

Improve your Practical Play in the Endgame

Alexey Dreev



Thinkers Publishing

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by
Alexey Dreev

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Key to Symbols

- ! a good move
- ? a weak move
- !! an excellent move
- ?? a blunder
- !? an interesting move
- ?! a dubious move
- only move
- N novelty
- lead in development
- ⊙ zugzwang
- = equality
- ∞ unclear position
- ∞̄ with compensation for the sacrificed material
- ± White stands slightly better
- ∓ Black stands slightly better
- ± White has a serious advantage
- ∓ Black has a serious advantage
- +− White has a decisive advantage
- −+ Black has a decisive advantage
- with an attack
- ↑ with initiative
- ↔ with counterplay
- Δ with the idea of
- ⊃ better is
- ≤ worse is
- + check
- # mate

Foreword

Dear chess partisan,

It is with great pleasure that I hereby present you with Russian Grandmaster Alexey Dreev's "Practical Play in the Endgame", a continuation of "Practical Play in the Middlegame" (released in 2018, by Thinkers Publishing). Dreev has for the past three decades been internationally regarded as one of the most tenacious and consistent chess players in the world. His results speak for themselves, including, but not limited to, the World Blitz Championship Title, Gold Medals at the Chess Olympiad with the Russian national team, World Championships Candidate Tournaments, and numerous 1st place finishes at internationally renowned tournaments at the elite level such as "Wijk aan Zee" and "Biel" - to only name a few. Even more importantly, with respect to this book, Dreev has been able to draw from his extensive and direct interaction as a pupil with the legendary and instructive chess genius Mark Dvoretsky.

The author's aim in this volume is to improve the tournament chess player and professional alike in their ability to evaluate and execute crucial and hard-fought practical endgames - either in converting a winning position or holding a draw. This book will also sharpen the player's overall cognitive competences in practical situations, where the normal laws of endgame theory have little or no value. Dreev accomplishes this by providing categorized and detailed examples with clear commentary from his own tournament games, as well as from other Grandmasters' at the elite level.

Throughout the translation of this book from Russian to English, I have attempted to adhere as strictly as possible to the author's original content, so as to provide the most authentic experience between the reader and the author. Therefore, certain passages in the examples might appear unduly mechanical or dry from a purely linguistic standpoint. However, I have purposely chosen this path, to avoid any excessive wording or phrasing, and provide the reader with the most unequivocal, clear-cut access to the material without attempting unnecessary augmentations.

In conclusion, I believe that the examples in this book are of very high value for both elite and aspiring chess players - even in the 21st century, a time of computer analysis and evaluation. The works themselves come from the highest level of tournament play, and many of the examples have an "etude" feel to them, where the solutions are often quite nonstandard, yet entirely practical from a critical over the board situation. The book before you engages the reader in useful calculations all the while expanding the player's perception and confidence in a phase of the game where computer theory and preparation are of little value.

Sincerely,

Alexander Hart

Berlin, August 2019

Chapter 1

Particular Endgames

In this chapter, we will look at endings that contain a non-standard balance of material. Rare and uncommon endings will also be considered.

Obviously, it is quite difficult to get used to the unusual, since otherwise the unusual would become the habitual. However, it is necessary to improve a player's intuition in such unusual situations, as they frequently occur in practical games.

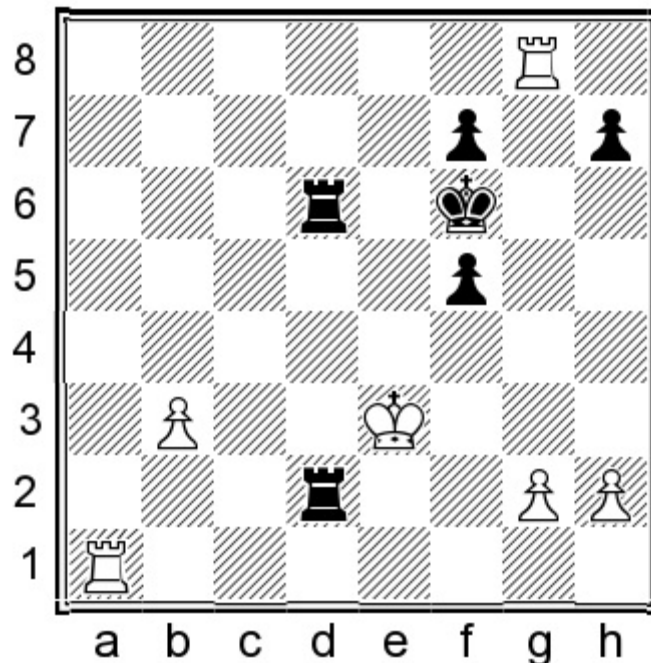
It can sometimes be a difficult task to assess the position in such an endgame, let alone find the correct moves.

Despite the active emasculation of our game, professionals, as well as amateurs, cannot get by without the use of figurative drugs (computers). Fortunately though, engines cannot completely cover all areas of the game.

The name of this chess Atlantis is the endgame, and its beautiful capital could certainly be located precisely in endgames with a non-standard material balance, of which we will see many examples.

Example 1

From Khismatullin – Inarkiev
Satka 2018



White to move

The material is absolutely equal, but Black threatens mate in two moves.

44. ♖g3

At first sight, simpler appears to be 44.♔f4 ♖2d3 [44...♖6d4+ 45.♔g3 ♖4d3+ 46.♔h4=] 45.♖a4= but the text move is certainly not a mistake.

44.♖g3 h5

Black threatens to disturb the white rook with the h-pawn and White naturally tries to defend against this.

45.♖a4??

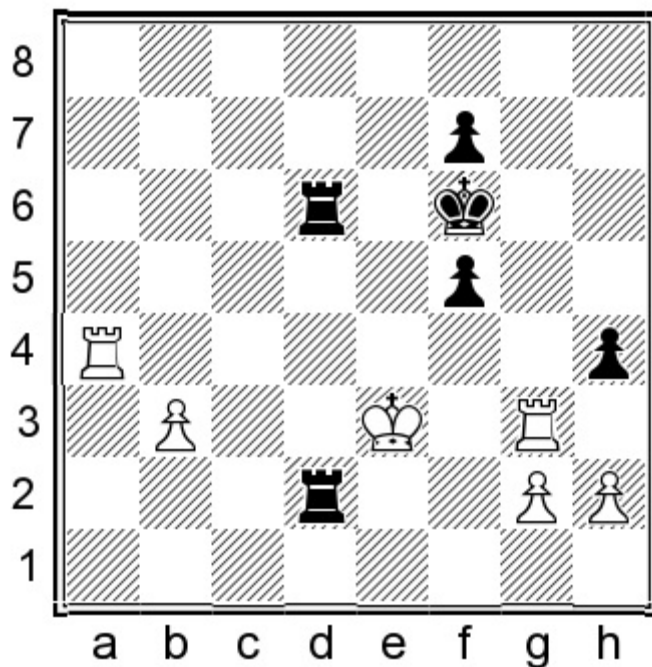
It seems that White is well protected from the movement of the h-pawn...

A) Almost any other move led to an inevitable draw: 45.♖a5=.

B) 45.h4=

C) 45.♖f3=

45...h4!!-+



Position after: 45...h4!!-+

And now...

46.♖xh4

46.♖f3 ♔g5!-+

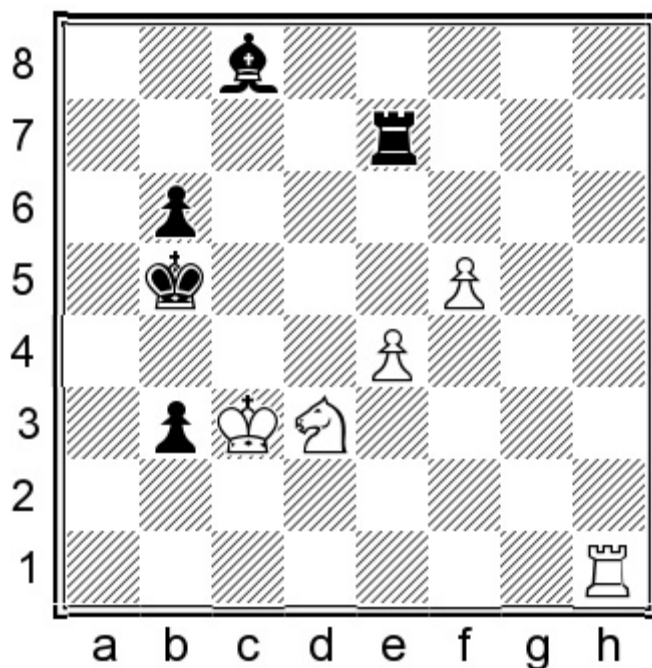
46...♔e5

Thanks to the diversion of the a4-rook, White has no saving check on a5 and there is no defense against mate.

0-1

Example 2

From Martinez Duany – Demchenko
 Rochefort 2018



White to move

In the game, White hurried to set his passed pawns in motion.

51.f6?!

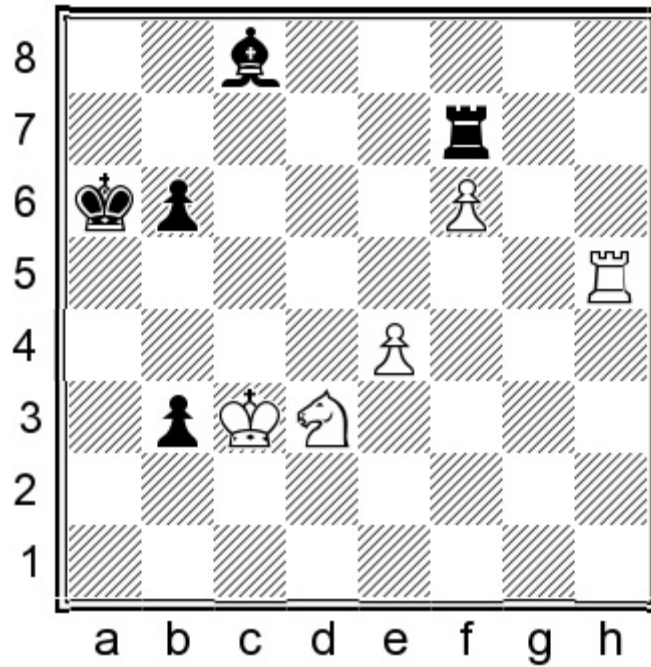
A) Winning easily was 51.♖h5! Δ 51...♞xe4 [51...♔a6 52.e5+-; 51...♔a4 52.♘b2+ ♔a3 53.♘c4+-] 52.f6+ ♔a6 53.f7+-.

B) 51.♖h4 also wins, though not as quickly.

51.f6?! ♞f7! 52.♖h5+

52.e5? ♕e6 53.♘f4 ♞c7+=

52...♔a6

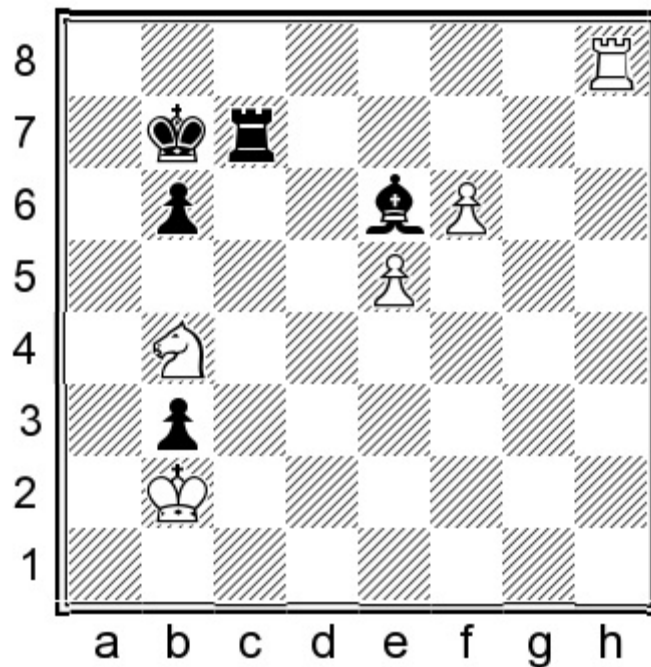


Position after: 52...♔a6

53.e5

The best move, but even then, after a brilliant game by both sides, Black is saved.

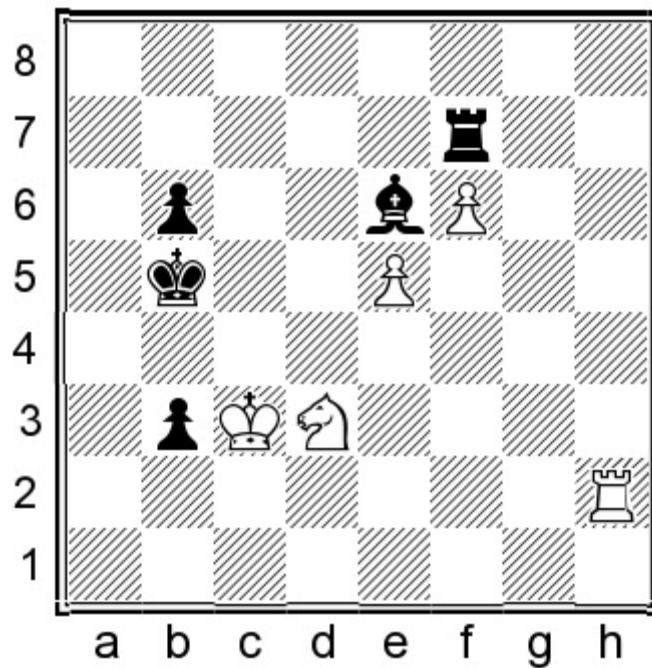
The game continued 53.♘b4+?! ♔b7 54.e5 ♕e6 55.♞h8 ♞c7+ 56.♔b2



Position after: 56.♔b2

56...♞d7 57.♔a3 ♞d2 58.♞h7+ ♔c8 59.♞h1 ♔b2 60.♞b1 ♞e2 61.♘c6 ♔d7 62.♘d4 ♞xe5= 1/2-1/2 (65).

53...♙e6 54.♖h2! ♔b5!

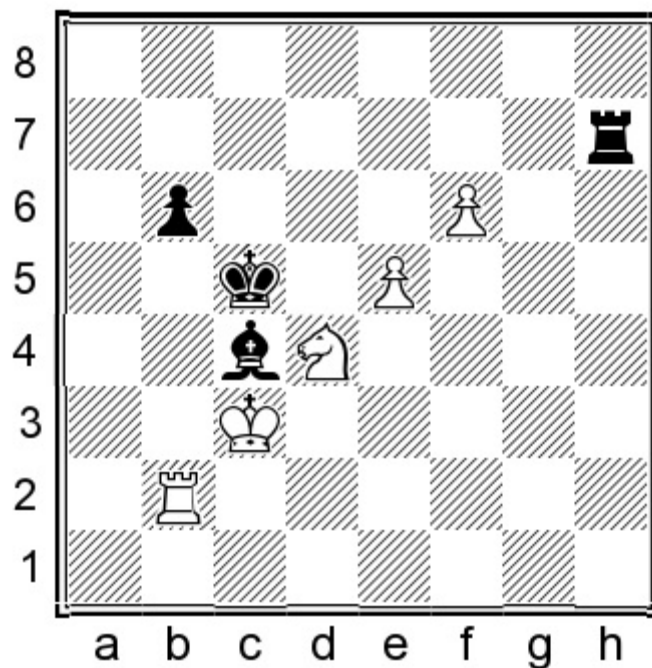


Position after: 54...♔b5!

Without the king's help, one can only dream of salvation.

55.♘f4 ♕c4 56.♘e2 ♔c5 57.♘d4 ♖f8!!

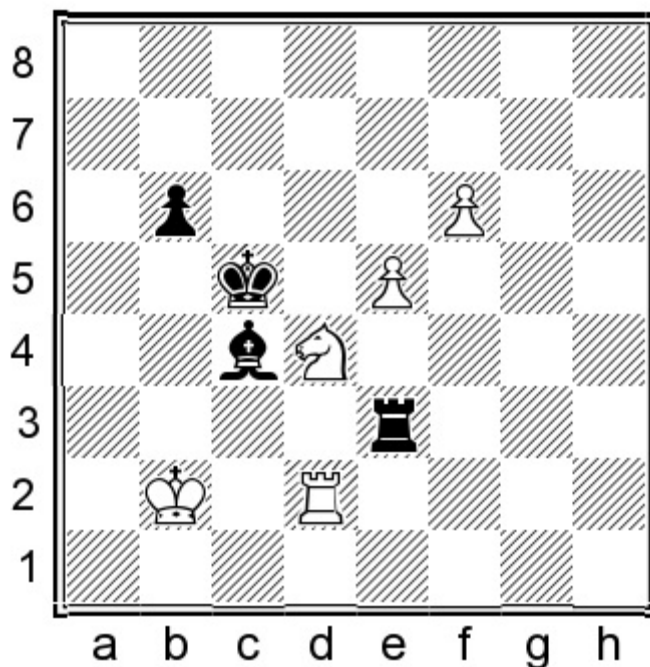
≤ 57...b2 58.♖xb2 ♖h7



Position after: 58...♖h7

A) ≤ 59.♖f2 ♖h3+ 60.♘f3 [60.♖f3 ♖xf3+ 61.♘xf3 ♙g8!]=] 60...♖h5 61.♘e1 ♖h8!! [61...♖h3+? 62.♔d2 ♖h8 63.♕e3 ♕d5 64.♘f3+–] White’s problem is that his king cannot support his passed pawns, and the rook ending that occurs after 62.♘d3+ ♙xd3 63.♕xd3 is drawn: 63...♕d5 64.♖e2 ♕e6=.

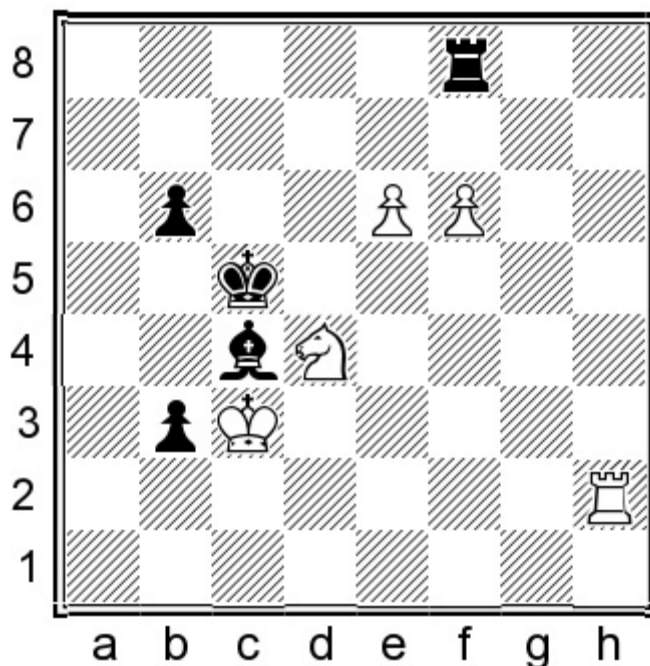
B) 59.♖d2!! ♖h3+ 60.♕b2! [60.♕c2 ♖e3=] 60...♖e3



Position after: 60...♖e3

61.♖c2! ♕xd4 [61...♖xe5 62.f7+–] 62.♖xc4+ ♕xe5 63.♖f4!!+–

58.e6



Position after: 58.e6

58...♖c8!!

58...♖xf6? 59.♖h5+-

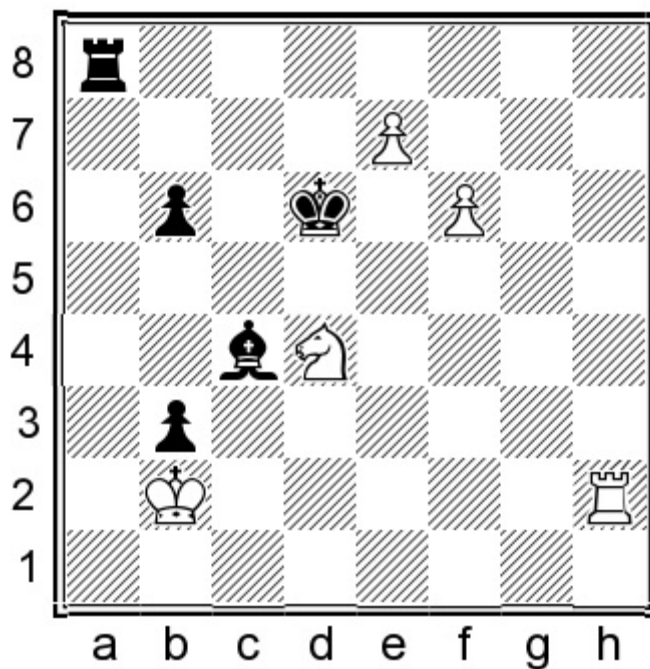
59.e7

59.f7 ♔d5! [59...♔xe6? 60.f8=♖+ ♖xf8 61.♘xe6+] 60.♖h5 ♔d6+ 61.♔b2 ♔xe6 62.♖h6 ♔e7=

59...♔d6 60.♔b2

60.e8=♖ ♖xe8 61.♔xc4 ♖f8 62.♖f2 b2=

60...♖a8□



Position after: 60...♖a8□

60...♔e5? 61.♖e2!+-

61.♘xb3

After 61.♔c3 ♖c8 White would have nothing better than 62.♔b2, repeating moves.

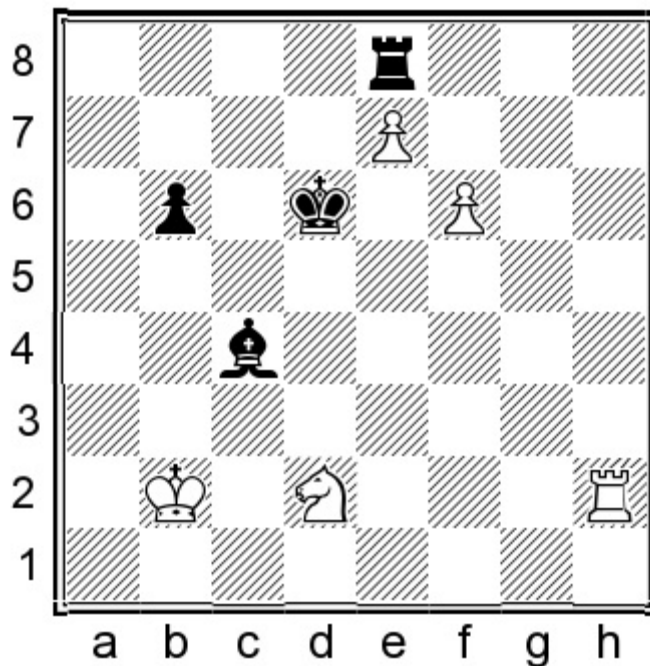
61...♖e8!!

A) 61...♔f7? 62.♖e2!+-

B) 61...♔e6? 62.♖f2!+-

C) 61...♙xb3? 62.♖xb3 ♕e6 63.♞d2+-

62.♞d2



Position after: 62.♞d2

62...♕e5!

The final subtlety.

A) 62...♕e6? 63.♞f2+-

B) 62...♙f7? 63.♞e2!+-

63.♞f2 ♙f7=

For example:

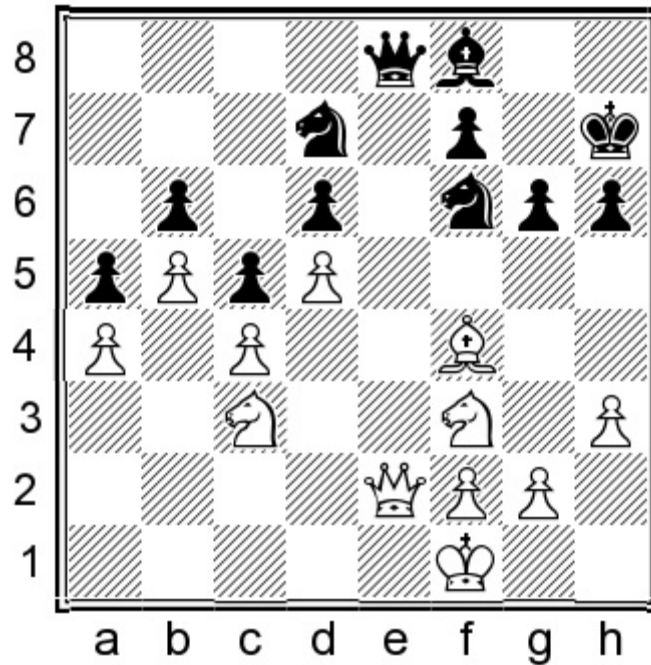
64.♕c3 ♞h8 65.♞c4+ ♕e6 66.♞xb6 ♞h6

A very instructive struggle, demonstrating the possibilities of defense!

Example 3

From Dreev – Balashov

Odessa 1989



Black to move

34...♔e7?!

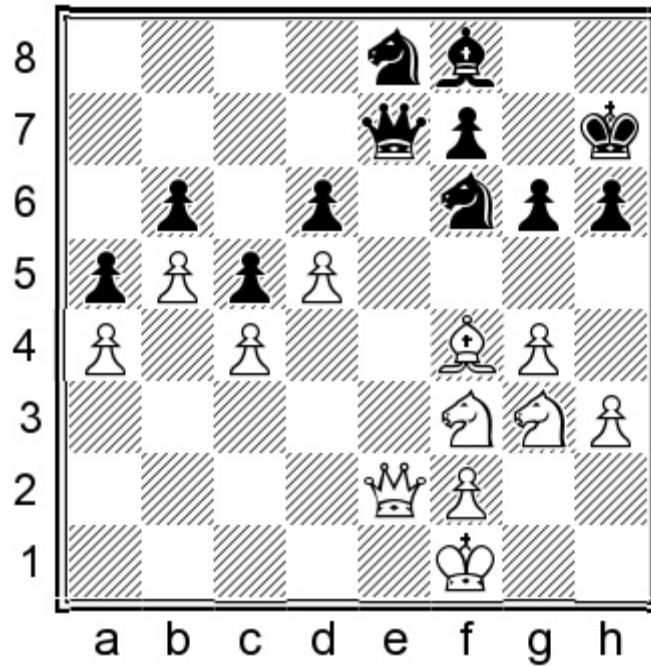
Seeing that the exchange of queens is almost inevitable, Black does a bit of “flirting”... Surprisingly, the fate of the entire battle was largely decided over this move.

34...♔e7+ 35.♕xe7 g5 The black pieces are tightly packed, so it is important to seize as much space as possible. [To this purpose, also interesting is 35...♞h5 36.♞h2 f5=] 36.♞h2 ♞e8 37.g4 f5 38.gxf5 ♞g7=

34...♔e7?! 35.g4!±

Now Black is doomed to a passive defense.

35...♞e8 36.♞e4 ♞df6 37.♞g3!



Position after: 37. ♖g3!

White doesn't exchange queens himself!

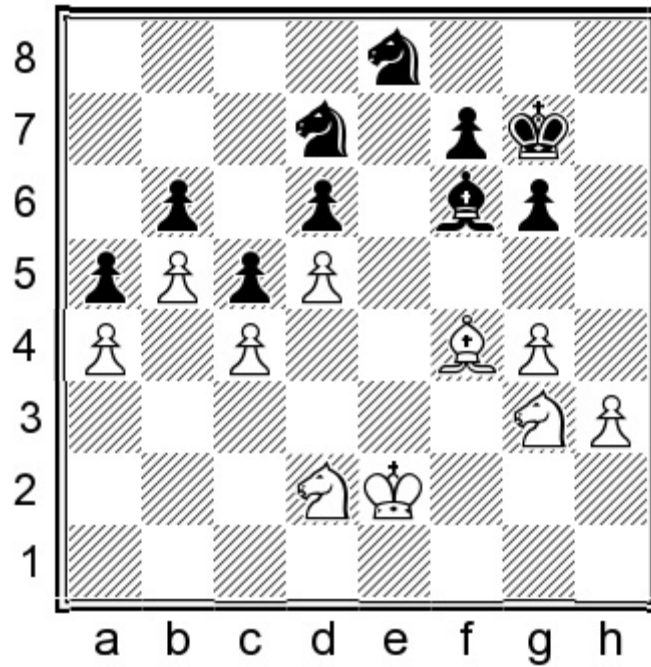
37... ♚xe2+ 38. ♜xe2 ♜e7

38... ♜d7!?

39. ♜d2 ♜g7 40. ♜e3 h5

It was perhaps not worth trying to be active.

41. f3 hxg4 42. fxg4 ♜d7 43. ♜f4 ♜f6



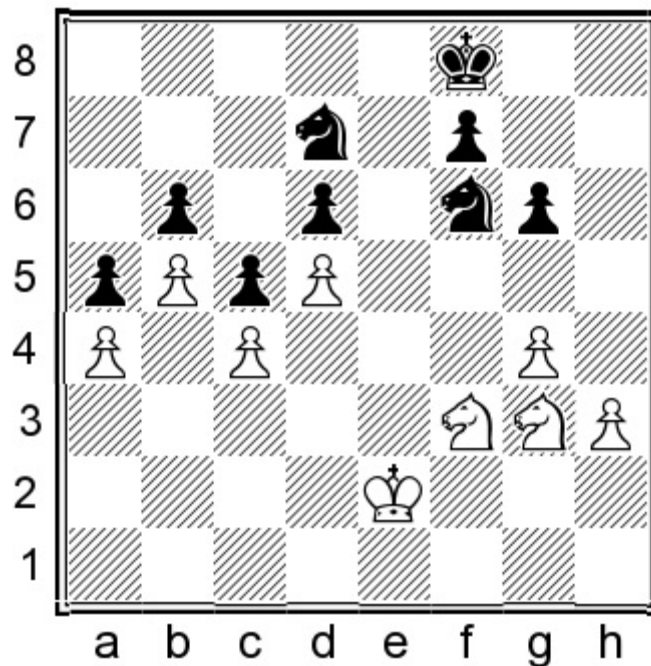
Position after: 43...♙f6

44.♘f3

It is important to take control of the e5-square.

Virtually the entire advantage would have been spoiled by the careless 44.♘de4?! ♙e5.

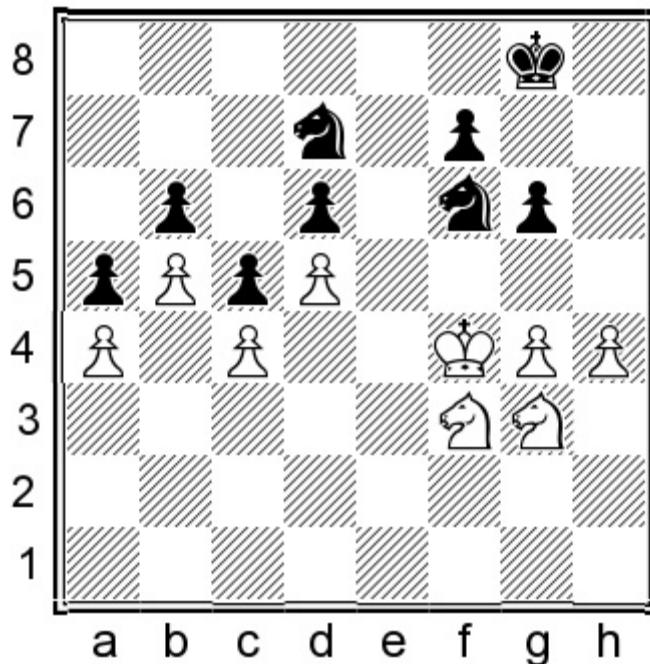
44...♙e7 45.♙d2 ♔g8 46.♘e4 ♘ef6 47.♙g5 ♔f8 48.♘g3 ♔e8 49.♙h6 ♙f8 50.♙xf8!? ♔xf8



Position after: 50...♔xf8

White exchanged the bishops since the pawn structure had already changed for the better and it is now important for him to activate the king in order to push the h-pawn, which was much more difficult in the presence of the bishops.

51.♔e3 ♖g7 52.♔f4 ♖g8 53.h4



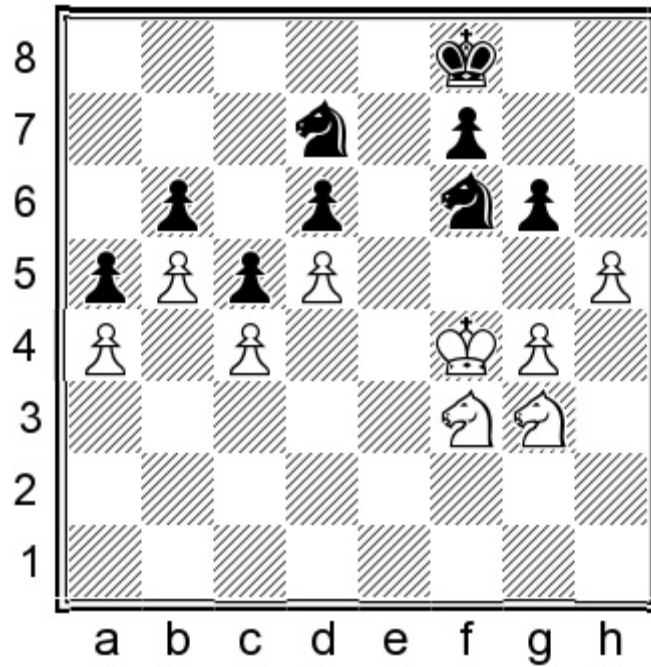
Position after: 53.h4

Until now, Black patiently waged an unpleasant defense, but as practice often shows, even very strong defenders in such cases sooner or later make an irreparable mistake...

53...♖f8?

♞ 53...♖e8 ♠ 54.h5 ♖h7!±

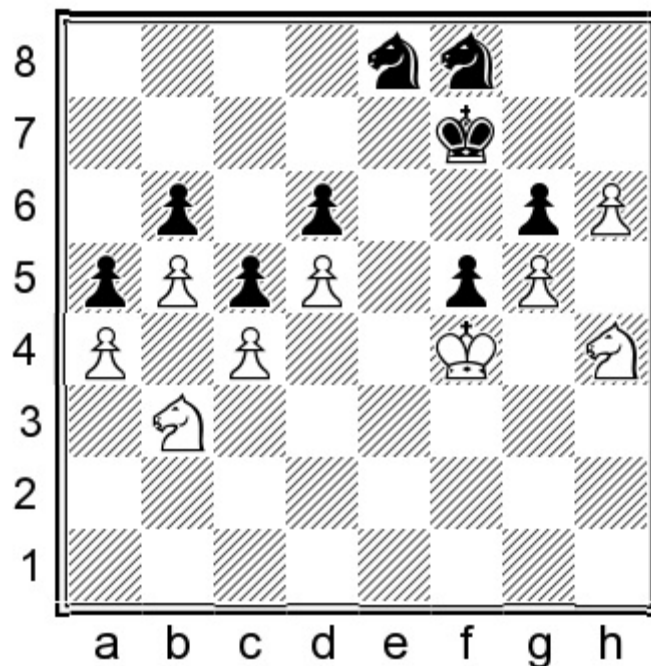
54.h5!+-



Position after: 54.h5!+-

The white pawn gets to h6 unhindered. Black cannot tolerate this by any means. White clinically converts the advantage, leaving no hope for Black.

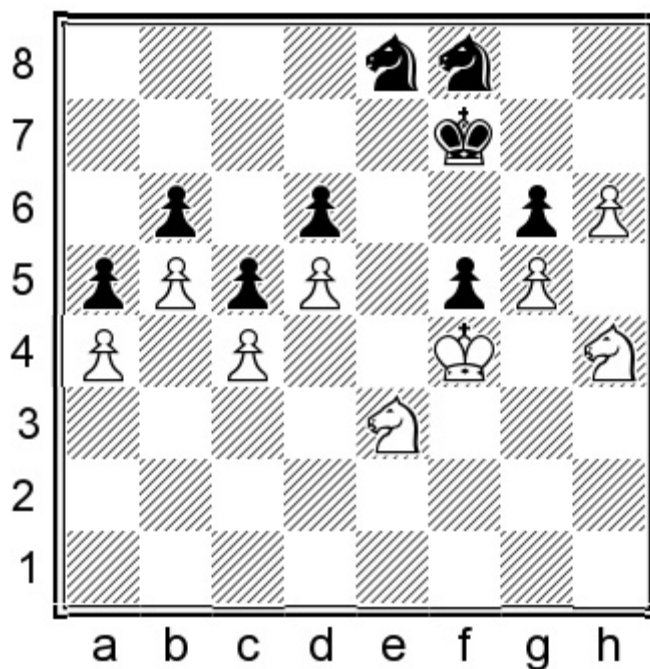
54...♙g7 55.h6+ ♜g8 56.g5 ♞e8 57.♞e4 ♙h7 58.♞h2 f5 59.♞d2! ♙g8 60.♞hf3 ♙f7 61.♞b3 ♞f8 62.♞h4



Position after: 62.♞h4

62...♖h7

Stronger was 62...♖c7. Then White could return to the plan of sacrificing the knight on f5, for example:
63.♗d2 ♖e8 64.♗df3 ♖c7 65.♗g2 ♖e8 66.♗fh4 ♖c7 67.♗e3 ♖e8



Position after: 67...♖e8

68.♗exf5+-

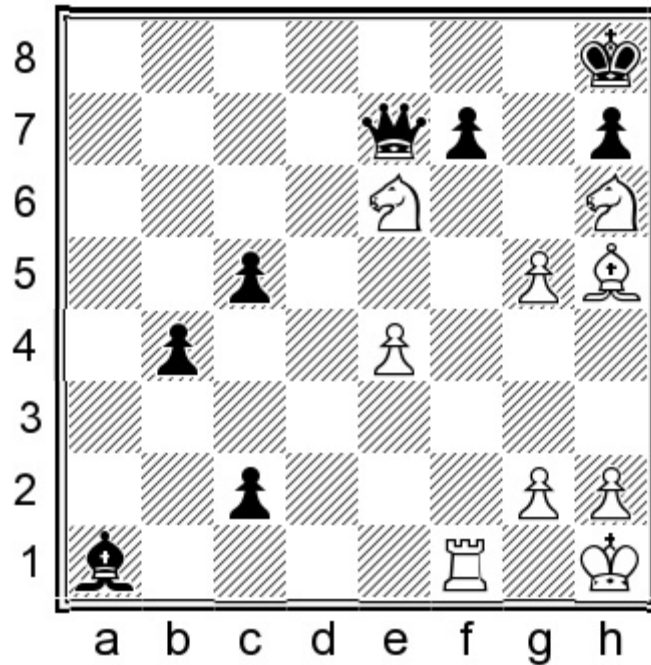
63.♗xa5 bxa5 64.b6 ♖f8 65.b7 ♖d7 66.h7 ♔g7 67.♗xg6 ♔xh7 68.♗f8+

1-0

Example 4

From Fier – Bologan

Moscow 2011



White to move

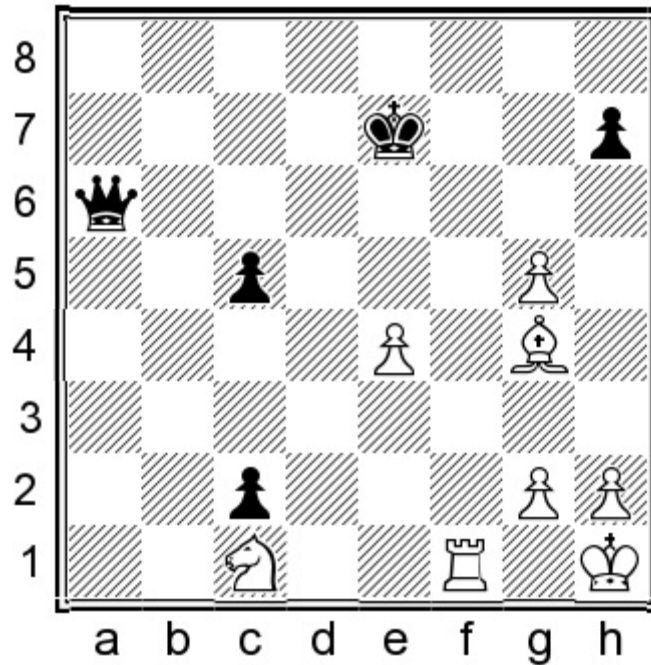
In this very non-standard ending, the opponents both made several mistakes, which is not surprising. In these types of situations, it is quite easy to lose one's way.

43. ♖xa1

43. ♖xf7+? ♔g8 44. ♖h6+ ♔h8 45. ♖f7+ [45. ♖xa1?? ♚xe6-+] 45... ♔g8 46. ♖h6+=

43. ♖xa1 c1=♚+?

A) Probably not saving Black, but would have allowed for practical chances of salvation was
 43... ♚a7! 44. ♖xf7+ ♔g8 45. ♖h6+ ♔h8 46. ♖f1 ♚e7 47. ♖d8!! b3 48. ♖df7+ ♔g7 49. ♖f5+ ♔f8
 50. ♖xe7 b2 [50... ♔xe7 51. ♖e5] 51. ♖e5+ ♔xe7 52. ♖d3 b1=♚ 53. ♖c1 ♚a1 54. ♖g4 ♚a6.

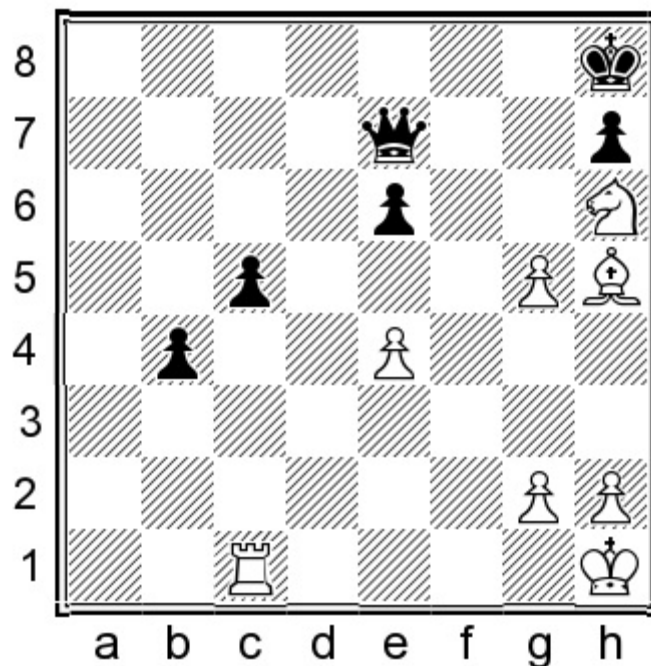


Position after: 54... ♔a6

It is not easy to win such an endgame, a player needs quite refined technique to be able to convert this.
 55. ♕e2! [\leq 55. ♖g1 ♔g6 56. ♕f5 ♔xg5 57. ♕xh7 ♔e6=] 55... ♔g6 56. ♖f5 ♔d6 57. ♕d3±

B) Also leading to the same result was 43... ♔b7! 44. ♖xf7+ ♔g8 45. ♖h6+ ♔h8 as White has nothing better than 46. ♖f1, transposing to 43... ♔a7 after 46... ♔e7.

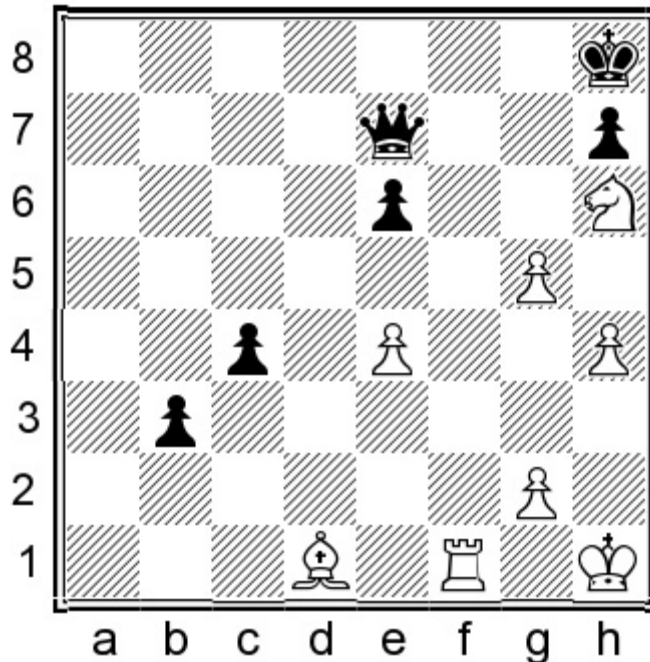
44. ♖xc1 fxe6



Position after: 44... fxe6

45.♖a1?

45.♖f1! b3 46.♙d1 c4 47.h4+-

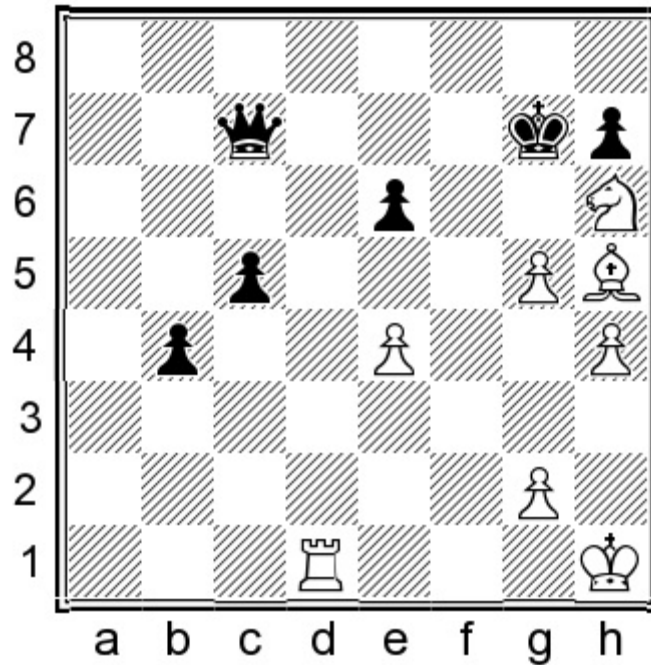


Position after: 47.h4+-

The black pawns are halted and the queen is restricted to the protection of the king in the “box”. White gradually strengthens his position and attains victory, for example: 47...♙c5 48.♙h2 ♙e7 49.♙h3 ♙c5 50.♖f7 ♙d6 51.e5 ♙c5 52.♙f3 b2 53.♙e4+-

45...♙f8?

Black was saved by a series of only moves: 45...♙g7! 46.h4 [46.♖a8? ♙xg5 47.♖g8+ ♙xh6 48.♖xg5 ♙xg5 49.♙d1 ♙f4+-] 46...♙b7! it is impossible to allow the rook to break through to the rear 47.♖d1 ♙c7!



Position after: 47... ♔c7!

[47... ♔xe4?? 48. ♖d7+ ♔f8 49. ♖f7+ ♔e8 50. ♖f4+-]

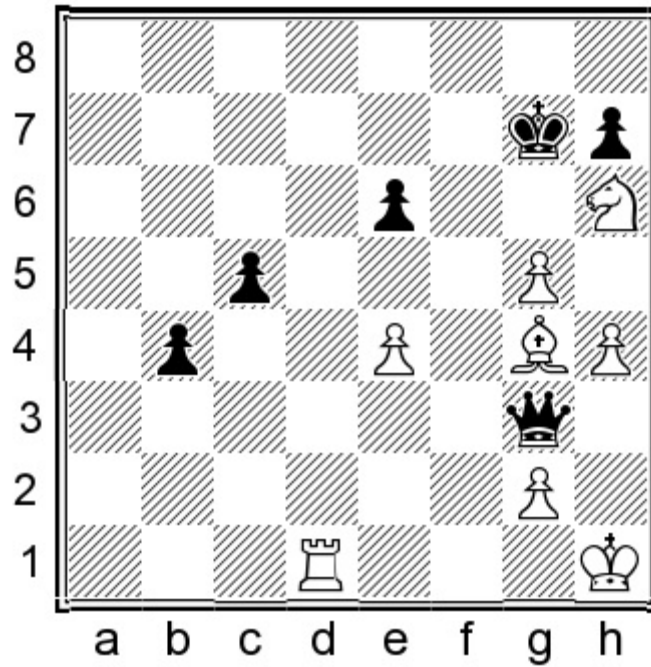
A) Obtaining nothing was 48. ♗f5+

A1) 48...exf5? 49.exf5 b3 50.f6+ ♔f8 51. ♖e1 ♔d7 52.f7 ♔g7 53. ♖e8 ♔xf7 54. ♗xf7 ♔xf7 55. ♖c8+-

A2) ≤ 48... ♔g8 49. ♗d6 b3 50. ♗f7+ ♔f8 51. ♗xe6 b2 52. ♗f5 [≤ 52. ♗c4 ♔f4 53. ♗xb2 ♔e5=] 52... ♔a5! 53. ♔h2 □ Threatening 53... ♔a1. 53...c4! 54. ♗xc4 ♔c7+ 55. ♔h3 ♔xc4 56. ♖d8+ ♔f7 57. ♗d6+ ♔e7 58. ♗xc4 b1=♔ 59. ♖d4±

A3) In view of the accurate response of 48... ♔h8! =.

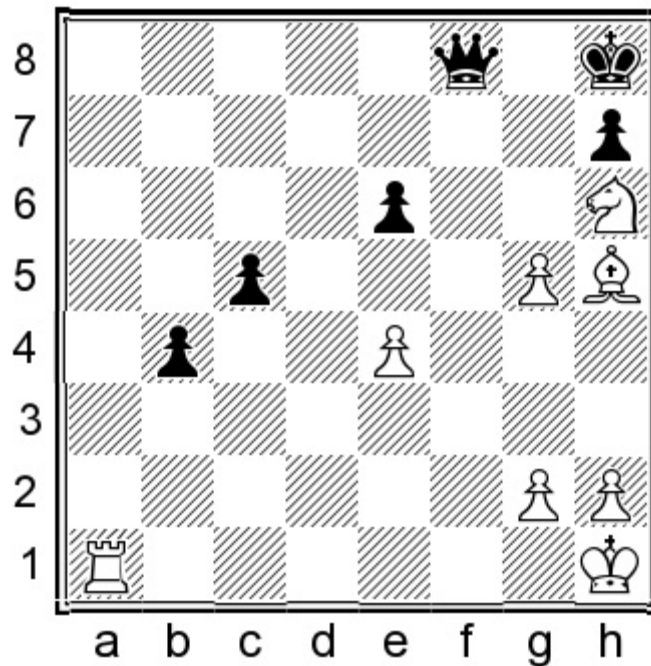
B) 48. ♗g4 ♔g3!



Position after: 48... ♔g3!

49. ♖d8 ♔xh4+ 50. ♕h3 ♔xg5 51. ♖g8+ ♕xh6 52. ♖xg5 ♕xg5 53. ♕xe6 ♖f4 54. ♕d5 ♖e5 55. ♖g1 ♕d4 56. ♖f2 c4 57. ♖e2 b3 58. ♖d2 b2 59. ♖c2 c3=

Back to 45... ♖f8.



Position after: 45... ♖f8?

46. ♕f7+?

The seemingly modest 46.♔e2!+- led to the winning plan previously discussed.

46...♙g7 47.♖a7 b3 48.♗h6+

White has no choice but to force a draw.

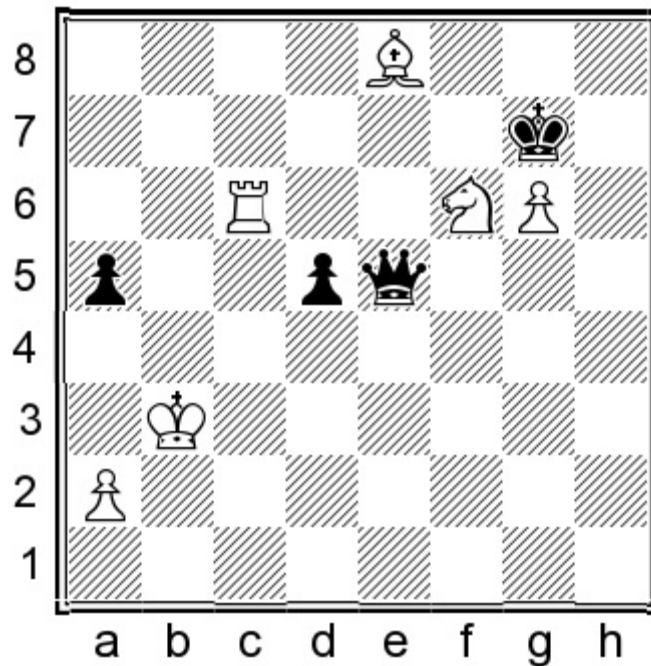
48.♖b7? ♚a8-+

48...♙h8 49.♗f7+ ♙g7 50.♗h6+ ♙h8 ½-½

Example 5

From Dreev – Savchenko

Apatity 2011

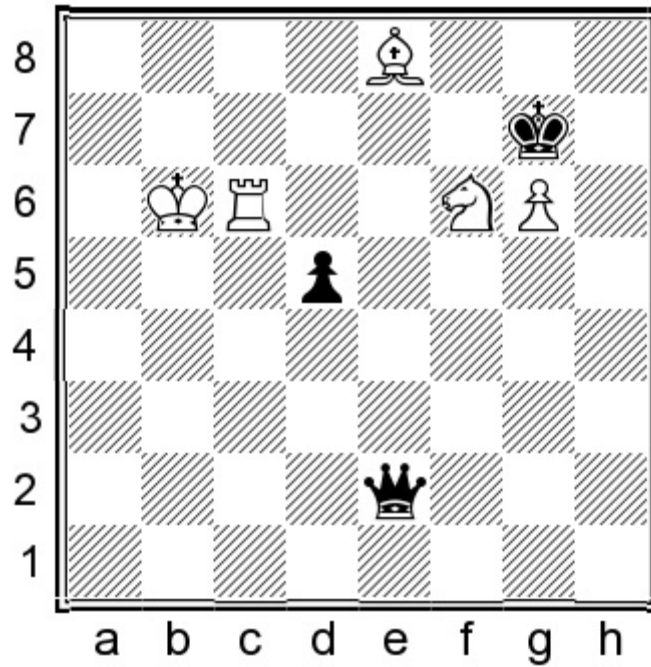


Black to move

Black has a way to draw, but he needs to understand the position in order to find it, and be rather resourceful.

36...♚b8+?!

The only saving move was the “quiet” 36...♚e2!! 37.♙a4 [White cannot reorganize his pieces as 37.♗d7 leads to a draw: 37...♚b5+ 38.♙c3 d4+ 39.♙xd4 ♚b4+ 40.♙d5 ♚b5+ 41.♙e6 ♚e2+ 42.♙f5 ♚f2+∞.] 37...♚xa2+ 38.♙b5 ♚b1+ 39.♙xa5 ♚a2+ 40.♙b5 ♚e2+ 41.♙b6



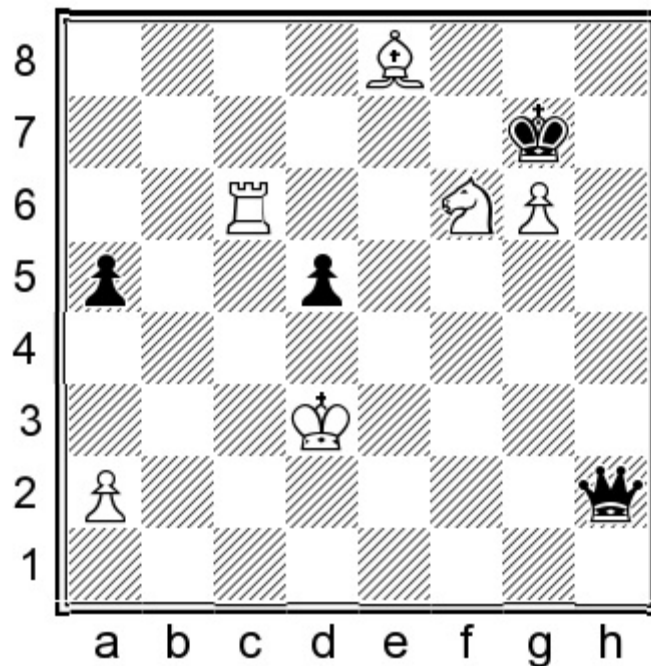
Position after: 41. ♔b6

41... ♕f2+ Only in this manner can the white king “cross the line” and head to the seventh rank. 42. ♔b7 ♕xf6! 43. ♖xf6 ♔xf6= and Black pushes his d-pawn and draws.

36... ♕b8+?! 37. ♔c2 ♕h2+

37... ♕e5 38. ♔d3 ♕g3+ 39. ♔d4 is just a different move order.

38. ♔d3



Position after: 38. ♔d3

38... ♖g3+

In the game, Black did not react in time and immediately lost the opportunity for a draw: 38... ♖e5?
39. ♕f7 ♖f5+ 40. ♔d4 ♖f4+ 41. ♔xd5 ♖f5+ 42. ♔c4 ♖f4+ 43. ♔b5 ♖b8+ 44. ♔c5 ♖a7+ 45. ♔d5+- 1-0
(57).

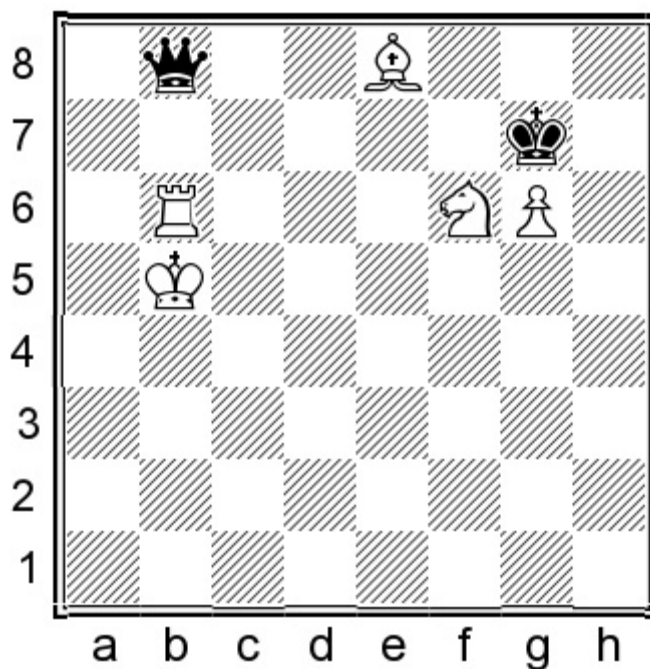
39. ♔d4 ♖f2+

≤ 39... ♖f4+?! 40. ♔xd5 ♖d2+ 41. ♔e6 ♖xa2+ 42. ♔d7+-

40. ♔xd5

Or 40. ♔e5 ♖e2+ 41. ♔xd5 ♖xa2+

40... ♖xa2+ 41. ♔c5 ♖a3+ 42. ♔b5 ♖d3+ 43. ♔xa5 ♖d8+ 44. ♔b5 ♖b8+ 45. ♖b6



Position after: 45. ♖b6

45... ♖d8!

It is extremely important for Black not to allow the king to a6.

45... ♖h2 46. ♔a6!! ♖e2+ 47. ♔b7 ♖g2+ 48. ♖c6 ♖b2+ 49. ♔c8 ♖a2 50. ♔d7+-

46. ♖e6!!

And yet, it appears as though the white king can make his way to the pieces with the aid of this fine

rook move.

A) 46. ♖h5+ ♕f8 47. g7+ ♕g8=

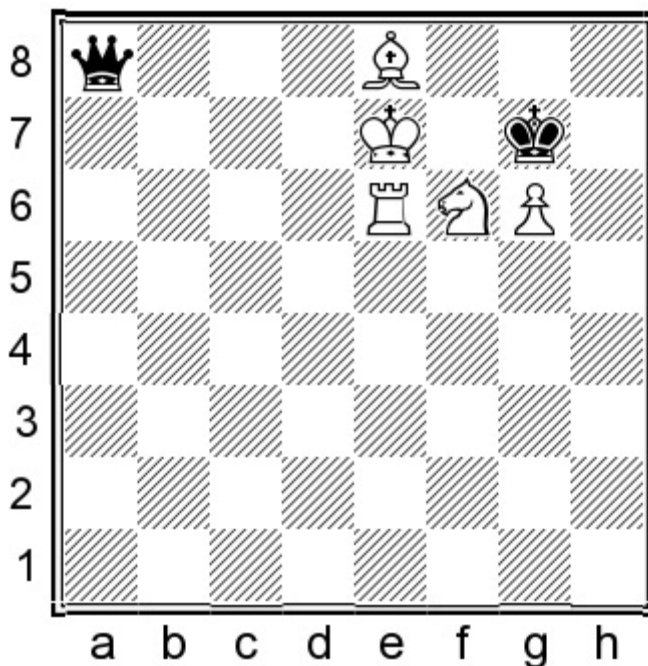
B) 46. ♕a6 ♖a8+ 47. ♕b5 ♖d8

C) 46. ♕f7 ♖d3+ 47. ♕c4 ♖b1+ 48. ♕a6 ♖a1+=

46... ♖d3+ 47. ♕c6 ♖a6+ 48. ♕d7 ♖b7+

48... ♖a7+ 49. ♕d8+—

49. ♕d8 ♖a8+ 50. ♕e7



Position after: 50. ♕e7

50... ♖a3+

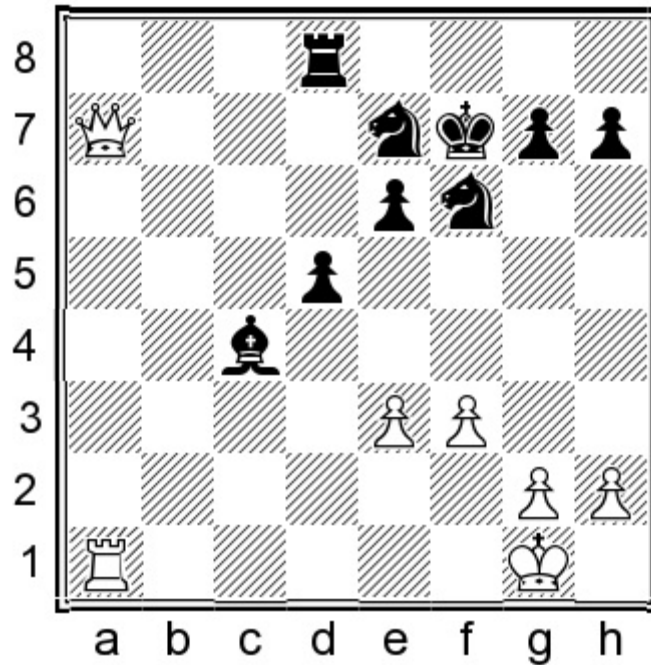
50... ♖a5 51. ♖c6!+—

51. ♖d6 ♖e3+ 52. ♕d8 ♖a3 53. ♖c6 ♖a5+ 54. ♕c8 ♖a8+ 55. ♕d7 ♖a7+ 56. ♖c7 ♖a2 57. ♕e4!+—

Example 6

From Dreev – Rausis

Luzern 1993



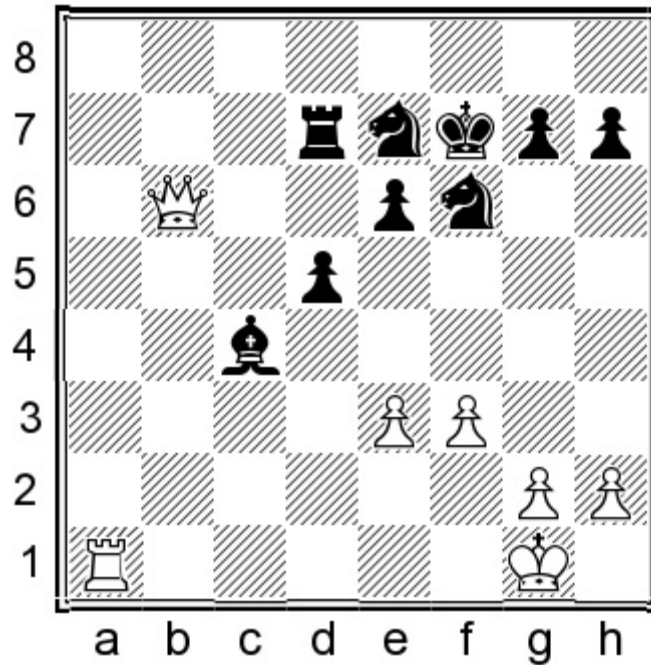
White to move

At first glance, in this position White cannot count on any advantage, since Black has enough material in return for the queen and does not have any real weaknesses. However, at this very moment, White can create serious practical problems, if not obtain a serious advantage. How is this possible?!

32.g4!

Of course, after this move, White may not win, but at the very least he will firmly seize the initiative. The resulting defensive task for Black is not easy — now the game can only end in two ways...

The game continued 32. ♖b6 ♜d7



Position after: 32...Rd7

A) 33.♔f2 h5= 1-0 (101).

B) Here, the plan with the g-pawn advance is no longer as effective as before, as there are no pins along the seventh rank and the knight can easily retreat to e8: 33.g4 h6!? [33...h5!? 34.g5 ♖e8 35.e4! ♜d6 36.♞a7 ♞xa7 37.♝xa7 Threatening g5-g6. 37...g6! 38.♞c7 ♜e8=; 33...g5 34.h4 gxh4 35.g5 ♜e8 36.♞b8 ♜f5 37.♞a8↑] 34.h4 e5!? 35.g5 hxg5 36.hxg5 ♜e8∞

32.g4! h6

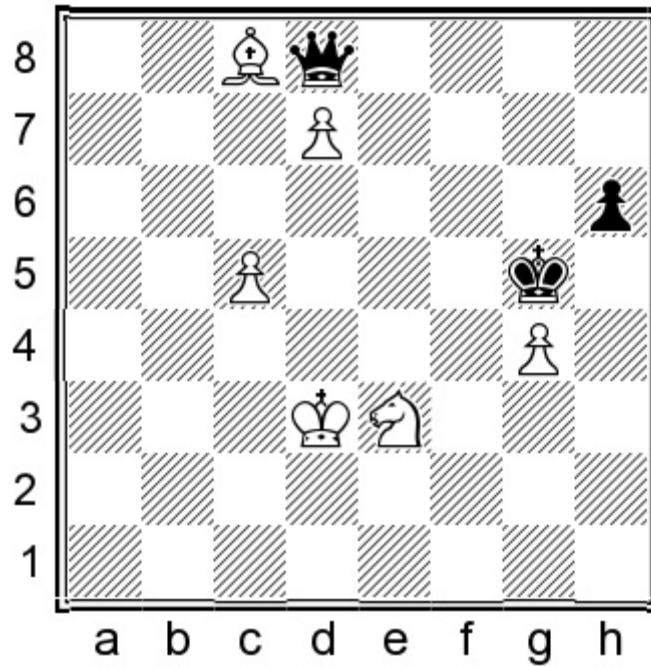
A) 32...g5?! 33.h4! h6 [33...gxh4 34.♞c7 ♞d7 35.♞f4± Δ 35...♔g6 36.g5 ♜h5 37.♞e5 d4 38.♞c1 ♔a2 39.e4 d3 40.♞b5 d2 41.♞d1 ♞d8 42.♞a5+–] 34.hxg5 hxg5 35.♞c7 ♞d7 36.♞e5±

B) 32...Rd7 33.♞b8↑ Δ 33...d4?! 34.♞b4 ♞c7 35.e4 ♜g6 36.♞b6 ♞e7 37.♞xd4±

33.h4↑

Example 7

From Rakhmanov – Maghsoodloo
St Petersburg 2018

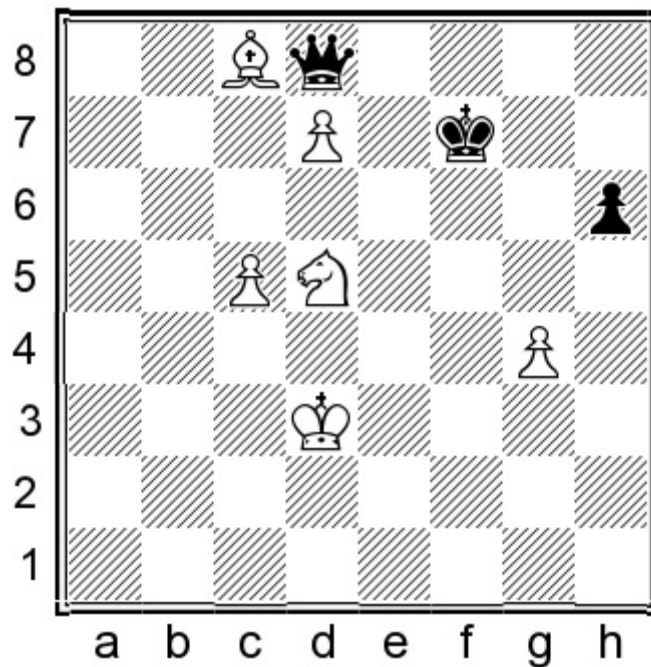


Black to move

63...♔f6 64.♔c4!!

The only move!

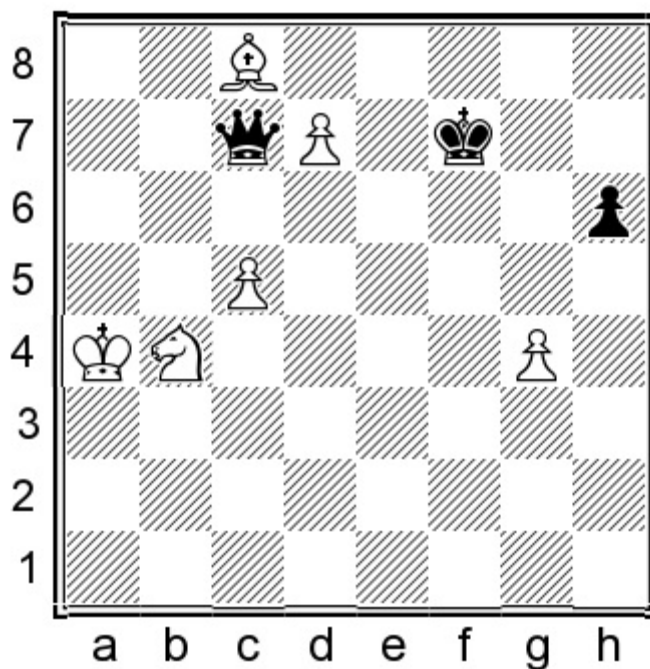
In the case of the natural and seemingly very strong 64.♘d5+, Black saves the game: 64...♔f7



Position after: 64...♔f7

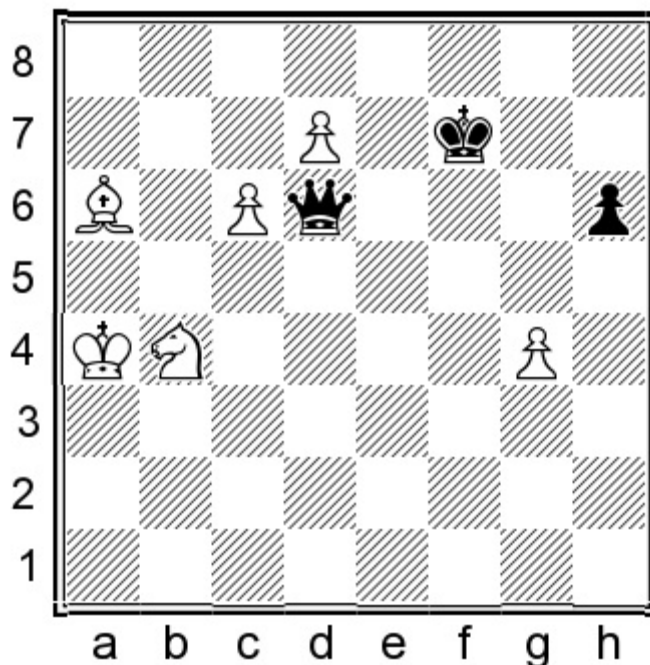
A) 65.♔c4 ♕g5! 66.♘b4 [66.c6 ♕xg4+ 67.♔c5 ♕g1+ 68.♔d6 ♕g3+=] 66...♕f4+ 67.♔b5 ♕b8+

68.♔a5 ♚c7+ [Another acceptable form of protective defense 68...♚a8+!? 69.♕b6 ♚b8+ 70.♙b7 ♚d8+ 71.♕c6 ♕e7 72.♘d5+ ♕f7 73.♙c8 ♚h8!]=] 69.♕a4



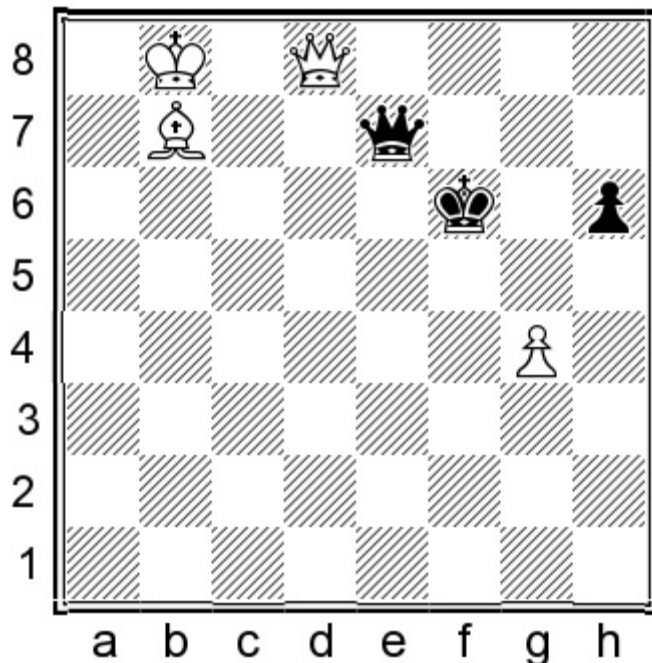
Position after: 69.♕a4

69...♕f8!! 70.♕b5 ♚b8+ 71.♕a5 ♚c7+ 72.♕a4 White was able to give the move to Black, but Black again has a waiting move with the king 72...♕f7! 73.c6 ♚d6!! Again, a very important move. [≤ 73...♚b6 74.♙a6! ♚d4 75.♙b5 ♚a1+ 76.♕b3 ♚d1+ 77.♕c3 ♚d6 78.c7 ♚xc7+ 79.♘c6 ♚g3+ 80.♙d3+–] 74.♙a6



Position after: 74.♙a6

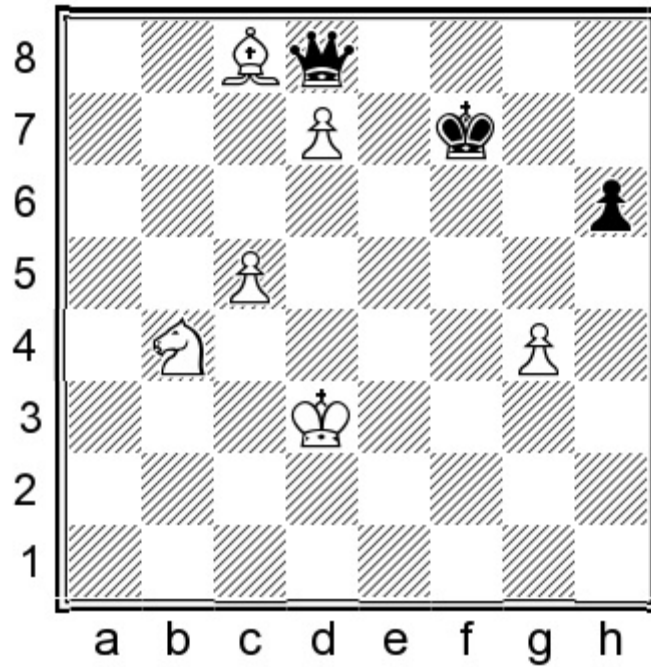
74...♔d1+! It is necessary to prevent the white bishop from getting to the b5-square. 75.♕a5 [75.♕b5 ♖d4 76.♗b7 ♗e5+ 77.♕b6 ♖d4+ 78.♕c7 ♕e7 79.♕b8 ♗h8+ 80.♗c8 ♖b2 81.c7 ♗xb4+ 82.♗b7 ♕xd7 83.c8=♗+ ♕e7=] 75...♗a1+! [≤ 75...♕e7 76.♗d3!!+– A very strong and difficult move to find. 76...♕d8 77.♕b6 ♖c2 78.♗b5+–] 76.♕b6 ♖d4+ 77.♕c7 ♕e7 78.♕c8 ♗h8+ 79.♕b7 ♖b2 80.c7 ♗xb4+ 81.♕a8 ♖e4+ 82.♕b8 ♖b4+ 83.♗b7 ♕xd7 84.c8=♗+ ♕e7 85.♗c7+ ♕f6 86.♖d8+ ♗e7=



Position after: 86...♗e7=

Despite the extra piece, due to the fact that the h8-square is of opposite color to that of the bishop, the position is drawn, as after a queen exchange, Black will manage to play ...h5 in perfect conditions.

B) 65.♗b4

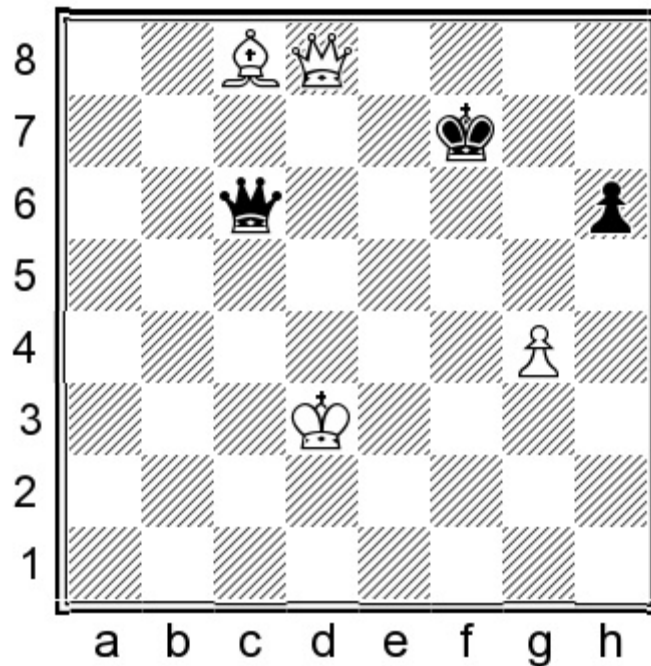


Position after: 65. ♖b4

B1) The game continued 65... ♕f6? 66. ♔c4? [66. ♘c6!+-] 66... ♕f1+ 67. ♔d5 instead of continuing with checks, Black went 67... ♕f6?? and lost: 68. ♘c6 ♕f3+ 69. ♔d6 ♕d3+ 70. ♔c7 ♕g3+ 71. ♔b7 ♕b3+ 72. ♔a7 ♕a3+ 73. ♙a6 ♕xc5+ 74. ♔b7+- 1-0 (81).

B2) 65... ♕g5! 66. ♔c4 ♕f4+ 67. ♔b5 ♕b8+ 68. ♔a5 ♕c7+=

B3) 65... ♕e7! 66. ♘c6 ♕xc5 67. d8=♕ ♕xc6



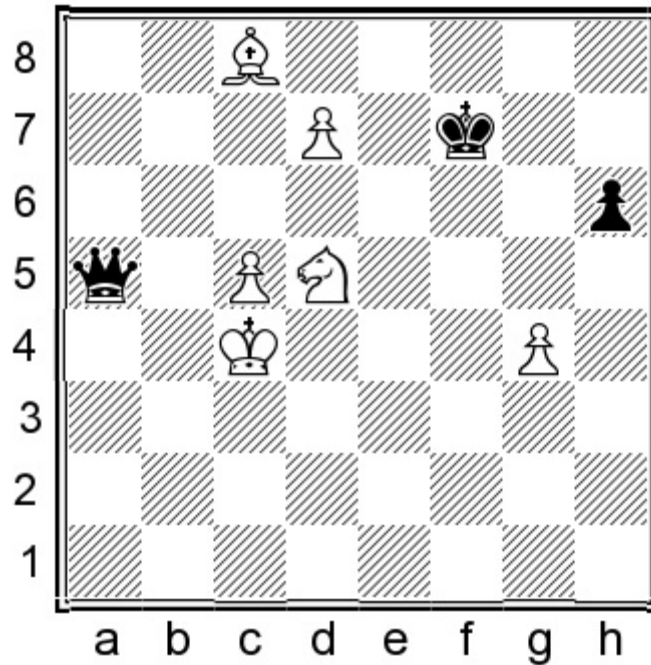
Position after: 67... ♕xc6

And, once again, a clear extra piece is not enough for the win. 68.♔f5 ♚f3+ 69.♚c4 [69.♚d4 ♚d1+ 70.♔d3 ♚xg4+=] 69...♚c6+ 70.♚d4 ♚f6+!=

64...♚a5

64...♚e5 65.♚b5+-

65.♘d5+ ♚f7



Position after: 65...♚f7

66.♘b4! ♚g7!

≤ 66...♚f6 67.♚b3 ♚f7 68.♔a6 ♚e6 69.♘c6 ♚xa6 [69...♚xc5 70.d8=♚ ♚xc6 71.♚f8+-] 70.d8=♚ ♚xc6 71.♚b6+-

67.♘c6

No progress after 67.♚b3 ♚f6 68.♔a6 ♚d8 69.♔c8 ♚a5.

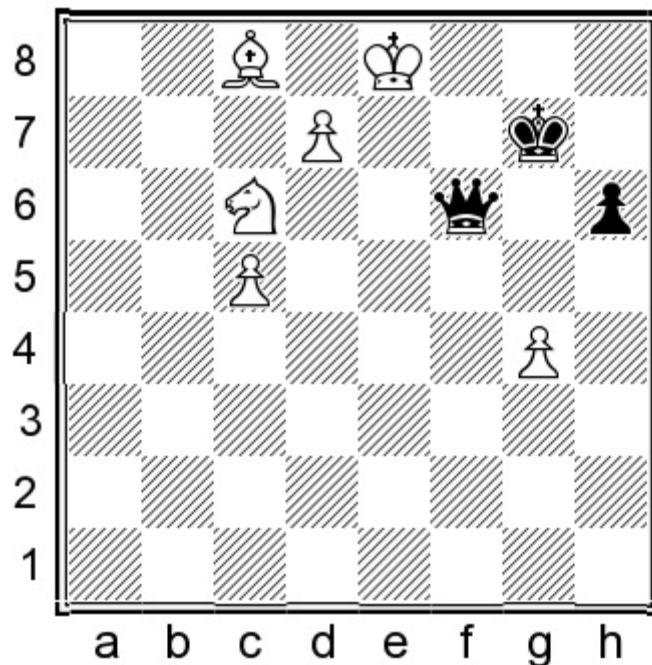
67...♚a4+

67...♚a2+ 68.♚b5 ♚b3+ 69.♘b4+-

68.♚d5 ♚d1+ 69.♚e5 ♚e2+ 70.♚d6 ♚d3+ 71.♚c7 ♚g3+ 72.♚d8!

≤ 72.♚b7 ♚b3+ 73.♚a8 ♚d5!

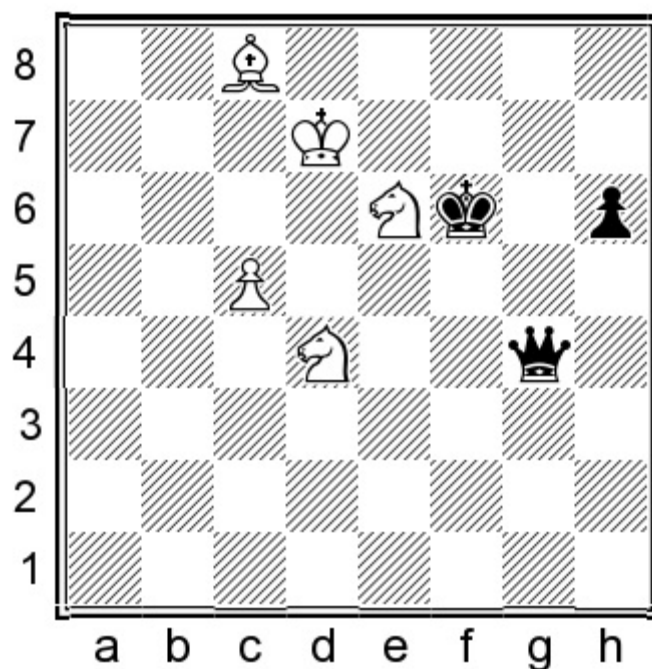
72...♖h4+ 73.♔e8 ♖f6



Position after: 73...♖f6

It would appear that defense triumphs, but this would turn out to be a premature celebration.

74.d8=♗! ♖g6+ 75.♔d7 ♖xg4+ 76.♗e6+ ♔f6 77.♗cd4+-

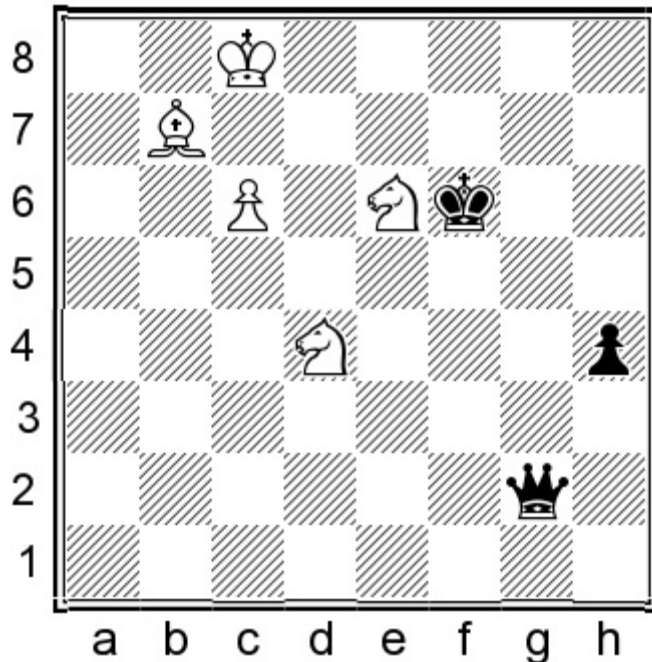


Position after: 77.♗cd4+-

Though not immediately and not without difficulty, White is definitely winning, for example:

77...h5 78.♙b7 h4 79.♙f3

Or 79.c6 ♖g2 80.♙c8



Position after: 80.♙c8

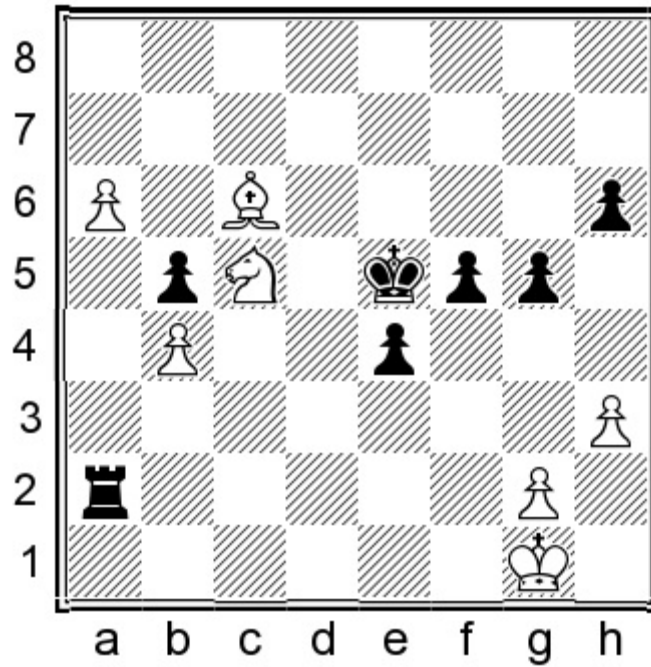
80...♖g8+ [80...h3 81.c7 ♖g8+ 82.♘d8 h2 83.♙b8 ♖g3 84.♙c6+-] 81.♙c7 h3 82.♙b6 h2 83.c7 ♖h8
84.♘b5 ♙e5 85.♘a7 h1=♖ 86.♙xh1 ♖xh1 87.c8=♖+-

79...♖g8 80.c6 ♖h7+ 81.♙c8 h3 82.c7 h2 83.♙b8 ♖b1+ 84.♙a7 ♖h7 85.♙b6+-

Example 8

From Carlsen – Mamedyarov

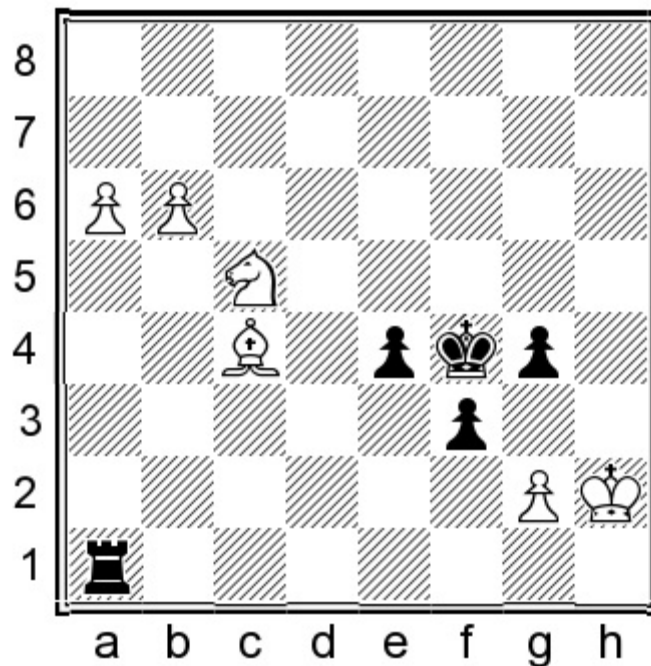
Wijk aan Zee 2019



Black to move

44...e3

In the game, Black did not decide that the problem could be solved in a simple manner and chose the erroneous 44...h5? which quickly lost to 45. ♖xb5 g4 46. hxg4 hxg4 47. ♙c4 ♖a1+ 48. ♔h2 f4 49. b5 f3 50. b6 ♔f4

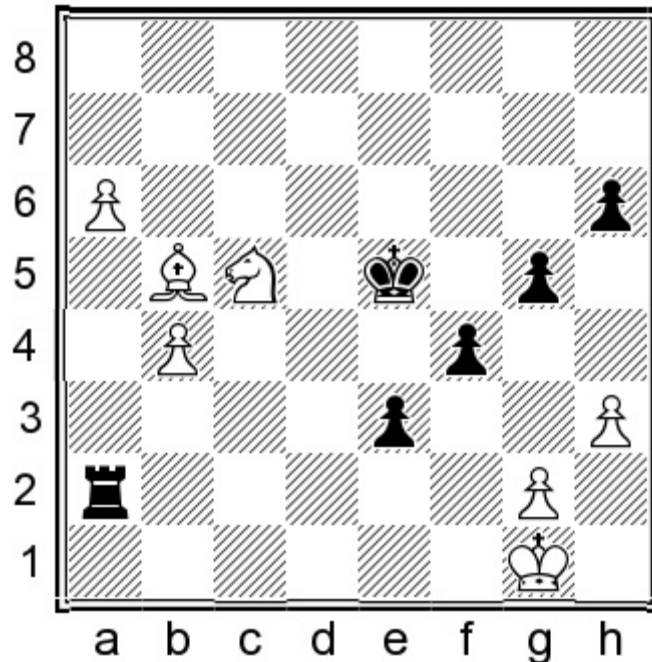


Position after: 50... ♔f4

51. ♞xe4! 1-0.

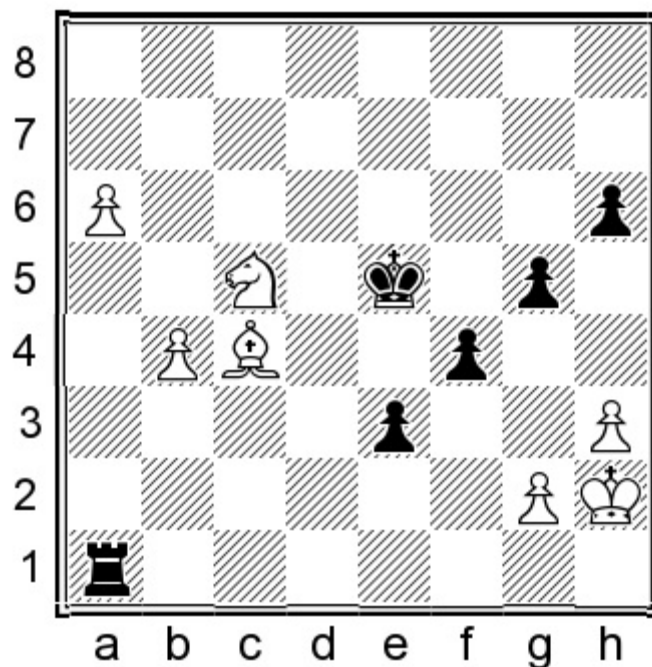
44...e3 45.♙xb5 ♔d4!

≤ 45...f4?



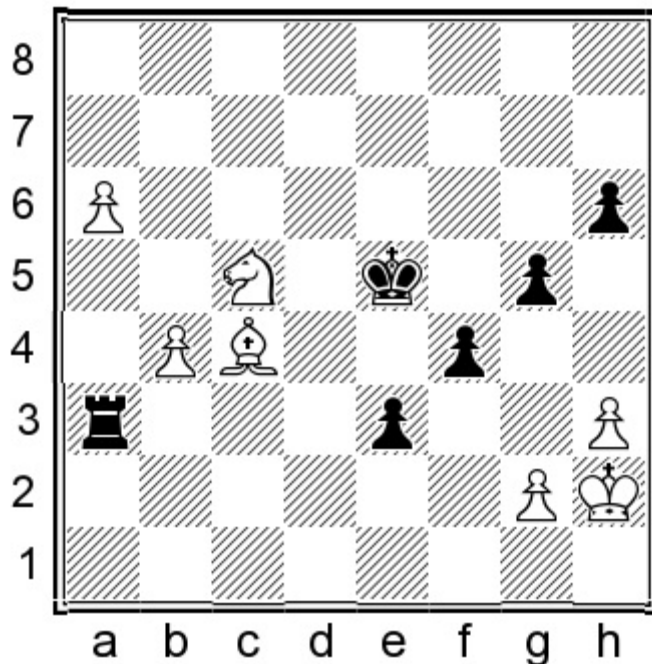
Position after: ≤ 45...f4?

This position deserves its own separate diagram. Black's error can only be taken advantage of through a series of fine and unique moves. 46.♙c4! [Natural, and at first glance very strong is 46.♞b3?. Actually, this does not achieve the win due to Black's timely counterattack: 46...h5! 47.♞a5 g4 48.hxg4 hxg4 and Black is not worse.] 46...♞a1+ [46...♞a3? 47.♞b3+...] 47.♙h2



Position after: 47. ♔h2

47... ♖a3! [47... ♕d4 48. ♗b3+-; 47... ♕d6 48. ♗b3 ♖a2 49. ♗d4 ♖a1 50. ♗c2 ♖a4 51. ♕g1+- The black rook is immured and the white king triumphantly enters the game.]

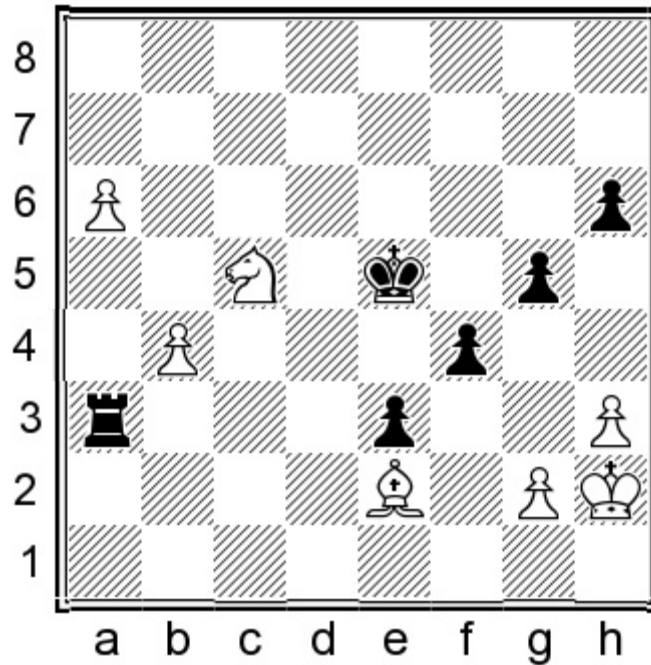


Position after: 47... ♖a3!

A) 48. ♗b7 ♕d4 49. ♗a5 [49. ♗e2 ♕c3 50. b5 ♕d2 51. ♗f3 e2 52. ♗xe2 ♕xe2 53. ♗c5 f3 54. gxf3 ♕xf3 55. b6 ♖a2+=; 49. ♗d6 ♕e5! 50. ♗b7 ♕d4=] 49... ♖xa5 50. bxa5 ♕xc4 51. a7 e2 52. a8=♚ e1=♚=

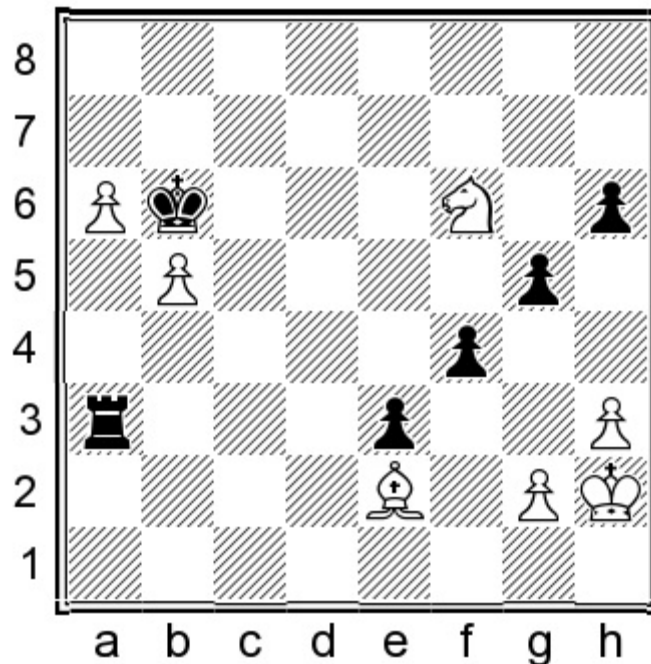
B) 48. ♗f1? ♕d5=

C) 48. ♗e2!!



Position after: 48. ♕e2!!

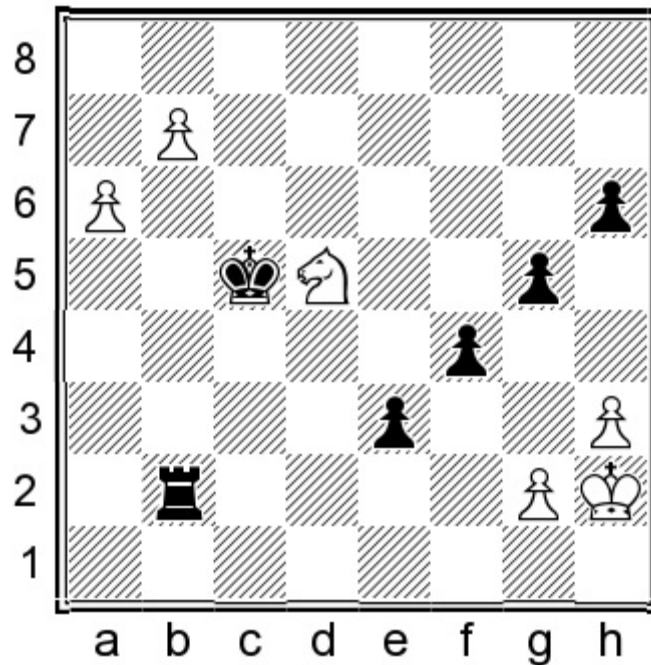
48... ♖d6 [48... ♖a2 49. b5 ♖xe2 50. b6 f3 51. b7 ♖xg2+ 52. ♖h1 ♖b2 53. a7+-; 48... ♖d4 49. h4+- Δ
 49... ♖a2 50. ♖b3+ ♖e5 51. ♖a5+-; 48... ♖d5 49. ♖b7+-] 49. ♖e4+! [49. h4? ♖c6=; also allowing the
 win to slip away was 49. ♖b7+? ♖c7 50. ♖a5 ♖b8=.] 49... ♖c6 [49... ♖c7 leads to the same position
 with a different move order: 50. b5 ♖b6.] 50. b5+ ♖b6 51. ♖f6! [51. h4? draws after ... ♖a7 or 51... g4
 52. ♖xg4 ♖xb5 53. ♖e2+ ♖c6=.]



Position after: 51. ♖f6!

C1) 51...f3 52.gxf3 ♖a2 53.♗d5+ ♔a7 54.b6+ ♕b8 55.♗c3 ♖c2 [55...♖b2 56.a7+ ♕b7 57.♕g3 ♖xb6 58.♗b5+–] 56.a7+ ♕b7 57.f4! gxf4 58.♕g1 ♖c1+ 59.♕g2 ♖c2 60.♕f1 ♖c1+ 61.♗d1+–

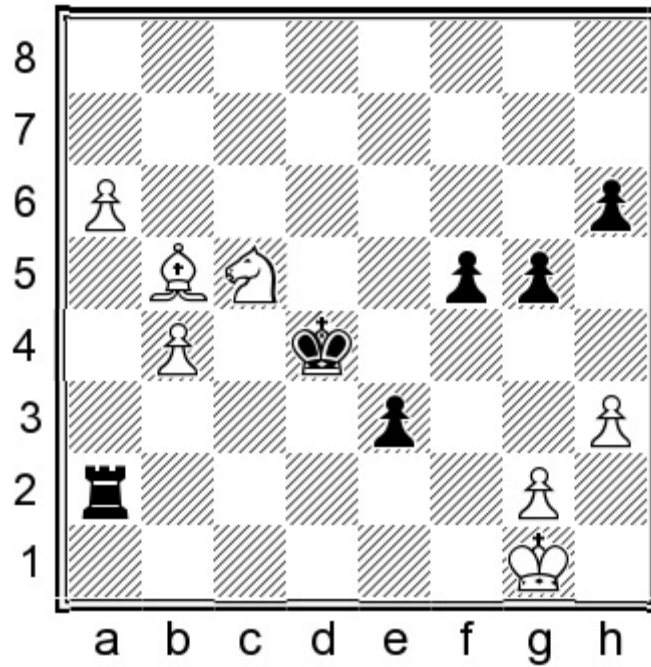
C2) 51...♖a2 52.♗d5+ ♕c5 53.b6 ♖xe2 54.b7 ♖b2



Position after: 54...♖b2

55.♗xe3! The clearest. [55.a7 also wins: 55...e2 56.b8=♖ ♖xb8 - if 56...e1=♖ 57.♖c7+ ♕d4 and now 58.♗xf4 or 58.♖c3 wins – 57.axb8=♖ e1=♖ 58.♖b3! The resulting pawn ending if Black plays ...♖g3+ is lost and the white king goes to h5. Δ 58...♖e6 59.♖b5+! ♕xb5 60.♗c7++–] 55...fxe3 56.a7 e2 57.a8=♖ e1=♖ 58.♖a3+ ♖b4 59.b8=♖ ♖xa3 60.♖f8++–

Back to 45...♕d4.



Position after: 45...♔d4!

46.♔f1

Not changing much either is the move

46.♙d3 f4 47.♔f1 ♖a1+ 48.♔e2 ♖a2+ 49.♔d1 ♖xg2 50.♙e2 ♔c3 51.♘a4+ ♔b3 52.♘c5+ ♔c3=.

46...f4

The activity of the black pieces is now at its zenith, and is enough to achieve a draw.

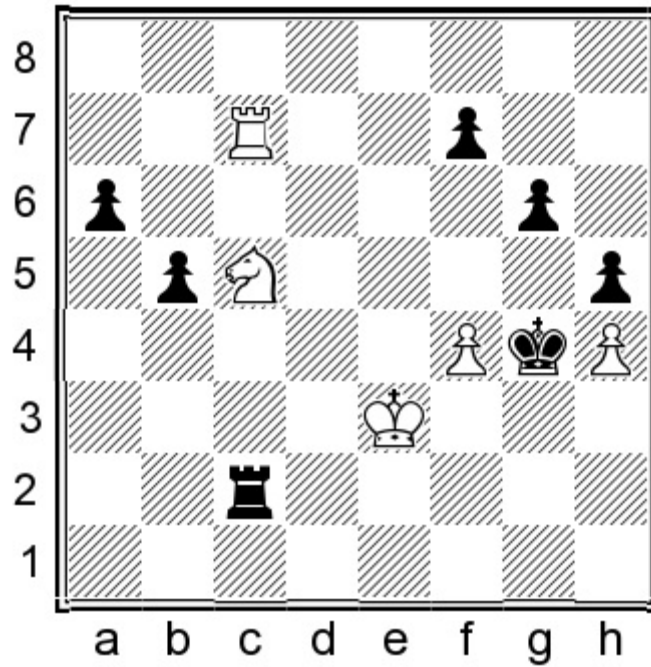
47.♙a4 ♖a1+ 48.♔e2 ♖a2+ 49.♔f1

49.♔f3?? h5--+

49...♖a1+=

Example 9

From Bachmann – Henriquez
chess.com 2019



White to move

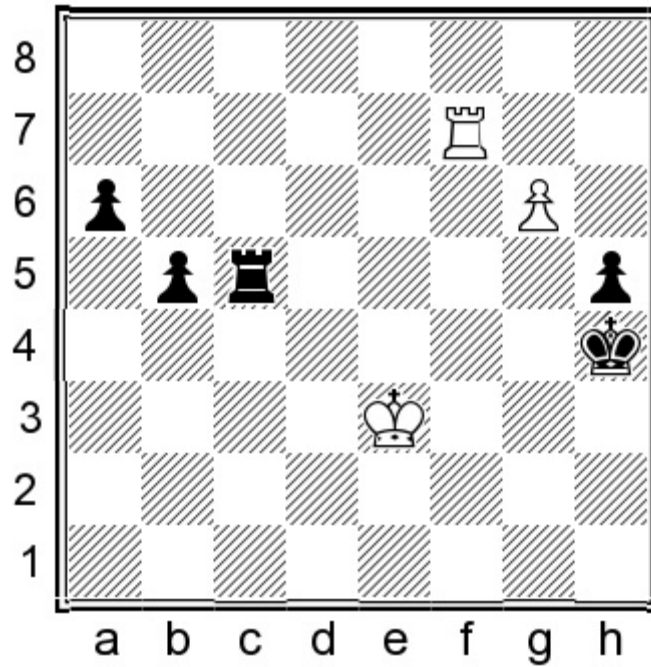
White's position appears to be gloomy, however salvation is possible!

47.f5!

In the game, White simply "went with the flow" and quickly ended up losing 47.♘xa6? ♜xc7 48.♘xc7 b4 49.♘d5 b3 50.♙d3 ♔xh4 51.♙c3 ♙g3 52.♙xb3 h4 53.♙c3 h3 0-1.

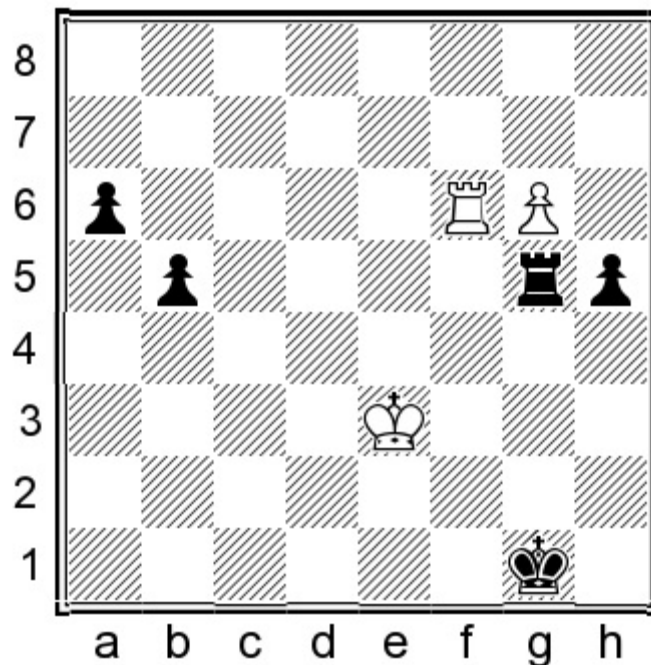
47.f5! gxf5

47...♔xh4 48.♝xf7! [48.♙d4 is possibly a draw as well, but the transition into the rook endgame saves the game without a doubt!] 48...♝xc5 49.fxg6



Position after: 49.fxc6

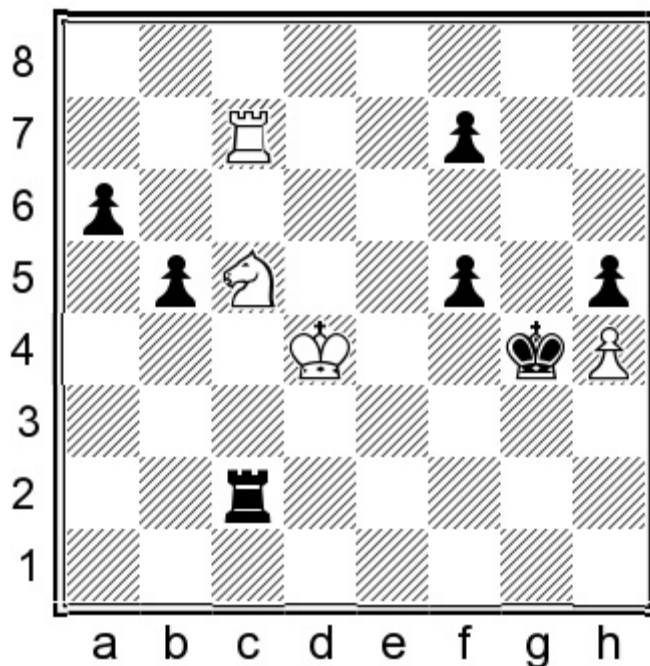
49...Rg5 [49...b4 50.Rf1 Qh3 51.Rg1 Rc8 52.g7 Rg8 53.Qf3 Qh2 54.Rg2+ Qh1 55.Rg5 h4 56.Rh5=;
 49...Rc6 50.g7 Rg6 51.Qf4=] 50.Rf4+ Qg3 51.Rf3+ Qg2 52.Rf2+ Qg1 53.Rf6



Position after: 53.Rf6

53...a5 [53...b4 54.Rxa6 h4 55.Qf4 Rg3 56.Rb6=] 54.Qf4 Rg4+ 55.Qf5=

48.Qd4



Position after: 48. ♔d4

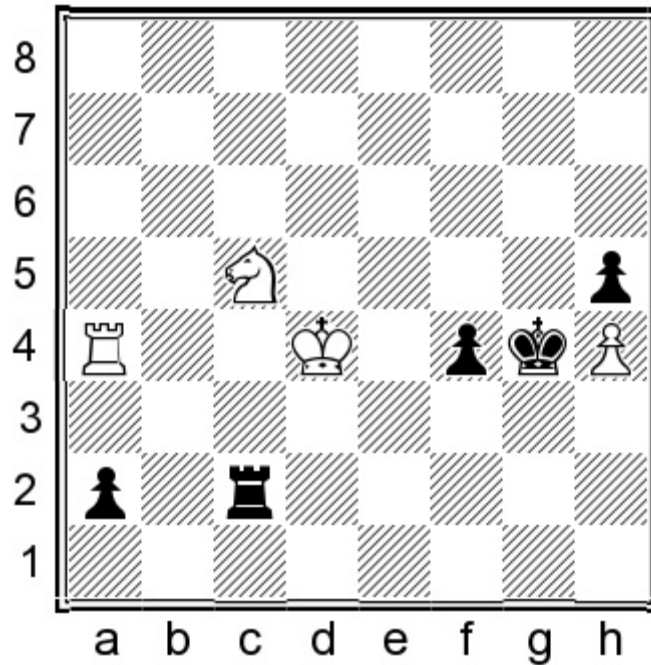
48...a5!

≤ 48...f4 49. ♖xf7 ♖c4+ [49...f3 50. ♗e4=] 50. ♔d5 f3 [50...a5 51. ♗e4=] 51. ♗e4 a5 52. ♔e5=

49. ♖b7!!

A very difficult move to find in my opinion, especially since it is not very clear why the more natural move below loses!

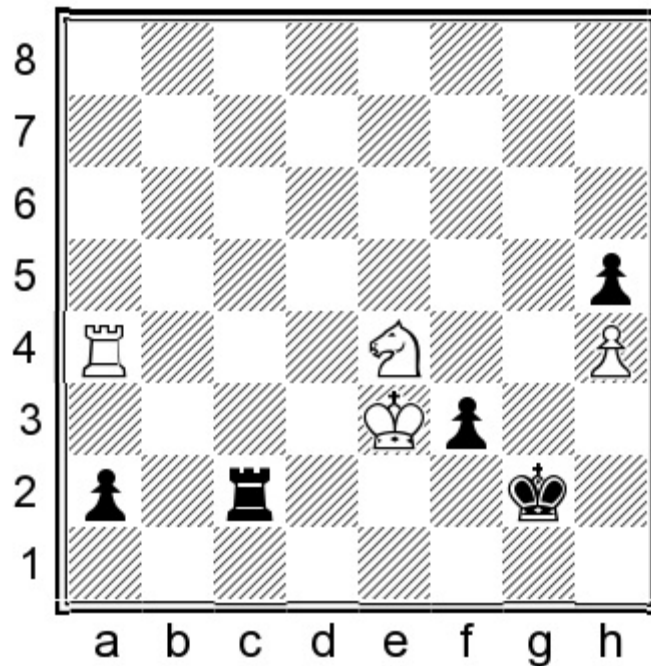
A) 49. ♖xf7? a4 50. ♖b7 a3 51. ♖xb5 a2 52. ♖a5 f4 53. ♖a4



Position after: 53. ♖a4

And here is why:

A1) The logical and tempting 53...f3? allows White to escape by creating a fortress 54. ♖e3+ [54. ♖d3+ ♖h3 55. ♖xc2 f2 56. ♖xa2 f1=♚] 54...♔g3 55. ♗e4+ ♖g2



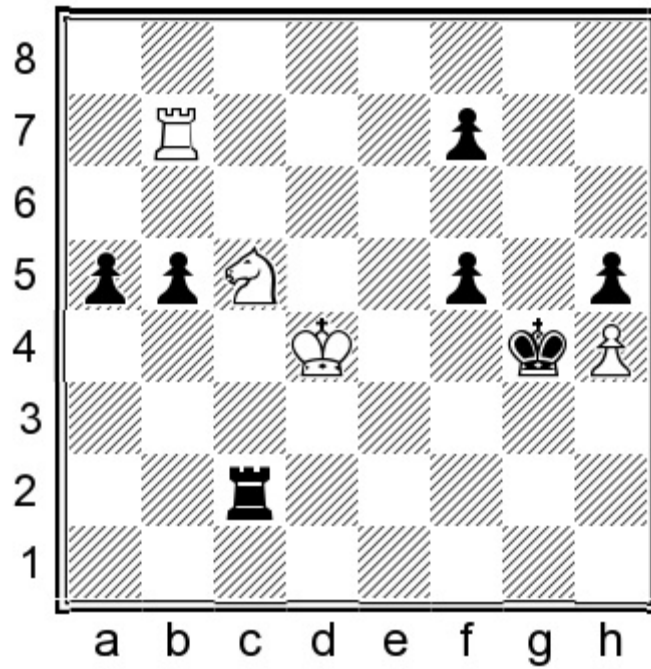
Position after: 55... ♔g2

56. ♖f4! f2 57. ♗xf2 ♖c4+ [57...♖xf2 58. ♖g5=] 58. ♖xc4 a1=♚ 59. ♗d3□=

A2) 53...♖h3!! 54. ♗d3 [54. ♖e4 ♖g3-+] 54...f3 55. ♗f4+ [55. ♖e3 ♖g3-+] 55...♖h2 56. ♖a3 f2

57. ♖h3+ ♔g1 58. ♖g3+ ♔f1 59. ♖a3 ♔e1-+

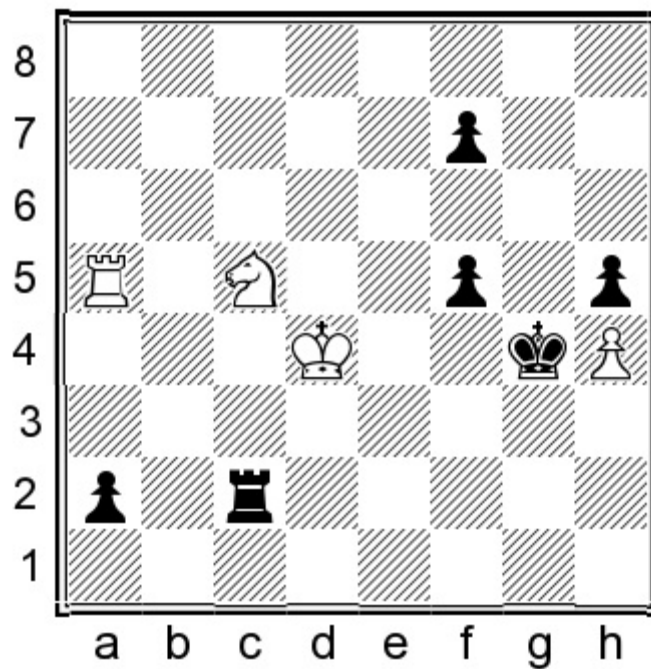
B) 49. ♖a7? a4-+



Position after: 49. ♖b7!!

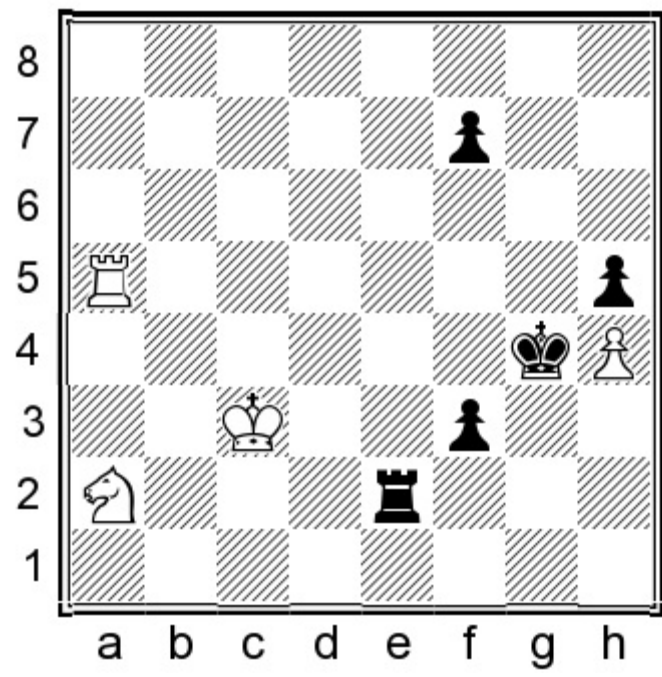
49... ♖c4+

A) 49... a4 50. ♖xb5 a3 51. ♖a5 a2



Position after: 51... a2

A1) 52. ♖d3? f4! [52... ♖xh4 53. ♗b4 ♜g2 54. ♗xa2 f4 55. ♗c3=] 53. ♗b4 ♞d2+ 54. ♖c3 ♞e2! 55. ♗xa2 f3



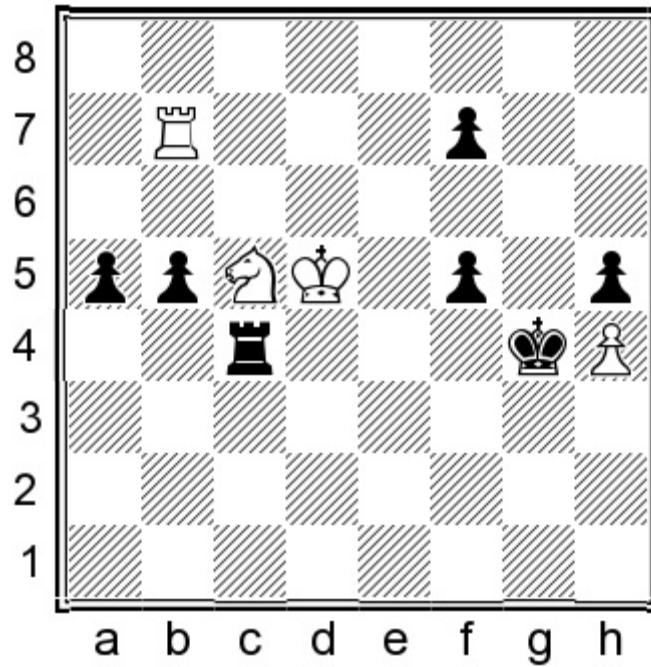
Position after: 55...f3

56. ♞a4+ [56. ♗c1 f2 57. ♞g5+ ♖xh4 58. ♞f5 ♞e1 59. ♞xf2 ♞xc1+ 60. ♖d3 ♞c7 61. ♖e4+] 56... ♖g3
 57. ♗c1 ♞e5 58. ♗d3 ♞f5 59. ♞a1 f2 60. ♗xf2 ♞xf2 61. ♞g1+ ♖xh4 62. ♖d3+

A2) 52. ♗b3! f4 53. ♖d3 ♞b2 54. ♗d2 f3 55. ♖c3=

B) 49...b4 50. ♞xf7= Now that the queenside pawns cannot make progress, White can shift his focus elsewhere and take the f7-pawn.

50. ♖d5



Position after: 50. ♔d5

50... ♖b4

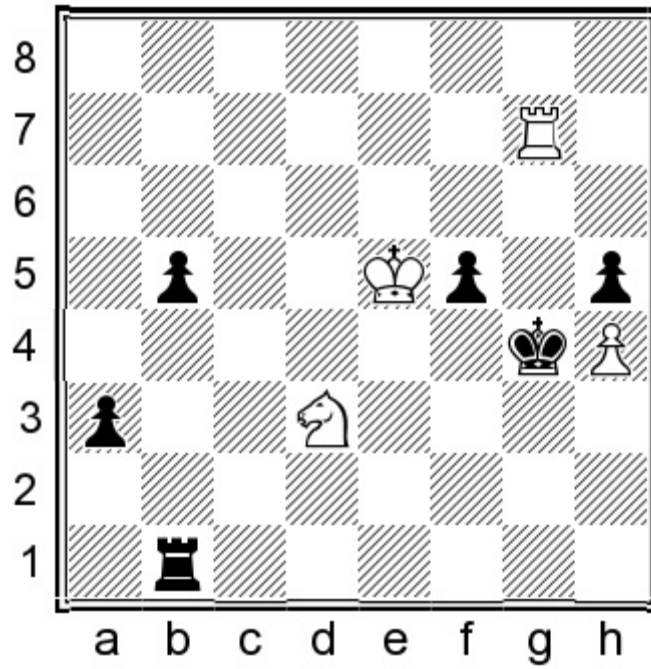
Only with the aid of this clumsy maneuver is Black able to push his passed a-pawn.

After 50...f4 51. ♖xb5 ♖c2 52. ♗e4 White holds easily.

51. ♖xf7 a4 52. ♗d3! ♖b1

52... ♖b3 53. ♖g7+ ♔xh4 54. ♗f4 ♖b2 55. ♔e5 a3 56. ♔xf5 a2 57. ♖a7 b4 58. ♗d3=

53. ♔e5 a3 54. ♖g7+



Position after: 54. ♖g7+

54... ♔xh4

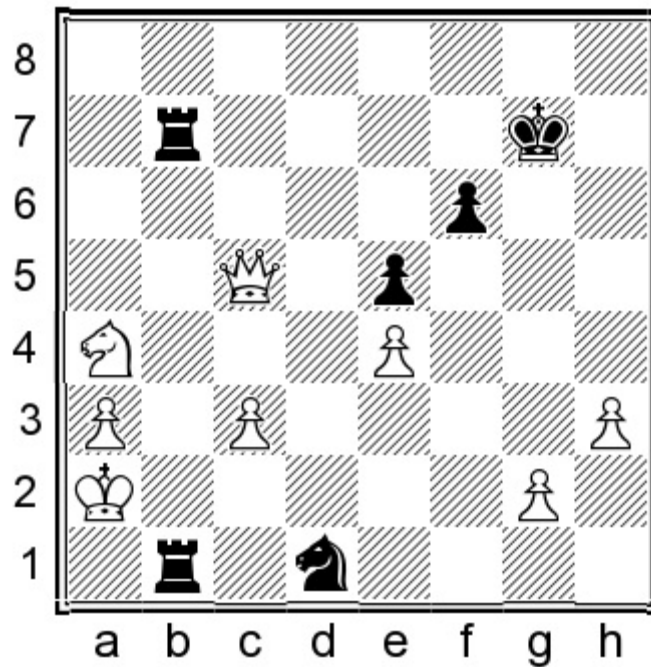
54... ♔f3 55. ♖a7 ♖b3 56. ♗c1 ♖c3 57. ♗a2=

55. ♗f4 a2 56. ♗g2+ ♔h3 57. ♗f4+=

Chapter 1 Exercises

1

Svidler, P. – Indjic, A.



□ Black has a big threat: ...♘d1-b2!. Amazingly, salvation can be found in the weakest member of the fight. Find the drawing move!

Show/Hide Solution

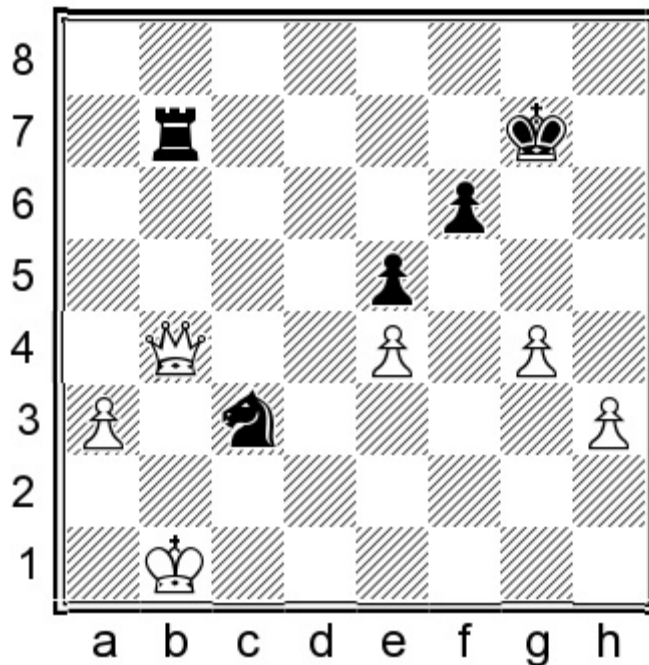
1

42.g3!!

A solution worthy of a medallion.

A) The game itself continued with the active but careless 42.g4? with the idea of g4-g5, but after 42...♘b2! 43.♙xb1 [43.♘b6 ♘d3 44.♚d6 ♜7xb6 45.♚e7+ ♔h6 and the black king escapes.]

43... ♖xa4+ 44. ♕b4 ♗xc3+--+



Position after: 44... ♗xc3+--+

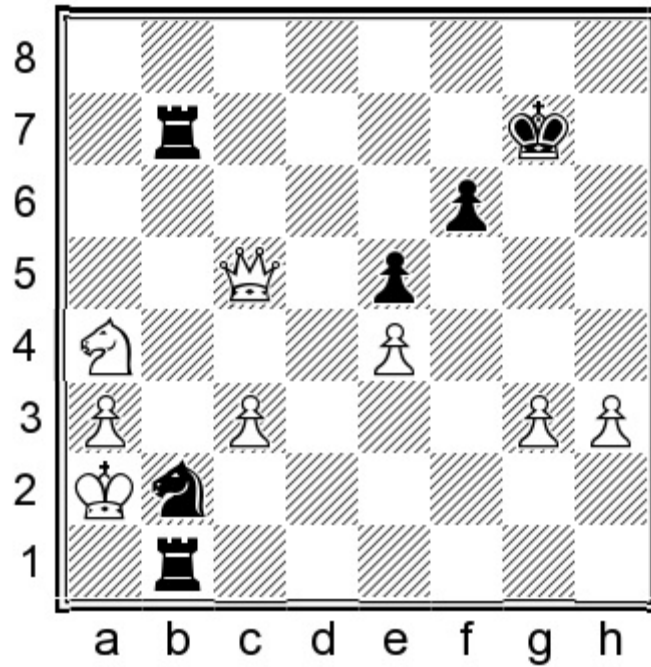
Black won easily: 45. ♖c2 ♜xb4 46. axb4 ♗xe4 47. b5 ♗d6 48. b6 ♖f7 49. h4 ♖e6 50. ♖c3 ♖d7 51. ♖d3 ♖c6 52. g5 ♖xb6 0-1 Svidler, P (2756) – Indjic, A (2604) Porto Carras 2018.

B) 42. ♕a5 ♗e3 43. c4 ♜1b3!--+

C) 42. c4? ♗c3+!--+

D) 42. ♕c6? ♗e3--+

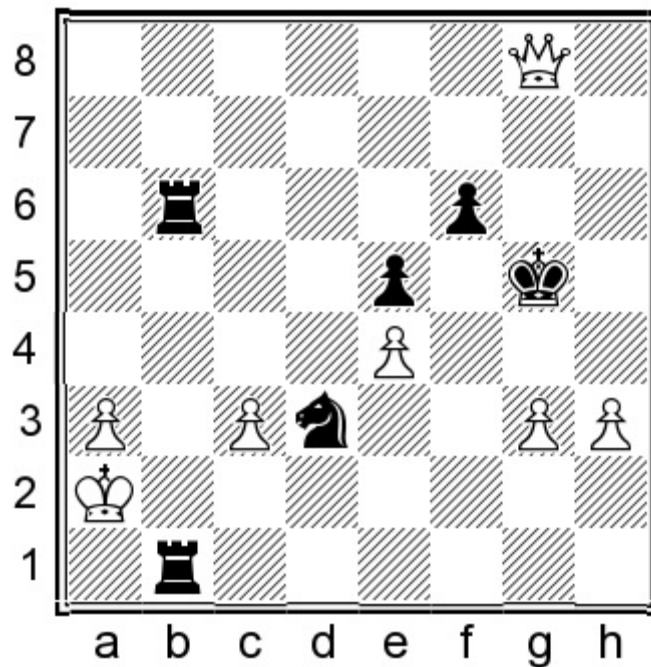
42.g3!! ♗b2



Position after: 42... ♖b2

With the pawn placed on g3, this tactical strike is no longer dangerous.

43. ♖b6 ♜d3 44. ♚d6 ♜7xb6 45. ♚e7+ ♔g6 46. ♚e8+ ♔g5 47. ♚g8+=

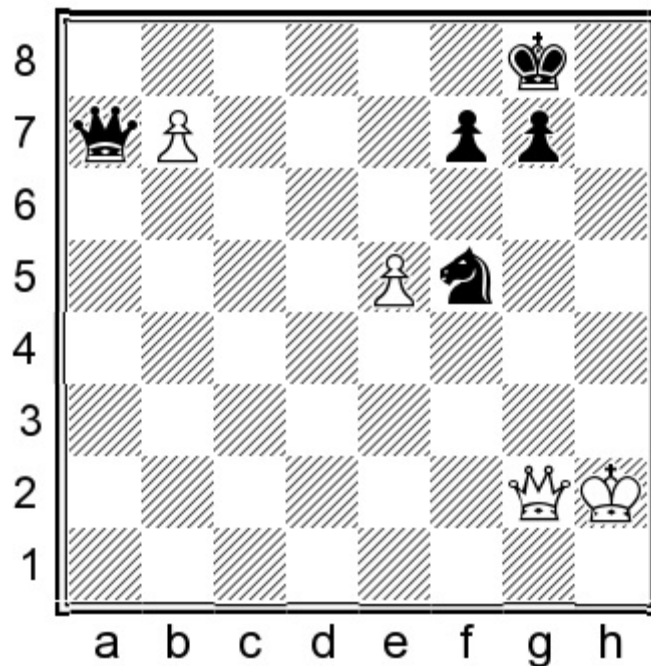


Position after: 47. ♚g8+=

The black king cannot escape the checks — the f4-square is controlled by the important g3-pawn.

2

Korobov, A. – Durarbayli, V.



□ In the game, White played 52. ♔c2 and ran into a difficult queen endgame after 52... ♕xb7 53. ♕xf5. Was there a tougher defense?

Show/Hide Solution

2

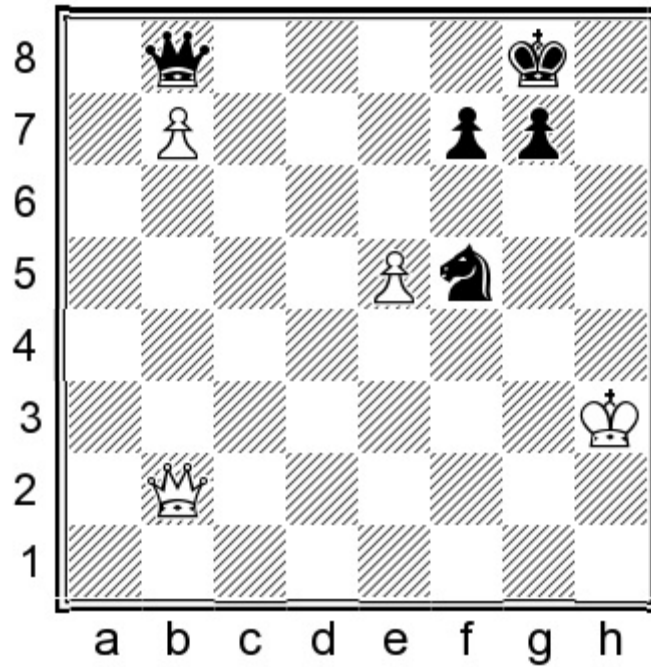
52. ♕b2!

If he really wants to, then he can be saved!

A) White overlooked this opportunity and lost after 52. ♕c6? ♖f2+ 53. ♕g2 ♖b6–+ 0-1 (63) Korobov, A (2705) – Durarbayli, V (2584) Baku 2012.

B) 52. ♕c2? leads to a difficult queen endgame: 52... ♕xb7 53. ♕xf5 ♕c6–+

52. ♕b2! ♖b8 53. ♔h3!



Position after: 53. ♔h3!

Despite the clear extra piece, White effortlessly keeps the equilibrium, for example:

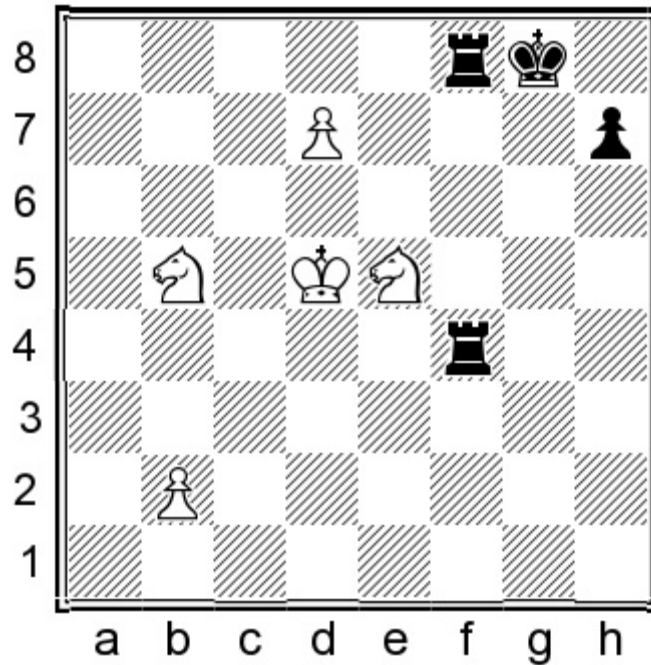
53... ♘e7

53... g5 54. ♕d2 [54. ♕b5=] 54... ♕xb7 55. ♕xg5+ ♘g7 56. ♕d8+=

54. ♕b5! g6 55. ♕d7 ♔f8 56. ♔g2 g5 57. ♔f3=

3

Onischuk, A. – Vitiugov, N.



■ White has annoying threats (45.♘d6/45.♘d4). Black should move his f4-rook to behind the pawn on the d-file. But where to, f2 or f1?

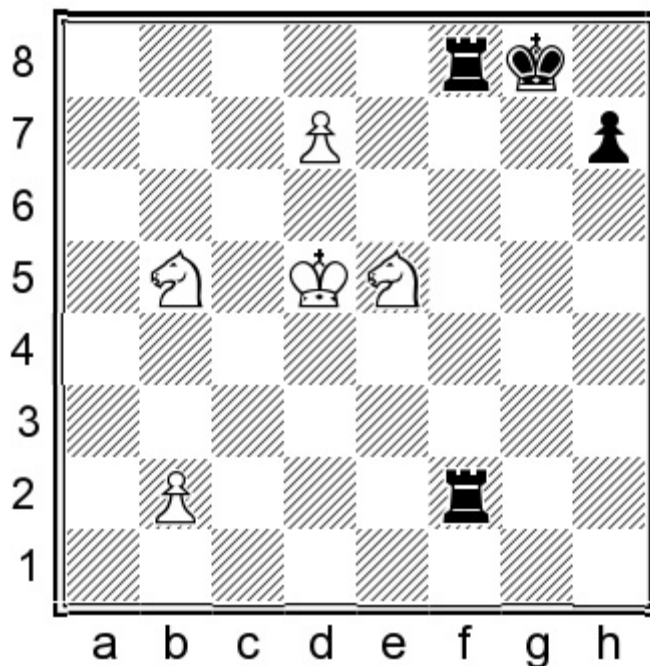
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3

Black has a solid material advantage, but this is not enough to win on its own. White's passed pawn has gone too far astray. Of course, Black cannot wait to play his main trump: his passed pawn. However, White will answer the immediate pawn move with a fork on g6, bringing chaos to the black ranks. Therefore, the next idea that Black should consider is to transfer the rook to the d-file, from where it can keep an eye on White's dangerous passed pawn. Only after that can he push his own passed pawn forward.

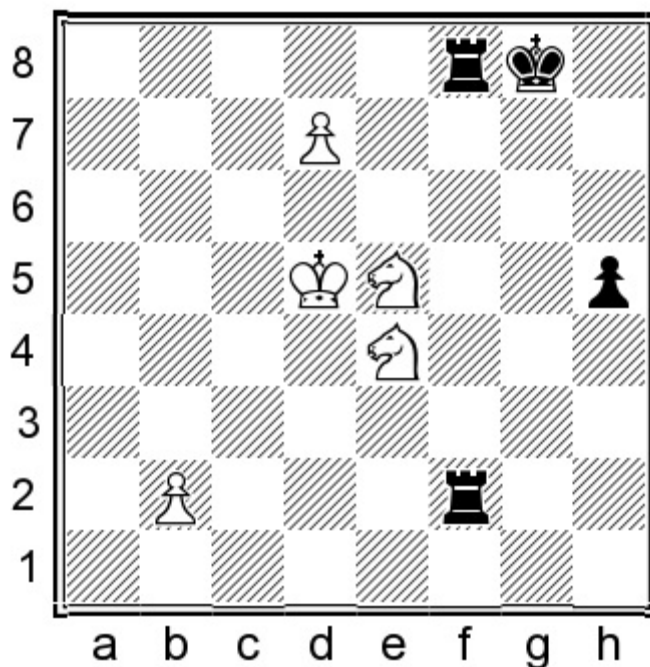
45...♖f1!

45...♖f2?



Position after: 45...♖f2?

This move seems stronger because, just in case, Black also targets the b-pawn, but this merely leads to a draw... 46.♘d6! [46.♘d4 may also hold: 46...♞d2 47.♘ec6 h5 48.d8=♚ ♞xd8+ 49.♘xd8 h4 50.♘8c6 h3 51.♘e7+ ♔f7 52.♘ef5 ♔g6 53.♘g3 and the black rook is misplaced on d2 here as well, if 53...♔g5 54.♘e4+=] 46...h5 [46...♞xb2 47.♔e6=] 47.♘e4!



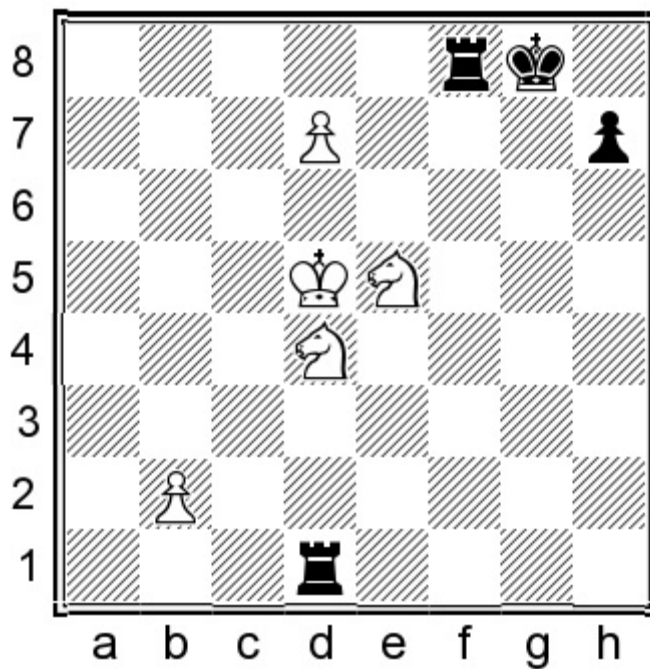
Position after: 47.♘e4!

An extremely important tempo! 47...♞f1 48.♔e6 h4 49.♘g6=

45...♖f1! 46.♗d4

Now the following is already useless: 46.♗d6 h5 47.♗e4 h4 48.♗g5 ♖g1!? 49.♗e6 h3 50.♗xf8 ♖d1+-
+.

46...♖d1

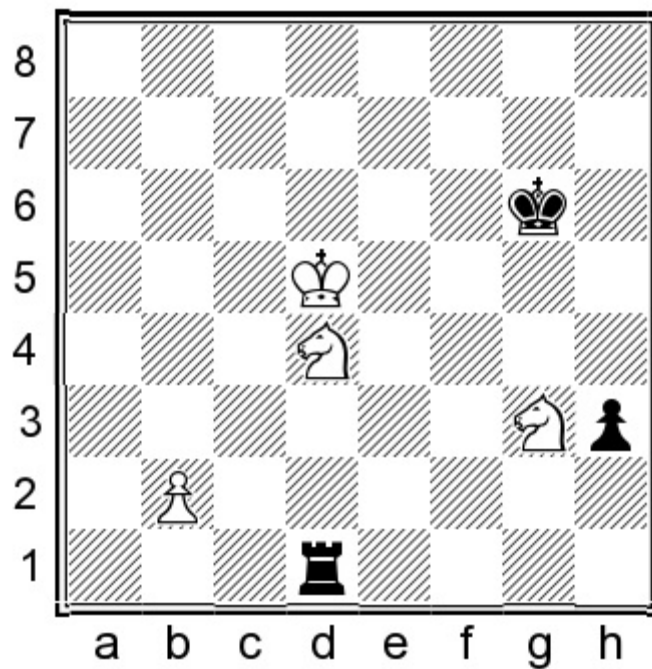


Position after: 46...♖d1

47.♗ec6

47.♔e4 h5+-

47...h5 48.d8=♚ ♖xd8+ 49.♗xd8 h4 50.♗8c6 h3 51.♗e7+ ♔f7 52.♗ef5 ♔g6 53.♗g3



Position after: 53. ♖g3

53...♔g5!

Here it becomes obvious why the rook should be on d1, and not d2.

54.♔e4

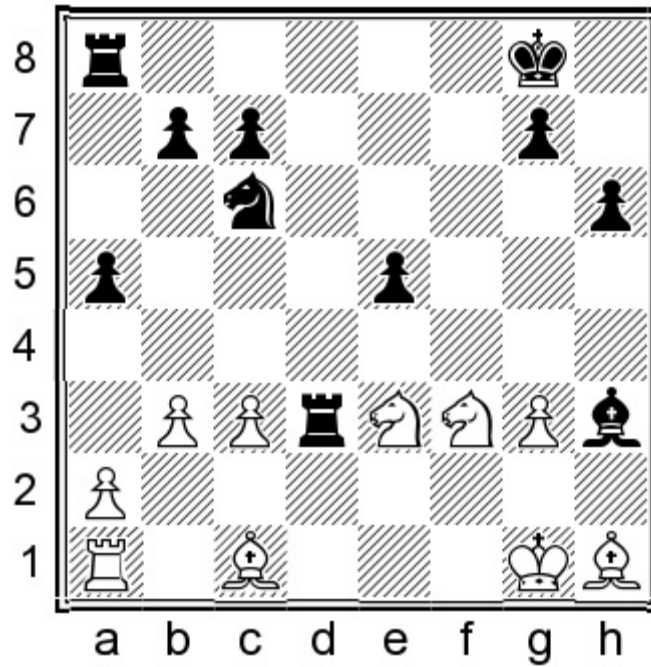
54.♗e4+ ♔f4! 55.♗f2 h2 and ...♞f1.

54...♔g4 55.♗de2 ♞e1 56.♔e3 ♞xe2+

0-1 Onischuk, A (2685) – Vitiugov, N (2720) Khanty-Mansiysk 2017.

4

Vajda, L. – Kravtsiv, M.



□ If White can succeed in solving his temporary problems, then he has the better chances. How can this be achieved?

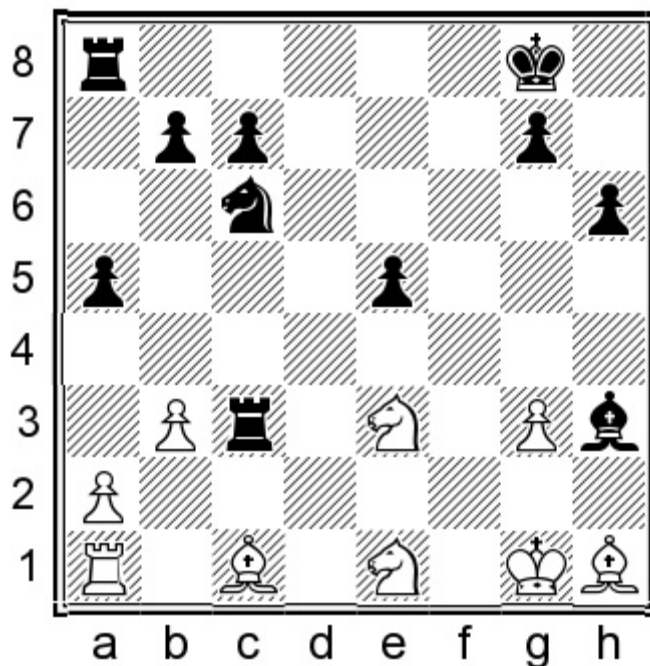
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4

25. ♖e1!!

The game continued 25.c4?! ♕e6!? 26. ♖e1 ♜d7 27. ♕xc6 bxc6 ∞ ½-½ (42) Vajda, L (2547) – Kravtsov, M (2641) Hungary 2018.

25. ♖e1!! ♜xc3



Position after: 25... ♖xc3

Of course, capturing a pawn is the most principled continuation.

After 25... ♖d6 26. ♗e4! (a great square for the bishop!) 26... ♖ad8 27. ♘f3± White has consolidated and has a comfortable advantage.

26. ♘d1!

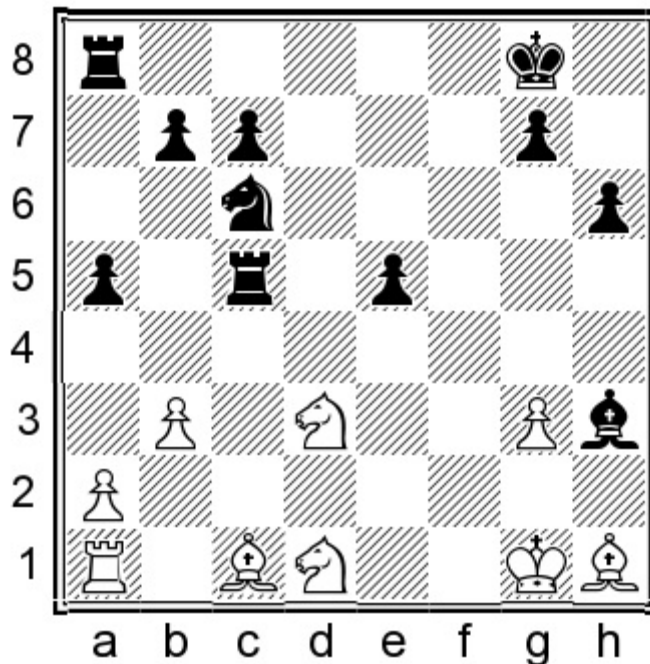
What a beautiful (and not obvious) way to go after the black rook!

Interesting, but not as good, is 26. ♗d2 ♖c5 27. ♘d3 ♖b5 28. a4 ♖b6. White stands better, but is still very far away from the win, at least from a practical point of view. 29. ♘c5 ♘d4 30. ♘d5 ♖f8 31. ♗xa5 ♖xb3±

26... ♖c5

26... ♖xg3+ 27. ♖h2 ♖d8 28. ♖xg3 ♖xd1 29. ♗xc6 bxc6 30. ♗b2+–

27. ♘d3



Position after: 27. ♘d3

27... ♖c2

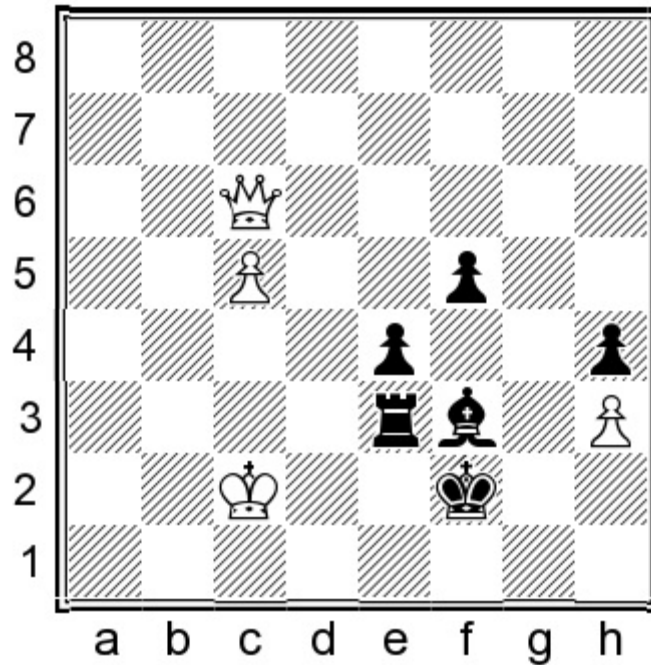
After 27... ♖d8!? Black sacrifices the exchange to preserve drawing chances, but White's extra piece should still be worth more than Black's activity: 28. ♘xc5 ♖xd1+ 29. ♔h2 ♙g4 30. ♙xc6 bxc6 31. ♔g2 ♖e1 32. ♘d3 ♖e2+ 33. ♔f1 g5 34. a4± Δ 34... ♔f7 35. ♖b1 ♔e6 36. ♖b2+-.

28. ♘e3 ♖c3 29. ♘f2! ♙e6 30. ♘e4+-

A marvelous dance by the knights led White into a technically winning position.

5

Werle, J. – Naiditsch, A.



■ Black has several possible rook moves, but only one wins – which?

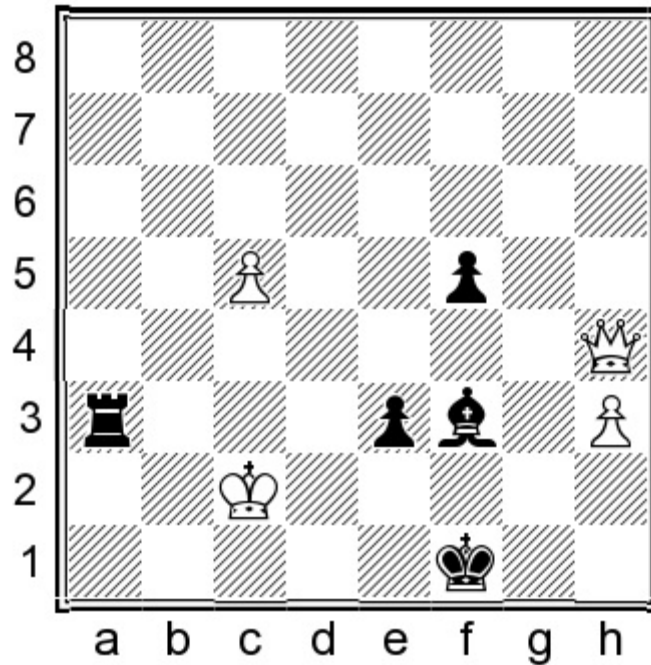
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5

56...♖e2+?

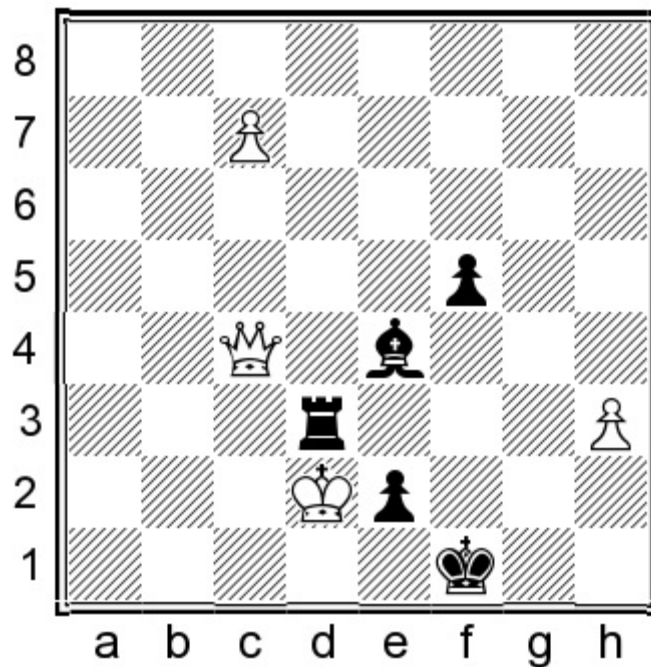
Black's desire to push his passed pawn is understandable but still, in order to succeed, one has to play more deeply and look a bit further ahead.

Winning was the seemingly modest 56...♖a3!. The rook here occupies an excellent position, does not get targeted by the white queen and links up with the bishop, which, as we will see, is very important in order to advance the passed pawn. 57.♕f6 e3 58.♕xh4+ ♔f1



Position after: 58...♔f1

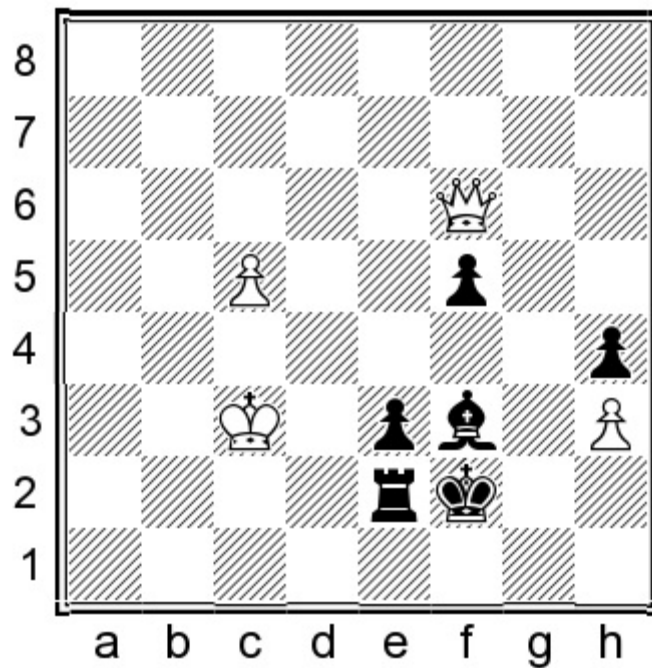
59.c6 [Pointless is 59.♕f4 e2! as the black bishop is now protected.] 59...e2 60.c7 ♘b7 61.♕c4 [61.♕f4+ ♖f3 62.♕c4 ♖f2 63.♔d2 f4-+] 61...♙e4+ 62.♔d2 [62.♔b2 ♖a8 63.h4 ♖c8 64.h5 ♖xc7 65.♕xc7 e1=♕-+] 62...♖d3+!



Position after: 62...♖d3+!

63.♕xd3 ♘xd3 64.c8=♕ e1=♕+ 65.♔xd3 f4!-+ The transition into a queen endgame was extremely unfortunate for the white side.

56...♖e2+? 57.♔c3 e3 58.♕f6



Position after: 58.♕f6

Now White holds.

58...♖a2 59.♕xh4+ ♔g2

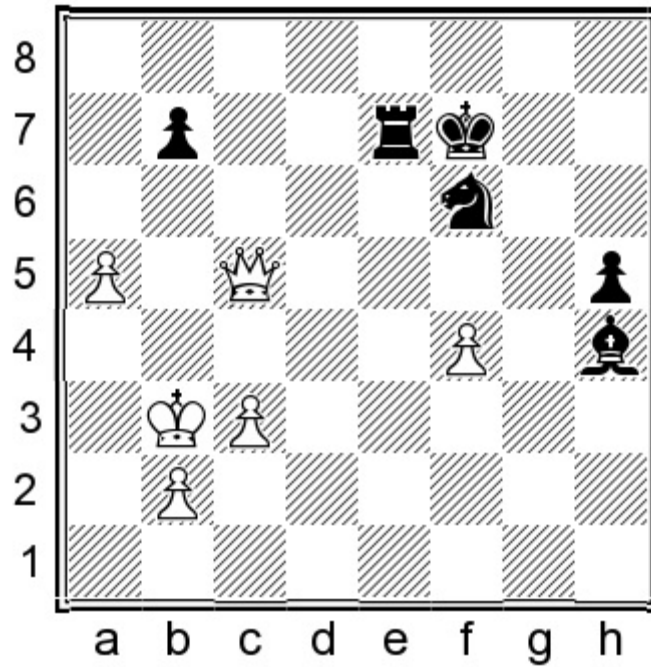
59...♔f1 60.♕f4!=

60.♕g5+ ♔f2 61.♕h4+ ♔g2 62.♕g5+ ♔f2

½-½ Werle, J (2555) – Naiditsch, A (2684) Hamburg 2017.

6

Najer, E. – Laznicka, V.



□ White should get going on the queenside – but must first take measures against Black’s h-pawn. Find a smart queen move!

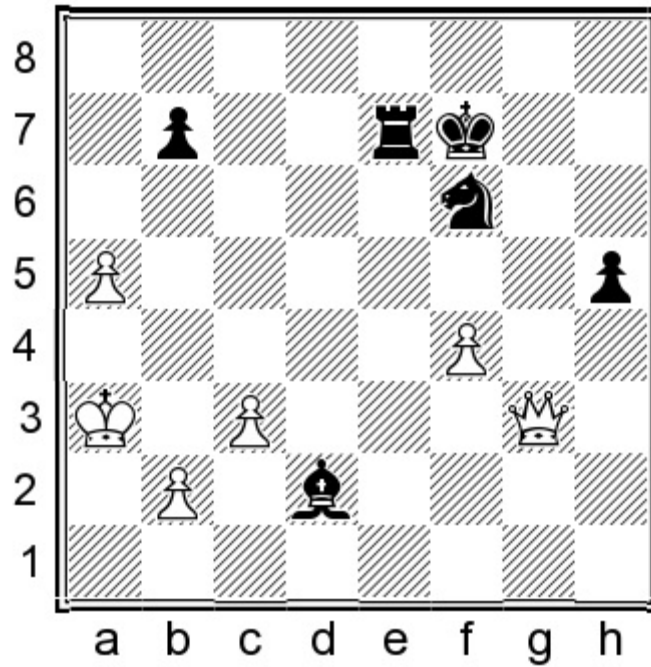
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6

47. ♔g1!!±

With this subtle move, White is preparing the advance of f4-f5 in order to get the queen to g6, restraining the opponent’s pieces. After that, he can start thinking about moving his own pawns.

A) The game continued 47. ♔a3 ♚e1 48. ♔g5 ♚d2 49. ♔g3.

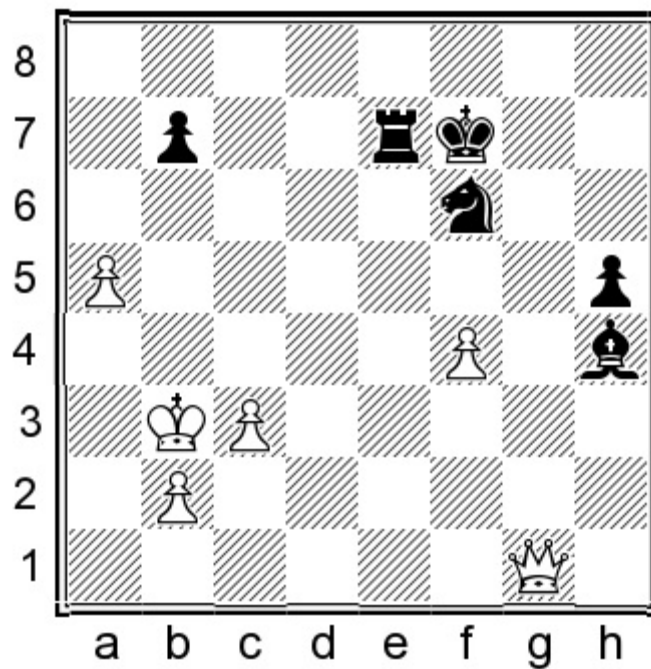


Position after: 49. ♔g3

It was necessary to create obstacles for the white queen. 49... ♖e4 [Blacks was slow to react 49... ♖d7? 50.f5 ♔f8 51.♔a4 ♖e7 52.c4 ♙e1 53.♔g5 ♖f7 54.♔e3 ♙h4 55.b4+- ½-½ (77) Najer, E (2634) – Laznicka, V (2667) Czech Republic 2015.] 50. ♔h4 ♖f6±

B) 47.f5? ♖e4 48. ♔g1 ♙g5=

47. ♔g1!!±



Position after: 47. ♔g1!!±

47...♔e1

It is difficult for Black to defend without moving the h-pawn, for example: 47...♖e4 48.f5 ♔f8 49.♙h2 ♘e8 50.c4+–.

48.f5 ♘g4 49.♙h1 ♘f6

49...h4 50.♙d5+ ♔f6 51.♙d6+ ♔f7 52.♙g6+

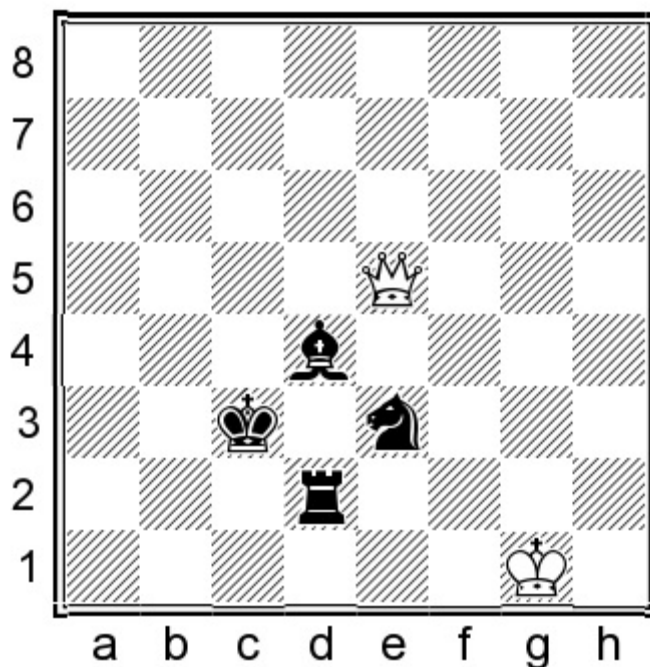
50.♙g2 ♘g4

Black loses his coordination, and now White's pawns will be quicker.

51.♙d5+ ♔f8 52.♙d6 ♘h4 53.c4 ♘f6 54.c5 h4 55.c6 bxc6 56.a6 ♔f7 57.♙xc6+–

7

Mchedlishvili, M. – Sanikidze, T.



□ The position is drawn, but White's king is in a danger zone. Which check would you give, 73.♙a5+ or 73.♙c7+?

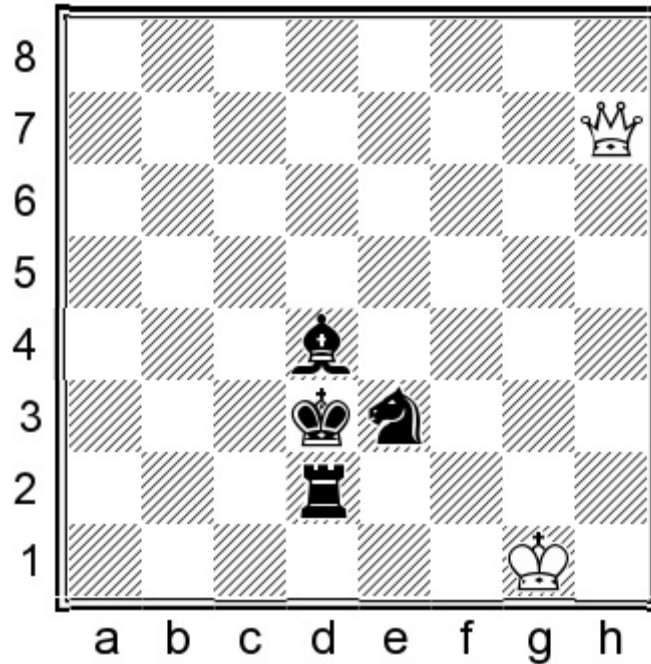
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7

73. ♖a5+?

Surprisingly, after this move, White can no longer be saved.

A) Correct was 73. ♖c7+ ♔d3 74. ♗h7+ ♚.

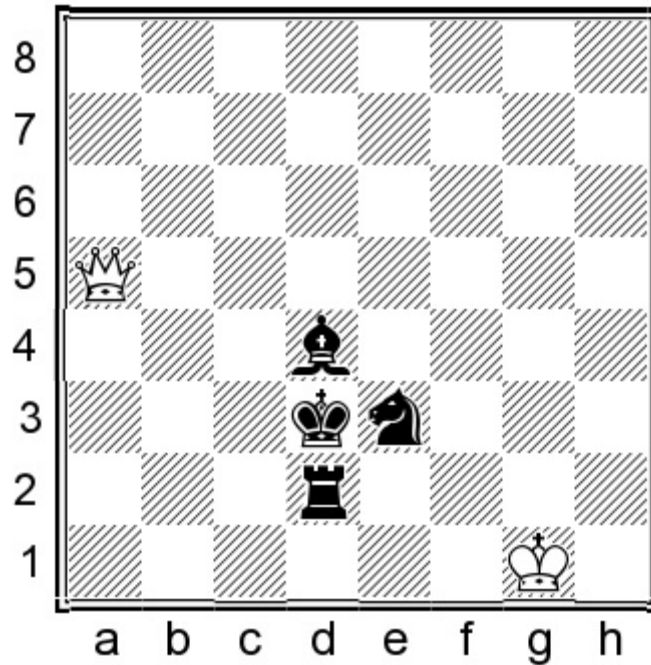


Position after: 74. ♗h7+ ♚

Here, the main defensive idea is not to allow the black king onto the f-file. 74... ♞f5+ Since the king cannot break through to the kingside, Black is forced to remove his knight from the e3-square, making life a little easier for the black king. [74... ♔e2 75. ♗h5+ =] 75. ♔f1 ♖f2+ 76. ♔e1 ♖f3 77. ♗d7! ♞e3 78. ♗b5+ ♞c4 [78... ♔e4 79. ♗d3+ =] 79. ♗b1+ =

B) 73. ♗g3!? was also possible.

73. ♖a5+? ♔d3!



Position after: 73...♔d3!

73...♔c2 74.♞c7+=

74.♞a6+

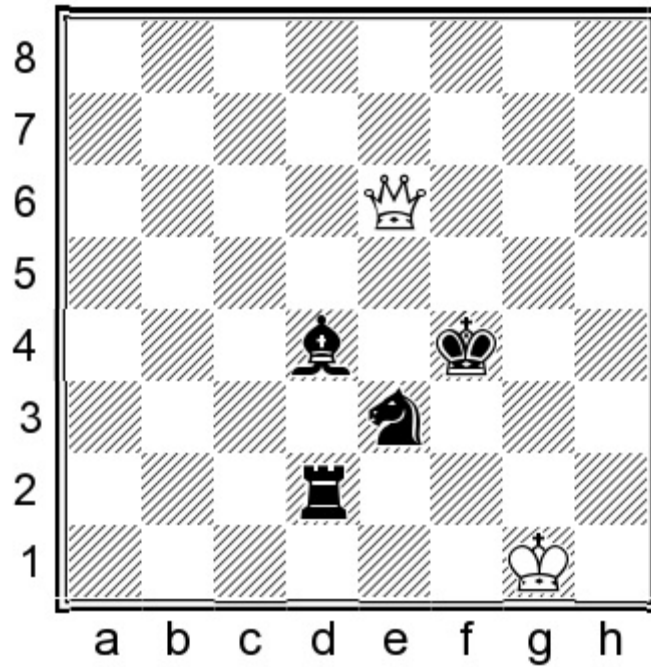
74.♞b5+ ♔e4 75.♞c6+ ♔f4 76.♞h6+ ♔g4 77.♞e6+ [77.♞g6+ ♔f3 and the black knight will cover the next check.] 77...♔g3 78.♞d6+ ♔f3 79.♞c6+ ♖d5+ 80.♔h1 ♜d1+ 81.♔h2 ♙e5+ 82.♔h3 ♜h1#

74...♔e4!

In the game, Black did not fully understand the advantages of his position and played 74...♞c4+? 75.♔h1 ♜d1+ 76.♔g2 ♔c3 77.♞c8 ♜g1+ 78.♔f3 ♜f1+ 79.♔g2=. The king broke free from the danger zone, and the game ended in a draw. ½-½ (110) Mchedlishvili, M (2587) – Sanikidze, T (2508) Tbilisi 2015.

75.♞c6+

A) 75.♞e6+ ♔f4

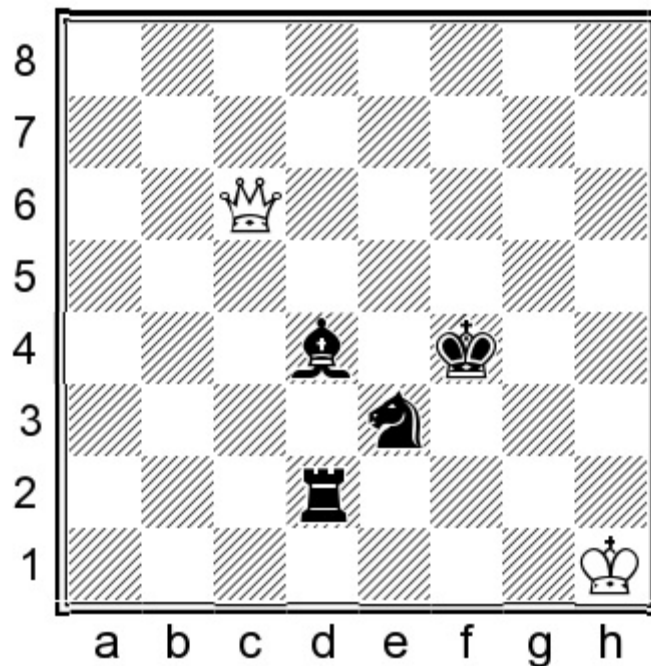


Position after: 75...♔f4

76.♚h6+ [76.♚f7+ ♔g3-+; 76.♚h3 ♘g4+ 77.♔f1 ♕e3 78.♔e1 ♖c2 79.♚h7 ♕f2+ 80.♔d1 ♘e3#]
 76...♔g4! [The last trick: 76...♔g3? 77.♚h2+!!=.] 77.♚g6+ ♔f3-+

B) 75.♚b7+ ♔f4-+

75...♔f4 76.♔h1



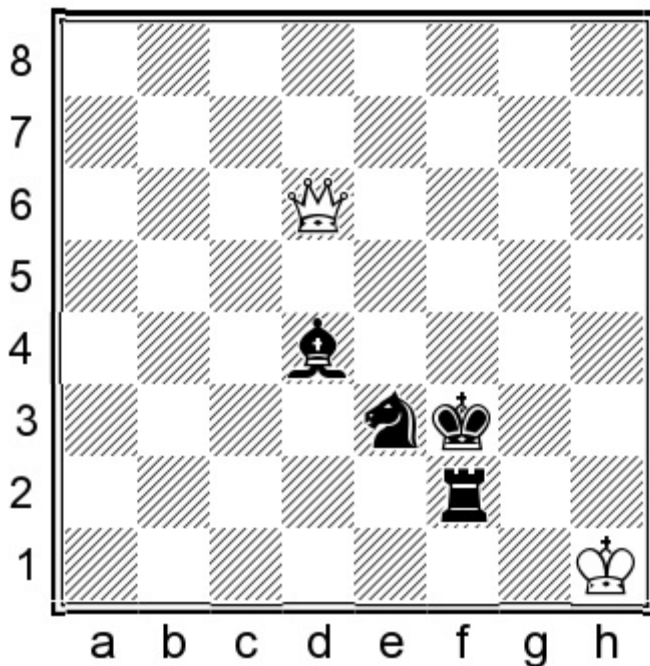
Position after: 76.♔h1

Now, when the black king participates in the attack, Black gradually weaves a mating net while he dodges the white queen's checks.

76...♖f2

76...♞d1+!? 77.♔h2 ♕e5 78.♔h3 ♞d6 79.♚a4+ ♔d4 80.♔h2 ♞d8 81.♚c6 ♕e5 82.♔g1 ♔g3 83.♚g6+ ♘g4 84.♔f1 ♕c3 85.♔e2 ♞d2+ 86.♔f1 ♖f2+ 87.♔g1 ♕d4 88.♚d6+ ♘e5--+

77.♚d6+ ♔f3!



Position after: 77...♔f3!

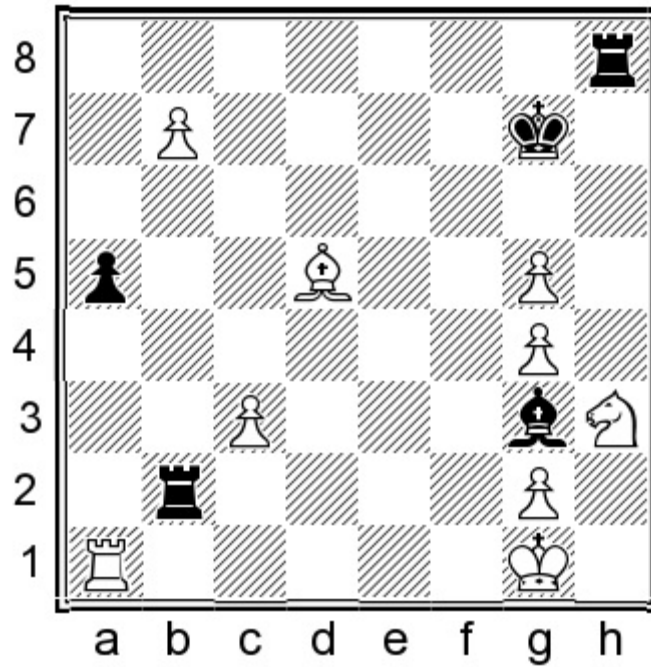
78.♚f8+

78.♚xd4 ♖f1+ 79.♔h2 ♘g4+--+

78...♔g3 79.♚d6+ ♖f4 80.♚g6+ ♘g4 81.♚d6 ♕e5 82.♚d3+ ♖f3 83.♚e2 ♕c3 84.♚b5 ♞e3--+

8

Rapport, R. – Kramnik, V.



□ Find the prophylactic move that keeps the balance!

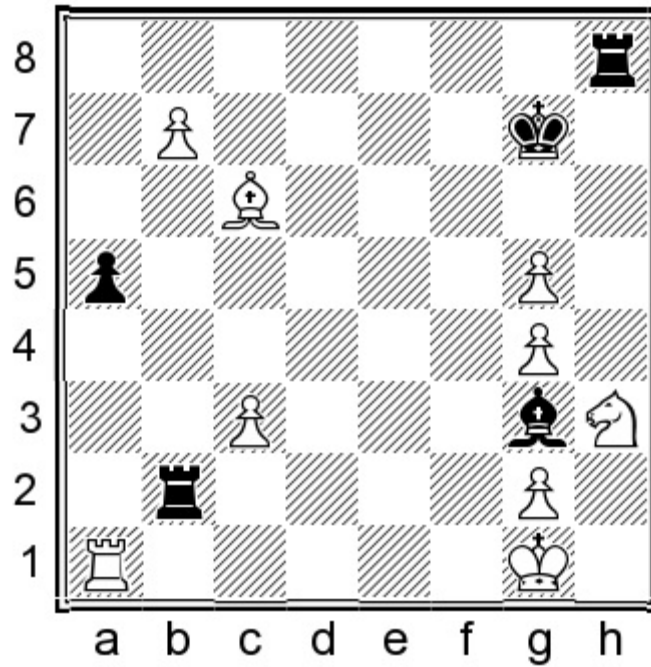
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8

43.g6?

White is trying to release the knight from imprisonment, but it was even more important to prevent Black from pushing his a-pawn.

A) This could have been achieved with an only move: 43.♔c6!

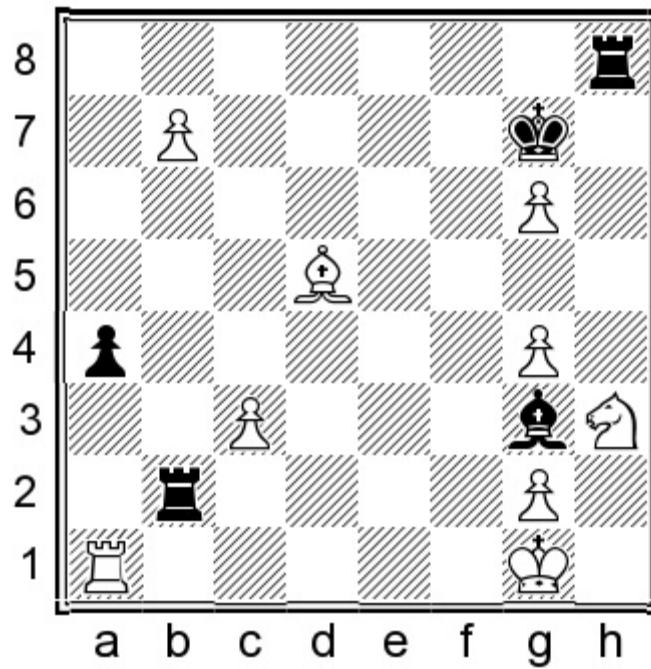


Position after: 43. ♕c6!

(preventing ...a5-a4, but also ...♖h8-e8) 43...♞d8 44.g6!? ♔xg6 45.♞f1=

B) 43.♔f1? ♞e8+

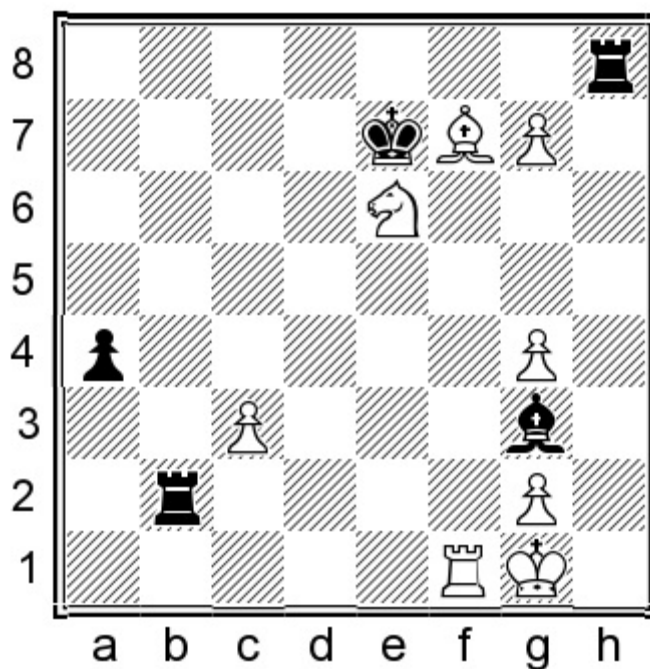
43.g6? a4!



Position after: 43...a4!

44.♔f1

44.♙f7 does not change the evaluation of the position: 44...♖xb7 45.♘g5 ♜b2 46.♘e6+ ♔f6 47.♖f1+ ♔e7 48.g7



Position after: 48.g7

48...♙f2+! 49.♖xf2 ♜b1+ 50.♖f1 ♜h1+ 51.♔xh1 ♖xf1+ 52.♔h2 ♔xf7-+

44...♖e8

44...♖d8 also looks good: 45.c4 and only now 45...♖e8 46.♘g5 a3 47.♘e6+ ♔xg6 48.♖xa3 ♜h8!-+.

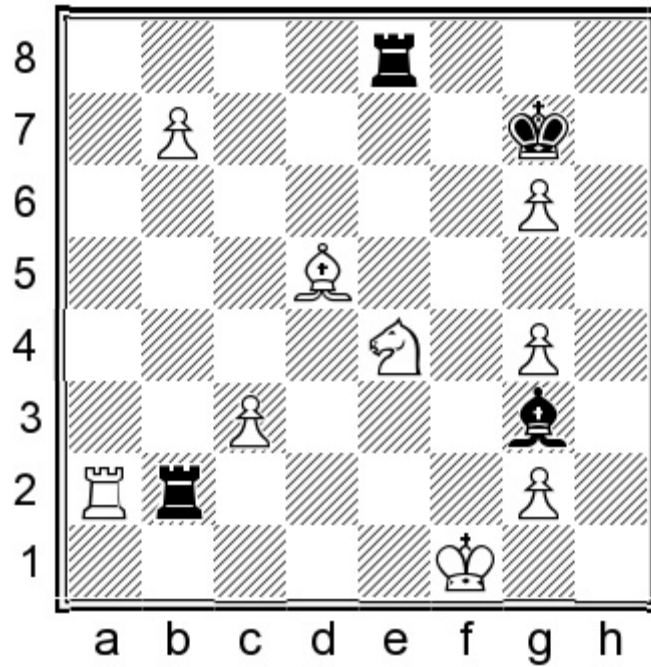
45.♘g5

45.b8=♚ ♖bxb8 46.♘g5 ♜e3-+

45...♖e5?

Being on the verge of victory, Black misses the win and allows the full point to slip away.

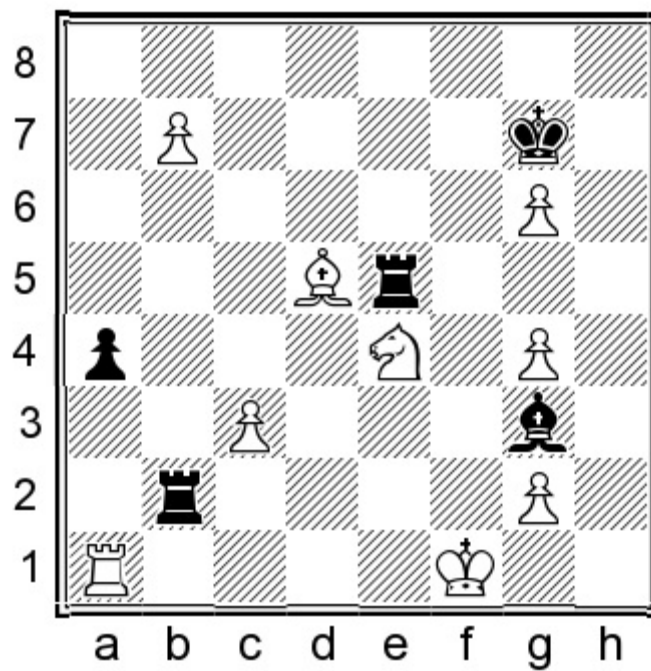
The graceful 45...a3 would have won 46.♘e4 a2 47.♖xa2.



Position after: 47. ♖xa2

47... ♜xe4!-+ [47... ♜xa2? 48. ♘xg3=]

46. ♘e4



Position after: 46. ♘e4

46... ♜xd5 47. ♘xg3 ♜dd2 48. ♘f5+=

½-½ (94) Rapport, R (2731) – Kramnik, V (2777) Wijk aan Zee 2019.

Chapter 2

Defense

In this chapter, various defensive techniques will be discussed. One often comes across the general notion that an active defense is always better than a passive one. However, this is, of course, not the case.

It all depends on the specific situation. In situations where your experience tells you that a standard type of defense is unlikely to save the game, it may be a good idea to create additional practical problems for your opponent. This is worthwhile, even if a crisis may be awaiting you should the opponent solve the practical problems that you posed. On the other hand, a solid and dragged out defensive procedure may also allow the defending side to attain the desired outcome, since the opponent might get tired, or spend too much time trying to find a win.

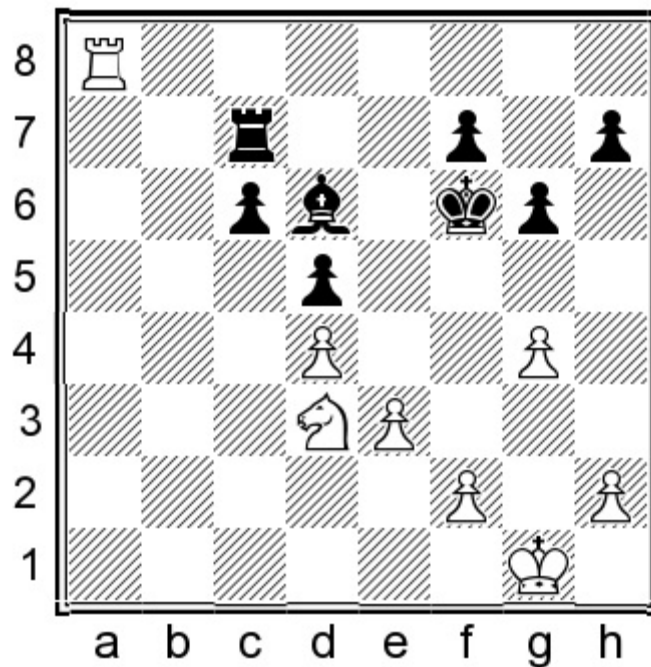
It is difficult to provide a specific recipe, as each case is unique. Furthermore, the same position might call for different approaches, depending on the player.

Thus, your chess instinct and experience will aid you in making the best decision. The examples discussed in this chapter are designed to help you in this respect.

Example 1

From Kotov – Pachman

Sora 1950



Black to move

Let us consider the famous game in which I managed to find an important improvement, which had not previously been detected.

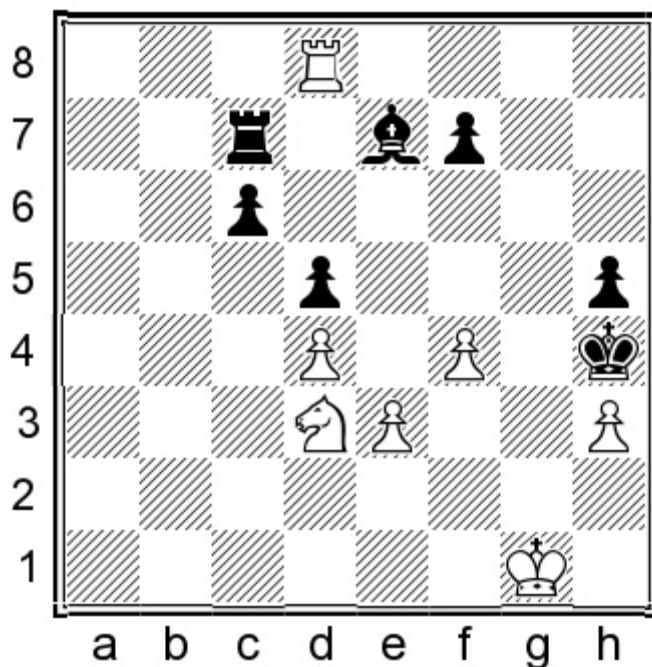
43...♔g5!

This move escaped the commentators notice. The game continued 43...♔e6?! 44.♔g2± and White converted the advantage technically: 1-0 (69) Kotov, A – Pachman, L Venice 1950.

43...♔g5! 44.h3 f5!

It is beneficial for Black to exchange the pawns.

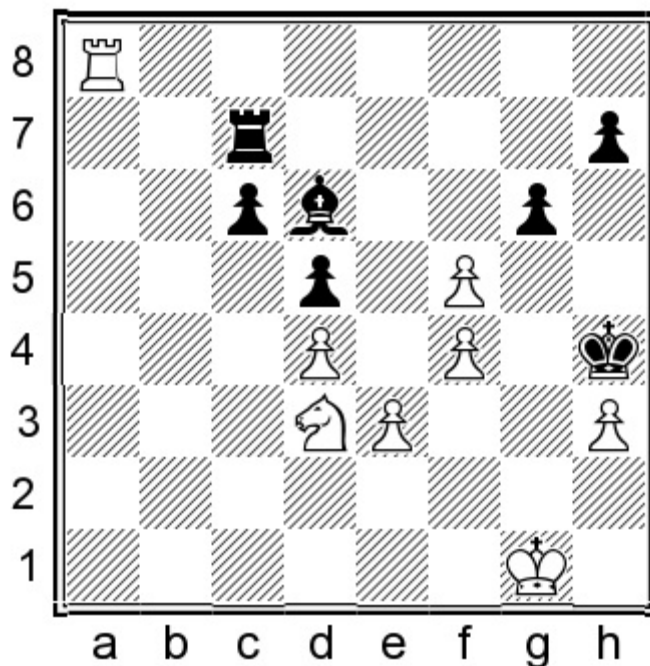
However, if he plays 44...h5?, then after 45.f4+ White will have an advantage because the principal move 45...♔h4? [⊞ 45...♔f6 46.gxh5±] can lead to 46.gxh5 gxh5 47.♖d8! ♔e7



Position after: 47...♔e7

48.♔g2!! ♖a7 49.♖d7! ♖xd7 50.♗e5+- with an inevitable checkmate.

45.f4+ ♔h4 46.gxf5



Position after: 46.gxf5

46...♔g3!!

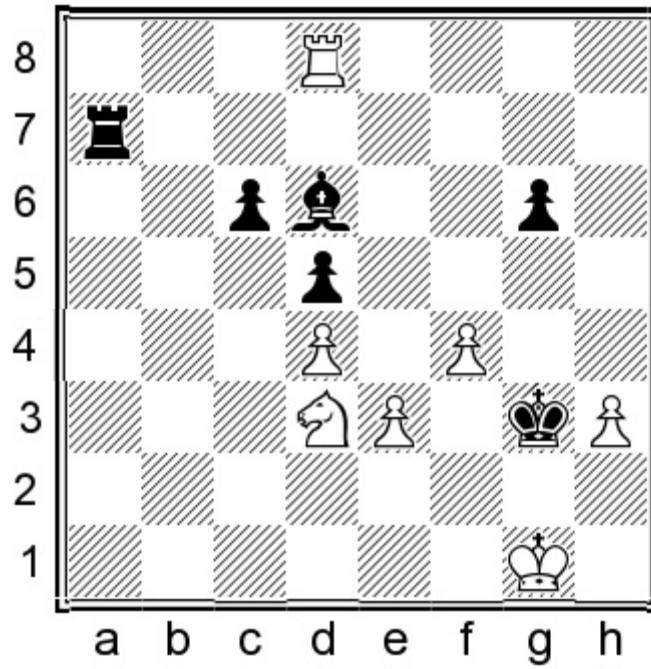
A type of move which usually slips away during long calculations, because we are accustomed to recapture automatically. It can be assumed that precisely this difficult move was overlooked during calculation. Thanks to the activity of the black king and despite being a pawn down, Black has no problems.

It should be noted that a poor position is reached after 46...gxf5? 47.♔f2 ♔xh3 48.♞a1 ♔g4 49.♞h1+-

47.fxg6

47.f6 ♞f7!?=

47...hxg6 48.♞d8 ♞a7

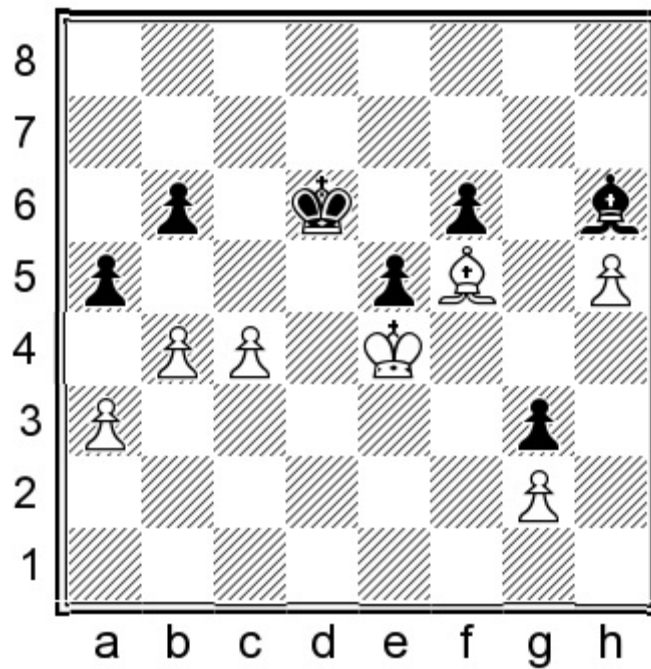


Position after: 48...Ra7

49.♔f1 ♕c7 50.♖d7 ♜a1+ 51.♔e2 ♜a2+ 52.♔d1 ♕a5 53.♘e5 ♕d2=

Example 2

From Korobov – Sutovsky
Poikovsky 2018



Black to move

31...a4!

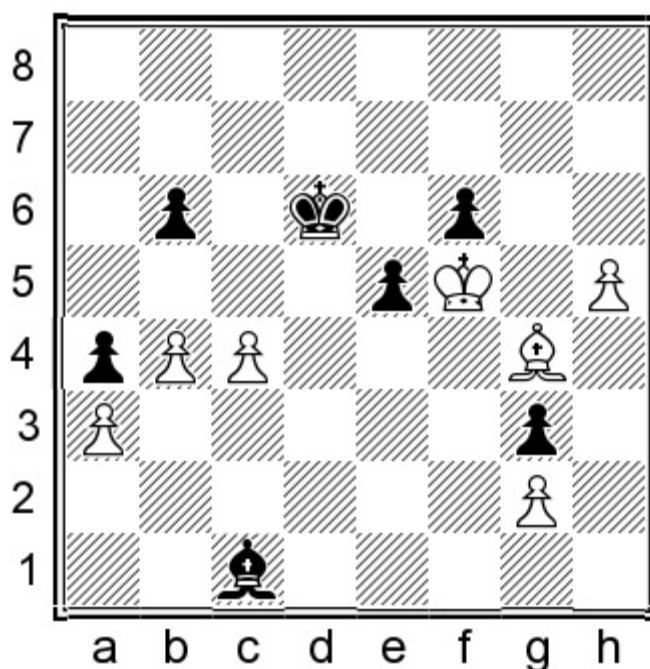
It must be acknowledged that this move does not actually save Black, however, White's path to victory becomes very thorny and it's not obvious that White would navigate through it without stumbling...

It is generally considered that pawn exchanges aid the defending side, which is probably why Black played the following move without much hesitation. 31...axb4? 32.axb4 and it turns out that Black is defenseless against the plan of the white king moving to b5. 32...♙d2 33.♔d3 ♗h6 34.♔c3 ♗f8 35.♔b3 ♔e7 36.c5 bxc5 37.bxc5 ♔f7 38.c6 ♗d6 39.h6 1-0.

31...a4! 32.♗g4

Clearing the way for the white king to the kingside, but Black is in time for counterplay.

32...♗c1 33.♔f5



Position after: 33. ♔f5

33...e4!

33...♔e7? 34.♔g6 f5 35.h6! ♗xh6 36.♔xh6 fxg4 37.♔g5+-

34.♗e2!!

One has to admit that finding the only winning move in a practical game is not easy, even for an experienced player.

34.♔xe4? f5+ 35.♔xf5 ♗xa3 36.♗d1 ♗xb4 37.♗xa4 ♗c3=

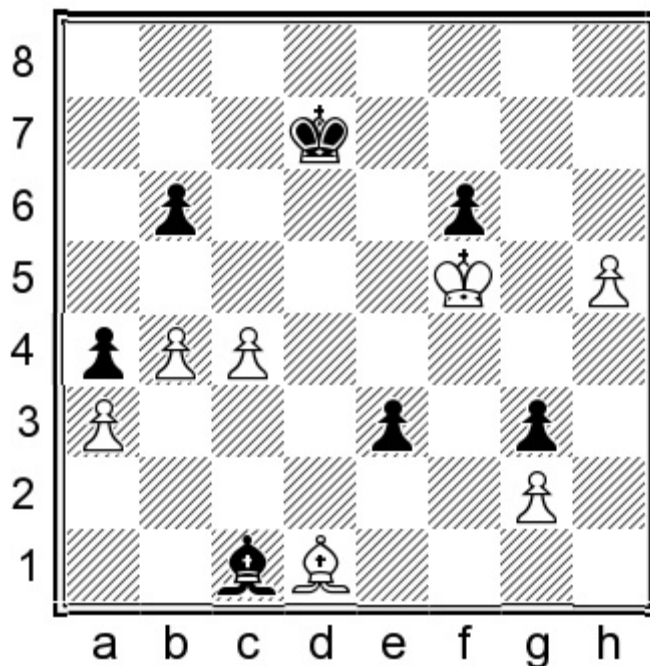
34...♔d7!

Now, in order to win, White needs to resist the temptation to attack the a4-pawn with tempo.

34...♔e7?! 35.c5 bxc5 36.bxc5+-

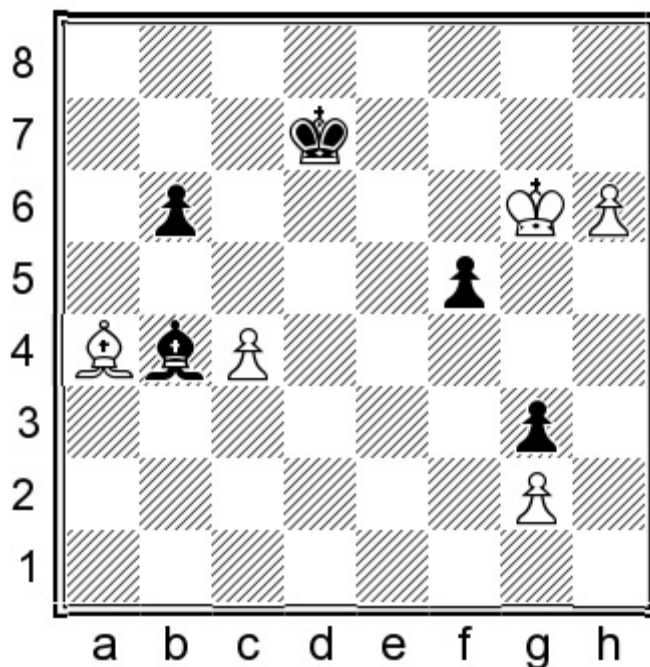
35.c5!

The natural and seemingly very strong 35.♙d1 actually only leads to a draw. 35...e3!



Position after: 35...e3!

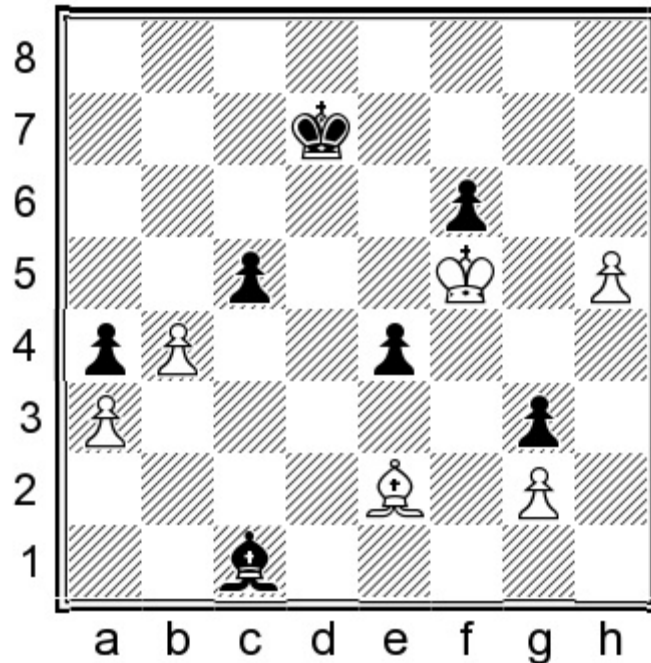
36.♙g6 [36.♙xa4+ ♔e7 37.♙d1 ♙xa3 38.h6 ♔f7=] 36...♙xa3 37.h6 e2 38.♙xe2 f5 39.♙d1 ♙xb4 40.♙xa4+



Position after: 40. ♖xa4+

40...♔d6!! [40...♕e6? 41.♕g7!+-] 41.♕xf5 [41.♕g7 ♕c5!]=] 41...♗c3=

35...bxc5



Position after: 35...bxc5

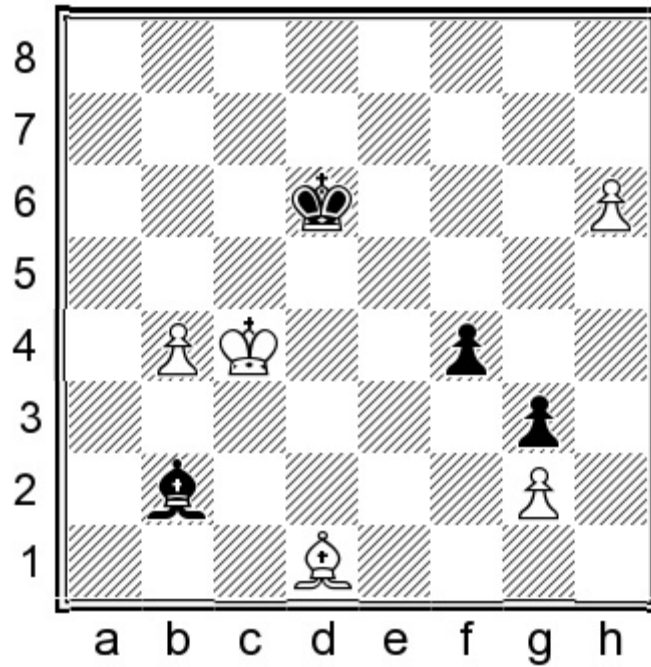
36.♗b5+!

36.bxc5? ♕c6! =

36...♔d6 37.♗xa4 c4 38.♕xe4 ♗xa3

38...f5+ 39.♕d4 ♗xa3 40.♕xc4 ♗c1 41.b5+-

39.h6 f5+ 40.♔d4! ♗b2+ 41.♕xc4 f4 42.♗d1+-

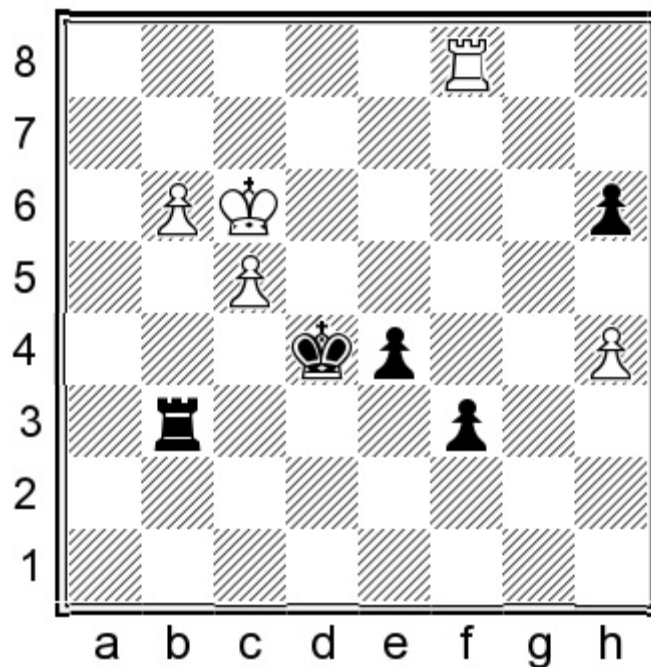


Position after: 42.♙d1+-

On the board is a typical endgame position which in Russian is referred to as “pants”. Black will have to give up his bishop for one of the pawns.

Example 3

From Sorensen – Bjerring
Copenhagen 1996

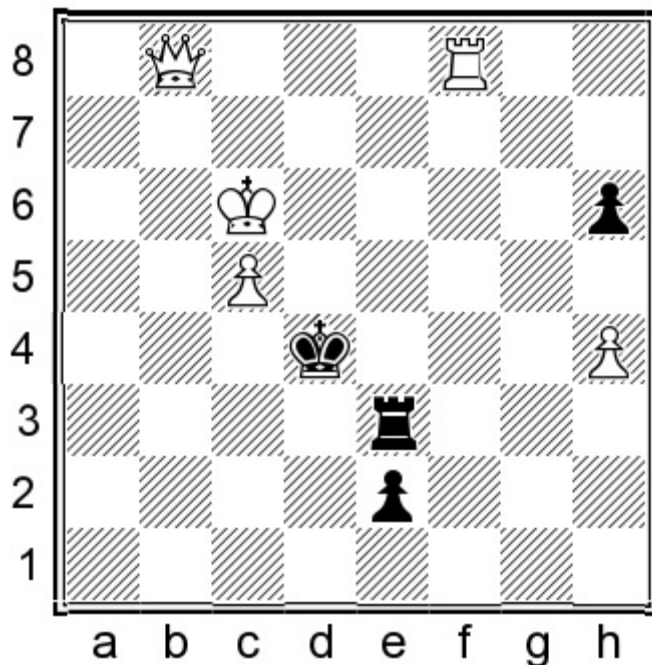


White to move

It appears as though White is winning...

51.b7

A) In the game, White lost time by playing 51.♖f5?!, to which Black replied by donating a gift 51...e3??. Practically any other move would have led to a draw. 52.♖f4+!+- 52...♔e5 53.♖xf3 e2 54.♖f8 ♖e3 55.b7 ♔d4 56.b8=♔

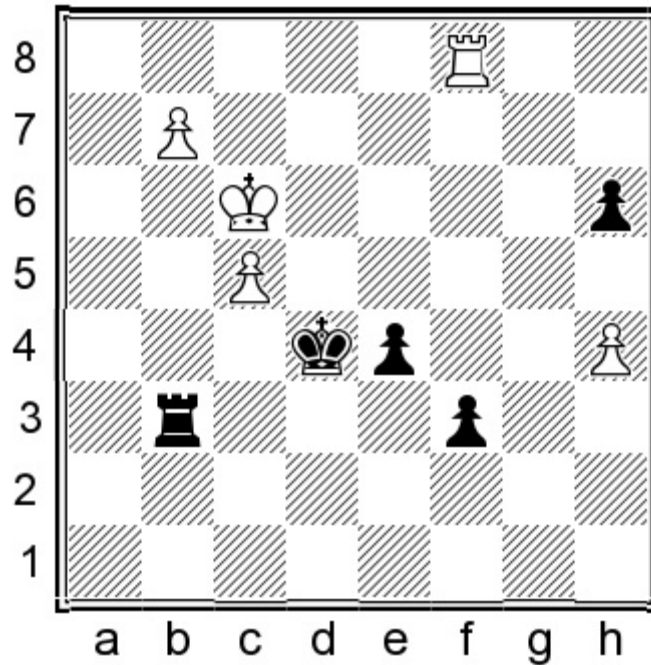


Position after: 56.b8=♔

56...♖e6+ [56...e1=♔ 57.♖f4+ ♖e4 58.♔e8+-] 57.♔d7 e1=♔ 58.♖f4+ ♔xc5 59.♔a7+ ♔b5 60.♔a4+ 1-0 Sorensen, T (2275) – Bjerring, K (2365) Copenhagen 1996.

B) 51.h5 ♔e3 52.b7 ♔f2=

51.b7

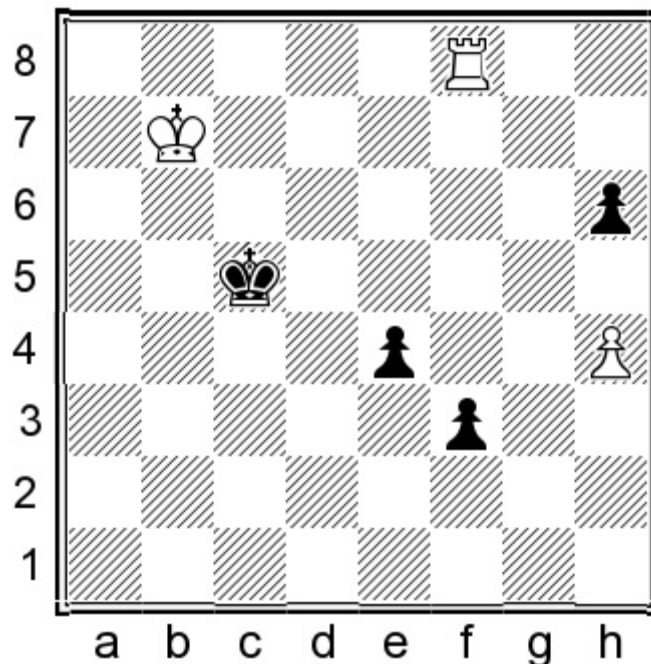


Position after: 51.b7

51...h5!!

Psychologically, it is extremely hard to make such a move as it is difficult to ignore the fact that White is about to queen. Black, instead of engaging in a race to promotion, moves the h-pawn for some reason – rather strange isn't it? In fact, if you take a closer look, White has no decisive threats, (except perhaps the h4-h5 push), so Black has time. The position of the h-pawns are very important when transitioning into pawn endgames.

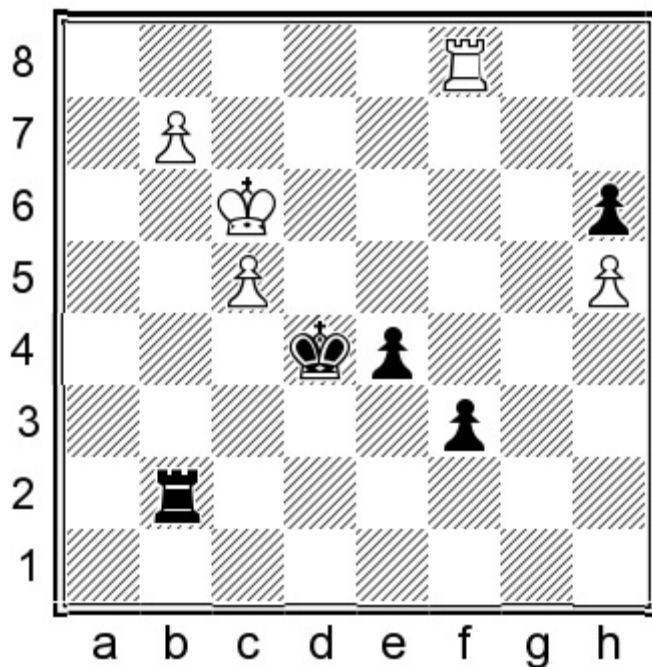
A) Clearly losing is 51...♖xb7 52.♔xb7 ♔xc5



Position after: 52... ♔xc5

53.h5 [To win, White doesn't even have to make the move h4-h5: 53.♔c7 ♕d5 54.♔d7 ♕e5 55.♔e7 h5 56.♖f7+–] 53...♔d4 54.♔c6 e3 [54...♔e3 55.♔d5 f2 56.♖xf2 ♕xf2 57.♔xe4+–] 55.♖f4+!+–

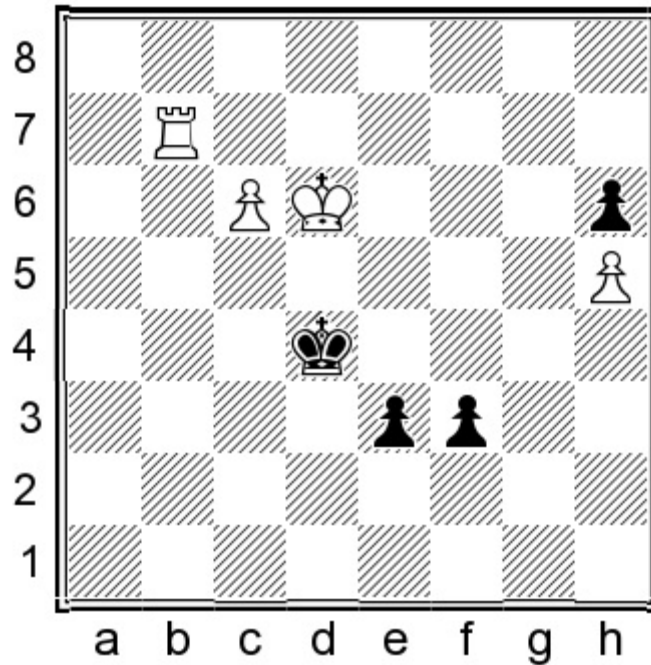
B) If, in the previous version, the position of the h-pawns were unimportant, then why was Black's first move necessary? The secret is not immediately revealed... 51...♖b1 52.h5 ♖b2 Black simply stands in place:



Position after: 52... ♖b2

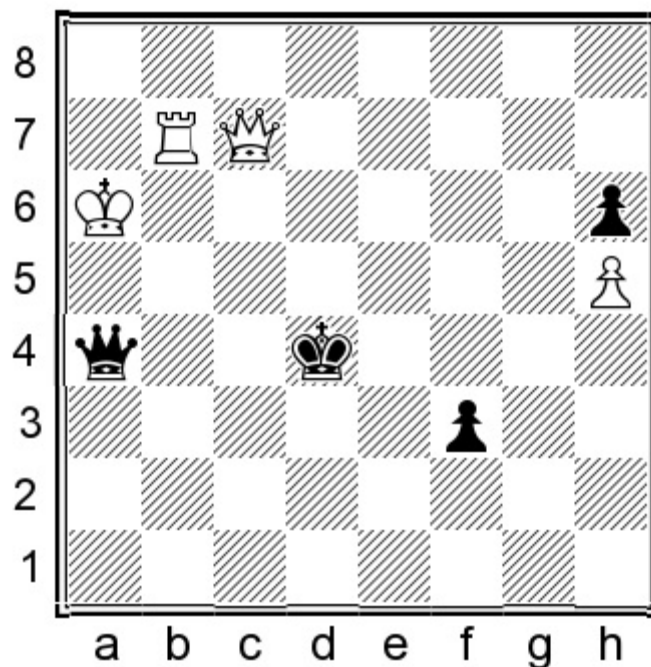
B1) It seems that there is no other winning plan for White, for example: 53.♖f5 ♖b1 54.♔c7? [54.♖f7!] 54...e3 55.♖f4+ ♔xc5 56.♖xf3 ♔d4=

B2) 53.♖f7! ♖b1 54.♔d6 ♖xb7 55.♖xb7 e3 56.c6



Position after: 56.c6

56...e2 [56...f2 57.♖b4+ ♔d3 – or 57...♔c3 58.♖f4 e2 59.c7 – 58.c7 f1=♚ 59.c8=♚ ♚f6+ 60.♚e6+–]
 57.c7 e1=♚ 58.c8=♚ ♚e5+ 59.♔d7 ♚f5+ 60.♔c7 ♚c5+ 61.♔b8 ♚e5+ 62.♚c7 ♚e8+ 63.♔a7 ♚a4+
 64.♔b6 ♚b3+ 65.♔a6 ♚a4+ and only now does it become clear how important the position of the h-pawns is. With a white pawn on h5, he obtains a winning position upon transitioning into the pawn endgame.

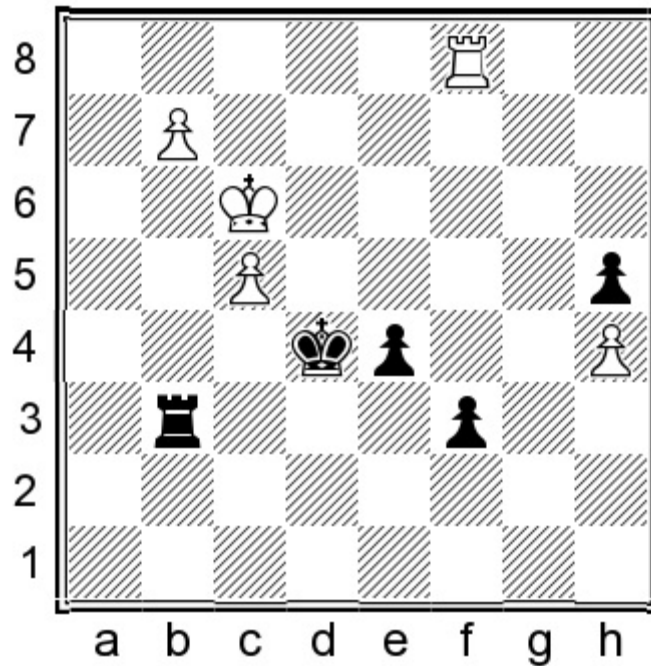


Position after: 65...♚a4+

66.♚a5! ♚xa5+ 67.♔xa5 f2 68.♖f7 ♔e3 69.♔b4 ♔e2 70.♔c4 f1=♚ 71.♖xf1 ♔xf1 72.♔d4 ♔f2

73.♔e4!+-

Back to 51...h5.



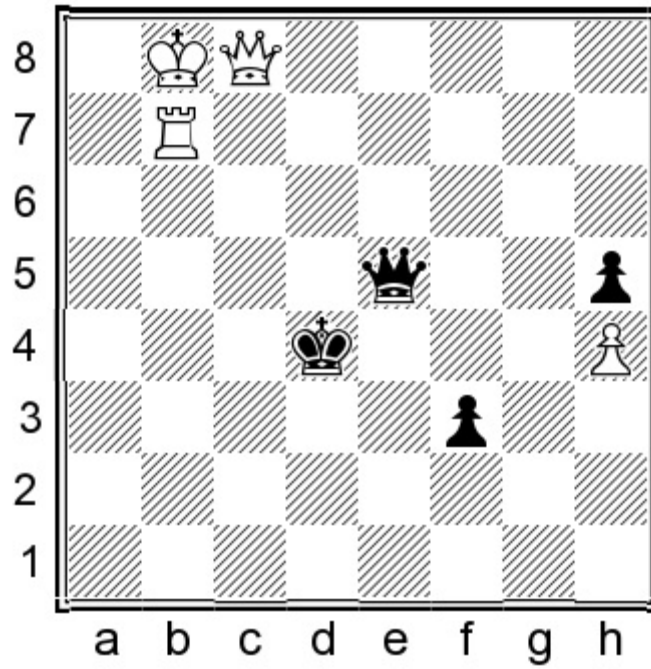
Position after: 51...h5!!

With the black pawn on h5, the winning plan shown above no longer brings White to victory — the position is drawn:

52.♖f7

52.♖f5 ♖b1 53.♔c7 e3 54.♖f4+ ♔xc5 55.♖xf3 ♔d4 56.♖f8 e2 57.♖e8 ♔d3 58.b8=♚ ♖xb8 59.♔xb8 ♔d2 60.♔c7 e1=♚=

52...♖b1 53.♔d6 ♖xb7 54.♖xb7 e3 55.c6 e2 56.c7 e1=♚ 57.c8=♚ ♚e5+ 58.♔d7 ♖f5+ 59.♔c7 ♖c5+ 60.♔b8 ♖e5+



Position after: 60... ♕e5+

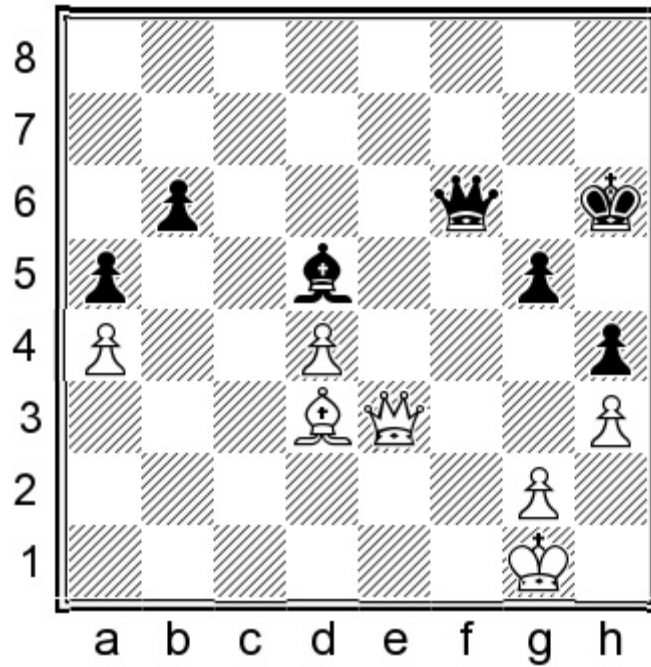
61. ♖c7

61. ♖c7 ♗b5+=

61... ♗e8+ 62. ♔a7 ♖a4+ 63. ♔b6 ♗b3+ 64. ♔a6 ♖a4+ 65. ♗a5 ♗xa5+ 66. ♔xa5 ♖f2 67. ♖f7 ♔e3
68. ♔b4 ♔e2=

Example 4

From Giri – Kovalev
Dortmund 2018



White to move

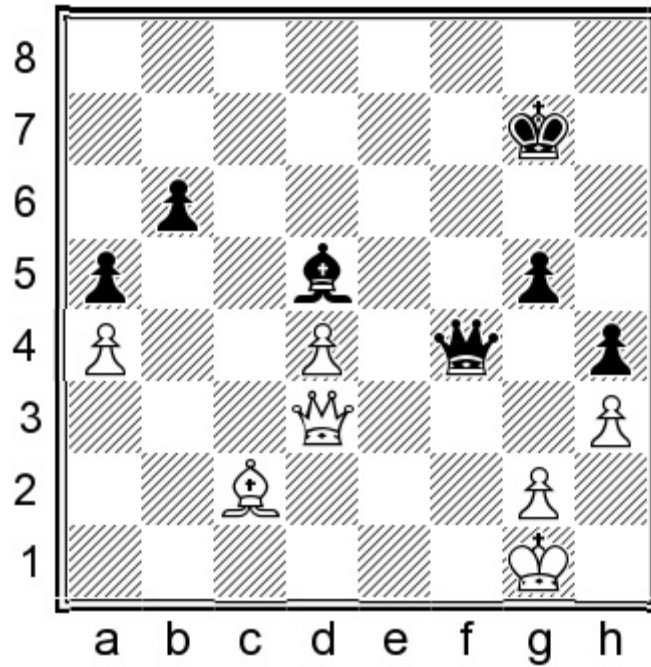
Black's threats are quite benign due to the unfortunate disposition of his pawns. He would like to exchange queens by means of ♕f6-f4. What is the most efficient way to anticipate this?

55. ♖b5!

It would have been correct to let go of the central pawn in order to activate the pieces as much as possible.

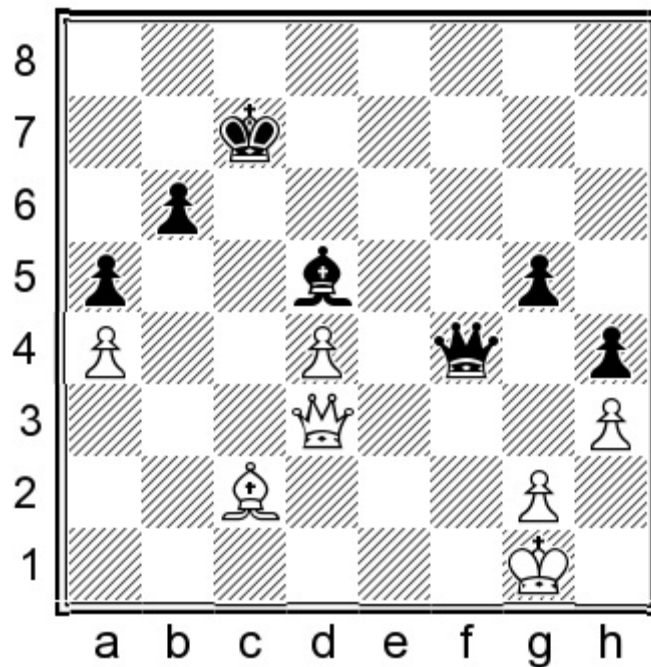
A) With this intention, a good continuation would have been 55. ♖e2! ♕f4 56. ♖e7! [56. ♖f2?? ♕xf2+ 57. ♖xf2 ♖c6 58. ♖d1 ♖g7-+] 56... ♖xd4+ 57. ♖h1 ♕f4 58. ♖b5=.

B) In the game, White got "greedy" and went for 55. ♖c2?! ♕f4 56. ♖d3 ♖g7=



Position after: 56... ♔g7

57. ♕g6+ ♔f8 58. ♕d3 ♔g7 59. ♕g6+ ♔f8 60. ♕d3 ♔e7 The king migrates to the queenside where he will feel more comfortable, while “freeing the hands” of the black pieces. 61. ♗d1 ♕e4 62. ♕d2 ♔d6 63. ♗c2 ♕f4 64. ♕d3 ♔c7

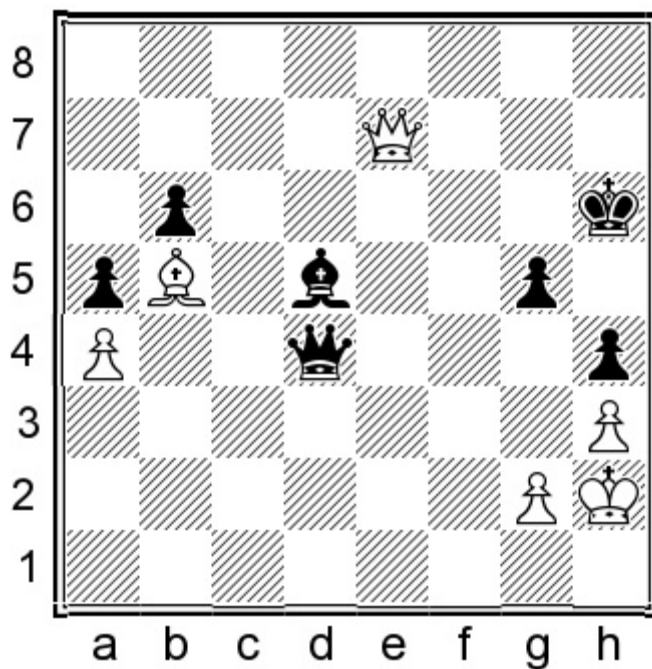


Position after: 64... ♔c7

65. ♕h7+? [The position is unpleasant and this is probably why White is banking on activity. However, it was necessary to adhere to waiting strategies 65. ♕c3+ ♔b8 66. ♗d1 ♔a7±] 65... ♔b8

66. ♖d3 g4!-+ 67. hxg4 ♜xg4 68. ♜g6 ♜xd4+ 69. ♔h1 ♘b7 70. ♜e8+ ♔a7 71. ♘f5 ♜d1+ 72. ♔h2 ♜d6+ 73. ♔h1 ♜g3 0-1.

55. ♘b5! ♜f4 56. ♜e7 ♜xd4+ 57. ♔h2



Position after: 57. ♔h2

The white pieces are as active as they can be and Black is unable to convert the extra pawn:

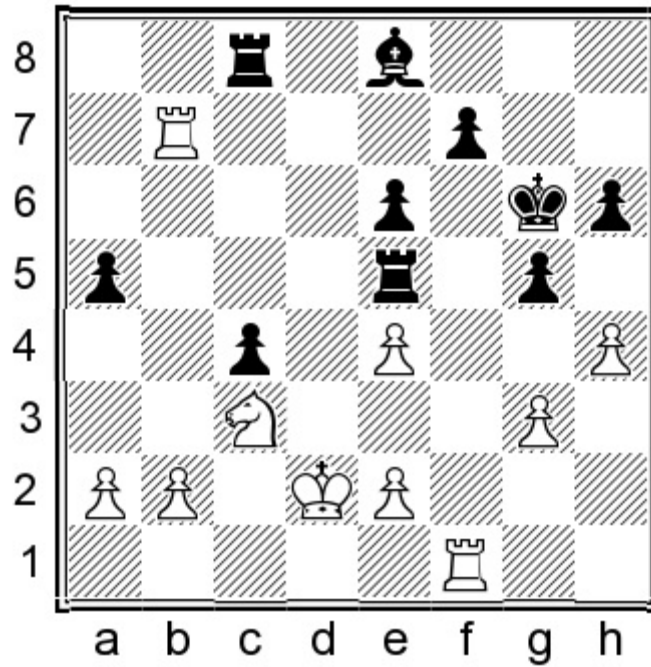
57... ♜f4+ 58. ♔g1 ♜e4 59. ♜f6+ ♔h5 60. ♜h8+ ♔g6 61. ♘e8+ ♔f5 62. ♘d7+ ♔g6

62... ♔f4? 63. ♜f6+ ♔e3 64. ♜f2+ ♔d3 65. ♘f5+-

63. ♘e8+=

Example 5

From Caruana – Nakamura
Saint Louis 2018

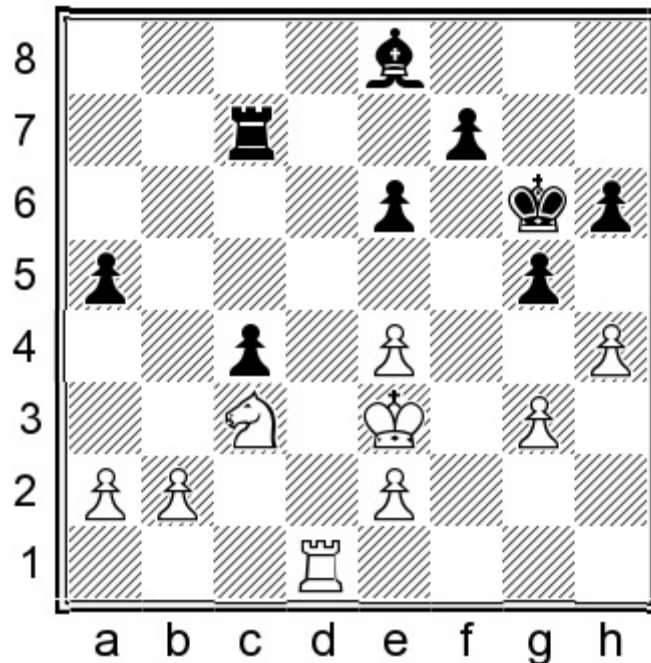


Black to move

35...f5?!

The situation on the kingside looks quite stable for Black. However, the “active” position of the rook on e5 probably prompted Black into playing an erroneous move.

All that was necessary was to exchange the rooks: 35...♖ec5 36.♔e3 ♜5c7 37.♞xc7 [37.♞b6 ♜c6 38.♞b7 ♜6c7 39.♞b6 ♜c6 40.♞b5 ♜c5 41.♞b6 ♜5c6 42.♞xc6 ♜xc6 43.♔d4 ♜e8=] 37...♞xc7 38.♞d1

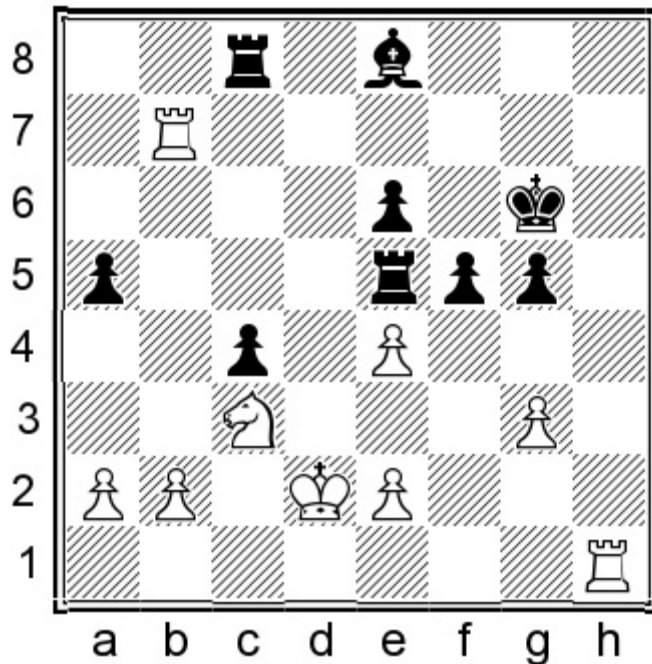


Position after: 38.♞d1

38...♖d7!? [38...♜b7 39.♜d8 ♔d7 40.hxg5 hxg5=] 39.♜xd7 ♔xd7 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.♔d4 [41.♘d1 ♔h5 42.♘f2 e5=] 41...♔h5=

35...f5?! 36.hxg5 fxe4

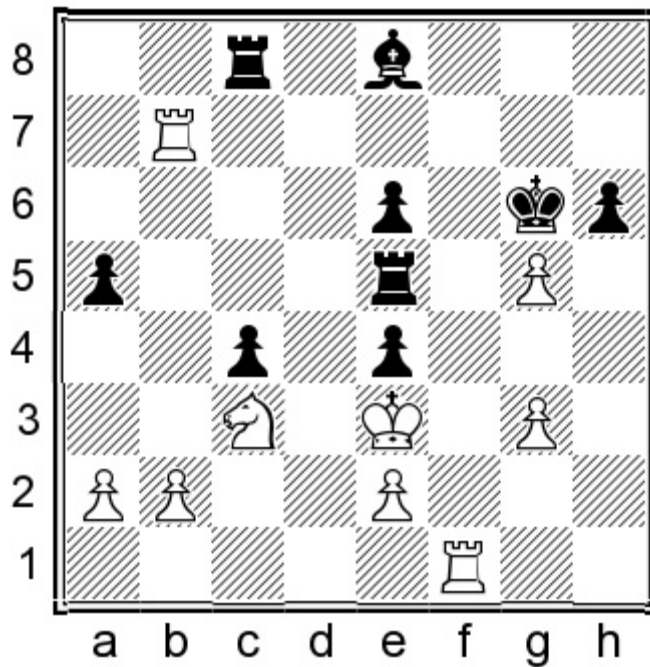
36...hxg5 37.♜h1!



Position after: 37.♜h1!

Thanks to the movement of the f-pawn, the white rooks connect via the h7-square and become an unwelcome and formidable force for the black king to reckon with. 37...♔c6 [A difficult defensive task was awaiting Black in case of 37...♔f7 38.♔e3 ♜ec5 39.a4!±; thus after 37...♔f6 38.♔e3±] 38.♜bh7±

37.♔e3



Position after: 37. ♖e3

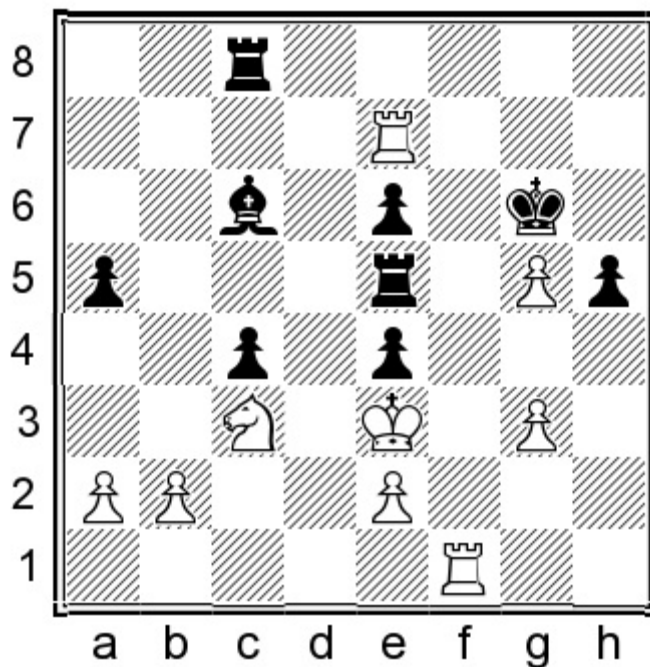
37... ♗c6

37...hxg5? immobilizes Black's pieces after 38. ♜f8 ♗d7 39. ♜xc8 ♗xc8 40. ♜c7 ♗a6 41. g4!+-

38. ♜e7 ♜xg5?!

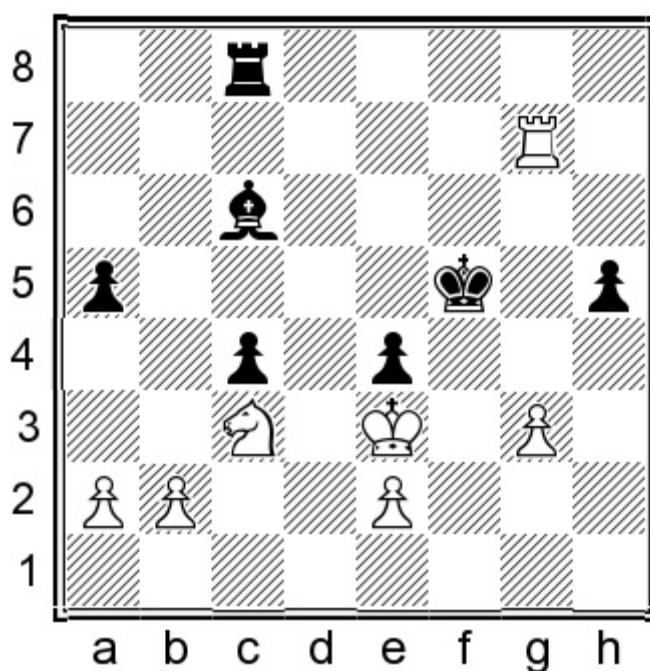
A) Of course not 38...hxg5? 39. ♗d4+-

B) A chance for salvation was to be found in the subtle response 38...h5!



Position after: 38...h5!

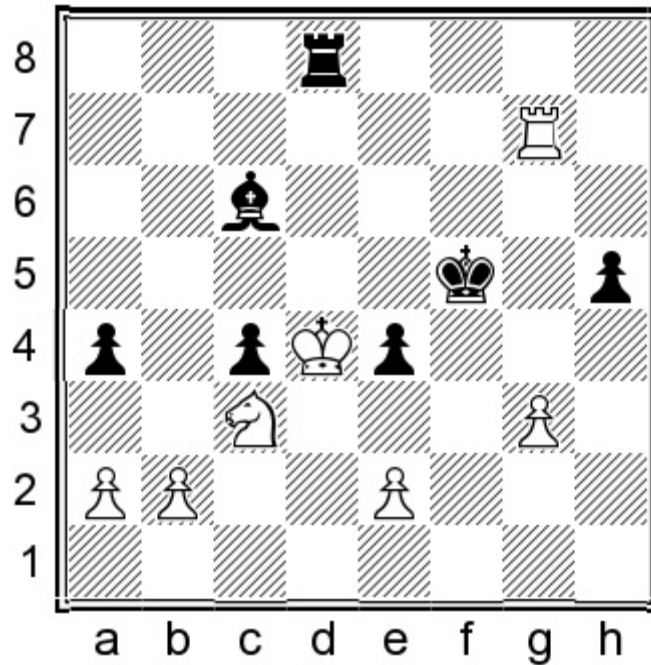
The g5-pawn is not going anywhere, but now, to win the e6-pawn, White will have to exchange rooks, giving Black the potential to attack the g3- and b2-pawns, significantly increasing Black's chances of a successful defense. With four rooks on the board, the black king is in more danger and therefore Black will not find counterplay. Black must exchange rooks at all costs. 39.♖f6+ [39.♖ff7 yields the same result: 39...♙xg5 40.♖g7+ ♔h6 41.♙xg5 ♔xg5 42.♙xe6] 39...♔xg5 40.♖fxe6 ♖xe6 41.♙xe6 ♔g4 42.♖g6+ ♔f5 43.♖g7



Position after: 43.♖g7

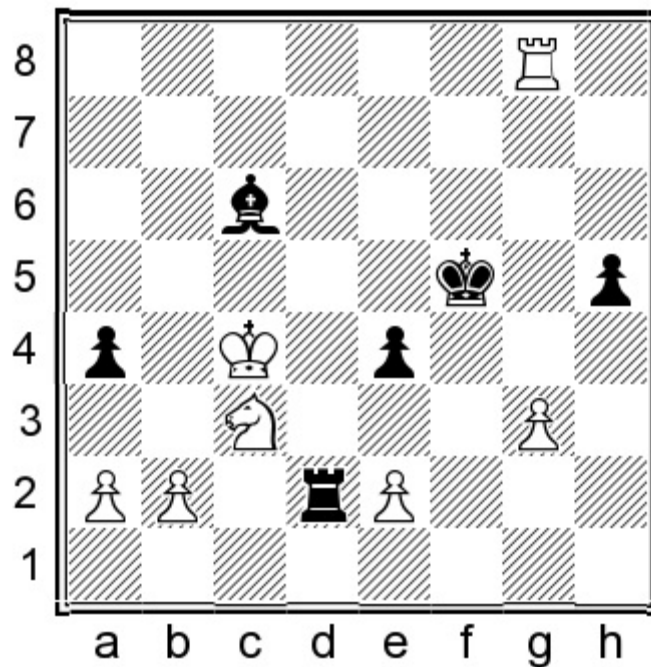
B1) Far from losing is 43...♞d8, preventing the white king from getting to the d4-square 44.♞h7 ♔g5 [≤ 44...♔g4 45.♞h6 ♞c8 46.a4!± fixing the black pawn on a5, where it will be more difficult to defend] 45.♞c7 [45.♞a7 a4 46.♘xa4 ♙xa4 47.♙xa4 ♞b8 48.♙xc4 ♞xb2=] 45...♞d6 but after 46.♘b1! Black still faces problems.

B2) 43...a4! This move conflicts with well-known chess dogmas, but it is only “anti-positional” at first glance — the black bishop is a bit sad, and whether it limps on one or two legs is unimportant compared to the potential loss of the a-pawn. 44.♔d4 Black appears to regret letting the white king out to the queenside, but at the same time the g3-pawn loses its potential defender, which Black skillfully exploits. [44.a3 ♞d8! 45.♞h7 ♔g5± Formally, White is better, but it is difficult for him to strengthen the position. A draw is the most likely result, for example: 46.♞c7 ♞d6 47.♖g7+ ♔f5 48.♖g8 ♞d7! 49.♞h8 ♔g5 50.♞c8 ♞d6] 44...♞d8+



Position after: 44...Rd8+

45.♔xc4 [45.♔c5 ♕d7 46.e3 ♖c8+ 47.♔b4 ♖b8+ 48.♔a3 ♖d8=] 45...♖d7!! The most important and subtle detail, it is important for him to lure the white rook to g8. [45...♖d2? 46.b4 axb3 47.axb3 ♕d7 48.b4+-] 46.♖g8 [46.♖xd7 ♕xd7 47.♗d5 ♕e6=] 46...♖d2



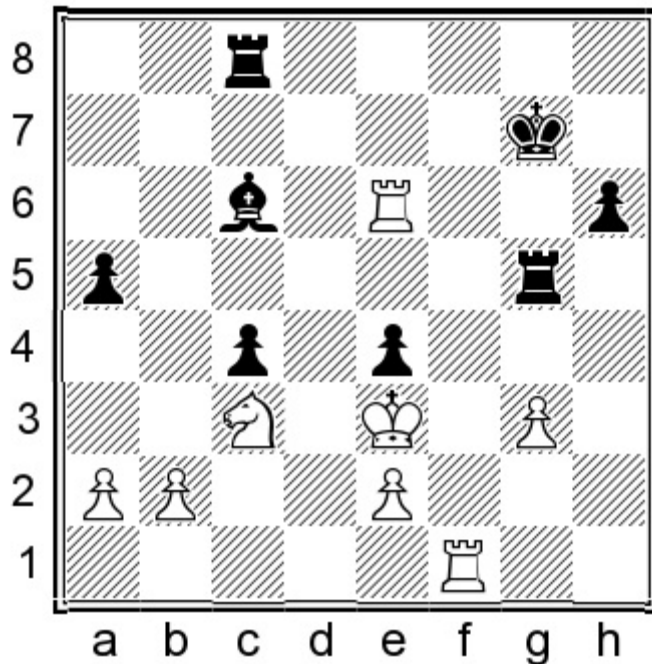
Position after: 46...Rd2

B2.1) Now after 47.b4 axb3 48.axb3 ♕d7 is much stronger than before 49.♔c5 [49.♖f8+ ♔e5 50.b4? ♕e6+ 51.♔b5 ♔d4+] 49...♕e6 50.♖b8 ♖b2 51.b4 ♔e5 52.♖h8 ♕f7= the unstable position of

the white knight impedes the conversion of an extra pawn.

B2.2) 47.♖h8 ♜xb2 48.♖xh5+ ♔g4 49.♖c5 ♕d7 50.♔d4 ♕xg3 51.♗xe4+ ♔h4 52.♗c3 ♕e6 White cannot save the a-pawn. 53.a3 ♜b3=

39.♖xe6+ ♔g7



Position after: 39...♔g7

40.♖e7+

♞ 40.♖ff6! led to an even larger advantage 40...♕d7 41.♖d6 ♜xg3+ 42.♔d4 ♕e8 43.♖xh6 ♕f7 44.♖hf6 ♖b8 45.♖b6±

40...♔g6?!

Once again, the seemingly most active move is not the best.

Better chances of salvation were to be found in ♞ 40...♔g8 41.♖f6 ♜xg3+ 42.♔f4 ♖g7 43.♖e5 ♖f7 44.♖xf7 ♔xf7 45.♖xa5 ♖b8 46.♖a6 ♖c8±

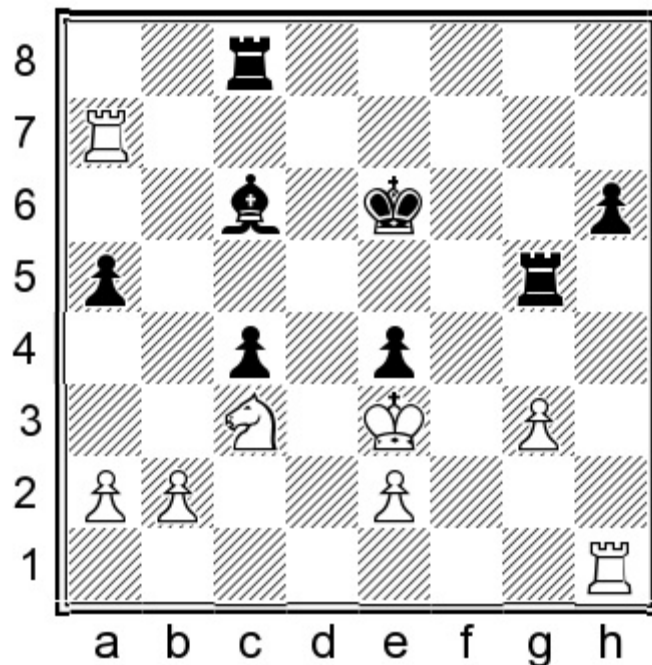
41.♖d1!

The White rook rushes to the sixth rank with lethal intention.

41...♔f6

41...♜xg3+ 42.♔f4 ♖g5 43.♖d6+ ♔h5 44.♖ee6 ♖f8+ 45.♔e3 ♖g3+ 46.♔d4+–

42.♖a7 ♔e6 43.♞h1



Position after: 43.♞h1

43...h5

Not a pleasant sight for Black but still better than the game was 43...♞xg3+ 44.♔d4 ♞g6 45.♞h5±

44.g4! ♔e8

Loses immediately.

A) 44...hxg4 45.♞h6++-

B) Extending the resistance was 44...♞h8 45.gxh5 ♞hxh5 46.♞f1 ♞f5 47.♞xf5 ♞xf5 48.♔d4+-

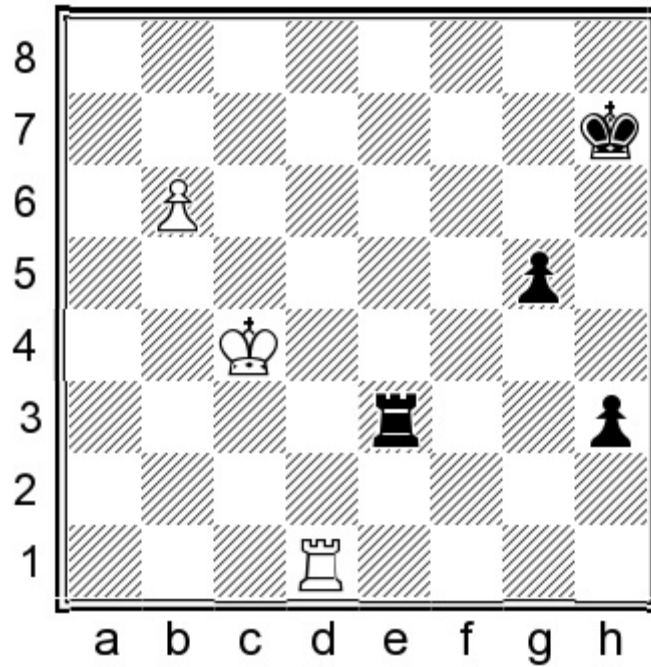
45.gxh5 ♔xh5 46.♘xe4 ♞f5 47.♞a6+ ♔e7 48.♘d6 ♞e5+ 49.♔d4

1-0

Example 6

From Zhang Pengxiang – Dreev

Ergun 2006



White to move

50.b7

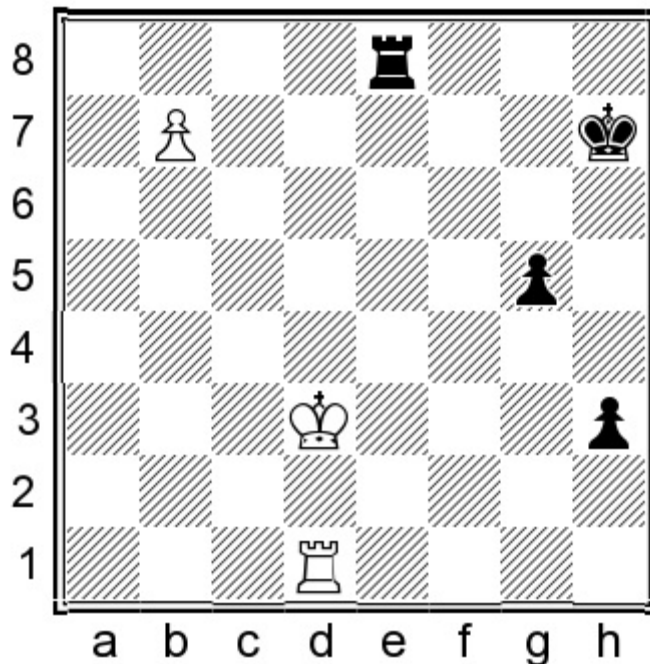
The win would have been much more difficult after this move.

A) 50.♖g1?! was played, but Black won easily: 50...♔g6 51.b7 ♜e8 52.♞g3 ♜b8 53.♞xh3 ♜xb7 54.♔d4 ♜e7 0-1 Zhang, P (2622) – Dreev, A (2666) Ergun 2006.

B) 50.♞d7+ ♔g6 51.♞d8 ♜e7 52.♞h8 g4 53.♔c5 ♔g5 54.♔d6 ♞g7 55.♔c6 ♔f4 56.b7 ♜xb7 57.♔xb7 ♔g3 58.♔c6 ♔h2--+

C) 50.♔d4? ♜b3--+

50.b7 ♜e8 51.♔d3



Position after: 51. ♔d3

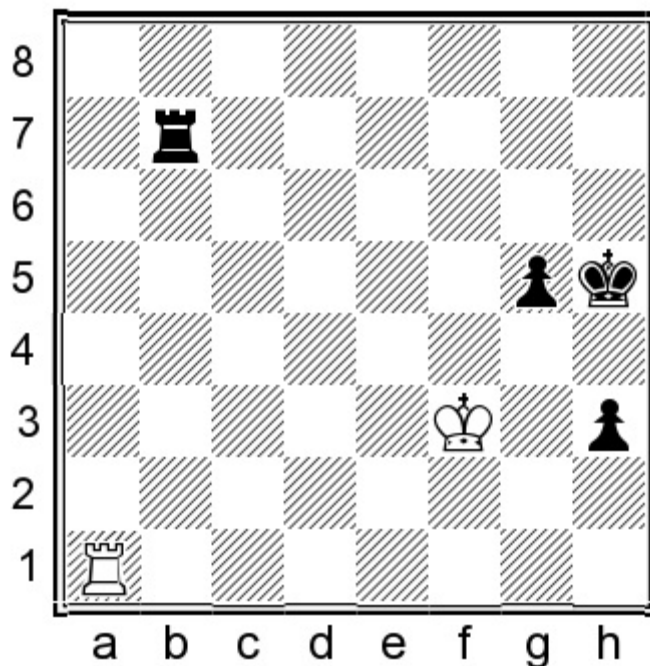
51...g4!!

Without falling into the insidious trap: 51...♔g6?

A) Correct play would have been 52. ♖c1! and not 52. ♖e1? ♜b8 53. ♔e4 [53. ♖b1 h2 54. ♔e3 ♜xb7 55. ♖h1 ♜b3+ 56. ♔f2 g4 57. ♔g2 g3 58. ♖c1 ♜e3–+] 53...♜xb7 54. ♔f3 ♔f5–+ in this position, the White rook does not have a fifth-rank saving check.

B) 52. ♖b1? g4–+

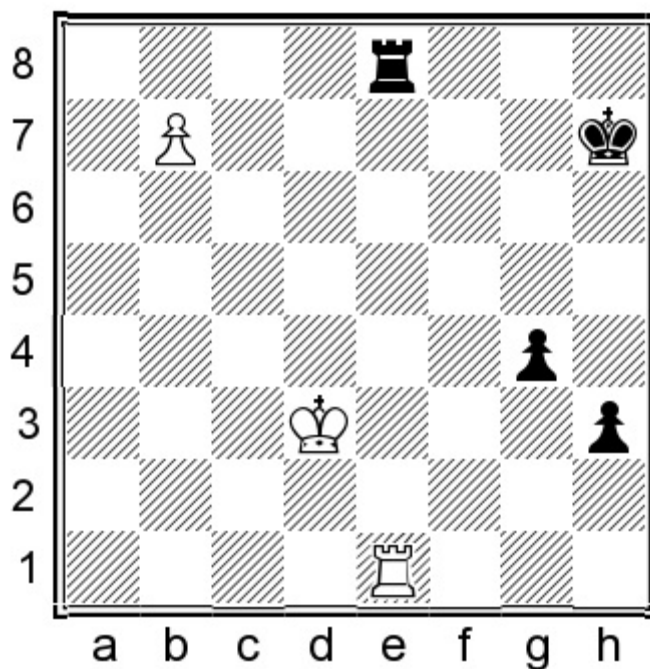
C) 52. ♖a1! ♜b8 53. ♔e3 ♜xb7 54. ♔f3 ♔h5



Position after: 54...♔h5

[54...♔f5 55.♖a5+=] 55.♖a3!! with the help of this trick, White restricts the black pawns at the last line of defense, as any further advance would have been intolerable 55...♔h4 [55...♖b2 56.♔g3 h2 57.♖a1=] 56.♖a4+ ♔h5 57.♖a3= ♖b5 58.♔g3 g4 59.♖c3=

52.♖e1!



Position after: 52.♖e1!

52.♖c1 h2+-

52...♖f8!!

At first sight, it is not clear why the rook should go precisely to this square.

A) 52...♖g8 53.♔e3 g3 54.♖h1 h2 55.♔f3=

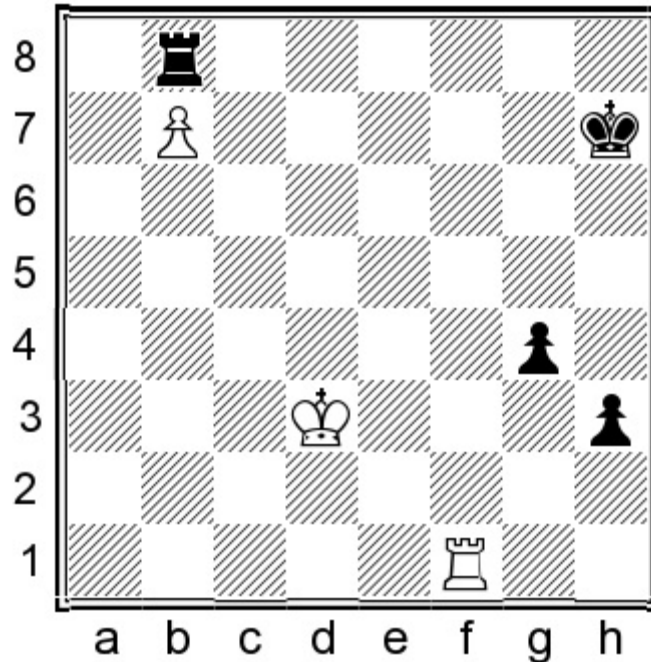
B) 52...♖b8 53.♔e4 ♖xb7 54.♔f4 ♖b4+ 55.♔g3=

53.♖f1

A) 53.♔e3 g3 54.♖f1 g2!-+

B) 53.♔e4 g3 54.♖f1 h2!-+

53...♖b8!



Position after: 53...♖b8!

Now we understand the importance of luring the white rook to the f-file.

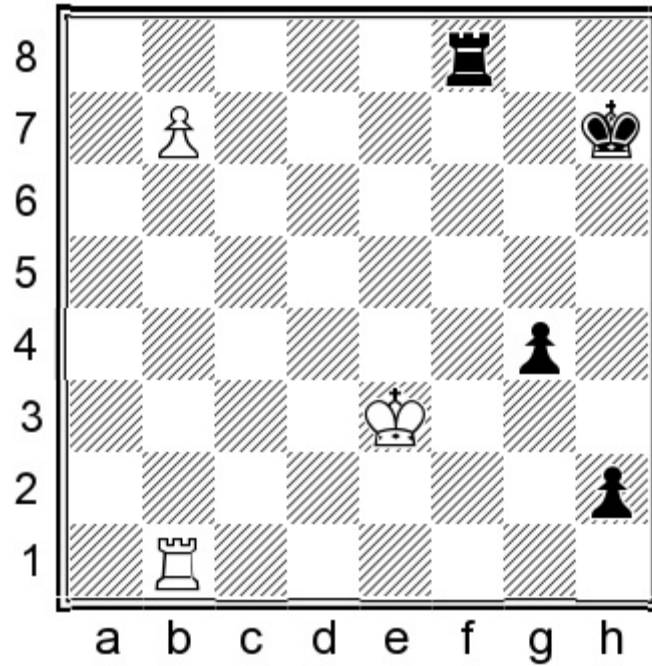
54.♖b1

After 54.♔e3 ♖xb7 the white king is unable to approach the pawns 55.♔f4 ♖f7+-+

54...h2!

It was not too late to make a mistake by playing the hasty 54...g3? 55.♔e2□ 55...♖f8 56.♖f1 ♖e8+ 57.♔f3 g2 58.♖b1 ♖g8 59.♖c1 h2 60.b8=♔ g1=♗+ 61.♔f2 ♖xb8 62.♔g2 ♖b2+ 63.♔h1=

55.♔e3 ♖f8!



Position after: 55...♖f8!

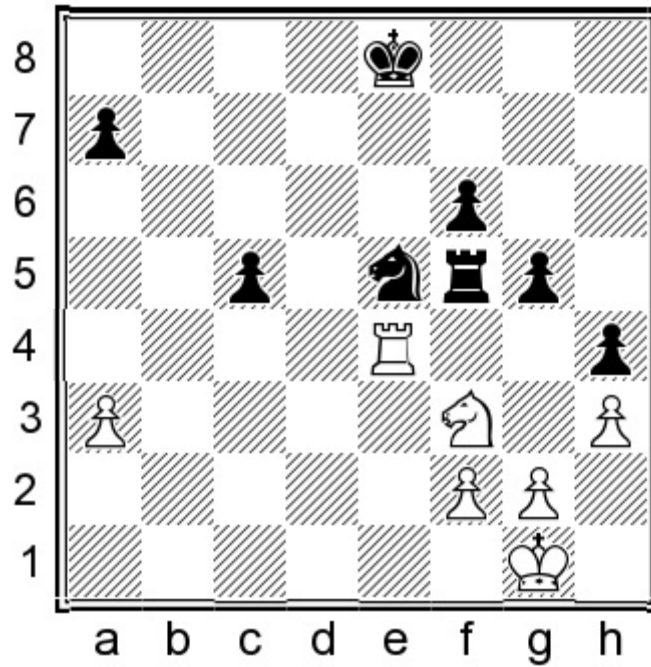
56.♖f1

56.♖h1 g3 57.b8=♚ ♖xb8 58.♔f3 ♖b3+ 59.♔g2 ♔g6+

56...♖xf1 57.b8=♚ h1=♚-+

Example 7

From Bologan – Georgiev
Batumi 2018



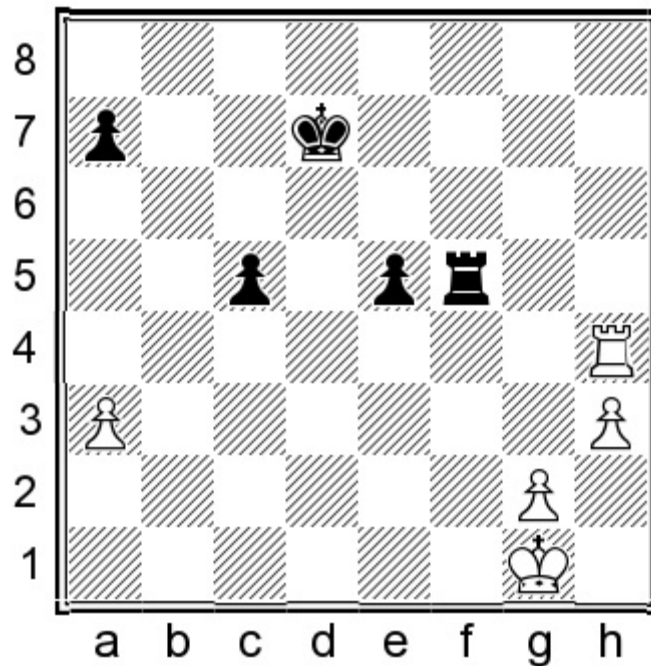
White to move

33. ♖xh4!

After the “useful” 33. ♔f1?, White is simply lost: 33... ♕d7 34. ♗xe5+ ♜xe5 35. ♝a4 ♔c6 36. ♞xa7 c4 37. ♝a8 ♔c5 38. ♞c8+ ♔d4 0-1.

After the given move (33. ♖xh4), White amazingly holds.

33. ♖xh4! g4 34. f4 ♔d7 35. fxe5 ♜xe5 36. ♞xh4



Position after: 36. ♖xh4

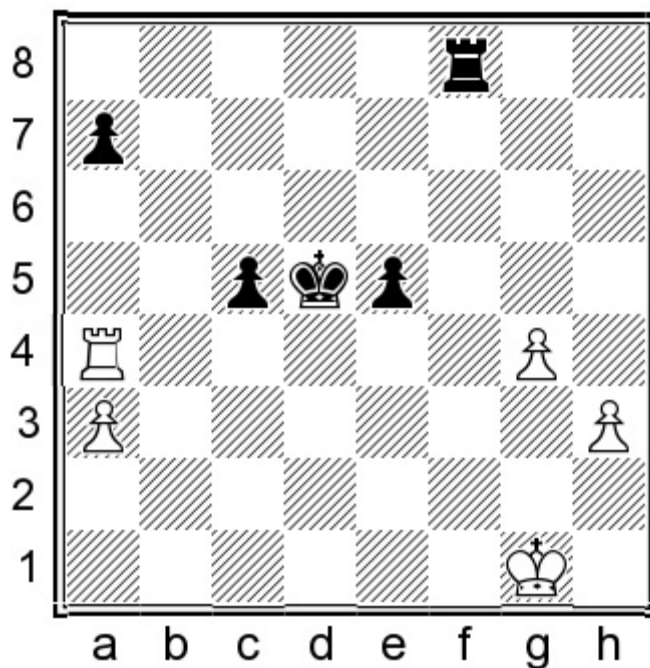
36... ♖f8

36... ♔c6 37.g4 ♖f8 38.g5 ♔d5 39.g6 c4 40.♖g4 c3 41.g7 ♖g8 42.♖g2! ♔d4 43.h4 ♔d3 44.h5 c2 45.♖xc2 ♖xg7+ 46.♖g2=

37. ♖a4!

Immediately moving the g-pawn is no longer possible: 37.g4 c4 38.g5 c3 39.♖c4 ♖c8!-+.

37... ♔d6 38.g4 ♔d5



Position after: 38... ♔d5

39. ♖xa7

39.g5? c4 40.♖xa7 ♖c8-+

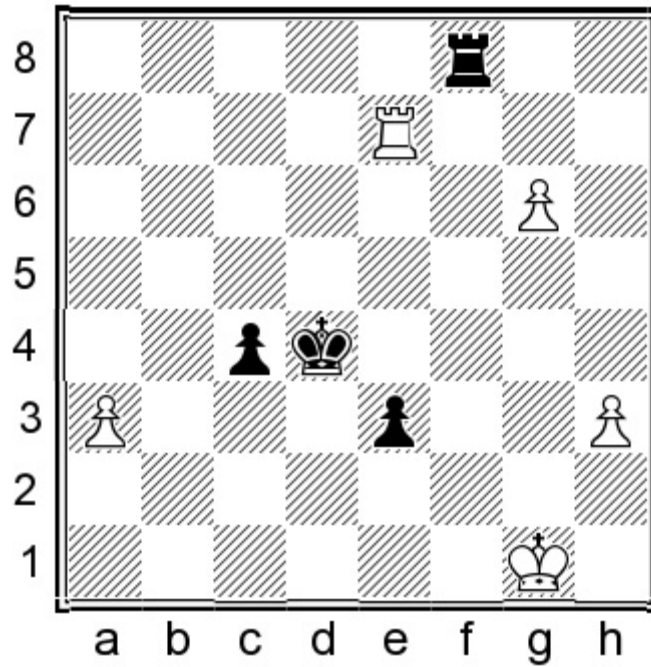
39...c4

Now White can be saved in two different ways.

40. ♖c7

40.♖d7+ ♔c6 41.♖d2! ♔c5 42.♖f2=

40...e4 41.g5 e3 42.♖e7 ♔d4 43.g6

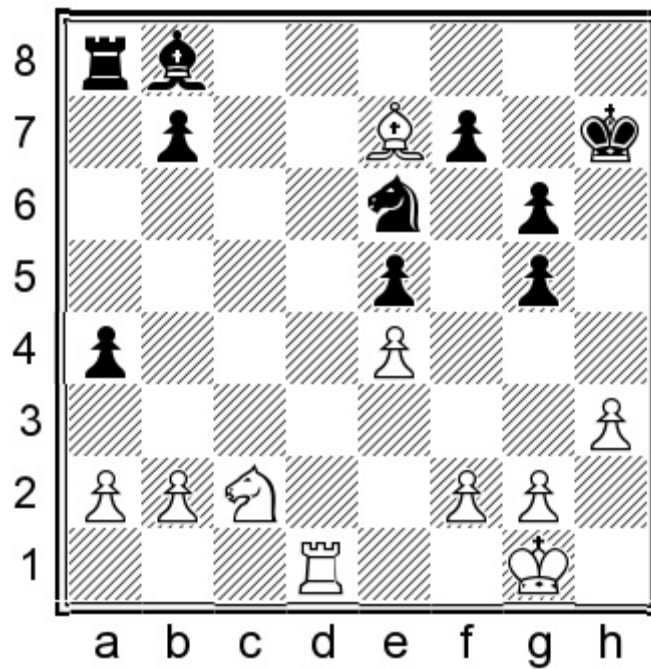


Position after: 43.g6

43...c3 44.g7 ♖g8 45.♔f1=

Example 8

From Saduakassova – Stefanova
Khanty-Mansiysk 2018



Black to move

Despite the material balance, Black's position is extremely dangerous. The white rook will invade the

seventh rank, f6 is weak, and the black pieces are poorly coordinated. Therefore, in realizing the danger of any further delay, Black should take immediate action.

32...♙a7!

The game continued with the stereotypical 32...♞a6?! 33.♞d7 [Even stronger was 33.♜b4 ♞b6 34.♜d5! Δ 34...♞xb2 35.♞c1!+- with a mating attack] 33...♞b6 34.♙a3 [34.♜b4!? ♔g7 35.♞d5±] 34...♔g7 35.♜e3± ½-½ (67).

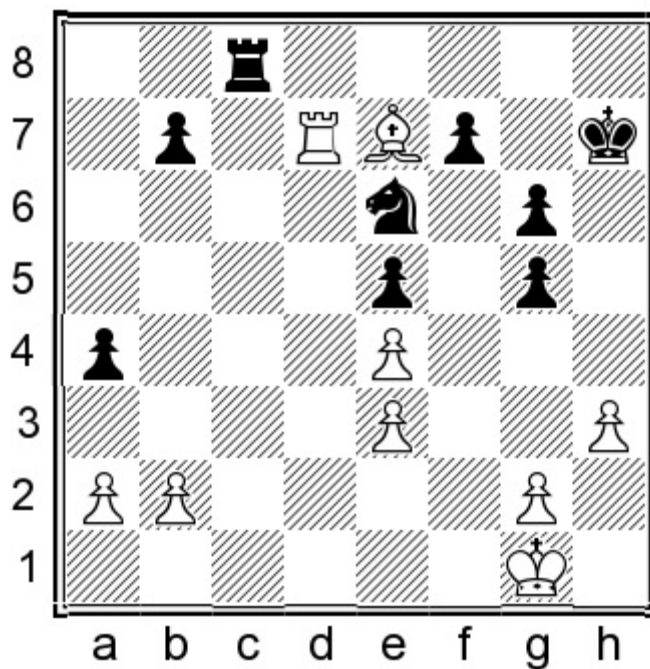
32...♙a7! 33.♞d7

Obviously the strongest.

33...♞c8 34.♜e3

34.♞xb7? ♙xf2+∞

34...♙xe3 35.fxe3



Position after: 35.fxe3

It seems that White will soon make Black pay for his activity.

35...♞c1+

35...b5 36.♙f6±

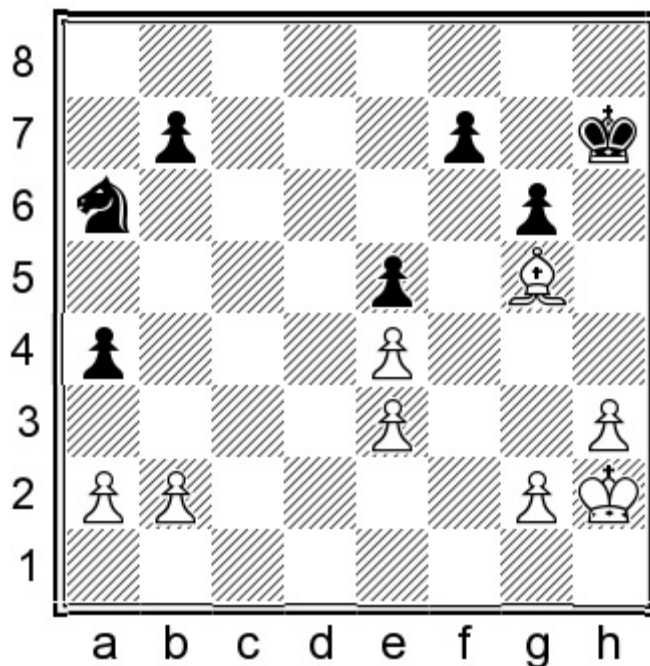
36.♔h2 ♞c7!

For the sake of exchanging rooks, Black parts with the pawn, but what is he counting on?

37. ♖xc7 ♜xc7 38. ♙xg5

38. ♙d6 ♜e6 39. ♙xe5 ♜c5=

38... ♜a6!



Position after: 38... ♜a6!

The knight goes to c6, from where it will defend the queenside from the invasion of the white king.

39. ♙e7 ♜b8 40. ♙d6 ♜c6 41. ♜g3

41. h4 f6 42. ♜g3 ♜a5=

41... f6

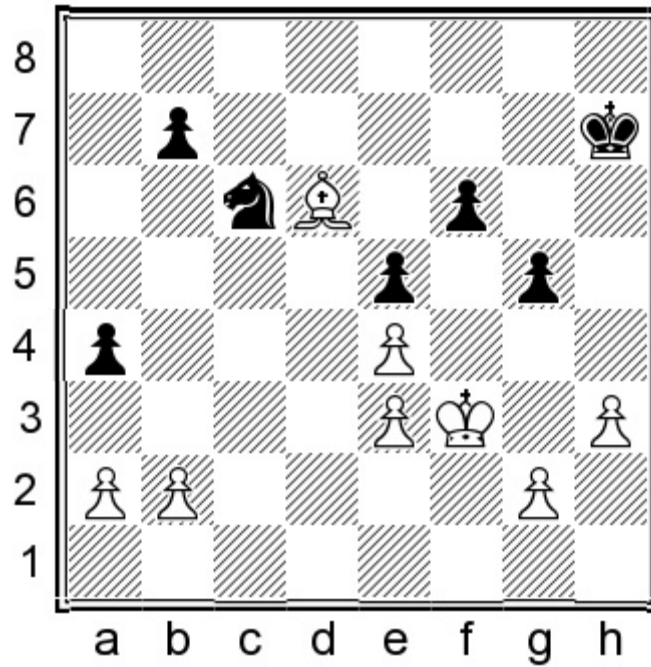
Black practically builds a fortress and can count on a draw.

42. ♜f3

A passive defense is perfectly acceptable here.

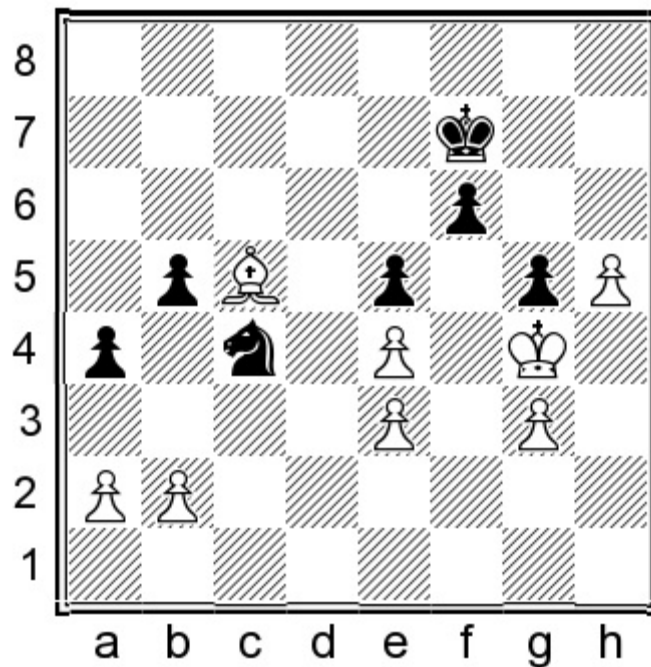
42... ♜g7

Also a viable option, and at first glance more active was 42... g5



Position after: 42...g5

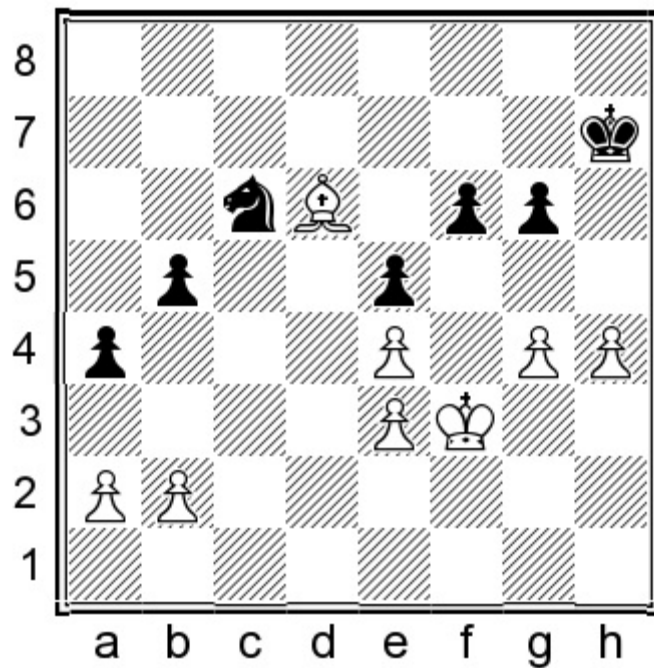
43.g3 [43.♔g4 ♔g6 44.g3 ♖a5! 45.h4 gxh4 46.gxh4 ♜c4=; 43.♔e2 ♔g6 44.g3 b5 45.♔d3 ♔f7 46.♔c3 ♔e6 47.♙c5 ♔f7 48.b3 axb3 49.♔xb3 ♔e6 50.a4 bxa4+ 51.♔xa4 ♜d8 52.♔b5 ♔f7=] 43...♔g6 44.♙c5 [44.♙c7 ♜b4=] 44...b5 45.♔g4 [45.♙d6 ♖a5 46.♙b4 ♜c6 47.♙c5 ♖a5=] 45...♖a5 46.h4 ♜c4 47.h5+ ♔f7



Position after: 47...♔f7

48.♔f5 [48.b3 axb3 49.axb3 ♜d2=] 48...♜xb2 49.h6 ♜c4=

43.h4 b5 44.g4 ♔h7

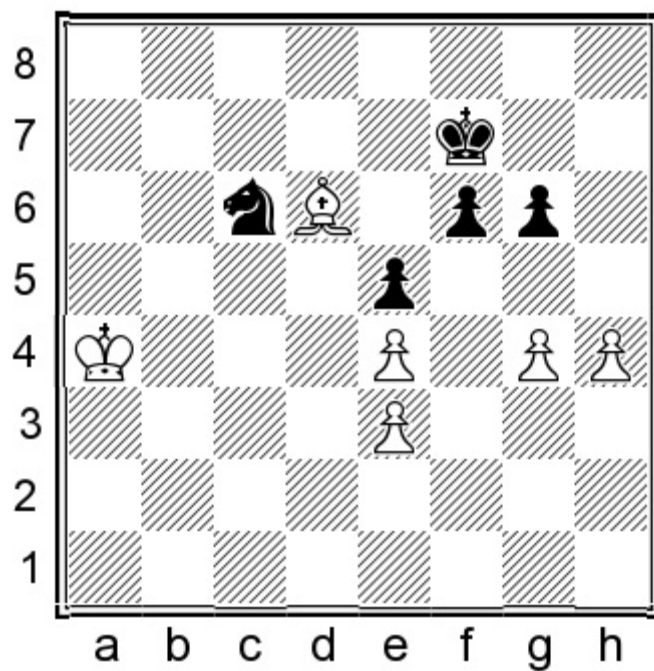


Position after: 44... ♔h7

45. ♔e2 ♔g7 46. ♔d3 ♔f7 47. ♔c3 ♔g7 48. b3 axb3 49. ♔xb3 ♔f7 50. a4

50. ♔c2 ♔g7 51. ♔d2 ♔f7=

50... bxa4+ 51. ♔xa4



Position after: 51. ♖xa4

51...g5

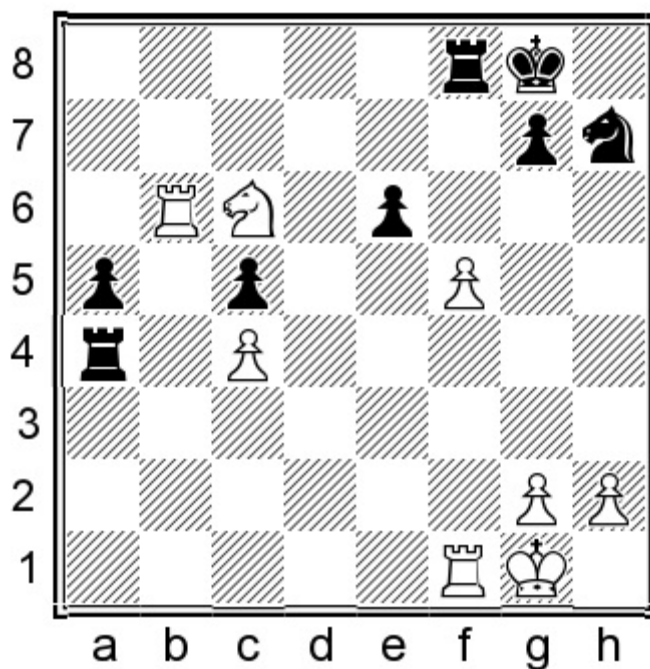
51...♘d8= A modest and effective move.

52.hxg5 ♖e6=

Example 9

From Dreev – Kholmov

Barnaul 1988



Black to move

On the previous move, White moved the f-pawn forward and with this created serious problems for his opponent, however, Black acted very coolly.

28...♖e8!

28...exf5?! 29.♘e7+ ♖f7 30.♘xf5 g6 31.♘d4+ ♖g8 32.♖xg6+ ♖h8 33.♘f3 ♖xc4 34.♖a6±

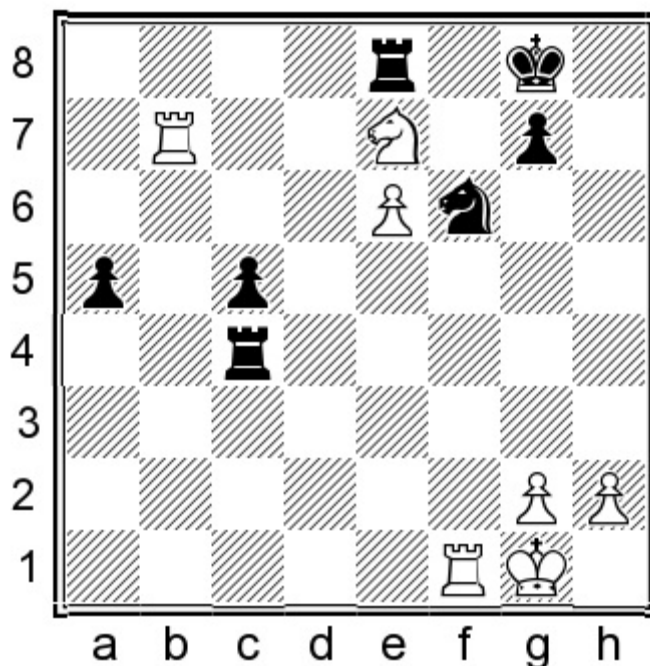
28...♖e8! 29.fxe6 ♖xc4 30.♖b7

30.♘xa5 ♖e4 31.♘b3 ♖4xe6 32.♖xe6 ♖xe6 33.♘xc5±

30...♘g5?

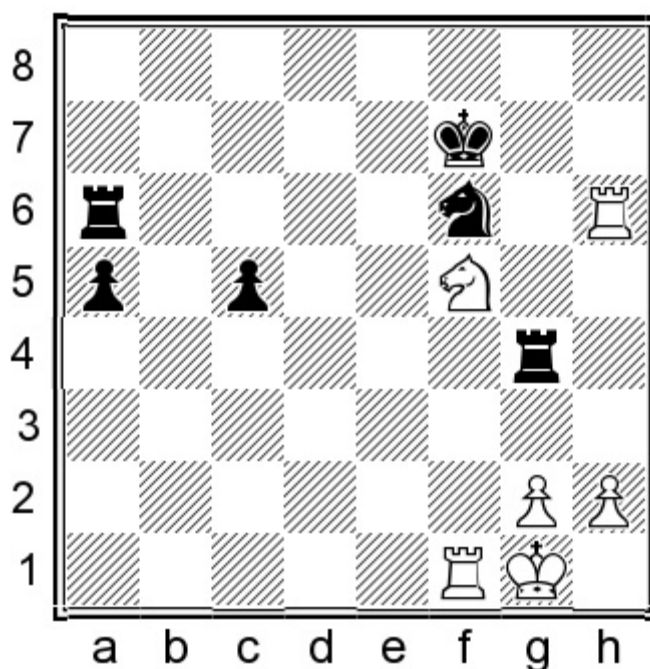
Obviously, Black considered this position-strengthening move, which was correct, but only if one sees

the entire ensuing series of only moves: 30...♖f6! 31.♗e7+



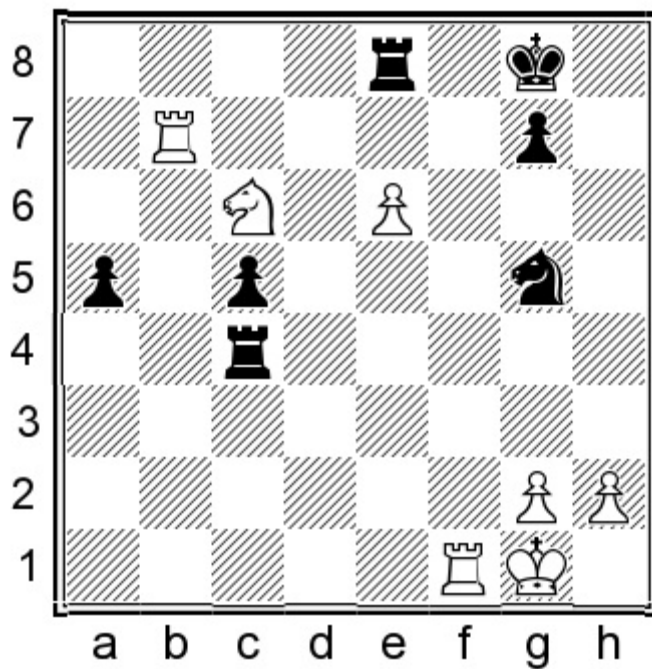
Position after: 31.♗e7+

31...♔f8! [31...♔h8?! 32.♗f5 ♖xe6 33.♗xg7 ♖d6 34.♗h5±] 32.♗f5 ♖xe6 33.♖xg7 [33.♗xg7 ♖e7! =] 33...♖a6! [33...♖b6?! allows White to win an important tempo for to regroup his forces 34.♖a7 a4 35.♗e3 ♖d4 36.h3 ♔e8 37.♗f5±] 34.♖g6 [34.♖c7 a4 =] 34...♖g4! [34...♖e4?! 35.♗h6 ♖ee6 36.g4±] 35.♖h6 ♔f7 =.



Position after: 35...♔f7 =

A possible continuation is 36.♘e3 ♜g5 [36...♜g6?! 37.♜h5±] 37.h4 ♜g6 38.♜h5 ♜g3 39.♘d5 ♔g7
 40.♘xf6 ♜xf6 41.♜xf6 ♕xf6 42.♜xc5 ♜g4 43.h5 ♜g5=.



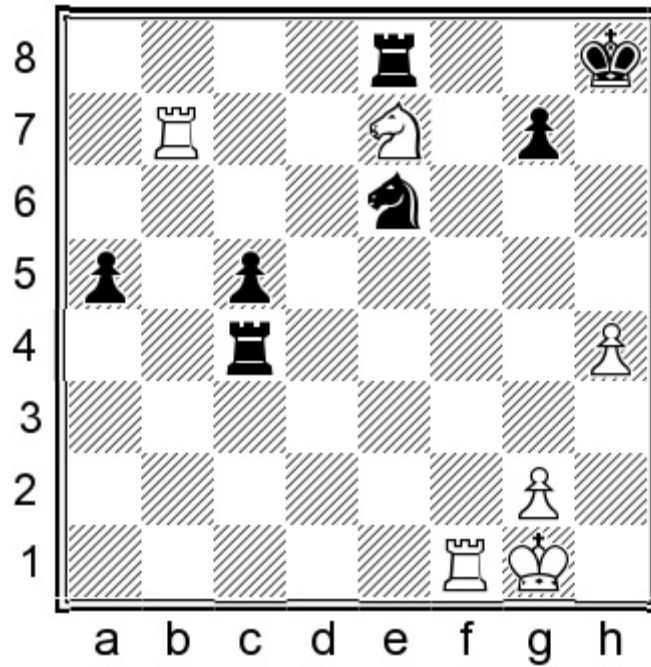
Position after: 30...♘g5?

31.♘e7+

31.e7!? ♜e4 32.♜d7 ♔h7 33.♜f5+-

31...♔h8 32.♘f5?

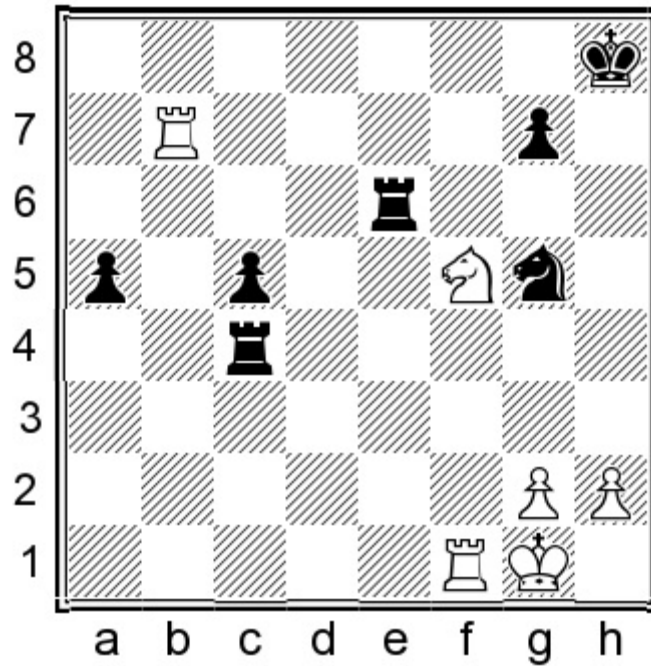
Surprisingly, 32.h4! ♘xe6 was winning.



Position after: 32... Nxe6

33. Re1! [33. Rf5? Nf8=] 33... Rb4 34. Ra7 Rb6 35. Re5! There is no satisfactory defense against the mate on the h-file: 35... Nf4 36. Ng6++.

32... Rxe6



Position after: 32... Rxe6

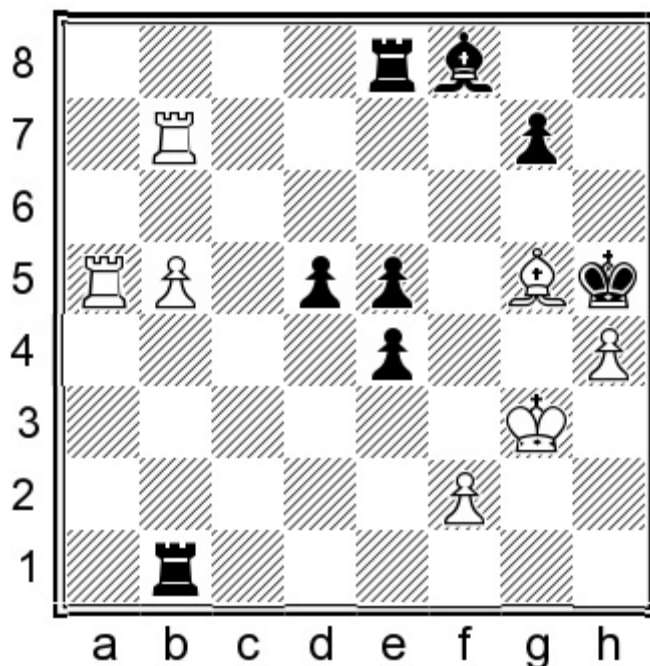
33. Rxg7

33.h4 ♖h3+ 34.gxh3 [34.♔h2 ♖f4=] 34...♞g6+ 35.♔h1 ♖c3 36.♞b2 [36.♞f2? ♞xh3+ 37.♞h2 ♞f3⌘] 36...♞xh3+ 37.♞h2 ♞xh2+ 38.♔xh2 ♖f6=

33...♞g4!= 34.h4 ♖h3+ 35.♔h2 ♞xg7 36.♖xg7 ♔xg7 37.♔xh3 a4 38.♖c1 a3 39.♞xc5 a2 40.♖c1 ♞a6 41.♞a1 ½-½

Example 10

From Czarnota – Navara
Poland 2018



White to move

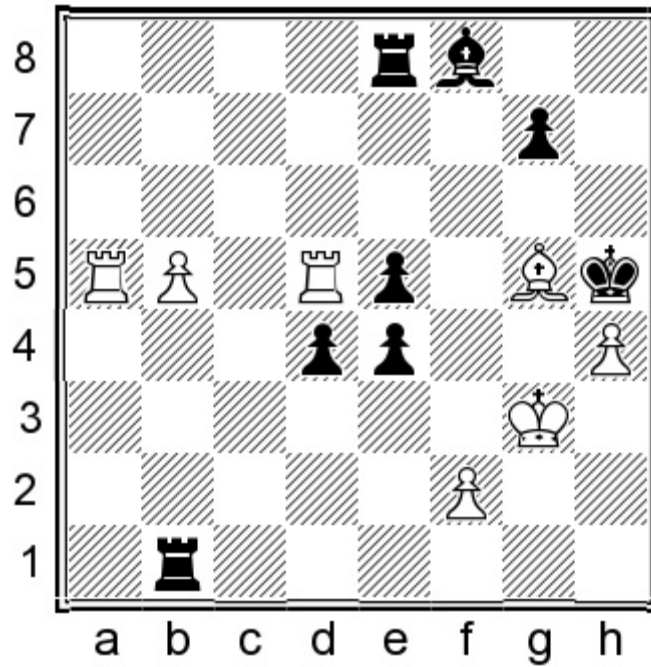
37.♞d7?!

The black rook on b1 does not allow White to make use of his only strength - the passed pawn. This means that he will have a difficult defensive challenge at hand. In reality though, his task becomes a lot easier if he pays attention to the positioning of the black king.

A) 37.♞a6! d4 38.♞f7 The white rooks are like hungry wolves approaching the black king, it is time to force a draw. 38...♞g1+ [38...♞b3+? 39.♔e3!+-] 39.♔h3 ♖h1+ 40.♔g3 ♞g1+=

B) Even weaker, with the same idea, was 37.♞f7 in view of 37...♔c5 38.♞xg7 ♞b3+ 39.♔g2 ♞f8⌘.

37.♞d7?! d4 38.♞d5

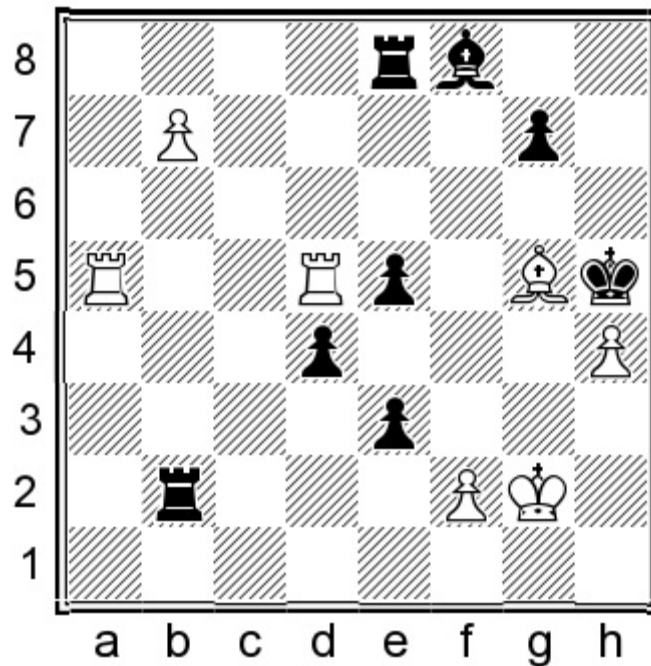


Position after: 38. ♖d5

38... ♔g6?!

38... ♖b3+ 39. ♔g2 causes big problems for White:

A) In case of the immediate 39... ♖b2 40. b6! e3 41. b7



Position after: 41. b7

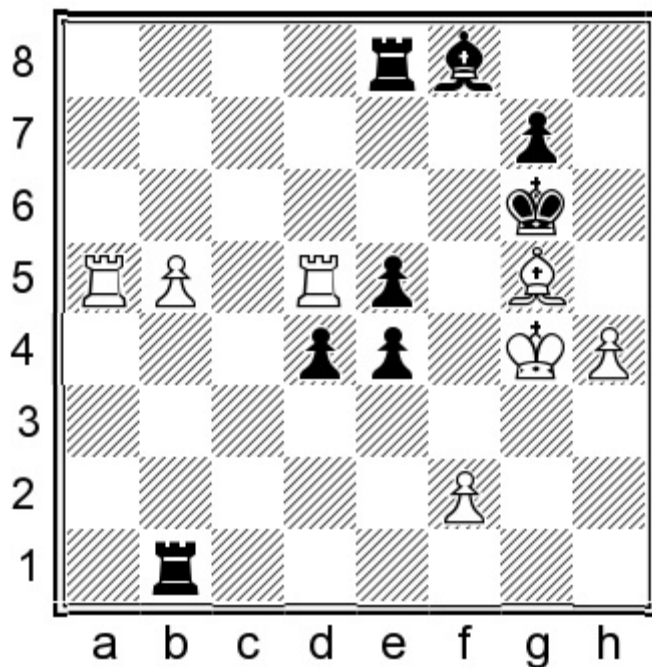
41... ♔b4 [41... e2 42. ♔d2! =] 42. ♖ab5 e2 43. ♔d2! ♔xd2 44. ♖xe5+ ♖xe5 45. ♖xe5+ ♔g4 46. ♖xe2 ♖xb7

47.♖xd2 ♜d7 48.♜d3! and White is saved.

B) 39...♙b4! It is important to knock the white rook off the fifth rank. 40.♞a2 [40.♞a7 ♜b2!-+] 40...♔g4 41.♜d7 ♙f8

39.♞a7?

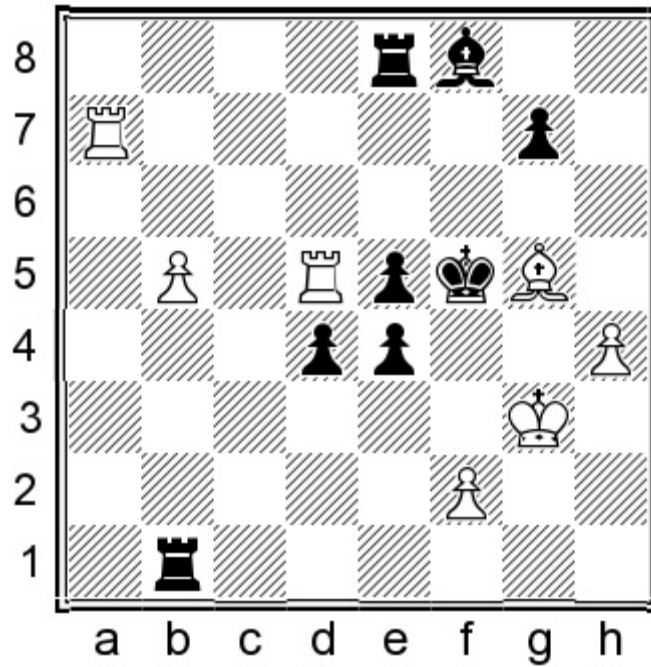
With 39.♔g4!



Position after: 39.♔g4!

White threatens to push the black king away. White distracts the black rook from its defensive duty of monitoring the passed pawn and could now look to the future with courage 39...♞g1+ 40.♔h3♞.

39...♔f5



Position after: 39...♔f5

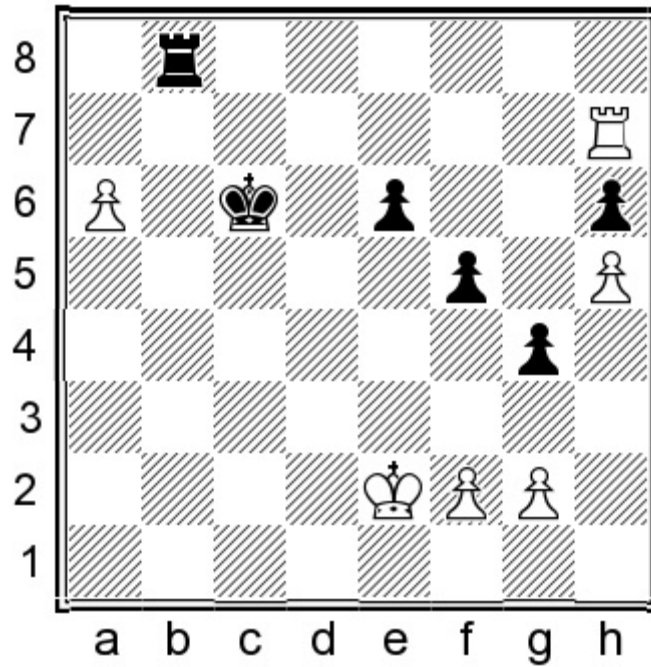
While the enemy king was moving towards the center of the board to join the fight, the white pieces wandered around the board without much sense or purpose, and it did not take long for the game to play itself out.

40.♖a6 e3 41.fxe3 ♕e4 42.♞d7 dxe3 43.♞a4+ ♜b4 44.♞a3 ♙c5 45.♞xg7 ♜f8 46.♕g4 e2 47.♙d2 ♞d4

0-1

Example 11

From Dreev – Lerner
Simferopol 1988



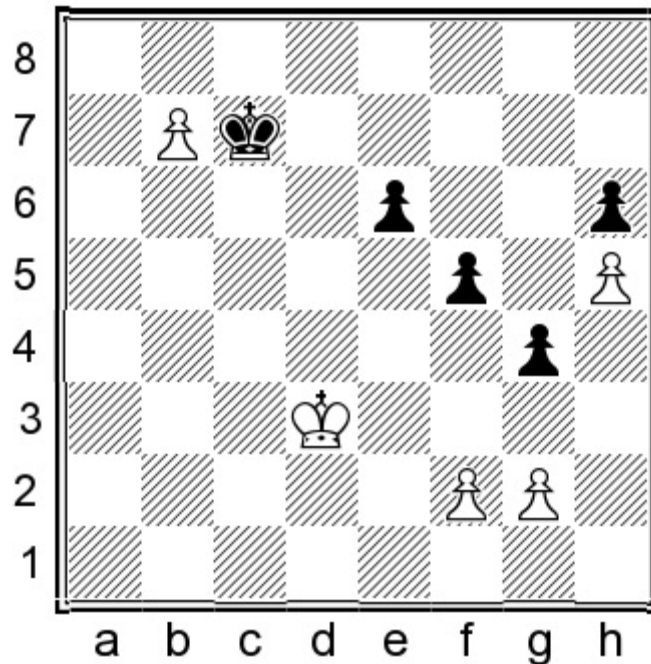
Black to move

Let's examine this very instructive rook endgame.

54...♖b2+?

It is normally advisable to put the rook behind the opponent's passed pawn, but in this case it is too slow.

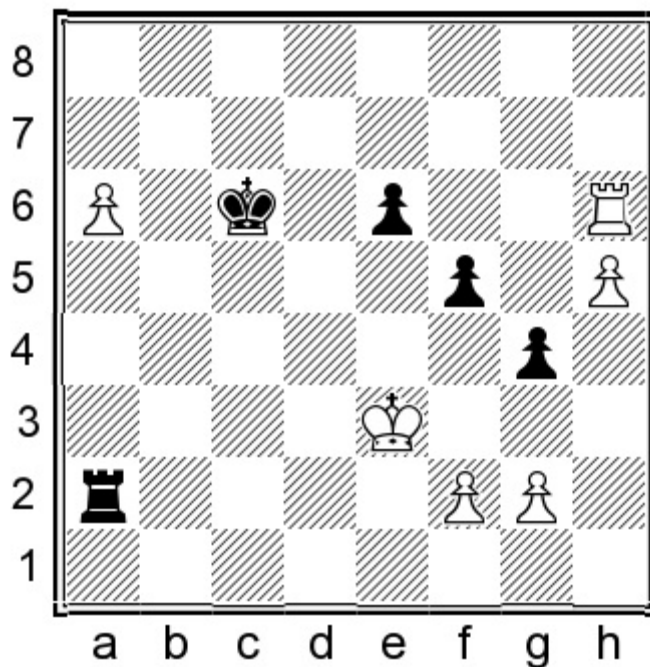
Black should first have played 54...♔d6!: 55.♖b7 [55.a7 ♖b2+ 56.♔d3 ♖a2 57.♔c4 ♔c6! 58.♖xh6 ♖a4+ 59.♔d3 ♖xa7 60.♖xe6+ ♔d5 61.♖b6 ♖a3+ 62.♔e2 ♔e4 63.g3 ♖a1=] 55...♖xb7 56.axb7 ♔c7 57.♔d3



Position after: 57.♔d3

57...♕xb7 [Or 57...e5 58.♕c4 ♖xb7 59.♕d5 e4 60.g3 ♖b6 61.♕e5 ♖c5 62.♕xf5 ♕d4 63.♕xg4 e3 64.fxe3+ ♕e4=] 58.♕d4 ♕c7 59.♕e5 ♕d7 60.♕f6 ♕d6 61.♕g6 ♕e7 62.g3 ♕e8 63.♕xh6 ♕f7 64.♕g5 ♕g7 65.h6+ ♕f7=

54...♖b2+? 55.♕e3 ♖a2 56.♖xh6



Position after: 56.♖xh6

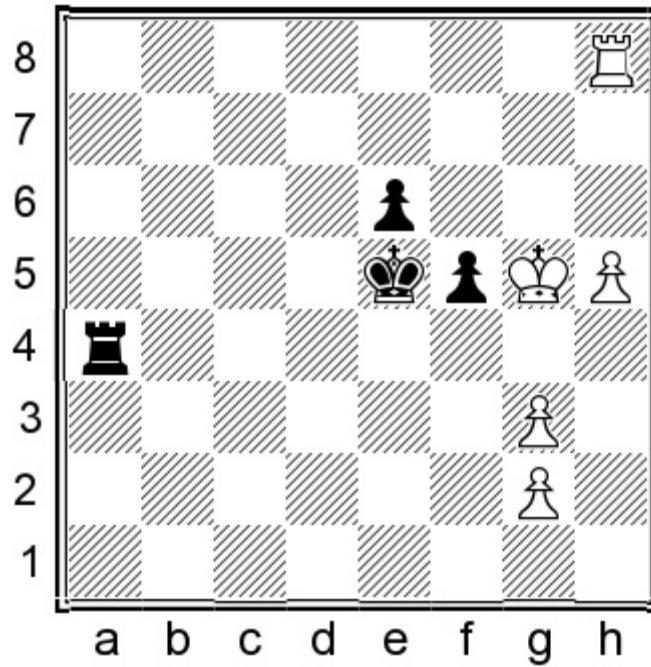
56...♕d6

56...♕d5 changes nothing.

57.♖g6!

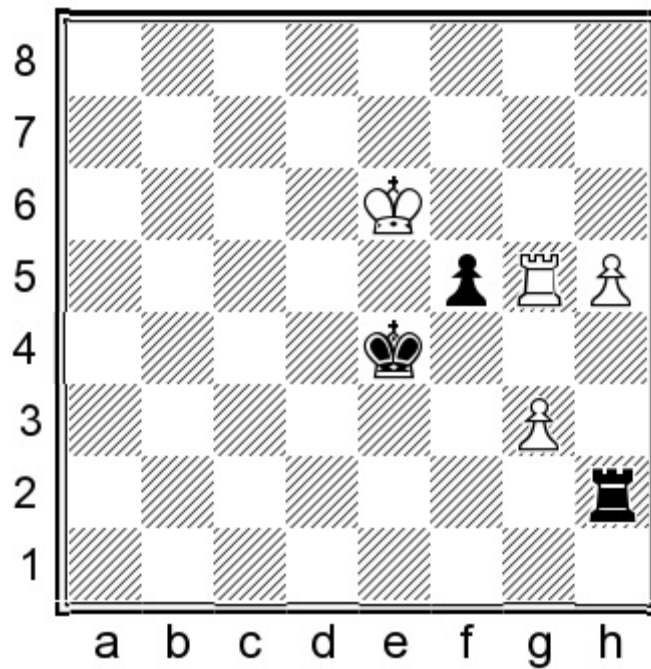
It is most likely that this imperceptible move was missed in calculation by my rival, who was a stronger and more experienced player at that point in time.

In case of the natural 57.♖h8 ♖xa6 58.♕f4 Black is saved by 58...♖a4+ 59.♕g5 g3! 60.fxg3 [60.f4 ♖a2=; 60.f3 ♖a2 61.h6 ♖xg2 62.h7 ♖h2=] 60...♕e5!!.



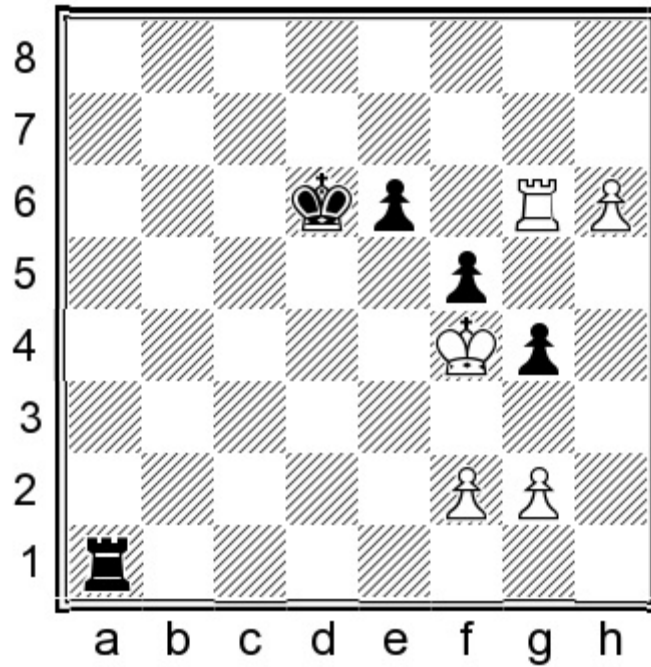
Position after: 60... ♔e5!!

61. ♔g6 [61. h6 ♖g4+ 62. ♔h5 ♖xg3 63. h7 ♖xg2 64. ♖c8 ♖h2+ 65. ♔g6 ♖xh7 66. ♔xh7 ♔f4! 67. ♔g6 e5 and Black is just in time. 68. ♖c4+ e4 69. ♔f6 ♔f3 70. ♔xf5 e3=] 61... ♖a2 62. ♖g8 ♖xg2 63. ♔f7 ♖h2 64. ♖g5 ♔e4 65. ♔xe6



Position after: 65. ♔xe6

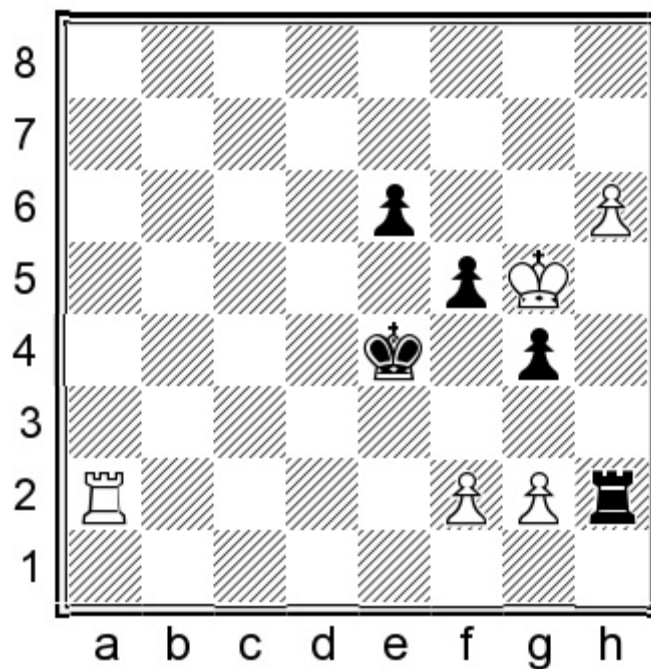
65... ♖a2! 66. ♔f6 ♖a6+ 67. ♔g7 ♖a7+ 68. ♔h6 ♖a6+ 69. ♖g6 ♖a3 70. ♔h7 f4 71. gxf4 ♔xf4 72. h6 ♔f5= 57... ♖xa6 58. h6 ♖a1 59. ♔f4



Position after: 59. ♔f4

59... ♖g1

59... ♖h1 60. ♔g5 ♖h2 61. ♖g8 ♔e5 62. ♖a8 [It is never too late to make mistakes; for example 62. ♔g6? ♖xg2 63. h7 ♖h2 64. h8=♚+ ♖xh8 65. ♖xh8 ♔f4 66. ♖a8 ♔f3 67. ♔g5 ♔xf2 68. ♔f4 e5+!=.] 62... ♔e4 63. ♖a2



Position after: 63. ♖a2

The rook has returned to defend its own pawns, and the white king can easily aid the passed pawns to

promotion. 63...♔d3 [63...♖xg2 64.h7 ♖h2 65.f3+!] 64.g3 ♖h1 65.♔g6+–

60.♖g8!

A) Without falling into the trap 60.h7?? ♖h1 61.♖g7 ♖h5□=.

B) 60.♔g5 also wins.

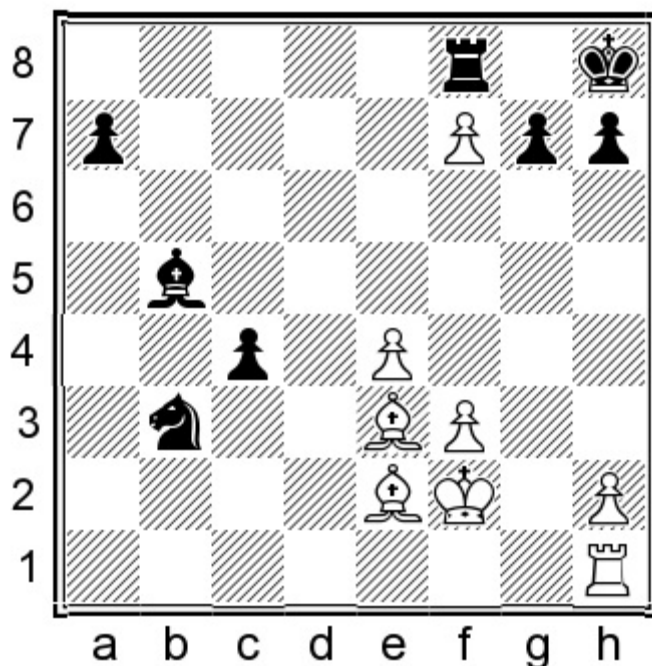
60...♖xg2 61.h7 ♖xf2+ 62.♔g3 ♖f3+ 63.♔g2 ♖h3 64.h8=♚ ♖xh8 65.♖xh8+– ♔e5 66.♔g3 ♔e4
67.♖h1 ♔e5 68.♖e1+ ♔f6 69.♔f4 ♔f7 70.♖a1 ♔f6 71.♖a6 ♔f7 72.♔e5 ♔g6 73.♖xe6+ ♔g5 74.♖e8

1-0

Example 12

From Dreev – Yudasin

Manila 1990



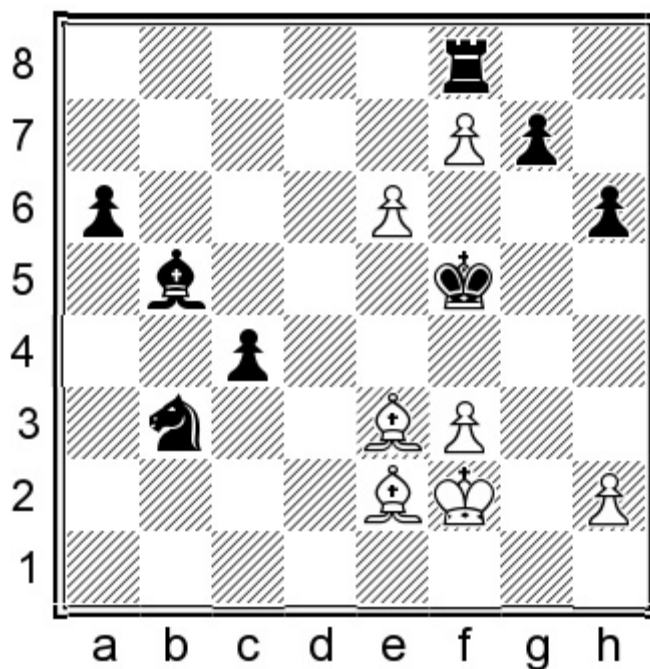
White to move

This memorable and “historical” battle for the opponents took place in the last round of an interzonal tournament. Both opponents were playing to win, however Black’s chances of qualifying to the next stage of the candidate matches were considerably higher than mine in case of a draw.

As a result of an opening mistake, Black ended up with a dangerous position. Though from a practical point of view, the win for White was not completely obvious as there was no material advantage. Let’s see how this fight continued.

36.♖d1 h6 37.f4?!

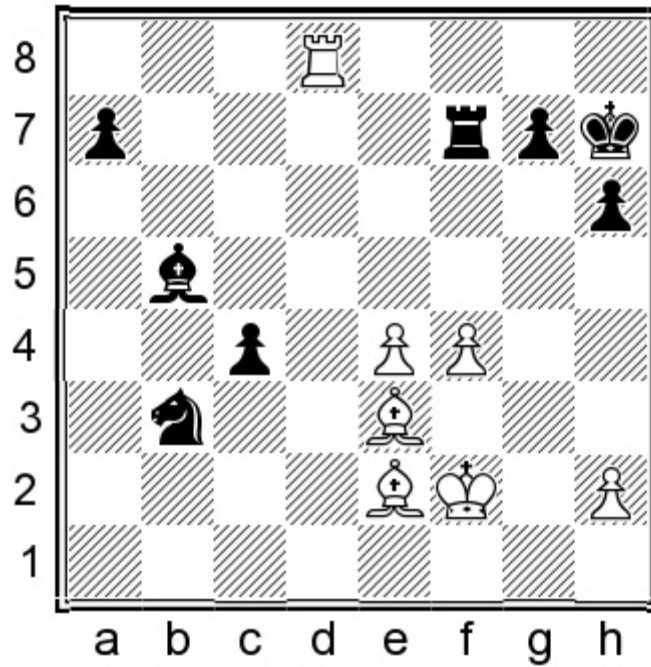
Winning was 37.♖d5! a6 38.♗f5 ♔h7 [38...g6 39.♙xh6!+-] 39.e5 ♕g6 [39...♙d7 40.♙xc4 ♙xf5 41.♙xb3+-] 40.e6! ♕xf5



Position after: 40...♕xf5

41.♙xc4! ♙xc4 [41...♕f6 42.♙xb3+-] 42.e7 ♖xf7 43.e8=♗+-. If the black king were safe, then Black could make an assesment based on full compensation for the queen, but here White wins using the unfortunate position of the black pieces. 43...♙d5 [43...♙e6 44.h4 a5 45.h5 fixing Black's weakness on g7 45...♕e5 46.♗b8+ ♕f6 47.♙f4 ♖d7 48.♙e5+ ♕f7 49.♗h8+-] 44.♗b8 ♙e6 [44...♕g6 45.♗d6+-] 45.♗f4+ ♕g6 46.♗e4+ ♙f5 [46...♕f6 47.♙f4+-] 47.♗c4+-

37...♖xf7 38.♖d8+ ♕h7



Position after: 38...♔h7

39.f5?!

≤ 39.e5±

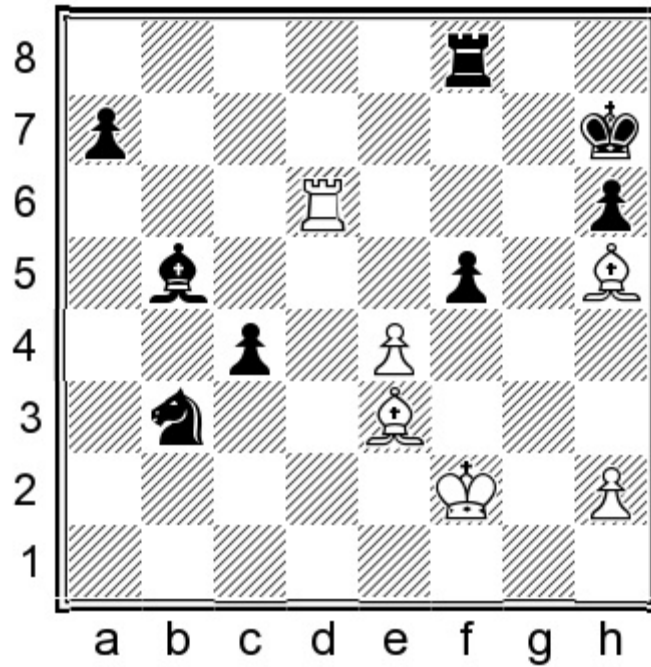
39...g6□

Parrying the bishop transfer to g6.

40.♞d6 gxf5 41.♙h5 ♞d7?!

The not-very-obvious retreat of the rook to f8 would have equalized. In general, in a practical game in such dynamic situations, chess players pay less attention to quiet moves like this one, and more to tempo moves, thus often overlooking correct decisions. This is correlated, it seems to me, to the fact that the modern world exaggerates the tendency to use a “punch to punch” approach, which is not always the right one...

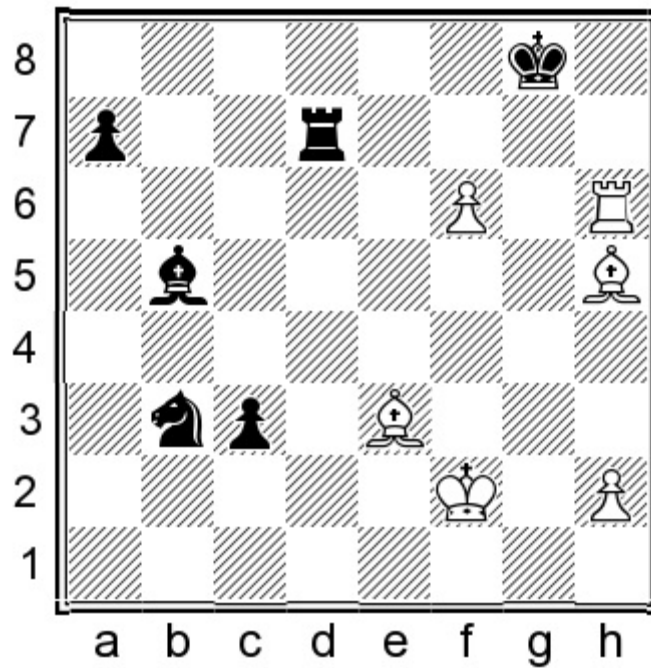
41...♞f8!



Position after: 41...Rf8!

42.♙xh6 [42.♙g6+ ♔g7 43.♙xf5 ♖f6!=; 42.♖xh6+ ♔g7 43.♖g6+ ♔h7=] 42...♖c8 43.exf5 c3=

42.♖xh6+ ♔g8 43.exf5 c3 44.f6



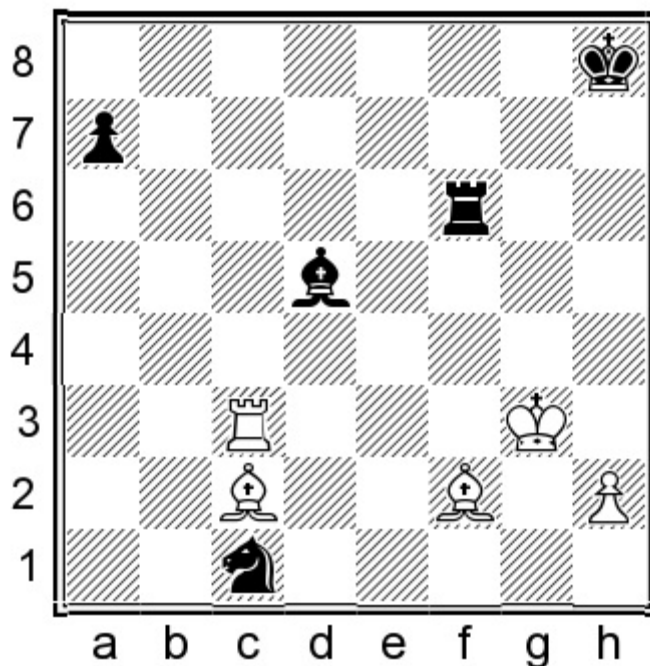
Position after: 44.f6

44...♙c4

44...c2? 45.f7+ ♖xf7+ 46.♙xf7+ ♔xf7 47.♖h7+ ♔e6 48.♖c7+-

45. ♖g6+

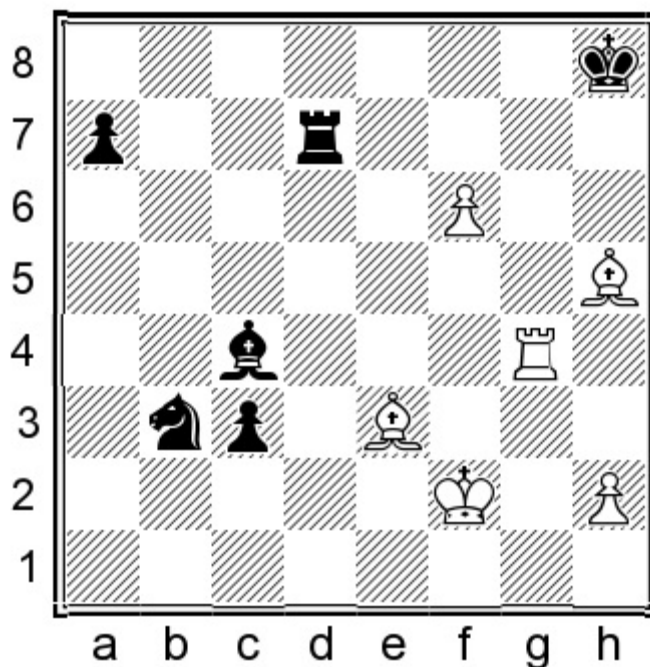
Probably stronger was 45. ♕g6 ♖d1 46. ♔g3! ♜f1 47. ♕f2! Δ 47... ♖d1 48. ♖h7 ♖d6 49. ♖c7 ♖xf6 50. ♕h7+ ♔h8 51. ♕c2 ♕d5 52. ♖xc3 ♖c1



Position after: 52... ♖c1

53. ♕d1 ♖c6 54. ♕c5! ♖a2 55. ♕d4+ ♔h7 56. ♕c2+ ♔h6 57. ♖xc6+ ♕xc6 58. ♕e3+ ♔g7 59. ♕d2+-.

45... ♔h8 46. ♖h6+ ♔g8 47. ♖g6+ ♔h8 48. ♖g4



Position after: 48. ♖g4

48... ♗e6!

In this situation, retreating with tempo is vitally important.

48... ♗d5 49. ♗g6+-

49. ♖b4!

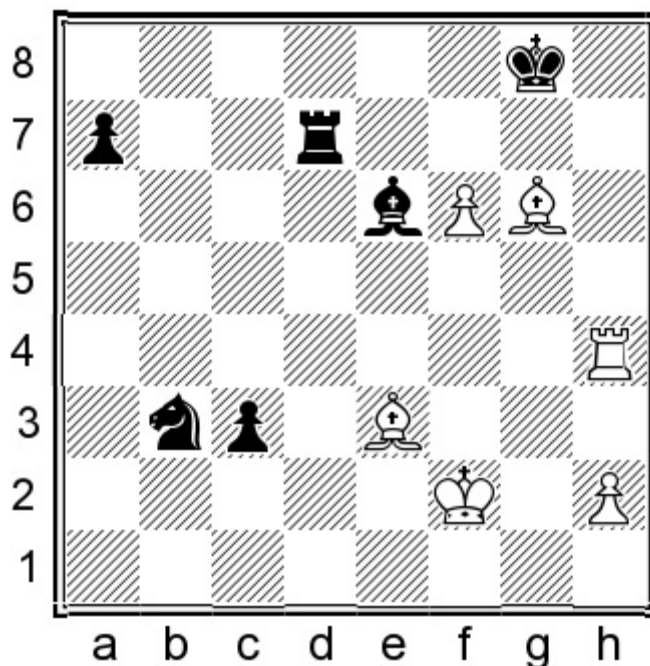
49. ♖h4? ♖h7!=

49... ♔h7!

The only move! Losing was 49... ♖d8? 50. ♖e4! ♗d5 51. ♖h4 ♔g8 52. f7+! ♗xf7 53. ♖g4+ ♔f8 54. ♗h6+ ♔e7 [54... ♔e8 55. ♖g8+-] 55. ♗g5+ ♔f8 56. ♗xf7+-.

50. ♗e8?!

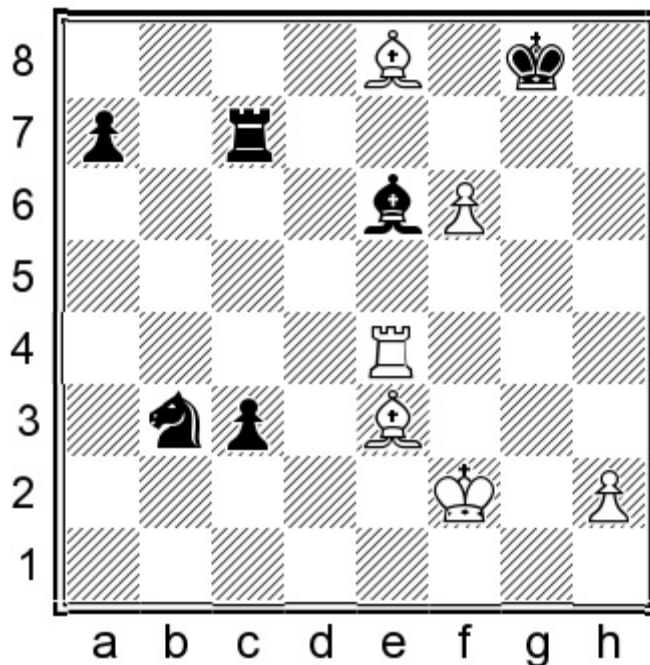
Now, when the black king is on the h7-square, making it unavailable for the rook, White could “reverse” things by playing 50. ♖h4! ♔g8 51. ♗g6.



Position after: 51. ♗g6

The c-pawn is stopped, White is threatening the rook transfer ♖h4-b4-b8, which looks promising, and transferring the bishop to e5 poses a threat of a beautiful mate through sacrificing the rook by means of ♖h8! However, Black finds a way to fend off these threats. 51... a5! 52. ♗f4 ♘c5! 53. ♔e3 [53. ♗e5? ♘d3+=] 53... ♖d5! 54. ♖h7 c2! 55. ♗xc2 ♗f7± White has an obvious advantage, but there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve the win...

50...♖c7 51.♗h4+ ♔g8 52.♗e4



Position after: 52.♗e4

It appears as though White is winning, but this evening the stars were aligned for the Black camp.

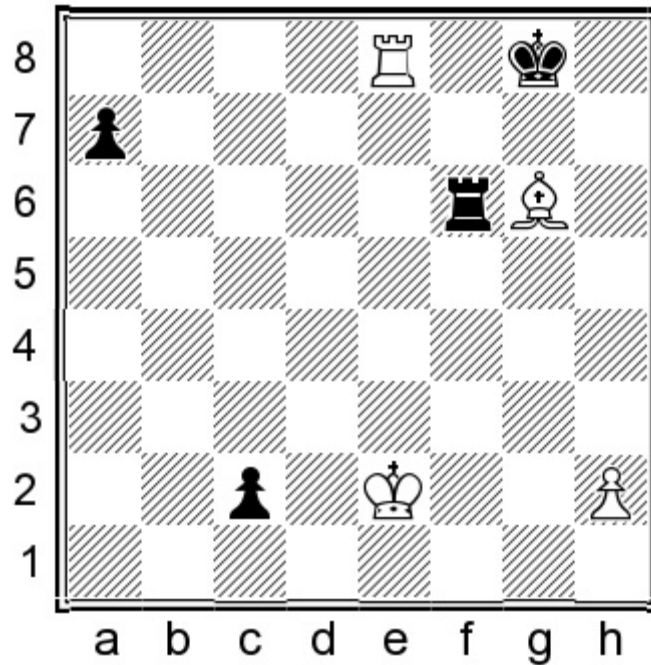
52...♘c5!

Brilliant, and the only correct road to salvation! 52...♙d5? 53.♗e7! ♖xe7 54.fxe7 ♙f7 55.♙c6 c2 56.♙d5+-

53.♙xc5 ♖xc5 54.♗xe6 c2 55.♙g6 ♖f5+!

55...♖c8? 56.♗e8+-

56.♔e2 ♖xf6 57.♗e8+



Position after: 57. ♖e8+

57... ♜f8!

Formally, 57... ♔g7 58. ♕xc2 ♜h6 also led to a draw. Having said that, at the time Leonid was actively interested in yoga, and not masochism.

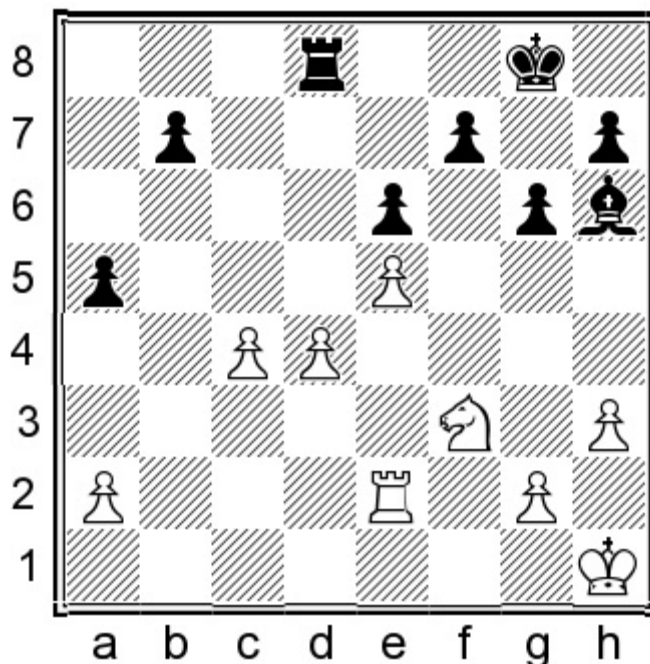
58. ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 59. ♕xc2

Here, my opponent, with a jubilant expression on his face, was very eloquently banging his fingernail on the h8 square, urging me to cease the fight. I obliged. As a reward for the suffering, I still ended up getting a spot in the candidates match, where a tiger from Madras was awaiting me, and Leonid faced a brilliant Ivanchuk. But all that is another story...

1/2-1/2

Example 13

From Brown – Khachiyan
chess.com 2018



Black to move

Black's queenside pawn structure leaves much to be desired. White has a powerful center and Black urgently needs to create pressure, otherwise White will bring his king to the center, and subsequently deal with Black's weaknesses.

33...♖g7!

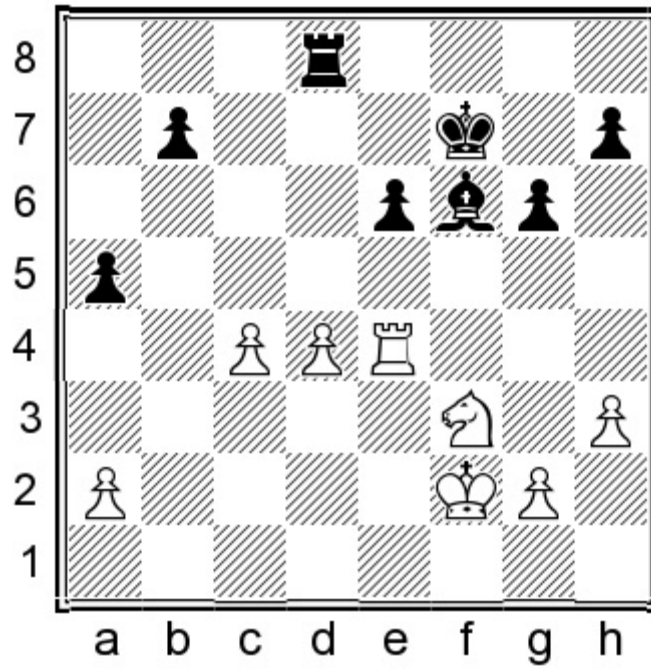
The bishop returns to support the ...f7-f6 thrust, after which the white center will not be so impregnable.

The game continued 33...b6? 34.♔g1 ♜c8 35.♞c2 b5 36.c5 b4 [36...♔f8 37.♔f2 ♕e8 38.♔e2 ♕d7 39.♔d3 ♕c6 40.h4±] 37.♔f2 a4 38.♔e2 ♞b8 39.♘d2 ♙xd2 40.♔xd2 ♕f8 41.♔d3 ♕e7 42.♞b2+- ½-½ (48).

33...♖g7! 34.♔g1

34.g4 f6 35.exf6 ♙xf6 36.♞e4 b6 37.♔g2 ♕f7 38.♔f2 ♞c8=

34...f6 35.exf6 ♙xf6 36.♞e4 ♕f7 37.♔f2

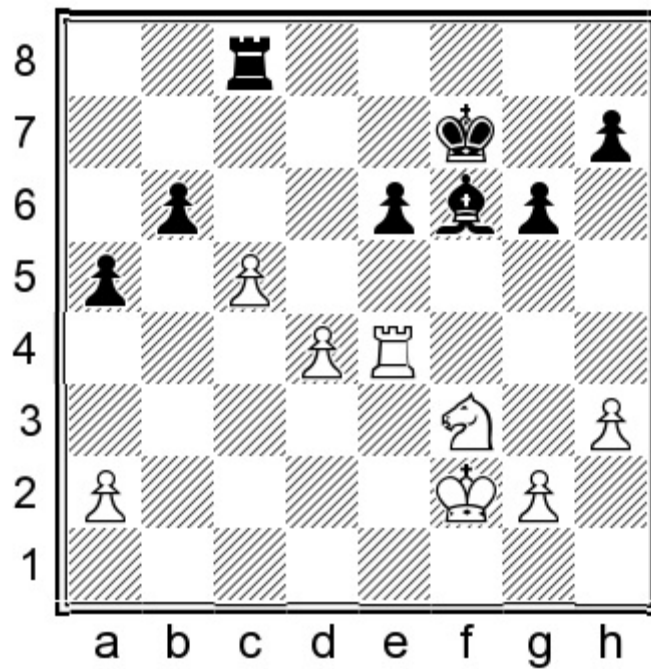


Position after: 37. ♔f2

37... ♖c8

37... b6 38. ♔e2±

38. c5 b6!



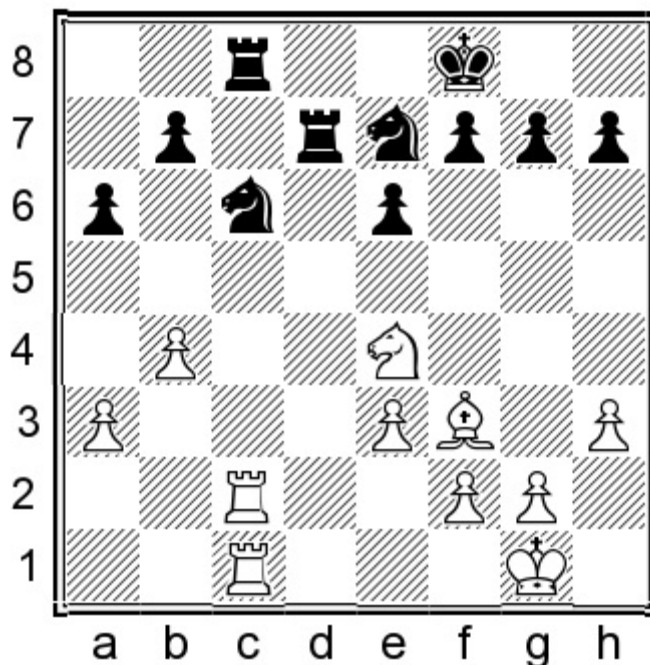
Position after: 38...b6!

Same principle as ...f6.

39.cxb6 ♖b8 40.♘e5+ ♙xe5 41.♞xe5 ♞xb6 42.♞xa5 ♞b2+ 43.♕f3 ♞d2=

Example 14

From Dreev – Erenburg
chess.com 2019



Black to move

Black's position is very alarming due to the threat of ♘e4-c5. It is therefore necessary to take immediate action - active methods are Black's only hope.

27...♞d3!

The game continued 27...♘d5? 28.♘c5 ♞dc7 29.♙xd5 exd5 30.♘xb7 ♞xb7 31.♞xc6 ♞xc6 32.♞xc6 a5 33.bxa5 ♞b3 34.♞c5 ♞d3 35.♕f1 ♕e7 36.♕e2 ♞xa3 37.♞xd5+- 1-0 (53).

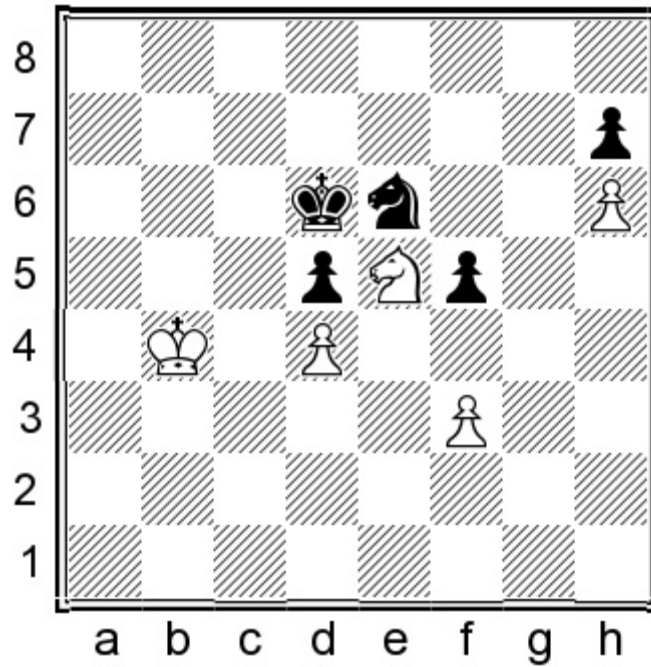
27...♞d3! 28.♘c5

28.♞a1!±

28...♞xa3 29.♘xb7 ♘a7□±

Example 15

From Werle – Alekseenko
Gibraltar 2019



White to move

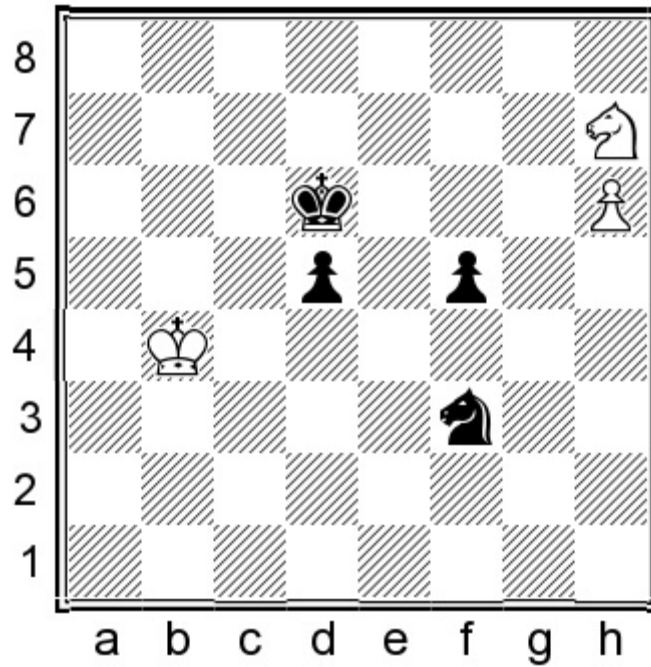
The fragility of White's position lies in the fact that he may lose the h-pawn, which has been pushed too far forward.

51. ♖g6!?

A) A spectacular solution. Quite a simple one, 51. ♔c3, enables White to keep the position under control without any particular difficulty, for example: 51... ♗e7 52. ♘d3 ♖f6 53. ♙c5! ♘g5 54. ♘d7+ ♗g6 55. ♘b6 ♘xf3 56. ♔d3 ♗xh6 57. ♔e3 ♘e1 58. ♗f4 ♖g6 59. ♘xd5 ♘d3+ 60. ♔e3 ♘e1 61. ♗f4=.

B) 51. ♘f7+?! ♔e7 52. ♘e5 ♗f6⚡

51. ♘g6!? ♘xd4 52. ♘f8 ♘xf3 53. ♘xh7



Position after: 53. ♖xh7

53... ♖e7

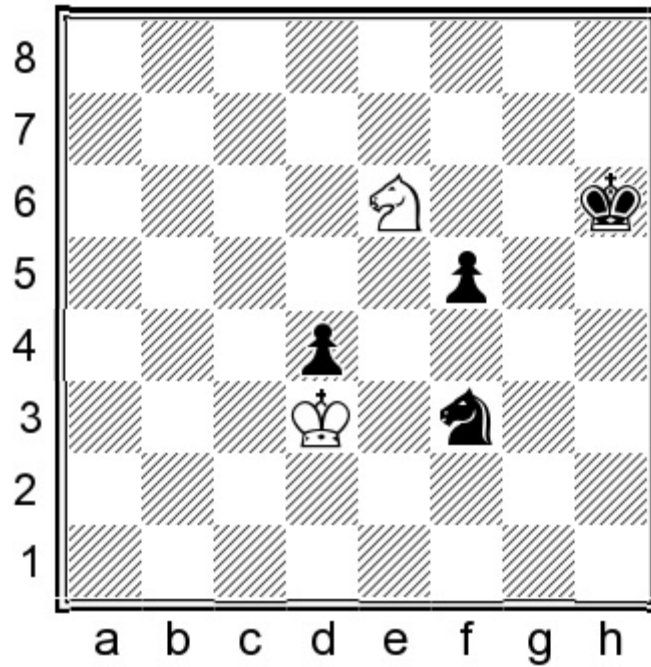
53... f4 54. ♖f6=

54. ♖c5?

54. ♖c3! ♖f7 55. ♖d3 f4 [55... ♖g6 56. ♖f8+ ♖xh6 57. ♖e6 Black is unable to hold onto both pawns.]

56. ♖c3! [56. ♖e2? ♖d4+ 57. ♖f2 ♖e6 58. ♖f3 ♖g6+] 56... ♖g6 57. ♖f8+ ♖xh6 58. ♖e6=

54...d4 55. ♖c4 ♖f7 56. ♖d3 ♖g6 57. ♖f8+ ♖xh6 58. ♖e6



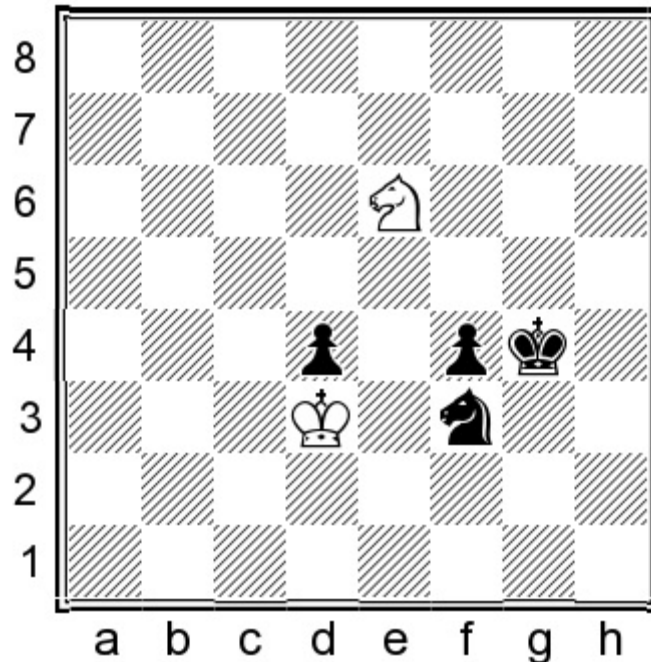
Position after: 58. ♖e6

58...♔g6!

It is important for Black to get the king to e5. Leading to a draw is the apparently more active 58...♔h5?.

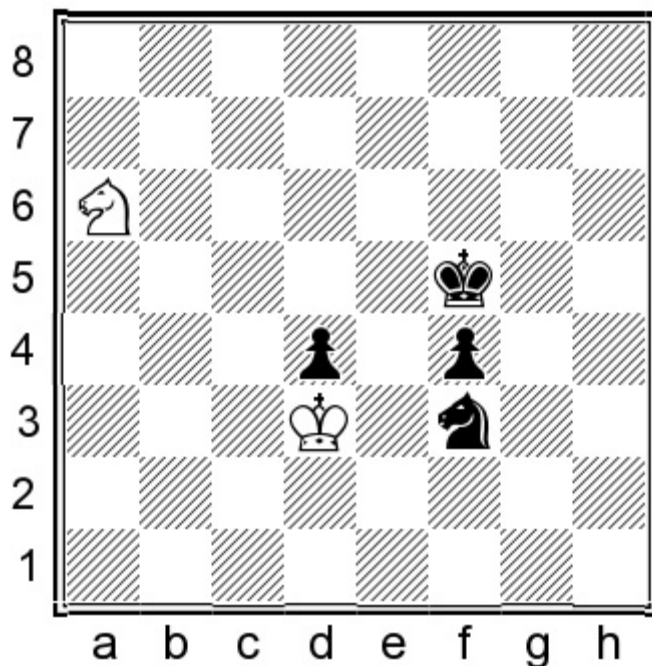
A) 59. ♗f4+ ♔g5 60. ♗d5! ♔g6 [60...♔g4 61. ♔c4! =] 61. ♔c4 ♔f7 62. ♗f4 ♔f6 63. ♔d5! not allowing the black king to the center. 63...♔g5 64. ♗d3 ♔g4 65. ♔c4 =

B) Or 59. ♔e2 ♔g4 60. ♔d3 f4



Position after: 60...f4

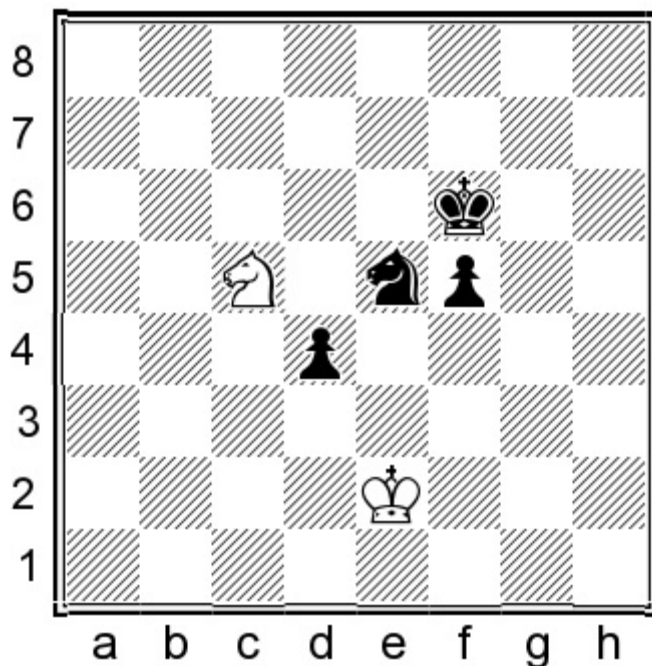
61.♖c5! [61.♖c7 ♕e1+ 62.♔xd4 f3 63.♖d5 f2 64.♖e3+ ♔f3 65.♖f1 ♔g2 66.♖e3+ ♔g1-+] 61...♔f5
[61...♔g3 62.♖e6=] 62.♖a6!!



Position after: 62.♖a6!!

The only move, a study like solution. 62...♔e5 [62...♔g4 63.♖c5=] 63.♖b4. The black king gets to the center but with the knight on b4, White still draws: 63...♖e1+ 64.♔e2 ♖g2 65.♔d3 f3 66.♖c6+=.

59.♔e2 ♔f6 60.♖c5 ♖e5-+



Position after: 60... ♖e5-+

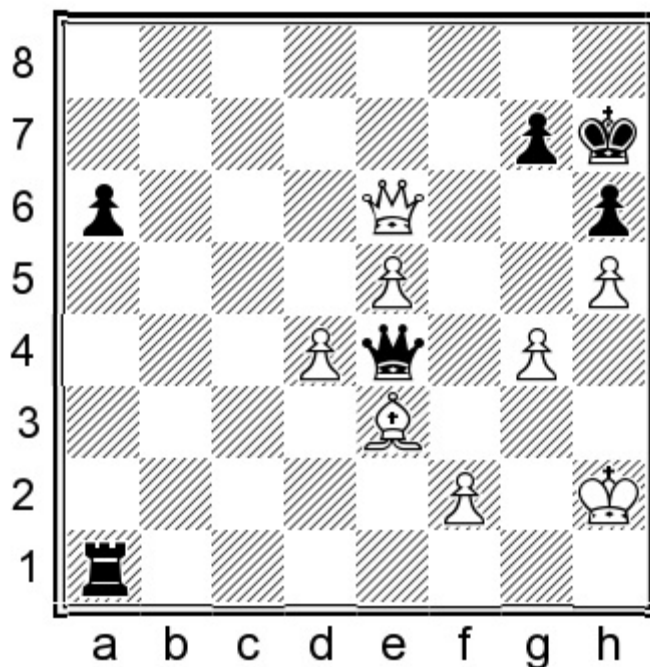
61. ♖b3 ♖c6 62. ♖d3 ♖e5 63. ♖d2 ♖d5

0-1

Example 16

From Debashis – Iturrizaga Bonelli

Moscow 2019



White to move

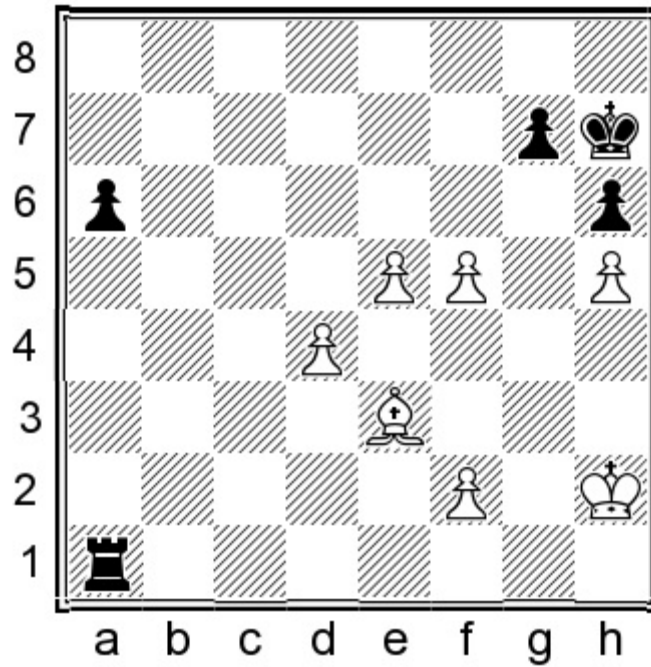
39. ♖f5+?

Black's threats towards the white king look very serious, and this explains the choice to exchange queens. White hopes to counteract Black's passed pawn by engaging his own passers in the center. In reality, there was actually nothing that threatening on the board, and the game could have been saved in two different ways.

A) 39. f3! ♖xe3 [39... ♖xf3 40. ♖g6+ ♖g8 41. ♖e6+ ♖f7 42. ♖c8+ ♖h7 43. ♖c2+ ♖h8 44. ♖c8+ ♖g8 45. ♖f5=; 39... ♖d3 40. ♖g3=] 40. ♖g6+ ♖g8 41. ♖e8+=

B) Or 39. ♖xh6! a5 40. ♖g3 ♖g1+ [40... a4 41. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 42. ♖e7+=] 41. ♖h4 a4 [41... ♖h1+?? 42. ♖g5 gxh6+ 43. ♖xh6+ ♖g8 44. ♖e6+ ♖f8 45. ♖d7+-] 42. ♖xg7=.

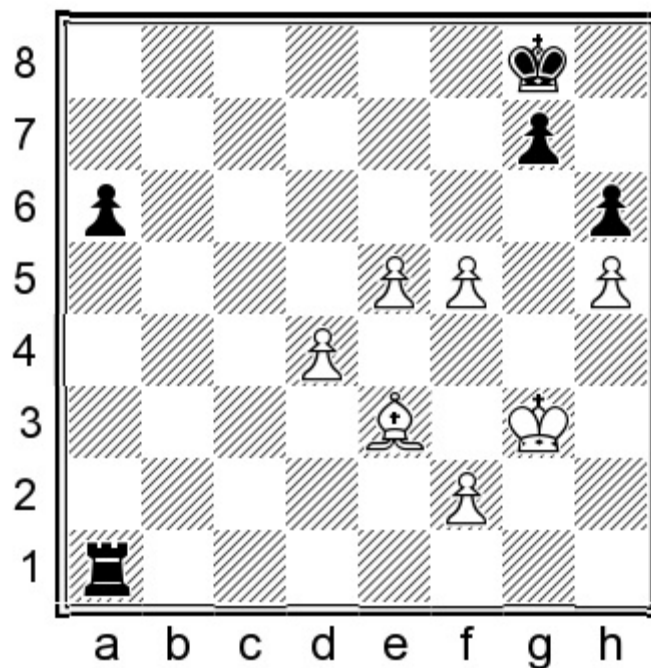
39. ♖f5+? ♖xf5 40. gxh6



Position after: 40.gxf5

40...♖d1

A) Winning was 40...♔g8! 41.♔g3 [In case of the prompting 41.d5, 41...♖a5!-+ decides - the point!; There is no time for the white king to make it to the center of the board 41.♔g2 ♖d1 42.♔f3 a5 43.♔e2 ♖b1 44.d5 ♖b5]



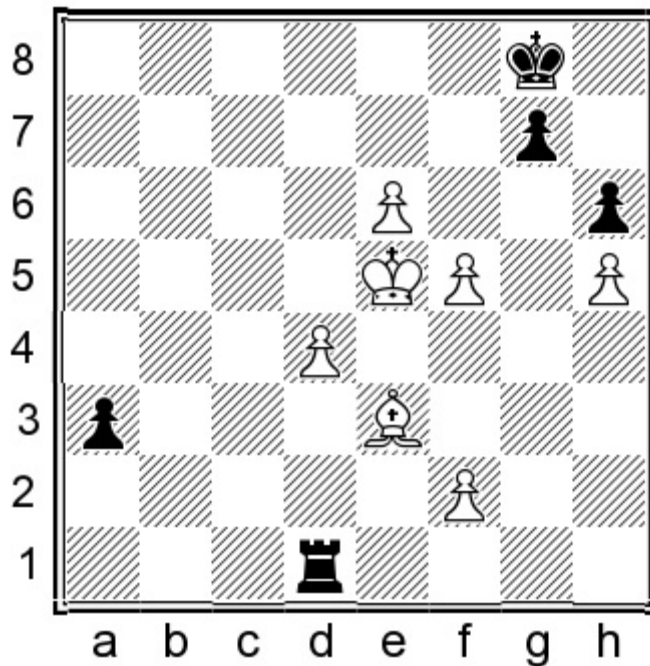
Position after: 41.♔g3

41...a5 [41...♖d1 42.e6 a5 43.♔f4 a4 44.♔e5 a3 45.♔d6!]=] 42.d5 a4 43.d6 ♖d1 44.♔c5 a3! 45.♔xa3

♖d3+-+

B) 40...a5 41.d5 ♔g8 42.d6+-

41.♔g3 a5 42.e6 ♔g8 43.♔f4 a4 44.♔e5 a3

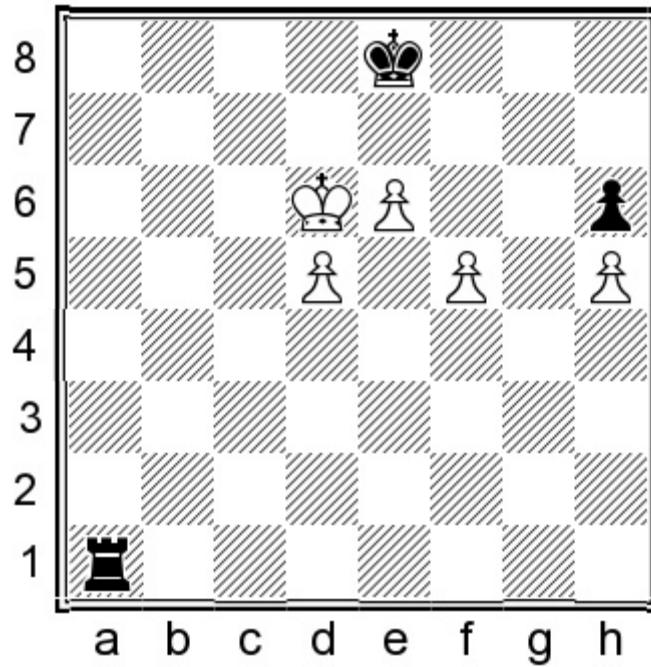


Position after: 44...a3

45.♔d6!= ♖b1 46.d5 ♖d1

46...a2 47.♙d4 a1=♚ 48.♙xa1 ♖xa1 49.♔e7 ♖a7+ 50.♔e8=

47.♙f4 a2 48.♙e5 ♔f8 49.f6 gxf6 50.♙xf6 ♔e8 51.f4 a1=♚ 52.♙xa1 ♖xa1 53.f5



Position after: 53.f5

The three pawns are sufficient compensation for the rook.

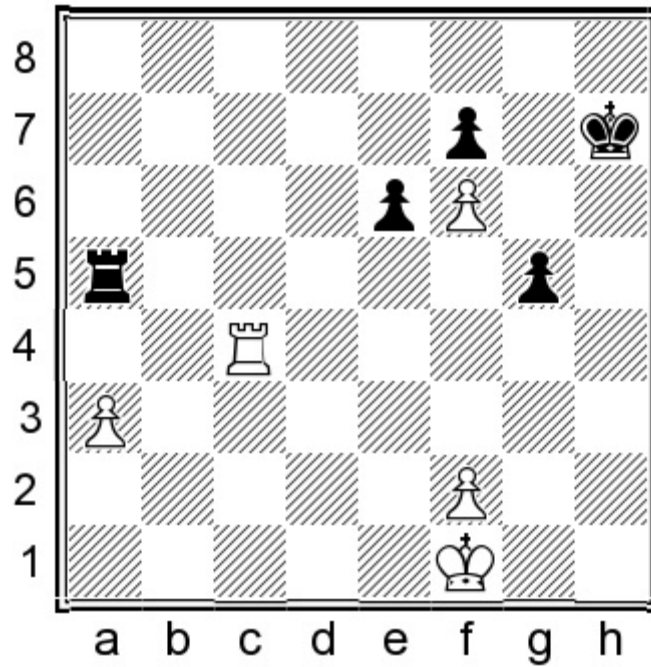
53...♖h1 54.♔c7 ♜c1+ 55.♔d6 ♜f1 56.♔e5 ♜h1 57.d6 ♜xh5 58.♔f6 ♜g5 59.♔e5 h5 60.♔f4 ♜g4+
 61.♔e5 ♜g1 62.f6 ♜f1 63.f7+ ♔f8 64.d7 ♔e7 65.♔d5 h4 66.♔c6 h3 67.♔c7 ♜c1+ 68.♔b7 ♜d1
 69.♔c8 ♜c1+ 70.♔b7 ♜d1 71.♔c8 h2 72.f8=♚+ ♔xf8 73.d8=♚+ ♜xd8+ 74.♔xd8 h1=♚ 75.e7+ ♔g7
 76.e8=♚ ♚a8+ 77.♔d7 ♚xe8+ 78.♔xe8

1/2-1/2

Example 17

From Vishnu Prasanna – Sarana

Moscow 2019

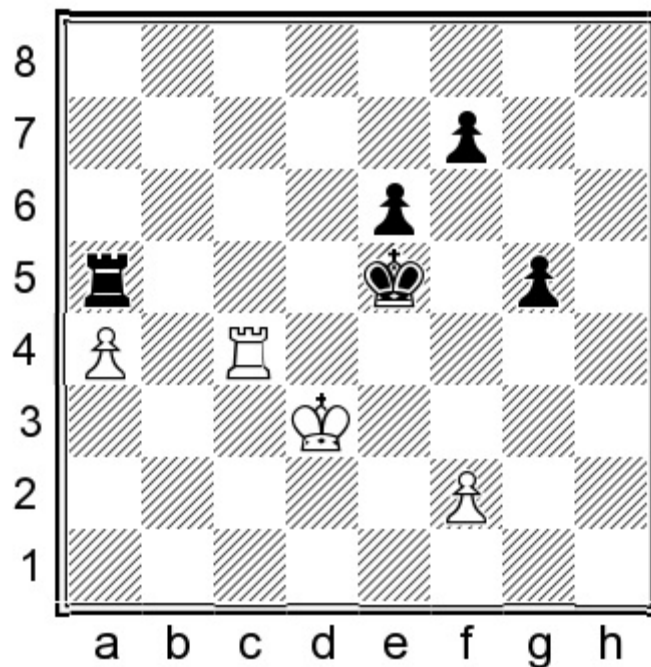


White to move

White's position looks bleak, he is about to part with the f6-pawn, after which Black's position will be technically winning. However, there is still a path to salvation...

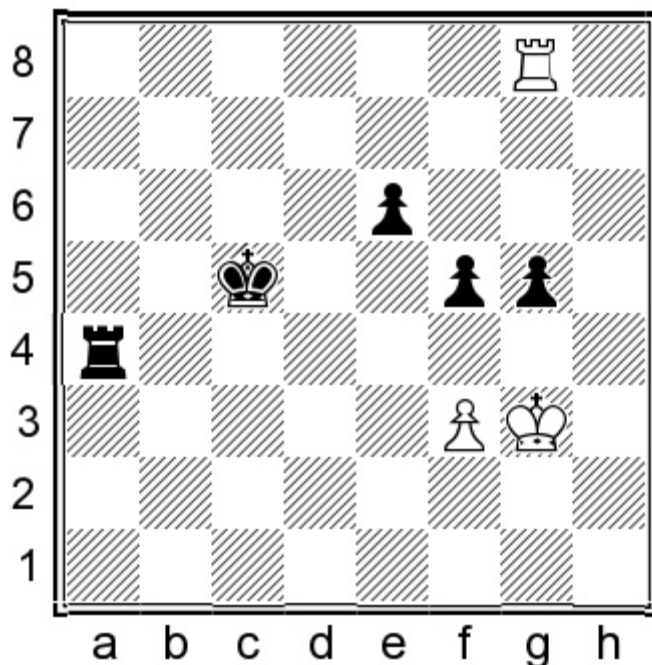
59. ♖g4!!

A) In the game, White overlooked this opportunity and played 59.a4? ♔g6 60. ♔e2 ♕xf6 61. ♔d3 ♔e5



Position after: 61... ♔e5

62.f3?! It was not worth moving the pawn, White had more practical chances by not playing it. The general rule is that you should not hurry with such pawn moves, as you cannot take them back. In some cases, the pawn may be better placed on f2, at times perhaps the f2-f3 tempo is serendipitously preserved. 62...♔d6 63.♖b4 ♕d5 64.♗g4 f6 65.♗d4+ ♕c5 66.♖c4+ ♕d6 67.♖b4 f5 68.♖b6+ ♕d5 69.♖b4 ♕c6 70.♕d2 ♗d5+ 71.♕e2 ♖e5+ 72.♕f2 ♗a5 73.♕g3 ♕c5 74.♖b8 ♖xa4 75.♗g8



Position after: 75.♗g8

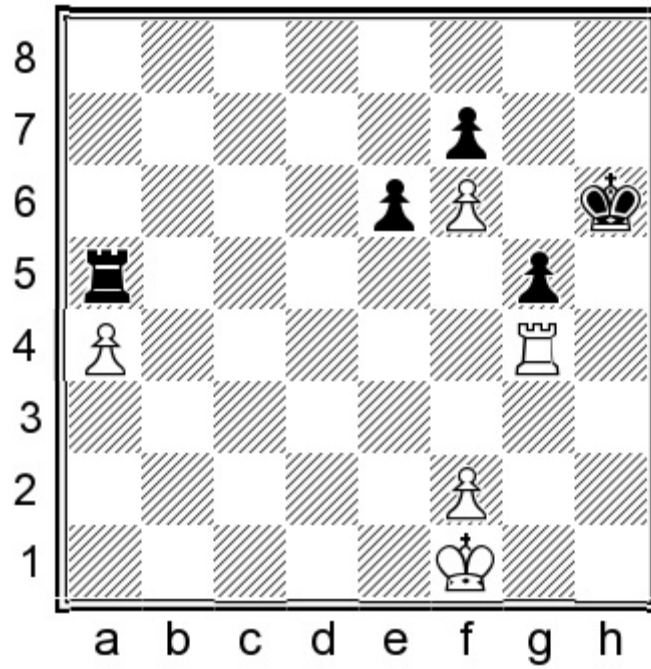
75...g4! 0-1.

B) 59.♖c3 ♕g6 60.♖f3 e5 61.♕e2 e4 62.♖e3 ♗a4 63.f3 exf3+ 64.♖xf3 g4+

59.♗g4!! ♕h6

59...♕g6 60.f4 ♕xf6 61.fxg5+ [61.♖xg5? ♗a4!-+] 61...♕f5 62.♖g3=

60.a4



Position after: 60.a4

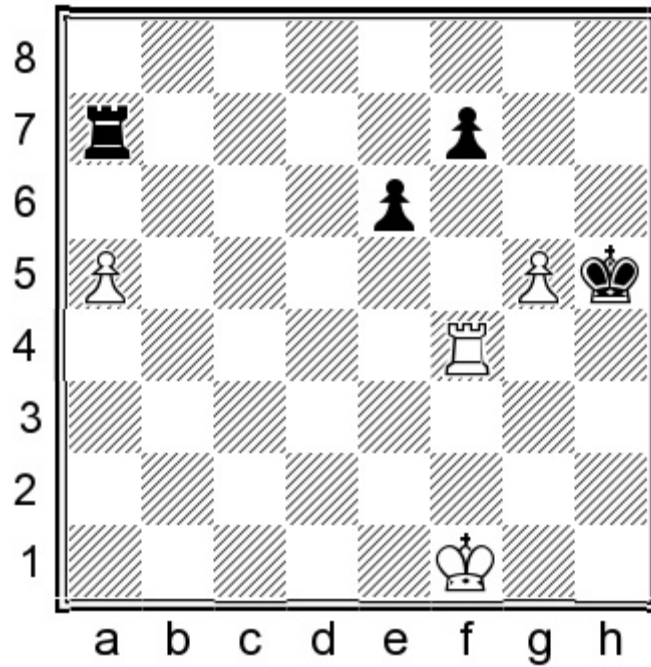
60...♔g6

≤ 60...e5 61.♖b4 ♔g6 62.♖b5=

61.f4 ♔xf6 62.fxg5+ ♔f5 63.♖b4 ♔g6

≤ 63...e5 64.♖b7 ♔g6 65.♖b5=

64.♖g4 ♔h5 65.♖f4 ♖a7 66.a5!

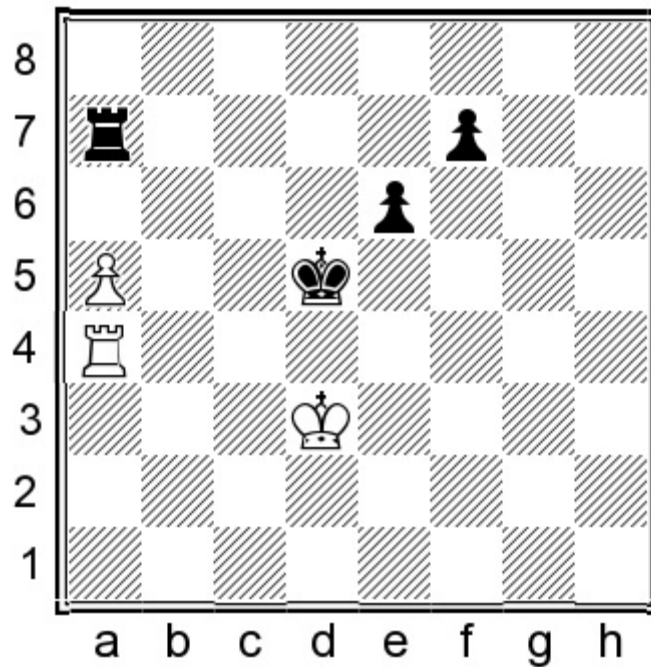


Position after: 66.a5!

It is important to be in time to place the rook behind the pawn.

66...♙xg5 67.♖a4 ♕f5 68.♕e2 ♕e5 69.♕e3

Also possible is 69.♕d3 ♕d5



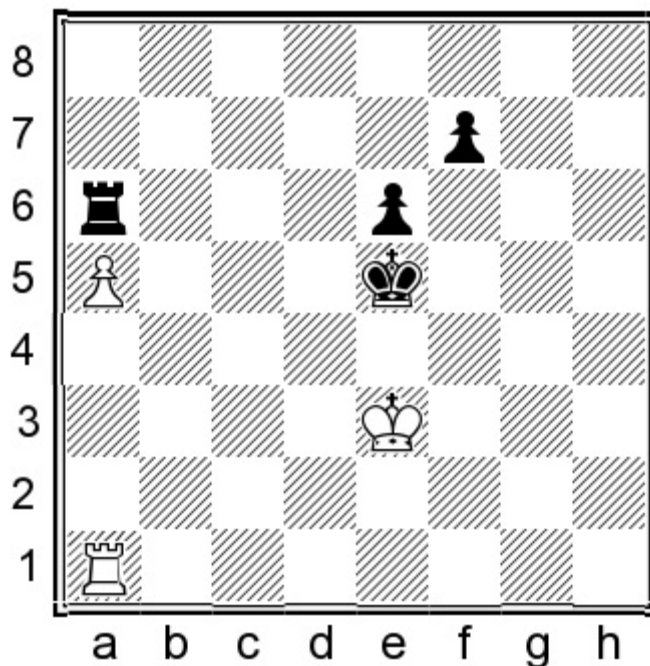
Position after: 69...♕d5

70.♖a1 [70.a6? ♕c5 71.♕e4 ♕b5 72.♖a1 ♖xa6 73.♖b1+ ♕c5 74.♖f1 ♖a7 75.♕e5 ♕c4 76.♕e4 ♖d7-+]

70...♔c5 [70...f5 71.a6=] 71.♔e4 transposing into the main line.

69...♔d5

69...♞a6 70.♞a1



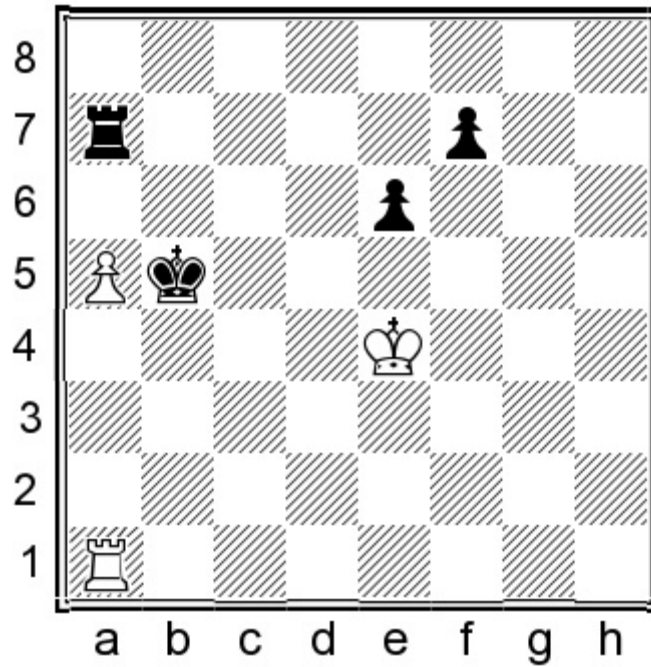
Position after: 70.♞a1

70...♔d5 [70...f5 71.♞a2 ♔d5 72.♔f4 ♔c5 73.♔e5=] 71.♔f4 f6 72.♞a2 ♔c4 73.♔e4 ♔b5 74.♞f2 f5+ 75.♔e5 ♔xa5 76.♞b2 ♞b6 77.♞a2+ ♔b4 78.♞b2+ ♔c5 79.♞c2+ ♔b5 80.♞b2+ ♔c6 81.♞d2=

70.♞a1

70.a6? ♔c5-+

70...♔c5 71.♔e4 ♔b5



Position after: 71...♔b5

72.♖b1+!

After this precise and only move, Black is unable to realize the material advantage because his king cannot help the pawns.

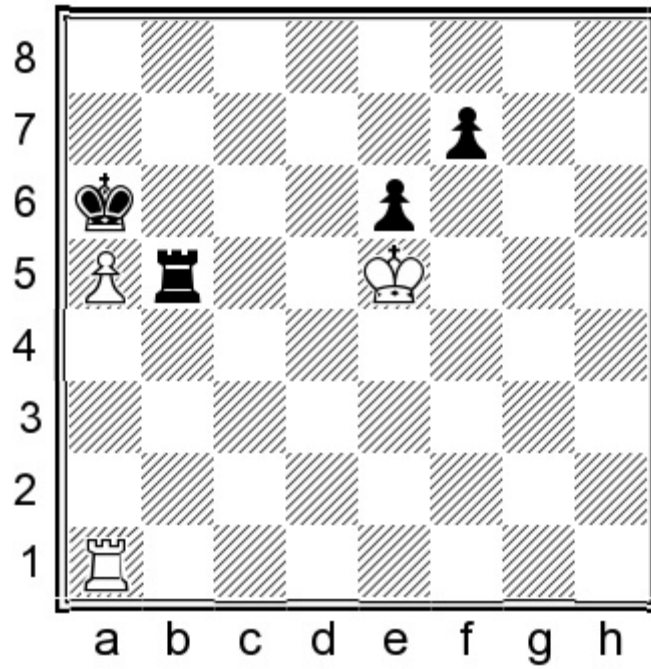
72...♔a6

72...♔xa5 73.♔e5 ♖d7 74.♔f6=

73.♔e5 ♖b7

73...♖d7 74.♔f6=

74.♖a1! ♖b5+



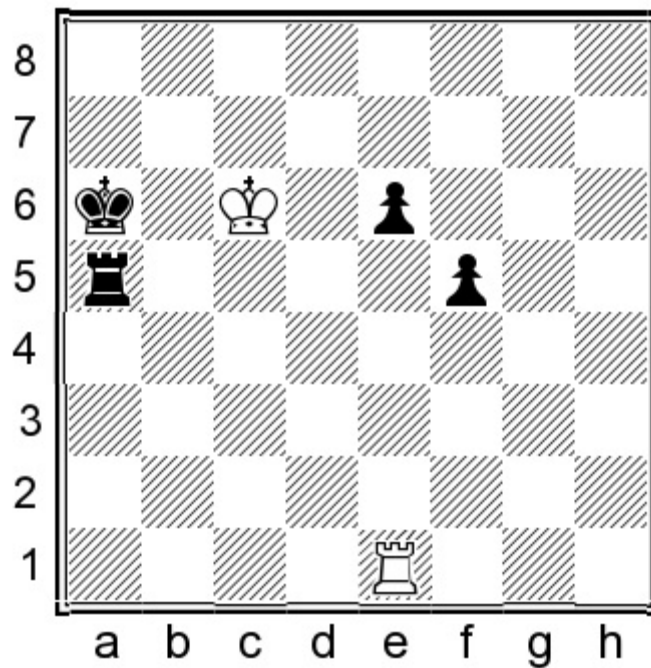
Position after: 74...♖b5+

75.♔d6!

75.♔f6 ♖f5+ 76.♔e7 ♖xa5 77.♖b1 ♖f5 78.♔d6 ♔a5—+

75...♗d5+

75...♖xa5 76.♖f1 ♗d5+ 77.♔c6 [77.♔e7? ♖f5—+] 77...f5 78.♖e1 ♖b5 79.♖a1+ ♖a5 80.♖e1



Position after: 80.♖e1

80...e5 [80...♔a7 81.♕d6 ♖a6+ 82.♕c7=] 81.♖b1 e4 82.♖b8 ♕a7 83.♖b7+ ♕a8 84.♖e7 ♖a3 85.♖e5 ♖f3
86.♕b6=

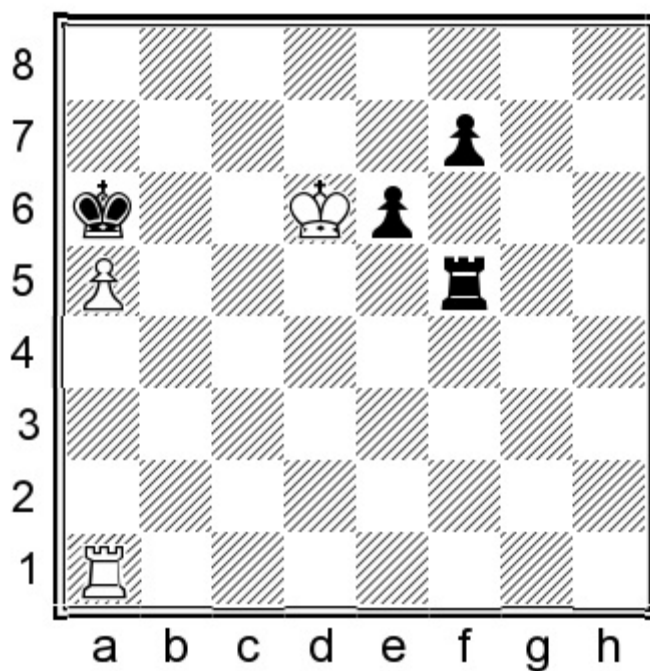
76.♕c6!

76.♕e7? ♖xa5 77.♖b1 ♖f5—+

76...♖f5

76...♖xa5 77.♖f1=

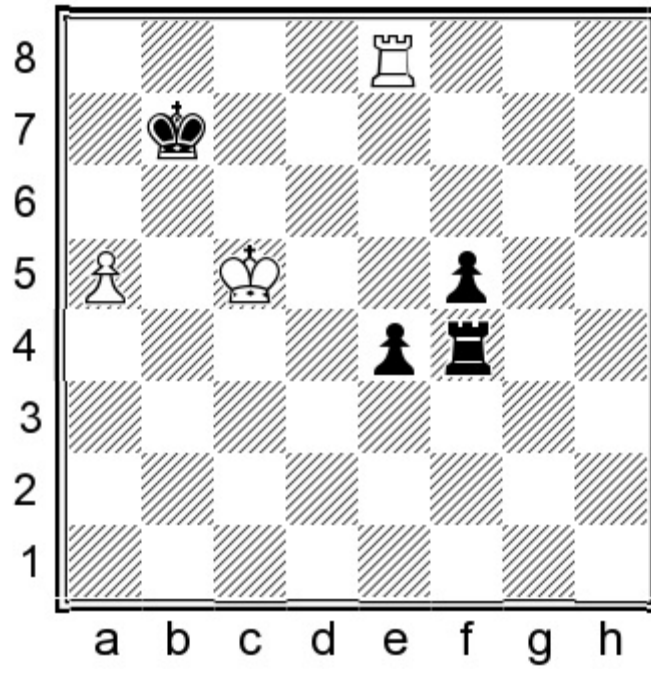
77.♕d6=



Position after: 77.♕d6=

For example...

77...e5 78.♕c5 ♖f4 79.♖h1 e4 80.♖h8 f5 81.♖a8+ ♕b7 82.♖e8



Position after: 82. ♖e8

82... ♜f1

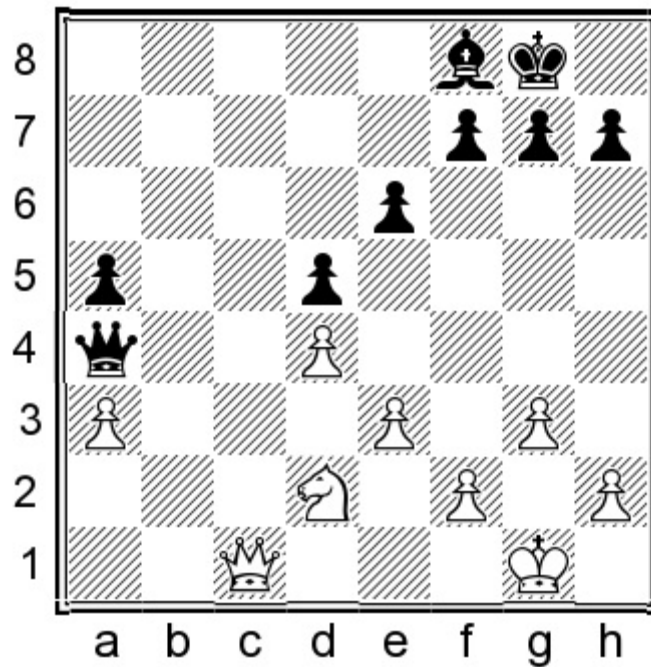
82... ♜f3 83. ♖e6 e3 84. a6+ ♔a7 85. ♔b5=

83. ♖e6=

Chapter 2 Exercises

1

Caceres Vasquez, S. – Alonso, S.



□ Find the best move - by far - for White.

Show/Hide Solution

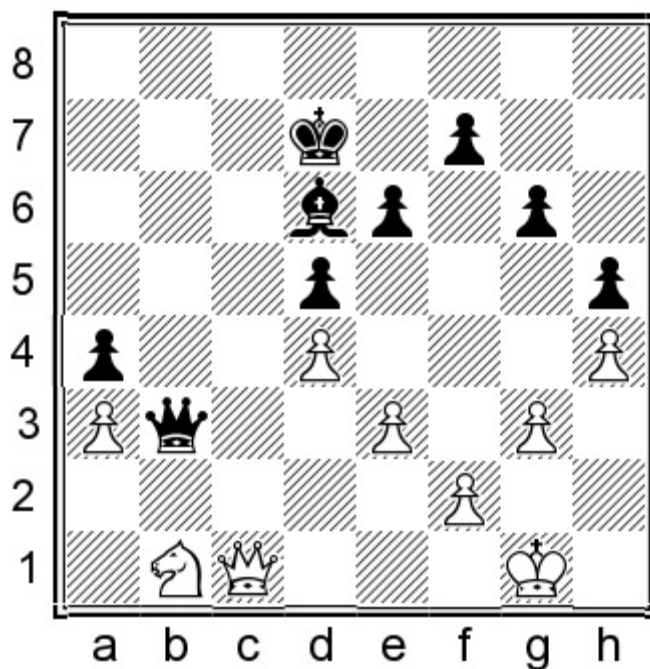
1

27. ♖f3!

Active defense!

27. ♖b1? The a3-pawn is under duress, so this move seems natural. After this though, in view of the fact that White's pieces are tied down to defending this pawn, they were forced to stand by and observe

while Black methodically strengthened his position... 27...♙b3 28.♚g2 g6 29.♚g1 h5 30.h4 ♚g7
 31.♚g2 ♜d6 32.♚g1 ♚f8 33.♚g2 ♚e7 34.♚g1 ♚d7 35.♚g2 a4 36.♚g1

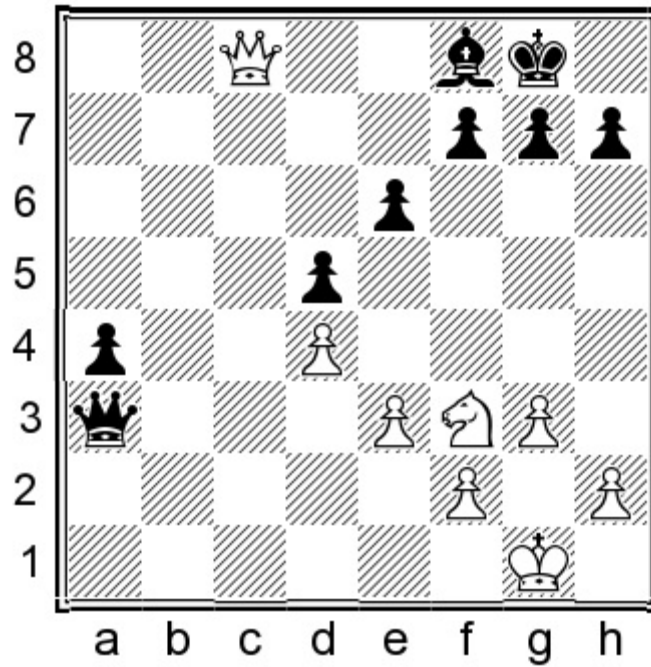


Position after: 36.♚g1

36...♙c4!? 37.♙xc4 dxc4 38.♚f1 ♚c6 39.♚e2 e5 40.♚d2 exd4 41.exd4 ♜c7–+ 42.♞c3 ♜a5 43.♚c2
 ♜b6 44.d5+ ♚d6 45.f3 f5 46.♞xa4 ♜f2 47.g4 hxg4 48.fxg4 fxg4 49.♚d2 ♜d4 0-1 Caceres Vasquez, S
 (2041) – Alonso, S (2519) Montevideo 2018.

27.♞f3! f6

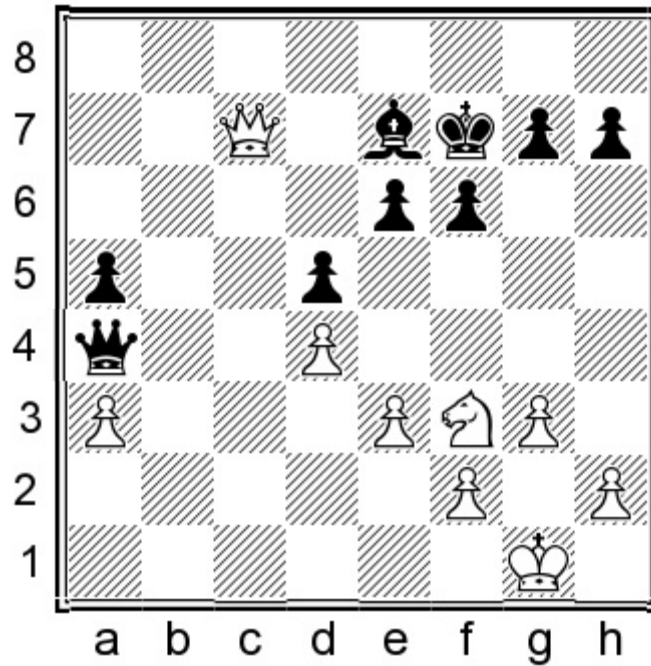
27...♙xa3 28.♙c8 a4



Position after: 28...a4

29. ♖d7! Keeping an eye on the a4-pawn, ♘f3-e5 is threatened, and Black will soon be forced to part with his passed pawn [29. ♘e5? ♜e7+] 29... ♜e7 30. ♜xa4=.

28. ♜c8 ♔f7 29. ♜c7+ ♕e7



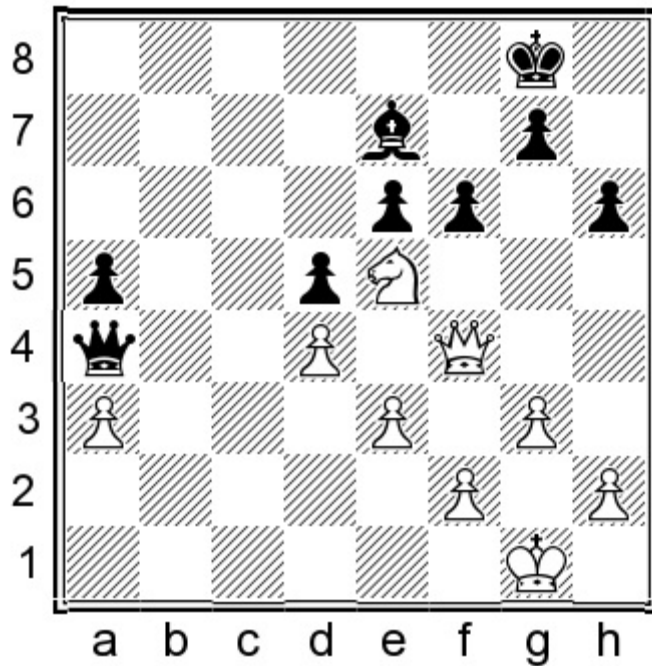
Position after: 29...♕e7

30. ♜f4!!

When it looked like all active possibilities had already been exhausted for White, he finds this brilliant resource. The position is equal, for example:

30...♙xa3

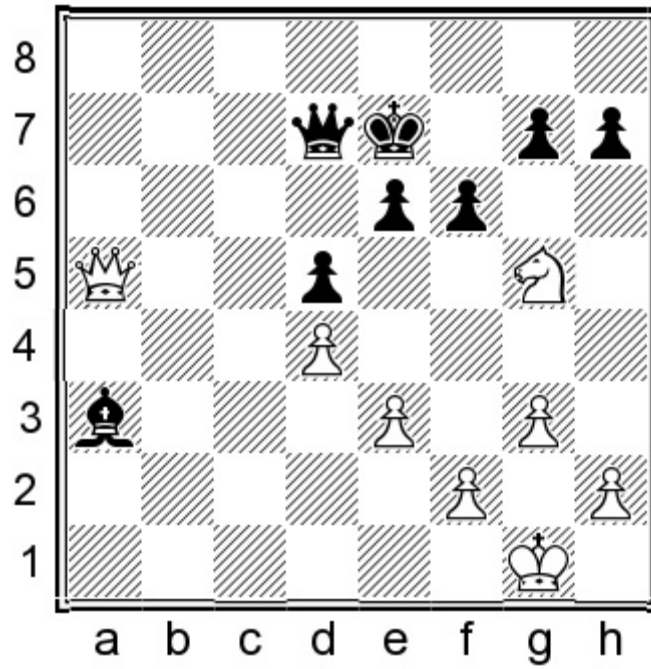
30...h6 31.♘e5+ ♔g8



Position after: 31...♔g8

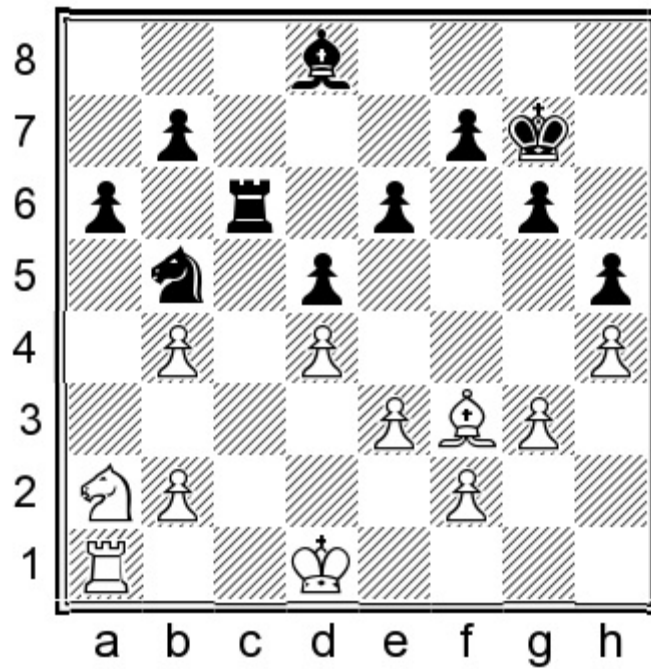
32.♙g4 [Or 32.♘g6 ♙xa3 33.♙c7 ♙e8 34.♙xa5=] 32...fxe5 33.♙xe6+ ♔f8 34.♙f5+=

31.♘g5+ ♔e7 32.♙c7+ ♙d7 33.♙xa5=



Position after: 33. ♔xa5=

2
Lampert, J. – Spoelman, W.



□ 47. ♖c1 trying to exchange rooks, or 47. ♘c1?

Show/Hide Solution

47.♖c1?

White's position looks safe and he decides to exchange rooks, probably thinking that this would bring him closer to a draw. However, he did not take into account the fact that it was not necessary to engage in a battle over the open file...

A) The only correct path was to mobilize all forces to defend the b4-pawn 47.♘c1! ♜b6 48.♘d3 ♘a7 49.♙c2 ♘c6 50.♙c3 ♕e7 51.♞a4=. Just in time! Now it is necessary to simply stay put and everything will be fine.

B) 47.♕e2?! ♜b6 48.♕xb5 ♞xb5 49.♙c2 ♕e7 50.♙b3 ♜b6 51.♖c1 ♕d6 52.♖c8 The Black king joins the game, heading for White's kingside, which was seriously weakened by the exchange of light-squared bishops 52...♙f6.

47.♖c1? ♜b6!

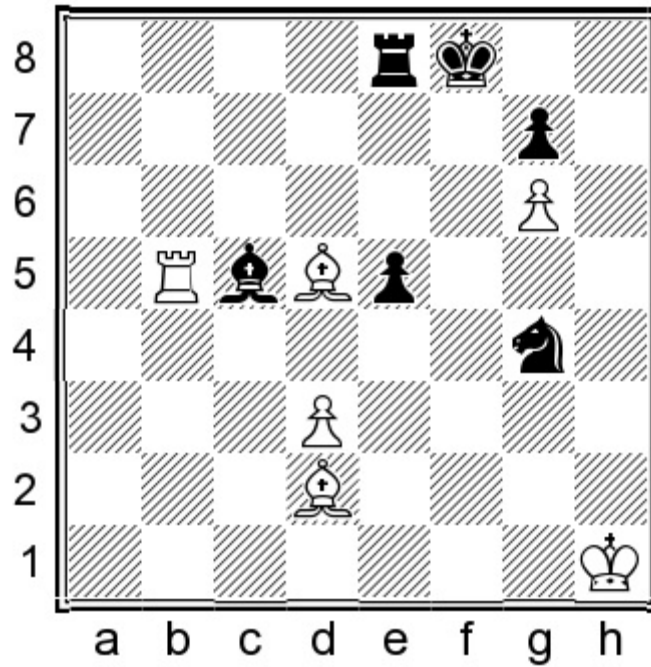
This does not comply with the idea that the open file is of any importance to the White rook.

48.♙d2 ♕e7 49.♙d3 ♘a7

The b4-pawn falls, hence White's delayed activity.

50.e4 dxe4+ 51.♕xe4 ♕xb4 52.♖c7 ♕e1 53.♞xb7 ♞xb7 54.♕xb7 ♕xf2 55.♕xa6 ♘c6 56.b4 ♕xg3 57.b5 ♘b8 58.♕c8 ♕xh4+

0-1 (76) Lampert, J (2514) – Spoelman, W (2586) Bremen 2017.



- Would you go for the passive 48...♙d6 or the concrete 48...♘f2+?

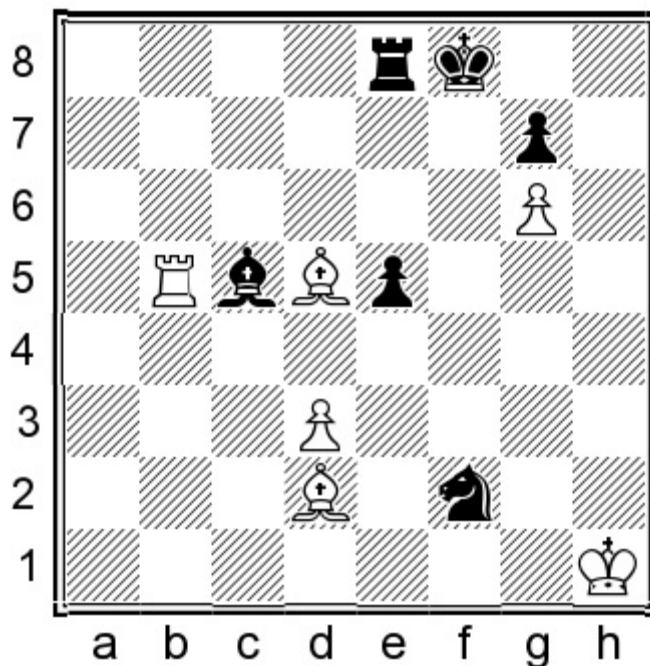
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3

48...♙d6?

With this decision, Black condemned himself to a difficult defensive position.

Active measures were necessary, such as 48...♘f2+!



Position after: 48...♗f2+!

In fairness, it should be noted that this “activity” looks more like suicide than a rescue mission at first glance.

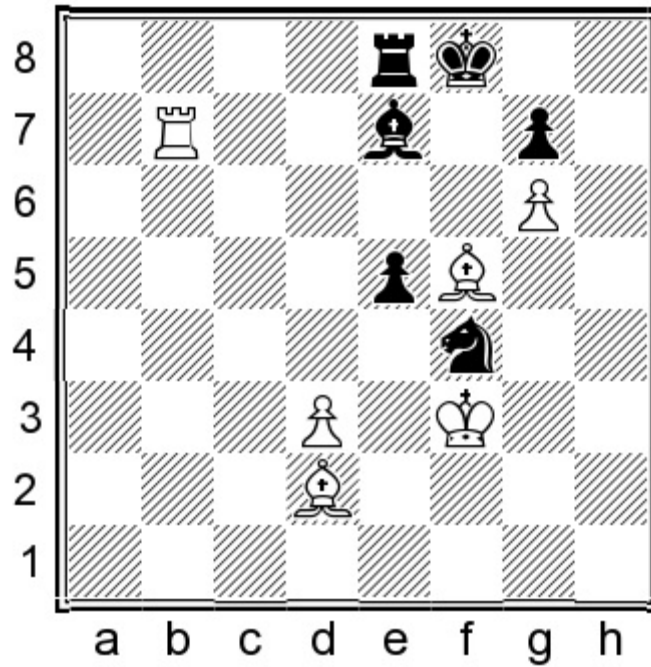
A) 49.♔g2 ♗xd3 50.♗e4 [50.♗c4 e4! 51.♗xd3 exd3 52.♖xc5 ♖e2+=] 50...♗f4+=

B) 49.♔h2 ♗xd3 50.♗e4 ♗d6! [50...♗f2? 51.♗c6 ♖d8 52.♗a5+-] 51.♖d5 ♗c5! =

48...♗d6? 49.♔g2?!

The reflex to bring White’s king into the battle cannot be disputed, but one should not always hurry with “useful” moves.

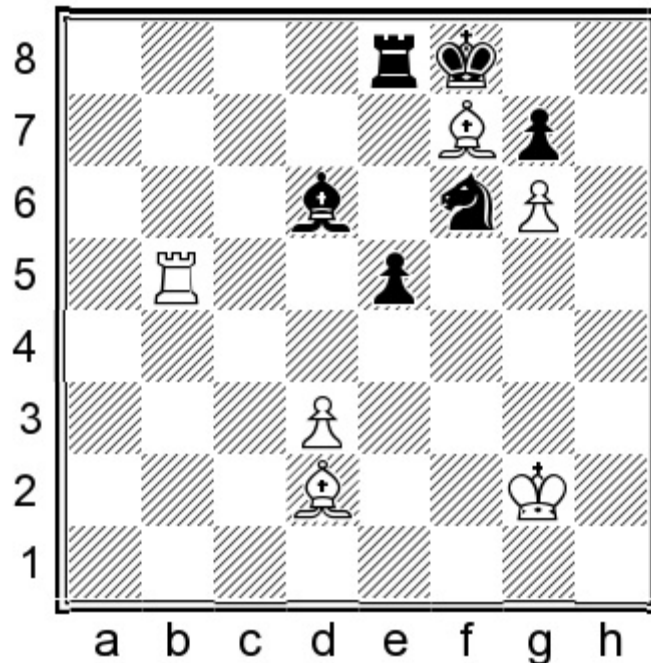
Significantly stronger was 49.♖b7! creating panic in the black ranks 49...♗e7 [49...♖e7 50.♖b6 ♗c5 51.♖c6 ♗a3 52.♗g5 ♗f6 53.♗e4+-] and only now 50.♔g2 ♗f6 51.♗e6 ♗h5 52.♔f3 ♗f4 53.♗f5+-.



Position after: 53. ♔f5+-

There is not a lot of material on the board, and Black will not lose immediately. However, the presence of the bishop pair, the activity of the white rook and the sublimely placed g6-pawn make Black's position difficult. Gradually, the white king will pick up the e5-pawn and Black's only remaining chance is a miracle.

49... ♖f6 50. ♔f7



Position after: 50. ♔f7

50...♖c8

A) 50...♖d8!? 51.♔f3 ♘a3 52.♔e3 ♘d6±

B) 50...♖e7!?±

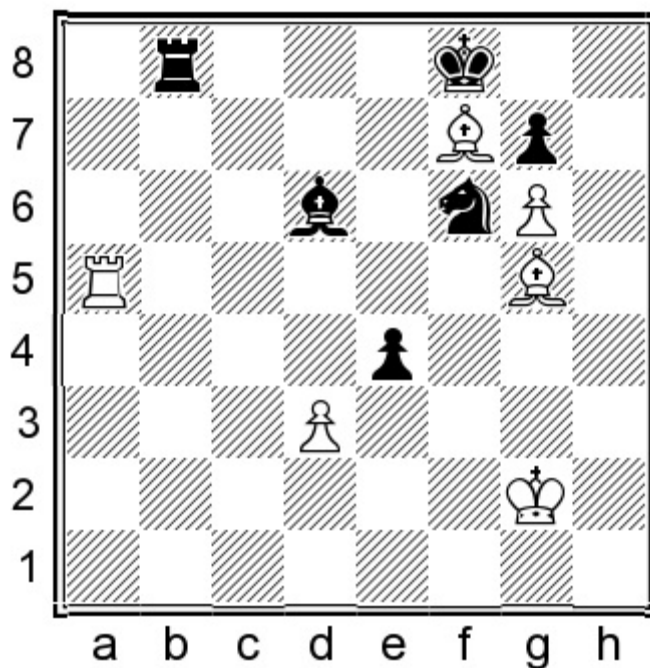
51.♘g5?

51.♖xe5!±

51...♖b8?!

Not noticing the opportunity handed to him - a small amount of activity in combination with the exchange of rooks would have saved Black. 51...♖c2+ 52.♔f3 ♖c5=

52.♖a5 e4

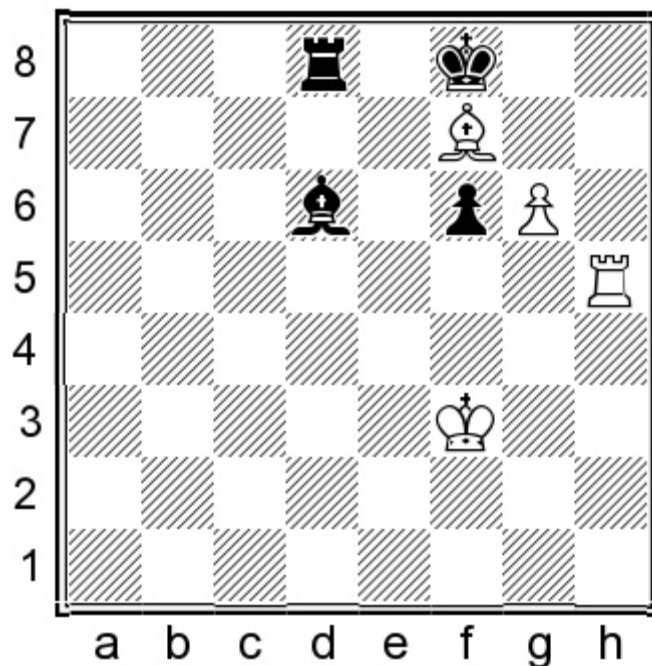


Position after: 52...e4

53.dxe4

White should keep the pawns in order to keep the advantage: 53.d4!±.

53...♗xe4 54.♘e3 ♗f6 55.♘d4 ♘e7 56.♔f3 ♖d8 57.♘e5 ♘d6 58.♘xf6 gxf6 59.♖h5



Position after: 59. ♖h5

59...f5??

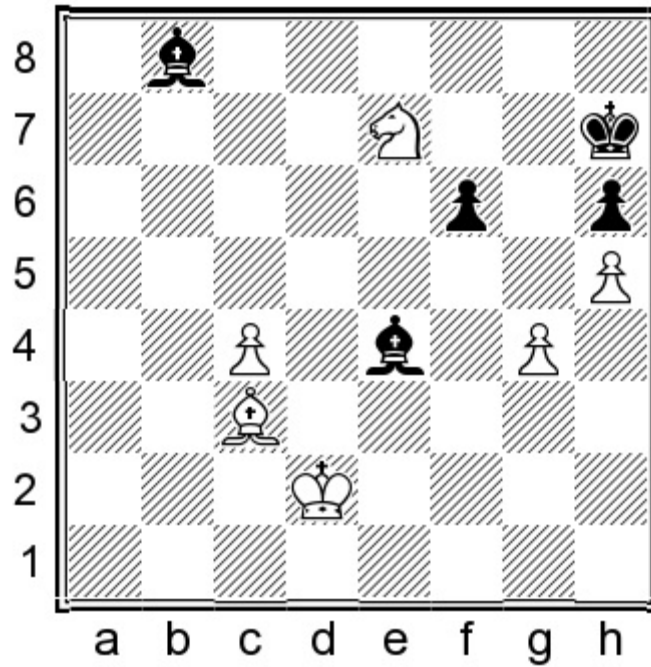
59...♖d7=

60. ♖h8+

This game was played in a rapid tournament, so there are quite a few mistakes in it. Nevertheless, it remains quite instructive as a whole. 1-0 Nakamura, H (2780) – Topalov, V (2749) Saint Louis 2017.

4

Grischuk, A. – Kramnik, V.



■ Find the best defense.

Show/Hide Solution

4

76...♙f3!

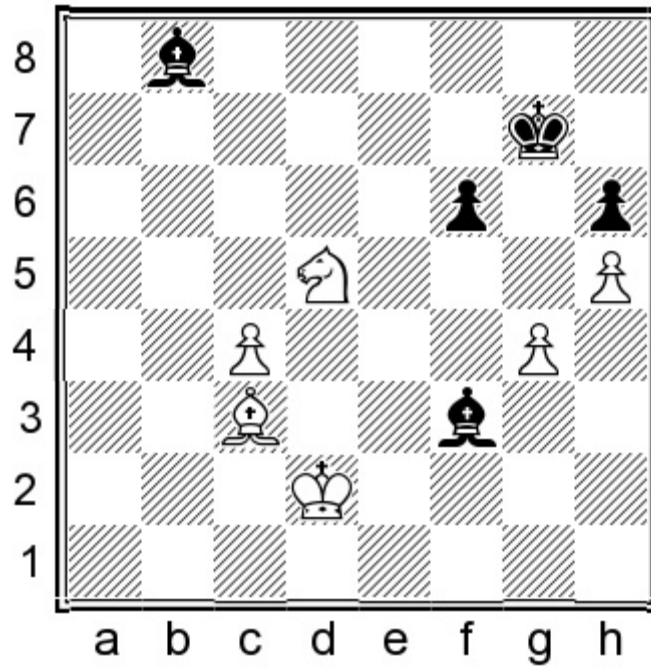
Obviously, such a simple move cannot be excluded from consideration for Black.

Kramnik played 76...♙f4+? 77.♚e2 ♖g7 78.♜f5+ ♜f7 79.♞d2 ♞e5 80.♞xh6+– and White won easily: 1-0 (91) Grischuk, A (2767) – Kramnik, V (2800) Berlin 2018.

76...♙f3! 77.♜d5

The only attempt to refute 76...♙f3, and here it may seem that Black is in bad shape, but he has an elegant move that easily draws...

77...♚g7!



Position after: 77...♔g7!

78.♕e3

78.♘xf6 ♕f4+ 79.♔e1 ♕g3+ 80.♔d2 ♕f4+ 81.♔d3 ♔f7 82.c5 ♔e6=

78...♕xg4 79.♘xf6

It was probably here that Black stopped calculating, thinking that because of the discovered check, the bishop is lost, but it is necessary to calculate to the very last check.

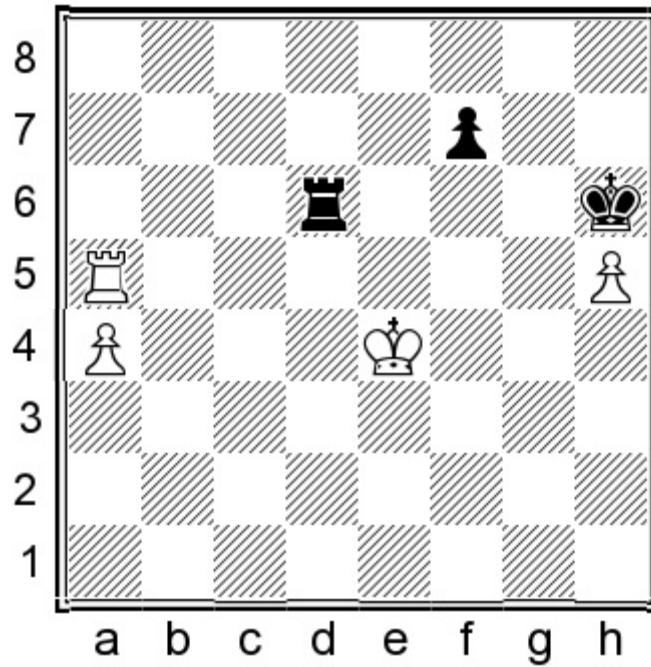
79...♕a7+!

At the final moment, the black bishop manages to escape from the trap.

80.♔f4 ♕e2=

5

Giryra, O. – Zhao, X.



■ Only one difficult rook move saves the game for Black here. Find it!

Show/Hide Solution

5

45...♖c6!!

Only this move saves Black.

A) 45...♖d1? 46.♗f5!+- 1-0 (64) Girya, O (2442) – Zhao, X (2504) Batumi 2016.

B) 45...♖b6? 46.♖b5+-

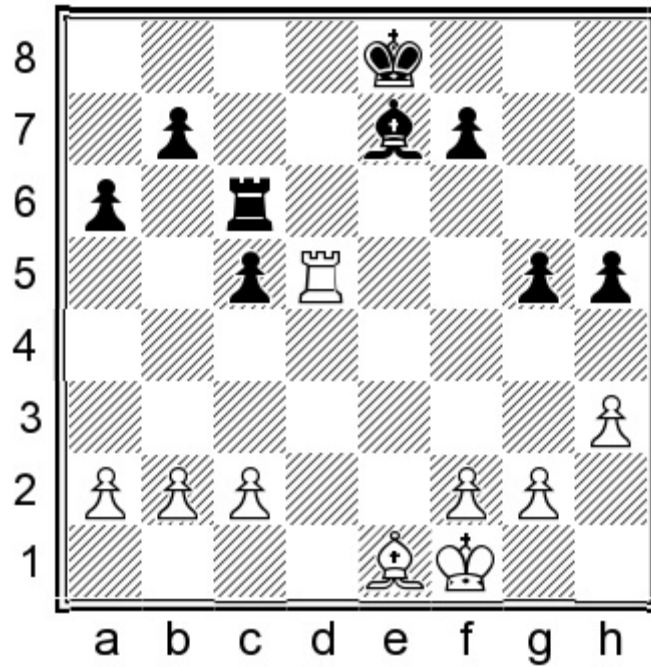
45...♖c6!! 46.♔d4 ♖f6!

Thanks to the side checks by the black rook, White cannot push the passed a-pawn without losing the h-pawn. Here a draw can be agreed.

47.♗e5 ♖f4+ 48.♗e4 ♖f1 49.♖h4 ♔g5=

6

Vachier Lagrave, M. – So, W.



■ Force a draw with Black!

Show/Hide Solution

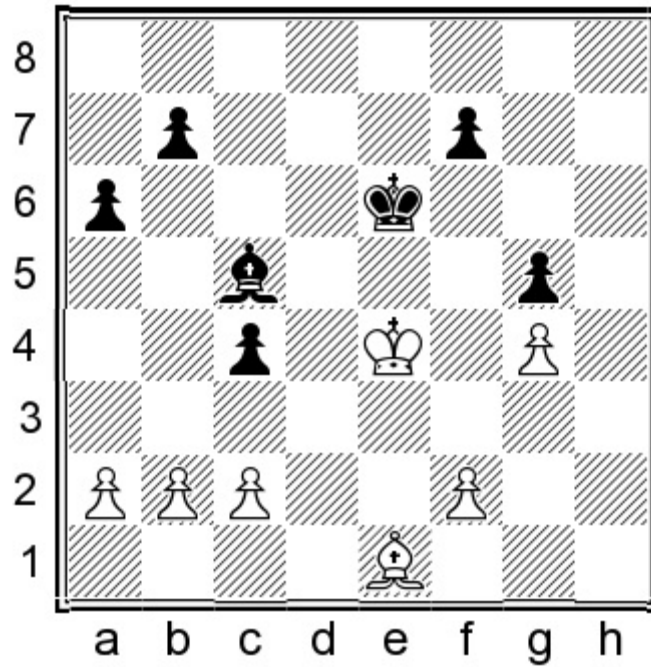
6

White has some initiative. With the help of an active rook, he can play f2-f4 and try to create real weaknesses in Black's position.

25...♖d6! 26.♗xd6

It turns out that the c5-pawn will not simply give itself up: **26.♗xc5 ♖b6!=.**

26...♗xd6 27.g4 hxg4 28.hxg4 c4 29.♕e2 ♕d7 30.♕e3 ♗c5+ 31.♕e4 ♕e6=

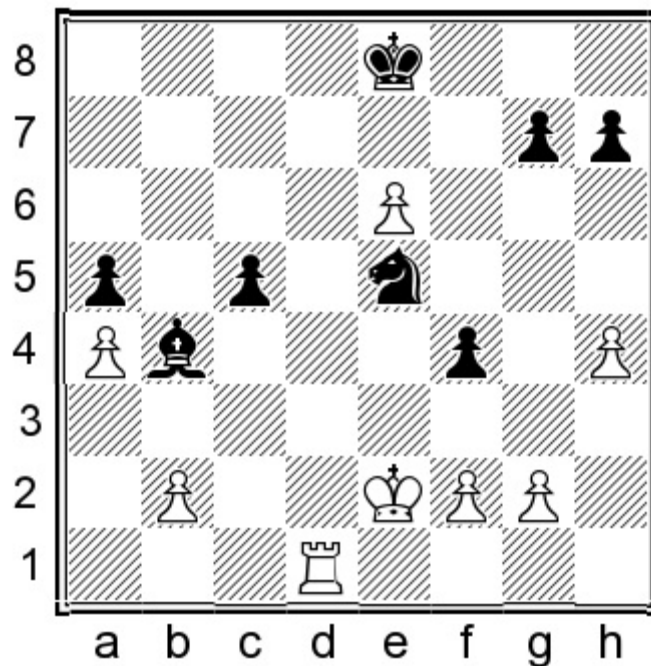


Position after: 31...♔e6=

A draw was soon agreed: ½-½ (45) Vachier Lagrave, M (2779) – So, W (2780) Saint Louis 2018.

7

Bruzon Batista, L. – Anton Guijarro, D.

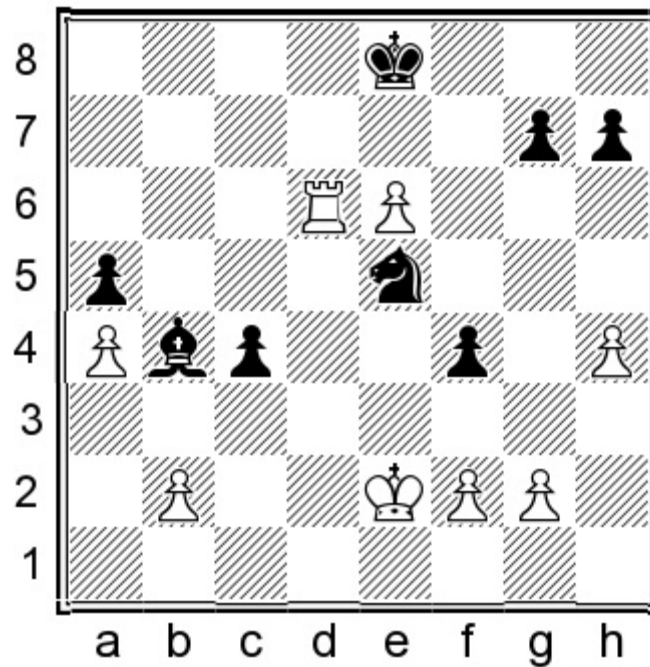


□ Black has two threats: 31...♔e7 and 31...c4. Find the best move for White!

32.♖d5!

It is important to kick the black knight away from the center where he not only restricts the white king, but also greedily glares at the white b2-pawn.

In the game, white carelessly played 32.♖d6?, though the desire to activate the rook is understandable. 32...c4⚡



Position after: 32...c4⚡

White's position is probably not completely lost yet, but the game has unambiguously gone in Black's favour. The torment did not last long: 33.♖a6?! [33.♖d4 ♕e7 34.♖xf4 ♕xe6⚡] 33...♘d3 34.♖a7 ♘xb2 35.♖xg7 h6 36.♖c7 c3 37.g4 fxg3 38.fxg3 ♘xa4 39.♕d1 ♘c5 40.♖c6 ♕e7 41.g4 ♘xe6 0-1 Bruzon Batista, L (2664) – Anton Guijarro, D (2646) Havana 2018.

32.♖d5! ♘c6

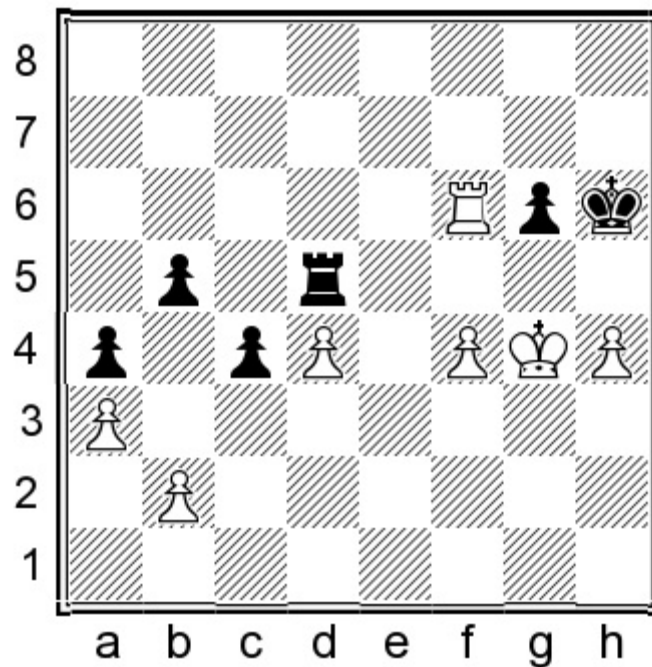
32...♘c4? 33.b3 Δ 33...♘b6 34.♖d6+–

33.♕d3=

and White is out of danger.

8

McShane, L. – Rodshtein, M.



■ How should Black proceed?

Show/Hide Solution

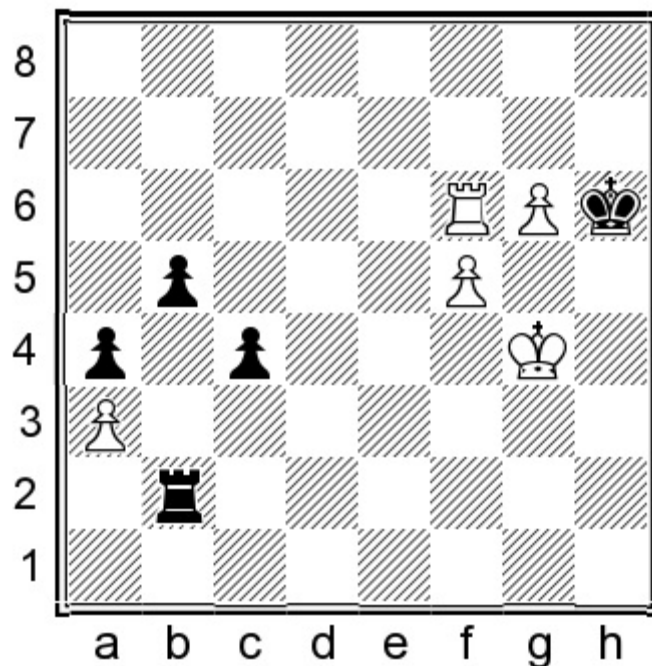
8

57...♖xd4?

An instance where passive defense is justified because activity leads to a poor outcome.

Correct was 57...♔g7 58.♖b6 and now simply to stay put with 58...♔f7! and after the only means of strengthening the position, 59.♔f3, 59...♖xd4 60.♖xb5 c3! 61.bxc3 ♖d3+ 62.♔g4 ♖xc3 with an obvious draw.

57...♖xd4? 58.h5 ♖d2 59.hxg6 ♖xb2 60.f5+-



Position after: 60.f5+–

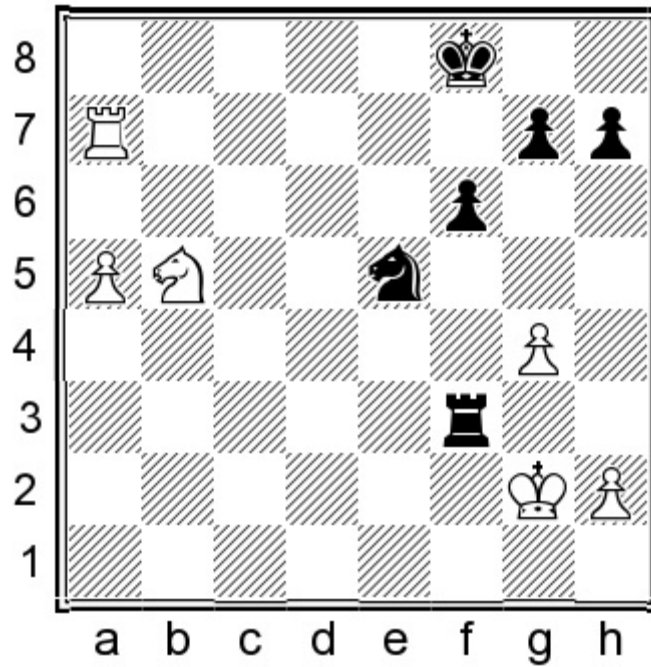
Black's counterplay against the ambitious white pawns is clearly lacking.

60...♖g2+ 61.♔f4 ♜f2+ 62.♔g4 ♜g2+ 63.♔h4 ♜h2+ 64.♔g3 ♜h1 65.♞f7 ♜g1+ 66.♔f4 ♜f1+ 67.♔e5 c3 68.♞h7+ ♔g5 69.g7

1-0 McShane, L (2672) – Rodshtein, M (2674) Batumi 2018.

9

Naiditsch, A. – Wei Yi



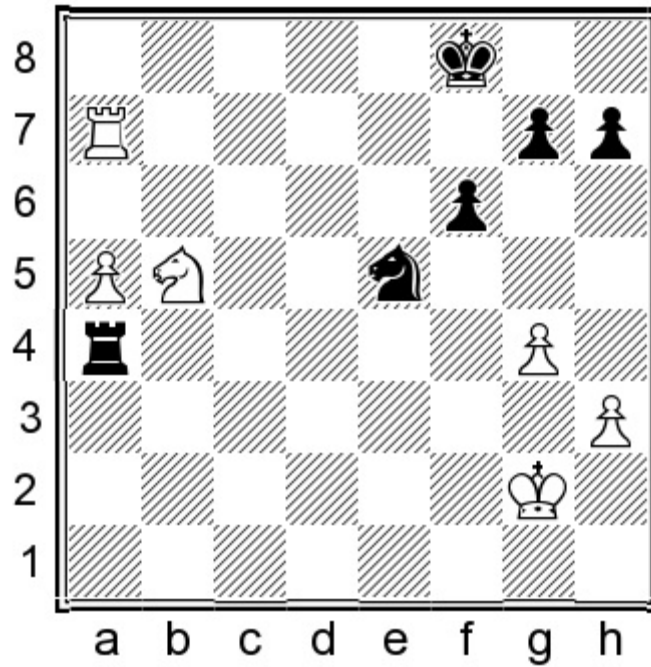
■ Black needs his rook on the a-file to defend. How should he get it there?

Show/Hide Solution

9

47...♖b3?

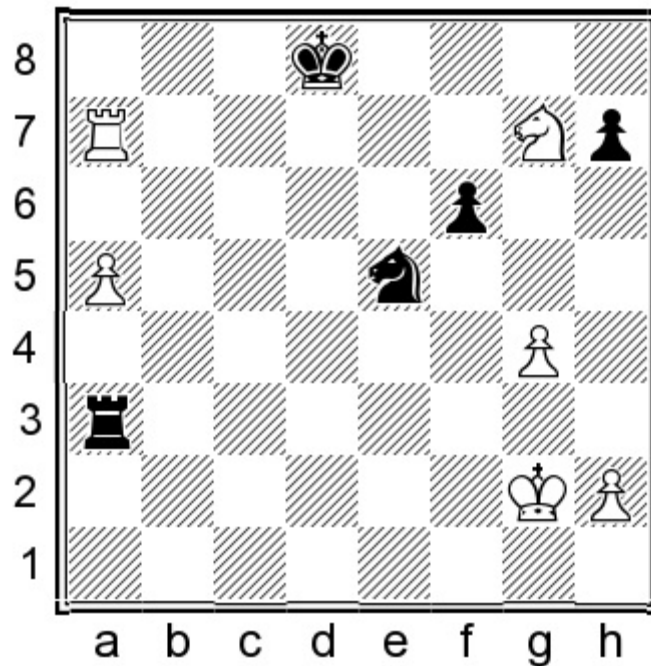
Of course, it is vitally important for Black to place the rook behind White's passed pawn, but also necessary to prevent the enemy's rook from coordinating with the enemy knight. This seemingly gigantic task was accomplished with a simple 47...♖f4! 48.h3 ♖a4.



Position after: 48... $\text{Ra}4$

Now the white knight cannot get to e6 via the d4-square, and 49. $\text{Bc}7$ is met with 49... $\text{Ke}7$ 50.a6 $\text{Kd}7=$.

47... $\text{Rb}3?$ 48. $\text{Bd}4$ $\text{Ra}3$ 49. $\text{Be}6+$ $\text{Ke}8$ 50. $\text{Bxg}7+$ $\text{Kd}8$



Position after: 50... $\text{Kd}8$

More events in the game are very instructive, therefore we will take a look at them in more detail.

51.h3?!

51.♖e6+! ♔c8 [51...♖e8 52.a6] 52.h3 ♖a2+ 53.♖f1 ♖a1+ 54.♖e2 with good chances of winning as now, with the black king on c8, it is no longer useful. 54...♖a2+ 55.♖e3 ♖xa5 56.♖xa5 ♖c4+ 57.♖e4 ♖xa5 58.♖f5+–

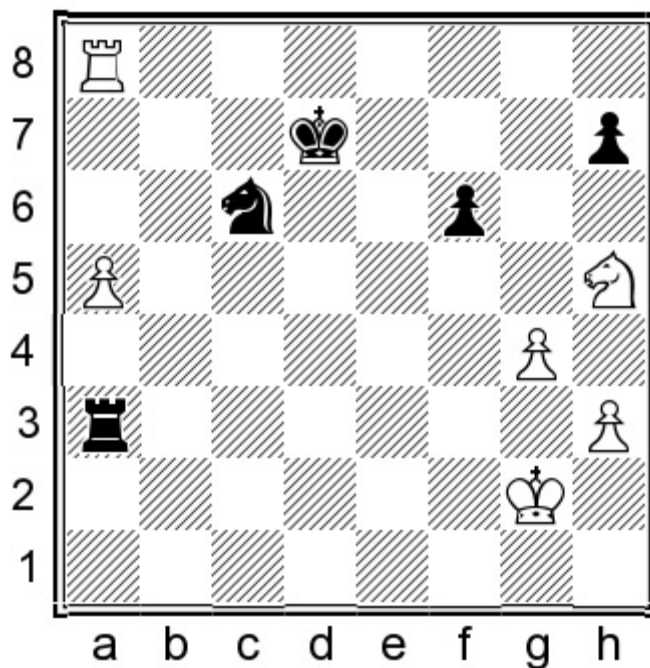
51...♖c6?!

51...♖a2+! 52.♖f1 [52.♖g3 ♖a3+ 53.♖f4 ♖xh3 54.a6 ♖a3±] 52...♖a1+ 53.♖e2 ♖a2+ Δ 54.♖e3?! [54.♖d1 ♖c6±] 54...♖xa5! 55.♖xa5 ♖c4+ 56.♖e4 ♖xa5 57.♖f5 ♖e7=

52.♖a8+

52.♖a6!?±

52...♖d7 53.♖h5



Position after: 53.♖h5

53...♖e7

It would have been worthwhile to consider changing the defensive landscape by means of 53...f5! Δ 54.gxf5 ♖d6 55.a6 ♖e5 56.f6 ♖e6 and it is difficult for White to maintain his advantage.

54.a6

54.♖a6! ♖c3 55.♖h2±

54...♖f7 55.♖h8

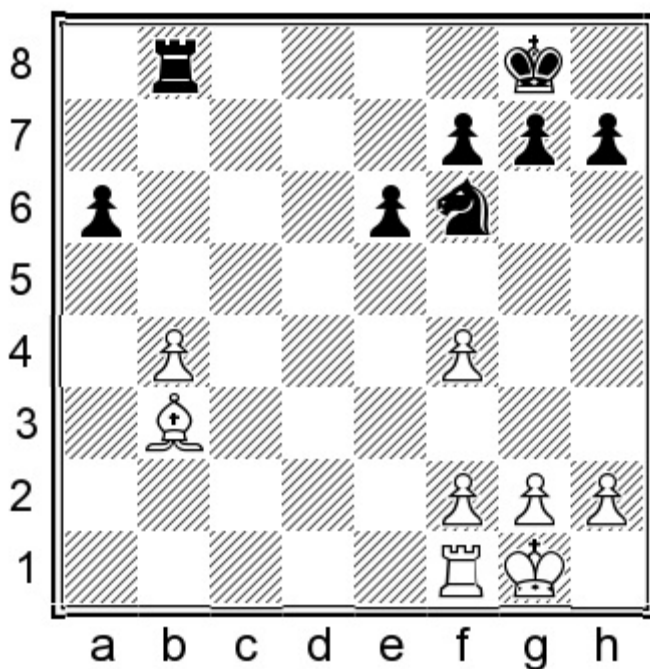
The only practical chance of success was 55.♔f2± Δ 55...♞xh3? 56.♞c8!+-.

55...♞a2+ 56.♔g3 ♞a3+ 57.♔h4 ♚e5= 58.♞xh7+ ♔g6 59.♞a7 ♔h6 60.♚f4 ♞f3 61.♞a8 ♞xf4 62.a7 ♚g6+ 63.♔g3 ♞a4 64.h4 ♞a3+ 65.♔f2

½-½ Naiditsch, A (2721) – Wei Yi (2742) Batumi 2018.

10

Krasenkow, M. – Duda, J.



□ Find the best continuation for White to save himself.

Show/Hide Solution

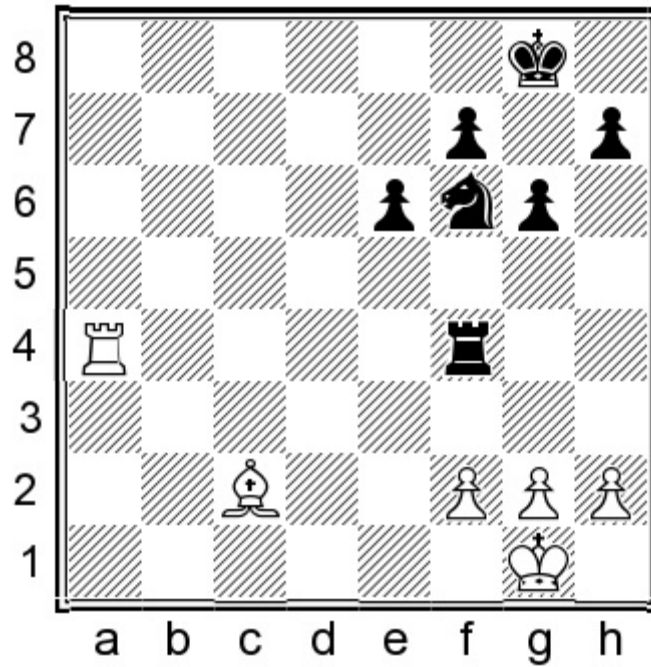
10

25.♞a1!

White's position is extremely unpleasant, and there is no way around enduring some suffering.

25.f5?! ♞xb4 26.♙c2 a5 [26...e5? 27.♞a1=] 27.fxe6 fxe6±

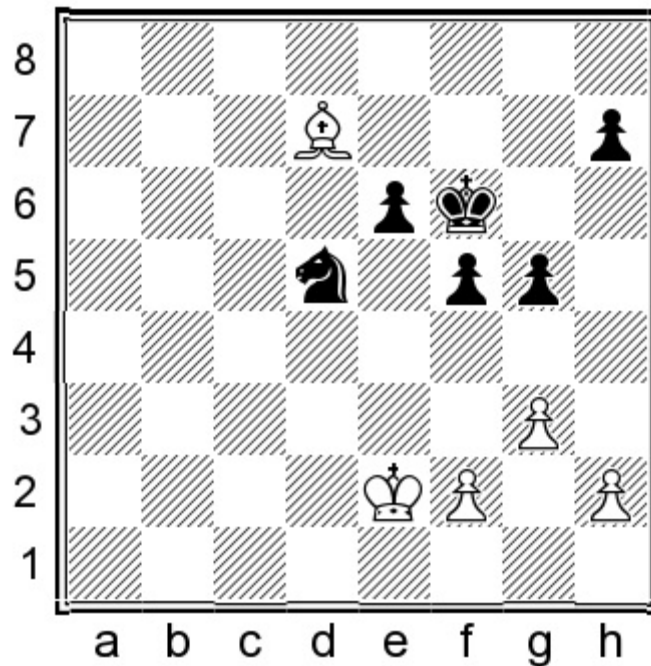
25.♞a1! ♞xb4 26.♞xa6 g6 27.♙c2 ♞xf4 28.♞a4!



Position after: 28. ♖a4!

Forcing a rook exchange that leads to an unpleasant but drawn endgame. If the rooks stay on the board, Black has better winning chances as we can't really call the endgame an objective draw.

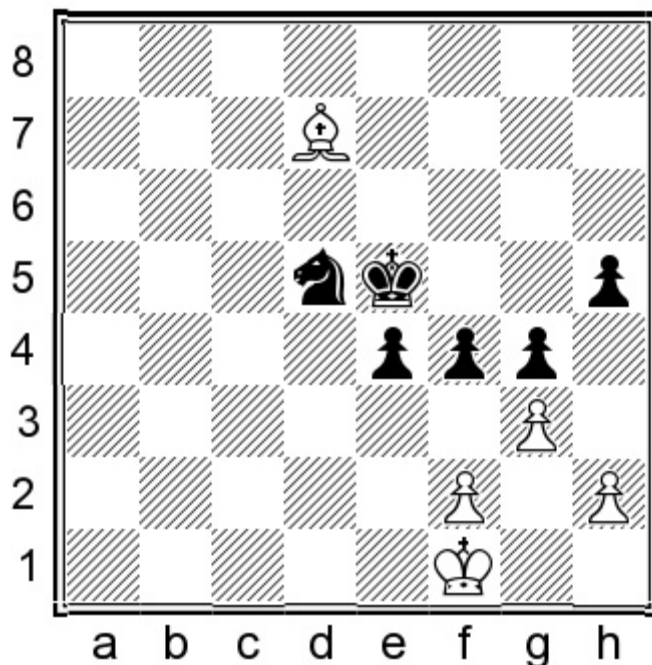
28... ♜xa4 29. ♙xa4 g5 30. g3 ♔g7 31. ♔g2 ♞d5 32. ♔f3 f5 33. ♙d7 ♔f6 34. ♔e2



Position after: 34. ♔e2

34... ♔e7

Of course, White must be careful in defense, for example: 34...g4 35.♙c8 e5 36.♙d7 [36.♙b7!?] 36...e4 37.♙c8 ♖e5 38.♙d7 h5 39.♙f1 [Not allowing ...h5-h4 39.♙c8 h4 40.gxh4 ♜e7 41.♙d7 ♜g6 42.h5 ♜f4+] 39...f4



Position after: 39...f4

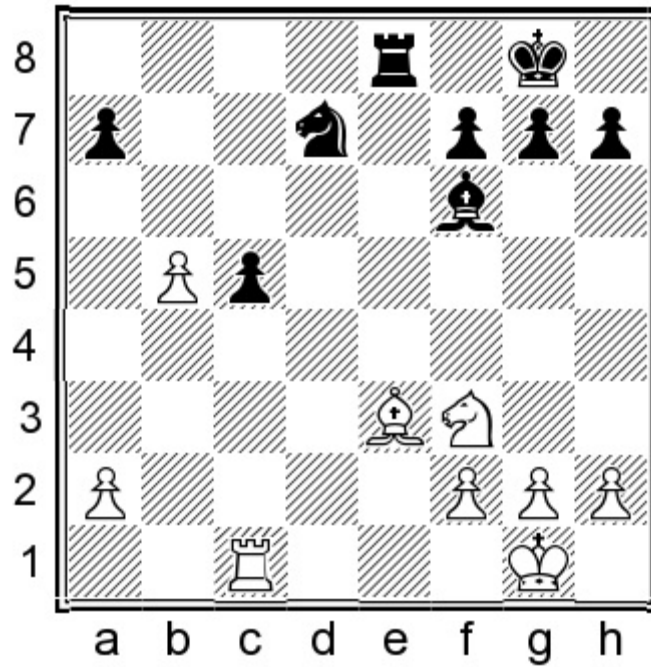
40.gxf4+ [40.h3!? f3 41.hxg4 ♜f6 42.♙c8 ♜xg4 43.♙d7 ♜d4 44.♙e8 ♜f6 45.♙f7 e3 46.♙g6 e2+ 47.♙e1 ♜c3 48.♙f7=] 40...♙xf4 [40...♜xf4 41.♙e8=] 41.h3 g3 42.fxg3+ ♙xg3 43.♙e2 h4 44.♙f5 ♙f4 45.♙c8 ♜c3+ 46.♙f2 e3+ 47.♙e1 ♜b5 48.♙e2 ♜d4+ 49.♙e1 ♙g3 50.♙d7=

35.♙c8 h6 36.♙d3 ♜f6 37.f3 ♜h5 38.♙d4 ♙d6 39.♙a6 ♜f6 40.♙d3 h5 41.♙c4 h4 42.gxh4 gxh4 43.♙a6 ♜d5 44.♙c4 ♜f4 45.♙b3 ♜g2 46.♙c4 e5+ 47.♙d3 ♙e7 48.♙e2 ♙f6 49.♙f2 ♜f4 50.♙e3 ♙g5 51.♙b3=

½-½ (88) Krasenkow, M (2628) – Duda, J (2724) Warsaw 2018.

11

Wojtaszek, R. – Dreev, A.



- Find what White wants to play on the next move, and hence deduce Black's best move.

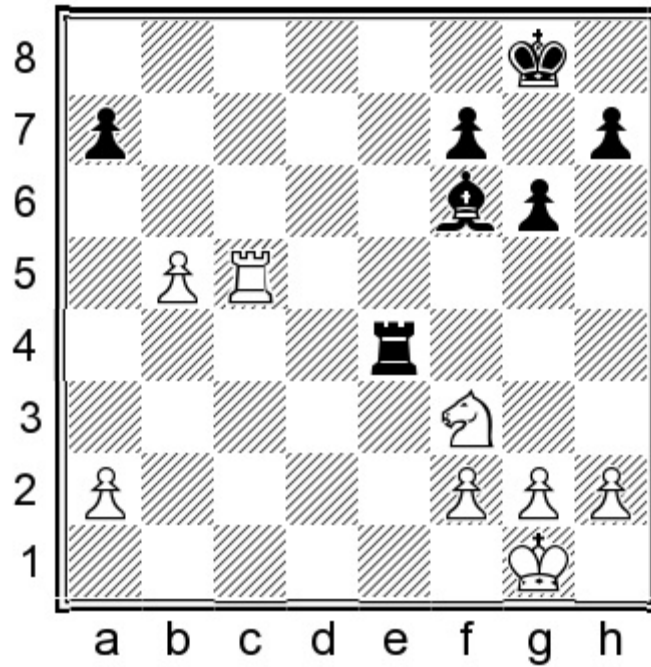
Show/Hide Solution

11

22...♖e4!

Avoiding a2-a4. If Black defends the pawn, then he will face an extremely unpleasant defense: 22...♙e7 23.a4!?± [23.♞d1 ♜b6 24.♞e5±].

22...♖e4! 23.♙xc5 ♜xc5 24.♞xc5 g6



Position after: 24...g6

25.♖c6

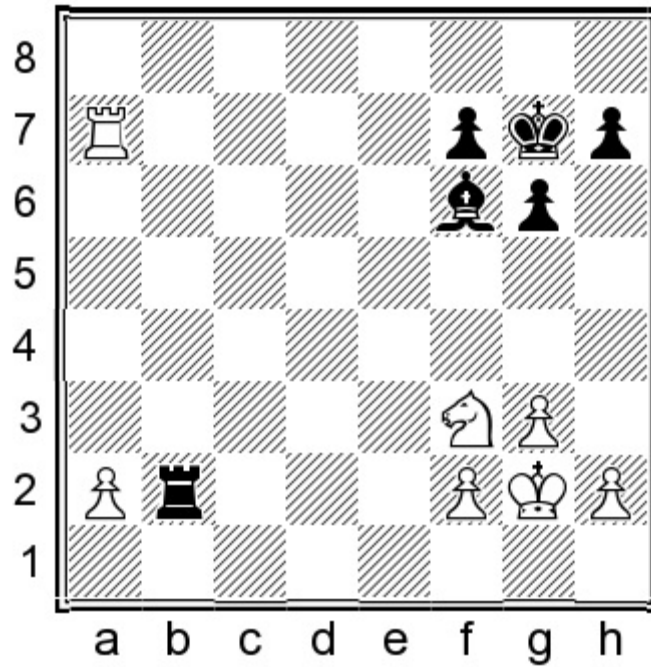
25.g3 ♔g7! [\leq 25...♖a4 26.♖c6 ♔g7 27.♖a6±] 26.♔g2 ♖a4 27.♖c2 ♖a5=

25...♔g7?!

Played “automatically”. Of course, stronger was 25...♙d4! 26.♔f1 [26.♖c4?? ♙xf2+-+] 26...♙b6=.

26.g3?!

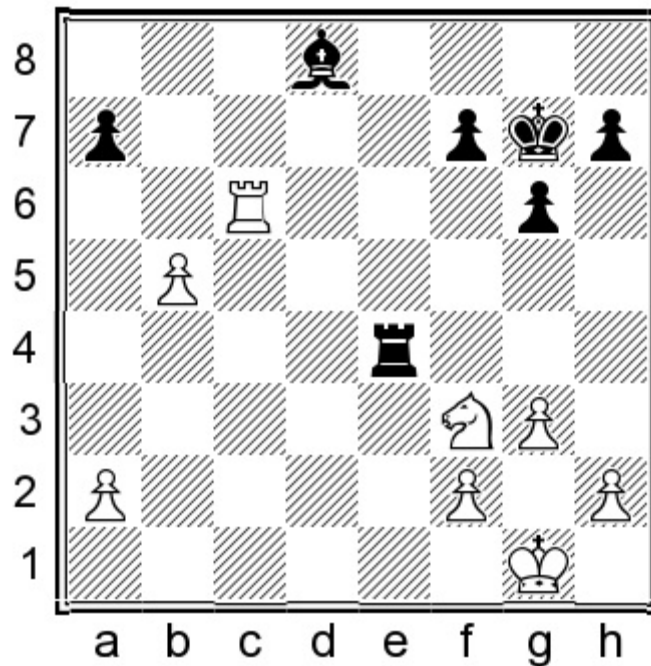
⊖ 26.♖a6 ♖b4 27.g3 ♖xb5 28.♖xa7 ♖b2 29.♔g2±



Position after: 29. ♖g2±

Objectively, the position is drawn, but some concerns remain, especially if during the game Black noticed that 25... ♙d4! eliminated all problems.

26... ♗d8!=



Position after: 26... ♗d8! =

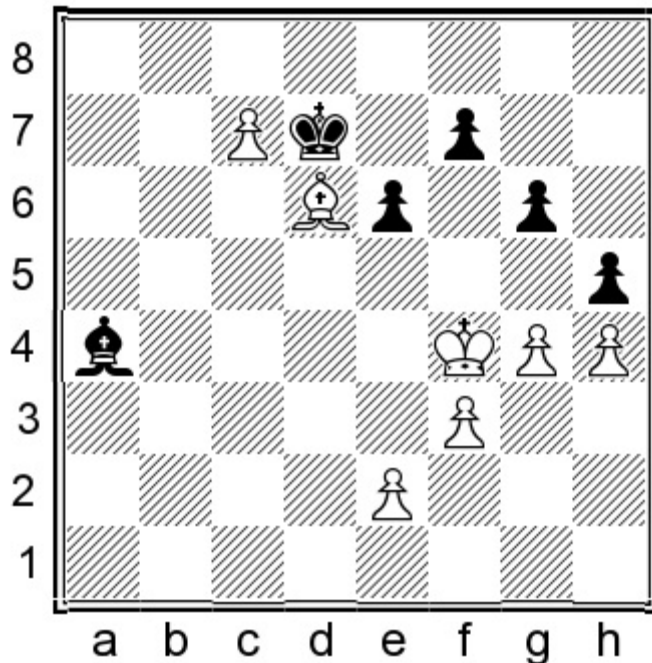
Now the bishop lands on the ideal b6-square, White cannot retain the extra pawn.

27.♖a6 ♘b6 28.a4 ♜e2 29.a5 ♘xf2+ 30.♔f1 ♞b2 31.♞e5 ♘c5 32.♞d3 ♞b1+ 33.♔g2 ♘e3 34.♔f3 ♘g1
 35.♔g2 ♘e3 36.♔f3 ♘g1 37.♔g2 ♘e3

½-½ Wojtaszek, R (2700) – Dreev, A (2654) Russia 2013.

12

Vidit, S. – Van Foreest, J.



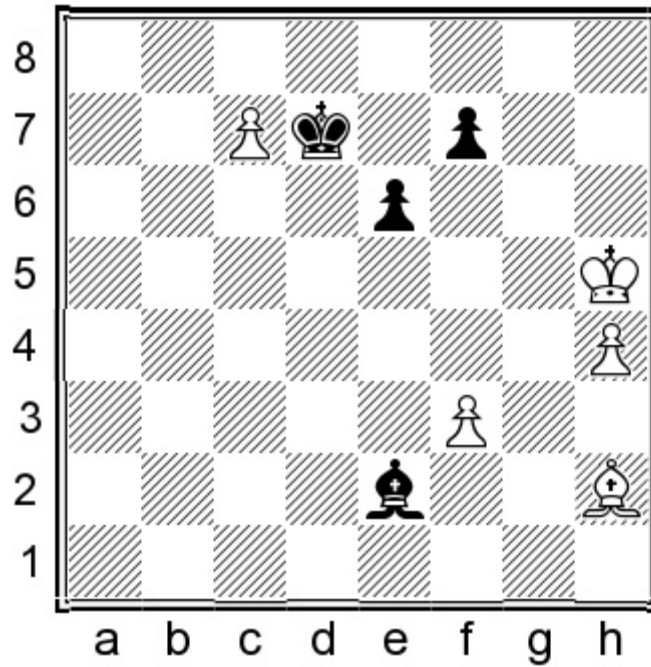
■ Find the only saving move.

Show/Hide Solution

12

39...f6!

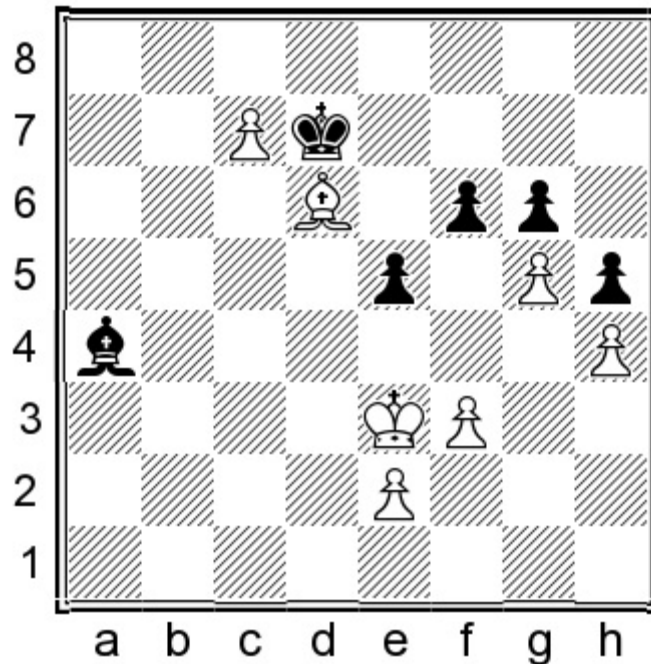
39...♘b5? was played but after 40.♔g5+- Black is just lost. 40...♘a6 41.gxh5 gxh5 42.♘h2 ♘xe2
 43.♔xh5



Position after: 43. ♖xh5

43...f6 [43...♙xf3+ 44.♔g5 ♚e2 45.♙d6! A very important move. 45...♙f3 46.h5 f6+ 47.♔g6 White wins as ...e5 doesn't interrupt the protection of the c7-pawn by the white bishop.] 44.♔g6 e5 45.♔xf6 ♔xc7 46.♙xe5+ ♔d7 47.f4 ♔e8 48.♙d6 ♙h5 49.♔g5 ♙f7 50.h5 ♙g8 51.♔f6 1-0 Vidit, S (2695) – Van Foreest, J (2612) Wijk aan Zee 2019.

39...f6! 40.g5 e5+ 41.♔e3

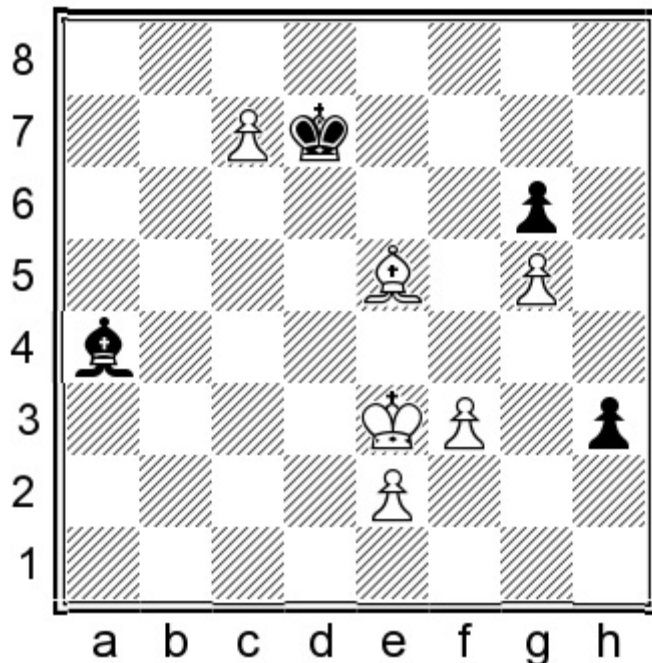


Position after: 41. ♔e3

41...fxg5!

41...f5? 42.♙xe5 ♜b5 43.f4 ♜a6 44.♚d4 ♜xe2 45.♞d6 ♜f3 46.♚e5 ♜b7 47.♞b4 ♚xc7 48.♚f6+-

42.hxg5 h4 43.♞xe5 h3



Position after: 43...h3

Despite two healthy extra pawns, White cannot convert the advantage since, for various reasons, White cannot successfully push the f-pawn, for example:

44.♚f2 ♞d1 45.f4

45.e4 ♚c8 46.♞d6 [46.♞h2 ♚d7 47.f4 ♚xc7=] 46...♚d7 47.f4 h2! 48.♚g2 ♞f3+ 49.♚xh2 ♞xe4=

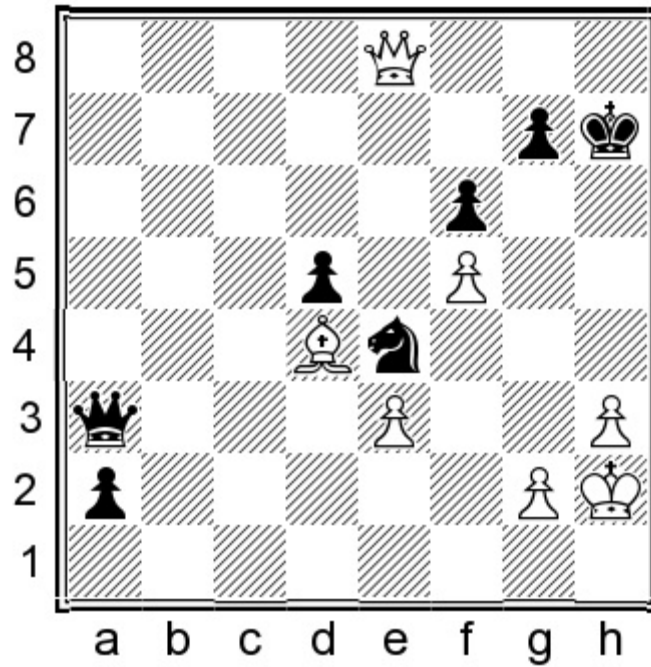
45...♞c2!

45...h2? 46.♚g2 ♞xe2 47.f5+-

46.♚g3 ♞f5=

13

Fedoseev, V. – Vidit, S.



□ Despite the seeming abundance of possibilities, only one move leads to salvation. Which?

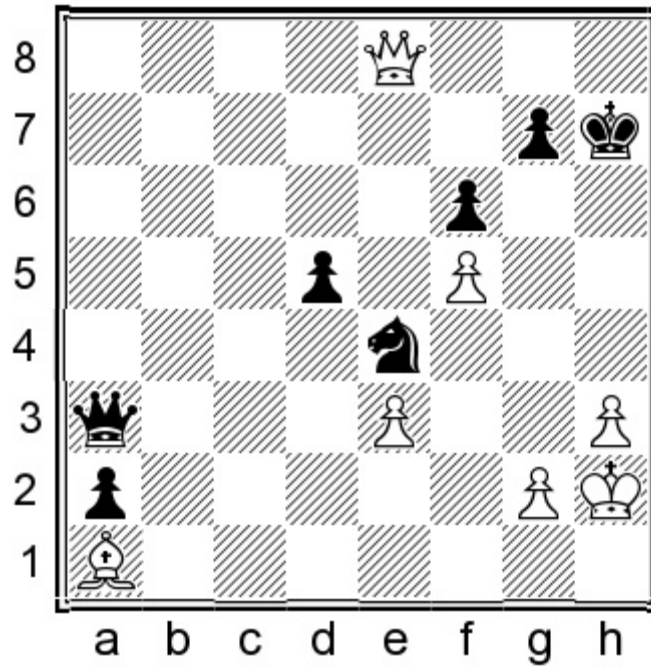
Show/Hide Solution

13

White's position appears to be critical for obvious reasons, but in view of the possibility of a draw by perpetual check, all is not yet completely hopeless. However, the one and only road to salvation and the subtleties between the different options are not easy to understand.

61.♙b2!

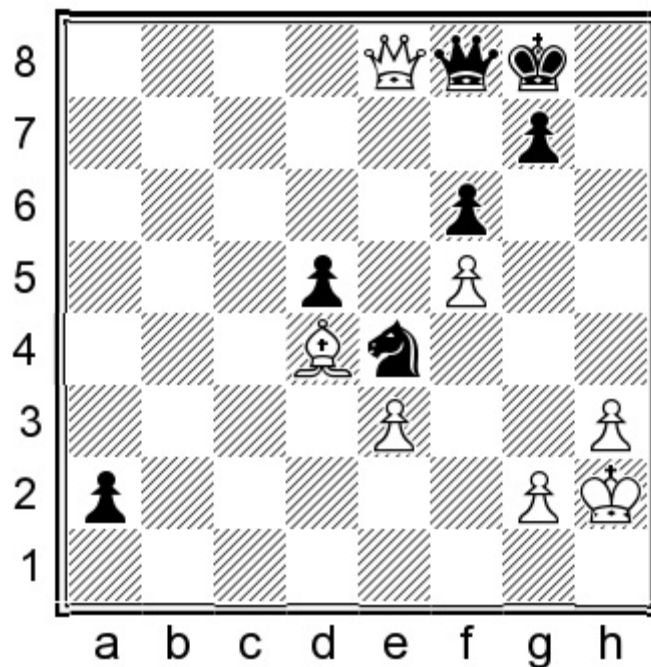
A) In the game, White made a move that actually loses the game, but Black "pardoned" the opponent.
61.♙a1?



Position after: 61. ♔a1?

61... ♛d6+? [Winning was 61... ♛c5 – or ... ♛b4 – 62. ♛g6+ ♔g8 63. ♛e8+ ♛f8 64. ♛a4 ♛b8+ 65. ♔g1 ♛b1+! 66. ♔h2 ♖d6!–+.] 62. ♔g1 ♛c5 63. ♛g6+ ♔g8 64. ♛e8+ ♛f8 65. ♛a4 ♛c8 66. ♛xa2 ♛c1+ 67. ♔h2 ♛c7+ 68. ♔g1 ♛c1+ 69. ♔h2 ♖d2 70. ♔b2 ♛e1 71. ♛xd5+ ♔h7 72. ♔c3 ♖f1+ 73. ♔g1 ♖d2+ 74. ♔h2 ♖f1+ ½-½ Fedoseev, V (2724) – Vidit, S (2695) Wijk aan Zee 2019.

B) 61. ♛h5+? ♔g8 62. ♛e8+ ♛f8



Position after: 62... ♛f8

63. ♖a4 [63. ♖e6+ ♔h7 64. ♖xd5 ♖b8+ 65. ♔g1 ♖b1+ 66. ♔h2 ♘d2! 67. h4 ♘f1+ 68. ♔h3 ♘xe3—+]
 63... ♖b8+ 64. ♔g1 ♖b1+ 65. ♔h2 ♘d6!—+

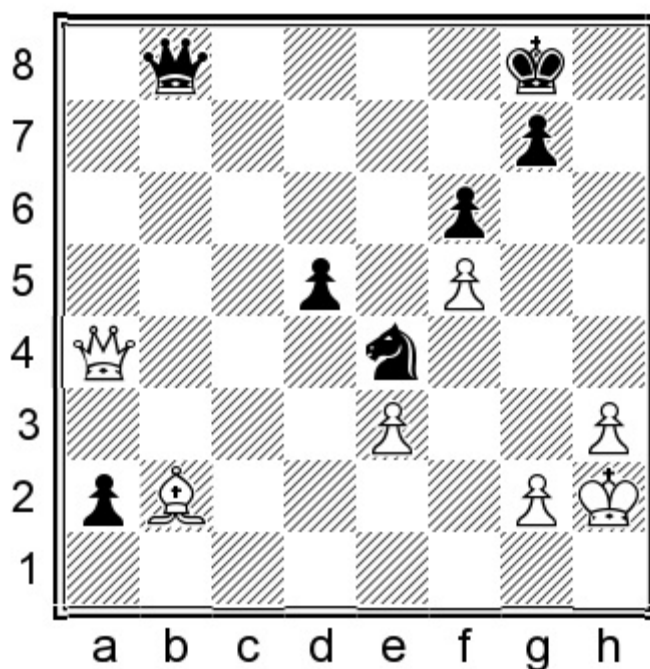
C) 61. h4? ♖b4 62. ♖g6+ ♔g8 63. h5 [63. ♖e8+ ♖f8 64. ♖a4 ♖b8+ 65. ♔g1 ♖b1+ 66. ♔h2 ♘d6—+]
 63... ♖b8+ 64. ♔g1 ♖g3—+

61. ♘b2! ♖c5

A) 61... ♖d6+ 62. ♔g1 ♖b4 63. ♖h5+ ♔g8 64. ♖e8+ ♖f8 65. ♖a4=

B) 61... ♖b4 62. ♖h5+ ♔g8 63. ♖e8+ ♖f8 64. ♖a4=

62. ♖g6+ ♔g8 63. ♖e8+ ♖f8 64. ♖a4 ♖b8+

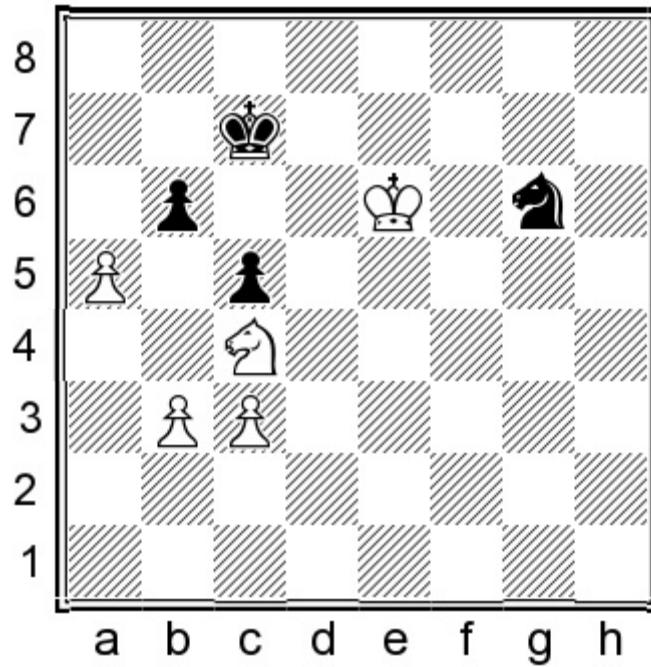


Position after: 64... ♖b8+

65. ♔g1

Here is the point: when the bishop is on b2, Black does not have the important check on b1 at his disposal.

65... ♖xb2 66. ♖e8+=



■ Can Black still save himself? Should he play 70...b5 or 70...bxa5?

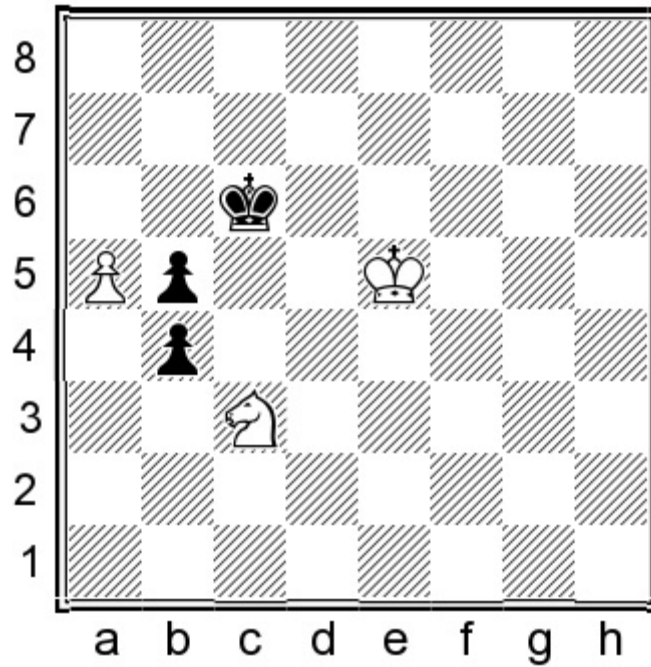
Show/Hide Solution

14

White had been trying for a long time to convert the extra pawn, but Black successfully defended and it seemed evident to both players that it would be impossible to win with such a minimal material advantage. Therefore, White attempts to make use of a practical chance and played 70.a5.

70...bxa5!

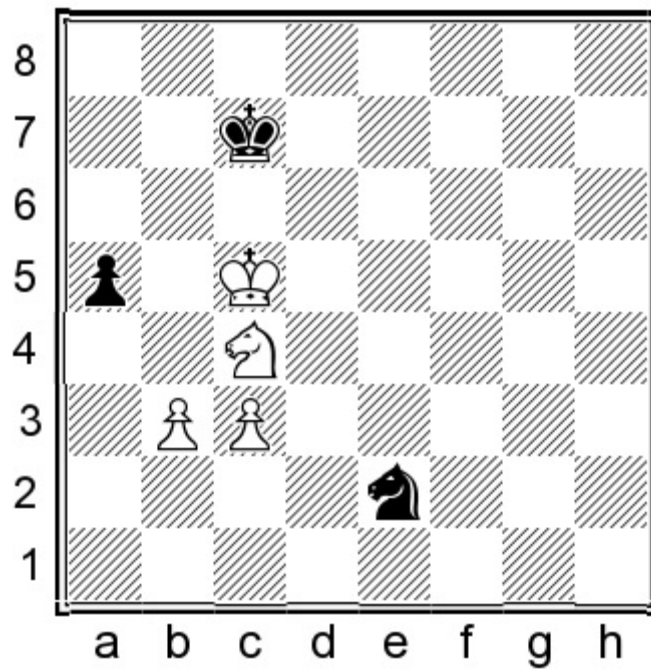
70...b5?? 71.♖e3+- ♜f4+ 72.♙e5 ♜e2 73.♞d5+ ♚c6 74.b4 ♞xc3 75.♞xc3 cxb4



Position after: 75...cxb4

76.♘e2! followed by ♘d4. 1-0 Carlsen, M (2835) – Anand, V (2773) Wijk aan Zee 2019.

70...bxa5! 71.♙d5 ♘f4+ 72.♙xc5 ♘e2



Position after: 72...♘e2

73.♘d6!

Black must have played 70...b5 (instead of the natural pawn exchange) when he noticed this idea.

Taking the pawn on c3 is impossible due to the resulting pawn endgame and he must therefore have considered the position to be lost. Actually, Black can still save himself...

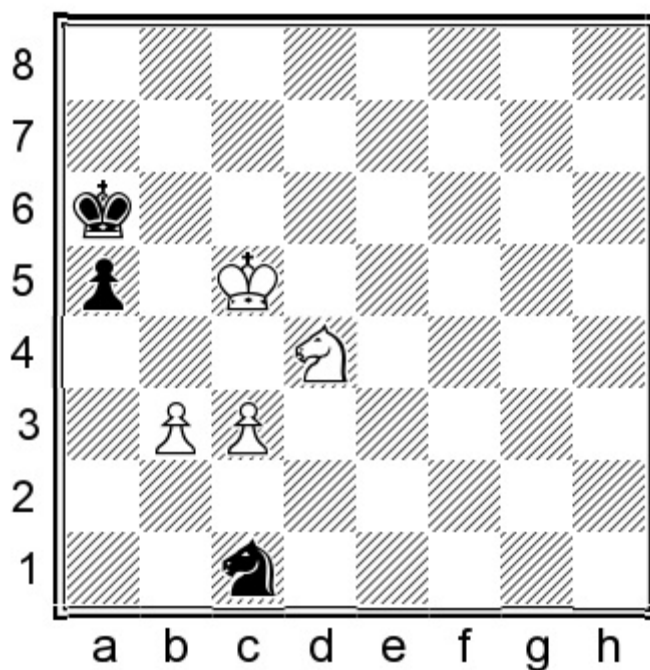
73...♖c1!

73...♖xc3? 74.♗b5++-

74.♗b5+ ♕b7 75.♗d4

75.♕c4 ♕a6=

75...♕a6!



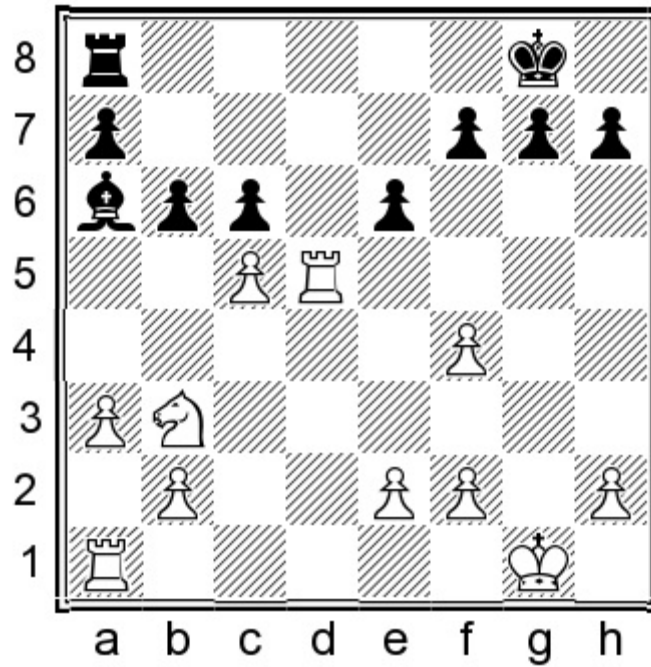
Position after: 75...♕a6!

The position is drawn, for example:

76.♕c4

76.c4 a4 77.bxa4 ♕a5=

76...♕b6 77.♗e6 ♕a6 78.♗c5+ ♕b6 79.♗d3 ♗e2 80.♗b2 ♗c1=



- What is the best way to recapture on d5?

Show/Hide Solution

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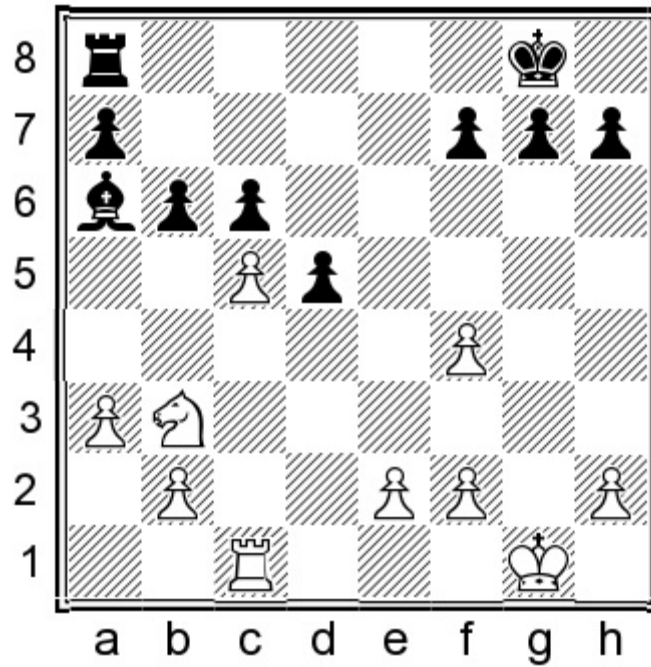
18...exd5?!

Not the best choice as it allows White to seize the initiative.

The correct continuation was 18...cxd5! 19.cxb6 axb6 20.e3 ♕f8 21.♖c1 ♜c8=. Black plans to take control of the center with ...f7-f6 followed by ...e6-e5.

18...exd5?! 19.e3?!

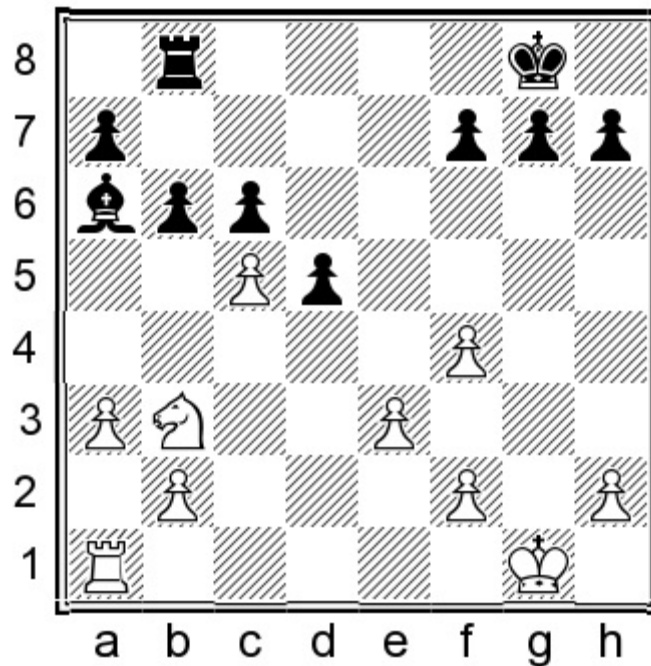
After 19.♖c1!



Position after: 19. ♖c1!

19... ♗c4 [\leq 19... bxc5? 20. ♖xc5 ♗xe2 21. ♘d4 ♗b5 22. b3 ♖e8 23. f3 ♔f8 24. ♔f2± Δa4] 20. ♘d4 bxc5 21. ♘xc6 ♔f8 22. e4± it would not be easy for Black to defend.

19... ♖b8!=



Position after: 19... ♖b8!=

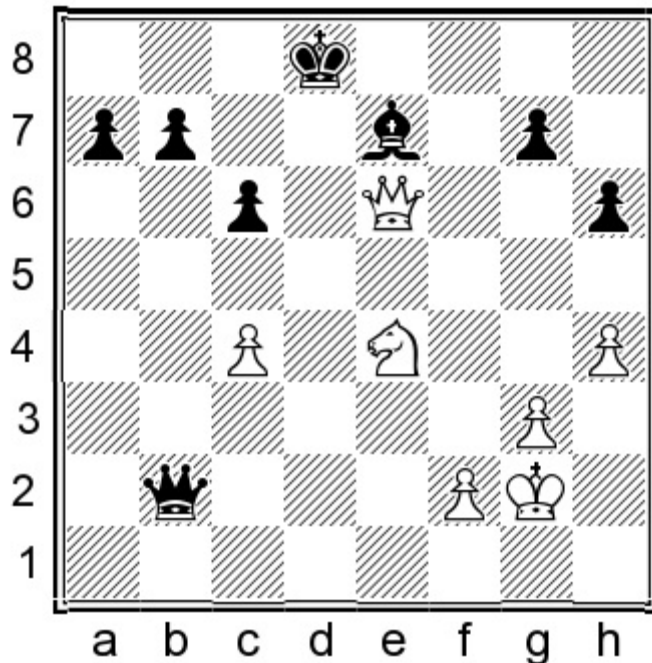
Now, an inevitably drawn rook endgame has been reached.

20.♞c1 ♕c4 21.♘d2 bxc5 22.♘xc4 dxc4 23.♞xc4 ♞xb2 24.♞xc5 ♞b6 25.a4 ♖f8 26.a5 ♞b5 27.♞xc6
 ♞xa5 28.♞c8+ ♖e7 29.♞c7+ ♖f8 30.♞c8+ ♖e7 31.♞c7+ ♖f8

½-½ Moroni, L (2567) – Wei Yi (2733) Moscow 2019.

16

Fier, A. – Wang, H.



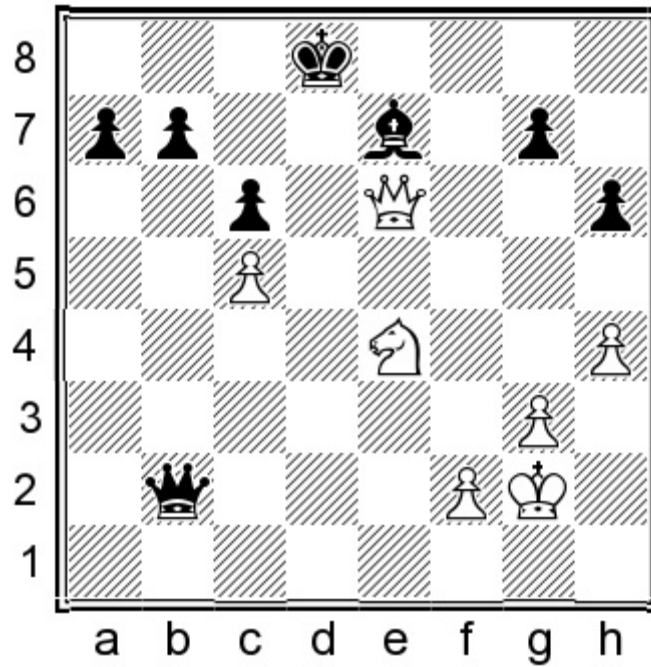
□ White is worse - how should he defend himself?

Show/Hide Solution

16

28.♘d6!

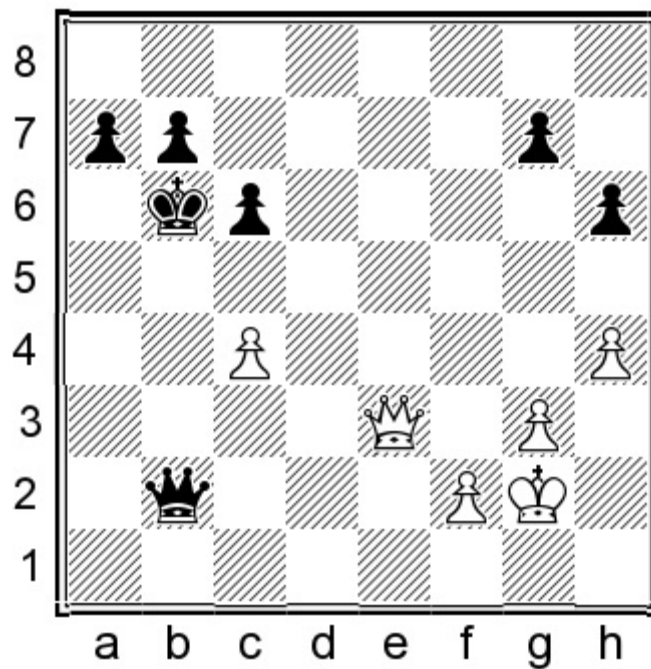
Actively! By entering a queen endgame. In the game, White decided to prepare ♘e4-d6 by playing 28.c5? but after



Position after: 28.c5?

28...♔d4! [he was probably calculating 28...a5 29.♘d6 ♕xd6 30.♔xd6+ ♖c8 31.♔f8+ ♖c7 32.♔d6+=] the white knight can no longer get to d6 without exchanging queens. 29.♔g8+ [29.♘d6? ♕xd6 30.cxd6 ♔d5+-+] 29...♖d7 30.f3 a5+- ½-½ (56) Fier, A (2561) – Wang Hao (2714) Moscow 2019.

28.♘d6! ♕xd6 29.♔xd6+ ♖c8 30.♔e6+ ♖c7 31.♔e7+ ♖b6 32.♔e3+



Position after: 32.♔e3+

32...♔a6

32...c5 33.♖e6+! ♔a5 34.♖e7=

33.g4!=

White can mobilize his own passed pawn. The unfortunate position of the black king prevents the a-pawn from moving forward, therefore White's chances are not worse in this position.

Chapter 3

Hidden Resources

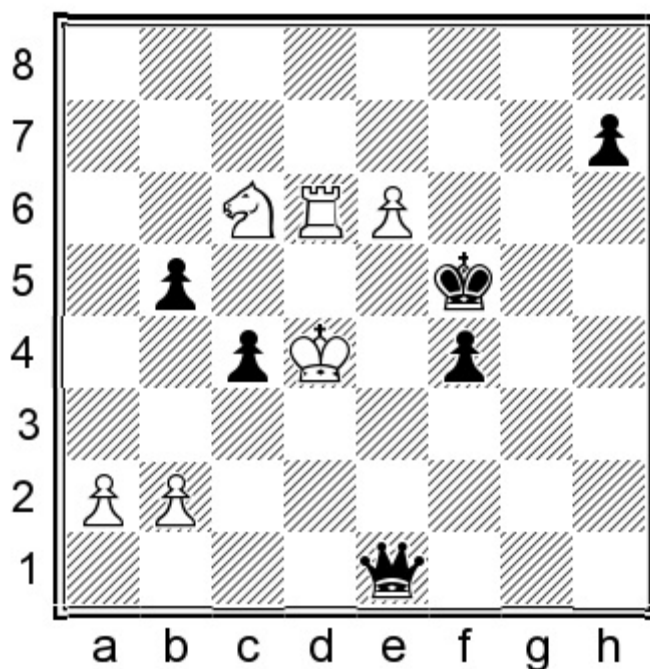
In this chapter, we will consider examples where the solutions are not obvious and where it would be quite difficult to find the correct continuation simply through experience or technical skill.

Hidden resources will always be concealed from us, no matter how much a player has been trained in this aspect. Our task is to be prepared to find a black cat in a dark room, even if it isn't there, and, also to acknowledge the possibility of its existence in so-called "simple" positions. It is always better to avoid being surprised by miracles.

Miracles occur every now and then, and sometimes even with a small amount of effort they can arise and considerably improve our position.

Example 1

From Inarkiev – Sarana
Satka 2018



Black to move

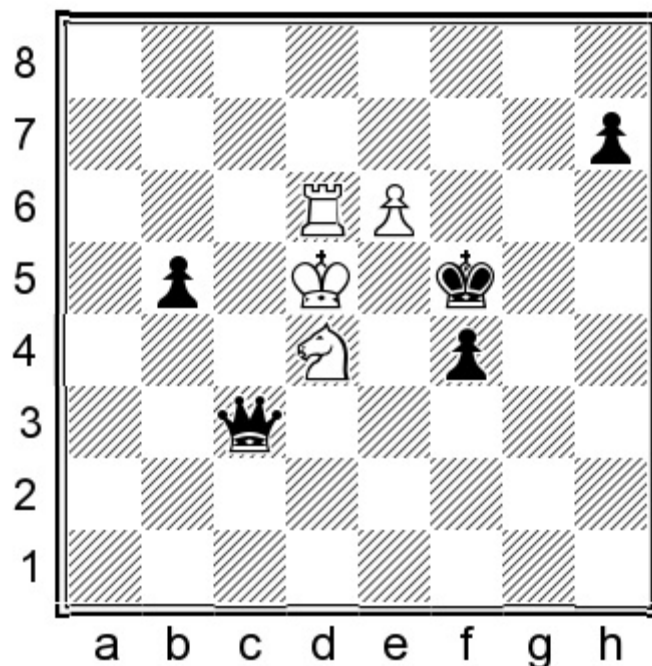
When making decisions in such situations, one cannot rely on anything other than accurate and precise calculation.

52...f3!

The winning move.

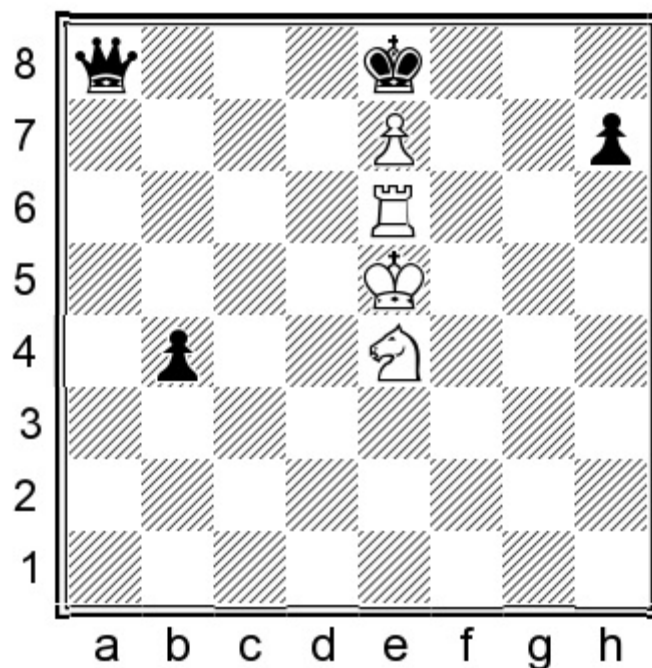
A) 52...c3? In the game, Black preferred this, which exposes the white king. An attractive and understandable move, but missing the win... 53.bxc3 ♖f2+ 54.♔d5 ♗xa2+ 55.♔c5 ♗a3+ 56.♔d5

♙xc3 57.♘d4+



Position after: 57.♘d4+

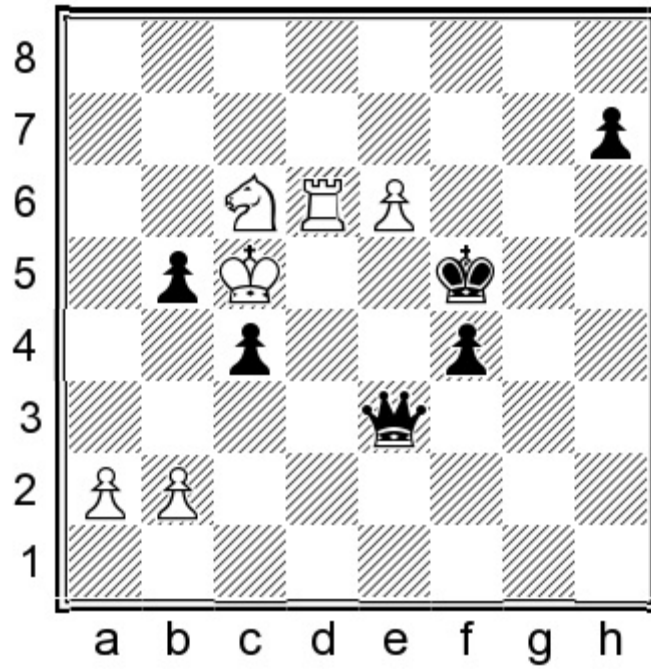
57...♔g6 [57...♔f6 58.♖d7 ♙c4+ 59.♔e4 ♙c8 60.♖f7+ ♔g6 61.♖xf4 h5 62.♔f3 b4 63.♖e4=] 58.♖c6 ♙a3 59.e7+ ♔f7 60.♖e6 ♙a8+ 61.♔e5 f3 62.♘xf3 b4 63.♘g5+ ♔e8 64.♘e4



Position after: 64.♘e4

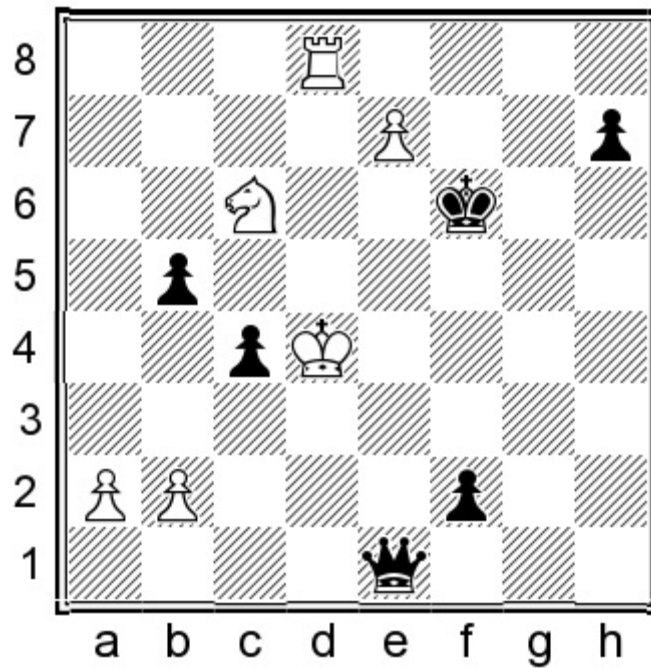
Picturesque! 64...♙a1+ 65.♔f5 ♙f1+ 66.♔e5 ♙a1+ 67.♔f5 ♙f1+ 68.♔e5 ½-½

B) In case of 52...♙f2+ 53.♔d5 ♙f3+ 54.♔c5 ♙e3+



Position after: 54...♙e3+

55.♚b4! The white king has found a safe haven. 55...f3 56.e7 f2 57.♖d8=
 52...f3! 53.e7 f2 54.♗d8 ♔f6!



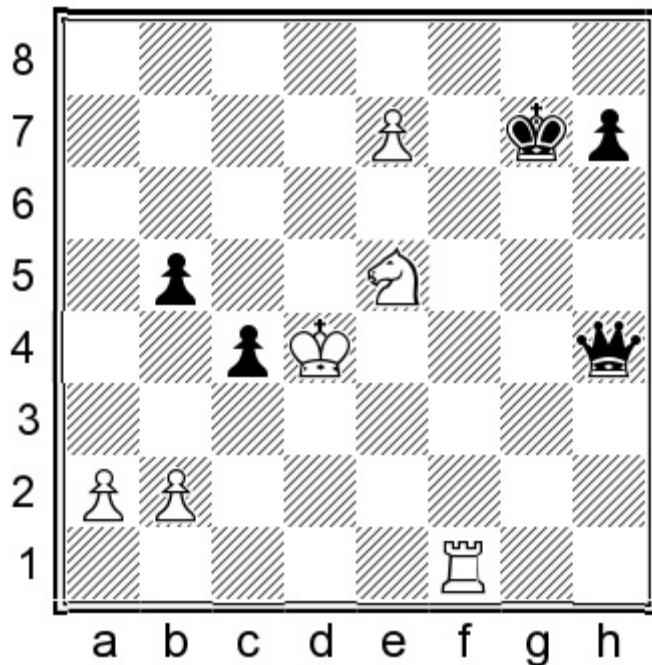
Position after: 54...♔f6!

A major hidden resource.

55.♖f8+

55. e8=♔ ♖xe8 56. ♜xe8 ♔g7! [56...♔f7?? 57. ♜e3! f1=♔ 58. ♜f3+ ♖xf3 59. ♘e5++-] 57. ♜e7+ ♔f8
 58. ♜e5 f1=♔ 59. ♜xb5 h5-+

55...♔g7 56. ♘e5 f1=♔ 57. ♜xf1 ♖h4+!



Position after: 57...♖h4+!

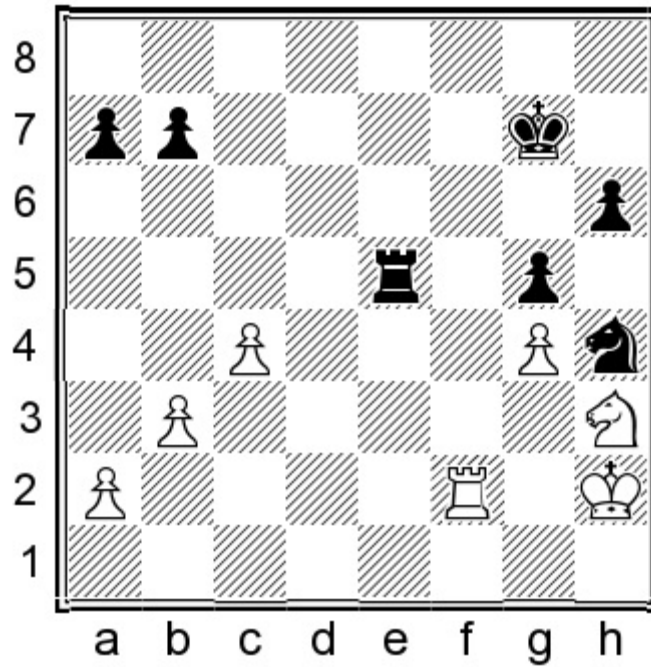
Perhaps White did not consider this particular move in his calculations.

58. ♔d5 ♖xe7-+

Example 2

From Jakubowski – Sadzikowski

Katowice 2018



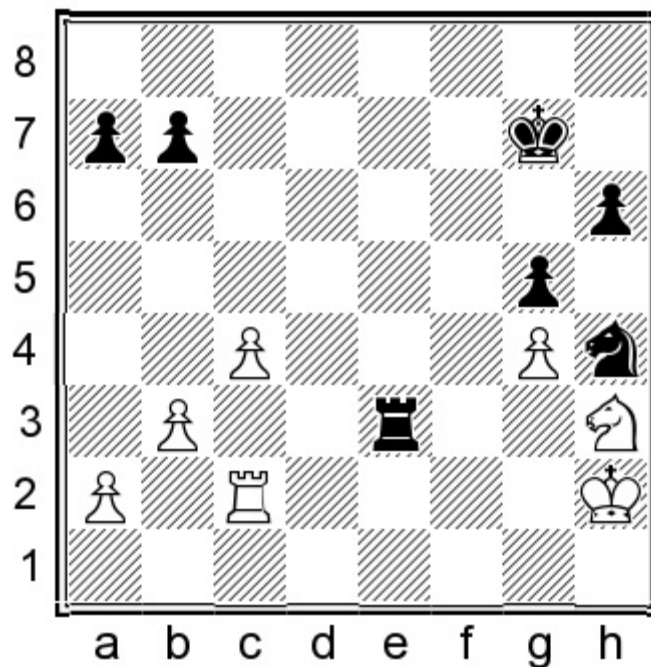
White to move

Despite the material balance and the absence of obvious weaknesses, White is in a very dangerous position - the unfortunate position of his knight and king is to blame for this.

58.♖b2!!

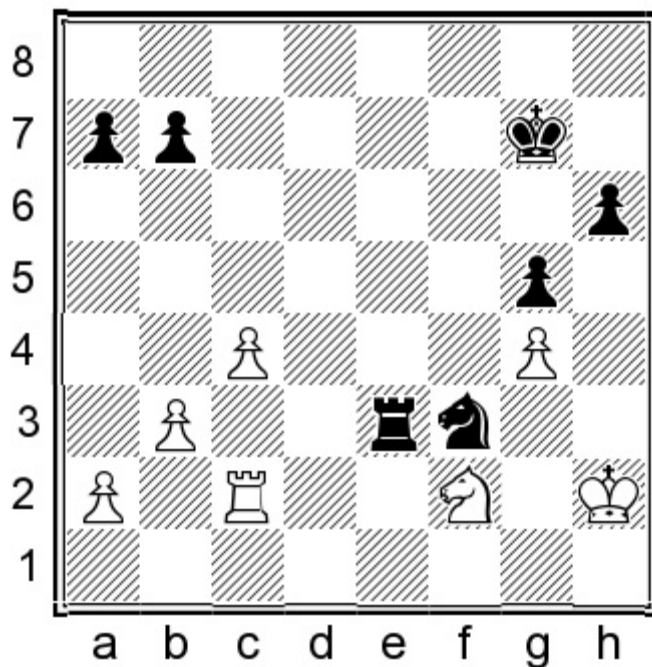
Why there? How can that be useful?

A) Much more natural and seemingly correct 58.♖c2?! ♖e3 led to a serious advantage for Black.



Position after: 58...♖e3

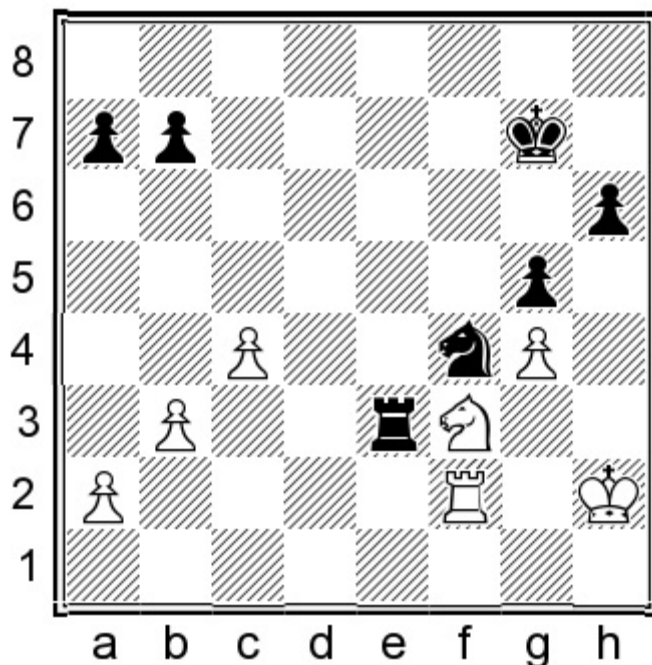
59.♖g1 [59.c5 ♖f3+? 60.♔h1 ♖e1-+; 59.♗f2 ♖f3+ 60.♔h1 ♖f6+] 59...♗g6 60.♗h3 ♖e5 61.♗f2 ♗f3+



Position after: 61...♗f3+

62.♔h1 With nothing better than to retreat to the corner. [62.♔g2? ♖e1+-+] 62...♔f6 63.c5 ♗d4+

B) The game continued 58.♗g1?! and after 58...♞e4! [Black continued with the significantly weaker: 58...♞e3?! 59.♞d2+ 0-1 (73)] 59.♔g3 ♞e3+ 60.♔h2 ♗g6 61.♗f3 ♗f4



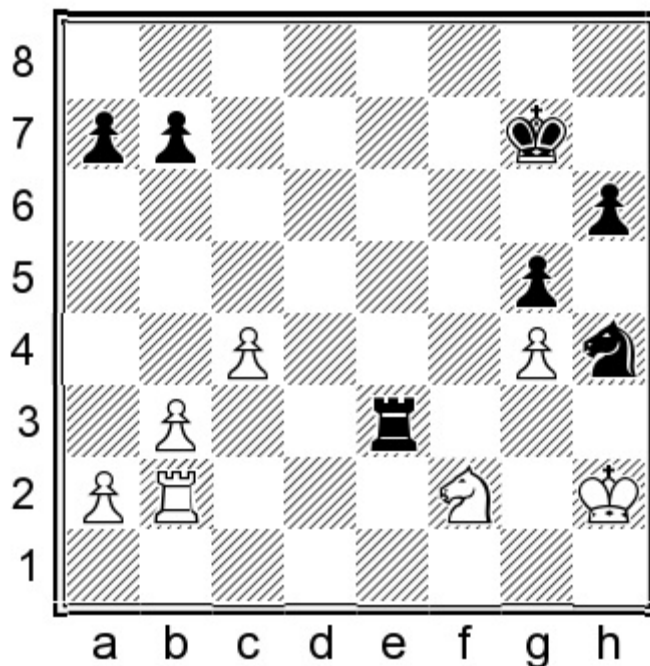
Position after: 61...♗f4

White's position could be evaluated as critical. 62.♔g3 ♖d3 63.♟f1 ♗e5—+

58.♟b2!! ♟e3

58...♔f6 59.♗f2 ♔e6 60.♗d1 ♞e1 61.♗f2=

59.♗f2



Position after: 59.♗f2

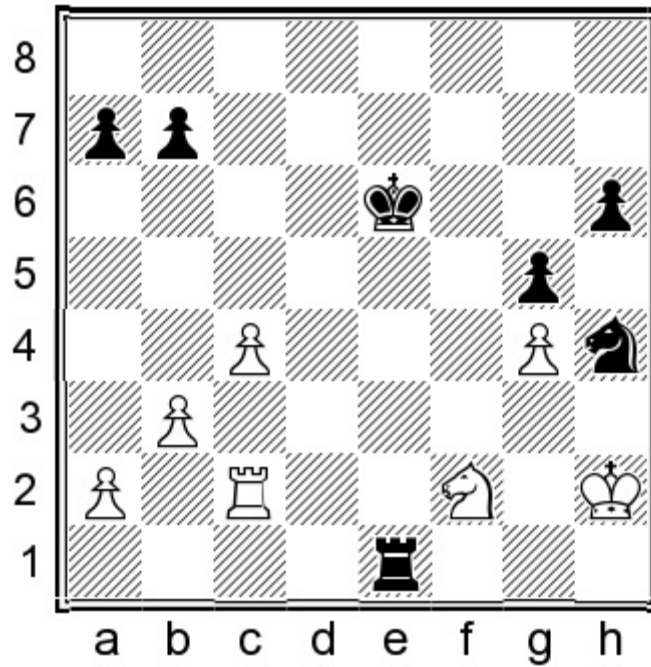
59...♔f6

59...♗f3+ 60.♔g2! The idea behind the mysterious first move now becomes clear, as here it does not fall victim to a fork from the knight, and White buys time to achieve piece coordination. 60...♔f6 61.♗d1 ♗h4+ 62.♔f2 ♟f3+ 63.♔e2=

60.♗d1! ♟e1

60...♟f3 61.♟e2=

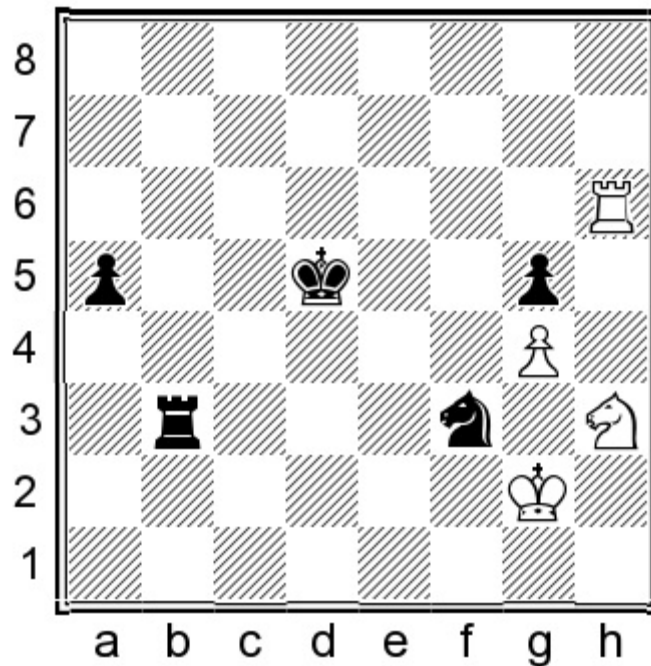
61.♗f2 ♔e6 62.♟c2



Position after: 62. ♖c2

With excellent drawing chances, for example:

62...b6 63.c5 bxc5 64.♖xc5 ♖e2 65.♔g3 ♖xa2 66.♖c6+ ♔d5 67.♖xh6 ♖a3 68.♘h3 ♖xb3+ 69.♔h2 ♘f3+ 70.♔g2 a5



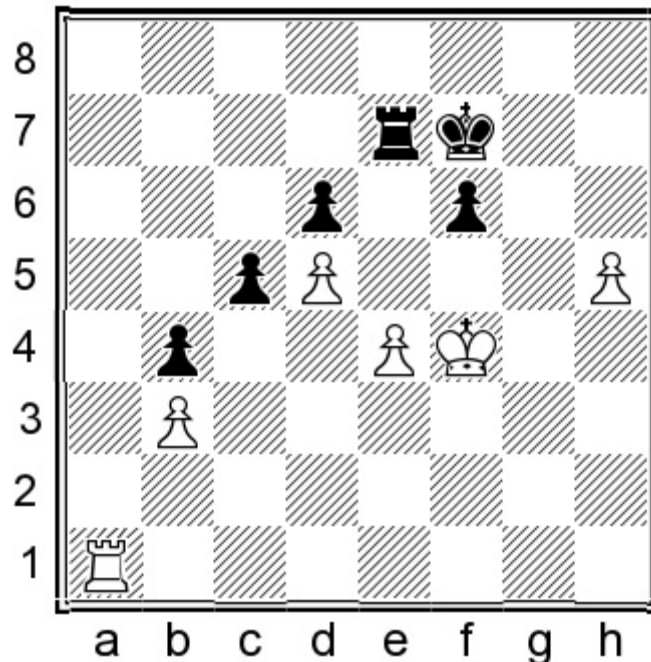
Position after: 70...a5

71.♘xg5! ♘xg5 72.♖h5=

Example 3

From Dreev – Mecking

Tilburg 1994



White to move

A fascinating endgame, that will turn out to be a true roller coaster: the most aggressive moves by White, and incredible resources for Black.

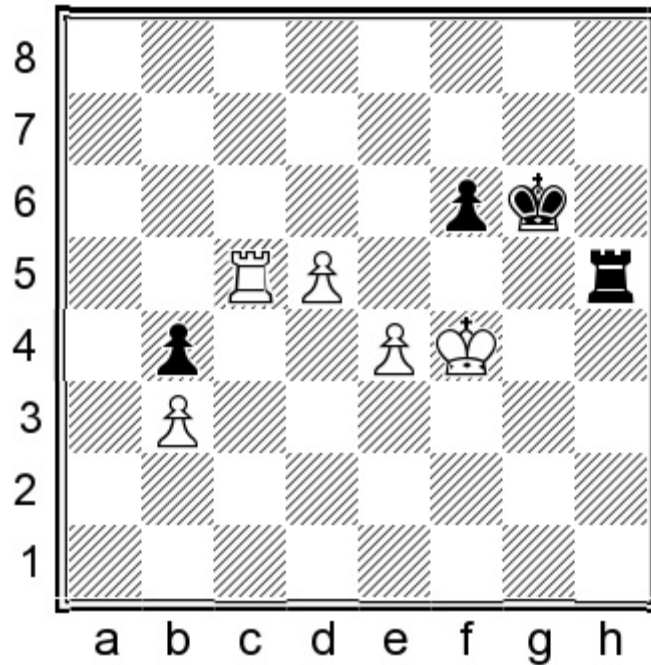
43.h6!

43.♖a6? This natural move was the game continuation, missing the win. 43...♞e5! 44.♖a7+ ♞e7! 45.♖a6 ♞e5 46.♞xd6 ♞xh5 47.♞d7+ ♔g6 48.♞c7 ½-½

43.h6! ♔g6!

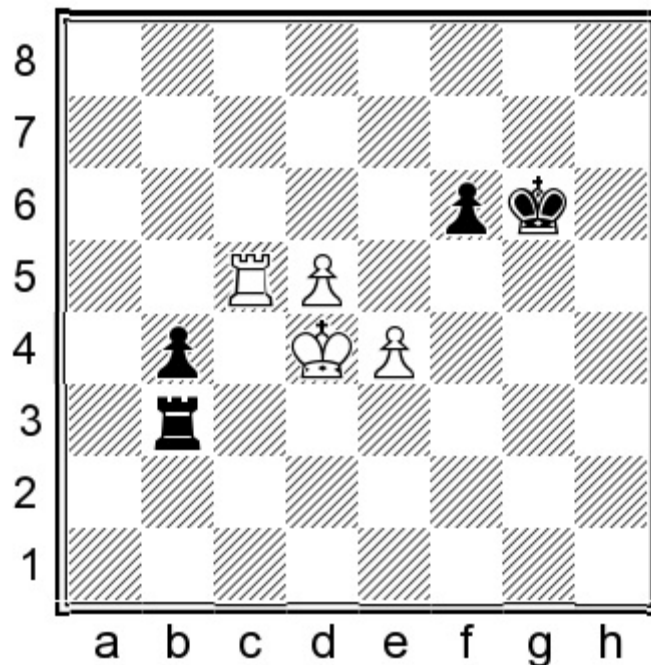
The only way!

Another natural move that loses the game was the inferior 43...♞e5?. Consider it in detail, there are many instructive techniques at play. 44.♖a7+ ♔g6 45.♞d7 ♔xh6 46.♞xd6 ♔g6 47.♞c6 ♞h5 48.♞xc5



Position after: 48. ♖xc5

A) 48... ♜h4+ 49. ♔e3 ♜h3+ [49... f5 50. ♖c6+ ♔g5 51. ♖e6!+-] 50. ♔d4 ♜xb3 A series of exact and only moves leads White to the win.

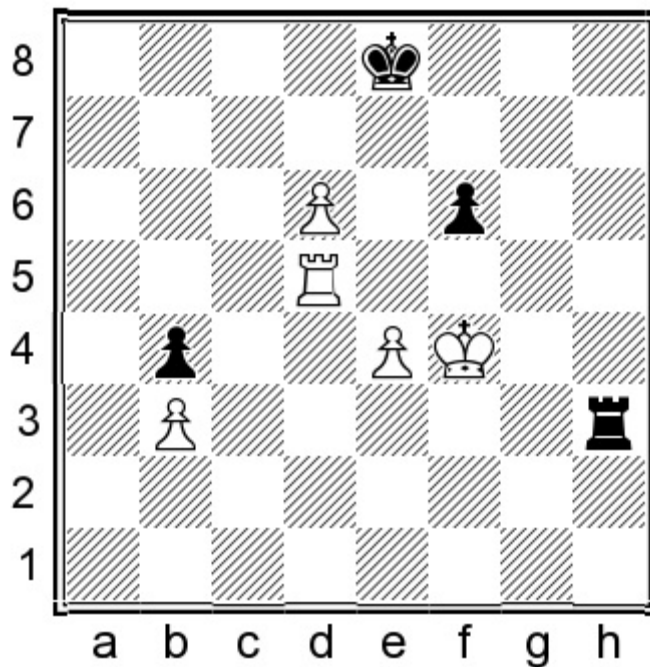


Position after: 50... ♜xb3

51. ♖c6! Threatening to move the e-pawn, White wins an important tempo that strengthens his position. [51. ♖b5? ♜b1=; 51. ♖c7? ♜b1 52. d6 ♜d1+ 53. ♔c5 ♔g5! 54. ♔c6 ♔f4=] 51... ♔f7 [51... ♖b1 52. e5 ♜d1+ 53. ♔c5 ♜c1+ 54. ♔xb4+-] 52. ♖c7+! ♔e8 [52... ♔g6 53. d6 ♜b1 54. d7 ♜d1+ 55. ♔c4 ♔g5

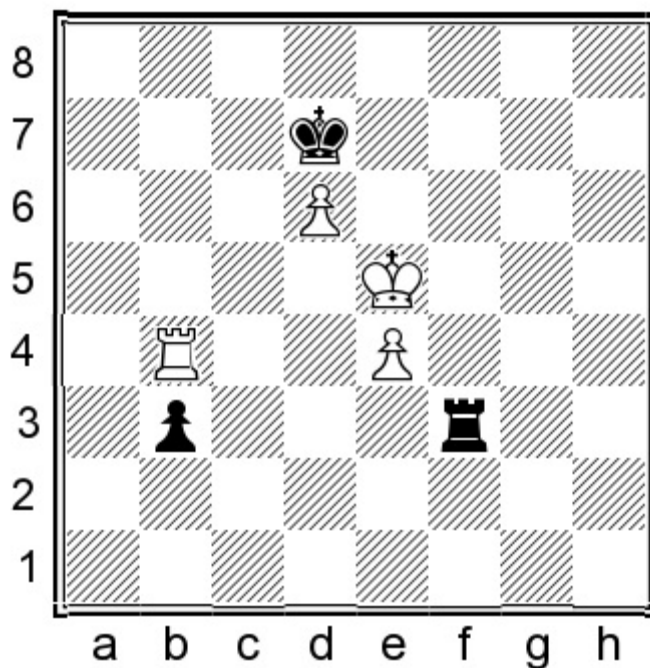
56.♖c5+ ♔f4 57.♞d5+–] 53.♞b7! [53.d6? ♞a3 54.♔d5 ♞a5+=] 53...♞b1 54.d6! ♞a1 55.♔d5! ♞a5+ 56.♔c6+–

B) 48...♞h3 49.d6 [49.e5? fxe5+ 50.♔xe5 ♞xb3=] 49...♔f7 50.♞d5 ♔e8



Position after: 50...♔e8

B1) 51.♔f5? ♔d7 52.♔xf6 ♞xb3 53.♞d4 [53.e5 ♞f3+ 54.♔g7 b3=] 53...♞f3+ 54.♔e5 b3 55.♞b4

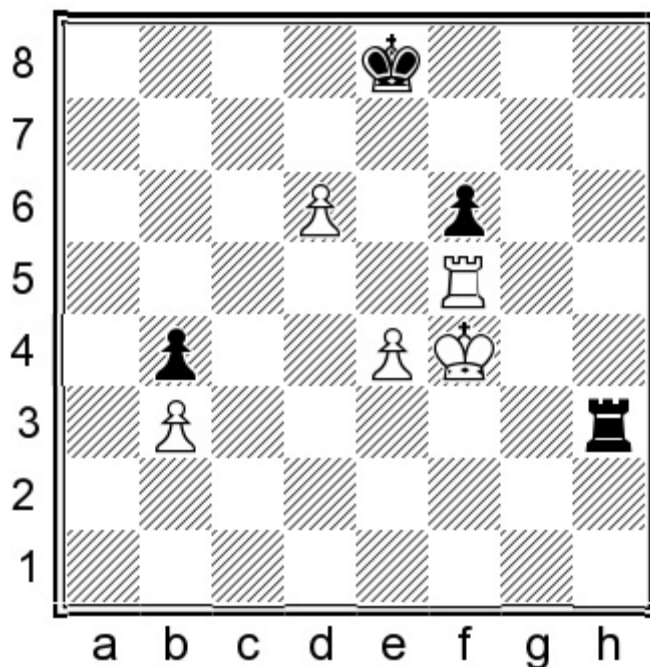


Position after: 55.♞b4

55...♞e3 [Though it may look dangerous, active defense also leads to a draw. 55...♞h3!? 56.♞b7+

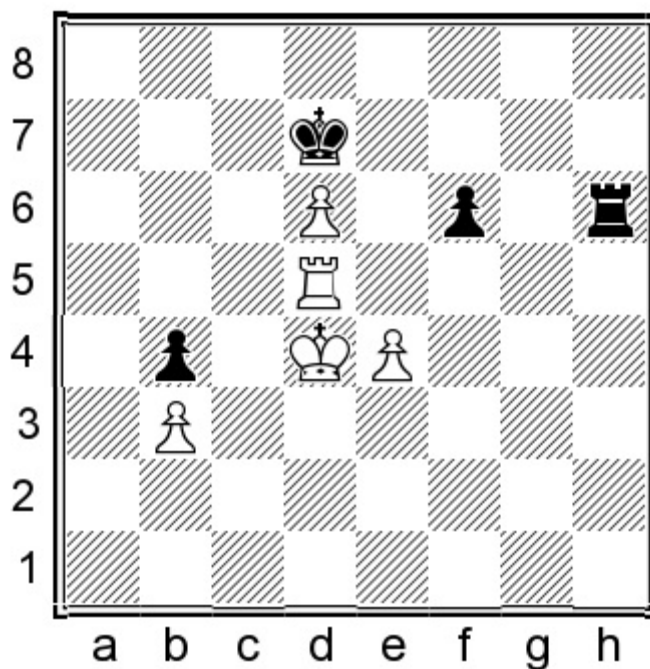
♔c6 57.♖c7+ ♔b6 58.♖c4 ♖h5+ 59.♕e6 b2 60.♖b4+ ♖b5 61.d7 ♖xb4 62.d8=♚+ ♔c5=] 56.♖b7+ ♔c8 57.d7+ Otherwise, no progress is made. 57...♔d8 58.♕d6 ♖d3+ 59.♕e6 b2 60.♖b8+ [60.♖xb2 ♖d6+!=] 60...♔c7 61.♖xb2 ♖d6+ 62.♕e5 ♖xd7=

B2) 51.♖f5!!



Position after: 51.♖f5!!

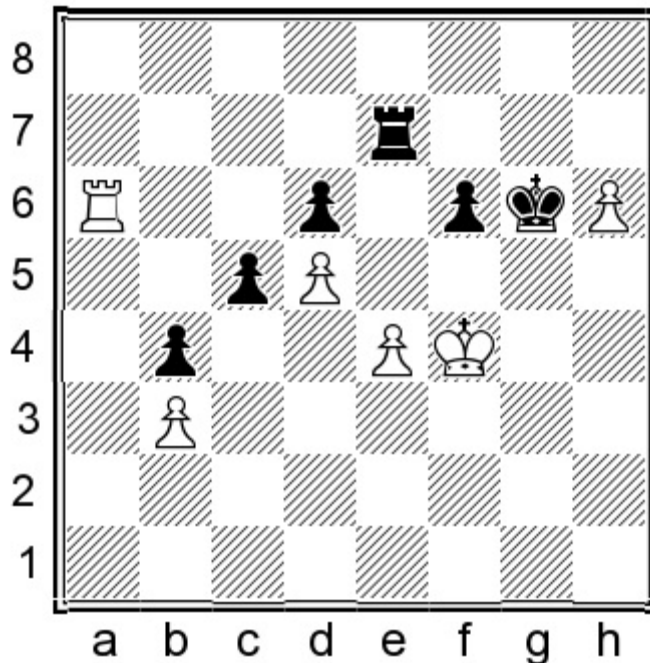
51...♖h6 [51...♖xb3 52.♖xf6 ♖d3 53.♕e5 b3 54.♕e6 b2 55.♖f1+-] 52.♕e3 ♔d7 53.♕d4 ♔c6 [53...♕xd6 54.♖xf6++-] 54.♖d5 ♕d7



Position after: 54...♕d7

55.♔c5! [55.♔c4 ♖h4 56.♞d4 ♜f4 57.♔c5 ♞g4 58.♞xb4 – or 58.♔xb4 f5= – 58...♞g5+ 59.♔d4 ♔xd6=] 55...♞h3 [55...♞h4 56.e5 fxe5 57.♞xe5 ♞h7 58.♞e7+-] 56.♔xb4 ♞h4 57.♔c5 ♞xe4 58.♞h5
 And White wins, since 58...♞e5+ fails to 59.♞xe5 fxe5 60.♔d5 e4 61.♔xe4 ♔xd6 62.♔d4+-.

44.♞a6



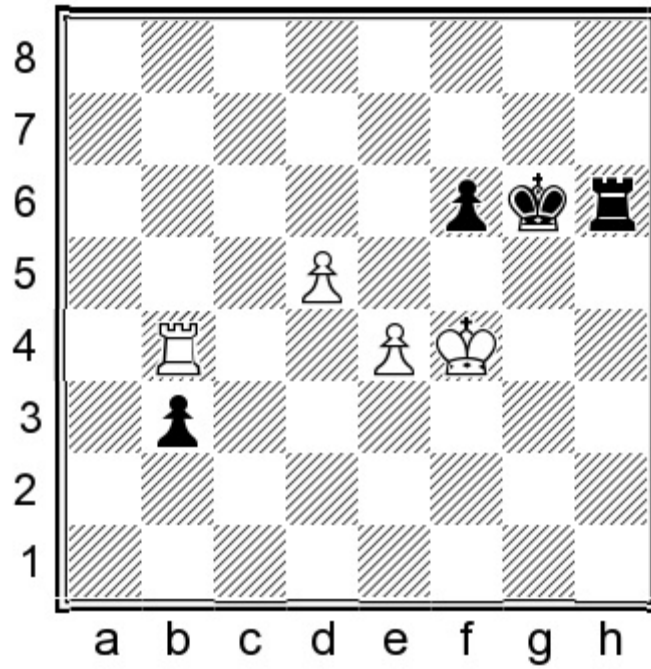
Position after: 44.♞a6

44...c4!

44...♞d7? 45.♞b6 ♞d8 46.h7 ♔xh7 47.♔f5 ♔g7 48.♔e6 ♞e8+ 49.♔xd6 ♞xe4 50.♔c7+-

45.bxc4

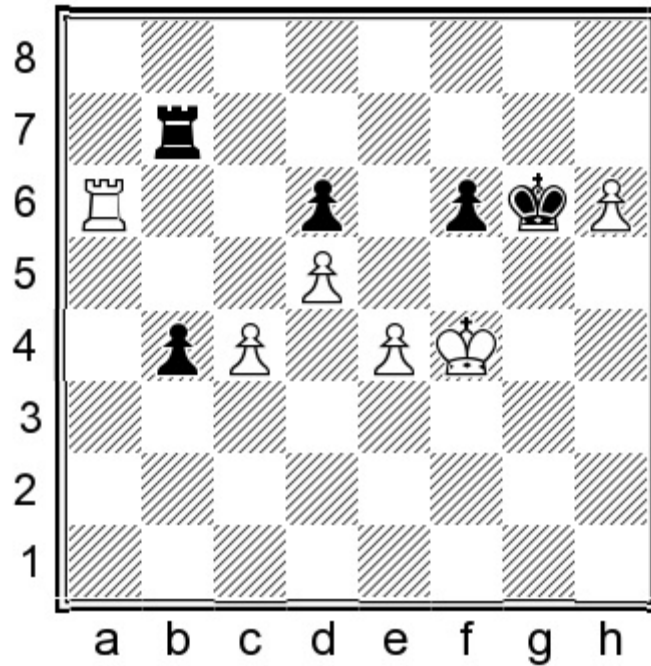
45.♞xd6? cxb3 46.♞b6 ♞h7 47.♞xb4 ♞xh6



Position after: 47... Rxb6

48. Qg3 [48. Qg4 Rh5 49. Rxb3 f5+ =] 48... Rh1 49. Rxb3 Rf1 50. Rf3 Rd1 51. Qf4 Qf7 52. Ra3 Rf1+ 53. Qe3 Qe7 =

45... Rb7

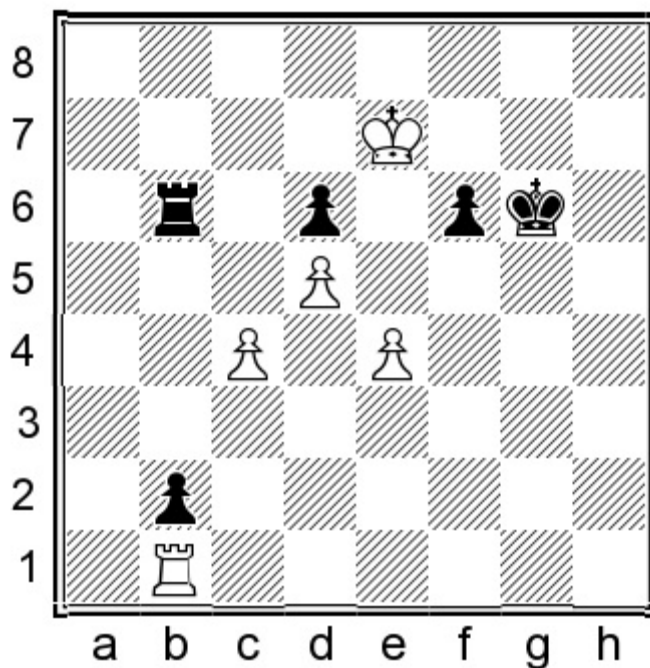


Position after: 45... Rb7

46. Ra1

46.♖a2 b3 47.♖b2 ♖b6=

46...b3 47.♖g1+ ♔xh6 48.♕f5 b2 49.♖b1 ♔g7 50.♕e6 ♖b6 51.♕e7 ♔g6



Position after: 51...♔g6

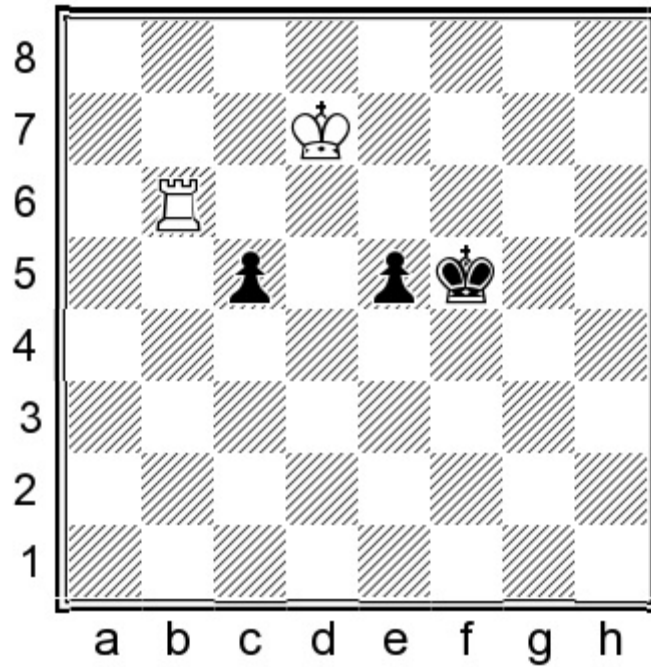
52.c5

52.♕d7 ♖b4=

52...dxc5 53.d6 ♖b4 54.e5 fxe5 55.d7 ♖d4

55...♖b8?? 56.♖xb2+-

56.♖xb2 ♕f5 57.♖b6 ♖xd7+ 58.♕xd7



Position after: 58. ♔xd7

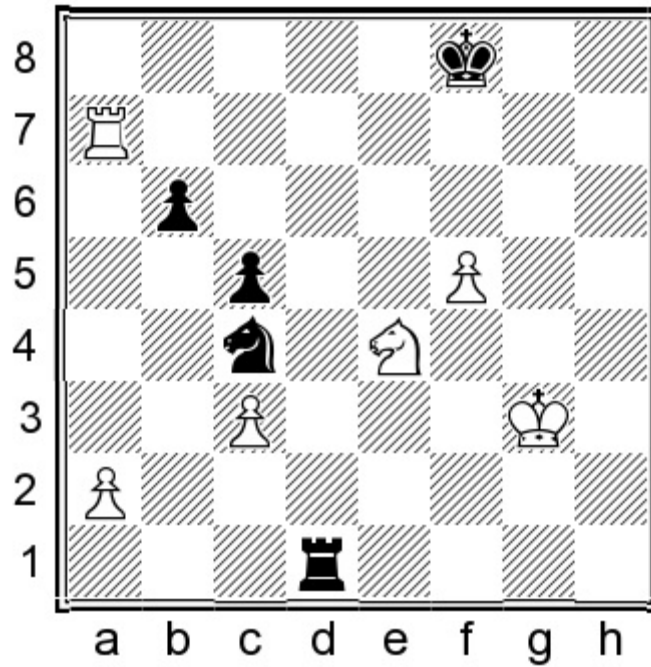
58...♚e4!!

The only move, but sufficient. Thus, it can be concluded that this endgame, with the most accurate play possible by Black, leads to a draw.

59.♚c6 ♚d4=

Example 4

From Dreev – Piket
Wijk aan Zee 2002



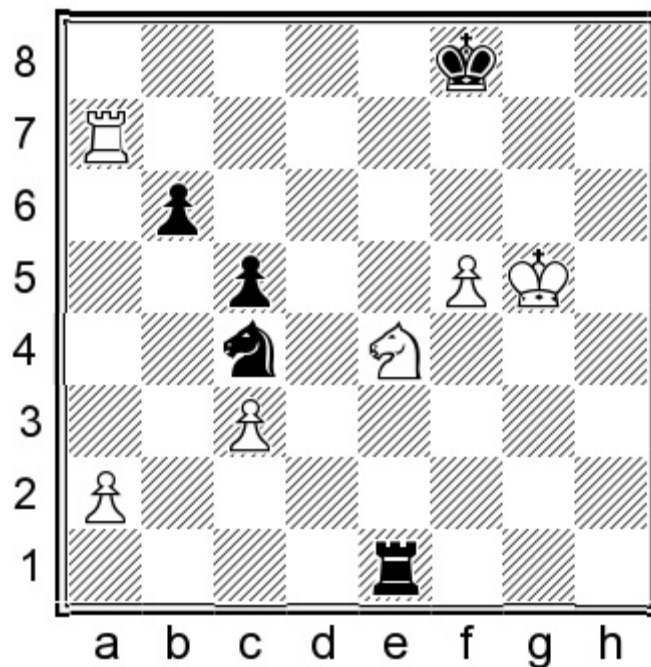
Black to move

With the last move, White pushed his powerful f-pawn which forces Black to make a very difficult decision: to simplify into a rook endgame – which may well be lost – or to continue to defend as is?

39...♖f1?!

Black's move in the game.

A) Also losing was 39...♜g1+?! 40.♔f4 ♜f1+ 41.♔g5 ♜e1.



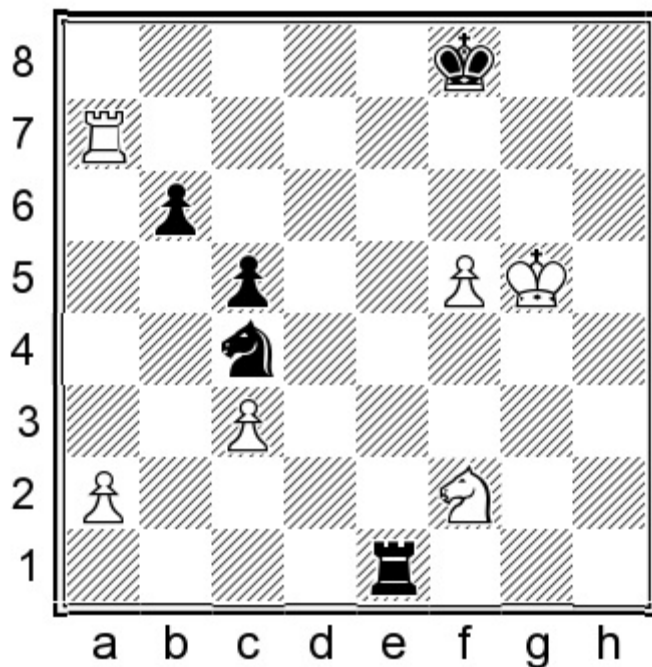
Position after: 41...♜e1

[41...♖e5 42.f6+-]

A1) 42.♗f6± ♜g1+ 43.♕h6 ♗d6=

A2) 42.♗g3 ♗d6! [≤ 42...♞e3?! Δ 43.♗h5 ♞xc3 44.♗f4 ♞a3 45.♗g6+ ♕e8 46.♞xa3! ♗xa3 47.♗e5!+-] 43.f6 ♞e3 44.♗h5 ♞xc3 45.♗f4 ♞g3+ 46.♕h5 ♞e3 47.♕g6 ♕e8 48.f7+ ♗xf7 49.♞xf7 ♞g3+ 50.♕f6 ♞f3 51.♞e7+ ♕d8 52.♞e4 ♕d7 53.♕e5 ♕c6=

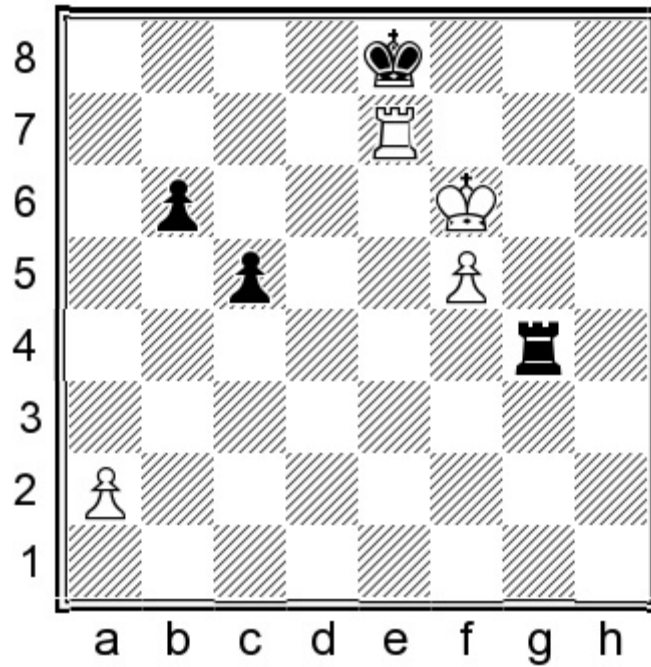
A3) 42.♗f2!!



Position after: 42.♗f2!!

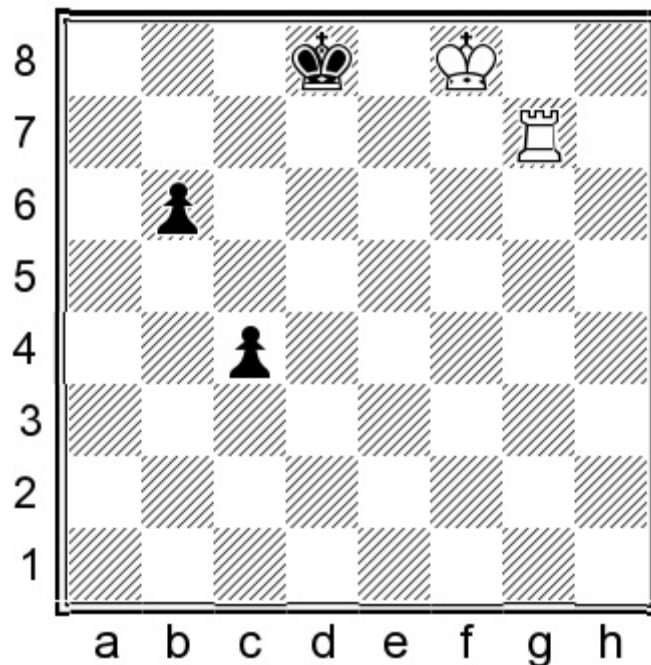
Not an obvious and quite a far-sighted retreat, but it is precisely the f2-square that the white knight decisively arrives to in the game. What a hidden resource! 42...♗d6 43.f6 ♞e3 44.♗g4 ♞xc3 45.♗e5+-

B) The only correct decision was to liquidate into the rook endgame in which Black apparently escapes: 39...♗d6! 40.♗xd6 [40.♕f4 ♞f1+ 41.♕e5 ♗xf5 42.a4 ♗e7=] 40...♞xd6 41.♕f4 ♞d3 42.c4 ♞d4+ 43.♕g5 ♞xc4 44.♕g6 ♞g4+ 45.♕f6 ♕e8 46.♞e7+



Position after: 46. ♖e7+

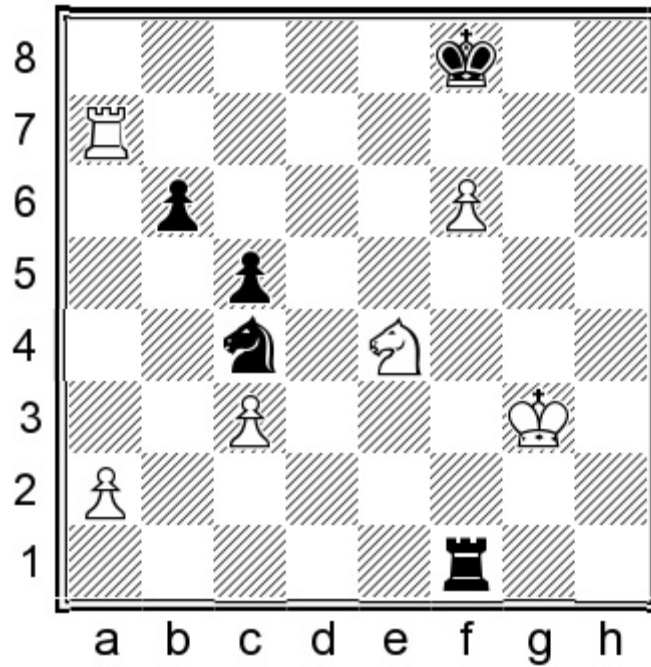
46... ♔d8 [46... ♔f8 47. ♖b7+–] 47. ♖g7 ♖f4 48. ♔e6 ♖e4+! 49. ♔f7 c4 50. f6 ♖e2! 51. ♔g8 [51. a4 c3=] 51... ♖xa2 52. f7 ♖f2 53. f8=♚+ ♖xf8+ 54. ♔xf8



Position after: 54. ♔xf8

54...c3! 55. ♖g3 ♔d7 56. ♖xc3 ♔d6= An unexpected resource for Black, who is just in time to make a draw, even though at first sight there didn't seem to be much hope initially.

39... ♖f1?! 40. f6



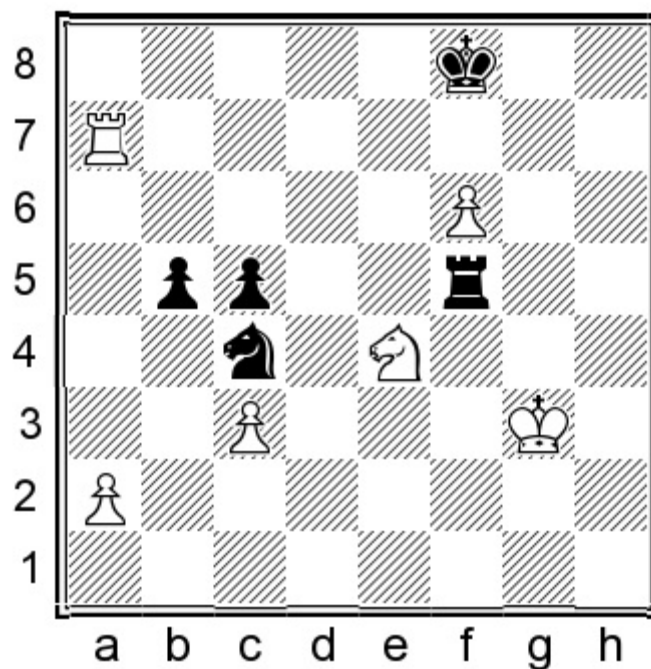
Position after: 40.f6

Now White is winning.

40...♞e5

A) 40...♞e3 41.♞g5+-

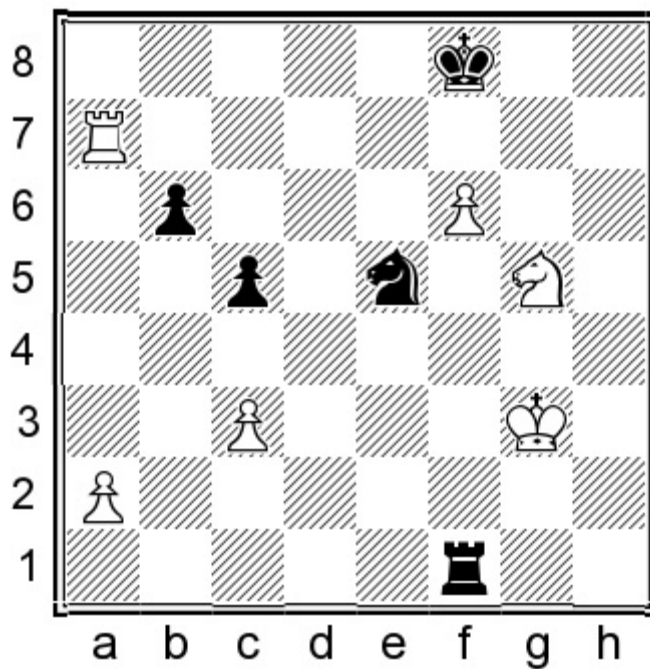
B) 40...♞f5 41.♞a4! White poses insurmountable problems to his opponent in an exclusively correct and subtle way. [41.a4?! ♔e8±] 41...b5 [41...♞e3 42.♞a8+ ♔f7 43.♞d6+-] 42.♞a7



Position after: 42. ♖a7

The rook returns, but the situation has changed – Black now has a weak pawn on b5. 42...b4 [42...♔e8
43. ♖b7+–] 43. cxb4 cxb4 44. ♖c7+–

41. ♘g5!+–



Position after: 41. ♘g5!+–

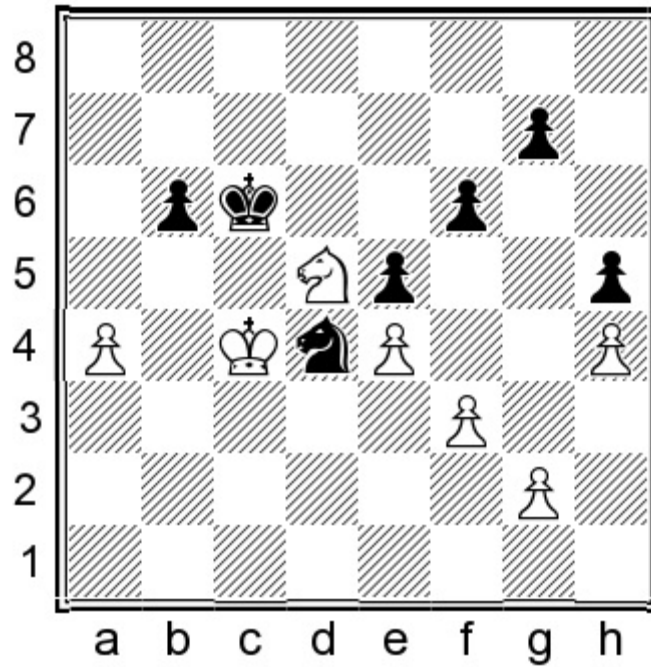
1-0

If 41. ♘g5 ♖xf6 then 42. ♘h7++–.

Example 5

From Dreev – Ivanov

Reykjavik 1990



White to move

For a long time, the rivals maneuvered in a roughly equal endgame. With his last move, White is trying to pose Black a more specific set of problems.

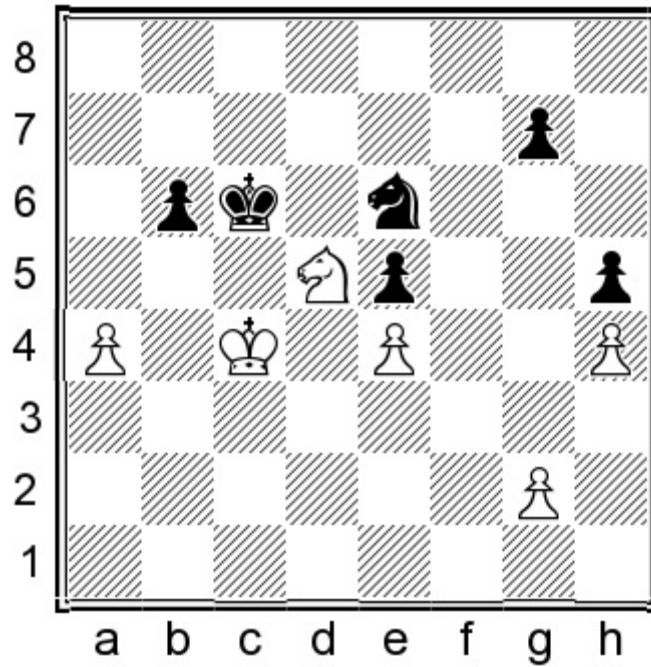
49.f4

And Black makes a mistake...

49...♞e2?

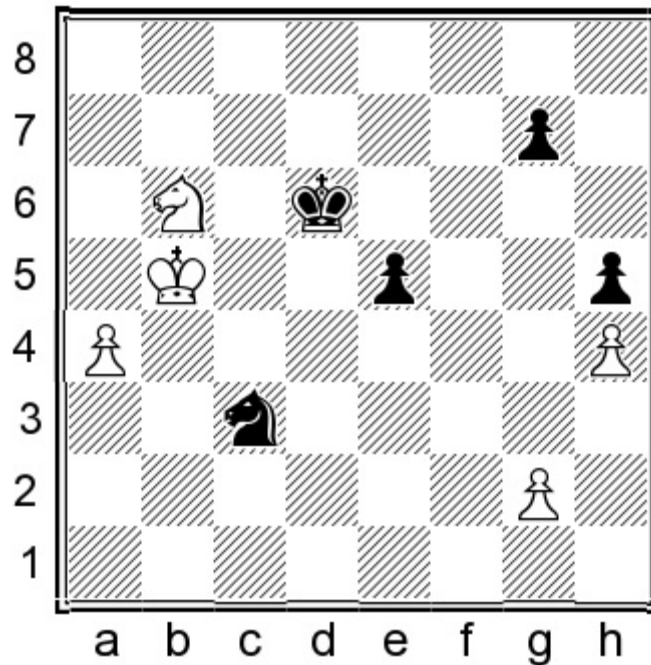
Although the following solution seems simple, it's not obvious during a game that it is the way to play. Especially when it isn't very clear why the move in the game is poor.

Leading to a draw was 49...♞e6! 50.fxe5 fxe5.



Position after: 50...fxe5

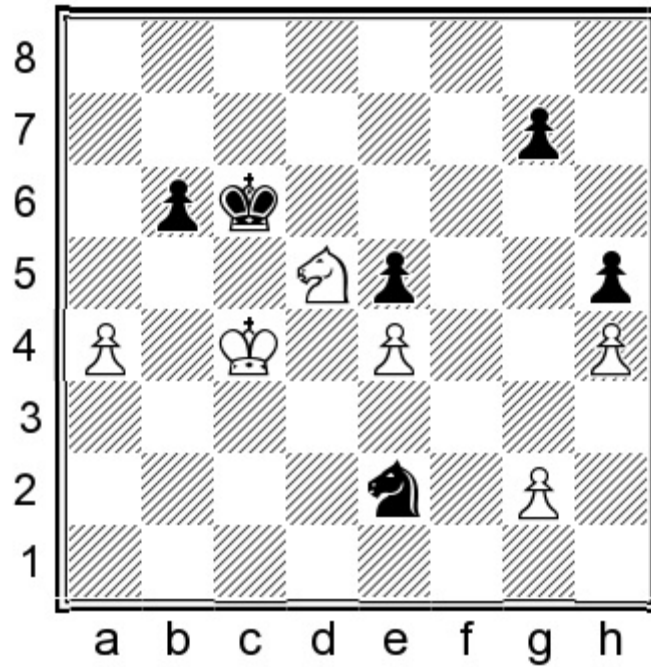
51. ♖b4+ ♔d6 52. ♕b5 ♘c5 53. ♘d5 ♘xe4 [53... ♘xa4 54. ♕xa4 ♔c5 55. ♘e3 ♔d4 56. ♘f5+ ♕xe4 57. ♘xg7 ♕f4 58. ♘h5+ ♕g4=] 54. ♘xb6 ♘c3+



Position after: 54... ♘c3+

55. ♕c4 [55. ♕b4 ♘xa4 56. ♘xa4 ♕e6=] 55... ♘e4 56. a5 ♕c6 57. ♕d3 ♘d6 [57... ♘g3!?] 58. ♘c4 e4+!
59. ♕d4 ♘f5+=

50.fxe5 fxe5



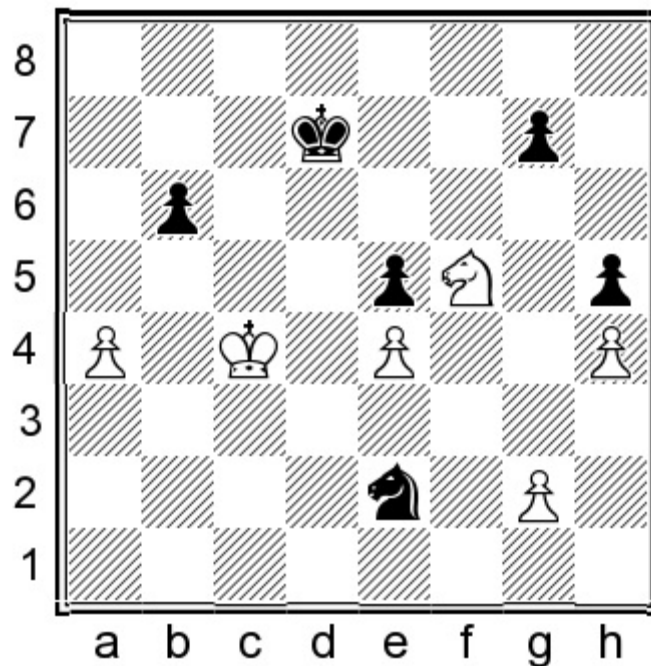
Position after: 50...fxe5

51. ♖e7+

51. ♘b4+ ♔d6 Δ 52. ♚b5? ♘c3+-+

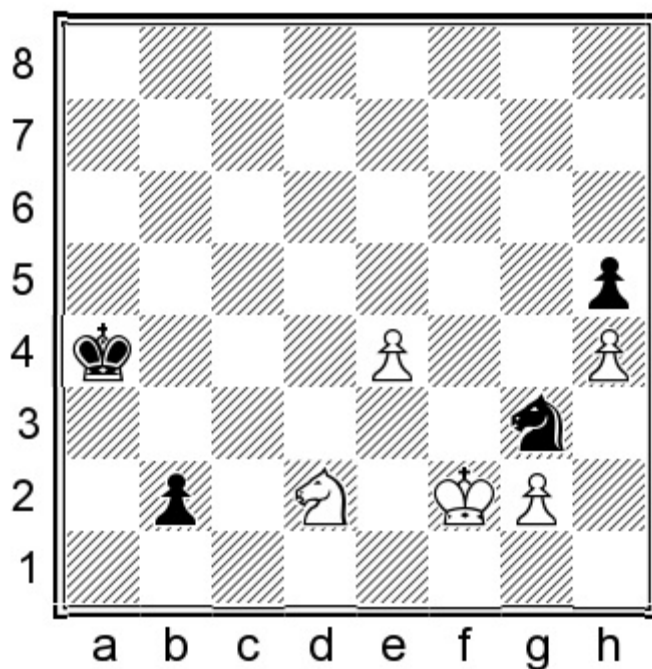
51...♔d7 52.♘d5

White, in turn, makes mistakes and overlooks the almost winning resource 52. ♘f5!.



Position after: 52. ♘f5!

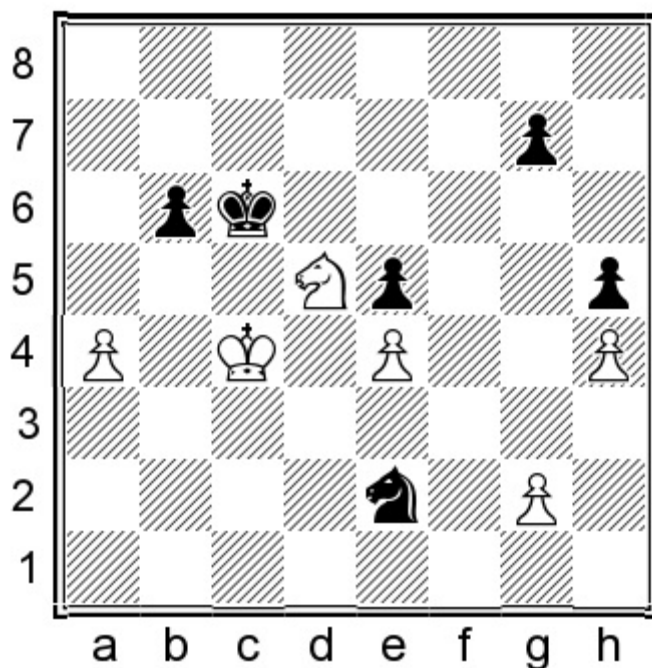
It is important to lure the black pawn to g6. 52...g6 53.♖e3 ♘c6 54.♗d5 ♗g3 55.♙d3 ♘c5 56.♗e7 ♘b4 57.♗xg6 ♘xa4 58.♗xe5 b5 59.♙e3 b4 60.♗f3 b3 61.♗d2 b2 62.♙f2



Position after: 62. ♙f2

62...♘b4!! 63.♙xg3 ♘c3 64.♗b1+ ♘c2 65.e5 ♘xb1 66.e6 ♘c1 67.e7 b1=♙ 68.e8=♙ ♙d3+ 69.♙h2 ♙d6+ 70.g3 Even if this queen endgame is not winning, the practical chances for victory are quite high.

52...♘c6



Position after: 52... ♘c6

53. ♖b4+?

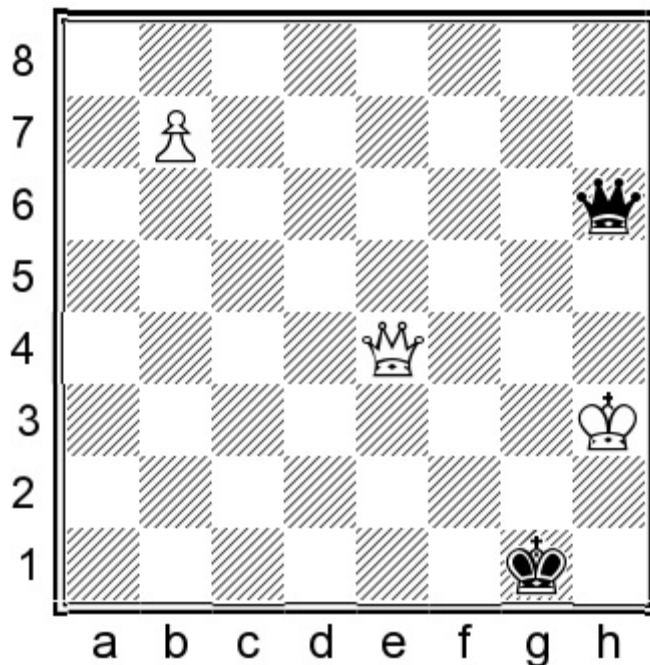
It was still not too late to return to the correct path with 53. ♖e7+!

53... ♔d6 54. ♖d3 ♕g3 ½-½ (75)

Example 6

From Grigoriants – Carlsen

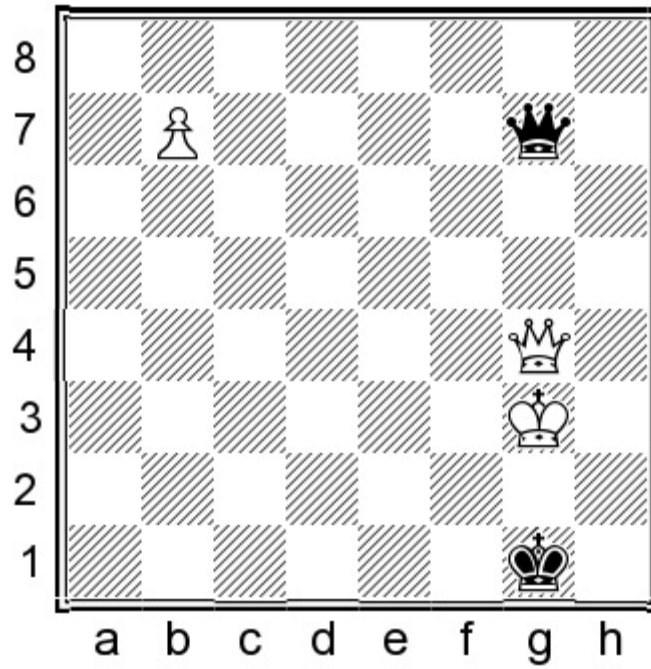
St Petersburg 2018



White to move

67. ♕h4?

A natural move which allowed Black to save the game thanks to a series of only moves. Easily winning was 67. ♔g3+- Δ 67... ♕g7+ 68. ♕g4



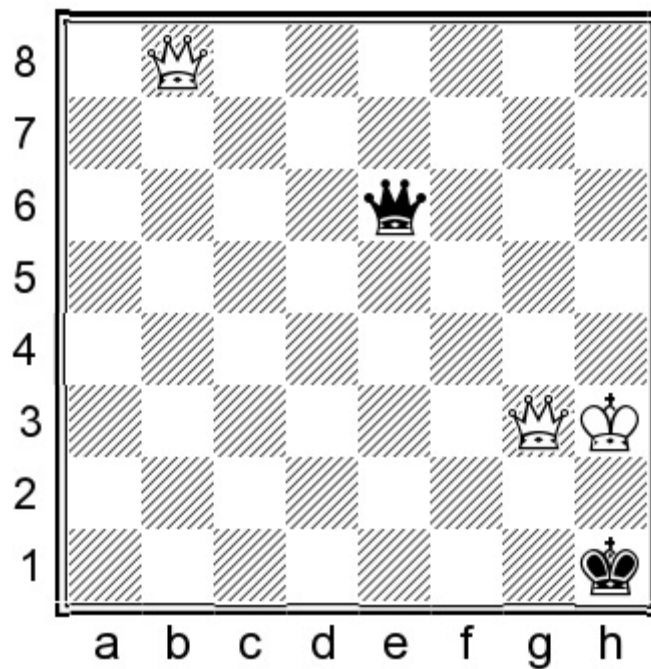
Position after: 68. ♔g4

68... ♚xb7 [68... ♚c7+ 69. ♔f3+ ♔f1 70. ♚g2+] 69. ♚d1#.

67. ♚h4? ♚e3+

67... ♚e6+? 68. ♚g4+-

68. ♚g3+ ♔h1 69. b8=♚ ♚e6+



Position after: 69... ♖e6+

The white king ends up in an endless roundabout.

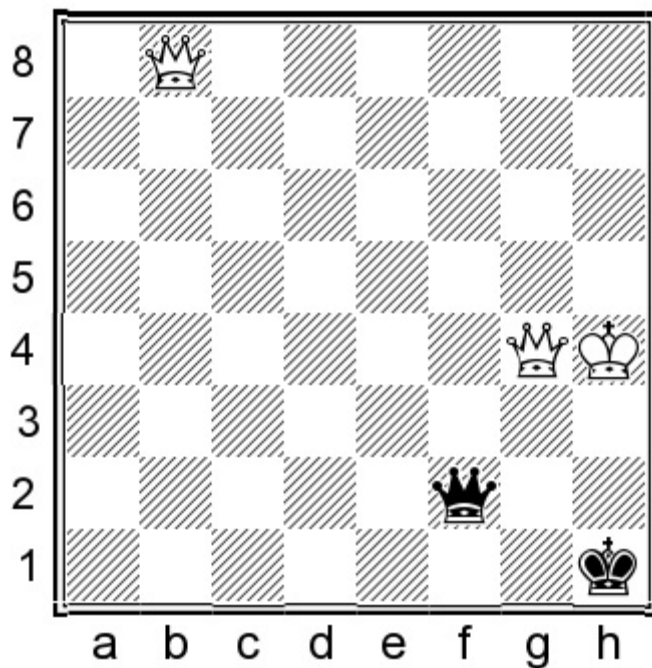
70. ♖g4

70. ♔h4 ♖g4+=

70... ♖e3+ 71. ♔h4

71. ♖bg3 doesn't help. 71... ♖h6+ 72. ♖4h4 ♖e6+ 73. ♖gg4 ♖e3+ 74. ♖hg3 ♖h6+ 75. ♖4h4 ♖e6+ 76. ♖gg4 ♖e3+ 77. ♖hg3 ♖h6+ 78. ♖4h4 ♖e6+=

71... ♖f2+!



Position after: 71... ♖f2+!

72. ♔h5

A) 72. ♔g5 ♖f6+=

B) 72. ♖bg3 ♖f6+ 73. ♖g5 ♖h6+! =

72... ♖f7+! 73. ♖g6

73. ♔h6 ♖g7+=

73... ♖f3+! 74. ♔g5

74. ♔h6 ♚f4+=

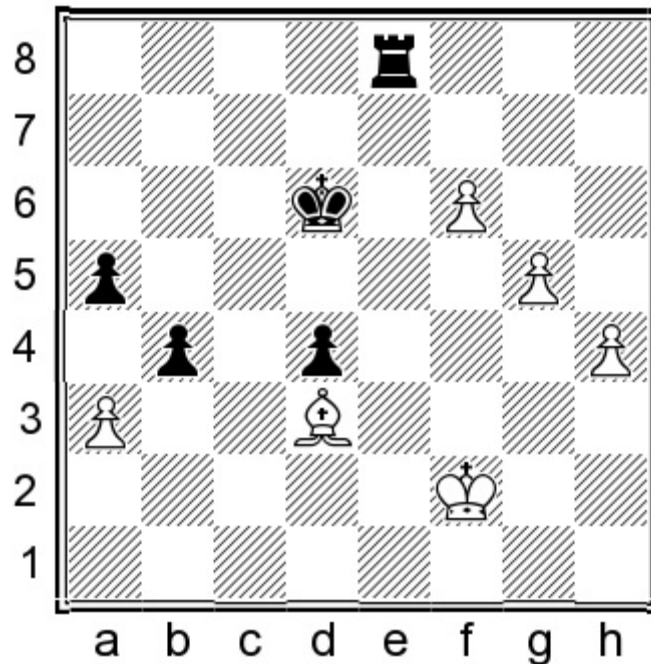
74... ♚g3+!=

Unbelievable - such patterns can only occur in very concrete setups!

½-½

Example 7

From Artemiev – Paravyan
Skopje 2019



White to move

White's passed pawns are very strong and if the king can support them, then victory will be secured. However, it is necessary to decide whether or not to exchange the last remaining queenside pawn.

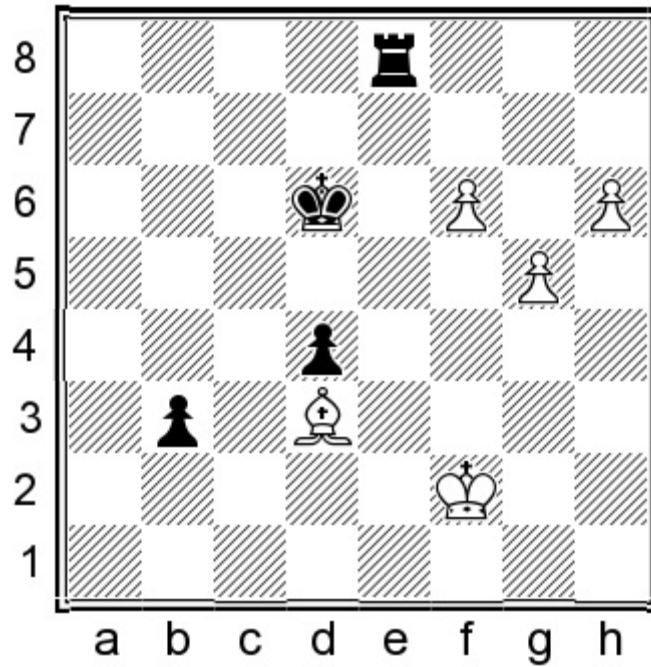
43.a4?

It is clear that White's aim is to preserve the pawn, so that the opponent will not be allowed to execute the idea of sacrificing the rook for two pawns, leaving White, albeit with an extra bishop, with the h-pawn. Furthermore, after 43.axb4, it is necessary to calculate 43...a4. However, all this human "logic" only encourages the possibility of a grave mistake.

It was correct not to avoid the exchange. 43.axb4

A) 43...a4 44.♙c4! a3 [44...♔e5 45.♔e2+-] 45.g6+-

B) 43...axb4 44.h5 b3 45.h6



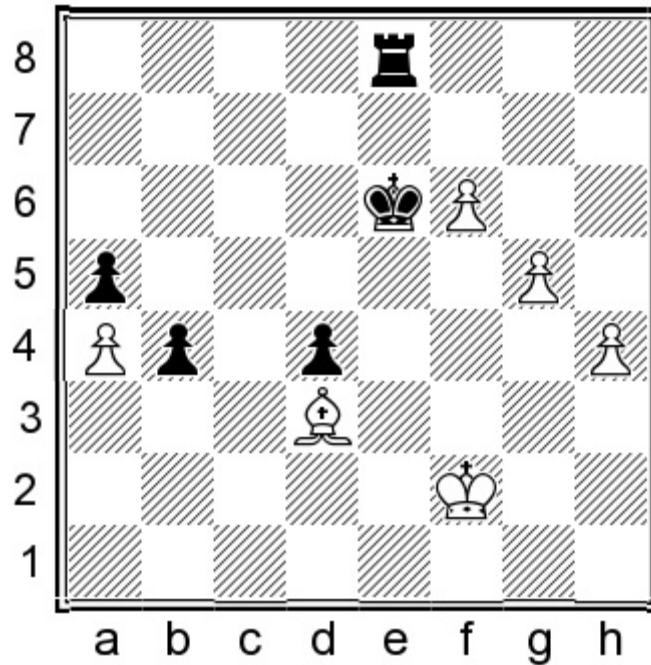
Position after: 45.h6

45...♔e5 [Or 45...b2 46.h7 ♔e5 47.♔f3+–] 46.♔f3 The king enters the game and Black's last chance, 46...♖f8 with the idea of sacrificing the rook for two pawns, is easily stopped by playing 47.h7+–. The white king arrives via h5 to aid the pawns in their route to promotion.

43.a4? b3?

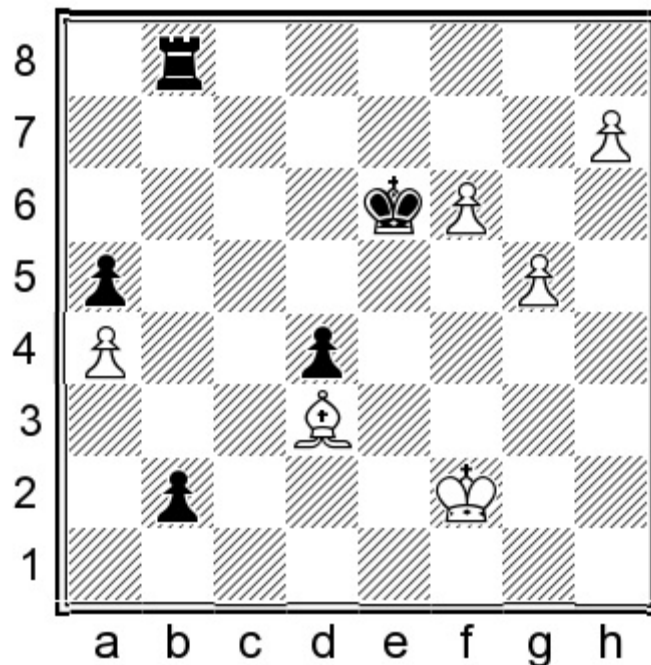
Again, the seemingly logical move turns out to be a serious mistake, it was necessary to prevent the white king from reaching the pawns - but how?

43...♔e6



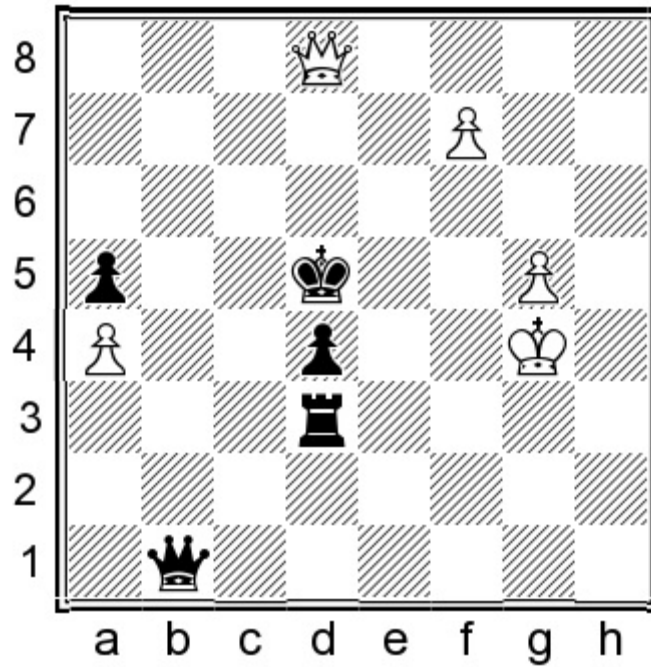
Position after: 43...Ke6

44.h5 [44.Kf3 b3 45.h5 b2 46.h6 Rb8 47.h7 Rb3=; 44.Qc4+ Kf5 45.f7 Rd8 46.Qb5 Ke6 47.Qe8 Ke7 48.h5 Rxe8=] 44...Rb8!! [44...b3? 45.Qc4+ Kf5 46.f7+-] 45.h6 b3 46.h7 b2



Position after: 46...b2

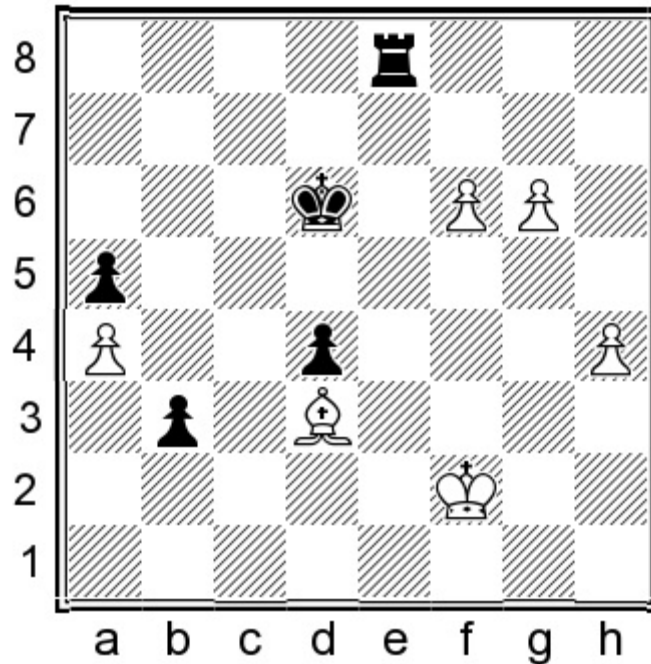
47.Ke2 It seems as though Black is in zugzwang. Any movement by the king puts him in a poor position. Black, once again, finds the only move. [Now if 47.Kf3 Rb3!=.] 47...Rc8! [47...Ke5? 48.Kf3 Rb3 49.h8=Q Rxd3+ 50.Kg4 b1=Q 51.f7+ Kd5 52.Qd8+!



Position after: 52. ♔d8+!

52...♔c4 53.♕c7+ ♔d5 54.♕d7+ ♔c4 55.♕c6+-; 47...♔f7? 48.♔f3 ♖b3 49.♔e4 ♖xd3 50.h8=♕ ♖e3+ 51.♔d5 b1=♕ 52.♕g7+ ♔e8 53.f7+-] 48.♔d2 ♖b8=

44.g6+-

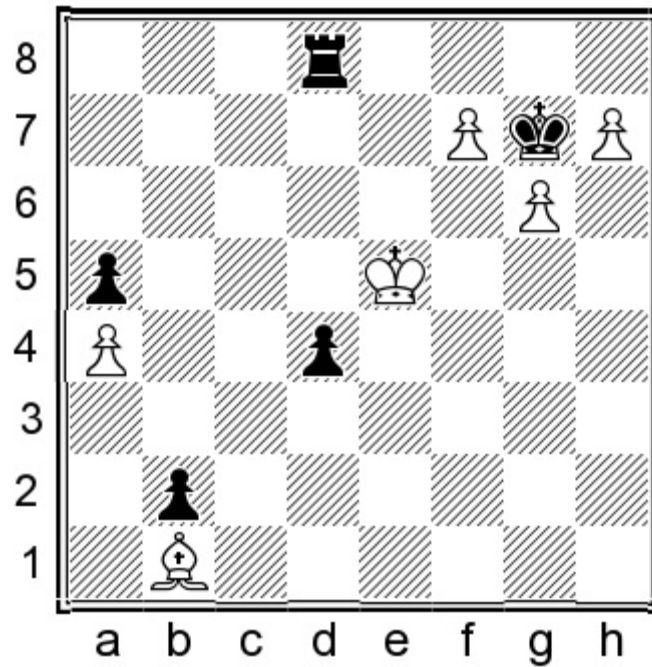


Position after: 44.g6+-

44...♔e6 45.f7 ♖b8 46.h5 ♔f6 47.h6 b2 48.♔f3

With far-advanced pawns and the support of the king, the victory is not difficult to attain.

48...♖d8 49.♔g4 ♜c8 50.h7 ♜d8 51.♕h5 ♔g7 52.♕g5 ♜d5+ 53.♕g4 ♜d8 54.♕f5 ♜c8 55.♕e6 ♜b8 56.♕e5 ♜d8 57.♙b1



Position after: 57.♙b1

Black cannot hold onto his own pawns.

57...♜b8

A) 57...♕h8 58.♕f6+-

B) 57...d3 58.♙xd3+-

58.♕xd4 ♜b4+ 59.♕c5 ♜h4 60.♕b5 ♜h5+ 61.♕c4 ♜h3 62.♙e4 ♕f8 63.♙f5 ♜h2 64.♕c3 ♔g7 65.♙c2

And the b2-pawn also falls.

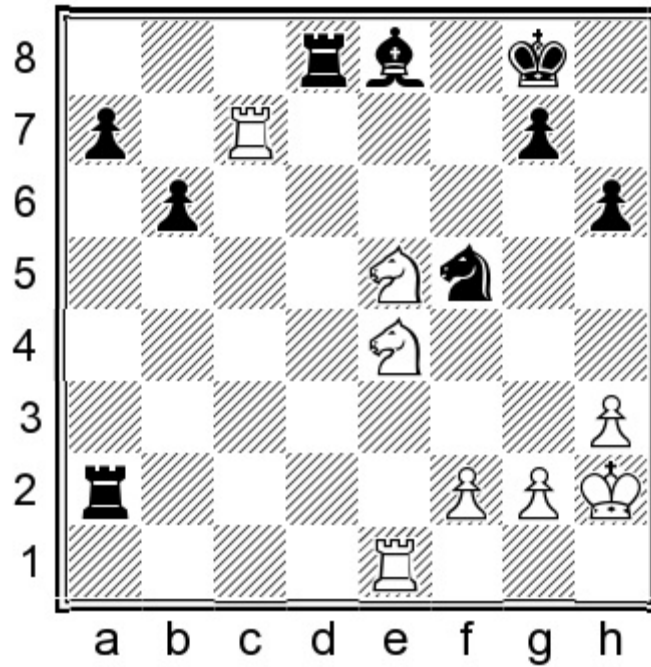
65...♜h4 66.♕xb2 ♜h3 67.♙f5 ♜h5 68.♙d3 ♜h4 69.♕c3 ♜f4 70.♙e4 ♜h4 71.♕d4 ♜h5 72.♕c4

1-0

Example 8

From Kramnik – Giri

Dortmund 2018

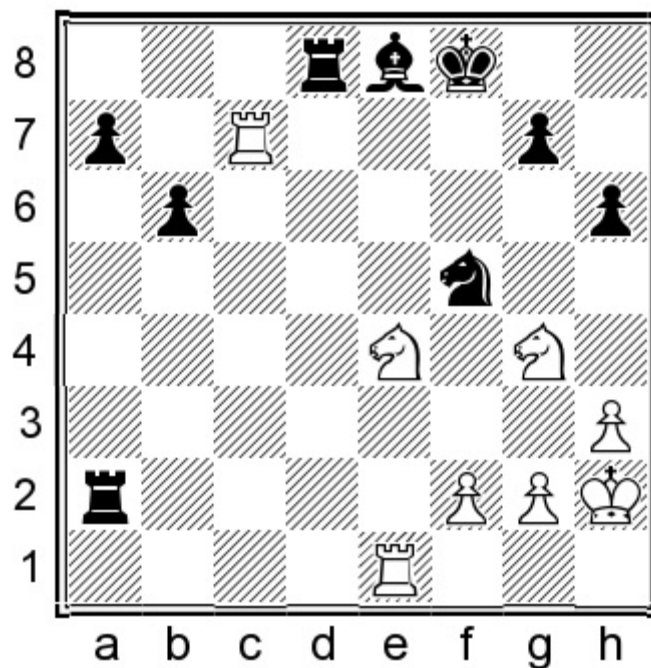


White to move

35. ♖f3!

At first sight, this appears to be a concession. However, White clears the e-file for his rook and prepares to disturb the black knight with g2-g4, which previously did not make sense since the knight could go to d4.

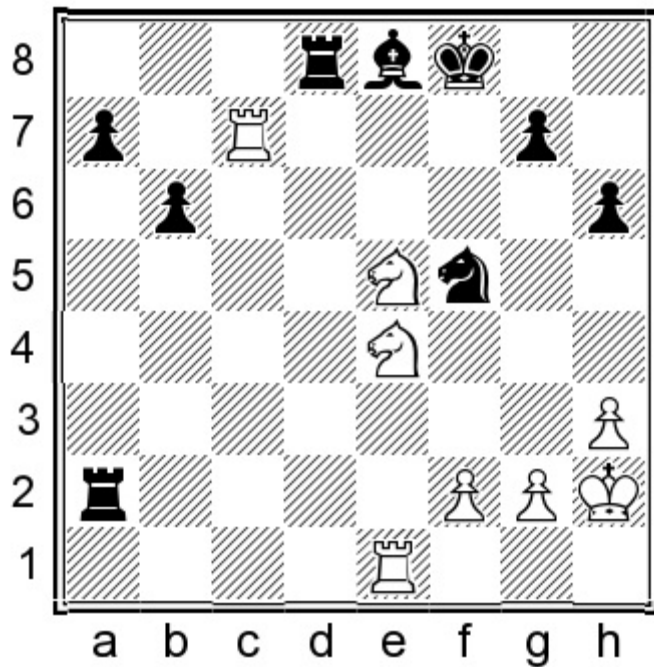
A) In the game, White tried to draw the game by repetition through repeatedly checking the black king by 35. ♖g4?!, but after the prophylactic 35... ♔f8



Position after: 35... ♖f8

he found himself in a difficult situation and again made a mistake [35...a5? 36. ♘ef6+ gxf6 37. ♘xf6+ ♖f8 38. ♘h7+ ♖g8 39. ♘f6+=]

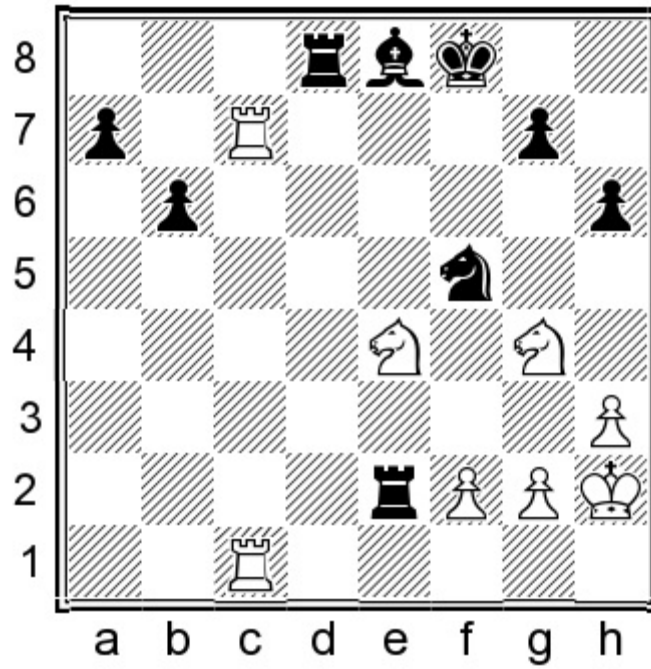
A1) Here, it was necessary to admit his previous mistake and return the knight to the center with 36. ♘e5! ♖.



Position after: 36. ♘e5! ♖

In this case, the active position of the white pieces still hinders the movement of Black's past pawns and White retains excellent drawing chances, for example: 36...a5?! 37. ♖b7! b5 38. ♘c5! ♖g8 39. ♘e6=.

A2) 36. ♖ec1? ♖e2-+

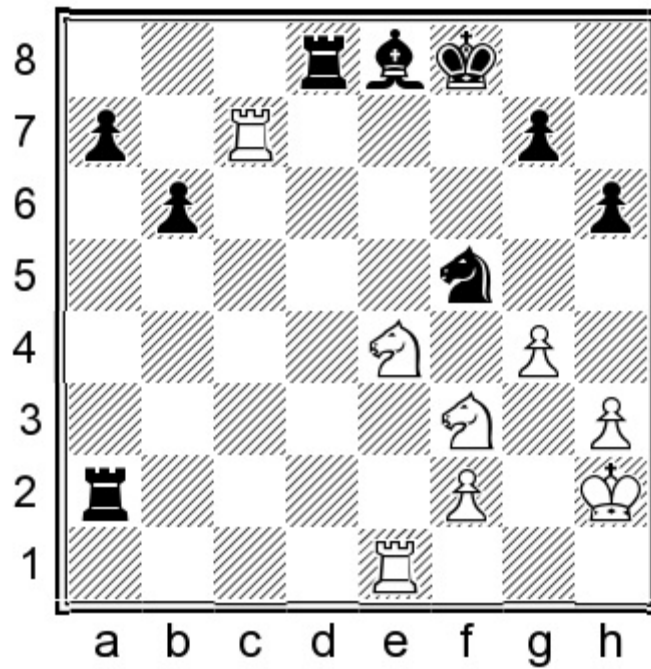


Position after: 36...Re2-+

And Black later won: 0-1 (64).

B) 35. Rb7 Qf8

35. Nf3! Qf8 36. g4



Position after: 36. g4

36... Ra3

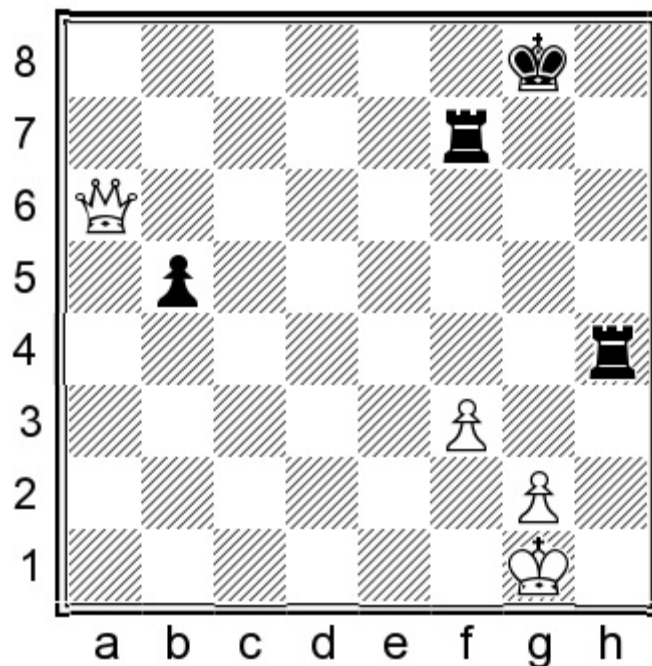
36...♖d4? 37.♗xd4 ♜xd4 38.♞c8 ♔f7 39.♞xe8! ♕xe8 40.♗c3±

37.♕g2 ♗d4 38.♗xd4 ♞xd4 39.♗c5! bxc5 40.♞c8=

Example 9

From Galliamova – Shuvalova

Satka 2018

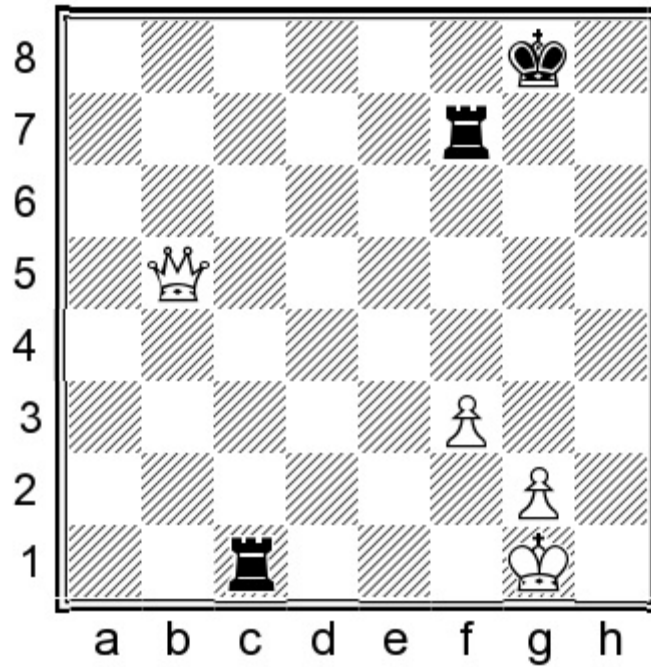


Black to move

61...b4?

It is human nature to try to hold on to something. In life it may be people, habits, comfort, power, happiness, youth, etc... Sometimes people do not notice the point at which it becomes ridiculous. However, we will not mock the natural last move made by Black, although it does lead to a losing position.

A) Rescue came from active defense! 61...♞c4!! 62.♞xb5 [62.♞g6+ ♔f8! 63.♞d6+ ♔g7 64.♞d5 ♔f8!?=] 62...♞c1+



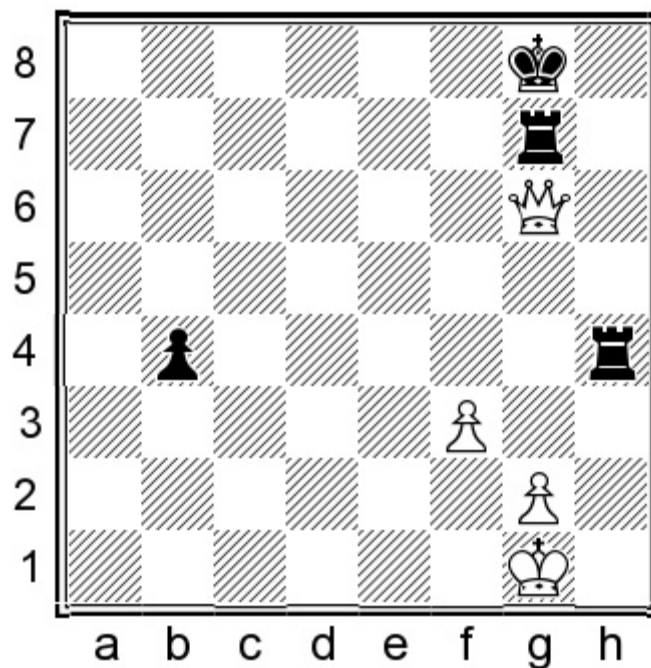
Position after: 62...Rc1+

63.♔h2 [63.♔f2 ♖c2+=] 63...♖h7+ 64.♔g3 ♖g7+ 65.♔f4 ♖xg2= Surprisingly, the black rooks stay out of the white queen's reach.

B) 61...♖b4? 62.♙g6+ ♖g7 63.♙e8+ ♔h7 64.♙e5+-

C) 61...♖d4? 62.♙xb5 ♖d1+ 63.♔f2 ♖d2+ 64.♔f1+-

61...b4? 62.♙g6+ ♖g7



Position after: 62...♖g7

63.♞e6+

63.♞d6!? ♜gh7 64.♞d8+ ♔g7 65.g4+–

63...♔h8 64.♞f6 ♜h5 65.♞f8+ ♔h7 66.♞xb4+–

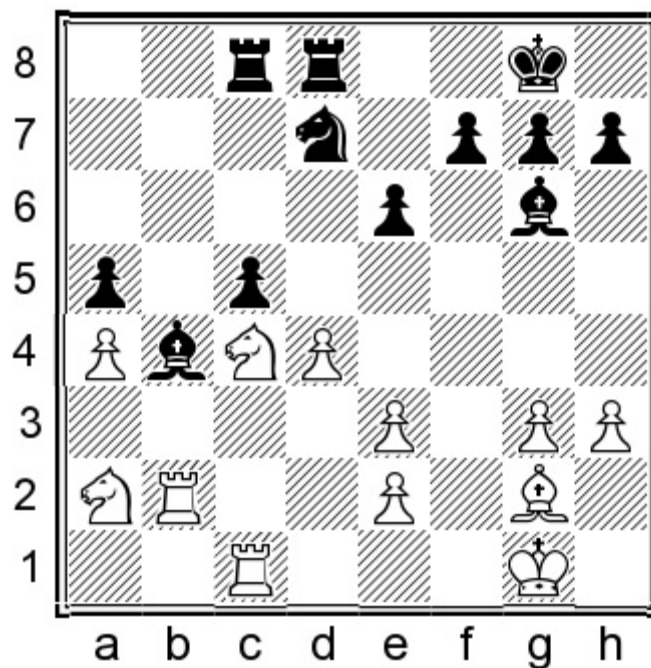
The doomed pawn falls and White convincingly converted the advantage.

1-0 (101)

Example 10

From Matlakov – Giri

Wijk aan Zee 2018



White to move

White's position does not look overwhelming, but strangely enough his advantage is considerable. Here, it was necessary to make a quiet, subtle move.

25.♞d1!±

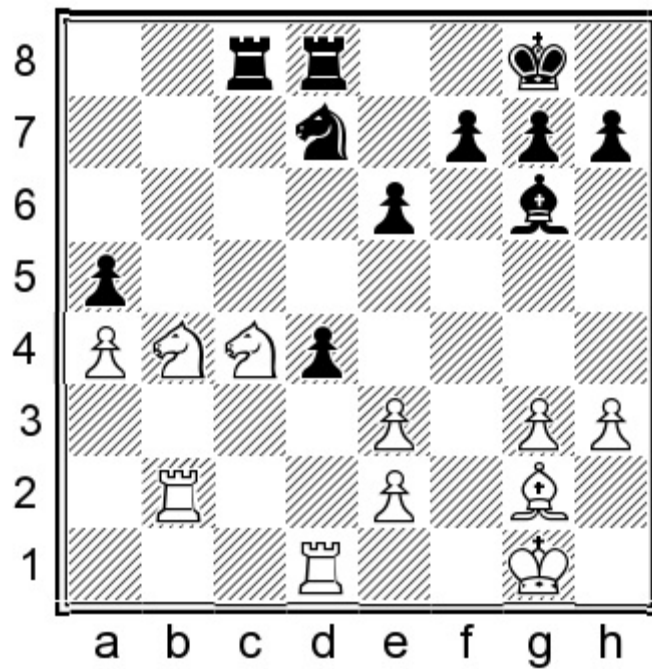
It turns out that Black cannot solve the problem of the a-pawn in standard fashion, the appearance of a White passed pawn is inevitable.

White was not in time with «active play». 25.♞d6? ♜a3 26.♞xc8 ♜xb2 27.♞e7+ ♔f8 28.♞xg6+ hxg6 0-1 (39).

25.♞d1!± cxd4

25...♘f6 26.♘xb4 axb4 27.a5+-

26.♘xb4

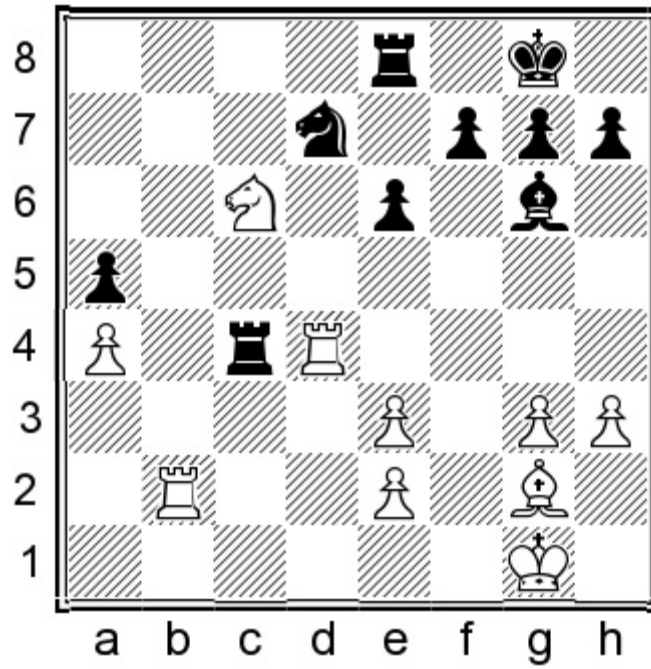


Position after: 26.♘xb4

26...♖xc4

26...axb4 27.♖xb4 d3 28.exd3 ♘c5 29.♘e5 ♘xd3 30.♘xd3 ♖xd3 31.♖a1±

27.♘c6 ♖e8 28.♖xd4



Position after: 28. ♖xd4

28... ♖c1+

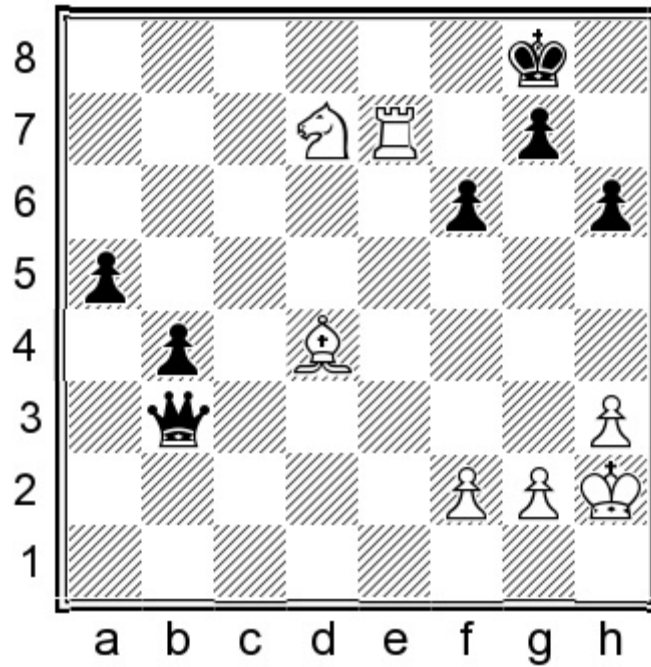
28... ♖xd4 29. exd4+-

29. ♔h2 ♘c5 30. ♘xa5 e5 31. ♖db4 ♖a1 32. ♙c6±

Example 11

From Laznicka – Bologan

Poikovsky 2015



White to move

The black pawns hurry to become queens. White can only counter this by attacking the black king. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to establish coordination between the pieces.

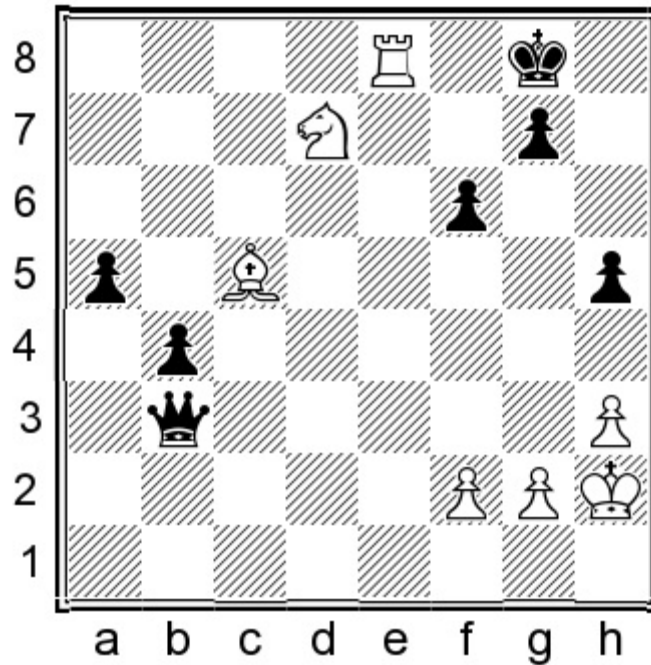
42.♔c5!!

In the game, White was unable to find this and eventually lost. 42.♘c5?! ♕d5! 43.♖d7 [43.♘e6 ♕d6+-+] 43...♗c4 44.♔e3 b3 45.♖b7 a4+- 0-1 (62).

42.♔c5!! h5!?

42...a4 43.♖e8+ ♔f7 44.♖e7+ ♔g8 [44...♔g6? 45.♘f8+-] 45.♖e8+=

43.♖e8+



Position after: 43. ♖e8+

43...♔h7

43...♔f7 44. ♖e7+ ♔g6 45.g4! Making the black king less comfortable. 45...hxg4 46.hxg4 ♔g5
47. ♖xg7+ ♔f4 48. ♗xf6 ♖c4 49. ♗d7=

44. ♗f8+!

But not 44. ♖e7? ♖c3! [44...♔g6? 45.g4=] 45. ♗f8+ ♔g8 46. ♗e6 b3 47. ♗d4 ♖c6! 48. ♖xg7+ ♔h8
49. ♗xf6 ♖xe6 50. ♗c3 ♖d6+ 51.g3 ♖d3 52. ♗f6 ♖f1-+.

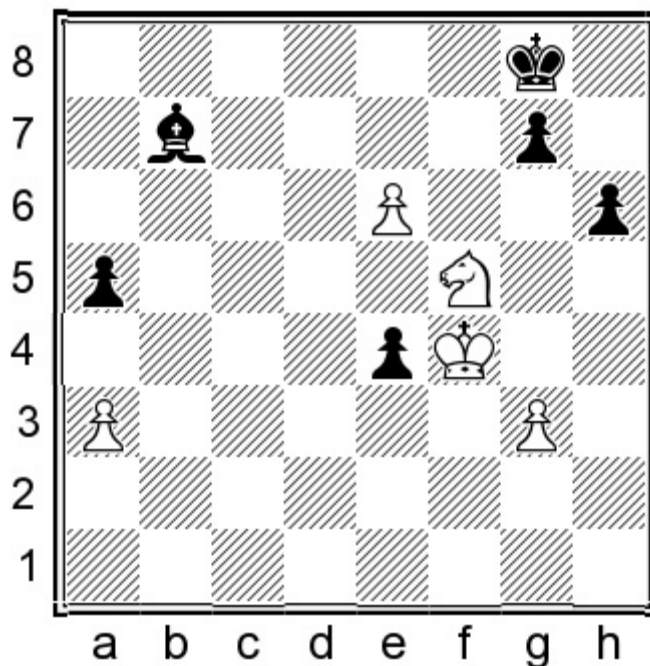
44...♔g8

44...♔h6?? 45. ♗e3+ g5 46. ♖e7+-

45. ♗e6+ ♔h7 46. ♗f8+=

Example 12

From Lu Shanglei – Inarkiev
China 2015

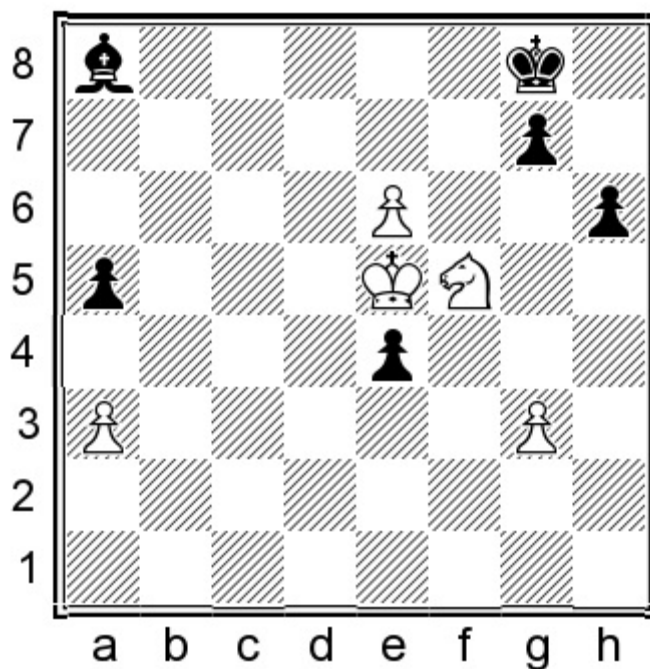


Black to move

The surest antidote to White's passed pawn was the creation of one of his own...

49...h5!!

Not devoid of logic, Black preliminarily removed the bishop from the knight's reach, but White found another way to use the strength of his passed pawn. 49...♖a8? 50.♔e5!+-



Position after: 50.♔e5!+-

50...g6 [50...♖f8 51.♗d6+-] 51.♘xh6+ ♖f8 52.♗d6 e3 53.e7+ ♖e8 54.♘g4 ♖f7 55.♘xe3 ♗f3 56.♗d7
 And Black gave up. 1-0

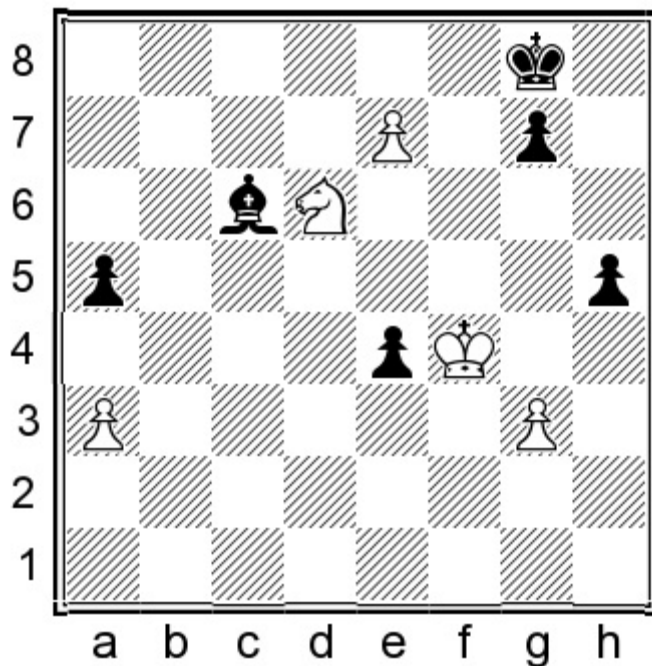
49...h5!! 50.e7

A) 50.♖e3 g5=

B) 50.♖g5 ♖f8 51.♖xh5 ♗d5 52.e7+ ♖f7=

C) 50.♖e5 g6 51.♘e3 ♗c6=

50...♗c6 51.♘d6



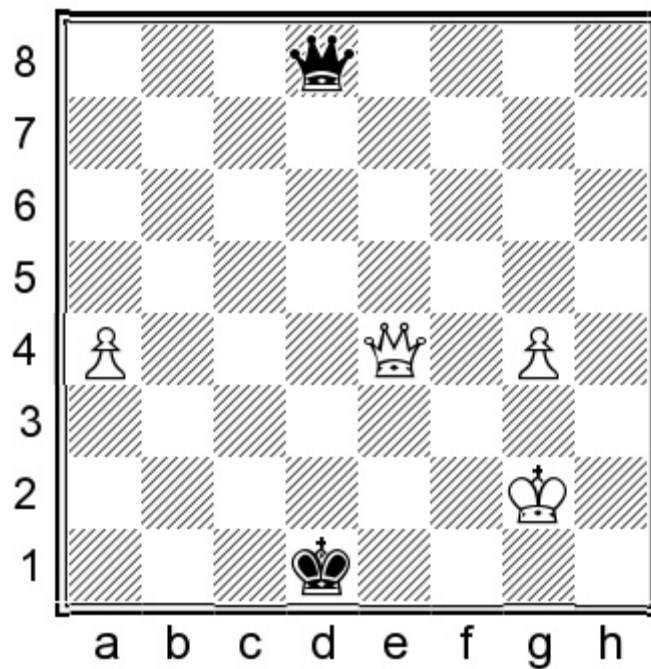
Position after: 51.♘d6

51...g5+! 52.♖e3 h4 53.e8=♚+ ♗xe8 54.♘xe8 hxg3 55.♘f6+ ♖f7 56.♘xe4 g2 57.♖f2 ♖e6=

Chapter 3 Exercises

1

Najer, E. – Lomasov, S.



□ 61. ♖c4 or 61. ♖f4?

Show/Hide Solution

1

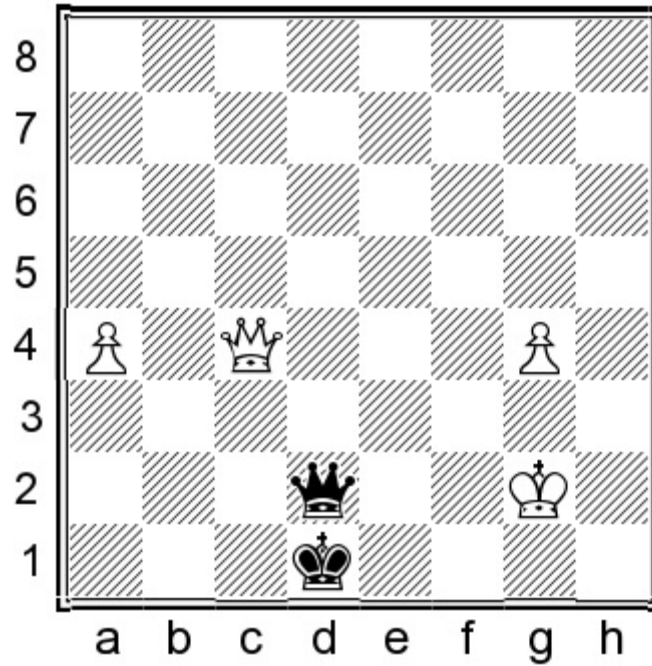
In this position virtually any “normal” move would have won, but White was careless and continued...

61. ♖c4?

This gave Black an unexpected chance to draw, which he made use of.

61. ♖f4!?+-

61. ♖c4? ♔d2+!

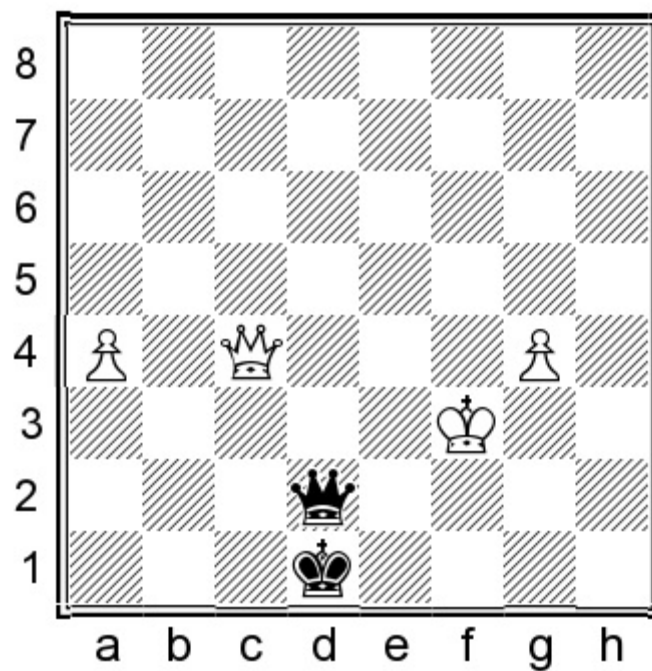


Position after: 61... ♔d2+!

62. ♕f1

62. ♖g3 ♔e3+ 63. ♕h4 ♖h6+=

62... ♔e1+ 63. ♖g2 ♔d2+ 64. ♕f3



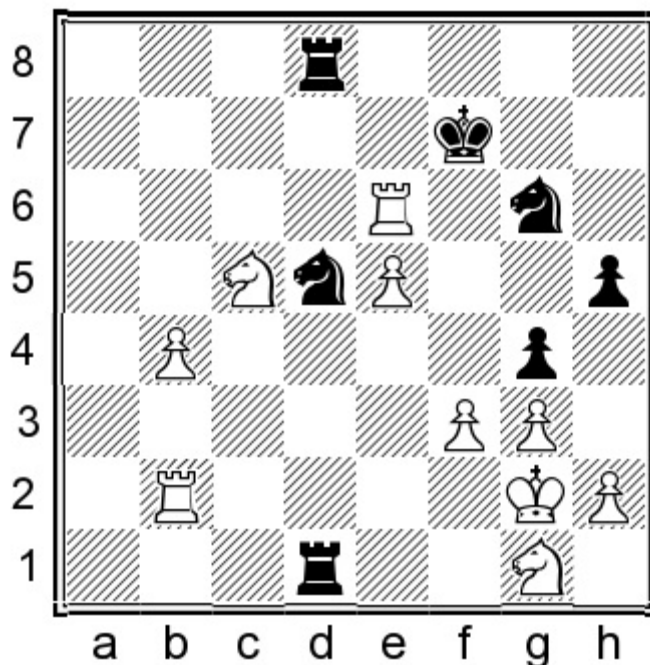
Position after: 64. ♔f3

64... ♚c3+! 65. ♚xc3

Stalemate! ½-½ (65) Najer, E (2670) – Lomasov, S (2553) Moscow 2018.

2

Vocaturo, D. – Kramnik, V.



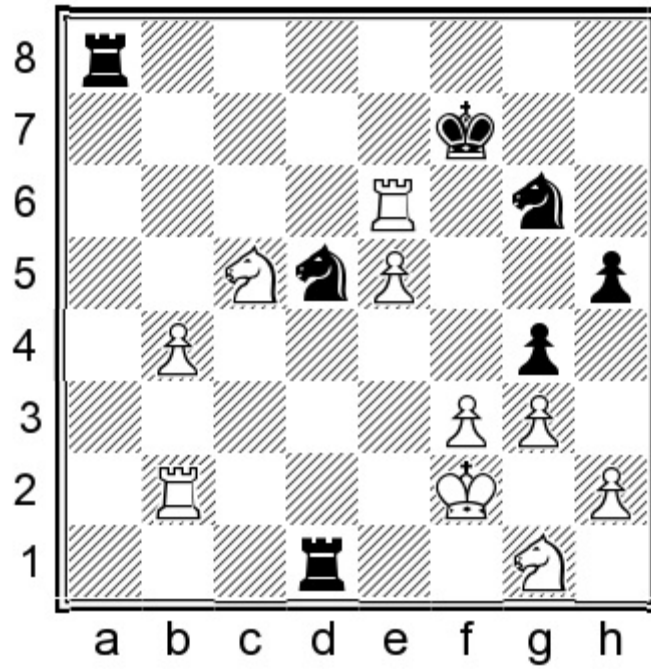
□ White would like to activate his pieces, but he is hindered by the ... ♘f4+ fork. However, one smart move solves both issues - which?

Show/Hide Solution

2

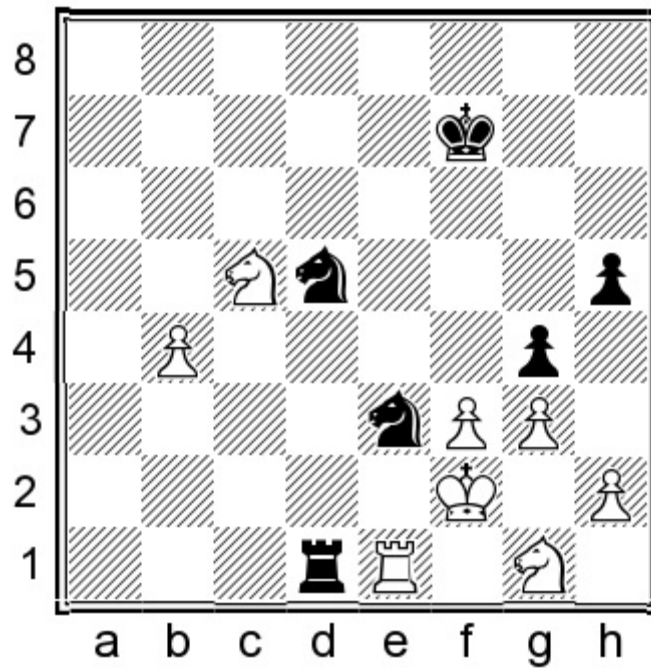
43. ♜a2!+-

The game continued with the logical 43. ♔f2, however after 43... ♜a8! the black pieces became as active as possible, which compensated for the absence of three (!) pawns:



Position after: 43... Ra8!

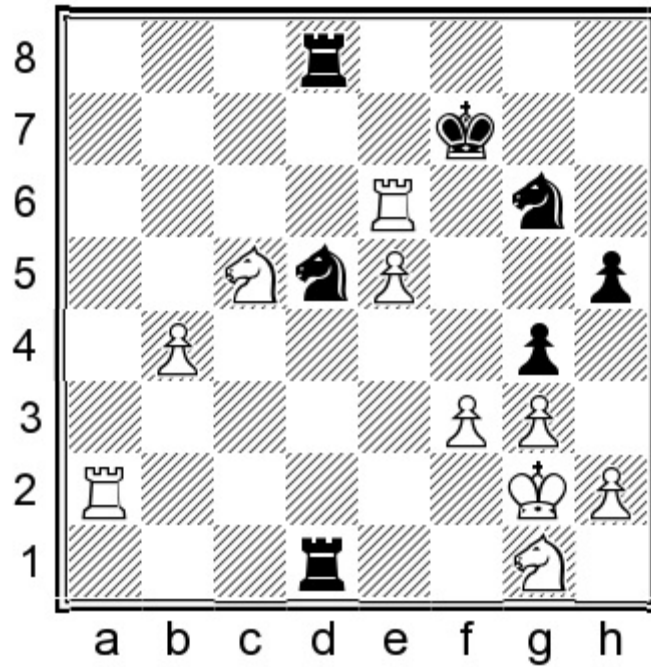
44. Ra6 Rxa6 45. Nxa6 Nxe5 46. Nc5 Nc4 47. Re2 Nce3 48. Re1



Position after: 48. Re1

48... Rd2+ 49. Re2 Rd1 50. Re1 Rd2+ 51. Re2 1/2-1/2 Vocaturo, D (2597) – Kramnik, V (2796) Doha 2015.

43. Ra2!+-



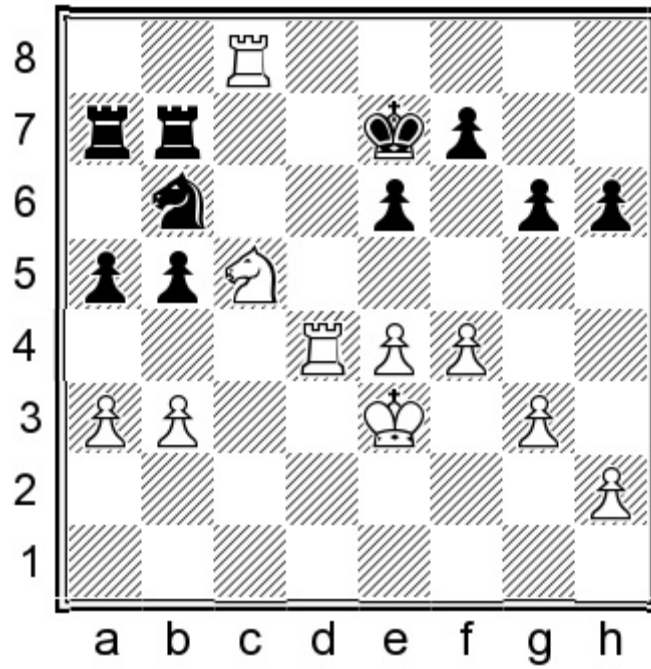
Position after: 43. ♖a2!+-

Back to the main line. The white rook enters the fight with impact, all the while fending off Black's threats. It is important to note that the ...♘f4 fork doesn't work anymore:

43...♘df4+ 44.gxf4 ♘xf4+ 45.♕f2 ♘xe6 46.♖a7++-

3

Ding, L. – So, W.



□ Find a crushing move for White.

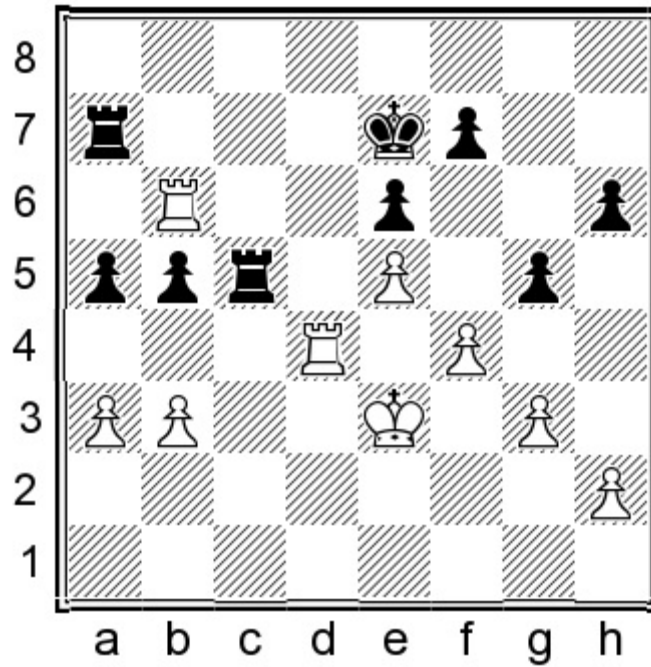
Show/Hide Solution

3

1. ♖h8!

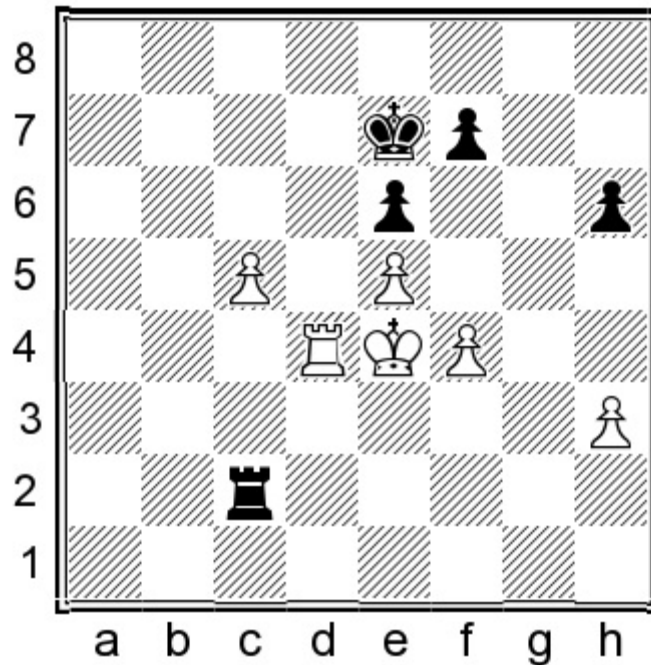
The winning move.

The game continued 1. ♖c6 ♜c7 □ 2. ♖xb6 ♜xc5 3. e5 g5 ♞



Position after: 3...g5

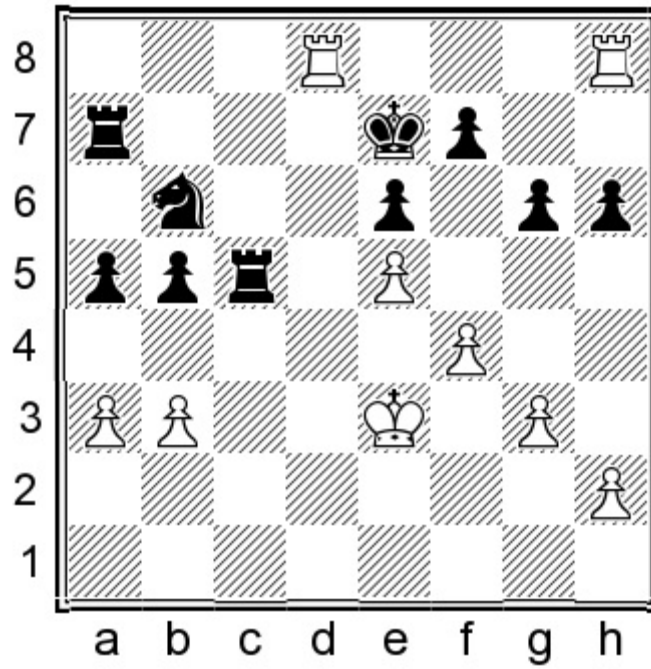
4.♖d3 gxf4+ 5.gxf4 ♖c2 6.h3 ♖a2 7.b4 axb4 8.axb4 ♖h2 9.♕e4 ♖c7 10.♖xb5 ♖c4+ 11.♖d4 ♖c7 12.♖c5 ♖xc5 13.bxc5 ♖c2=



Position after: 13...♖c2=

and a draw was agreed shortly after: ½-½ (58) Ding Liren (2771) – So, W (2792) Tbilisi 2017.

1.♖h8! ♖c7 2.♖dd8! ♖xc5 3.e5



Position after: 3.e5

3...f5□

3...♞d5+ 4.♔d4+-

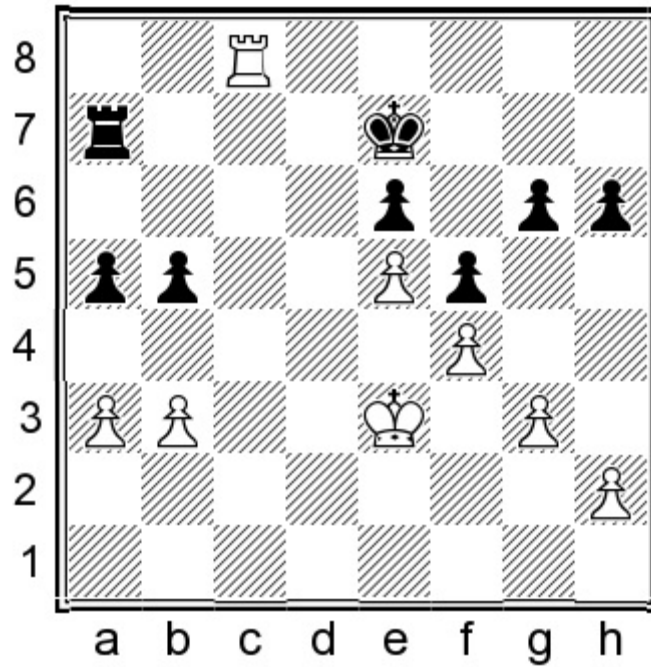
4.♞b8!

In view of the mate threat, Black has to give back the piece and enter a difficult rook endgame.

4...♞c8

4...♞d5+ 5.♔d4+-

5.♞bxc8 ♞xc8 6.♞xc8+-

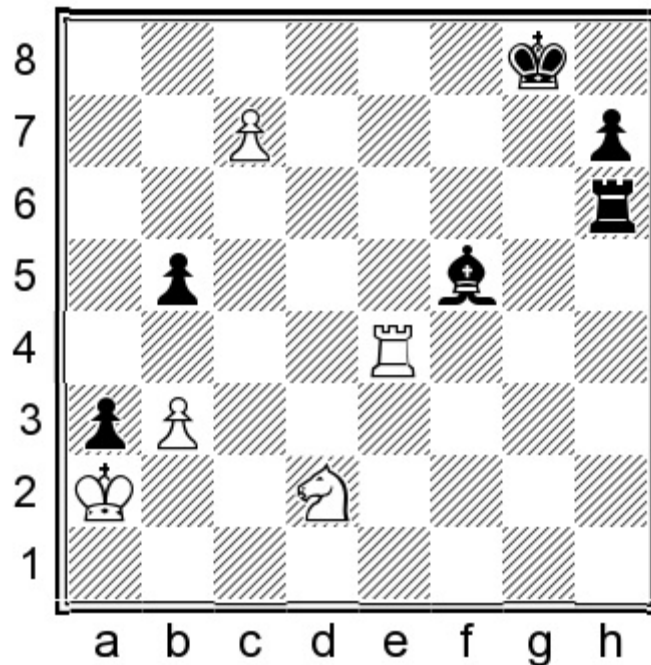


Position after: 6. ♖xc8+-

Several of the black pawns are weak, and White is threatening ♖b8 or ♖h8, for example.

4

Carlsen, M. – Solak, D.



□ If White can coordinate his pieces, the c7-pawn will bring him victory. How can he achieve this?

4

1. ♖f3!

A simple, but elegant tactic that decided the outcome of the battle.

1... ♜e5? would have allowed Black to escape with 1... ♜h2 2. ♜xf5 ♜xd2+ 3. ♔xa3 ♜c2=.

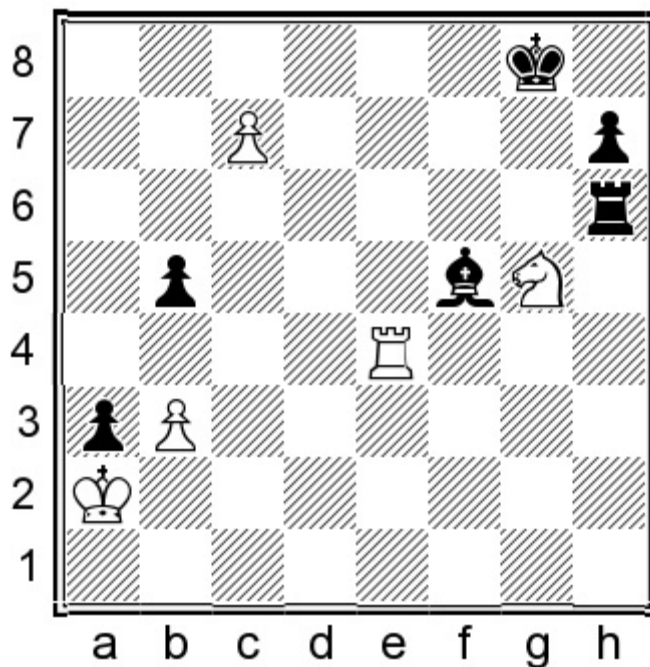
1. ♖f3! ♜h3

1... ♜c6 2. ♖d4!+- . The knight will always find something to fork.

2. ♖g5!

2. ♔xa3!/? should also win.

2... ♜f5



Position after: 2... ♜f5

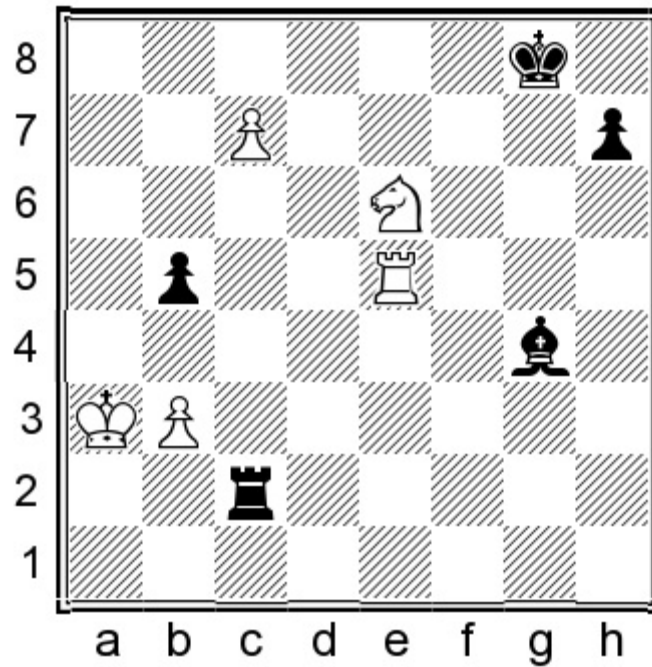
3. ♜e5

White doesn't rush to take the bishop: 3. ♜e8+? ♔g7 4. c8=♚? ♜xc8 5. ♜xc8 b4! =.

3... ♜g4

3...♔d7?! 4.♖e8+ ♕g7 5.♖e7+-

4.♘e6! ♖h2+ 5.♕xa3 ♖c2



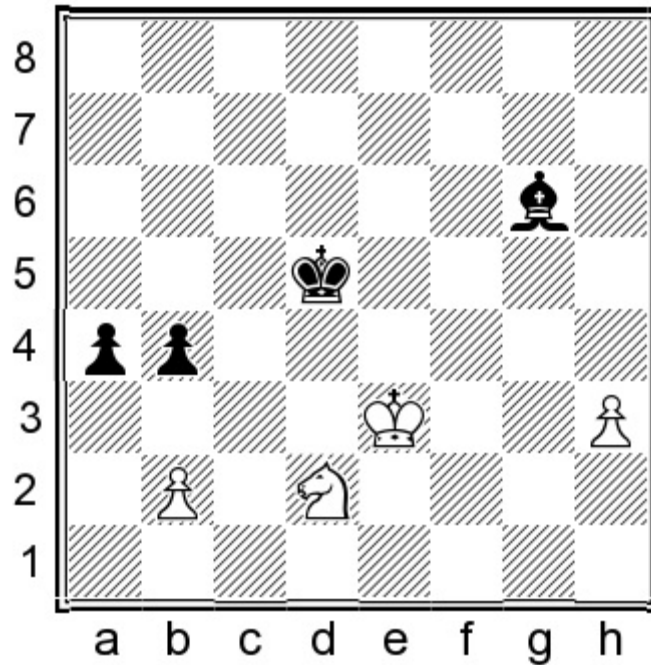
Position after: 5...♖c2

6.♖g5+ ♕f7 7.♘d4! ♖xc7 8.♖xg4+-

1-0 (60) Carlsen, M (2877) – Solak, D (2632) Tromso 2014.

5

Fedoseev, V. – Carlsen, M.



□ Despite the limited material remaining and the “wrong” corner for the black bishop, White still needs to be alert. Find the only move!

Show/Hide Solution

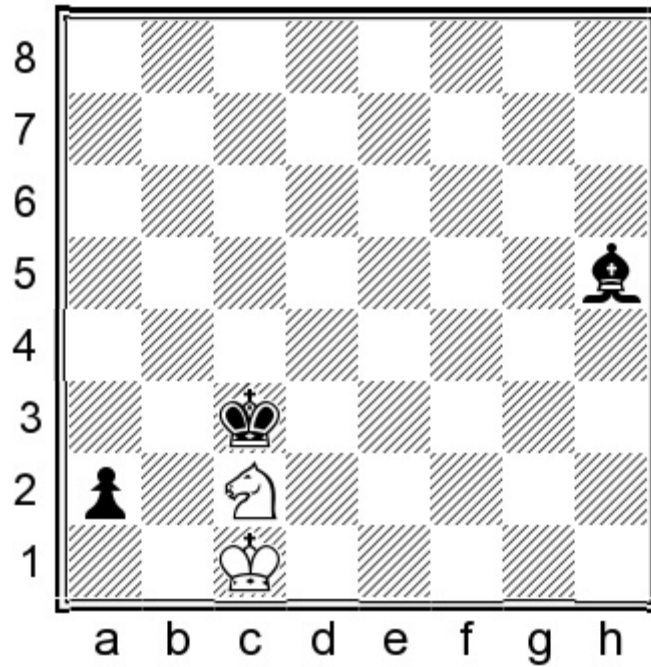
5

74. ♖b3! =

The knight’s desire to occupy the c1-square, from where it blocks the passed a-pawn, is so great that it makes it untouchable for the time being.

In the game, White could not find the one and only solution for a draw and made a decisive mistake.

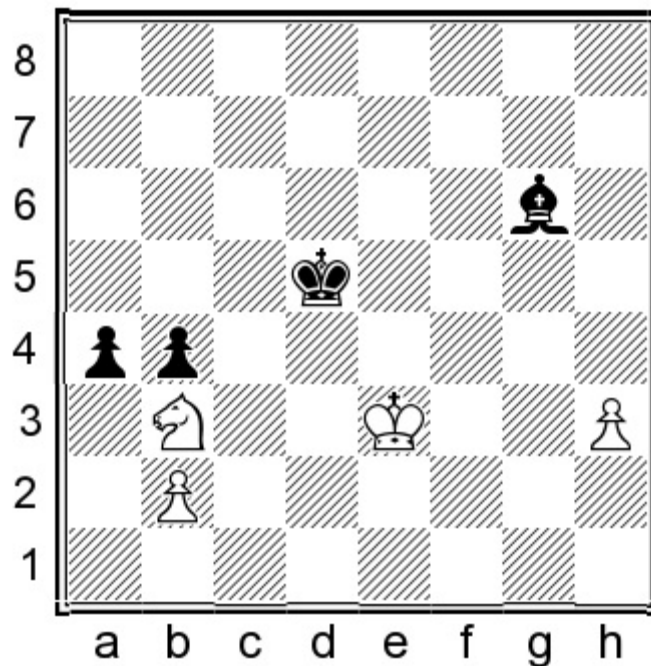
74. ♕e2? a3 75. bxa3 bxa3 76. ♕d1 a2 77. ♖b3 ♕c4 78. ♖a1 ♕c3 79. ♕c1 ♖f5 80. h4 ♖g6 81. h5 ♖xh5 82. ♖c2



Position after: 82. ♖c2

It may seem that the invulnerability of the white knight saves him from defeat, but the following maneuver from Black came as an unwelcome shock: 82...♙e8! 83.♖a1 ♙a4 84.♖c2 ♗b3! 85.♖a1+ ♗a3—+ 0-1 Fedoseev, V (2718) – Carlsen, M (2837) Riyadh 2017. White actually resigned one move earlier.

74. ♖b3!=



Position after: 74. ♖b3!=

74...axb3

A) 74...♖h7 75.h4 ♗g6 76.♔d2=

B) 74...a3 75.bxa3 bxa3 76.♘c1 ♕c4 77.♔d2 ♗h7 78.h4 ♗g6 79.♘a2 ♕b3 80.♘c3 ♗h7 81.h5 ♗f5 82.h6 ♗h7 83.♘e2 ♕b2 84.♘c3 ♗c2 85.♘d1+=

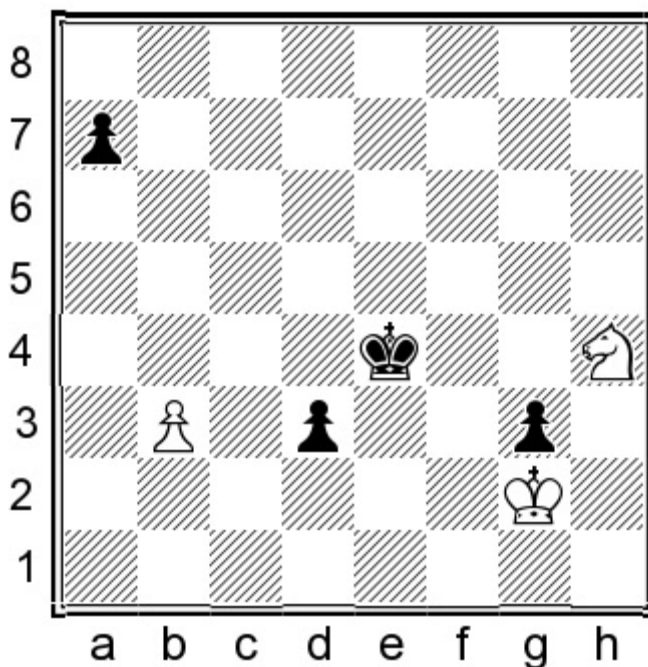
C) 74...♕c4 75.♘d2+=

75.♔d2=

The white king hides within the fortress and Black is not able to make progress.

6

Xiong, J. – Durarbayli, V.



□ 57.♘f3 or 57.♔f1?

Show/Hide Solution

6

57.♘f3?

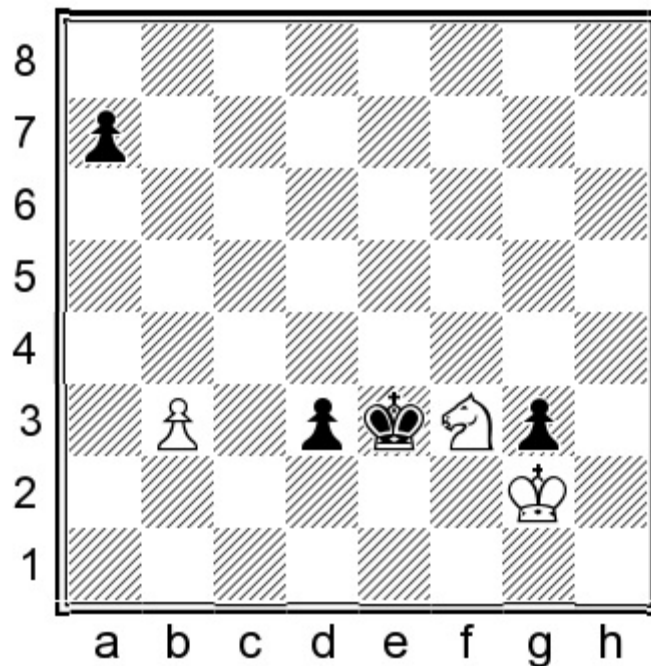
The wrong choice was made in the game.

57.♔f1! a5 58.♔e1=

57. ♖f3? a5!

Now the a-pawn raises the stakes - just in time.

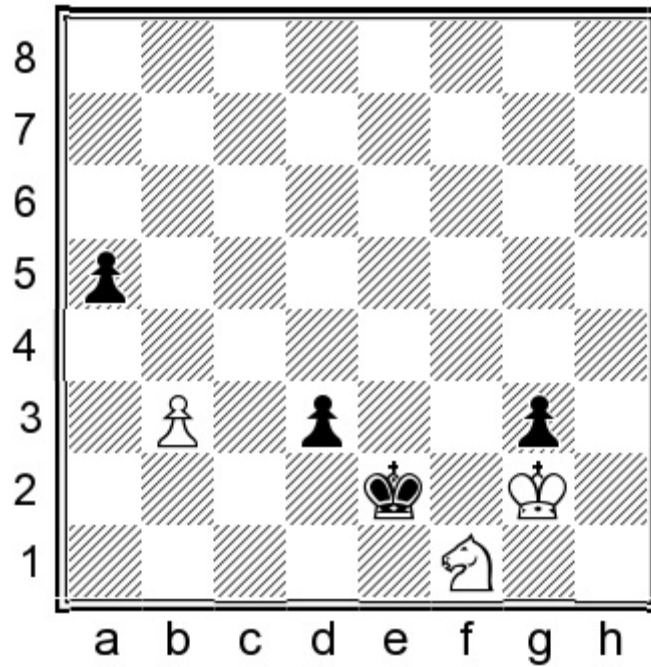
Apparently, White only calculated the linear 57... ♔e3?



Position after: 57... ♔e3?

but then the precise 58.b4! leads to a draw. [But not 58. ♔xg3?? in view of 58... a5!-+.] 58... d2 59. ♖xd2 ♔xd2 60. ♔xg3 ♔c3 61. b5=

58. ♖d2+ ♔e3 59. ♖f1+ ♔e2



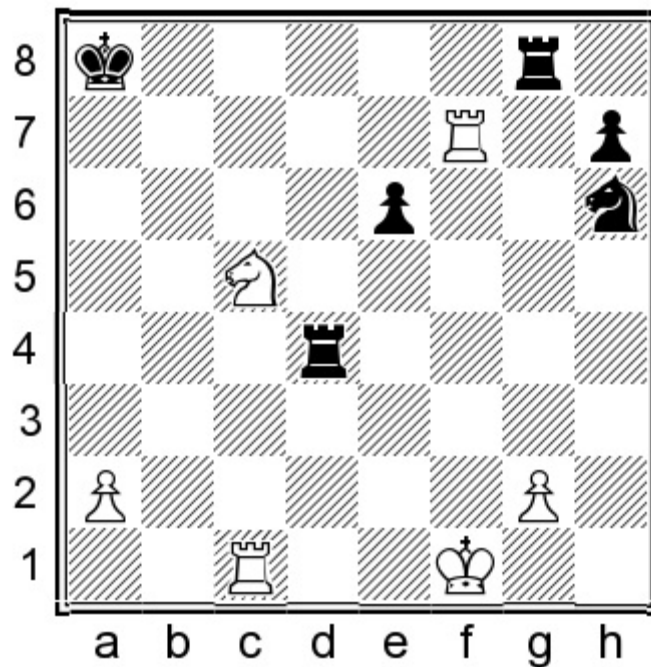
Position after: 59...Ke2

0-1 Xiong, J (2665) – Durarbayli, V (2618) Saint Louis 2018.

White resigned in view of 59...Ke2 60. Nxc3+ Ke1 61. Ne4 d2 62. Nxd2 Qxd2 63. Qf2 Qc3 64. Ke2 Qxb3 65. Qd2 Qb2+.

7

Zawadzka, J. – Guseva, M.



□ Find the killer move for White.

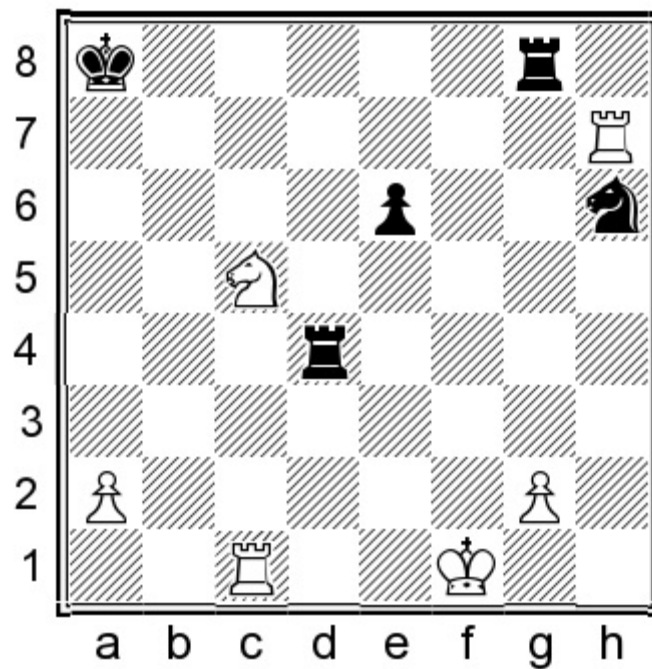
Show/Hide Solution

7

38.♖f3!!

Winning by means of a surprise attack on the king.

38.♖xh7 This natural move turned out not to be the strongest, and leaves Black with hopes of salvation.



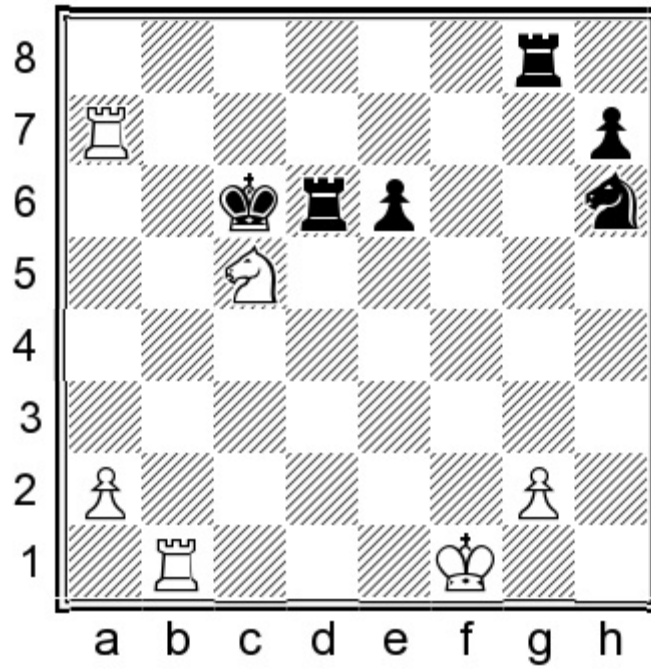
Position after: 38.♖xh7

38...♗f5 [In the game, Black did not seize this opportunity and quickly lost after 38...♖f4+ 39.♔g1 ♗f7? 40.♗xe6 ♖f6 41.♗c7+ ♔b8 42.♗d5+- 1-0 (49) Zawadzka, J (2407) – Guseva, M (2413) Khanty-Mansiysk 2018.] 39.♖c3 ♖g3±

38.♖f3!! ♖d6

38...♖d2 39.♖a3+ ♔b8 40.♖b1+ ♔c7 41.♖a6+-

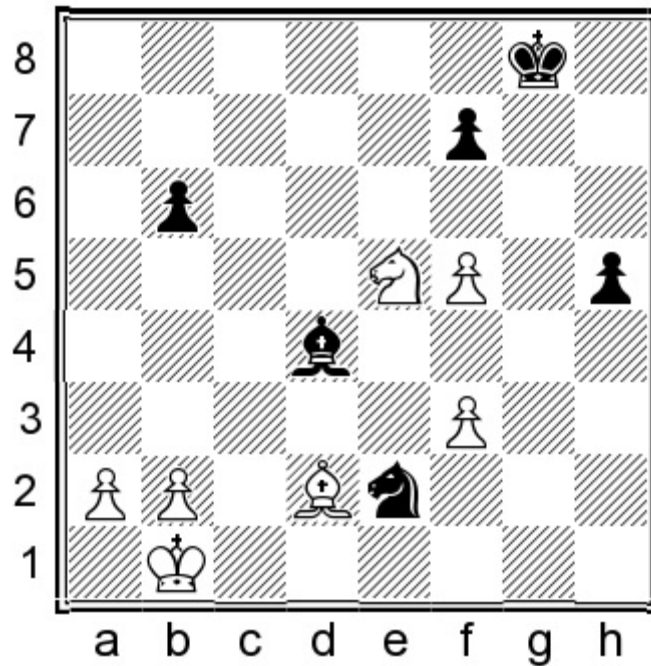
39.♖a3+ ♔b8 40.♖b1+ ♔c7 41.♖a7+ ♔c6



Position after: 41...♔c6

42.♖a6+! ♕xc5 43.♖c1+ ♕d5 44.♖d1+-

8
Muzychuk, M. – Atalik, E.

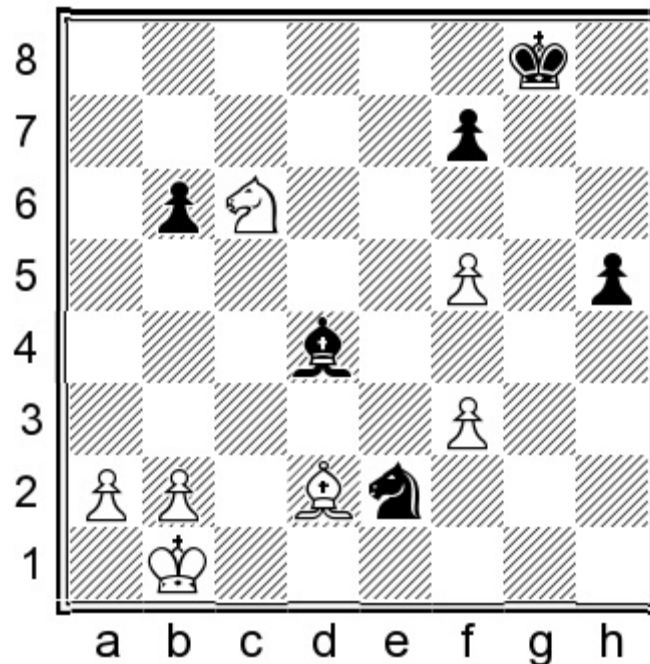


□ White is in danger due to Black's passed h-pawn. Find the best defensive move for White!

37. ♖g4!!

Psychologically, it is difficult to simply place a knight en prise, but this precisely was the only way for White to deal with the main danger: Black's passed pawn.

In the game, White held out as long as possible by giving up material. 37. ♖c6?



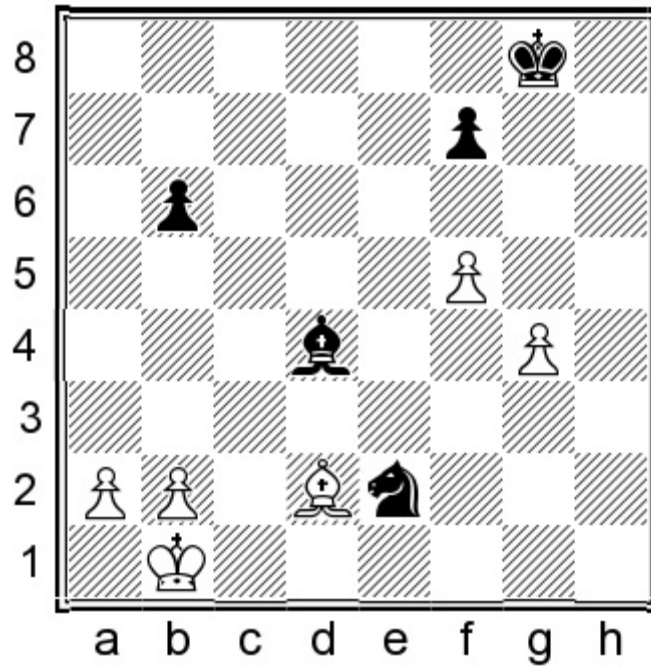
Position after: 37. ♖c6?

37... ♕f6 [An even quicker and simpler win was 37... h4 38. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 39. a4 h3 40. ♕f4 ♔f8 41. b4 ♕e7 42. a5 bxa5 43. bxa5 ♔d7–+.] 38. ♕e1 h4 39. ♕xh4 ♕xh4–+ As a result, White still had to part with the piece, but here the pawns remained doubled: 0-1 (122) Muzychuk, M (2545) – Atalik, E (2445) Khanty-Mansiysk 2018.

37. ♖g4!! hxg4

There is no point in refusing the sacrifice, as the passed pawn would no longer be as dangerous.

38. fxg4

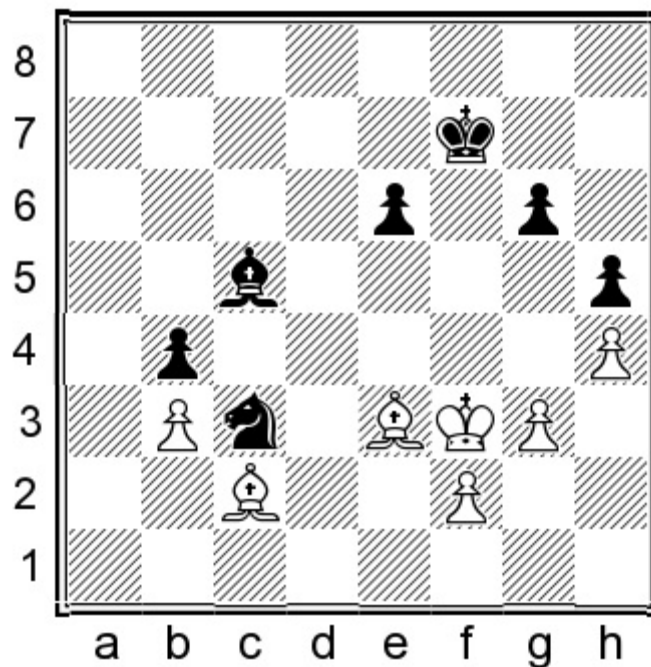


Position after: 38.fxg4

The knight sacrifice brought the white pawns back to life. They can now create a passed pawn on the queenside, and if necessary advance the kingside pawns. The extra black piece, considering the limited material, will not be enough to bring Black victory.

9

Pridorozhni, A. – Timofeev, A.



■ Is it advisable to exchange bishops or is it wiser to retreat?

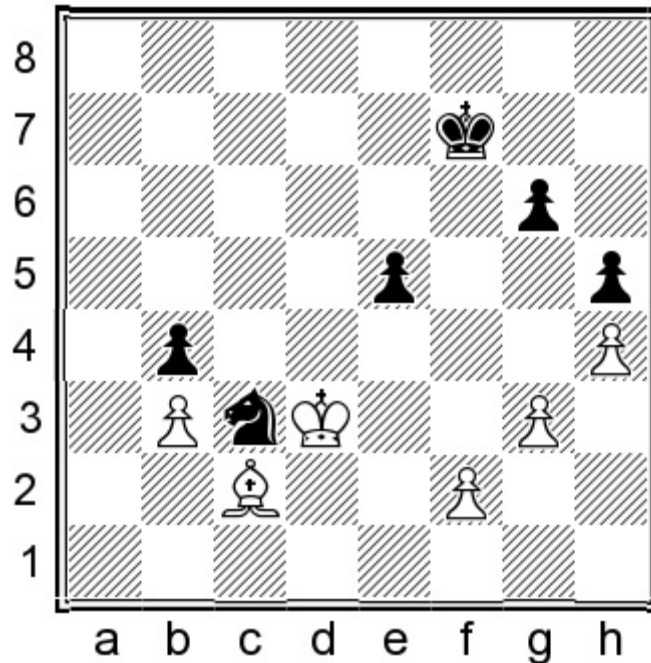
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9

50...♗xe3!

Upon retreating the bishop, White would not achieve a decisive advantage, but he could “torment” the opponent for quite some time.

51.♔xe3 e5 52.♔d3

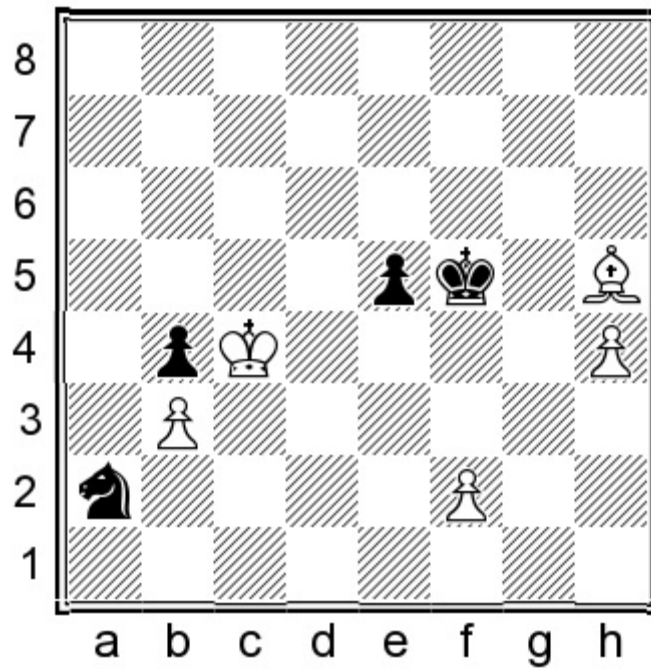


Position after: 52.♔d3

52...♞b5!

A major resource. Black’s intention is, with the help of a fork, to enable the knight to get to d6 in time, after which the white king cannot reach the b4-pawn.

In the game, Black let this opportunity slip away, and lost the game. 52...♔f6? 53.♔c4 ♞a2 54.♔c5 g5 55.♔c4 gxh4 56.gxh4 ♔f7 57.♙d1 ♔g6 58.♙f3 ♔h6 59.♙c6 ♔g6 60.♙e8+ ♔f5 61.♙xh5+–



Position after: 61. ♕xh5+-

1-0 (70) Pridorozhni, A (2571) – Timofeev, A (2563) Taganrog 2018.

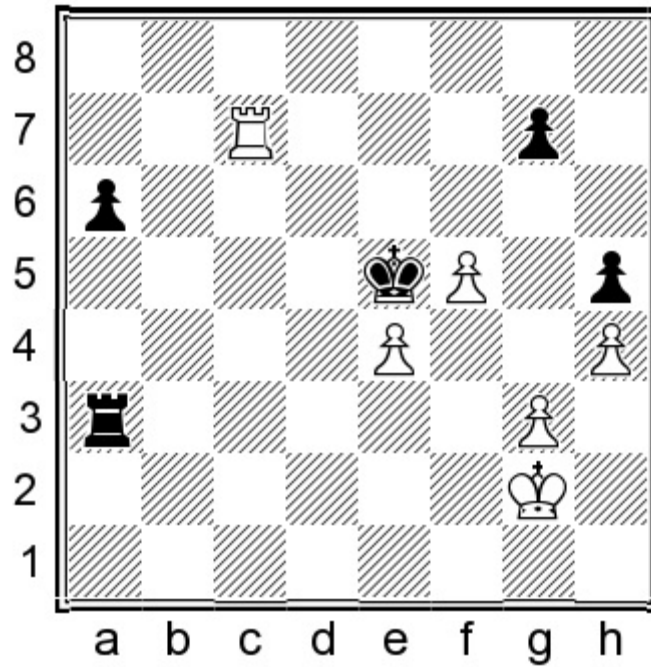
53. ♕e4

53. ♕c4 ♖a3+=

53... ♕e6=

10

Carlsen, M. – Caruana, F.



■ How can Black hold a draw?

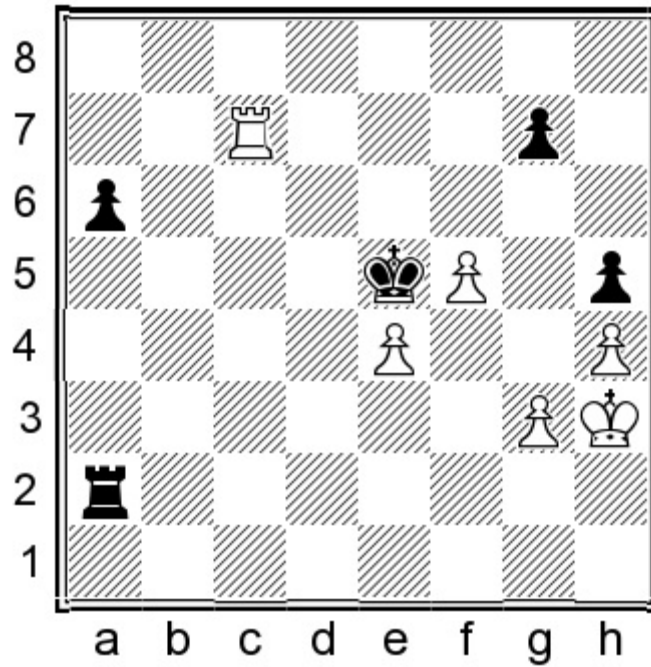
Show/Hide Solution

10

37...♔xe4??

Only a step away from the draw, Black falls into an insidious trap.

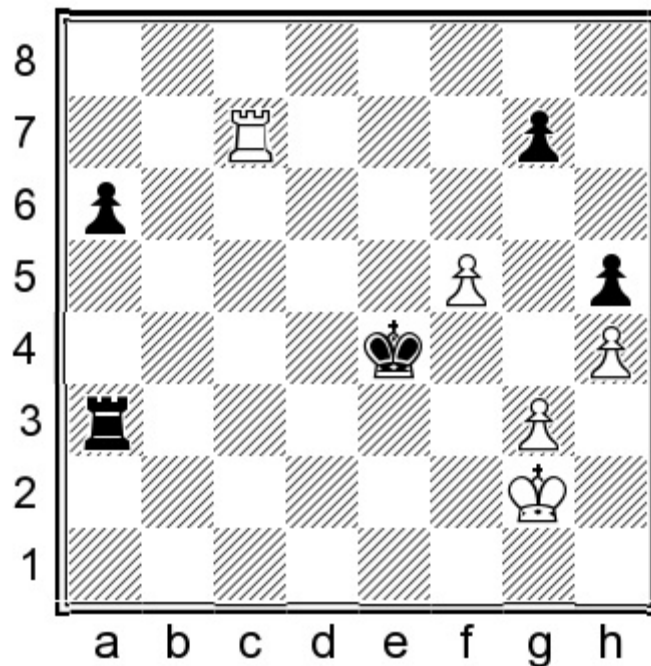
Leading to a draw was 37...♖a2+! 38.♔h3



Position after: 38. ♔h3

and here the king is poorly placed and Black can achieve a draw in more ways than one. 38... ♕xe4 The most natural. [However, also equalizing was 38... ♕f6 39. ♖c6+ ♔f7 40. e5 ♖a5 41. ♖c7+ ♔f8 42. f6 gxf6 43. exf6 ♖f5=.] 39. ♖xg7 [39. ♖e7+ ♔f3 40. ♖xg7 ♖a1=] 39... ♖f2 [Or 39... ♖a1 40. ♖c7 ♖f1!?=] 40. ♖e7+ ♔d4 41. g4 ♖f3+=

37... ♕xe4??



Position after: 37... ♕xe4??

38.♖e7+!

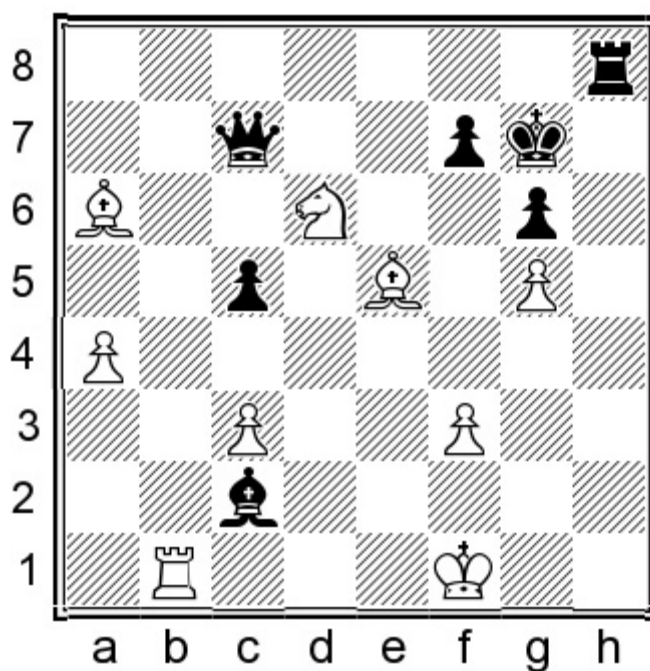
38.♖xg7 ♖a2+ would be a draw, as discussed above.

38...♔xf5 39.♖xg7 ♔f6 40.♖g5+–

As a result of Black's error, a well-known theoretical and easily winning position emerged for White: 1-0 (55) Carlsen, M (2835) – Caruana, F (2832) London 2018.

11

Ponkratov, P. – Bacrot, E.



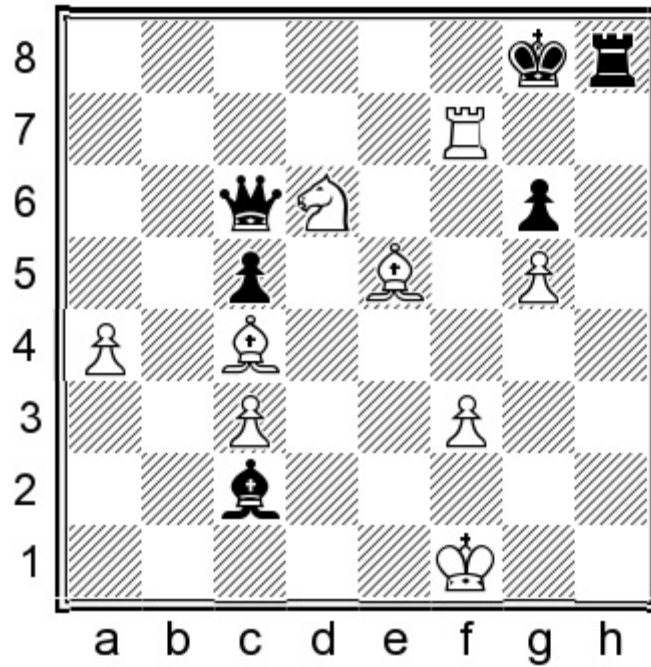
■ Can Black save himself?

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11

Black's position appears to be completely hopeless, but there is actually a beautiful only move that leads to salvation.

31...♔h7□ 32.♖b7 ♕c6 33.♖xf7+ ♔g8 34.♔c4



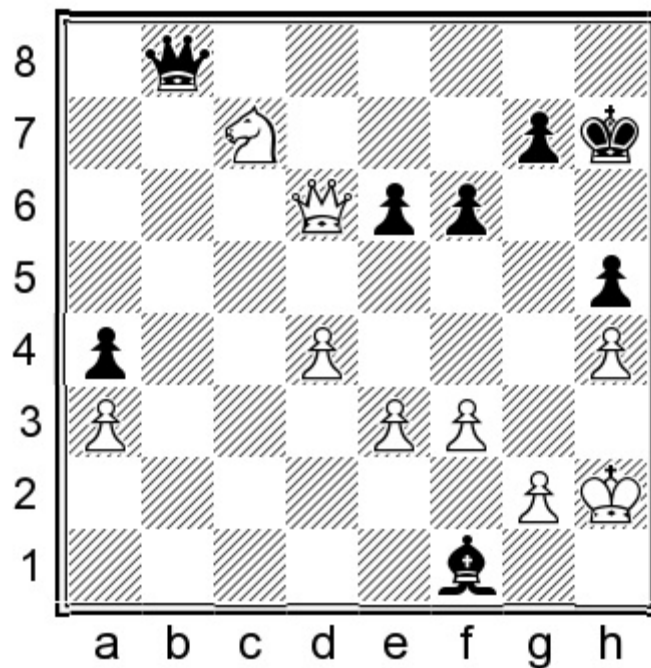
Position after: 34. ♖c4

34... ♗d3+!! 35. ♗xd3 ♕d5! 36. ♗c4 ♜h1+ 37. ♔g2 ♖d2+! 38. ♕xh1 ♗g2+

½-½ Ponkratov, P (2604) – Bacrot, E (2697) Berlin 2015.

12

Esipenko, A. – Leko, P.



□ 50. ♖c5 or 50. ♔g1?

12

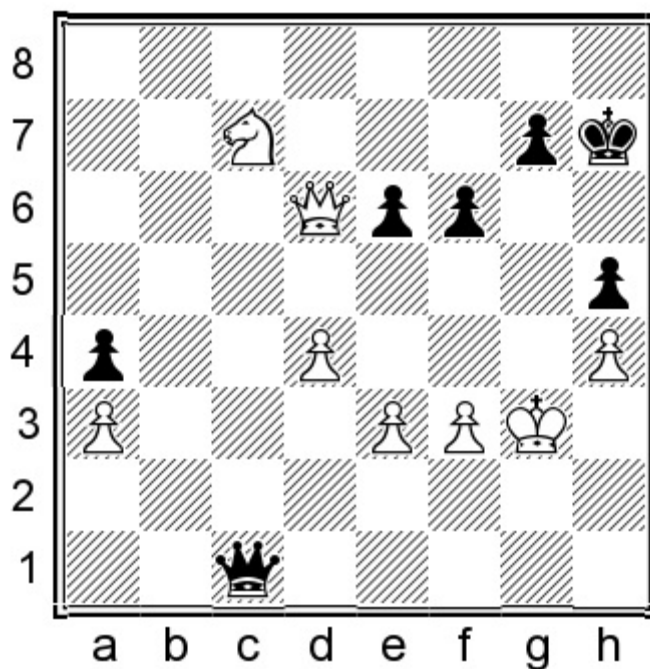
50.♔g1?

After 50.♖c5 ♕h6 51.♖c1+–, White should gradually be able to convert the extra pawn.

50.♔g1? ♕d3?

Black was not psychologically ready for the “gift” and let it slip past.

Leading to a draw was 50...♗xg2!! 51.♔xg2 ♖b2+ 52.♔g3 ♖c1.



Position after: 52...♖c1

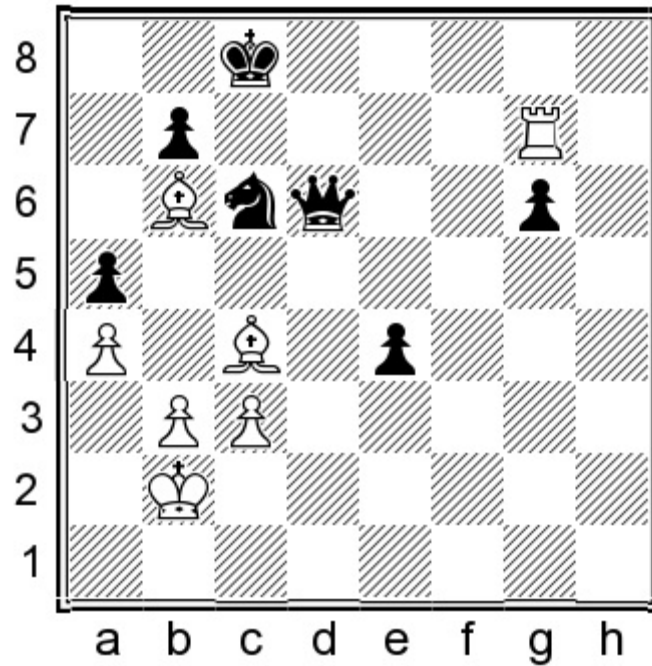
White cannot evade the perpetual check! What a save! 53.♔f4 [53.♗xe6 ♖g1+ 54.♔h3 ♖h1+ 55.♖h2 ♖xf3+ 56.♖g3 ♖h1+=] 53...♖h1 54.♔e4 ♖b1+ 55.♔f4 ♖h1=

51.e4+–

And White won later on.

1-0 (61) Esipenko, A (2593) – Leko, P (2669) Moscow 2018.

13



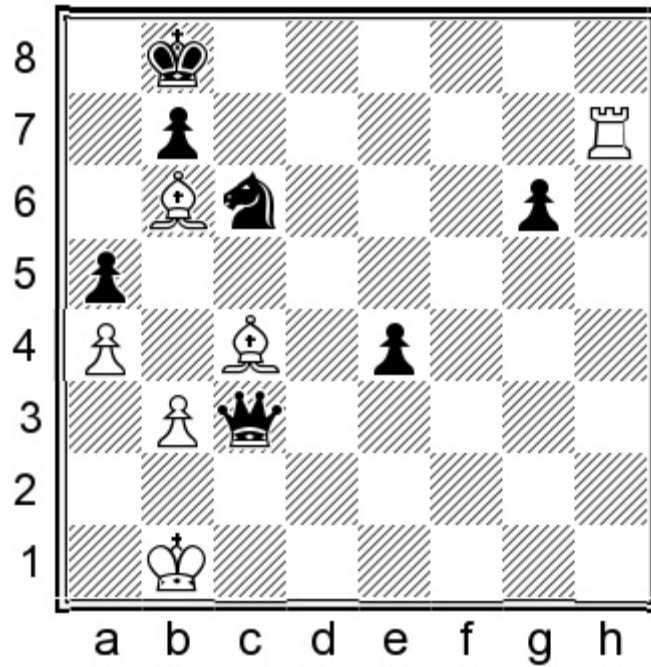
□ Although White's pieces are active, there is not enough for permanent compensation for the queen. He does have an unexpected opportunity though... Find it!

Show/Hide Solution

13

55. ♔c7!

A) A similar idea was played: 55. ♖c7+? but after 55... ♕b8 56. ♗h7 Black found a simple refutation in [56. ♖g7 ♘e7-+] 56... ♙d2+ 57. ♕b1 ♗xc3



Position after: 57... ♖xc3

and the h8-square is under control: 58. ♖f7 ♖e1+ 59. ♔b2 ♖d2+ 60. ♔b1 ♖d1+ 61. ♔b2 ♖d6–+ 0-1
(74) Najer, E (2670) – Sarana, A (2618) Moscow 2018.

B) 55. ♖g8+ ♔d7 56. ♖g7+ ♘e7 57. ♙xa5 ♖h2+ 58. ♔a3 ♖e5 59. ♙b5+ ♔e6 60. ♖h7 ♘c6–+

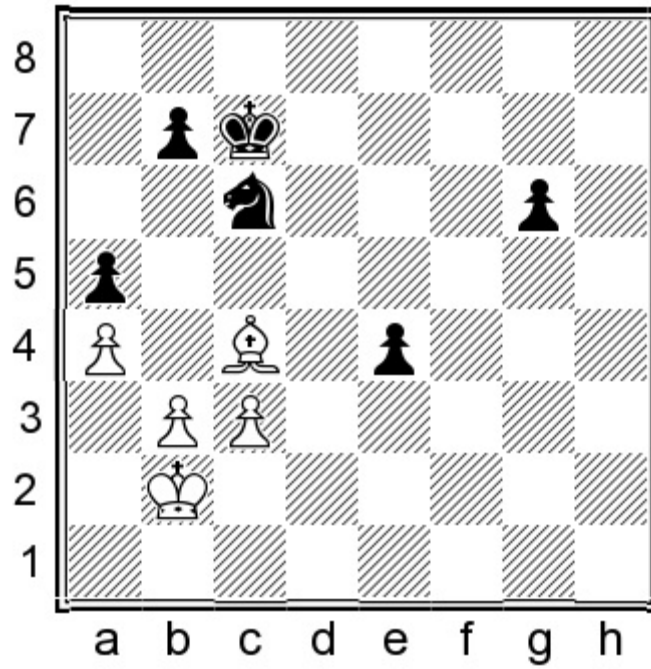
C) 55. ♙e3 ♖h2+ 56. ♔a3 ♖e5–+

55. ♙c7! ♖xc7

A) 55... ♖f6 56. ♖f7=

B) 55... ♖d2+ 56. ♔a3 (Δ ♙e6#) 56... ♘d8 57. ♙e5! =

56. ♖xc7+ ♔xc7



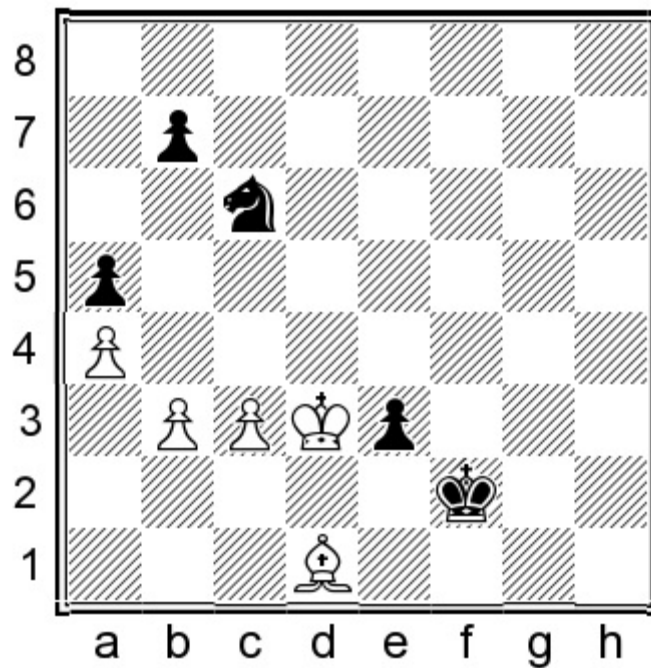
Position after: 56... ♔xc7

57. ♖d5! e3 58. ♕c2 ♔d6 59. ♙e4 ♕e5!

The only try for Black.

59...g5 60. ♕d3=

60. ♙xg6 ♔f4 61. ♙h5 ♕g3 62. ♕d3 ♕f2 63. ♙d1



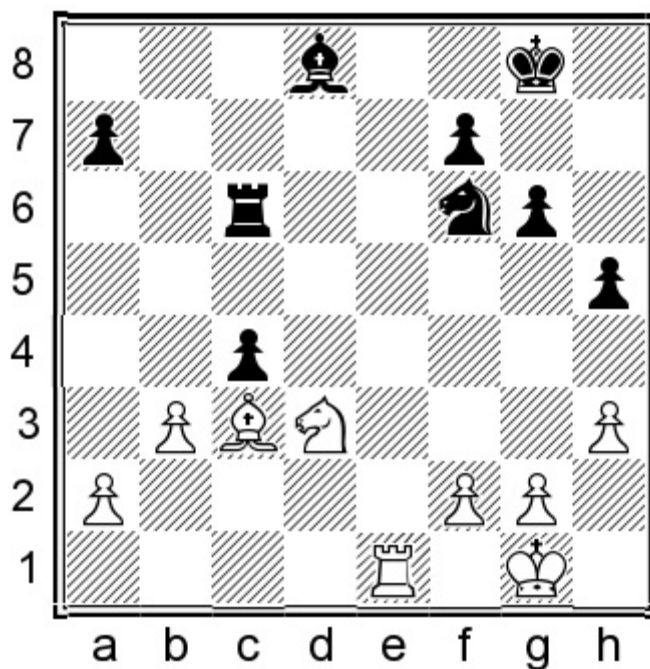
Position after: 63. ♙d1

And White holds. He will lose his bishop but will manage to exchange the black pawns, e.g.

63...♖e7 64.b4 ♜c6 65.♗c4 e2 66.♙xe2 ♜xe2 67.♗b5=

14

Andreikin, D. – Vaissier, A.



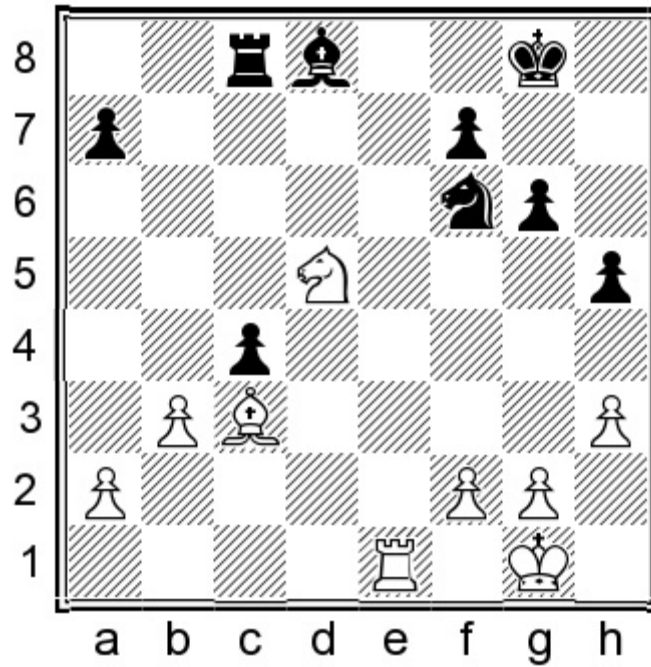
□ With his last move (27...c4), Black attempted to get rid of the weak c-pawn. Find the best reaction for White.

Show/Hide Solution

14

28.♗e5?!

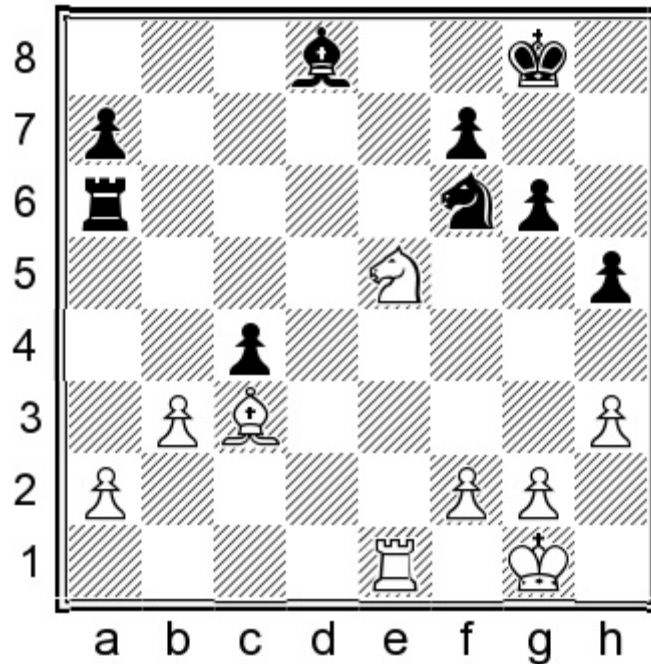
After this natural move, Black succeeded. But after 28.♗b4! he wouldn't have. 28...♞c8 [28...♞c5 29.♙d4 only helps White.] 29.♗d5!



Position after: 29. ♘d5!

White is left with a healthy extra pawn: 29... ♖c6 [29... ♘xd5?? 30. ♖e8+ ♔h7 31. ♖h8#] 30. ♙xf6!? ♙xf6 31. ♖c1± 1-0 (82) Andreikin, D (2719) – Vaisser, A (2505) St Petersburg 2018.

28. ♘e5?! ♖a6!



Position after: 28... ♖a6!

29. bxc4 ♖xa2 30. g4 ♖c2=

Chapter 4

Prophylaxis

Prophylaxis in the endgame is certainly no less important than in any other stages of the game. In the endgame, however, it is often less obvious due to the reduced number of pieces present.

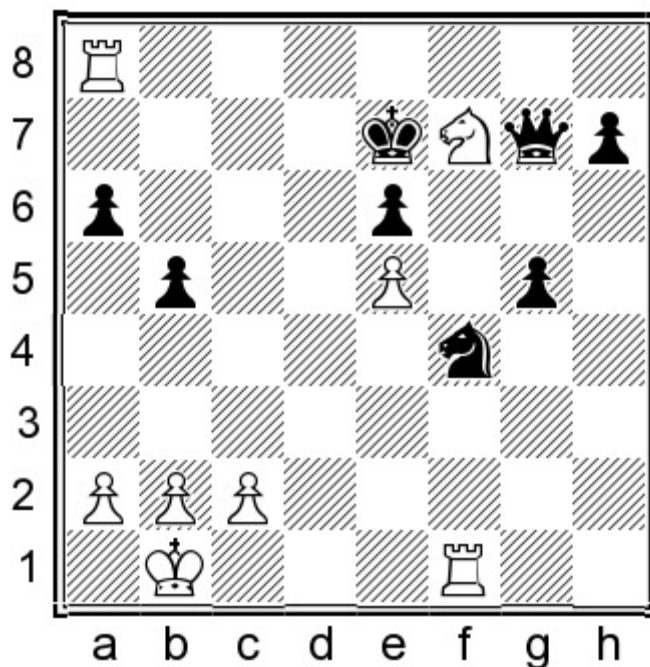
It is not always easy to understand the opponent's plan because, in general, it is not an attack on the king or seizing open files. In the endgame, the magnitude and measure of evaluation is altered. Quite often, for example, a rook and pawn can successfully battle with two minor pieces, which is rarely the case in the opening or middlegame phase. There are many reasons for this. For example, the inability of coordination between the minor pieces and the queen, or the lack of outposts or desirable stationary squares for minor pieces and, as a result, the mobility and impact of the rook is magnified.

Nevertheless, the basic principles of prophylactic thinking, of course, remain essentially the same. Ideally, we aim to find solutions that improve our position all the while obstructing our opponent's plan. Hence, in this chapter, I have provided several useful examples of prophylaxis in the endgame.

Example 1

From Pragnanandhaa – Eljanov

Douglas 2018



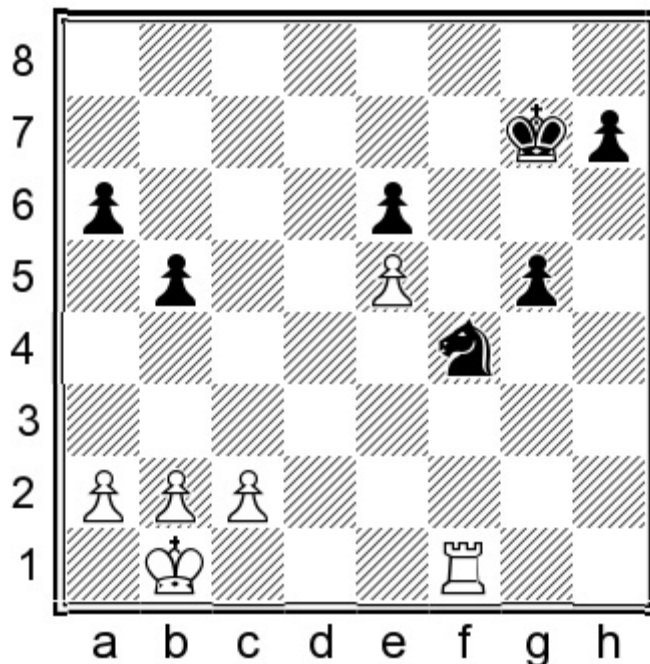
Black to move

It is obvious that Black, in order to avoid an attack on the king, must sacrifice the queen and head into the endgame hoping that the connected passed pawns will serve as good consolation for the material setback. The king can start the endgame on f7 or g7. Does it matter and if so, which move is stronger?

36...♔xf7?!

This seemingly logical move allows the black king to get closer to the center, and, most importantly, to White's future passed pawn. But it turns out to be a mistake!

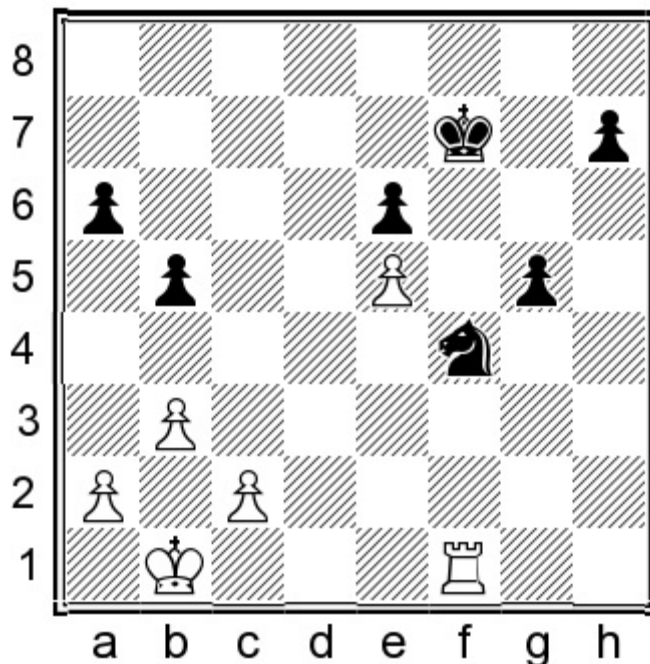
Correct was 36...♔xf7! 37.♞a7+ ♔g6 38.♞xg7+ ♔xg7



Position after: 38...♔xg7

and now 39.b3 is followed by the thematic 39...b4! 40.♔b2 ♖d5⚡ and due to the position of the king on g7, and not f7, the knight can prevent the fast creation of a white passed pawn. Deep prophylaxis!

36...♞xf7?! 37.♞a7+ ♔f8 38.♞xf7+ ♔xf7 39.b3



Position after: 39.b3

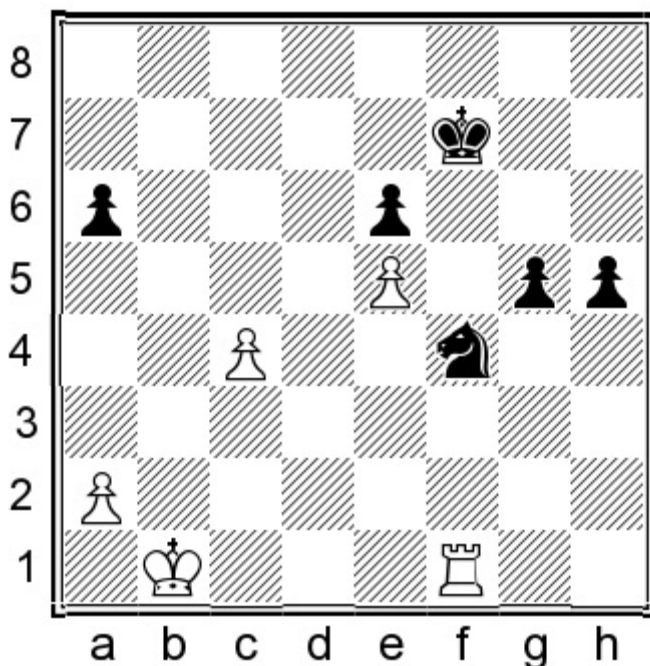
39...h5?!

It seems that the black pawns, supported by the knight, will be difficult to stop. In fact, it was necessary to be cautious - a draw would have been a natural outcome, for example:

A) 39...b4!? 40.c4 bxc3 41.♔c2 h5 42.♔xc3 h4 43.♔d4 ♔g6 44.♔e4 ♘d5 45.♞f8 g4 46.♞g8+=

B) 39...♔g6!? 40.c4 bxc4 41.bxc4 ♔f5 42.c5 ♔xe5 43.♞d1 ♘d5 44.c6 ♔d6 45.♞h1 ♔xc6 46.♞xh7 ♔c5 47.♞g7 e5 48.♞xg5 e4=

40.c4 bxc4 41.bxc4



Position after: 41.bxc4

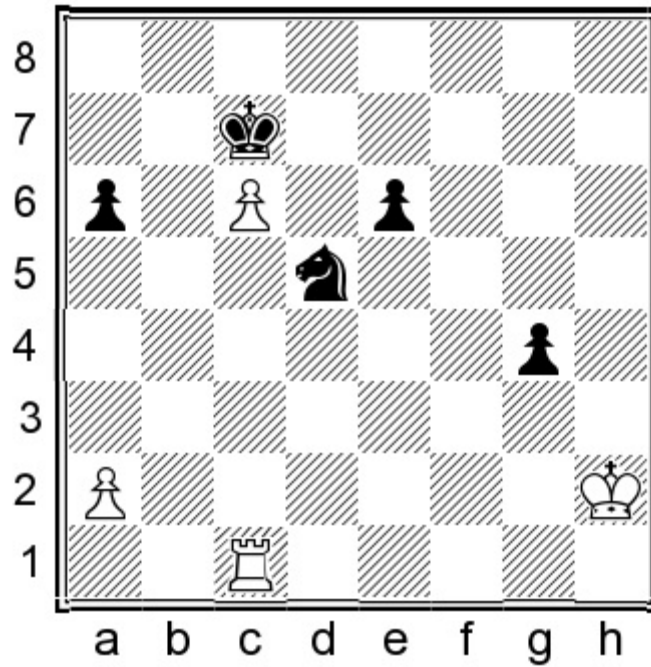
41...h4?

The continuation is obvious but this erroneous plan has irreparable consequences.

Good chances for salvation were to be found in 41...♔e7 42.♔c2 [42.♞d1?! g4] 42...♔d7 43.♞g1! g4 44.♞f1 ♘h3! 45.♞f7+ ♔c6 46.♞g7 ♘f2 47.♞h7 ♔c5 48.♞xh5 ♔xc4±.

42.c5 ♔e7

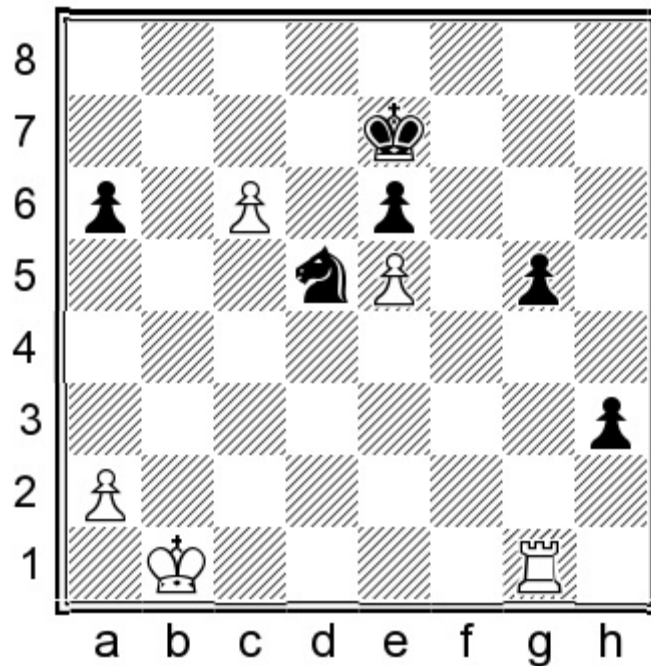
42...♔g6 This does not save Black. 43.c6 ♘d5 44.♔c1 h3 45.♔d2 g4 46.♔e2 h2 47.♔f2 ♔f5 48.♔g2+ ♔xe5 49.♞c1 ♔d6 50.♔xh2 ♔c7 With precise maneuvering of the rook, reminiscent of a car parking in a small space, White is winning.



Position after: 50...♔c7

51.♖c4! [51.♔g3? ♜b4=] 51...♞b6 [51...♞e7 52.♖a4! ♔b6 53.c7+–] 52.♖c3 ♞d5 53.♖a3 ♔b6 54.♔g3 ♞c7 55.♖c3 ♞d5 56.♖c4 ♔c7 57.♖a4 ♔b6 58.♔xg4+–

43.♖d1 h3 44.c6 ♞d5 45.♖g1!+–

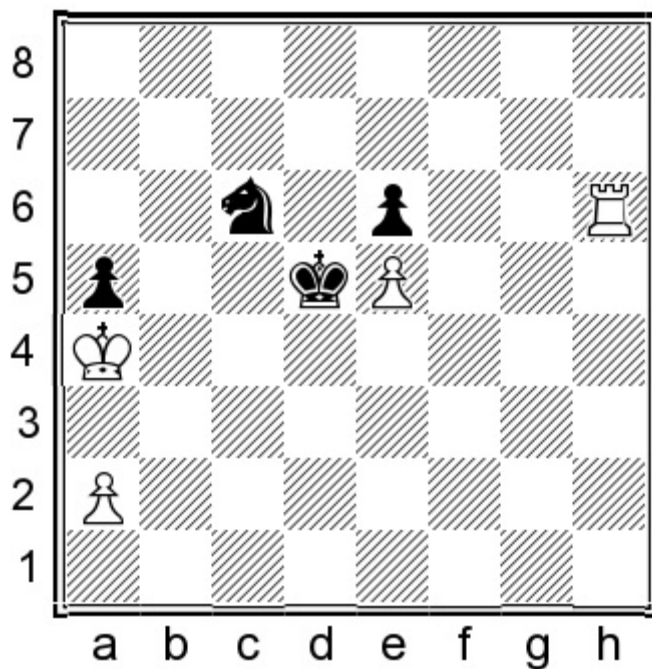


Position after: 45.♖g1!+–

It was probably this resource that Black missed. His passed pawn falls and the position is technically

won for White, who clearly converts the advantage.

45...h2 46.♖h1 ♜b4 47.c7 ♔d7 48.♞xh2 ♕xc7 49.♞h6 ♔d7 50.♞g6 a5 51.♞xg5 ♕c6 52.♕b2 ♔d5
53.♕b3 ♔d4 54.♞h5 ♜c6 55.♕a4 ♕c4 56.♞h6 ♔d5



Position after: 56...♔d5

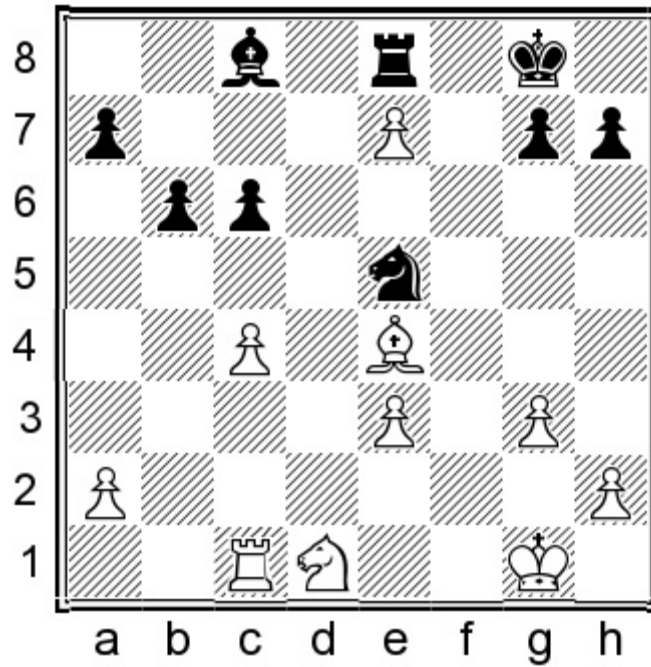
57.♕b5 ♜xe5 58.♞h5!?! ♔d4 59.♕xa5 ♜d3 60.♕b5 e5 61.a4 ♜f4 62.♞h4 ♔d5 63.a5 ♜e6 64.♞c4

1-0

Example 2

From Swiercz – Quesada Perez

Saint Louis 2018



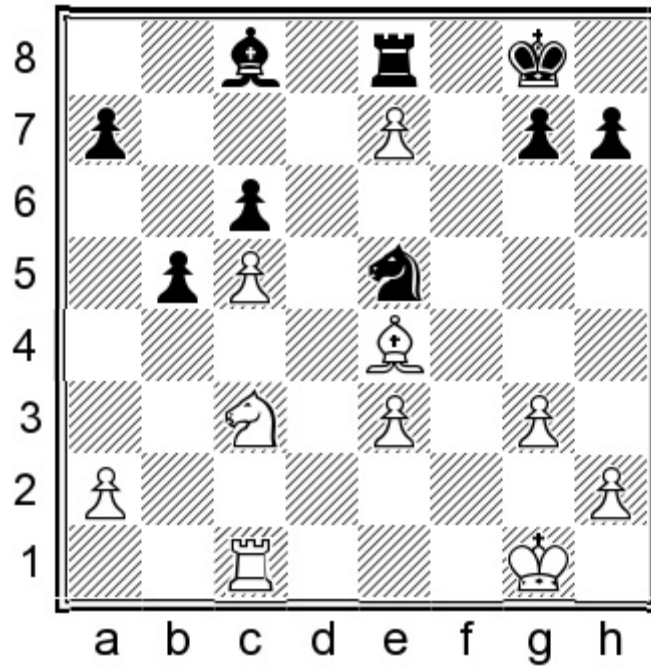
White to move

Apparently, White did not entirely realize that the fate of the game was being decided at this moment in the game, and played...

29.c5?!

Extremely vital was the preliminary 29.a4! ♖xe7 and only now 30.c5 and after 30...b5 31.axb5 cxb5 32.♘c3 ♕b7=.

29.c5?! b5 30.♘c3



Position after: 30. ♖c3

30... ♗g4!

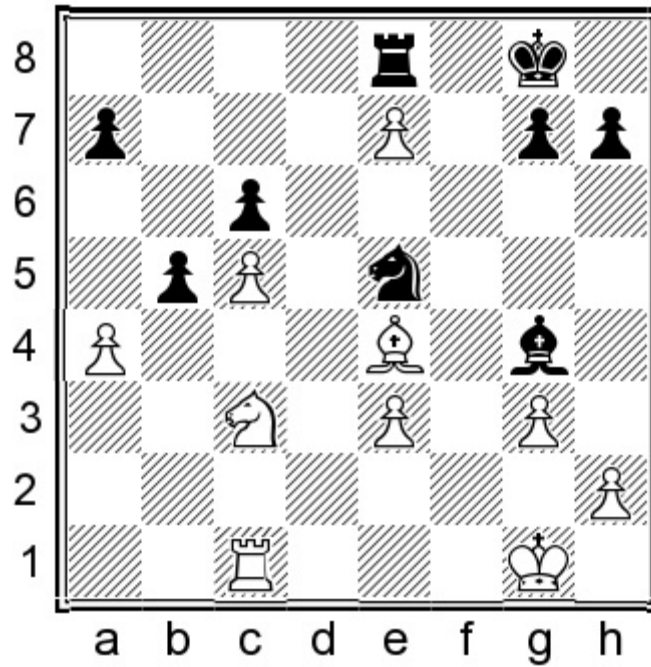
An excellent move, prophylactic against 31. ♘e2!

White probably only considered the natural 30... ♖xe7, after which he was intending to transfer the knight to d4 to pin down the opponent's forces to the defense of the c6-pawn. 31. ♘e2=

31. ♖b1?

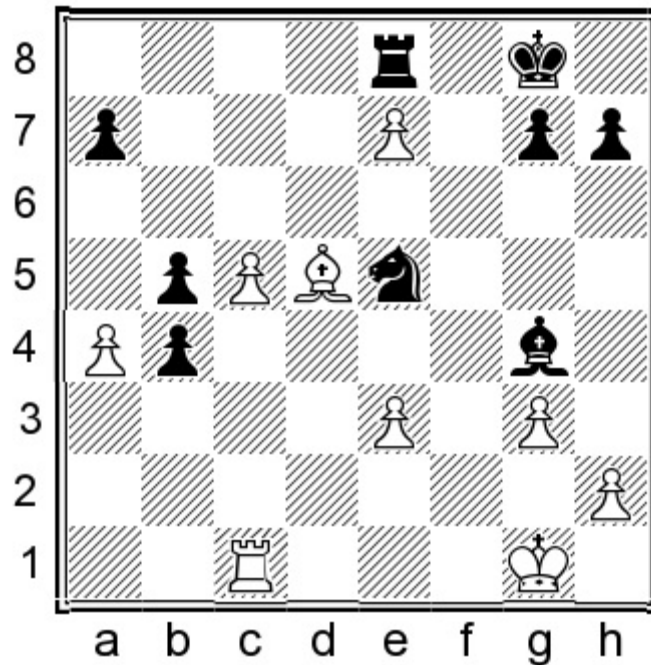
White does not find how to react to the situation on the board, but there was in fact a way to handle it.

31. a4!



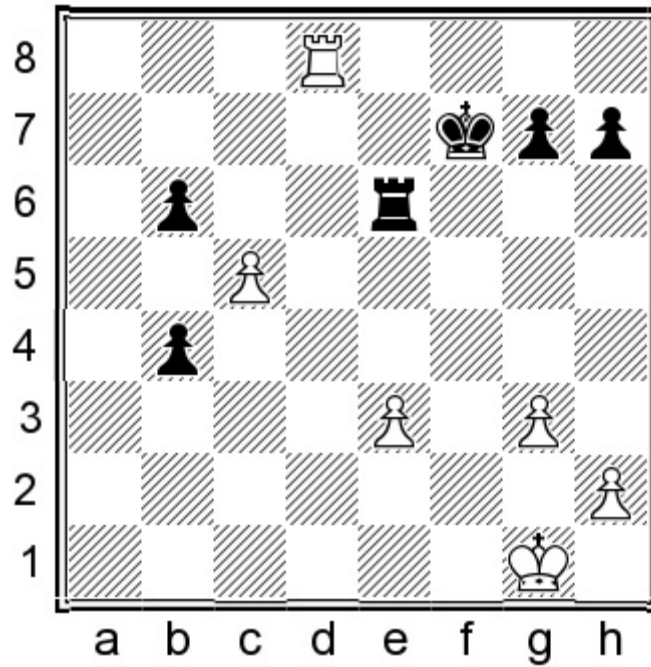
Position after: 31.a4!

31...b4 [31...a6 32.axb5 axb5 33.♖a2= with the idea of ♖b4; note that even 32.♖a2!? made sense.]
 32.♖b5!! cxb5 [32...♞xe7 33.♖d4 ♕d7 34.a5=] 33.♕d5+



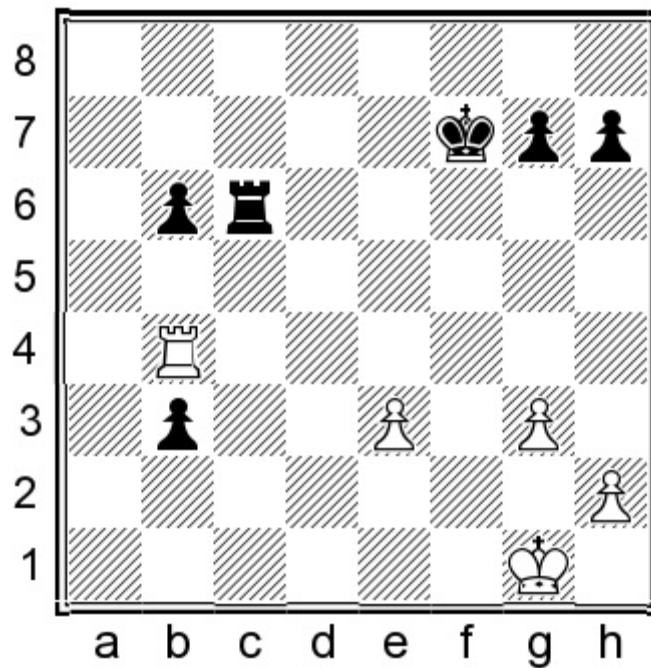
Position after: 33.♕d5+

33...♖f7 [33...♔h8 34.axb5 ♞xe7 35.b6♞] 34.axb5 ♞xe7 35.b6 ♕c8 36.♞a1 axb6 37.♞a8 ♞e8 38.♞a7
 [38.cxb6? ♖f8-+] 38...♕e6 39.♕xe6 ♞xe6 40.♞a8+ ♖d8 41.♞xd8+ ♖f7



Position after: 41...♔f7

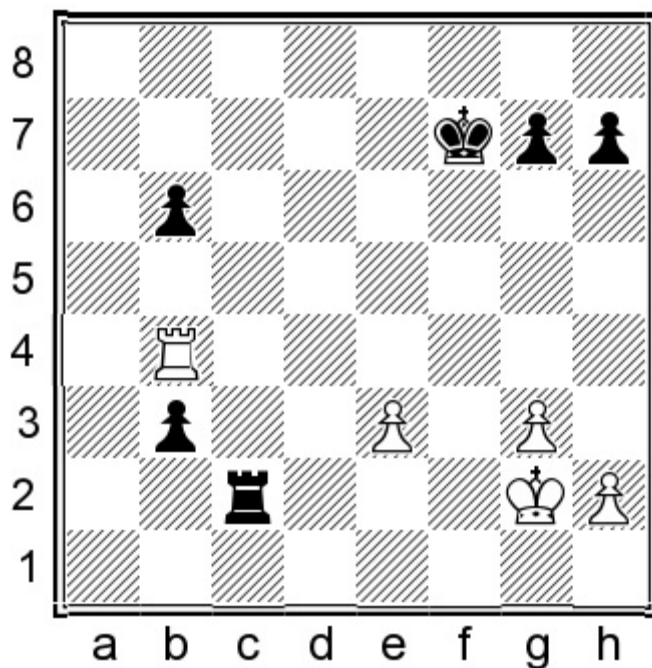
Of course, we are familiar with the old saying that “all rook endgames are drawn”, but I would not recommend that the reader applies this statement in practice. Therefore, we will make the strongest and only move: 42.c6!! ♖xc6 43.♞d4 b3 44.♞b4



Position after: 44.♞b4

44...♞c1+ [44...♞c3 45.♞xb6 ♞xe3 46.♔f2 ♞c3 47.♔e2 ♞c2+ 48.♔d3 ♞b2 49.♔e3 ♔e7 50.♔d3 ♔d7 51.♔d4 ♔c7 52.♞b4 and a draw will likely follow. 52...♔d6 53.♞b6+ ♔d7 54.♔d3 ♞b1 55.♔c3=]

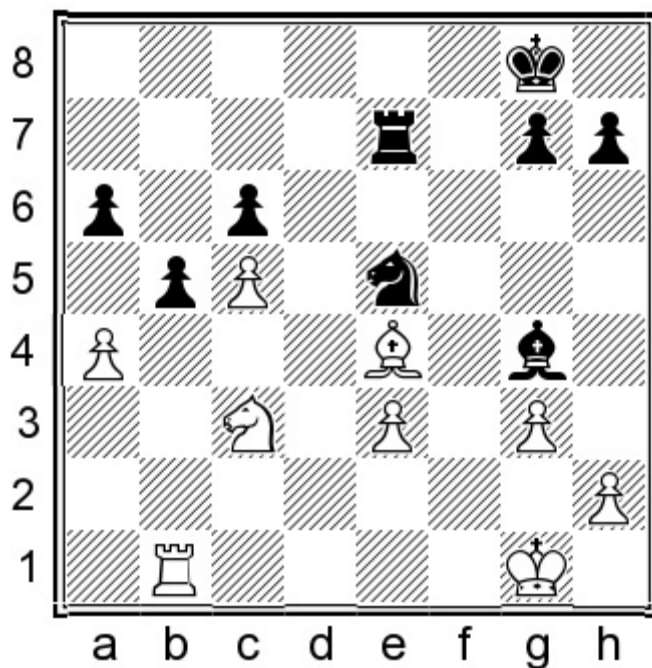
45.♔g2 ♖c2+



Position after: 45...♖c2+

46.♔h3! [46.♔f3? b2 47.h4 ♕e6 48.♖xb6+ ♔d5-+] 46...b2 47.♖xb6 ♕e7 48.e4! ♔d7 49.e5 ♕c7
50.♖b3 ♕c6 51.e6=

31...♖xe7 32.a4 a6

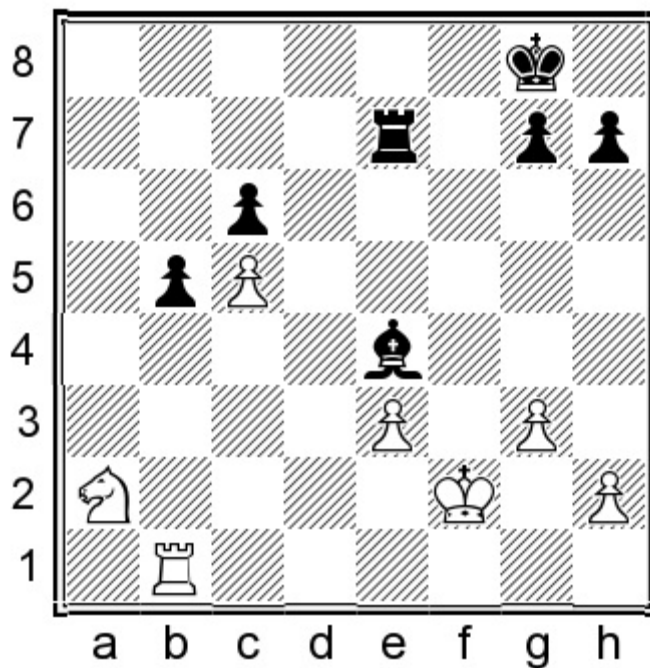


Position after: 32...a6

Thanks to his superior pawn structure, Black has a solid advantage that he confidently converted.

33. axb5 axb5 34. ♖b4

34. ♘a2 ♗f3+ 35. ♕xf3 ♕xf3 36. ♔f2 ♖e4+



Position after: 36... ♖e4+

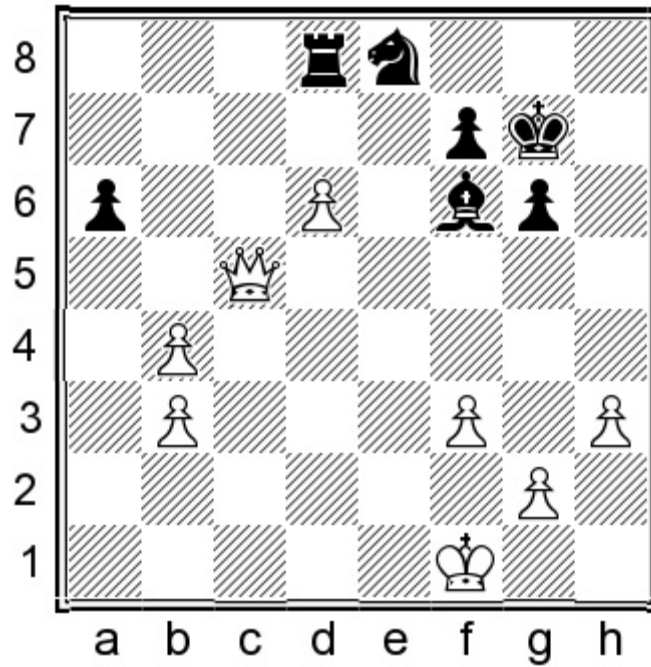
34... ♖a7+

And Black won later on.

0-1 (59).

Example 3

From Tang – Dreev
chess.com 2018

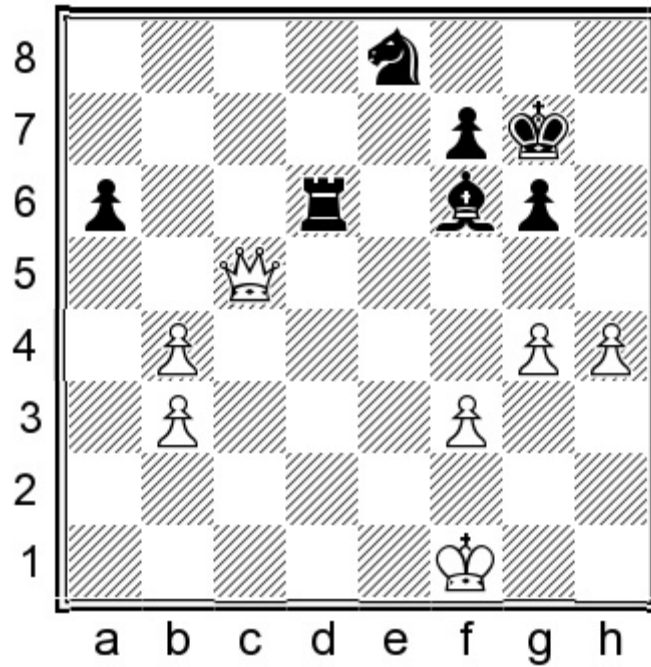


White to move

White's doubled pawns are certainly not pretty. Therefore, while the black pieces are engaged in absorbing the d-pawn, it seems quite logical to attempt to get rid of the doubled pawns...

48.b5?

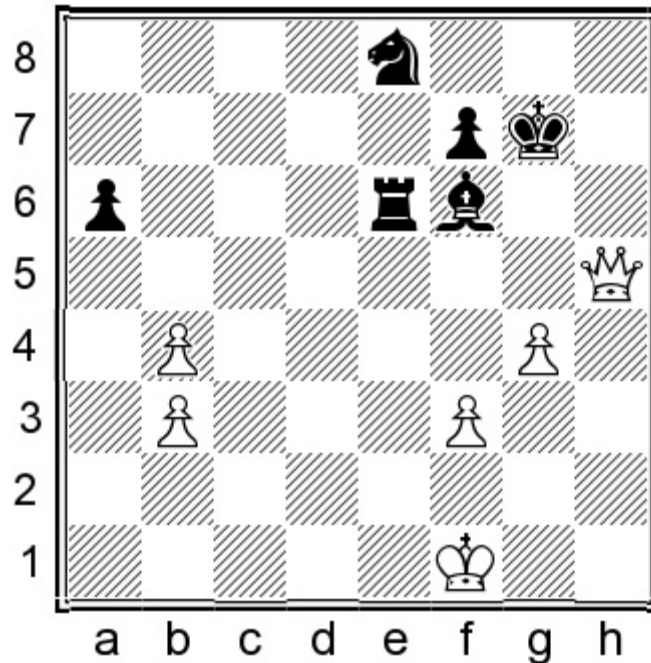
In fact, the essence of the position is quite a different story: sooner or later, the white king, which is cut off from the center, will fall under attack by the black pieces. So instead of improving the pawn structure, it was necessary to take prophylactic measures against this, and to try to open the position of the black king and prevent this planned coordination of the black pieces. 48.g4! ♖xd6 [48...♘xd6? 49.g5 ♘b2 50.♙c7+–] 49.h4!



Position after: 49.h4!

A) 49...♔xh4?! 50.♚e5+ ♜f6 [50...♔f8? 51.♚h8++-] 51.♔g2±

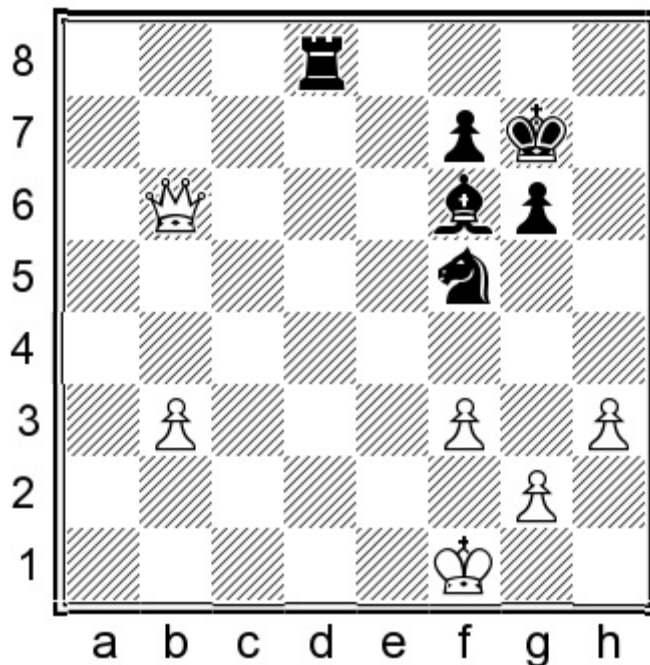
B) 49...♞e6 50.h5 gxh5 51.♚xh5



Position after: 51.♚xh5

Now, the black king is only protected by one pawn, meaning the black pieces must waste time protecting it rather than regrouping in order to attack the white king. 51...♞d6 52.♚d5 ♞b5 53.g5 ♔b2 54.f4=

48.b5? axb5 49.♖xb5 ♗xd6 50.♗b6 ♘f5-+



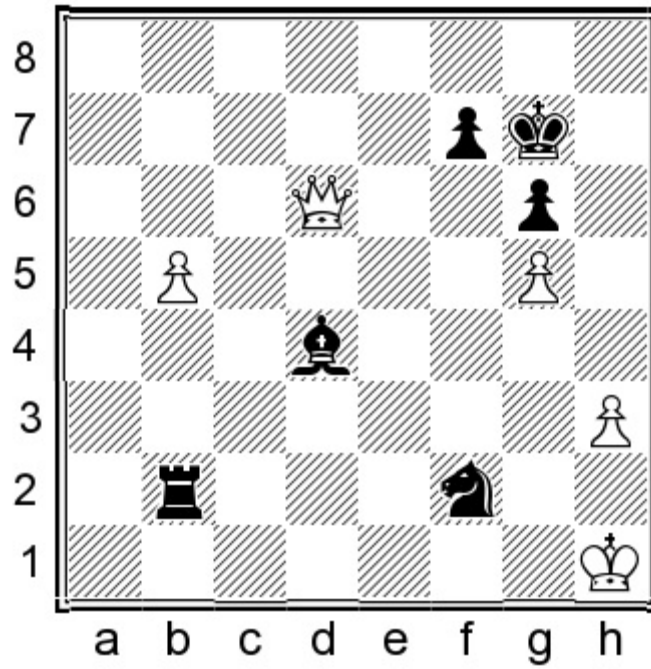
Position after: 50... ♘f5-+

White has no resources to oppose Black's attack.

51.g4 ♗g3+

♖ 51... ♗d4-+

52.♔g2 ♗e2 53.♗e3 ♗c3 54.g5 ♔d4 55.♗e7 ♖d5 56.f4 ♗f5 57.b4 ♗d5 58.♗d6 ♗xf4+ 59.♔h1 ♔e5
60.♗e7 ♗d3 61.b5 ♖f1+ 62.♔g2 ♖f2+ 63.♔g1 ♔d4 64.♔h1 ♖b2 65.♗d6 ♗f2+



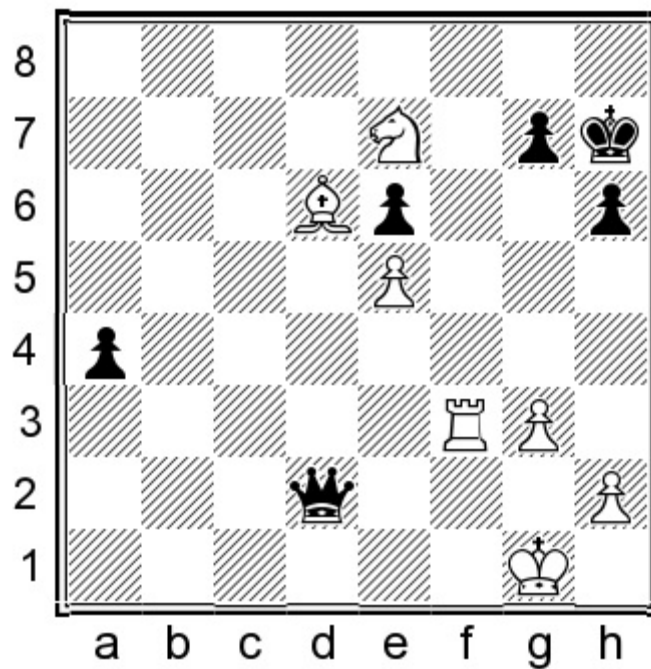
Position after: 65...♘f2+

Black wins: 65...♘f2+ 66.♙g1 ♘xh3+ 67.♙f1 [67.♙h1 ♖d2-+] 67...♙c3-+.

0-1

Example 4

From Ivanchuk – Mamedyarov
Beijing 2013



White to move

37. ♖a3?

Despite a small material edge, White certainly cannot count on an advantage. Although he does not create a threat with the last move, he somehow emphasizes the reinforced concrete nature of his position. It is surprising that this move actually leaves no chance for White to save the game. The reason is zugzwang! White should have taken prophylactic measures here to ensure that he will manage to block the kingside. Otherwise, his position is lost.

A) Leading to complete equality was the accurate 37.h3! g5 [37...h5 38.h4=] 38.g4=.

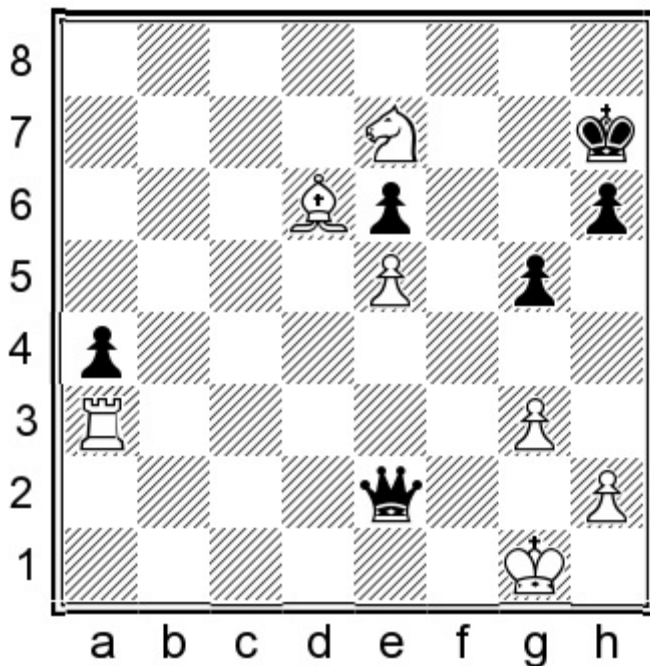
B) No weaker and more active was 37.h4! g5 38.h5 g4 39.♖f7+ ♔h8 40.♖f8+ ♔g7 41.♘g6 a3 42.♙e7 ♚e1+ 43.♔g2=.

C) 37.♔h1? ♚e2!-+

37. ♖a3? ♚e1+ 38. ♔g2 ♚e2+ 39. ♔g1

39. ♔h3 ♚f1+ 40. ♔h4 g5+ 41. ♔g4 ♔g7O-+

39...g5O-+



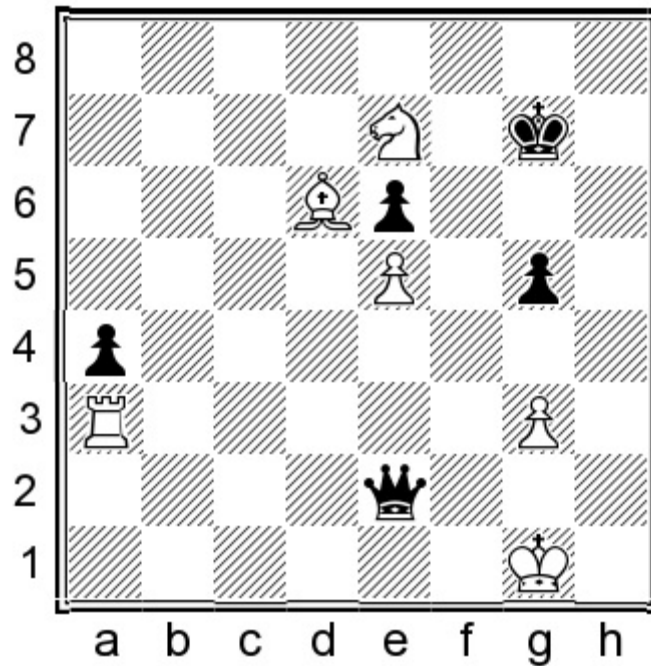
Position after: 39...g5O-+

40.h4□

A) In the game, White panicked and failed to provide the best resistance: 40.♖a1? ♚e3+ 41.♔g2 ♚e4+ 42.♔h3 [42.♔g1 ♚d4+-+] 42...g4+ 43.♔h4 ♚e3 and Black won, 0-1.

B) 40.h3 h5 41.♖a1 [41.♘c6 ♚d1+ 42.♔f2 ♚c2+-+] 41...♚b2 42.♖a3 g4 43.hxg4 hxg4 44.♖e3 ♚d2 45.♖a3 ♚e1+ 46.♔g2 ♚e2+ 47.♔g1 ♔g7O 48.♖a1 ♚e3+-+

40...♔g7 41.hxg5 hxg5



Position after: 41...hxg5

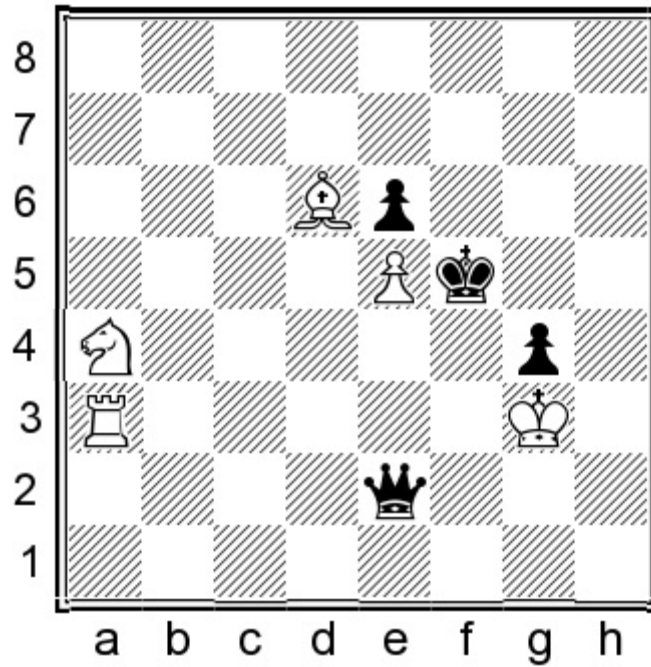
42.g4

Giving a pawn, but the other options are even worse. 42.♔h1 g4 43.♔g1 ♔f7 44.♔h1 ♕f2+

42...♕xg4+ 43.♔f1

A possible continuation might be:

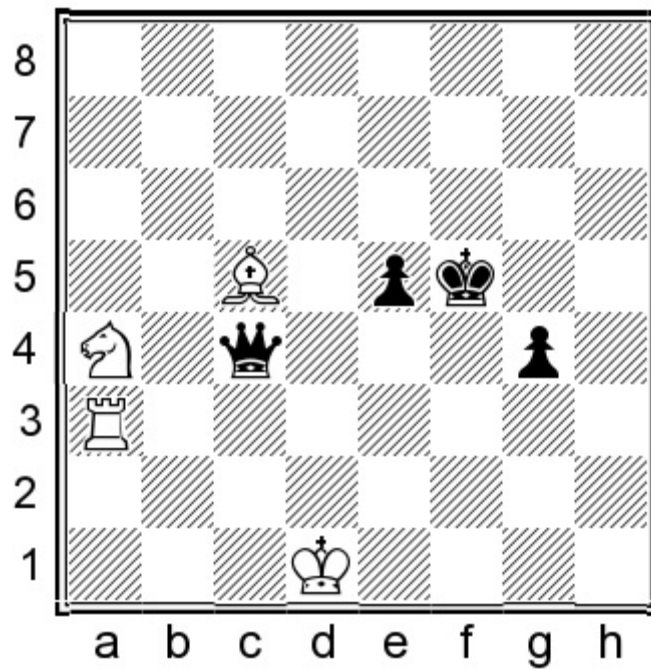
43...♕f4+ 44.♔g2 g4 45.♘c8 ♕e4+ 46.♔g3 ♔g6 47.♘b6 ♔f5 48.♘xa4 ♕e2



Position after: 48... ♔e2

Zugzwang once again.

49. ♖c5 ♚xe5+ 50. ♔f2 ♚e4 51. ♖f8 ♚d4+ 52. ♔e2 e5 53. ♖c5 ♚c4+ 54. ♔d1



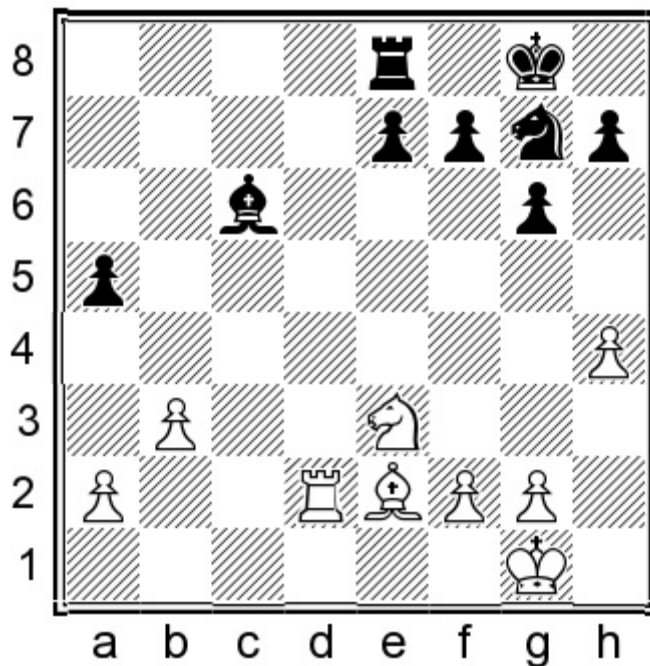
Position after: 54. ♔d1

54...g3! 55. ♖xg3 ♚xa4+ 56. ♔d2 ♚a2+ 57. ♔c3 ♔f4 58. ♖h3 ♚a5+ 59. ♔c4 ♚a4+ 60. ♔c3 e4 61. ♖h4+ ♔g3 62. ♖h7 ♚a1+ 63. ♔b4 e3-+

Example 5

From Kramnik – Grischuk

Berlin 2018



Black to move

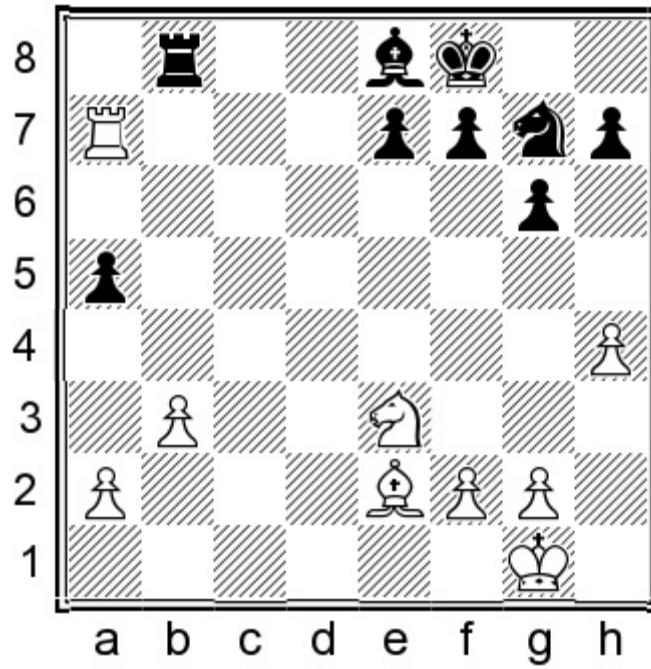
Black's position is undeniably worse but, nevertheless, all hope is still not lost.

1...♖b8?

After this careless move, the white rook was able to position itself ideally.

Correct would have been the simple and prophylactic 1...♖e6 2.♙c4 [2.♖c4 ♖a8 3.♗e5±; 2.♙c2?! ♗d4=] 2...♖d8 3.♙xd8+ ♗xd8 4.♙f1 ♙f8 5.♙e2 e6±.

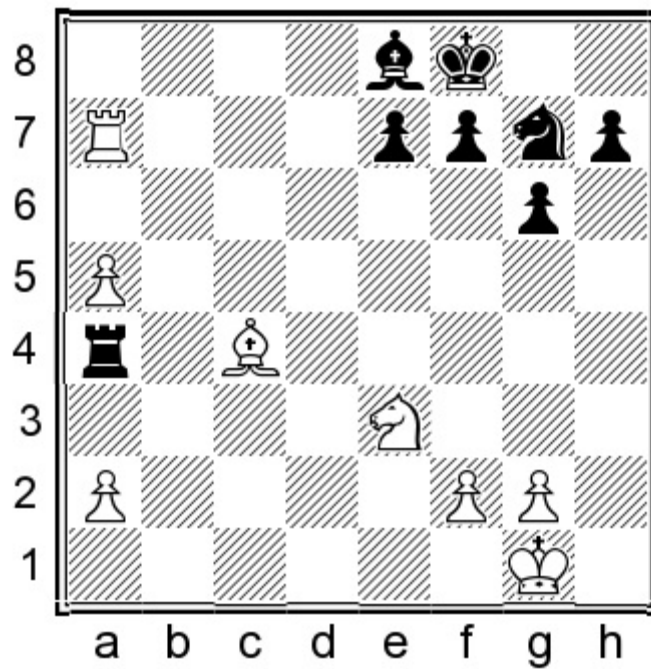
1...♖b8? 2.♙c2! ♙e8 3.♙c7! ♙f8 4.♙a7



Position after: 4. ♖a7

Making use of a slight gap, White entered the black trenches.

4...a4 5.bxa4 ♜b1+ 6.♔h2 ♜b4 7.a5 ♜xh4+ 8.♔g1 ♜a4 9.♙c4+-



Position after: 9. ♙c4+-

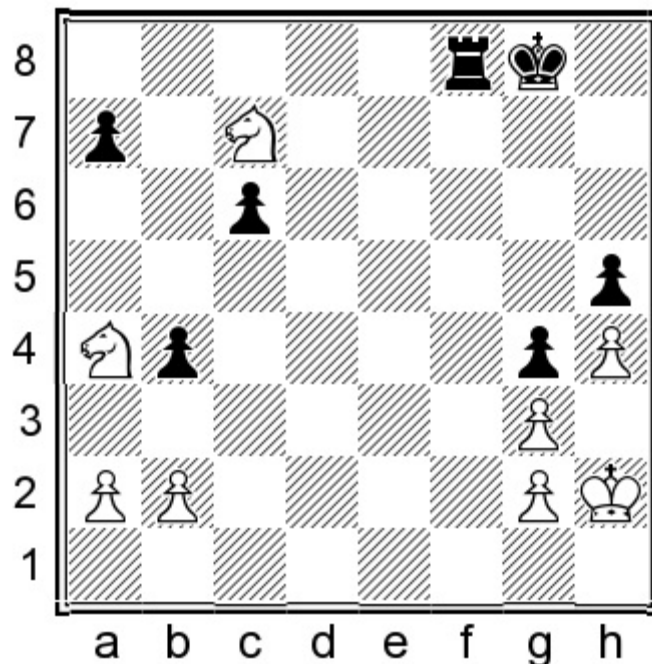
9...♙c6 10.♜c7 ♙e8 11.a6 h5 12.♘d5

1-0

Example 6

From an opening analysis

2016



Black to move

White has a material advantage, but the white king is still out of play. Therefore, it may be desirable for Black to rush to the only weakness in White's position before it is too late: the pawn on a2. First though, it is necessary to take all of the opponent's resources into account...

25...a5!

The only way! Before proceeding with active moves, Black defends against the threat of ♞c7-a6 .

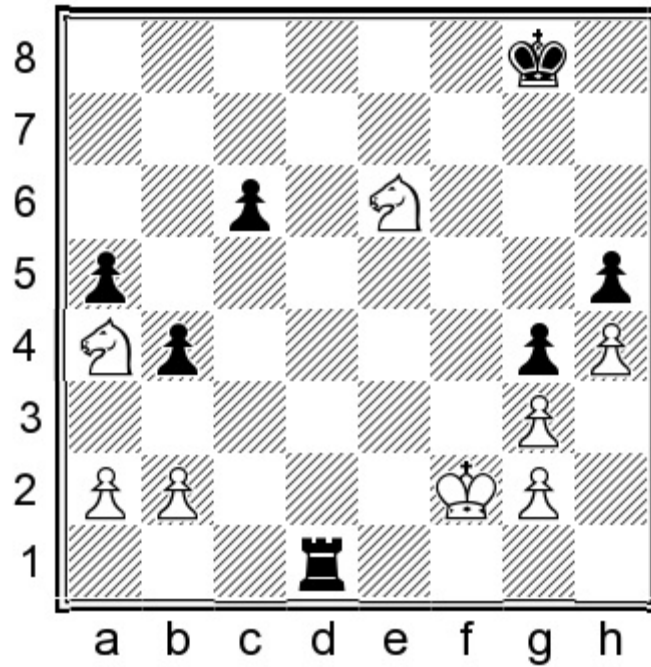
25... ♞f1 ? We often do not pay attention to the enemy and are only focused on our own plans...

26. ♞a6+ –

25...a5! 26.♞e6

White does not sit idly by and sends the knight to hunt for pawns.

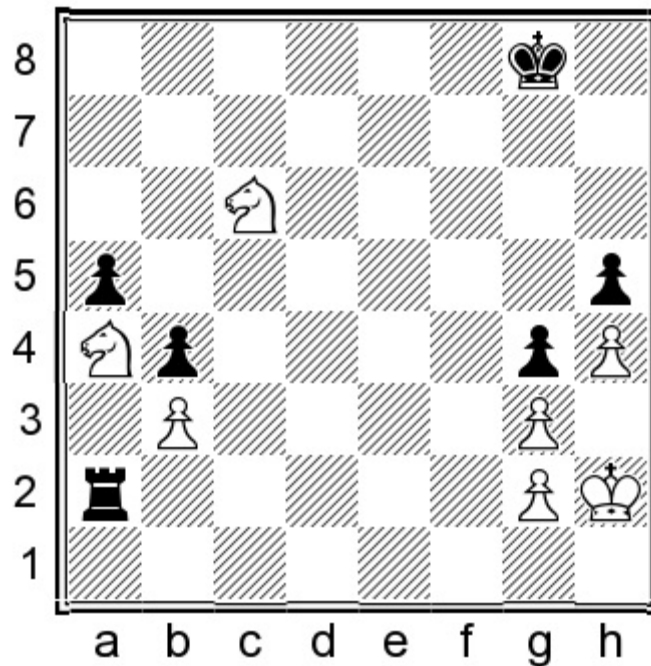
26. ♞g1 ♞d8 27. ♞e6 ♞d1+ 28. ♞f2



Position after: 28. ♔f2

28... ♖a1 [28... ♖d2+!?=] 29. ♘ec5 ♖xa2 30. ♔e3 ♔f7 31. ♔e4 ♖a1=

26... ♖f1 27. ♘d4 ♖a1 28. ♘xc6 ♖xa2 29. b3

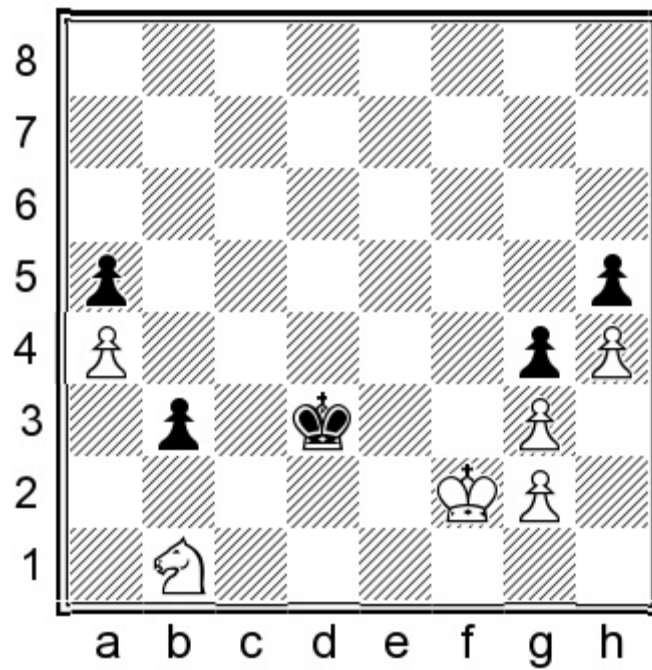


Position after: 29. b3

29... ♖xa4

Or 29... ♖a3 30. ♘xa5 ♔f7 31. ♔g1 ♔g6 32. ♔f2 ♖a2+ 33. ♔g1 ♖a3= with a positional draw.

30.bxa4 b3 31.♘e7+ ♔f7 32.♘d5 ♕e6 33.♘c3 ♕e5 34.♔g1 ♕d4 35.♘b1 ♕d3 36.♕f2



Position after: 36.♕f2

36...b2

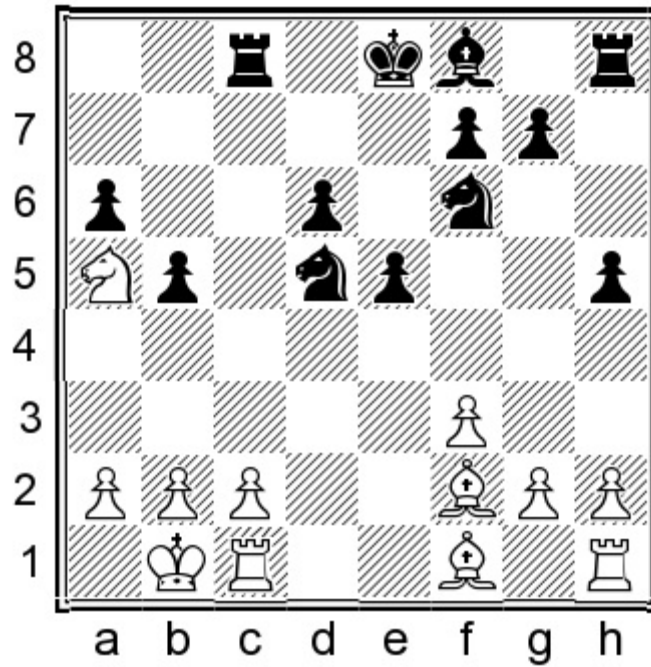
36...♕c2 also works.

37.♘a3 ♕d2 38.♕f1=

Example 7

From Cheparinov – Palac

Zagreb 2018



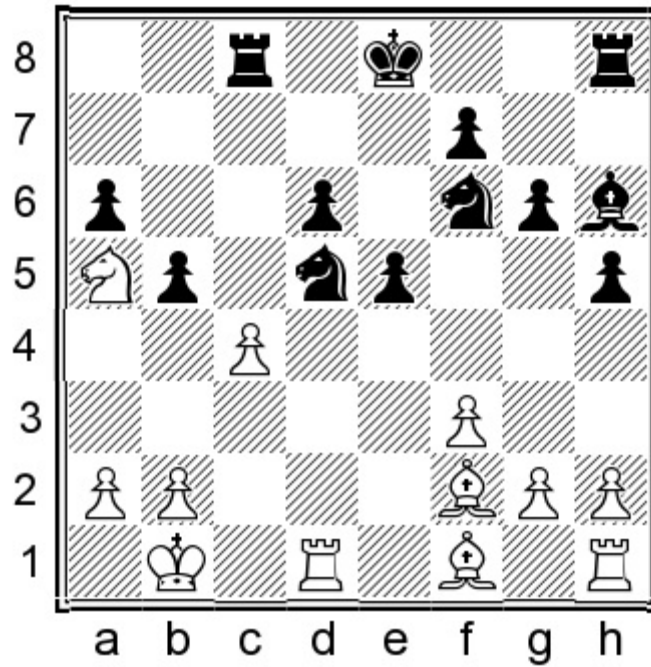
Black to move

White sacrificed a pawn for the initiative and now, with the help of the bishops, is ready to develop with the aid of c2-c4, emphasizing the weakness of the black pawns on the queenside. Black must find something to oppose this plan.

17... g6!

In the game, Black continued to develop with 17...♔e7?! and after 18.c4 bxc4 19.♔xc4 0-0 20.♖hd1± White seized an irresistible initiative: 1-0 (38). [20.g3!?±]

17...g6! 18.c4 ♔h6 19.♖d1



Position after: 19. ♖d1

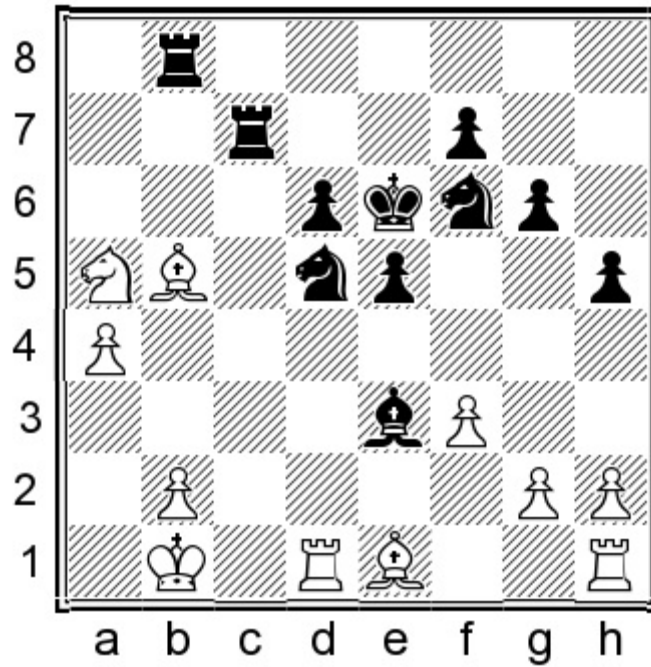
19... ♗e3! 20. ♕e1

20. ♗h4 g5!∞

20... bxc4 21. ♗xc4 ♔e7!?

Taking advantage of the fact that White cannot win a knight because of the mate threat on c1, Black mobilizes his forces.

22. ♗xa6 ♜c7 23. a4 ♜b8 24. ♗b5 ♔e6∞



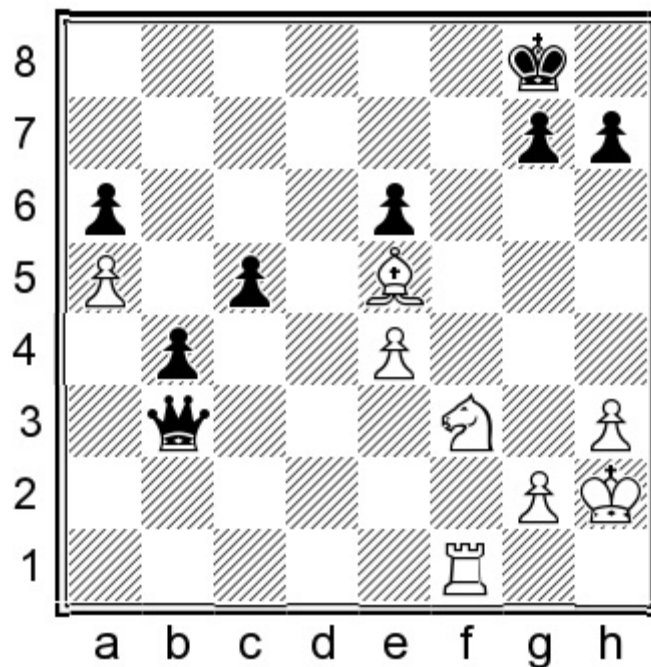
Position after: 24... ♔e6

White's dark-squared bishop interferes with the overall coordination of the pieces, a possible continuation is:

25. ♖b3 ♜b6 26. ♙d2 ♞e7 27. ♝c1 ♞fd5 28. ♝xc7 ♞xc7 29. ♙e2 f5

Example 8

From So – Aronian
London 2017



Black to move

It is necessary for White to get to the black king, otherwise the black pawns will start advancing... Obviously, ♖f3–g5 is an idea, which Black apparently was concerned by. Therefore, he continued in natural fashion, and erroneously played...

30...h6?

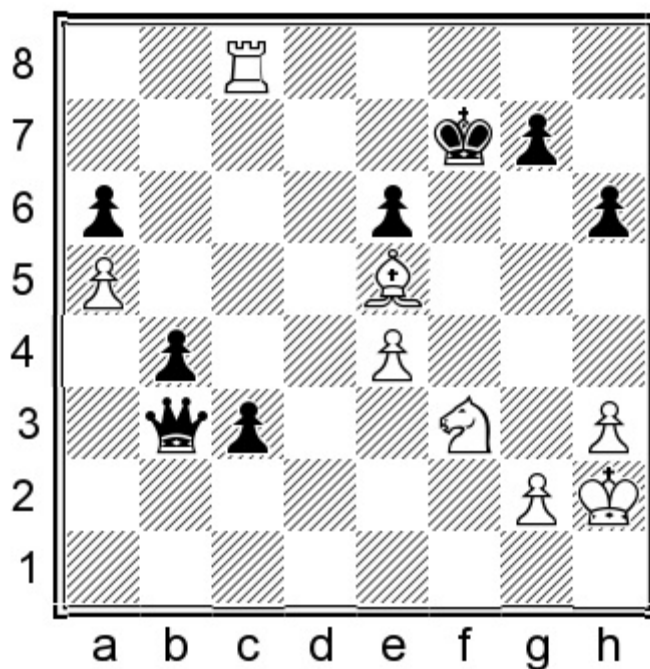
Winning was 30...♙c2!!, parrying all of White's attempts to strengthen his position while freeing the b-pawn to move up the board. White cannot activate his rook, and 31.♘g5 is met with 31...h6 32.♘xe6 ♙xe4–+.

30...h6? 31.♙f2!

This was also a major threat!

The white rook will penetrate along the d-file.

31...c4 32.♙d2 c3 33.♙d8+ ♔f7 34.♙c8



Position after: 34. ♙c8

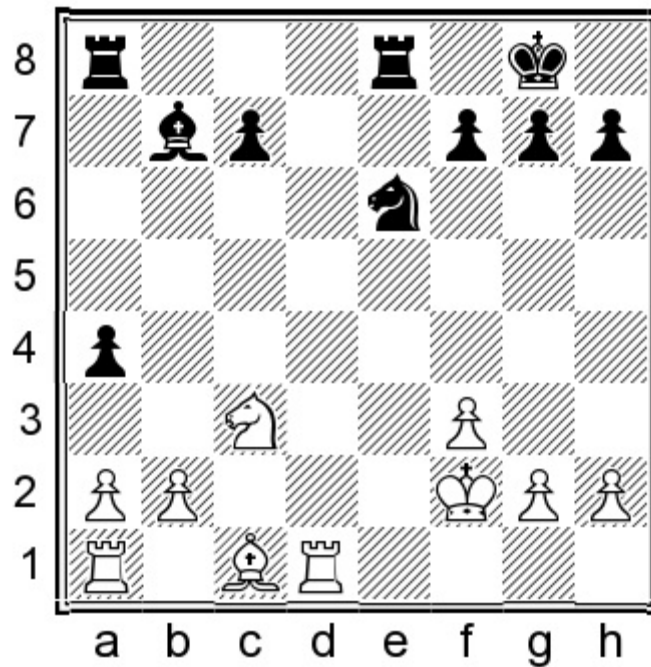
34...♙b1 35.♙c7+ ♔e8 36.♙c8+ ♔f7 37.♙c7+ ♔e8 38.♙c8+

1/2-1/2

Chapter 4 Exercises

1

So, W. – Kramnik, V.



■ Black's pawn structure is worse, but White needs to complete development. Find a strong pawn move for Black, keeping the white pieces passive.

Show/Hide Solution

1

20...f5! =

Not only paving the way for his king but, more importantly, obstructing the development of White's bishop to the e3-square.

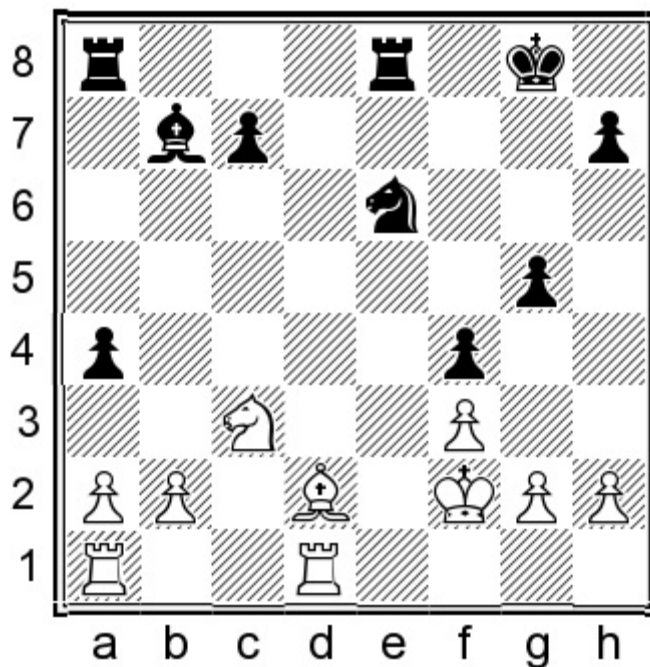
In the game, Black played the "active" 20...c5?! which wastes time, and only weakens d6. 21.♔e3± 1-0

(62) So, W (2812) – Kramnik, V (2808) Leuven 2017.

20...f5! = 21.♔e3

21.f4 stops ...f5-f4, but permanently opens the diagonal for the black bishop. 21...♕c6 22.♔e3 ♖ab8
23.♗d2 h6!?! =

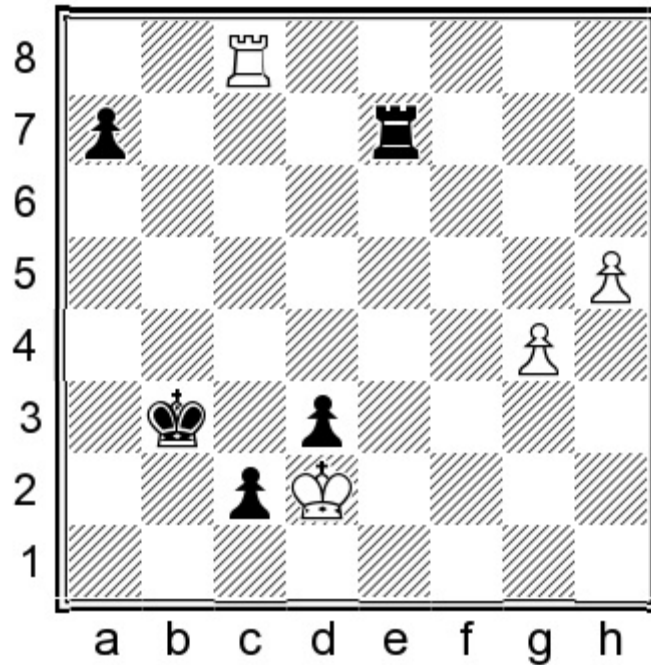
21...f4 22.♕d2 g5!?! =



Position after: 22...g5!?! =

2

Caruana, F. – Carlsen, M.



■ Black wants to win, but is this possible?

Show/Hide Solution

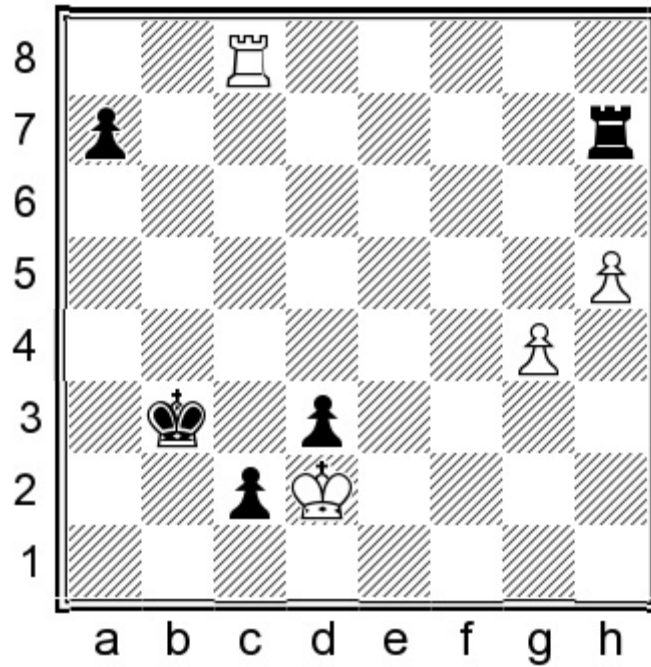
2

54...♖h7!-+

Yes, it is possible. The point is not to engage in active moves, but to restrict the enemy. With the help of this modest but effective preventive move, Black slows down the white pawns and easily achieves victory.

The game continued 54...a5? 55.h6 ♖e2+ 56.♔xd3 ♖h2 57.g5 ♖h3+ 58.♔d2 ♖h2+ 59.♔d3 ½-½ Caruana, F (2784) – Carlsen, M (2843) Karlsruhe 2018.

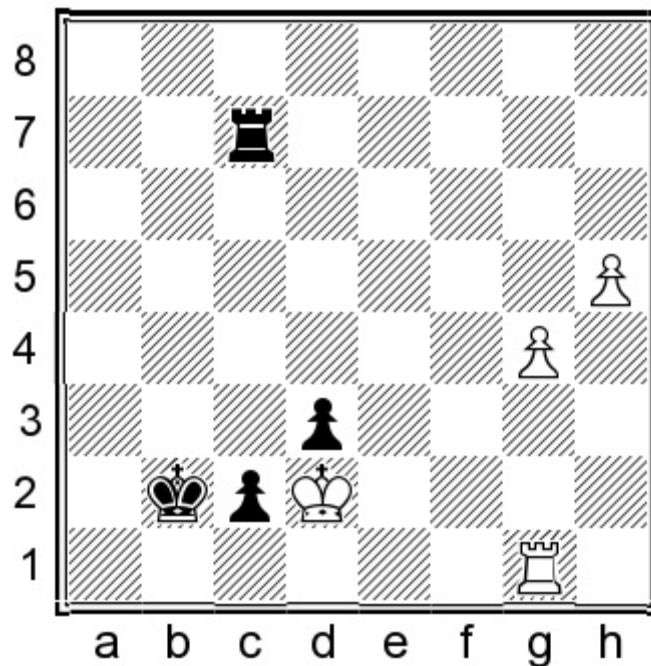
54...♖h7!-+



Position after: 54... ♖h7!—+

55. ♔xd3

A) 55. ♖c5 a5 56. ♖xa5 [56. ♖b5+ ♔c4 57. ♖xa5 ♖f7 58. ♖a4+ ♔b3 59. ♖a1 ♔b2 60. ♖h1 ♖f4 61. g5 ♖f5 62. h6 ♖xg5 63. h7 ♖h5—+] 56... ♖c7! 57. ♖a1 ♔b2 58. ♖g1

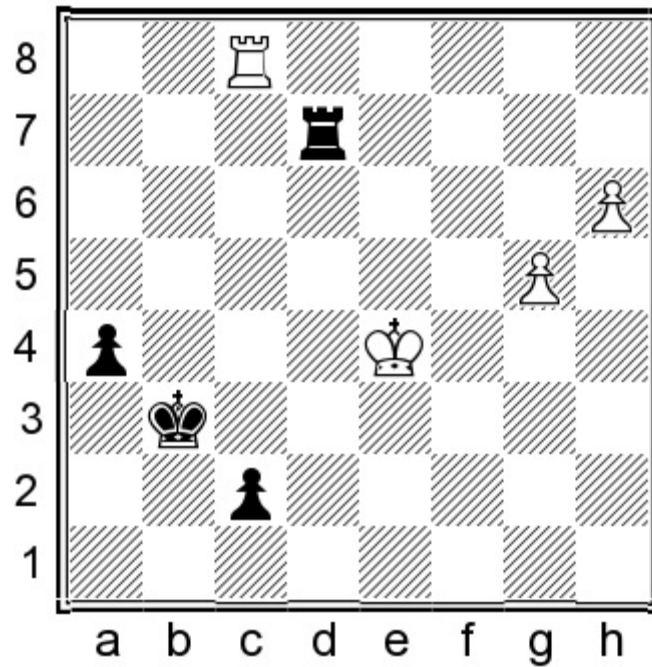


Position after: 58. ♖g1

58... ♖g7 59. ♔xd3 ♖xg4—+

B) 55.♖b8+ ♔a2 56.♞c8 a5 57.♕xd3 ♔b1 58.♖b8+ ♕c1-+

55...♞d7+ 56.♕e4 a5 57.h6 a4 58.g5



Position after: 58.g5

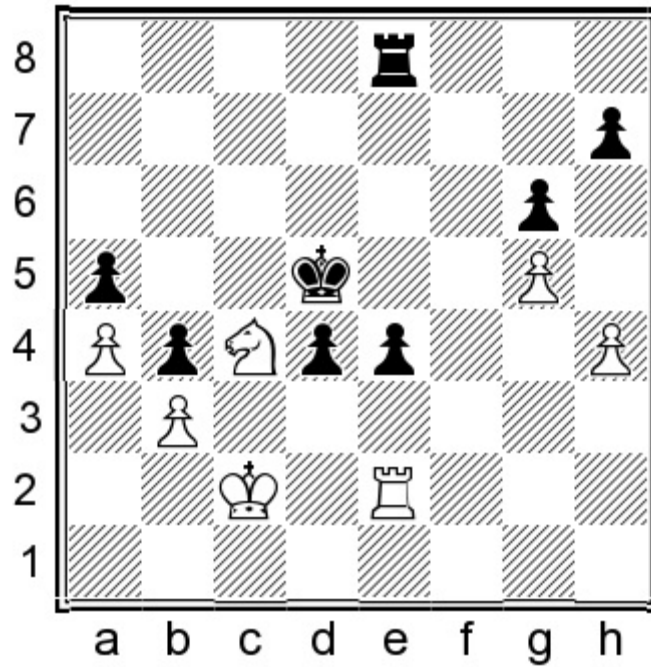
58...♞d8!

An important detail, thanks to the control over the eighth rank, Black wins an important tempo in the race.

59.♞c7 a3-+

3

Khotenashvili, B. – Dzagnidze, N.



□ Can White cash in on his material advantage despite Black's activity?

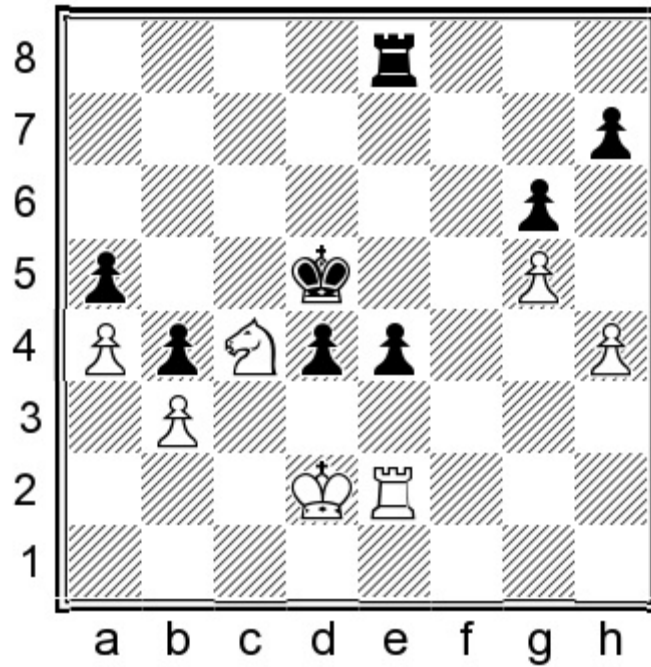
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52.♖f2!

Extremely important as Black was dreaming of controlling the f-file.

The game continued 52.♔d2 and after



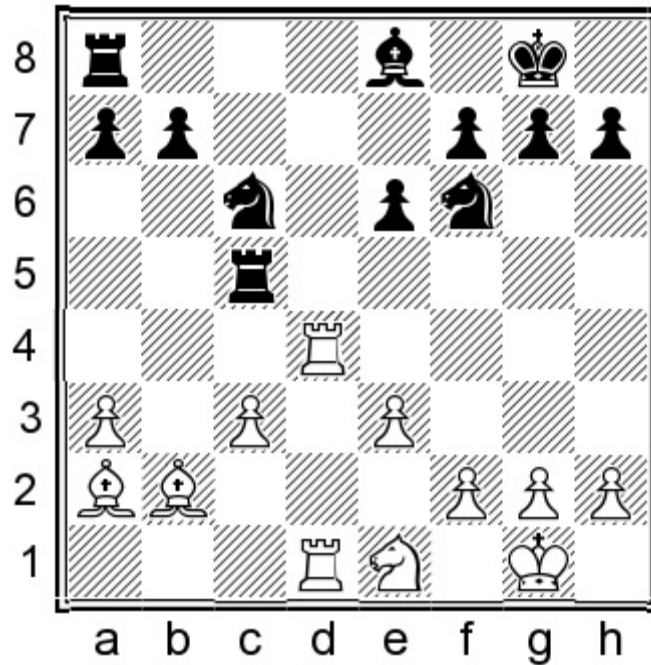
Position after: 52. ♔d2

52... ♜f8! = Black seized the f-file. This was however not enough to convert to a win, as White found a nice resource to force a draw: 53. ♘b6+ ♔c6 54. ♘c4 ♔d5 55. ♘b6+ ½-½ (58) Khotenashvili, B (2493) – Dzagnidze, N (2535) Batumi 2016.

52. ♜f2! e3 53. ♜f1+-

4

Ouellet, M. – Goryachkina, A.



□ 18.♖c4, 18.♗h4, or 18.♗d2?

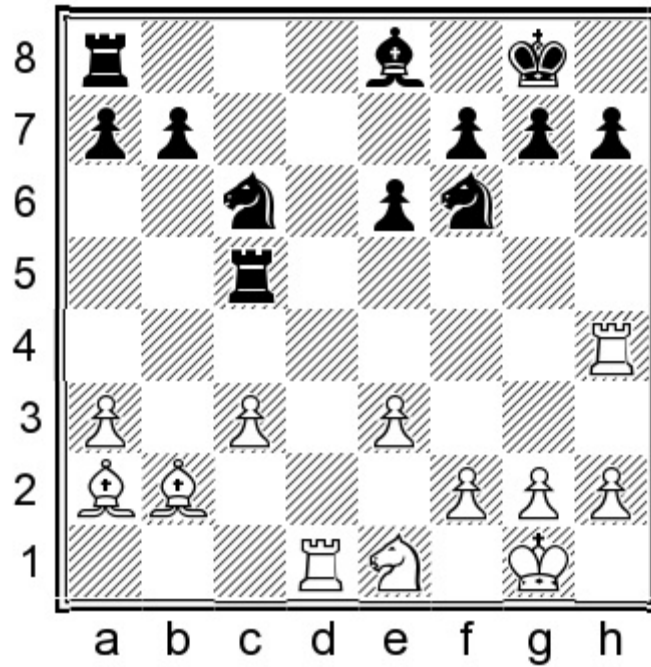
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18.♖c4?

Exchanging Black's active rook in this case is very unfortunate since it allows Black to activate his minor pieces, which creates pressure against White's weak pawn structure on the queenside.

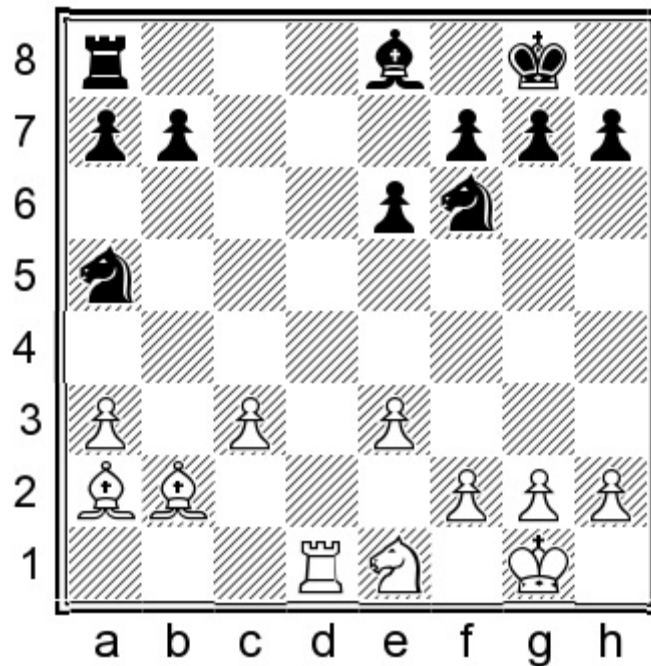
The correct decision was to keep the rooks on the board and not leave the fourth rank so that c3-c4 remains possible if Black goes ...♞e5 or ...♞a5 (prophylaxis!). 18.♗h4!



Position after: 18. ♖h4!

Retreating the rook to f4 makes it less powerful since, when the time is right, Black can play ...e6-e5 with tempo. 18... ♖b5 19. ♗c1 with reasonable play for White. [19. ♗a1!?]

18. ♖c4? ♖xc4 19. ♗xc4 ♘a5 20. ♗a2

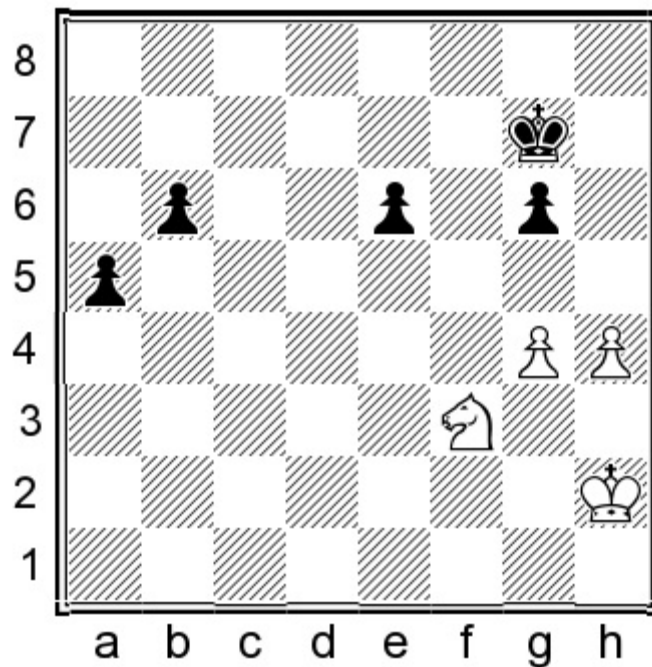


Position after: 20. ♗a2

20... ♗a4! 21. ♖d4 ♗b3 22. ♗xb3 ♘xb3 23. ♖b4 ♘a5 24. e4 b6 25. f3 ♖c8

5

Adams, M. – Hou, Y.



■ 50...a4 or 50...♔f6?

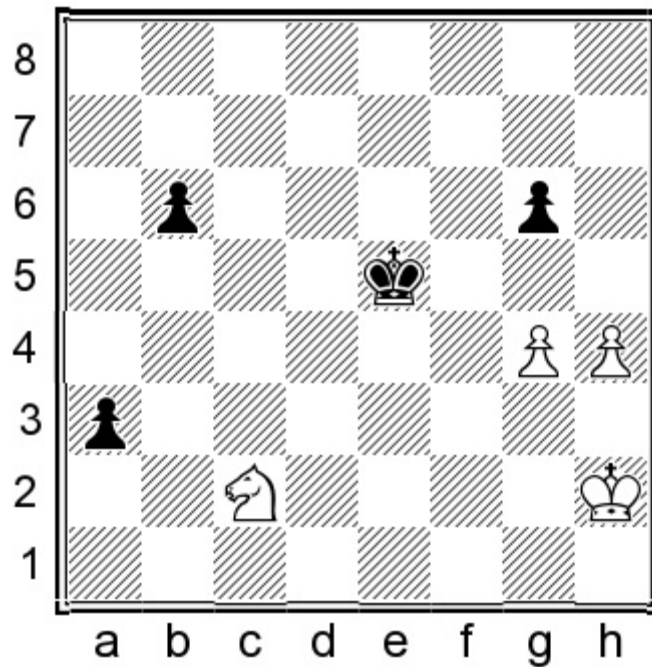
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50...♔f6!

An important preparatory move, avoiding ♖d4 with a double threat (♜xe6 and ♜b5).

A) In the game, Black hurried to set his passed pawns in motion. Surprisingly, this natural impulse turned out to be a fatal mistake. 50...a4? 51.♜d4 a3 [51...♔f6 52.♜b5!+–] 52.♜xe6+ ♔f6 53.♜d4 ♔e5 54.♜c2



Position after: 54. ♖c2

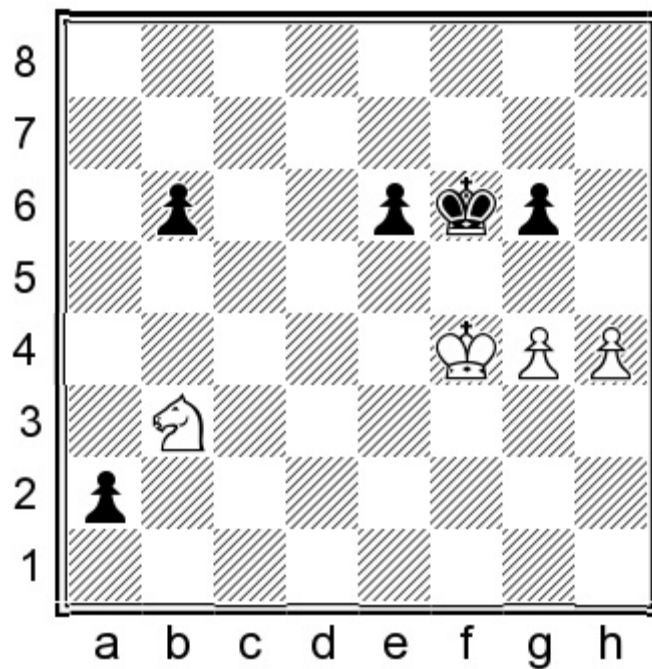
54... ♔f4 55. ♔h3 a2 56. g5 b5 57. ♘a1 b4 58. ♙b3 ♕e5 59. h5 gxh5 60. ♔h4+- 1-0 (70) Adams, M (2751) – Hou Yifan (2651) Gibraltar 2017.

B) 50...b5? 51. ♘d4 b4 52. ♙xe6+ ♔f6 53. ♙c5+-

50...♔f6! 51.♔g3

51. ♘d4 ♕e5=

51...a4 52. ♘d4 a3 53. ♙b3 a2 54. ♔f4



Position after: 54. ♔f4

54...g5+!

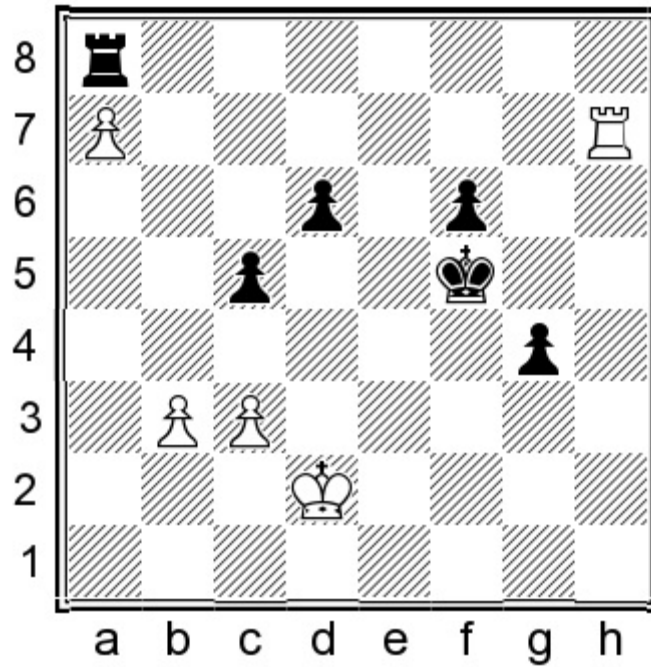
The easiest.

55.hxg5+ ♔g6=

Followed by ...e5+.

6

Popov, I. – Demchenko, A.



■ On the last move, White played c2-c3 and it seems that the b-pawn will be able to advance. Can Black still save the day?

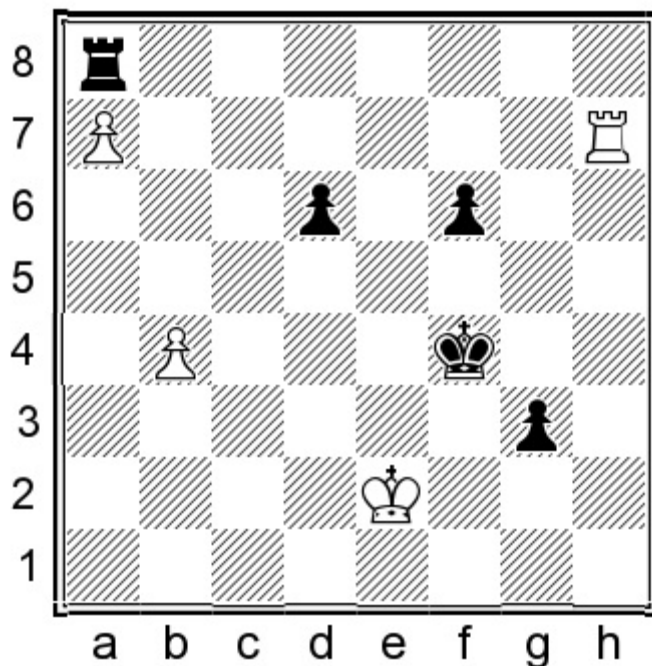
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46...d5!

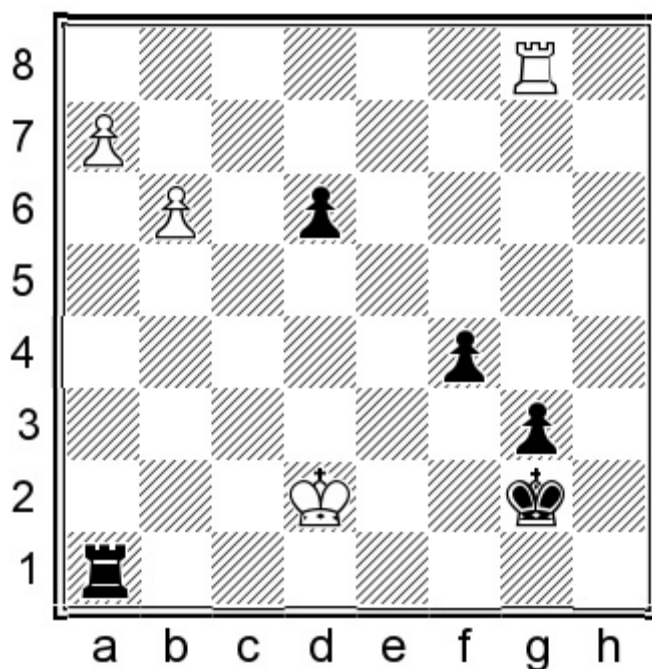
Only with this move!

A) In the game Black played 46...♔f4? and lost: 47.b4 cxb4 48.cxb4 g3 49.♔e2+–



Position after: 49. ♔e2+-

49... ♖e8+ 50. ♔f1 ♔f3 51. ♖g7 ♖h8 52. ♔e1 ♖h1+ 53. ♔d2 ♖a1 54. b5 f5 55. b6 f4 56. ♖g8 ♔g2



Position after: 56... ♔g2

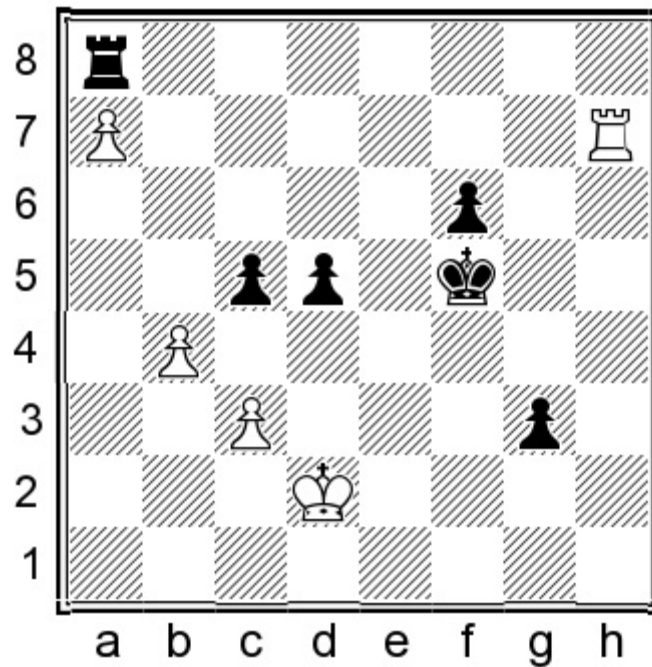
57. a8=♚+ ♖xa8 58. ♖xa8 f3 59. ♖f8 f2 60. ♔e2 1-0 Popov, I (2622) – Demchenko, A (2611) New Delhi 2015.

B) 46... ♔e5? 47. b4 cxb4 48. cxb4 ♔d5 49. ♖c7!+-

46...d5! 47.b4

47.♔e3 ♖e5=

47...g3!

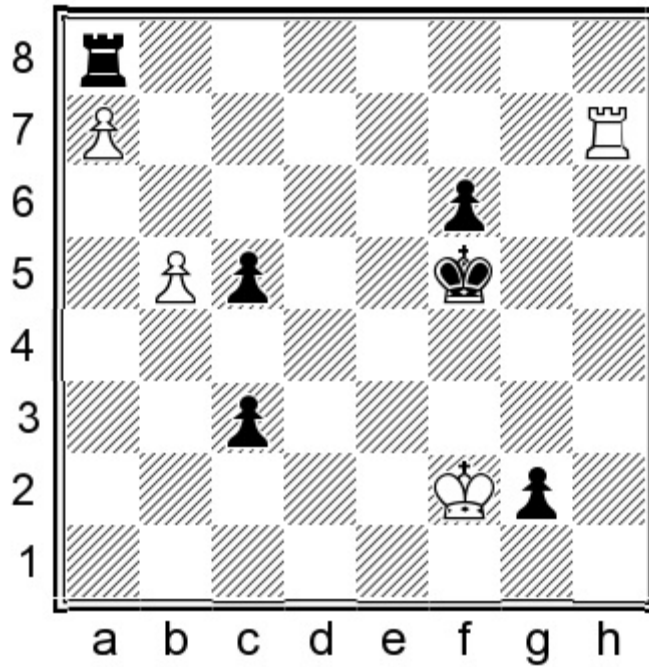


Position after: 47...g3!

Δ 48.♔e2 d4! =

This is the idea. Now a tricky line goes

49.b5 g2 50.♔f2 dxc3



Position after: 50...dxc3

51.♔xg2

The natural 51.b6? fails to 51...♖g8! and Black is better: 52.♔g1 [52.♖h5+ ♔e4 53.♔g1 ♔d4 54.♖h4+ ♔d5 55.♖h3 ♔c6+] 52...c2 53.♖h5+ ♖g5 54.♖xg5+ fxg5 55.a8=♚ c1=♚+ 56.♔xg2 ♚b2+ winning the b6-pawn.

51...c2 52.♖h5+ ♔e4 53.♖xc5 ♖xa7 54.♖xc2=

Chapter 5

Pawn Endgames and Transitioning into Pawn Endgames

Often, the transition into a pawn endgame causes great concern to many of my colleagues, and even pure horror to some.

Why so? You may ask. In my opinion, the reason is that in pawn endgames, we somehow find ourselves in a parallel sphere of reality, where the usual laws of physics that we are accustomed to no longer seem to exist. For example, we may need to lose a tempo in order to win, passing the move to the opponent, whereas we are used to fighting to win tempos. Likewise, the attractiveness of a position can often merely be a beautiful illusion before the collapse of all hope. Quite often, as a result of pawn races, queen endgames for which we are not psychologically prepared may arise...

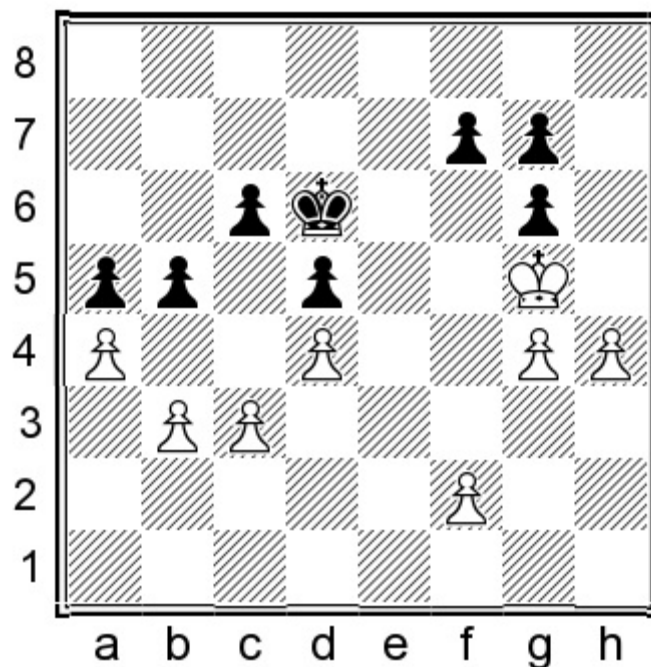
These types of endgames often involve elements such as seizing the opposition, triangulation, laws of “pawn boxes” and more... In general, pawn endgames can turn a player’s head inside out. The only reliable allies in pawn endgames is the precise and exact calculation of variations and knowledge of the basic theoretical positions.

For obvious reasons, we will not dwell on the latter - there are time-tested endgame monographs for that. Instead, we’ll look at interesting practical situations and analyze typical human errors from them, helping us feel a little more confident in this complex type of ending.

Example 1

From Karjakin – Le Quang Liem

Beijing 2013



White to move

38.h5?

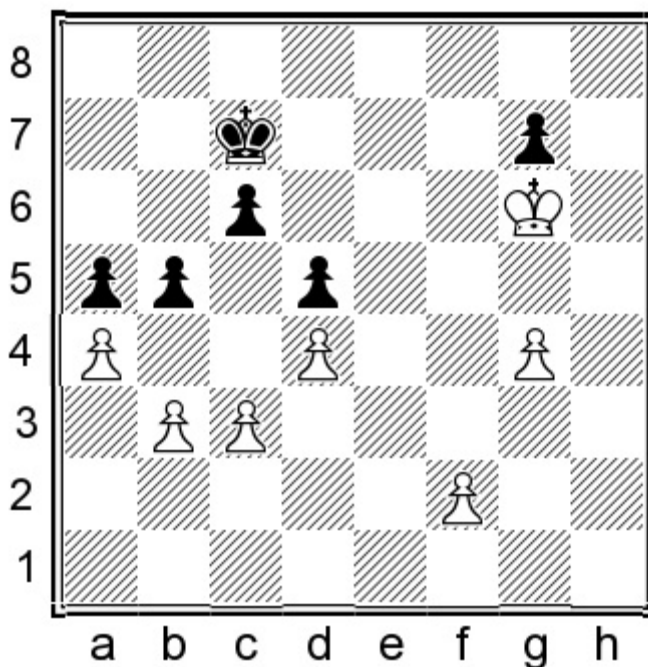
38.f4 would have led to an easy win. 38...♔e6 39.f5+ gxf5 40.gxf5+ ♔e7 41.f6+ gxf6+ 42.♔f5+—
 Black's position can be compared to a desperate man hanging from the edge of a cliff, however there is a saving resource...

38.h5? ♔d7!!=

Through this only move, Black is able to obtain a draw. How? And why here exactly?

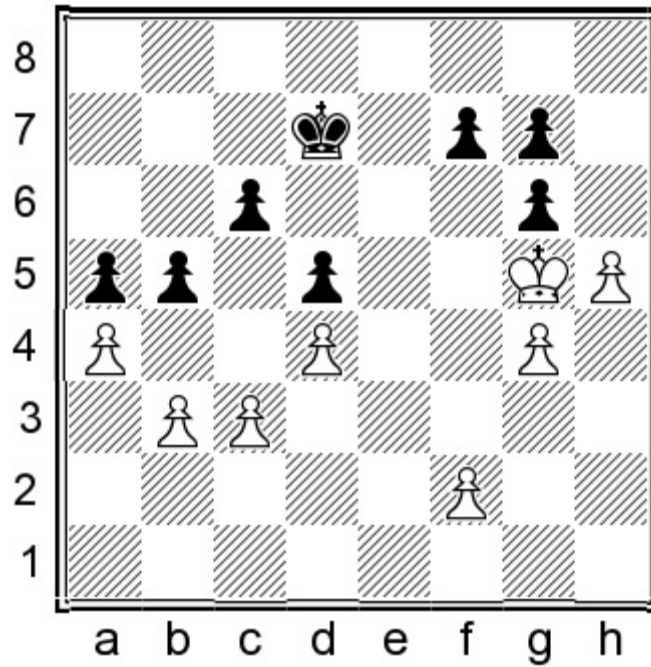
A) In the game, Black went wrong with 38...gxh5? and lost: 39.gxh5 c5 [39...♔e7 40.f4+—] 40.dxc5+ ♔xc5 41.axb5 ♔xb5 42.f4 a4 43.bxa4+ ♔xa4 44.f5 ♔b3 45.f6+— 1-0 (63).

B) 38...♔c7? 39.hxg6 fxg6 40.♔xg6



Position after: 40.♔xg6

40...c5 41.axb5 c4 42.bxc4 a4 [42...dxc4 43.d5 a4 44.♔f7 a3 45.♔e7 a2 46.d6+ ♔b7 47.d7+—]
 43.cxd5 a3 44.♔f7 a2 45.♔e7 a1=♚ 46.d6+ ♔b7 47.d7 ♚e1+ 48.♔d6 Thanks to the pawn on f2,
 Black does not have the means to stop White from promoting as ...♚h4 is not possible.



Position after: 38...♔d7!!=

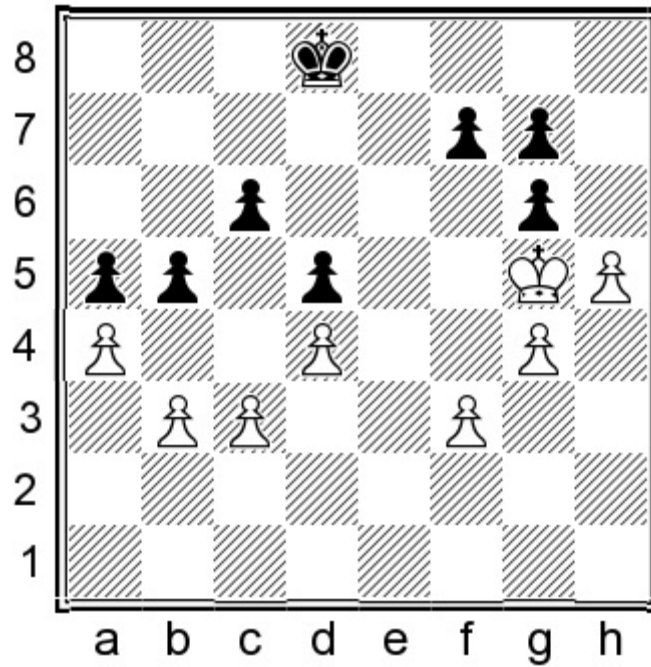
39.f3

A) The black pawn cannot be taken. 39.hxg6 f×g6 40.♔xg6? [40.♔f4 ♔e6=] 40...c5–+ therefore White uses a spare tempo.

B) 39.f4? c5–+

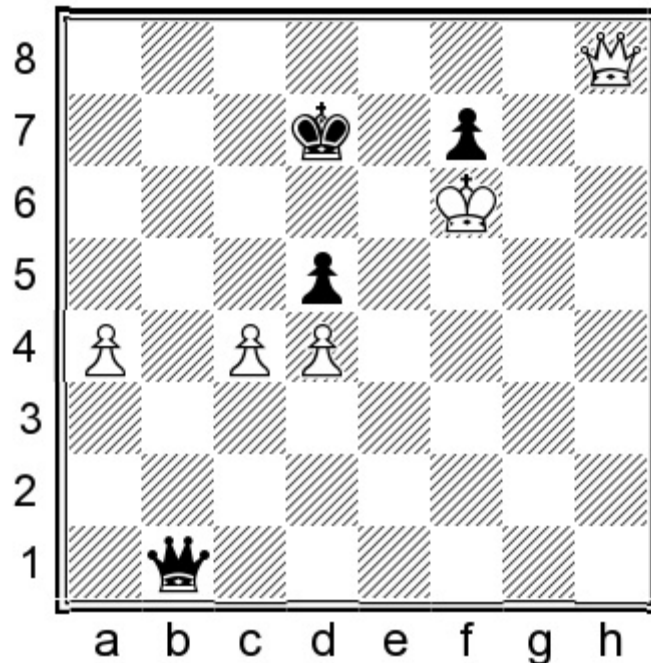
39...♔c7!

Now, this move is possible. In fairness, it should be noted that this is not the only continuation that draws. Also possible is 39...♔d8



Position after: 39...♔d8

40.hxg6 [40.f4 doesn't win either: 40...c5! 41.f5 gxh5 42.gxh5 c4 43.bxc4 b4 44.cxb4 axb4 45.f6 gxf6+ 46.♕xf6 b3 47.h6 b2 48.h7 b1=♚ 49.h8=♚+ ♔d7

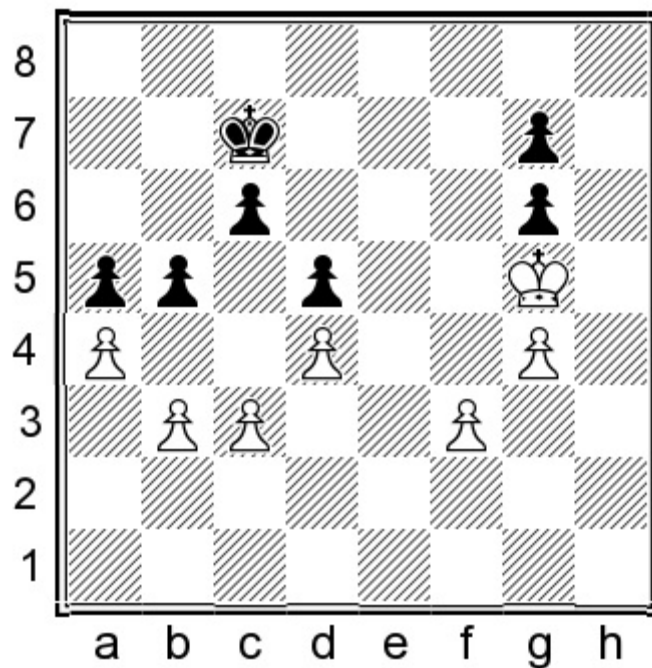


Position after: 49...♔d7

50.♚h3+ ♔d8 51.cxd5 ♚g6+ 52.♕e5 ♚g5+ 53.♕d6 ♚e7+ 54.♕c6 ♚c7+ 55.♕b5 ♚b7+ 56.♕c4 ♚a6+ 57.♕b3 ♚b6+ 58.♕a3 ♚xd4=] 40...fxg6 41.♕f4 [41.♕xg6? c5! and Black wins.] 41...♔d7 42.♕e5 bxa4 43.bxa4 ♕e7 44.f4 ♕d7 45.f5 ♕e7 46.fxg6 ♕d7=

40.hxg6 fxg6

White has to come to terms with accepting a draw, since he cannot make progress with the pawn on f3.



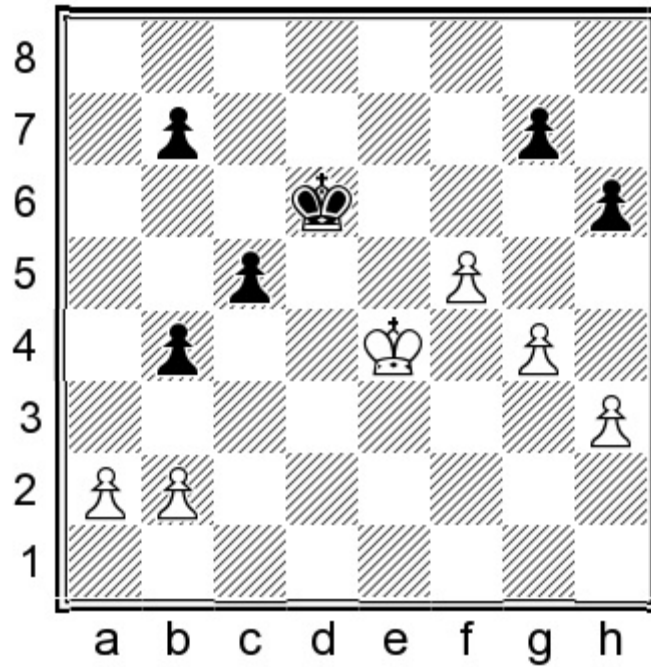
Position after: 40...fxg6

41.♔f4=

41.♔xg6? c5 42.axb5 c4 43.bxc4 a4 44.cxd5 a3 45.♔f7 a2 46.♔e7 a1=♚ 47.d6+ ♔b7 48.d7 ♚e1+
49.♔d6 ♚g3+-+

Example 2

From Ivanchuk – Karjakin
Beijing 2012

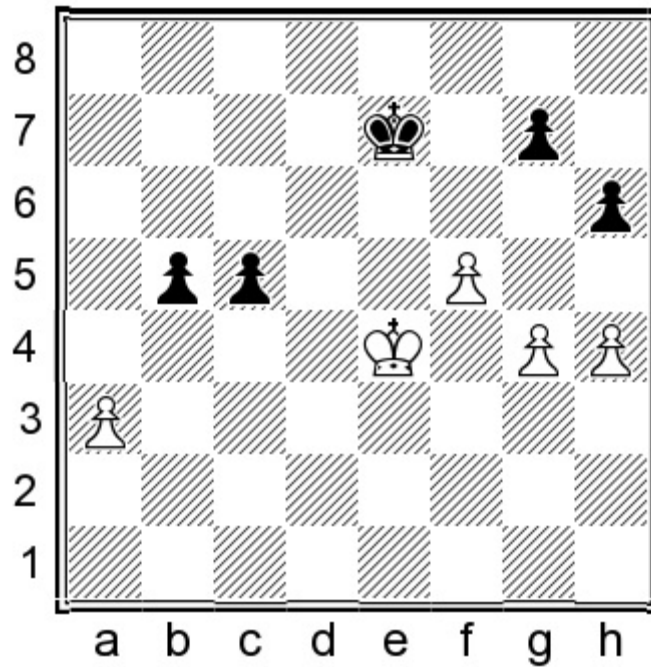


White to move

42.h4?

The most obvious move turns out to be a treacherous mistake.

Correct was 42.a4! (or 42.a3) 42...bxa3 43.bxa3 b5 44.h4 ♔e7



Position after: 44... ♔e7

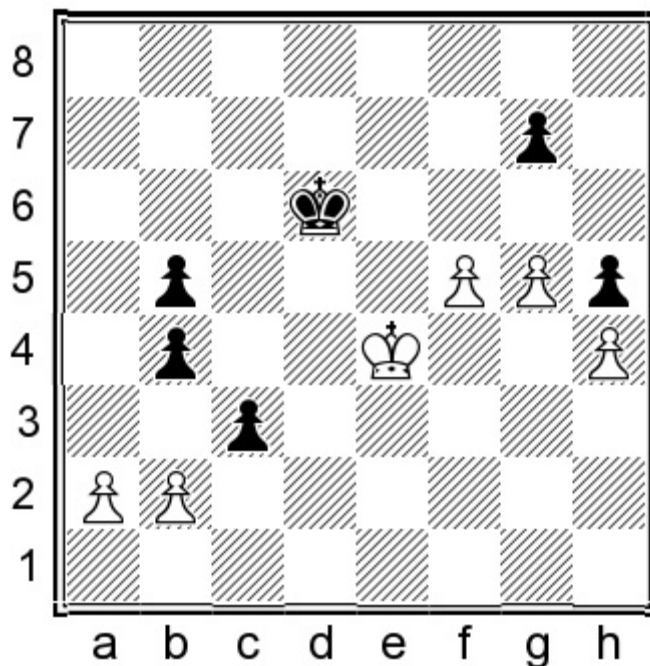
45.g5 [But not 45.♔d5?? b4 46.axb4 cxb4 47.♔c4 ♔f6 48.♔xb4 ♔e5+] 45...hxg5 46.hxg5 with an

easy draw 46...♔d6 47.f6 gxf6 48.gxf6 ♕e6 49.f7 ♕xf7 50.♔d5 c4 51.♔d4=

42.h4? c4?

Returning the mistake.

Winning was 42...b5! 43.g5 h5! 44.♕f4 c4 45.♕e4 c3

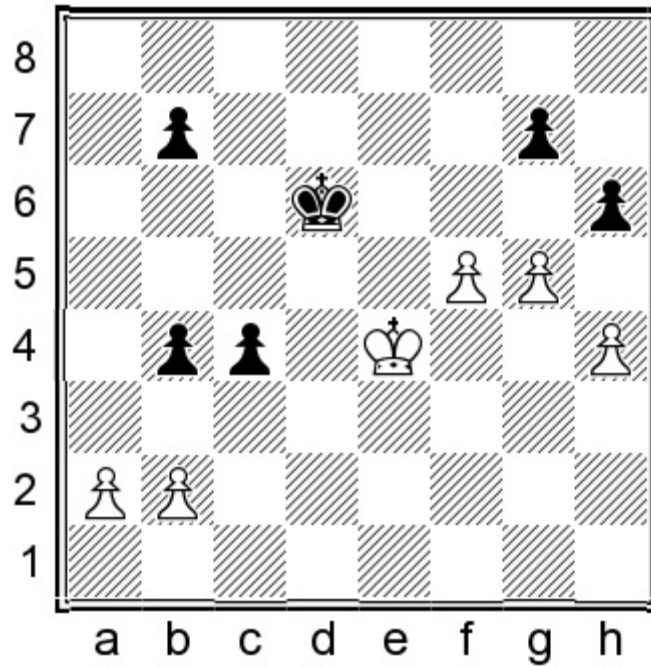


Position after: 45...c3

46.♔d3 [46.bxc3 bxc3 47.♔d3 b4+] 46...cxb2 47.♕c2 ♕e5 48.f6 gxf6 49.gxf6 ♕xf6 50.♕xb2 ♕f5 51.♕b3 ♕g4 52.♕xb4 ♕xh4 53.♕xb5 ♕g3 54.a4 h4+.

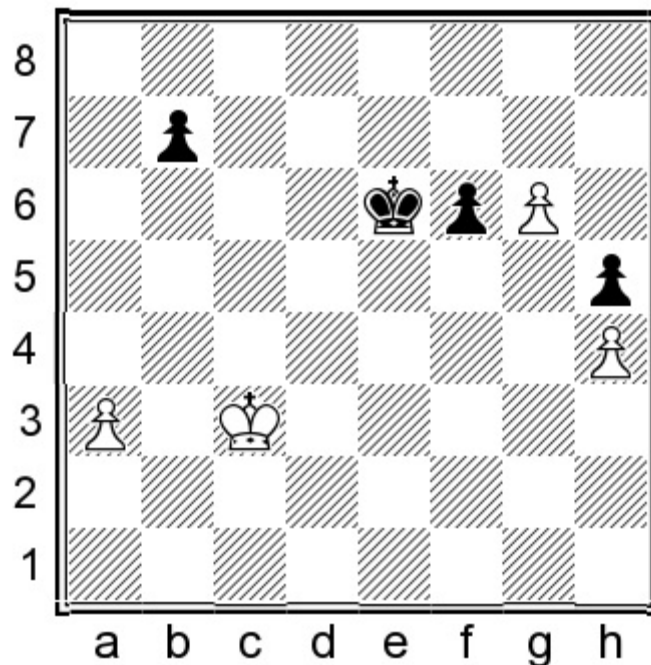
43.♔d4?

43.g5 just holds. Here are some ways these complications can develop:



Position after: 43.g5

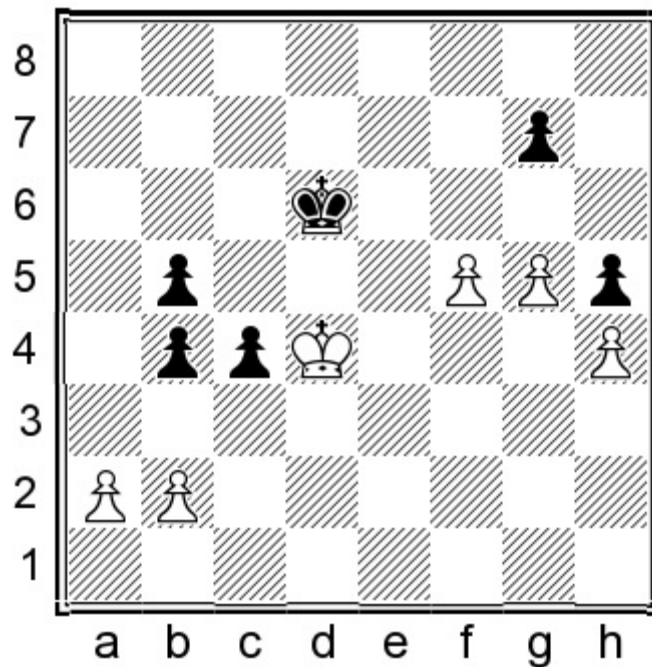
43...h5 44.a4! bxa3 45.bxa3 c3 [45...b5 46.♔d4 ♕e7 47.♕e3 ♖d7 48.♕e4=] 46.♕d3 ♕e5 47.f6 gxf6
48.g6 ♕e6 49.♕xc3



Position after: 49.♕xc3

49...f5 [49...♕e7 50.♕d4 ♕f8 51.♕e4 ♖g7 52.♕f5 b5 53.♕e4 ♕xg6 54.♕f4 ♖g7 55.♕e4 ♕f7
56.♕f5=] 50.a4 ♕f6 51.♕d4 ♕xg6 52.a5 ♕f6 53.♕d5 f4 54.♕e4 f3 55.♕xf3 ♕f5 56.♕e3 ♖g4 57.♕d4
♕xh4 58.♕c5 ♖g5 59.♕b6 h4 60.♕xb7 h3 61.a6 h2 62.a7 h1=♚+ 63.♕b8=

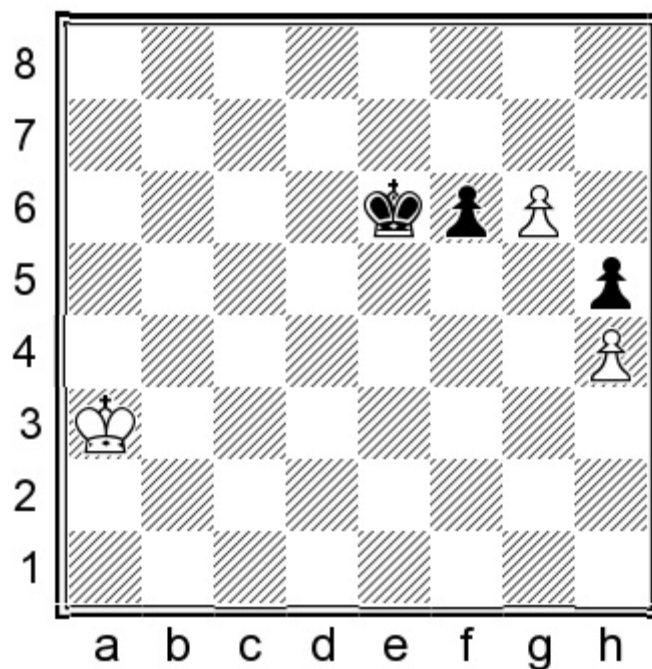
43...b5 44.g5 h5



Position after: 44...h5

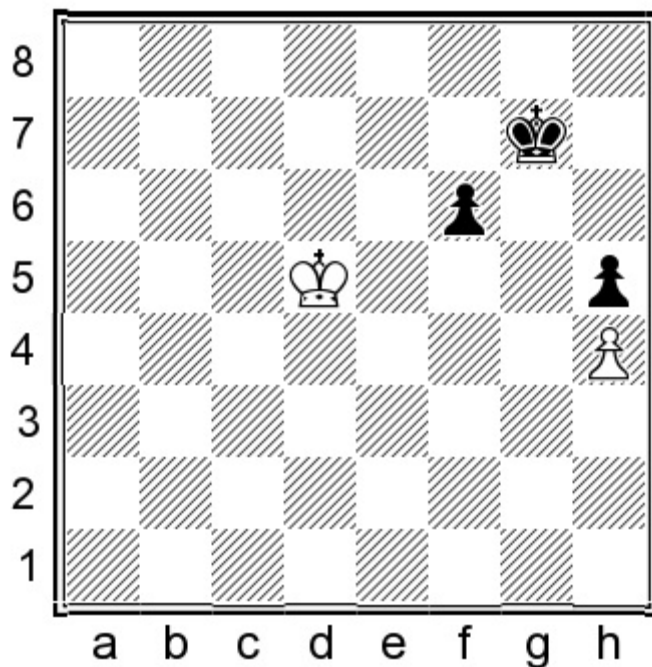
45.♔e4?!

A much more stubborn defense was 45.a4 bxa4 46.♔xc4 a3 47.bxa3 bxa3 48.♔b3 ♔e5 49.f6 gxf6 50.g6 ♔e6 51.♔xa3



Position after: 51.♔xa3

51...♔e7! [51...f5? 52.♕b4 ♕f6 53.♕c4 ♕xg6 54.♕d4 ♕f6 55.♕d5=] 52.♕b4 ♕f8 53.♕c4 ♕g7
 54.♕d5 ♕xg6 55.♕e6 ♕g7 56.♕d5



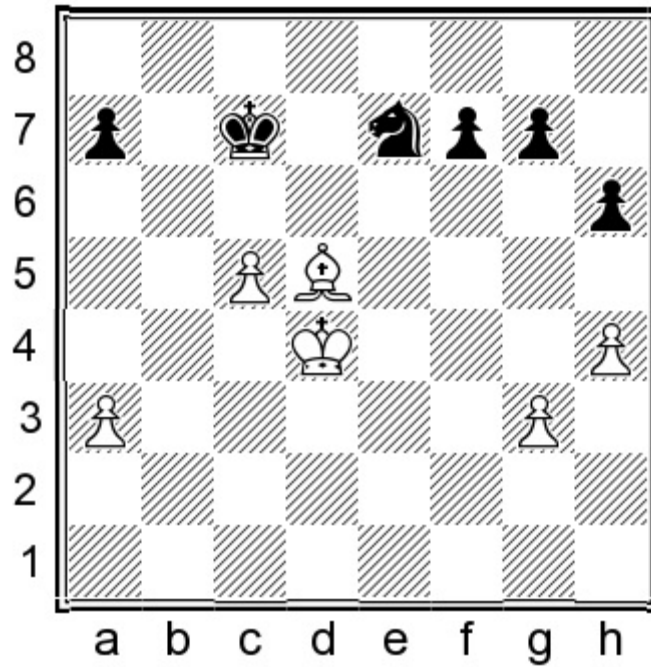
Position after: 56.♕d5

Here, with the aid of a beautiful dance by the king, Black achieves the win. 56...♔h6! [Or 56...♔h7!
 57.♕d6 ♕h6 58.♕d5 ♕g7-+.] 57.♕d6 ♕h7 58.♕d5 ♕g7! 59.♕e4 ♕f8 60.♕f4 ♕e7 61.♕f3 ♕e6
 62.♕f4 f5 63.♕g5 ♕e5 64.♕xh5 f4 65.♕g4 ♕e4 66.h5 f3 67.h6 f2 68.h7 f1=♚ 69.h8=♚ ♚g1+ 70.♕h5
 ♚h1+-+

45...c3 46.♕d3 cxb2 47.♕c2 ♕e5 0-1

Example 3

From Svidler – Carlsen
 Porto Carras 2018

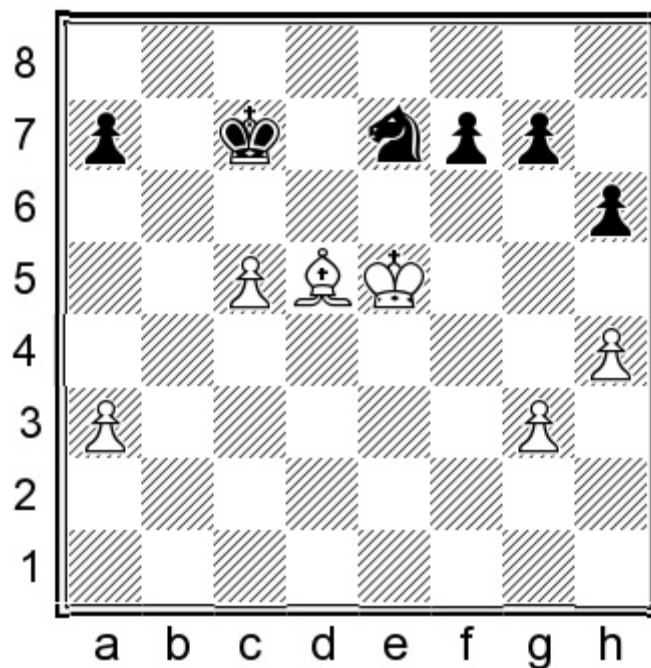


White to move

40. ♔e5

After 40. ♕xf7 “to torment” the enemy, White does not win. 40... ♖f5+ 41. ♔e5 ♗xg3 42. h5 [42. ♕g6 ♕c6=] 42... ♕c6 43. ♕f4 ♗f1 44. ♕f5 ♕xc5 45. ♕g6 ♕d6 46. ♕xg7 ♕e7 47. ♕g6 ♗e3 48. ♕xh6 ♕f6 49. ♕h7 ♕g5=

40. ♔e5

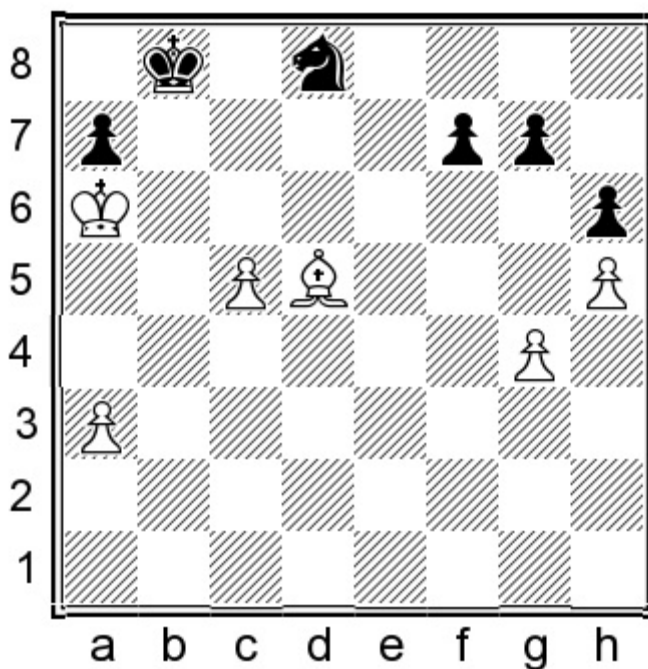


Position after: 40. ♖e5

40... ♜xd5!

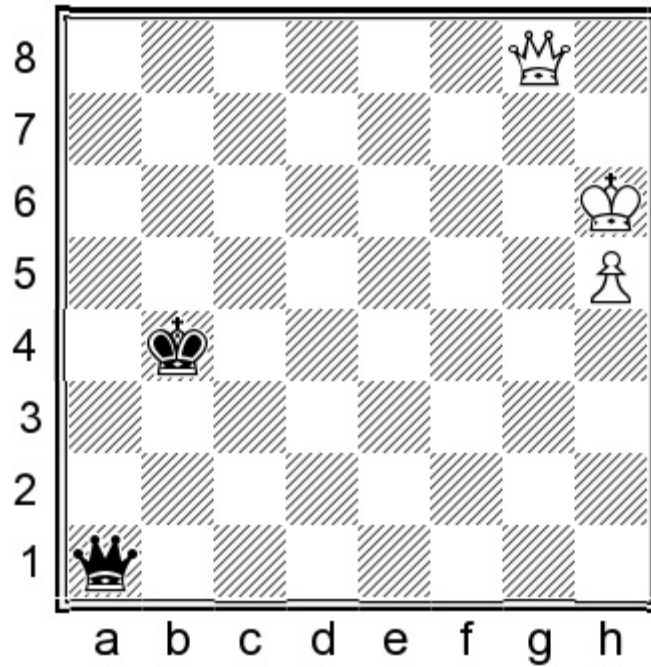
Black would probably not lose with a passive defensive setup, but of course there is no absolute certainty in a practical game.

A) Transferring into the pawn endgame eliminates all of Black's concerns. 40... ♜c6+ 41. ♖e4 ♜d8 42. g4 ♜d7 43. h5 ♜c7 44. ♖d4 ♜d7 45. ♖c4 ♜c7 46. ♖b5 ♜c8 47. ♖a6 ♜b8



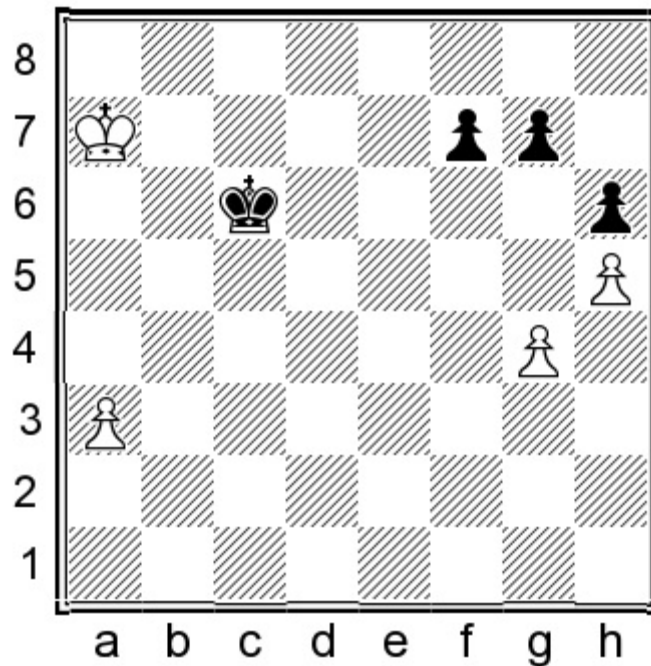
Position after: 47... ♖b8

48. c6 [48. a4 ♜e6 49. ♙xe6 fxe6 50. ♖b5 ♜c7 51. ♖c4 ♜c6 52. ♖d4 a5 53. ♖e5 ♜xc5 54. ♖xe6 ♜b4 55. ♖f7 ♜xa4 56. ♖xg7 ♜b4 57. ♖xh6 a4 58. g5 a3 59. g6 a2 60. g7 a1=♚ 61. g8=♚



Position after: 61.g8=♔

White has an extra pawn, but this is a theoretical draw.] 48...♔c7 49.♔xa7 ♖xc6+ 50.♙xc6 ♔xc6

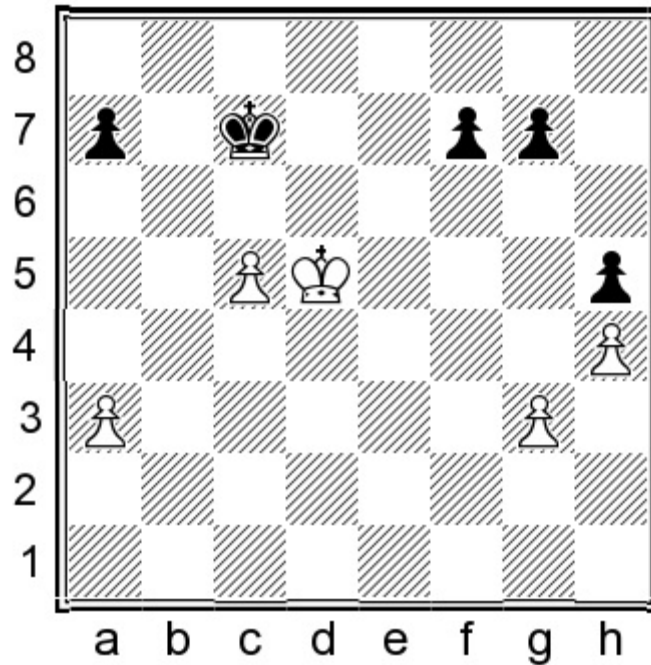


Position after: 50...♔xc6

51.♔b8 [51.a4 ♔c7=] 51...g5! 52.a4 ♔b6 53.♔c8 ♔a5 54.♔d7 ♔xa4 55.♔e7 f5=

B) 40...♖g6+? 41.♔e4 f6 42.♔f5 ♖f8 43.♙e4 ♔d7 44.♙f3 ♔c7 45.♔e4 ♖d7 46.♔d5 ♖e5 47.♙e4+-

41.♔xd5 h5!=



Position after: 41...h5!=

If we look ahead a little bit, then it becomes clear that in such endgames the weaker side will have to manage to stay in the corner and fend off the opponent's king, so the struggle for space is of the utmost importance.

42.c6 a6

42...a5=

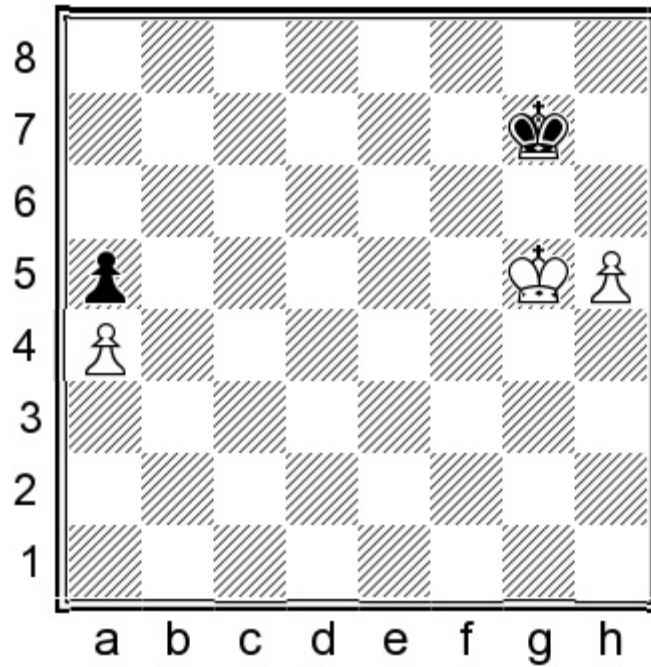
43.a4 a5!

With a pawn on a5, Black has time to implement the main defensive idea.

43...f6?? 44.a5 g5 45.♔e6 ♔xc6 46.♔xf6+-

44.♔c5 f6 45.♔d5 g5 46.♔e6 ♔xc6 47.♔xf6 gxh4 48.gxh4 ♔d6 49.♔g5 ♔e5 50.♔xh5 ♔f5 51.♔h6 ♔f6 52.h5 ♔f7 53.♔g5 ♔g7

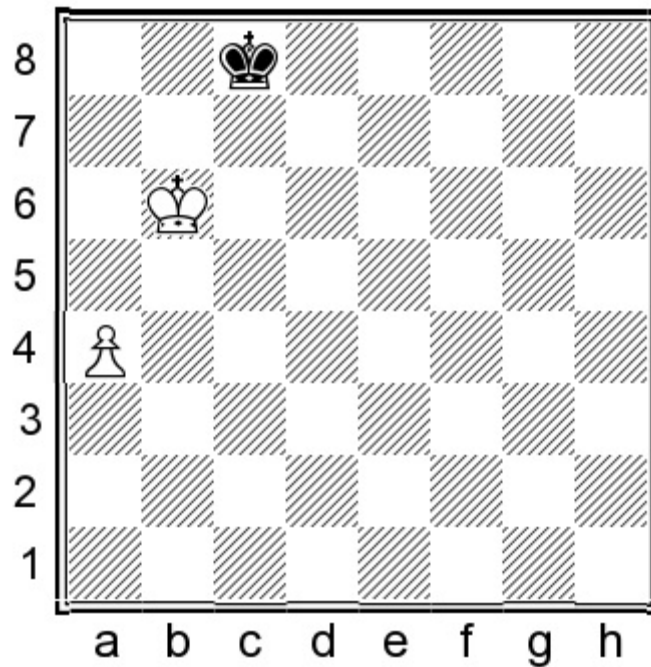
According to the rule: this is a draw as the external pawn (a4) hasn't crossed the halfway line.



Position after: 53...♔g7

54.h6+

54.♕f5 ♖h6 55.♕e5 ♖xh5 56.♕d5 ♖g6 57.♕c5 ♖f7 58.♕b5 ♖e7 59.♕xa5 ♖d7 60.♕b6 ♖c8=



Position after: 60...♖c8=

Just in time!

If the pawns had been on a5 (White) and a6 (Black), as explained earlier, White would have won, as his

last move would have been 60.♔b7 (preventing ...♔c8).

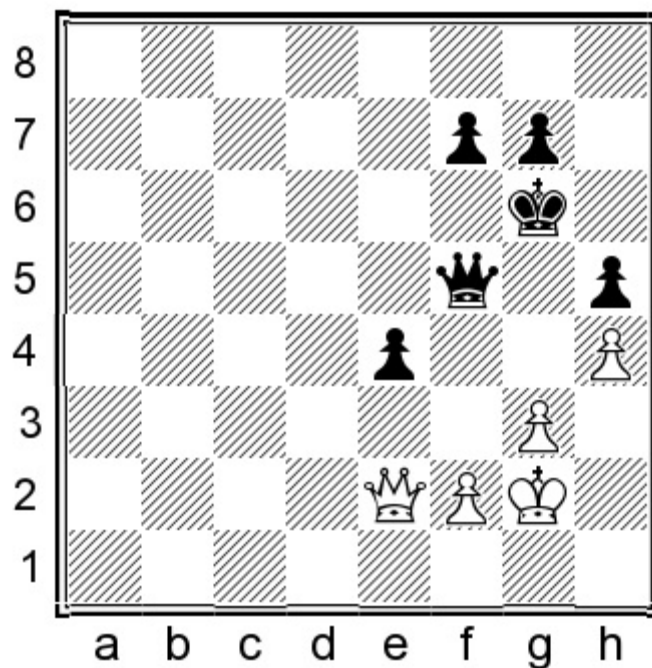
54...♔h7 55.♔h5 ♔h8 56.♔g6 ♔g8 57.h7+ ♔h8 58.♔h6

½-½

Example 4

From Edouard – Akobian

Saint Louis 2018



White to move

Despite Black's extra pawn, the advantage in such an endgame is only symbolic. On the previous move, Black moved the e-pawn forward, but White, apparently confident, did not sense the danger and replied with the natural...

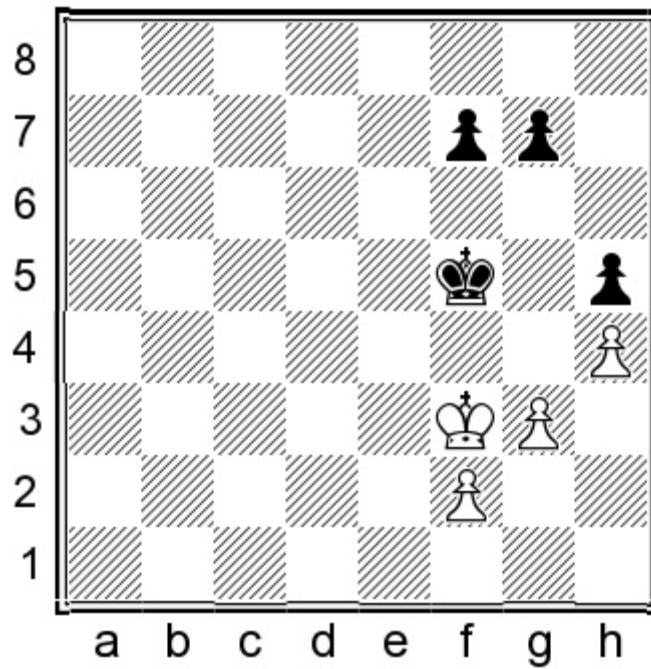
52.♕e3??

This turned out to be an irreparable mistake, a draw would have been secured by making any move, for example 52.♕d2.

52.♕e3?? ♖f3+!

With the aid of a pawn sacrifice, Black transfers into a winning pawn endgame.

53.♕xf3 exf3+ 54.♔xf3 ♔f5—+



Position after: 54...♔f5-+

55.♔g2

55.♔e3 ♔g4 56.♔e4 f6 57.♔e3 f5 58.♔e2 f4-+

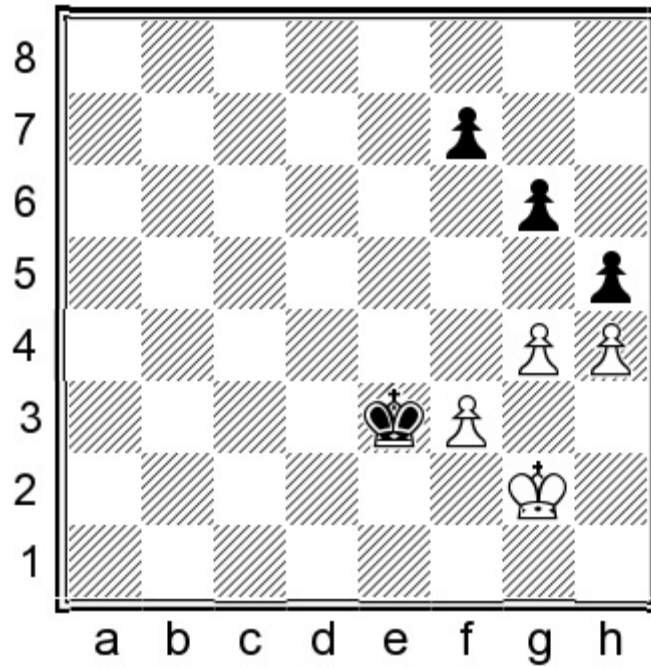
55...♔e4 56.f3+

56.♔g1 ♔f3 57.♔f1 f5 58.♔g1 f4 59.gxf4 ♔xf4 60.♔g2 ♔g4-+

56...♔e3 57.g4

57.f4 f5 58.♔g1 ♔f3 59.♔h2 ♔f2 60.♔h3 ♔g1-+

57...g6

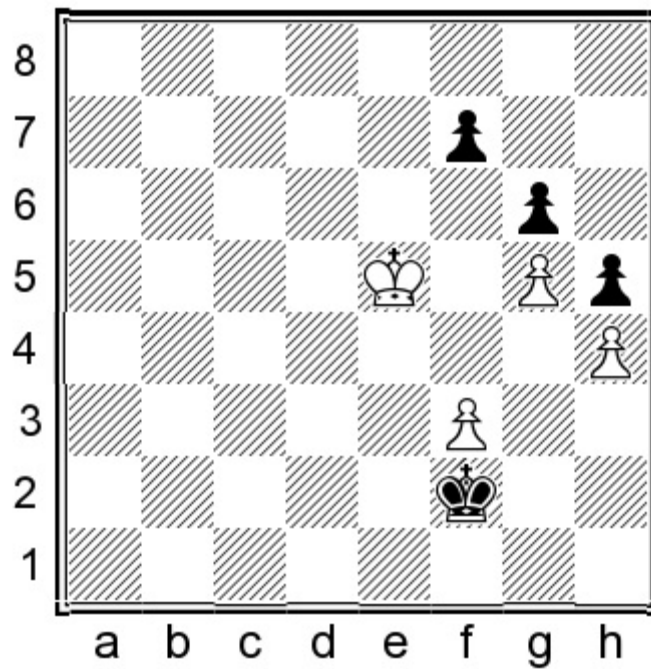


Position after: 57...g6

58.g5

58.♔g3 f5!-+

58...♔e2 59.♔g3 ♔e3 60.♔g2 ♔e2 61.♔g3 ♔f1 62.♔f4 ♔f2 63.♔e5

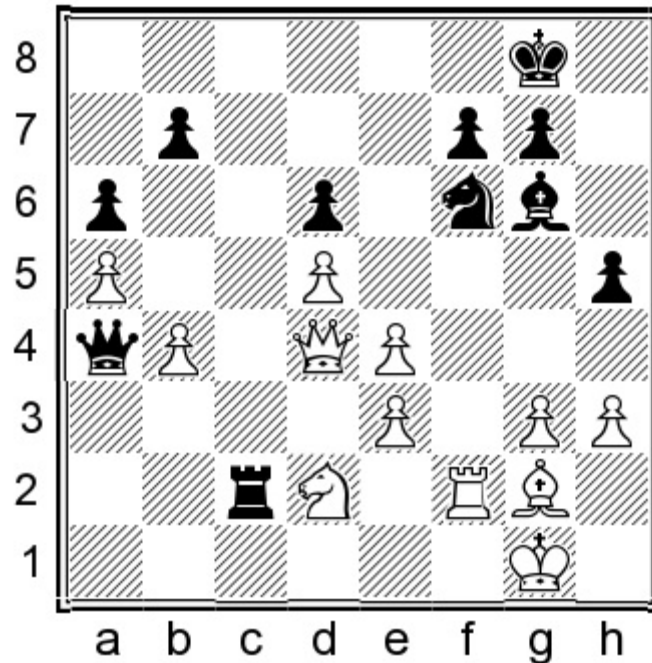


Position after: 63.♔e5

63...♔g3! 64.♔f6 ♔xh4 65.f4 ♔g4 66.♔xf7 ♔f5

Example 5

From Lenderman – Xiong
Saint Louis 2018



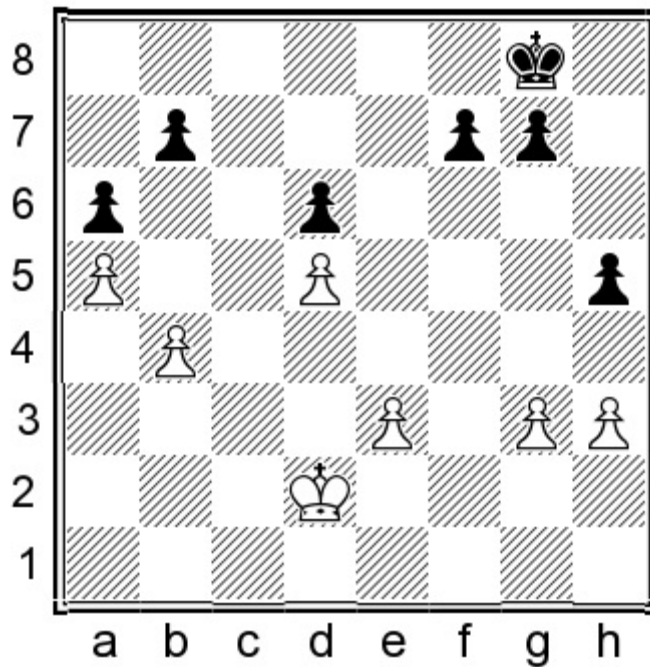
White to move

The reader should not be surprised by this type of middlegame position, White's next move forces the transfer into a pawn endgame, mistakenly considering it a draw.

34. ♖c4?

After 34. ♖f3!? ♚d7! [34... ♜d7 35. ♖c4=] 35. ♖g2 ♚c7 36. ♖e2!? ♞ White's position looks a bit unpleasant, but nothing more than that.

34. ♖c4? ♜xf2 35. ♖xf2 ♚c2+ 36. ♖d2 ♞ 36... ♖xe4 37. ♖xe4 ♚xd2+ 38. ♚xd2 ♜xe4+ 39. ♖e2 ♜xd2 40. ♖xd2



Position after: 40. ♔xd2

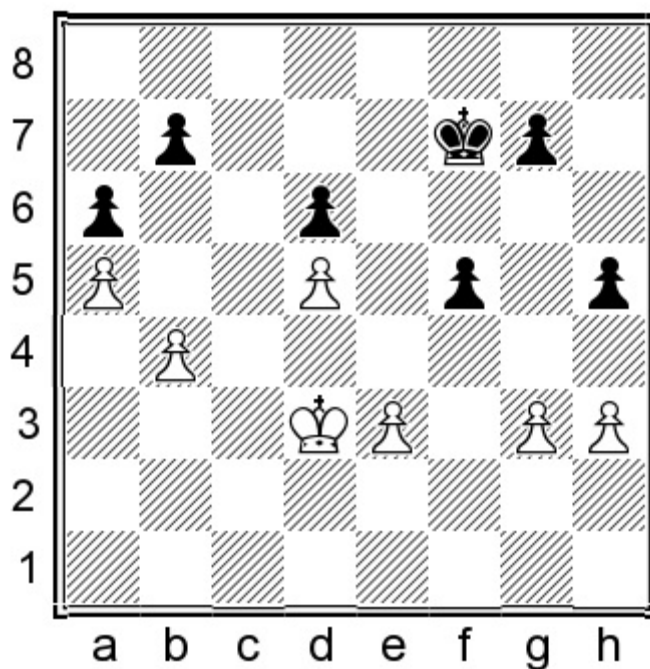
40...f5?

By making this stereotypical move, Black overlooks a convincing win 40...♔h7!! 41.e4 ♔g6 42.♔e3

A) 42...♔f6? 43.♔d4 g6 [43...g5?? 44.g4 h4 45.e5+-] 44.h4=

B) 42...f5! 43.♔f4 fxe4 44.♔xe4 ♔g5--+

41.♔d3 ♔f7

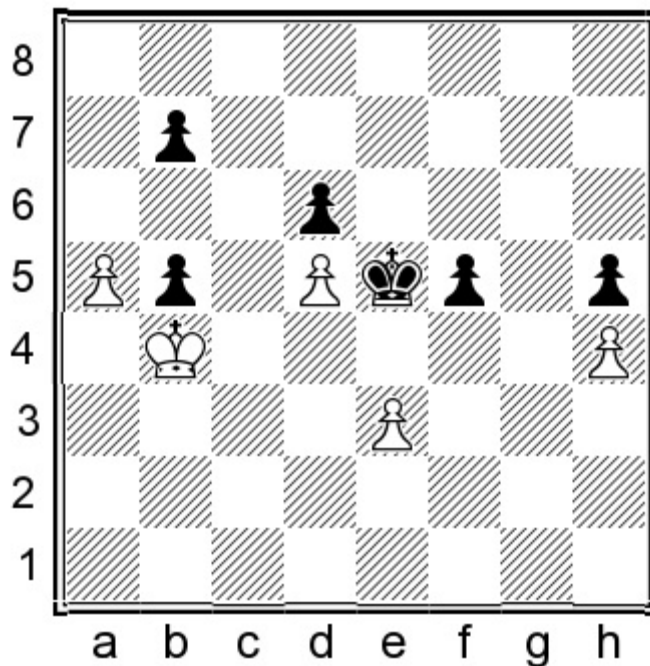


Position after: 41...♔f7

And another miracle occurred...

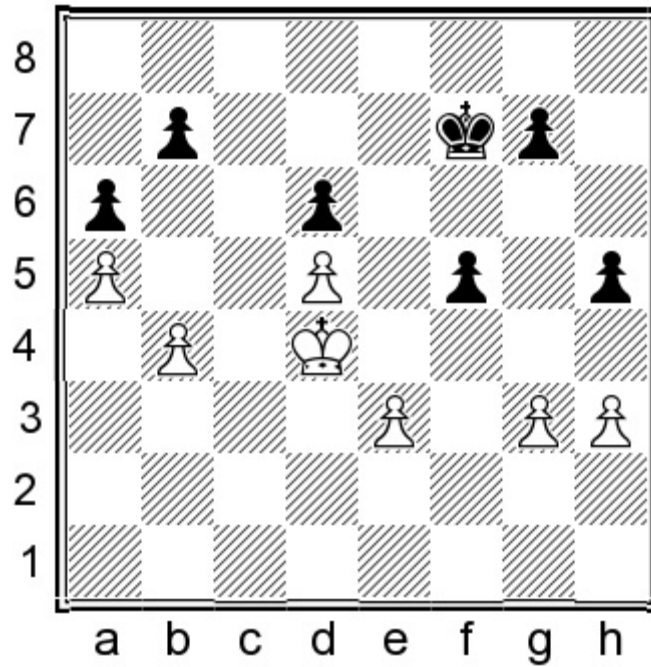
42.♔d4??

After 42.h4! ♔f6 43.♔d4 g5 44.b5! axb5 45.♔c3 gxh4 46.gxh4 ♔e5 47.♔b4=.



Position after: 47.♔b4=

White achieves a clear draw, and of course, one cannot state that it was easy, but on the other hand it cannot be viewed as extremely complicated either. White probably didn't realise how critical his situation was and instead preferred a normal move towards the center.



Position after: 42. ♔d4??

42... ♔f6??

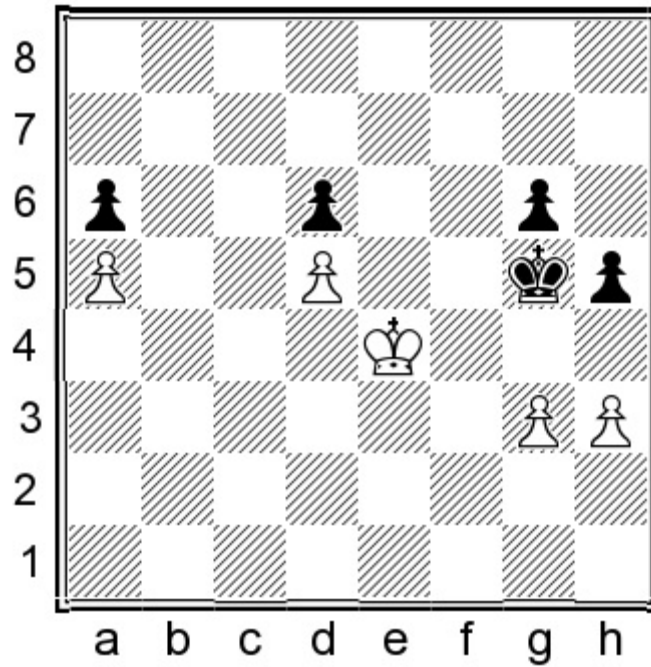
A) Easily winning was 42... ♔g6 43.h4 ♔f6 44.b5 g6! 45.b6 g5—+.

B) Or 42... ♔e7 43.h4 ♔f6—+

43.b5??

43.h4 g5 44.b5 axb5 45.♔c3=

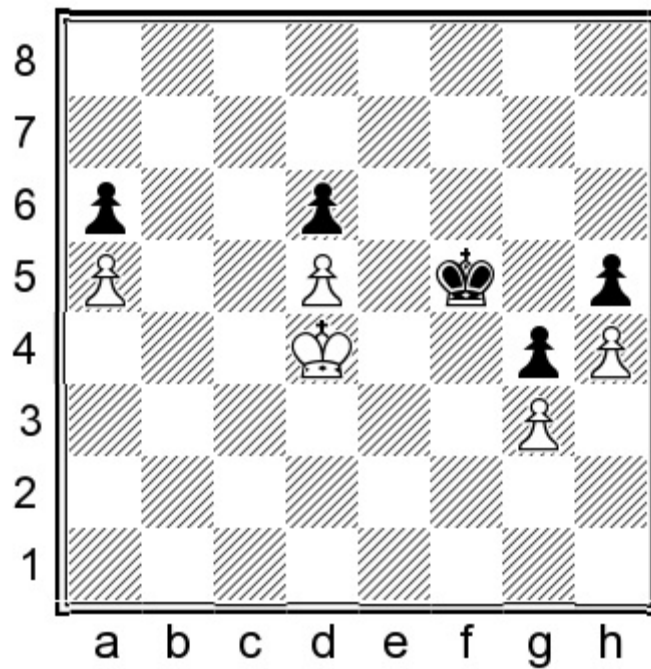
43... ♔g5 44.e4 fxe4 45.bxa6 bxa6 46.♔xe4 g6—+



Position after: 46...g6-+

Zugzwang: White will lose his d5-pawn in the next few moves.

47.♔e3 ♔f5 48.♔d4 g5 49.h4 g4



Position after: 49...g4

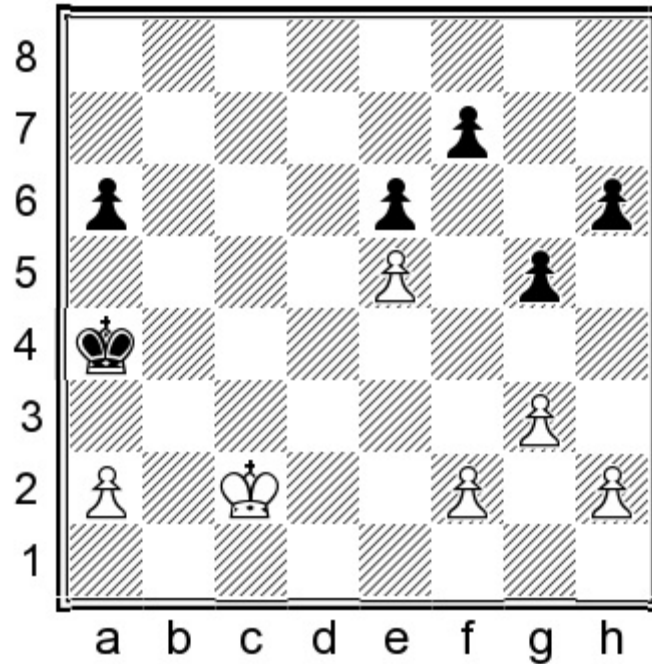
50.♔d3 ♔e5 51.♔e3 ♔xd5 52.♔d3 ♔e5 53.♔c3 d5 54.♔d3 d4 55.♔c4 ♔e4

0-1

Example 6

From Ganguly – Yu Yangyi

Fufeng 2017

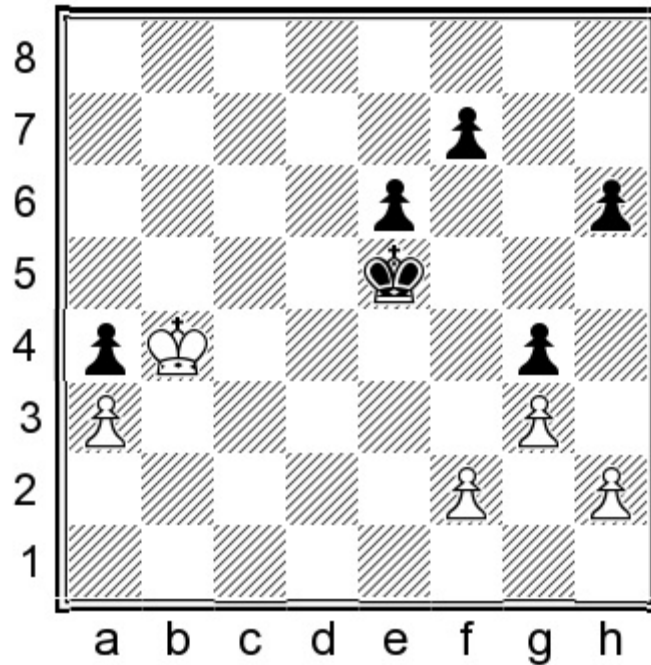


White to move

41.♔d3!!

The only move.

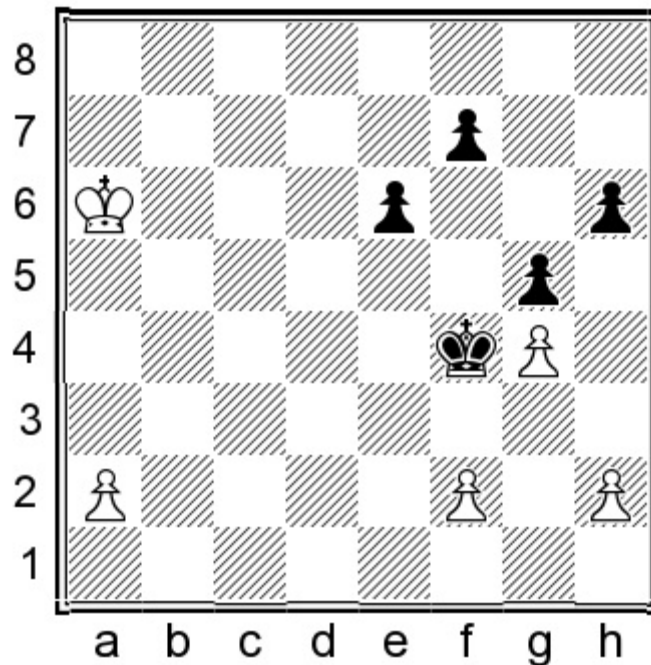
A) In the game, White did not believe that he could be saved, and after the weak-willed 41.♔b2? g4 42.a3 a5 43.♔a2 ♖b5 44.♔b3 a4+ 45.♔c3 ♔c5 46.♔d3 ♔d5 47.♔c3 ♔c5 48.♔d3 ♔d5 49.♔c3 ♔xe5 50.♔b4



Position after: 50. ♔b4

50... ♕e4! [The game continued 50... ♕d4?? 51. ♕xa4 ♖c4 52. ♕a5 ♖c5 53. ♕a4 ♖c4 54. ♕a5 ♖c5 55. ♕a4 ♖c4 with a draw, ½-½] 51. ♕xa4 ♖f3 52. ♕b3 e5 53. a4 ♕xf2 54. a5 e4 55. a6 e3 56. a7 e2 57. a8=♚ e1=♚-+. The queen endgame is easily won for Black.

B) 41. g4? ♕a3 42. ♕b1 ♕b4 43. ♕b2 ♖c4 44. ♕a3 ♖d4 45. ♕a4 ♖xe5 46. ♕a5 ♖f4 47. ♕xa6



Position after: 47. ♕xa6

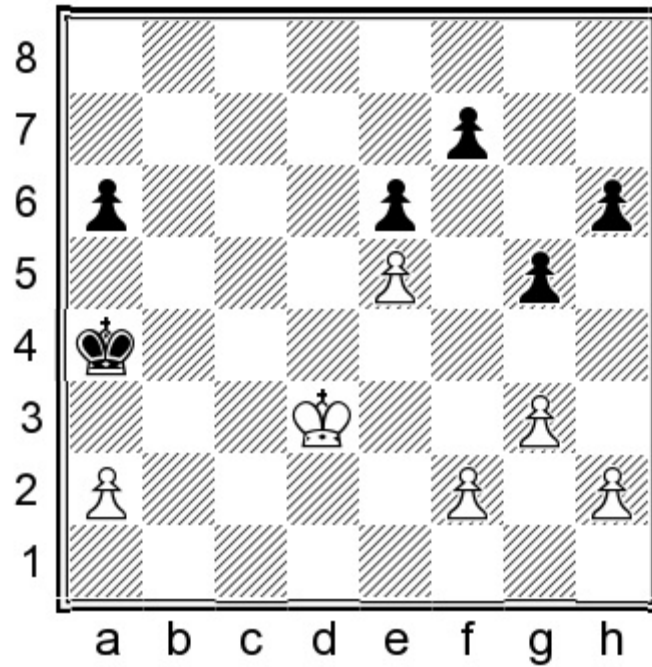
47...e5! 48. ♕b5 e4 49. a4 [The move order (first pushing the e-pawn) is important, as if White plays

49.♔c4 to catch the e4-pawn, Black has 49...♕xg4 50.a4 ♔f3 51.♕d4 f5–+.] 49...♕f3 is similar to the game above.

C) 41.f4? g4 42.♕d3 ♕b4 43.♕d4 a5 44.♕d3 a4–+

D) 41.♕c3 h5!–+

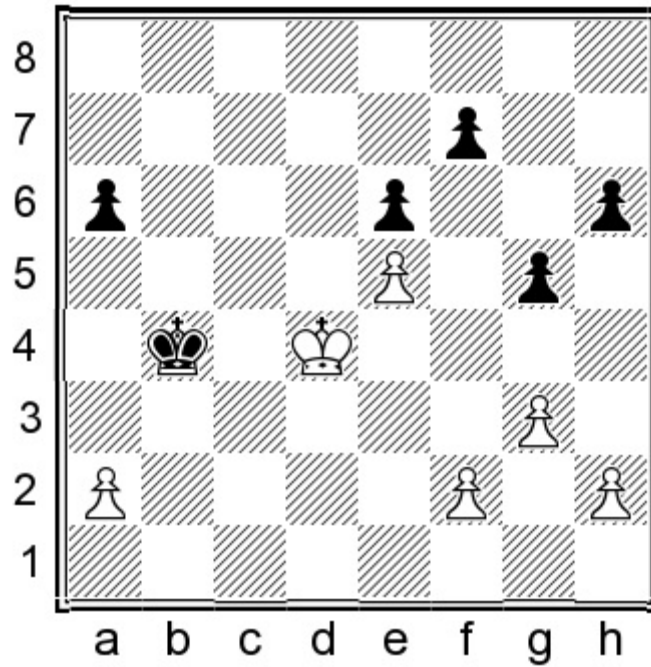
41.♕d3!!



Position after: 41.♕d3!!

41...♕a3

A) 41...♕b4 42.♕d4!



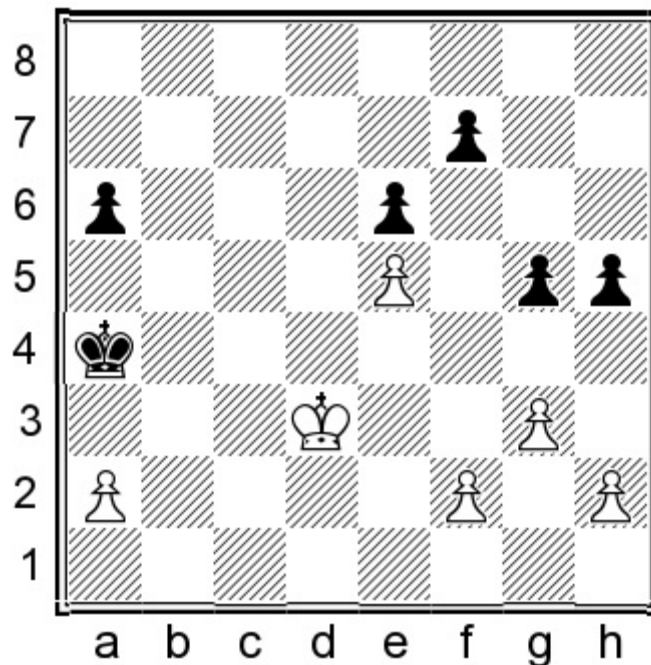
Position after: 42. ♔d4!

A1) 42...g4 43.f3! h5 [43...gxf3 44.♔e3 ♔a3 45.h4 ♔xa2 46.h5 a5 47.g4 a4 48.g5 a3 49.gxh6 ♔b3 50.h7=] 44.fxg4 hxg4 45.♔e4 a5 46.♔f4=

A2) 42...h5 43.♔e4 a5 44.f4 g4 45.f5 a4 46.♔f4 ♔a3 47.♔g5 exf5 48.♔f6 f4 49.gxf4 h4=

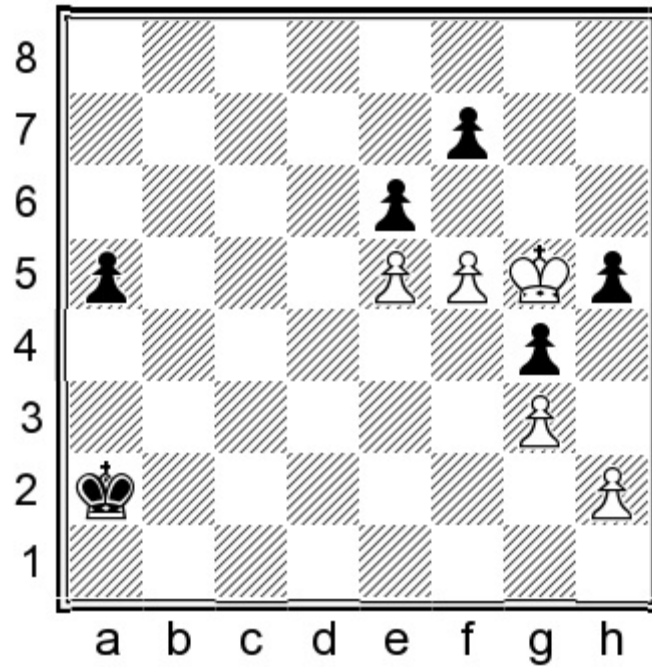
A3) 42...a5 43.g4! a4 44.a3+ [Or 44.♔d3=] 44...♔b3 45.♔d3 ♔xa3 46.♔c3=

B) 41...h5



Position after: 41...h5

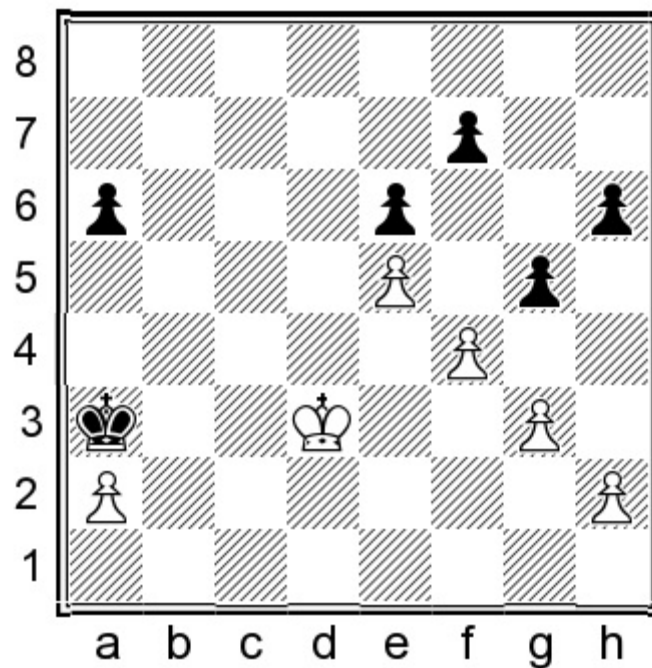
42.♔e4! Seeking counterplay on the kingside. 42...♙a3 43.f4 g4 [43...a5 44.fxg5 ♔xa2 45.h4! a4 46.g4=] 44.f5 ♔xa2 45.♙f4 a5 46.♙g5



Position after: 46.♙g5

46...exf5 [46...a4? 47.♙f6±] 47.♙xf5 a4 48.♙f6 a3 49.♙xf7 ♔b1! 50.e6 a2 51.e7 a1=♚ 52.e8=♚ ♚a2+=

42.f4!!



Position after: 42.f4!!

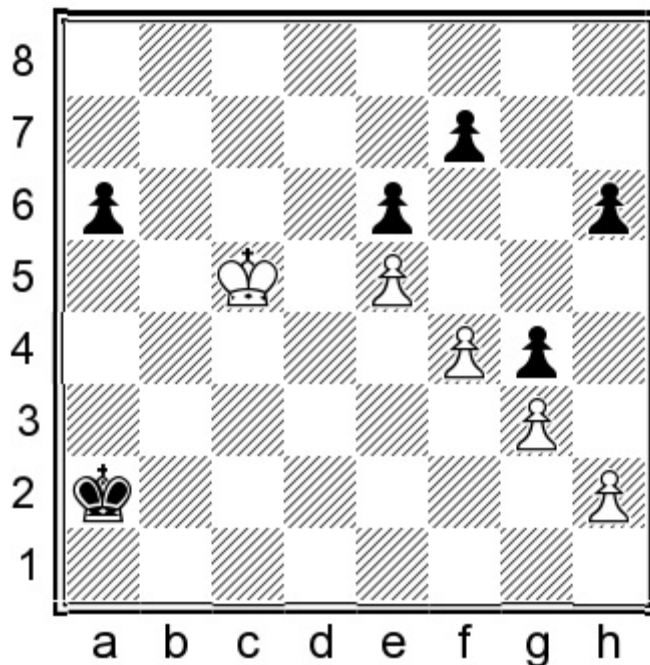
42...g4

42...gxf4? 43.g4!+-

43.♙c4!

43.♙d4? ♙b4! 44.♙d3 a5 45.♙d4 a4+-

43...♙xa2 44.♙c5



Position after: 44. ♙c5

There is a feeling that White is a little late, but this is not the case.

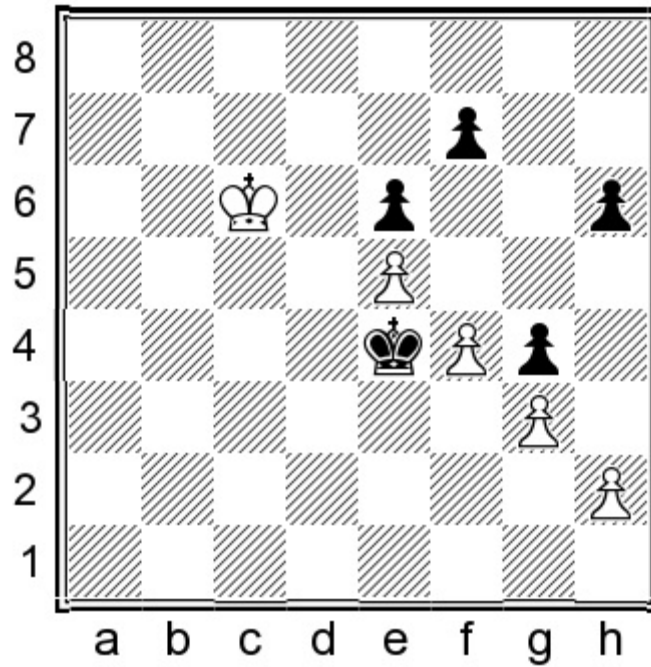
44...♙b3

44...a5?? 45.♙b5+-

45.♙b6

45.♙d6!?! a5 46.f5 a4 47.♙e7 a3 48.♙xf7 a2 49.fxe6 a1=♚ 50.e7=

45...♙c4 46.♙xa6 ♙d4 47.♙b6 ♙e4 48.♙c6

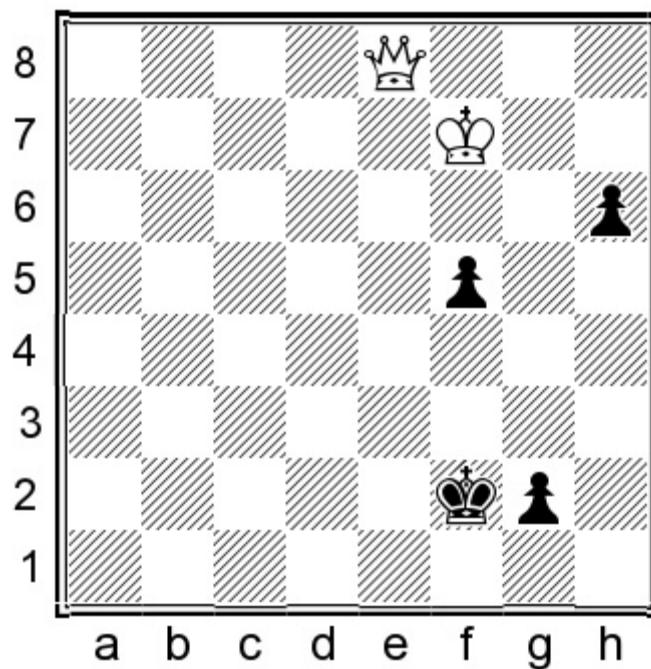


Position after: 48. ♔c6

48... ♕f3!?

48... ♕f5 49. ♔d6 ♕g6 50. ♕e7 ♕g7=

49. ♔d6 ♕g2 50. ♕e7 ♕xh2 51. ♕xf7 ♕xg3 52. f5 exf5 53. e6 ♕f2 54. e7 g3 55. e8=♚ g2=



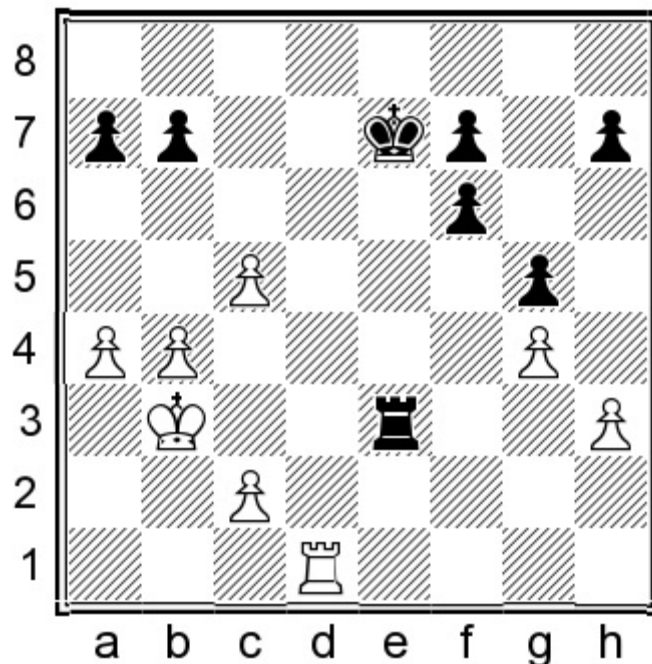
Position after: 55...g2=

White has no checks, so the best he can do is grab Black's f-pawn and draw the game.

Example 7

From Van Wely – Van Kampen

Rotterdam 2015



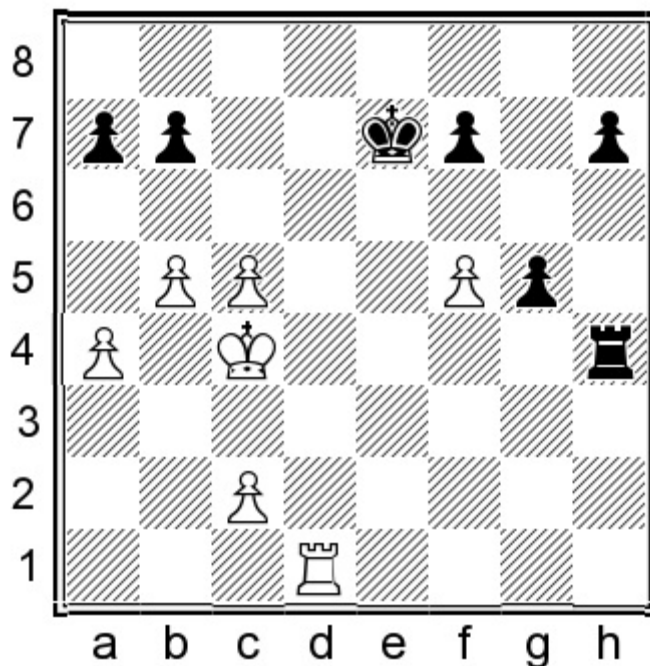
White to move

A critical question here: to force a pawn ending with ♖d1-d3 or not?

40.♖d3!

In the game, White did not dare to transition into the pawn endgame, but his choice was incorrect and could then only play for a draw (which he didn't achieve). The rook endgame is nevertheless also very interesting: 40.♔c4?

A) 40...f5?! The game move. 41.gxf5 ♖xh3 42.b5 ♖h4+? [♘ 42...♖h6 43.♔d5! ♖h2 44.c3 ♖f2 45.♖e1+ ♔d7 46.♔e5±]

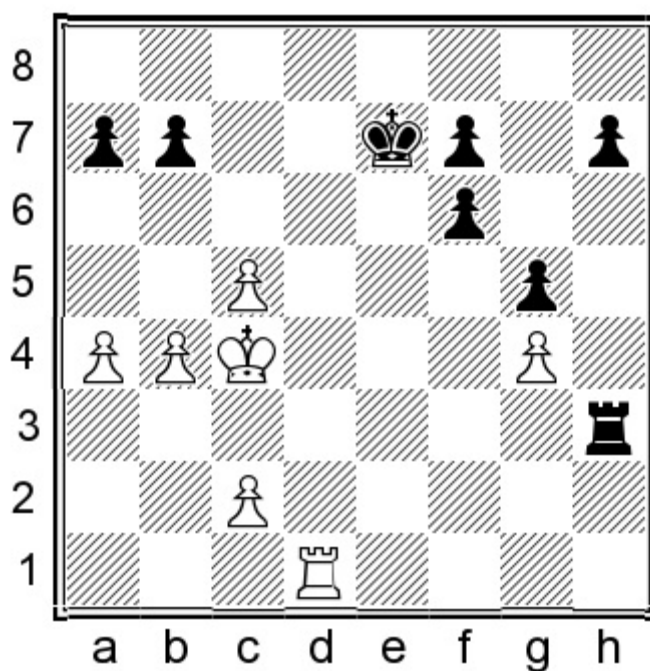


Position after: 42... Rh4+?

A1) 43. ♔b3! g4 [43... ♖h6 44. a5 ♖f6 45. c4 g4 46. ♔b4 h5 47. a6 bxa6 48. c6+–] 44. c6 bxc6 45. f6+!+– [45. bxc6? ♖h6=]

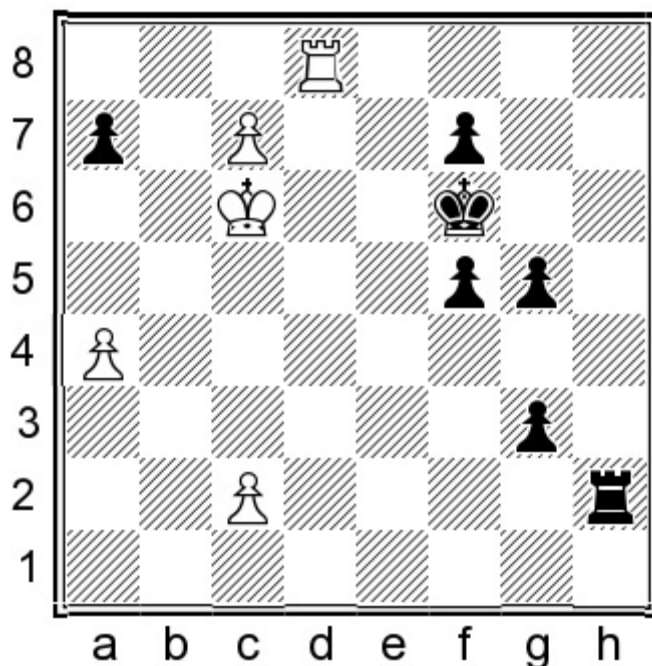
A2) 43. ♔d5? ♖f4 44. ♖e1+ ♔d8 45. ♔e5 ♖c4? [♟ 45... ♔e7! 46. c6 bxc6 47. bxc6 h5=] 46. ♔f6 ♖xc5 47. ♖h1± ♖xc2? 48. ♔xf7 g4 49. f6 g3 50. ♔g7 ♖f2 51. f7 g2 52. ♖d1+ ♔e7 53. ♖e1+ ♔d6 54. f8=♙+ ♖xf8 55. ♔xf8 ♔c5 56. ♔e7 h5 57. ♖g1 and White won anyway: 1-0.

B) 40... ♖xh3!



Position after: 40... Rh3!

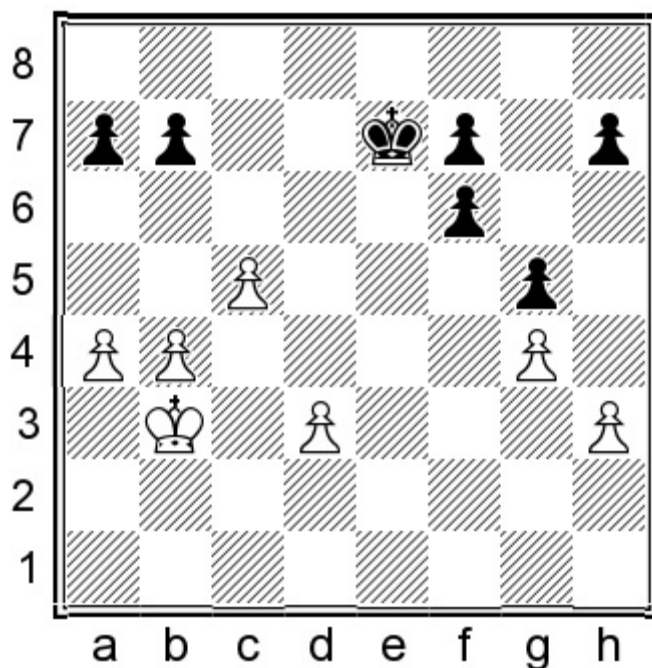
41.b5 h5 42.c6 bxc6 43.bxc6 hxg4 44.c7 ♖h8 45.♔c5 g3 46.♔c6 f5 47.♞d7+ ♕f6 48.♞d8 ♞h2



Position after: 48... ♞h2

49.c8=♞ [49.c4? g2 50.c8=♞ g1=♞干] 49... ♞xc2+ 50.♔d5 ♞xc8 51.♞xc8 g4! [51...g2? 52.♞c6+ ♔g7 53.♞c1+-] 52.♔d4 f4 53.♔d3 f3! [53...g2? 54.♞c1 f3 55.♔e3 ♔g5 56.♔f2 f5 57.a5 f4 58.a6 ♔h4 59.♞c7 g3+ 60.♔g1+-] 54.♔e3 ♔g5 55.♞g8+ ♔h5= Neither side can play for a win here!

40.♞d3! ♞xd3+ 41.cxd3



Position after: 41.cxd3

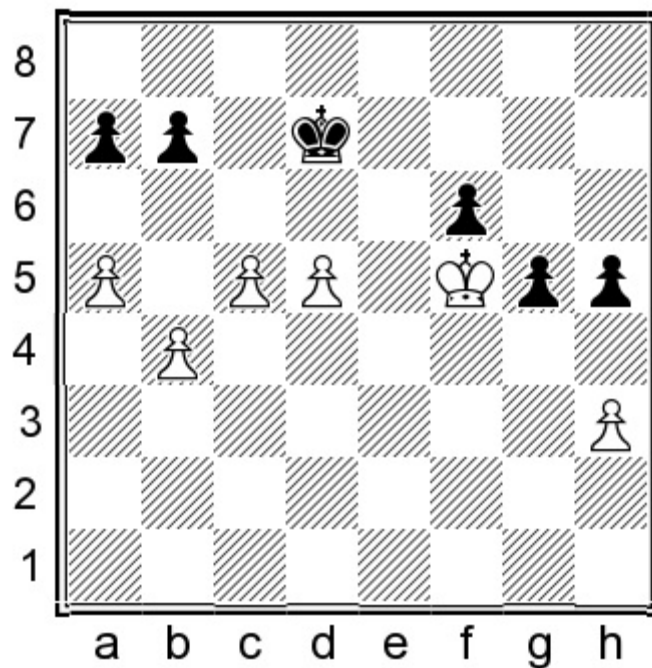
41...f5 42.♔c4!

42.gxf5?? h5—+

42...f4

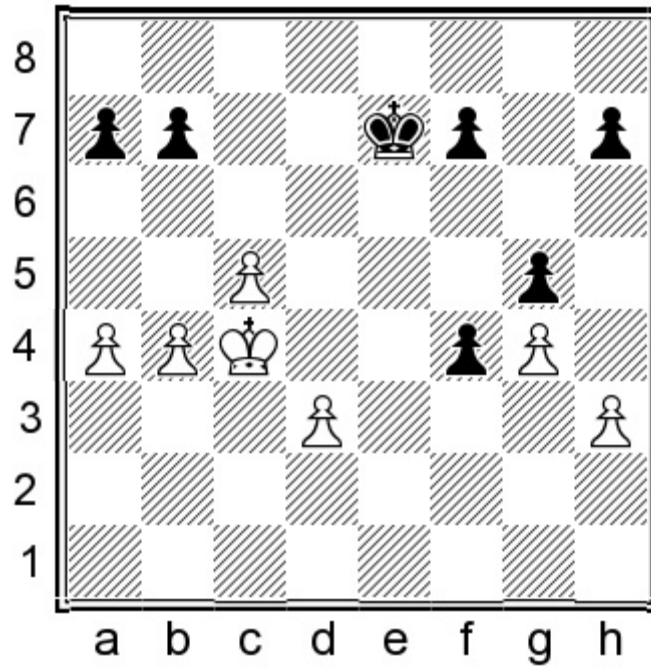
A) 42...fxg4 43.hxg4 f5 44.gxf5 h5 [44...g4 45.♔d4+—] 45.♔d5 h4 46.♔e4+—

B) 42...♔e6 43.gxf5+ ♔xf5 44.♔d5 ♔f6 45.d4 h5 46.♔e4 ♔e7 47.♔f5 f6 48.d5 ♔d7 49.a5!



Position after: 49.a5!

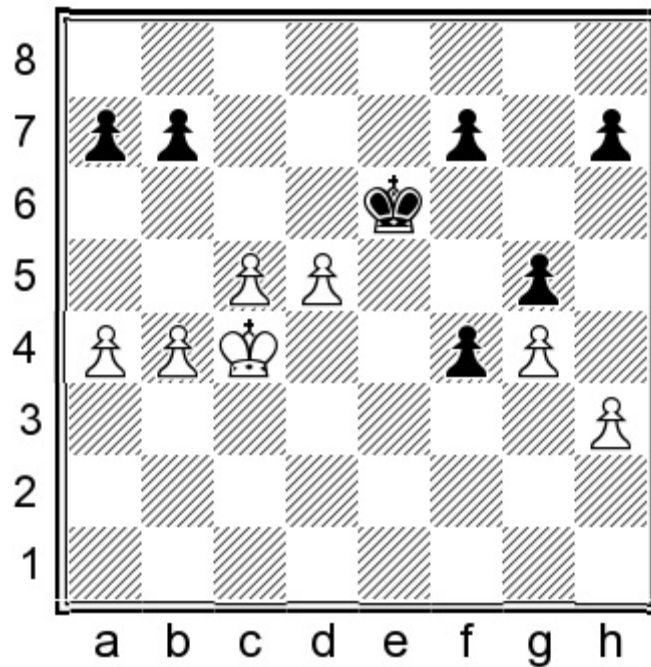
49...a6 [49...♔e7 50.d6+ ♔d7 51.b5 a6 52.b6 ♔c6 53.♔e6+—] 50.b5 axb5 51.c6++—



Position after: 42...f4

43.♔d4!

But not 43.d4 ♔e6 44.d5+



Position after: 44.d5+

A) in view of 44...♔e5! and White has to place the pawn on d6, after which the pawn-break plan is no longer feasible. 45.d6 ♔e6 46.♔d4 ♔d7 47.a5 a6=

B) 44...♔d7? 45.♔d4 ♕c7 46.a5 [46.b5? b6=] 46...a6 [46...♔d7 47.b5 ♕c7 48.b6+ axb6 49.axb6+ ♔d7 50.♔e4 ♔d8 51.c6 ♕c8 52.♔d4+–] 47.♔d3 ♔d7 48.b5 axb5 49.c6+–

43...♔d7 44.♔e4 ♕c6 45.d4 ♔d7

45...b5 46.cxb6 axb6 47.d5+ ♔d6 48.a5+–

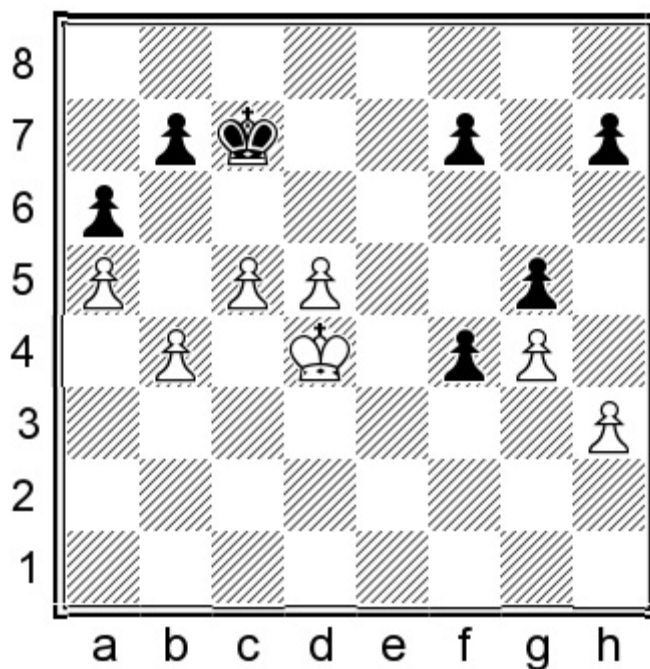
46.d5 ♕c7 47.a5!

47.b5? b6=

47...a6

47...♔d7 48.b5 ♕c7 49.b6+ axb6 50.axb6+ ♔d7 51.♔d4 ♔d8 [Black ends up in zugzwang anyway. 51...f6 52.♔e4 h6 53.♔d4+–] 52.c6 ♕c8 53.d6 bxc6 54.♔c5+–

48.♔d4⊖



Position after: 48.♔d4⊖

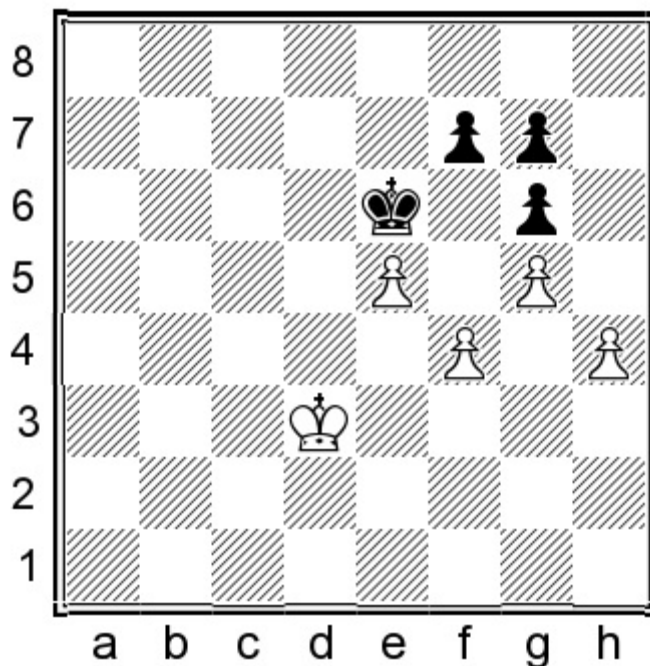
48...♔d7

48...♔c8 49.b5 axb5 50.c6 bxc6 51.d6+–

49.b5! axb5 50.c6+ bxc6 51.a6 ♕c7 52.a7 ♔b7 53.d6+–

Example 8

From Grachev – Ponkratov



Black to move

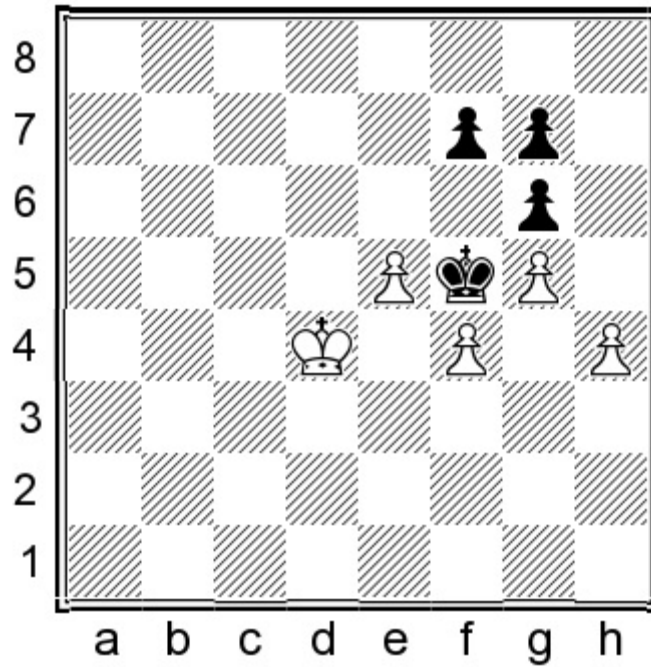
Even in such a simple position, as practice shows, one can make many mistakes.

51...♔f5?

In life, the right action is often inaction and likewise in chess it is often necessary not to act, but simply stay put. Correct was 51...♔d5 52.♔e3 ♔e6 53.♔e4 ♔e7=.

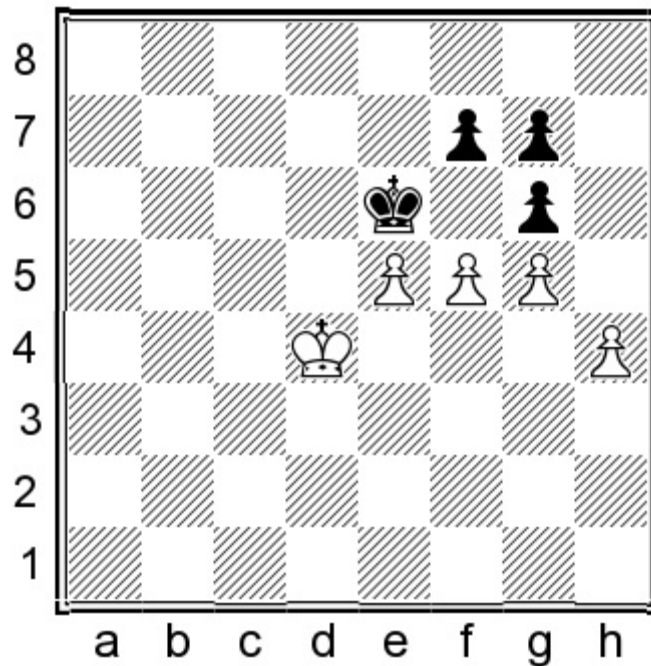
51...♔f5? 52.♔e3?

White does not accept the gift. Surprisingly, winning was 52.♔d4!



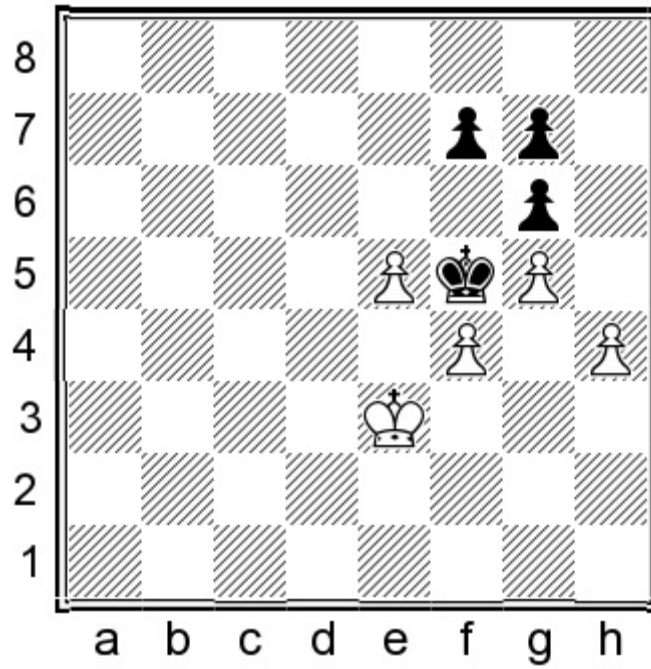
Position after: 52. ♔d4!

52... ♕e6 [52... ♕xf4 53. ♔d5 ♕g4 54. ♔d6 ♕xh4 55. ♕e7 ♕xg5 56. ♕xf7+–] 53. f5+!



Position after: 53. f5+!

53... gxf5 [53... ♕e7 54. f6+! gxf6 55. gxf6+ ♕e6 56. ♕e4 ♕d7 57. ♔d5 ♕e8 58. e6+–] 54. h5 ♕e7 55. h6 gxf6 56. gxf6 ♕f8 57. ♕e3 ♕g8 58. ♕f4 ♕h7 59. ♕xf5 ♕xh6 60. ♕f6+–



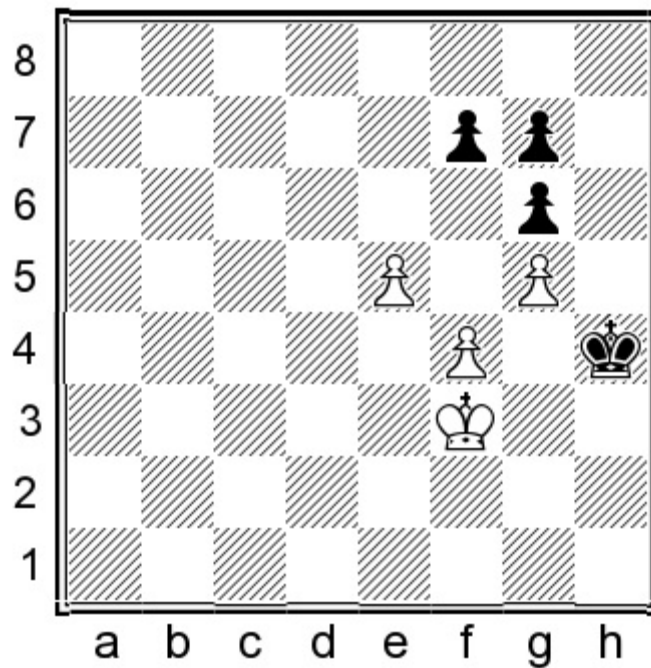
Position after: 52. ♔e3?

52... ♖g4?

Black refuses “amnesty” and once again prefers activity...

52... ♖e6 53. ♔d4 ♖e7 54. f5 gxf5 55. h5 g6 56. h6 ♖f8=

53. ♔e4 ♖xh4 54. ♔f3!+-



Position after: 54. ♔f3!+-

54...♔h3

54...♔h5 55.♔g3+-

Now the game is decided by the simple breakthrough.

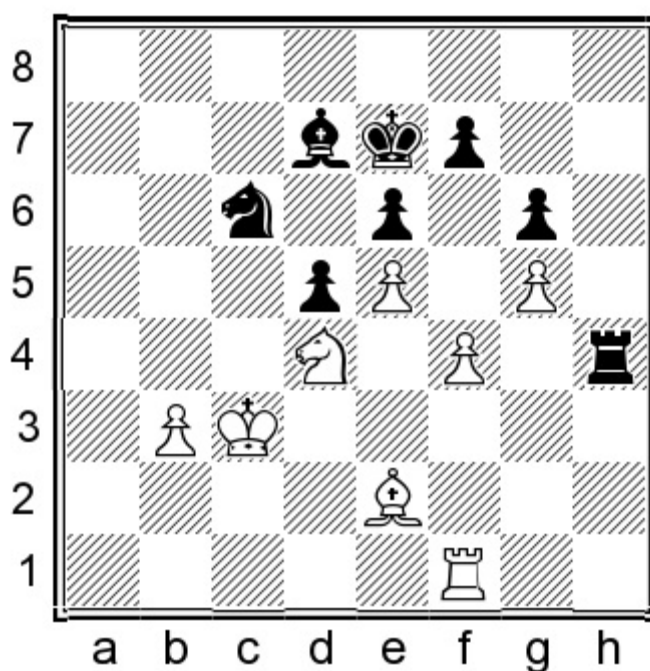
55.f5 gxf5 56.g6 fxg6 57.e6 g5 58.e7 g4+ 59.♔e2 f4 60.e8=♚ ♔g2 61.♚e4+ ♔g3 62.♚e5 g5 63.♚xg5

1-0

Example 9

From Bologan – Jakovenko

Sochi 2018



Black to move

43...♖h2

Clearly, neither side has realistic resources to play for the win. Black's last move attacked the White bishop. Through incredible carelessness, the White bishop retreated to allow Black to enter into a winning pawn endgame.

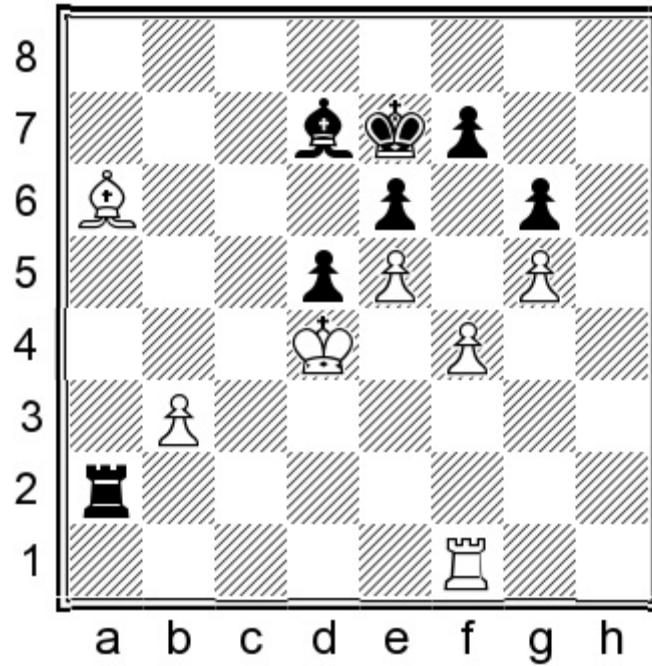
44.♔a6?

Practically any other move would have led to a draw.

A) 44.♖e1!? ♖f2 45.♖f1=

B) It might have been possible to exchange on c6 first. 44.♘xc6+ ♗xc6 45.♔a6 ♖h3+ 46.♔b4=

44...♖xd4 45.♔xd4 ♜a2!



Position after: 45...♜a2!

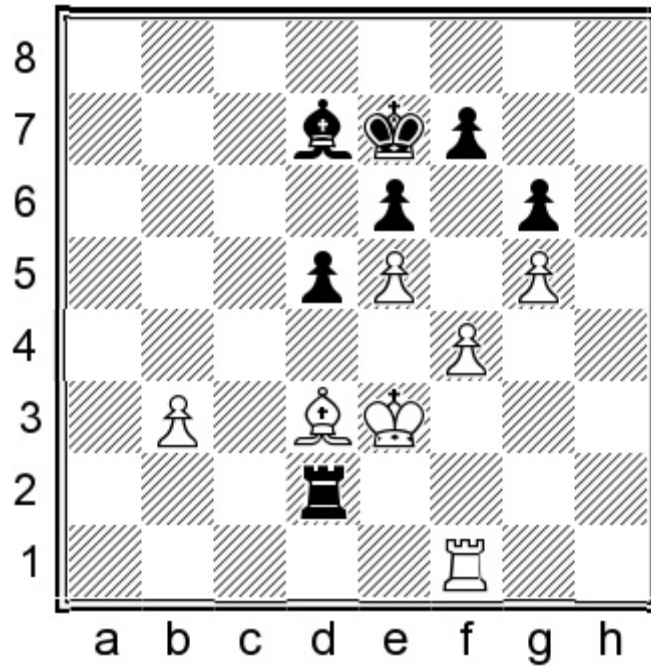
Suddenly, White's bishop becomes restricted.

46.♔d3

46.♔b7 ♜a7-+

46...♜d2! 47.♜f3

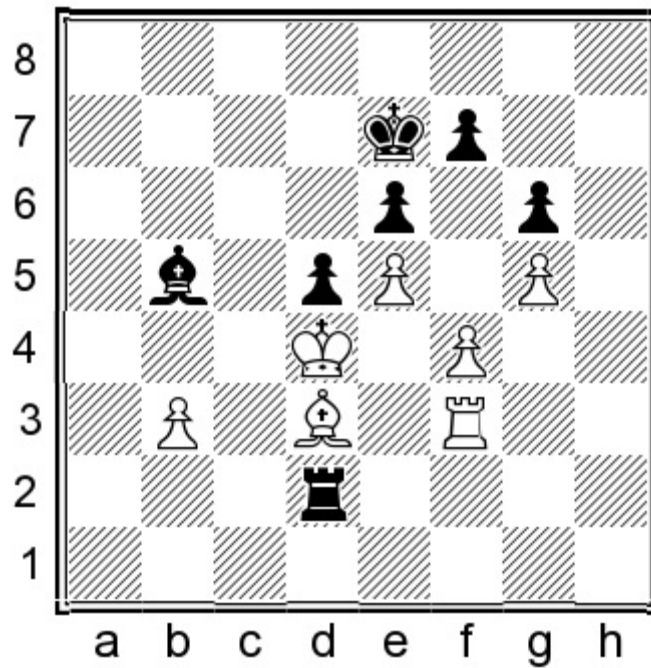
47.♔e3?



Position after: 47. ♔e3?

47... ♖xd3+ 48. ♔xd3 ♘b5+-+

47... ♘b5

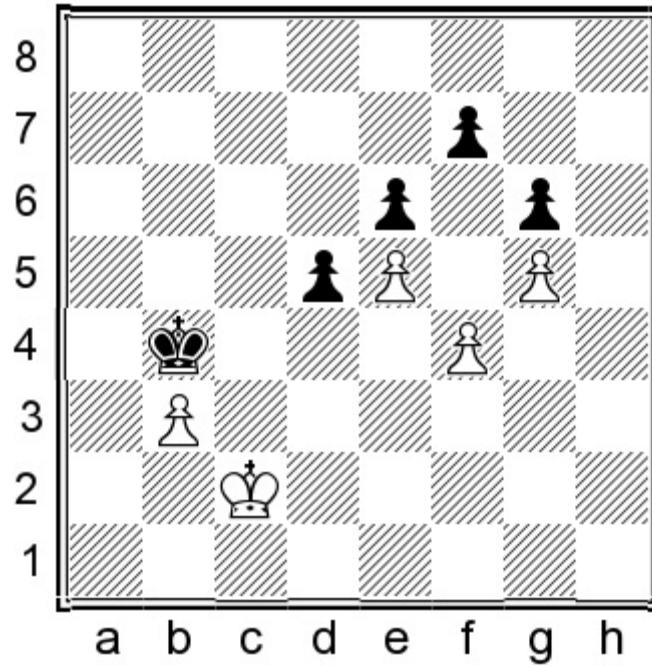


Position after: 47... ♘b5

Soon entering the topic of this chapter.

48. ♔c3 ♖xd3+ 49. ♖xd3 ♘xd3 50. ♔xd3 ♔d7+-+ 51. ♔c3 ♔c6 52. ♔b4 ♔b6 53. ♔c3 ♔b5 54. ♔d3 ♔b4

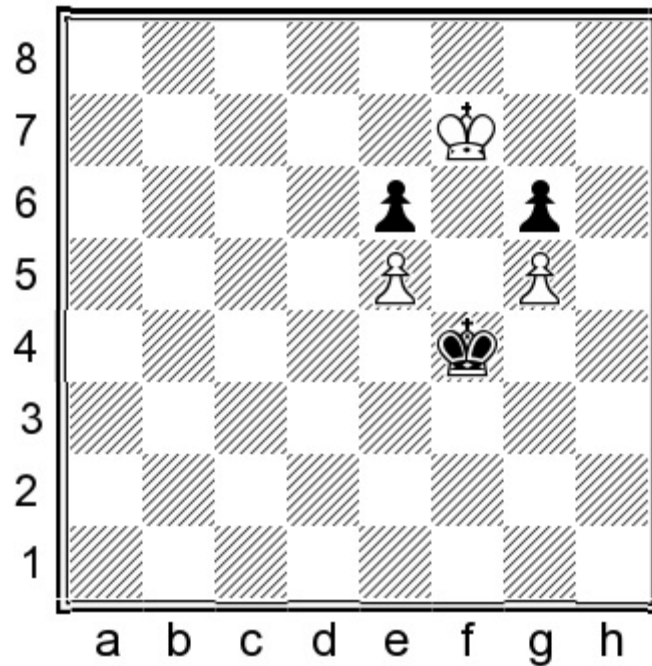
55.♔c2



Position after: 55.♔c2

55...d4! 56.♔d3 ♖xb3 57.♔xd4 ♔c2 58.♔e3

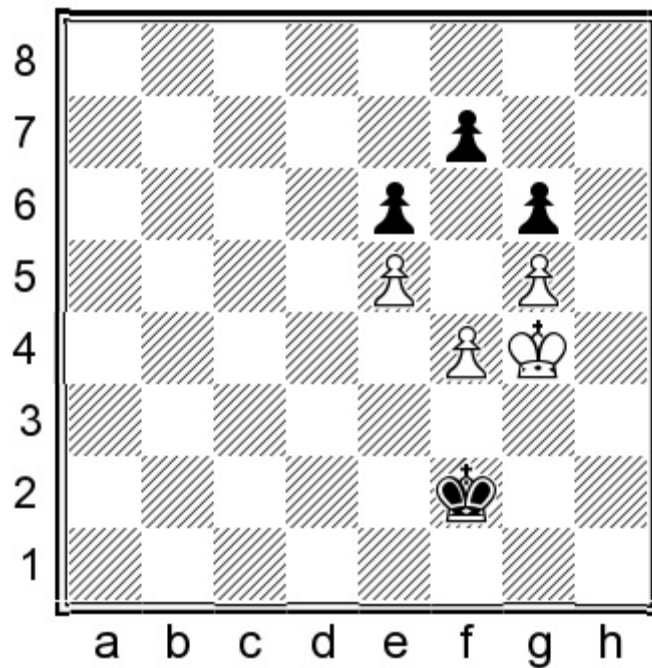
The counter attack doesn't save White... 58.♔c5 ♔d3 59.♔d6 ♔e4 60.♔e7 ♖xf4 61.♔xf7



Position after: 61.♔xf7

61...♔f5!-+

58...♔c3 59.♕f3 ♖d3 60.♕f2 ♖e4 61.♔g3 ♖e3 62.♔g4 ♕f2



Position after: 62...♕f2

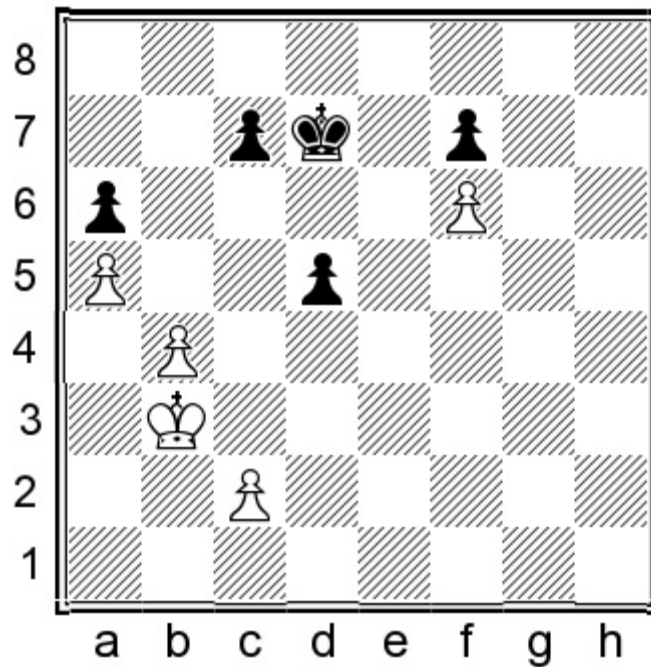
I cannot say whether such losses are fair, but they are certainly instructive. Even in the seemingly most calm situations, it is impossible to relax.

0-1

Chapter 5 Exercises

1

Giri, A. – Hou Yifan



- 55...♔c6, 55...♔d6, or 55...c6? Only one of these moves draws!

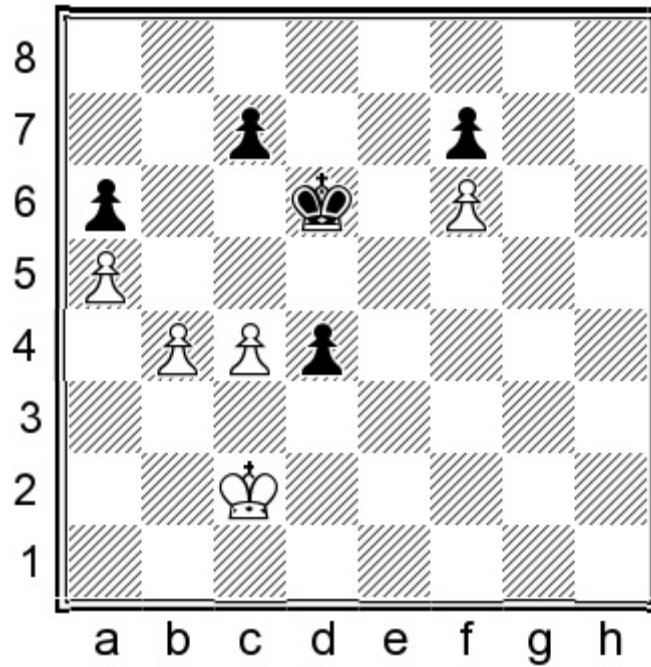
Show/Hide Solution

1

55...♔d6!

Black's only chance was to ignore the b4-b5 breakthrough.

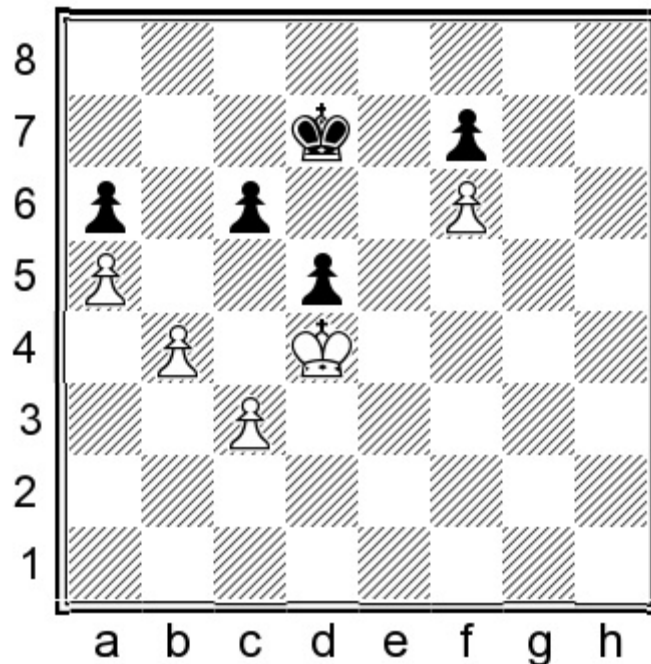
A) At first glance, Black must reckon with the b4-b5 breakthrough, which explains the extremely unfortunate move in the game: 55...♔c6? 56.c4 d4 57.♔c2 ♔d6



Position after: 57...♔d6

With the aid of simple triangulation, White easily wins: 58.♔d2! c6 [58...c5 59.bxc5+ ♔xc5 60.♔d3+–] 59.♔e2 ♔d7 60.♔d3 ♔c7 61.♔xd4 ♔d6 62.♔d3 ♔c7 63.♔e4 ♔d6 64.♔d4 1-0 Giri, A (2752) – Hou Yifan (2680) Wijk aan Zee 2018.

B) Also unsuccessful is 55...c6? 56.♔c3 ♔e6 57.♔d4 ♔d6 58.c3! ♔d7

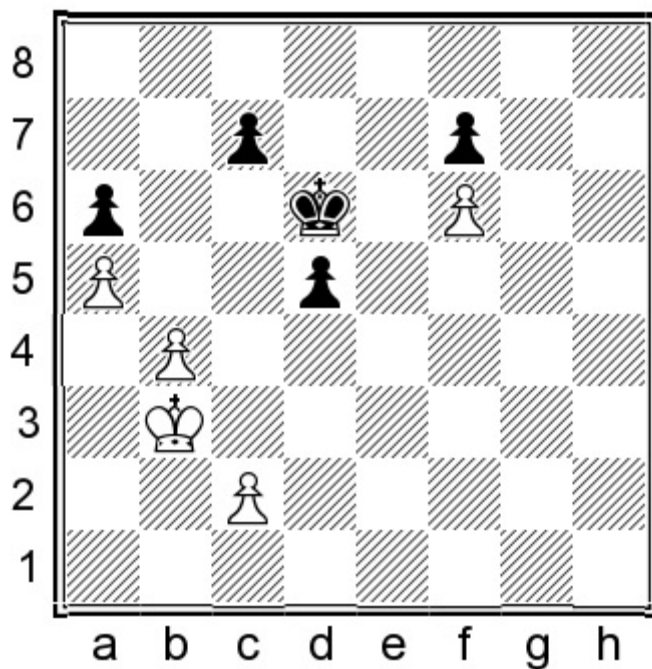


Position after: 58...♔d7

59.b5! [59.♔c5? ♔c7 60.b5 cxb5! 61.♔xd5 ♔d7=] 59...axb5 [59...cxb5 60.♔xd5+–] 60.♔c5 ♔c7

61.a6 b4 [61...♙b8 62.♙xc6! b4 63.cxb4 d4 64.b5 d3 65.b6 d2 66.a7+ ♔a8 67.♙c7 d1=♚ 68.b7+ ♙xa7 69.b8=♚+ ♙a6 70.♚b6#] 62.cxb4 ♙b8 63.♙xc6! d4 64.b5 d3 65.b6 d2 66.a7+ ♔a8 67.♙c7+-

55...♙d6!



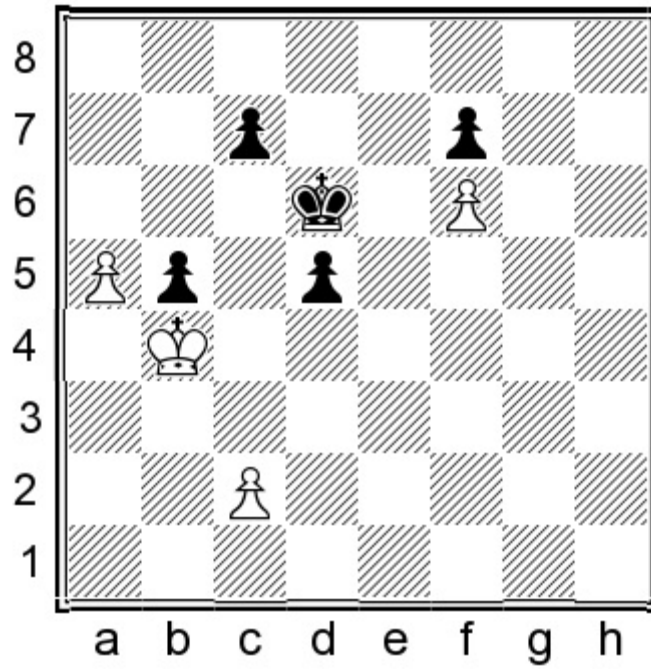
Position after: 55...♙d6!

56.b5

A) 56.♙c3 c5=

B) 56.c4 c5 57.b5 d4=

56...axb5 57.♙b4



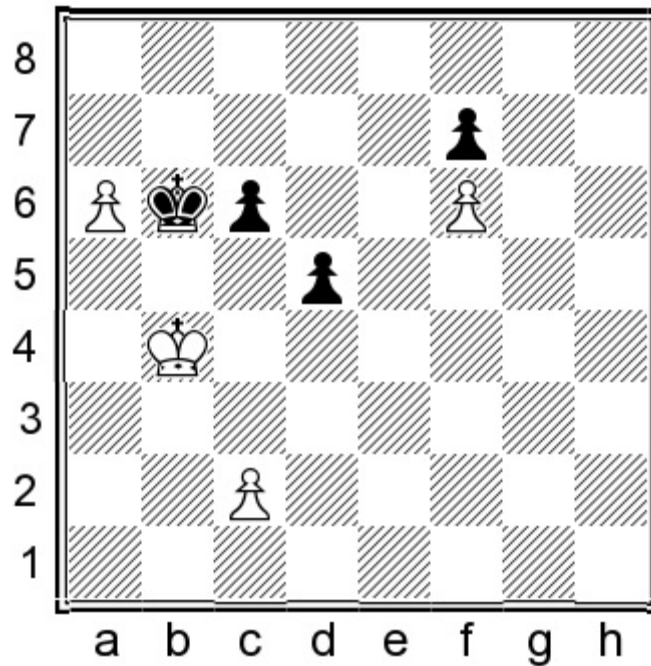
Position after: 57. ♔b4

57...c6

57...♔c6? 58.c3+-

58.a6 ♔c7 59.♔c5 d4

Or 59...b4 60.♔xb4 ♔b6

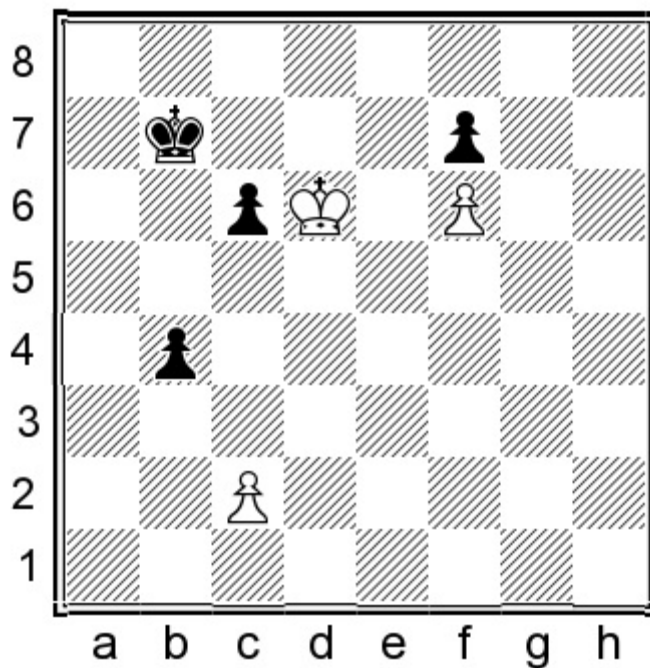


Position after: 60... ♔b6

61.a7 ♖xa7! [61...c5+? 62.♙a4 ♖xa7 63.♙b5+–] 62.♙c5 ♖b7 63.♙d6 d4 64.♙e7 c5=

60.♙xd4 ♖b6 61.a7 ♖xa7 62.♙c5 ♖b7 63.♙d6 b4

And the race leads to a draw!

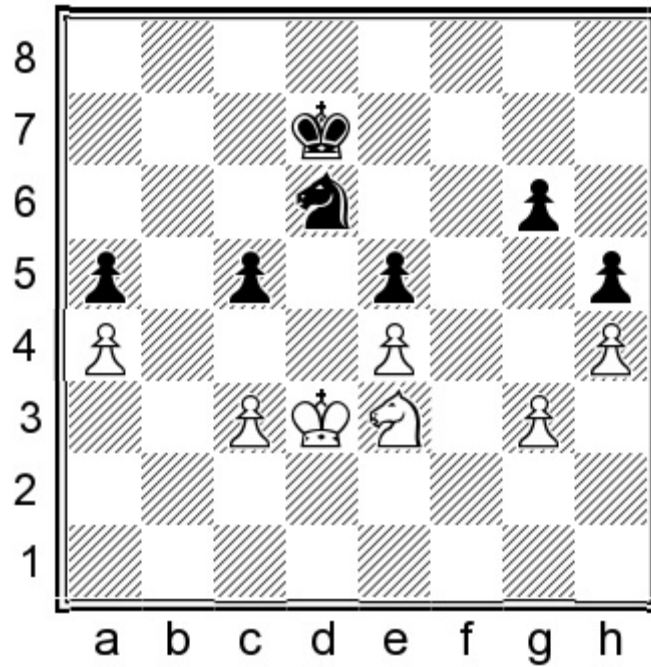


Position after: 63...b4

64.♙e7 c5 65.♙xf7 c4 66.♙g7 b3 67.cxb3 cxb3 68.f7 b2 69.f8=♚ b1=♚=

2

Navara, D. – Jobava, B.



■ Black has only one move to keep the balance: which one?

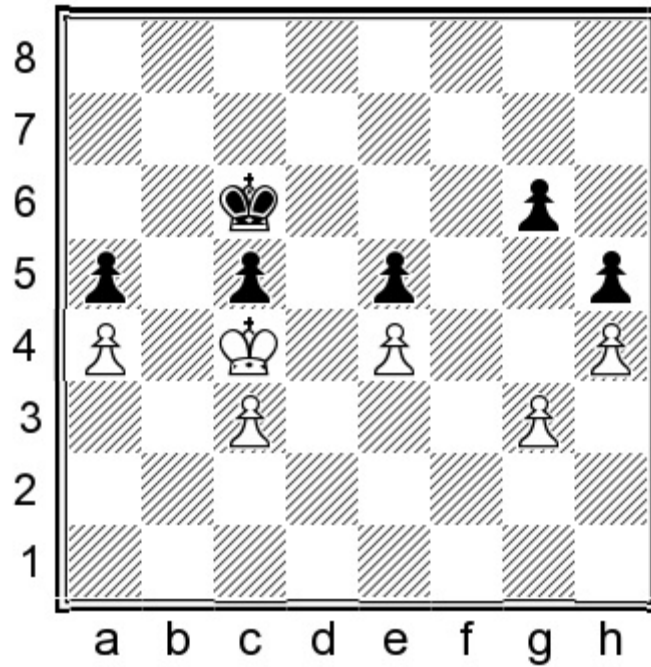
Show/Hide Solution

2

34...c4+!

The only move, although not that difficult to find.

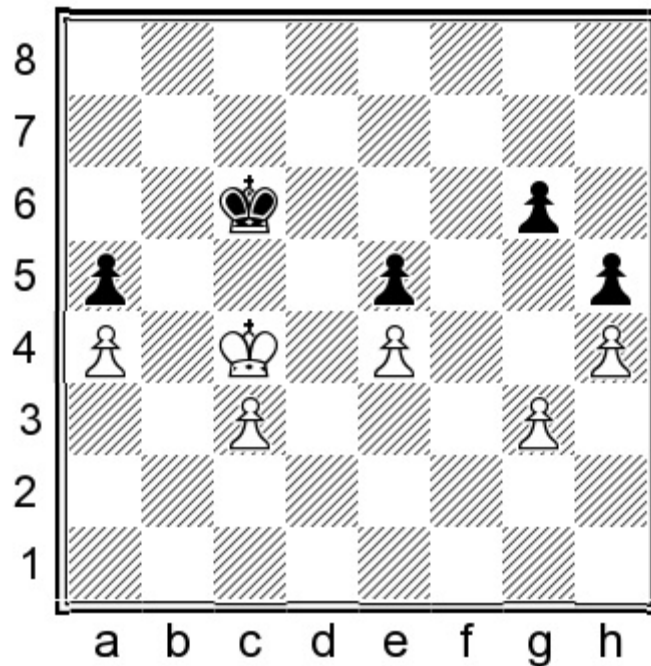
Without sacrificing a pawn, Black's position might be evaluated as completely fine. However, if he just waits with 34...♔c7? then Black will unexpectedly and suddenly lose the pawn endgame after 35.♘c4 ♘xc4 36.♔xc4 ♔c6



Position after: 36...♔c6

37.g4! hxg4 38.♕d3 ♕d6 39.♕e3 ♕e6 40.♕f2 ♕f6 41.♕g3 ♕g7 42.♕xg4 ♕h6 43.c4!+- the extra tempo decides the outcome of the fight.

34...c4+! 35.♖xc4 ♗xc4! 36.♕xc4 ♕c6=



Position after: 36...♕c6=

37.♕d3 ♕c5 38.♕d2

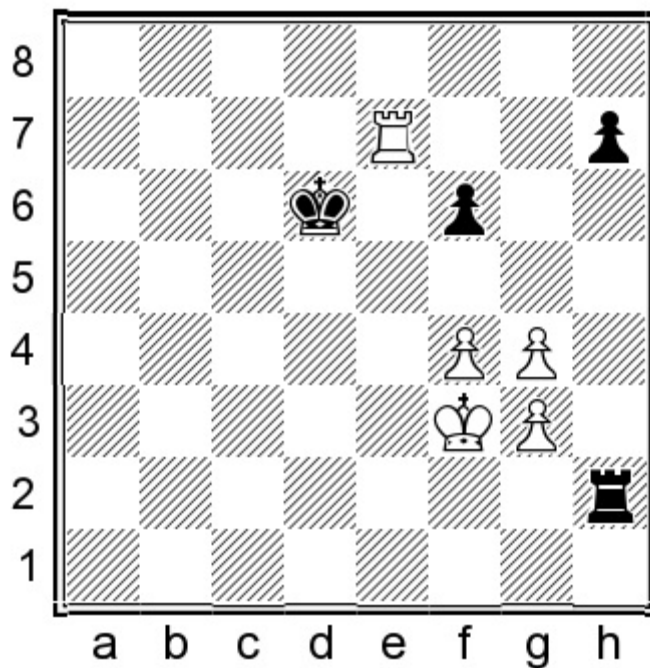
38.c4 ♖b4 39.c5 ♘ 39...♗xc5 40.♗c3=

38...♗c4 39.♗c2 ♗c5 40.♗d3 ♗d6 41.♗d2

½-½ (41) Navara, D (2742) – Jobava, B (2665) Baku 2016.

3

Moiseenko, A. – Dreev, A.



□ Is 63.♖e2 a good move?

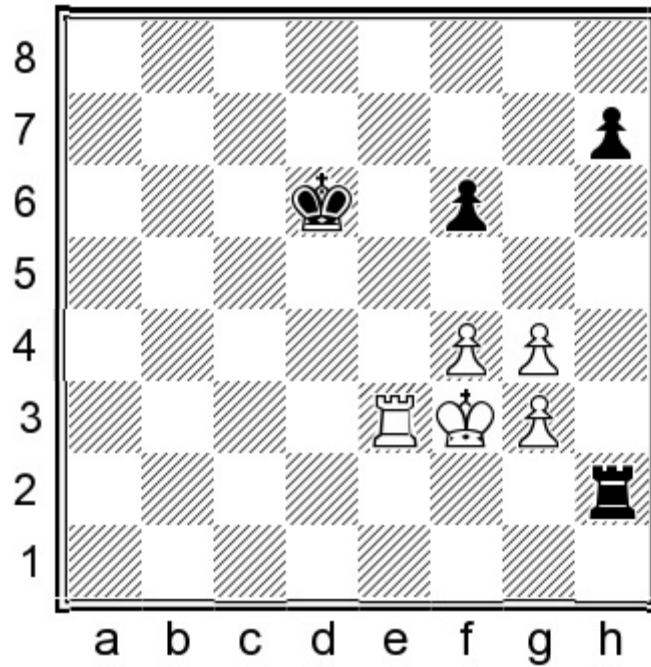
Show/Hide Solution

3

63.♖e2?

No!

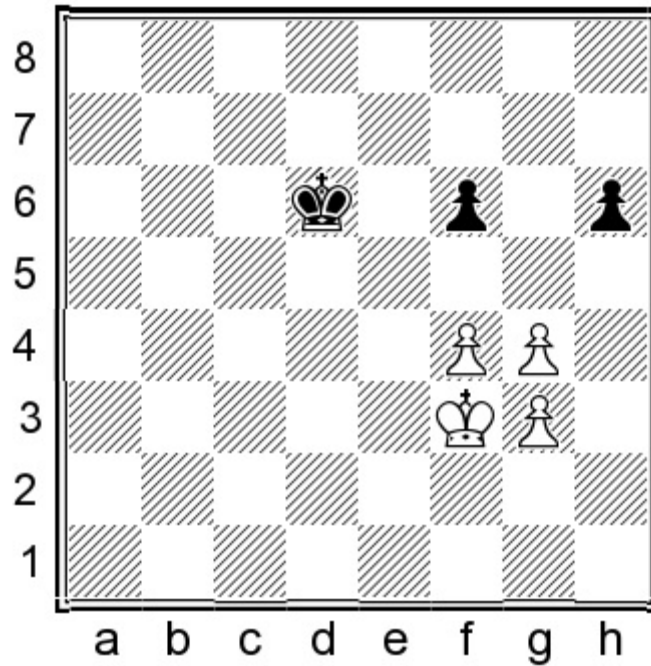
White could have effortlessly achieved victory. For example, after 63.♖e3



Position after: 63. ♖e3

63...♔d5 [63...♞h1 64.f5+-] 64.f5 h5 65.♞e6 hxg4+ 66.♔xg4 ♞h6 67.♔f4 ♔c5 68.g4 ♔d5 69.♔g3 ♔d4 70.g5 ♞h5 71.gxf6 ♞xf5 72.♔g4 ♞f1 73.♔g5+-

63.♞e2? ♞xe2 64.♔xe2 h6! 65.♔f3



Position after: 65. ♔f3

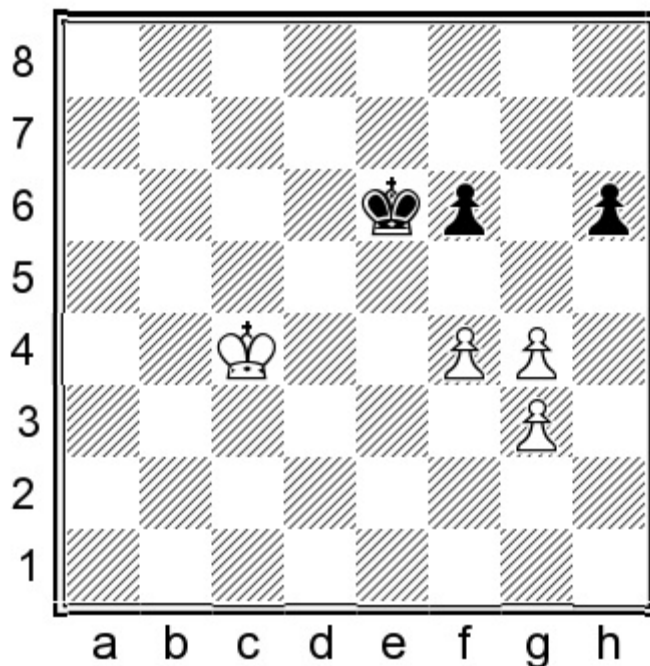
65...♔e7! =

The only move! Now Black is ready for the “opposition dance” - it is necessary to tread into the pawn endgame extremely cautiously.

A) 65...♔d5? 66.g5+-

B) 65...♔e6? 66.♔e4+-

66.♔e3 ♔d7 67.♔d3 ♔e7 68.♔c3 ♔d7 69.♔d3 ♔e7 70.♔c4 ♔e6

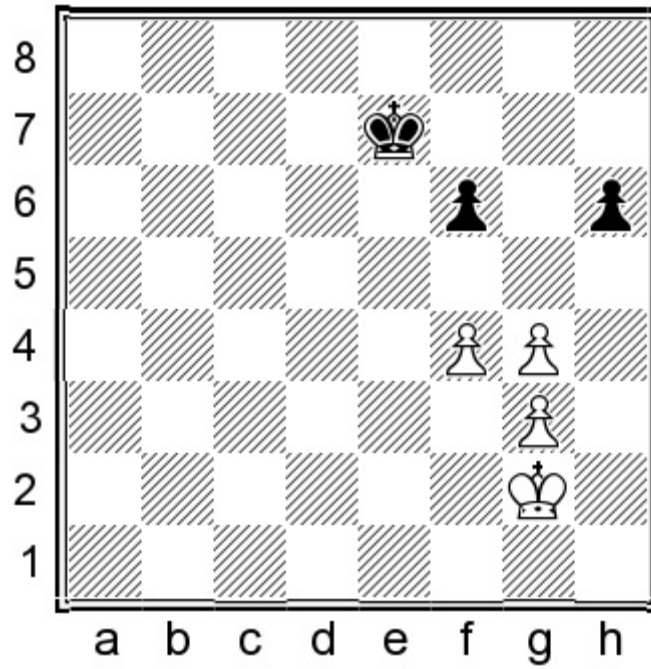


Position after: 70...♔e6

71.♔d4

71.♔c5 f5!=

71...♔d6 72.♔e4 ♔e6 73.♔f3 ♔e7 74.♔g2 ♔f7 75.♔h3 ♔g7 76.♔h2 ♔f7 77.♔g1 ♔e6 78.♔f2 ♔f7
79.♔e3 ♔e7 80.♔f3 ♔f7 81.♔g2 ♔e7



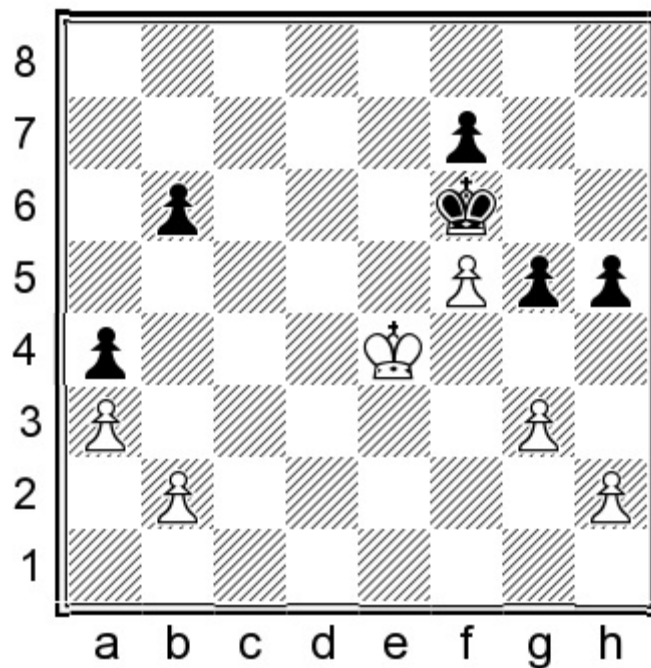
Position after: 81...Ke7

82.f5 Ke6 83.Kh3 Ke7 84.Kh2 Ke6 85.Kh3 Ke7

1/2-1/2 Moiseenko, A (2703) – Dreev, A (2679) Jakarta 2013.

4

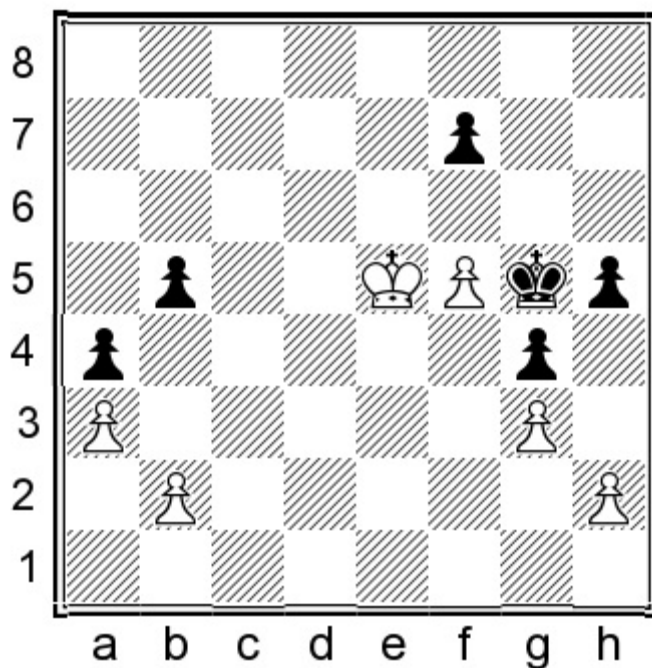
Hoang Thanh Trang – Aczel, G.



■ Can Black be saved?

44...♔g7!

A) In the game, Black did not find the strength to send his king into exile, but this was the only way to hold. Instead, the game continued 44...g4? 45.♕f4 b5 46.♕e4 ♔g5 47.♕e5

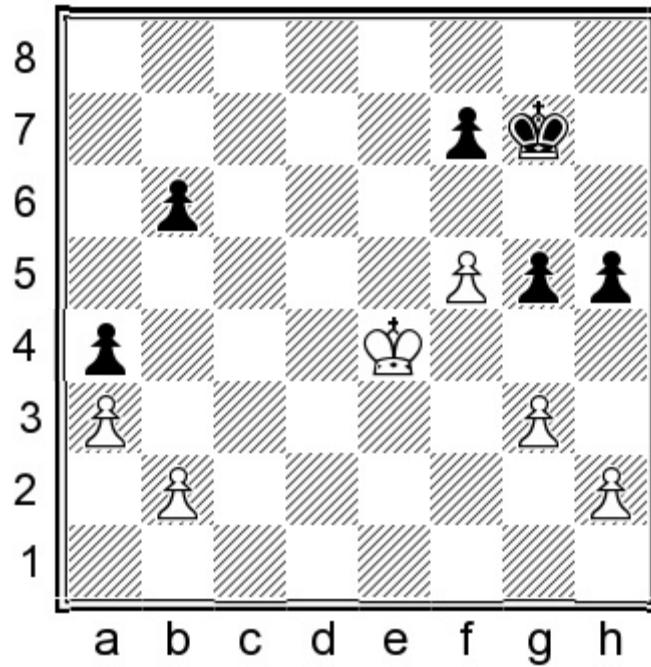


Position after: 47.♕e5

47...h4 48.gxh4+ ♔xh4 49.♕f6 ♔h3 50.♕g5!+- 1-0 (58) Hoang Thanh Trang (2436) – Aczel, G (2565) Budapest 2018.

B) 44...♕e7? 45.♕e5 f6+ 46.♕d5 ♔d7 47.h3+-

44...♔g7!

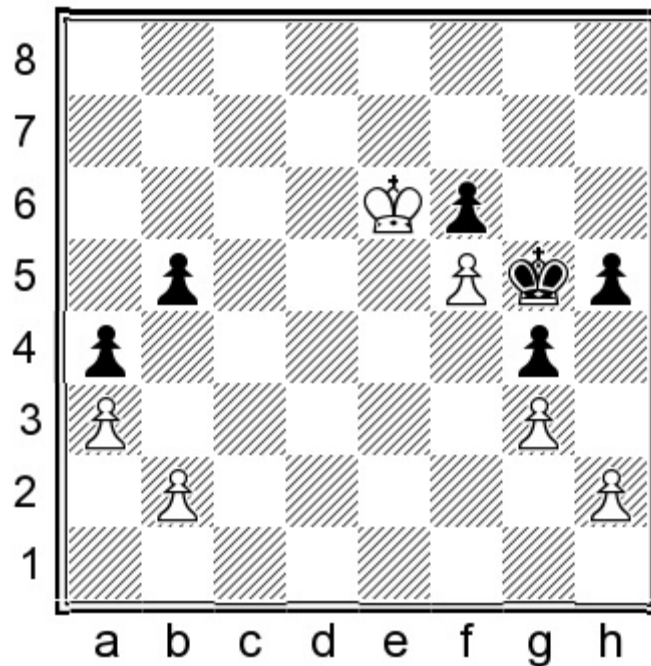


Position after: 44...♔g7!

45.h3

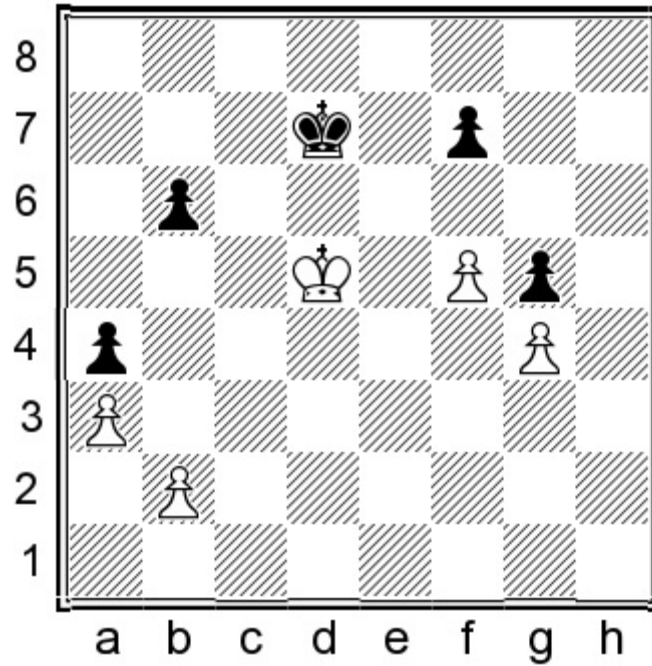
Here, White should be very cautious.

For example, the “active” 45.♕e5? loses to 45...g4! 46.♕e4 ♖h6 47.♕d5 ♖g5 48.♕e5 f6+ 49.♕e6 b5–+.



Position after: 49...b5–+

45...♔f6 46.g4 hxg4 47.hxg4 ♕e7 48.♔d5 ♔d7



Position after: 48...♔d7

49.♔e5

49.f6 ♕c7 50.♔e5 ♕c6 51.♔f5 ♕d5 52.♔xg5 ♕e5=

49...♕e7=

Chapter 6

Converting

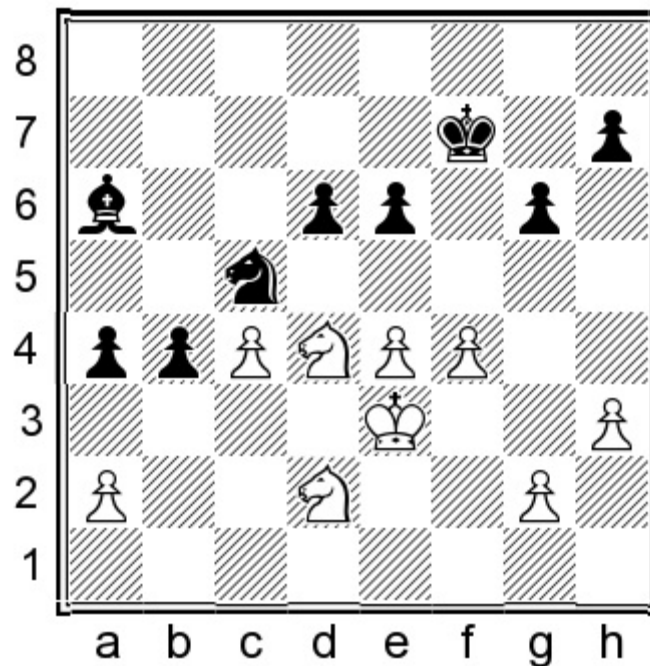
The conversion of an advantage is certainly one of the most important, if not the most important, aspect of what you need to be able to achieve in the endgame.

For many great chess players, this quality is simply obtained “from birth”, while others must train in this respect. There is an opinion that by working a person can learn everything and anything, unless specific natural physical attributes are necessary. However, it seems to me that this is false. In any case, the training and practice of converting advantages will aid in obtaining a higher level of command in this area.

Once upon a time, my mentor, Mark Dvoretsky, stressed the importance that when attempting to realize our advantage, the enemy will simultaneously mobilize a resistance as much as he possibly can. In order for us to break through and beat him, we must be extremely focused on the task at hand.

Example 1

From Mamedyarov – Ivanchuk
Beijing 2012



Black to move

Black’s position is promising: the queenside pawns are far advanced, and the knight’s position on c5 is secure. However, this does not bring immediate dividends, further strengthening of the position is necessary.

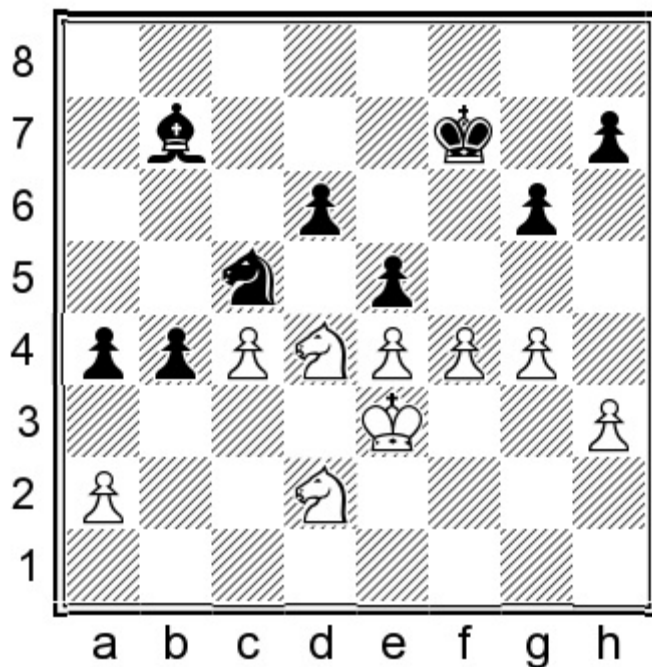
30...♙b7!

The task at hand is not to improve the position of the bishop, instead what is important is for Black to seize the center with e6-e5, and for this it is important to deprive White of ♖d4-c6.

The immediate 30...e5 31.fxe5 dxe5 runs into 32.♖c6 b3 33.axb3 ♖xb3 [33...a3? 34.♖b4±] 34.♖xb3 axb3 35.♔d2!=.

30...♗b7! 31.♖b5

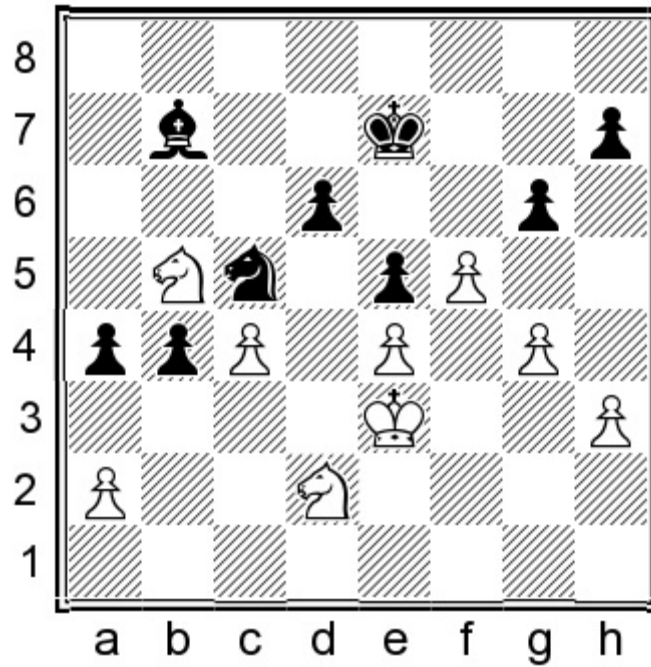
31.g4 e5±



Position after: 31...e5±

Now, when the white knight doesn't have access to the c6-square, this idea noticeably gains in strength. 32.fxe5 dxe5 33.♖c2 b3 34.axb3 ♖xb3± [≤ 34...axb3? 35.♖b4 ♔f6 36.♖d3=]

31...♔e7 32.g4 e5! 33.f5



Position after: 33.f5

33...g5?

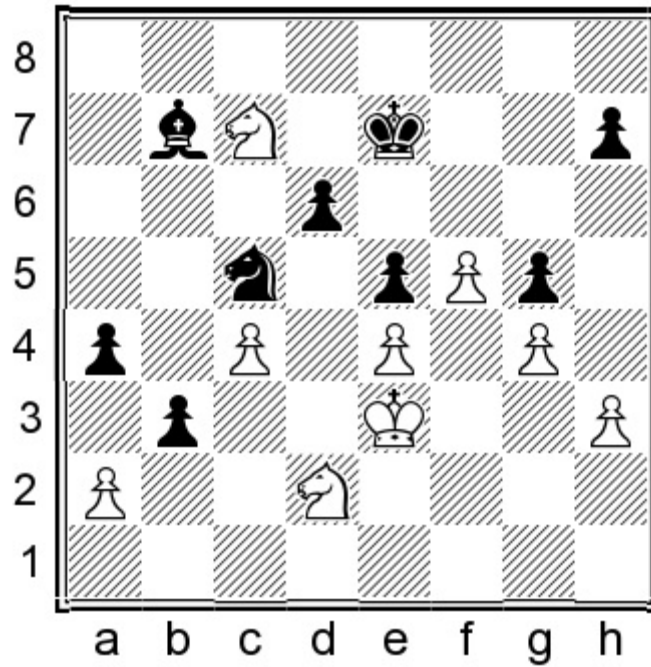
A good move from a positional point of view, but here it is necessary to play more dynamically.

33...gxf5 strong move, and immediately followed by ...♙c6: 34.exf5 ♙c6 there is no satisfactory defense against the d6-d5 threat. 35.g5 d5 36.f6+ ♚f8--+

34.♘c7?

Only a symbolic advantage remains for Black after the only move 34.a3! b3 35.♘c3.

34...b3?



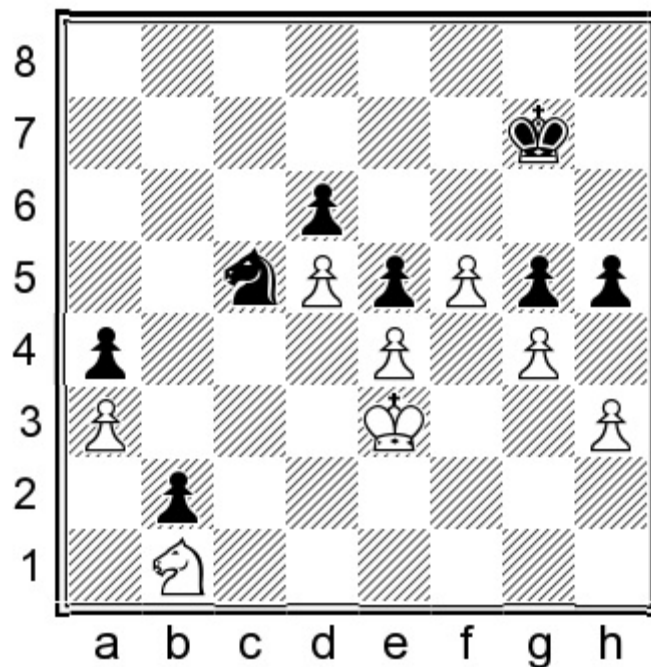
Position after: 34...b3?

34...a3--+

35.axb3?

Time trouble error. However, even with correct play, the endgame is already lost 35.a3 35...b2!

36.♞d5+, otherwise the e4-pawn will fall, 36...♙xd5 37.cxd5 ♔f7 38.♞b1 ♔g7 39.♞d2 h6 40.♞b1 h5.



Position after: 40...h5

Black creates a second weakness in the White camp on g4. 41.♖d2 hxg4 42.hxg4 ♔f7 43.♗b1 ♖d7 44.♗c3 ♗f6 45.♕f3 ♕e7–+ and now the game is decided by the march of the king to his passed pawn.

35...a3 36.b4 a2

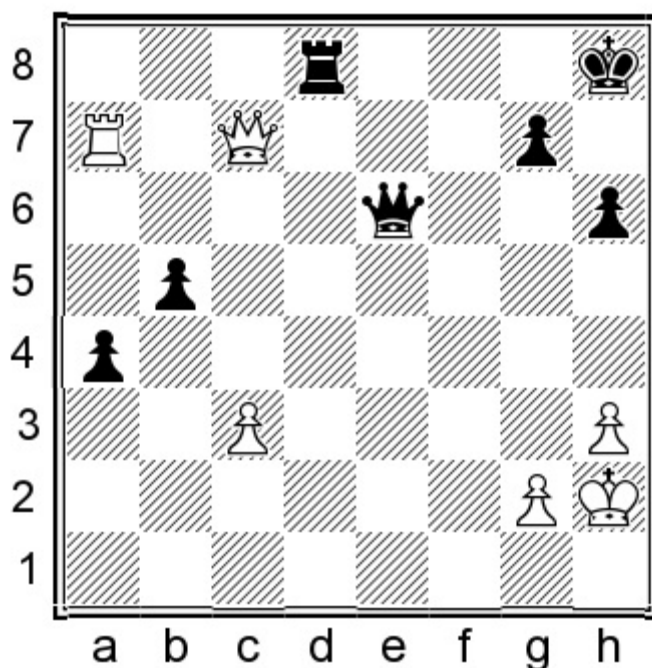
Although the game was played in a blitz tournament, the mistakes are still quite instructive, therefore the example was analyzed to the end.

0-1

Example 2

From Kryvoruchko – Bacrot

Batumi 2018

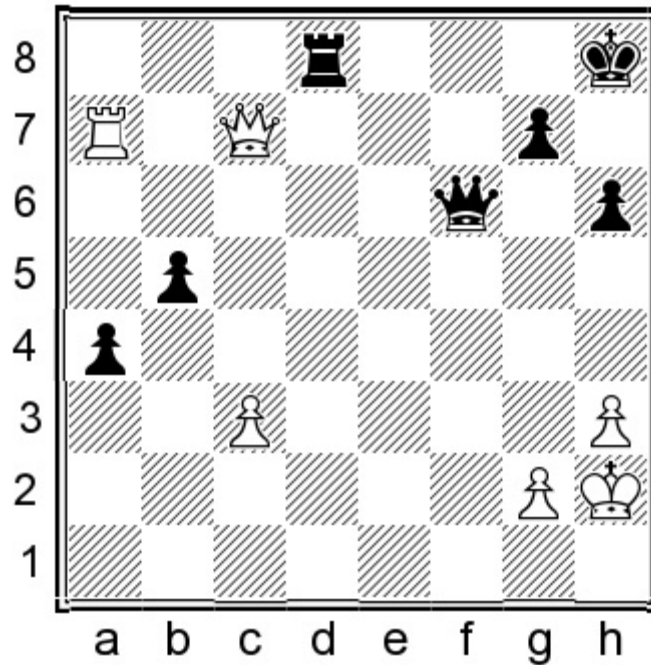


Black to move

47...♔g8!

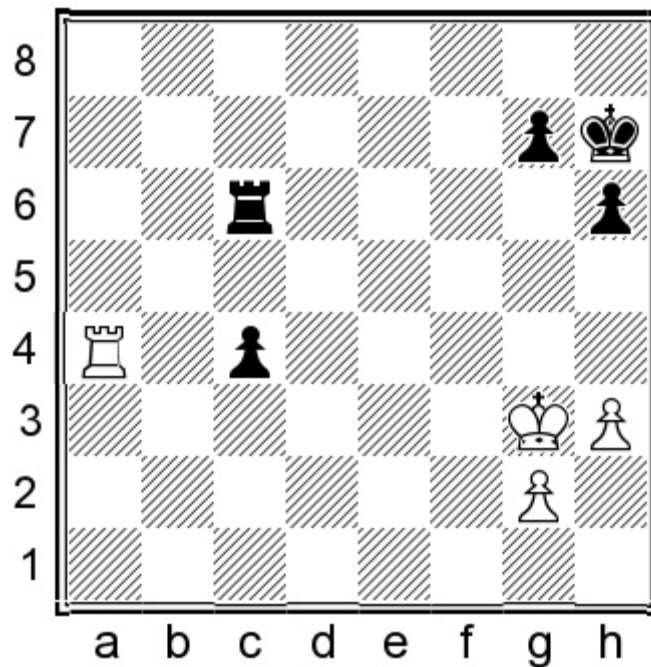
Only with the help of this inconspicuous move could Black have created some unappeasable problems for his opponent.

In the game, he played the more natural, but significantly weaker, 47...♔f6.



Position after: 47... ♕f6

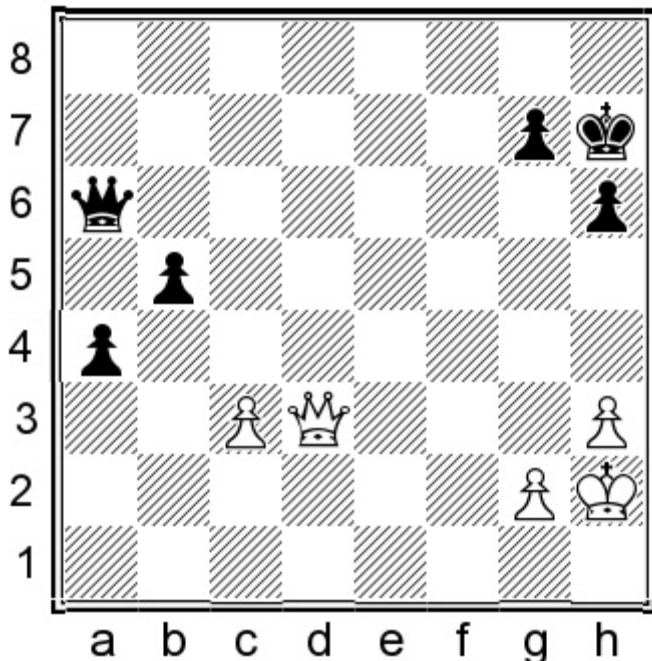
A) In the game, White decided to immediately break the consolidation of black pawns, and paid the price. 48.c4? ♜d6! An important artery has now been blocked (the h2-g1 diagonal) connecting the white king with his queen, and her desperate attempt to rectify the situation led only to a hopeless rook ending. 49.♕c8+ ♔h7 50.♕g4 ♕e5+ [Even quicker would have been 50...♞d4+.] 51.♕g3 ♕xg3+ 52.♔xg3 bxc4 53.♞xa4 ♞c6-+



Position after: 53... ♞c6-+

It further continued: 54.♖a2 ♔g6 55.♕f4 c3 56.♖c2 ♖c4+ 57.♕e3 ♔g5 58.g3 h5-- 59.♕f3 ♕f5
 60.♕e3 ♖c7 61.♕d3 ♔g5 62.♕e3 ♕f5 63.♕d3 ♖c6 64.♕e3 ♕e5 65.♕d3 ♕d5 66.g4 hxg4 67.hxg4
 ♕e5 68.♖e2+ ♕f4 69.♕c2 g5 70.♖g2 ♕f3 71.♖g1 ♖c5 0-1

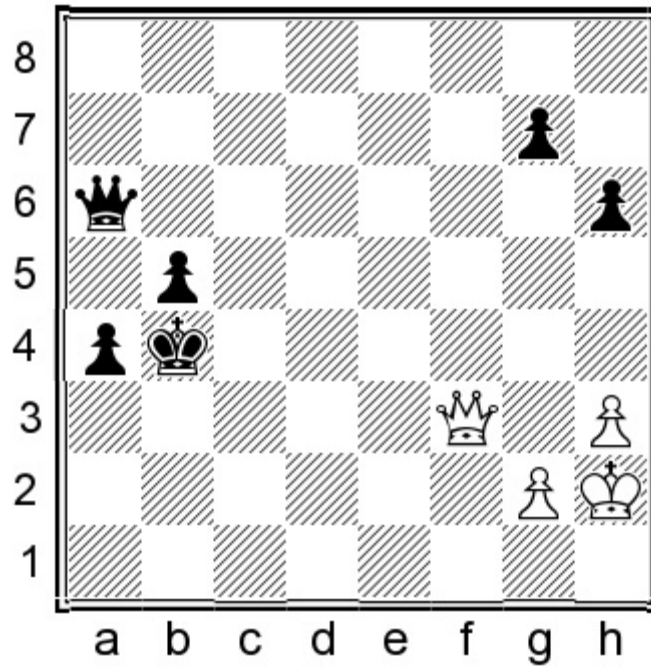
B) White, in turn, made a mistake and bypassed a brilliant opportunity for salvation: 48.♖a6! ♖xa6
 49.♖xd8+ ♔h7 50.♖d3+



Position after: 50.♖d3+

B1) Formally stronger 50...♖g6 51.♖xb5 ♖d6+ [Or 51...a3 52.♖a4 ♖d6+ 53.♕h1] 52.♕h1 a3
 53.♖a4 and Black is better, but objectively it is a draw.

B2) 50...♔g8 51.♖d5+ It's hard to believe that the black king cannot hide from the checks on the
 queenside, but White's perfectly accurate moves prove this to be the case. 51...♕f8 52.♖d8+ ♕f7
 53.♖d7+ ♕f6 54.♖d4+! ♕e6 55.♖g4+! ♕d5 56.♖f3+! ♕c5 57.♖e3+ ♕c4 58.♖e4+ ♕b3 59.♖d5+
 ♕b2 60.♖d2+ ♕a3 61.♖c1+ ♕b3 62.♖d1+ ♕xc3 63.♖f3+ ♕b4

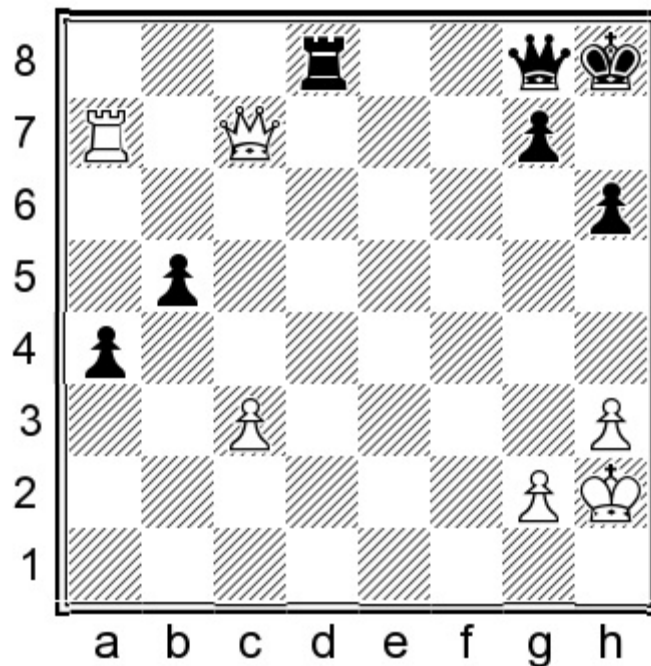


Position after: 63...♔b4

64. ♖f4+! ♕a5 65. ♖d2+ b4 [65...♕b6 66. ♖d6+ ♕a7 67. ♖c7+=] 66. ♖d5+ ♖b5 67. ♖a8+ ♕b6
 68. ♖b8+ ♕c5 69. ♖e5+=

Back to 47...♖g8.

47...♖g8!



Position after: 47...♖g8!

48.c4

What else to do?!

A) 48.♚b7 ♚f8! 49.♚xb5 ♚f4+–+

B) 48.♚e5 ♚a8! 49.♚c7 a3–+

48...bxc4 49.♞xa4 ♞c8

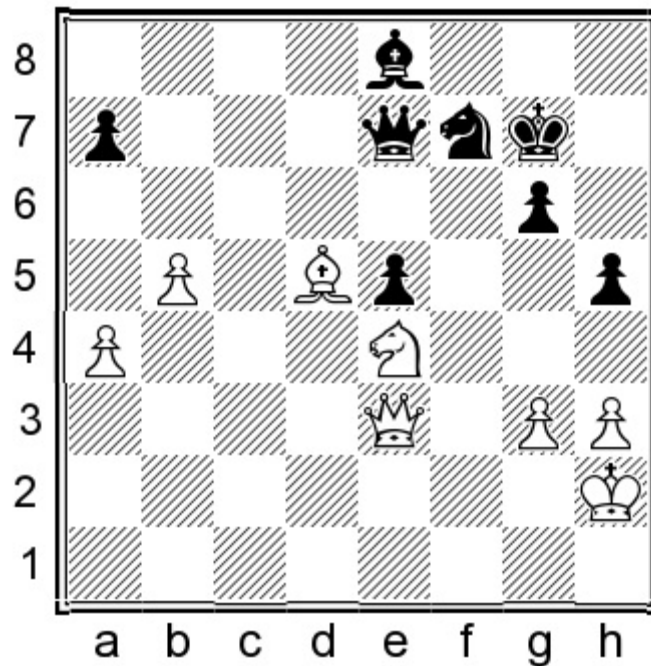
Thanks to the queen's subtle maneuver, the rook has managed to place itself behind the passed pawn and the position is now technically winning.

50.♚d7 c3 51.♞a1 c2–+

Example 3

From Gelfand – Adams

Batumi 2018

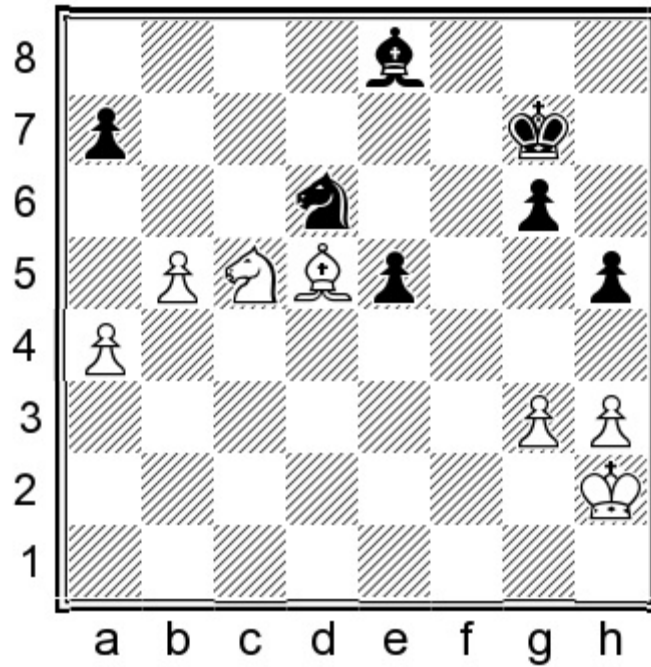


White to move

39.♚f2!

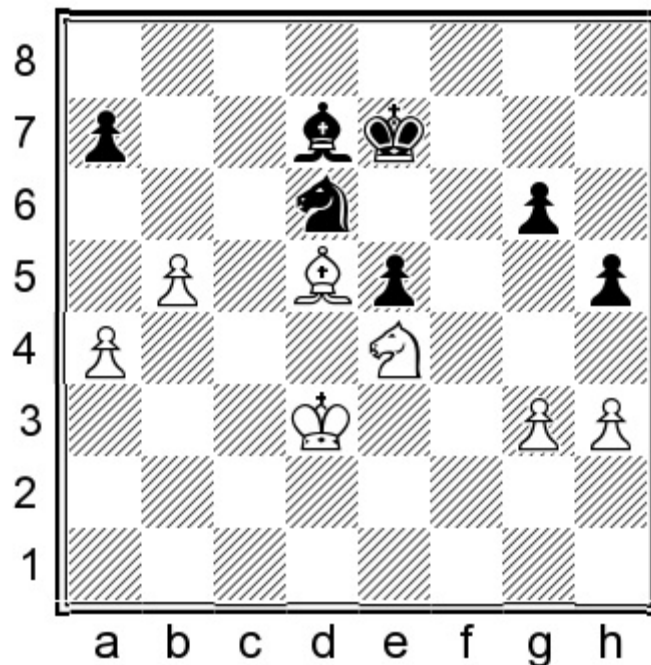
Precise and underlining the advantages of White's position: the good positioning of the pieces, the ability to create a passed pawn on the queenside, and the a7-pawn does not allow the black pieces to become more active.

Instead, White hurried to exchange queens, after which there was an undeniable advantage in the endgame, but it was by no means easy to convert. 39.♚c5?! ♚xc5 40.♞xc5 ♞d6



Position after: 40...♞d6

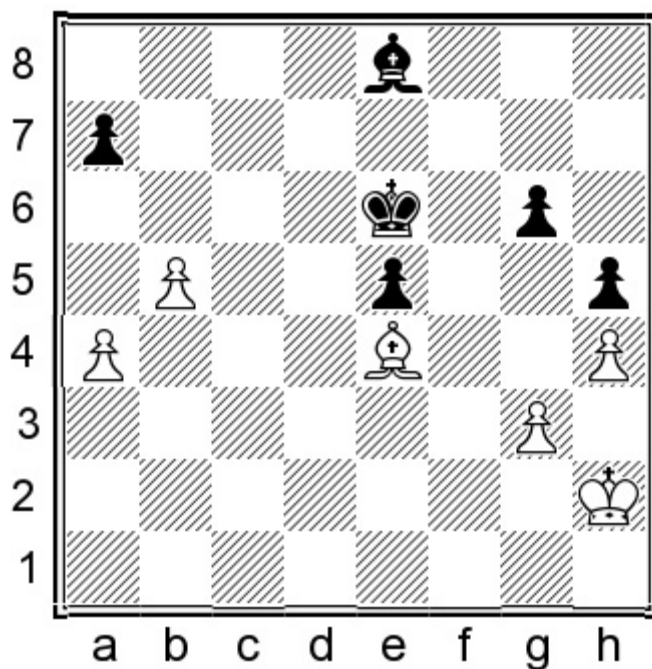
A) The game continued: 41.♞g2 ♞f6 42.♞f3 ♞f5?! [⊔ 42...♞e7±] 43.♞e4+?! [43.g4!±] 43...♞e7 44.♞e2 ♞d6 45.♞d3 ♞d7= with equality:



Position after: 45...♞d7=

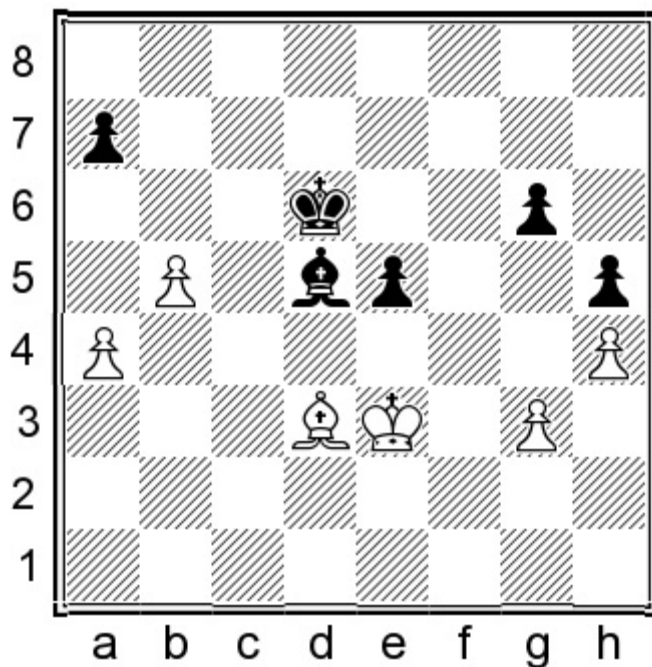
46.♞f2 ♞d8 47.♞c3 ♞c7 48.♞b4 e4 49.♞xe4 ♞xh3 50.♞xd6 ♞xd6 51.♞f7 ♞f5 52.a5 ♞d3 53.♞e8 ♞e7 54.b6 axb6 55.axb6 ♞d8 56.♞c3 ♞b1 57.♞d4 ♞c8 58.♞e5 ♞b7 59.♞f6 ♞f5 60.♞xg6 ♞h3 61.♞xh5 ♞xb6 62.♞g6 ♞g4 63.♞f5 ♞e2 64.♞g5 ♞c5 65.♞g4 ♞b5 66.♞f6 ♞d4 67.♞f5 ♞e2 ½-½

B) 41. ♖e4!? ♜xe4 [There is no certainty that White will convert the material advantage after 41... ♜xb5 42. axb5 ♝xb5 but it is not desirable to play like this, of course.] 42. ♝xe4 ♔f6 43. h4 ♕e6



Position after: 43... ♕e6

B1) 44. ♖g2 ♕d6 45. ♖f2 ♕c5 46. ♕e3 ♖b4 47. ♝c2 ♕c5 48. ♕e4 ♕d6 49. ♖f3 ♕c5 50. ♕e3 ♝f7 51. ♕e4 ♕d6 52. ♝d3 [52. a5 g5! =] 52... ♝d5+ 53. ♕e3

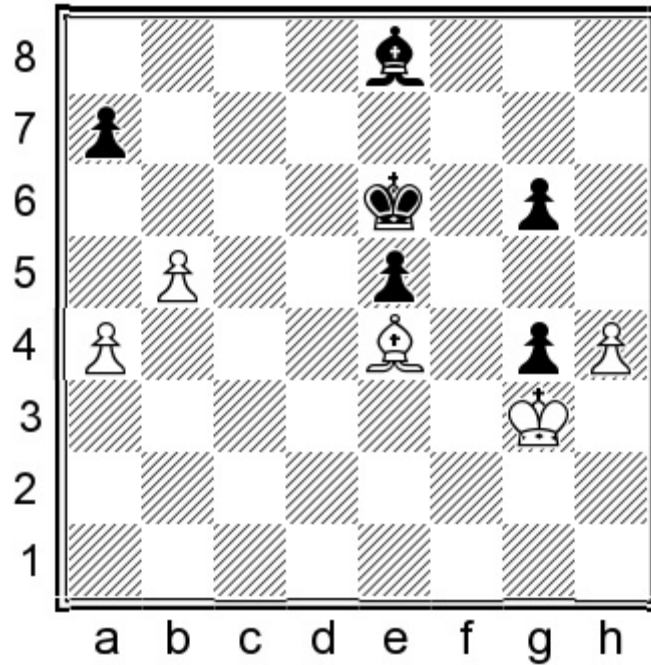


Position after: 53... ♕e3

53...e4! 54. ♝e2 [54. ♝xe4 ♝xe4 55. ♕xe4 ♕c5 56. ♕f4 ♖b4 57. ♖g5 ♕xa4 58. ♖xg6 ♖xb5 59. ♖xh5

a5 60.g4 a4 61.g5 a3 62.g6 a2 63.g7 a1=♚ 64.g8=♚=] 54...♔c5 55.a5 ♕b7 56.b6 axb6 57.axb6
 ♖xb6 58.♗c4 ♖c5 59.♗f7 g5 60.hxg5 ♔d6=

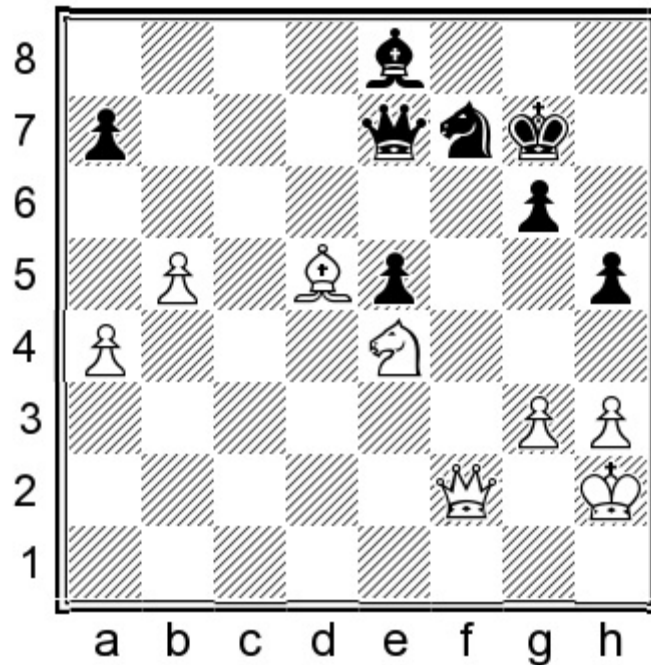
B2) 44.g4 hxg4 [44...♔d6? 45.g5 ♖c5 46.♔g3 ♖b4 47.♔f3 Δ 47...♔xa4 48.♗c6+–] 45.♔g3



Position after: 45.♔g3

45...♔d6! 46.♔xg4 ♖c5 47.♔g5 ♖d4 48.♗c6 ♗f7 49.a5 e4 50.b6 axb6 51.axb6 e3 52.b7 e2
 53.b8=♚ e1=♚ 54.♚a7+ ♔d3 55.♚xf7 ♚g3+=

39.♚f2!



Position after: 39. ♖f2!

Now a possible continuation is:

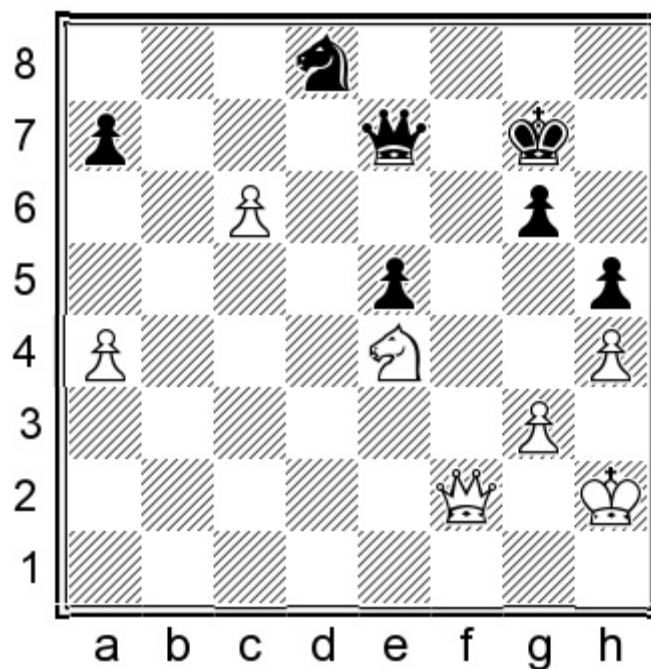
39... ♜h6

39... ♜d8 40. ♚b2! with the idea of a4-a5. 40... ♙f7 41. ♙xf7 ♜xf7 42. a5±

40. ♙c6 ♙xc6

40... ♙f7 41. a5+-

41. bxc6 ♜f7 42. h4 ♜d8



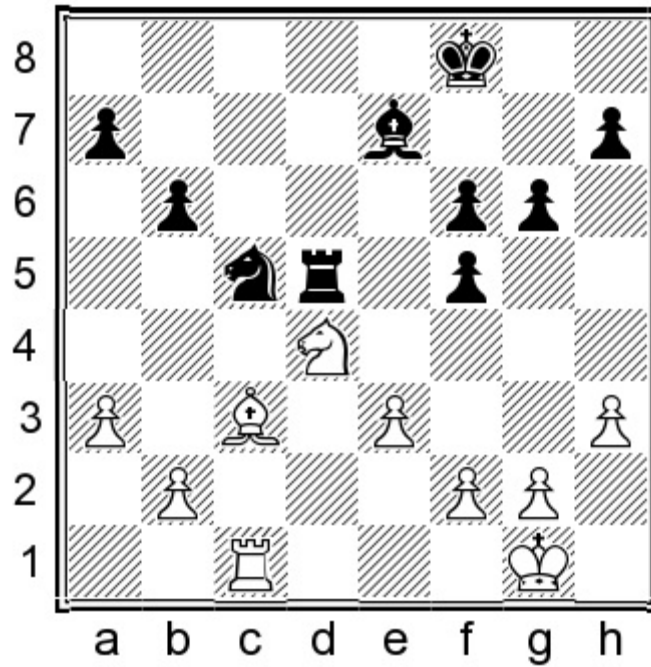
Position after: 42... ♜d8

43. c7! ♚xc7 44. ♚f6+-

Example 4

From Dreev – Bruzon Batista

Saint Louis 2018



Black to move

In an approximately equal position, Black attempted to seize the initiative.

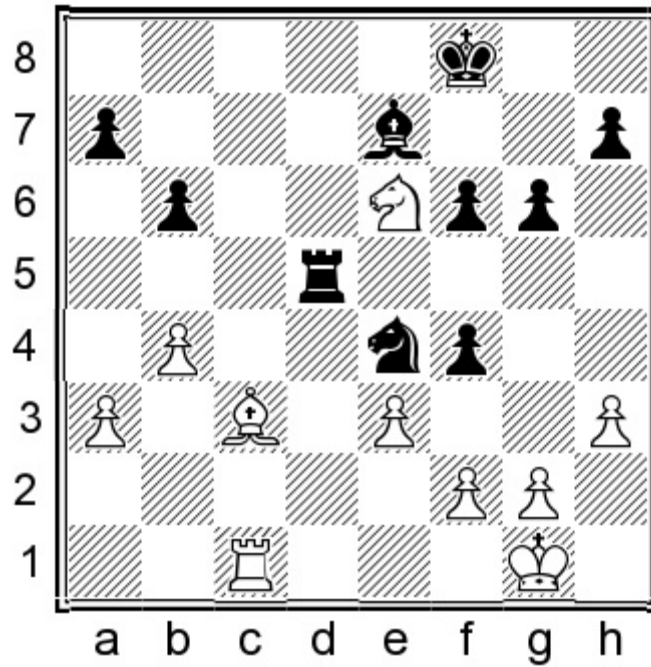
25...f4?!

25...♔f7 26.♘c6 ♖d7=

25...f4?! 26.b4!

Black's idea is revealed in the following variation 26.exf4 ♘d3 27.♖d1 ♘xf4 28.♘e6+? ♔f7-+.

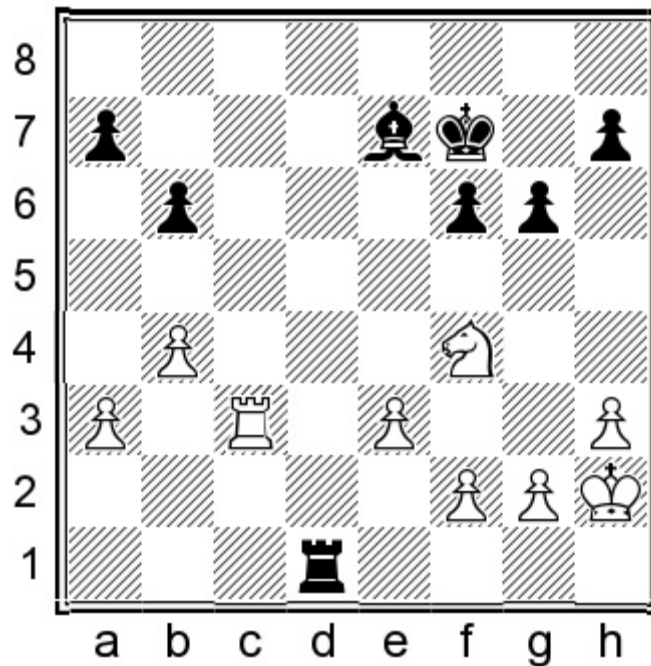
26...♘e4 27.♘e6+



Position after: 27. ♖e6+

Unexpectedly, Black was left without a pawn, and although the activity of his pieces makes it possible to hope for a successful outcome, to regroup into a defensive scheme in this situation is not an easy task psychologically.

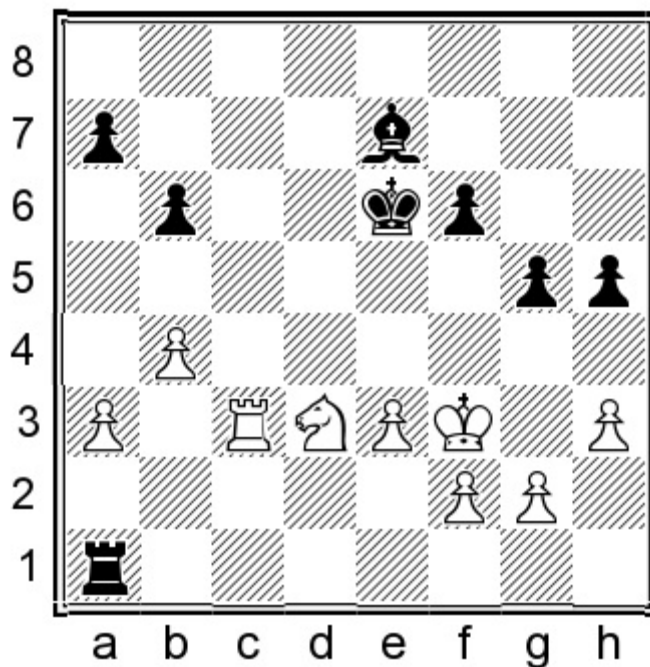
27... ♔f7 28. ♖xf4 ♖xc3 29. ♖xc3 ♖d1+ 30. ♔h2



Position after: 30. ♔h2

30...♖d2?!

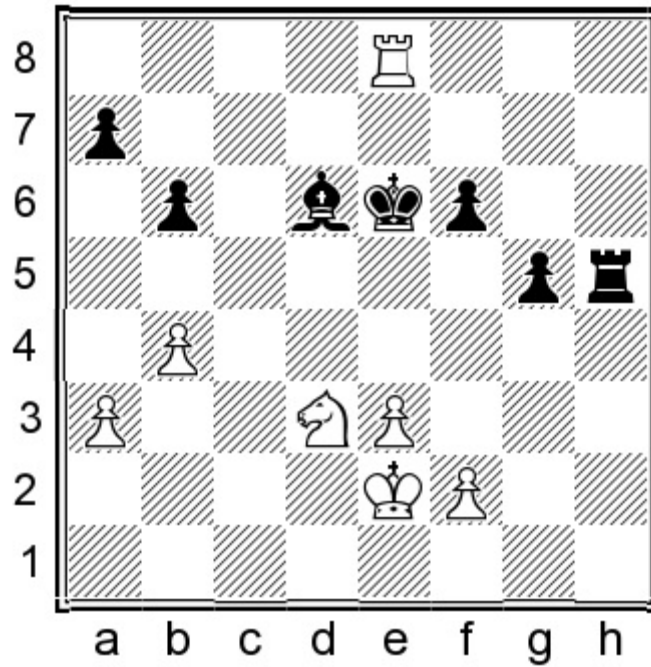
A) A waste of time, the rook has nothing to do on the second rank. It was much more important to create as much activity as possible in the center. 30...g5! 31.♘d3 ♔e6 32.♕g3 h5 33.♕f3 ♖a1



Position after: 33...♖a1

[33...f5? 34.h4!±]

A1) It is very important that in the event of 34.g4 there is 34...♗d6!. Now the advantages of the position of the black rook on the first rank become obvious. [34...h4 35.♘c1±] 35.gxh5 [35.♕g2 hxg4 36.hxg4] 35...♖h1 36.♕e2 ♖xh3 37.♖c8 ♖xh5 38.♖e8+



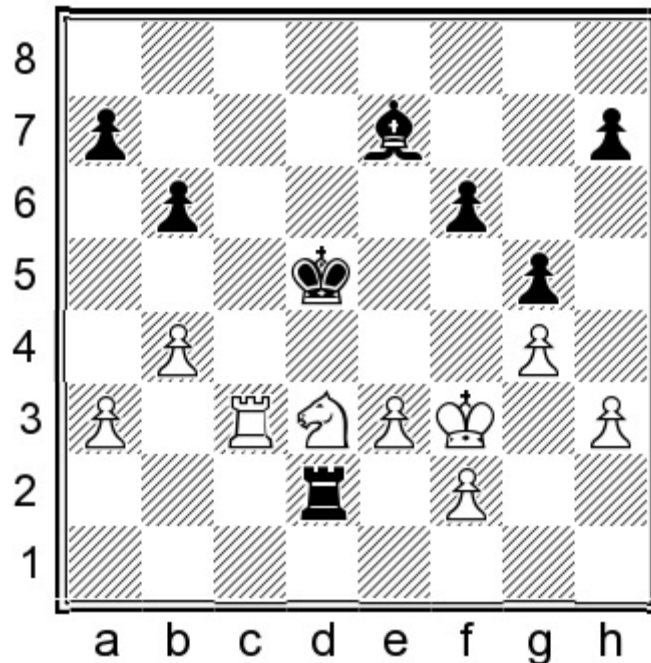
Position after: 38. Re8+

38... Qd5 [38... Qd7?! 39. Ra8±] 39. e4+ Qc4 40. Re6 Qb8 41. Rxf6 Rh4 42. Qe3 Rh3+ 43. f3 g4=

A2) 34. Qc1 Qd6 35. Qb3 Ra2 36. Rd3 [36. Qd4+ Qd5±] 36... Qe5 37. g4 hxg4+ 38. hxg4 Rc2±

B) 30... Qd6?! 31. g3±

31. Qg3 g5 32. Qd3 Qe6 33. Qf3 Qd5 34. g4



Position after: 34. g4

34...a6?!

Black defends himself against a possible b4-b5, but this only aggravates his position. The best chance was probably the more active 34...♙d6 35.♘c1 ♜d1 but even then, after the prophylactic 36.♔g2 as Black threatened to attack the h3-pawn, 36...♙e5 37.♞c2 ♕e4 38.b5 White retains a significant advantage.

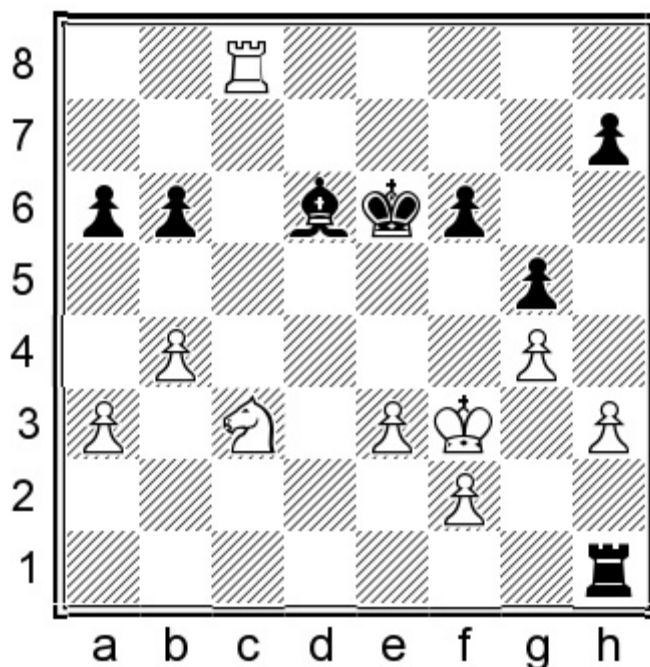
35.♘c1!

The knight moves to a promising square, all the while freeing himself from worrying about the rook.

35...♙d6

No relief came after 35...a5 36.bxa5 bxa5 37.a4±.

36.♞c8 ♜d1 37.♘e2 ♞h1 38.♘c3+ ♕e6



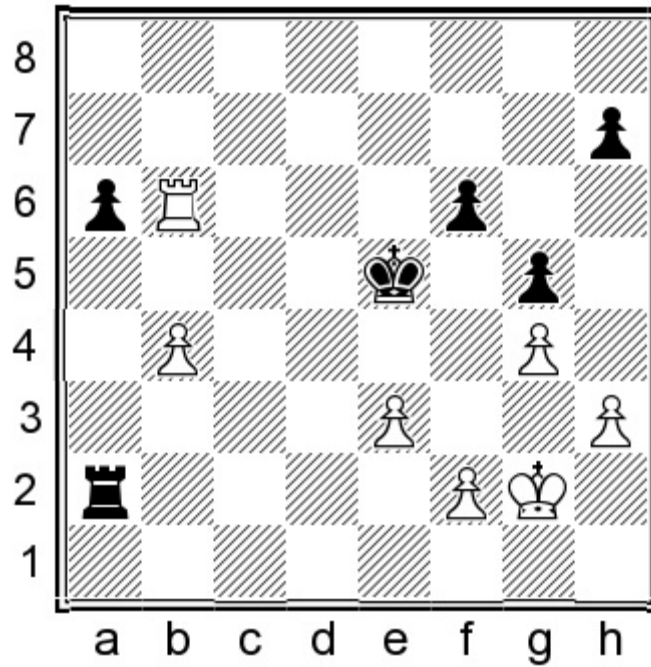
Position after: 38...♕e6

39.♕e2!

A) ≤ 39.♕e4 ♞c1!

B) Perhaps winning was 39.♞c6 ♞c1 40.♕e2 ♕d7 41.♕d2 ♕xc6 42.♕xc1 but White did not have complete confidence in this during the game.

39...♞a1 40.♞c6 ♞xa3 41.♘e4 ♕d5 42.♞xd6+ ♕xe4 43.♞xb6 ♞a2+ 44.♕f1 ♕e5 45.♕g2



Position after: 45. ♔g2

The rook endgame is lost for Black because of the unfortunate position of the king and the inability to defend the h-pawn.

45... ♖a1

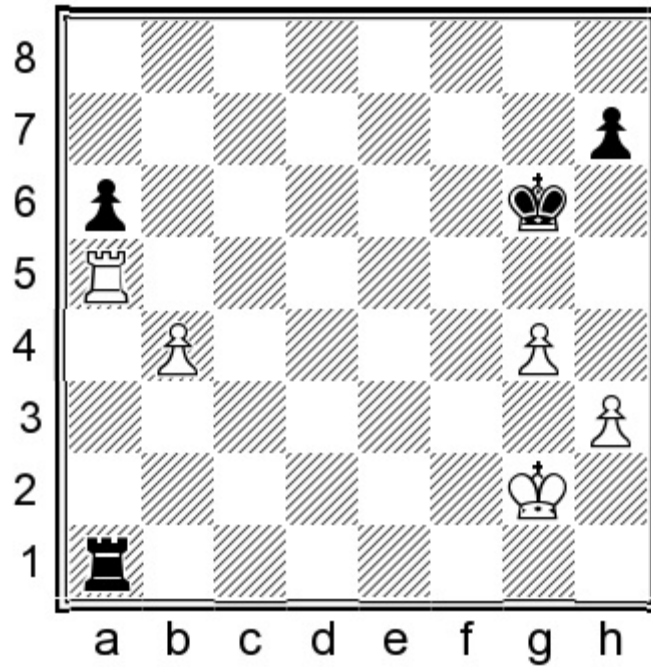
A) 45... ♖a4 46. ♔g3 ♖a3 47. ♖c6 ♖b3 48. ♖xa6 ♖xb4 49. ♖a7+–

B) 45... f5 46. ♖b7 fxg4 47. hxg4 ♖b2 48. ♔f3 h6 49. ♖b6+–

46.f4+!

The shortest route to victory.

46... gxf4 47. exf4+ ♔xf4 48. ♖xf6+ ♔g5 49. ♖f5+ ♔g6 50. ♖a5+–



Position after: 50. ♖a5+-

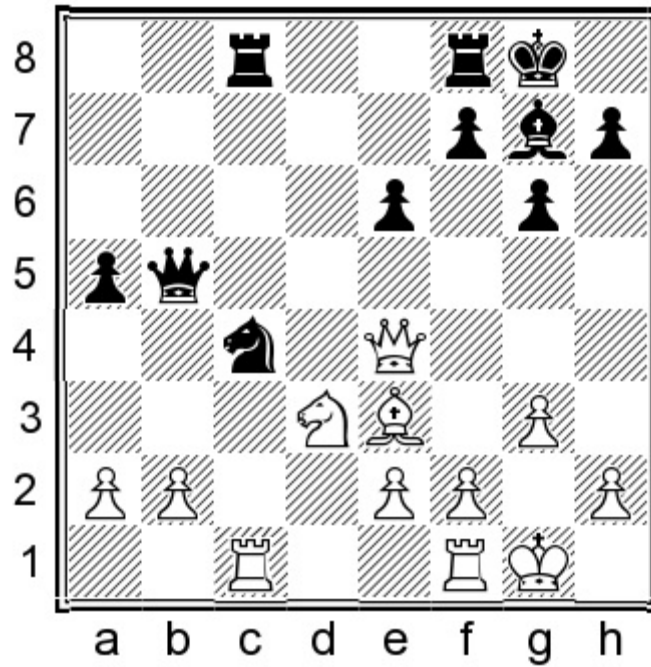
The rest is easy.

50... ♖b1 51. ♖xa6+ ♔g5 52. ♖a5+ ♔g6 53. ♖b5 ♖b2+ 54. ♔g3 ♖b3+ 55. ♔h4 h6 56. ♖b6+ ♔h7 57. ♖b8
 ♔g6 58. ♖b7 ♔f6 59. ♖b6+ ♔g7 60. b5 ♔h7 61. g5 hxg5+ 62. ♔xg5 ♖xh3 63. ♖b7+ ♔g8 64. b6 ♖b3
 65. ♔f6 ♖b1 66. ♖b8+ ♔h7 67. ♔e6 ♔g7 68. ♔d6 ♔f7 69. ♔c6 ♔e7 70. ♖h8 ♖c1+ 71. ♔d5 ♖d1+ 72. ♔e5
 ♖e1+ 73. ♔f4

1-0

Example 5

From Dreev – Hansen
 Saint Louis 2018

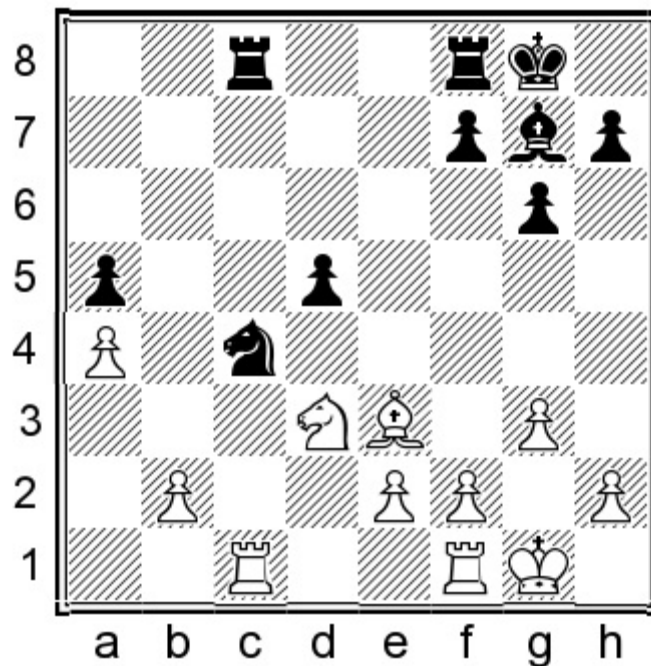


White to move

22.a4!?

Although I realized that it was possible to play the simple and objectively stronger 22.b3 Nxe3 23. Qxe3 a4 24. Rxc8 Rxc8 25. $\text{Rc1}\pm$, I preferred transitioning into the endgame. It seemed to me that the conversion of an extra pawn would be easier for me than with queens on the board.

22.a4!? Qd5 23. Qxd5 exd5



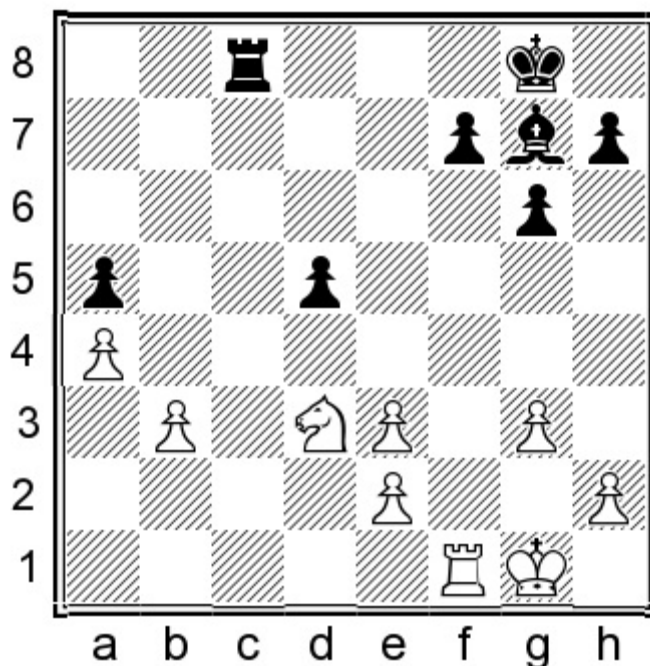
Position after: 23...exd5

Doubled pawns along the e-file cannot be avoided, but this did not bother me as Black also has pawn weaknesses.

24.b3 ♖xe3 25.♖xc8

It is certainly important to exchange a pair of rooks in this case, the white pawns become much less of a concern.

25...♖xc8 26.fxe3

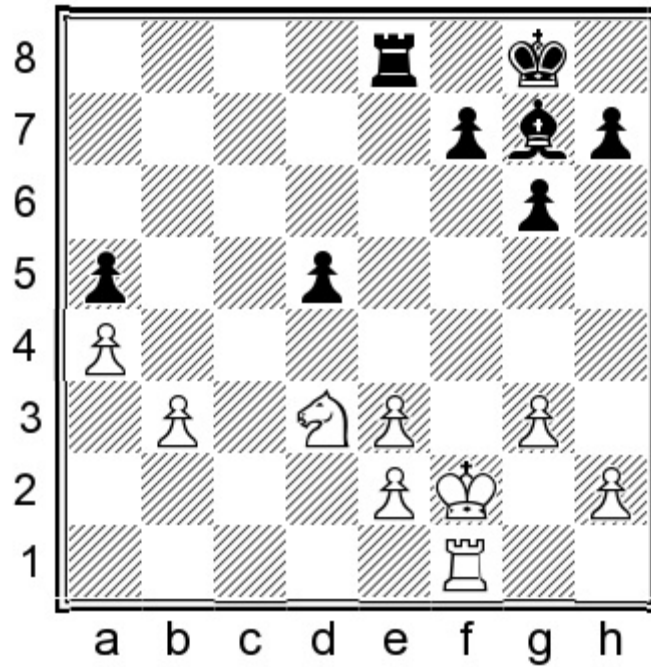


Position after: 26.fxe3

26...♖e8

People often think that it is possible to solve all problems with activity, the attack on the pawn certainly suggests itself, but it was better to focus on improving the position with 26...f5!? 27.♖b1 d4 but even then White keeps the advantage after 28.♗b2!? ♖c2 29.♕f1 dxe3 30.♗c4±.

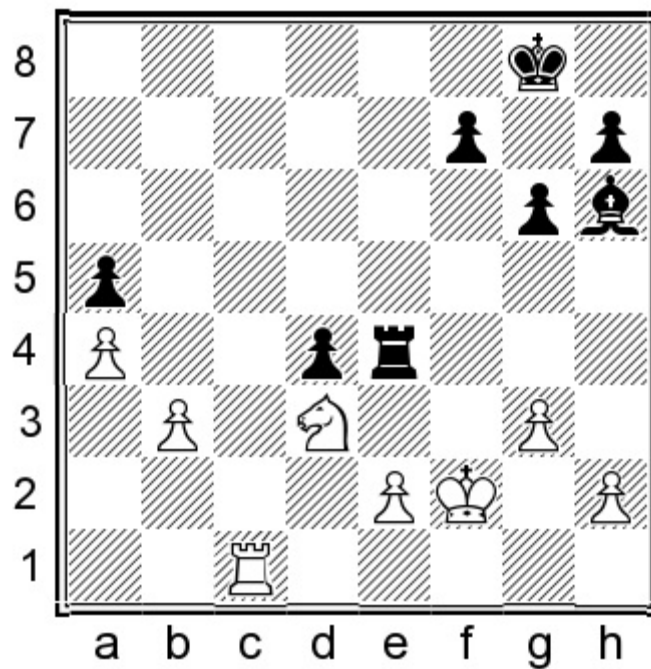
27.♕f2



Position after: 27. ♔f2

27... ♕c3

27...d4 28.e4!? [28.♖c1!? dxe3+ 29.♔f3±] 28...♗xe4 29.♖c1 ♕h6



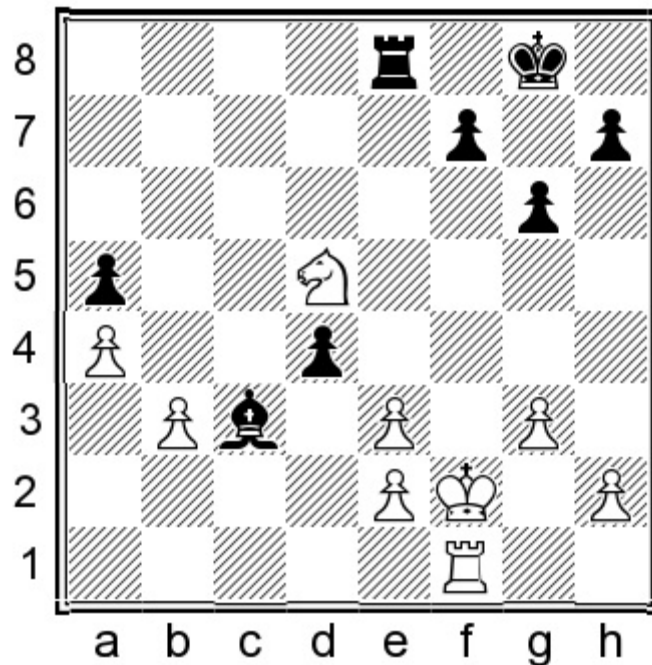
Position after: 29... ♕h6

30.♖c8+ [30.♖c5?! ♕d2=] 30...♔g7 31.♔e1! It's important not to allow the black bishop to d2. 31...♗e6
32.♖c5 ♖a6 33.♘e5±

28. ♖f4

28. ♜d1!? d4 29. exd4 ♙xd4+ 30. ♔e1±

28...d4 29. ♘d5



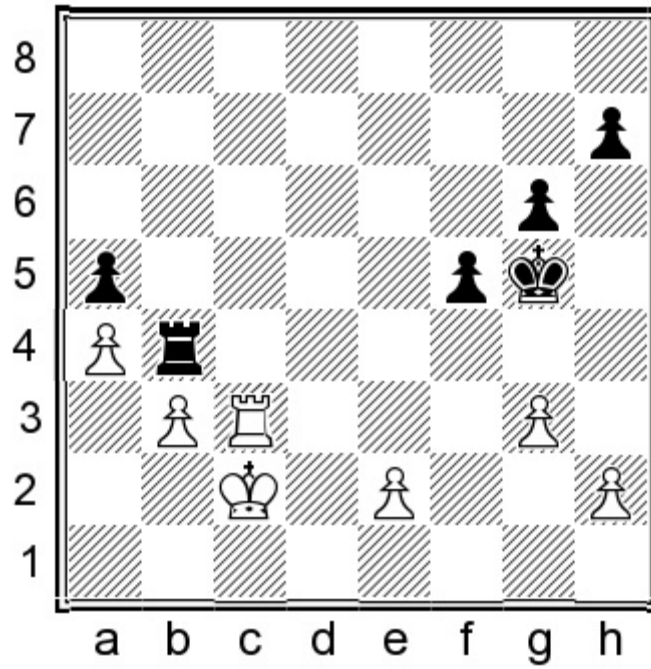
Position after: 29. ♘d5

29... ♔g7

29... ♜b8 30. ♜b1 f5 31. exd4 ♙xd4+ 32. e3±

30. exd4

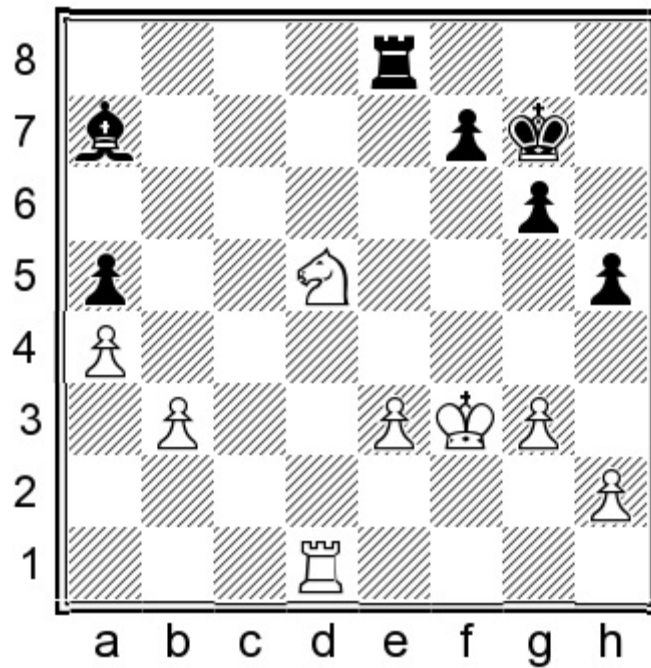
Of course, it would be unwise to go into a rook ending. 30. ♔f3?! ♜e5 31. e4 f5 32. ♘xc3 dxc3 33. ♜c1 ♜xe4 34. ♜xc3 ♜b4 35. ♔e3 ♔f6 36. ♔d2 ♔g5 37. ♔c2



Position after: 37. ♔c2

37... ♖e4! 38. e3 ♖e5=

30... ♙xd4+ 31. e3 ♙a7 32. ♖d1 h5 33. ♔f3



Position after: 33. ♔f3

White gradually strengthens the position.

33... g5

Usually such “active moves” only worsen the situation, and our case is no exception.

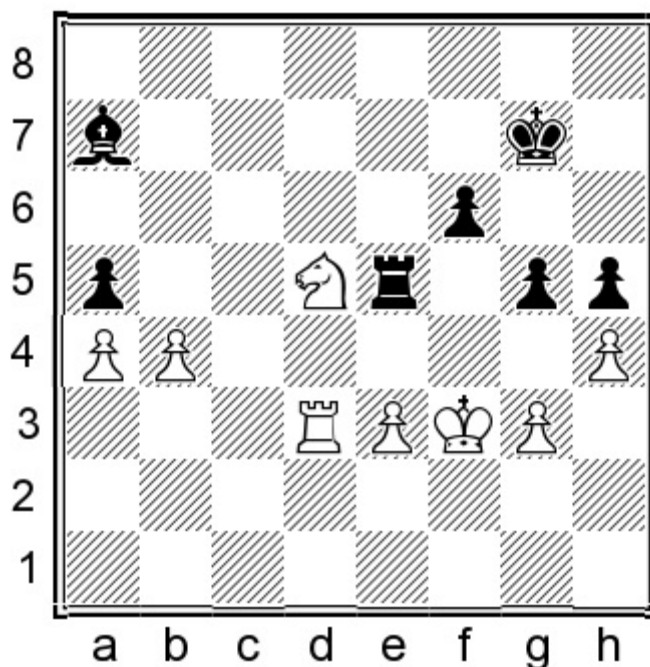
34.♖d3 ♜e5 35.h4!?

Of course not 35.b4? axb4 36.♗xb4 ♜a5=.

35...f6

Stronger was 35...g4+, but Black did not want to give the f4-square to the white knight. 36.♔e2±

36.b4!



Position after: 36.b4!

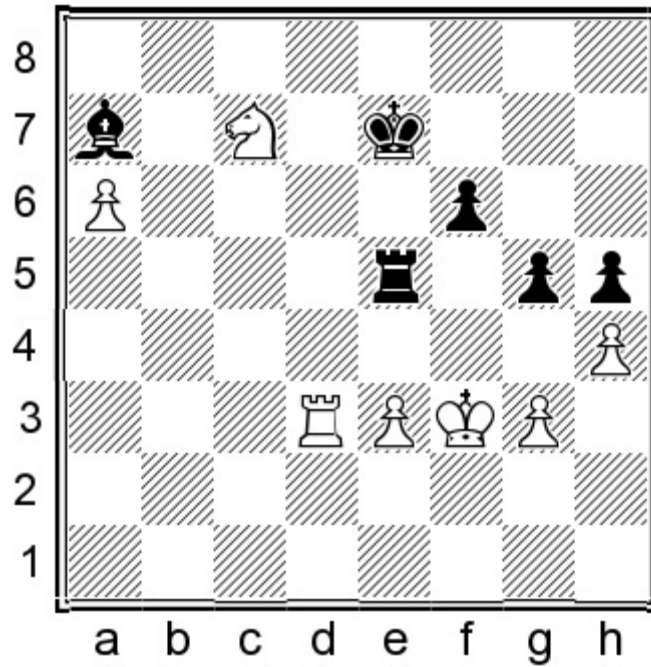
Now is the time to remember that White has an extra pawn and the weakness of the seventh rank helps White create a passed pawn.

36...axb4 37.♗xb4 ♘c5

37...♜a5? 38.♗c6 ♜xa4 39.♖d7+-

38.♗d5 ♔g6?!

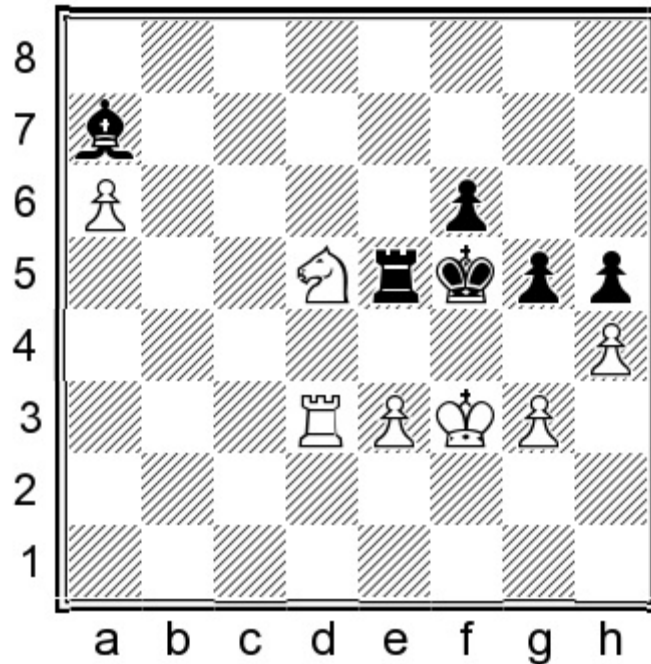
A misstep. I was expecting 38...♔f7 39.a5 ♔e6 40.♗c7+ ♔e7 41.a6 ♘a7



Position after: 41...♔a7

and here it is possible to continue with 42.hxg5! [42.♖b3? ♜f5+ 43.♕e2 ♜a5±] 42...fxg5 43.♖b3 with good winning chances, for example 43...♜a5 44.♖b5+.

39.a5 ♕f5 40.a6 ♔a7



Position after: 40...♔a7

41.e4+!+- 41...♕g6

41...♖xe4 42.♘e3+ ♙xe3 43.♞d5+-

42.hxg5

42.♞c3!? g4+ 43.♔g2 ♖xe4 44.♞c7+-

42...fxg5 43.♞c3 g4+ 44.♔f4 ♙b8 45.♞c6+

Avoiding the trap of 45.a7?? ♖f5+.

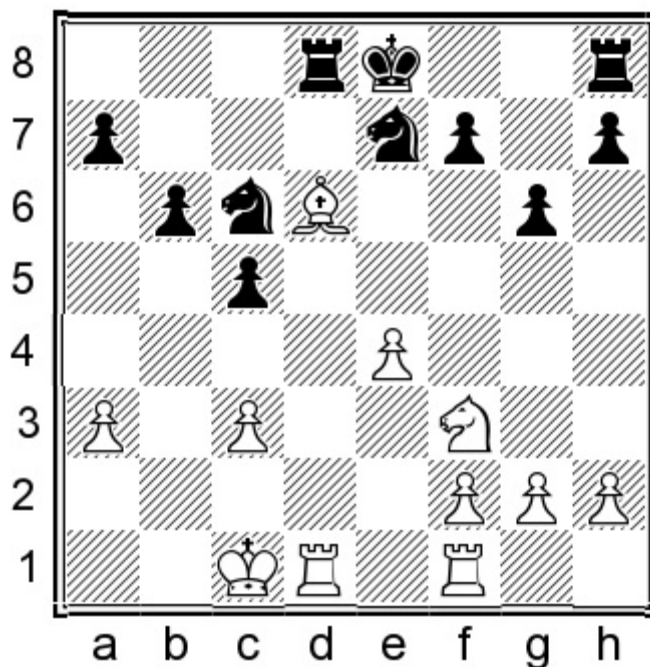
45...♞e6+ 46.♔e3 ♔f7 47.♞c7+

1-0

Example 6

From Dreev – Vallejo Pons

Biel 2002



White to move

White's position looks preferable. However, Black has no weaknesses and his strong pawn structure on the queenside restricts White's possibilities. Can White pose Black any real problems?

18.♙e5!

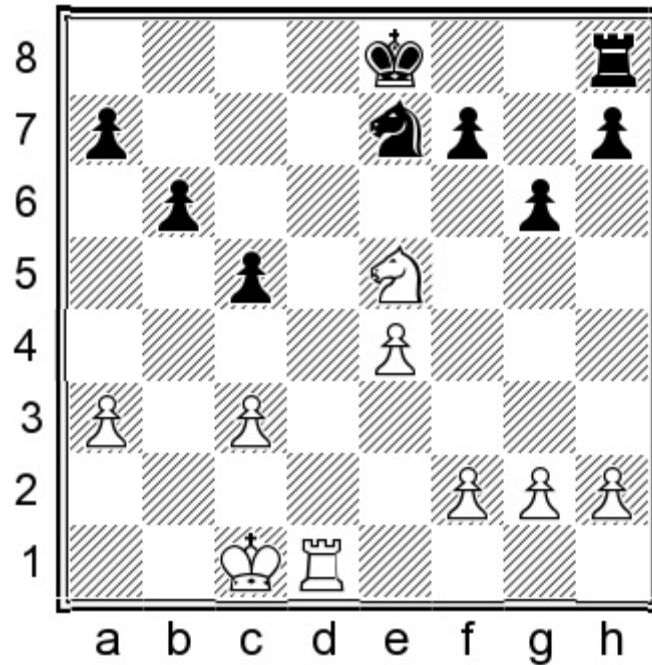
At first glance, this continuation only leads to simplifications, but things are not so straight forward.

18.♞fe1 ♘c8=

18. ♕e5! ♖xd1+

If Black knew ahead of time what was awaiting him, he would probably have preferred 18...0-0!? but then the bishop finds an excellent outpost. 19. ♕f6↑

19. ♖xd1 ♜xe5 20. ♜xe5



Position after: 20. ♜xe5

20...f6

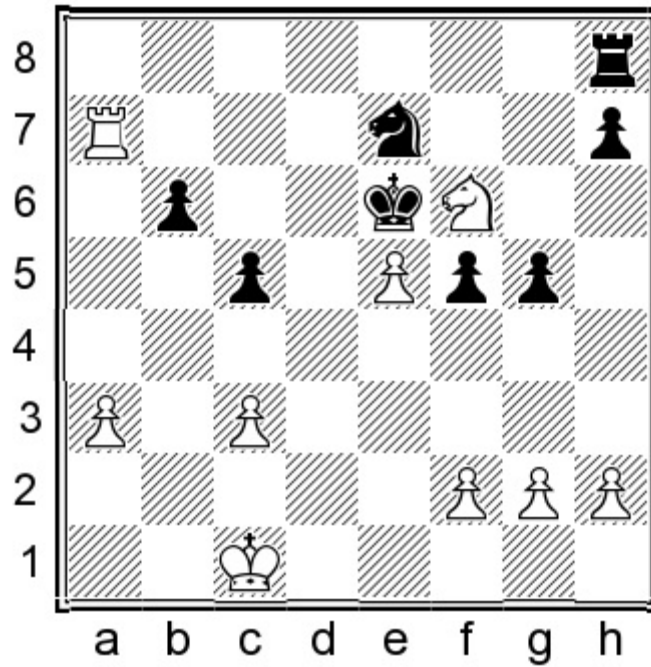
20...0-0? 21. ♖d7+-

21. ♜d7!

≤ 21. ♜c4?! ♜c8=

21...♔f7

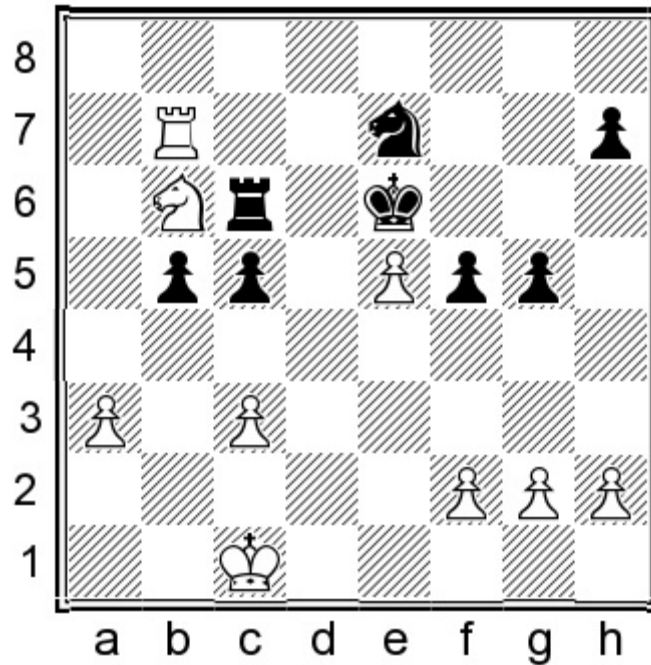
A different defensive strategy did not solve the problems either: 21...f5 22.e5 g5 but then after 23. ♜f6+ ♔f7 24. ♖d7 ♔e6 25. ♖xa7



Position after: 25. ♖xa7

White has a serious advantage:

A) 25...b5 26. ♗d7 ♝c8 27. ♘b6 ♝c6 28. ♖b7

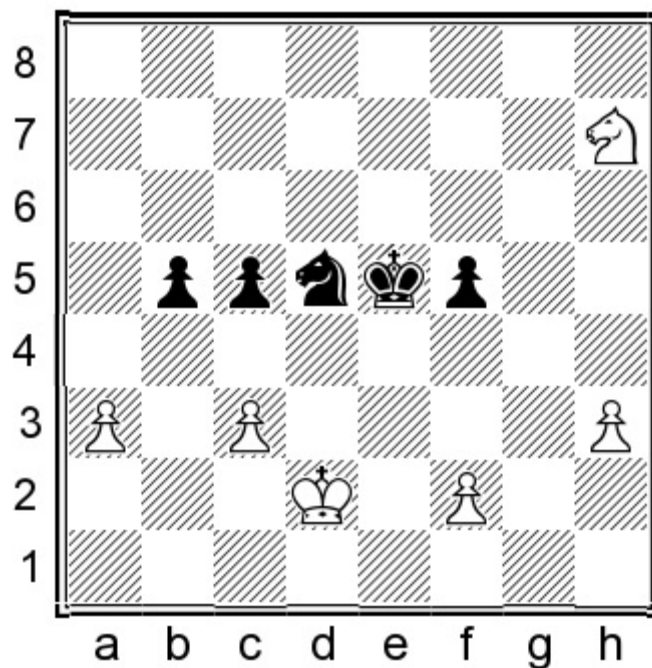


Position after: 28. ♖b7

28...c4 [28...♗d5 29.c4!! bxc4 30.♗xc4 ♗f4 31.♕c2 ♗xg2 32.♖xh7+–; 28...♗g6 29.c4 bxc4 30.a4+–] 29.♕c2 ♗g6 30.♗d7±

B) 25...♗d5 26. ♖xh7 [26.♗xh7!?±] 26...♖xh7 27.♗xh7 g4 28.♕d2 ♕xe5 29.h4 gxh3 30.gxh3 Δ

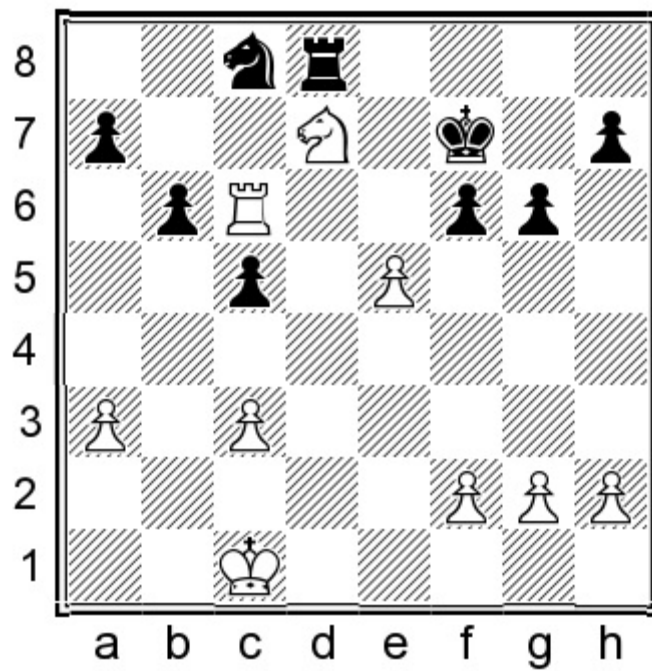
30...b5?!



Position after: Δ 30...b5?!

31.c4! bxc4 32.♘g5+- White's passed pawns are clearly stronger than his opponent's.

22.♞d6 ♘c8 23.♞c6 ♞d8 24.e5!±

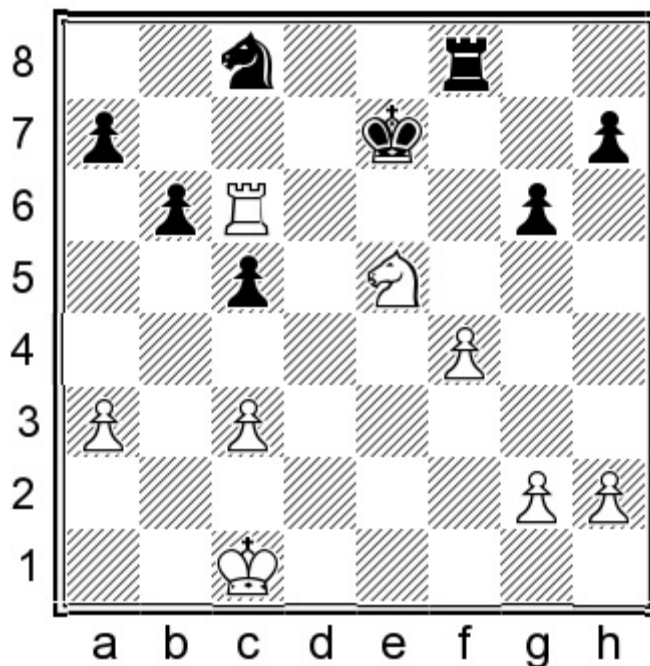


Position after: 24.e5!±

The point!

24...f5

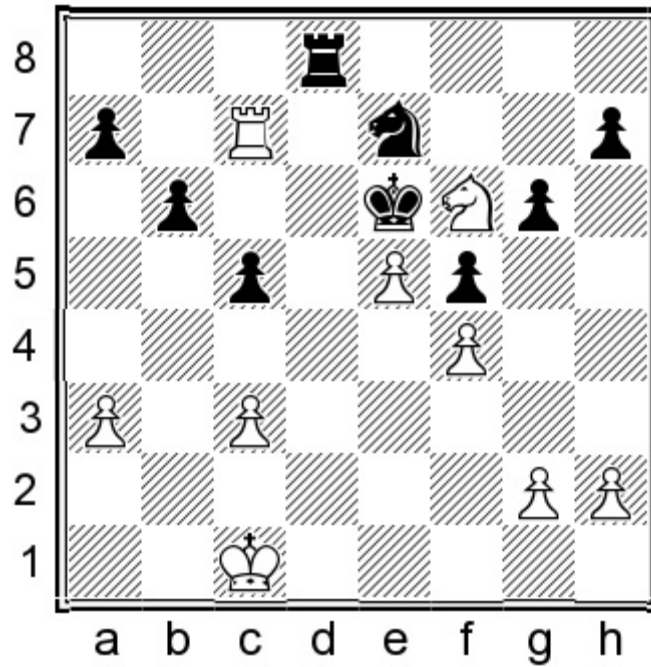
Opening the position, even at the cost of a pawn, was probably the best practical chance: 24...fxe5
25.♘xe5+ ♔e7 26.f4! ♖f8



Position after: 26...♖f8

But even then, with correct play, White retains good winning chances. 27.♔c2 [27.g3 g5 28.fxg5
♘d6±] 27...♘d6 28.♖c7+ ♔e6 29.g3 ♘f7 [29...g5 30.♖xh7 gxf4 31.♘g6±] 30.♘c4 g5 31.♖xa7 gxf4
32.gxf4 b5 33.♖a6+ ♔f5 34.♘d2±

25.♘f6 ♘e7 26.♖c7 ♔e6 27.f4+–



Position after: 27.f4+-

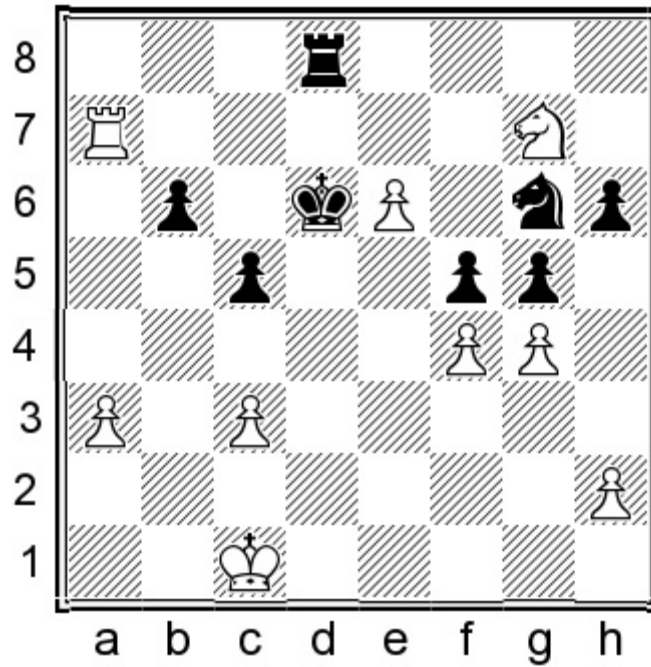
27...h6

Liquidating into a rook ending does not hold either. 27...♞d5 28.♞c6+ ♔e7 29.♞xd5+ ♞xd5 30.♔c2 ♔d7 31.♞f6 ♔e7 32.g3 ♞d8 33.a4 ♞d5 34.a5 bxa5 35.♞a6+-

28.♞xa7 g5 29.♞h5 ♞g6

29...gxf4 30.♞g7+-

30.♞g7+ ♔d5 31.e6 ♔d6 32.g4!+-



Position after: 32.g4!+-

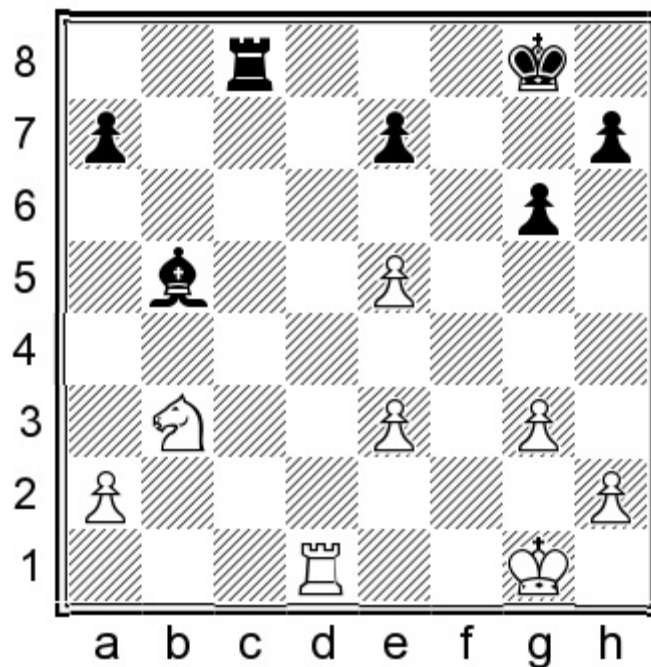
The most effective and strongest move, the creation of a new passed pawn is now inevitable.

32...gxf4 33.gxf5 f3 34.fxg6 f2 35.♖f7 ♜g8 36.e7

1-0

Example 7

From Dreev – Skoberne
Spilimbergo 2018



Black to move

Virtually any move here leads to a draw, White's extra pawn will not last for long. However, Black decided to play as safely as possible and therefore wanted to exchange the minor pieces in order to transition into a completely drawn rook endgame.

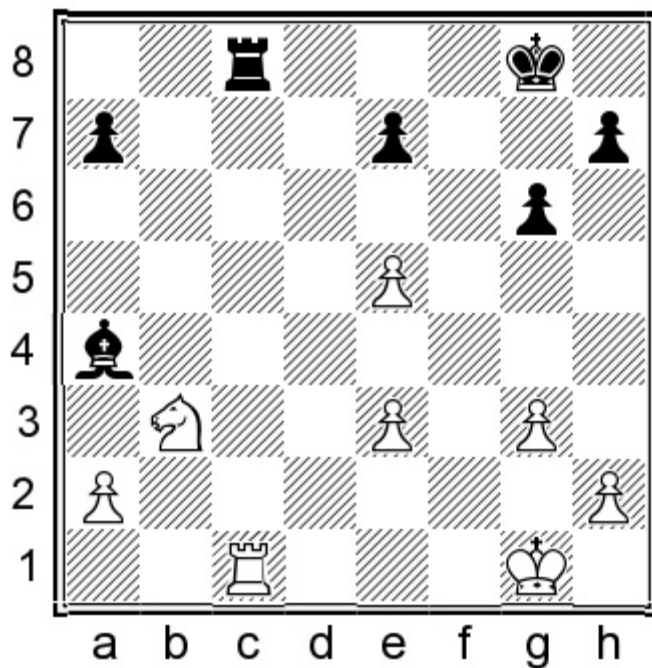
27...♙a4?

A) 27...♔f7!? 28.♘d4 ♝c5 29.♞b1 a6 30.e6+ ♔f6=

B) 27...♞c3!? 28.♔f2 ♔f7 29.♘d4 ♙c4=

C) 27...a6!? 28.♘d4!? ♝c5=

27...♙a4? 28.♞c1!



Position after: 28.♞c1!

It turns out that after the exchange of rooks, the white knight is in time to disturb the triumphant transfer of the black king to e6.

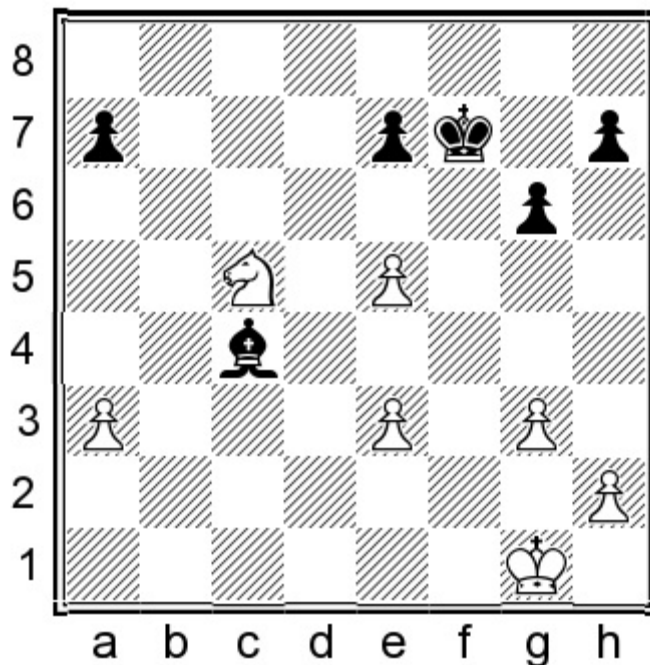
28...♞xc1+

28...♞b8 29.♘d4±

29.♘xc1 ♔f7 30.♘d3 ♙b5

30...♔e6? 31.♘c5++-

31.♖c5 ♜c4 32.a3



Position after: 32.a3

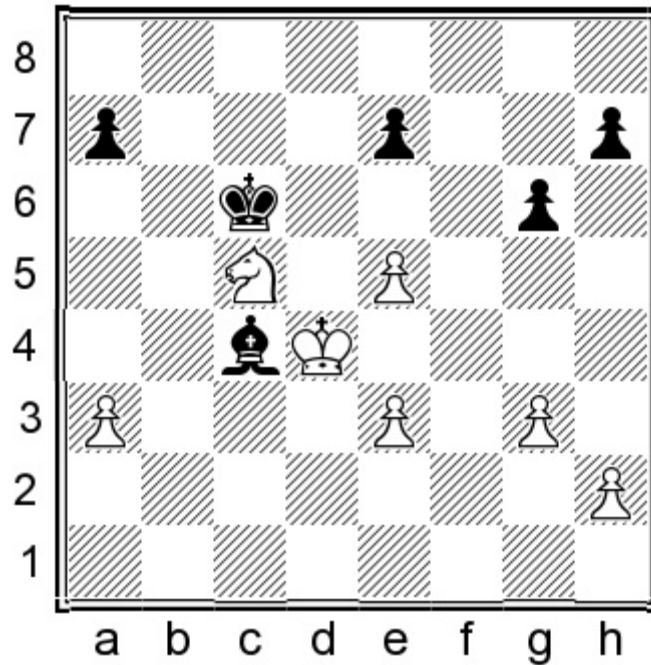
32...♔e8

The black king could not leave his nest and must stay on the kingside. He would probably regret not trying to get to the queenside: 32...g5 33.♕f2 ♔g6 34.e4 ♔h5 35.♕f3 h6 36.♘a4! Δ 36...♜e6 37.♘c3 ♜c4 38.♘d5 e6 39.♘f6+ ♔g6 40.♕e3+–

33.♕f2 ♔d8 34.♕f3

For practical reasons, White did not want to place the pawn on e4 prior to this, although it was clear that sooner or later he would have to use the resource of transferring the knight to d5.

34...♔c7 35.♕e4 ♔c6 36.♕d4



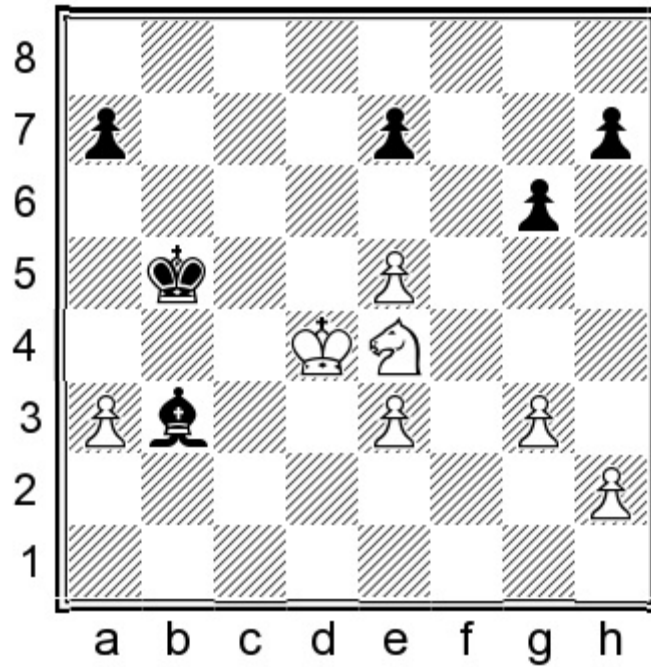
Position after: 36. ♔d4

The endgame that arose after the exchange of rooks is not easy to assess. It is clear that White should try to create a second weakness to win, but this is not that easy because he will need to use his knight, and then the black king can step in. In general, it seems to me as if it is winning for White, however, it's very difficult. Let's try to make sense of it and see how the players calculated in the actual game. The attentive reader will find many interesting and sometimes etude like ideas that can be very useful too.

36... ♖a2

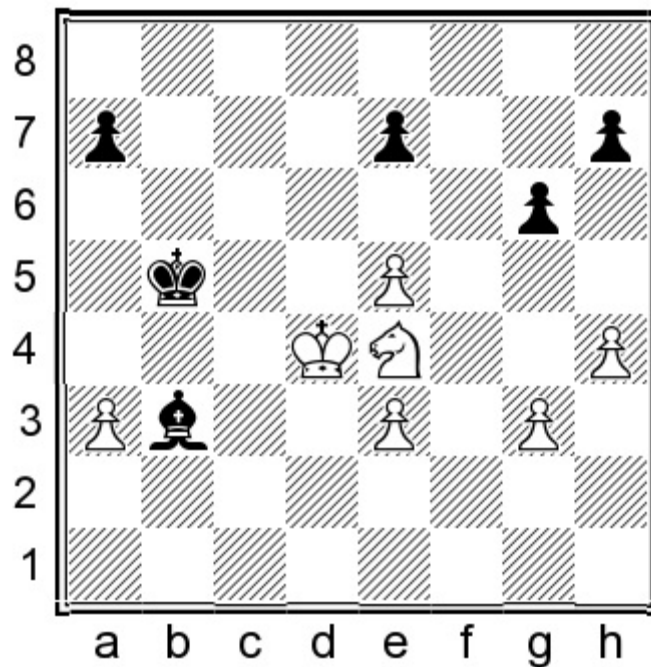
Gives White additional opportunities, it was better to immediately activate the king.

36... ♔b5 It is interesting to note that this also does not save Black. In this case though, it would be more difficult to loosen Black's position, for example: 37. ♘e4 ♖b3



Position after: 37...♔b3

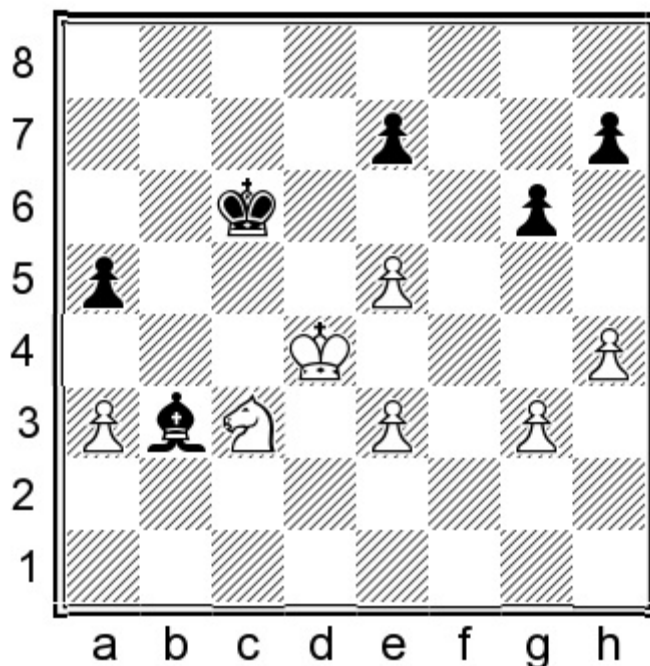
38.h4 Black has two ways to defend: with the pawn on h7 or with the pawn on h6. However, it seems that neither of them are capable of yielding a draw. As we will see though, the winning position for White is not a walk in the park. [38.♘g5? brings Black closer to a draw 38...h6 39.♘e4 g5!± White must not allow a black pawn to g5.]



Position after: 38.h4

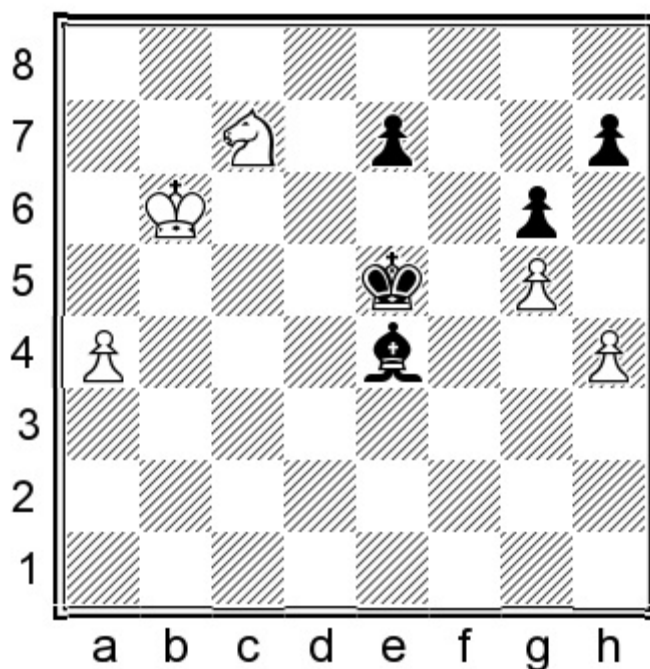
A) 38...♔a4 39.♘c3+!

B) 38...a5!? 39.♖c3+ ♔c6



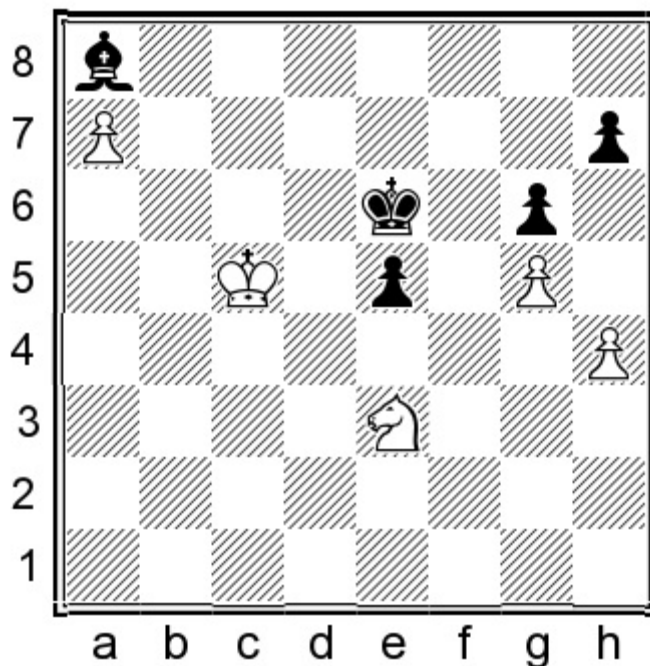
Position after: 39...♔c6

B1) 40.g4? The obvious plan lies in fixing the black pawns, which was feared and hence there was an attempt to obstruct this in the game. When Black ends up with an e7-pawn in this position, it turns out to be a mistake! The pawn on g5 looks beautiful, but as is known, “all that glitters is not gold”. 40...♙e6 41.g5 ♗b3 42.e4 ♕d7 43.♘d5 ♙a2 44.a4 How else to strengthen the position? 44...♗b3 45.♕c3 ♙d1 46.♕c4 ♙c2 47.♕b5 ♕e6 [47...♙xe4? 48.♘f4+–] 48.♕xa5 ♙xe4 49.♘c7+ ♕xe5 50.♕b6



Position after: 50. ♖b6

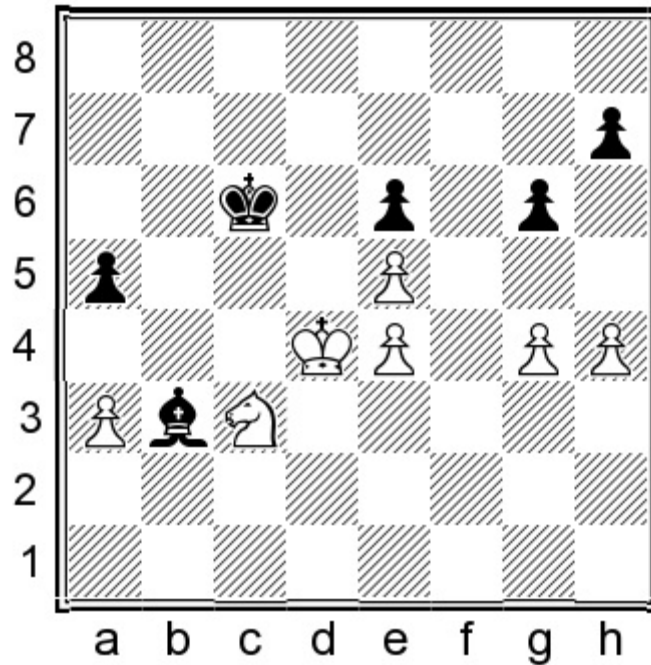
50...♗d6 Not the only move, but the most reliable! It is important not to chase the defenseless white pawns, but to prevent White from blockading the long diagonal and promoting the pawn to a queen.
 [50...♖f4? 51.a5 e5 52.a6 ♗f3 53.♖c5! ♖g3 54.♗d5+-; 50...♗d4!? should also hold, for example:
 51.a5 e5 52.a6 ♖c4! 53.♗e8 ♗a8!= and the e-pawn also advances rapidly!] 51.♗b5+ ♖d7 52.a5 e5
 53.a6 ♗a8 54.a7 ♗f3 55.♖c5 ♗a8 56.♗d6 ♖e7 57.♗c4 ♖e6 58.♗e3



Position after: 58. ♗e3

58...e4! The only way! Any other move leads to a losing position. 59.♗c4 [59.♖d4 ♗c6 60.♗c4 ♗b7
 61.♖e3 ♗c6 62.♗b6 ♖f5=] 59...♗d5 [Also leading to a draw is 59...♖f5 60.♖d6 ♖g4 61.♗b6 ♗b7
 62.♖c7 e3 63.♖xb7 e2 64.a8=♗ e1=♗=.] 60.♗b6 ♗b7=

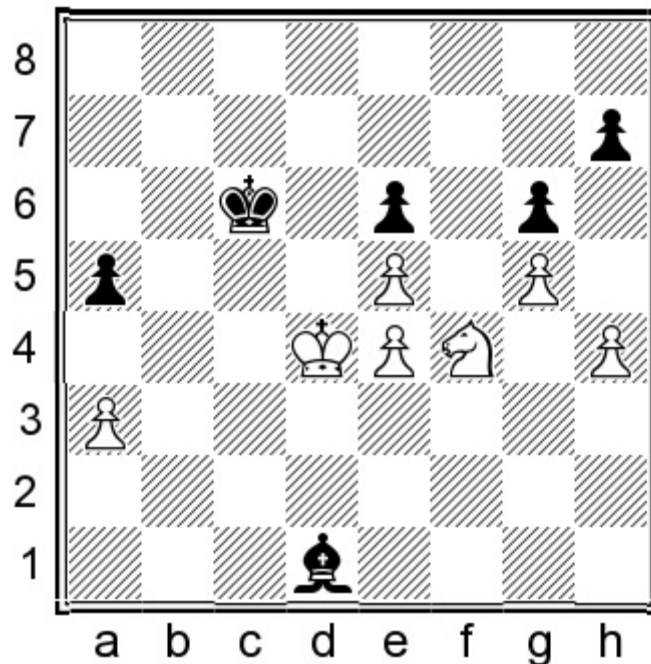
B2) 40.e4! e6 [Black cannot afford to allow the knight to d5. 40...♖d7 41.♗d5+-] 41.g4!



Position after: 41.g4!

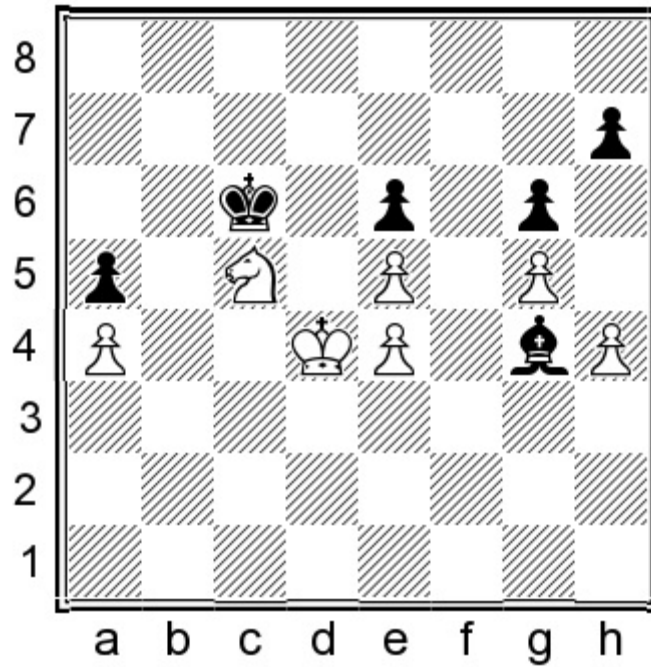
Now, with the black pawn on e6, the plan of fixing black pawns on the queenside clearly gains credibility. In addition to the pawn on e6 being clearly worse than on e7, more importantly, the black king will not have an e6-square to make use of as an escape in the case of an immediate 40.g4?.

41...♖b6 42.g5 ♖c6 43.♗e2 ♔d1 44.♗f4



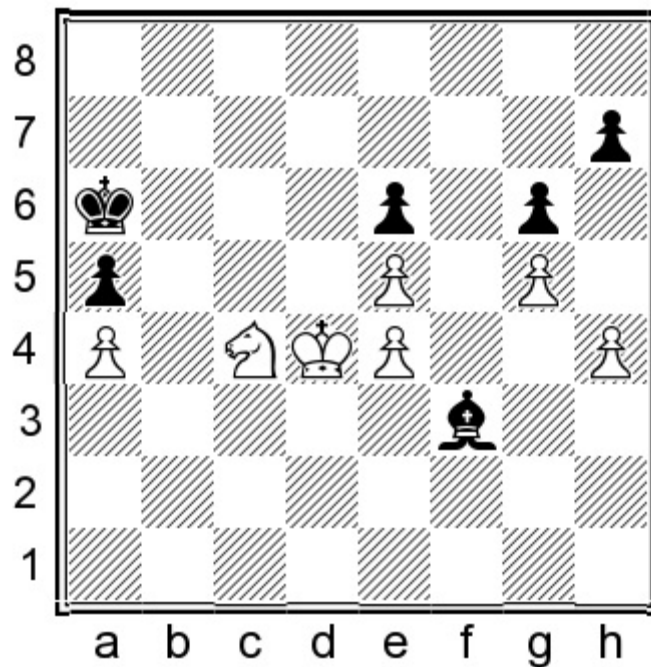
Position after: 44.♗f4

44...♔g4 [44...♔b3 45.♗xg6! hxg6 46.h5+–] 45.a4 ♖b6 46.♗d3 ♖c6 47.♗c5



Position after: 47. Nc5

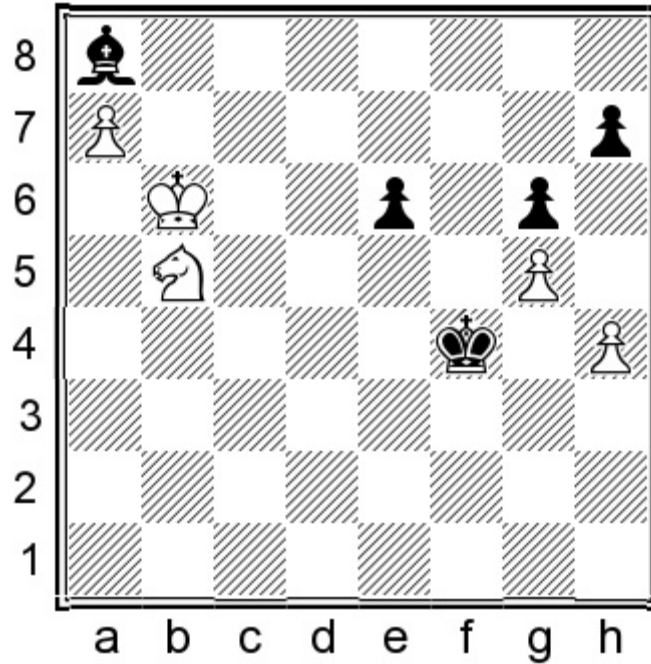
White held back the opposing forces as much as possible. 47... Qc7 [47... Kh3 48. Nb3 Qb6 49. Nd2 Kg4 50. Nc4+ Qa6 51. Ne3 Kf3 52. Qc5 Kxe4 53. Qd6+–] He can then implement the following winning plan: 48. Qd3!? Kh3 49. Nb3 Qb6 50. Nd2! Kg4 51. Nc4+ Qa6 52. Ne3 Kf3 53. Qd4 Qb6 54. Nc4+ Qa6



Position after: 54... Qa6

55. Qc5! Kxe4 56. Na3 Qb7 57. Qb5 Kd3+ 58. Qxa5 Qc6 59. Qb4 Qd5 60. Nb5 Qxe5 61. Qc5 Ke4

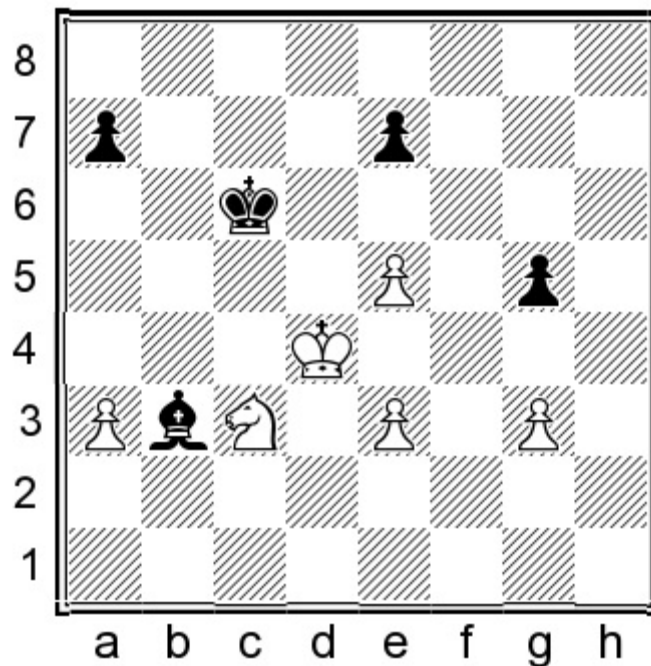
62.a5 ♖b7 63.♔b6 ♖f3 64.a6 ♖a8 65.a7 ♔f4



Position after: 65...♔f4

66.♔c7 e5 67.♔b8 ♖d5 68.♘d6 e4 69.♘b7+-

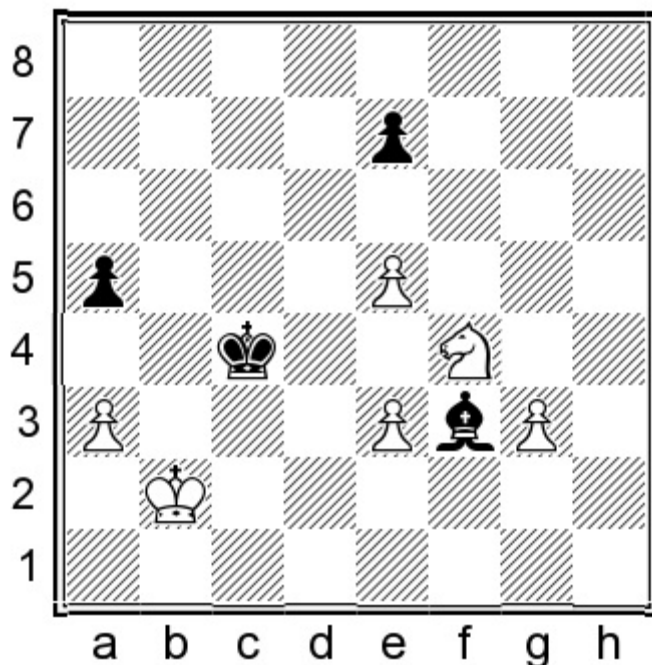
C) 38...h6!? 39.♘c3+ [39.g4? g5!! And not ...♔a4 allowing ♘c3+! 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.♘xg5 ♖d1=.]
 39...♔c6 40.♘e2 g5 41.hxg5 hxg5 42.♘c3



Position after: 42...♘c3

42...a5 An interesting attempt to not end up in a fixed position. [42...♖e6 led to the same fate as in the

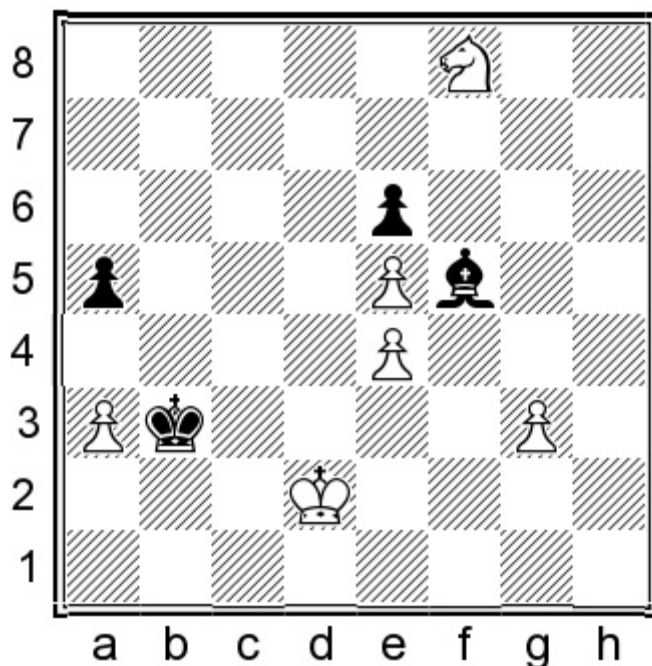
game. 43.♖e4 g4 44.♗c3] 43.♗e4 ♖b5 [After the prosaic 43...g4, White should return to the plot of the actual game: 44.♗c3! ♗g8 45.e4 ♗f7 46.♗d5 e6 47.♗f6+–] 44.♖c3 ♗d5 45.♗xg5 ♖a4 46.♖b2 ♖b5 47.♗h3 ♖c4 48.♗f4 ♗f3



Position after: 48...♗f3

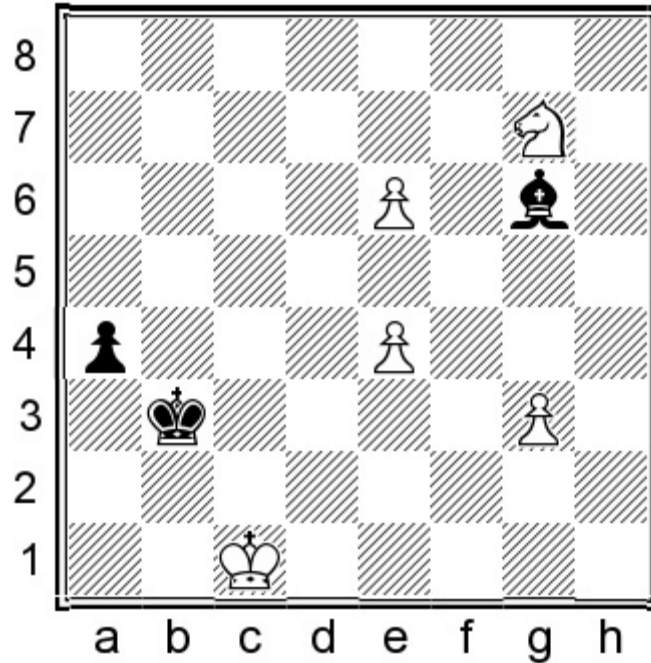
Here too, White, with difficulty, nevertheless achieves victory.

C1) 49.♗g6? e6 50.♗f8 [50.♗f4 ♗g4=] 50...♗g4 51.♖c2 ♗f5+ 52.♖d2 ♖b3 53.e4



Position after: 53.e4

53...♙g4! [53...♙h3? 54.♜d7 ♔xa3 55.♙c3 a4 56.♞f6 ♔a2 57.g4 a3 58.♙c2 ♙f1 59.g5 ♙d3+ 60.♙xd3 ♔b3 61.g6 a2 62.g7 a1=♚ 63.g8=♚+–] 54.♜d7 ♙h5! [54...♙xa3? 55.♞f6+–] 55.♞c5+ ♔xa3 56.♞xe6 ♔b3! [56...♔b4? 57.♞g7! ♙g6 58.e6 a4 – or 58...♙c4 59.♞f5+ – 59.♞f5! a3 60.♙c2+–] 57.♞g7 With the king on b4, this maneuver would win, but on b3, the black king is more active, which aids him in luring the white king far from the center of events with the help of a pawn. [57.♞d4+ ♔b2 58.e6 a4=; 57.♞f4 ♙e8=] 57...♙g6 58.e6 a4 59.♙c1

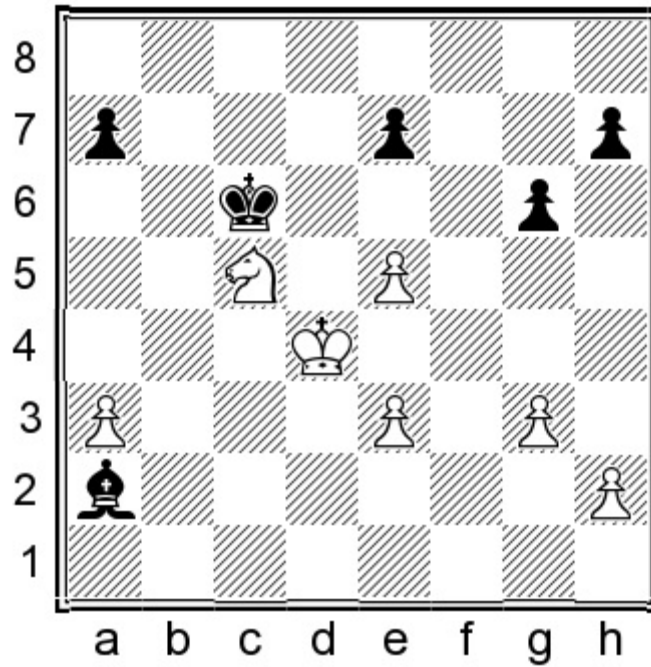


Position after: 59.♙c1

59...a3 60.♙b1 ♙xe4+ 61.♙a1 ♙g6 62.e7 ♔c4=

C2) 49.e6! Fixing the black pawn on e7, where the bishop cannot protect it. 49...♙g4 50.♞g6 ♙xe6 51.g4!!+– [51.♞xe7? ♔d3=] Δ 51...♙xg4 52.♞e5++–

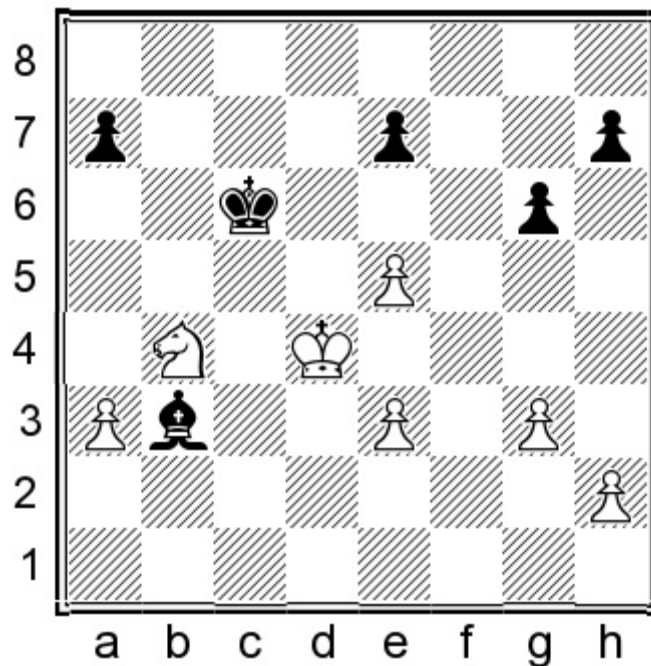
Back to 36...♙a2.



Position after: 36...♔a2

37.♘e4

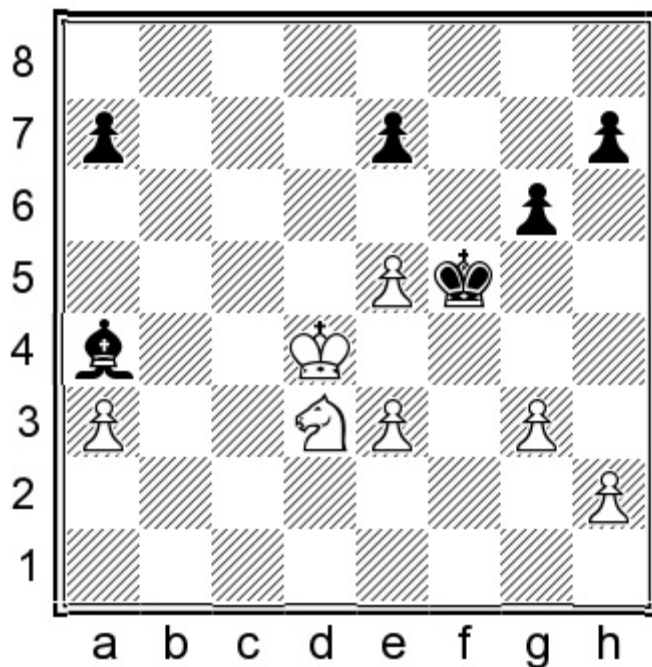
White did not take advantage of the unexpected opportunity, 37.♘a6!. In this case, it would be much more difficult for Black to keep up the defense, if at all possible, because his king will no longer be as active as in the game. 37...♔b3 38.♘b4+



Position after: 38.♘b4+

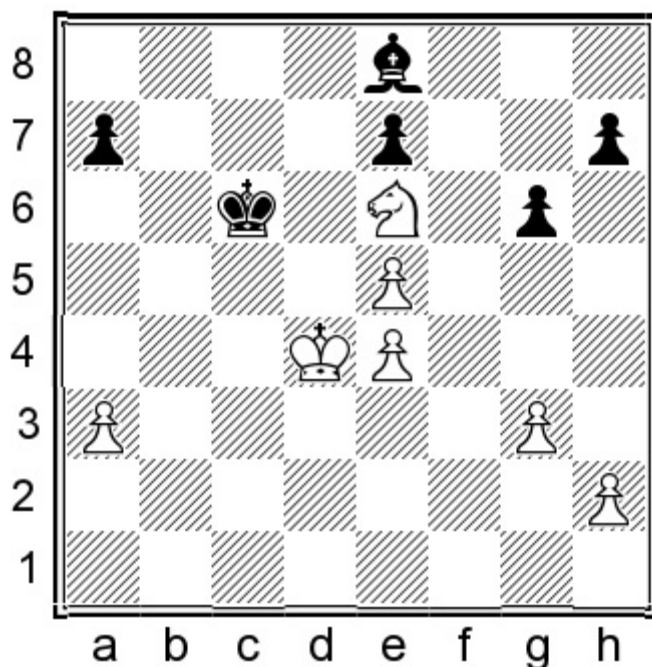
38...♔d7 [38...♔b5? 39.♘d5 e6 White forced the black pawn to move and did so without moving his

own, which left an important e4-square behind for the knight, undoubtedly an achievement. 40.♖c3+ ♜c6 41.♗e4+–] 39.♙c5 ♜a4 40.♗d3 ♜e6 41.♙d4 ♜f5



Position after: 41...♜f5

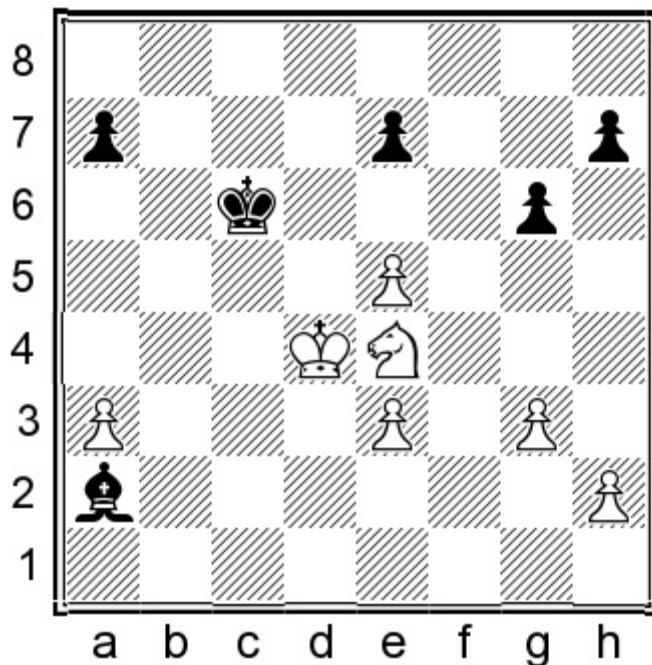
42.♗f2! [Bringing Black as close as possible to a draw. 42.e4+?! ♜g4 43.♗f4 g5 44.♗d5 ♜h3 45.♗xe7 ♜xh2 46.♗f5 h5] 42...♜e8 [42...♜c2 43.e4+ ♜e6 44.♗h3 h6 45.♗f4+ ♜f7 46.♗d5 ♜e6 47.♗b4 ♜a4 48.♗d3 ♜c6 49.♗c5+ ♜f7 50.♙c4+–] 43.e4+ ♜e6 44.♗d3 ♜d7 45.♗c5+ ♜c6 46.♗e6



Position after: 46...♗e6

46...h6 [46...♖b6 47.♗f4 ♕c6 48.♘d5 ♔d7 49.♖c5+–] 47.♗f4 g5 48.♗e6 ♕d7 49.♗f8+ ♖c6 50.g4! ♖b5 51.♖d5 ♗f7+ 52.e6 ♗e8 53.♗d7+–

Back to the game (37.♗e4).



Position after: 37.♗e4

There is no need to hurry with pawn moves in the endgame, at least when it can be done later. However, it is not a decisive factor here.

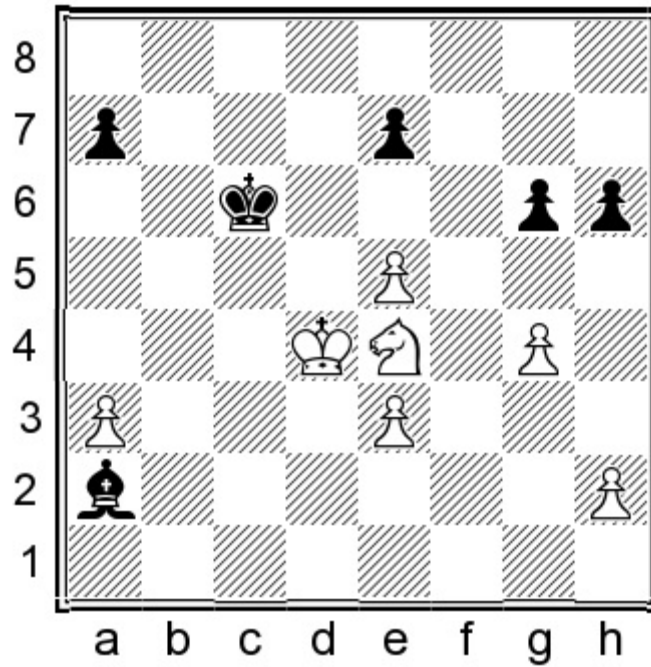
37...h6

After 37...♗d5 38.♗c3 ♗b3 39.h4 in one way or another, it will reduce to the position detailed below.

38.♗c3?!

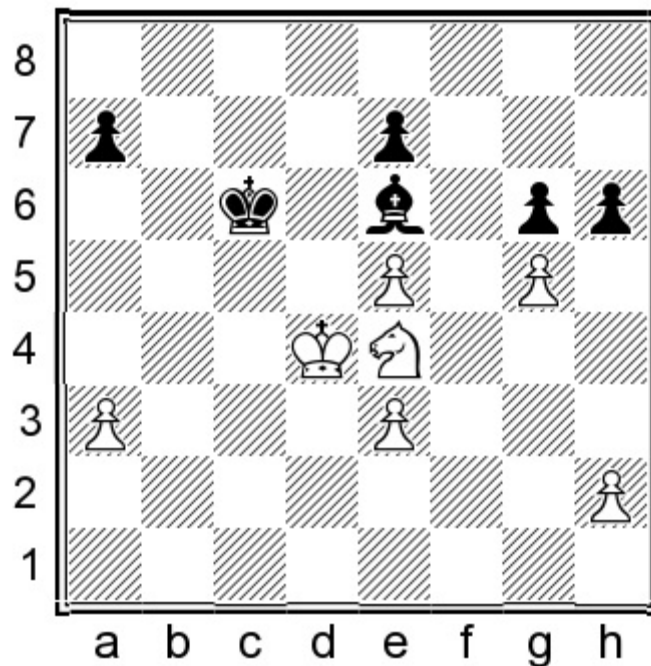
Once again it was possible to play better, although the game was played without a significant increase in time after the control, the opponents had only a 30 second time increment after each move. So, of course, they didn't have much to base serious decisions on.

Energetic, but very unobvious, 38.g4!! created a second weakness for Black and led White to victory:



Position after: 38.g4!!

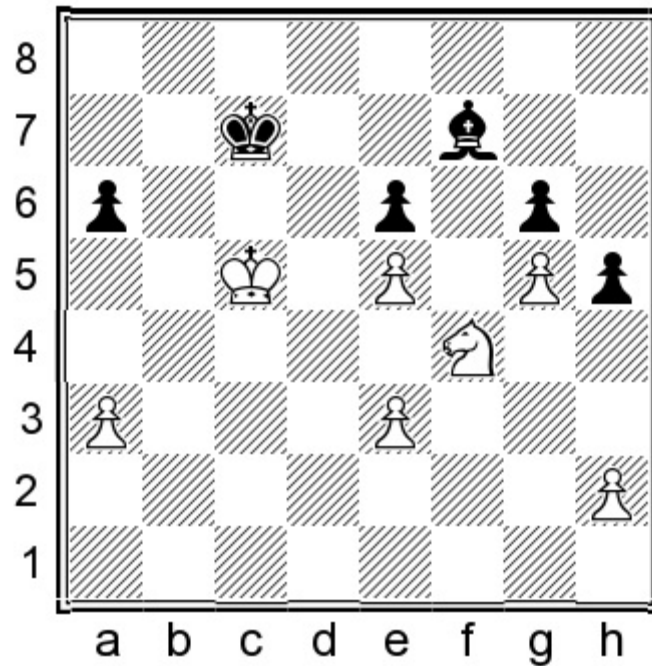
- A)** 38...a5 39.h4! [39.g5? hxg5 40.♖xg5 ♔b5 41.♕c3 ♔a4 42.♕b2 ♕d5 43.♘h3 ♕e4 44.♘f4 ♔b5 45.♕c3 ♕c5 46.h4 ♕f5=] 39...♕e6 40.g5 hxg5 41.hxg5 ♕a2 42.♘c3 ♕f7 43.♘e2+-
- B)** 38...g5 39.♘g3! e6 40.♘e4+-
- C)** 38...♕e6 39.g5!



Position after: 39.g5!

- C1)** An attempt to barricade was doomed to failure. 39...h5 White gradually improves the knight's

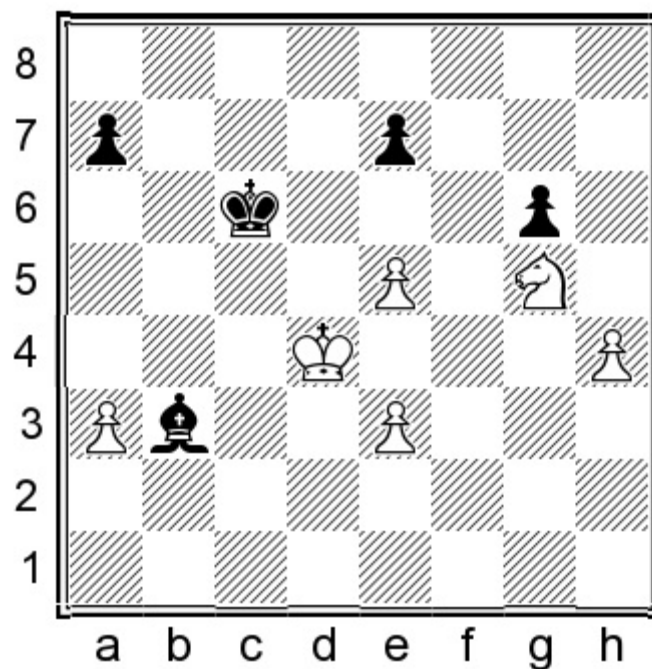
position and turns the black bishop into a pawn, achieving victory, for example: 40.♖c5 ♘f7 41.♗d3 e6 [41...♗b5 42.e6! ♘xe6 - or 42...♘e8 43.♗f4 ♗a4 44.♗d5+- - 43.♗e5 ♘f5 44.e4+-] 42.♗c4 ♗b6 43.♗f4 ♗c6 44.♗e2 ♗b6 45.♗d4 ♘g8 46.♗b5 ♘f7 47.♗d6 ♘g8 48.♗c8+ ♗b7 49.♗e7 ♘f7 50.♗c5 ♗c7 51.♗c6 a6 52.♗d4 ♘g8 53.♗e2 ♘f7 54.♗f4+-



Position after: 54.♗f4+-

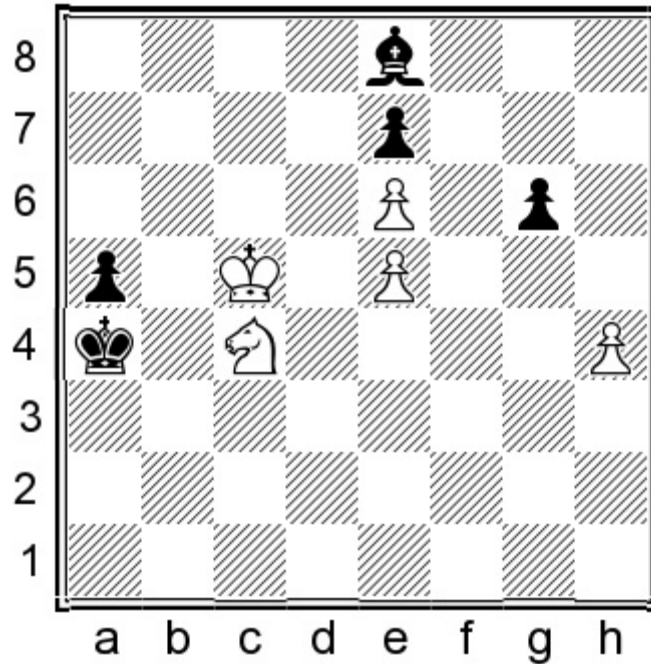
Zugzwang! That's all...

C2) 39...hxg5 40.♗xg5 ♘b3 41.h4+-



Position after: 41.h4+-

41...♖b5 [41...a5 42.♗h3+–] 42.♗e4+– ♕f7 [42...♖a4 is answered by the surprising 43.♗c3+! ♖xa3
 44.♗b5++–] 43.♗c5 ♕e8 44.e6 a5 45.e4 ♕c6 [45...♖c6 46.♗d3 ♖d6 47.♗f4 ♖c6 48.e5+–] 46.♗d3
 ♖a4 47.♗e5 ♕e8 48.♖c5 ♖xa3 49.♗c4+ ♖a4 50.e5

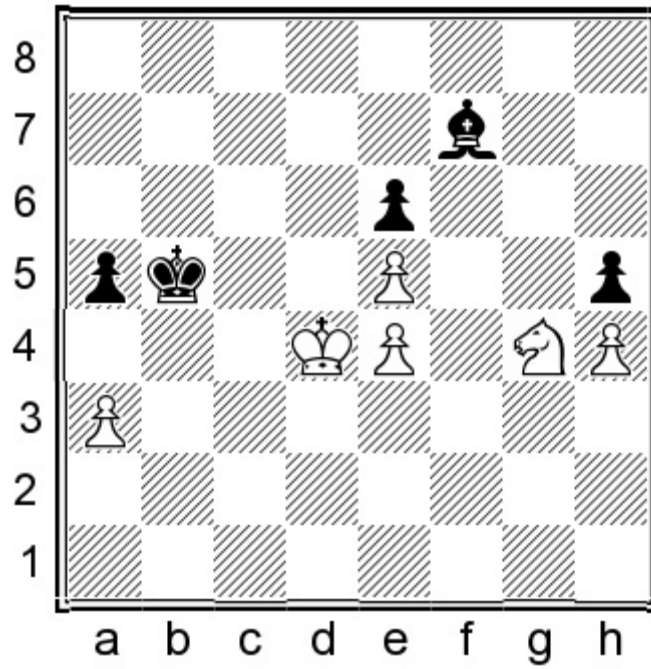


Position after: 50.e5

Zugzwang!

38...♕b3?!

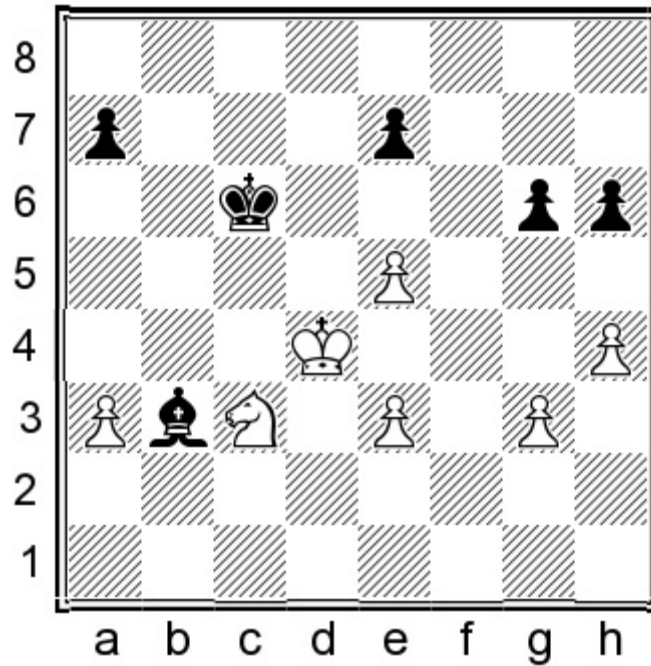
38...♕f7!! Keeping the bishop on an active square isn't important. From f7, it defends some important light squares / light-squared pawns. 39.h4 a5 40.e4 g5!! 41.♗d5 gxh4 42.gxh4 e6 43.♗f6 ♖b5 44.♗g4 h5



Position after: 44...h5

And here, the e6- and h5-pawns are securely defended and locked. 45. ♖e3 ♙e8 46. ♘c4 ♙d7= White cannot make progress.

39.h4!



Position after: 39.h4!

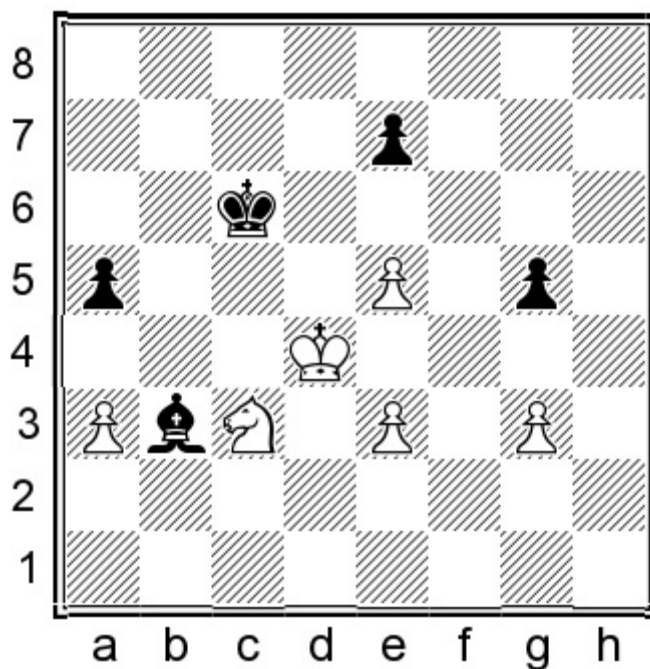
39...a5?!

39...♙f7! 40.♘e2! g5 41.hxg5 hxg5 42.♘c3 ♙e8!±

40.♘e2?

40.e4! g5 41.hxg5 hxg5 42.♘d5 e6 [42...♙d7 43.♙c3+-] 43.♘f6 ♙b5 44.♙c3 ♙a4 45.♙b2 ♙c4
46.♘h7 g4 47.♘f8 ♙b5 48.♙c3+-

40...g5 41.hxg5 hxg5 42.♘c3

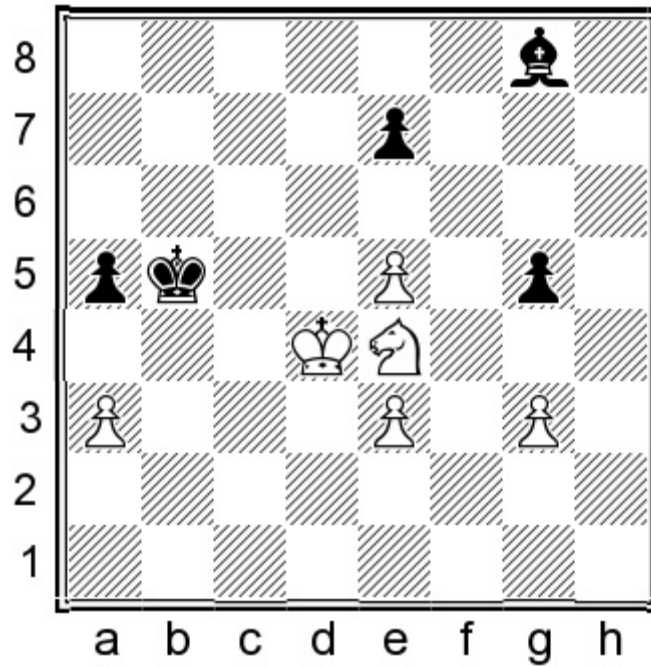


Position after: 42.♘c3

The secret of the position lies in the fact that if the black pawn gets to g4, then additional weaknesses are created and White's position becomes winning. Black must resist this in every way!

42...♙e6

The only opportunity for this was 42...♙g8!! 43.♘e4 ♙b5

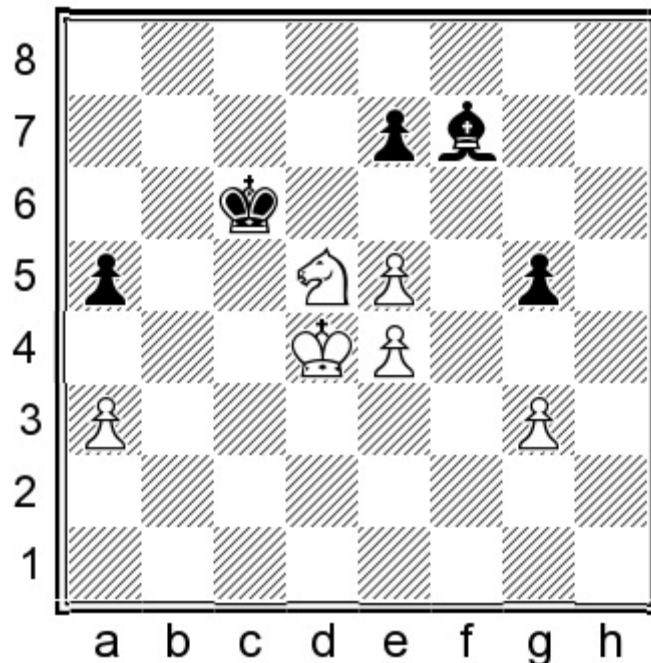


Position after: 43... ♔b5

A) 44. ♕c3 g4= this move is possible here since the position of the kings has changed. The white knight does not have the important c3-square. When ♖c3-d5 is possible, of course after the preliminary e3-e4, he could attack the e7-pawn.

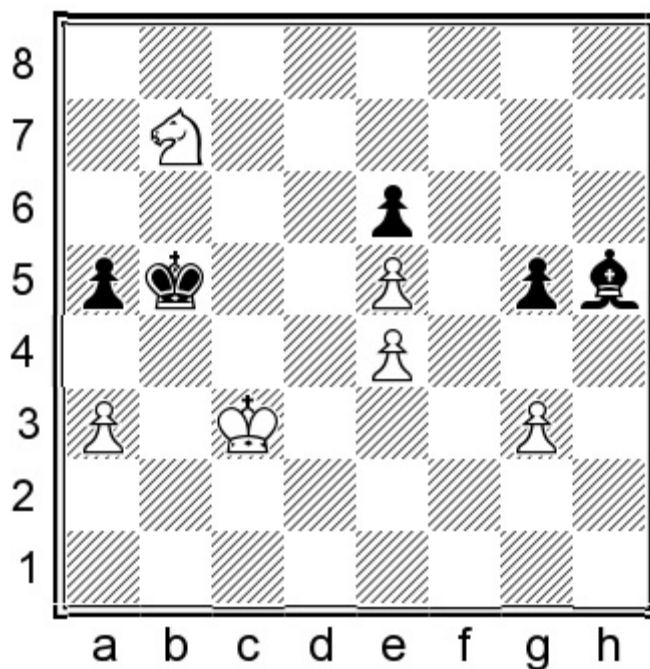
B) 44. ♖xg5 ♔a4

C) 44. ♖c3+ ♔c6 45. e4 Otherwise there is no progress to be made. 45... ♗f7 46. ♖d5



Position after: 46. ♖d5

C1) 46...♔d7? 47.♘e3 ♕c6 48.♔d3! ♕c5 49.♙f5 e6 50.♘d6 ♗h5 51.♘b7+! An important square.
51...♕b5 52.♕c3!

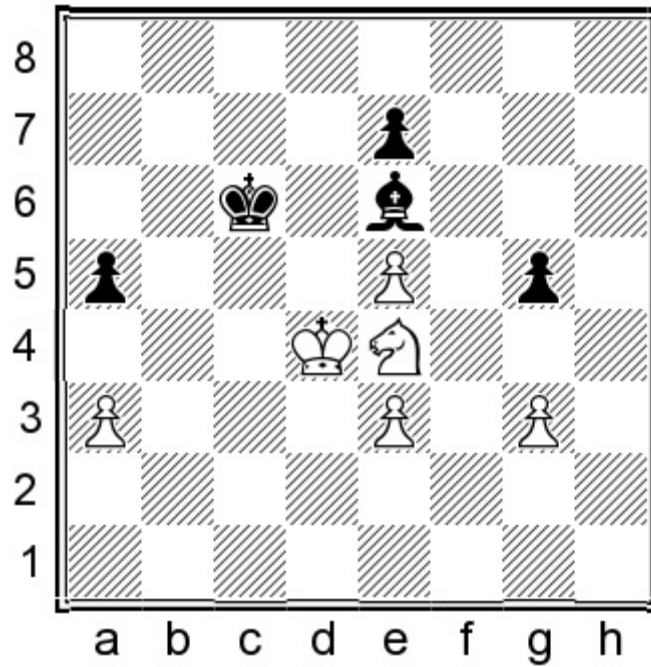


Position after: 52.♕c3!

For White, it is important to defend the a-pawn. 52...♗f3 [52...♗g4 53.♘d8 ♕a4 54.♕b2 ♕b5 55.♕b3 ♕c5 56.♕c3 ♕b5 57.♘f7+–] 53.♘d8 ♗g4 54.♘f7+–

C2) 46...e6! 47.♘e3 ♕b5 just in time with the necessary activity. 48.♘c4 ♗h5 49.♘d6+ ♕a4 50.♘b7 ♗g6= Now it is not possible to strengthen the position.

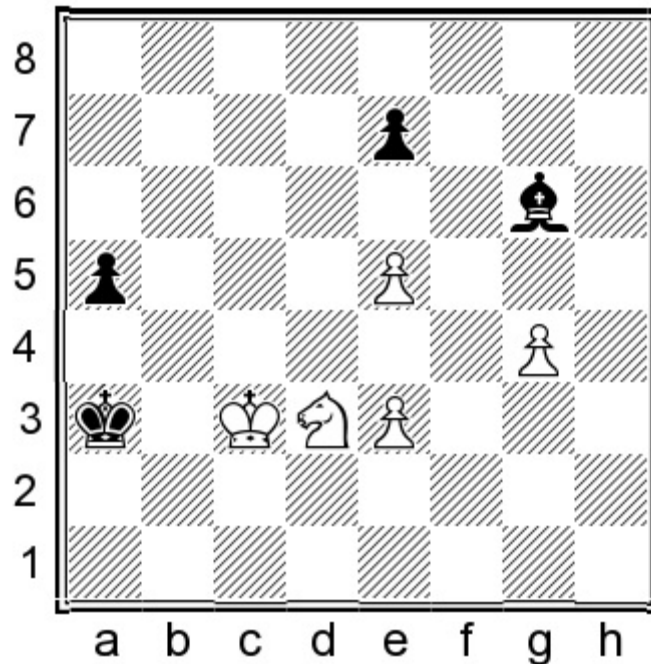
43.♘e4



Position after: 43. ♖e4

43...g4

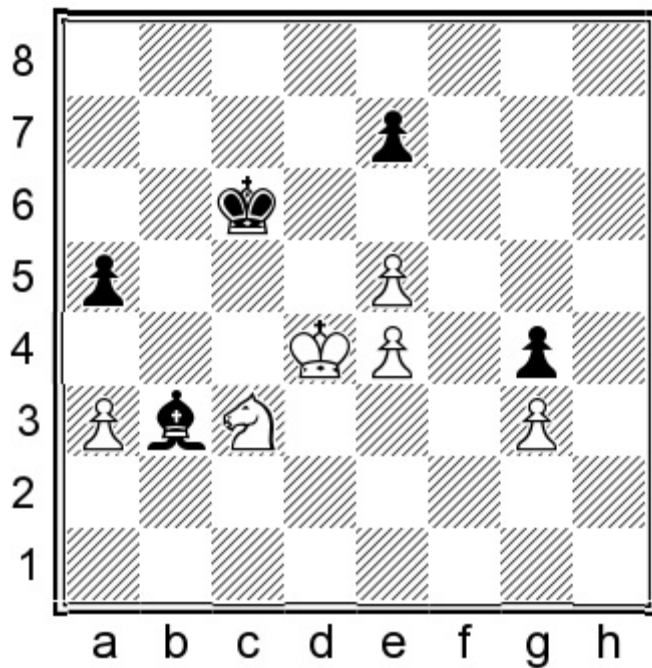
43...♔b5? 44. ♜xg5 ♙g4 45. ♕c3 ♔a4 46. ♕b2 ♔b5 47. ♕b3 ♙d1+ 48. ♕c3 ♔a4 49. ♜e4 ♔xa3 50. ♜f2 ♙h5 51. g4 ♙g6 52. ♜d3!+-



Position after: 52. ♜d3!+-

52...♙xd3 53. ♔xd3 ♔b2 54. g5 a4 55. g6 a3 56. g7 a2 57. g8=♚ a1=♚ 58. ♚b8+ ♔c1 59. ♚c7+-

44.♖c3 ♜b3 45.e4



Position after: 45.e4

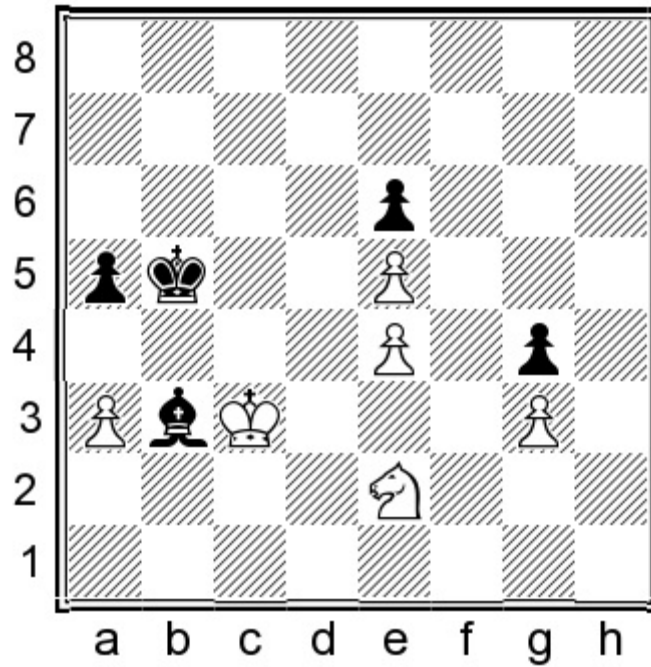
45...e6

45...♞f7 46.♘d5 e6 47.♘f6 ♔b5 48.♜c3+-

46.♘e2

46.♘b1!? ♔b5 47.♘d2 ♞d1 48.♘c4 ♞f3 49.♘d6+ ♔a4 50.♘b7 ♞d1 51.♘c5+ ♔xa3 52.♜c3 ♞f3
53.♘xe6 ♞xe4 54.♘c7+-

46...♔b5 47.♜c3



Position after: 47. ♔c3

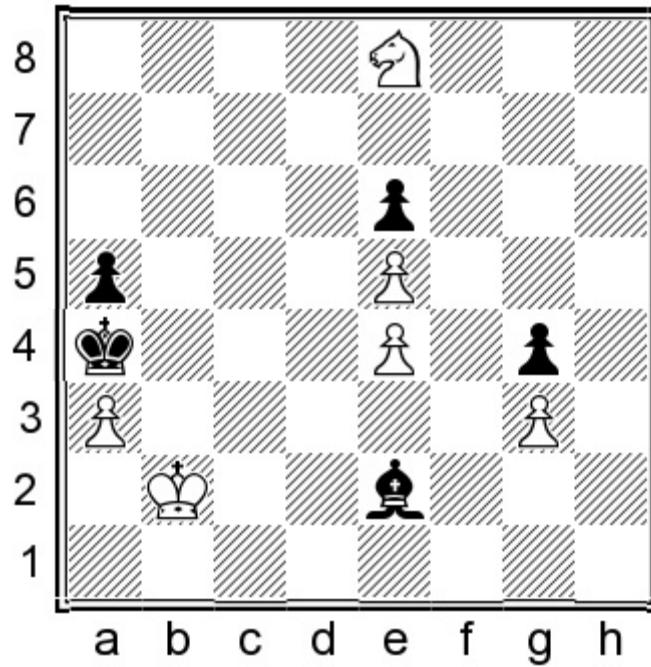
47... ♖a2

47... ♖c4 48. a4+ ♔c5 49. ♗f4 ♖a2 50. ♗d3+ ♔c6 51. ♗f2+-

48. ♗f4 ♔a4

Here, White drew attention to the interesting opportunity 49. ♗g2, but decided to wait before acting on it.

49. ♔b2 ♖c4 50. ♗h5 ♖e2 51. ♗g7 ♖c4 52. ♗e8 ♖e2



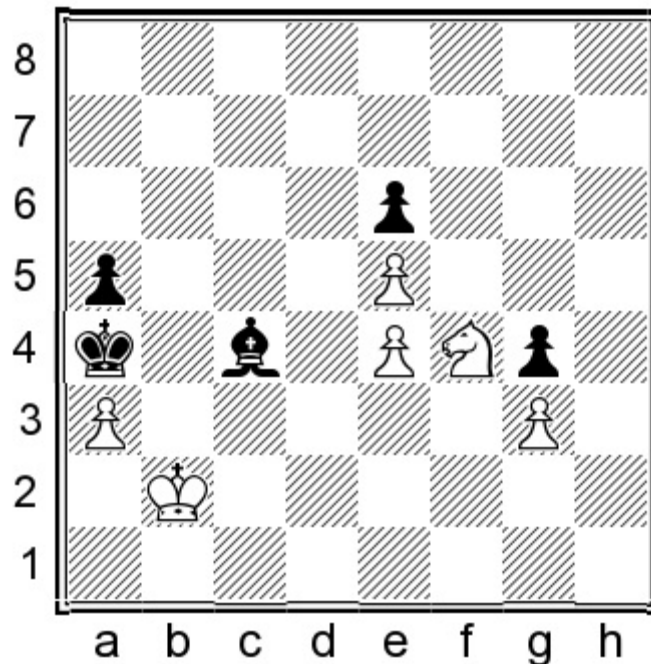
Position after: 52...♔e2

53.♞g7

The white knight has not found the correct path to return to its original position. In time pressure, it is not easy to figure out that it needs to get to d6.

53.♞d6! ♔a6 [53...♔f1 loses immediately due to 54.♞b7!+-.] 54.♞f7 ♔b7 55.♞h6 ♔b5 56.♔c3 ♔xe4 57.♞xg4 ♔c5 58.♞f6 ♔g6 59.g4 ♔b1 60.g5 ♔g6 61.♞g8!+-

53...♔c4 54.♞h5 ♔e2 55.♞f4 ♔c4



Position after: 55...♔c4

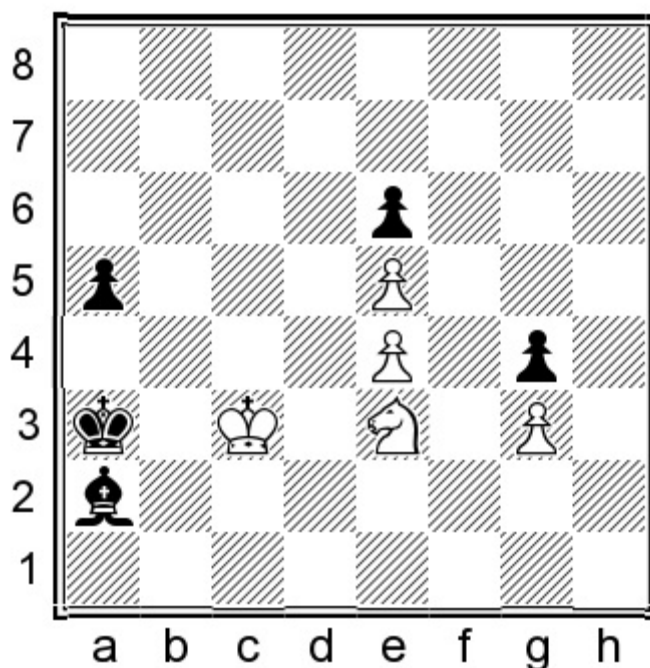
56.♕c3

56.♖g6 ♔a6 57.♗f8 ♔c8 58.♗h7 ♔a6 59.♗f6 ♔e2 60.♗d7

56...♔a2 57.♗g2?

It was still possible to return to the winning plan discussed above. 57.♕b2! However, during the game I wasn't certain that White wouldn't "run into" a threefold repetition...

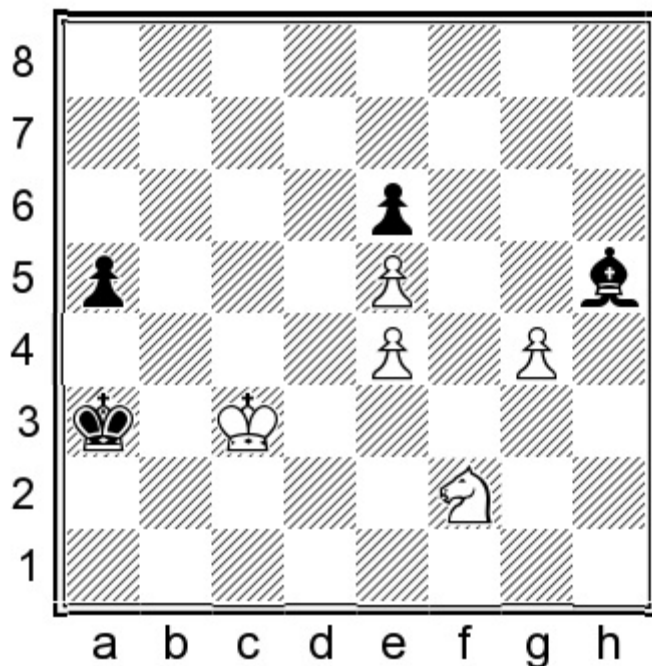
57...♕xa3 58.♗e3



Position after: 58.♗e3

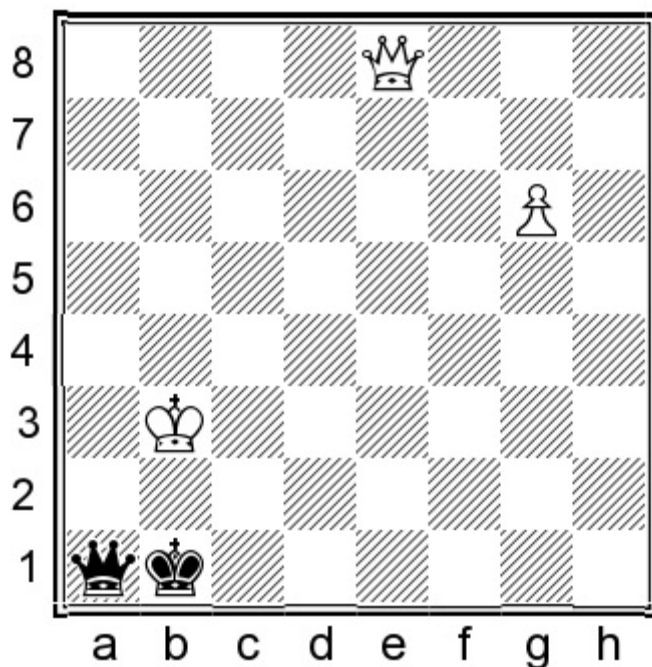
58...♔b1?

Black's most natural and active move saves the game. 58...♔b3! 59.♗xg4 ♔d1! [59...a4? 60.♗e3 ♕a2 61.g4 a3 62.g5 ♔a4 63.♗c4+–] 60.♗f2 [60.♗f6 a4 61.g4 ♕a2 62.g5 a3=; 60.♗e3 ♔f3!]=] 60...♔h5 61.g4



Position after: 61.g4

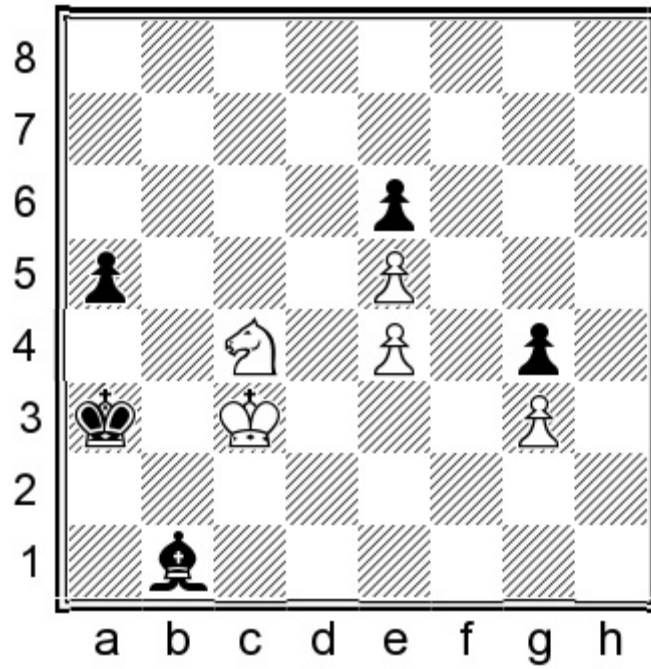
61...♙e8! [61...♙g6?! 62.♘d3 ♔a2 63.♘f4 ♙xe4 64.♘xe6 a4 65.♘c5 ♙f3 66.g5 a3 67.e6 ♔b1 68.g6! a2 69.♘b3 ♙d5 70.e7 ♙xb3 71.e8=♚ a1=♚+ 72.♔xb3=



Position after: 72.♔xb3=

The queen ending with the g-pawn has reappeared - but how is it that Black, after 61...♙e8!, is only one step away from a draw?] 62.♘d3 ♔a2 63.g5 ♔b1 64.♘c5 a4 65.♔b4 ♔c2=

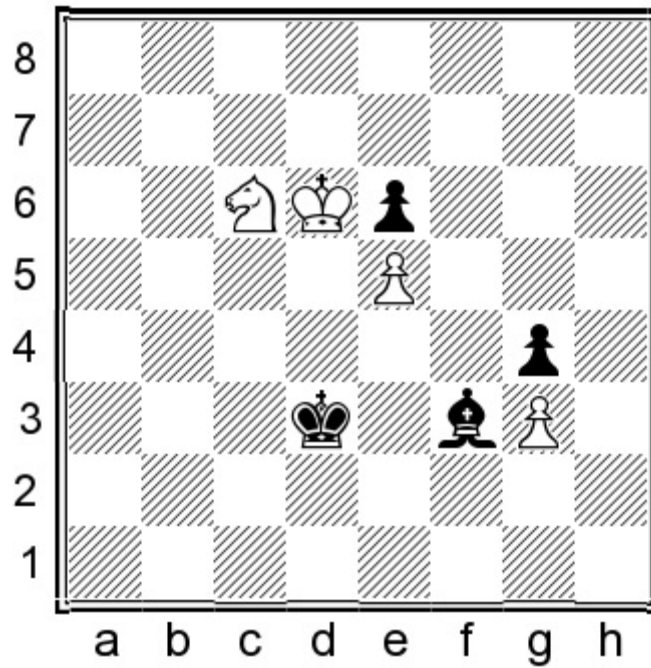
59.♘c4+!



Position after: 59. ♖c4+!

59...♔a4

59...♔a2 60. ♗xa5 ♕xe4 61. ♖d4 ♕f3 62. ♖c5 ♔b2 63. ♖d6 ♔c3 64. ♗c6 ♖d3



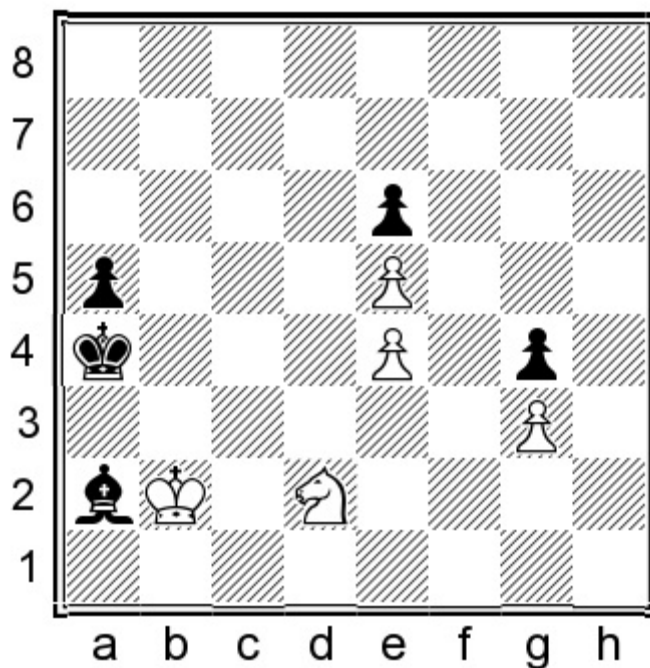
Position after: 64... ♔d3

65. ♗e7!! Accuracy until the very end! 65...♔e3 66. ♖xe6 ♔f2 67. ♗f5+-

60. ♗d2

The bishop is trapped.

60...♙a2 61.♖b2



Position after: 61.♖b2

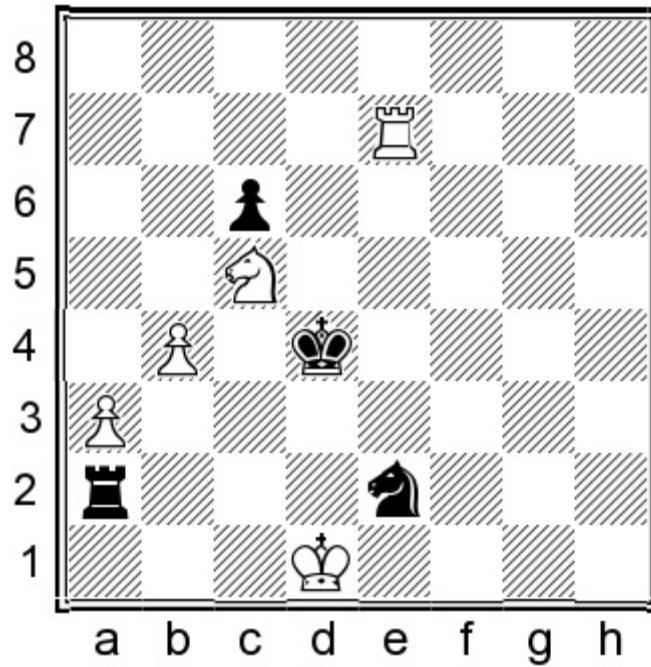
61...♙b4 62.♖xa2 ♖c3 63.♘b3

Black resigned due to 63.♘b3 ♖d3 64.♘c5+ ♖d4 65.♘xe6+ ♖xe4 66.♘f4 ♖xe5 67.♖b3 ♖e4 68.♖a4 ♖f3 69.♘h5+.

1-0

Example 8

From Sarana – Alekseenko
Khanty-Mansiysk 2018

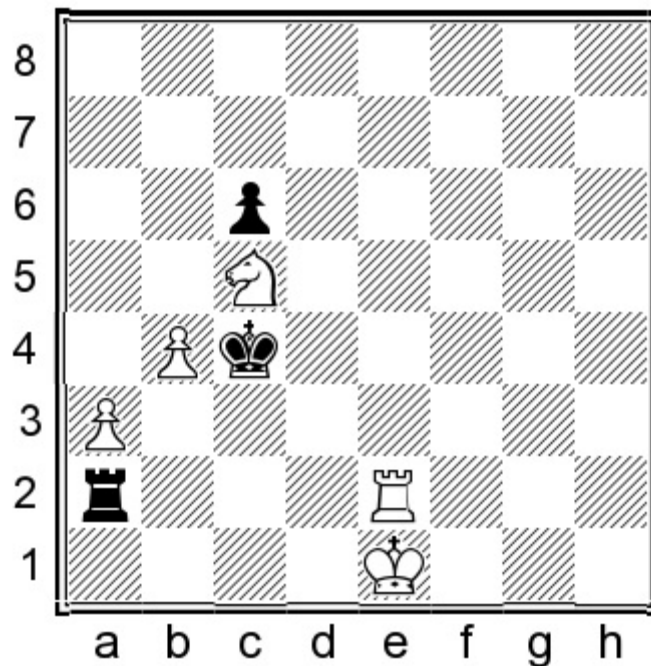


White to move

A curious position, the win is achieved in a rather subtle way.

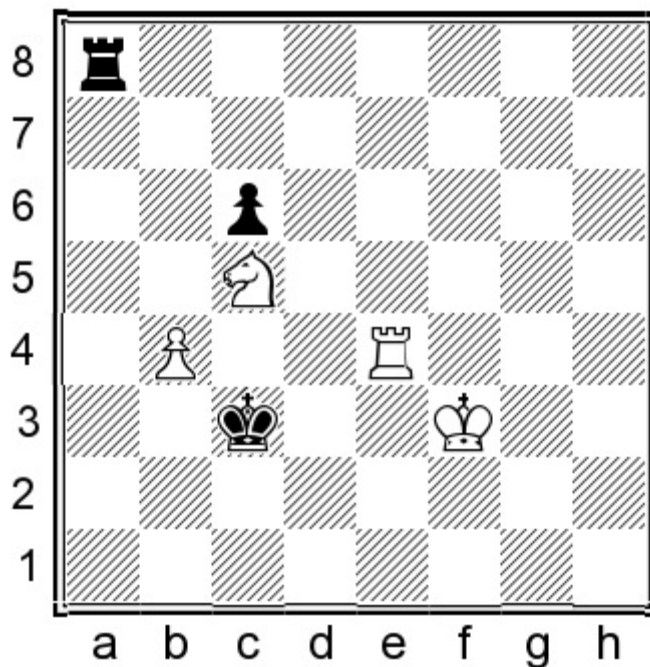
61. ♖xe2

In the game, White started to play too “cleverly”. 61. ♖e4+? ♔c3 62. ♖e3+ ♔c4 63. ♖xe2 ♖a1+ 64. ♔d2 ♖a2+ 65. ♔e1



Position after: 65. ♔e1

65...♖xa3 The simplest. [In the game, Black played 65...♖a1+? 66.♔f2 ♖xa3 which led to the position that we are considering in the main line after 67.♞e4+ ♕c3; anyway, after 68.♕e3?! ♖a8 69.♘d7? ♖a4 Black held a draw, ½ – ½ (112).] 66.♞e4+ ♕c3 67.♕e2 ♖a2+ 68.♕f3 ♖a8



Position after: 68...♖a8

led to a draw, as White is unable to strengthen the position.

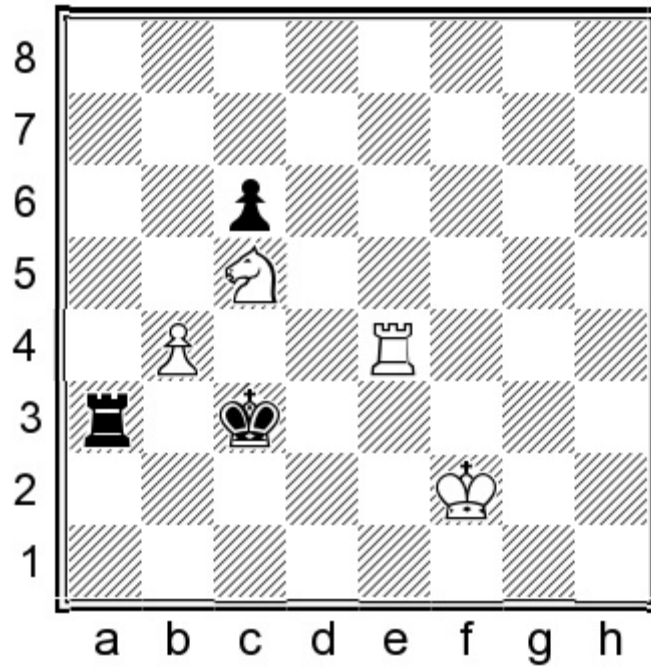
61.♞xe2 ♖a1+

61...♖xa3 62.♞c2! ♞c3 63.♕d2+–

62.♕d2 ♖a2+ 63.♕e1 ♖a1+

63...♖xa3 64.♞c2+–

64.♕f2 ♖xa3 65.♞e4+ ♕c3



Position after: 65...♔c3

66.♘d3!

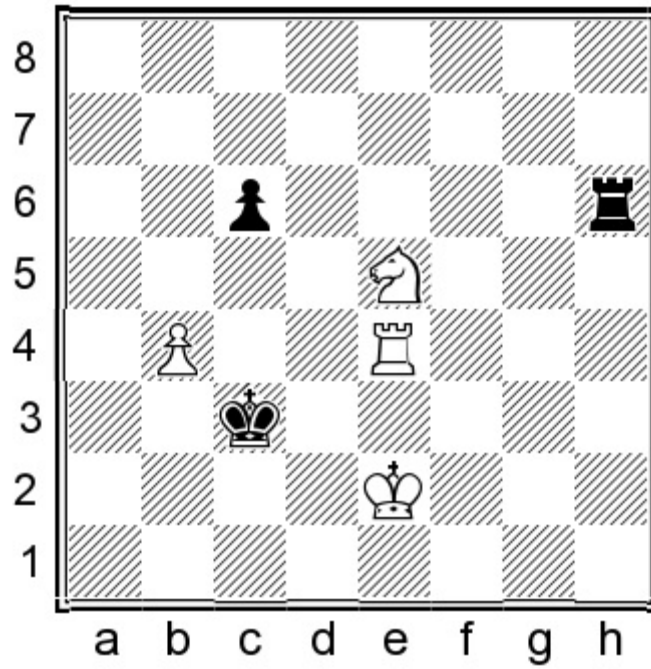
With the help of a tactical stunt, White achieves an important regrouping.

66...♖a2+ 67.♔e3 ♜h2 68.♘e5

Now the c6-pawn is under threat.

68...♜h3+ 69.♔e2 ♜h6

The first stage is now complete: the black rook is chained to the c6 pawn. However, to win, White needs to improve the position of his king, but this is not entirely easy, since the white rook is restricted to the defense of the lone pawn.

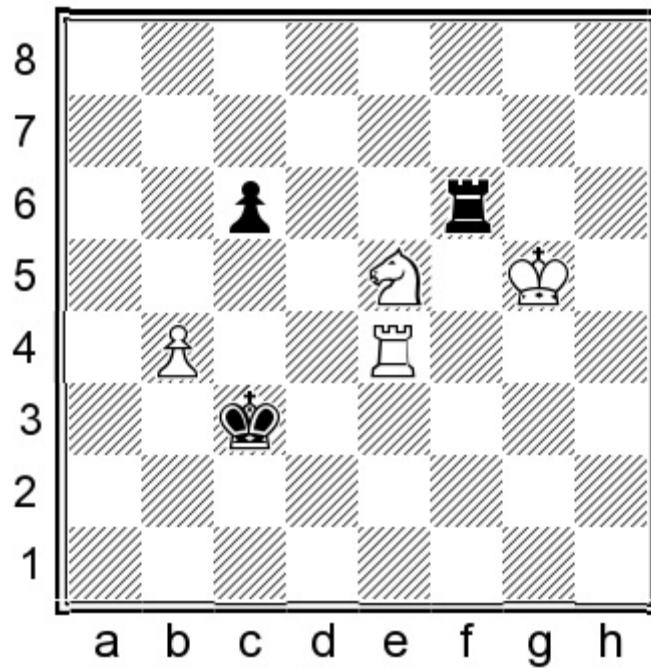


Position after: 69... Rh6

70. ♔f3 ♖d6

70... ♖e6 71. ♔g4 ♖f6 72. ♔g5 ♖d6 leads to the position from the main variation.

71. ♔f4 ♖f6+ 72. ♔g5



Position after: 72. ♔g5

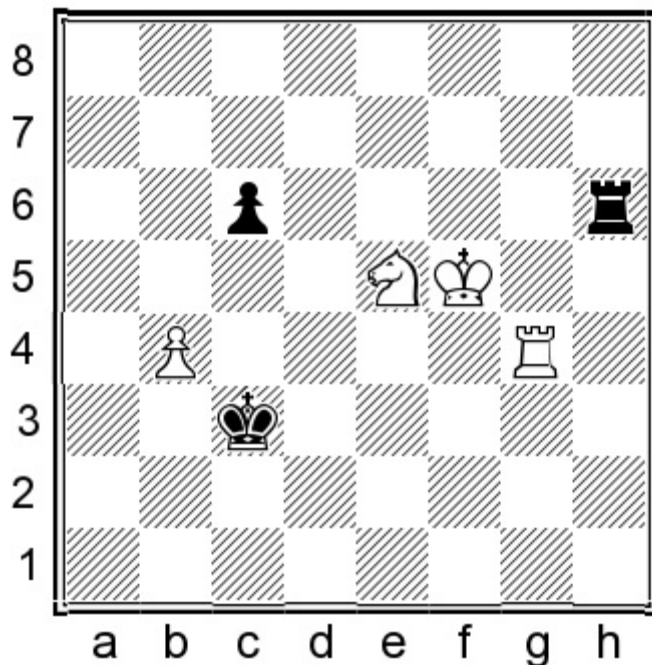
72...♖d6

Simplifying the task for White was 72...♖e6 73.♖e3+! ♔d4 [73...♕xb4 74.♘d3+-] 74.♕f5+-.

73.♕f5 ♖h6

73...♕b3 74.♘c4! ♖h6 75.♕g5 ♖h1 76.♘a5+-

74.♖g4♘



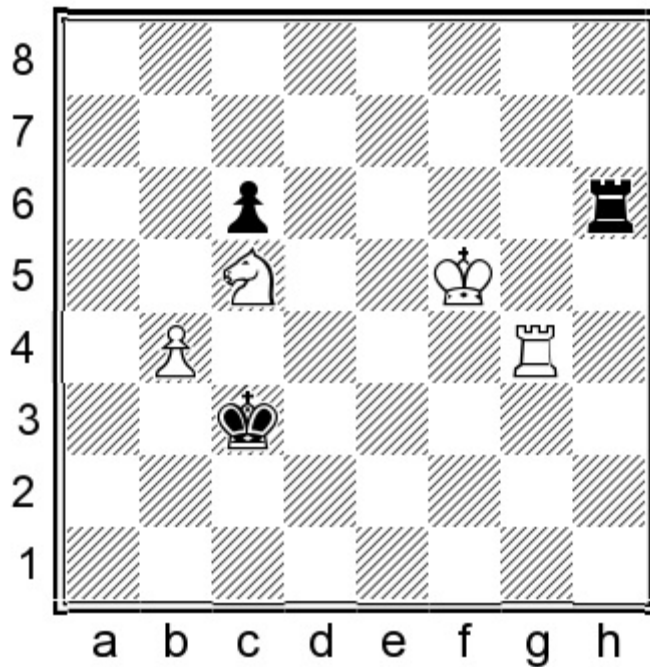
Position after: 74. ♖g4♘

74...♕b3

A king move is forced, since there are no other moves.

74...♖d6 75.♖c4+ ♕b3 76.♖xc6 ♖d5 77.♖c5 ♖d2 78.♘c6

75.♘d3! ♕c3 76.♘c5



Position after: 76. ♞c5

76... ♜h8

The black rook has run out of work to do on the sixth rank.

76... ♜h1 77. ♕e6 ♜b1 78. ♞a6+-

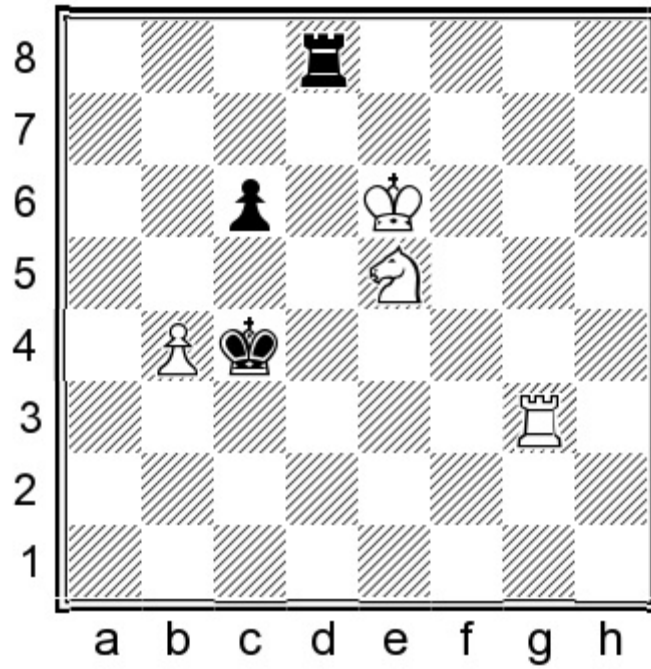
77. ♕e6

The beginning of the second stage of the white king's travels.

77... ♜b8 78. ♜g3+ ♕c4

78... ♕xb4 79. ♞a6++-

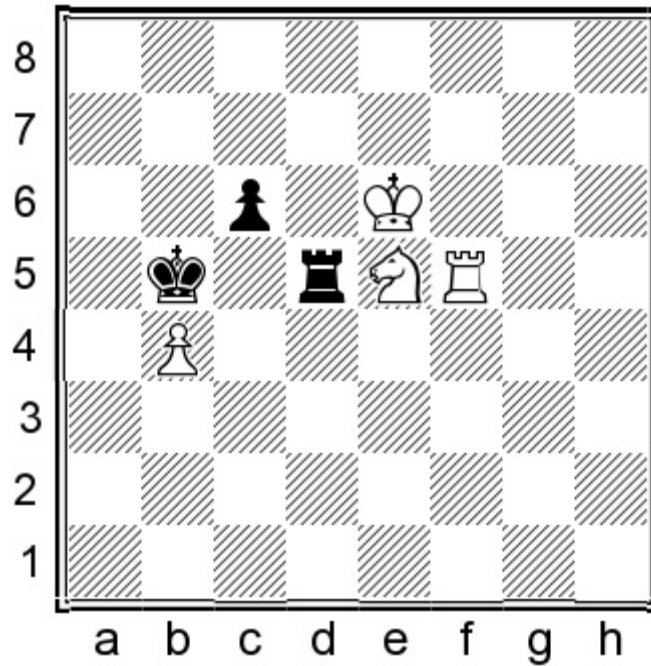
79. ♞d3 ♜d8 80. ♞e5+



Position after: 80. ♖e5+

Taking advantage of the fact that the b4-pawn is invulnerable, White begins a new regrouping of forces.

80... ♜b5 81. ♖g5 ♜d5 82. ♖f5 ♜



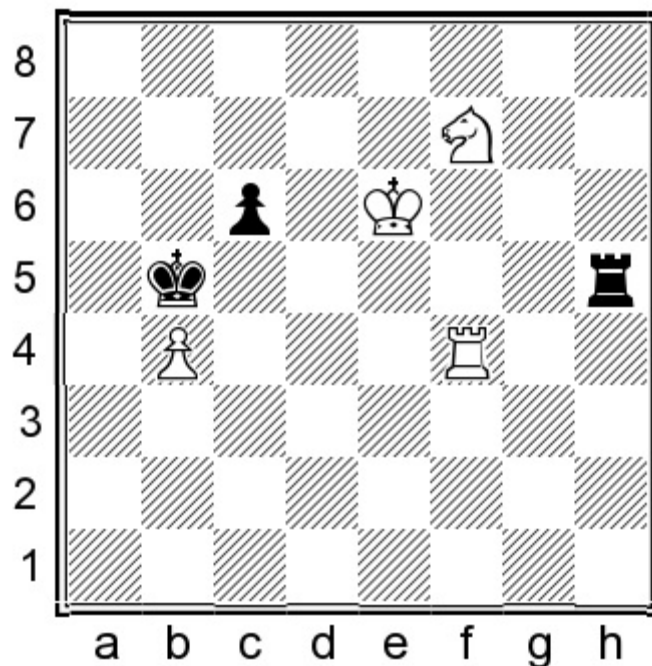
Position after: 82. ♖f5 ♜

82... ♜d8

A) 82...♞d1 83.♘d3+ ♔b6 [83...♕c4 84.♘b2+] 84.♞f3 ♔b5 85.♕e5+-

B) 82...♕b6 83.♞f4 ♔b5 84.♘xc6! ♕xc6 85.♞c4+-

83.♘f7+ ♞d5 84.♞f4 ♞h5



Position after: 84...♞h5

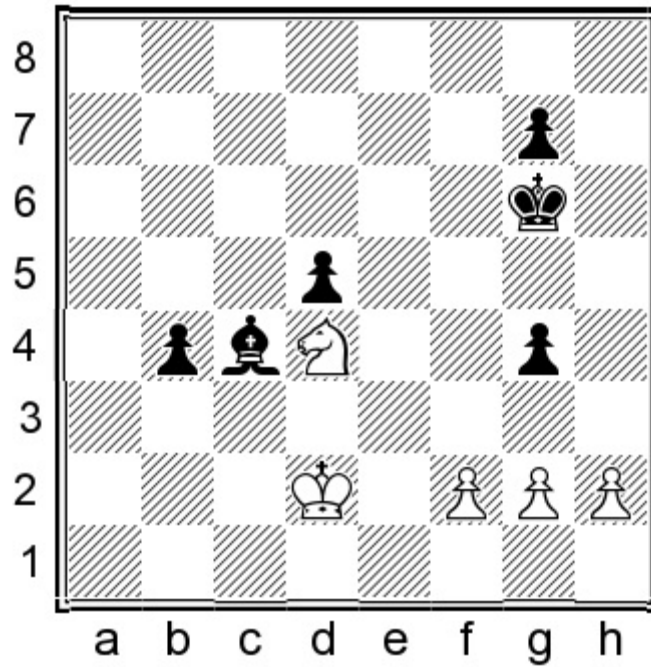
And, at last, the final stage - the return of the king to the pawn.

85.♘d6+ ♔b6 86.♘e4 ♞d5 87.♘c3 ♞d3 88.♞c4! ♞d8 89.♕e5 ♞d2 90.♕e4 ♞d8 91.♕e3 ♞d7 92.♞d4 ♞f7 93.♕d3+-

Example 9

From Balogh – Navara

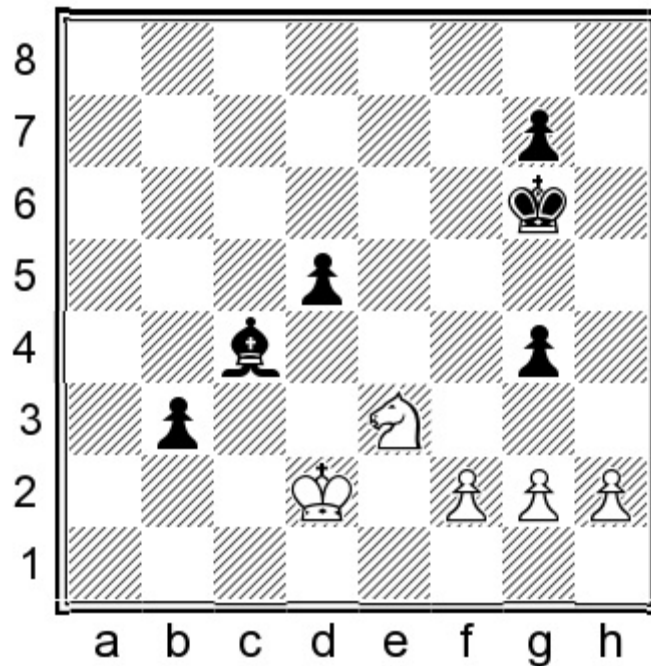
Slovakia 2017



White to move

Understanding that he cannot hold the position through conventional means, White regroups his forces in an attempt to restrict the black king by obliging him to protect the g4-pawn.

44. ♖c2 b3 45. ♘e3

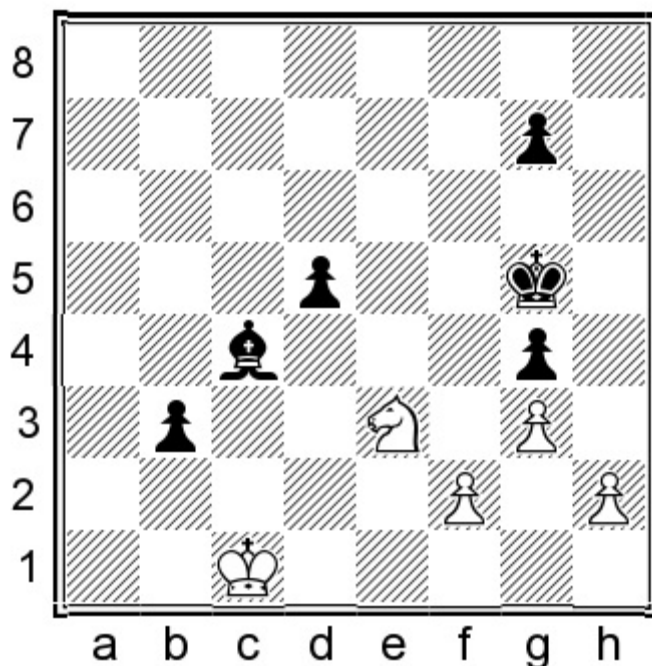


Position after: 45. ♘e3

From here, a series of not so obvious moves led to victory.

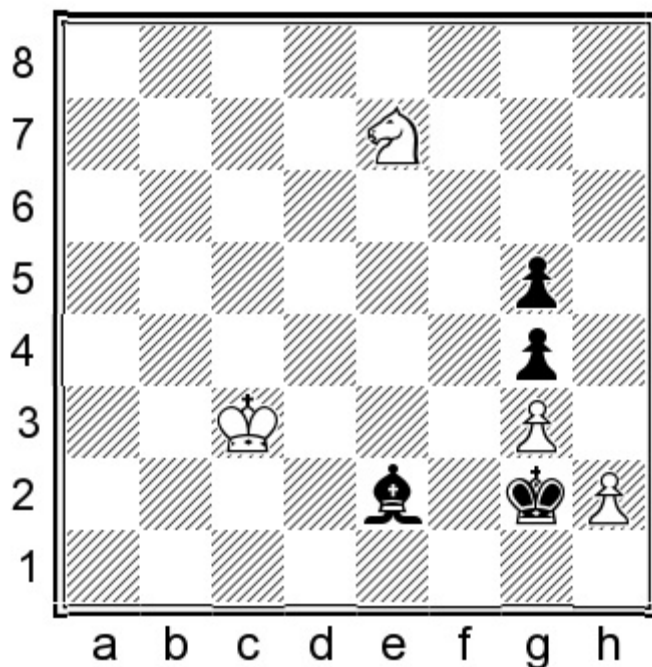
45...♔f6!

A) 45...♔h5? White's plan paid off, Black felt sympathy for his pawn and the position was drawn, but the win was still only possible to find by looking at the position with a "broader" perspective. 46.♔c1 ♔g5 47.g3=



Position after: 47.g3=

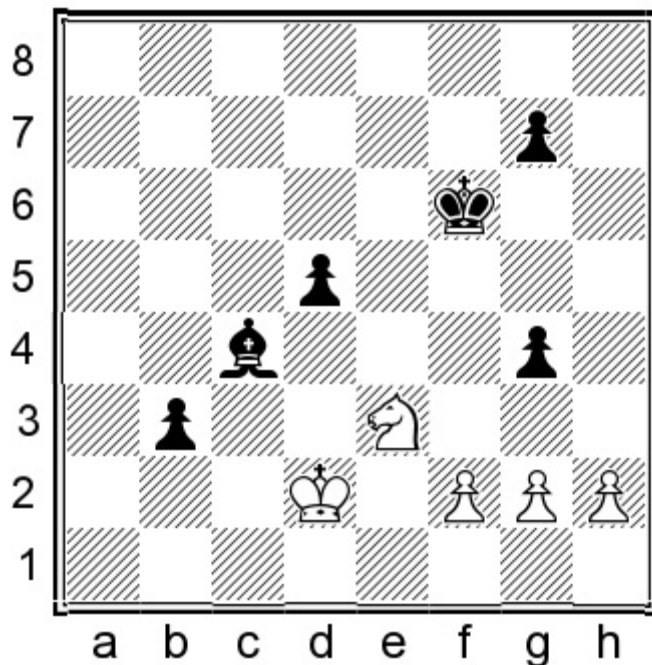
47...♔e2 48.♖xd5 ♔f5 49.♖b2 ♔e4 50.♗e3 ♔f3 51.♔xb3 ♔xf2 52.♗f5 g6 53.♗e7 g5 54.♔c3 ♔g2



Position after: 54...♔g2

and, without waiting for 55.♔d2, Black offered a draw, ½-½.

B) Slightly stronger than the game move but a mistake all the same, 45...♔g5? 46.g3 b2 47.♔c2 ♕d3+ 48.♔xb2 d4 49.♖d5 ♔f5 50.♔c1=.



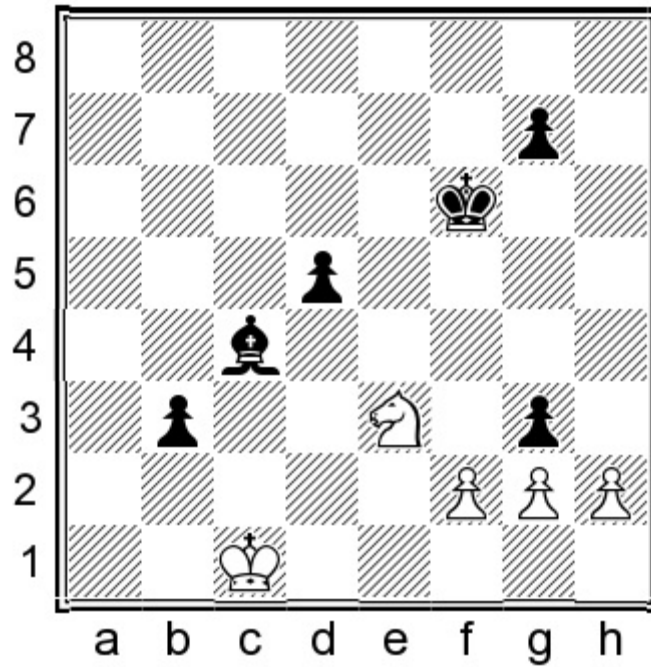
Position after: 45...♔f6!

46.♔c1

A) 46.♖xg4+ ♔f5 47.♖e3+ [47.f3 ♔f4 48.♖f2 ♕f1-+] 47...♔e4 Black wins easily, the deciding factor lies in transferring the king to the queenside. 48.h4 ♕b5 49.♖d1 d4 50.♖b2 ♕f1 51.g3 ♔d5 52.♖d1 ♔c4 53.♖b2+ ♔b4! 54.♖d1 ♔a3 55.♔c1 ♕e2-+

B) 46.♔c3? d4+-+

46...g3!!

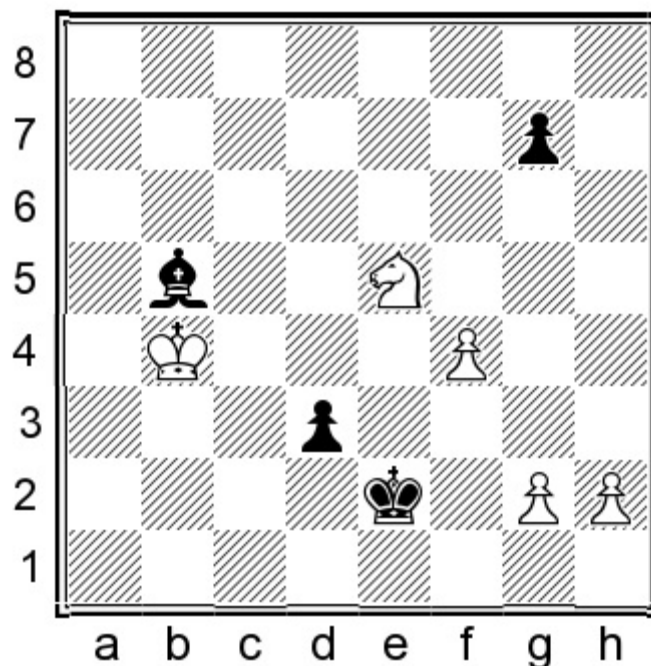


Position after: 46...g3!!

The only move! There is no need to hold on to the past, it no longer exists.

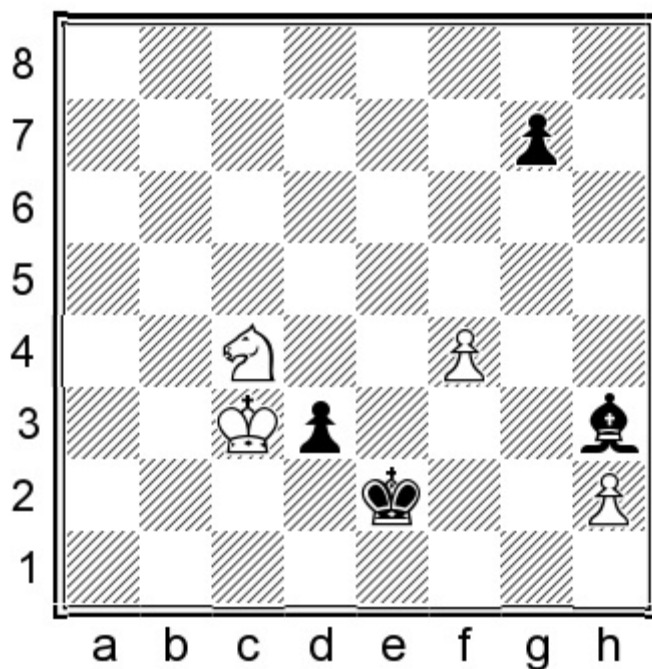
At the cost of a pawn, Black spoils the defensive structure of the white pawns and finds a gap in the white forces.

The natural 46...♔e5? led only to a draw: 47.♘xg4+ ♔d4 48.♕b2 ♕d3 49.♖e5+ ♔e2 50.f4 ♘b5 51.♕xb3 d4 52.♕b4 d3



Position after: 52...d3

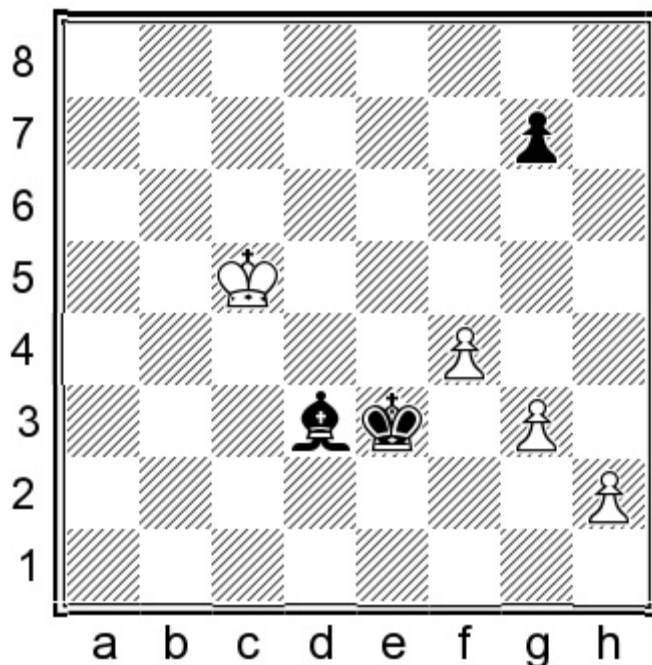
A) It was somewhat more difficult to achieve a draw after 53.♖f3 ♘c6 54.♗d4+ ♔e3 55.♕c3 ♘e4 56.♗b3 ♘xg2 57.♗d2 ♘h3 58.♗c4+ ♕e2



Position after: 58... ♕e2

59.♕d4! [In the case of a passive defense, White is doomed. 59.♗d2? g6 60.♗c4 ♘e6 61.♗d2 ♘f5 62.♗c4 ♘c8 63.♗d2 ♘a6 64.♗b3 ♕e3+] 59...g6 60.♕e5 ♘c8 61.h4 ♘a6 62.♗b2 d2 63.f5=.

B) 53.♗xd3!? ♘xd3 54.♕c5 ♕e3 55.g3=



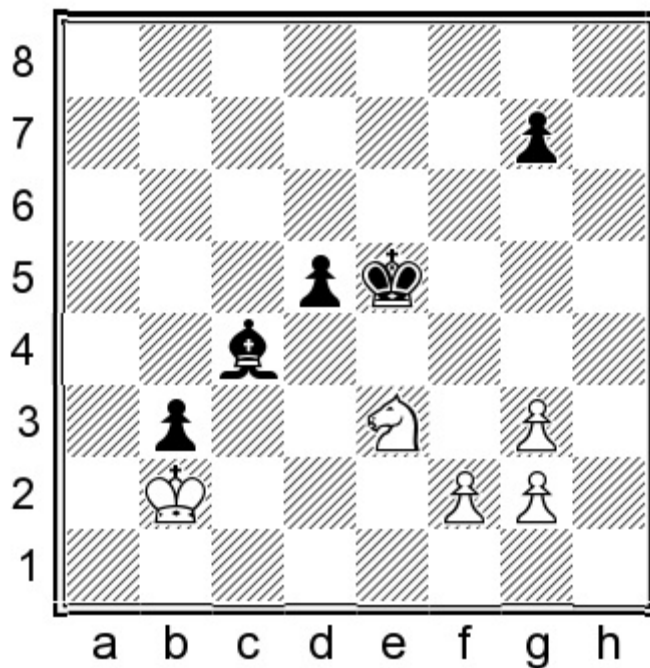
Position after: 55.g3=

It is not difficult to see that Black is unable to convert his material advantage.

47.hxg3

47.fxg3 ♔e5 48.♞d1 ♔d4 49.♚d2 ♞f1-+

47...♔e5 48.♚b2

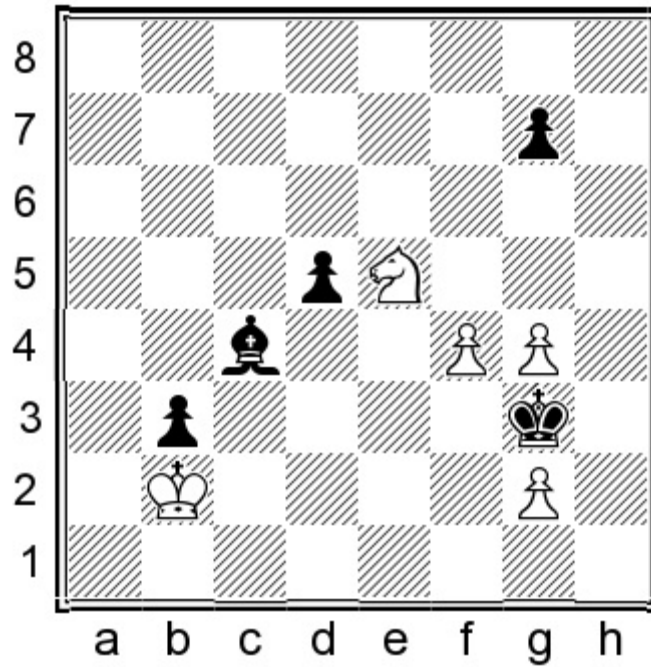


Position after: 48.♚b2

48...♔e4!

48...g6? 49.♞g4+ ♔d4 50.f4=

49.♞g4 ♔d3 50.♞e5+ ♔e2 51.f4 ♔f2 52.g4 ♔g3!

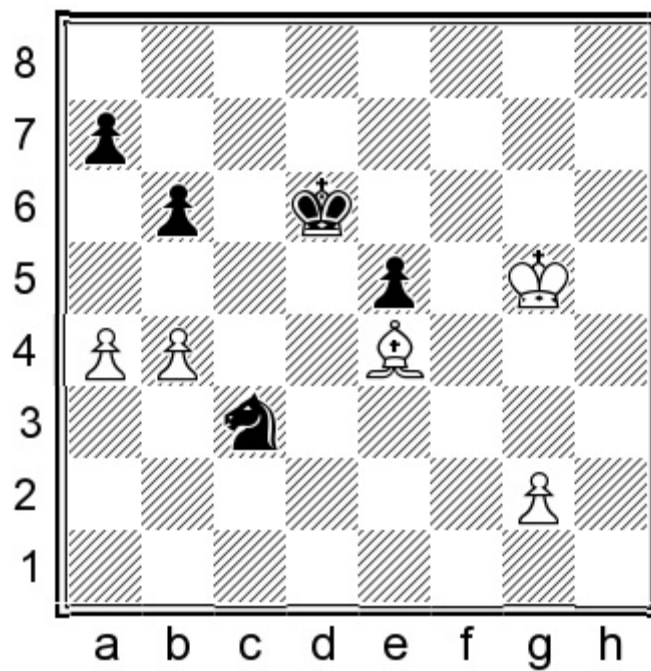


Position after: 52... ♔g3!

53. f5 ♔f4 54. ♖d7 ♔xg4 55. f6 gxf6 56. ♖xf6+ ♔g3-+

Example 10

From Bacrot – So
chess.com 2017



White to move

56. ♔c2?!

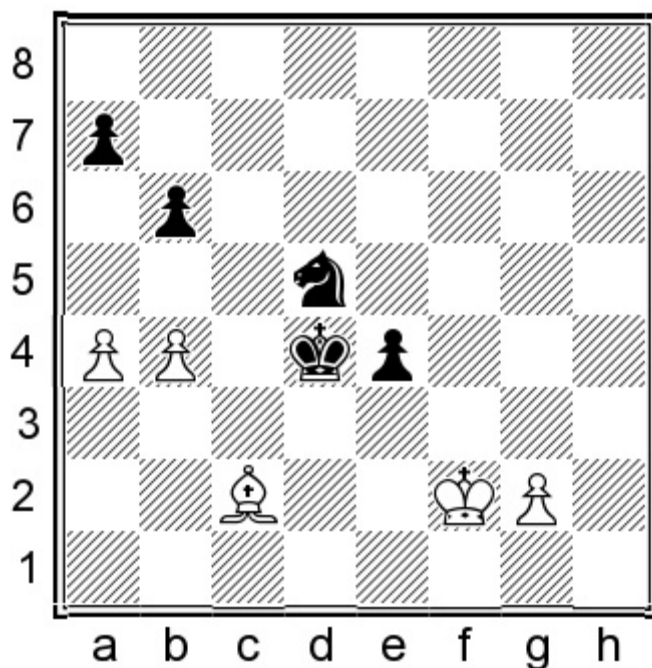
For a long time in the game, White had been playing for a win, but now would have been a good time to stop. 56.♔f5 ♖xa4 57.g4=

56.♙c2?! ♔d5!

After this move, the situation changes dramatically and White already needs to think about how to save the position, but he is playing purely by inertia.

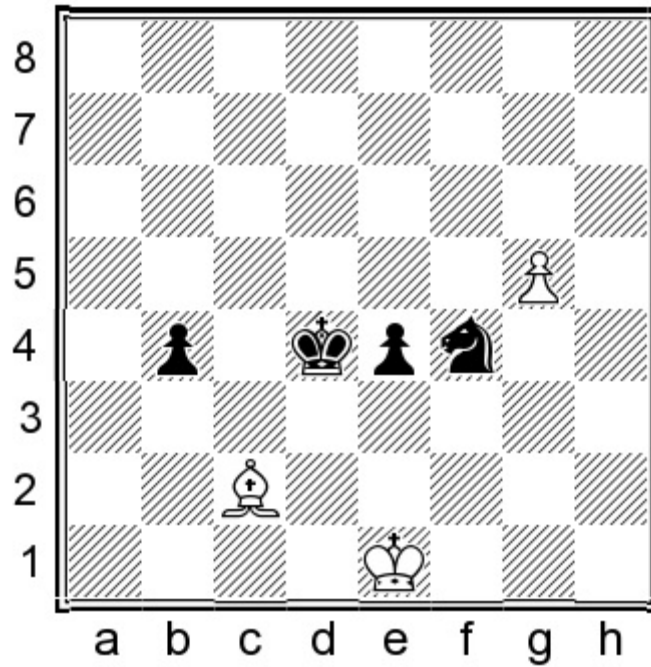
57.g4?

Only an immediate retreat led to salvation. 57.♔g4! ♔d4 58.♔f3 e4+ 59.♔f2 ♖d5



Position after: 59...♖d5

60.♙b1! [60.g4? ♖e3!-+] 60...♖xb4 61.g4 ♖d5 62.g5 ♖f4 63.♔e1 [63.♔f1 ♔e3 64.♙c2=] 63...a6
64.♙c2 b5 65.axb5 axb5 66.♙b1 b4 67.♙c2



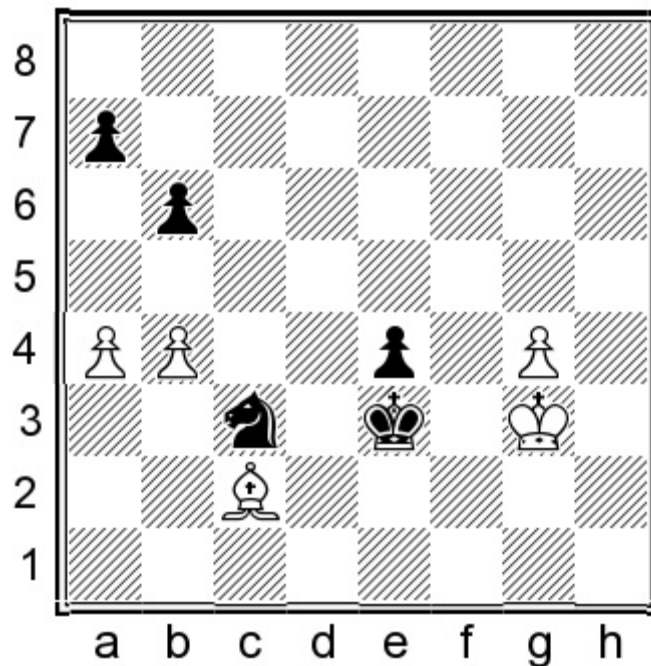
Position after: 67. ♔c2

Black cannot strengthen his position and is unable to convert the extra pawn, for example: 67... ♔e3 [67... e3 68. g6=] 68. ♕f1 ♔f3 69. ♔d1+ ♔g3 70. ♕e1 e3 71. ♕f1=.

57... ♔d4!

The winning move. The game continued 57... e4? 58. ♕f4 ♔d4 59. g5= 0-1 (66).

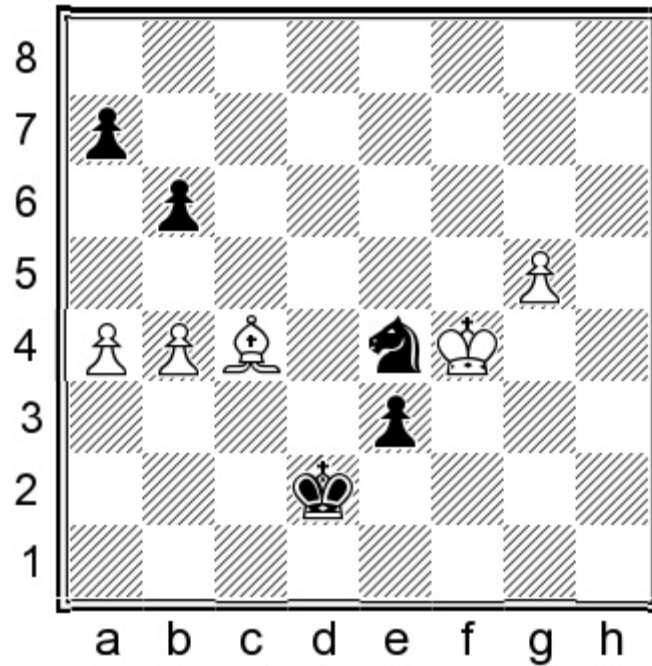
58. ♕h4 e4 59. ♕g3 ♔e3!



Position after: 59...♔e3!

60.♙b3

60.g5 ♔d2 61.♙b3 [61.g6 e3 62.g7 e2-+] 61...e3 62.♙c4 ♖e4+ 63.♔f4

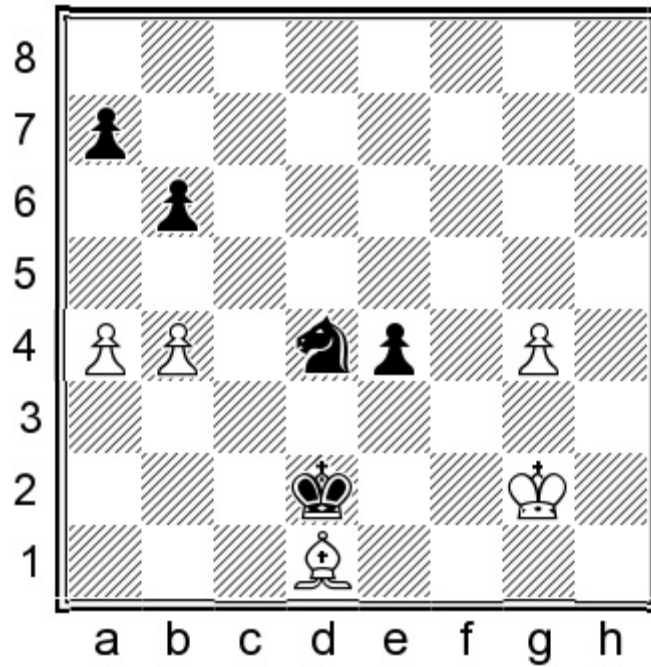


Position after: 63.♔f4

63...♖xg5 64.♔xg5 e2-+

60...♖e2+ 61.♔g2 ♖d4 62.♙c4

62.♙d1 ♔d2-+

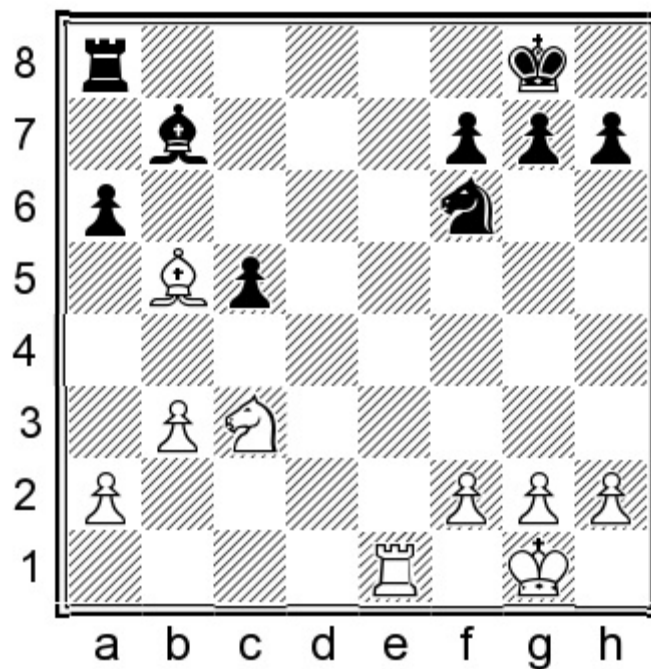


Position after: 62...♔d2-+

62...♔f4-+

Example 11

From Shankland – Dreev
Havana 2018



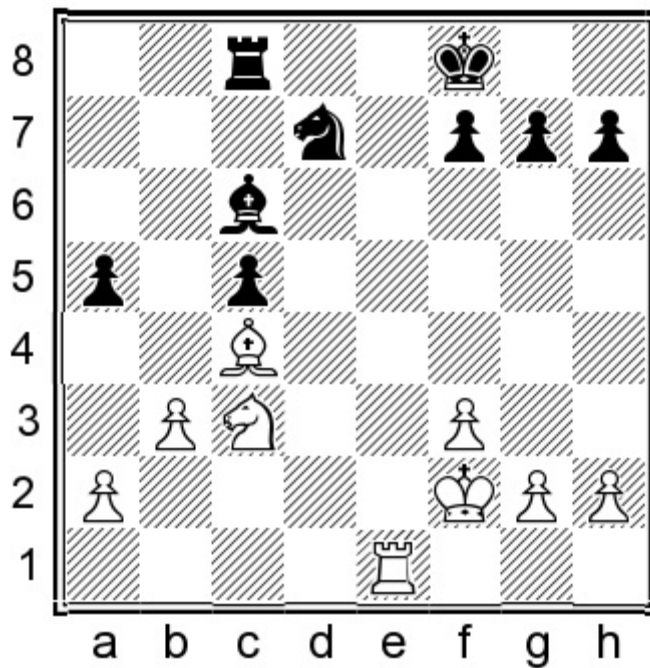
White to move

In view of the weakened pawn structure, White is clearly better. However, if he lacks precision, it can

slip away - which is what happened in the game.

24.♙f1!

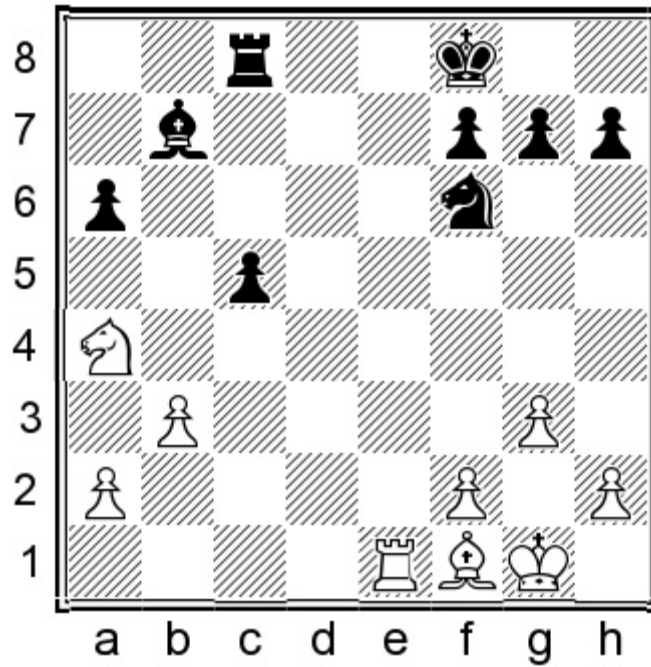
In the game, the white bishop retreated to a seemingly active position, but unintentionally protected the weak c5-pawn. 24.♙c4 and after 24...♚f8 25.♘a4 ♜c8 26.f3 ♞d7 27.♚f2 ♙c6 28.♞c3 a5



Position after: 28...a5

29.♙b5 ♞b6 30.a4 ♙xb5 31.♞xb5 ♜d8 White's advantage is a thing of the past, 1/2-1/2.

24.♙f1! ♚f8 25.♘a4 ♜c8 26.g3!



Position after: 26.g3!

Only now does the meaning of the bishop retreat become clear.

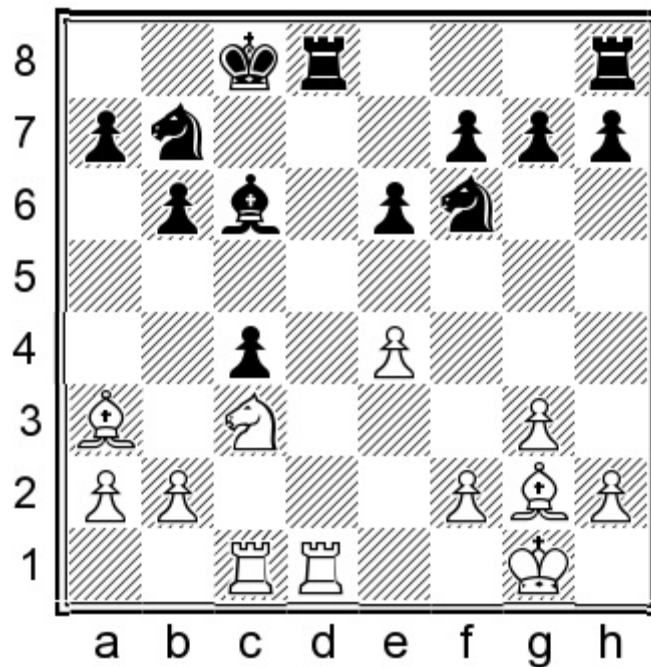
26...g6 27.♘h3 ♜c7 28.♞c1 ♞e4 29.♘g2±

White wins a pawn and retains good winning chances.

Example 12

From Galliamova – Nakhbayeva

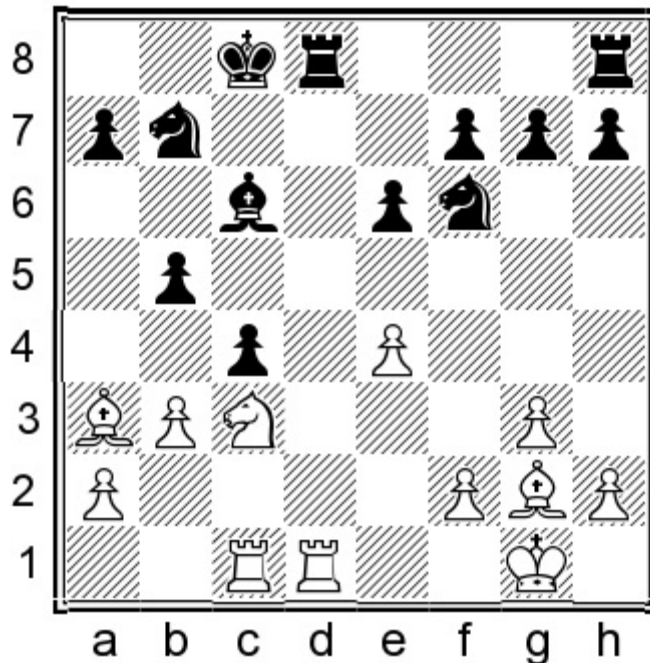
Khanty-Mansiysk 2018



Black to move

17...♞g4!

The black knight goes to e5 from where, if necessary, it can transfer to the d3-square. In the game, Black decided to reinforce the c4-pawn first: 17...b5?! but after 18.b3



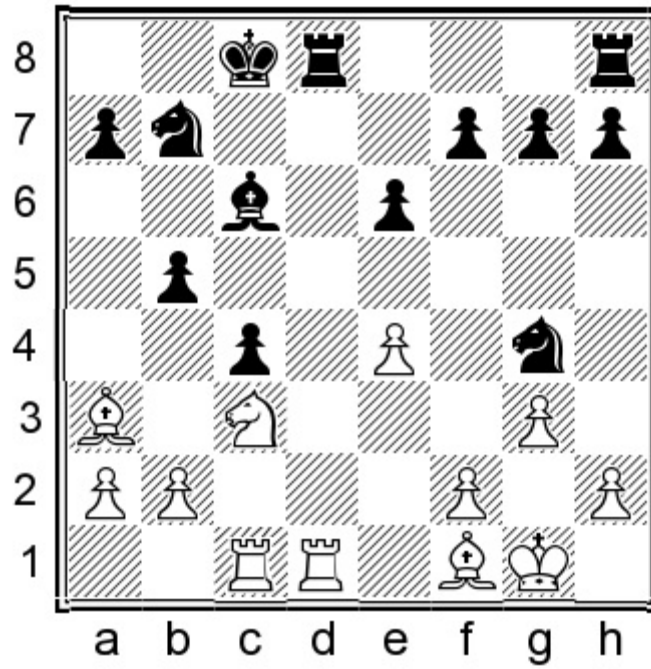
Position after: 18.b3

White has full compensation for the pawn, therefore it is no good: 18...a5?! 19.♞xd8+ [19.♙e7? ♞xd1+] 19...♞xd8 in view of 20.e5!±.

17...♞g4! 18.♙f1

18.b3 ♞e5 19.f4 ♞d3 20.♞c2 b5

18...b5



Position after: 18...b5

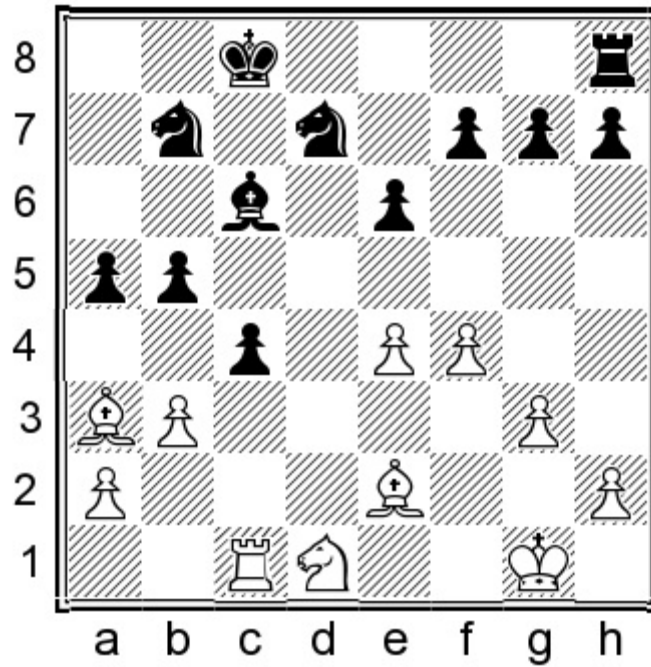
19.♔e2

19.b3?! a5⚡

19...♘e5

19...♘f6!? 20.b3 a5⚡

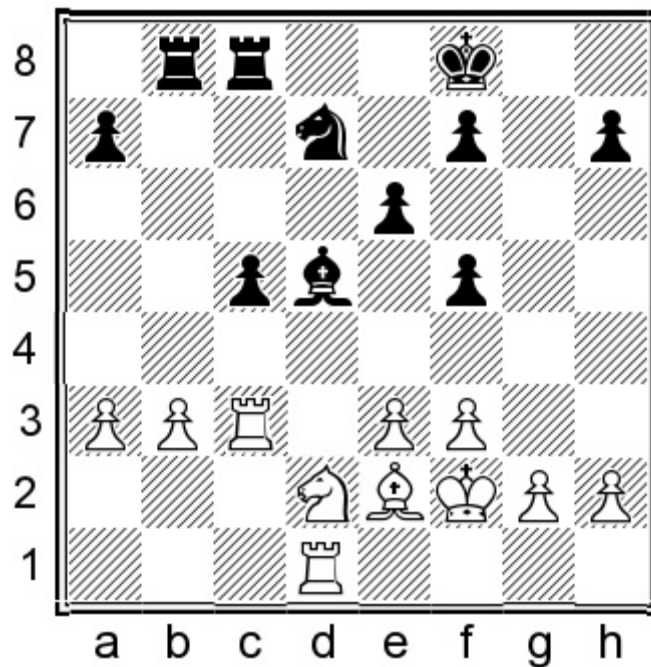
20.f4 ♖xd1+ 21.♘xd1 ♘d7 22.b3 a5!⚡



Position after: 22...a5!♣

Example 13

From Dreev – Movsesian
Olginka 2011



White to move

White's position is clearly preferable: the c5-pawn is weak and the kingside structure is somewhat spoiled. This is not enough to obtain a serious advantage though — it is necessary to create additional

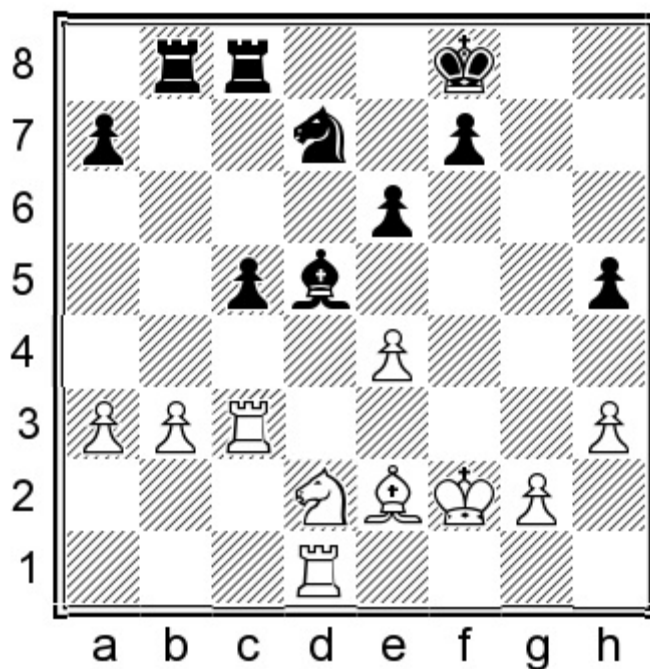
weaknesses in the opponent's position.

27.h3!

Threatening g2-g4, and Black cannot prevent it.

27...♙e7

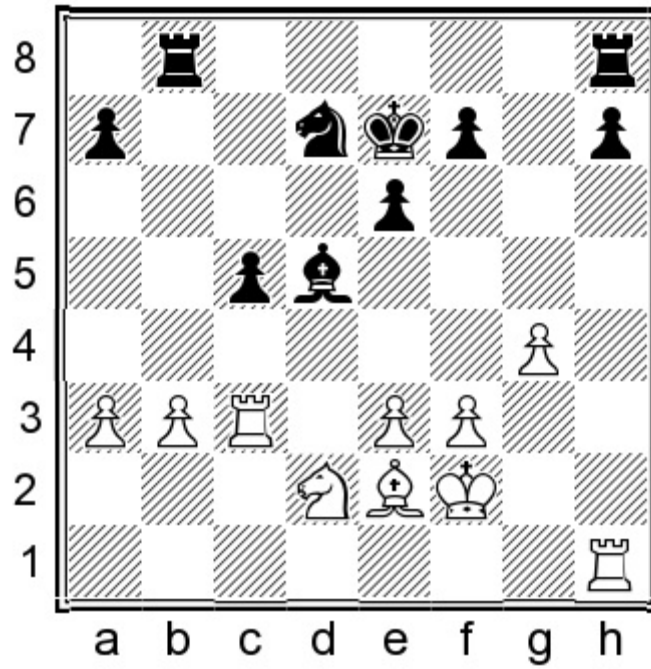
27...h5 Attempting to prevent White's plans only aggravates Black's case. 28.e4!± Δ 28...fxe4 29.fxe4



Position after: 29.fxe4

The black h-pawn, who did not have time to experience the joys of life, disappears from the board.

28.g4 fxg4 29.hxg4 ♖h8 30.♙h1±



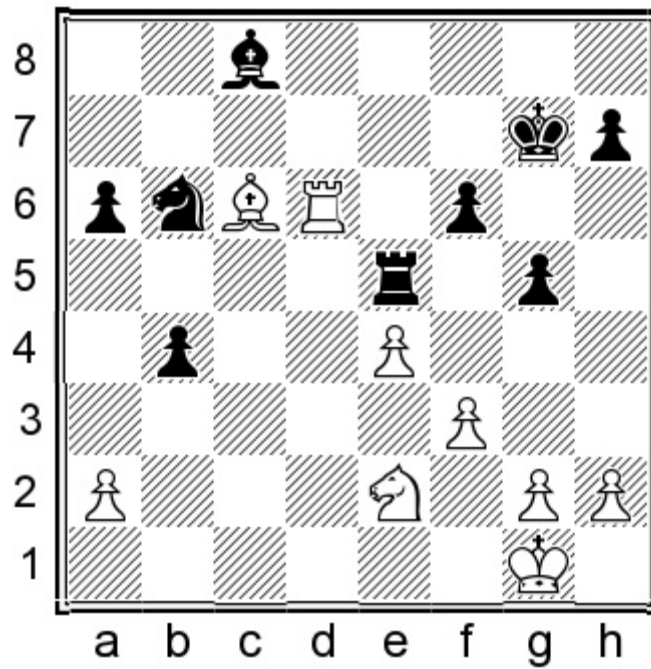
Position after: 30. ♖h1±

Black still has concerns about the c5-pawn, and a weak h7-pawn has now been added to the mix.

Chapter 6 Exercises

1

Grandelius, N. – Dubov, D.



- Find the killer move for Black.

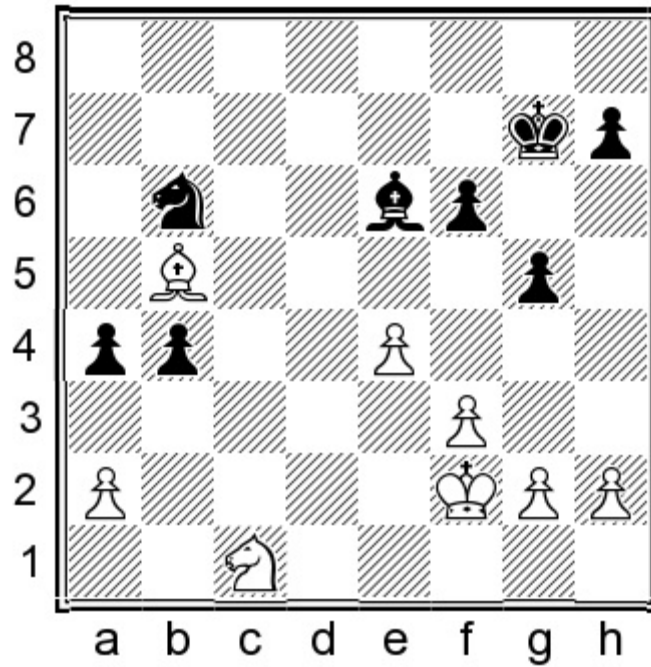
Show/Hide Solution

1

1...♖e6!

After the exchange of rooks, White is defenseless against the black pawns' desire to become queens...

2.♖xe6 ♕xe6 3.♘c1 a5 4.♕b5 a4 5.♔f2



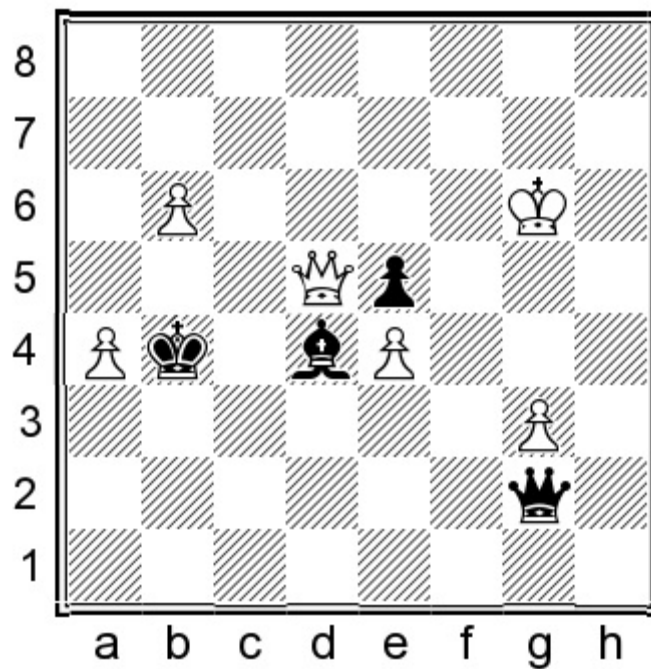
Position after: 5. ♔f2

5... ♕xa2! 6. ♖xa2 b3

The dream of promotion will come true, but for which one of the two pawns still remains a mystery: 0-1 (40) Grandelius, N (2653) – Dubov, D (2677) Bremen 2017.

2

Grischuk, A. – Caruana, F.



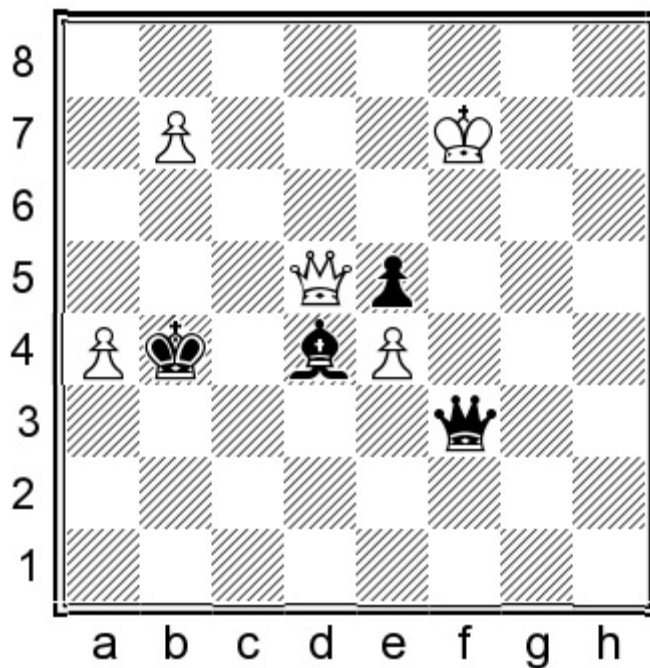
□ 1. ♖b5+ or 1. b7?

Show/Hide Solution

2

1. ♖b5+!

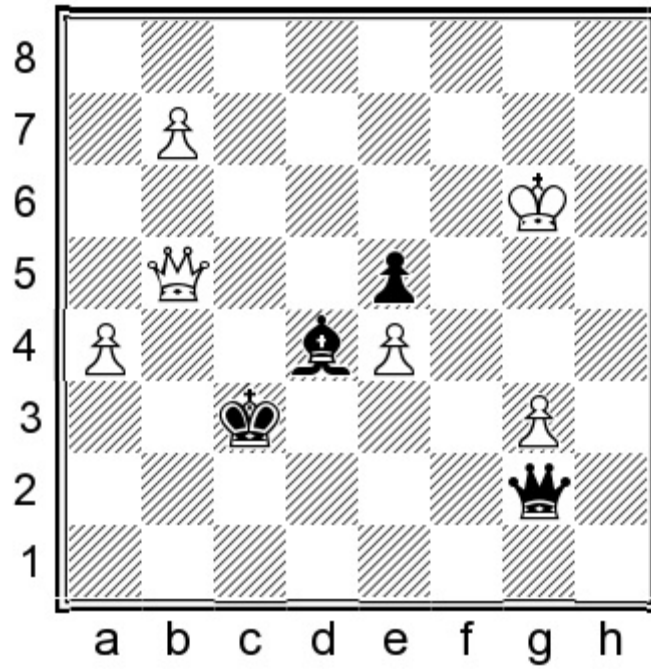
The game continued 1. b7?! ♖xg3+ 2. ♔f7 ♖f3+



Position after: 2... ♖f3+

3. ♔e8 [3. ♔e7 ♙c5+=] 3... ♖h5+ 4. ♔d8 ♖h8+ 5. ♔c7 ♖g7+ 6. ♔c6 ♙a7= ½-½ (81) Grischuk, A (2782) – Caruana, F (2799) Saint Louis 2017.

1. ♖b5+! ♔c3 2. b7



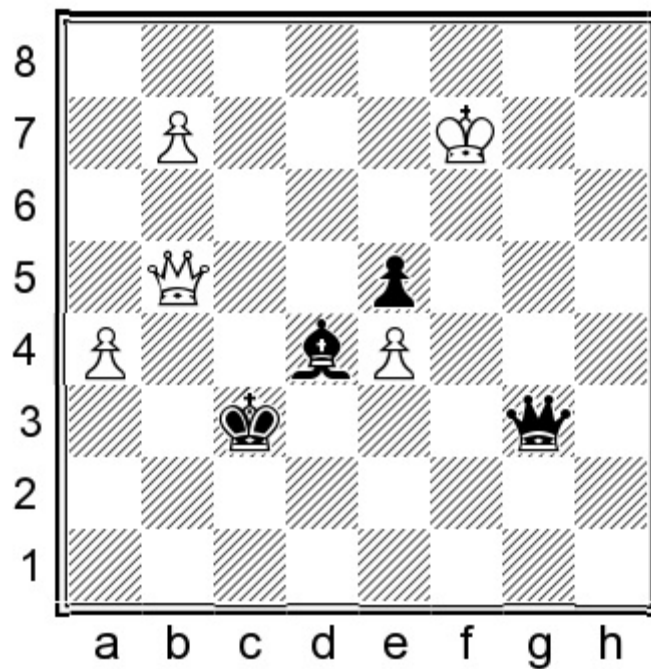
Position after: 2.b7

At first sight, it seems as though giving the “key” central pawn to Black is not a wise choice, but this is not case.

2...♞xg3+

2...♞xe4+ 3.♔f6 ♕a7 4.♞xe5+ ♕d4 5.b8=♞+–

3.♔f7



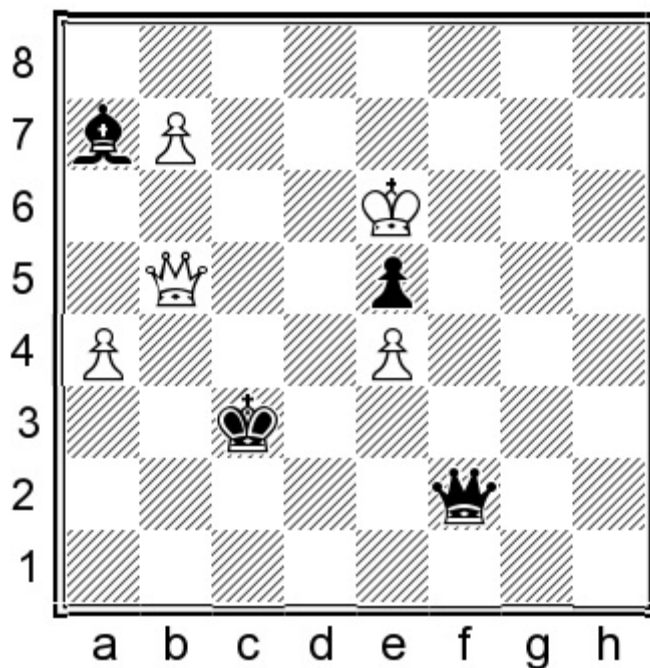
Position after: 3. ♔f7

3... ♕f2+!

A) 3... ♕f3+ 4. ♔e7+-

B) 3... ♕f4+ 4. ♔e8+-

4. ♔e6 ♕a7



Position after: 4... ♕a7

5. b8=♕

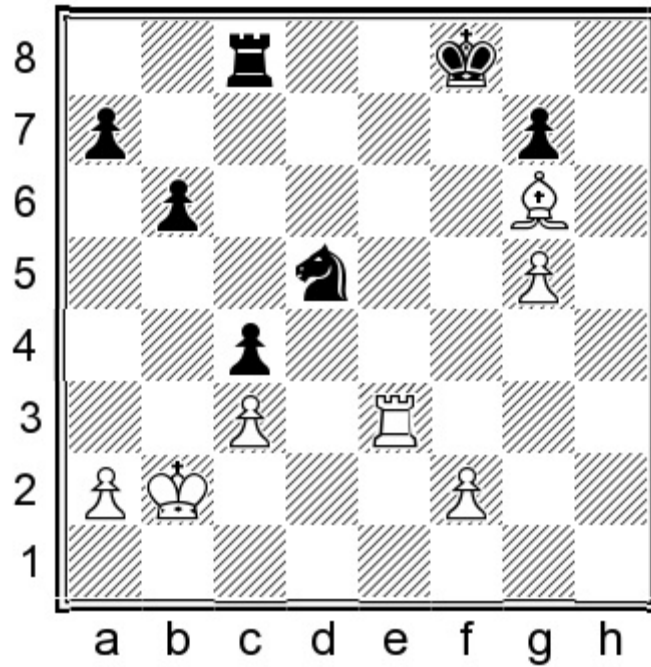
5. ♕xe5+ ♔b4 6. b8=♕+ ♕xb8 7. ♕xb8+ ♔xa4 would be a similar amount of fun for Black.

5... ♕xb8 6. ♕xb8 ♕a2+ 7. ♔e7+-

Despite the efforts from Black, his position remains difficult.

3

Short, N. – Perez Gormaz, M.



□ 1.♖e4, or the straightforward 1.♖f3+?

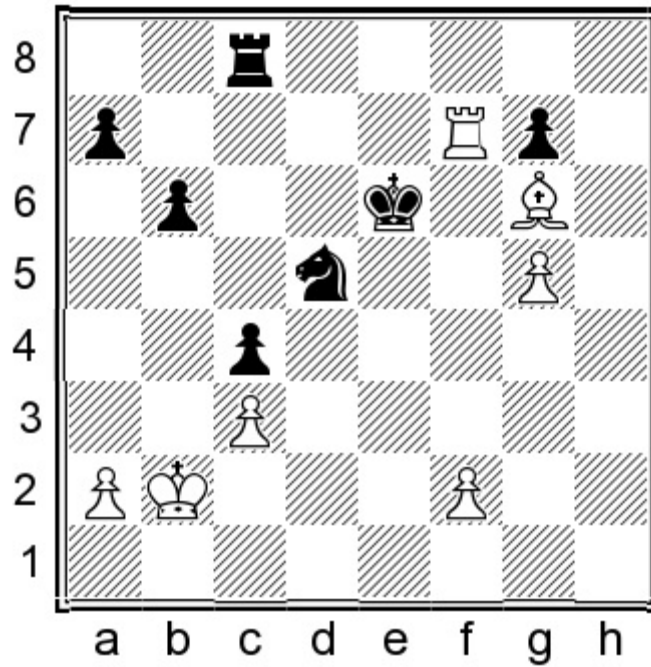
Show/Hide Solution

3

1.♖e4!±

With a clear advantage for White.

In the game, he could not resist the opportunity to obtain activity with the help of checks, getting the rook to the seventh rank. 1.♖f3+ ♔e7 2.♖f7+ ♔e6

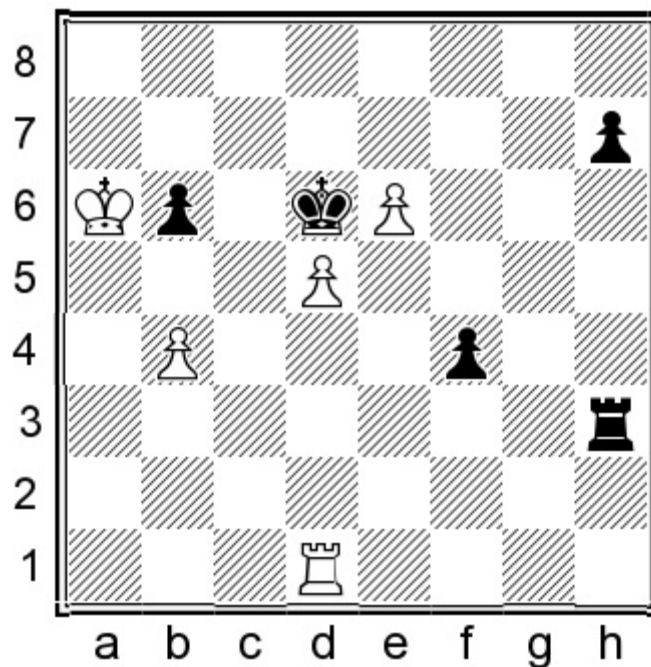


Position after: 2...♔e6

However, it turns out that the black pawns are invulnerable due to the counterattacking resource that is Black's ...♖c8-f8, and after 3.f4 there is 3...♖c7!= and White's former advantage is now merely a distant memory.

4

Oleksienko, M. – Shankland, S.



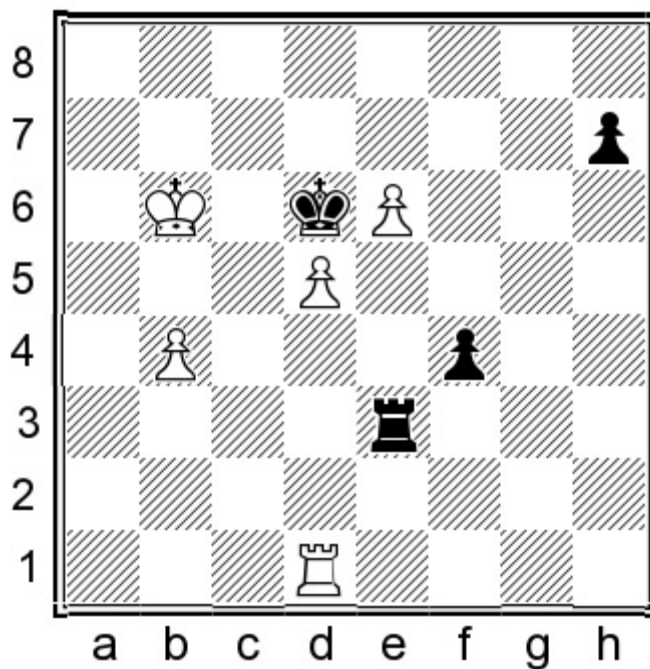
□ White only has one winning move, using his rook. Find it!

Show/Hide Solution

4

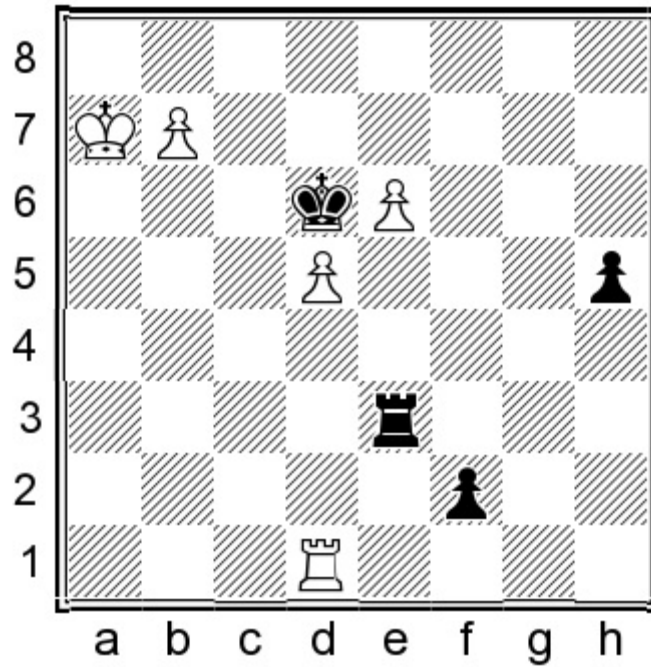
48.♖d4!!+-

Only this move leads to a win. The most natural move lets the win slip away. 48.♔xb6? ♜e3!=



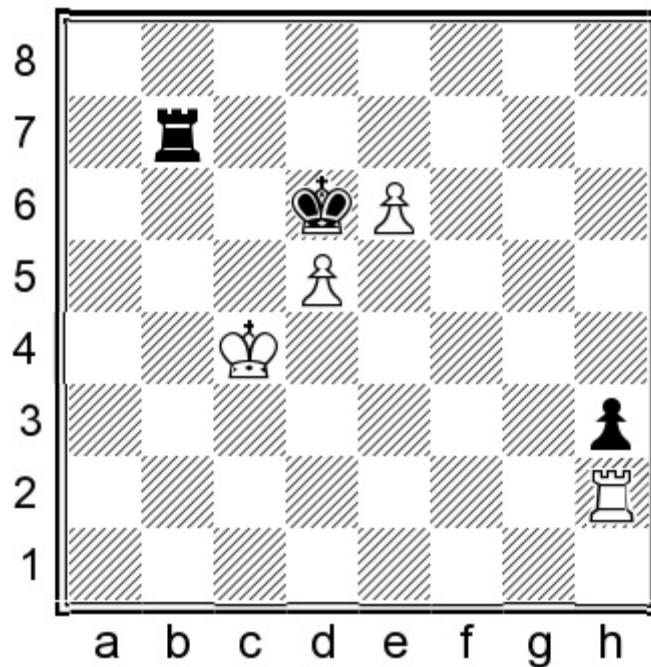
Position after: 48...♜e3! =

The rook is placed behind the passed e-pawn and Black will have time to set his own passed pawns in motion: 49.b5 f3 50.♔a7 f2 51.b6 h5 52.b7



Position after: 52.b7

52...♖a3+ 53.♕b8 ♜f3 54.♕a8 ♖a3+ 55.♕b8 ♜f3 56.♞f1 h4 57.♕a7 ♖a3+ 58.♕b6 ♜b3+ 59.♕a6 ♖a3+ 60.♕b5 ♜b3+ 61.♕c4 ♜xb7 62.♞xf2 h3 63.♞h2



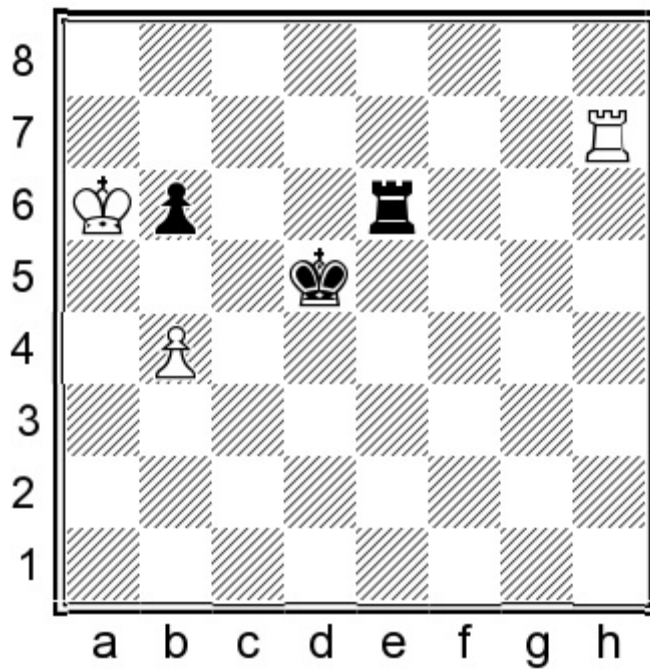
Position after: 63.♞h2

½-½ Oleksiyenko, M (2596) – Shankland, S (2591) Germany 2013.

48.♞d4!!+- ♜e3

48...f3 49.♖f4 f2 50.♖xf2 ♔xd5 51.e7 ♖e3 52.♖f7+-

49.♖xf4 ♔xd5 50.♖h4 ♖xe6 51.♖xh7



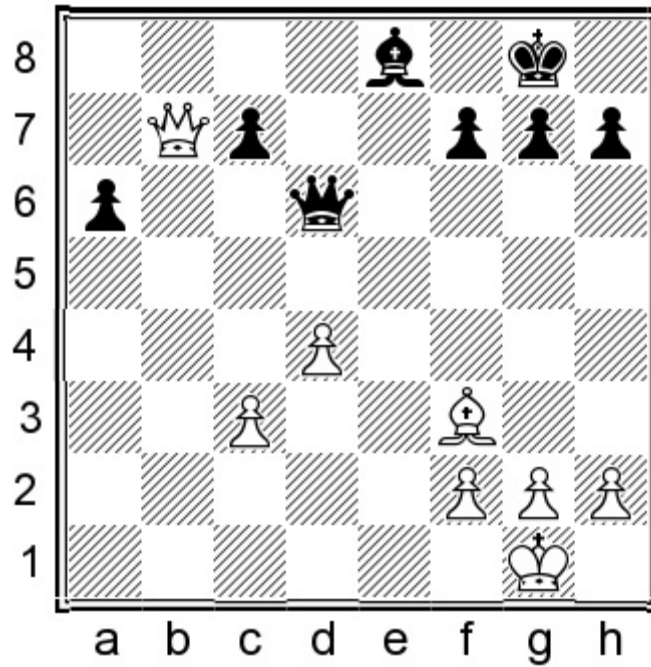
Position after: 51.♖xh7

With an easy win, for example:

51...♔d4 52.b5 ♔d5 53.♖d7+ ♔c5 54.♖c7+ ♔d5 55.♔b7 ♖f6 56.♖c6+-

5

Shankland, S. – Robson, R.



□ It is obvious that Black may encounter problems with the defense of the a-pawn. How should he proceed?

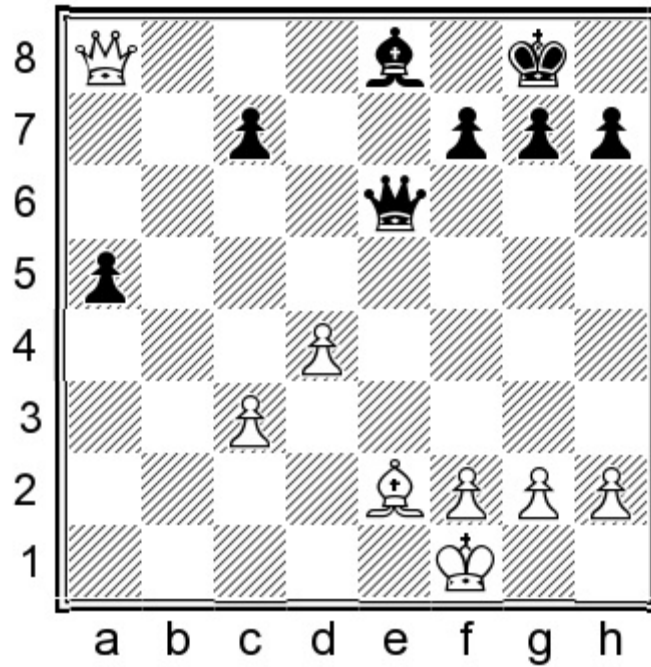
Show/Hide Solution

5

26. ♖a8?

The idea is correct, but the execution is not.

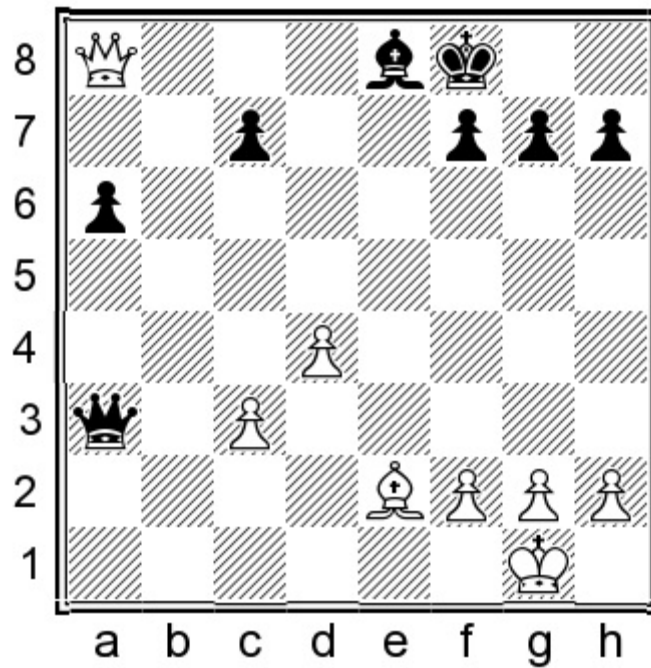
Correct was 26. ♕e2! a5 and only now 27. ♖a8 ♖e6 28. ♔f1.



Position after: 28. ♔f1

Black is unable to hold onto the a-pawn. 28...a4 29. ♕b5±

26. ♛a8? ♔f8 27. ♙e2 ♛a3!=



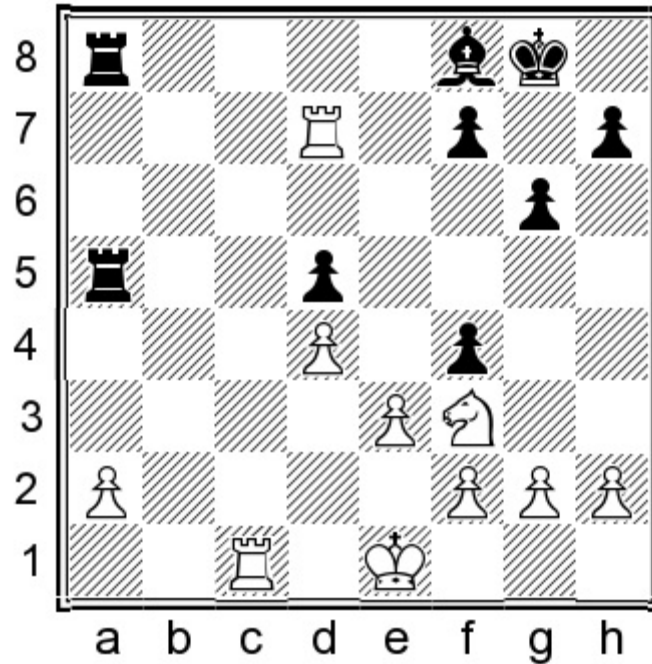
Position after: 27... ♛a3!=

28. ♛xa6 ♛xc3 29. ♛c4 ♛xc4 30. ♙xc4 ♔e7

1/2-1/2

6

Sarana, A. – Dubov, D.



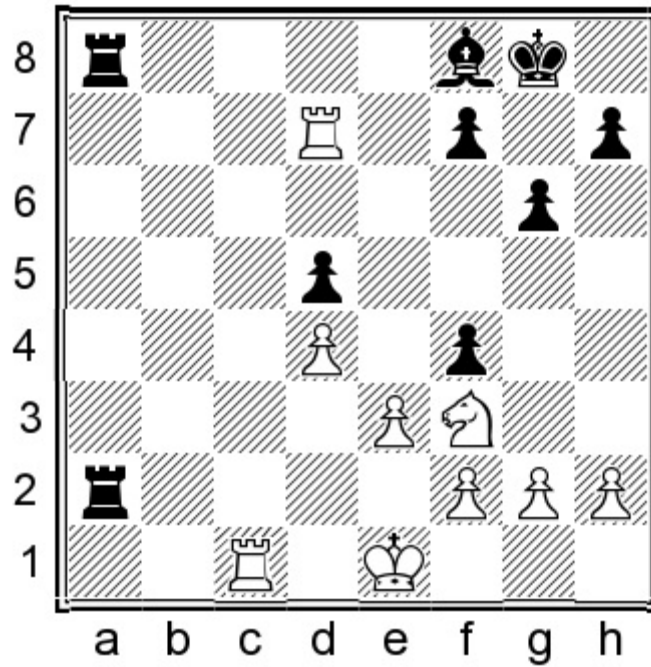
■ 24...♖xa2 or 24...fxe3?

Show/Hide Solution

6

24...fxe3?

In a practical game situation, such moves often seem necessary and we play them without giving it much thought, sometimes missing significant chances. Indeed, Black missed a great opportunity here. 24...♖xa2!

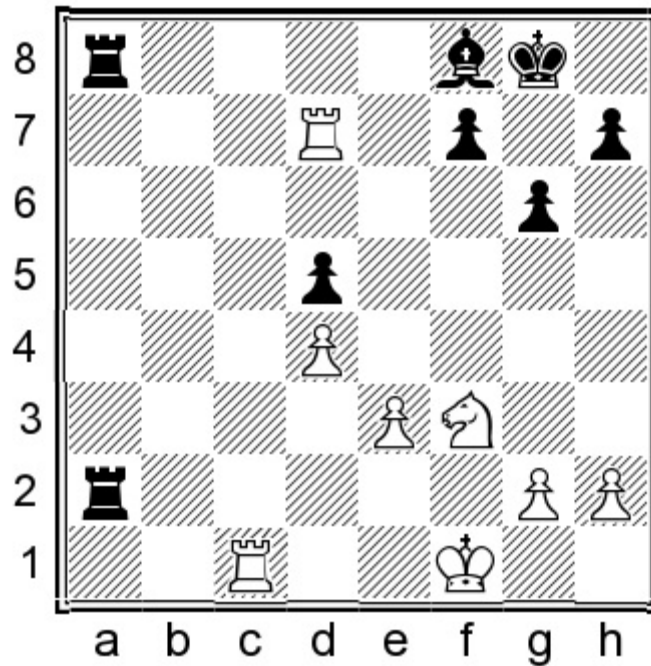


Position after: 24...Rxa2!

A) 25.exf4 R8+! 26.Kf1 [26.Ne5 f6] 26...R8e2

B) 25.Kf1 Rb2 the doubling of the black rooks on the second rank is inevitable.

24...fxe3? 25.fxe3 Rxa2 26.Kf1

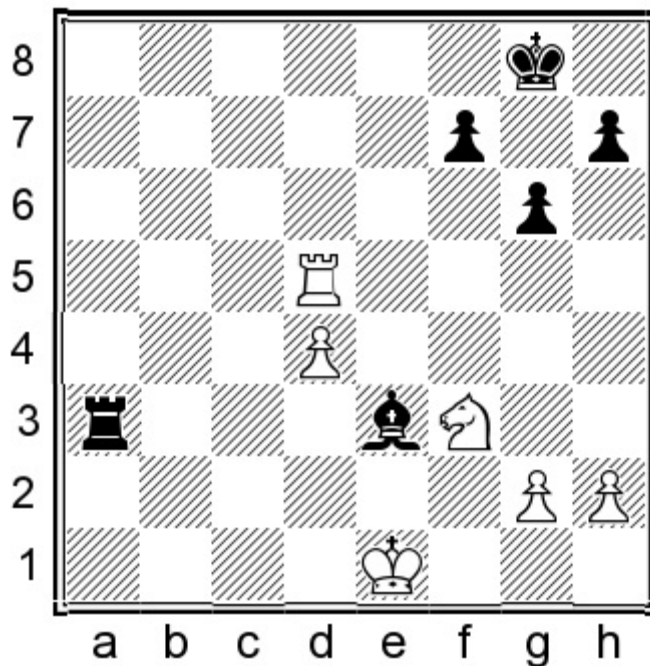


Position after: 26.Kf1

26...Rh6

No longer dangerous was 26...♖b2 27.♘e5 ♜aa2? in view of 28.♞xf7±.

27.♞e1 ♜8a3 28.♞xd5 ♘xe3 29.♞e2 ♜a1+ 30.♞e1 ♞xe1+ 31.♙xe1=



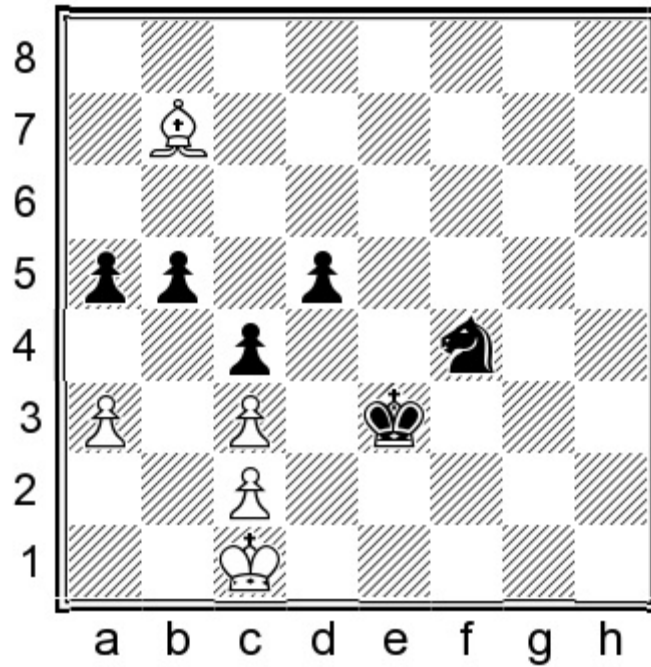
Position after: 31.♙xe1=

31...♘f4 32.♙f2 ♜a2+ 33.♙f1 ♘g7 34.♞b5 ♙f6 35.♞b3 ♜a1+ 36.♙f2 ♜a2+ 37.♙f1 h5 38.g3 ♘d6
39.♞b6 ♙e7 40.♞b7+ ♙f6 41.♞b6 ♙e7 42.♞b7+

½-½ Sarana, A (2587) – Dubov, D (2696) Sochi 2018.

7

Caruana, F. – Hou Yifan



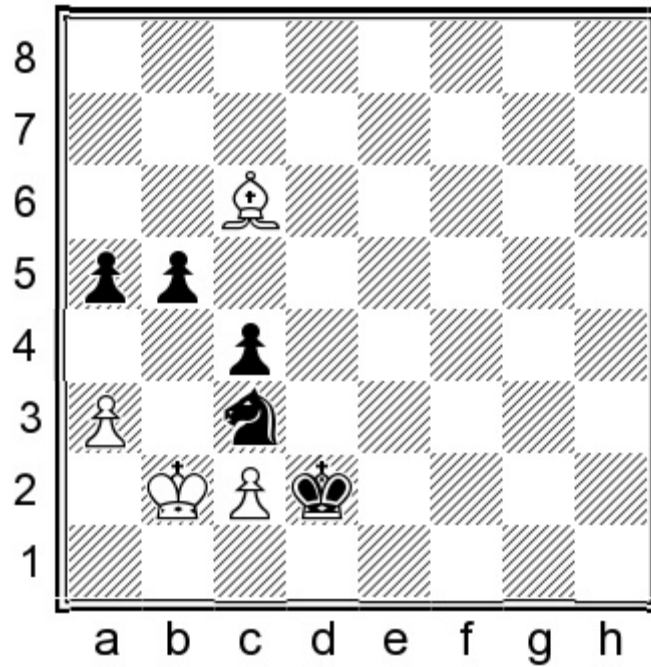
■ In order to find a win, first of all, Black must realize that normal moves will not suffice, and therefore he needs to look for something special...

Show/Hide Solution

7

65...♔e2!

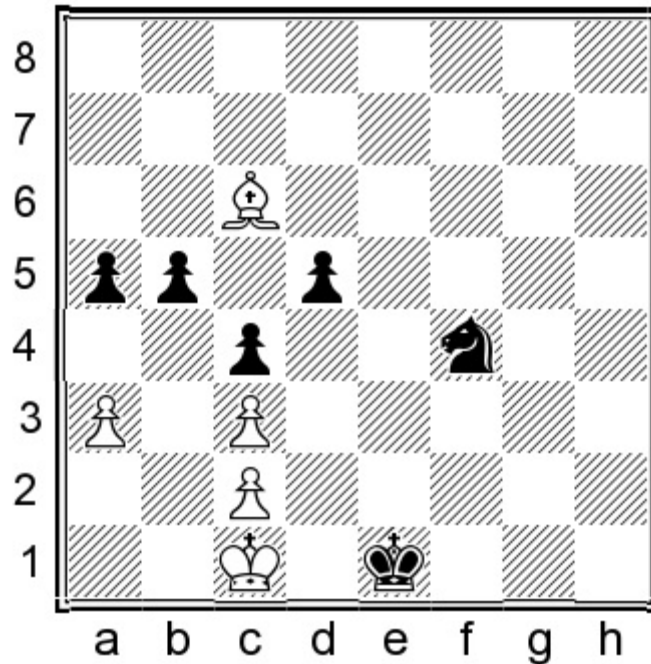
In the game, the limited amount of material allowed White to escape after 65...♘e2+ 66.♕b2 ♔d2 67.♙xd5 ♘xc3 68.♙c6 and the position is a fortress.



Position after: 68. ♖c6

68... ♜d1+ 69. ♖b1 ♞e3 70. ♙e4 c3 71. ♙h7 ♞c4 72. ♚a2 ♞e5 73. ♙e4 ♚e3 74. ♙h7 ♞c6 75. ♙g6 ♚d2
 76. ♙e4 ♞d4 77. ♖b1= ½–½ (98) Caruana, F (2784) – Hou Yifan (2654) Baden Baden 2018.

65... ♚e2! 66. ♙c6 ♚e1



Position after: 66... ♚e1

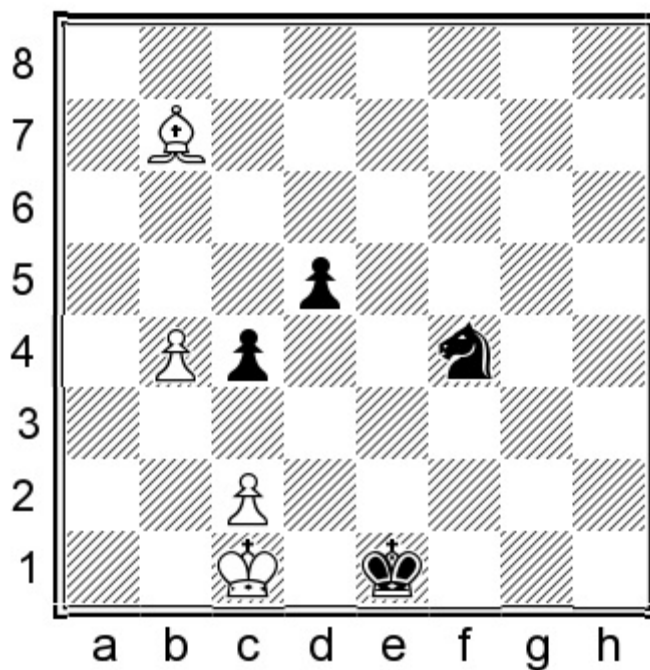
67. ♙b7

67.♙xb5 ♖e2+ 68.♚b2 ♜d2 69.♙c6 ♖xc3 70.♙d7 d4–+

67...b4!!

And here it is, something special! Only with the help of this etude-like idea is Black now able to realize his advantage.

68.cxb4 axb4 69.axb4

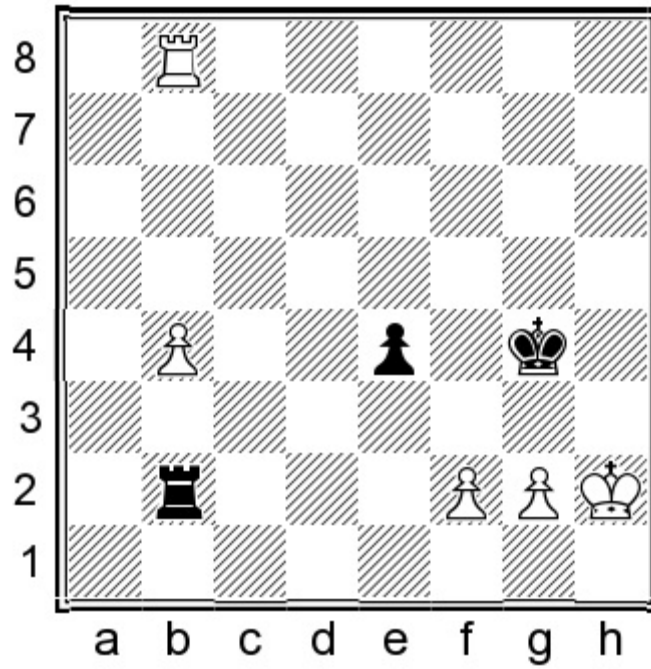


Position after: 69.axb4

69...♖d3+! 70.♚b1 ♖xb4 71.c3 ♜d2 72.♚b2 d4–+

8

Kashlinskaya, A. – Dordzhieva, D.



□ White to move: is he winning or not?

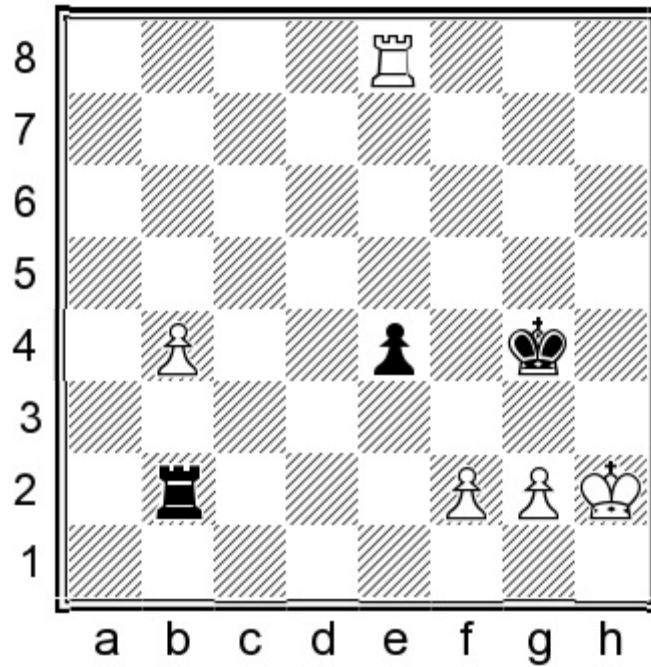
Show/Hide Solution

8

46.b5!

Yes, he is. But he has to find a series of good moves.

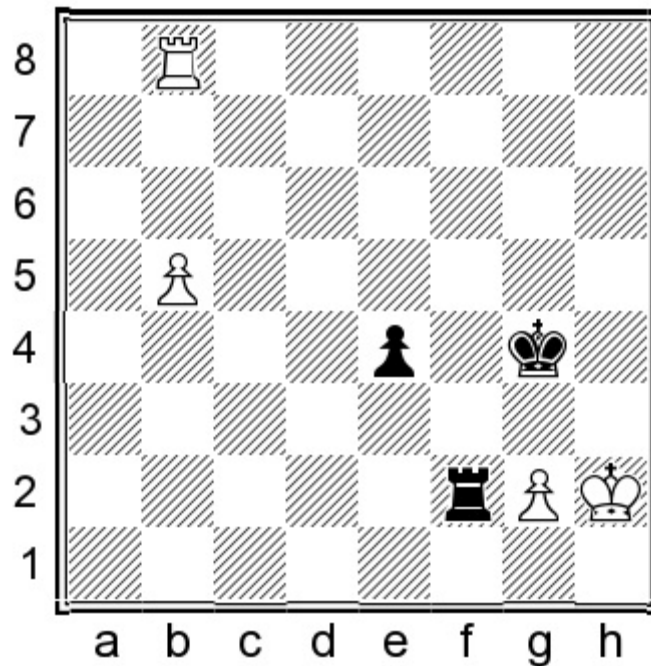
46.♖e8



Position after: 46. Re8

46... Kf5 [46... Rxb4? could however lead to a nice trick: 47. Rxe4+-.] 47. Rb8 Kf4! is just a move repetition, and now 48.b5.

46.b5! Rxf2

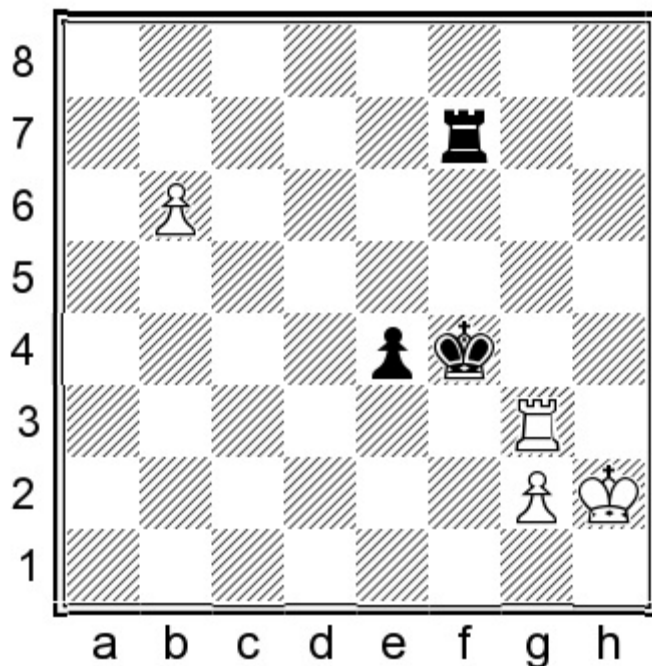


Position after: 46... Rxf2

47.b6!

The game was reduced to an elementary draw. 47.♖g8+? ♔h5 48.b6 ♖b2 49.♖b8 ♔g6 50.♔g3 e3 51.♔f3 e2 52.♔f2 ♔g7 53.g4 ♔h7= ½-½ (69) Kashlinskaya, A (2459) – Dordzhieva, D (2294) Moscow 2018.

47...♖f7 48.♖g8+ ♔f4 49.♖g3!



Position after: 49.♖g3!

The idea of transferring the rook to behind the pawn is of course a simple one. What scared White was probably the active placement of the black king.

49...♔e5

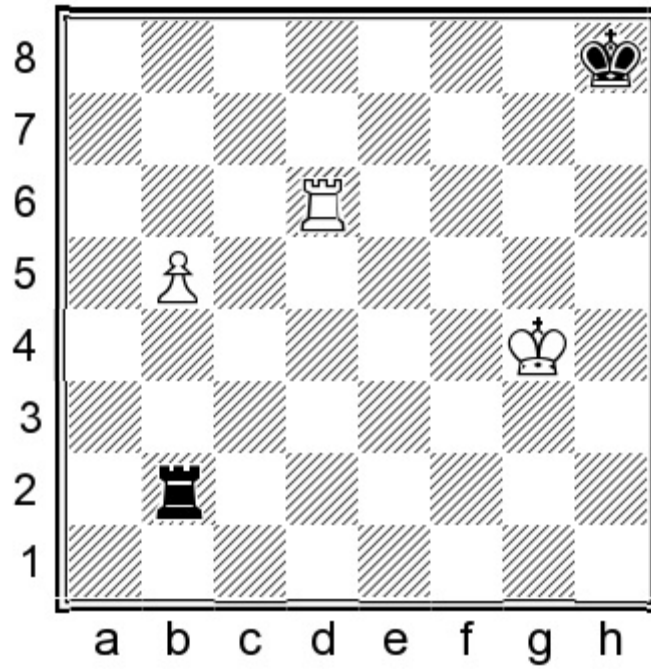
A) 49...e3 50.♖f3+-

B) 49...♖h7+ 50.♖h3 ♖b7 51.♖b3+-

50.♖b3 ♖b7 51.♔g3+-

9

Wyss, T. – Sinkovics, P.



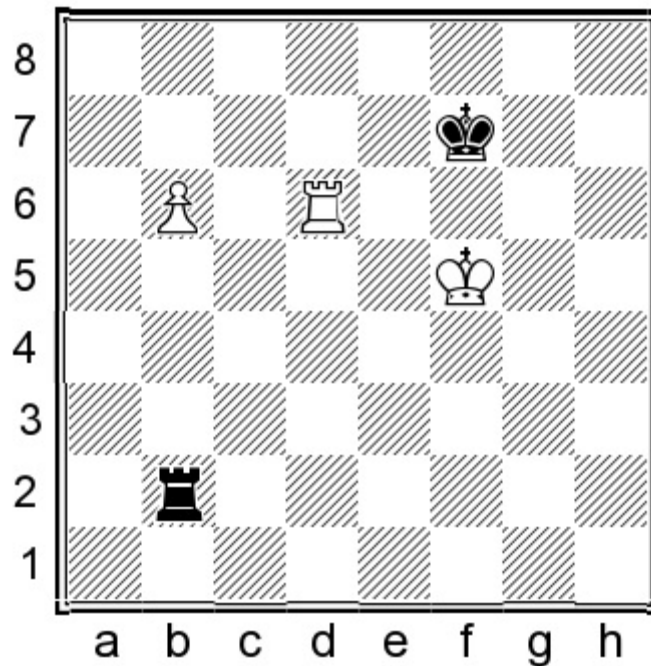
□ 1.♖b6 or 1.b6?

Show/Hide Solution

9

58.♖b6!

A) The game continued with the trivial 58.b6? ♔g8 59.♕f5 ♕f7

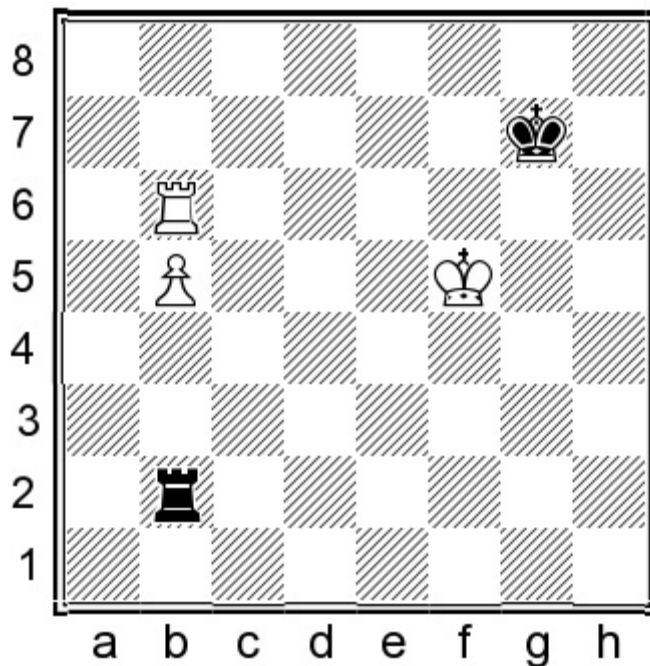


Position after: 59...♔f7

60.♖h6 ♖b5+ 61.♕e4 ♕e8 62.♕d4 ♕d7 63.♕c4 ♖b1 64.♕c5 ♕c8 ½-½ Wyss, T (2255) – Sinkovics, P (2415) Biel 1995.

B) 58.♞d5 ♔g7 59.♕f5 ♕f7 60.♕e5 ♕e7 61.♕d4 ♕e6=

58.♞b6! ♕g7 59.♕f5



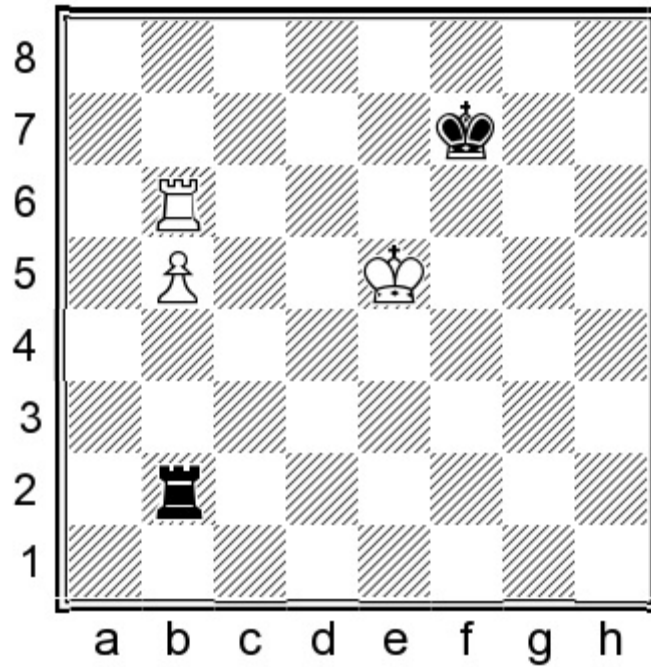
Position after: 59.♕f5

59...♕f7

59...♞e2 60.♞b7+! ♕f8 61.b6 ♕e8 62.♞h7+- was not enough to save the game.

60.♞b7+!

But not 60.♕e5?

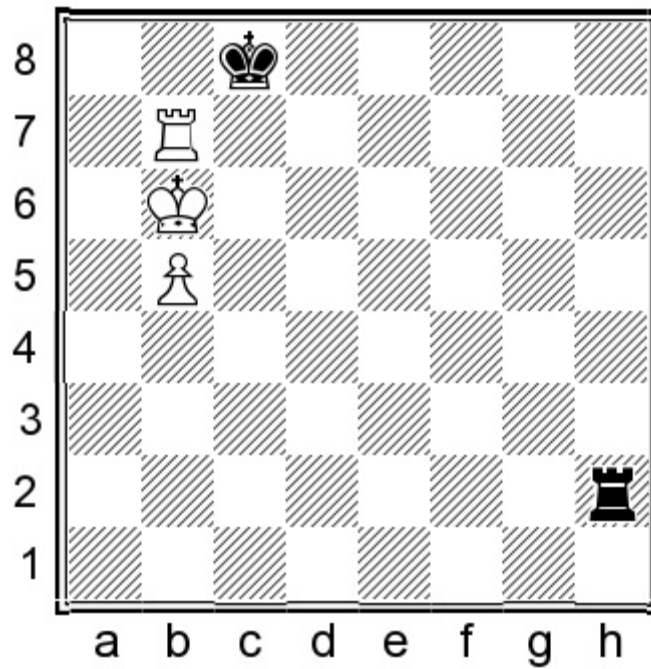


Position after: 60. ♔e5?

60... ♖d2! [60... ♔e7? 61. ♖b7+ ♔d8 62. ♔d6 ♔c8 63. ♔c6 ♖g2 64. ♔b6+-] 61. ♖d6 ♖b2=

60... ♔e8 61. ♔e6 ♔d8 62. ♔d6 ♔c8 63. ♔c6 ♖h2 64. ♔b6

Transitioning into the well-known theoretical position which is winning for White.

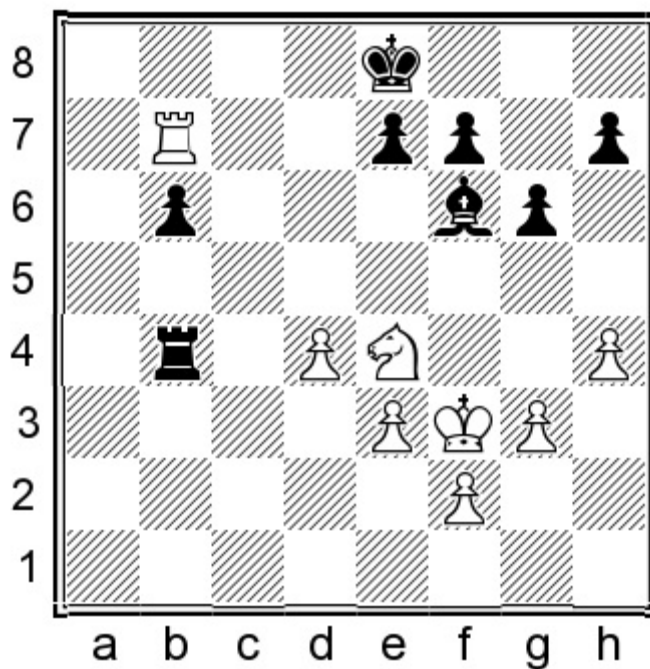


Position after: 64. ♔b6

64... ♖b2 65. ♖h7 ♖b1 66. ♖h8+ ♔d7 67. ♖b8!+-

10

Rozum, I. – Sjugirov, S.



□ White's advantage is beyond doubt. However, he would like to achieve something more substantial. How?

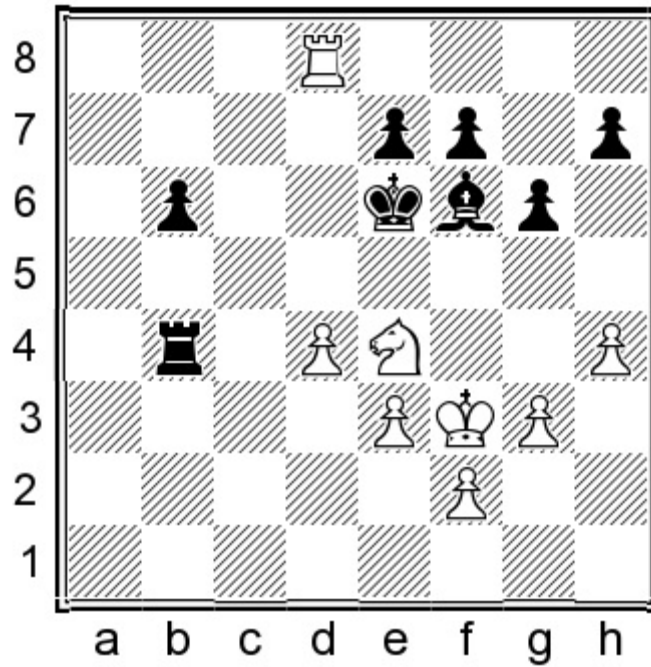
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39.♔f4?!

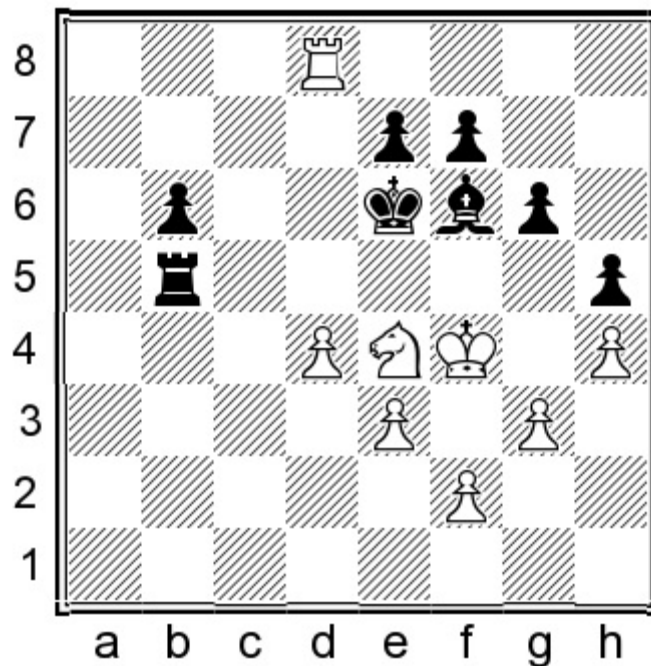
White overlooked the winning maneuver and eventually threw away most of the advantage.

Winning was 39.♖b8+ ♕d7 40.♖f8! ♕e6 41.♖d8!.



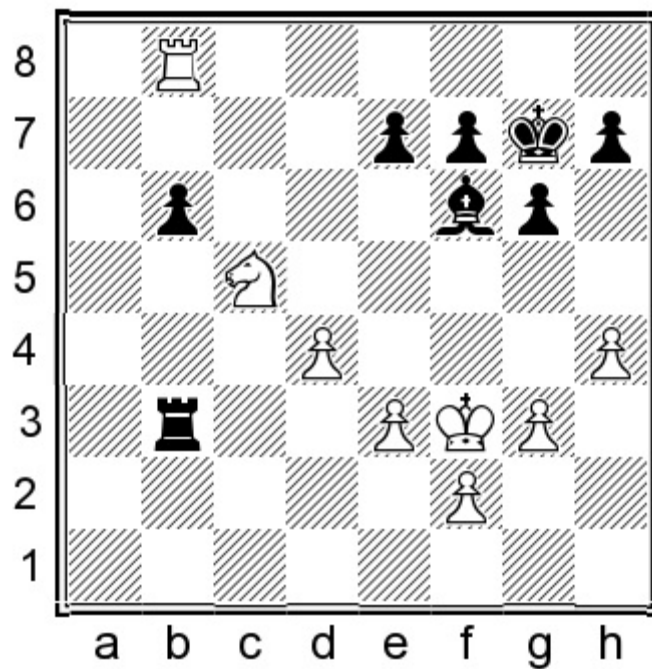
Position after: 41. ♖d8!

Unexpectedly, in the center of the board, White woves a mating net around the black king. So, as not to get checkmated, Black is forced to give up the exchange and White obtains a technically won endgame. 41...h5 [41...♖b3 42.♔f4 ♖d3 43.♖b8 ♖b3 44.♘c5+ bxc5 45.♖xb3 cxd4 46.e4+-] 42.♔f4 ♖b5



Position after: 42... ♖b5

43.♘c5+ [43.♘c3!+-] 43...♖xc5 [43...bxc5?? 44.d5#] 44.dxc5 bxc5 45.♔e4 ♗c3 46.♖a8+-
 39.♔f4?! ♔f8 40.♖b8+ ♔g7 41.♔f3 ♖b3 42.♘c5?!



Position after: 42. ♖c5?!

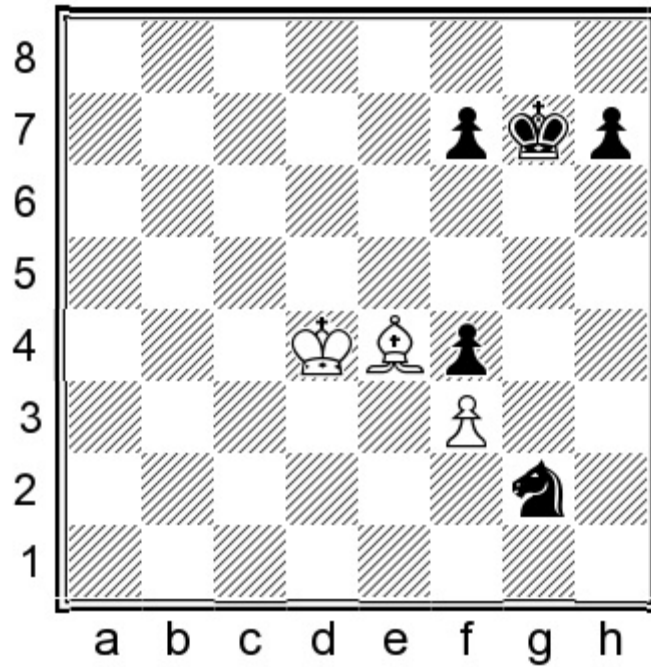
Spoiling the rest of the advantage.

42... ♜a3! 43. ♜xb6 ♔xd4 44. ♜b5

½-½ Rozum, I (2573) – Sjugirov, S (2654) Khanty-Mansiysk 2018.

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Dreev, A. – Illescas Cordoba, M.



■ Black is winning in one way only: how to proceed?

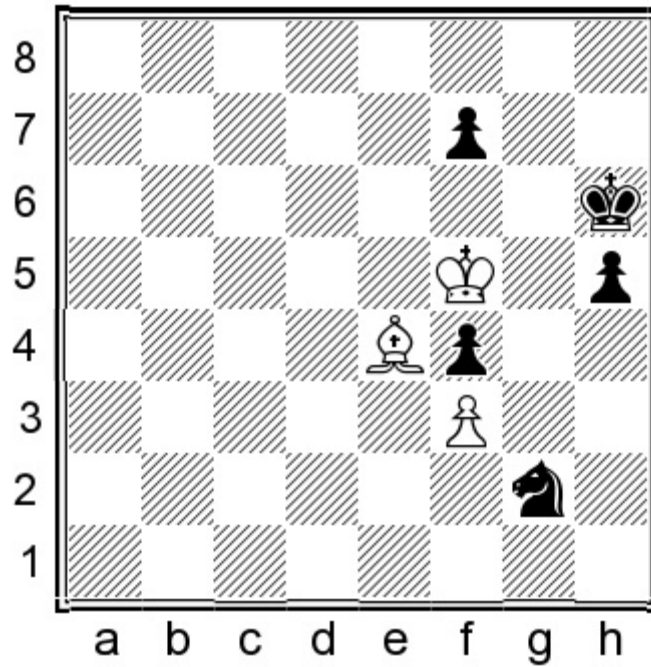
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60...f6!-+

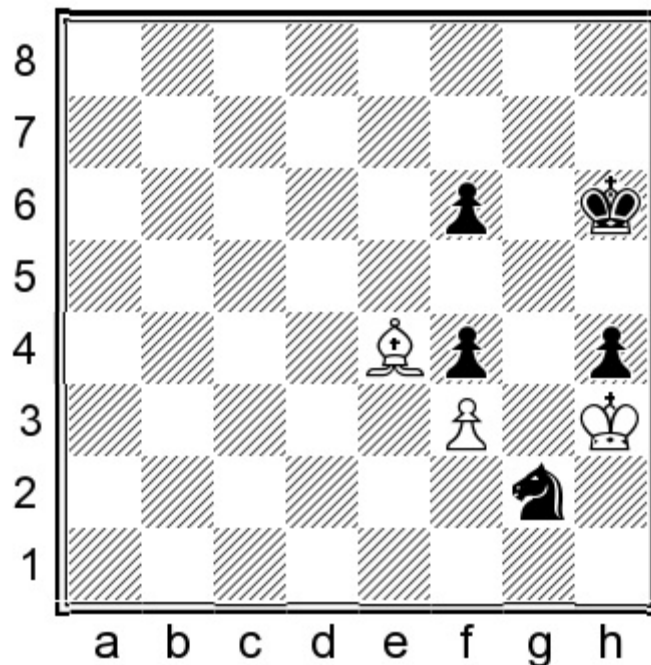
An easily winning prophylactic move. It is important to remove the e5-square from the white king.

A) 60...h5? 61.♔e5 ♔h6 62.♔f5!=



Position after: 62. ♔f5!=

Now Black cannot strengthen his position. 62...f6 [62...h4 63. ♖g4 f5+ 64. ♙xf5 ♜e3+ 65. ♗xh4 ♜xf5+ 66. ♗g4=] 63. ♙c6 ♗g7 64. ♙e8 ♗h6 65. ♙c6 ♜e1 66. ♙e4 h4 67. ♗g4 ♜g2 68. ♗h3=



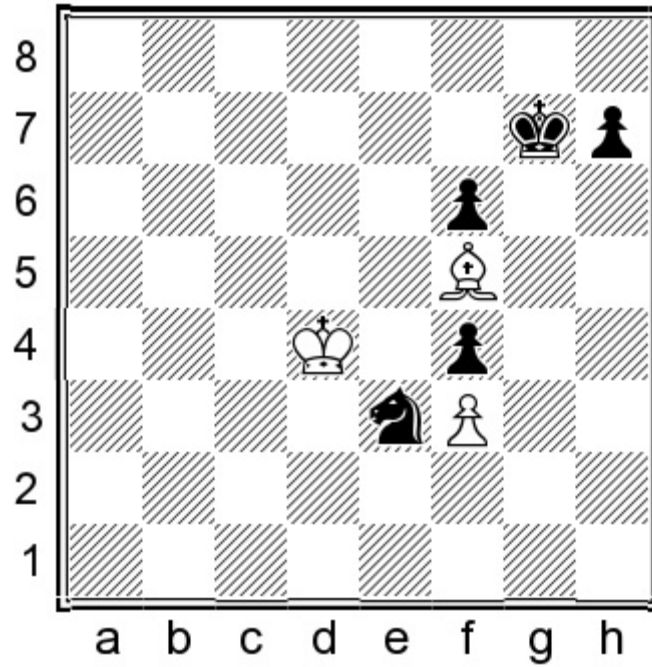
Position after: 68. ♗h3=

and soon after a draw was agreed: ½–½ (84) Dreev, A (2610) – Illescas Cordoba, M (2545) Logrono 1991.

B) 60...♜h4 61. ♗e5 ♜g6+ 62. ♗f5 ♗h6 63. ♗g4=

C) 60...♔h6 61.♕e5=

60...f6!-+ 61.♖f5 ♜e3



Position after: 61...♜e3

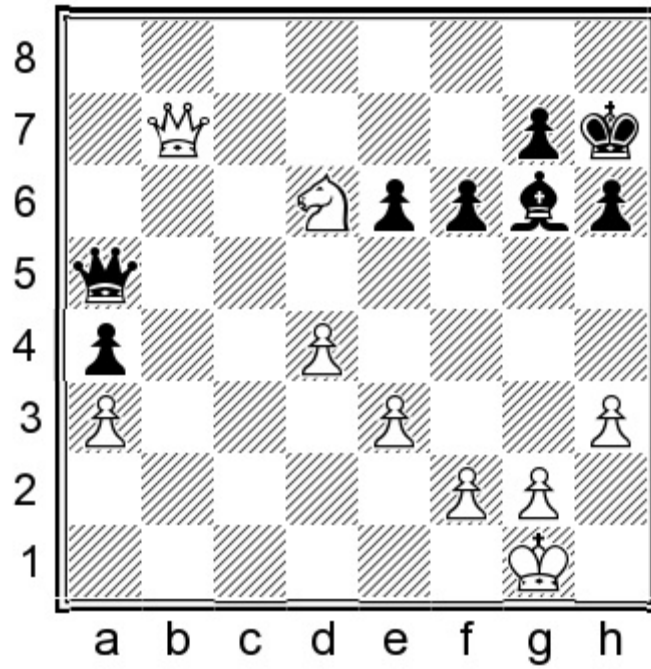
62.♖h3

62.♕e4 ♜xf5 63.♕xf5 h5 64.♕xf4 ♔g6-+

62...♔g6-+

12

Esipenko, A. – Leko, P.



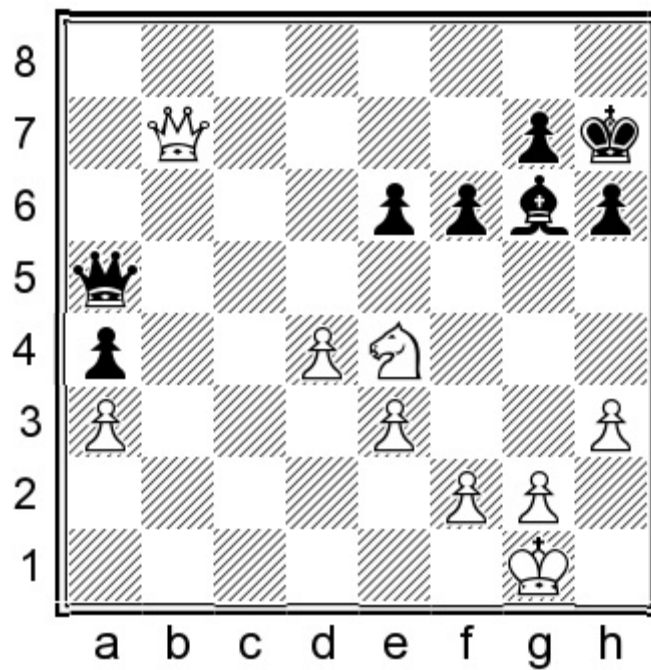
□ Find a decisive move to convert the extra pawn into a win.

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37. ♔b2?

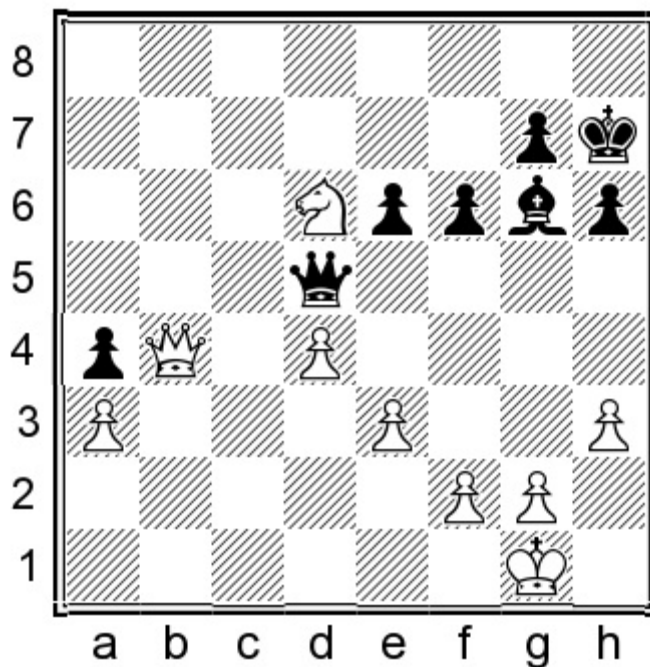
Winning was the simple 37. ♘e4!.



Position after: 37. ♖e4!

The white knight on d6 is beautifully situated, but there is nothing for him to do there. It was necessary to regroup as quickly as possible. 37... ♙xe4 38. ♚xe4+ f5 [38... ♜f5? obviously leads to a lost pawn endgame.] 39. ♜xe6 ♜e1+ 40. ♔h2 ♜xf2 41. d5 f4 42. ♜e4+-

37. ♜b2? ♜d5 38. ♜b4

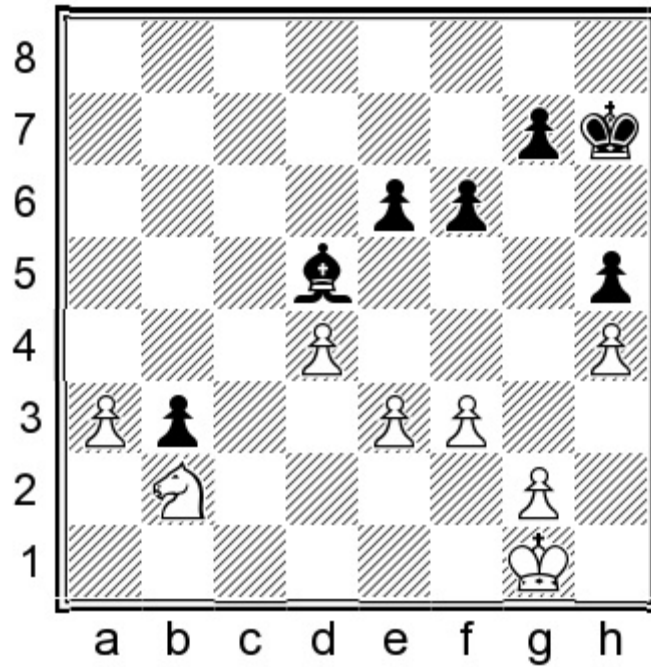


Position after: 38. ♜b4

And here Black cannot transfer the bishop in time.

38... ♙d3?!

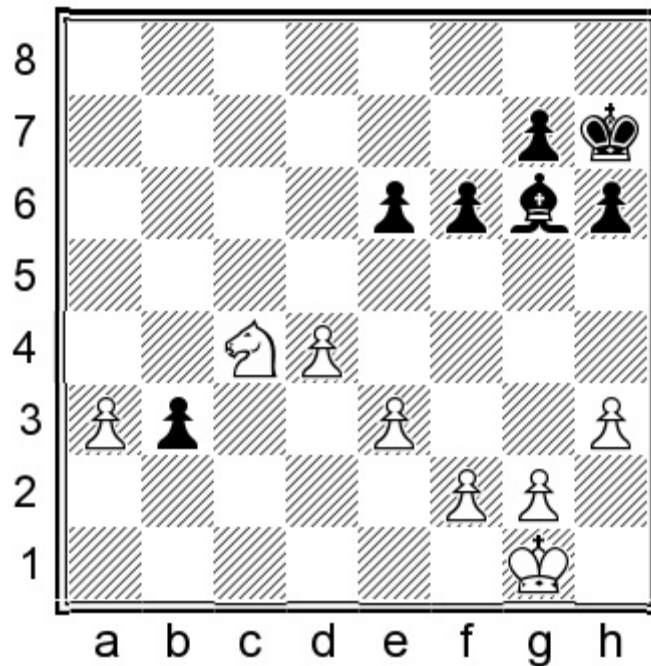
A) Correct was 38...h5!. Black wants to advance the pawn to h4, which will obviously complicate the conversion of the extra pawn for White. On the other hand, White can prevent this by playing 39.h4, when White could clearly win in the case of a transition into a queen endgame. [39. ♖c8 ♜b3 40. ♜c5 ♜d1+ 41. ♔h2 ♜d2= Δ 42. ♔g3? h4+!±; 39. ♖c4 ♜e4 40. ♜xa4 ♜b1+ 41. ♔h2 ♜a2± 42. ♜c6 ♜xf2 43. ♜xe6 ♜a2 44. ♜c6 h4±] 39... ♜b3! 40. ♜xb3 axb3 41. ♖c4 ♙e4 42. f3 ♙d5 43. ♖b2



Position after: 43. ♖b2

43...g5! Changing the relation of the h-pawns. 44.e4 ♕c6 45.g3 [45.a4 gxh4 46.a5 ♕b7=] 45...♙g6 46.♙f2 f5 47.♙e3 f4+ 48.♙f2 fxg3+ 49.♙xg3 gxh4+ 50.♙xh4 ♕b5=

B) In case of the immediate ≤ 38...♙b3 39.♙xb3 axb3 40.♖c4±



Position after: 40. ♖c4±

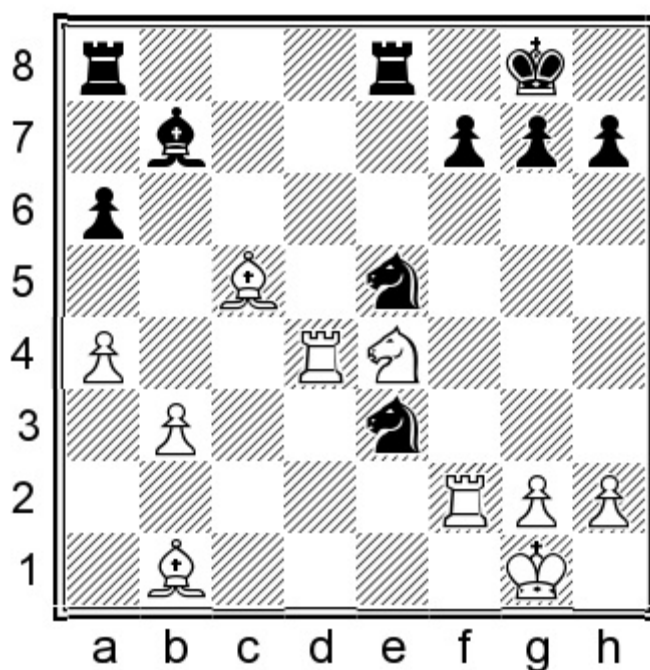
White's kingside is less vulnerable and he can therefore count on the aid of his king on the queenside.

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White's choice of moves here cannot be considered as very many, but the difference in strength between the two possible continuations is significant.

28. ♖xd4?

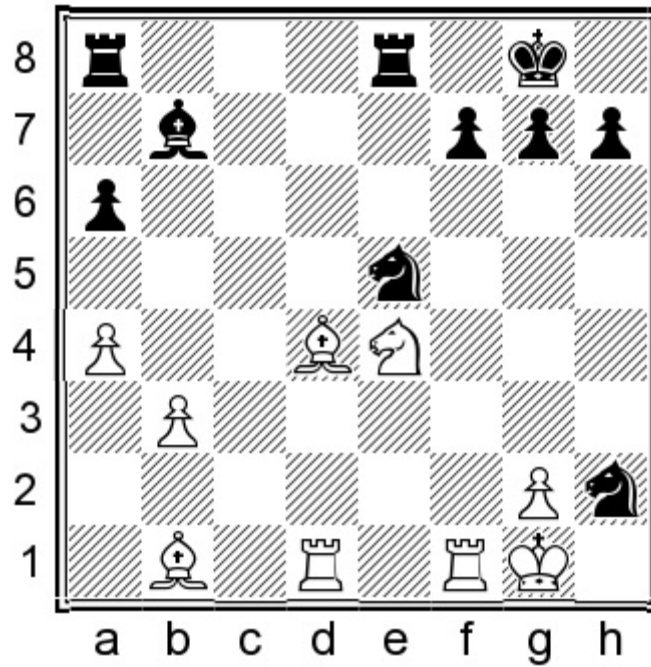
Correct was 28. ♖xd4!. White probably did not consider this move to be very solid. Indeed, after 28... ♗e3 the pieces are hanging, but if White coolly “keeps the thread” with 29. ♖f2!



Position after: 29. ♖f2!

it turns out that the attacks from the minor pieces are not that dangerous, and the threat of ♗e4–d6 may force Black to reconsider his life choices... For example: 29... ♗5g4 [29... ♗3g4 30. ♖f4±; 29... ♖ac8 30. b4±] 30. ♗d6 [30. ♖f4!±] 30... ♗xf2 31. ♗xf2 ♗d5 32. ♗xe8 ♖xe8 33. b4±.

28. ♖xd4? ♗xh2!



Position after: 28... Nc2!

White possibly forgot about this move.

29. Bf5?!

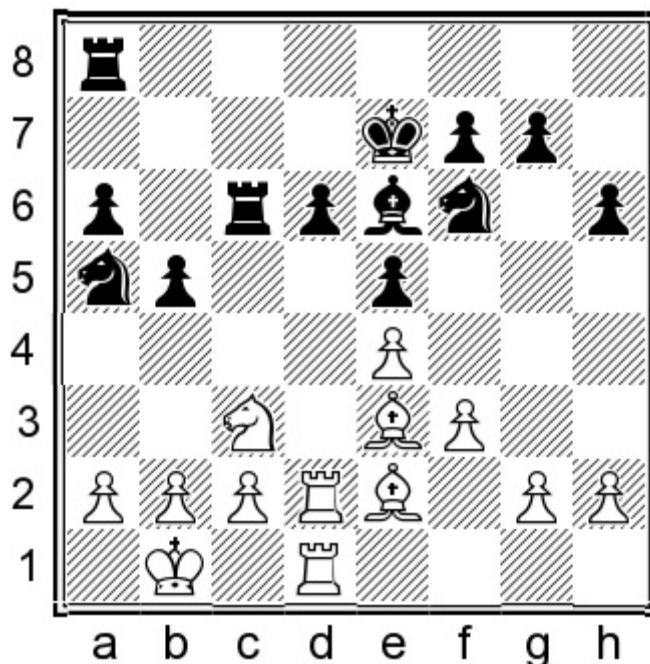
A) 1. Qxh2 Qxe4 2. Qxe4 Ng4+ 3. Qg3 Bxe4 4. Bf4 Bxf4 5. Qxf4 h5 6. b4 f6=

B) 1. Bf4 Ng6 2. Bxf7 Qxf7 3. Nd6+ Qg8 4. Qxh2 Qd5 5. Nxe8 Bxe8=

29... Bc8

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Karthikeyan, M. – Libiszewski, F.



□ How can White achieve a clear advantage?

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17. ♖d5+!

In the game, White was unable to hinder the appearance of the black knight on c4 and the position quickly became equal. 17.g4 ♜c4 18.♙xc4 ♞xc4 19.♞e1 b4= 1-0 (37) Karthikeyan, M (2570) – Libiszewski, F (2481) Gibraltar 2019.

17. ♖d5+! ♞xd5 18.exd5 ♞cc8 19.b3!

It is important not to allow the black knight to c4. It is precisely for this reason that White should have proceeded to exchange his knight and cause alterations to the pawn structure. Weakening the c3-square does not play a significant role here as the knight cannot get there, and the rook will not stay there for long.

19... ♜b7

19... ♞c3 20.♙f2 ♞ac8 21.♞c1 ♜b7 22.♙b2 g5 23.♞dd1 h5 24.♙d3±

20.a3

Played in order to block the potential advance of the b-pawn.

Restricting the movement of the knight by means of 20.b4? is premature in view of 20...a5.

20...♞c5

20...♞h5 21.b4!±

21.g4±

Later on, White will strive to open up the game via the flanks, after which the pair of bishops and potential weakness of the queenside should give him an advantage.

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