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Nunn's Chess Endings Volume 2



John Nunn

**The definitive work on
practical endgame tactics**



Nunn's Chess Endings

Volume 2

John Nunn

GAMBIT

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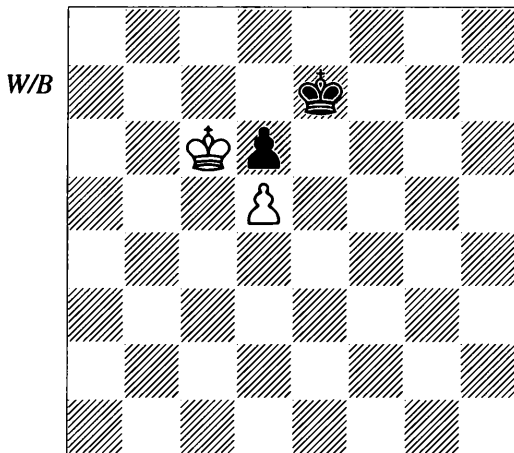
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Conventions and Terminology

Most of the terms which are used in this book are either familiar chess words such as mate and stalemate, or are explained in the text of the book. However, it is worth clarifying a few terms which occasionally cause confusion.

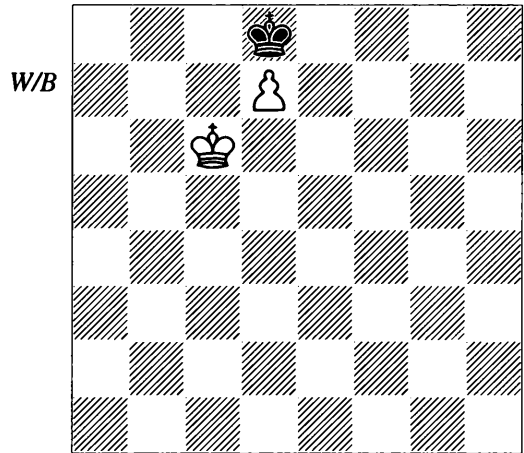
Zugzwang is a situation in which a player would prefer not to move, because any move weakens his position. Here's an example.



If it is Black to play, then any move loses his pawn, after which White wins (for example, 1...♙e8 2 ♖xd6 ♜d8 3 ♙e6 ♙e8 4 d6 ♜d8 5 d7 ♜c7 6 ♙e7). Black would prefer not to move, since he could then keep his pawn, but the rules of chess do not allow this. Thus Black is in zugzwang.

In this case, White still wins if it is his move because after 1 ♙c7 the situation hasn't really changed and Black is again in zugzwang.

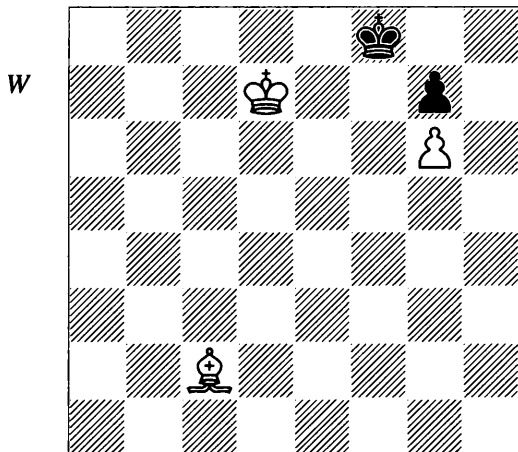
The situation in the following diagram is subtly different. If Black is to play then he must weaken his position by 1...♙e7, which allows 2 ♙c7 followed by the promotion of the pawn. Thus Black to move is in zugzwang as before. However, if White is to play, he has no waiting move and cannot win, since the only move that



retains his pawn, 1 ♙d6, stalemates Black. Thus White to play would also prefer to pass and is thus also in zugzwang. A situation like this, in which whoever is to move must weaken his position, is called *reciprocal zugzwang*. However, in the first diagram above, White wins whoever moves first, so this is a *non-reciprocal zugzwang*. The general term *zugzwang* refers to both reciprocal and non-reciprocal zugzwangs. It turns out that reciprocal zugzwangs play a key role in a wide range of endgames, and they will crop up regularly throughout the book. In simple positions which are amenable to precise analysis, reciprocal zugzwangs differ from non-reciprocal zugzwangs in that in the former the **result of the position differs according to who moves first**. Normally, this means that when one player moves first, he loses, while if the other player moves first the result is a draw. However, in rare cases, whoever moves first loses (for example, w♙d5, ♠e4 vs b♙f4, ♠e5), and this situation is called a *full-point reciprocal zugzwang*.

Another term which can be confusing is *positional draw*. This refers to a situation in which the material balance would normally indicate a win, but the weaker side is able to draw, not

because of some immediate concrete idea such as exchanging the enemy's last pawn, but because the superior side is unable to make progress. Here's an example.



A material balance of bishop and pawn against pawn normally wins, and here there is no danger of White's pawn being captured, but nevertheless the position is a draw. The reason is that Black has a *fortress*, in other words a defensive position which White cannot break into. White can stalemate Black by, for example, 1 ♖b3 or 1 ♖d3 ♜g8 2 ♜e7 ♜h8 3 ♜f7, but he cannot win. The most common reason for a positional draw is that the defender has a fortress, but some positional draws are more complicated than the example given above.

It is interesting to note that if White has a dark-squared bishop on c3 rather than a light-squared bishop on c2, then the result is still a draw. White can try 1 ♖d4 ♜g8 2 ♜e7 ♜h8 3 ♖f6, but provided Black replies 3...♜g8! (not 3...gxf6? 4 ♜f7 and mate in three more moves) then again White cannot make progress. However, replacing the bishop with a knight results in a win. It doesn't matter where the knight starts (except for g8!), but if we put it on c2, for example, then White wins by 1 ♖b4 ♜g8 2 ♜e7 ♜h8 3 ♖d5 ♜g8 4 ♜e8 ♜h8 5 ♖f6! gxf6 6 ♜f7 followed by mate.

I have followed one convention which is worth explaining. In discussing, for example, the ending of bishop and pawn vs bishop, one often wants to write something like 'if White's

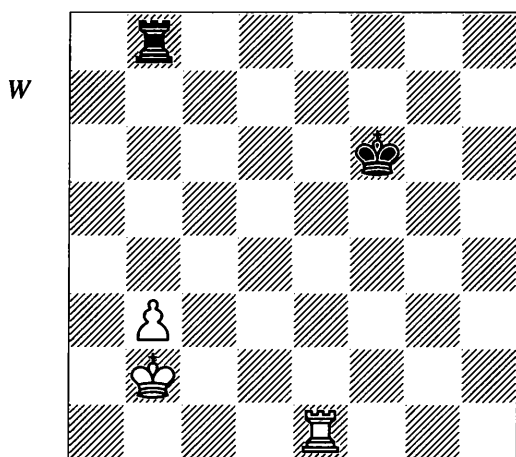
pawn is on the fifth rank, then...', but this can lead to confusion because sometimes it is Black who has the extra pawn. In many endgame books this is not a problem, since it is always assumed that White is the superior side. However, this book depends entirely on practical examples, and in these it quite often happens that it is Black who has the bishop and pawn and so references to 'White's pawn' may be confusing. Some books solve this problem by reversing the colours in those examples where Black is trying to win, but in practice you have to play Black as often as White and I believe that it is helpful to see the situation from both sides of the board. Therefore I have adopted a different solution to this problem. If I want to make a general statement about an ending, I shall write (to use the above example), 'if the attacker's pawn is on the fifth rank, then...' where it is understood that the *attacker* is the superior side, who is trying to win, while the *defender* is the inferior side, who is trying to draw. This avoids reference to White or Black and applies equally whether White or Black is the superior side. It should be clear in any given position who the attacker and defender are.

The letter 'W' or 'B' beside a diagram indicates whether it is White or Black to play. If 'W/B' appears, this means that the diagram position is considered both with White to move and with Black to move.

Where I refer to 'first rank', 'fifth rank', etc., this is always from the point of view of the player being discussed. Thus if Black plays ...♞d8-d2, I may write that 'Black occupies the seventh rank' since the rank a2-h2 is the seventh rank from Black's side of the board.

In rook endings, it is common for a king to be cut off from a passed pawn by a rook operating along a file, as in the diagram overleaf.

The number of files by which the defender's king is separated from the enemy passed pawn is often very important, but there is some inconsistency in chess literature about how this is described. In this book, we shall say that in this position the black king is **cut off by three files**



from the white pawn (or that it is a **three-file cut-off**); in other words we count the files starting with the one adjacent to the pawn until we reach the file adjacent to the defender's king.

Transpositions occur fairly often in end-game books, but I dislike comments of the type "...transposing into the position after White's 11th move in line 'a21' on page 165, with the colours reversed and the position reflected.", to

take a deliberately exaggerated example. I don't believe anyone actually follows through such convoluted transpositions, and in this book I have generally attempted to avoid clumsy cross-references by repeating the relevant analysis, at least in a condensed form, rather than merely referring to it. There are still some positional references within a single example, since these often serve to simplify the analysis rather than obscure it, but not between different examples.

In this book, the symbols '!' and '?' have their standard chess meanings of 'good move' and 'bad move' respectively (in other words, this book does **not** use the so-called *Nunn convention* which attaches special and more rigid meanings to these symbols). However, I have assigned special meanings to two other standard chess symbols. In this book, the symbol '?!' refers to a move which makes the position more difficult but should not change the result, while '!?' means a move which causes problems for the opponent, but again does not change the result.

Introduction

Volume 1 included a lengthy introduction which explained in detail the aims of *Nunn's Chess Endings* and the philosophy behind these two books. I shall not repeat the whole introduction, but here is a summary for those who do not have Volume 1.

Nunn's Chess Endings is an instructional work on endgames, the aim being to improve the reader's endgame play. All the major endgame classes are considered, but the focus is heavily on those endgames which arise most often in practical play. In each type of endgame I have selected a series of topics, mainly those which are both important and poorly covered in existing endgame literature. Each topic is illustrated by detailed analysis of positions from practical play.

The focus of *Nunn's Chess Endings* is on endgames which require precise analysis. Practically all fundamental endgames (those with few pieces) fall into this category, as do many endgames in which tactical elements predominate. The concrete positions, ideas and principles covered in these two volumes can be learned by any motivated player and will produce an immediate improvement in endgame play. There are many tactical elements which arise mainly in the endgame, such as breakthrough, pawn promotion, zugzwang and stalemate, but endgame tactics are not limited to a specific list of motifs. Any endgame position which involves exact calculation can be considered tactical, even if this involves no more than a subtle reason for playing a king to one square rather than another. In order not to overuse the word 'tactics', I call endgames of the type considered in these books *concrete endgames*.

Nunn's Chess Endings takes a somewhat different approach from almost all previous endgame books, and offers a number of special features. A lot of elementary endgame theory is familiar, and can be found in numerous endgame

books. I decided not to include any of this basic theory in the current work, as this would consume a great deal of space repeating material which can easily be found elsewhere. Instead, I collected together all the necessary prerequisites and made *Understanding Chess Endgames* (Gambit, 2009) out of it. I should emphasize that it is not necessary to have this earlier book in order to read the present one, but the reader should have a level of endgame knowledge and expertise equivalent to *Understanding Chess Endgames*. I have included a few references to *Understanding Chess Endgames* in cases where I have used some specific piece of information from that book but, as already mentioned, similar material exists in other books.

The main content of *Nunn's Chess Endings* is the careful analysis of hundreds of instructive endgames from practical play. By skipping the elementary parts, I have been able to go beyond standard endgame texts to consider more advanced topics and more complex positions. In some cases I have been able to identify new and important motifs which occur in over-the-board play, but which are often overlooked even by very strong players due to their unfamiliarity. Examples of this include the fifth-rank cut-off (see Section 8.4.1) and the rook switch (see Section 8.4.2).

Another theme that runs through the two volumes is that real-life situations often pose unexpected problems. Endgame books tend to focus on theoretical positions which minimize the difficulties that frequently arise in practice. That is not to say that there is anything wrong with such positions, provided one appreciates that these are idealized cases. Theoretical positions are constructed to show a concept as clearly as possible, and therefore are designed to eliminate enemy counterplay, awkwardly-placed pieces, or any of the other problems

which beset over-the-board players. However, life isn't that simple and endgames are often misplayed because, having been brought up on a diet of clear-cut theoretical examples, players are poorly prepared to deal with the complexities that the real world throws at them. Readers may feel that the positions in this book are unusually complicated, but that isn't really the case. Practical examples are often complicated, but this sad truth is disguised because of the way endgames are normally covered in textbooks. When reality intrudes into chess theory, the result is instructive but requires more work on the reader's part to gain the maximum benefit.

These days, it is practically impossible to write a good chess book without using a computer, but precisely how it has been used often plays a big part in determining how useful the resulting book is. In my work on *Nunn's Chess Endings*, I used *Deep Fritz* and *Rybka* on a quad-core computer, together with an extensive collection of 5- and 6-man tablebases. It's easy to generate lots of analysis using a computer, but a mass of variations by itself doesn't convey understanding. Humans don't think like computers, and there's no point in simply giving computer output and expecting it to be helpful. In these two volumes I have made a big effort to explain in words the ideas that underlie the analysis.

The value of well-annotated endgames lies largely in the way in which the reader can extract general lessons from the annotations. In these two volumes, I have summarized the key points at the end of most sections, but a careful reader will probably get much more out of the analysis than a brief summary can provide.

When playing over an example, readers should think about the ideas and general principles implied by the example. In part, my selection of positions is based on those which I personally found instructive and in the course of writing *Nunn's Chess Endings* I feel that I have learnt a great deal about endgames. One particular surprise has been the frequency with which positions of reciprocal zugzwang turned up, even in quite unlikely situations. Evidently they are far more common than is generally supposed.

In *Nunn's Chess Endings* there are many positions in which pre-existing analysis is corrected; indeed, it happens so often that readers may wonder how much earlier endgame analysis is correct. I was surprised by how many errors turned up during my work on this project, and concluded that analysing endgames correctly is more difficult than many people imagine. It is perhaps not surprising that the use of computers and tablebases should turn up a considerable number of mistakes and it is unfair to criticize pre-computer analysts for overlooking subtle moves pointed out by the machine. However, it is interesting to look at such errors because they often reveal common misconceptions about the endgame. In this respect, computer analysis, which brings us closer to the absolute truth about endgames, serves to expose the doubtful assumptions which have been ingrained into generations of players.

This book consists of Chapter 8, which deals with rook endings, and Chapter 9, which covers endings involving rooks and minor pieces. Other types of ending were considered in the earlier chapters, which may be found in Volume 1 of *Nunn's Chess Endings*.



8 Rook Endings

8.1 Introduction

This is the most detailed chapter in the whole of *Nunn's Chess Endings*, reflecting the fact that rook and pawn endings are by far the most common type of ending to arise in practical play. It's not just the frequency of rook endings which demands such thorough coverage; it's also that rook endings are very often misplayed over the board. Even grandmasters are prone to making a mess of rook endings and, surprisingly, many of these mistakes could have been avoided had the players possessed more theoretical knowledge. In this chapter I shall focus on those areas which most often cause problems in practice; of course, it's not only grandmasters who can benefit from this material, since the same types of error occur even more frequently at lower levels.

In the first sections of the chapter, only one side has a rook. A natural starting point is the case of rook vs pawns, which is the subject of **Section 8.2** (page 14). An important finesse in such endings is the *hesitation check*, in which the rook gives an intermediary check while moving from one square to another. This idea is often overlooked in practice, and **Section 8.2.1** (page 14) emphasizes its importance. We do not consider the basic ending of ♖ vs ♙ here, since standard endgame texts provide all the necessary information (also see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Sections 40 and 41). ♖ vs 2♙ is more interesting and is covered in **Section 8.2.2** (page 16). When the pawns are far-advanced, they may even win (see Penrose-Perkins on page 15, for example) but in most cases the question is whether the pawns can hold a draw. In **Section 8.2.3** (page 18), the pawn tally is increased to three. Again the rook generally has the advantage, although not surprisingly there are more cases in which the pawns draw

or even win. In all cases of rook vs pawns, it's important for the side with the rook to keep his pieces active and not be distracted by grabbing an irrelevant pawn.

Section 8.3 (page 22) moves on to the case of rook and pawns vs pawns. Many of the principles from **Section 8.2** carry over to this situation, and we start in **Section 8.3.1** (page 26) by emphasizing again how important it is for the side with the rook to have an active king. The next two sections deal with less frequent occurrences which players should nevertheless be familiar with. **Section 8.3.2** (page 28) shows how the side with the rook can sometimes win by sacrificing the rook, while in **Section 8.3.3** (page 29) the player with the rook is on the defensive against some advanced pawns, but manages to save the game by stalemate.

The rest of Chapter 8 deals with the more common case in which both sides have a rook. Endgame books traditionally start their coverage of this subject by looking at ♖+♙ vs ♗, then ♖+2♙ vs ♗ and so on. I'll take a somewhat different route by first examining a wide range of general concepts which are important for all rook endings. **Section 8.4** (page 30) is one of the most important parts of the book since it identifies and explains several concepts which are covered poorly or not at all in standard endgame texts. The examples provided show how these ideas are regularly overlooked by top players, probably due to lack of familiarity. I start in **Section 8.4.1** (page 30) with the *fifth-rank cut-off*, a concept which is usually only presented in the context of ♖ vs ♙, but which applies widely in rook endings. **Section 8.4.2** (page 38) deals with the *rook switch*, in which the attacker moves his rook away from its standard position behind the enemy passed pawn.

Textbooks drum into readers the advice to put your rook behind the enemy passed pawn,

and players evidently find it hard to spot situations when this is exactly the wrong thing to do. Section 8.4.3 (page 43) covers this common error, and explains how in some cases the rook is better placed to the side of the enemy passed pawn. We move into more familiar territory with Section 8.4.4 (page 45), which examines the well-known *Lasker manoeuvre*. Even here, however, there are a few unexpected twists, especially when we consider the modified situation in which the defender's rook is in front of his pawn, since in this case the Lasker manoeuvre often has to be combined with a rook switch in order to win.

It's almost a reflex to position your rook so as to provide the greatest checking distance to the enemy king, but there are situations in which this is wrong. Section 8.4.5 (page 49) deals with this important topic, which is another common source of result-changing errors. There are several situations in which the rook should **not** move so as to provide the maximum checking distance, and these are carefully explained. Positions of reciprocal zugzwang are surprisingly common in rook endings, and Section 8.4.6 (page 56) gives some insight into how these arise and how to handle the complexities which can result from them.

In Section 8.4.7 (page 67) we deal with the possibility of liquidating to a pawn ending. When assessing the consequences of a rook exchange, it's important to bear in mind the points made in Chapter 2 (from Volume 1), as a failure to judge the pawn ending correctly may result in a faulty liquidation. The examples in this section show how the typical errors mentioned in, for example, Section 2.2.5 can have knock-on effects in a rook ending.

Section 8.4.8 (page 73) covers another common error, that of promoting too soon. If you have a far-advanced passed pawn, it's natural to want to win the enemy rook for it as soon as possible, but this is often a mistake. Instead of promoting straight away, it may be possible to manoeuvre first in order to extract a further concession from the defender before finally winning the rook. This concession can take the form of an improved rook position, or it may be possible to force the defender to give up his

rook for the pawn on the seventh rank rather than the eighth.

Stalemate occurs relatively often in rook endings, but many players overlook the possibility entirely. In Section 8.4.9 (page 77) we take a look at some typical stalemate ideas, using several examples from practical play. In a few of these examples the play was accurate, but in most cases the attacker could have avoided the stalemate had he spotted the danger in time. The wide range of stalemate ideas featured in this section, which includes some examples involving leading grandmasters, shows that every player should remain alert for the possibility of stalemate.

Having covered many key general ideas in earlier sections, the next part of the chapter reverts to a case-by-case analysis based on material. The ideas introduced in earlier sections reappear here in various guises. The first case is ♖+♙ vs ♚, covered in **Section 8.5**. The elementary theory of this ending may be found in *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Sections 44-51, while the more advanced theory is exhaustively covered in my book *Secrets of Rook Endings* (expanded edition, Gambit, 1999). My intention here is not to provide a comprehensive coverage of this topic, which would be impossible in the space available, or to repeat material which has been published many times before, but to concentrate exclusively on situations which often give rise to mistakes. The key feature of ♖+♙ vs ♚ positions is the file the pawn is on, as each file has different characteristics. Centre-pawn positions are examined in Section 8.5.1 (page 91), positions with a bishop's pawn are in Section 8.5.2 (page 94), while knight's pawns are featured in Section 8.5.3 (page 97). The rook's pawn (Section 8.5.4, page 99) is the most complicated case, as here the defender has drawing possibilities which don't exist with other pawns. It is also the most important situation, as the drawing ideas found in this section can be applied to some rook endings with more pawns.

In **Section 8.6** (page 108) we move on to the next material balance, that of ♖+2♙ vs ♚. This is another important section, because it goes beyond traditional endgame theory to reveal some

hitherto unknown aspects of this ending. Most endgame books consider this endgame generally won, apart from the known exceptional case of ♖+f♗+h♗ vs ♜, and some positions with blockaded pawns or with ♖+a♗+h♗ vs ♜. While it is generally won, the range of drawn positions is much wider than has been supposed and is not restricted to the special cases mentioned above. Section 8.6.1 (page 108) provides an introduction to the coverage of ♖+2♗ vs ♜ and readers should refer there for a more detailed description of Section 8.6.

Section 8.7 (page 152) deals with endings of ♖+♗ vs ♜+♗, an important practical case which is often scantily covered in other textbooks (Levenfish and Smyslov, for example, in their classic book on rook endings devote just 7½ pages to it from a total of 224). Several endings with this material balance were given in earlier sections (for example, see Section 8.4.1 on the fifth-rank cut-off) but Section 8.7 deals with this ending in a systematic manner. The defender doesn't always benefit from his pawn, and in Section 8.7.1 (page 152) we look at some cases in which the pawn actually gets in the way. The remainder of the material is divided up according to the relative position of the pawns. We start in Section 8.7.2 (page 155) with the case in which the two pawns stand on the same file with neither passed. In this case the attacker's objective is to win the enemy pawn in such a way as to reach a winning ending of ♖+♗ vs ♜. This is sometimes possible even when the defender's king is relatively close, provided the attacker has active pieces. In Section 8.7.3 (page 161) the pawns are on adjacent files with neither passed. In order for the attacker to win, the defender's king usually has to be cut off at a considerable distance from the pawns. The pawns are still on adjacent files in Section 8.7.4 (page 167), but now they are passed. Here the attacker can sometimes win even if the enemy pawn is far advanced, provided his own king is in an active position and the defender's king is cut off. In Section 8.7.5 (page 171) the pawns are at least two files apart, and now the main factor is whether the defender's pawn can be supported by his king. If it can, he will usually be able to

give his rook up for the attacker's pawn and still draw. Section 8.7.6 (page 178) wraps up the coverage of ♖+♗ vs ♜+♗ by considering positions in which promotion occurs. A good knowledge of ♖ vs ♜+♗ is essential in such situations.

Section 8.8 (page 183) is the last of the sections based on material, and considers the ending of ♖+2♗ vs ♜+♗. This is another ending of great practical importance, and also one which is often misplayed over the board. With three pawns on the board, there are many pawn-position permutations, so I shall focus on those of greatest practical significance. Section 8.8.1 (page 183) covers the case in which no pawns are passed. This is usually drawn if the defender's king is nearby, but there are some winning positions if the pawns are far advanced. In Section 8.8.2 (page 188) we assume that the attacker has a passed pawn, and this material is divided into two parts. Section 8.8.2a (page 188) deals with the case in which the attacker's pawns are connected (for example, e- and f-pawns against a g-pawn). This is generally drawn, but it doesn't take much to tip the balance in the attacker's favour. Section 8.8.2b (page 191) covers the alternative case in which the attacker's pawns are not connected. When the pawns are relatively close together (for example, d- and f-pawns against g-pawn) the defender still has drawing chances, but as the pawns become further apart, the balance shifts further in the attacker's favour.

In Section 8.8.3 (page 199) we move on to the case in which all the pawns are passed. Again the material is divided according to whether the attacker's pawns are connected. The case of connected pawns is covered in Section 8.8.3a (page 200); here the attacker has good winning chances, but several factors can affect the result, such as whether the passed pawns are supported by the king and how actively the rooks are positioned. With disconnected pawns, as in Section 8.8.3b (page 213), the defender has better chances, especially if the pawns are far apart. Finally, in Section 8.8.4 (page 218) we look at the rare situation in which the side with the single pawn has the advantage. This can only occur if the lone pawn is far advanced and

supported by the king, and then only in very favourable situations.

In **Section 8.9** (page 219) we move on to rook endings with more pawns, and consider first the topic of the outside passed pawn. The most favourable case for the attacker arises when his rook is supporting the pawn from behind, and this is considered in **Section 8.9.1** (page 219). The situation in which the rook defends the passed pawn from the side, as in **Section 8.9.2** (page 230), is generally less favourable for the attacker since the pawn is not threatening to advance. In this case the defender should place his own rook behind the pawn. In **Section 8.9.3** (page 235) the attacker's rook is in front of the pawn, which is the least favourable case, but nevertheless there are still winning chances, some of which are based on interesting tactical points. We finish with **Section 8.9.4** (page 242), in which the passed pawn is supported by the attacker's king rather than his rook. Here the defender will ultimately have to give up his rook for the pawn, after which the result depends on how much counterplay he has been able to develop on the opposite wing.

Section 8.10 (page 251) covers the situation in which both sides have connected passed pawns. If the race is close, the play can be very double-edged, with a whole point depending on tactical finesse.

In **Section 8.11** (page 264) we look at a range of tactical ideas which crop up in rook and pawn endings (note that stalemate was already covered in **Section 8.4.9**). One normally associates triangulation with king and pawn endings, but **Section 8.11.1** (page 264) shows that such tempo-losing manoeuvres can also arise in rook endings. Pawn breakthroughs are less common in rook endings than in other types of ending because a single passed pawn can normally be stopped, but they occur from time to time, as we can see in **Section 8.11.2** (page 266). In **Section 8.11.3** (page 268) we briefly examine perpetual check, while **Section 8.11.4** (page 269) deals with mating ideas, which occur relatively often in rook endings. We end with **Section 8.11.5** (page 271), which covers positional draws; in rook endings, this usually involves the creation of a fortress in an

ending of queen and pawns against rook and pawns.

Section 8.12 (page 273) includes some positions not fitting into earlier categories. This section can be viewed as a kind of revision of earlier material, but it also introduces several new ideas which are summarized at the end of the section.

Our coverage of rook endings concludes with **Section 8.13** (page 286), which takes a brief look at four-rook endings. The main difference between these and endings with just one pair of rooks is the possibility of a direct attack on the enemy king.

8.2 Rook vs Pawns

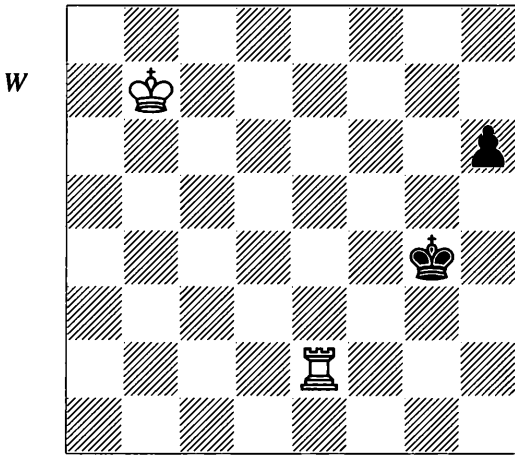
There are a surprising number of subtleties in endings in which a lone rook faces enemy pawns, and here we shall focus on those which are of greatest importance for over-the-board play.

8.2.1 Hesitation Checks

By *hesitation check* I mean that a piece travelling from square A to square B gives an intermediary check on square C before moving to B. The point is that if the enemy king is already on its best square, the hesitation check forces the king to an inferior square. It might seem unnecessary to give a special name to such an elementary concept, but it often helps to have a label to refer to a particular theme. Hesitation checks play an important role in rook endings and are often overlooked in practice. The diagram on the following page provides an example.

1 ♖c6?

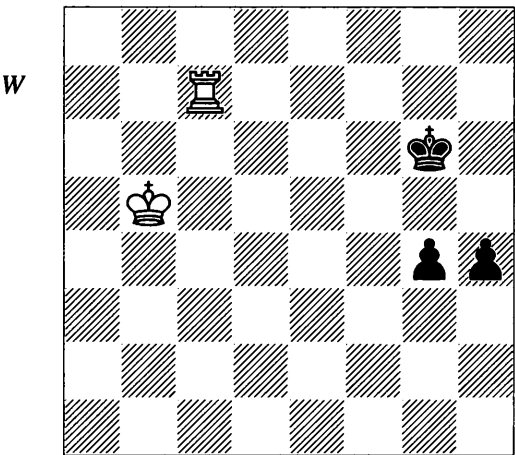
A mistake allowing Black to escape with a draw. White could have won by 1 ♖g2+! ♜f4 (1...♜h3 2 ♜g8 leaves Black's king stuck on the h-file and White wins after 2...h5 3 ♖c6 h4 4 ♜d5 ♜h2 5 ♜e4 h3 6 ♜f3 ♜h1 7 ♜h8 h2 8 ♜a8, mating) 2 ♜h2! ♜g5 (mission accomplished; with gain of tempo White has forced Black's king back from g4 to g5) 3 ♖c6 (the extra tempo now proves decisive) 3...h5 4 ♜d5 h4 5 ♜e4 ♜g4 6 ♜g2+ ♜h3 7 ♜g8.



J. Fries Nielsen – Plachetka
Rimavska Sobota 1991

1...h5 2 ♖d5 h4 3 ♜e4 h3 4 ♜e3 ♙g3 5 ♜e1 h2 6 ♜e2 ♙g2 7 ♜h1 ♙xh1 8 ♙f1 1/2-1/2
Stalemate.

The following position proved too much for both players and for Mineev, who annotated the ending in *Informator 16*.



Penrose – Perkins
British Ch, Brighton 1972

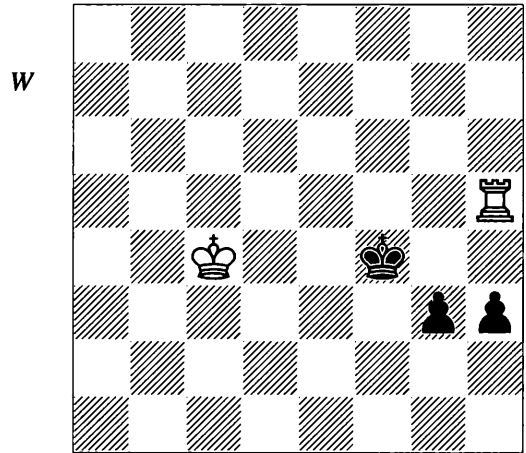
This position should be a draw with best play, but it is easy for White to go wrong.

1 ♜c8?

In spite of Mineev's exclamation mark, this move should lose. 1 ♜c4? is also bad due to 1...h3 2 ♜d3 h2 3 ♜c6+ ♙g5 4 ♜c5+ ♙f4 5 ♜h5 g3 6 ♜e2 g2 and Black reaches ♚ vs ♜.

The only way to draw involves an idea which frequently saves the side with the rook in such

endings: 1 ♜c6+! (1 ♜c4! ♙f5 2 ♜c5+ is just as good, but every other move loses for White) 1...♙f5 2 ♜c5+ ♙f4 3 ♜h5! (attacking this pawn greatly delays the advance of the pawns) 3...h3 4 ♜c4 g3 (D) (4...♙g3 5 ♜d3 h2 6 ♜e3 ♙g2 7 ♙f4 g3 8 ♙g4 ♙f2 9 ♜h8 is also drawn).



Now it looks as if White is in trouble, since 5 ♜xh3? g2 6 ♜h4+ ♙f5 7 ♜h5+ ♙f6 8 ♜h6+ ♙g7 is winning for Black. However, White draws by the hesitation check 5 ♜h4+!, an important finesse which is often overlooked in over-the-board play, after which White can eliminate both pawns with his rook.

1...g3!

The only winning move. After 1...h3? White switches the rook behind the h-pawn, which as before serves to slow the pawns down: 2 ♜h8 ♙f5 3 ♜c4 ♙f4 4 ♜d3 ♙f3 5 ♜f8+ ♙g2 6 ♜e3 h2 7 ♜h8 is again a draw.

2 ♜g8+ ♙f5 3 ♜c4

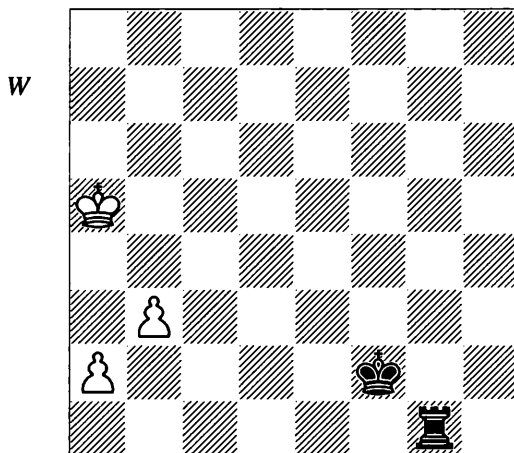
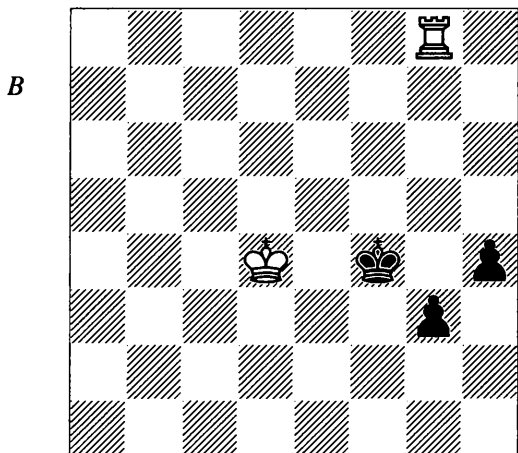
White puts up the most resistance.

3...♙f4?

This natural move hands the half-point back again. Black could have won by 3...♙e4! (it turns out to be more important to keep the white king at bay than to defend the g3-pawn) 4 ♜c3 (4 ♜g4+ ♙f3 and 4 ♜h8 g2! 5 ♜xh4+ ♙f5 6 ♜h5+ ♙f6 7 ♜h6+ ♙g7 also win for Black) 4...♙f3 5 ♜d2 h3 and the pawns are too strong.

4 ♜d4! (D)

This unexpected move rescues White. Perhaps Black was only counting on 4 ♜d3?, when he wins by 4...h3 5 ♜f8+ ♙e5 and the two pawns cannot be stopped.



4...♔f3

Now 4...h3 doesn't win, because Black's king is confined and this allows White to gain time by rook checks: 5 ♖f8+ ♔g4 6 ♔e4! h2 (Mineev gives 6...g2? 7 ♖g8+ ♔h5 here, which even loses after 8 ♔f3 and the pawns are captured) 7 ♖g8+ ♔h3 8 ♖h8+ ♔g2 9 ♔f4 with a draw.

5 ♖f8+ ♔g2 6 ♔e3 h3 7 ♖h8!

White has to keep finding accurate moves, but from here on he does not make any mistakes.

7...♔h2

7...h2 8 ♔f4 is the familiar draw.

8 ♖g8! g2 9 ♔f2 ♔h1 10 ♖g7 h2 11 ♖xg2
1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

Summary:

- Hesitation checks are important in endings with rook vs pawns, since they can force the enemy king to an inferior position without loss of time.
- Recall that in the position w♖h5 vs b♔f4, ♠g3, ♠h3 White can eliminate both black pawns by 1 ♖h4+!. This finesse is often overlooked in practical play.

8.2.2 Rook vs Two Pawns

I won't dwell on the ending of rook vs one pawn, which is covered in all the standard endgame texts (for example, *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Sections 40 and 41). We have already seen one example of rook vs two connected passed pawns immediately above and the next position features another typical error.

Shomoev – Kobaliya

Tomsk 2006

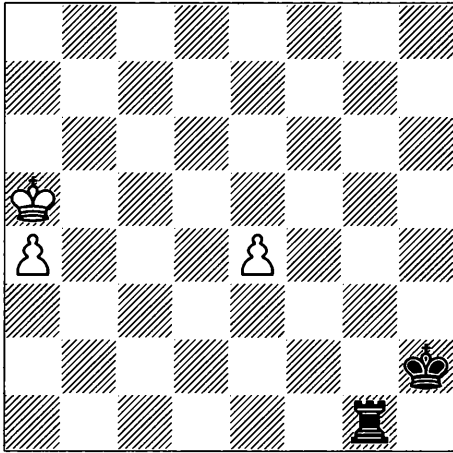
White must decide which pawn to push. At first sight, the b-pawn looks more logical because it is not obstructed by the white king. That's what White chose in the game, which finished 1 b4? ♔e3 2 b5 (2 a4 ♔d4 3 ♔b5 ♖g5+ 4 ♔c6 ♔c4 5 b5 ♖g6+ 6 ♔c7 ♔c5 7 ♔b7 ♔b4 8 b6 ♔a5 also wins for Black) 2...♔d4 3 ♔b6 ♖g6+ 4 ♔a7 ♔c5 5 a4 ♖g4 0-1.

The problem here was that there was nothing to prevent Black's king from approaching the advancing b-pawn. The drawing line involved pushing the a-pawn instead: 1 a4! ♔e3 2 ♔b6! (White has to spend a tempo moving his king before the a-pawn can advance further, but it's worth it because the white king prevents Black's king from approaching the advancing pawn) 2...♔d4 3 a5 ♖g6+ 4 ♔b5! (4 ♔b7? loses to 4...♔c5 5 a6 ♖b6+ 6 ♔a7 ♔b5) 4...♖g5+ 5 ♔b6 with a draw because the b3-pawn prevents ...♔c4. This last point is crucial, and if White's pawn were on b2 instead of b3 in the diagram, then the position would be lost for White.

With disconnected pawns, it often happens that the side with the pawns has to focus on supporting just one pawn with his king, in which case the second pawn plays little or no part in the battle. However, there are occasions when it serves a vital role.

The following position would be lost without the e-pawn, which can be used to distract Black at the critical moment.

B



Ermeni – Cvetković
Skopje 1991

1...♖b1!

The best chance, trapping White's king on the a-file. 1...♔g3 2 ♖b6 ♔f4 3 a5 ♔e5 (3...♔xe4 4 a6 ♔d5 5 a7 is also drawn) 4 a6 ♔d6 5 e5+! shows why the e-pawn is essential, since without this move White would lose.

2 ♔a6 ♔g3 3 e5

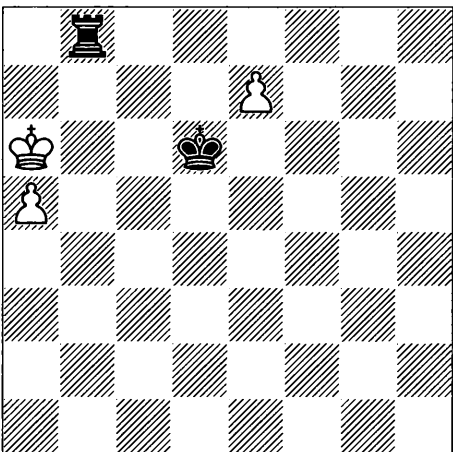
It is imperative to use the e-pawn to deflect Black's rook and thus free the white king. 3 a5? loses after 3...♔f4 4 ♔a7 ♔xe4 5 a6 ♔d5 6 ♔a8 ♔c6 7 a7 ♖h1 and mate next move.

3...♔f4 4 e6 ♔e5 5 e7 ♖b8

The rook has been forced back to the first rank, but White's king is still not free.

6 a5 ♔d6 (D)

W



Kalinichev – Siniavsky
USSR 1982

The key moment. The following mistake probably arose because White had given up hope of saving the game, but there was a narrow

path to the draw, based on the overriding principle of getting the king off the a-file.

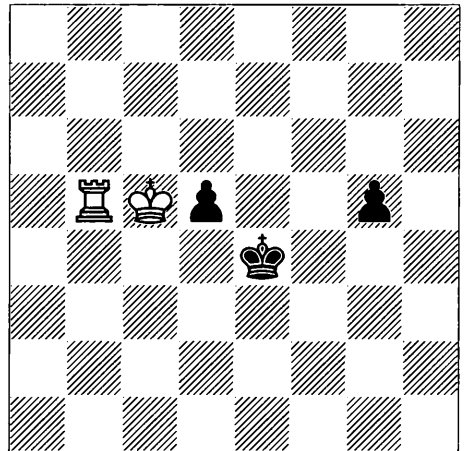
7 e8♖?

The drawing line runs 7 ♔a7! ♖e8 (7...♔c7 8 a6 followed by e8♖ forces stalemate) 8 ♖b6! (this is the move that's difficult to see; 8 a6? ♔c5! 9 ♖b7 ♖xe7+ and 8 ♖b7? ♔c5 both win for Black) 8...♖xe7 (8...♖b8+ 9 ♔a7 repeats) 9 a6 ♖e1 10 ♖b7! (now we have a standard drawn position, but not 10 a7? ♖b1+ 11 ♔a6 ♔c7 12 a8♔+ ♔c6 13 ♔a7 ♖b4 and Black wins) 10...♔d7 (10...♔c5 11 a7 ♖e7+ 12 ♔a6! and 10...♖b1+ 11 ♔c8! are also drawn) 11 a7 ♖b1+ 12 ♔a8! and Black cannot win.

7...♖xe8 8 ♖b7 ♔c5 9 a6 ♖e7+ 0-1

Now we come to another common error, this time involving the side with the rook. It is often more important to improve the position of the king and rook than to remove one of the opposing pawns, but sometimes it's hard to resist the temptation to grab first and think afterwards.

W



The game ended in a draw, but as Psakhis and Vaiser pointed out in *Informator 34*, White missed an instructive winning line.

1 ♖b4+ ♔f3 2 ♔xd5?

Surprisingly, taking the pawn is wrong. White should have continued 2 ♖b3+!, and now:

1) 2...♔f2 3 ♔xd5 g4 4 ♔e4 g3 5 ♖b2+ ♔f1 6 ♔f3 and White wins the pawn.

2) 2...♔f4 3 ♔d4! (3 ♔xd5? is still wrong in view of 3...g4; it's more important to force

Black's king in front of the g-pawn than to take on d5) 3...g4 4 ♖d3 ♜f3 5 ♖d2+ ♜f2 6 ♜b8 g3 7 ♜f8+ ♜g2 8 ♜e2 d4 9 ♜f7 and White wins as in line 3a below.

3) 2...♜e4 3 ♜g3! ♜f4 (3...d4 4 ♜xg5 d3 5 ♜c4 d2 6 ♜d5 and White wins) 4 ♜g1 g4 5 ♜d4! (again White must not be greedy; the d5-pawn is an irrelevance) 5...♜f3 6 ♜d3! and now:

3a) 6...d4 7 ♜f1+ ♜g2 8 ♜f8 g3 9 ♜e2! (yet again taking the d-pawn is a mistake: 9 ♜xd4? ♜h2 10 ♜e3 g2 11 ♜h8+ ♜g1 12 ♜f3 ♜f1 13 ♜a8 g1♘+ is a standard drawn position) 9...♜h2 (9...d3+ 10 ♜xd3 ♜h2 11 ♜h8+ ♜g1 12 ♜e2 wins for White) 10 ♜f3 d3 11 ♜h8+ ♜g1 12 ♜xg3 ♜f1 13 ♜f3 ♜e1 14 ♜e3 and White wins.

3b) 6...g3 7 ♜f1+ ♜g4 8 ♜e2 g2 9 ♜d1 ♜g3 10 ♜e3 d4+ 11 ♜e2 d3+ 12 ♜e3 d2 13 ♜e2 (now Black's king must give way) 13...♜h3 14 ♜f3 ♜h2 15 ♜f2 ♜h3 16 ♜xd2 and White wins.

2...g4 3 ♜e5 g3 4 ♜b3+ ♜f2! 5 ♜f4 g2 6 ♜b2+ ♜g1!

Playing for stalemate is the simplest draw, since this avoids having to defend rook vs knight, as occurs after 6...♜f1 7 ♜f3 g1♘+.

7 ♜g3 ♜h1 8 ♜xg2 1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

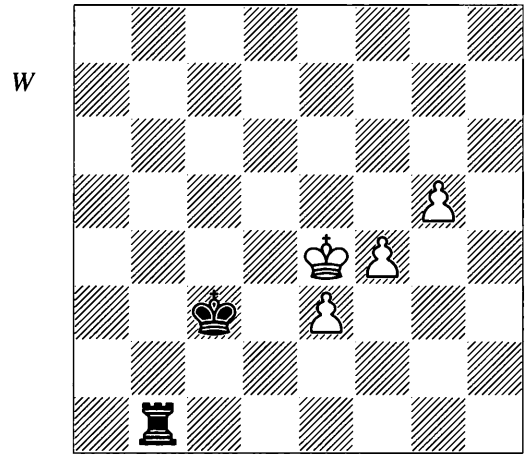
Summary:

- If the defender has more than one pawn, it's important to choose the correct one to advance. A key factor is whether the enemy king can easily approach the pawn.
- The side with the rook must focus on improving the position of his pieces, and not be deflected by capturing irrelevant pawns.

8.2.3 Rook vs Three Pawns

When a rook faces three pawns, both sides can have winning chances. If the pawns are all connected and the opposing king is in front of the pawns, the crucial position arises when the pawns are in a chain from the 4th to 6th ranks (such as d4-e5-f6, assuming that White has the pawns). This situation is usually drawn, but if the pawns are further back, the rook usually

wins. The side with the rook faces more problems when his king is not in front of the pawns, and then he may struggle to draw.



Füster – Watz
Hungary-Austria match 1947

This example is interesting because Black missed a tricky draw in the game, and the saving idea was also overlooked in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*, which considered the diagram position winning for White.

1 g6 ♜g1?

Also not 1...♜h1? 2 ♜f5 ♖d3 3 e4 ♜h5+ 4 ♜g4 ♜h1 5 e5 and White wins.

However, Black actually has two drawing moves, both based on the same idea:

1) 1...♜e1! 2 f5 ♜g1! (by inducing White to push his f-pawn, Black has denied White the use of the f5-square for his king) 3 ♜e5 ♖d3! 4 e4 (or 4 f6 ♜g5+!) 4...♜e3 5 f6 (or 5 ♖d5 ♜f4) 5...♜g5+ and Black draws using the finesse mentioned on page 15.

2) 1...♜f1! 2 ♜f5 (or 2 f5 ♜g1, as in line 1) 2...♖d3 3 e4 ♜e3 and again the result is a draw.

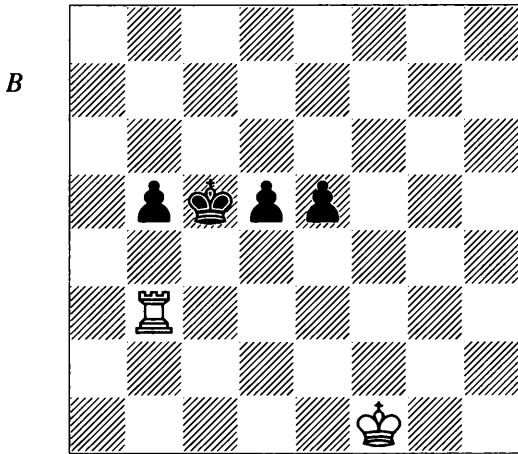
2 ♜f5

Not 2 f5? ♜c4 3 ♜e5 ♖d3! 4 e4 and now the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* gives 4...♜g4? an exclamation mark, even though 5 f6! ♜g5+ 6 ♜f4 wins. The correct line is 4...♜e3!, when Black does indeed draw.

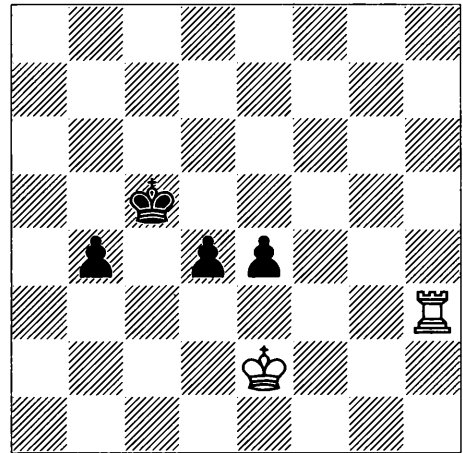
2...♖d3 3 e4 ♜e3 4 e5 ♜f3 5 e6 ♜g4 6 e7 ♜xf4+ 7 ♜g5 1-0

White wins after 7...♜g4+ 8 ♜h5 ♜e4 9 g7 and one of the pawns will promote.

The following example is a typical over-the-board position, and the analysis is rather more complicated.



W



K. Piskov – Alster

Bulgaria-Czechoslovakia match, Sofia 1949

Black has three pawns for the rook but although none of his pawns is far advanced, White's task is not easy since his rook is badly placed in front of the pawns and his king is slightly offside. White can win, but only after a long series of accurate moves.

1...e4

1...♙c4 is a tougher defence, when the winning line runs 2 ♖e3! (the only move to win; 2 ♖h3? b4 3 ♙e2 d4 4 ♖h8 e4 5 ♜c8+ ♙b3 is a draw) 2...e4 (2...♙d4 3 ♙e2 b4 4 ♙d2 e4 5 ♖e1 ♙c4 6 ♖b1 transposes) 3 ♙e2 b4 4 ♙d2 ♙c5 5 ♖e1 ♙d4 6 ♖d1! ♙c4 (after 6...b3 7 ♖e1! ♙c4 8 ♖e3 ♙b4 9 ♙c1 ♙a3 10 ♙b1 White wins by zugzwang) 7 ♖b1 ♙c5 (7...b3 8 ♖e1 ♙b4 9 ♖e3 and 7...d4 8 ♜c1+ ♙b3 9 ♖e1 e3+ 10 ♙d3 are also winning for White) 8 ♙e3 ♙c4 9 ♜c1+ ♙b3 10 ♜c5! ♙a2 11 ♖a5+ ♙b2 12 ♖xd5 b3 13 ♙d2! e3+ 14 ♙d3! ♙a2 15 ♖a5+ ♙b1 16 ♖h5 b2 17 ♖h1+ ♙a2 18 ♙c2 and Black is finished.

2 ♙e2 d4

After 2...♙c4, 3 ♖e3 b4 4 ♙d2! transposes to the previous note but 3 ♖b1! is even quicker.

3 ♖h3?!

3 ♙d2 ♙c4 4 ♖b1 is a simpler win; for example, 4...♙c5 5 ♜c1+ ♙d5 6 ♖e1 d3 (or 6...b4 7 ♜c1 b3 8 ♜c8) 7 ♙e3 ♙c4 8 ♜c1+ ♙d5 9 ♜c8 b4 10 ♜c7 is much as in the game.

3...b4 (D)

4 ♖h8?

The *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* doesn't comment on this move, which throws away the win. The only winning move is 4 ♖h4!, and now:

1) 4...d3+ 5 ♙e3 b3 6 ♖h8 ♙c4 7 ♜c8+ ♙b4 8 ♙d2 ♙a3 9 ♙c3 ♙a2 10 ♖a8+ ♙b1 11 ♖h8! and White wins.

2) 4...♙d5 5 ♙d2 b3 transposes to line 3.

3) 4...b3 5 ♙d2! ♙d5 and now 6 ♖g4!! is the only winning move, putting Black in zugzwang (note that the zugzwang is not reciprocal because if White were to play, he would still win with the waiting move ♖h4!). Note that 6 ♖f4? fails since 6...b2 7 ♖f1 ♙c4 8 ♙c2 e3 9 ♙xb2 e2 gives Black a vital tempo. After 6 ♖g4!! Black is defenceless; for example, 6...b2 7 ♖g1 ♙c4 8 ♙c2 e3 9 ♙xb2 ♙d3 10 ♙c1! ♙e2 11 ♙c2 d3+ 12 ♙c3 d2 13 ♙c2 ♙f2 14 ♖a1 ♙e2 15 ♖b1 ♙f2 16 ♙d3 and White wins.

4...b3

Now it should be a draw.

5 ♖b8 ♙c4 6 ♜c8+ ♙b4 7 ♙d2 d3?

The *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* correctly points out that this is wrong and that Black could have drawn by 7...e3+! 8 ♙d3 b2 9 ♖b8+ (after 9 ♙c2? d3+ 10 ♙xb2 e2 Black even wins) 9...♙a3 10 ♖b7 ♙a2 11 ♙c2 d3+ and White loses his rook.

8 ♖b8+ ♙c4

Or 8...♙a4 9 ♙c3 and White wins.

9 ♜c8+

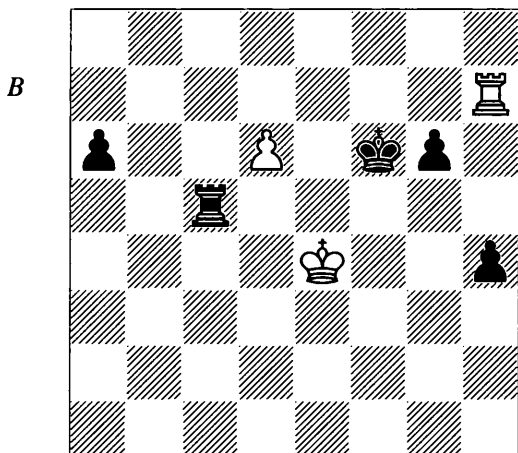
9 ♖b7 is a simpler way to pass the move to Black.

9...♙d4 10 ♖d8+ ♙c4 11 ♖b8

Now Black is in zugzwang.

11...e3+ 12 ♖xe3 ♕c3 13 ♖c8+ 1-0

The following example shows how such positions can easily arise when one player has to give up his rook for an enemy passed pawn.



L. Karlsson – Furhoff
Stockholm 2006/7

Black is two pawns up, but White has some counterplay thanks to his far-advanced d-pawn. The game ended in a draw but, according to the notes by Perun in *Informator 99*, Black overlooked a win. However, deeper analysis shows that White could have drawn in any case, although it would have required extremely precise play to hold the game.

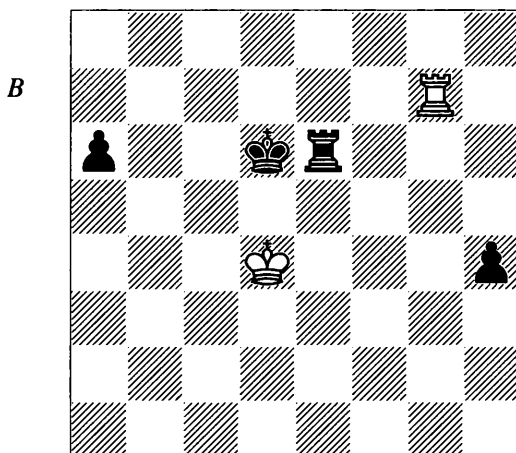
1...♖c1

This is a plausible winning attempt, but White can defend. The alternative 1...♕e6!? presents White with very difficult problems to solve. After 2 ♖g7! (2 d7? loses to 2...♖e5+! 3 ♕f3 ♖d5, liquidating to a winning ♖+2♗ vs ♖ position) 2...♖e5+ (Perun's notes stopped here with a 'Black is winning' symbol, but the position is actually a draw) 3 ♕d4! Black can try:

1) 3...♖d5+ 4 ♕e4 ♖xd6 5 ♖xg6+ ♕e7 (after 5...♕d7 6 ♖g7+ ♕c8 7 ♖h7 ♖b6 8 ♕d5 White's active king enables him to draw) 6 ♖g7+ ♕f6 7 ♖g4! ♖b6 8 ♕f3 h3 9 ♕g3 ♖b3+ 10 ♕h2 ♖a3 11 ♖h4 ♕e5 12 ♖g4 a5 13 ♖g5+ ♕f4 14 ♖h5 ♕e4 15 ♖g5 ♕d4 16 ♖g4+ ♕c3 17 ♖g3+ ♕b2 18 ♖g5 a4 19 ♖g4 leads to a Vančura-type draw (the Vančura draw is summarized in Section 8.5.4 on page 100, or see

Section 51 of *Understanding Chess Endgames* for more information) in which Black's extra h-pawn doesn't make much difference.

2) 3...♕xd6 4 ♖xg6+ ♖e6 5 ♖g7! (D) (5 ♖g8? loses to 5...♖h6 6 ♖a8 ♕c7) leads to a critical position.



We shall see in Section 8.6 (page 108) how unexpected drawing possibilities often arise in positions of ♖+2♗ vs ♖, and here is a taster of the type of position we shall be looking at later. Endings with ♖+a♗+h♗ sometimes offer drawing chances, but there is one situation in which the attacker almost always wins, namely when the pawns are on the same rank and his rook stands between them, defending both pawns from the side. The defender must at all costs strive to prevent this situation from arising. This subject will be covered in more detail in Section 8.6.3a (page 122).

In the diagram, the pawns are still two ranks apart so White has a chance to prevent Black from arriving at the winning formation. Concrete analysis shows that White can draw, but it is not simple: 5...♖f6 (5...♖h6?! 6 ♖a7 costs Black the a-pawn) 6 ♖h7! ♖f4+ 7 ♕e3! ♖a4 and now:

2a) White must not give thoughtless checks since 8 ♖h6+ ♕d5 9 ♖h5+? (9 ♕f2 still draws) 9...♕c6! is winning for Black. Although this position can only arise after inaccurate play, I shall analyse it in detail because Black's win from this point is very instructive: 10 ♖h6+ ♕b7 11 ♖h7+ ♕c8 12 ♖h8+ ♕d7 13 ♖h7+ ♕d8!! (a tough move to find, and not 13...♕e8?

14 ♖f3 ♜c4 15 ♞a7 ♜c6 16 ♞h7 h3 17 ♔g3 ♔d8 18 ♔xh3 ♜c7 19 ♞h6 with a draw as Black's king is too far away to play ...♔b7) and now:

2a1) 14 ♖f3 ♜c4 15 ♞a7 ♜c6 16 ♞h7 h3 17 ♔g3 ♔c8! 18 ♔xh3 ♜c7! 19 ♞h5 (19 ♞h6 ♔b7 20 ♔g3 ♜f7 21 ♞e6 a5 22 ♞e4 ♜f6 23 ♞e1 ♔a6 24 ♞a1 ♜f8 25 ♔g4 ♔b5 26 ♞b1+ ♔c4 27 ♜c1+ ♔b3 28 ♞b1+ ♔a2 and Black wins) 19...♞g7! 20 ♞e5 ♔b7 21 ♔h4 ♔b6 22 ♞e6+ ♔b5 23 ♞e5+ ♔b4 24 ♞e4+ ♔c3 25 ♞e3+ ♔d4 26 ♞a3 ♞a7 27 ♞a5 ♔c4 28 ♔g4 ♔b4 29 ♜f5 a5 and White's king is still too far away.

2a2) 14 ♞h8+ ♔e7 15 ♞h5 ♞b4 16 ♔d3 (16 ♔f3 ♔d7 17 ♞a5 ♞b6 18 ♔g4 ♔c7 19 ♔xh4 ♞g6 wins for Black) 16...♔f6 17 ♔e3 ♔g6 18 ♞a5 ♞b6 19 ♔f4 (D).

we have a Vančura-type draw in which the extra h-pawn doesn't help Black.

2 ♔d5!

The only chance, as after 2 d7 ♞d1 White's king is cut off and Black wins easily.

2...♞d1+ 3 ♔c6 g5 4 d7 a5

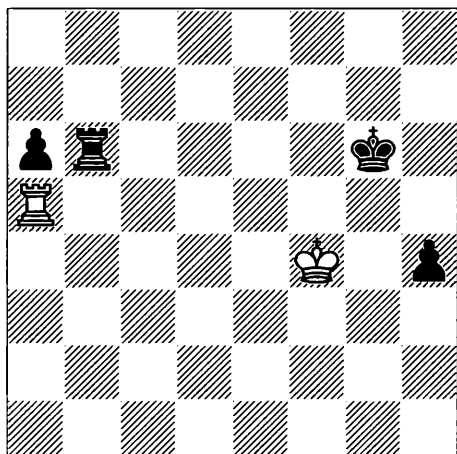
4...♔f5 5 ♔c7 ♔g4 6 d8 ♞ ♞xd8 7 ♔xd8 h3 8 ♔e7 ♔g3 9 ♔f6 g4 10 ♔g5 h2 11 ♞h4 is also drawn.

5 ♞h8

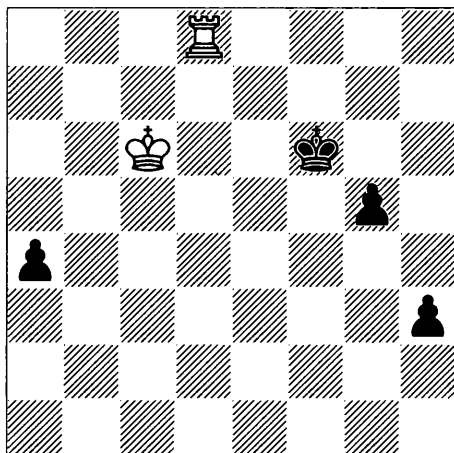
White even had a second drawing line: 5 ♞h6+ ♔e5 6 ♔c7 a4 7 d8 ♞ ♞xd8 8 ♔xd8 a3 9 ♔e7! a2 10 ♞a6 g4 11 ♞a5+! (11 ♞xa2? loses to 11...g3) 11...♔f4 12 ♞a4+! ♔g3 13 ♞a3+ ♔g2 14 ♞xa2+ ♔h3 15 ♔f6 g3 16 ♔g5.

5...a4 6 d8 ♞+ ♞xd8 7 ♞xd8 h3 (D)

B



W



Now Black has to find the very difficult move 19...♔g7!! (the only way to win, clearing the rank for the rook to move to h6; 19...♔h7? 20 ♔g4 ♞h6 21 ♔h3 ♔g7 22 ♞f5! ♔g6 23 ♞f1 is only a draw) with a winning position; for example, 20 ♔g4 ♞h6 21 ♔h3 ♔f7 22 ♞e5 (here White is only able to cut the king off along the e-file) 22...♔f6 23 ♞e1 ♔f5 24 ♞a1 ♔e5 25 ♞a5+ ♔d4 26 ♞a1 ♔c5 27 ♞c1+ ♔b6 28 ♞b1+ ♔a7 29 ♞a1 ♞h8 30 ♞a2 ♔b6 31 ♞b2+ ♔c5 32 ♞a2 ♞a8 33 ♔xh4 a5 and Black wins.

2b) 8 ♔f3 h3 9 ♞h6+ ♔e5 (9...♔c5 10 ♞h5+ ♔c4 11 ♞h4+ doesn't help Black) 10 ♞h5+ ♔f6 11 ♔g3 ♞a3+ 12 ♔h2 ♔g6 13 ♞c5 a5 14 ♞b5 ♔f6 15 ♞h5 ♔e6 16 ♞g5 ♔d6 17 ♞h5 ♔c6 18 ♞g5 ♔b6 19 ♞g6+ ♔b5 20 ♞g5+ ♔b4 21 ♞g4+ ♔b3 22 ♞g3+ ♔b2 23 ♞g5 and again

Now we have an ending of ♞ vs ♔ which requires some care by White in order to draw.

8 ♞h8?!

With this move White makes life more difficult for himself. There was a simpler draw by 8 ♔d5! ♔f5! (every other move loses for Black) 9 ♞a8 (9 ♞f8+? ♔g4 10 ♞f2 ♔g3 11 ♞a2 h2 wins for Black as White cannot take the a-pawn with check) 9...a3 (9...g4? even loses after 10 ♞f8+! ♔g5 11 ♔e4 a3 12 ♞g8+ ♔f6 13 ♞c8! h2 14 ♞c1 ♔g5 15 ♞h1) 10 ♞f8+ (not 10 ♞xa3? g4 11 ♞a8 h2 12 ♞f8+ ♔g6 13 ♞h8 g3 and the pawns are too strong) 10...♔g4 11 ♞f2! (holding up the pawns along the second rank) 11...♔g3 12 ♞a2 g4 13 ♔e4 h2 14 ♞xa3+ ♔g2 15 ♞a2+ ♔h3 16 ♞a1 g3 17 ♔f3 g2 18 ♞a8 g1 ♔+ 19 ♔f2 with a draw.

8...g4 9 ♔d5! a3 10 ♔e4!

10 ♖f8+? ♔g5 11 ♕e5 h2 12 ♗g8+ ♔h4 13 ♜a8 g3 14 ♔f4 ♔h3 wins for Black.

10...a2 11 ♖f8+!

White must transfer his rook to the first rank to stop the pawns.

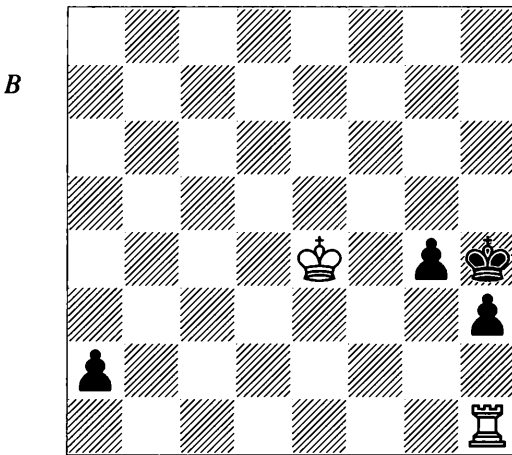
11...♔g5 12 ♖f1

In this line White can only blockade the pawns along the first rank, but he still draws by careful play.

12...♔h4

12...h2 13 ♖h1 is also drawn.

13 ♖h1! (D)



The only drawing move since White must prevent ...h2.

13...♔g3

13...g3? even loses after 14 ♔f3.

14 ♖g1+ ♔h2

After 14...♔f2 15 ♖a1 h2 16 ♖xa2+ ♔g3 17 ♖a3+ White also draws.

15 ♖a1 g3 16 ♔f3

16 ♖xa2+? g2 17 ♔f3 ♔h1 wins for Black.

16...g2 17 ♔f2 g1 ♖+ 18 ♖xg1 a1 ♖ 19 ♖xa1
1/2-1/2

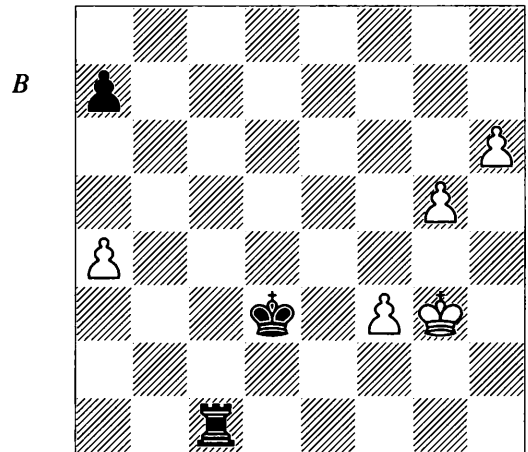
It's stalemate.

Summary:

- In practical play, the side with the rook may start with his pieces unfavourably placed (for example, with the rook in front of the enemy pawns) and the priority is then to switch the rook to a better position and activate the king.
- Against disconnected pawns, the rook is often best placed holding the pawns up along a rank.

8.3 Rook and Pawns vs Pawns

The following example reinforces the point made above about the side with the rook not grabbing pawns. It is also interesting to note that the apparently irrelevant queenside pawns play an important role. In endings with rook and pawns vs pawns, it happens quite often that the rook chases the enemy king across the board and in this case distant pawns can unexpectedly determine the result of the game.



Levy – Bonner Edinburgh 1972

White's passed pawns are obviously very dangerous, and indeed Black must defend carefully in order to hold the game. There are some interesting subtleties in this ending, which unfortunately were ignored in Mineev's *Informator 16* notes.

1...♖h1 2 ♔f4!

White advances his king while keeping the enemy king at arm's length. 2 f4? would even lose after 2...♔e4 3 ♔g2 ♖h5 4 ♔g3 ♔f5 5 ♔f3 a5 6 ♔g3 ♖h1 7 ♔g2 ♖e1 8 ♔g3 ♖e4 and White has no moves, while 2 ♔g4?! ♔e3 3 ♔f5 ♔xf3 4 ♔f6 ♔f4 5 ♔g7 ♔xg5 6 h7 ♔f5 also leads to a draw, but here it is White who is fighting for the draw and not Black.

2...♖h4+

2...♔d4 3 ♔f5 ♔e3! 4 f4 ♔f3 also draws in a similar way to the game.

3 ♔e5

3 ♖f5 ♕e3 4 g6 ♜h5+! is again a draw (note that this is the finesse from page 15 again).

3... ♕e3 4 f4

The only real chance to play for a win.

4... ♜xf4?

A typical mistake, grabbing a pawn rather than concentrating on piece position, and as a result allowing the remaining pawns to advance decisively. 4... ♜h5! was the only move to draw; after 5 ♖f5 ♖f3! 6 ♖g6 ♖g4! (this is the key idea; White is unable to make progress on the kingside) 7 h7 ♜h1 the draw is clear since 8 f5 runs into 8... ♜xh7 9 ♖xh7 ♖xg5.

5 h7 ♜h4 6 g6 ♜h5+

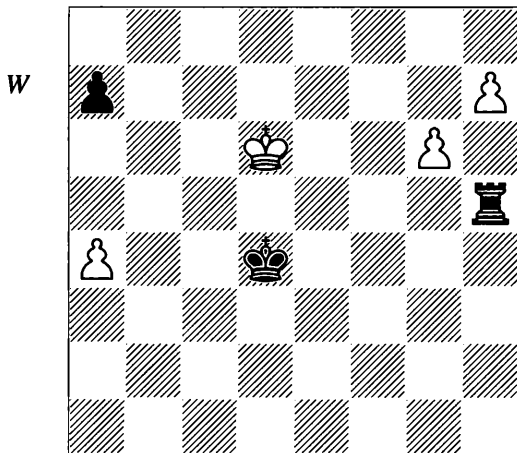
The best chance, but it should not have saved Black.

7 ♖d6

7 ♖f6 ♖f4 8 g7? ♜h6+! is drawn, but White could still win by backtracking with 8 ♖e6.

7... ♖d4 (D)

Black continues to oppose the white king, since 7... ♖e4? loses at once after 8 g7! ♜h6+ 9 ♖c5.



8 ♖c6?

This move is heading in the wrong direction and throws away the win, which could have been achieved by 8 ♖e7! ♖e5 9 ♖f8 ♖f6 10 g7 ♜xh7 (10... ♜c5 11 g8♭+) 11 g8♞ ♜b7 12 ♞h8+. The winning idea is to force Black's king to d4, so that it is one square further away from g6, and then play White's king to f8. White carried out the first part of this plan but not the second. It is interesting that the move played would win if the pawns on the a-file

were removed; the reason will be seen in the following note.

8... a6?

This move, given a double exclamation mark by Mineev, actually hands the half-point back to White. 8... ♖c4? also loses after 9 ♖b7 ♜h6 10 ♖a8, but Black could have drawn by the study-like line 8... ♜h6! 9 ♖b5 ♜h5+ 10 ♖b4 (after 10 ♖a6 ♜h6 11 ♖xa7 Black holds the draw by 11... ♖e5! 12 ♖b8 ♖f6) 10... a5+ (this is where the a-pawns play a part) 11 ♖b3 ♜h3+ 12 ♖c2 ♜h2+ 13 ♖d1 ♖d3 14 ♖e1 ♖e3 15 ♖f1 ♖f3 16 ♖g1 ♜h4! (16... ♜h5? loses to 17 g7 ♜g5+ 18 ♖f1 ♜c5 19 ♖e1) 17 g7 ♜g4+ 18 ♖f1 ♜xa4 19 ♖e1 ♖e3 20 ♖d1 ♖d3 21 ♖c1 ♖c3 22 ♖b1 ♜b4+ and White cannot escape.

9 ♖b6?

White is set on heading for the queenside and so misses another chance to win by 9 ♖d6! (9 ♖b7? ♖e5) 9... ♜h2 10 ♖e7 ♖e5 11 ♖f8 ♖f6 12 g7, etc.

9... ♜h6!

This time Black spots the drawing idea.

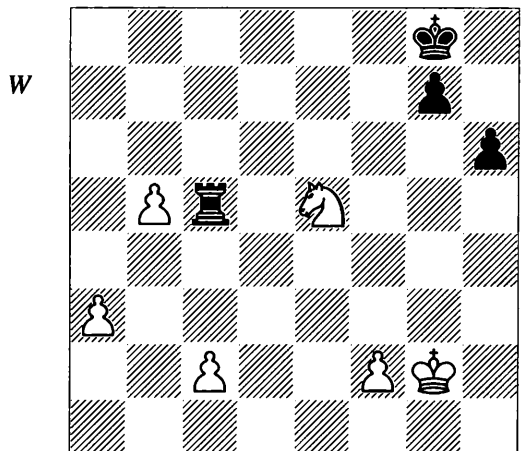
10 ♖a5

10 ♖b7 ♖e5! is also a draw.

10... ♖c4! 1/2-1/2

After 11 g7 ♜h5+ 12 ♖xa6 ♜h6+ neither side can deviate from the perpetual check.

It is possible for endings of this type to metamorphose into queen endings if the rook grabs some pawns while allowing one of the other pawns to promote.



Gulko – Berkovich
USSR 1971

White's three connected queenside pawns look very dangerous, but at the moment both his knight and his b-pawn are under attack. If the b-pawn falls, White will stand to lose as his knight will not be very effective in defending the remaining scattered pawns.

1 a4!

The correct decision: White sacrifices his knight in order to mobilize his pawn-mass, after which it is Black who is in trouble.

1...♖xe5 2 b6 ♜e1!

Playing the rook behind the enemy pawns offers the most resistance. Other ideas lose quickly:

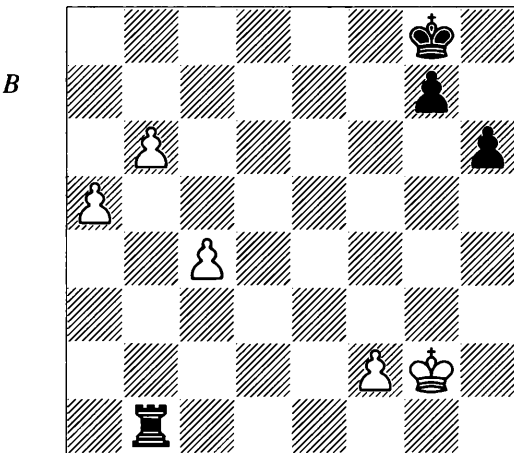
1) 2...♖g5+? 3 ♔f1 ♜h5 4 ♔e2 ♜c5 5 ♔d3 just drives the white king across to support the pawns, and White wins easily after 5...♜c8 6 a5, etc.

2) 2...♜e8? (the rook is too passively placed on the first rank) 3 a5 ♜b8 4 c4 ♔f7 5 c5 ♔e7 6 a6 and the pawns roll through.

3 a5 ♜b1

For the moment the a- and b-pawns are stopped, so the third foot-soldier has to advance.

4 c4 (D)



4...♔f7?

This move indicates that Black had given up hope, because there is no way that he is going to stop the pawns using his king.

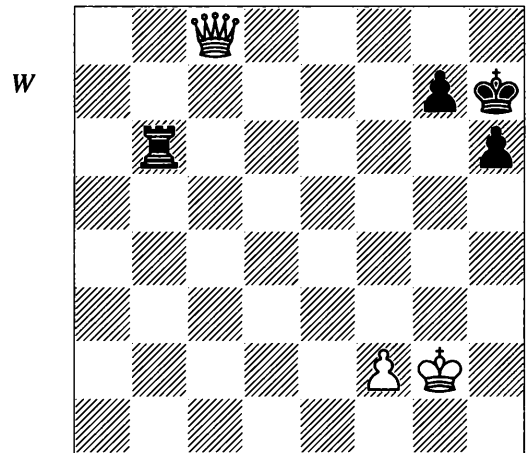
5 c5 ♔e6?!

Losing at once. White would still have some work to do after 5...♜b5 6 a6 ♜xc5 7 b7 ♜b5 8 a7 ♜xb7 9 a8♞ ♜e7 10 ♞d5+ ♔g6 11 ♞d6+

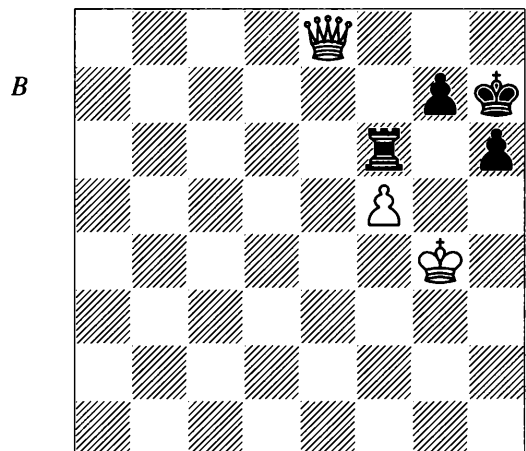
♔f7 12 f4, although his task is made easier by the inferior position of Black's king.

6 a6 1-0

Let's return to the diagram position above. Moiseev gave Black's best defence: 4...♔h7! 5 c5 (5 f4!? is another interesting idea, whereby White tries to improve his position before liquidating into an ending with queen and pawns against rook and pawns; however, since the direct approach seems to work, I shall not examine the question of whether White can simplify his task) 5...♜b5 6 c6 (6 a6 ♜xc5 7 b7 ♜a5 8 b8♞ ♜xa6 is the same) 6...♜xa5 7 c7 ♜b5 8 c8♞ ♜xb6 (D) and here Moiseev finished his analysis by declaring the position a draw.



But is this position really a draw? Take a look at the following example.



Lukin – Taimanov
Leningrad 1984

From this position the winning method is relatively simple, although Lukin did not hit upon it for some time. To add to the confusion, the score of this game in Mega Database contains several errors.

1...♖b6 2 ♔f4 ♕d6 3 ♗e4 ♖b6 4 ♘d5

This is the key position, in which White threatens to win by playing ♖e6. Black can either ignore this threat or play ...♖f6, but it comes to the same thing in the end.

4...♖f6

4...♖a6 5 ♖e6 ♖a5+ 6 ♗e4 ♖a4+ 7 ♔f3 ♖a3+ 8 ♔g2 wins for White, as Black has no real defence against the threat of ♖g6+ followed by f6, or possibly f6 first; for example, after 8...♖a7 9 f6 gxf6 10 ♖xf6 ♖g7+ 11 ♔h3! (not 11 ♔f3?, which only draws) White has a theoretical win since his king can advance along the h-file to attack Black's pawn.

5 ♗e5

Now Black is in zugzwang (this is why White was correct to play 4 ♘d5 rather than 4 ♗e5 immediately).

5...♖a6

5...h5 6 ♖xh5+ ♖h6 7 ♖f7 is an easy win for White.

6 ♖e6!

This should win as in the note to Black's 4th move.

6...♖a5+ 7 ♔d6?!

Going the wrong way. Retreating to g2 wins as described above.

7...♖a8 8 ♗e5 ♖f8

Black has now set up a new, more resilient, defensive position and White must start the winning process again.

9 ♗e4

For the moment White does not know how to drive the black rook away from f8 and it is several moves before he hits on the correct plan.

9...♔h8 10 ♖c6 ♔h7 11 ♗e5 ♔h8 12 ♖h1 ♔g8 13 ♖f3 ♔h8 14 ♖a3 ♔g8 15 ♖c5 ♖e8+ 16 ♔f4 ♖f8 (D)

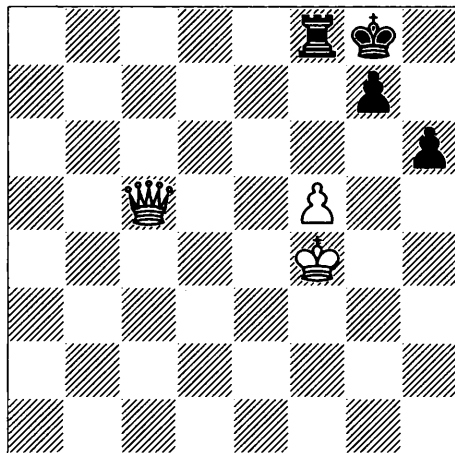
17 ♖d6!

This is the key position. Black is in zugzwang.

17...♖f6

After 17...h5 18 ♖e6+ ♔h8 19 ♖g6 White wins the h-pawn, while 17...♖e8 18 f6 gxf6

W



(18...♖f8 19 ♖e6+) 19 ♔f5 is a quick win for White.

18 ♖d5+

Black must move to the h-file, since after 18...♔f8 19 ♖d8+ ♔f7 20 ♔g4 h5+ 21 ♔g5 White wins quickly.

18...♔h7 19 ♖d8

White has succeeded in his aim of driving the rook away from f8 and onto the third rank. Now he can return to the earlier winning plan.

19...♖c6

After 19...♖f7 20 ♗e5 ♖f6 21 ♖e8 the rook must move along the third rank.

20 ♖e8 ♖a6 21 ♗e4 ♖b6 22 ♔d5!

Returning to the position 18 moves earlier, but now White adopts the correct plan.

22...♖a6 23 ♖e6 ♖a5+ 24 ♗e4 ♖a4+ 25 ♔f3 ♖a3+ 26 ♔f2 1-0

The conclusion is that this ending is generally won for White, whether Black keeps his rook on the third rank or the f-file. The one thing White must not allow is ...h5 followed by ...♖h6, protecting the h5-pawn, when it is not clear if he can win.

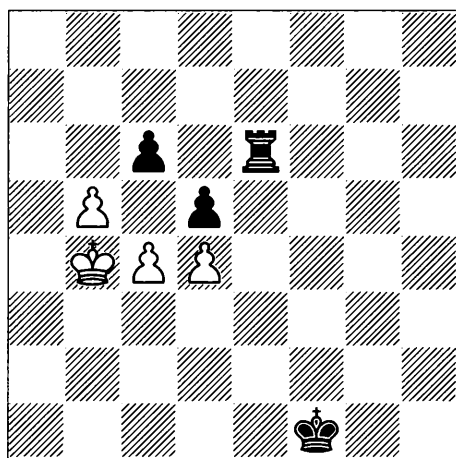
If we now return to the position from Gulko-Berkovich (see diagram on page 24), one winning method is 9 ♖f5+ ♔h8 10 f4 ♖f6 11 ♖e5, which ensures that Black will not be able to play ...h5. Then White advances his king to g4 and plays f5, when we have effectively transposed into Lukin-Taimanov. Thus we must conclude that White was winning in any case, although it is clear that 4...♔h7! would have put up far more resistance.

Summary:

- When the rook battles against advanced pawns, it can sometimes exploit the enemy king position, for example by taking one pawn while pinning another, or by checking the king onto an unfavourable rank or file.
- If the pawns are unstoppable, the side with the rook can sometimes save the game by grabbing as many pawns as possible while allowing one pawn to promote, and then trying to create a fortress in the resulting queen vs rook position.

8.3.1 King Activity

I have already emphasized the importance of piece activity, especially for the side with the rook, but I make no apologies for bringing it up again as it's one of the key features of rook endings in general. The following example shows Black achieve a winning position, but then make the typical mistake of wasting time capturing an irrelevant pawn.



Zhelnin – Dmitriev
USSR 1984

Contrary to Mi.Tseitlin's notes in *Informator* 37, this position is a draw, but White must play carefully.

1...cxb5

After 1...dxc4 2 ♖xc4 cxb5+ 3 ♖xb5 ♕e2 4 d5 ♜h6 5 ♖c5 White is in time to save the game.

2 ♖xb5?

Curiously, Tseitlin doesn't mention the drawing move 2 cxb5! at all. After 2...♜e8 (or 2...♕e2

3 ♖c5 ♕d3 4 ♖xd5 ♜h6 5 ♖c5! ♕e4 6 b6 and White draws comfortably) 3 ♖c5 ♜d8 4 ♖c6 ♕e2 5 ♖c7 ♜h8 White seems to be in trouble, but holds the game with the surprising defence 6 ♖c6! ♕d3 7 ♖xd5 ♜h5+ (7...♖c3 8 ♖c6 ♖b4 9 d5 is drawn) 8 ♖c6 ♖xd4 9 b6 ♜h6+ 10 ♖c7 ♖c5 11 b7 ♜h7+ 12 ♖b8 (12 ♖c8 ♖c6 13 b8♘+ also draws, but then White must defend rook vs knight) 12...♖b6 13 ♖a8 ♜xb7 stalemate.

2...♜d6!

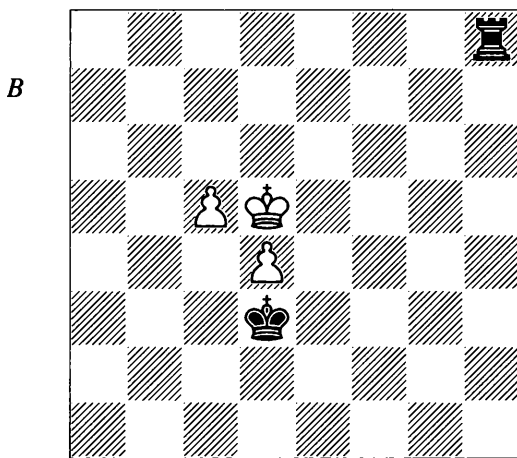
The only winning move. 2...dxc4? 3 ♖xc4 ♕e2 4 d5 leads to a draw.

3 c5

3 cxd5 ♜xd5+ 4 ♖c4 ♜d8! 5 d5 ♕e2 6 ♖c5 ♕d3 7 d6 ♕e4 and 3 ♖c5 dxc4! 4 ♖xc4 ♕e2 5 d5 ♕e3 6 ♖c5 ♜d8 7 d6 ♕e4 both lead to the same winning position, so White's move is forced.

3...♜d8 4 ♖c6 ♕e2 5 ♖c7 ♜h8 6 ♖d6

The same procedure drew with the pawn on b5, but here it is less effective.

6...♕d3! 7 ♖xd5 (D)**7...♜d8+?**

The typical mistake of pawn-grabbing: Black is struck by an attack of greed and plays to win the d-pawn, but this allows White to save the day using his c-pawn. It was more important for Black to improve his king position by 7...♖c3! 8 ♕d6 (8 c6 ♖b4! and 8 ♕e5 ♖c4 9 c6 ♖b5 also win for Black) 8...♖b4! (once again, king position is more important than taking a pawn and 8...♖xd4? 9 c6 ♜h6+ 10 ♕d7 ♕d5 11 c7 ♜h7+ 12 ♕d8 ♕d6 13 c8♘+ is a theoretical

draw) 9 c6 ♖b5 10 d5 ♖b6 11 ♔d7 (11 c7 ♖c8 12 ♔d7 ♖xc7+ 13 ♖e6 ♖c5 also wins for Black) 11...♖h6 12 c7 ♖h7+ 13 ♖e6 ♖xc7 and Black wins.

8 ♖e6!

Not 8 ♖e5? ♖c4 9 c6 ♖b5 10 d5 ♖b6 and Black wins.

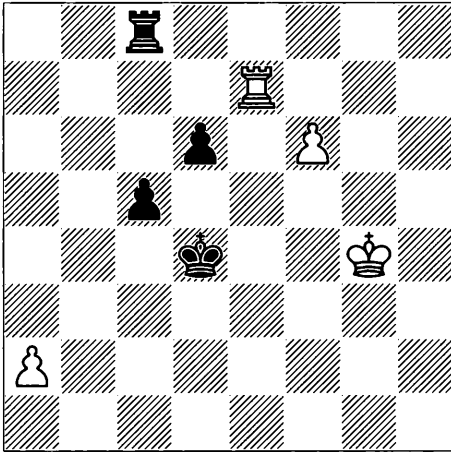
8...♔xd4

8...♖c4 9 c6 ♖b5 10 c7 is another draw.

9 c6 1/2-1/2

9...♖c5 10 c7 ♖h8 11 ♔d7 ♖h7+ 12 ♔d8 ♔d6 13 c8♔+ is the standard ♖ vs ♔ draw.

It's not only the side with the rook which needs to worry about king position. When your opponent has a rook, having your king trapped on the edge of the board is risky because of possible mating threats. In the following example, Black incorrectly plays to win a pawn but his resulting poor king position proves fatal.



Greтарsson – Casagrande
Moscow Olympiad 1994

Connected passed pawns are generally more powerful than disconnected pawns, but here White's f-pawn is by far the most advanced pawn and will soon cost Black his rook. Then everything will depend on the resulting position of ♖+♔ vs 2♔ which, if played correctly, should be a draw.

1...d5!

This is the right pawn to push since the connected pawns are dangerous only if they advance together. If one is left behind then White can stop that one with his king and give up his

rook for the other one, after which the a-pawn will be decisive. Thus 1...c4? loses after 2 f7 ♖f8 3 ♖f5, and now:

1) 3...♖c3 4 ♖e6 ♖b2 5 a4! c3 6 ♖e8 ♖xf7 7 ♖xf7 d5 (7...c2 8 ♖b8+ ♖a2 9 ♖c8 and White wins) 8 a5 d4 9 a6 c2 10 a7 c1♖ 11 ♖b8+ is lost for Black.

2) 3...d5 4 ♖e6 (now the pawns get stuck) 4...♖c5 (or 4...c3 5 ♖c7) 5 ♖e8 ♖xf7 6 ♖c8+! ♖b4 (after 6...♔d4 7 ♖xf7 Black's pawns are far too slow) 7 ♖xf7 d4 8 ♖e6 d3 9 ♔d5 c3 10 ♖c4+ and White wins.

3) 3...c3 4 ♖c7 ♔d3 5 ♖e6 c2 6 ♖e7 ♖h8 7 f8♖ ♖xf8 8 ♖xf8 d5 9 a4 d4 10 a5 ♔d2 11 a6 c1♖ 12 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 13 a7 and White wins by one tempo.

2 f7 ♖f8 3 ♖f5 ♖c3!

Freeing the d-pawn to advance. 3...c4? 4 ♖e6 transposes to the previous note.

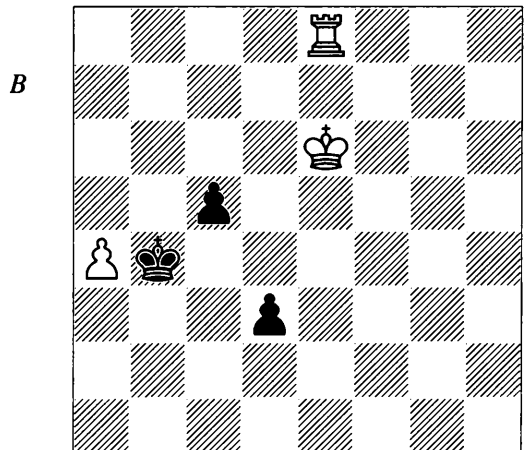
4 ♖e6 d4 5 ♖e8 ♖xf7 6 ♖xf7 d3

Black is much better off than in the note to his first move because White's king can't easily attack the rear pawn, which here is the c-pawn. The reason is partly that White's king has to go further to reach it, and partly that White's rook will need to be on the d-file to stop the d-pawn, and the white king can't reach the c-pawn without at some stage blocking the rook.

7 a4 ♖b4?!

This doesn't yet lose, but it's a step in the wrong direction. The simplest route to safety lies in 7...d2 8 ♖d8 ♖c2 9 a5 d1♖ 10 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 11 a6 c4 12 a7 c3 13 a8♖ c2, when White's king is well outside the winning zone.

8 ♖e6 (D)



8...♙xa4?

This is the losing move. Black eliminates White's pawn, but at the cost of having his king trapped on the edge of the board, where it is subject to possible mating threats. 8...d2? also loses after 9 ♖d8 ♙xa4 (or 9...♙c3 10 ♜xd2 ♙xd2 11 ♙d5) 10 ♜xd2 c4 11 ♙d5 c3 12 ♜d3! ♙b3 13 ♙d4 and White wins the pawn.

8...c4! was the only move to draw: 9 ♜b8+ (after 9 ♖d8 Black draws by 9...♙xa4 10 ♙d5 ♙b3 11 ♙e4 d2! 12 ♜xd2 c3 13 ♜d8 c2, but not 9...c3? due to the old trick 10 ♜d4+!) 9...♙c3 (9...♙xa4? loses to 10 ♙d5! c3 11 ♙c4) 10 ♖d8 d2 11 a5 ♙c2 12 a6 d1 ♖ 13 ♜xd1 ♙xd1 14 a7 c3 15 a8 ♖ c2 and White's king is one square outside the winning zone.

9 ♜b8!

Evidently Black had overlooked this unexpected move. Instead of putting the rook behind Black's pawns, White uses it to trap the enemy king on the a-file.

9...d2

After 9...c4 10 ♙d5! c3 11 ♙c4 White wins both pawns.

10 ♜b1 c4

10...♙a3 11 ♙d5 ♙a2 12 ♜d1 ♙b3 13 ♜xd2 c4 14 ♙d4 c3 15 ♜d3 also wins for White.

11 ♙d5 d1 ♖+

After 11...c3 12 ♙c4 the tempo gained by the mate threat is decisive.

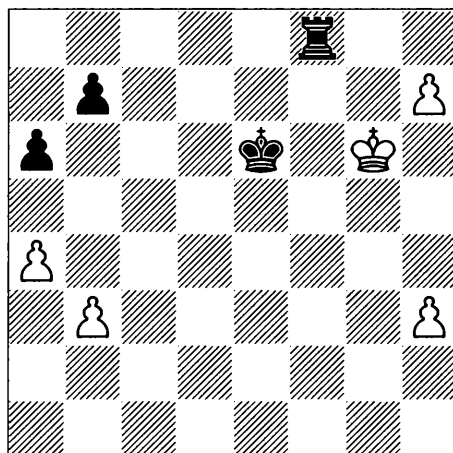
12 ♜xd1 ♙b3 13 ♜c1 1-0**Summary:**

- The importance of king activity in rook endings can hardly be overstated. Passed pawns often need the support of the king if they are to pose a real danger.
- A king trapped on the edge of the board can be in real danger in a rook ending. Even if there is no actual mate, the attacker may gain enough time from mating threats to secure a decisive advantage.

8.3.2 Rook Sacrifice

Tactical elements don't play an especially large role in this ending, but there can be unexpected moves. In the following example, Black wins by sacrificing his rook to stalemate the white king.

B



L. Roos – Gobet
France 1984

At first sight, the position is a draw as White threatens ♙g7, so one might expect a continuation such as 1...♜c8 2 ♙g7 ♜c7+ 3 ♙g6 ♜c3 4 h4 ♜c8 5 ♙g7 ♜c7+ and Black cannot make progress. However, Black has a winning possibility, which one can spot either by using imagination or as a result of having seen a similar idea before. The basic idea is to meet ♙g7 with ...♜h8, and then ♙xh8 by ...♙f7. With White's king bottled up in the corner, he will eventually be forced to move his queenside pawns. Thus the result depends on the pawn-structure on the queenside, and for Black to win, he must immediately fix the structure in a way favourable to himself.

1...a5!

Only this move succeeds, since it ensures that if White has to move a pawn on the queenside then he will lose. If Black delays, White will play a5 and then it is a draw; for example, 1...♜c8? (1...b6? 2 ♙g7 ♜h8 3 b4 is equally ineffective) 2 ♙g7 ♜h8 3 a5 ♙e7 4 ♙xh8 ♙f7 5 h4 ♙f8 6 h5 ♙f7 7 h6 ♙f8 8 b4 ♙f7 9 b5 axb5 10 a6 and White stalemates himself.

2 ♙g7 ♜h8! 3 ♙g6

White puts up the maximum resistance by refusing to take the rook. After 3 ♙xh8 Black wins by 3...♙f7 4 h4 ♙f8 5 b4 (or 5 h5 ♙f7 6 h6 b6! 7 b4 axb4 8 a5 b3 with a quick mate) 5...axb4 6 a5 b3 7 a6 bxa6 8 h5 b2 9 h6 ♙e7! (the key move, lifting the stalemate) 10 ♙g7 b1 ♖ 11 h8 ♖ ♖b2+ (unfortunately for White, his king is in a mating-net) 12 ♙h7 ♖c2+ 13

♔g7 ♖g2+ 14 ♕h7 ♜e4+ 15 ♔g7 ♖g4+ 16 ♕h7 ♖f5+ 17 ♔g7 ♖f7#.

3...♔e7

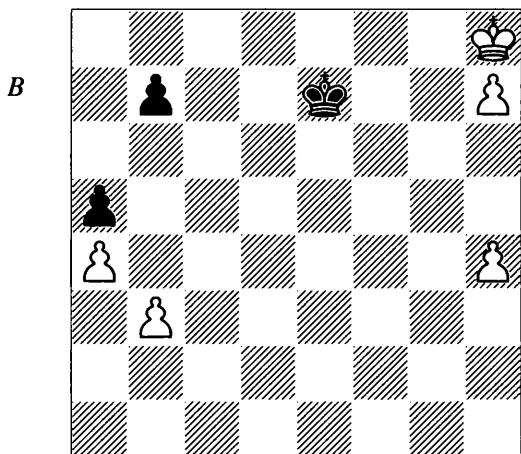
Black must manoeuvre so as to force White to take the rook.

4 ♔g7 ♔e8 5 h4

White uses up one of his reserve tempi. After 5 ♔g6 ♔f8 White would be forced to push the h3-pawn in any case, while 5 ♕xh8 ♔f7! transposes into the note to White's third move.

5...♔e7 6 ♕xh8 (D)

Now White decides to take the rook. If he continues to refuse, then Black repeats his previous manoeuvre until White has run out of moves with his rear h-pawn; for example, 6 ♔g6 ♔f8 7 h5 ♔e7 8 ♔g7 ♔e8 9 ♔g6 ♔f8 10 h6 ♔e7 11 ♔g7 ♔e8 and now White has no choice but to take the rook.



6...♔f8!

Care is needed even at this stage. Black must be able to meet h5 by ...♔f7, so as to play ...b6 after h6, hence this accurate choice of square. 6...♔f7? only draws after 7 h5 ♔f8 (7...b6 8 h6 ♔f8 9 b4 axb4 10 a5 is also a draw, the point being that with the king on f8, White will promote with check) 8 b4 axb4 9 a5 b3 10 a6 bxa6 11 h6 and Black is too late.

7 b4

Or 7 h5 ♔f7 8 h6 b6! 9 b4 axb4 10 a5 b3 11 a6 b2 12 a7 b1 ♖ 13 a8 ♜ ♖b2#.

7...axb4 8 a5 b3 9 a6 bxa6 10 h5 b2 11 h6 ♔e7 0-1

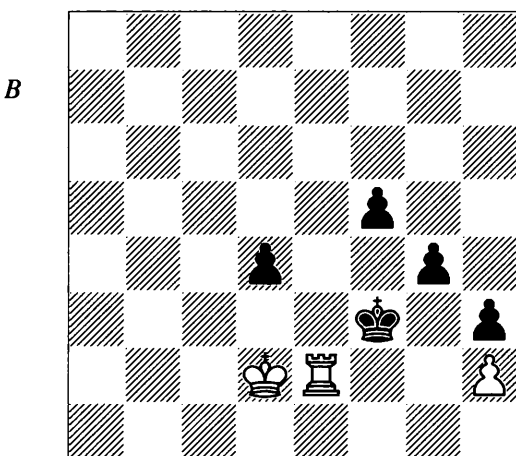
12 ♔g7 b1 ♖ 13 h8 ♜ ♖b2+ and Black mates as in the note to White's third move.

Summary:

- Unexpected moves can occur in almost any ending, and the only real advice that can be given is to stay alert for unusual possibilities, such as a rook sacrifice.

8.3.3 Stalemate

A rook sacrifice also plays a part in the following position, but this time the purpose is to force stalemate.



T. Horvath – Angantysson
Reykjavik 1982

The game ended in a draw thanks to an unusual stalemate possibility, but in *Informator 34* T.Horvath claimed that Black missed a win in the diagram position. However, it turns out that his suggestion also leads to a draw if White defends accurately.

1...f4

After 1...d3 White can play:

1) 2 ♔xd3? was the only move considered in *Informator*, but it loses after 2...f4 3 ♔d2 g3 4 ♔e1 g2 5 ♜f2+ ♔e3! (5...♔g4? 6 ♜xf4+! ♔xf4 7 ♔f2 is a draw) 6 ♜e2+ ♔d3 7 ♜d2+ ♔c3 8 ♜xg2 hxg2 9 ♔f2 f3 and Black wins.

2) 2 ♜e1! (it is more important to improve the position of White's pieces than to grab a pawn) 2...♔g2 (or 2...f4 3 ♜f1+ ♔e4 4 ♜e1+) 3 ♔xd3 ♔xh2 (3...f4 4 ♔e4 f3 5 ♔e3 is also a draw) 4 ♔e3 g3 (4...♔g3 is met by 5 ♜g1+) 5 ♔f3 g2 6 ♔f2 f4 7 ♜a1 f3 8 ♜b1 g1 ♖+ leads to stalemate.

2 ♔e1 g3

2...d3 3 ♖f2+ ♔e3 4 ♜e2+ ♔d4 5 ♜e8 g3 6 ♜h8! g2 7 ♔f2 d2 8 ♜d8+ ♔c3 9 ♜c8+ is an easy draw.

3 ♔f1!

The only way to draw is to play for stalemate.

3...d3

3...g2+ 4 ♔g1 ♔xe2 is the first of two stalemates.

4 ♖f2+! 1/2-1/2

4 ♜a2 also draws, but playing for a second stalemate is more forcing. If Black declines the rook by 4...♔e3, White draws with 5 hxg3 fxg3 6 ♜f8 d2 7 ♜e8+.

Summary:

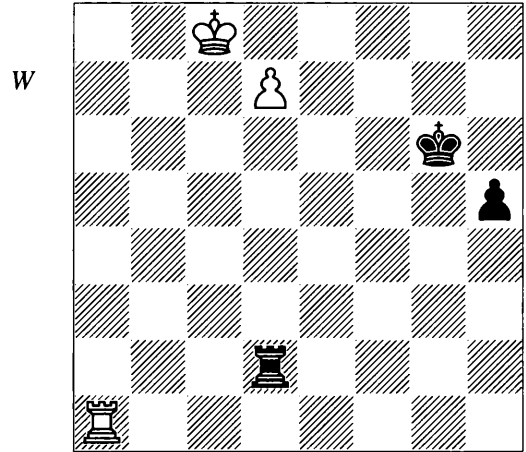
- Stalemate ideas occur occasionally in endings in which only one side has a rook. The trick we saw above (with w♔f1, ♖f2 vs b♔f3, ♜g3) is a typical stalemating idea which is also important in some positions with ♜+♜ vs ♜.

8.4 Rook and Pawns vs Rook and Pawns

We now move on to the main subject of this book: rook endings in which both sides have a rook. The traditional method of covering rook endings is to start with rook and pawn vs rook and then move on to positions with more pawns. However, the philosophy behind this book is not to repeat theoretical information which may be found in many other endgame books, but to move directly on to the practical implications of the theory. Accordingly, the first part of this section focuses on some ideas which you won't find in most theoretical books. Because these ideas are generally not spelt out explicitly, many players are unaware of how widespread they are and so they are often overlooked in over-the-board play. After exploring these general concepts, I shall move on to an examination of different material balances. However, even here I won't conduct a case-by-case study; instead, I shall focus on the tricky points and common oversights which often result in these endings being misplayed.

8.4.1 Fifth-Rank Cut-Off

This is one of the most important concepts in rook and pawn endings, yet in most books you will only find it in the section 'rook vs pawn', which conceals its wide application.



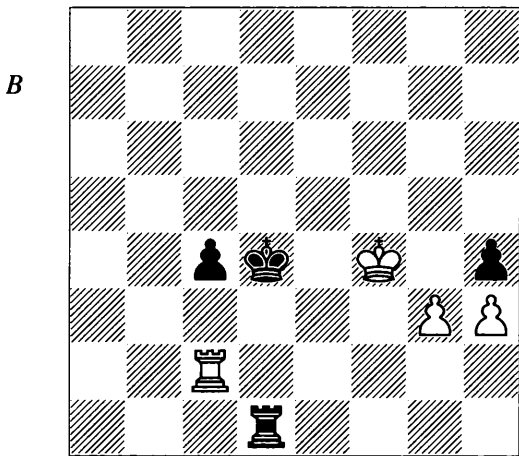
Here's the basic idea. If White plays 1 d8♖? ♜xd8+ 2 ♔xd8, then 2...♔g5 3 ♔e7 h4 4 ♔e6 h3 5 ♔e5 ♔g4 leads to a draw. It's almost a reflex to promote and win the enemy rook as soon as you can, but it's wrong here. Instead, White's only winning move is 1 ♜a5!, with a *fifth-rank cut-off*. The first point is that 1...h4 2 d8♖ ♜xd8+ 3 ♔xd8 is now a win because if Black ever pushes his pawn with ...h3, then White wins it by ♜a3 and ♜h3. Thus White has time to bring his king back, with an easy win. The point of ♜a5 is to cut Black's king off and prevent it from supporting the h-pawn. Achieving this is White's priority and is more urgent than promoting White's own pawn.

Black can also try meeting 1 ♜a5 by 1...♜c2+, but then 2 ♔b7 ♜d2 3 ♔c7 reveals a second key feature of the fifth-rank cut-off. If Black continues checking by 3...♜c2+ 4 ♔d6 ♜d2+, then White wins with 5 ♜d5. This is no accident, but an inevitable consequence of White's rook position.

Based on this example, the fifth-rank cut-off hardly looks like a difficult idea, but the above position is an idealized theoretical example, with all the pieces placed to make it as clear as possible. It's deceptive to look mainly at such theoretical examples, in which messy practical

details have been eliminated by careful construction. Ideas that seem obvious in such simplified positions can easily be overlooked in over-the-board play, where there are often confusing alternatives and complex sidelines to consider. It is for this reason that this book deals with practical examples, so that readers can gain experience in picking out the crucial elements from irrelevant distractions.

Due to its importance, we shall look at several examples in which the fifth-rank cut-off plays a crucial role. In the first position there is as yet no sign of a cut-off, but Black finds the winning idea and executes it precisely.



Yusupov – Tseshkovsky
Moscow (4 teams) 1981

Black has various ways to win White's rook for the c-pawn, but only one of these leads to a win. In order to find the correct path, Black must calculate the results of various endings with a rook against a pawn.

1...♖f1+!

The only winning move, which crucially prevents White from playing his own rook to the f-file. If Black plays 1...♔d3?, then White draws by 2 ♜f2! hxg3 3 ♔xg3 c3 4 h4 c2 5 ♞xc2 ♔xc2 6 ♔f4! (keeping Black's king at bay; 6 ♔g4? loses to 6...♔d3 7 h5 ♔e4) 6...♔d3 7 h5 ♞h1 8 ♔g5 ♔e4 9 ♔g6 ♔e5 10 h6 ♞g1+ 11 ♔f7!, reaching a standard drawn position. 1...hxg3? also fails to win after 2 ♔xg3 ♔d3 3 ♜f2, transposing to the above line.

2 ♔g4 hxg3 3 ♞d2+

White attempts to drive Black's king to an inferior position before surrendering his rook. After 3 ♔xg3 ♔d3 Black wins precisely because his rook occupies the f-file so that after 4 ♞a2 c3 5 h4 c2 6 ♞xc2 ♔xc2 White is unable to play his king to f4 as in the previous note. Then Black wins by means of 7 ♔g4 ♔d3 8 h5 ♔e4 9 ♔g5 ♔e5 10 ♔g6 ♔e6 11 h6 ♞g1+, etc.

3...♔e3

3...♔c3? 4 ♞g2 leads to a draw since Black must waste time before advancing his c-pawn.

4 ♞g2

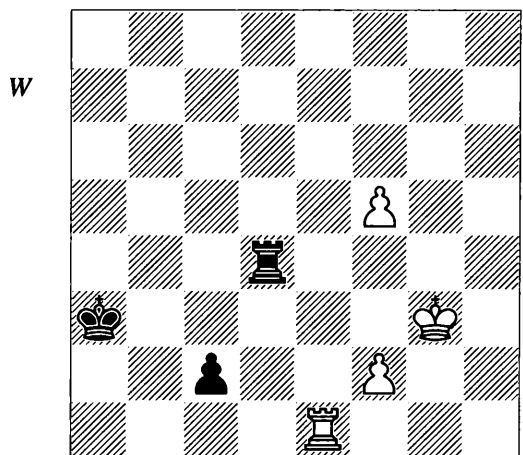
The key line is 4 ♞c2 ♞f4+ 5 ♔xg3 (after 5 ♔g5 ♞f8 6 ♔g6 g2 Black wins at once) 5...♞d4! and Black wins because of the fifth-rank cut-off; for example, 6 h4 ♔d3 7 ♞f2 c3 8 ♞f3+ ♔c4 9 ♞f2 ♔b3 10 h5 c2 11 ♞f3+ ♔b2 12 ♞f2 ♔b1 13 ♞xc2 ♔xc2 and White cannot push his pawn as it is simply lost after 14 h6 ♞d6 15 h7 ♞h6. Therefore Black can just bring his king back to round up the h-pawn.

4...♞f4+! 5 ♔xg3 c3

The fifth-rank cut-off is decisive just as in the note to White's 4th move.

6 h4 ♞c4 7 ♞c2 ♔d3 8 ♞c1 c2 9 h5 ♔d2 10 ♞h1 c1 ♔ 11 ♞xc1 ♔xc1 0-1

The following example shows a more complex case in which Black overlooked the possibility of a fifth-rank cut-off.



Makovsky – K.D. Müller
e-mail 2000

In this position Black has a monster passed c-pawn and is threatening an immediate win by

...♖d1. White can use his front f-pawn to deflect Black's rook, but the power of the c-pawn is so great that Black has time to eliminate the far-advanced f-pawn and still win. However, a couple of good moves are required and Black was not up to the task, even in a correspondence game.

1 f6

This is the only way to meet the threat of ...♖d1, making use of the sole feature of the position that favours White: the fact that his f-pawn can promote with check.

1...♖d6! 2 f4

After 2 f7 ♖f6 3 ♖e3+ ♖b2 4 ♖f3 c1♚ 5 ♖xf6 ♚g5+ Black picks up the rook and wins.

2...♖xf6 3 ♖f3 (D)

White tries to get his king to the other side of the pawn, so as to keep Black's king away from the f-pawn after he gives up his rook for the c-pawn. The alternative is 3 ♖g4, but then Black wins by 3...♖c6 4 ♖f5 (4 f5 c1♚ 5 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 6 ♖f4 ♖b4 7 ♖e5 ♖c5 8 ♖e6 ♖c6 9 f6 ♖e1+ and 4 ♖c1 ♖b2 5 ♖h1 c1♚ also win for Black) 4...c1♚ 5 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 6 ♖e6 ♖e1+! 7 ♖d6 ♖f1 8 ♖e5 ♖b4 9 f5 ♖c5 10 ♖e6 ♖c6 11 f6 ♖e1+ followed by ...♖d7.

♖e4 ♖c3 8 f5 ♖c4 9 ♖e5 ♖c5 10 ♖e6 ♖c6 is winning for Black as before) 4...♖c4!, followed by ...♖b2, and the fifth-rank cut-off is decisive.

4 ♖h1!

White cannot play ♖e4 at once due to the skewer, but by moving his rook away from the vulnerable e1-square he threatens to play his king to e4. Oddly, 4 ♖g4! draws as well since Black's king is in many ways worse placed on b2 than on a3, because it takes longer to reach f8; after 4...♖c6 5 f5 c1♚ 6 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 7 ♖g5 ♖c3 8 f6 ♖d4 9 f7 ♖f1 10 ♖g6 ♖e5 11 ♖g7 White is just in time to draw.

4...♖h6

4...c1♚ 5 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 6 ♖e4! ♖d2 7 ♖e5 ♖f8 8 f5 ♖e3 9 f6 is a draw.

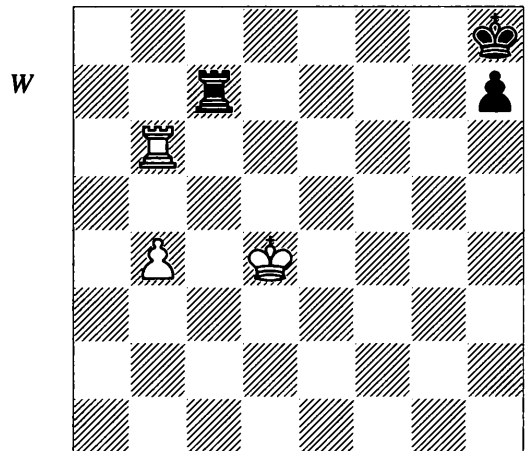
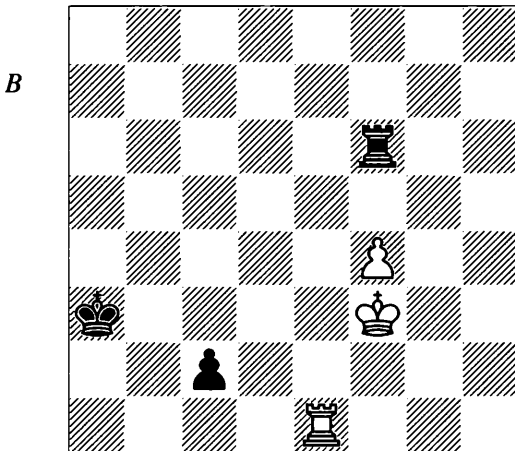
5 ♖g1

White is now out of danger.

5...♖h2 6 ♖e4 ♖e2+ 7 ♖d5 ♖f2 8 ♖e5 ♖d2 9 f5 ♖d1 1/2-1/2

10 ♖g2 draws easily.

In the following position, White can win by making the most of the rook's ability to operate along the ranks, but he went wrong almost immediately and let Black escape.



F. Schubert – U. Dietrich

e-mail 2001

This is the key moment. It's not obvious that Black can establish a fifth-rank cut-off, but without it he cannot win.

3...♖b2?

An automatic but wrong move. Black could have won by 3...♖c6! (threatening to promote) 4 f5 (after 4 ♖h1 or 4 ♖g4 Black just promotes, while 4 ♖c1 ♖b2 5 ♖h1 c1♚ 6 ♖xc1 ♖xc1 7

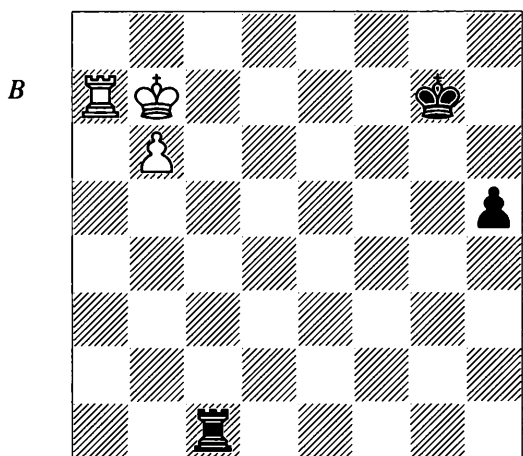
The key to the position is the use of the white rook to cut off the enemy king along a rank. First the rook must be used along the seventh rank to confine Black's king to the back rank, but later the rook must be switched to create a fifth-rank cut-off.

1 b5 ♖c1

There is nothing better. 1...♔g7 loses to 2 ♖c6! ♜d7+ 3 ♔c5 ♔f7 4 b6 ♔e7 5 ♔b5 ♜d5+ 6 ♔a6 ♔d7 7 ♜c7+ ♔d8 8 ♖c1 ♜d6 9 ♔a7 ♜d2 10 b7 ♜a2+ 11 ♔b6 ♜b2+ 12 ♔c6 ♔e7 13 ♜c5 ♔d8 14 ♜d5+ ♔e7 15 ♜b5 and the pawn promotes, while 1...h5 loses the pawn after 2 ♜h6+ ♔g7 3 ♜xh5, with a simple technical win for White.

2 ♜d6?

2 ♜c6? is also bad since Black draws by 2...♜b1 3 b6 h5 4 ♔c5 ♔g7 5 ♔d6 h4 6 ♔c7 h3 7 ♜c2 ♔g6. White had only one move to win, and that was 2 ♜b7!, keeping the enemy king confined to the back rank for the moment. After 2...h5 (2...♜b1 3 ♔c5 h5 4 ♜a7 transposes) 3 ♜a7! (the idea is to allow the rook to switch to the fifth rank later; 3 ♜e7! also wins, but not 3 b6? ♜b1 4 ♔c5 ♜c1+ 5 ♔d6 ♜b1 6 ♔c7 ♜c1+ 7 ♔d8 ♜b1! with a draw as White cannot free his rook, nor 3 ♜f7? ♜b1 4 ♔c5 ♔g8 5 ♜a7 h4 6 b6 h3 and Black draws since his king is now on g8, so White does not have the manoeuvre ♜a3 and ♜h3+) 3...♜b1 4 ♔c5 ♜c1+ (4...h4 5 b6 h3 6 ♜a3! and White wins) 5 ♔d6 ♜b1 6 ♔c6 ♜c1+ 7 ♔b7 (White's play is counter-intuitive, since he now blocks the rook's action along the seventh rank; however, the release of Black's king doesn't help the defence much, since White is ready to create a new cut-off by b6 and ♜a5) 7...♔g7 8 b6 (D) Black can try:



1) 8...♜b1 9 ♔c7! (the only move to win as White must cover all the squares the pawn needs to cross to reach the eighth rank; 9 ♔c6+? ♔g6

10 ♜a5 h4 11 b7 h3 gives Black an extra tempo which allows him to draw) 9...♔g6 10 ♜a5 h4 11 b7 and White wins since 11...♜c1+ 12 ♔b6 ♜b1+ may be met by 13 ♜b5.

2) 8...♔g6 9 ♜a5! (here comes the fifth-rank cut-off) 9...h4 10 ♔a7! (the only move to win; 10 ♔a8? is wrong because after 10...h3 Black will promote with check) 10...h3 11 b7 h2 12 b8 ♜h1 ♜ (White gets the first check and this gives him a decisive attack) 13 ♜d6+ ♔h7 (if the rook can enter the attack by checking on f5 or g5, mate occurs within a few moves) 14 ♜d7+ ♔h8 15 ♜e8+ ♔h7 16 ♜h5+, winning the queen.

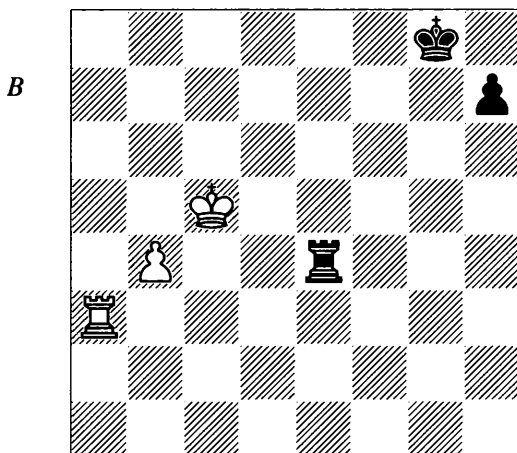
2...♔g7

Now Black is safe as it takes White far too long to set the b-pawn in motion.

3 b6 h5 4 ♔d5 h4 5 b7 ♜b1 1/2-1/2

After 6 ♔c6 h3 7 ♜d2 (7 ♜d3 h2 8 ♜h3 ♜c1+ is also a draw) 7...♔g6 8 ♜h2 ♜c1+ 9 ♔d7 ♜b1 10 ♔c7 ♜c1+ 11 ♔b8 ♜c3 Black's problems are solved.

The following position is an interesting example of how the half-point can be handed back and forth, even in a relatively recent correspondence game.



Callow – Petters
Chessfriend.com 2004

White's pawn is further advanced and his king is much better placed, but Black has chances of drawing with his h-pawn after he gives up his rook for the b-pawn. Indeed, if Black defends carefully, the result should be a draw, but it's a tough defensive challenge.

1...♖e5+!

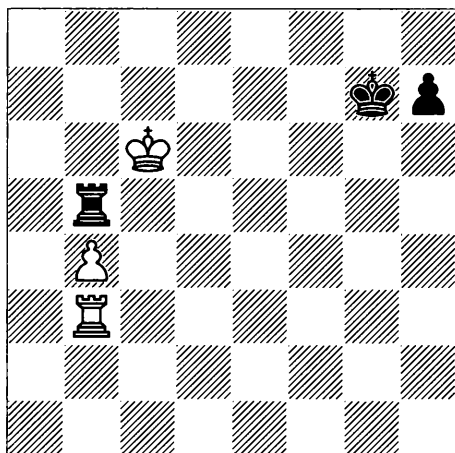
The only move. After 1...♔g7? 2 b5 ♔g6 3 b6 ♔f5 (3...h5 4 b7 ♖e5+ 5 ♔b6 ♖e6+ 6 ♔a7 ♖e7 fails to the fifth-rank cut-off 7 ♖a5!) 4 b7 ♖e5+ 5 ♔c4 ♖e4+ 6 ♔c3 ♖e3+ 7 ♔d2! ♖xa3 8 b8♖ White wins thanks to Black's widely-separated forces; for example, 8...♖a2+ 9 ♔c3 ♖a3+ 10 ♔b4 ♖f3 11 ♖h2 ♖f4+ 12 ♔c5 and the h-pawn falls.

2 ♔d6

After 2 ♔c6 ♖e6+ Black just keeps checking until he can either switch his rook to the b-file or White retreats his king to the a-file: 3 ♔b7 ♖e7+ 4 ♔a6 ♔g7 (now Black can advance his king) 5 b5 ♔g6 6 b6 ♔g5 (not 6...h5? 7 ♖a5) 7 b7 ♖xb7 8 ♔xb7 h5 9 ♔c6 h4 10 ♔d5 ♔g4 11 ♔e4 h3 and Black draws.

2...♖b5!

A second 'only' move. 2...♖f5? loses in a surprising way: 3 ♔c6! ♖f6+ 4 ♔b7 ♖f7+ 5 ♔a6 (it isn't obvious why this is lost with Black's rook on the f-file, whereas it was drawn with the rook on the e-file) 5...♖f6+ 6 ♔a5 ♔g7 7 b5 ♔g6 8 ♖g3+! (this is the key point; Black's king cannot move to f5, so it either has to retreat to f7, or block the pawn by moving to the h-file) 8...♔h5 (8...♔f7 9 b6 ♖f1 10 ♖b3 ♖a1+ 11 ♔b5 ♖a8 12 b7 ♖b8 13 ♔b6 ♔g6 14 ♖b5 also wins for White) 9 b6 ♖f1 10 b7 ♖b1 11 ♔a6 ♖a1+ 12 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 13 ♔a7 ♖a1+ 14 ♔b8 ♖b1 15 ♖g8 ♔h4 16 ♔c7 ♖c1+ 17 ♔d6 and White wins.

3 ♖b3 ♔g7 4 ♔c6 (D)

A critical moment. Black must choose the correct square for the rook.

4...♖e5?

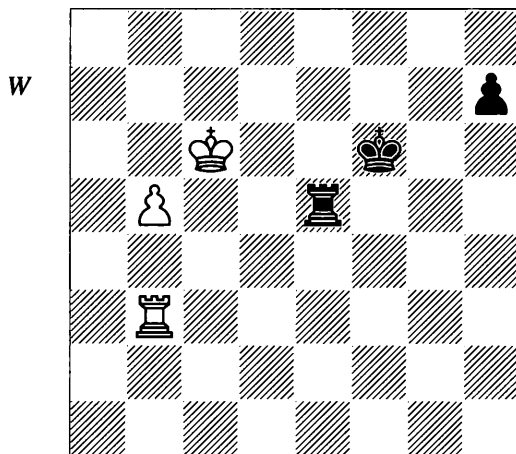
This is wrong. The path to the draw lay in 4...♖b8! 5 b5 ♔g6 6 ♔c7 (or 6 b6 ♔g5), and now:

1) 6...♖a8? 7 b6 ♔f5 8 b7 ♖h8 (8...♖e8 9 ♖h3 ♔g6 10 ♖d3 ♖e7+ 11 ♖d7 ♖e8 12 ♖d5 again establishes a fifth-rank cut-off) 9 ♖b5+ ♔g4 10 ♖b6! h5 11 ♖g6+ ♔f4 12 ♖h6 ♖xh6 13 b8♖ is a win for White.

2) 6...♖f8? loses to 7 ♖g3+ ♔h6 8 b6 ♖f7+ 9 ♔b8 ♖f8+ 10 ♔a7 ♖f1 11 b7 ♖a1+ 12 ♔b8 ♖b1 13 ♖g8 followed by ♔c7.

3) 6...♖h8? 7 ♖d3! h5 (7...♔g5 8 ♖d8 and White wins) 8 ♖d5! (this idea should be familiar by now) 8...h4 9 b6 h3 10 b7 ♖h7+ (10...h2 11 ♖d1! ♔g5 12 ♖h1 is similar) 11 ♔c6 ♖h8 12 ♖d3 h2 13 ♖d1 followed by ♖h1 and ♖xh2, leading to a ♖ vs ♖ win.

4) 6...♖e8! (the only drawing square) 7 b6 ♔g5! 8 ♖g3+ (8 b7 h5 is also a draw) 8...♔f4 9 ♖h3 ♖h8! 10 b7 ♔g4 11 ♖h6 ♔g5 12 ♖d6 h5 13 ♖d8 ♖h7+ 14 ♔c6 ♖xb7 15 ♔xb7 h4 and Black is safe.

5 b5 ♔f6 (D)**6 b6?**

This move appears natural but throws away the win. The only winning move is 6 ♖d3!, which has two functions: firstly, if Black moves his rook along the e-file then White can reply ♖d5, setting up the usual cut-off, and secondly, it nullifies the check on e6 because now White can simply interpose his rook. After 6...h5 (6...♖e1 7 ♖d5 ♔e6 8 ♖c5 and 6...♖e8 7 ♖d5 ♔e6 8 ♖h5 ♖c8+ 9 ♔b7 are both comfortably

winning for White) 7 b6 h4 (7...♖e8 8 ♗d5) 8 b7 ♗e8 9 ♗d5 the fifth-rank cut-off is decisive.

6...♗e6+!

Not 6...h5? 7 b7 ♗e8 8 ♗b5 and White wins as before.

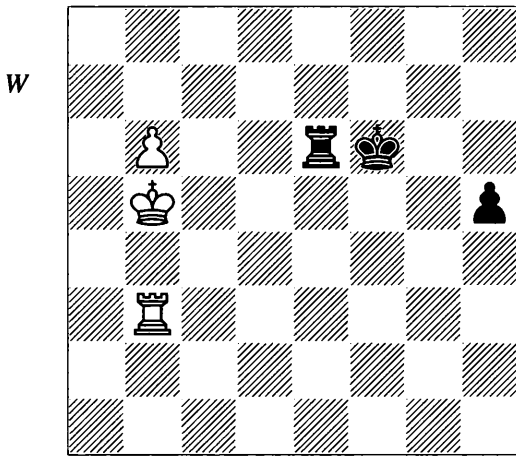
7 ♖b5

After 7 ♖c5 ♗e5+! (not 7...♖g5? 8 b7 ♗e8 9 b8♗ ♗xb8 10 ♗xb8 h5 11 ♖d4 h4 12 ♖e3 and White wins) White doesn't have a good square for his king; for example, 8 ♖c4 ♗e8 9 b7 ♗b8 10 ♖d5 h5 11 ♖c6 ♖g5 with a draw.

7...h5? (D)

Black thinks it's time to push the pawn, but he is wrong. 7...♗e5+? is also bad and loses after 8 ♖a6 ♗e8 9 b7 ♖g5 10 b8♗ ♗xb8 11 ♗xb8 h5 12 ♖b5 h4 13 ♖c4 ♖g4 14 ♖d3 h3 15 ♖e2.

The drawing line was 7...♖g5! 8 ♗c3 (8 b7 ♗e8 9 ♗c3 ♗b8 is also a draw) 8...♗e8, when it's impossible for White to create a fifth-rank cut-off and so Black draws after 9 b7 ♗b8 10 ♖b6 h5 11 ♖c7 ♗xb7+ 12 ♖xb7 h4.



8 b7?

The fourth and last time the half-point is handed to the opponent. 8 ♗c3! is the only winning move, based on three ideas; the first is the familiar one of preparing a possible ♗c5, the second is the immediate threat of ♗c6, and the third is the idea of b7 followed by ♗c8, promoting the pawn. White wins after 8...♖g5 9 ♗c5+ ♖g4 10 b7 ♗e8 11 ♗c8 or 8...♗e8 9 ♗c5! h4 10 b7 h3 11 ♖b6 ♖g6 12 ♖a7 h2 13 ♗c1.

8...♗e8 9 ♖c6

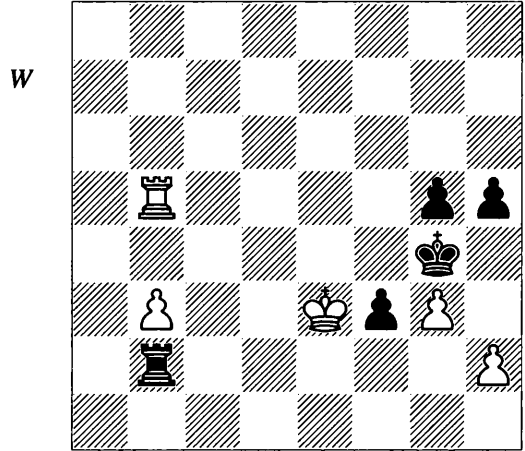
9 ♗c3 ♗b8! 10 ♖b6 ♖g5 is also a draw.

9...♖f5 10 b8♗ ♗xb8 11 ♗xb8 h4

Not 11...♖g4?, losing to 12 ♖d5 h4 13 ♖e4 ♖g3 14 ♖e3 h3 15 ♗g8+.

12 ♖d5 h3 13 ♖d4 ♖f4 14 ♖d3 h2 15 ♗h8 ♖g3 16 ♗xh2 1/2-1/2

In the next example, Black can set up a fifth-rank cut-off easily enough, but actually winning proves more troublesome.



B. Balogh – Sosonko

Netherlands 1973

Material is equal, but Black has a clear advantage based on his active pieces, especially his king. If Black's king can penetrate into the kingside and liquidate the white pawns there, he will have winning chances provided he keeps at least one kingside pawn of his own. This is because his passed pawn will be supported by his king, whereas White's will not. Black's advantage is sufficient to win, but accurate play is required.

1 h3+

White finds the best defence, which involves liquidating as many enemy pawns as possible. The alternative 1 ♗b4+ ♖h3 2 ♖xf3 fails to 2...g4+! (but not 2...♖xh2? 3 g4! h4 4 ♗b5 h3 5 ♗xg5 ♗xb3+ 6 ♖f2! ♗b2+ 7 ♖f3! ♖g1 8 ♗a5 ♗b1 9 ♗a2! h2 10 ♗g2+ ♖h1 11 ♗a2 and White draws) 3 ♖f4 ♗xh2 4 ♗c4 ♗f2+ 5 ♖g5 ♖xg3 6 ♖xh5 ♗f5+ 7 ♖g6 ♗b5 8 b4 ♖h3 and the g-pawn is too quick.

1...♖xh3

Not 1...♖xg3? 2 ♗xg5+ ♖h4 3 ♗f5 ♗xb3+ 4 ♖f2 and White draws easily.

2 ♖xf3 g4+ 3 ♖f4 ♗f2+ 4 ♖e4

The right direction, heading to support the b-pawn. 4 ♖g5 ♕xg3 5 ♖xh5 ♖h3 6 b4 g3 is an easier win for Black.

4... ♕xg3 5 ♖xh5 ♖f4+! 6 ♖d3

6 ♖d5?! ♖b4 costs White his b-pawn, but retreating the king gives Black a fifth-rank cut-off.

6... ♖f3 7 ♖h1?!

7 ♖h4! is more awkward, transposing into the note to White's 10th move and denying Black the relatively simple win in the following note.

7... ♕g2?!

Up to this point, both sides have played accurately, but now Black makes the win significantly more difficult. 7...g3? is a blunder due to 8 ♖f1+ ♕g4 9 ♖xf4+! ♕xf4 10 ♖e2, drawing, but as Marić points out in *Informator 15*, Black should have played 7...♖b4! 8 ♖c3 ♖e4, maintaining his control of the fifth rank while moving the rook to a safer position. Then 9 b4 (9 ♖d3 g3 10 ♖f1+ ♕g2 is also winning for Black) 9...g3 10 b5 g2 11 ♖a1 ♖f2 12 b6 g1 ♖ 13 ♖xg1 ♕xg1 is an easy win for Black.

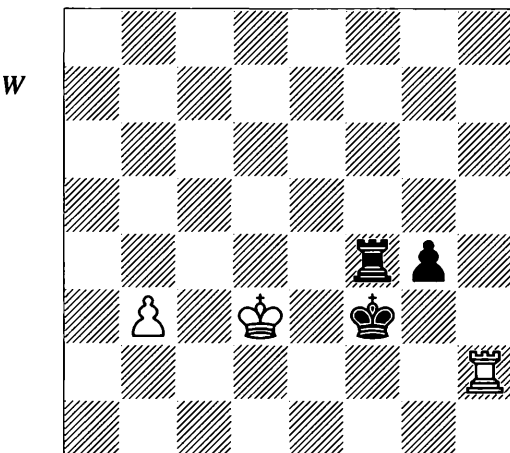
8 ♖h4!

This defence pins the pawn and makes life awkward for Black.

8... ♖f2

It would have been quicker to return to f3 and then continue as in the previous note, but for the moment Black is not sure how to make progress.

9 ♖h2+ ♖f3 (D)



10 ♖h1

White returns to the position at move seven. 10 ♖h4! was a more troublesome defence, again preventing the advance of the g-pawn. Then Black can win, but only with some subtle play: 10...♕g2! (putting White in zugzwang) 11 ♖d2 (11 ♖c3 ♕g3 12 ♖h1 ♖f2 13 ♖h2+ ♖f3 14 ♖h1 g3 is now winning for Black because White's king is one square further away and so he cannot exchange rooks) 11...♕g3 12 ♖h8 ♖f3 (Black changes tack and cuts the king off along the third rank instead) 13 b4 ♖f2! 14 ♖h2+ ♕g1 15 ♖h8 g3 16 ♖e2 ♖b3! 17 ♖h3 ♖b2+ 18 ♖d3 ♕g2! (a tough move to find, blocking Black's own pawn; 18...g2? allows 19 ♖c3! ♖f2 20 ♖xb2 g1 ♖ 21 b5 ♖g7+ 22 ♖a2 ♖d4 23 ♖b3! with a draw according to the tablebase, although this is far from intuitively obvious) 19 ♖h4 ♖f3! 20 ♖c3 ♖b1 21 ♖h3 ♕g4 22 ♖h8 g2 23 ♖g8+ ♖f3 24 ♖c4 (24 ♖f8+ ♖e4 25 ♖e8+ ♖d5 and Black wins) 24...g1 ♖ 25 ♖xg1 ♖xg1 26 b5 ♖e4 and Black's king arrives back in time.

10... ♕g3?

For the second time Black misses the simple win with 10...♖b4!, and indeed the position is now a draw, because all the winning lines involve returning to the position arising after White's 7th and 10th moves, and would therefore result in a draw by repetition.

11 ♖h8!

In view of the possibility of repetition, this is the right idea, but it is also worth noting that the position after 11 ♖b1? is a win for Black, albeit a quite complex one: 11...♖f2! (the only move to win) 12 ♖b2+ ♖f3! 13 ♖b1 ♖b4! 14 ♖c3 ♖e4! 15 b4 (15 ♖d3 g3 wins for Black) 15...g3 16 b5 g2 17 b6 ♖h4 (this threatens ...♖h1 and so forces White to push the pawn) 18 b7 ♖h8 (but now the pawn is too far away to be supported by the white king) 19 ♖d4 ♖b8 followed by ...♖xb7 and Black will reach ♖ vs ♖.

11... ♖b4

11...♖f3 12 ♖h1 and 11...♕g2 12 ♖h4 ♖f3 13 ♖h1 would still be winning, were it not for the threefold repetition.

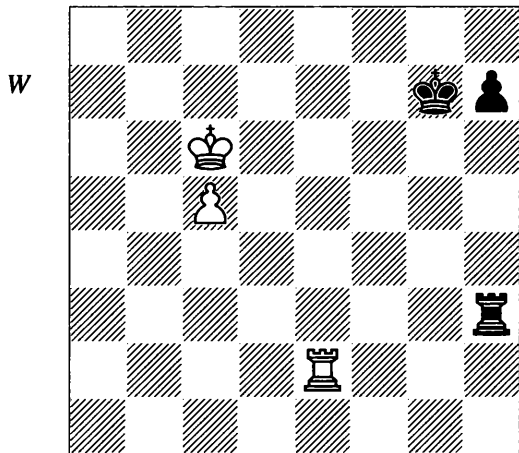
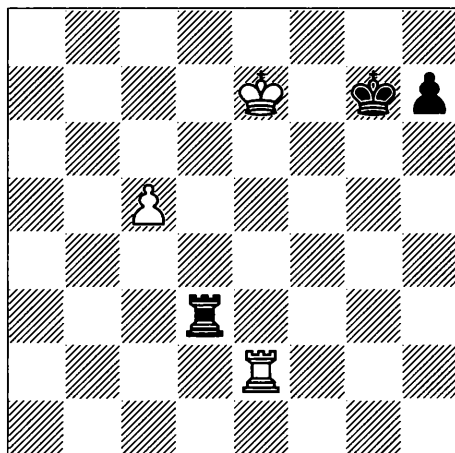
12 ♖c3! ♖e4

The right idea, but executed in the wrong position; here Black's king is blocking his pawn, which costs vital time.

13 b4 ♔f2 1/2-1/2

The draw is simple after 14 ♖f8+ ♔g2 15 b5.

For our final example of the fifth-rank cut-off, we again return to the world of correspondence chess. Although this example is only two moves long, there is a surprising amount of interesting play.



Boström – Marttinen
Finnish corr. Ch 1975

It's possible for Black to defend this position, but he must understand the basic principles of the fifth-rank cut-off. White's ambition is to play his rook to the fifth rank, keeping the black king in the top half of the board. Then he will win the game if he can win Black's rook for the c-pawn. Black has to try to do the opposite: if he can get his king and pawn to White's fifth rank, then he will draw even if he has to sacrifice his rook for the c-pawn. Thus occupation of the fifth rank by White's rook is the key factor, and it is more important for Black to prevent this than to push his h-pawn.

1 ♖d2!?

A cunning move which forces Black to play accurately. Instead, 1 ♖e5 attempts to cut the king off straight away, but after 1...♔f6 2 ♖d5 (2 ♔d6 ♖d3+ 3 ♖d5 ♖xd5+ 4 ♔xd5 ♔e7 5 ♔c6 h5 is also drawn) 2...♔e6 White cannot easily release the pawn, so the position is a draw.

Black can also draw after 1 ♔d7:

1) 1...♖d3+? surprisingly loses to 2 ♔e7! (D).

B

Then the options are:

1a) 2...♖c3 3 ♖g2+ ♔h6 4 ♔d6 and White wins as Black's king is trapped on the h-file.

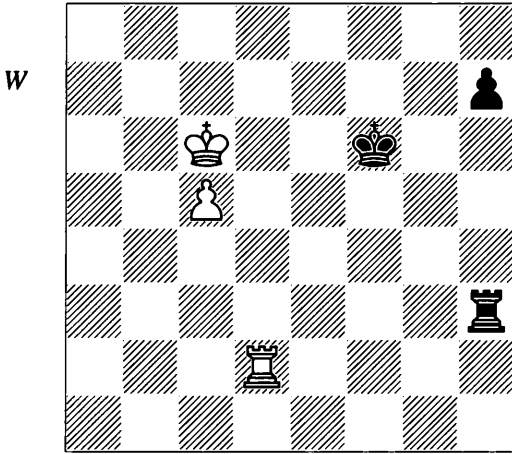
1b) 2...h5 3 ♖c2! ♔g6 4 c6 ♖e3+ 5 ♔d7 ♖d3+ 6 ♔c8 ♔g5 7 c7 ♖f3 (the only way back to the first rank, but on the f-file the rook is a tactical weakness) 8 ♔d7 ♖f8 9 ♖g2+! ♔h6 (Black cannot play to the f-file) 10 ♖g1! h4 11 ♖f1! ♖xf1 (after 11...♖h8 12 ♖f5! White wins since he has achieved the desired fifth-rank cut-off by a roundabout route) 12 c8♖ is a win because Black's pawn is on one of the losing ranks; for example, 12...♖f6 13 ♔e7 ♖f4 14 ♔e6 ♔h5 15 ♔e5 ♖f3 16 ♔e4 ♖f6 17 ♖d7 ♖f2 18 ♖d1+ ♔h6 19 ♖g4 and the pawn falls.

1c) 2...♔g6 3 c6 ♖c3 4 ♔d6! (after 4 ♔d7? ♔f5 Black prevents the cut-off and draws) 4...h5 (White wins after 4...♔f5 5 ♖e5+ followed by ♖c5, so Black's king cannot move up the board) 5 ♖e5! (the fifth-rank cut-off again, although this is a slightly more complicated case) 5...h4 6 c7 (threatening ♖c5) 6...h3 7 ♖e3! ♖xe3 8 c8♖ ♔g5. Positions with a rook's pawn on the sixth rank are generally drawn, but here Black's pieces lack coordination and by precise play White can win; for example, 9 ♖c1 ♔f4 10 ♔d5 ♔f3 11 ♖f1+ ♔g3 12 ♖g1+ ♔f3 13 ♖h2 ♔g4 14 ♔d4 ♖a3 15 ♖d6! ♖f3 16 ♔e4 ♖f1 17 ♖g6+ ♔h4 18 ♖a6! ♖g1 19 ♖d6 ♖e1+ 20 ♔f3 ♖f1+ 21 ♔e2 ♖f5 22 ♔e3 ♖f1 23 ♖a6! ♖f5 24 ♖h6+ ♔g4 25 ♖g6+ ♖g5 26 ♖e6+ ♔g3 27 ♖e4 ♖g4 28 ♖e5+ ♔h4 29 ♔f3 ♖g6 30 ♖e7+ ♔h5 31 ♔f4 ♔h6 32 ♔f5 ♖g2 33 ♖h4+ ♔g7 34 ♖xh3 and the pawn falls.

2) 1...♔f6! 2 ♖e6+ (after 2 c6 ♖d3+ 3 ♔c8 ♖c3 4 c7 h5 Black draws since White cannot cut the king off along the fifth rank) 2...♔g5! (not 2...♔f5? 3 c6 ♖c3 4 ♖h6! and the h-pawn falls, after which White has an easy win in the ♖+♔ vs ♖ position) 3 c6 ♖c3 4 c7 ♖xc7+! 5 ♔xc7 h5 6 ♔d6 h4 7 ♔e5 h3 and Black is just in time to draw.

1...♔g6?

Perhaps surprisingly for a correspondence game, Black fails to grasp the significance of the fifth-rank cut-off and makes a fatal error. The only way to draw was 1...♔f6! (D).



Now:

- 1) 2 ♖d5 ♔e6 draws as before.
- 2) 2 ♔d7 ♔f5 3 ♖d5+ (3 c6 h5 4 ♖d5+ ♔g4 5 c7 ♖c3 is a draw as Black's king is free) 3...♔g4! (not 3...♔e4? 4 ♖d6!, when White wins after 4...h5 5 c6 ♖c3 6 ♖h6 or 4...♖g3 5 ♖h6 since Black's king is too far away from the h-pawn) 4 c6 ♖c3 5 c7 h5 with an easy draw.
- 3) 2 ♔d6 h5! (2...♔f5? 3 c6 ♖c3 4 ♖d5+ and White wins after 4...♔e4 5 ♖c5 or 4...♔f6 5 c7) 3 c6 ♖c3 4 ♖d5 h4! 5 c7 h3 6 ♖h5 ♖d3+ 7 ♔c6 ♖c3+ 8 ♔d7 ♖d3+ 9 ♔e8 ♖c3 and White cannot make progress.

2 ♖d5! 1-0

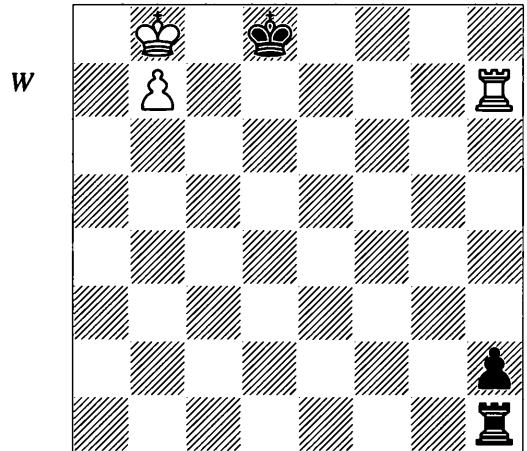
White finds the only move to win, although after the previous discussion this move should have been obvious. Black cannot save the game; for example, 2...♖f3 3 ♔d6 ♖f6+ 4 ♔c7 ♖f7+ 5 ♔b6 or 2...h5 3 ♔d7! (not 3 ♔d6? ♖c3 4 c6 h4 5 c7 h3, drawing) 3...h4 4 c6 ♖c3 5 c7 h3 6 c8 ♖xc8 7 ♔xc8.

Summary:

- The fifth-rank cut-off is a fundamental concept in rook endings and arises in a wide range of positions. The attacker tries to establish it, while the defender tries to prevent it.
- It is usually more important to establish a fifth-rank cut-off than to promote one's pawn.
- In some cases subtle manoeuvres may be necessary to get the rook to the fifth rank by a roundabout route.

8.4.2 The Rook Switch

Every endgame textbook hammers home the point that a rook is best placed behind the enemy passed pawn, and this becomes so ingrained that it is almost a reflex to position the rook this way. However, not only are there certain positions in which the rook is best placed to the side of the opposing passed pawn, but in some cases where the rook is initially behind the pawn, the correct plan involves switching the rook to the side of the pawn. We call this the *rook switch*. The following position shows the basic idea.



At the moment White cannot effectively move his king to release the b-pawn because Black has a rook check. But if White can transfer his rook to a2, then he will be able to free the pawn.

1 ♖h3! ♔d7 2 ♖d3+ ♔e6

Or 2...♔c6 3 ♖d2 ♔b6 4 ♖b2+ ♔c6 5 ♔c8 ♖f1 6 ♖c2+ ♔d5 7 ♖xh2 with an easy win for White.

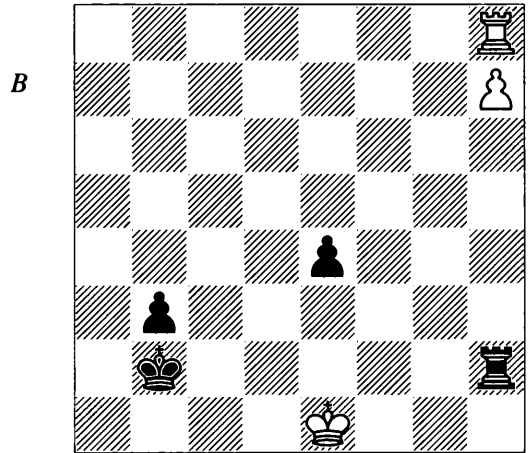
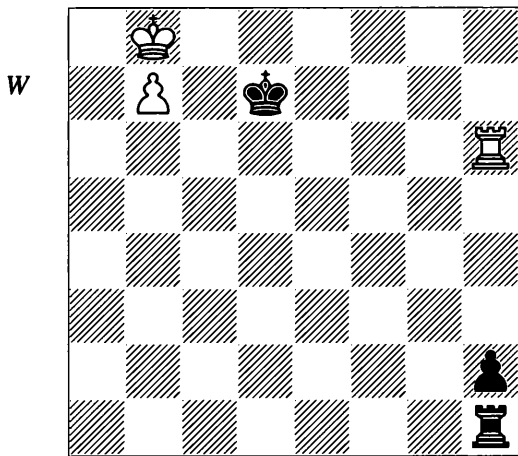
3 ♖d2! ♕e5 4 ♜a2 ♖f4

Black is just too late to defend the h-pawn.

5 ♕a7 ♜b1 6 ♜xh2

White now wins easily.

Although this is an important idea, it doesn't always work.



Anand – Vallejo Pons
Linares 2005

from running through) 6 ♕d2 b2 7 ♜b8 ♜xh7 8 ♜a8+ ♕b1 with a standard Lucena position win.

3 ♜b8 ♜xh7 1/2-1/2

After 4 ♜xb3+ ♕a2 5 ♜xe3 all the pawns disappear.

Here Black's king is one square closer to the h-pawn and this enables him to draw.

1 ♜h3 ♕e6! 2 ♜e3+ ♖f5 3 ♜e2 ♕g4 4 ♜a2 ♕g3

and Black is in time.

If it is Black to play in the diagram, then he draws but he must find the unique waiting move 1...♕e7! in order to save the game.

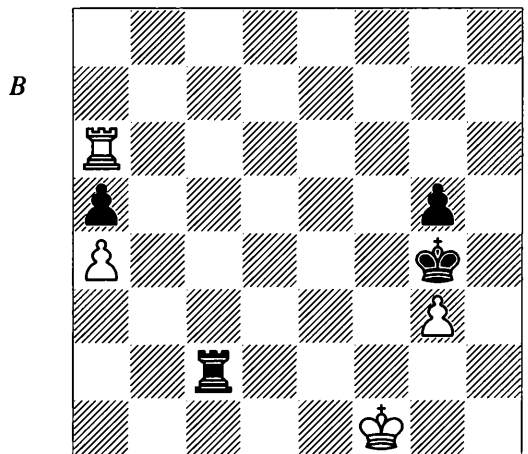
The rook switch plays a major role in the following ending.

Once again, it's an idea that doesn't appear too difficult when presented in an idealized form, but even very strong players can overlook it in a practical situation.

In the following diagram, we have the same basic set-up, although Black's e-pawn is an additional factor. His rook is currently behind the white pawn, but in order to win, Black must switch his rook to the side of the h-pawn. The e-pawn provides the necessary support to achieve this and allows Black to win even though his own pawn is not yet on the seventh rank.

1...e3 2 ♕d1 ♖b1??

A really terrible mistake, which allows White to liquidate all the pawns. Black could have won by 2...♜d2+! 3 ♕e1 ♜d7 4 ♕e2 ♜a7 (Black sets up the familiar shield) 5 ♕xe3 ♕a2 (White can do nothing to prevent the b-pawn



M. Kravtsov – Kononenko
Alushta 2006

This position is winning for Black, but it requires high-quality play from the attacker.

1...♖f3!

By threatening mate, Black wins the g3-pawn with gain of time. 1...♕xg3? 2 ♜xa5 g4 3 ♜b5 allows White a comfortable draw.

2 ♜f6+

2 ♖e1 ♜e2+ 3 ♔d1 ♜e5 is hopeless for White, as Black wins the g3-pawn while keeping the white king cut off from his forthcoming passed g-pawn; even 4 ♜b6 ♖xg3 5 ♜b5 ♖f4 doesn't help.

2...♖g4

For the moment Black is not sure how to proceed. It would have been more effective to take the g3-pawn at once.

3 ♜a6

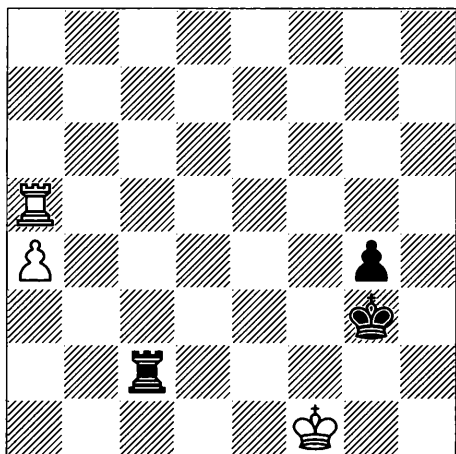
Black's hesitation can't be exploited by 3 ♜f2 since 3...♜c3 wins a pawn while retaining a total grip on the position.

3...♖f3 4 ♜f6+ ♖xg3

Black takes the plunge; White can regain the pawn, but in the meantime Black's g-pawn becomes very dangerous.

5 ♜f5 g4 6 ♜xa5 (D)

B



6...♜f2+

The first step is to transfer the rook to a2 with gain of tempo. 6...♜c1+? 7 ♖e2 ♖g2 looks promising but allows a draw if White plays accurately: 8 ♔d3 g3 and now:

1) 9 ♜a8? (this provides a foretaste of Section 8.4.5 in which we discuss another rook-ending reflex, that of going for the maximum checking distance; here playing to the eighth rank is natural but wrong) 9...♖g1 10 a5 g2 11 ♜g8 (11 a6 loses to the rook-switch idea 11...♜c6! 12 a7 ♜c7!) 11...♜a1 12 ♜g5 ♜a4! 13 ♖e2 ♜a3 14 ♜h5 ♜a1 15 ♜g5 ♖h2 16 ♜h5+ ♖g3 17 ♜g5+ ♖h3 and Black wins.

2) 9 ♜a6! ♖g1 10 ♜g6 g2 11 a5 ♜a1 12 a6 and now that the rook defends the pawn along

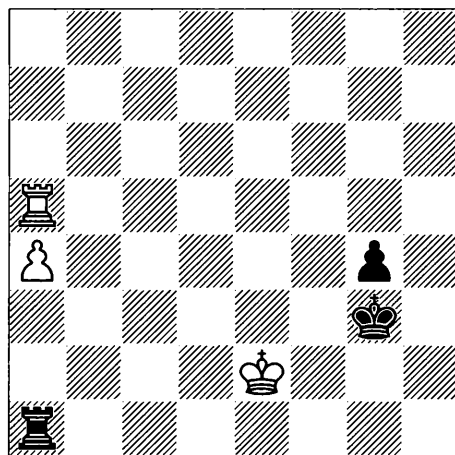
the sixth rank, Black cannot win. The plan of playing his king out via h2 is impossible as White can just keep checking.

7 ♖g1

Objectively, 7 ♖e1 is no better. After 7...♜a2, 8 ♜a6 ♖g2 9 a5 g3 is winning for Black, while 8 ♜a8 loses to 8...♖f3! (gaining a vital tempo; 8...♖g2? allows White to draw by 9 a5 g3 10 a6 ♖g1 11 ♜g8 g2 12 ♜g6) 9 ♜f8+ (9 a5 ♜a1+ 10 ♖d2 g3 11 ♖d3 g2 12 ♜f8+ ♖g3 13 ♜g8+ ♖f2 14 ♜f8+ ♖g1 15 ♜a8 ♜a3+ 16 ♖c4 ♖f2 is a win for Black) 9...♖g2 10 ♜a8 g3 11 a5 ♖g1 12 a6 g2 13 a7 ♜a6 and Black wins with the rook switch (see the second diagram on page 38).

7...♜a2 8 ♖f1 ♜a1+ 9 ♖e2 (D)

B



9...♖g2?

The obvious move, but it only draws. Black could have gained a vital tempo by 9...♖h3! because he avoids blocking the g-pawn. After 10 ♜a6 (10 ♜h5+ ♖g2 11 a5 g3 12 ♖d3 ♖f3 13 ♜f5+ ♖g4 14 ♜f6 ♜xa5 and 10 ♜a8 g3! 11 a5 g2 12 ♜h8+ ♖g3 13 ♜g8+ ♖h2 14 ♜h8+ ♖g1 15 ♜h5 ♜a3 are both winning for Black) 10...g3 11 a5 ♜a2+! (not 11...g2? 12 ♜h6+ ♖g3 13 ♜g6+ ♖h2 14 ♜h6+ ♖g1 15 a6 and White draws) White has no good square for his king:

1) 12 ♖e1 ♖g2 13 ♜a8 ♖g1 14 a6 g2 15 a7 ♜a6 and Black wins by the rook switch.

2) 12 ♖f3 ♜a3+! 13 ♖e2 (13 ♖f4 ♖g2 14 ♜a8 ♖f2 15 a6 g2 and Black wins) 13...g2 14 ♖f2 ♜a2+ 15 ♖f3 ♖h2 16 ♜h6+ ♖g1 17 a6 ♖f1 again wins for Black.

3) 12 ♖d3 g2 13 ♜h6+ ♖g3 14 ♜g6+ ♖f2 15 ♜f6+ ♖e1! (Black's preliminary check on

move 11 has made this square available) 16 ♖e6+ ♔f1 17 ♜f6+ ♜f2 18 ♞b6 ♜f5! 19 ♞b1+ (after 19 a6 g1 ♚ Black wins as the a-pawn will be lost) 19...♔f2 20 ♞b2+ ♔f3 21 ♞b1 ♜xa5 and Black wins.

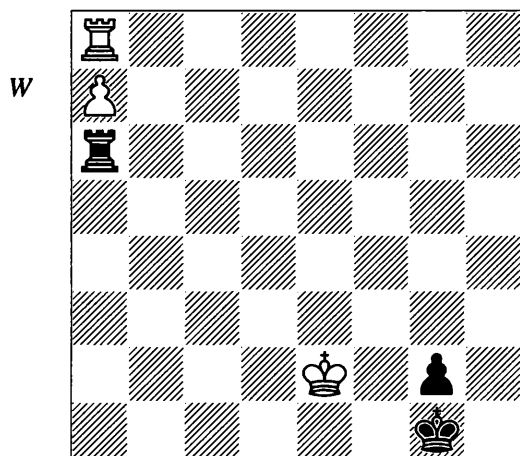
10 ♞a8

Now White has sufficient time to reach a draw.

10...g3 11 a5 ♔g1 12 a6 g2 13 a7

We have reached the first diagram on page 39 (with colours reversed), which we know to be a draw. Black tries the rook switch in any case, since it is his only winning chance.

13...♞a6 (D)



14 ♔e1?

Unaware of the danger, White moves his king away from the a-pawn. 14 ♔d3! ♞d6+ 15 ♔c4 ♞d7 16 ♔b5 ♜f7 17 ♔b6 ♔f2 18 ♞g8 would have held the game.

14...♞e6+

Now White is doomed.

15 ♔d2 ♞e7

Threatening ...♞h7 followed by ...♔h2, so White must surrender his a-pawn.

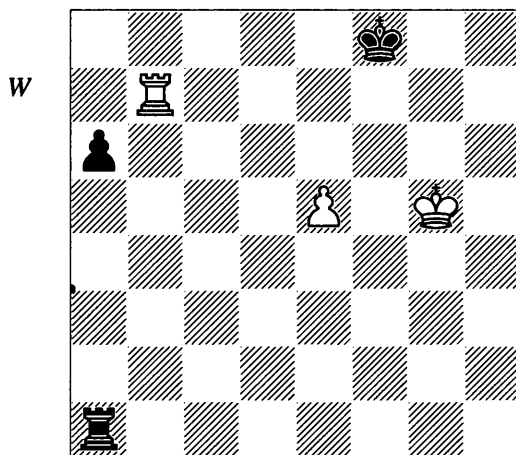
16 ♞h8 ♞xa7

Now we have a Lucena position.

17 ♔e2 ♞e7+ 18 ♔d2 ♞e5 19 ♞h7 ♔f2 20 ♜f7+ ♔g3 21 ♞g7+ ♔f3 22 ♞g8 ♞e4 0-1

Black will win by ...♞g4.

There is a rook switch in the following example, but it also emphasizes the importance of knowing the basic theoretical positions of ♞+♔ vs ♞.



Staikopoulos – Pantelias
Ikaros 1995

This position is drawn even without Black's a-pawn, although in some lines the a-pawn actually gets in the way by preventing long-range checks from the a-file. Both players conducted this ending inaccurately, and it is an example of how knowing a couple of basic ideas can make the difference between drawing and losing.

1 ♔f6 ♜f1+!

The only move. 1...♔e8? 2 ♞b8+ ♔d7 3 e6+ ♔c7 4 e7 ♜f1+ 5 ♔g5 will eventually lead to a ♚ vs ♞+♔ ending that is winning for White.

2 ♔e6

Without the a-pawn, the simplest draw would be by 2...♞a1, preparing to check from the a-file, but here that option isn't available since 2...♞a1? loses after 3 ♞b8+ ♔g7 4 ♔d7.

2...a5

Black has to come up with another plan. The one he chooses is to try to get rid of the a-pawn by advancing it, and indeed this is adequate to draw. 2...♞e1 is another good move, since after 3 ♞b8+ ♔g7 4 ♞e8 a5 5 ♔d7 ♞d1+ 6 ♔e7 a4 the a-pawn provides enough counterplay to hold the game.

3 ♞b8+ ♔g7 4 ♞a8 ♞a1?

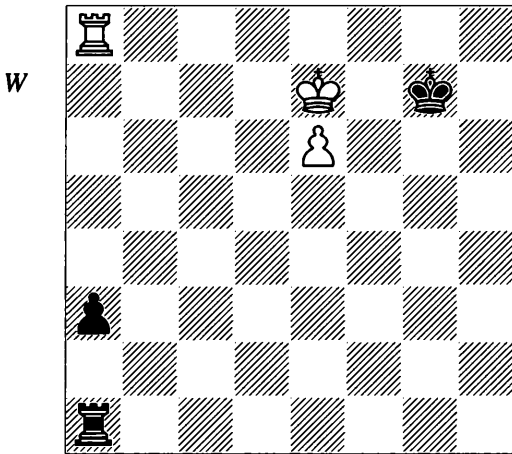
It's wrong to put the rook in such a passive position. Black could have drawn in various ways, but perhaps the simplest is 4...♞b1 5 ♞xa5 ♞b6+ 6 ♔e7 ♞b7+ 7 ♔d6 ♔f7 8 e6+ ♔f6 and the danger is past.

5 ♔e7 a4

It's now too late for 5...♞b1 since White wins by 6 e6 ♞b7+ 7 ♔d6 ♞b6+ 8 ♔d7 ♔f6 9 ♜f8+

♙e5 10 e7 ♜b7+ 11 ♚d8 ♚d6 12 ♜f6+ ♙c5 13 ♜c6+! ♙xc6 14 e8♙+; for example, 14...♙b6 15 ♜e3+ ♙c6 16 ♜c3+ ♙b6 17 ♙c8 ♜a7 18 ♙b3+ ♙c6 19 ♜e6+ ♙b5 20 ♙b8 ♜a6 21 ♙d5+ and Black loses his rook after a check on b7 or c4.

6 e6 a3 (D)



Black hopes to gain counterplay with his a-pawn, but against accurate play this hope is in vain.

7 ♜a4?

7 ♙e8! was the only move to win; after 7...a2 8 e7 ♙g6 9 ♜a3 (the rook switch again) 9...♙g7 10 ♜g3+ ♙f6 11 ♜g2 ♜b1 12 ♜xa2 ♜b8+ 13 ♙d7 ♜b7+ 14 ♙d6 ♜b8 (14...♜b6+ 15 ♙c7 ♜e6 16 ♙d8 ♜d6+ 17 ♙e8 also wins for White) 15 ♜f2+ ♙g7 16 ♜f4 ♜a8 17 ♜a4 ♜b8 18 ♙c7 ♜h8 19 ♜e4 ♙f7 20 ♙d7 Black loses his rook.

7...a2?

Missing a chance to draw by 7...♜b1! 8 ♜xa3 (this is a theoretical position which would be lost if White's rook were on a7 or a8, due to Black's inadequate checking distance; however, here Black can use his checks to transfer his rook to the a-file and save the game) 8...♜b7+ 9 ♙d6 ♜b6+ 10 ♙d7 ♜b7+ 11 ♙c6 ♜b1 (now Black threatens to play ...♙f6, so White must play his rook to the f-file) 12 ♜f3 ♜a1 (Black seizes his chance to occupy the a-file) 13 e7 ♜a6+ 14 ♙d7 ♜a7+ and Black holds the draw.

8 ♜g4+!

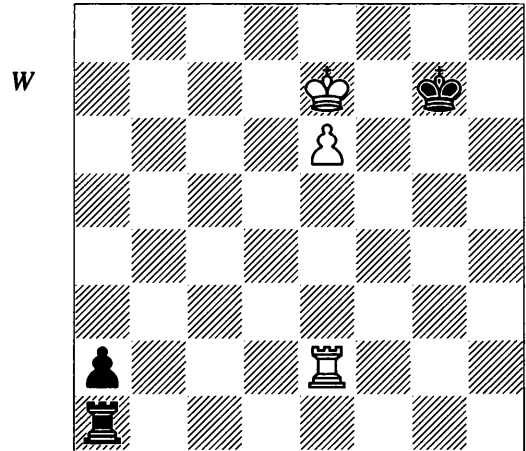
The winning idea is to transfer the rook to the second rank using the rook switch.

8...♙h6 9 ♜g2 ♙h7 10 ♜e2

Now that the pawn is shielded from attack by ...♜e1, White is threatening to win by ♙e8 and e7.

10...♙g7 (D)

This actually stops White's threat, but he goes ahead in any case.



11 ♙e8?

Unnecessarily giving Black a chance to draw. The winning line was 11 ♜d2!, which puts Black in zugzwang because now he must move his king to an inferior position. This zugzwang explains why it was correct for White to play his rook to e2 and then d2, rather than moving at once to d2. The analysis runs:

1) 11...♜b1 12 ♜g2+!, followed by ♜xa2, winning.

2) 11...♙g8 12 ♙d7 ♜b1 13 ♜xa2 ♜b7+ 14 ♙c6 ♜b1 15 ♜a8+ (Black's king is poorly placed on g8 precisely because White has this check) 15...♙g7 16 e7 and White wins the rook.

3) 11...♙g6 12 ♙d7! ♜b1 13 ♜xa2 ♜b7+ 14 ♙c6 ♜b1 15 ♜e2 (with the king on g6, Black is deprived of the drawing move ...♙f8) 15...♜b8 16 ♙d7 ♜b7+ 17 ♙c8 ♜e7 18 ♙d8 and White wins.

11...♙g8?

11...♜b1! 12 ♜xa2 (now 12 ♜g2+ may be met by 12...♙f6) 12...♜b8+ 13 ♙d7 ♜b7+ 14 ♙c6 ♜b1 draws as in the note to Black's seventh move. This underlines the importance of knowing the basic theoretical positions since if you know a position is a draw, it's often easy to work out how to reach it.

12 e7

Black has no chance when the pawn is so far up the board.

12... ♖g7 13 ♜g2+ ♕f6 14 ♕f8 ♜c1 15 e8 ♖a1 ♗16 ♗e7+ ♕f5 17 ♜f2+ ♕g4 18 ♗e4+ ♕h3 1-0

Summary:

- The rook switch is a key idea in rook endings in which your opponent has a passed pawn with his rook in front of the pawn. It's often overlooked in practice because players put their rook behind the enemy passed pawn almost by reflex, so the idea of switching it away from this position is hard to see.
- The success or failure of the rook switch often depends on whether the enemy king has enough time to run across to support its own passed pawn.
- Knowledge of the basic positions of ♜+♞ vs ♜ is an invaluable aid when playing rook endings.

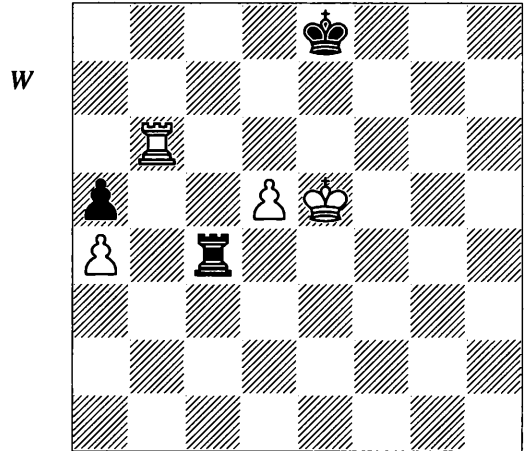
8.4.3 Common Error: Rook Behind Passed Pawn

One curious psychological feature of rook endings is that players are often overcome by the desire to put their rook behind the enemy passed pawn, even if this is totally inappropriate. Doubtless many generations of textbooks emphasizing the merits of using the rook like this have served to ingrain the reflex into the subconscious of many players, often with unfortunate consequences. This point is related to the rook switch of the preceding section, but here there is no actual switch; instead, it is a matter of choosing the most appropriate position for the rook.

The following position provides an example. White is a pawn ahead, but his a-pawn is about to fall. However, the far-advanced d-pawn, supported by both king and rook, should be enough to decide the game. Let's see what happened.

1 ♖d6 ♜xa4 2 ♜b8+ ♕f7

Black's king has been driven out from in front of the white pawn. Without the a-pawn this position would be an easy win, since Black's king is on the long side of the pawn and so Black's



Knobel – J. Neumann
corr. Olympiad 1995-8

checking distance from the a-file is too short to trouble White. The addition of the a-pawn makes almost no difference to the situation, other than to interfere with Black's checking possibilities.

3 ♜a8?

This is one of the odd moves resulting from the 'rook behind enemy passed pawn' reflex. Black's a-pawn is as yet no danger and White certainly had no need to try to restrain it at this stage. In some lines White should attack the black pawn from the side rather than from behind, and so it is best to leave the rook where it is for the moment, since this leaves both options open. 3 ♖d7! was the simplest win and after 3... ♜a1 (or 3... ♜b4 4 ♜a8 and White wins comfortably after 4... a4 5 d6 or 4... ♜b7+ 5 ♖c6 ♜b1 6 ♜xa5) 4 d6 a4 5 ♜c8 (5 ♜b4 is also good) 5... a3 6 ♜c3! (the only move to win, but one which is fairly obvious if you are aware of the rook-switch concept) 6... a2 7 ♜c2 ♕f6 8 ♖c7 ♕e6 9 d7 ♜d1 10 ♜e2+ ♕f6 11 ♜xa2 the d-pawn will promote.

3... ♜d4!

This position is a draw even without the a-pawn.

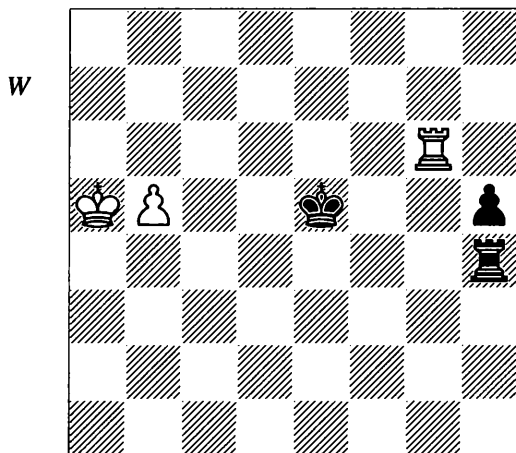
4 ♜xa5

4 ♖c6 ♕e7 and 4 ♜d8 a4 are also simple draws.

4... ♖e8 1/2-1/2

Black draws after 5 ♜a8+ ♕f7 6 ♜d8 ♜a4! 7 ♖c7 (7 ♖c6 ♕e7 8 ♜d7+ ♕e8 9 ♜h7 ♜a6+ is also drawn) 7... ♜a7+ 8 ♖b6 ♕e7.

The next position, also from the world of correspondence chess, features a similar error.



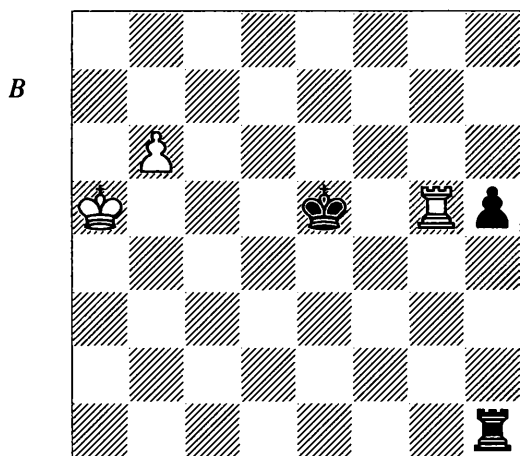
Michalek – Sonnabend
ICCF corr. 1996

The position is winning for White, although that is perhaps not obvious since Black's king is quite close to the h-pawn, which gives him the possibility of giving up his rook for the b-pawn and drawing with his king and h-pawn. It wasn't long before White went wrong.

1 b6 ♖h1 2 ♖h6?

Once again the standard reflex betrays White (if correspondence players can be said to suffer from reflex actions). It isn't at all clear that the rook belongs behind the pawn, when it might well be better to attack it from the side. What is clear, however, is that this move offers White no winning chances at all since Black's king can now support the h-pawn with ease.

The winning move is 2 ♖g5+! (D).



Now:

1) 2...♔f4 3 ♖b5! (in this line the rook belongs not behind the enemy passed pawn, but behind White's own) 3...♖a1+ 4 ♔b4 ♖b1+ (4...♖a8 5 ♖xh5 is an easy win) 5 ♔c4 ♖c1+ 6 ♔d3 ♖d1+ 7 ♔c2! ♖d8 8 ♖xh5 ♖b8 9 ♖b5 ♔e4 10 ♔c3 and the white king advances to support the pawn.

2) 2...♔d6 3 ♔a6! (not 3 ♖b5? ♔c6, drawing) 3...h4 4 ♖a5 (4 b7 also wins, but more slowly) with a further branch:

2a) 4...h3 5 ♖a3! h2 6 ♖a2! ♔c6 7 b7 ♖b1 8 ♖c2+ and White wins.

2b) 4...♖b1 5 ♖h5 ♖a1+ 6 ♔b7 ♖h1 7 ♔c8 ♖c1+ 8 ♔b8 ♖h1 9 b7 h3 10 ♔c8 ♖c1+ 11 ♔d8 ♖b1 12 ♖h6+ ♔d5 13 ♔c7 ♖c1+ 14 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 15 ♔a7 ♖a1+ 16 ♖a6 ♖xa6+ 17 ♔xa6 h2 18 b8♖ and White picks up Black's queen with a skewer.

2c) 4...♔c6 5 ♖a3! (5 ♖a4? isn't a good idea since after 5...h3 6 ♖a3 h2, 7 ♖a2? even loses to 7...♖c1, while 5 ♖a2? h3 is also only a draw after 6 b7 ♖b1 7 ♖c2+ ♔d7 8 ♔a7 ♖a1+ 9 ♔b8 ♔d8) 5...♖b1 (5...h3 6 b7 ♖b1 7 ♖c3+ ♔d6 8 ♖xh3 ♖a1+ 9 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 10 ♔a7 heads for the Lucena position) 6 ♖c3+ ♔d7 7 b7 ♖a1+ 8 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 9 ♔a7 ♖a1+ 10 ♔b8 ♖b1 11 ♖c7+ ♔e6 (11...♔d8 12 ♖h7 ♖h1 13 ♖h6 ♔d7 14 ♔a7 also wins for White) 12 ♖h7! ♖b4 13 ♖h5! (at this point White's rook *does* belong behind the h-pawn; it pays to be flexible!) 13...♔d7 14 ♖h6 ♖a4 15 ♖h8 (zugzwang) 15...♖b4 16 ♔a7 ♖a4+ 17 ♔b6 ♖b4+ 18 ♔a6 and Black will have to give up his rook for the b-pawn.

2...♔f4 3 ♔b5

3 b7 ♖a1+ 4 ♔b6 ♔g4 is also an easy draw.

3...♖b1+ 4 ♔c6 ½-½

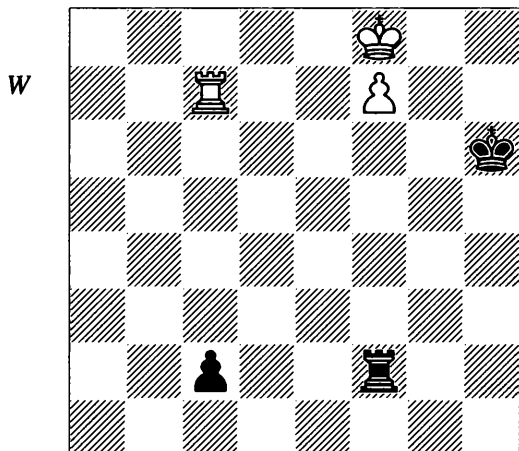
4...♔g4 draws comfortably.

Summary:

- When the enemy rook is in front of its passed pawn, you should not automatically play your rook behind the pawn. In some positions it is indeed best, but there are many situations in which the rook is better placed to the side of the enemy pawn. In other cases it is better to leave the rook where it is, leaving the decision about how to hold up the enemy pawn for later.

8.4.4 Lasker Manoeuvre

The Lasker manoeuvre can arise when both players have a pawn on the seventh rank. It involves gradually driving the enemy king back, rank by rank, until the enemy pawn can be captured either with check or with a pin of the rook. Here is Lasker's original position, which clearly demonstrates the basic idea.



Em. Lasker

Deutsches Wochensach, 1890

At the moment White's pawn is blocked by his own king, so the first step is to transfer it to h8.

1 ♔g8 ♖g2+ 2 ♔h8 ♜f2

Now the black king is driven back by a rook check.

3 ♜c6+ ♔h5 4 ♔g7

When White's king is defending the f-pawn, he is threatening ♜xc2, so Black has to check.

4... ♜g2+ 5 ♔h7 ♜f2

White has transferred his king from h8 to h7 with gain of tempo and can now drive the king back another rank.

6 ♜c5+ ♔h4 7 ♔g6 ♜g2+ 8 ♔h6 ♜f2

The manoeuvre is repeated and the king is now forced back again.

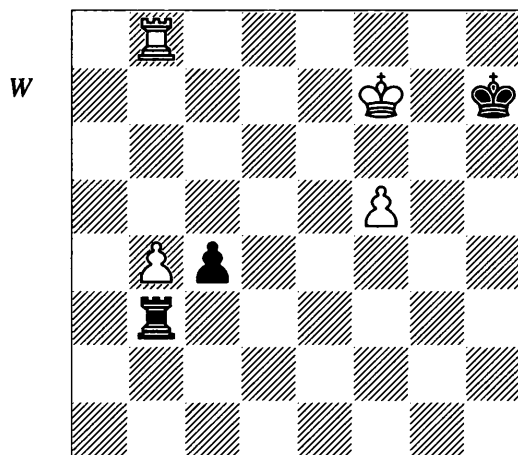
9 ♜c4+ ♔h3 10 ♔g6 ♜g2+ 11 ♔h5 ♜f2 12 ♜c3+ ♔g2

Now the black king is on the same rank as the pawn, and when White takes the pawn, he also pins the enemy rook.

13 ♜xc2

and White wins.

The following position is a typical practical example. It involves some additional details which do not appear in the above theoretical position, but it's precisely these details which trip players up in over-the-board play.



Jansa – Geller

Team event, Budapest 1970

1 f6!

The correct pawn to push. If the b- and c-pawns are exchanged then Black will draw, since his king is on the short side of the f-pawn and so he has plenty of checking distance to the left of the pawn. Thus 1 b5? c3 2 f6 c2 3 ♜c8 ♜xb5 4 ♜xc2 ♜b7+ is an easy draw.

1...c3 2 ♜b5!

The threat of mate forces the black king to move, which gives the white king access to g8.

2... ♔h6 3 ♔g8! c2 4 ♜c5 ♜xb4

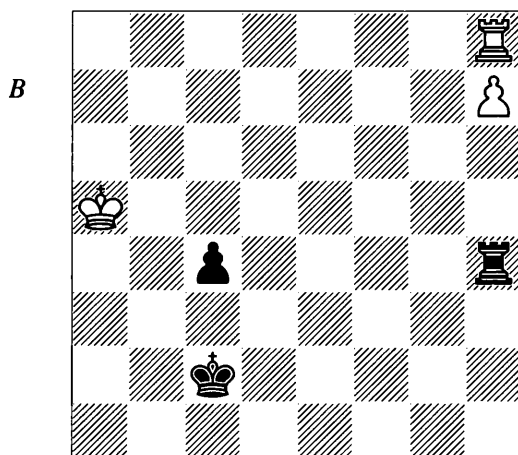
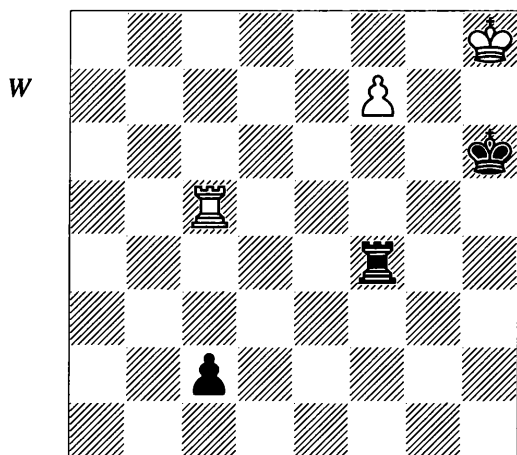
Black must eliminate White's b-pawn. After 4... ♜g3+ 5 ♔f8 ♜g2 6 f7 ♜f2 White could win with a Lasker manoeuvre, but 7 b5 is even easier.

5 f7

5 ♜xc2? ♜b8+ 6 ♔f7 ♜b7+ is again a draw.

5... ♜g4+ 6 ♔h8 ♜f4 (D)

Now the situation is similar to the basic Lasker position, except that Black's rook is on the fifth rank rather than the seventh. White cannot undertake the Lasker manoeuvre yet, because if White at any stage pins the rook by ♜c4 (having driven Black's king to h4), Black can simply take the rook since his c-pawn is still on the board. Therefore White must first force the rook to f2.



7 ♖c6+ ♔h5

The king must always go to the h-file, since after 7...♔g5 8 ♖g7 Black has no check and White wins at once.

8 ♖g7 ♜g4+ 9 ♔h7

White's plan involves playing ♖f6, but he cannot do so at once due to ...♜g6+, so first he must drive Black's king back to h4. Another way to achieve White's aim is to play 9 ♖f8 ♜g2 10 ♔e7 ♜e2+ 11 ♖f6 ♜f2+ 12 ♖g7 ♜g2+ 13 ♔h7, followed by the standard Lasker win. Indeed, if Black's rook were on g3 rather than g4, this would be the only way to win.

9...♜f4 10 ♜c5+ ♔h4 11 ♖g7 ♜g4+ 12 ♖f6

The king emerges. By playing his king to f5, White will force Black's rook to the seventh rank.

12...♜f4+ 13 ♔e6 ♜e4+ 14 ♖f5

There are no more checks, so Black must defend his pawn.

14...♜e2

Now we're in the standard situation and White wins using the Lasker manoeuvre.

15 ♖g6 ♜g2+ 16 ♔h6 ♜f2 17 ♜c4+ ♔h3 18 ♖g6 ♜g2+ 19 ♔h5 ♜f2 20 ♜c3+ ♔h2 21 ♜xc2 1-0

A related situation arises when the defender's rook is in front of the pawn rather than to the side of it. This can easily turn into the standard Lasker position if the rook can escape from its position with check. However, if the rook stays where it is then zugzwang often plays an important role. The following position gives some idea of the possibilities.

Crisan – Grivas

Bucharest 1984

This is an instructive example because it adds something to the familiar Lasker pattern. White's pawn is the further advanced, but his rook is stuck in front of the pawn and therefore paralysed. Moreover, his king is far away and cannot support the pawn. Black's pawn, although further back, is supported by his king and his rook is in an active position. All this adds up to a decisive advantage for Black, but the winning method is very interesting.

1...c3

White was threatening 2 ♜c8, so this is natural.

2 ♔a6

It's best to keep the king on the a-file. If the king moves to the b-file then Black's king can emerge from in front of his pawn, and then we have the familiar Lasker manoeuvre in a truncated form: 2 ♔b5 ♔b3 3 ♔a5 ♜h5+ 4 ♔a6 c2 5 ♜b8+ ♔a4 6 ♜c8 ♜h6+, winning the pawn with check.

2...♜h5!

White is in zugzwang: if he moves to the b-file, Black wins as in the previous note, while otherwise he has to move his king up the board on to the same rank as his pawn, which proves to be a tactical weakness.

3 ♔a7 ♔c1!

Just at this moment White cannot play ♜c8 because Black takes the pawn with check, so Black seizes the opportunity to advance his pawn to the seventh rank.

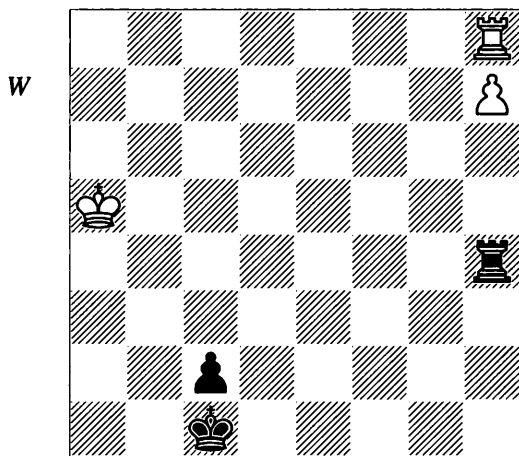
4 ♔b6 c2 5 ♔a6

Back to the a-file, or else Black wins quickly by playing his king out.

5...♖h6+

Black can't move his king for the moment, but he can repeat his earlier manoeuvre to force White's king into a bad position.

6 ♔a5 ♖h4! (D)



Zugzwang again.

7 ♖b8

White gives up, but he was also lost after 7 ♔b5 ♔b2 or 7 ♔a6 ♖h5 8 ♔a7 ♔b2 9 ♖b8+ ♔a3 10 ♖c8 ♖xh7+, taking the pawn with check.

7...♖xh7 8 ♔a4 ♖h3 9 ♖d8 ♔b2 10 ♖b8+ ♔a2 11 ♖c8 ♖a3+ 0-1

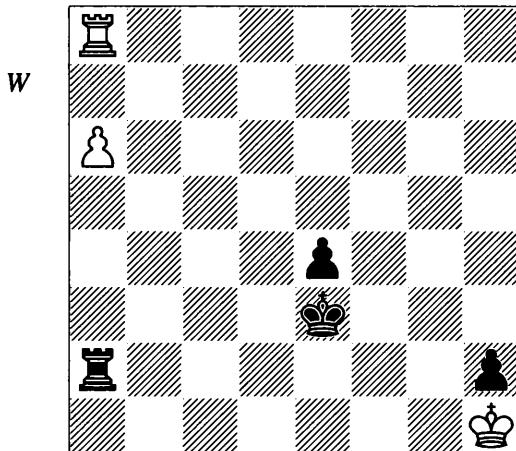
After 12 ♔b4 ♖b3+ 13 ♔a4 ♔b2 14 ♖c4 ♖b8 the pawn promotes.

The following position (see next diagram) combines the Lasker idea with the rook switch.

1...♔e2!

The only move to win. White was threatening to draw by playing a7, which would lead to a position of reciprocal zugzwang. 1...♔d3? surprisingly allows White to escape by 2 ♖a7! (2 a7? ♔e3 leaves White in zugzwang) 2...e3 3 ♖d7+ ♔c3 4 ♖e7 e2 5 a7 ♔d2 6 ♖d7+ ♔e1 7 ♖f7! (but not 7 ♔xh2?, as Minev gives in *Informator 16*, due to 7...♔f2! 8 ♖f7+ ♔e3 9 ♖e7+ ♔d2 10 ♖d7+ ♔c1! 11 ♖c7+ ♔b1 12 ♖b7+ ♔a1 and Black wins) 7...♔d2 8 ♖d7+ ♔c1 9 ♖c7+ ♔b1 10 ♖b7+ ♔a1 11 ♖e7, with a draw.

2 ♔xh2



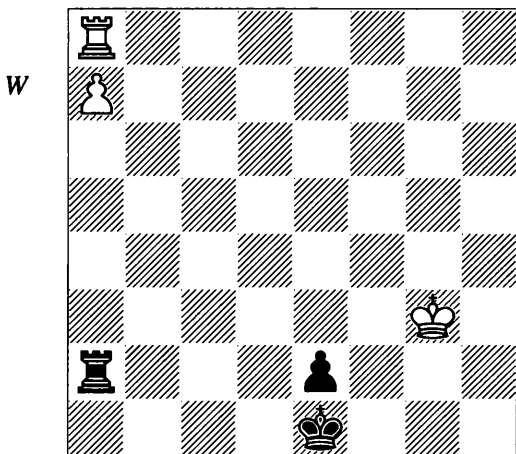
I. Zaitsev – Dvoretzky
USSR 1973

There is nothing better than taking the pawn; for example, 2 a7 ♔e3! and White is in zugzwang, or 2 ♖e8 e3 3 ♖e6 ♔d2 4 ♖d6+ ♔e1 5 ♖e6 e2 6 ♖d6 ♔f2 7 ♖f6+ ♔g3 8 ♖g6+ ♔f4 and Black wins.

2...e3 3 a7

Or 3 ♔g3 ♔e1! 4 ♔f3 e2 5 ♔g2 ♖a5 6 ♔g3 ♖e5 7 ♔f4 ♖e7 8 a7 ♔f2 and Black wins.

3...♔e1+ 4 ♔g3 e2 (D)



The winning plan involves the rook switch from Section 8.4.2, in which Black transfers his rook to the second rank so as to attack the white pawn from the side. White's king is far away from his own pawn, so there is little hope of giving it support.

5 ♔g4

5 ♔g2 allows Black to execute his plan without any problems: 5...♖a6 6 ♔g3 (Black also

wins after 6 ♖b8 ♗xa7 7 ♖b1+ ♔d2 8 ♖b2+ ♔d3 as White has insufficient checking distance) 6... ♗g6+ 7 ♔f3 ♗g7 8 ♖b8 ♗xa7 9 ♖b1+ ♔d2 10 ♖b2+ ♔d3 11 ♖b3+ ♔c2 12 ♖e3 ♔d1 and Black wins.

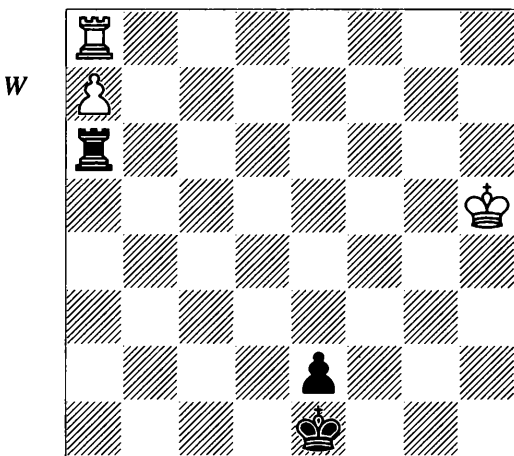
5 ♔h4!? puts up the greatest resistance: 5... ♗a4+ 6 ♔h5 ♗a6 transposes to the game, but White has avoided the quicker win given in the next note.

5... ♗a4+

5... ♔f1? is wrong and allows White to draw by 6 ♗f8+ ♔g2 7 ♖e8 ♗a4+ 8 ♔h5! (this move nullifies the Lasker manoeuvre; 8 ♔g5? ♔f3 9 ♗f8+ ♔g3 10 ♖e8 ♗a5+ transposes to the note to White's 7th move) 8... ♔f3 9 ♗f8+ ♔g3 10 ♖e8 ♗a5+ (thanks to his eighth move, White has this extra check) 10... ♔h3 11 ♖e8.

The move played is sufficient, but 5... ♗a5! is quicker, when White is immediately in zugzwang: 6 ♔h4 (moving the king to h4 has the defect that it allows Black to promote with check, but 6 ♔f4 loses at once to 6... ♔f2, while after 6 ♔g3 ♗g5+ 7 ♔f4 ♗g7 Black has executed the rook switch) 6... ♖e5 7 ♗g8 (7 ♔g4 ♗e7) 7... ♔d2! 8 a8♖ (Black wins after 8 ♗g2 ♗a5) 8... e1♗+ 9 ♗g3 ♖e4+ 10 ♔h5 ♗h1+ followed by a discovered attack winning the queen.

6 ♔h5 ♗a6 (D)



Now White is in zugzwang. If his king moves to g5, then Black wins with a Lasker-type manoeuvre, while if the king moves to g4 or h4 then Black can complete his rook switch to the second rank.

7 ♔g4

Or 7 ♔g5 ♔f2 8 ♗f8+ ♔g3 9 ♖e8 ♗a5+ (now it's a standard Lasker manoeuvre) 10 ♔h6 ♔f3 11 ♗f8+ ♔g4 12 ♗g8+ ♔h4 13 ♖e8 ♗a6+ 14 ♔g7 ♗xa7+ (taking the pawn with check, but Black's king is rather distant and the win still requires a little work) 15 ♔f6 ♗a2 16 ♖e3 ♔g4 17 ♔e5 ♖b2 18 ♔e4 (18 ♔d4 ♔f4 also wins for Black) 18... ♗d2! (this is a position of reciprocal zugzwang) 19 ♔e5 ♗d8! 20 ♔f6 ♗f8+ 21 ♔e7 ♗f2 22 ♔d6 ♔f4 and Black wins.

7... ♗g6+ 8 ♔f5 ♗g7 9 ♔f6 ♗h7

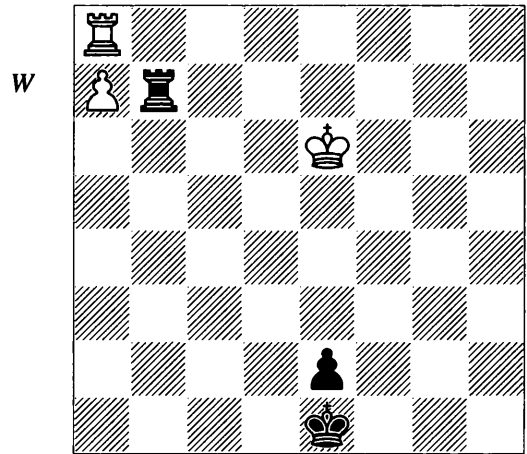
9... ♖b7! is quicker; for example, 10 ♔g6 ♗d7 11 ♔g5 ♔d2 or 10 ♔e6 ♔d2 11 ♗d8+ ♔c2 12 ♗c8+ ♔b2.

10 ♔e6

10 ♔e5 lasts a little longer, since then the simplest win is to backtrack by 10... ♗g7 11 ♔f6 and now 11... ♖b7.

10... ♖b7 (D)

10... ♔d2! 11 ♗d8+ ♔e3 12 a8♖ e1♗ gives Black a decisive attack thanks to the threatened discovered check, although this would require careful checking before playing over the board.



11 ♔e5?!

After 11 ♔f6?! ♔f2 Black wins at once, but 11 ♔d6 is a tougher defence. Then Black should play 11... ♗f7! 12 ♔e6 ♗g7 13 ♔f6 ♖b7, transposing into the note to his ninth move.

11... ♗e7+?!

11... ♔d2! 12 ♗d8+ ♔c2 13 ♗c8+ ♔b2 wins straight away, since if both sides promote Black will have a winning attack.

12 ♔d6 ♔d1 13 ♔xe7?!

White could have forced Black to win a ♖ vs ♜ ending after 13 ♔c6 ♔c2 14 ♚c8 ♚xa7 15 ♔b6+.

13...e1♖+ 0-1

Black wins after 14 ♔d7 ♖d2+ 15 ♔c7 ♖f4+ 16 ♔d7 ♖d4+ 17 ♔c7 ♖c5+ 18 ♔b7 ♖d5+ 19 ♔b8 ♔e1 (or any other pass move) as the rook falls.

Summary:

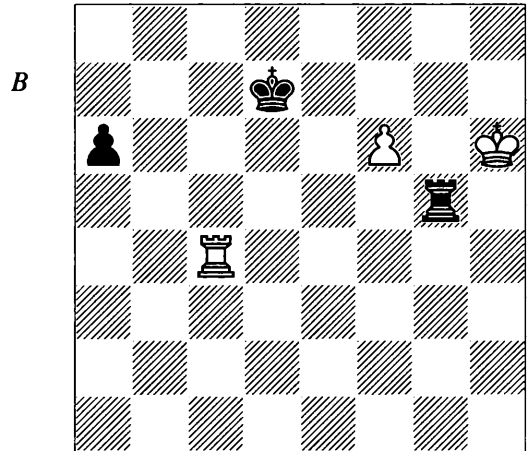
- The Lasker manoeuvre is a standard weapon which should be in the armoury of every chess-player. It arises fairly often in practice, but is hard to spot if you haven't seen it before.
- Sometimes it's necessary to combine the Lasker manoeuvre with the rook switch in order to win. In these cases, the attacker often has to use zugzwang to achieve success.
- The Lasker manoeuvre doesn't always win. If the defender can move his king three files away from the attacker's pawn, he usually has sufficient checks from behind to draw (see the note to Black's fifth move in I.Zaitsev-Dvoretzky).

8.4.5 Common Error: Checking Distance

One of the most common errors in rook endings with few pawns involves the concept of checking distance. In many positions it is important to have your rook positioned at the maximum possible distance from the enemy king. The reason is that a common method of stopping a barrage of rook checks is for the king to approach the rook. It follows that when you are checking from the opposite side of the board, the king has to go a long way to stop the checks. Thus in many positions, having the maximum possible checking distance is an advantage. This applies especially in positions of rook and pawn vs rook, which many textbooks examine quite carefully.

The idea of securing the maximum checking distance occurs so often that it becomes a reflex to move the rook as far away from the enemy king as possible. The trouble is that in endings where both sides have pawns, there may be reasons why the rook shouldn't go to the far edge

of the board, and in this case the reflex action can be wrong. Here's an example.



M. Gurevich – Rechlis

Tel-Aviv 1989

1...♜g3?

In his notes in *Informator 47*, M.Gurevich makes no comment on this, even though it is the losing move. Rechlis falls into the trap of instinctively moving his rook as far away from the enemy king as possible, even though 1...♜g3! was correct. After 2 ♚e4 a5 3 f7 ♜f3 4 ♔g7 ♔d6! 5 ♚c4 (or else the black king can support the a-pawn) 5...♜g3+ 6 ♔f8 ♜f3 7 ♚c8 a4 8 ♚a8 Black is able to get his pawn one square further up the board by 8...a3. This is enough to secure the draw because, curiously enough, Black now has one **extra** square of checking distance; for example, 9 ♔g7 ♜g3+ 10 ♔f6 ♜f3+ 11 ♔g6 ♜g3+ and White cannot win.

2 ♚e4 ♜h1+

The key line is 2...a5 3 f7 ♜f1 4 ♔g7 ♔d6 (4...♜g1+ 5 ♔f8 ♜g5 6 ♚h4 ♜g3 7 ♚h7 ♜f3 8 ♜g7 ♜f4 9 ♔g8 ♔d6 10 ♜g5! ♔e7 11 ♚e5+ ♔d6 12 ♚xa5 and White wins) 5 ♚c4 ♜g1+ 6 ♔f8 ♜f1 7 ♚c8 a4 8 ♚a8 ♜f4 (here Black's rook is one square closer to the white king and this enables White to win) 9 ♔g7 ♜g4+ 10 ♔f6 ♜f4+ 11 ♔g6 ♔e7 12 ♚e8+ ♔d6 13 ♚e4 ♜xe4 14 f8♖+ ♔d5 15 ♖a8+ with an eventual win.

3 ♔g7 ♜g1+ 4 ♔f8 ♜f1 5 f7 a5

Black's pawn is only on the fourth rank so White should win easily.

6 ♚e5?

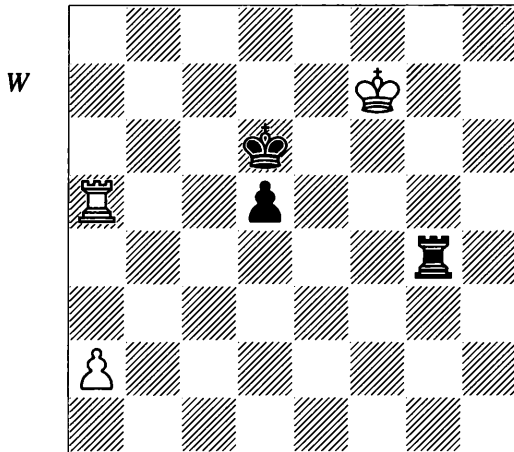
As Gurevich correctly points out in *Informator*, this is a serious mistake. White can win easily by 6 ♖e7+ ♔d6 7 ♖a7 ♖f5 8 ♔g7 or 6 ♖g4 ♔d6 7 ♖g5! a4 (or 7...♔e6 8 ♖g6+ ♔d7 9 ♖a6) 8 ♔g8 ♔e7 9 ♖g4!.

6...a4 7 ♖a5 ♖a1?

A fatal error. Black could have drawn by 7...♖f4! 8 ♔g7 ♖g4+ 9 ♔f6 ♖f4+ 10 ♔g6 ♔e6 11 ♖a6+ ♔e7 12 ♖a7+ ♔e6 13 ♔g7 ♖g4+ 14 ♔f8 ♔d6 15 ♔e8 ♖e4+ 16 ♔d8 ♖f4 17 ♖a6+ ♔c5 18 ♔e7 ♖xf7+, etc.

After the move played, Black resigned (1-0), since 8 ♖g5! ♖f1 9 ♔g8 ♔e7 10 ♖g4! followed by ♖e4+ wins the black rook and then the a-pawn.

Even top players are not immune from making this mistake.



Topalov – Kasparov
Geneva (rapid) 1996

This was only a rapid game, but it is a useful example which allows us to make a couple of general points.

1 ♔f6?

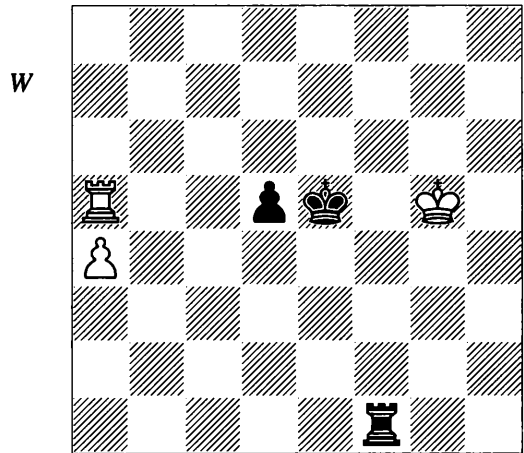
Allowing Black to cut the white king off along the f-file is a mistake. White could have drawn most simply by 1 ♖a6+ ♔e5 2 ♖e6+! (the idea is to check the black king onto the fourth rank, where it blocks the black rook, and then play a4) 2...♔d4 (or 2...♔f5 3 ♖f6+ ♔e4 4 a4) 3 a4 ♔c5 (3...♔c3 4 a5 ♖a4 5 a6 d4 6 ♔e7 is also a draw) 4 a5 ♖a4 5 a6 d4 6 ♔e7 d3 7 ♔d7 and the king rushes over to support the a-pawn.

1...♖f4+

Not the only winning move, but the quickest.
2 ♔g5 ♖f1?

The wrong direction. Black could have won by 2...♖f7! 3 a4 ♔e5 4 ♖b5 ♔e4 5 a5 (or 5 ♖b1 d4 6 ♖e1+ ♔d3 7 ♖d1+ ♔e3 8 ♖e1+ ♔d2 9 ♖a1 d3 10 a5 ♔c2 11 a6 ♖a7 and the d-pawn advances) 5...d4 6 a6 ♖a7 7 ♖b6 d3 8 ♖d6 (8 ♔f6 d2) 8...♖c7! (providing a shield for Black's king if it should have to move to the c-file) 9 ♖e6+ ♔f3 10 ♖d6 ♔e2 11 ♖e6+ ♔d1 12 ♔f4 d2 and White has no defence.

3 a4 ♔e5 (D)



A key moment.

4 ♖a8?

The natural ideas appear to be 4 ♔g4, to bring the king back, and 4 ♖a8, to check Black's king from behind with the maximum possible distance. However, both these moves lose. Even more surprising is the fact that White has two different moves that do draw. Here is the analysis:

1) 4 ♔g4? (this allows Black to drive the white king to the h-file with tempo) 4...♔e4 5 ♖a7 ♖g1+ 6 ♔h3 (6 ♔h5 prevents Black's rook from moving to g6, but loses to 6...d4 7 ♖e7+ ♔d3 8 a5 ♖a1 9 ♖a7 ♔e4 10 ♖e7+ ♔f3 11 ♖f7+ ♔e2 12 ♖e7+ ♔d1 13 ♖d7 ♖xa5+ 14 ♔g4 ♖a4; in this line the king was poorly placed on h5 because Black could take the a-pawn with check) 6...d4 7 a5 ♖g6! (a type of rook switch) 8 a6 ♔d3! 9 ♖a8 ♖c6! (again this idea, securing the c-file against white rook checks) 10 ♔g3 ♔c3! 11 ♔f2 d3 12 a7 ♖c7 13 ♔e3 d2 14 ♖d8 ♖e7+ and Black wins.

2) 4 ♖a7! (the correct rank for the rook; in the main line White can advance his pawn to a7 because it is defended on that square and this is more important than checking distance) 4...♙g1+ 5 ♔h4! d4 6 a5 d3 7 ♗d7 ♕e4 8 a6 ♗a1 9 a7 (only possible thanks to the accurate choice at move four) 9...♖e3 10 ♖g3 d2 11 ♗e7+ ♖d3 12 ♗d7+ ♖c2 13 ♗c7+ ♖d1 14 ♖f2 and White holds the draw.

3) 4 ♖h4! (this surprising move also draws; White brings his king back, but without allowing Black to cut the king off with tempo) 4...♖e4 5 ♗a7 d4 (after 5...♗h1+ 6 ♖g3 the white king heads towards f2) 6 a5 ♗f6 7 a6 ♖d3 8 ♖g3 ♗c6 9 ♖f2 ♖c3 10 ♖e1 and White is safe.

The move played loses. Play proceeds as in line 2 above, except that White's pawn only reaches the sixth rank.

4...♗g1+ 5 ♖h6 d4 6 a5 d3 7 ♗d8 ♖e4 8 a6 ♗a1

Here is the difference. White has to defend his pawn and so it cannot advance beyond the sixth rank.

9 ♗d6 ♖e3 10 ♗e6+ ♖f2 11 ♗d6 ♖e2 12 ♗e6+ ♖d1 13 ♖g5 d2 14 ♖f4 ♖c2 0-1

In the above two examples, the motivation for the counter-intuitive rook move was to ensure that a friendly pawn would be defended at some point in the future. In the next position, White has to ensure that his king can cross the file occupied by the rook without allowing a rook exchange.

Black certainly has the advantage because his own king is able to support his passed pawn while White's king is cut off far away on the h-file. However, the d-pawn will probably force Black's rook to abandon the g-file sooner or later, after which the white king will be released to head towards the queenside. Then everything will be a matter of timing, which means that determining the result is a matter of calculation rather than judgement. In fact, Black is winning, but precise play is necessary.

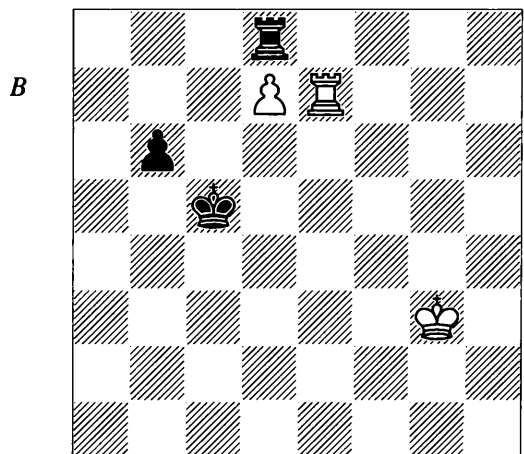
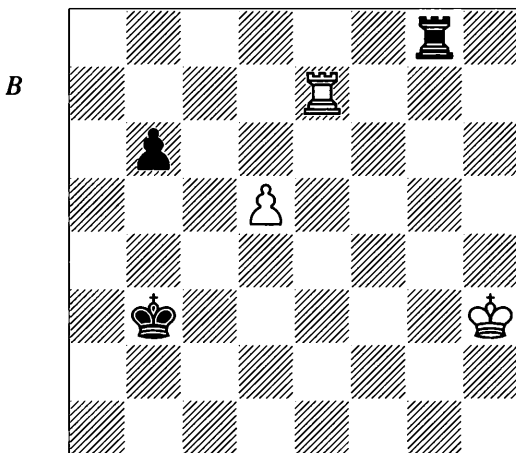
1...♖c4

This wins, but it would have been quicker to play 1...♗d8! at once, since this prevents White from pushing his pawn to the seventh rank. After 2 ♗e1 (the lines 2 ♗e6 b5 3 d6 ♖c4 4 ♖g4 ♖c5 5 ♗e5+ ♖c6 6 ♖f3 ♗xd6 7 ♖e3 b4, 2 ♗e5 b5 3 d6 ♖c4 4 ♗e4+ ♖d5 5 ♗b4 ♖c5 6 ♗b1 ♗xd6 and 2 ♗b7 ♗d6 3 ♖g3 ♖c4 4 ♖f3 b5 5 ♗c7+ ♖d3! 6 ♖f2 ♗xd5 7 ♖e1 ♗h5 8 ♗d7+ ♖c2 9 ♗c7+ ♖b3 10 ♖d2 b4 all win for Black) 2...b5 3 ♗b1+ ♖c4 4 ♗c1+ ♖d4 5 ♗d1+ ♖e5! (the simplest, although 5...♖c5 6 ♗c1+ ♖b6 7 ♗d1 ♗d7! also wins) 6 ♗e1+ ♖d6 7 ♖g3 ♗g8+ 8 ♖f3 ♖xd5 9 ♗d1+ ♖c4 10 ♗c1+ ♖d3 11 ♗b1 ♗b8 Black will be able to push the b-pawn.

2 d6 ♖c5 3 d7 ♗d8

This is now forced, but the white king is thereby released, and unlike the note to Black's first move, here Black's king has been forced to retreat a long way in order to ensure the capture of the d-pawn. Black is still winning, but the position is poised on a knife edge.

4 ♖g3 (D)



4...♔d6?

Black already goes wrong, making a mistake which allows White to draw. 4...♔c6! was the only move to win:

1) 5 ♖e6+ and then:

1a) 5...♔c7? 6 ♔f3 ♖xd7 7 ♔e3 is only a draw; for example, 7...♔b7 8 ♖h6 ♔a6 9 ♖h1! b5 10 ♖a1+ ♔b6 11 ♖b1 ♖d5 12 ♔e4! ♖d2 13 ♔e3! ♖d8 14 ♔e4! and Black cannot make progress.

1b) 5...♔b7!! (this unlikely-looking move is the only way to win; Black needs to have the option to sneak round the pawn via a6) 6 ♔f3 ♖xd7 7 ♖e4 (7 ♖e3 ♔a6 is much the same) 7...♔a6 8 ♖a4+ ♔b5 9 ♖a1 ♖e7! 10 ♖b1+ ♔c5 (10...♔c6 11 ♖c1+ ♔b7 12 ♖b1 ♖e8 also wins as it transposes to line 3) 11 ♖c1+ ♔d4 12 ♖b1 ♖b7 13 ♔e2 ♔c3! 14 ♖b5 ♖e7+ 15 ♔f2 (15 ♔d1 ♖e6 16 ♖h5 ♖g6 17 ♖b5 ♖g1+ 18 ♔e2 ♖g2+ 19 ♔d1 ♖b2 20 ♖h5 ♖b1+ 21 ♔e2 b5 also wins for Black) 15...♖e6 16 ♖b1 ♖d6 17 ♔e3 transposing to line 3b after White's 17th move.

2) 5 ♖e2 ♖xd7 6 ♖c2+ ♔b7 and now:

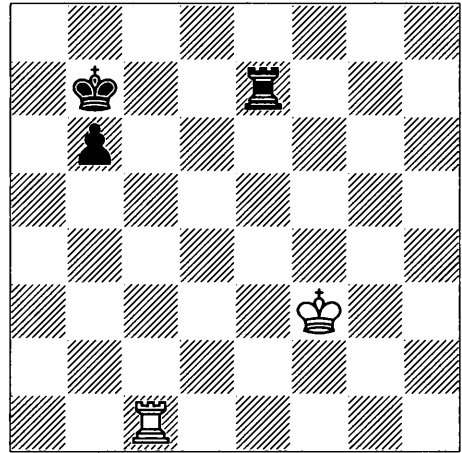
2a) 7 ♔f3 b5 8 ♔e2 (after 8 ♔e3 ♔b6 9 ♖c1 b4 Black wins more directly) 8...♔b6 9 ♖c1 ♖d5! (not 9...b4? 10 ♖d1, drawing) 10 ♖b1 ♔c5 11 ♖c1+ ♔b4 12 ♔e3 ♔b3 13 ♔e4 ♖h5 14 ♖g1 b4 and Black wins.

2b) 7 ♖b2 ♖f7 cuts off the white king far enough away to ensure a technical win (indeed it is a win even if the king is one file closer – see line 3 after Black's 7th move). One line runs 8 ♖b1 ♔c6 9 ♖c1+ ♔d5 10 ♖b1 ♔c5 11 ♖c1+ ♔d4 12 ♖d1+ ♔c3 13 ♖b1 ♖b7 14 ♔f2 b5 and the pawn advances.

3) 5 ♖e1 ♖xd7 6 ♖c1+ ♔b7 7 ♔f3 ♖e7 (D) is a theoretical win.

The winning line is fairly complex and the details may be found in books such as *Secrets of Rook Endings* (expanded edition, Gambit, 1999). The main idea is for Black to manoeuvre his rook until one of two situations arises: either his rook defends the pawn from e6 and cannot be quickly dislodged by the white king, or the white king occupies the f4-square. When one of these two situations arises, Black can head up the board with his king. After 8 ♖b1 ♖e8 White can try:

W



3a) 9 ♔f4 ♔c6 (one of the above situations has arisen and black advances his king to d4) 10 ♖c1+ ♔d5 11 ♖d1+ ♔c5 12 ♖c1+ ♔d4 13 ♖d1+ (after 13 ♖b1 ♖f8+ Black drives the king back and wins as in line 2b above) 13...♔c3 14 ♖b1 (14 ♖c1+ ♔b2 15 ♖c4 ♔b3 16 ♖c1 b5 also wins for Black) 14...♖b8 15 ♔e4 b5 and the pawn starts to advance.

3b) 9 ♖h1 ♖e6 10 ♖b1 gives rise to the other situation mentioned above and now Black wins by 10...♔c6 11 ♖c1+ ♔d5 12 ♖d1+ ♔c4 13 ♖c1+ ♔d3 14 ♖b1 ♔c2 15 ♖b5 ♔c3 16 ♖b1 ♖d6! 17 ♔e3 ♖d3+ 18 ♔e4 ♖d4+ 19 ♔e3 ♖b4 20 ♖c1+ ♔b2 21 ♖c6 b5 22 ♖c5 ♖b3+ 23 ♔d4 ♔a3 24 ♖h5 ♔a4 25 ♖h8 ♖g3 26 ♔c5 b4 27 ♔c4 ♖c3+ 28 ♔d4 ♔a3 and the pawn's advance cannot be prevented.

5 ♖e1?

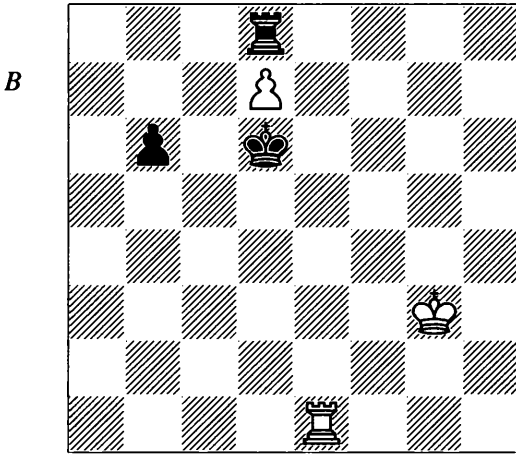
One's natural instinct is to withdraw the rook as far as possible so as to gain the maximum checking distance; indeed, in several of the above lines we have seen how important checking distance can be. However, there are exceptions to any general principle and this is one. White will need to move his king towards the queenside, but with his rook on e1, Black will be able to meet a move by White's king to the f-file with ...♖f8+, forcing the king back since White dare not allow a rook exchange. If the rook is on e2, then White can play ♔f2, meeting ...♖f8+ with ♔e1, sneaking round behind the rook. One might imagine that it would be the same with the rook on e3, but then White's checking distance really is too short and he again loses. Thus e2 is the perfect compromise

between ensuring sufficient checking distance while at the same time allowing the white king to cross the e-file behind the rook. The concrete variations are:

1) 5 ♖e2! ♜xd7 6 ♔f2! ♚c6 (after 6...b5 White can simply exchange rooks, while 6...♞h7 7 ♚e1 b5 8 ♚d1 is a simple draw) 7 ♜c2+ ♚b7 8 ♚e2 b5 9 ♞d2 and Black has no winning chances.

2) 5 ♜e3? ♜xd7 6 ♔f2 ♚c5 7 ♜c3+ ♚b4 and the white rook is too close to Black's king, so the pawn will be able to advance.

We now return to 5 ♜e1? (D):



5...♜xd7 6 ♞b1

After 6 ♔f2 ♞f7+ Black drives the king to the g-file and wins.

6...♚c6 7 ♜c1+ ♚b7 8 ♞b1?!

This makes it easier for Black by allowing him to use his rook on the f-file to cut off the white king. 8 ♔f3 ♞e7 9 ♞b1 would have moved the white king one file closer and forced Black to execute the technically difficult win described in line 3 of the note to Black's 4th move.

8...♞f7 9 ♔g4 ♚c6

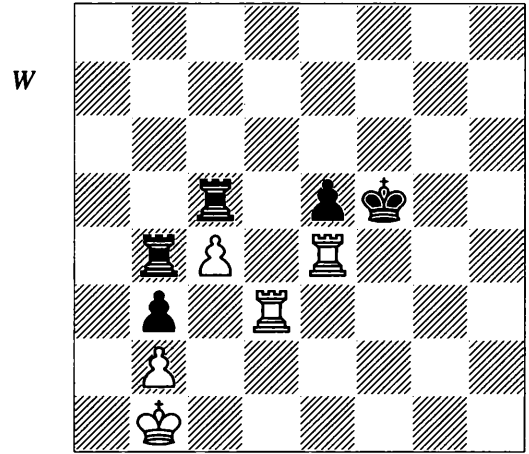
In this situation Black can advance his king without any preliminary manoeuvres.

10 ♜c1+ ♚d5 11 ♞b1 ♚c5 12 ♜c1+ ♚d4 13 ♞b1 ♞b7! 14 ♔f3 b5 15 ♚e2 ♚c3!

The key move. Now White cannot avoid falling into the Lucena position.

16 ♜c1+ ♚b2 17 ♜c6 b4 18 ♔d2 ♞d7+ 19 ♚e2 b3 20 ♞a6 ♚b1 21 ♞a8 b2 22 ♞a6 ♞d5 23 ♞a8 ♚c2 24 ♜c8+ ♚b3 25 ♞b8+ ♚a3 0-1

The following example contains an amazing subtlety, in which White must avoid playing his rook to the eighth rank so as to gain a tempo 14 moves later.

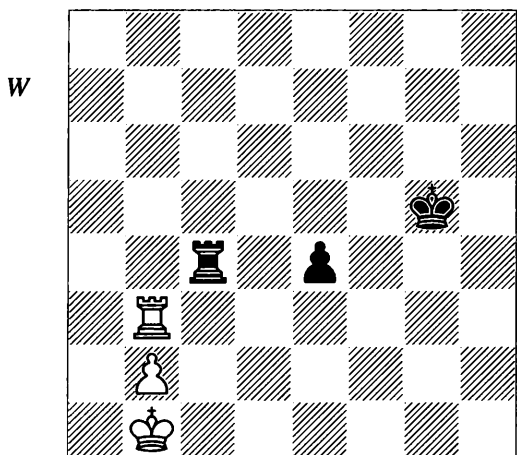


Lemaire – Bedu
corr. 1989

This position from a correspondence game contains some remarkable finesses. After White deals with the attack on his e4-rook, Black will take on c4, a pair of rooks will be exchanged and White will play ♜xb3, leading to an ending of ♜+♔ vs ♜+♔. This ending is clearly favourable for Black, since his pawn is more advanced than White's, and the white king is cut off from the e-pawn. However, it is hard to say without detailed analysis whether Black's advantage is sufficient to win. It turns out that the naïve method of reaching this ending leads to a win for Black, but by a subtlety White can reach the ending in a slightly different way that results in a draw.

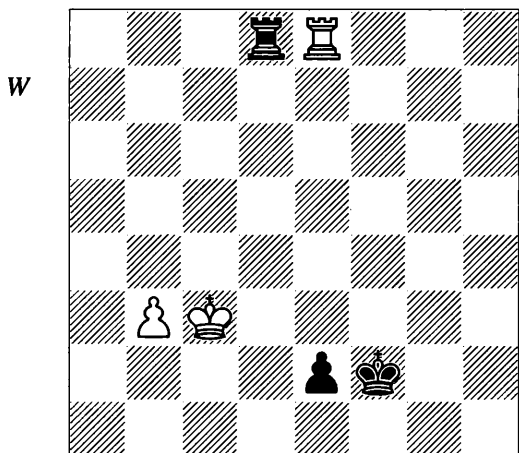
1 ♞de3?

After this Black has a forced win. White could have drawn by playing 1 ♞h4! ♞bxc4 (1...e4 2 ♞h5+ ♔f4 3 ♞h4+ is an immediate draw, while after 1...♞cxc4 2 ♞h5+ ♔e6 3 ♞h6+ ♔f7 Black's king has been driven right back and now White can safely play to win the b-pawn by 4 ♞hh3 e4 5 ♜xb3 ♞xb3 6 ♞xb3 ♚e6 7 ♜c3, drawing) 2 ♞f3+! (the key finesse, driving Black's king away from f5) 2...♔g5 (2...♞f4?? loses to 3 ♞xf4+ exf4 4 ♞h5+) 3 ♞xc4 ♞xc4 4 ♜xb3 (now we have the same position as in the game, except that Black's king is on g5 instead of f5) 4...e4 (D).



Now there is a remarkable finesse. One's natural instinct is to play 5 ♖b8, switching behind the enemy pawn and gaining the maximum checking distance. However, this move loses. The correct move, and the only one to draw, is 5 ♖b7!! . It turns out that whichever rank White plays his rook to now, Black's rook will eventually end up on the same rank. White will then have to give up his rook for Black's pawn and play with his king and b-pawn against Black's rook. When Black's rook is on d7, White gains a crucial tempo by attacking it with a later ♔c6, but when the rook is on d8, it is safely out of range. Here's the concrete analysis:

1) 5 ♖b8? e3 6 ♜e8 (6 b3 ♜e4! 7 ♜g8+ ♔f4 transposes) 6...♔f4 7 b3 ♜e4 8 ♜f8+ ♔g3 9 ♜g8+ ♔f3 10 ♜f8+ ♜f4 11 ♜e8 e2 12 ♔c2 ♔f2 13 ♔d2 ♜d4+ 14 ♔c3 ♜d8! (D) and now:



1a) 15 ♜xd8 e1♚+ is a win for Black because, although White's pawn is on a drawing

square, his pieces are poorly coordinated and he cannot reach the standard drawing structure of king on b2 and rook on c4: 16 ♔c4 (after 16 ♔b2 ♜e5+ or 16 ♔c2 ♜e4+ 17 ♔d2 ♜f4+ 18 ♔d1 ♜g4+ 19 ♔c2 ♜g6+ 20 ♔d1 ♜b1+ White loses far more quickly) 16...♜c1+ 17 ♔b4 ♜f4+ 18 ♔a3 ♔e2 19 ♜d5 (19 ♜c8 ♜d6+ 20 ♔b2 ♜f6+ 21 ♔c1 ♔d3 is also winning for Black since White cannot reach the drawing formation) 19...♜f8+ 20 ♔a4 ♜a8+ 21 ♜a5 ♜c6+ 22 ♔a3 ♜c1+ 23 ♔b4 ♜e1+ 24 ♔a4 ♜a1+ 25 ♔b4 ♜d4+ 26 ♔a3 ♔d2 27 ♜a4 ♜a1+ 28 ♔b4 ♜b2 (White is doomed by his bad king position) 29 ♜a5 ♜d4+ 30 ♔b5 ♔d3 31 ♜a4 ♜d5+ 32 ♔b4 ♜d6+ 33 ♔b5 ♔c3 and the pawn falls.

1b) 15 ♜e5 e1♚+ 16 ♜xe1 ♔xe1 17 b4 ♔e2 18 ♔c4 ♔e3 19 ♔c5 ♔e4 (this is where White would draw if Black's rook were on d7) 20 b5 ♔e5 21 ♔c6 (21 b6 ♜c8+ 22 ♔b5 ♔d6 is also lost for White) 21...♔e6 22 ♔c7 ♜d7+! 23 ♔c6 ♜d1 24 b6 ♜c1+ and Black wins.

2) 5 ♖b7!! e3 6 ♜e7 (6 b3 ♜e4 7 ♜g7+ ♔f4 transposes) 6...♔f4 7 b3 ♜e4 8 ♜f7+ ♔g3 9 ♜g7+ ♔f3 10 ♜f7+ and now:

2a) 10...♜f4 11 ♜e7 e2 12 ♔c2 ♔f2 13 ♔d2 ♜d4+ 14 ♔c3 ♜d7 15 ♜e6 (15 ♜e5 is also good, but not 15 ♜e8? ♜d8! and White has undone the good work of choosing the correct square at move 5) 15...e1♚+ 16 ♜xe1 ♔xe1 and then:

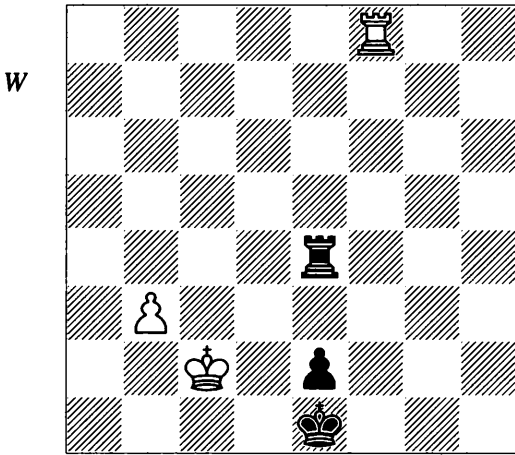
2a1) 17 ♔c4? ♜c7+ 18 ♔d4 ♜b7 19 ♔c4 ♔d2 20 b4 ♔c2 21 b5 ♜b8! (a move reminiscent of a famous Réti study) 22 ♔b4 ♔b2 23 ♔c5 (White's king must go to one side or the other, whereupon Black's king goes to the opposite side) 23...♔a3 24 b6 ♔a4 25 ♔c6 ♔a5 26 b7 ♔a6 and Black wins.

2a2) 17 b4! ♔e2 (17...♜b7 18 ♔c4 ♔d2 19 b5 ♜b8 20 ♔c5 ♔c3 21 b6 ♔b3 22 ♔c6 ♔a4 23 ♔c7 is also drawn) 18 ♔c4 ♔e3 19 ♔c5 ♔e4 20 ♔c6 gains a vital tempo and draws after 20...♜d1 21 b5 ♔e5 22 b6 ♜c1+ 23 ♔d7!.

2b) 10...♔e2 11 ♔c2 ♔e1 12 ♜f8 e2 (D).

In this position White must again choose the correct rank for his rook, balancing the need for some checking distance with the necessity of defending the b-pawn when it advances:

2b1) 13 ♜f7? loses because the rook is poorly placed to defend the b-pawn later on:



13...♖e8 14 b4 ♖e4! 15 b5 (if 15 ♔c3 ♔d1, Black wins at once) 15...♖e5! 16 b6 ♖c5+ 17 ♔b3 ♖b5+ and Black captures the undefended b-pawn.

2b2) 13 ♖f5? loses because the rook is too close to the black king. Then 13...♖d4! is the only move to win:

2b21) 14 ♔c3 ♔d1 15 ♔xd4 (15 ♖e5 ♖f4 16 ♖d5+ ♔e1 17 ♖e5 ♔f1 18 ♔d2 ♖f2 and Black wins as in line 2b24) 15...e1♖ and White is far away from the drawing formation with king on b2 and rook on c4; one line might be 16 ♖b5 ♔c2 17 ♔c5 ♖e7+ 18 ♔d5 ♖d7+ 19 ♔c5 ♔d3 20 ♔b6 ♔c3 21 ♔a6 ♖c6+ 22 ♖b6 ♖a8+ and the pawn falls.

2b22) 14 ♖f8 ♖d1! (a waiting move to force the white rook away from the eighth rank; there are other ways to win, but this is the simplest) 15 ♖f7 (15 b4 ♖d4 and Black wins as before) 15...♖d2+ 16 ♔c1 ♖d8 17 ♔c2 ♖c8+ and Black wins as in line 2b23.

2b23) 14 ♖f6 ♖d2+! 15 ♔c1 ♖d8 16 ♔c2 ♖c8+ 17 ♔b2 ♖c5! is basically a Lucena manoeuvre. Black wins after 18 b4 ♖c4! 19 ♔b3 ♖e4 or 18 ♖f7 ♔d2 19 ♖d7+ ♔e3 20 ♖e7+ ♔d3 21 ♖e8 ♖c2+ 22 ♔b1 ♖d2.

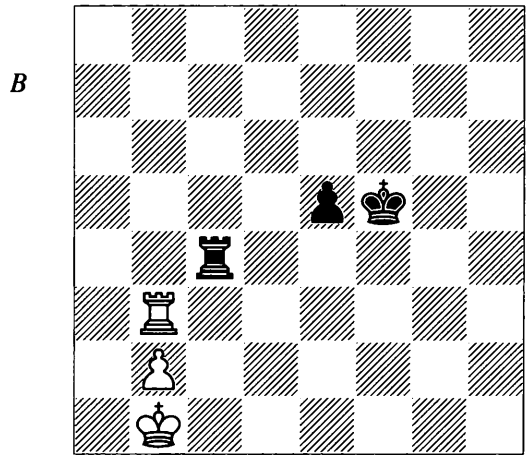
2b24) 14 ♖e5 is answered by 14...♔f1! (not 14...♔f2? 15 ♔c3 ♖f4 16 ♔d2 and Black has nothing better than to repeat moves), a subtle move keeping f2 clear for the rook. Black wins after 15 ♖f5+ (now 15 ♔c3 ♖f4 16 ♔d2 may be met by 16...♖f2! 17 ♔d3 e1♖ 18 ♖xe1+ ♔xe1 19 ♔d4 ♖b2 20 ♔c3 ♖b1 21 ♔c2 ♖d1 22 b4 ♖d4) 15...♔g2 16 ♖e5 ♔f3 17 ♖f5+ ♔e4 18 ♖f8 ♖d1! 19 ♖e8+ ♔f3 20 ♖f8+ ♔g4.

2b3) 13 ♖f6! (surprisingly, the only move to draw, and providing another example of not playing for the greatest checking distance) 13...♖e8 (13...♖d4 14 ♖e6 ♔f1 15 ♖f6+ ♔g2 16 ♖e6 ♔f3 17 ♖f6+ is a draw as White's rook is far enough away to be immune from attack by the black king) 14 b4 ♖e4 15 b5 ♖e5 16 b6 draws because the pawn is defended so Black cannot win it by ...♖c5+ and ...♖b5+.

1...♖bxc4

Now Black is winning.

2 ♖xc4 ♖xc4 3 ♖xb3 (D)



3...♖c6?

It's hard to see why Black chose this move (especially in a correspondence game) since it allows White to draw straight away. 3...e4! would have won: 4 ♖b7 (4 ♖b8 e3 5 b3 ♖e4 6 ♖f8+ ♔g4 7 ♖g8+ ♔f3 transposes to line 1 in the note to White's first move) 4...e3 5 ♖e7 ♖e4 (this is the key difference between line 2 in the note to White's first move and the current line; with Black's king on g5, he cannot play his rook to e4) 6 ♖f7+ ♔g4 (Black is effectively a tempo ahead of line 2 in the note to White's first move since here White's pawn is still on b2) 7 ♖g7+ ♔f3 8 ♖f7+ ♖f4 (8...♔e2 also wins) 9 ♖e7 ♖c4! 10 b3 ♖c5 11 ♖f7+ (11 ♔b2 e2 12 b4 ♖c4 threatens ...♖e4 and Black wins after 13 ♖xe2 ♔xe2 14 ♔b3 ♔d3) 11...♔g2 12 ♖g7+ ♔f2 13 ♖f7+ ♔e1 14 ♔b2 e2 15 b4 (15 ♖e7 ♔d2 16 ♖d7+ ♔e3 17 ♖e7+ ♔d3 18 ♖d7+ ♔e4 and Black wins) 15...♖c4 16 ♔b3 ♖e4 and White is defenceless.

4 ♖c3

There are several ways to draw, but this is the simplest.

4...♖xc3 5 bxc3 ♔e4 6 ♔c2 ♔e3 7 c4 1/2-1/2

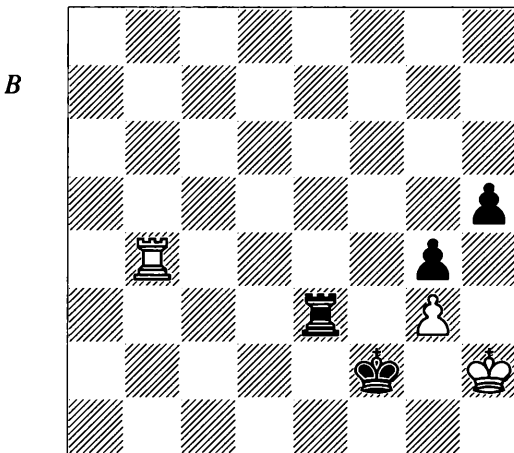
Summary:

Playing for the maximum checking distance is almost a reflex, but it is not always appropriate and is a common source of errors. Typical situations in which the rook should not go to the edge of the board include:

- The rook needs to be on a certain rank to defend a friendly pawn later on.
- The rook must leave space for the king to cross a critical rank or file behind the rook.

8.4.6 Reciprocal Zugzwang

Positions of reciprocal zugzwang arise quite often in rook endings and it is worth looking at a number of examples, since such positions are often misplayed in practice. We'll start with an elementary case.



S. Novikov – Yakovenko
Moscow 2007

This position is a draw, and White's simplest drawing method involves arriving at a position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play.

1...h4

The only real winning chance.

2 ♖f4+!

White can also draw with the more passive plan 2 ♖b2+ ♖e2 3 ♖b3, since after 3...h3 4 ♖a3 Black cannot make progress because 4...♖e3 5 ♖a4. However, 2 ♖xg4? is

wrong because after 2...hxg3+ 3 ♔h3 ♖f3! the reciprocal zugzwang arises with White to play. Black then wins as follows: 4 ♖g8 ♖f7 5 ♖a8 ♖h7+ 6 ♔g4 g2 7 ♖a2+ ♔g1 8 ♔f3 ♖f7+ 9 ♔g3 ♔h1 and White loses his rook.

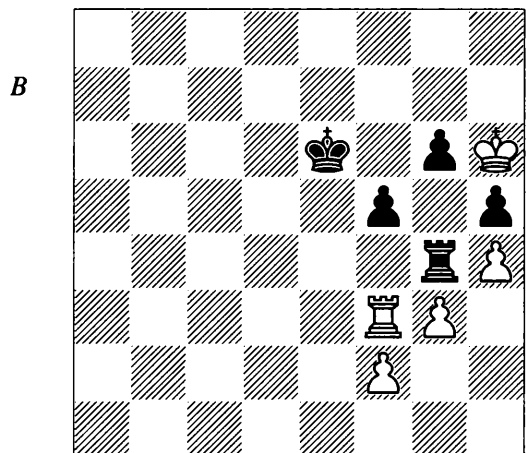
2...♖f3 3 ♖xg4 hxg3+ 4 ♔h3

Now it is Black to play in the reciprocal zugzwang. The key point is that if Black moves his rook along the f-file, White can force stalemate by, for example, 4...♖f8 5 ♖f4+ ♖xf4. That is why White loses if it is his move; he has to move his rook along the g-file and this destroys the stalemate defence.

4...♖e3 5 ♖g8 ♖d3 6 ♖g7 ♖f3 7 ♖g4! ♖f8 8 ♖f4+ ♖xf4 1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

If a reciprocal zugzwang is likely to arise, both sides will be trying to reach it with the other player to move. Sometimes this can be achieved by a simple king triangulation, much as in pawn endings (see Section 2.2.3 in Volume 1).



Serper – Schwartzman
USA 1996

1...♔f6?

As we shall see, this move permits White to play ♖f4, reaching a reciprocal zugzwang with Black to move. 1...f4? is also bad and fails to 2 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 3 gxf4 ♔f5 (3...♔f6 4 f3 ♔f5 5 ♔g7 is also a win for White) 4 f3! ♔f6 5 ♔h7 ♔f7 6 f5! gxf5 7 f4 and Black will lose both his pawns.

1...♔f7! would have drawn, since after 2 ♖f4 ♔f6! the reciprocal zugzwang arises with White

to play; then 3 ♖h7 may be met by 3...♙f7 or 3...g5, with a simple draw in either case. White can continue to play with the rooks on, but without any real hope of winning; for example, 2 ♖a3 ♙f6 (not 2...f4?, which loses to 3 ♖f3) 3 ♖a6+ ♙f7 4 ♖h7!? (4 ♖b6 f4! 5 ♖b4 fxg3 6 ♖xg4 hxg4 7 fxg3 ♙f6 is drawn) and now:

1) 4...f4? loses: 5 ♖a4 fxg3 6 ♖xg4 hxg4 7 fxg3 ♙f6 8 ♖h6 ♙f7 (or 8...♙f5 9 ♖g7) 9 ♖g5 ♙g7 10 ♖xg4 ♖h6 11 ♙f3! (11 ♙f4? ♖h5 is a reciprocal zugzwang; White is to play, so it is a draw) 11...♖h5 (11...g5 12 ♖g4 gxh4 13 ♖xh4 is also winning for White) 12 ♙f4 ♖h6 13 ♖g4 ♖h7 14 ♖g5 ♖g7 15 g4 ♖h7 16 ♙f6 and White wins.

2) 4...g5! (the only move) 5 hxg5 ♖xg5 6 ♖h6 ♖g8 7 ♖xh5 ♖g4! 8 ♖b6 ♖g8 and White is unable to exploit his extra pawn.

Black can also draw by 1...♙e5! (threatening ...f4!) 2 ♖e3+ ♙f6! 3 f4 (3 ♖a3 f4! draws) 3...♙f7 4 ♖h7 ♙f8! and Black just oscillates with his king between f7 and f8.

2 ♖f4!

Now it is Black to play in the reciprocal zugzwang.

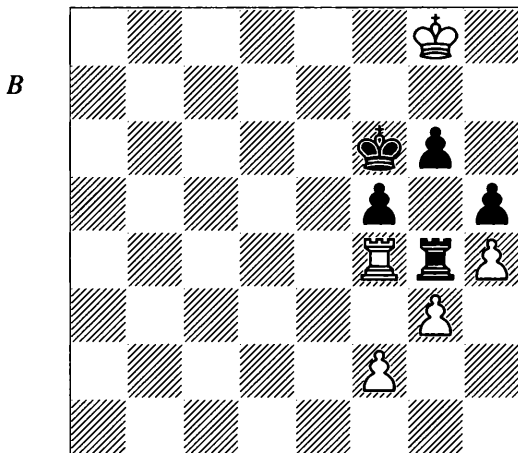
2...♙f7

2...♖xf4 3 gxf4 ♙f7 4 ♖h7 ♙f6 5 ♖g8 also wins for White.

3 ♖h7

White has the horizontal opposition and soon forces Black's king back.

3...♙f6 4 ♖g8! (D)



4...g5

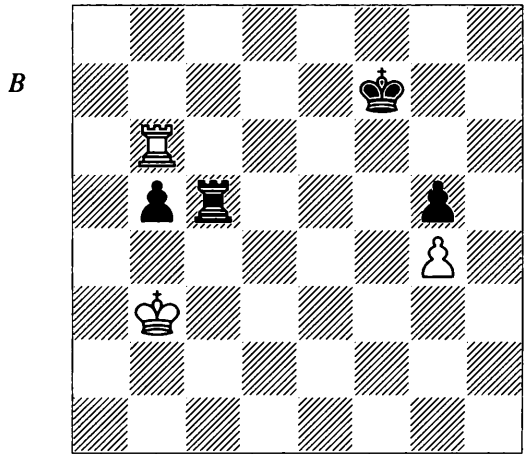
4...♙e5 5 ♖xg4 fxg4 6 ♙f7 ♙f5 7 ♖g7 g5 8 ♖h6! gxh4 9 gxh4 is no improvement from Black's viewpoint.

5 ♖xg4 hxg4

5...fxg4 6 ♖h7 ♙f5 7 ♖h6 is again winning for White.

6 h5 ♙e5 7 h6 ♙e4 8 h7 ♙f3 9 h8♙ ♙xf2 10 ♙e5 1-0

Sometimes it is hard to believe that a position is really reciprocal zugzwang.



Rigan – Yandemirov
Budapest 1993

Black is a passed pawn up and White's king is far away from the other pawns. On the other hand, White's rook is well placed behind the enemy passed pawn and is also cutting off Black's king. Black's winning plan must be to exchange the b5-pawn for the g4-pawn and thereby obtain a winning ♖+♙ vs ♖ position. However, it turns out that this plan cannot be executed directly since 1...♖c4? 2 ♖xb5 ♖xg4 3 ♖c3 ♖g6 4 ♖d3! (otherwise ...♖e4 wins) 4...♖f4 5 ♖e3 ♖h5 (5...♖f8 6 ♖b1 g4 7 ♖e2 followed by ♖f1 draws) 6 ♖b1 ♖g4 7 ♖g1+ ♙f5 8 ♖g2 allows White to defend (8...g4 can be met by 9 ♖f2). Thus Black has to employ some subtlety.

1...♖g7!

Amazingly, this is a position of reciprocal zugzwang. If White is to play, he must make a concession; rook moves are out because a move along the file allows Black's king to advance, while one along the rank loses to ...♖c4 and

White cannot capture immediately on b5. This leaves king moves, but ♔a3 takes the king one file further away from the g-pawn, while ♔b4 allows Black to check and take the g4-pawn with gain of tempo. This leaves only the move played in the game, which represents White's relatively best chance. Black has a second, rather similar, winning method starting with 1...♞c1! 2 ♔b4 ♕g7!, but one is enough!

2 ♔b2

The analysis of the alternatives runs:

1) 2 ♔b4 ♞c4+ 3 ♕xb5 ♞xg4. Now White's king is cut off along a rank, which is generally even worse than being cut off along a file. However, this particular case involves a finesse because Black must use his own rook to drive away White's rook and clear the way for his king to advance: 4 ♕c5 ♞h4! (the only move to win; 4...♞e4? 5 ♕d5 ♞e8 6 ♕d4 g4 7 ♕d3 and 4...♞f4? 5 ♕d5 ♞f6 6 ♞xf6 ♕xf6 7 ♕e4 are comfortable draws) 5 ♕d5 ♞h6! (here White cannot exchange rooks, which is why Black had to go via the h-file rather than the f-file) 6 ♞b1 ♕g6 7 ♕e4 ♞h3! (Black had to temporarily lift his own cut-off to free his king, but now he re-establishes it) 8 ♞g1 ♕h5! 9 ♕f5 ♞f3+ 10 ♕e4 g4 11 ♞h1+ ♕g5 12 ♞g1 ♕h4 13 ♞h1+ ♕g3 14 ♞g1+ ♕h3 and Black wins.

2) 2 ♞b8 ♕f6 3 ♞f8+ ♕e5 and now:

2a) 4 ♞f5+ ♕d4 5 ♞f3 (after 5 ♞f2 ♞c3+ 6 ♔b2 ♞g3 7 ♞f5 ♞xg4 8 ♞xb5 ♞g2+ 9 ♕c1 ♕e3 Black wins easily enough) 5...♞e5 6 ♔b4 ♞e4 7 ♞g3 ♕e5+ 8 ♕xb5 ♕f4 9 ♞g1 ♕f3 10 ♕c5 ♞xg4 11 ♞f1+ ♕g2 12 ♞f5 ♞g3 13 ♕d4 g4 14 ♞g5 ♕f2 15 ♕e4 ♞e3+ and Black wins.

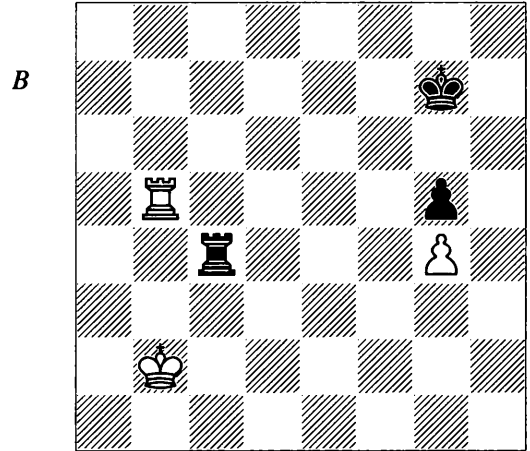
2b) 4 ♔a3 ♕d4! 5 ♔b2 (5 ♔b3 ♞c3+ 6 ♔b2 ♞g3 and Black wins as before) 5...♞e5 6 ♕c2 ♞e4 7 ♞f5 ♞xg4 8 ♞xb5 ♕e3 9 ♞b3+ ♕f2 10 ♞b5 ♞g2 11 ♞f5+ ♕e3+ 12 ♕c3 g4 and the g-pawn advances.

3) After 2 ♔a3 ♞c4 3 ♞xb5 ♞xg4 4 ♔b3 ♕g6 5 ♕c3 ♞e4 Black wins as in the game because White's king is too far away.

It is astonishing that White is in zugzwang in the position after 1...♕g7!, but it is just as remarkable that Black cannot win if he is to play. The main point is that 2...♕f7 is met by 3 ♔b4 ♞c4+ 4 ♕xb5 ♞xg4 5 ♕c5 and Black no longer has the manoeuvre ...♞h4-h6, which proved

decisive when the king was on g7. 2...♕h7 might therefore seem better, but after 3 ♔b2 ♞c4 4 ♞xb5 ♞xg4 5 ♕c3 ♕g6 6 ♕d3 we have the same draw as after 1...♞c4?.

2...♞c4! 3 ♞xb5 (D)



3...♕f6!

This finesse is the only way to win and helps to explain why the position is a draw when Black's king is on h7 rather than g7. It also explains why Black cannot win when White's king is on b3 (because then his rook is attacked and so he has to take on g4 immediately). By playing ...♕f6 first, Black effectively gains a tempo, because his rook remains on the c-file cutting off White's king for one extra move. 3...♞xg4? 4 ♕c3 ♕g6 5 ♕d3 is the familiar draw.

4 ♔b3

After 4 ♞f5+ ♕g6 5 ♞f1 ♞xg4 6 ♕c3 (Black also wins after 6 ♕c2 ♞d4) 6...♞g2! Black cuts off the white king along a rank and wins by 7 ♕d3 ♕h5 8 ♕e3 ♕g4.

4...♞xg4 5 ♕c3

White is a tempo down over 1...♞c4? and now Black can cut White's king off along the e-file.

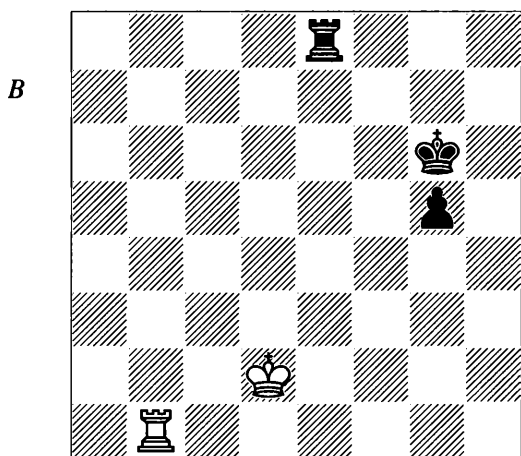
5...♞e4! 6 ♕d3 ♞e8 7 ♕d2

Black also wins after 7 ♞b1 g4 8 ♞b5 g3 9 ♕d2 ♞e4 10 ♞b3 ♞g4 11 ♞b1 g2 12 ♞g1 ♕g5 13 ♕e2 ♕h4 14 ♕f2 ♕h3 or 7 ♞b2 ♕f5 (not 7...g4? 8 ♞e2 and White is saved) 8 ♞f2+ ♕g4 9 ♞g2+ ♕f4 10 ♞f2+ ♕g3.

7...♕g6

7...g4 is slightly quicker, but the move played is adequate.

8 ♖b1 (D)



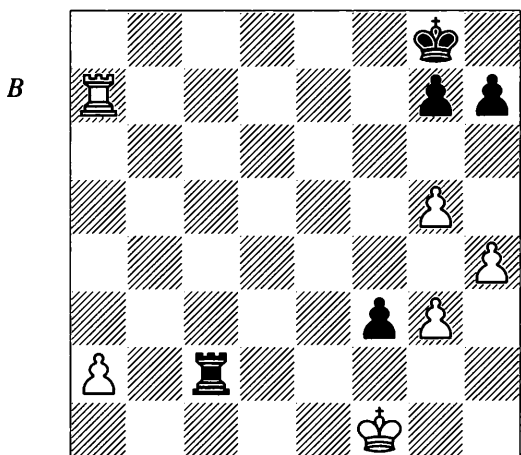
8...♖e5!

It's not too late to go wrong: 8...g4? 9 ♖e1 and White draws. The move played defends the g-pawn so that Black can advance his king even if White gives frontal checks. Note that it is important that Black can maintain his rook on e5; if White's king were on d3 rather than d2, he would be able to draw by ♔d4, displacing the rook from e5.

9 ♖g1 ♔h5 0-1

Black wins after 10 ♖h1+ ♔g4 11 ♖g1+ ♔f3 12 ♖f1+ ♔g2 followed by ...g4.

In the following example, Black defended weakly and lost in a few moves, but had he found the best defence, a truly fascinating position would have arisen.



Sedina – Jenni

Mitropa Cup, Leipzig 2002

This example shows how the study of apparently impractical theoretical positions can make all the difference when a related situation arises over the board. The interest lies not so much in the fact Black lost the game when it could have been drawn, but more that the winner's notes showed that she didn't really understand the position either. The type of position which may arise is one of (white) rook vs three connected (black) passed pawns on f3, g4 and h5, with the white king on f2 or g3 and Black's king on g7. The basic theory of this ending shows that Black can generally draw, provided only that he does not allow the white rook to occupy h8, tying his king down to the defence of the h-pawn.

In the diagram, White is a pawn up and has an outside passed a-pawn. Moreover, Black's king is cut off on the back rank. If Black waits, White will win by simply pushing the a-pawn, so Black has to undertake something positive. The only real plan available is to play ...♖g2, take the g3-pawn, and then make it back to a2 in time to stop the a-pawn. Then at least Black will have restored material equality, although he still has to cope with the danger posed by the a-pawn. However, no other plan offers any hope at all so Black has to try it.

1...♖g2!

In the game Black delayed his counterplay and lost in a few moves: 1...g6? (losing a vital tempo and giving White the time she needs to push the a-pawn) 2 a4 ♖g2 (passive defence is also hopeless; for example, 2...♖a2 3 a5 ♔f8 4 a6 and White wins after 4...♔e8 5 g4 ♔d8 6 h5 or 4...♔g8 5 g4 ♔f8 6 h5 gxh5 7 gxh5 ♔g8 8 h6) 3 a5 ♖xg3 (too late now) 4 a6 ♖g4 5 ♖b7 1-0. White plays a7 and ♖b8+, winning Black's rook.

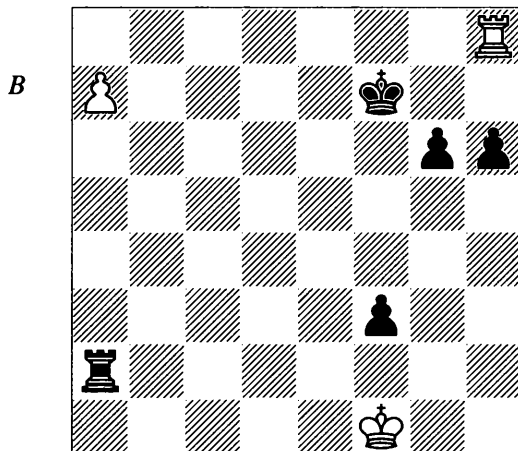
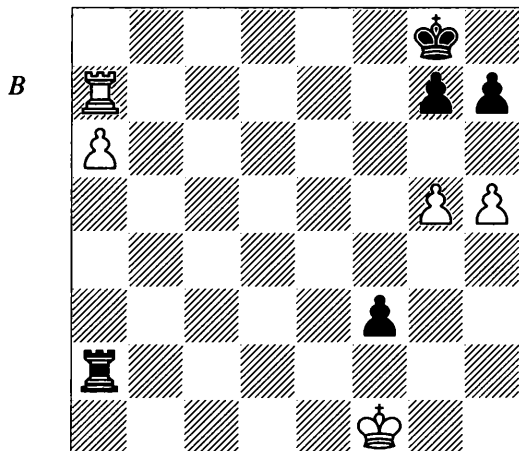
2 a4 ♖xg3 3 a5

3 ♔f2 ♖h3 4 a5 ♖xh4 5 ♔xf3 ♖a4 offers White no winning chances; for example, 6 ♔e3 ♔f8 7 ♔d3 h5 8 g6 h4 is drawn.

3...♖g2

Black must return as he now has no time to hunt down the h4-pawn. It is best to return via the second rank as this cuts off the white king from the f3-pawn.

4 a6 ♖a2 5 h5 (D)



5...♙f8

The only move, as White was threatening to win by 6 g6 hxg6 7 hxg6 ♙f8 8 ♖f7+ ♙g8 (8...♙e8 9 a7) 9 ♖b7 ♙f8 10 a7. Amazingly, the position after 5...♙f8 is reciprocal zugzwang. If it were Black to play, then the only feasible move would be 6...h6, but then White wins by 7 g6 ♙e8 8 ♖a8+ ♙d7 9 a7 ♙c6 10 ♖c8+ ♙b7 11 ♖g8 ♙xa7 12 ♖xg7+ ♙b6 13 ♖h7. If White is to play, however, she cannot lose a move; for example, if she plays ♙e1 or ♙g1, then Black checks on e2 or g2 respectively, and then returns the rook to a2. 6 g6 hxg6 7 hxg6 ♙e8 and 6 h6 gxh6 7 gxh6 ♙e8 also lead to a draw, so checking on a8 is the only way to make progress. This leads to the win of Black's rook but not the game.

6 ♖a8+ ♙e7!

There are reciprocal zugzwangs around, so Black must take care. 6...♙f7? is wrong because after 7 a7 Black is to play in a second reciprocal zugzwang. After 7...♖a5 (7...g6 8 ♖h8 and White wins) 8 ♙f2 ♖a3 9 ♙g3 Black has to surrender the f-pawn through zugzwang, whereupon the win is simple; for example, 9...♖a2 10 ♙xf3 ♖a5 11 g6+! hxg6 12 h6 gxh6 13 ♖h8 and White wins the rook.

7 a7 ♙f7

Now it is White to play in the second reciprocal zugzwang.

8 g6+!

Playing to win the rook is the only chance.

8...hxg6 9 h6 gxh6 10 ♖h8 (D)

This is the critical position. Black must give up his rook, but he can choose exactly how to

do this. In her analysis, Sedina only considered 10...♖xa7, which loses, although later in her analysis she gave a faulty white move, so she ended up with the correct result!

In order to find the best continuation, we must recall the remarks at the start of this example: if Black can reach a position with his pawns on f3, g4 and h5 and his king on g7 (preventing ♖h8) then he can generally draw. The time element is significant, so Black should arrange his forces so as to reach this target position as fast as possible.

10...g5!

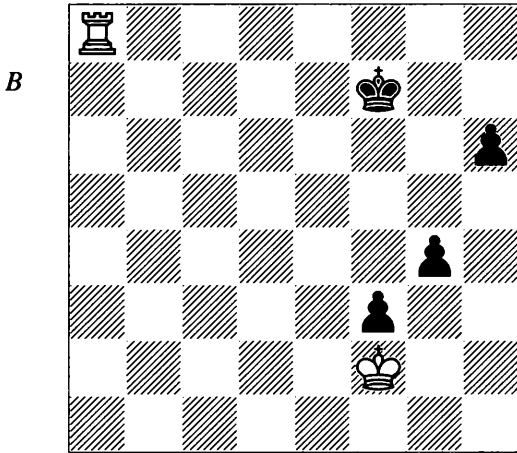
This is therefore the correct line (10...♙g7! draws in the same way). 10...♖xa7? 11 ♖h7+ ♙f6 12 ♖xa7 leads to a win for White, because Black still has to play four moves (...g5, ...g4, ...h5 and ...♙g7) in order to reach the drawing formation, which proves to be too many. The analysis runs 12...g5 (the best chance, as now Black is threatening to draw by ...g4) 13 ♙f2! (the only move to win; Sedina only considered 13 ♖a6+?, which is wrong because forcing the king to g7 only helps Black reach his target position and after 13...♙g7 14 ♙f2 g4 15 ♙g3 h5 it's a draw) 13...g4 14 ♙g3! h5 (Black is just one tempo short of drawing by playing ...♙g6) 15 ♖h7! ♙g6 16 ♖h8! and White wins as in the note to Black's 13th move below.

11 a8♖ ♖xa8 12 ♖xa8 g4

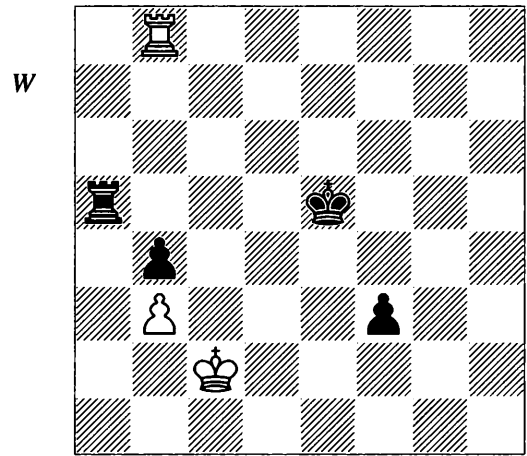
Black need not worry about 13 ♖h8 because after 13...♙g7 the rook must return.

13 ♙f2 (D)

White can't prevent Black from setting up his ideal defensive formation; for example, 13 ♖a5 ♙g6 14 ♙f2 h5.



Also in the following example, the analysis is far more interesting than the game continuation.



Guinsburg – Schoonhoven
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13...♔g7!

The key moment. Black mustn't play his moves in the other order, as then White wins: 13...h5? 14 ♖h8! ♔g6 (the win in this position is very instructive) 15 ♔g3 ♔g5 reaching an important moment. Most endgame books only consider this position in the simpler case that Black is to move, but it is much more interesting when White is to play. In order to transfer the move to Black, White must undertake a 12-move-long manoeuvre that includes two king triangulations. This runs 16 ♖g8+ ♔f5 17 ♔f2 ♔f6 (17...h4 weakens the g4-pawn and loses quickly after 18 ♔e3 h3 19 ♖g7 h2 20 ♖h7) 18 ♔f1! (White triangulates so as to lose a tempo; 18 ♔e3?! ♔f5 is slower) 18...♔f5 19 ♔g1! ♔f6 (19...♔f4 20 ♔f2 is the same) 20 ♔f2 ♔f5 21 ♔e3 (now this position arises with Black to play) 21...♔f6 22 ♔d2! (a second triangulation is necessary; 22 ♖h8?! ♔g5 is inferior as White wants this position with Black to play) 22...♔f5 23 ♖h8 ♔g6 (23...♔g5 24 ♔e3! reaches the target position more quickly) 24 ♔d3! ♔g5 25 ♔e3 (now Black has to give way) 25...♔g6 (25...♔h4 26 ♔f2 is the same) 26 ♔f2 ♔g5 27 ♔g3 (the position at move 15 has been repeated, but with Black to move) 27...♔g6 28 ♔h4 ♔f6 29 ♖h6+ ♔f5 30 ♖xh5+ ♔f4 31 ♖h8 ♔e3 32 ♔g3 and White wins.

Black is a passed pawn ahead, and is threatening to win immediately by ...f2, meeting ♖f8 with ...♖a1, so White's only chance is to move his king towards the f-pawn.

1 ♔d3

Now White is threatening ♔e3, so Black must use his king to support the f-pawn, even if this means giving up the b-pawn. 1 ♔d2 also draws.

1...♔f4 2 ♖xb4+

Forced, as Black was threatening to win by ...♖d5+ or even ...f2.

2...♔g3

At this point White resigned (0-1), even though the position is a draw. It must be quite unusual for a player in a correspondence game to resign in a drawn position. The drawing line is very interesting and runs 3 ♖b8 ♖f5! (after 3...f2, 4 ♖g8+ ♔f3 5 ♖f8+ ♔g2 6 ♔c4 ♖a8 7 ♖f7 f1♙+ 8 ♖xf1 ♔xf1 9 b4 ♔e2 10 b5 ♔e3 11 ♔c5 ♔e4 12 b6 ♔e5 13 b7 is a draw, but White must avoid 4 ♖f8? due to 4...♖a1 5 b4 f1♙+ 6 ♖xf1 ♖xf1 7 ♔d4 ♖b1 8 ♔c5 ♔f4 9 b5 ♔e5 10 ♔c6 ♔e6 11 b6 ♖c1+ and Black wins) 4 ♖g8+ (4 ♔e4? loses to 4...f2 5 ♔xf5 f1♙+ as White's pieces are too scattered) 4...♔h2 5 ♖h8+ ♔g1 6 ♖g8+ ♔f1 (D).

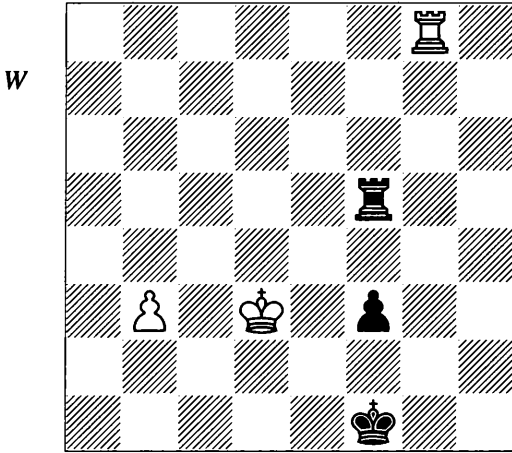
14 ♔g3 h5! 15 ♖b8 ♔h7!

This is the only available waiting move, since Black must keep the rook away from h8.

16 ♔h4 ♔g7 17 ♖b6 ♔h7 18 ♔g5 f2 19 ♖h6+ ♔g7 20 ♖g6+ ♔h7

This is a key moment at which White must find the correct continuation. The possibilities are:

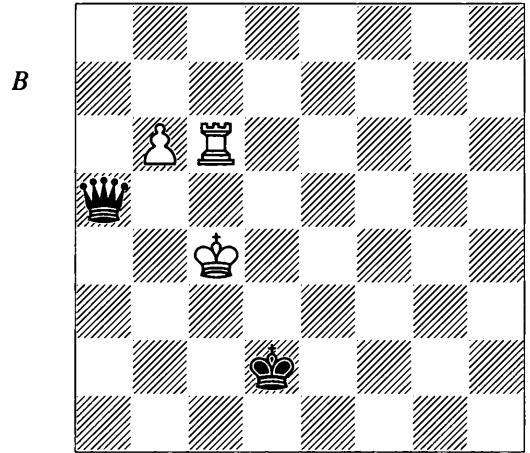
White has no more than perpetual check.



1) After 7 $\text{c}d2?$, Black wins by 7... $\text{f}f4$, setting up a fifth-rank cut-off: 8 $\text{c}e3$ $\text{f}f2!$ 9 $\text{c}d2$ (9 $\text{c}xf4$ $\text{c}e1$ 10 $\text{f}f8+$ $\text{c}d2$ 11 $\text{f}d8+$ $\text{c}c2$ 12 $\text{f}c8+$ $\text{c}b2$ leads to a won K vs $\text{K}+\text{P}$ position) 9... $\text{f}f4$ (to transfer the rook to h4 with gain of tempo) 10 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{f}f4$ 11 $\text{c}d2$ $\text{f}f2$ 12 $\text{b}b4$ $\text{f}f2$ 13 $\text{f}f8$ $\text{f}f3!$ (a sixth-rank cut-off can be as effective as one on the fifth rank) 14 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{f}f3!$ (now White is in zugzwang; 14... $\text{f}f3?$ 15 $\text{f}f4!$ is a position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play; after 15... $\text{f}f3$ 16 $\text{f}f8$ Black has nothing better than to return to b3) 15 $\text{f}f4$ (15 $\text{f}f8$ $\text{f}f3$ 16 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{c}c2$ 17 $\text{c}c2$ $\text{f}f2+$ 18 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{f}fxb4$ and Black wins) 15... $\text{f}f3$ (now White is on the wrong side of the reciprocal zugzwang) 16 $\text{c}c2$ $\text{c}c2$ 17 $\text{c}cxb3$ $\text{f}f1$ and White cannot hold out long due to his poor piece coordination; for example, 18 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{f}f7+$ 19 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{f}f7+$ 20 $\text{f}f4$ $\text{f}f5+$ 21 $\text{c}c2$ $\text{f}f5$ 22 $\text{f}f5$ $\text{f}fa2+$ 23 $\text{c}c3$ $\text{f}fa3+$ and Black picks up the pawn since White is mated if he moves to c4.

2) 7 $\text{b}b4?$ loses, although it takes Black a massive 79 moves to force mate from this position: 7... $\text{f}f2$ 8 $\text{c}d2$ $\text{f}f4$ 9 $\text{b}b5$ $\text{f}fb4$ 10 $\text{f}fg5$ $\text{f}fb3!$ (this is a second position of reciprocal zugzwang, analogous to the one arising in line 1) 11 $\text{c}c2$ $\text{c}ce2$ 12 $\text{c}cxb3$ $\text{f}f1$ (here White's pawn is one square more advanced and this makes the win much harder) 13 $\text{f}fc5$ and now if White had an extra tempo to coordinate his forces by, for example, $\text{c}cb4$ or $\text{f}fc6$, it would be a draw. However, with careful play Black can keep White off balance and win. I won't go into the details of this complex position, but here is a sample line: 13... $\text{f}fd1+$ 14 $\text{c}cb4$ $\text{f}fd2+$ 15 $\text{c}cc4$

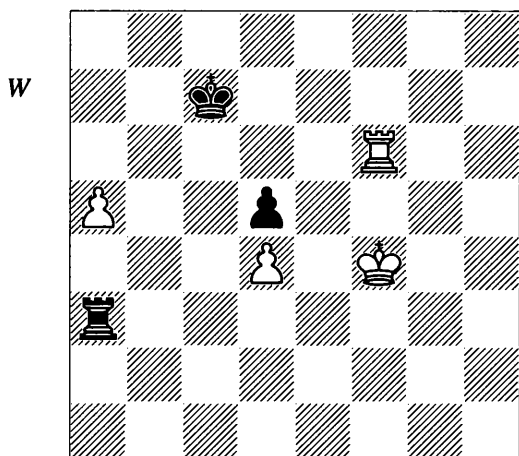
$\text{f}fa5$ 16 $\text{f}fd5$ $\text{f}fb6$ 17 $\text{f}fc5$ $\text{c}cd2$ 18 $\text{f}fc6$ $\text{f}fa5!$ 19 $\text{b}b6$ (D).



19... $\text{c}cd1!!$ (incredibly, this is the only move to win; Black's queen is already optimally placed so he should move his king) 20 $\text{b}b7$ $\text{f}fa7$ 21 $\text{f}fc7$ $\text{f}fb6$ 22 $\text{f}fh7$ $\text{c}cc2$ 23 $\text{f}fh2+$ $\text{c}cc1$ 24 $\text{f}fh1+$ $\text{c}cb2$ 25 $\text{f}fh2+$ $\text{c}ca3$ 26 $\text{f}fh7$ $\text{f}fc6+$ 27 $\text{c}cd3$ $\text{f}fd6+$ 28 $\text{c}cc4$ $\text{c}ca4$ 29 $\text{c}cc3$ $\text{f}fg3+$ 30 $\text{c}cc4$ $\text{f}fb3+$ 31 $\text{c}cd4$ $\text{f}fb4+$ 32 $\text{c}ce5$ $\text{c}ca5$ 33 $\text{f}ff7$ $\text{c}ca6$ 34 $\text{c}ce6$ $\text{c}ca7$ 35 $\text{c}cf5$ $\text{f}fd6$ 36 $\text{c}cg5$ $\text{f}fe5+$ 37 $\text{c}cg6$ $\text{c}cb6$ 38 $\text{f}fe7$ $\text{f}fd6+$ 39 $\text{c}cf5$ $\text{c}ca7!$ (I did warn you this ending was complex; playing the king to a7 threatens to take the rook and so forces it to an inferior position) 40 $\text{f}fg7$ $\text{f}fh6$ 41 $\text{f}ff7$ $\text{c}cb8$ 42 $\text{f}fe7$ $\text{f}fh5+$ 43 $\text{c}cf6$ $\text{f}fh4+$ 44 $\text{c}ce6$ $\text{f}fg5$ 45 $\text{f}fd7$ $\text{f}fg4+$ 46 $\text{c}ce7$ $\text{c}ca7$ 47 $\text{c}cd6$ $\text{f}fe4$ 48 $\text{f}fe7$ $\text{f}ff5$ 49 $\text{f}fd7$ $\text{f}ff6+$ 50 $\text{c}cd5$ $\text{c}cb8$ 51 $\text{c}cc5$ $\text{f}fe5+$ 52 $\text{c}cc4$ $\text{f}fe6+$ and the pawn finally drops, after which Black 'only' has to win K vs K .

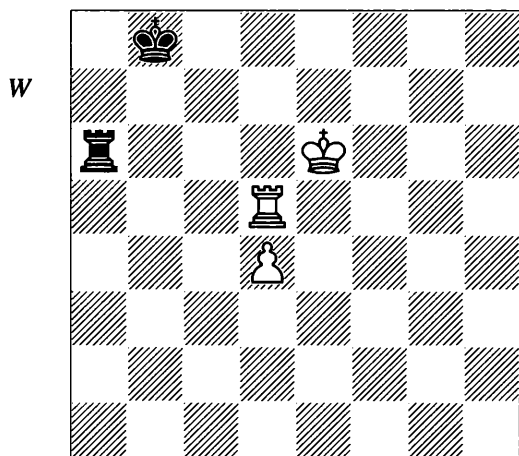
3) 7 $\text{f}fa8!$ (the only other drawing move is 7 $\text{f}fc8$, which is based on a similar idea) 7... $\text{f}f2$ (7... $\text{f}f4$ tries to set up a fifth-rank cut-off, but White can strongly reply 8 $\text{c}ce3!$) 8 $\text{f}fa1+$ $\text{c}cg2$ 9 $\text{c}cd4!$ (another fairly tough move, which helps to keep the black king at bay; 9 $\text{c}cc4?$ loses to 9... $\text{f}f1$ $\text{f}fa+$ 10 $\text{f}fxf1$ $\text{f}fxf1$ 11 $\text{b}b4$ $\text{c}cf3$ 12 $\text{b}b5$ $\text{c}ce4$ 13 $\text{c}cc5$ $\text{c}ce5$ 14 $\text{c}cc6$ $\text{c}ce6$ 15 $\text{b}b6$ $\text{f}fc1+$, while after 9 $\text{c}ce4?$ $\text{f}fb5$ White drops the b-pawn) 9... $\text{f}f1$ (9... $\text{f}fa5$ 10 $\text{f}fb1$ doesn't help Black) 10 $\text{f}fxf1$ $\text{f}fxf1$ 11 $\text{b}b4$ $\text{c}cf3$ 12 $\text{b}b5!$ $\text{f}fb1$ (Black is effectively conceding a tempo, as he cannot immediately approach with his king) 13 $\text{c}cc5$ $\text{c}ce4$ 14 $\text{c}cc6$ $\text{c}ce5$ 15 $\text{b}b6$ $\text{f}fc1+$ 16 $\text{c}cd7$ with a standard draw.

Now we come to an especially complex position that depends crucially on reciprocal zugzwangs.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Vršac 1979

This very complicated endgame was analysed by Marjanović in *Informator 28*, and subsequently in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*. However, there are many mistakes in these analyses, and I believe the full picture is revealed here for the first time. The play depends on a network on linked reciprocal zugzwangs, and in order to understand these, we first have to consider a specific situation of ♖+♗ vs ♜.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Analysis diagram 1

We shall keep all the other pieces fixed but vary the position of the black king, in order to

understand how this affects the result of the position.

White wins when Black's king starts on b8, although great accuracy is required. It is noteworthy that the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* incorrectly gives this position as a draw.

1 ♖d7

The threat is ♜b5+.

1...♞a7+

1...♜b6 2 ♞e5! transposes to the main line.

2 ♖d8 ♜b7 3 ♞e5!

The only winning move and very hard to find since White must not instinctively move his rook too far. The alternatives are:

1) 3 ♜c5? (this and 3 ♜h5? were the only moves considered by Marjanović, but neither of them wins) 3...♜b6! (3...♜b4? loses to 4 d5 ♜d4 5 ♖d7) 4 d5 ♜d6+! 5 ♖e7 ♜h6 and Black draws by giving checks from the long side.

2) 3 ♜h5? allows 3...♜b6! 4 ♖d7 ♜b7+ 5 ♖c6 ♜c7+ 6 ♖d6 ♜g7! (*Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* gives 6...♜c1?, but this loses after 7 ♜b5+ ♖a7 8 d5 ♜h1 9 ♖c6 and Black's king is hopelessly cut off from the pawn) 7 d5 ♜g6+ 8 ♖d7 ♜g7+, drawing.

3) 3 ♜d6? ♜b1 (3...♜b4 4 d5 was given as winning for White by the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*, but after 4...♜d4! 5 ♖d7 ♖b7 6 ♖e6 ♞e4+ 7 ♖f5 ♜h4 Black is out of danger; not, however, 4...♜b5? due to 5 ♖e7 ♞a5 6 ♜d8+ ♖b7 7 ♖e6 ♖c7 8 ♜d7+ ♖b6 9 ♜h7 ♞a8 10 d6 and White wins) 4 d5 ♜d1 5 ♖d7 ♖b7, drawing as before.

3...♜b6 4 ♖d7 ♜b7+ 5 ♖c6! ♖a7

The line 5...♜c7+ 6 ♖d6 ♜h7 reveals the reason why the rook had to go to e5 and not another square on the fifth rank: White can now win by 7 ♞e8+ ♖b7 8 ♞e7+, forcing the exchange of rooks.

6 d5 ♜b6+ 7 ♖c5 ♜b1 8 ♞e7+

8 d6? ♖b7! 9 ♞e7+ ♖c8 is only a draw.

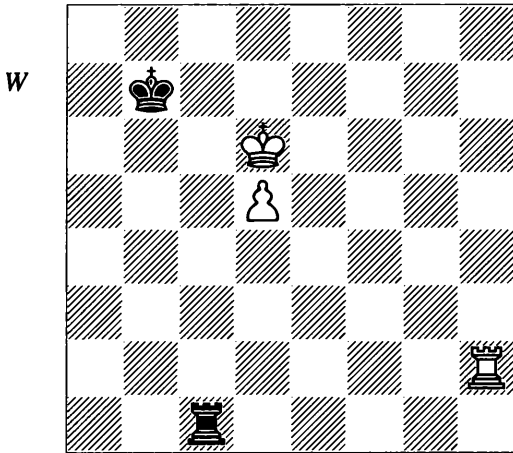
8...♖b8 9 ♖c6 ♜c1+ 10 ♖d7! ♜h1 11 ♞e2

Threatening to check at b2. If Black's king were on b7 then he would draw here by sideways checks, but as it is White is able to win.

11...♜h7+ 12 ♖c6 ♜c7+ 13 ♖d6 ♜c1

13...♜h7 again loses to 14 ♞e8+ ♖b7 15 ♞e7+.

14 ♜h2 ♖b7 (D)



Black improves the position of his king, but now his rook is poorly placed.

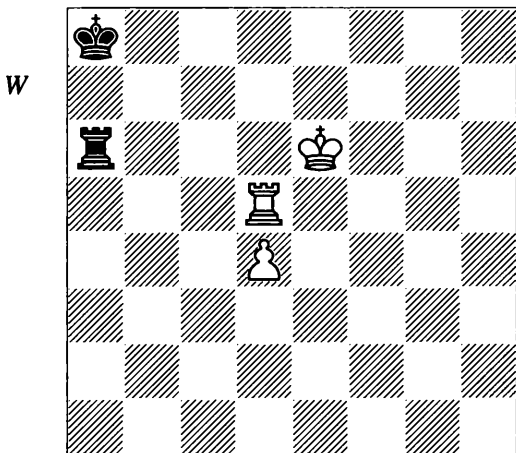
15 ♖h7+ ♔c8

15...♔b6 16 ♖h8 ♔b7 transposes.

16 ♖h8+ ♔b7 17 ♔e6 ♖e1+ 18 ♔d7 ♖g1

Black does his best, but White's rook occupies the h-file and so Black is unable to gain sufficient checking distance.

19 d6 ♖g7+ 20 ♔e6 ♖g6+ 21 ♔e7 ♔c6 22 ♖c8+ ♔d5 23 d7 ♖g7+ 24 ♔e8 ♔e6 25 ♖c6+ followed by d8♚, winning.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Analysis diagram 2

With the king on a8, the win is easier:

1 ♔d7 ♖b6

Or 1...♖a4 2 ♔c7!.

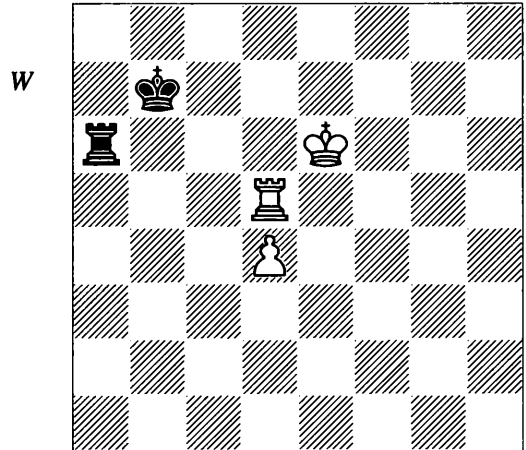
2 ♖c5 ♖b7+

2...♔b7 3 d5 ♖h6 4 ♖b5+ ♔a6 5 ♖b1 is easy.

3 ♔d8 ♖h7 4 ♖b5

But not 4 d5? ♖h8+ 5 ♔c7 ♖h7+ 6 ♔b6 ♔b8, drawing.

4...♖h8+ 5 ♔c7 ♖h7+ 6 ♔c6 ♖h6+ 7 ♔c5 and Black has no chance with his king cut off on the a-file.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Analysis diagram 3

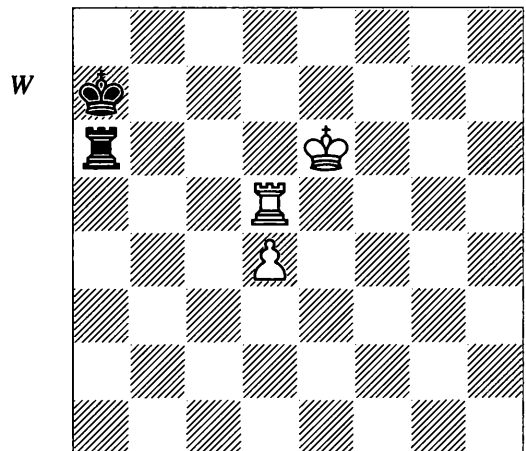
With the king on b7, it's a draw.

1 ♔d7 ♖a4! 2 ♖d6

Or 2 ♖b5+ ♔a6.

2...♖a1 3 d5 ♖d1 4 ♔e6 ♖e1+

Black draws easily.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Analysis diagram 4

With the king on a7 it's again a draw.

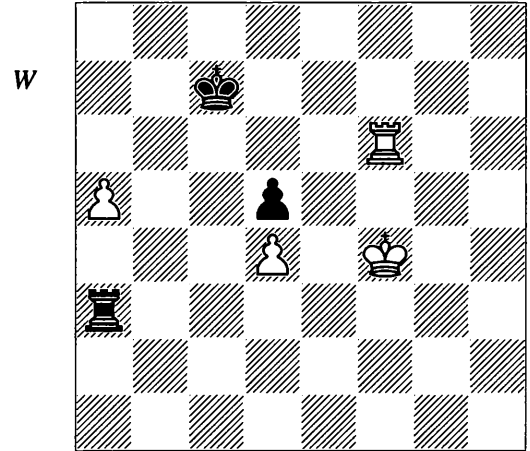
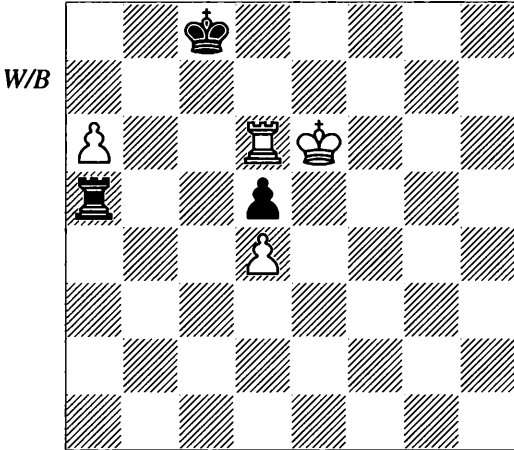
1 ♔d7 ♖a4! 2 ♔c7

2 ♔c6 ♖c4+ is also a draw.

2...♔a6! 3 ♖d8 ♕b5 4 d5 ♕c5 5 d6 ♖a7+ 6 ♕b8 ♖h7 7 d7 ♕b6 8 ♕c8 ♕c6
White loses his pawn.

4 ♖d6 ♕b8 5 ♕e6 ♕c8!
White cannot make progress.

Now let's return to the game position, which I repeat here.



Marjanović – Bronstein
Zugzwang diagram

This position is reciprocal zugzwang (zz1). With Black to play, White wins after 1...♕c7 (after 1...♕b8 2 ♖xd5 ♖xa6+ 3 ♕d7 White wins as in analysis diagram 1) 2 a7 ♕b7 3 ♖xd5 ♖a6+ 4 ♕d7 ♖xa7 5 ♖b5+ ♔a6+ 6 ♕c6 ♖h7 7 d5 ♖h6+ 8 ♕c5.

Now suppose that White is to play.

1 ♖c6+
1 ♕e7 ♕c7 2 a7 ♕b7 3 ♕e6 ♕xa7 4 ♖xd5 ♖a6+ is a draw by analysis diagram 4.

1...♕b8

This is a second position of reciprocal zugzwang (zz2).

2 ♕d6

2 ♖b6+ ♕c7 3 ♖d6 ♕c8 repeats.

2...♔a7

Or 2...♔a8 3 ♕e5 ♔a7! 4 ♖d6 ♕b8 5 ♕e6 ♕c8, also with a draw.

3 ♕e5 ♔a8!

3...♕b8? 4 ♕e6 leads to zz2 with Black to play and then White wins: 4...♔a7 (4...♔a8 5 ♖b6! ♔a7 6 ♖d6 is the same as after 4...♔a7, while after 4...♖b5 5 ♖d6 ♖a5 6 ♖xd5 ♖xa6+ 7 ♕d7 White wins as in analysis diagram 1) 5 ♖d6 with a third position of reciprocal zugzwang (zz3). If Black is to play, he must move his king to one of the losing squares a8 and b8, after which ♖xd5 wins.

1 a6

The only option, but a good one. After 1 ♖a6? ♕b7 2 ♖b6+ ♕c7 3 ♖b5 ♕c6 4 ♖c5+ ♕d6 the position is a dead draw.

1...♕b8 2 ♕e5 ♖a5

Black is severely restricted, but White still has to make progress. His first step is to put the rook on d6, so that his king can move to the sixth rank without blocking his guard of the a-pawn.

3 ♖d6 ♕c7!

In order to understand the play in this position, it is essential to bear in mind the three reciprocal zugzwangs mentioned in the analysis of the previous diagram. We can see that after 3...♕c8? 4 ♕e6! Black loses because this is zz1 with Black to move.

4 ♕e6 (D)

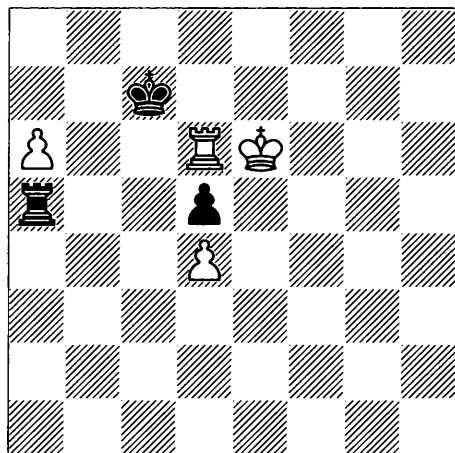
4...♕b8?

This should have been the losing move. 4...♕c8! would have drawn, reaching zz1 with White to play.

5 ♖c6?!

Missing the chance to play 5 ♖xd5! ♖xa6+ 6 ♕d7 with a win as in analysis diagram 1, although White takes this option when the same position arises again later. The move played does not throw the win away, but it does waste time.

B

**5...♖b5**

5...♖a7 loses since 6 ♜d6 is zz3 with Black to play. 5...♖a8 is tougher, but White still wins with accurate play:

1) 6 ♜c5? ♜xa6+ 7 ♕xd5 ♖b7 is a draw.

2) 6 ♜d6? ♖a7! (6...♖b8? loses to 7 ♜xd5) and we have zz3 with White to play.

3) 6 ♜b6! ♖a7 7 ♜d6 ♖b8 returns to the position after Black's fourth move, and now White can win by 8 ♜xd5.

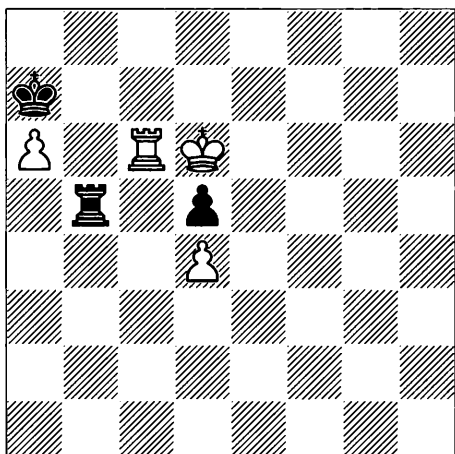
6 ♕d6?!

This still does not throw away the win, but does make it more complicated. 6 ♜c5? ♜xc5 7 dxc5 d4 8 c6 d3 9 ♕d7 d2 10 c7+ ♖a7 11 c8♙ d1♙+ is a draw, but the most direct line was 6 ♜d6! ♜a5 7 ♜xd5 ♜xa6+ 8 ♕d7 reaching analysis diagram 1, which is a win for White.

6...♖a7 (D)

Black doesn't have a satisfactory move, since 6...♜a5?! 7 ♕e6 is zz2 with Black to play, while after 6...♖a8?! 7 ♜c5 White wins comfortably.

W

**7 ♕e6!**

White is correct to backtrack. After 7 ♜c5? Black has only one saving line, namely 7...♜b4! (7...♜b6+? loses to 8 ♕xd5 ♜xa6 9 ♜b5! ♜h6 10 ♕c5 as Black's king is cut off) 8 ♕xd5 ♕xa6 and Black can draw because his king is on the short side of the pawn; for example, 9 ♕e5 ♖b6 10 ♜c1 ♜b2 11 d5 ♜h2, followed by checking from the side.

7...♜a5

7...♖b8 repeats the position after 5...♜b5, and therefore White can win by 8 ♜d6! ♜a5 9 ♜xd5 ♜xa6+ 10 ♕d7.

8 ♜d6

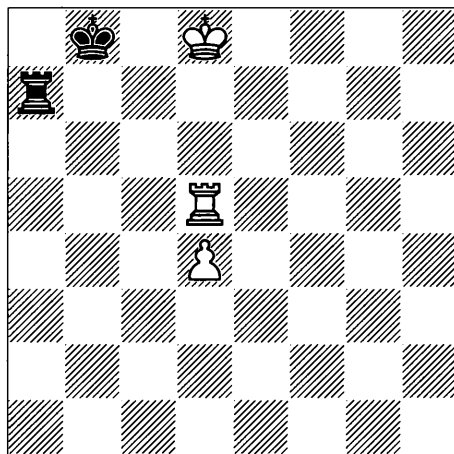
This is zz3 with Black to play, and so White wins.

8...♖b8

Repeating the position after 4...♖b8?. This time White finds the winning line.

9 ♜xd5! ♜xa6+ 10 ♕d7 ♜a7+ 11 ♕d8 (D)

B

**11...♜a4?!**

This makes things rather easy for White. The most resilient defence is 11...♜b7, which we considered in detail in analysis diagram 1.

12 ♜b5+ ♖a7 13 ♕c7!

The only winning move. Using a mating idea, White manages to advance his pawn while keeping Black's king cut off on the a-file. 13 d5? ♖a6 14 ♜c5 ♖b6 15 ♜c6+ ♖b5 16 ♕d7 ♜h4! 17 ♜e6 ♜h7+ 18 ♜e7 ♜h1 19 d6 ♖b6 is a standard draw.

13...♖a6

13...♜c4+ 14 ♜c5 is an even simpler win for White.

14 ♖b6+ ♔a7 15 d5 ♜c4+ 16 ♜c6 ♖b4 17 d6 ♖b7+ 18 ♔d8 ♖b8+ 19 ♜c8 ♖b1 20 d7 ♔b7 21 ♔e7 1-0

Summary:

- Positions of reciprocal zugzwang arise frequently in rook endings.
- Some reciprocal zugzwangs are relatively simple, but in other cases they verge on the unbelievable.
- It's sometimes necessary to spot the reciprocal zugzwang well in advance in order to arrive at the key position with the other player to move.
- The most mind-boggling positions are those in which there are several possible reciprocal zugzwangs, when the players have to take as much care as if they were in a minefield.

8.4.7 Liquidation to a Pawn Ending

Many rook endings reduce to pawn endings after an exchange of rooks. Accurate assessment of the resulting ending is clearly essential when a liquidation is in prospect, yet it is rather common for one of the players to misjudge the consequences. It's almost as if the brain has two distinct modes, one for rook endings and one for pawn endings, with a switch from one to the other proving too difficult.

that this position can be anything other than a draw. However, in order to find the correct defence, White must understand that a certain position is reciprocal zugzwang.

1 g4?

This mistake gives Black a chance to force a win. 1 h4? also loses after 1...g4 2 h5 ♔e3! (2...♜f2 doesn't throw away the win but it allows White to spin the game out by 3 ♔h1!) 3 ♜a2 ♜f2+ 4 ♜xf2 ♔xf2.

1 ♜a2! is the drawing idea (1 ♖b2, 1 ♜c2 and 1 ♜d2 are also good) since after 1...♜f2+ 2 ♜xf2+ ♔xf2 3 g4! we arrive at the reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play, and so the result is a draw: 3...♔f3 4 h4! ♔xg4 (not 4...h5? 5 gxh5 g4 6 ♔g1 and White wins) 5 hxg5 hxg5 6 ♔g2 and White has the opposition.

1...♜e1?

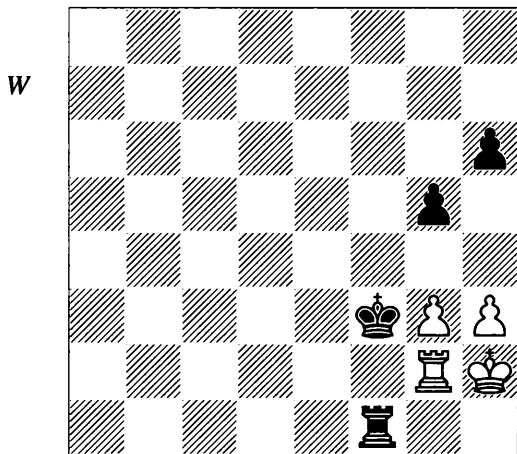
Black misses a golden opportunity. He could have won by 1...♜f2! 2 ♜xf2+ ♔xf2 and now it is White to play in the reciprocal zugzwang: 3 h4 h5! 4 ♔h3 (or 4 gxh5 g4 transposing) 4...♔f3 5 gxh5 (5 hxg5 hxg4+ 6 ♔h2 ♔f2! also wins for Black) 5...g4+ 6 ♔h2 ♔f2 7 h6 g3+ 8 ♔h3 g2 9 h7 g1 ♖1 ♗10 h8 ♗ ♗g3#.

2 ♜a2

Now it's even easier for White as 2...♜e2+ 3 ♜xe2 ♔xe2 4 ♔g3 followed by h4 is clearly drawn.

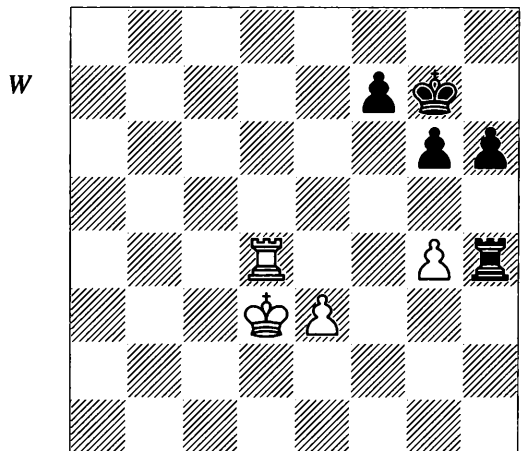
2...♖b1 3 ♜a3+ ♔f4 4 ♜a4+ 1/2-1/2

In the next example, a faulty liquidation allowed White to escape from a difficult position.



Golod – Baches Garcia
Benasque 2005

White is under some pressure due to Black's actively posted pieces, but it is hard to believe



Gulko – Short
Tal Memorial, Riga 1995

Black is a pawn up and even a quick glance indicates that he has good winning chances. White's remaining two pawns are isolated and Black has chances to exchange his f-pawn for White's g-pawn, thereby securing two connected passed pawns. White must also cope with the immediate threat of 1...h5 2 gxf5 ♖xd4+, which leads to a winning king and pawn ending.

1 ♖e4!

This is the only move to cope with Black's immediate threat. Remarkably, if it were White to play then he would lose at once, since a rook move along the rank allows ...h5 followed by a rook exchange, while 2 ♔d4 loses to 2...h5 3 gxf5 g5! 4 ♖xh4 gxf4 5 ♔e4 ♖h6 6 ♔f3 ♖xh5 7 ♔f4 f5 and Black has a winning king and pawn ending.

1...h5?

Black has no obvious waiting move, since 1...♖h7?! may be met by 2 ♖e7 and the ending after 2...♖xg4 3 ♖xf7+ ♔g8 4 ♖f1 is not a clear win for Black as the e-pawn provides some counterplay. Alternatively, 1...♔f8?! allows 2 ♖a4, as now 2...h5 may be met by 3 ♖a8+ followed by gxf5.

So it is almost a reciprocal zugzwang, the only caveat being that Black can continue with 1...g5! (threatening 2...h5 3 gxf5 ♖xe4 4 ♔xe4 ♖h6) 2 ♖d4! (the only defence) 2...f6 and now:

1) 3 ♔e2?! f5 4 ♖d7+ (4 gxf5? loses to 4...♖xd4 5 exd4 ♔f6) 4...♔f6 5 gxf5 ♔xf5 and with two connected passed pawns against White's lone pawn, I would expect this to be a win for Black.

2) 3 ♖a4 h5 (or else Black cannot make progress) 4 ♖a7+ ♔g6 5 gxf5+ ♔xh5 is White's only chance, although Black retains good winning chances as White's king is not in front of the passed g-pawn, nor is it clear how it can reach such a position.

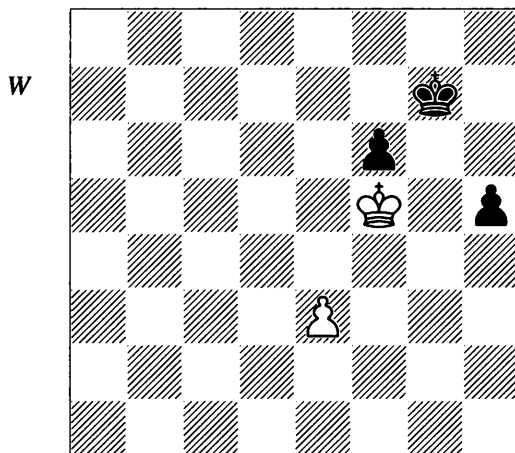
In the game, Short didn't assess the resulting king and pawn ending correctly, and gave away a likely win.

2 gxf5 ♖xe4

After 2...♖xh5 3 ♔e2 the white king can move in front of the enemy pawns, with a drawn position.

3 ♔xe4 gxf5 4 ♔f5! f6 (D)

4...♔h6 5 e4! reaches a position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play, so it is a draw.



5 ♔f4!

This is the only drawing move, since 5 e4? fails to 5...♔f7 6 e5 h4! 7 ♔g4 (7 e6+ ♔e7 8 ♔g4 ♔xe6 9 ♔xh4 ♔f5 also wins for Black) 7...fxe5 8 ♔xh4 ♔e6 9 ♔g3 ♔d5 10 ♔f2 ♔d4!, gaining the opposition and winning, while 5 ♔e4? ♔f7 6 ♔f5 ♔e7 7 ♔f4 ♔e6 8 ♔g3 ♔f5 9 ♔h4 ♔g6 10 e4 ♔h6 11 ♔h3 ♔g5 12 ♔g3 h4+ 13 ♔f3 h3 14 ♔g3 h2 15 ♔xh2 ♔f4 is a win for Black.

5...♔f7

5...♔g6 6 e4 is another reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play; after 6...♔f7 7 e5 or 6...♔h6 7 ♔f5 ♔g7 8 e5 White exchanges pawns and draws.

6 ♔g3!

Not 6 ♔f3? ♔e6 7 ♔g3 ♔f5, when Black wins in the same way as after 5 ♔e4?. The point is that White must be ready to meet ...♔e6 by ♔h4.

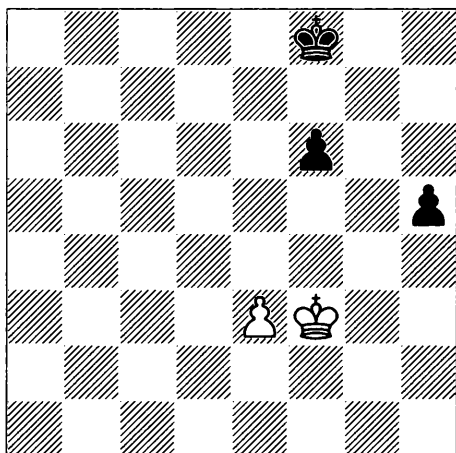
6...♔g6 7 ♔f4 ♔g7 8 ♔f3!

White continues to play accurately. He has to be able to meet ...♔g6 by ♔f4 and ...♔e6 by ♔h2, so when Black's king is on f7, White's king must be on g3. When Black's king is on g7, next to g6 and f7, White's must be next to f4 and g3; hence it must be on f3. We saw this type of logic in Section 2.2.5 from Volume 1. 8 ♔g3? ♔f7 and 8 ♔f5? ♔f7 9 ♔f4 ♔e6 both win for Black.

8...♔f8 (D)

9 ♔g2!

W



Once again the only move since 9 ♖g3? ♕f7, 9 ♕f2? ♖e7 10 ♖g3 ♕f7 and 9 ♕f4? ♖e7 10 ♖g3 ♕f7 are all winning for Black.

9... ♖g8 10 ♕f2

10 ♕f3 also draws.

10... ♕f8 11 ♖g2 ♖e7 12 ♖h3!

12 ♖g3? ♕f7 should be familiar by now.

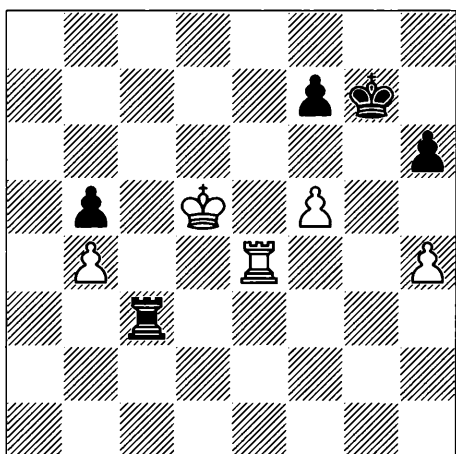
12... ♕f7 13 ♖g3 ♖g6 14 ♕f4 ♖h6 15 ♕f5 ♖h7 16 e4 ♖h6

16... ♖g7 17 e5 is also a draw.

17 ♕xf6 h4 1/2-1/2

The following example could also have been included in the pawn endings chapter in Volume 1, but it's interesting to see how the critical position arose from a rook ending.

B



Lopez Jimenez – A.C. Hernandez
Isla Guitart 1994

Black won this position and Hernandez's notes indicated that the ending was winning

from this point onwards. It is interesting how even strong players can sometimes totally misjudge positions. If we look at the diagram in general terms then, yes, we can say that Black should have some advantage as the f5-pawn is weak and may well fall within a few moves. On the other hand, White's king is very actively placed and in the event of White winning the b5-pawn, he will have good counterplay with his b-pawn. It doesn't really look as if Black's advantage should be decisive, but as always in order to verify this opinion we need to look at some concrete variations.

1... ♕f6 2 ♖f4

The only move according to Hernandez. I don't agree with this, although there is nothing wrong with White's continuation and it should prove perfectly adequate to draw. 2 ♖d4 is also sufficient; for example: 2... ♕xf5 3 ♖d6 h5 4 ♖d5+ ♕g4 5 ♖xb5 f5 6 ♖b8 f4 7 b5 f3 8 b6 ♖b3 9 ♖c7 ♖xh4 10 ♖f8 ♖g3 11 ♖g8+ ♕h3 12 ♖f8 ♖g2 (12...h4 13 b7 ♖g2 14 ♖g8+ is also drawn) 13 ♖g8+ ♕f1 14 ♖g5 h4 15 ♖h5 ♖b4 16 b7 f2 17 ♖xh4 ♖xh4 18 b8♣ and Black cannot win as there are too many checks.

2... ♖c8

This causes White the most difficulty. 2... ♖c7 allows a simpler draw by 3 ♖d4 (not, however, 3 ♖d6? in view of 3... ♖c4! 4 ♖xc4 bxc4 5 b5 c3 6 b6 c2 7 b7 c1♣ 8 b8♣ ♣f4+, winning the white queen) 3... ♕xf5 (3... ♖d7+ 4 ♖c5 ♖xd4 5 ♖xd4 ♕xf5 6 ♖c5 ♖e4 7 ♖xb5 f5 8 ♖c6! leads to a drawn queen and pawn ending) 4 ♖d6 ♖b7 (or else ♖d5+) 5 ♖c6 and White draws easily thanks to his active pieces.

3 ♖d4

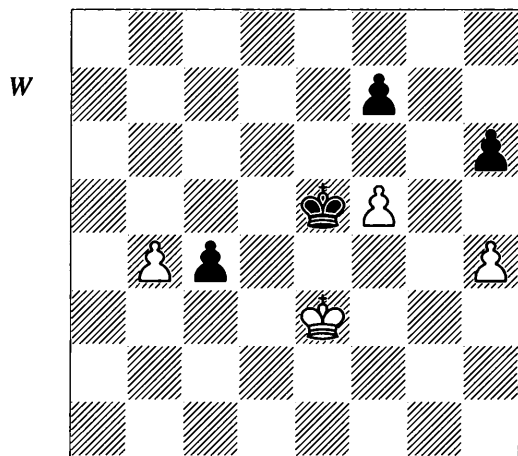
White is almost in zugzwang, since 3 ♖d4? ♕xf5 and 3 ♖f1? ♖c4 are certainly lost for him.

3... ♖c4+ 4 ♖e3 ♖e5

Black decides to force a king and pawn ending. Even though it is drawn, there was no other continuation that offered realistic winning chances. This is an example of how luck can play a role in chess. Black didn't realize the king and pawn ending is drawn and so aimed for it, but this decision won him the game because White went wrong and lost. Had he analysed the king and pawn ending correctly, he would probably not have headed for it, and

then it is quite possible that White would have drawn.

5 ♖xc4 bxc4 (D)



The crucial moment, at which White has only one move to draw, which was missed by the players during the game and by Hernandez in his analysis.

6 b5?

This loses, as does 6 h5? ♖d5! 7 ♖d2 ♖d4 8 ♖c2 f6 (the crucial point is that this position is reciprocal zugzwang; here White is to play and he cannot avoid making a fatal concession) 9 ♖d2 (9 b5 ♖c5 is also hopeless for White) 9...c3+ 10 ♖c2 ♖c4 11 b5 ♖xb5 12 ♖xc3 ♖c5 and Black wins.

6 ♖d2! is the drawing move, threatening ♖c3, and now:

1) 6...♖xf5 7 ♖c3 (the simplest method, although 7 b5 ♖e6 8 ♖c3 ♖d5 9 b6 ♖c6 10 ♖xc4 ♖xb6 11 ♖d5 also draws) 7...♖e4 8 ♖xc4 f5 9 b5 f4 10 ♖c3 ♖e3 11 b6 f3 12 b7 with a clear draw.

2) 6...♖d4 7 ♖c2 (after the two reserve tempi on the kingside have been used up, the above reciprocal zugzwang arises with Black to play and then White escapes with a draw) 7...c3 (after 7...h5 8 f6 c3 9 b5 ♖c5 10 ♖xc3 ♖xb5 11 ♖d4 the h5-pawn falls, while 7...f6 8 h5 c3 9 b5 ♖c5 10 ♖xc3 ♖xb5 11 ♖d4 ♖c6 12 ♖c4 is the same as the main line) 8 b5 ♖c5 9 ♖xc3 f6 (9...♖xb5? even loses after 10 ♖d4) 10 b6 ♖xb6 11 ♖c4 ♖c6 12 h5 and White has the opposition.

6...♖d5 7 b6 ♖c6 8 ♖d4 ♖xb6 9 ♖xc4

White has liquidated the queenside pawns, much as in some of the above lines, but the crucial difference is that Black now gains the opposition.

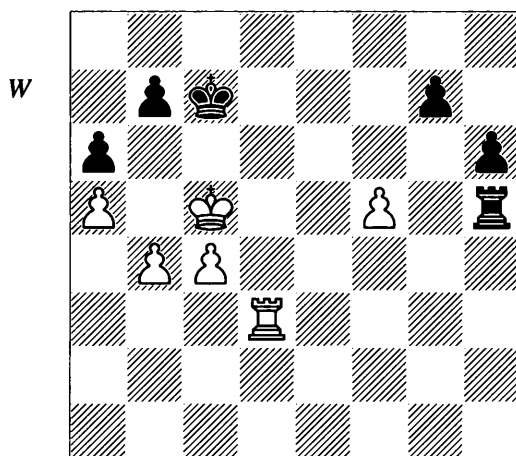
9...♖c6 10 ♖d4

10 h5 f6 doesn't help White.

10...♖d6 11 ♖e4 f6 0-1

The lines 12 h5 ♖c5, 12 ♖f4 h5 13 ♖e4 ♖c5 and 12 ♖d4 h5 are all lost for White as he will eventually lose both his pawns.

The next position shows how a typical error in king and pawn endings (see Section 2.7.2 in Volume 1) can have an impact in a rook ending.



Stefansson – Volzhin
Varadero 2000

Players often overestimate the strength of outside passed pawns in king and pawn endings, and this can lead to faulty evaluations. In this position, White has an evident advantage because his pieces are more actively placed and he has a considerable space advantage. At two stages in the subsequent play, White had the opportunity to exchange rooks into a king and pawn ending, but he declined these, perhaps for fear that the outside passed h-pawn would at any rate prevent him from winning. However, this fear was unjustified and swapping rooks would have led to victory. Keeping the rooks on allowed Black to draw with careful defence.

1 ♖d5!

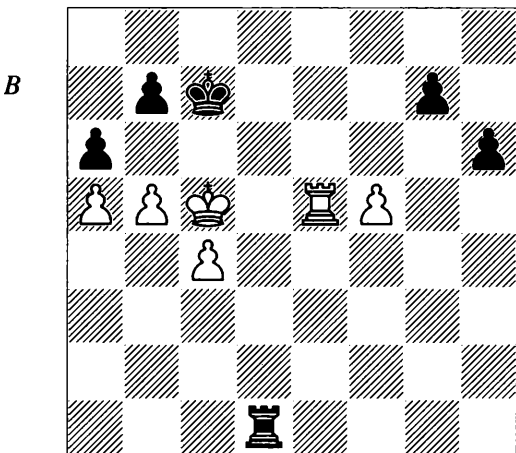
The best move; White defends the f-pawn and prepares the manoeuvre ♖e5-e7+, followed by ♖b6.

1...♖h1

Black's only chance is to play his rook to the d-file, so that he can interpose on d7.

2 ♜e5 ♞d1 3 b5?! (D)

This move misses a golden opportunity to win. Exchanging rooks by 3 ♜e7+ ♞d7 4 ♞xd7+ ♟xd7 5 ♟d5 would have given White a decisive advantage, despite Black's outside passed h-pawn. White threatens to play his king to h5 and g6 and then take on g7. If at any stage Black pushes the h-pawn, White simply rounds it up with his king, while if Black tries to counterattack the f5-pawn, then White creates a passed pawn on the queenside. In this position, White's space advantage on both sides of the board outweighs the value of the outside passed pawn. Here is the analysis: 5...♟c7 6 ♟e5 ♟c6 7 ♟f4 ♟d6 8 ♟g4 ♟e5 9 c5! (9 b5? ♟d4 10 ♟h5 ♟xc4 11 bxa6 bxa6 12 ♟g6 h5! 13 ♟xh5 ♟d5 14 ♟g6 ♟e5 is a draw) 9...h5+ (9...♟d5 10 ♟h5 ♟c4 11 ♟g6 h5 12 ♟xh5 ♟xb4 13 ♟g6 and White wins) 10 ♟xh5 ♟xf5 11 b5! axb5 12 c6 and the a-pawn promotes.



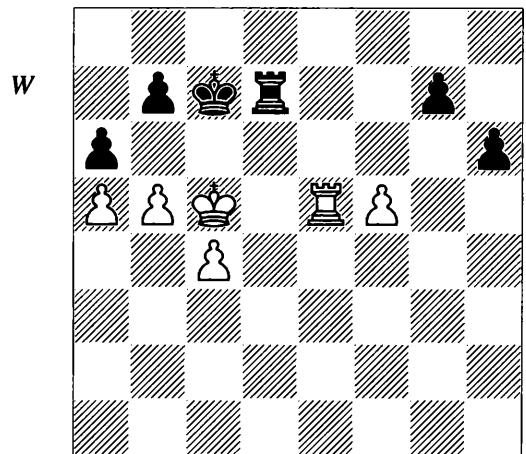
After the move played, White is still winning, but his task is now significantly more complicated.

3...♞d7

Black's other possible defence is to put his h-pawn to use directly by 3...h5. Now, curiously, although White has various possibilities to exchange rooks, he cannot win with this plan; instead, he must keep the rooks on the board: 4 b6+! (4 ♜e7+? ♞d7 5 b6+ ♟d8 6 ♞xd7+ ♟xd7 7 ♟d5 h4 8 ♟e4 h3 9 ♟f3 ♟d6 10 ♟g3 ♟c5 11

♟xh3 ♟b4! 12 ♟g4 ♟xa5 13 ♟g5 ♟xb6 14 ♟g6 a5 15 ♟xg7 a4 is only a draw) 4...♟d7 (4...♟d8?! loses to 5 ♞d5+ ♞xd5+ 6 ♟xd5 ♟d7 7 ♟e5 ♟c6 8 ♟f4 ♟c5 9 ♟g5 ♟b4 10 ♟xh5 ♟xa5 11 ♟g6 and White is too fast) 5 f6! (5 ♞d5+? ♞xd5+ 6 ♟xd5 h4 transposes into the analysis of 4 ♜e7+?) 5...gxf6 6 ♞xh5 with an extremely unpleasant ending for Black. Indeed, I cannot see how he can save the game; for example, 6...♞a1 (6...♟e6 7 ♞h7 ♞d7 8 ♞xd7 ♟xd7 9 ♟d5 ♟e7 10 ♟e4! and 6...♞f1 7 ♞h7+ ♟c8 8 ♞h8+ ♟d7 9 ♞b8 ♞f5+ 10 ♟b4 ♟c6 11 ♞c8+ ♟d6 12 ♞c7 are also winning for White) 7 ♞h7+ ♟c8 8 ♞c7+ ♟b8 9 ♞f7 ♟c8 10 ♞xf6 ♟d7 11 ♞f7+ ♟c8 12 ♞h7 (now Black is in zugzwang) 12...♞a2 (reducing the checking distance) 13 ♟b4 ♞b2+ 14 ♟a3! ♞b1 15 ♞h8+ ♟d7 16 ♞b8 ♟c6 17 ♞c8+ ♟d6 18 ♞c7 ♞a1+ 19 ♟b4 ♞b1+ 20 ♟c3 and White wins.

We now return to 3...♞d7 (D):



4 ♜e8?

Now the win definitely disappears. White could still have decided the game by 4 b6+ ♟d8 5 ♞d5!, and now:

1) 5...h5 6 ♞d4! (6 ♟d4? h4 7 ♟e4 ♞xd5 8 cxd5 h3 9 ♟f3 ♟d7 10 ♟g3 ♟d6 11 ♟xh3 ♟xd5 12 ♟g4 ♟d6! 13 ♟g5 ♟e7 14 ♟g6 ♟f8 is a draw since if the kingside pawns are exchanged, Black just runs with his king to a8) 6...♟e7 (6...♞xd4 7 ♟xd4 ♟e7 8 ♟e5 and White wins) 7 ♞h4 ♟f6 8 ♞xh5 ♞d1 9 ♞h7! (9 ♞h8! ♟xf5 10 ♞b8 ♞d7 11 ♞xb7! ♞xb7 12 ♟d6! is another method which leads to an easily winning queen ending, although this requires

careful calculation; the idea of a rook sacrifice on b7 recurs in several lines) 9...♖d2 (Black was in an awkward zugzwang; moving the rook along the d-file loses his checking distance and White can reply ♖b4, setting the c-pawn in motion; 9...♙f7 10 ♖h8 ♙f6 11 ♖c8 followed by ♖c7 wins for White, as does 9...♖d8 10 ♖b4) 10 ♖b4! ♖d1 11 ♖h8 ♙xf5 12 ♖b8 ♖d7 13 ♖xb7! ♖xb7 14 c5 and the connected passed pawns are too strong.

2) 5...♖xd5+ 6 ♖xd5 ♖d7 7 ♖e5! (7 c5? h5 8 ♖e5 ♖c6 9 ♖f4 ♖xc5 10 ♖g5 ♖d6! 11 ♖xh5 ♖e7 is only a draw) 7...♖c6 (7...♖e7 8 ♖f4 ♖d6 9 ♖g4 ♖c5 10 ♖h5 ♖xc4 11 ♖g6 h5 12 ♖xh5 ♖d5 13 ♖g6 ♖e5 14 ♖xg7 ♖xf5 15 ♖f7 and White wins) 8 ♖e6 h5 9 ♖f7 h4 10 ♖xg7 h3 11 f6 h2 12 f7 h1♚ 13 f8♚ and the queen ending should be a win. White is a pawn up and, more significantly, his large space advantage on the queenside means that in the likely event of the b7-pawn falling, White's passed b-pawn will already be on the sixth rank. One line runs 13...♚g2+ 14 ♖f7 ♚f3+ 15 ♖e8 ♚g4 16 ♚f6+ ♖c5 17 ♚f7! ♖b4 18 ♚d5 ♚c8+ 19 ♖e7 and Black is in zugzwang; if he plays 19...♖a4 then 20 ♚d7+ wins, while if the king moves elsewhere, White plays c5-c6.

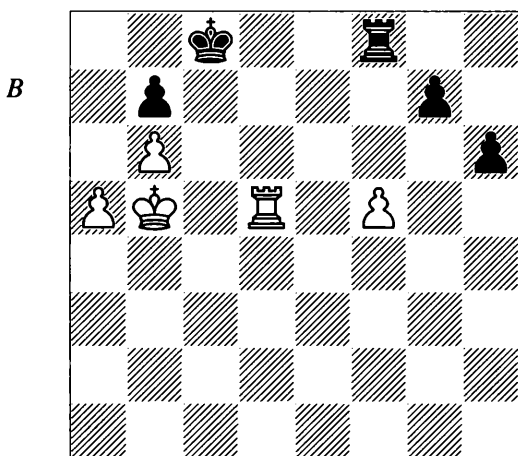
4...axb5!

Black seizes on White's mistakes and now saves the game by accurate defence.

5 cxb5 ♖f7 6 b6+ ♖d7 7 ♖e5

7 a6 bxa6 8 b7 ♖xf5+ 9 ♖d4 ♖xe8 10 b8♚+ ♖f7 is an easy draw for Black, since playing his rook to f6 creates a fortress.

7...♖f8 8 ♖d5+ ♖c8 9 ♖b5 (D)



9...h5

It's time for the h-pawn to make its presence felt. Black only needs to exchange the h- and f-pawns to secure the draw.

10 a6 ♖b8 11 axb7

11 a7+ ♖a8 12 ♖c4 h4 is drawn because Black can play for stalemate if necessary.

11...h4 12 ♖d3 ♖h8

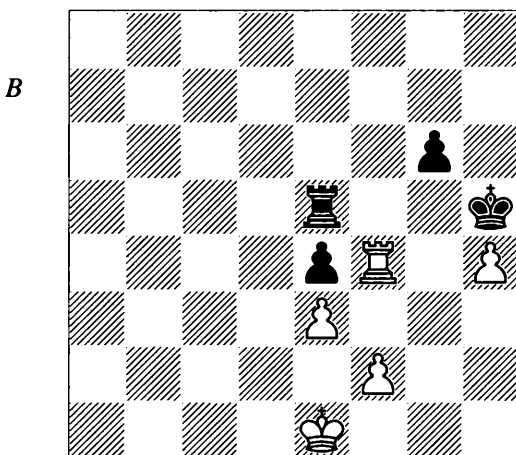
But not 12...♖xf5+? 13 ♖a6 ♖f8 14 ♖c3 followed by ♖c8+ and White wins.

13 ♖a3 ♖xb7 14 ♖a7+ ♖b8 15 ♖a6 h3 16 ♖b7+ ♖a8

16...♖c8 17 ♖a7 ♖h4 also draws.

17 ♖a7+ ♖b8 18 ♖b7+ 1/2-1/2

Finally, an example in which everything was played accurately. Black correctly calculated the consequences of exchanging rooks and so saved a difficult position.



Believsky – Spraggett

Elista Olympiad 1998

Black is a pawn down, but there are few pawns remaining. The main danger is that White will play his king to d4 and win the e4-pawn; for example, 1...g5? 2 hxg5 ♖xg5 3 ♖d2 is winning for White, as there is no way for Black to save his last pawn. The diagram position is a draw, but Black must find the correct plan.

1...♖h6!

This is a good idea; Black simply waits until White moves his king to the d-file and then he plays ...♖f5. It's also possible to draw by waiting with the rook; for example, 1...♖e6! 2 ♖d2 ♖d6+ 3 ♖c3 (3 ♖c2 ♖d8 4 ♖xe4 ♖f8 5 ♖f4

♙xf4 6 exf4 ♖g4 is a draw) 3...♙d3+ 4 ♖c2 (4 ♖c4 ♙d2 5 ♖c5 ♖h6 is also safe for Black) 4...♙d8 and White cannot make progress.

2 ♖d2

Other moves also offer White no winning prospects; for example, 2 ♖e2 ♖h5 3 f3 exf3+ 4 ♖xf3 g5 5 hxg5 ♖xg5 or 2 ♖f1 ♖h5 3 ♖g2 ♙e8 4 ♖g3 ♙e5 5 ♙f8 ♖h6 6 ♖f4 ♙e7 7 ♙h8+ ♖g7 8 ♙d8 ♙f7+ 9 ♖g3 ♙e7.

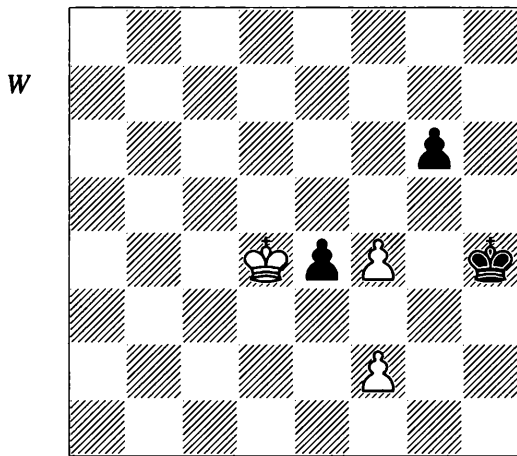
2...♙f5!

Black has accurately calculated the result of the liquidation to a king and pawn ending.

3 ♖c3

3 ♙xe4 ♙xf2+ 4 ♖d3 g5 5 ♙e6+ ♖h5 6 hxg5 ♖xg5 7 ♖e4 ♙a2 is an easy draw, so White has little choice but to allow the rook exchange.

3...♙xf4 4 exf4 ♖h5 5 ♖d4 ♖xh4 (D)



The position with the white king on e4 and the black king on g4 is the crucial reciprocal zugzwang in this ending. Black can ensure that it arises with White to play.

6 ♖xe4

6 ♖e5 is met by 6...♖h3! (not 6...♖g4? 7 ♖xe4 and it is Black to play in the reciprocal zugzwang; White then wins after 7...♖h5 8 f5) 7 ♖xe4 and now Black can draw by 7...♖g4 or 7...♖g2.

6...♖g4!

Now it is White to play in the reciprocal zugzwang. Not 6...♖h3?, which loses to 7 f5!.

7 ♖e3 ♖h3

The only move. 7...♖f5? loses; for example, 8 ♖f3 ♖e6 9 ♖g4 ♖f6 10 f3 ♖f7 11 ♖g5 ♖g7 12 f5 gxf5 13 ♖xf5 ♖f7 14 f4 and White wins.

8 ♖f3 ♖h2!

The last trap is 8...♖h4? 9 f5 gxf5 10 ♖f4, when White wins.

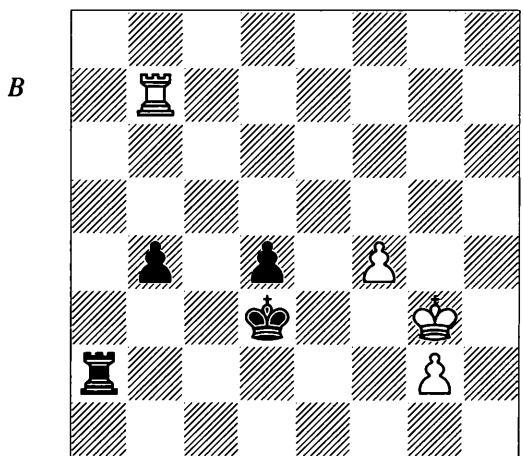
9 ♖e3 ♖g2 10 ♖e2 ♖h3 1/2-1/2

Summary:

- It's easy to make a mistake when considering a liquidation to a pawn ending, because rook endings are quite unlike pawn endings. This applies especially when the pawn ending involves corresponding squares, since such positions require a totally different mode of thinking.

8.4.8 Common Error: Promoting Too Soon

This section deals with another typical mistake in rook endings. When you have advanced a passed pawn to the seventh rank, supported by your king, there is a natural inclination to promote it and win the enemy rook as soon as possible. This isn't always correct and earlier we saw how establishing a fifth-rank cut-off may be more important than promoting the pawn (see the diagram on page 30). There are other reasons for delaying the promotion of the pawn, and we shall look at a couple here.



Suetin – Portisch
Ljubljana/Portorož 1973

White has the advantage that his passed pawns are connected while Black's are not, but this is far outweighed by the more advanced position of Black's pawns and his better placed

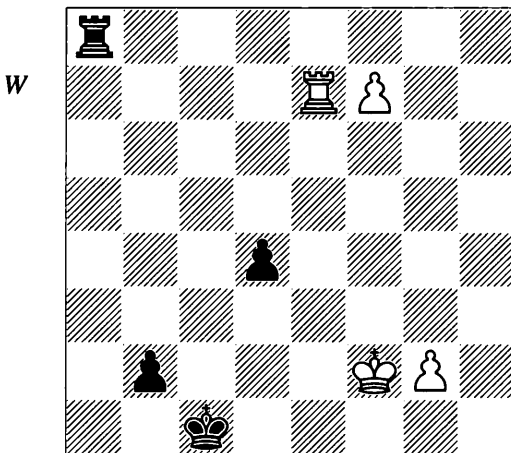
king; indeed, Black has a winning position. The game continuation was not very accurate, but featured some interesting and eventful play. Neikirkh's notes in *Informator 16* wrongly portrayed the play as accurate up to move 7.

1...♙c3 2 ♜c7+ ♔d2 3 ♜b7

After 3 f5 d3! 4 f6 (4 ♜b7 transposes to the game) 4...♞a1 5 ♔g4 ♜f1 6 ♔g5 b3 Black's pawns are too strong.

3...d3?

Black should not have offered the b-pawn, as White could have drawn by taking it. 3...♞a3+! was winning, although it is far from simple: 4 ♔f2 (4 ♔g4 b3 5 f5 ♔c2 6 f6 b2 7 f7 ♞a8 also wins for Black) 4...b3 5 f5 (5 g4 ♔c2 6 ♜c7+ ♔b1 7 ♞d7 b2 8 ♞xd4 ♔c2 9 ♜c4+ ♜c3 10 ♞b4 ♞b3 and Black wins easily) 5...♔c2 6 ♜c7+ ♔b1 7 f6 (7 ♞e7 b2 8 f6 ♞a8 9 f7 ♔c1 transposes) 7...b2 8 f7 (8 g4 ♔a1 9 ♞b7 b1♙ 10 ♞xb1+ ♔xb1 11 f7 ♞a8 12 g5 d3 13 g6 d2 14 g7 d1♙ 15 f8♙ ♞a2+ mates) 8...♞a8 9 ♞e7 ♔c1 (D) and now:



1) 10 ♞e1+ ♔d2 11 ♞e2+ ♔c3 (chasing the king to c3 only helps Black) 12 ♞e8 b1♙ 13 f8♙ ♙c2+ 14 ♔g1 (White must avoid a check on, for example, g6 which would win the e8-rook) 14...♞a1+ 15 ♔h2 ♙h7+ 16 ♔g3 ♙g6+ 17 ♔h2 ♙h5+ 18 ♔g3 ♙g5+ 19 ♔f2 ♞a2+ with a decisive attack for Black.

2) 10 ♞e8 b1♙ 11 f8♙ ♞xe8 12 ♙xe8 ♙c2+ 13 ♔f1 (13 ♔g3 ♙c3+ 14 ♔h2 d3 15 ♙e3+ ♔b2 16 ♙b6+ ♔c2 17 ♙g6 ♔c1 18 ♙g3 ♙c4 19 ♙e1+ ♔c2 followed by ...d2 is similar) 13...♙d1+ 14 ♔f2 d3 and now White has no

checks, so Black gains time to improve his position. In the subsequent play, the d-pawn proves too strong, while White's own pawn doesn't make much difference. One line runs 15 ♙f8 ♙e2+ 16 ♔g1 ♙e3+ (16...d2? 17 ♙a3+ draws) 17 ♔h1 d2 18 ♙c8+ ♔b2 19 ♙b8+ ♙b3 20 ♙e5+ ♙c3 21 ♙b5+ ♔c1 22 ♙g5 ♙a1! 23 ♔h2 ♙d4 (as usual, occupying a central square is a key feature of the winning process; here White is in zugzwang and must weaken his position) with a branch:

2a) 24 g3 harms White's position for the not very obvious reason that it blocks the h4-e1 diagonal. After 24...♙e4 25 ♙c5+ ♔b2 26 ♙b5+ ♔c2 27 ♙c5+ ♔d3 28 ♙a3+ (28 ♙b5+ ♔e3 29 ♙b6+ ♔e2 30 ♙b2 ♙e3 31 ♔g2 ♙f2+ 32 ♔h3 ♙c5 33 ♙a2 ♙h5+ 34 ♔g2 ♔e1 and Black wins) 28...♔e2 29 ♙a6+ ♙d3 30 ♙e6+ ♙e3 31 ♙c4+ ♔e1 White lacks a check on h4 and so loses quickly.

2b) 24 ♔h1 ♙d6 (another zugzwang) 25 ♔g1 (this weakens White's position by allowing the black queen to interpose on the a7-g1 diagonal with check) 25...♔b2 26 ♙b5+ ♔c3 27 ♙a5+ ♙b4 (here, for example, White has no check on e5) 28 ♙a1+ ♔c2 29 ♙a2+ ♔d3 30 ♙a6+ ♙c4 31 ♙g6+ ♔c3 32 ♙g3+ ♔b2 33 ♙e5+ ♔b3 34 ♙g3+ ♙c3 35 ♙g8+ ♔c2 36 ♙g6+ ♔b2 37 ♙b6+ ♔c1 38 ♙h6 ♙d4+ 39 ♔h2 ♔b2 and the pawn promotes.

This win is quite complex but in practice Black would certainly have had very good chances as it is generally more difficult to defend such positions than to play the attacking side.

4 f5? (D)

Missing his chance. White should have continued 4 ♞xb4! ♔c3 (4...♔e2 5 ♞e4+ ♔f1 6 ♞d4 d2 7 ♔g4 ♔e2 8 ♔g5 d1♙ 9 ♞xd1 ♔xd1 10 g4 ♔e2 11 f5 is a comfortable draw) 5 ♞b1! d2 6 f5 ♔c2 7 ♞f1 d1♙ 8 ♞xd1 ♔xd1 9 ♔f4 ♞xg2 10 f6, drawing.

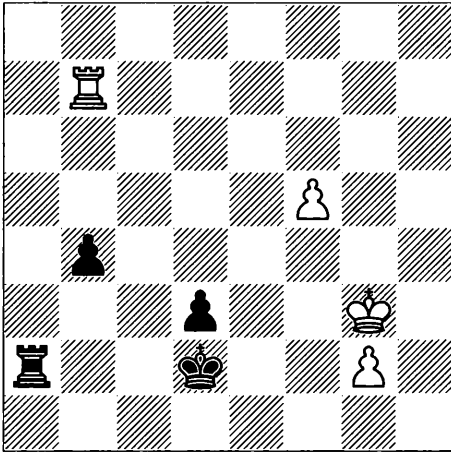
4...♔e2?!

4...♔c2! is much simpler: 5 ♞c7+ (or 5 ♞xb4 d2 6 ♞d4 ♞a3+ and 7...♞d3) 5...♔d1 6 f6 ♞a8 7 f7 b3 8 ♞b7 d2 and Black wins.

5 ♞xb4

Or 5 f6 ♞a6 6 f7 (6 ♞e7+ ♔d2 7 f7 ♞f6 transposes) 6...♞f6 7 ♞e7+ ♔d2 8 ♔g4 b3 9 ♔g5 ♞xf7! 10 ♞xf7 ♔e1! (but not 10...b2? 11 ♞b7

B



♔c2 12 ♖c7+ and White draws after 12...♔b1 13 ♖d7 or 12...♔b3 13 ♖b7+ ♔c3 14 ♖c7+ ♔d4 15 ♖d7+ ♔e3 16 ♖e7+) 11 ♖e7+ ♔f1 12 ♖f7+ ♔g1 and although White can reach various endings of ♖+♔ vs ♔, they are all lost.

5...d2 6 ♖b1 ♖a4!

This is one point at which Black must not promote too quickly. The immediate 6...d1♔? 7 ♖xd1 ♔xd1 allows a draw by 8 ♔f4 ♖xg2 9 f6, but Black can manoeuvre to win White's rook under more favourable circumstances.

7 ♖h1

White is in a kind of zugzwang since all the obvious moves have a defect:

1) 7 ♔h3 moves the king one square offside and now Black wins by 7...d1♔ 8 ♖xd1 ♔xd1 9 g4 ♔e2 10 ♔h4 ♔f3 11 f6 ♔f4!.

2) 7 ♖b2 ♖c4 8 ♖a2 ♔e1 9 ♖xd2 ♔xd2 (Black wins with his king on d2 rather than d1) 10 ♔f3 ♔d3 11 g4 ♔d4 12 ♔f4 ♔d5+ 13 ♔g5 ♔e5 wins for Black.

3) 7 f6 also doesn't help as Black rounds up the pawn by 7...♖a6 8 ♔h4 ♖xf6 and wins after 9 g4 ♖f1 10 ♖b2 ♔d3 11 ♖xd2+ ♔xd2.

Therefore White is reduced to playing his rook along the first rank.

7...♖e4?!

According to Neikirkh, this throws away the win, but actually Black is still winning even after this move. The alternatives are:

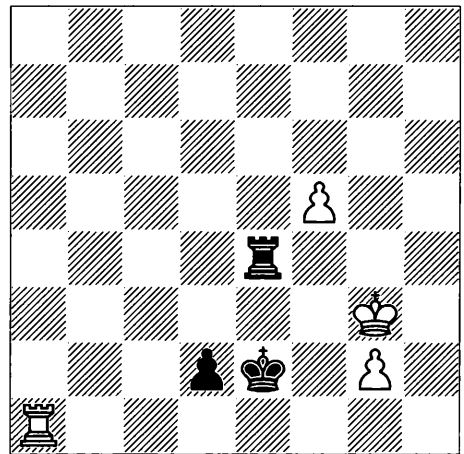
1) 7...d1♔? (again too soon) 8 ♖xd1 ♔xd1 9 ♔f3! (curiously, Neikirkh gives 9 f6 as drawing and 9 ♔f3 as losing, which is exactly the wrong way round since 9 f6? actually loses after 9...♖a6! 10 ♔h4 ♖xf6 11 g4 ♔e2 12 g5 ♖f1

13 g6 ♖g1 14 ♔h5 ♔f3 15 ♔h6 ♔f4 16 g7 ♔f5 17 ♔h7 ♖h1+ 18 ♔g8 ♔g6) 9...♔d2 10 f6! (10 g4? ♔d3 11 f6 ♔d4 12 ♔f4 ♔d5+ 13 ♔f5 ♖a1 really does win for Black) 10...♖a6 11 g4 ♖xf6+ 12 ♔e4 and White draws as the black king's approach is blocked.

2) 7...♖c4!, threatening ...♖c1, would have been simpler since 8 ♖b1 (after 8 f6 ♖c6 Black wins as before) 8...♖c1 9 ♖b2 ♖f1! 10 ♔g4 ♔e3 11 ♖xd2 ♔xd2 12 ♔g5 ♔e3 13 g4 ♔e4 14 ♔f6 ♖a1 15 ♔g7 ♔e5 16 f6 ♖a7+ 17 ♔g6 ♔e6 18 g5 ♖b7 is a straightforward win for Black.

8 ♖a1 (D)

B



8...♔d3?

This is the move that should have thrown the win away. 8...♖c4! 9 ♖b1 ♖c1 10 ♖b2 ♖f1! still wins, as in the previous note.

9 ♖d1?

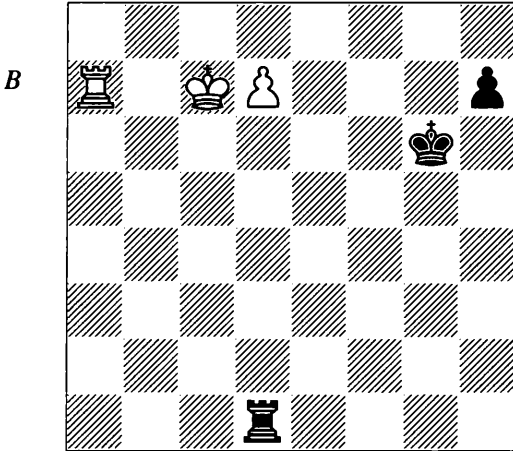
White makes the last mistake and loses. 9 f6! would have drawn: 9...♖e1 (9...♖e6 10 ♖f1) 10 ♖a3+! (10 f7? ♖xa1 11 f8♔ d1♔ wins for Black) 10...♔e4 (it doesn't matter where Black moves his king as he doesn't have a useful check after both sides promote) 11 f7 ♖f1 12 ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 13 gxf3+ ♔e5 14 f8♔ d1♔ 15 f4+ ♔e6 and Black draws comfortably since his king is almost in front of the pawn.

9...♖e1 10 ♖xd2+ ♔xd2

Black usually wins when White is forced to give up his rook on d2 rather than d1, as Black has gained a clear extra tempo.

11 ♔f4 ♔d3 12 f6 ♔d4 13 ♔f5 ♔d5 14 g4 ♖f1+ 15 ♔g6 ♔e6 16 g5 ♖f5 17 ♔h6 ♔f7 0-1

The next example involves a subtle preliminary manoeuvre.



Wolff – Fishbein
USA 1988

According to Fishbein's notes in *Informator* 47, this position is a draw, but White has a remarkable and subtle win based on delaying the promotion of his pawn. We have already seen some examples in which it is better to cut off the enemy king than to promote, but in this case the preliminary manoeuvres are more complicated.

1...♔g5

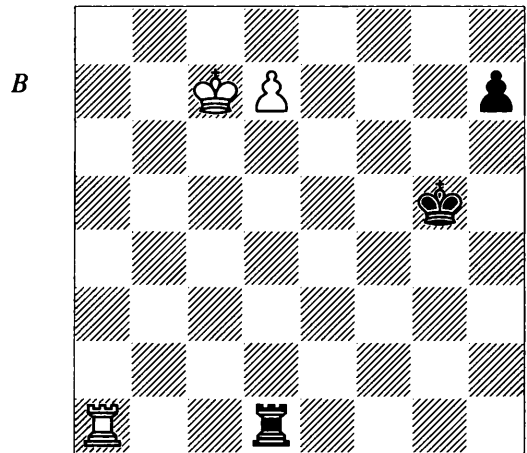
1...♖c1+ loses relatively simply after 2 ♔d8! ♔g5 (2...h5 3 ♖a5 is a fifth-rank cut-off, after which White can safely pick up Black's rook for the d-pawn) 3 ♖a5+! ♔f6 (or 3...♔g4 4 ♖d5! ♖a1 5 ♔e7 ♖a8 6 d8♖ ♖xd8 7 ♖xd8 h5 8 ♔f6 h4 9 ♖d4+ ♔g3 10 ♔g5 with the standard win after Black promotes to a knight) 4 ♖a6+ ♔f7 5 ♖h6! ♔g7 6 ♖e6 ♔f7 7 ♖e7+ ♔g6 8 ♔e8 ♖d1 9 d8♖ ♖xd8+ 10 ♔xd8 h5 11 ♖e5 and again the cut-off along a rank is decisive.

1...♔f5 is actually the most resilient defence and makes White work harder for the win: 2 ♖a5+! (2 ♖a1? ♖xd7+ 3 ♔xd7 h5 is a draw because on f5 Black's king is better able to keep White's king at bay; for example, 4 ♔d6 h4 5 ♔d5 h3 6 ♔d4 ♔f4 7 ♖f1+ ♔g3 8 ♔e3 h2 and 4 ♖h1 ♔g4 5 ♔e6 h4 6 ♔e5 h3 7 ♔e4 ♔g3 8 ♖g1+ ♔f2 both lead to a draw) 2...♔g4 (after 2...♔f4 3 ♖h5 White picks up the black pawn) 3 ♖a4+! ♔g3 (3...♔g5 4 ♖a1 transposes to the game, while 3...♔f5 4 d8♖

♖xd8 5 ♔xd8 h5 6 ♔e7 ♔g5 7 ♖a5+! ♔g4 8 ♔f6 h4 9 ♖a4+ is a standard win for White) 4 ♖a1! ♖xa1 (4...♖xd7+ 5 ♔xd7 h5 6 ♔e6 h4 7 ♔f5 h3 8 ♖a3+ and White wins as before, while after 4...♖d2 5 ♖h1 White wins the h-pawn) 5 d8♖ ♖c1+ 6 ♔b6 ♖h1 7 ♖g5+ ♔f2 8 ♖f4+ ♔g2 9 ♖e4+ ♔g1 10 ♖f3 ♖h2 11 ♔c5 and Black's forces are too poorly coordinated to hold out for long.

2 d8♖+?

Promoting too soon just leads to a draw. White could have won by 2 ♖a1! (D) (this is effective here because Black cannot take on d7 when his king is on g5; 2 ♖a5+ ♔g4 3 ♖a4+ ♔g5 maintains the win but loses time), and now:



1) 2...♖xd7+ 3 ♔xd7 h5 4 ♔e6 h4 5 ♔e5 ♔g4 6 ♔e4 ♔g3 7 ♔e3 and White wins after 7...♔g2 8 ♔f4 or 7...h3 8 ♖g1+.

2) 2...♖xa1 3 d8♖+ is even worse here than in the analysis of 1...♔f5 since White promotes with check and wins Black's rook in a few moves.

3) 2...♖d2 3 ♖g1+! (White transfers his rook to h1 with gain of tempo) 3...♔f6 4 ♖h1 ♖c2+ (the best defence, forcing White's king in front of the pawn; after 4...♔g6 5 d8♖ ♖xd8 6 ♔xd8 h5 7 ♔e7 ♔g5 8 ♔e6 h4 9 ♔e5 ♔g4 10 ♔e4 ♔g3 11 ♔e3 White wins in simpler fashion) 5 ♔d8 ♔g6 6 ♖e1! (threatening ♔e7) 6...♖d2 (6...♔f6 7 ♔e8 ♖d2 8 ♖h1! ♔g6 9 d8♖ ♖xd8+ 10 ♔xd8 and White wins as before) 7 ♖e5 (cutting off Black's king along the rank) 7...♔f6 8 ♖h5 ♔g6 9 ♖c5 ♔f6 10 ♔c8 ♔e7 (otherwise

White just promotes) 11 ♖c7 ♜f6 12 d8♚+ ♜xd8+ 13 ♜xd8 h5 14 ♜c5!, restoring the fifth-rank cut-off and winning.

2...♜xd8 3 ♜xd8 h5

In this position Black's king is not cut off and White's own king is relatively far away, so Black can draw.

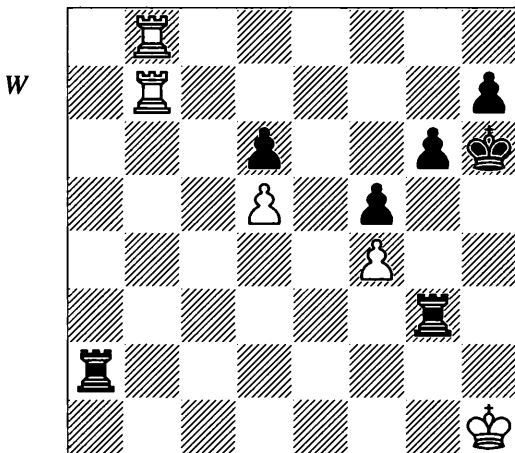
4 ♜e7 h4 5 ♜e6 h3 6 ♜e5 ♜g4 7 ♜e4 h2 8 ♜h7 ♜g3 9 ♜e3 ♜g2 10 ♜xh2+ 1/2-1/2

Summary:

- Cashing in a passed pawn prematurely is a common mistake in rook endings.
- It is often possible to extract greater value from a far-advanced passed pawn by playing some preliminary manoeuvres before promoting the pawn.
- Typical preliminary manoeuvres include cutting off the enemy king and transferring the rook to a better position with gain of tempo.

8.4.9 Stalemate

Stalemate is one of the most common tactical ideas in rook endings, but it nevertheless still appears to come as a surprise to many players.



Pavlović – Mikhalchishin
Yugoslavia 1991

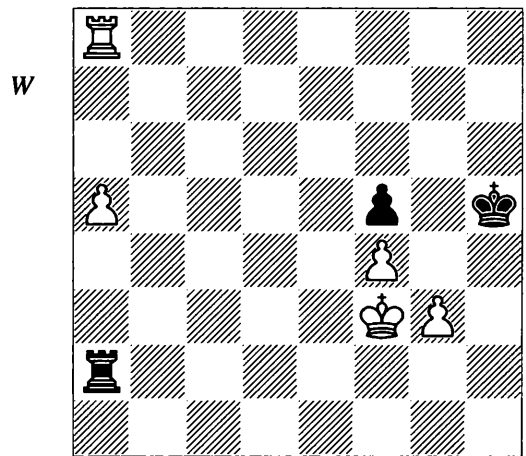
It's easy to forget about the possibility of stalemate and miss the chance to save half a point. Here the game finished 1 ♜h8? ♜h5 2 ♜bxh7+ ♜g4 3 ♜h4+ ♜f3 0-1 as 4 ♜h3 (otherwise Black mates in a few moves) 4...♜xf4 leaves White hopelessly down on material.

However, White's immobile pawns and lack of king moves should have indicated a possible stalemate, and he could have drawn by giving away both his rooks: 1 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 and now:

1) 2 ♜h8+? is wrong and loses after 2...♜g7 3 ♜g8+ (White has a choice of checks at each move, but in every case Black's king eventually escapes and makes its way to White's second rank, lifting the stalemate) 3...♜f7 4 ♜f8+ ♜e7 5 ♜e8+ ♜d7 6 ♜d8+ (6 ♜e7+ ♜c8 7 ♜c7+ ♜b8 8 ♜b7+ ♜a8 9 ♜b8+ ♜a7 transposes) 6...♜c7 7 ♜c8+ ♜b7 8 ♜b8+ ♜a7 9 ♜a8+ (9 ♜b7+ ♜a6 10 ♜b6+ ♜a5 11 ♜b5+ ♜a4 12 ♜b4+ ♜a3 and Black wins since he can take on b3 with his rook) 9...♜b6 10 ♜b8+ (10 ♜xa2 ♜c5 11 ♜d2 ♜g4 wins easily for Black) 10...♜c5 11 ♜c8+ ♜d4 12 ♜c4+ ♜e3 13 ♜c3+ ♜f2 and White's resources are exhausted.

2) 2 ♜b7+! (the correct check) 2...♜g8 (or 2...♜h6 3 ♜h7+) 3 ♜b8+ ♜f7 4 ♜b7+ and White gives perpetual check on b7 and b8.

Here's another example of 'stalemate blindness'.



Grishchuk – Lima
FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2007

White is two pawns up and the position should be a simple win, but there is one trap that White must avoid.

1 a6??

Falling into it. The simplest win involves giving up the a-pawn by 1 ♜g8! ♜xa5 2 ♜g5+ ♜h6 3 ♜g2 followed by ♜h3-h4 and then g4, winning the f5-pawn. White can also delay

giving up the a-pawn; for example, 1 ♖a7 ♖a3+ 2 ♜g2 ♖a2+ 3 ♜h3 ♖a1 4 ♖g7! ♖xa5 5 ♖g5+ ♜h6 6 ♜h4 and g4.

1...♖a3+??

Black misses it! He could have escaped with a draw by 1...♖xa6!, exploiting the stalemate. After 2 ♖g8 ♜h6 3 ♖g5 ♖f6 Black is able to defend the f-pawn along the file, and this enables him to draw; for example, 4 ♜e3 ♖f8 5 ♜d4 ♖e8! 6 ♖xf5 ♖g8 and the g-pawn falls.

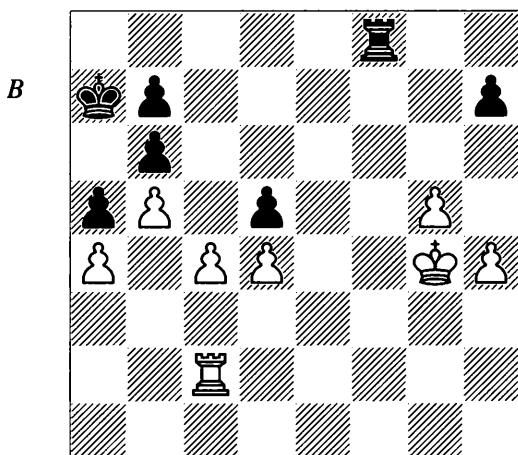
It often happens that players miss unexpected saving opportunities because they have already resigned themselves to defeat and are only going through the motions until they reach a point at which they can reasonably surrender. Without a fully alert mind, it's easy to miss even quite simple ideas.

2 ♜f2 ♖a2+ 3 ♜e3 ♖a3+ 4 ♜d4

Black cannot take the g-pawn due to ♖h8+ and ♖g8+.

4...♜g4 5 ♖g8+ ♜f3 6 ♖g6 1-0

The following case is more subtle.



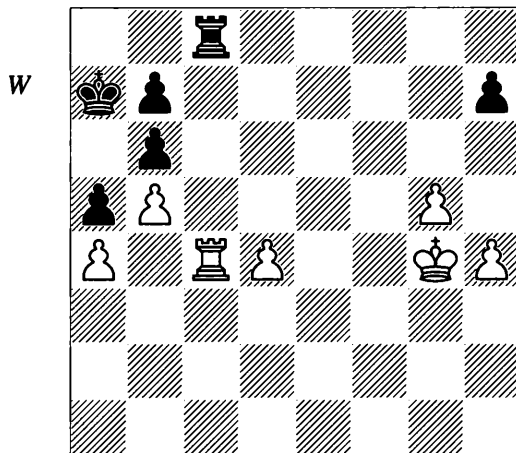
Gulko – Amateur
USSR 1970

This position features an unusual combination of stalemate and positional draw more often found in composed studies. White clearly has a winning position; he is a pawn up, and has a kingside majority actively supported by his king, while Black's king is hidden away at a7. Oddly, it is this last feature which offers Black his only saving chance.

1...dxc4 2 ♖xc4?

Amazingly, this natural recapture costs White half a point. If White takes care, he can promote a kingside pawn without allowing any stalemate tricks; for example, 2 h5! ♖d8 3 g6 ♖xd4+ 4 ♜g5 hxg6 5 hxg6 ♖d5+ 6 ♜h6 c3 (Black forces White to take the c-pawn in order to set up a possible stalemate; 6...♖d4 7 g7 ♖g4 8 ♖h2 c3 9 ♜h7 c2 10 ♖xc2 ♖h4+ 11 ♜g6 ♖g4+ 12 ♜h6 ♖g1 13 ♖f2 ♖g3 14 ♖f5 also wins for White) 7 g7 ♖d2 8 ♖xc3 ♖h2+ 9 ♜g6 ♖g2+ 10 ♜f7 ♖f2+ 11 ♜e8 ♖e2+ 12 ♜d8 ♖g2 13 ♖c7 ♖g3 14 ♜e8 ♖g2 15 ♜f8 and White can promote his pawn with his king on f8, which cuts out any stalemate.

2...♖c8! (D)



A nasty trick. Now 3 ♖xc8 would be met by 3...h5+!, forcing stalemate, while otherwise White's rook is trapped. His only chance is to sacrifice the rook in the hope of deciding the game with his kingside pawns.

3 g6!? ♖xc4 4 g7

4 gxh7 ♖c8 5 ♜g5 ♖d8 6 ♜g6 ♜b8 7 ♜g7 ♖d7+ draws as the white king has no shelter from sideways checks.

4...♖xd4+ 5 ♜h5 ♖d5+ 6 ♜h6 ♖d6+ 7 ♜xh7 ♖d5

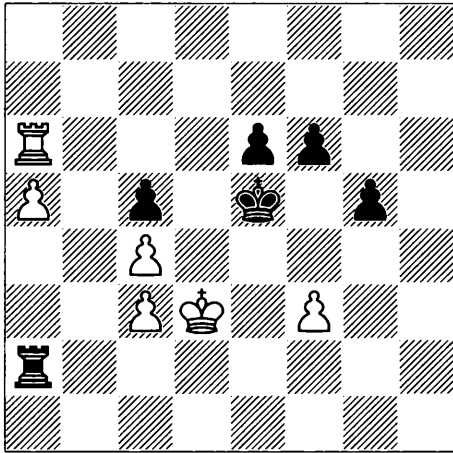
Not the only move to draw, but a perfectly adequate one.

8 g8 ♖h5+ 9 ♜g6 ♖xh4 1/2-1/2

Black has an impenetrable fortress.

It is even easier to overlook a stalemate with the king in the centre of the board, as in the next three examples.

B



Jansa – Rublevsky
Ostrava 1992

Even at a glance, it is clear that Black is much better. White's pawns are all isolated, while Black has three connected pawns on the kingside. Although none of these pawns is currently passed, if Black can exchange the f3-pawn for the e6-pawn then he will have two connected passed pawns. White, it is true, has a passed a-pawn, but his rook is badly placed in front of it while Black's rook is in the perfect position, holding back the a-pawn while at the same restricting White's king. Black's advantage is so large that he has more than one way to win the position.

1...♙f4

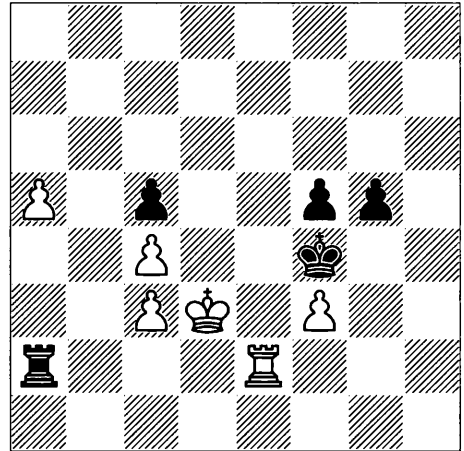
Black gives up the e6-pawn in order to activate his king. He intends to pick up the f3-pawn within a few moves, after which his connected passed pawns should prove decisive. Black could also have won without giving up the e6-pawn, and this provides a simpler route to victory: 1...f5 2 ♖e3 (there is no other move, because 2 ♖a7 or 2 ♖a8 allows 2...♙f4) 2...f4+ 3 ♙d3 ♖f2 4 ♖c6 ♖xf3+ 5 ♙c2 ♖f1 6 ♙d3 (6 ♖xc5+ ♙e4 7 a6 ♖a1 8 ♖c6 f3 9 ♖xe6+ ♙f5 and 6 ♙b2 f3 7 a6 f2 8 a7 ♖b1+ win for Black) 6...f3 7 ♖xc5+ ♙f4 and Black's pawns are overwhelming.

2 ♖xe6 f5 3 ♖e2!? (D)

The best defence in any case, but it also sets a devilish trap. Other moves lose without much of a fight: 3 ♖f6?! ♖xa5 4 ♙e2 ♖a2+ 5 ♙e1 (5 ♙d3 ♖f2) 5...♖c2 6 ♖c6 ♙xf3 7 ♖xc5 ♙e4 8 ♙d1 ♖a2 9 ♖c8 g4 and Black wins comfortably, or 3

a6?! ♙xf3 4 ♖e5 ♙f4 5 ♖xc5 g4 6 a7 g3 and again Black's pawns are too strong.

B



3...♖xa5?

Black falls into the trap. He could have won by 3...♖a4! 4 ♖f2 (4 ♖g2 ♖a1 is zugzwang; then 5 ♙e2 allows 5...♖xa5, while 5 ♖f2 ♙g3 6 ♖e2 ♙xf3 7 ♖e5 ♙f4 8 ♖xc5 g4 wins for Black) 4...♖a3, leaving White in a kind of zugzwang. After a king move or 5 ♖f1 Black can safely take on a5, while 5 ♖g2 ♖a1 transposes to the analysis of 4 ♖g2. Thus 5 ♖e2 is more or less forced, but after 5...♙xf3 6 ♖e5 ♙f4 7 ♖xc5 g4 8 ♙e2 g3 9 ♖d5 ♙g4 there is no stopping Black's connected passed pawns.

4 ♖a2! 1/2-1/2

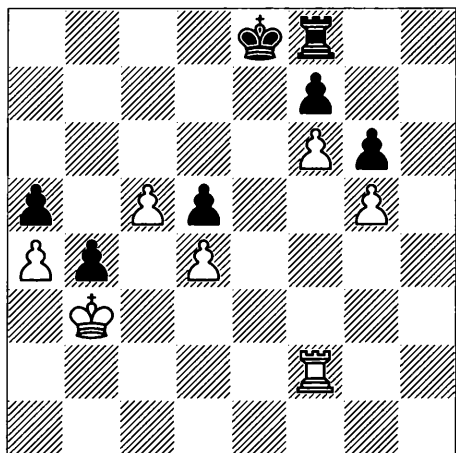
A nasty surprise for Black. His rook is trapped, but if it takes the enemy rook then White is stalemated.

'Stalemate blindness' is more likely to occur when, as here, the stalemate is quite unexpected. Before the sacrifice, White's king had three flight-squares and, in any case, it is unusual for a king to be stalemated in mid-board, at least in practical play.

In the diagram overleaf, the stalemate idea is more complex and neither side handled it accurately.

Black's position looks grim. Both sides have protected passed pawns, but overall White has a considerable space advantage and the difference in the activity of the two rooks is substantial. White is already threatening to penetrate with ♖e2+ and ♖e7, while Black's rook has still

B

**Rustemov – Goldin***Russian Ch, Elista 1995*

to reach an open file. Despite these disadvantages, the position is drawn, but only if Black notices a cunning stalemate defence.

1...♖h8

Black must activate his rook as quickly as possible. 1...♖d7 2 ♜e2 ♖h8 is just as good.

2 ♜e2+ ♖d7!

The correct choice, allowing White to take the f7-pawn with tempo but setting up the stalemate possibility. Passive defence by 2...♖d8? is hopeless because 3 ♜e7 ♖h3+ 4 ♖b2 ♖h2+ 5 ♖c1 ♖h1+ 6 ♖d2 ♖h7 7 c6 ♖c8 8 ♖b7 ♖d8 9 ♖e3, followed by ♖f4-e5, wins comfortably for White.

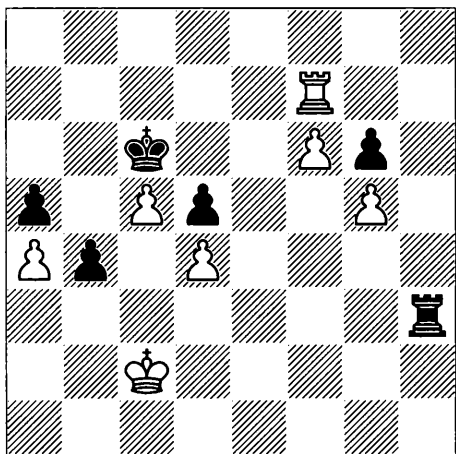
3 ♜e7+ ♖c6 4 ♖xf7

Now Black's king has no moves. Can he get rid of his rook and b-pawn to force stalemate?

4...♖h3+ 5 ♖c2 (D)

5 ♖b2 ♖h2+ 6 ♖c1 transposes to the game.

B

**5...♖h2+?**

A serious error giving White the chance to avoid the stalemate. Black should have continued 5...b3+! (it is important to advance the b-pawn with gain of tempo) 6 ♖b2 ♖h2+! 7 ♖xb3 ♖b2+! (White cannot avoid the checks) 8 ♖c3 ♖c2+ 9 ♖d3 ♖d2+ 10 ♖e3 ♖e2+ 11 ♖f4 ♖f2+ 12 ♖e5 ♖e2+ and the king has to come back.

6 ♖c1?

Curiously, Rustemov's notes made no mention of the fact that he could have won at this point by 6 ♖d3!. Black's b-pawn cannot now advance with check and White gets time to play his rook behind the pawn by 6...b3 7 ♖a7 b2 8 ♖a6+ ♖d7 9 ♖b6. White is now a pawn up and wins comfortably; for example, 9...♖g2 10 f7 ♖e7 (or 10...♖f2 11 ♖xb2 ♖xf7 12 ♖b7+ ♖c6 13 ♖b6+ ♖c7 14 ♖xg6 and White is two pawns ahead) 11 c6 ♖xf7 12 c7 ♖g3+ 13 ♖c2 ♖g2+ 14 ♖b1 ♖g1+ 15 ♖xb2 ♖g2+ 16 ♖c3 ♖g3+ 17 ♖d2 ♖g2+ 18 ♖e3 ♖c2 19 ♖b7 ♖e6 20 ♖d3 ♖c1 21 ♖a7 ♖d7 22 ♖xa5 ♖d1+ 23 ♖e3 ♖xc7 24 ♖xd5 and again White has two extra pawns.

6...♖h1+ 7 ♖d2

White plays so as to avoid a check from the enemy b-pawn, but the situation is different when Black's rook is already on the first rank, as White has no time for the ♖a7-a6-b6 manoeuvre.

7...b3!

7...♖h2+? loses to 8 ♖e3 b3 9 ♖a7, as in the note to White's 6th move.

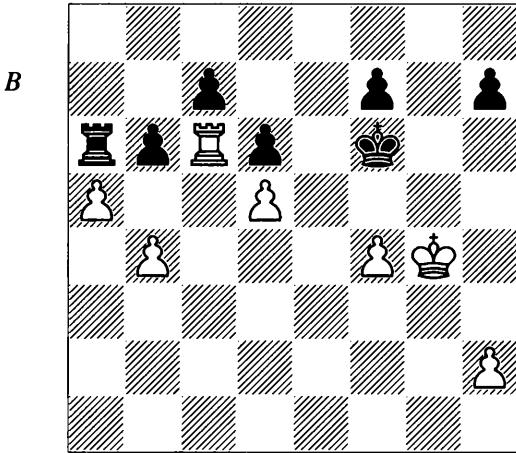
8 ♖c3

White prevents the pawn from advancing to b2, but now Black can again use his stalemate idea.

8...b2! 9 ♖xb2 ♖b1+! 1/2-1/2

Our last example of mid-board stalemate is perhaps the most spectacular in that it arises in an accurate sequence and does not depend on a mistake by the attacker.

Black is clearly in considerable difficulties. Material is equal, but his rook is essentially paralysed since if it moves, White just plays axb6. There are two main dangers for Black: the first is that White will at some stage be able to



Kochetkov – Janjgava
Elista Olympiad 1998

liquidate into a winning king and pawn ending by exchanging twice on b6 (after axb6, Black generally must recapture with the rook). The second danger is that Black will end up in zugzwang, and eventually be forced to make a serious concession such as moving his rook. Despite these difficulties, Black found an ingenious plan that enabled him to save the game. Surprisingly, this plan depends on both mate and stalemate ideas.

1...h5+!

The only move to save the game. Other moves are hopeless:

1) 1...♔g6 2 f5+ ♕f6 3 ♕f4 h6 4 h4 (4 ♜xc7? bxa5 5 ♞c6 ♞a7 6 bxa5 ♞xa5 7 ♞xd6+ ♕g7 8 ♕e5 ♞a2 is not clear) puts Black in zugzwang; for example, 4...♕g7 5 h5 ♕f6 6 ♞xc7 bxa5 7 ♞c6 ♞a8 8 bxa5 ♞xa5 9 ♞xd6+ ♕g7 10 ♕e5 and the d-pawn should decide the game, or 4...h5 5 ♞xc7 bxa5 6 ♞c6 ♞a8 7 bxa5 ♞xa5 8 ♞xd6+ ♕e7 (8...♕g7 9 ♕g5) 9 ♕e5 ♞a1 10 f6+ ♕e8 11 ♞b6 with a winning position for White.

2) 1...h6 2 h4 h5+ 3 ♕xh5 ♕f5 4 axb6 ♞xb6 (4...cxb6 5 ♞xd6 ♕xf4 6 b5 ♞a8 7 ♞xb6 ♕e5 8 d6 f5 9 ♕g6 ♞d8 10 h5 f4 11 h6 f3 12 d7 ♞xd7 13 ♞b8! also wins for White) 5 ♞xb6 cxb6 6 ♕h6 ♕xf4 7 h5 ♕g4 8 ♕g7 ♕xh5 9 ♕xf7 with a winning king and pawn ending.

2 ♕xh5

The only genuine winning attempt, since 2 ♕f3 ♕f5 3 ♞xc7 bxa5 4 ♞xf7+ ♕g6 5 b5 ♞b6 6 ♞d7 ♞xb5 7 ♞xd6+ ♕f5 is an easy draw.

2...♕f5 3 ♞xc7

Or 3 ♕h6 ♕xf4 4 h4 ♕e4 5 h5 ♕xd5 6 ♞xc7 bxa5 7 b5 ♞b6 8 ♕g7 ♞xb5 9 h6 ♞b1 10 h7 ♞g1+ 11 ♕xf7 ♞h1 and Black draws after giving up his rook for the h-pawn.

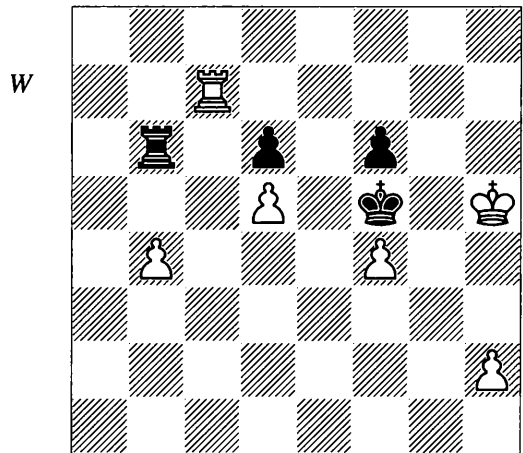
3...f6!

Black can probably also draw by 3...♕xf4 4 ♞xf7+ ♕e4 5 ♕g5 bxa5 6 bxa5 ♞xa5 7 ♞f4+ ♕e3 8 ♞f5 ♞a8, but the move played is more forcing.

4 axb6

After 4 ♞c6 ♞a8! Black gains a vital tempo due to the mate threat and draws easily after 5 ♕h6 bxa5 6 bxa5 ♕xf4.

4...♞xb6 (D)



5 ♞c6

The key point of Black's defence lies in the tactic 5 ♞c4 ♞xb4!, leading to a surprising mid-board stalemate. Deprived of the natural defence of his b4-pawn, White's winning chances are zero.

5...♞xb4 6 ♞xd6 ♞xf4

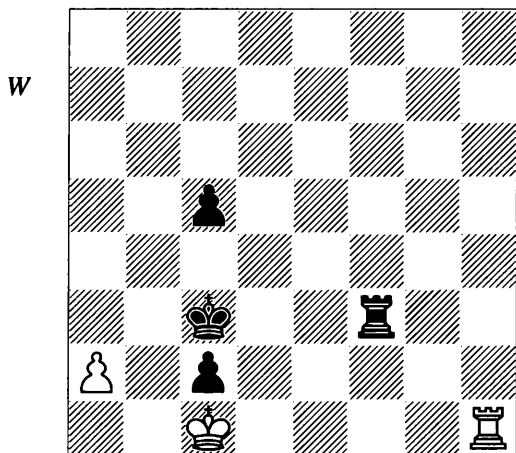
White is still a pawn ahead, but his king and rook are both passively placed and Black has no difficulty reaching a draw.

7 ♞d8 ♞f2 8 h4 ♞f4 9 ♞e8

9 d6 ♕e6 is also drawn.

9...♞d4 10 ♞e1 ♞xd5 11 ♞f1+ ♕e4+! 12 ♕g6 f5 13 h5 f4 14 h6 f3 15 h7 ♞d8 1/2-1/2

The situation in which the defender's king is trapped on the first rank by an enemy pawn can give rise to stalemate ideas, as in the next two positions.



Bocharov – Y. Geller
Moscow 2004

White is a pawn down and his rook is trapped on the back rank. Fortunately, he can save the day by using his a-pawn to set up a stalemate possibility.

1 a4!

The only way to draw. Delaying by even one tempo would be fatal: 1 ♖g1? c4 2 a4 ♖b3 3 a5 (3 ♖d2 ♖d3+ 4 ♖c1 ♖d1+ also wins for Black) 3...c3 4 a6 ♖f4 5 a7 ♖a4 and Black mates in two more moves.

1...♖b3 2 a5 c4 3 a6 ♖f6

Or 3...♖f7 4 a7! ♖xa7 5 ♖h3+ c3 6 ♖xc3+! ♖xc3 with the same stalemate as in the game.

4 a7 ♖a6 5 ♖h3+ c3 6 ♖xc3+! ♖xc3 7 a8♖ ♖xa8 1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

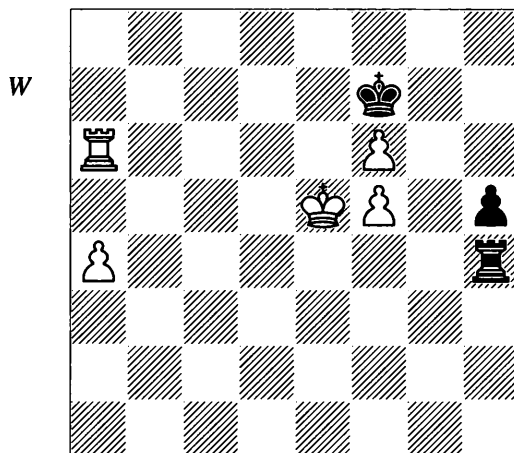
The last two examples were played accurately, but in the following diagram the stalemate only worked thanks to an error by White.

1 ♖a7+ ♖f8 2 f7!

In *Informator 7*, Milić incorrectly claimed that this move throws away the win. Another equally simple win is 2 a5! ♖b4 (or 2...♖a4 3 f7 ♖c4 4 ♖f6 ♖c6+ 5 ♖g5 and Black loses his last pawn) 3 a6 h4 4 ♖b7 ♖a4 5 a7 and Black is defenceless.

2...♖b4 3 a5?!

But now White is starting to make it hard for himself. There was still a straightforward win by 3 ♖f6! ♖b8 (3...♖b6+ 4 ♖g5 5 and the h-pawn falls) 4 ♖g6 h4 5 f6 h3 6 ♖a5 h2 7 ♖h5 with a quick mate to come.

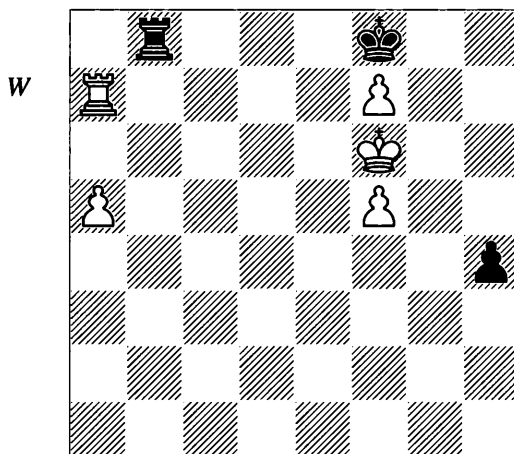


S. Nikolić – Deže
Yugoslav Ch, Novi Travnik 1969

3...h4

3...♖g7 4 f8♖++ ♖xf8 5 ♖f6 ♖e8 6 a6 is also lost for Black.

4 ♖f6 ♖b8 (D)



This stalemating formation is familiar from the previous position. White must take care.

5 a6?

This move throws away the win. White should have played 5 ♖e7! h3, and now:

1) 6 ♖e3? (the only move considered by Milić) 6...♖a8! 7 ♖g6 (7 ♖xh3 ♖a6+! 8 ♖g5 ♖xa5 9 ♖g6 ♖a6+! 10 f6 ♖xf6+! leads to stalemate) 7...h2 8 ♖h3 ♖a6+! 9 f6 (9 ♖g5 ♖xf7 10 ♖xh2 ♖xa5 11 ♖h7+ ♖g8! is also a draw) 9...♖xf6+! 10 ♖xf6 h1♖ again leads to stalemate.

2) 6 ♖e1! h2 (White wins after 6...♖a8 7 ♖g6 h2 8 f6 followed by a6-a7) 7 ♖g6! (this

wins because, thanks to the pawn on a5, Black cannot force stalemate by ...h1♚ followed by ...♖b6+) 7...♖a8 8 f6 and White wins with a6-a7.

5...♖b6+ 6 ♔g5 h3

White has to give up his front f-pawn to prevent Black from promoting.

7 ♖a8+ ♔xf7 8 a7 ♖a6 9 ♖h8 h2 10 ♖xh2 ♔g8!

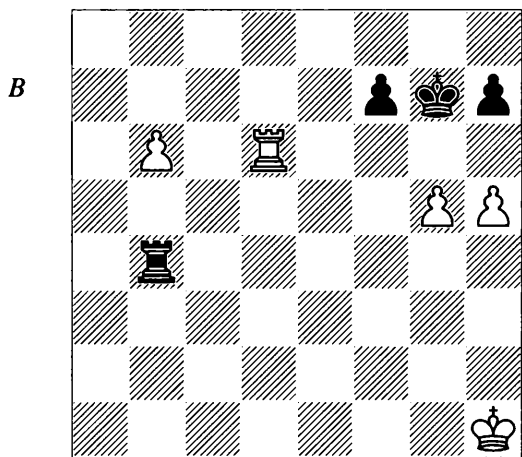
Now Black wins the a7-pawn and liquidates to a drawn ending of ♖+♔ vs ♖.

11 ♖b2 ♖xa7 12 ♔g6 ♖g7+

Certainly not 12...♖a6+?? 13 f6 ♖a8 14 ♖b7 followed by ♖g7+, winning.

13 ♔f6 ♖f7+ 14 ♔g5 ♖g7+ 15 ♔f4 ♖a7 16 ♖b6 ♔f8 1/2-1/2

In the next group of positions, the defender is reduced to a lone rook. In the first example, White suffers from an attack of 'stalemate blindness', which is surprising given that this was a correspondence game.



Neil – Andeer
corr. 1995

This is a good example of 'annotation by result'. Black drew this position, and Andeer's notes in *Informator 67* claimed that the diagram position is a draw and that both sides played accurately. In fact White is winning, and indeed in the game continuation White missed several wins. When an annotator has it fixed in his mind that the position is a draw, he can consistently overlook strong continuations for the attacking side and instead of an objective

evaluation, his view of each line is shoehorned to fit his preconceived notion of the result. Perhaps the most surprising point is that this was a correspondence game, where one might have expected a greater degree of objectivity than in an over-the-board encounter.

The ending is actually quite instructive. White is an outside passed pawn ahead, although Black's rook is well posted behind the pawn. The second main factor in White's favour is his space advantage on the kingside, which effectively prevents Black from developing any counterplay; for example, if Black plays his king to the queenside, White will attack and win the kingside pawns. On the other hand, if Black does nothing, White's king will advance and eventually move over to support the b-pawn.

1...h6

Given an exclamation mark in *Informator*, but neither better nor worse than any other move because I do not believe that Black can save this position. Passive defence also loses; for example, 1...♔f8 2 ♖c6! ♖b5 (2...♔e7 3 ♖c7+ ♔e6 4 b7 ♖b2 5 ♔g1 and White wins by marching his king to the queenside) 3 ♔h2! ♖b3 4 ♔g2 and the king will soon play a decisive role.

2 gxh6+

Not 2 ♖xh6? ♖h4+ 3 ♔g2 ♖g4+ 4 ♔f3 ♖xg5 5 ♖c6 ♖xh5 and Black draws easily.

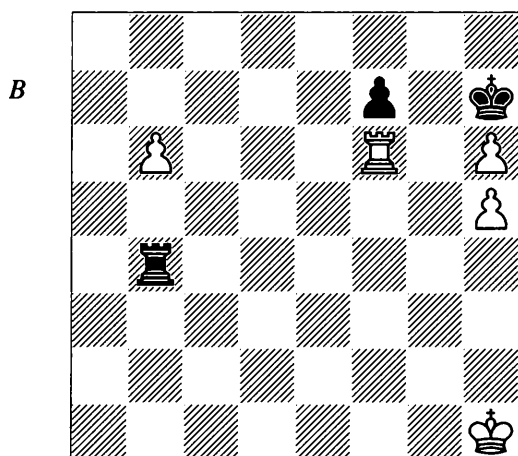
2...♔h7 3 ♖f6!

An excellent move, which prevents Black from creating counterplay by advancing his f-pawn. 3 ♔g2? is met by 3...f5! 4 ♖f6, and now:

1) 4...f4? was the only move given by Andeer, but it loses after 5 ♔f3 ♔h8 6 ♔g4 ♔h7 7 ♖c6 ♔h8 8 ♖c8+ ♔h7 9 ♖c7+ ♔xh6 10 b7 (this is a position of reciprocal zugzwang; White only wins when his rook is on c7, for reasons we shall see) 10...f3+ 11 ♔xf3 ♔xh5 12 ♔e3 ♔g6 13 ♔d3 ♔f6 14 ♔c3 ♖b1 15 ♔d4 ♔e6 (if White's rook were on d7, for example, Black would gain a tempo at this point and draw) 16 ♔c5 ♔e5 17 ♖h7 and the king will advance to b8, reaching the Lucena position.

2) After 4...♖b3! 5 ♔f2 f4 I do not see any way for White to win; for example, 6 ♔e2 (or 6 ♖c6 f3) 6...f3+ 7 ♔f2 ♔g8 8 ♖e6 ♔h7 9 ♔g3 ♔g8 and White cannot make progress.

We now return to 3 ♖f6! (D):



3...♖g4

Black plays to keep the white king cut off along a file, but this allows White to liquidate to a winning ending of ♖+2♙ vs ♚ straight away. However, the only alternative plan is to try to cut off the white king along the second rank by 3...♖b2 and in this case White wins by simply marching the king to the queenside; for example, 4 ♖g1 ♖g8 5 ♖f1 ♖h2 6 ♖e1 ♖xh5 7 ♖d2 ♖b5 8 ♖c3 and the king will soon support the b-pawn.

4 ♖h2

This wins, but it was even simpler to play 4 ♖xf7+! ♖xh6 5 ♖f8! ♖b4 6 ♖b8 and now Black cannot take the h5-pawn because b7 wins, so the main line runs 6...♖b2 7 ♖g1 ♖h7 8 ♖f1 ♖g7 9 ♖e1 ♖h7 10 ♖d1 ♖g7 11 ♖c1 ♖b5 12 ♖c2 and again the king runs up to aid the b-pawn.

4...♖g5 5 ♖h3

Now 5 ♖xf7+? ♖xh6 6 ♖f8 doesn't work due to 6...♖xh5+ 7 ♖g3 ♖b5 8 ♖b8 ♖g6.

5...♖g1

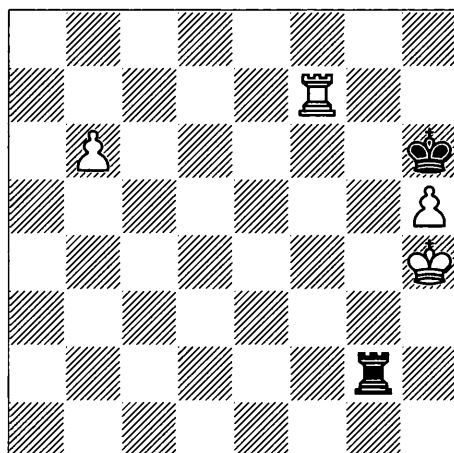
After 5...♖xh5+ 6 ♖g4 ♖b5 7 ♖f4 ♖g8 8 ♖e4 White wins quickly.

6 ♖h4

Now that Black's rook is not attacking the h5-pawn, White could again win by 6 ♖xf7+! ♖xh6 7 ♖f8 ♖b1 8 ♖b8, followed by moving his king across to support the b-pawn as before. Andeer didn't mention any of these wins in his notes.

6...♖g2 7 ♖xf7+ ♖xh6 (D)

W



8 b7?

A really serious mistake throwing away the win. 8 ♖b7? is also bad, due to 8...♖g4+! 9 ♖h3 ♖g5 10 ♖b8 ♖xh5+ 11 ♖g4 ♖b5 12 ♖f4 ♖g7 13 ♖e4 ♖f7 14 ♖d4 ♖e7 15 ♖c4 ♖b1 16 ♖c5 ♖d7 and Black is just in time.

However, there were several winning possibilities, the simplest being 8 ♖f6+ ♖h7 (8...♖g7 9 ♖g6+) 9 h6, when the rook defends both pawns from the side, a situation that is almost always winning with ♖+2♙ vs ♚. One line is 9...♖g1 10 ♖h5 (threatening ♖f7+) 10...♖b1 11 ♖g5 ♖b2 12 ♖f5 and the king moves across to c5.

8...♖b2

White has no satisfactory defence to the threat of taking on b7, leading to stalemate.

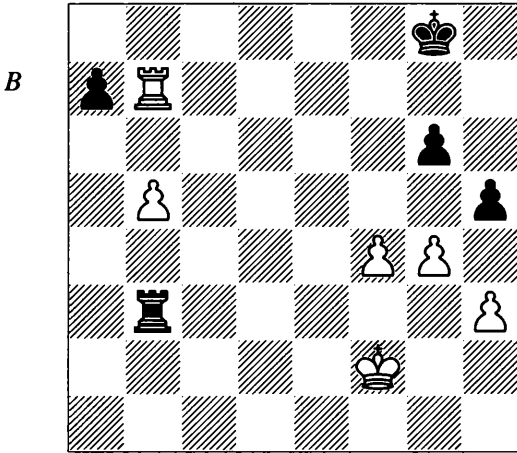
9 ♖g4

9 ♖g3 ♖xh5 10 ♖f3 ♖b4 11 ♖e3 ♖g6 12 ♖c7 ♖f6 13 ♖d3 ♖e6 14 ♖c3 ♖d6 is an easy draw.

9...♖xb7! 1/2-1/2

The following defensive effort (*see diagram on next page*) by Black is especially impressive as it involves a totally unexpected move.

Black is a pawn down and his king is cut off on the back rank, but all is not lost. White's king is also cut off, and if the queenside pawns are exchanged then a drawn ending with all the pawns on one side will result. Nevertheless, Black still has to find a way to draw. He faces a typical choice: should he defend passively and wait to see if White can improve his position, or should he enter a forced line which simplifies



Sakalauskas – Nadeian
Polanica Zdroj 1996

the position, but in which the slightest miscalculation will prove fatal? Black decides on the latter choice, in this case correctly, and is rewarded with a clear-cut draw.

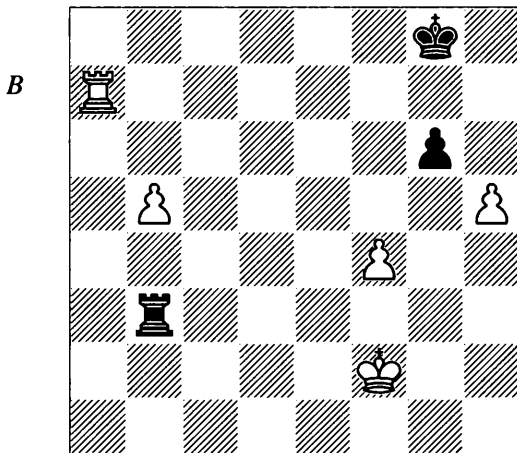
1...♖xh3!

1...h4 was the ‘passive defence’ option, which should also be sufficient for a draw, but allows White to torture Black for a long time. The move played is very sharp, but Black’s calculations prove accurate.

2 ♖xa7 ♜b3

Forced, or else b6 wins.

3 gxf5 (D)



3...g5!!

This incredible move is the cornerstone of Black’s defence. Other moves lose:

1) 3...gxf5? loses to 4 ♜b7 because the passed f-pawn will eventually enable White to

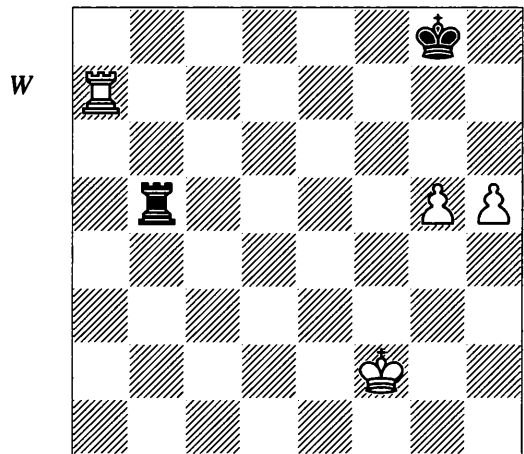
win Black’s rook; for example, 4...h4 5 ♔g2 ♜g3+ 6 ♔h2 ♜b3 7 b6 ♔f8 8 ♜b8+ ♔g7 9 b7 ♔h7 10 f5 ♔g7 11 f6+ ♔f7 12 ♜h8.

2) 3...♜xb5? 4 hxg6 is winning for White: 4...♜f5 (4...♜b6 5 f5 ♜f6 6 ♖a5 also wins for White) 5 ♔e3 ♜f6 6 g7 ♜g6 7 ♔e4 ♜e6+ 8 ♔f5 ♜b6 9 ♜e7 ♖a6 10 ♔e5 ♜b6 11 f5, etc.

4 fxf5

4 ♖a8+ ♔g7 5 fxf5 ♜xb5 transposes, while 4 ♜b7 gxf4 leaves White with an h-pawn instead of an f-pawn, and this proves insufficient to win after 5 b6 f3 6 h6 ♔h8 7 ♔g3 ♔g8 8 ♜g7+ (transferring the rook to g6 is the only possibility to change the situation) 8...♔h8 9 ♜g6 ♔h7 10 ♜d6 ♜c3 and White is unable to make progress.

4...♜xb5 (D)



A rook and two pawns generally beat a rook, but there are many exceptions (see Section 8.6 on page 108). In this case, White’s king is too far away to support the pawns so White has no choice but to defend them with his rook, but this creates a stalemate possibility which Black can exploit to force a draw.

5 ♖a8+ ♔g7!

Not 5...♔h7? 6 g6+ ♔h6 7 ♜h8+ ♔g7 8 ♜h7+ ♔g8 9 ♔g3 and the king marches up to support the pawns. With the g-pawn advanced, there is no stalemate.

6 h6+ ♔g6!

6...♔h7? 7 ♖a7+ ♔h8 8 g6 wins for White.

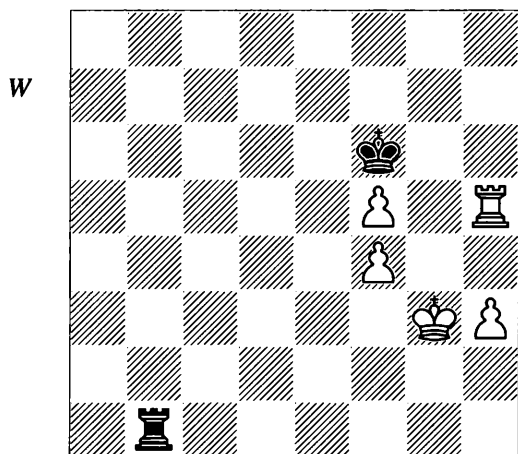
7 ♜g8+

7 ♖a6+ is met by the obvious 7...♔xg5.

7...♔h7 8 ♜g7+ ♔h8 1/2-1/2

White has managed to avoid losing a pawn, but only at the cost of trapping Black's king in the corner; indeed, Black is already threatening to give perpetual check, since he need not fear White taking the rook with his king. After 9 ♖g6 ♕h7 Black forces the rook back to g7, while otherwise White cannot do anything to lift the stalemate.

Sometimes a stalemate possibility can affect the general assessment of a particular ending.



Pokojowczyk – Doda
Polish Ch, Poznan 1971

The ending of ♖+f♔+h♔ vs ♖ is generally drawn, but does the addition of an extra f-pawn alter the situation? In general it should provide sufficient advantage to win, but in this position White is handicapped by the poor position of his rook. Any attempt to extract it from g5/h5 will lead to the loss of the f5-pawn, after which Black achieves a theoretical draw. Despite this, Marić claimed in *Informator 11* that the diagram position is a win, and an expanded version of this analysis was given in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*. However, as we shall see, the diagram position is a draw. The point Marić overlooked is actually quite simple, but it is sufficiently unusual that it escaped his attention. We follow the game continuation.

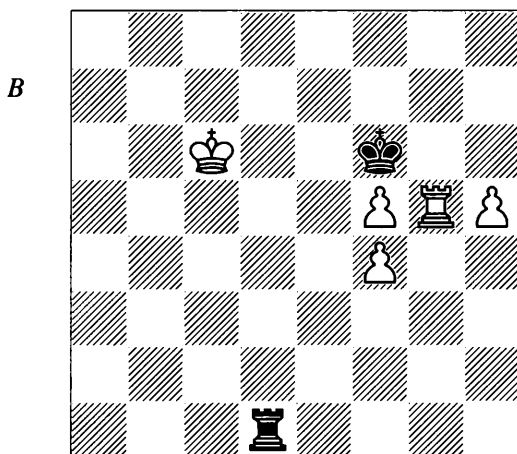
1 ♖g5 ♖g1+ 2 ♕f3

2 ♕h4 is no better since the king must return after 2...♖f1.

2...♖f1+ 3 ♕e3 ♖e1+ 4 ♕f2 ♖a1 5 h4 ♖h1 6 h5 ♖h4 7 ♕f3

7 ♕g3 ♖h1 8 ♕g4 ♖g1+ 9 ♕f3 ♖h1 is also a draw.

7...♖h1 8 ♕e4 ♖e1+ 9 ♕d5 ♖d1+ 10 ♕c6 (D)



The white king is heading for e8 and f8. If Black stops this march by playing ...♕f7, then the white rook is freed.

10...♖f1

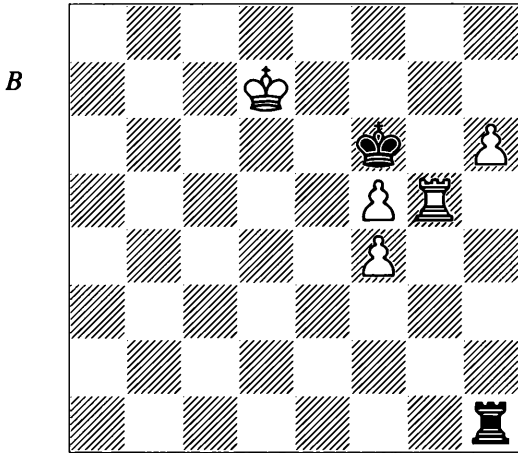
Minev gave the following line in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*: 10...♖c1+ 11 ♕d7 ♖d1+ 12 ♕e8 ♖e1+ 13 ♕f8 ♖a1 14 ♕g8 ♖a8+ 15 ♕h7 ♖a7+ 16 ♕h8 ♖b7 17 h6 ♖a7 18 h7 ♖b7? (my question mark) 19 ♖g6+ ♕xf5 20 ♖a6 and White wins. In the interests of accuracy, it is worth pointing out that Black can draw in this line by 16...♖a4! (there is a similar draw two moves later by 18...♖a4!) 17 h6 (17 ♖g6+ ♕xf5 and 17 ♖g4 ♕xf5 18 ♖h4 ♕f6 are even easier for Black) 17...♖xf4 18 ♖g6+ ♕f7! (not now 18...♕xf5? 19 ♕g7 ♖a4 20 h7 ♖a7+ 21 ♕h6 and White wins) 19 ♖g7+ ♕f8! (19...♕f6? loses to 20 ♕g8) 20 ♖g5 ♖h4 21 ♕h7 ♕f7! 22 ♖g7+ ♕f6!. This shows that even if White's king travels along the eighth rank and reaches h7, the position is still drawn. However, there is an even more serious problem with Minev's variation in that Black plays not 13...♖a1?!, but 13...♖e8+!, forcing immediate stalemate. The fact that Black's king is in mid-board makes this stalemate rather hard to see, but once you have spotted it, there can be no doubt that the position is drawn because it shows that there isn't even the possibility of penetrating with the king via e8 and f8. Black

can simply continue checking and eventually White's king will have to return to the second rank, whereupon Black plays ...♖h1 again.

11 h6 ♖h1

The stalemate still exists, so Black could have again drawn by checking along the first rank. 11...♖xf4? is wrong, however, since then 12 ♖h5 wins.

12 ♖d7 (D)



12...♖f7?

The losing move. 12...♖xh6? also loses after 13 ♖g6+! ♖xg6 14 fxg6 ♖xg6 15 ♖e6. Black could still have drawn by checking along the first rank, or by waiting with 12...♖h2, since after 13 ♖e8 Black can safely take on h6.

13 ♖g7+ ♖f6

13...♖f8 14 ♖h7 ♖a1 15 ♖e6 ♖a6+ 16 ♖e5 ♖g8 17 ♖g7+ ♖h8 18 ♖d7 is also a win for White.

14 ♖e8!

A neat point, threatening mate in one.

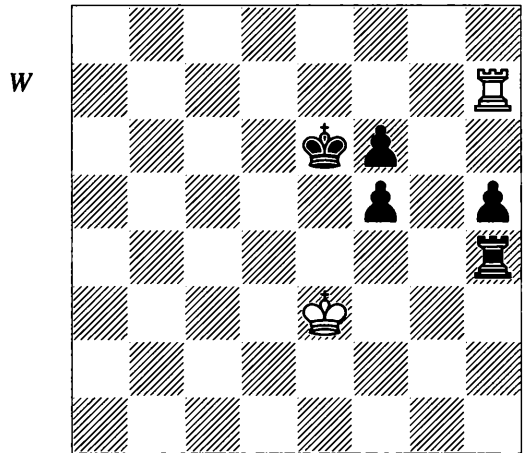
14...♖xf5

Now the pawn advances to h7 and the game is over.

15 ♖f7+ ♖g6 16 h7 ♖a1 17 f5+ ♖g5 18 ♖f8 1-0

The situation in which the mobility of the attacker's rook is limited by having to defend the front f-pawn isn't the only way this ending can result in a draw.

The following diagram is another exceptional position. Here Black's problem is the poor position of his king, which allows the



Krasenkow – Bacrot

French Team Ch, Asnières-sur-Seine 2006

white rook to stay behind the h-pawn, preventing Black from activating his rook. Were Black able to bring his king round to g6, then the rook would be freed and Black would indeed be winning.

1 ♖f3

1 ♖h8? is wrong as this allows Black to make the king transfer; after 1...♖f7 2 ♖f3 ♖g7 3 ♖a8 ♖b4 4 ♖g3 ♖g4+ 5 ♖f3 h4 6 ♖a1 ♖g6 7 ♖h1 ♖g5 8 ♖a1 ♖g3+ 9 ♖f2 f4, for example, Black is certainly winning.

However, I think that 1 ♖a7 is also sufficient to draw, even though Black's rook can move along the rank, since after 1...♖b4 2 ♖h7 h4 3 ♖f3 I cannot see how Black can make progress. The key point is that after 3...♖b3+ or 3...h3 4 ♖xh3 ♖b3+ 5 ♖f4 ♖xh3 White is stalemated, while 3...♖e5 4 ♖e7+ ♖d6 5 ♖f7 ♖e6 6 ♖h7 does not help Black. The move played is more clear-cut since it keeps Black's rook tied down to the h-file.

1...f4

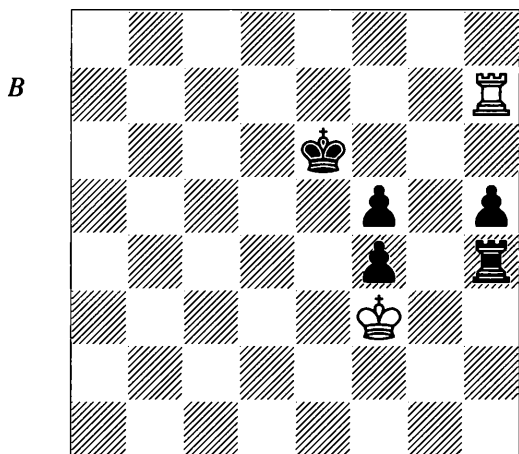
This is the only possibility to make progress, since other moves allow White to repeat the position; for example, 1...♖e5 2 ♖e7+ ♖d5 3 ♖f7 or 1...♖h3+ 2 ♖g2 ♖h4 3 ♖f3.

2 ♖e4!

Keeping Black's king out of f5 and thus preventing the transfer to the g-file. After 2 ♖a7? ♖f5 3 ♖a5+ ♖g6 4 ♖b5 Black can win, although the process is not at all simple: 4...♖g4 5 ♖b8 ♖g5! 6 ♖xf4 h4! (White's pieces are unfavourably placed and this gives Black time to

establish a winning position) 7 ♖b3 ♜h5 8 ♜h3 ♜f5+ 9 ♘g4 ♜g5+ 10 ♚f4 ♚h5 11 ♜h1 ♜g4+ 12 ♚f3 ♚g5 13 ♚f2 ♜a4 14 ♜g1+ ♚f5! (but not 14...♚f4? 15 ♚g2 and White draws) 15 ♜g8 ♜a2+ 16 ♚f3 ♜a3+ 17 ♚f2 ♚f4 and Black wins.

2...f5+ 3 ♚f3 (D)



White returns to f3, but forcing the pawn from f6 to f5 is a great help to White, as Black's king no longer has access to the shielded square f5. We now have the position that was claimed to be a win in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*, but we saw in the previous example that it is a draw thanks to a stalemate defence. White continued his accurate defence and Black was unable to win.

3...♚f6 4 ♜h8 ♘g7 5 ♜a8 ♜g4 6 ♜a5 ♚f6 7 ♜a8 ♚g5

No better is 7...h4 8 ♜h8 ♚g7 9 ♜h5 ♚g6 10 ♜h8.

8 ♜g8+ ♚h4

Black tries every possibility but he is thwarted by White's careful play.

9 ♜f8 ♚g5 10 ♜g8+ ♚f6 11 ♜a8 h4 12 ♜h8 ♚e5

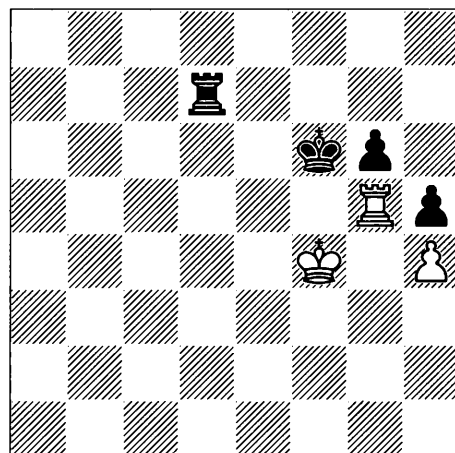
Finally Black heads for f1 with his king, but to no avail.

13 ♜e8+ ♚d4 14 ♜d8+ ♚c3 15 ♜c8+ ♚d2 16 ♜d8+ ♚e1 17 ♜e8+ ♚f1 18 ♜e1+! 1/2-1/2

Krasenkov doesn't miss the drawing stalemate.

In some positions it is necessary to anticipate a stalemate possibility and then avoid it.

B



Piscopo – Kelly
Turin Olympiad 2006

Black is a pawn up, but one would normally expect an ending with two pawns against one and all the pawns on the same side to be drawn. However, this position is special because both White's pieces are badly placed. The king should be on g3 or h3 defending the pawn, while the rook is passively placed on g5 since it is unable to check Black's king. All these advantages are purely temporary, so Black must act immediately to have any chances of success. It turns out that there is only one winning move.

1...♜d1!

Black finds the correct continuation, heading for h1 to attack the h4-pawn. 1...♜d2? is pointless because White can defend easily by 2 ♚g3.

The tempting move 1...♜d3?, aiming for h3, doesn't work as 2 ♜a5 (2 ♜f5+ ♚g7 3 ♜a5 ♜h3 4 ♜a4! defends the same way) 2...♜h3 3 ♜a6+! ♚g7 4 ♜a4! sets up a neat stalemate defence: the point is 4...♜xh4+ 5 ♚g5!, while after 4...♚h6 5 ♚e5 ♜g3 6 ♜d4 Black cannot make progress as 6...♜g4 7 ♜xg4 hxg4 8 ♚f4 ♚h5 9 ♚g3 is drawn.

2 ♜g2

2 ♚g3 fails to 2...♜g1+ 3 ♚f4 ♜f1+! (not 3...♜xg5? 4 hxg5+ ♚e6 5 ♚e4 ♚d6 6 ♚d4 ♚c6 7 ♚e4! drawing because White can maintain the opposition while staying in the square of the h-pawn) 4 ♚g3 (after 4 ♚e4 ♜h1 Black wins the h-pawn) 4...♜f5! (exploiting the bad position of White's rook) 5 ♜xf5+ gxf5 6 ♚f4 ♚e6 7 ♚g5 (or else White's king is forced back and

Black can eventually take the h-pawn) 7...♔e5 8 ♖xh5 ♕f6! (simplest, although 8...f4 also wins) 9 ♖h6 f4 and Black promotes first.

2 ♖a5 also loses after 2...♖g1 3 ♖a6+ (3 ♖g5 ♖f1+ transposes to the analysis of 2 ♖g3) 3...♖g7 4 ♖a7+ ♖h6 followed by ...♖g4+ and the h-pawn falls.

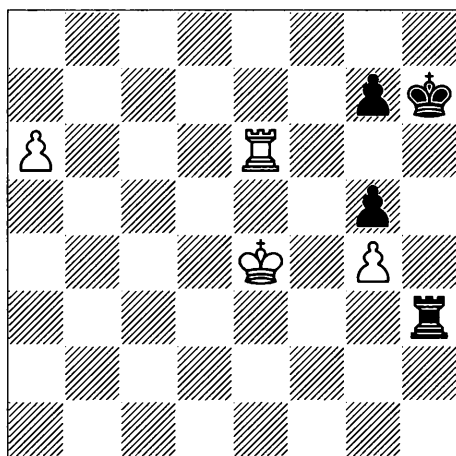
2...♖d4+

Now Black is able to exploit the position of the rook on g2.

3 ♖g3 ♖g4+ 4 ♖h3 ♖xg2 5 ♖xg2 ♔e5! 0-1

Not 5...♖f5? 6 ♖f3 with a draw. However, after the text-move Black wins because he can gain the opposition; for example, 6 ♖f3 ♖f5 7 ♖g3 ♔e4 and the h-pawn falls in a few moves.

The final example in this section is the most complicated. Black found a brilliant defensive idea based on stalemate, but in the ensuing complications both players missed opportunities.



Ivanchuk – Anand
Linares 2009

White clearly has a large advantage. His outside passed a-pawn is just two squares away from promotion and his king is actively placed, while Black has no prospect of a passed pawn and his king is cut off. It seems likely that Black will resign soon, but the game ended in a draw. It turns out that White can win, but it requires considerable accuracy and indeed with his very first move, White made a mistake that allowed Black to save the game with a remarkable stalemate defence.

1 ♔d5?

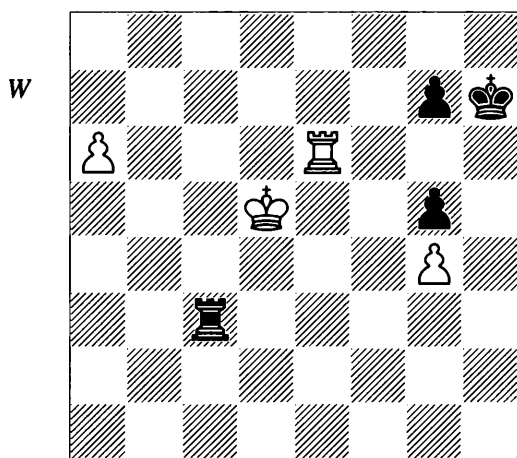
1 ♔d4! was the winning move: 1...♖g3 (1...g6 loses to 2 ♖e3 followed by ♖a3, while after 1...♖a3 2 ♖c5 g6 3 ♖b6 ♖b3+ 4 ♖c7 ♖a3 5 ♖b7 Black is helpless) 2 ♖c5 ♖xg4 3 ♖e5!! (a very difficult move to spot; 3 a7? ♖a4 4 ♖b6 g4 5 ♖e4 ♖xe4 6 a8♖ is only a draw as Black just puts his rook on f6 and doesn't even need the front g-pawn) and now:

1) 3...♖h6 4 a7 ♖a4 5 ♖b6 (threatening 6 ♖a5) 5...♖xa7 6 ♖xa7 ♖h5 7 ♖b6 ♖g4 8 ♖c5 ♖f4 9 ♔d4 g4 10 ♖e7 g3 11 ♖f7+ ♖g4 12 ♔e3 (12 ♖xg7+? allows Black to draw by 12...♖f3) 12...g5 13 ♖f6 ♖h3 14 ♖f3 g4+ 15 ♔e2 g2 16 ♖f2 and White wins.

2) 3...♖a4 4 ♖b5 ♖a1 5 ♖xg5 ♖h6 6 ♖c5 g5 7 ♖b6 ♖h5 (after 7...g4 8 a7 ♖xa7 9 ♖xa7 White wins by the fifth-rank cut-off) 8 ♖a5 ♖b1+ 9 ♖c7 ♖c1+ 10 ♔d7 ♖d1+ 11 ♔e7 ♖e1+ 12 ♖f7 ♖f1+ 13 ♖g7 ♖d1 14 a7 ♖d8 15 a8♖ ♖xa8 16 ♖xa8 g4 17 ♖f6 g3 18 ♖f5 and White wins.

1...♖c3! (D)

Having been given a chance by White's previous move, Anand finds an incredible defence. 1...♖a3? 2 ♖c5 g6 3 ♖b6 ♖h6 4 a7 and 1...♖g3? 2 ♖c6 ♖xg4 3 a7 ♖a4 4 ♖b7 both win for White.



2 ♖b6

2 ♖c6 (2 ♔d4 ♖c1 doesn't improve White's position) also doesn't win after 2...♖g3 (it turns out that the white rook is worse placed on c6 than e6, and this allows Black to draw) and now:

1) 3 a7 ♖a3 4 ♜c7 ♔h6 5 ♜c6 g6 (Black reveals the basis of his drawing idea: he stalemates his own king on h6 and thereby threatens to play ...♖xa7) 6 ♔d7 ♖a1 (Black waits until the white king leaves the seventh rank, after which he can take on a7) 7 ♔e7 ♖a2 8 ♔f7 ♖a1 and White cannot make progress as 9 ♔g8 is again met by 9...♖xa7.

2) 3 ♔c5 ♖xg4 (White no longer has the move ♖e5, which was decisive after 1 ♔d4! ♖g3 2 ♔c5 ♖xg4) 4 ♔b5 (or 4 a7 ♖a4 5 ♔b6 g4 and Black draws easily after 6 ♔b7 g3 7 a8♙ ♖xa8 8 ♔xa8 g5 9 ♔b7 g2 10 ♖c1 ♔g6 11 ♔c6 ♔f5 or 6 ♖c4 ♖xc4 7 a8♙ ♖f4) 4...♖f4 5 a7 ♖f8 6 ♖a6 ♖a8 7 ♔c6 g4 8 ♔b7 ♖f8 9 a8♙ ♖xa8 10 ♖xa8 ♔g6! (the only move to draw; 10...♔h6? loses to 11 ♖a5! g5 12 ♔c6 ♔h5 13 ♔d5 g3 14 ♖a2 ♔g4 15 ♔e4 ♔h3 16 ♖a8 g2 17 ♔f3! and White wins after 17...♔h2 18 ♖h8+ ♔g1 19 ♔g3 or 17...g1♙+ 18 ♔f2 ♔h2 19 ♖h8+ ♔h3+ 20 ♔f3, when the knight falls) 11 ♔c6 ♔f5 12 ♔d5 g3 with a draw.

2...g6? (D)

Having initiated a brilliant defence, Anand makes a slip which allows White a second winning opportunity since by denying his king the use of the g6-square, he improves White's chances in line 2 of the previous note. It wasn't necessary to set up the stalemate defence immediately, and he should have waited with 2...♖c1!, maintaining the status quo until White pushes the pawn. After 3 a7 (3 ♖b2 ♖a1 forces the rook back to b6, while 3 ♖c6 ♖g1 draws as in the previous note) 3...♖a1 4 ♖b7 ♔h6! 5 ♔c6 g6 Black is just in time.

2...♖g3? is also bad as White wins by 3 ♔c6 ♖xg4 4 a7 ♖a4 5 ♔b7.

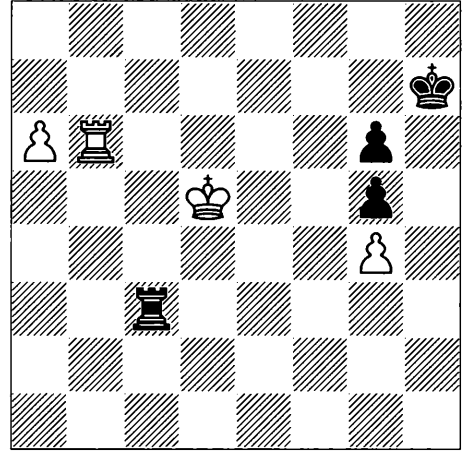
3 ♔d6?

After this, everything is in order for Black. 3 a7? ♖a3 4 ♖b7+ ♔h6 and 3 ♖d6? ♔h6 4 ♔e6 ♖c1 5 ♖d2 ♖a1 6 ♔f7 ♖f1+ 7 ♔g8 ♖f2! both lead to stalemate draws.

3 ♖c6! was the winning move; after 3...♖g3 (3...♖a3 4 ♔c5 and ♔b6 wins) 4 ♔c5 ♖xg4 5 ♔b5! Black can play:

1) 5...♖g1 6 a7 ♖b1+ 7 ♔a6 ♖a1+ (7...g4 8 ♖c5! wins for White) 8 ♔b7 (threatening ♖a6) 8...♖xa7+ 9 ♔xa7 ♔h6 10 ♔b6 g4 11 ♔c5 and White wins.

W



2) 5...♖f4 6 a7 ♖f8 7 ♖a6 ♖a8 8 ♔c6 g4 9 ♔b7 ♖f8 10 a8♙ ♖xa8 11 ♖xa8 and we have the same position as in line 2 of the note to White's second move, except that the pawn is on g6 and not g7. This blocks in Black's king and turns the position from a draw into a win for White: 11...♔h6 12 ♖a5! g5 13 ♔c6 transposes into the analysis of 10...♔h6? in the aforementioned note.

3...♔h6 4 ♖b8

It's no longer possible for White to win. 4 ♔e6 ♖g3 5 ♖b1 ♖a3 6 ♔f7 ♖f3+ 7 ♔g8 ♖f1 is also a draw.

4...♖a3 5 ♖a8 ♔g7 6 ♔c5 ♖a1 7 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 8 ♔a7 ♖b4 9 ♖b8 ♖xg4 10 ♖b5 ♖a4 11 ♖xg5 ♖b4 12 ♖c5 ♔h6 13 ♖c6 ♔h5 14 ♖b6 ♖f4 15 ♖b5+ g5 16 ♔b6 ♖f6+ 17 ♔a5 ♖f7 18 ♔b6 ♖f6+ 19 ♔a5 1/2-1/2

Summary:

- Stalemate is a common and important resource in rook endings.
- 'Stalemate blindness', in which a player totally overlooks a quite simple stalemate possibility, occurs frequently. This is especially common if there is something unusual about the stalemate, such as the king being in the middle of the board. It is often caused by lack of alertness in an 'obviously' won or lost position.
- Stalemates arise most often when the defender's king is on the edge of the board. The formation with king on f6 and pawn on f7 against king on f8 occurs rather often (of course, this can happen on any file).

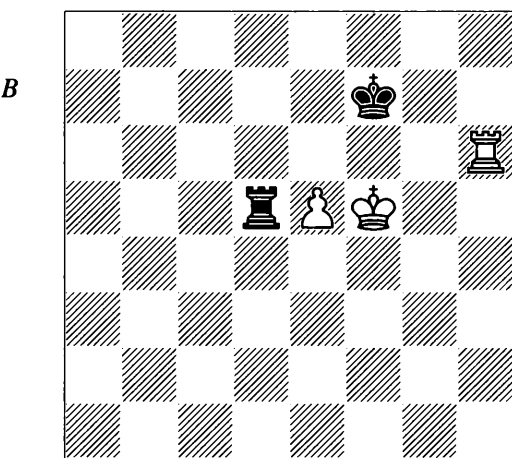
- The ending of ♖ + doubled f6+h6 vs ♚ is generally won, but if the attacker's pieces are poorly placed, then the defender may be able to save the game by means of a stalemate defence.
- In order to win, the attacker may need to spot a stalemate possibility in advance and manoeuvre to avoid it.

8.5 Rook and Pawn vs Rook

Having examined several key ideas that apply to all rook endings, I shall now move on to some particular material balances. I shall not examine these endings in an exhaustive way, since this book is not intended to be an encyclopaedia, but instead focus on situations of practical interest and typical errors.

8.5.1 Centre Pawn

With a centre pawn, if the defender has to check from the side, it is often important that he checks from the long side and that he secures the maximum checking distance. However, other factors can play a part and so one should not move to the a- or h-file automatically.



Kamsky – Kramnik
Amber Blindfold, Nice 2009

One might imagine that for two of the top players in the world, a technical ending such as this would pose no great challenge, even in a blindfold game. However, apparently simple

endings can contain subtleties that can trip up even the strongest players. In positions like this, Black's drawing plan is generally to keep his king on the kingside (the short side of the pawn) and check the white king from the a-file (this plan arises later in the game). Therefore, one's natural instinct with Black is to play the rook to the a-file directly, in order to prepare these checks and to prevent White from occupying the a-file himself.

On this basis, Kramnik's next move looks perfectly natural, but it is actually a losing mistake.

1...♖a5?

1...♞d1! is the correct plan (the rook could also move to d2, d3 or d4, but d1 is the most natural square on the d-file); after 2 ♖h7+ ♔f8 3 ♔f6 ♞f1+ (Black must be able to check on the f-file, which explains why he should play his rook along the d-file on his first move) 4 ♔e6 ♞a1 5 ♖h8+ ♔g7 it is a draw as in the game.

2 ♖h7+ ♔g8

2...♔f8 also loses, because after 3 ♔f6! ♔g8 4 ♞g7+ ♔f8 5 ♞b7 ♔g8 6 ♞b8+ ♔h7 7 e6 the poor position of the black king enables White to advance his pawn with impunity.

3 ♞e7?

Giving away the chance of victory, which is never again within White's grasp. 3 ♞d7! would have won; after 3...♞a1 (trying to rectify the earlier error, but it is too late; 3...♔f8 loses to 4 ♔f6 as in the previous note) 4 ♔f6! ♞f1+ 5 ♔e7! ♞a1 6 ♞d2! (accuracy is required; after 6 e6? ♔g7 Black improves the position of his king and reaches a standard theoretical draw) 6...♞a7+ (otherwise White checks on the g-file, driving the black king away and winning easily) 7 ♔f6 (had Black's king been on g7, the position would have been a draw, but not here as f6 is still available for White's king) 7...♞f7+ 8 ♔e6 ♞f1 9 ♞a2! (White's manoeuvres have gained him control of the crucial a-file, and now he wins as Black cannot achieve an adequate checking distance) 9...♔g7 10 ♞a7+ ♔g6 11 ♞a8 ♔g7 12 ♔e7 ♞b1 (12...♞f7+ 13 ♔d6 ♞f1 14 e6 ♞d1+ 15 ♔e7 ♞b1 16 ♔e8 also wins for White) 13 e6 ♞b7+ 14 ♔d6 ♞b6+ 15 ♔d7 ♔f6 (or 15...♞b7+ 16 ♔c6) 16 ♞f8+ ♔e5 17 e7 ♞b7+ 18 ♔d8 ♔d6 19 ♞f6+ and White wins.

3...♖a6

Kramnik now defends accurately until the end of the game.

4 ♜e6 ♖a1 5 ♜f6 ♔g7 6 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 7 ♔d5 ♖a5+ 8 ♔d4 ♖a4+ 9 ♔d5 ♖a5+ 10 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 11 ♔f5 ♖a1 12 ♜b6 ♔f7 13 ♜b7+ ♔e8 14 ♔f6 ♖e1 15 ♔e6 ♔f8 16 ♜b8+ ♔g7 17 ♖d8 ♖e2 18 ♖d5 ♔f8 19 ♖c5 ♖e1 20 ♖c8+ ♔g7 21 ♔d6 ♔f7 22 ♖c7+ ♔e8 23 ♔e6 ♔f8 24 ♖f7+ ♔e8 25 ♖h7 ♔f8 26 ♖h8+ ♔g7 27 ♖e8 ♖e2

27...♖a1 is simpler, but the text-move is also adequate.

28 ♔d7 ♖d2+ 29 ♔e7 ♖e2 30 e6 ♖a2 31 ♖c8 ♖a7+ 32 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 33 ♔d7 ♖a7+ 34 ♖c7 ♖a8

The only move to draw.

35 ♔e7 ♔g6 36 ♜b7 ♔g7 37 ♖d7 ♔g6 38 ♖d2 ♖a7+ 39 ♔f8 ♖a8+ 40 ♔e7 ♖a7+ 41 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 42 ♔e5 ♖a5+ 43 ♖d5 ♖a1 44 ♖d8 ♖a5+

Again the only move.

45 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 46 ♔e7 ♖a7+ 47 ♖d7 ♖a8 48 ♖d6 ♔g7

Once again Kramnik finds the unique drawing continuation. Kamsky tries everything, but to no avail.

49 ♖c6 ♖a7+ 50 ♔e8 ♖a8+ 51 ♔e7 ♖a7+ 52 ♔d8 ♔f8 53 ♖c5 ♖a8+ 54 ♔d7 ♖a7+ 55 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 56 ♖c6 ♖xc6+ 57 ♔xc6 ♔e7 58 ♔d5 ♔e8 59 ♔d6 ♔d8 60 e7+ ♔e8 61 ♔e6 1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

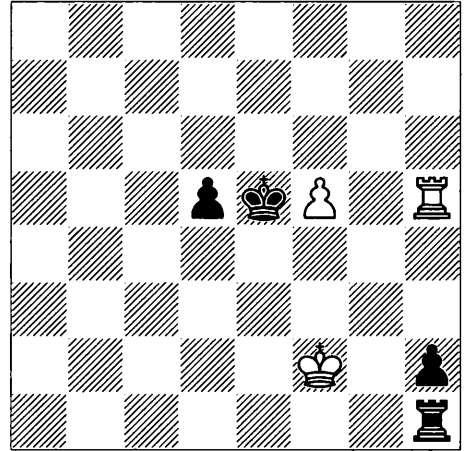
The result of many rook endings with few pawns depends on the evaluation of ♖+♔ vs ♖ positions which result after the exchange of some pawns. In the next position White made a slip, allowing Black a chance to win.

White's coming ♔g2 will inevitably result in the h-pawn falling, and if the f-pawn is also captured then we shall be in a position with ♖+♔ vs ♖. The diagram position is drawn, but only if White chooses the method of liquidation correctly.

1 f6+?

This is wrong. 1 ♔g2! would have drawn after 1...♖g1+ 2 ♔xh2 ♖g8 3 f6+ ♔e4 4 f7 ♖f8 5 ♖h7 d4 6 ♔g2 ♔e3 7 ♔f1 ♔d2 8 ♖h2+ or 1...♖e1 2 ♔xh2 d4 3 f6+ ♔xf6 4 ♖d5 ♖e4 5 ♔g3 ♔e6 6 ♖d8.

W



Dreev – Speelman
Geneva (rapid) 1996

1...♔xf6 2 ♔g2 ♖g1+?

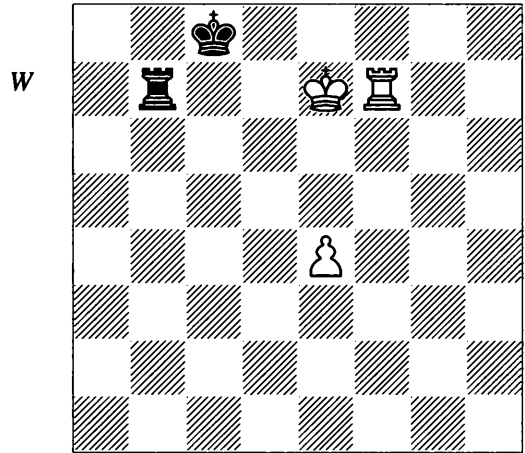
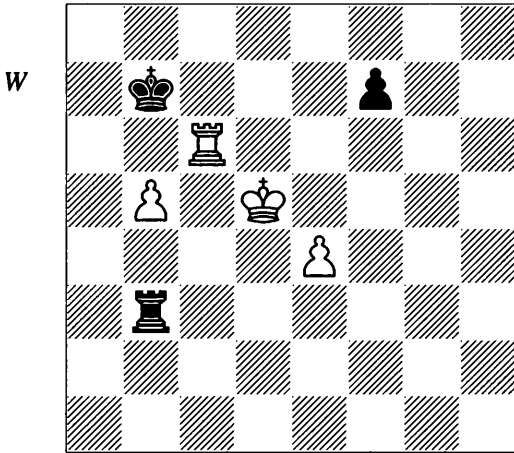
Black throws away an unexpected chance to win. After 2...♖e1! 3 ♔xh2 ♖e5 it is perhaps surprising that Black wins, as neither his pawn nor his king is especially far advanced. However, Black can gain just enough time to get his king in front of his pawn, while the rook stays on the e-file to cut off White's king. Then the key factor is that White's king is on the long side of the pawn, and the distance to the left of the pawn is too short for White to draw by sideways checks. Thus once Black establishes his king in front of the pawn, there is no way to prevent him from reaching the Lucena position. The main line runs 4 ♖h6+ ♔g5! (4...♔f5? 5 ♖h4! draws as now White can prevent Black's king from moving in front of the pawn) 5 ♖h3 (5 ♖d6 ♔f4 6 ♔g2 ♔e3 7 ♔f1 ♔d3 wins for Black) 5...♔f4! 6 ♔g2 ♔e4 7 ♔f2 ♔d4 8 ♖a3 ♔c4 9 ♖a4+ ♔b3 10 ♖h4 ♔c3 11 ♖h3+ ♔d2 12 ♖h4 ♖e4, followed by ...d4, and the pawn starts to advance.

3 ♔xh2 ♖d1

3...♖g5 4 ♖xg5 ♔xg5 5 ♔g3 is also a draw.
4 ♔g2 1/2-1/2

The following example is more complex. The defender again has his king on the unfavourable long side of the pawn, but the win is not simple as the attacker's pawn is only on the fourth rank.

This position is winning for White since his pieces are actively placed, and so he can give up the b-pawn to win with the e-pawn.



M. Gurevich – Malakhov

FIDE World Cup, Khanty-Mansiisk 2005

1 ♖f6!

A well-calculated move. White no longer needs the b-pawn.

1...♗xb5+

It does not help to decline the pawn, since White wins easily after 1...♗d3+ 2 ♔e5 ♗d7 3 ♗d6 ♗e7+ 4 ♔f5 followed by e5 and ♔f6.

2 ♔d6 ♔c8

The best defence, since it allows Black to give some annoying sideways checks.

3 ♗xf7 ♗b6+ 4 ♔e7 ♗b7+ 5 ♔e8 ♗b6

5...♗b5 allows a simple win by 6 ♗f5! ♗b4 7 e5.

6 ♔e7

Black has found a plan of defence that at least causes White some problems, and for the moment White does not know how to proceed. 6 ♗f8! is the only way for White to make progress, forming a battery which prevents 6...♗e6+ due to 7 ♔f7+ ♔d7 8 ♗d8+. If Black waits, White plays e5, while 6...♔c7 also does not help, since after 7 ♔e7 Black no longer has a sideways check, so he cannot prevent White from pushing his e-pawn. The battery-forming idea is important in rook endings, and White's failure to spot it should have cost him half a point.

6...♗b7+ (D)

7 ♔f8?

White should have repeated moves with 7 ♔e8 before returning to winning plan, since now Black can draw.

7...♗b5?

The moment passes Black by, and now he is losing again. The drawing idea was 7...♗b4! 8 e5 ♗e4! 9 ♗e7 (9 ♗f5 ♔d7 10 ♔f7 ♗e1 gets White nowhere) 9...♗f4+ 10 ♔e8 ♗f5! and White cannot free his pieces since 11 e6 may be met by 11...♗f6.

8 ♗f5!

White finds the right move and is back on track.

8...♗b4 9 e5 ♔d7

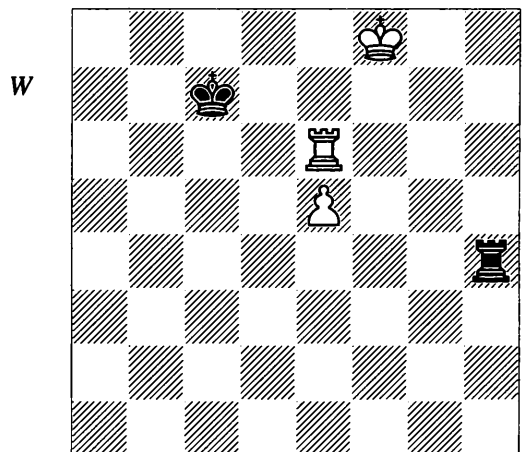
This is relatively the best defence. Note that 9...♗e4 no longer works because the e-pawn is already defended and White can simply play 10 ♔e7.

10 ♗f6!

The only winning move. 10 ♔f7? is bad in view of 10...♗e4!, when White is totally tied up.

10...♗e4 11 ♗d6+ ♔c7 12 ♗e6 ♗h4 (D)

After 12...♗f4+ 13 ♗f6 ♗e4 14 e6 White wins more easily.



13 ♖g6?

White has done most of the hard work and unexpectedly stumbles just when he could have won with a few more accurate moves. 13 ♖e7? is wrong due to 13...♗h5, but the winning line is 13 ♖f7! (threatening ♖g6 followed by e6) 13...♗h7+ 14 ♖g6! ♗h1 15 ♖d6! (now Black's king is cut off and he cannot prevent the advance of White's pawn) 15...♗e1 16 ♖f6 ♗f1+ 17 ♖e7 ♗h1 18 ♖d2 ♗h7+ 19 ♖f6 ♗h6+ (the checking distance is inadequate on the short side, and White can advance the pawn step by step) 20 ♖g5 ♗a6 21 ♖f5 ♗a1 22 e6 ♗e1 23 ♖f6 ♗f1+ 24 ♖g7 ♗e1 25 ♖f7 ♗f1+ 26 ♖e8 and the Lucena position is not far off.

13...♗e4?

The final error. Black could have drawn by 13...♖d8! 14 ♖d6+ ♖c7 15 ♗f6 (15 ♖d1 ♗e4, 15 ♖d5 ♖c6 and 15 ♖f7 ♗h5! 16 ♖e6 ♗h6+ 17 ♖e7 ♗h7+ are also drawn) 15...♖d8! 16 e6 (16 ♖f7 ♗h7+) 16...♗h8+ 17 ♖g7 ♖e7.

14 e6

Now the pawn advances and the end is close.

14...♗f4+

After 14...♖d8 15 ♗f6 ♗e1 16 ♖f7 ♗e2 17 ♗f1 White wins easily.

15 ♖e7 ♗h4 16 ♗g1 ♗h7+ 17 ♖f6 ♗h6+ 18 ♖f7 ♗h7+ 19 ♗g7 ♗h8 20 ♗g1 ♗h7+ 21 ♖g6 ♗h2 22 ♖d1 1-0

White reaches the Lucena position after 22...♗g2+ 23 ♖f7 ♗f2+ 24 ♖e8 ♗e2 25 e7.

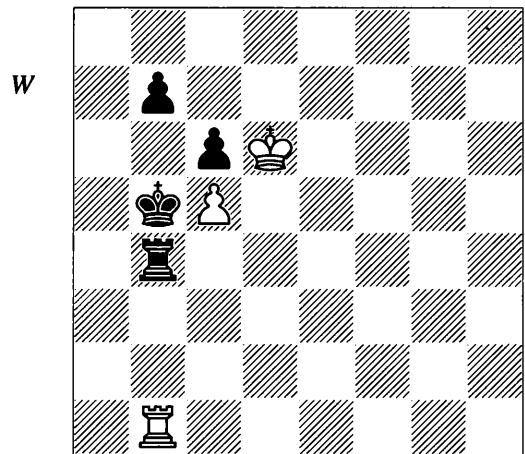
Summary:

- Positions with ♗ + centre pawn vs ♗ are often decided by the position of the defender's king. If it is on the short side, then the defender can check with his rook from the long side, which increases his drawing chances. If, however, the attacker's rook already occupies the rook's file, the defender may not be able to secure sufficient checking distance.

8.5.2 Bishop's Pawn

Many of the principles with a centre pawn carry over to the bishop's pawn. Once again, checks from the side should be from the long side of the pawn, but this time there is a bit more flexibility for the defender as there is

more space to play with. Rather than simply repeat the same type of example as in the centre-pawn section above, I'm going to look at a couple of positions in which the defender's king is behind the pawn. Normally this doesn't offer the defender much hope, but there are some exceptional cases.



Ljubojević – Smeets
Amsterdam 2007

This position should be a draw. Black has an extra pawn, but White has the possibility of exchanging the c5-pawn for the b7-pawn in order to reach a drawn ♗+♖ vs ♗ ending.

1 ♖d1?

This should lose. After 1 ♖c1! Black would not be able to make progress, since 1...♖d4+ 2 ♖c7 ♖c4 3 ♗h1 ♖xc5 4 ♖xb7 is drawn.

1...♗b3?

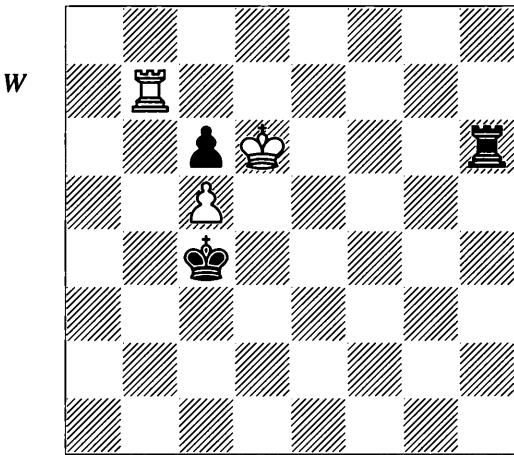
Missing the winning line 1...b6! 2 cxb6 ♖xb6. In endings of ♗+♖ vs ♗, it is much worse for the defender to have his king cut off along a rank than along a file, and here there is no way to prevent the advance of Black's pawn; for example, 3 ♖d2 c5 4 ♖d5 ♖b5 5 ♖d1 ♗b3 or 3 ♖c1 ♖d4+ 4 ♖e5 c5 5 ♗b1+ ♖c6 6 ♗h1 (or else ...♗h4 followed by ...c4) 6...♖d8 7 ♖c1 ♗e8+ and Black wins.

2 ♖c1 ♗h3

The only way to try for a win, even though it allows an exchange of pawns.

3 ♗b1+ ♖c4 4 ♗xb7 ♗h6+ (D)**5 ♖e5?**

Here White missed a draw with the instructive line 5 ♖c7! ♖xc5 6 ♗b1 (the full checking



distance is necessary: 6 ♖b2? loses to 6...♞h7+ 7 ♔c8 ♔d4) 6...♞h7+ 7 ♔c8. It is surprising that Black cannot win even though White's king is cut off on the back rank, but after 7...♔d5 8 ♞d1+ ♔e4 9 ♞c1 it becomes clear that there is nothing Black can do. This draw also works when the pawn is on a different file.

5...♔xc5

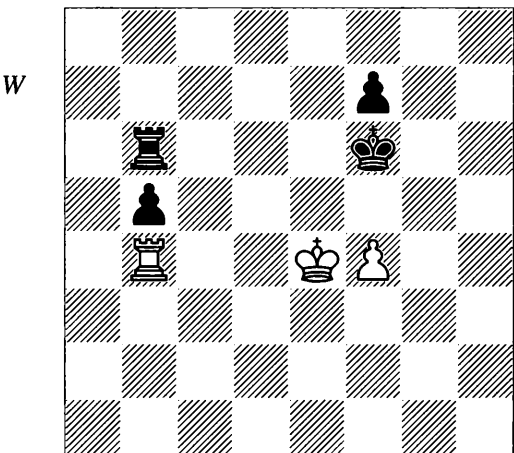
Now White's king gets cut off and there is no hope of saving the game.

6 ♔e4 ♔c4

6...♞h3 also wins.

7 ♔e3 ♔c3 8 ♞c7 ♞e6+ 9 ♔f4 ♔c4 10 ♔f5 ♞h6 11 ♔e4 c5 12 ♔e3 ♞d6 13 ♔e2 ♔b4 14 ♞b7+ ♔c3 15 ♞b1 ♔c2 16 ♞a1 ♞e6+ 17 ♔f3 c4 0-1

A somewhat similar position arises in the following example.



Totsky – Golod
Cappelle la Grande 2007

This position is lost for White. Black has an extra outside passed pawn, with his rook favourably placed behind the pawn. The only complication is the limited material, which means that Black must take a little care. Despite the relatively technical nature of this ending, Black, rated 2595 at the time, played inaccurately and allowed White to reach a drawn position. The key idea is to liquidate to a winning ♞+♔ vs ♞ position, and a firm grasp of such positions is essential to choose the correct method of liquidation. It is hardly possible to play rook endings well without a good knowledge of ♞+♔ vs ♞, since this material balance is fundamental to the whole subject of rook endings.

1 ♔d5

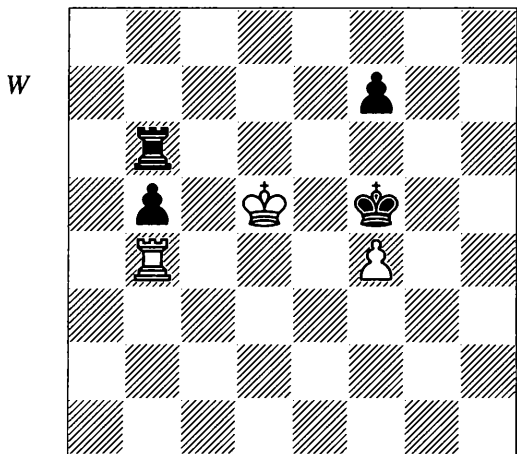
White decides to play actively. Against more passive plans, Black starts to move his king towards the queenside and White soon finds himself in zugzwang. For example, 1 ♔d4 ♔f5 2 ♔e3 ♔e6 3 ♔d3 ♔d6 4 ♔d4 ♔c6 (now White has to make a concession, either to permit the pawn to advance or to allow Black's king access to c5) 5 ♔c3 (5 ♞b1 b4 6 ♔c4 b3 only makes matters worse for White, while after 5 f5 ♔d6 White is again in zugzwang and must soon allow the black king to reach c5 or e5) 5...♔c5 6 ♞b1 (6 ♞e4 ♞e6 and Black forces an exchange of rooks) 6...b4+ 7 ♔b3 ♞f6 8 ♞f1 ♞f5 9 ♔c2 ♔d4 10 ♔b3 ♔e4 11 ♔xb4 ♞xf4 12 ♞e1+ ♔d3+ 13 ♔c5 f5 14 ♔d5 ♞a4 and Black wins since White's king is cut off along a rank.

1...♔f5

Black had an alternative win by 1...♞a6 (threatening ...♞a4) 2 ♞xb5 ♞a4 3 ♞b1 ♔f5! (3...♞xf4? allows a surprising draw by 4 ♞g1! ♔f5 5 ♔d6! and Black cannot win after either 5...f6 6 ♔e7 or 5...♞g4 6 ♞f1+ ♔g6 7 ♔e5) 4 ♔d6 ♞e4 (White's king is cut off along a file and along a rank) 5 ♞h1 f6! (threatening ...♔xf4) 6 ♞h6 ♞xf4 7 ♔e7 ♔g5! 8 ♞h8 (the best defence, which forces accurate play by Black) 8...♞e4+ 9 ♔f7 f5 10 ♞g8+ ♔f4 11 ♔f6 ♞a4 12 ♔g6 ♞a6+ 13 ♔h5 ♞a1! 14 ♞f8 (Black wins after 14 ♞b8 ♞h1+ 15 ♔g6 ♔g4) 14...♞f1 15 ♞f6 ♞h1+ (now Black passes the move to White to put him in zugzwang; the immediate 15...♔g3 16 ♞g6+ ♔h3? is wrong due to 17 ♔g5!, drawing) 16 ♔g6 ♞g1+ 17 ♔h5 ♞f1 18 ♞f7 ♔g3 19

♞g7+ ♕h3 and Black wins since ♔g5 is impossible owing to $\dots\text{♞g1+}$.

We now return to $1\dots\text{♕f5}$ (D):



2 ♕c5

Or $2\ \text{♔d4 ♞e6!}$ $3\ \text{♕d3}$ ($3\ \text{♕d5 ♞e3}$ $4\ \text{♞xb5 ♕xf4}$ $5\ \text{♞b1 f5}$ wins easily for Black) $3\dots\text{♔g4}$ $4\ \text{f5+ ♕xf5}$ $5\ \text{♞xb5+ ♕f4!}$ ($5\dots\text{♕g4?}$ $6\ \text{♞b1! f5}$ $7\ \text{♞g1+}$ is drawn) $6\ \text{♞b4+}$ ($6\ \text{♞b1 ♞e3+!$ $7\ \text{♕d2 f5}$ $8\ \text{♞f1+ ♞f3}$ $9\ \text{♞a1 ♕g3}$ $10\ \text{♕e2 ♞f2+}$ $11\ \text{♕e1 f4}$ also wins for Black) $6\dots\text{♕f3}$ $7\ \text{♞b1 ♞d6+!}$ $8\ \text{♕c3 f5}$ $9\ \text{♞f1+ ♕e4}$ $10\ \text{♞e1+ ♕f4}$ $11\ \text{♞f1+ ♕e5}$ (the immediate $11\dots\text{♕g4}$ $12\ \text{♞g1+ ♕h3}$ $13\ \text{♞f1 ♞f6?}$ doesn't work due to $14\ \text{♕d4! f4}$ $15\ \text{♕e5!}$, attacking the rook) $12\ \text{♞e1+ ♕f6}$ $13\ \text{♞f1 ♞d8}$ (the rook retreats to a safe distance and now the king marches to h3) $14\ \text{♕c4 ♕g5}$ $15\ \text{♞g1+ ♕h4}$ $16\ \text{♞f1 ♕g4}$ $17\ \text{♞g1+ ♕h3}$ $18\ \text{♞f1 ♞f8}$ $19\ \text{♕d4 f4}$ $20\ \text{♕e4 ♕g3}$ and Black wins.

2...♞b8?!

The first step off the correct path. Black could have won fairly simply here by $2\dots\text{♞e6!}$ ($2\dots\text{♞h6!}$ $3\ \text{♕xb5 ♞h4}$ followed by $\dots\text{♞xf4}$ is also good) and now both $3\ \text{♕xb5 ♞e4}$ $4\ \text{♞b1 ♞xf4}$ and $3\ \text{♕d5 ♞e3}$ $4\ \text{♞xb5 ♕xf4}$ present Black with few technical difficulties. Black's reluctance to surrender his b-pawn to head for a winning ♞+♖ vs ♞ position might have proved costly.

3 ♕d6 ♕g4?

Now Black allows White to reach a drawn position. $3\dots\text{♞e8!}$ was the correct move, cutting off the white king along the e-file, and after $4\ \text{♕d5 ♞e3}$ play transposes into the previous note.

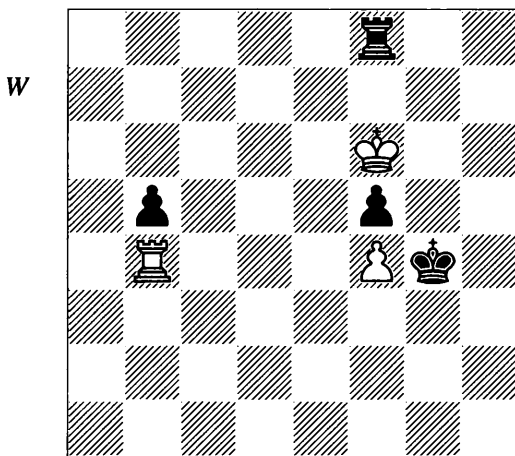
4 ♕e7

Now the f-pawn is vulnerable and must advance.

4...f5 5 ♕f6

White has established a new defensive formation that is not easy to break down. Black's problem is that if he moves his rook along the rank (for example, by $\dots\text{♞e8}$, intending $\dots\text{♞e4}$) then the reply ♞xb5 already attacks the f5-pawn.

5...♞f8+!? (D)



The best try. If White does not appreciate the danger, then he can easily go wrong here.

6 ♕g6?

And he does. The simplest draw was by $6\ \text{♕e5 ♞e8+}$ $7\ \text{♕f6 ♞e4}$ $8\ \text{♞xb5 ♞xf4}$ $9\ \text{♞b1!}$ ($9\ \text{♞b8?}$ loses to $9\dots\text{♞a4}$) $9\dots\text{♞f2}$ $10\ \text{♞g1+ ♕f4}$ $11\ \text{♞a1}$ and Black cannot make progress.

6...♞c8

Now this move wins, because Black has an intermediate check on c6 forcing White's king away.

7 ♕f6

$7\ \text{♞xb5 ♞c6+}$ $8\ \text{♕f7 ♕xf4}$ is hopeless for White as his king is totally cut off. The text-move threatens to draw by taking on b5.

7...♞c5

Black has manoeuvred his rook into a more active position and should now win.

8 ♕e6 ♕f3?!

Although this does not throw away the win, it does not bring victory any nearer. $8\dots\text{♞c4!}$ was the way forward: $9\ \text{♞xb5 ♞xf4}$ (this is a draw with the white king on f6, but here Black can win thanks to the check on e4) $10\ \text{♞b1}$

♖e4+ 11 ♔d5 (Black also wins after 11 ♔f6 f4) 11...♞a4 12 ♜g1+ ♔h3 13 ♞f1 f4 and White's king is cut off.

9 ♔d6?!

Now it should be easy for Black. After 9 ♔f6 Black would have to backtrack by 9...♔g4 and then win as in the previous note.

9...♞c4 10 ♞xb5 ♔xf4

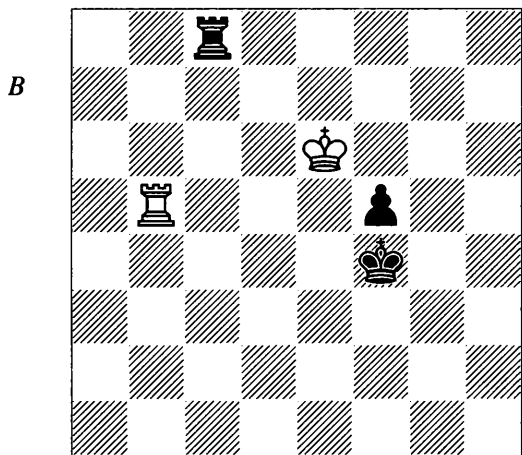
White is doomed by his poorly-placed king.

11 ♔e6 ♞c6+! 12 ♔d5 ♞c8?!

Here too Black makes the win harder than necessary. 12...♞a6! was simpler and after 13 ♔d4 (13 ♞b1 ♔g3 and Black wins after 14 ♞g1+ ♔f2 or 14 ♞b3+ ♔g4) 13...♞a3 14 ♞b8 ♔f3 Black can edge his pawn up the board until he reaches the Lucena position.

13 ♔e6!? (D)

Causing the greatest problems. 13 ♞b1 ♔g3 14 ♞g1+ ♔f2 is an easy win for Black.



13...♞e8+?

This move unexpectedly throws away the win. The simplest route to victory was by 13...♞c6+! 14 ♔d5 ♞a6, as in the note to Black's 11th move, but there is a second possibility: 13...♞f8! 14 ♞b1 (14 ♔e7 ♞a8 15 ♔e6 ♔g4 also wins for Black) 14...♔g3!, winning after 15 ♔e7 ♞a8 or 15 ♞b3+ ♔g4.

14 ♔f6?

Missing the last drawing chance 14 ♔f7! ♞a8 15 ♔g6! ♞a6+ 16 ♔h5, when White easily reaches a drawn position with his rook giving long-range horizontal checks from the queen-side.

14...♔g4!

White is defenceless as he can't take the pawn.

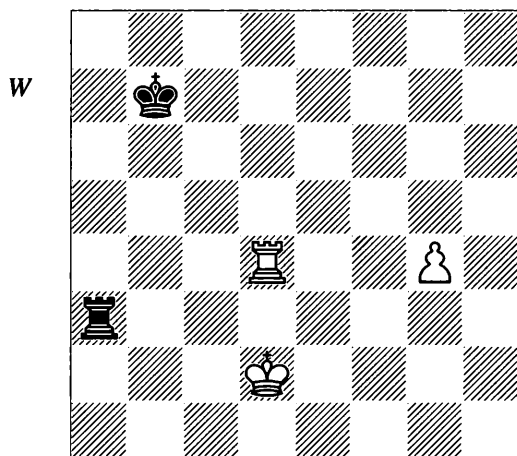
15 ♔g6 ♞e6+ 0-1

Summary:

- Many positions with ♞ + bishop's pawn vs ♞ are based on the same general principles as centre-pawn positions, with the ability to check from the long side being a major consideration.
- In ♞+♔ vs ♞, it's generally worse for the defender to have his king cut off along a rank than along a file.
- There are some drawn positions with the defender's king behind the enemy pawn.

8.5.3 Knight's Pawn

For some reason, situations in which the defender's king is cut off along a file arise especially often with a knight's pawn. Then the most important factor is how many files separate the pawn and the defender's king. For a knight's pawn on the fourth rank, the king needs to be cut off by three files from the pawn to ensure a general win (in other words, with a white g4-pawn the black king must stand on the c-file with White's rook controlling the d-file).



Saltaev – Efimenko
Bundesliga 2004/5

This position is winning for White, but accurate play is required. Although Black's king is cut off far enough away to ensure a win, here there is a complicating factor in that White's

own king is cut off along a rank by the enemy rook. This probably served to confuse White, who promptly went wrong.

1 ♖e2?

White's priority should have been to cut off Black's king at the greatest possible distance, and ignoring this principle should have cost White half a point. 1 ♖c4! wins if followed up correctly: 1...♗b6 (1...♖f3 2 ♖e2 ♖f8 3 ♖e3 and White wins by marching the king up the e-file and then pushing the g-pawn) 2 ♖e2 ♗b5 (this looks awkward for White, because if his rook moves along the file, Black can reply ...♖g3) 3 ♖e4! (the only move to win; White plays his rook to e3 to enable his king to approach the pawn while still keeping Black's king cut off, albeit at a more modest distance; 3 ♖d4? ♖c5 4 ♖d3 doesn't work because Black can exchange rooks) 3...♖c5 4 ♖e3 ♖a8 5 ♖f3 ♖d4 (a two-file cut-off from a knight's pawn on the fourth rank is not enough to win if Black's pieces are optimally placed, but that is not the case here; to save the game, Black's king should be on d6 and his rook already on g8, but he lacks time to achieve this set-up) 6 ♖e7! (this exploits the absence of the black king; now when White marches his king up the board, his rook can interpose on the seventh rank) 6...♖f8+ 7 ♖g3 ♖g8 8 ♖f4 ♖f8+ 9 ♖g5 ♖g8+ 10 ♖f5 ♖f8+ 11 ♖g6 ♖g8+ 12 ♖g7 and the pawn advances.

1...♖c6 2 ♖f2

A three-file cut-off usually wins with a g-pawn, but not when White's own king is cut off along a rank.

2...♖b3 3 ♖d1

3 g5 only draws after 3...♖b5! 4 ♖g4 ♖d7 5 g6 ♖b8 6 ♖g3 ♖e6 7 ♖h4 ♖f6 and White will lose his pawn, while 3 ♖e4 ♖d5 4 ♖e3 doesn't work here as Black can swap rooks.

3...♖a3 4 ♖g2 ♖b3 5 ♖h2 ♖a3 6 ♖g1

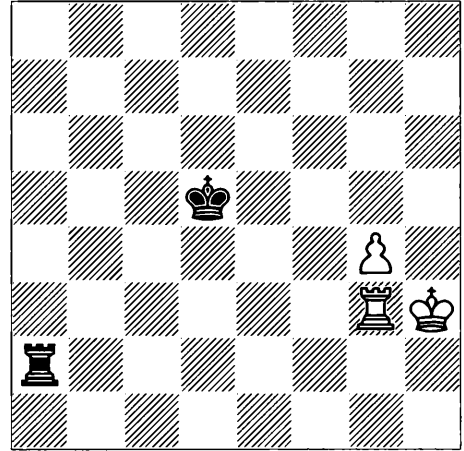
After some preparatory moves, White decides to try releasing his king by playing his rook to g3.

6...♖d5 7 ♖g3 ♖a2+ 8 ♖h3 (D)

8...♖e4?

A serious error. Black tries to avoid having his king cut off by ♖f3, but an important general principle for the ending of ♖+♔ vs ♖ is that

B



it is usually worse for the defender to have his king cut off along a rank than to have it cut off along a file. By playing his king so far up the board, Black allows White to switch his rook to the fifth rank, preventing any retreat by the black king. 8...♖e5? is also bad due to 9 ♖f3! ♖a8 10 g5 ♖e6 11 ♖g4 ♖e7 12 ♖h5 and Black is too late to offer the exchange of rooks with ...♖f8.

8...♖e6! would have drawn: 9 ♖f3 ♖a8! 10 g5 (or 10 ♖h4 ♖h8+ 11 ♖g5 ♖g8+ 12 ♖h5 ♖h8+ 13 ♖g6 ♖g8+ and White cannot make progress) 10...♖e7 (10...♖a4 also draws, repeating the defensive theme of cutting off the white king along a rank) 11 ♖g4 ♖f8 and Black gets his king in front of the pawn, with a sure draw.

9 ♖b3 ♖a1

There's no way back as 9...♖e5 10 ♖f3 wins for White as in the previous note.

10 ♖b5

Establishing a cut-off along the fifth rank. There is now nothing Black can do to prevent the gradual advance of White's pawn.

10...♖a8 11 ♖h4 ♖h8+ 12 ♖h5 ♖f8 13 ♖h6 ♖f4 14 ♖h5 ♖e5 15 g5

The situation is repeated one rank up.

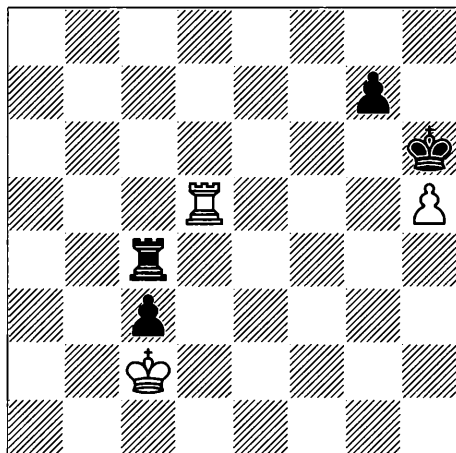
15...♖f1

15...♖f5 16 ♖h7 ♖a8 17 ♖f7+ ♖e6 18 g6 is also a win for White.

16 ♖a6 ♖g1 17 ♖h6 ♖f5 18 g6 ♖b1 19 ♖h7 ♖h1+ 20 ♖g8 ♖h6 21 ♖f7 1-0

Some positions are a win even if the defender's king is relatively close to the pawn, provided the attacker's pieces are well placed.

B



Morozevich – Gelfand

Amber Rapid, Monte Carlo 2005

Black’s only winning chance is to enter a $\text{K}+\text{P}$ vs R ending by exchanging his c-pawn for White’s h-pawn.

**1...R

####**

1...Rg4 2 Kxc3 Rg5 3 Rd7! (the only drawing move) 3... Kxh5 4 Kd2 is also a draw.

**2 Kxc3 R

####**

This ending should be a draw with correct play.

**3 R

####**

3 Rd1 followed by a frontal attack also draws, and is simpler than the game continuation.

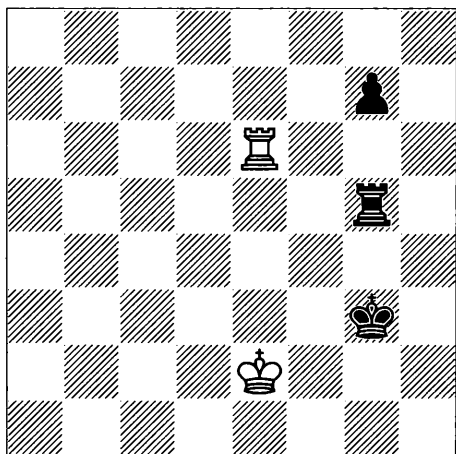
**3... Kg5 4 Kd2 Kh4 5 Ke2 R

####**

Cutting off the king and threatening to win by ...g5, so the reply is forced.

6 Rg6! Rg5 7 Re6 Kg3 (D)

W



Although the pawn is only on the second rank and White’s king is just two files away from the

pawn, the position is unpleasant for White since his rook is poorly placed and Black’s king is active.

8 Kf1 ?

Now Black wins. The correct defence is quite tricky: 8 R (White must keep his rook on the sixth rank for the moment) 8... Kg2 9 Ke3 ! (the first of a long succession of ‘only’ moves; Black was threatening to win by 9...R**e5**+ followed by ...g5, or 9...R**g3** followed by ...g5) 9...R**g4** 10 R**a2**+! Kh3 11 R**a1**! g5 12 R**h1**+ Kg3 13 R**g1**! (not 13 R**h5**? Kg2 and White is to play in a reciprocal zugzwang) 13... Kh3 14 R**h1**! Kg2 15 R**h5**! (now Black is to play in the reciprocal zugzwang and so the result is a draw) 15...R**g3**+ 16 Ke4 ! g4 17 Kf4 and the draw is clear. It would certainly have been a remarkable feat to find this draw at 10 seconds a move.

8... Kh2 !

Black finds the winning move.

9 Re2**+**

Or 9 Ke2 Kg2 10 Ke3 (with the rook on e6, this position is lost, because White cannot switch his rook to the second rank in time) 10...R**g4** 11 R**a6** g5 and Black wins.

9... Kh1 10 Re7** R**f5**+ 11 Ke2 g5**

The rest is simple.

12 Ke3 Kg2 13 Ke4 Rf4**+ 14 Ke3 R**f3**+ 15 Ke2 g4 16 R**e4** g3 17 R**b4** R**f8** 18 R**h4** R**e8**+ 19 Kd3 Kf2 20 R**f4**+ Kg1 21 Kd2 g2 22 R**f7** R**h8** 23 Ke2 Kh1 0-1**

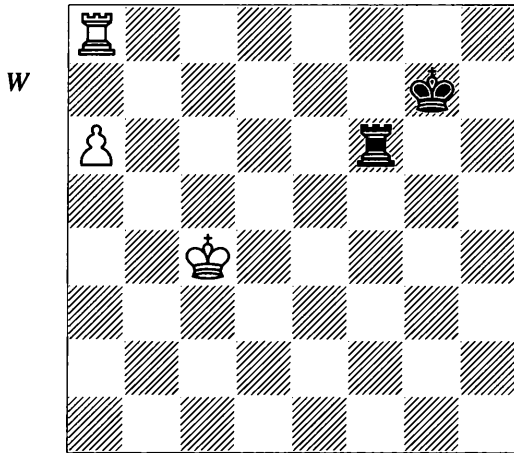
Summary:

- With a knight’s pawn on the fourth rank, the defender’s king must be cut off by three files in order for the position to be generally won. Curiously, exactly the same distance suffices for a knight’s pawn on the third rank.
- Even if the requisite cut-off distance has been achieved, the position may not be winning if the attacker’s king is cut off along a rank.

8.5.4 Rook’s Pawn

The rook’s pawn is the most complicated case, because there are new defensive strategies that don’t exist for any other pawn. The main one is the Vančura draw, which operates when the attacker’s rook is in front of the pawn and the

defender's rook attacks the pawn from the side. The following diagram shows the basic idea.



J. Vančura
28 Rijen, 1924

The black rook's attack on the pawn prevents White's rook from escaping from its current passive position, while if White's king approaches the pawn it is just checked away.

1 ♖b5 ♜f5+

White was threatening to win with 2 ♜c8, so this is forced.

2 ♖b6 ♜f6+ 3 ♖c5 ♜f5+ 4 ♖d4 ♜f6!

The only drawing move. Not 4...♜f4+? 5 ♖e5 ♜a4 (now 5...♜f6 loses to 6 ♜g8+) and White wins now that Black's rook has taken up an inferior position behind the pawn: 6 ♖d5 ♜a1 7 ♖c6 ♖f7 8 ♖b7 ♜b1+ 9 ♖a7 ♖e7 10 ♜b8 ♜c1 11 ♖b7 ♜b1+ 12 ♖a8 ♜c1 13 ♖a7 ♖d6 14 ♖b7 ♜b1+ 15 ♖c8 ♜c1+ 16 ♖d8 ♜h1 17 ♜b6+ ♖c5 18 ♜c6+ ♖d5 19 ♜a6 ♜h8+ 20 ♖c7 and White wins Black's rook in a few moves. This is another case in which the rook is better placed to the side of the enemy passed pawn than behind it (see also Section 8.4.3).

5 ♖e5 ♜b6

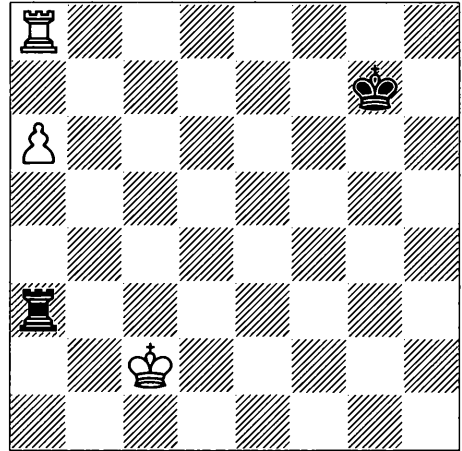
Countering the threat of 6 ♜g8+.

6 ♖d5 ♜f6

and White is not making progress.

The Vančura draw arises in many positions with a rook's pawn. For example, how does Black draw in the following diagram? The answer is to use a refined form of the rook switch from Section 8.4.2.

B



1...♜h3!

The rook has to be transferred to a sideways attack on the pawn in order to reach the Vančura draw, but the surprise is that this is the only way to do it. After 1...♜f3? 2 ♜a7+! ♖f6 (2...♖g6 3 ♜b7 ♜f8 4 ♖a7 ♜a8 5 ♖b3 and White wins because the black king is one square too far away: after 5...♖f6 6 ♖b4 ♖e6 7 ♖b5 ♖d6 8 ♖b6 Black is too late) White wins by 3 ♜h7! (the best square for the rook, as Black's king doesn't gain a tempo by attacking it while moving across to c6) 3...♖g6 (if Black doesn't drive the rook away from h7, White wins by 3...♜a3 4 ♖a7 ♖e6 5 ♖b2 and now 5...♜a5 loses to 6 ♜h6+ ♖d7 7 ♜h8, while after 5...♜a4 6 ♖b3 White gains another tempo and wins) 4 ♜b7 ♜a3 5 ♖a7 ♖f6 6 ♖b2 ♜a6 7 ♖b3 ♖e5 8 ♖c4 ♖d6 (Black is one tempo short) 9 ♖b5 ♜a1 10 ♜b6+ ♖d5 11 ♜a6 ♜b1+ 12 ♖a5 ♖c5 13 ♜c6+.

2 ♜a7+

2 ♖b2 ♜h6 3 ♖b3 ♜f6 is the Vančura draw of the previous diagram.

2...♖f6!

After 2...♖g6? 3 ♜b7 White gains a tempo and wins.

3 ♜b7

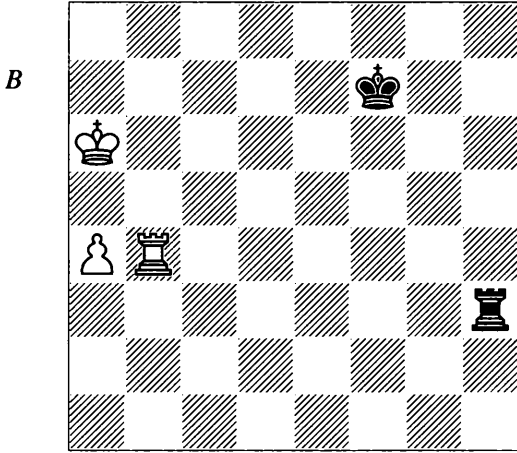
3 ♖b2 ♜h8! 4 ♖b3 ♖e6 5 ♖b4 ♖d6 6 ♖b5 ♜b8+ and Black draws because after 7 ♜b7 he can exchange rooks.

3...♜a3 4 ♖a7 ♖e6 5 ♖b2 ♜a6 6 ♖b3 ♖d6 7 ♖b4 ♖c6

and Black draws.

We shall refer to the above position later (see Yermolinsky-Miton on page 146).

I shall not go into the details of exactly when the Vančura draw can be reached, since this material may be found in many endgame books (for example, *Secrets of Rook Endings*). Instead I shall just emphasize that the defender often needs to operate sideways with his rook, either to give a barrage of checks or to tie the enemy rook down by attacking the pawn.



I. Novikov – Lalić
Manila Olympiad 1992

This is a marginal case. With White to play, Black would definitely be lost, but with Black to play, the position stands on a knife-edge. In the game Lalić produced some really accurate defence to save the game.

1...♔e6!

Already on this first move Black has only one chance to draw. White is threatening to win by ♖e4, cutting off the black king at a winning distance of four files, so Black must play his king to the e-file. However, 1...♔e7? loses to 2 a5 ♜h8 (2...♔d6 3 ♔b6 also wins for White) 3 ♔b7 ♔d6 4 ♜c4! ♜h7+ 5 ♔b6 ♜h1 6 ♜d4+ ♔e5 7 ♜b4! ♜h6+ 8 ♔c5! ♜a6 9 ♜a4 ♔e6 10 ♔b5 ♜a8 11 a6 ♔d7 12 a7 ♔c7 13 ♔a6 ♜h8 14 ♜c4+, followed by ♔b7, with an easy win. As we shall see, 1...♔e6 is the only good continuation because Black's king needs to be able to move to d5 later.

2 a5 ♜h8!

Another accurate move; indeed, 2...♜d3! was the only other way to draw. Other moves lose:

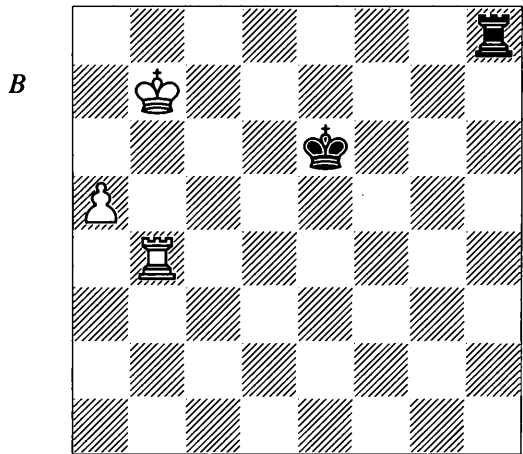
1) 2...♔d7? 3 ♔b7 is easy.

2) 2...♔d6? loses to 3 ♔b6! ♜h8 4 ♜d4+ ♔e5 5 ♜d7 ♔e6 6 ♜g7 ♜h1 7 a6 ♜b1+ 8 ♔c7 ♜c1+ 9 ♔b8.

3) 2...♔d5? 3 ♔b5! (note how in every case White moves his king onto the same rank as Black's, in order to provide shelter from lateral checks; 3 ♔b6? is only a draw after 3...♜h6+! 4 ♔b5 ♔d6 5 ♜c4 ♜h1) 3...♜h8 4 a6 ♜b8+ 5 ♔a5 ♜xb4 (5...♜a8 6 ♜b7 ♔c6 7 ♜h7 ♜g8 8 a7 is also winning for White) 6 a7! and White wins because he promotes with check (although he does have to win the rather tough ending of ♔ vs ♜).

The reason why 2...♜h8! works is that Black does not commit his king. Because of the possibility of ...♜b8+ exchanging rooks, White's king has to go to b7, but then Black can play his own king to d5, making sure there are a number of clear ranks to give checks from the side. The other drawing move, 2...♜d3!, also arranges to give checks from the side, but in this case they are short-range checks from the d-file.

3 ♔b7 (D)



3...♔d5!

This move has a double purpose: preventing ♜c4, which would enable White to shield his king, and making sure that the top three ranks are all open for sideways checks from Black's rook. 3...♔d6? loses to 4 ♜c4! ♔d5 5 ♜c7, shielding the white king.

4 ♜g4

4 a6 ♔c5, followed by checking with the rook, draws.

4...♔c5

4...♖h7+ 5 ♔b6 ♖h6+ 6 ♔b5 ♔d6! 7 ♖g7
♖h1 is another way to draw.

5 ♖g7 ♖h6!

The only move, preparing a check on b6.

5...♖h1? loses after 6 a6.

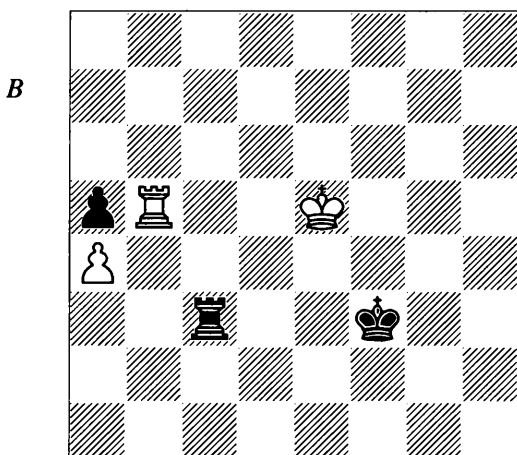
6 a6

6 ♖g5+ ♔b4! 7 a6 ♖h7+ is a draw.

6...♖b6+ 7 ♔a7 ♖b1 8 ♖b7 ♖a1! 1/2-1/2

Not 8...♖h1?, losing to 9 ♖c7+ ♔d6 10 ♔b8.

Sideways checks and the Vančura draw also feature prominently in the next example.



Nezar – Marzolo

Nancy 2005

Black is about to lose his a-pawn, when he will have to defend an ending of ♖+♔ vs ♖. According to the database, there are six moves that lead to a draw here, but not all of these have equal merit. To defend a tricky ending of ♖+♔ vs ♖ is by no means easy, so the right choice here will ease Black's task later on.

1...♔e3

There is nothing really wrong with this, but 1...♖e3+ might have been simpler. Then 2 ♔d4 is impossible, while 2 ♔d5 ♔f4 3 ♔c6 ♖e6+ 4 ♔b7 ♔e4 5 ♖xa5 ♔d4 6 ♖b5 ♔c4 7 ♖b6 ♖e5 is an easy draw. If the king moves to the f-file, then 2 ♔f5 ♔e2 3 ♖xa5 ♔d3 4 ♖a8 ♔c4 is also simple, so the only real test is 2 ♔d6, but after 2...♔e4 3 ♖xa5 ♔d4 4 ♖a8 ♔c4 the black king catches the pawn. The two basic points about this ending are that Black should try to restrict the white rook by attacking the a-pawn, thus keeping White's rook on the a-file, and that

White's king has no shelter from sideways checks, so Black should try to check from the h-file. We already know from the Vančura position that sideways checks are the way to go when fighting against an a-pawn with the attacker's rook in front of the pawn, and the same principle applies in this slightly different situation.

2 ♖xa5 ♔d3?!

After this, Black must defend with more accuracy. 2...♖c4! 3 ♖a8 (3 ♔d5 ♔d3) 3...♖h4 4 a5 ♖h5+! was the best plan of defence, switching the rook to the h-file at the first opportunity. By forcing the white king away, Black's king can move to d4 and then c5, approaching the white pawn as quickly as possible. After 5 ♔d6 ♔d4 6 a6 ♖h6+ 7 ♔c7 ♔c5 it's an easy draw.

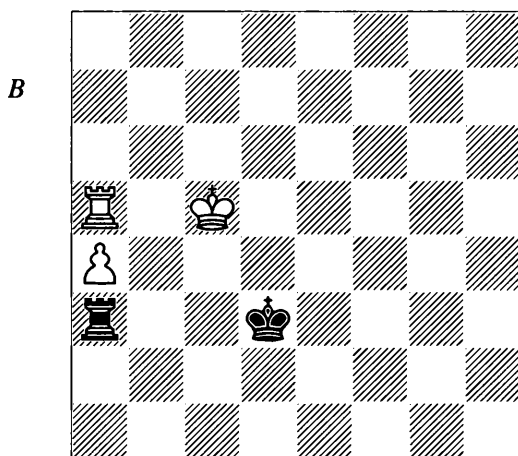
3 ♔d6

This causes the most problems. After 3 ♔d5 ♖c4 (3...♖a3? 4 ♖a8 ♔c3 5 ♔c5 transposes to the game) 4 ♖a8 ♖h4 5 a5 ♖h5+ 6 ♔c6 ♔c4 Black draws much as in the previous note.

3...♖a3

3...♖c4 still draws, but precise play is necessary: 4 ♖d5+ (this check is the point of playing ♔d6 rather than ♔d5) 4...♔c3! 5 a5 (now that White's rook has emerged, the h-file checks are ineffective, but Black can draw by a different method) 5...♔b4 6 a6 ♖c8! 7 ♖d1 ♔b5 8 a7 ♔b6 and Black saves the game.

4 ♔c5 (D)



4...♔c3?

The natural move, but it loses because it blocks the rook and thus prevents it from

switching to the h-file. Black's last chance to draw was by 4...♖c2! (this may seem like a difficult move to find, but it is not so hard if one appreciates the importance of sideways checks) 5 ♖a8 (5 ♖b4 is met by 5...♜b3+! 6 ♖c5 ♜a3, repeating, but not 5...♜h3? 6 ♜c5+, when the white rook emerges) 5...♜h3 6 ♜d8 (6 a5 ♜h5+ draws as before) 6...♜c3+! 7 ♖b5 ♜b3+ 8 ♖a6 (there is little choice but to block the pawn) 8...♖c3 9 a5 ♖c4 and White cannot win.

5 ♖a8

Now Black is doomed.

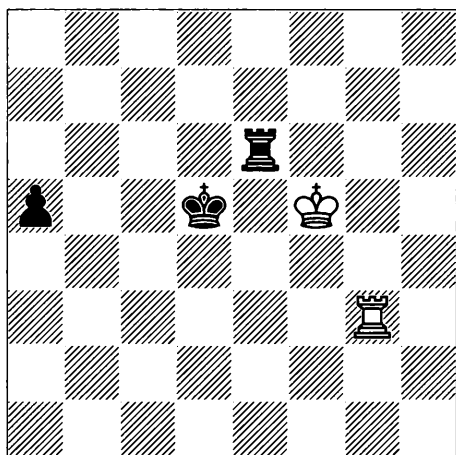
5...♖b3 6 ♖b5 ♜a1

The rook takes an extra move to emerge, and this makes all the difference.

7 a5 ♜h1 8 ♜c8! 1-0

The only move to win, but an immediately decisive one. White's rook can now interpose on the c-file, which nullifies the checks from the h-file. Without these, Black can do nothing to halt the advance of the white pawn.

In the following ending, the attacker's rook is not in front of the pawn, so the sideways-checks defence is much less effective. Instead, the defender places his rook behind the enemy pawn.



Bogdan – Z. Varga
Romania 1995

This endgame was extensively analysed by Stoica in *Informator 63*. The difficulty of such endings can be judged from the fact that his main conclusion (that both sides committed errors giving away half a point) is wrong. Neither side committed a result-changing error, although it is

true that Black could have posed White more problems.

1 ♜g8

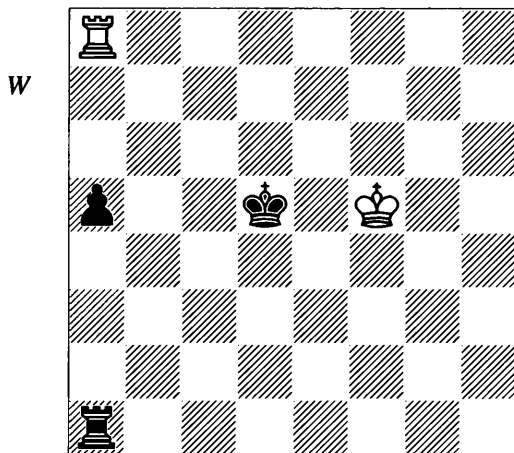
Playing the rook behind the enemy pawn is the most natural defence. 1 ♜a3 also draws: 1...♜a6 (1...♜e5+ 2 ♖f4 ♜e4+ 3 ♖f3 a4 4 ♜a1! is safe for White) 2 ♜a4! (hindering the advance of the black king) 2...♖c5 3 ♖e4 ♖b5 4 ♜a1! ♖c4 5 ♖e3 ♖c3 6 ♜c1+ ♖b2 7 ♜c8 a4 8 ♜b8+ ♖c2 (8...♖c3 9 ♜c8+ ♖b4 10 ♜b8+ ♖a5 11 ♖d2 a3 12 ♖c1 is a draw) 9 ♜c8+ ♖d1 10 ♜d8+ ♖e1 11 ♜h8 and White has no problems.

Stoica believed that 1 ♜g1? also draws, but it loses: 1...♜a6! 2 ♜d1+ ♖c4 3 ♜c1+ (3 ♖e4 a4 4 ♜c1+ ♖b3 5 ♜b1+ ♖c2 is also winning for Black) 3...♖b3 4 ♜b1+ ♖c2 5 ♜b8 (the same plan as in the analysis of 1 ♜a3, but here White's king is further away and this costs him the game) 5...a4 6 ♜c8+ ♖d2 (the black king is heading for the shelter on a5) 7 ♜d8+ ♖c3 8 ♜c8+ ♖b4 9 ♜b8+ ♖a5 10 ♖e4 a3 11 ♜b1 a2 12 ♜a1 ♖b4 13 ♖d3 ♖b3 and Black wins.

1...♜a6?!

This allows White to draw fairly comfortably, whereas some of the alternatives would have posed more of a challenge for White:

- 1) 1...♜e5+ 2 ♖f4 ♜e4+ 3 ♖f3 is easy for White.
- 2) 1...♜e1 2 ♜a8! ♜a1 (D) and now:



2a) 3 ♜d8+? loses to 3...♖c6! 4 ♜c8+ (after 4 ♖e4 ♜e1+ Black drives White's king away and wins, while 4 ♜a8 ♖b7 5 ♜d8 can be met by 5...♜e1, winning in the same way, although in this particular position 5...a4 6 ♜d2 a3 7 ♜f2

♔b6 is even quicker) 4...♔b7 5 ♖c2 ♖e1! (cutting the white king off far enough away to ensure that Black will win if he gets his king to a1 and pawn to a2) 6 ♖a2 ♔b6 7 ♔f4 ♔b5 8 ♖b2+ ♔c4 9 ♖a2 ♔b4 10 ♖b2+ ♔a3 11 ♖b8 a4 with a standard theoretical win.

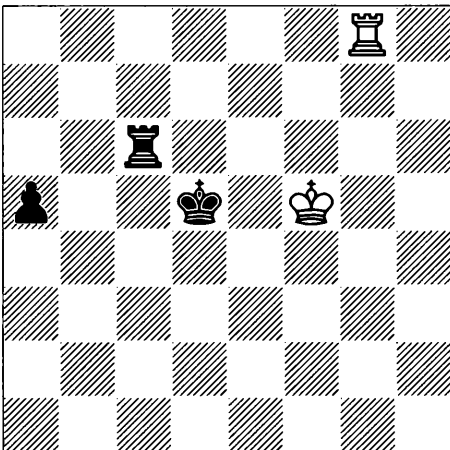
2b) 3 ♔f4! (the only move to draw) 3...♖a3 (3...♔d4 4 ♖d8+ ♔c3 5 ♖c8+ ♔b2 6 ♖b8+ ♔a3 7 ♔e3 is a draw as Black can only cut the king off from the pawn by three files, which is not enough to win) 4 ♖d8+ ♔c4 5 ♔e4 ♔c3 (5...a4 6 ♖c8+ ♔b3 7 ♔d3 ♔b2+ 8 ♔d2 ♖h3 9 ♖b8+ ♖b3 10 ♖c8 a3 11 ♖c2+ is a draw) 6 ♖a8 a4 7 ♔e3 ♔c2+ 8 ♔e2 ♖a2 (threatening to win by ...a3) 9 ♖c8+ ♔b1+ 10 ♔d1 ♖h2 11 ♖b8+ ♖b2 12 ♖a8 ♖b4 13 ♔d2 ♔b2 14 ♖c8! (the only move to draw) 14...a3 (14...♖d4+ 15 ♔e3 is also drawn) 15 ♖c2+ ♔b3 16 ♖c3+ ♔a4 17 ♔c2 a2 18 ♖c8 draws.

3) 1...♖b6 and now:

3a) 2 ♖a8? (Stoica believed this to be a draw, but Black can now win) 2...♖b5! 3 ♖d8+ (after 3 ♔f4 ♔d4 4 ♔f3 ♔d3 5 ♔f2 ♖e5! Black cuts the king off and wins) 3...♔c4+ 4 ♔e4 a4 5 ♔e3 a3! (but not 5...♔c3? 6 ♖d3+! ♔b2 7 ♖d2+ ♔b3 8 ♖d3+ ♔a2 9 ♖d2+ ♖b2 10 ♖d8 a3 11 ♔d3 ♔b1 12 ♔c3, when White draws) 6 ♖d4+ ♔b3 7 ♖d3+ ♔a4 8 ♖d4+ ♖b4 9 ♖d2 ♖c4 10 ♔d3 ♔b3 11 ♖d1 a2 and Black wins.

3b) 2 ♔f4! ♔d4 3 ♖d8+ ♔c3 4 ♖a8! ♖b5 (4...♔b4 5 ♔e3 a4 6 ♔d2 ♔b3 7 ♔c1 is the same) 5 ♔e3 ♔b3 6 ♔d2 a4 7 ♔c1 and White is in time to draw.

4) Stoica believed that 1...♖c6!/? (*D*) wins, but White can still hang on:



4a) 2 ♖a8? ♖c5! 3 ♔f4 ♔d4 4 ♔f3 (4 ♖d8+ ♔c3 5 ♖a8 ♖c4+ 6 ♔e3 a4 also wins for Black) 4...♖e5! (4...♔d3? 5 ♖d8+ ♔c2 6 ♖a8! is only a draw) 5 ♔f4 (the only chance, as otherwise the white king is cut off far enough away for Black to win) 5...♖d5! 6 ♖a7 (Black wins after 6 ♔f3 ♔d3! 7 ♔f2 ♖e5, as he also does after 6 ♖h8 ♔d3 7 ♖h3+ ♔c4 8 ♖h8 a4 9 ♖c8+ ♖c5 10 ♖a8 ♔b3 11 ♖b8+ ♔c2 12 ♖a8 ♖c4+ 13 ♔e5 ♔b3 14 ♔d5 ♖b4 followed by ...a3) 6...♔d3! (intending ...♖d4+ followed by ...a4) 7 ♔f3 ♖f5+ 8 ♔g4 ♔e4 9 ♖a8 ♖e5! 10 ♖a7 (10 ♔g3 ♔e3 11 ♔g2 ♖f5 12 ♔g3 ♖g5+ 13 ♔h4 ♔f4 transposes) 10...♔e3! (threatening ...♖e4+ and ...a4; by repeating this manoeuvre, Black forces White's king to the edge of the board) 11 ♔g3 ♖g5+ 12 ♔h4 ♔f4 13 ♖a8 ♖f5! 14 ♔h3 (14 ♖a7 ♔f3 followed by ...♖f4+ and ...a4 is winning for Black; now that White's king has reached the edge of the board, he no longer has any defence) 14...♔f3 15 ♔h2 ♖g5 16 ♖a7 ♔e3 17 ♔h3 ♔d3 18 ♔h4 ♖b5 19 ♔g3 ♔c3 20 ♔f3 ♔b3 21 ♔e3 (21 ♖e7 a4 22 ♖e3+ ♔b4 23 ♖e4+ ♔a5 is hopeless for White) 21...a4 22 ♖d7 a3 23 ♖d3+ ♔a4 and again Black wins.

4b) 2 ♔f4! ♔d4 3 ♔f3 ♔d3 (White draws Black's king down the board, so that he will not be able to interpose his rook later; 3...♖e6 4 ♖g5! ♖a6 5 ♔e2! is also a draw) 4 ♖a8 ♖c5 5 ♖d8+ (now Black cannot interpose on d5, so he must allow the white king to approach) 5...♔c2 (5...♔c3 6 ♔e2 ♔c2 7 ♖d2+ ♔b3 8 ♖d3+ ♖c3 9 ♖d8 a4 10 ♔d2 is drawn) 6 ♖a8! ♔b3 (6...♖e5 7 ♔f4) 7 ♔e3 a4 8 ♔d2 a3 9 ♖b8+ with a draw.

4c) 2 ♖d8+! ♔c4 3 ♖a8! is the only other drawing line.

2 ♖d8+

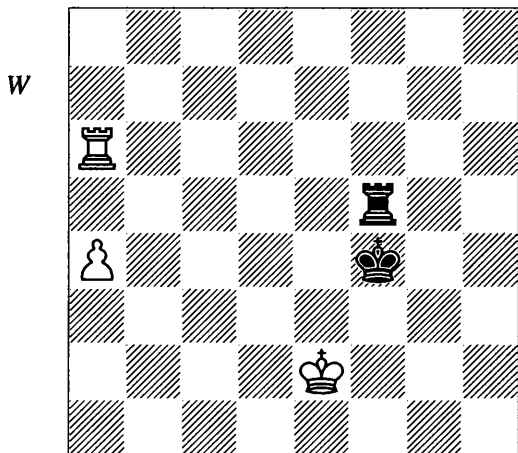
Now White simply checks Black's king to the a-file, after which Black is unable to cut the white king off by the distance necessary to win.

2...♔c4 3 ♖c8+! ♔d4 4 ♖d8+ ♔c3

4...♔e3 5 ♖e8+ ♔f3 6 ♔e5 a4 (or 6...♔e3 7 ♔d5+ ♔d3 8 ♔c5) 7 ♔d4 a3 8 ♖e1 also draws.

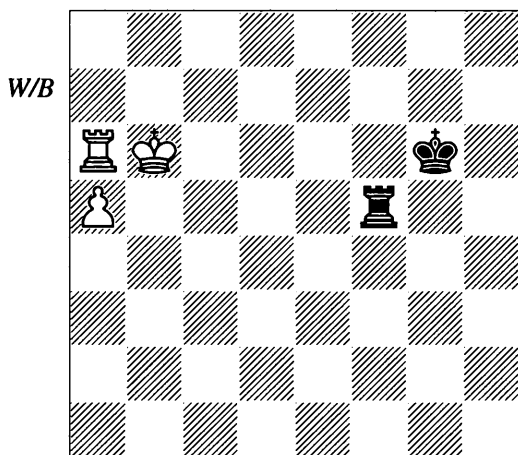
5 ♖c8+ ♔b2 6 ♖b8+ ♔a1 7 ♔e5 a4 8 ♔d4 a3 9 ♔c3 a2 10 ♔c2 ♖c6+ 11 ♔d2 ♖h6 12 ♔c1 ♖h1+ 13 ♔c2 ♖b1 14 ♖c8 1/2-1/2

Our final example of this section is the most complex by far.

**Bagirov – Kraidman***World Seniors Ch, Grieskirchen 1998*

This ending reminds us again that apparently simple endings can be very difficult; the position proved too much for both players during the game, and Bagirov also failed to assess the position correctly in his annotations. He believed that White was winning throughout the remainder of the game, but actually the diagram position is a draw and both sides made result-changing mistakes.

Before tackling the game position, we shall

**Bagirov – Kraidman**

Analysis diagram

first prove that this is a position of reciprocal zugzwang. This fact dominates the play in the game.

The first point to note is that White's king is so close to the pawn that if he can extract his rook from its clumsy position in front of the

pawn, the position will definitely be lost for Black.

Suppose first that White is to move. His problem is that a rook move allows the standard Vančura draw, while a king move necessarily removes the king's guard from the a5-pawn, and then White cannot activate his rook because it must remain on the a-file to defend the pawn. The main line is **1 ♖a8** (1 ♖c6 ♕g7 2 ♖a7+ ♕g6 3 a6 ♖f6+ is also drawn) **1...♖f6+ 2 ♕c7 ♖f7+ 3 ♕d6 ♖f6+ 4 ♕e5** (4 ♕e7 ♖f7+ 5 ♕e8 ♖f5 6 a6 ♖f6 7 ♕e7 ♖b6 8 ♕d7 ♕g7 9 ♕c7 ♖f6 is the standard Vančura draw) **4...♖f5+ 5 ♕e4 ♖b5!** (the only move to draw; 5...♖c5? gives White a free tempo and loses after 6 ♕d4 ♖f5 7 a6 ♖f4+ 8 ♕e5 ♖f5+ 9 ♕e4 ♖a5 10 ♕d4 ♕g7 11 ♕c4 followed by hiding the king on a7) **6 a6 ♕g7! 7 ♕d4 ♖b6 8 ♕c5 ♖f6** and again the normal drawing pattern arises.

Now suppose that it is Black to move.

1...♕g5

The problem with this move is that Black's rook is no longer defended when it is on f7, and so White can escape the checks by approaching Black's rook with his king. Other moves:

1) After **1...♖f1 2 ♕b7+ ♕g5 3 ♖c6** White frees the rook and wins.

2) **1...♖e5 2 ♖a8!** (Black no longer has a Vančura draw as his rook is not defended by his king) **2...♖e6+** (Black must start checking or White wins by playing his rook to c8) **3 ♕c7 ♖e7+ 4 ♕d6 ♖f7 5 ♖c8 ♖f5 6 ♖c5** and White wins.

3) **1...♕h6** (once again the flaw is that Black's king is not defending the rook) **2 ♖a8! ♖f6+ 3 ♕c7 ♖f7+ 4 ♕c6 ♖f5** (after **4...♖f6+ 5 ♕d7 ♖f7+ 6 ♕e6 ♖g7 7 ♖h8+ ♕g6 8 ♖h1 ♖a7 9 ♖a1** White transfers the rook to the other side of the pawn and wins easily) **5 a6 ♖f6+ 6 ♕b5 ♖f5+ 7 ♕c4 ♖f4+ 8 ♕d5 ♖f5+ (8...♖f6 9 a7 is a win for White) 9 ♕e6 ♖a5 10 ♕d6 ♖a1 11 ♕c7** and White wins by hiding the king on a7 and then extracting the rook.

4) **1...♕g7 2 ♖a7+ ♕g6 3 ♖c7** and White wins easily.

5) **1...♕f6 2 ♖a8** and Black's king blocks his rook checks.

2 ♖a8 ♜f6+ 3 ♔c7 ♜f7+ 4 ♔d6 ♜f6+ 5 ♔e7 ♜g6

White also wins after 5...♜f5 6 a6 ♜b5 7 ♔d6.

6 ♜b8 ♜a6 7 ♜b5+ ♔f4 8 ♔d7 ♔e4 9 ♔c7 ♔d4 10 ♔b7 ♜h6 11 a6 ♔c4 12 ♜g5 ♜h7+ 13 ♔b6 ♜h6+ 14 ♔a5 ♜h7 15 ♜g8

Threatening ♔b6 following by playing the king to the eighth rank.

15...♜h5+ 16 ♔b6 ♜b5+ 17 ♔c7 ♜c5+ 18 ♔b7 ♜b5+ 19 ♔a8 ♜b1

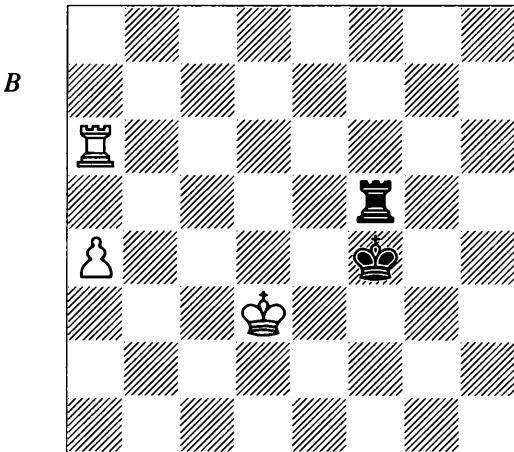
19...♔c5 20 ♜g5+ is a win for White.

20 a7 ♔c5 21 ♜b8 ♜h1 22 ♔b7 ♜h7+ 23 ♔a6 ♜h6+ 24 ♔a5 ♜h1 25 ♜c8+

and White wins.

Now let's return to the game position.

1 ♔d3 (D)



The best try, threatening to win by ♔c4.

1...♜c5?

With this move, Black attempts to cut off White's king, and also allow his king to move to e5 (he cannot play 1...♔e5 at once due to 2 ♜a5+), but this plan does not succeed. 1...♜f8? also threatens ...♔e5, but this move loses to 2 ♜a5! (the only winning move, cutting off the black king along a rank and intending to improve White's position with ♜d5 followed by a5) 2...♜d8+ 3 ♔c4 ♔e4 4 ♜h5 ♜c8+ 5 ♜c5 ♜d8 6 a5 ♜a8 7 ♔b5 ♔d4 8 ♜h5 ♜b8+ 9 ♔c6. Since Black cannot play ...♔e5, and he cannot allow White to play ♜a5, it probably seemed logical to move the rook along the rank so as to allow his king to move to e5 or f5. However, on

c5 the rook is exposed to attack by ♔d4, and then it will be forced to decide which way to move.

The key to Black's dilemma is the paradoxical 1...♔g5!!, which is the only move to draw. It is very odd that the best move is to take the king further away from the pawn, but it is possible to find this move if one is familiar with the Vančura draw (see page 100). We are not yet in a true Vančura position but such a position could easily arise if White pushes the pawn. The key feature of the Vančura draw is the sideways attack on the enemy pawn, and therefore Black should move his king in such a way as to allow ...♜f4. 1...♔g5!! indeed threatens ...♜f4, and the king also moves up the board so as to head for g7 in case White advances the pawn (in the basic Vančura draw, Black's king is on g7 and his rook is on the f-file).

Situations with the attacker's rook in front of a rook's pawn are special, and the defender can sometimes draw by the Vančura method even when his king is very distant from the enemy pawn. That is the case here; in the game Black focused on trying to move his king towards the a-pawn, whereas the priority should have been to set up a sideways attack. That is not to say that bringing the defending king towards the pawn is always wrong; in many cases it is the correct method (and if White meets 1...♔g5!! by 2 ♜b6, for example, Black has to switch to this method). As always in chess, everything depends on the exact position.

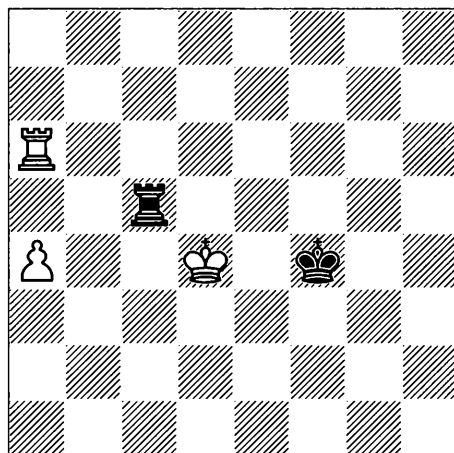
Finding the right move in endgames is often a two-stage process. It is very common for players not even to consider the correct move, especially if it has an unlikely or counter-intuitive appearance, so the first step is to look for all possible candidate moves, even the improbable ones. This step usually depends on imagination or, as in this case, a knowledge of analogous positions. The second step is to examine the various possibilities to home in on the correct move; this step often depends on concrete analysis of the given position. With any luck, the interaction between the three main elements of endgame play (knowledge, calculation and imagination – see Chapter 1 of Volume 1) will then result in the correct decision.

After 1...♔g5!! White can try:

1) 2 ♖b6 attempts to extract the rook before Black can set up the sideways attack on the pawn. In this new situation, Black has to change his plan of defence and play his king towards the enemy pawn: 2...♜f4! 3 a5 ♕f5! (Black is helped by the fact that his rook now cuts off the white king) 4 a6 ♕e5 5 ♕c3 ♕d5 6 a7 ♜a4 and Black holds the draw.

2) 2 ♕c4 ♜f4+ 3 ♕b5 ♜f5+ 4 ♕b6 ♜f6+ 5 ♕b7 ♜f7+ 6 ♕c8 ♜f8+ 7 ♕d7 ♜f7+ 8 ♕e8 ♜g7 9 a5 ♕f5 10 ♜h6 ♕e5 11 a6 ♕d5 and Black's king arrives just in time to save the day.

3) 2 a5 ♜f3+! 3 ♕c4 ♜f4+ 4 ♕c5 ♜f5+ (D) reaches a critical position.



B

Black's king cannot move to e5 or f5 without blocking his own rook.

2...♜c1

Or 2...♜h5 3 a5 ♜f5 (after 3...♕f5 4 ♖b6 ♕f4 5 a6 ♜a5 6 ♕c4 White wins easily now that his rook is freed) 4 ♜a8 ♕g5 (Black again tries to reach the Vančura draw, but compared to the note to Black's first move he has lost time) 5 a6 ♜f4+ 6 ♕e3 ♜f7 (6...♜a4 7 a7 and Black loses since his king is too far up the board) 7 ♖b8 ♜a7 8 ♖b6 ♕f5 9 ♕d4 and White wins.

3 ♜f6+?

3 a5! was the simplest route to victory: 3...♜d1+ (3...♜a1 4 ♜a8 ♕f5 5 a6 ♕g6 6 ♕c5 and White wins by hiding his king on a7 and then freeing his rook) 4 ♕c5 ♜c1+ 5 ♕b5 ♜b1+ 6 ♕c6 ♜a1 7 ♜a8 ♜c1+ 8 ♕d5 ♜d1+ (8...♕g5 9 a6 and White wins) 9 ♕c4 ♜c1+ 10 ♕b3 ♜b1+ 11 ♕c2 ♜h1 12 a6 (Black's king is stranded too far from the drawing zone near the top-right corner of the board) 12...♜h7 13 ♕b3 ♜f7 14 ♕b4 and the king lends decisive support to the a-pawn.

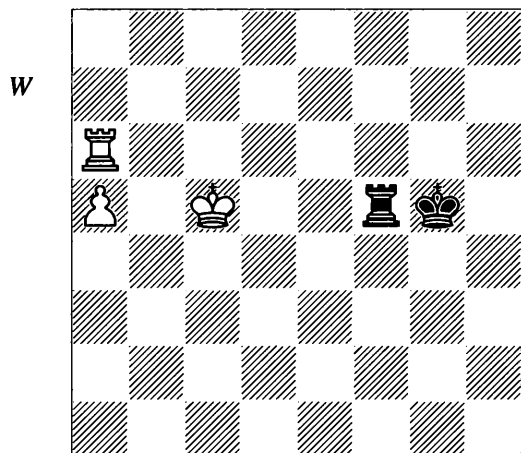
The move played gives Black a free tempo to bring his king nearer the desirable g7-square. Bagirov believed that this move, while inaccurate, maintains the win, but in fact Black can now draw.

3...♕g5! 4 ♖b6 ♜a1 5 ♜a6 (D)

5 ♖b4 ♕f6 6 ♕c5 ♕e7 7 ♕b6 ♕d7 is a draw, so the move played is the best chance.

5...♕f5?

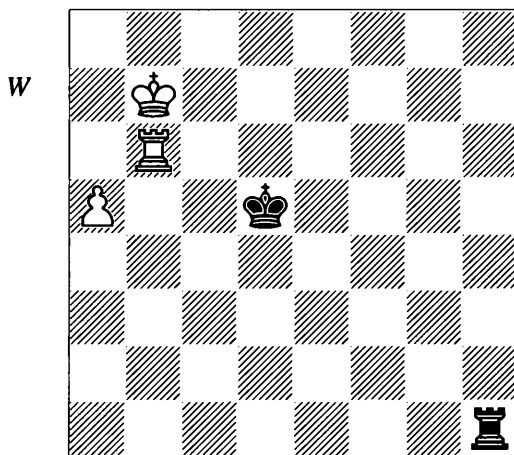
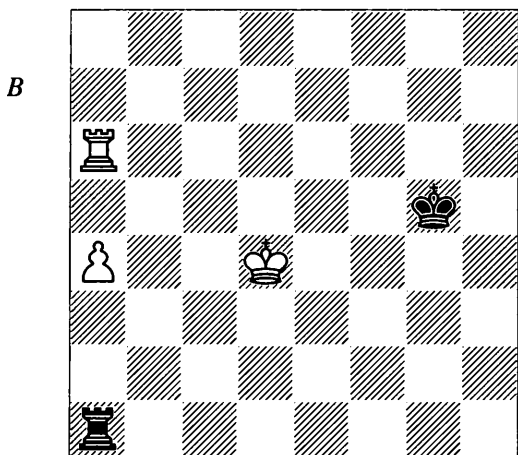
Black repeats his earlier error. Instead of trying to move his king towards the a-pawn, he



The point which is hard to grasp here is that the position with White's king on b6 and Black's king on g6 is reciprocal zugzwang, as we proved in the analysis diagram. 5 ♕c6! is the trickiest move (5 ♕b6 ♕g6! reaches the reciprocal zugzwang with White to play), but Black can draw by 5...♕h6! (not 5...♕g6? 6 ♕b6!, reaching the reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play, but 5...♕f6! also draws) 6 ♕b6 (6 ♜a8 ♕g7! is also drawn as we now have the standard Vančura draw) 6...♕g6! and again it is White to play in the reciprocal zugzwang.

2 ♕d4 (D)

Now Black is lost. If the rook moves along the file, then he is effectively abandoning the idea of attacking the pawn from the side, but moving the rook along the rank is also unattractive, as it has to move to f5, g5 or h5 and then



should have switched his rook round so as to attack the pawn from the side. Thus 5...♖f1! is the only move to draw: after 6 a5 (6 ♔c5 ♖f5+ is no better) 6...♖f4+? 7 ♔c5 we have transposed into the note to Black's first move.

5...♗d1+? wastes time and loses after 6 ♔c5 ♖c1+ 7 ♔b5 ♗b1+ 8 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 9 ♔b7 ♗a1 (9...♗c4 10 a5 ♗c5 11 ♗a8 and White wins) 10 a5 ♔f5 11 ♗a8 ♗b1+ 12 ♔c7 ♖c1+ 13 ♔b6 ♗b1+ 14 ♔c5 ♖c1+ 15 ♔b4 ♗b1+ 16 ♔c3 ♔g6 17 a6 ♗a1 18 ♔b4, since it is now too late to switch to the Vančura draw.

6 a5!

White pushes the pawn while at the same time keeping Black's king cut off along a rank. After this Black gets no further chances in the face of White's accurate play.

6...♗d1+ 7 ♔c5 ♗a1 8 ♔b5 ♔e5?!

This loses relatively quickly, but even in the case of the more resilient 8...♗b1+ 9 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 10 ♔b7 ♗a1 11 ♗a8 White wins in the same way as after 5...♗d1+?, analysed above.

9 ♗h6! ♔d5

Black has managed to get his king some way towards the a-pawn, but further progress is impossible and White can gradually push the pawn.

10 ♔b6 ♗b1+ 11 ♔c7 ♖c1+ 12 ♔b7 ♗b1+ 13 ♗b6 ♗h1 (D)

14 ♖c6!

The last difficult move, providing a shield for the white king no matter which direction Black decides to check from. 14 a6? ♗h7+ and 14 ♗b5+? ♔c4 15 ♗g5 ♗h7+ are drawn.

14...♗h7+

14...♗b1+ is met with 15 ♔c7 followed by a6, winning because White's king is shielded against a check along the c-file.

15 ♖c7 ♗h1 16 a6 ♗b1+ 17 ♔c8 ♔d6 18 a7 1-0

Summary:

- The ending of ♖+♔ vs ♗ is especially complex with a rook's pawn because the defender has possibilities that don't exist with the pawn on any other file.
- When the attacker's rook is in front of the pawn, the Vančura draw is absolutely fundamental to the whole ending. This draw is based on the key defensive idea of giving sideways checks with the rook.
- When the attacker's rook is not in front of the pawn, sideways checks are less effective and the defender's best option is often to have his rook in front of the pawn. However, this is not a universal rule and much depends on the exact position.

8.6 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook

8.6.1 Introduction

I shall examine this material balance in considerable detail because standard theoretical works are rather misleading and mistakes are common in over-the-board play. Most books state that ♖+2♔ vs ♗ is generally won, mention that ♖+f♔+h♔ vs ♗ is an exception, and

add that some positions with ♖+a△+h△ vs ♜ are also drawn. All of these statements are true as far as they go, but they don't give a balanced picture of the ending. Although ♖+2△ vs ♜ is a win in general, the drawing chances are much greater than is generally supposed and we shall take a detailed look at the cases that can give rise to difficulty.

Even with connected pawns, it's not always plain sailing for the attacker. If White has pawns on g4 and h5, for example, with Black's king blockading the pawns on g5, then it may not be possible to advance the pawns. This type of situation is considered in the lengthy Section 8.6.2a; the play can be quite complex, since it's sometimes possible to set the pawns moving with some subtle manoeuvres. A second awkward situation arises when the pawns are connected, but one is much further advanced than the other. The far-advanced pawn is often weak and if the attacker is tied down to its defence, then he may find it impossible to make progress. Section 8.6.2b covers this case. Finally, in Section 8.6.2c, we briefly consider the danger of stalemate, although this can normally only happen if the attacker makes a mistake.

In Section 8.6.3 we move on to disconnected pawns. Section 8.6.3a considers the case of ♖+a△+h△ vs ♜, in which problems can arise because there are drawing positions closely related to the Vančura draw (see page 100) – indeed, in some cases the extra pawn doesn't help at all. Once again, these situations are quite tricky and complex, so we shall look at several examples in detail. Section 8.6.3b covers the notorious ♖+f△+h△ vs ♜ ending. Most positions are drawn, provided the pawns are not too far advanced and the defender's king is in front of them. However, it is important to emphasize that defending this ending is difficult, especially at 30 seconds per move, and in practice even some very strong players have gone wrong and lost positions which should have been drawn. The detailed analysis provided in this section should be a great help in avoiding a similar fate.

In Section 8.6.3c we look at other cases involving disconnected pawns. Theory books usually dismiss these as 'won', but this is a massive

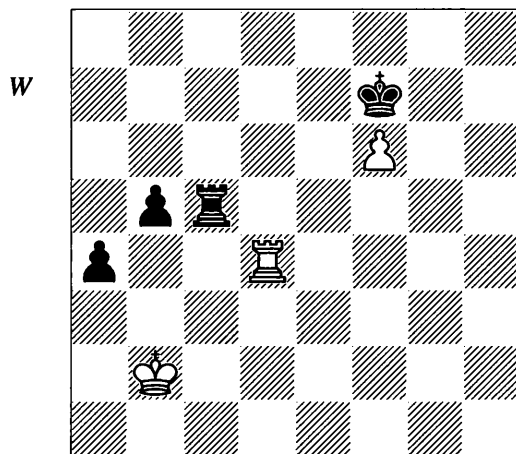
oversimplification. There are many drawing positions and some of the winning positions are difficult enough to present a real challenge in over-the-board play. This topic goes beyond traditional endgame theory and in view of its unfamiliar nature I shall present a wide range of examples with full explanations.

Finally, Section 8.6.4 deals with doubled pawns. This is another topic that is largely ignored by traditional theory, which only observes that if the defender's king is in front of the pawns the position is generally drawn. I shall look at two examples that shed more light on the situation.

8.6.2 Connected Pawns

8.6.2a Blockade

Rook and two connected pawns against rook is generally a win, but there are various cases in which the win may be difficult or even impossible. The most common of these arises when the pawns are blockaded. If two white pawns are on, for example, a5 and b4, with Black's king on b5, then the white rook may be tied down to defending the b4-pawn, making it impossible to lift Black's blockade of the pawns. Such blockade situations are often finely poised between a win and a draw, and so are rather complicated.



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Black is a pawn up and has two connected passed pawns, but not everything is in Black's

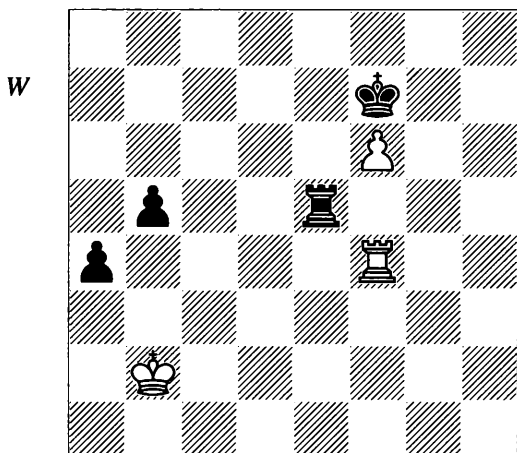
favour. The white king is in a good position to blockade the enemy pawns, while White's own pawn ties up the black king and prevents it from coming to the queenside to support the a- and b-pawns. In the diagram, White faces an important decision about how to defend his f-pawn.

1 ♖f4?!

This doesn't lose, but it does make White's defence more awkward. 1 ♖d6 would have led to a much simpler draw; for example, 1...b4 (1...♖f5 2 ♖b6 ♖g6 3 ♖a3 is also drawn) 2 ♖a6 a3+ 3 ♖b3 ♖b5 4 ♖c6 and Black cannot make progress.

1...♖e5 (D)

1...♖c4!? is an interesting winning try which demands precise play by White: 2 ♖f5 b4 3 ♖a5 b3 (3...a3+ 4 ♖b3 ♖f4 5 ♖a6 ♖g6 6 ♖b6 is a draw as in the analysis of 1 ♖d6) 4 ♖a6 ♖b4 (White is in zugzwang and must move his king, allowing the b-pawn to advance) 5 ♖c1 b2+ 6 ♖b1 ♖g6 (White cannot move his king again, so he must abandon his f-pawn; however, with Black's pawn on b2 the position is a draw even without the f-pawn) 7 ♖a8 (not 7 ♖d6? a3 8 ♖a6 ♖b3 followed by ...♖c3 and Black wins) 7...♖xf6 8 ♖a7 ♖e5 9 ♖a8 ♖d4 10 ♖a7 ♖c3 11 ♖c7+ ♖b3 12 ♖c2! ♖a3 (12...a3 13 ♖xb2+ leads to stalemate) 13 ♖c3+ ♖b3 14 ♖xb3+ and again the result is stalemate.

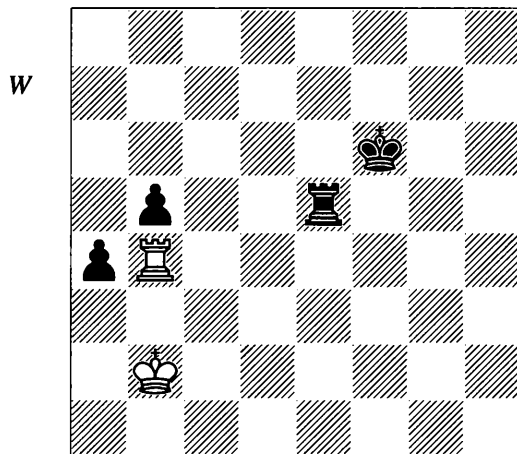


2 ♖b4?

White quite unnecessarily surrenders his f-pawn and thereby gives Black a winning position. Stohl's notes in *Informator 53* did not criticize this odd-looking move because he

wrongly believed that the ♖+2♖ vs ♖ ending which results from it is drawn. Black doesn't actually have a threat, and so the simplest draw was just to wait by 2 ♖a3 ♖e3+ (or 2...♖e6 3 ♖f5) 3 ♖a2 ♖h3 4 ♖b2 and it is impossible for Black to improve his position.

2...♖xf6 (D)



3 ♖a3

Many positions with ♖+2♖ vs ♖ in which connected pawns are firmly blockaded by the defender's king are drawn. In the current position, if White were able to establish his king firmly at b4, then it would be a draw, but that is not yet the case and if Black plays accurately then he can prevent White from reaching this type of position.

3...♖e6 4 ♖b1

After 4 ♖d4 ♖e3+ 5 ♖b2 (5 ♖b4 ♖b3+ 6 ♖c5 a3 is even worse) 5...♖b3+ 6 ♖c2 ♖e5 7 ♖d8 ♖b4 8 ♖c3 ♖c4+ 9 ♖b2 ♖e4 10 ♖a3 ♖e3+ 11 ♖b2 b4 the chance of a blockade has gone and Black wins.

4...♖d6 5 ♖b4

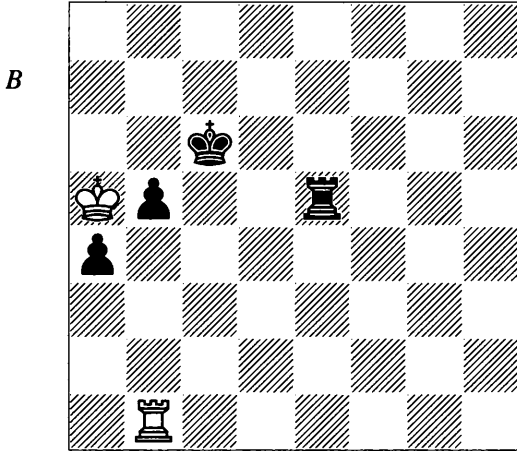
White's king is now on b4, and if he could also transfer his rook to the fourth rank then the position would be a draw, but Black need not allow this.

5...♖c6?!

5...♖e3! was the simplest win since White cannot take on b5, while otherwise Black can eventually drive White's king back; for example, 6 ♖b2 ♖c6 7 ♖b1 ♖b6 8 ♖b2 ♖f3 9 ♖b1 ♖f4+, etc. The move played also wins, but it requires an accurate follow-up by Black.

6 ♖a5 (D)

The best chance. After 6 ♖c1+?! ♕b6 followed by ...♞e4+ and 6 ♜h1?! ♞e4+ 7 ♕a3 ♞e3+ 8 ♕b4 ♞b3+ 9 ♕a5 a3, White loses more simply.



6...♞d5?

Black goes wrong and allows White to draw. 6...a3? is also a mistake due to 7 ♕b4! (7 ♖c1+? ♞c5 8 ♞a1 ♞c4! 9 ♜xa3 ♕c5 10 ♞a1 ♞c2 wins for Black) 7...a2 8 ♞a1 ♞e2 9 ♕b3 ♕c5 10 ♖c1+ ♕d4 11 ♞a1 and Black cannot make progress.

6...♞c5! is the only move to win, reaching a position of reciprocal zugzwang with White to move. Then 7 ♖b2 (after 7 ♞b4 ♖c1 8 ♜h4 a3 9 ♜h8 ♕d5 the a-pawn is decisive, while 7 ♕a6 a3 8 ♜h1 b4 and 7 ♕b4 ♕b6 followed by ...♞c4+ also win for Black) 7...a3 (this gains a vital tempo by attacking the rook) 8 ♜h2 a2! (a spectacular move, which results in White's rook being tied to the a-file by the possibility of a mate on a4) 9 ♜xa2 ♞c4 10 ♞a1 ♕c5 11 ♞a3 ♞c2 12 ♞a1 b4 13 ♕a4 ♕c4 14 ♕a5 b3 leads to a win for Black.

7 ♖c1+ ♕d6

The key point is that 7...♞c5 8 ♞b1 gives the reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play; then 8...a3 no longer gains a tempo and therefore White can draw by 9 ♕b4.

8 ♕b4 ♕e5

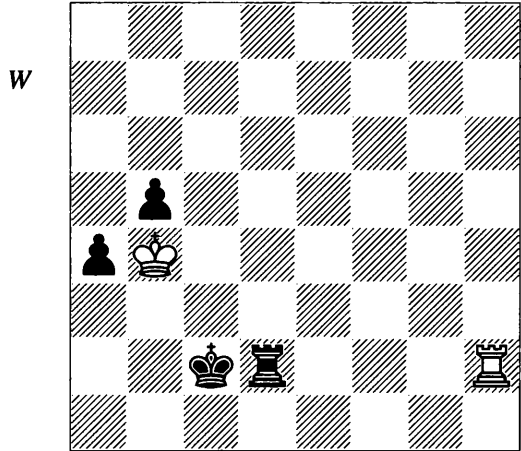
White has reached his ideal blockading position and should not be in any danger.

9 ♞c8 ♕d4 10 ♞c1 ♕e3 11 ♜h1

It was probably simpler to keep the rook on the c-file; for example, 11 ♞c8 ♕d2 12 ♞c7

♕d1 (12...♞d3 13 ♕xb5 a3 14 ♕b4 draws easily) 13 ♞c3! (White must play accurately here, since 13 ♞c8? ♞d2! 14 ♕xb5 a3 15 ♕b4 a2 16 ♞a8 ♕c1 wins for Black) and Black cannot make progress since after 13...♞d2 14 ♕xb5 he cannot advance the a-pawn.

11...♕d2 12 ♜h2+ ♕c1 13 ♜h1+ ♕c2 14 ♜h2+ ♞d2 (D)



15 ♞h5?

This mistake costs White the game. He could still have drawn by 15 ♞h3! ♕b2 16 ♞g3 ♞d4+ (16...♞e2 17 ♞h3 ♞e4+ 18 ♕xb5 a3 19 ♞h2+ and White holds the draw) 17 ♕c5! (White must first drive Black's rook further away; 17 ♕xb5? loses to 17...a3 18 ♞g2+ ♕c3 19 ♞h2 ♞d2) 17...♞e4 18 ♕xb5 a3 19 ♞g2+ and White is safe.

15...♞d4+!

Black seizes his chance and takes advantage of White's misplaced rook to force the a-pawn home.

16 ♕xb5

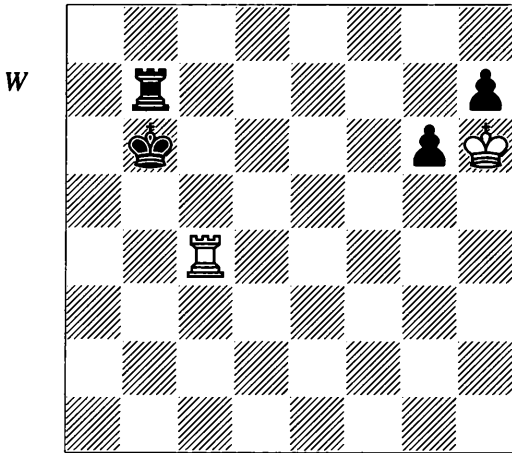
16 ♕c5 ♕c3 17 ♕xb5 a3 18 ♞h2 ♞d2 and 16 ♕a3 ♞d3+ 17 ♕a2 b4 also win for Black.

16...a3 0-1

The advance of this pawn is decisive.

In the diagram overleaf, Black's pawns are blockaded on the second and third ranks, and both sides made mistakes in the ensuing play.

Black is two pawns ahead and his pawns are secure from attack, but can he make progress? At first sight it's easy: Black plays ...♞c7 to get his king to the c-file, and repeats the manoeuvre



Macieja – Acs
Bundesliga 2004/5

to transfer his king to the other side of the board. However, it isn't necessarily clear that Black wins even if his king does reach the kingside, and indeed if White defends accurately the position should be a draw.

1 ♖c1 ♜c7 2 ♖b1+?

This should already be a losing move. White's basic defence is to check the enemy king sideways from the a-file. There is little shelter along the ranks except by interposing the rook, but this leaves the h-pawn hanging. Thus the immediate **2 ♖a1!** was correct; after **2...♔c6** (**2...♔b7** carries no threat, so White just waits by **3 ♖a2**, while if Black plays **2...♞e7** White just returns with **3 ♖c1**) **3 ♖a6+ ♔d5** (or **3...♔b5 4 ♖a1**) **4 ♖a5+ ♜c5** (after **4...♔d6 5 ♖a6+ ♜c6 6 ♖a7** White also draws) **5 ♖a7 ♔e4 6 ♖xh7 g5 7 ♔h5 ♔f4 8 ♖a7** White draws by again checking from the a-file.

2...♔c6

Black's king is now one square nearer the kingside and this makes a big difference. However, the win is still far from easy and indeed it takes a massive 72 moves to force mate from this position.

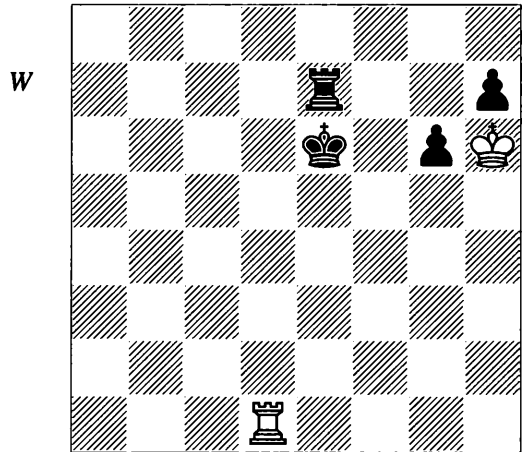
3 ♖d1

3 ♖a1 ♞e7 4 ♖d1 ♞d7 transposes.

3...♞d7 4 ♖c1+

Or **4 ♖a1 ♔d6 5 ♖a6+ ♔e5 6 ♖a5+ ♔e4 7 ♖a4+ ♔d4 8 ♖a7 ♔f5!** **9 ♖a5+** (**9 ♔xh7 g5** is winning for Black) **9...♔g4 10 ♖a1**, effectively transposing to the game after White's 17th move.

4...♔d6 5 ♖e1 ♞e7 6 ♖d1+ ♔e6 (D)



7 ♖e1+

Black also wins after **7 ♖f1 ♞d7 8 ♖f2 ♔e5 9 ♖f1 ♔e4 10 ♖g1** (or **10 ♖f2 ♞d5 11 ♔xh7 g5**) **10...♔f3 11 ♖g5 ♞e7 12 ♖a5 ♔f4 13 ♖a7!?** (a neat trick, but it only delays the end) **13...♞e1 14 ♖a4+ ♞e4 15 ♖a5 ♔g4 16 ♖a1**, transposing to the game after White's 17th move.

7...♔f7 8 ♖f1+ ♔g8

The king's journey to g8 is a temporary diversion, as its real target is the g4-square.

9 ♖a1 ♞e2

It's slightly quicker to play **9...♞e4** at once, as occurs on move 14 in the game.

10 ♖a8+ ♔f7 11 ♖a7+ ♔f6 12 ♖a6+ ♔f5 13 ♖a5+

13 ♔xh7 g5 is hopeless for White, so he must keep checking.

13...♔f4 14 ♖a4+ ♞e4

Eventually Black has to interpose his rook, but now that he is no longer threatening to check on the h-file, White can move his rook away.

15 ♖a1

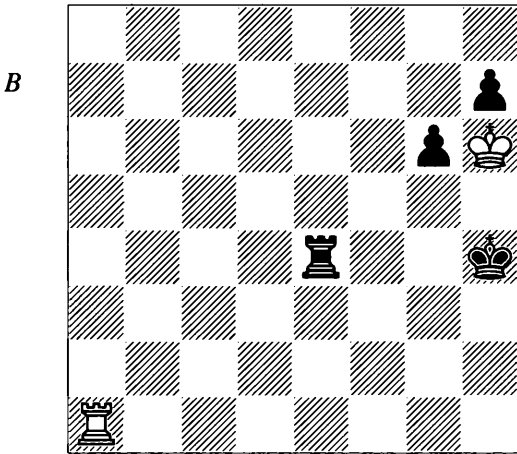
A key moment because it isn't easy for Black to make progress. He would like to have his king and rook on different ranks, so as to threaten a check on the h-file, but in this case White is able to start checking from the a-file. To stop the checks, Black will eventually be forced to put his king and rook on the same rank, and then White just returns to a1. The key winning idea is to use zugzwang to force White's rook off the a- and b-files, thus shortening his checking distance.

The position Black should aim for has his rook on b4 and his king on h4, with the white rook on a1 and White to play.

15...♙f3

This just loses time. 15...♞b4 16 ♞a5 (forced, since 16 ♞a2 loses to 16...g5) 16...♙g4 17 ♞a1 ♙h4 is the quickest way to reach the desired position.

16 ♞a3+ ♙g4 17 ♞a1 ♙h3 18 ♞a3+ ♙h4 19 ♞a1 (D)



Now Black is in a position to make progress.

19...♞e3?!

Black hasn't spotted the winning idea and sets the clock back by several moves. 19...♞b4! wins: 20 ♞c1 (20 ♞a2 g5 is immediately decisive) 20...♙g3 21 ♞c3+ ♙f2 22 ♞c2+ (or 22 ♞c7 ♞h4+ 23 ♙g5 ♞h5+ 24 ♙g4 h6) 22...♙f1! (it's important to play the king to the first rank rather than the third rank because 22...♙e3 23 ♞c3+ ♙e2? 24 ♙xh7 g5 25 ♙g6 g4 26 ♙g5 is only a draw, as White's rook is positioned so as to prevent the further advance of the pawn; in this line, Black can still win by backtracking with 23...♙f2) 23 ♞c1+ ♙e2 24 ♞c2+ (here 24 ♙xh7 g5 25 ♙g6 g4 wins for Black since White's rook is on the first rank, so the pawn is threatening to advance to g3) 24...♙d3 25 ♞c7 (25 ♞a2 ♞h4+ 26 ♙g5 ♞h5+ 27 ♙g4 ♞f5 28 ♞a7 h5+ 29 ♙h4 ♙e4 and Black wins easily) 25...♞h4+ 26 ♙g5 ♞h5+ 27 ♙f6 (after 27 ♙g4 h6! 28 ♞c6 ♞g5+ 29 ♙f4 ♞g1 Black has lifted the blockade of his pawns and can now advance them freely) 27...♞f5+ 28 ♙g7 g5 29 ♙xh7 (29 ♙h6 ♙e3 30 ♙h5 h6! 31 ♙xh6 g4 is also

winning for Black) 29...g4 30 ♞g7 ♞f4 31 ♙h6 ♙e3 32 ♙h5 ♙f3 33 ♙h4 ♞f8! followed by ...♞h8+ and the g-pawn will be decisive.

20 ♞a4+ ♙h3

Black still stands to gain the full point, but he has to start the winning process from an earlier stage.

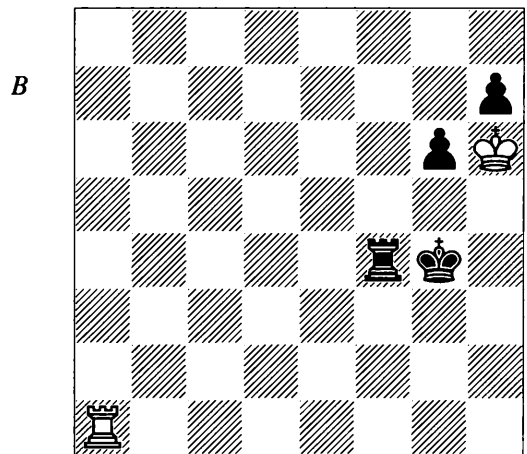
21 ♞a1?!

21 ♞a7 is a slightly tougher defence; then 21...♙g4 22 ♞a4+ ♙f3 23 ♞a7 ♙f4! 24 ♞a4+ ♞e4 returns to the position in the game after Black's 14th move.

21...♞f3

Black can't hope for success unless he spots the basic winning idea described above. As it is, he makes aimless moves which bring victory no closer.

22 ♞a7 ♙g4 23 ♞a4+ ♞f4 24 ♞a1 (D)



24...♙h4?

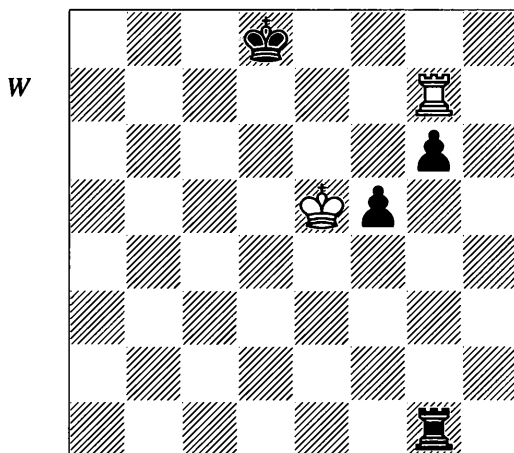
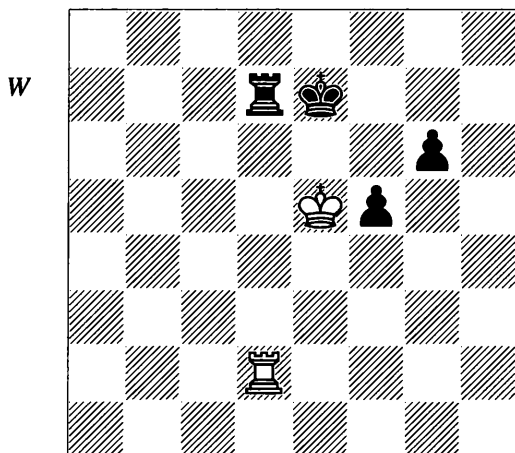
Totally the wrong moment for this move since, thanks to the poor position of Black's rook, White can now safely take the h7-pawn. Black could still have won by 24...♞c4 25 ♞b1 ♙h4 26 ♞a1 ♞b4, reaching the key zugzwang.

25 ♙xh7! g5 26 ♞h1+ ♙g4 27 ♙g6

With the rook on f4, there is no check on the third rank, so Black is forced to concede the draw.

27...♞b4 28 ♞g1+ ♙h4 29 ♞h1+ ♙g4 1/2-1/2

In the following position, the white king does not yet occupy the hole between the pawns (here g5). Despite this, his active pieces should enable him to secure a draw, provided he takes care.



V. Belov – I. Popov
Moscow 2006

Although White's king occupies an active position, it is hard to believe that this position can be a draw. White is not yet tying down Black's pieces by attacking the g6-pawn, and Black has no problems transferring his rook to g1, where it supports the pawns. However, with accurate play the position is indeed a draw. The play is unusually subtle and interesting, with the complexities proving too much for both players.

1 ♖h2!

The only move to cause Black problems, since now White is able to drive Black's king onto the back rank. 1 ♖a2? is met by 1...♔f7 2 ♖a1 ♔g7 3 ♖a2 ♖b7 followed by ...♖b4, winning comfortably.

1...♖d1 2 ♖h7+! ♔d8

The only winning chance, as 2...♔f8 3 ♔f6 ♖d6+ 4 ♔g5 is a clear draw because Black's rook is tied down and his king is cut off.

3 ♖g7 ♖g1 (D)

This is the basic position of the ending. Black's winning hopes are based on edging his pawns forward by ...♖g4, ...f4 and so on, but his problem is that once he has played these two moves his rook will be very passively placed and White will be able to create mating threats against the enemy king with ♔d6. Therefore, in order to play for a win Black must first move his king further to the queenside, so that ♔d6 will not come with tempo, and only then play ...♖g4 and ...f4. This looks odd because Black is moving his king away from his own pawns,

but it is the only plan with a hope of success. White can frustrate Black's idea, but he has to continue accurately.

4 ♖a7?

This is already wrong, and gives Black time to move his king towards the queenside. Instead, 4 ♔d6! would have drawn: 4...♔e8 (this is more or less forced, as after 4...♔c8 5 ♔c6 ♔b8 6 ♔b6 White just pursues the enemy king, while a check on the first rank doesn't help Black, as sooner or later his rook must return to g1) and now:

1) 5 ♔e6? (this is wrong) 5...♔f8! with another branch:

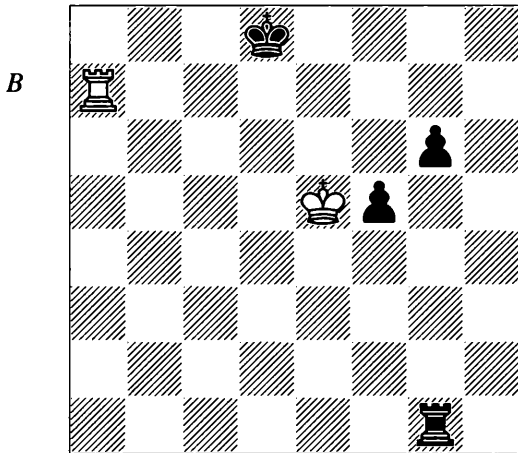
1a) 6 ♖a7 f4 7 ♖f7+ ♔g8 8 ♖xf4 ♔g7 9 ♔e5 (or 9 ♖e4 ♔h6 10 ♖h4+ ♔g5 11 ♖e4 ♔h5 and the g-pawn advances) 9...♖e1+ 10 ♔d4 ♔h6 (Black's rook is well posted, preventing White's rook from retreating to the first rank to gain the maximum checking distance) 11 ♔d3 g5 12 ♔d2 ♖e5 13 ♖f1 ♔h5 and Black wins.

1b) 6 ♖f7+ ♔g8 7 ♔f6 f4 8 ♖g7+ ♔f8 9 ♖a7 ♔e8 10 ♔e6 ♖e1+ 11 ♔f6 f3 12 ♖a2 ♖g1 13 ♔e6 ♔f8 14 ♔f6 ♔g8 15 ♖f2 ♖g3 (Black's rook is forced to occupy a passive position, so the win is still far from easy; indeed, Black's king has to travel to the a-file in order to secure victory) 16 ♖f1 g5 17 ♔g6 ♔f8! 18 ♔f6 ♔e8 19 ♔e6 ♔d8 20 ♔d6 ♔c8 21 ♖c1+ (21 ♔c6 ♖h3 22 ♔d5 g4 wins for Black) 21...♔b7 22 ♖b1+ ♔a6 23 ♔c6 ♔a5 24 ♔c5 ♖g4 25 ♖f1 ♖f4 and now the win is clear.

2) 5 ♔e5!! (this switchback is the difficult move to see; having driven the enemy king away from the queenside, White returns to

prevent the f-pawn from advancing) 5...♖e1+ (5...♔f8 6 ♖a7 ♕g8 doesn't help as White can just wait: 7 ♖b7 ♖a1 8 ♔f6 ♖a6+ 9 ♕g5 with a clear draw) 6 ♔d5! (the only move to draw; 6 ♔f6? loses to 6...f4 7 ♖a7 f3 8 ♖a2 ♖g1 as in the analysis of 5 ♔e6?, while 6 ♔f4? ♖e4+ 7 ♕g5 ♖g4+ 8 ♔f6 f4 is similar) 6...♖g1 7 ♔e5 and Black cannot make progress.

We now return to 4 ♖a7? (D):

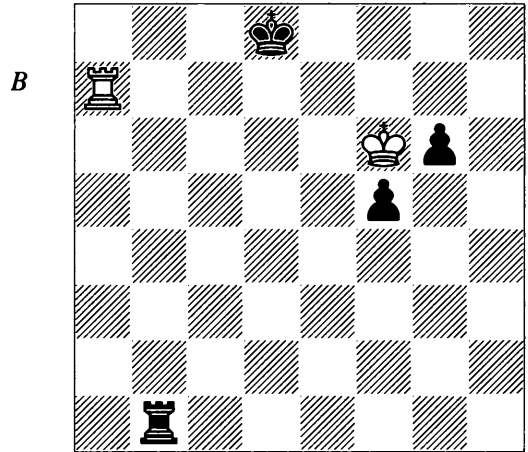


4...♖b1?

Black misses the chance to win by moving his king to the queenside: 4...♔c8! (threatening ...♖g4 followed by ...f4) 5 ♖f7 (threatening ♔d6) 5...♖g4! (White is in zugzwang and cannot both restrain the f-pawn and keep Black's king trapped on the back rank) 6 ♔d6 f4 7 ♔c6 ♔d8 8 ♔d6 ♔e8 9 ♔e6 (now Black has a free tempo, which he uses to push his g-pawn and thus free his rook from the defence of the f-pawn) 9...g5 10 ♖g7 (or 10 ♖a7 ♔d8 11 ♔d6 ♔c8 12 ♔c6 ♔b8 13 ♖b7+ ♔a8 14 ♖f7 ♖g3 and the rook emerges) 10...♔f8 11 ♖a7 ♖g3 12 ♖f7+ ♔e8 (not 12...♔g8? 13 ♔f6 f3 14 ♖g7+ ♔f8 15 ♖h7 ♔e8 16 ♔e6 and White can chase Black's king; in this line 14...♔h8? even loses after 15 ♔g6) 13 ♖g7 ♔d8 14 ♔d6 ♔c8 15 ♔c6 ♖c3+ 16 ♔d6 ♖d3+ 17 ♔c5 (17 ♔c6 ♔d8 18 ♖xg5 ♔e7 is a win for Black) 17...♖a3 18 ♔d6 ♖a5 19 ♖f7 ♖a6+ 20 ♔e5 ♖a1 21 ♔f5 ♖g1 22 ♔e5 ♔d8 23 ♔e4 (23 ♔d6 ♔e8 24 ♖f5 ♖f1 25 ♖xg5 f3 and Black wins as White's king has no shelter) 23...♔e8 24 ♖h7 ♔f8 25 ♖a7 ♖g3 and Black is ready to advance his pawns further.

5 ♔f6? (D)

White in turn misses the best move; after 5 ♖g7! ♖b6 (5...♖g1 6 ♔d6 also draws as in the note to White's 4th move) 6 ♔f4 ♖b4+ (or else ♔g5, with a clear draw) 7 ♔e5! ♖g4 8 ♔d6 the draw is again similar to the note to White's 4th move.



5...♖b6+?

This is a serious error, because the position is a clear draw once the white king occupies g5. Black could have won by 5...♖g1! 6 ♔e5 ♔c8!, transposing into the note to Black's 4th move.

6 ♔g5 ♔e8 7 ♖c7

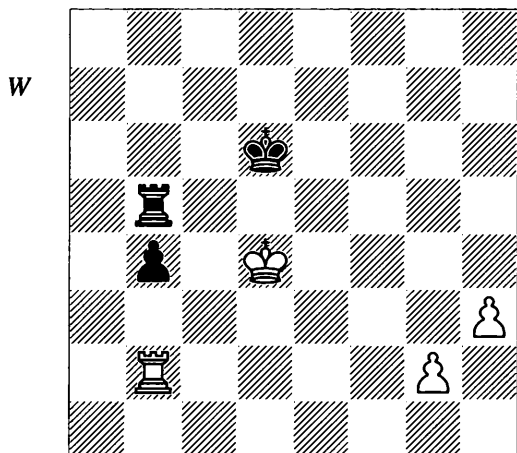
Black cannot make any progress.

7...♖e6 8 ♖a7 ♔f8 9 ♖b7 ♖e7 10 ♖b8+ ♔f7 11 ♖b6 ♖e1 12 ♖f6+ ♔e7 13 ♖xg6 ♖g1+ 14 ♔xf5 ♖xg6 15 ♔xg6 1/2-1/2

The following position (see diagram overleaf) is rather similar in that Black's king cannot easily reach the 'hole' between the two pawns, and has to be content with a more modest role.

In a few moves, Black will lose his b-pawn, resulting in an ending of rook and two connected passed pawns against rook, which is normally an easy win. However, here Black's king will be near the pawns and this allows him to blockade them.

It is often hard to decide whether such positions can be won, so let's consider a few general principles. First of all, suppose that White's pawns are on h3 and g4 (White can easily achieve this set-up). If Black's king can reach



Ki. Georgiev – Piket
Moscow Olympiad 1994

the active square f4, then the result depends mainly on the location of White's rook. If the rook is on the h-file in front of the pawns (for example, on h5), then White wins in most cases. The rook and pawns can edge forward by themselves (by g5, h4, ♖h6, etc.). In order to prevent this, Black must deploy both his pieces against the pawns, and this generally allows White's own king to approach.

If the white rook is defending the h3-pawn along the rank, then the result is usually a draw. Suppose, for example, White's king is on b6 with his rook on a3, and Black's rook is on c8 and king on f4. There aren't many possibilities for White here. If he plays his rook to a5, for example, threatening to win by ♖h5, then Black plays ...♞h8 and White must either return to a3 or try ♖f5+, when ...♙e4 is a good reply. If White ever plays ♖h5, Black can just exchange rooks. If the white king is closer, say on the c- or d-file, most positions are still drawn but the situation is more complicated.

Finally, let's suppose the black king is on a square other than f4. It is even better for Black to have his king on h4, if it can get there, since in this case White can't free his rook at all. When the black king is on a less active square, his drawing chances are generally poorer. However, there is an exception when Black's king is on g6 and his rook is on the third rank, attacking the h3-pawn, since then most positions are drawn; the details are rather complex and not really relevant to the analysis.

With the pawns on g2 and h3, the situation is simpler. Suppose first that White's rook is on a2 defending the g2-pawn. Black usually draws if his king can reach g3, since then White's rook is hopelessly tied down (although there are a few exceptions if Black's rook is tactically exposed). If Black's king cannot reach g3, then White generally wins. If the white rook is on g4, then everything on the kingside is secure and White almost always wins. There are of course many details which depend on the precise position, but these guidelines should at least provide us with a compass to help navigate a rather complex position.

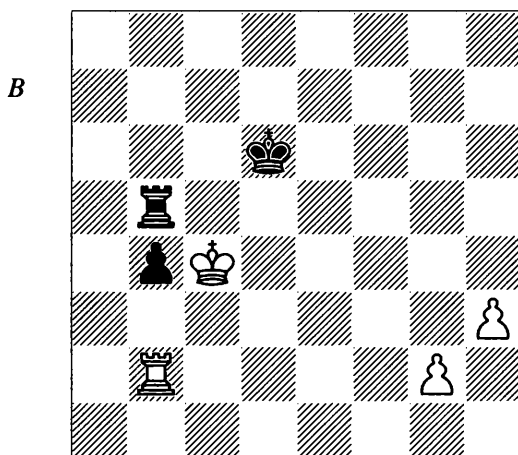
1 ♙c4!

The only winning move. Other moves allow Black to improve his rook position and draw; for example, 1 ♞b3? ♞b8 2 ♙c4 (or 2 g4 ♙e6 3 ♙e4 ♙f6 4 ♙f4 ♙g6 5 h4 ♞f8+ 6 ♙g3 ♞b8 and White cannot win due to his passive rook position) 2...♞g8 3 g4 (after 3 ♞b2 ♙e5 4 ♙xb4 ♙f4 Black's king reaches the drawing g3-square) 3...♙e5 4 ♙xb4 ♙f4 5 ♙c4 and now:

1) 5...♙g5? 6 ♞b5+ transfers the rook to h5. Then Black's only hope is to try to get his king to g6 and rook to the sixth rank, but 6...♙g6 7 ♞h5 ♞a8 8 ♙d3! (8 ♙d4? ♞a3 is a draw) 8...♞a3+ 9 ♙e2 is winning for White, as the king can now support the pawns, hiding on h4 if necessary.

2) 5...♞d8! 6 ♙c5 ♙g5, intending ...♙h4, and Black draws.

We now return to 1 ♙c4! (D):



1...♞g5

Another critical line is 1...♖b8 2 ♖xb4 ♗g8 3 ♖b2! (3 g4? is met by 3...♗h8! 4 ♖b3 ♕e5! 5 ♗f3 ♕e4 followed by ...♕f4, drawing) 3...♕e5 (threatening ...♕f4-g3) 4 ♗f2!, and now:

1) 4...♕e4 5 ♕c5 and then:

1a) 5...♕e3 6 ♗a2 ♕f4 7 ♕d6 ♕g3 (after 7...♗e8 8 ♗a4+ ♕f5 9 ♗g4 White secures everything and wins) 8 ♗a4 exploits the position of Black's rook. Black cannot take on g2 and a check on d8 is met by a king move attacking the rook, so Black has no time to take on g2; thus White wins.

1b) 5...♕e5 6 ♕c6 ♕e6 7 ♗e2+ ♕f5 8 ♕d6 ♕f4 9 ♕e7 ♗h8 10 ♗f2+ ♕g5 (10...♕g3 11 ♗f8! ♗h7+ 12 ♗f7 ♗h6 13 ♗g7+ also wins for White) 11 ♗f8 ♗h7+ 12 ♕e6 ♗a7 13 ♗g8+ ♕h5 14 ♗g4 and White wins.

2) 4...♗d8 5 ♕c3 (White intends ♕c2 and ♗d2 to lift the blockade) 5...♕e4 6 ♕c2 ♗a8 (or 6...♕e3 7 ♗f3+ ♕e4 8 ♗g3 ♕f4 9 ♗g4+ ♕f5 10 ♕c3 and White will win in the end) 7 ♗d2 ♗a1 (trying to prevent ♕d1, moving the king over to support the pawns) 8 ♕c3 (now the threat is ♗d4+ followed by ♗g4) 8...♗a3+ 9 ♕c4 ♗g3 10 ♗e2+ ♕f4 11 ♕d4 ♗g8 12 ♗e4+! (or else ...♕g3 draws) 12...♕f5 13 g4+ ♕g5 14 ♗e5+! ♕f4 15 ♗h5 and White has achieved a winning formation, because here Black's king cannot reach g6. The continuation might be 15...♗g7 16 ♕d3 ♗g6 17 ♕e2 ♗a6 18 g5 ♕f5 19 h4 ♕e4 20 ♕d2 ♗d6+ 21 ♕c3 ♗c6+ 22 ♕b4 ♕e5 23 ♕b5 ♗e6 24 ♕c5 ♕f5 25 ♗h8 ♗e5+ 26 ♕d6 ♗a5 27 ♕e7 ♕g6 28 ♗h6+ ♕g7 29 ♗f6 ♗e5+ 30 ♕d6 ♗a5 31 ♕e6 ♗b5 32 ♗f5 ♗b1 33 h5 and by now the win is straightforward.

2 g4?

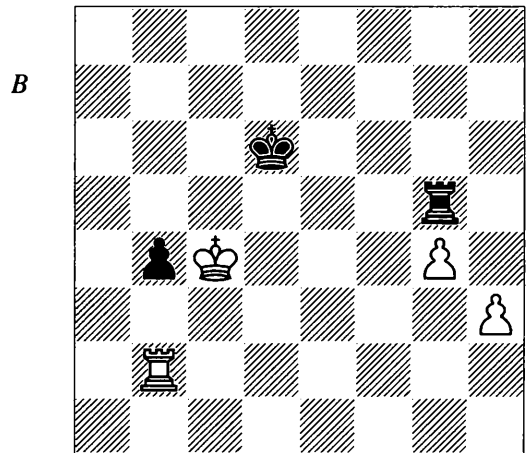
A mistake, as Black can now reach a drawing formation. Here are two winning possibilities for White:

1) 2 ♕xb4 ♕e5 3 ♕c5 ♗g8 (3...♕f4+ 4 ♕d6 ♕g3 5 ♖b4! is a familiar trick) 4 ♕c6 ♗d8 5 ♖b5+ ♕f6 6 ♗d5 ♗c8+ 7 ♕d7 ♗c2 8 g4 ♗h2 9 ♗d3 ♕g6 10 ♕d6 ♗e2 11 ♗f3 ♗e8 12 ♕d5 ♗h8 13 ♕e4 ♕g5 14 ♕e3 ♕h4 15 ♗f5! ♕g3 16 ♗h5 ♗e8+ 17 ♕d3 ♕f4 18 g5 and the pawns start to advance.

2) 2 ♗d2+! is the quickest route to victory and after 2...♕e6 3 ♕xb4 ♕e5 4 ♕c5 ♗g3 (or

4...♕f4+ 5 ♕d6 ♕g3 6 ♗d4! as usual) 5 ♕c6 ♗a3 6 ♕d7 ♗a7+ (6...♕f4 7 ♗d4+) 7 ♕e8 ♕f6 8 ♗d6+ ♕e5 (8...♕f5 9 ♕f8 ♕g5 10 ♗d4 ♕f6 11 ♗f4+ ♕g6 12 h4 essentially transposes) 9 ♗g6 ♕f5 10 ♗g4 ♕f6 11 ♗f4+ ♕g6 12 ♕f8 ♖b7 13 h4 ♖b8+ 14 ♕e7 ♕h5 15 g3 ♗g8 16 ♗f5+ ♕h6 17 ♗f3 ♕h5 18 ♕e6 ♕g6 19 ♕e5 ♗e8+ 20 ♕f4 ♕h5 21 ♗f2! (the only move to win; 21 ♗a3? ♗f8+ 22 ♕e4 ♕g4 is a draw) 21...♗f8+ 22 ♕e3 ♗e8+ 23 ♕f3 ♗f8+ 24 ♕g2 White has a technical win.

We now return to 2 g4? (D):



2...♗e5?

2...♕e5? is also wrong since 3 ♖xb4 ♕f4 4 ♖b5 ♗g6 5 ♗h5 reaches a winning structure. The simplest drawing line was 2...♗g8! 3 ♖xb4 ♗h8 4 ♖b3 ♕e5 (threatening ...♕f4) 5 ♗f3 ♕e4 and Black gets his king to f4. 2...♗c5+! 3 ♖xb4 ♗c8! also draws, but is slightly more complicated as here Black's king is two squares away from f4. Nevertheless, after 4 ♗e2 ♕d5! 5 ♕b3 (5 g5 ♗h8 6 ♗e3 ♕d4 and 5 ♗e7 ♗h8 6 ♗e3 ♕d4 7 ♗g3 ♕e4 are also draws) 5...♗h8 6 ♗e3 ♕d4 Black's king again forces its way towards f4.

3 ♖b3

This is sufficient to win. 3 ♖xb4 is also effective; for example, 3...♗e4+ 4 ♕b5 ♗e8 5 h4! (otherwise ...♗h8 and ...♕e5-f4 draws) 5...♕e5 6 g5 ♗c8 7 ♕a4 ♕f5 8 ♕b3 ♗c7 9 ♖b6 ♗h7 10 ♖b5+ ♕g6 11 ♖b4 ♕f5 12 ♕c3 ♗d7 13 ♕c4 ♗h7 14 ♕d5 ♗d7+ 15 ♕c6 ♗d1 16 ♖b8 ♕g6

3...♗e4+

The key point is that 3...♖e8 4 ♜d3+ forces Black's king to the c-file, after which ♖xb4 wins because Black's king is cut off.

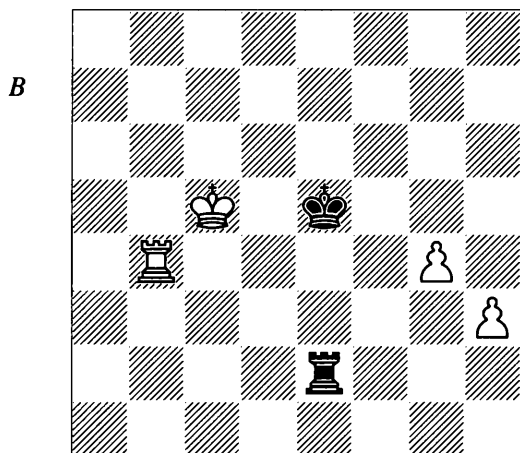
4 ♖b5 ♖e5 5 ♖c5?

A finesse too far. White should have played 5 ♜xb4! ♜e3 6 h4 ♜h3 7 g5 much as in the note to his third move. This wins after 7...♖e6 8 ♖c5 ♖e5 9 ♖c6 ♖e6 10 ♖c7 ♜h1 11 ♖d8 ♖f7 12 ♜f4+ ♖g7 13 ♖e7 ♜e1+ 14 ♖d6 ♜e2 15 ♖d5 ♜e1 16 ♖d4 ♜e2 17 ♜f6 ♜h2 18 ♜h6 ♜e2 19 h5 ♜g2 20 ♜g6+ ♖f7 21 ♖e3 ♜g1 22 ♖f3, when Black is in zugzwang and must allow White to make further progress.

5...♜e2!

Black hits upon the correct defence.

6 ♜xb4 (D)



In his notes in Mega Database, Hecht believes that White is winning and comments that "White demonstrates a good winning technic" (sic). Given that White threw away the win on the previous move, this comment is rather wide of the mark. Moreover, there are further errors to come.

6...♜h2!

6...♜c2+? 7 ♜c4 ♜h2 8 ♜c3 ♜a2 is tempting, trying to reach a drawing position with ...♜a8, but this plan is thwarted by 9 ♖b5! ♜b2+ (9...♜a8 10 ♜c5+ ♖f6 11 ♜h5 ♜a3 12 h4 is also winning for White) 10 ♖c6 ♜b8 11 ♜f3 (preventing ...♖f4) 11...♜d8 12 ♜f5+ ♖e6 13 ♜h5 ♖f6 14 h4 and the pawns start to advance.

7 ♜b3 ♜c2+!

Now this is more effective, as the white king is driven back.

8 ♖b4 ♖f4

Another good option is 8...♜c8 9 ♜f3 ♜h8 followed by ...♖e4, and the king reaches f4.

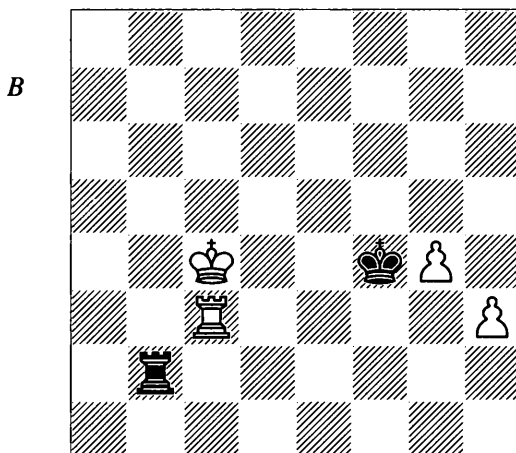
9 ♜c3

The best try, countering Black's threat to play ...♜c8. However, Black has other routes to his first rank.

9...♜b2+!

9...♜h2? is wrong due to 10 ♜d3! ♖e4 (or 10...♜b2+ 11 ♖c5 ♜b8 12 ♜d5! ♜h8 13 ♜f5+ ♖g3 14 ♜h5 and again White wins) 11 ♖c4 ♜c2+ 12 ♜c3 ♜d2 13 ♖b4! ♜b2+ 14 ♖c5 ♜d2 15 ♖c6 ♖e5 16 ♜c5+ ♖f6 17 ♜f5+ ♖e6 18 ♜h5 ♜c2+ 19 ♖b5 ♖f6 20 h4 and again the pawns are set in motion.

10 ♖c4 (D)



10...♖g5?

Black is too eager to transfer his king to h4. He should have played 10...♜b8!, reaching the drawing formation we have seen several times already.

11 ♜b3!

White seizes on Black's error and prepares to transfer his rook to b5 and then possibly h5.

11...♜c2+

This drives White's king towards the king-side, but there was little choice because 11...♜d2 12 ♜b5+ ♖g6 (12...♖f4 13 ♜h5 is a winning formation) 13 h4 ♜g2 14 ♜g5+ ♖f6 15 ♖d3 is clearly winning for White.

12 ♖d3 ♜c5

Preventing the check on b5. 12...♜c8 loses to 13 ♜b5+ ♖f4 14 ♜f5+ ♖g3 15 ♜h5 ♖f4 16 g5, etc.

13 ♖b8 ♖a5

13...♙f4 14 ♜f8+ ♙g3 15 ♜f5 ♜c1 16 ♜h5 also wins for White.

14 ♜g8+ ♙h4 15 ♜h8+ ♙g3

Now White has a winning formation and the win should be relatively simple, but there are still some unexpected twists to come.

16 ♙e4 ♖b5 17 ♜h5 ♖b4+ 18 ♙e5 ♖b5+ 19 ♙d6

Delaying matters. 19 ♙d4 ♖b6 20 g5 ♙f4 21 h4 ♙f5 22 ♜h8 would have been quicker.

19...♖b6+ 20 ♙c7 ♜g6

Or 20...♖a6 21 g5 ♙f4 22 h4 ♙e5 23 ♙b7 ♜g6 24 ♜h8 ♙f5 25 ♜c8 ♜g7+ 26 ♜c7 ♜g8 27 ♜f7+ ♙g4 28 ♜h7 ♙f5 29 ♜h6 ♜g7+ 30 ♙c8 and White is winning.

21 ♙d7 ♖a6 22 ♜h8?!

Although this doesn't throw away the win, it makes it more complicated. It is wrong to allow Black to bring his king back to f4 and g5 since, as mentioned earlier, Black's main hope with the white rook on the h-file is to reach a position with his king on g6 and rook on the sixth rank.

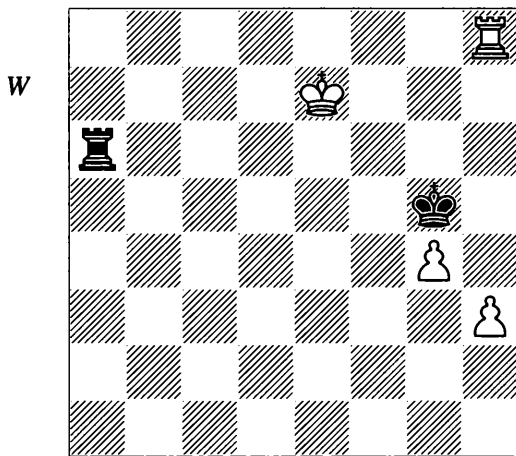
22...♙f4!

Black at once takes advantage of White's slip and moves his king towards g6.

23 ♙e7

Apart from returning with 23 ♜h5, this is the only winning move.

23...♙g5 (D)



24 ♜h5+?

White practically forces Black's king to occupy the optimum square g6 and in doing so he throws away the win. The best line was 24 ♜d8!

♖a4 (24...♖a3 25 ♜d5+ ♙g6 26 h4! ♖a7+ 27 ♙e6 ♖a1 28 ♙e5 ♖e1+ 29 ♙f4 ♜f1+ 30 ♙e3 ♖e1+ 31 ♙f2 and White wins) 25 ♙f8! (not 25 ♙f7? ♖a7+ 26 ♙e6 ♜h7 27 ♜d3 ♜h8 with a draw) 25...♙f6 26 ♜d6+ ♙g5 27 ♜d7 ♖a3 28 ♜d5+! ♙f6 29 ♜f5+ ♙g6 30 h4! ♖a8+ 31 ♙e7 ♖a4 32 h5+ (32 ♜g5+? ♙h6 is drawn) 32...♙g7 33 g5 ♖a7+ 34 ♙d6 ♖a6+ 35 ♙e5 and White wins.

24...♙g6 25 ♜d5

White tries to extract his rook before Black gets a chance to pin it down with ...♖a3. Although this prevents one drawing plan, it allows Black to switch back to the alternative draw with his rook attacking the h-pawn.

25...♖a7+!

Not 25...♖a3?, losing to 26 h4.

26 ♙e6 ♜h7! 27 ♜d3 ♙g5

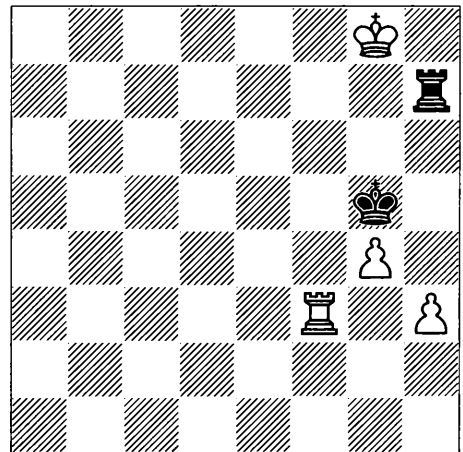
At the moment Black is not threatening ...♙f4 due to the reply ♙f6, but he has no need for a threat, as White is not threatening anything himself.

28 ♜f3 ♜h6+

28...♙h4? loses to 29 ♙f6 ♜h6+ 30 ♙g7 ♜g6+ 31 ♙f7 ♖a6 32 ♜f6 ♖a7+ 33 ♙g6 ♙xh3 34 g5 ♙g4 35 ♙h6 and the g-pawn decides.

29 ♙f7 ♜h7+ 30 ♙g8 (D)

B



30...♜h6?

Just when Black could have drawn, he blunders by releasing the white king, and loses more or less immediately. 30...♖a7! was the simplest and after 31 ♜f5+ (31 ♙f8 ♜h7! just repeats) 31...♙g6! 32 h4 ♖a8+ 33 ♜f8 ♖a4 Black holds the game easily.

31 ♖g7 ♜g6+ 32 ♔f7 ♖h4

32...♜a6 33 ♜f5+ ♖h4 34 ♜h5+ ♖g3 35 g5
is also hopeless for Black, and the stalemate
trick doesn't help him either.

33 ♜f6 1-0

33...♜g5 34 ♜f5 forces the exchange of
rooks.

Summary:

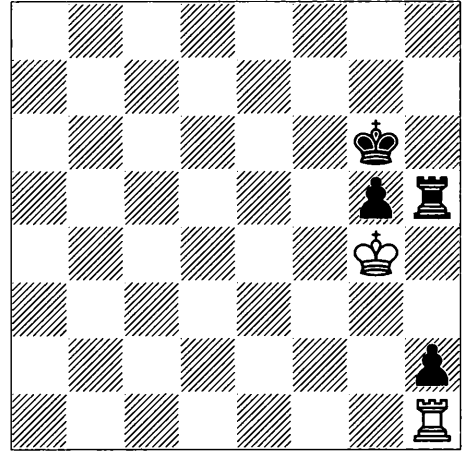
- Some positions with ♜ + two connected pawns vs ♜ are drawn if the pawns are blocked by the enemy king occupying a 'hole' between the pawns.
- Determining whether a particular position is winning is often quite difficult, as the result may depend on subtle manoeuvres and zugzwangs.
- There is one trick that occurs again and again in such endings. If White has his rook on a2 with pawns on g2 and h3, and Black has his king on g3 and rook on g8, then White may be able to play ♜a4!. Then ...♖xg2 loses to ♜g4+, while otherwise Black's pieces are tied down since moving his rook off the g-file allows ♜g4+, while ...♖f2 and ...♖h2 are also met by ♜g4. This idea can also occur on other ranks and files, but it only works if Black cannot move his rook away from g8 with check (unless White can reply with a king move immediately attacking Black's rook).
- There are even some drawn positions where the defender's king does not occupy the 'hole', but for such a position to be a draw, the defender's pieces must be very active.

8.6.2b One Pawn is Too Far Advanced

Problems can also arise if one of the pawns is several ranks ahead of the other. In this case the attacker may be tied down to defending the more advanced pawn and be unable to make progress.

In the following diagram, White's cause might seem to be hopeless, since he is two pawns down and his rook is totally immobilized by Black's h-pawn. However, this position is a draw provided White defends accurately. The drawing plan is to remove the rook from h1 and put the king there instead. Then Black's

W



Shurygin – Stocck
Pardubice 1995

rook will be tied down by having to defend the h-pawn, while White's rook will be able to harass the black king by checking from the queenside.

1 ♖g3

The correct plan, edging nearer h1.

1...♖f5

This king move exposes it to a rook check, which facilitates White's plan, but Black is unable to make progress without moving his king to the f-file at some point.

2 ♖f3?

White loses sight of the correct plan and makes a fatal mistake. As Stocck pointed out, the route to a draw lay in 2 ♜f1+! ♖e4 3 ♜e1+ (White must check the king further away, as 3 ♖g2? loses to 3...h1♙+ 4 ♜xh1 ♜xh1 5 ♖xh1 ♖f3) 3...♖d3 4 ♖g2! (this is the correct moment to transfer the king; 4 ♜h1? loses to 4...♖e2 5 ♖g2 ♜h8 6 ♖g3 g4 7 ♖g2 ♜h3 and White is in zugzwang, while 4 ♜d1+? ♖e2 5 ♜h1 ♜h4 is similar) 4...♖d2 (4...h1♙+ 5 ♜xh1 ♜xh1 6 ♖xh1 ♖e3 7 ♖g2 ♖f4 8 ♖f2 is now a draw) 5 ♜a1 and White is safe; for example, 5...♖e3 6 ♖h1 g4 7 ♜a3+ ♖f2 8 ♜a2+ ♖g3 9 ♜a3+ and Black cannot achieve anything.

2 ♖g2? is also wrong because after 2...♖g4! White has no rook check and so cannot extract his rook from h1; Black then wins as in the game.

2...♜h3+!

Black exploits White's mistake.

3 ♖f2 ♖f4 4 ♖g2 ♖g4

Black ensures that White doesn't have a check and thus keeps his rook imprisoned on h1.

5 ♖f2 ♜a3

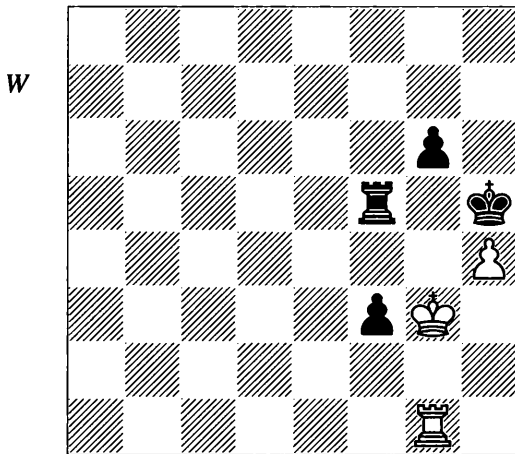
Now it's easy for Black.

6 ♜xh2 ♜a2+ 7 ♖g1 ♜xh2 8 ♖xh2 ♖f3 9 ♖h3 g4+ 10 ♖h2 ♖f2

Avoiding the familiar trap 10...g3+?? 11 ♖h1, drawing.

11 ♖h1 ♖g3 0-1

One of the world's leading players missed the opportunity to reach a draw of this type in the following game.



Carlsen – Aronian
Linares 2009

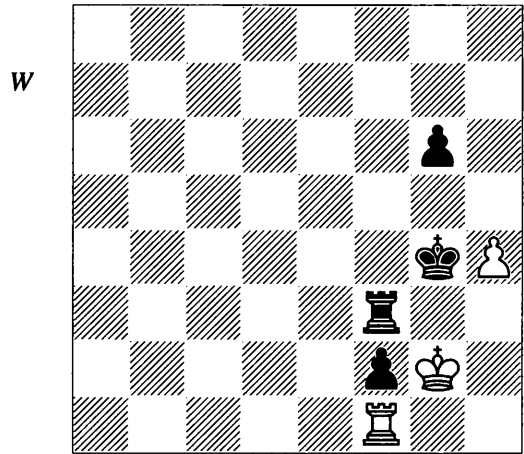
In order to draw this position, White must be prepared to give up his h-pawn to reach a drawn position of ♜+2♟ vs ♜ in which the far-advanced f-pawn is weak.

1 ♜f1?

A fatal error, allowing Black's pawn to advance to f2. After this, White's rook will be paralysed, since taking on f2 always leads to a lost king and pawn ending. 1 ♖f2! is the only move to draw, blockading the pawn with the king. After 1...♜f6 2 ♜a1 (White cannot avoid giving up the h-pawn since if he tries to hang on to it with 2 ♜h1 ♖g4 3 ♜h2?, then Black wins by 3...♜e6 4 ♖f1 ♖g3 5 ♜a2 ♜b6 6 ♜a1 ♜b2) 2...♖xh4 3 ♜h1+! (White must act at once since if Black is allowed to play ...g5 then he wins) 3...♖g4 4 ♜g1+ ♖f4 (4...♖h5 5 ♜h1+ ♖g5 6 ♜g1+ ♖h6 7 ♜h1+ ♖g7 8 ♜h3 is a draw) 5 ♜g3 ♖e4 6

♜g4+ ♖e5 7 ♜g3 and Black cannot make progress.

1...f2! 2 ♖h3 ♜f3+ 3 ♖g2 ♖g4 (D)



4 h5

The only chance, since 4 ♖h2 ♖xh4 5 ♖g2 ♖g4 6 ♖h2 g5 is an easy win for Black.

4...♜g3+!

4...gxh5? allows 5 ♜xf2, drawing.

5 ♖h2

5 ♖xf2 ♜f3+ 6 ♖g2 ♜xf1 7 ♖xf1 ♖xh5 and Black wins.

5...♖f3

Threatening ...♜g5.

6 ♜a1 ♜g2+ 7 ♖h1 ♜g5 8 ♜a3+ ♖f4 9 ♜a4+ ♖g3 10 ♜a3+ ♖h4 0-1

Black wins after 11 ♜a1 ♖h3 12 hxg6 ♜g2 13 ♜a3+ ♜g3 14 ♜a1 ♜e3 followed by mate.

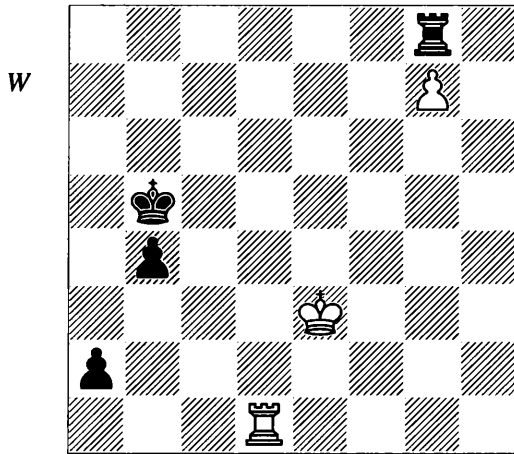
Summary:

- If one of the connected pawns has advanced well ahead of the other, it can become weak and need to be continuously defended by the rook. Then the attacker may be unable to make progress.
- In some cases the defender can draw even if his rook is paralysed by having to block a pawn on the seventh rank. Drawing usually requires the king to be substituted for the rook.

8.6.2c Stalemate

There are a few stalemate possibilities in the ending of ♜ + 2 connected pawns vs ♜, especially if the pawns include a rook's pawn. We

have already seen one such example in Sakauskas-Nadanian (page 85) and here is another.



Witkowski – Rakowiecki
Poland 1979

White drew this position by using a stalemate idea. All the play was accurate according to the notes by Witkowski in *Informator 28*, but in reality Black missed more than one winning possibility.

1 ♔d3!?

The best chance, since 1 ♖d5+ ♔c6 (1... ♔a4 2 ♖d7 ♔a3 also wins) 2 ♖a5 ♖xg7 3 ♖xa2 ♔b5 4 ♔d3 ♖g3+ allows Black a simple technical win.

1... ♖xg7

1... ♖d8+? 2 ♔c2 ♖xd1 3 g8♖ a1♖ is a draw after 4 ♖e8+ or, more spectacularly, 4 ♖c4+, since Black's pieces are offside and cannot stop a perpetual check.

2 ♔c2 ♔a4

The simplest win is 2... ♔c4 3 ♔b2 b3 4 ♖h1 ♖g2+ 5 ♔a1 ♖g4 6 ♔b2 ♔b4 7 ♖h2 ♖c4 8 ♖d2 ♖c2+ 9 ♖xc2 bxc2 10 ♔xa2 c1♖ (or 10... ♔c3), but the move played spoils little.

3 ♔b2 ♖g2+?

This is the move which throws the win away. 3...b3! was the only route to victory; for example, 4 ♖d4+ ♔b5 5 ♖d1 ♔c4 and then as in the previous note.

4 ♔a1

Now it is genuinely a draw as White's king has no moves, and so he only has to sacrifice his rook to force stalemate.

4... ♖c2

4...b3 5 ♖d4+ ♔b5 6 ♖d5+ ♔c4 7 ♖d4+ and 4... ♔a3 5 ♖d3+ b3 6 ♖xb3+ both lead to stalemate.

5 ♖d4 ½-½

Black can only prevent White's rook sacrifice on b4 by giving away the a-pawn, which leads to a simple draw.

Summary:

- Stalemate can arise with ♖+2♔ vs ♖, but normally only if the attacker makes a mistake.
- If you have ♖+g♔+h♔ vs ♖, then it is risky to advance the h-pawn to the seventh rank unless you have an immediate win, because it unnecessarily creates stalemate opportunities.

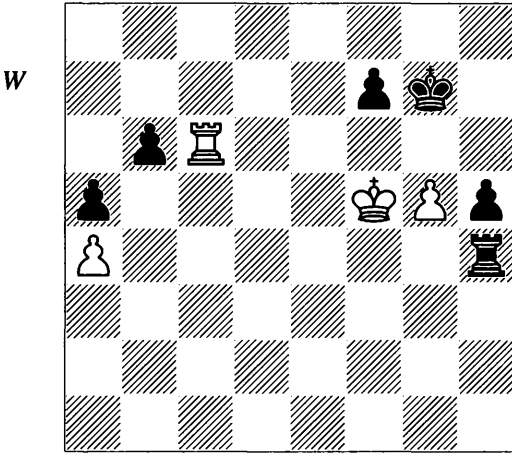
8.6.3 Disconnected Pawns

There are also many cases in which a rook and two disconnected passed pawns fail to win. We shall deal with the well-known case of f-pawn + h-pawn later (see page 128), but other pairs of pawns can also give rise to drawing possibilities.

8.6.3a a-Pawn + h-Pawn

This can be an awkward combination because the winning chances with a rook's pawn are far less than with other pawns, so it may be hard to execute the standard winning strategy of using one pawn to deflect the enemy king and thereby reach a winning position of ♖+♔ vs ♖. The main problem is that instead of leading to a win, this strategy may only result in a Vančura draw. Perhaps the most important single fact to know about the ending of ♖+a♔+h♔ vs ♖ is that if the pawns are on the same rank, with the attacker's rook between them guarding both pawns, then the position is almost always a win provided the pawns are on at least the fourth rank. In the following diagram, White's active counterplay prevents Black from reaching such a position.

White is two pawns down, but his active pieces provide counterplay and he has chances of holding the game by liquidating to a drawn position with ♖+a♔+h♔ vs ♖. Against correct play by Black, this plan should not succeed, but



Elianov – Van Wely
Wijk aan Zee 2008

the win involves a deep and paradoxical move which Black did not find during the game.

1 g6

The only chance as White must reduce the number of pawns.

1...fxg6+ 2 ♖xg6+

This is already the critical moment at which Black has only one move to win.

2...♣f7?

This allows White to force a draw. The only winning move is the astounding 2...♣f8!!, which prevents White from driving the king to the back rank with gain of tempo later. White can continue:

1) 3 ♜f6+ (giving further checks only drives Black's king to a better position and makes the win easier) 3...♣e7 4 ♜xb6 ♜xa4 5 ♣e5 ♜b4 6 ♜h6 a4 7 ♜h7+ ♣d8 8 ♣d6 ♜b6+ 9 ♣c5 ♜a6 10 ♜h8+ (10 ♣b5 a3 also wins for Black) 10...♣d7 11 ♜h7+ ♣e8 12 ♜h8+ ♣f7 and Black wins.

2) 3 ♜xb6 ♜xa4 4 ♣f6 (after 4 ♜b7 h4! 5 ♣f6 ♜f4+ 6 ♣g5 ♜c4 7 ♜a7 a4 Black achieves the ideal position with the rook between the pawns and wins after 8 ♣f6 ♣e8 9 ♣e6 ♣d8 10 ♣d6 ♣c8 11 ♣d5 ♜g4 12 ♣c6 ♣b8 13 ♜a5 ♜g6+ 14 ♣d7 ♜h6 15 ♜xa4 h3 16 ♜al h2 17 ♜h1 ♣b7 18 ♣e7 ♣c6 19 ♣f7 ♣d5 20 ♣g7 ♜h3 21 ♣g6 ♣e4 22 ♣g5 ♣f3) 4...♜f4+ 5 ♣g5 ♜b4 6 ♜a6 a4 7 ♣xh5 (White also loses after 7 ♣f6 ♣e8 8 ♣e6 ♣d8 9 ♣d6 ♣c8 10 ♣c6 ♜c4+ 11 ♣b5 ♜g4) 7...♣e7 8 ♣g5 ♣d7 9 ♣f5 ♣c7 10 ♣e5 ♣b7 11 ♜a5 ♣c6! (keeping the white

king at bay and threatening ...♜b5+) 12 ♜a8 ♜h4 (the white king is cut off along a rank, always an unfavourable situation) 13 ♜c8+ ♣b5 14 ♜a8 ♣b4 15 ♜b8+ ♣c3 16 ♜c8+ ♣b3 17 ♜b8+ ♜b4 18 ♜h8 a3 19 ♜h3+ ♣b2 20 ♜h2+ ♣a1 21 ♣d5 a2 22 ♣c5 ♜b2 23 ♜h1+ ♜b1 24 ♜h8 ♣b2 and Black wins.

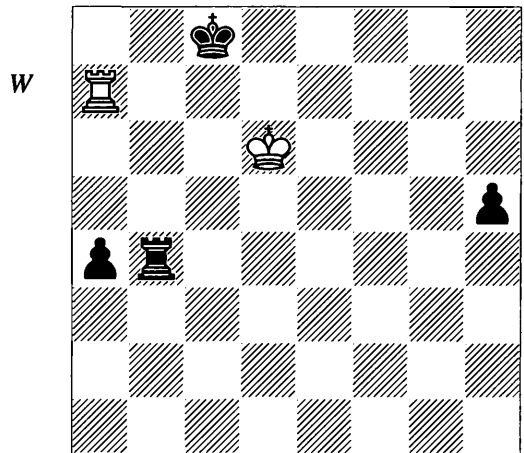
3 ♜xb6 ♜xa4 4 ♜b7+

Now White occupies the seventh rank with gain of tempo, which is sufficient to ensure a draw. Elianov's play from here to the end of the game is impressively accurate.

4...♣e8 5 ♣e6 ♜e4+ 6 ♣f5 ♜b4 7 ♜a7 a4

After 7...♜b5+ 8 ♣e6 White's threats against the king provide sufficient counterplay.

8 ♣e6 ♣d8 9 ♣d6 ♣c8 (D)



10 ♣c5!

Black wins after 10 ♣c6? ♣b8 11 ♜h7 h4 12 ♜h8+ ♣a7 13 ♣c5 ♜f4 14 ♜h7+ ♣b8 15 ♣b6 ♣c8 16 ♣c6 ♣d8 17 ♣d6 ♣e8 18 ♣e6 ♣f8 19 ♣e5 ♜b4 20 ♣f6 ♣g8 21 ♜g7+ ♣h8, which is a reflection of one of the lines in the note to Black's second move.

10...♜h4

After 10...♜g4 11 ♣c6 ♣b8 12 ♜b7+ ♣a8, the drawing line is 13 ♜h7! h4 14 ♣b6 and the mating threat ensures the draw.

11 ♣c6! ♣b8 12 ♜b7+ ♣a8 13 ♜b5!

Now 13 ♜h7? loses to 13...a3 14 ♣b6 ♜b4+ 15 ♣c5 a2.

13...♣a7

Black tries everything, but to no avail against White's careful play.

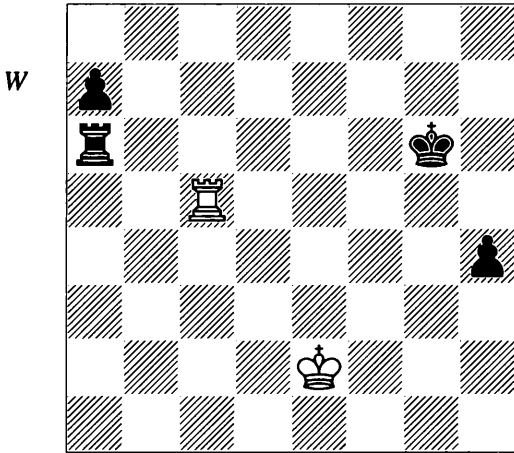
14 ♜b7+

14 ♖a5+? is a mistake which loses after 14...♗b8 15 ♖b5+ ♗c8 16 ♖d5 a3 17 ♖a5 ♖c4+ 18 ♗b6 h4! 19 ♖xa3 ♗d7 20 ♗b5 ♖g4! (the only winning move; after 20...♖f4? 21 ♖a6! ♗e7 22 ♗c5 ♗f7 23 ♗d5 ♗g7 24 ♗e5! White gains a vital tempo and draws) 21 ♖a6 ♗e7 22 ♗c5 ♗f7 23 ♗d5 ♗g7 24 ♖a3 (24 ♗e5 h3 25 ♗f5 h2 is winning for Black) 24...♗f6! 25 ♖a8 ♖b4 26 ♗c5 ♖f4 27 ♗d5 ♗f5 28 ♖f8+ ♗g4 29 ♖g8+ ♗f3 30 ♗e5 ♖a4 31 ♖f8+ ♗g3 and Black wins as in the note to his second move.

14...♗a8 15 ♖b5 ♖c4+ 16 ♗b6 h4 17 ♖h5
Now it's easy.

17...♖b4+ 18 ♗a5 ♖g4 19 ♗b6 ♖b4+ 20 ♗a5 ♖g4 21 ♗b6 ♖g6+ 22 ♗b5 ♖g4 1/2-1/2

The following example is especially instructive since it combines several themes, including reciprocal zugzwang and the Vančura draw.



Bologan – Dreev

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006

Black has extra a- and h-pawns, but he does not have the favourable set-up with his rook and pawns all on the same rank and the rook between the pawns. Despite this, the position is winning for Black, but threading through the complications requires very precise play.

1 ♗f3

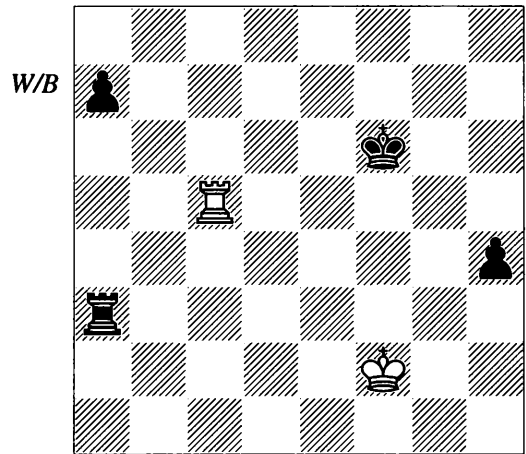
The most obvious and best move, threatening to draw by, for example, ♗g4, meeting ...♖a4+ with ♗h3. Once Black's rook gets tied down in front of the a-pawn, White can usually defend by reaching a Vančura-type draw in which the extra h-pawn plays little part.

1...♖a3+!

The only move to win.

2 ♗g2?!

Giving Black a free check on g3 makes the win slightly easier. The most interesting line is 2 ♗f2 (threatening to draw by 3 ♖c7! ♗f6 4 ♖c5!, when we have the reciprocal zugzwang described below with Black to play) 2...♗f6! (D) (the only winning move; after 2...♖a2+? 3 ♗g1 or 2...h3? 3 ♗g1 White gets his king in front of the h-pawn and reaches a Vančura-type draw) and, unbelievably, this is a position of reciprocal zugzwang.



First let's take a look at the situation with White to play. He has a wide range of moves but they all have some defect:

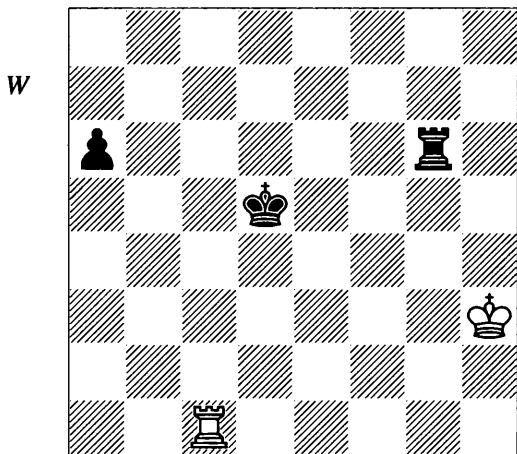
1) 3 ♗g2 ♖g3+ 4 ♗f2 (4 ♗h2 ♖g5 is similar) 4...♖g5 5 ♖c6+ ♗f5 6 ♖a6 (6 ♖h6 ♗g4 7 ♖a6 ♖g7 is also similar) 6...♖g7 7 ♖a5+ ♗g4 8 ♖a4+ ♗h3 9 ♖a5 ♖h7 (now that the rook is behind the h-pawn, Black is threatening ...♗g4) 10 ♖a4 (after 10 ♖g5 ♖h6 11 ♖a5 a6 12 ♖g5 ♖b6 13 ♖a5 ♖g6 14 ♖a1 ♖f6+ 15 ♗g1 ♖h6 16 ♖a3+ ♗g4 Black's king heads to the queenside to support the a-pawn) 10...♖f7+ (Black must lose a tempo to put White in zugzwang) 11 ♗g1 ♖g7+ 12 ♗f2 (or 12 ♗h1 ♖h7 13 ♖a1 ♗g4 14 ♗h2 h3 15 ♖a4+ ♗f5 and with White's king stuck in front of the h-pawn, Black's king is again able to move to the queenside) 12...♖h7 (now White is in zugzwang and must make a concession) 13 ♖a1 (the alternatives also allow Black to make progress; for example, 13 ♗f3 ♖f7+, 13 ♗g1 ♗g3 or 13 ♖b4 ♖f7+ 14 ♗g1 ♖g7+ 15 ♗h1 a5)

13...♔g4 14 ♔g2 h3+ 15 ♔h2 ♔f4 and again the king can cross the board to the queenside.

2) 3 ♖b5 (playing the rook to the b-file means that Black's a-pawn will later deprive White's rook of vital sideways checks) 3...a5 4 ♖b6+ ♔f5 5 ♖b5+ ♔g4 6 ♔g2 ♖a2+ 7 ♔g1 a4 and Black wins because after 8 ♖b4+ ♔g3 there is no check on the third rank.

3) 3 ♖d5 a5 4 ♖d6+ ♔e5 (now White's rook is too close to the king, so it has to go to h6, where it is not attacking the a-pawn; if the rook were on the c-file then ♖c5+ and ♖h5 would transfer the rook to the h-file while maintaining the pressure against the a-pawn) 5 ♖h6 h3 6 ♔g1 ♔f4 7 ♔h2 (White is just too slow; if his rook were already on h5 then he would have a Vančura-type draw) 7...♖e3 8 ♖a6 ♖e5 9 ♔xh3 ♖g5 10 ♔h4 ♖f5 11 ♔h3 ♔f3 12 ♔h2 ♖g5 13 ♖a8 ♔e3 14 ♔h3 ♔d3 15 ♔h4 ♖b5 16 ♔g4 ♔c3 17 ♔f4 ♔b3 18 ♖e8 a4 19 ♖e3+ ♔b4 20 ♖e4+ ♔a5 21 ♖e3 ♖c5 22 ♔e4 ♔b4 23 ♔d4 ♖c1 and Black wins.

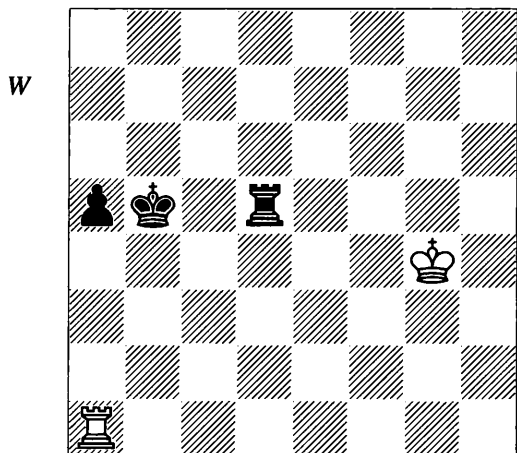
4) 3 ♖h5 h3! (threatening simply ...a5) 4 ♔g1 ♖g3+! (now 4...a5? is only a draw as White's extra tempo allows him to play 5 ♔h2 a4 6 ♖h4 ♔g5 7 ♖c4, with a Vančura-type draw; note that with the king still on g1 here, Black could win by ...♖g3+ and ...♖g4) 5 ♔h2 ♖g5 6 ♖h6+ (6 ♖xh3 a5 7 ♖e3 ♔f5! 8 ♔h3 ♔f4 9 ♖a3 ♔e4 10 ♔h4 ♖d5 is also winning for Black) 6...♖g6 7 ♖h5 a6! 8 ♖a5 (8 ♔xh3 ♔e6! 9 ♖a5 ♔d7 transposes) 8...♔e7! 9 ♔xh3 ♔d7! (9...♔d8? 10 ♖c5! is a draw) 10 ♖c5 ♔d6 11 ♖c1 ♔d5! (D) (11...a5? allows White to draw by 12 ♖a1 ♖g5 13 ♔h4 ♖d5 14 ♔g4) and now:



4a) 12 ♖a1 ♔c4 13 ♖c1+ ♔b5 14 ♖b1+ ♔c5 15 ♖c1+ ♔b6 16 ♖b1+ ♔a7 17 ♖a1 allows Black a standard theoretical win. One line runs 17...♖g8 18 ♔h4 ♔b6 19 ♖b1+ ♔c5 20 ♖c1+ ♔b4 21 ♖b1+ ♔c3 22 ♖c1+ ♔b2 23 ♖c5 ♖a8 24 ♖a5 ♔b3 25 ♔g4 ♔b4 26 ♖f5 a5 27 ♖f4+ ♔c3 28 ♖f3+ ♔d2 29 ♖f2+ ♔d1 30 ♖f1+ ♔e2 31 ♖a1 a4 and the pawn is too strong.

4b) 12 ♖c8 ♔d4 (threatening ...a5 since now the pawn can be defended by ...♖g5) 13 ♔h4 (cutting out ...♖g5) 13...♖e6! (a tough move to find since the rook must move along the rank in order to defend the pawn from the side after ...a5, but it must also position itself to cut off the white king along a file later on; e6 is the perfect compromise) 14 ♔g3 a5 15 ♖a8 ♖e5 16 ♔f4 (extremely alert readers will have noted that we have transposed to line 4a in the note to Black's first move in Bogdan-Varga on page 103, but I shall repeat the analysis here) 16...♖d5 17 ♔f3 ♔d3 18 ♔f2 (White cannot avoid having his king forced back since 18 ♔f4 allows 18...♖d4+ followed by ...a4) 18...♖e5 19 ♔f3 ♖f5+ 20 ♔g4 ♔e4 21 ♖a7 ♖e5 (Black repeats the manoeuvre and eventually pushes White's king onto the h-file) 22 ♔g3 ♔e3 23 ♔g2 ♖f5 24 ♔g3 (White must try to displace the rook, since otherwise Black's king just heads for the a-file) 24...♖g5+ 25 ♔h4 ♔f4 26 ♖a6 ♖f5 27 ♔h3 ♔f3 28 ♔h2 ♖g5 (now the king cannot move to h3, so Black gains the time he needs to move his king over to the a-pawn) 29 ♖a8 ♔e3 30 ♔h3 ♔d3 31 ♔h4 ♖b5 32 ♔g4 ♔c3 33 ♔f4 ♔b3 34 ♖e8 a4 35 ♖e3+ ♔b4 36 ♖e4+ ♔a5 37 ♖e3 ♖c5 38 ♔e4 ♔b4 39 ♔d4 ♖c1 and Black wins.

5) 3 ♖c7 ♖a5 (threatening ...♖f5+ followed by ...a5) 4 ♖h7 (or 4 ♔g2 ♖g5+ 5 ♔h3 ♖g7 6 ♖c6+ ♔g5! 7 ♖c5+ ♔f4 8 ♖c4+ ♔e3 9 ♖a4 ♖h7! 10 ♖a3+ ♔d4 11 ♖a1 ♔c5 12 ♖c1+ ♔b6 13 ♖b1+ ♔c7 14 ♖c1+ ♔b8 15 ♖a1 ♖h6, followed by ...a6, and Black is edging forwards) 4...♔g5! 5 ♖g7+ ♔h5 6 ♖c7 ♖f5+ 7 ♔g2 a5 8 ♖c4 ♔g5 9 ♖a4 ♔f6! 10 ♖xh4 (10 ♔h3 ♖h5! 11 ♔g4 ♖b5 12 ♔h3 ♔e6 13 ♖xh4 ♖g5 14 ♖d4 ♔e5 15 ♖a4 ♔d6! 16 ♔h4 ♖d5! 17 ♔g4 ♔c6 transposes) 10...♔e5 11 ♔g3 ♔d5 12 ♖a4 ♔c6 13 ♔g4 ♖d5! (the only move; 13...♖c5? is met by 14 ♔f4 ♔b5 15 ♖a1 a4 16 ♔e4, drawing) 14 ♖a1 ♔b5 (D) and now:



5a) 15 ♖b1+ ♔c4 16 ♜a1 ♔b3 and Black wins easily.

5b) 15 ♔f4 a4 16 ♔e4 ♜d6! (the only move; 16...♜d8? 17 ♔e3 ♔b4 18 ♖b1+ ♔c3 19 ♜c1+ ♔b2 20 ♜c7! a3 21 ♖b7+ ♔c3 22 ♜c7+ ♔b4 23 ♖b7+ ♔a5 24 ♜a7+ draws as Black's rook is not in a position to block the checks) 17 ♔e3 ♔b4 18 ♖b1+ ♔c3 19 ♜c1+ ♔b2 20 ♜c7 a3 21 ♖b7+ ♔c3 22 ♜c7+ ♔b4 23 ♖b7+ ♔a5 and Black wins, as his rook can interpose on a6.

5c) 15 ♔f3 ♜e5! (15...a4? allows 16 ♔e2! ♔b4 17 ♜d1, drawing) 16 ♔f4 ♜e6 17 ♖b1+ ♔c4 18 ♜c1+ ♔b3 19 ♖b1+ ♔c2 20 ♜a1 ♜a6 and Black wins.

Returning to the second diagram on page 124, with Black to play the position is a draw. Based on our experience of the White-to-play analysis, we can see why each of Black's available moves weakens his position:

1) 1...♜a4 2 ♔g2! ♜g4+ 3 ♔h3 and White gains vital time by occupying h3 at once rather than playing to h2 first.

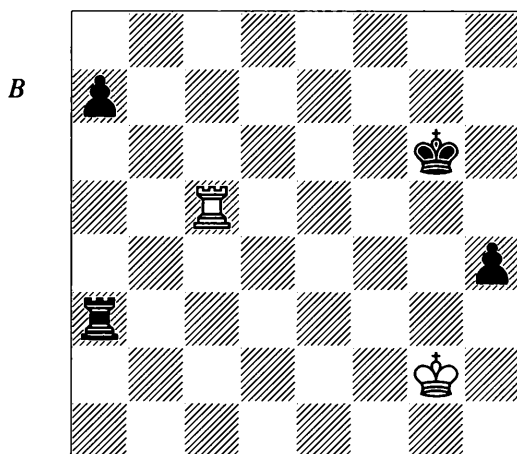
2) 1...♔e6 2 ♜h5 h3 3 ♔g1 and Black lacks ...♜g3+ followed by ...♜g5.

3) 1...♔g6 2 ♜c7! ♜a5 3 ♔g2! and Black no longer has ...♜g5+ and ...♜g7 available.

4) 1...h3 2 ♔g1! gets the king in front of the h-pawn.

5) 1...a5 2 ♜c6+ ♔f5 (or 2...♔e5 3 ♜c5+ ♔d4 4 ♜h5 h3 5 ♔g1, drawing because the rook is already attacking the a-pawn) 3 ♜c5+ ♔g4 4 ♔g2 ♜a2+ 5 ♔g1 a4 6 ♜c4+ ♔f3 7 ♜c3+ ♔e2 8 ♜c4! h3 9 ♜h4 and White reaches the familiar Vančura-type draw.

We now return to the game after 2 ♔g2?! (D):



2...♔f6?

This is wrong; we already know from the above analysis that White draws if his king can cross the g-file without anything terrible happening, so if White plays his king on to the g-file, then Black must immediately respond ...♜g3+, extracting the rook from its awkward position in front of the a-pawn. Thus 2...♜g3+! 3 ♔h2 ♔f6! (not 3...♜g5? 4 ♜c6+ ♔f5 5 ♔h3!, drawing) is the winning idea: 4 ♜c6+ (or 4 ♜a5 ♜g7 5 ♜h5 ♔g6 6 ♜a5 ♜h7 7 ♔h3 ♔f6! 8 ♜a1 ♔e6 9 ♜a5 ♔d6 10 ♜a6+ ♔c5 11 ♜a1 ♔b6 12 ♖b1+ ♔c7 13 ♜c1+ ♔b8 14 ♜a1 ♜h6, followed by ...a6 and ...♔a7, and Black starts to advance his pawn) 4...♔f5! (not 4...♔e5? 5 ♜c7 a6 6 ♜c6 and Black lacks ...♜g6) 5 ♜c4 (after 5 ♜c7 a6 6 ♜c6 ♜g6 7 ♜c4 ♜h6 Black wins by marching the king to the queenside, as we have seen before) 5...a6! 6 ♜xh4 ♜g4 7 ♜h8 (7 ♜h6 ♜g6 8 ♜h4 ♔e5 9 ♜a4 ♔d5 10 ♜a5+ ♔c4 11 ♜a1 ♔b4 effectively transposes) 7...♔e4 8 ♜h5 ♔d4 9 ♔h3 ♜g6 10 ♜a5 ♔c4 11 ♜a1 ♔b5 12 ♖b1+ ♔c6 13 ♜a1 ♔b6 14 ♖b1+ ♔a7 15 ♜a1 ♜g8 16 ♔h4 ♔b6 followed by marching the king up and then playing ...♜a8, as we saw in line 4 of the note to White's second move.

3 ♜h5 h3+ 4 ♔h2

Now White has the drawing formation and he plays the rest of the game accurately.

4...a5 5 ♜c5 ♔e6 6 ♜g5

White just keeps the a-pawn under observation and thereby prevents Black from moving his rook out from in front of the pawn.

6...♔d6 7 ♖f5

For the moment White waits, since Black is not threatening anything.

7...♔c6

Black intends to free his rook by playing his king to b6. Since White would then be forced to start checking in any case, he decides to do so straight away.

8 ♖f6+ ♔d5 9 ♖f5+ ♔e4 10 ♖c5 a4 11 ♖c4+ ♔d3 12 ♖f4 ♔d2 13 ♖d4+ ♔c2 14 ♖f4 ♖a1 15 ♖f2+!

White needs to take some care here, and indeed this move is the only one to draw because there is no pure waiting move. White needs to keep his rook on the f-file because all the squares on the f-file are available for checks and provide adequate checking distance. The e-file is no good as the checking distance is inadequate, while the g-file is equally bad as g2 is covered and not available for checks. Thus 15 ♖e4? a3 16 ♖e3 a2 17 ♖e2+ ♔d3 and 15 ♖g4? a3 16 ♖g3 a2 17 ♖a3 ♔b2 win for Black.

15...♔d3 16 ♖f4!

Again the only move.

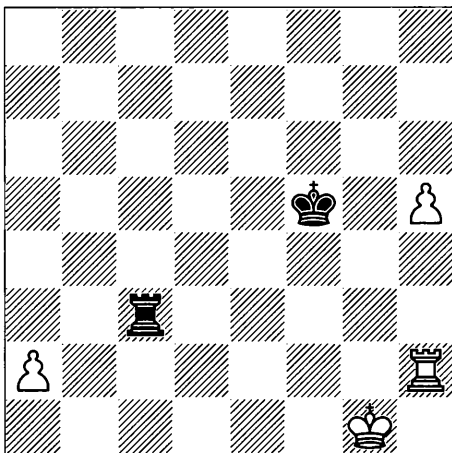
16...a3 17 ♖f3+ ♔d2 18 ♖xh3

Now the pawn can be safely removed and we have the standard Vančura draw.

18...♔c2 19 ♖g3 a2 1/2-1/2

It's a draw after 20 ♖g2+.

In the next position, it takes one difficult and surprising move by White to make the win clear.



Biro – Liptay
Hungary 1987

Despite White's extra pawns, there is some doubt as to whether he can win in the diagram, as neither his king nor his rook is especially active, while Black's pieces are well placed. The one really positive feature of White's position is that his rook is posted behind the passed h-pawn, which he can easily push forward. If Black is forced to defend passively by blocking the h-pawn then he will certainly lose, so he must try to defend actively. In the game White demonstrated that the position is indeed a win, but victory requires a very surprising move.

1 h6!

The first move is natural enough, but Black finds a tricky defence.

1...♔g5!

Black can spin the game out by checking, but his eventual defeat is certain: 1...♖c1+ 2 ♔f2 (not 2 ♔g2? ♔g4 and Black draws) 2...♖c2+ 3 ♔g3 ♖c3+ 4 ♔h4 ♔g6 5 ♔g4 ♖c4+ 6 ♔f3 ♖c3+ 7 ♔e4 ♔h7 8 ♔d4 ♖a3 9 ♔c4 ♖a8 10 ♔c3 ♖c8+ 11 ♔b2 ♖b8+ 12 ♔a1 (it's curious that the white king has to go all the way to a1 in order to win) 12...♖b4 (if 12...♖a8, then 13 ♖h4 followed by a4 and White is making progress) 13 a3 ♖g4 14 ♔a2 ♖f4 15 ♖h5! ♖g4 16 ♔b3 ♖g3+ 17 ♔b4 ♖g1 18 a4 ♖b1+ 19 ♔c4 ♖c1+ 20 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 21 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 22 ♖c5 ♖a1 23 a5 ♔xh6 24 ♔b6 and the a-pawn is decisive.

2 ♖h1!!

A remarkable winning move. Black was threatening to give perpetual check on c1, c2 and c3 (this would have been the reply to 2 h7?, for example) and the only way to counter this without losing the h-pawn is to move the rook along the h-file. By a process of elimination, h1 is the only suitable square, however unlikely it may look.

2...♔f4

Black can no longer give perpetual check; for example, 2...♔g4 3 ♔f2! ♔f4 4 ♖h4+ ♔g5 5 h7 and White wins.

3 h7 ♖c1+

After 3...♔g3 there is only one move to avoid losing, namely 4 ♖h3+!, but it wins.

4 ♔g2 ♖c2+ 5 ♔h3 1-0

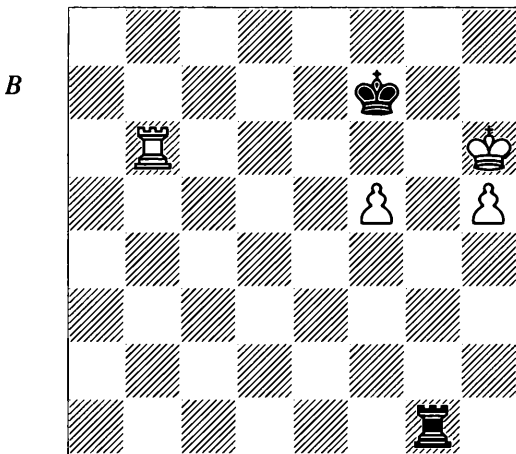
Black's cause is now hopeless; for example, 5...♖c8 6 a4 ♖h8 7 ♔g2 ♔e5 8 a5 ♔d6 9 ♔f3 followed by marching the king to g7.

Summary:

- In ♖+a♙+h♙ vs ♜, when the attacker's rook is in front of one of the pawns some positions are drawn because the defender can reach a Vančura-type draw in which the extra pawn on the opposite side of the board doesn't help.
- When the attacker's rook defends one pawn from the side, it is best for him if the other pawn is on the same rank so that the rook can defend both pawns.
- The attacker usually wins if his rook is supporting one of the pawns from behind, forcing the defender to blockade the pawn with one of his pieces.

8.6.3b f-Pawn + h-Pawn

Now we move on to the case of ♖+f♙+h♙ vs ♜. Most positions are drawn, except if the pawns are far-advanced, but the ending is notoriously difficult to defend over the board. We shall take four practical examples, which should illustrate the most important principles involved in this ending.



Larsen – Spangenberg
Buenos Aires 1991

The ending of ♖+f♙+h♙ vs ♜ has confounded chess-players for generations, partly because it is hard to assess positions which are close to the boundary between a draw and a win. Even grandmasters can find this difficult, as Larsen's notes to this ending in *Informator 53* demonstrate. In the diagram, White's pawns are relatively far-advanced, but Black's pieces are on

good squares and he shouldn't have too much trouble defending the position.

1...♜g2?!

According to Larsen, the losing move, but the position remains drawn for a further eight moves. However, it is true that Larsen's 1...♜f1! would have made Black's life considerably easier since after 2 ♔g5 (2 ♜b5 ♔f6 3 ♔h7 ♜g1 is also a draw) 2...♜g1+ 3 ♔f4 ♜f1+ 4 ♔e5 ♜e1+ 5 ♔d6 ♔f6 Black draws comfortably.

2 ♜g6 ♜f2 3 ♔g5 ♜g2+

The only drawing move since Black cannot allow White's king to stay on the optimum square g5.

4 ♔f4 ♜f2+

It is generally recommended that if White has no threats, Black should keep his rook near the a1-corner. This gives him the flexibility of checking either from White's first rank or from the a-file. In this game, Black persistently checks from the first rank, which is a less flexible plan that carries the danger that White will advance his king to, say, d7 and then interpose his rook on d6, blocking the checks. As we shall see, even this doesn't win for White provided Black defends correctly, but drawing this ending is all about not creating problems for yourself, so 4...♜a2 would have been a more practical option.

5 ♔e4 ♜f1 6 h6 ♜e1+ 7 ♔d5 ♜d1+ 8 ♔c6 ♜c1+?!

Even though Black is drawing even after this move, he could have taken advantage of the relatively distant white king to play 8...♜f1! 9 h7 (9 ♜g5 ♜h1 is also a draw) 9...♜h1 and after 10 ♜d6 ♔g7 11 ♔d7 (11 ♜d7+ ♔f6) 11...♜xh7 12 ♔e7 ♔g8+ 13 ♔e8 ♜a7 it's a standard draw.

9 ♔d7 ♜d1+

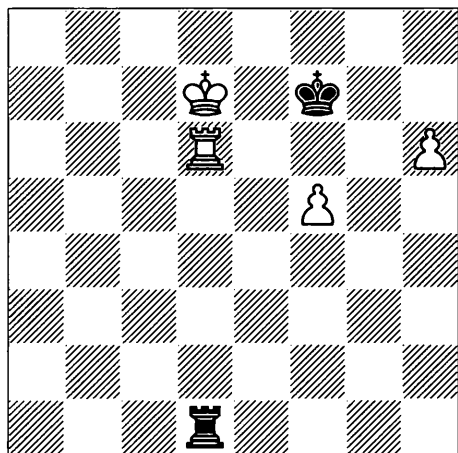
Now 9...♜f1? loses to 10 h7 ♜h1 11 ♜e6 ♜d1+ (11...♔g7 12 ♔e7 ♜xh7 13 ♜g6+ ♔h8+ 14 ♔f8! also wins for White) 12 ♜d6 ♜h1 13 ♔d8! ♜h2 14 ♜d7+, effectively transposing into the game at move 13.

10 ♜d6 (D)

10...♜h1?

This loses, as does 10...♜a1? 11 h7 ♔g7 12 f6+! ♔xh7 13 ♔e8! ♜e1+ 14 ♔f8 ♜a1 15 ♜d8 ♔g6 16 f7 ♜f1 17 ♜d6+ ♔h7 18 ♜e6 and White wins. There was by now only one move

B



to draw, namely 10...♖e1!, which prevents the white king from crossing the e-file after Black's king moves away to deal with the h-pawn. Then 11 h7 ♔g7! 12 f6+ (12 ♖h6 ♔h8 and 12 ♖e6 ♖a1 13 ♖e7+ ♔h8 are also drawn) 12...♔xh7 leads to a draw thanks to the position of Black's rook.

11 ♔d8!

Larsen finds the only move to win, which threatens 12 h7.

11...♖h5?!

This further slip makes life much easier for White. Against the best defence, White's win is by no means straightforward: 11...♔f8 12 ♖f6+ ♔g8 13 ♔e7 ♖e1+ 14 ♖e6 ♖a1 15 ♔f6 ♖a2 16 ♖e7 ♖a1 17 ♔e5! (the king is heading for e8, and must go by a slightly roundabout route because 17 ♔e6? ♖a6+ costs White the h-pawn) 17...♖e1+ (17...♖a5+ 18 ♔f4 ♖a4+ 19 ♔g5 ♖a1 20 f6 also wins for White) 18 ♔d6 ♖d1+ 19 ♔e6 ♖e1+ 20 ♔d7 ♖d1+ 21 ♔e8 ♖f1 22 ♖e5 ♔h7 23 ♔f7! ♖a1 (23...♔xh6 24 ♖e6+! ♔h7 25 f6 ♖a1 26 ♔f8! and White wins) 24 ♖e6 ♖a8 25 ♖e8 ♖a6 26 ♖e1 ♖a7+ 27 ♔f8 ♔xh6 28 ♖e6+ ♔h7 29 ♖e7+ ♔h8 30 f6 and White wins.

12 h7 ♔g7 13 ♖d7+ ♔h8 14 f6 ♖a5

After 14...♖f5 15 ♔e7! (not 15 f7? ♖xf7 and the stalemate trick saves Black) 15...♖e5+ (15...♔xh7 16 ♔e6+ and White wins the rook) 16 ♔f7 ♔xh7 17 ♖d1 ♖h5 18 ♖f1 ♖h2 19 ♔f8 the f-pawn is decisive.

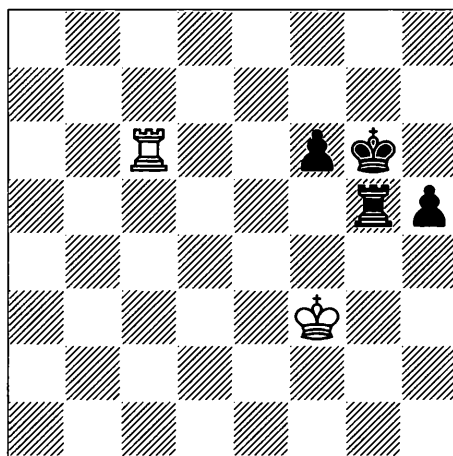
15 f7 ♖a8+ 16 ♔e7 ♔g7 17 h8 ♖+! ♔xh8

Or 17...♔xh8 18 ♖d1 followed by ♖g1+.

18 ♖d8+ 1-0

The next example shows that even very strong players have considerable difficulty playing this ending at 30 seconds per move.

W



Carlsen – Aronian

FIDE Knockout, Tripoli 2004

The attacker has two basic plans in this ending. He can either operate with his rook from the side, hoping for a mistake which will allow him to drive the defender's king on to the back rank (this cannot be forced). The second plan, which is especially relevant to this example, is to put the rook behind the h-pawn and push it as far as possible. The defender cannot ignore this plan, since if the h-pawn advances far enough then the position will be a win.

1 ♖c4!

A good start. At the moment the main danger is that Black will play ...h4, aiming for ...♖h5 at some stage, so White immediately prevents this plan. 1 ♖c8? loses after 1...h4 2 ♖g8+ ♔h7! 3 ♖a8 h3 4 ♖a2 ♔g6! 5 ♖h2 ♖a5 6 ♔g3 ♖a3+ 7 ♔h4 ♖b3 8 ♔g4 f5+ 9 ♔f4 ♖b4+ (not 9...♔f6? 10 ♖xh3, drawing thanks to stalemate) 10 ♔g3 ♔g5 11 ♖a2 ♖b3+ 12 ♔h2 ♔g4 13 ♖a8 ♖b2+ 14 ♔g1 f4 with a winning position for Black.

1...♖g1 2 ♖c8

Threatening ♖g8+.

2...♖g4 3 ♖g8+ ♔f5 4 ♖h8 ♖g5 5 ♖h6 ♔e5 6 ♖h8 ♖f5+ 7 ♔e3

This draws, but to me it appears more natural to play 7 ♔g3 ♔e4 8 ♖a8. As mentioned in the previous example, the a8-corner is a good place for the rook, as it can deliver checks both from the eighth rank and along the a-file.

7...♔d5 8 ♖a8 ♕e6

With the white king cut off, Black hopes to play ...♕f7-g6. White alertly prevents this.

9 ♖a7 ♖b5

Black cannot make any progress with his rook on f5, so he abandons the f-file cut-off and tries a different plan.

10 ♕f4 ♖b4+ 11 ♕f3 ♕f5 12 ♖a5+ ♕g6 13 ♖a8

When Black has no particular threat, it is usually a good idea to return to a8.

13...h4

In this position, pushing the h-pawn is less dangerous, as Black does not have the possibility of switching the rook behind the pawn. Nevertheless, the pawn's advance contains a drop of poison even when the rook is defending it from the side, so White has to take a little care.

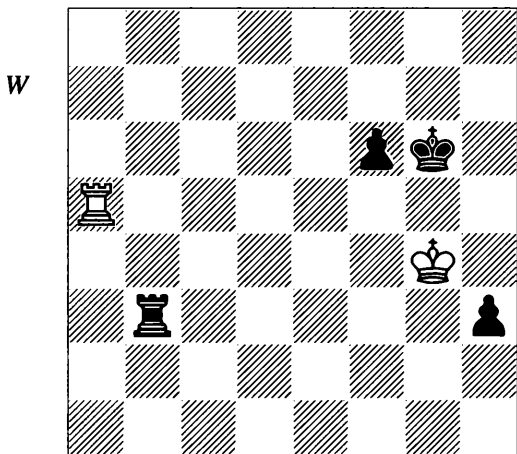
14 ♖a5

Preventing the advance of Black's king.

14...♖b3+ 15 ♕g4

The king must move to the g-file, since 15 ♕f4? ♖g3 16 ♖a2 ♖g5 switches the rook into a position where it can move behind the h-pawn. White could also have drawn by 15 ♕g2.

15...h3 (D)



16 ♖g5+!

Although this stalemate trick is not the only drawing move, it is the simplest. White could not afford to remain passive any longer as Black was threatening to win by 16...f5+! 17 ♖xf5 ♖b4+.

16...♕f7 17 ♖h5 ♕e6

Black is tied down to the defence of the h-pawn, and now the draw should have been relatively simple.

18 ♖h8

White's fortress should be impregnable.

18...♖c3

18...f5+ 19 ♕f4 ♖b4+ 20 ♕f3 and 18...♕e5 19 ♖e8+! ♕d4 20 ♖d8+ are also drawn.

19 ♕f4 ♕f7 20 ♕g4 ♕g6 21 ♕f4 ♖c2

This move at least allows Black to advance his pawn to the seventh rank.

22 ♕g3

22 ♖xh3? loses to 22...♖c4+ 23 ♕f3 ♖c3+ 24 ♕g2 ♖xh3 25 ♕xh3 ♕f5.

22...h2

The critical moment since White must find the correct idea to draw.

23 ♕f3?

This is too passive and unnecessarily allows Black's king to advance. 23 ♕f4! draws; for example, 23...♕f7 24 ♖h3 ♕e6 25 ♖h5! and Black's king is cut off along the fifth rank.

23...♕f5?!

23...♕g5 24 ♖g8+ ♕f5 25 ♖h8 ♕e5 transposes to the game after 25...♕e5.

24 ♖h5+ ♕e6?

Throwing away the win, since Black's king is cut off along the fifth rank and therefore we have the same situation as in the note to White's 23rd move. Black should have backtracked by 24...♕g6 25 ♖h8 and then 25...♕g5, as given before.

25 ♖h8?

Repeating the error of allowing the king to advance. 25 ♕f4 or 25 ♕e4 would have drawn, amongst other moves.

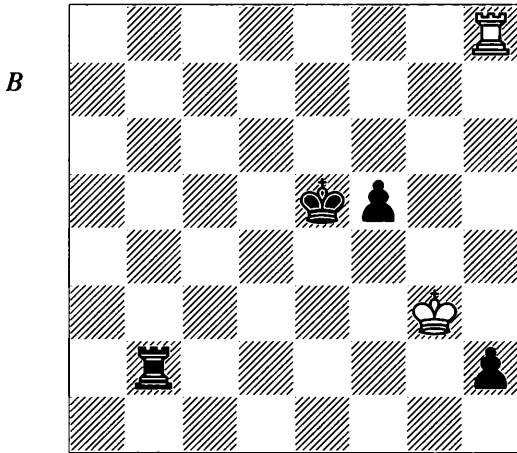
25...♕e5

Now Black again stands to win, although it still requires some work against the best defence.

26 ♖e8+

The most resilient line is 26 ♖h4 f5 (threatening to win by 27...♖c1, so the reply is forced) 27 ♕g3 (Black would like to return to this position with White to move, which he can achieve by losing a tempo with his rook; it isn't immediately obvious why Black can't just make a pass move with his rook along the second rank, but it turns out that the rook needs to be on c2 in

order to make progress) 27...♖b2 28 ♖h8 (D) and now:



1) 28...♖a2? gives away the win as after 29 ♖e8+ ♔d4 30 ♖d8+ White can just continue checking since he can take on h2 if Black's king advances to the seventh rank.

2) 28...♔d4? is also wrong as 29 ♖d8+ ♔c4 30 ♖c8+ ♔b3 31 ♖b8+ ♔a2 32 ♖xb2+ ♔xb2 33 ♔xh2 is drawn. It follows that when the white rook is on h8, Black's rook must be on c2 or d2.

3) 28...♖d2! (the key move; the rook must play to a square which allows Black's king to manoeuvre around the rook if White starts checking along the eighth rank) 29 ♖h4 (now 29 ♖e8+ ♔d4 30 ♖d8+ ♔c3 31 ♖c8+ ♔d3 32 ♖d8+ ♔c2 33 ♖c8+ ♔d1 is an easy win for Black) 29...♖c2 (White is now in zugzwang) 30 ♖h8 (30 ♔f3 loses at once to 30...♖c1! 31 ♖xh2 ♖c3+ followed by the exchange of rooks) 30...♔d4 (the start of a lengthy manoeuvre which returns to more or less the same position, except with Black's rook better placed on d2) 31 ♖d8+ ♔c3 32 ♖d1 (White's rook is obliged to switch to the first rank as 32 ♖c8+ ♔d2 33 ♖xc2+ ♔xc2 34 ♔xh2 ♔d2 wins for Black) 32...♔c4 33 ♖a1 (33 ♔f4 ♖f2+ 34 ♔g3 ♖d2 35 ♖a1 ♔d5 36 ♖a5+ ♔e6 37 ♖a6+ ♔e5 38 ♖h6 ♔d4 39 ♖d6+ ♔c3 40 ♖h6 ♔d3 is also winning) 33...♖a2 34 ♖b1 ♖d2 35 ♔f3 (35 ♖a1 ♔d5 36 ♖a5+ ♔e6 37 ♖a6+ ♔e5 38 ♖h6 ♔d4 39 ♔f3 ♔d3 is similar) 35...♔d5 (now Black threatens to play his king to g5) 36 ♖b5+ (trying to switch the rook back behind the pawn; if

White waits, Black wins by 36 ♖e1 ♔d4 37 ♖a1 ♔e5 38 ♖e1+ ♔f6 39 ♖a1 ♔g5 40 ♔g3 f4+ 41 ♔f3 ♔h4 42 ♔xf4 ♖f2+ 43 ♔e3 ♔g3) 36...♔e6 37 ♖b6+ ♔e5 38 ♖h6 ♔d4 (the manoeuvre is complete; Black's king returns to d4, but with his rook on d2, which makes it easier to play the king round behind the rook) 39 ♖d6+ (39 ♖h8 ♔d3 40 ♖h3 ♔c2 41 ♔f4 ♔d1 42 ♔xf5 ♔e1 43 ♔f4 ♔f1 and Black wins; the fact that this line wins by one tempo shows why Black can only play his king round the rook when it is on d2) 39...♔c3 40 ♖c6+ ♔b2 41 ♖h6 ♔c2 42 ♔f4 ♔d1 43 ♔xf5 ♔e1 44 ♔f4 ♔f1 and Black wins.

26...♔d4 27 ♖d8+ ♔c3 28 ♖h8?!

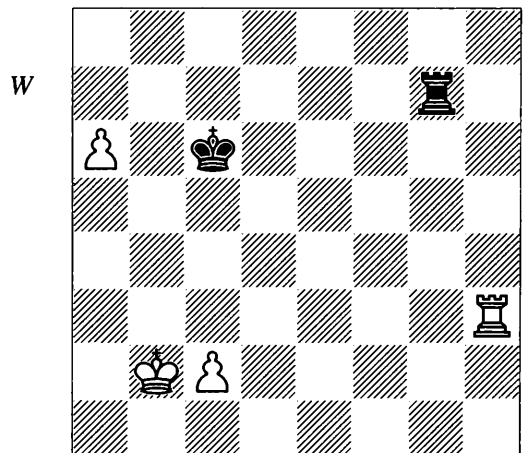
Now Black achieves his target position more easily. 28 ♖d1 puts up greater resistance, but 28...♔c4 29 ♖a1 f5 30 ♔f4 ♖f2+ 31 ♔g3 ♖a2 32 ♖b1 ♖d2 transposes into the previous note.

28...♖d2

Here the rook is already on d2, which makes it easy for Black.

29 ♔g3 ♔d3 30 ♔f3 ♔c2 31 ♔g3 ♔d1 0-1

In the following position, White adopts the plan of playing his rook behind the a-pawn. If the a-pawn is already quite far advanced, the only hope for the defence is to blockade the pawn with the king.



Kaminski – Ehlvest
Polanica Zdroj 1997

White has a relatively favourable position in that his a-pawn is well forward and he can put his rook behind it, which paralyzes Black's

rook, at least for a time. However, even this favourable case should be a draw with accurate play by Black. The ideas in this example are similar to those in Section 8.6.2b (page 120).

1 ♖a3 ♖a7 2 ♗b3 ♗c7!

The only move to draw; Black cannot hope to save the game with his rook totally immobilized, so he must play his king to b8 in order to free the rook to play an active role in the defence.

3 ♗b4 ♗b8 4 c4 ♜h7 5 ♞d3 ♗c7?

This is wrong since the priority was to move the rook to a more active position and therefore 5...♜h1! was correct. After 6 c5 (if both pawns can safely advance to the sixth rank then the position is generally lost, so here White is threatening to win by playing c6; 6 ♗b5?! ♞b1+ 7 ♗c6 ♗a7 is an easier draw) 6...♗a7! (the only move) 7 ♗b5 (7 ♞d6 ♞g1 8 ♗b5 ♞b1+ 9 ♗c6 ♞c1! draws) 7...♞b1+ 8 ♗c6 ♜h1! 9 ♗c7 ♗xa6! 10 c6 ♜h7+ 11 ♞d7 ♜h8 12 ♞d8 ♜h7+ White cannot win.

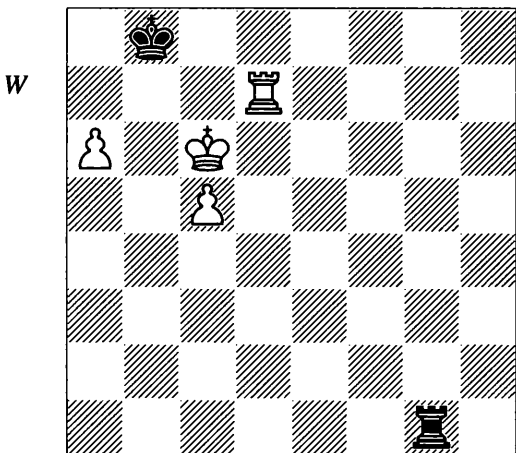
6 ♗b5

6 c5! is more direct since after 6...♜h1 7 ♖a3! ♗b8 8 c6 White's pawns are already on the sixth rank.

6...♜h6 7 ♖a3 ♗b8 8 ♞e3?!

This retains the win, but makes it significantly harder. 8 c5 ♗a7 9 ♞d3 ♜h7 10 ♞d5! (threatening c6) 10...♜h1 11 ♞d7+ ♗b8 12 c6 is much simpler.

8...♜h1 9 ♞e8+ ♗a7 10 ♞e7+ ♗b8 11 c5 ♞b1+ 12 ♗c6 ♜h1 13 ♗d6 ♞d1+ 14 ♗c6 ♜h1 15 ♞d7 ♞g1 (D)



16 ♞d6?!

White has completely lost the thread of the game. Here he could have won by 16 ♗d5! ♞d1+ 17 ♗e6 ♞e1+ 18 ♗d6 ♞d1+ 19 ♗e7 ♞e1+ 20 ♗d8 ♞c1 21 ♞d5 ♗a7 22 ♗c7! ♜h1 (22...♗xa6 23 ♞d6+! ♗a7 24 c6 ♜h1 25 ♗c8! ♜h8+ 26 ♞d8 ♜h1 27 c7 also wins for White) 23 ♞d6 ♜h8 24 ♞d8 ♜h6 25 ♞d1 ♜h7+ 26 ♗c8 ♗xa6 27 ♞d6+ ♗a7 28 ♞d7+ ♗a8 29 c6!.

16...♜h1 17 ♞e6?

Now the win vanishes completely. 17 ♞d7 is correct, repeating the position, and then adopting the line of the previous note.

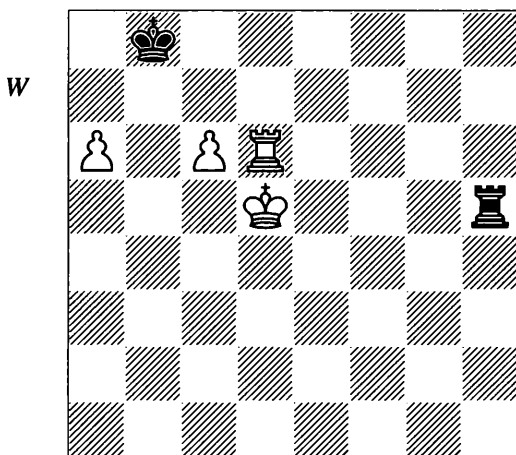
17...♞g1?

17...♗a7! would have saved the game, since 18 ♗c7 ♜h7+ 19 ♗d8 ♜h8+ 20 ♗d7 ♜h7+ 21 ♞e7 ♜h8 22 c6 ♗xa6 is only a draw.

18 ♗d7 ♞d1+ 19 ♞d6 ♜h1 20 c6?

20 ♗c6 ♞g1 21 ♞d7 ♜h1 22 ♗d5 would have won as in the note to White's 16th move. I stated earlier that White generally wins when he gets both pawns safely to the sixth rank, but this position is a rare exception, as the white king is very exposed to sideways checks. Had the white rook been on e6, f6 or g6 then the position would be an easy win.

20...♜h7+ 21 ♗e6 ♜h6+ 22 ♗d5 ♜h5+ (D)



23 ♗c4

In order to escape the checks, the king has been forced to retreat quite a long way, and this gives Black the chance to defend by attacking the vulnerable a-pawn.

23...♗c7?

After this Black doesn't get another chance. He could have drawn by 23...♖a5! 24 ♗b4 ♖a1

25 ♖b5 ♜b1+ 26 ♖c5 ♜c1+! (26...♖a7? loses to 27 ♜d4!) 27 ♖d5 ♖a7! (this is the correct moment to attack the a-pawn) 28 ♖e6 ♖xa6 29 ♖d7 ♖b6! 30 ♜d2 ♜h1 31 ♜b2+ ♖a7 with a standard draw by sideways checks.

24 a7!

White takes advantage of Black's lapse and finishes off precisely.

24...♜a5 25 ♜d5!

The only move to win, preparing to interpose on a5 in a few moves. 25 ♖b4? ♜a1 is a draw.

25...♜a1

25...♜xa7 26 ♜d7+ ♖b8 27 ♜xa7 ♖xa7 28 ♖c5 and White wins.

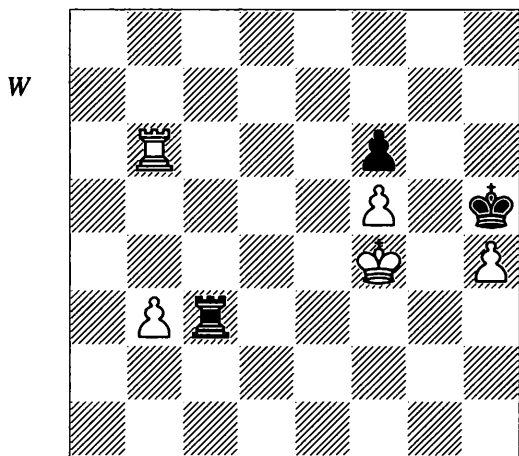
26 ♖b5 ♜b1+ 27 ♖a6 ♜b6+

Or 27...♜a1+ 28 ♜a5.

28 ♖a5 ♜b2 29 ♜d4 1-0

The a-pawn will promote.

Judging the outcome of a ♜+f△+h△ vs ♜ position may be quite difficult, so deciding whether to liquidate to such an ending requires care.



Zhao Xue – Khamrakulova

Asian Team Ch (women), Visakhpatnam 2008

This position looks like an easy win as White is two pawns ahead, but there are still a few technical problems since Black's rook and king are both actively placed, and White has the awkward f△+h△ combination on the kingside. White has the choice between 1 ♜xf6, immediately exchanging the b- and f-pawns to reach a ♜+f△+h△ vs ♜ position, or playing 1 ♜b8 (or 1

♜b7) to try to improve White's position without an immediate liquidation.

1 ♜xf6?

White assesses the position incorrectly and liquidates to a position that should be a draw. The winning line was 1 ♜b8! ♖h6 2 b4 ♜b3 (2...♜c4+ 3 ♖f3 ♜c3+ 4 ♖e4 ♖h5 5 b5 also wins for White) 3 ♖e4 ♖h5 4 ♖d5 ♖xh4 5 ♖e6 ♖g5 6 ♜g8+ ♖f4 7 ♖xf6 ♜xb4 8 ♖g6 and the f-pawn is decisive.

1...♜xb3 2 ♜f8

This position is a little out of the ordinary because of the odd position of Black's king.

2...♜b4+?

Black is tempted by the possibility of taking the h-pawn and makes a fatal mistake. 2...♖h6! was the only move to draw, simply returning the king to a more normal position on g7. Then Black would have a standard ♜+f△+h△ vs ♜ position which is a draw with careful play; for example, 3 ♜d8 ♖g7 4 h5 ♜b1! preparing to check from behind if White plays ♖e5 or ♖g5.

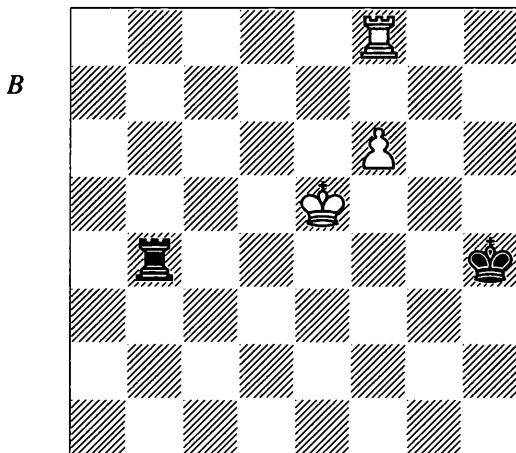
3 ♖e5!

Now White is winning.

3...♖xh4

It's too late to withdraw the king: 3...♖h6 4 ♜d8 ♖g7 5 ♜d7+ ♖g8 (5...♖h6 6 ♜d4! ♜b8 7 ♖e6 ♖g7 8 f6+ ♖g6 9 ♜g4+ ♖h7 10 ♜g7+ ♖h6 11 ♜d7 also wins for White) 6 h5 is winning as Black's king is trapped on the back rank.

4 f6 (D)



The position is a win, but it still requires several accurate moves from White.

4...♔h5 5 ♖g8!

The only move to win, cutting off the enemy king and threatening simply f7.

5...♜b7

5...♜b5+ 6 ♔e6 ♜b6+ transposes.

6 ♔e6 ♜b6+ 7 ♔e7 ♜b7+ 8 ♔f8 ♔h6

After 8...♜b8+ 9 ♔g7 White wins at once, but now that White's king is blocking the pawn, Black seizes the opportunity to bring her king back.

9 f7 ♔h7 10 ♖g7+!

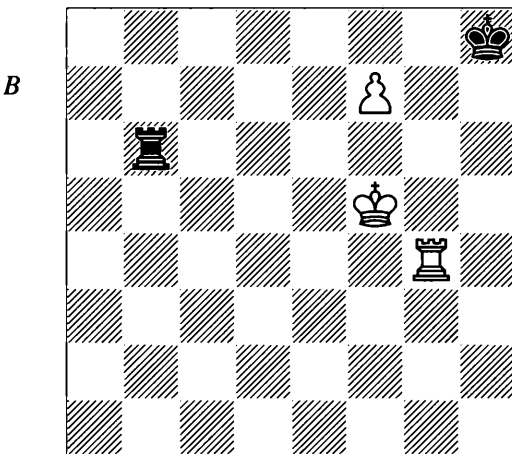
The only move to win, gaining access to the g6-square. If White retreats the rook further down the g-file, Black draws by a check barrage.

10...♔h8 11 ♖g4?

Playing the rook to the wrong square gives Black a chance to draw. 11 ♖g6! was the winning move: 11...♜b8+ 12 ♔e7 ♜b7+ 13 ♔f6 ♜b6+ 14 ♔f5 (14 ♔g5? ♜xg6+ 15 ♔xg6 is stalemate) 14...♜b5+ 15 ♔g4 ♜b8 (15...♜b4+ 16 ♔g5 ♜b5+ 17 ♔h6 and White wins at once) 16 ♔g5 ♔h7 17 ♜b6! ♜a8 (17...♜xb6 18 f8♚ ♜b5+ 19 ♔f4 ♖g5 would still pose a few practical problems for White, although the position is of course lost) 18 ♔f6 ♔h6 19 ♜d6 ♜b8 20 ♜d1 ♜b6+ 21 ♔e7 and White wins.

11...♜b8+

Now the checks should lead to a draw.

12 ♔e7 ♜b7+ 13 ♔f6 ♜b6+ 14 ♔f5 (D)**14...♜b8?**

Returning too soon to b8 gives White a chance to correct her earlier mistake. Black should have kept checking for the moment: 14...♜b5+!

15 ♔g6 ♜b6+ 16 ♔h5 ♜b5+ 17 ♔h4 (White cannot interpose her rook on either g5 or g6 because in both cases a rook exchange leads to a draw) 17...♜b8 was correct, followed by ...♜f8, and White loses the f-pawn.

15 ♔g6?

Failing to take advantage of the opportunity. White could have won by 15 ♖g6! (15 ♜b4? ♜a8 is a draw) 15...♜b5+ (15...♔h7 16 ♜b6! and White wins as in the note to White's 11th move) 16 ♔g4 ♜b8 17 ♔g5, transposing to the note to White's 11th move.

15...♜b6+ 16 ♔h5 ♜b8

With the king on h5, this should lead to a draw, although it is simpler and safer to keep checking until the king moves back to h4.

17 ♔h6 ♜a8??

This is one mistake too far. Checking would still have drawn.

18 ♖g6

Now it's easy since White can play ♜e6-e8+, forcing mate.

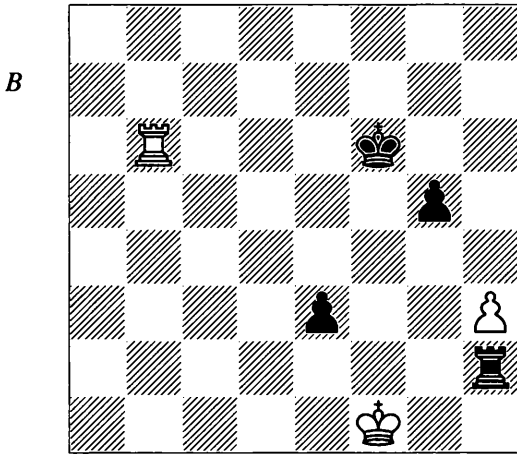
18...♜b8 19 ♜e6 1-0**Summary:**

- Most positions with ♜+f♖+h♖ vs ♜ are drawn, provided the defender's king is in front of the pawns and the pawns are not too far advanced. If both pawns reach the sixth rank then almost all positions are won.
- The attacker has two possible plans: he can try to drive the enemy king back with checks from the side, or he can attempt to put the rook behind the h-pawn and force it forward. Neither plan should succeed against accurate defence.
- Assuming that White has f- and h-pawns, Black should keep his rook in the a1-corner except when dealing with immediate threats, since from a1 his rook can check the white king along either the eighth rank or the a-file.
- If the attacker does manage to get his rook behind the rook's pawn and starts to advance it, the defender should blockade it with the king rather than the rook.

8.6.3c Other Disconnected Pawns

Contrary to most theory books, it's not only the familiar awkward pawn combinations (f- and

h-, a- and h-) which give rise to drawing possibilities. Virtually any combination of pawns can prove troublesome if the attacker's pieces are poorly placed or one of the pawns is vulnerable to attack. Even strong players can underestimate the drawing chances, as we can see from the following example.



Alavkin – S. Ionov
Russian Ch, Samara 2000

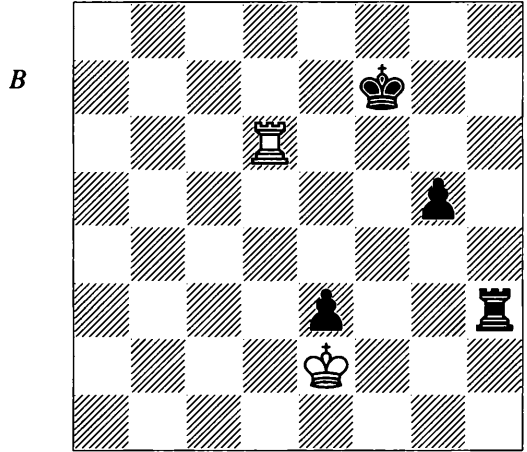
Correctly assessing the result of even fairly simple rook endings can prove a challenge. The game ended in a draw, but Ionov's notes in *Informator 80* claimed that Black missed a win. However, Ionov's analysis was based on the common mistake of underestimating the drawing possibilities in endings of $\text{K}+\text{2}\Delta$ vs K . A variety of circumstances can cause such endings to be drawn and here it is the combination of a cut-off king and a poorly-placed rook that undermines Black's winning prospects.

1...♙f5?!

The game continuation offers no hope of victory if White adopts the correct defence. 1...♙g7?! 2 ♖e6! ♜xh3 3 ♙g2 g4 4 ♖e4 is an immediate draw, while 1...♙e5?! 2 ♜h6! is similar to the game (note that 2...g4 fails to 3 ♜h5+ followed by hxg4).

Ionov claimed that 1...♙f7!? was a win, based on the line 2 ♜b7+? (2 ♜h6? is also bad since 2...g4 wins for Black) 2...♙g6 3 ♜b6+ ♙h5, which is indeed hopeless for White. However, there is no need to check Black's king up the board and White can reach a draw by 2 ♜d6 (♜a6 and ♜b6 are also good) because Black isn't

threatening anything. After 2...♜xh3 3 ♙e2 (D) the position is (perhaps surprisingly) drawn because Black cannot easily free his rook from the defence of the e-pawn and his king is cut off.



Here are some lines: 3...♙g7 4 ♜a6 ♜h6 5 ♜a7+ ♙g6 6 ♙xe3 is a draw as the king can get in front of the pawn, 3...♜g3 4 ♜a6 ♙g7 5 ♜b6 g4 6 ♜a6 ♜f3 7 ♜a4 forces the rook back to g3, and finally 3...g4 4 ♜d4 ♜g3 5 ♜e4 ♙g6 6 ♙xe3 ♜xe3+ 7 ♙xe3 ♙h5 8 ♙f2 ♙h4 9 ♙g2 draws as White is in time.

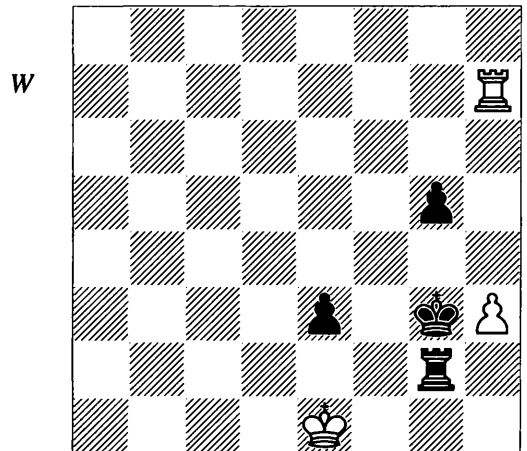
2 ♜h6

The correct plan; White keeps his rook on the h-file for the moment.

2...♙e4 3 ♜h8 ♜f2+ 4 ♙e1 ♜g2 5 ♜e8+ ♙f3 6 ♜f8+ ♙g3 7 ♜h8 ♙h2

7...♜h2 8 ♜g8! is also a draw.

8 ♜h7 ♙g3 (D)

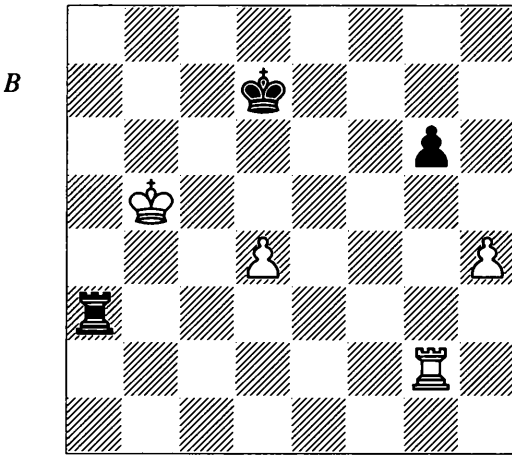


9 ♜h8

Black cannot make progress; if he puts his king on f3 White checks it away, while if he plays ...♖h2 White replies ♗g8, forcing the king back.

9...♖a2 10 ♗g8 ♖a5 11 ♖h8 ♖a4 12 ♖e2
 ♖h4 13 ♗g8 ♖h5 14 ♖xe3 ♖xh3
 14...♖xh3 15 ♖f3! is also a draw.
 15 ♖xg5+ ♖h4+ 16 ♖f4 1/2-1/2

In the following position, the draw is based on the distant white king, which leaves the rook with the impossible task of saving both pawns.



Atalik – Adly
Wijk aan Zee 2006

Black is a pawn down and his g-pawn is under fire, but the reduced material and White's slightly offside king allow Black to draw the game with a few accurate moves. This example shows the importance of choosing the right plan at an early stage.

1...♖h3 2 ♗g4

If Black waits, then White plays his king to d5, after which Black has a harder defensive task.

2...♖e6!

The key move. Black plays actively with his king, even though this costs him the g-pawn.

3 ♖xg6+

3 ♖c4 ♖f5 4 ♗g5+ ♖f6 also draws comfortably.

3...♖d5 4 ♗g4 ♖b3+

Black may as well take the chance to drive White's king one file further away.

5 ♖a5 ♖d3

Threatening to take the d-pawn, so White's reply is forced.

6 h5 ♖h3

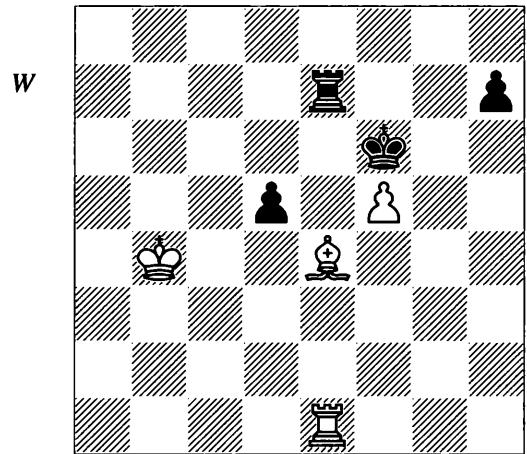
Now White loses first one of his pawns ...

7 ♗g5+ ♖xd4 8 ♖b6 ♖e4 9 ♖c6 ♖f4 10
 ♖a5 ♖g4

... and then the other.

11 ♖d6 ♖xh5 12 ♖xh5 ♖xh5 1/2-1/2

The next position is a draw because the rook is tied to the defence of one pawn, while the king cannot force the other pawn forward by itself.



Vladimirov – Voronkov
USSR 1969

White's position appears very unpleasant since his f5-pawn is weak and once the bishop falls, Black will have a dangerous passed e-pawn.

1 ♖c3!

White is prepared to give up the f5-pawn to reach a drawn position of ♖+2♙ vs ♖.

1...dxe4

1...♖xe4 2 ♖h1 draws easily as White is only one pawn down.

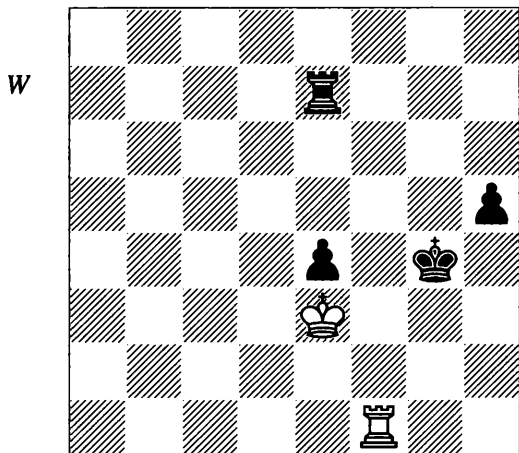
2 ♖d4 ♖xf5

2...♖d7+ 3 ♖e3 ♖e5 4 ♖h1 ♖xf5 5 ♖f1+ ♖e5 6 ♖h1 is also a draw; for example, 6...♖e7 7 ♖h5+ ♖d6 8 ♖h4 and Black cannot make progress.

3 ♖f1+ ♖g4 4 ♖e3!

The only move to draw, blockading the dangerous e-pawn.

4...h5 (D)



The most dangerous continuation.

5 ♖g1+!

Once again the only move, since if White allows the pawn to advance to h4 then he loses: 5 ♖h1? h4 6 ♖g1+ ♔h3 7 ♖h1+ ♔g3 8 ♖g1+ ♔h2 9 ♖g8 h3 10 ♖g6 ♔h1 11 ♖g4 h2 12 ♖g6 ♖e8! (a small finesse which makes the win much easier; Black forces White's rook off the relatively favourable sixth rank) 13 ♖g7 (after 13 ♖g5 ♖f8 14 ♔xe4 ♖f1 15 ♔e3 ♖g1 16 ♖a5 ♔g2 17 ♖g5+ ♔h3 18 ♖h5+ ♔g3 Black wins even more quickly) 13...♖f8 14 ♔xe4 ♖f1 15 ♔e3 ♖g1 16 ♖a7 ♔g2 17 ♖g7+ ♔f1 18 ♖f7+ ♔e1 19 ♖a7 ♖g3+ 20 ♔f4 ♖f3+ 21 ♔xf3 (21 ♔e4 ♖h3 is also a quick win for Black) 21...h1♚+ 22 ♔f4 ♚f1+ (this position reveals why it was a good idea to force the rook off the sixth rank at move 12; when the rook is on a6, Black cannot win it with a series of checks, but if the rook is on a5 or a7 then it is quickly lost) 23 ♔e5 ♚b5+ 24 ♔e4 ♚c4+ 25 ♔f3 ♚d3+ 26 ♔g2 ♚f1+ and Black wins the rook on a7.

5...♔f5

With the pawn on h5, it does Black no good to move to the h-file since White can just keep checking.

6 ♖f1+ ♔g6

6...♔e5 7 ♖h1 ♖h7 8 ♖h4 draws at once.

7 ♖g1+ ♔h6 8 ♖h1

Black cannot make progress. His rook is tied to the defence of the e-pawn, while the h-pawn cannot advance with only the support of the king.

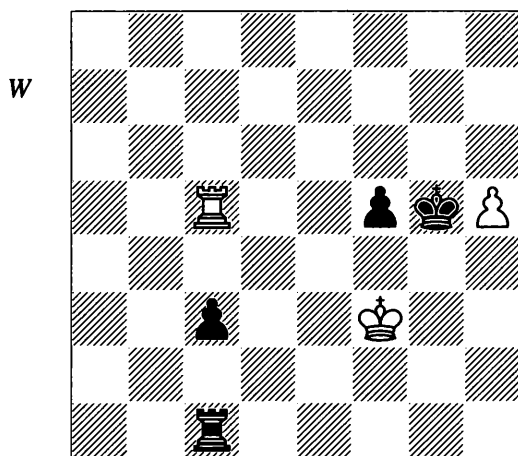
8...♖e8

An attempt to put White in zugzwang. If he plays 9 ♖h2? then he loses his checking distance and Black's king can advance to h3.

9 ♔f4! ♔g6 1/2-1/2

Or 9...e3 10 ♖e1 e2 11 ♔f3 and Black loses his pawn.

Now it's time to move on to some slightly more complicated cases. In the next example, from a correspondence game, White missed a draw based on reaching a ♖+2♚ vs ♖ position in which Black cannot win even though one of his pawns is on the seventh rank.



Cyrus – Mularczyk

corr. 1987

This ending contains some surprising subtleties. It is drawn with accurate play, but the defensive idea is quite obscure and difficult to see. It depends on reaching a position of ♖+2♚ vs ♖ which at first sight looks lost, but which can be held provided White finds a stalemating idea.

1 ♔e2!

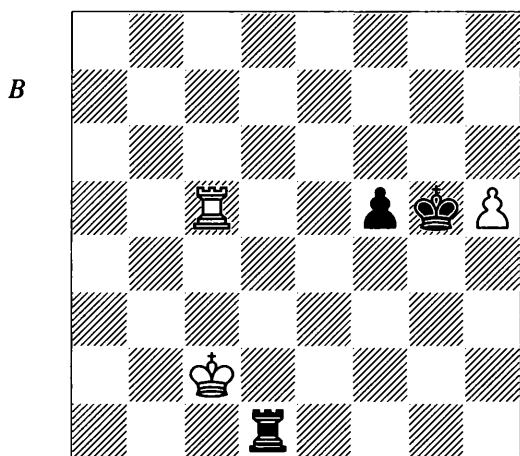
White starts well since this is the only move to draw. 1 ♔e3? c2 2 ♔d2 transposes to the game, while 1 ♔f2? c2 2 ♔g2 ♔h6! 3 ♔h2 f4 4 ♔g2 f3+ 5 ♔f2 ♖h1 costs White his rook.

1...c2 2 ♔d2?

This move loses as White's king gets cut off by the enemy rook. Instead, White had a remarkable way to draw: 2 h6! ♖h1 (or 2...♔xh6 3 ♔d2 and now 3...♖d1+ 4 ♔xc2 no longer works as the f-pawn is hanging, while after 3...♖f1 4 ♔xc2 ♔g5 5 ♔d2 ♔g4 6 ♔e2 White's king is close enough to draw) 3 h7! ♖xh7 4

♔f3! (4 ♕e3? ♖h3+ wins for Black after 5 ♔f2 ♖h1 or 5 ♔d2 ♖h2+ 6 ♕e3 ♔g4) 4...♗h2 (at first glance White hasn't achieved much other than to lose his h-pawn while Black has managed to preserve both his pawns, but with his next two moves White reveals the point of his play) 5 ♔g3 ♖d2 6 ♖c6! (the only move to draw; it is now impossible for Black to make progress as he is unable to release his king; 6 ♔f3? is wrong since it allows Black's king to escape and after 6...♔f6 7 ♕e3 ♖h2 8 ♔f3 ♕e6 9 ♔g3 ♖d2 10 ♔f3 ♔d6 11 ♖c3 ♔d5 12 ♕e3 ♖h2 13 ♖c8 f4+ 14 ♔xf4 ♔d4 Black will soon reach the Lucena position) 6...f4+ (6...♖e2 7 ♔f3 ♖h2 8 ♔g3 ♖d2 transfers the move to White, but he still has one waiting move, namely 9 ♔f3!, and Black has not improved his position) 7 ♔f3 ♔f5 8 ♖xc2 (8 ♖c5+ ♕e6 9 ♔xf4 ♔d6 10 ♕e3 also draws) 8...♗xc2 stalemate.

2...♖d1+! 3 ♔xc2 (D)



3...♖d6!

Very precise play by Black, who finds the only move to win. The plan is simply to play ...♔g4 and ...f4, leaving the rook to hold up the h-pawn. 3...♖d7? 4 h6! ♔g4 5 ♖c3 f4 6 ♖d3 ♖h7 7 ♔d2 ♖xh6 8 ♕e2 is only a draw.

4 ♖e5

4 h6 is worse because White's king remains cut off after 4...♖xh6 5 ♔d2 ♖e6.

4...♔g4! 5 h6

White finds the most resilient defence, but it is of no avail against Black's exact play.

5...♖xh6 6 ♔d2 ♔f4!

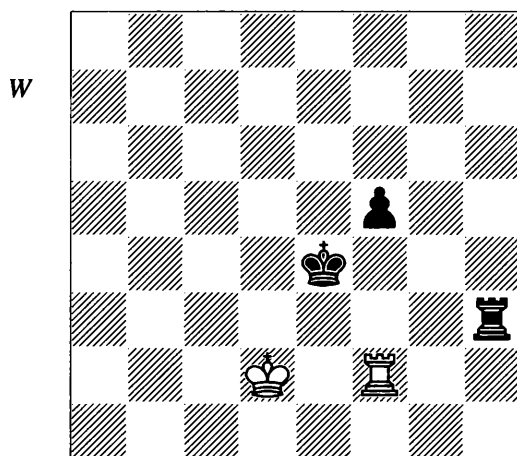
It may be counter-intuitive to block the pawn, but forcing White's rook to commit itself is the only way to win. After 6...f4? 7 ♕e2 ♖h2+ 8 ♔f1 ♔f3 9 ♔g1 White's king reaches the short side of the pawn, leading to a standard draw by long-range checks from the a- or b-file.

7 ♖e2

White's rook has to go one way or the other. 7 ♖a5 ♖e6 again cuts the white king off, while after 7 ♖e8 ♖h2+ 8 ♕e1 ♔f3 9 ♖a8 ♖h1+ 10 ♔d2 f4 11 ♖f8 ♖f1 White's king is on the long side of the pawn, so there is no way to prevent Black from reaching the Lucena position.

7...♖h3 8 ♖f2+ ♕e4! (D)

Not 8...♔g4? 9 ♕e2 ♖a3 (9...f4 10 ♖g2+ ♖g3 11 ♔f1 is also a draw) 10 ♖g2+ ♔f4 11 ♖g8 ♖a2+ 12 ♔f1 ♔f3 13 ♔g1 and again White's king escapes to the short side.



9 ♕e2?!

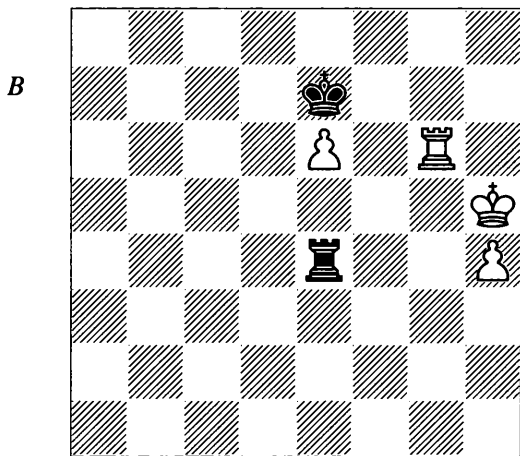
This loses at once. White could have put up more resistance by 9 ♖e2+ ♔f3 10 ♖e3+ ♔g4 11 ♖e5, but Black wins all the same by 11...♖f3! (a tough move to find, which aims to prevent White's king from crossing to the short side; 11...f4? 12 ♕e2 ♖h2+ 13 ♔f1 ♔f3 14 ♔g1 is the familiar draw) 12 ♕e2 ♔g3 13 ♖e8 ♖f2+ 14 ♕e1 f4 15 ♖f8 ♔g2 (threatening ...♖f1+) 16 ♖g8+ ♔f3 17 ♖a8 ♖b2 (White's king cannot move to f1, so there is no danger of it reaching the short side) 18 ♖f8 ♖b1+ 19 ♔d2 ♖f1 (a typical manoeuvre in endings with ♖+♔ vs ♖: Black prepares ...♔g2 followed by ...f3) 20 ♖h8 ♔g2 21 ♖g8+ ♔f2 22 ♖h8 f3 and the Lucena position is not far off.

9...♖a3

Thanks to the miserable position of White's rook, he is unable to avoid the exchange of rooks.

10 ♖e1 ♖a1+ 11 ♖e2 ♖a2+ 12 ♖f1 ♖xf2+ 13 ♖xf2 ♖f4 0-1

In some cases it is hard to imagine that the position is a draw, since the defender appears to have little going for him.



Pogorelov – Matamoros
Seville 2007

This position hardly looks like a draw since White is two pawns ahead and, while the e-pawn is blockaded, his king is in a good position to support the advance of the h-pawn. In the game, Black played a few perfunctory moves and then resigned, yet he could have saved the game had he adopted the correct defence.

1...♖e1

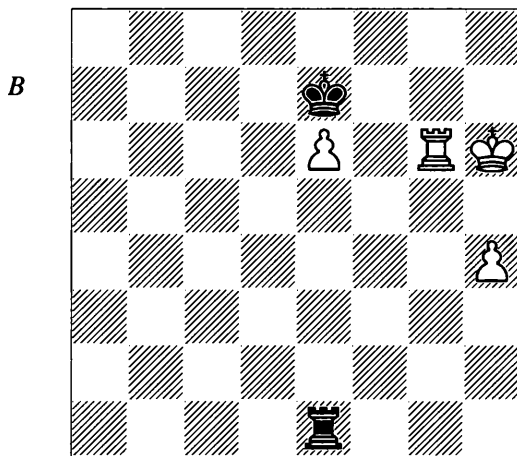
Finding the right plan depends on understanding two crucial positions of reciprocal zugzwang. 1...♖e5+? loses because after 2 ♖h6! we have the first position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play: 2...♖f8 (White also wins after 2...♖f5 3 h5 ♖e5 4 ♖g5 ♖xe6+ 5 ♖g7 or 2...♖e1 3 h5 ♖h1 4 ♖g5 ♖xe6 5 ♖g7 ♖f1 6 h6 ♖f7+ 7 ♖g8 ♖e7 8 ♖a5 ♖e8+ 9 ♖g7 ♖e7+ 10 ♖g6) 3 h5! and now we have the second position of reciprocal zugzwang. With Black to play, White wins after 3...♖f5 (3...♖e1 4 ♖h7 and 3...♖e8 4 ♖g5 ♖xe6+ 5 ♖g7 ♖e7+ 6 ♖g8 ♖e6 7 ♖g6 win more easily) 4 ♖g5 ♖f6+ 5 ♖h7 ♖xe6 6 ♖f5+ ♖e7 7 ♖g8! (this finesse

makes life easier for White; Black is more or less forced to move his rook off the e-file, which allows White a check on e5 in a couple of moves) 7...♖a6 8 ♖g7 ♖a1 9 ♖e5+ ♖d6 10 ♖g5 ♖a7+ 11 ♖g6 ♖e7 12 h6 ♖e6+ 13 ♖h5 ♖e7 14 ♖f5 ♖e6 15 ♖g6 ♖e8 16 h7 and the h-pawn cannot be stopped.

The key idea for Black is to reach the first reciprocal zugzwang position (the one with black rook on e5, white king on h6 and pawn on h4) with White to play. There are many ways to achieve this; indeed, in the diagram position every plausible move apart from 1...♖e5+? draws, but in each case Black has to follow his move up correctly. One of the simplest methods is 1...♖a4 2 ♖g5 ♖a5+ 3 ♖h6 ♖e5 and Black has achieved his aim, but the move played is also sufficient.

2 ♖h6 (D)

2 ♖g5 ♖e2 3 h5 ♖e5+ 4 ♖h6 ♖f8 is also a draw, as it is the second reciprocal zugzwang position mentioned above with White to play.



2...♖h1?

Black hasn't understood the logic of the position and allows White a simple win. 2...♖e4? is also bad due to 3 h5 ♖e5 4 ♖g5 ♖xe6+ 5 ♖g7 followed by h6, but 2...♖e5! leads to a draw as we now have the first reciprocal zugzwang with White to play:

1) 3 ♖g5 ♖xe6+ 4 ♖g7 ♖e1 5 h5 ♖f1! 6 h6 (6 ♖e5+ ♖d6 7 ♖e4 ♖g1+ is also a draw) 6...♖f7+ 7 ♖g6 ♖f6+ 8 ♖h5 ♖f7 (8...♖f7 also draws) 9 h7 ♖f1 and White cannot win.

2) 3 ♖g1 ♖xe6+ 4 ♖g7 ♖e5 5 ♖g5 ♖e1 6 h5 ♖f1 transposes to line 1.

3) 3 h5 ♖f8! reaches the second reciprocal zugzwang with White to play: 4 ♜f6+ ♕e7 5 ♜f1 ♜xe6+ 6 ♖g7 ♜e5! (6...♜e2? loses to 7 ♜f7+! ♕e8 8 ♜f6 ♜e7+ 9 ♖g8 ♜e5 10 ♜f8+ ♕e7 11 ♜f7+ ♕e8 12 h6) 7 h6 ♜g5+ and the king is forced to the h-file.

4) 3 ♖g7 (this is the most awkward move to meet, and requires extremely precise defence by Black) 3...♜h5! 4 ♜g4 (4 ♜h6 ♜f5 5 h5 ♜g5+ is another draw) 4...♕xe6 5 ♖g6 ♜h8! 6 ♜e4+ ♕d5 7 ♜a4 and now:

4a) 7...♜g8+? 8 ♖f7 ♜g1 9 ♜a5+! (9 h5? ♜f1+ draws as there is no real shelter from the checks other than by blocking the h-pawn) 9...♕e4 10 h5 ♜f1+ 11 ♖g6 ♜g1+ 12 ♜g5 ♜a1 13 h6 and the pawn rolls on.

4b) 7...♕e6! 8 ♜a6+ ♕e7! 9 ♜a7+ ♕e6 10 h5 ♜g8+ 11 ♜g7 ♜a8 12 h6 ♜a1 13 ♜g8 ♜g1+ 14 ♖h7 ♜h1 15 ♖g7 ♜g1+ 16 ♖f8 ♜f1+ 17 ♕e8 ♜a1 18 ♜g6+ ♖f5 19 ♜b6 ♜a8+ and Black finally saves the game.

3 h5

Now Black's rook is attacking the h-pawn from the wrong direction and there is no defence to the threat of ♜g5 followed by ♖g7.

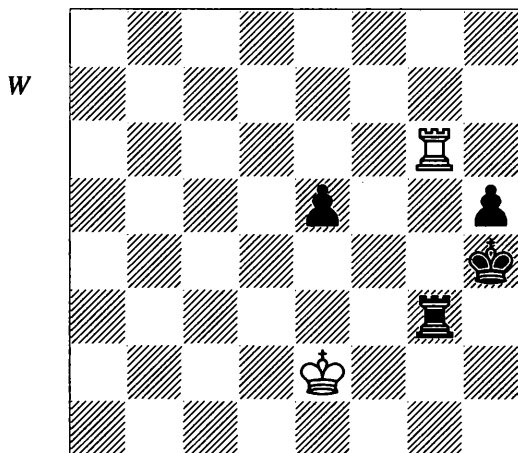
3...♜h2 4 ♜g5 ♕xe6 5 ♖g7 ♜a2

5...♜f2 6 h6 ♜f7+ 7 ♖g8 ♜e7 8 ♜a5 also wins for White.

6 h6 ♜a7+ 7 ♖g6 1-0

The pawn cannot be stopped.

The following position is rather similar, except that the e-pawn is further back.



M. Gurevich – Azarov
Istanbul 2006

This is another position in which one could hardly imagine that Black has problems winning. His combination of pawns is not one of the standard awkward ones, and his king and rook are actively placed, so it would seem a simple matter to put the rook on g5, extract the king from the h-file and advance the h-pawn. If executed correctly, this plan does indeed win, but it is certainly possible for Black to go wrong, as happened in the game.

1 ♜e6

Or 1 ♜f6 ♜g5 2 ♜f1 ♕h3 3 ♜h1+ ♖g2 4 ♜h4 ♖g3 5 ♜h1 h4 6 ♜g1+ ♖f4 7 ♜f1+ ♕e4 8 ♜h1 ♜h5 9 ♜h3 ♖f4 10 ♖f2 ♖g4 and after 11 ♖g2 e4 or 11 ♜h1 h3 White's position is hopeless.

1...♜g5 2 ♖f3

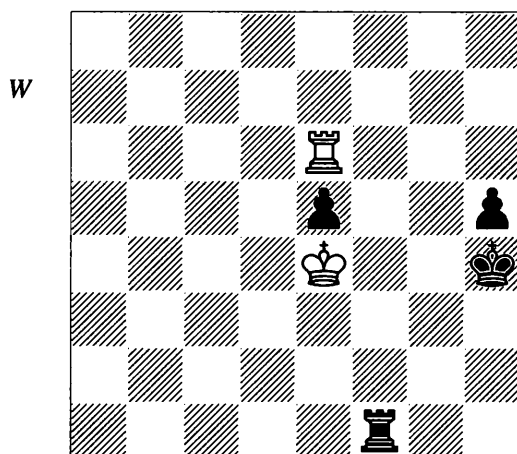
White does his best to keep Black's king trapped on the h-file.

2...♜f5+

This wins, but it would have been quicker to edge the h-pawn further up the board before releasing the king: 2...♖h3! 3 ♜a6 (or 3 ♜e8 h4 4 ♜e7 ♜f5+ 5 ♕e4 ♖g4) 3...♜g4 4 ♜a5 e4+ 5 ♕e3 h4 6 ♜a1 (6 ♖f2 ♖h2 7 ♜e5 h3 is also a win for Black) 6...♖h2 7 ♜a2+ ♖g3 8 ♜a1 h3 9 ♜g1+ ♖h4 10 ♜h1 ♜g2 11 ♕xe4 ♖g3 and the h-pawn decides the game.

3 ♕e4 ♜f1?! (D)

This further inaccuracy makes the win much harder. 3...♖g4 4 ♜a6 h4 is a far more efficient winning plan.



4 ♜a6?!

Objectively speaking, this makes life somewhat easier for Black, although it is tough to

criticize a move which provokes an immediate blunder. The most resilient defence was 4 ♖g6, keeping the black king trapped on the h-file. Black can still win, but it isn't easy: 4...♙e1+! 5 ♖f3 ♙c1 6 ♖e4 ♙c5 7 ♖g1 ♖h3 (the start of a triangulation to transfer the move to White) 8 ♙h1+ ♖g4 9 ♖g1+ ♖h4 10 ♖f5 ♖h3! (this is based on a neat tactical point) 11 ♙a1 (11 ♙h1+ ♖g2 12 ♙xh5?! loses the rook to 12...e4+) 11...h4 12 ♙a3+ ♖g2 13 ♙a2+ ♖f3 14 ♙a3+ ♖e2 15 ♖e4 ♖f2 16 ♖f5 ♙c4 17 ♙a2+ (17 ♖xe5 loses to 17...♖g2 18 ♙a2+ ♖g3 19 ♙a3+ ♖g4) 17...♖e3 18 ♙a3+ ♖d4 19 ♙b3 ♙a4! (this puts White in zugzwang) 20 ♖g4 (20 ♙h3 e4 21 ♙xh4 ♖d3 also wins for Black) 20...♖c4 21 ♙h3 ♖d5+ 22 ♖f5 ♙f4+ 23 ♖g5 ♖e4 24 ♙a3 ♙f8 25 ♖xh4 ♖f4 26 ♖h3 ♙g8! 27 ♙a7 e4 and the e-pawn is too strong.

4...♙e1+?

Perhaps surprisingly, this move throws away the win. Now was a good time to abandon the e-pawn and concentrate on forcing the h-pawn home: 4...♙f4+! 5 ♖xe5 ♖g4 6 ♙h6 ♙a4 7 ♙g6+ ♖f3 8 ♙f6+ ♖g3 9 ♙g6+ ♖h2 (it may look odd to put the king in front of the pawn, but with White's king cut off along a rank, even this is sufficient to win) 10 ♖f5 h4 11 ♙b6 h3 12 ♙b2+ ♖g3 13 ♙b3+ ♖h4 14 ♙b2 ♙a1 (so that Black's king can head for g1 if White keeps checking from the side) 15 ♙b4+ ♖g3 16 ♙g4+ ♖f2 17 ♙f4+ ♖g2 18 ♙g4+ ♖h1 19 ♙g8 h2 20 ♖f4 ♙g1 and Black wins now that his king has been released.

5 ♖f5!

Suddenly White's pieces are very active and Black's rook is tied down.

5...♖g3 6 ♙a3+ ♖g2 7 ♙a2+ ♖g3 8 ♙a3+ ♖g2 9 ♙a2+ ♖f3

Black cannot make progress unless he moves his king to the f-file.

10 ♙h2!

10 ♙a3+? loses to 10...♙e3.

10...e4 11 ♙h3+!

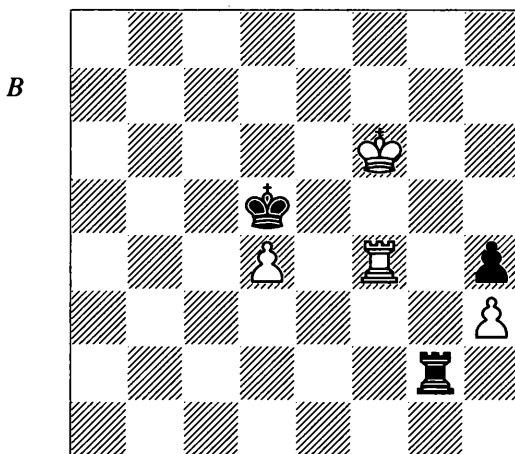
White must not be greedy and grab the h-pawn since 11 ♙xh5? e3 12 ♙h3+ ♖e2 13 ♖e4 ♖d2 14 ♙h8 ♙a1 15 ♙d8+ ♖e2 16 ♙h8 ♙a4+ wins for Black. Instead White must play to confine Black's pieces.

11...♖f2 12 ♖f4 e3 13 ♙h2+ ♖g1 14 ♙xh5

Now it's safe to take the pawn.

14...♖g2 15 ♖e4 1/2-1/2

The following example demonstrates how in real-life positions the attacker's pieces may not be optimally placed, thus providing drawing opportunities for the defender.



Milos – Oblitas
São Paulo Zonal 2000

Black's h-pawn is doomed, and after White takes it we shall have a position with ♙+2♙ vs ♙. White doesn't have one of the awkward combinations of pawns, and his king is actively placed, yet Black does have a route to a draw. By keeping the d- and h-pawns under attack, Black can make it impossible for White to move his rook, and White also cannot approach with his king. The only real winning attempt involves sacrificing a pawn, but against accurate defence this should not be sufficient to win.

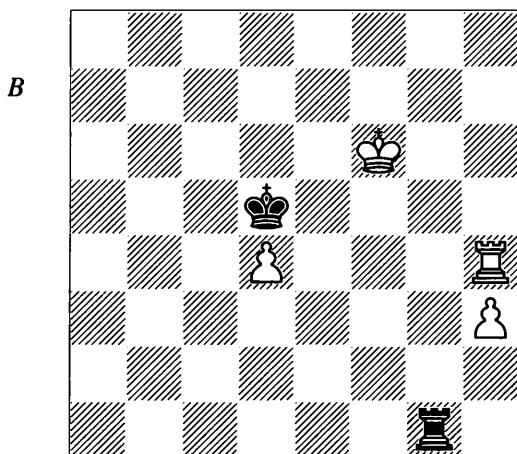
It is important to note that this drawing opportunity, which depends on White's poor rook position, does not arise by chance. The rook ends up on the passive square h4 not by choice but through necessity, since it has to go there to capture Black's last pawn. The theoretical positions which one often finds in endgame books generally assume that the attacker's pieces are already well-placed, so they tend to ignore the difficulties which arise in real-life situations such as this one.

1...♙g1?

This is wrong. Black's rook belongs on the third rank, attacking the h3-pawn, and he should

have played it there without delay. 1...♖g3! 2 ♜xh4 ♜a3! was the drawing idea and after 3 ♜h5+ (3 ♜h8 ♜xd4 4 h4 ♜e4 5 h5 ♜a6+ 6 ♜g5 ♜a5+ 7 ♜g4 ♜e5 8 ♜f8 ♜al 9 h6 ♜g1+ is also a draw, while 3 ♜f5 ♜b3 doesn't help White) 3...♜xd4 4 h4 ♜e4 5 ♜e5+ ♜f4 6 h5 Black saves the game by 6...♜a6+! 7 ♜e6 ♜xe6+ 8 ♜xe6 ♜g5. The check on Black's third rank is an important resource, and hence his rook belongs on a3 (b3 and c3 are just as good), where it attacks the h3-pawn but is also ready to give sideways checks if White gives up the d-pawn.

2 ♜xh4 (D)



2...♜g3?!

This makes life easier for White, since it's now too late for Black's rook to reach the optimum position on a3. Black could have resisted more by 2...♜f1+ 3 ♜g6 ♜h1, which is an alternative method of trying to pin White's rook down. However, White can win, although precise play is necessary: 4 ♜h5+! ♜xd4 5 h4 ♜d3 (Black moves his king off the vulnerable fourth rank; 5...♜e4 6 ♜a5! and 5...♜e3 6 ♜e5+ ♜f4 7 ♜f5+ ♜e4 8 h5 are easier wins for White) 6 ♜f6! (perhaps surprisingly, this puts Black in zugzwang; 6 ♜h8? ♜g1+ 7 ♜f5 ♜f1+ is a draw as White's king is too exposed to checks and must move all the way to g2 to stop them) 6...♜h2 (6...♜f1+ can here be met by 7 ♜f5, while 6...♜e3 7 ♜e5+ ♜f4 8 h5 is an easy win for White; therefore Black tries to wait, but his rook is worse placed on h2 than on h1) 7 ♜g7! (this subtle triangulation is the key to success) and now:

1) 7...♜e3 loses to 8 ♜g6! (threatening ♜e5+) 8...♜d3 9 ♜h8! (with the rook on h2 rather than h1, the white king only has to retreat as far as f3) 9...♜g2+ 10 ♜f5 ♜f2+ 11 ♜g4 ♜g2+ 12 ♜f3 ♜h2 13 ♜d8+ ♜c4 14 ♜g4 and now Black's king is cut off by one file more, and White wins by just pushing his pawn with the king in front of it.

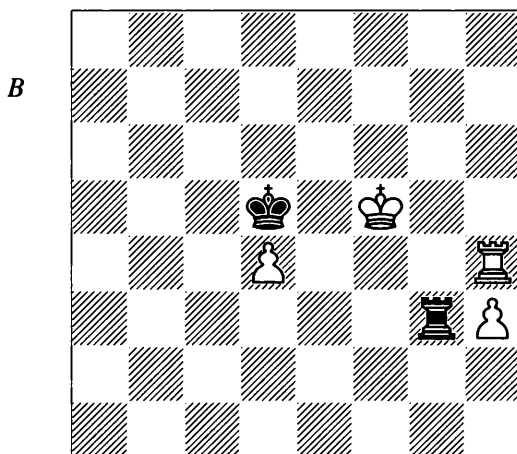
2) 7...♜h1 (Black attempts to regain his checking distance) 8 ♜h6! with another branch:

2a) 8...♜e4 9 h5 ♜d4 (after 9...♜f5 10 ♜f6+ or 9...♜e5 10 ♜a6 Black loses at once) 10 ♜f7! ♜h2 11 ♜d6+ ♜c5 12 ♜a6 ♜b5 13 ♜h6 (this manoeuvre forces the black king further away) 13...♜c5 14 ♜h8 ♜f2+ 15 ♜e6 ♜e2+ 16 ♜f5 ♜f2+ 17 ♜g4 ♜g2+ 18 ♜h3 ♜d2 19 ♜c8+ ♜b5 20 ♜g8 ♜d1 21 ♜g2 and White wins.

2b) 8...♜al 9 ♜f6 ♜g1+ 10 ♜f7 ♜h1 11 ♜f4 (cutting Black's king off along a rank) 11...♜e3 12 ♜a4 ♜f3 13 ♜g6 ♜b1 14 ♜a6! (the only move to win, shielding the white king from sideways checks) 14...♜g1+ 15 ♜f5 ♜h1 16 ♜a3+ ♜e2 17 ♜g5 ♜g1+ 18 ♜h6 ♜b1 19 h5 ♜b6+ 20 ♜g5 ♜b5+ 21 ♜h4 ♜b4+ 22 ♜g3 ♜b6 23 ♜a5 ♜h6 24 ♜g4 ♜h8 25 ♜a6 and the pawn continues to advance.

3 ♜f5? (D)

White fails to exploit Black's hesitation and hands over the half-point. The winning line was 3 ♜h5+! ♜xd4 4 h4 ♜e4 (or 4...♜a3 5 ♜b5 ♜c4 6 ♜f5 ♜h3 7 h5 ♜d4 8 ♜g6 ♜e4 9 ♜g5 ♜a3 10 h6 and White wins) 5 ♜e5+ ♜f4 6 h5 (now Black doesn't have the check on a6 and he cannot prevent the pawn's advance) 6...♜h3 7 ♜f5+ ♜e4 8 ♜g6 ♜g3+ 9 ♜g5 with the usual win.



3...♖a3!

Black takes advantage of White's lapse and arrives at the drawing formation.

4 ♖h8

4 ♖h5 ♔xd4 5 h4 ♔e3 6 ♖h8 ♖a5+ 7 ♔g4 ♖a4+ 8 ♔g3 ♔e4 is also a draw.

4...♔xd4 5 ♖d8+?!

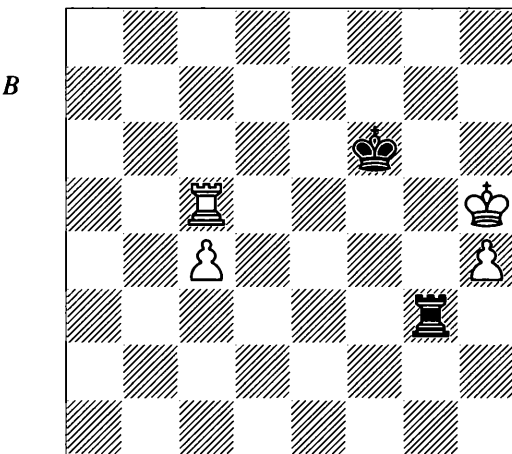
Checking only improves the position of Black's king. White could have caused more problems by 5 h4, but Black can draw provided he finds the defence 5...♖f3+! 6 ♔g4 ♖f1! (the only move; Black must secure adequate checking distance) 7 h5 ♖g1+ 8 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 9 ♔g6 (or 9 ♔e6 ♖e1+ 10 ♔d6 ♖a1) 9...♖g1+ 10 ♔h7 ♔e5 and Black's king is close enough to draw.

5...♔e3 6 ♖e8+

After 6 h4 ♖a5+ 7 ♔g4 ♖a4+ 8 ♔g3 ♔e4! 9 ♔g4 ♔e5+ 10 ♔g5 ♔e6 Black's king gets back.

6...♔f3 7 h4 ♖a5+ 8 ♔g6 ♖a6+ 1/2-1/2

Even when the position is winning, it's easy for the attacker to become overconfident and think the win is merely a matter of technique, only to be rudely awakened from his complacency.



Nevednichy – Berkes
Paks 2004

This is a winning position for White; he is two pawns up, his pawns are not blockaded and he doesn't have the drawing combination of ♔d4+♔h4, so what can go wrong? His only real difficulty is that his king is blocking the h-pawn and needs to be freed at some stage.

1...♖g1

Black waits as he cannot do anything constructive.

2 ♖c8

There is nothing wrong with this plan and it should lead to a win. However, it seems more natural to play 2 ♖g5 ♖c1 3 c5 ♖c4 (3...♔f7 4 ♔h6) 4 c6 ♔f7 5 ♖g6, which enables White to edge forward with his c-pawn while keeping his rook in an active position.

2...♖g2 3 c5 ♖g1 4 c6 ♔g7

Black defends cautiously. If he plays his king to the queenside by 4...♔e5 5 ♔h6 ♔d6, White replies 6 h5 and edges forward with his king and h-pawn, eventually freeing his king by playing ♖g8.

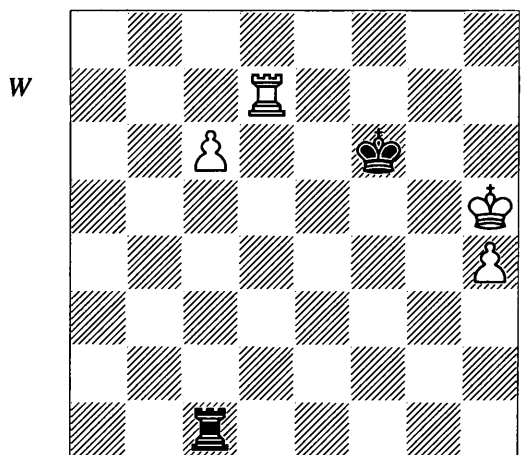
5 ♖c7+

White seizes his chance to extract the rook from its awkward position in front of the pawn. 5 c7? would be a blunder allowing Black to draw by 5...♖c1.

5...♔f6 6 ♖d7?!

It would have been simpler first to advance the h-pawn by 6 ♔h6 ♖g2 7 h5 ♖g1 8 ♔h7, followed by h6, when the rook could move directly to g7. As so often happens, major errors are preceded by inaccuracies. If White had hit upon the correct plan of advancing king and pawn along the h-file, then his moves would have flowed automatically. But once he has headed down the wrong path, and adopted a plan that requires an accurate follow-up, then the chance of a more serious error increases.

6...♖c1 (D)



The toughest defence.

7 c7?

A serious mistake, throwing away the win. Now the white rook is virtually immobilized and cannot shift the black king from its excellent post on f6. 7 ♖d6+! was the winning move, forcing Black's king to decide which way it is going; for example, 7... ♔g7 (7... ♔f5 8 ♕h6 ♕g4 9 ♕g6 ♕xh4 10 ♕f7 and White wins comfortably) 8 ♕g4 ♕f7 (8... ♞c4+ 9 ♕f5 ♞xh4 10 ♕e6) 9 h5 ♕e7 10 ♞g6 ♞g1+ 11 ♕f5 ♞f1+ 12 ♕g5 ♞g1+ 13 ♕h6 ♞h1 14 c7 ♕d7 15 ♞g7+ ♕c8 16 ♕g6 and the h-pawn decides the game.

7...♞c4!

Black seizes on White's mistake and finds the only move to draw. Suddenly both white pieces are lacking mobility.

8 ♞h7

This is an attempt to put Black in zugzwang.

8...♕f5!

Black finds the only drawing move. 8... ♞c1? is wrong because after 9 ♕h6 followed by h5 White improves his position enough to win.

9 ♕h6!?

Setting a small trap.

9...♞c6+!

Black correctly resists the temptation to grab the pawn, since 9... ♞xh4+? 10 ♕g7 ♞c4 11 ♕f8 ♕e6 12 ♕e8 leads to a quick win for White.

10 ♕h5 ♞c4 11 ♞f7+

The only other try for White is to give up the c-pawn, but this is not enough to win.

11... ♕e6 12 ♞f3 ♞xc7 13 ♕g6 ♞c1 14 ♞e3+ ♕d6

If Black's king were cut off by one more file then he would lose, but as it is he can hold the game.

15 h5 ♞g1+ 16 ♕f6 ♞f1+ 17 ♕g7 ♞g1+ 18 ♕h7 ♕d7

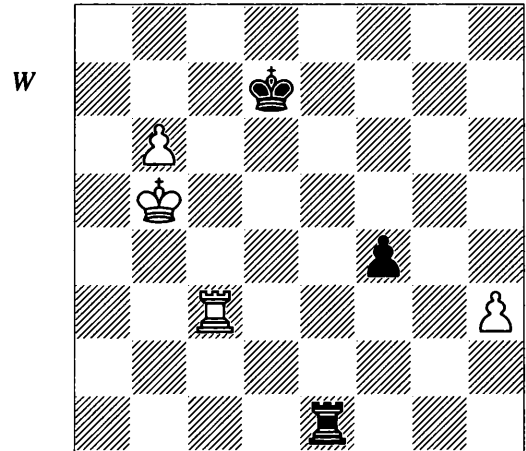
It is important to cover e8 in order to prevent the manoeuvre ♞e8-g8 . After 18... ♞g2 19 h6 ♞g1? (19... ♕d7! still draws) 20 ♞e8! ♕d7 21 ♞g8 White has a standard win.

19 h6 ♞g2 20 ♕h8 ♞g6 21 h7 ♞g1 1/2-1/2

After 22 ♞a3 ♕e7 23 ♞a8 ♕f7 24 ♞g8 ♞a1 Black easily holds the draw.

The next example features another position which one can scarcely believe is not winning.

It seems that almost no position of ♞+2♗ vs ♞ can be taken for granted.



Timofeev – Bocharov
Tomsk 2006

It's not easy to assess positions such as this one. White is a pawn up and his b-pawn is the most advanced pawn on the board, but that does not guarantee an automatic win. White can only win if he selects the correct plan, which is to push the h-pawn. If the h-pawn is exchanged for the f-pawn, then White will have a winning ending of ♞+b♗ vs ♞ in which he can easily reach the Lucena position. In the game White made a serious mistake, which allowed Black to reach a drawn position with ♞+2♗ vs ♞ . Both players are very strong grandmasters, and it is interesting to note that even Timofeev (2657 at the time the game was played) underestimated the drawing possibilities in a two-pawn-ahead position.

1 b7?

This allows Black to sacrifice his f-pawn to get his king in front of the b-pawn. 1 h4! is the winning move because after 1... ♞h1 (1... ♞e3 2 ♞c7+ ♕d6 3 h5 f3 4 h6 f2 5 ♞f7 ♞e2 6 h7 ♞e7 7 ♞xf2 ♞xh7 8 ♞d2+ and 1... ♞b1+ 2 ♕a6 ♞a1+ 3 ♕b7 ♞h1 4 ♕a7 ♞a1+ 5 ♕b8 ♞e1 6 ♞f3 ♞e4 7 h5 are comfortable wins for White) 2 b7 f3 3 ♞xf3 ♕c7 4 ♞f7+ ♕b8 5 ♕c6 White has a much improved version of the game in which Black's rook is poorly placed on h1. Then one line is 5... ♞c1+ 6 ♕d7 ♞h1 7 ♞f4 ♕xb7 8 ♞b4+ ♕a6 9 ♕e6 (Black's king is too far away) 9... ♕a5 10 ♞g4 ♕b5 11 ♕f6 ♕c5 12 ♕g6 ♞d1

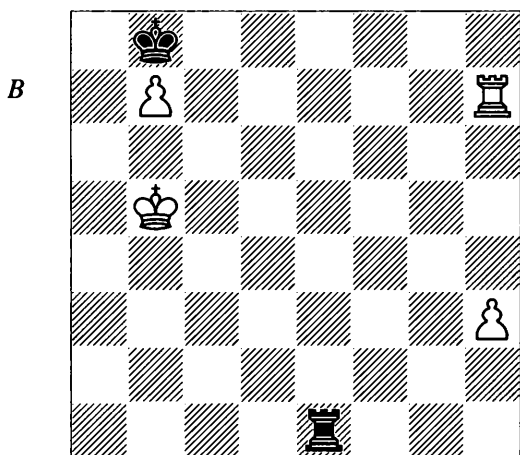
13 h5 ♖d6+ 14 ♔g5 ♗d5+ 15 ♔h4 ♗d6 16 ♗f4 ♔d5 17 ♔g5 ♔e5 18 ♗f8 and White wins.

1...f3! 2 ♗xf3 ♔c7 3 ♗f7+ ♔b8

It might appear surprising that this position is a draw, as White does not have one of the combinations of pawns (f- and h-pawns, or a- and h-pawns) which textbooks list as potential draws. This only reinforces the point I have been making that the drawing possibilities in ♗+2♗ vs ♗ are far more extensive than most textbooks would lead one to believe.

4 ♗h7 (D)

The rook is awkwardly placed in front of the h-pawn, but White doesn't have a choice if he wants to maintain both pawns. After 4 ♔c6 ♗e6+ 5 ♔d7 ♗h6 6 ♗f3 ♔xb7 7 ♗b3+ ♔a6 8 ♔e7 Black is able to hold the game by accurate defence: 8...♔a5! (moving up to displace the rook) 9 ♔f7 ♔a4 10 ♔g7 ♗h4 11 ♗e3 ♔b5! (11...♔b4? allows the pawn to advance by 12 ♔f6! ♗h8 13 ♗e4+ ♔c5 14 h4, after which White has a winning position) 12 ♔g6 ♗h8 13 ♔g5 ♗g8+ and Black draws.



4...♗b1+

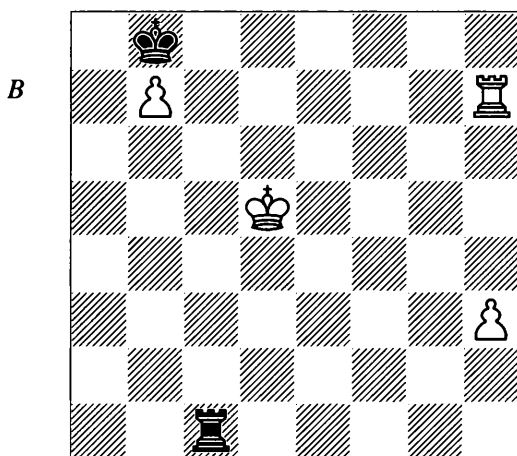
Perhaps Black did not realize that the position is a draw, because he gives a series of pointless checks that only serve to drive White's king to a better position. At this stage Black is not yet in danger of losing, but sooner or later he has to adopt the correct defensive plan. The basic idea is to use the Vančura drawing method of attacking the h-pawn from the side and thus keeping White's rook pinned down to its position in front of the pawn. If White's king approaches

the h-pawn, then Black checks it away. Which file is best for Black's rook? The checking distance from the d-file is inadequate, but why not the b-file, as Black apparently can use all the squares up to b7? The problem is that at some point White can play ♗h8+, forcing ...♔xb7, and then h5. Then Black no longer has the full range of checks on the b-file because b7 is blocked by his king. Thus the c-file is best, because Black has enough checking distance and access to all the squares up to c7 (it turns out that he does not need c8).

5 ♔c5 ♗c1+

This does not yet lose, but it would have been simpler to set up the horizontal attack as soon as possible by 5...♗a1 6 ♔d5 ♗a3 7 h4 ♗a4 8 ♔e5 ♗c4 9 ♔f6 ♗c6+, etc.

6 ♔d5 (D)



6...♗d1+?

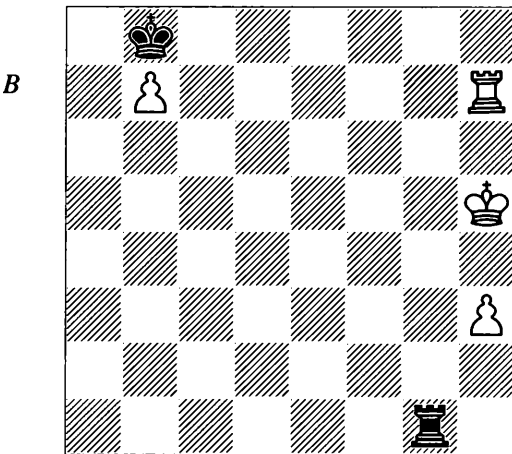
Now the draw disappears, never to return. Black should have continued 6...♗b1 (the only other drawing move is 6...♗a1) 7 h4 (7 ♗d7 ♗h1 forces White back to h7, while 7 ♗e7 ♗h1 8 ♗e3 ♔xb7 9 ♗c3 ♔b6 10 ♔e5 ♔b5 11 ♔f5 ♔b4 12 ♗g3 ♔c5 13 ♔g5 ♔d6 14 h4 ♔e7 leads to a draw) 7...♗b5+ (7...♗b4 is another way to draw) 8 ♔c6 ♗b6+! 9 ♔c5 (9 ♔d5 ♗b5+ 10 ♔e6 ♗b6+ 11 ♔f7 ♗xb7+ 12 ♔g8 ♗b4! 13 h5 ♗b5 14 h6 ♗b6 is the familiar Vančura draw) 9...♗a6! (the only drawing move; 9...♗f6? loses to 10 ♗e7 ♗h6 11 ♗e4 ♔xb7 12 ♔d5 ♔c7 13 ♔e5 ♔d7 14 ♔f5 ♗h8 15 ♔g6 ♗g8+ 16 ♔f7 ♗h8 17 ♔g7 ♗h5 18 ♔g6 followed by h5) 10 ♗e7 ♗a4! (10...♗h6? loses to 11 ♗e4 ♔xb7 12

♔d5, as in the previous bracket) 11 h5 ♖a6! (these moves are quite tough to find) 12 ♖h7 (12 ♖e5 ♔xb7 13 ♔d5 ♔c7 14 ♔e4 ♖h6 15 ♔f4 ♔d6 16 ♖a5 ♔e7 is also a draw) 12... ♖a5+ 13 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 14 ♔e7 ♖a5! 15 ♔f7 ♖c5! (not 15... ♖b5? 16 ♖h8+ ♔xb7 17 h6 and White wins as 17... ♖b6 18 h7 ♖h6 19 ♔g7 is decisive, so Black cannot set up a Vančura draw) and he is just in time to set up his target defensive formation.

7 ♔e5 ♖e1+

It's now too late to reach the drawing set-up: 7... ♖b1 8 ♖d7 ♖h1 9 ♖d3 ♔xb7 10 ♔f5 ♔c6 11 ♔g5 ♖g1+ 12 ♔h5 and the king and pawn march up the board, after which Black's king is just far enough away for White to win by playing his rook round to g8.

8 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 9 ♔g5 ♖g1+ 10 ♔h5 (D)



10... ♖d1

10... ♖c1 would have at least set the trap 11 h4? ♖c5+ 12 ♔g6 ♖c6+ 13 ♔g7 ♖c7+ 14 ♔g8 ♖c4!, with a draw, but 11 ♖f7 wins.

11 h4

Now even this move wins, as Black doesn't have enough checking distance.

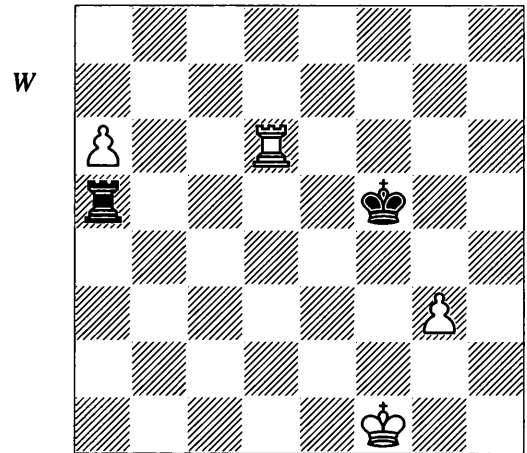
11... ♖d5+ 12 ♔g6 ♖d6+ 13 ♔f5 ♖b6

13... ♖d4 14 ♖h8+ ♔xb7 15 h5 ♖d5+ 16 ♔g6 ♖d6+ 17 ♔f7 ♖d7+ 18 ♔e6 also wins for White.

14 ♖f7 ♖b5+ 15 ♔g6 ♖b6+ 16 ♖f6 ♖b1 17 h5 ♖g1+ 18 ♔f7 1-0

Our final position in this section again shows how tricky ♖+2♔ vs ♖ positions can be. The

half-point is handed back and forth until Black eventually manages to save the game.



Yermolinsky – Miton
Stratton Mountain 2000

In this position White's main problem is that his g-pawn is weak. If Black puts his rook on a3 then it will not only prevent the a-pawn from advancing but also stand ready to take on g3 if White plays his king to the queenside. Surprisingly, everything hangs by a single tempo so it is essential not to waste time. If White fritters away even a single move, Black will have time to take on g3 and still set up a Vančura draw.

1 ♔f2?

Yermolinsky recognized that this was wrong, but incorrectly believed that it was still sufficient for a win. White should have continued 1 ♔e2! ♖a3 2 ♔d2 ♔e5 (2... ♖xg3 3 ♖d8 ♖a3 4 ♖a8 ♔g6 5 ♔c2 transposes) 3 ♖g6 ♔f5 4 ♖h6 ♖xg3 5 ♖h8! ♖a3 (5... ♖g7 6 ♔c3 ♔e6 7 ♔b4 ♔d6 8 ♔b5 is also a win for White) 6 ♖a8 ♔g6 7 ♔c2 ♔g7 8 ♔b2 ♖a5 9 ♔b3 ♖b5+ 10 ♔a4 ♖b6 11 ♔a5 ♖f6 12 ♖b8, after which he frees his rook and wins. In this line a single extra tempo would have enabled Black to draw, as we shall see in the next note.

1... ♖a3 2 ♖h6

Now 2 ♔e2 ♖xg3 3 ♖d8 (3 ♖d5+ ♔e6 4 ♖a5 ♖g8 5 a7 ♖a8 6 ♔d3 ♔d6 7 ♔c4 ♔c6 is also a draw) 3... ♖a3 4 ♖a8 ♔g6 5 ♔d2 ♔g7 6 ♔c2 leads to the second diagram on page 100, in which we showed that 6... ♖h3! is the only move to draw.

The move played is tricky because although White isn't threatening anything, Black is almost in zugzwang.

2...♔g5!

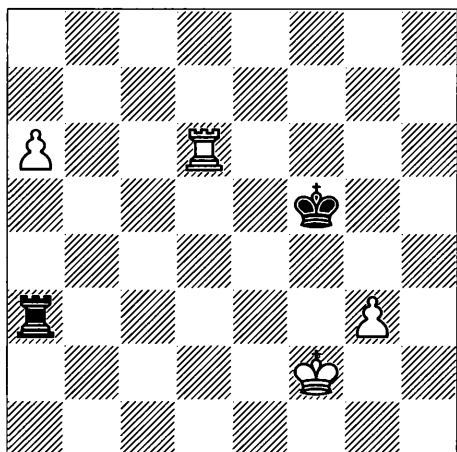
The only move as 2...♔g4? loses to 3 ♖e2 ♔g5 4 ♜b6 ♔f5 5 ♔d2 ♜xg3 6 ♜b8 ♜a3 7 ♜a8, transposing to the analysis of 1 ♔e2!.

3 ♜e6

After 3 ♜d6 Black again has just one move to draw, namely 3...♔f5!.

3...♔f5 4 ♜d6 (D)

B



4...♔g5?

This move gives White a second opportunity to win. White wasn't threatening anything, but 4...♔g5 loses because it takes the black king one square further away. 4...♔g4? also loses after 5 ♖e2 since taking on g3 with either piece results in an immediate exchange of rooks.

The only drawing move was 4...♔e5!, returning to f5 after 5 ♜h6 or 5 ♜b6. Keeping track of which positions are drawing and which are winning is a little confusing, so here is a summary of the situation, in each case assuming that it is White to play. When White's rook is on b6 or c6, then it is a draw if Black's king is on f5 or g4. When White's rook is on d6, then it is a draw if Black's king is on e5 (attacking the rook) or f5; here being on g4 no longer draws as after 1 ♖e2 ♔xg3 White has 2 ♜d3+, which wasn't possible with the rook on b6 or c6. If White's rook is on e6, then it is a draw if Black's king is on f5, g5 or g4. In this case g4 and g5 draw because after 1 ♖e2 Black gains a tempo by attacking the rook with 1...♔f5!.

Finally, if White's rook is on h6 then it is a draw if Black's king is on g5 (attacking the rook) or f5. We can see that Black's king is best posted on f5, which always draws, but for every white rook position there is at least one other drawing square for the king, so Black can never be forced into zugzwang.

5 ♜c6?

White delays and never again has a winning position. He could have won by 5 ♖e2! ♜xg3 (5...♔g4 is even worse because after 6 ♔d2 Black cannot take on g3) 6 ♜d5+! (Yermolinsky gave 6 ♜d8? as the winning move, but it actually lets Black escape by 6...♜a3! 7 ♜a8 ♔f6 8 ♔d2 ♔g7!, transposing to the analysis of 2 ♖e2) 6...♔f6 7 ♜a5 ♜g8 8 a7 ♜a8 9 ♔d3 ♖e6 10 ♔c4 ♔d6 11 ♔b5 ♔c7 12 ♔a6 and Black is helpless.

5...♔f5 6 ♜b6 ♔g4!

From the above discussion, we know that this is Black's only possibility.

7 ♖e2

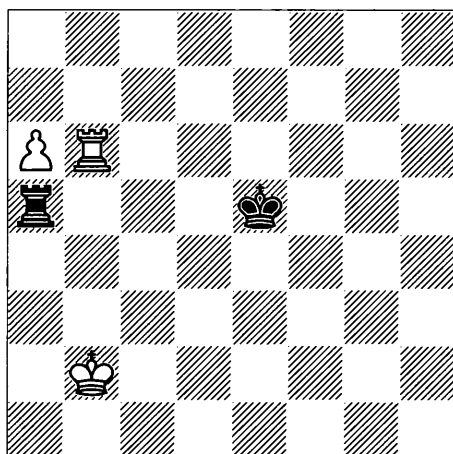
At last White makes his move, but in this situation Black can defend.

7...♔xg3 8 ♔d2

8 ♜f6 ♔g4 9 ♔d2 ♔g5 10 ♜b6 ♔f5 11 ♔c2 ♔e5 transposes to the game.

8...♔f4 9 ♔c2 ♔e5 10 ♔b2 ♜a5 (D)

W



11 ♜h6

11 ♔b3 ♔d5 12 ♔b4 ♜a1 is also a draw.

11...♔d4!

11...♜a4? loses to 12 ♔b3 ♜a1 13 ♔c4, advancing the white king while keeping Black's king at arm's length.

12 ♖h4+ ♔d3!

Not 12...♔e3? 13 ♖h3+ ♔d4 14 ♖a3 ♖b5+ 15 ♔a2 ♖b8 16 ♖a5!, when White wins.

13 ♖h3+ ♔c4! 1/2-1/2

The only move to draw, but perfectly adequate. After 14 ♖a3 ♖b5+ 15 ♔a2 ♖b8 16 ♖a5 ♔b4 Black is just in time to dislodge the rook.

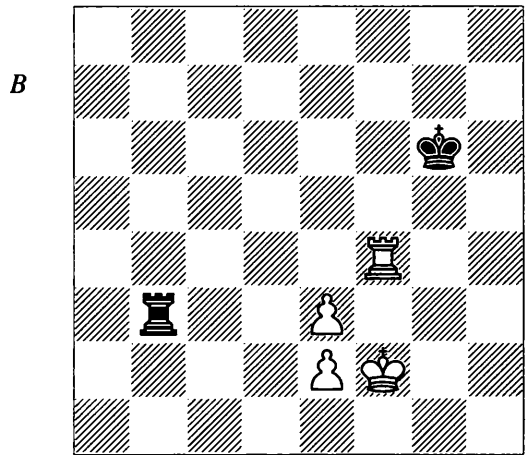
Summary:

- It's not only the traditional awkward combinations of disconnected pawns (f- and h-, a- and h-) which give rise to drawing possibilities in ♖+2♙ vs ♖. Drawing possibilities can arise with virtually any combination of pawns if the attacker's pieces are badly placed, or one of the pawns is weak.
- One typical drawing situation arises when the attacker's rook is obliged to defend a pawn that is under threat from the enemy king. This leaves the attacker's king and remaining pawn to do battle with the enemy rook, but it may be impossible to win if there are too many harassing checks.
- A second drawing situation occurs when the attacker's rook is stuck in front of one pawn and is obliged to defend the other one. The defender may then be able to draw by keeping both pawns under threat and checking away the enemy king if it tries to support the pawns.
- In many cases the result depends on whether one of the pawns can be sacrificed to win with the other. Therefore a good knowledge of ♖+♙ vs ♖ positions is essential when playing this type of ending.

8.6.4 Doubled Pawns

The endgame of rook and doubled pawn vs rook is not covered in any detail in chess literature, with most textbooks commenting only that it is generally drawn if the defender can get his king in front of the pawns. But in practical examples the defender's king is often cut off, even if only by a very short distance. What happens then? The results are a little surprising. The diagram position below is drawn, and it turns out that the key factor is whether the defender's king is cut off on the long or short side

of the pawns. The short side is more favourable for the defender as it leaves the long side free for sideways rook checks. If the diagram position is shifted one file to the left, so that the defender's king is now on the long side of the pawns, then it is a win. A similar result holds for bishop's pawns. With knight's pawns, the king is either in front of the pawns (draw) or cut off on the long side (win). With rook's pawns, it's always a draw. If the defender's king is cut off by more than one file, then he generally loses with all pawns except rook's pawns.



Belivsky – Hodgson
Čačak 1996

Here Black's king is cut off by White's rook, but only by one file. From the above discussion we can conclude that the position should be a draw because Black's rook can often defend by checking from the a-file. However, unless Black finds the correct plan it is easy to go wrong.

1...♔g5 2 ♔f3 ♖a3 3 ♖f8 ♖a1

Threatening a skewer.

4 ♔e4

It isn't possible for White to make progress with his king on the f-file because Black either pins the e3-pawn or threatens a skewer, so Belivsky decides to bring his king into the open.

4...♖a4+ 5 ♔d5 ♖a5+ 6 ♔d4 ♖a4+ 7 ♔c5

In order to stop the checks, the king must move towards the enemy rook, but this gives Black the opportunity to force a clear draw.

7...♖a5+

7...♖e4! 8 ♖f3 ♖e8 is simpler, since as soon as the king approaches the e3-pawn, Black just

checks it away; for example, 9 ♔d4 ♖d8+ 10 ♕e5 ♜e8+ 11 ♔d6 ♖g6 12 ♔d7 ♜e4 13 ♔d6 ♜e8 and White cannot make progress.

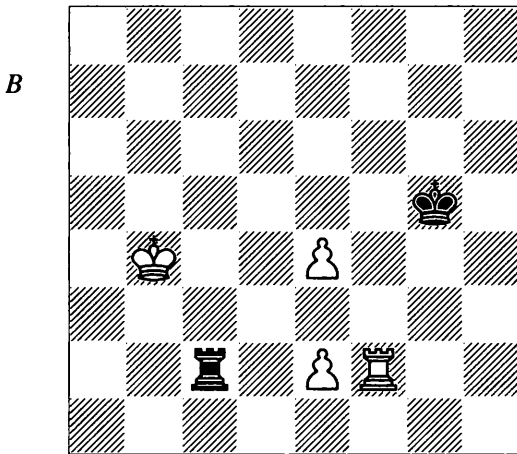
8 ♖b4 ♜a2

8...♜e5 9 ♖f3 ♜e8 is essentially the same as the previous note.

9 ♖f2 ♜c2

This plan is less reliable than the frontal attack on the e-pawn because now White can advance the e3-pawn. This will put Black in a critical position in which he must find the correct plan or lose.

10 e4 (D)



10...♔g4?

Now White has a winning position. 10...♜c8! would still have drawn: 11 ♖f5+ ♔g4 12 e3 (12 ♜c5?! ♜e8 13 e5 ♔f4 is simple) 12...♜e8 (12...♜c7 13 ♖f4+ ♔g5 14 ♖f8 ♜e7 15 ♖f5+ ♔g6 16 ♖f4 ♜c7 is another good plan; White's king is kept cut off and he cannot make progress because e5 can always be met by ...♜e7) 13 ♖f4+ ♔g5 14 ♔c5 ♜e7 15 ♔d6 ♜a7 (Black saves the day by giving checks from the a-file) 16 e5 ♜a6+ 17 ♔d5 (17 ♔c7 ♜e6 18 ♜e4 ♔f5 19 ♔d7 ♜xe5 is also drawn) 17...♜a5+ 18 ♔e4 ♜a4+ 19 ♔f3 ♜a5 20 ♜e4 ♔f5 21 e6 ♜a8 22 e7 ♜e8 and it is White to play in a straightforward position of reciprocal zugzwang.

11 e5?

White misses it. The neat tactical idea 11 ♖g2+! ♔h3 (11...♔f4 loses the rook to 12 e3+) 12 ♖b3! ♜c8 (12...♜d2 13 ♔c3 ♜a2 14 ♖g8 ♜xe2 15 ♔d4 and White wins) 13 ♖g7 leads to a winning position as Black's king is now cut

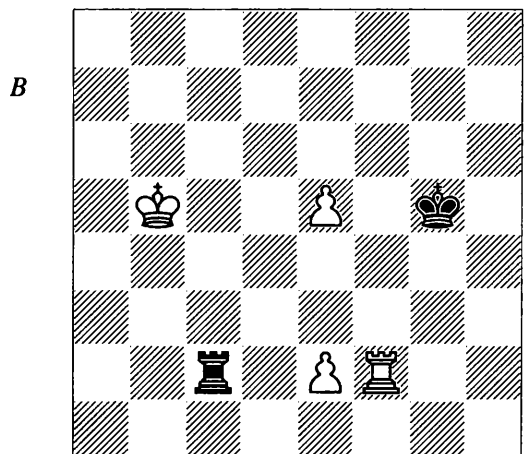
off by two files: 13...♔h4 14 ♖b4 ♔h5 15 e3 ♔h6 16 ♖g2 ♔h5 (16...♜e8 17 ♔c4 ♜xe4+ 18 ♔d3 ♜e8 19 e4 leads to a win as in the main line) 17 e5! ♜e8 (sooner or later the advancing e-pawns will force Black to abandon the cut-off) 18 ♔c4 ♜xe5 19 ♔d4 ♜e8 20 e4 (this is a theoretical win because White can create mating threats against the sidelined black king) 20...♜d8+ 21 ♔e3 ♜e8 22 ♖g1 (placing Black in zugzwang) 22...♔h6 (22...♔h4 23 e5! wins for White because 23...♜xe5+ 24 ♔f4 costs Black his rook) 23 ♔d4 ♜d8+ 24 ♔c5 ♜e8 25 ♔d5 ♜d8+ 26 ♔e6 ♜e8+ 27 ♔f6! and the pawn advances.

11...♔g5?

Handing White a second winning chance. Black could have held the game by 11...♜c8! 12 e4 ♔g5! (12...♜e8? loses to 13 ♖f5 ♜c8 14 e6 ♜e8 15 ♖f6 ♔g5 16 e5) 13 ♖f5+ (or 13 e6 ♜e8 14 ♔c5 ♜xe6 15 ♔d5 ♜a6 16 e5 ♜a5+ and Black is saved by the sideways checks) 13...♔g6 14 ♖b5 ♜c7 15 ♖f1 ♔g5 16 ♖f6 ♜c8 and even though the pawns are now further up the board, the c-file cut-off plan still saves the game.

12 ♖b5? (D)

White again misses the chance to force the enemy king to the h-file and win by 12 ♖g2+ ♔h5 (any move to the f-file loses the rook, but with the king on the h-file White wins easily in any case) 13 ♖b5 ♜c8 14 e4 ♜e8 15 ♔c5 ♜xe5+ 16 ♔d4 followed by e5.



12...♔g6?!

This doesn't lose, but 12...♜c8! is simpler; for example, 13 e4 ♜e8 (13...♔g6 14 ♖f6+

♙g5 15 ♖f5+ ♙g6 is also a draw) 14 ♖f5+ ♙g6 15 ♙c6 ♖a8!, preparing to give the drawing sideways checks.

13 e6 ♖c8 14 ♖f3

The situation is now critical, as White threatens to win by putting his rook on e3, supporting the e6-pawn. There is only one move to draw.

14...♙g7?

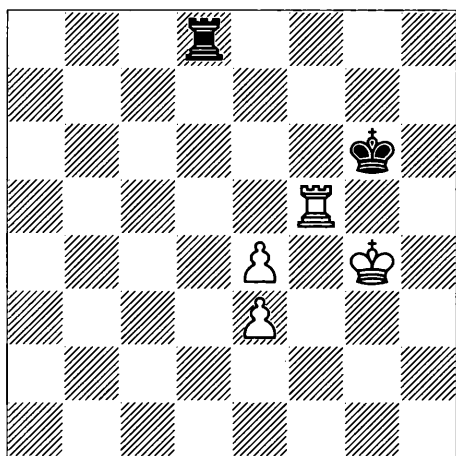
The alternatives are:

1) 14...♖e8? also loses after 15 ♖e3 ♙f5 16 ♙c5! (but not 16 e7? ♙f4 17 ♖f3+, when 17...♙e5? loses to 18 ♙c6, but 17...♙e4! 18 ♖f7 ♙d5 draws) 16...♙f4 (16...♖xe6 17 ♖xe6 ♙xe6 18 ♙d4 and White wins) 17 ♖f3+ ♙e5 18 e7 ♖c8+ 19 ♙b6 and White wins after 19...♖e8 20 ♙c6 or 19...♙d6 20 ♖f8.

2) 14...♙g5! is the only move to draw, preparing to dislodge the rook if it moves to e3: 15 e4 (15 ♙b6 ♖e8 16 ♖e3 ♙f4 and 15 ♖e3 ♙f4 are also drawn) 15...♖e8 16 ♙c5 ♖xe6 17 ♙d5 ♖a6 and the sideways checks lead to a draw.

After the move played, Black resigned (1-0) since 15 e7 ♖e8 16 ♖e3 ♙f7 17 ♙c6 ♖xe7 18 ♖xe7+ ♙xe7 19 ♙d5 wins for White.

The following position is a little more difficult for the defender as the pawns are further advanced, but it should still be a draw.



G. Ginsburg – Timoshenko
Ukrainian Ch, Simferopol 1992

1...♖d1!

Black has to take action, because White threatens to win by playing e5. Transferring his rook to White's first rank means that it is

actively placed and in particular prevents the immediate e5.

2 ♖f4

White secures his rook, again threatening e5.

2...♖g1+ 3 ♙f3 ♖a1?!

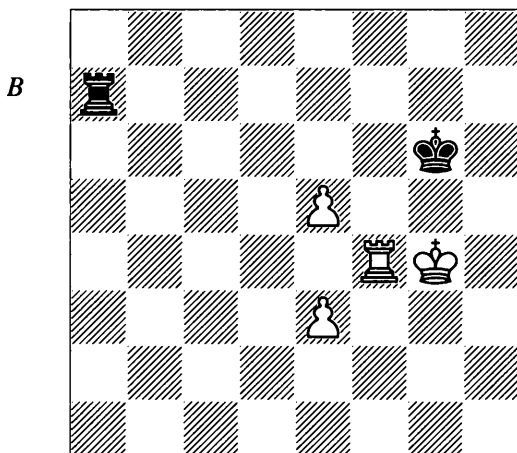
Timoshenko incorrectly believed that this is the losing move, but it is true that allowing White to play e5 free of charge makes Black's defence much more difficult. 3...♖f1+! 4 ♙e2 ♖a1 is a much safer defence, since 5 e5 is once again prevented, this time due to 5...♖a5. If instead 5 ♙d3, then Black just checks from the side: 5...♖a3+ 6 ♙d4 ♖a4+ 7 ♙c5 ♖a5+ 8 ♙c6 ♖a6+ 9 ♙b5 ♖a8 10 e5 ♖e8 with a draw. Black's rook is well placed on a1, allowing checks from both the eighth rank and along the a-file.

4 e5! ♖a7?

This is the losing move, but 4...♖a5? is also bad due to 5 e6 ♖a7 (5...♖e5 6 ♖e4) 6 ♙g4 ♖e7 7 ♖e4 ♙f6 8 ♙f4 and Black must give way.

4...♖f1+ 5 ♙e4 ♖a1 6 e6 is given as winning for White by Timoshenko, but Black draws by 6...♖a6 7 ♙e5 ♖a5+ 8 ♙d6 ♖a6+ and there is no protection from the checks along the a-file. 4...♙g5 is another drawing move and after 5 e6 ♖a8! (5...♖a7? was the only move considered by Timoshenko, but then White wins by 6 ♙e4! ♙g6 7 ♖f8! ♖a4+ 8 ♙e5 ♖a5+ 9 ♙f4 ♖a4+ 10 e4) 6 ♙e4 ♙g6! 7 ♖f7 ♖a6 8 ♙e5 ♖a5+ 9 ♙f4 ♖a6 White cannot make progress.

5 ♙g4 (D)



Now White has a winning position, and although in the subsequent play he makes some

time-wasting inaccuracies, he never lets the win slip.

5...♖a5

5...♖a3 is the most resilient defence, when the win still presents quite a technical challenge: 6 ♖f6+ ♔g7 7 e4 ♖a8 8 ♕f5 ♖h8 9 ♕e6 ♖e8+ 10 ♕d6 ♖a8 11 ♕e7 ♖a7+ 12 ♕e6 ♖a6+ 13 ♕f5 ♖a1 14 e6! ♖a5+ (14...♖f1+ 15 ♕e5 ♖xf6 16 e7 is decisive) 15 e5 ♖a7 16 ♕f4! (this waiting move puts Black in zugzwang and forces his rook to abandon its optimum position on the a-file; 16 ♕e4?! ♖a4+ is less accurate and loses time because for the moment the king cannot march to the queenside) 16...♖b7 (after 16...♖a4+ 17 ♕g5 ♖a7 18 ♖f1 ♖e7 19 ♕f5 White wins more easily) 17 ♕e4 ♖a7 (17...♖b4+ 18 ♕d5 ♖b5+ 19 ♕d6 ♖b6+ 20 ♕d7 ♖b7+ 21 ♕c6 is quicker) 18 ♖f5 (defending the e5-pawn in preparation for a king march to the queenside) 18...♖a4+ 19 ♕d5 ♖a5+ 20 ♕d6 ♖a6+ 21 ♕d7 ♖a7+ 22 ♕c8 ♖a8+ 23 ♕c7 ♖a7+ 24 ♕b8 ♖e7 25 ♖f6 ♕g8 26 ♕c8 ♖a7 27 ♕d8 ♖a8+ 28 ♕c7 ♖a7+ 29 ♕c6 ♖a6+ 30 ♕b7 ♖a5 31 e7 and White wins.

6 ♖f6+ ♔g7 7 ♕f5 ♖a1

7...♖a7 8 e4 ♖a1 9 e6! transposes to the previous note.

8 ♖b6?!

This is inaccurate, delaying the win by nine moves. The best continuation is 8 e4! ♖a2 9 e6, as in the note to Black's fifth move. Curiously, in his notes Timoshenko considers 8 ♖c6? more accurate, but this move throws away the win after 8...♕f7! (Timoshenko didn't mention this move, by which Black takes his chance to move his king in front of the pawns) 9 ♖c7+ ♕e8 10 ♕f6 ♖h1! and with White's rook so close to the enemy king, he cannot win by checking on the eighth rank and then playing e6+.

8...♖h1

Now 8...♕f7 loses much more quickly after 9 ♖b7+ ♕e8 10 ♕f6 since 10...♖h1 fails to 11 ♖b8+ ♕d7 12 e6+.

9 ♖f6!

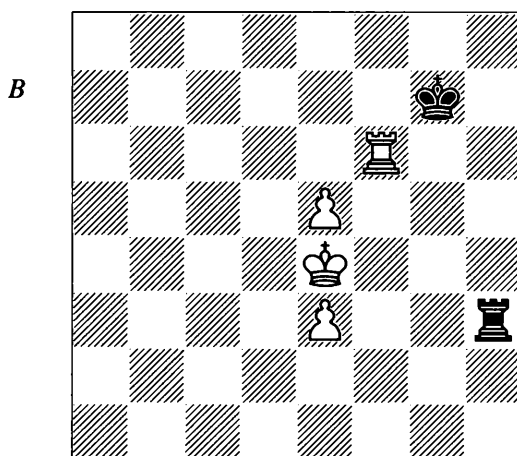
White realizes he has made a mistake and returns to f6, which is the only move to win. 9 ♖b7+? ♕f8 10 ♕e6 ♖h6+ only leads to a draw.

9...♖h3

This is now the toughest defence. In his *Informator 56* notes, Timoshenko remarks that 9...♖a1 is met by 10 ♖c6? but, as we know, this move throws away the win and should be replaced by 10 e4!.

10 ♕e4 (D)

10 e4? is a mistake, because after 10...♖h4! a position of reciprocal zugzwang arises with White to move. 11 e6 fails to 11...♖h5+, while if the rook moves along the rank, Black's king can reach the e-file.



10...♖h1?!

10...♖h8 was a better defence; then 11 ♕d5 ♖a8 12 ♕e6! ♖e8+ 13 ♕d6 ♖a8 (13...♖d8+ 14 ♕e7 ♖d5 15 ♕e6 ♖d8 16 ♖f7+ ♕g6 17 ♖d7 ♖e8+ 18 ♕d6 also wins for White) 14 ♕e7 ♖a7+ 15 ♕e6 ♖a6+ 16 ♕f5 ♖a1 17 e4 wins as in the note to Black's fifth move, but only after a considerable loss of time by White.

11 ♖f5!

The most accurate. With the e5-pawn defended, White is free to manoeuvre with his king.

11...♖h6 12 ♕d5 ♖h3 13 e4

In another slip, Timoshenko gives 13 e6? ♖xe3 14 ♖e5 as an alternative win, but Black can then draw by 14...♖a3! since after 15 e7 ♖a5+ 16 ♕e6 ♖xe5+ 17 ♕xe5 ♕f7 18 ♕d6 ♕e8 White can only deliver stalemate.

13...♖a3 14 e6

Now this wins.

14...♖a5+ 15 ♕d6 ♖a6+ 16 ♕e5 ♖a5+ 17 ♕f4 ♖a8 18 ♕g5 ♖b8 19 e7 ♖e8 20 ♖e5 ♕f7 21 ♕f5 1-0

Summary:

- Positions with ♖ + doubled pawns vs ♜ are generally drawn if the defender's king is in front of the pawns, but there are winning chances if the king is cut off along a file.
- If it is cut off by one file then, with a bishop's pawn or centre pawn, the defender usually draws if his king is on the short side but loses otherwise. The correct defensive method is either to give sideways checks from the long side or to attack the pawns from the front, depending on the position.
- If the king is cut off by more than one file, then the attacker almost always wins, except in the case of rook's pawns.

8.7 Rook and Pawn vs Rook and Pawn

This ending is of great practical importance, but coverage in standard endgame textbooks is often sketchy. To remedy this, we shall examine ♖+♙ vs ♜+♙ in considerable detail. Many of the principles and ideas found in rook endings with more pawns first appear here, and the limited material means that the concepts are often revealed with particular clarity. Readers should note that we have already considered several positions with this material, especially in Section 8.4.1 on the fifth-rank cut-off.

8.7.1 The Defender's Pawn Gets in the Way

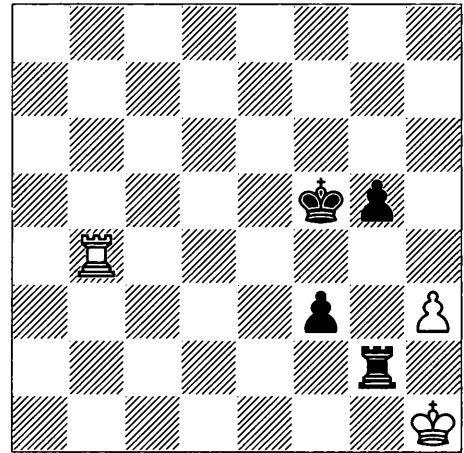
The defender doesn't always benefit from his pawn. If the attacker has a far-advanced passed pawn, it's not unusual for the defender's pawn actually to prove a handicap, for example by blocking vital checks.

The position in the following diagram hardly looks like a win for Black because his king is cut off by White's rook. However, by sacrificing his g-pawn, Black manages to create a route for his king to advance.

1...g4! 2 hxg4+

There is nothing better. After 2 ♖xg4 ♜xg4 3 hxg4+ ♔xg4 4 ♔h2 ♔f4 or 2 ♜b5+ ♔f4 3 ♜b4+ ♔e3 4 ♜b3+ (Black wins after 4 hxg4

B



WI. Schmidt – Plachetka
Dečín 1976

♜e2 5 ♜b3+ ♔f4 followed by ...♔g3) 4...♔f2 5 hxg4 ♔g3 6 ♜d3 ♜a2 7 ♜d1 ♜h2+ Black wins more easily.

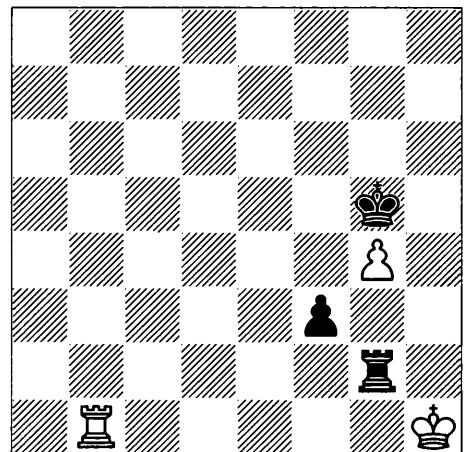
2...♔g5!

Not 2...♜xg4? 3 ♜b3 ♔f4 4 ♔h2 ♜g2+ 5 ♔h3, with a draw. Black must not remove White's pawn, which only gets in his way.

3 ♜b1 (D)

Or 3 ♜b3 ♔f4 4 ♜b1 ♜d2 5 g5 ♔g3 6 ♜g1+ ♔f2 7 ♔h2 ♜d8 8 ♜g3 ♜h8+ 9 ♜h3 ♜xh3+ 10 ♔xh3 ♔e3 and Black promotes with check.

B



After the move played, the position would be a draw without White's pawn, as he could meet ...♔f4 by ♜b8, preparing to check from behind. This plan no longer works with the pawn on g4, as Black's king is safe from checks on g3.

3...♔h4?

Black undoes all his good work with this error. He could have won most easily by 3...♖d2! 4 ♜g1 (4 ♖g1 ♖f4 5 ♜a1 ♖g3 6 ♜c1 ♜g2+ 7 ♖f1 ♜h2 8 ♖g1 f2+ decides the game) 4...♖f4 5 g5 f2 6 ♜a1 ♖f3 7 g6 ♜e2 8 g7 ♜e1+ 9 ♖h2 f1♙ 10 ♜a3+ ♖f4 and after the checks run out White will be mated. 3...♖f4 also wins, but is more complicated.

4 ♜f1!

White takes his chance and now defends accurately until the end of the game.

4...♜g3

4...♖g3 is critical, but a sequence of accurate moves allows White to draw using a stalemate trick: 5 ♜g1! ♖f2 6 ♜a1 ♜xg4 7 ♜a2+ ♖g3 8 ♖g1 ♜b4 9 ♜g2+! and White is saved.

5 g5

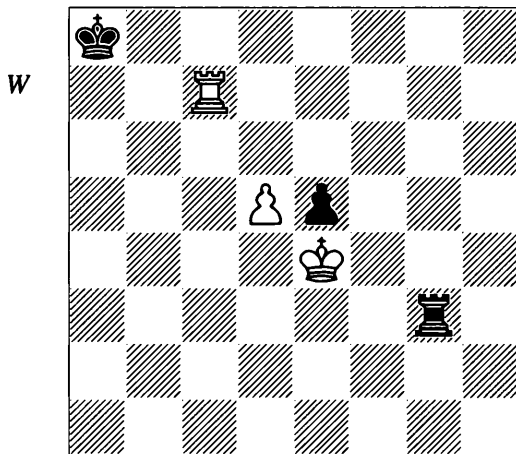
This is simplest, although there are other drawing moves.

5...♖xg5 6 ♜a1 ♖g4 7 ♜a4+ ♖g5

7...♖h3 is met by 8 ♜f4.

8 ♜a5+ ♖h4 9 ♜f5 ♜h3+ 10 ♖g1 ♖g3 11 ♜f8 ♜h4 12 ♜g8+ 1/2-1/2

As in the previous example, when the defender's pawn is an obstruction, it is necessary for the attacker to avoid taking it.



Wilms – Tietze
European corr. Ch 1986

Material is equal, but White clearly has winning chances. His pieces are actively placed, and his passed d-pawn is a serious threat. Black's drawing prospects mainly lie in reaching a theoretical drawing position in which his rook gives

checks from the h-file. White is indeed winning but, curiously, the position would be a draw without the black pawn.

1 d6

This obvious move is the only one to win.

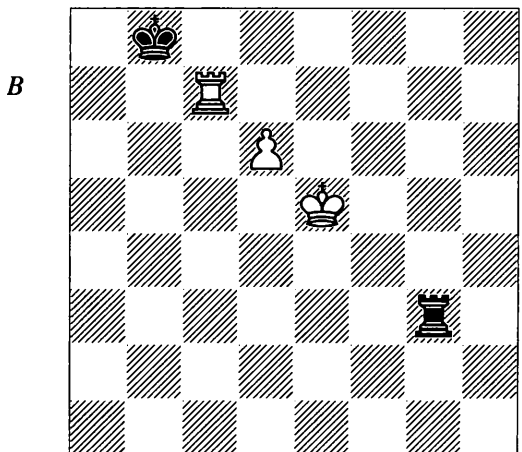
1...♖b8

Black hastens to improve his king position and forces White to make a crucial decision. He has several moves to win, but the one he chose wasn't one of them.

2 ♖xe5?

A serious mistake which allows Black to establish a drawing position of the type mentioned above. 2 ♖d5! is the simplest win. If Black did not have his pawn, he would now be able to draw with ...♜h3, followed by sideways checks, but the pawn interferes with this plan for the surprising reason that it prevents a crucial stalemate defence. The main line runs 2...e4 (the drawing line without the pawn is 2...♜h3 3 ♖c6 ♜c3+ 4 ♖d7 ♜h3 5 ♜c1 ♜h7+ 6 ♖c6 ♖c8, but with the pawn 7 ♜g1 now wins for White because Black doesn't have the stalemate defence 7...♜c7+) 3 ♖c6 ♜b3 (3...♜c3+ 4 ♖d7 ♜b3 5 ♜c4 e3 6 ♖e7 e2 7 ♜e4 ♜h3 8 ♜xe2 ♜h7+ 9 ♖d8 ♜h8+ 10 ♖d7 ♜h7+ 11 ♖c6 ♜h6 12 ♜e8+ ♖a7 13 ♖c7 also wins for White) 4 ♜h7 ♜c3+ 5 ♖d7 e3 (5...♖b7 6 ♖e6+ ♖b6 7 d7 ♜d3 and now 8 ♜h1! e3 9 ♖e7 ♖c5 10 ♜c1+ ♖b4 11 d8♙ ♜xd8 12 ♖xd8 wins, but not 8 ♜h8? e3 with a draw) 6 ♜h4 ♜d3 7 ♜b4+ ♖a7 8 ♖e7 e2 9 ♜e4 ♖b7 10 ♜xe2 ♜h3 11 d7 ♜h7+ 12 ♖d6 ♜h6+ 13 ♜e6 and White wins.

We now return to 2 ♖xe5? (D):



2...♖g1?

A rather basic error since it is the checks from the side that are important, not the checks from behind. Therefore Black should have taken the chance to gain the maximum sideways checking distance by 2...♜h3!, when White cannot win: 3 ♜c1 (3 ♖d5 ♜h1, 3 ♜e7 ♖c8 and 3 ♖e6 ♜h6+ 4 ♖d7 ♜h1 also draw) 3...♜h5+ 4 ♖e6 ♜h6+ 5 ♖e7 ♜h7+ 6 ♖d8 ♜h8+ 7 ♖d7 ♜h7+ 8 ♖c6 ♖c8! 9 ♜g1 ♜c7+ and Black is saved by the stalemate defence.

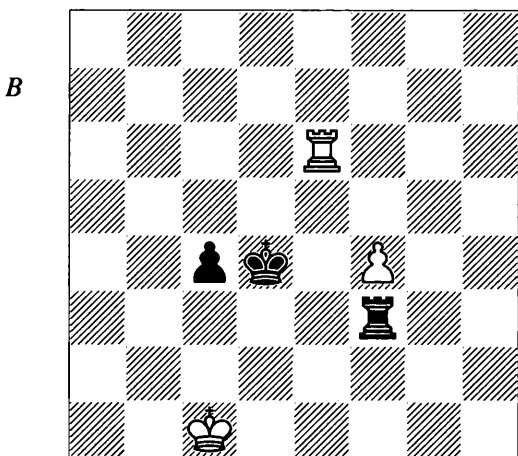
3 ♜c2 ♜h1?!

Black makes it easy for White because now he can advance his pawn straight away. 3...♜g7 would have put up more of a fight, since after 4 ♖e6! ♜g6+ 5 ♖e7 ♜g7+ 6 ♖e8 ♜g8+ 7 ♖f7 ♜h8 8 ♖d7 ♖b7 9 ♜h2! ♜xh2 (9...♜a8 10 ♜d2 ♖c7 11 ♖e7 and White wins) 10 ♖d8♙ White still has to win ♙ vs ♜.

4 ♖d7 ♜h8 5 ♖d6 ♜h6+ 6 ♖d5 ♜h5+ 7 ♖c6 ♜h6+ 8 ♖b5 1-0

After 8...♜h5+ 9 ♖b6 ♜h6+ 10 ♜c6 ♜h8 11 ♜e6 it's all over.

The following example is a little more difficult, since it isn't immediately obvious why White's pawn gets in the way.



Mi. Tseitlin – Malevinsky
USSR 1983

This is an interesting ending because it was misplayed in the game and later misanalysed by Tseitlin in *Informator 36*. The position is drawn without the f4-pawn, but although it's still a draw with the pawn, White's task is more

difficult because he is unable to set up a third-rank defence and so must move his king to the 'short side' when Black advances his king. Then White will rely on long-range checks from the kingside to harass the black king. However, this is where the f4-pawn proves a handicap: there is no check along the fourth rank, so Black has an extra possibility to escape the checks compared to the standard position without the f-pawn.

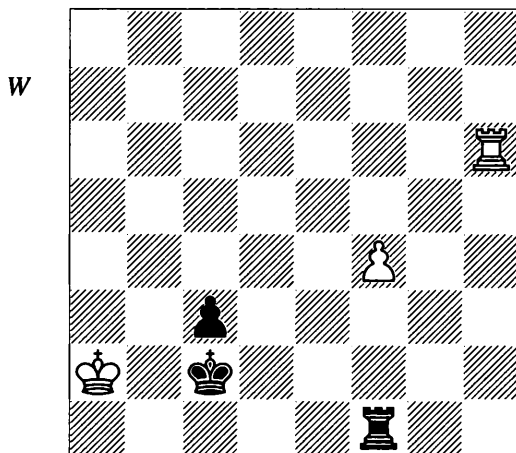
1...♖d3

White draws in a similar way after 1...♖c3; for example, 2 ♖b1 (2 ♖d1? ♜xf4 is lost for White as his king is now stuck on the long side, while after 2 ♜e1? ♖b3 Black wins by ...c3 and ...♜f2-a2) 2...♜f1+ 3 ♖a2 ♖c2 (3...♖d3 4 ♜d6+ ♖c2 is the same) 4 ♜h6, transposing to the game. If 1...♜xf4, then 2 ♜h6 followed by ♜h3 is the usual third-rank defence.

2 ♜d6+

According to Tseitlin this move loses, but White can still draw. There are other satisfactory moves; for example, 2 ♜c6 ♜f1+ 3 ♖b2 ♜f2+ 4 ♖b1 ♖c3 5 ♜h6 with the usual sideways draw.

2...♖c3 3 ♖b1 ♜f1+ 4 ♖a2 ♖c2 5 ♜h6! c3 (D)

**6 f5?**

Now White loses. In the position without the f-pawn, White has two drawing moves, ♜h2+ and ♜h3, but here only one of them draws:

1) 6 ♜h2+? ♖d3 7 ♜h3+ ♖c4 and Black wins as the f-pawn blocks further checks.

2) 6 ♜h3! (the only drawing move) 6...♖d2 (or 6...♜f2 7 ♖c1+ 8 ♖b3 c2 9 ♜h1+ ♖d2 10

♔b2) 7 ♔b3! ♚b1+ 8 ♔c4! c2 9 ♚h2+ and White is safe.

6...♔d1!

Black finds the only move to win. 6...♔c1? blocks the c-pawn and allows White to escape after 7 f6 c2 8 f7 ♚xf7 9 ♚h1+, when the checks drive the king away.

7 ♚d6+

Black also wins after 7 ♔b3 c2 8 ♚d6+ ♔c1 9 ♚c6 ♚f3+ 10 ♔a2 ♚xf5.

7...♔c1

Now that the white rook has been deflected to the d-file, there are no sideways checks.

8 f6 c2 9 ♔a1

9 ♔a3 ♔b1 10 ♚b6+ ♔a1 and 9 f7 ♚xf7 are also winning for Black.

9...♚d1 0-1

Summary:

- In positions of ♚+♔ vs ♚+♔, it occasionally happens that the defender's pawn is a handicap and turns a drawn position into a loss. This can occur because the pawn gets in the way of vital checks or because it interferes with a possible stalemate defence. In these cases, the attacker must sometimes spurn the capture of the enemy pawn in order to win.

8.7.2 Pawns on the Same File

When the pawns are on the same file, with neither passed, there may be winning chances if the defender's king is far away from the pawns or is cut off from them. In general, the further away the defending king is, the better for the attacker, but there may be winning chances even when the king is cut off by just one file.

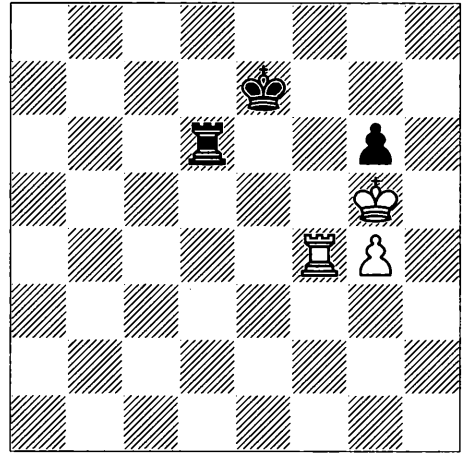
The instructive position in the following diagram is not easy to assess since White has the dangerous plan of ♔h6, g5, ♔g7 and ♚f6, picking up the g6-pawn and reaching a winning ending of ♚+♔ vs ♚. With the correct defence Black can draw, but the saving line is not easy to find.

1 ♔h6 ♚f6!

The only drawing move. Black must take some action to disturb White, or else the above-mentioned plan will be decisive.

2 ♚a4 g5+?

W



Taimanov – Estevez
Brno 1975

Black panics and gives away his pawn under unfavourable circumstances. Mineev's excellent analysis in *Informator 20* showed how Black could have drawn: 2...♔f7! (the only move, since White was threatening to win by either 3 g5 or 3 ♔g7) 3 ♔h7 (3 g5 ♚f1 4 ♚a7+ ♔g8! 5 ♔xg6 ♚f8! is a draw, since with ♚+g♔ vs ♚, Black can even defend by keeping his rook on the first rank; 3 ♚a7+ ♔g8! 4 ♚g7+ ♔h8 5 ♚xg6 ♚f8 is similar, so White plays to prevent ...♔g8) 3...♚f1 4 ♚a7+ ♔f6 5 ♚a6+ and now:

1) 5...♔g5? loses to 6 ♚xg6+ ♔h4 7 g5! (the only slip in Mineev's analysis was to give 7 ♔h6? as winning here, but this allows Black to draw by 7...♚h1 8 g5 ♔g4+ 9 ♔g7 ♚a1) 7...♔h5 8 ♚f6! followed by g6 and White wins.

2) 5...♔f7! 6 ♚xg6 ♚h1+! 7 ♚h6 ♚g1 (the only drawing move, since White wins if his pawn reaches g5) 8 ♚h4 ♚g2 and White cannot make progress.

3 ♔xg5

White wins because Black's king cannot reach g8.

3...♚f1

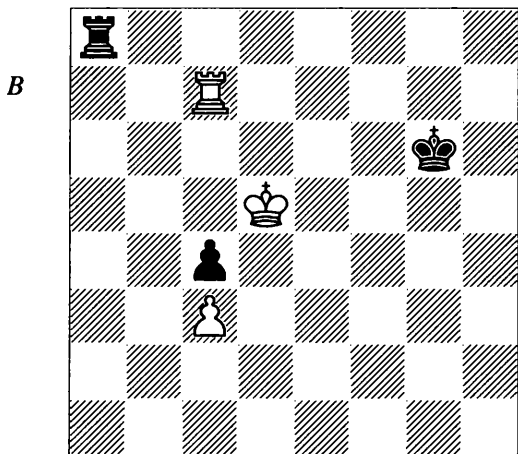
White wins after 3...♚b6 4 ♚f4! followed by ♔h5 and g5.

4 ♚a7+ ♔f8 5 ♔g6 ♚f2

5...♚b1 6 g5 ♚b6+ 7 ♔h7 and 5...♔g8 6 ♚a8+ ♚f8 7 ♚xf8+ ♔xf8 8 ♔h7 also win easily for White.

6 g5 ♚b2 7 ♚a8+ ♔e7 8 ♔g7 ♚f2 9 g6 ♚f1 10 ♔g8 ♚g1 11 g7 ♚g2 12 ♚f8 1-0

In the following example, Black's king gets cut off by three files, but it isn't easy for White to round up the enemy pawn while retaining a winning position.



Makarychev – Lerner
USSR Ch, Minsk 1979

1... ♖f5?

It's a mistake to allow White to cut the black king off along a file. Black could have drawn by 1... ♖f6! 2 ♖xc4, and now:

1) 2... ♖e6? 3 ♖c5! ♖a5+ (it's now too late for 3... ♖e5 4 c4 ♖e4 since White can just advance his pawn by 5 ♖b5 ♖d3 6 c5) 4 ♖b6 ♖a4 5 c4 ♖b4+ 6 ♖c5 ♖a4 7 ♖h7 and White wins since Black's king is cut off along a rank and White can gradually advance his pawn.

2) 2... ♖e5! (the only move) 3 ♖c5 (3 ♖c6 ♖b8! 4 ♖c5 ♖e4 is similar) 3... ♖e4! 4 c4 ♖d3 5 ♖d7+ ♖c3 6 ♖d5 ♖h8 draws because 7 c5 ♖h5+ 8 ♖c6 ♖c4 costs White his pawn.

2 ♖f7+ ♖g6

If Black loses his pawn while his king is cut off by three files, then the position is generally won, so 2... ♖g5 3 ♖xc4 ♖c8+ 4 ♖b3 ♖b8+ 5 ♖c2 ♖c8 6 ♖f1 is a technical win.

3 ♖f4?!

This move actually makes the win more complicated. The simplest line, which was given by Ftačnik, is 3 ♖f1 ♖c8 (3... ♖a4 4 ♖c5 followed by ♖b5 is easier) 4 ♖f4 ♖a8 (4... ♖g5 5 ♖xc4 ♖d8+ 6 ♖e6 ♖e8+ 7 ♖d7 ♖e3 8 ♖c5+ ♖f6 9 c4 is also winning) 5 ♖xc4 ♖f7 (5... ♖f6 6 ♖c7 cuts the king off along a rank) 6 ♖e4 (here Black's king is only cut off by two files, but

White still wins because he can force the pawn forward to c4) 6... ♖d8+ 7 ♖c5! ♖c8+ 8 ♖b4 ♖b8+ 9 ♖a5 ♖a8+ 10 ♖b6 ♖b8+ 11 ♖c7 followed by c4.

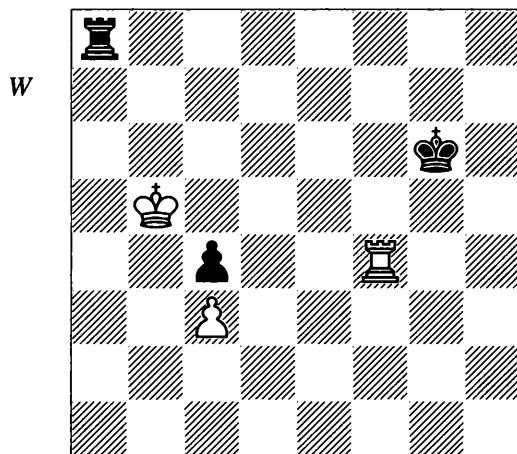
3... ♖a5+

White cannot immediately take on c4 due to the position of his rook, so he has to take a more roundabout route.

4 ♖c6

Once again White moves further away from success. The best line was 4 ♖d4 ♖a8 5 ♖f1, winning as in the note to White's third move.

4... ♖a6+ 5 ♖b5 ♖a8 (D)



6 ♖xc4?

White finally gives in to temptation and takes the pawn, but the resulting ♖+♔ vs ♖ ending should be a draw (the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* erroneously considers it to be winning). 6 ♖c5! was the only move to win and after 6... ♖a5+ 7 ♖d4 ♖a8 8 ♖f1 White wins as described earlier.

6... ♖b8+!

Black finds the only drawing move. Curiously, the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* considers this move to be losing and 6... ♖f6 drawing, which is the wrong way round. The alternatives to the move played all lose:

1) 6... ♖f7? loses to 7 ♖e4! as in the note to White's third move.

2) 6... ♖f5? 7 ♖c6! and White cuts the enemy king off along a rank.

3) 6... ♖f6? 7 ♖c7! (not 7 ♖e4? ♖b8+ 8 ♖a6 ♖f5! 9 ♖e3 ♖c8 10 ♖b5 ♖b8+ and White cannot make progress) 7... ♖e5 (White wins after

7...♖e6 8 ♖c5 ♖a5+ 9 ♖b6 followed by c4) 8 ♖c6! (not mentioned by the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings*; White wins easily as Black's king is cut off along a rank) 8...♖a1 9 c4 ♖b1+ 10 ♖c5 ♖b8 11 ♖b6 ♖c8+ 12 ♖b5 and the pawn advances.

After the rook check, White must move his king to the c-file, but this prevents him from using his rook to cut off Black's king along a rank.

7 ♖c6 ♖f5!

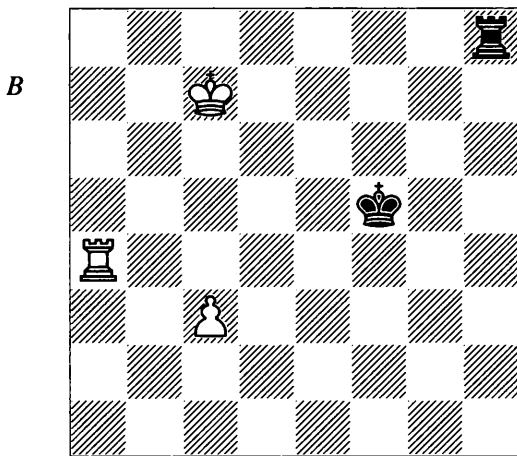
Another accurate move by Black. 7...♖f6? 8 ♖c7 ♖h8 9 ♖c5 ♖h7+ 10 ♖b6 ♖h4 11 ♖c7 and 7...♖c8+? 8 ♖d5! ♖d8+ 9 ♖e6 ♖e8+ 10 ♖d7 ♖e3 11 ♖c6+ ♖f5 12 c4 are both winning for White.

8 ♖c7 ♖h8!

8...♖g8? surprisingly loses to 9 ♖h4! and White's rook takes up an active position; for example, 9...♖g7+ 10 ♖c6 ♖g6+ 11 ♖d5 ♖f6 12 ♖e4 ♖g8 13 c4 and White wins.

9 ♖a4 (D)

After 9 ♖d4 ♖e5 10 ♖d1 ♖h4 Black draws easily, so the move played is the best chance.



9...♖e5?

A tragic error after some remarkably good defensive play by Black. He could have drawn by 9...♖e6! 10 c4 (10 ♖a5 ♖h4 11 ♖c5 ♖h7+ 12 ♖c6 ♖h8 is also a draw) 10...♖h7+! (not 10...♖h4?, which loses to 11 ♖a6+ ♖e5 12 c5, nor 10...♖h5? 11 ♖a6+ ♖e7 12 ♖c6 ♖a5 13 c5 ♖b5 and White wins using the tempo-losing manoeuvre 14 ♖c8 ♖a5 15 ♖b7 ♖b5+ 16 ♖c7, putting Black in zugzwang) 11 ♖c6 ♖h4! and now White has no rook check and so cannot

free himself without allowing Black's king to move in front of the pawn.

10 ♖a5+!

White finds the only winning move, which allows him to advance his pawn.

10...♖e4

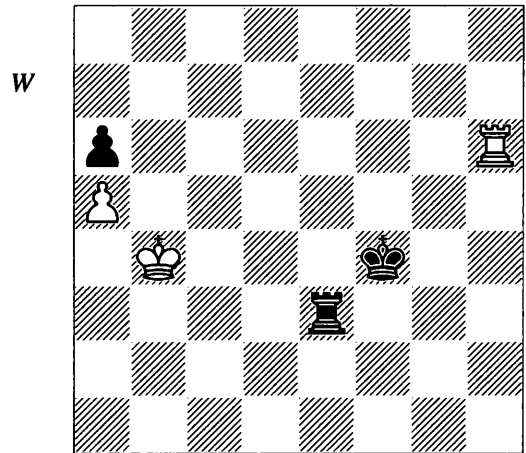
10...♖e6 is also met by 11 c4.

11 c4 ♖h7+ 12 ♖b6 ♖h6+ 13 ♖b5 ♖h8 14 ♖a6

White keeps the black king cut off along a rank and wins without difficulty.

14...♖d4 15 ♖d6+ ♖e5 16 c5 ♖b8+ 17 ♖b6 1-0

The main problem for the attacker is to find a way of capturing the enemy pawn in such a way as to reach a winning ♖+♔ vs ♖ position, and for this a good knowledge of ♖+♔ vs ♖ is essential.



C. Brauer – G. Grüner
East German corr. Ch 1978

This apparently simple position conceals some subtleties. White has the choice between taking immediately on a6 with the rook or first moving his king up the board. Which is correct?

1 ♖c5?

The wrong decision, since taking at once would have won: 1 ♖xa6! ♖e4+ 2 ♖c5 ♖e5+ 3 ♖d6 ♖f5 4 ♖a8 ♖e6+ 5 ♖d5 ♖e5+ 6 ♖d4 ♖e4+ 7 ♖d3 ♖a4 (7...♖e5 8 a6 ♖e7 9 ♖f8+ ♖e6 10 ♖c4 ♖d6 11 ♖b5 and 7...♖e7 8 a6 ♖e6 9 a7 ♖d7+ 10 ♖c4 ♖d6 11 ♖b5 also win for White) 8 a6 ♖g6 9 ♖c3 ♖g7 10 ♖b3 ♖a1 11

♔b4 and White wins by hiding the king on a7. 1 ♔c4 was the only other move to win, but this is significantly more complicated than the immediate capture.

1... ♖e5!

Black takes advantage of White's lapse and finds the only move to draw.

2 ♖xa6

Given that White now takes on a6 in any case, it is clear that it would have been more flexible to capture the pawn a move earlier. However, playing to take the pawn with the king is now no better since 2 ♔b6 ♔d5 3 ♖xa6 ♔c5 leaves Black's king close enough for an easy draw.

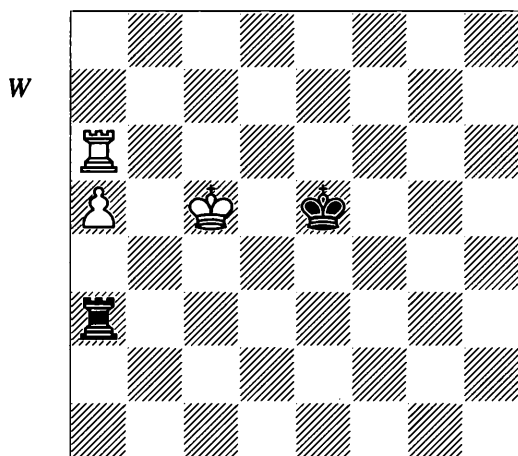
2... ♖a3? (D)

After this White again has a winning position, although the win is tricky. 2... ♖c3+! was the only move to draw, forcing the white king back so as to allow Black's own king to approach. White can try:

1) 3 ♔b5 ♔d5 4 ♖h6 ♖b3+ drives the king to the a-file and so Black draws easily.

2) 3 ♔b6 ♔d6 4 ♔b7+ ♔d7 5 ♖h6 ♖b3+ 6 ♖b6 ♖c3! 7 a6 ♖c7+ is also a draw.

3) 3 ♔b4 ♖c1 4 ♖h6 ♔d5 5 a6 ♖b1+ 6 ♔a5 ♔c5 7 ♖h5+ ♔c6 and Black's king is too close.



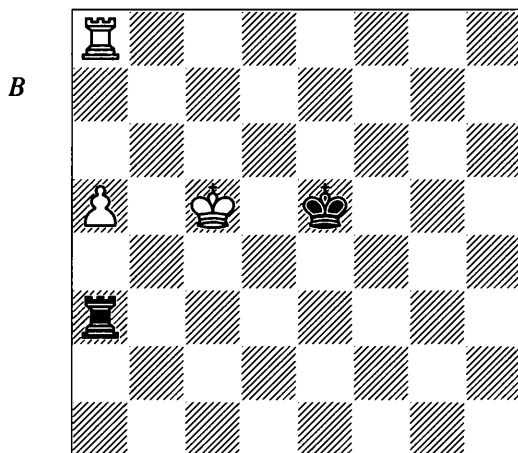
3 ♖a8? (D)

This lifts the rook's control of the sixth rank and allows Black to improve his king position. White has just one move to win, and it is by no means easy to find: 3 ♔c4!. This cuts out the check on c3, and at the same time clears the fifth rank, so as to threaten the powerful 4 ♖h6,

which would enable White to advance his pawn to the sixth rank while preventing Black from creeping closer with his king. Now:

1) 3... ♖a1 4 ♖h6 ♖c1+ 5 ♔b5 ♔d5 6 ♔b6! ♖b1+ (now White is not forced to move to the a-file in response to this check) 7 ♔c7 ♖c1+ 8 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 9 ♖b6 ♖h1 10 ♖c6! (providing a shield against rook checks from either direction) 10... ♖b1+ 11 ♔c7 ♖h1 12 a6 and White wins.

2) 3... ♔e4 4 ♖e6+ ♔f5 5 ♖h6 ♔g5 6 ♖a6 (White returns to a6, having dragged Black's king all the way to the g-file) 6... ♔f5 (6... ♖a1 7 ♔b5 ♖b1+ 8 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 9 ♔b7 ♖a1 10 ♖a8 also wins for White) 7 ♔b4 ♖a1 8 ♖h6 ♔e5 9 ♔b5 ♔d5 10 ♔b6 ♖b1+ transposing into line 1.



3... ♖a1?

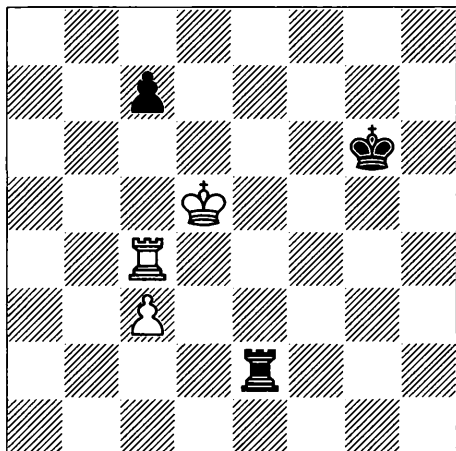
A surprisingly bad mistake for a correspondence game, allowing White to check the black king away and cut it off. The obvious 3... ♔e6! would have saved the game because 4 ♔b4 (4 a6 ♔d7! and 4 ♔c6 ♖c3+ 5 ♔b7 ♖b3+ are also easy draws) 4... ♖a1 5 ♖d8 ♖b1+ 6 ♔c5 ♖c1+ 7 ♔b6 ♖b1+ will force White's king in front of the pawn, when Black's king is close enough to draw.

4 ♖e8+ ♔f6 5 ♔b6 1-0

5... ♖b1+ 6 ♔a7 wins for White, since Black's king is cut off on the f-file (if the king is on the e-file, then the result is a draw).

The following intriguing position is finely poised between a draw and a win for White, a situation which often gives rise to tricky play.

B



Brainikov – Guth
IECG e-mail 1999

Black's last pawn is under attack, and if Black defends it then his king gets cut off, giving White the chance to improve his position. It turns out that Black can just about draw, but extremely precise play is necessary. In the game Black made a mistake and then White won convincingly (the fact that he could have won more quickly at one point isn't really significant).

1...♖e7!

The only move to draw. 1...♖d2+? 2 ♖c6 ♗f6 is quite tempting, because 3 ♖xc7? ♗e5 4 ♖c6 ♖c2 5 ♗b5 ♖b2+ 6 ♖b4 ♖c2 and 3 ♖g4? ♖d6+ 4 ♖xc7 ♖d3 5 c4 ♗f5 both lead to a draw. However, White has one way to win: 3 ♖h4!! ♖d6+ (3...♗g5 4 ♖a4 ♗f6 5 ♖xc7 ♗e6 6 c4 ♖d7+ 7 ♗b6 ♖d6+ 8 ♖c5 ♖d1 9 ♖a7 cuts Black's king off along a rank and wins for White) 4 ♖xc7 ♖d3 5 ♖h6+! (5 c4? ♗g5 6 ♖e4 ♗f5 is a draw) 5...♗g5 6 ♖c6 ♗f5 7 ♗b7 (7 c4? ♗e5 8 c5 ♖c3! is drawn) 7...♗e5 8 ♖c8 ♗e6 9 c4 ♗d7 10 ♖c7+! ♗d8 11 c5 ♖b3+ 12 ♖c6 ♖b1 13 ♖h7 ♖c1 14 ♖h8+ ♗e7 15 ♖c8 and Black is doomed because his king is on the long side of the pawn.

1...♗f7? also loses after 2 ♖h4 ♗e7 3 ♖c6 ♖d2 4 c4 ♖d6+ 5 ♖xc7 ♖d7+ 6 ♗b6 ♖d6+ 7 ♖c5 ♖d1 8 ♖h7+ ♗d8 9 ♖c6, followed by c5, ♖h8+ and ♖c8, much as after 1...♖d2+?.

2 ♖f4

White wants to cut Black's king off along the e-file, but he cannot play 2 ♖e4 immediately because Black can simply exchange rooks. Thus he first deflects the rook to f7 before occupying

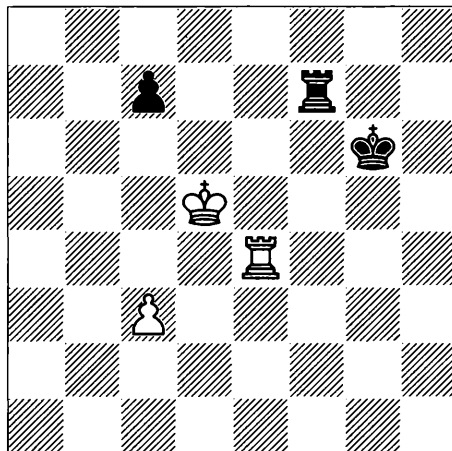
the e-file. After 2 ♖c6 Black can defend by 2...♗f5! 3 ♖d4 ♖e4! and he is out of danger.

2...♖f7

Black relieves the f-file cut-off only to see the rook occupy the e-file instead.

3 ♖e4 (D)

B



3...♗f5?

A mistake which gives White a winning position. Black should have sacrificed the c-pawn straight away by 3...♖d7+!, and now:

1) 4 ♖c5 is met by 4...♗f6! (4...♗f5? 5 ♖e1 transposes to the game) 5 c4 (5 ♖c6 ♖d6+ 6 ♖xc7 ♖d3 7 c4 ♗f5 transposes to the analysis of 4 ♖c6) 5...♖d6! 6 ♖e8 ♖e6 7 ♖c8 ♗e7 8 ♖xc7+ ♗d8 with a standard draw.

2) 4 ♖c6 ♖d6+ 5 ♖xc7 ♖d3 6 ♖c4 (6 c4 ♗f5 7 ♖h4 ♗g5 8 ♖e4 ♗f5 and Black draws) 6...♗f5! (6...♗f6? loses to 7 ♖c6+ ♗e5 8 ♗b6 ♖d8 9 ♗b5 ♖d1 10 c4, as Black's king is cut off along a rank) 7 ♖c6 ♗e4! 8 ♗b6 ♖d8! (a tough move to find, since it is unnatural to relieve the pressure on the c3-pawn, but Black needs to have a check on b8; 8...♖d7? 9 c4 ♗d4 10 c5 and 8...♖h3? 9 ♖c8 ♖h6+ 10 ♖c5 ♖h5+ 11 ♗b4 ♖h1 12 c4 ♗e5 13 ♖c5 ♗e6 14 ♖c6 both win for White) 9 c4 (9 ♖c7 ♗d3 10 c4 ♖b8+ 11 ♖c5 ♖c3 is also a draw) 9...♗d4 10 c5 ♖b8+! 11 ♖c7 ♖h8 and White cannot make progress.

4 ♖e1 ♖d7+

There is nothing better as 4...♖f6 loses to 5 ♖e7 c6+ 6 ♖c5 ♖h6 7 c4 ♖h4 8 ♖c7 ♗e6 9 ♖xc6+ ♗d7 10 ♗b6 ♖h1 11 ♖c7+ ♗d8 12 c5 ♖b1+ 13 ♖c6 ♖a1 14 ♖h7 followed by ♖h8+

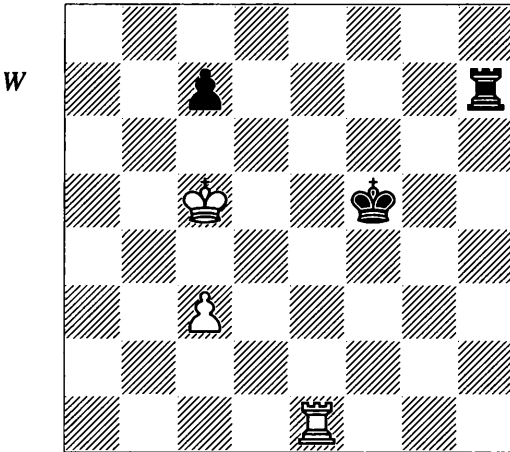
and Black's king is stuck on the long side of the pawn.

5 ♖c5

This wins, but it would have been quicker to play 5 ♖c6 ♖d6+ (5...♖d3 6 c4 ♖c3 7 c5 ♖f6 8 ♖e8 ♖c1 9 ♖c8 ♖e7 10 ♖xc7+ ♖d8 11 ♖h7 and White wins as before) 6 ♖xc7 ♖d3 7 ♖c1! ♖h3 8 c4 ♖h7+ 9 ♖c6 ♖h6+ 10 ♖d5 ♖f6 11 ♖e1 and Black's king is cut off.

5...♖h7 (D)

5...♖d3 would have put up more resistance, but White wins all the same after 6 c4 ♖c3 7 ♖e7 c6 8 ♖d7! (8 ♖c7? ♖e6 is a draw) 8...♖e4 (White wins after 8...♖e6 9 ♖d4 ♖e5 10 ♖h4 followed by ♖xc6) 9 ♖d6 ♖c1 10 ♖xc6 ♖d3 11 ♖d6+ ♖c3 12 ♖d4! ♖b3 13 ♖b5 ♖c3 14 ♖h4 ♖b1+ 15 ♖c6 ♖b4 16 c5+ ♖a5 17 ♖h2 ♖c1 18 ♖b2 ♖c3 19 ♖b1 ♖c2 20 ♖a1+ ♖b4 21 ♖b6 ♖c4 22 c6 ♖d5 23 ♖d1+ and the pawn continues to advance.



6 c4

White threatens to improve his position with ♖c6 and c5 before sending the rook round to attack Black's c-pawn.

6...♖h4 7 ♖d5

This move, threatening c5 followed by ♖c6, is adequate, but 7 ♖e7 c6 8 ♖c7 would have won somewhat more easily.

7...c6+ 8 ♖c5 ♖f6 9 ♖e8!

Just in time, White manoeuvres his rook round to c8 to attack the c-pawn. If Black is allowed to play ...♖f7, then the position is a draw.

9...♖g4 10 ♖c8 ♖e7 11 ♖xc6 ♖d8 12 ♖b6! ♖h4

Or 12...♖g1 13 ♖b7! ♖b1+ 14 ♖b6 ♖c1 15 ♖d6+ ♖e7 16 ♖d4 ♖e6 17 ♖c6 ♖e5 18 ♖h4 ♖c2 19 c5 ♖e6 20 ♖e4+ and by now the win is straightforward.

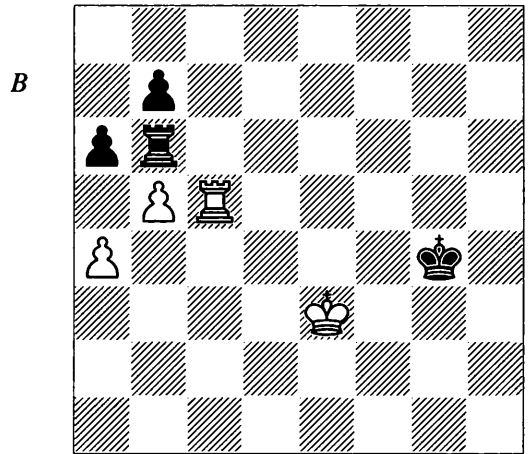
13 ♖c7 ♖h6+

13...♖h1 14 c5 and White wins as before.

14 ♖b7 ♖h4 15 c5 ♖b4+ 16 ♖c6 1-0

White wins after 16...♖b1 17 ♖h7 ♖c1 18 ♖h8+ ♖e7 19 ♖c8 ♖c2 20 ♖b7 because Black's king is on the long side of the pawn.

Judging when to liquidate to a ♖+♗ vs ♖+♗ position can be tricky since assessing the resulting position may be far from simple.



Lomholt Hansen – Kullamaa
corr. 1986-91

White is certainly better as his king is closer to the pawns, while Black's king is cut off. Although White's advantage is not enough to win against correct defence, Black must take care as it only takes one mistake to fall into a lost position.

1...axb5?

This is wrong because it allows White to get rid of his undefended a4-pawn, which is currently subject to a possible counterattack by Black. There are several drawing moves, but the simplest is 1...♖f6!, preparing to move to f4 to attack the a4-pawn. This also prevents the white king from advancing to the fourth rank because then ...♖f4 is check. The only winning try is 2 ♖c7, but after 2...axb5 3 axb5 ♖d6! (3...♖b6? 4 ♖c5 transposes to the game) 4 ♖e4 (4 ♖xb7 ♖f5 cuts off the white king and draws

easily after 5 b6 ♖e6 6 ♜h7 ♔d5 7 b7 ♚b6) 4...♔g5! 5 ♖e5 ♚b6! 6 ♜c5 ♔g6 7 ♜d5 ♔f7 8 ♔d4 ♖e6 Black's king arrives in time to save the game.

2 axb5 ♚f6

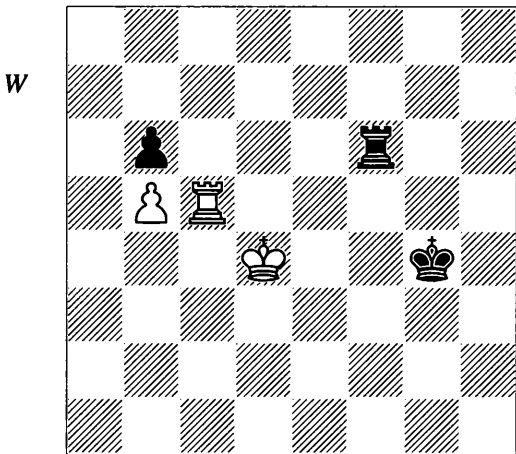
Or 2...♜d6 3 ♖e4! ♔g3 4 ♖e5 ♜h6 5 ♔d5 ♔f3 (5...♔f4 6 ♜c7 ♜h5+ 7 ♔c4 is even easier for White as Black has no further checks) 6 ♜c7 ♜h5+ 7 ♔c4 b6 8 ♜c6 ♜h4+ 9 ♔c3 ♖e3 10 ♜xb6 ♖e4 11 ♜d6 ♖e5 12 ♜d8 ♜h1 13 ♔b4 and White wins.

3 ♔d4

3 ♜c7? ♜d6 is a draw, as in the note to Black's first move. However, once the king is on d4, ♜c7 is a genuine threat.

3...b6 (D)

Other moves are no better: 3...♜f4+ 4 ♖e5 b6 5 ♜d5! ♜f1 6 ♔d6 ♜c1 7 ♔d7 ♔f4 8 ♜d6 ♖e5 9 ♜xb6 ♜h1 10 ♜d6 ♜h7+ 11 ♔c6 ♜h8 12 b6 ♜c8+ 13 ♔b7 heads for the Lucena position, while White also wins after 3...♜f7 4 ♜c8 ♜f5 5 ♔c4 b6 6 ♜b8 ♜f6 7 ♔d5 ♔f5 8 ♜d8 ♜h6 9 ♜d6 ♜h1 10 ♔c6 ♖e5 11 ♜d5+ ♖e4 12 ♜d8 ♜h6+ 13 ♜d6 ♜h1 14 ♔xb6.



4 ♜d5?

A surprising mistake for a correspondence game. 4 ♜c6? is also bad, since Black can draw by 4...♜f4+! 5 ♔c3 ♜f3+ 6 ♔b4 ♜f4+ and there is no shelter from the checks (7 ♜c4 can be met by 7...♔f5).

4 ♜c7! is simplest, threatening ♔d5 followed by ♜d7-d6; for example, 4...♜d6+ (4...♜f5 5 ♔c4 ♔f3 is essentially the same as the note to Black's second move) 5 ♖e5 ♜h6 6 ♔d5 ♔f7 5

♜d7, followed by ♜d6, winning. 4 ♜e5! is the only other winning move, when 4...♜d6+ 5 ♖e4 ♔g3 6 ♜e7 ♔g4 7 ♜g7+ ♔h5 8 ♜c7 ♔g5 9 ♜c6 ♜d1 10 ♜xb6 ♚b1 11 ♔d5 ♔f5 12 ♚b8 ♔f6 13 ♔c6 leads rapidly to the Lucena position.

4...♔f4!

The most obvious move, and the only one to draw. White's rook blocks the d5-square, which is needed by his king, and so progress is too slow.

5 ♜d8 1/2-1/2

It's a draw after 5...♜f5! 6 ♔c4 ♜c5+ 7 ♔b4 ♖e5 8 ♚b8 ♜c1! (not 8...♜c2?, when White wins after 9 ♜xb6 ♚b2+ 10 ♔a3 ♚b1 11 ♜h6) 9 ♜xb6 ♚b1+ 10 ♔a3 ♔d5 and the king approaches.

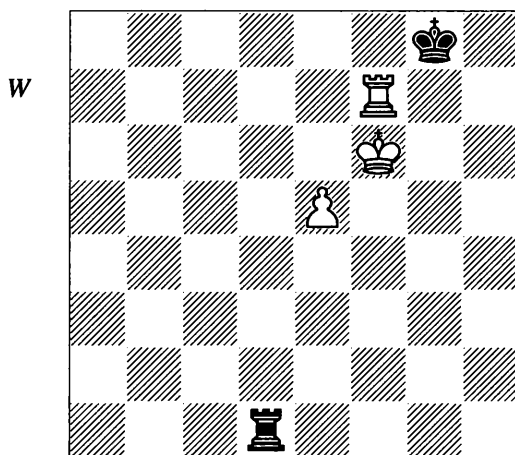
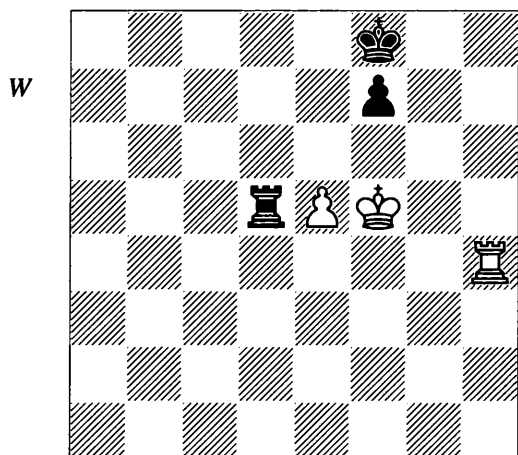
Summary:

- When the pawns are on the same file in a position of ♚+♔ vs ♚+♔, the attacker must capture the enemy pawn in such a way as to reach a winning ♚+♔ vs ♚ position. This is normally only possible when the enemy king is cut off from his pawn, which therefore has to be defended by the rook.
- The winning chances are frequently greater than is immediately apparent, as by manoeuvring with king and rook it is often possible for the attacker to cut off the enemy rook's guard of the pawn.
- It's often necessary for the attacker to improve the position of his king and pawn before playing to win the enemy pawn.

8.7.3 Pawns on Adjacent Files, Not Passed

We start with a position in which the attacker wins even though the defender's king is adjacent to his pawn. Of course, this can only happen if the defender's pieces are badly placed.

It is surprising that the position in the diagram overleaf is winning for White, although the win is not at all simple. White needs to win the f-pawn in such a way as to ensure that the resulting ♚+♔ vs ♚ position is a win. In studying this example, it's possible to learn a lot about endings of ♚+e♔ vs ♚.



Kirov – D. Kosić

Novi Sad 1992

1 ♖f6! ♜g8

Forced, as 1...♙e8 2 e6! fxe6 3 ♙xe6 costs Black his rook.

2 ♜g4+ ♜f8

2...♙h8 3 ♙xf7! ♜d7+ 4 ♙f6 is an easy win as Black's king is cut off.

3 ♜a4

Or 3 ♜b4, but not 3 ♜g7? ♜xe5!, nor 3 ♜c4? ♙e8 4 ♜c8+ ♙d7 5 ♜f8 ♜d1 6 ♜xf7+ ♙e8 with a draw.

3...♜d8?!

This makes it much easier for White, as does 3...♙e8?! 4 ♜a8+ ♙d7 5 ♜a7+ ♙e8 (5...♙c6 6 ♜xf7 and White wins) 6 ♜e7+ ♙f8 7 ♜xf7+ ♙g8 (7...♙e8 8 ♜h7 is easy) 8 e6 ♜d1 9 ♜g7+ ♙h8 10 ♜g5 and the end is near.

3...♙g8 puts up the greatest fight. 4 ♜a8+ ♙h7 5 ♜f8! (White only loses time by 5 ♜a7 ♙g8) 5...♜d1 (5...♜a5 6 ♜xf7+ ♙g8 7 e6 followed by ♜g7+, winning) 6 ♜xf7+ ♙g8 (*D*) (6...♙h6 7 e6 ♜f1+ 8 ♙e7 ♜a1 9 ♜f2 is an easy win for White) and now:

1) 7 ♜a7? was given an exclamation mark by Mirković in his *Informator 54* notes, but it allows Black to escape with a draw, providing another example of the checking-distance mistake we examined in Section 8.4.5. In simple rook endings, one's natural instinct is to move the rook as far away as possible and in most situations this is the correct choice, but in a few cases a different approach is necessary. Here Black can defend by 7...♜f1+ 8 ♙e6 (the problem with playing the rook to a7 is that White

cannot move his king to e7 due to ...♜f7+) 8...♜e1! (the only move to draw; 8...♙f8? loses to 9 ♜a8+ ♙g7 10 ♙e7 ♜b1 11 e6 because White's rook controls the a-file, so Black lacks sufficient checking distance, while 8...♜b1? 9 ♙d7 ♙g7 10 e6 ♜b8 11 ♙e7 ♙g6 12 ♜a1 ♜b7+ 13 ♙d6 ♜b6+ 14 ♙d7 ♜b7+ 15 ♙c6 ♜b8 16 ♙c7 ♜b2 17 ♜e1 also wins for White) 9 ♜a8+ (9 ♜a5 ♙f8 and 9 ♙d6 ♙f8! are also drawn) 9...♙g7 10 ♙d6 ♙f7! and White cannot make progress.

2) 7 ♜c7! (this surprise move is the only one to win) 7...♜f1+ 8 ♙e7! (this is the point: the rook is near enough to the king to prevent Black from winning it with ...♜f7+) 8...♜a1 9 ♜d7! (if Black's king were on g7 then the position would be a draw, but here Black's king is temporarily misplaced so White wins; the position is basically the same as in the note to White's third move in Kamsky-Kramnik on page 91) 9...♜a2 (9...♙g7 10 ♙e8+! ♙g6 11 ♜d6+ ♙g7 12 e6 ♜a8+ 13 ♜d8 ♜a1 14 e7 also wins for White) 10 ♜d1 (threatening to drive Black's king away by ♜g1+) 10...♜a7+ 11 ♙f6 (now the threat is ♜d8+ followed by e6, so the reply is again forced) 11...♜f7+ 12 ♙e6 ♜f2 (12...♜a7 is impossible as 13 ♜d8+ ♙g7 14 ♜d7+ wins at once) 13 ♜a1! (now it really is important to move as far away as possible; White's manoeuvre has enabled him to seize control of the a-file, so that Black has to be content with the inferior b-file, which leaves him with inadequate checking distance) 13...♙g7 14 ♜a7+ ♙f8 (14...♙g6 15 ♜a8 ♙g7 transposes) 15 ♜a8+ ♙g7 16 ♙d6 ♜d2+ 17 ♙e7 ♜b2 18 e6

♖b7+ 19 ♔d6 ♖b6+ 20 ♔d7 ♔f6 21 ♜f8+ ♔e5 22 e7 ♖b7+ 23 ♔d8 ♔d6 24 ♜f6+ and White wins.

4 ♖a7?!

White misses an easy win by 4 ♖h4! ♔g8 5 ♔e7! ♖a8 6 ♜g4+ ♔h7 7 ♔xf7 ♖a7+ 8 ♔f6, when Black has no chance at all since his king is cut off.

4...♖b8?!

Black could have forced White to find the difficult win given above by 4...♔g8 5 ♜xf7 ♜d1, transposing into the analysis of 3...♔g8.

5 ♜xf7+ ♔g8

5...♔e8 6 ♖h7 ♖b1 7 ♖h8+ ♔d7 8 e6+ ♔d6 9 ♜d8+ and 10 e7 wins easily.

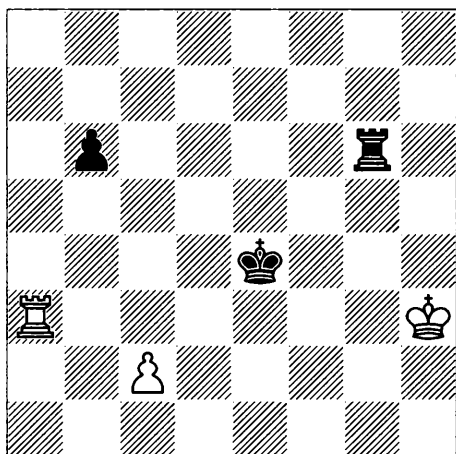
6 ♜g7+! ♔f8

6...♔h8 7 ♜g4 ♜f8+ 8 ♔e7 is hopeless for Black.

7 e6 ♖b6 8 ♖a7 ♖b8 9 ♖h7 ♔g8 10 ♜g7+ 1-0

After 10...♔h8 11 ♜g5 ♜f8+ 12 ♔e7 ♜f1 13 ♔e8 the e-pawn cannot be stopped.

The next position looks like a clear draw, and it's interesting to see how, even in a correspondence game, it's possible to make one small slip after another and eventually fall into a lost position.



Firsching – Merk
German corr. Ch 1993-5

Black has some advantage as White's king is cut off from the remaining pawns, but even so the position looks like a draw. Black's pawn is not passed, and in order to make any progress

Black will have to use his rook, releasing the white king. Indeed, at this stage White shouldn't face too many problems securing the draw, but some small inaccuracies lead to his position gradually going downhill.

1 ♜d3

There is nothing wrong with this move. Black's king is cut off and in order to make progress he must remove his rook from the g-file.

1...♜c6

1...b5 2 ♖b3 ♜g5 3 ♔h4 ♜c5 4 ♔g3 ♔d4 5 ♔f4 is safe for White.

2 ♖b3

White could also have drawn by 2 ♜d2 ♔e3 (2...b5 3 ♔g3 b4 4 ♔f2 is safe as the king can reach the queenside) 3 ♜d3+ ♔e2 4 ♔g3! ♜xc2 5 ♖b3 ♜c6 6 ♔f4 ♔d2 7 ♔e4 ♔c2 8 ♖b5 ♔c3 9 ♔d5 ♖h6 10 ♖b1! and Black cannot make progress. The decision as to whether to play 2 ♖b3 or 2 ♜d2 is of a type that occurs frequently in practical play: both moves draw, but they initiate different plans. By playing 2 ♖b3, White makes no immediate concession, but Black is able to continue his winning attempts and White must be prepared to defend for some time. With 2 ♜d2, White makes a concession in that Black can win the c-pawn within a few moves, but the resulting position is nevertheless a draw. This line has the advantage of being very forcing, but it requires accurate calculation by White. Which move to play is largely a matter of taste, since objectively both lead to a draw, but it is important not to underestimate the chances of going wrong when defending a passive position for a long time.

2...♔d4

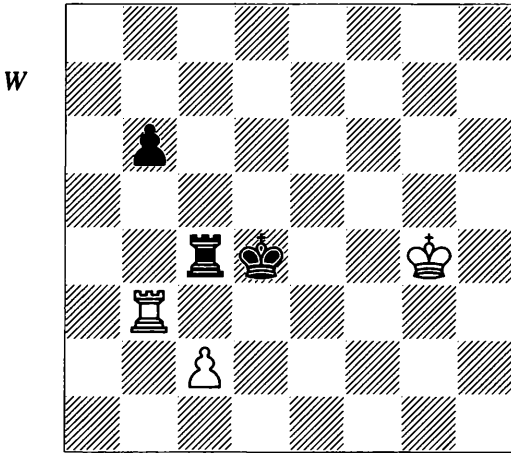
Threatening ...♜c3+.

3 ♔g4 ♜c4 (D)

A neat tactical point (4 ♜xb6?? ♔c5+) enables Black to improve his position and further his plan of ...♔c5 followed by ...b5.

4 ♔f5?!

This is a more definite mistake, allowing the white king to be cut off along a rank. Although the position remains drawn, White is now obliged to defend accurately. Instead, he had a simple way of reaching a draw: 4 ♔f3! ♜c3+ (4...♔c5 5 c3 is completely safe) 5 ♜xc3



♙xc3 6 ♙e4 b5 7 ♙d5 and the pawn ending is a draw, so Black has no winning chances at all.

It is worth noting that 4 c3+ is also drawn (and is very similar to 2 ♖d2); after 4...♙d3+ (4...♙c5+ 5 ♙f3 is simple) 5 ♙f5! (5 ♙f3? ♖c6 6 ♙f4 ♙c2 7 ♖b5 ♙xc3 8 ♙e4 ♙c4 wins for Black) 5...♖c6 6 ♙e5 ♙c4 7 ♖b4+ ♙xc3 8 ♖b1 ♖h6 9 ♙d5 we reach the same drawn position as in the note to White's second move.

4...♙c5 5 ♖b2!

White must already take care, since 5 c3? loses, although the win is very difficult: 5...b5 6 ♙e6 ♖a4! (threatening ...♖a5 followed by ...♙c4) 7 ♙d7 ♖a7+ 8 ♙d8 ♙c6! (an exceptionally unlikely-looking move, taking the king away from the white pawn) and now:

1) 9 ♖b4 ♖a8+ 10 ♙e7 ♖a4! 11 ♖b3 ♖e4+ 12 ♙f6 (12 ♙d8 ♖e3 is immediate zugzwang) 12...♙c5 13 ♖b1 ♖c4 14 ♖b3 ♖a4 repeats the position at move 6, except that White's king is one square further away. Black now wins comfortably; for example, 15 ♙e5 ♖a5 16 ♙e4 ♙c4 17 ♖b1 ♙xc3 18 ♖c1+ ♙b2 19 ♖c5 ♖a4+ 20 ♙d3 b4.

2) 9 ♙e8 ♖a5 10 ♙d8 ♖a4 (now White is in zugzwang) 11 ♖b1 (11 ♙e7 ♖e4+ 12 ♙f6 ♙c5 and after 13 ♙f5 ♖a4 14 ♙e5 ♖a5 Black wins as before, while 13 ♖b1 ♖c4 14 ♖b3 ♖a4 transposes into line 1) 11...♖a8+ 12 ♙e7 ♖a3 13 ♖c1 ♙d5! (13...♙c5? allows White to draw by 14 ♙d7 ♙c4 15 ♙c6) 14 ♙d7 ♖a7+ 15 ♙c8 ♙c4 16 ♖h1 ♙xc3 17 ♖h3+ ♙b4 18 ♖h1 ♖g7 19 ♖b1+ ♙c4 20 ♖c1+ ♙d4 21 ♖b1 ♖g5 and Black wins.

5...b5 6 ♙e5 ♖c3

Black's plan is ...b4, ...♙c4, ...♖a3 and ...♙c3. White cannot stand idly by while Black steadily improves his position.

7 ♙e6

Playing the king round behind Black's pawn should be sufficient to draw, although the task is quite tricky.

7...b4 8 ♙d7 ♖a3

Black creates the maximum difficulties for White. Rather as in the note to White's fifth move, Black plans to combine the threat of advancing his king with ideas of harassing White's king.

9 ♙e6

Another drawing plan is 9 ♙c7 ♖a7+ 10 ♙b8! ♖h7 11 ♖b3 ♙c4 12 ♙a8! (not 12 ♙c8? ♖a7 followed by ...♖a2, when Black wins) 12...♖h2 13 ♖b2 and, perhaps surprisingly, Black cannot make any progress.

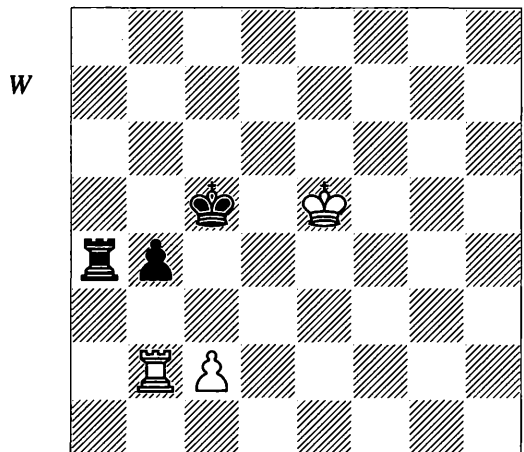
9...♖a7

Black interferes with White's intention to play ♙d7-c6.

10 ♙e5

10 ♖b3 ♙c4 11 ♖h3 ♖a2 12 ♖h4+ ♙c3 13 ♙d5 ♖xc2 14 ♙c5 draws, as in the following note.

10...♖a4 (D)



This is a critical moment since Black threatens to win by playing ...♙c4. White has only one move to draw.

11 ♖b1?

This isn't it. The correct line was 11 ♖b3! ♙c4 (11...♖a2 12 c3 draws at once) 12 ♖h3 (activating the rook; now Black can win the

c2-pawn, but this does not bring him victory) 12...♖a2 13 ♖h4+ ♕c3 14 ♔d5 ♖xc2 15 ♕c5! b3 16 ♖h3+ ♕b2+ (or 16...♕d2+ 17 ♕b4 b2 18 ♖h1) 17 ♕b4 and the pawn falls.

11...♖a2

In contrast to 11 ♖b3, there is no threat of c3, so Black can immediately attack the c2-pawn with his rook.

12 ♖c1 ♕c4

Now White has no chance.

13 ♕d6 ♖a6+!

Accurate play. 13...♕c3? allows 14 ♕c5 ♖a5+ 15 ♕b6! ♖h5 16 ♖b1! ♖h4 17 ♕b5 with a draw.

14 ♕e5

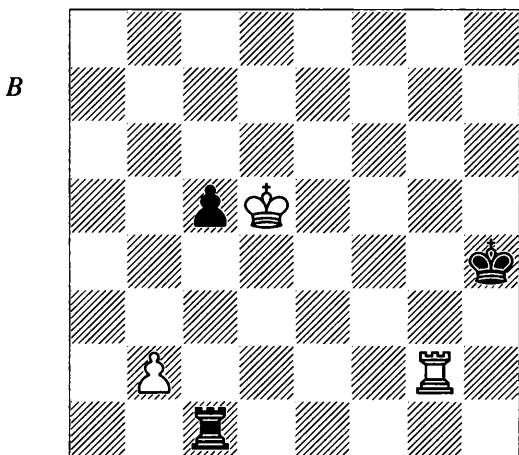
14 ♕d7 ♕c3 15 ♖b1 ♖a2 is also a win.

14...♕c3 15 ♖g1

Or 15 ♕d5 ♖a5+! 16 ♕c6 ♕b2 and Black wins.

15...♕xc2 16 ♕d4 ♖c6 0-1

In our final example of this section, Black's king is cut off at the maximum possible distance from the pawns. However, in order to make progress White must use his rook, which releases Black's king.



Solari – Pavlenko
BFCC e-mail 2002

Material is equal and there are no passed pawns. However, White has a substantial advantage since his king is near the pawns, while Black's is cut off on the distant h-file. Nevertheless, it isn't clear whether White's advantage will be enough to win since he will have to use

his rook to attack the c-pawn and this will release Black's king. The main question is how much progress White can make while keeping his rook on the g-file. The position is currently drawn, but it requires careful defence by Black.

1...c4

A perfectly good move. Even though it's not a threat in the current position, White now has to take into account the possibility of ...c3. In order to follow the analysis, it is worth recalling a few facts about ♖+♔ vs ♖ positions with a b-pawn and Black's king cut off along a file. If the pawn is on b3 and Black's king is cut off on the f-file, then White wins, but it's generally a draw with the king on the e-file. Surprisingly, it's the same with the pawn on b4.

2 ♕c5

Now Black already has to find a unique saving move.

2...♕h5!

Everything else loses:

1) 2...c3? 3 b3! (but not 3 b4? ♕h3 4 ♖e2 ♕g4 5 ♕d4 ♕f5 6 ♖e5+ ♕f6 7 ♖e3 c2 8 ♕c3 ♖b1 and White cannot take on c2 without losing his own pawn) 3...♕h3 4 ♖e2! ♕g4 5 ♕d4 ♕f5 (or 5...♕f4 6 ♖f2+ ♕g3 7 ♖f5 ♕g4 8 ♖c5 c2 9 ♕d3 ♖h1 10 ♕xc2 and White wins as Black's king is cut off along a rank) 6 ♖e5+ ♕f6 7 ♖e3 c2 8 ♕c3 ♕f5 9 ♕b2 and White wins the pawn, while keeping the enemy king cut off on the f-file.

2) 2...♕h3? is a mistake because both the third and the fourth ranks are dangerous for the black king (on account of ♖e2-e3+, followed by ♖c3, and ♖e2-e4+ respectively) and now Black has no time to get his king off the dangerous ranks. Therefore White wins by 3 ♖e2! ♕g3 4 ♖e3+ ♕f2 (4...♕f4 5 ♖c3 ♖h1 6 ♖xc4+ ♕e5 7 b4 ♕e6 8 b5 ♕d7 9 ♕b6 is also winning for White) 5 ♖c3 ♖b1 6 ♖c2+ ♕e3 7 ♕xc4 ♖h1 8 b4 ♖h4+ 9 ♕b5 ♕d3 10 ♖c8 and Black's king is too far up the board.

3 ♕b5

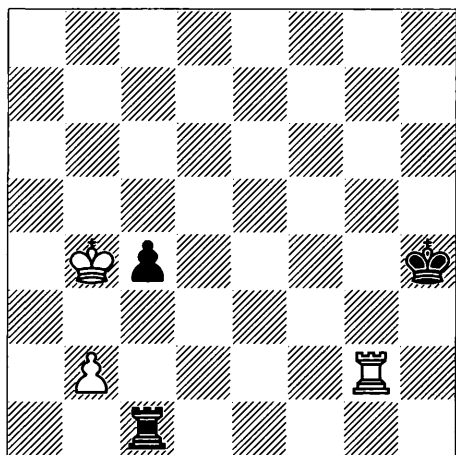
3 ♖e2 ♕g6 is not dangerous for Black.

3...♕h4

So long as Black keeps his king somewhere near the middle of the h-file, he should not be in any danger. 3...♕h6 also draws.

4 ♕b4 (D)

B

**4...♔h5!**

The only move, as 4...♔h3? loses as before to 5 ♖e2.

5 ♖g3

Now that White's king is on b4, and is ready to meet ...♞c2 by ♔a3, he can reasonably make a move with his rook along the g-file.

5...♞b1

5...♞c2 is also adequate to draw; for example, 6 ♔a3 ♞e2 7 ♞c3 ♞e4 8 ♞c2 (8 ♔b4 ♞e2 will repeat) 8...♔g5 9 ♔b4 ♔f5 10 ♞xc4 ♞e8! (the only move to draw; 10...♞e7? 11 ♔c5 ♞c7+ 12 ♔d5 ♞d7+ 13 ♔c6 wins for White) 11 ♞c6 (11 b3 ♞b8+ 12 ♔c3 ♔e5 13 b4 ♔d6 and 11 ♔c5 ♞c8+ 12 ♔d5 ♞d8+ are also drawn) 11...♞b8+ 12 ♔c3 ♔e5 13 b4 ♔d5 and Black's king arrives just in time to draw.

6 ♔c3

Now White threatens to win by 7 ♖g2! ♞c1+ 8 ♞c2, so Black must take action.

6...♞c1+!

Again the only move.

7 ♔d2 ♞f1 8 ♔c2 ♞f8

This draws, but it would have been simpler to continue waiting with 8...♞e1, as White has no threat at the moment. After 9 ♖g8 ♞e3 10 ♞c8 ♔g5 11 ♞xc4 ♔f5 12 ♞c3 ♞e8 13 b4 ♞b8! 14 ♔b3 ♔e6! (after 14...♔e5? 15 ♞c6 ♔d5 16 ♞a6 White cuts the king off along a rank and wins) 15 ♞d3 ♔e5! (15...♔e7? loses to 16 ♞d4 ♔e6 17 ♔c4 ♞c8+ 18 ♔b5 ♔e5 19 ♞h4) 16 ♞d7 ♔e6! White cannot make progress.

9 ♔c3 ♞c8?

A mistake, after which White wins. 9...♔h4! is the only move to draw since it is essential to

be able to drive the white rook away from g2. Then 10 ♞g2 ♔h3! 11 ♞d2 (after 11 ♞g5 ♞b8 12 ♞c5 ♞b3+ 13 ♔c2 ♞b4 White cannot make progress) 11...♔g4! 12 ♔xc4 ♞c8+ (Black is just able to draw this position) 13 ♔b5 ♞b8+ 14 ♔c5 ♞c8+ 15 ♔b6 ♞b8+ 16 ♔c7 ♞b3 17 ♔c6 ♔f4 18 ♔c5 ♔e3! 19 ♞h2 ♔d3 20 ♞g2 ♞b8! (the only move) 21 b4 ♞c8+ 22 ♔b5 ♞b8+ 23 ♔a4 ♔c3! (23...♔c4? loses to 24 ♞c2+ ♔d3 25 ♞c7) 24 ♞g3+ ♔c4 25 ♞g4+ ♔c3 is a draw since White cannot make progress due to the potential mate on a8. If he plays 26 ♔a5, Black just starts checking along the first rank.

10 ♞g2

Now White has a new and decisive plan: ♔d4 followed by ♞c2.

10...♔h4 11 ♔d4 ♔h5

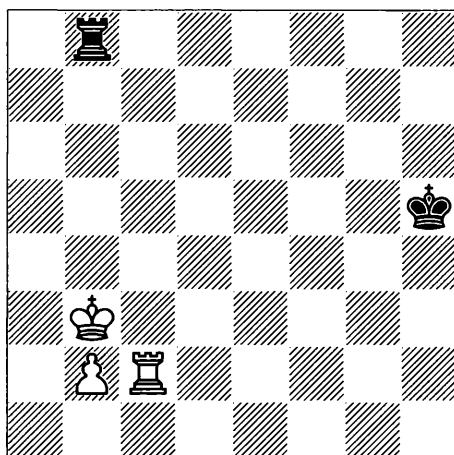
11...♞d8+ 12 ♔xc4 ♞c8+ 13 ♔d3 ♞d8+ 14 ♔c2 ♞c8+ 15 ♔b1 and White wins as in the game.

12 ♞c2 ♞d8+

12...♔g5 13 b4 ♔f6 14 ♞xc4 ♞d8+ 15 ♔c5 ♞c8+ 16 ♔b5 ♞b8+ 17 ♔a6 is also winning for White.

13 ♔xc4 ♞c8+ 14 ♔b3 ♞b8+ (D)

W

**15 ♔a2?!**

This considerably lengthens the winning process. 15 ♔a4! ♞a8+ 16 ♔b5 ♞b8+ 17 ♔a6 is quicker; for example, 17...♔g6 18 ♞c6+ ♔f7 19 ♞b6 ♞a8+ 20 ♔b7 ♞e8 21 b4 ♞e7+ 22 ♔a6 ♞e4 23 b5 ♞a4+ 24 ♔b7 ♞b4 25 ♔c7 ♔e7 26 ♞b8 and the pawn advances.

15...♞a8+ 16 ♔b1 ♞b8?!

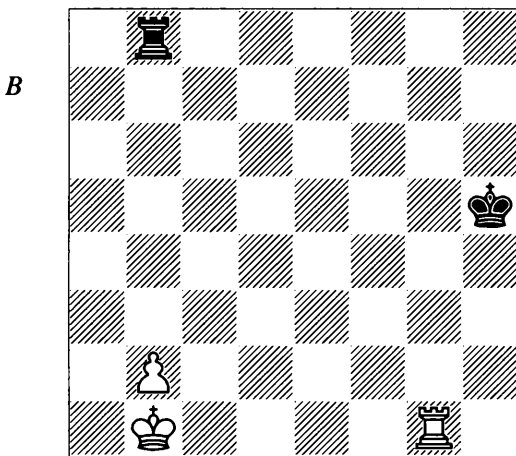
This allows White to cut off the enemy king on the h-file, which makes the win easier. 16...♔g5 was a tougher defence, although White can still win by 17 b3 ♔f6 18 ♖e2 and, as we observed above, this cut-off distance is sufficient to win (although the winning method is by no means simple – see page 52 for details).

17 ♖g2

With the pawn on b2, White wins even if the black king is cut off on the g-file, although the extra file makes the win easier.

17...♔h4 18 ♖g6 ♔h5 19 ♖g1 (D)

This winning method involves White switching the rook behind the pawn by ♖b1. 19 ♖a6 ♔g5 20 ♔a2 ♔f5 21 ♔a3 ♔e5 22 b4 ♔d5 23 ♔a4 is also good, cutting the black king off along a rank.



19...♔h4 20 ♔c2 ♖c8+ 21 ♔d3 ♖d8+ 22 ♔c4 ♖c8+ 23 ♔d5 ♖d8+ 24 ♔c6 ♖c8+ 25 ♔d6 ♖d8+ 26 ♔c6 ♖c8+ 27 ♔b7 ♖c4 28 ♖b1 ♖b4+ 29 ♔c6 ♖b3 30 ♔c5 ♔g5 31 ♔c4

Releasing the pawn.

31...♖b8 32 b4 ♔f6 33 ♖e1 ♖c8+ 34 ♔d5 ♖b8 35 ♔c5 ♖c8+ 36 ♔d6 1-0

After 36...♖b8 37 ♖b1 White wins easily.

Summary:

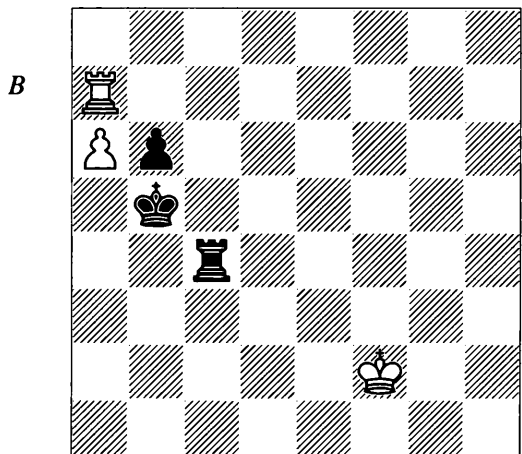
- In ♖+♔ vs ♖+♔ with pawns on adjacent files (not passed), the attacker can very occasionally win even though the defender’s king is adjacent to his pawn, but this can happen only in the most favourable situations.
- Normally winning chances only exist if the attacker’s rook cuts off the defender’s king

from the pawns. Then the attacker must improve his position as far as possible while retaining the cut-off. In order to attack the enemy pawn, the rook usually has to abandon the cut-off and the result then depends on whether the defender’s king can race back in time to save the resulting ♖+♔ vs ♖ position.

- As in the previous section, a good knowledge of ♖+♔ vs ♖ positions is essential in order to conduct this type of ending well.

8.7.4 Pawns on Adjacent Files, Passed

When the pawns have bypassed each other, play naturally becomes sharper. The most important factor is often not how far advanced a pawn is, but how far away the friendly king is. In the following example, White has a lost position even though his pawn is on the sixth rank.



Lysy – Galkin

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2005

At first sight it appears unlikely that Black will win this position. True, White’s king can be cut off along a file, but on the other hand White still has a pawn of his own, which indeed is passed and already on the sixth rank. However, White’s pawn is not as significant as it looks. His rook is severely restricted thanks to its poor position in front of the pawn, for if the pawn is lost, the resulting ♖+♔ vs ♖ will be hopeless for White. In the game Black won with very precise play.

1...♖e4!

It is essential to cut the king off as far away as possible. Other moves only draw; for example, after 1...♖c8? 2 ♔e3 ♔a5 3 ♔d3 b5 4 ♔d2 ♔b6 (4...♖c6 5 ♖a8 and 4...b4 5 ♖b7 also draw) 5 ♖h7 ♔xa6 6 ♖h1 ♔a5 (6...b4 7 ♖c1 draws) 7 ♖a1+ ♔b4 8 ♖b1+ ♔a4 9 ♖a1+ White is safe, while 1...♖a4? 2 ♔e3 ♖xa6 3 ♖c7 ♔b4 4 ♔d2 ♔b3 5 ♖c3+ is a clear draw.

2 ♖a8

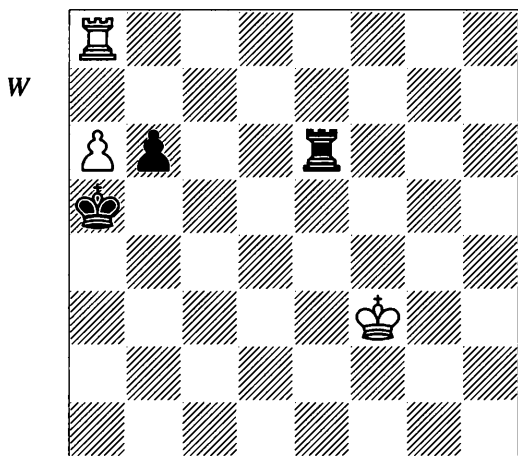
The best defence. 2 ♔f3?! loses more quickly after 2...♖e8 3 ♔f4 ♔a5 followed by ...b5 and ...♔b6, winning the pawn.

2...♖e6

The plan is ...♔a5 and then ...b5.

3 ♔f3

Trying to keep the a-pawn for as long as possible. 3 a7 ♔a6 4 ♔f3 ♔b7 wins for Black, as does 3 ♖d8 ♔xa6 4 ♖a8+ ♔b7 5 ♖a1 b5 6 ♖b1 ♔b6 7 ♔f3 ♔c5 8 ♖c1+ ♔d4 9 ♖b1 ♖b6 10 ♔e2 ♔c3 and after 11 ♔d1 ♖d6+ 12 ♔e2 b4 13 ♖c1+ ♔b2 or 11 ♖c1+ ♔b2 12 ♖h1 b4 Black will soon reach the Lucena position.

3...♔a5 (D)**4 ♔f4**

The greatest resistance is offered by 4 a7, but Black still comes out on top after 4...♔a6 5 ♔f4 ♔b7 6 ♖d8 ♔xa7 7 ♔f5 ♖e7! 8 ♔f4 (or 8 ♔f6 ♖e1 9 ♖d2 b5 10 ♖d6 b4 11 ♔f5 ♖e7 12 ♖d4 b3 13 ♖a4+ ♔b8 14 ♖a1 ♔c7 15 ♔f4 ♔c6 16 ♖b1 ♖b7 17 ♔e3 ♔c5 18 ♔d2 ♔b4 19 ♖h1 ♔a3 20 ♖a1+ ♔b2 and Black wins) 8...♔a6 (but not 8...b5? 9 ♖d6! with a draw) 9 ♖a8+ ♔b7 10 ♖h8 ♔c6 11 ♖c8+ ♔d5 12 ♖b8 ♔c5

13 ♖c8+ ♔b4 14 ♖c1 b5 15 ♖b1+ ♔c5 16 ♖c1+ ♔d4 17 ♖d1+ ♔c3 and White cannot avoid the Lucena position.

4...b5

Threatening to take the pawn.

5 a7 ♖e7!

Accuracy is still necessary. 5...♔a6? 6 ♖b8 is an immediate draw.

6 ♖d8

White finally decides to give up the pawn. 6 ♔f5 also loses after 6...b4 7 ♔f6 ♖h7 8 ♔e5 ♔a4 9 ♔d4 ♔a3! (9...b3? 10 ♖b8! ♖xa7 11 ♔c3 is only a draw) 10 ♔c4 (10 ♔c5 b3 11 ♔b6 b2 and Black wins) 10...b3 11 ♖b8 ♖c7+!

6...♖xa7 7 ♖d1

Threatening ♖a1+.

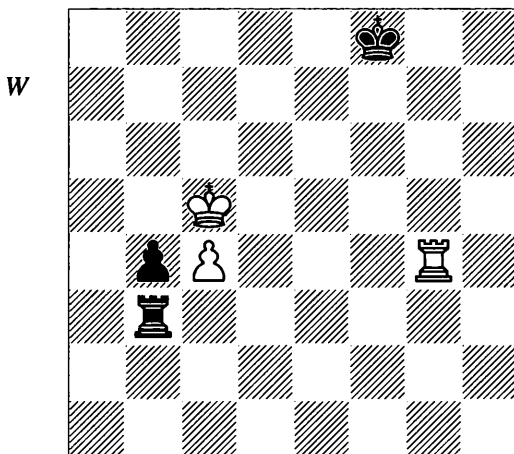
7...♖f7+! 8 ♔e5

Or 8 ♔e3 ♖e7+! 9 ♔d2 ♖d7+ 10 ♔c2 ♖xd1 11 ♔xd1 ♔a4 and Black wins.

8...b4 0-1

9 ♖a1+ ♔b5 10 ♔d4 ♖d7+ 11 ♔e3 b3 is an easy win for Black.

In the previous position, Black won the white pawn by following it back with his king, while his rook continued to cut off the white king. This is often the correct strategy, but not always.



Portilho – Toro Solis de Ovando
corr. 1994-8

This position is surprisingly deceptive and in order to win, White has to overcome a psychological barrier. His passed pawn is supported by his king while Black's is not, and White has the chance to cut off Black's king by using his rook,

but despite these advantages, the win is quite tricky.

1 ♖e4

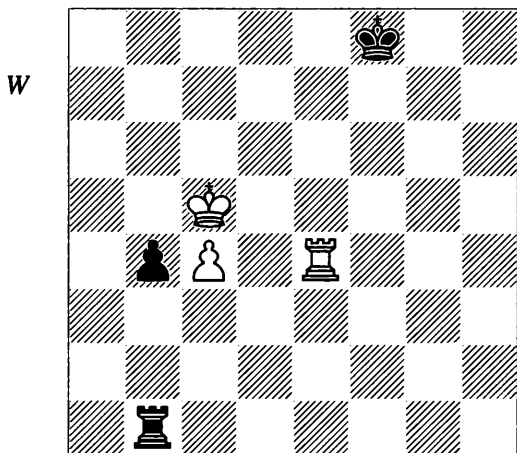
The only good move, cutting off the king immediately.

1...♜b1

Black cannot afford to wait; for example, 1...♟f7 2 ♟b5 ♜b1 3 c5 b3 4 ♜e3 b2 5 ♜e2 and White wins since the sideways attack on Black's pawn paralyzes Black's rook and the advance of the c-pawn will, sooner or later, force Black to abandon his pawn.

It is curious that White's strategy is totally different if Black plays 1...♜b2. Then the best line is 2 ♜e3! (2 ♜e1 is the only other winning move, but is slightly slower; 2 ♟c6? b3 3 c5 ♜c2 4 ♜b4 b2 is now only a draw because Black's rook is positioned so as to support the advance of his pawn to the seventh rank, so that after 5 ♟d6 ♟e8 6 ♜b8+ ♟f7 7 c6 ♜d2+ 8 ♟c7 ♟e7 9 ♜b3 ♜c2 10 ♟b7 ♟d6 White cannot win) 2...b3 3 ♟b4! (Black's pawn is blocked by the rook, which reveals the dark side of playing the rook to b2 rather than b1) 3...♜d2 4 ♟xb3 ♜d8 5 ♟b4 ♜b8+ 6 ♟a5 ♜c8 7 ♜c3 ♟e7 8 ♟b6 ♟d7 9 ♜d3+ followed by c5, winning. In this line White adopted the strategy of the previous example, following the enemy pawn back with his king. After the move played, however, White must adopt the opposite plan of advancing the king, while leaving the rook to restrain the enemy pawn by a sideways attack.

We now return to 1...♜b1 (D):



2 ♟b6?

2 ♜e3? is also bad due to 2...b3 3 ♟b4 b2 4 ♜e2 ♜d1 5 ♜xb2 ♟e8 with a comfortable draw.

The move played is natural but throws away the win. 2 ♟c6! is, surprisingly, the only route to victory. Blocking one's own pawn is counter-intuitive and it is notable that even in a correspondence game White failed to find the winning idea. The main line runs 2...b3 3 c5 ♜c1 4 ♜b4!, and now:

1) 4...♟e7 5 ♜xb3 is a win precisely because 5...♟d8 can be met by 6 ♜b8+ ♟e7 7 ♜c8 followed by ♟b7, etc. This line explains why it is wrong to play the king to b6, where it both blocks the b-file and gives Black's king more freedom to approach the c-pawn.

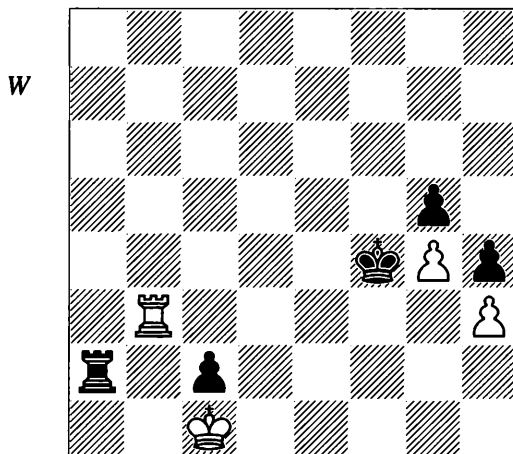
2) 4...♜c3 5 ♟d6! ♜d3+ (or 5...♟e8 6 c6 ♜d3+ 7 ♟c7 ♜c3 8 ♜e4+ ♟f7 9 ♟d7 b2 10 ♜b4 ♜c2 11 c7 ♜d2+ 12 ♟c6 ♜c2+ 13 ♟b7 and again White wins) 6 ♟c7 ♟e7 7 c6 ♜c3 8 ♜e4+ ♟f6 9 ♟d7 ♟f5 10 ♜b4 ♜d3+ 11 ♟c8 ♟e6 12 c7 ♜c3 13 ♟b7 and White wins.

2...b3 3 c5 ♜c1 4 ♜b4 ♟e7

In contrast to the previous note, here White cannot prevent Black's king from moving in front of the pawn, with an easy draw.

5 ♜xb3 ♟d7 1/2-1/2

In the following position Black missed a win based on yet another strategy for containing the enemy pawn: putting the rook in front of it.



M. Weiner – Kalish
corr. 1975

This position is winning for Black. He is a pawn ahead and his king is already close to

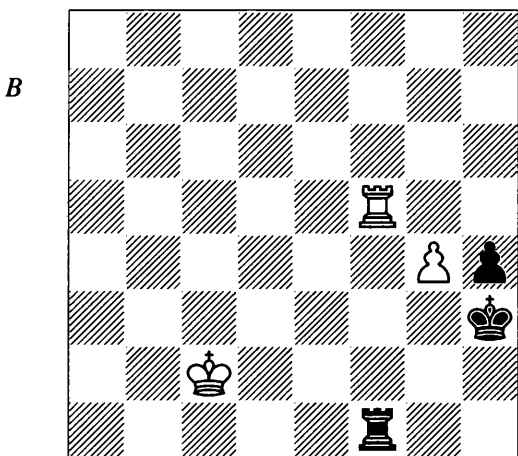
White's remaining pawns. The only problem is that at the moment White's rook is cutting Black's king off from the vulnerable h-pawn. In order to make progress, Black must give up the c-pawn to transfer his rook to f3 or g3 and thereby lift the blockade.

1 ♖c3 ♖a1+ 2 ♜xc2 ♖f1

This wins, but it would have been somewhat simpler to play 2...♖g1! 3 ♖c5 (after 3 ♜d2 ♖g3 4 ♖c4+ ♜f3 5 ♖c5 ♖xh3 6 ♖xg5 ♖g3 Black wins easily) 3...♜g3 4 ♖xg5 ♜xh3 5 ♜d3 ♜g3 6 ♖h5 ♖a1! 7 g5 (7 ♖h8 h3 8 g5 ♖a4 9 g6 ♖g4 10 ♖h6 h2 11 ♜e3 ♜g2 and Black wins thanks to the fifth-rank cut-off) 7...♖a5 8 ♜e4 h3 9 ♜d4 h2 10 ♜e4 ♖a4+, followed by ...♖h4, when the h-pawn promotes.

3 ♖c5 ♜g3 4 ♖xg5 ♜xh3 5 ♖f5 (D)

Thanks to the position of the rook on f1, White is able to release his g-pawn with gain of tempo, and this forces Black to continue accurately.



5...♖g1?

Throwing away the win. Here are the alternatives:

1) 5...♖a1? is also wrong and only leads to a draw after 6 ♜d3! ♜g3 (6...♜xg4 7 ♖f8 and 6...♜g2 7 g5 ♖a4 8 g6 ♖g4 9 ♜e2 ♖xg6 10 ♖f2+ ♜g3 11 ♖f3+ are also drawn) 7 g5 ♖a4 8 g6 ♖g4 9 ♜e2 h3 10 ♖f3+ and White is saved.

2) 5...♖e1! is the quickest: 6 g5 ♜g4 7 ♖f7 (or 7 ♖f8 ♖e7 8 g6 ♖g7 9 ♜d3 h3 10 ♜e3 h2 11 ♖h8 ♜g3 12 ♖h6 ♖e7+! 13 ♜d4 ♜g2 14 ♜d5 h1♖ 15 ♖xh1 ♜xh1 and Black wins the g-pawn) 7...♖e8 8 g6 ♖g8! (putting the rook in

front of the pawn is the correct strategy here, but not 8...h3? 9 ♖h7 ♜g3 10 g7 ♖g8 11 ♜d3 h2 12 ♜e4 and the king is just in time to support the g-pawn) 9 g7 h3 10 ♖d7 h2 11 ♖d4+ ♜g5 12 ♖d5+ ♜h6 13 ♖d6+ ♜xg7 14 ♖d1 ♖h8 15 ♖h1 ♜g6 16 ♜d3 ♜g5 17 ♜e3 ♜g4 18 ♜f2 ♜h3 and Black wins.

3) 5...♖h1! (this also wins, surprisingly so as it appears illogical to block the h-pawn) 6 g5 ♜g4 7 ♖d5 ♜h5! (the only move to win, preventing the further advance of the g-pawn) 8 ♖d8 (8 g6+ ♜xg6 9 ♖d6+ ♜f5 10 ♖d4 h3 wins for Black) 8...♜xg5 9 ♖g8+ ♜f6 10 ♖f8+ ♜g7 and now:

3a) 11 ♖f3 ♜g6! (11...h3? allows a Vančura draw following 12 ♜b2 ♜g6 13 ♖c3) 12 ♖d3 ♜f5 13 ♖d5+ ♜e4 14 ♖d8 h3 15 ♖h8 ♜f3 and Black wins by hiding the king on h2.

3b) 11 ♖f4 h3 (this wins because White's king is one square away from the safe zone on a2 and b2) 12 ♜b2 ♖h2+! (the only winning move; once again 12...♜g6? 13 ♖f3 is a Vančura draw) 13 ♜b3 ♖g2 14 ♖h4 h2 15 ♜c3 ♜g6 16 ♜d3 ♜g5 17 ♖h8 ♜f4 and Black is in time to prevent White's king from approaching the pawn.

6 g5

The rook is poorly placed on g1 because if Black moves his king out of the path of the h-pawn then it will block the g1-rook's action along the file.

6...♖g2+?!

6...♜g4 7 ♖f8 h3 8 g6 is also a draw, but 6...♖g4! is a better try. Then:

1) 7 ♜d3? loses after 7...♜g2! 8 ♜e3 h3 9 ♖f2+ ♜g1 10 ♖e2 h2 11 ♜f3 h1♖+ 12 ♜xg4, although this ending is not all that easy to win. One line runs 12...♖d5 13 ♖e7 ♖d6 14 ♖e4 ♜f2 15 ♖f4+ ♜g2 16 ♖e4 ♖d7+ 17 ♜f4 ♖f7+ 18 ♜e3 ♖f5 and the pawn falls.

2) 7 ♖d5! (the only drawing move, preparing to check along the d-file) 7...♜g2 8 ♖d2+ ♜f3 9 ♖d3+ ♜e4 10 ♖h3 ♜f5 11 ♜d2 and White is out of trouble.

7 ♜d3

White has an easy time now that his king is so close.

7...♜h2 8 ♜e3 h3 9 ♜f3 ♜h1 10 ♖a5 h2 11 ♖b5 ♖g1 12 ♜f2 ♖g2+ 1/2-1/2

Summary:

In ♖+♙ vs ♗+♙ with passed pawns on adjacent files, the main task for the attacker is to keep the enemy passed pawn under control while advancing his own. There are three basic methods for achieving this:

- When the defender's rook is in front of the pawn, the attacker can run back with his king, always keeping in contact with the enemy pawn.
- Again with the defender's rook in front of the pawn, the attacker can keep his rook on the same rank as the enemy pawn while at the same time cutting off the defender's king. Then he will run up the board with his king and pawn.
- When the defender's rook is to the side of the pawn, the attacker can sometimes place his rook in front of the enemy pawn, although he cannot then use his rook for a cut-off at the same time.

8.7.5 Pawns at Least Two Files Apart

With both pawns passed, a great deal depends on whether it's possible for the players to support their passed pawns with their kings.

In the following position (*see next diagram*), White's king is actively supporting his own pawn, but Black's king is far away from the f-pawn. The position is winning for White, since his pawn is well advanced and Black's king is uncomfortably posted on the edge of the board. However, he made the mistake of allowing Black's king to cross the board and join up with his pawn, although Black failed to make the most of his opportunity.

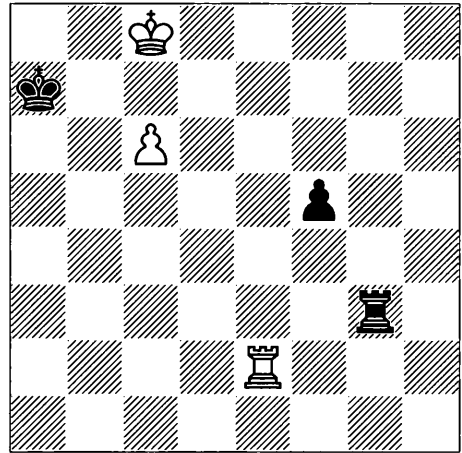
1 c7 ♖c3

1...f4 loses straight away after 2 ♖a2+ ♚b6 3 ♚b8.

2 ♖a2+?

It's odd to make such a serious error in a correspondence game. White had several possible routes to victory; for example, 2 ♖b2! f4 3 ♖b7+ ♚a6 (or 3...♚a8 4 ♖b8+ ♚a7 5 ♚d7) 4 ♚b8 or 2 ♖e7! f4 3 ♚d8 and in both cases White wins the rook and secures a winning position.

W



Grossmann – Pinkerneil
corr. 1986-7

2...♚b6

Black's king starts to move towards the f-pawn, ready to support it after he has given up his rook for the c-pawn.

3 ♖b2+ ♚c6!

The only move to draw, since Black loses after 3...♚c5? 4 ♖d2 ♖h3 (4...♚b6 5 ♖d6+ ♚c5 6 ♚d7 also wins for White) 5 ♖d8 f4 6 ♖f8 ♚c6 7 ♖f6+ ♚d5 8 ♖xf4.

4 ♖d2

White attempts to prevent Black's king from making further progress.

4...♖h3

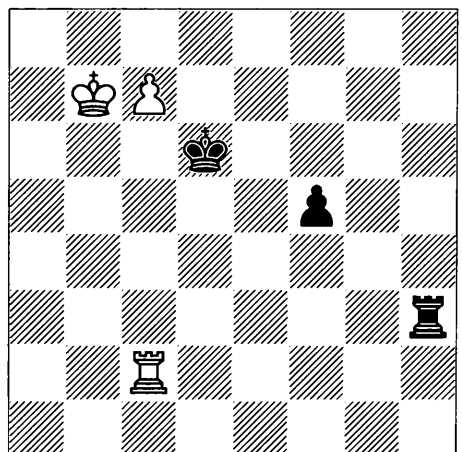
This prevents both ♚d8 and ♚b8, due to ...♖h8+ and ...♖b3+ respectively.

5 ♖c2+

The only way to make progress, but now the black king joins up with the f-pawn.

5...♚d6 6 ♚b7 (D)

B



6...♖h7?

The losing move. After this White is able to force Black to give up his rook by playing ♖b6, effectively gaining a tempo for free. By playing 6...♖h8, Black could have given up his rook with the white king still on b7, which makes all the difference: 7 c8♞ ♖xc8 8 ♖xc8 f4 (not 8...♔e5? 9 ♔c6 f4 10 ♔c5 ♔e4 11 ♔c4 ♔e3 12 ♔c3 f3 13 ♖e8+, when White wins) 9 ♖f8 ♔e5 10 ♔c6 ♔e4 11 ♔c5 f3 12 ♔c4 ♔e3 and Black draws.

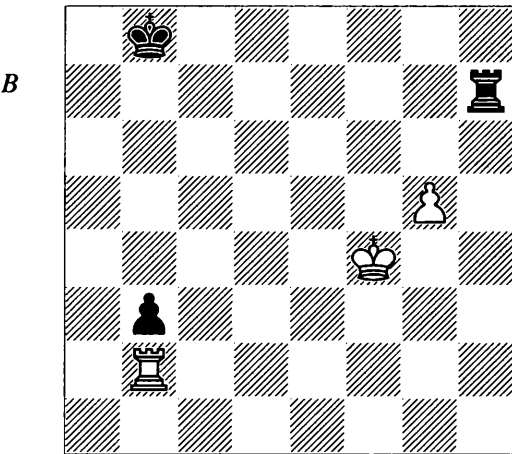
7 ♖b6 ♖xc7

7...♖h8 8 c8♞ ♖xc8 9 ♖xc8 ♔d5 10 ♖f8 ♔e4 11 ♔c5 f4 12 ♔c4 ♔e3 13 ♔c3 f3 14 ♖e8+ is also winning for White.

8 ♖xc7 ♔d5 9 ♖b5 1-0

White wins after 9...f4 10 ♖f7 ♔e4 11 ♔c4 ♔e3 12 ♔c3 f3 13 ♖e7+.

Sometimes the defender's king can support his pawn even when it is initially far away. In the next example, Black resigned even though he could have drawn.

**M. Noble – A. O'Brien**

Chessfriend.com 2004

At first glance, this position looks lost for Black, since he must defend the b-pawn or else White reaches a winning ♖+♔ vs ♖ position, but with his rook tied to b3, there is little Black can do to prevent the advance of the g-pawn. Black was evidently convinced by this logic, because after just one more move he resigned, even though the position is a draw.

1...♖f7+

1...♖b7 also draws, much as in the analysis below.

2 ♔e5 1-0

Resignation is a mistake, as the following lines show:

1) 2...♖e7+? 3 ♔f6! ♖e3 (3...♖b7 leaves Black a tempo down and White wins after 4 g6 ♔a7 5 g7 ♖b8 6 ♔f7 ♖b7+ 7 ♔g6 ♖b8 8 ♔h7) 4 ♖g2! (otherwise Black starts harassing checks from behind; 4 ♖f2? is slower and only draws after 4...♔b7 5 g6 ♔a6 6 g7 ♖g3) 4...♖f3+ 5 ♔e5 ♔c7 6 g6 ♖e3+ 7 ♔f6 ♖f3+ 8 ♔g5 ♖f8 9 g7 ♖g8 10 ♔f6 ♔d6 11 ♖b2 ♖b8 12 ♖h2! (not 12 ♖xb3? ♖xb3 13 g8♞ ♖f3+, when Black draws) 12...b2 (or else ♖h8) 13 ♖d2+ followed by ♖xb2, winning.

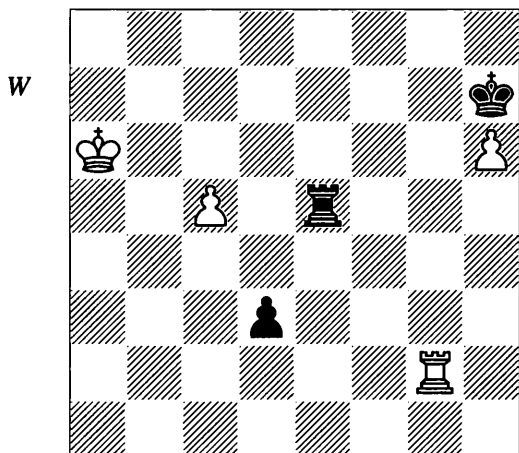
2) 2...♖f3? 3 ♖g2! ♔c7 transposes to line 1 after Black's 5th move.

3) 2...♖b7! 3 g6 ♔a7! is the key idea. Black's king sneaks up the a-file to support his pawn, being careful not to block the rook's guard along the b-file. It seems that Black will be too slow, but appearances are deceptive: 4 ♔f6 ♔a6 5 g7 ♖b6+! (5...♖b8? loses to 6 ♖xb3) 6 ♔f7 (it looks as if Black will be one tempo short if White plays his king round to h7) 6...♖b7+ 7 ♔g6 (White has no choice but to put his king on the g-file at some point, and then Black has a tactical defence) 7...♖b8! 8 ♔h7 (8 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 9 g8♞ ♖g3+ draws) 8...♔a5! and Black is now able to support his pawn with ...♔a4 or ...♔b4, since 9 ♖xb3 ♖xb3 10 g8♞ runs into 10...♖h3+ followed by ...♖g3+ and White's queen falls.

In the following diagram, White is winning as his king is ready to support the c-pawn, while Black's king is as far away from the d-pawn as is possible. Moreover, the black king is cut off by White's rook, at least for the moment. Despite these advantages, White must take care in order to win.

1 ♔b6

This is sufficient to win, but it would have been quicker to play the more direct 1 c6! ♖c5 2 ♔b6 ♖c2 3 ♖g7+ (3 c7 ♖xg2 4 c8♞ also wins, but requires White to win ♞ vs ♞) 3...♔xh6 (after 3...♔h8 4 ♖d7 ♖b2+ 5 ♔c7 d2 6 ♖d5 White wins the same way) 4 ♖d7 d2 5 ♖d5! (a cut-off



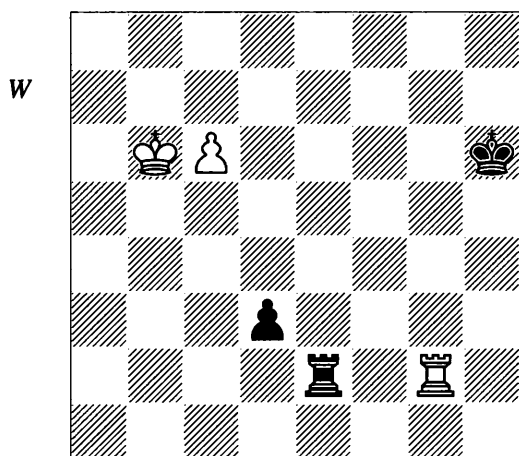
Sellberg – Jenkins
corr. 1986

preventing Black's king from moving towards the d-pawn) 5...♖b2+ 6 ♔c7 ♕g6 7 ♔d7 ♕f6 8 c7 and White wins.

1...♕xh6

White also wins after 1...♖e2 2 ♖g4 ♖b2+ 3 ♕c7 d2 4 ♖d4 ♕xh6 5 c6 ♕g5 6 ♔d8! (it is important to keep d7 clear since after 6 ♔d7? ♕f5 7 c7 ♕e5! there is no safe square for White's rook on the d-file; for example, 8 ♖d3 ♕e4 or 8 ♖d6 ♖c2) 6...♕f5 7 c7 ♕e5 8 ♖d7! ♖c2 9 c8♖.

2 c6 ♖e2 (D)



Dannberg – Klompus
corr. 1962-5

3 ♖g1?

Giving Black the chance to draw. There were two ways to win:

1) 3 ♖g4! is simplest and after 3...♖b2+ 4 ♕c7 d2 5 ♖d4 play transposes into the note to Black's first move.

2) 3 c7 ♖xg2 4 c8♖ ♖b2+ 5 ♔a5 d2 6 ♖d7 ♕g5 7 ♔a4 ♕f6 8 ♔a3 picks up the d-pawn, but then White has to win ♖ vs ♖.

Moving the rook to g1 is wrong because it cannot switch to an active post on d3 or d4.

3...♖b2+! 4 ♕c7 d2

The only move to draw, this ties the white rook down to the first rank and prevents White from correcting his earlier error.

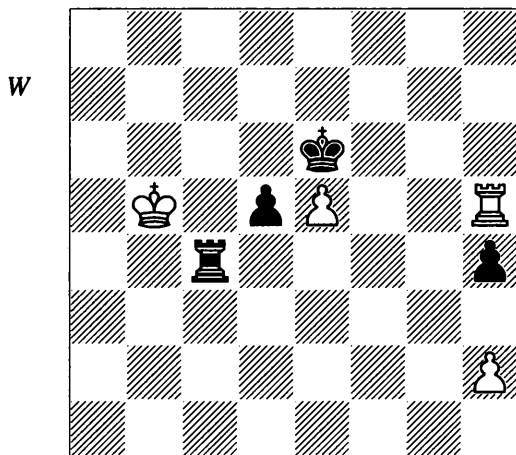
5 ♔d7 ♖b3

Moving the rook to a position from which it has free access to the b-, c- and d-files to harass White's king.

6 c7 1/2-1/2

After 6...♖d3+ 7 ♕e7 ♖e3+ it's a clear draw.

The defender's chances are reduced if his pawn is not well advanced and cannot be supported by his king.



Despite the equal material, this position looks lost for White. His own passed pawn is blocked, while Black's is free to advance; moreover, White's king is cut off from the enemy d-pawn by Black's rook. However, despite these advantages the position is not at all easy to win. Black's rook is tied to defending the h-pawn, and if it moves along the rank, the white king is no longer cut off.

1 h3

After 1 ♖h6+ ♕xe5 2 ♖h5+ ♕e6 3 ♖h6+ (3 ♖h8 ♕f5 4 h3 ♖c7 5 ♖xh4 ♕e5 is essentially the same as the game) 3...♕f5 4 ♖h5+ ♕g4 5

$\mathbb{E}xd5$ $\mathbb{K}c2$ 6 $\mathbb{E}d4+$ $\mathbb{C}h3$ 7 $\mathbb{C}b4$ $\mathbb{E}xh2$ there is no Vančura draw because White's pieces are far away from the ideal set-up of king on b2 and rook on the c-file. However, this is a marginal case and were White's king on b3 or his rook on c4 then he would be able to draw. The finish might be 8 $\mathbb{E}d3+$ $\mathbb{C}g4$ 9 $\mathbb{E}d4+$ $\mathbb{C}g5$ 10 $\mathbb{E}d5+$ $\mathbb{C}g6$ 11 $\mathbb{E}d6+$ $\mathbb{C}f5$ 12 $\mathbb{E}d5+$ $\mathbb{C}e4$ 13 $\mathbb{K}c5$ $\mathbb{E}d2$ 14 $\mathbb{E}h5$ $\mathbb{E}d4+$ 15 $\mathbb{C}c5$ $\mathbb{C}e3$ 16 $\mathbb{E}h8$ $\mathbb{E}g4$ 17 $\mathbb{C}d5$ $\mathbb{C}f4$ 18 $\mathbb{E}h7$ $\mathbb{C}g3$ and the pawn advances.

1... $\mathbb{K}c8!$

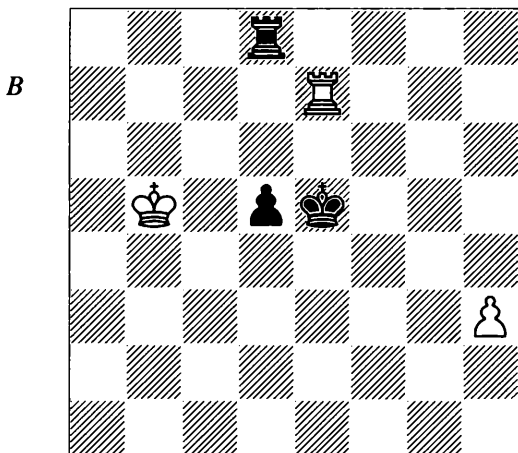
A well-judged liquidation. Exchanging the e5- and h4-pawns leads to a winning position for Black based on his well-supported d-pawn.

2 $\mathbb{E}xh4$ $\mathbb{C}xe5$ 3 $\mathbb{E}h7$ $\mathbb{E}d8$

This may look odd as it lifts the c-file cut-off, but White's king is poorly placed on b5 and cannot move in front of the d-pawn in any case.

4 $\mathbb{E}e7+$ (D)

Or 4 $\mathbb{C}c6$ d4 5 $\mathbb{C}c7$ $\mathbb{E}f8$ 6 h4 d3 7 h5 d2 8 $\mathbb{E}d7$ $\mathbb{E}f7$ 9 $\mathbb{E}xf7$ d1♙ and the h-pawn falls in a couple of moves.



4... $\mathbb{C}d6?!$

An inaccuracy making the win much harder. The quickest route to victory is 4... $\mathbb{C}f4$ 5 $\mathbb{C}b4$ d4 6 $\mathbb{E}f7+$ $\mathbb{C}e3$ 7 $\mathbb{E}e7+$ $\mathbb{C}d2$ 8 $\mathbb{C}b3$ d3 9 h4 (9 $\mathbb{C}b2$ $\mathbb{E}b8+$ 10 $\mathbb{C}a2$ $\mathbb{C}c2$ 11 $\mathbb{K}c7+$ $\mathbb{C}d1$ 12 h4 d2 13 $\mathbb{E}d7$ $\mathbb{E}e8$ 14 $\mathbb{C}b2$ $\mathbb{C}e2$ also wins for Black) 9... $\mathbb{C}d1$ 10 h5 d2 11 $\mathbb{C}b2$ $\mathbb{E}h8$ 12 $\mathbb{E}g7$ $\mathbb{E}xh5$ 13 $\mathbb{E}g1+$ $\mathbb{C}e2$ 14 $\mathbb{E}g2+$ $\mathbb{C}e1$ and White is helpless.

5 $\mathbb{E}b7$

5 $\mathbb{E}e2$ is more stubborn, although Black can still win by 5... $\mathbb{E}b8+$ 6 $\mathbb{C}a4$ d4 7 $\mathbb{C}a3$ $\mathbb{C}d5!$ (not

7... $\mathbb{C}c5?$ 8 $\mathbb{E}b2$) 8 $\mathbb{E}b2$ $\mathbb{E}g8!$ 9 $\mathbb{E}b7$ $\mathbb{C}e4$ 10 $\mathbb{C}b2$ $\mathbb{C}e3$ 11 h4 d3 12 h5 $\mathbb{E}g2+$ 13 $\mathbb{C}b3$ $\mathbb{E}h2$ 14 $\mathbb{E}e7+$ $\mathbb{C}d2$ 15 $\mathbb{E}g7$ $\mathbb{C}e2!$ (not 15... $\mathbb{E}xh5?$, when White draws by 16 $\mathbb{E}g2+$ $\mathbb{C}e3$ 17 $\mathbb{E}g3+$ $\mathbb{C}e2$ 18 $\mathbb{C}c3!$ $\mathbb{K}c5+$ 19 $\mathbb{C}d4$) 16 $\mathbb{E}g6$ d2 17 $\mathbb{E}e6+$ $\mathbb{C}d1$ 18 h6 (now Black wins using the Lasker manoeuvre from Section 8.4.4) 18... $\mathbb{C}c1$ 19 $\mathbb{K}c6+$ $\mathbb{C}b1$ 20 $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{E}h3+$ 21 $\mathbb{C}b4$ $\mathbb{C}c2$ 22 $\mathbb{K}c6+$ $\mathbb{C}b2$ 23 $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{E}h4+$ 24 $\mathbb{C}b5$ $\mathbb{C}c2$ 25 $\mathbb{K}c6+$ $\mathbb{C}b3$ 26 $\mathbb{E}d6$ $\mathbb{E}h5+$ 27 $\mathbb{C}b6$ $\mathbb{E}xh6$.

5... $\mathbb{C}e5!$

Black now realizes that his last move was wrong and correctly decides to backtrack.

6 $\mathbb{C}a4$

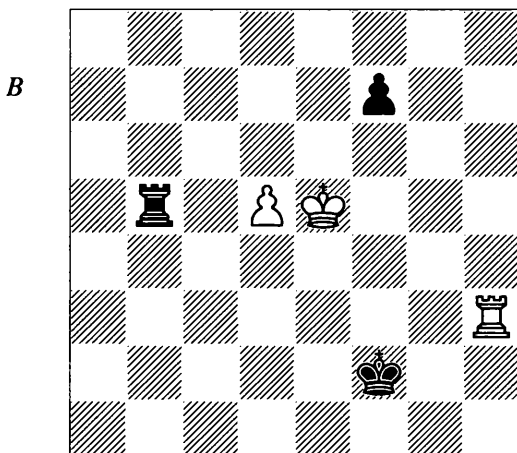
White surprisingly decides not to repeat moves by 6 $\mathbb{E}e7+$, perhaps seeing the win given in the note to Black's fourth move.

6...d4

Now it's easy.

7 $\mathbb{E}b1$ d3 8 $\mathbb{C}b3$ $\mathbb{C}d4$ 9 $\mathbb{E}h1$ $\mathbb{E}b8+$ 0-1

The following position again shows the importance of uniting the defender's king and pawn, although this time it is the pawn that must move to the king rather than the other way around.



Pommerel – De Wolf
Dutch e-mail Ch 2001

White has the advantage as his pawn is more advanced and is supported by his king, but Black can draw if he plays correctly.

1... $\mathbb{C}e2?$

Black at once makes a mistake. White was threatening to win by playing $\mathbb{E}h7$, and this

move does little to counter the threat. 1...f5? is also bad due to 2 ♖h5! f4 3 ♕xf4 and the d5-pawn is defended, so the only way to draw was by 1...f6+! 2 ♕e6 (2 ♕d4 f5 is similar) 2...f5 3 d6 f4 4 d7 ♖b8 and Black's pawn is united with his king. Having missed this relatively simple draw, Black now falls into a lost position.

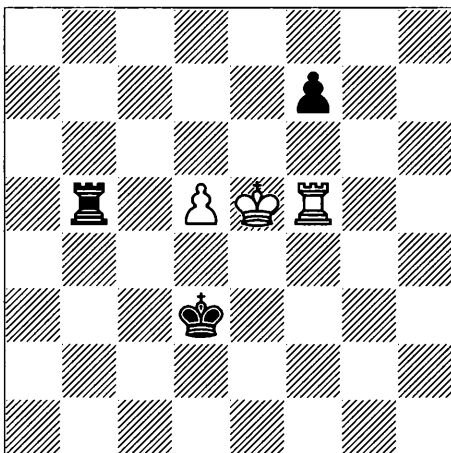
2 ♖h5?

White immediately hands the half-point back again. The winning line, which admittedly is quite complex, runs 2 ♖h7! ♖b7 (threatening ...f6+, so White cannot play d6 at once; 2...f5 3 ♖f7 ♕d3 4 ♖xf5 ♕c4 5 ♕e6 is also a win for White) 3 ♕d4! (a tricky move, which keeps Black's king at bay while White improves his position by playing d6; 3 ♕d6? only draws after 3...♕d3 4 ♕c6 ♖a7! 5 d6 ♖a6+ 6 ♕c7 f5 7 d7 ♖a8 8 d8♙+ ♖xd8 9 ♕xd8 f4) 3...♕f3 4 d6 ♕f4 5 ♕c5! (5 ♕d5? ♖a7! 6 ♕c6 ♖a6+ 7 ♕c7 f5 8 d7 ♖a8 is again a draw) 5...♖a7 6 ♕b6 ♖a8 7 d7 ♖f8 (after 7...f5 8 ♖e7! White gains a vital tempo by threatening ♖e8; then 8...♖d8 9 ♕c7 ♖a8 10 ♖e8 ♖a7+ 11 ♕c6 ♖a6+ 12 ♕b5 ♖d6 13 d8♙ ♖xd8 14 ♖xd8 ♕e3 15 ♕c4 f4 16 ♕c3 f3 17 ♖e8+ wins for White) 8 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 9 d8♙ and White has reached ♙ vs ♖.

2...♕d3!

The only move to draw. Black must be prepared to jettison his f-pawn in order to reach a drawing position with his king on the short side of the pawn.

3 ♖f5 (D)



3...♖b7?

Too materialistic. Defending the f7-pawn gives White enough time to improve his position and win with the d-pawn. Black could have saved the game by 3...♕c4! 4 ♖f4+ (4 ♕d6 ♕d4 5 ♖f4+ ♕e3 6 ♖xf7 ♕e4 7 ♖e7+ ♕d4 8 ♖e5 ♖b6+ 9 ♕c7 ♕xe5 is also a draw) 4...♕c5! 5 ♖xf7 ♖b1 6 ♖c7+ ♕b6 7 d6 ♖h1 with a standard theoretical draw. Knowing typical positions such as this is a massive help in playing more complex rook and pawn endings.

4 d6

Black's f-pawn is firmly blockaded, while White's pawn has edged forward. There is now no defence.

4...♕c4

Other moves also lose, although accurate play is required in some lines:

1) 4...♕e3 5 ♖g5! (intending ♖g3+) 5...♖b5+ (White wins after 5...♕f3 6 ♖g8 ♖a7 7 ♖d8 followed by d7) 6 ♕f6 ♖b7 7 ♖d5 ♕e4 (7...♖d7 8 ♕e5 ♕f3 9 ♖d1 ♕e3 10 ♖c1 followed by ♖c7 is decisive) 8 d7! (8 ♖d1? ♖d7 is a draw) 8...♕xd5 9 d8♙+ and White wins as Black's pawn is cut off from his remaining pieces; for example, 9...♕c6 10 ♙a8 ♕b6 11 ♙e8 ♖c7 12 ♕e5 ♖c5+ 13 ♕d4 ♖c7 14 ♙a4 ♖a7 15 ♙b3+ ♕c6 16 ♙d5+ ♕b6 17 ♙d6+ ♕b7 18 ♕c5 ♖a5+ 19 ♕b4 and White wins.

2) 4...♖a7 5 ♖f1! (the only move to win; 5 ♖f2? ♖a5+ 6 ♕f6 ♖d5 7 ♕e7 f5 8 d7 ♕e4 is only a draw) 5...♕e2 (5...♖a5+ 6 ♕f6 ♕e2 7 ♖f5 ♖a7 8 ♖c5 ♖d7 9 ♕e5 f5 10 ♖d5 and White wins) 6 ♖c1 ♖a5+ 7 ♕d4 ♖a6 8 ♕d5 ♖a3 9 ♖c6! (the plan is ♕e5 and then d7, but not 9 d7? at once, since 9...♖d3+ 10 ♕c6 f5 11 ♖c4 ♕e3 draws) 9...♕e3 10 ♕e5! ♖d3 11 ♕f6 ♕e4 12 ♕xf7 ♕d5 13 ♖a6 ♕c5 14 ♕e7 ♕b5 15 ♖a1 and White wins.

5 ♖f1!

Intending ♖c1+ followed by ♖c7.

5...♖b5+ 6 ♕e4 ♖b7 7 ♖c1+ ♕b5 8 ♕d5 ♕b6 9 ♖e1

Threatening ♖e7.

9...♖b8 10 ♖b1+ ♕a7 11 ♖c1 ♖d8

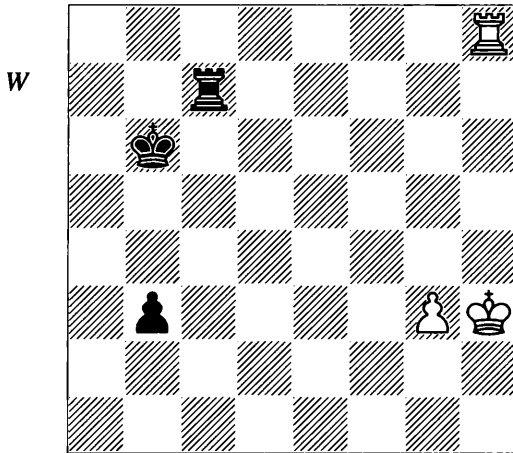
11...♖b5+ 12 ♕c6 ♖b6+ 13 ♕c7 ♖b7+ 14 ♕d8 also wins for White.

12 ♖a1+ ♕b8 13 ♕c6 ♖c8+ 14 ♕d7

White hasn't followed the optimal winning line, but his play proves sufficient in the end.

14...♖c2 15 ♜b1+ ♔a7 16 ♜e1 ♘b7 17 ♘e7
♜d2 18 d7 f5 19 d8♞ ♜xd8 20 ♘xd8 ♘c6 1-0

We now move on to positions in which the defender's king is able to support his pawn. In order for the attacker to have winning chances, the defender's pawn must be far back. While positions like this might seem to be little more than a race, ideas such as the fifth-rank cut-off often play a part. In the following example, Black missed a win based on a strikingly counter-intuitive move and played instead to win the enemy rook as quickly as possible. As we noted in Section 8.4.8 (page 73), this is sometimes a mistake.



Jobe – Nowicki
IECC e-mail 2000

Black's advantage is obvious because his pawn is more advanced than White's, but at first sight it appears unlikely that his advantage is sufficient to win. Black's king is not yet supporting the b-pawn, while by pushing his king and g-pawn White seems to have good prospects of saving the game after he eventually has to give up his rook for the b-pawn. It turns out that a surprising resource enables Black to win, but in the game he overlooked the key idea and had to settle for a draw.

1 ♜b8+

The best move, forcing Black's rook to move off the c-file and thereby preventing ...♜b2 followed by ...♜c1, which would promote the pawn at once.

1...♜b7 2 ♜f8

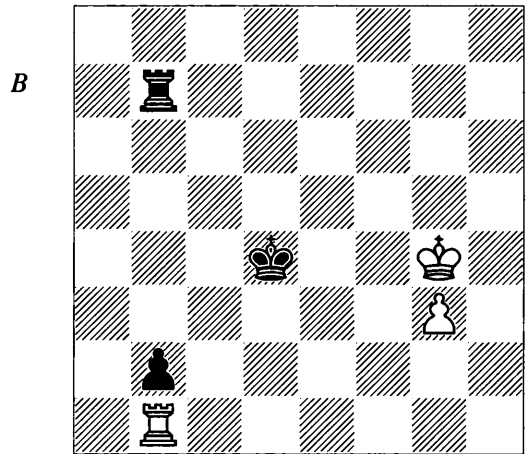
Preparing to switch to the first rank.

2...♘c5 3 ♜f1 b2 4 ♜b1 ♘d4!

The only move to win, for reasons that Black fails to appreciate.

5 ♘g4 (D)

The best chance, trying to cross to the other side of the pawn before pushing it. After 5 g4 ♘c3 Black wins quite simply: 6 ♘g3 (after 6 ♘h4 ♘c2 7 ♜xb2+ ♜xb2 8 g5 ♘d3 9 ♘h5 ♘e4 10 g6 ♘f5 Black is too quick, while 6 g5 ♜b4! is a fifth-rank cut-off) 6...♘c2 7 ♜h1 b1♞ 8 ♜xb1 ♜xb1 9 ♘f4 ♘d3 10 g5 ♘d4 11 ♘f5 ♘d5 12 ♘f6 ♘d6 13 g6 ♜f1+ followed by ...♘e7.



5...♘c3?

This mechanical move allows White to get away with a draw. Here is a clear case of chess psychology (even though this was a correspondence game, psychological factors can still be important). It's so normal for the attacker's king to march up the board to enforce the promotion of a passed pawn that Black probably didn't consider any other move. Yet the winning idea was there, if only Black had been prepared to overcome the mental block and consider moving the king away from the passed pawn. 5...♘e4! would have been decisive, preventing White's king from moving to the f-file. Now White faces a dilemma, since if he retreats to the h-file Black gains a tempo, while playing ♘g5 allows Black to improve his rook position by checking:

1) After 6 ♜e1+ ♘d3 7 ♜b1 ♘c2 Black gains a crucial tempo and wins: 8 ♜h1 b1♞ 9

♖xb1 ♖xb1 10 ♕f5 ♕d3 11 g4 ♕d4 12 g5 ♕d5 13 ♕f6 ♕d6 14 g6 ♖f1+.

2) 6 ♕h4 ♕d3 again wins a tempo for Black since White's king has been forced back to the h-file; after 7 ♕g5 ♕c2 8 ♖h1 b1♗ 9 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 10 ♕f5 ♕d3 11 g4 ♕d4 12 g5 ♕d5 play transposes to line 1.

3) 6 ♕g5 ♖b5+! 7 ♕g4 (after 7 ♕f6 ♕f3 8 ♕e6 ♕xg3 9 ♕d6 ♕f3 10 ♕c6 ♖b8! 11 ♕c5 ♕e3 12 ♕c4 ♕d2 White is one tempo too late) 7...♕d3 (the point of Black's idea is that White is now unable to play the drawing move ♕f5, as occurs in the game) 8 ♕f4 ♕c2 9 ♖h1 b1♗ 10 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 11 g4 ♕d3 12 g5 ♕d4 13 ♕f5 ♕d5 14 ♕f6 ♕d6 15 g6 ♖f1+ and Black wins.

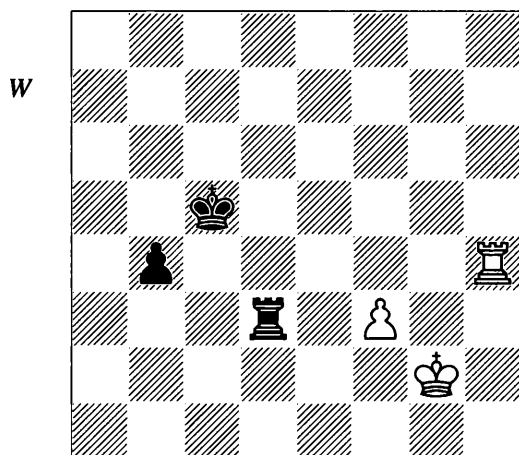
6 ♕f5!

The only drawing move.

6...♖b5+ 1/2-1/2

6...♕c2 7 ♖h1 b1♗ 8 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 9 g4 ♕d3 10 g5 ♕d4 11 g6 ♕d5 12 ♕f6 ♖f1+ 13 ♕e7! is also drawn, while after the move played, 7 ♕f6 ♖b4 8 ♕f5 ♕c2 9 ♖h1 b1♗ 10 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 11 g4 leads to a draw as before.

The following position is slightly similar, but the play is quite different.



Lerner – Serper
Moscow 1992

Black's more advanced pawn gives him the advantage, but it usually requires a substantial advantage to win positions of ♖+♔ vs ♖+♔. The reason is that the attacker's king usually has to advance to support his own pawn, so that when the defender finally has to give up his

rook for the pawn, the attacker's king is far away. This often allows the defender to draw the resulting ending of ♖ vs ♔. However, such positions often contain intricate finesses and careful calculation may be necessary to find the right move.

1 ♖h8?!

This is the losing move according to Serper's notes in *Informator 56*, but it is the next move which proves fatal. When fighting against an enemy passed pawn, the defender often faces the decision as to whether to play his rook behind the pawn (as was intended by 1 ♖h8) or to stop the pawn by retreating the rook to the first rank. There's no general rule to indicate which method is better, and here both plans should lead to a draw. In this case it takes two moves to play the rook behind the pawn and only one to retreat it to the first rank, and White can use the extra tempo to develop counterplay with the f-pawn: 1 ♕g3! b3 2 ♕g4! (White's king advances as quickly as possible, thus avoiding the possibility that it falls victim to a fifth-rank cut-off) 2...b2 (2...♖d1 3 ♖h2 ♕b4 4 f4 ♕a3 5 f5 b2 6 ♖xb2 ♕xb2 7 f6 ♖f1 transposes) 3 ♖h1 ♕c4 (3...♖b3 4 ♖b1 ♕d4 5 f4 is also drawn) 4 f4 ♖c3 5 ♖b1 ♕b3 6 f5 ♖c1 7 ♖xb2+ ♕xb2 8 f6 ♖f1 9 ♕g5 ♕c3 10 ♕g6 ♕d4 11 f7 ♕e5 12 ♕g7 and White is just in time.

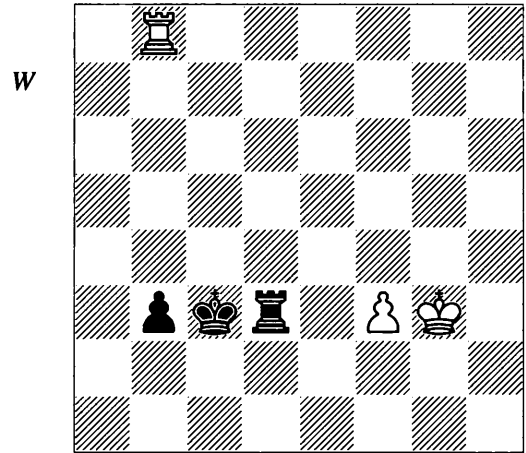
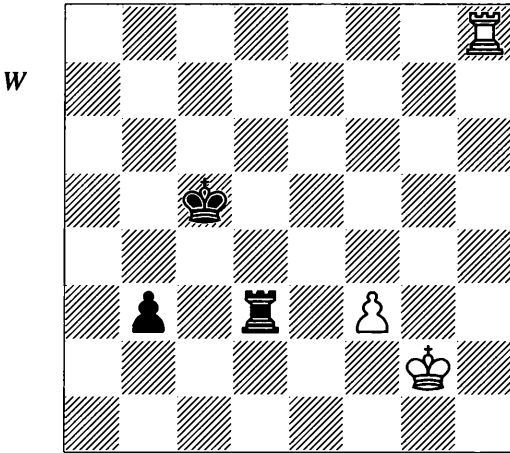
White can also draw by 1 ♕f2 b3 and now 2 ♖h8, transposing into note 1 to White's second move. Note, however, that 2 ♕e2? loses to 2...b2 3 ♖h1 (the ♖+♔ vs ♗ position after 3 ♕xd3 b1♗+ is lost for White because the pawn is on the third rank, which is a losing rank with a bishop's pawn or centre pawn, although the win is quite lengthy and difficult) 3...♖b3 4 ♖b1 ♕b4 and Black wins with ...♕a3 and ...♕a2 because the white king is cut off along the third rank.

1...b3 (D)

2 ♕g3?

This fails because White's pawn is now pinned, so he is committed to playing his king to the fourth rank, which allows Black to transfer his rook behind his own pawn with gain of tempo by means of a check on d4. White had two basic drawing plans:

1) 2 ♕f2 is the simpler idea of the two, aiming to use the king to interfere with the



promotion of Black's pawn: 2...♔c4 (2...♔d4 3 ♔e2 b2 4 ♚d8+ ♔c4 5 ♚c8+ and White draws comfortably) 3 ♔e2 ♚d5 (3...b2 4 ♚c8+ is again a draw) 4 ♚c8+ ♔b4 5 ♚b8+ ♔c3 6 ♚c8+ ♔b2 7 ♔e3 and now White's king can freely advance to support the f-pawn without being cut off.

2) 2 f4 is the second plan, aiming to use the f-pawn to distract Black (White can also initiate this plan by 2 ♚b8 ♔c4 3 f4). Then 2...♔c4 3 ♚b8 ♔c3 4 f5 ♚d5 (4...b2 5 f6 ♚d7 6 ♚c8+ ♔d2 7 ♚b8 ♔c2 8 ♚c8+ ♔b1 9 ♔g3 ♚f7 10 ♚c6 is also drawn) 5 f6 ♚g5+ 6 ♔h3 ♚f5 7 ♚b6 b2 (threatening ...♚xf6) 8 ♚c6+! ♔d2 9 ♚b6 ♔c2 10 ♚c6+ ♔b1 11 ♔g4 leads to a draw.

2...♔c4!

Now there is no escape for White.

3 ♚c8+

Or 3 ♔g4 b2 4 ♚c8+ (it's too late to retreat to the first rank, since after 4 ♚h1 White has lost a vital tempo and Black wins by 4...♚b3 5 ♚b1 ♔d3 6 f4 ♔c2 7 ♚h1 b1♚ 8 ♚xb1 ♚xb1 9 f5 ♚f1 10 ♔g5 ♔d3 11 f6 ♔e4 12 ♔g6 ♔e5 13 f7 ♔e6) 4...♔b3 5 ♚b8+ (after 5 f4 ♚d4! Black promotes his pawn) 5...♔c2 6 ♚xb2+ ♔xb2 7 f4 ♔c3 8 f5 ♔d4 9 f6 ♔e5 and the white pawn falls.

3...♔b4 4 ♚b8+

4 ♔g4 b2 5 ♚b8+ (5 f4 ♚d5 and Black's pawn promotes) 5...♔a3! (threatening ...♚b3) 6 ♚a8+ ♔b3 transposes to the previous note.

4...♔c3 (D)

5 ♚c8+

The key point is that 5 ♔g4 loses to 5...♚d4+ 6 f4 ♚b4 7 ♚c8+ ♔d2 8 ♚d8+ ♔e2 9 ♚e8+ ♔f2

10 ♚d8 b2 11 ♚d1 b1♚ 12 ♚xb1 ♚xb1 13 f5 ♔e3.

5...♔d2 6 ♚b8 ♔c2 7 ♔f4

7 ♔g4 b2 8 ♚xb2+ ♔xb2 is a position we have seen before.

7...b2

Threatening ...♚b3.

8 ♚xb2+ ♔xb2 9 ♔e4 ♔c3 10 f4 ♔c4 11 f5 ♚d1 12 ♔e5 ♔c5 13 ♔e6 ♔c6 14 ♔e7 ♚e1+ 0-1

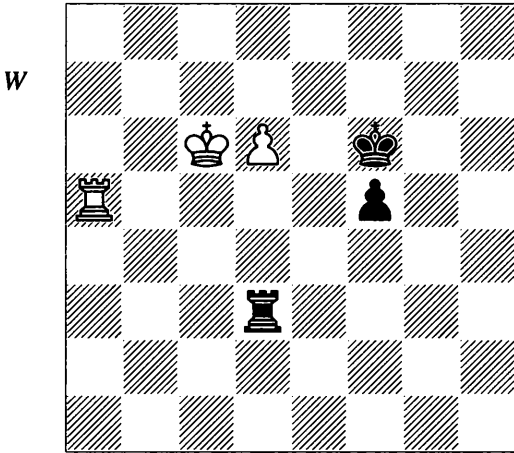
Summary:

- In ♚+♔ vs ♚+♔ with the pawns far apart, much depends on whether the defender's king can link up with his pawn. If it can, the defender will often be able to draw by giving up his rook for the attacker's pawn. However, the task may be hopeless if the defender's pawn is far back or the attacker can cut off the defender's king from his pawn.
- The defender often has to choose whether to play his rook behind the enemy pawn, or to withdraw it to the first rank. In both cases he is aiming to give up his rook when the pawn promotes, but the best method depends on the exact position. The only real rule of thumb is that the quicker method is often to be preferred.

8.7.6 Transformation to a Queen Ending

Endings of ♚+♔ vs ♚+♔ can turn into queen endings in a variety of ways, but perhaps the most common is for the attacker to give up his

rook to promote his pawn, thus reaching a position with ♔ vs ♚+♗. It is unfortunate that this ending is relatively complicated, and apart from some simple generic cases that are definitely drawn, it is often hard to assess whether a particular position is winning (see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Sections 86 and 87, for more details).



Merker – Kosmol
corr. 1997

This is an unusually sharp position. White can try to force his pawn home by playing ♖d5, and indeed in the game this plan led to success. However, a surprising resource would have enabled Black to draw.

1 ♖d5 ♜c3+ 2 ♔b7 ♜b3+

Black must continue to check until the white king moves in front of the pawn. Endings such as that arising after 2...♔e6 3 d7 ♔xd5 4 d8♖+ are in general winning, firstly because the black f-pawn is on one of the losing ranks, and secondly because Black's pieces are poorly coordinated. Here, for example, Black loses his pawn after 4...♔e4 5 ♖e7+ ♔f3 6 ♖d7 ♔e4 7 ♖a4+ ♔e3 8 ♖a5.

3 ♔c7 ♜c3+ 4 ♔d8

Now Black has a free tempo to improve his position.

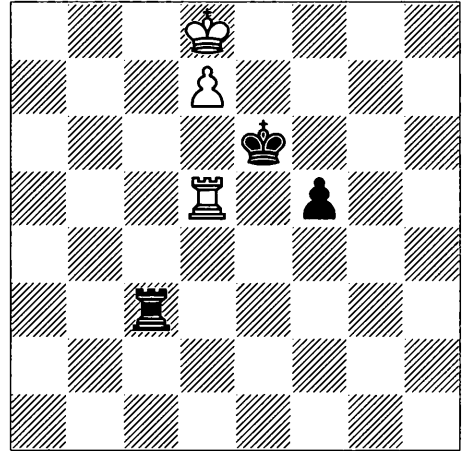
4...♔e6

4...f4 5 d7 ♔e6! is also possible, transposing into the note to Black's fifth move below.

5 d7! (D)

A neat tactical point which forces Black to find the correct defence.

B



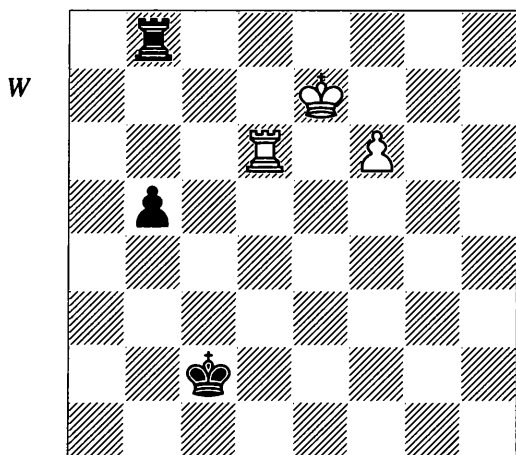
5...♔xd5?

It is surprising that Black made this mistake when he had a drawing alternative. 5...f4!, spurning the offered rook, is the only move to save the game. After 6 ♜d4 (6 ♔e8 ♜h3! 7 ♜d6+ ♔e5 is similarly drawn) 6...♔e5 7 ♔e8 (or 7 ♔e7 ♜c7!, drawing) 7...♜h3! 8 ♜d5+ (8 d8♖ ♜h8+ 9 ♔e7 ♜xd8 10 ♜xd8 f3 is a draw) 8...♔e4 9 ♜d4+ ♔e5 White has nothing better than to repeat moves.

6 ♔e8 1-0

Black cannot prevent the pawn from promoting, when White wins for the reasons explained above. The win is by no means easy, but this was a correspondence game and in 1997 the 5-man databases were readily available, so there was no point in Black continuing the game. One line runs 6...f4 7 d8♖+ ♔e4 8 ♖e7+ ♔f3 9 ♖b7+ ♔e3 10 ♖b6+ ♔f3 11 ♔f7 ♜e3 12 ♔f6 ♔g2 13 ♖b2+! (the only move to win; White must not allow Black to advance the pawn to f3 until his king is closer) 13...♔g3 14 ♖b1 ♔g2 15 ♖c2+ ♔g3 16 ♖d1 ♔g2 17 ♖g4+ ♔f2 18 ♔f5 f3 19 ♖g5 ♜d3 20 ♔g4 ♜d4+ 21 ♔h3 ♜d3 22 ♖c5+ ♔e1 23 ♖c1+ ♔e2 24 ♖c2+ ♔e3 25 ♔g3 ♔e4 26 ♖b1 ♔d4 27 ♔f4 (Black's king is gradually forced to the queenside) 27...♔c4 28 ♖a2+ ♔b4 29 ♔e4 ♜c3 30 ♖b2+ ♔c4 31 ♖b6 ♜b3 32 ♖e6+ ♔b4 33 ♔d4 f2 34 ♖e2 and the pawn falls, after which White 'only' has to win ♖ vs ♜.

In the following example, a better knowledge of ♖ vs ♜+♗ would have helped Black save the game.



Marcotulli – Malmström
e-mail 2001

1 f7 ♖b7+?

This move loses because the ♖ vs ♖+♜ ending which now arises by force is winning for White. Instead Black could have drawn by 1...b4! 2 ♖b6 (2 ♖c6+ ♜b2 3 ♖b6 ♖xb6 4 f8♖ ♖c6 is similar) 2...♖xb6 3 f8♖ ♖c6!. The basic point is that a position with the rook on c3 and Black's king on b2 or b3 is a fortress. Black's rook prevents White's king from approaching, and if the b4-pawn is attacked, Black can easily defend it with his king. Even in a relatively favourable case, such as White getting his queen to a1 with Black's king on b3, then if Black is to play, he is not in zugzwang as he can simply continue ...♖c8. It doesn't take long to see that White cannot make progress. After 3...♖c6!, White cannot prevent Black from reaching this set-up after, for example, 4 ♖f2+ ♜b3 5 ♖f3+ ♖c3, so the position is a draw. It is important to note that the same position shifted up a rank (in other words, with Black's pawn on b5), is a draw for the same reason.

2 ♖d7 ♖b8 3 ♜e6!!

White is aware of the common error of promoting too soon (see Section 8.4.8) and instead of winning the enemy rook, he actually moves his king away from the queening square. This surprising move, which threatens ♖e7-e8, is the only one to lead to victory.

3 ♜d6? b4 4 ♖b7 ♖f8 is a draw because the white king is not defending the f7-pawn, while 3 ♜f6? only draws after the cunning defence 3...♜b3! (3...♜c3? loses to 4 ♖b7 ♖xb7 5 f8♖,

threatening both ♖c8+ and ♖a3+) 4 ♖b7 ♖xb7 5 f8♖ ♖c7! 6 ♖b8 (6 ♖g8+ ♖c4 7 ♜e5 b4 8 ♖d5 ♜c3 is also a draw) 6...♖c6+! 7 ♜e5 b4 and Black has established his fortress.

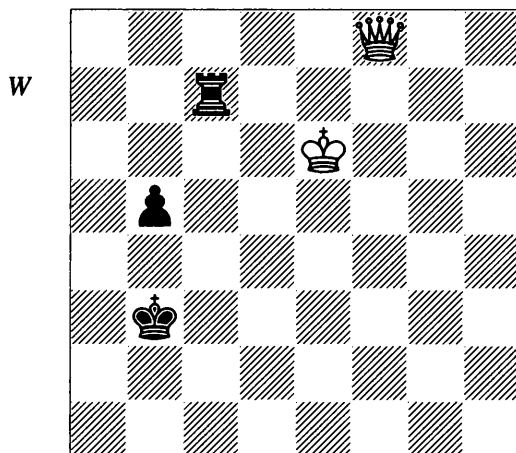
3...♜b3

The only chance. Other moves lose more quickly: 3...♖f8 4 ♖b7 costs Black his pawn, 3...♜c3 4 ♖b7 ♖xb7 5 f8♖ ♖c7 6 ♖a3+ ♜c2 7 ♖a2+ ♜c1 8 ♖a5 picks up the b-pawn and 3...♖b6+ 4 ♜e5 ♖b8 5 ♖b7! only makes life easier for White by chasing his king to a better position.

4 ♖b7

4 ♖e7? ♖f8 is a draw as 5 ♖b7 may be met by 5...b4.

4...♖xb7 5 f8♖ ♖c7! (D)



Black's best chance is to try to construct a fortress. White has to play precisely to prevent this, and he trips at the very first hurdle.

6 ♖h8?

Now it should be a draw. The winning line was 6 ♖b8! (the only move to win) 6...♖c5 7 ♖b6! (again the only move, since if Black gets his king to b4 and rook to c4 then he has a fortress draw) 7...♜b4 (7...♜c4 loses to 8 ♜d6 ♖d5+ 9 ♜c6 ♖e5 10 ♖f2 as Black's fortress has been broken; for example, after 10...♖e6+ 11 ♜d7 ♖e4 12 ♜d6 ♖d4+ 13 ♜c6 ♖e4 14 ♖c5+ White wins the pawn) 8 ♖d6! (once again the only move, as it is a draw if Black is allowed to play ...♖c4) 8...♜c4 9 ♖e7 ♖d5 (9...♜b4 10 ♜d7 ♜c4 11 ♜d6 ♜b4 transposes) 10 ♖c7+ ♖c5 11 ♖a7! ♜b4 12 ♖e7 ♜c4 13 ♜d6 ♜b4 14 ♖e1+ ♖c3 15 ♜d5 and

the fortress is now unreachable, so White will eventually win the pawn; for example, 15...♖b3 16 ♜b1+ ♔a4 17 ♜a2+ ♖b4 18 ♜b2+ ♜b3 19 ♜d4+ ♔a3 20 ♜d2 b4 21 ♔c4 ♜b2 22 ♜c1 ♔a2 23 ♜h1 ♜b3 24 ♜a8+ ♔b2 25 ♜a7 and the pawn is lost.

6...b4

Black has established the drawing fortress and should now be out of danger.

7 ♔d6 ♜c3 8 ♔d7 ♜d3+?

A very weak move, allowing the white king to cross the c-file barrier. 8...♔a3, amongst many other moves, would have been a simple draw.

9 ♔c6

Now White is again winning. It's odd that a 5-man ending should be conducted so inaccurately in a correspondence game from 2001, at which time the 5-man tablebases had already been available for several years.

9...♔c2

The best chance, threatening to draw with ...b3, after which the pawn would be too far advanced for White to win.

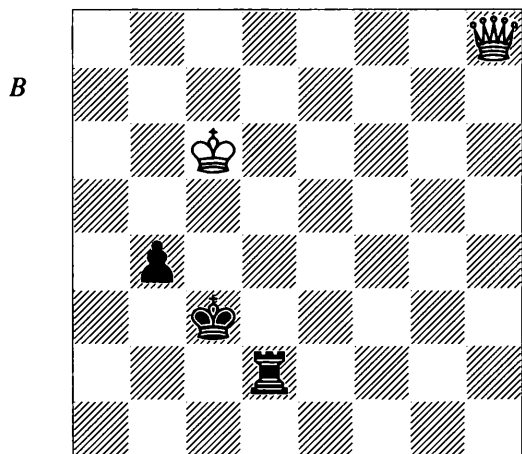
10 ♜h2+

The only viable check, and the only winning move.

10...♜d2 11 ♜h7+ ♔c3

Or 11...♜d3 12 ♔c5 ♔c3 13 ♜g7+ ♔b3 14 ♜e5 ♜c3+ 15 ♔b5 ♜d3 16 ♜e4 and White wins the pawn.

12 ♜h8+ (D)



12...♔c2

The position after Black's ninth move has been repeated, but with the important difference

that Black's rook is on d2 rather than d3. With Black's rook less actively placed, White can now afford to bring his king closer, even though this allows Black's pawn to advance.

13 ♔b5 b3 14 ♜h7+ ♔c3 15 ♜c7+ ♔b2 16 ♜f4!

Black is kept off balance while White improves his queen's position.

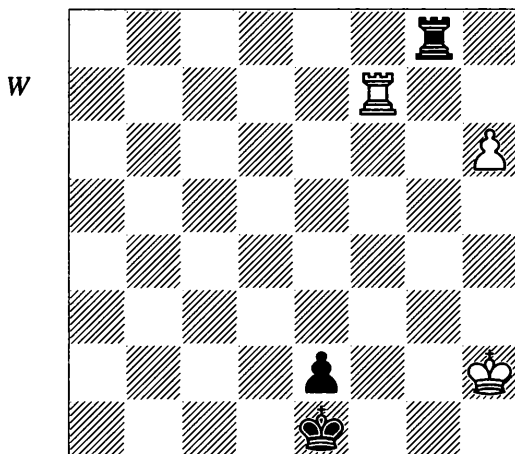
16...♔c2 17 ♜c4+ ♔b2 18 ♔a4

Now the pawn falls, and the rest is technique, at least in a correspondence game.

18...♜c2 19 ♜xb3+ ♔c1 20 ♜f3 ♜d2 21 ♜f1+ ♜d1 22 ♜f4+ ♔c2 23 ♔b4 1-0

Black did not wish to be shown the rest.

Sometimes other material balances can arise as a result of pawn promotion. In the next position, the play in the rook ending is influenced by the possibility of reaching a position with ♜ vs ♜+♜.



Lu. Valdes – Corrales Jimenez
Cuba 2006

Rook endings in which both sides have far-advanced pawns can often turn into queen endings in the not unlikely event that one or both sides promote. Here Black has the advantage because his pawn is supported by his king.

1 ♜g7?

The alternatives are:

1) 1 ♔h3? and now:

1a) The notes by Camacho and Valdes incorrectly claim that 1...♜e8? leads to a win for Black, but White can draw by 2 ♔g4! ♔d1 (2...♔d2 3 ♜f2! ♔d3 4 ♜xe2 is also drawn) 3

♖a7! (White loses after both 3 ♜d7+? ♕c2 4 ♜c7+ ♕d2 5 ♜d7+ ♕e3 and 3 ♜b7? ♕c2) 3...♕d2 4 ♜a2+ ♕e3 5 ♜xe2+ ♕xe2 6 ♕g5.

1b) 1...♜h8! is the genuine winning line: 2 h7 ♕d2 3 ♜d7+ ♕c3 4 ♜c7+ ♕d4 5 ♜d7+ ♕c5 6 ♜c7+ ♕d5! (6...♕d6? allows 7 ♜c1 ♜xh7+ 8 ♕g2, with a draw) 7 ♜c1 (7 ♜e7 ♜xh7+ is winning for Black) 7...♜xh7+ 8 ♕g2 ♕d4 9 ♕f2 ♕d3 10 ♜a1 ♜f7+ 11 ♕g2 ♜a7! 12 ♜b1 (12 ♜xa7 reaches ♜ vs ♜, an ending in which a determined and knowledgeable defender can put up considerable resistance, but which is nevertheless lost) 12...♕c2 13 ♜h1 ♕d2 and the pawn promotes.

2) 1 h7! is the simplest draw since after 1...♜e8 (1...♜h8 2 ♕g2 doesn't help Black) 2 ♜e7! ♜d8 3 ♜d7 White holds the game comfortably.

3) 1 ♜a7! is the only other move to draw, setting up possible sideways checks: 1...♜e8 (1...♜d8 2 ♕g2 and 1...♜h8 2 ♕g2! ♜xh6 3 ♜a1+ also draw, the latter line demonstrating why the rook must be on the a-file) 2 ♕g3! (2 ♕g2? loses to 2...♕d2 3 ♜a2+ ♕c3 4 ♜a1 e1♜) 2...♕f1 (2...♕d2 3 ♜a2+ ♕e3 4 ♜xe2+ is similar) 3 ♜a1+ e1♜+ 4 ♜xe1+ ♕xe1 5 ♕g4 and White is in time to support the pawn with his king.

1...♜d8?

Black misses the win and gives White a second chance to save the game. 1...♜e8! would have left White helpless: 2 h7 (or 2 ♜a7 ♕f2) 2...♕d2 3 ♜d7+ ♕e3 4 ♜e7+ ♜xe7 5 h8♜ e1♜ and White has only a few checks; for example, 6 ♜h6+ ♕e4 7 ♜g6+ ♕e5 8 ♜g5+ ♕d4 9 ♜f4+ ♕c3 10 ♜f3+ ♜e3 and Black wins.

2 h7 ♕f2

2...♕d2 gives White a choice of draws: 3 ♜d7+, as in the game, or 3 ♜g8.

3 ♜f7+!

Not 3 ♜g2+? ♕f3 4 ♜g3+ ♕f4 5 ♜g1 ♜h8 6 ♜a1 ♜xh7+ 7 ♕g2 ♜a7! 8 ♜b1 ♕e3 9 ♜b3+ ♕d2 10 ♜b2+ ♕d3 11 ♜b1 ♕c2 and Black wins.

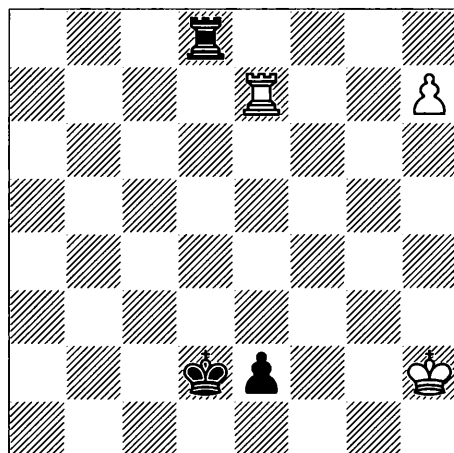
3...♕e3 4 ♜e7+ ♕d2 (D)

The critical moment.

5 ♜d7+!

The only way to draw, even though White is a rook down after both sides promote.

W



5...♜xd7 6 h8♜ e1♜

The key difference between this position and that arising after 1...♜e8! is that here Black's queen and rook are on different files, and so the rook is vulnerable to forks.

7 ♜b2+

The only move to draw. Black cannot both avoid the checks and preserve his rook.

7...♕d3

7...♕e3 8 ♜e5+ and 7...♕d1 8 ♜b1+ ♕e2 9 ♜e4+ ♕d2 10 ♜b4+ are also drawn.

8 ♜b5+ 1/2-1/2

The rook drops.

Summary:

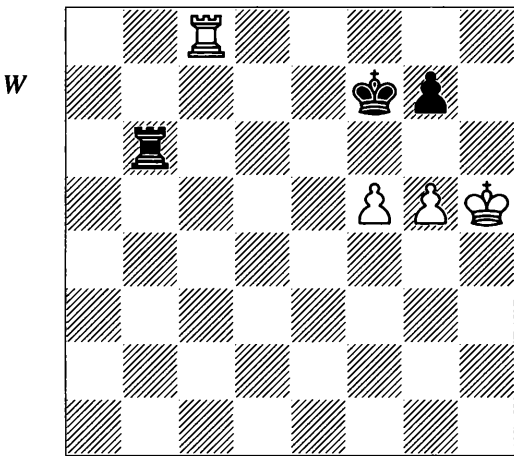
- Endings of ♜+♜ vs ♜+♜ can turn into queen endings if one or both sides promote. The most common case involves transformation to a position of ♜ vs ♜+♜. Unfortunately, this ending is quite complicated (apart from certain simple cases in which the defender has an immediate fortress) and there is no substitute for knowing the winning and drawing ranks with the pawn on each file. It is worth mentioning that some theoretically won positions are real challenges in over-the-board play and require very accurate play from the side with the queen.
- If both sides promote, then a position with ♜+♜ vs ♜+♜ or ♜+♜ vs ♜ will be the result. The initiative is very important when two queens are on the board and the kings are totally without shelter, so in endings with ♜+♜ vs ♜+♜ the player with the first effective check has a head start and is likely to win.

8.8 Rook and Two Pawns vs Rook and Pawn

This is another extremely important material balance for over-the-board play. There are so many permutations of pawns that we cannot consider all of them, so I shall focus on some situations which are especially relevant in practical play.

8.8.1 No Passed Pawns

This ending is generally drawn if the defender's king is nearby, but there are winning chances in the rather common situation that the attacker's pawns are well advanced.



Lutikov – Taimanov
Leningrad 1955

This instructive position shows the value of endgame knowledge. The same position, except for unimportant differences in rook position, has occurred several times in practice. In order to combine several games I have reversed the colours in Lutikov-Taimanov (in the game Taimanov had the two pawns).

Let's take a look at what happened in a couple of practical examples: 1 g6+ ♟f6 2 ♖f8+ ♟e5 3 ♟g5? ♚b1 4 ♜e8+ ♝d6! (4...♝d5? is a mistake allowing 5 ♜e7! ♜g1+ 6 ♟f4 ♜f1+ 7 ♟g3! ♜g1+ 8 ♟h2 ♜f1 9 ♜xg7 ♜xf5 10 ♟g3 ♜f1 11 ♟g4 ♟e6 12 ♜a7 and White wins since Black cannot play ...♟f6 due to the skewer; note that 5 ♜e3? is wrong due to 5...♜g1+! with

a draw) 5 ♜e6+ (after 5 ♜e4 ♜g1+ 6 ♜g4 ♜f1 7 ♜f4 ♜g1+ Black draws comfortably) and now:

1) 5...♝d5? allows a win by 6 ♜e7!, as above, but White missed it in Andreev-Onishchuk, Ukrainian Team Ch, Alushta 2002 and the game finished 6 ♜b6? ♟e4 1/2-1/2.

2) 5...♝d7 6 ♜e4 ♜g1+ 7 ♜g4 ♜f1 8 ♜a4 ♟e7 9 ♜a7+ ♟f8 10 ♜a8+ ♟e7 11 ♜g8 ♜g1+ 12 ♟f4 ♜f1+ 13 ♟e4 ♜e1+ 14 ♝d3 ♟f6 15 ♜f8+ ♟g5 16 ♝d4 ♜d1+ 17 ♟e5 ♜e1+ 18 ♝d6 ♜e2 19 ♜f7 ♜e1 20 ♜f8 ♜e2 21 ♜f7 ♜e1 22 ♜e7 ♜f1 23 ♜xg7 ♜xf5 1/2-1/2 Solleveld-Döttling, Dutch Team Ch 2001/2 (I reversed the colours in this example; Döttling had the two pawns in the game).

So here we have two games, both ending in draws, and in both cases the attacker was highly-rated (Andreev over 2400 and Döttling over 2500). Admittedly, in one of these games White was winning at one point, but only after a mistake by Black. There are several other practical examples of this ending resulting in a draw and so one might deduce that the diagram position is drawn, but actually it is won for White. However, this win depends on a tactical point which is hard to see if you don't already know it; the evidence for this is found in the above games, in which two very strong players failed to spot it. Let's go back to the start and look at the whole thing again.

1 g6+

1 f6? is most simply met by 1...♜b7 although 1...gx6 2 g6+ ♟g7 3 ♜c7+ ♟g8 4 ♟h6 ♜b8 also draws.

1...♟f6

1...♟e7 2 ♜g8 ♟f6 3 ♜f8+ transposes to the main line.

2 ♜f8+ ♟e5

2...♟e7 3 ♜f7+ and ♜xg7 is a simple win.

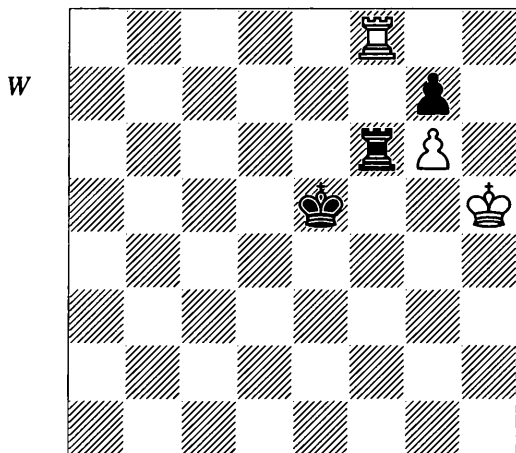
3 f6!

This is the only move to win, and far stronger than 3 ♟g5?, as played in the two games quoted above. 3 ♜f7? ♚b1 is also a draw, and indeed White must take care not to play 4 ♜xg7?!, which allows mate in two by 4...♟f4.

3...♜xf6 (D)

4 ♜f7!!

This is the move that's tough to see; thanks to the preliminary deflection of Black's rook to



f6, it can no longer move to White's first rank as after 3 ♖f7?, so now White wins the g7-pawn and reaches a winning position of ♖+♗ vs ♜.

4... ♗e6

4... ♖f5+ 5 ♗g4 ♖f6 6 ♜xg7 ♗e6 7 ♗g5 is similar to the main line.

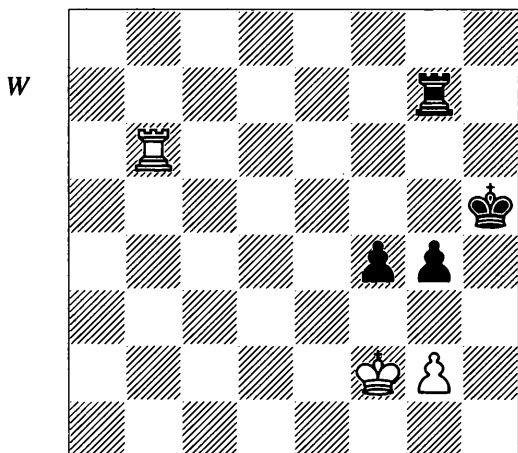
5 ♖xg7 ♖f1 6 ♖a7

Black cannot prevent White from reaching the Lucena position.

6... ♖h1+ 7 ♗g5 ♖h2 8 g7 ♖g2+ 9 ♗h6 ♗f6 10 ♗h7 ♖h2+ 11 ♗g8 ♖b2 12 ♖a6+ ♗g5 13 ♖e6 ♖f2 14 ♖e1 ♗f6 15 ♖h1 1-0

It's all over after 15... ♖g2 16 ♗f8 ♖xg7 17 ♖f1+.

The next position is closely related to the previous one since the pawn-structure is identical, but this time the attacker's pieces are less actively placed.



V. Milanović – Genov
Yugoslavia 2001

Although Black is a pawn up, this position looks like a draw since he doesn't have a passed pawn and White's pieces are in reasonable positions. White's main worry is that Black might reach the previous position, but he cannot achieve this against accurate defence. According to Genov's analysis in *Informator 83*, White's very first move was the losing mistake, but the position remained drawn for several moves and it was only considerably later that it passed over the boundary to a win for Black.

1 ♖f6

There's nothing wrong with this move but, as Genov points out, White could have drawn quite simply by 1 g3! f3 2 ♖b8 since as soon as Black plays his rook to, for example, a7, White starts checking Black from behind.

1... ♗g5 2 ♖f8 ♖g6 3 ♖f7

3 ♖h8 is slightly simpler, maintaining the maximum checking distance. After 3... ♖a6 4 ♖g8+ ♗f5 5 ♖f8+ Black cannot make progress.

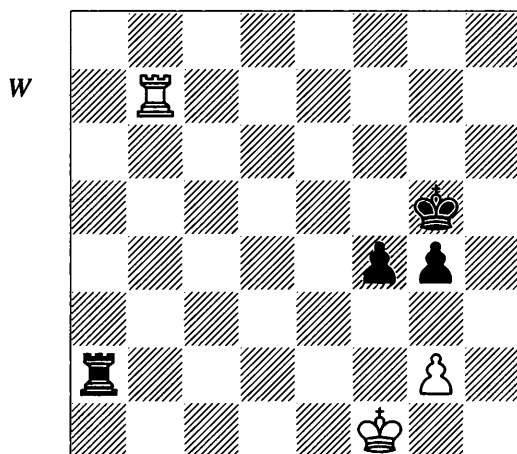
3... ♖a6

White's rook checks are less dangerous when the rook is on the seventh rank and so Black is able to switch his rook to White's second rank. This makes White's defence more difficult as the position of the previous example draws closer.

4 ♖g7+ ♗f5 5 ♖f7+ ♗e5 6 ♖e7+?!

Here again White misses an easier way to hold the draw; after 6 g3 f3 7 ♖f4 Black has no winning chances.

6... ♗f6 7 ♖b7 ♖a2+ 8 ♗f1 ♗g5 (D)



This is the critical moment since Black is now threatening to win by 9... ♗h4. White decides to

counter this threat by attacking the f4-pawn, but this defence proves inadequate. White had two different methods of drawing this position, both of them instructive and neither mentioned by Genov.

9 ♖b4?

9 ♖h7! is the simplest way to draw, simply preventing the black king's advance; after 9...g3 (9...♖a1+ 10 ♖e2 g3 11 ♖h8 is similarly drawn) 10 ♖h8! ♖a1+ 11 ♖e2 ♖g1 (after 11...♖a2+ White simply returns by 12 ♖f1) 12 ♖g8+ ♖h6 13 ♖f3 ♖f1+ 14 ♖g4 White draws comfortably.

9 g3! is also good, but somewhat more complicated; Black has to reply 9...f3, but now there is no way in for his king, so White need only worry about the possibility of ...♖g2 and ...♖xg3. This can be prevented provided White plays accurately: 10 ♖b5+ ♖f6 11 ♖b4 ♖f5 12 ♖b5+ ♖e4 13 ♖g5! (13 ♖b4+? ♖d3 14 ♖b3+ ♖c4 wins for Black) 13...♖e3 14 ♖e5+ ♖d4 15 ♖g5 ♖e4 (another critical moment as there is only one move to draw) 16 ♖g8! (after 16 ♖g7? the checking distance is too short and Black wins by 16...♖f5 17 ♖f7+ ♖g5 18 ♖g7+ ♖h5 19 ♖h7+ ♖g6 20 ♖h4 ♖g5 21 ♖h8 ♖g2 22 ♖g8+ ♖f5 23 ♖f8+ ♖e5 24 ♖e8+ ♖f6 25 ♖f8+ ♖g7 and the g3-pawn falls) 16...♖f5 17 ♖f8+ and Black cannot make progress.

9...♖h4! (D)

Black simply ignores the attack on f4 and presses on with his king. 9...♖a1+! 10 ♖e2 ♖h4 is also winning.

10 ♖b3 would have put up more resistance, but Black continues 10...♖a1+ (10...f3 11 gxf3 g3 now only leads to a draw after 12 ♖b8) and now:

1) 11 ♖e2 f3+ 12 gxf3 g3 13 ♖b8 g2 14 ♖h8+ ♖g3 15 ♖g8+ ♖h2 16 ♖h8+ ♖g1 17 f4 ♖a2+ 18 ♖f3 (18 ♖e1 ♖a4 19 f5 ♖e4+ 20 ♖d2 ♖f2 and Black wins) 18...♖f1 19 ♖g8 ♖a3+ 20 ♖e4 ♖f2! (the threat of ...♖g3 forces White to take on g2, which leaves Black's king one square nearer than if he had played 20...g1♣?) 21 ♖xg2+ ♖xg2 22 f5 ♖g3 23 f6 ♖g4 24 ♖e5 ♖g5 25 f7 ♖f3 and Black wins.

2) 11 ♖f2 and we have effectively reached the Lutikov-Taimanov example on page 183, in which Black wins by 11...g3+ 12 ♖f3 ♖f1+ 13 ♖e4 f3! 14 ♖xf3 ♖f2!.

10...♖g3 11 ♖b4 ♖a1+ 12 ♖e2 ♖g1

Now the g2-pawn falls and Black reaches a winning ♖+♔ vs ♖ position.

13 ♖a4

13 ♖b8 ♖xg2 followed by ...g3 will also lead to the Lucena position.

13...♖xg2+ 14 ♖f1 ♖b2 15 ♖a8

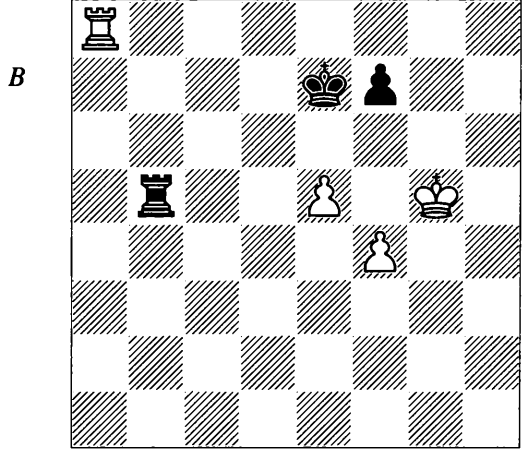
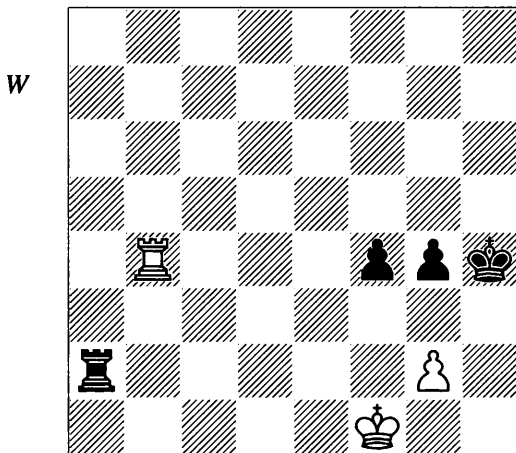
15 ♖a3+ ♖h2 and 15 ♖c4 ♖b1+ 16 ♖e2 ♖h3 win for Black.

15...♖b1+ 16 ♖e2 ♖g2 17 ♖g8 g3

The Lucena position is not far off.

18 ♖g7 ♖b8 19 ♖e7 ♖f8 20 ♖e6 ♖g1 21 ♖g6 g2 22 ♖e6 ♖h8 23 ♖a6 ♖h2 0-1

In the next position, the pawn-structure is shifted left by one file.



This is an interesting example because positions similar to it arise frequently in practice. The question is whether Black should defend passively by waiting, or instead undertake action himself by pushing the f-pawn.

1...f6+

Shamkovich's notes in *Informator 23* give this as a losing mistake, but it leads to a draw, although it requires a high-quality follow-up by Black. It is perhaps simpler just to wait by 1...♞c5. Then White's main winning attempt is 2 f5 ♞xe5 3 ♞a7+ ♖f8 4 ♖f6, and now:

1) 4...♞e8? loses after 5 ♞xf7+ ♖g8 6 ♞g7+ ♖f8?! (6...♖h8 also loses but White must find the accurate continuation 7 ♞e7! ♞g8 8 ♖f7! ♖h7 9 ♞e8! ♞g7+ 10 ♖e6 ♞g1 11 f6 ♞e1+ 12 ♖f7 ♞a1 13 ♖f8! in order to win) 7 ♞a7 ♞b8 8 ♖g6 ♖g8 9 f6 ♞f8 10 ♞g7+ ♖h8 11 ♞h7+ ♖g8 12 f7+ 1-0 Holscher-Flückiger, Bad Wörishofen 2003.

2) 4...♞e1! 5 ♞xf7+ ♖g8 6 ♞g7+ ♖f8 7 ♞a7 ♖g8 8 ♞a8+ ♖h7 9 ♞f8 ♞a1 and Black is safe thanks to the large checking distance to the left of the pawn.

2 ♖g6

With this move White secures a passed f-pawn.

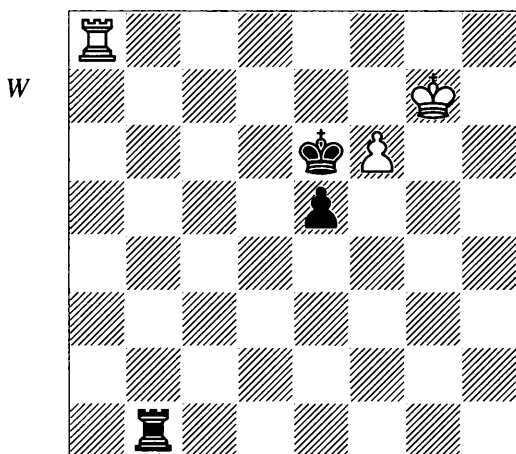
2...fxe5 3 f5 ♞b6+!

The immediate 3...♞b1? loses to 4 f6+ ♖e6 5 ♞e8+ ♖d5 6 f7 ♞f1 7 f8♙ ♞xf8 8 ♞xf8 e4 9 ♖f5 with an easy win.

4 ♖g7 ♞b1

Not 4...e4? 5 ♞a4! and Black loses his pawn, leaving White with a simple technical win.

5 f6+ ♖e6 (D)



6 ♞e8+

According to Shamkovich, White could have won by 6 ♞a6+ ♖f5 7 f7, based on the continuation 7...♞b8? 8 ♞f6+! ♖g4 9 ♞e6! ♖f4 10 ♞e8 (now Black has to give up his rook in any case and White's rook is already optimally placed behind Black's pawn) 10...♞b7 11 ♖g8 ♞xf7 12 ♖xf7 e4 13 ♖e6 e3 14 ♖d5 ♖f3 15 ♖d4 e2 16 ♖d3. However, Black can defend by playing instead 7...♞b7! (Shamkovich failed to consider this move; White again wins Black's rook, but his own rook ends up less favourably placed) 8 ♞f6+ (8 ♖g8 ♞xf7 9 ♖xf7 e4 is an immediate draw) 8...♖g4 9 ♖g6 ♞xf7 10 ♖xf7 e4 11 ♖e6 e3 12 ♖d5 e2 13 ♞e6 ♖f3 14 ♖d4 ♖f2 and White is one tempo too late to win.

6...♖f5 7 f7 ♞b7?

After defending accurately for several moves, Black makes a fatal error. 7...♞g1+! was obvious and good since in order to escape the checks White must block his own pawn by 8 ♖f8, but then Black draws easily by 8...e4 9 ♖e7 ♞g7.

8 ♖g8 ♞xf7 9 ♖xf7

The situation is basically the same as after 7...♞b8? in the note to White's sixth move. Black is lost when White's rook is ideally placed behind the enemy pawn.

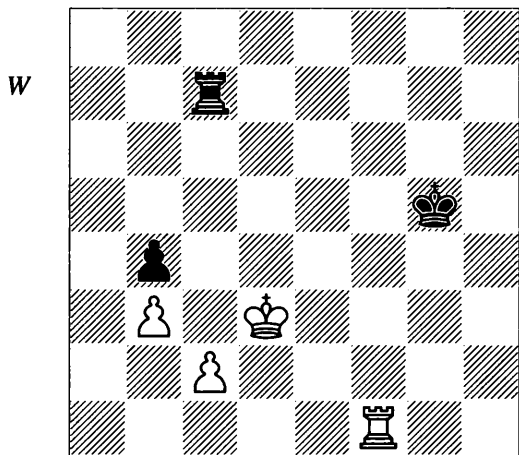
9...e4 10 ♞e7!

A waiting move, forcing Black to allow White's king to cross to the other side of the pawn.

10...♖f4 11 ♖e6! e3 12 ♖d5 ♖f3 13 ♖d4 1-0

The following position (*see diagram on next page*) differs in that the attacker's pawns are not far advanced. It should be a simple win, but even in correspondence chess it's easier to make mistakes than one might imagine.

There is little doubt that this position is winning for White. He is a pawn ahead and Black's king is cut off at a considerable distance from the remaining pawns. The most likely upshot is the exchange of the b4- and c2-pawns, leading to a winning ending of ♞+♖♠ vs ♞. In order to assess the results of such a liquidation, it is worth remembering that with ♞+♖♠4 vs ♞ and Black's king cut off along a file, the position is



Kosmol – Uies
corr. 1994

winning if Black’s king is on the f-file, but is usually drawn with the king on the e-file. The result is exactly the same if the pawn stands on b3.

1 c4

This move is the most direct route to victory, but an alternative and safer win was available by 1 ♖f8 (threatening ♖b8) 1...♞c3+ (1...♞b7 2 c3 and 1...♞h7 2 ♖c4 ♞b7 3 c3 are wins by the comments above, since Black’s king is one file further away than is necessary to ensure a win) 2 ♖d2 ♞h3 3 ♞b8 ♞h2+ 4 ♖d3 ♞h4 5 c4 bxc3 6 ♖xc3 ♖f6 7 ♞e8 and White reaches the theoretical winning position mentioned above.

1...bxc3 2 ♞c1?

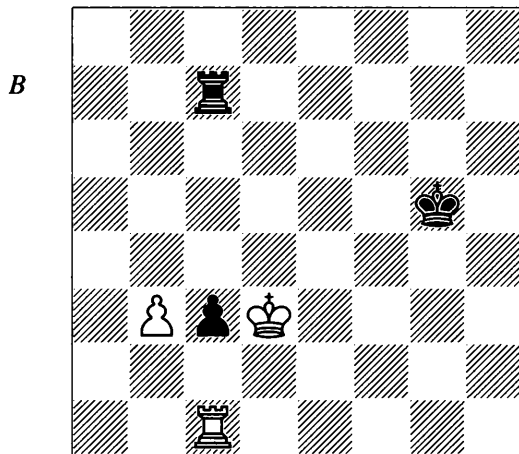
Releasing the cut-off prematurely gives Black the chance to reach a draw. White should have first improved his position before taking aim at the enemy pawn. Here are two possible winning lines:

1) 2 b4! ♖g6 (2...c2 3 ♞c1 ♞b7 4 ♖c4 ♞c7+ 5 ♖b3 ♖f6 6 ♞xc2 ♞b7 7 ♞e2 and White reaches the standard win) 3 ♞c1 (or 3 ♖c2, transposing to line 2) 3...♖f5 4 ♞xc3 ♞b7 5 ♖c4 ♖e6 (when Black’s king is on the e-file it is usually a draw, but here he still loses because his rook doesn’t have enough checking distance; if the rook were on b8, it would be a draw) 6 ♞d3 ♞c7+ 7 ♖b5 ♞b7+ 8 ♖c5 ♞c7+ 9 ♖b6 and White wins.

2) 2 ♖c2! (this is the safest win of all; White improves his position to the maximum extent before playing ♞c1) 2...♖g6 3 b4 ♖g5 4 ♖b3

c2 5 ♞c1 ♖f6 6 ♞xc2 ♞b7 7 ♞e2 and White achieves the theoretical win painlessly.

We now return to 2 ♞c1? (D):



2...♖f4?

Black immediately squanders his drawing chance by playing his king to the wrong square. 2...♖f5! (2...♖f6! is equally good and transposes after a few moves) 3 ♞xc3 ♞b7! 4 ♖c4 ♖e6! is the correct route to a draw, but it still requires care: 5 ♞h3 ♞g7! (this and 5...♞f7! are the only drawing moves; after 5...♞c7+? 6 ♖b5 ♞b7+ 7 ♖c5 ♞c7+ 8 ♖b6 Black loses relatively quickly, but 5...♞b8? loses only after a massive effort by White: 6 ♖c5 ♞c8+ 7 ♖b6 ♞b8+ 8 ♖c7 ♞b4 9 ♖c6 ♞b8 10 ♞e3+ ♖f5 11 ♖d6 ♖f4 12 ♞h3! ♖g4 13 ♞c3 ♖f5 14 ♖c7 ♞b4 15 ♖c6 ♖e5 16 ♖c5 ♞b8 17 ♞e3+ ♖f4 18 ♞h3 ♖g4 19 ♞c3 ♞c8+ 20 ♖b4 ♞b8+ 21 ♖a5 ♖f5 22 b4 ♞a8+ 23 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 24 ♖c5 ♞c8+ 25 ♖d4 ♞b8 26 ♞c5+ ♖e6 27 b5 ♖d7 28 ♖c4 ♞b6 29 ♖b4 ♖d6 30 ♞c1 followed by ♖a5, winning) 6 ♞d3 (6 ♖c5 ♖d7! and 6 b4 ♖d6 are comfortable draws) 6...♞g8! (the only move to draw) 7 ♖c5 (after 7 b4 ♞c8+ 8 ♖b3 ♞b8 Black’s king is close enough to draw) 7...♞c8+ 8 ♖b6 ♖e5! 9 ♞h3 (9 ♖b7 ♞c1 and 9 b4 ♞b8+ 10 ♖c5 ♞c8+ 11 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 12 ♖c4 ♞c8+ 13 ♖b3 ♞b8 are also drawn) 9...♖d4 10 b4 ♞b8+ 11 ♖a5 ♞a8+ 12 ♖b5 ♞b8+ 13 ♖a4 ♞a8+ 14 ♖b3 ♖d5 15 ♞h6 ♞a1 and White cannot make progress.

3 ♞xc3 ♞d7+

Black could have put up more resistance by 3...♞b7 4 ♖c4 ♖e5, but White still wins after 5

♖h3! ♜c7+ (5...♙g7 6 ♜h6 cuts off Black's king, which wouldn't have been possible had Black played 2...♙f5! followed by ...♙e6) 6 ♙b5 ♜b7+ 7 ♙c5 ♜c7+ 8 ♙b6 ♜c8 9 ♙b7 ♜c5 10 ♜h6! ♙d4 11 ♙b6 ♜c8 12 ♖b4 ♜b8+ 13 ♙a5 ♜a8+ 14 ♜a6 and Black's king is cut off along a rank.

4 ♙c4 ♙e4

Or 4...♜c7+ 5 ♙b4 ♜b7+ 6 ♙a5 ♜b8 7 ♖b4 and White wins.

5 ♜h3 ♜c7+ 6 ♙b5 ♙g7 7 ♖b4

Black's pieces are miserably placed and cannot stop the pawn.

7...♙g1 8 ♜h6 ♙d4 9 ♙b6 ♙d5 10 ♖b5 ♜b1 11 ♙a6 ♙c5 12 ♖b4 1-0

Summary:

- ♜+2△ vs ♜+△ with no passed pawns is generally drawn if the defender's king is close by, but even then there can be winning chances if the attacker's pawns are well advanced. The position on page 183 often arises in practice and should be studied carefully.
- If the defender's king is not close to the pawns then the attacker usually has good winning chances. His main idea is to exchange a pair of pawns to reach a winning position of ♜+△ vs ♜.

8.8.2 One Passed Pawn

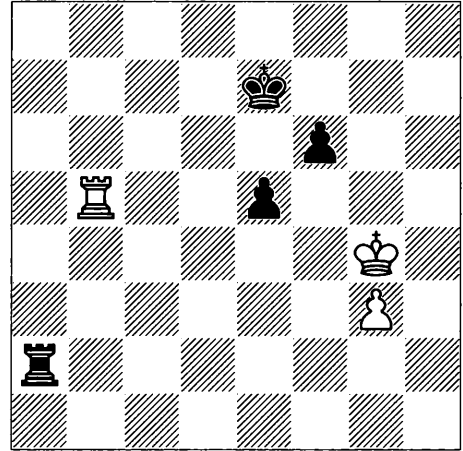
The attacker's winning chances increase when he has a passed pawn, but there are so many cases it is impossible to establish any general rules. We shall divide the material up according to whether or not the attacker's pawns are connected. If they are, then this means that all the pawns are close together.

8.8.2a The Attacker's Pawns are Connected

This is another common situation. In general, such positions tend to be drawn provided the defender's king is near the pawns. However, an additional advantage for the attacker may be enough to tip the balance.

One would expect a position with the pawn-structure of the following diagram to be a draw. Black is a pawn up and has a passed pawn, but

B



Loskutov – R. Scherbakov
Russia Cup, Omsk 1996

the limited number of pawns and the fact that all the pawns are close together should enable White to defend. However, this position is special in that White's king is not directly in front of Black's pawns, but slightly off to one side, and with his first move Black can cut White's king off. This means that White faces particular problems and according to Scherbakov's notes the diagram position is already lost for him. This is not so, but White can only draw by immediately adopting the correct plan.

1...♜f2!

Definitely the best chance since the white king is cut off and Black simply intends to push his passed e-pawn.

2 ♜b6?

White cannot afford just to wait. The correct plan is to set about improving the position of the white king right away by the manoeuvre ♙h3, g4 and ♙g3. This will force the enemy rook off the f-file and thus allow White to bring his king in front of the dangerous e-pawn: 2 ♙h3! ♙e6 3 ♖g4 ♖e4 4 ♙g3 ♜f3+ 5 ♙g2 ♜d3 6 ♙f2 ♜d5 and now:

1) Scherbakov only gave the extremely weak line 7 ♜b6+?! ♙e5 8 ♙e3? (8 ♜b8 still draws) 8...♜d3+ 9 ♙f2 ♜d6, followed by ...♙f4, with an easy win. This is another case of 'annotation by result'; once you are convinced that the position is a win, logic dictates that every line has to end up as a win for Black and if the only way to achieve this is for White to commit suicide, so be it.

2) 7 ♖b8! ♗g5 (7...♔e5 8 ♜e8+ ♔f4 9 ♜e6 ♜d2+ 10 ♔e1 is also a draw) 8 ♜e8+ ♔d5 9 ♜f8 ♔e5 10 ♜e8+ ♔f4 11 ♜e6 ♜g6 12 g5! forces a liquidation.

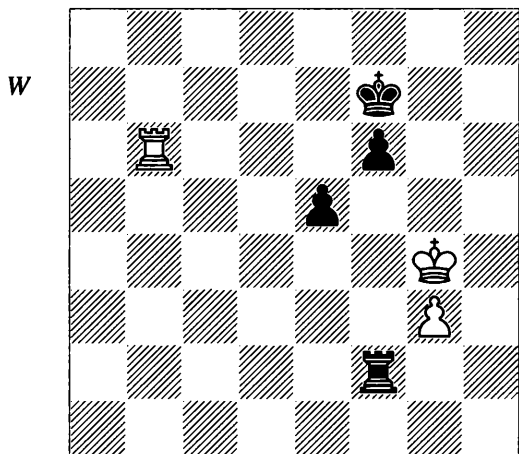
2...♔f7?

This is too slow and gives White a second chance to remedy the defects of his position. After 2...e4 White would not have been able to save the game:

1) 3 ♔h4 f5! 4 ♜b3 ♔f6 5 ♔h3 ♔e5 6 ♜a3 ♜d2 7 ♜a5+ (7 ♜b3 ♔d4 followed by ...e3 is even worse) 7...♔d4 8 ♜xf5 e3 9 ♜f8 e2 10 ♜e8 ♔d3 11 g4 ♜d1 12 g5 e1 ♖ 13 ♜xe1 ♜xe1 14 ♔g4 ♔e4 and Black wins.

2) 3 ♜b3 f5+ 4 ♔g5 ♜f3 5 ♜b5 ♔e6 6 g4 (or else ...e3) 6...f4 7 ♜b6+ ♔e5 8 ♜b8 e3 and the connected passed pawns are too strong.

We now return to 2...♔f7? (D):



3 ♜a6?

White again fails to meet the demands of the position. He could have drawn by 3 ♔h4! (3 ♔h3?! is now less effective because after 3...♔g6 White cannot play 4 g4? due to 4...♔g5, winning) 3...f5 (3...♜h2+ 4 ♔g4 ♔g6 5 ♔f3 reaches a 'normal' position which should be a draw with careful play by White) 4 ♔g5 e4 5 g4 (Scherbakov only gave 5 ♜a6? e3 6 ♜a3 ♜f3 and Black wins, and did not mention pushing the g-pawn, which draws immediately) 5...f4 6 ♜f6+ followed by ♜xf4.

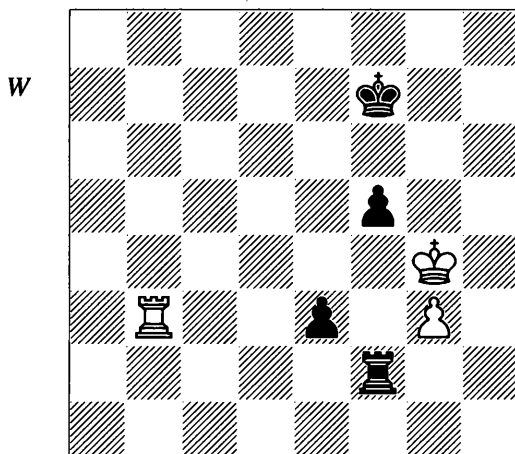
3...e4!

Now Black is on the correct path and White no longer has time to organize his defence.

4 ♜b6

Another waiting move, but by now it is too late for White to save the game; for example, 4 ♔h4 f5 5 ♔g5 e3 is now winning for Black, while after 4 ♜a3 ♔e6 5 ♔h4 f5 6 ♔g5 ♔e5 7 ♜a5+ ♔d4 8 ♜a4+ ♔d3 9 ♜a3+ ♔c4 Black is steadily improving his position.

4...e3 5 ♜b3 f5+ (D)



6 ♔g5?!

After 6 ♔h3 Scherbakov believed that 6...e2 draws while 6...♜e2 wins; this is almost exactly the wrong way round since 6...e2 wins, while after 6...♜e2 Black can only win by repeating the position and then playing ...e2:

1) 6...♜e2?! 7 ♜b4! threatens to draw by playing g4; Black can now only win with 7...♜f2 8 ♜b3 e2!, going back to the correct line.

2) 6...e2! 7 ♜e3 f4! (7...♔g6? 8 ♜e6+ ♔g5 9 ♜e5 ♔f6 10 ♜e8 really is a draw) 8 gxf4 ♜f3+ 9 ♜xf3 e1 ♖ 10 f5 (contrary to Scherbakov's view, this position is a win and a fairly easy one at that; White can only draw if Black mistakenly allows the pawn to advance to f6) 10...♖h1+ 11 ♔g3 ♖g1+ 12 ♔f4 (after 12 ♔h3 ♔f6 13 ♔h4 ♖g2 Black wins the pawn at once) 12...♔f6 13 ♔e4 ♖h1 14 ♔f4 ♖e1 15 ♔g4 ♔e5 (Black's pieces are now sufficiently well placed to unblock the pawn, since if it advances it is quickly lost) 16 f6 ♖g1+ 17 ♔h4 ♖h2+ 18 ♔g4 ♖g2+ 19 ♜g3 ♖e4+ and the pawn falls. Black would then have to win ♖ vs ♜, not an especially easy task against determined defence, so this line represents White's best practical chance. The game continuation offers little resistance.

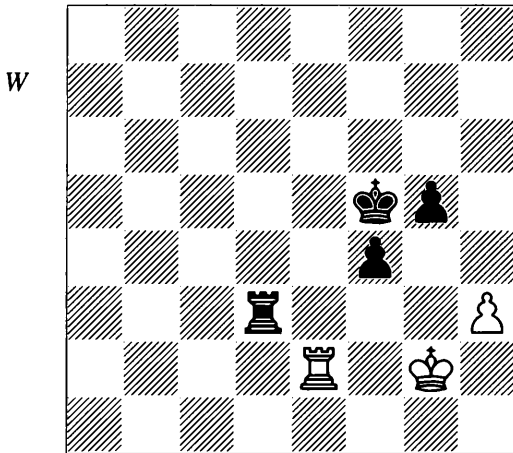
6...♜f3 7 ♜b6

Or 7 ♖b2 ♕e6 8 g4 f4 9 ♖a2 ♖f1 and the pawns advance.

7...e2 8 ♖b7+ ♕e6 9 ♖b8 ♕d7 0-1

Black wins after 10 ♖b7+ ♕d6 11 ♖b6+ ♕d5 12 ♖b5+ ♕d4 13 ♖b4+ ♕c3.

The following position is another of those standard pawn-formations which has arisen many times in practice.



Wedberg – Speelman
Gothenburg 1982

This position is drawn, but it requires careful play by the defender. Matters are simpler if the white rook is already on the eighth rank, because the easiest way to draw the position is to put the rook on h8, so as to meet ...♖g3+ by ♕f2, keeping the king in front of the f-pawn. With his rook on g3 and White's king on f2, Black can then attack the white rook by ...♕g7, but White replies ♖h5 and Black has no way to exploit the curious position of White's rook. If Black attempts to play his king through the centre via e4, he is frustrated by checks from behind. This method of defence was used as long ago as Schlechter-Lasker, St Petersburg 1909 (in which it was Schlechter who found the correct drawing plan) and in such high-profile encounters as Smyslov-Keres, USSR Ch, Moscow 1949. In the diagram, however, White's rook is not already on the eighth rank and so he has to adopt a more passive defence which is, however, also sufficient to draw. The correct plan is simply to wait by 1 ♖a2 ♖g3+ 2 ♕h2. It turns out that White can always harass Black's king

with sideways checks and thereby prevent him from making any progress.

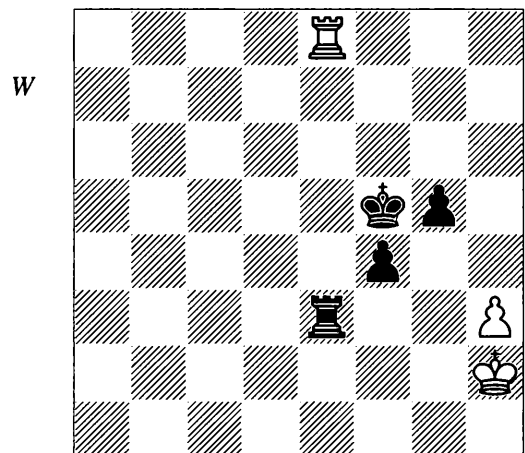
1 ♖e8?

Perhaps Wedberg knew about the plan of playing the rook to h8, but this move is a losing mistake since he lacks one tempo to reach the required position and thus gives Black the opportunity to win. Such is the ability of modern computers that when I put the position after 1 ♖e8? in my computer and left it for some minutes, it announced that Black can mate in 46 moves with 1...♖g3+, but it evaluated all other black moves as '0.00'.

1...♖g3+!

Speelman finds the correct move, forcing the white king to an inferior position before playing ...♖e3. Not only did he conduct the endgame with great skill, but Speelman also gave some accurate analysis in *Informator 34* demonstrating how Black wins against White's alternatives.

2 ♕h2 ♖e3 (D)



Thanks to the preliminary check on g3, the black king has the f3-square available if White starts checking.

3 ♖f8+

Or 3 ♖a8 ♖e2+ 4 ♕g1 f3! (threatening ...♕f4) 5 ♖a4 ♖g2+! (5...♖e4? allows White to escape by 6 ♖a2 ♕f4 7 ♕f2 ♖e2+ 8 ♖xe2 fxe2 9 h4!) 6 ♕h1 (6 ♕f1 ♖h2 7 ♖a5+ ♕g6 8 ♖a3 ♖xh3 9 ♕f2 g4 is a technical win for Black) 6...g4! (the key move; see also Wl.Schmidt-Plachetka on page 152, which features a virtually identical position) 7 hxg4+ (7 ♖xg4 ♖xg4

8 hxg4+ ♖xg4 and Black wins) 7...♔g5! (this position is a draw without the g4-pawn, but thanks to the obstructive effect of the pawn, Black's king can penetrate to h4 and g3) 8 ♖a1 (8 ♖a3 ♖f4 doesn't help White) 8...♞d2! (not 8...♔h4? 9 ♖f1! ♔g3 10 ♞g1! ♖f2 11 ♖a1 and the position is only a draw) 9 ♔g1 ♖f4 10 g5 ♔g3 11 g6 ♞g2+ 12 ♖f1 ♞h2 and Black is just in time to win.

3...♔e4 4 ♞g8

The alternative is 4 ♞e8+ ♖f3 5 ♞g8 ♞e2+, and now:

1) 6 ♔g1 ♞g2+ 7 ♖f1 (7 ♖h1 g4! 8 hxg4 ♔g3 and Black wins) 7...♞h2 8 ♔e1 (8 ♔g1 ♞xh3 9 ♞xg5 ♞g3+ 10 ♞xg3+ ♖xg3 is a winning king and pawn position) 8...♞h1+ 9 ♔d2 ♞xh3 10 ♞xg5 ♖f2 and Black will soon reach the Lucena position.

2) 6 ♖h1 g4! 7 ♞xg4 ♞e1+ 8 ♖h2 ♔e3 9 ♞g8 f3 10 ♞e8+ ♔d2 11 ♖f8 ♔e2 12 ♞e8+ ♖f1 13 ♞a8 f2 14 ♞a2 ♞d1 and Black wins.

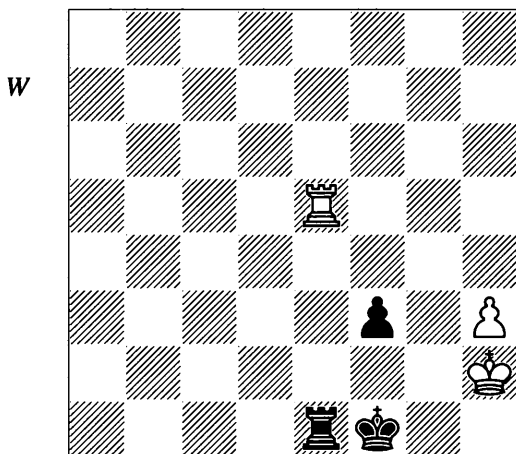
4...♞e2+ 5 ♔g1 ♔e3! 6 ♞xg5 ♞e1+ 7 ♖h2 f3

This position would be winning for Black without the h3-pawn, and the addition of this pawn doesn't make much difference.

8 ♞e5+ ♔d2!

Not 8...♖f2? 9 ♞a5 ♖f1 10 ♔g3 f2 11 ♖f3! ♞b1 12 h4 and White exploits the h-pawn to draw after he gives up his rook for the f-pawn.

9 ♞d5+ ♔e2 10 ♞e5+ ♖f1 (D)



Black's king manoeuvre stops the checks while leaving the pawn free to advance to f2.

11 ♞a5

11 ♞f5 f2 12 ♔g3 also fails after 12...♞e3+ 13 ♔g4 (13 ♖h2 ♔e1 14 ♔g2 ♞e2 15 ♔g3 f1 ♖ 16 ♞xf1+ ♖xf1 17 ♔g4 ♖f2 18 h4 ♔e3 19 h5 ♔e4 is winning for Black) 13...♔g2 14 ♞xf2+ (after 14 h4 ♞g3+! followed by ...♞f3 Black makes a whole queen) 14...♖xf2 15 h4 ♞e4+ 16 ♔g5 ♔g3 with a standard win after White promotes to a knight (see the game continuation).

11...f2 12 ♞a2 ♞d1!

The only square to win as 12...♞c1? 13 ♔g3! ♞c3+ 14 ♔g4 ♔g1 (14...♔e1 15 h4 is no better) 15 ♞a1+ f1 ♖ 16 ♞xf1+ ♖xf1 17 h4 is only a draw.

13 ♔g3 ♞d3+ 14 ♔g4 ♔e1

Not 14...♔g1? 15 ♞a1+! f1 ♖ 16 ♞xf1+ ♖xf1 17 h4 with a draw.

0-1

The key point is that because Black's rook is on the d-file, 15 h4 loses to 15...f1 ♖ 16 ♞a1+ ♞d1 and so White has to give up his rook on f2, handing Black an extra tempo: 15 ♞xf2 ♖xf2 16 h4 ♞d4+ 17 ♔g5 ♔g3 18 h5 ♞d5+ 19 ♔g6 ♔g4 20 h6 ♞d6+ 21 ♔g7 ♔g5 22 h7 ♞d7+ 23 ♔g8 ♔g6 24 h8 ♖+ ♖f6 and Black wins.

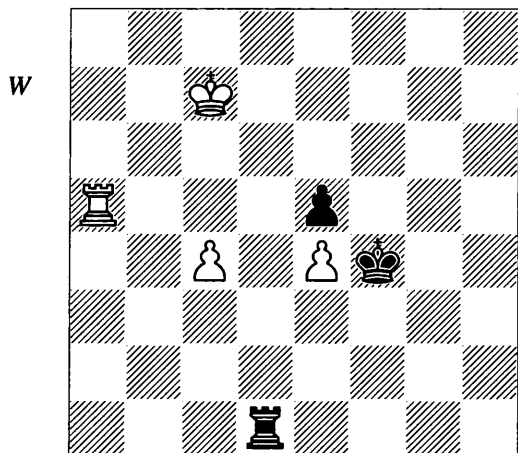
Summary:

- Positions such as ♞+e♠+f♠ vs ♞+g♠ tend to be drawn unless the attacker has some additional advantage, such as being able to cut off the defender's king. However, the defence may not be straightforward.
- The pawn-structure of Wedberg-Speelman arises frequently in practice, so this example is worth looking at closely.

8.8.2b The Attacker's Pawns are Not Connected

The most common situation here is when the pawns are still relatively close to each other, having, for instance, just one file in between. I included the first example below because it's a good reminder of how sceptical one should be about published analysis, even in relatively simple positions.

White is a pawn up in the diagram overleaf but stands to lose his e-pawn, so the only question is whether he can make something of his passed c-pawn.



Vujačić – Hradetzky
Hungary 1968

1 ♖d5!?

The only move to offer any winning chances at all.

1...♞c1?!

According to Marić in *Informator 6*, this is the losing move. He recommends 1...♞d4, which certainly does draw, one line being 2 c5 ♖xe4 3 ♞d7 ♞c4. However, 1...♞d4 doesn't really deserve the double exclamation mark Marić gives it, since any other rook move along the first rank draws comfortably; for example, 1...♞h1 2 c5 ♖xe4 3 ♞d7 ♖f3 and Black just pushes the e-pawn.

2 c5 ♖xe4??

This blunder, which costs Black his e-pawn, is actually the losing move. Black can draw in two different ways:

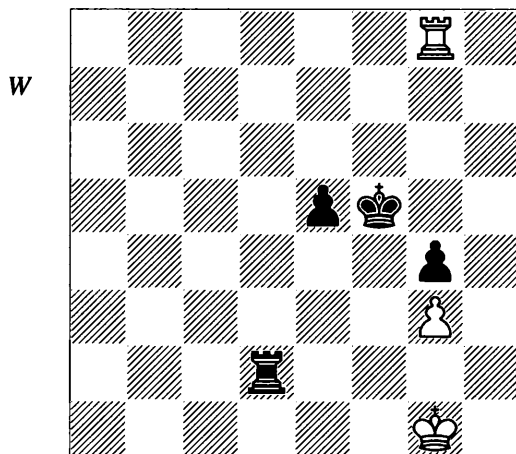
1) 2...♞c4 3 ♖d6 (3 c6 ♖xe4 4 ♖d6 ♖f4! transposes) 3...♞xe4! 4 c6 ♞c4! 5 ♞c5 (5 c7 ♞xc7 6 ♖xc7 e4 is a draw) wins for White according to Marić, but 5...♞d4+! draws because Black can always give up his rook for the c-pawn: 6 ♖e6 (6 ♖e7 ♞a4! 7 c7 leads to a draw after 7...♞a8 8 c8 ♖xc8 9 ♞xc8 e4 10 ♖d6 e3, but not 7...♞a7?, which loses to 8 ♖e6) 6...♞d8! 7 c7 ♞c8 8 ♖d7 (or 8 ♞c4+ e4 9 ♖d5 ♖f3) 8...♞xc7+ 9 ♖xc7 e4.

2) 2...♞h1 still draws, despite the lost tempo: 3 c6 ♖xe4 4 ♖d6 ♞h6+! 5 ♖c5 ♞h1 and Black is safe.

3 ♖d6 1-0

3...♖f5 4 ♞xe5+ ♖f6 5 ♞d5 and White wins easily.

Now we move on to a typical practical position, in which the pawn-structure is similar to the previous example but the defender's king is passively placed.



Shapovalov – Estrin
USSR corr. Ch 1963-4

With correct play, even this relatively favourable position should have been a draw. Black's rook is well-placed, cutting off White's king on the back rank, but on the other hand Black's king is tied to the defence of the g4-pawn. The only real winning attempt for Black is to abandon the g4-pawn and activate his king, staking everything on the power of the e-pawn. However, against precise defence this plan should not succeed.

1 ♞g7

At the moment White cannot do anything but wait.

1...♖e4

The best chance, since 1...e4 2 ♞g8 ♖e5 (2...e3 3 ♞e8 draws at once) 3 ♞xg4 ♖d4 4 ♖f1 ♖e3 5 ♞g8 ♞d1+ 6 ♖g2 ♖e2 7 ♞a8 is a comfortable draw.

2 ♞xg4+ ♖d3 3 ♞g8?

What is surprising is that this move loses, whereas moving to g5, g6 or g7 would draw, so here we have another example of the 'checking distance' error from Section 8.4.5. However, instead of moving along the g-file, White could have drawn quite simply by 3 ♞a4! e4 4 ♞a3+ ♖e2 5 ♖g2 e3 6 ♞a1, a manoeuvre which would draw even if White had no g-pawn.

The reason why ♖g7 works while ♖g8 does not is extremely subtle. It is revealed in the variation 3 ♖g7! e4 4 ♔f1 ♖d1+ 5 ♔g2 e3 6 ♖d7+ ♔c2 7 ♖c7+ ♔d2 8 ♖d7+ ♔e1 9 ♖e7 ♖d2+ 10 ♔f3 ♖f2+ 11 ♔xe3 ♖e2+ 12 ♔f4 ♖xe7 (this position is lost if the rook is on e8, but here White gains a crucial tempo by attacking Black's rook with his king) 13 g4 ♔f2 14 g5 ♖g7 15 ♔f5 ♔g3 16 ♔f6 and White is saved. Similar logic applies to other moves by the white rook along the g-file.

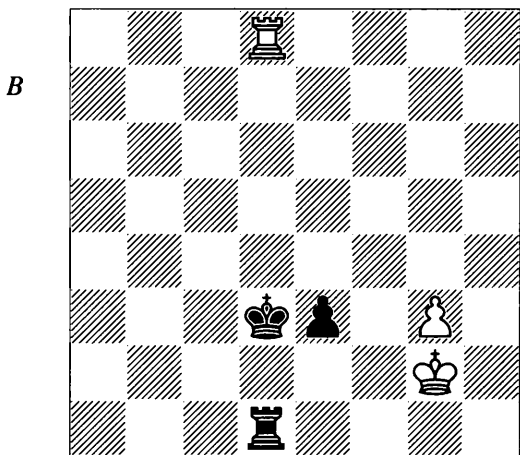
3...e4

Now Black should win, but exact play is necessary.

4 ♔f1

4 g4 also loses: 4...e3 5 ♖d8+ ♔e2 6 ♖g8 (6 ♖a8 ♖d4 7 ♖a2+ ♔f3 and 6 ♖e8 ♖d4 are even easier for Black) 6...♔d1 7 ♖a8 ♖d4! 8 ♔g2 e2 9 ♖a1+ ♔d2 10 ♖a2+ ♔e3 11 ♖a3+ ♖d3 12 ♖a1 ♖d1 and the pawn promotes as soon as White's checks run out.

4...♖d1+ 5 ♔g2 e3 6 ♖d8+ (D)



6...♔e2?

This mistake loses a vital tempo. The king is now blocking the pawn and Black must spend another move on ...♔e1 before the pawn can advance. The winning line was 6...♔c2! 7 ♖c8+ ♔d2 8 ♖d8+ ♔e1, and now:

1) 9 ♖e8 ♖d2+ 10 ♔f3 ♖f2+ 11 ♔xe3 (11 ♔e4 e2 12 ♖a8 ♔f1 13 ♖a1+ e1♚+ 14 ♖xe1+ ♔xe1 15 g4 ♖g2 16 ♔f5 ♔f2 17 g5 ♔g3 18 g6 ♔h4 also wins for Black) 11...♖e2+ 12 ♔f4 ♖xe8 13 g4 ♔f2 14 g5 ♖g8 15 ♔g4 ♔g2! 16 ♔f5 ♔g3 17 g6 ♔h4 18 ♔f6 (this does not

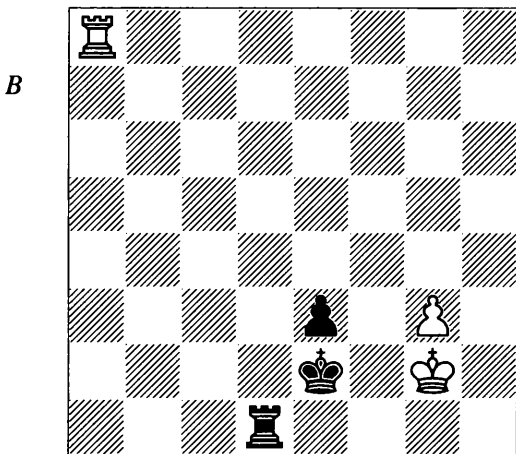
attack the rook thanks to White's faulty third move) 18...♔h5 19 g7 ♔h6 and Black wins.

2) 9 ♖h8 e2 10 ♔f3 ♖d3+ 11 ♔f4 ♔f1! and then:

2a) 12 ♖e8 ♖d8! 13 ♖xd8 (13 ♖xe2 ♔xe2 14 g4 ♖f8+ 15 ♔e4 ♔f2 and Black wins) 13...e1♚ 14 ♖d5 ♚f2+ 15 ♔g4 ♔g2 and Black wins the g-pawn.

2b) 12 ♖h2 ♖e3!! (this stunning tactical resource is the only way to win) 13 ♖h1+ (13 ♔xe3 e1♚+ 14 ♔f3 ♚c3+ 15 ♔f4 ♚d3 is winning for Black since the rook has no safe squares on the second rank, and after 16 ♖h5 ♚d4+ 17 ♔f5 ♚d5+ 18 ♔g4 ♚d1+ 19 ♔h4 ♚d4+ 20 g4 ♔f2 21 ♖f5+ ♔g2 22 ♔h5 ♔g3 the pawn falls) 13...♔f2 14 ♖h2+ ♔g1 15 ♖xe2 (after 15 ♔xe3 e1♚+ Black wins the pawn at once) 15...♖xe2 16 g4 ♔g2 17 g5 ♔h3 18 g6 ♔h4 19 ♔f5 ♔h5 and Black wins.

7 ♖a8! (D)



The only drawing move. Black would win were it not for the white g-pawn, which provides enough counterplay for White to hold the game.

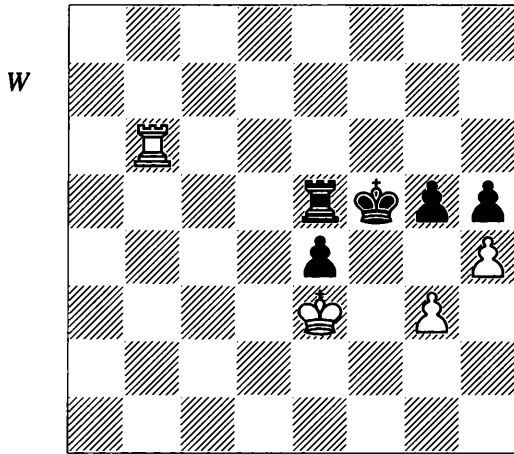
7...♔e1 8 g4 e2 9 ♖a2! ♖d8 10 ♔f3 ♔f1 10...♖f8+ 11 ♔e3 doesn't help Black.
11 ♖xe2!

Giving up the rook is the only route to a draw.

11...♖f8+ 12 ♔e4 ♔xe2 13 g5 ♔f2 14 ♔e5
After 14 g6? ♖f6 White loses the pawn.
14...♔g3 15 g6 1/2-1/2

In the next example, the passed pawn is again close by, but this time the two other pawns do not

face each other, which gives the attacker's king better chances of penetrating. Despite this, the result should again be a draw.



Zinn – Bronstein
East Berlin 1969

1 hxg5

This is the losing move according to Marić in *Informator 7*, but White can still draw. However, the simplest draw is by Marić's 1 ♖h6! ♙g4 2 ♜g6, when Black is in a kind of zugzwang.

1... ♙xg5 2 ♜b8?!

At this stage virtually any move is adequate, but perhaps the simplest is 2 ♙d4 ♜e8 3 ♙e3 and if 3... ♙g4, then 4 ♜g6+. Although the move played also draws, it requires an accurate follow-up.

2... ♙g4 3 ♜g8+ ♜g5 4 ♜a8 ♙xg3 5 ♙xe4 h4

The h-pawn is relatively far advanced, but the proximity of the white king is enough to ensure a draw.

6 ♜a3+! ♙g4 (D)

7 ♜a1?

This is the losing move. White overlooks a tactical point, when he could have held the game by 7 ♙e3! ♜f5 8 ♜a8 h3 9 ♜g8+ ♙h4 10 ♜h8+ ♙g3 11 ♜g8+ ♙h2 12 ♙e2 and his problems are over.

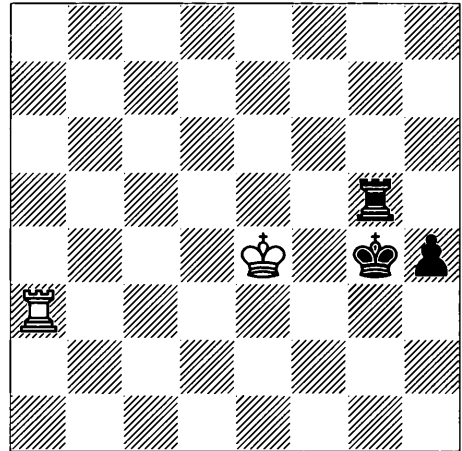
7...h3!

Now Black wins.

8 ♙e3

The point is that 8 ♜g1+ ♙h4 9 ♜xg5 (Black also wins after 9 ♜h1 ♜g2 10 ♙f3 ♜a2) is met by 9...h2! and Black promotes with check.

W



8...h2

8... ♜f5 also wins.

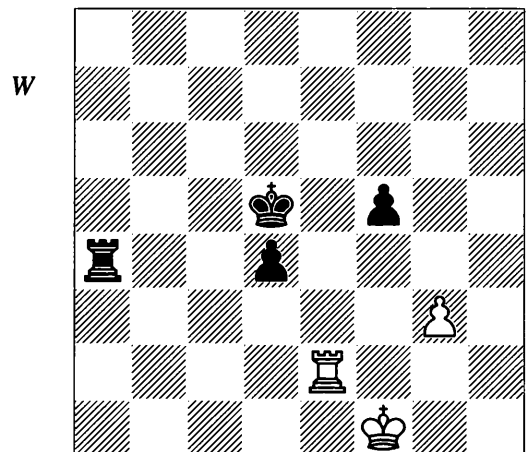
9 ♙f2 ♜a5! 10 ♜xa5

10 ♜h1 ♜a2+ is hopeless for White.

10...h1 ♙ 0-1

Black has a technical (although not exactly trivial) win.

In the next example, the pawn-structure is similar to the previous position, but the play is far more complicated.



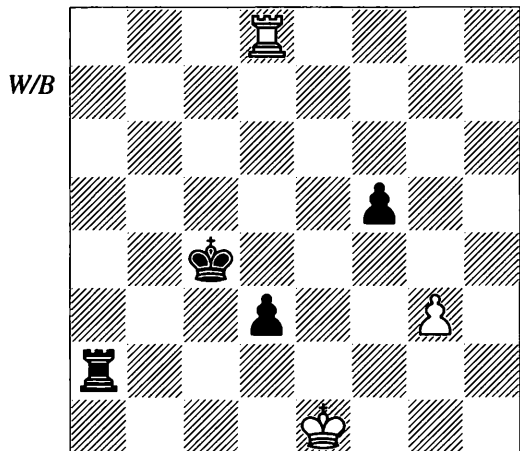
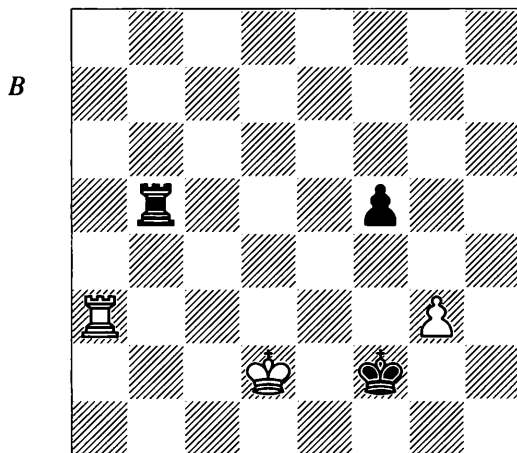
Nevednichy – Marin
Romania 1996

This position is finely poised between a draw and a win for Black. In addition to the extra passed pawn, Black's pieces are active and at the moment White's king is poorly placed. The two factors operating in White's favour are the small number of pawns, which increases the drawing prospects in most endings, and the fact that

Black's passed pawn is quite close to the remaining pawns, which means that White's king can both defend the g3-pawn and play a part in the fight against the d-pawn. The difficulty of the position can be judged by the fact that not only did both players make mistakes in the game, but Marin, a careful analyst, overlooked some important possibilities in his notes (he considered that both players conducted the endgame accurately). The position should be a win for Black, but it is balanced on a knife-edge and the win requires very accurate play by Black.

In order to make the analysis easier to understand, we shall first consider a preliminary position in which Black wins with a long but forcing continuation.

9...d2 10 ♖a7 ♜b5 11 ♖a3+ ♔f2 12 ♔xd2 (D)



Nevednichy – Marin
Analysis diagram

This position is a win for Black if it is his move, but if White is to play, it is drawn. To begin with, assume that Black is to play.

1...♖g2! 2 ♖g8

All lines lead to the same position; for example, 2 ♖f8 ♔c3 3 ♜c8+ ♔d4 and 2 ♜c8+ ♔d4 transpose to the main line.

2...♔c3 3 ♜c8+

Black wins after 3 ♔f1 ♜c2 4 ♜c8+ ♔b2.

3...♔d4 4 ♖g8

Or 4 ♖f8 ♔e4 5 ♖e8+ ♔f3 6 ♖f8, transposing.

4...♔e3 5 ♖e8+ ♔f3 6 ♖f8 ♖e2+ 7 ♔d1 ♖e5 8 ♖g8 ♔e3 9 ♖g7

9 ♖d8 d2 10 ♖xd2 ♔f3 11 ♖d3+ ♔f2 12 ♔d2 ♖e2+ 13 ♔d1 ♖e3 transposes to the main line.

Perhaps surprisingly, this position is a win; the first step is for Black to play his rook to e3.

12...♖e5

Not 12...♖d5+? 13 ♔c3!, drawing because Black cannot take on g3.

13 ♖b3 ♖e2+ 14 ♔d1 ♖e3 15 ♖b5 ♖f3 16 ♔d2 ♔xg3

The white pawn has gone, but the win is still not easy.

17 ♖b8 f4 18 ♖g8+ ♔f2 19 ♖g4

At first sight paralysing Black, but he has a cunning manoeuvre to free his position.

19...♔f1! 20 ♖h4 ♔g2 21 ♖g4+ ♔f2

Losing a tempo has put White in zugzwang.

22 ♖h4 ♔g3 23 ♖h8 ♖e3

and Black wins as White cannot avoid the Lucena position.

Now let's suppose White is to play. The key finesse in the above line is the transfer of Black's rook from g2 to e5 via a check on e2. Without this manoeuvre, Black is unable to win, so the simplest drawing line is 1 ♔d1! ♖g2 2 ♜c8+ ♔d4 3 ♖d8+ ♔e3 4 ♖e8+ ♔f3 5 ♖f8! and White draws since Black has no good way to defend the f5-pawn.

From this analysis, we can conclude that when Black's pawn is on d3, the white king is best placed on d1. It also follows that Black shouldn't push his pawn to d3 unless he has a forced win, because he reduces his own possibilities by denying his king the use of the d3-square.

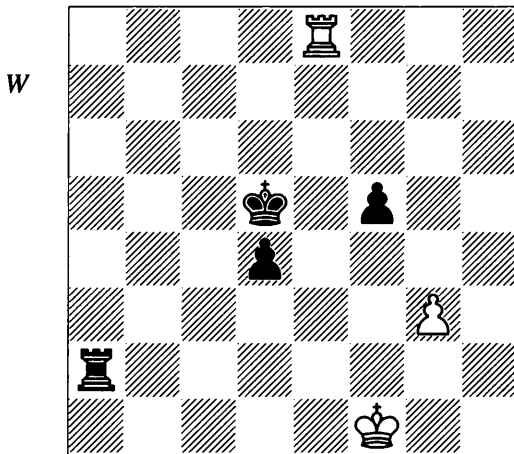
Now we return to the game position.

1 ♖e8

Preparing to give checks from behind is the most natural defence. 1 ♖f2?! loses quickly after 1...d3! 2 ♖e8 (2 ♖b2 ♖d4 followed by ...♖c3 is an easy win for Black) 2...♖e4! (cutting off White's king) 3 ♖d8+ ♖c4 4 ♖c8+ ♖b3 5 ♖d8 ♖c3 6 ♖c8+ ♖c4 followed by ...d2.

1...♖a2?! (D)

Black could have won by 1...d3! 2 ♖d8+ ♖e4 (2...♖c4 also wins, but is more complicated) 3 ♖e1 ♖e3! (after 3...♖a1+? 4 ♖d2 ♖a2+ 5 ♖d1 ♖g2 6 ♖e8+ ♖f3 7 ♖f8 ♖g4 8 ♖g8+ ♖h5 9 ♖h8+ ♖g5 10 ♖g8+ there is no satisfactory escape from the checks) 4 ♖e8+ ♖e4 5 ♖f8 ♖e5, transposing to the position after 7...♖e5 in the analysis diagram. Once Black has played his rook to a2, he cannot interpose on e4 and so ...d3 is no longer a threat.



2 ♖e7

There are no immediate threats, so White decides just to wait. Other moves lose more quickly; for example, 2 ♖e1?! (trying to cross to d1, but this doesn't work when the pawn is still on d4) 2...♖g2 3 ♖g8 (3 ♖f8 ♖e4 4 ♖e8+ transposes) 3...♖e4! and now:

1) 4 ♖d1 f4! 5 ♖e8+ ♖d3! is the key line in which Black exploits the availability of d3 for his king. This is why White must wait for ...d3 before crossing with his king to d1.

2) 4 ♖f1 ♖f3! 5 ♖g5 ♖xg3 6 ♖xf5+ ♖e3 7 ♖e5+ ♖d2 8 ♖f2 ♖g8 9 ♖e2+ ♖c3 and the d-pawn is decisive.

3) 4 ♖g7 ♖f3 5 ♖f7 ♖e2+ effectively transposes to line 4.

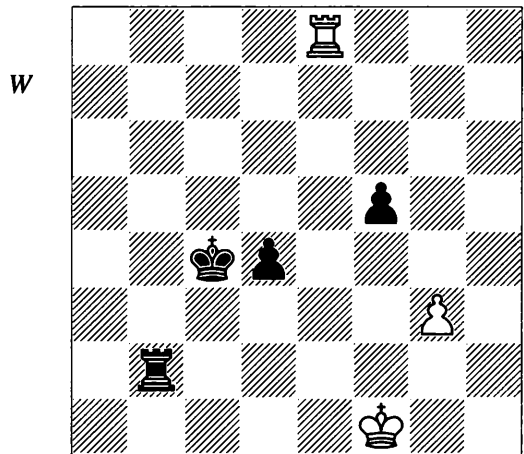
4) 4 ♖e8+ ♖f3! (after 4...♖d3?! 5 ♖a8 the g-pawn is indirectly defended so Black has not made any progress) 5 ♖f8 ♖e2+ (the same manoeuvre wins even when the pawn is still on d4) 6 ♖d1 ♖e5 7 ♖g8 ♖e3! (threatening ...d3) 8 ♖a8 d3 9 ♖a7 d2 10 ♖c7 ♖a5 11 ♖c3+ ♖f2 and Black wins as in the analysis diagram.

2...♖b2

2...♖c4? fails to 3 ♖e5! ♖c3 (3...d3 4 ♖e1 ♖a1+ 5 ♖d2 ♖f1 6 ♖a5 is also a draw) 4 ♖c5+! (4 ♖xf5? loses to 4...♖a1+ 5 ♖f2 d3) 4...♖d3 5 ♖xf5 ♖a1+ 6 ♖f2 ♖c3 7 ♖c5+ and White draws without difficulty. If 2...d3?, then 3 ♖e1! ♖g2 4 ♖g7 ♖e4 5 ♖d1 and the king has reached the drawing square just in time.

The waiting move played doesn't improve Black's position, but it does retain the win.

3 ♖e8 ♖c4 (D)



4 ♖f8

Given an exclamation mark by Marin, who considered it the only move to draw. However, while this move puts up the greatest resistance, it, like all the other moves available to White, should lose:

1) 4 ♖e5 ♖b5 5 ♖e8 ♖c3 6 ♖e1 ♖b1+ 7 ♖f2 d3 wins for Black.

2) 4 ♖d8 ♖d3 5 ♖e1 ♖e2+ 6 ♖f1 ♖e7 7 ♖f2 ♖c3 8 ♖c8+ ♖d2 9 ♖c5 ♖f7 10 ♖a5 d3 is also a win for Black.

3) 4 ♖e1 ♖c3! 5 ♖d8 (5 ♖c8+ ♖d3 6 ♖c5 ♖e2+ 7 ♖f1 ♖e3 8 ♖f2 ♖e4 9 ♖c8 ♖f3+ 10 ♖g2 ♖a3 11 ♖f2 ♖a2+ 12 ♖e1 ♖g2 13 ♖g8

♖f3 14 ♜f8 ♜e2+ followed by ...♜e5 and Black wins as in line 4 of the note to White's second move) 5...♞g2 6 ♜a8 (6 ♜c8+ ♖d3 7 ♜a8 ♖e3 8 ♜e8+ ♖f3 9 ♜f8 ♜e2+ and Black wins as in the previous bracket) 6...d3 7 ♜c8+ ♖d4 transposes to the analysis diagram.

4...♞b5?

For the second time Black misses a chance to force a win. After 4...d3? 5 ♖e1! the white king heads for the drawing square d1, but 4...♖c3! is the route to victory: 5 ♜xf5 (it is too late for 5 ♖e1 due to 5...♞b1+ 6 ♖f2 d3) 5...d3 6 ♜c5+ ♖d4 7 ♜c8 and now:

1) Marin only considered 7...♞b1+?, which should lead to a draw after 8 ♖f2 d2 9 ♜d8+ ♖c3 10 ♜c8+ ♖b2 11 ♞b8+ ♖c1 12 ♜c8+ ♖d1, though White must choose carefully:

1a) 13 g4? (Marin's move actually loses) 13...♞b4! (13...♞c1? 14 ♜d8 ♜c3 15 g5 ♖c1 16 ♖e2 ♜c2 17 ♜xd2 ♜xd2+ 18 ♖e3 is indeed a draw) 14 g5 (14 ♖f3 ♜d4! threatens ...♖e1 and after 15 ♖f2 or 15 ♖e3 Black simply takes on g4 with a winning position) 14...♞b5! (not 14...♞f4+? 15 ♖e3!, drawing) 15 g6 (15 ♞g8 ♜f5+ 16 ♖g3 ♜d5 is also winning for Black) 15...♞f5+ 16 ♖g3 ♞g5+, followed by ...♞xg6, with a technically winning position.

1b) 13 ♜d8! ♞b3 (or 13...♞b4 14 ♖e3 ♞b3+ 15 ♖f4) 14 g4 ♞b4 15 g5 ♞b5 16 g6 ♜f5+ 17 ♖e3 draws.

2) 7...♜c2! (a difficult move to spot) 8 ♜d8+ (8 ♜a8 ♜c1+ 9 ♖f2 d2 10 ♜d8+ ♖c3 11 ♜c8+ ♖b4 12 ♞b8+ ♖c5 and Black wins) 8...♖c3 9 ♜c8+ ♖b2! 10 ♞b8+ ♖c1 11 ♜a8 ♜c4! (the simplest, preventing the advance of the g-pawn) 12 ♜d8 (12 ♜a1+ ♖c2 13 ♖f2 d2 14 ♖e2 ♜e4+ 15 ♖f3 ♜e1 16 ♜a2+ ♖c3 17 ♜xd2 ♖xd2 18 g4 ♖d3 wins for Black) 12...d2 13 ♖e2 ♜c2! 14 ♖f3 d1♙+ 15 ♜xd1+ ♖xd1 16 ♖e4 ♞g2 17 ♖f3 ♞g1 18 g4 ♖d2 19 ♖f4 ♖d3 20 g5 ♖d4 21 ♖f5 ♖d5 22 g6 ♜f1+ and Black wins.

5 ♖e2

Now that White's king has been released from the back rank, he faces far fewer difficulties.

5...♜e5+

5...d3+ 6 ♖e3 ♜e5+ 7 ♖d2 ♜e2+ 8 ♖d1 ♜f2 9 ♖e1 d2+ 10 ♖d1 ♖d3 11 ♜d8+ ♖e3 12 ♜e8+ ♖f3 13 ♞g8 is also a draw.

6 ♖d2 ♖d5 7 ♜d8+ ♖e4 8 ♖e2 ♜e7 9 ♞g8 ♜e6

Objectively speaking, Black doesn't have many winning chances, although White must still take a little care.

10 ♜d8 ♜e5 11 ♜d7 ♜e8 12 ♞g7 ♖d5+ 13 ♖d2 ♜e3 14 ♞g5

14 g4! f4 15 g5 ♖e4 16 g6 ♜d3+ 17 ♖e1 ♞g3 18 ♜e7+ ♖d3 19 g7 is a more clear-cut way to force a draw.

14...♖e4 15 ♞g8 ♜a3 16 ♜e8+ ♖f3 17 ♜f8 ♜a5 18 ♞g8 ♜a3

18...♜a2+ 19 ♖d3 ♞g2 20 ♞g5! ♜xg3 21 ♜xf5+ ♖g4+ 22 ♖e4 is a draw since 22...♜e3+ may be met by 23 ♖xd4.

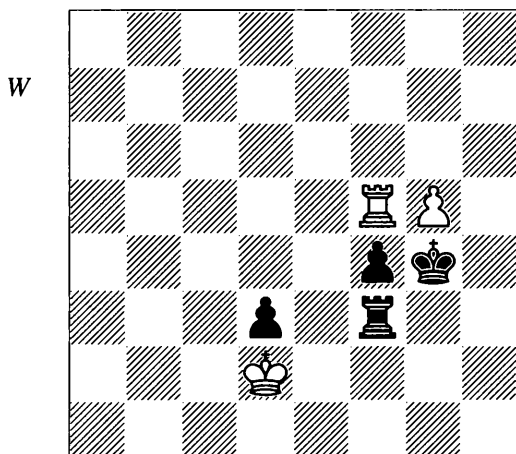
19 ♜f8 ♖g4 20 ♞g8+ ♖h3 21 ♞g5 ♜f3 22 ♖e2 ♖g2 23 ♖e1 d3 24 ♖d2 ♖f2

Black's efforts, while not having resulted in a winning position, at least force White to play accurately. He cannot move his king or rook; for example, 25 ♖d1? ♖e3, 25 ♞g8? ♜xg3 and 25 ♞h5? ♖xg3 all lose at once. By a process of elimination, White has only one feasible move.

25 g4! f4 26 ♜f5

Again the only move, tying down Black's rook.

26...♖g3 27 g5 ♖g4 (D)



28 ♜e5?

Marin made no comment on this move, which gives Black another winning chance. 28 ♜d5! is a simple draw, as Black cannot prevent White from simply taking on d3; for example, 28...♞g3 29 ♜xd3 ♖xg5 30 ♜d5+ ♖g4 31 ♖e2 and White defends comfortably.

28...♖g3?

Black misses his last chance to win. After 28...♖h5! White is defenceless: 29 ♖d5 (29 ♖c3 is met by 29...♖g6! 30 ♖d2 ♖g3 31 ♖d5 ♖xg5 32 ♖xd3 ♖e5!, cutting off the white king and winning) 29...♖e3! (this position is winning for Black whoever moves first, since if it is Black to play, he simply waits with ...♖g6) 30 ♖xd3 ♖e5! 31 g6 ♖xg6 32 ♖d8 ♖f5 and Black will eventually reach the Lucena position.

29 g6 ♖f3

29...♖h3 30 ♖f5 is also drawn.

30 ♖e6 ♖g2 31 ♖f6!

The only move to draw.

31...f3 32 ♖xd3 ♖g1

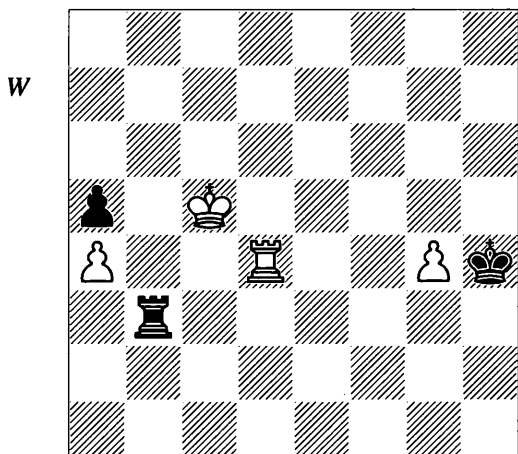
32...f2+ 33 ♖e2 and 32...♖g5 33 ♖e3 ♖e5+ 34 ♖f4 ♖a5 35 ♖g4 are also drawn.

33 ♖e4 f2 34 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 35 ♖f5

The king is just in time to support the g-pawn.

35...♖e3 36 ♖f6 ♖e4 37 g7 ♖xg7 ½-½

In our final position, the attacker's pawns are almost on opposite sides of the board. When the pawns are so far apart, the position resembles a typical outside passed pawn situation (see also Section 8.9).



Hertneck – G. Horvath
Austrian Team Ch 1994

At the moment, White's king is cut off from the black pawn so he will have to use his rook to relieve the cut-off, losing the g-pawn in the process. Then everything will depend on the resulting ending of ♖+a♙ vs ♚. According to

Hertneck's notes, this position is a win for White, and he even gives two different ways to win, one of which was played in the game. However, the position is drawn, provided Black finds the correct defence.

1 ♖c4

Hertneck's other line is 1 ♖d5 with the idea of ♖c4-c5, but after 1...♖g5! (not mentioned by Hertneck) 2 ♖c4 ♖b8 we transpose to the following note.

1...♖b8?

This move is wrong because it loses time. 1...♖b1? is also a mistake and loses after 2 ♖c6! (threatening ♖c5) 2...♖b4 3 ♖d5! (now White threatens to exchange rooks; the manoeuvre ♖c5-c6-d5 gains time for White because Black has to keep moving his rook and has no time to improve the position of his king) 3...♖b8 4 ♖c5 ♖a8 (4...♖b4 5 ♖xa5 ♖xg4 6 ♖e6! ♖g6+ 7 ♖f7 ♖g4 8 ♖a8 and White wins as Black's king is too far away from the safe zone at g7 and h7, while 4...♖xg4 5 ♖xa5 is also winning for White after, for example, 5...♖b4 6 ♖a8 ♖g5 7 a5 ♖f6 8 a6 ♖a4 9 ♖c6 ♖a1 10 ♖b7) 5 ♖c6 ♖xg4 6 ♖b7 ♖f8 7 ♖b6 ♖b8+ 8 ♖xa5 ♖f4 9 ♖b5 ♖h8 10 ♖b4 and Black cannot save the game with his king cut off along a rank.

The only drawing move is 1...♖g5!, whereby Black takes the chance to improve his king position. At some stage White's rook will take the a5-pawn and Black's rook will capture the g4-pawn. In the resulting ending with ♖+a♙ vs ♚, the crucial position for Black to know is the Vančura draw (see page 100), in which Black's king is on g7 or h7 and his rook is on the f- or g-file respectively, checking the white king from the side (for this to work, the white rook has to be in front of the pawn). The important point here is that Black's king has to reach the safe zone of g7 and h7 as quickly as possible, and so having the king on g5 rather than h4 saves a vital tempo. After 1...♖g5! White can try:

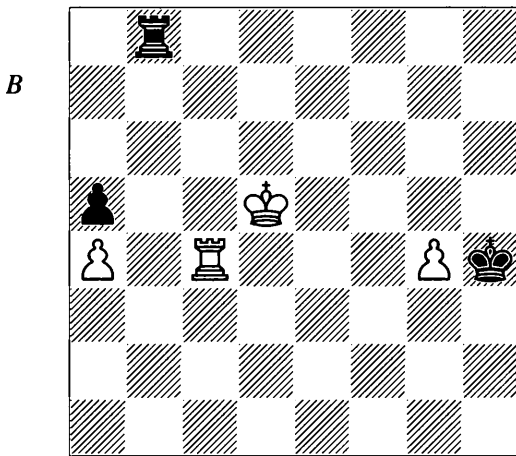
1) 2 ♖c6 ♖b4! 3 ♖c5+ (3 ♖d5 ♖b8 transposes to line 2) 3...♖g6! (the only move to draw) 4 ♖xa5 ♖xg4 5 ♖a8 ♖h7 and Black achieves a Vančura draw.

2) 2 ♖d5 ♖b8 3 ♖c5 ♖b4! 4 ♖xa5 ♖xg4 (this is the crucial point: by taking on g4 with his rook, Black keeps the a4-pawn under attack

and so prevents White from freeing his rook from the a-file; moreover, with Black's king on g5 rather than h4, it is harder for White to cut the black king off along a rank) 5 ♖a6 (5 ♖c6+ ♖g6 6 ♖a8 ♖h7 is also a draw) 5...♗f4 6 a5 ♗f5+ 7 ♖c4 ♗f4+ 8 ♖c5 ♗f5+ (we have now transposed to the left-hand diagram on page 107, from Bagirov-Kraidman) 9 ♖c6 (9 ♖b6 ♖g6! reaches the reciprocal zugzwang of diagram 105 with White to play) 9...♖h6! 10 ♖b6 (10 ♖a8 ♖g7! is also drawn as we now have the standard Vančura draw) 10...♖g6! and again it is White to play in the reciprocal zugzwang.

2 ♖d5? (D)

This move was given an exclamation mark by Hertneck, but it actually throws the win away. White could have gained a decisive tempo by 2 ♖c6! ♗b4 (2...♖g5 3 ♖c5+ ♖xg4 4 ♖xa5 ♗b4 5 ♖a8 and White wins as Black is too slow to get his king back) 3 ♖d5, transposing to the analysis of 1...♗b1?.



2...♗b1?

Black misses his chance. 2...♖g5! would have drawn as in the analysis of 1...♖g5!.

3 ♖c5!

White doesn't miss it second time round and he now forces the win.

3...♖xg4 4 ♖xa5 ♖f5

There is no defence; for example, 4...♖a1 5 ♖a8 ♖f5 6 a5 ♖f6 7 a6 ♖d1+ 8 ♖c6 (this line shows how White wins when Black is unable to set up the Vančura draw: White plays his king to a7, freeing the rook, which can then provide a shield to allow the king to emerge, which in

turn frees the pawn to advance) 8...♖c1+ 9 ♖b7 ♗b1+ 10 ♖a7 ♖e7 11 ♗b8! ♖a1 12 ♖b7 ♗b1+ 13 ♖a8 ♖a1 14 a7 ♖d6 (14...♖d7 15 ♖b7 ♗b1+ 16 ♖a6 ♖a1+ 17 ♖b6 ♗b1+ 18 ♖c5 wins for White) 15 ♖b7 ♗b1+ 16 ♖c8 ♖c1+ 17 ♖d8 ♗h1 18 ♗b6+ ♖c5 19 ♖c6+ ♖b5 20 ♖c8 and White wins.

5 ♖d6+ ♖f6

5...♖e4 6 ♖c6 ♖a1 7 ♗h5 is also an easy win for White.

6 ♗b5

Once White's rook escapes from in front of the pawn, Black's fate is sealed.

6...♖d1+ 7 ♖d5 ♖a1 8 a5 ♖a2 9 ♖d7 ♖a1

9...♖f7 10 ♗b5 ♖a1 11 ♖c7 and White wins.

10 ♖d6+ ♖f7

10...♖e5 11 a6 ♖a2 12 ♖c7 ♖a1 13 ♗b6 followed by ♖b7, winning.

11 a6 ♖a2 12 ♖c8 ♖e7 13 ♖d7+ 1-0

13...♖e6 14 a7 ♖a1 15 ♗b7 ♖d6 16 ♖b8 wins for White.

Summary:

- When the pawns are still relatively close to each other, the defender has good drawing chances, as his king can defend its own pawn while also helping in the fight against the enemy passed pawn. The attacker generally has better chances if there a route by which his own king can penetrate to attack the enemy pawn.
- When the passed pawn is further away from the remaining pawns, the attacker's winning chances increase. The usual plan is to swap the outside passed pawn for the defender's pawn to reach a ♖+♔ vs ♗ position in which the defender's king is far away from the last pawn. Despite this, the win may not be automatic, especially if the last pawn is a rook's pawn.

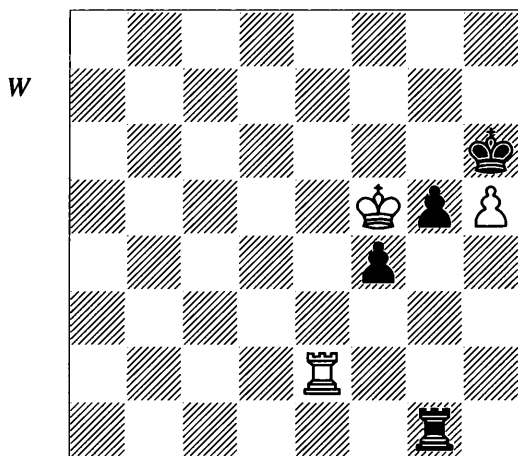
8.8.3 All the Pawns are Passed

With two passed pawns against one, the attacker has an obvious advantage, but a great deal depends on how far advanced the various passed pawns are, which passed pawns are supported by the king, and how actively the rooks are positioned.

8.8.3a The Attacker's Pawns are Connected

In this common situation, the attacker usually has good winning chances. Defending passively may be an option if the attacker's rook is stuck in front of the enemy passed pawn, but in most cases the defender will have to try to utilize his passed pawn. This generally involves marching his king up to support the pawn, but even if he eventually wins the attacker's rook, he may still lose, as he then faces two connected pawns with his king far away. When there is a race, the defender generally needs some compensating advantage to hold the game; for example, a much further-advanced pawn or a far more active king.

In the first example, the pawns are all close together and there is no race but the attacker has a chance to win by forcing an exchange of pawns.



Veingold – G. Agzamov
USSR 1983

According to Veingold's notes in *Informator* 36, this position is a draw and both sides played accurately. In fact, not only is the position winning, but it remains so for several moves before Black throws away the win.

1 ♖f2

The most natural move because Black was threatening to play ...f3.

1... ♗g7

This move maintains the win, but introduces some unnecessary difficulties. The most direct route to victory was to play 1...f3! in any

case; after 2 ♖xf3 g4 3 ♖a3 (or 3 ♖f2 g3 and then ...♗xh5) 3... ♗xh5 4 ♖a8 ♖f1+ 5 ♗e4 ♗h4 Black will soon reach the Lucena position. 1...♖g3 maintains the win but loses time because after 2 ♖a2 only backtracking by 2...♖g1! wins (not 2...f3? 3 ♖a6+ with a draw after 3... ♗xh5 4 ♖a8 ♗h6 5 ♗f6 ♗h7 6 ♖a7+ or 3... ♗g7 4 ♖a7+ ♗f8 5 ♗g6).

2 ♖f3

White decides to wait. The main alternative was 2 ♗e4, but then Black wins by 2... ♗f6 3 ♖a2 ♖e1+ 4 ♗f3 ♖e3+ 5 ♗g2 ♖g3+ 6 ♗h2 (6 ♗f2 ♖h3) 6... ♖g4 7 ♖a6+ ♗g7 8 ♖g6+ ♗h7 9 ♖a6 ♖h4+ 10 ♗g2 ♖xh5 11 ♗f3 ♖h6, consolidating his extra material.

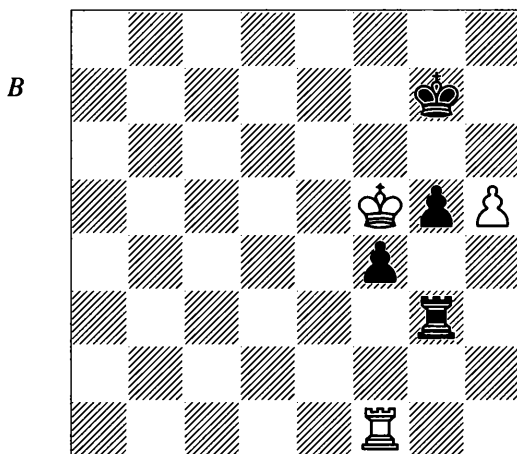
2... ♖g3

The simplest win is probably 2... ♗h7 3 ♖f2 ♗h6 4 ♖f3 g4! 5 ♖xf4 ♗xh5, when the g-pawn will be decisive, but for the moment Black is not sure how to proceed.

3 ♖f1 ♖g2

3...f3? 4 ♗e4 g4 doesn't win, as we shall see in the game. However, first 3... ♗h6! 4 ♖f2 and only then 4...f3 does win, since 5 ♗e4 ♗xh5 6 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 7 ♗xf3 ♗h4 is a winning pawn ending for Black.

4 ♖f3 ♖g3 5 ♖f1 (D)



5...f3?

Black finally decides to push a pawn, but at just about the worst possible moment. He could still have won by 5... ♗h6 6 ♖f2 f3, etc.

6 ♗e4!

White seizes his chance and finds an accurate and surprising sequence of moves to force

a draw. First he forces Black to push the g-pawn, which clears the g5-square for his king.

6...g4 7 ♔f4

Gaining a tempo on the way to g5.

7...♞g2 8 ♔g5

Now White's king occupies an active position supporting the h-pawn and he has enough counterplay to draw.

8...f2 9 h6+ ♔f7

9...♔h7 10 ♞a1 gives White no problems.

10 h7!

The black king must be drawn into the corner so that White can create mating threats.

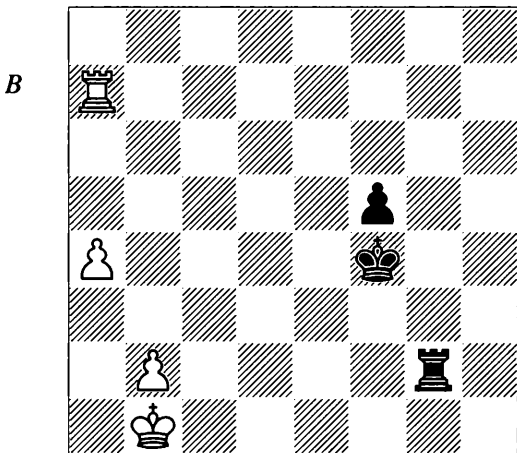
10...♔g7 11 h8♞+! ♔xh8 12 ♔g6

Thanks to the miserable position of both his pieces, Black cannot win despite his far-advanced passed pawns.

12...♔g8 13 ♞a1 ♔f8 14 ♔f6 1/2-1/2

The draw is clear after 14...♔e8 15 ♔e6 ♔d8 16 ♔d6 ♔c8 17 ♔c6 ♔b8 18 ♞b1+.

In the next group of positions, we see the defender adopting the strategy of giving up his pawn in the hope of blockading the connected passed pawns and thereby reaching a drawn position of ♞+2♙ vs ♞.



Rogers – Nep
Wijk aan Zee 2002

This position should be a draw. Admittedly, White is a pawn up and has two connected passed pawns, but Black's single pawn is also dangerous and is well supported by his king. There are two possible plans for Black: the first is to push his own pawn; the second is to head

for the queenside with his king, giving up the f-pawn in the process, with the aim of reaching a drawn position of ♞+2♙ vs ♞.

1...♔e5?!

Black goes for the second plan. Both plans should draw, but whereas the first plan draws without any particular difficulty, the second plan demands extremely high-quality play from Black. Therefore 1...♔e3 is more practical; for example, 2 a5 f4 3 a6 ♞g6 4 ♞e7+ ♔d3 5 a7 ♞a6 and White has no winning chances.

2 a5 ♔d5 3 ♞f7 ♔c5

With this plan Black must abandon the f-pawn, since after 3...♞f2? 4 a6 the a-pawn runs through.

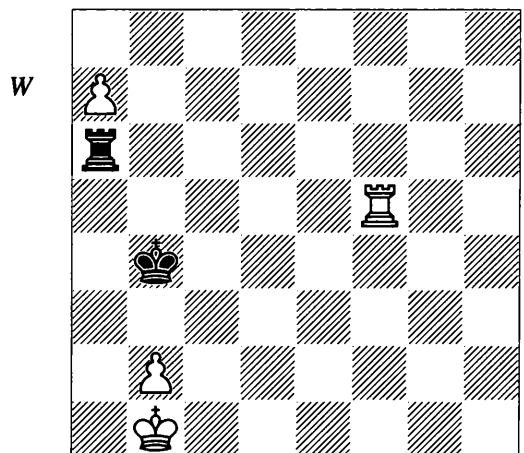
4 ♞xf5+ ♔b4!

The only move because Black must cover a5; after 4...♔c4? 5 a6 ♞g7 6 ♞a5 White wins easily.

5 a6 ♞g6

Black had a second drawing line which is somewhat easier to handle and involves withdrawing his king to a7 to blockade the a-pawn: 5...♞g7 6 ♞f3 (White manoeuvres his rook behind the a-pawn; defending it from the side by 6 ♔c2 ♞a7 7 ♞f6 ♔b5 8 ♔b3 ♞h7 causes no problems for Black) 6...♔b5 7 ♞a3 ♔b6! 8 ♔c2 ♞c7+ 9 ♔b3 ♔a7! and White cannot make progress. One line is 10 ♞a4 ♞c8 11 ♔b4 ♞c6 12 b3 ♞c8 13 ♔b5 ♞b8+ 14 ♔c4 ♞c8+ and White cannot get anywhere provided Black makes sure he can check the white king away if it moves to b5.

6 a7 ♞a6 (D)



7 ♞f7

In this line White has no choice but to defend the pawn from the side, but now the pawn is one square further advanced, which makes Black's defence more awkward.

7...♖b5

7...♖c4?, for example, is already a losing move: 8 ♖c2 ♖b4 9 ♖d3 ♖a1 10 b3! (White must prepare the king advance properly since 10 ♖d4? ♖b5 11 ♖d5 ♖b6 12 ♖d6 ♖d1+ and 10 ♖d7? ♖c5 are only draws) 10...♖a2 (10...♖c5 11 ♖c3 ♖a2 12 ♖f5+ ♖c6 13 ♖b4 and White wins) 11 ♖d7 ♖b5 (11...♖a1 12 ♖d4 and White wins after 12...♖xb3 13 ♖c5 or 12...♖b5 13 ♖d5 ♖b6 14 ♖d6) 12 ♖c3 ♖b6 (if Black tries to keep White's king out of b4, then he loses in any case: 12...♖a1 13 ♖h7 ♖a2 14 ♖h5+ ♖c6 15 ♖b4 ♖xa7 16 ♖h6+ ♖d5 17 ♖b5 and the black king is cut off along a rank) 13 ♖b4! (White reaches the key winning position in this ending, in which he has his pawn on b3 and king on b4) 13...♖a1 14 ♖h7 ♖c6 (14...♖a2 15 ♖h5! ♖a1 16 ♖b5+ and 17 ♖a5(+) wins) 15 ♖h5 ♖xa7 16 ♖h6+ ♖d5 17 ♖b5 and again White wins.

With accurate play Black can prevent White from reaching the winning position with king on b4 and pawn on b3, but the slightest slip will be fatal.

8 ♖c2 ♖a1!

This is the only move to draw as 8...♖b4? 9 ♖d3 transposes to the previous note.

9 ♖b3 (D)

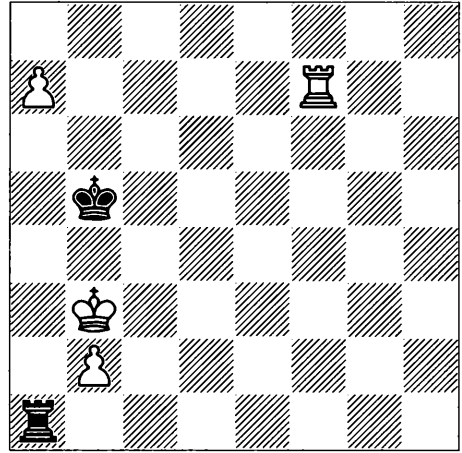
White is trying to get his king to b4. The other plan is to advance the king along the d-file, but this is not possible without allowing Black to reach a position with his king on b6 and his rook on the first rank, which draws comfortably: 9 ♖d3 ♖b6 10 ♖c4 (10 b3 ♖d1+ 11 ♖c4 ♖d8 is a typical drawing line) 10...♖c1+ 11 ♖b4 ♖c8! and Black is safe.

9...♖b6?

The necessity of finding a succession of 'only' moves proves too much for Black, and he allows White's king to reach b4 without a fight. The only drawing move is 9...♖c5!, when White cannot make progress; for example:

1) 10 ♖f5+ ♖c6! 11 ♖b4 ♖xa7 12 ♖f6+ ♖d5 (this position is a draw, but it would be a win for White with the pawn on b3) 13 b3 (13 ♖b5 ♖b7+ 14 ♖b6 fails because Black can

B



exchange rooks) 13...♖b7+ 14 ♖a4 ♖c5! and Black defends.

2) 10 ♖h7 ♖b5! 11 ♖c3 ♖c1+ 12 ♖d4 ♖a1! is a draw.

3) 10 ♖d7 ♖c6 hits the rook.

4) 10 ♖c3 ♖c1+! 11 ♖d3 ♖d1+ 12 ♖c2 ♖a1 (not 12...♖d8? 13 ♖f1 followed by ♖a1, winning; playing the rook to the first rank only draws when Black's king is on b6, which prevents White from switching his rook behind the pawn) and White has not achieved anything.

10 ♖b4!

Now it is all over as White immediately reaches the key winning position.

10...♖a2

10...♖c6 offers more resistance, but White wins by 11 b3 ♖a2 12 ♖f5, as we have seen before.

11 ♖f3

In this particular position White can employ tactics to win more quickly. In his *Informer* 83 notes, Rogers considers 11 b3 ♖a1 to be a draw but, as we saw above, White wins quite simply by 12 ♖f5.

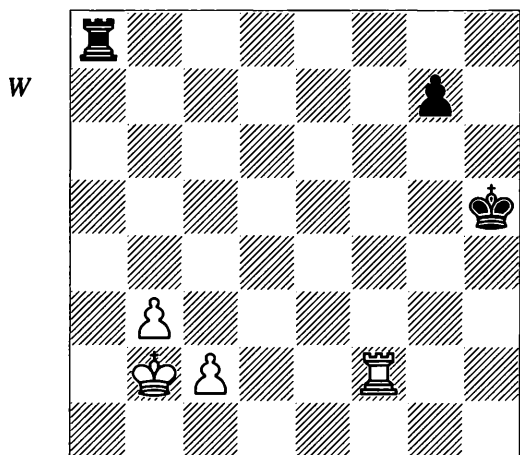
11...♖xa7

Everything loses quickly: 11...♖xa7 12 ♖f6+ ♖b7 13 ♖f7+, 11...♖xb2+ 12 ♖a3 ♖b1 13 ♖a2! or 11...♖b7 12 ♖a3!.

12 ♖a3+ 1-0

White wins after 12...♖xa3 13 ♖xa3 ♖b6 14 ♖b4.

In the following position, inaccurate play by White allows Black to give up his pawn to reach a drawn ♖+2♗ vs ♖ position.



Vallejo Pons – Landa

European Clubs Cup, Rethymnon 2003

This position is a clear win for White and demonstrates why two connected passed pawns are so much better than a lone passed pawn in a rook ending. There are two basic winning ideas: the first is the exchange of the black pawn for one of the white pawns. This will almost inevitably lead to a win, as Black's king will be too far away to defend against White's remaining pawn. The second idea is to allow Black to promote his pawn, give up the rook for the pawn and then win with the two connected passed pawns against the rook. This plan often works because Black can only promote his pawn by using his king, and then the king is too far away to help in the ensuing battle against the connected pawns. The lone pawn can usually only draw if there is some additional factor favouring it, for example if it is already far advanced, so that Black can win the rook yet still get back in time to counter the connected pawns. No such factor is visible here, so the position should be a simple technical win. It is interesting to see how a highly-rated grandmaster continued and how he almost allowed Black to escape with a draw thanks to his underestimation of the drawing possibilities in a ♖+2♙ vs ♜ position.

1 c4 g5 2 b4 g4 3 c5 g3 4 ♜c2

4 ♜d2 also wins.

4...♙g5

White wins comfortably after 4...♙g4 5 c6 ♙f3 6 c7 g2 7 ♜xg2 ♙xg2 8 b5.

5 c6 ♙f6 6 ♜g2?!

This wins, but makes matters far harder for White. There are several more effective winning lines, for example:

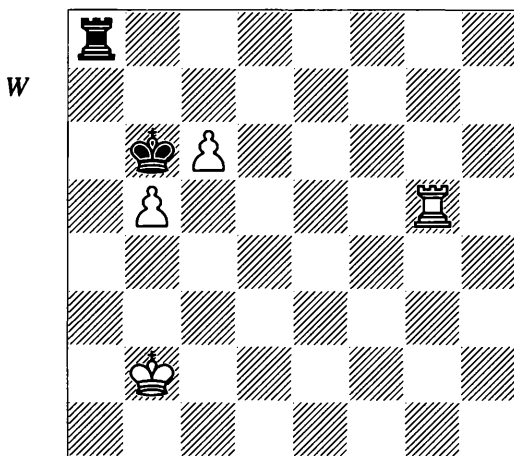
1) 6 c7 ♜c8 7 b5 g2 8 ♜xg2 ♜xc7 9 ♙b3 is the simplest. Black's king is too far away and White wins after 9...♙e7 10 ♙b4 ♙d7 11 ♙a5 ♙c8 12 ♙a6 ♜c1 13 ♜g8+ ♙d7 14 b6 ♜a1+ 15 ♙b7 and the Lucena position is not far off.

2) 6 b5 g2 (Black also loses after 6...♜b8 7 c7 ♜xb5+ 8 ♙c1 ♜c5 9 c8 ♜ ♜xc8 10 ♜xc8 ♙f5 11 ♙d2) 7 ♜xg2 ♜b8 8 c7 ♜xb5+ 9 ♙c1! ♜c5+ 10 ♜c2 and White wins.

6...♙e5!

Black gives up the g-pawn to reach a position in which White has two extra connected passed pawns, but they are blockaded.

7 ♜xg3 ♙d6 8 b5 ♙c5 9 ♜g5+ ♙b6 (D)



We saw positions such as this in Section 8.6.2a. This particular case is winning for White, but the process is by no means simple.

10 ♜d5 ♜a4 11 ♙c3 ♜h4 12 ♙d3 ♜b4 13 ♙e3

13 ♜e5! is the most accurate move, after which Black is in zugzwang and must decide whether to move the rook along the rank or the file. A move on the file allows the white king to advance, while a move along the rank allows ♜e8, activating White's rook. Here's the analysis:

1) 13...♜b1 14 ♙e4 ♜b2 15 ♙f5 ♜b1 16 ♙e6 ♙c7 (after 16...♜d1 17 ♜d5 or 16...♜b2 17 ♙d7 ♜d2+ 18 ♙c8 ♜h2 19 ♜e8 ♙xb5 20 c7 White wins more easily) 17 ♙f7 (threatening ♜e7+) 17...♜f1+ 18 ♙e8 ♜b1 19 ♜e7+ ♙c8 20

♖b7 ♜h1 21 ♔f8 ♜h6 22 ♔g7 ♜d6 23 ♜f7 ♜e6
24 ♜f6 ♜e1 25 b6 with a winning position for
White.

2) 13...♜h4 14 ♜e8 ♜h3+ (14...♜h7 15
♔c4 transposes) 15 ♔d4 ♜h7 16 ♔c4 ♜g7
(16...♜h4+ 17 ♔d5 ♜h5+ 18 ♔e6 ♜h6+ 19
♔d7 ♜h7+ 20 ♜e7 is also a win for White) 17
♜a8 ♜g4+ 18 ♔d5 ♜g5+ 19 ♔e6 ♜g6+ 20 ♔f5
♜g7 21 ♜b8+ ♔a7 22 ♜d8 ♔b6 23 ♜d7 ♜xd7
(or else White plays ♜b7+) 24 cxd7 ♔c7 25
♔e6 ♔d8 26 ♔d5! ♔xd7 27 b6 ♔d8 28 ♔d6
♔c8 29 ♔c6 and White wins.

13...♜c4 14 ♜e5 ♜h4 15 ♔d3

15 ♜e8 is ineffective when the white king
cannot move to c4, since 15...♜h7 just forces
the rook to return.

15...♜g4?!

15...♜b4 poses greater problems, although
after 16 ♜d5 Black is in zugzwang, much as in
the note to White's 13th move.

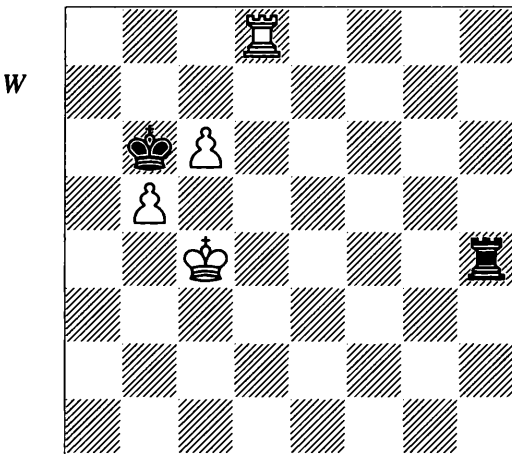
16 ♜e8!

Activating the rook decides the issue.

16...♜g7 17 ♔c4 ♜h7

17...♜g4+ 18 ♔d5 and White wins.

18 ♜d8 ♜h4+ (D)



19 ♔d3?!

Going the wrong way. 19 ♔d5 ♜h5+ 20 ♔d6
♜h6+ 21 ♔d7 ♜h7+ 22 ♔c8 ♔xb5 23 ♜d6!
♔c5 24 ♜e6 ♔d5 25 ♜g6 is the quickest way to
win.

19...♜h7 20 ♜b8+ ♔a7 21 ♜e8 ♔b6 22 ♔c4

After a small interlude, White again starts to
make progress.

22...♜g7 23 ♜h8 ♜f7 24 ♜a8 ♜f4+

Lukacs comments in Mega Database "...and
finally Black blunders in a drawish position!"
(he considered this whole ♜+2♙ vs ♜ ending a
likely draw). However, the position is not
drawish and the move played is not a blunder,
but the most resilient defence, spinning the
game out by six moves more than the second-
best move.

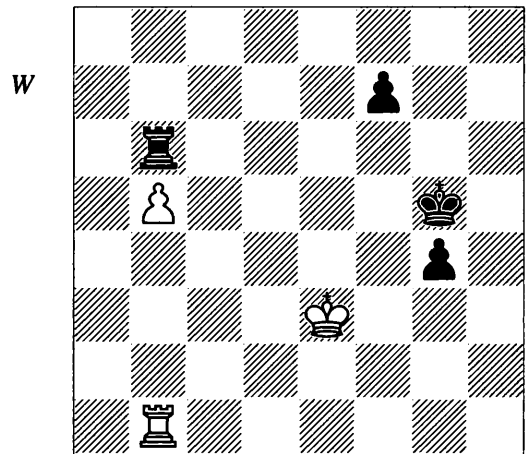
25 ♔d5 ♜f5+

25...♜f7 26 ♜b8+ ♔a7 27 ♜d8 ♔b6 28 ♜d7
and White wins much as above.

1-0

After 26 ♔e6 ♜xb5 27 ♔d6 ♜h5 28 ♜b8+,
followed by c7, the c-pawn will promote.

In the following example, the defender bene-
fits from an active rook position which keeps
the attacker's rook tied down to the blockade of
the pawn. However, Black's pawns are rela-
tively well advanced and are supported by his
king, so the position should be a win for Black,
but a mistake allows White to reach a drawn po-
sition by giving up his pawn, much as in the
previous example.



Serper – Shabalov
Philadelphia 1997

White is a pawn down and is facing two con-
nected passed pawns, but the position of the
rooks operates in his favour. The rook on b1 is
actively posted, supporting the b-pawn while
also able to operate laterally, while Black's rook
is stuck on b6 and for the moment cannot realis-
tically move, since he cannot allow the white
pawn to advance further. The danger for White

is that Black will edge his pawns forward as far as possible with the rook on b6, and then suddenly activate his rook, hoping to finish White off before the b-pawn promotes. According to Serper's notes in *Informator 64*, the position should be a draw (although Black won the game after an error by White). However, this is not so, and with accurate play Black should win in the diagram position.

1 ♖f2

There is not much White can do for the moment other than keep his king in front of Black's pawns and wait to see what Black does.

1...f5 2 ♖g3

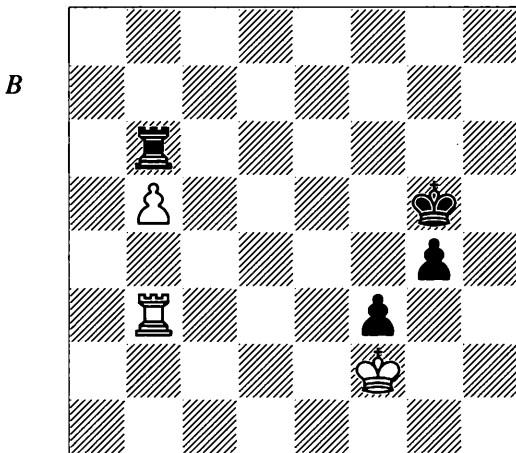
According to Serper, 2 ♖g2 f4 3 ♖b3 f3+ 4 ♖g3 ♖h6 5 b6 ♖h3+ 6 ♖f2 draws, but here Black can win by 6...g3+! 7 ♖e3 (7 ♖xf3 g2+) 7...f2 8 ♖b5+ ♖g6 9 b7 f1 ♖ 10 b8 ♖ g2+ with a quick mate to follow.

2...f4+ 3 ♖f2 f3!

This is the winning move. Advancing the other pawn only leads to a draw: 3...g3+? 4 ♖f3 ♖e6 5 b6 ♖e3+ 6 ♖g2 ♖e2+ 7 ♖f3! and White is out of trouble.

4 ♖b3 (D)

4 ♖g3 loses to 4...♖h6! 5 b6 ♖h3+ 6 ♖f2 ♖h2+ 7 ♖e3 ♖e2+ 8 ♖d3 g3 9 b7 ♖e8 10 b8 ♖ ♖xb8 11 ♖xb8 g2 12 ♖g8+ ♖f4 and the pawns are too strong.



4...♖h4?!

Serper gives this an exclamation mark, but in reality it is a step in the wrong direction. 4...♖h6? is even worse and throws the win away completely: 5 b6 ♖h2+ 6 ♖g1! (but not Serper's

6 ♖f1?, which loses to 6...♖f4! with the deadly threat of mate in two) 6...♖g2+ 7 ♖f1 and now it's time for Black to force a draw.

The decisive line is 4...♖f6! 5 ♖f1 (after 5 ♖b1 ♖h6 6 b6 ♖h2+ 7 ♖e3 ♖e2+ 8 ♖d3 ♖e8 the pawns decide the game, while 5 b6 is met by 5...g3+ 6 ♖xg3 f2 7 ♖b5+ ♖h6 8 b7 f1 ♖ 9 b8 ♖ ♖f3+ and Black mates next move) 5...♖f4 6 b6 ♖d6 (threatening mate in two) 7 ♖b1 ♖h6 8 ♖g1 g3 9 ♖b4+ ♖f5 10 ♖b1 ♖h2 11 b7 f2+ and Black wins.

5 ♖b1

The only move, for otherwise Black improves his position with ...♖h3.

5...♖e6?

Throwing away the win. Black could still have returned to the correct path by 5...♖g5! 6 ♖b3 ♖f6!, transposing to the previous note.

6 ♖h1+

6 b6? loses to 6...♖e2+ 7 ♖g1 g3 8 b7 ♖g2+ 9 ♖f1 ♖h2, so again White's move is forced.

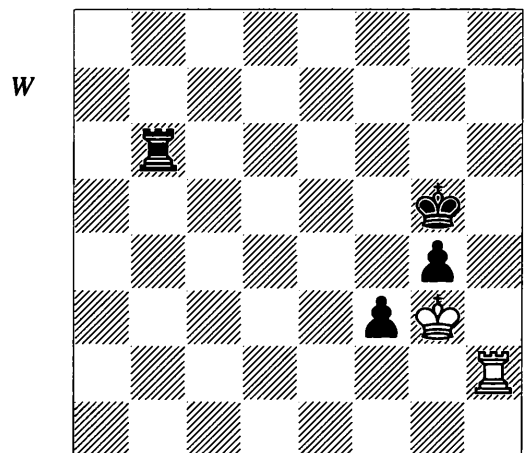
6...♖g5 7 ♖g3!

White keeps finding 'only' moves.

7...♖e2 8 ♖h2 ♖e1 9 b6!

This move draws thanks to a stalemate defence. There was only one other drawing possibility (which is actually simpler than the move played), namely 9 ♖d2! ♖g1+ (9...♖b1 10 ♖d5+ ♖g6 11 ♖xg4 f2 12 ♖g5+ leads to perpetual check) 10 ♖h2 ♖b1 11 ♖g3 ♖xb5 12 ♖d4 and the g-pawn falls.

9...♖g1+ 10 ♖f2 ♖b1 11 ♖g3 ♖xb6 (D)



We have already discussed how the drawing chances in ♖+2♖ vs ♖ are greater than most

people suppose (see Section 8.6.1) and here is another case in point. Despite facing two connected passed pawns, White is able to draw because the pawns are firmly blockaded by the white king and White is able to bring his rook into an active position.

12 ♖b2!

The only move. White exploits the stalemate trick to activate his rook with gain of tempo.

12...♙f6 13 ♖b1

Serper incorrectly believed this to be the losing mistake, but White has done nothing wrong yet. However, 13 ♖b5+! ♙f5 14 ♖b1 is simpler, preventing Black from activating his king via f5.

13...♙f5 14 ♖a1?

Waiting is not good enough since now Black can activate his rook with decisive effect. White could still have held the game by 14 ♖b5+ ♙e4 15 ♖b4+ (it is essential to check the king away from the f-pawn) 15...♙d3 (15...♙e3 16 ♖b3+ ♙d2 17 ♖b2+ ♙d3 18 ♖a2! is similar) and now:

1) 16 ♖b3+? loses to 16...♙c2! 17 ♖a3 ♙b2 18 ♖d3 ♙c1! (now White's rook cannot easily return to the first rank) 19 ♖a3 f2 20 ♖a1+ ♙d2 21 ♙g2 g3 22 ♖a2+ ♙d3 23 ♖a3+ ♙c2 24 ♖a1 ♙f4 25 ♖f1 ♙d3 26 ♖a1 ♙e4 27 ♖a4+ ♙f5 28 ♖a1 ♙g4 29 ♖f1 ♖f8 30 ♖a1 f1♙+ 31 ♖xf1 ♖xf1 32 ♙xf1 ♙f3 and Black wins.

2) 16 ♖b2! (the only drawing move) 16...♖f8 17 ♖a2! (and this is the only waiting move) 17...♙e3 18 ♖a3+ ♙d2 19 ♖a2+ ♙d3 20 ♖b2 and Black cannot make progress.

14...♖e6!

The only move to win. Black transfers his rook to the side of the g-pawn and then advances his king.

15 ♖a4

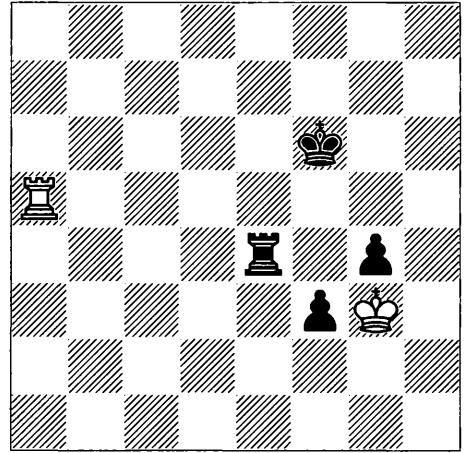
15 ♖a5+ ♖e5 doesn't make any difference.

15...♖e4 16 ♖a5+ ♙f6 (D)

17 ♖a1?!

The position is still not easy to win, but over the next few moves White gives some pointless checks which only serve to ease Black's technical task. The most resilient defence is 17 ♖d5 ♙e6 18 ♖d1 (18 ♖a5 ♖e1! 19 ♖a2 ♙f5 20 ♖a5+ ♙e4 21 ♖a4+ ♙e3 22 ♖a3+ ♙e2 23 ♖a2+ ♙f1 24 ♙xg4 ♖e3! 25 ♙f4 ♖b3 26 ♙g3 f2+ 27 ♙h2 ♖f3 also wins for Black) 18...♙e5

W



19 ♖d8 ♖d4 (Black lifts the d-file blockade so as to allow his king to advance) 20 ♖a8 ♙d5 21 ♖c8 ♖e4 22 ♖d8+ ♙c4 23 ♖d1 ♙c3 24 ♖a1 ♙d2 25 ♖a2+ ♙d1 26 ♖a1+ ♙e2 27 ♖a8 ♙f1 28 ♖a2 ♖e2 29 ♖a1+ ♖e1 30 ♖a3 f2 31 ♙xg4 ♙e2 and Black wins.

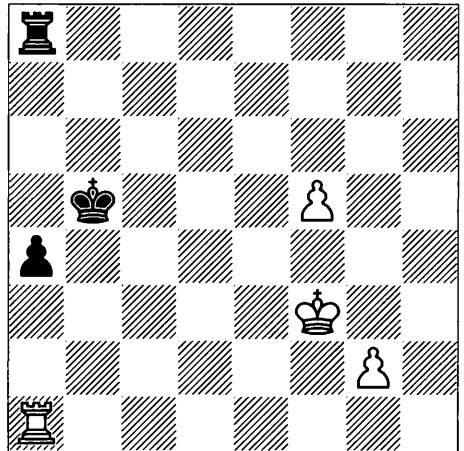
17...♙e5 18 ♖a5+

After 18 ♖d1 ♖d4 Black wins much as in the previous note.

18...♙d4 19 ♖a4+ ♙d3 20 ♖a3+ ♙e2 21 ♖a2+ ♙f1 22 ♖a1+ ♖e1 23 ♖a2 ♙g1 24 ♖f2 ♖e2 0-1

In the next example a similar position arises, but with a subtle difference.

B



Adams – Akopian
Khalkidhiki 1992

In rook endings, two connected passed pawns often beat a lone pawn because the attacker can eventually give up his rook for the lone pawn,

relying on his connected passed pawns to overwhelm the enemy rook. However, this is not a cast-iron rule and often the result depends on timing. Here Black has a relatively favourable situation in that his rook is well placed behind the passed pawn, but he must decide on the correct plan. It is hopeless to run up with his king to support the a-pawn, because then the familiar scenario will be played out: he will win White's rook, but lose the game. Instead, as we have seen in previous examples, he must bring his king to the kingside to fight against the white pawns, while trying to push his own pawn up the board to immobilize the white rook. But which of these takes priority?

1...♙c5?!

Contrary to Akopian's analysis in *Informator 55*, the position is a draw even after this move. However, there is no doubt that by moving the king first, Black creates difficulties for himself and he can now only draw by a study-like defence.

It is simpler to restrict White's rook by 1...a3!, after which Black can defend more easily; for example, 2 ♙f4 (it is usually best for White to push his king before advancing the pawns, since otherwise the pawns are quickly blockaded by Black's king; thus 2 f6 ♙c6 3 f7 ♙d7 and 2 g4 ♙c5 3 g5 ♙d6 cause Black no problems) 2...♙c6 3 ♙g5 (3 ♙e5 ♙d7 4 ♙f6 ♙e8 leads to a draw after 5 ♙g7 ♖a7+ 6 ♙g8 ♙e7 7 ♙g7 ♙e8+, 5 ♙g6 a2 6 f6 ♖a4! or 5 g4 ♙f8! 6 ♙g6 a2 7 f6 ♙g8! 8 g5 ♖a6 9 ♖c1 ♖a8) 3...a2! (3...♙d7? 4 ♙g6! ♙e8 5 ♖e1+ and White wins after 5...♙f8 6 ♖h1 ♙g8 7 f6 or 5...♙d7 6 ♙f7 a2 7 ♖a1, when Black's king can no longer blockade the pawns) 4 ♙f6 ♖a7! (not 4...♙d7?, which loses to 5 ♙f7; Black must not allow White's king to shoulder his own king aside) 5 g4 ♙d7 6 g5 (6 ♙f7 ♙d6+! 7 ♙f6 ♙d7 draws) 6...♙e8 7 g6 ♙f8 8 ♙g5 ♖a3 and Black holds on.

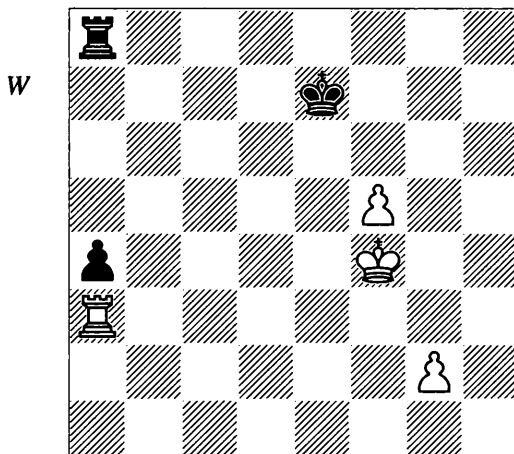
2 ♙f4 ♙d6

2...a3? is now too late since 3 f6 ♙d6 4 ♙f5 ♙d7 5 ♙g6 ♙e8 6 ♙g7 wins easily.

3 ♖a3

The most testing move. After 3 ♙g5 ♙e7 Black draws more easily as 4 ♙g6 is met by 4...♖g8+.

3...♙e7 (D)



4 g4

In this case White can only advance his pawns in front of his king, but he has managed to blockade the a-pawn one square further back. Black can still draw, but only by a hair's breadth.

4...♙f7 5 g5 ♖a6

Black's king has settled in front of the pawns and now he can only wait.

6 ♙g4 ♖a8 7 f6

At some stage White must push one of the pawns and since 7 g6+ ♙f6 8 ♖e3 a3 9 ♖e6+ ♙g7 10 ♖e7+ ♙f6! gets White nowhere, this is the only chance.

7...♖a6!

Not 7...♙g6? losing to 8 ♖h3 a3 9 ♖h6+ ♙f7 10 ♖h7+ ♙e6 (10...♙g8 11 g6) 11 ♖e7+ ♙d6 12 ♖e1 a2 13 f7 and the pawns roll through.

The move played is the only one to draw; Black takes action against the threat of ♖e3-e7+ followed by g6. The position is now the same as that after 4 ♖b3 in Serper-Shabalov (see page 205) except that the pawn is on the a-file rather than the b-file. Curiously, this changes the result of the position.

8 ♖f3?!

This allows an immediate draw. In *Informator*, Akopian claimed that 8 ♙h5 would have won, but he overlooked a subtle defence for Black: 8...♖a8 (8...♖a5? loses to 9 ♙h6 ♖a8 10 g6+ ♙xf6 11 g7 ♙f7 12 ♙h7) 9 ♖e3 ♖h8+! (Akopian only considered 9...a3?, which fails to 10 ♖e7+ ♙g8 11 ♙g6 a2 12 ♖g7+ ♙f8 13

♖h7) 10 ♔g4 ♔g6 (threatening ...♖h1, so White must take immediate action) 11 ♖e7 ♖h7! 12 ♖e8 a3 (12...♖d7 also draws; for example, 13 ♔f4 a3 14 ♖g8+ ♔f7 15 ♖a8 ♔g6 16 ♖xa3 ♖d5 or 13 ♖g8+ ♔h7 14 ♖a8 ♔g6! 15 ♖xa4 and now 15...♖a7 or even 15...♖d5 draws) 13 ♖g8+ ♔f7 14 ♖a8 ♔g6! 15 ♖xa3 ♖a7! 16 ♖f3 ♖a4+ 17 ♖f4 ♖a7 with a positional draw, since if White's rook moves along the fourth rank it is no longer supporting the advance f7, and so Black can reply ...♖a5.

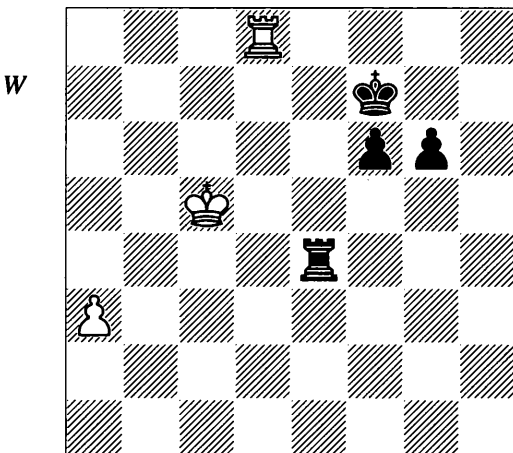
8...a3 9 g6+ ♔f8!

The only move to draw as 9...♔xg6? 10 f7 a2 11 f8♖ ♖a4+ 12 ♔h3 a1♖ 13 ♖g3+ leads to a quick mate. After the move played, 10 ♔g5 a2 11 ♖d3 ♖xf6! is a draw, since 12 ♔xf6?? allows Black to promote with check. In Serper-Shabalov the pawns were on the b-file and this line led to a win.

10 ♖h3 ½-½

Black can simply take on f6 with a dead draw.

The theme of the defender playing his king back to counter the enemy pawns manifests itself in an even more subtle fashion in the following position. In order to draw, White first plays his king away from the enemy pawns in order to help his pawn advance. Only when the enemy rook has been reduced to a passive position in front of the advanced pawn does White reverse track and play his king back towards the connected kingside pawns.



Gesos – Vadasz
Rimavska Sobota 1974

In this position, White's a-pawn is no further forward than Black's pawns, and for the moment it cannot advance, so things look bleak for White. However, White does have one thing operating in his favour, namely his good king position. By accurate defence, White managed to activate his pawn and save the game.

1 ♖d1!

The best move; the rook switches behind the a-pawn to get the pawn moving. It is wrong to support the pawn with the king right away, because this involves playing the king too far off-side: 1 ♔b5? f5 2 a4 f4 3 a5 f3 4 ♖d1 (after 4 a6 f2 5 ♖d1 ♖e1 or 4 ♖d3 ♖e5+! 5 ♔b6 f2, Black wins at once) 4...g5 5 a6 ♖e2! 6 ♖a1 f2 7 a7 ♖e1 8 ♖xe1 fxe1♖ 9 a8♖ ♖e8+ and Black wins.

1...g5

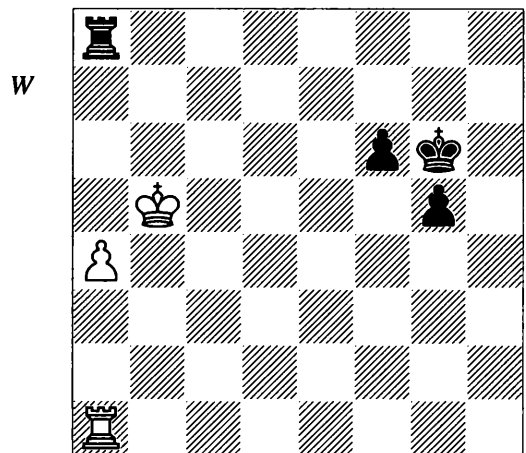
1...f5 2 ♖a1 f4 3 a4 f3 4 a5 is also a draw; in comparison with the play after 1 ♔b5?, White has saved a tempo by missing out the king move.

2 ♖a1 ♖a4

2...g4 3 a4 g3 4 a5 g2 (4...f5 5 a6 f4 6 a7 ♖e8 7 ♖f1 is also drawn) 5 ♖g1 ♖a4 6 ♖xg2 ♖xa5+ 7 ♔d4 ♖e5 8 ♖g4 ♔e6 9 ♖e4 is a draw.

3 ♔b5 ♖a8 4 a4 ♔g6 (D)

Black's pawns aren't going anywhere without the support of his king. 4...g4 5 a5 f5 6 a6 g3 7 ♖g1 f4 8 ♖f1 is an easy draw.



5 a5 g4 6 a6 ♔g5

6...f5 7 ♔c4 f4 8 ♔d3 ♔g5 9 a7 ♔h4 10 ♔e2 ♔g3 11 ♖g1+ ♔h4 12 ♖a1 is also safe for White.

7 ♔c4!

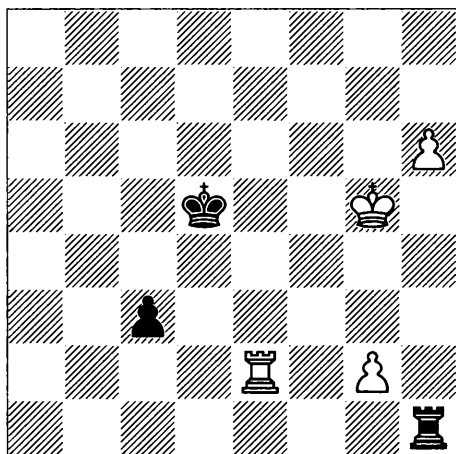
This is the key move. Now that Black's rook has been immobilized on a8, White can draw the game by blockading the enemy pawns with his king. It is quite wrong to move the king up the board to win Black's rook, as White is overwhelmed by the connected pawns: 7 ♔c6? f5 8 ♔b7 ♚f8! (Neikirkh's analysis of this ending in *Informator* is commendably accurate, but here he makes a small slip in giving 8...♚xa6? as a win, although White can draw by 9 ♔xa6 g3 10 ♔b5 f4 11 ♔c4 f3 12 ♔d3 ♔g4 13 ♔e3) 9 a7 g3 10 a8 ♚ ♚xa8 11 ♚xa8 f4 12 ♚g8+ ♔h4 13 ♚f8 ♔g4 14 ♔c6 f3 15 ♔d5 f2 16 ♔e4 g2 and here Black does win.

7...♔f4 8 ♚f1+ ♔g5 9 ♚a1 g3 10 ♔d3 ♔g4

Other moves are no better: 10...f5 11 ♔e3 ♔g4 12 ♚a4+! ♔h3 13 a7 f4+ 14 ♔f3! or 10...g2 11 ♚g1 ♔f4 12 ♚xg2 ♚xa6 13 ♚f2+! ♔g3 14 ♚f1 ♚e6 15 ♔d2 ♔g4 16 ♚g1+ and White draws in both cases.

11 ♔e2 f5 12 a7 f4 13 ♚a4 ♔h3 14 ♔f3! g2 15 ♚a6 1/2-1/2

Moving on to other motifs, the attacker must make sure that he can make use of both his pawns. If one gets stuck, then he may no longer be able to win.



Rivas – Gelfand
Dos Hermanas 1994

Here there seems little to suggest that Black might save the game. His pawn is no more advanced than White's h-pawn, and moreover White's king is well placed to support the pawn. Indeed, the position is winning at this

stage, but perhaps required rather more care than White expected.

1 ♔g6?!

This doesn't throw the win away, but it does make it much more complicated. White can't win without using both his passed pawns, so 1 g4 is the most logical move. After 1...♔d4 2 ♔g6 ♔d3 3 ♚g2 c2 4 ♚xc2 ♔xc2 5 g5 ♔d3 6 ♔h7 White promotes the g-pawn and wins.

1...♚h2!

A cunning defence, pinning the g2-pawn so that it cannot advance as in the above line. White can still win, but now it's more difficult.

2 h7?

After this, Black's resourceful defence pays off and he escapes with a draw. The only move to win is 2 ♚f2!., and now:

1) 2...♔e4 (preventing the rook check on f4 as in line 2 below) 3 h7 ♔d3 4 ♚f3+ ♔d2 5 ♚h3 (the simplest, although 5 g4 also wins) 5...♚xg2+ (after 5...♚xh3 6 gxh3 c2 7 h8 ♚c1 ♚8 ♚h6+ White exchanges queens) 6 ♔h5 c2 7 h8 ♚c1 ♚8 ♚h6+ ♔c2 9 ♚c6+ followed by ♚xg2 with a quick win.

2) 2...♔c4 loses after 3 ♚f4+! (freeing the g-pawn; 3 h7? ♔b3 transposes to the game, and so is a draw) 3...♔b3 (3...♔d3 4 g4 c2 5 ♚f1 ♔d2 6 g5 c1 ♚7 ♚xc1 ♔xc1 8 ♔h7 and White wins easily) 4 g4 c2, and now:

2a) 5 ♚f1? rather surprisingly allows Black to draw by 5...♚d2! (threatening ..♚d1) 6 h7 (after 6 ♚c1 ♚d6+ 7 ♔h5 ♚d1 8 ♚xc2 ♔xc2 9 g5 ♔d3 10 g6 ♔e4 11 g7 ♔f5 Black escapes with a draw) 6...♚d6+ 7 ♔g5 (7 ♔g7 ♚d7+ 8 ♚f7 ♚xf7+ 9 ♔xf7 c1 ♚10 h8 ♚ ♚c4+ and 7 ♔h5 ♚d1! are also drawn) 7...♚d5+ 8 ♔h4 ♚d1 9 h8 ♚ ♚xf1 10 ♚b8+ ♔a2! (10...♔a3? loses to 11 ♚d6+ ♔b2 12 ♚e5+) 11 ♚a7+ ♔b2 12 ♚d4+ ♔b1! and White can never win the f1-rook with a series of checks.

2b) 5 ♚f3+! (this hesitation check forces Black's king to an inferior square) 5...♔b2 (White wins after 5...♔c4 6 ♚f1 ♚d2 7 ♚c1 as Black's king no longer defends the c-pawn) 6 ♚f1 ♚d2 7 h7 ♚d6+ 8 ♔h5 and White wins because after 8...♚d1 he can promote with check.

This is quite a tricky win and shows how much simpler it would have been if White had not made a slip the move before.

2...♔c4!

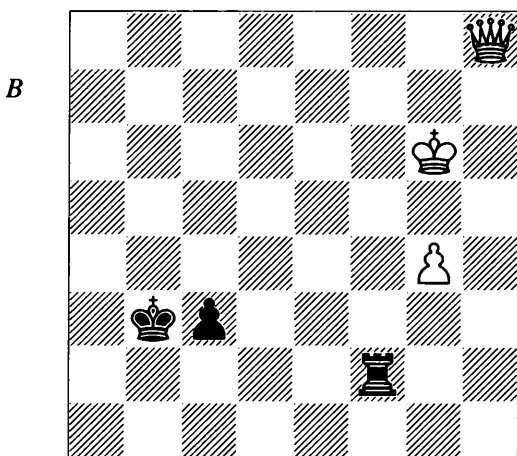
Once given his chance, Gelfand makes no mistake. This move gives Black the flexibility to play his king to b3 or d3.

3 ♖f2

So that ...♔d3 doesn't come with tempo. 3 ♔g7 ♔d3 4 ♖f2 c2 5 ♖xc2 ♔xc2 6 g4 (after 6 h8♗ ♖xh8 7 ♔xh8 ♔d3 Black catches the pawn) 6...♔d3 7 g5 ♔e4 8 g6 ♔f5 and 3 g4 ♖xe2 4 h8♗ c2 are also drawn.

3...♔b3 4 g4

4 ♔g7 c2 5 ♖xc2 ♔xc2 transposes into the previous note.

4...♖xf2 5 h8♗ (D)**5...♖b2!**

Not the only move to draw, but the safest, making sure Black's pieces all defend one another. 5...c2?! 6 ♗b8+ ♔a2 7 ♗a7+ ♔b1 8 ♗b6+ ♔a1 9 ♗xf2 c1♗ is also drawn according to the tablebase, but who would want to defend such a position if it could be avoided?

6 ♗h3

White is unable to make progress since Black keeps threatening to advance his pawn and White never gets time to push his own pawn. 6 ♗b8+ ♔a2 7 ♗a7+ ♔b1 8 ♗g1+ ♔a2 9 ♗c1 c2 10 g5 ♔b3, threatening ...♖b1, is also a draw.

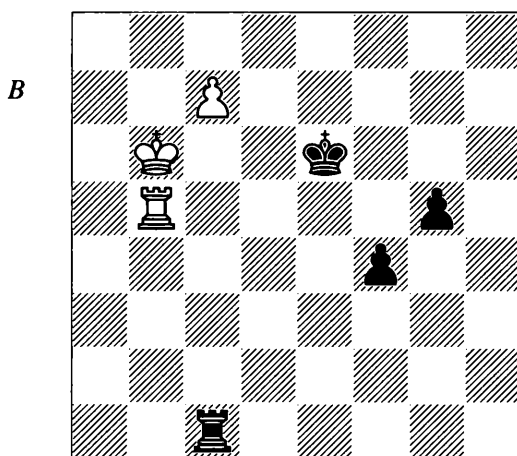
6...♔b4 7 ♗h8 ♔b3 8 ♗g8+ ♔c2 9 ♔h5

After 9 ♗c4 ♖b3! 10 g5 ♔b2 Black again saves the day.

9...♔b1 10 g5 c2 11 ♗h7 ½-½

The following position shows that the defensive plan of winning the enemy rook for the

pawn and then racing back with the king to stop the enemy pawns does sometimes work, but it is important to emphasize that it only stands a chance if the initial position is very favourable. Here White's pawn is already on the seventh rank, and even then Black would have won had he not made a mistake.

**Naiditsch – Kuzubov**

European Ch, Warsaw 2005

This looks like an easy win for Black. It is his turn to move, so he should have time to get his pawns to the sixth rank while White is promoting his own pawn. In addition, Black's king is well posted to support the pawns. One might therefore expect that either pawn push would secure victory for Black. In fact, only one wins and in the game Black made the wrong choice.

1...g4?

It appears more natural to advance the pawn which is attacked, but this allows White to draw. Black could have won by 1...f3! 2 ♖xg5 (2 ♖b2 g4 3 ♖f2 ♔e5 followed by ...♔f4 and ...g3 is hopeless for White, while after 2 ♖c5 ♖xc5 3 ♔xc5 ♔d7 Black stops the c-pawn) 2...♖xc7 3 ♔xc7 f2 4 ♖g6+ ♔f7, although he still has to play out ♗ vs ♖.

2 ♖g5!

White hits on the flaw in Black's plan. By attacking the pawns from behind, White can considerably delay their advance.

2...g3

2...f3 3 ♖xg4 f2 4 ♖f4 is an easy draw.
3 ♔b7 ♖b1+ 4 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 5 ♔b7 ♔f6

This is the only way to make progress; Black forces the rook off the fifth rank so that he can move his king up the board and support the pawns.

6 ♖g8 ♖e5 7 c8♖ ♜xc8 8 ♖xc8 ♖e4 9 ♖d7

White arrives back just in time.

9...f3

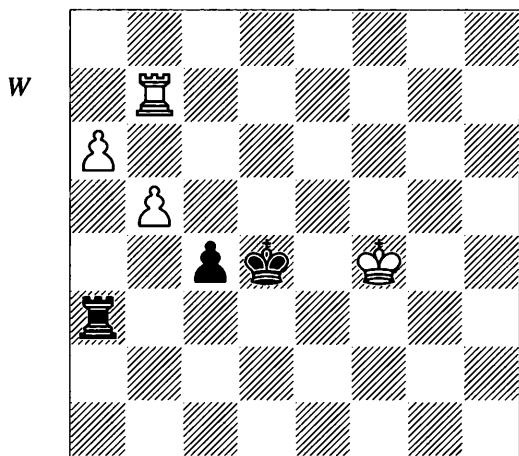
9...♖f3 also leads to a draw after 10 ♖e6 ♖f2 11 ♖e5 f3 12 ♖f4 g2 13 ♜g7.

10 ♜g4+!

This trick was first mentioned on page 15 in Penrose-Perkins and has cropped up regularly throughout the book.

10...♖e3 11 ♜xg3 1/2-1/2

There are always some positions in which imagination is the key element.



VI. Sergeev – Kobaliya Cappelle la Grande 1999

This is an absolutely stunning endgame which could easily be a composed study, and it is greatly to Sergeev's credit that he found the correct continuation over the board.

1 ♜c7!

1 a7? only draws after 1...c3 2 b6 c2 3 ♜c7 (3 ♜d7+ ♖c5 doesn't help) 3...♜c3! 4 ♜xc3 (not 4 ♜d7+ ♖c5 5 a8♖? c1♖+ and Black even wins) 4...♖c3 5 a8♖ c1♖+ and Black picks up the undefended b-pawn with a couple of checks.

White will have to give up his rook for the c-pawn, but the problem with playing a7 so soon is that White's rook must then defend the a-pawn for a moment, and this gives Black time to push his pawn to c2. The correct idea is to put

the rook on c7 immediately, since this move will definitely be required sooner or later, and wait to see how Black responds. This also has the benefit that White need not worry about a possible ...♖c5 by Black.

1...c3

Thanks to the extra tempo ♜c7, White was threatening 2 a7, so this is forced. But now what can White do apart from 2 a7 c2 3 b6, transposing into the drawing line given above?

2 ♖g4!!

An absolutely stunning move. We have seen that Black's defence is based on ...c2 and ...♜c3, but this only works because Black promotes with check. If ...c1♖ were not check, then White could skewer Black's king and queen, forcing the exchange of queens, and then win with the b-pawn. But why should the unlikely-looking g4 be the only square for the white king? The king clearly cannot move to the third rank, as then ...c2+ followed by ...♜c3 draws. Also g5 is no good, as Black still promotes with check. Therefore the only possible alternative is 2 ♖f5, but then 2...♜a5 3 a7 ♖xb5+ is check and Black can draw by ...♜a5 next move.

Now that ...c1♖ is no longer check, White threatens to win by a7.

2...♜a4

Black has little defence against White's threat; for example, 2...♖d3 3 a7 c2 4 b6 ♖d2 (4...♜c3 5 ♜xc3+ ♖xc3 6 a8♖ c1♖ 7 ♖c6+ and White wins) 5 b7 ♜xa7 6 ♜xc2+ (not 6 b8♖? ♜xc7 7 ♖d8+ ♖c1 8 ♖xc7 ♖b1 with a draw) 6...♖xc2 7 b8♖ is lost for Black, although White has to win the tricky ending of ♖ vs ♜ (as also happens in the game).

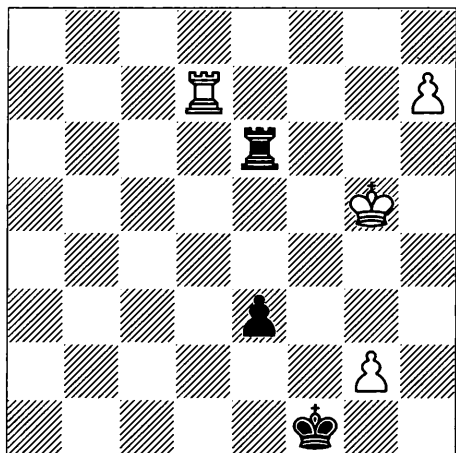
3 a7 ♖d3+ 4 ♖g3 c2 5 b6 ♖d2 6 ♜xc2+ ♖xc2 7 b7 ♜xa7 8 b8♖

White eventually won this ending of ♖ vs ♜; the details are not really relevant.

Finally, there is always the possibility of liquidation to some sort of queen ending. If the result of such a liquidation is hard to assess, playing the rook ending is made far more complicated.

This following position was analysed by Rogers in *Informator 96*. White has the advantage as he is a pawn up and he has a pawn on the

B



Rogers – Johansen

Australian Ch, Brisbane 2006

seventh rank, while Black's is only on the sixth. However, the win is not guaranteed as it isn't easy to stop Black's pawn. Liquidations are possible to various positions with ♖ vs ♜ (with pawns) and assessing these endings is tricky. As we shall see, some parts of Rogers's analysis need correction.

1...♜e5+

The best chance, as 1...♜e8 2 ♜e7! ♜xe7 (if 2...♜h8 3 ♜xe3 ♜xh7 4 g4 White wins easily as Black's king is totally cut off) 3 h8♖ ♖xg2 (3...e2 loses at once to 4 ♖f6+) is winning, although it requires considerable accuracy by White: 4 ♖f6 ♜a7 5 ♖e5 ♖f3 6 ♖d5+ ♖f2 7 ♖d4 ♜a3 8 ♖g4 ♖f1 9 ♖f4+ (the principle is similar to that of ♖ vs ♜ on the seventh in that White forces Black's king to block the pawn, and uses the resulting time to improve his king position) 9...♖e2 10 ♖b4 ♜d3 11 ♖f4 ♖f2 12 ♖c5 ♜b3 13 ♖e4 ♖f1 14 ♖f5+ ♖e2 15 ♖h5+ ♖d2 16 ♖d5+ ♖c2 17 ♖c4+ ♖b2 18 ♖d4 ♖a3 19 ♖e2 ♖b4 20 ♖a6 and the black pawn falls.

2 ♖g6?!

Rogers makes no comment on this move, which loses time. The alternatives are:

1) 2 ♖g4? ♜e8! 3 ♜e7 ♜h8! 4 ♜xe3 ♜xh7 (here the pawn cannot advance to the fourth rank and this allows Black to draw) 5 g3 ♖f2! 6 ♜f3+ ♖g2 followed by ...♜g7+ draws.

2) 2 ♖f4? ♜e8! 3 ♜e7 ♜xe7! 4 h8♖ e2 5 ♖h1+ ♖f2 6 ♖h4+ ♖xg2 7 ♖xe7 (7 ♖e1 ♜e8 offers White no winning chances) 7...♖f1! and

White cannot win due to the unfortunate position of his king.

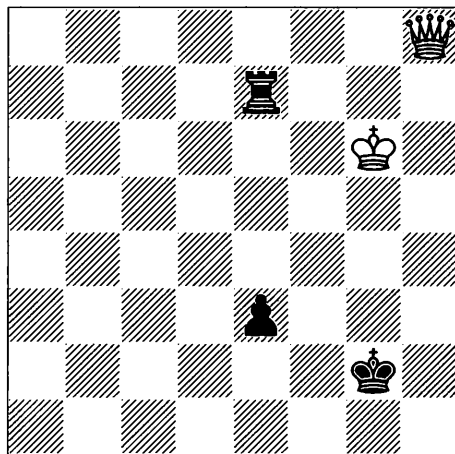
3) 2 ♖f6! (this move was not mentioned by Rogers) 2...♜e8 (2...♜h5 3 g4! ♜h2 4 ♜e7 e2 5 g5 and the pawns are too strong; note that 5...♜xh7 6 ♜xh7 e1♖ fails to 7 ♜h1+) 3 ♜e7 ♜xe7 4 h8♖ ♜a7 (4...e2 5 ♖h1+ ♖f2 6 ♖xe7 and White wins) 5 ♖h1+ ♖f2 6 ♖h4+ ♖xg2 (this position is similar to that in the previous note; White again wins, although as before accurate play is needed) 7 ♖g4+ ♖f2 8 ♖f4+ ♖e2 9 ♖b8 ♜a5 10 ♖b4 ♜a8 11 ♖f5 ♖f1 12 ♖f4+ ♖e2 13 ♖h2+ ♖d3 14 ♖d6+ ♖e2 15 ♖c5 ♜a1 16 ♖c4+ ♖f2 17 ♖e4 ♜a3 (17...e2 loses to 18 ♖d4+ ♖f1 19 ♖f6+) 18 ♖c5 ♜b3 19 ♖d4 ♜a3 20 ♖f6+ ♖e1 21 ♖b2 and White wins.

2...♜e8?

This makes it easier for White. Black should have tried 2...♜e6+!, when the only way to win is to repeat the position by 3 ♖g5 (if instead 3 ♖g7? then 3...♜e8! 4 h8♖ ♜xh8 5 ♖xh8 ♖xg2 draws at once) 3...♜e5+ and then win by 4 ♖f6! as in the previous note.

3 ♜e7! ♜xe7 4 h8♖ ♖xg2 (D)

W



The only chance, but we have seen positions like this above. White can win with correct play.

5 ♖f6?!

This sets the win back by nine moves. 5 ♖a8+ ♖g1 6 ♖f8! wins quite quickly: 6...♜a7 (after 6...♜e4 7 ♖c5 ♜e8 8 ♖f7 ♜e4 9 ♖g5+ ♖h2 10 ♖f5 White also wins the pawn) 7 ♖c5 ♜a6+ 8 ♖f5 ♖f2 9 ♖e4 ♜e6+ 10 ♖d3 and the pawn falls.

5...♖a7

The best chance, as after 5...♞e4 6 ♖c6 and 5...♞e8 6 ♖c6+ Black loses at once.

6 ♖g5+ ♔f3 7 ♖f5+ ♔g3?!

7...♔g2 is a tougher defence, although White still wins after 8 ♖e4+ ♔f2 9 ♖f4+ ♔e2 10 ♖b8, as in the analysis of 2 ♔f6!.

8 ♖c5!

Now it's possible for White to win much more quickly.

8...♖a6+ 9 ♔f5 ♔f3 10 ♖d5+ ♔f2 11 ♖d4 ♖a8

11...♔f3 12 ♖g4+ ♔f2 13 ♖f4+ ♔e2 14 ♖c4+ and White picks up the rook.

12 ♔e4 ♞e8+ 13 ♔d3 ♔g3?!

Losing the rook, but it doesn't make any difference by now.

14 ♔e2?!

After 14 ♖g7+ ♔h4 15 ♖h6+ followed by ♖g6+ White wins the rook.

14...♞e6 15 ♖d5

Now Black must give up the pawn or lose the rook to a fork.

15...♖a6

15...♞g6 would have offered slightly more resistance.

16 ♖g5+ ♔h2 17 ♔f3

Even quicker than taking the pawn.

17...♖a2 18 ♖h5+ ♔g1 19 ♖g6+ 1-0

After 19...♔h2 20 ♖h7+ ♔g1 21 ♖b1+ White wins the rook and then mates.

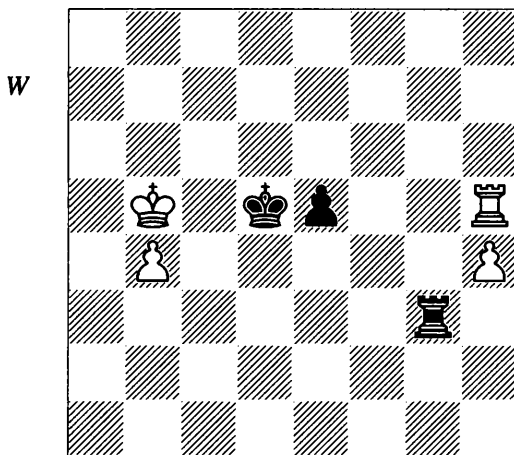
Summary:

- Most positions with rook and two connected pawns vs rook and pawn, with all the pawns passed, are winning.
- The defender's best chance is usually to try to push his lone pawn as far as possible, while he uses his king to hold up the enemy pawns. This plan has a better chance of succeeding if the defender's rook is actively placed behind his passed pawn. In some cases he can give up his pawn to reach a ♞ vs ♞+2♟ position in which the pawns are blocked by the defender's king.
- The defensive plan of using the king to force the promotion of the lone pawn usually fails, because even if this wins the enemy rook, the defender is usually overwhelmed by the

connected pawns. However, this may work in a few cases with very favourable initial positions.

8.8.3b The Attacker's Pawns are Not Connected

In this case the defender's drawing chances are significantly improved, especially if the pawns are far apart. The standard attacking plan of giving up the rook for the enemy pawn is now much less likely to succeed, as a rook can often draw against two disconnected passed pawns. In the following example Black should draw even though White can advance his h-pawn to the seventh rank.



Dražko – Zi. Jakovljević

Yugoslav Team Ch, Vrnjačka Banja 1999

1 ♖h8

White gets ready to advance his h-pawn.

1...e4!

Definitely the best defence; Black is facing two enemy passed pawns, and his best chance is to develop counterplay with his e-pawn as quickly as possible.

2 h5 e3 3 h6 ♞g5!

Black hits on the drawing plan of playing his rook to h5. 3...e2? 4 ♞e8 ♞h3 5 ♞xe2 ♞xh6 6 ♞d2+ ♔e5 7 ♔c5 is a typical winning line based on the exchange of pawns, while 3...♔d4? 4 h7 ♞g5+ 5 ♔a6 ♞g6+ 6 ♔a5 also wins for White. However, Black could also have drawn by 3...♞h3! 4 h7 ♞h5!, reaching the same position as in the game.

4 h7

The only chance, as 4 ♖e8 ♔d4+ 5 ♔a4 ♖h5 and 4 ♖d8+ ♔e4+ 5 ♔a4 ♖h5 are clear draws.

4...♖h5!

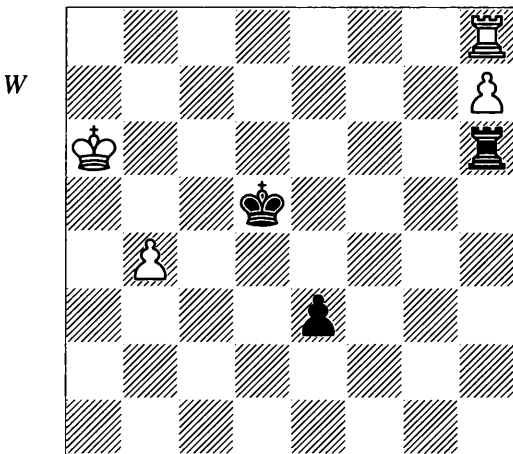
A very fine defensive idea: Black creates a battery on the fifth rank to keep White's rook pinned down on h8.

5 ♔a6

The possible discovered check means that 5 ♖d8+ can be met with 5...♔e4+, followed by ...♖xh7, drawing. Therefore, White must move his king off the fifth rank in order to nullify the rook and king battery. However, retreating the king by 5 ♔a4 improves Black's chances if the e- and h-pawns are exchanged, and now Black draws by 5...e2 6 ♖e8 ♖xh7 7 ♖xe2 ♔c6 and the king moves in front of the b-pawn. Instead White decides to move his king up the board.

5...♖h6+ (D)

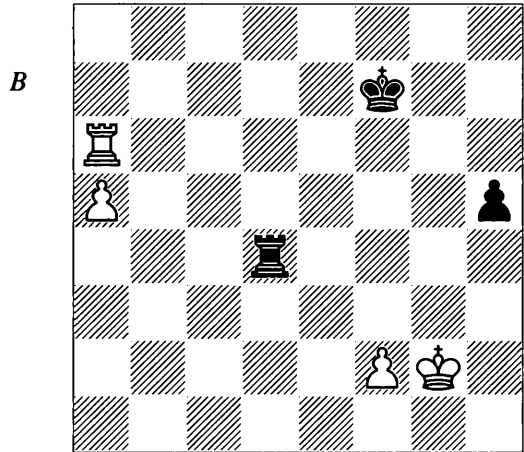
This loses according to Cvetković in *Informator 76*, but Black can still hold on. However, it would have been simpler to play 5...♔c4! 6 ♖c8+ (6 b5 e2 7 ♖e8 ♔d3 is also a draw) 6...♔xb4 7 h8♖ ♖xh8 8 ♖xh8 ♔c3 with a clear draw.



After the move played, Black resigned (1-0), a mistake since he could still have saved the game: 6 ♔a5 ♖h5! (the only move, as 6...e2? loses after 7 ♖e8 ♖xh7 8 ♖xe2 ♖a7+ 9 ♔b6 ♖a8 10 b5 and the b-pawn will decide the game) 7 b5 (Cvetković's notes in *Informator* end here with a 'decisive advantage for White' sign) 7...e2 8 ♖e8 ♔c4! 9 ♖xe2 (9 h8♖ ♖xh8 10 ♖xe2 ♖a8+ 11 ♔b6 ♖b8+ 12 ♔c6 ♖xb5 is also a draw) 9...♖xb5+ 10 ♔a6 ♖h5 11 ♖e7

♔d5 12 ♔b6 ♔d6 13 ♖a7 ♔e6 and the h-pawn will fall.

White's rook is also stuck in front of the pawn in the following example, which shows how difficult players often find such positions.



Shamkovich – Liberzon
Moscow 1967

White's main plan is clear: he will advance his rook to a8 and pawn to a7, forcing Black to keep his king on g7 or h7 and his rook on the a-file. Then White will push his f-pawn, which will eventually cost Black his rook thanks to the typical tactical point (assuming Black's king is on g7) f6+, meeting ...♔f7 by ♖h8. In the meantime, White can use his king to block Black's h-pawn. The only question is whether Black can create any counterplay to distract White from this plan.

1...♖g4+!

Playing passively by 1...h4 2 ♖a7+ ♔g6 3 a6, for example, is hopeless.

2 ♔f3

White cannot avoid blocking the f-pawn, since after 2 ♔h2 ♖f4 White has to go back, while 2 ♔f1 h4 gives Black too much counterplay with the h-pawn.

2...♖a4?

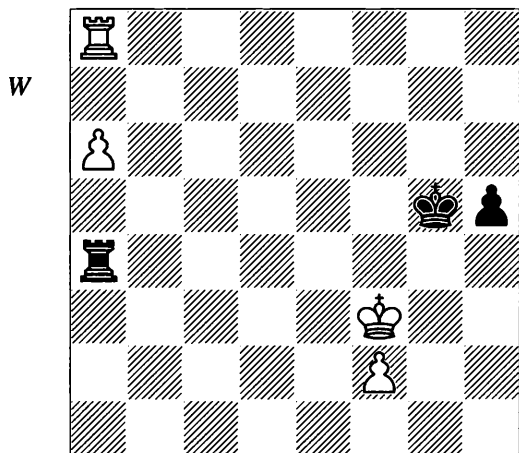
This does nothing to obstruct White's plan. Black could have drawn by 2...♖g1! (this threatens to push the h-pawn, so White cannot keep his rook in front of the pawn) 3 ♖h6 (3 ♖a7+ should be met by 3...♔f6! 4 a6 h4 5 ♖h7 ♖a1 6 a7 h3 7 ♔g3 ♖a3+ 8 f3 ♔g6 9 ♖d7 ♔f6,

when White cannot make progress, but not 3...♔g6? since 4 ♖a8 threatens to win Black's rook by ♖g8+ and gains a decisive tempo) 3...♖g5 4 a6 ♔g7 5 ♜c6 h4 6 a7 ♖a5 7 ♜c7+ ♔g6 and again White cannot penetrate Black's defences.

3 ♖a8!

Now White's advantage should be decisive.

3...♔g6 4 a6 ♔g7 5 ♜c6 h4 6 a7 ♖a5 7 ♜c7+ ♔g6 and again White cannot penetrate Black's defences.



Foreseeing White's plan of a7 followed by the advance of the f-pawn, Black realizes that keeping his king on the second rank offers no hope. Therefore he tries to hide his king from rook checks in front of his own h-pawn.

5 ♔e3?!

This doesn't yet throw away the win, but it is a step along the wrong path. After 5 a7! ♔h4 White can win in two different ways:

1) 6 ♔e3 is the direct approach; when Black runs out of checks, White just pushes his f-pawn: 6...♖a3+ (or 6...♔h3 7 f4 h4 8 f5) 7 ♔d4 ♖a4+ 8 ♔c5 ♔h3 9 f4, etc.

2) 6 ♔g2 ♖a2 (otherwise White pushes the f-pawn immediately) 7 ♔g1 ♔h3 (after 7...♖a1+ 8 ♔h2! ♖a2 9 ♔g2 Black is in zugzwang and must release the f-pawn) 8 f4 h4 9 f5 ♖g2+ 10 ♔f1 ♖g7 11 f6 ♖f7 12 ♔e2 ♔h2 13 ♔f3! ♔h3 (13...h3 14 ♔g4 ♔g2 15 ♜d8 ♖xa7 16 ♜d2+ ♔g1 17 ♔xh3 and White wins) 14 ♔e4 and White's king advances.

5...♖a3+ 6 ♔e4?

6 ♔e2! ♖a2+ 7 ♔f1 ♖a1+ 8 ♔g2 ♔h4 9 a7 would still win as in the previous note.

6...♖a4+?

The drawing chance passes Black by. In this position, White's king is cut off along a rank and cannot stop Black's h-pawn, so this was the moment for Black to change plans and play his king back to the safe zone on the second rank: 6...♔g6! 7 f4 (7 ♔f4 h4 8 f3 ♖a4+ 9 ♔e3 ♖a2 also draws) 7...h4 8 f5+ ♔f7! 9 a7 h3 10 ♖h8 h2 11 ♖xh2 ♖a4+ 12 ♔e5 ♖a5+ 13 ♔e4 (13 ♔f4 allows an immediate draw by 13...♖xa7 14 ♖h7+ ♔f6 15 ♖xa7 stalemate) 13...♖a4+ 14 ♔f3 ♔g7 and White loses the a-pawn, after which Black has an easy draw.

7 ♔d3 ♔h4

7...♖a3+ 8 ♔e2 ♖a2+ 9 ♔f1 leads to a win as in the note to White's fifth move.

8 ♔e3?

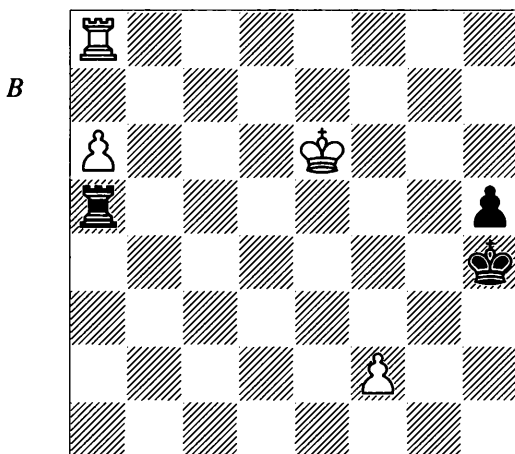
White's reluctance to push his pawn to a7 could have cost him dearly. 8 a7! still wins as before.

8...♖a3+ 9 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 10 ♔f5 ♖a5+

10...♖a2! is the simplest draw; after 11 f4 (11 f3 ♔g3 12 a7 ♖a5+ is also a draw) 11...♖a5+! 12 ♔e6 (12 ♔g6 ♔g4 is safe for Black) 12...♔g4 13 a7 ♔xf4 14 ♖f8+ ♔g4! (the only move) 15 a8♖ ♖xa8 16 ♖xa8 h4 Black saves the game.

11 ♔e6 (D)

11 ♔f4 ♔h3 12 a7 h4 is also drawn.



11...♔g4?

Yudovich's *Informator 5* notes correctly pinpoint this move as a mistake, but his suggestion of 11...♖a4? is equally bad, since then White wins by 12 a7 ♔h3 (12...♖a5 13 f4 ♔g4 14 f5) 13 f4 ♔g4 14 f5 and Black loses since he is missing a tempo with the h-pawn. Incidentally,

Yudovich totally fails to mention the mistakes at moves 6 and 8.

11...♔h3! is the only move to draw: 12 f4 (White must push the f-pawn, since 12 a7 h4 13 f4 ♖g4 14 f5 ♜a6+ is only a draw) 12...♖g4! (this is the key idea: Black must wait for f4 before playing ...♖g4, because then he is actually attacking the f-pawn) 13 f5 ♜xf5 14 ♜g8+ ♔f4 15 a7 ♜a5 16 ♜f8+ ♖g4! drawing, as we have seen before.

12 a7!

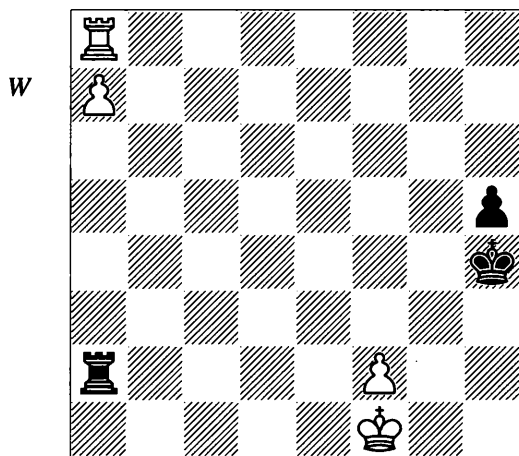
Finally White pushes the pawn, and here it is good enough to win because White threatens the immediate ♜g8+. Therefore Black must sooner or later waste a tempo with his king.

12...♜a6+ 13 ♖e5

White heads back to f1 with his king, which is sufficient, but he could have decided the game quickly by 13 ♔d5 ♜a5+ 14 ♖c6 h4 15 ♖b6 ♜a1 16 ♜h8 h3 17 a8♙ ♜xa8 18 ♜xa8 ♔f3 19 ♜h8.

13...♜a5+ 14 ♖e4 ♜a4+ 15 ♖e3 ♜a3+ 16 ♖e2 ♜a2+ 17 ♖f1 ♖h4 (D)

17...♔h3 18 f4 also wins for White.

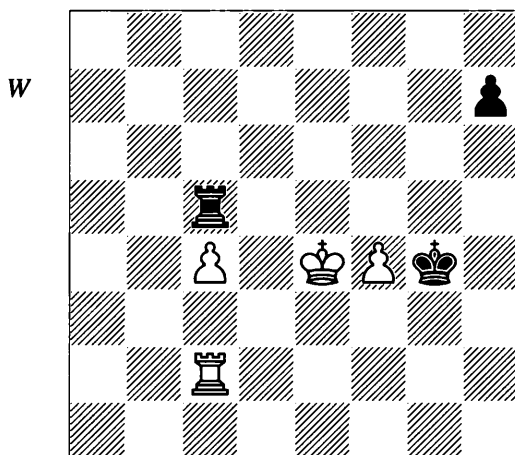


18 f4!

Black is doomed.

18...♜a5 19 ♖e2 ♜a2+ 20 ♔d3 ♜a3+ 21 ♖c4 ♖g4 22 ♜g8+ ♔xf4 23 a8♙ ♜xa8 24 ♜xa8 h4 25 ♔d3 h3 26 ♖e2 1-0

As a rule, the attacker has more winning chances when the pawns are closer together, since then he can assist both pawns with his king.



A. Fedorov – Kupreichik Belarussian Ch, Minsk 2005

This position is winning for White, but it requires accurate play as Black's h-pawn provides a source of counterplay.

1 ♔d4?

White seeks to displace the blockading rook as soon as possible, but this move is a mistake as it gives up the f-pawn too soon. White could have won by 1 ♜c1! ♜c8 (1...h5 2 ♜g1+ ♔h3 3 ♔f3 ♔h2 4 ♜g5 wins for White, while after 1...♔h5 2 ♔d4 ♜c8 3 ♖e5 ♖g4 4 f5 ♜e8+ 5 ♔f6 ♜c8 6 c5 the pawns advance) 2 ♜g1+! ♔h5 (2...♔h4 3 ♔d4 is similar) 3 ♔d5 ♜d8+ 4 ♖e6 ♜e8+ 5 ♔d7 ♜e4 6 f5 ♜xc4 7 f6 because now the black king is blocking the h-pawn.

1...♜f5

Now White faces an awkward choice between giving up his f-pawn or playing a passive move with his rook.

2 c5

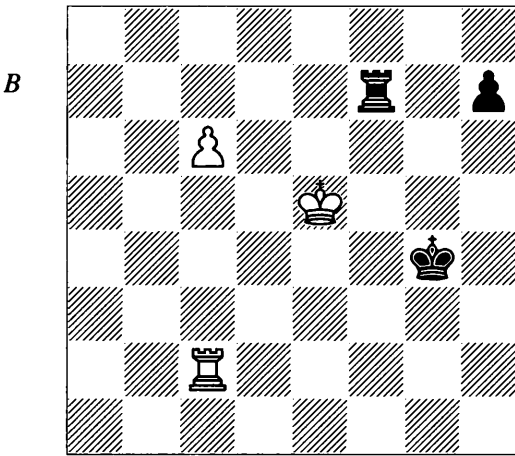
After 2 ♜f2 h5 Black has gained enough time to draw; for example, 3 ♖e4 ♜c5 4 ♜g2+ ♔h3 5 ♜c2 ♖g4 6 ♜c1 h4 7 ♜g1+ ♔h5 8 ♔d4 ♜f5 and his problems are over.

2...♜xf4+ 3 ♖e5 ♜f7?!

An odd move, although Black is not losing even after this. By preparing to give up his rook on c7, Black wastes considerable time, not only because the pawn only has to advance to the seventh rank, but also because White need not play his king up to support the pawn. 3...♜f8 would have drawn more easily; for example, 4 ♜g2+ ♔h3 (even 4...♔f3 draws after 5 ♜h2 ♜f7 6 ♖e6 ♜a7 7 c6 ♖g4 8 ♔d6 h5! 9 c7 ♜xc7

10 ♖xc7 h4) 5 ♜g7 h5 6 c6 h4 7 c7 ♖h2 and Black is in plenty of time.

4 c6 (D)



4...h5?

The losing move. Even though the white pawn is one square further advanced, Black could still have saved the game by reverting to the correct plan: 4...♞f8 5 ♜g2+ (5 c7 ♞c8 is a draw after 6 ♖d6 h5 7 ♖d7 ♞xc7+ 8 ♖xc7 h4 or 6 ♞c4+ ♖g5 7 ♞c1 h5 8 ♜g1+ ♖h4 9 ♖d6 ♖h3 10 ♖d7 ♞h8 11 c8♞ ♞xc8 12 ♖xc8 h4) and now:

1) 5...♖f3? (this no longer draws) 6 ♞h2 ♞f7 7 ♖d6 ♖g4 8 ♞h6! ♖g5 9 ♞h1 h5 10 ♜g1+ (a tactical trick forcing Black's king onto the h-file) 10...♖h4 11 ♜g8! ♞f6+ 12 ♖d7 ♞f7+ 13 ♖d8 ♖h3 14 c7 and White wins.

2) 5...♖h3! 6 ♜g5 ♞h8 7 c7 (7 ♞h5+ ♖g4 8 ♞h6 ♖g5 9 ♞h1 h5 10 c7 ♖g4 is also a draw) 7...h5 8 ♖e6 h4 9 ♖d7 ♖h2 10 ♞h5 ♞xh5 11 c8♞ h3 draws.

5 c7 ♞e7+

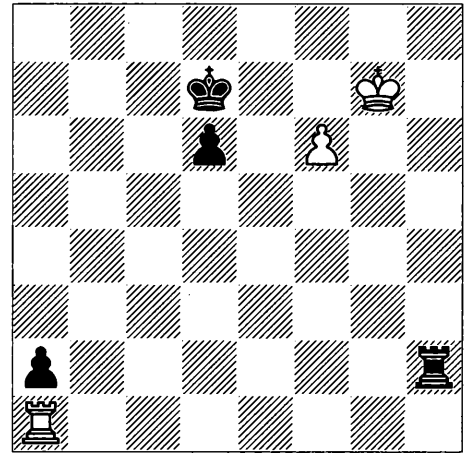
Black is too slow in every line; for example, 5...♞xc7 6 ♞xc7 h4 7 ♖e4 ♖g3 8 ♖e3 h3 9 ♜g7+ ♖h2 10 ♖f2 ♖h1 11 ♜g1+ ♖h2 12 ♜g3 and White mates next move.

6 ♖d4 1-0

In the following example, Black overlooked a study-like win in which both sides promote. The a-pawn and f-pawn more or less balance each other, so the question is whether Black can put the d-pawn to good use.

1...♜g2+ 2 ♖f8 d5 3 f7 d4 4 ♞d1

B



Khasanova – Ruceva
USSR 1980

The best chance. 4 ♜g1 loses more simply to 4...d3! 5 ♞xg2 a1♞ 6 ♖g8 ♞a8+! (6...♞f1? is a mistake as now 7 ♜g7 draws) 7 f8♞ ♞xg2+ (this position is an easy win as Black can swap queens) 8 ♖h8 (8 ♖h7 ♞e4+ 9 ♖h6 ♞e6+ transposes) 8...♞h3+ 9 ♖g7 ♞g4+ 10 ♖h6 (or 10 ♖h8 ♞h5+ 11 ♖g7 ♞g5+) 10...♞e6+ and Black forces the exchange of queens on e7 or e8.

4...♖c6!

A very fine move. Black wants to advance her king to support the pawns, but must avoid d6 because White can take on d4 with check. Other moves are inferior:

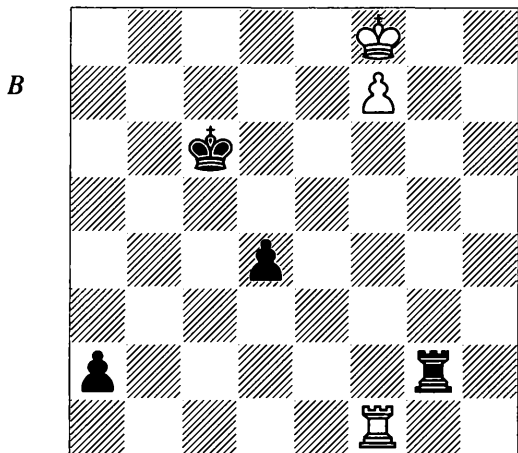
1) 4...♞d2? 5 ♜g1 d3 6 ♖g8! ♞f2 7 f8♞ ♞xf8+ 8 ♖xf8 ♖e6 9 ♖g7! ♖f5 10 ♖h6! ♖e4 11 ♖g5 d2 12 ♖g4 ♖e3 13 ♞a1 is an easy draw because if Black advances her king, White takes on a2 and pins the pawn.

2) 4...♖e6?! wastes time after 5 ♞e1+ since the only winning line is to return by 5...♖d7 (5...♖d5? 6 ♖e7 ♞e2+ 7 ♞xe2 a1♞ 8 f8♞ ♞a3+ and 5...♖d6? 6 ♖e8 ♞f2 7 ♞a1 ♖d5 8 f8♞ ♞xf8+ 9 ♖xf8 are drawn) 6 ♞d1 (6 ♞e7+ ♖c6 7 ♞a7 d3 wins for Black) and then 6...♖c6! as in the main line.

5 ♞f1 (D)

There is nothing better as 5 ♖e8 ♞e2+ 6 ♖f8 d3 7 ♖g8 ♜g2+ 8 ♖h8 ♞f2 9 ♖g8 ♖c5 10 f8♞+ ♞xf8+ 11 ♖xf8 ♖c4 12 ♖e7 d2 13 ♖d6 ♖c3 is also winning for Black.

At this point the game concluded 5...♖d7 6 ♞d1 ♖c6 7 ♞f1 ♖d7 8 ♞d1 1/2-1/2.



However, Black could have reaped the rewards of her earlier accurate play by a study-like win: 5...d3! 6 ♖e7 ♜e2+! 7 ♔d8 (or 7 ♔f8 ♜f2 8 ♜xf2 a1♙ 9 ♜g2 ♔d7 10 ♔g8 ♜a8+ 11 ♔h7 ♔e7 and Black wins) 7...♜f2!! (the key move) 8 ♜xf2 (8 ♜c1+ ♔d5 9 ♔e7 ♜xf7+ 10 ♔xf7 ♔d4 11 ♔e6 d2 and Black wins) 8...a1♙ 9 f8♙ ♜a8+ (Black wins despite White's extra rook) 10 ♔e7 ♜a7+ (White cannot return to e8 due to mate, but otherwise Black can win the rook with check) 11 ♔e6 ♜e3+ and Black wins by taking the rook and then exchanging queens.

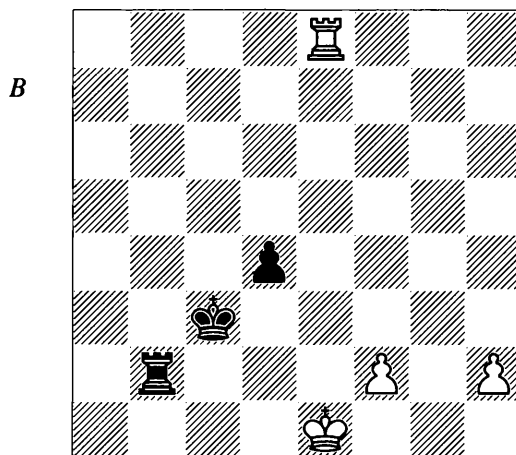
Summary:

- In ♜+2♙ vs ♜+♙, with all the pawns passed, the defender's chances are increased if the two pawns are disconnected and especially so if the two pawns are several files apart. Since a rook can sometimes draw against two disconnected passed pawns even if they are both on the seventh rank, the plan of pushing the single pawn to win the enemy rook can sometimes lead to a draw.
- If the two pawns are closer together, the attacker may be able to use his king to support both pawns, and here the defender has more difficulty. Eventually the attacker may abandon one of the pawns to promote the other, without having to take his king too far away.

8.8.4 The Single Pawn has the Advantage

In rare cases it can happen that the side a pawn down even has the advantage. This can only

happen if, as in the following position, the single pawn is close to promotion while the enemy pawns are far back. The interesting point about this example is that in one crucial line White's second pawn actually hinders him by depriving him of a standard stalemate defence.



Krebs – Mocete

West Germany-Spain corr. 1958

White has an extra pawn, but both his pawns are still on the second rank while Black's passed pawn is on the fifth rank and is well supported by his king. Moreover, it is Black to play. All this means that White is fighting for the draw, which he should be able to reach by giving up his rook for the d-pawn and advancing his king and h-pawn.

1...♜b1+ 2 ♔e2 d3+ 3 ♔f3 d2 4 ♜c8+ 4 ♜d8? d1♙+ 5 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 6 h4 ♔d4 7 ♔f4 ♜h1 8 ♔g5 ♔e5 9 f4+ ♔e6 wins comfortably for Black, so White must check.

4...♔d3

The only shelter for Black's king lies in front of his pawn, which provides White with a tempo to improve his position.

5 ♜d8+ ♔c2 6 ♜c8+ ♔d1

The crucial question is how White should use the tempo. In the game he made the wrong choice.

7 ♔g4?

This loses. There were actually three possible drawing moves:

1) 7 h4! is the simplest, activating the h-pawn at once: 7...♜b4 (after 7...♜b3+ 8 ♔g4 ♜d3 9 ♜a8 ♔e2 10 ♜a1 d1♙ 11 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 12

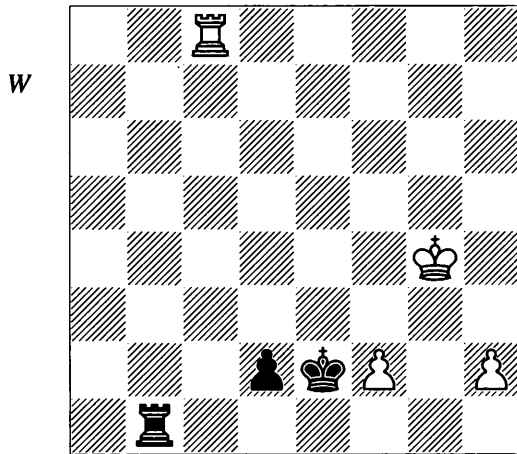
h5 White draws easily enough) 8 ♖d8 (8 h5 also draws) 8...♗c2 (8...♞xh4 9 ♖e3 is an immediate draw) 9 ♖c8+ ♖d3 10 ♖d8+ and Black cannot make progress.

2) 7 ♖d8! ♞b3+ 8 ♖g4 ♖c2 9 ♞xd2+ ♖xd2 10 h4 ♖d3 11 h5 ♖e4 12 h6 and White is in time to save the game.

3) 7 ♞g8! ♞b3+ 8 ♖e4 ♖e2 9 ♖d8 d1♚ 10 ♞xd1 ♖xd1 11 f4! ♖e2 12 f5 is the third drawing possibility.

The move played may appear logical, because after White has given up his rook for the d-pawn, he does not want his king cut off along a rank by Black's rook, so he decides to advance it now. However, concrete calculation always outweighs general principles and the move played should lose.

7...♖e2 (D)



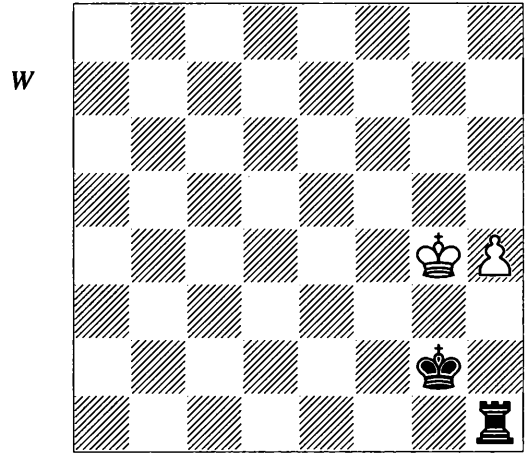
8 ♖e8+

Or 8 ♖c2 ♖d3 9 ♞xd2+ ♖xd2 10 h4 ♖d3 11 ♖f5 ♖d4 (Black also wins after 11...♞h1 12 ♖e5 ♖e2! 13 f4 ♖f3 14 f5 ♖g4 15 f6 ♖h5 16 ♖e6 ♖g6 17 f7 ♖e1+) 12 h5 ♞h1 13 ♖g6 (this position is only winning thanks to the presence of the f-pawn, which deprives Black of his usual stalemate defence) 13...♖e5 14 h6 ♖e6 15 ♖g7 ♖e7 16 h7 ♞g1+ 17 ♖h6 (without the f-pawn, 17 ♖h8 would draw) 17...♖f7 18 h8♗+ ♖f6 and Black wins.

8...♖xf2 9 ♖f8+ ♖g2 10 ♖d8 d1♚+ 11 ♞xd1 ♞xd1 12 h4 ♞h1? (D)

An astonishing mistake, given that this was a correspondence game. Black could have won by 12...♖d4+ 13 ♖g5 ♖g3 14 h5 ♖d5+ 15 ♖g6

♖g4 16 h6 ♖d6+ 17 ♖g7 ♖g5 18 h7 ♖d7+ 19 ♖g8 ♖g6 20 h8♗+ ♖f6.



13 h5

Now it's a draw.

13...♖f2 14 ♖g5 ♖e3 15 h6 ♖e4 16 ♖g6 ♖e5 17 h7 ♖e6 18 ♖g7 ♞g1+ 19 ♖f8 1/2-1/2

Summary:

- In exceptional cases, the ending ♞+2♗ vs ♞+♗ may favour the side with the single pawn. This can only occur if the lone pawn is far advanced, while the enemy pawns are near their starting squares.

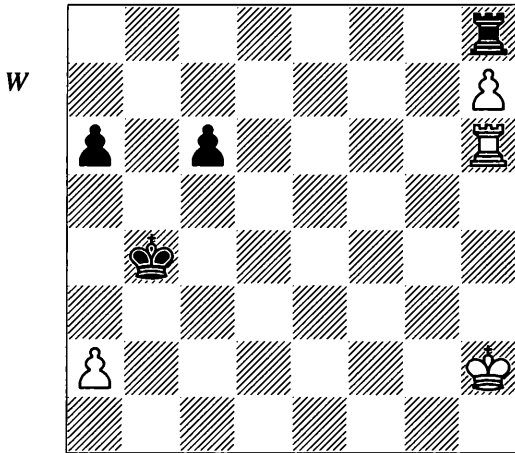
8.9 The Outside Passed Pawn

An outside passed pawn is generally an advantage in rook endings, but a great deal depends on the position of the rooks. The most favourable case for the side with the passed pawn is to have his rook behind the pawn, urging it on. The pawn will usually have to be blockaded by the enemy rook, which leaves the rook paralysed. This is the situation which we consider first.

8.9.1 The Attacker's Rook is Behind the Pawn

In many cases, such a situation leads to a more or less automatic win of the type that can found in standard endgame textbooks: the attacker

either runs his king over to the pawn and wins the rook or, more commonly, uses zugzwang to penetrate with his king on the other side of the board and win there. The following position is not of the totally trivial type that you usually find in books, but it's still fairly simple. However, it allows us to reinforce the important point that the game is usually decided on the opposite side of the board to the passed pawn.



Pytel – Segiet
Poland 1969

White has a far-advanced outside passed pawn, but Black has a passed pawn of his own to provide some counterplay. Nevertheless, it would be astonishing if White's advantage were not enough to win.

1 ♖g1

Pytel gave this a double exclamation mark and claimed that 1 ♖g3 only leads to a draw. This is one of those claims that looks unlikely the instant you see it, and precise analysis bears out this initial reaction. After 1...c5 2 ♖f4 Black has:

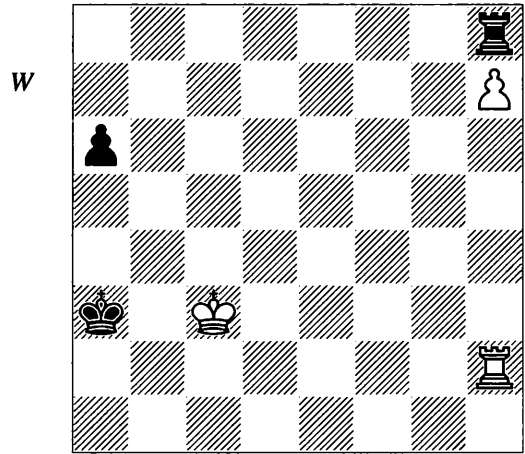
1) 2...♟a3 3 ♞h2 (3 ♞xa6+ and 3 ♟e4 also win) 3...c4 4 ♟e4 c3 5 ♟d3 c2 6 ♟xc2 transposes to the analysis of 2...♟a3 in the game.

2) 2...c4 3 ♞h3! (Pytel only gave 3 ♟f5? c3 4 ♞h2, after which the simple 4...c2 draws) 3...c3 (3...♞f8+ 4 ♟e3 ♞h8 5 ♟d2 enables White to bring his king in front of Black's pawn, with an easy win, while 3...a5 4 ♟e4 ♞e8+ 5 ♟f3 ♞h8 6 ♟e2 is similar) 4 ♟e3! a5 5 ♟d3 ♞d8+ 6 ♟c2 ♞h8 7 ♞h4+ with an easy win.

Thus both moves are equally good.

1...c5 2 ♟f1 ♟c3?!

After this White wins comfortably. The critical line is 2...♟a3 3 ♞h2 c4 4 ♟e1 c3 5 ♟d1 c2+! (the only chance; otherwise Black gets driven back and loses his c-pawn) 6 ♟xc2 ♟xa2 7 ♟c3+ ♟a3 (D).



W

At this point Pytel claimed a win by 8 ♞h1? (with an exclamation mark) even though this move actually throws the win away. This shows, firstly, that the winning line is not particularly obvious and secondly that even simple rook endings can fool strong players. Let's see what Pytel missed in this line: 8...♟a4 9 ♟c4 ♟a5 10 ♟c5 ♞c8+! 11 ♟d6 ♞h8 12 ♟c6 ♟b4 13 ♞h4+ (playing ♞h1 and later ♞h4 costs White a tempo and a half-point) 13...♟c3 14 ♟b6 ♟d3 15 ♟xa6 (White wins the pawn, but Black has gained a substantial amount of time) 15...♟e3 16 ♟b6 ♟f3 17 ♟c6 ♟g3 18 ♞h1 ♟g4 19 ♟d6 and now Pytel concluded 19...♟g5? 20 ♟e6 ♟g6 21 ♞g1+! ♟h6 22 ♟f7! and White wins. The trouble is that 19...♟f5! draws, because Black's king approaches g6 while shouldering away the white king, and after 20 ♟e7 ♟g6 21 ♞g1+ ♟f5 22 ♞g7 ♞a8 the draw is clear.

However, White can win by 8 ♞h4!, when White wins the a6-pawn without allowing Black's king to become active as in the 8 ♞h1? line. For example, after 8...♞c8+ (8...a5 9 ♟c4 and White wins after 9...♟a4 10 ♟c5+ ♟b3 11 ♟b5 a4 12 ♞h3+ ♟c2 13 ♟xa4 or 9...a4 10 ♞h3+ ♟b2 11 ♟b4 a3 12 ♞h2+ ♟c1 13 ♟xa3) 9 ♟d4 ♞h8 10 ♟c5 ♟b3 11 ♟b6 ♟c3 12 ♟xa6

White is a crucial tempo up over the 8 ♖h1? line.

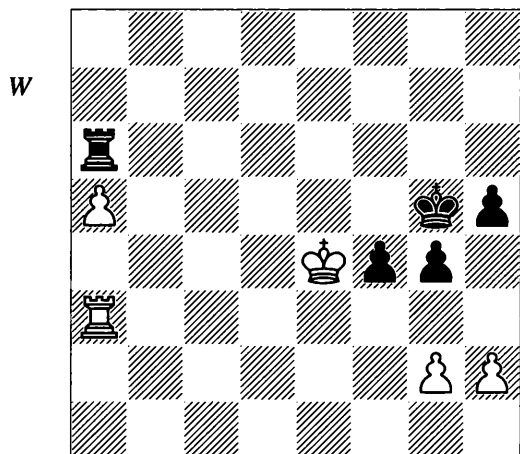
3 ♖h2

Now the white king easily moves across in front of the c-pawn.

3...♔d3 4 ♖e1 ♖e3 5 ♖h3+ ♔d4 6 ♔d2 ♖e5 7 ♖c3 ♖f6 8 ♖c4 ♖g7 9 a4! 1-0

9...a5 10 ♖h1! ♖g6 11 ♖xc5 is a simple win.

The following position shows how tactical elements can play a part; mate, stalemate and reciprocal zugzwang all make an appearance in the analysis.



Inkirov – Kirov

Bulgarian Ch, Asenovgrad 1974

This position is winning for White according to Neikirkh in *Informator 19*, but Black can save the day in two different ways, although neither defence is especially easy.

1 h4+!

The best try, breaking up Black's kingside pawns. If the white king heads directly for the queenside, then Black draws more comfortably: 1 ♔d4 h4 (but not Neikirkh's 1...f3? 2 gxf3 gxf3 3 ♖e3 ♖g4 4 ♖f2 ♖h3 and now, instead of 5 ♖g1?, the nasty 5 ♖a4 puts Black in zugzwang; after 5...h4 6 ♖xf3 ♖f6+ 7 ♖e3 ♖a6 8 ♖a2 ♖g4 9 ♔d4 White wins with his extra pawn) 2 ♖c5 f3 3 gxf3 gxf3 and White should take the draw by 4 ♖xf3, since after 4 ♖b5? f2 5 ♖a1 ♖f6 6 ♖f1 ♖g4 he would even lose.

1...gxf3?!

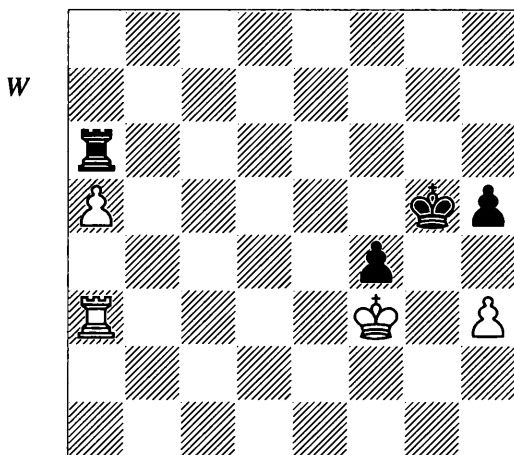
This move hangs on only by a miracle, so in practical terms it would have been better to play

1...♖xh4 2 ♖xf4 (threatening mate by 3 ♖h3+!) and now:

1) 2...♖f6+? 3 ♖e4 ♖a6 and here Neikirkh gave 4 ♔d5? ♖g5 5 ♖c5 h4 6 ♖b5 ♖a8 7 a6 ♖f4 8 ♖b6 h3 9 gxf3 g3 10 ♖a4+ and stopped his analysis, with a 'decisive advantage for White' symbol. However, if we continue this line by 10...♖f3 11 ♖g4 ♖g2! 12 h4 ♖h3 we can see that Black draws comfortably. White can win in this line by 4 ♖f5!, which again uses mating ideas to put Black in an unpleasant zugzwang. Black must now move his rook, allowing the pawn to advance, and White wins after 4...♖a8 5 a6 ♖f8+ 6 ♖e4 ♖e8+ 7 ♔d5 ♖g5 8 a7 ♖a8 9 ♖c6 h4 10 ♖b7 ♖h8 11 a8 ♖ ♖xa8 12 ♖xa8 ♖f4 13 ♖b7 g3 14 ♖c6 h3 15 ♖a4+.

2) 2...g3! 3 ♖a1 (curiously, Neikirkh noticed the stalemate trick 3 ♖f5 ♖xa5+! but then gave 3 ♖f3 as winning, even though it allows exactly the same draw; 3 ♖xg3 ♖f6+ 4 ♖e5 ♖f2 5 ♖g8 ♖f5+ is also a draw) 3...♖f6+ 4 ♖e4 ♖a6 5 ♔d5 ♖g4 6 ♖a4+ ♖g5 7 ♖c5 h4 8 ♖b5 ♖a8 9 a6 ♖h5! (to rule out a rook check on g4 later) 10 ♖b6 h3 11 gxf3 ♖g8 12 ♖a1 ♖h4 leads to a draw.

2 gxf3 ♖e6+ 3 ♖f3 ♖a6 (D)



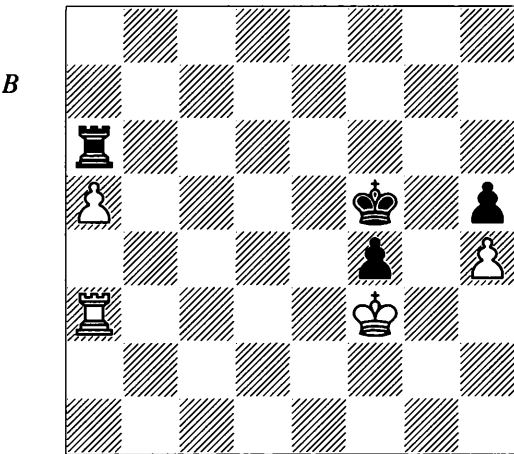
4 ♖a4

White is not sure how to proceed, so for the moment he just marks time. Neikirkh gave the following line as a win for White: 4 ♖a1 ♖f5 (not 4...♖h4?, since 5 ♖xf4 ♖xh3 6 ♖h1+ ♖g2 7 ♖xh5 wins easily) 5 h4 ♖e5? 6 ♖a4 and now White does indeed win; for example, 6...♖f5 7 ♖xf4+ ♖e5 8 ♖a4 ♖f5 9 ♖a1 ♖e5 10 ♖e3 and

Black has to allow White's king to advance. However, going back to the position after 5 h4, Black has a remarkable defence: 5...♞c6! 6 a6 ♞c3+ 7 ♚f2 (or 7 ♚e2 ♞c2+ 8 ♚d3 ♞c8 9 a7 ♞a8 10 ♚e2 ♚g4 11 ♞g1+ ♚xh4 12 ♞g7 ♚h3 13 ♚f3 ♚h4! 14 ♚xf4 ♞f8+ 15 ♚e4 ♚h3 and Black draws) 7...♞c2+ 8 ♚g1 (now that White's king has been driven back to the first rank, Black retreats his rook to a8) 8...♞c8 9 a7 ♞a8 (White cannot now prevent ...♚g4) 10 ♚f2 ♚g4 11 ♞a5 ♚h3!! (11...♚xh4? 12 ♚f3 is a reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play) 12 ♚f3 ♚xh4 13 ♚xf4 ♞f8+ 14 ♚e4 ♞a8 and White cannot win. This defence is indeed miraculous; it is White's misfortune that he can only force Black to play ...♚g5-f5 when his rook is on a1 (otherwise Black can play ...♚h4), but it is precisely when the rook is on this square that the counterattack with ...♞c6 draws, because White's king is exposed to checks along the second and third ranks.

4...♚h4 5 ♞a1 ♚g5 6 ♞a3 ♚f5 7 h4 (D)

The alternative is 7 ♞a2 ♚g5 8 ♞a1, but then Black draws as in the note to White's fourth move.



7...♞g6!

The ...♞c6 defence doesn't work here, because there is no check on c3, but this alternative idea, exploiting the position of the rook on a3 to threaten ...♞g3+, is effective enough.

8 ♞a4

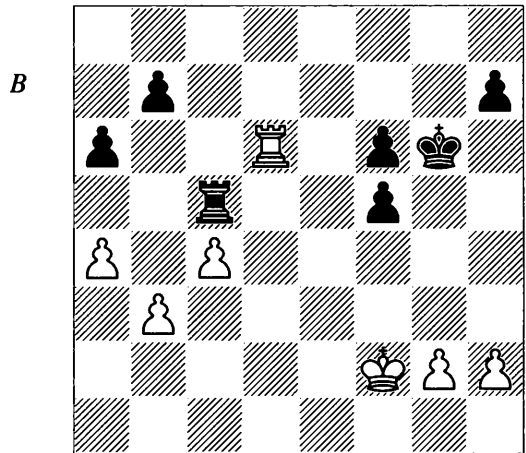
After 8 ♞a1 ♞g3+ 9 ♚f2 ♞c3 10 a6 ♞c2+ Black draws as before.

8...♞g3+ 9 ♚f2 1/2-1/2

The position is drawn, but if I were White I would have checked that Black found the line 9...♞g8! 10 a6 ♚g4 11 a7 ♞a8 12 ♞a5 ♚h3! before agreeing to share the point.

Just playing over the moves of the game itself reveals little that is unexpected, but a careful analysis shows how various tactical elements play a part in this deceptively tricky position.

The next example shows how positions of this type can arise from endings in which one side has a pawn-majority on the queenside.



Pismenny – Zhidkov
USSR 1979

This is a very instructive example which demonstrates several important points about rook and pawn endings with an outside passed pawn. It also shows how easy it is for players and annotators to get completely the wrong impression about a position.

A quick glance at the diagram shows that Black is fighting for a draw. His kingside pawns are broken, while White has more active pieces and a queenside pawn-majority. Once White plays ♚e3-d4 and sets his queenside pawns in motion, Black will have a lost position, so it is essential for him to take active measures at once.

1...b5!

The best move, playing to liquidate some queenside pawns. Black's plan may appear strange, in that the resulting pawn exchanges can only lead to the creation of a white passed pawn, which is what Black is afraid of. The crucial point is that exchanging pawns now, before

White's king has reached the queenside, will leave White with an isolated pawn which he will have to defend using his rook. Forcing White's rook into a defensive role, even if this is purely temporary, is definitely a success for Black and should enable him to draw.

2 axb5 axb5 3 ♖d4

3 ♖d5 looks promising, but the resulting pawn ending is a draw because White's d-pawn is weak: 3...♗xd5! 4 cxd5 f4! (the only drawing move) 5 ♖f3 ♖f5 6 d6 ♖e6 7 ♖xf4 ♖xd6 8 ♖f5 ♖c5 9 g4 ♖b4 10 ♖xf6 ♖xb3 11 h4 ♖c2 12 g5 b4 13 h5 b3 and both sides promote at the same time.

3 ♖d3 bxc4 4 ♖c3 ♖f7 5 bxc4 ♖e6 causes fewer problems for Black, as he can easily blockade the passed pawn with his king.

3...bxc4 4 ♖xc4

4 bxc4 ♖f7 5 ♖e3 ♖e6 6 ♖d3 ♖a5 is not dangerous for Black.

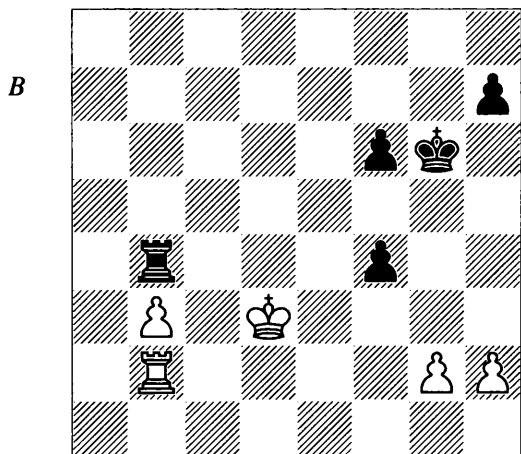
4...♖a5 5 ♖c2 ♖b5 6 ♖b2 ♖b4!

Given the choice, it is better to blockade White's pawn as far back as possible, and 6...f4?! 7 b4 gives White more chances. Black's active defence has improved his chances because White's rook has been forced into a passive position, but the threat of White marching his king to the queenside remains, so Black must continue to defend accurately.

7 ♖e3 f4+

7...♖f7 8 ♖d3 ♖e6 9 ♖c3 ♖f4 10 b4 ♖d6 is the simplest plan, preparing to move the king in front of the b-pawn. In this case the draw would have presented few problems.

8 ♖d3 (D)



8...♖f5?

Up to here, Black has played reasonably accurately, but now he strays from the correct path. It is noteworthy that Gufeld, annotating this endgame in *Informator 29*, considered the play of both sides to be accurate and the position to be drawn throughout. However, a key point about rook endings with outside passed pawns is that it is usually better for the defender to blockade the pawn with the king rather than the rook. This frees the rook for active duty to harass the opponent's pawns or force pawn exchanges in another part of the board. In the game, Black decided to blockade the pawn with his rook and create a passed pawn on the kingside by ...♖f5-e4 and then ...f3. With the pieces on slightly different squares, this might have also been sufficient to draw, but here it is a poor decision that should lead to defeat. The right idea is 8...f3! 9 gxf3 ♖f5 10 ♖c3 (10 ♖e3 maintains the extra pawn, but White cannot make progress without playing his king to c3, so he might as well do it straight away) 10...♖f4 11 b4 ♖xf3+ 12 ♖c4 ♖e6 and Black is still in time to blockade the b-pawn with his king.

9 ♖c3

Now Black is unable to maintain his rook in an active position.

9...♖b8?!

The last chance was 9...♖e4 10 b4 ♖e6!, again trying to play his king to the queenside. Then 11 ♖d2! ♖e3+ 12 ♖c4 f3 13 gxf3 ♖xf3 14 b5 ♖f1 15 b6 ♖b1 16 ♖c5 f5 is unpleasant for Black, but perhaps not totally lost.

10 b4

Here White's b-pawn can advance unopposed.

10...♖e4 11 b5 f3

Black proceeds with his plan of creating a passed f-pawn. It is now too late to play the king to the queenside; for example, 11...♖d5 12 ♖b4 h5 13 ♖a5 ♖a8+ 14 ♖b6 h4 15 ♖b7 ♖g8 16 h3 and White wins.

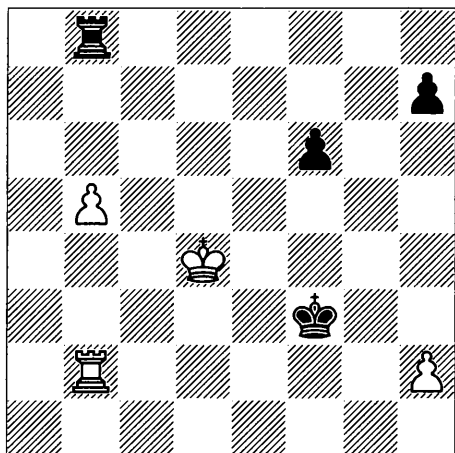
12 gxf3+

12 ♖b4+ also wins.

12...♖xf3 13 b6?

This obvious move unexpectedly lets Black off the hook. 13 ♖d4! (D) is the winning continuation:

B



1) 13...f5 14 b6 f4 15 b7 g4 16 Bb3 f5 (after 16...f3 17 e3 e3h3 18 exf3 exh2 19 eg4 White wins the h-pawn and then the game) 17 h3 Bd8+ 18 ec5 Bb8 19 ed5 h6 20 ed6 ce4 21 c7 and White wins.

2) 13...Bd8+ 14 ec5 f5 15 b6 f4 16 b7 and now:

2a) 16...e3 17 b8 Bxb8 18 Bxb8 f3 (Gufeld considered this position to be a draw, but White has several ways to win) 19 Bf8 (this is the simplest) 19...f2 20 h4 e2 21 h5 f1 B 22 Bxf1 exf1 23 h6 e2 24 ed4! (24 ed5? ed3 is only a draw) 24...ef3 25 ee5 eg4 26 ef6 and White wins.

2b) 16...Bb8 17 ec6 e3 18 Bb3+! e2 19 Bh3 f3 20 Bxh7 Bf8 (20...f2 21 Be7+ ed2 22 Bf7 e2 23 c7 wins for White) 21 Bf7 Bxf7 22 b8 B and White wins since 22...f2 may be met by 23 Be8+.

At first it's hard to see why 13 ed4! wins while 13 b6? does not. The key point is that to advance his f-pawn, Black must move his king. It is far more effective to play the king to the e-file than to the g-file, since this helps to keep White's king at bay, but with the white king on d4 this is impossible. Therefore Black has the choice between accepting an inferior position for his king, or giving a rook check to displace White's king from d4, which loses time.

13...e4

Black at once seizes on White's mistake and moves his king to a central position.

14 ec4

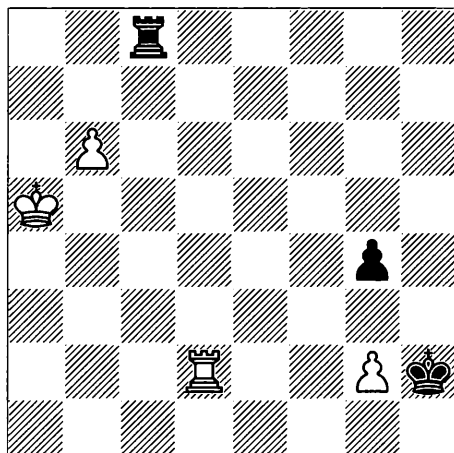
To prevent ...ed5-c6 from winning the pawn. 14 Bb5 f5 15 b7 h5 is also a draw.

14...f5 15 ec5 f4 1/2-1/2

After 16 ec6 f3 17 b7 e3 White is a crucial tempo down on the note to his 13th move, with the result that Black draws comfortably after 18 ec7 Bf8 19 b8 Bxb8 20 Bxb8 f2 21 Bf8 e2 22 h4 f1 B 23 Bxf1 exf1 24 ed6 eg2.

When fighting against an outside passed pawn, the defender often has to aim for counterplay on the other side of the board. Even without a passed pawn, he may have drawing chances provided his king is active and he has a far-advanced pawn. The following position is won for White, but it only requires one slip for Black to escape.

B



Mednis – Djukić
Niš 1977

Here the trouble is that Black has the possibility of counterplay by ...g3 and ...Bf8-f2. This can result in an ending with B+P vs B+P, but many of the resulting positions are drawn. According to Djukić and Ilić in *Informator 25*, the diagram position is a draw, but over the years various analysts have demonstrated not only that White can win, but that he can do so in more than one way.

1...Ba8+!?

The best chance, since after 1...g3?! 2 b7 Bf8 3 Bb2! Black cannot play 3...Bf2 as 4 b8 B defends the rook, while otherwise White marches his king up the a-file and promotes the pawn, recapturing with the king.

2 ec5 g3 3 b7

White can also win by 3 ♖b2 ♜f8 4 ♔c4 ♜f2 5 ♔c3 ♜f8 (after 5...♜f7 6 b7 ♜xb7 7 ♜xb7 ♔xg2 8 ♔d2 White wins at once) 6 b7 ♜b8 7 ♔d4 ♔g1 8 ♔d5 ♔h2 9 ♔c6 ♜f8, and now:

1) The immediate 10 ♔b6? is wrong due to 10...♜f2, and now 11 b8♞?? doesn't defend the rook.

2) 10 ♔c5! is a waiting move that puts Black in zugzwang since if he moves his rook off the f-file then the ...♜f2 defence will not be available: 10...♜b8 (10...♔g1 11 ♔b6 ♜f2 12 ♜b1+ also wins for White) 11 ♔b6 ♜f8 12 ♔a7 and the pawn promotes.

3...♜f8 4 ♜c2?

The wrong square for the rook, after which Black can draw. Other moves:

1) 4 ♜b2? is also wrong since 4...♜f2 5 ♜xf2 gxf2 6 b8♞+ ♔xg2 is a standard draw.

2) 4 ♔c6? ♜f6+ 5 ♔c5 ♜f2 is the same.

3) 4 ♔c5? is a draw because after 4...♜f2 5 b8♞ ♜xd2 6 ♞b4 ♜f2! 7 ♞e4 ♔g1 8 ♔d4 ♔h2 9 ♔e3 ♔g1 White is unable to make progress; if the queen moves away, Black can take the pawn with his king, while otherwise White cannot achieve anything.

4) 4 ♜a2! is the only move to win. The crucial difference arises after 4...♜f2 5 ♜a4! ♜f8 6 ♔c6! since now White threatens to gain a whole queen by playing ♜a8. Then 6...♜b8 (6...♔xg2 7 ♜a8 ♜f6+ 8 ♔c5 ♜f5+ 9 ♔c4 ♜f4+ 10 ♔c3 ♜f3+ 11 ♔d2 ♜b3 12 b8♞ ♜xb8 13 ♜xb8 and 6...♜f6+ 7 ♔c5 ♜f5+ 8 ♔c4 ♜f4+ 9 ♔b3 ♜f1 10 ♜a2 ♜f8 11 ♜a8 are also winning for White) 7 ♜a2! ♜f8 8 ♜a8 is a clear win for White.

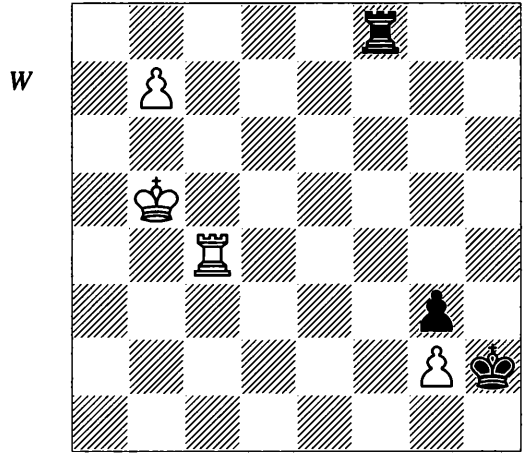
4...♜f2 5 ♜c4

The only chance, since 5 b8♞ ♜xc2 is a draw as after 4 ♔c5? above.

5...♜f8 (D)

Now we see the crucial difference between 4 ♜c2 and 4 ♜a2. White needs to move his king off the b-file so that he can genuinely threaten ♜c8, but moving to the c-file blocks the rook, so he must move to the a-file. But with the king on the a-file, ♜c8 only wins a rook since Black has ...♜a2+ and ...♜b2+ after White promotes. In the mirror-image position with the rook on a2 and the king on the c-file, the analogous move ♜a8 gains a whole queen.

6 ♜c8



6 ♔a6 ♔xg2 7 ♜c8 ♜f1 is only a draw.

6...♜f2 7 b8♞ ♜b2+ 8 ♔c4 ♜xb8 9 ♜xb8 ♔xg2 10 ♔d3

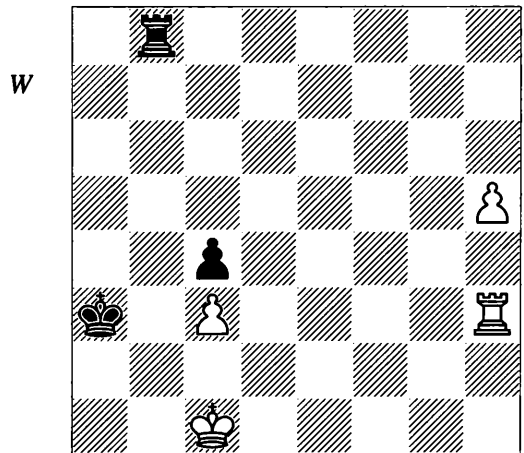
The white king is one square too far away.

10...♔f2!

10...♔f1? 11 ♔e3 and 10...♔f3? 11 ♜f8+ are winning for White.

11 ♜f8+ ♔e1! 1/2-1/2

The following position is somewhat similar, but the winning line is more surprising.



Yandemirov – S. Ivanov
USSR 1989

White has an extra outside passed pawn with his rook favourably placed behind the pawn, so the win looks to be a simple matter of pushing the pawn to h7 and then moving the king up to support the pawn. However, it's not that simple because the direct execution of this plan is impossible: 1 h6? ♔b3 2 h7 ♜h8 (this is actually a

position of reciprocal zugzwang; if Black were to move then he would have to allow White to play ♖c2, keeping Black's king at bay, after which the win is straightforward) 3 ♔d2 (3 ♖b1 ♜f8 4 ♜h1 ♜h8 doesn't help) 3...♜d8+ 4 ♔e2 (4 ♔e3? even loses after 4...♜d3+) 4...♜h8 and the white king cannot cross the third rank without the loss of the c3-pawn, which would lead to a draw. White can only win by an extremely subtle manoeuvre involving the sacrifice of the c3-pawn, and it is to Yandemirov's credit that he found the winning line.

1 ♜h2!

This is the winning move. The threat is 2 h6, followed by h7 and then ♖c2, keeping Black's king away from the c3-pawn. Black cannot play ...♖b3 because this would lose his rook to ♜b2+.

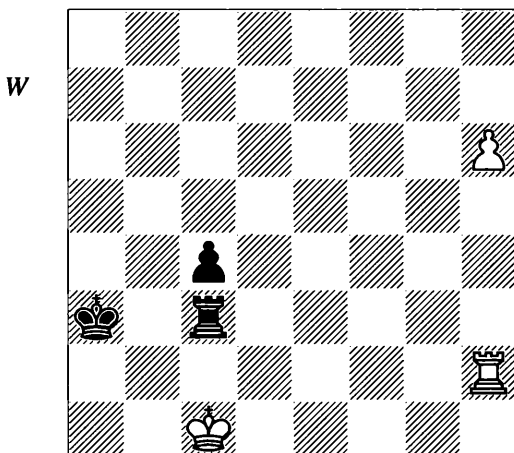
1...♜b3

Black sees that passive defence cannot succeed, so he plays for a counterattack. After 1...♜f8 (1...♜h8 2 ♔c2 ♜b8 3 ♜h4 followed by h6-h7 is an easy win) 2 h6 ♖b3 3 h7 ♜h8 4 ♜h3 we reach the reciprocal zugzwang mentioned above with Black to play, and he must now give way with his king: 4...♔a4 (after 4...♔a3 5 ♔c2 ♔a4 6 ♜h5 White wins even more quickly) 5 ♔b2 ♔a5 (5...♜b8+ 6 ♔c2 ♜h8 7 ♜h5) 6 ♔a3 ♔b5 7 ♜h5+ ♔c6 8 ♔b4 and the c4-pawn falls.

2 h6!

The only way to make progress is to sacrifice the c-pawn. 2 ♜c2 wastes time as after 2...♜b5 White must return to h2.

2...♜xc3+ (D)



3 ♔d1!

Once again accuracy is essential: 3 ♔d2? ♖b3! (threatening ...♜c2+) 4 ♜h4 ♜d3+ 5 ♔e2 ♜d8 is a simple draw, while 3 ♖b1? ♜b3+ 4 ♔c1 isn't just a waste of time as now Black can draw by 4...♜b8 5 h7 ♜h8 6 ♔c2 ♖b4 7 ♜h5 c3!.

3...♜b3

Or 3...♜d3+ 4 ♔c2 ♜d8 (4...♜b3 5 ♜h1 doesn't help Black) 5 h7 ♜h8 6 ♔c3 ♔a4 7 ♜h5 and Black is in zugzwang. After the move played, Black threatens ...♜b1+ followed by ...♜b2+, so White must move his rook. There is only one square that wins.

4 ♜h4!

It is essential to attack Black's pawn.

4...♜b8

4...♖b1+ 5 ♔c2 ♜b2+ 6 ♔c1 ♜b8 7 ♜xc4 ♖b3 8 ♜c7 is basically the same.

5 ♜xc4

White has a winning position because he can use his rook to cut off the enemy king.

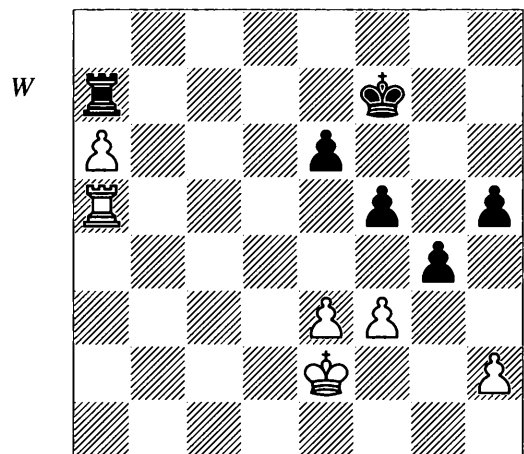
5...♖b3

5...♖b1+ 6 ♜c1 ♜b3 7 ♔d2 ♜b2+ 8 ♔c3 ♜b3+ 9 ♔d4 ♜b4+ 10 ♜c4 ♜b6 11 ♜c3+ ♔a4 12 ♜h3 is also winning for White.

6 ♜c7 ♜b6 7 h7 ♜h6 8 ♔e2 ♖b4 9 ♔f3 ♖b5 10 ♔g4 ♖b6 11 ♜f7 1-0

White wins by marching his king to g7.

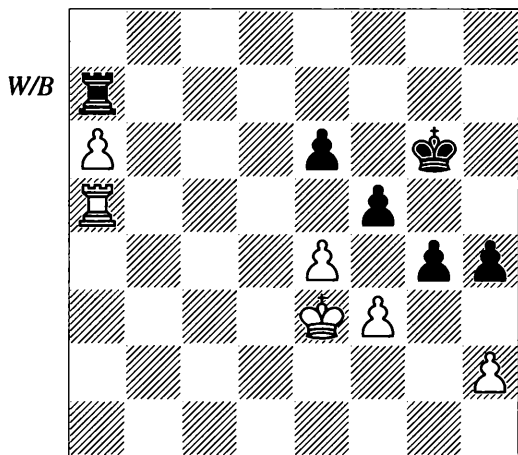
The next position is the most complicated of all the examples in this section.



Panno – Najdorf
Buenos Aires 1968

The position certainly looks very favourable for White. His rook is perfectly positioned

behind his far-advanced a-pawn, while Black's rook is effectively immobilized. Nevertheless, White still has to make progress and this can only be achieved on the kingside. Unfortunately, Marić's notes in *Informator 6* contained several errors, and the key points in this instructive position went unmentioned. White would like to simplify the position on the kingside and win a pawn there. Then, with no danger of Black making his own passed pawn, the win should be simple. However, it turns out that against correct defence this is impossible. The play depends on a remarkable position of reciprocal zugzwang, which is so crucial that we shall analyse it first.



Panno – Najdorf
Analysis diagram

It is hard to believe that this is reciprocal zugzwang. First of all, let's see why Black loses if it is his move:

1) 1...gxf3 2 exf5+ exf5 3 ♖xf3 allows White to exploit the a-pawn in the normal way and after 3...♔g5 4 ♖a4 ♔g6 5 ♖f4 h3 6 ♖a5 Black loses his f-pawn.

2) 1...fxe4 2 fxg4 costs Black a pawn at once.

3) 1...♔g5 2 exf5 exf5 3 fxg4 (Black cannot recapture with the f-pawn) 3...♔xg4 4 ♖a4+ ♔h3 (4...♔g5 is met by 5 ♖f3, etc.) 5 ♖f3 ♔xh2 6 ♖xh4+ ♔g1 7 ♖a4 with an easy win for White.

4) 1...♔h6 2 exf5 exf5 3 ♖f4 g3 4 hxg3 h3 5 ♖xf5 h2 6 ♖a1 and White will win with his two kingside pawns.

5) 1...g3 2 hxg3 hxg3 3 exf5+ exf5 4 f4 ♔h5 (otherwise White picks up the g-pawn and wins without problems) 5 ♖f3 ♔h4 6 ♖a1 g2 7 ♔xg2 ♔g4 8 ♖a4 and Black has to retreat.

6) 1...♔f6 2 exf5 exf5 3 ♖f4 and White wins because he threatens to take the f5-pawn with check, for example after 3...g3 4 hxg3 h3 5 ♖xf5+.

7) 1...♔g7 and now:

7a) 2 fxg4? fxg4 3 ♖f4 g3 4 ♖f3 (4 hxg3 h3 5 ♖f3 ♖f7+ followed by ...h2 is also a draw) 4...gxh2 5 ♔g2 e5 6 ♔xh2 ♔g6 7 ♔g2 ♔g5 8 ♖f3 h3 9 ♔g3 h2! 10 ♔xh2 ♖f4 11 ♖a4 ♖f3 and Black's active king saves the day; for example, 12 ♔g1 ♔g3 13 ♖f1 ♖f3 14 ♖e1 ♖e3 15 ♖d1 ♖d3 16 ♖c1 ♖c3 17 ♖b1 ♖b3 18 ♖a2 ♖g7 19 ♖b2+ ♖c3 20 ♖a2 ♖a7 21 ♖b3+ ♖c4 22 ♖a3 ♖d4 23 ♖a4+ ♖c3 24 ♖a3 ♖h7 25 a7 ♖h1.

7b) 2 ♖a1 ♔g6 3 exf5+ exf5 4 ♖a5 puts Black in zugzwang (this position also arises after 4 ♖e3 in the game continuation); after 4...♔g7 5 ♖f4! White wins as in line 7c, although he has wasted two moves with his rook.

7c) 2 exf5! exf5 3 ♖f4 g3 4 hxg3 h3 5 ♖xf5! h2 6 ♖a1 ♖xa6 7 ♖h1 ♖h6 8 ♔g4! ♔g6 9 f4 ♖f6 10 ♖f3 followed by ♔g2, winning the h-pawn and the game.

It is rather more surprising that if White is to play he cannot lose a tempo, but when White's rook is not on a5, Black can play ...♔g5, threatening ...f4+ followed by ...g3, and to meet this threat White has to return to a5. Exchanging pawns on f5 does not change the situation. White can try triangulating with his king, but when White's king is not on e3, there is no threat to move to f4, and so Black's king can be as far away as the second rank. Some sample lines:

1) 1 ♖a1 ♔g5 2 fxg4 (2 ♖f2 ♔g6) 2...fxg4 (2...♔xg4? loses to 3 exf5 ♔xf5 4 ♖a5+ e5 5 ♖a4) 3 ♖a5+ ♔g6 4 ♖f4 g3 5 hxg3 h3 6 ♖a2 e5+! 7 ♔g4 (7 ♔xe5 ♔g5 draws) 7...h2 8 ♖xh2 ♖xa6 9 ♖h5 ♖a5 10 ♖f5 ♖b5 and White's advantage is not enough to win.

2) 1 exf5+ exf5 2 ♖f4 g3 3 hxg3 h3 (White's king is too far away to stop the h-pawn and he cannot take on f5 with check) 4 ♖a2 h2 5 ♖xh2

♖xa6 6 ♜d2 ♖a4+ 7 ♖e5 ♖g5 8 ♜d8 ♖a5+ 9 ♖e6 ♖a6+ and Black draws.

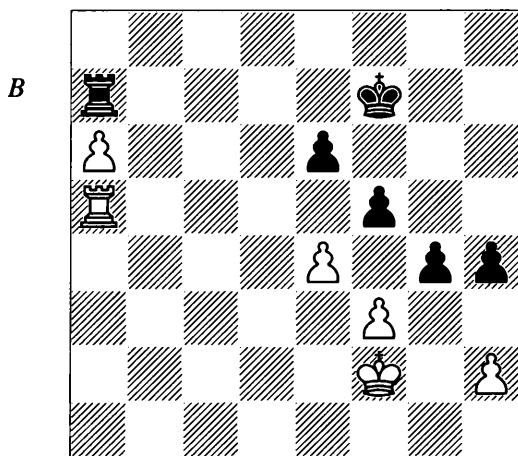
Now let's return to the game.

1 ♖f2

By threatening to penetrate with his king, White forces Black to push his h-pawn.

1...h4 2 e4 (D)

Again the best; White make a new route in for his king via e3, and at the same time create various possibilities for a favourable liquidation.



2...♖g6?

According to Marić, this is a losing mistake, and the alternative 2...♖f6 draws. This is absolutely correct even though the concrete analysis given by Marić is totally wrong. After 2...♖f6! White can try:

1) 3 ♖e3 and now:

1a) 3...gxf3? 4 exf5 e5 5 ♖xf3 ♖xf5 6 ♖a4 h3 7 ♖a3 with an easy win for White.

1b) 3...e5? 4 exf5 (4 ♖f2 also wins) 4...g3 5 hxg3 hxg3 6 ♖e2 ♖xf5 7 ♖f1 and White picks up the g3-pawn, before returning to e4 with his king.

1c) 3...♖g7? 4 ♖a1 ♖f6 (4...♖f7 5 fxf4 fxf4 6 ♖f4 and White wins) 5 exf5 exf5 6 ♖f4 g3 7 hxg3 h3 8 ♖e3 h2 9 ♖f2 and, thanks to the position of Black's king, neither 9...♖xa6 nor 9...h1♖ is possible.

1d) 3...g3? loses to 4 hxg3 hxg3 5 exf5 exf5 6 f4 ♖g7 7 ♖a1! g2 8 ♖f2 ♖e6 9 ♖g1 ♖a7 10 ♖xg2.

1e) 3...♖g6! is the only move; then the reciprocal zugzwang arises with White to play.

2) 3 ♖e2 ♖g7 4 ♖e3 ♖g6 doesn't help White.

3) 3 exf5 exf5 4 ♖e3 also leads to a draw, although not by the method given by Marić:

3a) Marić's drawing line 4...g3? 5 hxg3 hxg3 6 f4 ♖g7 loses to 7 ♖a1! (he only analysed 7 a7?, when Black draws by 7...g2 8 ♖a6+ ♖f7 9 ♖a1 ♖g3+! 10 ♖f2 g1♖+! 11 ♖xg1 ♖a3, winning the a-pawn) 7...g2 8 ♖f2 ♖e6 9 ♖g1 (now White threatens a7, so the rook must go back) 9...♖a7 10 ♖xg2 and White wins easily.

3b) 4...♖g6! 5 ♖f4 (otherwise White cannot make progress; for example, 5 ♖a4 ♖g5) 5...g3! 6 hxg3 h3 transposes to line 2 of the White-to-play coverage of the analysis diagram.

3 exf5+

3 ♖e3 also wins, reaching the analysis diagram with Black to play.

3...exf5 4 ♖e3 ♖g5

Black is in zugzwang and cannot save the game:

1) 4...g3 5 hxg3 hxg3 6 f4 ♖h5 7 ♖f3! ♖h4 8 ♖a1 and White wins the g-pawn.

2) 4...♖g7 5 ♖f4! (5 ♖a4? ♖f6 6 fxf4 fxf4 7 ♖f4 g3 8 hxg3 hxg3 9 ♖xg3 is a draw) 5...g3 6 hxg3 h3 7 ♖xf5! and White wins as in line 7c of the analysis diagram.

5 fxf4!

Black cannot take with the pawn, and this costs him the game.

5...♖xg4 6 ♖a2

Not the only move to win, but perfectly adequate.

6...♖e7+ 7 ♖f2 ♖a7 8 ♖a3! ♖f4 9 ♖a4+

Now Black has to start retreating and it isn't long before White wins the f-pawn.

9...♖e5 10 ♖f3 ♖d5 11 ♖f4 ♖c5 12 ♖xf5 ♖b5

12...♖b6 13 ♖xh4 and White wins.

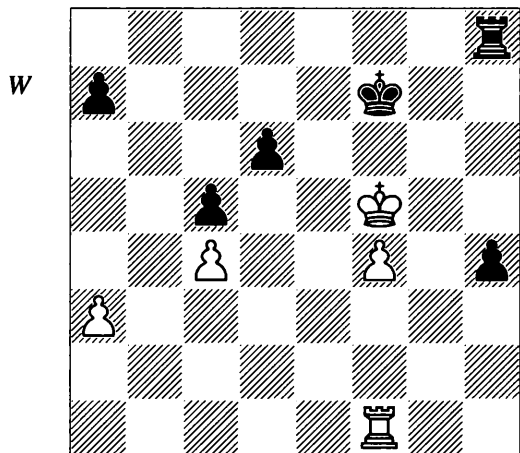
13 ♖a2

Even simpler than 13 ♖xh4.

13...h3 14 ♖g4 ♖xa6 15 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 16 ♖xh3 ♖b7 17 ♖g4 ♖c7 18 ♖g5 1-0

An outside passed pawn doesn't always guarantee success. In our final example in this section, White has the compensating advantages that his own king is active and that he has

threats against the enemy king; together these should have allowed him to draw.



Obukhov – Ibragimov
USSR 1991

White's plight appears desperate. He is a pawn down and Black has an outside passed pawn with his rook supporting it from behind. Indeed, in the game White lost after a few feeble moves.

1 ♖h1?

A passive move which gives Black a winning opportunity. By launching a counterattack straight away, White could have made use of his one real asset – his active king. This would have led to a draw after 1 ♖b1! h3 (1...♗h5+ 2 ♖g4 ♗h6 3 ♖g5 is also drawn) 2 ♖b7+ ♖f8! (other moves actually lose), and now:

1) 3 ♖g6? ♗h4 and White is helpless against the threat of ...h2.

2) 3 ♖f6? ♗h6+ 4 ♖g5 h2 wins for Black.

3) 3 ♖b8+? ♖g7 4 ♖b7+ ♖h6 5 ♖b2 (5 ♖b3 h2 6 ♖b1 ♗f8+ 7 ♖e6 ♗xf4 8 ♗h1 ♗h4 9 ♖xd6 ♗h5 is winning for Black) 5...♖h5 and the king moves up to support the h-pawn.

4) 3 ♖g5!! is the really difficult move to see, threatening perpetual check on b8 and b7, to which there is no defence as Black's rook has no safe square on the h-file. Note that 3...♗g8+? would even lose after 4 ♖f6.

1...h3 2 ♗h2 a6?

Too slow. Black could have won convincingly by 2...♖e7! 3 ♗e2+ (3 ♖e4 ♖e6 and 3 ♖g5 d5! 4 cxd5 c4 are even easier) 3...♖d7 4

♗h2 d5 5 cxd5 ♖d6 6 ♖e4 c4 7 ♖d4 ♗h4 8 ♖xc4 ♗xf4+ 9 ♖c3 ♗h4 and the d-pawn falls, after which the outside passed h-pawn will be decisive.

3 ♖g4?

After this further mistake, it's all over. 3 ♖g5! was the only chance to hang on: 3...♗g8+ (3...♖e7?! is now too slow after 4 f5) 4 ♖f5 (after 4 ♖h4? ♖f6 Black wins easily) 4...♗g3 5 a4 a5 6 ♖b2 (6 ♗h1? ♖e7 7 ♗e1+ ♖d7 8 ♗h1 ♖c6 9 ♖e4 ♗c3 10 ♖f5 ♗xc4 11 ♗xh3 ♗xa4 is winning for Black) 6...♗g2 7 ♖b7+ (7 ♖b8? h2 8 ♗h8 ♗e2 9 ♗h7+ ♖g8 10 ♗h3 d5! 11 cxd5 ♖f7 and Black's passed pawns will decide the game) 7...♖g8 8 ♖b8+ ♖g7 9 ♖b7+ ♖h6 10 ♖b3 h2 11 ♗h3+ ♖g7 12 ♖e4 and while Black retains a clear advantage, there is no obvious win.

3...♖f6

Now it's an easy win.

4 ♗xh3

This loses at once, but even 4 ♖g3 ♖f5 5 ♖f3 ♖b8 is totally hopeless for White.

4...♗xh3 5 ♖xh3 d5! 0-1

After 6 ♖g3 dxc4 7 ♖f3 ♖f5 8 ♖e3 c3 9 ♖d3 ♖xf4 10 ♖xc3 ♖e5 11 ♖c4 ♖d6 Black has a simple technical win.

Summary:

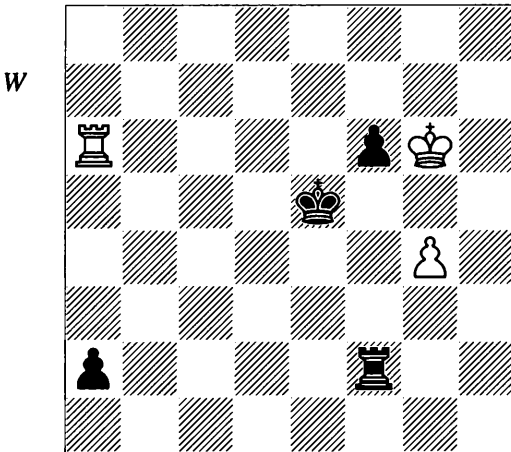
- In rook and pawn endings, an outside passed pawn is best supported by a rook **behind** the pawn.
- To exploit the advantage of an outside passed pawn, it is often necessary for the attacker to penetrate with his king on the other side of the board. Zugzwang is a key weapon here, as the defender's rook is often immobilized in front of the passed pawn.
- The defender usually has better chances if he can use his king to blockade the pawn. Even if the rook initially has to take up blockading duty, it's sometimes possible to substitute the king later and free the rook. However, if the passed pawn is far away from the other pawns there usually isn't time for this.
- Normally the defender's only chance is to create some counterplay on the opposite wing to the passed pawn, but a fine balance needs to be struck as weakening pawn advances may simply make it easier for the attacker's

king to penetrate. Thus any counterplay usually involves advancing the king and pawns together.

- The attacker should try to avoid too many pawn exchanges on the opposite flank, because he usually needs at least one pawn there in order to win.

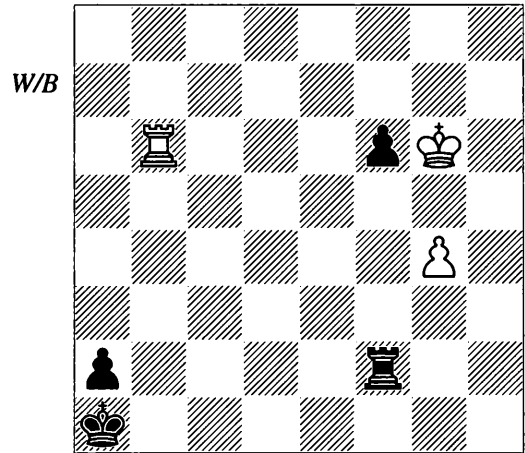
8.9.2 The Attacker's Rook is to the Side of the Pawn

While not as favourable as having the rook behind the pawn, it is also not bad to defend the pawn from the side. The main disadvantage is that the rook is not supporting the pawn's advance and so there is usually no immediate threat to advance the pawn. The positive side is that the attacker's rook can operate along the rank and take part in the action on the other side of the board while still guarding the pawn.



Callergard – Schipkov
Miskolc 1989

This position is surprisingly tricky. At first sight Black can just march his king to support the a-pawn and win White's rook, but this plan doesn't lead to immediate success because White can check Black's king from behind, either chasing it away from the a-pawn or forcing it to block the pawn by moving to a1. Schipkov, who analysed this position in *Informator 48*, believed that the position is a draw if Black's king gets stuck on a1. This situation can arise in various ways in the analysis, so let's take a look at it first.



Callergard – Schipkov
Analysis diagram

Schipkov's belief that this position is drawn affected his whole analysis. Actually Black wins whoever moves first. Let's suppose first that White is to play. Every move makes a concession of some sort, as we shall see:

1) 1 ♖b8 (this abandons the rook's attack on the f6-pawn, which deprives White of the move ♜xf6 in response to ...♜b2) 1...♜b2 2 ♜e8 ♜g2 3 ♚f5 (or 3 ♚h5 ♚b1 4 ♜b8+ ♜b2 5 ♜e8 a1♚ with an easy win for Black) 3...♚b1 4 ♜b8+ ♜b2 5 ♜e8 ♜f2+ 6 ♚g6 a1♚ and Black wins the rook while keeping his own pawn.

2) 1 ♜e6 (this releases Black's king from its prison) 1...♜f4! 2 ♚h5 ♚b2 3 ♜e2+ (after 3 ♜b6+ ♚a3 Black's pawn promotes at once) 3...♚b3 4 ♜e3+ ♚a4 5 ♜e1 (or 5 ♜e8 ♜f1 6 ♜a8+ ♚b3 7 ♜b8+ ♚c4 and the king approaches the white rook) 5...♜b4 6 ♜a1 ♚a3 7 ♜f1 ♜b5+ 8 ♚h4 (8 ♚g6 ♜g5+) 8...♜b1 9 ♜xf6 a1♚ 10 ♜a6+ ♚b4 11 ♜xa1 ♜xa1 12 g5 ♚c5 13 g6 ♚d6 14 ♚g5 ♚e7 and Black wins.

3) 1 ♚h5 (moving the king to the h-file allows ...f5, which either exchanges pawns into an easily winning ending or gives Black a second passed pawn) 1...f5 2 g5 f4 3 ♚g4 (3 g6 ♜g2 4 ♜f6 ♚b2 5 ♜b6+ ♚c3 6 ♜c6+ ♚b4 7 ♜b6+ ♚c5 8 ♜a6 f3 and Black wins) 3...f3 4 g6 (after 4 ♚g3 ♜g2+ Black picks up the g-pawn) 4...♜b2 5 ♜f6 ♜b4+ 6 ♚h5 ♚b2 7 g7 a1♚ 8 g8♚ ♚h1+ 9 ♚g6 ♚g2+ 10 ♚f7 ♜b7+ costs White his queen.

4) 1 ♚h6 f5! 2 g5 f4 3 g6 f3 4 g7 ♜h2+ 5 ♚g6 ♜g2+ 6 ♚h7 f2 7 ♜f6 ♜xg7+ 8 ♚xg7 ♚b1

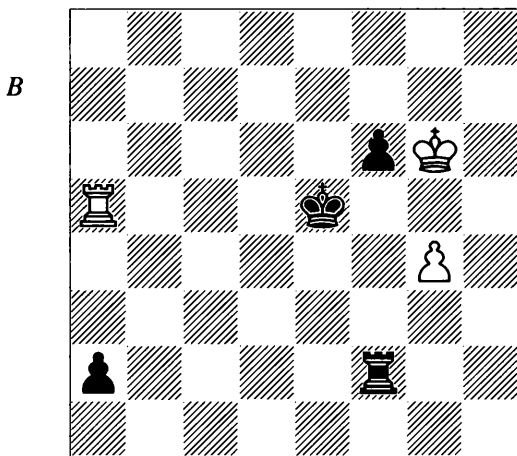
9 ♖b6+ ♔c2 10 ♜c6+ ♔d2 11 ♜d6+ ♔e2 12 ♜e6+ ♔f3 13 ♜f6+ ♔e4 14 ♜e6+ ♔d5 and Black wins.

Now let's suppose that Black is to move. In this case the win is scarcely more difficult: 1...♜f4 2 ♔h5 ♜f1! (threatening ...f5, so White must return; 2...f5? is wrong because after 3 g5 Black has to move his rook before the f-pawn can advance) 3 ♔g6 ♜f2 and Black has passed the move to White.

Now that we have analysed the target position and established it to be winning for Black, it's much easier to tackle the game situation.

1 ♜a5+ (D)

According to Schipkov, White could have drawn by 1 ♜a4 but it's not hard to see that Black can reach the target position: 1...♔d5! (1...♜g2? 2 ♜a5+ ♔f4 3 ♔xf6 ♔xg4 4 ♔e5 is drawn) 2 ♔f7 (2 ♔h5 loses even more quickly after 2...f5 3 g5 ♜h2+ 4 ♔g6 f4) 2...♔c5 3 ♔g6 (White cannot attempt anything positive) 3...♔b5 4 ♜a7 ♔b4 5 ♜a6 ♔b3 6 ♜b6+ ♔c2 7 ♜c6+ ♔b1 8 ♜b6+ ♔a1 (8...♜b2? 9 ♜xf6 a1 ♜ 10 ♜f1+ ♔a2 11 ♜xa1+ ♔xa1 12 g5 is a draw) and we have reached the target position with White to play. It follows that White was lost whatever he played, so there is no reason to criticize the text-move.



1...♔f4

This retains the win but loses time. 1...♔d4 2 ♜a4+ ♔c3 3 ♜a6 ♔b2 4 ♜b6+ ♔a1 was the quickest way for Black to secure victory.

2 ♔xf6?!

After this White loses straight away. 2 ♜a4+ is a better chance, when Black's quickest route to victory is 2...♔e3, again heading for a1. 2...♔g3 does not lead to a faster win, since White may reply 3 ♔h6! (3 ♔h5 loses more quickly after 3...f5 4 g5 ♜h2+ 5 ♔g6 f4) and now the only move to win is 3...♔f3, backtracking in order to head for a1.

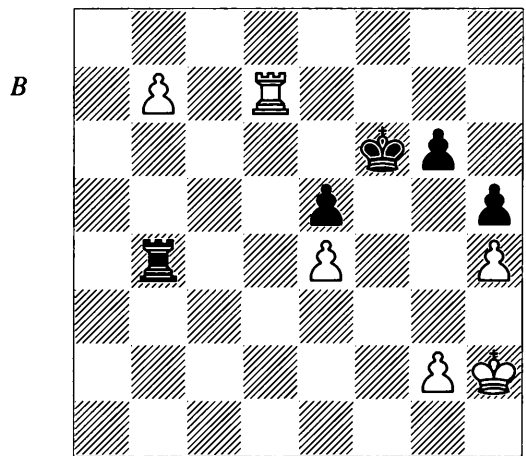
2...♔xg4+ 3 ♔e6

White loses at once in the case of 3 ♔e5 ♜f5+.

3...♜d2 0-1

White's king is cut off and the win is straightforward: 4 ♜a3 ♔f4 5 ♔f6 ♔e4 6 ♔g5 ♔d4 7 ♔f4 ♔c4 8 ♔e3 ♜h2 9 ♔f4 (or 9 ♜a8 ♜h3+ 10 ♔e4 ♔b3) 9...♔b4 10 ♜a8 ♔b3 11 ♜b8+ ♔c2 12 ♜a8 ♔b1 13 ♜b8+ ♜b2.

The following is a typically messy practical struggle between two leading players. Mistakes are made and the battle goes through various phases before Black finally makes a fatal mistake.



Kamsky – Bacrot
Sofia 2006

White has an extra outside passed pawn but at the moment his king is far away from it. It is unlikely that White will simply be able to march his king over to the queenside and win, so the most probable upshot is that White will force the exchange of the b-pawn for one of Black's pawns and the key question is whether White can carry out such a liquidation favourably.

Black's main decision is whether to play passively or to aim for pawn exchanges by ...g5. Both methods appear sufficient to hold the game.

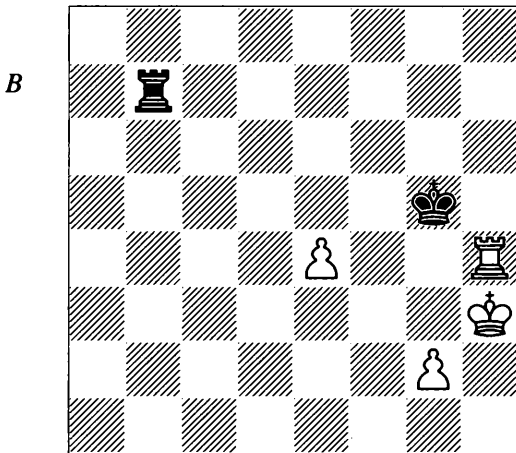
1...g5

1...♖b3 is also a good defence. After 2 g3 ♗e6 3 ♜g7 ♗f6 4 ♜c7 ♗e6 5 ♗g2 ♗f6 (Black waits until White's king is nearer the queenside before starting his counterplay; 5...♗d6, playing for immediate activity, is riskier and after 6 ♜g7 ♗c5 7 ♜xg6 ♜xb7 8 ♜g5 ♗d4 9 ♜xh5 ♗xe4 10 ♜h8 White still has winning chances) 6 ♗f2 ♗e6 7 ♗e2 ♗d6 8 ♜g7 ♗c5 9 ♗d7 (9 ♜xg6 ♜xb7 10 ♜g5 ♗d4 11 ♜xh5 ♗xe4 is drawn) 9...♗c4 10 ♗d2 ♖b6 11 ♗c2 ♖b5 it is not clear how White can make progress.

2 g3

After this it should be a clear draw. According to Marin in Mega Database, White could have won by 2 ♗d6+ ♗g7 (2...♗f7? 3 ♜h6 ♗g7 4 ♜xh5 ♜xb7 5 ♜xg5+ ♗f6 6 ♜f5+ and White wins easily) 3 ♜e6 and now:

1) 3...♜xb7? 4 ♜xe5 g4 5 ♜xh5 ♗g6 6 ♜xh4 ♗g5 7 ♗h3 (D) reaches a position with ♖+2♗ vs ♖ which is sufficiently interesting to examine in some detail.



Although this position is a win, it is surprisingly complicated. After 7...♖b3+ 8 g3 ♜e3 White's pieces are passively placed, and it is quite an effort to free them. The first step is to play the white king to the f-file to drive away Black's rook, thereby freeing White's own rook. It is worth noting that if Black were to play, he would draw by ...♜e2, sealing in White's king.

The main line runs 9 ♗g2! (the only way to win; 9 ♜f4? ♜e2 and 9 ♜g4+?! ♗h5 10 ♜f4? ♜e2 11 g4+ ♗g5 12 ♜f5+ ♗g6 13 e5 ♜e3+ 14 ♗g2 ♜a3 only lead to a draw) 9...♜e1 10 ♗f2 ♜a1 11 ♜h8 ♜a2+ 12 ♗f3 (having freed the white rook, White must return to h3 to evade the checks) 12...♜a3+ 13 ♗g2 ♜a2+ 14 ♗h3 ♜e2 15 ♜e8 ♜e3 (Black was in zugzwang and had to make a concession; this move releases the white king, but there is nothing better since 15...♗h5 16 ♜e5+ ♗g6 17 ♗g4 activates the king straight away) 16 ♗g2 ♜a3 17 ♜g8+ ♗f6 18 ♗f2 ♖b3 19 ♜a8 (threatening ♜a5-f5-f3, lifting the cut-off) 19...♗g5 20 ♗d8 ♗g4 21 ♗e2! ♜a3 (taking the g-pawn with either piece loses at once) 22 ♗d2 ♜a1 (or 22...♖b3 23 ♗d3 ♖b2+ 24 ♗c3 ♖b8 25 ♗d4 ♗d8+ 26 ♗e3 ♜a8 27 ♗d7 and White's pieces are free, since 27...♗xg3 loses to 28 ♜g7+ ♗h4 29 e5) 23 ♗d3! ♜a2+ 24 ♗c3 ♜a4 (a further attempt to cut off the white king) 25 ♜e3! (elaborate manoeuvres have allowed White to transfer his rook from h4 to a good square behind the e-pawn) 25...♗g5 26 ♗d3 ♗f6 27 ♜f3+ ♗g6 28 ♗e3 ♗g5 29 e5 (at least one of the pawns is able to advance) 29...♗g6 30 ♜f6+ ♗g5 31 ♜f4 ♜a3+ 32 ♗e4 ♜a4+ 33 ♗d5 ♜a5+ 34 ♗d6 ♜a6+ 35 ♗e7 ♜a7+ 36 ♗f8 ♜a8+ 37 ♗g7 ♜e8 38 ♜e4 ♗f5 39 ♜e1 ♜e7+ 40 ♗h6 ♜e6+ 41 ♗h5 ♜e8 42 g4+ ♗e6 43 g5 and now White is clearly winning.

2) However, 3...g4! 4 ♜xe5 ♗g6 (Burgess) saves the day for Black. After 5 ♜e7 ♖b1! White cannot advance his king due to mate, while e5 is met by ...♗f5. Otherwise White can only move his rook up and down the seventh rank, but Black just oscillates with his king between f6 and g6, when White cannot make progress.

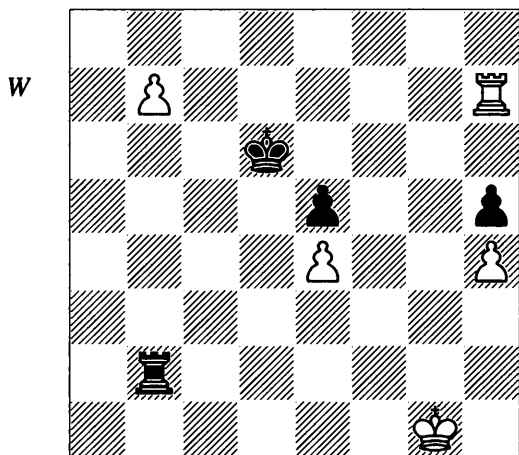
2...♖b2+

The king can't go to h3 due to mate, so Black manages to cut White's king off on the back rank.

3 ♗g1 g4 4 g4

Black has made considerable progress: one pair of pawns has been exchanged, and White's king is now in an inferior position. Now Black should have no trouble drawing.

4...♗e6 5 ♜h7 ♗d6 (D)



6 Rxb7

White decides to go for an immediate liquidation as 6 ♔f1 ♔c5 7 ♖xh5 ♖xb7 8 ♖xe5+ ♔d4 9 ♖e8 ♖h7 leads to an instant draw.

6... ♖xb7 7 ♔g2 ♖b4

Black could have forced a draw at once by 7... ♔c5! 8 ♖xe5+ ♔d4 9 ♖e8 ♔e3!, when his pieces are too active for White to handle; for example, 10 e5 (10 h5 ♖h7 and 10 ♔g3 ♖g7+ 11 ♔h3 ♔f4 12 h5 ♖g3+ 13 ♔h4 ♖g1 are also drawn) 10... ♔f4 11 e6 ♔e5 12 ♔g3 ♖b6 13 e7 ♔e6 14 h5 ♔f7 with a clear draw. However, the move played is also adequate for a draw if followed up correctly.

8 ♔f3 ♖b1 9 ♖g5 ♔e6 10 h5 ♖f1+ 11 ♔e2 ♖f4 12 ♔e3 ♖h4

Now we have a second situation with an outside passed pawn defended by a rook along a rank. Black has manoeuvred his rook into an excellent position where it keeps both white pawns under observation.

13 ♖f5 ♖h3+ 14 ♔f2 ♖h4 15 ♔f3 ♖h3+ 16 ♔g4

White's only winning chance, frail though it is, involves giving up the e-pawn.

16... ♖e3 17 h6 ♖xe4+ 18 ♔g5 ♖e1 19 ♖f6+ ♔d5?!

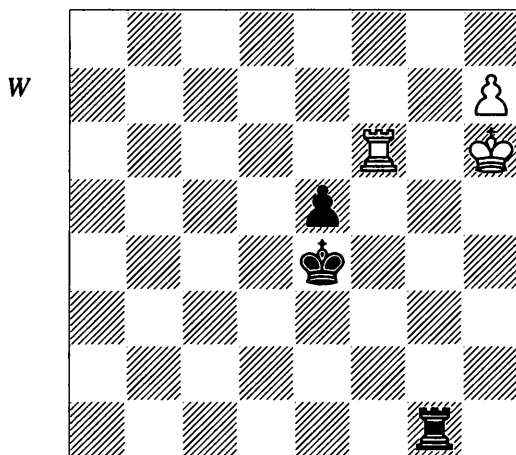
Black creates unnecessary problems for himself, since after this move White can force an ending of ♖ vs ♔. Instead, 19... ♔e7! would have secured a simple draw; for example, 20 ♖f2 ♖g1+ 21 ♔h5 ♖h1+ 22 ♔g6 ♖g1+ or 20 h7 ♖g1+ 21 ♔f5 ♖f1+ 22 ♔xe5 ♖h1 23 ♖a6 ♔f7 and Black's troubles are over.

20 h7 ♖g1+ 21 ♔h6

Now Black will have to give up his rook for the h-pawn.

21... ♔e4! (D)

Having fallen into a critical position, Black now defends very accurately. This move looks odd since it blocks Black's pawn, but it is the only one to draw because it is essential to prevent ♖f5. After 21... e4? 22 ♖f5+ ♔c4 23 ♖h5 White gains a queen, while after 21... ♖h1+? 22 ♔g7 ♖xh7+ 23 ♔xh7 e4 24 ♔g6 ♔e5 25 ♖f5+ ♔d4 26 ♔g5 e3 27 ♔f4 e2 28 ♖e5 he rounds up the pawn.



22 ♖f8

White finds the most awkward path. This forces Black to give up his rook on h7, whereas 22 h8♖ ♖h1+ 23 ♔g7 ♖xh8 24 ♔xh8 ♔d3 leaves White a tempo down with a correspondingly easier draw for Black.

22... ♖h1+ 23 ♔g6 ♖xh7!

Not 23... ♔d3? 24 ♖d8+! ♔c3 25 h8♖ ♖xh8 26 ♖xh8 e4 27 ♖e8 ♔d3 28 ♔f5 and White wins.

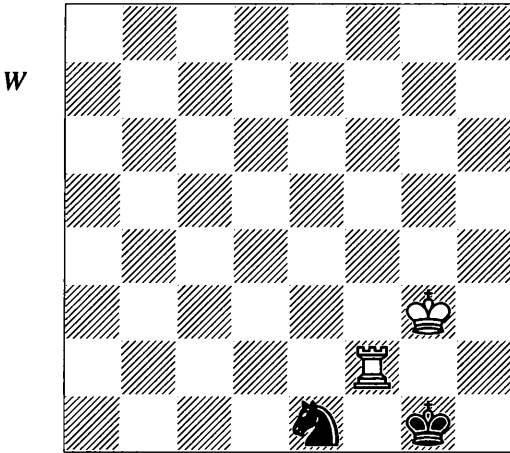
24 ♔xh7 ♔d3! 25 ♖d8+ ♔e3! 26 ♔g6 e4 26... ♔f3? loses to 27 ♖f8+.

27 ♔f5 ♔f3 28 ♖h8 e3 29 ♖h3+ ♔f2 30 ♔f4 e2 31 ♖h2+ ♔f1 32 ♔f3 e1♔+ 33 ♔g3 ♔d3

After 13 'only' moves, Black actually had a choice of drawing moves here since 33... ♔g1 is equally good.

34 ♖d2 ♔e1 35 ♖f2+ ♔g1 (D)

The game now enters a new phase. In general, ♖ vs ♔ is a draw, but there are two situations in which the rook has winning chances.



The first arises when the king and knight are separated; then the attacker may be able to keep them away from each other while gradually closing a net around the knight. The second situation occurs when the defender's king is poorly placed. The current position is a draw, but the uncomfortable position of Black's king means that it is still possible for him to go wrong. A quick search through Mega Database shows that the defender has only managed to hold this position about 50% of the time, and those who went wrong include some notable players. This may seem surprising, but one should not ignore the tiring effect of a long game, especially in these days without adjournments. The following analysis includes some other practical examples of this ending to demonstrate the errors which have caused players to lose a drawn position.

36 ♖f8

What's confusing about this position is that the moves available to Black depend on where White plays his rook along the f-file in a rather complicated way. However, the basic rule that it is always good to reply ...♔c2 simplifies Black's task enormously. If White plays ♖f6, then indeed ...♔c2 is the only move. If White plays ♖f7 then ...♔d3 also draws; after ♖f5 or ♖f8 Black loses if he plays ...♔d3, but in these cases he can draw by ...♔g2. ♖f4 is the weakest option, as then the moves to c2, d3 and g2 all draw. It's curious that although ♖f6 is the best chance, since Black has only one drawing reply, this move doesn't seem to have been favoured in practice. The reasons behind these subtle differences are complicated but interesting and instructive.

First let's see why moves apart from ...♔c2 lose after the best move, 36 ♖f6:

1) 36...♔d3? 37 ♖f3! ♔e1+ 38 ♖e2 ♔g2 39 ♖h6 ♔f4+ 40 ♖f3 ♔d3 41 ♖d6 ♔e1+ 42 ♖e2 ♔g2 43 ♖d4 ♖h2 44 ♖f1! (44 ♖f2? ♖h3 is a draw) 44...♖h3 45 ♖d3+ ♖h2 46 ♖d2 ♖h1 47 ♖f2 ♖h2 48 ♖f3 ♖h1 49 ♖d8 ♖h2 50 ♖h8+ ♖g1 51 ♖g8 ♖h1 52 ♖f2 and White wins.

2) 36...♔g2? 37 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 38 ♖f4! (a tricky move, which prevents ...♖g2 due to ♖g4 and ...♖h2 due to ♖h6) 38...♔g2+ 39 ♖e4! ♔e1 (39...♖h2 40 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 41 ♖g4 ♔g2 42 ♖a6 transposes) 40 ♖e3! ♔g2+ 41 ♖e2 ♖h2 42 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 43 ♖g4 ♔g2 44 ♖a6 ♖g1 45 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 46 ♖g3 ♔f5+ 47 ♖g4 ♔e3+ 48 ♖f3 ♔f5 49 ♖a4 and White cuts the knight off and eventually wins it.

Based on these lines, we can now explain the peculiarities of each rook move. After 36 ♖f5 the game Czeglédi-S.Farago, Kecskemet 1991 continued 36...♔d3? (36...♔g2! is a draw because ♖f3 allows a knight fork on h4) 37 ♖f3 ♔e1+ 38 ♖e2 ♔g2 39 ♖g5 ♖h2 40 ♖f3 ♔e1+ 41 ♖f2 ♔d3+ 42 ♖e2 ♔f4+ 43 ♖f3 ♔d3 44 ♖g2+ ♖h1?! (44...♖h3 puts up more of a fight) 45 ♖e2?! (45 ♖d2! ♔e1+ 46 ♖f2 ♔g2 47 ♖d8 wins at once) 45...♖g1 46 ♖e3 ♔b4 47 ♖b3 ♔c6 48 ♖e4 ♖f2 49 ♖b6 ♔d8 50 ♖f5 ♔f7 51 ♖f6 ♔d8 52 ♖e5+ ♖g3 53 ♖d5 1-0.

If, instead, White continues 36 ♖f7, then 36...♔d3! (not 36...♔g2? 37 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 38 ♖f4 ♔g2+ 39 ♖e4, when White wins much as after 36 ♖f6) is a draw because White cannot play ♖f3 due to the fork on e5.

From the practical point of view, the key point to remember is that moving to c2 always draws.

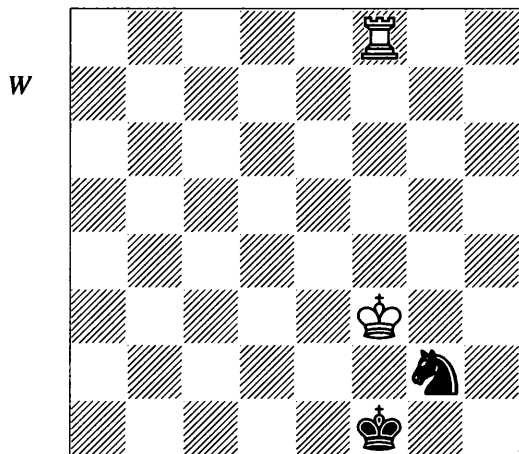
36...♔g2

With the rook on f8, this is an alternative drawing move. 36...♔d3? loses to 37 ♖f3! ♔e1+ 38 ♖e2 ♔g2 39 ♖f2?! (39 ♖e8 is better) 39...♖h1 40 ♖f1+ ♖h2 41 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 42 ♖g4 ♔g2 43 ♖a1 ♔e3+ 44 ♖f4 ♔g2+ 45 ♖f3 ♔h4+ 46 ♖g4 ♔g2 47 ♖a4 ♖g1?! (47...♔e3+ 48 ♖f3 ♔f5 offers more resistance) 48 ♖f3 ♔e1+ 49 ♖e2 ♔g2 50 ♖g4 ♖h2 51 ♖f2 ♖h1 52 ♖g8 1-0 K.Berg-Kuijff, Græsted 1990 (colours reversed; Kuijff won the game). As always, 36...♔c2 is

the safest move because Black can meet 37 ♖f3 by 37...♗f1.

37 ♖f3 ♗f1? (D)

This natural move is a decisive mistake. 37...♗h4+ is the only move to draw, and the reason it draws is that ♖f4, the move which wins with the rook on f6, here allows a fork on g6.



38 ♖g3+?

Returning the favour. 38 ♖f7! is correct, as played two moves hence.

38...♖g1 39 ♖f3 ♗f1? 40 ♖f7!

Kamsky spots the right idea second time around. 40 ♖f6! is just as good.

40...♗e1+ 41 ♖e3+ ♖g1 42 ♖e2 ♗g2 43 ♖h7

43 ♖e7 is slightly quicker.

43...♗f4+ 44 ♖f3

An identical position arose in Romanishin-Hort, Essen 2000 and at this point Black resigned.

44...♗d3 45 ♖h4?!

45 ♖h5 was more accurate; after 45...♗e1+ 46 ♖e2 ♗g2 47 ♖h6 ♗f4+ 48 ♖f3 ♗d3 49 ♖d6 ♗e1+ 50 ♖e2 ♗g2 51 ♖d4 ♖h2 52 ♖f1! ♖h3 53 ♖d3+ ♖h2 54 ♖d2 ♖h1 55 ♖f2 ♖h2 56 ♖f3 ♖h1 57 ♖d8 Black is defenceless.

45...♗e5+ 46 ♖e2?

A serious mistake throwing away the win. 46 ♖e3! is the quickest route to victory; for example, 46...♖g2 47 ♖e4! (the only move to win) 47...♗d7 48 ♖f4 ♖f2 49 ♖c4 ♗b6 50 ♖d4 ♖e2 51 ♖e4 and the knight and king cannot join up again.

46...♖g2! 47 ♖e4 ♗f7?

Black gives away a possible draw for the third time in the ♖ vs ♗ ending. He could have saved the game by 47...♗d7!, when it's hard for White to prevent the knight from returning via f6 and g4; for example, 48 ♖e6 ♖g3 49 ♖e3 ♖g4 or 48 ♖g4+ ♖h3 49 ♖g6 ♖h4.

48 ♖e7!

Now Black cannot move to g5 or h6, so the knight has to go to the queenside.

48...♗d6

48...♗h6 49 ♖g7+ and ♖h7 wins the knight.

49 ♖g7+! ♖h3 50 ♖f3!

A typical winning idea in ♖ vs ♗: White combines threats to trap the knight with an attack on the enemy king.

50...♖h4 51 ♖f4! ♖h5 52 ♖e7

Sufficient, but 52 ♖c7! is quicker; for example, 52...♗e8 53 ♖e7 ♗d6 (or 53...♗f6 54 ♖f5 ♗g8 55 ♖h7+ ♗h6+ 56 ♖f6 and the knight falls) 54 ♖e5+ ♖h4 55 ♖e6 ♗f7 56 ♖f6 and White wins.

52...♗c4 53 ♖e6 ♗d2 54 ♖c6 ♗b3 55 ♖e3 ♖g4 56 ♖c4+ ♖g3 57 ♖c3 ♗a5 58 ♖e4+ ♖f2 59 ♖d5 ♗b7 60 ♖b3 ♗d8 61 ♖b8 1-0

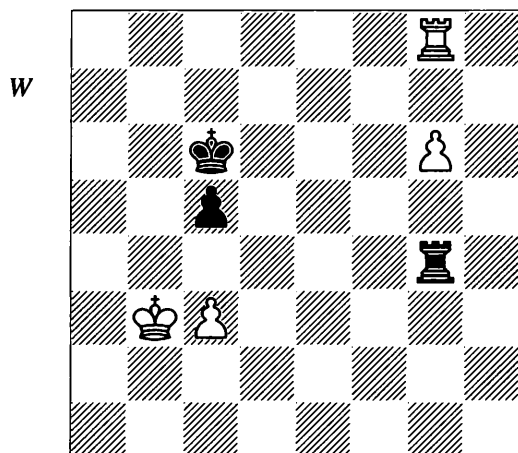
Summary:

- It is less favourable to defend the passed pawn from the side than to have the rook behind the pawn. The reason is that there is no threat to advance the pawn, so even if the pawn is on the seventh rank there is no guarantee of victory.
- The defender should have his rook behind the pawn, as happened twice in the Kamsky-Bacrot example above, first with the b-pawn and later on with the h-pawn.
- Perhaps it doesn't really belong in this section, but in the position with ♖g3, ♖f2 vs ♖g1, ♗e1, any move of the rook along the f-file may be met by ...♗c2. Not knowing this has tripped up more than one grandmaster.

8.9.3 The Attacker's Rook is in Front of the Pawn

This is generally the least favourable case for the attacker. As the pawn advances, the rook's mobility becomes more and more limited and if

the pawn is on the seventh rank, the rook may not be able to move at all. However, there's also good news for the attacker. When the pawn is on the seventh, the defender's rook normally has to stay on the same file as the pawn, and the defender's king must be in a position where a rook check is impossible. All this means that the defender may be tied down as much as the attacker.



Ljubojević – Gligorić

Match (game 9), Belgrade 1979

According to the notes by Milić and Božić in *Informator 27*, this position should be winning for White, but it is a draw.

1 g7

The *Informator* analysis continued 1 c4 ♖g3+ 2 ♕c2 ♖b7? 3 g7 ♕a7 4 ♕d2 ♖b7 5 ♕e2 ♕a7 6 ♖f2 ♖g5 7 ♖f3 ♖b7 8 ♖f4 ♖g1 9 ♕e5 ♖g2 10 ♕d5 ♖g5+ 11 ♕d6 ♕a7 12 ♕c6! and White wins by zugzwang. However, instead of 2...♖b7?, Black can save the game by 2...♕d7! 3 ♕d2 (3 g7 ♕e7 is also drawn) 3...♕e7 4 ♕e2 ♖f6 5 ♖c8 ♖xg6 6 ♖xc5 ♕e7 with an easy draw.

1...♖b7?

Missing his chance. Black could have held the game by 1...c4+! 2 ♖b4 ♖b7 3 ♖b5 ♕a7 4 ♖c6 ♖g6+ 5 ♕c5 ♖g4 with a draw, as with the pawn on c4 White can never put Black in zugzwang.

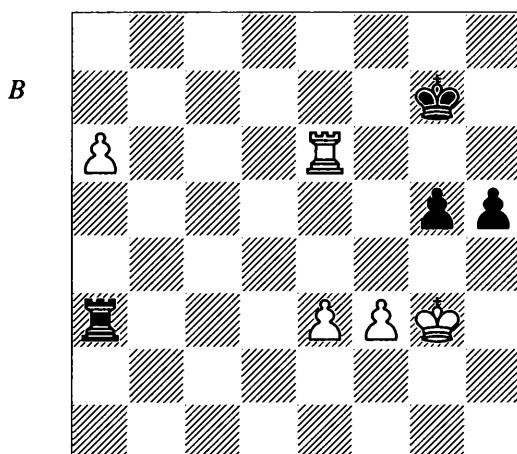
2 c4!

Now everything runs smoothly for White, since he can win as after 2...♖b7? in the first note.

2...♖g2 3 ♕c3 1-0

Black resigned as he cannot prevent the white king from penetrating through the centre to d6 and finally c6.

Although as a general rule the attacker's rook is better placed to the side of the passed pawn than in front of it, there are circumstances in which transferring the rook to the front of the pawn is the only way to make progress and get the pawn moving. Here is an example.



Akopian – Polovodin

St Petersburg 1994

1...♖a4?

Akopian correctly remarks that this move loses, although not for the reasons he gives. 1...♖f7? also loses: 2 ♖h6 g4 (White wins after both 2...♖xe3 3 a7 ♖a3 4 ♖h8 and 2...♕g7 3 ♖xh5 ♕g6 4 ♕g4 ♖a4+ 5 e4) 3 fxg4 hxg4 (3...♖xe3+ 4 ♖f4 ♖a3 5 gxh5 is a win for White as his pawns are too far advanced; for example, 5...♖a5 6 ♕e4 ♕g7 7 ♖d6 ♖xh5 8 ♕d4 ♖f7 9 ♖d5 ♖h1 10 ♖a5 ♖h8 11 a7 ♖a8 12 ♕c5) 4 ♕xg4 ♕g7 (4...♖xe3 5 a7) 5 ♖b6 ♖xe3 6 ♖f5! ♖a3 7 ♖b7+ ♕h6 8 a7 and White's king runs across to the queenside.

The correct defence, given by Akopian, is 1...♕h7, which retains the black rook's attack on the e3-pawn, and thereby prevents White from switching his rook to e7 and then a7. After 2 f4 (2 ♖e7+ ♕g6 3 a7 ♖a2 doesn't help White) 2...h4+! 3 ♕g4 gxf4 4 ♕xf4 (4 exf4 h3 leads to a draw) 4...h3 5 ♕g3 ♕g7 6 ♕xh3 ♖f7 (White must abandon a pawn) 7 ♖h6 ♖xe3+ 8 ♕g4

♖a3 9 ♔f5 ♖a5+ 10 ♔e4 ♔g7 11 ♖b6 ♔f7 12 ♔d4 ♔e7 13 ♔c4 ♔d7 14 ♔b4 ♖a1 it's an easy draw for Black.

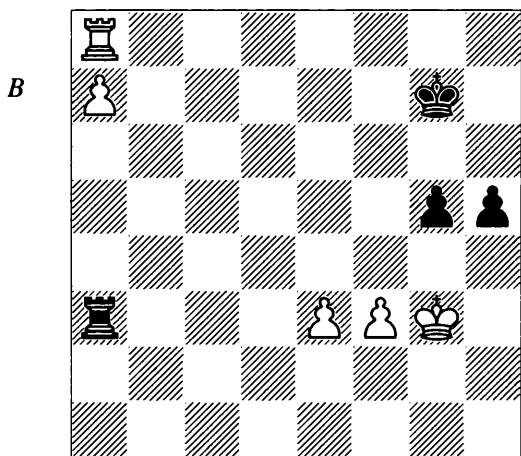
2 ♖e7+!

For the moment, e3 is not under fire, and this allows White to improve his rook's position. Normally it is undesirable to have your rook in front of the pawn, but this is an exception because once White has pushed his pawn to a7, Black's king will be confined to the g7- and h7-squares, which will make it hard to combat a white pawn advancing on the e- or f-file. Although this position is a win, White needs to find a study-like idea, which Akopian missed in his notes.

2...♔f6 3 ♖a7 ♖a3 4 ♖a8 ♔g7

It's too late to take the pawn since 4...♖xe3 5 a7 is an immediate win for White, so Black just retreats his king into the safe zone.

5 a7 (D)



5...♔h7?!

Just waiting allows White a fairly straightforward win by pushing his e-pawn. 5...g4 is a much tougher defence, when a waiting move would allow White to win easily, but there is no such move and so he has to resort to elaborate measures in order to win:

1) 6 fxg4? ♖xe3+ 7 ♔f4 ♖a3 is an immediate draw; having a passed pawn on the g- or h-file doesn't help White, as such a pawn can never force the black king out of the safe zone.

2) 6 f4? ♖xe3+ 7 ♔f2 ♖a3 8 f5 h4 9 f6+ was given as a win by Akopian, but this position is a draw if Black continues 9...♔f7 10 ♖h8 g3+ 11

♔g2 (11 ♔e2 h3 12 ♖xh3 ♔xf6 is an easy draw) 11...♖a2+ 12 ♔h3 ♖h2+ 13 ♔g4 g2 14 ♔f5 (14 ♖f8+ ♔g6 15 ♖g8+ ♔xf6 16 ♔h5 g1 ♖17 ♖xg1 ♖a2 is another draw) 14...g1 ♖15 ♖f8+ ♔xf8 16 a8 ♖+ ♔f7 17 ♖b7+ ♔g8 and White has no more than perpetual check.

3) 6 ♔f4? ♖a4+ 7 e4 ♖a3 8 fxg4 h4 9 ♖c8 ♖xa7 and White cannot win; for example, 10 ♖c5 (10 ♖c3 ♔g6) 10...♖a8 (10...♖a1 11 ♖h5 ♖h1 also draws) 11 ♖h5 ♔g6 12 ♖xh4 ♖f8+ 13 ♔e3 (13 ♔g3 ♖e8) 13...♔g5 (this position provides yet another example of a surprising ♖+2♖ vs ♖ draw) 14 ♖h7 ♖a8! (but not 14...♔xg4? 15 ♖g7+ ♔h5 16 e5 and White wins) 15 ♖g7+ ♔f6 16 ♖d7 ♔g5! 17 e5 ♔xg4! 18 ♔e4 ♖a4+ 19 ♖d4 ♖a1 and Black holds on.

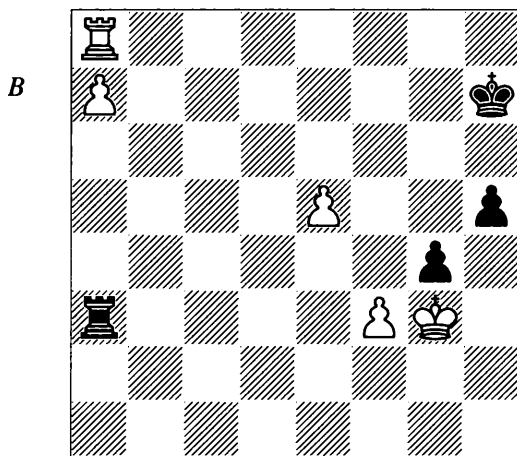
4) 6 ♔h4!! (this incredible idea is the only way for White to win) 6...gxf3 7 ♔g3! (an amazing switchback; now Black's f-pawn falls and White wins by pushing his e-pawn) 7...h4+ 8 ♔xf3 h3 9 ♔f2! ♖a2+ 10 ♔g1 and the advance of the e-pawn will be decisive.

The idea of 6 ♔h4 and 7 ♔g3 looks simple once you have seen it, but its counter-intuitive nature makes it hard to spot.

6 e4!

6 f4? h4+! (6...gxf4+? loses to 7 ♔xf4 h4 8 ♔f3! h3 9 ♔f2! as in the previous note) 7 ♔f3 gxf4 8 ♔xf4 h3 9 ♔f3 ♖a2! draws as White has to return with his rook to stop the h-pawn.

6...g4 7 e5 (D)



7...gxf3

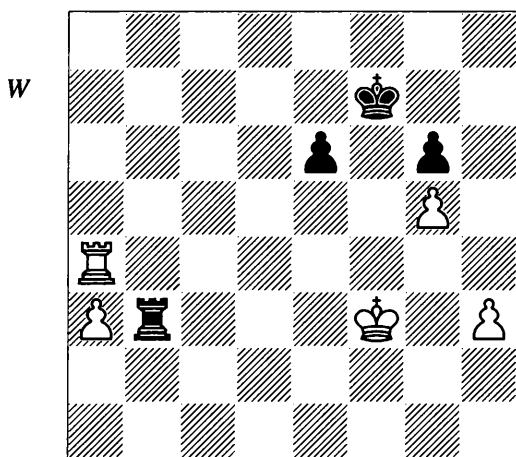
After 7...♖xf3+ 8 ♔g2 ♖a3 9 e6 Black's pawns are much too slow.

8 e6 h4+ 9 ♔f2 ♖a2+ 10 ♔xf3 h3 11 e7 h2
12 ♖h8+! ♔xh8 13 e8♖+ ♔g7 14 ♖e5+ ♔g6
15 ♖xh2 ♖xh2 16 a8♖ ♖h5

Black plays on to the bitter end.

17 ♖e8+ ♔g5 18 ♔g3 ♖h7 19 ♖e5+ ♔g6
20 ♔g4 ♖f7 21 ♖e6+ ♔g7 22 ♔g5 ♔f8 23
♖e5 ♖e7 24 ♖h8+ ♔f7 25 ♔f5 ♖d7 26 ♖h7+
♔e8 27 ♖g8+ ♔e7 28 ♔e5 ♖d1 29 ♖g5+ ♔f8
30 ♖f4+ ♔e7 31 ♖h4+ ♔f8 32 ♔e6 1-0

When the passed pawn is further back, the defender has more possibilities.



M. Kopylov – H. Grünberg
Germany tt 2003/4

An interesting ending in which it is hard to judge the correct result. White has an extra outside passed pawn, but his rook is not very well placed in front of the pawn, while Black's rook is quite active. On the other hand, Black's king position is awkward, since White can easily drive it onto the back rank. White can win according to Kopylov's notes in *Informator* 89, but as we shall see this is incorrect. However, the drawing idea is quite subtle.

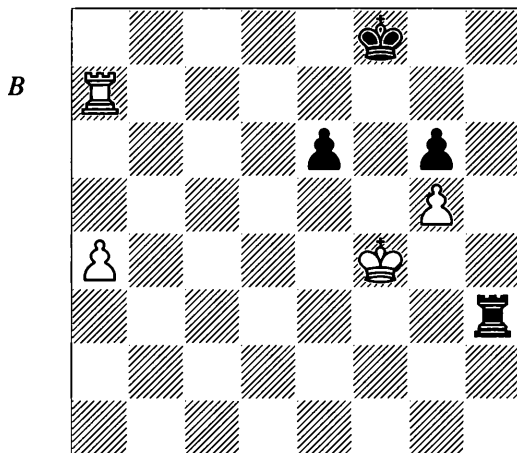
1 ♔g4?!

After this, Black is able to advance his e-pawn, not only boxing in the white king but also offering the chance of some counterplay. The plan of offering the h-pawn to activate the white king is far more critical: 1 ♔f4 ♖xh3 2 ♖a7+ and now:

1) 2...♔e8? puts Black in difficulties and after 3 ♔e5 ♖f3 4 ♔xe6 ♔d8 (4...♔f8 5 ♖a5 enables White to consolidate the extra pawn and

bring his king across to the queenside to support the a-pawn) 5 ♖g7 ♖xa3 6 ♖xg6 ♖a6+ 7 ♔f7 ♖a7+ 8 ♔f8 ♖a5 9 ♖g8 ♔d7 10 g6 ♔e6 11 ♔g7 ♖a7+ 12 ♔h8 ♖a1 13 ♖f8 White will reach the Lucena position.

2) 2...♔f8! 3 a4 (D).



Kopylov believed this to be winning for White, but Black actually has two drawing moves:

2a) Not 3...♖h1?, and now:

2a1) Kopylov's 4 a5? throws the win away:

2a11) 4...♖f1+? is Kopylov's move, but this is a further mistake after which White really does win: 5 ♔e5 ♖f5+ 6 ♔d6! (but not the move Kopylov gave, 6 ♔xe6?, when Black draws by 6...♖xg5 7 ♔f6 ♖f5+ 8 ♔xg6 ♖d5!, transposing to line 2c below) 6...♖xg5 7 ♔c6 ♖g1 8 ♖b7! ♖c1+ 9 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 10 ♔a7 ♖a1 11 a6 e5 12 ♔b6 ♖b1+ 13 ♔c5 ♖a1 14 a7 and Black is doomed by his bad king position.

2a12) 4...♖e1! 5 a6 (there is nothing better as the white king is trapped in a box) 5...e5+ 6 ♔f3 ♖a1 7 ♔e4 ♖a5 and White cannot make progress.

2a2) 4 ♔e5! genuinely wins for White; after 4...♖f1 5 a5 ♖f5+ 6 ♔d6! White wins as in line 2a11 above, but without allowing Black the drawing opportunity of line 2a12.

2b) 3...e5+! (a surprising but effective move, which draws by liquidating the harmful e-pawn) 4 ♔xe5 ♖f3 5 a5 ♖f5+ and now:

2b1) 6 ♔d6 ♖xg5 7 ♔c6 reaches the same position as in line 2a11, but without Black's e6-pawn; this change helps Black as the sixth

rank is now free for rook checks: 7...♖f5! 8 a6 ♜f6+ 9 ♖b7 ♜f7+ 10 ♖b8 ♜f6! with a Vančura-type draw; for example, 11 ♜a8 ♜f7 12 ♖c8 g5 13 ♜b8 g4 14 ♜b4 ♜a7.

2b2) 6 ♖e6 ♜xg5 7 ♖f6 ♜f5+ 8 ♖xg6 ♜d5 transposes to line 2c.

2c) 3...♜h5! 4 a5 e5+ 5 ♖xe5 (5 ♖g4 ♜h1 followed by ...♜a1 is also a draw) 5...♜xg5+ 6 ♖f6 ♜f5+ 7 ♖xg6 ♜d5! (the sole move to draw; Kopylov only gave 7...♜b5?, which loses after 8 ♜a8+ ♖e7 9 a6 ♜b6+ 10 ♖f5 ♜b5+ 11 ♖e4 ♜b4+ 12 ♖d5 ♜b5+ 13 ♖c6) 8 ♜a8+ (8 a6 ♜d6+ 9 ♖f5 ♖g8 10 ♖e5 ♜g6 is a Vančura draw) 8...♖e7 9 a6 ♜d7! 10 a7 ♖d6 (this is why Black's rook has to be on the d-file: it must be close enough to the black king to allow the king to hide behind the rook) 11 ♖f6 ♖d5! 12 ♖f5 ♜f7+ 13 ♖g6 ♜d7 14 ♖f6 ♖d6 and White cannot make progress.

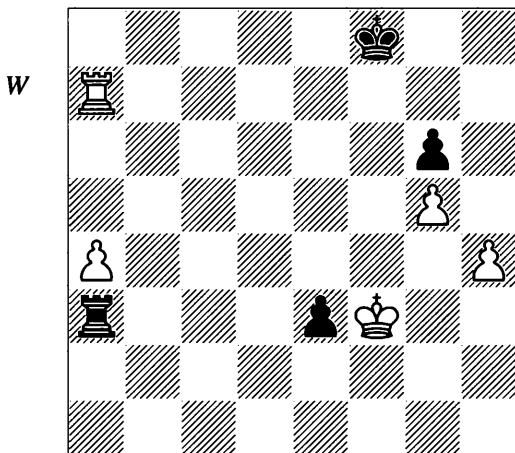
1...e5!

Now there is no danger of White's king penetrating via f4 and e5, and Black reaches the draw without undue problems.

2 ♜a7+ ♖f8

Not 2...♖e6? 3 ♜g7 ♜xa3 4 ♜xg6+ ♖d5 5 ♜g8 and the two connected passed pawns give White a decisive advantage.

3 h4 e4! 4 ♜a6 ♖g7 5 ♜a7+ ♖f8 6 a4 e3 7 ♖f3 ♜a3 (D)



Now Black can just wait, since he always has a tempo with his king and so cannot be forced into zugzwang.

8 a5 ♖g8 9 ♜d7

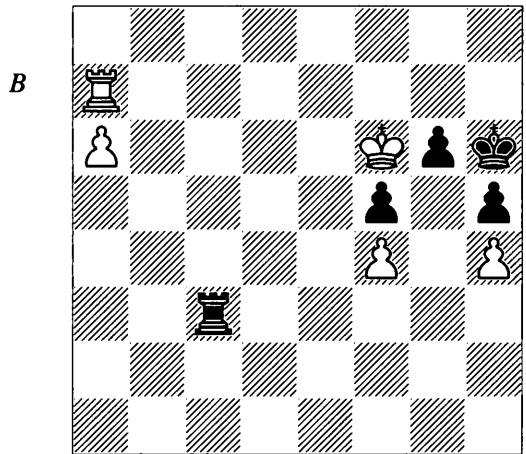
9 ♖e2 ♖f8 10 a6 ♖g8 doesn't help White.

9...♜xa5 10 ♖xe3

The exchange of the two passed pawns has left Black with an easy draw.

10...♜a4 11 ♜d4 ♜a5 12 ♖e4 ♖f7 13 ♜d5 ♜a4+ 14 ♖e5 ♜xh4 15 ♜d7+ ♖g8 16 ♖f6 ♜a4 1/2-1/2

The following position is more complicated, and contains an interesting mixture of tactical elements.



Gheorghiu – Radulov
Montilla 1974

White's advantage is clearly substantial: he has a dangerous advanced passed pawn, his king is actively placed and Black's majority is totally blocked. However, White's rook is passively placed in front of the pawn and it is not clear that his advantage will be enough to win. Black faces an immediate decision: should he defend with his rook behind the a-pawn or to the side of it?

1...♜c6+

In *Informator 19*, Radulov gave this a question mark and offered analysis indicating that 1...♜a3 would have drawn. In my view, both moves lose and it is a matter of opinion which causes White the greater practical problems. After 1...♜a3 White should continue with 2 ♖f7! (Radulov only gave the weaker line 2 ♜a8? ♖h7 3 ♖e5 ♜a4 4 ♖d6 ♜xf4 5 ♜e8 ♜a4 6 ♜e7+ ♖h6! 7 a7 g5, which does lead to a draw) 2...♖h7 (this is forced, as White threatened ♖g8 and mate on h7) 3 ♖e8+ ♖g8 4 ♖d7 (White's king manoeuvre has allowed him to

transfer his king nearer the pawn with gain of time; moreover, Black's king is now badly placed on the back rank and solving this problem costs Black further tempi) 4...♔f7 5 ♖c6+ ♜f6 6 ♖a8 ♖a2 (6...♖a4 7 a7 ♖g7 8 ♜b6 is also a win for White) 7 ♜b7 ♖b2+ 8 ♖a7 ♖b4 (8...♖f2 9 ♖b8 ♖xf4 transposes) 9 ♖b8 ♖xf4 10 ♖b6+ ♜e5 (retreating to the second rank puts up less of a fight; after 10...♔f7, for example, White wins by 11 ♜b7 ♖a4 12 a7 ♖xa7+ 13 ♜xa7 ♖g7 and Black has no chance with his king cut off) 11 ♖b5+ ♜e6 12 ♜b7 ♖a4 13 a7 (threatening 14 ♖b6+ followed by 15 ♖a6) 13...♔f7 14 ♖b6 ♖xa7+ 15 ♜xa7 with an easy win. It's a long line, but it's almost all forced.

2 ♔f7

White maintains the win with this move, but it is simpler to play 2 ♜e5!, and now:

1) 2...♖b6 3 ♔d5 ♖b4 (or else ♜c5 followed by ♜b5 wins) 4 ♖c7 ♖xf4 5 ♖c4! ♖f1 6 ♖a4 ♖d1+ 7 ♜c6 ♖d8 8 a7 g5 (8...♖a8 9 ♜b7 ♖h8 10 a8♙ ♖xa8 11 ♖xa8 is even worse) 9 a8♙ ♖xa8 10 hxg5+ ♜xg5 11 ♖xa8 h4 12 ♔d5 h3 13 ♖h8 ♜g4 14 ♔d4 ♜g3 15 ♜e3 f4+ 16 ♜e2 and White makes it back just in time, with an easy win.

2) 2...♖c5+ 3 ♜e6 (threatening to free the rook by ♖d7) 3...g5 (the only chance, because 3...♖a5 4 ♔f7! exploits the bad position of Black's rook on a5 to win with 4...♔h7 5 ♔f6+ ♜h6 6 ♖a8 ♜h7 7 ♜g5 followed by ♖a7+) and the extra pawn is enough to win after 4 hxg5+ ♜g6 5 ♖a8 ♜g7 6 ♖b8 ♖a5 7 ♖b6 h4 8 a7 h3 (8...♖xa7 9 ♜xf5 is simple) 9 ♖b3 ♜g6 10 ♖xh3 ♖a6+ 11 ♜e5 ♖a5+ 12 ♔d6 ♖a6+ 13 ♜c5 ♖xa7 14 ♖h6+ ♜g7 15 ♔d5 ♖a4 16 ♜e5 ♖a5+ 17 ♜e6 followed by ♖f6 and ♖xf5, with two extra pawns.

2...♔h7

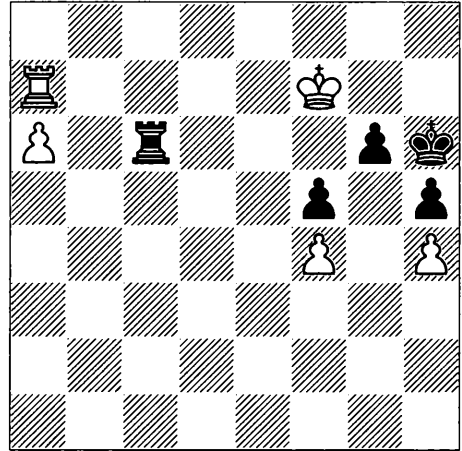
2...♖c4 loses at once to 3 ♖d7 ♖xf4 (3...♖a4 4 ♜g8) 4 a7 ♖a4 5 ♜g8 forcing mate.

3 ♔f8+ ♜h6

The alternative is 3...♔h8 4 ♜e8 ♖c4 but this loses to 5 ♜e7 ♖c6 6 ♔d7 ♖b6 7 ♜c7 ♖b4 8 ♖b7 ♖xf4 9 a7 ♖a4 10 ♖b8+ ♜g7 11 a8♙ ♖xa8 12 ♖xa8 and Black's pawns are far too slow.

4 ♜g8 ♖c8+ 5 ♔f7 ♖c6 (D)

W



White has spent some time manoeuvring with his king without achieving anything. As we saw in the earlier notes, the simple plan of playing the king to the queenside should win, since, provided it is handled accurately, Black's kingside pawns are too slow. White now decides to try his luck with the rook on a8.

6 ♖a8

6 ♜e7 ♖b6 7 ♔d7 is still the correct plan, although the win is slightly more complex than in the note to White's second move because his king is worse placed on the seventh rank than on the fifth rank. The reason is that on the fifth rank the king can prevent Black's rook from returning to the queenside after taking the pawn on f4, but on the seventh rank this is not possible. The main line runs 7...♖b4 8 ♖c7 ♖xf4 9 a7 ♖a4 10 ♜c6 f4 11 ♜b7 ♖b4+ 12 ♜c8 ♖a4 13 ♜b8 g5 14 ♖c6+ ♜g7 15 hxg5 ♖b4+ 16 ♜c8 ♖a4 17 ♜b7 and White wins.

6...♔h7 7 ♜e8 g5!?

White isn't threatening much, and Black could have simply continued his waiting tactics by 7...♖d6, but this runs the risk that White might eventually hit upon the winning plan of moving his king to the queenside. Radulov therefore decides to stake everything on this move, which sacrifices a pawn to create a passed pawn of his own. Objectively speaking, it should lose, but there is a great deal to be said for the move's practical merits. Instead of quiet manoeuvring, White must suddenly calculate some sharp variations. It is noteworthy that this move only comes into consideration because of White's arcane manoeuvres, which

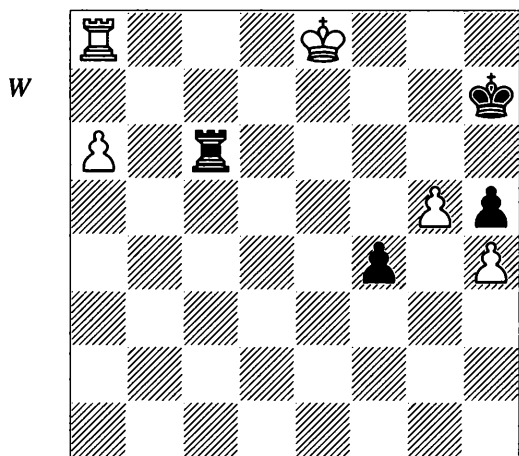
have left his king and rook stranded on the eighth rank.

8 fxg5?

The wrong capture. White could have won by 8 hxg5 ♖g7 (8...h4 9 ♖f7 h3 10 a7 ♖c7+ 11 ♖f6 ♖c6+ 12 ♖xf5 ♖a6 13 ♖e8 ♖a5+ 14 ♖e5 ♖xa7 15 ♖e3 and White wins) 9 ♖d7 ♖c4 (9...♖c1 10 ♖e6! h4 11 ♖d8! ♖a1 12 ♖xf5 ♖xa6 13 ♖g4 and 9...♖b6 10 ♖c7 ♖b1 11 ♖b8 ♖a1 12 ♖b7 ♖b1+ 13 ♖a7 ♖f1 14 ♖b4 h4 15 ♖b8 h3 16 a7 h2 17 a8 ♖h1 ♖ 18 ♖b7+ ♖g6 19 ♖b6+ both win for White) 10 ♖e8 ♖a4 11 ♖e7+ ♖f8 12 ♖e6 h4 13 ♖h6 ♖g7 14 ♖c7 h3 15 ♖b7 ♖b4+ 16 ♖c6 ♖xf4 17 ♖xh3 ♖a4 18 ♖b6 ♖a1 19 ♖h4! ♖g6 20 a7 ♖xg5 21 ♖h8 f4 22 a8 ♖ ♖xa8 23 ♖xa8 ♖f5 24 ♖e8 f3 25 ♖c5 ♖f4 26 ♖d4 f2 27 ♖f8+ ♖g3 28 ♖e3 and the pawn falls.

8...f4? (D)

Missing a draw by 8...♖g7! 9 ♖a7+ (9 ♖d7 ♖c1 is similar) 9...♖g6 10 ♖d7 ♖c1 11 ♖c7 ♖a1 12 a7 f4 13 ♖c8 f3 14 ♖c6+ ♖g7 15 ♖b7 f2 16 ♖f6 ♖b1+ 17 ♖c8 ♖a1 and White cannot make progress.



9 ♖d7?

This throws the win away, which White could have secured by the beautiful continuation 9 ♖f7! (9 a7? ♖c7! is also a draw), and now:

1) Radulov gave 9...f3 but this allows 10 g6+! ♖xg6 11 ♖h8+ ♖xh8 12 ♖xg6 f2 13 a7 f1 ♖ 14 a8 ♖+ and mate next move. This is the kind of tactical idea that is easy to overlook in a game and bears out the point that endgame tactics are far more common than is usually

supposed; it's just that they are often overlooked!

2) 9...♖c7+ 10 ♖e6! ♖g7 (10...♖g7 loses beautifully after 11 ♖f8 ♖a7 12 ♖f7+ ♖xf7 13 ♖xf7 f3 14 g6+ ♖h6 15 g7 f2 16 g8 ♖+! ♖h7 17 ♖f6+ ♖h6 18 a7 f1 ♖ 19 a8 ♖ and Black cannot make use of his stalemated king because he is unable to give up his queen: 19...♖c4+ 20 ♖d5 ♖c7+ 21 ♖d7 ♖c4+ 22 ♖e6 and the checks run out since 22...♖c7+ loses to 23 ♖d7+) 11 ♖b8! (11 a7? ♖c6+ 12 ♖f5 ♖a6 13 ♖xf4 ♖a4+ 14 ♖e5 ♖a1 is only a draw) 11...f3 12 ♖b7! ♖xb7 13 axb7 f2 14 b8 ♖ f1 ♖ (at first it isn't obvious that this is a win, but White's active pieces carry the day) 15 ♖c7+ ♖g6 16 ♖d6! ♖g7 17 ♖d7+ ♖g6 18 ♖e8+ ♖g7 19 ♖e7+ ♖g8 20 ♖e5! (the key move: White threatens to win with ♖e6+ followed by the exchange of queens, and any checks by Black only chase the white king towards the safety of h6) 20...♖c1 21 ♖f6 ♖b2+ 22 ♖g6 ♖b6+ 23 ♖xh5 and although the ending of ♖+g♗+h♗ vs ♖ is in general a draw (Volume 1, Section 7.5), White can win if his pieces initially occupy good positions. That is the case here and the tablebase gives it as mate in 22 more moves.

9...♖c1!

Suddenly White cannot do more than to swap the a- and f-pawns, after which Black only needs to be moderately careful to secure the draw.

10 ♖f8 ♖a1 11 ♖xf4 ♖xa6 12 ♖f6 ♖a4 13 ♖h6+

13 ♖e7 ♖g7! draws.

13...♖g7 14 ♖xh5 ♖a6!

An amusing position: the white rook is permanently trapped.

15 ♖e7 ♖b6 1/2-1/2

Summary:

- When a rook is supporting a passed pawn, the worst position for the rook is usually to be in front of the pawn. It is true that the rook can move to the eighth rank and then the pawn can advance behind it, but with each step forward, the rook's activity becomes more and more limited until with the pawn on the seventh rank, the rook can be practically stalemated.
- It's not all bad news, however. With a rook on a8 and pawn on a7, for example, if White

can safely check with his rook then he will promote his pawn. Thus Black often has to keep his king in the safe zone of g7 and h7. If White can create a second passed pawn on, for example, the e- or f-file then advancing this pawn may dislodge the enemy king from the safe zone and win. However, a second passed pawn on the g- or h-file doesn't help as Black's king can blockade the pawn while remaining in the safe zone.

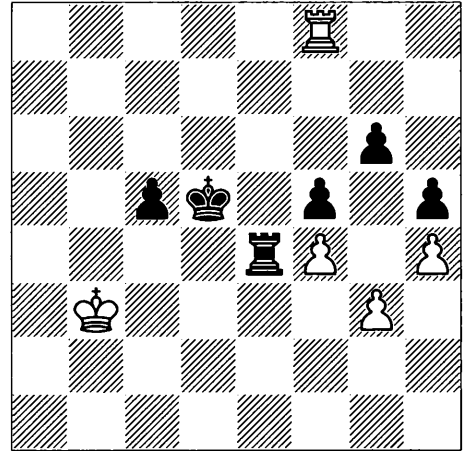
- If the attacker can also support the passed pawn with his king then he may be able to free his rook from its bad position in front of the pawn.
- If White has a rook on a8 and a passed a-pawn, it may be better to push the pawn only as far as a6. Then if the white king moves over to support the a-pawn and Black checks from his eighth rank, the king can hide from the checks on a7.
- In a few cases, the rook is actually better placed in front of the pawn than to the side of it (for example, if the attacker can make a second passed pawn as mentioned above). Then a counter-intuitive 'rook switch' to place the rook in front of the pawn may actually be the correct plan.

8.9.4 Other Cases

Now we consider situations in which the outside passed pawn is not being directly defended by the rook. This usually means that it is the king which is defending the pawn, while the rook performs other duties. Since the attacker's king is supporting the passed pawn, it cannot also be defending the mass of pawns on the other side of the board, so here the defender has more chances of counterplay by attacking the enemy pawns with his rook.

In the following diagram, Black is already a pawn up, and may even win a second pawn thanks to the check on e3, but White has drawing chances because he can activate his pieces while Black is grabbing the g3-pawn. It turns out that if White finds the best defence, he can draw by reaching a position two pawns down in which his active pieces can keep Black's king cut off from his remaining forces.

W



Krznisnik – Ivković

Yugoslav Ch, Cateske Toplice 1968

1 ♖d8+

Necessary to prevent Black's king from advancing through the centre.

1...♗e6

If 1...♗c6, then 2 ♖a8 ♖e3+ 3 ♗c4 ♖xc3 4 ♖a6+ ♗d7 5 ♗xc5 draws comfortably.

2 ♖a8?

The correct defence was pointed out by Karsten Müller: 2 ♗c2! ♖e2+ (2...♗e7 3 ♖d3 keeps the black king cut off and draws easily, so playing to win the g3-pawn is Black's best chance) 3 ♗d3 ♖g2 4 ♖e8+! (White must drive Black's king away from the kingside) 4...♗d5 (Black has no choice, as 4...♗f7 5 ♖e3 ♖a2 6 ♗c4 is a draw) 5 ♖d8+ (here 5 ♖e3? fails to 5...♖a2) 5...♗c6 6 ♗c4! (6 ♖c8+? ♗d7 7 ♖xc5 ♖xc3+ 8 ♗d4 ♖g4 9 ♗e5 ♖xh4 should win in the end) 6...♖xc3 7 ♖a8 (a remarkable position; even though Black is two pawns up and it is his turn to move, he cannot win) 7...♖g4 8 ♖a6+ ♗b7 (8...♗d7 9 ♗xc5 is also drawn) 9 ♖f6 ♖xf4+ 10 ♗xc5 ♖g4 11 ♗d5 (now White will draw provided he can prevent Black's king from assisting his other forces) 11...♗c7 12 ♗e5 ♗d7 13 ♖a6 ♗e7 (or 13...f4 14 ♖f6) 14 ♖a7+ ♗f8 15 ♗f6 ♗e8 16 ♖a6 and Black cannot make progress.

2...♗f6

The direct 2...♖e3+! 3 ♗c4 ♖xc3 is simpler; after 4 ♖a6+ ♗f7 5 ♗d5 (this draws according to Marić in *Informator* 5, but I don't agree) 5...♖e3! (5...♖g4? 6 ♖a7+ ♗f6 7 ♖a6+ ♗g7 8 ♖a7+ ♗h6 9 ♗e5 gives White enough counterplay to draw; for example, 9...♖xh4 10 ♗f6

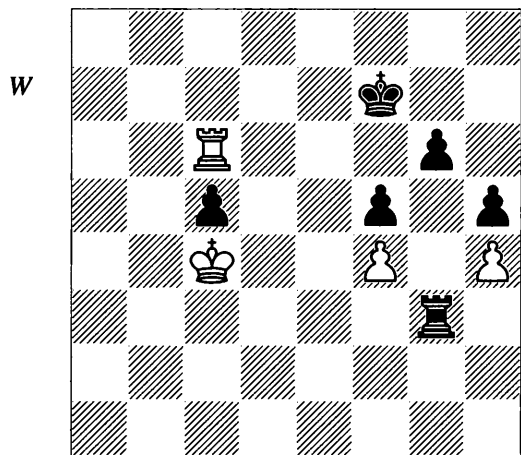
♖xf4 11 ♖a8 ♔h7 12 ♖a7+ and Black's four extra pawns are not enough to win) 6 ♖a7+ ♔f6 7 ♖a6+ ♔g7 8 ♖a7+ ♔h6 9 ♖a4 ♖e2! (Marić only gave 9...♖e4? 10 ♖c4) White, perhaps surprisingly, is in zugzwang. The lines are:

1) 10 ♖c4 ♖h2 11 ♔e5 ♖xh4 12 ♔f6 ♖h3 and the white rook cannot move to the eighth rank due to the blocking black pawn.

2) After 10 ♖a8 ♖e4 or 10 ♔d6 ♖e4 Black picks up the f-pawn.

3) 10 ♔xc5 (now the king is one square further away) 10...♖h2 11 ♔d5 ♖xh4 12 ♔e5 ♖h3 13 ♖a8 h4 14 ♔f6 ♔h5 and Black's king escapes, after which the h-pawn decides.

3 ♖c8 ♖e3+ 4 ♔c4 ♖xg3 5 ♖c6+ ♔f7 (D)



6 ♖c7+

Marić considered this to be a mistake and believed that 6 ♔d5 draws. However, after 6...♖d3+! (Marić only considered 6...♖g4? 7 ♔e5 ♖xh4 8 ♖xc5 ♖h1 9 ♖c7+ ♔e8 10 ♖g7, which is really a draw) 7 ♔e5 ♖e3+ 8 ♔d5 ♖e4 9 ♖c7+ ♔f6 10 ♖c6+ ♔g7 11 ♖c7+ ♔h6 12 ♖c8 ♖xf4 13 ♔e5 ♖b4 Black wins; for example, 14 ♔f6 ♖b6+ 15 ♔f7 ♔h7 16 ♖xc5 f4 17 ♖c3 ♖b5 followed by ...♖f5+.

The move played offers better drawing prospects as Black can only win by accurate play.

6...♔f6?!

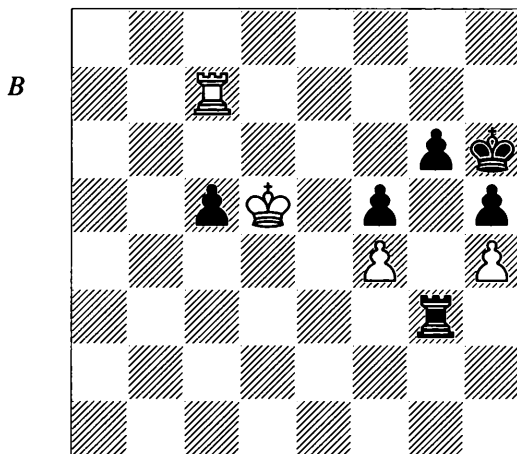
Heading the wrong way. 6...♔e8! is correct: 7 ♔d5 (7 ♖xc5 ♖f3 8 ♔d5 ♖xf4 9 ♔e6 ♔d8 10 ♔f6 ♖g4 11 ♖c2 ♔d7 12 ♖d2+ ♔c6 is similar) 7...♖g4 8 ♔e5 (8 ♔e6 ♔d8 9 ♖xc5 ♖xh4 is no better, as White must defend the f4-pawn in any case) 8...♖xh4 9 ♖xc5 ♔d7 10 ♖a5 (White

cannot keep the black king imprisoned since after 10 ♖c1 ♖g4 11 ♖c2 h4 Black is already threatening ...h3) 10...♖g4 11 ♖a1 ♔c6 12 ♖c1+ ♔b5 13 ♖c2 (Black also wins after 13 ♖c8 h4 14 ♖c7 h3 15 ♖h7 ♖g3 16 ♔d5 ♔b4 17 ♔d4 ♔b3 followed by ...♔c2-d2) 13...h4 14 ♖h2 ♔c4 15 ♖h3 (now Black must return to this position with White to play, which he achieves by triangulating with his king) 15...♔b4 16 ♔f6 ♔c5 17 ♔e5 ♔c4 (White must give way) 18 ♖h1 ♔d3 and the king moves across to support the h-pawn.

7 ♖c6+ ♔g7 8 ♖c7+ ♔h6?

This is the point of Black's play, but it turns out that his king is so badly placed on h6 that White can draw despite being two pawns down. It was not too late to play the king back to e8 by 8...♔f6 9 ♖c6+ ♔e7, etc.

9 ♔d5! (D)



White does not waste time taking the pawn. The threat of playing the king to f6 is so strong that Black has to bring his rook back.

9...♖e3

After 9...♖g4 10 ♔e5 ♖xh4 11 ♔f6 followed by ♖c8, White draws at once.

10 ♖xc5

Now that there is no danger of losing further kingside pawns, White can safely take on c5.

10...♖e7

10...♖e4 is met by 11 ♖c4.

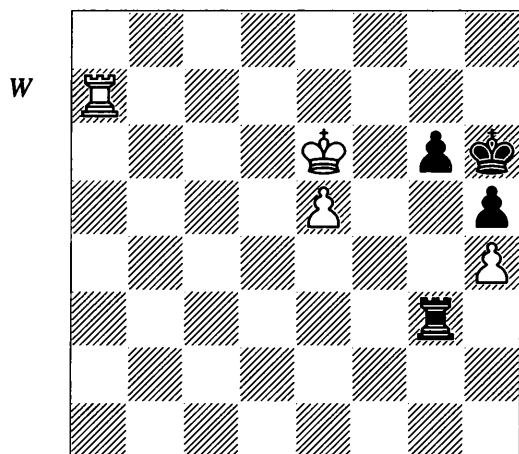
11 ♖c6 ♔g7

By playing his rook back to e7, Black has managed to extract his king from h6, but now he is only one pawn up and has no real winning chances in view of White's piece activity.

12 ♖c4 ♔f7 13 ♖a4 ♖b7 14 ♖c4 ♖a7 15 ♖c5 ♖a6 16 ♖c7+ ♔f6 17 ♖c6+! ♖xc6 18 ♔xc6 1/2-1/2

18...♔e6 19 ♔c5 ♔e7 20 ♔d5 ♔d7 21 ♔e5 ♔e7 22 ♔d5 is a clear draw.

In the following position White has a distinct advantage thanks to his passed e-pawn supported by the king, and Black's drawing chances lie with taking White's last kingside pawn and then giving up the rook for the e-pawn.



Radev – Skrobek
Pamporovo 1981

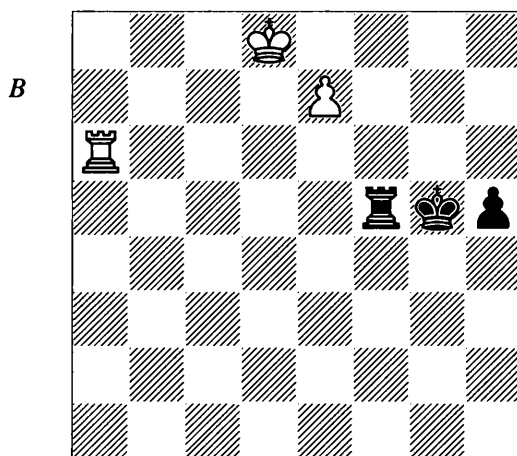
1 ♔f7

The most dangerous move, not only freeing the e-pawn but also threatening mate in two by 2 ♔g8. Analysis by Minev in *Informator 31* claimed that Black now has only one drawing move. This is true, but it's not the one Minev gave!

1...♖g4?

The move played in the game is actually a losing mistake. Black cannot play 1...♖f3+?? due to 2 ♔g8 with a quick mate, but the drawing continuation is 1...g5!. The critical position arises after 2 ♖a6+ ♔h7 3 hxg5 ♖xg5 (3...♖f3+? loses to 4 ♖f6) 4 e6 ♖f5+! (the only move as 4...♖g7+? 5 ♔f6 ♖g6+ 6 ♔f5 ♔h6 7 e7 ♖xa6 8 e8♖ is an easy win; for example, 8...♖a5+ 9 ♔f6 ♖a6+ 10 ♔f7 ♖a7+ 11 ♔f8 ♖h7 12 ♖e6+ ♔g5 13 ♔g8 ♖h6 14 ♖e5+ and Black loses his rook after the next check) 5 ♔e8 ♔g6 (not 5...h4?, since after 6 e7 h3 7 ♖a3 ♖h5 8 ♔f7 h2 9 e8♖ ♖f5+ 10 ♔e6 h1♖ 11 ♖a7+

♔h6 12 ♖h8+ White wins the queen) 6 e7+ ♔g5 7 ♔d8 (D) (7 ♔d7 ♖f7 8 ♔e6 ♖xe7+ 9 ♔xe7 h4 is also drawn).



Now:

1) 7...♖b5? 8 ♔c7! ♖e5 9 ♖a5 ♖xa5 10 e8♖ is a winning position of queen vs rook and pawn, although the win is by no means easy.

2) 7...♖d5+? 8 ♔c7 ♖e5 (8...♖c5+ 9 ♔d7! ♖e5 10 ♖e6 and White wins at once) 9 ♖a5! is similar – a win but not an easy one.

3) 7...♖e5! was the move Minev overlooked. With the king on d8, White cannot use the ♖a5 trick, so he has nothing better than 8 e8♖ ♖xe8+ 9 ♔xe8 h4 10 ♔f7 h3 and Black draws.

2 e6?

After this it's a draw, and Black plays accurately from here on. White could have won by 2 ♖a6! (threatening ♖f6 followed by e6) 2...♔h7 (2...♖f4+ 3 ♖f6 and White wins at once, while after 2...♖xh4 3 ♖xg6+ ♔h7 4 e6 ♖e4 5 ♖f6 h4 6 e7 h3 7 ♖f3 Black just loses his pawn) 3 ♖f6 ♖xh4 and now:

1) Minev only considered 4 ♖xg6?, which allows Black to draw by 4...♖a4! (not 4...♖g4? 5 ♖xg4 hxg4 6 e6 g3 7 e7 g2 8 e8♖ g1♖ 9 ♖e4+! followed by mate, nor 4...♖e4?, which loses to 5 e6 h4 6 ♖f6 h3 7 ♖f3) 5 e6 ♖a7+! 6 ♔f6 ♖a1 7 ♖g2 (7 e7 ♖f1+ 8 ♔g5 ♖e1 and 7 ♖g7+ ♔h6! are also drawn) 7...♖f1+ 8 ♔e7 ♔h6 and Black's king can support the h-pawn.

2) 4 e6! g5 (4...♖e4 5 ♖xg6 h4 6 ♖f6 h3 7 ♖f3 and White wins) 5 e7 ♖e4 6 e8♖ ♖xe8 7 ♔xe8 h4 8 ♔f7 h3 9 ♖f1! (the only move to win) 9...g4 (9...♔h6 10 ♖h1 g4 transposes) 10

♖h1 ♔h6 11 ♕f6 ♔h5 12 ♕f5 ♔h4 13 ♕f4 g3
14 ♕f3 g2 15 ♚a1 and White wins.

2...♜f4+

This preliminary check forces the white king to an inferior square.

3 ♔g8 ♜xh4 4 e7 ♜e4 5 ♕f7

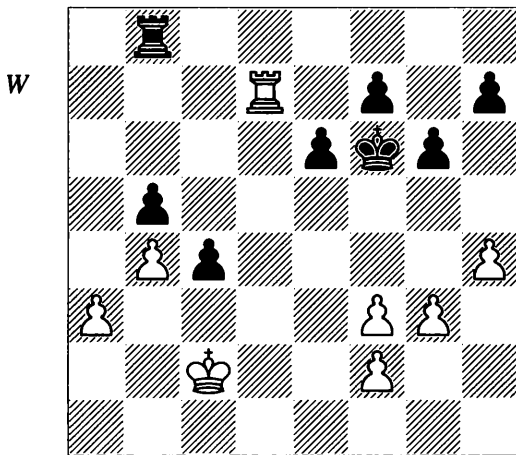
White has to waste a tempo returning with his king, and now Black draws easily.

5...h4 6 ♚a4

6 ♚a6 ♜xe7+ 7 ♕xe7 ♔g5 is also a draw.

6...♜xe7+ 7 ♕xe7 ♔g5 8 ♔e6 h3 9 ♕e5 h2
10 ♚a1 ♔g4 11 ♕e4 ♔g3 1/2-1/2

In the next position, both sides end up with an outside passed pawn, but White has the advantage thanks to his more active pieces.



Yusupov – Mestel
Esbjerg 1980

This interesting ending was analysed by Yusupov in *Informator 30*. White is definitely better but, as we shall see, Yusupov's conclusion that White is winning is overstating the case.

1 a4!

The best chance. White gets rid of his backward a-pawn with a temporary pawn sacrifice, at the same time creating a queenside passed pawn of his own. Moreover, his king and rook will both be well placed to support the resulting passed pawn. Nevertheless, Black should be able to defend the position, but he must bear in mind the point we have made before that the defender's king should participate in the fight against the passed pawn. Trying to hold the

pawn back using only the rook is much less likely to succeed.

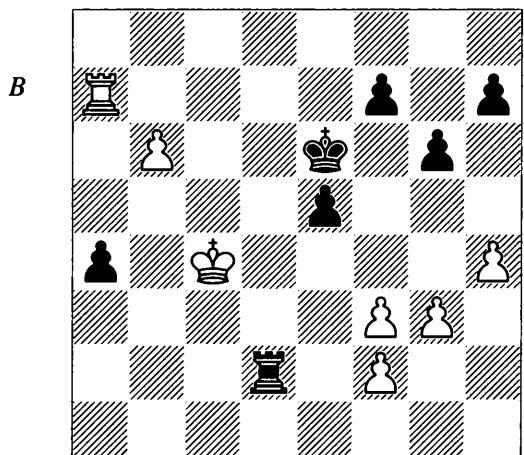
1...bxa4 2 ♕c3 ♚b5?

Black plays to activate his rook via d5 and d2, but this is rather slow and does not help to bring his king to the queenside. Here are the alternatives:

1) Yusupov's suggestion of 2...e5? is very logical, as it prepares ...♕e6. Once the white rook leaves the d-file, Black will be able to play ...♜d8-d2, saving a tempo over the manoeuvre ...♚b5-d5-d2, as played in the game. However, detailed analysis shows that it does not solve Black's problems. The main line runs 3 ♚a7! (3 ♕xc4? ♜c8+ 4 ♕b5 ♜c2 5 ♕xa4 ♔e6 6 ♜d3 f5 7 b5 ♚b2 8 ♕a5 ♚a2+ 9 ♕b4 ♜xf2 10 b6 e4 gives Black enough counterplay to draw) 3...♜d8, and now:

1a) 4 b5? (Yusupov preferred this move) 4...♕e6 (not 4...♜d3+? 5 ♕xc4 ♜xf3 6 b6 and White wins) 5 ♕xc4 (5 b6 ♚b8 and 5 ♚xa4 ♜d3+ 6 ♕xc4 ♜xf3 7 b6 ♕d7 allow Black easier draws) and here:

1a1) 5...♜d2? 6 b6! (D) (6 ♚xa4? allows a draw by 6...♜c2+! 7 ♕b4 ♜xf2 8 b6 ♕d6) and then:



1a11) 6...♕d6 7 ♚xa4! ♕c6 8 ♚a7 f5 (or 8...♕xb6 9 ♜xf7 h5 10 ♜f6+ ♕c7 11 ♕c3 ♜xf2 12 ♕d3 and White wins) 9 ♜xh7 ♕xb6 10 ♚h6 ♜xf2 11 ♜xg6+ ♕c7 12 ♕d5 ♜xf3 13 ♕xe5 and White wins.

1a12) 6...♜c2+ 7 ♕b5 ♚b2+ 8 ♕c6 ♜c2+ 9 ♕b7 ♜xf2 10 ♕a8 ♜xf3 11 b7 ♚b3 12 ♚xa4! f5 13 b8♙ ♜xb8+ 14 ♕xb8 e4 15 ♚a5! h6 16

♖a6+! ♔d5 17 ♜xg6 e3 18 ♜g8 ♔e4 19 ♔c7 ♕f3 20 ♔d6 e2 21 ♜e8 ♔xg3 22 ♜xe2 f4 23 ♔e5 is winning for White.

1a13) 6...♜xf2 7 ♜xa4 ♔d6 (7...♔d7 8 ♜a7+ ♔c6 9 ♜xf7 ♔xb6 10 ♔d5 is an easy win for White) 8 ♜b4 ♜c2+ 9 ♔b5 ♔d7 reaches an interesting position. Yusupov is correct in concluding that White is winning here, although the actual line he gave allows Black to draw:

1a131) 10 b7? ♔c7 11 ♜c4+ ♜xc4 12 ♔xc4 ♔xb7 13 ♔d5 f6 14 g4 and now instead of Yusupov's 14...♔c7?, which loses after 15 ♔e6 ♔c6 16 g5 f5 17 ♔xe5 f4 18 ♔f6 ♔d5 19 ♔g7 ♔d4 20 ♔xh7 ♔e3 21 h5, Black should continue 14...h5! 15 gxh5 gxh5 16 ♔e6 ♔c6 17 ♔xf6 ♔d5 18 ♔g5 e4 19 fxe4+ ♔xe4 20 ♔xh5 ♔f5, with a simple draw.

1a132) 10 ♜a4! is the right continuation, and White wins after 10...♜b2+ 11 ♔a6 ♜b3 12 b7 ♔c7 13 ♜c4+ ♔d7 14 ♜c5! f6 15 ♔a7 ♜a3+ 16 ♔b8 ♜xf3 17 ♜c7+ ♔d8 18 ♜xh7 ♜a3 19 ♜g7; for example, 19...e4 20 ♜xg6 ♔e7 21 h5 e3 22 h6 e2 23 h7 e1 ♖24 ♜g7+ ♔e6 25 h8 ♖e5+ 26 ♜c7 and Black is doomed by his exposed king and White's advanced b-pawn.

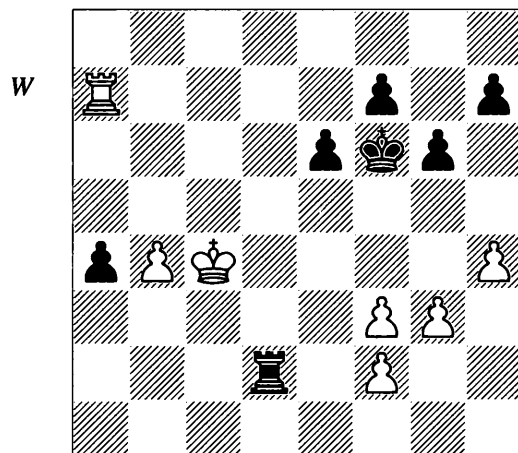
1a2) 5...♜d4+! is the correct defence, not mentioned by Yusupov. Black draws after 6 ♔c3 ♔d5 (as usual, bringing the king to the queenside is the key) 7 ♜c7 (7 ♜xf7 ♜c4+ 8 ♔b2 ♜b4+ 9 ♔a2 ♜xb5 10 ♜xh7 ♜b3 11 ♜f7 ♔e6 is fine for Black as White's rook cannot maintain its defence of the f3-pawn) 7...a3 8 b6 a2 9 ♔b2 ♜b4+ 10 ♔xa2 ♜xb6 11 ♜xf7 h5 and the extra pawn is irrelevant as White's king is totally cut off.

1b) 4 ♔xc4! ♜d2 5 b5 ♔e6 6 b6 ♔d6 7 ♜xa4 transposes to the winning line 1a11 in the above analysis.

2) 2...♜a8!. Basic principles often provide the clue to the correct continuation. Black places his rook behind the passed pawn, not with any hope of promoting it, but so that White will have to withdraw his rook from d7. This relieves the attack on f7, and so allows Black to play his king to e5, activating it without loss of time. Curiously, this move wasn't mentioned by Yusupov, even though putting a rook behind a passed pawn is a very familiar idea. Often, when players believe they were winning throughout,

their annotations lose objectivity and moves which they would find easily in a game are suddenly overlooked (or at least not mentioned). After 3 ♜d2 ♔e5 4 f4+ (4 ♔xc4 ♜c8+ 5 ♔b5 ♜a8 is similar) 4...♔e4 5 ♔xc4 ♜c8+ (this forces White to block his own pawn) 6 ♔b5 ♜a8 7 ♔c6 (the only way to make progress, but now Black's king can be activated) 7...a3 8 ♜a2 ♔d4 9 b5 ♔c4 10 b6 ♔b3 11 b7 ♜g8 12 ♜a1 ♔b2 13 ♜e1 a2 14 ♔c7 a1 ♖15 ♜xa1 ♔xa1 16 b8 ♖ ♜xb8 17 ♔xb8 ♔b2 18 ♔c7 ♔c3 19 ♔d6 ♔d3 20 ♔e7 f5 21 h5 gxh5 22 ♔xe6 ♔e2 23 ♔xf5 ♔xf2 24 ♔g5 ♔xg3 25 ♔xh5 ♔xf4 Black reaches a draw.

3 ♔xc4 ♜d5 4 ♜a7 ♜d2 (D)



5 b5

Thanks to Black's time-consuming rook manoeuvre, White is quicker than in the lines given above and now genuinely has a winning position.

5...♜c2+

Or 5...♔e5 6 ♜xa4 ♔d6 (6...♜c2+ 7 ♔b4 ♔d6 8 ♜a6+ ♔c7 9 ♜a7+ ♔b6 10 ♜xf7 ♜xf2 11 g4 h5 12 ♜f6 hxg4 13 ♜xe6+ ♔b7 14 fxg4 ♜f4+ 15 ♔c5 ♜xg4 16 ♜e7+ ♔c8 17 ♜h7 is also hopeless for Black) 7 ♜a6+ ♔c7 8 ♜a7+ ♔b6 9 ♜xf7 ♜xf2 10 ♔d3 and Black's kingside pawns are too exposed.

6 ♔b4 e5

6...♜xf2 7 ♜xa4 ♜xf3 8 b6 is decisive.

7 b6 ♜xf2

Or 7...♔e6 8 b7 ♜b2+ 9 ♔c5 a3 10 ♔c6 a2 11 ♜a6 ♔f5 12 ♔c7 and White wins.

8 b7 ♔f5

8... ♖b2+ 9 ♔c5 is also winning for White.

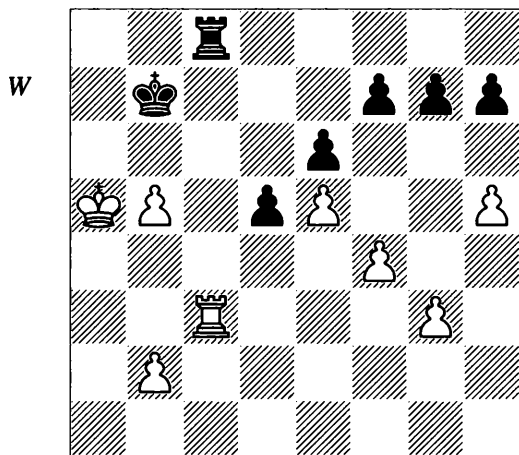
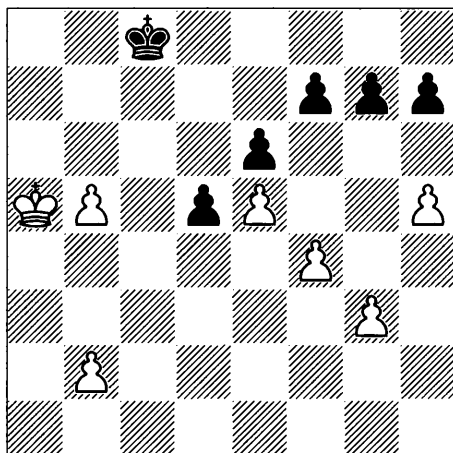
9 g4+! ♔f4

White promotes the b-pawn after 9... ♔e6 10 ♖a6+ followed by ♖b6.

10 ♖xa4 1-0

Black cannot prevent the promotion of the b-pawn.

The following example could have been given in the chapter on pawn endings in Volume 1, but the rook ending also includes some points of interest.



Shirov – Radjabov

Leon (rapid) 2004

An interesting moment because White can exchange rooks to reach a pawn ending, or keep them on in the hope of exploiting the extra pawn in a rook ending. Shirov chose to keep the rooks on, which turned out to be a good practical decision as he won the game in convincing style. According to Hecht in ChessBase Magazine, exchanging rooks would have led to a draw, but this is not so as White has an instructive win. However, this win is far from simple, so Shirov's move was the correct choice over the board.

1 b6

The king and pawn ending arises after 1 ♖xc8 ♔xc8 (D).

This is a fascinating and subtle ending. Because of Black's protected passed pawn, White cannot exploit his extra pawn directly. His only real plan is to play his king to c5, arrange his remaining pawns as best he can, and then make a

run for the f7-pawn while Black promotes his d-pawn. What happens then depends crucially on the kingside pawn-structure. If White can gain enough space on the kingside, and in particular if White can establish a pawn on f6, then White is likely to win. The reason is that after the sequence 1 ♔d6 d4 2 ♔e7 d3 3 ♔xf7 d2 4 ♔g8 d1 ♖ 5 f7 Black will be unable to prevent the f-pawn from queening (possibly with check), provided only that the g-file is not open. Then, with White's king already in amongst Black's kingside pawns, the queen and pawn ending will be hopeless for Black.

How can White get a pawn to f6? If Black does nothing, it is easy. White plays his king to c5, and then plays g4, f5 and f6, forcing ...g6 or ...g5. Therefore Black must take countermeasures before White's kingside pawns advance too far. He could try to play ...g6, but White can generally meet this by g4 (if his pawn is not already on g4) followed by f5; then if White's king is already on c5, Black cannot take twice on f5 because White plays ♔xd5 and wins easily. Thus Black again cannot prevent the pawn from reaching f6.

Black's final chance is to play ...g5. This may appear ridiculous, but a few moments' thought shows it to be the only chance for Black to save the game. If White plays fxg5 then he can no longer get a pawn to f6. If White plays hxg6, then after ...hxg6, White can still play g4 and f5, but it won't do him any good because after ...gxf5 gxf5 the g-file will be open and so White's plan no longer works. On the other hand, if he leaves the pawns as they are, Black

plays ...g4 and again White cannot push his kingside pawns. It follows that ...g5 is actually a threat and therefore White's first move must be 2 g4!! as this is the only move that allows White to meet ...g5 by f5. White then wins by 2...♙b7 (2...g5 3 f5 ♙b7 4 h6 ♙a7 5 b6+ ♙b8 6 ♙b5 ♙b7 7 f6 and White wins) 3 b6 g6 (3...g5 4 f5 d4 5 fxe6 fxe6 6 ♙b4 ♙xb6 7 ♙c4 d3 8 ♙xd3 ♙c5 9 h6 ♙d5 10 b4 ♙xe5 11 ♙c4 ♙d6 12 ♙d4 ♙c6 13 ♙e5 and 3...♙a8 4 f5 ♙b7 5 ♙b5 ♙b8 6 f6 g6 7 h6 ♙b7 8 g5 ♙c8 9 ♙c5 ♙d7 10 b3 ♙c8 11 ♙d6 d4 12 ♙e7 d3 13 ♙xf7 d2 14 ♙g8 d1 ♖ 15 f7 both win for White) 4 h6 ♙b8 5 ♙b5 ♙b7 6 b3! (one must always be alert for tactical points: the immediate 6 ♙c5? fails to 6...g5 7 f5 exf5 8 gxf5 g4 and Black draws because he promotes with check) 6...♙c8 7 ♙c5 ♙b7 (7...g5 8 f5 exf5 9 gxf5 g4 10 ♙c6 and White wins) 8 f5 gxf5 9 gxf5 ♙b8 10 f6 ♙c8 11 b4! (this is based on another tactical point: the g-file is now open, so after White's ♙xf7, he will have to continue with ♙e7 and f7; hence he must force the black king away from c8 because otherwise Black will have checks on d7 or d8) 11...♙d7 (11...♙b7 12 ♙d6 is similar) 12 b7 ♙c7 13 b8 ♖+ ♙xb8 14 ♙d6 d4 15 ♙e7 d3 16 ♙xf7 d2 17 ♙e7 d1 ♖ 18 f7 leading to a winning queen and pawn ending for White.

1...♙b8

After 1...♙a8+ 2 ♙b5 ♙c8 (2...♙a2 3 ♙c7+ ♙b8 4 ♙xf7 ♙xb2+ 5 ♙c6 ♙c2+ 6 ♙d6 and White wins easily) 3 g4 g6 4 h6 Black is in zugzwang, while 1...♙d8 2 ♙c7+ ♙b8 3 ♙a6! transposes to the game.

2 ♙a6 ♙d8 3 ♙c7?!

White misses a quicker win by 3 b7 d4 4 ♙c1 followed by ♙b6 and ♙a1-a8#. The move played depends on some precise calculation, but Shirov had worked things out accurately.

3...d4 4 ♙b7+ ♙a8 5 ♙a7+ ♙b8 6 b4 d3 7 b7

Threatening 8 ♙b6.

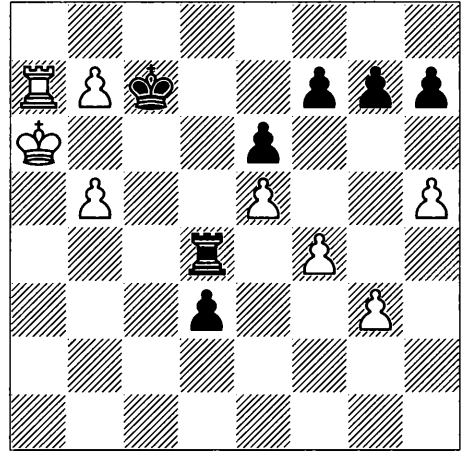
7...♙c7 8 b5 ♙d4 (D)

The only alternative is 8...d2, but then there is another neat variation: 9 b6+ ♙c6 10 ♙a8 d1 ♖ 11 ♙c8+ and Black loses his queen.

9 b6+ ♙c6 10 b8 ♗+!

The well-calculated point of White's play.

W



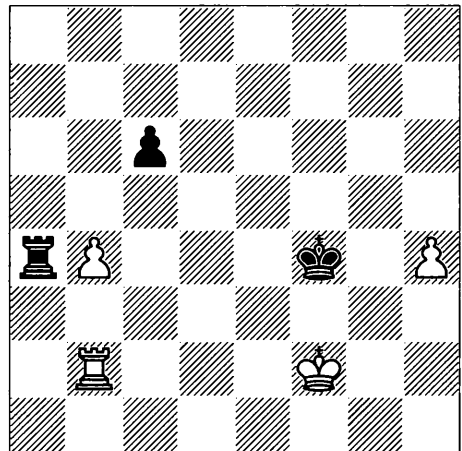
10...♙c5 11 ♙c7+ ♙d5 12 ♙c1

With an extra piece and a passed pawn on the sixth rank, White is winning easily.

12...d2 13 ♙d1 ♙e4 1-0

The final example is different, because the passed pawn is not at the moment being supported by either piece, which makes it vulnerable to attack. However, if Black plays to win this pawn, it allows White to make progress on the other side of the board.

B



Mednis – D. Gurevich

New York 1982

This turns out to be a very interesting ending. According to D.Gurevich's notes in *Informator 34*, both sides played accurately and the drawn result of the game correctly reflects the evaluation of the diagram position. However, White missed a win and I believe that the diagram is actually lost for Black. This may appear surprising

because, although White is a pawn up, there are very few pawns left and Black's king is active. However, Black is handicapped by the initially passive position of his rook. Activating his rook takes time, which allows White to improve his own position.

1...♖a3

The most logical and best defence, attempting to activate the rook immediately. Other moves are even less promising:

1) 1...♔g4 2 ♕e3 (heading for the c-pawn is decisive) 2...♕xh4 3 ♖d4 ♕g5 4 ♖c5 ♖a6 5 ♖d6 ♖f5 6 ♖c7 ♕e5 7 ♖b7 followed by ♕xc6, winning.

2) Passive defence by 1...♖a8 is hopeless; for example, 2 ♖c2 (threatening to win by 3 ♖c4+ followed by 4 ♖xc6) 2...♖b8 3 ♖c4+ ♕e5 4 ♕e3 ♖d5 5 ♖d4+ ♕e5 6 h5 (the pawn advances, ready for the white rook to switch to h4) 6...♖h8 7 ♖h4 (now we are in a 'rook behind the passed pawn' situation) 7...♖h6 8 ♖d3 ♖d5 9 ♖c3 ♕e6 (9...c5 10 b5 is hopeless for Black) 10 ♖c4 ♖d6 11 ♖d4 ♖d7 12 ♖c5 ♖c7 13 ♖h3 (a typical tempo move, forcing Black to make a concession) 13...♖d7 (13...♖b7 14 ♖d4 ♖b6 15 ♕e5 ♖b5 16 ♖h4 and White wins by playing the king to g5) 14 ♖b6 ♖c8 15 ♖h4 ♖d7 16 ♖b7 ♖d6 17 ♖d4+ ♕e5 18 ♖c4 ♖d5 19 ♖c5+ ♖d4 20 ♖xc6 ♖xh5 21 ♕a6 and the b-pawn will decide because Black's king is cut off.

3) 1...♕e4 moves too far away from the h-pawn and allows White to win by 2 h5! (but not 2 ♖g3? ♖d3 3 b5 ♖c3 4 ♖b1 ♖c2 and Black draws) 2...♖a8 (2...♖a3 3 ♖c2 ♖h3 4 ♖c4+ ♖d5 5 ♖g2! ♖a3 6 ♖h4 is decisive) 3 ♖g3 ♖f5 4 ♖c2 ♖a6 5 ♖f3 ♖b6 6 ♖c4 ♖g5 7 ♕e4 ♖xh5 8 ♕e5 and White wins by playing his king to c7.

2 ♖c2 (D)

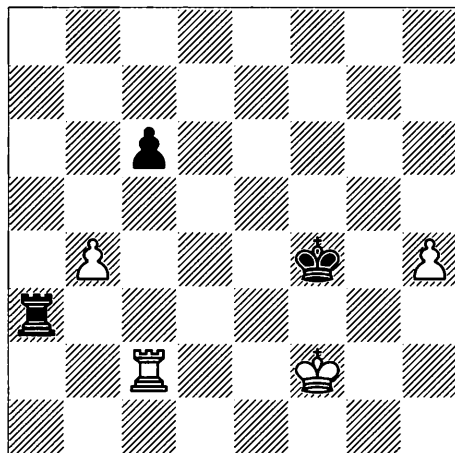
The only move, since otherwise Black draws easily by playing ...♖h3.

2...♖f3+

Once again Black finds the most resilient defence, transferring his rook to e4 to target the b4-pawn. The alternatives are:

1) 2...♖h3 3 ♖c4+ (3 ♖xc6? ♖h2+ 4 ♕e1 ♕e3 is a draw after 5 ♖c3+ ♖d4 or 5 ♖e6+ ♖d3 6 ♖h6 ♖b2) 3...♕e5 (3...♖f5 4 h5 ♖g5 5 ♖c5+ ♖f4 6 ♕e2 ♕e4 7 ♖d2 ♖b3 8 ♖c4+ ♖d5 9 ♖h4

B



wins for White) 4 ♖g2 ♖e3 5 h5 ♖d6 6 h6 ♖e7 7 ♖h4 ♖h7 8 ♖g3 ♕e6 9 ♖g4 ♖f6 10 ♖f4 and White wins.

2) 2...♖b3 3 ♖c4+ ♖f5 4 h5 ♖g5 5 ♕e2! ♕xh5 6 ♖d2 is close, but ultimately White wins here too: 6...♖g5 7 ♖c2 ♖h3 8 ♖xc6 ♖f5 (after 8...♖f4 9 ♖c3! ♖h8 10 ♖c5 ♕e4 11 ♖c3 White cuts off the black king along a rank and wins) 9 ♖c3! ♖h8 10 ♖e3 ♖f4 11 ♖e1 ♖h3 (the only chance, since Black's king is cut off too far away to draw under normal circumstances) 12 b5 ♖f5 13 b6 ♖f6 14 ♖b2 ♖g3 15 b7 ♖g8 16 ♕a3 ♖b8 17 ♖b1 ♕e6 18 ♕a4 and White simply marches his king to a7.

3 ♕e2!

The right direction, as 3 ♖g2? ♖g3+ 4 ♖h2 ♖g4! 5 ♖c4+ ♖f5 6 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 7 ♖g2 ♖xh4 is only a draw.

3...♖e3+ 4 ♖d2 ♖e4 5 ♖c3

Defending the c-pawn and threatening ♖b3.

5...♕e5 6 ♖h2

6 ♖b3? only draws because 6...♖d6! 7 ♖h2 c5 8 b5 ♖b4+ costs White his b-pawn.

6...c5!

Once again Black puts the greatest obstacles in White's path. After 6...♖d5 7 h5 c5 8 b5 ♖c4+ 9 ♖d3 ♖a4 10 ♕e3 ♖a3+ 11 ♖f4 ♖a8 12 h6 ♖d4 13 h7 ♖h8 14 ♖g5 c4 15 ♖g6 ♖c5 16 ♖h5+ White wins far more easily.

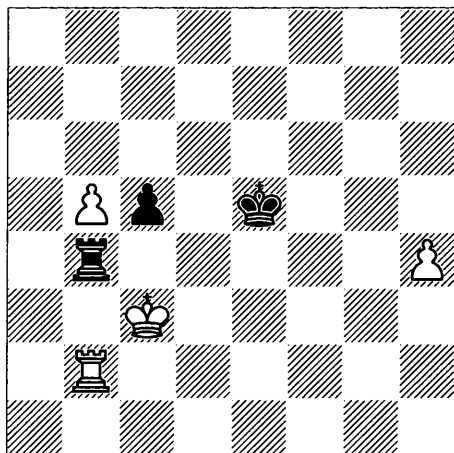
7 b5

Not 7 bxc5? ♖d5 8 ♖d3 ♖c4! 9 ♕e3 ♕e5! and Black draws comfortably.

7...♖b4 8 ♖b2! (D)

White must give up the h-pawn and pin his hopes on the passed b-pawn.

B

**8...♞xh4 9 b6**

This position is winning for White, but it still requires accurate play.

9...♞h8 10 ♖c4 ♘d6 11 ♖b5 ♘d7

The best chance. 11...♞c8 loses after 12 ♞d2+ ♖e5 (or 12...♖e6 13 b7 ♞b8 14 ♖c6) 13 b7 ♞b8 14 ♞d7! ♖e6 15 ♖c6 c4 16 ♞d4 and White wins first the c-pawn, and then Black's rook.

12 ♖a6 ♞a8+ 13 ♖b7 ♞a4!

Both sides have shown their best in this endgame: White has maintained his winning position throughout the complications and Black has put the maximum difficulties in White's path. Here, again, Black continues the fight by preventing the check on d2.

14 ♞c2!

The only move to win as 14 ♞d2+? ♞d4 15 ♞c2 ♖d6! is a draw.

14...c4

Now that Black's ...♞d4 has been prevented, White can check Black's king away.

15 ♞d2+ ♖e6 16 ♖c6!

16 ♖c7? ♖e5 17 b7 ♞b4 allows Black to draw, whereas now 16...♖e5 17 b7 ♞b4 runs into 18 ♞d5+ followed by ♞b5.

16...c3

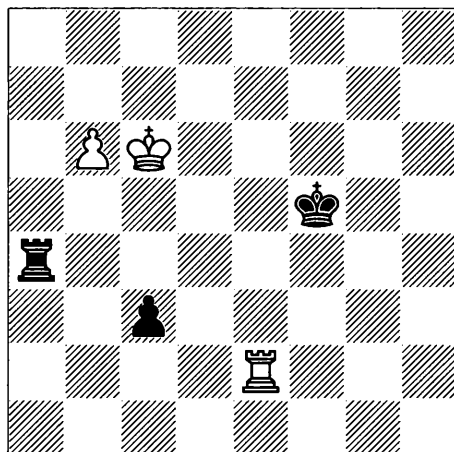
Up to here, neither side's play can be criticized, but now White starts to falter.

17 ♞e2+?!

This makes the win significantly more complicated. The simplest path was 17 ♞c2! ♞a3 (or 17...♞c4+ 18 ♖b5 ♞c8 19 b7 ♞b8 20 ♖c6 and White wins) 18 b7 ♞b3 19 ♞e2+ ♖f5 20 ♖c7 ♖f4 21 b8♞ ♞xb8 22 ♖xb8 and White wins the pawn.

17...♖f5 (D)

W

**18 b7?**

As so often happens, a small error is immediately followed by a much larger one. White could still have won by 18 ♖b5! ♞a3, and now:

1) In *Informator*, D.Gurevich only gave 19 ♖c4 ♞a6 20 ♖c5? (White can still win if he backtracks with 20 ♖b5), which actually throws the win away after 20...♞a1! (this is better than Gurevich's 20...♞a3?, which allows White to return to the correct path) 21 b7 ♞b1 22 ♖c6 ♞b4! 23 ♖c7 ♞c4+ 24 ♖d6 (or 24 ♖b6 c2) 24...♞b4 25 ♖c6 ♖f4! and White is not making progress.

2) 19 b7! ♞b3+ 20 ♖a6! (the key move; 20 ♖c6? ♞b4 is only a draw, as above) 20...♞b4 (now if Black were to move he would be in zugzwang, so the first step for White is to lose a tempo) 21 ♖a7! ♞a4+ 22 ♖b6 ♞b4+ 23 ♖a6 and Black is in zugzwang:

2a) 23...♖f4 (this is a bad square because White can promote with check) 24 ♞c2! ♞b3 25 ♞xc3 ♞xc3 26 b8♞+ with a technical ♞ vs ♞ win.

2b) 23...♞b3 24 ♖a7 ♞a3+ 25 ♖b6 ♞b3+ 26 ♖c7 and Black doesn't have a check on the c-file.

2c) 23...♖f6 (this square is also inferior) 24 ♖a7 ♞a4+ 25 ♖b6 ♞b4+ 26 ♖c7 ♞c4+ 27 ♖d6 ♞b4 (27...♞d4+ 28 ♖c5 ♞d2 29 b8♞ ♞xe2 30 ♞f4+ ♖e7 31 ♞h4+ ♖f8 32 ♞f6+ and White wins the c3-pawn) 28 ♞f2+ (thanks to the position of Black's king, White can force it one file

further away) 28...♔g5 29 ♔c6 ♔g4 30 ♖c2 ♖b3 31 ♔c7 and White wins.

18...♖b4!

We have seen in the above analysis that White only wins if his king is on a6 rather than c6.

19 ♖h2

After 19 ♔c7 ♖c4+ Black draws as before.

19...♖xb7!

The simplest.

20 ♔xb7 ♔e4 21 ♔c6 ♔d3 1/2-1/2

Summary:

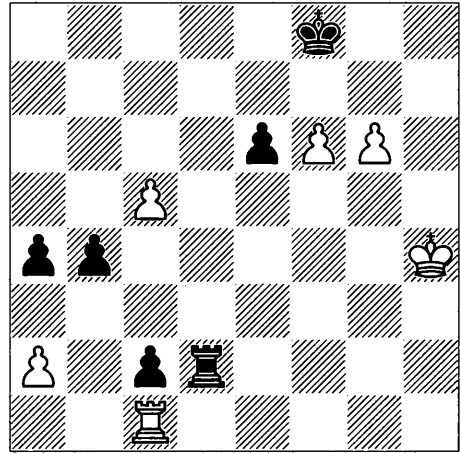
- When the passed pawn is supported by the king rather than the rook, the defender has more chances of creating counterplay by attacking the pawns on the opposite side of the board. Sometimes he can draw by grabbing as many pawns as possible and then giving up his rook for the enemy passed pawn.
- If the defender's king is not close to the passed pawn, the attacker's main idea is to use his king to force home his passed pawn and win the enemy rook. Then he will hope to win the resulting position in which the defender will have some pawns in return for the rook.
- If the defender's king is in front of the passed pawn, the attacker will try to switch his king to the other side of the board. While the defender is rounding up the passed pawn, the attacker hopes to establish a winning position in which his king is close to (or even amongst) the remaining enemy pawns.

8.10 Both Sides have Connected Passed Pawns

Tactics play a large part in this type of ending, and factors such as whether one of the pawns can promote with check can decide the whole game. However, the players also have to make decisions of a more strategic nature, such as whether time is better spent pushing one's own pawns or restraining the enemy ones.

When the pawns are near to promotion, it's generally just pure tactics, as in the next example.

B



Lukacs – Sehner

Budapest 1987

1...b3!

Lukacs's notes in *Informator 43* criticize this move for allowing a draw, and give 1...♖d4+ as the winning move. However, his 'winning' line actually loses, and the move Black played is the only one to save the game. The analysis of 1...♖d4+? is as follows:

1) 2 ♔h5?? (the only move considered by Lukacs) 2...♖c4 3 ♔h6 b3 (3...♖xc5 4 f7 ♖c3 also wins for Black) 4 axb3 axb3 5 f7 b2 6 g7+ ♔xf7 ♖f1+ ♔e7 and Black will win as he promotes with check.

2) 2 ♔g3! ♖c4 3 ♖h1! (this is the point: White must keep his king off the h-file to make space for the rook) 3...♔g8 4 f7+ ♔g7 5 ♖f1! with a simple win.

2 axb3 axb3 3 ♖a1!

White continues accurately and finds one of only two moves to save the game (the other is 3 c6).

3...♖d4+?

Lukacs doesn't comment on this move, which should lose. The only way for Black to save the game is by 3...♖d8! 4 ♖a7 c1♚ (4...♖d4+? loses to 5 ♔g3 ♖d8 6 ♖h7 ♔g8 7 f7+) 5 ♖f7+ ♔g8 6 ♖g7+ and White has no more than perpetual check.

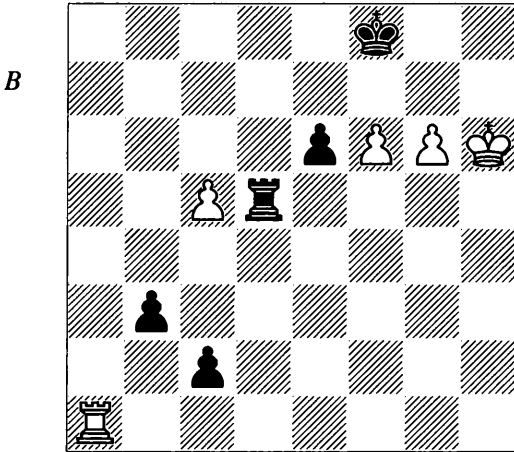
4 ♔h5?

Missing a win by 4 ♔g5! ♖d8 (4...♖d5+ 5 ♔h6 transposes into the game) 5 g7+ ♔f7 6 ♖a7+ (with the king on g5, Black cannot take on f6 here) 6...♔g8 7 ♔g6 followed by mate.

4...♖d5+?

This final mistake seals Black's fate. 4...♖d8 5 ♖a7 is still a draw as in the note to Black's third move.

5 ♖h6! (D)



5...♖e8

Or 5...♖d8 6 ♖h7! b2 7 ♖a7! followed by mate.

6 f7+

6 c6! is simpler, but the move played is also sufficient.

6...♖e7 7 ♖f1

This is one of several wins.

7...♖f5

7...♖d8 8 g7 c1♖+ 9 ♖xc1 ♖xf7 10 ♖h7 is decisive.

8 ♖xf5 c1♖+

Black manages to queen with check, but White's advanced pawns prove crushing.

9 ♖g7 ♖c3+

9...♖a1+ 10 ♖g8 exf5 11 f8♖+ ♖d7 12 ♖d6+ ♖c8 13 c6 ♖a7 14 g7 b2 15 ♖h8 and White wins.

10 ♖g8 exf5 11 f8♖+ ♖d7

11...♖e6 12 ♖d6#.

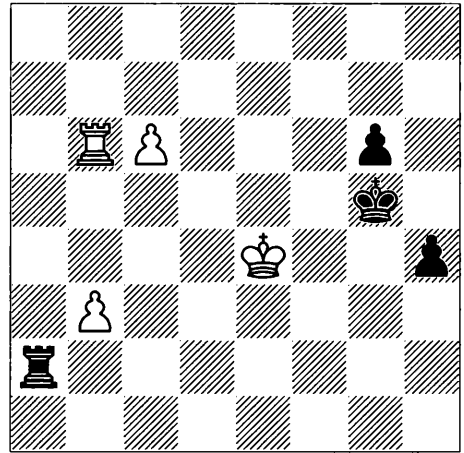
12 ♖d6+ 1-0

12...♖c8 13 c6 ♖c4+ 14 ♖f8 is the end.

The key factor in assessing such a position is how far advanced the pawns are, but it's not the only ingredient. The relative activity of the rooks is often also important.

In the following position, White clearly has an advantage as his pawns are further up the board, but this does not mean an automatic win

W



Rogozenko – M. Kopylov

Hamburg 2001

since his rook is in a clumsy position, blocking the b-pawn and playing no part in holding up Black's h-pawn. White won the game and according to Rogozenko's notes the diagram position is already winning, but Black could have held the game had he found the correct defensive plan.

1 b4

Black can easily put his rook behind the c-pawn, so White is not going to win unless he can mobilize both pawns. Other moves cause Black even fewer problems:

1) 1 c7?! ♖c2 is just a draw.

2) 1 ♖d3?! (to prevent ...♖c2) 1...♖a1 2 ♖c2 ♖a2+ 3 ♖b1 offers White no winning chances as 3...♖a8 4 c7 h3 5 ♖b8?? (5 ♖c6 h2 6 ♖c1 still draws) 5...h2 even wins for Black.

3) 1 ♖b8 and now Black has more than one way to draw:

3a) 1...h3 2 ♖h8 h2 3 b4 ♖f2! 4 b5 (4 ♖d5 ♖f5+ 5 ♖d6 ♖f6+ 6 ♖d7 ♖f7+ 7 ♖e8 ♖c7 is also a draw) 4...♖f4+ 5 ♖e5 ♖h4 6 ♖xh4 ♖xh4 7 c7 h1♖ 8 c8 ♖e1+ and Black has no problems.

3b) 1...♖c2 2 ♖d5 and now:

3b1) Rogozenko gave 2...h3? but this loses after 3 ♖h8 h2 4 b4 ♖d2+ (4...♖f6 5 b5 ♖b2 loses to 6 ♖d6! ♖xb5 7 ♖xh2 ♖b1 8 ♖d2 g5 9 c7 ♖c1 10 ♖d5 with a fifth-rank cut-off) 5 ♖e6 ♖e2+ 6 ♖d7 ♖d2+ 7 ♖c8 ♖a2 (7...♖f2 8 c7 ♖f8+ 9 ♖xf8 h1♖ 10 ♖b8 ♖h2 11 ♖b7 ♖h1+ 12 ♖b6 ♖g1+ 13 ♖b5 wins for White, while 7...♖e2 8 ♖h7! is similar to the main line) 8 ♖h7!

(White simply sidesteps the skewer) 8...♖b2 9 c7 ♜xb4 10 ♜xh2 ♡f6 11 ♣d7 ♜d4+ 12 ♣c6 ♜c4+ 13 ♣d6 g5 14 ♜f2+ ♣g6 15 ♜f8 g4 16 c8♖ ♜xc8 17 ♜xc8 ♡f5 18 ♣d5 ♡f4 19 ♣d4 ♡f3 20 ♣d3 g3 21 ♜f8+ and White wins.

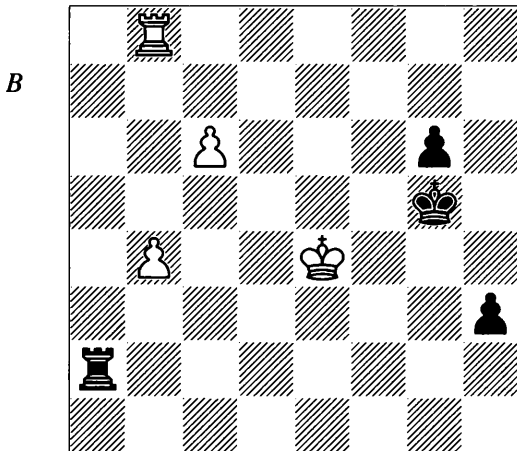
3b2) 2...♜d2+! 3 ♣c5 ♜c2+ 4 ♣d6 (4 ♣b6 ♜b2 doesn't help) 4...♜d2+ 5 ♣c7 h3 6 ♜h8 ♡g4! 7 b4 ♜b2 draws.

1...h3!

1...♜a8? prevents ♜b8 but loses to 2 c7 ♜c8 (2...h3 3 ♡f3 h2 4 ♡g2 ♜h8 5 ♡h1 also wins for White) 3 ♜c6 h3 4 ♡f3.

However, 1...♜c2! also draws: 2 b5 (2 ♣d5 h3 3 ♜b8 ♜d2+ 4 ♡e6 ♜e2+ 5 ♣d7 ♜d2+ 6 ♣c7 ♜b2! 7 ♜h8 ♜xb4 8 ♜xh3 ♡f5 is drawn) 2...h3 3 ♜b8 ♜c4+! (3...h2? fails to 4 ♜h8 ♜c4+ 5 ♡f3) 4 ♡f3 ♜c3+! (Rogozenko only analysed 4...♜h4?, which loses to 5 ♜d8 h2 6 ♜d1 ♜c4 7 ♡g2 ♜c2+ 8 ♡h1 ♡g4 9 ♜b1 followed by b6 and b7) 5 ♡f2 ♡g4 6 ♜h8 ♜c5! and White has no winning chances.

2 ♜b8 (D)



2...♜b2?

This is actually the losing move, which wastes time because the rook belongs on c2, not b2. Black had more than one way to save the game; for example, 2...h2 3 ♜h8 ♜f2! transposes into the analysis of 1 ♜b8 h3, while 2...♜c2 3 b5 ♜c4+ transposes to the analysis of 1...♜c2. Both lines draw.

3 ♣d3!

Not 3 c7? h2 4 ♜h8 ♜c2! with an immediate draw, but after the move played, everything goes wrong for Black. He cannot play 3...h2

due to 4 ♜h8 ♜xb4 5 c7 ♜h4 6 ♜xh4 ♡xh4 7 c8♖ followed by a skewer winning the queen, nor can he easily get his rook behind the c-pawn.

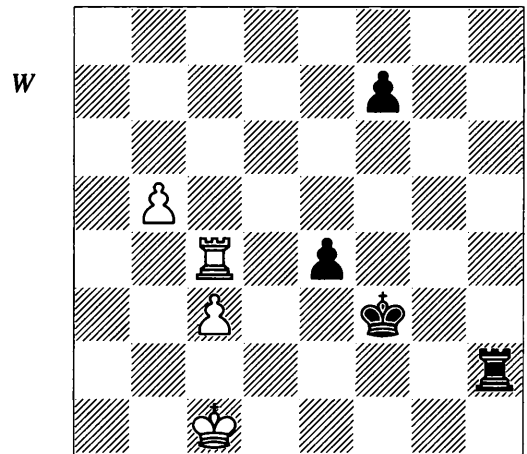
3...♜b1

3...♜b3+ also loses: 4 ♣c4 ♜b2 5 ♜h8 ♡g4 6 b5 and the pawns are too strong.

4 ♜h8 ♜c1 5 b5 1-0

5...♡g4 6 ♣d4 ♡g3 7 ♣d5 ♜d1+ 8 ♣c5 h2 9 b6 is decisive.

In the following example, White has to decide whether to push his own pawns or deploy his rook against Black's pawns.



Ferry – Villeneuve
French Ch, Clermont-Ferrand 1985

Both sides have two connected passed pawns, and White's are slightly further advanced, but a more important factor is that Black's pawns are supported by an actively-placed king. This means that it is White who is looking to escape with a draw. He faces a typical practical decision: should he push his own pawns as fast as possible, or should he take steps to restrain Black's pawns? In the latter case, he might be able to give up his rook for Black's pawns and then draw with his own pawns. As Villeneuve noted in *Informator 40*, White made the wrong decision in the game, although the details of his analysis need some correction.

1 b6?

This is wrong; after some sharp tactics, the fact that Black's pawns are supported by his king proves decisive. White could have drawn

by 1 ♖c5! (1 ♖c7! f5 2 b6 also draws) 1...e3 2 ♜f5+ ♔e4 (2...♔g4 3 ♜e5 ♔f4 4 ♜e7 f5 5 b6 ♜h8 6 b7 ♔f3 7 c4 e2 8 ♔d2 ♜d8+ 9 ♔c3 f4 10 c5 ♜d7 11 ♜xe2 ♜xb7 also leads to a draw) 3 ♜xf7 ♜h1+ 4 ♔c2 e2 5 ♜e7+ ♔f3, arriving at the critical position in which White must decide how to give up his rook:

1) 6 b6? (Villeneuve thought this move leads to a draw, but Black has a subtle win) 6...e1 ♖7 ♜xe1 ♜xe1 8 c4 and now:

1a) 8...♜e8? is only a draw after 9 ♔d3 ♜d8+ 10 ♔c3 ♔e4 11 ♔b4 ♔e5 12 ♔c5! (and not Villeneuve's 12 c5?, which loses to 12...♜d1! 13 ♔b5 ♔d5!) 12...♜c8+ 13 ♔b5 ♔d6 14 b7 ♜h8 15 ♔b6 ♔d7 16 c5 ♜h6+ 17 ♔a7.

1b) 8...♔f4! (this is the only move to win; the priority is for Black to bring his king back, but he must not block the e-file, or else White plays b7) 9 c5 (9 ♔c3 ♔e5 10 ♔b4 ♔d6 11 ♔b5 ♜b1+ and Black wins) 9...♜e8! (now is the time to return with the rook; 9...♜e5? 10 ♔c3 ♜xc5+ 11 ♔b4 is only a draw) 10 ♔c3 (after 10 c6 ♔e5 Black stops the pawns) 10...♔e5 11 ♔c4 ♔e6 12 ♔b5 ♔d7 13 c6+ ♔c8 and Black gets his king in front of the pawns, leading to a simple win.

2) The drawing move is 6 ♜xe2!, not mentioned by Villeneuve. It looks like a loss of tempo to give up the rook on e2 rather than e1, but this capture forces Black to take with his king, which is then drawn out of position: 6...♔xe2 7 ♔b3! (7 c4? ♔e3 8 ♔c3 ♜c1+ 9 ♔b4 ♔d4 wins for Black) 7...♔d3 (7...♜h4 8 c4 ♔d3 9 b6 is also drawn) 8 ♔b4 ♔e4 9 ♔c5! ♔e5 10 b6 ♔e6 11 ♔c6 and White draws.

1...e3 2 b7

2 ♖c5 ♜h1+ 3 ♔c2 e2 4 b7 e1 ♖5 b8 ♖ ♖e2+ leads to a quick mate.

2...e2 3 ♔d2 (D)

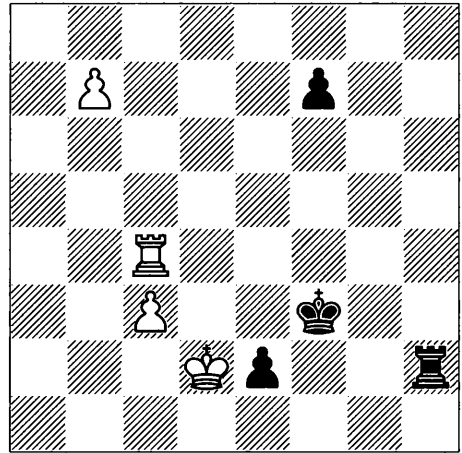
3...♜h8!

3...♜h1?? 4 ♜f4+ ♔xf4 5 b8 ♖+ is even winning for White.

4 ♜c8

White has no defence: after 4 ♜b4 ♜d8+ 5 ♜d4 ♔f2! Black wins at once, while 4 ♜d4 loses to 4...f5! 5 c4 (5 ♜d5 f4 6 ♜d4 ♜b8 7 ♜d7 ♔f2 also wins for Black) 5...e1 ♖+! 6 ♔xe1 ♔e3 7 ♜d3+ (7 ♜h4 ♜xh4 8 ♔d1 ♔d3 9 ♔e1 ♜h1+ 10 ♔f2 ♜b1 and Black wins) 7...♔xd3 8

B



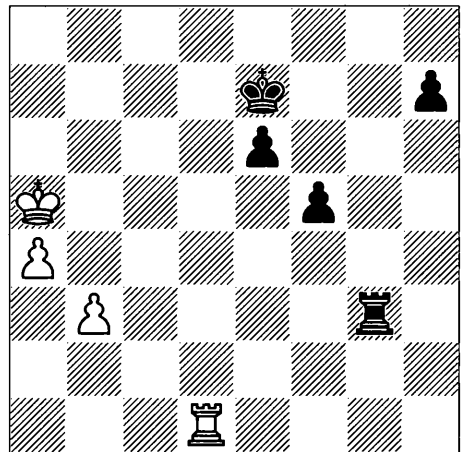
c5 ♔e3! 9 ♔d1 f4 10 c6 f3 11 c7 f2 12 c8 ♖ f1 ♖+ 13 ♔c2 ♖d3+ and Black mates in a few moves.

4...♔f2! 0-1

It's all over after 5 ♜xh8 e1 ♖+ 6 ♔c2 ♖e4+ or 5 b8 ♖ e1 ♖+ 6 ♔d3 ♖e3+ 7 ♔c2 ♖e2+ 8 ♔b3 ♖e6+, winning the rook on c8.

When both sides' pawns are equally advanced and everything depends on a single tempo, it is easy to make a mistake.

W



V.N. Kozlov – Kirpichnikov
USSR 1980

With five passed pawns on the board, precise calculation will be essential. Although Black has an extra pawn, the h-pawn doesn't have much relevance since all Black's efforts will be focused on advancing his connected passed pawns in the centre. White's pawns are no further forward than Black's, but he has two

advantages: it is his turn to move, and his king is better placed than Black's to support his passed pawns.

1 b4 f4?!

In such positions, apparently insignificant differences can have far-reaching implications. Although this move doesn't lose, it certainly creates difficulties for Black. It would have been better to push the e-pawn, because when the pawn arrives at e2 it denies White's rook the d1-square. The importance of this is not immediately apparent, but the concrete variations show that several moves down the road it has a profound influence on the game. 1...e5! 2 b5 e4 is much better and leads to a relatively comfortable draw. Then 3 ♖b1 ♔d7 4 ♕a6 ♖c8 5 ♕a7 ♖g7+ 6 ♕a8 e3 7 b6 e2 8 a5 f4 9 a6 ♖g8 is the key variation for exposing the difference between 1...f4 and 1...e5. With the f-pawn advanced rather than the e-pawn, the d1-square is available to the white rook (see the note to Black's 4th move for more details), but here d1 is covered. We can continue this variation by 10 a7 ♔d7+ 11 ♔b7 f3 12 a8♞ ♖xa8 13 ♔xa8 f2 14 b7 e1♞ 15 b8♞ f1♞ 16 ♖xe1 ♞xe1 with a draw. White can also try 3 b6, but 3...♖b3 4 ♕a6 ♕e6 5 b7 f4 6 ♖h1 (6 a5 f3 7 ♖f1 ♕e5 8 ♕a7 ♔f4 9 b8♞+ ♖xb8 10 ♔xb8 e3 11 a6 e2 12 ♖xf3+ ♔xf3 13 a7 e1♞ 14 a8♞+ is also drawn, although White must work to prove it) 6...f3 7 ♖h6+ ♔d5 8 ♖b6 ♖xb6+ 9 ♔xb6 f2 10 b8♞ f1♞ leads to a clearly drawn queen ending.

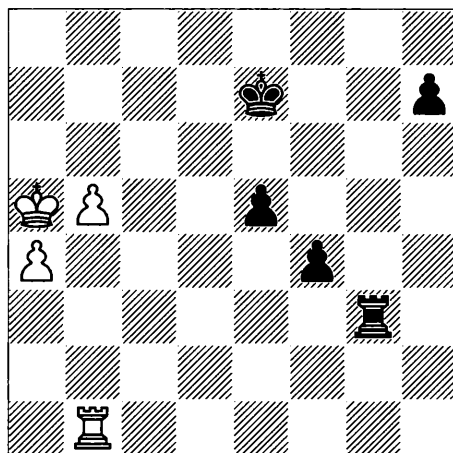
2 b5 e5

Black doesn't have any choice but to push the other pawn, since 2...f3? loses to 3 b6 f2 (Black can't play ...♖b3 because his pawn is in the way) 4 ♖f1 and Black will lose his f-pawn. Playing 2...♖b3? first is also bad due to 3 ♔b6! f3 4 a5 and now the a-pawn can advance quickly.

3 ♖b1! (D)

Or 3 b6?! ♖b3! 4 ♖d5 (4 ♕a6 ♕e6 is a draw) 4...♕e6! (after 4...e4? 5 ♖e5+ ♔d6 6 ♖xe4 f3 7 ♕a6 or 4...f3? 5 ♖xe5+ ♔f6 6 ♖e1 ♔f5 7 ♕a6 h5 8 a5 the connected passed pawns are stronger than the disconnected ones) 5 ♖b5 ♖xb5+ 6 axb5 f3 7 b7 f2 8 b8♞ f1♞ and although White has an edge in this queen ending, the result should be a draw.

B



3...♔d7

After 3...♖g8? 4 b6 ♔d6 5 ♔b5 e4 6 ♖d1+ ♕e6 7 a5 f3 (7...e3 8 ♖e1 ♖g5+ 9 ♔c6 wins for White) 8 ♖f1 ♖g5+ 9 ♔c6! e3 10 ♖xf3 e2 11 ♖e3+ ♖e5 12 ♖xe2! ♖xe2 13 a6 the passed pawns are decisive.

4 ♕a6!

White must prevent Black's king from moving in front of the pawns. 4 b6?! ♕c8 makes life easy for the defender.

4...♖g7?

This loses, as does 4...♖g8? 5 b6 e4 6 b7 f3 7 ♖f1, since this transposes to the game at move 8. Black could have reached a draw by 4...♕c8!, although this requires a long series of very precise moves: 5 ♕a7 ♖g7+ 6 ♕a8 and now:

1) 6...♖b7? 7 b6! (7 ♖c1+? ♖c7 8 ♖xc7+ ♕xc7 9 a5 f3 10 b6+ ♔d7 11 b7 f2 12 b8♞ f1♞ is only a draw) 7...♖b8+ 8 ♕a7 ♖b7+ 9 ♕a6 and then:

1a) 9...♖g7 10 ♖e1 ♔b8 11 ♖xe5 ♖g8 12 ♖f5 h5 13 ♖xf4 ♖h8 14 ♖h4 ♖h7 15 a5 ♖h8 16 ♔b5, followed by a6, and White wins.

1b) 9...♖f7 10 ♖g1! f3 11 b7+ ♖xb7 12 ♖g8+ ♕c7 13 ♖g7+ ♕c6 14 ♖xb7 e4 15 ♖f7 h5 16 a5 h4 17 ♖f6+! ♕c5 (or 17...♔d7 18 ♔b7 h3 19 a6 h2 20 a7 h1♞ 21 a8♞ and Black has only one check, after which his king will be subjected to a deadly attack) 18 ♔b7 h3 19 a6 h2 20 ♖c6+, followed by ♖c1, and the a-pawn will decide the game.

2) 6...f3! 7 b6 f2 8 a5 e4 9 a6 ♖g8 10 ♖d1 e3 11 a7 ♖g7 12 ♖c1+ ♔d7 13 b7 ♖g1 14 b8♞ (14 ♖c7+? ♕xc7 15 b8♞+ ♕c6 is only a draw) 14...♖xc1 is the key position. Although White

can give a lot of checks, and even win the h7-pawn with check, Black can defend provided he plays his king to the right square every time: 15 ♖b5+ ♔c7 16 ♗e5+ ♔d7 17 ♗d4+ ♔c7 18 ♗g7+ ♔d6 19 ♗h6+ ♔c7 20 ♗xh7+ ♔d6 21 ♗h6+ ♔c7 22 ♗f4+ ♔d7 23 ♗f5+ ♔c7 24 ♗e5+ ♔d7! 25 ♖b5+ ♔c7! (these are 'only' moves for Black) 26 ♗b7+ ♔d6 and I do not see how White can win.

5 ♖c1?!

This wins, but there was a much simpler way to decide the game: 5 b6! ♔c8 6 ♖e1 transposes to line 1a of the previous note.

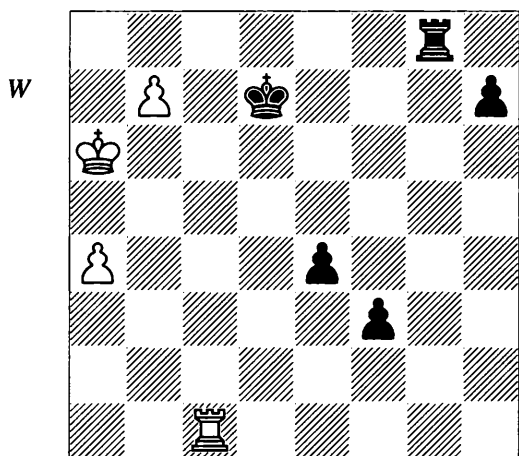
5...f3

5...e4?! allows White to win more easily by 6 b6 ♖g2 7 ♖c4 e3 8 ♖xf4 ♖b2 9 ♖f7+ ♔c6 10 ♖c7+ ♔d6 11 ♖xh7.

6 b6 e4! 7 b7

Not 7 ♖c7+? ♔e6 8 ♖xg7 f2!, when only Black can be better.

7...♖g8 (D)



8 ♖f1!

White correctly spends a tempo holding up Black's pawns. He now threatens ♔a7 followed by a5-a6.

8...♔c6 9 a5 ♔c5

Black's only hope is to play his king up to support his own pawns, and the double-edged play reaches a climax as both sides' pawns approach the queening square.

10 ♖c1+

According to Gipslis's notes in *Informator* 30, 10 ♔a7 is a losing blunder, but actually this move also wins: 10...♔d4 11 a6 (11 b8♗?

♖xb8 12 ♔xb8 e3 13 ♖d1+ is drawn) 11...e3 12 ♖d1+ ♔e5 (12...♔e4 13 b8♗ ♖xb8 14 ♔xb8 e2 15 ♖h1 f2 16 a7 and White wins as he will promote with check, giving him a decisive attack) 13 ♔b6 e2 14 ♖c1 f2 15 a7 f1 ♗16 b8♗+ and, as so often happens, the first check after both sides promote will prove decisive since Black's king is too exposed.

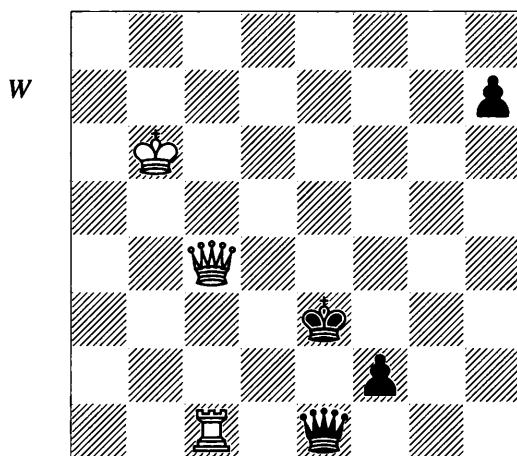
10...♔d4 11 ♔b6 f2 12 a6 e3 13 a7 e2 14 b8♗ ♖xb8+ 15 axb8♗ e1♗

15...f1 ♗16 ♗d6+ is a simple win for White. As mentioned above, having the first check after both sides promote usually guarantees a win, and that is indeed the case after the move played. However, White cannot get away with giving just any check, and after only three further moves he has given the win away.

16 ♗f4+?

The simplest win was pointed out by Gipslis: 16 ♖d1+! ♔c4 (16...♔e4 17 ♖xe1+ fxel ♗18 ♗e8+ and 16...♗xd1 17 ♗d8+ both cost Black his queen) 17 ♗f4+ ♔b3 18 ♖d3+ and White mates in a few moves.

16...♔d3 17 ♖c4+ ♔e3 (D)



18 ♖c3+?

After this move the win is gone forever. The correct line is remarkably difficult to find, and I am not surprised that in those distant pre-computer days, annotator Gipslis didn't spot it. 18 ♗b3+! (the only winning move) 18...♔e2 (18...♔f4 19 ♖c4+ ♔f5 20 ♗d3+ ♔g5 21 ♗d5+ ♔h6 22 ♖c6+ gives White a decisive attack) 19 ♖c2+ ♔f1 (after 19...♗d2 20 ♗c4+ ♔e1 21 ♖xd2 ♔xd2 22 ♗f1 White wins easily) 20

♖c8!! (this move, the only one to win, is really tough to find without a computer; the logic is that White needs a check on the g-file, but 20 ♖c7? ♗e5 doesn't work as after 21 ♗d3+ ♖g2 there is no check on g7, while 21 ♗h3+ ♖g1 22 ♗g4+ ♖f1 23 ♖c1+ ♗e1 leads to nothing) 20...♗e4 (20...♗e5 21 ♗d3+ ♖g2 22 ♖g8+ leads to mate, while 20...♗d2 loses after 21 ♗b1+ ♖g2 22 ♗e4+ ♖g1 23 ♖g8+ ♖f1 24 ♗h1+ ♖e2 25 ♖e8+ ♖d3 26 ♗d5+ ♖c2 27 ♖c8+ ♖d1 28 ♗f3+ ♖e1 29 ♖e8+) 21 ♗d1+ ♖g2 22 ♖g8+ ♗g6+ 23 ♖xg6+ hxg6 (the transfer of the pawn from h7 to g6 turns this position into a win) 24 ♗g4+ ♖h2 25 ♗f3 ♖g1 26 ♗g3+ ♖f1 27 ♖c5 ♖e2 28 ♗g2 ♖e1 29 ♗e4+ ♖d2 30 ♗f3 ♖e1 31 ♗e3+ ♖f1 32 ♖d4 ♖g2 33 ♗e2 ♖g1 34 ♗g4+ ♖h2 35 ♗f3 ♖g1 36 ♗g3+ ♖f1 37 ♖e3 and White will mate.

18...♗xc3

Forced, as the only other legal move allows mate in one.

19 ♗xc3+ ♖e2

It is perhaps surprising that White cannot win this position as the pawn on h7 destroys the stalemate which generally enables Black to draw with a pawn on f2. However, Black is able to play ...h5, after which White faces a choice: either to take the h5-pawn, which revives the stalemate, or to leave it on the board, but then he lacks a queen check on g4 and so cannot drive Black's king in front of the f-pawn.

20 ♗c2+ ♖f1 21 ♖c5?!

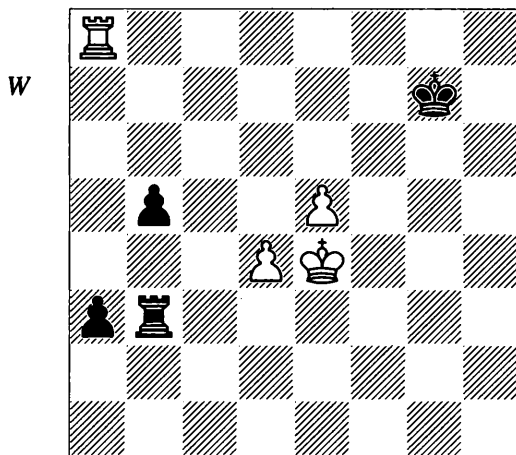
This makes life easy for Black, but the position is also a draw after 21 ♗d1+ ♖g2 22 ♗g4+ ♖f1 23 ♖c5 h5! 24 ♗h3+ ♖e2 25 ♗g2 ♖e1 26 ♗e4+ ♖d2 27 ♗f3 ♖e1 28 ♗e3+ ♖f1 29 ♖d4 ♖g2 and further progress is impossible.

21...♖g1 1/2-1/2

White cannot prevent an immediate pawn promotion.

It is quite common for endings of this type to be transformed into an ending with queens after one or both sides promote. Our final two examples deal with this type of transformation.

This ending has been analysed several times, for example in *Informator 16, Exploring the Endgame* by Peter Griffiths (A. & C. Black, 1984) and my own *Tactical Chess Endings*



Estrin – Pytel
Albena 1973

(George Allen & Unwin, 1981; second edition, Batsford, 1988). Although the *Tactical Chess Endings* analysis uncovered some subtleties which had eluded earlier analysts, my 1981 analysis nevertheless included a number of mistakes. Now I hope that it will finally be possible to offer a definitive analysis of this ending.

Both sides have two connected passed pawns, but the advantage lies with White because his pawns are supported by his king. Tactics often abound in situations involving several passed pawns, and this position is no exception.

1 d5 b4

Or 1...♖b4+ 2 ♖d3 ♖b3+ (2...♖f4 3 d6 ♖f8 4 ♖a7+ ♖g6 5 ♖e4 b4 6 ♖d5 ♖b8 7 e6 b3 8 e7 b2 9 d7 b1 ♗10 e8 ♗+ also wins for White) 3 ♖c2 ♖b2+ 4 ♖c1 b4 5 d6 and White wins.

2 d6 ♖b1 3 ♖a7+!

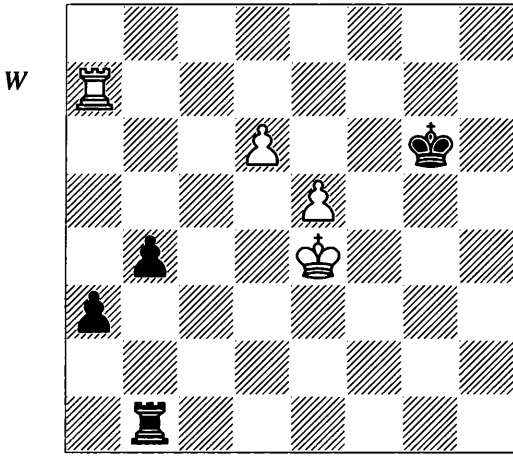
Not 3 d7? ♖d1! 4 e6 (4 d8 ♗? ♖xd8 5 ♖xd8 a2 wins for Black, while 4 ♖a7 ♖f8! 5 e6 ♖e7 6 ♖e5 ♖e1+ 7 ♖d5 is also drawn) 4...♖f6 5 ♖a6 (5 d8 ♗+?! ♖xd8 6 ♖xd8 b3 7 ♖d5 a2 8 ♖a8 b2 9 ♖xa2 b1 ♗10 ♖f2+ ♖e7 11 ♖f7+ ♖e8 is also a draw, but with White on the defensive) 5...♖e7 6 ♖e5 ♖e1+ leads to a draw.

However, White could also have won by 3 e6! b3 (3...♖e1+ 4 ♖f5 ♖f1+ 5 ♖g5! ♖g1+ 6 ♖h4 ♖h1+ 7 ♖g3 is similar) 4 ♖xa3! (4 d7? is met by 4...♖d1! 5 ♖xa3 b2 6 ♖b3 ♖f6 7 ♖xb2 ♖xe6, drawing) 4...b2 (4...♖d1 5 ♖e5 wins for White) 5 ♖b3 ♖e1+ (5...♖d1 6 ♖e5 b1 ♗7 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 8 d7 and White wins) 6 ♖f5! (not 6 ♖d5? b1 ♗7 ♖xb1 ♖xb1, when 8 ♖c6 ♖f8 9

♠d7 ♖e1 is a draw, while 8 d7? even loses after 8...♗d1+ 9 ♜e5 ♜f8) 6...♗f1+ 7 ♜g5 ♗g1+ 8 ♜f4 ♗f1+ 9 ♜g3 ♗g1+ 10 ♜f2 b1♗ 11 ♗xb1 ♗xb1 12 d7 ♗d1 13 e7 and White reaches the ending of ♗ vs ♗. The move played is at least as strong, so there is no reason to criticize it.

3...♜g6 (D)

3...♜f8 loses at once to 4 e6, so this is forced.



4 d7?

This is one of the new discoveries in the current analysis. I did not remark on this move in *Tactical Chess Endings*, while Griffiths even gave it an exclamation mark, but it throws away the win. It is better to push the e-pawn first, because then White can choose which pawn to advance first to the seventh rank. The winning line runs 4 e6! b3 (4...♗e1+ 5 ♜d5 does not help Black) 5 ♗xa3 ♗e1+ (5...♜f6 6 e7 b2 7 ♗f3+ ♜g5 8 ♗b3 ♜f6 9 ♜d5) 6 ♜d5 (compared to the analysis of 3 e6, White's king can no longer move to f5, but now there is an alternative win) 6...b2 7 ♗b3 b1♗ 8 ♗xb1 ♗xb1 9 d7 (this wins now that Black's king is on g6 rather than g7) 9...♗d1+ 10 ♜e5 ♗e1+ 11 ♜f4 and Black will eventually be forced into an ending of ♗ vs ♗.

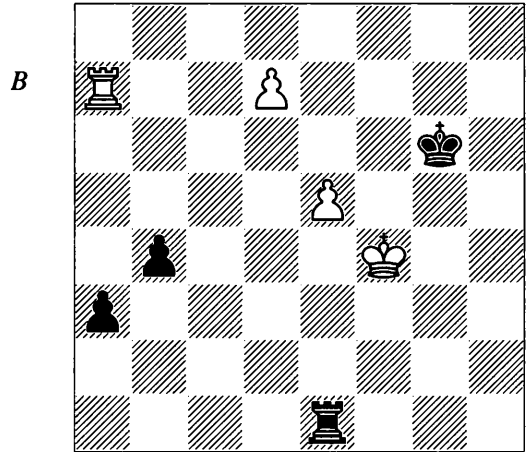
4...♗e1+!

The only drawing move. 4...♗d1? loses after 5 ♗a6+ ♜f7 6 ♗d6 ♗xd6 7 exd6 a2 8 d8♗ al ♗ 9 ♗c7+! (9 ♗e7+ ♜g6 10 ♗e8+ ♜g7 11 ♗d7+ also wins, but is more difficult; not, however, 10 ♗e6+? in this line, which is only a draw after 10...♗f6) 9...♜f6 10 d7 (there is no perpetual

check) 10...♗h1+ 11 ♜d4 ♗g1+ 12 ♜d5 ♗g2+ 13 ♜c5 ♗f2+ 14 ♜xb4 ♗b2+ 15 ♜a5 ♗a3+ 16 ♜b6 ♗b4+ 17 ♜a7 ♗a4+ 18 ♜b7 and Black runs out of checks thanks to the unfortunate position of his king.

5 ♜f4 (D)

5 ♜d3 also fails to win after 5...b3! (but not 5...♗d1+? 6 ♜c2 ♗d5 7 e6 ♜f6 8 ♗a8 a2 9 ♜b2 ♗d2+ 10 ♜a1 ♜e7 11 ♗e8+, when White wins) 6 ♜c3 b2 7 d8♗ ♗c1+ 8 ♜d2 ♗d1+ 9 ♜xd1 b1♗+ 10 ♜e2 ♗e4+ 11 ♜d2 ♗b4+ 12 ♜d3 ♗b5+ and White is unable to escape from the checks without losing his rook on a7.



5...♗f1+?!

This does not throw the draw away, but it does make it more difficult. The safest line was 5...♗d1! 6 ♗a6+ (6 e6 ♜f6) 6...♜f7 7 ♗d6 ♗xd6 8 exd6 a2 9 d8♗ al ♗ 10 ♗e7+ (10 ♗c7+ ♜g6! 11 d7 ♗d4+ is an immediate draw, revealing why the white king is worse placed on f4 than on e4) 10...♜g8! 11 ♗e6+ ♜f8! 12 ♗f5+ ♜e8! 13 ♗c8+ ♜f7 and White cannot make progress.

6 ♜e4 ♗e1+ 7 ♜f4 ♗f1+?!

Missing the second chance for a relatively simple draw.

8 ♜e3 ♗d1!

Now that the king is on e3 rather than e4, this move draws, and indeed it is the only move to save the game. 8...♗f8? is wrong because of 9 ♗a6+! (9 ♜e4? ♗d8! 10 ♜d5 b3 11 ♗xa3 ♗xd7+ is an evident draw) 9...♜g7 (9...♜f7 10 ♗f6+ and White wins) 10 ♜d4 ♗b8 11 ♜d5! b3 12 ♗xa3 b2 13 ♗g3+! ♜h7 (13...♜f8 14 ♗b3

and 13...♔f7 14 e6+ ♔e7 15 ♖g7+ ♔f6 16 ♖f7+ ♔g5 17 ♖f1 are also winning for White) 14 ♖g1 b1♚ 15 ♖xb1 ♖xb1 16 e6 and White wins.

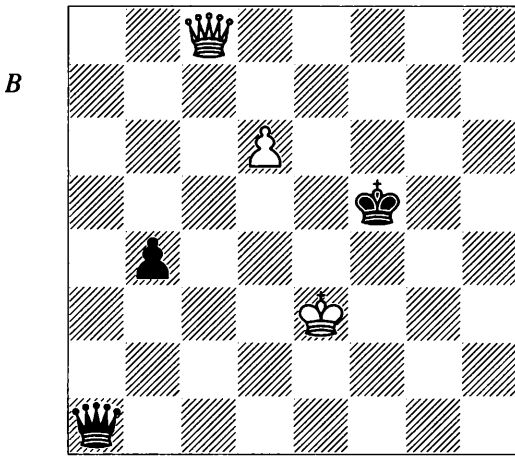
9 ♖a6+ ♔f5!

Thanks to the difference in the position of the white king, Black's own king can occupy this more active position.

10 ♖d6 ♖xd6 11 exd6 a2 12 d8♚ a1♚

We have seen several endgames of this type in the analysis. This is a relatively favourable case for Black due to his better king position, but accurate play is still required.

13 ♚c8+! (D)



The best chance; Black's king cannot move to the long diagonal and so must move away from the white pawn.

13...♔g6?

Informator and *Exploring the Endgame* both considered Black's position to be already lost, whereas my 1981 analysis gave this as the decisive error. I felt satisfied when, 25 years later, the 6-man databases vindicated my pre-computer work. However, the databases now allow me to give a far more complete picture of the position than was possible previously.

The reason why this move loses was already foreshadowed in the note to Black's fourth move. After White plays d7, Black must hope to give immediate perpetual check. However, if Black's king is on g6 and White plays his king to the a8-corner, there is the possibility of White interposing his queen with check, on, for example, a6 or c6. Therefore 13...♔g5! is correct:

1) 14 ♚c5+ ♔f6 is safe.

2) 14 ♚g8+ ♔h6! (14...♔f5? 15 ♚f7+ ♚f6 16 ♚d5+ ♔g6 17 d7 ♚d8 18 ♔d3 b3 19 ♔c3 leads to a winning position for White) 15 ♚e6+ ♔g7 and White is not making progress.

3) 14 d7 ♚e5+! (Black must not allow White to play his king to the a8-corner without taking the black pawn, because the pawn will obstruct some vital checks from Black; for example, after 14...♚e1+? 15 ♔d4 ♚d2+ 16 ♔c5 ♚e3+ 17 ♔c6 ♚f3+ 18 ♔b6 Black lacks a check on b3 and loses) 15 ♔d3 ♚d5+! 16 ♔c2 (the attempt to avoid taking the pawn by playing via c1 and b2 fails after 16 ♔e2 ♚e4+ 17 ♔d2 ♚d4+! 18 ♔c1 ♚a1+ and the king is kept away from b2) 16...b3+! (the only way to force White to take the pawn) 17 ♔c3 ♚a5+ 18 ♔xb3 ♚b5+ 19 ♔c3 and now:

3a) 19...♚a5+? (if Black's queen gets out of position, he may not be able to answer ♔a7 by ...♚a5+) 20 ♔c4 ♚a2+ 21 ♔c5 ♚a3+ (or 21...♚a5+ 22 ♔d6 ♚d2+ 23 ♔e7 ♚b4+ 24 ♔e8 ♚e4+ 25 ♔d8 and White wins) 22 ♔d4 and here:

3a1) 22...♚d6+ 23 ♔c4 ♚e6+ 24 ♔b4 ♚b6+ 25 ♔a4 (now Black must switch to rear checks) 25...♚d4+ 26 ♔a5 ♚e5+ 27 ♔a6 ♚f6+ 28 ♔b7 ♚b2+ 29 ♔a8 ♚a3+ 30 ♔b8 ♚b2+ 31 ♚b7 ♚h8+ 32 ♔c7 ♚e5+ 33 ♔c8 and the checks come to an end.

3a2) 22...♚a1+ 23 ♔d5 is typical; since 23...♚a5+ is met by 24 ♚c5, Black must start checking from behind, but his queen is out of position: 23...♚d1+ 24 ♔c5 ♚g1+ 25 ♔c6 ♚g2+ 26 ♔c7 ♚h2+ 27 ♔b7 ♚b2+ 28 ♔a8 and White wins as in line 3a1.

3b) 19...♚e5+! (this is the only move to ensure that Black can meet ♔a7 by ...♚a5+, which is essential if he is to draw) 20 ♔c4 ♚e2+! 21 ♔c5 ♚e3+! (by checking from this direction, Black can always keep his queen relatively close to White's king) 22 ♔d6 ♚d4+ 23 ♔c6 ♚c4+ 24 ♔b7 ♚b5+ 25 ♔a7 ♚a5+! (the key check) 26 ♚a6 (26 ♔b8 ♚b6+ 27 ♚b7 ♚d8+ is the same) 26...♚c7+ 27 ♚b7 ♚a5+ with a draw.

14 d7

Now White wins.

14...♚e5+ 15 ♔d2 ♚d4+ 16 ♔c2 b3+ 17 ♔xb3

Black employs the same plan as in the note to Black's 13th move, but with his king on g6 it is doomed to failure.

17...♖d3+ 18 ♔a4 ♗d4+ 19 ♔a5 ♗d5+ 20 ♔b6 ♗d4+ 21 ♔b7 ♗b4+ 22 ♔a7 ♗d4+ 23 ♔a8!

23 ♔b8?! ♗b6+ forces White to go round again if he wants to win: 24 ♔a8 ♗a5+ 25 ♔b7 ♗b4+ 26 ♔a7 returning to the position at move 22.

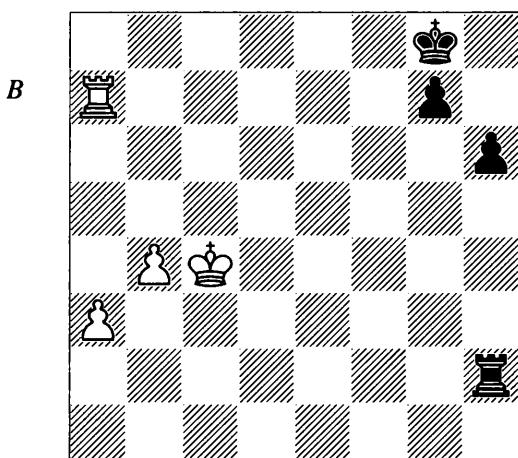
23...♗d5+

23...♗a4+ 24 ♔b8 ♗b4+ 25 ♗b7 ♗f8+ 26 ♔a7 also ends the checks.

24 ♔b8 ♗e5+ 25 ♗c7 ♗b5+ 26 ♔a7 1-0

After 26...♗a4+ 27 ♔b7 the checks end and the pawn promotes.

Now we tackle a really tricky position. If the result of the queen ending is hard to determine, then it can affect decisions made while still in the rook ending.

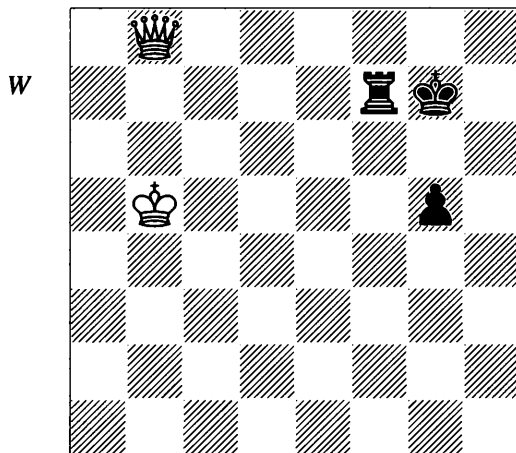


Kovaliov – Schipkov
USSR 1985

This is a difficult position to assess since the white and black pawns are equally advanced (as Black is to move), but White has the advantage that his king is better placed to support his pawns than Black's. Moreover, the position of Black's king on the back rank is unfortunate, since it may allow White to promote with check. One factor in Black's favour is that his rook can immediately move behind the white pawns, whereas White has more trouble manoeuvring his rook to hold up the enemy pawns' advance.

White certainly has whatever winning chances there are in the position, but it is doubtful if his advantage is sufficient for victory. Schipkov's notes in *Informator 40* incorrectly claimed that both sides played accurately throughout this ending.

Various endings with ♖ vs ♔+♕ can arise in the analysis, and it is worthwhile looking at these first.



Kovaliov – Schipkov
Analysis diagram

The errors in Schipkov's analysis can be traced back to the fact that he considered this position to be a draw, whereas in fact it is won for White. However, the win is very long and complex; indeed, it takes White 86 moves to mate. This evaluation is unchanged by the 50-move rule, since from the diagram White can, if he wishes, force a capture or pawn move within 37 moves (although this line is significantly different from that which leads to the quickest mate).

1 ♗e5+!

The only move to win. White must take immediate steps to disrupt Black's position, since if Black can get his king to g6 or h6 and his rook to f4 then it is a draw. It is also a draw if Black's rook is on f4 and his king is on g7, except if White can immediately play his queen to h5.

1...♔g6

Or 1...♔h6 2 ♗h8+ ♔g6 3 ♗g8+ ♖g7 4 ♗e6+ ♔h7 5 ♗e5! (Black is now far away from the drawing set-up) 5...♔g4 (after 5...♔h6 6 ♔c5 the king gradually approaches) 6 ♗g3 (pushing

the pawn to g4 usually doesn't help Black, since positions with his rook defending the pawn from behind are lost; he can only draw with the pawn on g4 if he can defend the pawn with his king and position his rook on the f-file, where it cuts off the white king) 6...♖g6 7 ♔c5 ♕h6 8 ♔d4 ♕h5 9 ♖h2+ ♔g5 10 ♖e5+ ♕h6 11 ♖h8+ ♔g5 12 ♕e5 and White wins.

2 ♖e8 ♔g7 3 ♔c5!

The only move to win; 3 ♔c6? ♖f6+ 4 ♔d5 ♕h6 and 3 ♔c4? ♖f4+ 4 ♔d5 ♕h6 both allow Black to reach a draw.

3...♖f4

Otherwise White just approaches with his king, but now Black is threatening ...♕h6 so White must take action.

4 ♖h5!

4 ♖e6? is only a draw as Black can just wait with ...♕h7 and ...♔g7.

4...♕f6 5 ♔d5

Threatening to win at once by 6 ♖h6+.

5...♖h4 6 ♖e8!

The only move to win. 6 ♖e2? ♔g6! draws.

6...♖f4 7 ♖g8

White has made some progress and the next step is to play his king to f8.

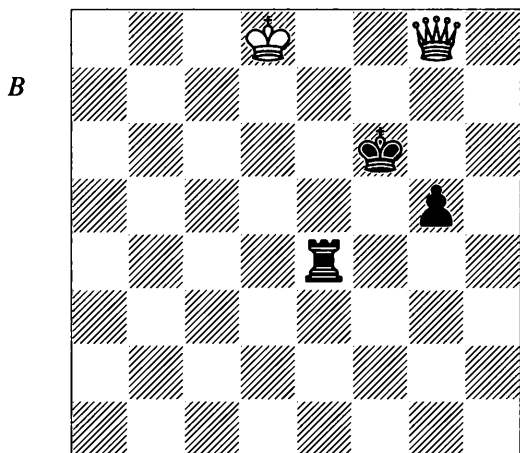
7...♖f5+

7...♖h4 8 ♔c6 ♖f4 9 ♔d7 transposes.

8 ♔d6 ♖f4 9 ♔d7 ♖e4

Black tries to prevent the king's march. Other moves lose far more quickly.

10 ♔d8 (D)



Putting Black in zugzwang.

10...g4

Or 10...♔f5 11 ♖d5+ ♔f4 12 ♖d6+ ♔g4 13 ♖d1+ ♔f4 14 ♖f1+ ♔g4 15 ♖g2+ ♔f5 16 ♖f3+ ♖f4 17 ♖h5! ♖e4 18 ♔d7 ♔f6 19 ♖h6+ ♔f5 20 ♖h7+ ♔f4 21 ♖h2+ ♔g4 22 ♖g2+ ♔f5 23 ♖c2 ♔f4 24 ♔d6 ♖e3 25 ♖f2+ ♖f3 26 ♖h2+ ♔f5 27 ♖h5 ♖e3 28 ♖f7+ ♔g4 29 ♖f2 ♖f3 30 ♖g2+ ♔f4 31 ♔e6 g4 32 ♔f6 g3 33 ♖d2+ ♖e3 34 ♖d5 ♖e2 35 ♖c4+ ♔e3 36 ♖c1+ ♔e4 37 ♔g5 g2 38 ♔g4 ♖b2 39 ♔g3 and White wins much as in the main line.

11 ♖h7 ♖e5 12 ♖h2 ♔f5 13 ♖g3 ♖e4 14 ♔d7 ♖f4 15 ♔e7 ♖f3 16 ♖h4 g3

If you have a good memory, then you'll realise that White has only one move to win here.

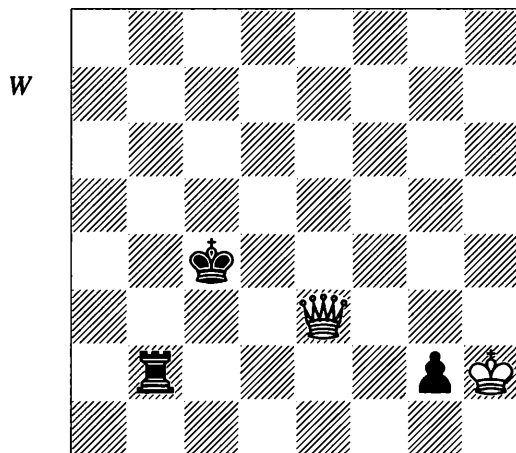
17 ♔e8!!

This astonishing move, which puts Black in zugzwang, was already mentioned on page 62. After 17 ♔d6? g2 18 ♖h2 ♖f2 19 ♖g3 ♖e2! Black cuts off the white king and draws.

17...g2 18 ♖h2 ♖f2 19 ♖g3 ♖a2 20 ♔f7

Now the white king crosses to the h-file, eventually to make its way to h2, where it frees the white queen for further manoeuvres.

20...♖a7+ 21 ♔g8 ♖a2 22 ♔g7 ♖a7+ 23 ♕h6 ♖a2 24 ♕h5 ♔f6 25 ♖f4+ ♔e6 26 ♖e3+ ♔f6 27 ♖b6+ ♔f5 28 ♖g6+ ♔e5 29 ♖g5+ ♔d4 30 ♔h4 ♔d3 31 ♖d5+ ♔c3 32 ♖c5+ ♔b3 33 ♔g3 ♖c2 34 ♖d4 ♖d2 35 ♖e3+ ♔c4 36 ♔h2 ♖b2 (D)



It is remarkable that White can only win in the initial position by allowing Black to advance his pawn to g2. White's plan now is to drive Black's king to the kingside, where it falls within the influence of White's king.

37 ♖a3 ♜c2 38 ♔g1 ♜d2 39 ♖c1+ ♔d3 40 ♖c5 ♜c2 41 ♖b4 ♜d2 42 ♔h2

A waiting move, since any reply loosens Black's defensive formation.

42...♜e2 43 ♖b5+ ♔e3 44 ♖d5 ♜d2 45 ♖c4 ♜e2 46 ♖c3+ ♔f2

Now the white king can help in the attack and Black soon loses his pawn.

47 ♖g3+ ♔f1 48 ♖f4+ ♔e1 49 ♖d4 ♜f2 50 ♖b6! ♔e2 51 ♔g1

White wins the g-pawn, after which it's only 30 moves to mate.

Now let's go back to the analysis diagram and consider how small changes in the position affect the result. The first point is that if the white queen starts on a8, then White still wins by playing 1 ♖d5! ♔g6 2 ♖e4+! ♔h6 3 ♖e6+ ♔g7 4 ♖e5+ ♔g6 5 ♖e8, transposing into the above analysis.

If we return the queen to b8 and move Black's king to h7, then White wins considerably more quickly by starting 1 ♖d8! ♜f5+ 2 ♔c6! ♔h6 3 ♖h8+ ♔g6 4 ♖g8+ and now 4...♔h6 is impossible due to 5 ♖e6+, so Black has to abandon his defensive formation.

Now put the king back on g7, and suppose the white king is on a different square. If the king is on b6 or c6 then the position is a draw because 1 ♖e5+ ♜f6+ is check and so Black has time for ...♔g6. If the king is on d6 then White is close enough to win by 1 ♖d8!. If the white king is on b4 White wins much as above by 1 ♖e5+, while with the king on c4 or d4 White wins far more quickly.

Finally, if the white king is further back, on the third rank, then the position is a draw. For example, it's a draw if White's king is on e3, since after 1 ♖e5+ ♔g6! 2 ♖e8 ♔g7! any attempt to play the king to the fourth rank is met by ...♜f4+ followed by ...♔h6.

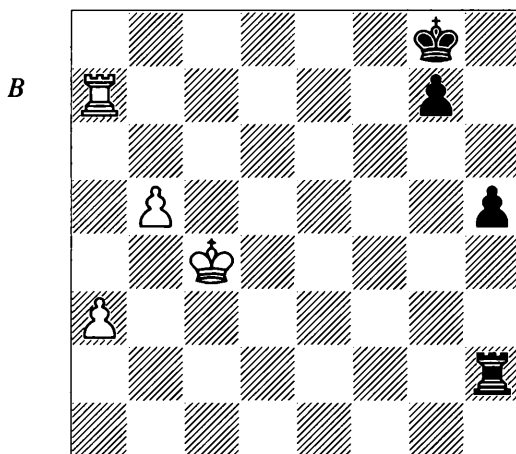
Now we return to the game position.

1...h5

The h-pawn is the one to advance; it is furthest away from White's forces, and pushing the g-pawn would leave Black's king trapped on the back rank. It may be that Black will ultimately have to advance the g-pawn in any case,

but given a free choice it is definitely better to start with the h-pawn.

2 b5 (D)



2...♜b2?

Schipkov does not comment on this move, but it seems definitely wrong to me since it is by no means clear that the rook is best posted on b2. If White pushes the a-pawn, it might be better to move the rook to a2 instead, while in many lines the best plan is to play ...♜h1 and then advance the pawn to h2. This decision is all the harder to understand in that there was no need to commit the rook at this early stage, since Black could have moved the h-pawn up first, leaving the decision about where to move the rook for later. After 2...h4! I think Black can draw; for example, 3 ♜e7 (3 b6 ♜b2 4 b7 ♔h7 offers White no winning chances as his rook is stuck) 3...h3 4 a4 (4 ♜e1 g5 provides Black with sufficient counterplay) 4...♜h1! (this is awkward for White, as his king is far from shelter) 5 ♜e2 h2 6 ♜c2 g5 7 b6 ♜b1 8 ♜xh2 ♜xb6 and now the draw is clear.

3 ♜e7!

Preparing to switch the rook back to the first rank to stop the h-pawn. Then Black will have to push the g-pawn in order to create meaningful threats, which is rather slow.

3...h4 4 a4 h3

4...♜a2 5 ♔b3 ♜a1 6 ♜e4 g5 7 ♜g4 costs Black a pawn.

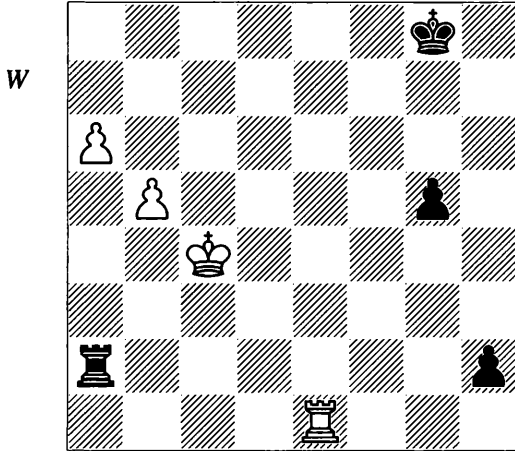
5 a5 h2

Black may as well push the pawn to the seventh rank, since 5...♔f8?! is met with 6 ♜e1 g5

7 a6 ♖a2 8 ♜b1! followed by b6, winning quickly.

6 ♜e1 g5 7 a6 ♖a2 (D)

Forced, since 7...g4 8 a7 ♖a2 9 b6 is hopeless for Black.



8 ♜h1!

A very strong move, threatening to win by 9 ♜xh2. Black's g-pawn is too slow to support its colleague.

8...♙g7

This is given a double exclamation mark by Schipkov, although it doesn't really change the situation since Black also loses after other moves:

1) 8...g4 9 ♜xh2! ♜xh2 10 a7 ♖a2 11 b6 and now both 11...♙h7 12 b7 ♖xa7 13 b8♖ and 11...♙g7 12 b7 ♖xa7 13 b8♖ are winning endings of ♖ vs ♜+♙.

2) 8...♙f7 9 ♜xh2! (9 ♙b3 ♖a5 10 ♙b4 ♖a2 makes no real difference – the king is neither better nor worse placed on b4) 9...♜xh2 10 a7 ♖a2 11 b6 ♙g7 effectively transposes into the note to White's 12th move.

9 ♙b3

White repeats moves.

9...♖a5 10 ♙c4 ♖a2 11 ♜xh2!

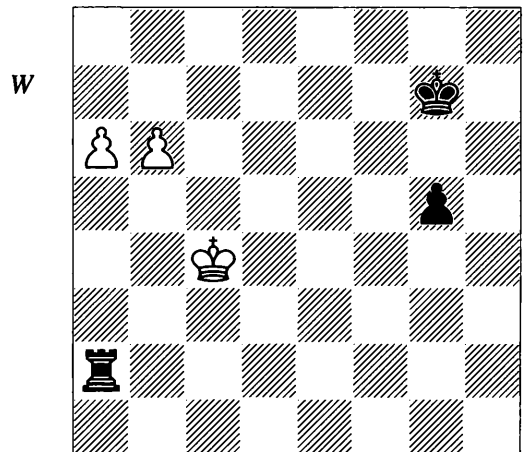
This wins, although the win is extremely long and complicated; indeed, my computer announces a mate in 92 at this point. This might seem an impossible task in practice, but it is worth bearing in mind that defending such positions is usually even more difficult than playing the attacking side.

11...♜xh2 12 b6?

An error which allows Black to escape with a draw. In the subsequent analysis, several endings arise with a queen against a rook and a g5-pawn, and then we have to refer back to the analysis diagram. The winning line runs 12 a7! ♖a2 (12...♜h4+ 13 ♙c5 ♖a4 14 b6 ♖a5+ 15 ♙b4 ♖a1 16 ♙b5 ♖a2 17 b7 ♖xa7 18 b8♖ ♜f7 leads exactly to the analysis diagram) 13 b6 (now Black has a free move, but there's no way he can improve his position since playing his king to h7 or pushing the g-pawn only handicaps him further in the ♖ vs ♜+♙ ending) 13...♖a1 14 ♙b5! (White must not play 14 b7? immediately since 14...♖xa7 15 b8♖ ♖a4+! 16 ♙d5 ♜f4 enables Black to set up the drawing position) 14...♖a2 (14...♜b1+ only makes matters worse by driving the white king nearer: 15 ♙c5! ♖a1 16 b7) 15 b7 ♖xa7 16 b8♖ ♜f7, and we have reached the analysis diagram.

12...♖a2? (D)

Black makes a mistake in return. He could have drawn by 12...♜c2+! (12...♜b2! 13 ♙c5 ♜c2+! draws the same way) 13 ♙d5 (13 ♙b5 ♜b2+ 14 ♙c6 ♜c2+ 15 ♙b7 g4 16 a7 ♖a2 is a draw, while 13 ♙b3 ♜c6 14 b7 ♖xa6 15 b8♖ ♜f6 16 ♖e5 ♙g6 reaches the usual drawing position) 13...♜d2+ 14 ♙e6 ♜b2! 15 b7 ♜b6+ 16 ♙f5 (16 ♙d5 ♖xa6 17 b8♖ ♜f6 18 ♖e5 ♙g6 is the same draw again) 16...♜b5+ (or 16...♜h6 17 a7 ♜xb7 18 a8♖ ♜f7+ followed by ...♜f4 and again Black is safe) 17 ♙g4 ♙g6 18 a7 ♜b4+ 19 ♙g3 ♜xb7 20 a8♖ ♜b3+ 21 ♙f2 ♜b2+ 22 ♙e3 ♜b3+ 23 ♙e2 ♜b2+ 24 ♙d3 ♜f2! and the rook occupies the crucial f-file.



13 a7

Now White is once again winning. He must move his king to b5 and then play b7 in order to reach the analysis diagram.

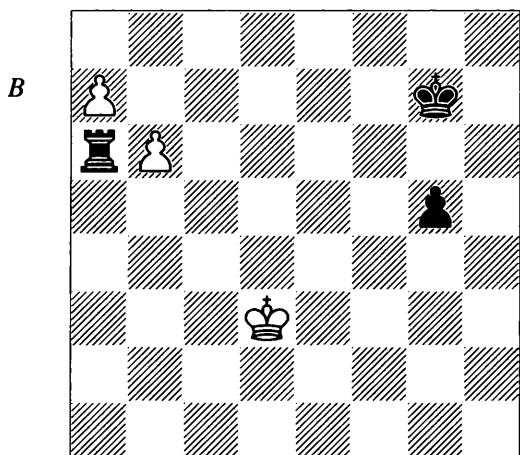
13...♖a6

A good practical choice, since Black doesn't just wait for White to play b7 but introduces the possibility of forcing the issue by ...♖xb6.

14 ♔d3? (D)

White goes the wrong way with his king and now Black is able to draw. 14 b7? is also wrong as 14...♖xa7 15 b8♖ ♖a4+ followed by ...♖f4 draws.

14 ♔b5! ♖a1 15 b7 ♖xa7 16 b8♖ ♖f7 17 ♖e5+ is the winning line, as we have seen before.

**14...♖xb6!**

Black takes advantage of White's mistake and immediately heads for the drawing position.

15 a8♖ ♖f6 16 ♖h1 ♖f4

This draws, as does the safer continuation 16...♔g6.

17 ♖h5

White gets his queen to h5, but this position is a draw because the white king is cut off along the fourth rank. When a similar position arose in the analysis diagram, White's king was more actively posted on d5 and this enabled him to win.

17...♔f6 18 ♔e3 ♔f5

White cannot make any real progress.

19 ♖h3+ ♔g6 20 ♖h8 ♔f5 21 ♖h5 ♔f6
1/2-1/2

Summary:

- Endings in which both sides have connected passed pawns are likely to be very tactical, especially if the pawns are far advanced. Factors such as promoting with check, or who gets the first check after both sides promote, may prove decisive.
- Whose pawns are further advanced is certainly an important factor, but it's not the only one; for example, connected passed pawns will be much stronger if they are supported by the king. Without the king, such pawns can often only edge forward slowly. Rook position is another factor. It's bad to have your rook blocking your own pawns, while it's good if your rook can quickly switch behind the enemy pawns to hold them up.
- It's often necessary to decide whether to push your own pawns as quickly as possible, or to spend some time countering the advance of the enemy pawns. Such decisions depend very much on the precise position, but my impression is that it's usually necessary to take at least some action to slow down the enemy pawns.
- If one or both sides promote, endings such as ♖ vs ♖+♗ or ♖+♗ vs ♖ can easily arise. In marginal cases, these endings can be hard to assess, and a good grasp of the general principles governing such endings is very helpful.

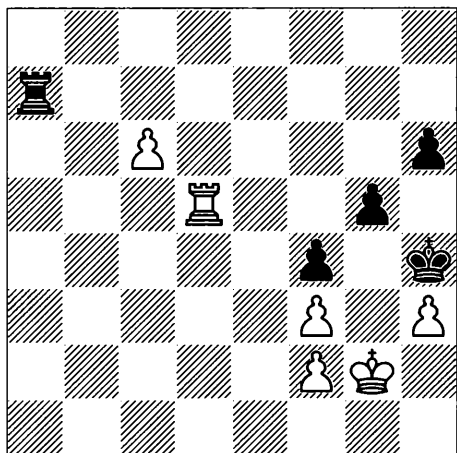
8.11 Miscellaneous Tactical Ideas

In this section we examine a few examples of specific tactical ideas that arise in rook endings. Stalemate is not covered as we already looked at this in Section 8.3.3.

8.11.1 Triangulation

Tempo-losing manoeuvres are not uncommon in rook endings, and we have already seen some examples of triangulation; for example, Sedina-Jenni (page 59) and Milos-Oblitas (page 142). However, the following case is especially clear-cut.

B



R. Marić – Vo. Petrović
Yugoslavia 1974

1...♖c7 2 ♖c5 ♕h5

This position looks winning for White, since he has an outside passed pawn supported from behind by his rook. Occasionally one can win such positions by marching the king across to the pawn, either forcing the opposing king to abandon the kingside or winning the enemy rook. Here, however, this is impossible due to White's weakened kingside pawn-structure; if White plays ♕f1-e2, Black just takes the h-pawn with his king.

It is far more common for such positions to be won by playing on the side opposite the passed pawn (here the kingside). Zugzwang is a common weapon since the enemy rook is usually paralysed by having to blockade the passed pawn. White's first step is to liquidate the weak h-pawn.

3 ♖c2!

This is just a tempo move, in order to reach the position with ♖c1 vs ♕h4 with Black to play.

3...♕h4 4 ♖c1 ♕h5

Forced, as 4...h5 5 ♖c5 g4 6 hxg4 hxg4 7 fxg4 ♕xg4 8 f3+ ♕h4 9 ♕f2 puts Black in a fatal zugzwang.

5 h4! g4

With White's rook on c1, Black cannot play 5...♕xh4? due to 6 ♖h1#, while after 5...gxh4 6 ♕h3 followed by ♖c5+ Black will lose his h4- and f4-pawns. Finally, 5...♕g6 allows White's king to penetrate and he wins by 6 ♕h3 ♕f5 7 ♖c5+ ♕g6 8 ♕g4 ♕f6 9 ♖c1 (White loses a tempo with his rook to pass the move to Black)

9...♕g6 10 ♖c2 (note that White mustn't exchange on g5 too soon as then he might be mated by ...♖h7 and ...♖h4#) 10...♕f6 11 hxg5+ hxg5 12 ♖c5 and Black is in a fatal zugzwang.
6 fxg4+

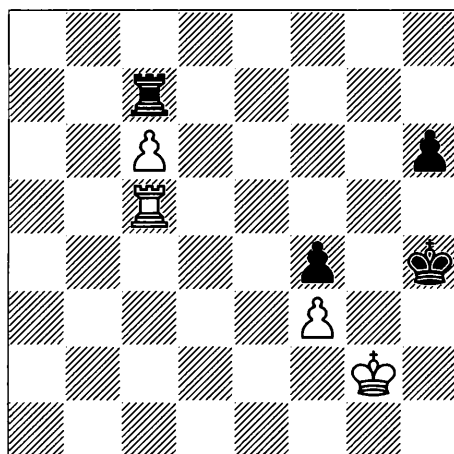
6 ♖c5+ ♕xh4 7 fxg4 ♕xg4 8 f3+ ♕h4 9 ♕f2 h5 10 ♕g2 is a slightly quicker way of arriving at the position after White's 11th move.

6...♕xg4 7 f3+ ♕xh4

7...♕f5 8 ♕f2 ♕e5 9 ♕e2 ♕d4 (9...♕d6 10 ♕d3 ♖xc6 11 ♖xc6+ ♕xc6 12 ♕e4 and White wins) 10 ♕d2 is winning for White since Black will gradually be forced back.

8 ♖c5 (D)

B



Now Black's king is caught in a box.

8...♖g7+

8...h5 9 ♕f2 is an immediately fatal zugzwang.

9 ♕f1!

This triangulation is the simplest way to win.

9...♖c7 10 ♕f2

Now Black must use up his sole reserve tempo, after which White simply repeats the triangulation.

10...h5 11 ♕g2 ♖g7+ 12 ♕f1! ♖g2

A last trick. 12...♖c7 13 ♕f2 finishes Black off at once.

13 ♖xh5+ 1-0

Not, of course, 13 ♕xg2?? stalemate.

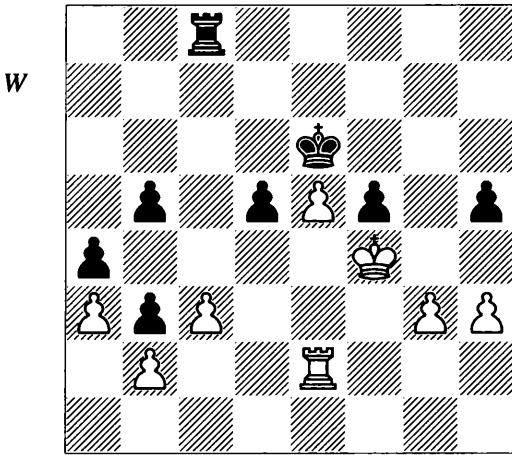
Summary:

- Tempo-losing manoeuvres are quite common in rook and pawn endings. Sometimes it is

possible to lose a tempo by manoeuvring with the rook (as also occurred in the above example), but occasionally it is necessary to triangulate with the king, much as in king and pawn endings.

8.11.2 Breakthrough

The possibility of a pawn breakthrough can arise in any type of endgame. They are not especially common in rook endgames, but do occur from time to time.



Loskutov – Belozero

Russian Ch qualifier, Tomsk 2004

White has a miserable position since Black has a large space advantage on the queenside, which means that if his rook ever penetrates and takes the b2-pawn, he will be able to make a queen very quickly. If White waits then he will lose; for example, 1 ♖e1 ♜c4+ 2 ♔f3 ♜e4 3 ♜xe4 (or else the e5-pawn falls) 3...dxe4+ 4 ♔f4 ♔d5 and Black wins. Therefore, White decided to play actively.

1 ♔g5

Now Black could still continue 1...♜c4, with fair chances of success, but the distant white king provides Black with the opportunity to finish the game crisply with a single tactical stroke.

1...b4!

A very attractive move: Black offers a pawn so that he can decisively break into White's position.

2 cxb4

Or 2 axb4 ♜xc3 3 b5 (after 3 bxc3 a3 the pawns cannot be stopped) 3...♜xg3+ 4 ♔h4 ♜g8 5 ♔xh5 ♜b8 6 ♔g5 ♜xb5 (threatening ...a3) 7 ♜e1 ♜c5 8 ♜a1 ♜c2 9 ♜xa4 ♔xe5 10 ♜a1 ♜g2+ 11 ♔h4 ♜xb2 with an easy win for Black.

2...♜c2

Now the white king cannot defend the rook, so White must abandon his b-pawn.

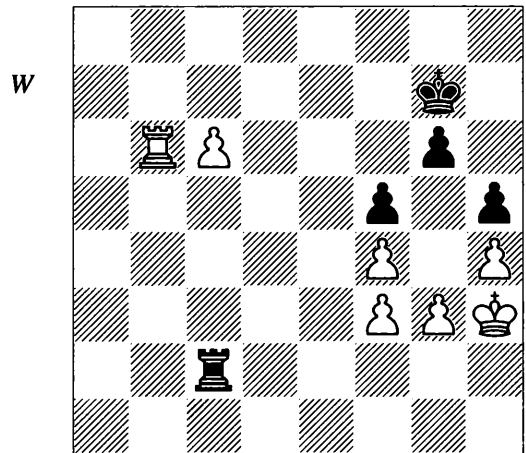
3 ♜e1 ♜xb2 4 ♔xh5 ♜c2 5 ♔g5 d4 6 b5 d3 7 b6 ♜c6 8 ♔f4

8 ♜b1 d2 9 b7 ♜b6 10 ♔f4 ♜xb7 11 ♔e3 ♜d7 is also a win for Black.

8...d2 0-1

Black wins after 9 ♜d1 b2 10 b7 (or 10 ♔e3 ♜c1) 10...♜b6 11 ♜b1 ♜xb7 12 ♔e3 d1♚.

The following example is more complex, but covers a typical situation with the rook in front of the pawn.



Rosmuller – R. Marić

Strasbourg 1973

White has two extra pawns but his king is trapped on h3, and if White plays g4 he will lose a pawn after ...fxg4+ and ...♜c3+. Nevertheless, White's advantage should be decisive, provided he plays accurately.

1 ♜b7+

The correct plan involves switching White's rook in front of the pawn. We saw this type of manoeuvre in Section 8.9.3 (see page 235).

1...♔f6

The only move, as after 1...♔h6? 2 c7 Black is in zugzwang and must release the white king, which can then make its way to d7.

2 ♖c7!

In the game White went wrong straight away with 2 c7? ♖e6 3 g4 (3 ♖b6+ ♖f7 is a draw, while 3 ♖a7 ♖f6 does not help White to make progress) 3...fxg4+ 1/2-1/2. However, in *Informator 15*, Marić published some excellent analysis showing how White could have won, and we take this as our main line.

2...♖e6 3 ♖c8 ♖f7

Black has to return to the safe zone at g7 and h7 or White wins immediately with c7.

4 c7 ♖g7 5 g4 hxg4+

Black may as well take the pawn, since other moves lose without a fight:

1) 5...♖h7 6 gxf5 gxf5 7 ♖f8 ♖xc7 8 ♖xf5 ♖h6 9 ♖e5 is a win for White by f5, ♖g3-f4, ♖e6+ and so on. See also Pokojowczyk-Doda and Krasenkow-Bacrot on pages 86-8 for a discussion of the generally won ending ♖ + doubled f♖+h♖ vs ♖.

2) 5...♖c3 6 gxf5 gxf5 7 ♖g2 ♖c2+ 8 ♖f1 ♖c1+ 9 ♖e2 ♖c5 10 ♖e3 ♖c1 11 ♖d4 ♖c2 12 ♖e5 ♖c5+ 13 ♖d6 and White wins.

3) 5...fxg4+ 6 fxg4 ♖c3+ 7 ♖h2 hxg4 transposes to the main line.

6 fxg4 ♖c3+ (D)

♖xf6 is also drawn) 13...h2! 14 ♖xh2 ♖c3+ 15 ♖xg4 ♖xf6.

7...fxg4

Continuing to check delays the end but does not genuinely help Black; for example, 7...♖c2+ 8 ♖g1 ♖c1+ 9 ♖f2! (9 ♖g2 fxg4 10 h5? gxh5 leads to a draw as in the previous note; instead of 10 h5?, White can still win by 10 ♖g3! ♖g1+ 11 ♖f2 ♖c1 but he has wasted time) 9...♖c2+ 10 ♖f3 ♖c3+ 11 ♖e2 fxg4 12 h5 ♖c2+ 13 ♖f1 ♖c1+ (13...♖c4 14 ♖g1! ♖c1+ 15 ♖f2 ♖c2+ 16 ♖g3 gxh5 17 f5 ♖c3+ 18 ♖f2 comes to the same thing – the crucial point is that White should not play his king to g2, since Black then draws as in the previous note) 14 ♖f2! ♖c4 15 ♖g3 gxh5 16 f5 ♖c3+ 17 ♖f2 and White wins as in the main line.

8 h5! gxh5 9 f5 h4

9...♖c2+ 10 ♖g3 ♖c3+ 11 ♖f2 leads to similar play.

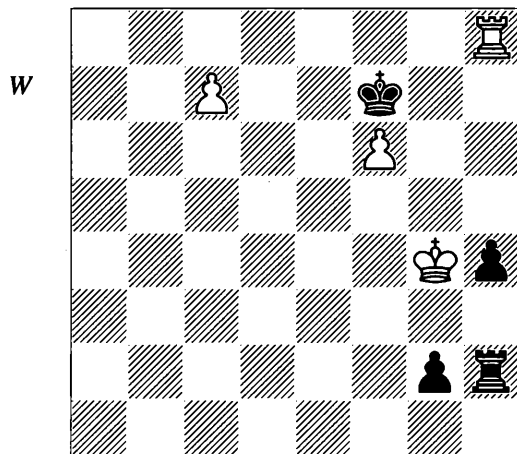
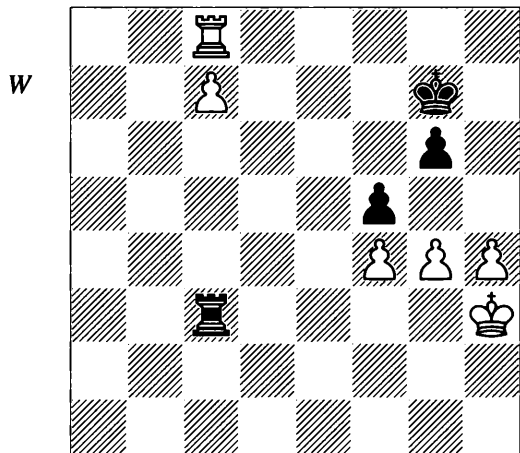
10 f6+ ♖f7 11 ♖h8 ♖c2+ 12 ♖g1 ♖c1+ 13 ♖f2! g3+

After 13...♖c2+ 14 ♖e3 White wins immediately.

14 ♖g2 ♖c2+ 15 ♖h3 ♖h2+

15...g2 16 ♖h2 and White wins.

16 ♖g4 g2 (D)



7 ♖h2!

The correct square. 7 ♖g2? only leads to a draw after 7...fxg4 8 h5!? (White's only winning chance is to secure a passed f-pawn, so as to dislodge Black's king from the safety zone of g7 and h7) 8...gxh5 9 f5 h4 10 f6+ ♖f7! 11 ♖h8 h3+! 12 ♖h2 ♖c2+ 13 ♖g3 (13 ♖g1 ♖c1+ 14 ♖f2 h2! 15 ♖g2 h1 ♖+ 16 ♖xh1 ♖c2+ 17 ♖g3

The climax of the ending. White only wins because of an amazing tactical point which only works when White has a c-pawn.

17 ♖f5!

The decisive move; by sacrificing his rook, White promotes with check in a position where mate is forced.

17...g1♖ 18 ♜f8+! ♔xf8 19 c8♞+ ♔f7

Now we see why White wins with a c-pawn and not with a b-pawn: in this position White has a deadly check on e6.

20 ♞e6+! ♔f8 21 ♞e7+ ♔g8 22 f7+

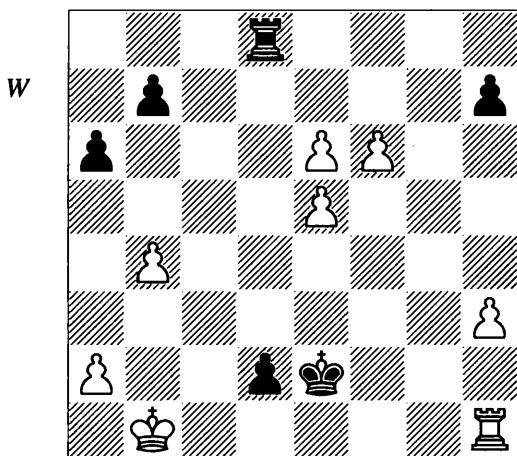
It's mate in two more moves.

Summary:

- It may be possible to sacrifice one or more pawns to create dangerous passed pawns. However, such breakthroughs are less effective in rook endings than in many other endings because a rook can usually stop a single passed pawn. Thus, when breakthroughs are possible, they normally involve either the creation of connected passed pawns or the addition of a second passed pawn to a pre-existing one.

8.11.3 Perpetual Check

It's rather unusual for a player to be able to give perpetual check with just a rook, but if the enemy king is confined in some way then it might be possible.



Krush – De Dovitiis
Buenos Aires 2003

White's mass of passed pawns would normally be decisive, but Black also has a dangerous advanced pawn. In the game White missed the winning line and allowed Black to escape with a draw.

1 e7?

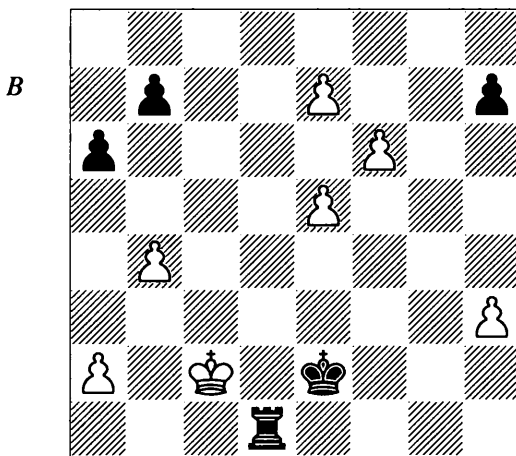
Here are the alternatives:

1) 1 ♔c2? b5! is similar to the game as the white king is sealed in. After 2 e7 d1♞+ 3 ♜xd1 ♜xd1 perpetual check along the d-file is inevitable.

2) 1 ♔h2+? ♔e1 2 ♜xd2 (or 2 ♔b2 b5!) 2...♔xd2 3 e7 is tempting, but Black continues 3...♜c8! 4 b5 (4 e8♞ ♜xe8 5 f7 ♜f8 6 e6 b5 7 e7 ♜c8 is also a draw) 4...a5! (4...axb5? is wrong as the white king slips out after 5 f7 ♜c1+ 6 ♔b2 ♜c2+ 7 ♔b3) 5 f7 (5 b6 a4! 6 ♔b2 ♜c3 7 a3 ♜c2+ is an immediate draw) 5...b6! 6 f8♞ ♜c1+ 7 ♔b2 ♜c2+ 8 ♔b3 ♜c3+ 9 ♔a4 ♜c4+ and again there is no evading the checks.

3) 1 b5! (amazingly, this is the only move to win; however Black plays, he cannot keep the white king confined and so White can always escape from the perpetual check) 1...a5 (1...d1♞+ 2 ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 3 ♔c2 ♜d2+ 4 ♔c3 ♜d3+ 5 ♔c4 axb5+ 6 ♔c5 wins for White) 2 b6 (2 e7 also wins) 2...d1♞+ (2...a4 3 e7) 3 ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 4 ♔c2 ♜d2+ 5 ♔c3 ♜d3+ 6 ♔c4 and the king escapes.

1...d1♞+ 2 ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 3 ♔c2 (D)



3...b5! 1/2-1/2

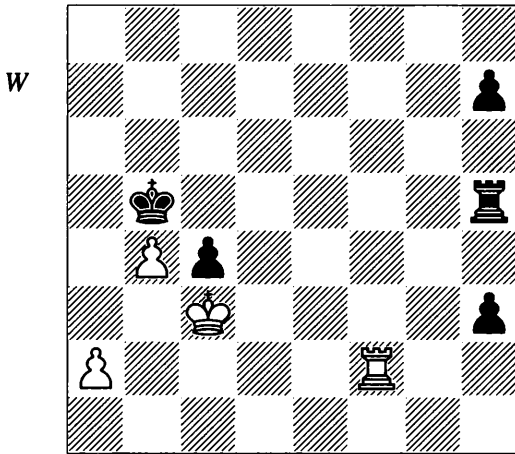
White cannot win as she is unable to evade perpetual check from the enemy rook on the squares d1, d2 and d3.

Summary:

- Perpetual check doesn't often arise in rook endings, but it can sometimes occur when the enemy king is poorly placed or restricted by the pawn-structure.

8.11.4 Mate

Mating ideas occur relatively often in rook endings, but they are normally restricted to the familiar situation in which the enemy king is trapped on the edge of the board. The following case is typical.



Pascual Perez – Otano
Cuba 1995

White is a pawn down, and faces an outside passed pawn supported by a rook behind the pawn. If White plays 1 ♖h2?, then it is clear that the best he can hope for is a draw. This example shows the importance of being alert to tactical ideas, so that you don't overlook any that arise in your games. White has a forced win, which arises 'by chance' in the position. Such apparently random tactical ideas occur more often than most people realize, but since they are often overlooked, the false impression is created that they are rare. With the advent of computer analysis, it has become apparent that tactical points play a larger role than is generally believed, even in the endgame.

1 ♖f6!

The threat is 2 a4+ ♔xa4 3 ♖a6+ ♔b5 4 ♖a5+, winning the rook, and this works even if Black plays 1...h2. Curiously, the black rook is more or less trapped. If the h7-pawn were missing, Black could still save the game by playing to h7 or h8, but as it is he has no defence.

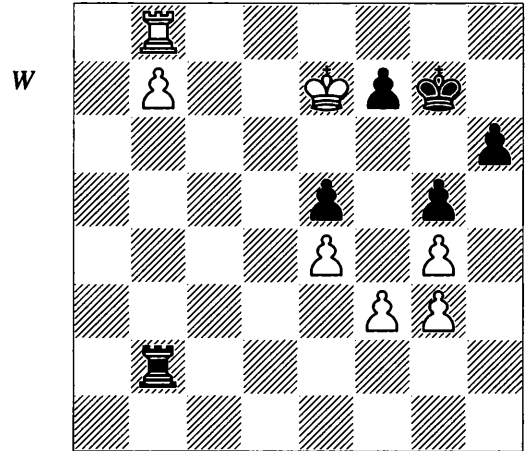
1...♖h4

After 1...♖d5 2 a4+! ♔xa4 3 ♔xc4 White wins the rook thanks to the mate threat.

2 a4+! ♔xa4 3 ♖f5 1-0

Black can't prevent mate on a5.

Mating ideas are more surprising when the target king is in the centre of the board.



Carlsen – Hraček
Bundesliga 2006/7

White clearly has a large advantage since he has a passed pawn on the seventh rank and his king has penetrated into the enemy position. However, his rook is poorly placed in front of the pawn and no immediate winning possibility suggests itself since if the white king approaches the b-pawn, Black just checks it away. Indeed, White can only win by using his kingside pawns and arranging a breakthrough by f4.

1 ♔d6!

Black cannot afford to surrender the e5-pawn, so he is forced to defend it.

1...♔f6

Other moves lose quickly: 1...f6?! fails to 2 ♖e8! ♖xb7 3 ♖e7+ ♖xe7 4 ♔xe7 ♔g6 5 ♔f8 h5 6 gxh5+ ♔xh5 7 ♔g7 g4 8 fxe4+ ♔g5 9 ♔f7 and Black's pawns fall, while 1...♖b5?! loses to 2 ♔c6 followed by a rook move.

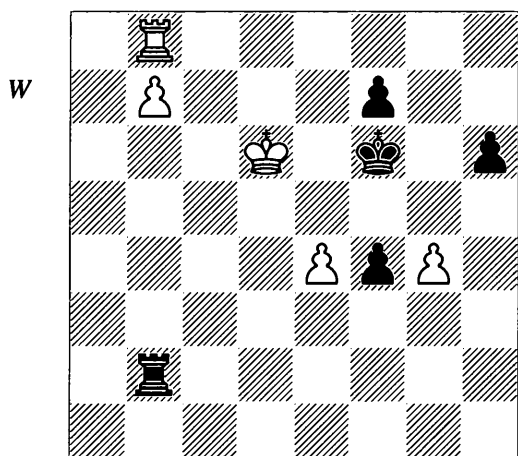
2 f4!

This is the moment for the breakthrough. Black obtains a passed f-pawn, but his king surprisingly ends up in a mating-net.

2...exf4

Or 2...♖d2+ 3 ♔c6 ♖c2+ 4 ♔d5 ♖d2+ 5 ♔c4 ♖b2 6 fxe5+ ♔g7 7 ♔c5 ♖b1 8 ♔c6 ♖c1+ 9 ♔d7 ♖b1 10 e6 fxe6 11 ♔xe6 and White wins.

3 gxf4 gxf4 (D)



4 ♖g8!

The point. White threatens 5 e5# and so Black is forced to check, but the result is that he loses his rook.

4... ♗b6+ 5 ♕c7 ♗xb7 6 ♕xb7 f3 7 ♕c6!

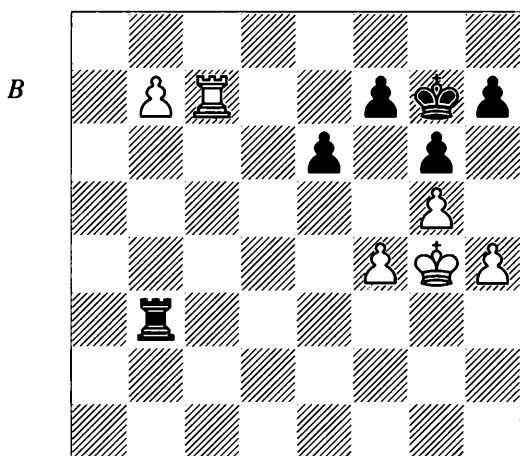
The simplest win; the threat is ♕d6 followed by e5#, so White gains a useful tempo.

7... ♕e5 8 ♗e8+ ♕f4 9 ♕d5 f6

White wins easily after both 9... f2 10 ♗f8 and 9... ♕xg4 10 ♗f8.

10 ♗f8 1-0

The following example is exceptional in that the mating idea is used for defensive purposes.



Rogers – Bellini
Chiasso 1988

Black looks to be in zugzwang since if he moves his rook along the b-file, then White

plays ♕f3 and moves his king over to support the b-pawn. Any king move allows ♗c8+, so Black appears to be reduced to moving a pawn, which costs material. Indeed, that is the way the game ended:

1... h5+? 2 gxf6+ ♕xh6 3 ♗xf7

Giving up the pawn hasn't helped Black much since he now has to release the white king in any case.

3... ♗b4 4 ♕f3 ♗b5 5 ♗e7 ♗b3+

After 5... ♗b4 6 ♗c7 Black must move his rook and let White's king advance.

6 ♕e4 ♗b5 7 ♗c7 ♗b6

7... ♕h5 loses to 8 ♗c5+.

8 ♕d4 ♕h5

Black's counterplay comes far too late.

9 ♕c5 ♗b1 10 ♗h7+ ♕g4 11 ♕c6 ♕xf4 12 ♗h8 ♕g4 13 b8♖ 1-0

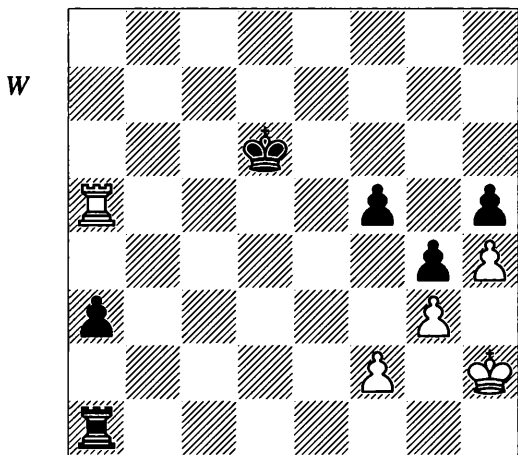
However, Black had a remarkable possibility to save the game. This example shows how you can't always play endgames 'by the book'. There will always be situations in which the correct solution cannot be found by theoretical knowledge, but only by the exercise of imagination. The drawing move is 1... ♕f8!!, which looks mad as it allows the check on c8 followed by promotion. But if White goes ahead with this, he even loses: 2 ♗c8+ ♕e7 3 b8♖?? (3 ♗c7+ repeats) 3... h5+! 4 gxf6 (transferring the king to e7 was necessary to ensure that this is not check) 4... f5+ 5 ♕g5 ♗g3#. If White does not check on c8, then he is unable to make progress because he cannot effectively free his king; for example, 2 h5 (2 f5 gxf5+ 3 ♕f4 ♕g7 and Black has no problems drawing) 2... gxf5+ 3 ♕xh5 ♕g7 4 ♕g4 (4 ♗d7 ♗h3+ 5 ♕g4 ♗b3) 4... ♕g6 and now White should be satisfied with a draw as 5 ♗c8?! f5+ is even slightly better for Black.

Summary:

- Mating ideas occur relatively often in rook endings and even some cases of ♗+♖ vs ♗ depend on the possibility of mate (for example, w♕e3, ♗g1, ♖e4 vs b♕h4, ♗e8; if White is to play, he wins by 1 e5!, based on the trick 1... ♗xe5+ 2 ♕f4).
- It's easy to overlook a mate when the king is in the middle of the board.

8.11.5 Positional Draw

A positional draw arises when a player who has a usually decisive material advantage is unable to make progress, most often because the defender has created a fortress.



Szekely – Barcza

Hungarian Ch, Budapest 1969

White's position looks extremely difficult. If Black were to play ...a2, then White would draw with ease by simply keeping his rook on a7 or a8 and checking Black's king if it approaches the a-pawn, but with the pawn on a3 this plan won't work because Black's king can hide on a2. Then Black's rook would be released to move round to b3, after which ...♔b2 and ...a2 finishes the job. Nor can White organize a sideways attack on the pawn, as in the Vančura draw, because with his rook on the e-file, Black plays his king to b4, defending the pawn on a3, and there is no check on e4. This allows Black to activate his rook, again leading to an easy win. Nevertheless White has a draw, but he has to act immediately.

1 ♔g2?

White misses it. The saving line was 1 ♖xf5!! ♖f1 (other moves also fail to win; for example, 1...♔c6 2 ♖xh5 ♔b6 3 ♖h8 and White has no problems since he has a passed pawn of his own, or 1...♖d1 2 ♖a5 ♖d3 3 ♔g2 ♔c6 4 ♖xh5 ♖d5 5 ♖h8 ♖a5 6 ♖c8+ ♔d5 7 ♖c1 a2 8 ♖a1 ♔c4 9 f3 and again White is saved by his kingside pawns) 2 ♔g2! a2 3 ♔xf1 a1♚+ 4 ♔g2 with a positional draw, since White just

settles his rook on f4 and waits. For example, 4...♖d1 5 ♖f4 ♔e5 6 ♖b4 (it is best not to allow Black's king to cross the fourth rank) 6...♖d5+ 7 ♔g1 ♖c5 8 ♖f4 and Black cannot make progress.

1...♔c6 2 ♖xf5

White may as well grab a pawn, but it doesn't make any difference as Black can execute the same winning plan. If White had time to take on h5 as well it would be different, but thanks to the tempo he squandered with ♔g2 this is impossible.

2...♔b6 3 ♖f8

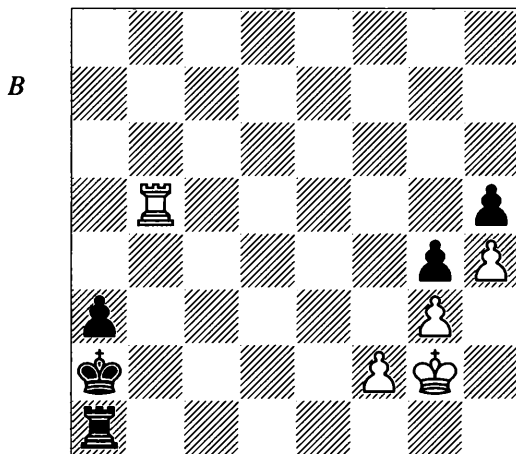
White must hurry to get back behind the a-pawn. Black wins easily after 3 ♖xh5 a2 4 ♖h6+ ♔b5 5 ♖h7 ♖e1 6 ♖a7 a1♚ 7 ♖xa1 ♖xa1.

3...♔b5 4 ♖b8+

4 ♖a8 ♔b4 is the same, as now White has to check to prevent Black from freeing his rook.

4...♔c4 5 ♖c8+ ♔b3 6 ♖b8+ ♔a2 7 ♖b5 (D)

White will have to give up his rook for the a-pawn within a few moves in any case, so he decides to grab another pawn. 7 f3 ♖b1 also wins for Black.



7...♖c1 8 ♖xh5 ♔b3!

This wins White's rook more quickly than any other method.

9 ♖a5

9 ♖b5+ ♔a4 10 ♖b8 a2 11 ♖a8+ ♔b3 is similar.

9...a2 10 f3

Trying to activate the king, but Black easily refutes this plan.

10...♖c2+ 11 ♔f1 gxf3 12 h5 ♖c4

The last finesse. Not 12...♖c1+?, when 13 ♖f2 a1♖ 14 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 15 ♖xf3 draws.

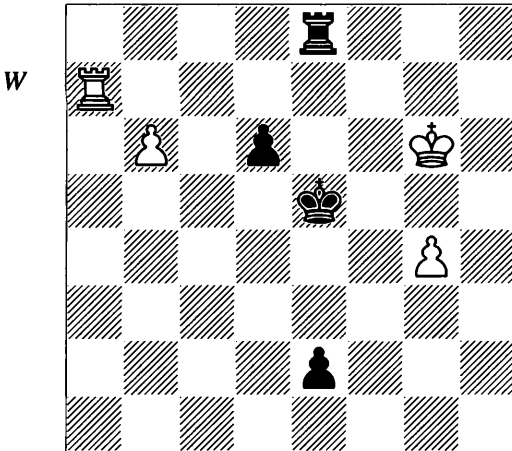
13 g4

13 h6 ♖c1+ 14 ♖f2 a1♖ 15 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 is also winning for Black.

13...♖c1+ 14 ♖f2 a1♖ 0-1

After 15 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 16 ♖xf3 ♖d5 17 ♖f4 ♖e6 18 ♖g5 ♖a4 Black's king gets in front of the pawns.

There are some positional draws which don't involve a fortress. In the following example, a rook and a far-advanced passed pawn hold a queen at bay.



Šahović – Striković

Yugoslav Team Ch, Cetinje 1993

White's position looks critical since Black's e-pawn is further advanced than White's b-pawn.

1 ♖f7

The only chance, as 1 ♖a1? ♖f4 2 ♖e1 ♖e3 3 ♖f7 ♖b8 is hopeless for White.

1...e1♖

1...♖e6 allows an easy draw by 2 b7 e1♖ 3 b8♖ ♖f1+ 4 ♖g8 (not 4 ♖g7? ♖f6+ and Black wins) 4...♖c4 5 ♖b2+ ♖e4 6 ♖h7.

2 ♖xe8 ♖d5+?!

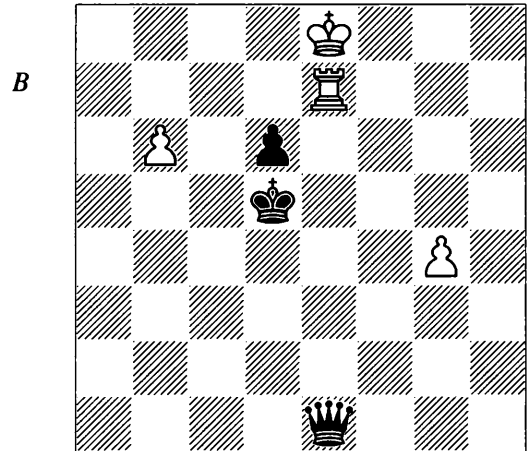
Mirković concluded in *Informator 57* that this move throws away the win. This is incorrect, although it is true that it makes the win far more difficult. The main danger for Black is that White's king will come across to support the advanced b-pawn. This could have been

completely prevented by 2...♖b1! 3 ♖e7+ ♖f4! 4 b7 ♖b6 and now that White's counterplay has been nullified, Black wins with his d-pawn; for example, 5 ♖g7 d5 6 g5 d4 7 g6 ♖g5 and White's pawns cannot advance further.

2...♖f6+ is also sufficient to win; for example, 3 ♖d8 (3 ♖f8 ♖e6! 4 g5+ ♖xg5 5 ♖g7+ ♖h6 6 b7 ♖f6+ is winning for Black) 3...♖b4 4 ♖c7 ♖c5+ 5 ♖b7 d5! (Mirković's 5...♖e6?! is less convincing since 6 g5! throws the win into doubt; for example, 6...♖xg5?! 7 ♖a8! is a draw) 6 ♖a6 ♖e6 7 ♖a8 ♖b5 8 ♖a7 ♖d7 9 ♖a2 d4 10 ♖h2 ♖a4+ 11 ♖b7 d3 and Black wins.

However, 2...♖f4+? is wrong and allows White to draw by 3 ♖d8! (3 ♖d7? ♖b4 wins for Black, although this is by no means easy) 3...d5 4 b7 ♖b4 5 ♖c7 ♖c5+ 6 ♖b8 d4 7 ♖a6!, followed by ♖a8.

3 ♖e7 (D)



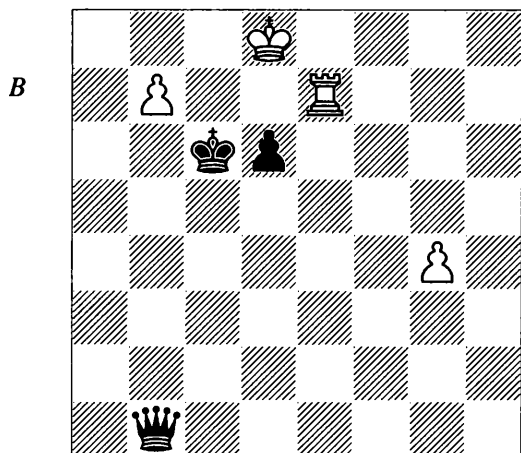
3...♖b1?

Now the position really is a draw. 3...♖b4? is also wrong because after 4 b7 ♖xg4 5 ♖d8! ♖c6 6 b8♖ (6 ♖c7+ ♖d5 7 ♖e7 is again a draw) 6...♖g8+ 7 ♖e8 ♖g5+ 8 ♖e7 it is perpetual check.

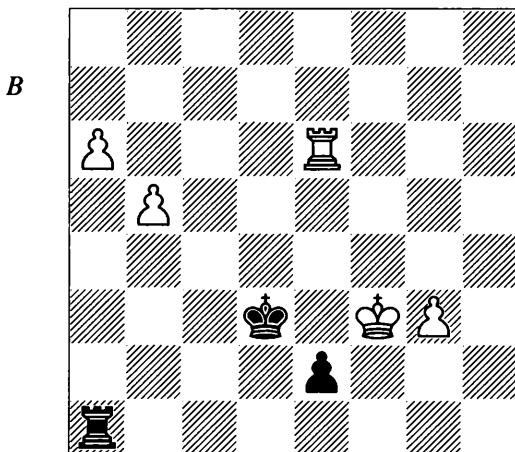
Black could still have won by 3...♖h4! 4 b7 ♖c6! (Mirković only considered 4...♖xg4? 5 ♖d8 and 4...♖h8+? 5 ♖f7! followed by g5, which do lead to a draw) 5 g5 (after 5 ♖d8 ♖h8+ 6 ♖e8 ♖g7 7 ♖e7 ♖g8+ 8 ♖e8 ♖xg4 9 b8♖+ ♖b7 Black will win in the long run) 5...♖xg5 6 b8♖+ ♖b5 with a winning position for Black.

4 b7 ♖c6 5 ♖d8! (D)

The king approaches the b-pawn. 5 g5? ♖g6+ 6 ♔f8 ♜xg5! 7 b8♜ ♜f6+ 8 ♔g8 ♜xe7 leads to a position of ♜+♔ vs ♜ that is winning for Black, although he would still have to work hard.



If you have what looks like a totally winning position and then encounter unexpected difficulties, it's easy to make a mistake. In the next position, White had only a narrow path to victory but missed it, both in the game and in his subsequent annotations.



Nadyrkhanov – Kochetkov
Alushta 1994

5... ♜b2

5... ♜b6+ 6 ♔c8 ♜a6 7 ♔d8 also leads to a draw.

6 ♔c7+ ♔d5 7 ♔e7! 1/2-1/2

White renews the threat of ♔c8/c7. Black cannot make progress since he is continually dealing with White's threats to promote the b-pawn.

Summary:

- It's sometimes possible to save an apparently hopeless situation by reaching a positional draw. This typically arises if the defender captures the enemy rook while allowing a pawn to promote. Then he may be able to set up a fortress in the resulting rook vs queen ending, or he may be able to stave off defeat by threatening to promote a far-advanced pawn.

This position looks dead lost for Black. If he wins White's rook by promoting his e-pawn, then White gets two connected passed pawns on the sixth rank, which will overwhelm Black's rook. It is hard to imagine that Black really has anything better than promoting his pawn, but Black miraculously saved the game, and according to Nadyrkhanov's notes in *Informator 60* the diagram position is drawn. This is wrong, but the win is surprisingly difficult.

1... ♔f1+

Since 1... e1♜ 2 ♔xe1 ♔xe1 3 b6 is hopeless for him, Black finds the best practical chance. He is trying to play ... ♔d2 and take back on e1 with his king, so that his rook can stay on a1 to restrain White's queenside pawns.

2 ♔g4

2 ♔g2! is perhaps even simpler since 2... ♔a1 3 b6! ♔xa6 4 ♔f2 ♔a8 5 ♔e3+ ♔d4 6 ♔xe2 is an easy win for White.

2... ♔a1!

The rook returns to a1 so as to threaten ... ♔d2. White can of course repeat the position and win as in the previous note, but this is not the only possibility.

3 ♔h3?

8.12 Other Ideas in Rook Endings

This final section contains some miscellaneous situations that do not readily fit into any of the earlier categories. While some of the positions include points from earlier sections, there are also several new ideas.

Alternatives:

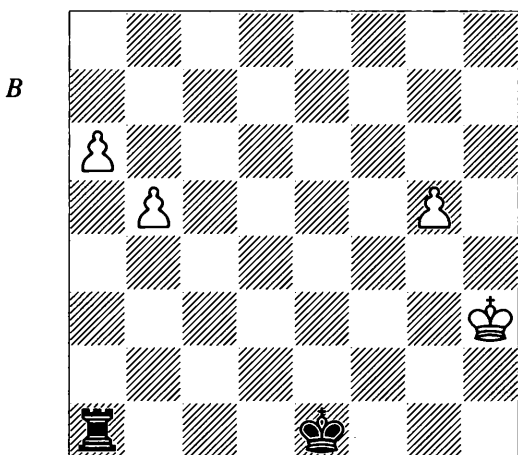
1) 3 ♖f4? ♔d2! 4 g4 e1♚5 ♜xe1 ♕xe1 6 g5 ♜a4+! (6...♜a5? loses to 7 g6 ♜xb5 8 a7! ♜a5 9 g7) 7 ♕e3 (7 ♕g3 ♜a3+ 8 ♕g4 ♜a4+ 9 ♕h5 ♜a5 draws) 7...♜a5! 8 g6 ♜xb5 9 a7 ♜e5+ and ...♜e8, with a draw.

2) 3 ♜e8? ♔d2 4 ♕h5 e1♚5 ♜xe1 ♕xe1 6 g4 ♜a5 is again a draw.

3) 3 b6! ♜xa6 4 ♕f3! ♜xb6 (this resource, which wasn't available with White's king on f2, at least enables Black to put up a fight; 4...♜a8 5 ♜d6+ ♕c4 6 ♕xe2 is an easy win for White) 5 ♜e3+ ♕d4 6 ♜xe2 ♜f6+ 7 ♕g4! ♜f8 (7...♜g6+ 8 ♕f4 ♜f6+ 9 ♕g5 ♜f8 10 ♜e6! is similar) 8 ♜e6! (the only move to win; Black's king is relatively close to the pawn in terms of files, but it is too far up the board and this allows White to cut off the king along a rank) 8...♕d5 9 ♜h6 ♕e5 10 ♕h4 (even though the pawn is only on the third rank, there is nothing Black can do to prevent its eventual advance) 10...♜f1 11 g4 ♜h1+ 12 ♕g5 ♜f1 13 ♜h7 ♕e6 14 ♕h5 and White wins.

After the move played, Black escapes with a draw.

3...♕d2! 4 g4 e1♚5 ♜xe1 ♕xe1 6 g5 (D)



6...♜a5

One of several drawing moves.

7 g6 ♜xb5 8 a7 ♜h5+!

Not 8...♜a5? 9 g7, when White wins.

9 ♕g4 ♜h8

A rook on the first rank draws against two disconnected pawns on the seventh rank, provided the pawns are sufficiently far apart. That

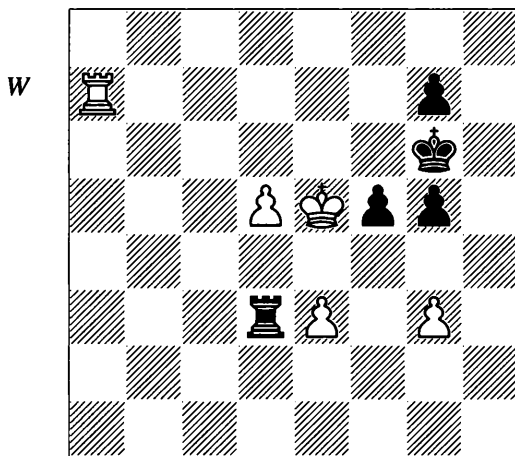
is the case here, so White has no winning chances.

10 g7 ♜a8 11 ♕f5 ♕e2 12 ♕f6

12 ♕g6 ♕f3 13 ♕h7 ♜xa7 is similar.

12...♕e3 13 ♕f7 ♜xa7+ 1/2-1/2

In rook endings, it is quite common to win the enemy rook for a passed pawn. The attacker's king has usually been obliged to journey to support the passed pawn and is now far away from the remaining pawns. In such situations, a single tempo often makes a crucial difference. One way to gain a tempo is to force the enemy rook to give itself up for the pawn on the seventh rank rather than the eighth. This can sometimes be achieved by threatening to cut the enemy rook off from the pawn. Here is a good example in which White, a strong grandmaster, could have won by using this technique but failed to spot the idea.



Baklan – Smikovsky

Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2006

Material is equal, but White has the advantage thanks to his dangerous passed pawn. There is no reasonable way to save the attacked e-pawn, so White must trust in the power of his passed pawn.

1 d6! ♜xe3+

There is nothing better since 1...♕h5 2 d7 f4 (after 2...♕g4 3 ♜a4+ ♕xg3 4 ♜d4 White gains a whole queen) 3 exf4 gxf4 4 gxf4 ♕g4 5 ♕e6 ♕xf4 6 ♜a4+ ♕g3 7 ♜a8 is an easy win for White.

2 ♕d4 ♜e1

The best chance, since other moves allow White to win more easily:

1) 2...♖xg3 3 d7 ♖g1 4 ♖a3! and the d-pawn promotes.

2) 2...♖e8 3 d7 ♖d8 4 ♖e5 f4 (or 4...g4 5 ♖e6) 5 g4 f3 6 ♖e6 f2 7 ♖a1 ♖f8 8 ♖f1 and White wins.

3) After 2...♖e4+ 3 ♖d5 ♖f6 4 ♖a8! ♖e1 5 ♖f8+ ♖g6 6 d7 White will win the rook in very favourable circumstances.

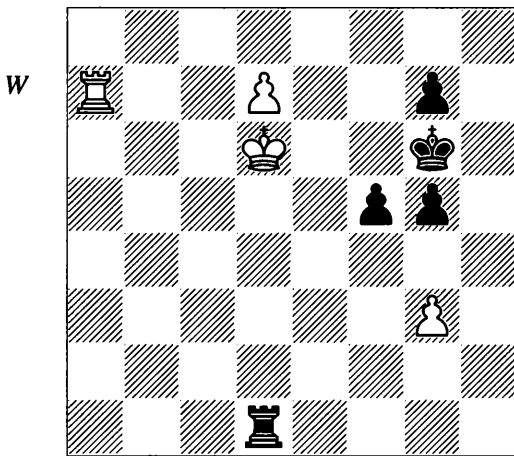
3 d7 ♖d1+ 4 ♖e5

Now White is threatening ♖a6+ followed by ♖d6.

4...♖e1+

Forced, as 4...♖h5 5 ♖xf5 g6+ 6 ♖e6 ♖g4 7 ♖a5 is an immediate win for White.

5 ♖d6 ♖d1+ (D)



Up to here, White has conducted the game accurately and has achieved a winning position, but now he overlooks the winning idea and consequently starts to lose the thread of the game.

6 ♖c7?!

Heading in the wrong direction. White can win by 6 ♖e7! ♖e1+ 7 ♖f8! ♖d1 8 ♖a6+! (the key move: by transferring his rook to the sixth rank with gain of tempo, White sets up the possibility of ♖d6) 8...♖h5 9 ♖e7 ♖xd7+ (Black is forced to give up his rook immediately, or else White gets a whole queen, but having the king on d7 rather than d8 gains a vital tempo which enables White to win) 10 ♖xd7 ♖g4 11 ♖e6 f4 12 gxf4 gxf4 13 ♖e5 f3 (or 13...g5 14 ♖e4 ♖g3 15 ♖a3+ ♖f2 16 ♖f5 f3 17 ♖g4 and White

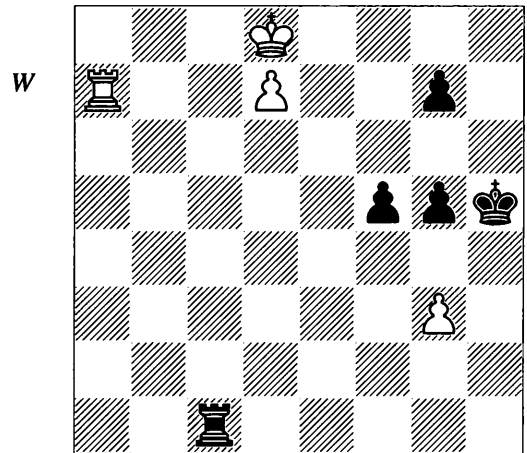
wins) 14 ♖e4 f2 15 ♖a1 ♖g3 16 ♖e3 ♖g2 17 ♖a2 and the f-pawn falls.

6...♖c1+ 7 ♖b8

White can win most simply by retracing his steps with 7 ♖d6, but it is interesting to note that 7 ♖d8 also wins, although this win is far more complicated. Then Black may play:

1) 7...f4 8 g4! (8 ♖c7? ♖d1 9 g4 f3! 10 ♖c2 ♖f6 11 ♖c8 ♖e5 12 d8♖ ♖xd8+ 13 ♖xd8 ♖f4 is an easy draw) 8...f3 9 ♖a6+ ♖h7 10 ♖a2 ♖g6 11 ♖d2 ♖f7 12 ♖d3 g6 13 ♖xf3+ ♖g7 14 ♖d3 ♖f7 15 ♖d5, followed by ♖xg5, and so on.

2) 7...♖h5 (D) (this draws according to the notes by Smikovsky in *Informator 96*, but White can still win) and now:



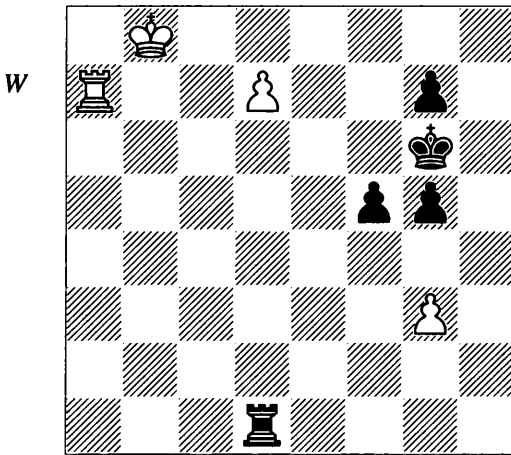
2a) 8 ♖a6? f4 is a draw.

2b) 8 ♖a5? ♖g4 9 ♖d5 ♖h1! (Smikovsky's 9...♖xg3? loses quickly after 10 ♖e8! ♖h1 11 ♖xf5) 10 ♖e7 ♖h8 11 d8♖ ♖xd8 12 ♖xd8 ♖xg3 13 ♖xf5 g4 only leads to a draw.

2c) 8 ♖a4! (this leads to an attractive and unusual win) 8...♖d1 9 ♖e7 ♖e1+ 10 ♖f7 ♖d1 11 ♖e6 g6 (11...♖d2 12 ♖a5 ♖xd7 13 ♖xd7 ♖g4 14 ♖e6 g6 15 ♖a3 wins for White) 12 ♖b4! (the best square for the rook) 12...♖d3 (now White must lose a tempo to drive Black's rook away from d3, so he triangulates with his king) 13 ♖e7 ♖e3+ 14 ♖f7 ♖d3 15 ♖e6 ♖d2 (15...g4 16 ♖b5 ♖xd7 17 ♖xd7 and White wins easily) 16 g4+! f4 17 ♖b2! (skewering Black's rook against the mate on h2) 17...♖xb2 18 d8♖ (now we see why White's rook was best placed on the b-file: Black has no check on b6) 18...♖e2+ 19 ♖f6 ♖f2+ 20 ♖g7 g3 21

♖d1+ ♜h4 22 ♜xg6 g2 (22...g4 23 ♜h1+ ♜h2 24 ♜c1 ♜h3 25 ♜g5 ♜f2 26 ♜h1+ ♜h2 27 ♜f1+ ♜g2 28 ♜f4 ♜h2 29 ♜xg4 and Black's last pawn falls) 23 ♜e1 ♜g3 24 ♜xg5 reaches a won ♜ vs ♜+♙ position, although the win is quite lengthy and complicated. The main line runs 24...♜f3 25 ♜h4 ♜e2 26 ♜g3+ ♜e4 27 ♜g4 ♜d4 28 ♜d6+ ♜c4 29 ♜d1 ♜d2 30 ♜c1+ ♜d3 31 ♜g3 and now White wins by the method shown in the analysis diagram of Kovaliov-Schipkov (see page 260).

7...♜d1 (D)



8 ♜c8?

This finally throws the win away. 8 ♜a6+? is also bad in view of 8...♜f7! 9 ♜c8 ♜c1+ 10 ♜d8 f4 11 gxf4 gxf4 and Black defends. The only way to win was to return by 8 ♜c7! ♜c1+ (Black also loses after 8...♜h5 9 ♜a4 f4 10 gxf4 gxf4 11 ♜xf4 g5 12 ♜f6 ♜xd7+ 13 ♜xd7 g4 14 ♜e6) transposing to the position after White's 6th move above.

8...♜h5! 9 d8♜

There is nothing better, since 9 ♜a4 f4 10 gxf4 gxf4 11 ♜xf4 g5 12 ♜f6 leaves White a tempo down over the previous note and Black draws after 12...g4 13 ♜c7 ♜xd7+ 14 ♜xd7 g3.

9...♜xd8+ 10 ♜xd8 ♜g4 11 ♜xg7 f4

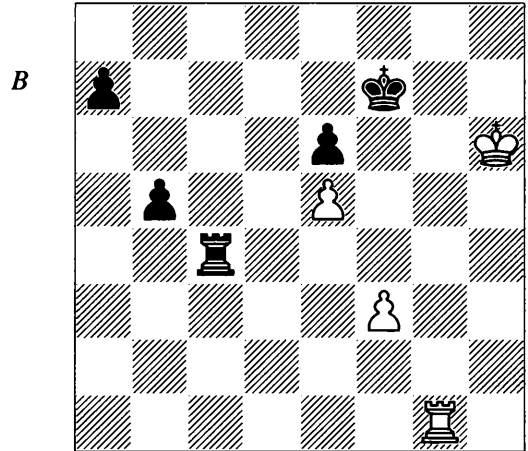
11...♜xg3 12 ♜xg5+ ♜f4 is also good.

12 gxf4 ♜xf4 13 ♜e7 g4 14 ♜f6 g3 15 ♜g6 ♜f3 16 ♜g5 g2 17 ♜h4 ♜f2 1/2-1/2

Black is just in time to save the game.

The drawing possibilities in rook endings are often underestimated; provided the defender has

some possibilities for counterplay, then there is generally some hope. The really dead lost positions are those in which the defender is totally passive and can only wait to see how his opponent intends to improve his position.



Taimanov – Beliavsky
Sukhumi 1972

Black is a pawn up and has two connected passed pawns on the queenside, which are certainly major advantages. White's hopes rest on his active king and the possibility of making his own passed pawn by advancing his f-pawn. According to Tal's notes in *Informator 14*, the position should be winning for Black, but as we shall see, White's defence in the game was inaccurate.

1...a5

1...♜h4+ 2 ♜g5 ♜h8 also offers few winning chances; for example, 3 ♜c1 ♜g8+ 4 ♜f4 ♜e8 5 ♜c5 a6 6 ♜c6 a5 7 ♜a6 a4 8 ♜g5 ♜e7 9 f4 and White's pieces are too active for Black to win.

2 ♜g7+

White correctly switches his rook to a position behind Black's passed pawns.

2...♜e8 3 ♜a7 ♜c5!

The only winning chance. White is offered the choice of allowing Black to save his queenside pawns or acquiescing to the exchange of the pawns on a5 and e5.

4 f4!

The correct choice. After 4 ♜g6? ♜xe5 5 ♜f6 ♜e3 6 ♜xa5 b4, there is little White can do to prevent Black's king from moving up to support the b-pawn; for example, 7 ♜b5 b3 8 ♜b7

♔d8 9 f4 ♕c8 10 ♖b4 ♕c7 and Black is winning. 4 ♖xa5? ♜xe5 5 ♕g6 ♔d7 is similar and should also be winning for Black.

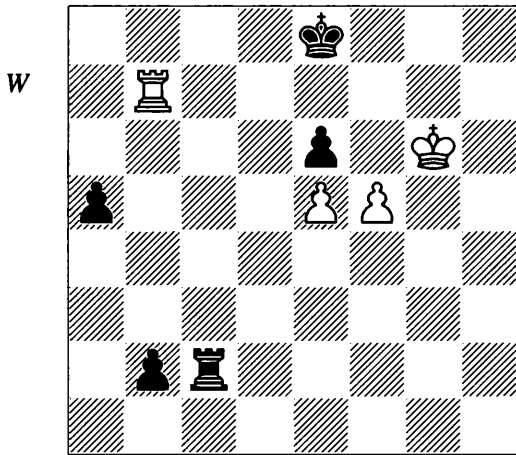
4...b4 5 ♕g6 b3

Black's pawns start to look really dangerous, but White's counterplay arrives just in time.

6 f5!

The correct plan since White must make a passed pawn as quickly as possible. 6 ♕f6? b2 7 ♖b7 ♜c2 8 ♕xe6 ♔d8 9 f5 transposes to the game at move 9, while after 6 ♖b7? a4 7 f5 (7 ♕f6 ♜c3 8 ♕xe6 ♔d8 is also winning for Black) 7...♜xe5 8 f6 ♖f5 9 ♖e7+ ♔d8 10 ♖b7 ♖f2! 11 f7 e5! 12 ♖b4 (12 ♖b6 ♔d7 transposes) 12...♕e7 13 ♖b7+ ♔d6 14 ♖b6+ ♔d7! 15 ♖f6 (15 ♖b4 e4 is also a win for Black) 15...b2 16 ♖xf2 b1♖+ Black picks up the rook in a few moves.

6...b2 7 ♖b7 ♜c2 (D)



8 ♕f6?

Having defended well for several moves, White makes a serious mistake. The problem with this move is the same as with 6 ♕f6?: taking the pawn on e6 with the king is just too slow. White could have drawn by 8 f6! (not considered in Tal's notes) 8...♜g2+ (8...♖f2 9 f7+ ♖xf7 10 ♖b8+ ♕e7 11 ♖b7+ ♕e8 is a draw) 9 ♕h6! a4 10 ♖b8+ ♔d7 11 f7 ♖f2 12 ♖xb2 ♖xf7 13 ♖b7+ ♕e8 14 ♖b8+ with perpetual check.

8...♔d8! 9 ♕xe6 a4

Black's pawns are ahead of White's since it only takes two moves for both to reach the seventh rank, while it takes four moves for White's pawns to reach the same position.

10 f6 a3 11 f7 ♖f2 12 ♖b3 ♕c7!

Black must take care. Playing 12...♖f1? immediately is wrong due to 13 f8♖+ ♖xf8 14 ♔d6 ♕c8 15 ♜c3+ ♕b7 16 ♖b3+ with a draw since if Black moves to the a-file he loses both pawns. 12...a2? is also bad in view of 13 ♖xb2 a1♖ 14 ♖d2+! ♕c7 (14...♖xd2 15 f8♖+ ♕c7 16 ♖c5+ is also a draw, as moving to the b-file allows ♖b4+ and ♖xd2) 15 ♖xf2 with a draw. Thus Black first removes his king from the dangerous back rank.

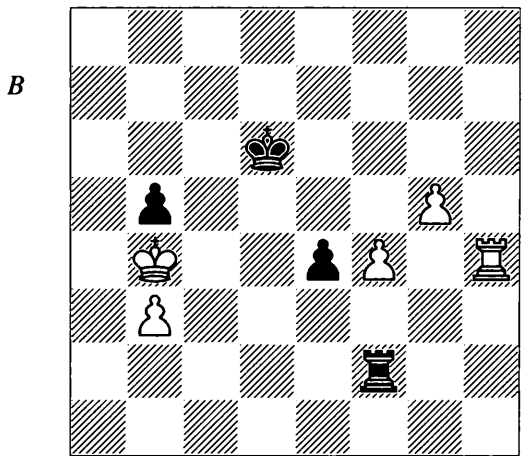
13 ♕e7 ♖f1

Now there is no real answer to the threat of 14...a2.

14 f8♖ ♖xf8 15 ♕xf8 a2 16 ♖xb2 a1♖ 17 ♜c2+ ♔d7 0-1

White could still have forced Black to win a ♖ vs ♖ ending by 18 e6+ ♕xe6 19 ♖e2+, but evidently he didn't think it was worth the trouble.

In the next example, Black could also have successfully fought against White's connected passed pawns, but he failed to adopt the correct plan.



Belavsky – Sitnik
Bled 1996

White is a pawn ahead and has two connected passed pawns, but there are also several factors in Black's favour. He has a passed e-pawn, which can be supported by his king, and White's pieces are poorly placed to stop this pawn. Black should have sufficient counterplay to draw, but he must choose the correct move in the diagram position.

1...♔d5?

Despite being given an exclamation mark by Beliavsky in his *Informator 69* notes, this move actually loses. Beliavsky also gave the correct continuation: 1...e3! 2 ♖c3 (after Beliavsky's 2 ♜h3 ♜xf4+ 3 ♖xb5? Black actually wins by 3...e2 4 ♜e3 ♜f5+ and 5...♜e5) 2...♔d5 3 ♖d3 e2 4 ♖d2 ♖e4 5 g6 ♜g2 and White has no winning chances at all.

The move played is simply too slow; while it is sometimes important to support a passed pawn with the king, in a race situation the priority is often to push the pawn.

2 g6!

White doesn't delay in getting his own pawns moving.

2...♔d4

Beliavsky believed that 2...e3 was sufficient to draw, but White can win. Here are the options:

1) 3 ♖c3? lets Black escape after 3...♖e4 4 ♜g4 b4+! 5 ♖c4 (not 5 ♖xb4? e2 and Black wins since he promotes with check) 5...♜c2+ 6 ♖xb4 e2 7 ♜g1 ♖xf4 8 g7 ♜c8 9 ♖b5 ♖f3 10 b4 ♖f2 with a comfortable draw.

2) 3 g7! ♜g2 4 ♜h5+! ♖c6 (4...♔d4 5 ♜g5 e2 6 g8 ♜e1 ♜+ 7 ♖xb5 ♜xg5+ 8 fxg5 ♜e5+ 9 ♖a4 is a fairly simple win) 5 ♜c5+! (forcing the king away from the b-pawn, as Black cannot allow White to take on b5 with check) 5...♔d6 6 ♜e5 ♜xg7 (or 6...e2 7 ♖xb5) 7 ♜xe3 ♜f7 (7...♜b7 8 ♜c3 ♜b8 9 ♜c5 is even easier) 8 ♖xb5 ♜xf4 9 ♜c3! (White wins because Black's rook is initially in a bad position) 9...♜f8 10 ♜c6+! (10 b4? ♜b8+ is a draw) 10...♔d7 11 b4 ♜b8+ 12 ♜b6 ♜h8 13 ♖a6 ♖c7 14 ♜b7+ ♖c8 15 b5 ♜h1 16 ♜g7 ♜a1+ 17 ♖b6 ♜b1 18 ♜g8+ ♔d7 19 ♜b8 ♜b2 20 ♖a7 followed by b6, heading for the Lucena position.

3 ♜g4

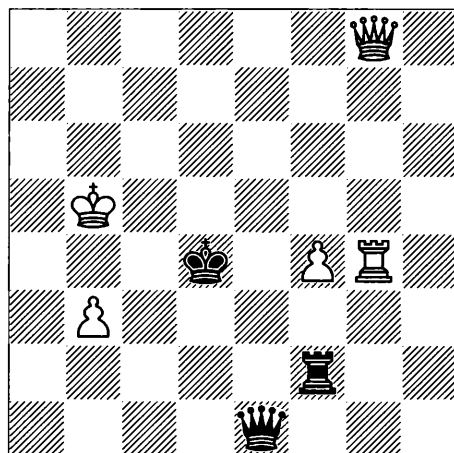
This is sufficient, but 3 ♜h8! ♜g2 (3...e3 4 g7 e2 5 ♜d8+ ♖e3 6 ♜e8+ and 7 g8 ♜ wins) 4 ♜d8+ ♖e3 5 f5 is even simpler. Black's king has been forced in front of his pawn, while White's pawns can just roll forward.

3...e3 4 g7 e2 5 g8 ♜ e1 ♜+ 6 ♖xb5 (D)

White is two pawns up, and in addition Black's king is the more exposed.

6...♜e2+

B



If Black does not exchange queens, White will have a winning attack; for example, 6...♖c3 7 ♜g1 ♜d2 8 ♜g7+ ♖c2 9 ♜g6+ ♖c3 10 ♜f6+ ♖c2 11 ♜f5+ ♖c3 12 ♜e5+ ♖c2 13 ♜e4+ ♖c3 14 ♜g3+ ♖b2 15 ♜d3 with decisive threats.

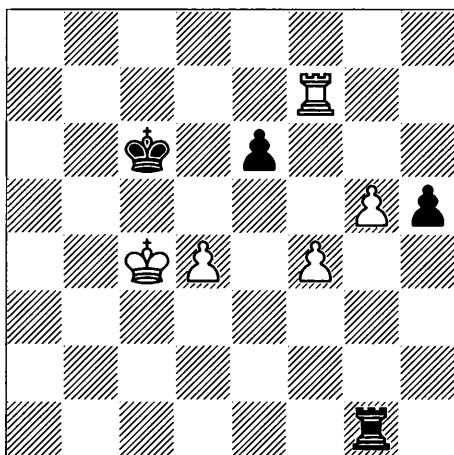
7 ♜c4+ ♜xc4+ 8 bxc4 ♜b2+ 9 ♖c6 ♜e2

White wins easily after 9...♖xc4 10 f5+ ♖d3 11 ♖d5 as Black's king is cut off.

10 ♖d6 ♖xc4 11 f5+ 1-0

In the following ending, the most notable feature is the importance of hesitation checks.

W

**Kakhiani – A. Marić**

Yugoslav Team Ch (women), Cetinje 1991

White is a pawn up in the diagram, but Black's rook is actively posted behind the white pawns and Black has a passed pawn of her own to provide counterplay. The diagram position is won, but White must find the correct plan.

1 d5+!

If White continues quietly by 1 ♔d3? ♔d6! 2 ♔e4 ♚e1+ 3 ♔f3 ♚h1 4 ♚h7 (4 ♔g2 ♚h4 is similar) 4...♚h3+ 5 ♔g2 ♚h4 6 ♔g3 ♚h1, then it isn't possible to make progress. The move played correctly returns the extra pawn in order to create two connected passed pawns.

1...exd5+ 2 ♔d4 ♚d1+

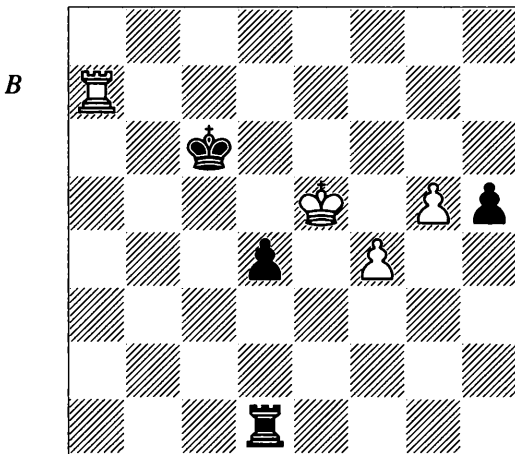
Black must act, because otherwise White's connected passed pawns will be overwhelming. Both black pawns will be relevant in the ensuing play, but the d-pawn is obviously the priority, because Black's king is in a position to support it.

3 ♔e5 d4

3...♚e1+?! makes life easy for White; Black shouldn't waste time chasing the white king to a position where it better supports its own pawns. White wins after 4 ♔f6 d4 5 g6 d3 6 g7 ♚g1 7 ♚f8 d2 8 ♚d8.

4 ♚a7? (D)

Missing a win by 4 ♚f8! ♔d7 (4...d3 5 ♚d8 ♔c7 6 ♚d4 h4 7 g6 h3 8 g7 ♚g1 9 ♚xd3 ♚xg7 10 ♚xh3 ♚e7+ 11 ♔f6 gives a winning ♚+♔ vs ♚ position) 5 g6 ♚g1 6 ♚f7+ ♔c6 7 ♚a7! (a crucial finesse, indirectly defending the g-pawn) 7...♔b6 (7...d3 8 ♚a2 also wins) 8 ♚d7 ♚xg6 9 f5 ♚g1 10 ♚xd4 ♚e1+ 11 ♔d6 ♚f1 12 ♔e6 ♚e1+ 13 ♔f7 and the f-pawn will win, as without the support of Black's king the h-pawn presents no danger.



4...d3

4...h4 5 ♚a2 d3, transposing, is equally effective.

5 ♚a2 h4

White is playing to prevent the further advance of the d-pawn, at least for the moment. Thus 5...d2? loses to 6 ♔f6 ♔d5 7 g6 ♔e4 8 g7 ♚f1 (after 8...♚g1 9 ♚xd2 ♔xf4 10 ♚d4+! ♔f3 11 ♚h4 White picks up the h-pawn and wins) 9 ♚a4+ (9 ♚xd2 also wins, but more slowly) 9...♔e3 10 g8 ♚d1 ♚ 11 ♚a3+ ♔d2 (11...♔xf4 12 ♚c4+ mates) 12 ♚d5+ ♔e1 13 ♚xd1+ ♔xd1 14 ♚a1+ ♔e2 15 ♚xf1 ♔xf1 16 ♔g5 and the f-pawn decides.

In addition to the move played, 5...♚e1+ should also suffice to draw: 6 ♔d4 (6 ♔f6 ♚e2 7 ♚a1 ♔d5 {but not 7...h4?, which loses to 8 ♚d1} 8 g6 ♔e4 9 f5 d2 10 g7 ♚g2 11 ♚d1 ♔e3 12 ♔f7 h4 also leads to a draw) 6...♚f1 (6...♚e2? loses to 7 ♚a6+ ♔b5 8 ♔xd3) 7 ♔e4 h4 8 ♚d2 h3 9 ♔e5 ♔c5! 10 ♚xd3 (10 g6 ♔c4 11 f5 ♔c3 is no improvement from White's viewpoint) 10...h2 11 ♚h3 ♚e1+ followed by ...h1 ♚ and Black is safe.

6 g6 h3!

The only move, even threatening to win with ...d2 followed by ...h2. 6...♚e1+? loses after 7 ♔f6 ♔d5 8 f5 ♚e8 9 g7 h3 10 ♔g6 and the advance of the f-pawn will be decisive.

7 ♚h2!

White crosses the d2-square and so neutralizes Black's threat.

7...♚g1?

A mistake which should have lost. The correct move is 7...♚e1+!, once again showing the importance of considering hesitation checks. White's king is now forced off the e-file, which gives the black king extra space to advance up the board. Then:

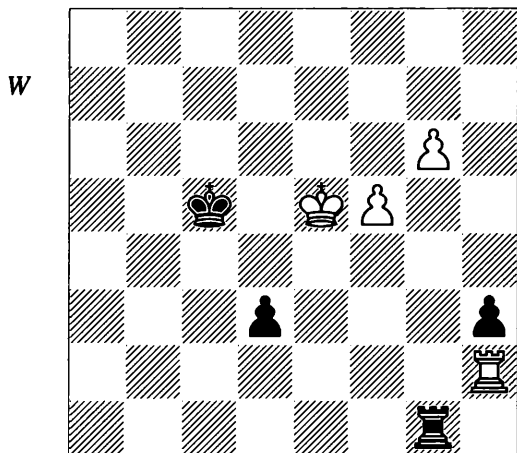
1) 8 ♔f6 ♔d5! 9 g7 (9 ♚xh3 ♔e4 is also a draw) 9...♚g1 10 f5 ♔e4 shows how the black king's activity frustrates White's winning attempts.

2) 8 ♔f5 ♚g1! (8...♔d5? loses to 9 ♚xh3 ♔d4 10 ♚h8) 9 ♔f6 ♔d5 10 f5 (or 10 ♚xh3 ♔e4) 10...♔e4! 11 g7 d2! 12 ♚xd2 ♚xg7 13 ♔xg7 ♔xf5 and Black holds the draw.

8 f5!

Now White can push the f-pawn while keeping Black's king from attacking the white pawn by moving to e4. 8 ♔f6? allows Black to draw with 8...♔d5 9 f5 ♔e4, as before.

8...♔c5 (D)



9 ♖xh3?

A slip throwing away the win. 9 ♔f6! ♔d4 10 ♔g7! (10 g7? ♔e4 is a draw, as before) was the solution, freeing the f-pawn to advance and after 10...♔e5 (10...♔c3 11 ♖xh3 ♔c2 12 ♖xd3 ♔xd3 13 f6 and White wins) 11 f6! the f-pawn will decide the game.

9...♗e1+!

This time Black spots the check. 9...d2? loses to 10 ♖c3+! (another hesitation check, but not 10 ♖d3? ♗e1+ and Black escapes) 10...♔b4 11 ♖d3 ♗e1+ 12 ♔f6 d1♚ 13 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 14 g7 ♖g1 15 ♔f7 ♔c5 16 g8♚.

10 ♔f4

Or 10 ♔f6 d2 11 ♖d3 d1♚ 12 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 13 g7 (13 ♔g7 ♔d6 14 f6 ♖f1! is also a draw) 13...♖g1 14 ♔f7 ♔d5 15 f6 ♔e5 and Black is just in time.

10...d2 11 ♖d3 ♖f1+!

The preliminary checks are essential, since 11...d1♚? 12 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 13 g7 is winning for White.

12 ♔e5

The critical line is 12 ♔g4 d1♚+ 13 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 14 f6 ♖g1+ 15 ♔f5 ♔d5! (15...♔d6? loses to 16 g7) 16 g7 ♖f1+ 17 ♔g6 ♖g1+ 18 ♔h7 ♔e6 and Black saves the game.

12...♗e1+

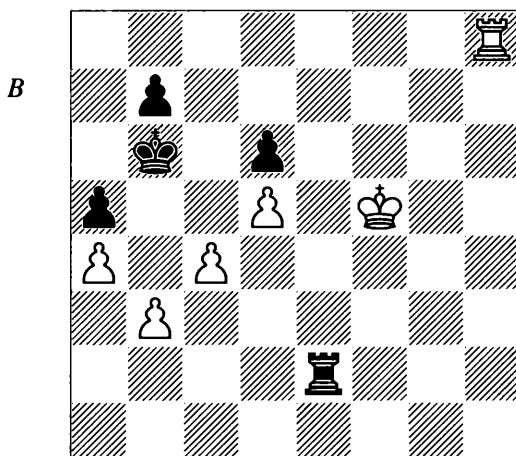
12...d1♚? is still wrong in view of 13 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 14 g7 ♖g1 15 f6.

13 ♔f6

Now that White's king is blocking the f-pawn, Black can safely promote.

13...d1♚ 14 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 15 g7 ♖g1 16 ♔f7 ♔d6 1/2-1/2

King activity is important in rook endings. In the next example, Black lost through not paying enough attention to his king position.



Browne – Bijasas

USA Ch, Greenville 1980

White is a pawn up, but the prospects for a draw look good since his king is cut off from the main mass of pawns, while Black's king is already in the thick of the action. Moreover, it is Black to play. In the game Black missed the best move and found himself in difficulties.

1...♗e3?

Black takes aim at the b3-pawn, but this pawn is not the most important factor in the position. The priority is for Black to activate his king, and so 1...♔c5! is the correct move, after which Black should have no trouble reaching a draw: 2 ♖h7 (after 2 ♖c8+ ♔b4 3 c5 ♖e5+ 4 ♔f6 ♖xd5 Black has no problems, while 2 ♖b8 b6 is similar to 2 ♖h7) 2...b6 3 ♖c7+ ♔b4 4 ♖c6 ♔xb3 5 ♖xb6+ ♔xc4 6 ♖xd6 ♔b4 and the a-pawn ensures Black a comfortable draw.

After the move played, Black is lost.

2 ♖c8!

White immediately exploits Black's mistake and prevents him from activating his king. Now Black will always have to worry that White might play c5(+), creating a passed d-pawn.

2...♖e5+?!

Black wastes time playing his rook up and down the e-file and makes life simple for White, but the alternatives would also not have saved the game:

1) 2...♖xb3 3 ♔e6 ♖a3 (3...♗h3 is even worse: 4 ♕xd6 ♗h6+ 5 ♕e7 ♗h7+ 6 ♕f6 ♗h6+ 7 ♕g7 ♗h3 8 d6) 4 ♕xd6 ♖xa4 5 ♕e6 ♖a1 6 d6 ♖e1+ 7 ♕f6 ♖f1+ 8 ♕e7 ♖e1+ 9 ♕d8 a4 10 d7 ♖e4 (10...a3 11 ♖a8 followed by ♕c8, winning) 11 ♖c7 a3 12 ♕c8 ♖d4 13 ♖xb7+ ♕c5 14 ♖a7 and White wins.

2) 2...♕a7!? (so that c5 is not check, and also preventing a later ♖a8, playing the rook behind Black's passed a-pawn) 3 ♕f6 ♖xb3 is the toughest defence, when White has to continue accurately:

2a) 4 ♕e6? ♖b4 5 ♕xd6 (5 c5 dxc5 6 d6 ♖e4+ 7 ♕d5 ♖d4+ 8 ♕xc5 ♖d1 is safe for Black) 5...♖xa4 6 ♕d7 (6 ♕e5 ♖a1 7 d6 ♖d1 8 ♕e6 ♖e1+ 9 ♕d7 a4 10 ♖c5 b6 11 ♖c7+ ♕a6 12 ♕c6 ♖c1 transposes) 6...♖a1 7 d6 a4 8 ♖c5 (the only move to cause difficulties for Black) 8...b6! (8...♕b8? 9 ♗h5 a3 10 c5 ♖g1 11 ♗h8+ ♕a7 12 ♗h3 ♕b8 13 ♖xa3 ♖g7+ 14 ♕e6 ♖g6+ 15 ♕e7 ♖g7+ 16 ♕f6 ♖g8 17 ♖e3 is winning for White) 9 ♖c7+ ♕a6 10 ♕c6 ♖c1 11 d7 ♖xc4+ 12 ♕d5 ♖xc7 13 d8♖ ♕b7 with a standard type of drawn position (it is drawn even without the a-pawn).

2b) 4 c5! dxc5 (4...♖c3 5 ♕e7 dxc5 6 d6 ♖e3+ 7 ♕d7 transposes) 5 d6 ♖d3 6 ♕e6 ♖e3+ 7 ♕d7 ♕b6 (now White can only win provided he finds the idea of playing his rook back to the first rank) 8 ♗h8! ♖e4 (White wins after both 8...c4 9 ♗h5! c3 10 ♖b5+ ♕a6 11 ♕c7 c2 12 ♖c5 ♖e2 13 d7 and the similar 8...♖d3 9 ♗h1 c4 10 ♗h5!) 9 ♗h1! (White must go all the way to the first rank; 9 ♗h2? only draws as then the rook ends up on b2, giving Black a later tempo by ...c3) 9...c4 10 ♖b1+ ♕c5 11 ♕c7 c3 12 d7 ♖d4 13 d8♖ ♖xd8 14 ♕xd8 c2 15 ♖xb7 ♕c4 16 ♕d7 ♕c3 17 ♕d6 and White wins.

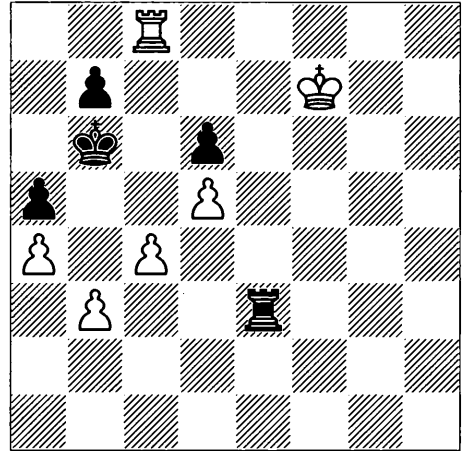
3 ♕f6 ♖e3 4 ♕f7 (D)

For the moment White is not sure how to proceed; he could have struck at once with 4 c5+.

4...♖e1

Black could have offered more resistance by 4...♗h3 but it is still lost in the long run: 5 ♕e6 ♗h6+ 6 ♕d7 ♖g6 7 c5+ dxc5 8 ♖e8 ♖g7+ 9 ♖e7 ♖g8 10 ♖e6+ ♕a7 11 ♖e8 ♖g4 12 d6 c4 13 bxc4 ♖xc4 14 ♖e6 ♖xa4 15 ♕e7 ♖d4 16 d7 a4 17 d8♖ ♖xd8 18 ♕xd8 b5 19 ♕c7 and White wins.

B



5 ♕f6 ♖e3 6 c5+!

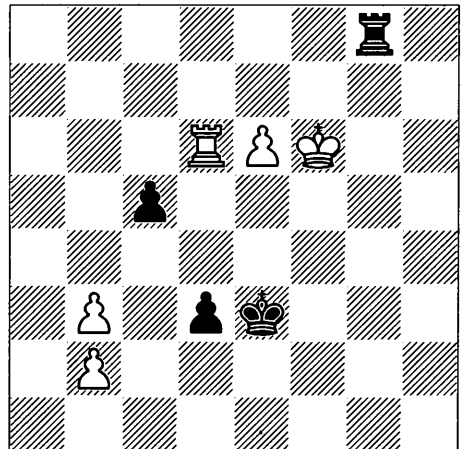
Finally White makes the decisive breakthrough.

6...dxc5 7 d6 ♖d3 8 ♕e7 ♖e3+ 9 ♕d8 1-0

9...♖xb3 10 d7 ♖e3 (10...♗h3 11 ♕e7 is also decisive) 11 ♖c7 followed by ♕c8 wins for White.

Surprising tactical blows abound in rook endings, especially when there are pawns near to promotion, and the following 'collinear move' trick is typical. In this case it should not have been enough to save Black, but White, perhaps taken aback by Black's defence, failed to find the correct continuation.

W



Gonzalez Aguirre – Pena Riasco
Mislata 2006

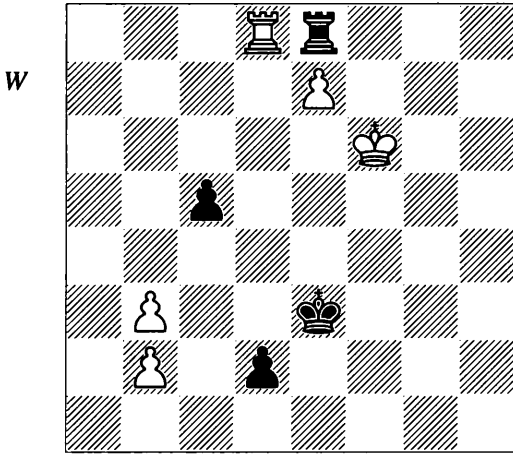
White is a pawn ahead and it appears that both sides will have to give up their rooks for the opposing passed pawns, after which the

game will be decided by the result of the ensuing ♔+2♙ vs ♔+♙ position. While this is true in a general sense, there are a few finesses that make the assessment of the position more complex than one might expect. White can win, but in the game he missed his chance and allowed Black to draw.

1 e7 d2 2 ♖d8

At first sight Black can resign at once, since it appears impossible to prevent White from promoting his pawn, a promotion which, moreover, is with check. However, Black has a tactical shot to keep the game going.

2...♗e8! (D)



This trick arises in many rook endings in slightly different guises. Black plays his rook to a square where taking it will cause White's pawn to be blockaded for a move. Now Black is threatening to draw by taking on e7, so White must hurry.

3 ♔f7?

This does nothing to counter Black's threat. 3 ♖xe8? is also bad due to 3...d1♙ 4 ♖d8 ♗f3+, but White could have won by improving the pawn-structure on the queenside with 3 b4! cxb4 4 b3. Now, assuming that Black has to give up his rook for the pawn, White will win provided his king is on e6 when Black promotes, so as to allow ♔d5 followed by ♔c4. The analysis runs 4...♔e2 (this is the only possible move since 4...♖xe7 5 ♔xe7 ♔e2 loses to 6 ♔e6 d1♙ 7 ♖xd1 ♔xd1 8 ♔d5 ♔c2 9 ♔c4) 5 ♖xe8! (this wins because Black's king turns out to be especially badly placed on e2, since it not

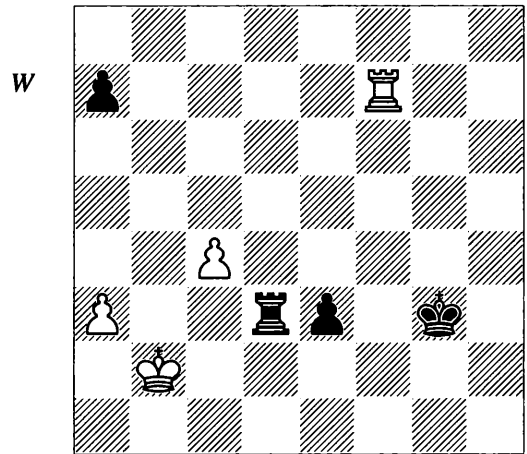
only blocks the best check on f3, but also prevents Black from checking on f1 and then a6) 5...d1♙ 6 ♖d8 (Black has only a few checks and then the pawn promotes) 6...♗f1+ (6...♗a1+ 7 ♔e6 transposes) 7 ♔e5 ♗a1+ 8 ♔e6 ♗a6+ 9 ♔f5 ♗b5+ (or 9...♗a5+ 10 ♔g4) 10 ♔f4 and the checks are at an end.

3...♖xe7+ 4 ♔xe7 ♔e2 5 ♔e6

It is curious that White, a pawn up, is worse off here than in the line of the previous note, where material was equal.

5...d1♙ 6 ♖xd1 ♔xd1 7 ♔d5 ♔c2 8 ♔xc5 ♔xb3 1/2-1/2

White can just scrape a draw in the following position, but the saving idea was missed both in the game and in Tal's notes.



L. Popov – Keres

Tallinn 1973

This position is winning for Black according to Tal's notes in *Informator 16*, but White has a neat drawing line. In the game White made a mistake and fell victim to an unexpected manoeuvre.

1 c5?

White should force Black's king in front of the pawn before it is too late: 1 ♖g7+! ♔f2 2 ♖f7+ ♔e1 3 c5 e2 4 c6 ♔d2 5 ♖e7 (5 c7? e1♙ 6 c8♙ ♗e5+ and Black forces mate) 5...♖f3 6 ♖d7+! (Tal only considered 6 c7?, which loses to 6...♖f8 7 ♖d7+ ♔e3! 8 ♖e7+ ♔f2 9 ♖f7+ ♖xf7 10 c8♙ e1♙) 6...♔e3 (after 6...♖d3 White can just exchange rooks) 7 ♖xa7! (this pawn may appear fairly irrelevant, but it's the a-pawn

that's going to save White) 7...e1♚ 8 ♖e7+ ♕f2 9 ♖xe1 ♕xe1 (White can use the c-pawn to force Black's rook back and gain enough time to push his king and a-pawn up the board) 10 c7 ♖f8 11 ♕b3 ♖c8 12 ♕b4 ♕d2 13 a4 ♕d3 14 ♕b5 ♖xc7 15 a5 ♕d4 16 ♕b6 ♖c1 17 a6 ♕d5 18 a7 and White draws.

1...e2 2 ♖e7 ♕f2 3 c6

3 ♖f7+ loses to 3...♖f3, which is why White had to start checking while the pawn was still on e3.

3...♖f3!

A surprising and decisive move. The rook plays to f8, stopping White's pawn and at the same time shielding Black's king from checks. After 3...e1♚? 4 ♖xe1 ♕xe1 5 c7 Black has to be careful to draw by 5...♖d2+! 6 ♕b3 ♖d3+ 7 ♕b4 a5+.

4 c7 ♖f8 5 c8♚

5 ♖f7+ ♖xf7 6 c8♚ e1♚ and Black wins.

5...♖xc8 6 ♖f7+ ♕e1 7 ♖xa7 ♖e8 0-1

Black will move his king and promote the e-pawn.

We end this section with a tougher piece of analysis. This is another case in which previous analysts (Anikaev and Van Perlo) failed to penetrate more than skin-deep into the position, and so missed a number of instructive points.

king is cut off, his pawns are blockaded and his rook is passively placed. Although White won the game, at this stage Black shouldn't have any trouble holding the position.

1...♕e3?!

Anikaev (in *Informator 34*) and *Van Perlo's Endgame Tactics* both wrongly believed that this move loses, but Anikaev correctly commented that both 1...♕g3 and 1...♕e5 are sufficient to draw. The first of these is the only alternative considered by Van Perlo, who dutifully reproduces Anikaev's line verbatim. Actually, the position is an easy draw and there is no reason for Black to move his king at all, since it is already well-placed. Here's the analysis:

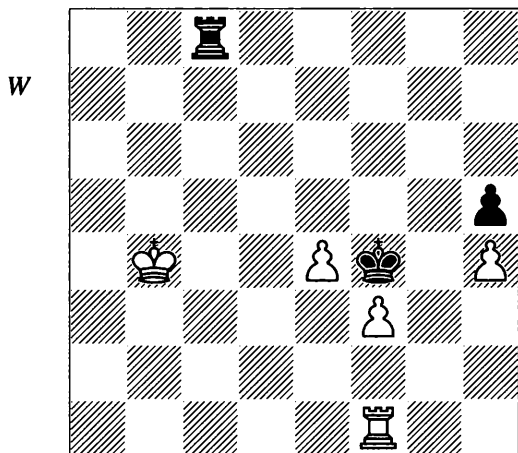
1) 1...♕g3 2 e5 ♕g2 3 ♖e1 ♕f2 4 ♖d1 ♕xf3 5 e6 ♕g4 6 e7 ♖e8 7 ♖e1 ♕xh4 8 ♕c6 ♕g3 9 ♕d7 ♖xe7+ followed by ...h4, drawing.

2) 1...♕e5 2 ♖e1 (or 2 ♕b6 ♖f8 3 ♕c7 ♖f4) 2...♖f8 3 ♖e3 ♖f4 4 ♖c3 ♖xh4 5 ♖c5+ ♕e6 6 ♖f5 ♖h1 7 ♕c4 h4 and White's king is too far away to win.

3) 1...♖c2 (the simplest draw) 2 ♖e1 (the only winning try) 2...♕xf3 3 e5 ♕f2! 4 ♖e4 ♕f3 and White has no winning chances, because if his rook leaves the e-file, Black replies ...♖e2.

The move played in the game also does not lose, although it makes life harder for Black and requires an accurate follow-up.

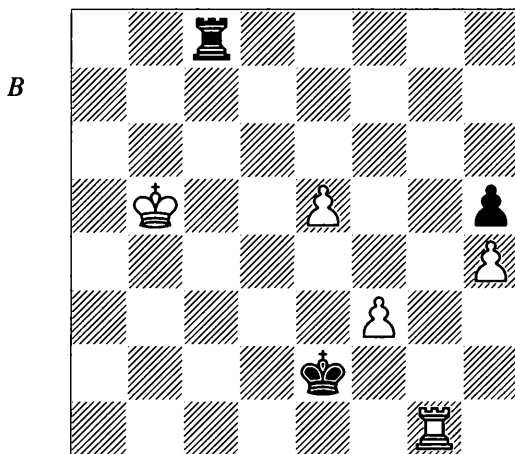
2 e5 ♕e2 3 ♖g1 (D)



Anikaev – Karasev
Severodonetsk 1982

1 ♕b5

Although White is two pawns up, he is clearly going to have trouble winning this position. His



3...♕xf3?

This move, not commented on by Anikaev or Van Perlo, is actually the decisive mistake.

Black could still have held the game had he played 3...♔f2!. Now:

1) 4 ♖g5 ♕xf3 5 ♚xh5 ♕e4 is a draw; for example, 6 ♖g5 ♕f4 7 e6 ♚e8 8 ♖g6 ♕f5.

2) 4 ♖g6 ♕xf3 5 e6 ♕f4 is safe for Black as White's king remains cut off.

3) 4 ♖g7 ♕xf3 (now that White is unable to play his rook behind the e-pawn, this capture draws) 5 e6 ♕f4 6 e7 ♕e5! (not 6...♕f5? 7 ♚f7+ and 8 ♚f8) 7 ♚f7 ♚e8 followed by ...♕e6 and the e-pawn falls.

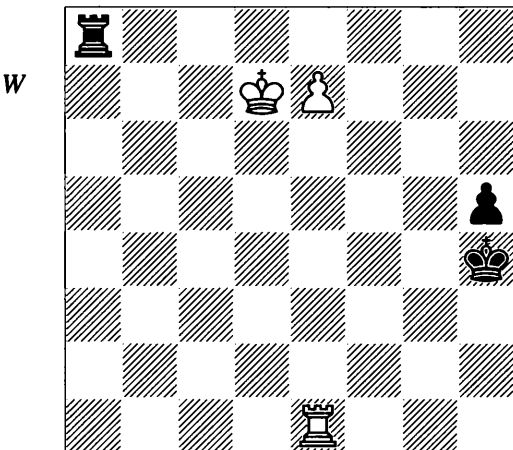
4) 4 ♚a1 ♕xf3 (this draws when the white rook is not on g1, because it takes Black one move less to capture the h4-pawn with his king) 5 e6 ♕g4 6 e7 (6 ♚a4+ ♕f5) 6...♕xh4 7 ♚e1 ♚e8 8 ♕c6 ♕g3 9 ♕d7 ♚xe7+ followed by ...h4, drawing.

4 e6

Now this wins, because White's rook can operate along the g-file, while retaining the option of playing behind the pawn to e1.

4...♚e8?!

There is no good move and this loses because it allows the white king to move to c6 and d7. However, even though 4...♕f4! loses, White has to find an extremely difficult line in order to win; so difficult, indeed, that I suspect few players would discover it over the board. This line runs 5 e7 (5 ♚e1 ♕g4 6 e7 ♚e8 transposes) 5...♚e8 6 ♚e1 ♕g4 (Black has lost a tempo playing his king to f4 and then g4; this costs him the game, but only after a study-like continuation by White) 7 ♕c6 ♕xh4 8 ♕d7 ♚a8 (D) (8...♚h8 9 ♕e6! is similar to line 3 below).

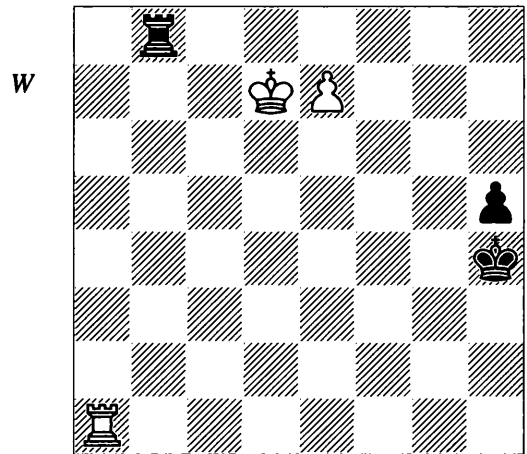


This position could easily be a 'White to play and win' endgame study. The analysis is as follows:

1) 9 e8♚? ♚xe8 10 ♚xe8 doesn't win, provided Black finds 10...♕g4! (10...♕g3? 11 ♕e6 h4 12 ♕f5 h3 13 ♚e3+ ♕g2 14 ♕g4 h2 15 ♚e2+ ♕g1 16 ♕g3 h1♔+ 17 ♕f3 and 10...♕g5? 11 ♕e6 h4 12 ♕e5 win for White) 11 ♕e6 h4 12 ♕e5 h3 13 ♕e4 h2 14 ♚g8+ ♕h3.

2) 9 ♕e6? may look like a crazy move, but the further analysis shows that it is one of White's most dangerous ideas. It doesn't work here because Black's rook is on a8 rather than b8: 9...♕g4 10 ♚g1+ ♕f3 11 ♚f1+ ♕g4 12 ♚f8 ♚a6+ 13 ♕d5 ♚a5+ 14 ♕c4 ♚a4+ 15 ♕b5 ♚e4 16 e8♚ ♚xe8 17 ♚xe8 h4 18 ♕c4 h3 19 ♕d3 h2 20 ♚h8 ♕g3 21 ♕e2 ♕g2 22 ♚g8+ ♕h1 and Black holds the draw.

3) 9 ♚a1! (the first step is to drive Black's rook away from a8, its best square) 9...♚b8 (D) (9...♚xa1 10 e8♚ ♚g1 is a theoretical win since ♚ vs ♚+h♔ is generally drawn only if the pawn is on the second, third, sixth or seventh rank; however, it should be added that the win is not especially easy).



The key moment. White can win only with 10 ♕e6!!, an unbelievable move by which White spurns the win of Black's rook and moves his king away from the promotion square. It isn't easy to explain why this move wins, and only after looking at several variations does the logic become apparent:

3a) 10...♚c8 (waiting doesn't help Black) 11 ♚d1 ♕g4 12 ♚d4+ ♕g3 13 ♚d8 ♚c1 14 ♕f5

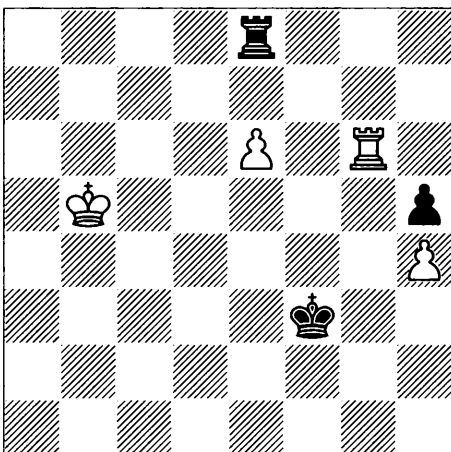
♖e1 15 e8♚ ♜xe8 16 ♜xe8 h4 17 ♖e3+ and White wins.

3b) 10...♜b6+ 11 ♔f7 ♜b7 12 ♜g1 (threatening ♜g8) 12...♔h3 (12...♜a7 13 ♜g8 ♜b7 14 ♔f8 and White wins) 13 ♔e6 ♜b6+ 14 ♔f5 ♜b5+ (14...♜b8 15 ♜h1+ and ♜xh5 wins) 15 ♔g6 ♖e5 (15...♜b6+ 16 ♔xh5 ♖e6 17 ♜g7 wins for White) 16 ♔f6 ♜xe7 (16...♖e3 17 ♜g5 followed by ♖e5) 17 ♔xe7 h4 18 ♔f6 ♔h2 19 ♜g8 h3 20 ♔f5 ♔h1 21 ♔f4 h2 22 ♔g3 ♔g1 23 ♜a8 is a win for White.

3c) 10...♔g3 11 ♜g1+ ♔f4 (11...♔h3 12 ♜d1! ♔g4 13 ♜d8 ♜b1 14 e8♚ ♖e1+ 15 ♔d5 ♜xe8 16 ♜xe8 h4 17 ♔e4 and White wins) 12 ♜f1+ ♔g4 (after 12...♔e4 13 ♔f7 ♜b7 14 ♜h1 White wins the h-pawn, while 12...♔g3 13 ♜f8 ♜b6+ 14 ♔f5 ♜b5+ 15 ♔g6 ♖e5 16 e8♚ ♜xe8 17 ♜xe8 h4 18 ♔g5 h3 19 ♖e3+ ♔g2 20 ♔g4 h2 21 ♖e2+ ♔g1 22 ♔g3 is a standard win for White) 13 ♜f8 ♜b6+ 14 ♔d5 ♜b5+ 15 ♔c4 (here is where the position of the black rook on the b-file is crucial; if it were on the a-file, the white king would have to go one file further from the kingside, and this would enable Black to draw) 15...♖e5 16 e8♚ ♜xe8 17 ♜xe8 h4 18 ♔d3 h3 19 ♔e2 ♔g3 20 ♔f1 h2 21 ♜h8 and White wins.

Basically, 10 ♔e6!! wins because it sets up the threat of ♜d1-d8. This threat forces Black to move his king to the g-file, but then after ♜g1+ he faces a dilemma: either to play his king to the h-file, where it blocks the h-pawn and makes most ♖ vs ♜ positions winning for White, or to play to the f-file, which allows ♜f1+ and ♜f8.

5 ♜g6 (D)



Now the win presents fewer problems, because White's king can support the pawn, while Black's king is cut off from the h4-pawn.

5...♔f4

5...♜c8 6 e7 ♖e8 7 ♜g7 is also a win for White.

6 ♔c6 ♔f5 7 ♔d7 ♜a8 8 ♜h6

The pawn on h4 proves especially useful in this line, preventing Black's king from moving to g5.

8...♜a7+ 9 ♔e8 ♔g4 10 e7 ♔xh4 11 ♜g6!

The last difficult move; with White's rook on the g-file, Black's pawn can only edge forwards slowly.

11...♔h3 12 ♔f8 ♜a8+ 13 e8♚ ♜xe8+ 14 ♔xe8 h4 15 ♔e7 ♔h2 16 ♔f6 h3 17 ♔f5 ♔h1 18 ♔g4 h2 19 ♔g3 1-0

White wins quickly after 19...♔g1 20 ♜a6 h1♜+ 21 ♔f3.

Summary:

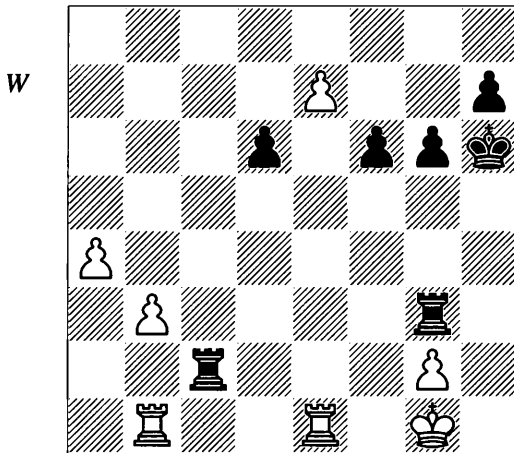
This section revisits some themes we have seen before, but also introduces several new ideas.

- In positions in which the rooks may be exchanged, it is important to bear in mind the points made in Chapter 2 (in Volume 1) on pawn endings; for example, that outside passed pawns are often less strong than is generally believed.
- It may be possible to gain a tempo by forcing the enemy rook to give itself up for a passed pawn when it is on the seventh rank rather than the eighth. This is generally achieved by threatening to gain a whole queen by cutting the enemy rook off from the pawn.
- Active play is very important in rook endings. It is usually better to be a pawn down with some genuine counterplay rather than have a passive position with level material.
- A single passed pawn can be an effective counter to connected passed pawns if the enemy king cannot approach the pawn.
- Hesitation checks play a major role in rook endings. When a rook is moving from one square to another, it's easy to overlook that throwing in a check can force the enemy king to an inferior position, for example blocking its own passed pawn.

- Surprising tactical blows are common in rook endings, especially when pawns are near to promotion. The 'collinear move' idea on page 282 is one tactical idea which is often missed in practice.
- It's worth mentioning again the 'don't promote too soon' theme of Section 8.4.8. It's important to extract the maximum value from a pawn on the seventh rank.

8.13 Four-Rook Endings

One of the main differences between four-rook endings and single-rook endings is the attacking power of a pair of rooks. The 'doubled rooks on the seventh' idea is rather familiar, but the following diagram features a few unusual twists.



Korsunsky – Khantadze
USSR 1978

White is about to make a queen, but Black's active rooks give him serious counterplay and he is threatening an immediate perpetual check. Gufeld incorrectly claimed that the diagram position is winning for White in *Informer 27*, overlooking a subtle defence for Black.

1 ♖h2!

Certainly White's best chance.

1... ♜xg2+?

Doubling rooks on the seventh rank is almost a reflex action, but here it is the losing move. Black could have drawn by taking with the other rook: **1... ♜cxg2+ 2 ♖h1** and now:

1) **2... ♜c2?** was the only move considered by Gufeld, but then White wins by **3 ♜e4! ♜h3+ 4 ♖g1 ♜g3+ 5 ♖f1 ♜h3 (5... ♜f3+ 6 ♖e1 ♜h3 7 ♖d1 and White wins) 6 ♜e2 ♜h1+ 7 ♖g2 ♜xe2+ 8 ♖xh1 ♜xe7 9 a5** and the connected outside passed pawns will be decisive; for example, **9...g5 10 a6 f5 11 b4 g4 12 b5**, etc.

2) **2... ♜a2!** (this draws because the rook is further away and is safe from attack by the white king) **3 ♜e4 ♜h3+ 4 ♖g1 ♜g3+ 5 ♖f1 ♜f3+ 6 ♖e1 ♜h3! 7 ♖d1 ♜d3+ 8 ♖c1 ♜c3+ 9 ♖d1 ♜d3+ 10 ♖e1 ♜h3** and White cannot escape from the black rooks.

2 ♖h3 ♜cf2

2... ♜ce2 3 ♜xe2 ♜xe2 4 b4 and White wins easily.

3 ♜g1!

This nullifies Black's attack.

3... ♜xg1

Or **3... ♜h2+ 4 ♖g3 f5 5 ♜h1 ♜fg2+ 6 ♖f3 ♜f2+ 7 ♖e3 ♜e2+ 8 ♖d3** and the king escapes.

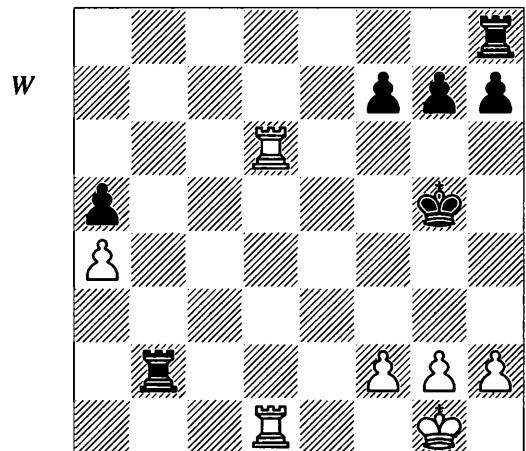
4 ♜xg1 ♜e2

Black wins the e-pawn, but once again the queenside pawns will be too strong.

5 a5 1-0

For example, **5... ♜xe7 (5... ♜e3+ 6 ♖g2 ♜xe7 7 ♜a1 and White wins) 6 a6 ♜e3+ 7 ♜g3 ♜e2 8 b4 ♜a2 9 b5 f5 10 ♜g2! (10 ♜b3 g5) 10... ♜a3+ 11 ♖h2 g5 12 ♜b2**, followed by **b6**, and Black is lost.

Two rooks can also launch a direct attack on the enemy king in other situations.



Soultanbéieff – O'Kelly
corr. 1943

Van Perlo comments “But look how O’Kelly weathers all the storms and holds the draw”, even though during the subsequent play Black made mistakes allowing White a forced win.

1 h4+!?

White offers a pawn to relieve his back rank with gain of tempo and draw the black king into a vulnerable position. While it shouldn’t lead to a win, at least this move creates some problems for Black to solve.

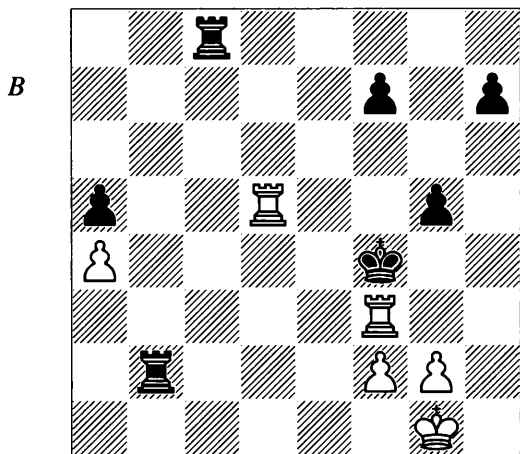
1...♙xh4 2 ♖d6d5 g5 3 ♜1d3 ♜c8?

It is a mistake to ignore White’s threats. After a defensive move on the kingside such as 3...f6 or 3...♙h5, Black is not in any real danger.

4 ♜h3+

The best move. White cannot get at the king in its current position, but by means of a few checks, White can transfer his rook to f3 with gain of tempo, thus countering Black’s threat of ...♜c1+ followed by ...♜xf2. It isn’t likely that White will deliver mate, but it may be that by attacking the king he can gain time to grab some of Black’s kingside pawns.

4...♙g4 5 ♜g3+ ♙f4 6 ♜f3+ (D)



6...♙g4?

Van Perlo doesn’t comment on this move or the next, even though playing the king back into the danger zone should lose by force. The best move is 6...♙e4, although after 7 ♜xg5 ♜c7 8 ♜xa5 ♜a2 Black, who is a pawn down with weak kingside pawns, has a pretty miserable position.

7 ♜f6?

The right idea but the wrong move, which allows Black to cover the fourth rank and defuse White’s threats. 7 ♜d4+! ♙h5 8 ♜f6 is correct, when the threat of 9 g4+ ♙h4 10 ♜h6# costs Black a rook.

7...♜c4!

White has let Black off the hook.

8 ♙h2

The threat is 9 f3+ ♙h5 10 ♜dd6, but Black has no trouble defending.

8...♙h5 9 g3

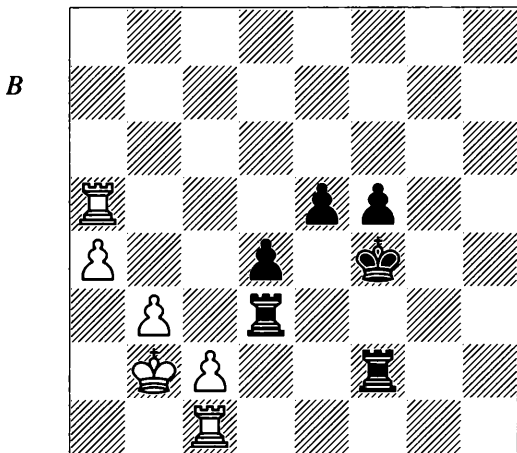
White now threatens 10 ♙h3, but again Black easily nullifies the threat.

9...♙g4

A satisfactory reply; now that White has played g3, his f-pawn is pinned and so Black need not worry about f3+.

10 ♜xf7 ♜xa4 11 ♜ff5 h6 12 ♜f6 ♜ab4 13 ♙g2 ♜b6 1/2-1/2

If both sides promote in a four-rook ending, we have what is essentially a middlegame situation.



Krnić – Palatnik

Yugoslavia – USSR match, Krk 1976

Black’s passed pawns are more advanced than White’s and they are supported by his king. Nevertheless, accurate play is essential because Black’s pieces are badly placed to stop White’s queenside pawns.

1...e4!

1...♜dd2? 2 ♜c5 is unclear because now the a-pawn presents a considerable danger.

2 b4 e3?

Black should not have indulged in a race, since the b-pawn can promote with check. Instead, he should have taken steps to nullify the b-pawn, and only then seen to the advance of his own pawns. 2...♖h3? is also wrong as after 3 b5 d3 4 b6 d2 (4...♗h8 5 ♜d5 d2 6 ♜a1 transposes) 5 ♜a1 ♗h8 6 ♜d5 e3 7 a5 Black's pawns are blockaded for the moment; for example, 7...♕e4 (after 7...e2? 8 ♜d4+! ♕f3 9 ♜xd2 e1 ♗ 10 ♜d3+ ♗e3 11 ♜xe3+ ♕xe3 12 b7 only White can be better) 8 ♜d7 ♜b8 9 ♕c3 Black still has some advantage, but there is nothing clear.

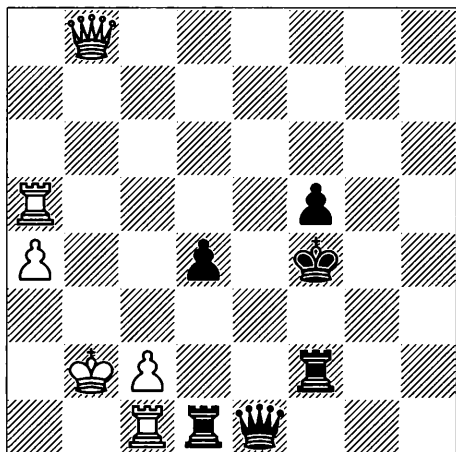
The correct line is 2...♜c3! 3 b5 ♜c8 4 b6 d3 5 b7 (or 5 ♜c5 ♜b8 6 a5 d2 7 ♜b1 e3 8 ♜d5 ♕e4! 9 ♜d7 ♜e2 followed by ...♜e1 and Black wins) 5...♜b8 6 ♜b5 d2 7 ♜b1 e3 8 ♕c3 (or else ...e2 wins) 8...♜f3! 9 a5 d1 ♗ 10 ♜xd1 e2+ 11 ♕d2 exd1 ♗+ 12 ♕xd1 ♕e4 13 ♕c1 ♜c3 14 a6 (Black wins after 14 ♕b2 ♜c6) 14...♜a3 15 ♜b6 f4 16 ♜c6 f3 17 ♜c8 f2 and the pawn is too fast.

3 b5 e2

3...♜c3 is no longer effective as Black has pushed the wrong pawn; after 4 b6 ♜c8 5 ♜d5 the position is unclear.

4 b6 ♜d1 5 b7 e1 ♗ 6 b8 ♗+ (D)

B



White has the first check, but his pieces are poorly placed for attacking Black's king and the question is more whether White can draw. Palatnik's annotations in *Informator 21* wrongly

claimed that Black is winning, and he considered Black to have handled the whole ending accurately.

6...♕g4

The only move, as 6...♕g5? 7 ♗g3+ ♕h5 8 ♗h3+ ♕g5 9 ♜xd1 ♗xd1 10 ♗g3+ wins for White.

7 ♗g8+

After 7 ♜d1? ♗c3+ Black forces mate in a few moves.

7...♕h3 8 ♗b3+?

A blunder which loses instantly, made just at the moment when White could have forced a draw by 8 ♗h7+! ♕g2, and now:

1) 9 ♗g8+? was the only move Palatnik considered, but it loses to 9...♕f1 10 ♜xd1 (10 ♗c4+ d3 11 ♜xd1 ♗xd1 12 ♕a3 ♗xc2 13 ♗xc2 dxc2 14 ♕b2 f4 also wins for Black) 10...♗xd1 11 ♗c8 ♗f3 12 ♗c4+ d3 13 ♕b3 ♜xc2 14 ♗d5 ♜f2 15 ♗xf3 ♜xf3 16 ♜e5 f4 17 ♕c3 ♜e3 18 ♜h5 ♜e4! 19 a5 ♕e2.

2) 9 ♗g6+! ♕f1 10 ♜xd1 ♗xd1 11 ♗c6! and it is time for Black to force a draw by 11...f4 12 ♗h1+ ♕e2 13 ♗e4+ (13 ♜e5+ ♕d2 14 ♗e4 ♗c1+ 15 ♕b3 ♗b1+ 16 ♕c4 ♗xc2+ 17 ♗xc2+ ♕xc2 18 ♕xd4 is also a draw) 13...♕f1, as otherwise he will be worse.

8...♗c3+ 0-1

After 9 ♗xc3+ dxc3+ 10 ♕b1 (or else White loses his rook) 10...♜xc1+ 11 ♕xc1 ♜f1# it is mate.

Summary:

- Four-rook endings differ from those with one pair of rooks because two rooks have a considerable attacking potential. This often manifests itself in the familiar case of doubled rooks on the seventh, but a pair of rooks can directly attack the enemy king in many other situations. Even if such an attack doesn't lead to mate, it can gain enough time to allow the rooks to capture some enemy pawns.
- If both sides promote, the position is more a middlegame than an endgame, and in this case king-safety is likely to be the most important factor.

9 Endings with Rooks and Minor Pieces

9.1 Introduction

We start in **Section 9.2** (page 289) with the common situation in which one player is the exchange up. This is a large subject, but in keeping with the general philosophy behind *Nunn's Chess Endings*, I shall skip the elementary material dealing with subjects such as ♖(+♗) vs ♘ and ♖(+♗) vs ♙ and move directly on to less familiar material which is nevertheless very important for the practical player. Section 9.2.1 deals with the case of ♖+♗ vs ♘+♗, which turns out to be quite complicated. While there are some positions which are definitely drawn, in other cases it is hard to judge the result of the position, with the outcome being determined by apparently insignificant differences. Continuing with the knight, Section 9.2.2 (page 294) covers ♖ vs ♘ positions with more pawns, and establishes some general principles for such endings. In some positions the side with the knight may even have the advantage, as in Section 9.2.3 (page 300).

Next we look at positions with ♖ vs ♙. The case of ♖+♗ vs ♙+♗ is considered in Section 9.2.4 (page 303) and this is, if anything, even more complicated than the corresponding ending with a knight. The material is therefore divided up according to pawn position and we start in Section 9.2.4a (page 304) with the case in which the pawns are on the same file. Here there is one definitely drawn position, but if the defender cannot reach it then his chances are poor. In Section 9.2.4b (page 308) the pawns are on adjacent files, and this case is especially complex since, while most positions are drawn, there are many exceptions. In Section 9.2.4c (page 313) both pawns are passed. Versus a knight, the rook had very good winning chances, but

the bishop case is less clear-cut: the rook wins more often than not, but there are also many drawn positions. ♖ vs ♙ positions with more pawns are considered in Section 9.2.5 (page 322), while in Section 9.2.6 (page 328) we consider a couple of positions in which the player with the bishop has the advantage.

In **Section 9.3** (page 330) we look at positions in which one side has an extra piece. The basic theory of ♖+♙ vs ♖ and ♖+♘ vs ♖ (without pawns) is well-known and a summary may be found in *Understanding Chess Endgames* (Section 88), while for a detailed coverage, see my book *Secrets of Pawnless Endings* (expanded edition, Gambit 2002). Of course, many other endgame books include similar material. Section 9.3 considers a selection of positions and makes some general points about this ending.

The remaining sections deal with various tactical ideas that can arise in endings with rooks and minor pieces. Stalemate is covered in **Section 9.4** (page 334), while **Section 9.5** (page 337) describes some mating ideas. The term *hesitation check* was introduced in Section 8.2.1 to refer to the situation in which a piece traveling from A to B first gives check on C. This idea occurs relatively often in endings with rooks and minor pieces, and **Section 9.6** (page 344) gives some examples in which a player gives away half a point by overlooking such a check. Finally, pawn-promotion tactics are covered in **Section 9.7** (page 347).

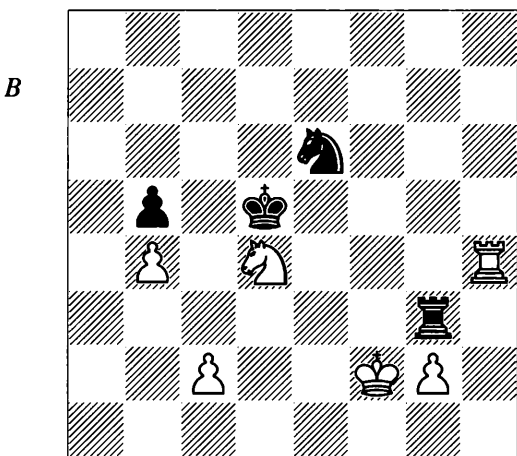
9.2 Advantage of the Exchange

In many games, one side wins the exchange and the material advantage persists to the endgame.

Thus the advantage of the exchange is one of the most common piece imbalances to arise in endgames. I shall not cover the basic rook (and pawn) vs knight and rook (and pawn) vs bishop endgames here (see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Sections 67-70 for more on these endgames), but move directly on to endgames in which both sides have pawns. The simplest of these is rook and pawn vs minor piece and pawn.

9.2.1 Rook and Pawn vs Knight and Pawn

If the pawns are passed, then the rook usually wins because the short-range knight cannot simultaneously defend its own pawn and restrain the enemy pawn. The situation becomes more interesting when the pawns are not passed. We first deal with the case in which the two pawns are on the same file. If the pawns are on adjacent ranks so that they are facing each other with no space in between, then the result is usually a draw. The reason is that the knight can stand on a secure square attacking the enemy pawn, which ties down either the king or the rook to its defence. Without the freedom to manoeuvre with both pieces, the attacker usually cannot make progress.



Stefansson – Shirov
Reykjavik 1992

Black's position looks desperate since he is two pawns down and his rook is under attack. Nevertheless, he was able to save the game by reaching a positional draw.

1...♖xg2+!

Shirov finds the right idea. 1...♖c3? 2 ♜xe6 ♖xc2+ 3 ♔g1 ♜xe6 4 ♖h5 leads to an ending with ♖+2♙ vs ♖ that is winning for White.

2 ♜xg2 ♜xd4

The point of Black's defence is that White is unable to save his c-pawn, after which we have a position of ♖+b♙ vs ♜+b♙. If the knight can occupy a safe square where it attacks the enemy pawn, thereby tying down one of White's pieces to the defence of the pawn, the result should be a draw. The question is whether Black has enough time to take the c-pawn and still reach a drawing set-up.

3 ♜f2

Or 3 c3 ♜e2 4 ♜f3 (4 ♖h5+ ♜c4 5 ♖c5+ ♜b3 6 ♖xb5 ♜xc3 7 ♖b8 ♜c4 and ...♜b5 draws) 4...♜xc3 5 ♜e3 ♜e5! (the only move to draw; Black must clear d5 for the knight, but 5...♜c6? is wrong because after 6 ♜d4 the knight cannot now move to d5) 6 ♖h5+ ♜d6 7 ♜d4 (giving another check by 7 ♖h6+ ♜e5 doesn't help White) 7...♜e2+ (Black draws because of the unfortunate position of the rook on h5, which prevents ♜d3) 8 ♜e3 ♜c3 and White is not making progress.

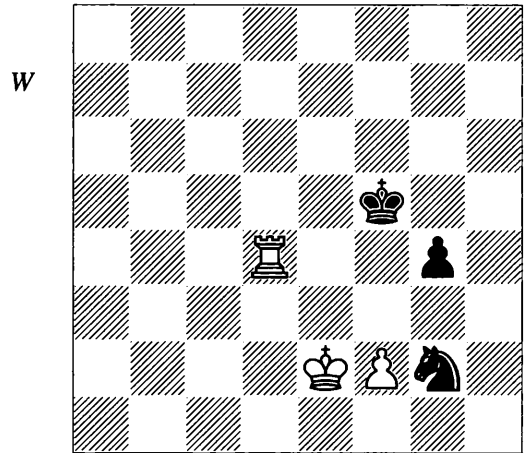
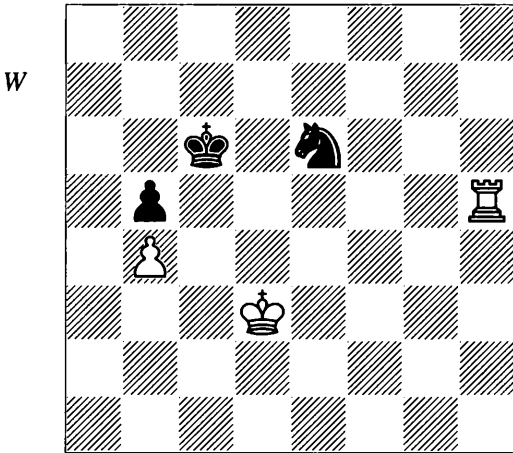
3...♜xc2 4 ♜e2 ♜d4+ 5 ♜d3 ♜e6!

Careful play by Shirov. If he could get his knight to c6 and king to b6 then he would clearly draw, but this isn't possible because 5...♜c6? loses to 6 ♖h5+ ♜e5+ 7 ♜e3 ♜d6 8 ♜e4 and the b-pawn falls. Since it isn't possible to set up a drawn position with the knight on c6, Shirov instead plays it to a6, where it again attacks the b4-pawn. It might seem risky to have the knight on the edge of the board, but the fortress just about resists any attempt to break it down.

6 ♖h5+ ♜c6 (D)

7 ♜e4

Or 7 ♖h6 ♜d5 8 ♜e3 (8 ♖f6 ♜e5 and 8 ♜c3 ♜d6 are drawn) and now 8...♜c7 draws, but not 8...♜d8? 9 ♖b6 ♜c4, as given by Shirov, since 10 ♖d6! ♜f7 11 ♖d4+ ♜b3 12 ♜f4 ♜a4 13 ♖d7 ♜h6 14 ♜g5 ♜xb4 15 ♜xh6 ♜c3 16 ♖c7+! (note this typical tempo-gaining manoeuvre, which should be familiar from Section 8.2.1) 16...♜d4 17 ♖b7 ♜c4 18 ♜g5 wins. This was the only mistake in a very good piece of analysis by Shirov in *Informator 54*.



E. Pandavos – Delithanasis

Greek Ch, Liosia 1991

7...♖c7 8 ♔e5 ♘a6 9 ♖h4

Now the rook is tied down.

9...♗c7 10 ♔d5 ♗b6 11 ♔d6 ♗b7

Black can maintain his fortress using only his king, as the knight not only attacks b4 but also covers c5.

12 ♖g4 ♗b6! 13 ♔d7 ♗b7 14 ♔d8 ♗b6 15 ♗c8 ♗a7! 1/2-1/2

The only move to draw, but an adequate one. Instead 15...♖xb4? loses after 16 ♖xb4 ♗c5 17 ♖b1 b4 18 ♗c7! ♗b5 19 ♗b7! with a typical 'Réti' win (for example, see diagram 41a in *Understanding Chess Endgames*) – whichever side the black king moves to, the white king moves to the opposite side.

When the pawns are on the same file, but not on adjacent ranks, the attacker's winning chances are slightly greater. Nevertheless, the formation with, for example, black king on d6, knight on e6 and pawn on d5 is a good one and generally draws even if the white pawn is on d3 or d2. However, the same formation one rank further back does not defend. Thus if Black has king on d7, knight on e7 and pawn on d6, White usually wins. His plan is to play his pawn to d5 and then sacrifice the exchange on e7, leading to a winning king and pawn ending.

If the pawns are on adjacent files, then there is no general rule for determining whether the position is a win or a draw. When there is only one empty rank between the pawns, most positions are drawn, but there are quite a few exceptions, such as the following position.

This position is winning for White, but if it is moved one rank up the board or one file to the left then it is a draw. White wins here because Black's pawn is a long way up the board and so White is able to operate freely from the eighth rank with his rook, but the pawn's proximity to the edge of the board restricts Black's movements. This ending was analysed in *Informator 53* by Andrianov and Pandavos. They gave White's first move an exclamation mark, even though it throws away the win, apparently because they believed the position to be drawn but thought the move played was White's best practical chance.

1 f3?

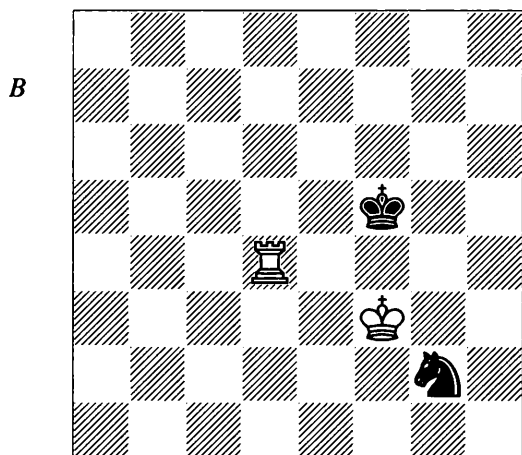
The winning line is quite lengthy and is based on gradually improving the position of the white king. The main idea is to play ♔f1-g1-h2, but this doesn't work straight away because Black can put his king on g5 and knight on f5, creating a barrier to the further advance of the king. White must first manoeuvre with his rook before starting out with the king walk. If this is carried out correctly, it will force Black to adopt a less satisfactory defence with the knight on h5. With Black's knight offside, White can then switch plans and try to get his king in by ♔g2-f1-e2-e3; eventually the various attacking ideas prove too much for Black. Here's an example of this winning method: 1 ♖d8 ♔e4 2 ♖e8+ ♔f4 3 ♖h8 (threatening ♖h2) 3...♔e4 4 ♔f1 (note how White puts his rook on h8 before playing ♔f1, thereby preventing ...♖h4-f5

by Black) 4...♔f3 (4...♖f4 5 ♖e8+ ♔f5 6 ♖a8 ♔e4 7 ♖g1 ♔f5 8 ♔h2 ♖h5 9 ♖a5+ transposes) 5 ♖h6! (5 ♖h7?! ♖f4 6 ♖a7 is wrong because now Black can transfer his knight to h4 and f5 by 6...♖g6 7 ♖a3+ ♔f4 8 ♖g1?! ♖h4; the position is still a win, but White has lost a lot of time) 5...♖f4 6 ♖a6 (thanks to White's accurate play, g6 is under control) 6...♔e4 7 ♖g1 ♔f5 (after 7...♔f3 8 ♖a3+ ♔e4 9 ♔h2 ♖h5 10 ♖a5 Black loses more quickly) 8 ♔h2 ♖h5 (or 8...♔g5 9 ♖a5+ ♔h4 10 ♖f5 ♖h5 11 ♔g2 ♖g7 12 ♖f8 ♖h5 13 ♔f1 ♔g5 14 ♔e2 and the king penetrates) 9 ♖a5+ ♔g6 10 ♔g2 ♔h6 11 ♔f1 ♔g6 (11...♖f4 12 ♔e1 doesn't help) 12 ♔e2 g3 (passive defence is no better; for example, after 12...♖f4+ 13 ♔e3 ♖h3 14 ♖b5 ♔h6 15 ♖b8 ♔g5 16 ♖f8 ♔h5 17 ♖h8+ ♔g5 18 f3 Black loses his pawn) 13 f3 ♖f4+ 14 ♔e3 ♖g2+ (or 14...g2 15 ♔f2 ♔f6 16 ♖a8 ♔f5 17 ♖f8+ ♔e5 18 ♖f7 and the pawn falls by zugzwang) 15 ♔e4 ♖h4 16 ♔f4 g2 17 ♖g5+ ♔f6 18 ♖g4 ♔e6 19 ♔e3 ♔f6 20 ♔f2 and once again the pawn is lost.

1...gxf3+

Not 1...g3? 2 ♖g4 ♖f4+ 3 ♔e3 ♖h5 (or 3...♖d5+ 4 ♔d2) 4 ♖g8 ♔f6 5 f4 followed by ♖g5, but 1...♖f4+ 2 ♔e3 ♖g2+ 3 ♔f2 gxf3 also draws.

2 ♔xf3 (D)



2...♔e5!

The only move as 2...♖e1+? loses to 3 ♔f2! ♖c2 4 ♖c4 ♖a3 5 ♖c3 ♖b1 6 ♖d3 followed by ♔e2 and ♖b3.

3 ♖c4

3 ♖e4+ ♔d5 gives a reciprocal zugzwang with White to play.

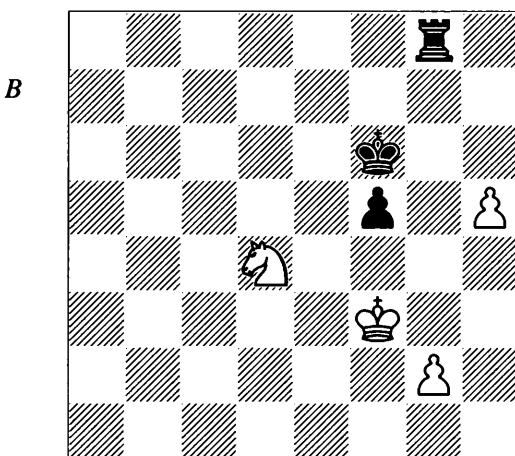
3...♔d5?

Black goes wrong and ends up on the wrong end of the reciprocal zugzwang. 3...♖e1+! 4 ♔f2 (4 ♔e2 ♖g2 defends) 4...♔d5! (but not 4...♖d3+?, which loses to 5 ♔e3 ♖e1 6 ♖e4+ ♔d5 7 ♖d4+ ♔c5 8 ♖d2 ♔c4 9 ♖e2 ♖d3 10 ♖c2+) 5 ♖c3 ♔d4! was the only way to hold the game.

4 ♖e4! 1-0

Now it is Black to play in the reciprocal zugzwang and he loses the knight immediately.

Knowing what position to aim for is the key to many endings. The diagram below is a draw despite the fact that White cannot save his h-pawn, but how should he arrange his pieces?



Matulović – Süer

Poiana Brasov 1973

The key point is to know (or work out) that White should have his pawn on g3 and knight on h3. If you imagine, for example, that Black's rook is on a4 and White's king is on f3, then Black can try to advance his king to the left or the right of the pawn. However, if he plays ...♔e5, ...♖a3+ (met by ♔f2) and ...♔e4, then White plays ♖g5+ and checks the king away from e4. If Black plays ...♔g6-h5, then White checks on f4 and h3, and again the black king must retreat. This only leaves the danger that White might end up in zugzwang, but it is not hard to see that White always has a spare move; for example, when Black's king is on e5 White

can just play ♖e3, and after ...♙a3+ the king retreats to f2 in any case.

1...♙g4

Black first aims to win the h5-pawn by a combination of ...♙h4 and ...♖g5.

2 ♖c2

White is still safely within the bounds of a draw, and has several methods of holding the position. One alternative is 2 ♖e2 ♖g5 3 ♖g1 ♙f4+ 4 ♖g3 ♙a4 5 ♖h3+ ♖xh5 6 ♖f4+ ♖g5 7 ♖h3+ ♖f6 8 ♖f3 followed by g3, reaching the target position.

2...♙h4 3 ♖e3 ♖g5

Not 3...♙xh5?! 4 g4, when White draws at once.

4 g3

In *Informator 16*, Minev considered this to be the losing move, but the fatal error came later. However, it is true that Minev's recommendation of 4 ♖d1! ♙xh5 5 ♖f2 ♙h8 6 ♖h3+ would have led to the drawing position more quickly.

4...♙h2

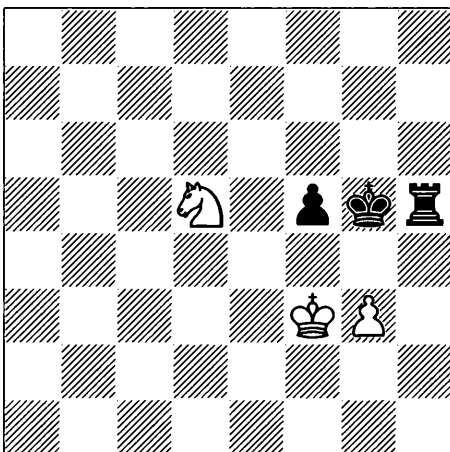
Black must avoid 4...♙xh5?! 5 ♖xf5!, with an instant draw.

5 ♖d5

Heading for f4 and then h3 is a sound plan.

5...♙xh5 (D)

W



6 ♖g2

This slightly odd move maintains the draw, but 6 ♖f4 ♙h2 7 ♖e6+ ♖f6 8 ♖f4 would have been easier.

6...♙h6 7 ♖e3?

Now White is losing because his knight has lost contact with the vital h3-square. 7 ♖f4! is

the only drawing move, intending to play ♖f3, after which the draw is clear. Black can prevent this with 7...♖g4 but then 8 ♖d3! followed by a check on f2 drives the black king back and again allows White to establish the correct drawing formation.

7...♙h8?

Black doesn't appreciate that time is of the essence and that if he doesn't take advantage of White's slip straight away, he will forfeit his winning opportunity. 7...♙b6 is the way to win, when White cannot reach the drawing formation: 8 ♖f3 (or 8 ♖d5 ♙b3 9 ♖h3 ♙b2 10 ♖f4 ♙a2 11 ♖d5 ♙f2 and the knight cannot now return to f4; after 12 ♖e3 ♖f6 Black marches his king round to e4 and wins) 8...♙b3 9 ♖f2 ♖f6 and Black wins as in the note to White's 12th move.

8 ♖f3?

The only drawing move is 8 ♖d1!, heading for f2 and h3, similar to the note to White's 7th move.

8...♙h2?

Failure to identify a target position often results in a whole series of misguided moves. Black could again have won by 8...♙a8, switching his rook to the queenside.

9 ♖f1?

Again wrong. 9 ♖d1 followed by ♖f2 draws as before, and in this position White actually has a second drawing move, namely 9 ♖g2, heading for f4 while at the same time preventing Black from immediately switching his rook to the queenside.

9...♙b2!

Black finally hits on the correct idea.

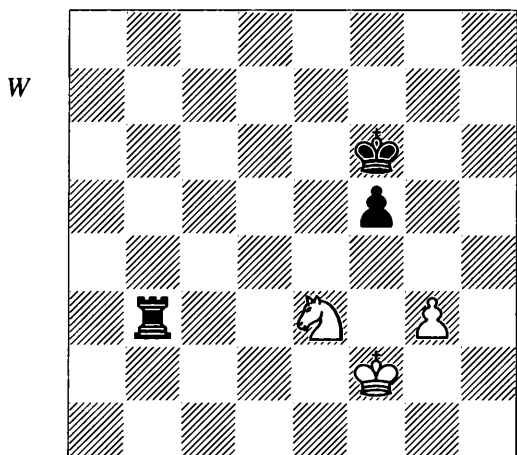
10 ♖e3 ♙b3!

10...♖f6? 11 g4 is a draw.

11 ♖f2 ♖f6 (D)

12 ♖e2?!

A rather weak move which makes the win much simpler for Black. The most resilient defence is 12 ♖c4 ♙c3 13 ♖e3 ♖e5 14 ♖g2 ♖e4 15 ♖h4 ♙c2+ 16 ♖g1, but Black wins by 16...♙a2 (a waiting move) 17 ♖f1 ♙d2! 18 ♖g1 ♖e3! (sacrificing the f-pawn is the way to succeed; this winning method was already demonstrated in analysis by Bronstein and Averbakh dating from 1946) 19 ♖xf5+ ♖f3 (this position



explains why Black had to play his rook to d2 at move 17; were the rook on a2, b2 or c2 White would draw by ♞d4+ 20 ♚h1 (20 ♞h4+ ♚xg3 21 ♞f5+ ♚g4 transposes) 20... ♞d5 21 g4 ♞d2 22 ♚g1 (after 22 g5 ♞d5 Black wins more quickly) 22... ♚xg4 23 ♞e3+ ♚f3 24 ♞f5 ♞d5 25 ♞e7 ♞g5+ 26 ♚f1 ♞a5 27 ♚g1 ♚g3 28 ♚f1 ♞c5 and Black quickly rounds the knight up.

12... ♚e5 13 ♚f2

White cannot set up the defence of the previous note since at the moment his knight is pinned against the g-pawn.

13... ♚e4 14 ♞c4

14 ♞g2 ♞f3+ costs White his g-pawn.

14... ♞f3+ 15 ♚g2 ♞d3! 16 ♚f2 ♞d4 17 ♞a3

The knight is isolated and will soon be lost.

17... ♞b4 18 ♚g2 ♚d3 19 ♚f3 ♚d2 20 ♚f2 ♚c1 21 ♚g2 ♚b2 0-1

Summary:

- In ♞+♚ vs ♞+♚ with both pawns on the same file, the defender should try to set up a position such as (assuming Black has the knight) ♚d6 , ♞e6 , ♚d5 . This offers excellent drawing chances against a white pawn on d2, d3 or d4. The same formation doesn't work one rank up (with the pawn on d6) as White can advance his pawn to d5 and give up the exchange to reach a winning king and pawn ending.
- When the pawns are on adjacent files, the winning and drawing positions are roughly equally divided and it is harder to give general rules for the evaluation of the position, but the following principles are worth knowing:

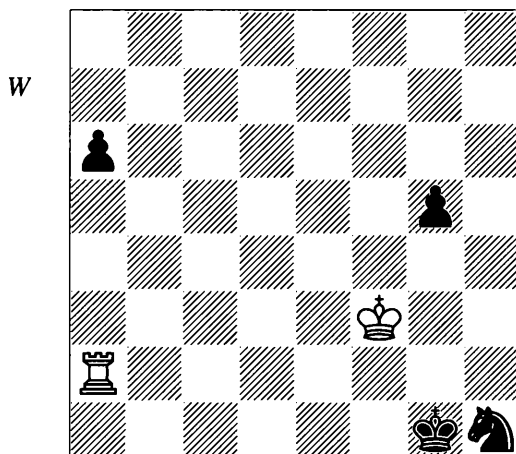
1) The defender has better chances when the pawn is near the centre of the board, so that the knight can operate to the left and right of the pawn.

2) The best rank for the defender's pawn is the fourth rank. The second and third ranks are worse because the knight is restricted, while the fifth rank is inferior because the rook can operate effectively from the eighth rank, harassing the enemy pieces from behind.

9.2.2 More Pawns

A knight and two pawns more or less balance a rook, but a great deal depends on the type of position. If the pawns are scattered all across the board, the short-range knight is going to have trouble defending them against the probing attacks of the rook. The knight is at its best when all the pawns are in a bunch, or if the position is so blocked that there are no open files along which the rook can penetrate.

The following position is exceptional, in that White's rook wins against the knight and two pawns, even though he has no remaining pawns.



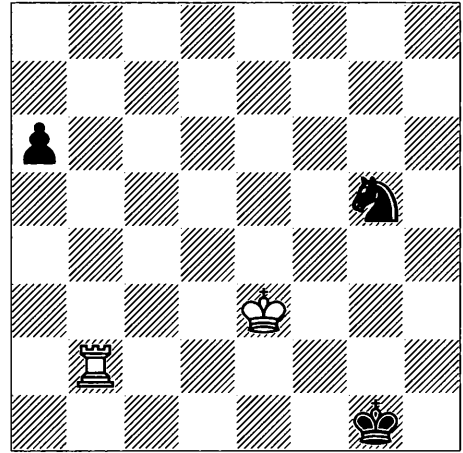
Šahović – Petronić
Novi Sad 1993

1 ♞b2?!

According to Petronić's notes in *Informator* 58, this move throws away the win. This is not the case, although it is true that it unnecessarily complicates the road to victory. Black has no problems from the material point of view, but his pieces are abysmally posted on the edge of

the board. His only chance is to release his knight by playing ...g4+ at some moment, in the hope that the resulting ending will be a draw. This hope is rather flimsy because even if the knight escapes, Black's king will still be stuck in a miserable position. In the game Black did manage to draw, but the diagram position is won for White; moreover, there are several ways to win. Here are two possibilities:

B



1) 1 ♖a4! and now:
 1a) 1...♙h2 2 ♜g4 ♙h3 3 ♜xg5 ♙h2 (after 3...♙h4 4 ♜g1 White wins at once) 4 ♜h5+ ♙g1 5 ♜a5 ♙h2 6 ♜xa6 with an easy win for White.

1b) 1...g4+ 2 ♜xg4+ ♙f1 3 ♜h4 ♙f2 4 ♜h2 and White wins the knight at once.

1c) 1...a5 2 ♜c4! (2 ♜d4? ♙f2! is a draw) 2...♙h2 (2...g4+ 3 ♜xg4+ ♙f1 4 ♜h4 ♙g1 5 ♜a4 and White wins as before) 3 ♜g4 a4 4 ♜xg5 a3 5 ♜h5+ ♙g1 6 ♜a5 ♙h2 (6...♙f2 7 ♜xa3) 7 ♜a8 and White wins.

2) 1 ♜d2! a5 (1...g4+ 2 ♙xg4 ♙f2+ 3 ♙f3 ♙h3 4 ♙g3 and White wins) 2 ♜d1+ ♙h2 3 ♜d5 g4+ (after 3...♙h3 4 ♜xg5 ♙h4 5 ♜g1 White picks up the knight) 4 ♙xg4 ♙g2 (4...♙f2+ 5 ♙f3 ♙h3 6 ♜d2+ ♙g1 7 ♙g3 is again winning for White) 5 ♜d2+ ♙f2+ 6 ♙f4 ♙g1 7 ♙f3 with a familiar win.

5...♙h3 would have forced White to retrace his steps by 6 ♙f3!.

6 ♜f2+ ♙g1 7 ♜f5 ♙e6

Now White has achieved a more favourable situation in which the knight is totally cut off from the king.

8 ♜f6

8 ♜a5 ♙g2 9 ♜xa6 is the simplest; White has taken Black's last pawn, and since ...♙g5 is impossible, his knight remains cut off, which guarantees eventual defeat.

8...♙c7 9 ♙d4 ♙g2

9...a5 is a more resilient defence, although after 10 ♙c4 ♙e8 11 ♜e6 ♙c7 12 ♜e7 ♙a6 13 ♜a7 ♙b4 14 ♜xa5 ♙c2 15 ♙d3 ♙b4+ 16 ♙e2 White still wins.

10 ♜c6 ♙b5+ 11 ♙c4 ♙f3 12 ♜xa6 ♙c7

Now White is close to victory, but it still requires a couple of precise moves.

13 ♜c6?

13 ♜f6+! was the winning move: 13...♙g4 (after 13...♙e4 14 ♜c6 ♙a8 15 ♙c5 White wins at once) 14 ♜c6! ♙e8 15 ♜e6 ♙c7 16 ♜e7 ♙a6 17 ♙b5 and the knight is trapped.

13...♙e8!

Now White cannot prevent Black's pieces from reuniting.

14 ♙d5

14 ♜g6 ♙f4! followed by ...♙f5 draws.

14...♙g7 15 ♙e5 ♙h5 16 ♜g6 ♙g3 17 ♜g8 ♙e2 18 ♜f8+ ♙e3 19 ♜a8 ♙c3 20 ♜a3 ♙d3 21 ♜b3 1/2-1/2

1...g4+!

Black correctly takes the opportunity to make life tough for White. Petronić considers this position to be a draw, but it remains winning for White until move 13.

2 ♙xg4 ♙f2+ 3 ♙g3

3 ♙f3 ♙d3 4 ♜b6 a5 5 ♜b5 ♙e1+ 6 ♙e2 ♙g2 7 ♜xa5 is a simpler method, leading to a won position of rook vs knight.

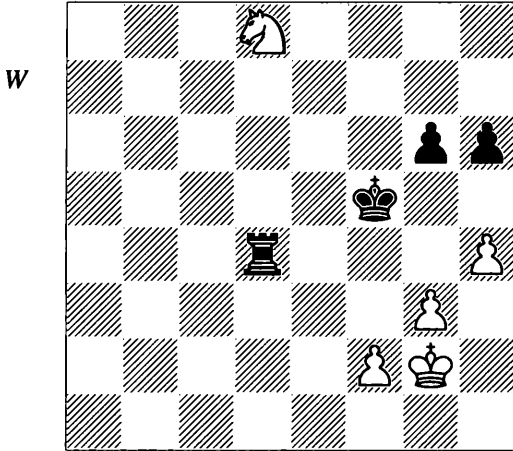
3...♙e4+ 4 ♙f3 ♙g5+ 5 ♙e3?! (D)

5 ♙f4 ♙e6+ 6 ♙e3 is correct, keeping the knight and king well separated; then 6...♙g5 7 ♜c2 ♙h3 8 ♙f3 ♙g5+ 9 ♙g4 ♙e4 10 ♙f4 ♙d6 11 ♙f3 ♙f5 12 ♜c1+ ♙h2 13 ♜c5 ♙d6 14 ♜d5 ♙b5 15 ♜d1 ♙c3 16 ♜a1 ♙b5 17 ♜xa6 leads to a won rook vs knight ending. There are several alternatives for Black in this line, but all eventually lead to a similar conclusion since Black simply has no way to recover from his bad king position.

5...♙f1?!

When the rook faces a knight and one pawn, the position is usually a win when there are

pawns on both sides of the board. However, a position such as the following, with ♖+3♗ vs ♘+2♗ and all the pawns on the same side, would normally be a draw. Here there is the special circumstance that White's knight is not close to the other white forces, but stuck in enemy territory. If the knight could get back to, say, f3, then the draw would be straightforward, but it is not clear whether this is possible.



Tratatovici – Kudischewitsch

Israel 2003

1 ♘f7!

1 ♘c6 might also be a draw, as it isn't easy for Black to prevent the knight from eventually manoeuvring back to friendly territory, but the move played is more forcing and clear-cut.

1... ♖f6

This looks like a killer move, as the knight clearly has no safe square to go to from h6. Certainly, 1...h5 offered no winning chances, as after 2 ♘g5 not only does the knight reach safety, but in addition Black's pawns have lost their flexibility.

2 ♘xh6 ♖g7

Black must strike immediately, as otherwise White rescues his knight with f4 or ♖f3, for example.

3 ♘g4!

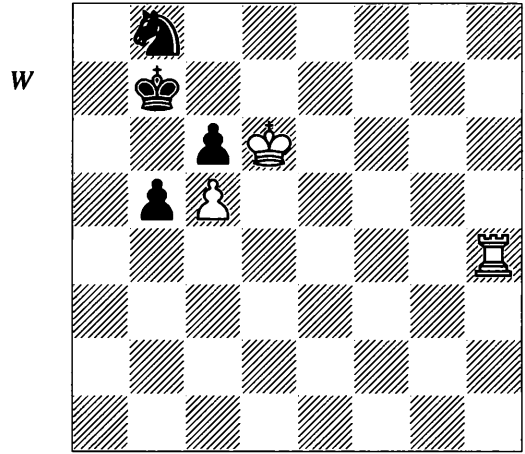
This surprising move is the point of White's play. He sacrifices his knight in order to imprison the enemy rook.

3... ♖xg4 4 f4 1/2-1/2

The rook cannot escape from the trap (if ...g5, then hxg5 and the rook is no nearer freedom)

and White draws after 4... ♖f6 5 ♖f2 (even 5 ♖f3 ♖f5 6 ♖g2 ♖e4 7 ♖f2 draws) 5... ♖f5 (or 5... ♖e6 6 ♖g2) 6 ♖f3.

There is no rule in chess that is without exceptions. Even with few pawns, the defender may be doomed if his pieces are badly placed.



Quiñones Paucar – Garcia Alarcon

Cali 2007

White clearly has a large advantage here since his king is very actively placed attacking the weak c6-pawn, while Black's knight is virtually immobilized. Indeed, with accurate play, it takes only a few moves to force victory.

1 ♖h7+

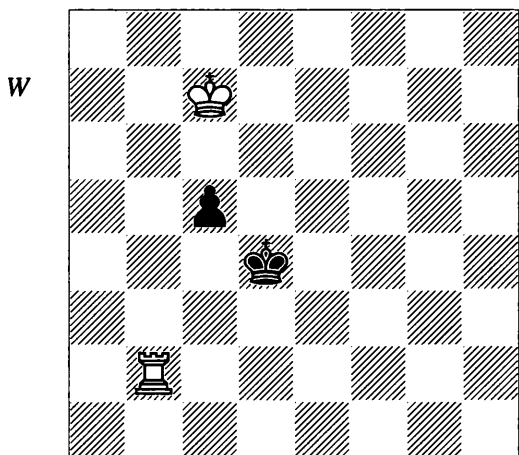
White plays to win the knight, which retains a winning position, but it would have been simpler to continue 1 ♖h8!, putting Black in zugzwang. After 1...b4 (1... ♖a7 2 ♖c7 and 1... ♘a6 2 ♖h7+ are immediately losing for Black) 2 ♖h4 ♘a6 (after 2...b3 3 ♖b4+ ♖c8 4 ♖xb3 White wins the other pawn as well) 3 ♖h7+ ♖c8 4 ♖xc6 ♘d8 5 ♖b6 ♘b8 6 ♖h8+ White wins the knight.

1... ♖a6 2 ♖c7 b4 3 ♖xb8?!

3 ♖d6! is quicker; for example, 3...b3 4 ♖h3 or 3... ♖a5 4 ♖b7 ♘a6 5 ♖xc6 and White wins. White's eagerness to take his opponent's knight only makes the win more difficult because it takes his king far away from the action.

3... ♖b5 4 ♖h5 b3 5 ♖c7 b2 6 ♖h1 ♖xc5 7 ♖b1 ♖d4 8 ♖xb2 c5 (D)

The crucial position. Up to this point, despite the missed easier wins, White has retained a



winning position. However, at this point there is only one way to win, and White misses it.

9 ♖b6?

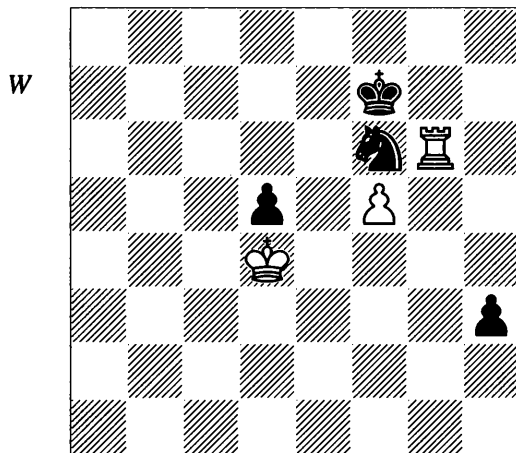
Despite the much-reduced material, the position is still very tricky, and White's winning manoeuvre is not at all simple. The key position arises after 9 ♚d2+! ♜c3 (9...♜e3 10 ♚c2 ♜d4 11 ♜b6 c4 12 ♜b5 c3 13 ♜b4 and White wins easily) and now White has to play 10 ♚d5!. This move is hard to spot; White must have freedom to use his rook along the b- and c-files and if the rook moves further along the d-file, the rook's action will be blocked by White's king. For example, 10 ♚d6? c4 11 ♜b6 ♜b3 and there is no check on the b-file, or 10 ♚d8? c4 11 ♜c6 ♜b3 12 ♚b8+ ♜a2 and White cannot attack the pawn along the c-file. After 10 ♚d5! there is no defence: 10...c4 11 ♜c6 (11 ♜b6? ♜b3 12 ♚b5+ ♜a3 13 ♚c5 ♜b3! draws as the white king cannot move to d5) 11...♜b3 12 ♚b5+ ♜c2 (12...♜a2 13 ♚c5 ♜b3 14 ♜d5 c3 15 ♜d4 and White wins) 13 ♜c5! ♜d3 (after 13...c3 14 ♜c4 ♜d2 15 ♚d5+ ♜c2 16 ♚d3 White picks up the pawn) 14 ♜b4 c3 15 ♚d5+ ♜c2 16 ♚c5 and White wins. The manoeuvre ♚b2-d2-d5-b5 is quite hard to spot, which only emphasizes the point that White would have made life a lot simpler for himself by choosing one of the earlier wins.

9...c4 10 ♜b5 c3 11 ♚h2 ♜d3 12 ♚h8 1/2-1/2

12 ♚h3+ ♜d2 13 ♜c4 c2 14 ♚h2+ ♜d1 15 ♜d3 c1♜+ is also a draw.

In the following position, the pawns are more scattered, which tends to favour the rook.

Nevertheless, care is necessary as Black has some counterplay with his passed pawns.



Minev – White
Vancouver 1985

This interesting ending was carefully analysed by Minev in *Informator 39*. Broadly speaking, his conclusions are correct, namely that White is winning in the diagram, but that a later error gave Black a drawing chance. However, he is not totally accurate on the timing of this error. Endings with ♚+♜ vs ♜+♜ are normally winning when the pawns are passed, so if White can round up the h-pawn without losing his own f-pawn, then he should win. However, it's not easy to do this against accurate defence.

1 ♚h6!

The only move to win. 1 ♚g3? h2 2 ♚h3 ♜g4 3 ♜xd5 ♜f6 is a clear draw, while 1 ♜e5?? even loses after 1...h2! 2 ♚xf6+ ♜g7 3 ♚g6+ ♜h7 and the h-pawn promotes.

1...♜g8

Black finds the best defence, clearing f6 to attack the f5-pawn with his king. 1...♜g4 2 ♚xh3 ♜f6 3 ♚f3 ♜h2 (3...♜h6 4 ♜xd5 ♜xf5 5 ♜e4 is also a win for White) 4 ♚f2 ♜g4 5 ♚f4 is winning for White.

2 ♚h5!

Threatening ♜e5, after which White can safely take the h-pawn. Instead 2 ♚xh3? allows Black to draw by 2...♜f6 3 ♚f3 ♜e7.

2...h2

Trying to draw the rook away from the defence of f5. 2...♜e7 3 ♜e5 and 2...♜f6 3 ♜xd5 h2 4 ♜e4 are much easier for White.

3 ♖e5

Or 3 ♖e3 ♖f6 (3...♗f6 4 ♖f4 ♖e7 5 ♖h6+ ♗f7 6 ♖xh2 and White wins) 4 ♖h3 d4+ 5 ♖f4!, transposing to the game.

3...♖f6

The fork on g4 keeps the h2-pawn safe, at least for the moment.

4 ♖h3

Now the threat is ♖f4, followed by ♖xh2.

4...d4

Black's only hope is to play actively and not give White time to take on h2 and consolidate his position.

5 ♖f4!

The only move to win. 5 ♖xd4? allows 5...♖g4! followed by ...♗f6, drawing.

5...♖d5+ 6 ♖g5

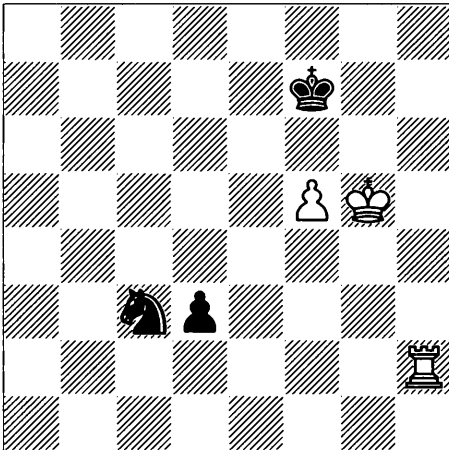
Keeping Black's king out of f6, and again threatening simply to take on h2.

6...d3 7 ♖xh2

Minev believed this to be an error allowing Black to draw, but the real mistake comes next move. However, it would have been simpler to play 7 ♖h7+! ♖e8 8 ♖xh2 ♖c3 9 ♖g6 ♖e4 10 f6 d2 11 f7+ ♖e7 12 ♖h8 d1♗ 13 f8♗+ ♖e6 14 ♗f5+ with a decisive attack.

7...♖c3! (D)

W



Black continues to resist stubbornly. Now he threatens to play ...d2.

8 ♖h7+?

Giving Black a drawing opportunity. White could have won by 8 ♖f4! ♖e2+ 9 ♖e5! (this is the move Minev failed to consider, playing for an attack against Black's king; 9 ♖e3?! wastes

time as after 9...♖g3 White can only win by playing 10 ♖f4 again) 9...d2 10 ♖h7+ ♖e8 (forced, to prevent ♖d7) 11 ♖h1 ♖c3 12 ♖e6 ♖d8 (12...♗f8 13 f6 leads to mate) 13 f6 d1♗ 14 ♖xd1+ ♖xd1 15 f7 and the pawn promotes.

8...♗f8?

After his long and resourceful defence, Black misses his one chance to draw. He could have held the game by 8...♖e8! 9 ♖f6 (9 ♖g6 d2 10 ♖h8+ ♖d7 11 ♖h1 d1♗ 12 ♖xd1+ ♖xd1 13 f6 ♖e3 14 f7 ♖e7 15 ♖g7 ♖f5+ is also drawn) 9...♖e4+! (the only move; 9...d2? loses at once to 10 ♖e6, while 9...♖d5+? also eventually fails: 10 ♖g7 d2 11 ♖h1 ♖e7 12 ♖d1 ♖e3 13 f6+ ♖e6 14 ♖xd2 ♖f5+ 15 ♖g6 ♖h4+ 16 ♖h5 ♖f3 17 ♖f2) 10 ♖g7 d2 11 ♖h1 ♖g3! and the f5-pawn falls.

9 ♖g6

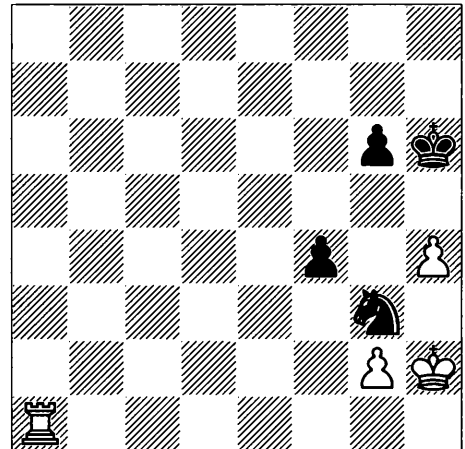
Black's king is poorly placed on f8 since White's f6 will threaten mate and thereby gain a tempo.

9...d2 10 f6 ♖e8 11 f7+ ♖e7 12 ♖h8 d1♗ 13 f8♗+ ♖e6 14 ♗f6+ 1-0

Next move ♖d8+ wins Black's queen.

In positions with all the pawns on one side, in a few cases it can be tricky to win even where there are equal pawns. This is more likely to occur when there are few pawns on the board.

B



Suba – Chiburdanidze

Dortmund 1983

In *Informator 35*, Chiburdanidze correctly claimed that this position should be a draw, but the key line she gave actually loses for Black.

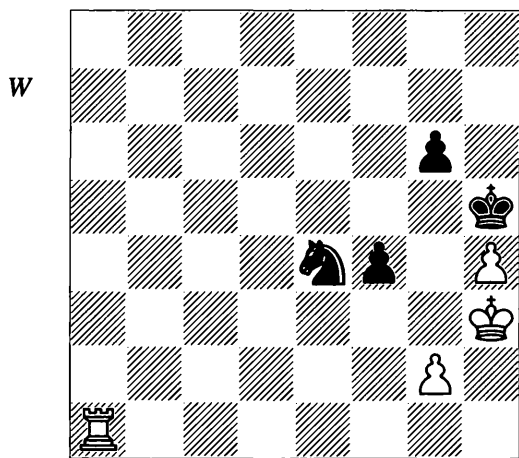
The draw can only be achieved thanks to a miraculous defensive idea based on a reciprocal zugzwang. Materially speaking, Black stands to lose and must therefore take immediate action. Her main aim is to exchange a pair of pawns and reach a drawn position with rook and pawn vs knight and pawn.

1...♔h5!

The immediate 1...g5? loses to 2 hxg5+ ♕xg5 3 ♕h3, since after 3...♖f5 4 ♖a5 Black is forced back and soon loses her pawn.

2 ♖a4?!

This allows Black's king to occupy an active position on g4, leading to a relatively simple draw. The critical move is 2 ♕h3!?, after which Chiburdanidze gave only 2...♖e4? (D), leading to a fascinating position.



If White now plays 3 ♖a5+? g5 4 g4+ fxg3, then we reach a position of reciprocal zugzwang with White to play. It is amazing that all the rook moves along the fifth rank damage White's position, but analysis reveals the reasons: 5 ♖e5 g2 6 ♕xg2 ♖d6 7 hxg5 ♖f7 is a draw as Black gains a vital tempo by attacking the rook (otherwise White could play ♕g3 and ♕f4), 5 ♖d5 g2! 6 ♕xg2 ♖f6 7 ♖f5 ♖h7 followed by ...♕g6 is again a draw, while after 5 ♖b5 g2! 6 ♕xg2 ♖d6 7 ♖d5 ♖f7 the last pawns will be exchanged. Nor does 5 ♕g2 work due to 5...♕g4 6 ♖a4 ♕f5 7 h5 ♖f6 8 ♖a5+ ♕g4 9 h6 ♕h5 10 ♖a6 ♖h7 11 ♕xg3 g4! 12 ♕f4 ♖f8! 13 ♖f6 ♖h7 and White cannot make progress.

However, White can win in the diagram with the astonishing 3 ♖a2!, which not only stops

the check on f2 but also loses a tempo on the way to a5, ensuring that the reciprocal zugzwang arises with Black to play. After 3...g5 (there is no other move) 4 g4+ fxg3 5 ♖a5 Black is in zugzwang and loses.

However, 2 ♕h3!?, while a good practical chance, only draws after 2...g5!, which forces White to play his rook to a5 directly. Then 3 ♖a5 (or 3 ♖a4 g4+ 4 ♕h2 ♕xh4 5 ♖xf4 ♖h5 and this ending is drawn) 3...♖e4 4 g4+ fxg3 leads to the reciprocal zugzwang with White to play.

2...♕g4

Now Black can force a favourable exchange of pawns, leading to a drawn position.

3 ♕g1

3 ♖a6 ♕xh4 4 ♖xg6 is drawn.

3...♖f5 4 ♕f2 ♖g3

Not 4...♖xh4? 5 g3 and White wins, but 4...g5 5 hxg5 ♕xg5 is also good, forcing a drawn position straight away.

5 ♖b4

5 ♖a6 g5 6 hxg5 ♖e4+! 7 ♕e2 ♖xg5 is another draw.

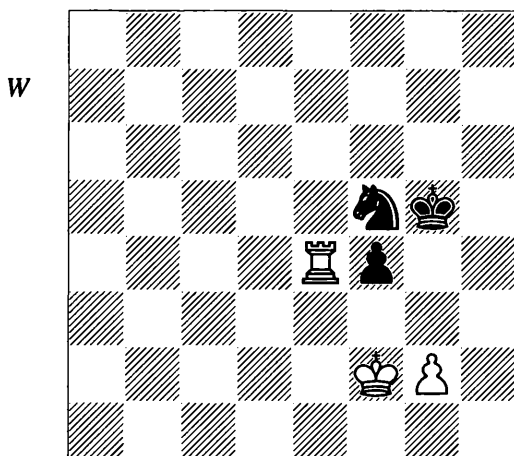
5...♖f5

5...♖h1+ 6 ♕e1 ♖g3 is also safe since White cannot make progress.

6 ♖e4 g5

Black cannot return with 6...♖g3? since then 7 ♖e6 g5 8 hxg5 ♕xg5 9 ♕f3 wins.

7 hxg5 ♕xg5 (D)

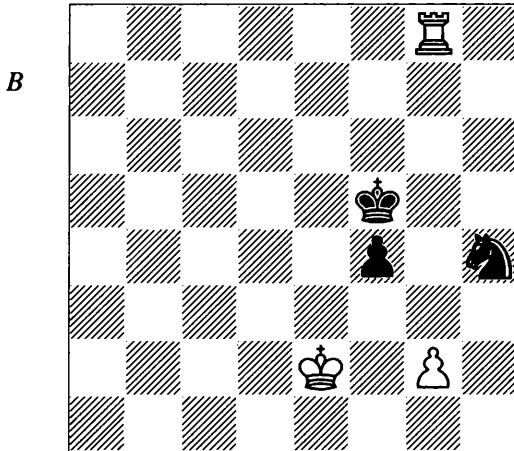


This position is a draw but, as we see in the game, it is still possible for Black to go wrong.

8 ♖e5 ♕g4 9 ♖e8 ♖h4

According to Chiburdanidze, this is the losing move; however, the position is still drawn. 9...♖d4 also draws, the idea being to play ...♗f5 and ...♘e6-g5, after which the knight is ideally placed to keep White's king out.

10 ♖g8+ ♗f5 11 ♗e2 (D)



11...♗e4?

This is a losing tactical oversight. Black could still have drawn by 11...♘g6! 12 ♗d3 ♘e5+, when White must return, since after 13 ♗d4 f3 14 g3 f2 15 ♖f8+ ♗g4 16 ♖xf2 ♗xg3 the pawns are exchanged.

12 g3!

Now White wins a pawn, since 12...fxg3 loses to 13 ♖g4+.

12...♘f3 13 ♖g4 ♘d4+ 14 ♗f2 ♘e6 15 gxf4 ♘d4?

15...♗f5 is a better try, but 16 ♗g3! wins in any case, though not 16 ♗f3? ♘d4+ 17 ♗g3 ♘e2+ with a draw.

16 f5+ 1-0

Summary:

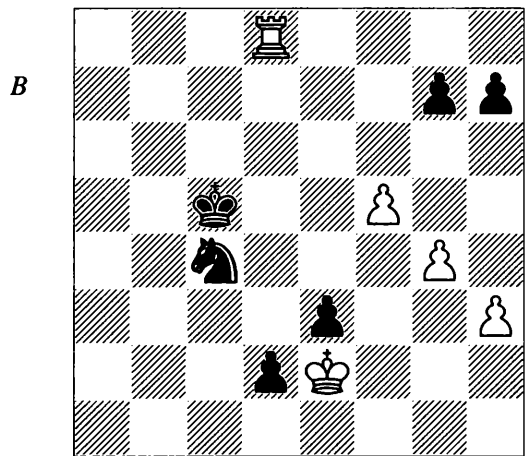
- A knight and two pawns more or less balance a rook, but much depends on the precise position. The short-range knight is at its weakest when there are pawns scattered across the board, and prefers to have the pawns close together.
- A knight and one pawn are inferior to a rook, and when there are two pawns on both sides of the board the rook usually wins. The knight has drawing chances when the pawns are all on one side of the board, and the fewer pawns

there are, the better the drawing chances. Thus ♖+3♙ vs ♘+4♙ offers good winning chances, but with ♖+2♙ vs ♘+3♙ most positions are drawn.

- In rare cases, the knight may have drawing chances even with equal pawns. This can happen when all the pawns are on one side and the player with the knight can force a liquidation to a drawn ♖+♙ vs ♘+♙ position.
- No matter how many pawns the player with the knight has, a badly placed knight can doom him.

9.2.3 The Knight has the Advantage

In certain cases the side with the knight can have the advantage. The most obvious arises if the knight is accompanied by three or more extra pawns, in which case the rook is likely to be overwhelmed, but even if the player with the knight is not ahead on material, the presence of dangerous passed pawns can tip the balance in the knight's favour.



Mascariñas – Yuldachev

Asian Team Ch, Kuala Lumpur 1993

1...♘d6!?

According to Serper in *Informator 59*, this move wins for Black. Although this is not true, it is certainly the case that the knight retreat poses most problems for White, and is better than 1...♘b2?! 2 g5 d1♖+ 3 ♖xd1 ♘xd1 4 ♗xd1 with a drawn king and pawn ending.

After the move played, the threat is ...♗c6-c7, driving White's rook away from d8, after

which Black plays ...♖b5-c3+ or ...♗e4-c3+, forcing the pawns home.

2 h4?!

This is not yet the losing move, but after it White can only draw by a study-like resource. His plan is to ignore Black's threat and concentrate on generating counterplay with his own pawns, but this is dangerously slow. 2 g5? is also wrong, as then Black wins by 2...♗xf5 3 h4 ♖d4+ 4 ♖d1 ♗c4 5 ♖a8 g6, threatening 6...♗c3, and the pawns are too strong.

2 ♖d7! is the most accurate move and would have defended comfortably; after 2...♗c6 3 ♖e7! (Black has no time to transfer his knight to c3, because White is threatening ♖xe3) 3...♗c4 (threatening ...♗b2, so White arranges to switch his rook back to the d-file if necessary) 4 ♖e8! ♗b2 (after 4...♗c7 5 ♖e4 ♗b2 6 ♖d4 White's problems are over, while 4...♗d7? 5 ♖b8 is even better for White) 5 ♖d8 White completes the unusual rook manoeuvre ♖d8-d7-e7-e8-d8, and draws after 5...d1♖+ 6 ♖xd1 ♗xd1 7 ♗xd1 ♗d5 8 g5 ♗e5 9 f6.

2...♗c6!

Now White cannot keep his rook on either the d-file or the e-file, so he must place his faith in his kingside pawns.

3 h5! ♗c7 4 ♖a8

4 h6? loses to 4...gxf6 followed by ...♗b5.

4...♗b5 5 ♖a1 ♗c3+ 6 ♗xe3

The best move. Not 6 ♗d3? d1♖+ 7 ♖xd1 ♗xd1 8 g5 ♗d6 9 g6 (9 f6 g6 and Black wins) 9...h6 10 f6 ♗f2+! 11 ♗e2 ♗e4 12 fxf7 ♗f6 13 ♗xe3 ♗e5, followed by ...♗g8, ...♗f6, ...♗xg7 and ...♗f6, with a comfortable win for Black.

6...d1♖ 7 ♖xd1 ♗xd1+ 8 ♗f4 ♗f2

The only winning chance, as White draws easily after 8...♗d6?! 9 ♗g5 ♗e7 10 h6 ♗f7 11 hxg7 ♗xg7 12 f6+ followed by ♗h6.

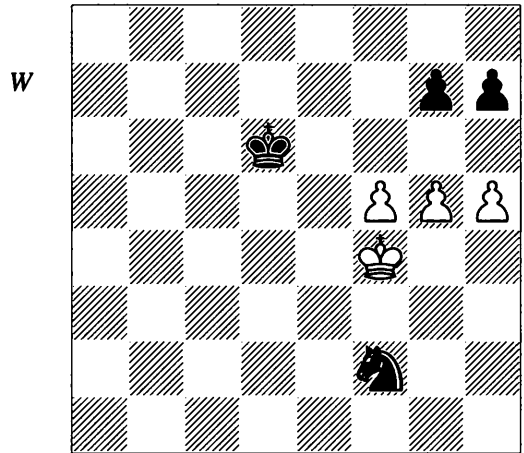
9 g5!

9 ♗g5? ♗e4+ 10 ♗f4 ♗f6 and 9 f6? gxf6 10 ♗f5 ♗xg4! 11 ♗xg4 ♗d6 are winning for Black.

9...♗d6 (D)

Serper's only comment here is that 10 f6(?) g6 is winning for Black (true), but he misses an astonishing drawing continuation for White.

10 ♗f3?

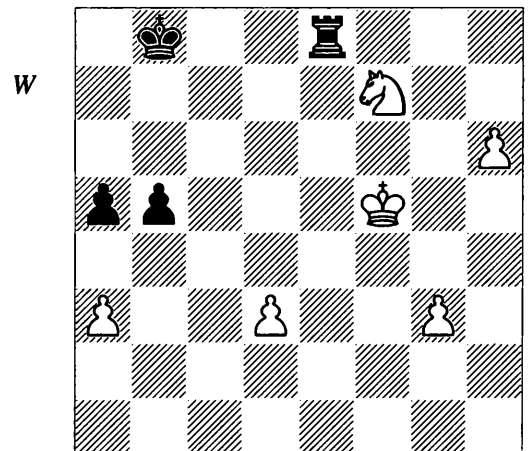


Now White loses. The drawing line is 10 g6! hxg6 (after 10...h6?! 11 f6 it is Black who has to scrape a draw by 11...♗d3+ 12 ♗f5 ♗b4 13 fxf7 ♗d5 14 g8♗ ♗e7+ 15 ♗xe7 ♗xe7) 11 ♗g5!! (11 hxg6? ♗e7 12 ♗g5 ♗e4+ 13 ♗f4 ♗f6 and 11 fxf6? ♗e6 are easily winning for Black, but the text-move prevents g6 from being blocked by a white pawn, and so enables White to exchange all the black pawns) 11...gxf5 (11...gxf5 12 ♗xh5 ♗e7 13 ♗g6 ♗f8 14 f6 is the same) 12 ♗xf5 ♗e7 13 ♗g6 ♗f8 14 h6 and the last pawn disappears.

10...♗d3 11 ♗e4 ♗e5 12 ♗f4 ♗f7 13 g6 hxg6 14 hxg6 ♗h6 15 ♗g5 ♗g8 0-1

White's pawns are blockaded and will soon be lost.

The situation is even more treacherous when both sides have dangerous passed pawns.



In this intriguing position, White has a passed h-pawn on the verge of promotion, and two other passed pawns. However, matters are complicated because Black can create a passed pawn himself on the queenside. White missed a win according to Mestel's notes in *Informator 47*, but this is not so, and the diagram position is a draw. In the game Black defended accurately for a long time before making a fatal slip.

1 h7

1 ♖e5 is an interesting alternative, rushing across with the knight to fight against Black's queenside pawns before White pushes his own pawns; however, after 1...♙f8+ (1...b4 2 axb4 a4 3 ♖c6+ ♖c7! 4 ♖a5 a3 5 g4 a2 6 ♖b3 ♙e1 7 g5 ♙h1 is also drawn) 2 ♖g6 ♙g8+ 3 ♖f7 ♙xg3 4 h7 ♙h3 5 ♖g7 ♖b7 6 h8♙ ♙xh8 7 ♖xh8 ♖b6 8 d4 ♖c7 White's king is too far away and Black can eliminate White's remaining pawns.

1...b4

Black must create his own passed pawn as quickly as possible.

2 axb4 a4

Not 2...axb4? 3 ♖d6 ♙h8 (3...♙d8 4 ♖c4 also wins for White) 4 ♖g6 b3 5 ♖c4 and Black's pawn is halted, after which the h-pawn will cost Black his rook.

3 ♖e5

Now the knight must rush back to stop the a-pawn. With three pawns for the exchange, it looks as if White should have good winning chances, but Black is able to defend by using his king to support the a-pawn.

3...a3 4 ♖c6+ ♖c7 5 ♖d4 a2

A key moment: which square should White choose for his knight?

6 ♖c2

According to Mestel, 6 ♖b3 would have won, but it turns out that Black can also draw in this case: 6...♖c6 7 g4 ♙h8 8 ♖g6 ♖b5 9 g5 ♖xb4 10 ♖a1 ♖c3 11 ♖h6 (11 ♖g7 ♙xh7+ 12 ♖xh7 ♖xd3 is a draw) 11...♙b2?, which does indeed lose after 12 g6 ♖xa1 13 g7 ♙xh7+ 14 ♖xh7 ♖b1 15 g8♙ a1♙ 16 ♙g1+, but Black can also draw by the transposition 11...♖xd3 12 g6 ♖c3 13 g7 ♙xh7+ 14 ♖xh7 ♖b2) 12 ♖xh7 ♖xd3 13 g6 ♖c3 14 g7 ♖b2 and Black saves the game.

6...♖d6!

The only move. The king edges up closer to the a-pawn, but also supports the rook to give some annoying checks along the e-file.

7 g4 ♙e5+

Black aims to check the white king to h5, after which he can play ...♙e2 secure in the knowledge that White cannot promote.

8 ♖g6 ♙e6+ 9 ♖g7 ♙e7+ 10 ♖g8 ♙e8+

White was short of time and for the moment was content to repeat moves.

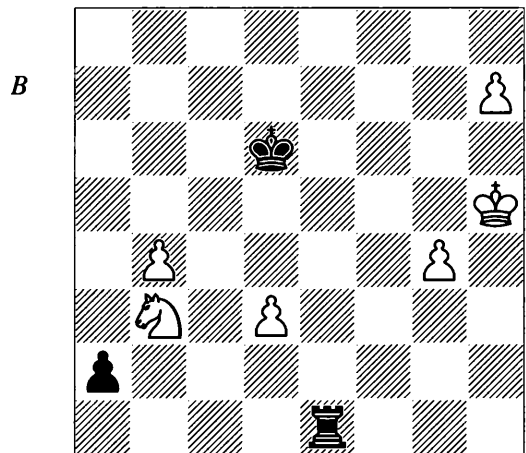
11 ♖f7 ♙e7+ 12 ♖g6 ♙e6+ 13 ♖g5 ♙e5+ 14 ♖h6 ♙e6+

Not, of course, the immediate 14...♙e2? due to 15 h8♙.

15 ♖h5

This is the only way to avoid the check barrage, but now Black can switch his rook to the rear of White's king.

15...♙e2! 16 ♖a1 ♙e1 17 ♖b3 (D)



The only way to avoid an immediate repetition.

17...♙e3?

After a long period of accurate defence, Black makes a fatal error just when the draw was within sight. He could have saved the game by 17...♖c6! (now that the rook is behind the white king, Black changes direction with his own king and runs to support the a-pawn; note that 17...♙h1+ 18 ♖g6 ♖c6! also draws) 18 g5 ♙h1+ (forcing White to block the g-pawn) 19 ♖g6 ♖b5 20 ♖g7 ♖xb4 21 ♖a1 ♖c3! 22 g6 ♖xd3 (the simplest move, although 22...♙xa1 23 h8♙ ♙f1 also draws) 23 h8♙ ♙xh8 24 ♖xh8 ♖c3 25 g7 ♖b2 and now the draw is clear.

18 g5!

White is winning since he is threatening both 19 g6 and 19 ♖g4.

18... ♜xd3 19 ♖g4

Now the h-pawn promotes.

19... ♜xb3 20 h8♚ ♜xb4+ 21 ♔h5 ♜a4 22 ♚a1 ♔e7 23 ♔g6 ♜a7?

Blundering the rook, but the g-pawn would be decisive in any case.

24 ♚g7+ 1-0

Summary:

- The side with the rook doesn't always have the advantage. A knight and three (or more!) pawns will normally outweigh a rook, but even if the player with the knight doesn't hold a material advantage, the presence of dangerous passed pawns can tip the balance in the knight's favour.

9.2.4 Rook and Pawn vs Bishop and Pawn

Before going into this ending in more detail, it is worth mentioning a few general points. I shall assume that readers know the basics of ♜+♔ vs ♝ (see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Section 69). To summarize the most relevant points:

- ♜+♔ vs ♝ is generally a win.
- Some positions with rook and rook's pawn vs bishop are drawn, if the bishop does not control the pawn's queening square and the pawn is on the fifth or sixth rank.
- There are a few exceptional drawing positions with other pawns, for example if the rook is tied down to the defence of the pawn.

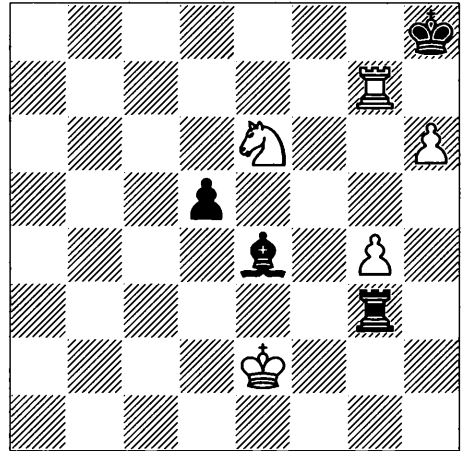
Knowing these general principles can be a great help, as in the following position. Black's situation appears bleak as White is not only a pawn up, but is also threatening ♘g5 followed by mate on f7. Nevertheless, Black can draw by a neat liquidating combination.

1... ♜xg4!

1... ♝f3+? loses after 2 ♔f2 ♜h3 (2... ♜xg4 3 ♔xf3 ♜h4 4 ♜g6 ♔h7 5 ♘f8+ ♔h8 6 h7 is decisive) 3 ♜e7 ♝xg4 4 ♜e8+ ♔h7 5 ♘g5+ ♔g6 6 ♜g8+ ♔xh6 7 ♘h3 ♝xh3 8 ♜h8+.

2 ♜xg4

B



Estremera – Sedina
Genoa 2004

2 ♘g5 ♜xg5 3 ♜xg5 ♔h7 4 ♜h5 d4 is a draw even without the d-pawn.

2... ♝f5

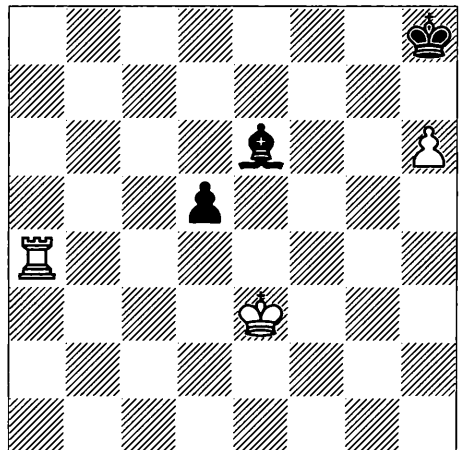
Remarkably, there isn't much White can do about this fork. The end result is a position with ♜+♔ vs ♝+♔.

3 ♜a4 ♝xe6

Black doesn't even need the d-pawn to draw. Positions with ♜+h♔ vs ♝ are hard to win if the bishop doesn't control the corner square. In such cases it is better for the attacker to have the pawn further back, so that his king can operate in front of the pawn. Here the pawn is too far advanced and Black draws without difficulty.

4 ♔e3 (D)

B



4...d4+?!

Black makes life harder for herself. Simply 4... ♝f5 followed by ... ♝e4 is totally safe.

5 ♖f4

White's best chance, preventing Black's bishop from reaching the important b1-h7 diagonal, at least for the moment. 5 ♜xd4 ♖h7 6 ♖f4 ♙b3 7 ♖g5 ♙c2 8 ♜d7+ ♖h8 is the typical draw in which White cannot make progress as his king can never occupy g6.

5...d3 6 ♖g5 d2 7 ♜d4 ♙a2!

The only drawing move, since otherwise the bishop cannot reach the b1-h7 diagonal.

8 ♜d8+ ♖h7 9 ♜xd2 ♙b1 10 ♜d7+ ♖h8

Now Black is safe.

11 ♜b7 ♙c2 12 h7 ♙xh7 13 ♖h6 ♙g8

Again the only move, but adequate.

14 ♜b8 1/2-1/2

Stalemate.

Summary:

- A knowledge of ♜+♙ vs ♙ positions is a great help in understanding ♜ vs ♙ endings with more pawns. Although most positions of this type are winning, there are several exceptional drawing situations which have helped many players save apparently hopeless positions.

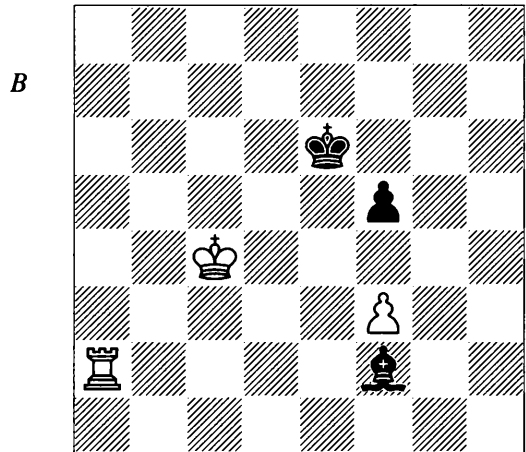
9.2.4a Pawns on the Same File

First we consider the case in which the pawns are not passed and are on the same file. Suppose the two pawns are on adjacent ranks. Then the main factor is whether the defender's pawn is stuck on the same colour square as his bishop. If it is, then the position is almost certainly lost, but if it isn't, then most positions are drawn. Suppose, for example, White's pawn is on d4 and Black's is on d5. Then if Black has his bishop on f6 and king on e6, the result will almost always be a draw.

As with the knight, there is an exception if the position is shifted up a rank so that the white pawn is on the fifth rank. In this case White wins as he can give up his rook for the bishop to reach a winning king and pawn ending. However, if the pawns are knight's pawns, then it's generally a draw even with the white pawn on the fifth, provided Black's bishop can reach the long diagonal. The situation with rook's pawns is notoriously complicated and I won't cover it here.

When there are empty ranks between the pawns, the attacker's chances improve. The defender's best set-up has his pawn on the fourth rank and his bishop on the opposite-coloured squares to the pawn. Since you can't change a light-squared bishop into a dark-squared one or *vice versa*, if the bishop is the wrong colour to begin with it's impossible to set up this formation. In this case the defender almost always loses. If your bishop is initially the correct colour and your pawn isn't beyond the fourth rank, then you at least have a chance of setting up this formation, although whether this is possible depends on the exact position.

In the following example, Black already has the optimal defensive set-up and therefore the result should be a draw.



Stoliar – Bobotsov
Albena 1973

This position is drawn, although it requires accurate defensive play by Black. Once again, the first question is how Black should arrange his pieces. Whatever Black does, he cannot prevent White from reaching d5 with his king. The key point then is to prevent White from playing f4 followed by ♜a6+, and bringing his king to e5. It follows that Black should keep his bishop on the h2-b8 diagonal to prevent White's f4 advance. Mineev correctly pointed out this defensive plan in *Informator 16*, although many of the details of his analysis were wrong.

1...♙g1?

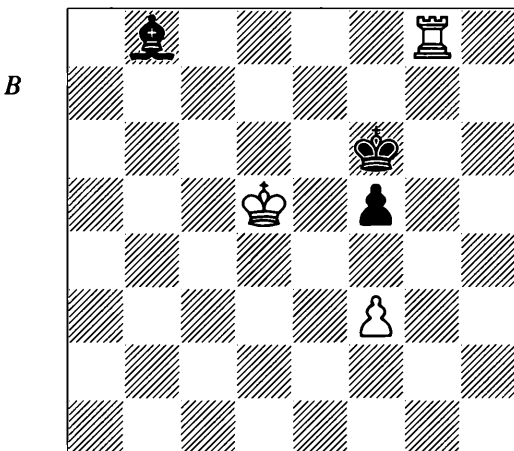
Black does not realize that his bishop is currently on a poor diagonal and makes an error

which loses quickly. The best defence runs 1...♙g3! 2 ♖e2+ and now:

1) Minev incorrectly concluded that 2...♙d6 loses. After 3 ♙d4 ♙f4 4 ♖e1 ♙g3 5 ♖e8 ♙f2+ (5...♙f4, keeping the king out of e3, also draws) 6 ♙d3 ♙g3 7 ♙e3 ♙d7 8 ♖g8 he only gave the inferior 8...♙d6?, which does indeed lose after 9 ♙d4! (but not Minev's 9 ♖g6?, which allows Black to repair his error by 9...♙e5!) 9...♙e6 10 ♖g6+ ♙e7 11 ♙d5 ♙h2 12 ♖h6 ♙g3 13 ♖h3 ♙b8 14 ♖h4 ♙g3 15 ♖a4 and now White wins because 15...f4 is met by 16 ♙e5, while otherwise White plays f4 and gets his king to e5. Instead, 8...♙e5! is the drawing move, so as to meet f4 with a move along the a1-h8 diagonal. This leads to a comfortable draw because the white king can never occupy e5 and the bishop can easily switch to c1 or d2 to attack the f4-pawn.

The important conclusion to be drawn from this is that if White plays his rook to the fourth rank to prepare f4, Black must be ready to counterattack with his king; this means that he must either be able to play ...♙g5, preventing f4 completely, or ...♙g6, so as to meet f4 with ...♙h5 and ...♙g4. Thus Black should not allow his king to be driven too far to the left. It follows that moving to d6 is playing with fire, since in some lines Black needs to be able to move his king to the g-file.

2) 2...♙f6 3 ♖g2 ♙c7 4 ♙d5 ♙b8 5 ♖g8 (D).



This is the crucial position in which Black must play precisely, because the b8-h2 diagonal

is only just long enough for Black to maintain his bishop on it. 5...♙h2! is the only drawing move, which reaches a position of reciprocal zugzwang with White to play. If you don't realize that this position is reciprocal zugzwang, then your chances of playing the ending correctly are remote. The analysis runs:

2a) Minev's 5...♙c7? loses to 6 ♖f8+ ♙g5 7 ♙e6 ♙f4 8 ♖f7! (and not 8 ♖xf5+? ♙e3 followed by ...♙f4, when Black regains the pawn) 8...♙d8 (8...♙b8 9 ♖b7 traps the bishop and White wins after 9...♙xf3 10 ♖xb8 f4 11 ♙f5) 9 ♖xf5+ ♙e3 10 ♖f7! ♙g5 11 ♙f5 ♙f4 12 ♙g4 and White secures his pawn.

2b) 5...♙f4? also loses, to 6 ♖f8+ followed by ♙e6, and the f-pawn falls.

2c) 5...♙h2! 6 ♖f8+ (the only serious winning attempt; 6 ♖h8 is met by 6...♙g3!, threatening ...♙g5) 6...♙g5! (the same idea as in Minev's line, but with the bishop safely placed on h2) 7 ♙e6 ♙f4 8 ♖xf5+ ♙e3 followed by ...♙f4, and Black draws.

2 ♖e2+?!

This wins, but White could have decided the game quickly with the immediate 2 f4!, since Black cannot attack the f4-pawn by ...♙h2 or ...♙e3 (the latter due to ♖e2), so he cannot prevent ♖a6+ followed by ♙d5-e5, winning the f5-pawn.

2...♙f6

Forced, 2...♙d6?! allows 3 f4 followed by ♖e5, picking up the pawn.

3 ♙d5 ♙a7 4 ♖e8! ♙f2?!

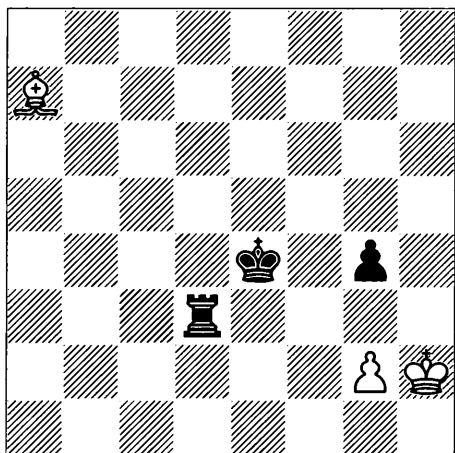
This allows an easy win. 4...♙f7 5 ♖c8 ♙e3 6 ♙e5 f4 puts up more of a fight; White can still win, but it requires a little work: 7 ♙f5 ♙e7 8 ♖c2 ♙d6 9 ♙f6 ♙d4+ 10 ♙f7 ♙d5 11 ♖a2 ♙e3 12 ♖a4 followed by ♖e4, ♙f6, ♙f5 and finally ♖xf4.

5 f4! 1-0

White wins at once, as there is no way to prevent ♖f8+ followed by ♙e5 or ♙e6, winning the f5-pawn.

In the following position, Black's pawn has advanced to the fifth rank and so White is unable to set up the drawing position with his own pawn on the fourth rank. Thus one would expect the position to be a win.

B

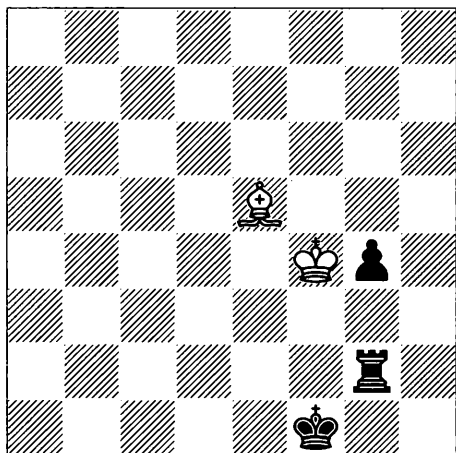


Varlamov – Gleizerov
St Petersburg 1994

We mentioned earlier that the attacker's chances are improved when there are empty ranks between the pawns. Indeed, one can generalize this by commenting that the more ranks there are between the pawns, the better it is for the attacker. The additional distance gives the attacker more flexibility, and avoids a situation in which the pawn gets in the way of the attacker's king manoeuvres. In the diagram there is only one rank between the pawns, so we shouldn't expect the win to be particularly easy. Gleizerov's notes incorrectly claimed that this position is a draw.

Before tackling the game continuation, it will be helpful to look at a crucial position that arises in the analysis.

B



Varlamov – Gleizerov
Analysis diagram

With Black to play, this position is winning for Black. It is also a win if White's bishop is on b8, but it is a draw if the bishop is on c7 or d6. First let's take the diagram position. Black wins as follows:

1...♔g1! 2 ♖g5
2 ♙c7 ♖h2! 3 ♚e3+ g3 4 ♜f3 (threatening to draw by playing ♜g4) 4...♜h3!, followed by ...♞f2+, is an easy win.

2...♜f2 3 ♜f4

Threatening to draw with ♙d6 or ♙c7.

3...♞g3! 4 ♙d4+

The key point is that the move 4 ♙f6, which would otherwise draw, fails to 4...♞f3+.

4...♔g2 5 ♙e5 ♜h3

followed by ...♞f3+ and again Black wins.

Now let's suppose the bishop starts on d6. Then it is a draw after 1...♔g1 (1...♞g1 2 ♙c5) 2 ♜g5 ♜f2 3 ♜f4! ♞g3 4 ♙e7 and Black cannot make progress as 4...♔g2 5 ♙h4 costs him the g-pawn. The situation is basically the same when the bishop is on b8: 1...♔g1 2 ♜g5 ♜f2 3 ♜f4 ♞g3 followed by ...♔g2-h3 and Black wins, because there is no c9-square which would enable White to transfer his bishop to h4.

Now we return to the game.

1...♞b3?!

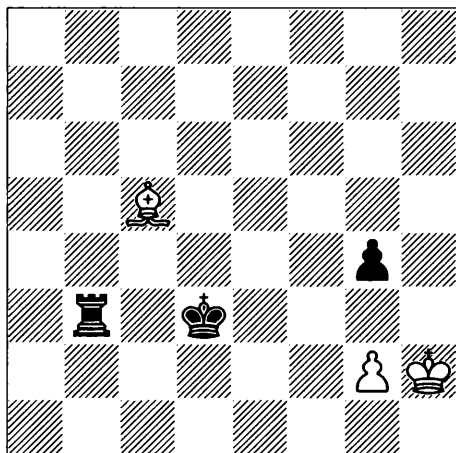
This is already a small step in the wrong direction. Black's winning plan is to penetrate with his king to f1, so as to attack the g2-pawn directly, but he must achieve this without allowing the white king out to g3, attacking Black's pawn. Therefore the king must manoeuvre behind the rook, and here the quickest path is 1...♔d5! 2 ♙f2 ♜c4 3 ♙b6 ♜c3, etc.

2 ♙c5?!

This mistake considerably simplifies Black's task. 2 ♜g1? loses immediately to 2...g3 3 ♜f1 ♔d3, while 2 ♙f2?! ♔d3! is similar to the game, but Gleizerov correctly points out that 2 ♙g1!? is the best defence. However, the position is not then drawn, as he believed, since Black can return his rook to d3 and then play his king behind the rook, as mentioned above.

2...♔d3! (D)

W



Thanks to the tactical point 3 ♖g3? ♖c4+, Black's king is able to cross the third rank without any delay.

3 ♙e7

It doesn't make much difference where White moves his bishop. 3 ♖g1? again loses straight away, to 3...g3.

3...♖e2 4 ♙f6 ♖f1

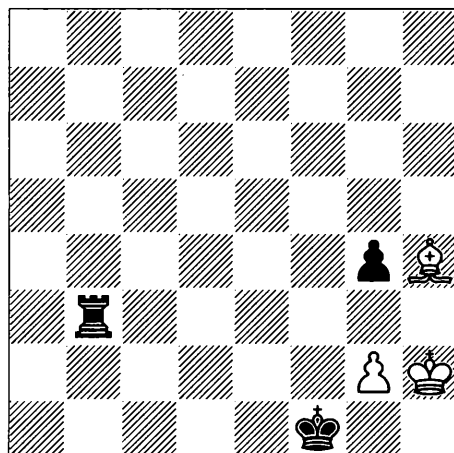
Black's king has reached f1, but the win is not as simple as just playing the rook to the second rank and taking the g2-pawn. The reason is that the resulting position may well be drawn. If White's bishop is on h4, for example, White meets ...♙b2 by ♖g3, and ...♙xg2+ by ♖f4; then he can play ♙g3 and win back the g4-pawn. Moreover, even if White's bishop is on the e5-b8 diagonal, the direct attack on the g2-pawn may still fail to win, since White may be able to reach one of the drawn positions from the analysis diagram. In order to win, Black must first drive White's bishop to one of the unfavourable squares e5 or b8 before launching his attack on the g2-pawn.

5 ♙h4?! (D)

This makes life somewhat easier for Black. The toughest defence is 5 ♙e5 (keeping the bishop on the e5-b8 diagonal) 5...♙d3 (Black must manoeuvre his rook to drive the bishop away from the good squares d6 and c7 and onto one of the unfavourable squares e5 and b8; in order to achieve this, he must play his rook to c6, which covers both d6 and c7) 6 ♙f4 ♙c3 7 ♙d6 ♙c6! (7...♙c2? 8 ♖g3 ♙xg2+ 9 ♖f4 is a draw – see the analysis diagram) 8 ♙e5 (after 8 ♙b8 ♙c2 9 ♖g3 ♙xg2+ 10 ♖f4 ♖g1 Black

wins as in the analysis diagram) 8...♙c2 9 ♖g3 ♙xg2+ 10 ♖f4 ♖g1 11 ♖g5 ♖f2 12 ♖f4 ♙g3 and again Black wins. This winning plan, while not especially deep, is rather subtle and would be easy to misplay during a game.

B



5...♙a3!

5...♙b2? 6 ♖g3 ♙xg2+ 7 ♖f4 followed by ♙g3 is a draw, but after the move played, White is in zugzwang and must make a concession.

6 ♙g5

6 ♙g3 ♙a2 is hopeless for White.

6...♙a2

The bishop is poorly placed on g5 and attacking the g2-pawn wins quite simply.

7 ♖g3 ♙xg2+ 8 ♖f4 ♖g1! 0-1

The last trap is 8...g3? 9 ♙h4! ♖f2 10 ♖g4 ♙g1 11 ♖f4 with a positional draw. After the move played, 9 ♙e7 ♖h2 10 ♙d6 ♖h3 followed by ...♙f2+ is a simple win.

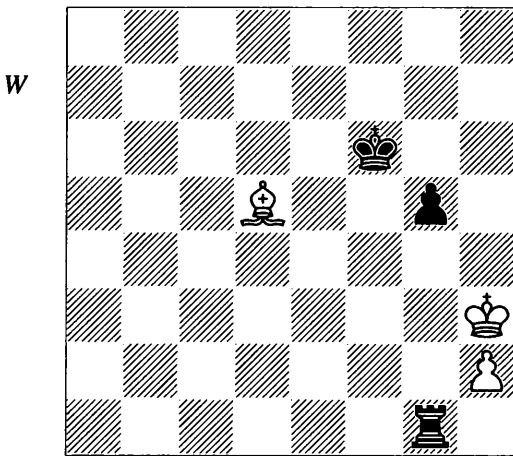
Summary:

- The defender's best set-up (assuming Black is the defender) is to have ♖e6, ♙f6, ♗d5, which almost always draws against a white pawn on d2, d3 or d4. A similar drawing structure exists with the pawns on the c-file, but this defence breaks down with the pawns on the a- or b-file. If the defender cannot reach this structure then his chances are poor.
- The more ranks there are between the pawns, the better the attacker's chances. The defender's chances are best when the pawns are on adjacent ranks and his bishop is attacking the enemy pawn.

9.2.4b Pawns on Adjacent Files

When the pawns are not passed and are on adjacent files, the majority of positions are drawn, although there are a fair number of exceptions. As usual, it is better for the defender to have his pawn on a square not controlled by the bishop. If the pawn is not initially on such a square, the defender should try to advance it so that it is on a square of the correct colour.

The complexities of such endings can be illustrated by the mysterious fact that the diagram below is lost, but if it shifted one or three files to the left then it is a draw. However, shifting it two files to the left again results in a loss.



S. Vajda – C. Peptan
Predeal 1997

Contrary to the notes by Peptan and Stoica in *Informator 71*, this position is lost for White. The general result of $\text{♖}+\text{g}\Delta$ vs $\text{♔}+\text{h}\Delta$ depends partly on the colour of the bishop; if White had a dark-squared bishop, then the above position would be a draw, but with a light-squared bishop it is lost, although the win is not simple. The basic reason for this is that if Black eventually liquidates the pawns by playing $\dots\text{g}4-\text{g}3$, then the resulting ♖ vs ♔ position will usually be lost with a light-squared bishop, because this is the 'wrong' bishop for the h1-corner. Thus a dark-squared bishop practically guarantees a draw (except for some very unfavourable positions), so we can restrict our discussion to the case of a light-squared bishop. This is more complex as not all positions with a light-squared bishop are lost. White should aim for a position

with his pawn on h3, king on g3 and his bishop positioned so as to prevent Black's king from occupying f5. This is sufficient to draw as Black cannot make progress. White needs to be able to keep Black's king out of f5 because if Black can check on the third rank with his king on f5 then White will have to retreat his king, allowing $\dots\text{♔f}4$, and then the position is definitely winning for Black. If White cannot reach this drawing position, and Black's pawn can advance to g4 without being exchanged, then Black generally wins.

Bearing the above general principles in mind will make the analysis below much easier to understand. In the diagram, the white king is initially cut off on the h-file, but this is a purely temporary situation, as White can extract her king by playing $\text{♔g}2$ and $\text{♔g}3-\text{f}2$.

1 ♔g2

By far the best defence; if the king remains stuck on h3 then White loses quickly; for example, 1 ♔f3?! ♔e5 2 ♔g4 ♔f4 3 ♔h5 ♖c1! 4 ♔g2 ♖c2+ 5 ♔g1 g4 6 ♔g6 ♖c6 7 ♔f7 g3 and White loses her bishop in a few moves.

1...♔f5

Black's play is far from accurate and to begin with she makes little progress. 1...♖c1 2 ♔g3 ♖c3+ 3 ♔g4 ♖c4+ 4 ♔g3 ♔f5 5 ♔h3+ g4 6 ♔f1 ♖c3+ 7 ♔g2 ♔f4 would have been a more efficient way to proceed. Black's plan is to advance her pawn to g4, but she must not allow White to exchange it off by h3 in favourable circumstances. It is interesting to see how Black wins from this position: 8 ♔a6 ♖c2+ 9 ♔g1 ♖c6! (9...g3? is premature and allows White to draw by 10 hxg3+ ♔xg3 11 ♔f1; 9...♔g5 is also too soon, as the king should only be transferred to h4 after the white bishop has been driven off the f1-a6 diagonal) 10 ♔b7 (10 ♔d3 ♔f3, 10 ♔b5 ♖c1+ 11 ♔g2 ♖c2+ 12 ♔g1 ♔f3 and 10 ♔e2 g3 are all winning for Black, the last because the bishop on e2 prevents White's king from escaping; thus the white bishop must quit the f1-a6 diagonal) 10...♖b6 11 ♔d5 (11 ♔a8 ♔g5 is similar) 11...♖d6 12 ♔b7 (12 ♔c4 ♔f3 wins for Black) 12...♔g5! (now the king transfer wins) 13 ♔g2 (White's bishop cannot easily return to the f1-a6 diagonal since 13 ♔g2 loses to 13...♖d1+ 14 ♔f2 ♔h4 15 ♔f1 ♖d2+

16 ♖g1 g3) 13...♔h4 14 ♖g1 ♖d1+ 15 ♖g2 ♖d2+ 16 ♔h1 (after 16 ♖g1 ♔h3 Black wins the h-pawn at once) 16...g3! (16...♔h3 only wastes time in view of 17 ♖g2+!) 17 h3 ♔xh3 18 ♖g2+ ♖g4 19 ♖c6 g2+ 20 ♔h2 ♖f2 21 ♖e4 g1 ♖+ 22 ♔xg1 ♖g3 with a standard winning position (see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, diagram 67b).

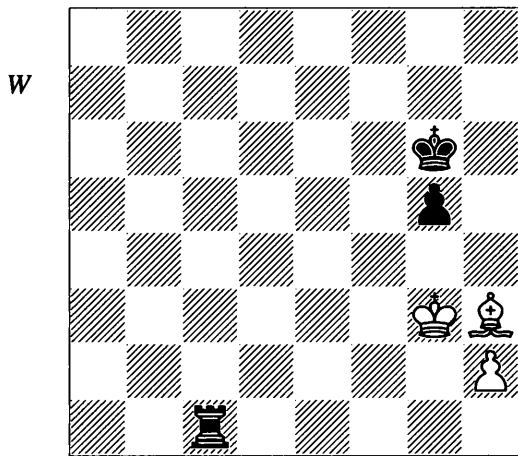
2 ♖g3 ♖c1

2...g4? 3 h3! gxh3 4 ♔xh3 ♔f4 5 ♖c6 is a draw as White's king is not trapped in the corner.

3 ♖h3+

Now Black has to retreat, since 3...♔e5? 4 ♖d7! is drawn. Black's king is kept out of f5 and there is nothing she can do to prevent h3, leading to the drawing position mentioned at the start; for example, 4...♖c7 5 ♖b5 (5 ♖a4? loses to 5...♖c3+ as the king cannot move to g4) 5...♔f5 6 ♖d3+.

3...♔g6 (D)



4 ♖g4?!

This makes Black's task easier as she can immediately check the white king back to the second rank. The following lines show how Black wins if White adopts a more resilient defence:

1) 4 ♖g2 ♖c3+ 5 ♖g4 ♖c4+ 6 ♖g3 ♔f5 (6...♔h5? 7 h3! ♖c3+ 8 ♖f3+ ♖g6 9 ♖g4! ♖c4+ 10 ♖g3 ♔f5 11 ♖g4+ ♔f6 12 ♖d7 reaches the drawing position) 7 ♖h3+ g4 8 ♖f1 ♖c3+ 9 ♖g2 ♔f4 transposes into the analysis of 1...♖c1.

2) 4 ♖d7! is the toughest defence, threatening to draw by playing h3. Now Black has only

one move to win: 4...♖g1+! 5 ♔f2 ♖d1 6 ♖g4 (6 ♖c8 ♔h5 7 ♖g3 ♖d3+ 8 ♖g2 ♔h4 9 ♖e6 ♖d2+ 10 ♖g1 ♖d4 11 ♖c8 ♖d6 is also winning for Black, as the bishop cannot move to the a6-f1 diagonal) 6...♖d3 7 ♖g2 ♖a3 8 ♔f2 ♔f6 9 ♖c8 ♔e5 10 ♖d7 ♔f4 11 ♖e6 ♖c3 12 ♖g2 g4 13 ♖d5 ♖c2+ 14 ♖g1 ♖g5 15 ♖b7 ♖a2 (preventing ♖a6) 16 ♖d5 ♖a4 17 ♖c6 ♖b4 followed by ...♔h4, again winning as in the note to Black's first move.

4...♖c3+ 5 ♖g2

Now that the king has been driven back to the second rank, it is impossible for White to reach the drawing position.

5...♔f6 6 ♖d7 ♔e5 7 ♔f2

7 ♖b5 ♔f4 8 ♖a6 g4 9 ♔f2 ♖c2+ 10 ♖g1 ♖c6 11 ♖b7 ♖b6 12 ♖d5 ♖d6 transposes to the note to Black's first move.

7...♔f4 8 ♖a4?!

Now Black wins without having to engage in any subtle manoeuvring. According to Peptan and Stoica, 8 ♖e6 draws, but in fact Black wins by 8...g4 9 ♔g2 ♖c2+ 10 ♖g1 ♖c6 11 ♖d5 ♖d6, as we have seen before.

8...g4 9 ♖g2

After 9 ♖d1 ♖a3! 10 ♖e2 ♖a2 11 ♔f1 ♖g5, followed by ...♔h4-h3, Black wins easily, as in the game.

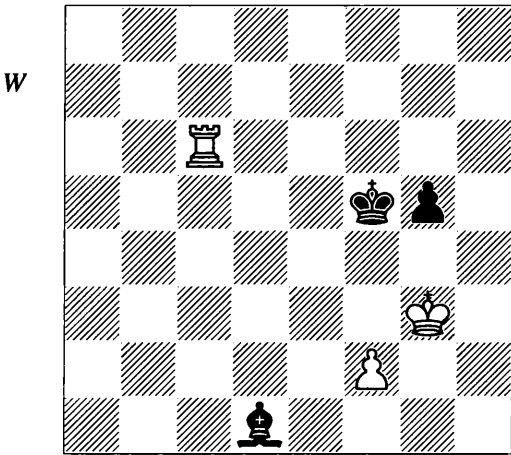
9...♖c4! 10 ♖d1

Black also wins quickly after 10 ♖b5 ♖c2+ 11 ♖g1 ♔f3 or 10 ♖b3 ♖d4! 11 ♖e6 ♖d2+ 12 ♖g1 ♔f3.

10...♖b4 11 ♖e2 ♖b2 12 ♔f2 ♖g5 13 ♔f1 ♔h4 14 ♔f2 ♖xe2+ 15 ♔xe2 ♔h3 0-1

The following position (*see diagram overleaf*) has the white pawn on the f-file rather than the h-file, but again the situation is far from straightforward.

Endings with rook and pawn vs bishop and pawn, with pawns on adjacent files, are unusually complicated and confusing. The reason is that the result depends on a large number of factors: the files the pawns are on, the ranks they are on and the colour of the bishop are all important factors. Even if we take the rather specialized case of rook and pawn on f2 against bishop and g-pawn, the results are far from simple: with a pawn on g6 or g7, Black draws with



Genov – S. Loeffler
Berlin 1992

a dark-squared bishop but loses with a light-squared bishop. It is worth noting that with a pawn on g7 and a dark-squared bishop, Black will have to play ...g6 at some point in order to draw. When his pawn is on g5, Black generally loses whichever bishop he has, except if he can reach a position with pawn on g4 and bishop on f4 (or another square controlling g3), in which case he draws. The most useful and memorable point here is that Black always loses with a light-squared bishop, while with a dark-squared bishop he can generally draw, except if his pawn is on g5. Obviously these are only general evaluations, and specific positions can have different results; if the white king is too active, for example, Black can lose in almost any position.

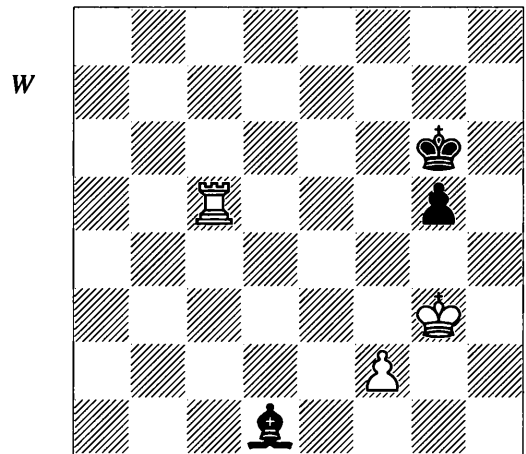
On top of the fact that there are no simple rules governing the result of such positions, a win, even if it exists, may be very long and complicated; many positions require more than 60 moves to force mate. By the general principles given above, we know that the diagram position is lost for Black, since he has the wrong bishop. The tablebase informs us that it's a mate in 36, which puts it at the 'medium difficulty' level. In the game White was unable to find the correct plan and soon the win had lengthened considerably; further inaccuracies then actually allowed Black to reach a drawn position. Finally, it all ended happily for White when Black missed the correct plan and allowed White to win. The notes by Genov and

E.Ragozin in *Informator 56* give no hint of these ups and downs and assert that White was always winning and played accurately throughout.

1 ♖c5+

Black cannot allow White's king to advance to g4 to attack the pawn, so his bishop must cover the g4-square and so has to be on either the d1-h5 diagonal or the c8-h3 diagonal. Of these two diagonals, d1-h5 is definitely inferior; it is shorter, and thus it is easier for White to chase the bishop off the diagonal. White is still winning if the bishop is on the c8-h3 diagonal, but the win is much longer and more complex (it takes roughly 70 moves if the black king is on, say, e5). Therefore White should not allow Black to transfer his bishop to that diagonal without some corresponding concession.

1...♗g6 (D)



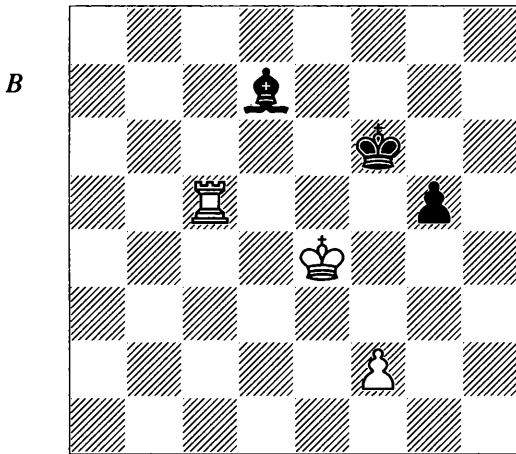
2 ♖g2?!

This doesn't help White and only increases the danger that Black will transfer his bishop to the other diagonal (although playing 2...♗g4 immediately is not as good as it might appear). 2 f3? is an even more serious error; after 2...♗b3! followed by ...♗e6 Black not only transfers his bishop to the best diagonal, but he actually draws the game since now White's pawn is subject to attack from Black's bishop, and this limits White's freedom.

The best winning plan involves chasing the black bishop off the d1-h5 diagonal, and then advancing White's king through the centre via f3 and e4. White can put this plan into action by 2 ♖c1!, and now:

1) 2...♙h5 3 f3! (this is now the quickest way to win, since Black cannot solve the problem of his inactive bishop) 3...♗f5 4 ♖c5+ ♗f6 5 ♖a5 (Black is now in zugzwang) 5...♗g6 (5...♙f7 6 ♗g4 ♙e6+ 7 ♗h5 and White wins the g-pawn in a couple of moves) 6 ♗f2 (Black's bishop is again blocked in, so White takes the chance to activate his king) 6...♗h6 (6...♗f6 runs into 7 f4) 7 ♗e3 ♙g6 8 ♗d4 ♙h5 9 ♗e4 ♗g6 10 ♖c5 ♗h6 11 ♖c3 ♙f7 12 ♗e5 ♗g6 13 ♖c1 followed by ♖g1 and f4, and White wins.

2) 2...♙a4 3 ♗f3 (now White can advance his king directly) 3...♙b5 4 ♗e4 ♗f6 5 ♖c8! (the threat is ♖f8+, when ...♗g6 is met by ♗e5 and ...♗e6 by ♗f3-g4) 5...♙d7 (a tricky defence which forces White to play accurately if he is not to slide down the snake to a much earlier stage of the winning process) 6 ♖c5! (D) (6 ♖f8+?! allows Black to establish his optimum defensive formation by 6...♗e6 7 ♗f3 ♗e5).



Now we have a remarkable position, which is a key point in the winning process. With Black to play, White mates in 30 moves, but with White to play it takes 58 moves. Thus this is a sort of reciprocal zugzwang, in which it is not a half-point at stake but 28 moves of difficulty. It is easy to see why Black is in zugzwang if it is his move: after ...♗g6 White plays ♗e5, while a bishop move allows a check on either c6 or f5. It is more surprising that with White to play it takes 28 moves to return to the same stage in the winning process, but, perhaps fortunately, this process is not relevant to the current analysis. The main line now runs 6...♙a4 7

♖f5+ ♗g6 8 ♗e5 (now that the king occupies this active square, Black's days are numbered) 8...♙b5 9 ♖f8 ♗h5 10 ♖g8 ♙d3 11 ♗f6 ♗g4 12 ♖xg5+ ♗f4 (White has won Black's pawn, but it still takes a little manoeuvring before the win is clear) 13 ♖d5 ♙b1 14 ♖d8 ♙c2 15 ♖d4+ ♙e4 16 ♖a4 ♗f3 17 ♗e5 ♙g6 18 ♖f4+ ♗e2 19 ♖f8 followed by f4 and the rest is easy.

2...♙e2

2...♙g4 is probably the best defence, because unless White plays accurately, Black will establish the optimal defensive position: 3 ♖c6+! and now:

1) 3...♗g7 (with the king cut off on the second rank, White need not fear the bishop's occupation of the c8-h3 diagonal) 4 ♗g3 ♙f5 (4...♙h5 5 f3 ♙e8 6 ♖a6 ♙h5 7 ♖a1 ♗f6 8 ♖a5 ♗g6 9 ♗f2 and White wins as in the analysis of 2 ♖c1! above) 5 ♗f3 ♗f7 6 ♗e3 ♙e6 7 ♗e4 and the king advances through the centre.

2) 3...♗f5 4 ♗g3 ♙h5 5 ♖c5+ ♗g6 6 f3 and again White wins as in the analysis of 2 ♖c1!.

3 ♖e5?!

This is a more serious error, which allows Black to reach the optimal defensive position.

3...♙d1?!

3...♙g4 is a much sterner defence, since White has no check on e6 and so cannot prevent Black from establishing his bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal. After 4 ♗g3 ♙f5 5 ♗f3 ♗f6 6 ♖a5 ♗e6, for example, White has to do a lot of work in order to reach the same point as the diagram position (I won't describe this complex process in detail).

4 ♗f1?!

White's best plan is to backtrack by 4 ♗g3 and then continue as in the note to White's second move.

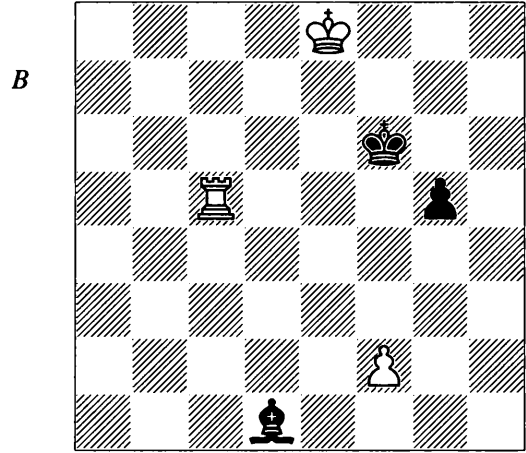
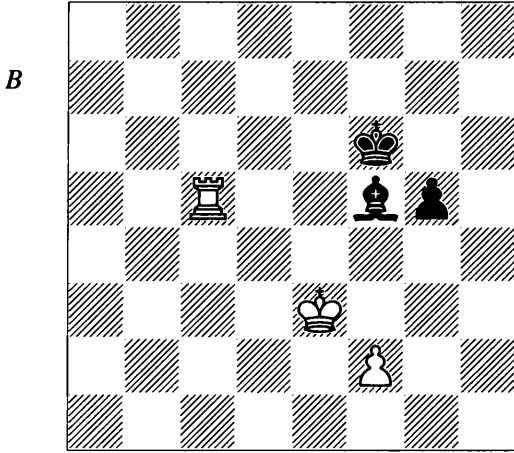
4...♗f6 5 ♖c5 ♙f3 6 ♗e1 ♙g4

Now Black hits on the right idea and transfers his bishop to the other diagonal.

7 ♗d2

White's king manoeuvre doesn't help very much because as soon as the king reaches e3, Black keeps his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal to stop the king reaching e4. If White then plays ♗f3 to head for g4, Black replies ...♙f5 and again keeps the king out.

7...♙f5 8 ♗e3 (D)



8...♙g6?!

It's not a good idea to put the bishop on the same rank at the black king. 8...♙b1 or 8...♙h7 would have been better.

9 ♖d4?!

Missing a chance to shorten the win drastically by 9 ♜c6+! ♕f5 10 ♖f3 ♙h5+ 11 ♖g3 ♙d1 12 ♜c5+ ♖g6 13 ♜c1, and then as in the note to White's second move.

9...♙f7 10 ♜e5 ♙b3 11 ♖e4

The notes by Genov and E.Ragozin rather oddly claim that Black is in zugzwang. This is not the case, and anyway White is now threatening to win by ♜f5+ followed by ♖e5, so Black's next move is pretty much forced.

11...♙c2+

After 11...♙e6?! 12 ♜b5 ♙g4 13 ♜b6+ ♙e6 14 ♜a6 or 11...♙f7?! 12 ♜f5+ ♖g6 13 ♜xf7 ♖xf7 14 ♖f5 White wins much more quickly.

12 ♖d5 ♙d1 13 ♖d6

White's king march to the eighth rank is not only taking him further and further away from victory, but it even endangers the win altogether. The problem with White's plan is that by moving his king so far away, he leaves his own pawn vulnerable to a counterattack by Black.

13...♙g4 14 ♜b5 ♙e2 15 ♜c5 ♙g4 16 ♖c7 ♙d1 17 ♖d7 ♙a4+ 18 ♖d8 ♙d1

Even with optimal play, White is now a massive 71 moves away from mate, but with his next move he throws the win away altogether. The correct plan was to bring the king back to d4 and start from the beginning.

19 ♖e8? (D)

19...♙h5+?

19...♙g4! is the only move to draw. The continuation is remarkable: 20 ♖d8 ♙f5 (the plan is to play ...g4, ...♖g5-f4, ...♙e4 and ...g3, exchanging the pawn; if White's rook is on the third rank by this stage, Black might have to play ...♙f3 before ...g3) 21 ♖c7 (White hastens to bring his king back) 21...♖e6! (Black must keep the white king at bay; 21...g4? loses to 22 ♖d6) 22 ♖b6 g4 23 ♖b5 (after 23 ♜a5 Black can just wait, because White's king cannot cross the fifth rank without allowing ...♖e5-f4) 23...♖f6! 24 ♖c4 ♖g5 25 ♖c3 ♖f4 26 ♖d2 ♙e4 (threatening ...g3; 26...♙e6 27 ♜c3 ♙d7 also draws, aiming to meet ♖e1 with ...♙b5, when White's king cannot cross to g2) 27 ♜c3 and now 27...♙b7! is the only move to draw. If the white king crosses to g1 and h2 then White wins, so Black must be ready to control f1 along the a6-f1 diagonal. This is the only move that makes such control possible and now we have one of the few exceptions to the general rule about the light-squared bishop mentioned at the start of this example. White's rook is tied down to preventing ...g3 and the king cannot reach h2 to free the rook from this responsibility, so Black is able to draw despite having the wrong bishop; for example, after 28 ♜a3 ♙c6! White cannot make progress.

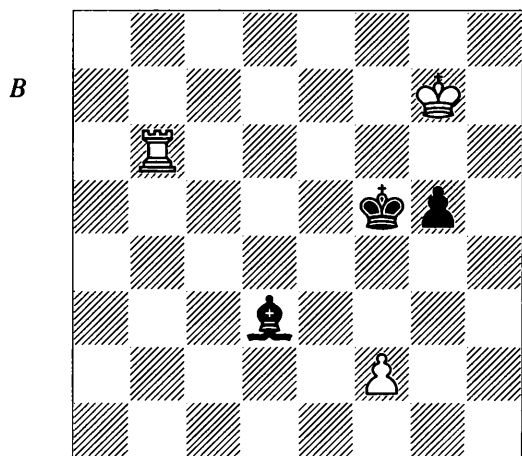
20 ♖f8?

Missing a second chance to bring the king back to the centre of the board by 20 ♖d7 ♙f3 21 ♖d6, etc. After the move played, it's again a draw.

20...♙e2 21 ♜a5 ♙d3 22 ♖g8 ♖g6

It's hard to see what White has achieved by playing his king to g8. There's no threat for the moment, so Black's waiting policy is fully adequate for a draw. He could also have continued more actively by 22...g4 23 ♖f8 ♙f5 24 ♖g8 ♖g5 25 ♙a4 ♙d3 26 ♖f7 ♖f5, followed by ...♙e4 and ...♖f4, which is also sufficient to hold the game.

23 ♙c5 ♙e4 24 ♙b5 ♙d3 25 ♙b6+ ♖f5 26 ♖g7 (D)



However, Black can't wait forever. White is now threatening to win by ♙b4 followed by ♖h6, when Black will be unable to prevent a check on the fifth rank for very long. Therefore it is time for him to initiate counterplay against the f-pawn.

26...♙e2?

Black ignores White's threat to cut his king off along the fourth rank and once again falls into a losing position. He could have held the game by advancing his king: 26...♖f4! 27 ♖h6 (27 ♙b3 ♙e4 28 ♖f6 g4 and 27 ♙f6+ ♖g4 28 ♖h6 ♙e4 are also drawn) 27...♙e2 (27...♖f3 28 ♙f6+ ♖g4 is another draw) 28 ♙f6+ ♖g4 29 ♙g6 ♖f3 30 ♙f6+ ♖g4 and White cannot make progress.

27 ♙b4!

Now White is winning; the immediate threat is ♖h6.

27...♙f3

27...♙d1 loses after 28 ♖h6 g4 29 ♙b8! (but not 29 ♖g7?, as given by Genov and E.Ragozin, since then 29...♖g5! draws by introducing the possibility of a counterattack via h4 and h3)

29...♖e4 30 ♙f8 ♙e2 31 ♖g5 ♖d3 32 ♙f4 ♖d2 33 ♙xg4 ♙f3 34 ♙a4.

28 ♙b5+ ♖f4 29 ♖f6 g4

Black is now too slow with his counterplay; for example, 29...♙e4 30 ♙xg5 ♖f3 31 ♖e5 ♙c2 (31...♙a8 32 ♙f5+ and 31...♙b1 32 ♙g1 ♙a2 33 ♙c1 are also winning for White) 32 ♙h5! ♙b1 33 ♙h2 ♙c2 34 ♙h3+ ♖g2 35 ♙a3 followed by f4.

30 ♙f5+

The only move, since Black was threatening to draw by ...♙e4, but it is amply sufficient to win.

30...♖e4 31 ♖g5 ♙g2

White also wins after 31...♙e2 32 ♙f4+ ♖d3 33 ♙xg4 ♙f3 34 ♙a4.

32 ♙f4+

Certainly not 32 ♖xg4? ♙h3+ and Black escapes with a draw.

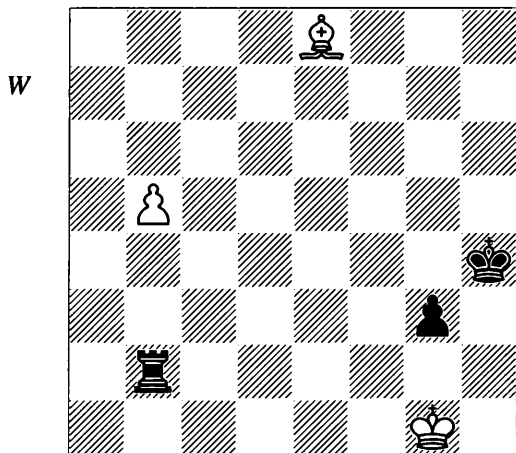
32...♖d3 33 ♖xg4 ♖e2 34 ♖g3 1-0

Summary:

- The case of pawns on adjacent files is one of the most complex in the ending of ♙+♙ vs ♙+♙, and there are few general principles governing the evaluation of such positions.
- The majority of positions are drawn, but there are many exceptions. Perhaps the most useful point to remember is that if the defender's pawn is initially on a square controlled by the bishop, he should try to advance it to a square of the opposite colour.

9.2.4c Both Pawns Passed

Unlike the corresponding situation with the knight, this is very complicated. It is fair to say that the rook wins more often than not, but there are also many drawn positions. On the whole, previous annotators and analysts have tended to underestimate the rook's winning chances, and have claimed some positions as drawn which are actually winning. One reason for this is probably that many of the wins are rather long and complicated, and involve running the bishop out of squares or setting up obscure zugzwangs. It's difficult to establish any general principles in this ending, so I have chosen several examples that demonstrate typical manoeuvres by the rook.



Bednarski – Hecht
Wijk aan Zee 1973

Hecht's notes wrongly claim that White could have drawn this position. As so often in endgames, finding a target position is the key to playing an ending correctly. Here the position Black is aiming for has his king on f4 and rook on b1, with White's king on g2 and bishop on c6. If White is to play, he is in zugzwang. If he moves his bishop on the long diagonal he loses his pawn, if he moves it to d7 or e8 then Black wins with ... Bb2+ followed by ...g2 (for details, see later), while Kh3 loses to ... Bb2 and White must give up his pawn to avoid being mated on h2.

1 Kd7

1 Kc6 was Hecht's supposed drawing move, but the general plan still wins: 1... Kg5 2 Kd7 Kf4 3 Kc6 (if Black checks on b1, then the required position is reached, but with the wrong player to move, so Black must be a little more subtle) 3... Bc2! 4 Ka8 (4 Kf1 Bc1+ 5 Kg2 Bb1 reaches the target zugzwang) 4... Kc5! 5 Kc6 (or 5 b6 Bb5 6 b7 Bb1+ 7 Kg2 Kg4 and again the b-pawn is lost) 5... Bc1+ 6 Kg2 Bb1 (again Black reaches the target position) 7 Kd7 Bb2+ 8 Kg1 g2 9 Kh2 (or else ... Kg3 wins) 9... Kf3 10 Kc6+ Kf2 11 Kxg2 Bxb5 (this ending is a win because the white king is in the wrong corner, that is one where the corner square is controlled by the bishop) 12 Kh3 Bb3+ 13 Kh2 Bb8 and White loses his bishop.

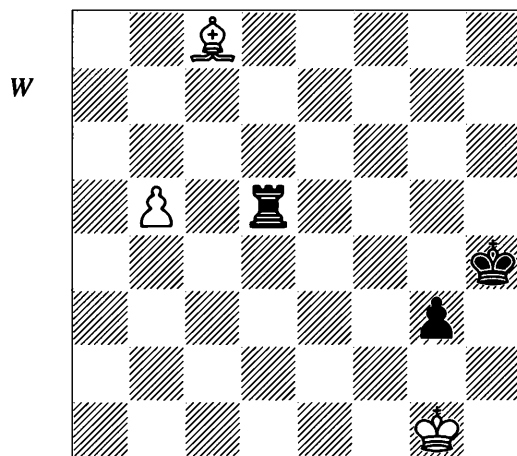
1... Bd2 2 Ke6

2 Kc8 Bd5 transposes to the game.

2... Bd6

2...g2 leads to a quicker win: 3 Kh2 Bd6! 4 Kf5 (or else ... Bg6) 4...g1 K + 5 Kxg1 Kg3 6 Kc2 Bd2 7 Kb3 Bb2 8 Kc4 Bb1+ 9 Kf1 Ba1 10 b6 Bb1 , after which Black rounds up the pawn, and then comes back for the bishop. However, there is nothing wrong with Hecht's methodical approach.

3 Kc8 Bd5! (D)



4 b6

Or 4 Ka6 Bd1+ 5 Kg2 Bd2+ 6 Kg1 Bc2 and Black wins after 7 Kb7 Kh3 or 7 b6 Kh3 8 Kf1+ g2.

4... Bb5 5 b7 Bb2

Now White can only move his king, so Black is free to improve the position of his own king.

6 Kh1 Kg5 7 Kg1 Kf4

Black threatens ... Kf3 , so White must surrender his pawn.

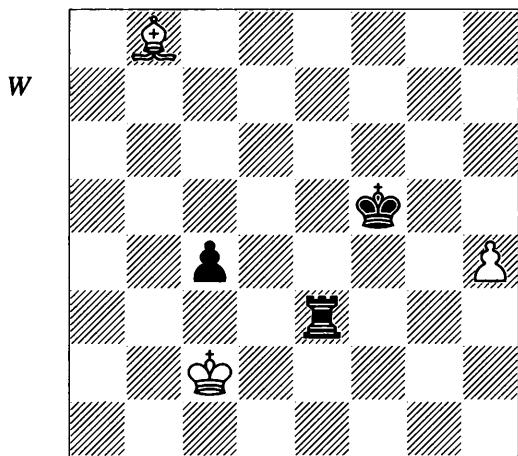
8 Kd7 Bxb7 9 Kc6 Bb1+ 10 Kg2 Bb2+ 11 Kg1 g2! 12 Kh2 Bb6 13 Kxg2

13 Kd5 Bg6 wins for Black.

13... Bh6+ 14 Kg1 Kg3 0-1

White loses his bishop in a few moves; for example, 15 Kd5 Bd6 16 Kb3 Bb6 17 Kc2 Bc6 . This example is interesting because, firstly, the analysis at White's first move demonstrates that this type of position is a general win, and secondly, that knowledge of a single key position is enough to enable a player to win the position over the board. Once you know what you are aiming for, normal chess-playing skills, such as being able to calculate a few moves ahead, are sufficient to attain the goal.

Failure to hit on the key winning idea often leaves the attacker going aimlessly round in circles, as in the next position.



Rublevsky – Z. Varga

European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2002

It is hard to assess positions such as this. In order to win, Black has to drive White's king back, but if he tries to get his king to d4 or b4, so as to give a check on the second rank, White can usually check it away with his bishop. It isn't obvious whether Black can manoeuvre in such a way as to rule out the disturbing bishop check.

The game ended in a draw, and Erenburg's notes claimed that the diagram is drawn and that during the remainder of the game Black never had a winning position. Erenburg believed the position to be drawn even without the h-pawn, but this is certainly wrong and Black wins if he can take the h-pawn without losing his own pawn (although the win isn't easy). Since White cannot save the pawn even if his bishop reaches the favourable g5-square, we can conclude that the diagram is winning for Black, but he must find the plan that both Varga and Erenburg overlooked.

1 ♖a7?!

White makes no real effort to save the h-pawn. 1 ♖d6 ♗e6 2 ♖f4 ♜f3 3 ♖g5 is a tougher defence, although Black can still win: 3...♗d5 (threatening ...♗d4) 4 ♖d8 ♜f8 5 ♖a5 (after 5 ♖g5 ♗d4 and 5 ♖e7 ♜f2+ 6 ♗c3 ♜f3+ 7 ♗c2 ♗d4 Black's king settles on d4 and the check on f2 will be decisive) 5...♜h8 6 ♖e1

♜h6! (White is now in zugzwang and indeed this is the key winning position) 7 ♖f2 (7 ♖g3 ♜a6 8 ♖e1 ♜a2+ 9 ♗c3 ♜h2 is a second zugzwang which forces White to surrender the pawn, while after 7 ♗c3 ♜a6 8 ♖f2 ♜a3+ 9 ♗b2 ♜f3 10 ♖e1 ♜f1 11 ♖g3 c3+! 12 ♗b3 ♗d4 Black wins quickly) 7...♜a6! (Black has positioned his rook to prevent the defence ♖b6-d8) 8 ♖g1 (or 8 ♖e1 ♜a2+ 9 ♗c3 ♜h2, as before) 8...♜g6 9 ♖a7 (9 ♖e3 ♜g2+ 10 ♗c3 ♜g3 11 ♗d2 c3+ is a win for Black) 9...♜g2+ (with the bishop on a7, Black has a tactical win) 10 ♗c3 ♜g3+ 11 ♗c2 c3 12 ♗b3 ♜g7! (running the bishop out of squares) 13 ♖e3 (13 ♖f2 c2) 13...♗e4 followed by ...♗d3.

1...♜d3?!

1...♜h3! 2 ♖d4 ♗e6 wins the h-pawn at once. It is worth looking at a typical line to see how Black finishes the game once the h-pawn falls: 3 ♖g7 ♜xh4 4 ♗c3 ♗d5 5 ♖f6 ♜h3+ 6 ♗c2 ♜f3 and now:

1) 7 ♖g7 ♜f7 8 ♖h8 ♗c5 9 ♖e5 (to meet ...♗b4 with ♖d6+) 9...♜e7 10 ♖h2 ♗d5 (not 10...♜e2+ 11 ♗c3 ♜xh2?? stalemate) 11 ♖g1 ♜e6 (White's bishop has few squares) 12 ♗c3 ♜a6 13 ♗c2 ♜h6 (now White is in zugzwang) 14 ♖a7 (14 ♗c3 ♜h3+ 15 ♗c2 c3 16 ♗b3 ♜h1 17 ♖a7 ♜h7 transposes) 14...♜h2+ 15 ♗c3 ♜h3+ 16 ♗c2 c3 17 ♗b3 ♜h7 followed by ...♜c7, winning.

2) 7 ♖d8 ♗c5 8 ♖a5 (8 ♖e7+ loses at once to 8...♗d4) 8...♜e3 9 ♖d2 ♜e6 10 ♖a5 (10 ♗c3 ♜f6 11 ♖e3+ ♗d5 12 ♗c2 ♜g6 13 ♖a7 ♜g2+ 14 ♗c3 ♜g3+ 15 ♗c2 c3 and Black wins as before) 10...♜a6 11 ♖e1 ♜a2+ 12 ♗c3 ♜h2 13 ♖f2+ (this trick only delays the end) 13...♗b5 14 ♖e1 ♜h3+ 15 ♗c2 (15 ♗d4 ♜d3+ 16 ♗e4 ♗a4 wins for Black) 15...♗a4 16 ♗b2 ♜e3 17 ♖d2 (17 ♖h4 ♗b4) 17...♜e2 18 ♗c3 ♜xd2 19 ♗xd2 ♗b3 and Black wins.

2 ♖c5 ♗e4 3 ♖e7

White has now achieved the more favourable defensive position with his bishop defending the h-pawn.

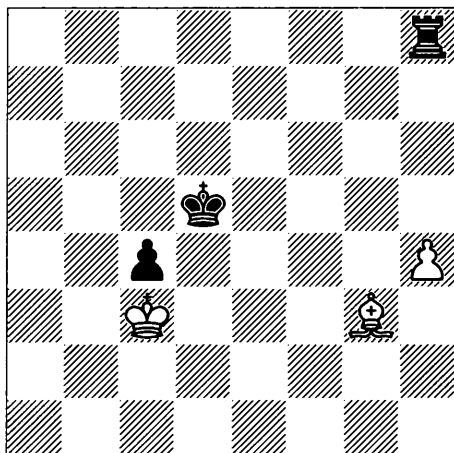
3...♜f3 4 ♖d8 ♗d4 5 ♖b6+ ♗d5 6 ♖c7 ♜f8

The correct plan. Not 6...c3? 7 ♗b3! ♗d4 8 ♖a5 and Black is paralysed.

7 ♗c3 ♜h8 8 ♖g3 (D)

8...♜a8?!

B



Starting to stray off the winning path. The key idea is similar to that given in the note to White's first move: 8...♖h6! 9 ♙f2 (9 ♜c2 ♜g6 10 ♙e1 ♜g2+ 11 ♜c3 ♜h2 is a zugzwang we have seen before) 9...♜f6 10 ♙e1 ♜a6! 11 ♜c2 ♜a2+ 12 ♜c3 ♜h2 with the same zugzwang.

9 ♙c7 ♜a3+ 10 ♜c2 ♜a8 11 ♜c3 ♜c8

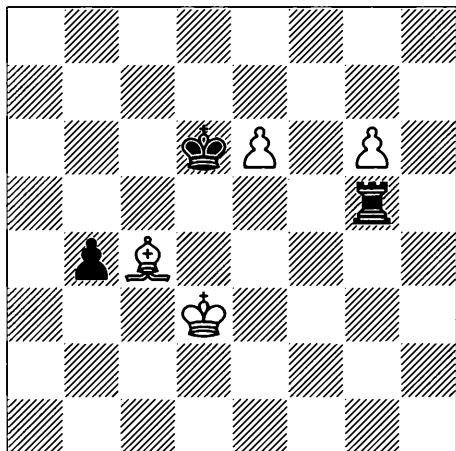
Black manoeuvres around, but does not make progress because he does not hit upon the ...♜h8-h6-a6 idea.

12 ♙g3 ♜f8 13 ♙c7 ♜f6 14 ♙d8 ♜f7 15 ♜c2 ♜f3 16 ♙c7 ♜c5 17 ♙d8 ♜h3 18 ♙e7+ ♜b5 19 ♙d8 ♜b4 20 ♙e7+ 1/2-1/2

The position remains winning for Black, but without the right idea he cannot make progress.

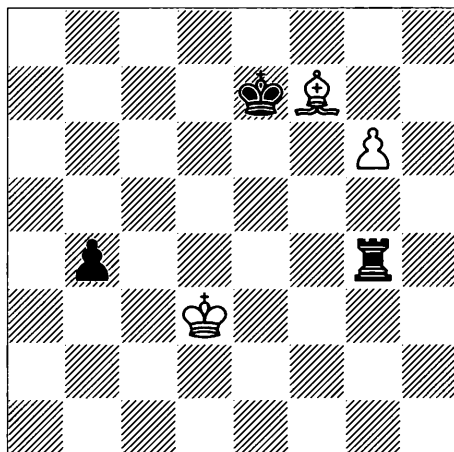
The next position continues the set of examples which involve manoeuvring. In this case, however, the position is a draw.

W



Onishchuk – Timman
Groningen 1996

B



After the move played, White's position looks quite solid since his bishop is on a secure square where it helps restrain the b-pawn.

At the moment White has one pawn for the exchange, but he cannot maintain both his pawns so the question is whether he can give up one of his pawns to reach a drawn position of ♜+♙ vs ♙+♙. The game ended in a draw, but Blatny's notes claimed that Black missed a number of winning possibilities.

1 ♙b3

According to Blatny, 1 e7 loses to 1...♙xe7 2 ♙f7 ♜g4, but this position is a draw. After 3 ♜c2 ♜d6 4 ♙b3 ♜c5 5 ♙b2 ♜g3 6 ♜c2 ♜d4 7 ♙b2 ♜g2+ 8 ♙b3 ♜c5 we reach a position that will be considered in the note to Black's fifth move.

1...♜g4!?

The only real winning try since 1...♜xg6 2 ♜c4 ♜g4+ 3 ♙b5 followed by ♙c4 picks up the b-pawn.

2 e7

Given a double question mark by Blatny, but this move is adequate to draw. White could also have drawn by 2 ♙a2; for example, 2...♙e7 (2...♜c6 3 e7 draws at once since 3...♜d7? even loses after 4 ♙e6+, while 2...♜xg6 3 ♜c4 ♜g4+ 4 ♙b5 followed by ♙c4 is an idea we have seen before) 3 g7 ♜xg7 4 ♜c4, etc.

2...♙xe7 3 ♙f7?! (D)

This move appears natural, but it makes White's task much more difficult. He should have played 3 g7! ♜xg7 4 ♜c4 ♜g4+ 5 ♙b5, followed by ♙c4, with a simple draw.

However, there is a danger that he will fall into zugzwang.

3... ♖d6 4 ♜c2 ♜c5 5 ♜b2 ♜g1

According to Blatny, Black can win here by 5... ♜g3 6 ♜c2 ♜d4 7 ♜b2 ♜g2+ 8 ♜b3 ♜c5 with zugzwang, but by precise play White can defend: 9 ♜e8! (the only move; not 9 ♜a4? ♜g3) 9... ♜g3+ 10 ♜b2 ♜b3 11 ♜f7 (11 ♜a3? loses to 11... ♜c4! 12 ♜f7+ ♜c3! 13 ♜xb3 ♜xg6 14 ♜a4 ♜g4+ 15 ♜a3 ♜g7 16 ♜a4 ♜a7+ and the bishop falls) 11... ♜b4 12 ♜d5! (this is the key move which Blatny overlooked, and illustrates how one small tactical point can overturn the evaluation of a whole ending; White prevents the check on g2 and threatens to draw by playing g7) 12... ♜e3 (12... ♜xg6 13 ♜xb3 ♜g2+ 14 ♜c2 ♜h2 15 ♜b1 is a draw as White's king is in the correct corner) 13 g7 ♜e2+ 14 ♜b1! ♜c3 15 ♜xb3 and White is saved.

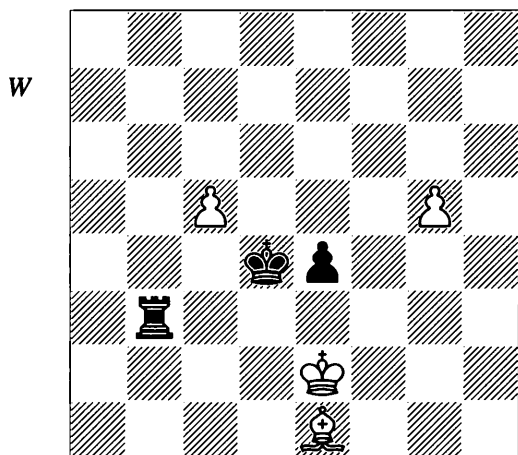
6 ♜c2 ♜g2+ 7 ♜b3 ♜g3+ 8 ♜b2 ♜b5 9 ♜e8+ ♜c4 10 ♜f7+ ♜c5 11 ♜c2 ♜d4 12 ♜b2 ♜3

Another question mark from Blatny, but his line 12... ♜g2+ 13 ♜b3 ♜c5 only leads to a draw, as given in the previous note.

13 ♜xb3 ♜xg6 14 ♜a2 ♜b6+ 15 ♜c2 1/2-1/2

This case was unusual in that the players conducted the game accurately, and it was the annotator who was at fault.

Next is the final 'manoeuvring' position, and the most complicated to date. The play contains some extraordinary study-like finesses.



Arakelian – Kudrin
Erevan (open) 1996

This example is very complex and shows how difficult endings with ♜+♔ vs ♜+♔ can be. In the diagram position, Black has a dangerous passed pawn well supported by his king, but, by using the g-pawn to deflect the enemy rook, White can avoid immediate disaster. The resulting position of ♜+♔ vs ♜+♔ is very difficult to play accurately and although it is initially a draw, a subtle mistake by White allows Black to achieve a winning position.

1 g6!

1 c6? ♜b2+ 2 ♜f1 ♜c2 is hopeless for White, as the g-pawn is not far enough advanced to provide any real counterplay.

1... ♜b2+ 2 ♜f1

2 ♜d2? loses to 2... e3 3 g7 ♜xd2+ 4 ♜f1 e2+ 5 ♜f2 e1 ♖++ 6 ♜xe1 ♜g2.

2... ♜b7 3 ♜e2!

Black wins after both 3 ♜h4? ♜e3 4 c6 ♜g7 and 3 c6? ♜c7 4 ♜e2 ♜xc6 5 g7 ♜g6 6 ♜f2+ ♜d5.

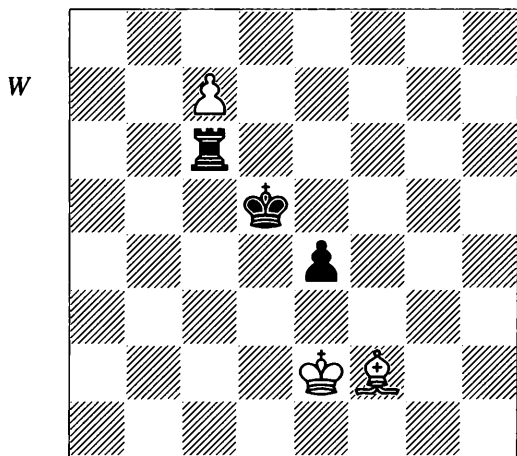
3... ♜g7 4 c6

The g-pawn is doomed, so White must create counterplay with the c-pawn.

4... ♜xg6 5 c7 ♜c6 6 ♜f2+!

First of all, White must drive Black's king back. 6 ♜g3? loses to 6... ♜c2+ 7 ♜d1 ♜d3.

6... ♜d5 (D)



7 ♜b6?!

Contrary to Arakelian's notes in *Informator 71*, this is not the losing move. However, it is true that White could have held the game more comfortably by 7 ♜g3! ♜c2+ (7... ♜c3 8 ♜d2 drives the rook away as 8... ♜d4?? even loses

after 9 ♖e5+) 8 ♜e3 ♜c3+ 9 ♜e2! (9 ♜f2? ♜d4 is winning for Black, as White no longer has a check on f2) 9...♜d4 (otherwise White's king cannot be driven away from the e2- and e3-squares) 10 ♖f2+ e3 11 c8♞, with a draw.

At first sight, the move played looks like a sure draw, as the bishop defends the pawn and controls d4 directly. Although it is sufficient to hold the game, the draw is far more complex than after 7 ♖g3! because Black has the interesting plan of defending the e-pawn with his rook, and then playing his king to c8 and b7 to run White's bishop run out of squares from which to defend the pawn.

7...♜e6

Heading for c8. Trying to get the king to f4 leads nowhere; for example, after 7...♜e5 8 ♜e3 ♜c3+ (8...♜f5 9 ♜e2 ♜f4 10 ♖e3+ is also a draw) 9 ♜e2 ♜f4 10 ♖e3+! the black king is forced away as 10...♜xe3+? 11 ♜d2 ♜d3+ 12 ♜c2 would even win for White.

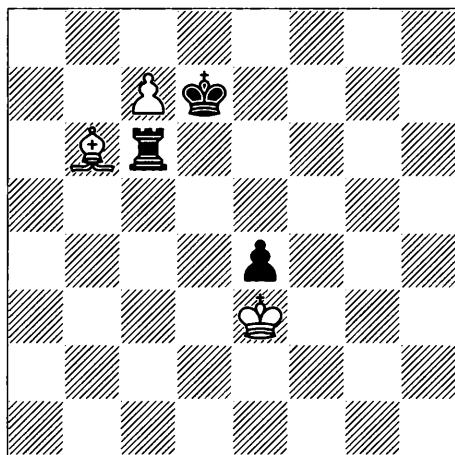
8 ♜e3

White must move up to attack the e4-pawn straight away. 8 ♖a5? allows Black to force an instructive win: 8...♜d7 9 ♜e3 ♜a6 10 ♖d2 ♜a2 11 ♖c1 (the best defence; after 11 ♖e1 ♜a4, 11 ♖b4 ♜xc7 or 11 ♖c3 ♜a3 12 ♜d2 e3+ 13 ♜c2 ♜xc7 White loses the c-pawn at once) 11...♜c2! (the only move) 12 ♖d2 (now Black has to lose a tempo in order to put White in zugzwang; this involves a surprisingly lengthy manoeuvre) 12...♜c8! 13 ♖b4 (after 13 ♖a5 ♜a2 14 ♖b6 ♜a6 15 ♖d4 ♜e6 Black wins the c-pawn) 13...♜c6! 14 ♖d2 ♜e6 15 ♖a5 ♜a6 16 ♖d2 ♜a2 17 ♖c1 ♜c2 18 ♖d2 ♜d7! (mission accomplished; now White must weaken his position) 19 ♖e1 (or 19 ♖a5 ♜a2! 20 ♖b6 ♜a6 and Black picks up the pawn after 21 ♖c5 ♜e6 or 21 ♖d4 ♜e6, although the resulting win is far from simple) 19...♜a2! 20 ♖f2 (20 ♖h4 ♜a3+ transposes, while after 20 ♖g3 ♜a3+ 21 ♜f2 ♜f3+ 22 ♜g2 ♜f7 Black cuts off the white king and wins easily) 20...♜c8! (this waiting move again places White in zugzwang) 21 ♖h4 (21 ♖e1 ♜a4 22 ♖g3 ♜a3+ and Black wins as before) 21...♜a3+ 22 ♜f4 ♜xc7 and Black wins.

8...♜d7 (D)

9 ♖a5?

W



This allows Black to win as in the note to White's 8th move. White could still have secured a draw with the remarkable line 9 ♖a7!! (heading for b8, which looks just about the worst possible square for the bishop, but is the only way to save the game) 9...♜a6 (after 9...♜xc7 10 ♖d4 White wins the e-pawn) 10 ♖b8 ♜a4 11 ♜f4 ♜c4 12 ♖a7! (passive defence by 12 ♜e3 is also sufficient, but this switchback is simple) 12...♜xc7 (after 12...♜xc7 13 ♖d4 White wins back the pawn) 13 ♜e5! followed by ♖d4 and ♜xe4, winning Black's pawn.

9...♜e6?!

This wins, but wastes some time. 9...♜a6! is the quickest win, transposing into the note to White's 8th move.

10 ♜d2?!

Giving up without a fight. The toughest defence is 10 ♜f4 ♜c8 11 ♜f5 (11 ♜e3 ♜a6! transposes into the note to White's 8th move) 11...♜e8! 12 ♜f4 ♜b7 13 ♜e3 ♜a8! 14 ♖d2 ♜a2 15 ♖c1 ♜c2 16 ♖d2 ♜c8 and again play transposes into the note to White's 8th move.

10...♜a6!

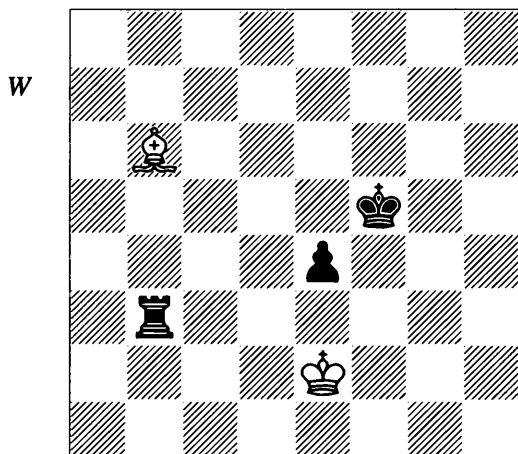
Now White loses his pawn at once, after which Black has a technical win.

11 ♖b4 ♜xc7 12 ♜e3 ♜c6 13 ♖f8 ♜d5 14 ♖g7 ♜a3+ 15 ♜e2 ♜e6 16 ♖d4 ♜f5

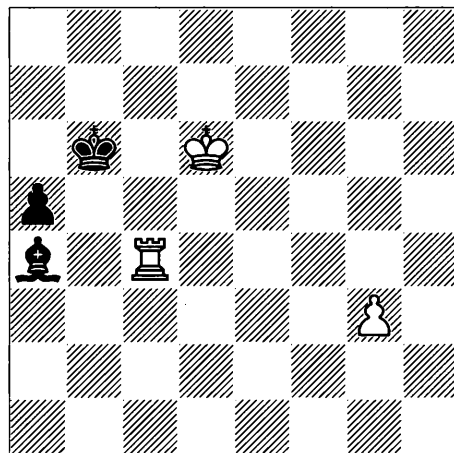
The quickest win is to play 16...♜h3 17 ♖b6 ♜b3 18 ♖c7 ♜d5 19 ♖d8 ♜e5 20 ♖g5 ♜a3 and now White is in zugzwang: 21 ♖d8 (21 ♖e7 ♜a7 22 ♖g5 ♜g7 23 ♖h6 ♜g2+ 24 ♜e3 ♜g3+ 25 ♜e2 ♜d4 also wins for Black) 21...♜a8! 22 ♖c7+ ♜d5 23 ♖b6 ♜b8 24 ♖f2 ♜b2+ 25 ♜e3 ♜b3+ 26 ♜e2 ♜e5 27 ♖c5

$\mathbb{B}b7!$ 28 $\mathbb{A}g1$ $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 29 $\mathbb{C}e3$ $\mathbb{C}f5$ 30 $\mathbb{A}f2$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$
31 $\mathbb{C}e2$ $\mathbb{C}f4$ and Black wins.

17 $\mathbb{A}b6$ $\mathbb{B}b3$ (D)



B



Adams – Shirov
Linares 1997

18 $\mathbb{A}c5?!$

18 $\mathbb{A}c7!$ offers more resistance, although Black can win by 18... $\mathbb{C}e6$ 19 $\mathbb{A}f4$ $\mathbb{C}d5$ 20 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{C}e5$ 21 $\mathbb{A}d8$ $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 22 $\mathbb{C}e3$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 23 $\mathbb{A}g5$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$ 24 $\mathbb{C}e2$ $\mathbb{B}a3$, transposing to the previous note.

18... $\mathbb{C}e5$ 19 $\mathbb{A}e7$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ 20 $\mathbb{A}h4?!$

This loses at once, but even the best defence, 20 $\mathbb{A}c5$, doesn't last much longer, as 20... $\mathbb{B}b2+$ 21 $\mathbb{C}e3$ $\mathbb{B}b3+$ 22 $\mathbb{C}e2$ $\mathbb{B}b7$ transposes into the note to Black's 16th move.

20... $\mathbb{C}f4$ 0-1

After 21 $\mathbb{A}f6$ $e3$ White is dead lost.

Our final two examples deal with an entirely different type of situation, in which both sides have passed pawns supported by their kings. Instead of the careful manoeuvring we saw in the last few examples, we are now in a race situation.

The following position shows how even the world's top players can get it wrong, not only in a game but also in subsequent annotations. Positions of this type can be deceptive; White is a whole exchange up and, given that Black's pawn is currently blocked by his bishop, the opposing pawns are effectively equally far advanced. Moreover, White's king is actively posted. Therefore, on general principles, one would expect the position to be a win, and indeed it is. However, the win is not so easy that

White can afford any carelessness. In his *Informator 69* notes to this game, Adams had already given White a 'decisive advantage' symbol 25 moves before the diagram, and from the diagram position to the end of the game he gave no notes at all, apparently considering the position to be simply a technical win. However, as we shall see, the play contains some surprises.

1... $\mathbb{C}b5$

Or 1... $\mathbb{A}b3$ 2 $\mathbb{B}c8$ $a4$ (2... $\mathbb{C}b5$ transposes to the following note) 3 $\mathbb{B}b8+$ $\mathbb{C}a7$ 4 $\mathbb{B}b4$ $\mathbb{A}d1$ 5 $\mathbb{C}c5$ $\mathbb{C}a6$ (5... $a3$ 6 $\mathbb{B}b1$ followed by $\mathbb{B}a1$ costs Black the pawn) 6 $\mathbb{B}d4$ $\mathbb{A}c2$ 7 $\mathbb{C}b4$ $\mathbb{C}b6$ 8 $g4$ and now White can simply push the pawn.

2 $\mathbb{B}c8$ $\mathbb{C}b4$

2... $\mathbb{A}b3$ is a slightly tougher defence, and forces White to find the unique winning move 3 $\mathbb{C}e5!$. It is surprising that this move wins, whereas more obvious alternatives lead to a draw. The point is that Black will draw if he can push his a-pawn and support it with his king. There isn't much White can do about the a-pawn, so his priority is to prevent Black's king from advancing to help the pawn. This can be accomplished by playing his king to d4 and possibly c3; if Black meets $\mathbb{C}d4$ with ... $\mathbb{C}b4$ then a check on b8 will force Black's king to the edge of the board. White's king manoeuvre must be initiated straight away, or it will be too late. Here's the analysis:

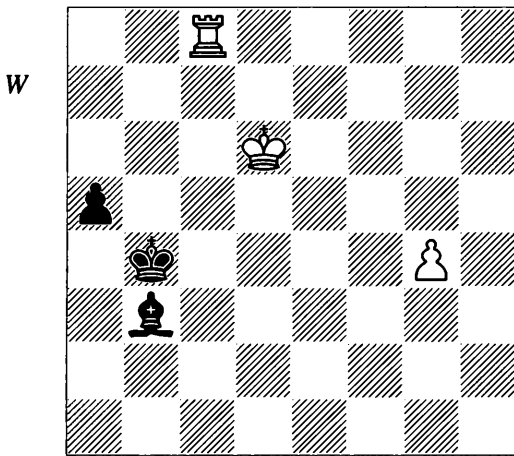
1) 3 $g4?$ $a4$ 4 $\mathbb{B}a8$ $\mathbb{C}b4$ 5 $g5$ $a3$ 6 $g6$ $a2$ 7 $g7$ $\mathbb{C}c3$ followed by ... $\mathbb{C}b2$ is a draw.

2) 3 ♖e5! a4 4 ♔d4! ♙e6 (trying to hold up the g-pawn is the best defence; after 4...♗b4 5 ♚b8+ ♖a5 6 g4 ♙c2 7 ♖c5 ♖a6 8 ♚b2 ♙e4 9 g5 White wins comfortably) 5 ♚a8 ♙d7 6 ♖c3 ♖c5 7 ♚a7 ♖d6 8 ♖d4 (now that Black's a-pawn is under control, White can afford to advance his king again) 8...♖e6 9 g4 ♙b5 10 ♖e4 ♖f6 11 ♖f4 and White wins using his g-pawn.

3 g4

After Black's slightly inferior defence, White can advance his pawn straight away; if followed up correctly, this is the quickest way to win.

3...♙b3 (D)



Now White must take action, as Black threatens to draw by playing ...a4.

4 ♖e5?

But this is the wrong way to go about it. White again intends to play his king to d4 to restrict Black's king, but this plan falls victim to a nasty tactical point which allows Black to force a draw. 4 ♚b8+! is the only move to win: then 4...♖c3 5 ♚a8 a4 6 ♖c5! (this alternative method of holding up the a-pawn proves decisive) 6...♙c2 7 ♖b5 (threatening ♚c8+ followed by ♚xc2) 7...♖d4 8 ♖b4 ♖e5 9 ♚f8! (the key move; White's king has arrived just in time to free the rook to cut off Black's king) 9...♖e6 10 g5 ♖e7 11 ♚f2 is a win for White since Black's bishop cannot both defend a4 and hold up the g-pawn.

4...♖a3?

Black misses the drawing resource. He could have saved the game by 4...a4! 5 ♖d4 ♖a3! (a

very surprising move, voluntarily playing the king to the edge of the board and blocking the pawn) 6 ♖c3 (forced, or else ...♖b2 followed by pushing the a-pawn draws) 6...♙e6!. This tactical point forks the rook and pawn, and thanks to the geometrical arrangement of pieces, the rook has no move to defend the pawn, so the position is a draw.

5 g5

The pawn is now too fast and White wins easily.

5...♖b2 6 g6 a4 7 g7 ♙f7

7...a3 8 ♚b8! and White wins.

8 ♚f8

Black's bishop is running out of squares, since ...♙b3 is met by ♚b8 while ...♙a2 loses to ♚f2+.

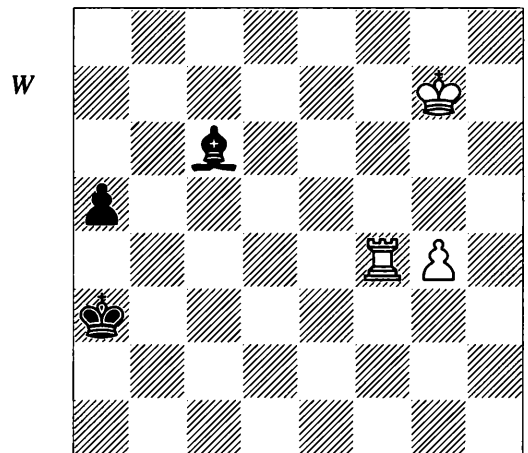
8...♙c4

The only square remaining.

9 ♚f4 1-0

After the bishop moves, White just takes on a4.

In a race situation, it can even happen that both sides promote and the battle is continued in the resulting queen ending.



Čabrilo – Savon
Belgrade 1988

1 ♖f6?!

'Only move' according to Čabrilo's notes in *Informator 46*, but White had a much simpler win by 1 g5! a4 (1...♖b3 2 ♖f8 a4 3 g6 transposes) 2 ♖f8! (2 g6? ♙e8! is a draw as Black can give up his bishop for the g-pawn) 2...♖b3

(2...♖b2 3 ♜c4 ♙d7 4 ♚e7 costs Black the a-pawn) 3 g6 a3 4 ♜d4! a2 5 g7 a1♚ 6 g8♚+ (White has the first check and this gives him a decisive attack) 6...♖b2 7 ♜b4+ ♚c2 8 ♚g6+ ♘d2 9 ♚xc6 with an extra rook. The reason why it is better to have the king on f8 than f6 is a simple one: White does not want his king to be on the same diagonal as Black's forthcoming queen on a1.

1...a4

Now Čabrilo makes up for his slight slip by finding a series of wonderfully accurate moves to win the game.

2 g5 ♖b3!

The best defence, avoiding blocking the a1-h8 diagonal at the cost of allowing White to promote with check. 2...♖b2 loses after 3 g6 a3 4 ♚e5! (4 g7? ♙d5 is only a draw) 4...a2 (Black has no choice as he cannot stop the pawn with his bishop) 5 ♜f2+ ♖b1 6 ♜xa2 ♖xa2 7 g7 and the pawn promotes.

3 g6 a3

After 3...♙d5 4 ♚e5! ♙g8 (4...♙c4 5 ♜xc4 and White wins immediately) 5 ♜f8 ♙c4 6 ♘d4! ♙e6 7 ♜e8 the bishop has no squares along the c4-g8 diagonal.

4 ♚e6!!

Remarkably, this is the only move to win. 4 g7? ♙d5 is a clear draw, 4 ♚e5? is bad due to 4...a2 5 ♜f1 (or else Black promotes with check) 5...♙e8 6 g7 ♙f7, when Black's problems are over, while 4 ♜d4? a2 5 g7 ♙d5 (the simplest, although 5...a1♚ 6 g8♚+ ♚c2 is only a draw because White's rook is pinned and can play no part in the attack) 6 ♜xd5 a1♚+ leads to an easy draw.

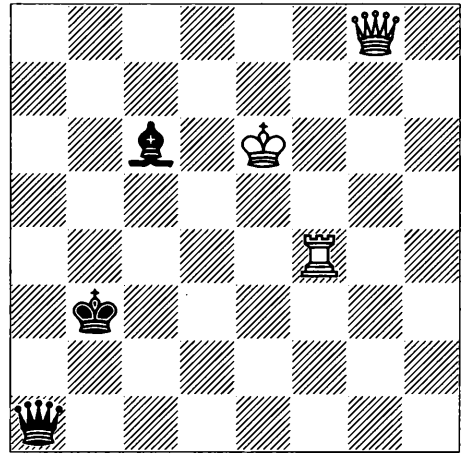
The move played performs two functions: it prevents Black's bishop from moving to d5 and it moves the king away from the impending check on a1. The drawback, which is why the move looks so unlikely, is that it also blocks White's queen check from g8. However, this turns out to be a less important factor.

4...a2 5 g7 a1♚ 6 g8♚ (D)

Although Black gets the first check if he wants it, this doesn't matter because White can answer with a discovered check, taking over the initiative and securing a decisive attack.

6...♚c3

B



Other moves lose more quickly; for example, 6...♖c2 7 ♜f2+ ♖b3 8 ♚b8+ ♖c4 9 ♜c2+ either mates or wins Black's queen.

7 ♚d6+!

Again the only winning move.

7...♖a3

7...♖b2 loses to 8 ♜f2+.

8 ♜c4

Black has problems not only with his exposed king but also with his poor piece coordination.

8...♚f6+ 9 ♚c5!

The king moves up to join in the attack. 9 ♚c7? ♙a4 is only a draw.

9...♙a4?!

This loses instantly, but against accurate play there is no defence: 9...♙f3 loses to 10 ♜a4+!, while the best defence, 9...♚f3, is refuted by 10 ♚g5! with the deadly threat of ♚c1+.

10 ♜xa4+! 1-0

The only winning move, but one which is instantly effective since it's mate after 10...♖xa4 11 ♚a2#.

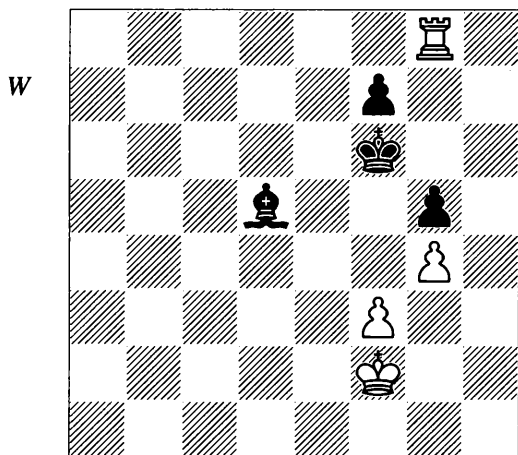
Summary:

- The majority of positions with ♜+♙ vs ♙+♙, with both pawns passed, are winning for the rook. However, there are also many drawn positions.
- When the defender's king is blocking the enemy pawn, it may be necessary to indulge in subtle manoeuvring in order to win. In such cases, identifying the key position (which will often be a zugzwang) is vital, since otherwise it is easy to go round in circles.

- The other main case is when the defender's king is supporting his own pawn. In these cases, it is often wrong for the attacker simply to push his own pawn as fast as possible, since even if this wins the bishop, the resulting ♖ vs ♔ position may be drawn. Instead it is often best to deploy the king and rook against the enemy pawn to hold it up, and to play to keep the enemy bishop from giving itself up for the pawn.

9.2.5 More Pawns

If the defender has no pawns for the exchange, then the position is usually lost, provided there are pawns on both sides of the board. However, when the pawns are all on one side, some positions are drawn (see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Section 73, for more examples). The drawing chances in these situations are often underestimated, as we shall see in the following example.



Bologan – Bouchet

French Team Ch, Vandoeuvre 2007

Playing such positions correctly often requires a good knowledge of the endings with ♖+♔ vs ♗ and ♖+♔ vs ♗+♔. This position is drawn, but accurate defence is necessary; in the game, Black's first move was already a fatal mistake.

The first step is to establish the general principles governing the position. If Black could play ...♗g7 and ...f6, then he would have a simple draw by keeping his bishop on the a2-g8

diagonal. This would give him a fortress which White could not break into; if White exchanges pawns by playing f4, the situation does not change. Therefore White only has winning chances in the diagram because of his favourable rook position, which prevents Black from retreating his king to g7. However, this also means that White's rook must stay on g8 and this leaves White with only one genuine plan, which is to play f4. In the position after the exchange of pawns on f4, Black's king is again best posted on g7 and this ensures a draw in almost all circumstances. However, White can often play so as to keep Black's king away from g7 and then he has winning chances; for example, if he can get his king to e5 and pawn to g5 with Black's king still on e7, then he wins.

1 ♖g3

This move immediately induced a losing mistake by Black, but actually 1 ♗e3!? is a better winning try, when Black has only one move to draw:

1) 1...♗e6? (1...♗c4? 2 ♗e4 ♗a2 is the same) 2 ♗e4! (this now wins because Black cannot immediately drive the king away from e4 with a check on the b1-h7 diagonal) 2...♗a2 (this comes too late) 3 f4 gxf4 (3...♗b1+ 4 ♗e3 gxf4+ 5 ♗xf4 and White wins because the bishop is now poorly placed on the b1-h7 diagonal; for example, after 5...♗g6 6 g5+ ♗e6 7 ♗b8 and 8 ♗b6+ White soon achieves the winning formation with pawn on g5 and king on e5) 4 g5+! (this is the reason why it is good to have the king on e4; after 4 ♗xf4? ♗e7 Black draws) 4...♗e6 5 ♗xf4 ♗b1 6 ♗e8+ ♗d6 7 ♗e3! (White is winning because Black's king has no hope of reaching g7; the first step is to transfer the king to d4) 7...♗d7 8 ♗e5 ♗d6 9 ♗d4 ♗c2 10 ♗e2 ♗h7 11 ♗f2 ♗e6 12 ♗f6+ ♗e7 13 ♗h6 ♗c2 14 ♗e5 (White has achieved the winning formation) 14...♗g6 15 ♗h1 ♗c2 16 ♗a1 ♗g6 17 ♗a7+ and White wins.

2) 1...♗b3? (this is bad because White can gain a tempo by attacking the bishop with his rook) 2 f4! gxf4+ 3 ♗xf4 ♗e7 (3...♗c2 4 g5+ ♗e6 5 ♗c8 ♗b1 6 ♗e8+ ♗d6 7 ♗e3 and White wins as in line 1) 4 ♗b8 (the crucial point is that Black is unable to move his bishop so as to attack White's rook, which would regain the lost

tempo) 4...♔c2 (4...♔d5 5 ♖e5 ♔c6 6 g5 is easier) 5 ♖c8 ♔b1 6 ♖g5! (here 6 g5? f6! draws, but White has an alternative plan of penetrating to g7 with his king) 6...f6+ (White also wins after 6...♔a2 7 ♖b8 ♔e6 8 ♖b4! ♔d7 9 ♖h6 ♖f6 10 g5+ ♖f5 11 ♖b6) 7 ♖h6 ♖f7 8 ♖c1 ♔d3 9 ♖d1 ♔c2 10 ♖d2 ♔e4 11 ♖f2 ♖e6 12 ♖g7 f5 13 g5 ♖e5 14 g6 f4 15 ♖h6! (not 15 ♖f7? ♔d5+ 16 ♖e7 f3 17 g7 ♖f4 with a draw) 15...♔d5 16 ♖g5 f3 17 ♖f1 ♖e4 18 ♖e1+ ♖d4 19 ♖d1+ ♖e4 20 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 21 g7 and White promotes with check.

3) 1...♔a2! (this is the sole drawing move for Black, which works because a later ♖a8 can be met by ...♔d5, gaining time by attacking the rook) 2 f4 (there is nothing else, as 2 ♖e4 ♔b1+ 3 ♖d4 ♔h7! 4 ♖a8 ♖g7 5 ♖e5 ♔c2 enables Black to set up his fortress; Black must not play 3...♔a2? in this line as 4 ♖e3! puts him in zugzwang) 2...gxf4+ 3 ♖xf4 ♖e7! 4 ♖a8 (one key point is that 4 g5 f6! 5 ♖g7+ ♖f8 6 gxf6 is a standard theoretical draw – see diagram 69d in *Understanding Chess Endgames*; knowing basic positions such as these is a real point-saver) 4...♔d5 5 ♖a5 (trying to regain the tempo, but in order to achieve this White must move his rook off the eighth rank, which allows Black's king to slip away; 5 ♖a7+ ♖f6 6 ♖a6+ ♖g7 is also a draw) 5...♔e6 6 g5 ♖f8! and Black reaches g7 with a draw.

It follows from the above analysis that the position with ♖e3 vs ♔a2 is reciprocal zugzwang. When White is to play, the only king move to retain the possibility of f4 is ♖e4, but then Black just checks on b1 and plays ...♔h7, driving the rook away and allowing his king to reach g7. When Black is to play, he must move his bishop to one of the inferior squares given in the above analysis and so he loses.

1...♔b7?

Black fails to understand the position (or maybe he had just given up) and plays his bishop along the wrong diagonal. We know from the above analysis that 1...♔e6! 2 f4 gxf4+ 3 ♖xf4 ♖e7! is a draw, since White cannot gain a tempo by attacking Black's bishop. 1...♔c4 and 1...♔a2 are equally good, as with the king on g3 there is no danger of White playing ♖e4 followed by f4, so Black need not take as much

care with his bishop position (however, he must still avoid b3 for the same reasons as given above).

2 f4 gxf4+ 3 ♖xf4 ♔c6

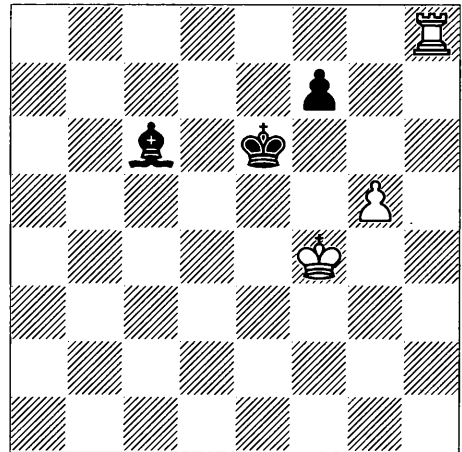
The reason why the bishop has to be on the b1-h7 diagonal is that White's rook must be attacked after 3...♖e7 4 g5 f6, so as to give him no time to play g6. Here the bishop is especially badly placed because this line loses after 5 ♖g7+.

4 g5+ ♖e6

4...♖e7 5 ♖e5 is even easier.

5 ♖h8 (D)

B



White plays ♖h6+ and gets his king to e5, after which the win is quite straightforward.

5...♔a4

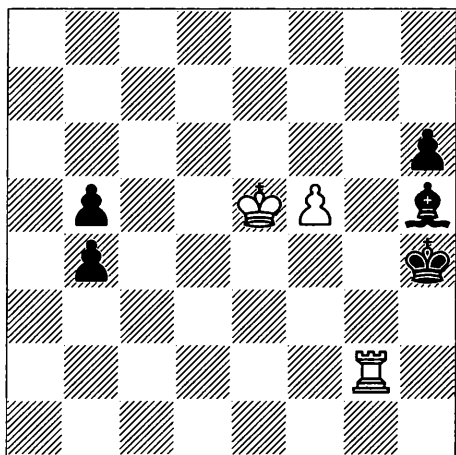
Or 5...♔d7 6 ♖h6+ ♖d5 7 ♖f6 ♔e6 8 ♖g3 ♖d6 9 ♖h4 ♖e7 10 ♖h5 ♖f8 11 ♖h6 ♖e7 (11...♖g8 is met by 12 g6) 12 ♖g7 ♔c4 13 ♖c6 ♔a2 14 ♖c7+ ♖e8 15 ♖f6 and White wins.

6 ♖h6+ ♖e7 ♖e5 ♔b3 8 ♖b6 ♔a2 9 ♖b7+ ♖f8 10 ♖f6 ♖g8 11 ♖b8+ ♖h7 12 ♖f8 ♔b3 13 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 14 ♖xf7 ♖h8 15 ♖g6 ♖g8 16 ♖h6 1-0

The remaining positions in this section cover the case in which both sides have passed pawns. Such positions are distinguished by tricky tactics and by the possibility of transforming to other endings, for example if the bishop is lost or if one of the players promotes.

The position in the following diagram is a fascinating ending which can reduce to a variety of simpler endings; for example, if Black

B



Murariu – Mateuta
Bucharest 2001

gives up his bishop for the f-pawn, then a ♖ vs 3♗ position results. According to Stoica's notes in *Informator 82*, the diagram position is drawn and both sides conducted the endgame accurately. The first of these statements is true but the second is not.

1...♗f7!

The only move. 1...b3? 2 ♖f4 ♗h3 3 ♖g3+, 1...♗e8? 2 ♖f4 ♗h3 3 ♖b2 and 1...♗h3? 2 ♖b2 all win easily for White.

2 ♖f6

White has a variety of alternative plans, but none of them leads to a win against accurate defence:

1) 2 ♖f4 ♗h3 3 ♖g3+ ♗h2 4 f6 b3 5 ♖f3 (5 ♖d3 h5 6 ♖d7 h4 is no better) 5...♗e6 6 ♖f2 b2 7 ♖g1 b4 8 ♖b1 ♗h3 9 ♖f3 ♗h4 10 ♖f4 ♗h5 11 ♖xb2 b3 12 ♖e5 ♗c4 13 ♖g2 b2! 14 ♖xb2 ♖g6 and Black draws since if his king reaches f7 the position is a draw even without the h-pawn.

2) 2 f6 ♗h3! (not 2...b3? 3 ♖d6 ♗h3 4 ♖d2! h5 5 ♖e7 ♗c4 6 f7 ♗xf7 7 ♖xf7 h4 8 ♖g6 ♖g4 9 ♖d4+ ♖f3 10 ♖f5 ♖e3 11 ♖b4 ♖d3 12 ♖xb3+ ♖c4 13 ♖b1 b4 14 ♖e4 ♖c3 15 ♖e3 b3 16 ♖c1+ ♖b4 17 ♖d3 b2 18 ♖f1 ♖b3 19 ♖h1 h3 20 ♖d1 h2 21 ♖h1, when White wins) 3 ♖g1 h5 4 ♖d4 h4 5 ♖g7 ♗e6 and White's advantage is insufficient to win.

3) 2 ♖d4 b3 3 ♖c3 ♗h3 4 ♖g7 ♗c4 5 f6 h5 6 ♖g5 h4 7 ♖xb5 ♗e6 8 ♖b6 ♗g8 9 ♖b8 ♗e6 10 ♖e8 ♗f7 11 ♖e7 ♗g8 and White cannot win.

4) 2 ♖h2+ ♖g3 3 ♖xh6 b3 4 ♖h1 ♖f3 5 ♖h3+ ♖e2 6 ♖d4 ♖d2 7 ♖h2+ ♖c1 8 ♖c3 b4+ is a clear draw.

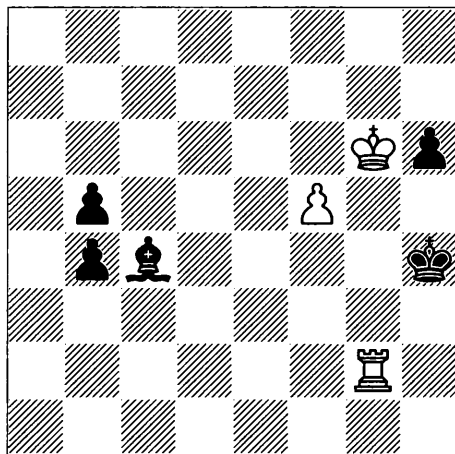
2...♗c4!

Once again Black finds the only defence. 2...♗d5? is wrong because White can later gain a tempo by attacking the bishop with his rook: 3 ♖g1! h5 (3...b3 4 ♖e7 ♗h3 5 f6 ♖h2 6 ♖b1 h5 7 f7 ♗xf7 8 ♖xf7 h4 9 ♖g6 h3 10 ♖g5 ♖g2 11 ♖g4 is also a win for White) 4 ♖e7 ♗h3 5 f6 h4 6 ♖g5! (this is the key point: the rook is removed from the g1-square with gain of tempo) 6...♗c4 7 f7 ♗xf7 8 ♖xf7 b3 9 ♖g6 b2 10 ♖xb5 and White wins.

3 ♖g6 (D)

3 ♖g1 now only leads to a draw after 3...h5 4 ♖e7 ♗h3 5 f6 h4 6 f7 ♗xf7 7 ♖xf7 ♗h2 (Black gains a tempo compared to the analysis of 2...♗d5?) 8 ♖g5 h3 9 ♖g6 b3 10 ♖h5 b4 11 ♖b5 ♖g2.

B



3...h5?

This move loses because it is essential for Black to gain time by attacking the white rook as quickly as possible. He could have defended by 3...♗h3! 4 ♖g1 (4 ♖d2 h5 5 ♖xh5 ♖g3 and 4 ♖b2 b3 5 f6 ♖g4! 6 f7 ♗xf7+ 7 ♖xf7 h5 8 ♖xb3 h4 are also draws) 4...h5! 5 ♖xh5 and now Black even has two drawing lines:

1) 5...♗h2 6 ♖c1 ♖g2 7 f6 b3 (7...♖f2? 8 ♖xc4 wins for White) is the simplest. If White moves his rook away from c1, then Black's king just heads for the queenside to support the b-pawns, while 8 ♖g4 ♗f7 followed by ...♖f2 is similar.

2) 5...b3 is more complicated, but leads to a neat conclusion: 6 ♖g6 (6 f6 ♖h2 7 ♜c1 transposes to line 1 in the note to White's 5th move) 6...♖h2 7 ♜d1 (7 ♜b1 ♖g2 is an easy draw) 7...♖g2 8 f6 ♖f2 9 f7 appears decisive as 9...♙xf7+? loses to 10 ♖xf7 ♖e2 11 ♜d5! b4 12 ♜d4!, but Black saves the game by 9...♖e2 10 f8♙ (after 10 ♜b1 ♙xf7+ 11 ♖xf7 ♖d3 12 ♜xb3+ ♖c4 13 ♜b1 b4 Black also holds the draw) 10...♖xd1, when White cannot win as he will soon have to give perpetual check to prevent the b3-pawn from promoting.

4 f6! b3

4...♖h3 loses to 5 ♜b2 b3 6 ♖xh5, when compared to the 3...♖h3! analysis, Black has lost a vital tempo since the move ...h5 has been a complete waste of time.

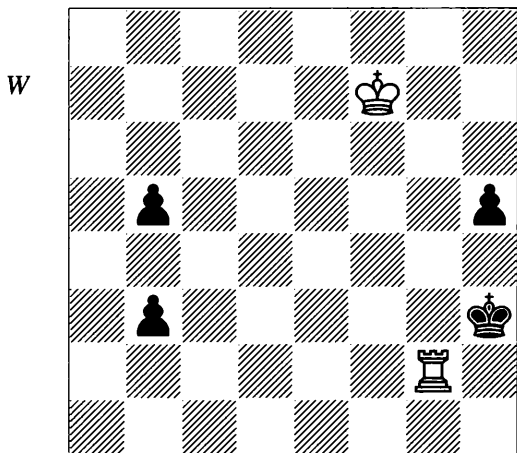
5 f7!

White can also win by 5 ♜g1! ♖h3 (5...b2 6 f7 ♙xf7+ 7 ♖xf7 ♖h3 8 ♖g6 h4 9 ♖g5 ♖h2 10 ♜b1 ♖g3 11 ♜xb2 is decisive) and now:

1) 6 ♖xh5? ♖h2 7 ♜c1 (7 ♜b1 ♖g2! leads to a draw) 7...♖g2 8 ♖g6 ♖f2 9 ♜xc4 bxc4 10 f7 c3! (10...b2? loses to 11 f8♙+ ♖e2 12 ♙f5 ♖d2 13 ♙d5+ ♖c3 14 ♙d1) 11 f8♙+ ♖e2 and the pawns are far enough advanced to draw.

2) 6 f7! ♙xf7+ (or 6...♖h2 7 ♜b1) 7 ♖xf7 ♖h2 8 ♜b1 h4 (Stoica stopped here with an '=' sign, but White can win) 9 ♖g6 h3 10 ♖g5 ♖g2 11 ♖g4 h2 (11...♖f2 12 ♖xh3) 12 ♜b2+ ♖g1 13 ♖g3 h1♙+ 14 ♖f3 b4 15 ♜xb3 and the knight falls.

5...♙xf7+ 6 ♖xf7 ♖h3 (D)



7 ♜b2?

Now it's a draw again. The simplest win is by 7 ♜g1! (7 ♜g5 and 7 ♜d2 also win) 7...♖h2 (7...h4 8 ♖g6 ♖h2 9 ♜b1 transposes) 8 ♜b1, transposing into the note to White's fifth move.

7...h4 8 ♖f6 ♖g4!

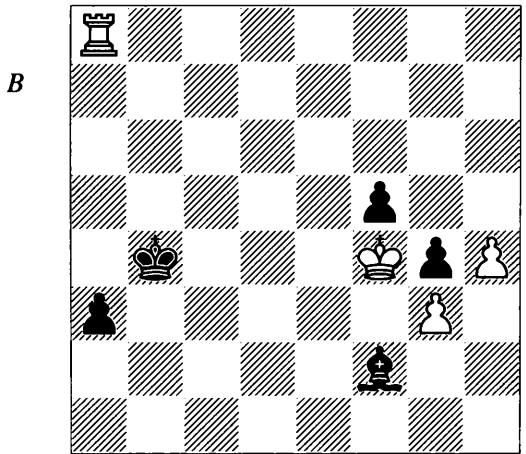
The only move to draw, since Black can hold the white king at bay while he pushes the h-pawn. 8...♖g3? loses to 9 ♖g5 h3 10 ♜xb3+ ♖g2 11 ♖g4, etc.

9 ♖e5 h3 10 ♖e4 ♖g3

10...b4 also draws.

11 ♜xb3+ ♖g2 12 ♜b2+ ♖g3 13 ♜b3+ ♖g2 14 ♖f4 h2 15 ♜b2+ ♖h3! 16 ♜b3+ ♖g2 1/2-1/2

The next position features some interesting finesses; in particular, there are some lines in which White's passed h-pawn is stronger on h5 than it is on h7.



G. Agzamov – Mikhalchishin
USSR Ch, Riga 1985

At some stage White will have to give up his rook for the a-pawn and hope to win with his kingside pawns, but detailed analysis is needed to determine if this leads to victory. In the game Black played 1...♖b3 and lost, and in *Informator 39* Agzamov claimed that 1...♖b3 was a losing mistake whereas 1...♙e1 would have drawn. In my opinion this is exactly the wrong way round; I believe 1...♖b3 would have drawn had it been followed up correctly, while 1...♙e1 would have lost. In addition, Black had a second drawing move in 1...♙b6. Let's look at the details.

1...♖b3!

Alternatives:

1) 1...♙e1? 2 h5 ♖b3 3 ♗xf5 (this move was not considered by Agzamov; 3 ♜e8? ♙d2+ 4 ♗xf5 a2 5 ♜a8 ♙c1! 6 ♜xa2 ♗xa2 7 ♗xg4 ♖b3 8 ♗f5 ♖c4 9 g4 ♗d5 10 g5 ♗d6 11 h6 ♗e7 is a draw) 3...♙xg3 4 h6 ♙e1 5 ♜e8! (White wins because he can prevent Black's bishop from reaching the long diagonal) 5...♙f2 (5...♙c3 6 ♜e3 a2 7 ♜xc3+ ♗xc3 8 h7 ♖b2 9 h8♙+ ♖b1 and Black wins because the g4-pawn frustrates any stalemate attempt: 10 ♙b8+ ♗c2 11 ♙e5 ♖b1 12 ♙e1+ ♖b2 13 ♙b4+ ♗c2 14 ♙a3 ♖b1 15 ♙b3+ ♗a1 16 ♙c2 and ♙c1#) 6 ♜b8+! (forcing the king to an inferior square) and now:

1a) 6...♗c4 7 ♜d8 ♙e1 8 h7 ♙c3 9 ♜c8+ and White wins.

1b) 6...♗a2 7 ♜d8 g3 (7...♙e1 8 ♜c8 and now ...♙f2 is impossible due to ♜c2+) 8 h7 g2 9 ♜d2+ ♖b3 10 h8♙ g1♙ 11 ♜d3+ ♗a2 12 ♙c3! with decisive threats.

1c) 6...♗c2 7 ♗e4 ♙h4 (7...♙e1 8 h7 ♙c3 9 ♜c8 and White wins) 8 ♜b6 a2 9 ♜a6 ♖b3 10 h7 ♙f6 11 ♜xf6 a1♙ 12 h8♙ and Black's checks don't last forever.

2) 1...♙b6! is the second drawing line. Now:

2a) 2 h5 ♙a5 3 ♜c8 (3 ♜b8+ ♗a4 4 ♜b1 ♙c3 5 ♗xf5 a2 6 ♜h1 a1♙ 7 ♜xa1+ ♙xa1 8 ♗xg4 ♖b5 9 ♗f5 ♖c6 10 g4 ♗d7 and the king makes it back in time) 3...a2 4 ♜c1 and now there are two ways to draw:

2a1) 4...♙b6 5 ♜d1 ♖c4! 6 h6 ♙a5! (not 6...♙d4? 7 ♜xd4+ ♗xd4 8 h7 and White wins) 7 ♗xf5 (7 ♜c1+ ♖b3 is a draw after 8 h7 ♙d2+ 9 ♗xf5 ♙xc1 10 h8♙ ♙b2 or 8 ♗xf5 ♙d2!) 7...♙d2! (not 7...♙c3? 8 ♗xg4 a1♙ 9 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 10 ♗f5 ♖d5 11 g4 ♗d6 12 g5 ♗e7 13 ♖g6 ♖f8 14 ♖h7 and White wins; in this line White benefited from having his pawn on h6 because this left the h7-square free for his king) 8 h7 ♙c3 (paradoxically, this draws now that the pawn has been forced to advance to h7) 9 ♗xg4 a1♙ 10 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 11 ♗f5 ♖d5 12 g4 ♗d6 with a draw.

2a2) 4...♖b3 (threatening ...♙d2+) 5 ♗xf5 ♙d2! (not 5...♙c3? 6 ♗xg4 a1♙ 7 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 8 ♗f5 ♖c4 9 g4 ♗d5 10 g5 ♗d6 11 h6 ♗e7 12 ♖g6 ♙c3 13 ♖h7 followed by g6-g7 and White wins) 6 ♜h1 ♖c2! (threatening ...♙c1) 7 ♜a1 ♖b2 8 ♜xa2+ ♗xa2 9 ♗xg4 ♖b3 10 ♗f5 ♖c4

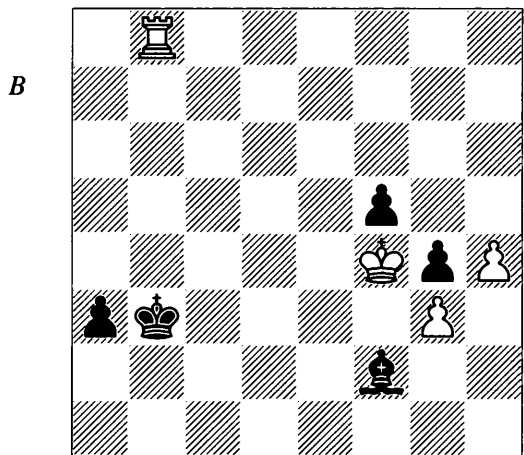
11 g4 ♗d5 12 g5 ♗d6 13 h6 ♗e7 and Black saves the game.

2b) 2 ♗xf5 ♙a5 3 ♜c8 a2 4 ♜c1 and then:

2b1) This time 4...♖b3? loses after 5 ♗xg4 ♙d2 (5...♙c3 6 h5 ♙b2 7 ♜h1 ♖c2 8 h6 ♙c1 9 ♜h2+ ♙d2 10 h7 a1♙ 11 h8♙ and White wins) 6 ♜h1 ♖c2 7 ♜a1 ♖b2 8 ♜xa2+ ♗xa2 9 ♗h5! (this tricky move explains why it is better for White to have played ♗xg4 than h5) 9...♖b3 10 g4 ♖c4 11 g5 ♗d5 12 ♖g6 ♗e6 13 ♖h7! (the only move to win; 13 h5? ♙xg5 is a draw) 13...♗f5 14 g6 ♙c3 15 h5.

2b2) 4...♙b6! 5 ♗xg4 (5 ♜d1 ♖c4 followed by ...♙d4 draws because White has not yet played h5) 5...♙d4 6 h5 a1♙ 7 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 8 ♗f5 ♖c5 9 ♖e6 ♙g7 10 g4 ♙h6 11 ♖f6 ♗d6 12 g5 ♙xg5+ 13 ♗xg5 ♗e7 and Black is just in time.

2 ♜b8+ (D)



2...♖c2

This is perfectly adequate, although other king moves also draw.

3 h5 ♙e1?

This time-wasting move is the decisive error. Black could have drawn by 3...a2! 4 ♜a8 ♖b3 5 h6 (5 ♗xf5 ♙xg3 6 h6 ♙e1 7 h7 ♙c3 is also a draw) and now:

1) 5...♙d4 6 ♗xf5 ♙e3! (surprisingly, it is worth two tempi to force the pawn to advance to h7; 6...a1♙? loses to 7 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 8 ♗xg4 ♖c4 9 ♗f5 ♖d5 10 g4 ♗d6 11 g5 ♗e7 12 ♖g6 ♖f8 13 ♖h7) 7 h7 ♙d4 8 ♗xg4 a1♙ 9 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 10 ♗f5 ♖c4 11 ♖e6 ♖d3 12 g4 ♖e4 13 g5 ♖f4 14 g6 ♖g5 15 ♖f7 ♖h6 and Black is just in time.

2) 5...♙c5 6 ♖xf5 (after 6 h7 ♙d4 7 ♖xf5 a1♖ 8 ♜xa1 ♙xa1 9 ♖xg4 ♖c4 Black makes it back in time to save the game) 6...♙a3 7 h7 a1♖ 8 ♜b8+ (8 h8♖ ♖f1+ is also a draw) 8...♖a4 9 h8♖ ♖f1+ 10 ♖xg4 ♖e2+ and with White's pieces stuck on the edge of the board, Black's queen and bishop have no trouble giving perpetual check.

4 ♜e8!

This is not the only winning move but it is the simplest.

4...♙c3

4...♙d2+ 5 ♖xf5 a2 6 ♜a8 ♖b2 7 ♖xg4 a1♖ 8 ♜xa1 ♖xa1 9 ♖f5! is also winning for White.

5 ♜a8 ♖b3 6 ♖xf5 a2 7 ♖xg4 a1♖ 8 ♜xa1 ♙xa1

It seems paradoxical that this position is a draw with the pawn on h7 (see the analysis of 3...a2 above) but a win with the pawn on h5. The reason is that with h7 free, White can play his king to that square and win by promoting the g-pawn.

9 ♖f5 ♖c4 10 g4 ♖d5 11 g5 ♖d6 12 h6

There is nothing Black can do to stop ♖g6-h7 followed by the advance of the g-pawn.

12...♙c3 13 ♖g6 ♖e6 14 ♖h7 ♙f6

A last trick.

15 g6! 1-0

White sidesteps the trick 15 gxf6?? ♖f7 16 ♖h8 ♖f8 with a draw, so Black resigned.

When both sides have multiple passed pawns, the play is usually just pure tactics.

With so many advanced passed pawns, the position is very complicated and even in analysis it isn't easy to spot the correct continuation. According to Marić in *Informator 12*, the position should be drawn but the move played by Black should have lost. However, as we shall see, both these conclusions are incorrect.

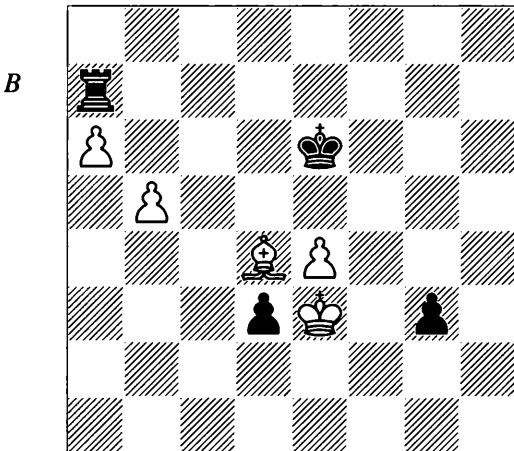
1...d2?

Marić was right to conclude that 1...g2? leads to a draw, but his double exclamation mark was misguided since Black throws away the win by pushing his g-pawn. The analysis runs 2 ♖d2! (2 ♖d3? loses to 2...♙d7 3 a7 ♜xd4+) 2...♜a8! 3 b6!? (3 a7 ♖d7 4 ♖xd3 ♖c7 5 ♖e2 ♖b7 and 3 ♙f2 ♖d7 4 ♖xd3 ♜g8 5 b6 ♖c6 6 b7 ♖c7 7 ♙g1 ♖b8 are also drawn) 3...♜xa6 4 b7 ♜a2+ 5 ♖c3 (or 5 ♖xd3 g1♖ 6 ♙xg1 ♜b2) 5...♜c2+! 6 ♖b3 g1♖ 7 ♙xg1 ♜c1 8 ♙e3 ♜b1+ and the b7-pawn falls.

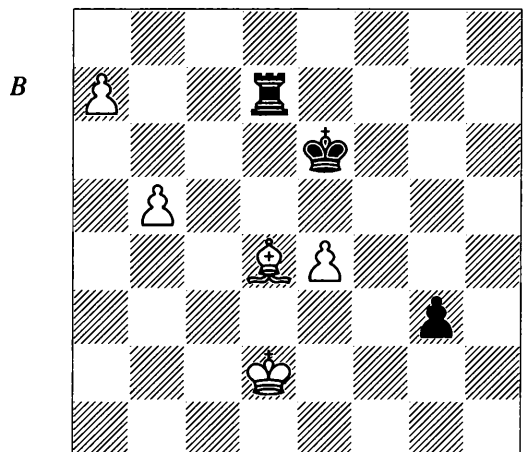
1...♙d7! is the strongest move and wins for Black: 2 a7 g2 3 ♖d2 (3 ♖f2 ♜xa7 4 ♙xa7 g1♖+ 5 ♖xg1 d2 is an easy win) 3...♜xd4 4 a8♖ g1♖ (White has a lot of checks, although they do eventually run out) 5 ♖e8+ ♖d6 6 ♖f8+ (6 ♖d8+ ♖c5) 6...♖d7 7 ♖f7+ ♖c8 8 ♖e6+ ♖d8 9 ♖f6+ (9 ♖b6+ ♖e7 10 ♖c7+ ♖f8 11 ♖f4+ ♖g8 12 ♖b8+ ♖h7 13 ♖c7+ ♖g7 also wins for Black) 9...♖e8 10 ♖e6+ ♖f8 11 ♖f6+ ♖g8 12 ♖e6+ ♖h7 13 ♖f7+ ♖g7 14 ♖f5+ ♖g6 and again the checks are over.

2 ♖xd2 ♜d7 3 a7 (D)

3 b6 ♜xd4+ 4 ♖e2 ♜d8 5 b7 ♜f8 6 a7 g2 7 b8♖ ♜xb8 8 axb8♖ g1♖ is a draw since Black's king is in front of the pawn.



Geissert – Starck
West Germany 1971



3...♞xd4+

Not 3...g2? 4 ♔e2 ♞xd4 5 ♕f2 ♞d2+ 6 ♔g1 ♞a2 7 b6 and the pawns cannot be stopped.

4 ♕e3?

A serious error. According to Marić 4 ♕e2! wins, but Black can still defend with 4...♞d8! (4...♞a4? indeed loses to 5 b6 ♞a2+ 6 ♕f1) 5 b6 ♞f8 6 b7 g2, transposing to the note to White's third move. However, a draw is better than the loss which follows the move played.

4...♞a4 5 b6 ♞a2!

The unpleasant point: White's king is cut off from the g-pawn, which now promotes with check.

6 b7 g2 7 a8♞ g1♞+

White's king is utterly defenceless and Black mates within a few moves.

8 ♔d3 ♞d1+ 0-1

Summary:

- When all the pawns are on the same side of the board, the bishop can sometimes draw even with equal pawns; for this to be a possibility, the defender's pawns must be on opposite-coloured squares to the bishop. The defender's chances are increased if the attacker's pawns have little or no flexibility.
- If both sides have passed pawns, the play is usually very sharp and frequently involves a transformation to a different type of ending, for example if the bishop or rook has to be surrendered for an enemy passed pawn, or if one or both sides promote. A common motif for the side with the rook is to try to prevent the bishop from giving itself up for a passed pawn, thereby gaining a queen instead of a piece.

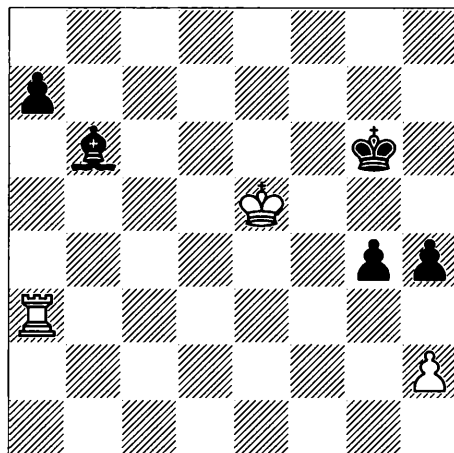
9.2.6 The Bishop has the Advantage

A bishop and two pawns more or less balance a rook, but if the player with the bishop has a dangerous passed pawn then he may even have the advantage.

According to Marić, the following position is winning for Black. However, by accurate defence White can secure a draw.

1...♕g5

B



S. Garcia Martinez – Padevsky
Varna 1970

This threatens 2...g3 3 hxg3 h3 4 ♞a1 h2 (or 4...♕g4), so White must move his king into the square of the h-pawn.

2 ♕e4 h3

Black edges forward with his pawns. The idea now is to play ...♕g1 and ...♕xh2, giving up the bishop to secure two connected passed pawns. At the moment, White's king cannot approach, so he can only wait.

3 ♞b3

The rook must stay on the third rank because 3 ♞a1? loses to 3...g3! 4 hxg3 ♕g4.

3...♕g1 4 ♞a3?

This is the losing move. White should now have changed his plan and played actively instead of waiting: 4 ♞b8! ♕xh2 5 ♞g8+ ♕h4 6 ♕f5 and Black cannot play ...g3, so he loses the g-pawn, after which White can draw comfortably. 4 ♞b5+! ♕h4 5 ♕f5! ♕xh2 6 ♞b4 is equally good.

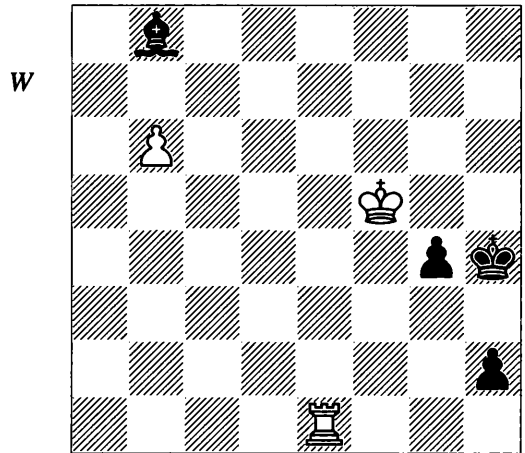
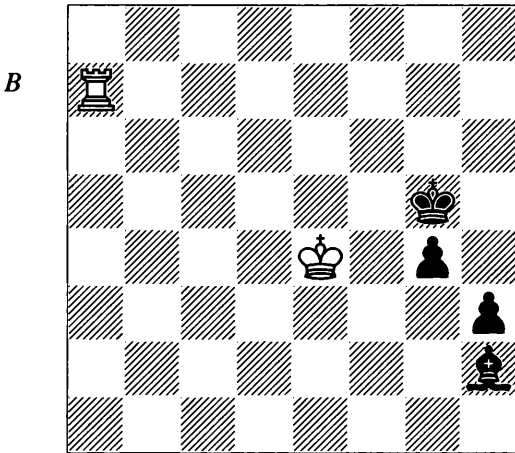
4...♕xh2

Black is willing to give up his a-pawn in order to gain two connected passed pawns on the kingside.

5 ♞xa7 (D)

5...♕e5

Marić's analysis gives 5...♕g3! as leading to a draw, but it is actually the quickest way to win: 6 ♞g7+ ♕h6 7 ♞g8 (7 ♞xg4 h2 8 ♞xg3 h1♞+ 9 ♕e3 forces Black to win a ♞ vs ♞ ending and so is the best practical chance, although Black is of course winning) 7...h2 8 ♞h8+ and now:



1) Marić gave 8...♖g7 9 ♜h5 ♗g6 10 ♜h8 ♙e5 11 ♜h4 and now 11...g3? 12 ♗f3 drawing, but Black can improve by 11...♙c7! 12 ♜h8 ♙g3, transposing to line 2.

2) 8...♗g6! (this is the quickest win) 9 ♗e3 (White is in zugzwang because the rook is out of squares on the h-file) 9...♙e5 10 ♜h4 ♗g5 11 ♜h7 ♙g3 followed by ...♙h4 and Black wins.

5...♙d6? is wrong, however, as White can simply reply 6 ♜g7+ ♗h4 (6...♗h6 7 ♜xg4) 7 ♗f5 h2 8 ♜h7+ ♗g3 9 ♜xh2! with a draw.

6 ♜d7

After this, White loses relatively quickly. More resistance is offered by 6 ♗xe5 h2 7 ♜a8 (7 ♜g7+ ♗h6 8 ♜g8 ♗h7 also wins for Black) 7...g3 8 ♜g8+ ♗h6 9 ♗f6 ♗h7 10 ♜g7+ ♗h8 11 ♜xg3 h1♚ 12 ♜g6 and Black still has to win ♚ vs ♜. Instead 6 ♜h7 ♙g3 7 ♜g7+ ♗f6 8 ♜h7 ♗g6 9 ♜h8 h2 transposes to the analysis of 5...♙g3.

6...h2 7 ♜d1 ♙d4! 0-1

The cleanest kill. Black threatens ...♙g1 and if 8 ♗xd4 then 8...g3 9 ♗e3 g2 wins.

In the next position Black has only one pawn for the exchange, but with two connected passed pawns, she is the only one who has winning chances. Despite the danger posed by the connected passed pawns, with accurate play White managed to secure the draw.

1 ♜e8!

According to Minev's notes in *Informator* 31, White could also have drawn by 1 b7? ♗g3? 2 ♜c1 (2 ♜d1? ♗f3! wins for Black as 3

Szmacinska – Chaves

Malta Olympiad (women) 1980

♜d3+ may be met by 3...♗e2, while 2 ♜h1? is also wrong due to 2...♗f3! 2...♗f3 (2...♗g2 3 ♗xg4) 3 ♜c3+ ♗f2 4 ♜c2+ and Black cannot make progress. However, Black can improve by 1...♗h3!, winning after 2 ♜e8 ♗g2 3 ♜e2+ ♗f3 4 ♜e1 g3 or 2 ♗e4 ♗g2 3 ♜e2+ ♗g1 4 ♜e1+ ♗f2 5 ♜a1 g3. 1 ♗e4? also loses after 1...♗g3, so the move played is the only one to draw.

1...♗g3 2 ♜h8 ♗f3 3 b7! ♙c7

After 3...g3 White draws by 4 ♜xb8! h1♚ 5 ♜f8!, when the discovered check means that Black cannot prevent the promotion of the b-pawn; for example, 5...♚b1+ 6 ♗g5+ followed by b8♚.

4 ♜h7!

This is White's idea: she perpetually attacks Black's bishop, so that she is always ready to take it if Black plays ...g3.

4...♙d6

4...g3 5 ♜xc7 h1♚ 6 b8♚ ♚h5+ is also drawn.

5 ♜h6 ♙f4

The last try: the bishop moves to a square on which it is shielded by the g-pawn. 5...♙g3 6 ♜h8 doesn't help Black because on g3 the bishop is blocking the g-pawn.

6 ♜h4!

This still works, because if Black pushes the g-pawn, White can take the bishop with check. Therefore Black is unable to make progress.

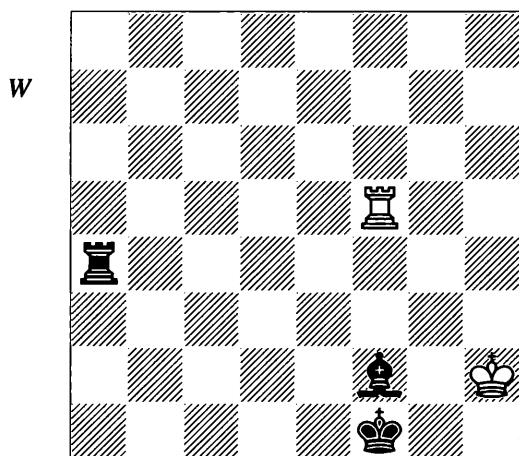
1/2-1/2

Summary:

- A strong passed pawn supported by the king can counterbalance a considerable material advantage, and can even tip the balance in favour of the side with the bishop, despite him being the exchange down.
- It is sometimes worth sacrificing the bishop to secure two far-advanced connected passed pawns.

9.3 Advantage of a Piece

The ending of ♖+♔ vs ♗ is one of the most irritating endings that can arise in over-the-board play, especially for the defender. Everybody knows that it is a draw, and the general drawing method (the 'second-rank defence' – see *Understanding Chess Endgames*, Section 88) is quite well-known. Nevertheless, it is frequently lost in practice, especially at 30 seconds a move. The following example shows that mistakes were possible even in the days of adjournments.



Knežević – Vaganian
Erevan 1980

Although the general second-rank draw is not too difficult, the defender's task is made harder if he initially has an unfavourable position, or falls into one as a result of inaccurate play. Here White's king is trapped on the edge of the board near one of the corners, but it is still a draw with accurate play.

1 ♖f3

One of only two moves to maintain the draw. The other is 1 ♖h5 and after 1...♗f4 2 ♔h3 ♔e2 3 ♗g5 White can switch to the second-rank defence, which is the most reliable method of defending this ending.

1...♗h4+ 2 ♖h3 ♗f4 3 ♔h1?

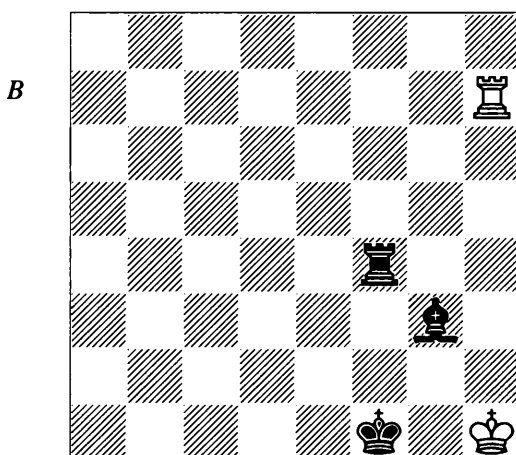
A losing blunder. Curiously, in *Informator 30*, Knežević recommended 3 ♖h7?, which also loses after 3...♗f3! (the threat is ...♔e3-f4+, forcing the king to h1, and then ...♗g3-g1#) 4 ♔h1 ♔d4 5 ♖h2 (a cunning defence, preparing to meet 5...♔e5? by 6 ♖f2+) 5...♗f5 (putting White in zugzwang) 6 ♖h3 (or 6 ♖a2 ♔f2 7 ♖a1+ ♔e2 8 ♔g2 ♗g5+ 9 ♔h3 ♔f3 10 ♖a3+ ♔e3 with a standard Philidor win) 6...♔c3! (a hard move to find, putting White in zugzwang) 7 ♖h2 (or 7 ♖h7 ♔e5 8 ♗f7 ♔f6 9 ♔h2 ♗f3 10 ♖h7 ♔e5+ 11 ♔h1 ♔f4 and now ...♗g3-g1# cannot be prevented) 7...♖b5 8 ♖a2 ♔e1 9 ♖b2 ♗f5 10 ♖a2 ♗f7 11 ♖b2 ♗f8 12 ♖a2 ♔f2 13 ♖a1+ ♔e2 14 ♔g2 ♗g8+ 15 ♔h3 ♔f3 again with a Philidor win.

Timman pointed out in the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* that White should play his rook along the third rank, and after 3 ♖b3! (3 ♖a3, 3 ♖c3 and 3 ♖d3 also draw) 3...♔e2 4 ♔g2 ♗g4+ 5 ♔h3 ♗g6 6 ♖a3 ♔e3 7 ♔h4 ♔f3 8 ♖a5 White has reached one of the standard ♖+♔ vs ♗ drawing positions.

3...♔g3!

Now White is helpless against the threat of ...♗g4 followed by ...♔f4.

4 ♖h7 (D)



4...♖a4?!

The *Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings* incorrectly believes that this move throws away the win, but of course it would have been far simpler to play 4...♖g4! 5 ♜f7+ ♔f4 with a quick mate.

5 ♜f7+ ♔f4?

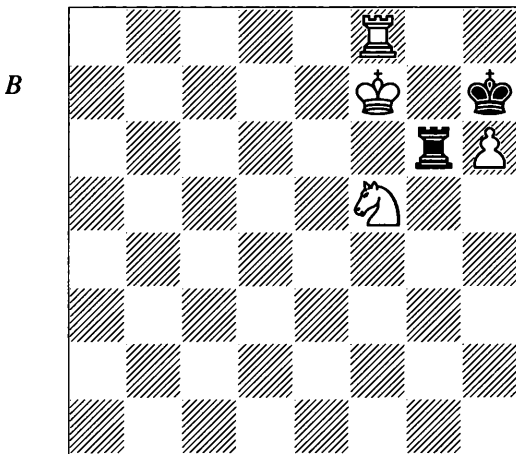
Now it really is a draw. Black could still have won by 5...♔f2! 6 ♜h7 ♜g4 7 ♔h2 ♜g2+ 8 ♔h3 (8 ♔h1 ♜g1+ 9 ♔h2 ♔g3+ 10 ♔h3 ♜h1+) 8...♜g3+ 9 ♔h2 ♜f3, transposing into the note to White's third move.

6 ♜a7!

Other moves draw, but this stalemate defence is the simplest.

6...♜d4 7 ♜a4! 1/2-1/2

Sometimes it's not plain sailing even with an extra piece and pawn.



Topalov – Kariakin

Amber Blindfold, Nice 2009

Although White's material advantage would normally be sufficient to win, this particular position presents difficulties as White's knight is tied down to defending the pawn and White's king is exposed to various checks. The position is winning, but requires considerable accuracy.

1...♜a6 2 ♔e7!

Topalov finds the only move to win. If White can improve the position of his rook by, for example, transferring it to d5, then he will win as he can approach the h-pawn with his king. However, this cannot be achieved immediately as 2 ♜e8? ♜f6+ 3 ♔xf6 is stalemate. Thus White first has to move his king away to avoid

the stalemate. 2 ♔e8? is also wrong as 2...♔g6! leads to a draw. None of White's pieces can move (3 ♜g8+ ♔xf5 4 h7 ♜a8+ costs White his pawn) and White's king will be subjected to lateral checks from Black's rook.

2...♔g6

The only chance to defend, as otherwise White plays ♜d8-d5 and wins with his extra material.

3 ♔d7?

Perhaps surprisingly, this allows Black to draw. 3 ♜d8! is the only move to win, threatening 4 ♜d5, with the point that 3...♔xf5 (3...♜a5 4 ♜d6+ ♔h7 5 ♔e6 and 3...♜a7+ 4 ♔e6 ♜a6+ 5 ♜d6 are also winning for White) 4 h7 ♜a7+ 5 ♜d7 ♜a8 6 ♔f7 is a simple win. White can get a similar position later, but only with his king one square further away, and then it is a draw.

3...♜b6

For the moment, accuracy is not required as White cannot play ♜g8+ followed by h7 while Black has a skewer with ...♜a7+ or ...♜b7+ winning the h7-pawn.

4 ♔c7

4 ♜c8 doesn't work as 4...♔xf5 5 h7 ♜b7+ 6 ♜c7 ♜b8 7 ♔e7 ♔g6 is a draw.

4...♜a6 5 ♔b8

Now that the king has moved off the seventh rank, White threatens ♜g8+ and so Black must take action.

5...♜b6+!

The only move. Black must check the king until it returns to the seventh rank.

6 ♔a7 ♜e6!

Again the only drawing move, setting up a fork on e7 if White should play ♜g8+ and h7.

7 ♔b7

Now Black appears to be in zugzwang since his rook has no safe square on the third rank.

7...♜e1?

Freeing the king loses. The only move to draw is 7...♔h7!, which is surprising because it apparently liberates White's rook. However, in this position White can't take advantage of this freedom; for example, 8 ♜d8 (8 ♜f7+ ♔g6 9 h7 ♜e8 10 ♔d6 ♜h8 is also drawn) 8...♜e5! 9 ♜d7+ ♔g6 10 h7 (10 ♔d6 ♜e1 11 ♔f7 ♜f1 doesn't help White) 10...♜e8 11 ♔h4+ ♔h6 and White can't prevent ...♜h8 and ...♜xh7.

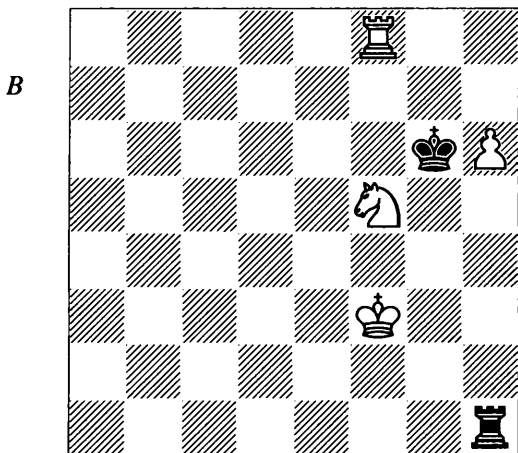
8 ♔c6

Now White is winning as his king is mobile.

8...♖c1+ 9 ♔d6 ♖d1+

If Black could check on a6 here he would draw, but he never has time to transfer his rook to the side of White's king because White is always threatening ♖g8+ followed by h7.

10 ♔e5 ♖e1+ 11 ♔f4 ♖f1+ 12 ♔g3 ♖h1 13 ♔f3! (D)



This puts Black in zugzwang. His rook must leave the first rank, which reduces his checking distance.

13...♖h2

13...♔g5 14 ♔g2 ♖h5 15 ♖a8 and White wins.

14 ♔g4 ♖g2+ 15 ♔f4 ♖g1

This loses at once, but the point is that with the rook on the second rank, 15...♖f2+ 16 ♔g3 leaves the rook unable to return to the h-file. After 15...♖h2 16 ♖g8+ ♔h7 17 ♖g7+ ♔h8 18 ♖e7 Black doesn't last long either.

16 ♖g8+ ♔h5 17 h7

Not 17 ♖xg1?? stalemate.

17...♖xg8 18 ♔g3+

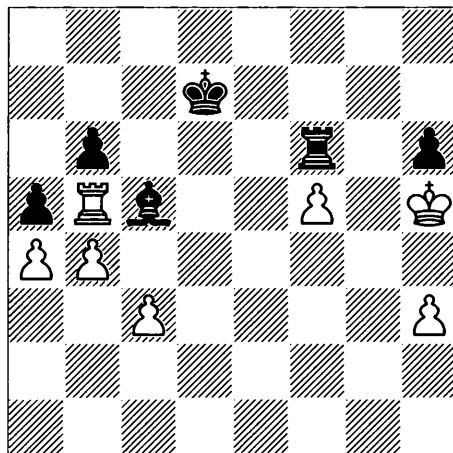
18 hxg8♔ also wins, but with more difficulty.

18...♔h6 19 hxg8♖ 1-0

Avoiding the last stalemate trap and winning.

The following position is another example of how imagination plays a crucial role in endgames. Black has a bishop for two pawns, but in view of the reduced material and White's active pieces, the win appears uncertain. However, Black found a forced line leading to victory.

B



Akobian – P. Wang
Los Angeles 2003

Black can win with a breakthrough on the queenside, but this only arises after some preliminary tactics.

1...♖xf5+!

A well-calculated move which forces the win. After 1...axb4 2 cxb4 ♔e3 3 a5 bxa5 4 bxa5 Black is unlikely to win as he has only one pawn left and has the wrong bishop for the rook's pawn, so he can never allow the exchange of rooks.

2 ♔g6

2 ♔xh6?! ♔f8+ and 2 ♔g4?! ♖g5+ 3 ♔f3 ♔g1 are instant wins for Black.

2...♖g5+ 3 ♔xh6 ♔e3 4 ♖xg5 b5

This wins, but it was even simpler to play 4...♔xg5+ 5 ♔xg5 b5 and Black will promote on a1.

5 h4

Black's king can always stop any passed pawns White obtains on the queenside, but White's king will always be too far away to catch the a-pawn. White therefore plays to promote his h-pawn, but this also fails.

5...bxa4 6 ♔h7

6 ♔h5 leads to the same conclusion.

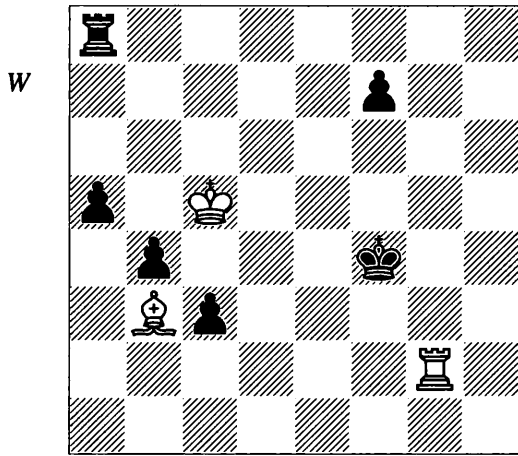
6...♔xg5 7 hxg5 a3 8 g6 a2 9 g7 a1♚ 10 g8♚

A Pyrrhic victory for White: he has promoted a pawn, but at the cost of allowing Black a decisive liquidation.

10...♚h1+ 11 ♔g7 ♚g2+ 12 ♔h7 ♚xg8+ 13 ♔xg8 a4 0-1

The second a-pawn proves decisive.

The piece-down side can claim an advantage in two main cases. The first is if he has several pawns for the piece, as in the next position.



Witkowski – Iljevski
Wroclaw 1974

It is possible that White can save the game by other methods, but given that taking the f-pawn leads to a draw, there is no reason to avoid this forcing continuation.

1 ♖f2+ ♕e3

The best chance, moving to support his own pawns.

2 ♜xf7 c2

The only move to cause White a problem.

3 ♜f1?

In *Informator 18*, Witkowski gives this move a double exclamation mark and 3 ♜xc2 a question mark, but this is exactly the wrong way round. Taking on c2 leads to a draw, while the move played should lose. The line 3 ♜xc2! ♜c8+ 4 ♕b5 ♜xc2 5 ♕xa5 b3 is an example of how a large number of endings involving rooks ultimately depend on the assessment of a position with ♜+♖ vs ♜. Here Witkowski only analysed 6 ♕a4?, which does indeed lose after 6...b2 7 ♜b7 ♕d2 8 ♕a3 ♕c1, but White has the improvement 6 ♜f1!, which saves the day after 6...b2 (or 6...♜c4 7 ♜b1) 7 ♜b1 ♕d2 8 ♕b4 and Black loses his b-pawn.

3...♜c8+?

Throwing away the win, which could have been reached by 3...♕d3! 4 ♕b5 ♕c3! 5 ♕a4 ♜d8 6 ♜c1 ♜d2 7 ♜a1 and now not 7...♕b2? 8 ♜a2+ ♕b1 9 ♜xc2! ♜xc2 10 ♕xa5 with a draw,

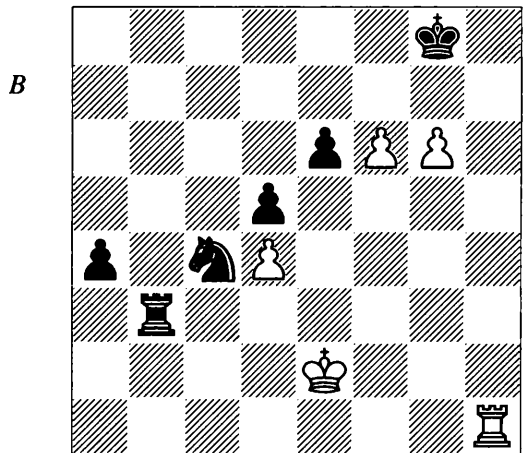
but 7...♜h2 and White is in zugzwang. After White moves his rook along the first rank or his bishop along the a2-g8 diagonal, the ♜a2+ and ♜xc2 defence is no longer available, and so Black wins by ...♕b2.

4 ♕b5 ♜c3

Or 4...c1 ♖ 5 ♜xc1 ♜xc1 6 ♕xa5 ♜b1 7 ♕xb4 ♕d4 8 ♕a4! (not 8 ♕a3?, which loses to 8...♕c3) and White defends.

5 ♜xc2 ♜xc2 6 ♕xa5 b3 7 ♕a4 b2 8 ♜b1 ♕d2 9 ♕b3 1/2-1/2

The second case in which the player who is a piece down might have the advantage is if he possesses dangerous passed pawns. In the following position, White's two connected passed pawns don't fully compensate for the knight, but the practical difficulties proved too much for Black.



Korchnoi – Eslon
Biel 1984

1...♜b8?

Black misses the chance to defeat his illustrious opponent. After 1...♕d6! White would not have had sufficient compensation for the piece; for example:

1) 2 ♜c1 ♜g3 3 ♜c6 and Black wins after 3...a3 4 ♜xd6 ♜xg6 5 ♜a6 ♜g4 6 ♜xa3 ♜xd4 7 ♜a7 ♜f4 or 3...♜xg6 4 ♜xd6 ♕f7 5 ♜a6 ♜g2+ followed by ...♜a2.

2) 2 ♜h7 ♜g3 (2...♜b7 3 ♜h3 ♜b2+ 4 ♕e1 ♜b3 5 ♜h7 ♜g3 6 f7+ ♕xf7 7 gxf7+ ♕f8 is another decisive line) 3 f7+ (3 ♜d7 ♜xg6 4 ♜xd6 transposes to line 1 above) 3...♕xf7 4 ♜xf7 a3!

5 ♖a7 ♜h3 (threatening 6...a2) 6 ♔f2 ♜d3 7 ♔g2 ♜xd4 8 ♔g3 ♜e4 9 ♜xa3 ♔g7 and Black will win easily with the two extra pawns.

The move played is unnecessarily passive and allows White to occupy the seventh rank.

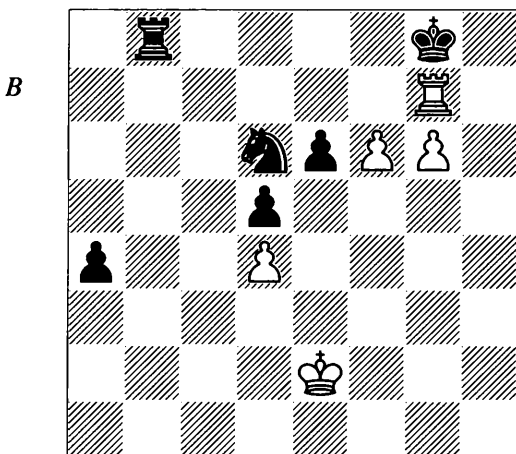
2 ♜h7

Now that White's rook has taken up an active position, the most Black can hope for is a draw.

2...♘d6

The best defence to the threat of 3 f7+ ♔f8 4 ♜h8+.

3 ♜g7+ (D)



3...♔h8?!

Black can still draw after this, but 3...♔f8! is much simpler. White should then repeat moves by 4 ♜h7, since other lines such as 4 ♜a7 ♘e8 5 g7+ ♘xg7 6 fxg7+ ♔g8 7 ♔e3 offer him no winning chances.

4 ♜d7 ♜a8?

Black panics and loses, when he could still have held the game by accurate defence. The alternatives are:

1) 4...a3? is also bad in view of 5 ♜xd6 a2 6 ♜d7! a1 ♔7 ♜h7+ ♔g8 8 f7+ ♔f8 9 ♜h8+ ♔g7 10 ♜xb8 ♔a2+ 11 ♔f3 ♔a3+ 12 ♔g4 and there is no defence to the threat of 13 ♜g8+.

2) 4...♔g8! 5 ♜xd6 ♜f8! 6 ♜xe6 a3 7 g7 (7 ♜a6 a2 8 ♔e3 ♜xf6 9 ♜xa2 ♜xg6 is also drawn, as is 7 f7+ ♔g7 8 ♜a6 a2) 7...♜a8! 8 ♜e7 a2 9 f7+ ♔xg7 10 ♜e8 ♜xe8+ 11 fxg8 ♔a1 ♔ and the best White can manage is a drawn ending of ♔+♘ vs ♔.

5 ♜xd6 ♔g8 6 ♜d7 1-0

6...a3 7 ♜g7+ ♔f8 8 ♜h7 is an immediate win for White.

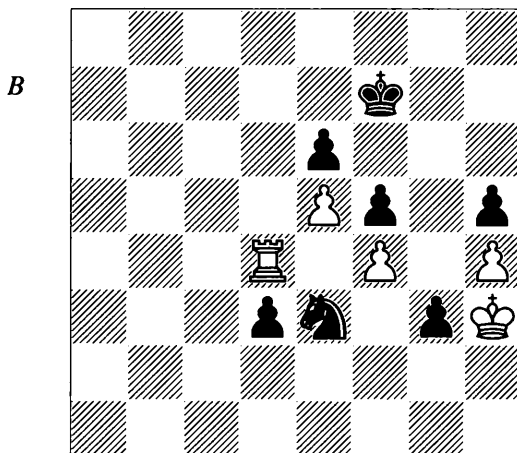
Summary:

The advantage of a piece is usually decisive, but there are some exceptions:

- If there are no pawns at all on the board, then ♜+♘ vs ♜ and ♜+♘ vs ♜ are generally drawn. However, ♜+♘ vs ♜ is tricky to play in practice. Although the second-rank defence is a reliable drawing method, it's still possible to lose through tiredness or because the initial position is unfavourable.
- If the piece-down side has three or more pawns for the piece, the most important factor is how far advanced the pawns are, and especially whether there is one pawn that poses an immediate danger of promotion.
- If the player who is a piece down has dangerous passed pawns, then they may balance the extra material or even tip the balance the other way. A standard tactic is to return the piece to neutralize the pawns.

9.4 Stalemate

When there are more pieces on the board, the tactical possibilities increase. Over the course of the two volumes we have seen stalemate ideas arise in virtually every type of endgame, and positions with rooks and minor pieces are no different.



Chan – Depasquale
Lao City 1985

In this position, Black must act quickly or his two passed pawns will simply drop off.

1...g2 2 ♖xd3

The best chance. 2 ♖h2 loses at once to 2...d2.

2...g1 ♙!

The only move to win since the other three promotions all lead to a draw:

1) 2...g1 ♖? 3 ♜d7+ ♖g8 4 ♜d8+ ♖h7 (the only attempt to escape from the checks) 5 ♜h8+! (but not 5 ♜d7+?, losing to 5...♖g7) and White draws.

2) 2...g1 ♗? 3 ♜xe3 ♗g4 4 ♜f3 ♖e7 5 ♜f1 ♖d7 6 ♜d1+ and White draws easily, since if the king moves to the c-file White can play ♜d6.

3) 2...g1 ♜+? 3 ♖h2 ♜f3+ 4 ♖g3 ♜d2 5 ♜xe3 ♜f1+ leads to a drawn pawn ending.

After the bishop promotion, Black has the material advantage of two minor pieces for a rook, but against accurate defence it is not necessarily easy to win.

3 ♜d7+?

After this Black is clearly winning. 3 ♖g3! is White's only chance; after 3...♜d5 4 ♖f3 ♙c5 5 ♜d1 (Black wins after 5 ♜d2 ♙e7 6 ♜h2 ♙b4 7 ♜a2 ♜e7 followed by ...♜g6 and ...♙e7) 5...♙e7 (taking aim at the h4-pawn, White's weakest point) 6 ♜h1 (or 6 ♖g3 ♖e8 7 ♜c1 ♙f8 8 ♖f3 ♙h6 9 ♜c4 ♖d7 followed by taking on f4, and Black wins) 6...♙d8 7 ♜h2 (7 ♜b1 ♙xh4 8 ♜h1 ♙e7 9 ♜xh5 ♙c5 followed by ...♙e3, winning) 7...♜e7 8 ♜d2 ♙a5 9 ♜d1 (or 9 ♜a2 ♙e1) 9...♜g6 10 ♜a1 ♙d8 11 ♜a7+ ♙e7 12 ♖g3 ♖g7 13 ♜b7 ♖h6 14 ♜b6 ♙xh4+ 15 ♖f3 (15 ♖h3 ♖g7) 15...♜f8 Black's victory is inevitable now that the h-pawn has gone, although it might still take some time to finish White off.

3...♖e8 4 ♜h7

This aggressive plan is doomed to failure, but in any case it was too late to defend passively since 4 ♜d3 ♜d5 5 ♖g3 ♙e3 leads to the loss of the f4-pawn.

4...♜d5 5 ♜h8+

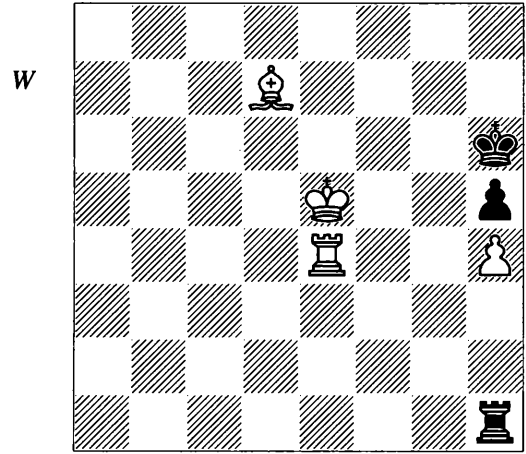
5 ♖g3 ♙e3 6 ♜xh5 ♙xf4+ 7 ♖f3 ♙xe5 is easily winning for Black.

5...♖f7 6 ♖g3 ♙e3 7 ♜xh5

After this White even loses his rook, but of course it didn't really matter by this stage.

7...♙xf4+ 8 ♖f3 ♖g7 9 ♖f2 ♙h6 0-1

Stalemate ideas often come as a surprise in over-the-board play, and can cause confusion amongst even very strong players.



Rustemov – Miroshnichenko
Bundesliga 2006/7

White, it is true, has the rook's pawn and wrong bishop combination, but the presence of rooks means that the position should be a win, although he still has to exercise some care. At the moment, however, White's first task is to win Black's h-pawn. This could have been accomplished without any complications by 1 ♙f5 ♜h2 2 ♜a4 ♜e2+ (after 2...♜h1 3 ♜a7 ♜e1+ 4 ♙e4 White wins at once) 3 ♙e4 ♜f2 4 ♜a6+ (4 ♜a7 ♜f5+ only creates unnecessary problems for White) 4...♖g7 5 ♜g6+ ♖f7 6 ♜g5 and loss of the pawn is inevitable. However, White chose a different route which, while still winning, involves a certain element of risk as it sets up a potential stalemate.

1 ♖f6?! ♜f1+ 2 ♙f5

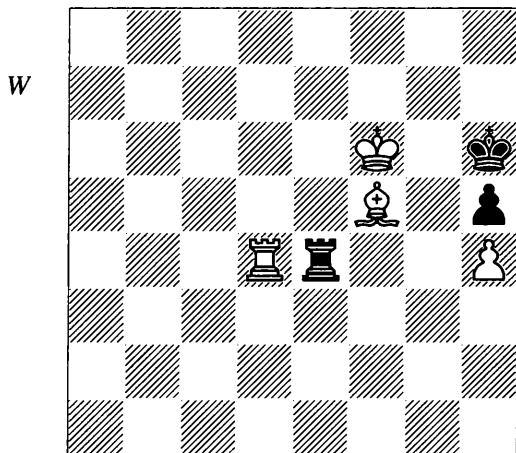
Now Black's king has no moves so he can cheerfully offer his rook.

2...♜e1 3 ♜d4 ♜e4 (D)

Black does his best to create problems. After 3...♜d1 4 ♙d3 ♜c1 5 ♖e5 White lifts the stalemate and can then get back on track.

4 ♜d6?

As so often happens, a slip is followed by a more serious error. After an inaccuracy, the attacker, who had been counting on a technical win, often has to solve concrete problems. The switch from technical play to a more intense struggle is often difficult to accomplish, and



then it is easy to make a further error. White could still have won by 4 ♙d1! ♚d4 (4... ♜e1 5 ♙d6 ♚d1 6 ♙d3 and White mates in a few moves) 5 ♙g1 ♚d6+ 6 ♜e5 ♚d5+ 7 ♜f4 ♚d4+ 8 ♙e4 ♚d6 9 ♙g8 ♜f6+ 10 ♙f5 ♚a6 11 ♜h8+ ♜g7 12 ♜xh5 , picking off the h-pawn.

4... ♚d4!

Black at once seizes on White's error. White now has to move his rook along the rank, whereupon Black simply plays ... ♚d6(+) .

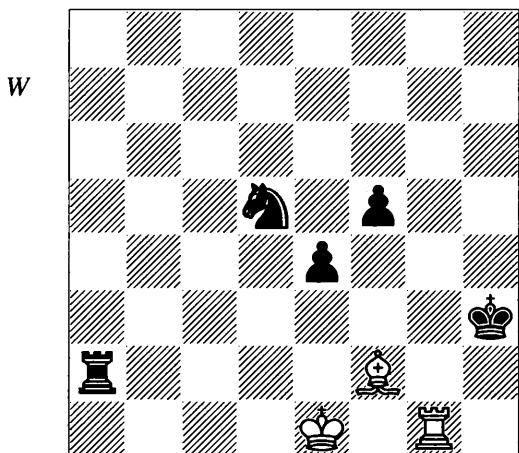
5 ♜e6 ♚d6

5... ♜e4 , with a perpetual attack, also draws.

6 ♜xd6 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

It's stalemate, but after any other move Black exchanges rooks, leading to a rook's pawn plus wrong bishop draw.

In our final stalemate example, White had the right idea but executed it the wrong way.



Afek – Lybin
Kiev 1996

White's position looks absolutely desperate: he is two connected passed pawns down, and moreover all Black's pieces are in active positions. His only hope is the possibility of ♙g5 , attacking a pawn which is pinned against Black's knight, but he has to choose between 1 ♙g5 and 1 ♙g3+ ♜h2 2 ♙g5 , which differ only in the position of Black's king. Which is correct?

1 ♙g3+?

White makes the wrong choice. Afek, a top-class endgame study composer, saw the drawing stalemate idea, but executed it in a way that allowed Black to evade the stalemate. 1 ♙g5! would have saved the game: 1... ♚a1+ (the only realistic winning chance is to play for the win of a piece; alternatives such as 1... ♜f4 2 ♙xf5 ♜d3+ 3 ♜f1 ♜g4 4 ♙f8 and 1... ♜e7 2 ♙c5 don't pose any particular problems for White) 2 ♜d2 e3+! (2... ♜e7 3 ♙c5 is also a draw) 3 ♙xe3 ♚a2+ (White cannot save his bishop, but he can ensure that his king is immobilized) 4 ♜e1! (4 ♜d3? ♚a3+ followed by ... ♜xe3 wins for Black) 4... ♜xe3 (now White only has to give up his rook to force a draw, but he must do so in such a way that Black cannot move his knight, lifting the stalemate) 5 ♙g3+! (not 5 ♜h5+? ♜g3 6 ♙g5+ ♜f3 7 ♙g3+ ♜e4 and the checks come to an end) 5... ♜h2 (the point is that Black cannot go the other way, because 5... ♜h4 6 ♙xe3 is a simple draw with White's rook already on the third rank) 6 ♜h3+! (here White cannot take the knight: 6 ♙xe3? ♜g2! 7 ♜e8 f4 8 ♙g8+ ♜f3 9 ♙f8 ♚a1+ 10 ♜d2 ♙f1 11 ♜h8 ♜g2 12 ♙g8+ ♜f2 13 ♜h8 f3 and the Lucena position is not far off) 6... ♜g1 7 ♜h1+! ♜g2 8 ♜h2+ and now Black must take the rook.

1... ♜h2 2 ♙g5

The same idea, but with the king on h2, things are different.

2... ♚a1+ 3 ♜d2 e3+! 4 ♙xe3 ♚a2+ 5 ♜e1 ♜xe3 6 ♜h5+

White cannot check on g2 and so must settle for the inferior check on the h-file, which allows Black's king to escape.

6... ♜g3 7 ♜h3+

7 ♙g5+ ♜f3 8 ♙g3+ ♜e4 wins for Black.

7... ♜f4 8 ♙f3+ ♜e4 9 ♙f4+ ♜d5 10 ♙d4+ ♜c5! 0-1

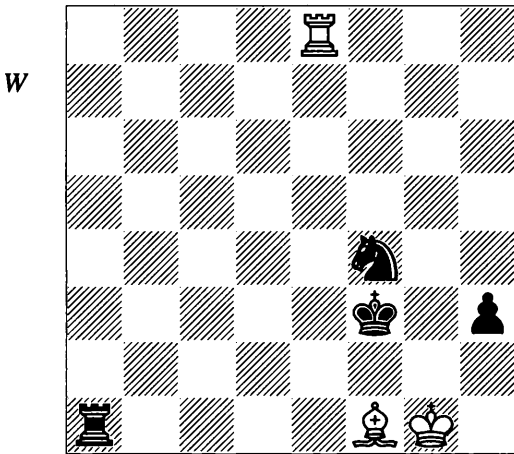
The checks are at an end.

Summary:

- Stalemate ideas are often effective because they come as a complete surprise to the opponent.
- If you are already in stalemate apart from an unwanted rook, it's often possible to get rid of the rook by either repeatedly checking the enemy king (as in Afek-Lybin and Chan-Depasquale), or by setting up a perpetual attack against an enemy rook (as in Rustemov-Miroshnichenko).

9.5 Attacking the King and Mating Ideas

Mate is a possibility in many endings, but hardly a frequent occurrence. However, with more pieces on the board a direct attack becomes more likely.



Lutz – B. Socko
Bundesliga 2007/8

Black is a pawn up and has active pieces, but his advantage is still insufficient to win against accurate defence.

1 ♖b8?

A mistake giving Black the opportunity to strike a deadly blow. White should have played 1 ♖f8, when Black cannot do more than reach a drawn ending of ♖+♘ vs ♖ by pushing his h-pawn.

1...♗c1?

Black misses it. He could have won neatly by 1...♘e2+! 2 ♔h2 ♖xf1 3 ♖b3+ ♔g4 4

♗g3+ (after 4 ♖xh3 ♖f2+ 5 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 6 ♔g1 ♔f3 Black wins in the same way, while 4 ♖b4+ ♖f4 is also hopeless for White) 4...♔f4 5 ♖xh3 ♖f2+ 6 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 7 ♔g1 ♔f3 8 ♖h2 ♖f1#.

2 ♖b3+

Now Black's king is driven back and White shouldn't have any difficulty drawing.

2...♔g4 3 ♖b8 ♖a1 4 ♖b2 ♖e1 5 ♖a2

5 ♖b4 is also safe.

5...h2+

Black's last throw of the dice.

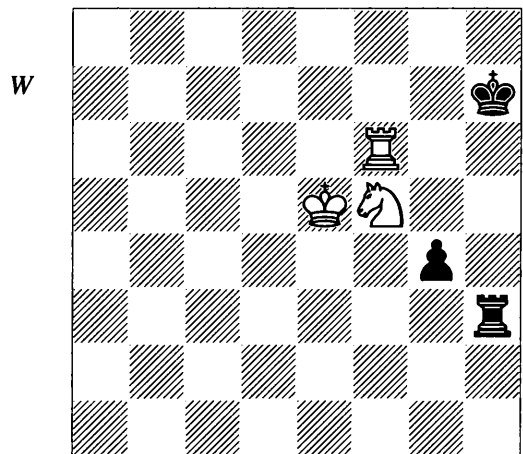
6 ♖xh2?

The gamble pays off. 6 ♔xh2 ♖xf1 7 ♖b2 draws easily.

6...♔g3 0-1

A remarkable position. White is in zugzwang because his rook must prevent both ...♘e2+ and ...♘h3+, but any move by the rook will lose control of one of these squares. It should be noted that this is not reciprocal zugzwang because if Black were to play, he could still win by making a waiting move with his rook along the first rank.

The next example shows how mating possibilities can arise even in very simplified positions.



Akopian – Khenkin
Las Vegas 1994

Surprisingly enough, if White is to play, he can win this position even though the same position without Black's g-pawn would be a draw.

1 ♖f7+ ♔h8

1...♔g6 2 ♖g7+ ♕h5 3 ♖f6 and White mates next move, while after 1...♔g8 2 ♖f6 ♖f3 3 ♖g6 Black is forced to give up his rook.

2 ♖f6

Threatening 3 ♖g6. Without the g-pawn, Black would have an immediate draw here by 2...♖h6+ 3 ♖g5 ♖h1, exploiting the possibility of stalemate.

2...♖a3 3 ♖d7!

An excellent move and the only way to make progress. The threat is 4 ♖g6.

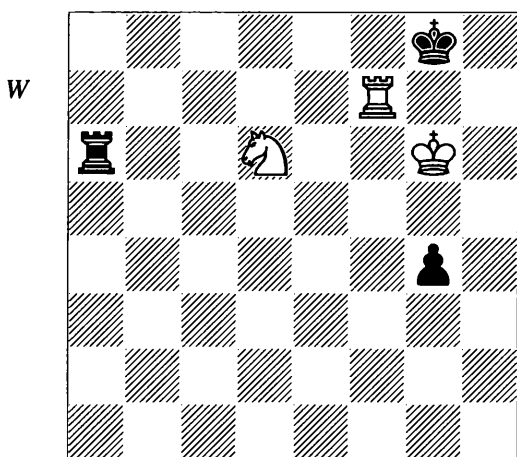
3...♖a6+ 4 ♖d6 ♖g8

Or 4...g3 5 ♖g6 ♖a8 6 ♖h7+ ♔g8 7 ♖g7+ ♖f8 8 ♖h7 followed by ♖f7#.

5 ♖g6 ♖f8 6 ♖f7+?!

Making things unnecessarily complicated. After 6 ♖h7 Black would have to give up his rook to avoid mate on f7.

6...♔g8 (D)



7 ♖f6

Threatening 8 ♖e6 ♖a8 9 ♖e7 with a quick mate to follow.

7...g3

7...♖a7 8 ♖f5 ♖a8 9 ♖e7+ ♕h8 10 ♖h6! g3 11 ♖f7 ♖a6+ 12 ♖g6+ is a win for White, while after 7...♖a8 White can win by retracing his steps with 8 ♖f7! ♖a6 9 ♖d7 ♖f8 10 ♖h7! and mate next move, although this might have been worth a try given that White didn't see the mate first time round.

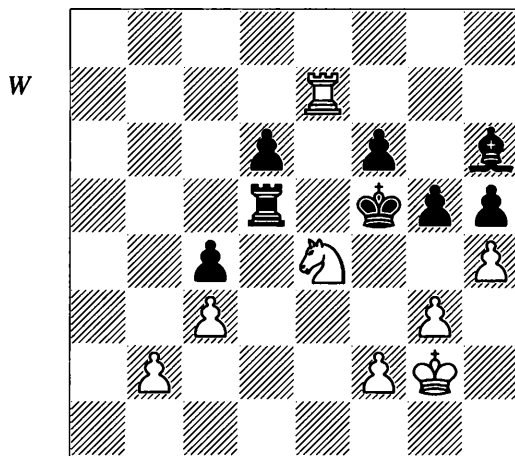
8 ♖e6 ♖a8 9 ♖e7 g2

9...♖d8 10 ♖e4 and White wins.

10 ♖g7+ ♖f8 11 ♖h7! 1-0

It's mate next move.

In the next position, Black's king doesn't appear especially confined, but White struck with a lethal tactical blow.



Ceteras – Hegedus

Romania 1997

At first glance this position looks roughly level. Material is equal, and although White's knight is actively posted, at the moment it has to be defended by his rook, which restricts White's mobility. It would be quite easy for White to play a 'normal' move such as 1 hxg5?!, thereby missing the opportunity to win at once with a tactical blow.

1 g4+!

White spots it. This move forces mate or win of a piece.

1...♖f4

1...hxg4 allows mate in two by 2 ♖g3+ ♖g6 (2...♖f4 3 ♖e4#) 3 h5# while after 1...♖xg4 2 ♖xf6+ and 1...♖g6 2 gxh5+ ♕xh5 (2...♖f5 3 ♖g3+ and mate next move) 3 ♖xf6+ White wins the black rook.

2 ♖xf6 ♖e5 3 ♖f7

3 ♖h7 gxh4 4 ♖xh6 ♖g5 5 f4+! is even simpler, after which White is just a piece up.

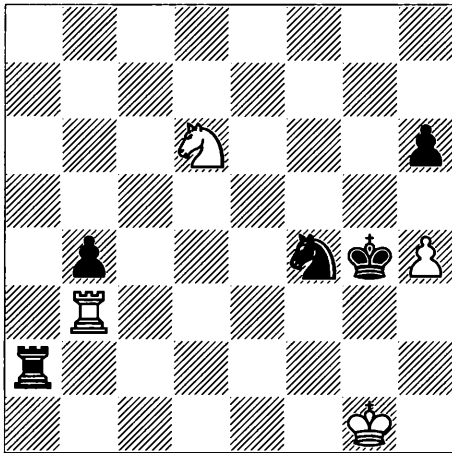
3...hxg4?!

3...♖e6 puts up more resistance, but White still wins by 4 ♖h3 hxg4+ 5 ♖xg4+ ♖e4 6 ♖h7 ♖f8 7 hxg5 with two extra passed pawns.

4 ♖g8+ ♖e4 5 ♖xh6 gxh4 6 ♖xg4 1-0

A king trapped on the edge of the board is always a potential weakness, even if there are few pieces available for an attack.

B



Muchnik – Ibragimov
Czestochowa 1991

Black clearly has a large advantage in view of his extra pawn and actively placed pieces. White's only hopes of a draw are based on the small number of remaining pawns, but even these hopes are dashed as Black's pieces combine for a direct attack on White's king.

1...♖e2+!

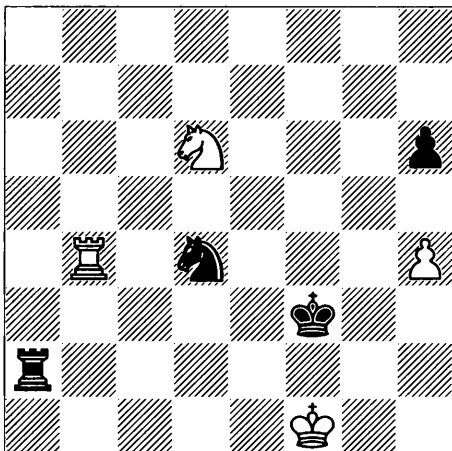
It is possible that Black can win with an alternative such as 1...♖a4 or 1...♘d5, but at the very least this would be quite a lengthy process. The move played involves the sacrifice of the b4-pawn, but leads to a deadly attack.

2 ♔f1 ♘d4! 3 ♖xb4

After 3 ♖d3 ♘f3 Black wins easily, so White must take the pawn.

3...♔f3 (D)

W



Touzane – Pfeifer
Villeneuve-Tolosane 1988

Or 4 ♖b1 ♖f2+ 5 ♔e1 ♘c2+ 6 ♔d1 ♘e3+ and mate next move.

4...♖g2+ 5 ♔h1

5 ♔f1 loses to 5...♖f2+! 6 ♔g1 ♘e2+ 7 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 8 ♔g1 ♖g2#.

5...♖g4!

This is the tricky move to spot. Up to this point, Black's rook has been operating on the second rank, but now it is switched to attack from a different direction. The immediate threat is mate in three.

6 ♖b2

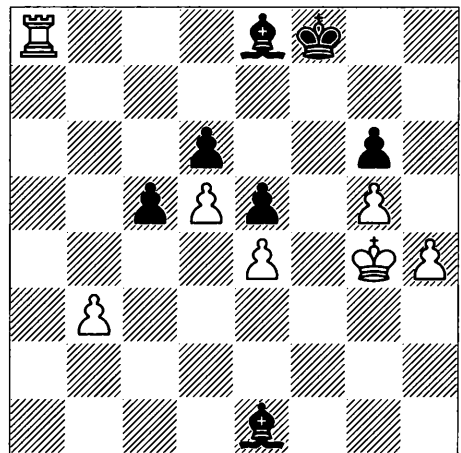
So as to interpose on h2, but Black is remorseless.

6...♘e2! 0-1

Cutting off the rook from the defence and winning after 7 ♘f5 ♖g1+ 8 ♔h2 ♖g2+ 9 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 10 ♘xg3 ♖xb2 or 7 ♖b3+ ♔f2 8 ♔h2 (8 ♘f5 ♖f4! 9 ♖b5 ♘g3+! 10 ♘xg3 ♖xh4# is a neat finish) 8...♖g2+ 9 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 10 ♖xg3 ♔xg3 11 ♘f5+ ♔f2 12 ♘xh6 ♖g6 13 ♘f5 ♖f6 14 ♘d4 ♖f4 followed by mate.

A poor king position is also the deciding factor in the next example.

W



Materially speaking, Black is not badly off with two bishops against a rook and a pawn. However, positionally he has some difficulties since one bishop is pinned, and this gives White the chance to break through with his king by h5 followed by ♔f5. White is already winning according to Vaisman's notes in *Informator 45*,

The first threat of mate.

4 ♔g1

A decisive breakthrough.

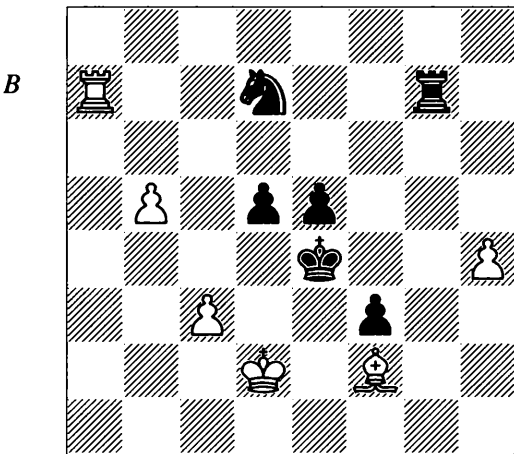
4 gxh4

After 4 ♖e1 h3 5 a6 ♜h1 6 ♜e2 ♜xe1 7 ♜xe1 h2 8 a7 ♖xd5 Black also wins easily.

4...f4+ 0-1

After 5 ♖d3 ♖f1+ White loses a whole rook.

In the next example, it's again Black's attack versus White's passed pawn, although this case is slightly less clear-cut.



Groszpeter – Binham

World Under-26 Team Ch, Graz 1981

Material is level, and both sides have two passed pawns, but Black's connected pawns, supported by his king, look the more dangerous. The question is whether Black's advantage is sufficient to win. The game ended in a draw and according to Milić's notes in *Informator* 32, both sides played accurately. However, as we shall see, Black overlooked an attractive and surprising win.

1...♜g2

Unpinning the knight with gain of tempo and forcing White's king onto the back rank.

2 ♖e1

2 ♜xd7 ♜xf2+ 3 ♖e1 ♜b2 and Black wins easily as the white king is helpless.

2...♞f6

The knight is ready to jump to g4, with a decisive attack. White can only put his faith in his b-pawn, but first he must decide whether to give a preliminary check.

3 b6?

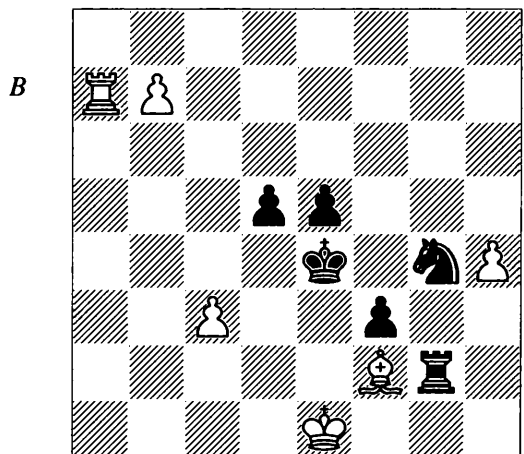
3 ♜a4+ ♖d3 4 b6 is also very complicated, but offers White better chances than the text-move. The continuation is 4...♜h2! 5 ♖f1 ♜h1+ (5...♞e4 6 ♜xe4 dxe4 7 b7 ♜h1+ 8 ♖g1 transposes) 6 ♖g1 ♞e4 7 ♜xe4 dxe4 8 b7 ♜xg1+! (8...f2 9 ♖xf2 e3+ 10 ♖g2 ♜xg1+ 11 ♖xg1 e2 12 b8♜ e1♜+ is only slightly better for Black) 9 ♖xg1 ♖e2 10 b8♜ f2+ 11 ♖h2 f1♜ (White's king is poorly placed for the queen ending, and in addition the c3-pawn gets in the way of White's checks, but despite Black's advantages he may not be able to win) 12 ♜xe5 (12 ♜b5+?! ♖f2 13 ♜b2+ ♖f3 14 h5 e3 15 ♜b7+ ♖f2 16 ♜g7 ♖e1 17 h6 ♜f4+ 18 ♖g2 e2 19 h7 ♜f2+ 20 ♖h3 ♖f1 21 h8♜ e1♜ gives Black a decisive attack) 12...♜f2+ 13 ♖h3 ♜f3+ 14 ♖h2 e3 15 c4 ♖f1 (15...♖f2?! 16 ♜g5! ♖f1 17 c5! draws and 15...♖d3 16 ♜b5! is also not clear) 16 ♜a1+ ♖f2 17 ♜g1+ (17 ♜b2+? ♜e2 18 ♜b7 ♖e1+ 19 ♖g3 ♜f2+ 20 ♖g4 ♜f6! and 17 ♜a2+? e2 18 ♜a7+ ♜e3 19 ♜f7+ ♖e1 20 ♜d5 ♜d2 are winning for Black) 17...♖e2 18 ♜g7 and although the position remains very unpleasant for White, I cannot see a forced win for Black.

3...♞g4

With accurate play Black now has a forced win.

4 b7 (D)

The only chance, as 4 ♖c5? d4 is an immediate win for Black.



4...♜xf2!

4...♞xf2? 5 b8♜ ♞d3+ 6 ♖f1 (6 ♖d1? loses to 6...f2) 6...♜f2+ 7 ♖g1 ♜g2+ 8 ♖f1 is a draw.

5 b8♖

White has promoted, but despite his material advantage Black's attack should be too strong.

5...♖e2+ 6 ♖d1

6 ♖f1? loses at once to 6...♗e3+ 7 ♖g1 f2+.

6...♗e3+?

Black is satisfied to force perpetual check and overlooks that he could have won by 6...♗f2+! 7 ♖c1 ♗d3+ 8 ♖d1 (8 ♖b1 f2) 8...♗b2+ 9 ♖c1 f2 10 ♖f7 (10 ♖b4+ d4 11 ♖b7+ ♖e3 12 ♖g2 ♗d3+ 13 ♖b1 ♖e1+ 14 ♖c2 ♖c1+ 15 ♖b3 f1♖ is also a win for Black) 10...♗d3+ 11 ♖d1 (11 ♖b1 ♗f4 12 ♖b4+ ♖f3 and the f-pawn promotes) 11...♖e3 (there is no real defence to the threat of mate on d2) 12 ♖b6+ (after 12 ♖xf2 ♖e1+ 13 ♖c2 ♖c1+ 14 ♖b3 ♖b1+ Black picks up the queen) 12...d4 13 ♖h6+ ♗f4 14 ♖xf4 ♖e1+ 15 ♖c2 d3+ 16 ♖b2 exf4 17 ♖b6+ ♖e2 18 ♖e6+ ♖d2 and the promotion of the f-pawn can no longer be delayed.

7 ♖c1 ♖e1+

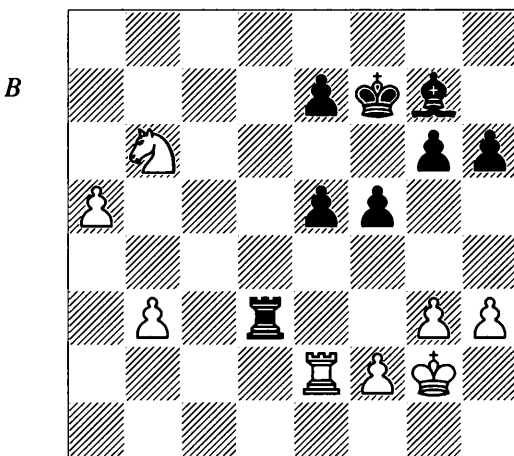
Now it's just a draw.

8 ♖b2

Not 8 ♖d2? ♖d1#.

8...♗c4+ 9 ♖a2 ♖e2+ 10 ♖a1 ♖e1+ 1/2-1/2

The attacker doesn't always win. In the following position, had White played accurately he could have nullified Black's kingside threats and won with his connected passed pawns.



Atalik – Salmensuu
Elista Olympiad 1998

Even a casual glance shows that Black is in trouble. Material is equal, but White has two

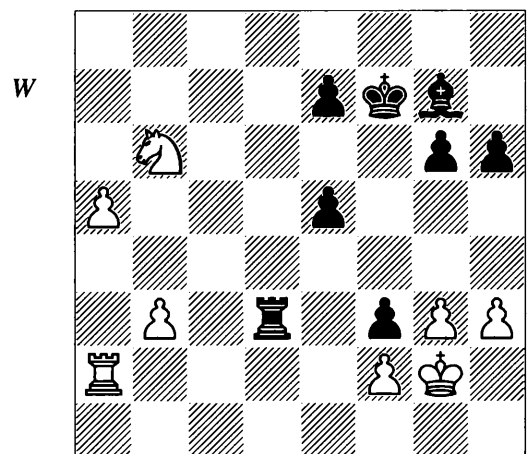
connected passed pawns on the queenside, one of them already on the fifth rank. Moreover, Black's bishop is for the moment out of play, while White can easily position his rook behind the queenside pawns. White's only concern is that by pushing his kingside pawns, Black might be able to expose the white king and generate some counterplay. This position is another good example of how a player (who in this case also annotated the game) has the 'narrative' of the game fixed in his mind (in this case, that's 'Black's counterplay is enough to draw') and then the variations, instead of being analysed objectively, are coerced into fitting in with the narrative. In reality, the diagram position is winning for White and indeed there is more than one way to win.

1...f4

1...♖xb3 2 ♖a2 is totally hopeless for Black, so this is his best chance. White has to decide on the best way to meet the threat of 2...f3+.

2 ♖a2?!

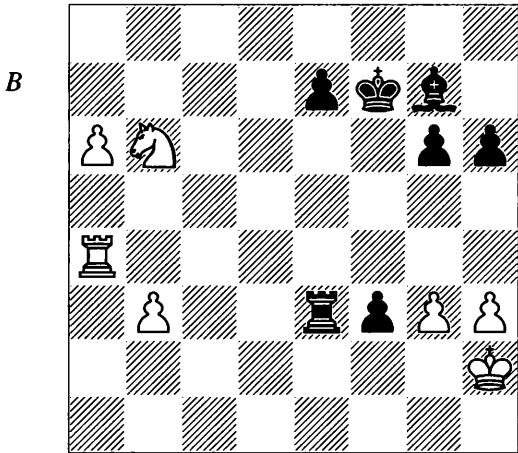
This should win, but it makes White's task significantly more difficult. The simplest route to victory is 2 ♖h2! (Atalik annotated the game in *Informator 73*, but he didn't mention this move at all) 2...f3 3 ♖e3 (this is why it is better to move the king than the rook) 3...e4 (otherwise the f3-pawn falls) 4 ♖xe4 ♖xb3 5 ♖a4 ♖e5 (5...♖b2 6 a6 ♖d4 7 ♖xd4 ♖xb6 8 ♖a4 also wins for White) 6 ♗d7 ♖b8 7 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 8 g4 and White wins easily. The f3-pawn will fall, and Black's rook will be immobilized by the a-pawn, giving an elementary win.

2...f3+ (D)

3 ♖g1?

Atalik gave this move an exclamation mark and 3 ♖h2 a question mark, but this is the wrong way round. The move played allows Black to draw, but White could still have won by 3 ♖h2! e4 and now White has two possibilities, which probably both win:

1) 4 a6 is the more complicated method: 4...e3 5 fxe3 ♖xe3 6 ♖a4! (D) and now:



1a) 6...♖e2+?! 7 ♖g1 ♖e5 was given by Atalik as winning for Black, but it is actually White who wins: 8 ♖f4+! (even 8 a7? ♖xg3 doesn't lose as 9 ♖f4+! ♖xf4 10 a8♖ ♖e3+ 11 ♖f1 ♖f2+ 12 ♖e1 ♖e2+ 13 ♖f1 is a draw) 8...♖xf4 9 gxf4 ♖a2 10 ♖a4 ♖g2+ 11 ♖f1 ♖d2 12 a7 ♖d8 13 ♖b6 and White will be a piece up.

1b) 6...♖e5 7 ♖f4+! ♖xf4 8 gxf4 and now:

1b1) 8...f2 9 ♖g2 ♖f3 10 ♖f1 ♖xb3 11 a7 ♖xb6 12 a8♖ ♖f6 is an interesting position that is not easy to assess, as it is hard to say whether Black can create a fortress. My view is that he probably can't as there are too many ways for White to penetrate with his queen, for example to e6 or h8, and therefore I would assess this as winning for White.

1b2) 8...♖xb3 9 a7 ♖a3 (9...♖xb6 10 a8♖ ♖f6 is basically the same as line 1b1) 10 a8♖ ♖xa8 11 ♖xa8 ♖e6 12 ♖g3 ♖f5 13 ♖xf3 e5 14 fxe5 ♖xe5 15 ♖g4 and White is winning.

2) 4 ♖c4! is the simpler method: 4...♖d7 (4...♖xb3 5 a6 ♖d4 6 a7 ♖xa7 7 ♖xa7 must be a win for White; Black has two pawns for the knight, but in view of the weak and doubled e-pawns his defensive chances are minimal) 5

♖d2 ♖e6 6 ♖xe4 ♖a7 (6...♖d5 7 ♖d2) 7 ♖d2 ♖c3 8 ♖c4 ♖d5 (8...h5 9 a6 ♖d4 10 ♖g1 ♖d5 11 ♖d2 is also winning for White) 9 g4 ♖c5 10 ♖a4 ♖b7 11 a6 ♖a7 12 ♖g3 ♖b5 13 ♖xf3 ♖xa6 14 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 15 ♖e4 with a comfortable win for White.

3...e4

White has made two mistakes in a row and now Black has sufficient counterplay to draw.

4 a6 e3?

A serious error just when Black had a chance to save the game. The drawing line is 4...♖d4! 5 a7 e3 6 fxe3 (6 a8♖? e2 7 ♖e4 ♖d1+ 8 ♖h2 e1♖ 9 ♖xe1 ♖xe1 followed by ...♖e2 even wins for Black) 6...♖xe3! (not 6...♖xe3+? 7 ♖h2 ♖d1 8 h4 and White wins) and White has several tries, but all lead to a draw:

1) 7 ♖f1 ♖d3 (7...♖xb3 8 ♖a1 ♖xa1 9 a8♖ ♖b1+ 10 ♖f2 ♖d4+ 11 ♖xf3 ♖f1+ 12 ♖e2 ♖f2+ 13 ♖d3 ♖xb6 is also drawn as Black puts his rook on f6 and sets up a fortress) 8 ♖e2 (8 ♖e1 ♖c3+ repeats) 8...♖d1+ 9 ♖e1 ♖d2 and White cannot win.

2) 7 a8♖ ♖e1++ 8 ♖h2 ♖g1+ 9 ♖h1 ♖xb6+ 10 ♖h2 ♖g1+ 11 ♖h1 leads to perpetual check.

3) 7 ♖h2 ♖e2+ (7...♖e1 8 h4 ♖e2+ is similar) 8 ♖xe2 fxe2 9 a8♖ ♖g1+! (not 9...e1♖?? 10 ♖d5+ and White wins) 10 ♖xg1 e1♖+ 11 ♖h2 ♖f2+ 12 ♖g2 ♖xb6 and the ending is drawn.

5 fxe3 ♖xe3 6 ♖a4!

This simple move kills Black's counterplay stone dead. The bishop cannot now move to d4, and the a-pawn decides the game.

6...♖e5 7 ♖c4! 1-0

7 a7? ♖xg3 is a draw, but the knight fork finishes Black off.

Summary:

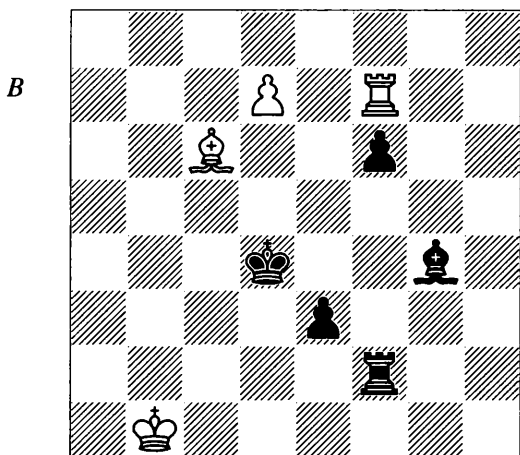
- It's easy to forget about the possibility of a mating attack in the endgame, but a rook and a minor piece can, in favourable circumstances, provide sufficient material to launch a direct attack on the enemy king. The phrase 'favourable circumstances' usually means that they are supported either by an active king or by some friendly pawns.
- Such an attack is usually conducted against a king which is confined in some way. The

king may be stuck on the edge of the board, but it can also be vulnerable in the centre if it is hemmed in by pawns.

- When one player has an unstoppable passed pawn, his opponent may draw or even win by launching a counterattack against the king. The race to deliver mate before the pawn promotes often leads to a tense struggle in which the whole point rests on a single tempo.

9.6 Hesitation Checks

I introduced the term 'hesitation check' in Section 8.2.1 to refer to the situation in which a piece travelling from A to B first gives check on C. Section 8.2.1 dealt with hesitation checks in the specific context of rook endings, but they can also play an important role in other endings. In the following position, Black gives away half a point by overlooking a hesitation check with his bishop.



Sulashvili – Gagunashvili
Georgian Ch, Tbilisi 2006

Black has winning chances here because, although he must give up his bishop for the pawn on d7, his dangerous e-pawn and active pieces present a real danger for White. In the game Black took immediately on d7, but this allowed White to save the game by an imaginative defence. A hesitation check would have made all the difference since Black could have secured victory by driving White's king to an inferior square.

1...♙xd7?

1...♙f5+! wins after 2 ♖c1 (2 ♙e4 loses at once to 2...♙xd7, while after 2 ♖a1 ♙xd7 3 ♙xd7+ ♖c5 4 ♙e7 e2 Black wins as the white king is one square further away) 2...♖c3! (the point of Black's play: he goes for a direct attack against White's king) 3 d8♙ ♙f1+ 4 ♙d1 e2 5 ♙a4 ♙xd1+ 6 ♙xd1 e1♙ with a decisive material advantage for Black.

2 ♙xd7+ ♖c5

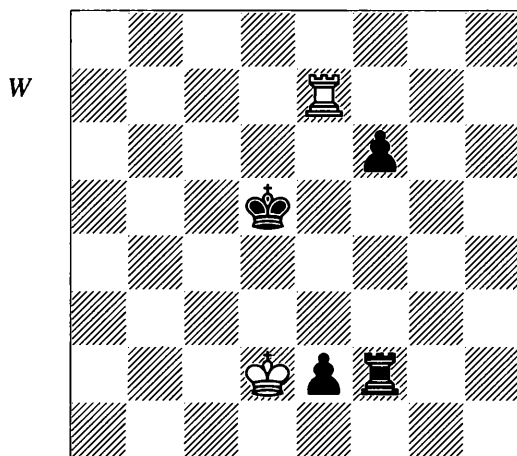
2...♖c3 also leads to a draw after 3 ♙c7 f5 (or 3...♙f1+ 4 ♙a2 e2 5 ♙b5+ ♖d2 6 ♙d7+ ♖e1 7 ♙e7 ♙f2 8 ♖b2 f5 9 ♖c3 f4 10 ♖d3 f3 11 ♖e3 and White's pieces are too active) 4 ♙e4+! ♖b3 (4...♖d2 5 ♙c2+ delivers perpetual check) 5 ♙c2+ ♖b4 6 ♙xf5 ♙xf5 7 ♙e7 ♙f3 8 ♖c2.

3 ♙e7 e2 4 ♖c1!

The only saving move. White surrenders his bishop in order to reach a drawn ending of ♙+2♙ vs ♙.

4...♖xc6

4...♙f1+ 5 ♖d2 e1♙+ 6 ♙xe1 ♙xe1 7 ♖xe1 ♖xc6 8 ♖f2 is a drawn king and pawn position.
5 ♖d2 ♖d5 (D)



Here we have one of the drawing ♙+2♙ vs ♙ cases (see Section 8.6.2b on page 120). One pawn has advanced too far and Black's rook is tied down to defending it.

6 ♙e8

White could have drawn more simply by 6 ♖d3 (keeping the enemy king away) 6...f5 7 ♙e8 ♙g2 (7...f4 8 ♙xe2 is an immediate draw) 8 ♙e7 (White simply waits until the pawn

reaches f4 and then takes on e2) 8...f4 9 ♖xe2 f3 10 ♖e8 and White draws without difficulty.

Here Black played 6...f5 and continued for another 40 moves before finally accepting the draw. However, the key line is:

6...♔d4

Now Black's king occupies a more active position and White has to resort to stalemate to secure the draw.

7 ♖e7 f5 8 ♖e8 ♖g2

8...f4 is again met by 9 ♖xe2.

9 ♔e1!

The only drawing move since 9 ♖e7? loses to 9...f4 10 ♖xe2 f3.

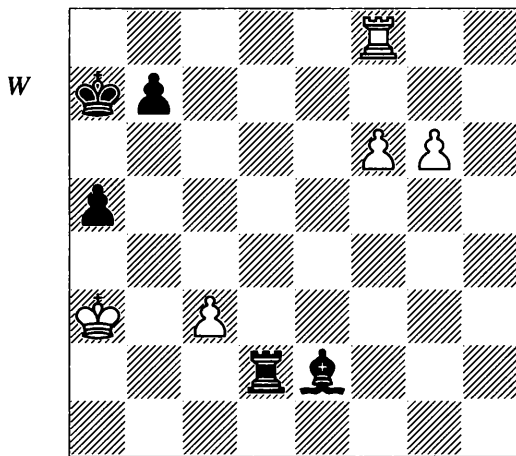
9...♔d3

9...f4 can still be answered by 10 ♖xe2.

10 ♖e3+!

This stalemate trick is the only way to reach a draw. After 10...♔d4 11 ♖e8 Black cannot make progress.

In the following position, it is a rook that makes the hesitation check.



Liogky – Zhelesny

USSR Army Ch, Odessa 1991

In this double-edged position, White has the advantage thanks to his connected passed pawns, but Black has counterplay based on ...♔c4 followed by mate on a2.

1 ♖a8+!

This spectacular and strong hesitation check is the simplest route to victory. 1 f7?? even loses after 1...♔c4 2 ♖a8+ ♔b6 followed by mate. However, contrary to Liogky's notes in

Informator 52, 1 ♖c8 is also enough to win: 1...♔h5 (1...♔g4 2 f7 ♔xc8 3 f8♖ is hopeless for Black) 2 f7 ♖f2 3 f8♖ ♖xf8 4 ♖xf8 ♔xg6 5 ♔a4 (if Black could now get his king to c7 then he would draw, but this is impossible because 5...♔b6 loses the bishop to 6 ♖f6+) 5...b6 (5...♔e4 6 ♔xa5 ♔c6 is a technical win; for example, 7 ♖f7 ♔d5 8 ♖e7 ♔c6 9 c4 ♔g2 10 ♔b5 ♔c6+ 11 ♔c5 ♔f3 12 ♖e3 ♔c6 13 ♖a3+ ♔b8 14 ♔b6 ♔c8 15 ♖g3 ♔e4 16 ♖g7, etc.) 6 ♔b5 ♔h5 7 ♖d8 (threatening 8 ♖d7+) 7...♔g4 8 ♖d6 followed by ♖xb6, winning.

1...♔b6

1...♔xa8 2 f7 ♔c4 3 f8♖+ ♔a7 4 ♖c5+ is winning for White, so Black must decline the offer.

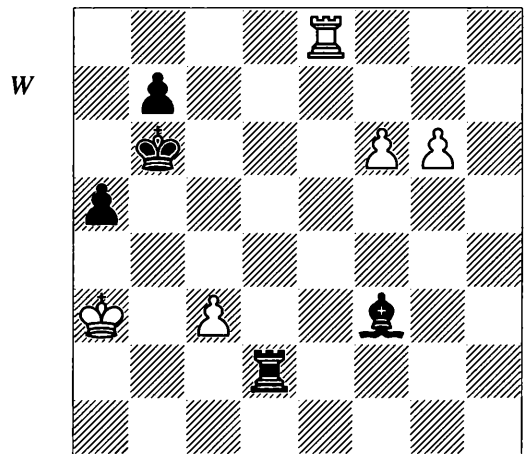
2 ♖c8 ♔g4

Thanks to White's hesitation check on a8, Black can no longer play 2...♔h5 3 f7 ♖f2 4 f8♖ ♖xf8 5 ♖xf8 ♔xg6 due to 6 ♖f6+.

3 ♖e8!

White moves the attacked rook and at the same time prevents ...♔e6.

3...♔f3 (D)



4 c4?

Liogky doesn't comment on this move, but it's actually a serious mistake that allows Black a cunning draw. 4 ♖e5! is the simplest win, since Black's bishop cannot now reach the a2-g8 diagonal without being captured by White's rook, after which the passed pawns decide the game.

4...♔e2?

Missing the saving opportunity 4...♔h5! 5 f7 ♖d3+ (White cannot move his king to a4, so

Black can keep checking along the d-file) 6 ♖b2 ♜d2+ 7 ♜c3 ♜d3+! (this is the key point) 8 ♜xd3 ♜xg6+ 9 ♜d4 ♜xf7 and, unlike the analysis of 1 ♜c8, here White cannot prevent Black's king from reaching c7, after which it is a draw even if Black loses his a-pawn. One line is 10 c5+ ♜c6 11 ♜c8+ ♜d7 12 ♜a8 ♜c7 13 ♜xa5 ♜e8 and Black is safe.

5 ♜xe2! ♜xe2 6 g7 ♜g2 7 f7 ♜xg7 8 f8♞

This is the best Black can do, but his situation is hopeless.

8...♜g6 9 ♞f5

It's simpler to play 9 ♞d8+ ♜a7 10 ♜a4 ♜a6 11 c5 but Liogky's move is also adequate.

9...♜c6 10 ♞b5+ ♜a7 11 ♜a4 ♜a6 12 ♞d5 ♜b8 13 ♞d8+ ♜a7 14 ♞g8! ♜b6

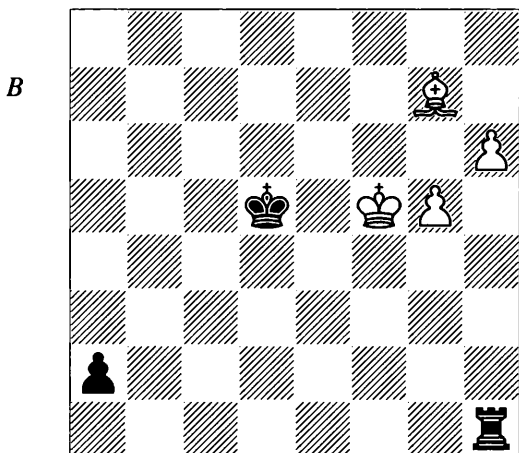
Attempting to hang on to the a5-pawn. Giving up the pawn by 14...♜c6 also loses: 15 ♜xa5 ♜a6+ 16 ♜b5 ♜b6+ 17 ♜c5 ♜c6+ 18 ♜d5 ♜a6 19 c5 ♜f6 20 ♞g7 ♜c6 21 ♞f8 ♜g6 22 ♞d6! ♜g5+ 23 ♜c4 ♜g2 24 ♜c3 ♜a2 25 ♞b6+ ♜a8 26 c6 and the rook will fall after a few checks.

15 ♞b8 ♜a7?

Now the game ends abruptly, but 15...♜c6 16 ♞d8 is also hopeless for Black.

16 ♞d6# (1-0)

Black lost in the following game because he overlooked a key hesitation check.



Kishnev – Nikolac
West Germany 1991

Not only is this position a draw, but it would even be a draw if White were to play. The danger for Black is that after he wins the bishop for

the a-pawn, the connected passed pawns will prove too strong for the rook. The way round this problem is to force White to block the g-pawn with his king. Even if this is only temporary, it gives Black enough time to bring his king to a more active position.

1...a1♞?!

Kishnev's notes in *Informator 52* suggest that this is the decisive error, whereas in fact that only came next move. However, he does correctly give two possible drawing lines for Black:

1) 1...♜f1+! 2 ♜g6 (2 ♜g4? actually loses after 2...♜e4! threatening to promote; for example, 3 h7 ♜g1+ 4 ♜h5 ♜f5 and Black wins) 2...a1♞ 3 ♜xa1 ♜xa1 4 h7 ♜h1 5 ♜g7 (White has to waste a tempo before he can advance the g-pawn and this allows Black to draw) 5...♜e6 6 g6 ♜f5 7 ♜f7 ♜g5 and White cannot achieve anything.

2) 1...♜d6! (intending ...♜e7, after which Black will be threatening to win by promoting the a-pawn) 2 ♜g6 a1♞ 3 ♜xa1 ♜xa1 is a draw.

The move played makes the draw more complicated, so it can rightly be regarded as questionable.

2 ♜xa1 ♜xa1?

This is the losing move. Black could still have drawn by the hesitation checks 2...♜f1+! 3 ♜g4 (3 ♜g6 ♜xa1 transposes to the previous note) 3...♜g1+! (3...♜xa1? still loses after 4 h7) 4 ♜f4 (4 ♜h5 ♜h1+ does not help White) 4...♜f1+! 5 ♜e3 ♜h1! (by calmly refusing the bishop, Black gains enough time to bring his king into the battle) 6 ♜g7 ♜e6 7 g6 ♜f5 8 h7 ♜xg6, with a draw.

3 h7

Both pawns are free to advance and this proves decisive.

3...♜f1+

3...♜h1 4 g6 also wins for White.

4 ♜g4!

4 ♜g6? ♜h1 is a draw, as above.

4...♜g1+

4...♜e4 is worth a try, although White still wins after 5 ♜g3 ♜g1+ 6 ♜h2.

5 ♜f4 1-0

After 5...♜f1+ 6 ♜e3 ♜e1+ 7 ♜f2 ♜h1 8 g6 ♜e5 9 g7 ♜xh7 10 g8♞ White will still have to

win ♔ vs ♚, but apparently Black had no stomach for this.

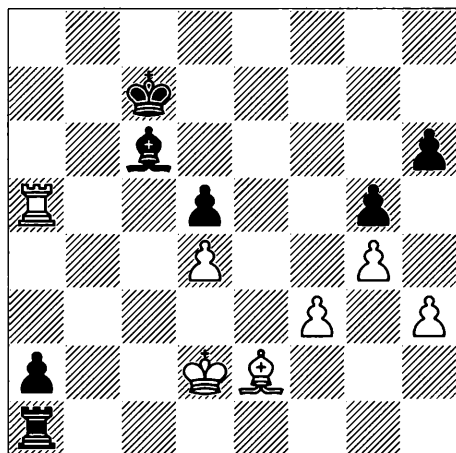
Summary:

- Hesitation checks play an important role in endings involving rooks and bishops (they are less common in queen endings, while a knight can't give a hesitation check at all), but they are often overlooked. If the possibility for an intermediary check arises, it's worth looking to see if the enemy king lacks a good move.

9.7 Pawn Promotion

When there are far-advanced passed pawns, tactics leading to a pawn promotion are quite common and we have seen examples throughout the book. Here are a couple of additional positions involving surprising tactical points. In the first position, Black finds an unexpected way to capitalize on his a-pawn.

B



Larrondo – G. Camacho
Cuba 1979

For the moment Black cannot promote the a-pawn, while he must deal with the threat of 2 ♔c2 ♚e1 3 ♚d1 picking it up.

1... ♚b5!!

This surprising blow decides the game.

2 ♚xb5

After 2 ♚d1 ♚c4 followed by .. ♚b1 Black wins easily, so White must take the bishop. However, after 2 ♚xb5 ♔b6 3 ♚a8 ♔xb5 (White's king is stranded far from safety) 4

♔c2 ♚h1 5 ♚xa2 ♚h2+ 6 ♔b3 ♚xa2 7 ♔xa2 ♔c4 the king and pawn ending is an easy win for Black.

2... ♚h1

Not 2... ♚d1+? 3 ♚xd1 a1 ♔4 ♚c5+ ♔d6 5 ♚c3 since White can set up a fortress which makes it impossible for Black to make progress.

3 ♚a5 a1 ♔4 ♚xa1 ♚xa1

White has only one pawn for the exchange, which is nowhere near enough in this position as Black's pieces are active and White's king-side pawns are stuck on light squares.

5 ♚d1

Seeking to prevent ... ♚h1 followed by the capture of the h3-pawn, but White immediately finds himself in zugzwang.

5... ♔d6! 6 ♔e1

Bishop moves are met by ... ♚h1, 6 ♔e2 ♚a2+ 7 ♔e1 ♚b2 followed by ... ♚b4 costs White his d-pawn, and finally 6 ♔c2 ♚a2+ followed by ... ♚h2 picks up the h-pawn.

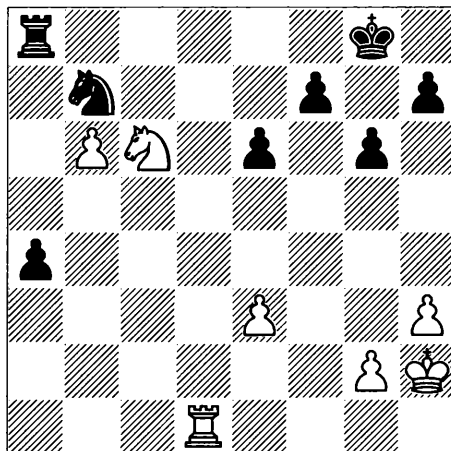
6... ♚a2

The threat is ... ♚b2-b4, winning the d4-pawn.

7 ♚e2 ♚a4 0-1

Finally, we have an exceptional case in which Black promotes first, but his extra queen isn't much help.

W



Medina Paz – Fonseca
Cuba 1994

White is a pawn down, but a more important factor is that both sides have dangerous passed pawns. If White plays passively, just blocking

the a-pawn, then it is likely that the passed pawns will be exchanged, after which White's pawn disadvantage will be an important factor. Therefore White should play actively if he can, trying to make use of his own passed pawn, which at least is one square further advanced than Black's.

1 ♖d7!

The best move, based on accurate calculation.

1...a3?

After this White wins by force, although some imaginative play is required. Objectively speaking, Black should have preferred 1...♘c5 2 b7 (2 ♖a7 ♖e8 3 ♖a5 ♘b7 4 ♖xa4 e5, while better for White, also offers Black fair drawing chances) 2...♘xb7 (2...♖f8 is worse in view of 3 ♖c7!) 3 ♖xb7 a3 4 ♖b1 ♖a6 5 ♘d4 (5 ♘b4? ♖b6 followed by ...a2 favours Black) 5...e5 6 ♘f3 f6. Then Black still has some drawing chances as he has two pawns for the piece and it will require quite a lot of work by White to get rid of the a-pawn, giving Black time to try exchanging off the kingside pawns.

2 ♖xb7 a2 3 ♖c7!

The surprising point is that White simply allows Black to promote. Although White then only has a knight for the queen, Black is curiously powerless to avoid losing a whole queen in the next few moves.

3...a1♚ (D)

After 3...♖a3 4 ♖c8+ ♔g7 5 b7 ♖b3 6 ♖a8 ♖xb7 7 ♖xa2 White wins with his extra piece.

4 b7

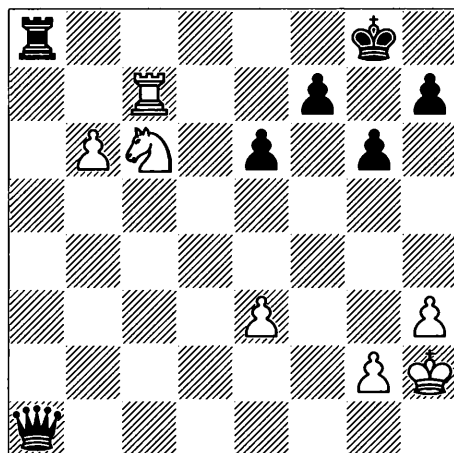
The main threat is 5 ♖c8+, but Black must also cope with the secondary threat of 5 bxa8♚+ ♖xa8 6 ♖c8+ ♖xc8 7 ♘e7+.

4...♖b8

Other moves are no better: 4...♚a6 5 ♖c8+ ♖xc8 6 bxc8♚+ ♖xc8 7 ♘e7+ and White will be a piece up, or 4...♔g7 5 ♖c8 ♖a3 6 bxa8♚ ♖d6+ 7 ♘e5 ♖xe5+ 8 ♔h1 and White wins.

5 ♖c8+

W



Not 5 ♘xb8?? ♖e5+, when Black wins.

5...♔g7 6 ♖xb8 ♚b2 7 ♖g8+! 1-0

The only move, but one strong enough to induce Black to resign since he will only have one pawn for the piece.

Summary:

- Pawn promotion is a key feature of virtually all endings. Whereas in many cases pawns are systematically advanced towards promotion, sometimes an imaginative tactical stroke is necessary to overcome the last hurdle.
- On rare occasions, it's possible to let the opponent promote first and still win, if the promotion of one's own pawn cannot be prevented.

This is the end of our journey through the world of chess endgames. With rapidplay and 30-second-per-move finishes now standard, a knowledge of endgame theory has never been more important to the over-the-board player. At the same time, the development of powerful computers and endgame databases has led to a spectacular growth of endgame knowledge. In the two volumes of *Nunn's Chess Endings*, I hope to have presented some of the fruits of the new technology in a way that will be helpful and instructive to practical players.

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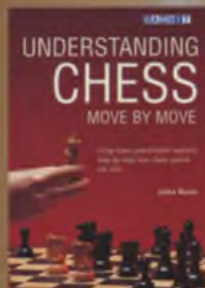
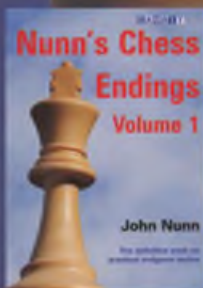
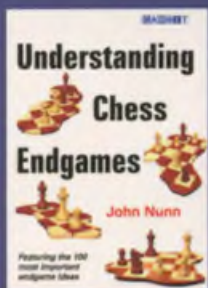
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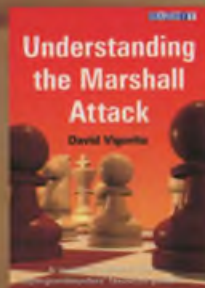
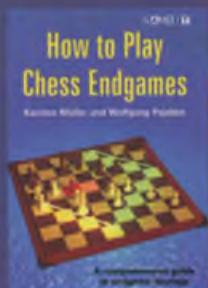
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