

THE MODERN ENDGAME MANUAL

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Mastering basic
rook endgames



Table of Contents

[Key To Symbols](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Editorial Preface](#)

[Chapter 1 - Rook against pawns \(part 1\)](#)

[Chapter 1 - Rook against pawns \(part 2\)](#)

[Chapter 2 - Basic Endings: Rooks with one pawn](#)

[Chapter 3 - Useful manoeuvres](#)

[Chapter 4 - Technical problems with the edge pawn](#)

[Chapter 5 - Rook against two pawns](#)

[Chapter 6 - Methods](#)

[Chapter 7 - Activity of the pieces: The multifunctional rook](#)

[Chapter 8 - Placement of the Rooks](#)

[Chapter 9 - Exploitation of the weakness](#)

[Chapter 10 - Different tactics](#)

[Chapter 11 - Stalemate](#)

[Chapter 12 - Zugzwang](#)

[Chapter 13 - Transition into pawn endings](#)

[Chapter 14 - Transition into rook endings](#)

[Chapter 15 - Mistakes\(Part 1\)](#)

[Chapter 15 - Mistakes \(Part 2\)](#)

Table of Contents

Key To Symbols	5
Introduction	6
Editorial Preface	8
Chapter 1 - Rook against pawns (part 1)	9
Chapter 1 - Rook against pawns (part 2)	36
Chapter 2 - Basic Endings: Rooks with one pawn	64
Chapter 3 - Useful manoeuvres	93
Chapter 4 - Technical problems with the edge pawn	113
Chapter 5 - Rook against two pawns	152
Chapter 6 - Methods	198
Chapter 7 - Activity of the pieces: The multifunctional rook	238
Chapter 8 - Placement of the Rooks	274
Chapter 9 - Exploitation of the weakness	285
Chapter 10 - Different tactics	305
Chapter 11 - Stalemate	330
Chapter 15 - Mistakes(Part 1)	345
Chapter 15 - Mistakes (Part 2)	371

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Mastering basic rook endgames



Cover designer

Piotr Pielach

Typesetting

Piotr Pielach <www.i-press.pl>

First edition 2018 by Chess Evolution

Mastering basic rook endgames

Copyright © 2018 Chess Evolution

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN 978-615-80713-5-2

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Chess Evolution
2040 Budaors, Nyar utca 16, Magyarorszag

e-mail: info@chess-evolution.com

website: www.chess-evolution.com

Printed in Hungary

Key to Symbols used!

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
=	equality
∞	unclear position
±	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 an initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
△	better is
≤	worse is
N	novelty
+	check
#	mate
©	with compensation for the sacrificed material

Introduction

Everybody knows that rook endings are the most frequently seen among all endgames. In fact we can say that more than 60% of all endings are rook endings and the reason is simple: rooks generally enter the game much later than other pieces.

In endgames we have two kinds of positions:

1. Theoretical or basic positions which we must study from the basic books. This knowledge is essential; we simply must know them well. Of course at different stages players have to know different amounts of basic positions. Lets say that in the early years it is enough to know the Philidor position and basic rook against pawn positions. Ten every year a player has to constantly add new material to his knowledge;
2. Complicated positions from which we have to transfer into basic positions using different methods such as exchanges improvement of the king using the power of the passed pawns and so on.

Basics of Rook Endgames is a useful book as I'll try here to show the necessary mixture of basic positions and different important manoeuvres which are typical for rook endings.

We have a few great masters of rook endings to help us in particular the likes of Akiba Rubinstein and Vasily Smyslov. Throughout chess history many top specialists have developed the theory of rook endings the great Lucena Philidor and Tarrasch for example all contributed to the basic work. In the 20th Century the specialists Andre Cheron Nikolay Grigoryev and Nikolay Kopaev all made crucial researches to further their predecessors work. And this work is not yet complete we can mention great analyses of the most typical endings with 3 pawns against 3 on one rank plus one passed pawn on the other side.

In this series it is planned to publish a few other books on rook endings. There will be more detailed analyses of rook endings with different pawn configurations where we have special methods of both realization of the win and fighting for a draw. In our opinion extremely interesting will be the book on the Top Rook Ending Specialists best achievements. And the final book will be a selection of Great Rook Studies which will include rook ending tests.

There have been some excellent books published on rook endgames already the classic Smyslov & Levenfish book for example or Kopaevs book in the Averbakh series and more recently Dvoretskys books. Plus we have the Encyclopaedia of Endgames where rook endings are selected and divided scientifically.

So here we will try not to repeat most of the material from other books and instead try to concentrate on basic and practical knowledge. And we will try sometimes to entertain the reader with unusual and brilliant solutions. In this first book we will attempt to give the reader the basic ideas required to play rook endgames and also introduce the most classical methods of play.

But there were a lot of mistakes committed even in the classics ! And these mistakes are extremely instructive as it is necessary to understand the difference between right and wrong decisions. In endgames we usually have two ways correct and incorrect and this is the main difference between the endgame and the middlegame.

The main idea of our book was to produce some sort of practical guide to rook endings including some necessary basic knowledge. We want to stress that with basic positions we dont study all of them at the same time. In the first year or so trainers usually just teach the Philidor method plus a few important positions with a single pawn especially with rook pawns (a and h pawns) as well as pawns on the ffh or sixth ranks. By the second year pupils have to know the Lucena position as well as some rook against pawns manoeuvres. Then they have to study different methods and especially activity. So in practice just step by step as it would be useless to study all the basic positions at the same time; it is necessary to study them on demand. And the most complicated methods such as the Vancura method can be studied by players around 1800 Elo strength.

I have to say that players dont study endgames very well because trainers dont teach the endgame properly! Its not just that they dont care about the step by step method. As we know from school from time to time it is necessary to refresh our knowledge and to repeat certain more difficult positions. However players just endlessly repeat opening variations leaving the endgame out completely and this is punished terribly by the modern shortened time control when players usually have just 30 seconds for a move come the endgame. The sheer quantity of mistakes even among grandmasters is constantly increasing proportional to the smaller amount of time which players spend on studying the endgame books.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

In this series of eight endgame books, FIDE Senior Trainer Adrian Mikhalchishin, FIDE Senior Trainer Efstratios Grivas and IGM Csaba Balogh combine their experience as trainers and as practical players to create something very special.

The authors aim for very understandable explanations of every endgame position in each book.

The specification:

- 1st book — Queen and pawn endgames.
- 2–3 — Minor piece endgames (bishop and knight endgames).
- 4–5 — These will feature the fight between different material constellations.
- 6–8 — These books are going to focus on the most common endgames, which are of course rook endings.

The main concept of each book is to provide theoretical knowledge which can be used in practical games. It means the focus of the books will be on those positions which are most likely to occur — and the practical playing of them.

That's why you will firstly meet the theoretical part, and secondly the practical examples of how games actually continued in a particular endgame.

Yes, you're right, you won't find too many very complicated studies, stunning manoeuvres or rarely-appearing positions — and there is a simple reason why not!

How often do we see positions, for example two knights vs pawn where one knight is blocking the pawn and the other one tries to get the king to the corner before releasing the second knight for the mate? Or constellations with crazy material on the board? This might happen in one game out of 100! You could spend hundreds of hours working on something that might bring you “only” a single point more out of 100 games!

Our approach is quite different: let's make more points in the other 99 games! And who knows, we might also be lucky in the remaining one, but actually, statistically, it would almost not matter.

“The Modern Endgame Manual” will make an expert out of you in most of the endgames which are going to appear in your long career as a chess player!

CHAPTER 1

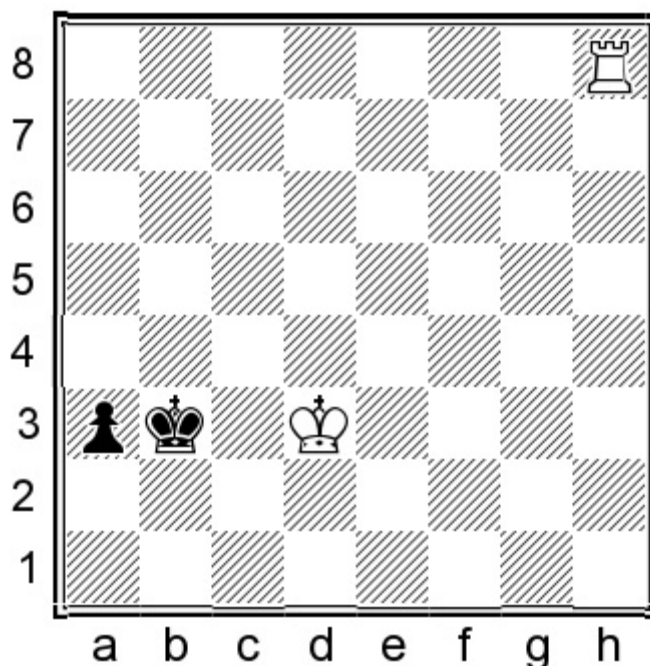
ROOK AGAINST PAWNS

To start talking about rook endings we must consider endgames where only one rook is on the board. The most typical rook endings are those with one passed pawn somewhere and an equal amount of pawns on the other flank. The stronger side tries to promote the passed pawn and sacrifices all the other pawns. He usually succeeds in promoting, and wins the opponent's rook, but during this time the opponent starts running with his own pawn or pawns. These endgames are very interesting and also extremely tricky.

There are a few basic theoretical positions which everybody has to know. In these endings the basic positions are achieved after a few moves but still matters are not so easy or obvious, as we will see from the practical games in this book. The most important feature of this kind of endgame is the fight between the kings, and the so-called 'bodycheck' method. We can say that this method comes from pawn endings, and we can even find triangulations here among the rook endings. The most important approach to fighting in such instances is the route of the king around forbidden squares; those which are under the control of the opposing king.

1 Basic

The most basic things we must consider are positions with one pawn against rook. The side with the rook must try to bring his king as close to the pawn as possible and the rook usually tries to cut-off the opponent's king, if it is possible. The weaker side must try to escape these dangers and to use a few important basic ideas, such as stalemate.



1...♔b2!

Losing is 1...a2? resulting in a basic lost position 2.♖b8+ ♔a3 3.♕c2 a1=♙+ 4.♕c3 ♔a2 5.♖b7 ♕a3 6.♖a7#

1...♕b2! 2.♖b8+

2.♖h2+ ♕b3 (2...♕c1?? 3.♕c3)

2...♕c1 3.♖a8 ♕b2 4.♕d2 a2 5.♖b8+ ♕a1!

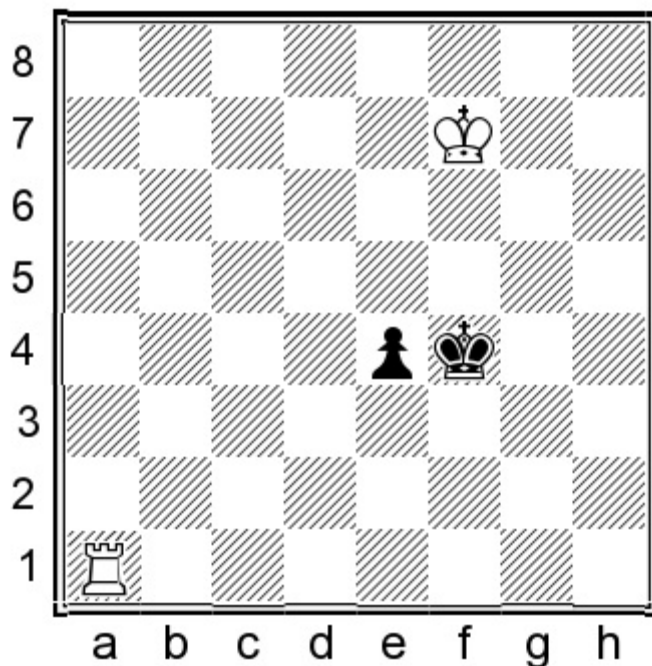
Stalemate is the 'classical' defence here.

A loss results from entering the previously-seen basic position: 5...♕a3? 6.♕c2 a1=♙+ 7.♕c3 ♔a2 8.♖b7

6.♕c2 1/2

2

M. Euwe, 1934

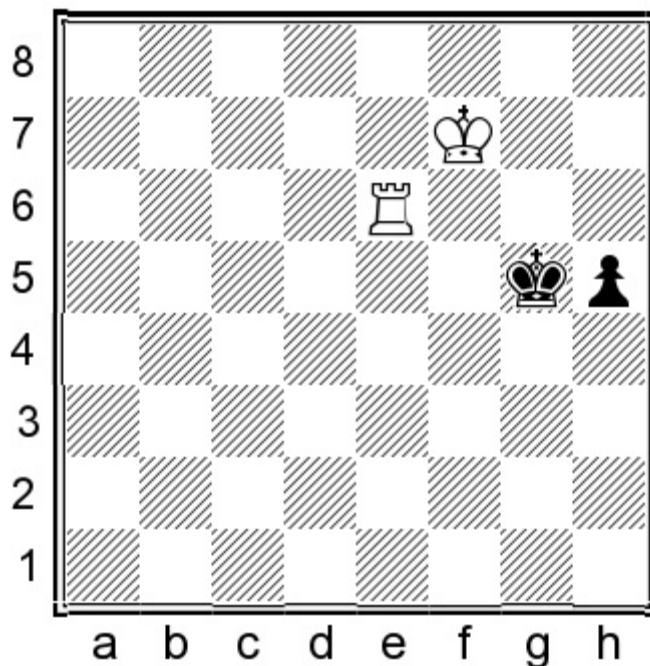


Here the king must run around the black king and pawn to avoid being bodychecked. This manoeuvre of one king blocking the other's approach is known by the ice hockey term BODY-CHECK.

1.♕e6! e3 2.♕d5 e2 3.♕d4 ♕f3 4.♕d3 ♕f2 5.♕d2 1-0

3

M. Euwe, 1934



Here White must establish coordination and cooperation between his king and rook to chase down the black king and pawn.

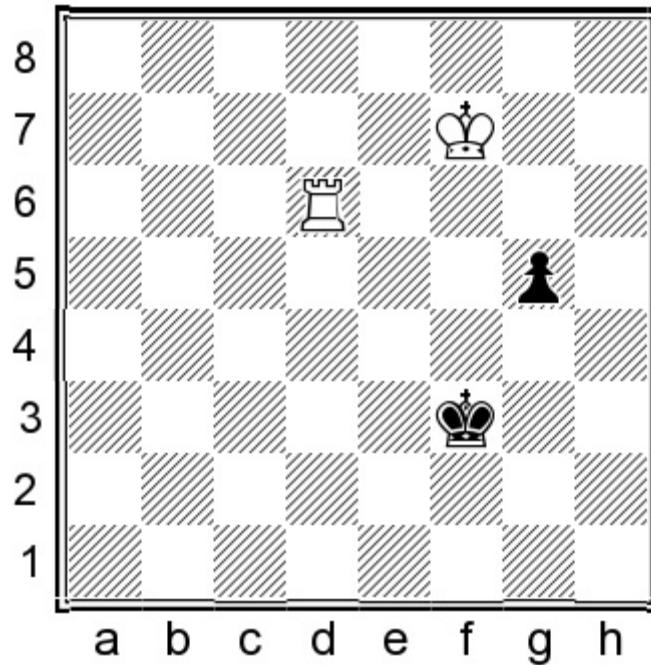
1.♞e5+ ♔g4 2.♔g6 h4 3.♞e4+ ♔g3 4.♔g5 h3 5.♞e3+ ♔g2 6.♔g4 h2 7.♞e2+ ♔g1 8.♔g3 h1=♘+
9.♔f3

Once again we reach the now-known basic position.

1-0

4

M. Euwe, Shakhmaty, 1934



1.♖f6+!

A very important and typical check, which forces the opponent's king backwards and allows our own king to win enough time to come around the pawn.

Wrong was 1.♔g6 g4 2.♔h5 g3 3.♔h4 g2 4.♖f6+ ♔e2 5.♖g6 ♔f2

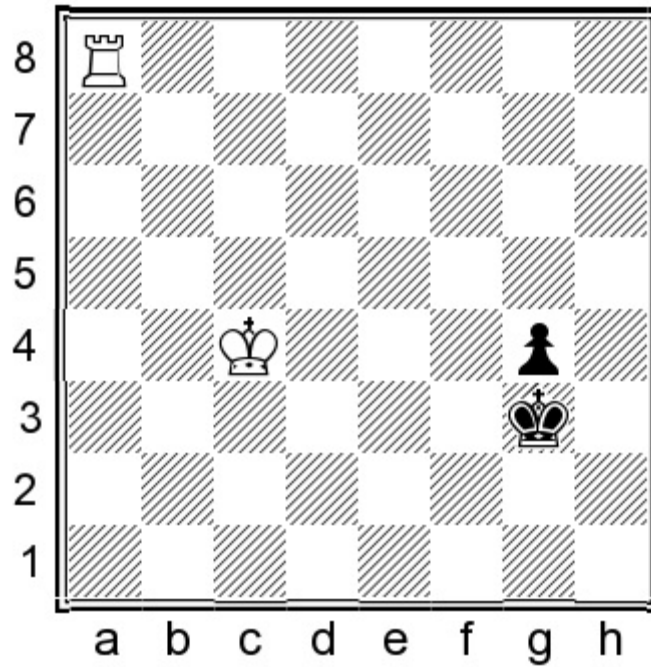
1.♖f6+! ♔e3 2.♖g6 ♔f4 3.♔g7!

The king can enter the game only on the very narrow path of the h-file, once more avoiding the 'bodycheck' zone on the other side of the pawn.

3...g4 4.♔h6 g3 5.♔h5 ♔f3 6.♔h4 g2 7.♔h3 1-0

**5
V. Korchnoi
E. Kengis
Bern, 1996**

Now let us demonstrate how these basic positions are achieved in grandmaster's games.



1...♔f2 2.♖f8+!

Again the check is a very important tool, winning a tempo to come closer with the king.

Leading only to a draw was 2.♔d3? g3 3.♖f8+ ♔e1=

2...♔e2 3.♖g8 ♔f3 4.♔d3 g3 5.♖f8+ ♔g2 6.♔e2 ♔h2 7.♔f3

A quicker win was 7.♖g8 g2 8.♔f2 ♔h1 9.♖h8#

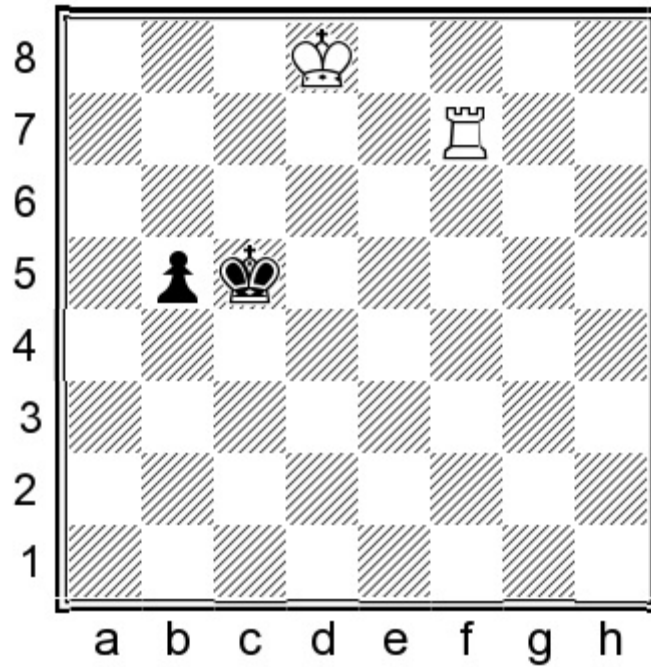
7...g2 8.♖h8+ ♔g1 9.♖g8 ♔h1 10.♔f2!

Avoiding the stalemate option of 10.♖xg2??

10...♔h2 11.♖xg2+ 1-0

6

M. Botwinnik, 1941



The main problem in such endings is finding a way for the king to help in the fight against the passed pawn.

1. ♖b7! b4 2. ♔c7

Now, because of the zugzwang, Black must allow the white king to come around the pawn, thereby avoiding the bodycheck defence.

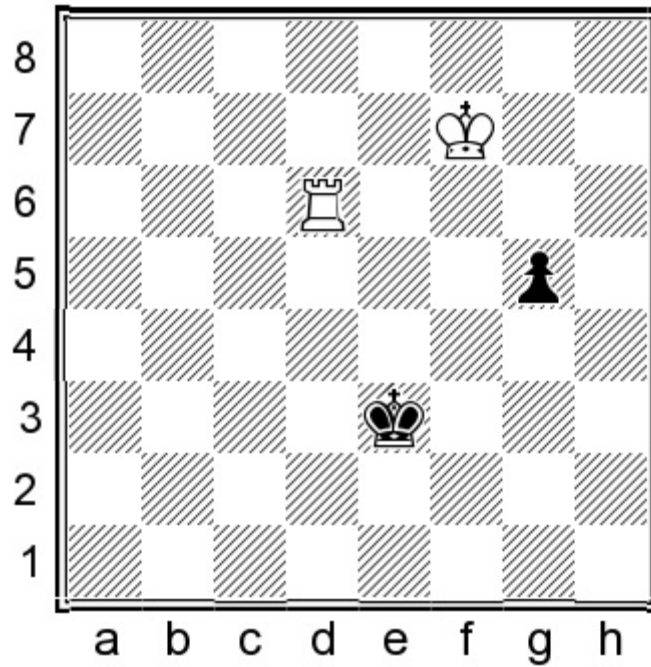
2... ♔c4 3. ♔b6

White successfully completed the mission and catches the pawn.

3... b3 4. ♔a5 ♔c3 5. ♔a4 b2 6. ♔a3 1-0

7

A. Eisenstadt, 1950



1. ♖g6!

Once more showing how important it is to turn the opponent's king back.

1... ♔f4 2. ♔g7!

To avoid the bodycheck it is necessary to choose a very long road. After this move the rest is easy.

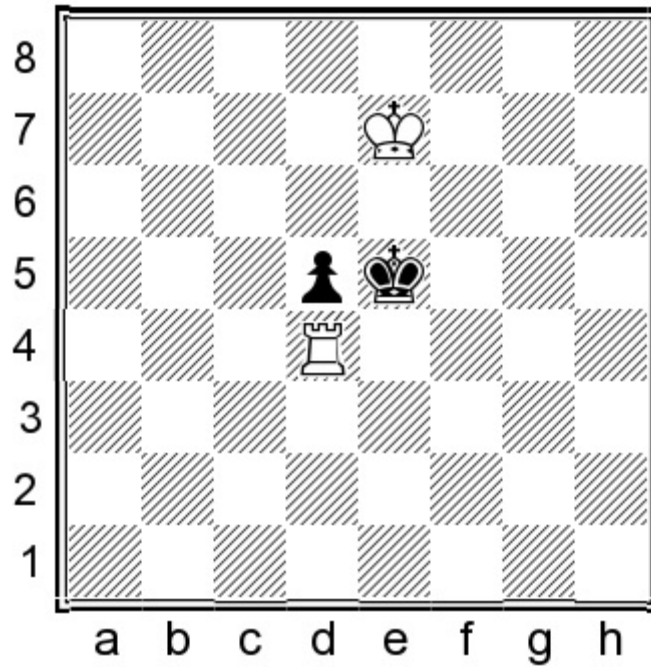
2... ♗g4 3. ♔h6 ♗g3 4. ♔h5 ♔f3 5. ♔h4 ♗g2 6. ♔h3

and the pawn is finally caught.

1-0

8

R. Reti, 1928



Here it is necessary to see where Black's king will go, and then White's king will choose whichever route avoids the bodycheck.

1.♖d2!

It was also possible to do it slightly differently: 1.♖d3 d4 2.♖d1.

1.♖d2! d4 2.♖d1!

White creates a decisive zugzwang.

2...♔e4

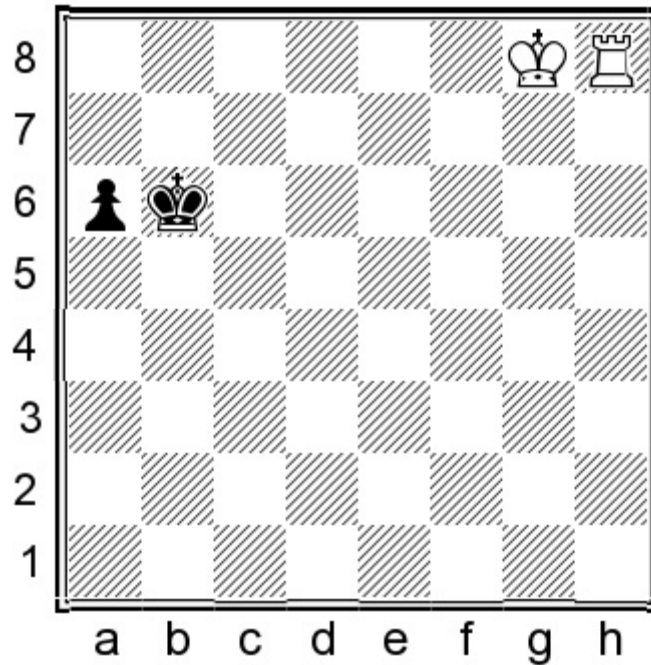
Heading to the other side does not work either:

2...♔d5 3.♔d7 ♔c4 4.♔e6 d3 5.♔e5 ♔c3 6.♔e4 d2 7.♔e3

3.♔d6+- 1-0

9

Basic



The main defensive idea is to avoid a bodycheck by the opponent's king, and also to avoid being cut-off by the rook!

1...♔c5

1...a5 2.♖h5! The classical 'cutting' of the king:

1...♔b5 2.♔f7 a5 3.♔e6 a4 4.♔d5 ♔b4 5.♔d4 a3 6.♖b8+ ♔a4 7.♔c3

1...♔c5 2.♔f7 a5 3.♔e6 a4 4.♔e5 a3 5.♖a8 ♔b4 6.♔d4 ♔b3 7.♔d3 ♔b2 8.♖b8+

Stalemate helps out in the variation 8.♔d2 a2 9.♖b8+ ♔a1

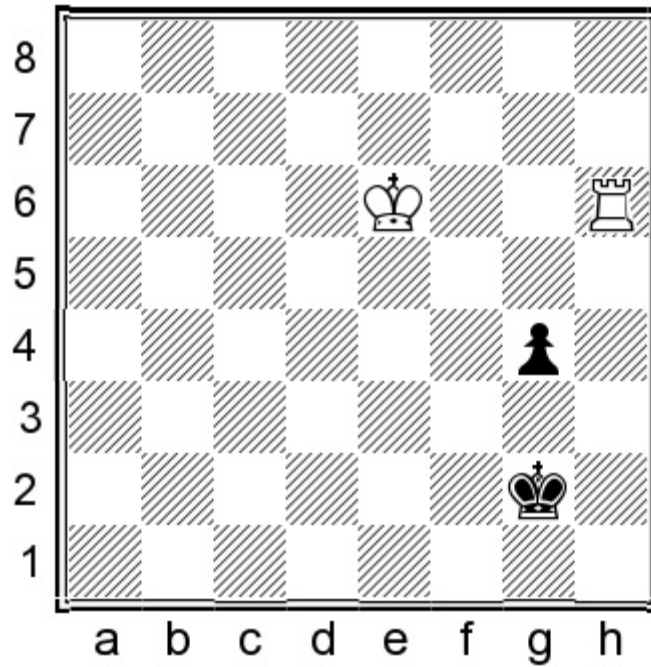
8...♔c1! 9.♔c3 a2 10.♖a8 ♔b1 1/2

10

A. Vaulin

V. Gashimov

Swidnica Open, 1999



70.♔f5?

The only way to win was to prevent Black's king coming to the f-file:

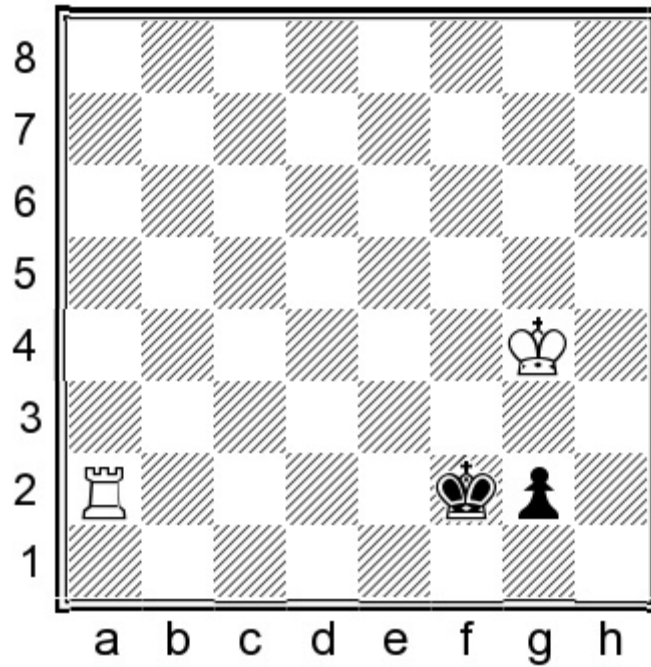
70.♖f6!! g3 71.♔e5 ♔h2 72.♔f4 g2 73.♞h6+ ♔g1 74.♔g3 ♔f1 75.♞f6+ ♔g1 76.♞f8 ♔h1 77.♞h8+ ♔g1 78.♞h2

70.♔f5? ♔f3!

Bodycheck!

But not 70...g3?? 71.♔g4 ♔f2 72.♞f6+

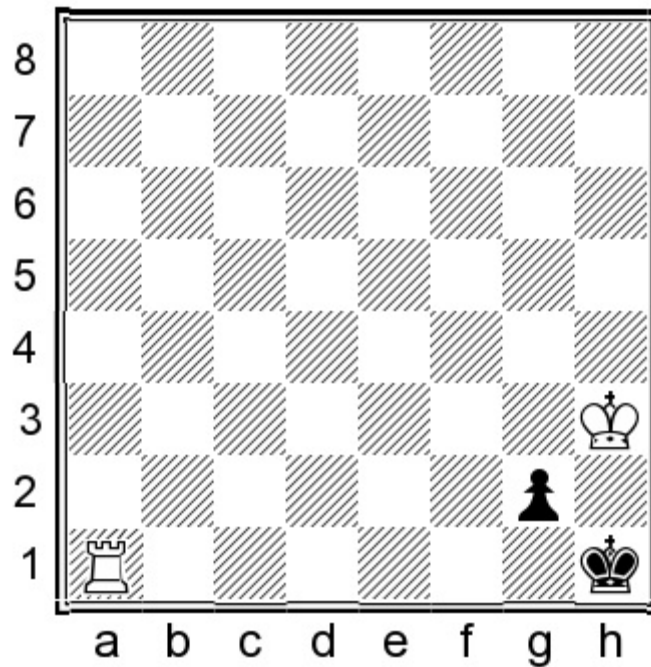
71.♞a6 g3 72.♞a3+ ♔f2 73.♔g4 g2 74.♞a2+



74...♔g1!

Gashimov correctly does not want to suffer the rook against knight ending: 74...♔f1 75.♔f3 g1=♘+ 76.♔e3 ♘h3 and instead correctly plays for stalemate.

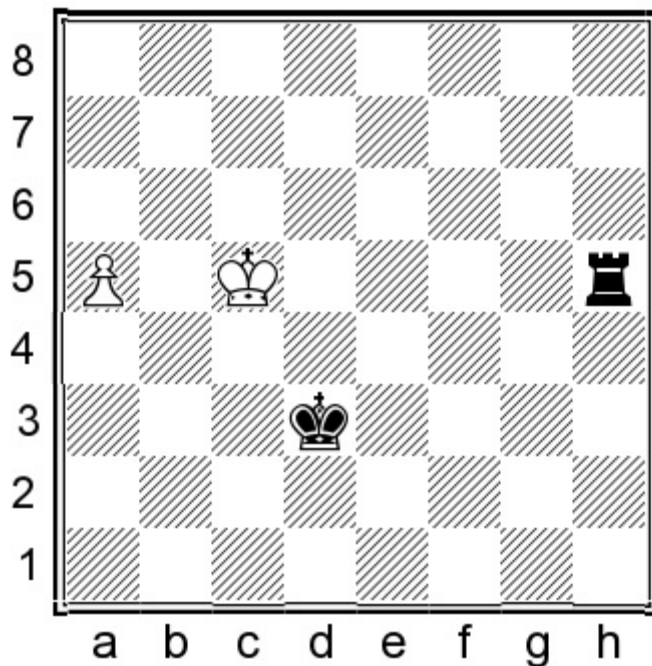
75.♞a6 ♔f2 76.♞a2+ ♔g1 77.♔h3 ♔h1 78.♞a1+



78.♞xg2

78...g1=♚ 79.♞xg1+ 1/2

11
 Urmancheev
 Podolsky
 USSR, 1972

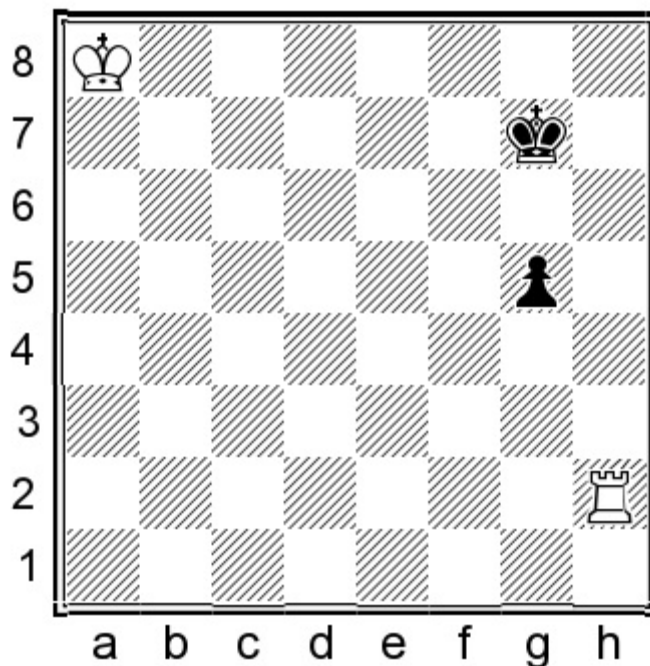


1.♔b6?

Automatic... and wrong! This allows his opponent's king to come closer. The correct way was to block it with 1.♔b4!! Blocking the Black King and winning time to advance his pawn. 1...♔d4 2.a6 ♔d5 3.a7 ♖h8 4.♔b5=

1.♔b6? ♔c4 2.a6 ♖h6+ 3.♔b7 ♔b5 4.a7 ♖h7+ 5.♔b8 ♔b6 6.a8=♖+ ♔c6 7.♔c8 ♖h8# 0-1

12
 K. Lerner
 J. Dorfman
 Tashkent, 1980



The winning move is in reality a prophylactic — preventing the bodycheck from his opponent's king.

19.♖f2!!

Wrong was immediately bringing the king back with 19.♔b7 ♔f6 20.♔c6 ♔e5! with bodycheck and a theoretical draw. (20...g4? 21.♔d5 ♔f5 22.♖f2+ ♔g5 23.♔e4 g3 24.♖f8) 21.♖e2+ ♔f4 22.♔d5 g4 23.♔d4 g3 24.♔d3 (24.♖e8 g2) 24...♔f3 25.♖e8 g2

19.♖f2!! ♔g6 20.♔b7 g4

Heading around the pawn is useless as White's king travels very quickly: 20...♔h5 21.♔c6 ♔h4 22.♔d5 g4 23.♖f8 g3 24.♖g8 ♔h3 25.♔e4 g2 26.♔f3

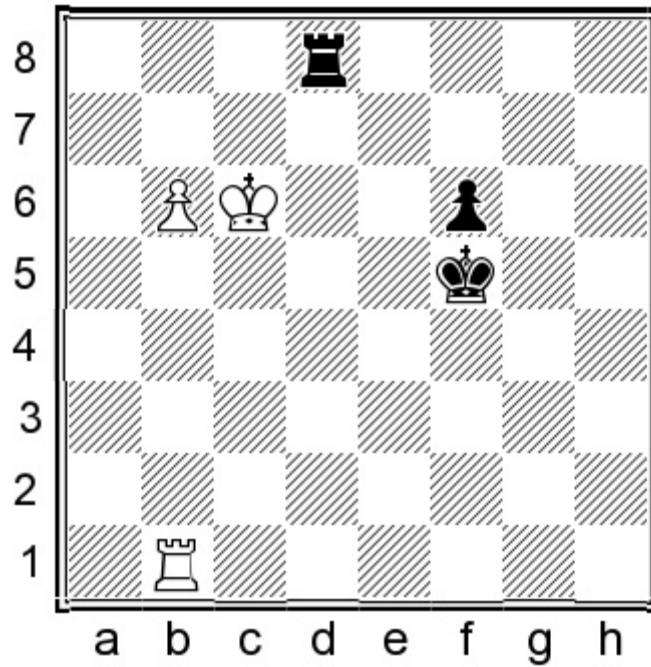
21.♔c6 ♔g5 22.♔d5 g3 23.♖f8 ♔g4 24.♔e4 g2 25.♖g8+ ♔h3 26.♔f3 1-0

13

A. Alekhine

E. Bogoljubow

Wch-GER\NLD, 1929



Even the greats from the 'classics' did not perform the bodycheck correctly!

70...♔g4?

The only drawing path was 70...♕e4! Black prepares for the bodycheck 71.b7 f5 72.b8=♚ ♖xb8 73.♖xb8 f4 74.♗e8+ ♔d4 75.♗f8 ♕e3 76.♔d5 f3 77.♔c4 f2 78.♔c3 ♕e2=

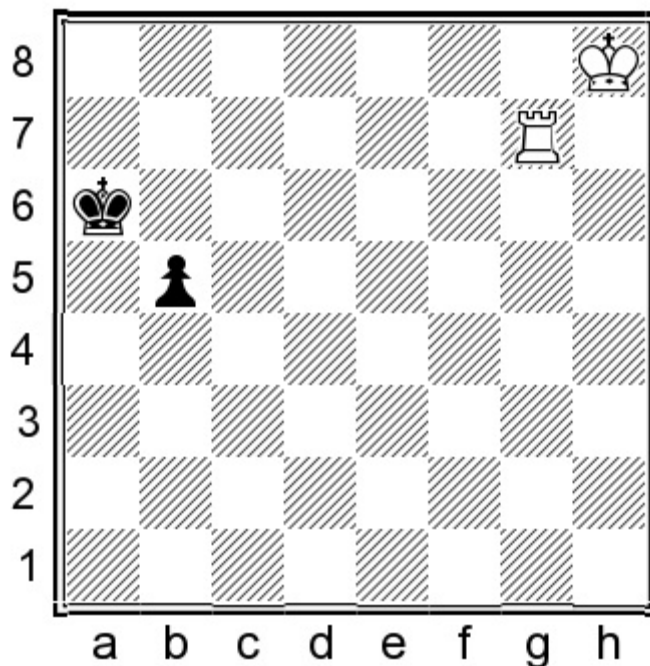
70...♔g4? 71.b7 f5 72.b8=♚ ♖xb8 73.♖xb8 f4 74.♔d5 f3 75.♔e4 f2 76.♗f8 ♔g3 77.♔e3 1-0

14

I. Sipos

M. Stankovic

TCh-Hungary, 2017



55.♠g5??

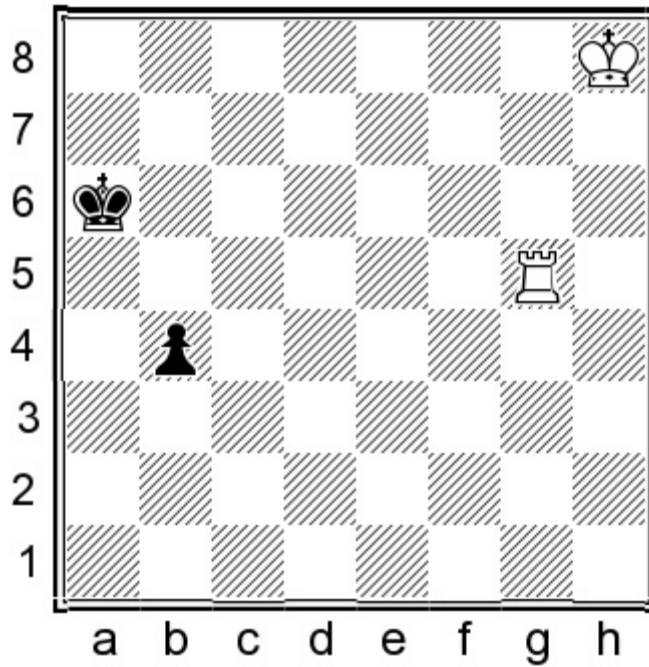
White had two winning options and one drawing approach; unfortunately he chose the last of these!

One route to victory was to perform a ‘cutting’ as we have seen previously: 55.♠c7 ♔b6 56.♠c8 b4 57.♔g7 ♔b5 58.♔f6 b3 59.♔e5 ♔b4 60.♔d4.

The second was to start running with the king: 55.♔h7 ♔a5 56.♔g6 b4 57.♔f5 ♔a4 58.♔e4 b3 59.♔d3 ♔a3 60.♠b7 b2 61.♔c2

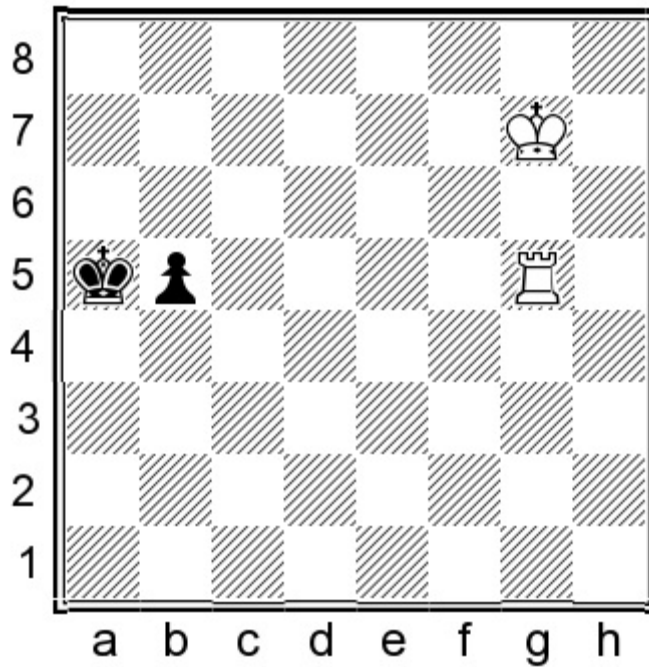
55.♠g5?? ♔a5

After the huge mistake 55...b4?? Black’s king will be cut off forever.



56.♔g7 b3 57.♖g3! b2 58.♞b3 and the black king cannot support his own pawn.

56.♔g7



56...♔a4??

Black avoids blocking his pawn...and loses the game!

He should have played 56...♔b4! 57.♔f6 ♔c4 keeping the enemy king at a distance — bodycheck!

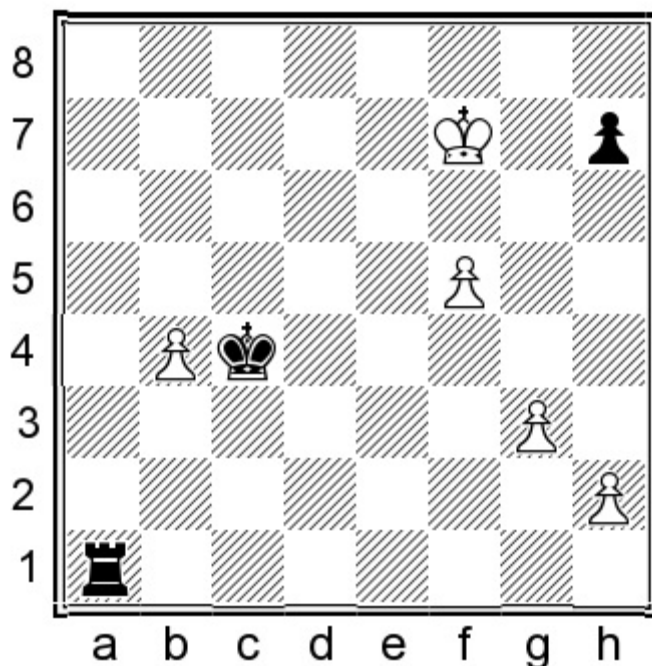
57.♔f6 b4 58.♔e5 b3 59.♔d4 b2 60.♞g1 ♔b3 61.♔d3 1-0

15

A. Mikhalchishin

Z. Azmaiparashvili

Tbilisi, 1980



11. ♖e6!

It is necessary to stop the opponent's king at any price... and immediately!

Losing was the natural-looking 11.f6 ♔d5 12.♔g8 ♖a8+ 13.♔xh7 ♔e6 14.♔g7 ♖a7+ 15.♔g6 ♖f7;

11.f6 ♔d5 12.♔g7 (12.♔g8 ♖a8+ 13.♔xh7 ♔e6 14.♔g7 ♖a7+ 15.♔g6 ♖f7) 12...♔e6 13.f7 ♖a7;

11.♔g7 ♖a7+ 12.♔g8 ♔d5 13.f6 ♔e6

11.♔e6! ♖e1+

If the other check, 11...♖a6+, then 12.♔e5!= (12.♔e7? ♔d5 13.f6 ♖a7+ 14.♔e8 ♔e6) 12...♖a8 13.f6

12.♔d6 ♖f1 13.♔e6 1/2

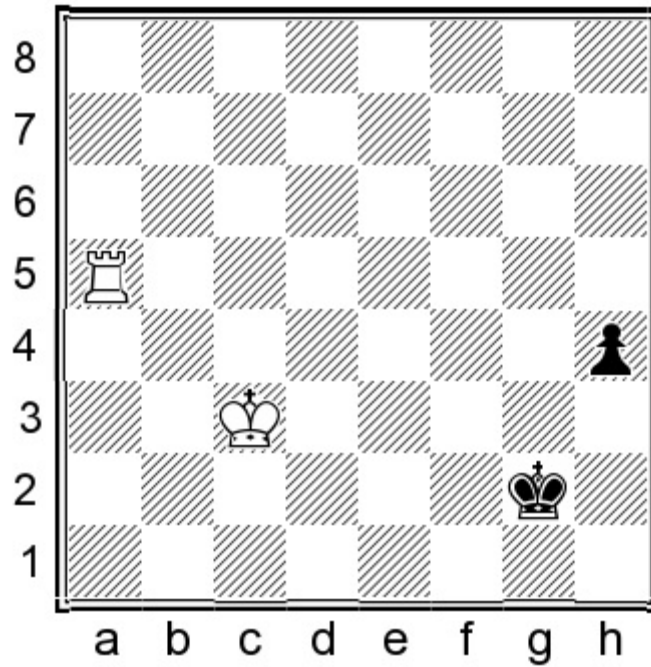
16

F. Marshall

O. Duras

San Sebastian, 1912

Nobody is immune to mistakes, errors which are in any case very instructive. Even legends of the game missed the correct procedure to fend off the opponent's king.



53.♔d2??

The classical winning method is to win a tempo with a check, and it must be conducted immediately:

53.♞g5+ ♔f3 54.♞h5 ♔g3 55.♔d2 h3 56.♔e2 ♔g2 57.♞g5+ ♔h1 58.♔f3 ♔h2 59.♞a5

53.♔d2?? h3 54.♔e2 h2 55.♞g5+ ♔h1! 1/2

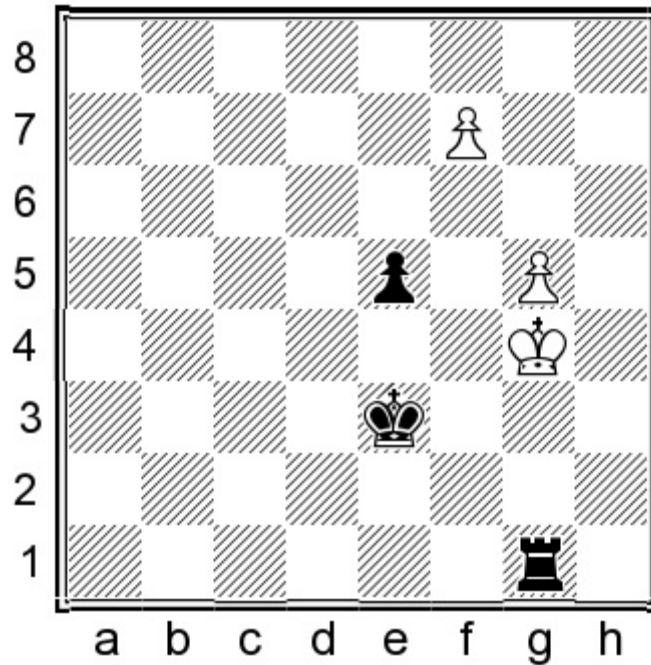
Now White has found himself in a basic — and for him wrong — position, where the opponent saves the game with stalemate.

17

A. Mista

D. Navara

Czech Republic, 2012



52.♔f5?

Correct was to avoid losing the f7-pawn with 52.♔h3 ♖f1 53.g6.

52.♔f5? ♖f1+ 53.♔e6 ♖xf7!

53...e4? 54.g6

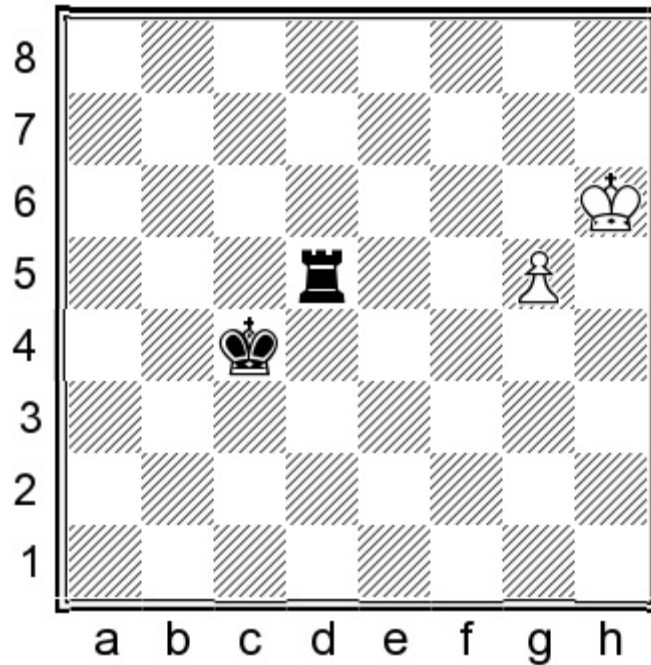
54.♔xf7 e4 55.g6 ♔f2 56.g7 e3 57.g8=♚ e2

and we have reached a very special basic position from queen endings, where the unfortunate position of White's king prevents a check on the f-file.

58.♚e8 e1=♚ 59.♚xe1+ ♔xe1 1/2

18
V. Sveshnikov
E. Grinberg
Riga, 2017

In the endgame there are often two serious options, and the choice of the correct way is sometimes not so easy.



90...♖d2??

The wrong use of the rook to cut off the opposing king.

Black could win simply with 90...♖d8! 91.♔g7 (91.g6 ♔d5 92.g7 ♔e6 93.♔h7 ♔f7) 91...♔d5 92.♔f6 ♔d6 93.g6 ♖f8+ 94.♔g5 ♔e7

90...♖d2?? 91.g6 ♖h2+ 92.♔g5 ♔d5 93.g7

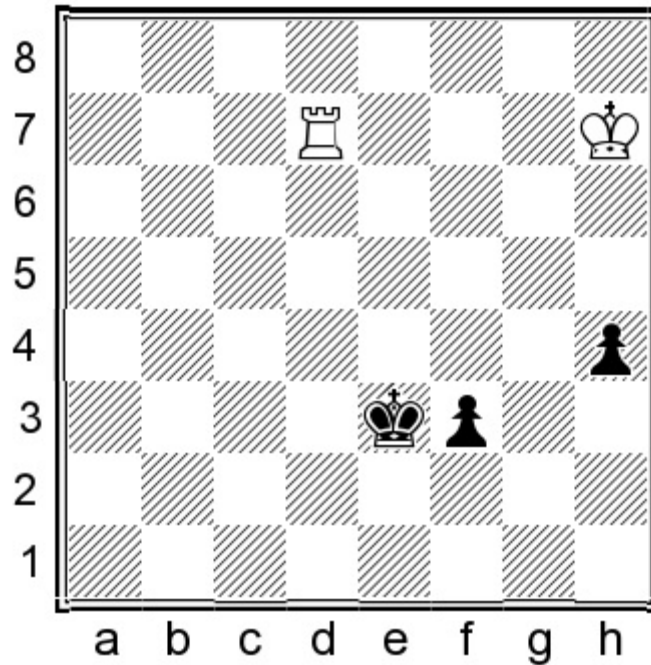
Now the draw is inevitable.

93...♔e5 94.♔g6 ♖g2+ 95.♔f7 ♖xg7+ 96.♔xg7 1/2

19

A. Korolkov, 1950

When we talk about two pawns against rook there are cases which are very similar to the previous examples featuring only one pawn. When the pawns are not connected it is much easier for the rook to fight against them, but technically he must be very precise.



1. ♔g8!

The seventh rank has to be free for operations by the rook.

1...f2

A very simple defence is seen after 1...h3 2. ♖h7

2. ♖e7+ ♔f3 3. ♖f7+ ♔g2 4. ♖g7+ ♔f1 5. ♖h7!

and White stands his ground...

5...h3 6. ♖xh3 ♔g2 7. ♖h7 f1=♚ 8. ♖g7+ ♔h3 9. ♖h7+ ♔g4 10. ♖g7+

and the king can only escape perpetual by allowing the trade of the rook for his queen.

1/2

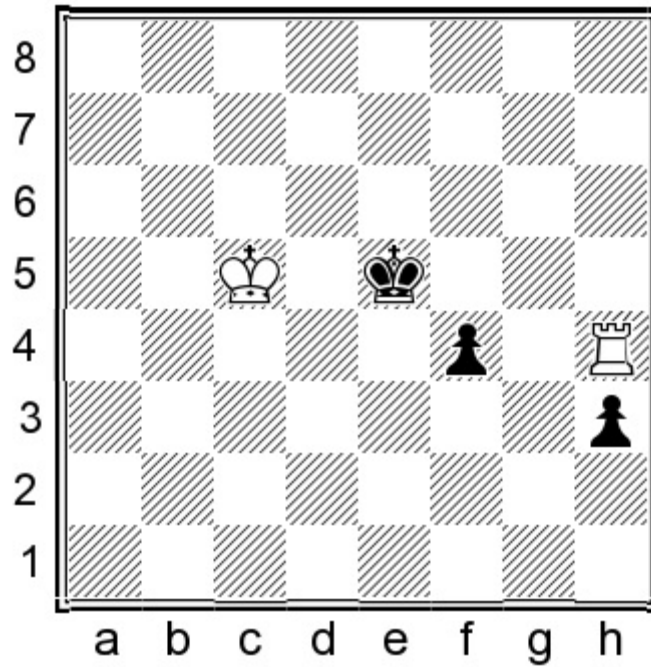
20

B. Kukovec

B. Podlesnik

Bled Open, 2001

As we have mentioned, fighting by only using the rook is not always sufficient and it is always preferable to run back with the king whenever possible.



53. ♖xh3?

Correct here was not the materialism of the game move, but rather to escape from the bodycheck defence: 53. ♔c4 ♕e4 54. ♔c3 ♕e3 55. ♔c2 f3 56. ♔d1 ♕f2 57. ♖xh3 ♕g2 58. ♖h8 f2 59. ♖g8+ ♔f1 60. ♖f8 ♕g2 61. ♔e2+-

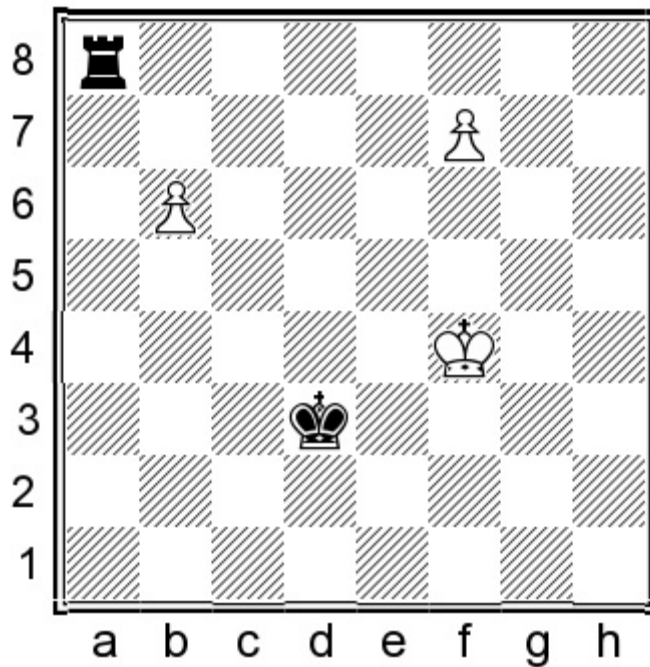
53. ♖xh3? ♕e4 54. ♔c4 f3 55. ♖h8 f2 56. ♖f8 ♕e3 1/2

21

F. Pancevski

P. Welz

Rijeka, 2010



57...♖f8?

The king must be brought closer as quickly as possible, at the same time preventing the opponent's king from helping its passed pawn.

57...♔d4! 58.♕f5 ♔d5 59.♕f6 ♔d6 60.b7 ♖b8 61.♕g7 ♔e7-+

57...♖f8? 58.♕e5 ♖xf7 59.♕d5!

Bodycheck! Bodycheck!

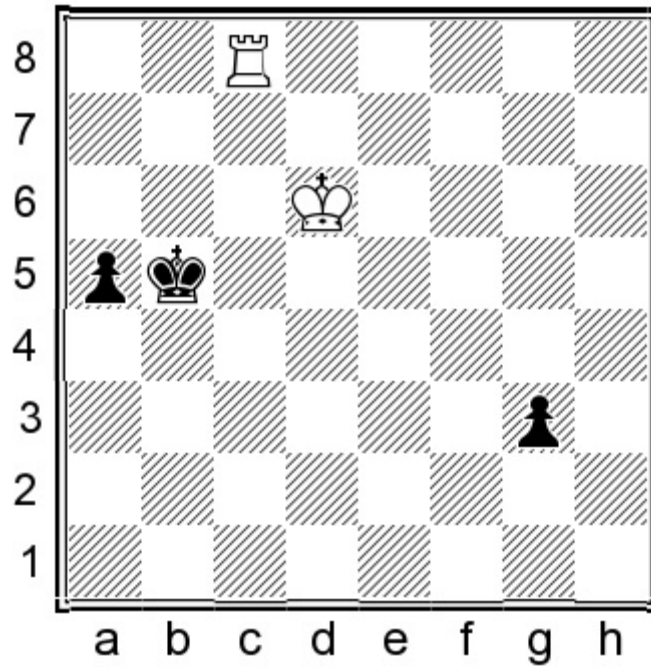
59...♔c3 60.♕c6 1/2

22

S. Holuba

R. Boisselle

Wuerzburg Open, 1996



71. ♖g8?

Materialism! It was necessary instead to start the king's raid:

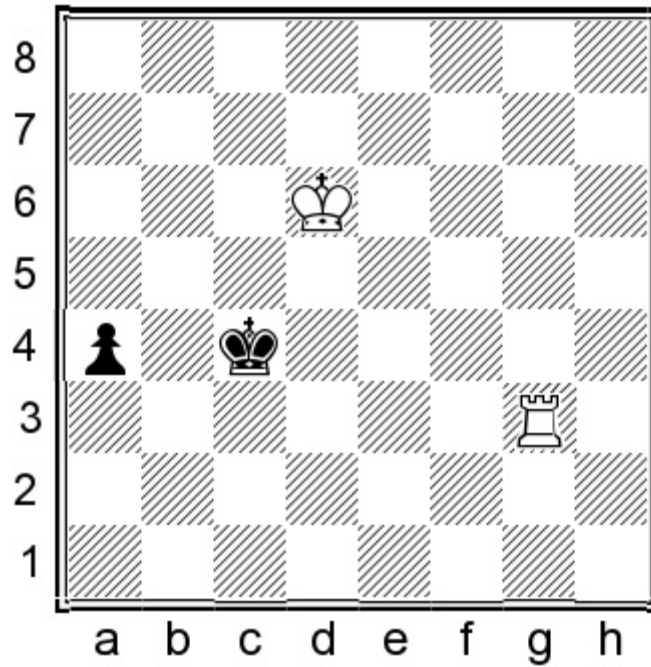
71. ♔d5! ♕b4 72. ♔d4 g2 (72... a4 73. ♖b8+-; 72... ♕b3 73. ♖c3+-) 73. ♖c1! ♕b3 74. ♔d3 a4 75. ♖b1+ ♕a2 76. ♖g1 a3 77. ♖xg2+ ♕b3 78. ♖g8! a2 79. ♖b8+ ♕a3 80. ♔c2! a1=♗+ 81. ♔c3 obtaining a basic winning position.

71. ♖g8? a4 72. ♖xg3?

It was time to turn to the correct procedure:

72. ♔d5 ♕b4 73. ♖g4+ ♕b5 74. ♖xg3 ♕b4 75. ♖g4+ ♕b5 76. ♔d4 ♕b4 77. ♖g8 ♕b3 78. ♔d3 a3 79. ♖b8+

72... ♔c4?



An easy and basic draw was available after the normal 72...♔b4.

73.♔e5?

Now it was possible to get a basic winning position by pressing the black king after it has lost connection with its pawn:

73.♔c6! ♔b4 74.♖g4+ ♔b3 75.♔b5

Simple winning with the standard method.

75...a3 76.♖g3+ ♔b2 77.♔b4 a2 78.♖g2+ ♔b1 79.♔b3 a1=♘+ 80.♔c3+-

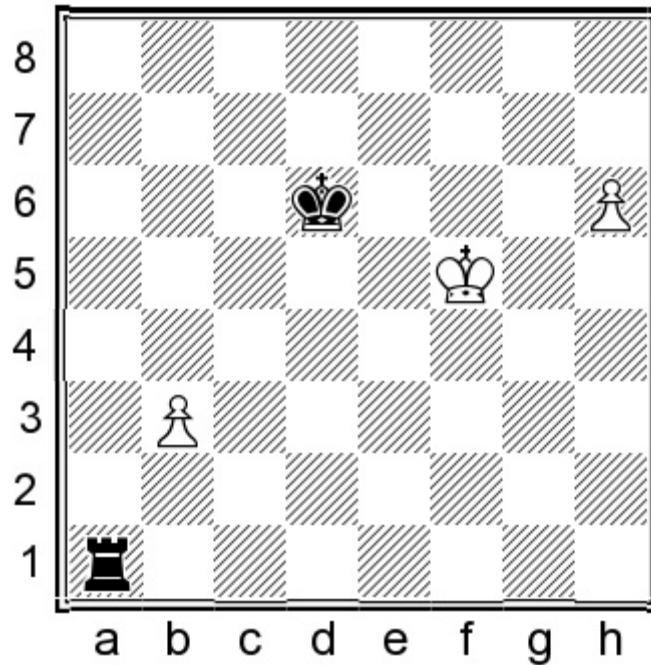
73...♔b4 74.♔d4 a3 75.♖g8 a2 76.♖a8 ♔b3 77.♔d3 ♔b2 1/2

23

M. Bartel

O. Sulypa

Lviv, 2001



1...♔e7?

A very weak approach. Why not transfer into the basic position? It was necessary to force White's king into a similar situation as in the previous game.

1...♖h1 2.♔g6 ♕e6 3.h7 ♜g1+ 4.♔h6 ♕f7 5.h8=♗+ ♕f6-+

1...♔e7? 2.h7 ♜h1 3.♔g6 ♜g1+ 4.♔f5!

The unexpected move — Black expected only the losing 4.♔h6? ♕f7

4...♜h1 5.♔g6 ♕f8 6.b4

Now it is a question of how to stop this remaining pawn? The king has to go over to deal with it, or the rook can perform many checks, but... both result in a draw!

1/2

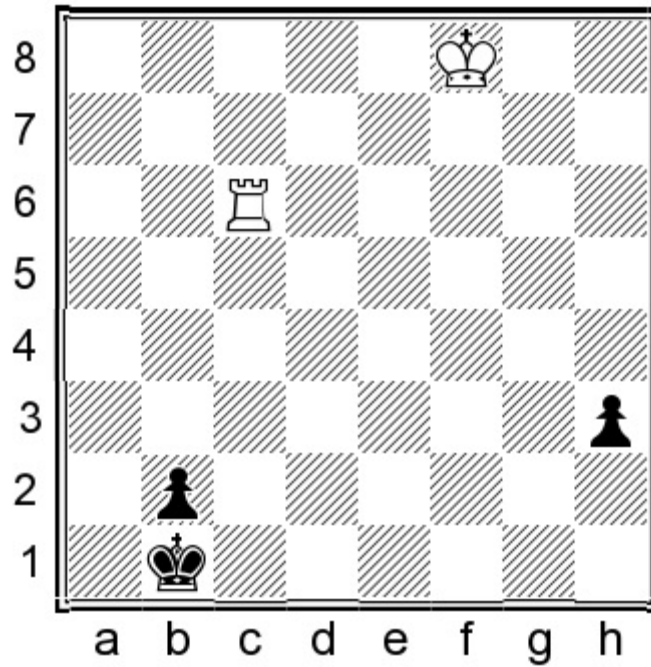
24

M. Percivaldi

O. Korneev

XTRACON GM Koge, 2015

There are cases, like the previous game and this one, when it is necessary to choose which side the rook will attack from...



72.♖h6?

Here it was necessary to use a study-like idea, whereby the rook can control both pawns:

72.♖c7! ♔a2 (72...h2 73.♖h7 ♔a1 74.♖a7+ ♔b1 75.♖h7=) 73.♖a7+ ♔b3 74.♖b7+ ♔c3 75.♖c7+ ♔b4
76.♖b7+=

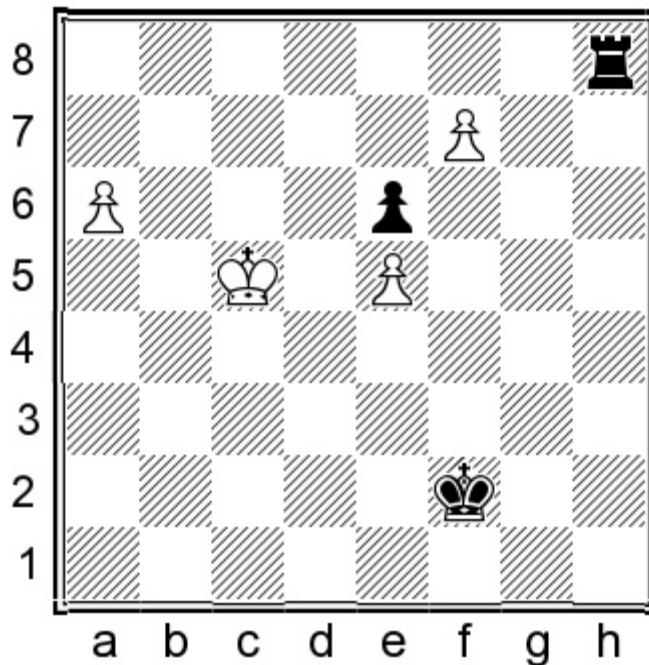
72.♖h6? ♔c2 73.♖xh3 b1=♚ 0-1

25

J. Kristiansen

K. Hulak

World Seniors Ch, Rijeka, 2013



66...♖f8?

The draw could be easily held after cutting off the king, not allowing it to come to d6 so readily:

66...♖d8! 67.a7 ♔e3 68.♔c6 ♔f4 69.♔c7 ♖f8 70.♔d6 ♖a8! 71.♔xe6 ♔g5!= 72.♔d6 ♔g6 73.♔c6 (73.e6? ♔g7) 73...♔xf7 74.♔b7=

66...♖f8? 67.a7+-

...and the king goes to e7.

1-0

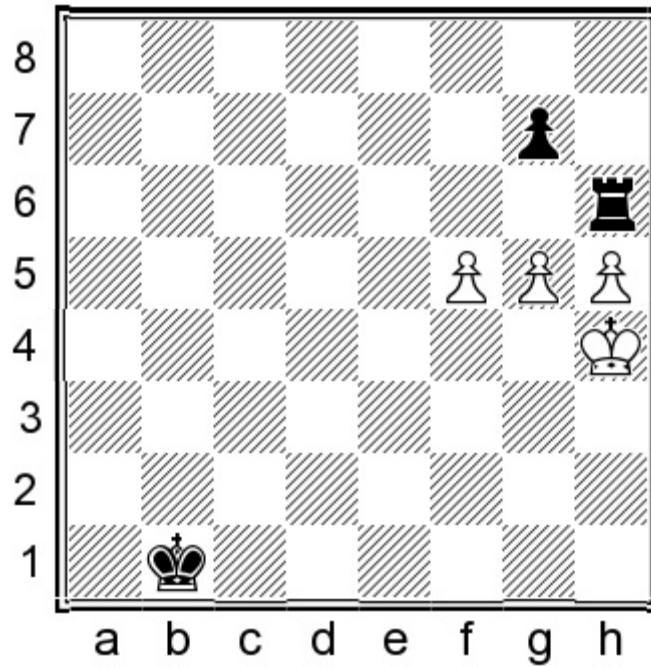
26

D. Pirrot

E. Kaiser

Bad Wiessee, 2015

When the pawns do not form a clear structure when running forward, it is necessary to be very careful with the rook's position, whose function is in such cases to optimally stop the pawns.



51...♖h8??

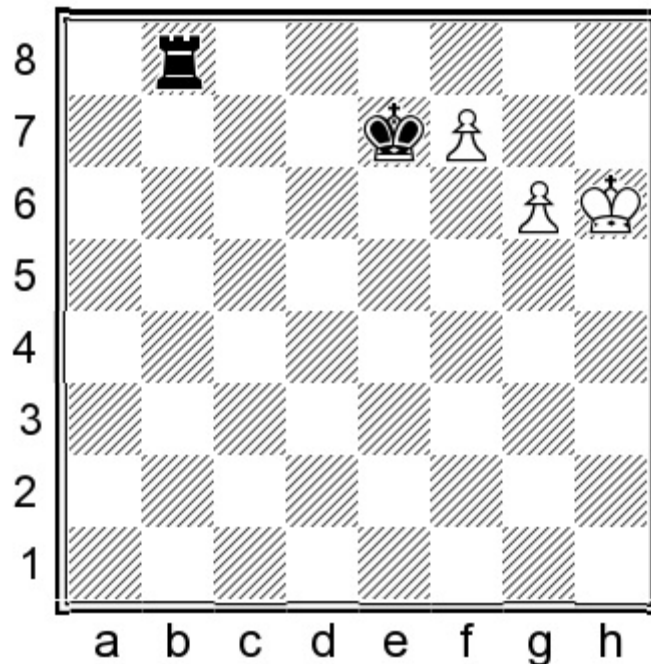
This move is illogical.

Black had to play 51...♖c6 52.h6 gxh6 53.g6 ♖c4+ 54.♔h5 (54.♔g3?? h5) 54...♖f4 55.g7 ♖xf5+ 56.♔xh6 ♖f1=

51...♖h8?? 52.g6+- ♖f8 53.♔g4! ♔c2 54.h6 gxh6 55.g7 ♖g8 56.f6 ♔d3 57.♔h5 1-0

27

Cozio, 1766

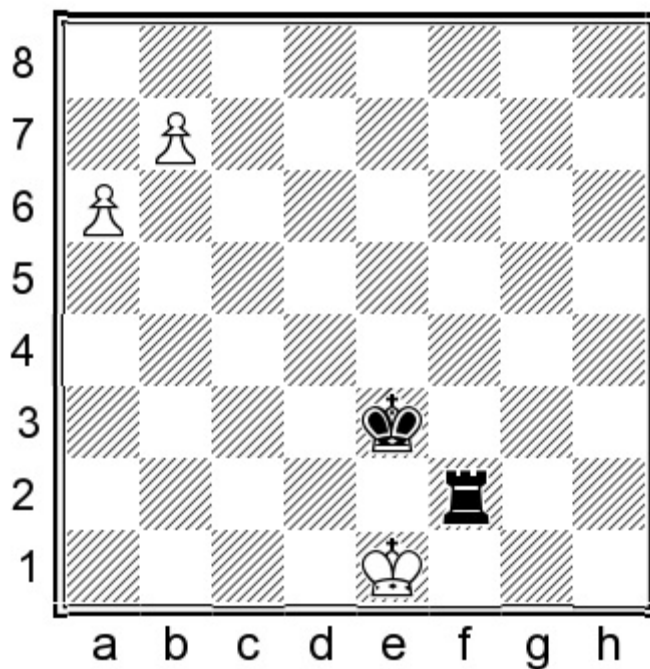


In this old position we saw demonstrated one of the first correct 'pat' defences.

1.♔g7 ♖c8 2.♔h6 ♕f6 3.♔h7 ♖b8 4.f8=♚+! ♖xf8 5.g7 ♖f7 6.♔h8 ♖xg7

28

Basic

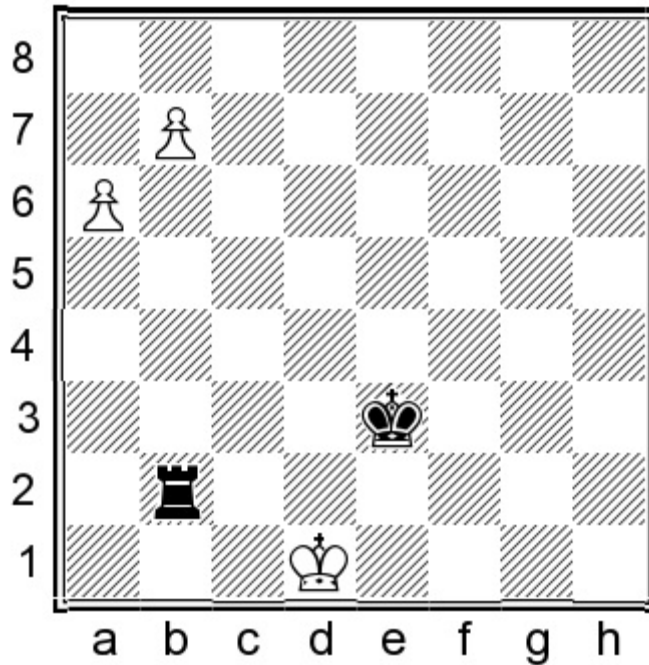


This is one of the most famous rook endgames from the category 'good to know'.

1...♖h2!

The only move to save the game!

It would be easy to go wrong with 1...♖b2? 2.♔d1!



Now by moving firstly towards the rook, then afterwards away from the rook, White is in time to win an important tempo! 2...♔d3 3.♕c1 ♕c3 (3...♖b6 4.a7 with an easy win for White.) 4.a7 White puts both pawns on the 7th rank, which means game over for Black. 4...♖h2 5.♕d1 ♕d3 6.♕e1 ♕e3 7.♕f1 ♕f3 8.♕g1 followed by queening one of the pawns.

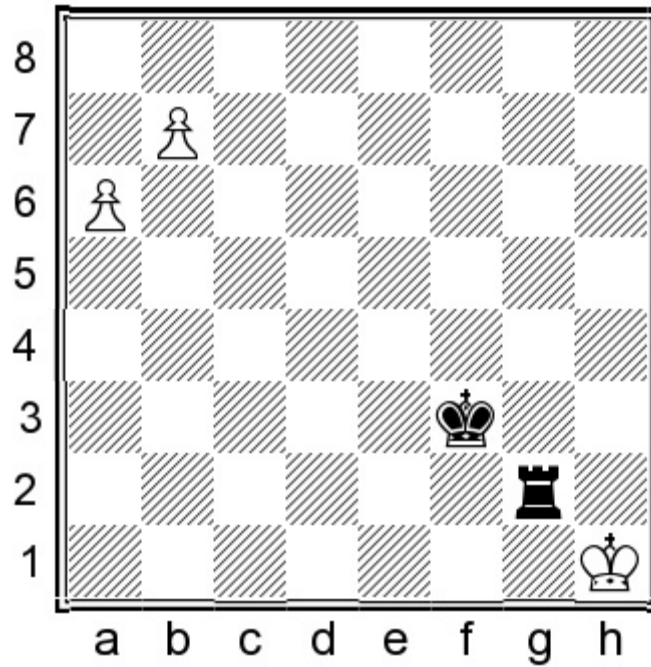
1...♖h2! 2.♕f1

Now White is no longer in time to go to the other side: 2.♕d1 ♕d3 3.♕c1 ♕c3 4.♕b1 ♖h1+ 5.♕a2 ♖h2+ 6.♕a3 ♖h6 7.♕a4 ♖xa6+ 8.♕b5 ♖a1 with a draw.

2...♕f3 3.♕g1 ♖g2+!

Once again Black holds with only moves.

4.♕h1



4...♖g8!

After vertical checks, Black continues with horizontal ones.

5.a7

White has 'almost' won, but this time Black is in time:

5...♖h8+ 6.♔g1 ♖g8+ 7.♔f1 ♖h8 8.♔e1

As we can see the position is very forced.

8...♔e3 9.♔d1 ♔d3 10.♔c1 ♔c3 11.♔b1

It seems as though the white king has escaped, but...

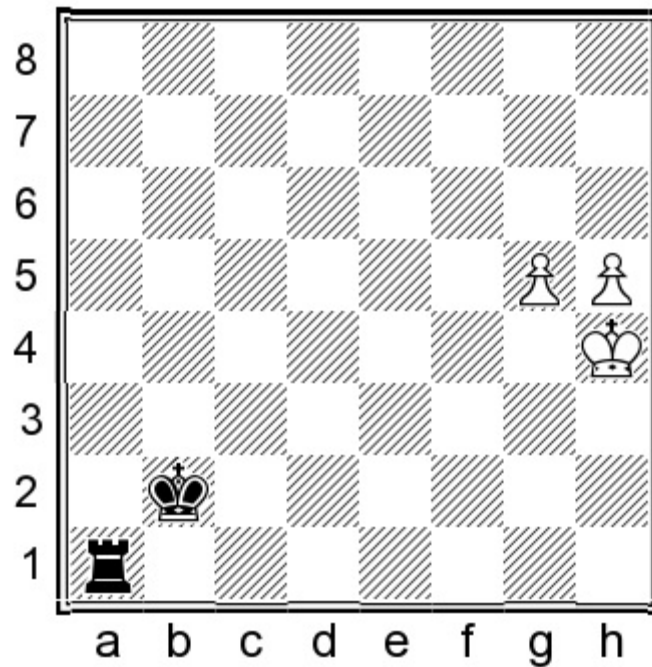
11...♖h1+ 12.♔a2 ♖h2+ 13.♔a3 ♖h1!

The only move to save the game again!

14.♔a4 ♔c4 15.♔a5 ♔c5

And White has nothing better than to return with 16.♔a4, and a draw.

1/2



8.♔g4

Nothing is promised by 8.g6? ♖g1

8.♔g4 ♜h1!

A very precise preventive move, making White's pawn advances very difficult.

9.g6

9.h6 did not work: 9...♔c3 10.♔f5 ♔d4 11.♔g6 ♔e5 12.♔h7 ♔f4

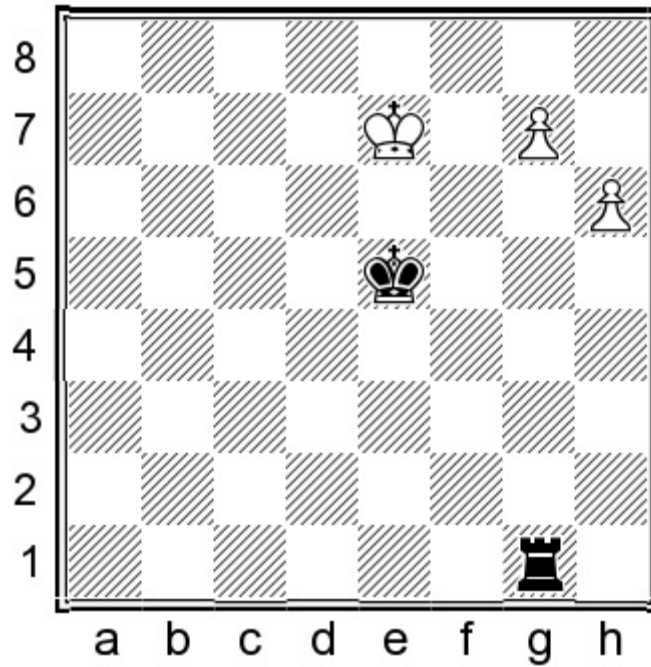
9...♔c3!

Starting the king's journey to the pawns, which seem to be very distant, but...

10.♔g5 ♔d4! 11.g7

Or 11.h6 ♔e5 12.h7 ♜g1+ 13.♔h6 ♜h1+ 14.♔g7 ♔f5

11...♔e5! 12.♔g6 ♜g1+ 13.♔f7 ♜f1+ 14.♔e7 ♜g1 15.h6



15...♖g6!

An active, multifunctional move, preparing checks and attacking the h6-pawn. Wrong was the passive 15...♖g2? 16.♔f7 ♖f2+ 17.♔g8

16.♔f7 ♖f6+ 17.♔e8 ♖e6+ 18.♔d8 ♖d6+ 19.♔c8 ♖c6+ 20.♔b7 ♖g6!

and White's pawns are stuck.

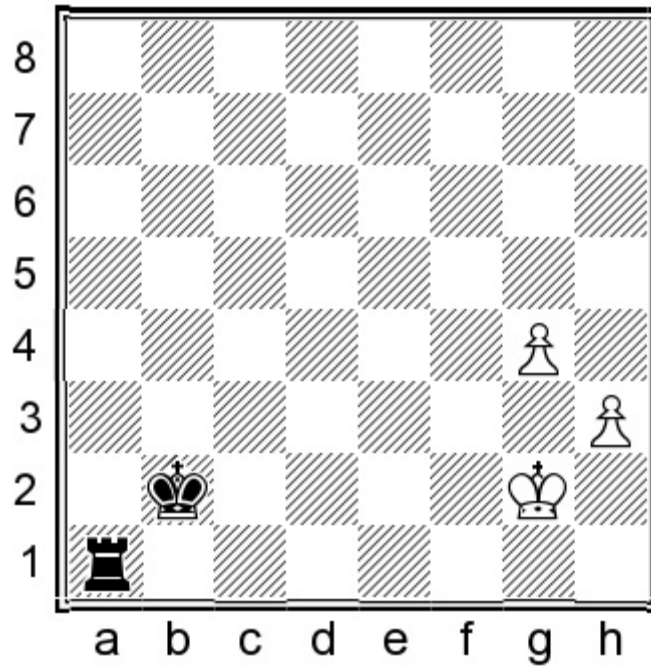
1/2

30

M. Abramciuc

P. Vorontsov

Gyor, 2014



63.♔f3 ♕c3 64.♔e4!

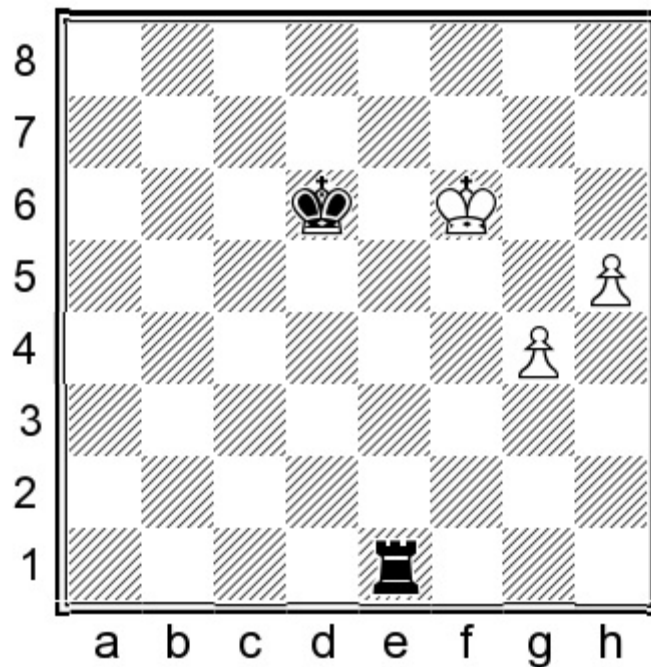
The only chance here is to use the powerful weapon of the bodycheck.

64...♖e1+ 65.♔f5 ♕d4 66.h4 ♔d5 67.h5

As we have seen, it is usually best to push the farthest-removed pawn.

67.g5 ♕d6 68.♔f6 ♖f1+!-+

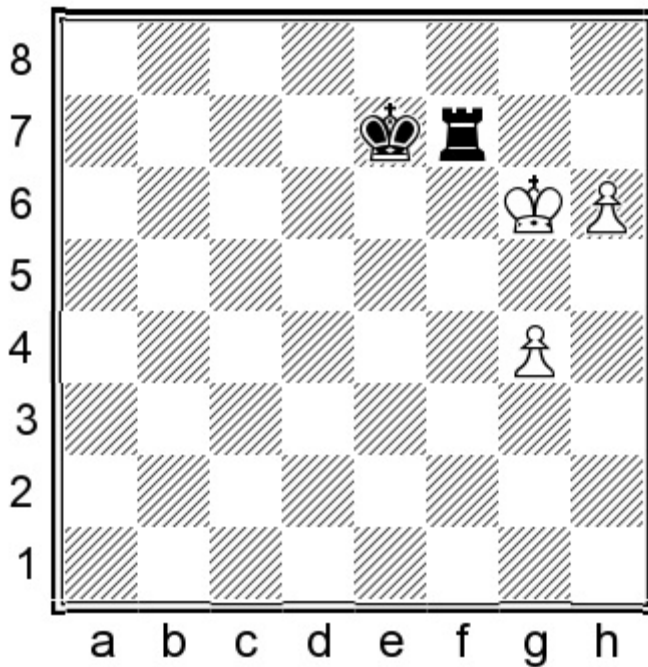
67...♔d6 68.♔f6



68...♖f1+?

There were two possible checks and it was easy to miss the correct one: 68...♖e6+! 69.♔f7 ♜e7+!
70.♔g6 (70.♔f6 ♔d7) 70...♖e4 71.♔f6 (71.g5 ♔e7 72.♔g7 ♖e5!-+) 71...♖f4+ 72.♔g5 ♖f1-+

69.♔g7 ♔e7 70.h6! ♖f7+ 71.♔g6



Not 71.♔g8 ♔f6 72.h7 ♖g7+ 73.♔h8 ♖a7 74.g5+ ♔g6 75.♔g8 ♖a8#

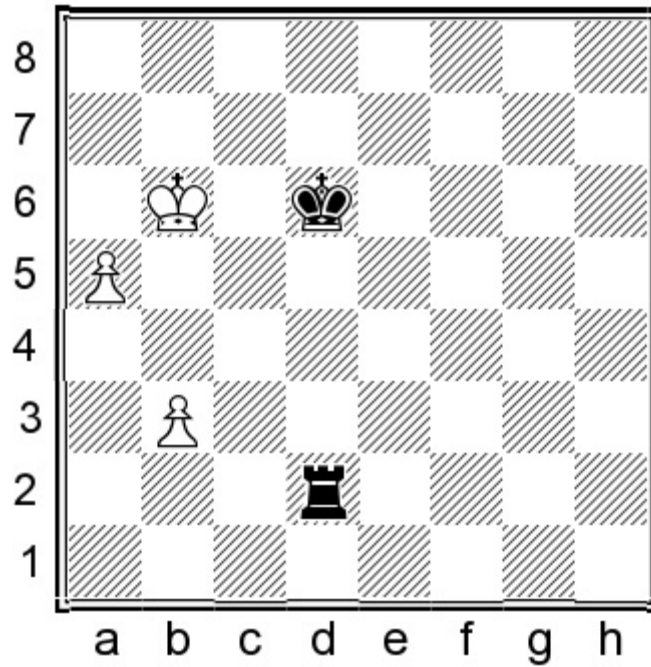
71...♖f6+ 72.♔g7 ♖f7+ 73.♔g6 ♖f4 74.g5 ♔f8 75.♔h7! ♖f7+ 76.♔h8 ♖f5 77.g6 ♖g5 78.h7 ♖xg6 1/2

31

V. Tukmakov

A. Shneider

Donetsk zt, 1998



56.a6

Losing was 56.b4 ♔d7 57.♕b7 (57.b5 ♔c8–+) 57...♖b2–+

56.a6 ♖b2 57.a7?

This seems very natural, but the draw was possible only after 57.♕b7! ♖xb3+ 58.♔c8 reaching a ‘basic’ position.

57...♖xb3+ 58.♔a6

Of no help is 58.♔a5 ♔c7 59.a8=♘+ ♕b7–+

58...♔c7!

Now we have another basic position, but this time lost for White.

59.a8=♘+

59.a8=♙ ♖a3+–+

59...♔c6 60.♔a7 ♖b1‡

White is in zugzwang.

60...♖b1 61.♔a6 ♖a1#

0–1

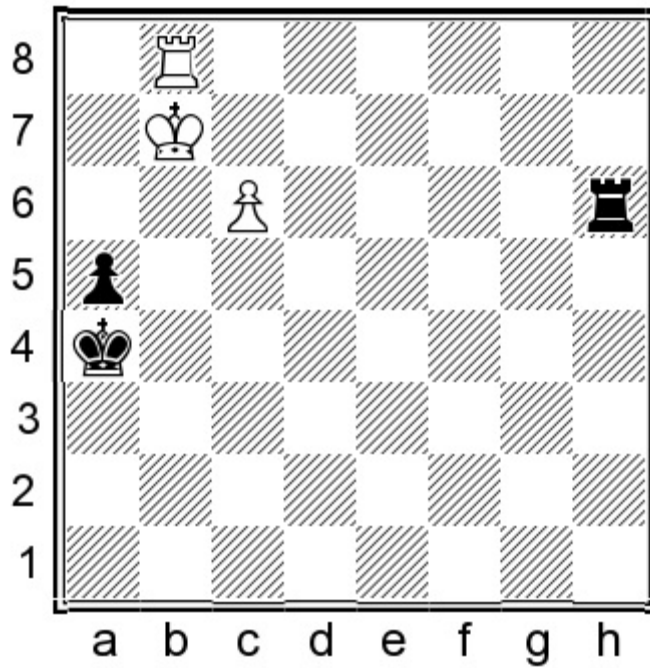
32

C. Balogh

R. Kuczynski

Bundesliga, 2008

Any preparation to sacrifice the rook for the pawn has to be considered very seriously.



70...♔a3?

Here it was necessary to transfer correctly into king and rook against pawn. Don't forget about the bodycheck! 70...♔b5! 71.c7 ♖c6 72.c8=♚ ♖xc8 73.♔xc8+ ♔c4 74.♖a8 ♔b4 75.♔d7 a4 76.♔e6 a3 77.♔d5 ♔b3 78.♔d4 a2 79.♔d3 ♔b2 and as always in chess, one tempo is missing!

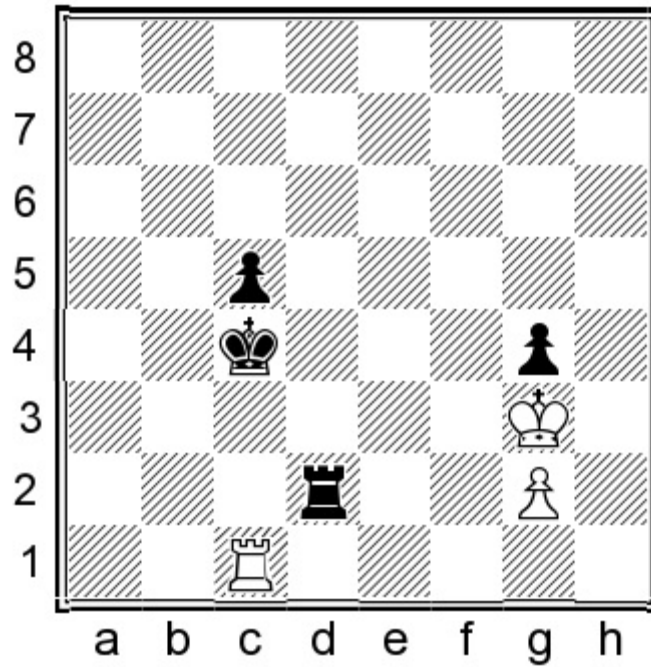
70...♔a3? 71.c7 ♖h7 72.♔b6 ♖xc7 73.♔xc7 a4 74.♔c6 ♔a2 75.♔c5 1-0

33

H. Melkumyan

D. Andreikin

Plovdiv, 2012



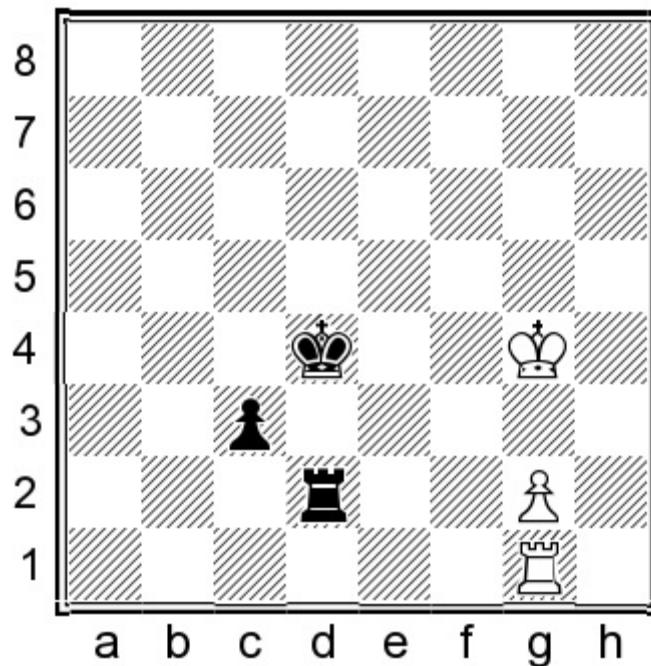
63...♔d4?

This looks to be active and logical, but winning required a smart move, making space for the rook to protect both pawns! 63...♔d5 64.♖g1 ♜d4 65.♖a1 c4 66.♔f2 ♔e4

63...♔d4? 64.♖g1!

The pawn must be kept even at the price of a few important tempos.

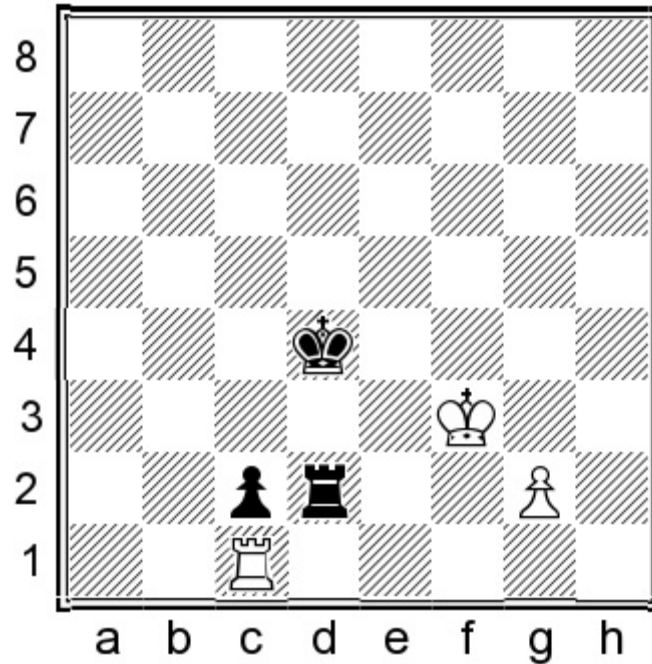
64...c4 65.♔xg4 c3



66.♔f3?

Here the draw could be held after an unbelievable move, which could be found only after long and logical reflection: 66.g3!! c2 67.♖c1 ♔d3 68.♕f5 ♖d1 69.♗xc2 ♔xc2 70.g4 ♗f1+ 71.♕e5 ♗g1 72.♕f5 ♔d3 73.g5 ♔d4 74.g6 ♔d5 75.♕f6 ♔d6 76.g7 ♔d7 77.♕f7

66...c2 67.♖c1



67...♔d3??

It was necessary to use the resource which we can name simply as ‘cut off the king!’ 67...♔c3 68.g4 ♖d4!

68.g4 ♖d1 69.♗xc2 ♔xc2 70.♕e4

Now it is a draw

70...♗g1 71.♕f5 ♔d3 72.g5 ♔d4 73.g6 ♔d5 74.♕f6 ♔d6 75.g7 ♔d7 76.♕f7 ♗xg7+ 77.♕xg7 1/2

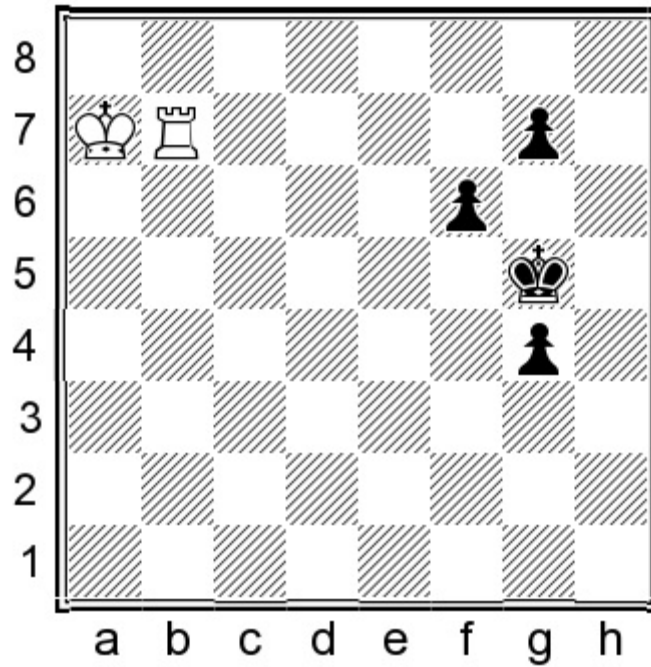
34

M. Oleksienko

S. Sagar

Al-Ain, 2014

With more pawns, of course, the defence is not so easy in situations where the king is not close to the pawns.



55...f5?

It is difficult to find here the winning 55...g6! The point is that with the pawn on g6 White would have to move his rook to a passive position on b1. 56.♔b6 g3 57.♕c5 g2 58.♖b1 ♔f4 59.♔d4 f5-+

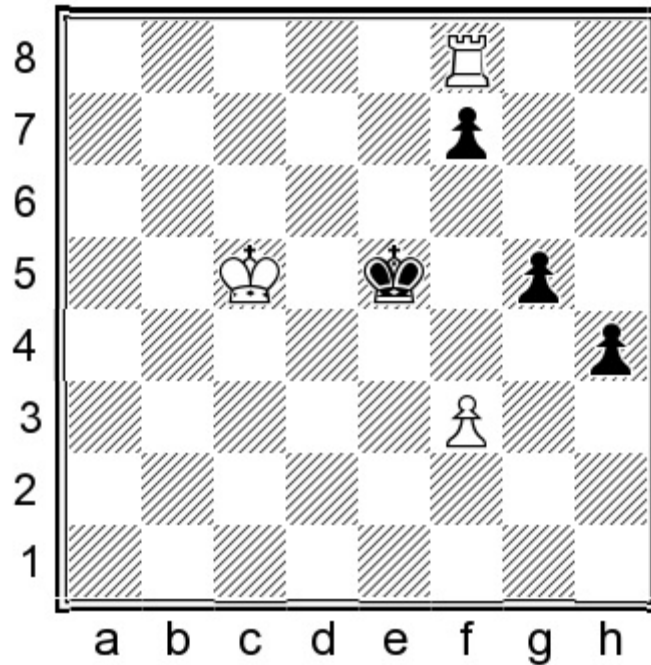
55...f5? 56.♔b6 g3 57.♕c5 ♔f4 58.♖xg7 ♔f3 59.♔d4 g2 60.♖xg2 ♔xg2 61.♔e5 1/2

35

A. Muzychuk

T. Kosintseva

Ankara, 2012



47...f5??

It was necessary to sneak in with the king to support the h4-pawn:

47...♔f4 48.♖xf7+ ♕g3 49.♕d4 h3 50.♕e4 h2 51.♖h7 ♕g2 52.♕f5 ♕xf3 53.♖xh2 g4 54.♖a2 g3 55.♖a3+ ♕f2 56.♕f4 g2 57.♖a2+ ♕f1 58.♕f3 g1=♗+ 59.♕e3 ♗h3 with a theoretical draw!

47...f5?? 48.♕c4 ♕f4

Of no help is 48...h3 49.♕d3 h2 50.♖h8 ♕f4 51.♕e2 ♕g3 52.♖h5 g4 53.fxg4 fxg4 54.♕f1

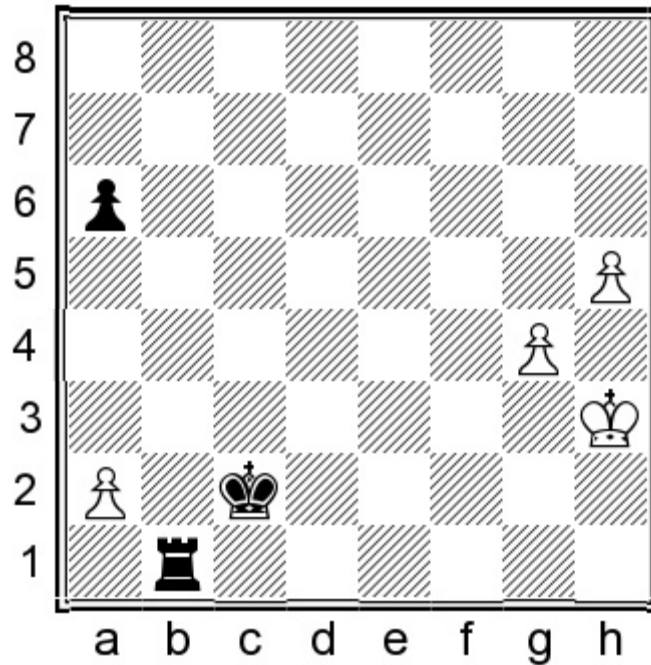
49.♕d3 ♕xf3 50.♖xf5+ ♕g4 51.♖f8 ♕g3 52.♕e2 g4 53.♕f1 ♕h2 54.♖f4 h3 55.♖xg4 ♕h1 56.♕f2 1-0

36

J. Rodgaard

J. Hjartarson

Runavik, 2016



Without a-pawns it should be a draw.

62...♞g1?!

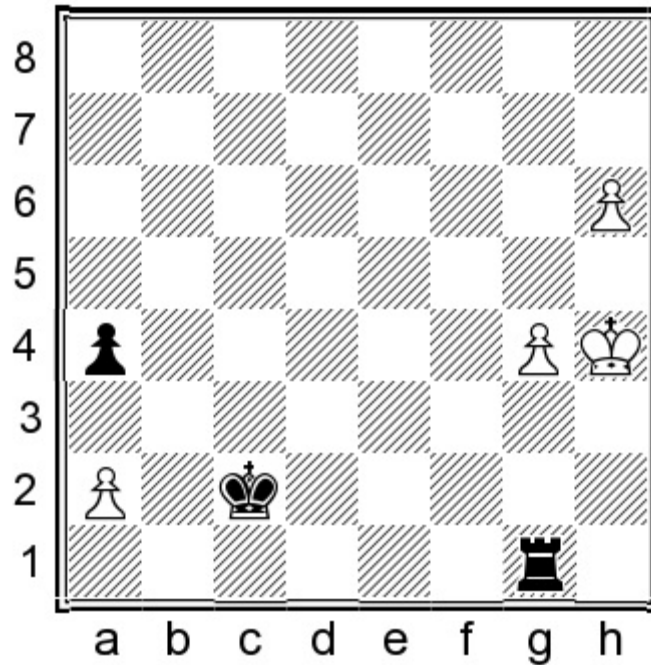
Too clever. It was necessary to remember the main rule: bring the king over to the pawns as soon as possible.

62...♔d3 63.g5 (63.♔h4 ♕e4 64.♔g5 ♞a1) 63...♕e4 64.h6 ♔f5

62...♞g1?! 63.♔h4 a5?

Now it was necessary to find the only move, continuing the plan of bringing the king back. 63...♔d3 64.h6 ♕e4 and now for example: 65.♔g5 ♕f3 66.h7 ♞xg4+ 67.♔f6 ♞h4 68.♔g7 ♕e3 69.h8=♚ ♞xh8 70.♔xh8 ♕d4 71.♔g7 ♕c3 72.♔f6 ♕b2 73.a4 ♕b3 74.a5 ♕b4 75.♕e5 ♕xa5 76.♔d4 ♕b4 77.♔d3 ♕b3 78.♔d2 ♕b2+

64.h6 a4



65.g5?

Here there was a great chance to save the game:

65.♔h5! ♕b2 66.g5 ♕xa2 67.g6 a3 68.g7 ♕b1 69.h7=

65...♕b2?

Mistakes come from both sides. Here there was a technical check, which would paralyze both white pawns: 65...♖h1+! 66.♕g4 ♕b2

66.♕h5 ♖h1+ 67.♕g4?

The wrong direction! Here the White player did not know the correct manoeuvre:

67.♕g6 ♕xa2 68.♕h7! This is the manoeuvre! 68...a3 69.g6 ♕b1 70.g7 a2 71.g8=♖ a1=♖ 72.♖b3+ ♕c1 73.♖c4+ ♕d2 74.♖d5+ ♕e3 75.♖b3+=

67...♕xa2 68.♕f5 a3 69.g6 ♖h5+!

Destroying White's idea. White did not know this classical check.

0-1

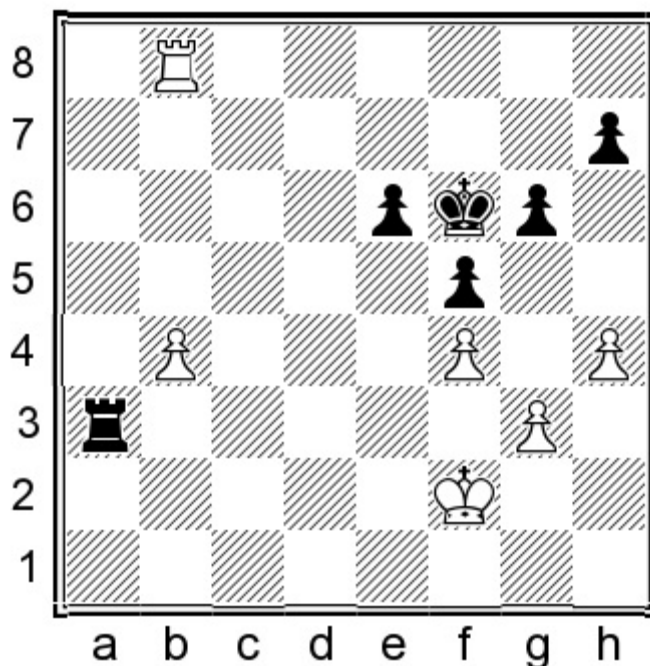
37

S. Brunello

N. Khurtsidze

Gibraltar, 2012

Let's observe the process of a transfer into the endgame of rook against pawn(s) in practice.



39...♔g7 40.b5 ♖b3 41.b6 ♕h6 42.♞b7 ♞b5 43.♕e3 e5!

According to the rules, any reduction of the pawns on the other flank is useful. In addition, the e6-pawn was a backward one.

44.fxe5 ♞xe5+ 45.♕d4 ♞b5 46.♕c4 ♞b1 47.♕c5 ♞c1+ 48.♕b5 ♞b1+ 49.♕c6 ♞c1+ 50.♕d7 ♕h5?!

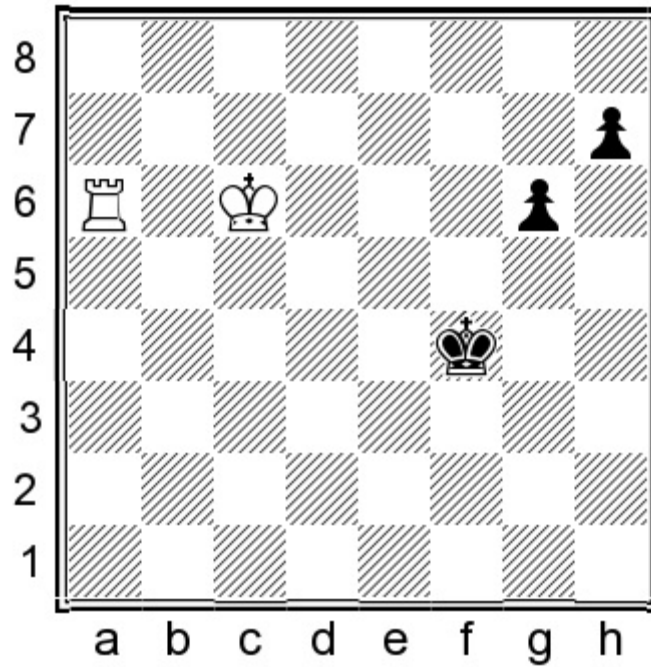
Much simpler was to restrict the opponent's rook and king and only then start attacking the pawns:

50...♞b1 51.♞b8 ♕h5 52.♕c6 ♕g4

51.♞a7 ♞b1 52.♕c7 ♕g4 53.♞a3 f4 54.gxf4 ♕xh4 55.b7 ♕g4 56.♞a6

Preparing to play ♞b6, which forces Black to finally sacrifice her rook for the passed pawn.

56...♞xb7+ 57.♕xb7 ♕xf4 58.♕c6



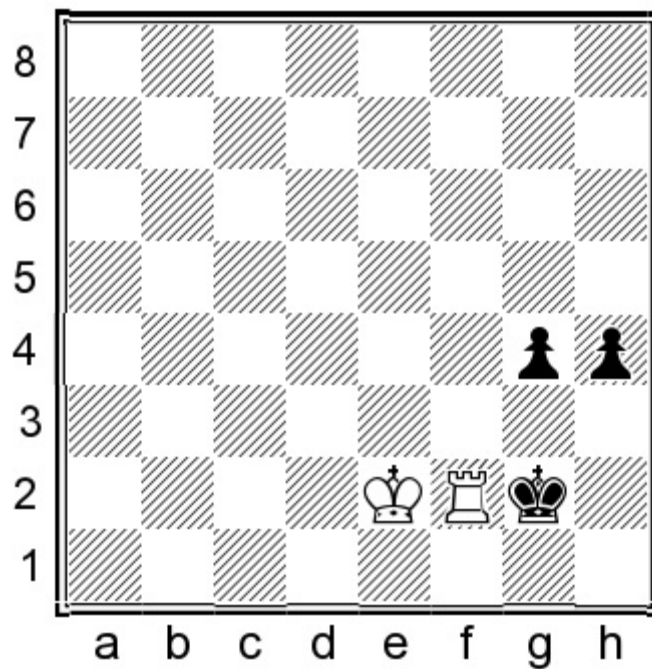
58...g5?

Correct was to start with the farthest-away pawn: 58...h5 59.♖a1 h4 60.♔d5 h3 61.♞f1+ ♔g3

59.♔d5 g4

Now it was late to use the h-pawn. 59...h5 60.♞a4+ ♔f5 (60...♔g3 61.♔e4 h4 62.♞a3+ ♔g4 (62...♔g2 63.♔f5 h3 64.♔g4 h2 65.♞a2+ ♔g1 66.♔g3 h1=♔+ 67.♔f3 g4+ 68.♔xg4 ♔f2+ 69.♔f3 ♔d3 70.♞a4 ♔c5 71.♞d4 ♔h2 72.♞d5) 63.♔e3 ♔g3 64.♔e2+ ♔g2 65.♞a4 ♔g3 66.♔f1)

60.♔d4 h5 61.♔d3 ♔f3 62.♞f6+ ♔g2 63.♔e2 h4 64.♞f2+



64...♔h1

Other king retreats allows White to bring his king in to stop the pawns, e.g. 64...♔g3 65.♔f1 h3 66.♔g1

65.♖f1+ ♔g2 66.♖f2+ ♔h1 67.♖f1+ ♔h2 68.♖f4 g3 69.♖xh4+ ♔g1 70.♖g4 g2 71.♖g8 1-0

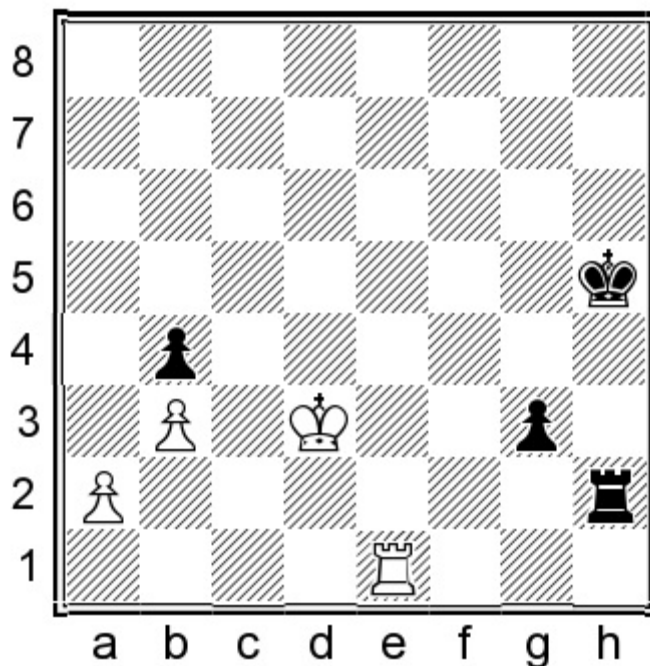
38

A. Shomoev

M. Kobalia

Tomsk, 2006

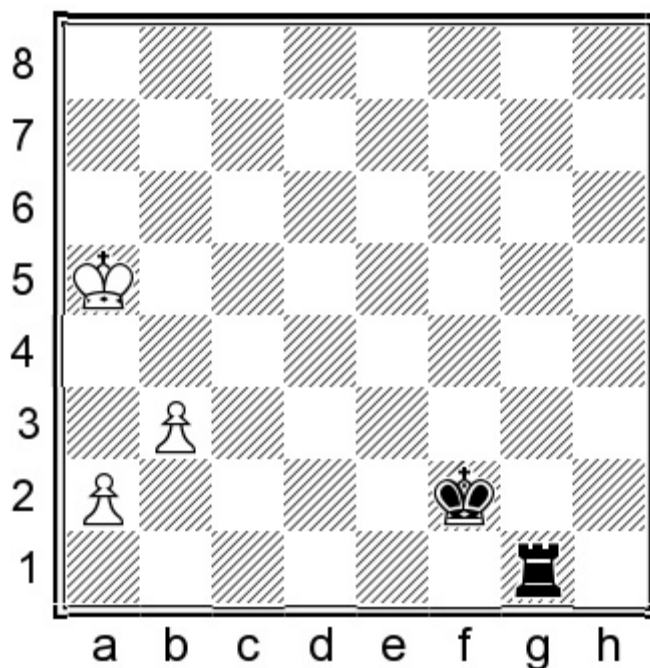
Here the situation at the start was somewhat similar.



50...♖f2 51.♞e8 ♔g4 52.♞g8+ ♔h3 53.♞h8+ ♔g4?!

Logical, but not so easy to find was the winning 53...♔g2 54.♞h4 ♞f8 (54...♔f3 55.♞xb4 g2 56.♞b8 ♞d2+! 57.♔xd2 g1=♚ 58.♞f8+ ♔e4 59.♞a8 and White has chances to set-up a fortress.) 55.♞xb4 ♔f3 56.♞b7 g2 57.♞g7 ♞f4 58.♞xg2 ♔xg2 59.a4 ♔f3 60.a5 ♔g4 61.a6 ♞f6 62.b4 ♞xa6 63.♔c4 ♔f5 64.b5 ♞a1 65.♔d5 ♞b1 66.♔c6 ♔e6

54.♞g8+ ♔f3 55.♔c4 ♞h2 56.♞f8+ ♔e2 57.♞e8+ ♔f2 58.♔xb4 ♞h4+ 59.♔a5 ♞g4 60.♞c8 g2 61.♞c1 g1=♚ 62.♞xg1 ♞xg1



After a long fight we come finally to our endgame...

63.b4?

Once more, it is correct to start with the farthest away pawn. This seems to be a rule!

63.a4 ♖a1 64.♔b6 ♖a3 65.a5 ♖xb3+ 66.♔c6

By pushing the a-pawn, White also keeps the bodycheck.

66...♖a3 67.♔b6 ♖e3 68.a6=

63...♔e3 64.b5 ♔d4 65.♔b6 ♖g6+ 66.♔a7 ♔c5 67.a4 ♖g4

Or even 67...♖b6 68.♔a8 ♔b4 69.♔a7 ♔a5

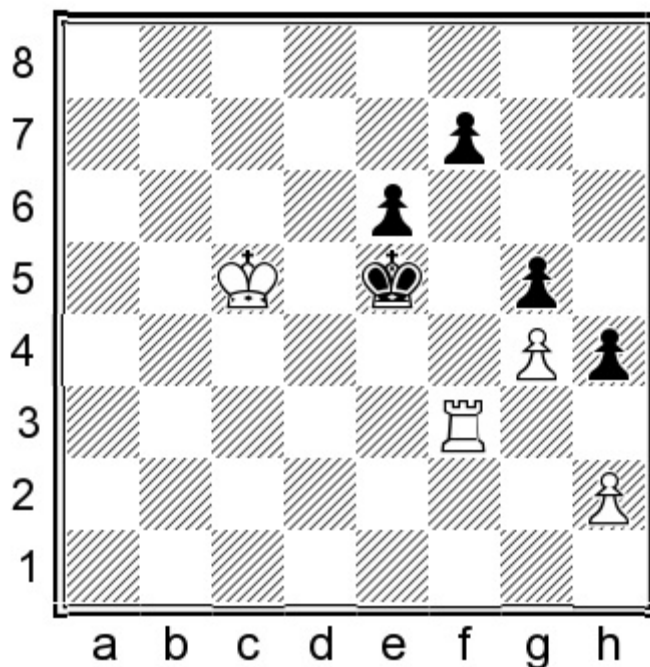
0-1

39

A. Grischuk

P. Svidler

Le Zion, 2006



54...f5 55.gxf5?

A very calm win was guaranteed after 55.h3 ♔e4 56.♖a3 f4 57.♔d6 f3 58.♔xe6 ♔f4 59.♔f6

55...exf5 56.♖f1 ♔e4?

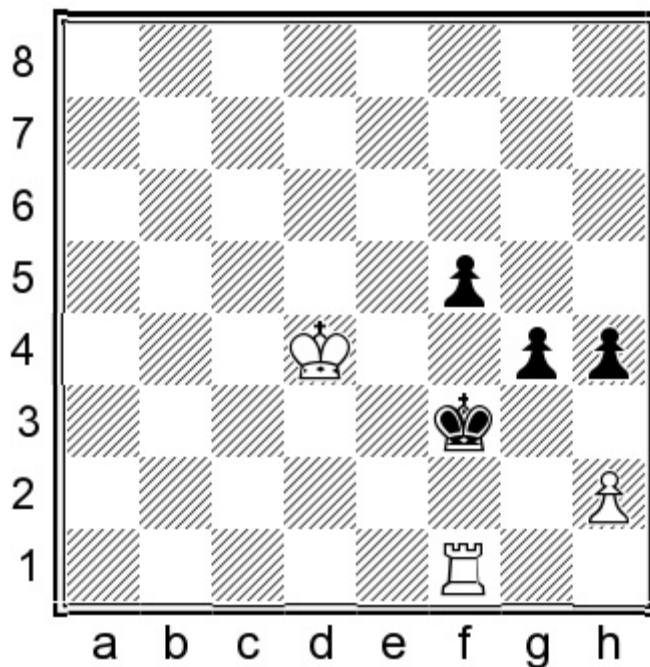
The rule is always to push pawns as quickly as possible:

56...g4! 57.♖e1+ ♔f4 58.♔d4 ♔f3!=

57.♞e1+?

Here the only chance was to go around the bodycheck zone! 57.♔d6! g4 58.♔e6 f4 59.♔f6 f3 60.♔g5 g3 61.♔g4 g2 62.♞e1+-

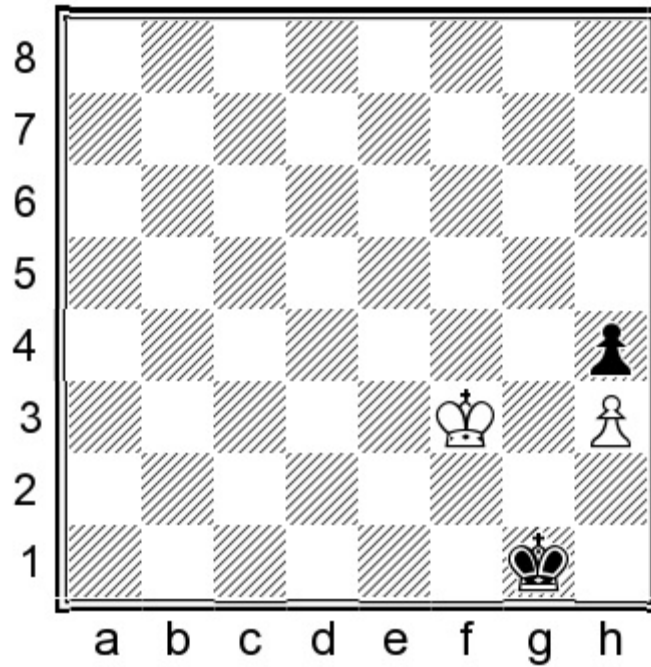
57...♔f3 58.♔d4 g4 59.♞f1+



59...♔e2??

A basic drawn position was achieved after a different king move: 59...♔g2 60.♞xf5 ♔xh2= 61.♔e3 g3 62.♞g5 g2 63.♔f2 h3 64.♞g4 ♔h1 65.♞g8 h2 66.♞xg2

60.♞xf5 g3 61.h3! g2 62.♞g5 ♔f2 63.♔e4 g1=♚ 64.♞xg1 ♔xg1 65.♔f3



A final bodycheck, after which White wins the pawn on h4 without allowing the opposing king to deliver his own bodycheck on f4.

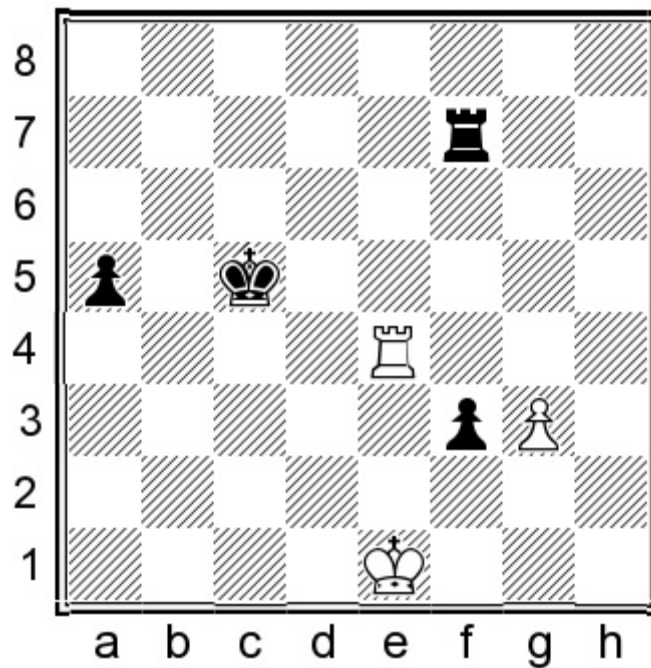
1-0

40

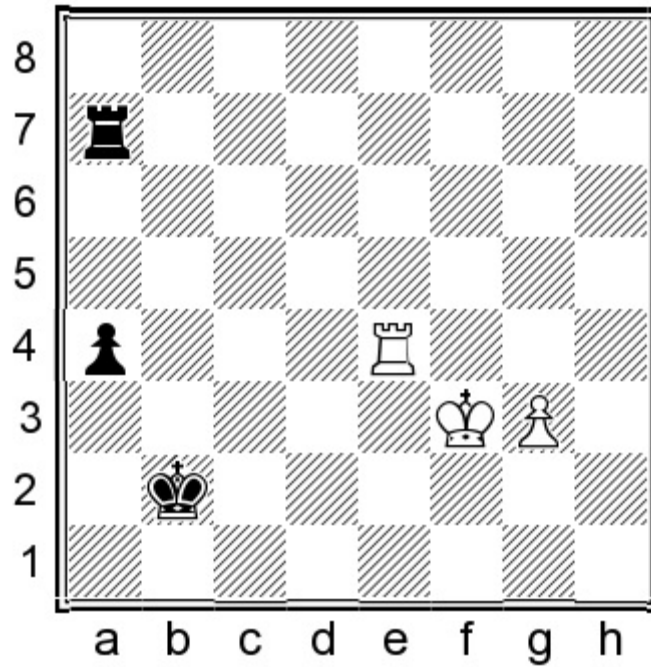
A. Greet

J. Tan

Hinckley, 2014



64.♔f2 ♔b5 65.♞e5+ ♔b4 66.♞e4+ ♔b3 67.♞e3+ ♔b2 68.♞e4 ♞a7 69.♔xf3 a4

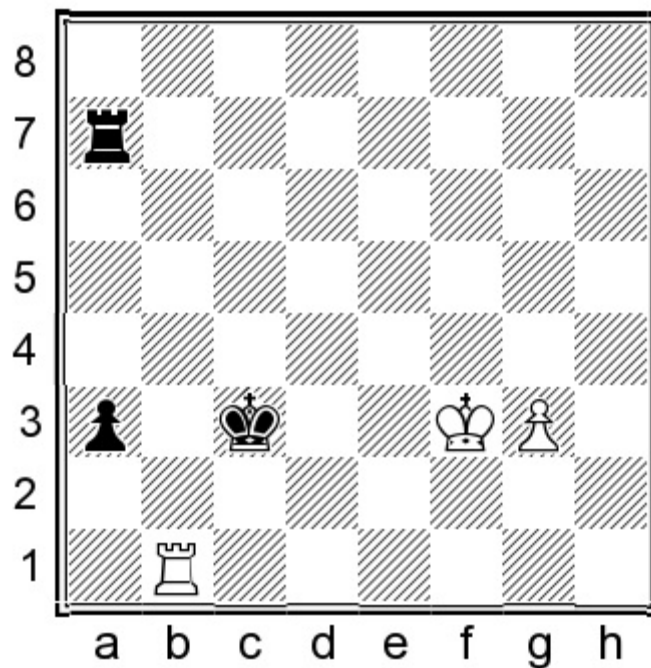


Here White must prepare very precisely how he will sacrifice his rook for the pawn and then advance his own pawn without allowing his king to be cut off.

70. ♖b4+

Not the most precise way. Much simpler was the direct 70.g4! a3 71.♔f4 (71.g5 draws too, but then White needs to be careful: 71...a2 72.♖e2+ (72.♖e1 ♖a4!) 72...♔c3 73.♖xa2 ♖xa2 74.♔e4! =) 71...a2 72.♖e1

70...♔c3 71.♖b1 a3



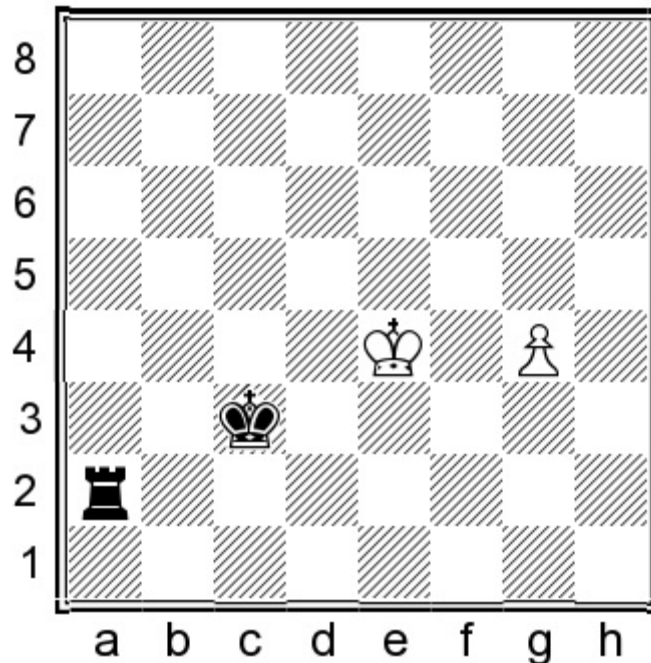
72.g4??

In such cases it is necessary to ensure that the king will not be cut off, so: 72.♔e4! which was the only move. Also losing was the natural 72.♔f4 a2 73.♞a1 ♔b2 74.♞xa2+ ♞xa2 75.g4 ♔c3 76.♔e4 ♞g2 77.♔f5 ♔d4 78.g5 ♔d5 79.♔f6 ♔d6 80.g6 ♞f2+

72...a2 73.♞a1 ♔b2??

Black did not perform the easy ‘cutting-off’ manoeuvre 73...♞a4!—+ forcing the white king to go around, thereby losing a lot of time. 74.♔g3 ♔b2 75.♞xa2+ ♔xa2 76.♔h4 ♔b3 77.♔h5 ♔c4 78.g5 ♔d5 79.g6 ♔e6

74.♞xa2+ ♞xa2 75.♔e4! ♔c3



76.♔f5??

Very illogical decision. Now White was very close to the draw, but did not keep his ‘bodycheck’ position and instead allowed his opponent’s king to come closer.

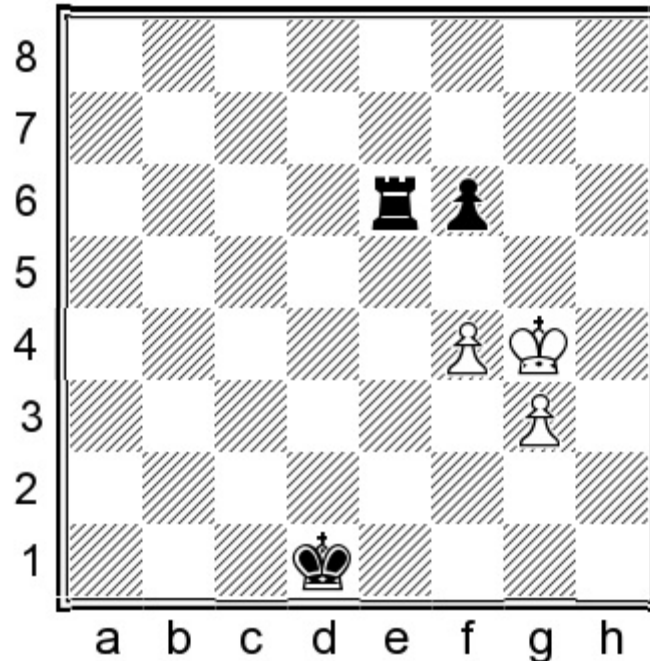
76.g5! ♞g2 77.♔f5 ♔d4 78.g6 ♔d5 79.♔f6 ♔d6 80.g7

76...♔d4 77.g5 ♔d5 78.♔f6 ♔d6 79.g6 ♞f2+

Reaching a basic winning position.

80.♔g7 ♔e7 0–1

66.♔g4



White wants to bring his king to f5 and then start running his g-pawn. Black must act quickly and precisely.

66...♕e2?!

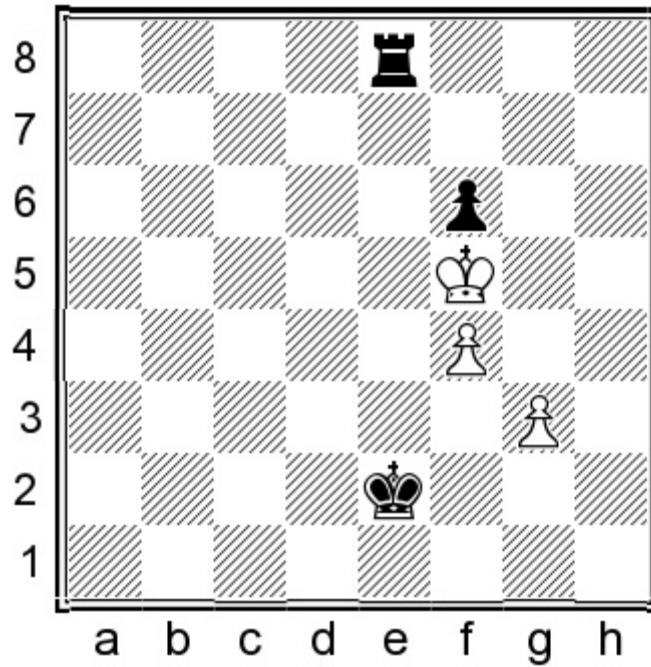
Very natural, but not the best.

There was an incredibly nice win available with 66...♖e8! 67.♔f5 ♜f8 Then Black wins the pawn endgame arising after 68.♔g6 (68.g4 ♕e2 69.g5 fxg5+ 70.♔xg5 ♕f3 71.f5 ♕e4 72.f6 ♕e5) 68...f5 69.♔g7 ♕e2 70.♔xf8 ♕f3 71.♔f7 ♕xg3 but it was practically impossible to find this in a modern game with 30 second increments.

67.♔f5 ♜a6?

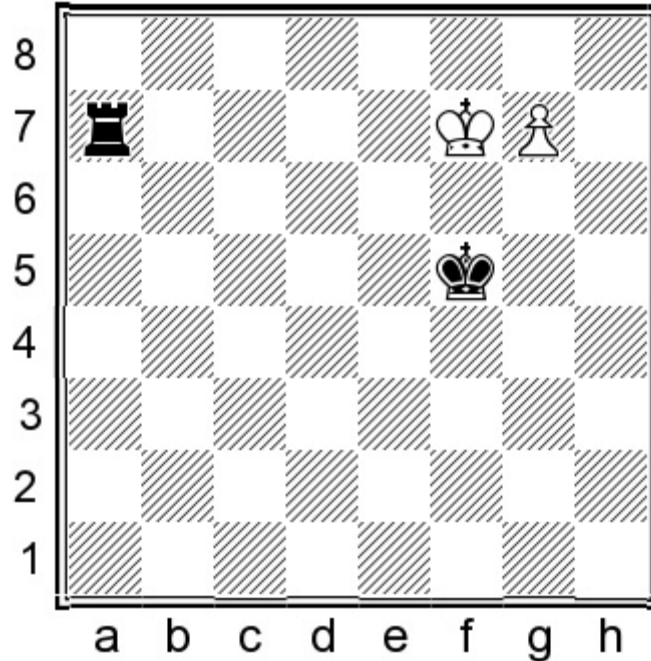
Huh? Who gives up a pawn without a fight? But it was not easy to make the winning move:

Black had to play 67...♖e8!



68.♔xf6 ♕f3 69.f5 (or 69.♕f7 ♖a8 70.f5 ♕e4 71.f6 ♕e5 72.g4 ♖a7+ 73.♕g6 ♕e6 74.g5 ♖b7 75.♕h6 ♕f5—+) 69...♕e4 70.g4 ♖a8 71.♕g7 ♕e5 72.f6 ♕e6—+

68.g4 ♕f3 69.g5 ♖a5+ 70.♕xf6 ♕xf4 71.g6 ♖a6+ 72.♕f7 ♕f5 73.g7 ♖a7+



74.♕g8!

It's also a draw after 74.♕f8 ♕f6 75.g8=♖+ but from a practical point of view White's decision on move 74 is better.

74...♕g6 75.♕h8 ♖xg7 1/2

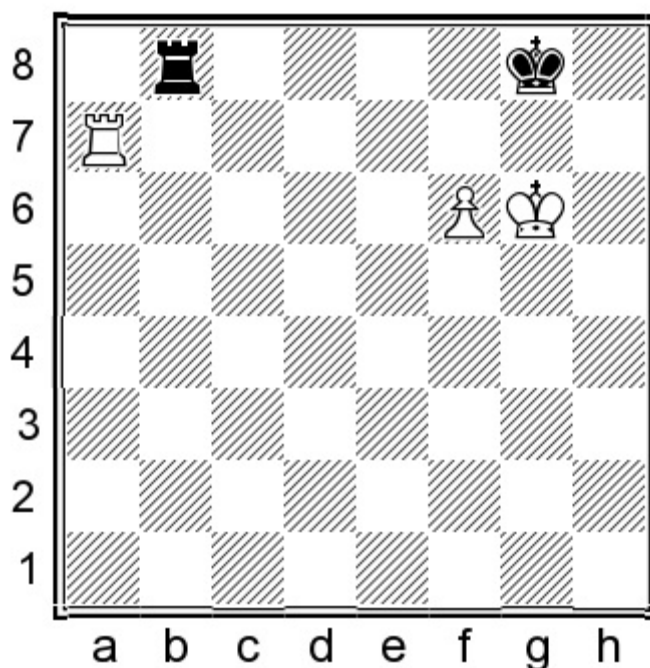
CHAPTER 2

BASIC ENDINGS: ROOKS WITH ONE PAWN

Here we will show the most necessary ‘basic’ positions, with the pawn on the 6th and 7th ranks to begin with. The Philidor and Lucena positions, then more complicated situations with the pawn on the fourth rank. Here we will explain the necessary methods of defence, the combination of frontal attack and proper king positions. The pieces must work together and for this reason the endgame is the best ‘school’ for studying the coordination of pieces in their simplest form of cooperation.

1

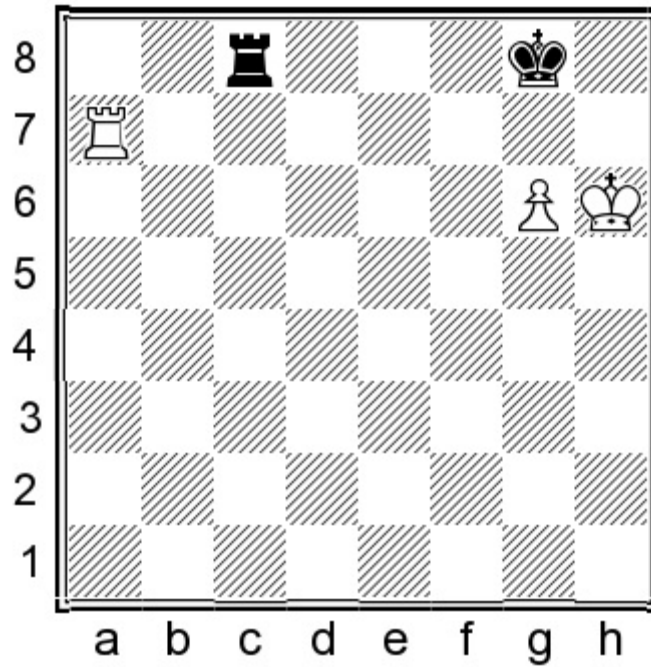
Basic



With pawns from the c- to f-files, the win is very easy using a simple manoeuvre.

1. ♖g7+ ♔f8 2. ♖h7 ♔g8 3. f7+ ♔f8 4. ♖h8+

2



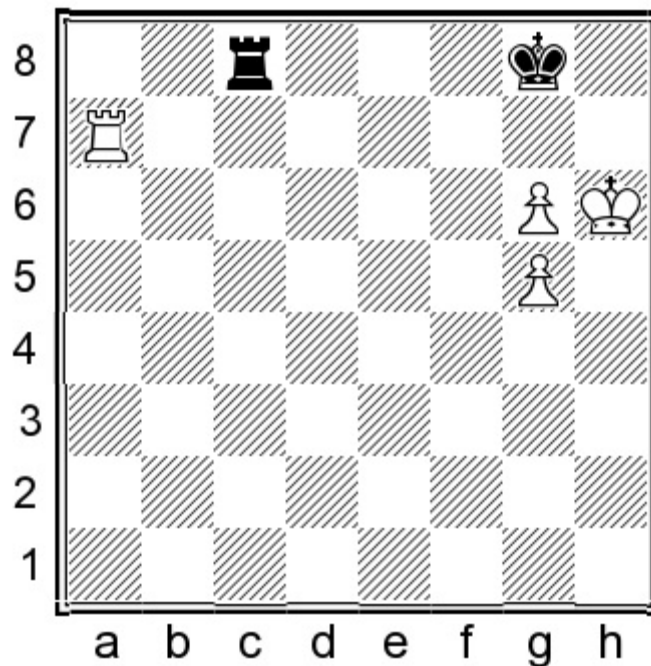
In contrast to the previous example, in the case of g- and h-pawns Black can hold the draw — even with passive defence.

1. ♖g7+ ♔h8 2. ♜h7+ ♔g8

White's only winning chance could be ♜i7, however the chess board is not wide enough to make this move. :-)

1/2

3



It is useful to know that if White has 2 g-pawns, and Black is forced to defend passively, then White can convert his advantage into a win.

1.♖a6!

A very precise move, required to avoid stalemate! After 1.g7? Black would survive in a spectacular way: 1...♞c6+ 2.g6 ♞xg6+! 3.♔xg6 stalemate.

1.♖a6! ♞b8 2.g7!

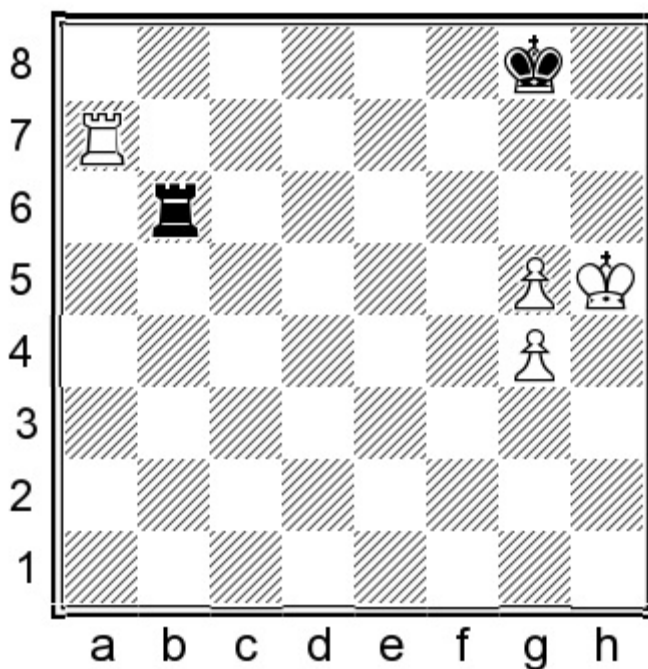
This time there is no danger of giving stalemate.

2...♞c8 3.♞f6! ♞b8 4.♞f8+!

The 2nd g-pawn plays its role. This is the only way to win!

4...♞xf8 5.gxf8=♞+ ♔xf8 6.♔h7 1-0

4



If Black has the chance to defend using the Philidor method, he holds the draw even against doubled pawns. White could have doubled e- or f-pawns as well, but against the correct defence, he cannot win the game.

1.g6 ♞b1!

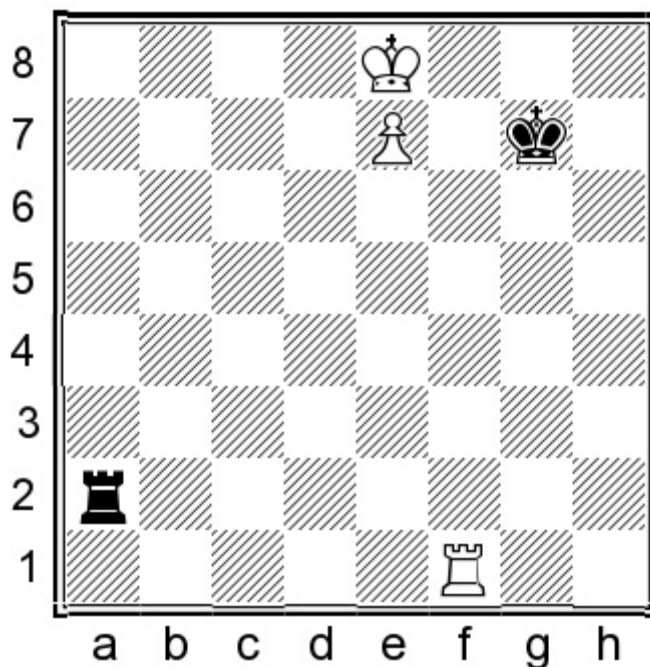
And, as we already know, Black holds the draw with vertical checks.

2.♔h6 ♞h1+ 3.♔g5 ♞b1 4.g7 ♞b6 5.♔h5 ♞c6 6.g5 ♞b6 7.g6 ♞b1

The funny thing is, White could have 5 pawns on the same file — against the Philidor defence, he cannot win the game!

1/2

5



Very basic positions occur when White's pawn has already reached the 7th rank and Black's king is squeezed out from behind the pawn.

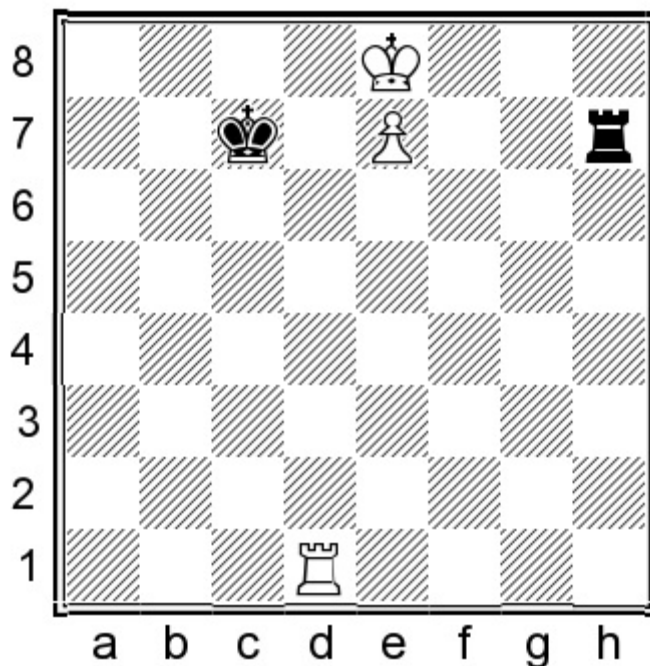
As we will see, the defensive side can only hold the draw if his king stands on the 'shorter' side of the board, and he gives checks with his rook from the 'longer' side.

1...♖a8+ 2.♔d7 ♜a7+ 3.♔d6 ♜a6+ 4.♔d5 ♜a5+ 5.♔c6 ♜a6+ 6.♔b7

White avoids the checks, but his king gets too far from the pawn.

6...♜e6= 1/2

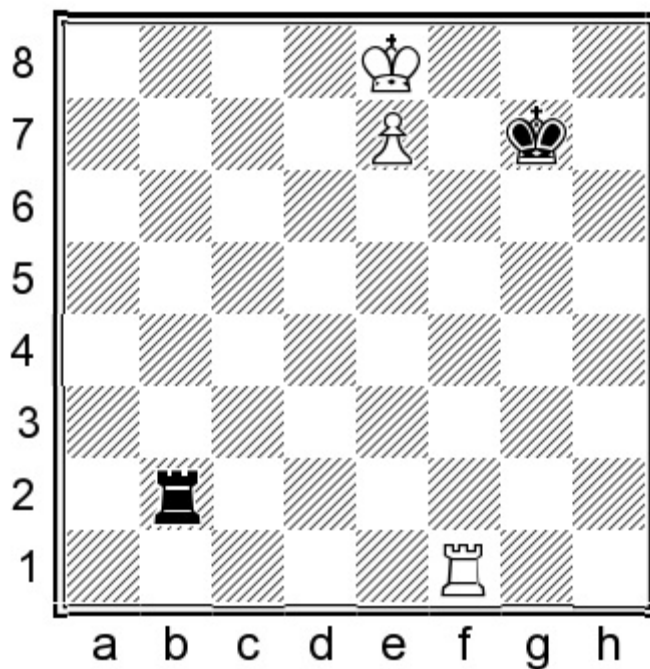
6



If the defensive side has not managed to set up the right defensive method, and his king is on the ‘longer’ side, then the ‘short’ side is not wide enough for the rook to give checks.

1...♖h8+ 2.♔f7 ♜h7+ 3.♔f6 ♜h8 4.♔g7 ♜a8 5.♔f7+- 1-0

7



Black to move. Seemingly he has reached the ideal setup, but his rook stands only on the b-file — which is not far enough afield for checks. We can say that such a rook is ‘too short’.

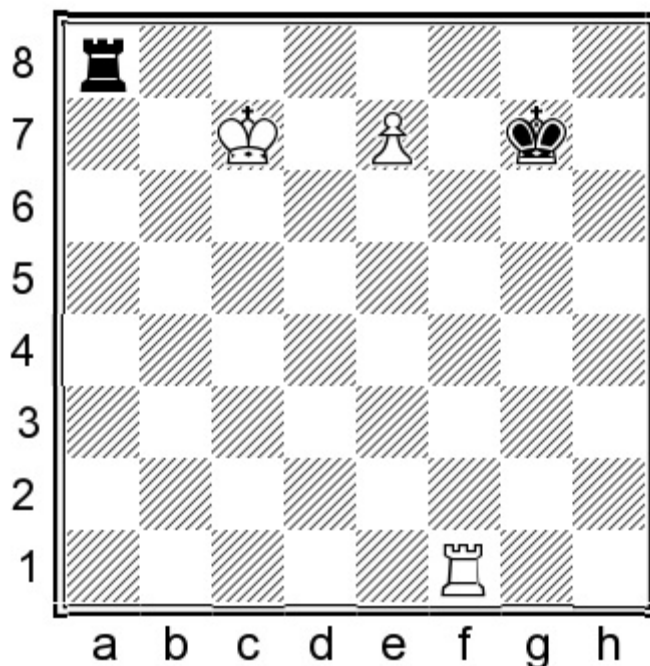
1...♜b8+

1...♖a2 2.♜f7+ ♔g8 (2...♔g6 3.♔f8+-) 3.♜f8+ We often see that in rook endgames with a small number of pawns, occupying the 8th rank with the rook is the key to winning the game. 3...♔g7 4.♔d7 ♜a7+ 5.♔d6 ♜a6+ 6.♔c5+-

1...♜b8+ 2.♔d7 ♜b7+ 3.♔d6 ♜b8

3...♜b6+ 4.♔c7 ♜e6 5.♔d7+-

4.♔c7 ♜a8



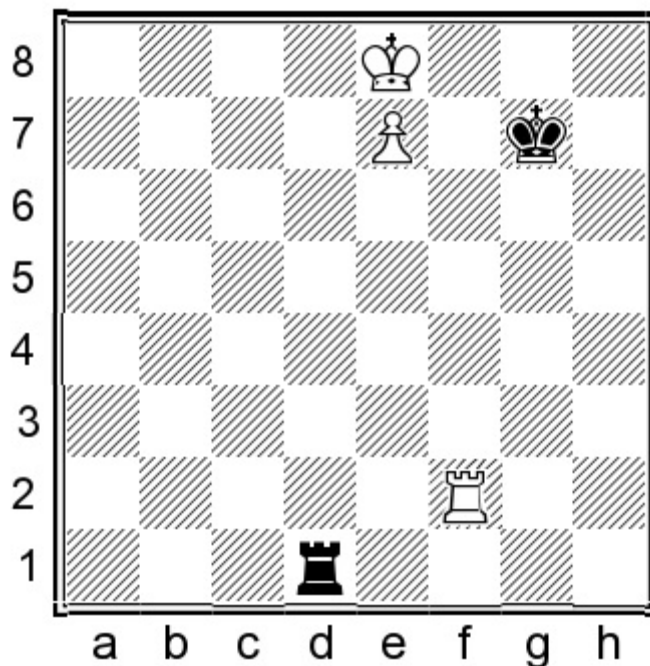
5.♜a1!

A very important motif and the only way to win! White achieves his goal of making the rook leave the 'long' side.

5...♜e8 6.♔d7 1-0

8

Lucena position



In the case where Black tries to cut the white king's way out from behind the pawn, White wins the game with the so-called 'bridge building' method.

1. ♖f4!

We will see the idea of this great move soon!

Also possible is to start building the bridge differently: 1. ♖g2+ ♔h7 2. ♖g4

1. ♖f4! ♜d2 2. ♖g4+ ♔h7

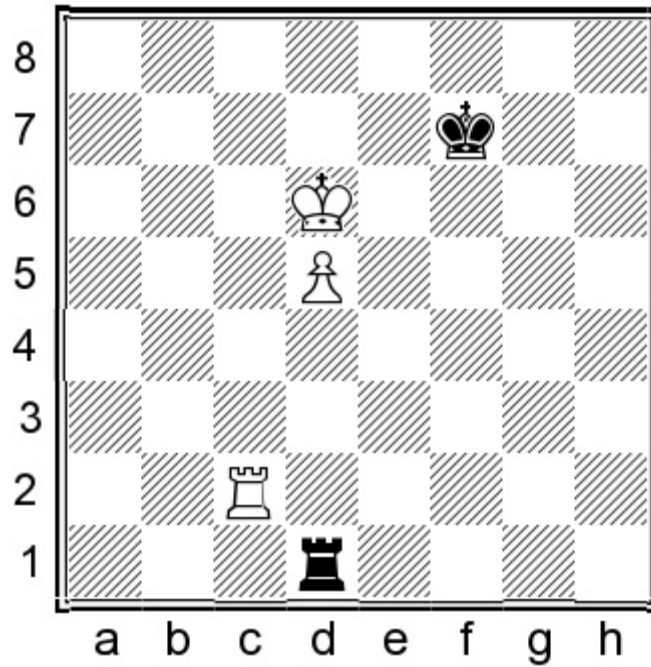
2... ♔f6 3. ♔f8+-

3. ♔f7 ♜f2+ 4. ♔e6 ♜e2+ 5. ♔f6 ♜f2+ 6. ♔e5 ♜e2+ 7. ♖e4 1-0

And the bridge has been built.

9

M. Euwe, 1931



There are few steps required to reach the basic position. First of all it is necessary to cut off the opponent's king.

1.♖e2! ♜a1 2.♔c6 ♜a6+ 3.♔c7 ♜a7+ 4.♔b6 ♜a1

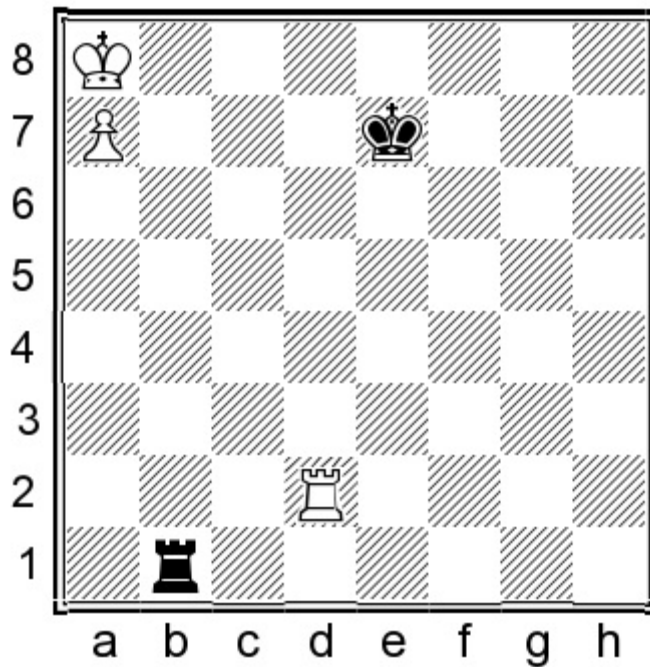
The rook is too 'short' and must turn back.

5.d6 ♜b1+ 6.♔c7 ♜c1+ 7.♔d8 ♜d1 8.d7 ♜c1 9.♞f2+ ♔g7 10.♞f4

and now White transfers into the Lucena position.

1-0

10



In practice we will very often meet this endgame. Black's king is now close enough to the corner and White has no winning chances at all.

1. ♖h2

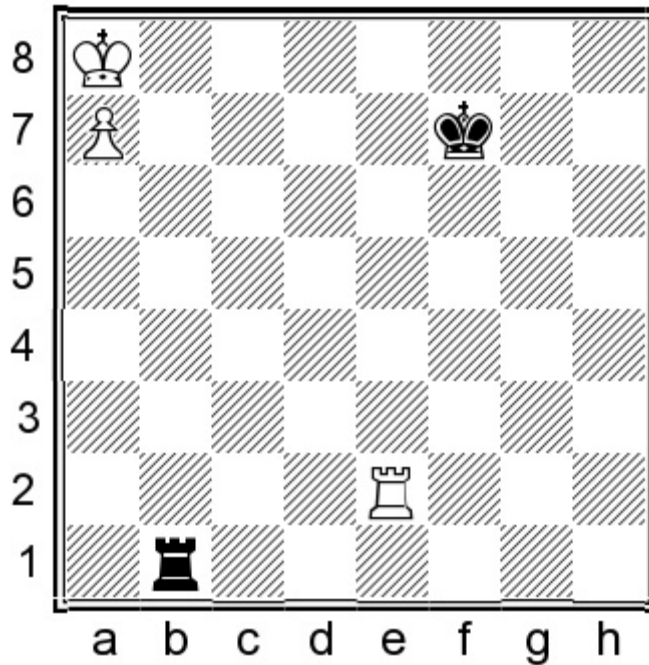
Other tries change nothing: 1. ♖d3 ♜b2;

1. ♖c2 ♔d7

1. ♖h2 ♔d7 2. ♖h8 ♔c7 3. ♖b8 ♜a1

White has managed to send the rook away from the b-file, but Black's king has just arrived and the white king will remain squeezed into the corner.

1/2



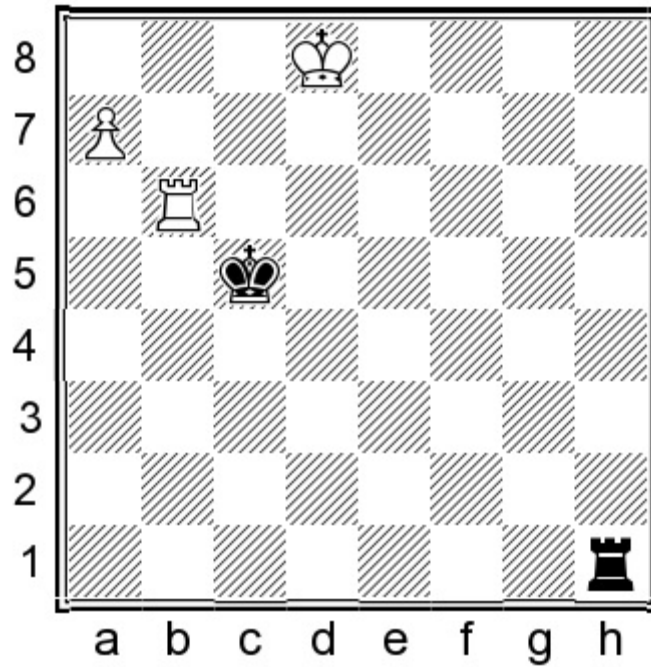
In cases with a- or h-pawns, the defensive side has the greatest drawing chances. However, in this example, Black's king is too far removed, and White's rook has enough time to rescue the king from the corner. Black's king should stay on e7 in order to make a draw, as we will see in the next diagram.

1.♖c2 ♔e7 2.♖c8

This is the winning technique! The rook is heading to b8 after which the king is in time to escape from the corner, but the rest still requires some technique.

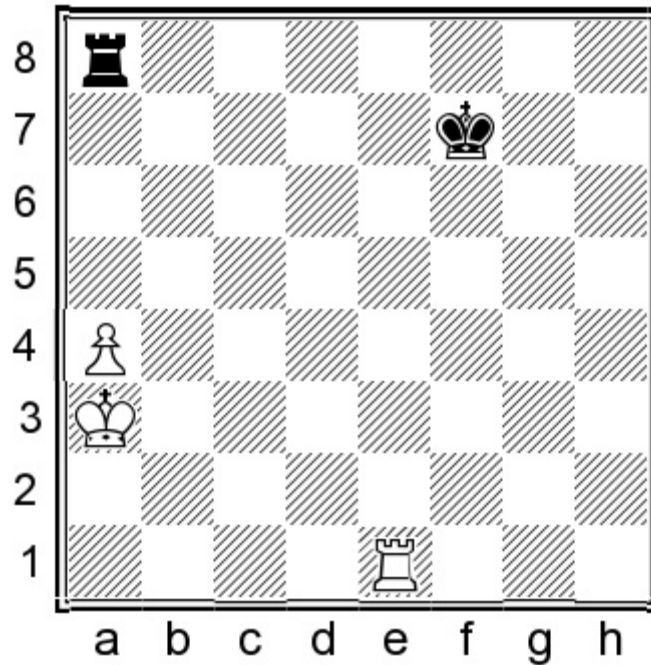
2...♔d7

2...♔d6 3.♖b8 ♖a1 4.♔b7 ♖b1+ 5.♔c8 ♖c1+ 6.♔d8 ♖h1 Black's trickiest try, but it does not save him.
7.♖b6+ ♔c5



8.♞c6+! ♔d5 (8...♔b5 9.♞c8 ♜h8+ 10.♔c7 ♜h7+ 11.♔b8+-) 9.♞a6 ♜h8+ 10.♔c7+-
 3.♞b8 ♞a1 4.♔b7 ♞b1+ 5.♔a6 ♞a1+ 6.♔b6 ♞b1+ 7.♔c5 1-0

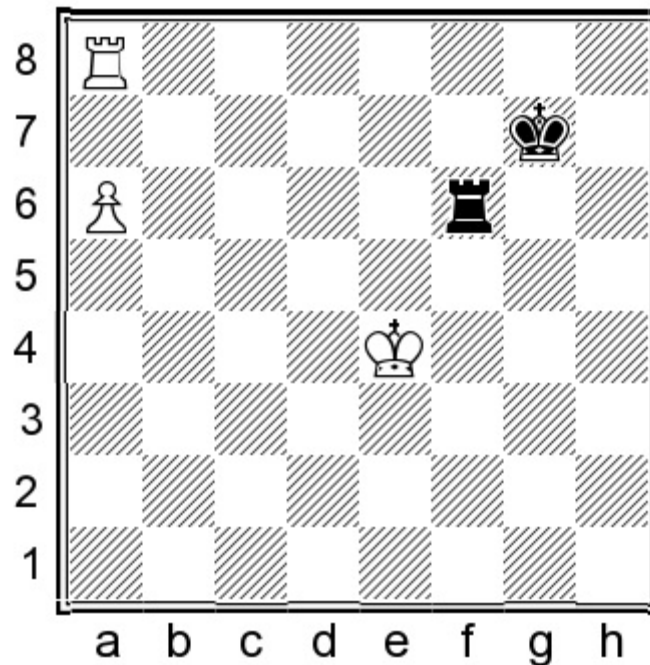
12



With the a- or h-pawn, Black can hold the draw with the so called ‘frontal attack’, even if his king is cut by 4 files from the pawn, due to the drawn pawn endgames.

1.♔b4 ♞e8! 2.♞d1 ♔e7 3.a5 ♞d8! 4.♞c1 ♔d7 5.a6 ♞c8! 6.♞d1+ ♔c7

Just in time!



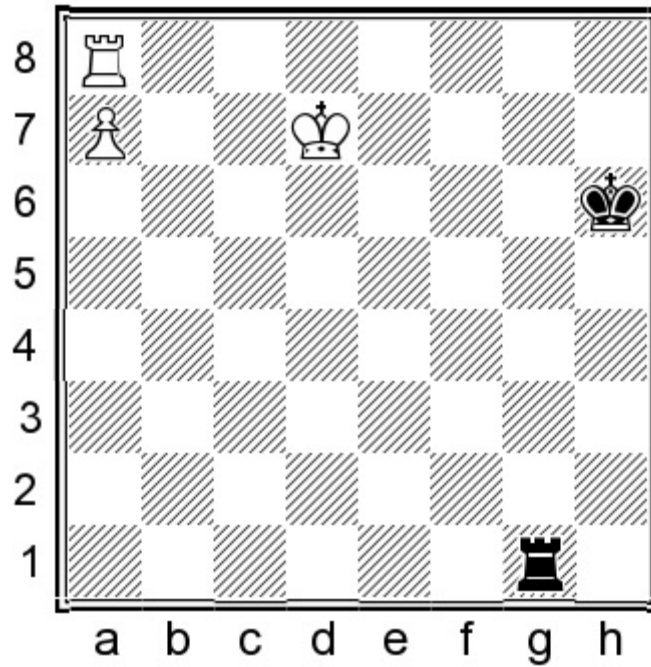
This is the so-called Vancura position. By attacking the pawn from the side, Black does not allow White to escape from the corner and activate his rook. Whenever the white king tries to approach the pawn, he can't hide from the side-checks.

1. ♔d5

If the pawn advances to the seventh rank, then the rook changes its defensive position to behind the pawn. 1. a7 ♖a6 2. ♔d5 ♖a1 When the pawn is pushed to a7, Black can hold the draw with vertical checks if his king is on g7 or h7! 3. ♔c6 ♖c1+ 4. ♔b6 ♖b1+ 5. ♔c7 ♖c1+ 6. ♔d6= (With the rook on b8 and pawn on b7, the outcome is the same)

1. ♔d5 ♖f5+ 2. ♔c4 ♖f6 3. ♔b5 ♖f5+ 4. ♔c6 ♖f6+ 5. ♔b7 ♖f7+

If White does not push his pawn to a7, and thereby keeps a square on a7 for his king against vertical checks, Black holds the draw by giving horizontal checks.



White's pawn has reached the 7th rank, but there is no time for vertical checks because of the bad position of Black's king.

1...♖g7+

1...♖d1+ 2.♔c6 ♖c1+ 3.♔d5 ♖d1+ 4.♔e4 ♖e1+ 5.♔d3 ♖d1+ 6.♔e2 ♖a1 7.♖h8+-

1...♖g7+ 2.♔c6 ♔g5!!

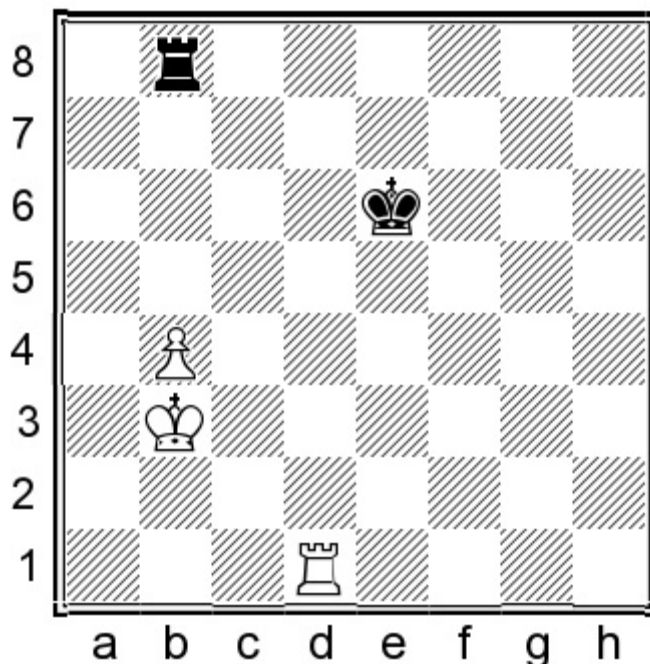
Black hides behind his own rook from the threatened check!

2...♔h7? 3.♖h8+-

3.♔b6 ♖g6+ 4.♔b5 ♖g7 1/2

15

C. Balogh



Let's now take a look at rook endgames in which the pawn has not yet crossed the middle of the board (the 4th rank).

In practice we quite often meet such examples. I can even show you a game from my own experience, one where I could successfully use the knowledge from the given diagrams. The rook keeps the black king 2 files away from the pawn, so he cannot approach it. However, in this seemingly hopeless position, Black can hold the draw thanks to the so-called 'frontal attack'. In general in rook endgames, both attacking and defensive sides should aim for active play and this means putting rooks behind the pawn.

However, in this case, the only way to survive is the passive defence from in front of the pawn. I would like to draw your attention to the position of the black king; it must stay on e6 or on e5! Let us see why it is so!

1. ♖d4

Defending the pawn, and in so doing preparing the march of his king. Without this move it was not possible because the rook checks would have forced the king back behind the pawn, viz:

1. ♖c4 ♜c8+ 2. ♔b5 ♜b8+ 3. ♖c5 ♜c8+ 4. ♖b6 ♜b8+=

1. ♖d4 ♔e5!

This is why it is so important that in the starting position the Black king must stay on e6 or on e5, to be able to attack the rook. In the initial position if Black king were on e7, we could see the win in the 2nd diagram, and with the king on e4, in the 3rd diagram.

2. ♔c3

2. ♖d7 ♔e6 3. ♜a7 ♔d6 4. ♔a4 ♔c6 The king arrives! 5. ♔a5 ♜b5+ 6. ♔a4 ♜b8=

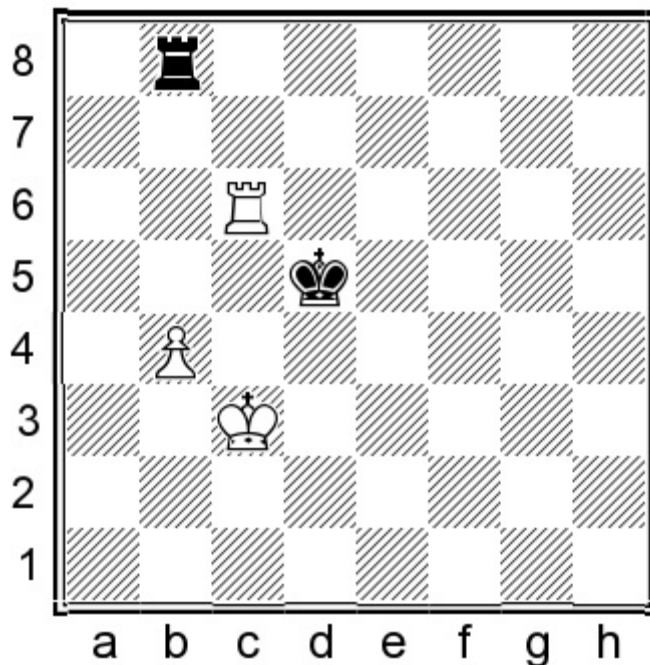
2...♖c8+

White must let Black's king approach the pawn.

3.♖c4

3.♔d3 ♜b8=

3...♜b8 4.♖c6 ♔d5



5.♖a6

White tries to prevent the king getting in front of the pawn from the 6th rank. However, with two very strong moves, Black saves the game.

5...♖c8+! 6.♔b3 ♜c6!

Forcing the rook to leave its good position, since the pawn endgames are drawn.

7.♖a7

7.♖xc6 ♔xc6 8.♔a4 ♔b6=;

7.b5 ♜xa6 8.bxa6 ♔c6=

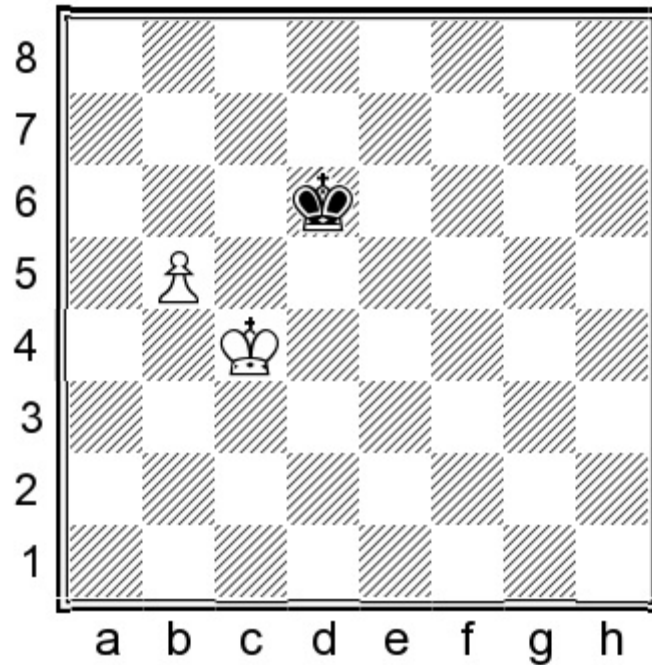
7...♜b6 8.♖c7

8.♔a4 ♔c6=

8...♔d6 9.♖c4 ♖c6!

Thanks to the drawish pawn endgame, the black king gets in front of the pawn.

10.b5 ♖xc4 11.♔xc4

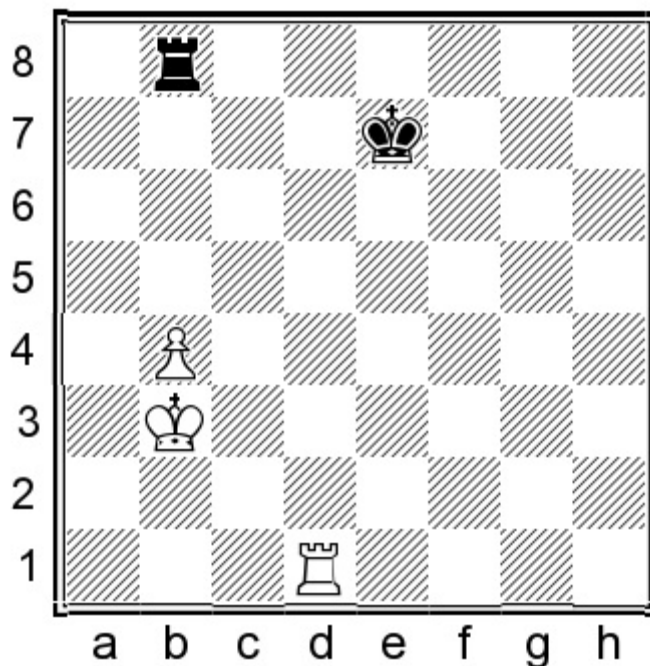


11...♔c7

It is important to know that the ‘frontal attack’ works **only** if White has a- or b-pawns, and his king is cut off by less than 3 files from the pawn!

1/2

16



This time Black's king does not stand on the ideal e6 or e5 squares, and therefore he cannot hold the draw.

1. ♖d4!

White protects the pawn in order to let the king going forward.

1. ♖c4 would lead nowhere: 1... ♜c8+ 2. ♔b5 ♜b8+ 3. ♔c5 ♜c8+ 4. ♔b6 ♜b8+

1. ♖d4! ♔e6 2. ♔c4

Finally the king can help the pawn as he need not worry about the checks.

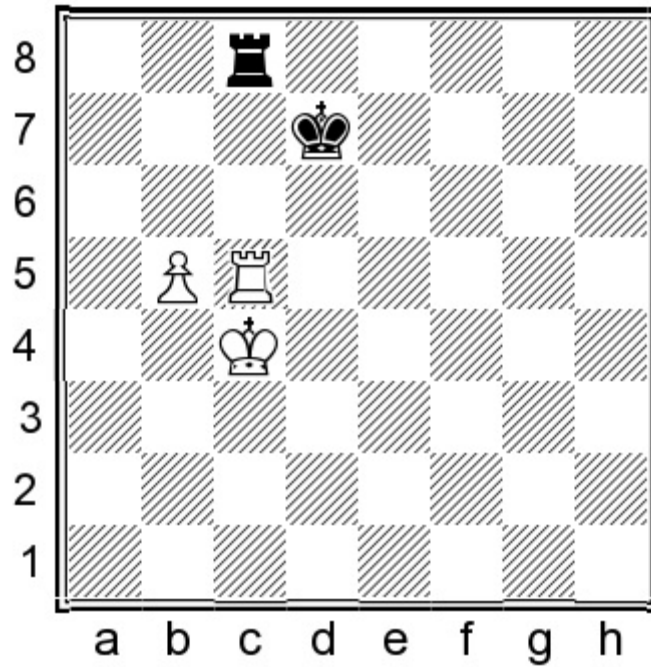
2... ♔e5

2... ♜c8+ 3. ♔b5 ♜b8+ 4. ♔c6+-

3. ♖d5+ ♔e6 4. b5

The pawn has crossed the middle of the board.

4... ♜c8+ 5. ♖c5 ♔d7



Black is hoping for the usual drawn pawn endgame, but this time it is too late. Here there exists a very important winning idea.

5...♖b8 6.♖c6+ ♔d7 7.♔c5+-

6.b6!

and the pawn endgame is winning

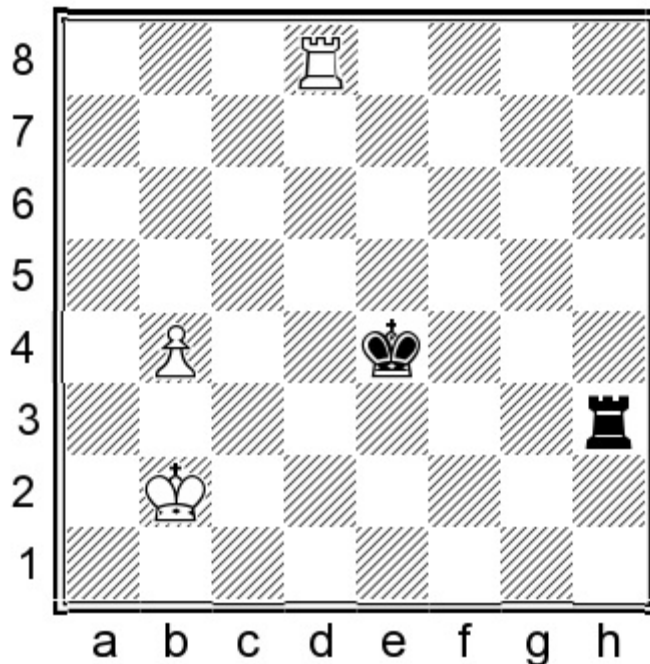
6...♖xc5+ 7.♔xc5 ♔c8 8.♔c6 ♔b8 9.b7 ♔a7 10.♔c7 1-0

17

C. Balogh

R. Kempinski

Warszawa, 2008



White cuts off the black king, but his king is also cut-off! The plan is to try to support his pawn by placing the rook behind it.

1.♔a2 ♖g3 2.♞d2

2...♞g5=

2...♞g8??

Robert decides to defend with the ‘frontal attack’ but, as we already know, his king should have been on e5 or e6. Let’s see how White can win in this case.

2...♞h3 3.b5 ♞h5 4.♞b2 (4.b6 ♞a5+ 5.♔b1 ♞a8 and the pawn falls) 4...♔d5 5.b6 ♞h8=

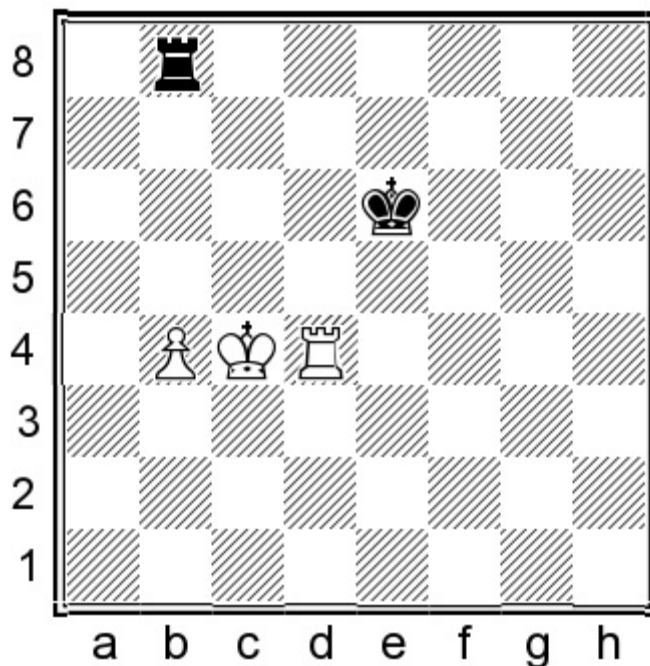
3.♔b3+- ♞b8 4.♞d7!

This is the difference — Black has to be able to play ...♔e6 now for the draw!

4...♔e5 5.♔c4 ♔e6

5...♞c8+ 6.♔b5 ♔e6 (6...♞b8+ 7.♔c5 ♞c8+ 8.♔b6 ♞b8+ 9.♞b7 The usual method no longer works.)
7.♞b7+-

6.♞d4



And we already know this position from diagram number 3!

6...♖c8+

6...♔e5 7.♞d5+ ♔e6 8.b5 ♞c8+ 9.♞c5 ♔d7 (9...♞b8 10.♞c6+ ♔d7 11.♔c5+-) 10.b6!+-

7.♔b5 ♔e5 8.♞d7 ♔e6 9.♞b7+- ♔d6 10.♔a6

From here, White will push his pawn to b7 — then he wins with the technique of ‘bridge building’

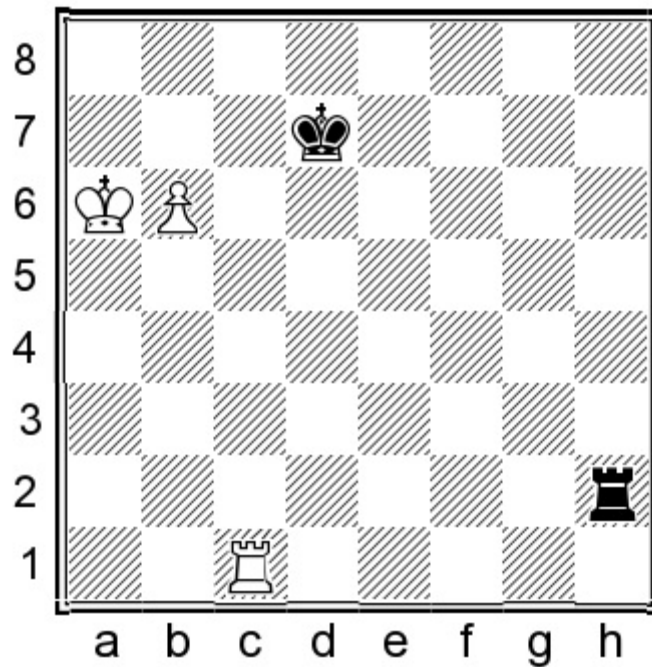
10...♞c1

10...♔c6 11.b5+ ♔c5 12.b6 ♔c6 13.♔a7+-

11.b5 ♞h1 12.♞g7 ♞h2 13.b6 ♔c6 14.♞c7+ ♔d6 15.♞c1

The king is successfully cut.

15...♔d7



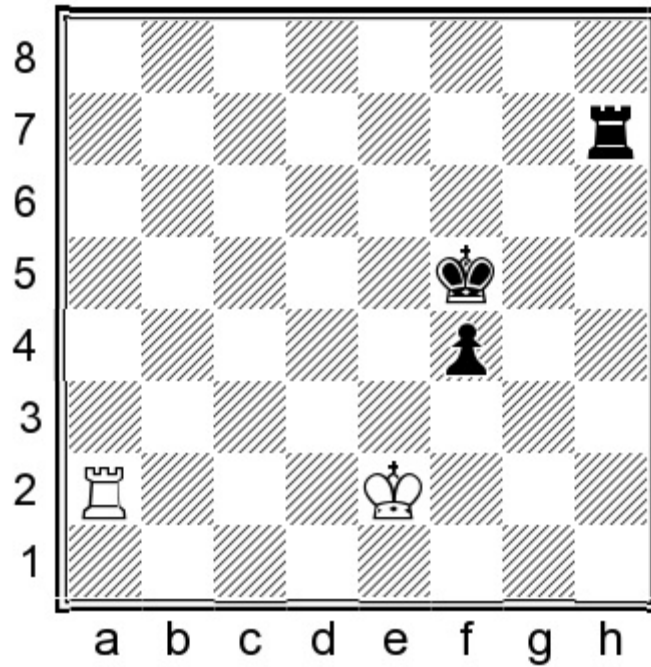
16.b7

Black resigned, as he did not want to wait until the bridge is built.

16.b7 ♖a2+ 17.♗b6 ♜b2+ 18.♗a7 ♖a2+ 19.♗b8 ♖a3 20.♞d1+ ♗e7 (20...♗c6 21.♗c8+-) 21.♞d4! ♖a1
 22.♗c7 ♞c1+ 23.♗b6 ♖b1+ 24.♗c6 ♞c1+ 25.♗b5 ♖b1+ 26.♞b4+-

1-0

18
K. Lagno
E. Tomilova
Sochi, 2016



The simplest Philidor method.

60. ♖a3

The first step is to try to control the third rank, provoking the opponent's pawn forward.

60... ♗g4 61. ♔f2 ♜h2+ 62. ♔f1 ♞c2 63. ♞b3 ♜a2 64. ♞c3

White just waits until Black advances his pawn.

64... f3 65. ♞c8

Immediately transferring the rook to the back rank in order to be able to check from behind.

65... ♜a1+ 66. ♔f2 ♜a2+ 67. ♔f1 1/2

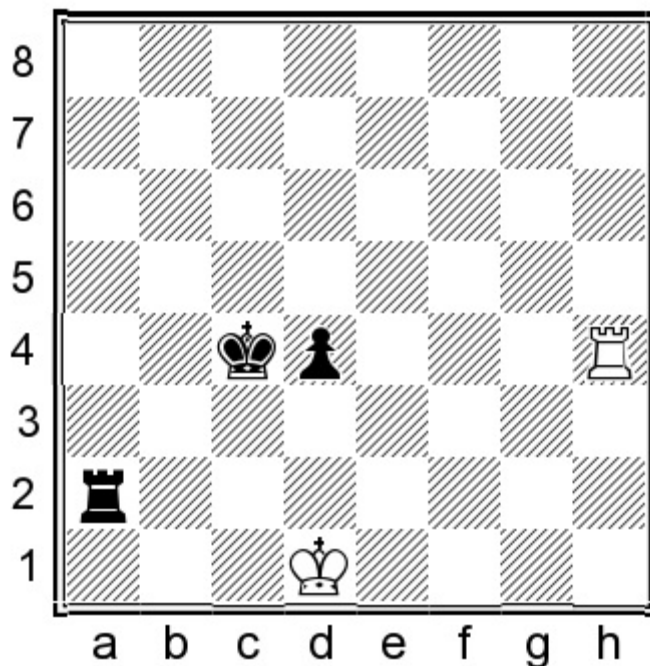
19

W. Boulton

D. Tunks

4NCL, 2008

Now for a practical example where the players treated basic knowledge incorrectly.



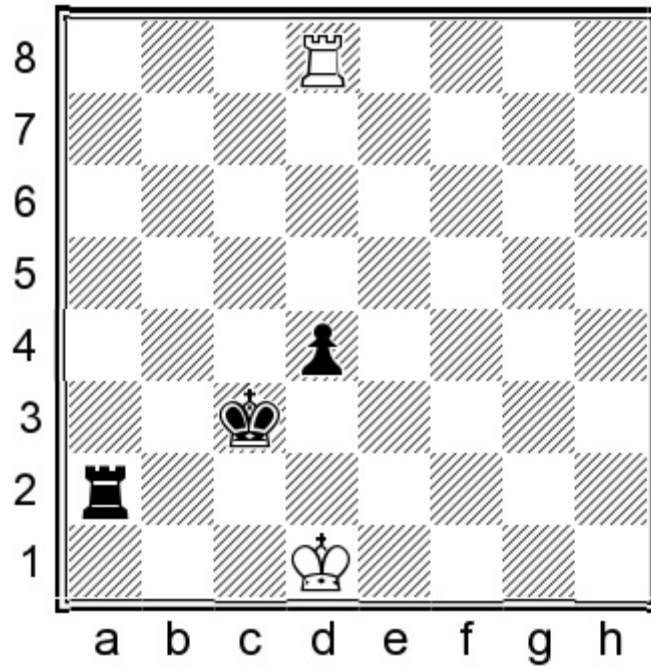
This is the most basic Philidor position. Waiting is the easiest way to draw — sometimes the only one — although sometimes there are more complicated ways, as in this game.

77. ♖h8

Simplest according to Philidor is 77. ♖h3! Then White keeps the rook on the 3rd rank until Black plays ...d4-d3. After this White moves his rook to the 8th rank and attacks the enemy king which can no longer use the pawn as a shield.

77. ♖h8 ♔c3 78. ♖c8+

Once again White missed the best form of defence — the ‘sticking’ method 78. ♖d8!

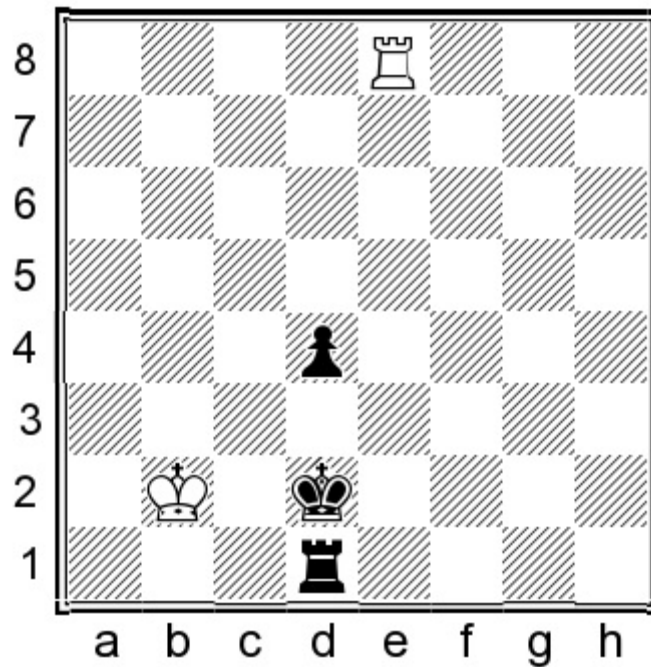


78...♔d3 79.♕c1 ♖a1+ 80.♕b2 ♜d1 81.♞h8 ♞e1 82.♞d8 ♔e3 83.♕c2

78...♔d3 79.♕c1 ♖a1+ 80.♕b2 ♜d1 81.♞d8

The simplest recommendation here is to move the rook to the long side with 81.♞h8.

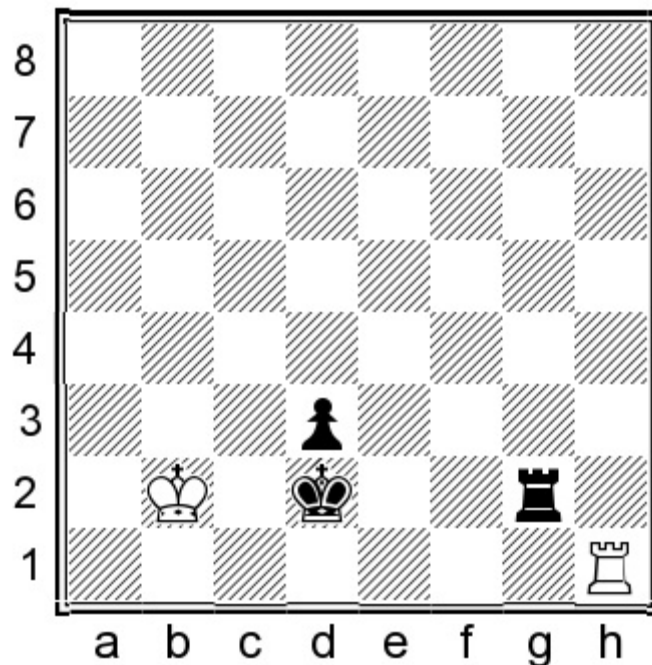
81...♔e2 82.♞e8+ ♔d2



83.♞h8

Finally!

83...♖e1 84.♜h4 d3 85.♜h2+ ♜e2 86.♜h1 ♜g2



87.♔b1??

There were two ways to draw here: 87.♜h3= and 87.♔b3=

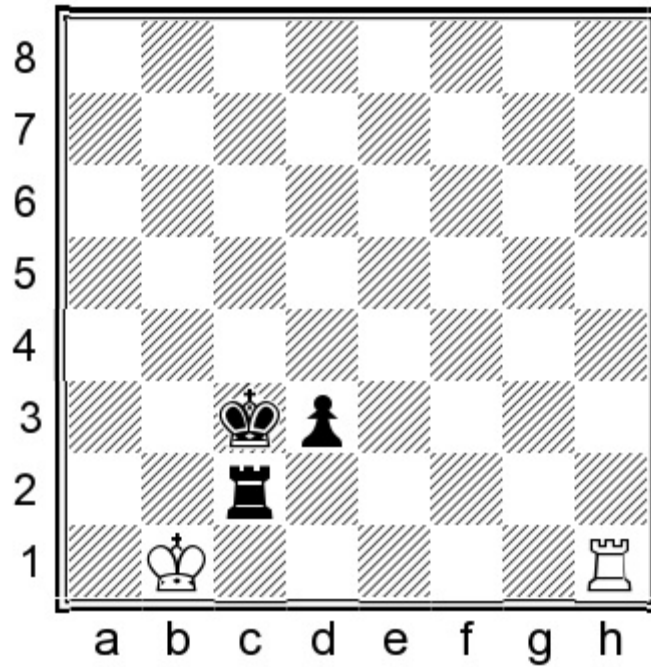
87...♔c3 88.♔c1 ♜a2

Almost anything is winning now, e.g. 88...♜g8! 89.♔b1 ♜b8+ 90.♔a1 ♔c2

89.♔b1 ♜b2+ 90.♔a1 ♜c2

90...d2?! 91.♜h3+ ♔b4 92.♔xb2 d1=♚ complicates things a bit, but 90...♜b4! wins easily.

91.♔b1



91...♔b3??

91...♞b2+ 92.♔a1 d2 (Very simple is 92...♞b8) 93.♞h3+ ♔b4 94.♞h4+ ♔a3 95.♞h1 ♞b3! Protection against checks. 96.♞d1 ♞e3 97.♔b1 ♔b3 and there is no defence against ...♞e1.

92.♞h3??

Correct was 92.♞h8 ♔c3 93.♞c8+ ♔d2 94.♞h8

92...♞c3??

The last available win here was with 92...♔c3!-+

93.♞h2 ♔c4 94.♔b2 ♞b3+ 95.♔c1 ♔c3 96.♞c2+!

Very important stalemate idea.

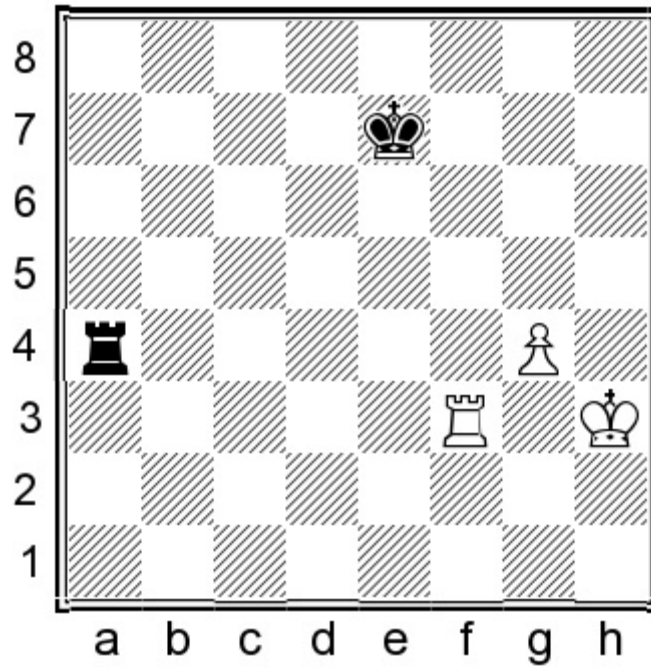
96...dxc2 1/2

20

R. Fischer

J. Sherwin

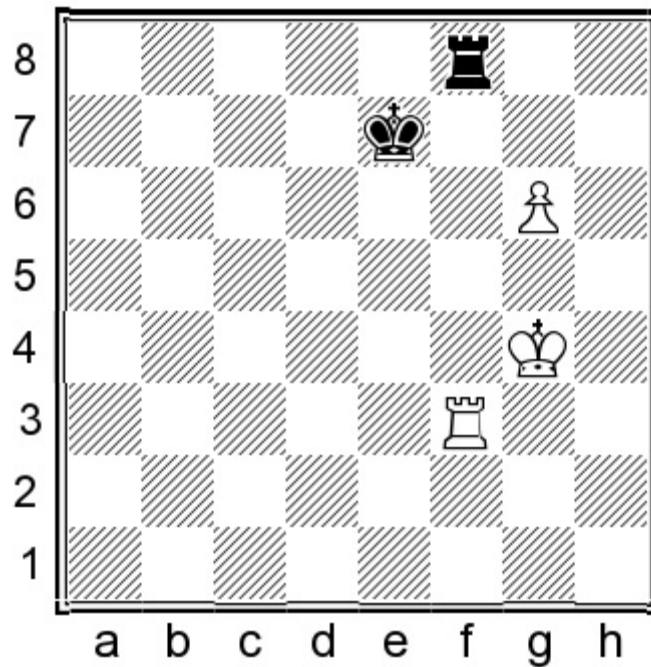
Portoroz, 1958



78...♔e6??

The typical way to draw was preparation of the frontal attack here by 78...♖a8. Then 79.♔h4 (79.♖f4 ♖f8) 79...♗h8+ 80.♔g5 ♗g8+ 81.♔h5 ♗h8+=

78...♔e6?? 79.♔h4 ♖a8 80.g5 ♗h8+ 81.♔g4 ♔e7 82.g6 ♖f8



83.♖f5!

This is a rarely known, but very important winning position

83...♖h8

The main point is that the pawn endgame is won after 83...♖xf5 84.♔xf5 ♔e8 85.♔e6 ♔f8 86.♔f6 ♔g8 87.g7 ♔h7 88.♔f7

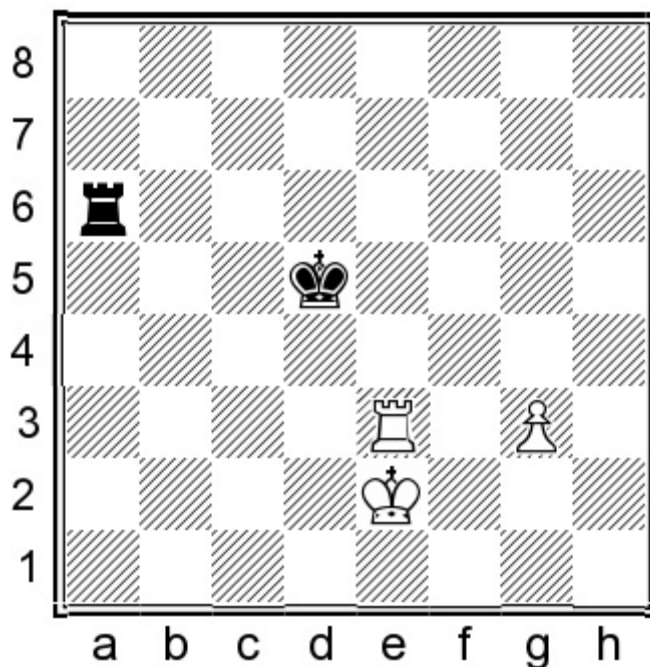
84.♔g5 ♖h1 85.♖f2 ♖h3 86.g7 ♖g3+ 87.♔h6 ♖h3+ 88.♔g6 ♖g3+ 89.♔h7 ♖h3+ 90.♔g8 1-0

21

M. Taimanov

B. Larsen

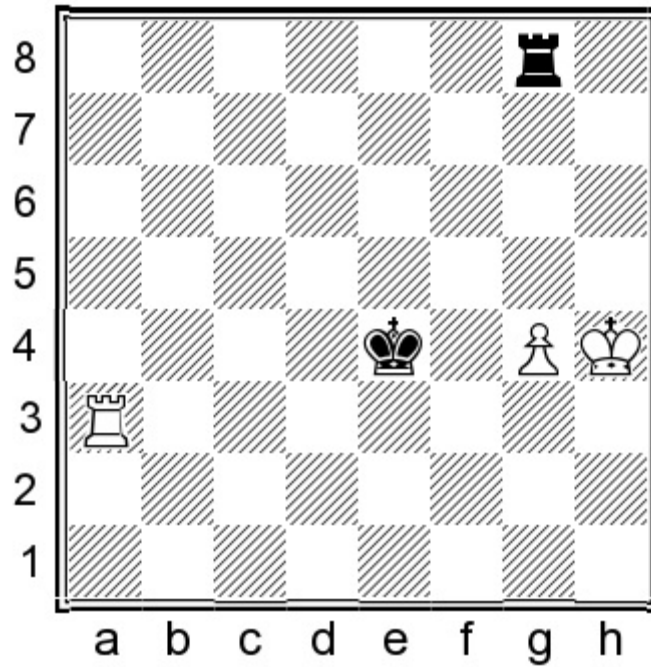
Palma de Mallorca, 1970



55.♔f3

Wrong is 55.g4? ♖e6 when offering the transition to a drawn pawn endgame is the classical defence.

55.♔f3 ♖f6+ 56.♔g4 ♖f8 57.♔h5 ♖h8+ 58.♔g6 ♔d4 59.♖a3 ♔e4 60.g4 ♖g8+ 61.♔h5 ♖h8+ 62.♔g5 ♖g8+ 63.♔h4



63...♔e5?

There were two ways to draw:

63...♔f4 64.♞a4+ ♔f3 65.♔h5 ♞h8+ 66.♔g6 ♞g8+ 67.♔f5 ♞f8+ 68.♔e6 ♞g8=;

and 63...♞h8+ 64.♔g3 ♔e5 65.♞a5+ ♔f6=

64.♞a6! ♔f4

64...♞h8+ 65.♔g5 ♞g8+ 66.♞g6 ♞f8 67.♞g7

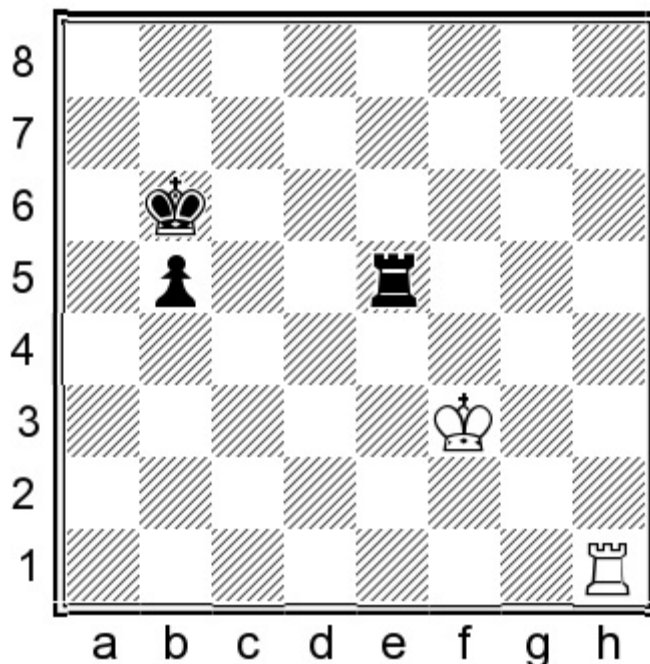
65.♞f6+ ♔e5 66.g5 1-0

CHAPTER 3

USEFUL MANOEUVRES

As we explained at the beginning of the book, we cannot simply remember all the possible positions, so we must study different typical methods, and how to use them in the proper way and in certain positions.

1 Basic cut



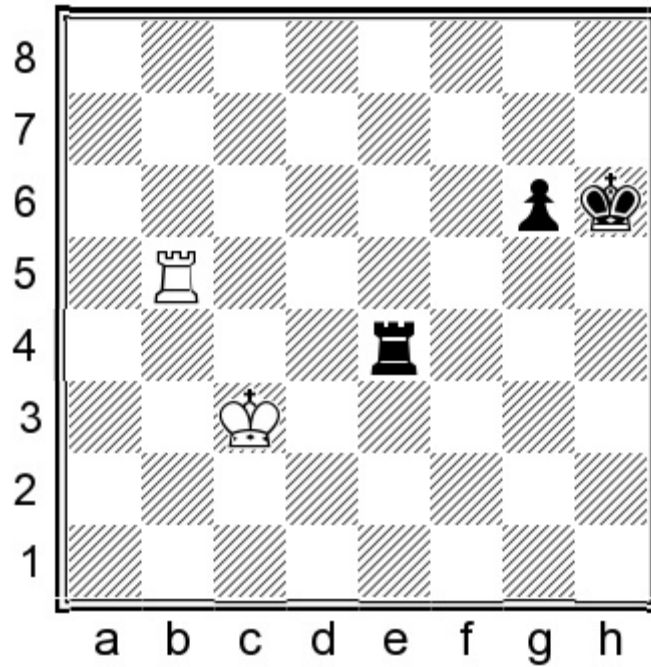
The king is cut off by three files from the passed pawn, therefore the position is lost.

1.♔f4 ♖e8 2.♞b1 ♔c5 3.♞c1+ ♔d4 4.♞b1 ♞b8

and there is no defence against the b-pawn's advance.

2 M. Tal I. Zaitsev Riga, 1968

When the king is cut off it does not mean that the position is automatically lost: there are still methods available to fight against it. The first one involves the transfer into a drawn pawn ending. The second is the frontal attack against the pawn, if it has not crossed the middle of the board.



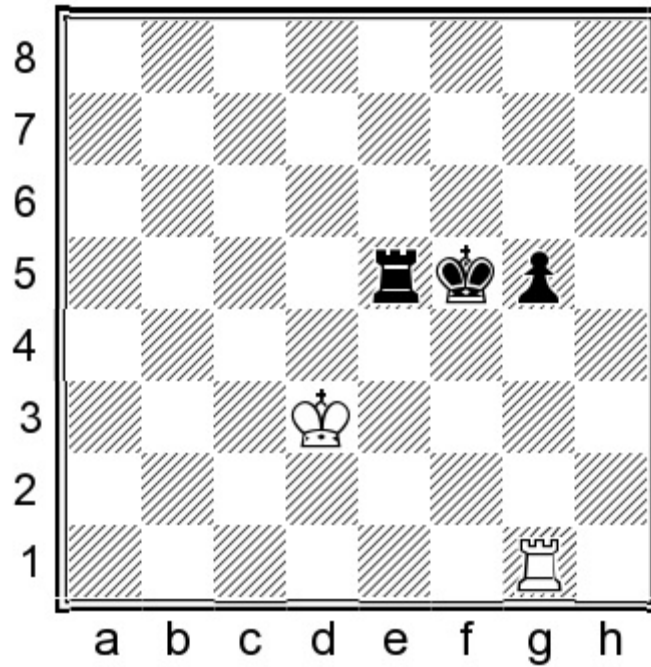
1.♔d3??

The main task here is to control the first rank in order to conduct the frontal attack properly. 1.♖b1! g5 2.♔d3 ♜e5 3.♔d4 Here is the difference: the king attacks the rook, whose function is to protect the pawn on g5: 3...♞e8 4.♞h1+ ♔g6 5.♞g1 Now it is a theoretical draw.

1.♔d3?? ♞e1 2.♔d2 ♞e6 3.♞b1 g5 4.♞g1

A lost pawn ending results from: 4.♞e1 ♞xe1 5.♔xe1 ♔h5 6.♔f2 ♔h4

4...♔h5 5.♞h1+ ♔g6 6.♞g1 ♞e5 7.♔d3 ♔f5



8.♖f1+

8.♔d4 ♜e4+ 9.♔d3 g4 10.♞f1+ ♞f4 11.♔e2 g3! Once more we encounter this ‘not well-known’ theoretical position.

8...♔g4 9.♔d4 ♜e2 10.♞g1+ ♔f4 11.♞f1+ ♔g3 12.♞g1+ ♞g2 0–1

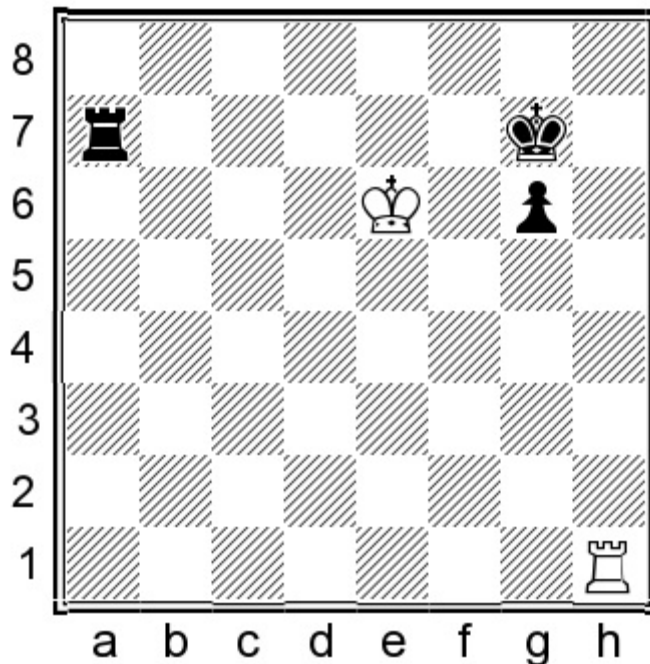
3

M. Lyell

T. Valgmae

Gibraltar, 2010

There are positions where it is necessary to be very careful with the ‘cut-off king’, especially when it involves horizontal cuts. And frontal attacks must be conducted with a strong hand.



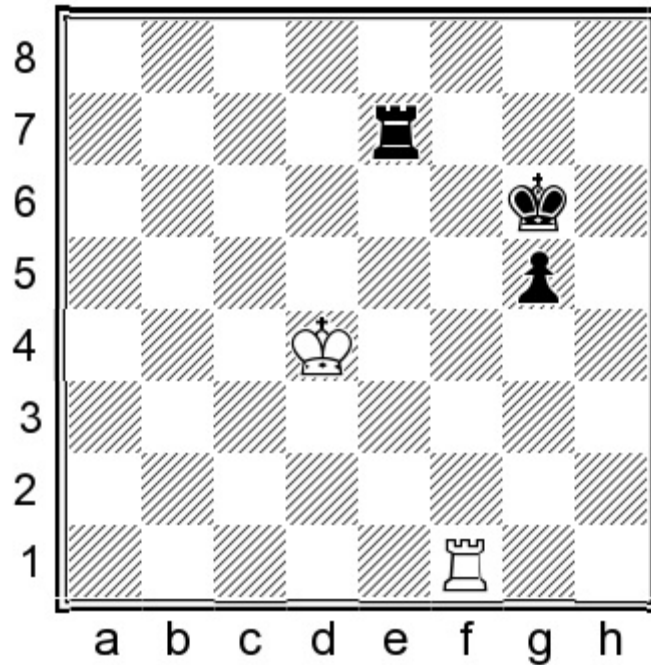
53. ♖f1?

The best way to hold the draw here was 53. ♔e5! ♜a4 54. ♞h2! not allowing Black's king to come out. (It is necessary to know when and how to start the frontal attack. 54. ♞g1? ♔h6—+)

53. ♖f1? g5?

The horizontal cut of the king is the worst to defend against: 53... ♞a5! Then the g-pawn and king simply advance together.

54. ♔e5 ♞e7+ 55. ♔d4 ♔g6



This is a very important theoretical position — White can hold it if he can prevent the advance of the enemy pawn.

56.♔d3??

Allowing the pawn to advance. It was necessary to use the frontal attack.

56.♖g1! ♜e8 57.♔d3

56...g4!-+

The pawn crosses the middle of the board, and such positions are — in most cases — won, as long as it is not possible to defend using the afore-mentioned transfer into a drawn pawn endgame.

57.♔d2 ♔g5 58.♜e1 ♜xe1 59.♔xe1 ♔h4 60.♔f1 ♔h3 0-1

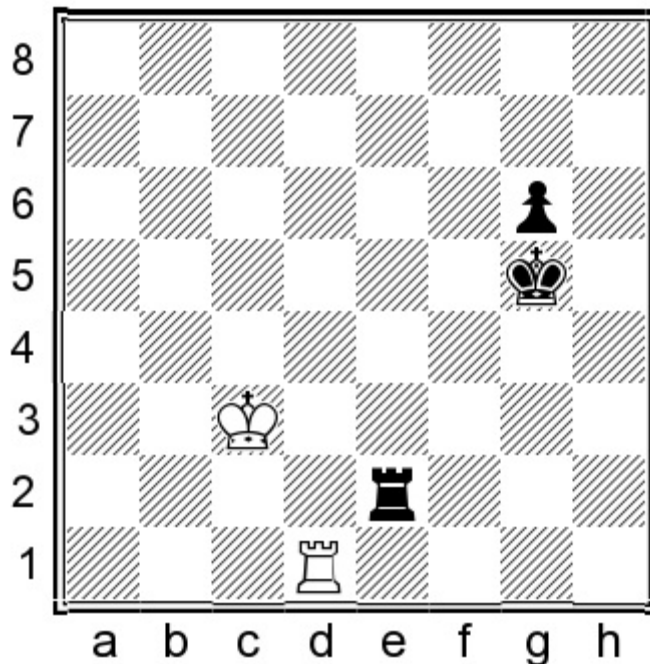
4

B. Jobava

J. Cuartas

Turin, 2006

The method of cutting off the king looks to be very simple, but even Grandmasters perform it with flaws!



56...♖f2?

Wrong. The win could be achieved with 56...♔h4 57.♖h1+ (57.♖d4+ ♔g3 58.♖d5 ♔f4 59.♖d4+ ♖e4 60.♖d1 g5 61.♔d3 ♖e3+ 62.♔d2 ♖e5 63.♖f1+ ♔g3 64.♔d3 g4+) 57...♔g3 58.♔d3 ♖g2 59.♔e3 g5 60.♖h8 g4 and then performing the Lucena 'bridge manoeuvre'.

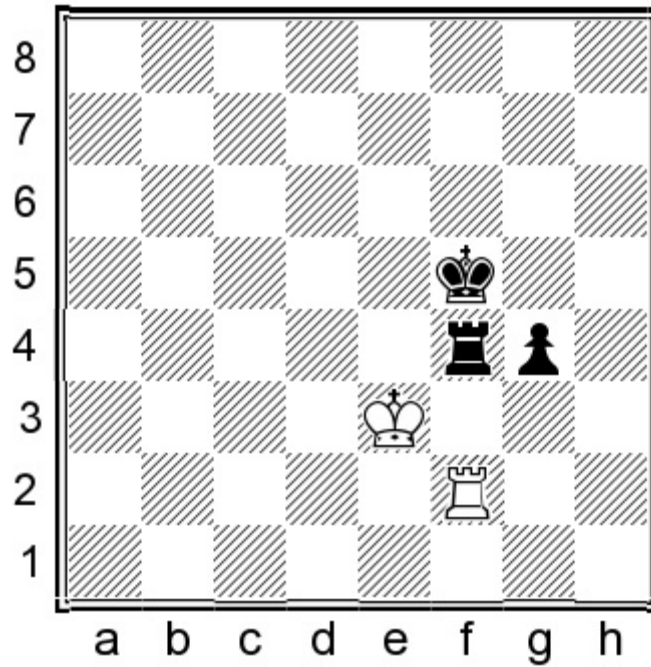
56...♖f2? 57.♖g1+ ♔f5 58.♔d3 g5 59.♔e3 ♖f4 60.♖g2

Simpler here is 60.♖a1

60...g4

Now 60...♖a4 does not win in view of 61.♖g1 g4 62.♖f1+ ♔g5 63.♔f2 ♖f4+ 64.♔g2 ♖xf1 65.♔xf1 ♔h4 66.♔g2=

61.♖f2!



The main method of defence has been correctly prepared and performed.

61...♖xf2 62.♗xf2 ♕f4 63.♗g2 g3 64.♗g1 ♕f3 65.♗f1 g2+ 66.♗g1 ♕g3 1/2

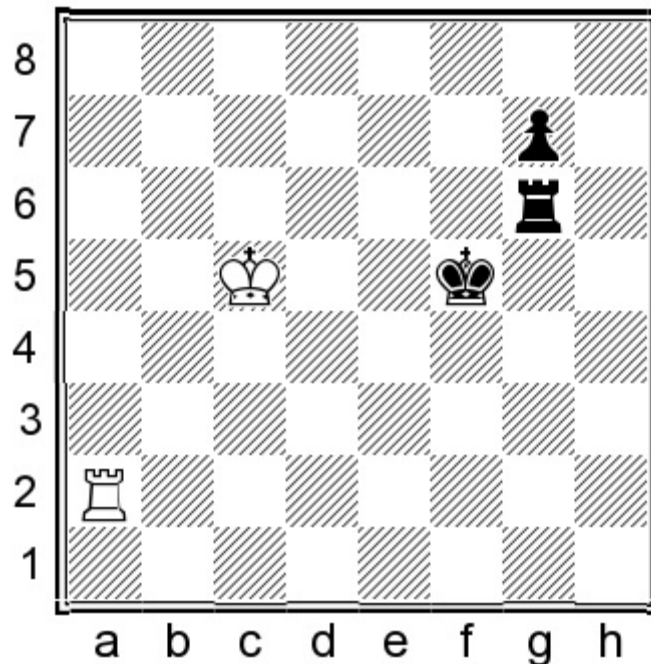
5

H. Fahrni

S. Alapin

Karlsbad, 1911

More complicated cases can be seen when we have a serious cutting off of the king, but the pawn is not yet prepared for 'full speed ahead'.



We can see again that the 'classics' had bad endgame knowledge too!

63...♖e6?

The horizontal cut is much more effective than the vertical cut!

63...♖g4 64.♞a8 g5 65.♞f8+ ♔e4 66.♞g8 ♞g1 soon reaching a basic Lucena position.

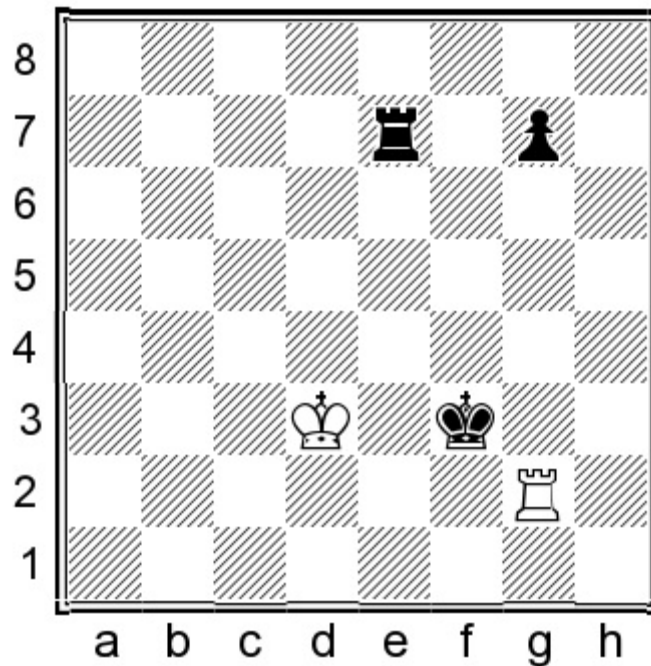
63...♖e6? 64.♔d4?

In such cases it is necessary to start attacking the opponent's king before they have coordinated their king, rook and pawn together for the final promotion: 64.♞f2+ ♔g5 65.♞g2+ ♔f6 66.♞f2+ ♔e7 67.♔d4 ♞f6 (67...g5 68.♞f5! ♞g6 69.♔e3)

64...♖e4+?

Once more helping the opponent! It was necessary to simply push the pawn: 64...g5

65.♔d3 ♞e7 66.♞f2+ ♔g4 67.♞g2+ ♔f3



68.♞g6?

It is necessary to keep the rook ready to check from long distance, so 68.♞g1

68...♞d7+ 69.♔c4 ♔e4?

It is always technically correct to be ready to connect the king and the pawns.

The task was clear; to unblock the passed pawn, which can easily be achieved with 69...♔f4 70.♔c5

♔f5 71.♖g1 g5

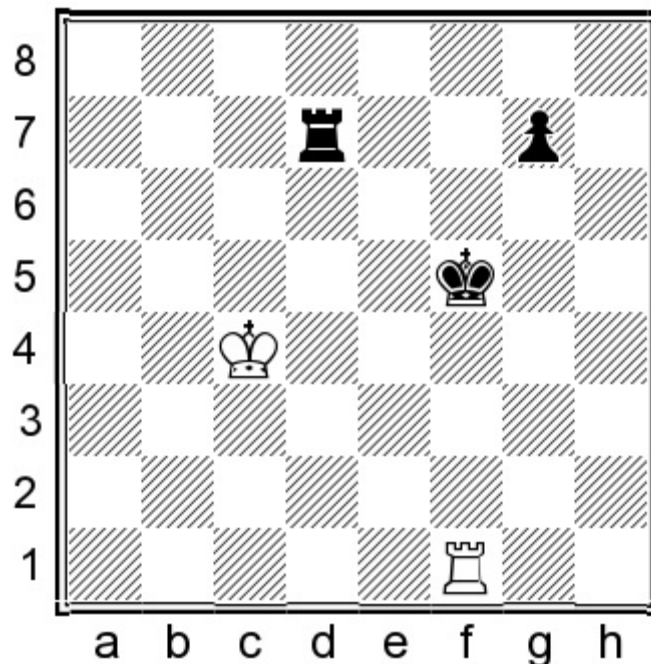
70.♖g1!

At the last moment, White understood the importance of the strong and long rook!

70...♔f4 71.♖f1+ ♔g3 72.♖g1+ ♔f4

There is no point to 72...♔f2 73.♖g6

73.♖f1+ ♔e4 74.♖e1+ ♔f5 75.♖f1+



And the powerful rook kicks the king far away, therefore...draw!

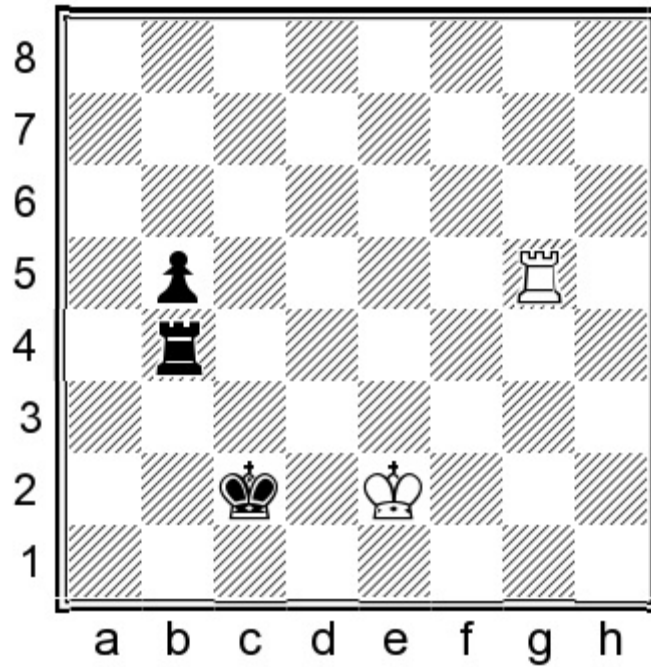
75...♔e6 76.♖e1+ ♔f7 77.♖f1+ ♔g8 78.♖g1 ♖d6 79.♔c5 ♖d2 80.♔c4 ♖f2 81.♔d4 ♔f7 82.♔e3 ♖f5 83.♔e4 g6 84.♖g4 ♔g7 85.♖f4 ♖a5 86.♔f3 ♖a1 1/2

6

A. Rubinstein

O. Duras

Breslau, 1912

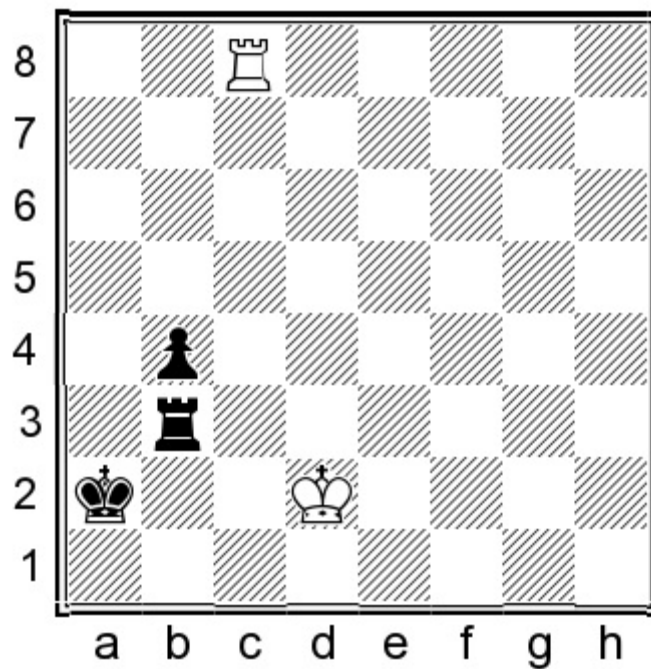


Let's see how the great classicists treated similar positions.

99. ♖c5+ ♔b2 100. ♕d2 ♜b3 101. ♝c2+

A different try was of no help either: 101. ♜h5 b4 102. ♜b5 ♕a2 103. ♝b6 ♜b1 104. ♜a6+ ♕b2 with a theoretically winning position.

101... ♕b1 102. ♝c1+ ♕a2 103. ♝c8 b4



104. ♜a8+

Or 104.♔c2 ♖b2+ 105.♕c1 ♖b1+ 106.♕c2 b3+

104...♖a3 105.♖b8 b3 106.♕c3 ♖a7

And the pawn cannot be taken, the promotion is inevitable.

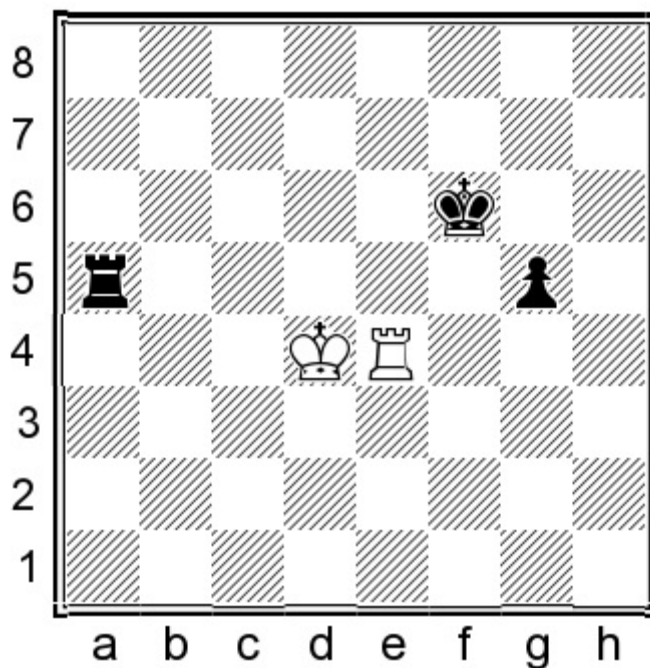
0-1

7

R. Fischer

E. Geller

Curacao, 1962



66...♕f5!

Of course not thinking about the pawn endgame resulting from 66...♖a4+?? 67.♕d5 ♖xe4 68.♕xe4=

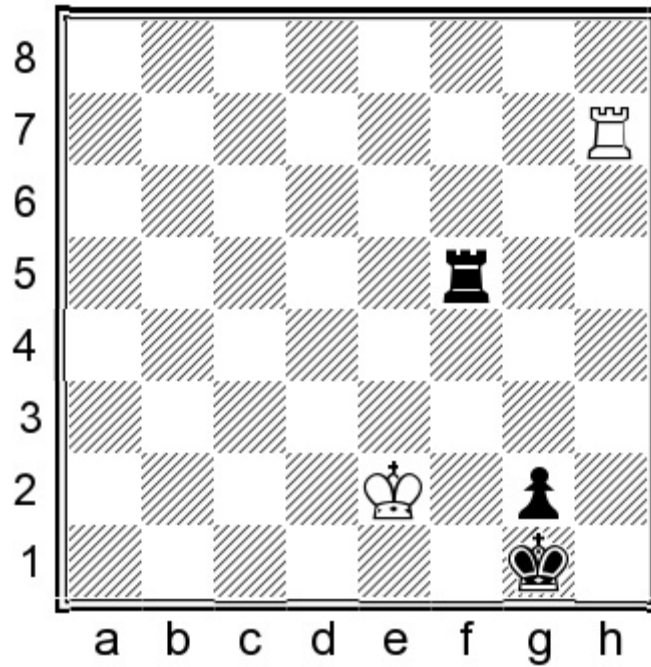
66...♕f5! 67.♖e8 ♕g4

Even simpler was to cut the king off horizontally with 67...♖a3

68.♕e3 ♕g3

and Fischer resigned, as he will find himself in the classical Lucena position in a few moves:

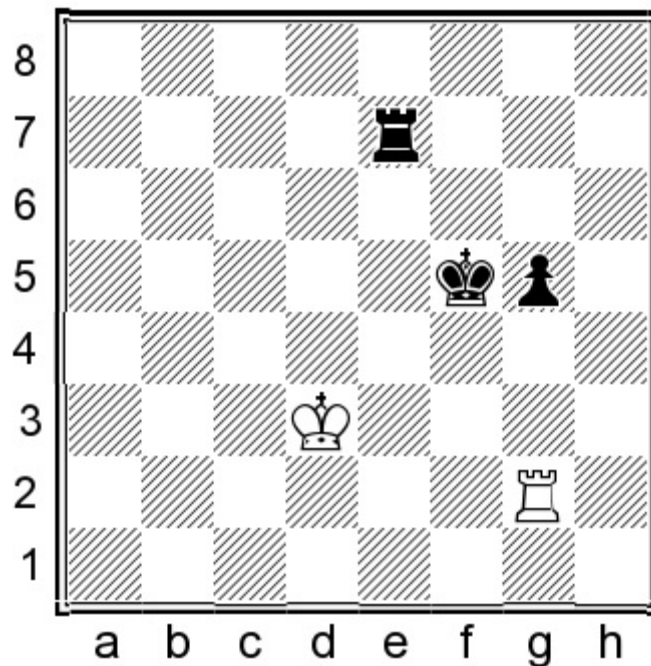
68...♕g3 69.♕e2 g4 70.♖g8 ♖f5 71.♖g7 ♕h3 72.♖g8 g3 73.♖g7 ♕h2 74.♖h7+ ♕g1 75.♖g7 g2 76.♖a7
(76.♖h7



76...♖e5+ 77.♔d3 ♕f2 78.♞f7+ ♔g3 79.♞g7+ ♔f3 80.♞f7+ ♔g4 81.♞g7+ ♞g5-+) 76...♞h5 77.♔f3 ♔h1-+

0-1

8
S. Tejaswini
D. Nguyen
KL Open MAS, 2014



Even when the pawn has crossed the middle of the board, this first classical defensive method can work very successfully. Different methods of defence can be used one after another sometimes...

47...g4??

Correct was to advance with the king first: 47...♔f4 48.♖f2+ ♔g3 49.♖f8 g4+

47...g4?? 48.♖e2!

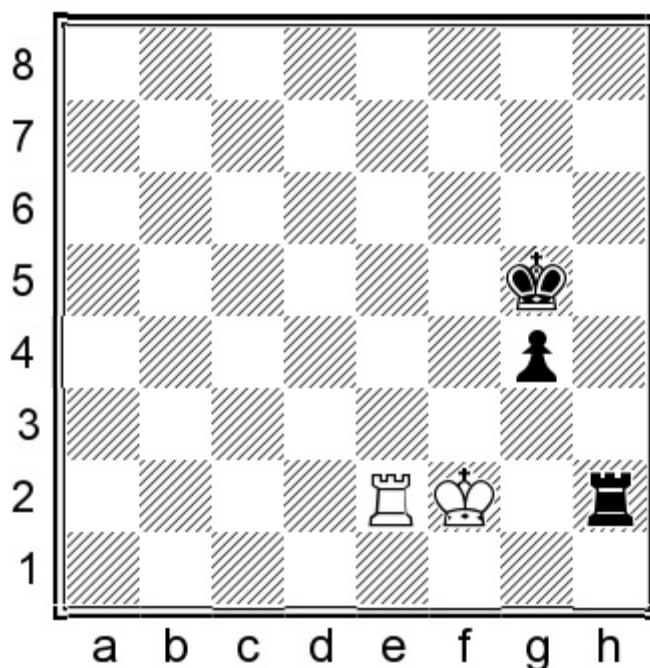
Offering the transfer into a drawn pawn ending. This allows the defending side to override the cutting off of his king.

48...♖h7 49.♔e3

White chooses the stalemate method of saving the game.

He could achieve the same result with the prosaic 49.♖f2+ ♔g5 50.♔e2= ♖h1 51.♖f8 g3 52.♖g8+ ♔f4 53.♖g6! Waiting time!

49...♔g5 50.♔f2 ♖h2+



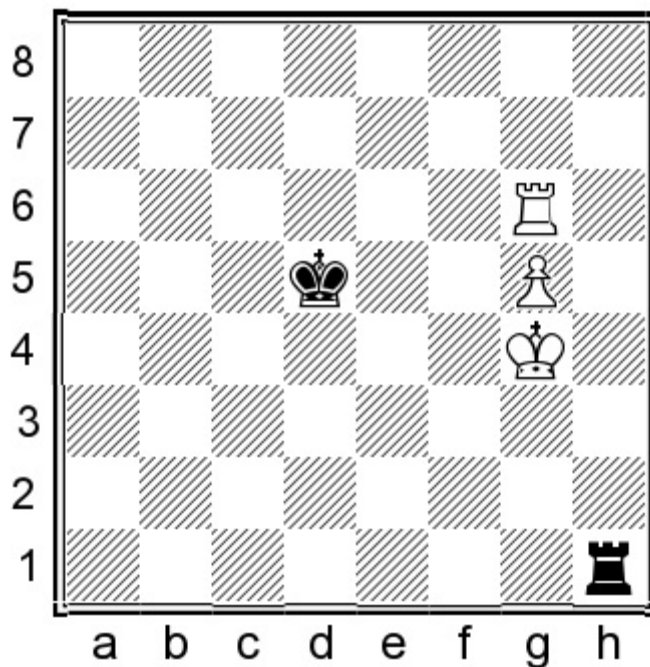
51.♔g3!

A very clever stalemate defence.

51...♖h3+

51...♖xe2=

52.♔g2 ♖a3 53.♖b2 1/2



Here we see a nice example of successful defence, the rook on g6 blocking his own king.

1...♖g1+ 2.♔h4 ♜h1+ 3.♔g3 ♜g1+ 4.♔h2

4.♔f2 ♜g4 5.♔f3 ♜g1 6.♞a6 ♔e5=

4...♞e1!

Wrong was 4...♞g4? 5.♔h3 ♜g1 6.♞a6! Only this small tactic helps to set up a winning position.
6...♔e5 7.♔h4 ♔f5 8.♞f6++-

5.♔h3 ♜h1+ 6.♔g2 ♜e1 7.♞a6

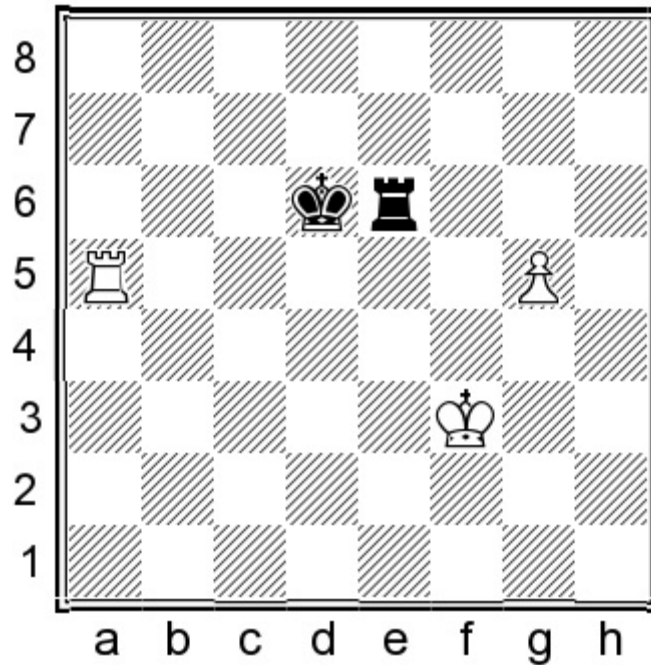
Other rook moves promise nothing either: 7.♞f6? ♜e6! =; 7.♞g8 ♜e7! 8.♔g3 ♔e6 9.♞f8 ♞f7=

7...♞e6!

This classical ‘uncutting’ method allows Black to draw. Wrong was

7...♞e3? 8.g6 ♜e6 9.g7 ♜e8 10.♞g6 ♞g8 11.♔f3 ♔e5 12.♔g4+-

8.♞a5+ ♔d6 9.♔f3



9.♔g3 ♕e7 10.♖f5 ♜e4! 11.g6 ♜e6=

9...♜e1!

But not 9...♕e7? 10.♖f5!+-

10.♕g4

A serious try was 10.♖f5 but 10...♜g1! (10...♕e6? 11.♖f6+ intending ♕g4+-) 11.♕f4 ♕e7! 12.♖f6 ♖f1+=

10...♕e6 11.♜a7 ♜h1!= 12.♜b7 ♜h2 1/2

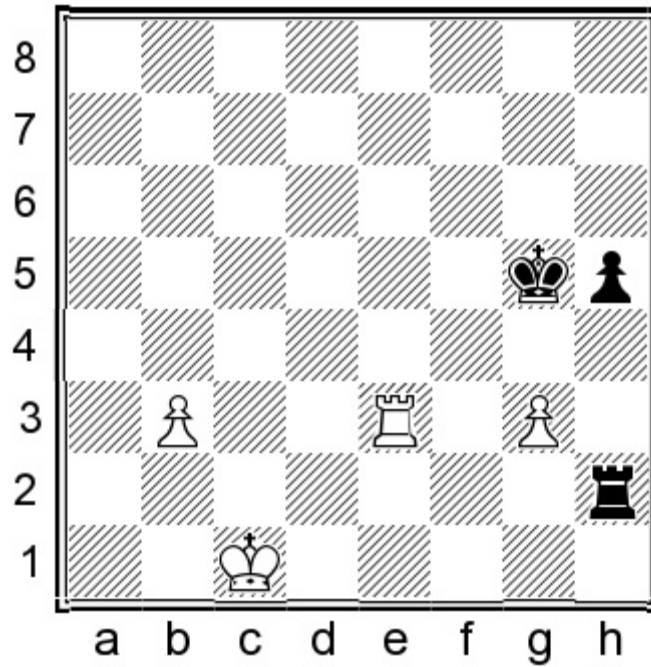
10

A. Mikhalchishin

D. Losev

Moscow, 1974

Let's now follow the practical development of this game, from the initial position to the later position which sees both kings cut off in different ways. The problems which arise in such situations are very educational.



49...♔g4?

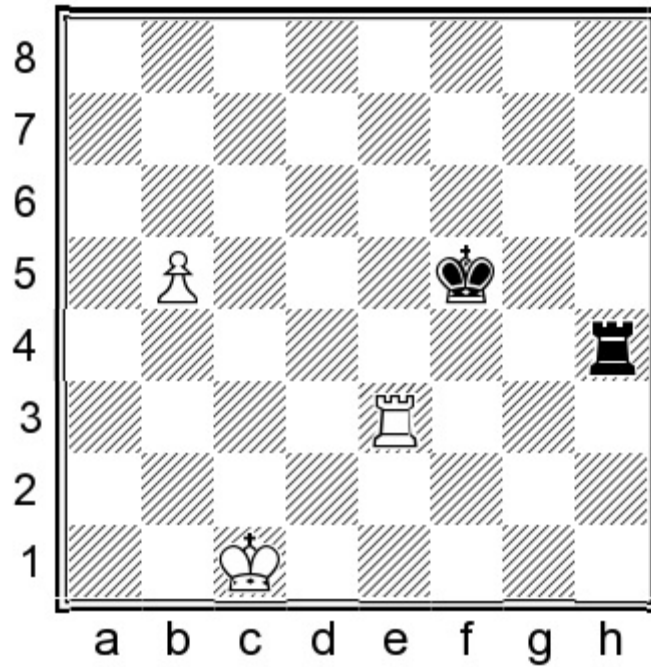
This looks very logical, but there was a rather unusual way to draw here:

49...♔f5! 50.b4 h4= Brilliant rook endgame tactics!

49...♔g4? 50.b4 h4

Black now realised that his plan does not work: 50...♖h3 51.♔d2! (51.b5 h4!)= 51...♖xg3 52.♖xg3+ ♔xg3 53.b5 h4 54.b6 h3 55.b7 h2 56.b8=♚++-

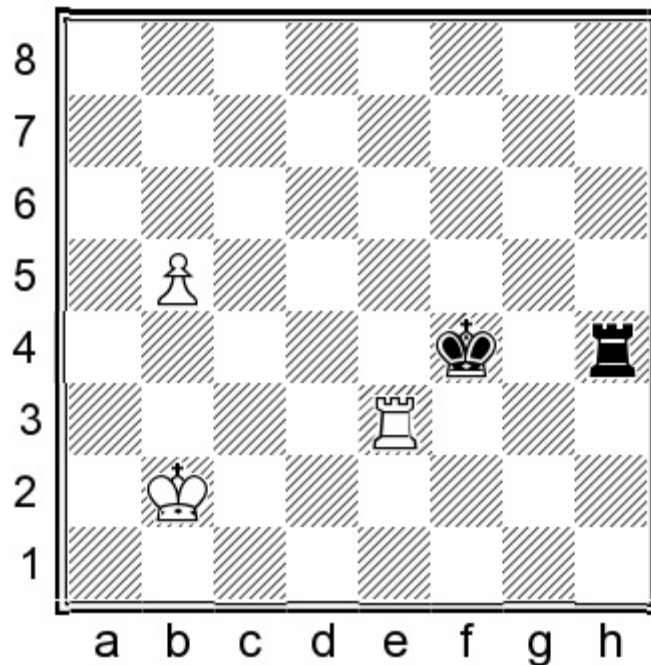
51.gxh4 ♔f5 52.b5 ♖xh4



53.♔b2!?

Dvoretzky correctly pointed out another winning way: 53.♔c2! ♖b4 (53...♔f4 54.♞e7! ♞h5 55.b6 ♞b5 56.b7 ♔f5 57.♔c3 ♔f6 58.♔c4 ♞b1 59.♞h7 ♔e6 60.♔c5+-) 54.♞b3 ♞c4+ 55.♔d3 ♞c8 56.♞c3 ♞b8 57.♞c5+ (57.♔c4!) 57...♔e6 58.♔c4 ♔d7 59.♔b4 and in this theoretical position there is a way to win the pawn ending: 59...♞c8 60.b6! ♞xc5 61.♔xc5 ♔d8 62.♔d6!

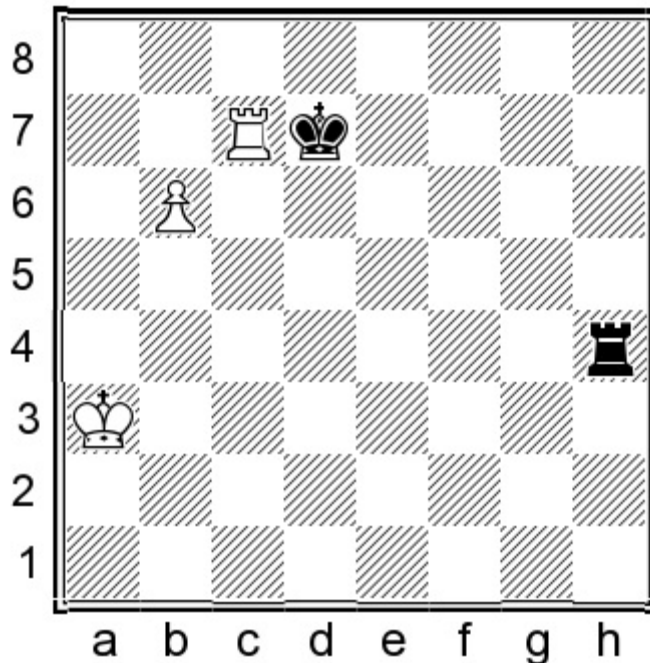
53...♔f4!



54.♞c3?

Also not enough for the full point was 54.♖e7 ♜h5 55.b6 ♜b5+ but Dvoretsky has not commented on the correct and winning method — to cut the white king off to the maximum: 54.♞d3! ♔e5 (54...♔e4 55.♕c3 ♜h5 56.♞d4+ ♔e3 57.♞b4 ♞c5+ 58.♕b3 ♔d3 59.b6!) 55.♕a3 ♔e6 56.b6+-

54...♔e5 55.♕a3 ♔d6 56.b6 ♔d7 57.♞c7+



The final try.

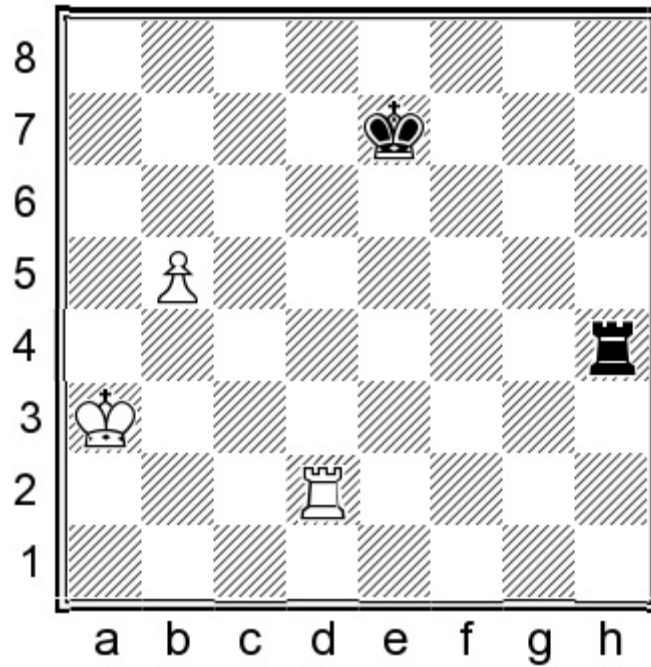
57...♔d8

Of course not 57...♔d6? when 58.♞c8 is winning

58.♞c6 ♔d7 59.♞c7+ ♔d8 60.♞c5 ♔d7 1/2

11
V. Simagin
V. Tarasov
Sverdlovsk, 1957

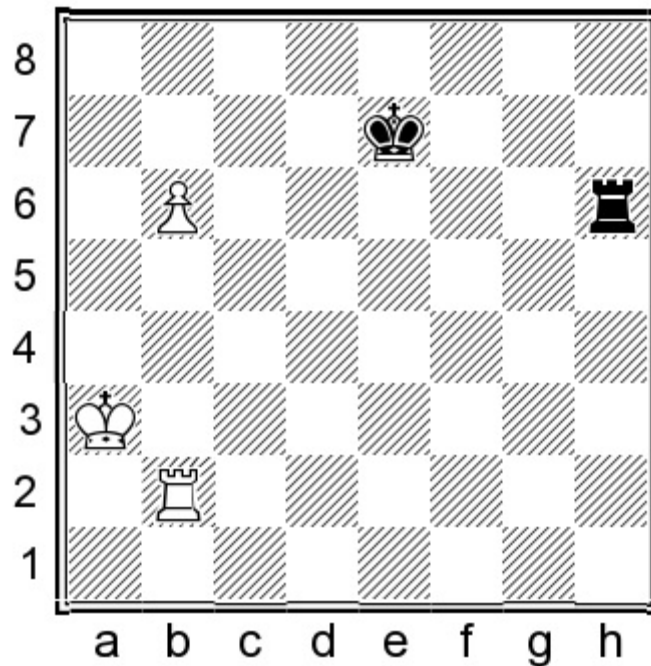
Everything has already been tested in ‘classic’ games, and this knowledge would have been very useful for the young player from the previous game!



72.b6?

The correct preparatory move was 72.♖d3!! ♜g4 73.b6 ♜g6 74.b7 ♜a6+ 75.♔b2 ♜b6+ 76.♖b3 winning.

72.b6? ♜h6 73.♖b2



73...♜h8??

An easy draw was guaranteed by 73...♔d7 74.b7 ♜a6+ 75.♔b3 ♜b6+ 76.♔c3 ♜xb2 77.♔xb2 ♔c7

74.b7 75.a4 d7 76.a5 c7 77.a6 78.a7 1-0

CHAPTER 4

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE EDGE PAWN

It is possible to consider specific situations with every pawn, but that is more the realm of the 'Encyclopaedia of Endings' rather than our book, in which we try instead to explain things from the practical viewpoint.

The 'edge' — or rooks' — pawns are easy to understand, and there are even some specific methods involved which we don't encounter with other pawns, such as the Vancura method, as well as the 'hiding of the king' manoeuvre.

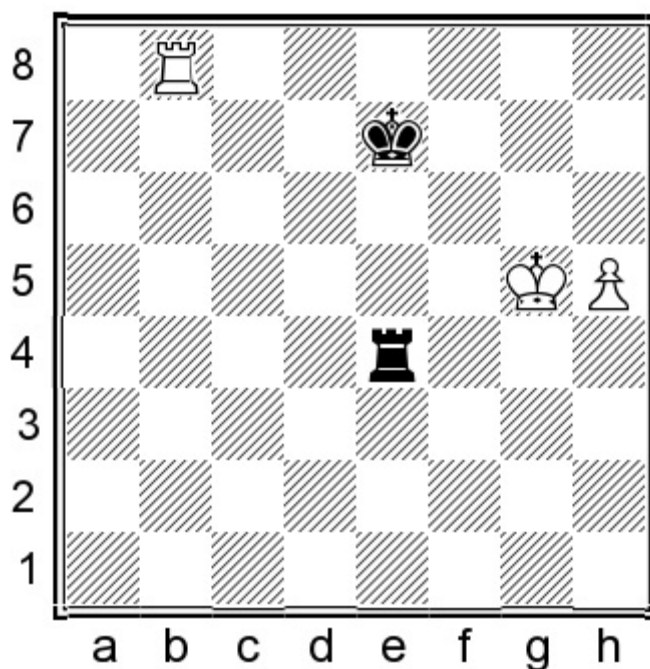
The basic positions here are very clear, but the methods for winning some of them must be precisely remembered. The most curious thing here is that we will see how many simple mistakes are committed by Grandmasters in this type of rook endgame.

1

E. Kovalevskaya

Z. Peng

Ekaterinburg, 2006



89...♖e1??

The draw would be easy after 89...♔f7 90.h6 ♜e5+= 91.♔g4 ♜e4+ 92.♔f3 ♜h4 and now the king is close enough to the pawn and the following famous tactic does not work: 93.h7 ♜xh7 94.♜b7+ ♔g6

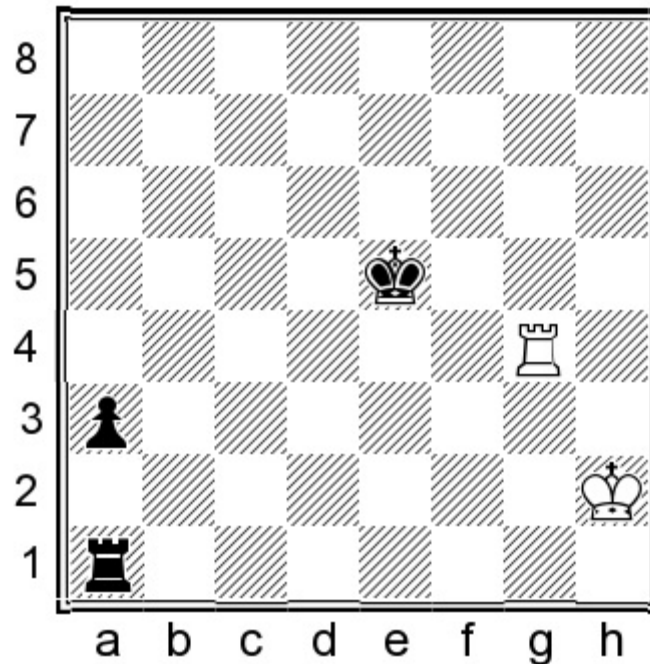
89...♖e1?? 90.h6 ♜g1+ 91.♔f4 ♜h1 92.h7! ♜xh7 93.♜b7+ 1-0

2

V. Smyslov

J. Donner

Palma de Mallorca, 1967



67...♖a2+!

The only winning manoeuvre! Other moves lead to a draw, e.g. 67...♖b1 68.♖a4 ♖b2+ 69.♔g3 a2 70.♔f3 ♔d5 71.♔e3 ♔c5 72.♔d3 ♔b5 73.♖a8 ♔b4 74.♖b8+=;

67...♔d5 68.♖g3! ♔c4 69.♖f3 ♔b4 70.♖f4+=

67...♖a2+! 68.♔h3 ♖b2 69.♖a4 a2 70.♔g3 ♔d5

Now the king has an unstoppable run to b1, although first it is necessary to overcome the 'horizontal cut' on the fourth rank.

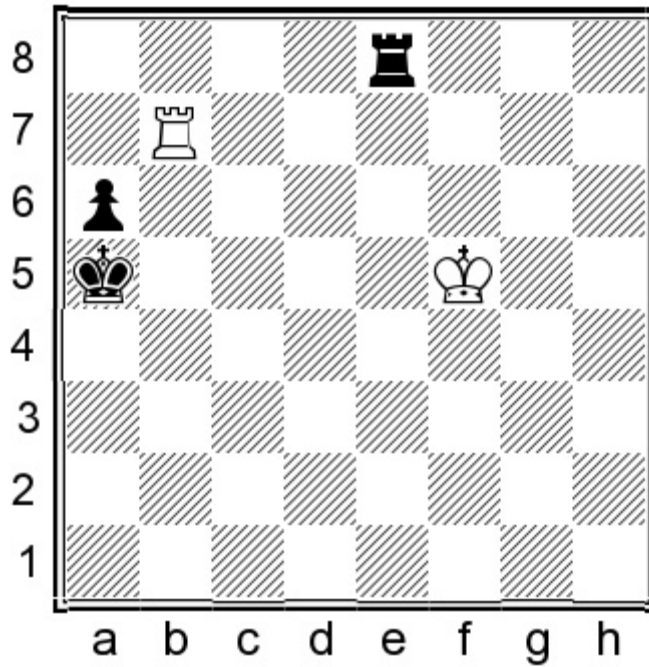
71.♔f3 ♔c5 72.♔e3 ♔b5 73.♖a8 ♔c4 0-1

3

F. Anquandah

M. Alberto

Kampala, 2016



81.♔f4??

This is a fatal mistake!

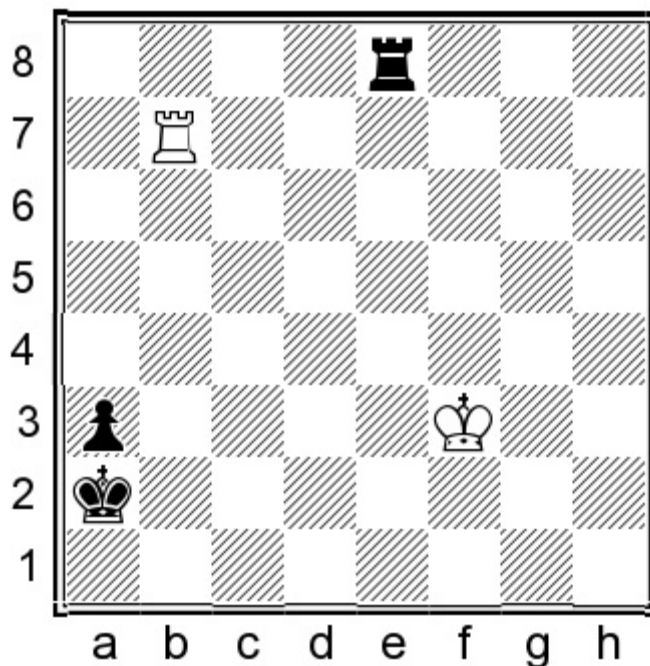
The white king is cut off from the a-pawn by four files, so simply keeping his rook on the b-file will not do — White had to switch to the frontal attack with 81.♖b1! ♕a4 82.♞a1+ ♕b5 83.♞b1+ ♕c4 84.♞a1 ♞a8 85.♕e4 a5 86.♕e3 ♕c3 87.♞c1+ ♕b2 88.♞c7 a4 89.♞b7+ =;

81.♞b2 is OK too.

81.♕f4?? ♕a4 82.♞b1 a5 83.♞a1+ ♕b4 84.♞b1+ ♕c3 85.♞b7

85.♞a1 ♞a8-+

85...a4 86.♞c7+ ♕b3 87.♞b7+ ♕a2 88.♕f3 a3



89.♖b6

It was better to cover the e1-square with 89.♔f2 but this would not have saved White: 89...♔a1 90.♖b6 a2 91.♖b7 ♜c8 92.♔e2 ♜c1 93.♔d3 ♖b1 94.♖a7 ♔b2 95.♖b7+ ♔c1 96.♜c7+ ♔d1 97.♖h7 ♖b3+ 98.♔c4 ♜c3+

89...♜e1 90.♖b7 ♔a1 91.♔f2 ♖b1

The standard way to rescue the king from the corner.

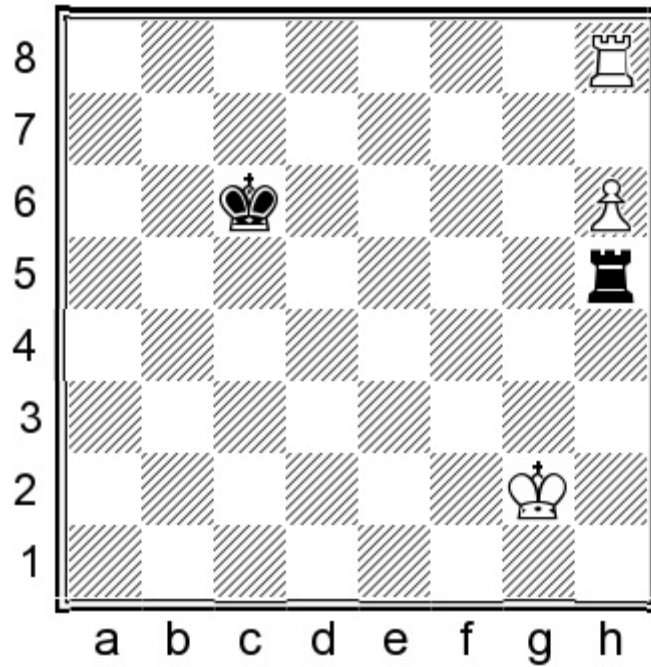
92.♖a7 a2 93.♔e3 ♔b2 94.♖b7+ ♔a3 95.♖a7+ ♔b2 96.♖b7+ ♔c3 0-1

4

B. Gelfand

V. Anand

Moscow, 2012



What is correct winning procedure?

61. ♖h7??

This spoils the win.

61. h7? Also fails after 61... ♕b7 62. ♖g3 ♖h1=;

The most logical and the right way was to hurry with the king towards the pawn 61. ♖g3! ♖h1 (61... ♕d6 62. h7 ♕e7 63. ♖a8+-) 62. ♖g4 ♖g1+ 63. ♕f5 ♖f1+ 64. ♖g6 ♖g1+ 65. ♕h7 ♕d7 66. ♖g8 ♖h1 67. ♖g6 ♕e7 68. ♖g7+-

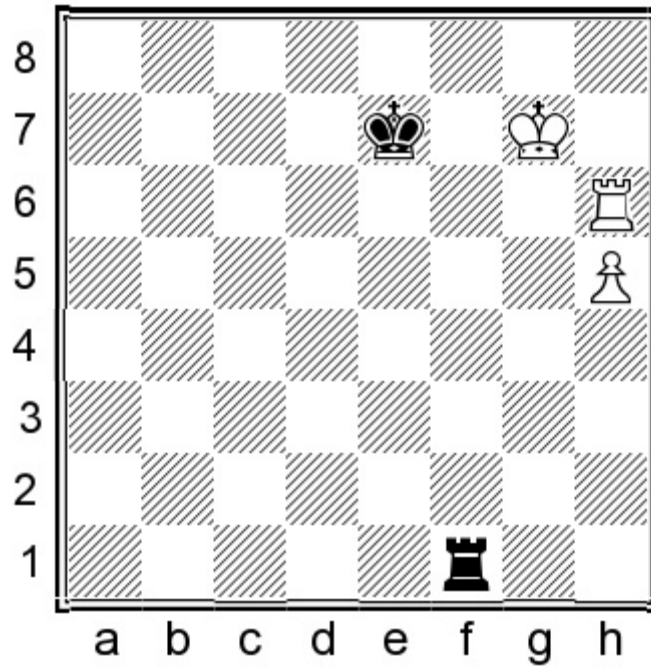
61. ♖h7?? ♕d6! 62. ♖g3 ♕e6 63. ♖g4 ♖h1 64. ♖a7 ♕f6 65. h7 ♖g6 1/2

5

Zhao Xue

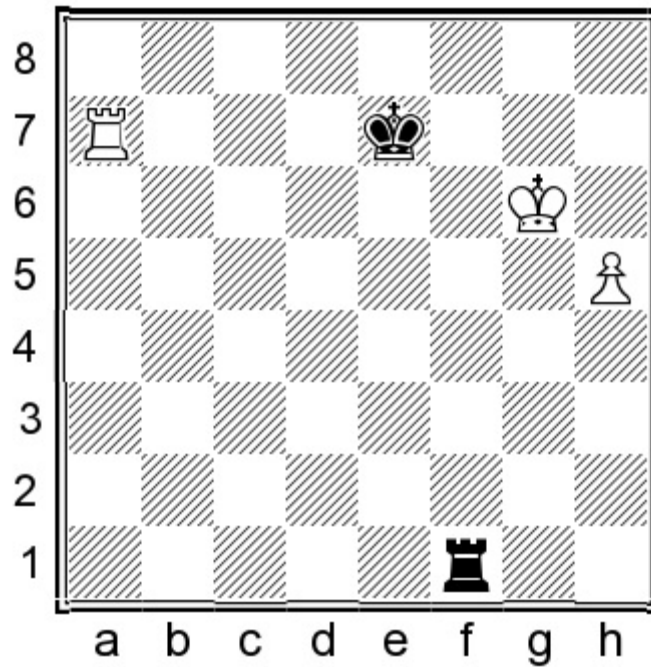
A. Stefanova

Khanty-Mansiysk, 2014



Initially at least, play proceeds naturally — the rook must be activated.

64.♖a6 ♜f7+ 65.♔g6 ♜f1 66.♖a7+



66...♔f8??

This appears logical, but the only drawing line was...

66...♔e6 67.h6 ♜g1+ 68.♔h7 ♜g2 69.♜g7 ♜h2=

67.♖a8+ ♔e7 68.h6 ♜g1+ 69.♔f5 ♜f1+ 70.♔e5 ♜h1 71.h7!

Once more a typical tactical trick decides the game.

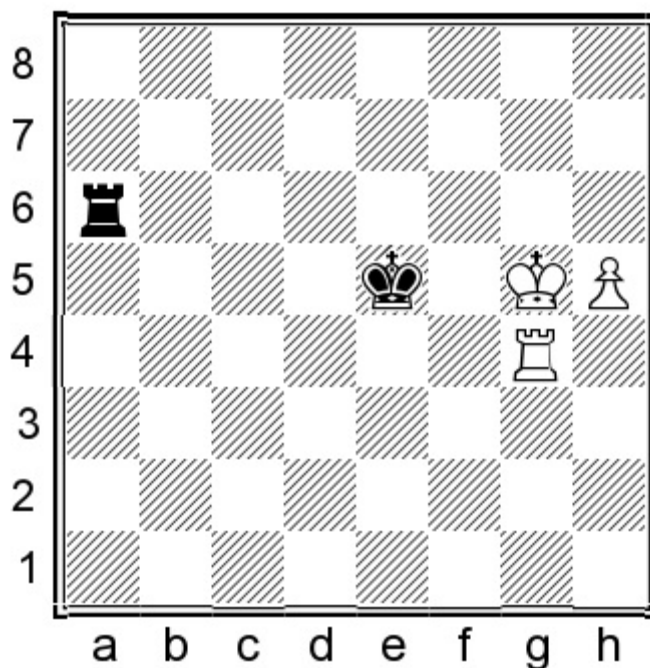
71...♖xh7 72.♖a7+ 1-0

6

D. Gurevich

I. Gurevich

Durango, 1992



76...♖a8?

The correct way was to fight with the king 76...♔e6! 77.♔g6 ♔e5+ 78.♔g7 ♖a7+ 79.♔h6 ♔f5=

76...♖a8? 77.h6 ♔e6

Not working either is 77...♖g8+ 78.♔h5 ♖xg4 79.h7!+-

78.h7 ♔f7 79.♖a4!!

A powerful tactical move!

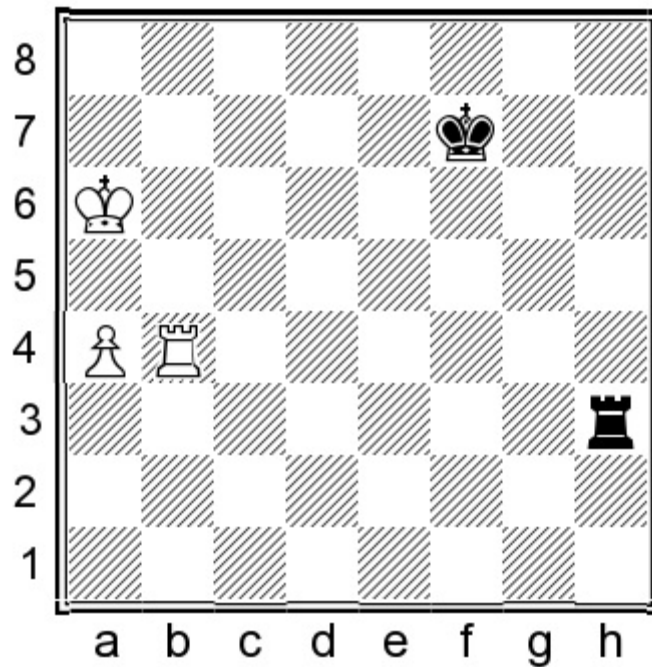
1-0

7

I. Novikov

B. Lalic

Manila, 1992



A very difficult defence, brilliantly executed by Lalic.

84...♔e6

84...♖h8? 85.♗e4!+-

84...♔e6 85.a5 ♖h8!!

The only move! Wrong was 85...♔d6 86.♔b6 ♖h8 87.♗d4+ ♔e5 88.♗d7!+-

86.♔b7 ♔d5! 87.♗g4

87.a6 ♔c5 88.♗b1 ♖h7+ 89.♔b8 ♖h8+ 90.♔a7 ♖h7+ 91.♗b7 ♖h6=

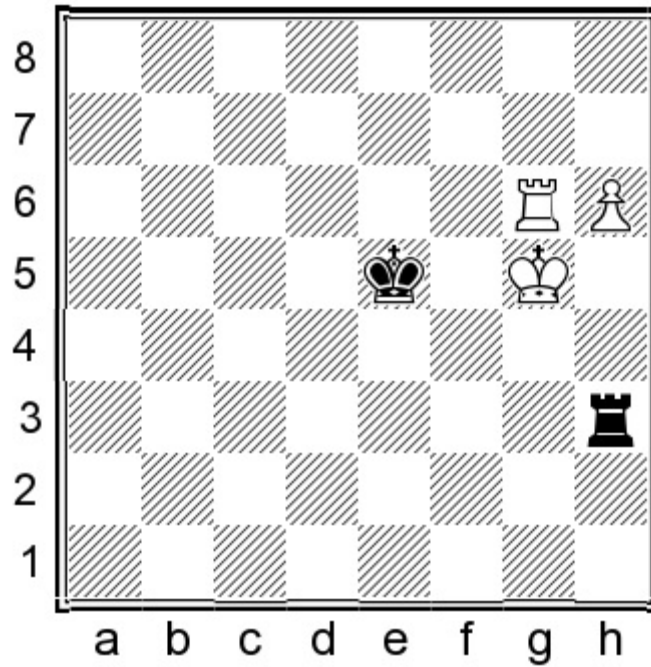
87...♔c5 88.♗g7 ♖h6! 89.a6 ♖b6+ 90.♔a7 ♖b1 91.♗b7 ♖a1 1/2

8

A. Cherniaev

Arakhamia-K. Grant

London, 2015



73.♖a6?

73.♖g7! was the only way to victory. 73...♔e6 74.♖a7! ♖g3+ 75.♕h4 ♖g1 76.h7 ♖h1+ 77.♕g5+-

73.♖a6? ♖g3+ 74.♕h5 ♖h3+?

Black returns the favour.

74...♕f5! =

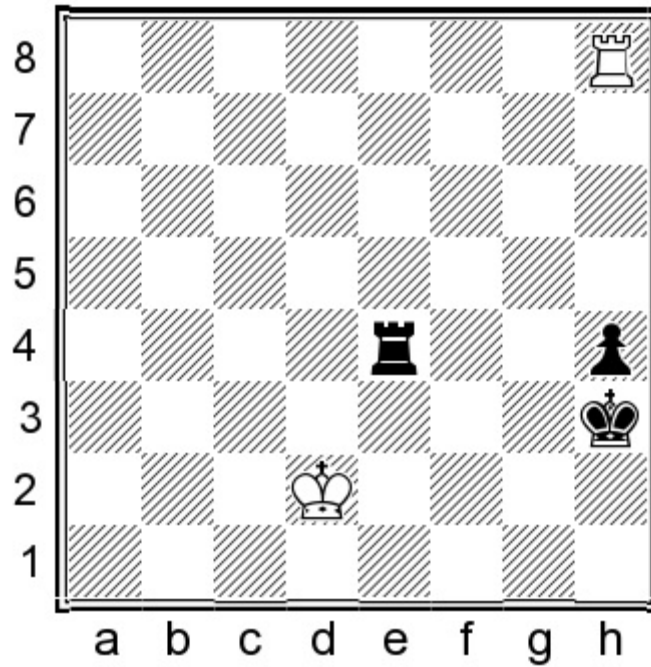
75.♕g6 ♖g3+ 76.♕f7 ♕f5 77.♖a5+ ♕e4 78.h7 ♖h3 79.♕g6 1-0

9

L. Bendsorp

A. Sengupta

Dieren, 2007



1.♔d3

It was better to immediately create the basic position with 1.♖g8!

1.♔d3 ♖g4 2.♔e3??

This is the decisive mistake. White should have played:

2.♔e2 ♔g2 3.♖f8 h3 4.♖f2+ ♔g3 5.♖f3+ ♔h4 6.♖f8 h2 7.♔f2=

2...♔g2 3.♖d8

If 3.♖f8 now, the difference is 3...h3 4.♖f2+ ♔g1! and there is no check on f1.

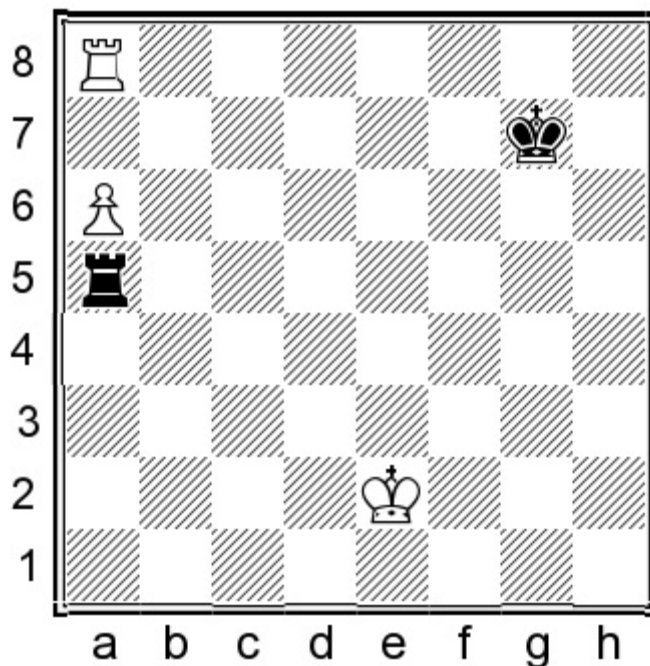
3...h3 4.♖d2+ ♔g3 0-1

10

M. Gagunashvili

B. Michiels

Amsterdam, 2004



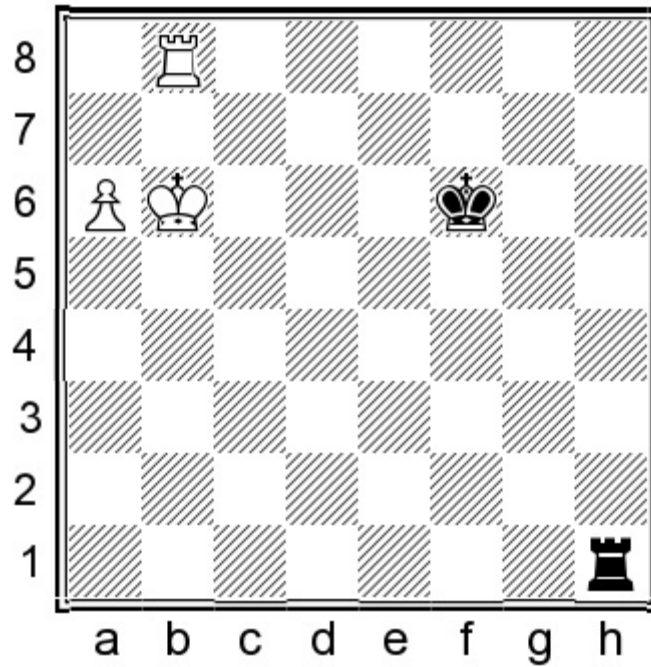
63...♖a1?

It was necessary to turn to the Vancura method of defence — using the rook from the side, and only when the pawn advances to the seventh rank does the rook come from behind: 63...♖e5+! 64.♔d3 ♜e6 65.a7 (No better is 65.♔c4 ♜f6 66.♔b5 ♜f5+ 67.♔b6 ♜f6+ 68.♔b7 ♜f7+ 69.♔c6 ♜f6+ 70.♔d5 ♜f5+ 71.♔e4 ♜f6) 65...♖a6

63...♖a1? 64.♔d3 ♜a3+

Now the Vancura drawing method cannot be achieved: 64...♜d1+ 65.♔c4 ♜d6 66.♔b5 ♜d5+ 67.♔c6

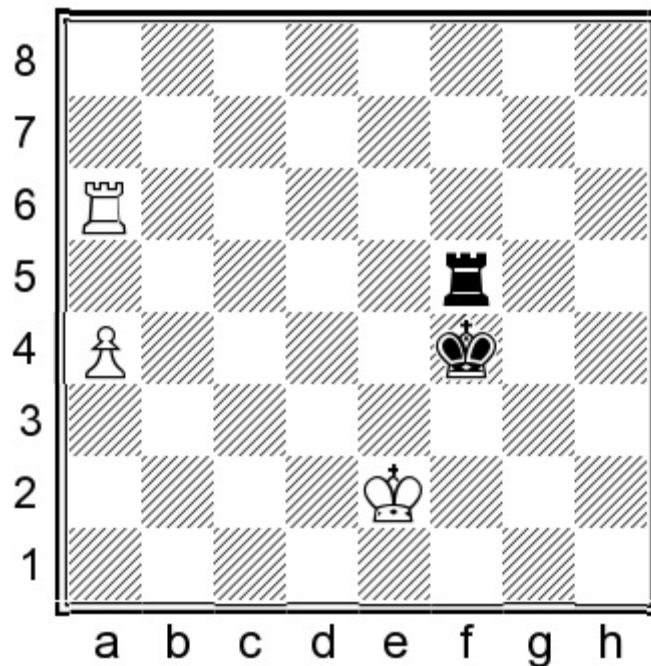
65.♔c4 ♜a1 66.♔b5 ♜b1+ 67.♔c6 ♜c1+ 68.♔b7 ♜b1+ 69.♔a7 ♔f6 70.♜b8 ♜h1 71.♔b6



White decides on a more complicated winning method. Much simpler is to protect the b-file with
 71. ♖b5 ♔e6 72. ♕b6 ♜h8 73. a7

71... ♜b1+ 72. ♕c7 ♜c1+ 73. ♕b7 ♜b1+ 74. ♕a8 ♜h1 75. a7 ♜h7 76. ♜c8 ♜h1 77. ♜c6+ ♔e5 78. ♕b7 1-0

11
 V. Bagirov
 Y. Kraidman
 Grieskirchen, 1998



14. ♕d3 ♜c5?

14...♔g5 15.♖b6 ♖f4 16.a5 ♕f5 17.a6 ♕e5

15.♕d4 ♖c1 16.♖f6+?

Winning was 16.a5! ♖a1 17.♖a8

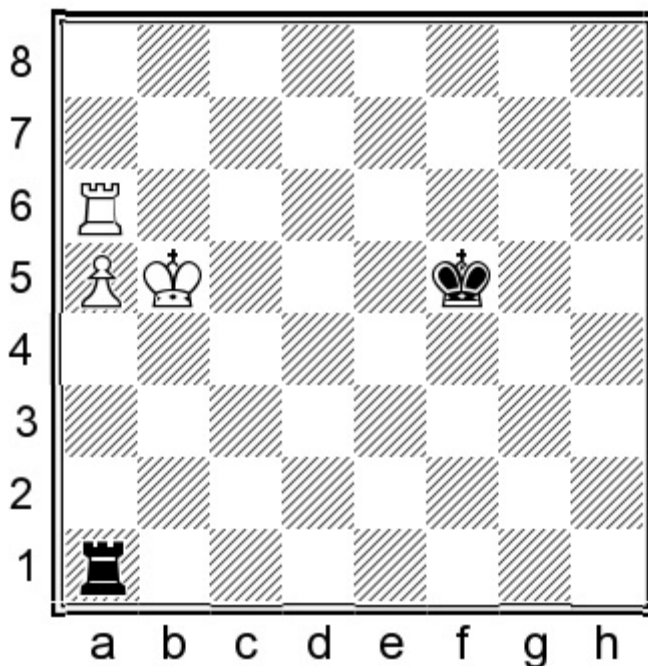
16...♕g5 17.♖b6 ♖a1 18.♖a6!

18.♖b4 ♕f6 19.♕d5 ♕e7 20.♕c6 ♕d8=

18...♕f5?

Transferring to the Vancura position was best: 18...♖f1

19.a5 ♖d1+ 20.♕c5 ♖a1 21.♕b5



21...♕e5

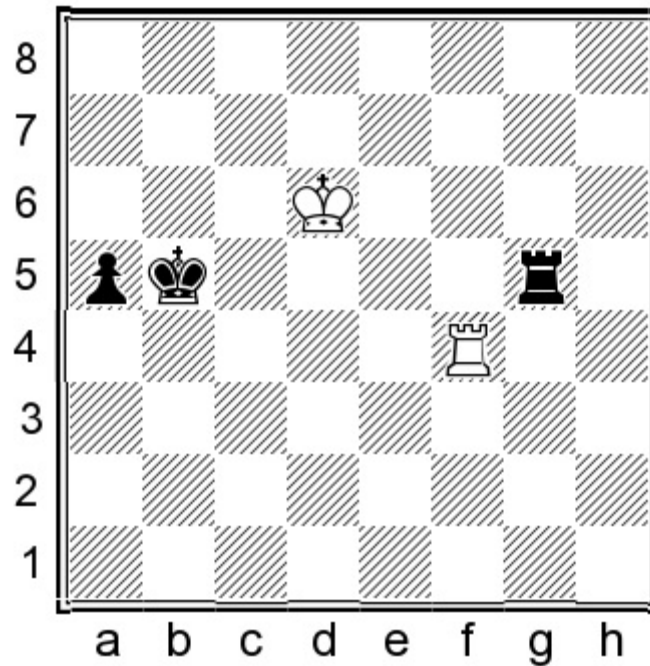
Also failing to save the game was 21...♖b1+ 22.♕c6 ♖c1+ 23.♕b7 ♖a1 24.♖a8 ♖b1+ 25.♕c6 ♖c1+ 26.♕d6 ♖d1+ 27.♕c5 ♖c1+ 28.♕b4 ♖b1+ 29.♕c3 ♖a1 30.a6 ♕f6 31.♕c4 ♖c1+ 32.♕b5

22.♖h6!! ♕d5 23.♕b6 ♖b1+ 24.♕c7 ♖c1+ 25.♕b7 ♖b1+ 26.♖b6 ♖h1 27.♖c6! ♖h7+

27...♖b1+ 28.♕c7+-

28.♖c7 ♖h1 29.a6 ♖b1+ 30.♕c8 ♕d6 31.a7 1-0

O. Alexandrova
V. Cmilyte
Warsaw, 2013



47...♖g6+??

It was necessary — and good enough — to simply push the pawn: 47...a4 48.♖f3 ♖g4 49.♔d5 ♔b4 50.♖h3 a3—+

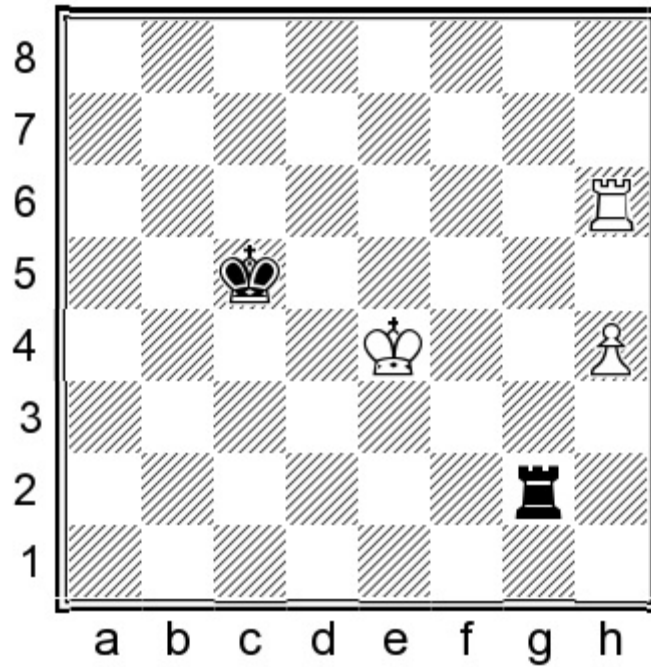
47...♖g6+?? 48.♔d5 ♖g5+ 49.♔d6??

Returning the favour.

After 49.♔d4 ♔b4 50.♔d3+ ♔b3 51.♔d2 ♔b2 52.♖f8 it is an easy draw. 52...♖d5+ 53.♔e2 ♖b5 54.♖a8 ♔b3 55.♔d2

49...a4 50.♖f3 ♖g4 51.♔d5 ♔b4 52.♖f8 a3 53.♖a8 ♔b3 54.♔c5 a2 55.♖b8+ ♔a3 0–1

13
V. Fedoseev
P. Smirnov
Khanty-Mansiysk, 2013



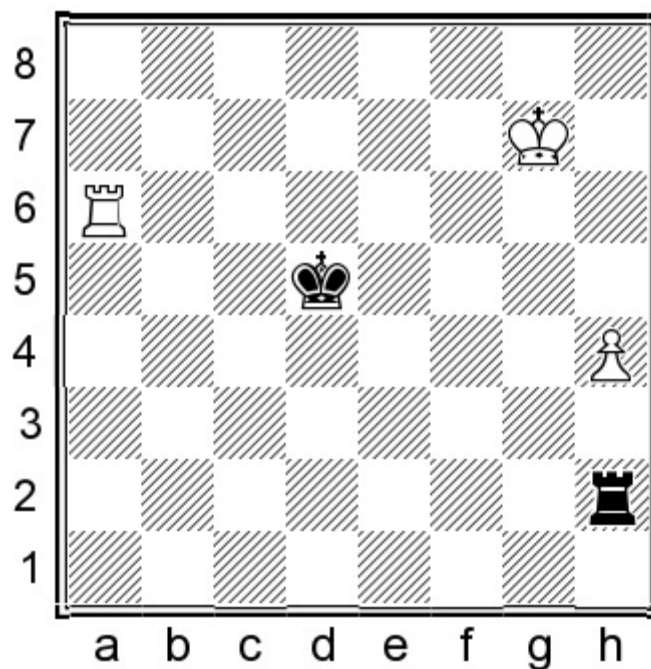
63.♔f4??

The logical move was 63.h5+- Black's king is 'horizontally cut'.

63.♔f4?? ♔d5 64.♖a6 ♜f2+ 65.♔g5 ♞g2+??

The simple way to draw was 65...♙e5 66.h5 ♞g2+ 67.♔h6 ♔f5 68.♔h7 ♞c2 69.♖a7 ♔f6 70.h6 ♞c8

66.♔f6 ♜f2+ 67.♔g7 ♞h2



68.h5!

For tactical reasons the h5-pawn cannot be taken, so there is no defence against h5-h6-h7.

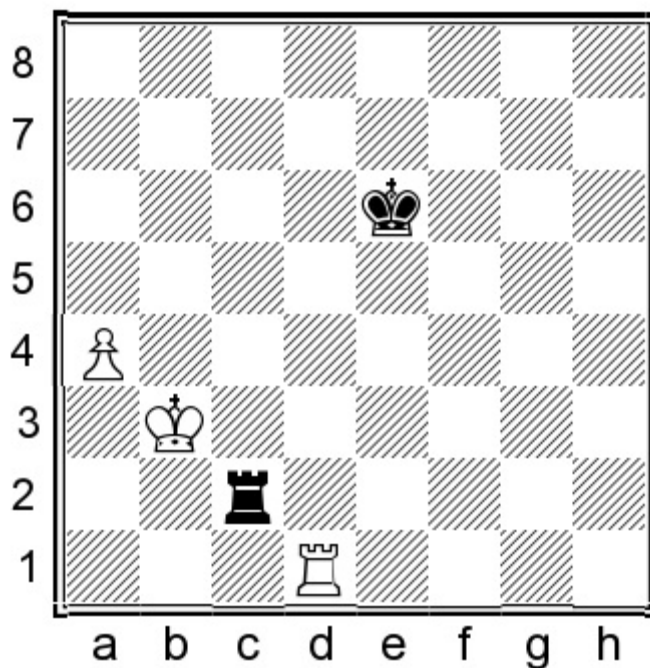
68...♔e5 69.h6 ♖g2+ 70.♖g6 ♜b2 71.h7 1-0

14

T. Petrik

I. Saric

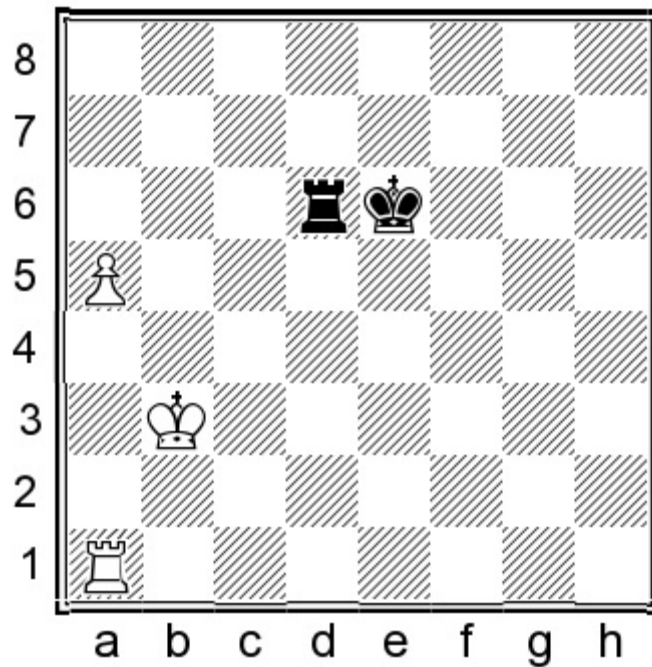
Pula Open, 2006



62...♖c6

Black's main defensive idea is to uncut the king, as the pawn endgame is drawn. It is also possible to draw with a different move and final method: 62...♖c7 63.a5 ♖d7 64.♖c1 ♔d6 65.♕b4 ♖c7 66.♖a1 ♔c6 67.a6 ♖a7 68.♕a5 ♔c7 69.♖b1 ♔c8 70.♕b6 ♔b8 71.♖h1 ♖b7+!

62...♖c6 63.a5 ♖d6 64.♖a1



64...♔d7?

A difficult moment. Also losing was 64...♖a6 65.♔b4 ♔d7 66.♔b5 ♖a8 67.a6 ♔c7 68.♖c1+ ♔d7 69.♖g1 ♖b8+ 70.♔a5 ♖b2 71.a7 ♖a2+ 72.♔b6 ♖b2+ 73.♔c5 ♖c2+ 74.♔d4 ♖a2 75.♖g8! But the draw can be achieved with 64...♔d5! 65.a6 ♖b6+ 66.♔c3 ♖b8 67.a7 ♖a8 68.♔b4 ♔c6

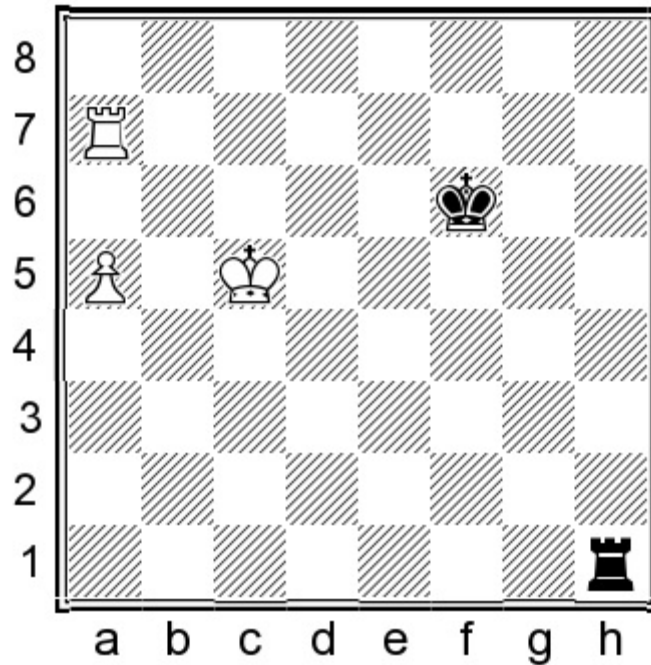
65.a6 ♖b6+ 66.♔c4 ♖b8 67.a7 ♖a8 68.♔b5 ♔c7 69.♔a6 ♖h8 70.♖c1+ 1-0

15

H. Nakamura

P. Leko

London, 2012



61. ♖b7??

White had several winning moves. The best of them is 61. a6 ♖c1+ 62. ♗b6 ♖b1+ 63. ♗c7 ♖c1+ 64. ♗d7 ♖d1+ 65. ♗c8 ♖a1 66. ♖a8 ♖c1+ (66... ♗e6 67. ♗b7 ♖b1+ 68. ♗c6 ♖c1+ 69. ♗b5 ♖b1+ 70. ♗c4 and White will soon play a6-a7 and then ♖~8+ or ♖h8.) 67. ♗b7 ♖b1+ 68. ♗a7 ♗e7 69. ♖b8 ♖c1 70. ♗b7 ♖b1+ 71. ♗a8 ♖c1 72. a7 ♗d6 73. ♗b7 ♖b1+ 74. ♗c8 ♖c1+ 75. ♗d8 ♖g1 76. ♖b6+ ♗c5 77. ♖c6+ ♗d5 78. ♖a6+-;

Other winning moves are 61. ♖c7+-;

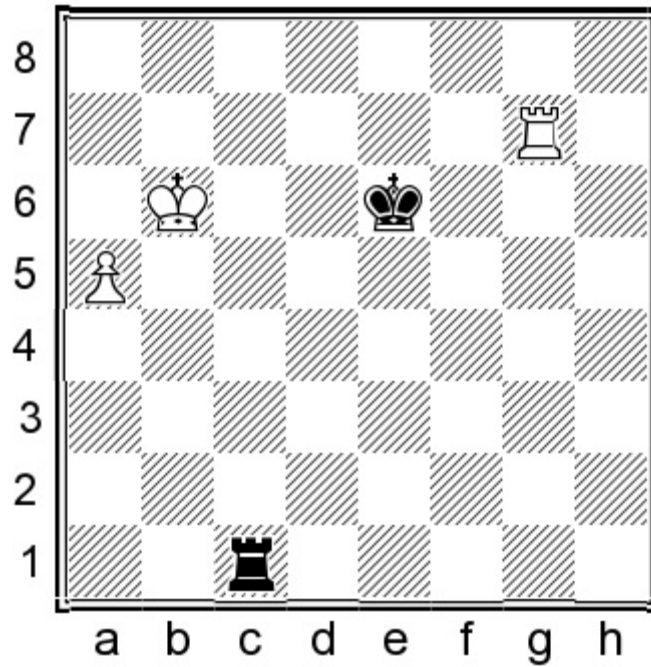
61. ♖a8+-;

and 61. ♗c6

61. ♖b7?? ♗e6! 62. ♖g7

There is also no win to be had after 62. a6 ♖c1+ 63. ♗b6 ♗d6 64. ♖b8 ♖b1+ 65. ♗a7 ♖a1 66. ♗b7 ♖b1+ 67. ♗a8 ♖a1 68. ♖b6+ ♗c7 69. ♗a7 ♖c1!

62... ♖c1+ 63. ♗b6



63...♔d6!

The only move. Much worse was 63...♖b1+ 64.♔c7 ♜a1 65.♞g6+ (65.a6? ♔f6!) 65...♔f5 66.♞h6 ♔g5 67.♞a6+-

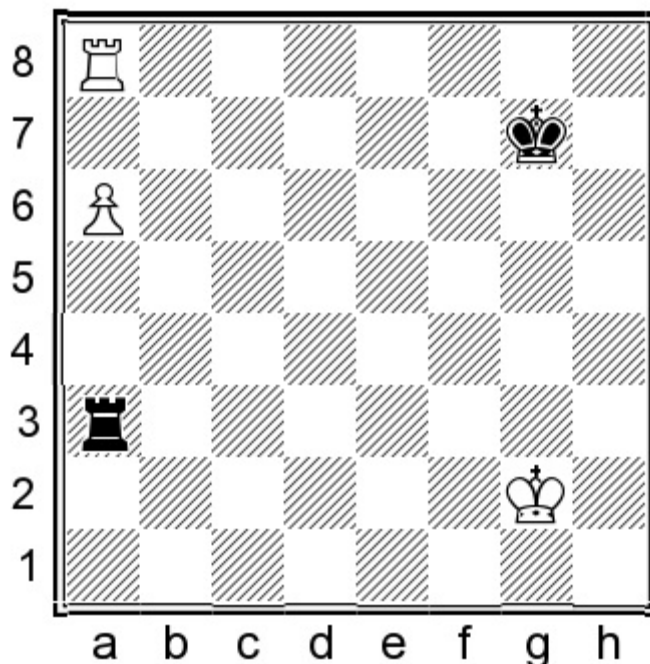
64.♔b7 ♜b1+ 65.♔c8 ♜h1 66.♞g6+ ♔c5 67.♔b7

Or 67.a6 ♔b5 68.a7 ♜h8+ 69.♔b7 ♜h7+ 70.♔b8 ♜h8+ 71.♔c7 ♜h7+ 'sticking' to the a7-pawn.

67...♔b5 68.♞g5+ ♔b4 69.a6 ♜h7+ 70.♔b6 ♜h6+ 71.♔b7 ♜h7+ 72.♔b6 ♜h6+ 73.♔b7 ♜h7+ 1/2

16

The Vancura Method



1...♖a5 2.♔f3 ♜f5+!

Passive defence is useless: 2...♔h7?! 3.♔e4 ♔g7? (There was still a last chance: 3...♜b5! 4.♜a7+ ♔g6 5.♜b7 ♜a5 6.a7 ♔f6 7.♔d4 ♔e6 8.♔c4 ♔d6 9.♔b4 ♜a1 10.♔b5 ♜b1+; 3...♜c5!⇒) 4.♔d4 ♔f7 5.♔c4 ♜a1 6.♔b5 ♜b1+ 7.♔c6 ♜c1+ 8.♔b6 ♜b1+ 9.♔a7 ♔e7 10.♜b8 ♜a1 11.♔b7 (11.♜b6) 11...♜b1+ 12.♔a8 ♜a1 13.a7 ♔d6 14.♔b7 ♜b1+ 15.♔c8 ♜c1+ 16.♔d8 ♜h1 17.♜b6+ ♔c5 18.♜c6+ ♔b5 19.♜c8

3.♔e4 ♜f6

Now Black targets the pawn from the side — and when the white king comes to b5, chases it away with horizontal checks.

1/2

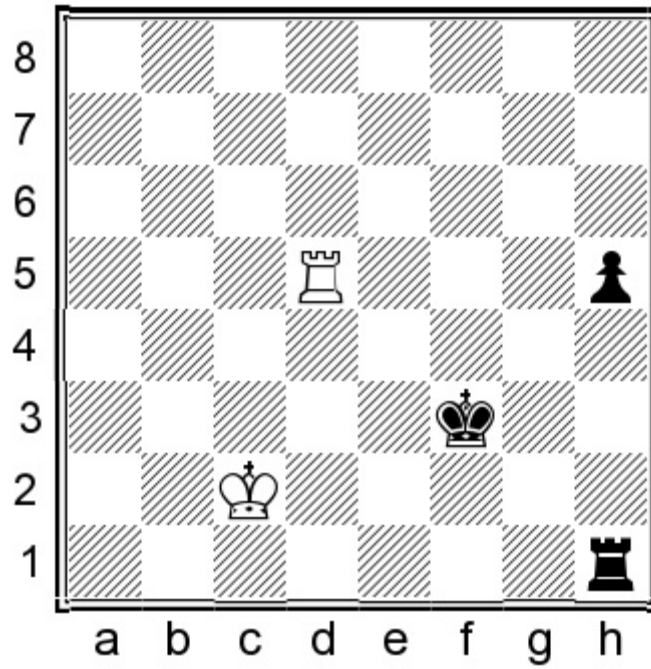
17

D. Howell

H. Nakamura

Gibraltar Masters, 2015

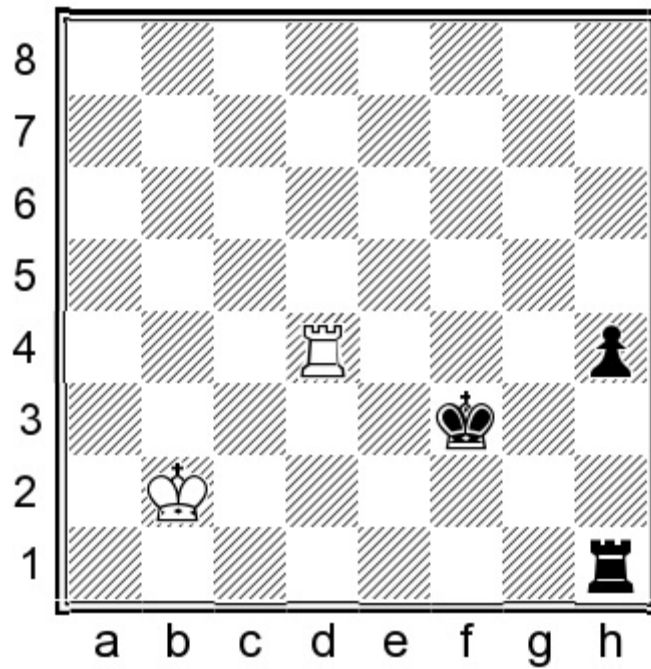
As in all other cases, there are times when any method must be used carefully, as there are only a few options for the method to work in any given situation. Even with few options, sometimes even the ‘obvious ways’ are wrong...



63.♔b2?

White prepares the Vancura defensive system, but a better way was 63.♞d3+ ♔e4 64.♞c3 h4 65.♞c4+ ♔f3 66.♔b2

63.♔b2? h4 64.♞d4



64...♔e3?

The winning procedure was to come closer to the pawn:

64...♔g3 65.♞d3+ ♕f2 66.♞d4 (66.♞d2+ ♕e3 Now the rook can leave the h-file 67.♞d8 ♞g1 68.♞h8 ♞g4 69.♕c2 ♕f2 70.♕d2 ♕g2) 66...h3 67.♞d3 h2 68.♞h3 ♕g2 69.♞h8 ♞f1 70.♞g8+ ♕f2 71.♞f8+ ♕e2 72.♞e8+ ♕d3

65.♞c4 h3 66.♞c3+ ♕d4 67.♞g3

Now it is a draw!

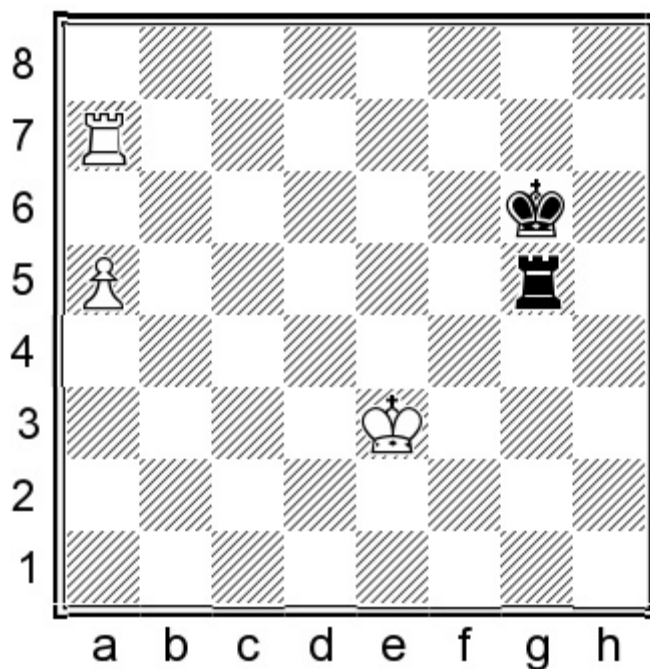
67...♞h2+ 68.♕a1 ♞h1+ 1/2

18

N. Short

F. Amonatov

Bangkok, 2012



68...♕f6?!

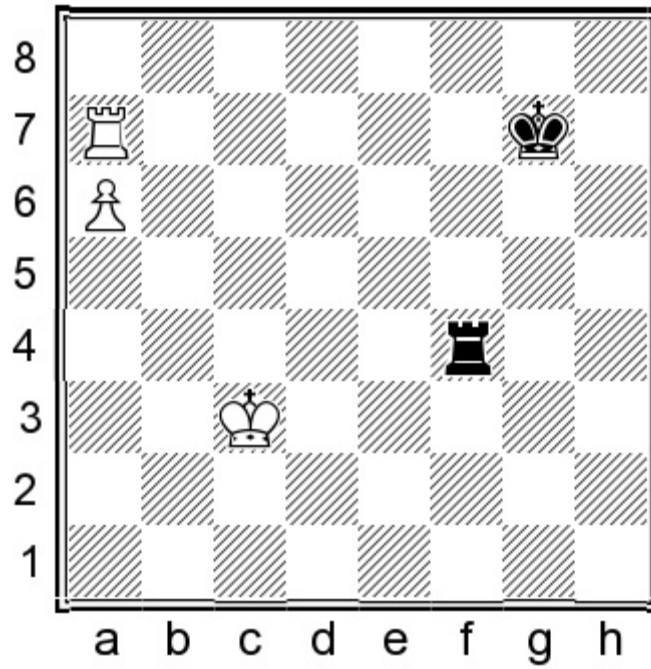
Black could simply play 68...♕h6 69.a6 ♞g6 with an ideal Vancura defence.

68...♕f6?! 69.a6 ♞a5??

There is a 'lost in space' feeling to Black's play!

He had only one move to hold the draw, the theoretical 69...♞d5! but to find such an 'only' move was not easy.

70.♞a8 ♞a4 71.♕d3 ♕g7 72.♕c3 ♞f4 73.♞a7+



73...♔g6

73...♔f6 74.♔b3!

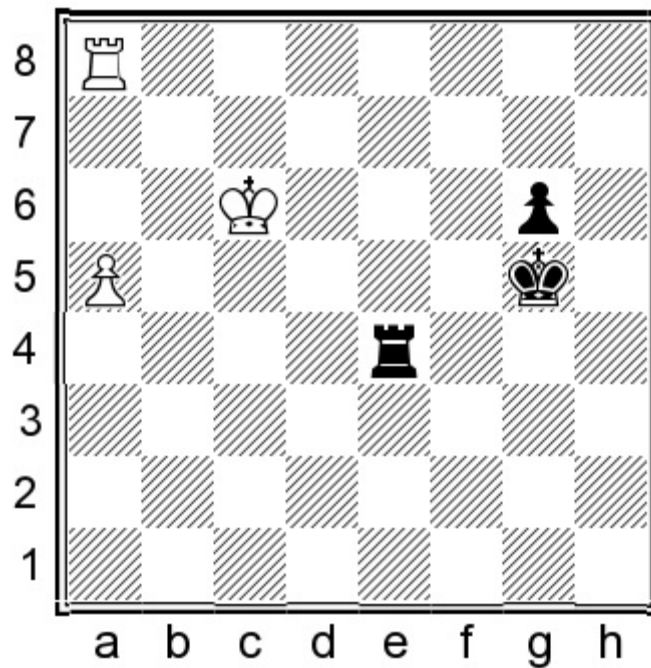
74.♖b7 ♜a4 75.a7 ♔f6 76.♔b3 ♜a1 77.♔c4 ♔e6 78.♔c5 1-0

19

H. Melkumyan

A. Mikaelyan

Erevan, 2014



106...♖a4

Very simple was to use the Vancura method of attack from the side, 106...♖e5 107.a6 ♖e6+ 108.♔b5 ♖e5+ 109.♕c4 ♖e6 and on 110.a7 ♖a6 111.♔b5 ♖a1 112.♔b6 ♖b1+

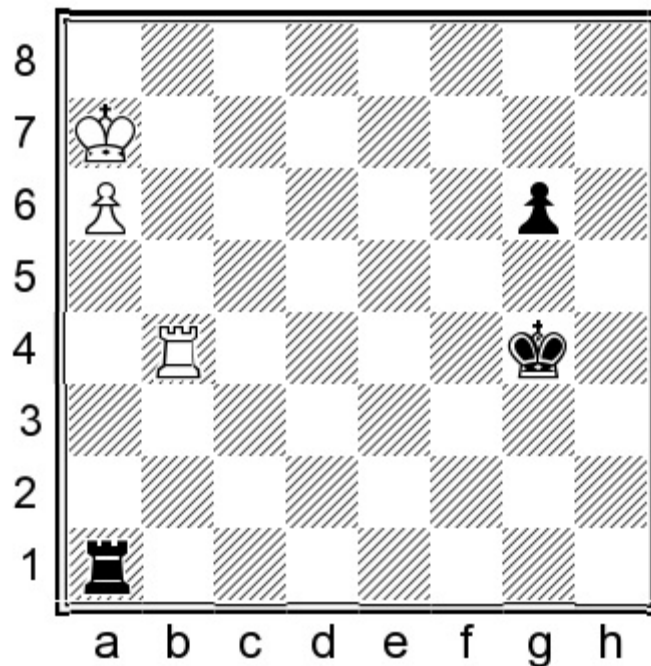
106...♖a4 107.a6 ♖a1

Leading to an easy draw was the 'normal' way: 107...♔g4 108.♔b6 g5 109.a7 ♔f3 110.♖f8+ ♔e3 (110...♔g2? 111.♖f5) 111.a8=♚ ♖xa8 112.♖xa8 g4 113.♔c5 g3 114.♖g8 ♔f2 115.♔d4 g2

108.♔b6 ♖b1+

To the same draw led 108...♔g4 109.a7 g5 110.♖f8 ♖xa7 111.♔xa7 ♔h3 112.♔b6 g4 113.♔c5 g3 114.♔d4 g2

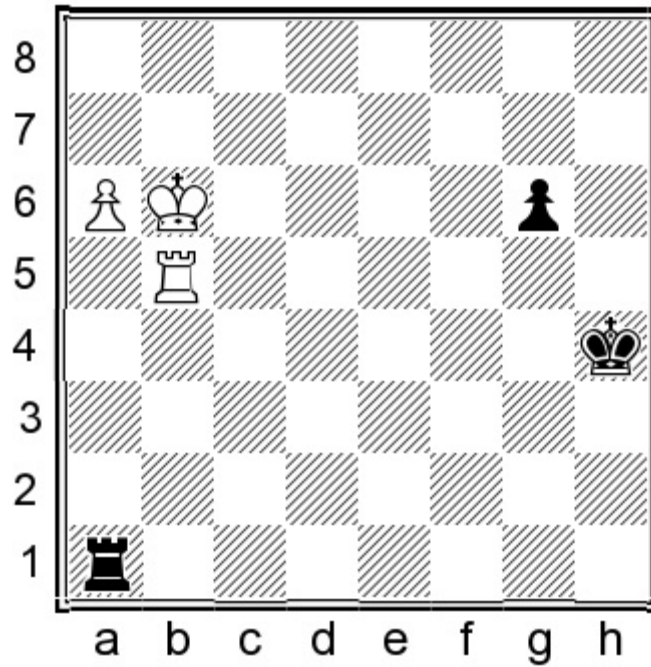
109.♔a7 ♔g4 110.♖b8 ♖a1 111.♖b4+



111...♔h3?

The last chance for a draw was 111...♔f3 112.♖b5 ♔f4 113.♔b6 ♖xa6+ 114.♔xa6 g5

112.♖b5! ♔h4 113.♔b6



113...g5

Now it is too late to play: 113...♖xa6+ 114.♔xa6 g5 115.♕b6 g4 116.♕c5 g3 117.♕d4 g2 118.♖b1 ♕g3 119.♕e3

114.♖a5 ♖b1+ 115.♕c7 ♖c1+ 116.♕d7 ♖d1+ 117.♕e7 ♖e1+ 118.♕f7 ♖f1+ 119.♕g7 ♖d1 120.a7 ♖d8 121.a8=♚ ♖xa8 122.♖xa8 g4 1-0

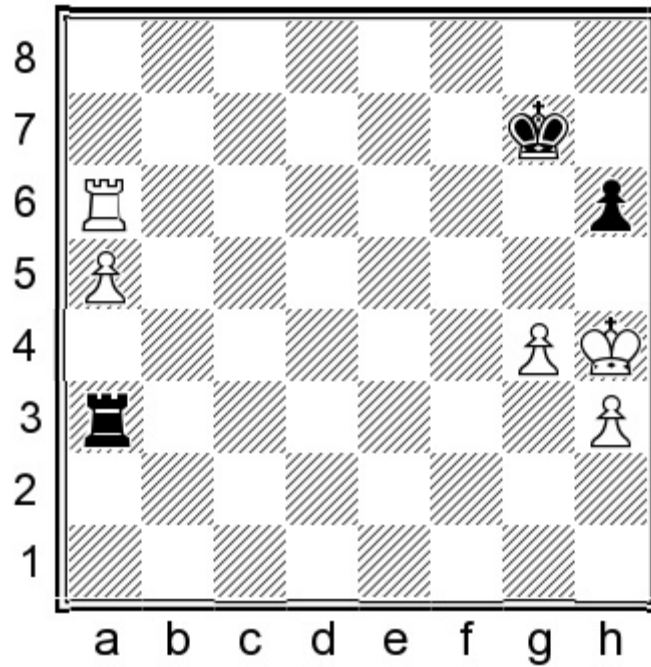
20

V. Bologan

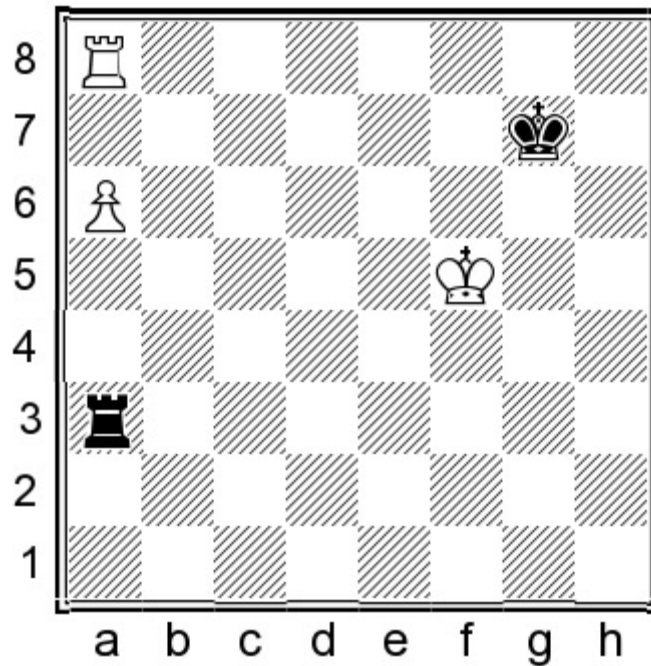
E. Berg

Dresden, 2008

Now let us consider cases where transpositions into ‘edge pawn’ situations occur.



59.g5 hxg5+ 60.♔xg5 ♖xh3 61.♖a7+ ♔f8 62.a6 ♖a3 63.♖a8+ ♔g7 64.♔f5



64...♖f3+?

The only way was to find the more complicated path to the Vancura position with 64...♖a5+! 65.♔e6 ♖h5! 66.♔d6 ♖h6+ 67.♔c7 ♖f6! Just in time!

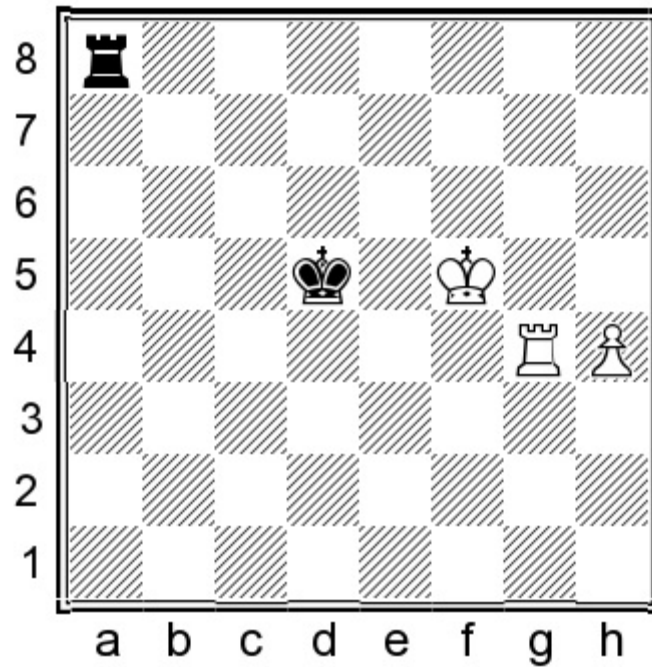
65.♔e5 ♖h3 66.♖a7+ ♔g6 67.♖c7 ♖a3 68.a7 ♖a6 69.♔d5 ♔f5 70.♔c5 ♔e5 71.♔b5 ♖a1 72.♔c6 ♔e6 73.♔b7 ♔d6 74.♖c6+ ♔d7 75.♖b6 1-0

21

H. Pflieger

J. Nikolac

Amsterdam, 1978



59.♖g6

59.♜b4

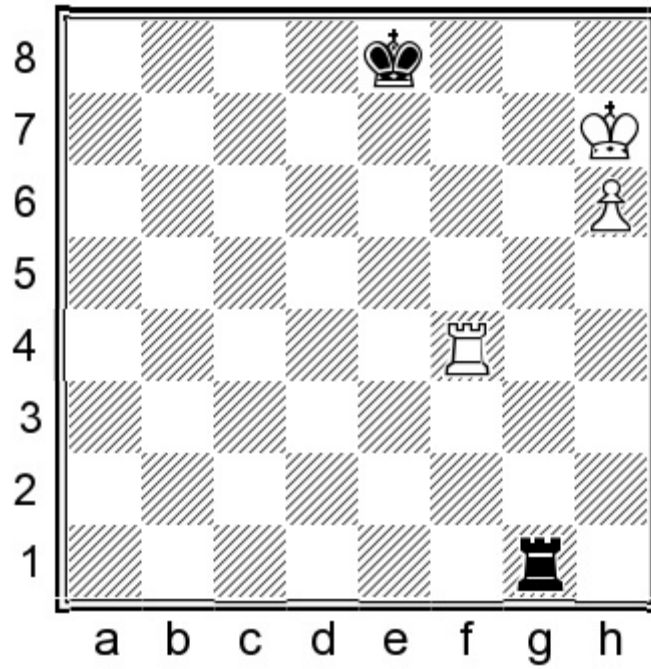
59.♖g6 ♜a1

59...♜f8+ 60.♜f6 ♜h8 61.♔g5 ♜g8+ 62.♞g6 ♜f8 63.h5 ♔e5 64.h6 ♜f5+ 65.♔g4 ♜f1

60.♞g2 ♔d6 61.♔g6

61.♞e2 ♜f1+ 62.♔g6 ♜g1+ 63.♔h7 ♔d7

61...♔e7 62.♔g7 ♜h1 63.♞g4 ♔e6 64.♔g6 ♔e7 65.♜f4 ♜g1+ 66.♔h7 ♜h1 67.♔h6 ♜g1 68.h5 ♞g2
69.♔h7 ♜g1 70.h6 ♔e8



71. ♖f6 ♜e1?

71... ♔e7 72. ♜g6 ♜f1 73. ♜g7+ ♔f6 74. ♔g8 ♜a1

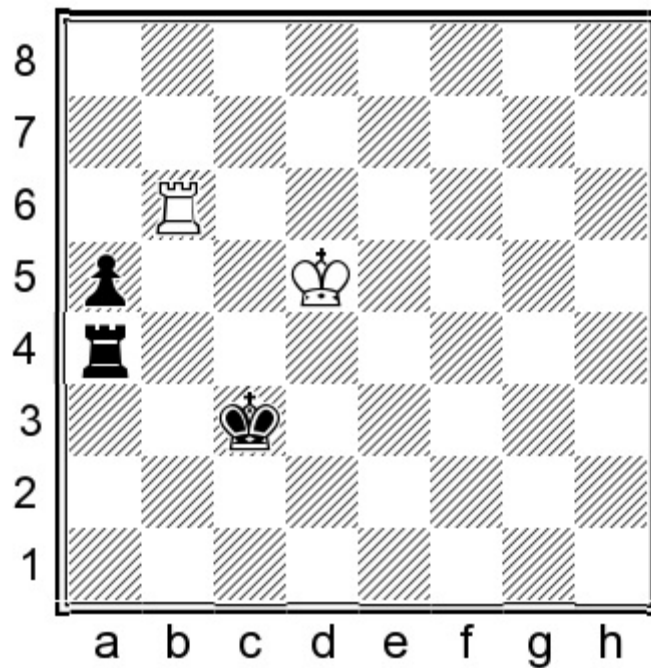
72. ♔g7 ♜e7+ 73. ♔g8 1-0

22

L. Tipary

D. Bronstein

Moscow-Budapest, 1949



94...♖h4

Also possible was the quicker solution: 94...♖d4+ 95.♔e5 a4 96.♖h6 ♖g4

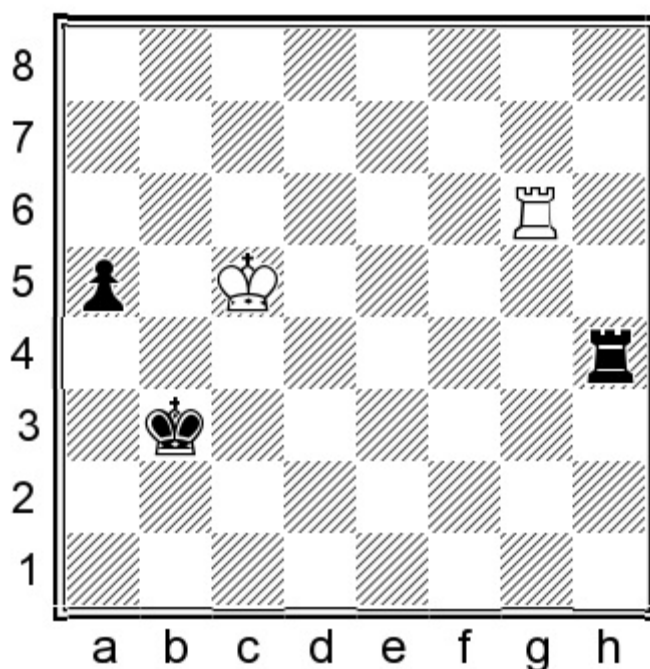
94...♖h4 95.♖g6

No change in the method of play was offered by the alternative 95.♖c6+ ♔b3 96.♖c1 a4 97.♖b1+ ♔a2 98.♖b8 a3 99.♖f8 ♔b3 100.♖f3+ ♔a4 101.♖f2 ♔b5 102.♖a2 ♔b4 103.♖g2 ♖c4

95...♔b3?

Winning was 95...a4 96.♖g3+ (96.♖a6 ♔b3 97.♖b6+ ♖b4 98.♖h6 a3 99.♖h3+ ♔a4 100.♖h2 ♖b2 101.♖h4+ ♔b5 102.♖h7 a2 103.♖a7 ♔b4 104.♔d4 ♖h2 105.♔e3 ♔b3) 96...♔b4 97.♖g2 a3 98.♖f2 ♖c4 99.♖h2 ♔b3

96.♔c5!



96...♖b4

Nothing is promised by 96...a4 97.♖g3+ ♔b2 98.♖g2+ either.

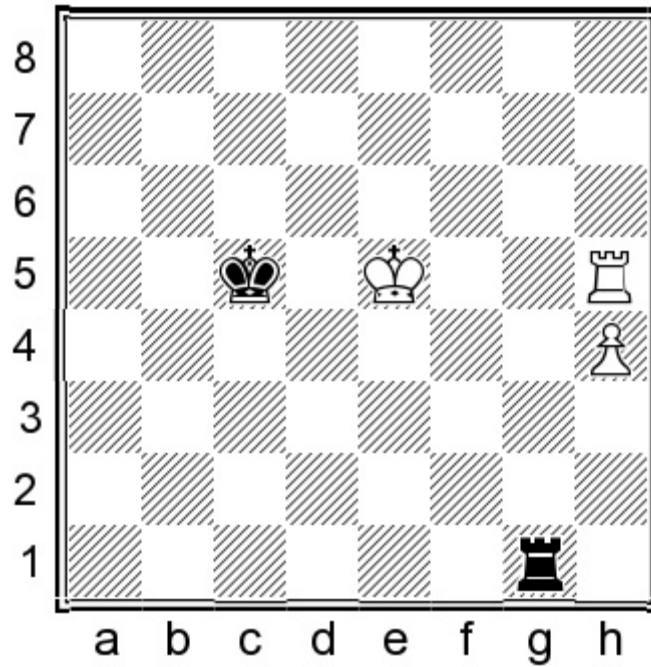
97.♖g3+ ♔b2 98.♖g2+ ♔a3 99.♖g1 ♔a2 100.♖g2+ 1/2

23

L. Portisch

I. Farago

Budapest, 1965



92. ♖g5?

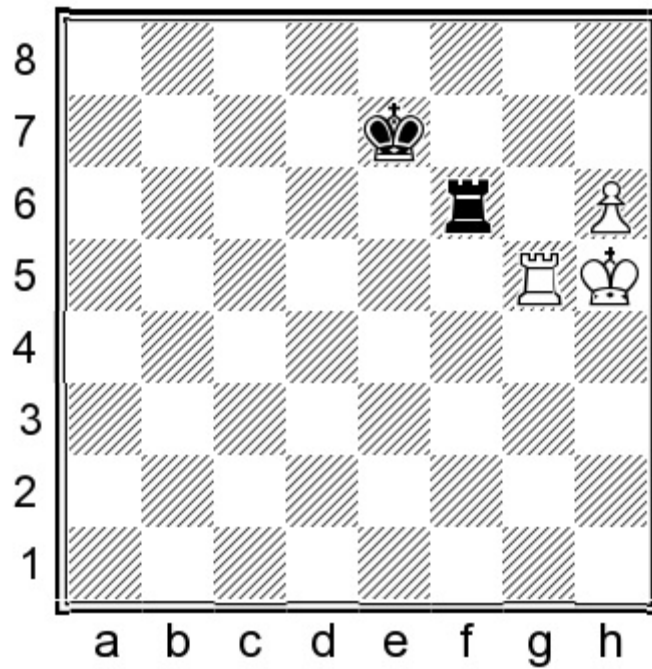
Natural, but wrong. Portisch himself gives the winning line: 92. ♔e6+ ♔c6 (92... ♔d4 93. ♖b5 (93. ♖g5) 93... ♖a1 94. ♔f6 ♔e4 95. h5 ♔f4 96. ♖b4+ ♔f3 97. ♖b6 ♖h1 98. ♔g6) 93. ♖g5 ♖e1+ 94. ♖e5 ♖h1 95. h5 ♔c7 96. ♖d5! ♔c6 97. ♖g5 and then the king comes to help the h-pawn.

Also very good was 92. ♖f5

92. ♖g5? ♖e1+ 93. ♔f6+ ♔d6 94. h5 ♖f1+ 95. ♔g7

The pawn ending is drawn after 95. ♖f5 ♖xf5+ 96. ♔xf5 ♔e7 97. ♔g6 ♔f8

95... ♔e7 96. ♖e5+ ♔d6! 97. ♖g5 ♔e7 98. h6 ♖f7+ 99. ♔g6 ♖f6+ 100. ♔h5



100...♔f7

100...♖f1 101.h7 ♔f7

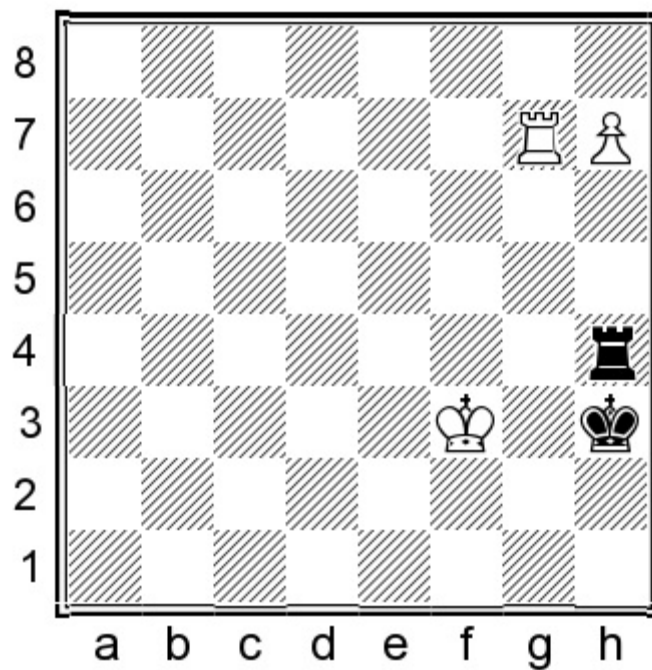
101.h7 ♖f1 1/2

24

S. Mamedyarov

H. Nakamura

Paris, 2017



88...♖h6??

White's king is cut off horizontally and an easy draw could be held by 88...♔h2

88...♖h6?? 89.♔f4 ♕h4 90.♔f5 ♖h5+ 91.♔g6 ♕g4 92.♔f7+ 1-0

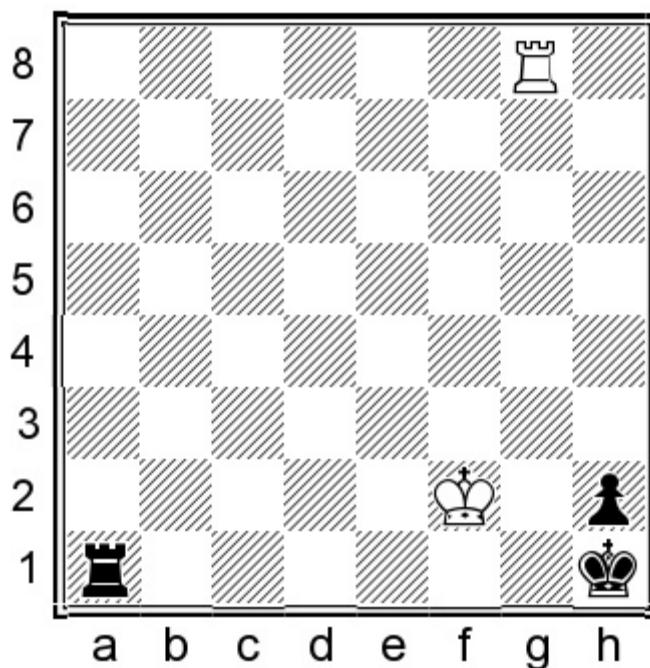
25

M. Abdulla

K. Shevchenko

Tarvisio, 2017

Just look what are our young and strong players are doing at the World Juniors!



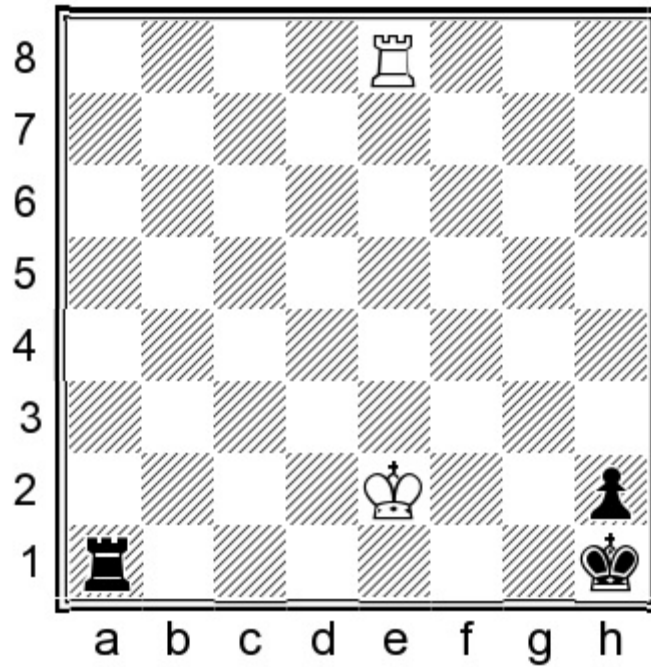
137.♖h8

In such cases it is also possible to keep the king closed in his box with 137.♖f8

137.♖h8 ♖g1 138.♖e8 ♖g2+ 139.♔f3

Simpler was 139.♔f1 ♖g7 140.♖f8

139...♖g7 140.♖e1+ ♖g1 141.♖e8 ♖f1+ 142.♔e2 ♖a1



143. ♖g8??

How is it possible not to know the basics?

143. ♔f2! keeps the opponent's king in the box forever.

143... ♖g1

Suddenly we are in the winning position.

144. ♖b8 ♔g2

and the king escapes the checks...

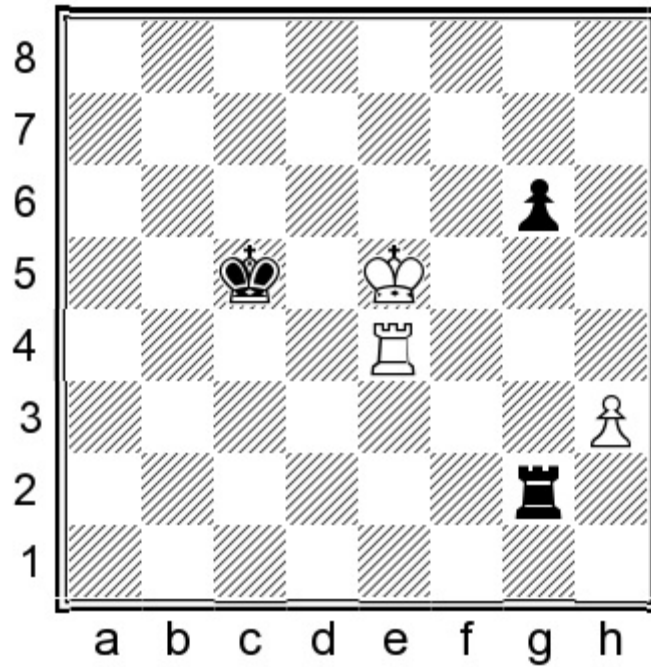
145. ♖g8+ ♔h3 146. ♖h8+ ♔g3 147. ♖g8+ ♔f4 0-1

26

A. Graf

M. Velcheva

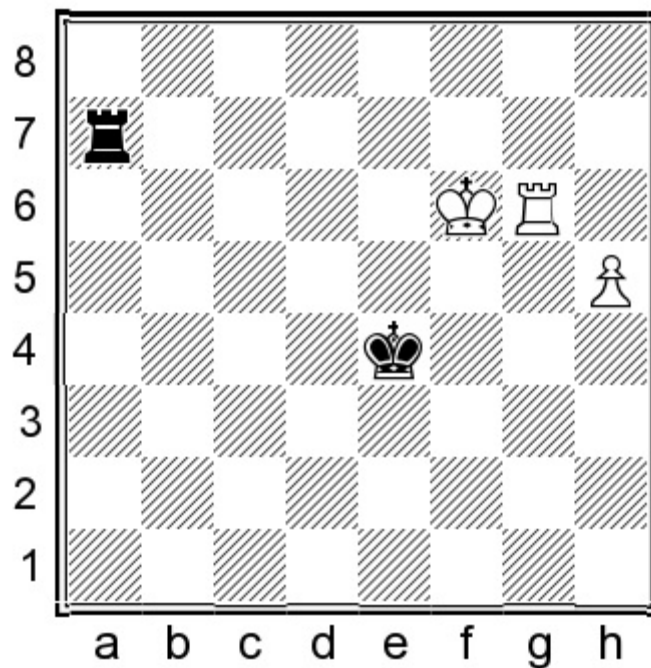
Acropolis, 2008



56.♖g4 ♜e2+ 57.♔f6 ♔d5 58.h4

58.♔xg6 ♜e8 59.h4 ♜g8+ 60.♔f5 ♜xg4 61.♔xg4 ♔e6

58...♜e6+ 59.♔f7 ♜a6 60.♜xg6 ♜a7+ 61.♔f6 ♔e4 62.h5

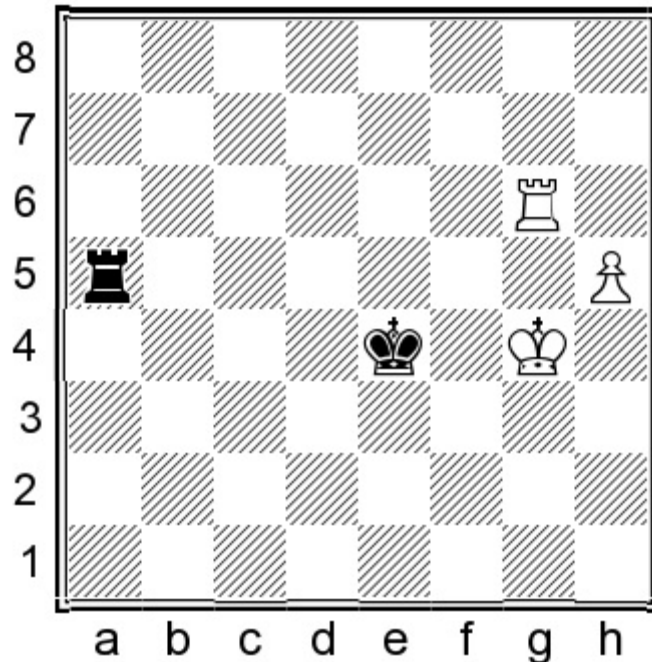


62...♜a6+?

An incorrect check. The correct way to keep the draw was with 62...♔f4 63.h6 ♜a6+ 64.♔g7 ♜a7+ 65.♔h8 ♜a8+ 66.♔h7 ♔f5 67.♜g7 ♔f6

63.♔g5 ♖a5+ 64.♔h6??

64.♔g4!



This is the only winning move! 64...♖a1 65.♖e6+ ♔d5 66.♖e8 ♖g1+ 67.♔f5 ♖f1+ 68.♔g6 ♖g1+ 69.♔h7 with a theoretically-won position since the black king is cut off on the d-file.

64...♖a7

64...♖a1! 65.♔h7 ♔f5 66.h6 ♖a7+ 67.♖g7 ♖a6=

65.♖f6!

Reaching one of our basic winning positions.

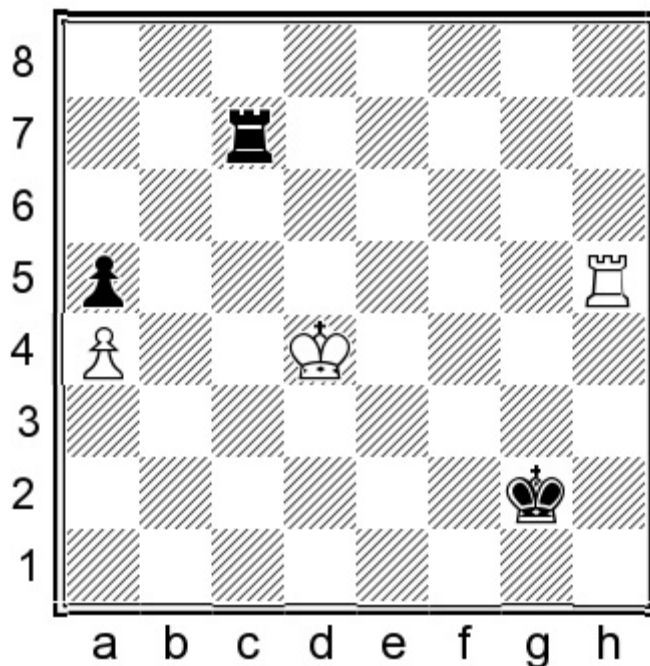
65...♖a1 66.♔g7 ♖g1+ 67.♔f7 ♔e5 68.h6 ♖b1 69.♔g7 ♖h1 70.♖g6 1-0

27

B. Jobava

S. Ernst

Vlissingen, 2015

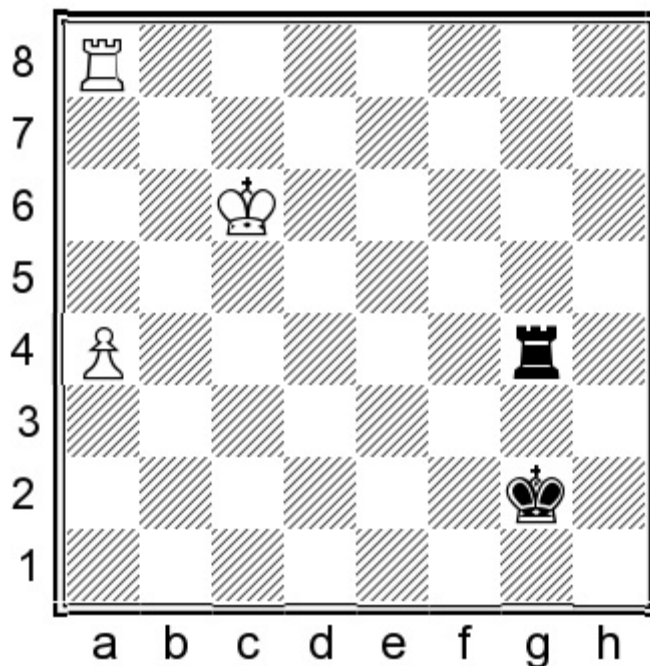


White threatens to win the a-pawn and Black's rook must become temporarily passive.

58...♖a7 59.♔c5 ♜b7

59...♕f3 60.♕b6 ♜a8 61.♞xa5 ♜b8+ 62.♕c6 ♜b4 63.♞a8

60.♕c6 ♜b4 61.♞xa5 ♞g4 62.♞a8



62...♕g3?

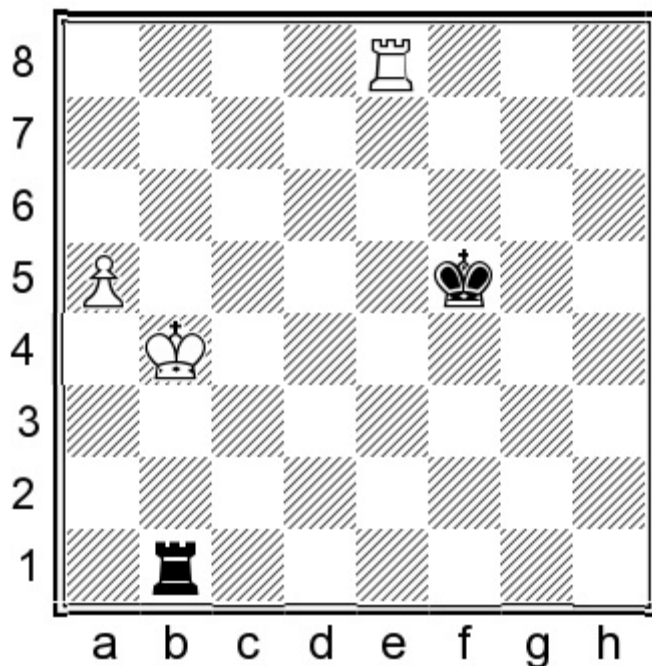
It was necessary to conduct the Vancura method correctly: 62...♞g6+ 63.♕c7 (63.♕d7?? ♞g4 (63...♕f3

with a draw) 64.a5 ♖g5 65.a6 ♖g6 66.♔e7 ♔g3 67.♔f7 ♖b6 68.a7 ♔f4 69.♖f8 ♖b7+ 70.♔e6+)
 63...♖g7+ (63...♔f3 64.a5 ♔e4 65.a6 ♖g7+ (65...♔d5 66.♖d8+ ♔c5 67.a7+-) 66.♔b6 ♖g6+ 67.♔c5
 ♖g5+ 68.♔c4+-) 64.♔d6 ♖g6+ 65.♔e5 ♖g5+ 66.♔f4 ♖h5 67.a5 ♔f2 68.a6 ♖a5 69.a7 ♖a1 70.♔e4 ♔e2
 71.♔d5 ♔d3 72.♔c5 ♔c3 73.♖c8 ♖xa7 74.♔b6++-

63.♔b5 ♖g5+ 64.♔b4 ♖g4+ 65.♔b3

There is no check on the third rank, the king protects the pawn and the rook can now move from its passive position on a8.

65...♔f4 66.♖e8 ♖g1 67.a5 ♔f5 68.♔b4 ♖b1+

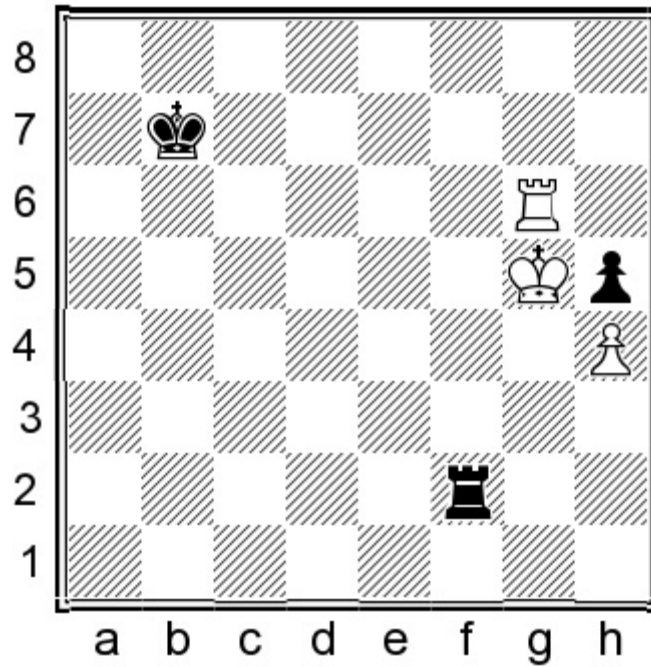


69.♔c5

and Black cannot avoid White building the known basic position of king on a8, pawn at a7 and the black king cut off by four files.

1-0

28
N. Zhukova
N. Pogonina
Plovdiv, 2008



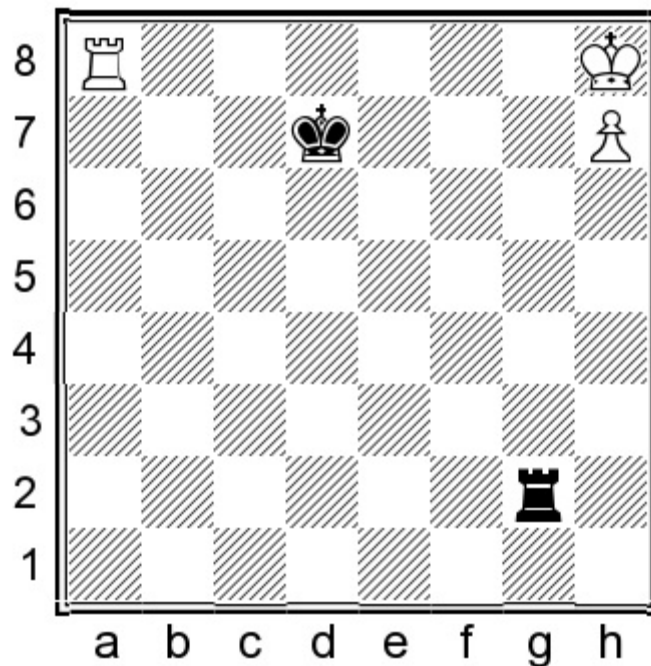
48.♖d6!

the king must be cut off on the d-file!

48...♔c7 49.♖d1 ♖g2+ 50.♔xh5 ♖g3 51.♔h6

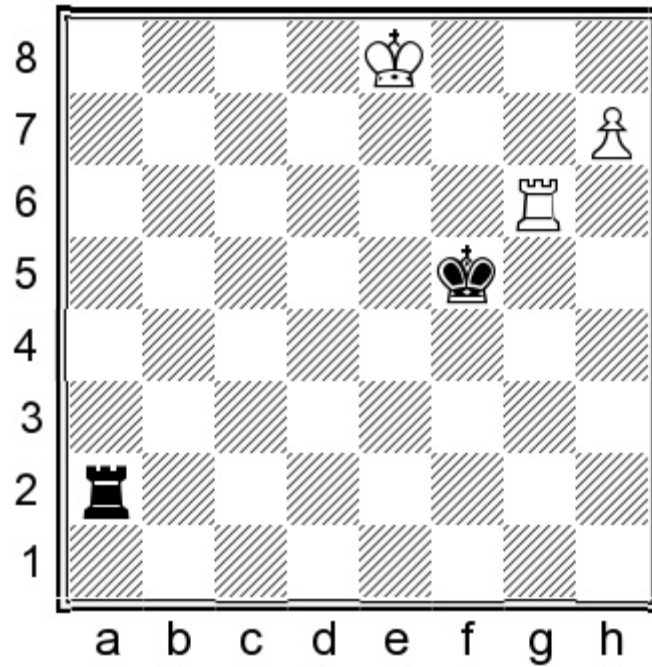
Now it is easy — the king comes to h8 followed by the rook manoeuvre ♖e1–e8–g8, and then the king emerges.

51...♖g4 52.h5 ♖g2 53.♔h7 ♖g5 54.h6 ♖g2 55.♔h8 ♖g6 56.h7 ♖g2 57.♖a1 ♔d7 58.♖a8



58...♔e7

58...♔e6 59.♖g8 ♖a2 60.♔g7 ♖g2+ 61.♔f8 ♖f2+ 62.♔e8 ♖a2 63.♖g6+ ♔f5



64.♖f6+! Only this tactic helps White to win! 64...♔g5 65.♖f8 ♖a8+ 66.♔f7 ♖a7+ 67.♔g8

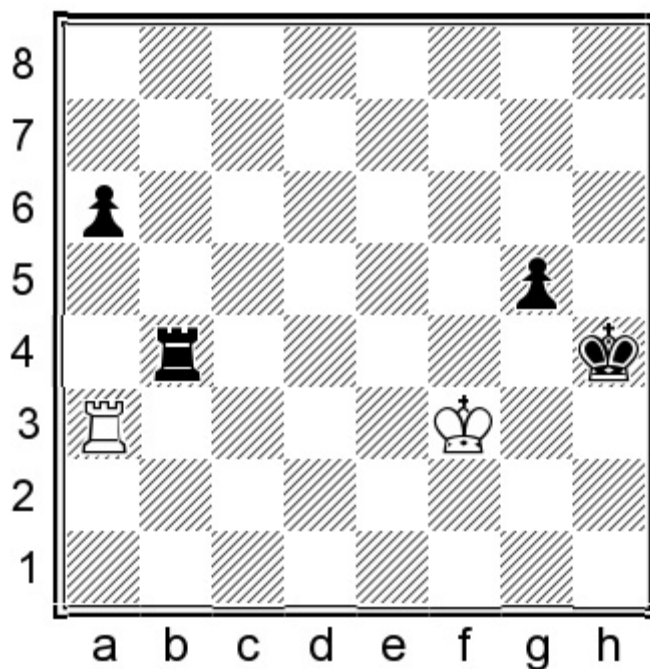
59.♖g8 ♖f2 60.♔g7 ♖g2+ 61.♔h6 ♖h2+ 62.♔g6 1-0

CHAPTER 5

ROOK AGAINST TWO PAWNS

There are two types of such endings — with connected pawns, and with pawns on different sides of the board. A very special case concerns the f- and h- (or c- and a- on the opposite side) which occurs very rarely in tournament games and tends to be full of mistakes. Two pawns don't guarantee the stronger side an easy win, and there are many methods of fighting against them, such as the blockade in the case of connected pawns. Anyhow, it is necessary to play these positions very carefully.

1
L. Brunner
K. Hulak
 Germany, 1990



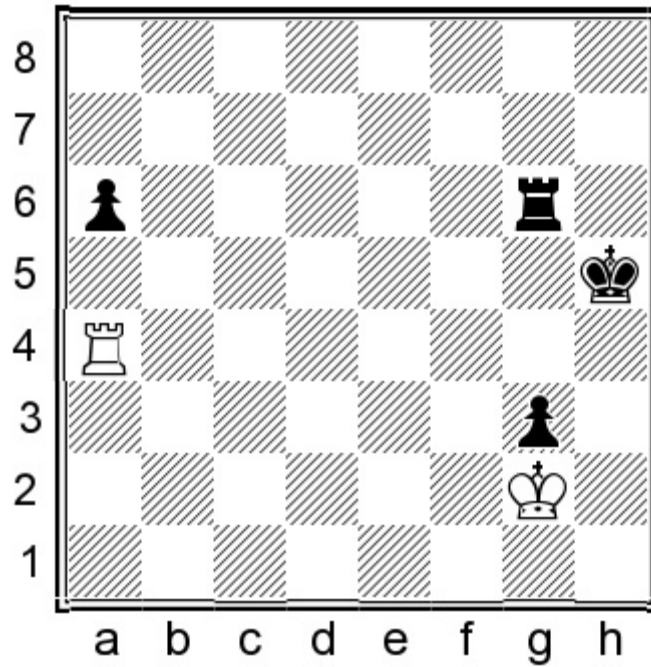
60...♖f4+?

It is always necessary to try to get a theoretically won position, even at the price of a pawn! 60...♖b2!
 61.♖xa6 g4+ 62.♔f4 ♖f2+ 63.♔e3 g3

60...♖f4+? 61.♔g2 ♖f6 62.♖a4+ g4 63.♖a5 ♖c6 64.♖a2 ♖b6 65.♔h2?

A decent plan was to wait with 65.♖a3

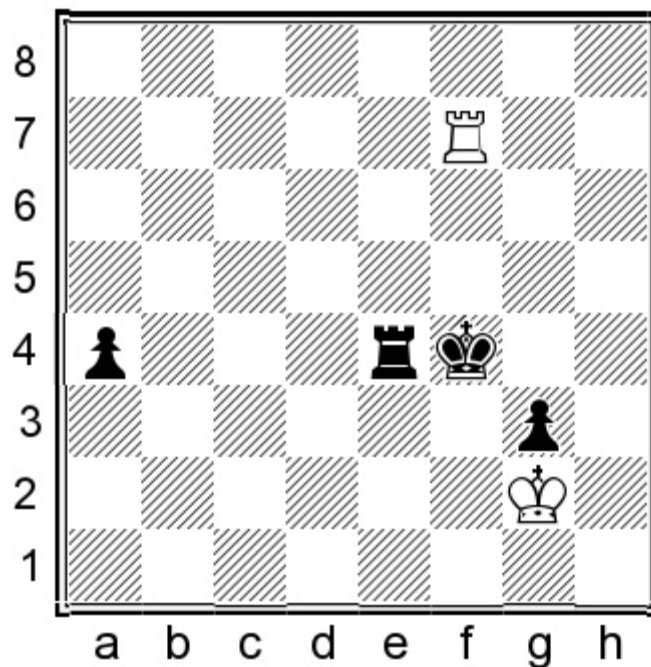
65...g3+ 66.♔g2 ♖g6 67.♖a4+ ♔h5



68.♖a5+

It was better to try to keep Black's king cut off: 68.♖a3 ♔h6 69.♖a5 ♔g7 70.♖f5 ♔g8 71.♖f4 ♖g5 72.♖f6 a5 73.♖f4 ♔g7 74.♖f1 ♔h6 75.♖a1 ♔g6 76.♖f1 ♖g4 77.♖a1 a4 78.♖f1 ♔g5 79.♖f7

68...♔g4 69.♖e5 ♔f4 70.♖e8 ♖g5 71.♖e6 a5 72.♖e8 ♔f5 73.♖e1 a4 74.♖e8 ♖g4 75.♖e7 ♖e4 76.♖a7 ♔f4 77.♖f7+



77...♔e3!

A decisive pawn sacrifice, transferring into a theoretically-winning position.

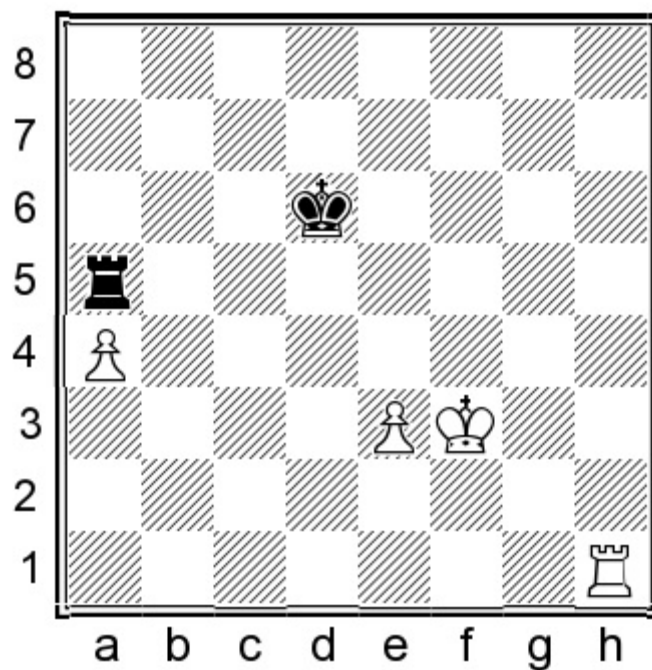
78.♙xg3 ♕d2 79.♙f3 ♖e3+ 80.♙f2 a3 81.♖d7+ ♖d3 0-1

2

G. Kasparov

N. Short

London, 1993

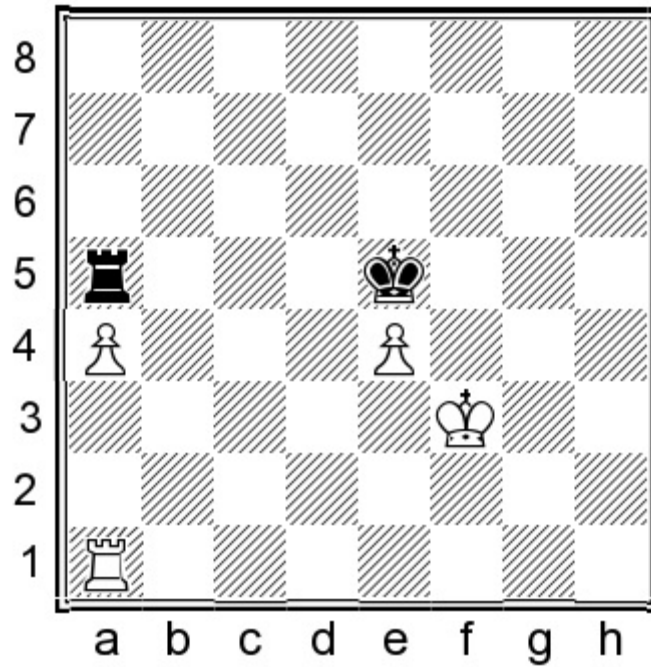


45.♖a1

Much simpler was to keep the rook working from the side: 45.♖h6+! ♕c7 46.♖h4

45.♖a1 ♕e5 46.e4??

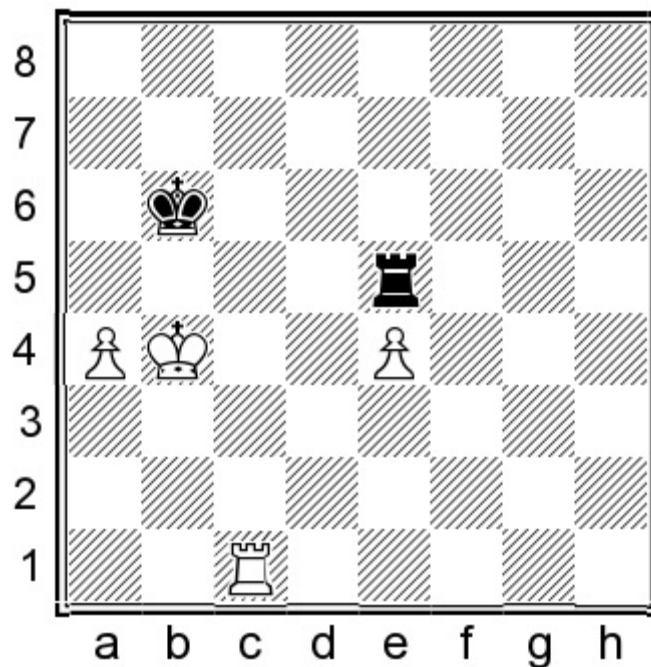
It was correct to switch the rook to the side defence after either 46.♕e2 ♕e4 47.♖f1 ♕e5 48.♖f4 or 46.♖a2 ♕f5 47.e4+ ♕e5 48.♕e3 ♖a8 49.a5 ♖h8 50.♖f2



46...♔e6??

To reach a draw it was necessary to activate his rook 46...♖c5! 47.a5 (Black also has time to return with the rook after 47.♖a3 ♜c4 48.a5 ♜xe4 49.a6 ♜f4+ 50.♔e3 ♜f8=) 47...♖c3+ 48.♔e2 ♔xe4 49.a6 ♜c8 50.a7 ♖a8

47.♔e3 ♔d6 48.♔d4 ♔d7 49.♔c4 ♔c6 50.♔b4 ♜e5 51.♖c1+ ♔b6



52.♖c4!

And Black resigned, as White is ready to transfer his king to support the e4-pawn, which cannot be stopped.

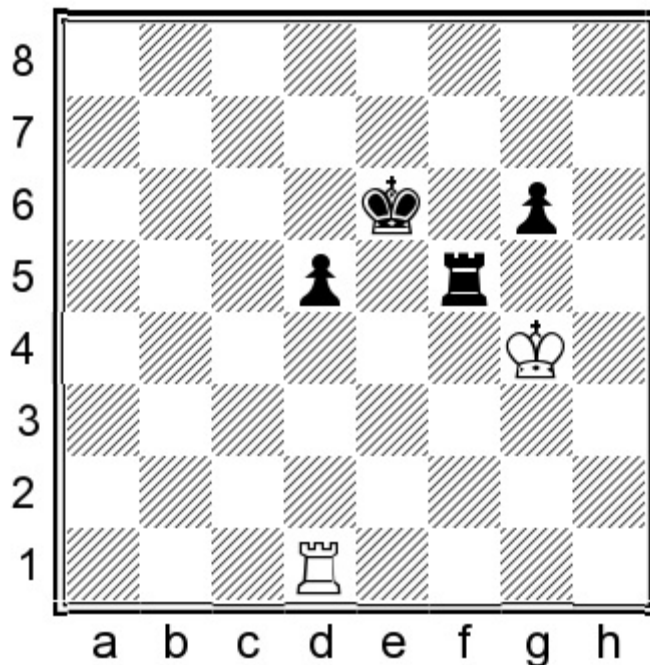
1-0

3

I. Miladinovic

V. Doncea

Cannes, 2008



61...♔e5 62.♖e1+ ♔d4

Practically the same was 62...♔d6 63.♞d1 ♞e5 64.♔f3 g5 65.♔g4 ♔c5

63.♞e6 ♞f1!

Black is ready to sacrifice the g6-pawn to get a theoretical and easily-winning position.

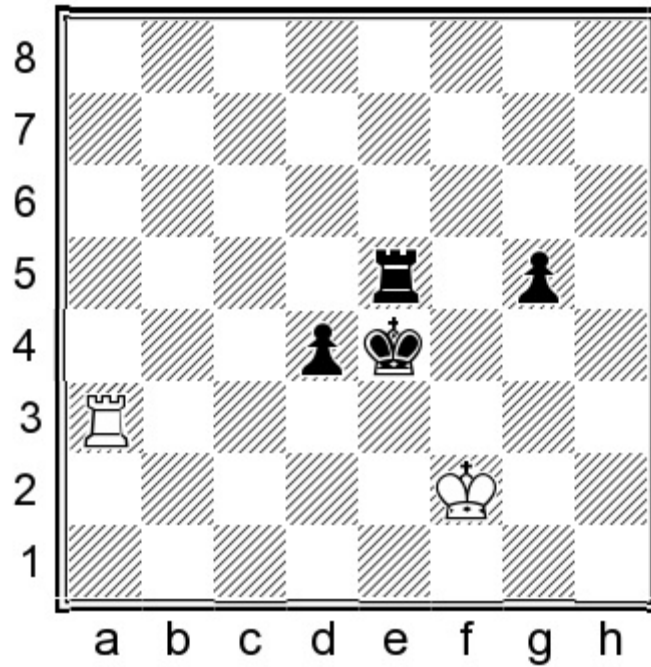
64.♔g3 g5

Also possible was 64...♔d3 65.♔g2 ♞f5 66.♞xg6 d4

65.♔g2 ♞f5 66.♔g3 ♞e5

66...♔d3

67.♞a6 ♔d3 68.♞a5 ♔e4 69.♔f2 d4 70.♞a3



70...♖b5

70...d3 71.♖a4+ ♔d5 72.♖a8 ♔c4; 70...d3

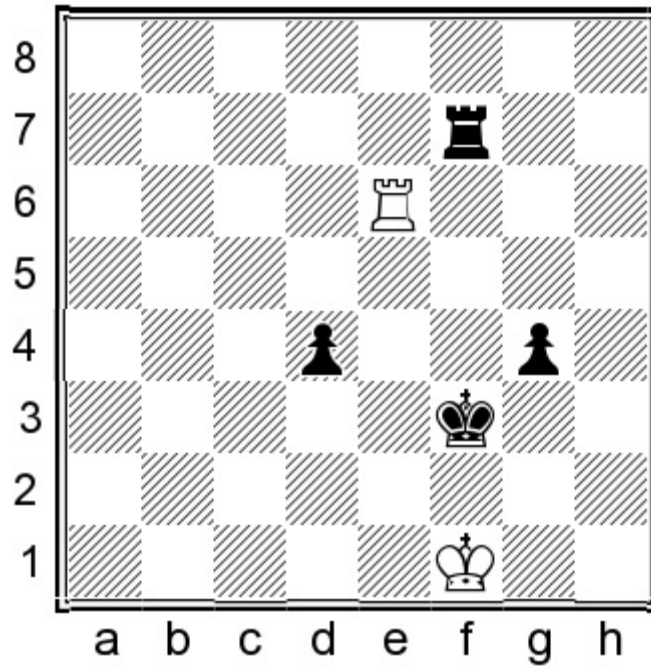
71.♖g3 ♖b2+ 72.♔e1 ♔f4 73.♖d3 ♖b4

Another nice option was 73...g4 74.♖xd4+ ♔e3—+

74.♔f2 g4 75.♖a3 ♖b2+ 76.♔f1 ♖c2 77.♖d3 ♖c1+ 78.♔e2 ♖c4 79.♖a3 ♖c2+

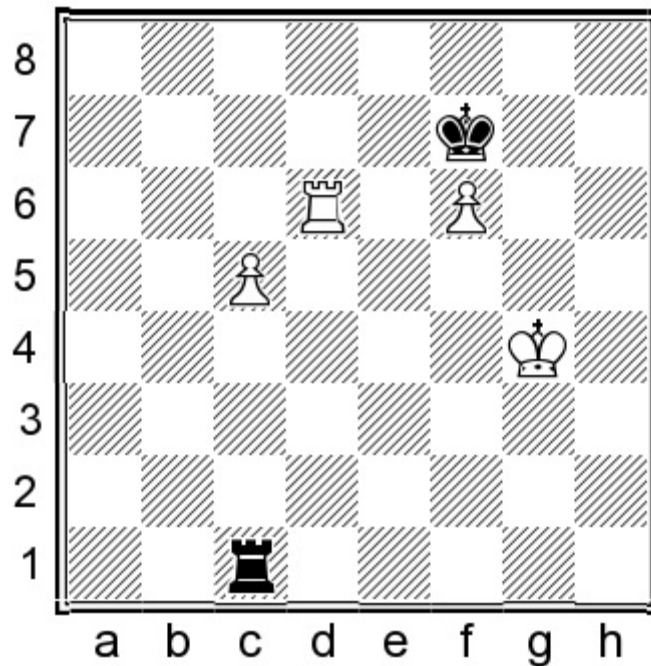
Or 79...g3 80.♖f3+ ♔g4

80.♔f1 ♖c3 81.♖a8 ♔g3 82.♖d8 ♖f3+ 83.♔g1 ♖f4 84.♖e8 ♔f3 85.♔f1 ♖f7 86.♖e6



86...g3 87.♖g6 d3 88.♖d6 ♔e3+ 89.♔e1 g2 90.♗e6+ ♔f3 91.♗g6 ♖f4 0-1

4
 B. Larsen
 E. Torre
 Leningrad, 1973



A famous game in which the great Bent Larsen did not realize the advantage of his two extra-pawns.

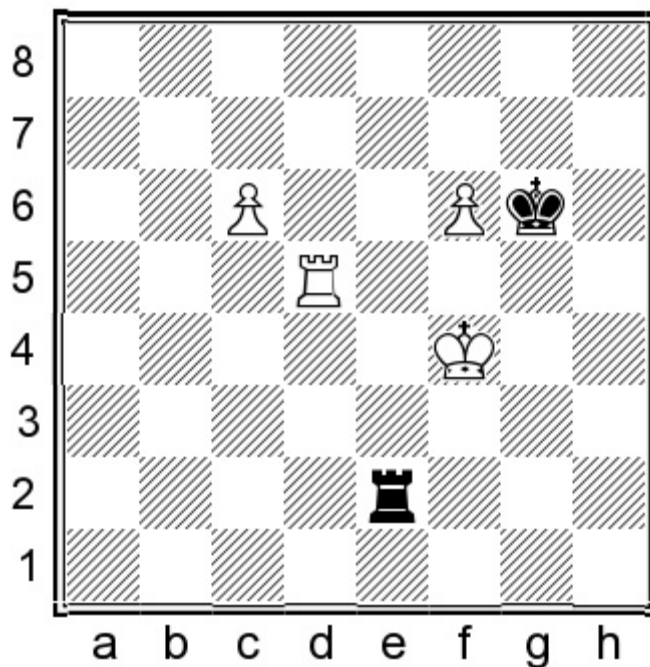
1.c6

There is no win after 1.♖c6 ♔g6! (1...♞e1? 2.♕f5) 2.♕f4 ♞e1! Cutting off the king. 3.♞d6 ♞c1 4.c6 ♞e1=

1.c6 ♔g6! 2.♕f3

2.♕f4 ♞e1 3.♕f3 ♕f7

2...♞e1 3.♕f4 ♞e2 4.♞d5



4...♞c2!

The only move!

Not 4...♕xf6? 5.♞c5 ♞e8 6.♞f5+ ♕g6 (6...♕e7 7.♞e5+ ♕f7 8.♞xe8 ♕xe8 9.♕e5 ♕e7 10.♕d5+-) 7.♞e5 ♞c8 8.♞e6+ ♕f7 9.♕e5 ♞d8 (9...♞a8 10.♕d6 ♞d8+ 11.♕c7+-) 10.♞h6 ♕g7 11.♞d6+-

5.♞d6

5.c7 ♕xf6

5...♞e2!

Once more cutting off the king.

6.f7+ ♕xf7 7.♕f5 ♕e7

7...♞f2+?? 8.♕e5 ♕e7 9.♞d7+ ♕e8 10.♕d6+-

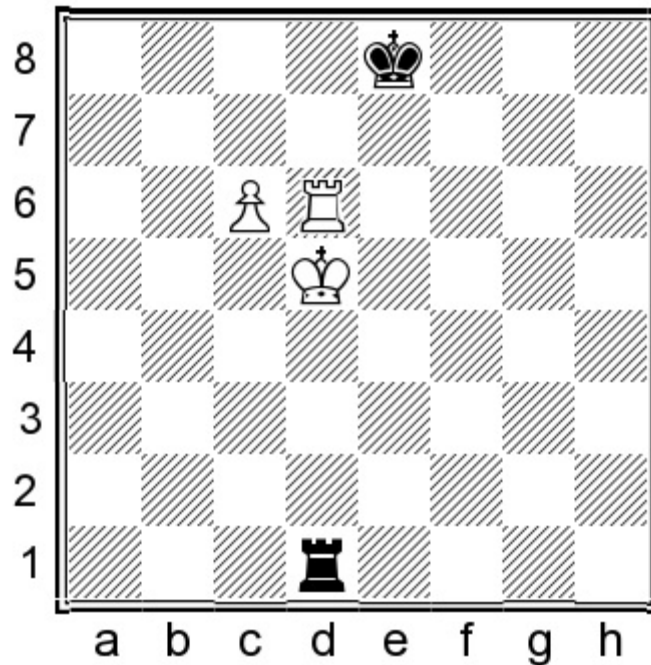
8.♖d7+

8.♜h6 ♕d8=

8...♗e8 9.♗f6 ♜e1 10.♞d5 ♞c1

Avoiding 10...♞e2? 11.♞e5+-

11.♞d6 ♞f1+ 12.♗e6 ♞e1+ 13.♗d5 ♞d1+



14.♗c5 ♞xd6!

Now the pawn endgame is drawn.

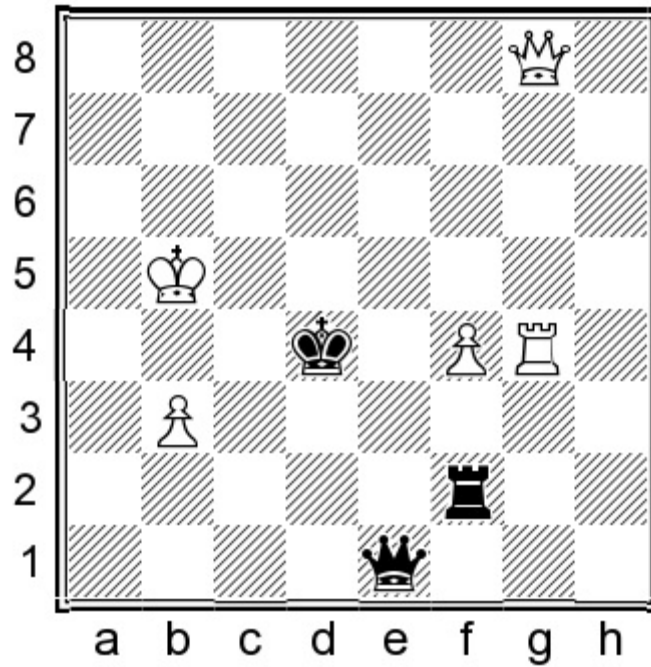
15.♗xd6 ♕d8 1/2

5

A. Beliavsky

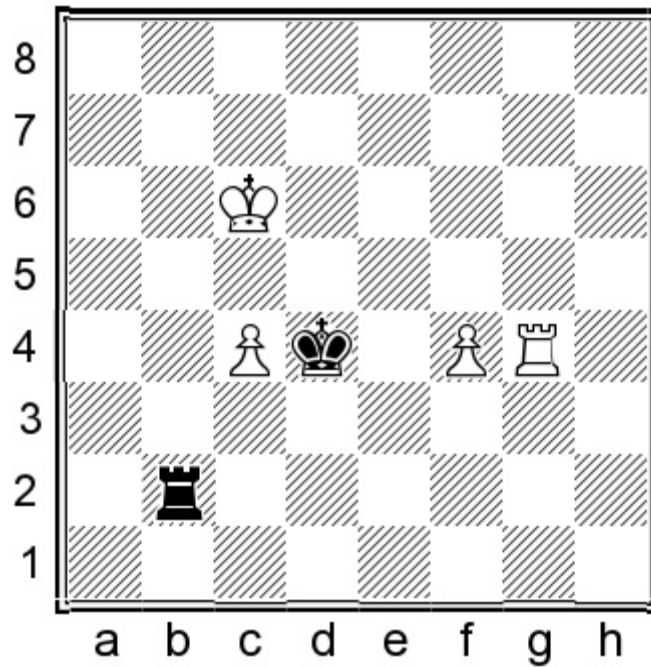
I. Sitnik

Bled, 1996



Black is forced to transfer into a rook ending.

6...♜e2+ 7.♜c4+ ♜xc4+ 8.bxc4 ♝b2+ 9.♔c6



9...♞e2

Leading to a theoretically-won position was 9...♔xc4 10.f5+ ♔d3 11.♔d5+- and the king is cut off horizontally.

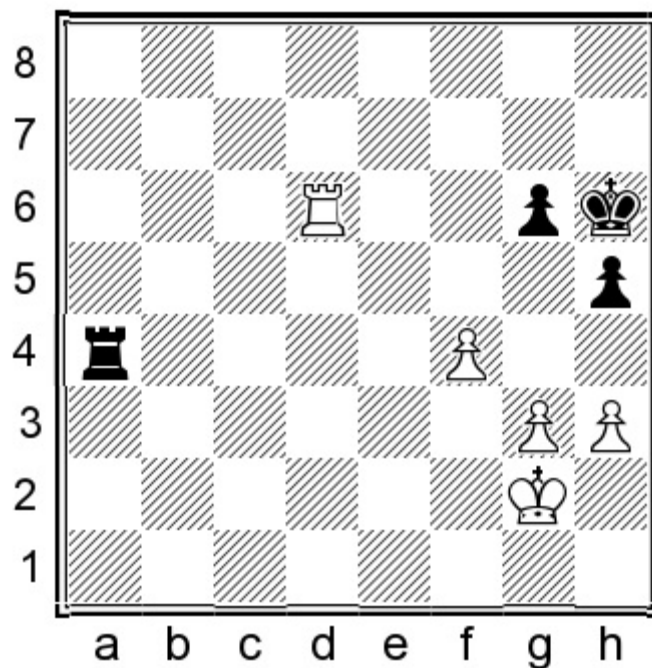
10.♔d6 ♔xc4 11.f5+ ♔b5 12.f6 1-0

6

M. Kozakov

A. Mikhalchishin

Ptuj, 2000



44.f5

White wins a pawn, but Black finds a great drawn setup!

44...♔g5! 45.fxg6 ♔h6! 46.♖b6 ♜c4

and if White wants to ‘uncut’ the king, it will be necessary to sacrifice his g6-pawn, which will lead to a clear draw.

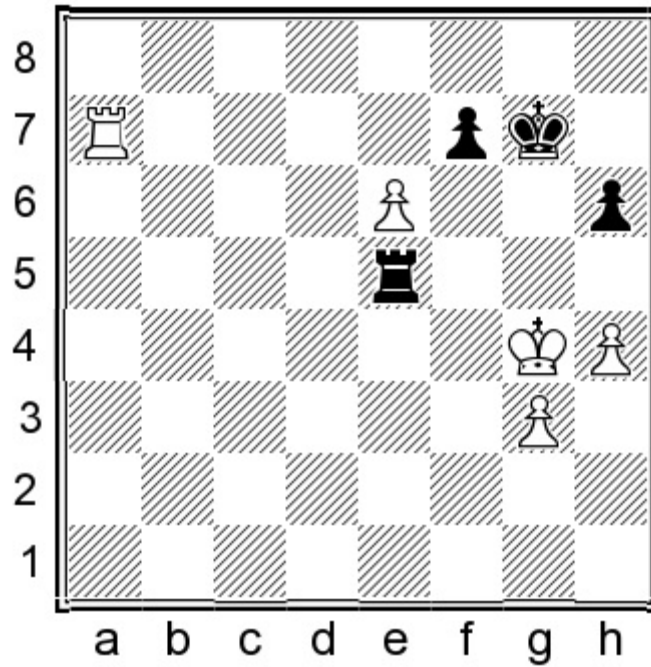
1/2

7

B. Lindberg

C. Bauer

Skopje, 2015



61.exf7?

White would not have had too many problems winning this endgame had he played 61.♖xf7+ ♔g8 62.♖e7 ♕f8 63.♕f4+-

61.exf7? ♖e6 62.f8=♚+

This does not help as the 2 vs 1 ending is drawn.

62.♕f5 ♖f6+ 63.♕e5 ♖g6=

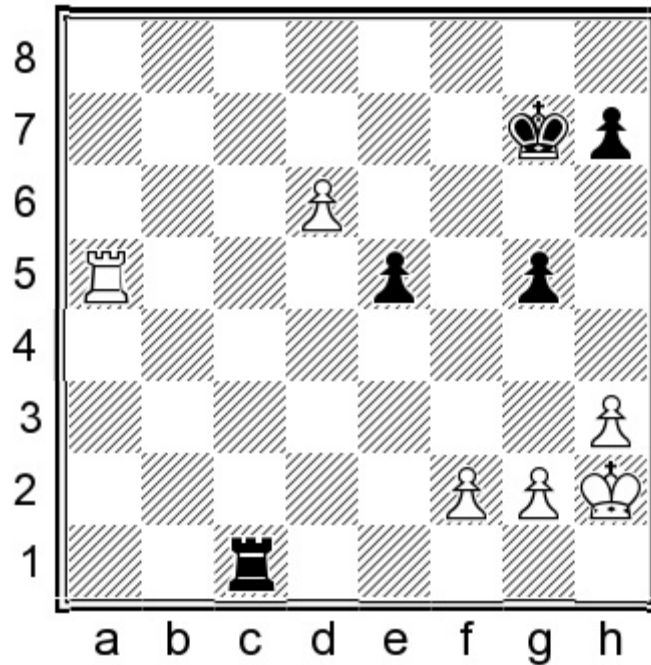
62...♕xf8 63.♕h5 ♕g8 64.g4 ♖d6 65.♖e7 1/2

8

T. Giorgadze

M. Tal

USSR, 1978



44...♖d1!

Sacrificing a second pawn for activity. Losing was 44...♔f6? 45.♖d5 ♖c8 46.d7 ♖d8 47.♔g3! ♔e6 48.♖d1 h5 49.♔f3 ♖xd7 50.♖xd7 ♔xd7 51.g4 h4 52.♔e4 ♔e6 53.f3+-

44...♖d1! 45.♖xe5 ♔f6 46.♖e7 h5 47.♖d7

The only chance was to try 47.♖h7 h4 48.g4! hxg3+ 49.♔xg3+= (49.fxg3 ♖xd6 50.♖h6+ ♔e5 51.♖xd6 ♔xd6 52.♔g2 ♔e6 53.♔f2 ♔f6=)

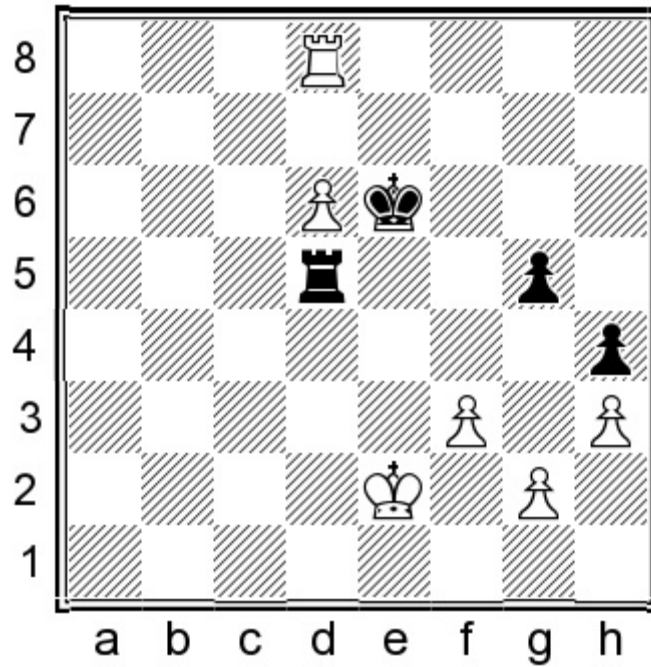
47...♖d2! 48.♔g3 ♖d3+ 49.f3 h4+ 50.♔f2

No better is 50.♔g4 ♔g6 51.♖e7 ♖xd6 52.f4 gxf4=

50...♔e6 51.♖g7 ♔f5!

Weaker, but still possible, was 51...♔f6 52.♖h7 ♔f5 53.d7 ♖d6

52.♖d7 ♔e6 53.♔e2 ♖d5 54.♖d8



54...♖a5!=

It would not be a great idea to transfer into the pawn ending:

54...♖xd6 55.♖xd6+ ♔xd6 56.f4+-

55.♔f2 ♖a2+ 56.♔g1 ♖d2

The white king is sent into passivity.

57.♖e8+ ♔f5 58.♖d8 ♔e6 59.d7= ♖xd7 60.♖xd7 ♔xd7

We have reached a theoretical pawn endgame, where White cannot realize his material advantage.

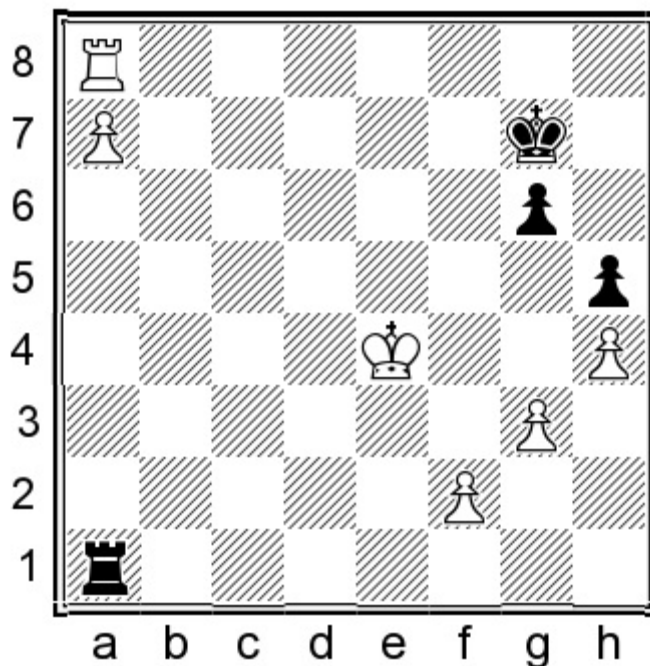
61.♔f2 ♔e6 62.♔e3 ♔e5 63.♔f2 ♔f6 64.♔e2 ♔e6 1/2

9

L. Aronian

A. Morozevich

Mexico City, 2007



To win this endgame, White must create a passed pawn on the f-file, but it is only possible with the help of the opponent.

48...♖a4+ 49.♔f3 ♜a3+ 50.♔g2 ♜a2 51.♔h3 ♜a3 52.f3 ♔h7 53.♔g2 ♜a2+ 54.♔f1 ♜a1+ 55.♔e2 ♜a2+ 56.♔d3 ♔g7 57.♔c4 ♜a1 58.♔c5 ♜c1+ 59.♔d6 ♜d1+ 60.♔e5 ♜a1 61.♔f4 ♜a4+ 62.♔e5 ♜a1 63.f4 ♜a2 64.f5 gxf5 65.♔f4 ♜a5 66.♜e8 ♜xa7 67.♔xf5 ♜f7+ 68.♔e4

68.♔g5 ♜f3

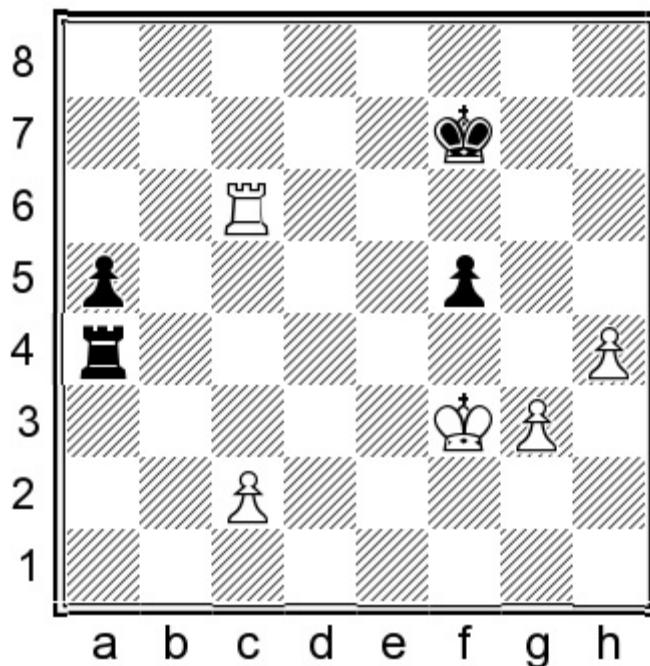
68...♜f1 69.♜e5 ♔g6 1/2

10

C. Schlechter

E. Lasker

World Championship 10th, 1910



54...♖e4!

Black's rook has to control the centre and cut off the white king. Other tries were completely wrong:

54...♔g7 55.c4 intending 56.♕f4+- Schlechter;

or 54...♞b4 55.c4 intending 56.♕f4+- Schlechter;

or 54...♞a1 55.♞a6 a4 56.♕f4 ♞f1+ 57.♔g5 ♞f3 58.♞xa4 ♞xg3+ 59.♕xf5+- Tartakover

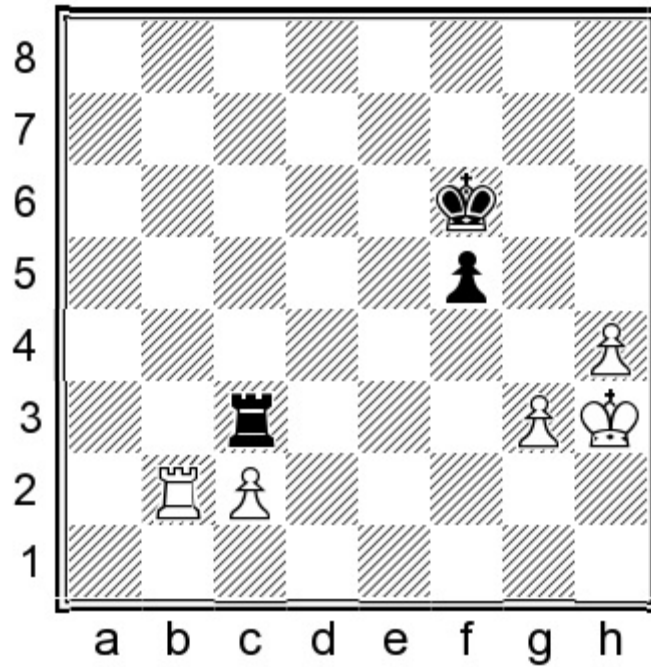
54...♞e4! 55.♞c5

Black's task would be a bit more complicated after 55.c4 a4 56.c5 ♞c4 57.♞a6 ♞xc5 58.♕f4 ♞c3 59.♞xa4 ♕g6 60.♞a6+ ♕h5 61.♞a5 ♕g6 62.♞e5 ♞c4+

55...♕f6 56.♞xa5 ♞c4 57.♞a6+ ♕e5 58.♞a5+ ♕f6 59.♞a6+ ♕e5 60.♞a5+ ♕f6 61.♞a2

What else? White has proudly kept his extra two pawns, but his rook is so passive that there are no longer chances to play for a win!

61...♕e5 62.♞b2 ♞c3+ 63.♕g2 ♕f6 64.♕h3



64...♖c6!

There was a pretty trick here: 64...f4? 65.♖b3! ♖xc2 66.♖f3+-

65.♖b8

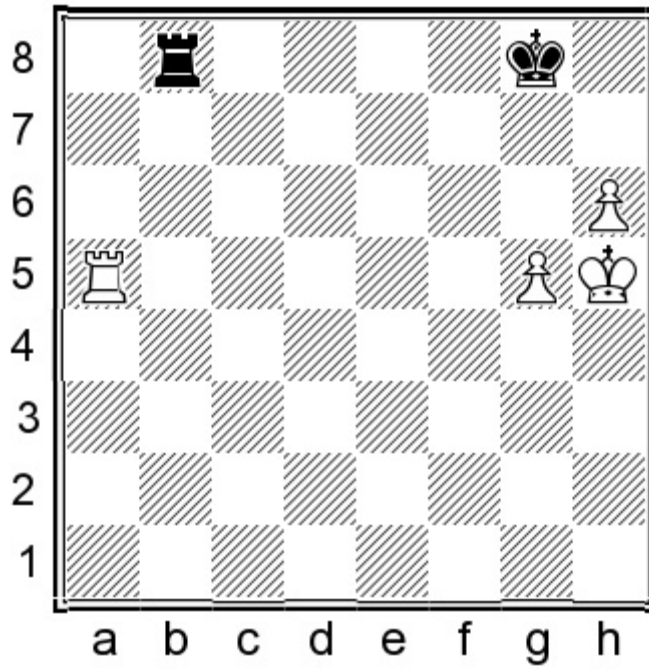
Or 65.h5 ♔g5

65...♖xc2 66.♖b6+ ♔g7 67.h5 ♖c4 68.♖g6+

68.h6+ ♔h7 69.♖f6 ♖a4 was given by Capablanca as the concluding moves of this game.

68...♔f7 69.♖g5 ♔f6 1/2

11
2012

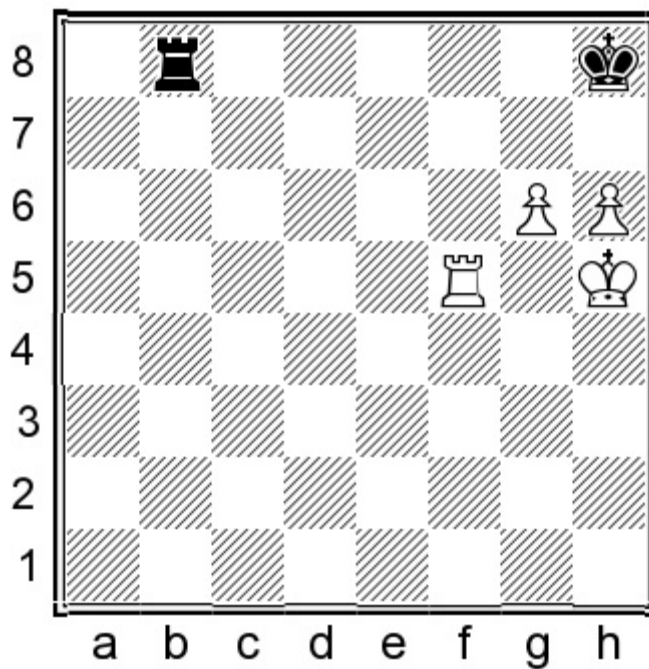


Now let us come to a very important subject — two connected pawns. Not as simple as it might seem! It is necessary to protect the king against checks...

1.g6 ♖h8

or 1...♞f8 2.♔g5

2.♞f5



2...♞g8

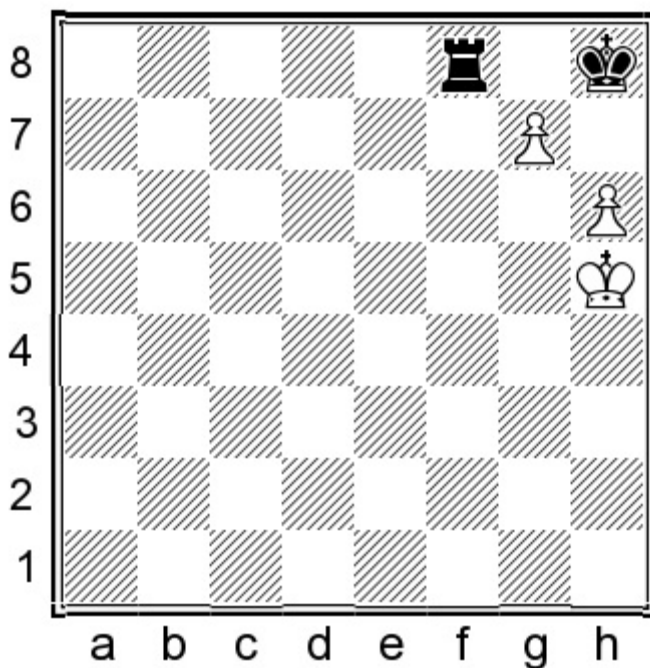
After 2...♔g8 it's an easy win with 3.h7+, then ♔h5-h6 and g6-g7 (There exists another way too: 3.g7 ♔h7 4.♖f8);

The defensive attempt 2...♖a8 doesn't change anything, and we have the same choice 3.h7 (or 3.g7+ ♔h7 4.♖f8; or 3.♖f8+ as in the main line)

3.♖f8!?

It is also possible to wait with 3.♔g5 and after 3...♖a8 make the choice, as above after 2...♖a8. But, don't allow the stalemate defence 3.h7?? ♖xg6!=

3...♖xf8 4.g7+

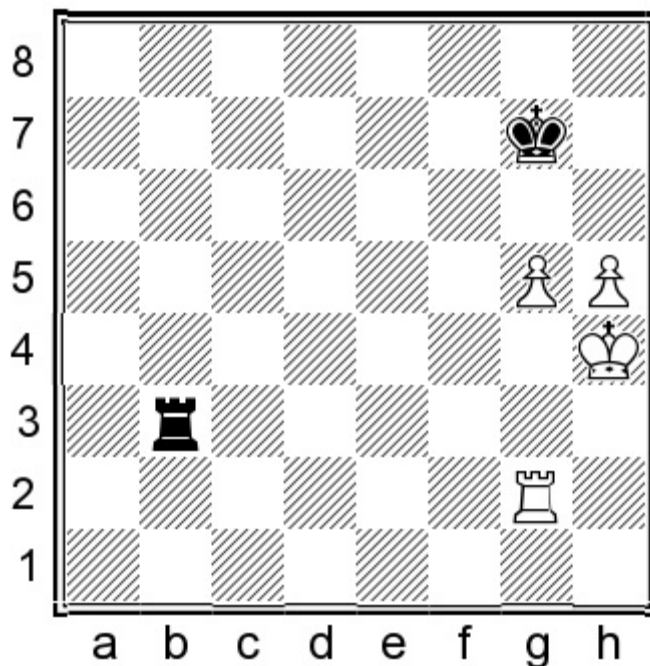


4...♔g8

After the tricky 4...♔h7 just not queen or rook!

5.♔g6 1-0

There is no defence against h6-h7.



Let's look at positions with a connected g & h-pawn advantage. These kinds of positions are winning in general, but as we will see there may well be exceptions. White must mainly take care of the black king, not allowing him to stand between the pawns. First off, let's see the winning technique!

74...♖b4+ 75.♗g4 ♖b1

Black tries to make the task harder by threatening both vertical and horizontal checks.

76.♗f4

White must keep his rook close by, so he can restrict Black's checks.

76...♖h1+ 77.♔g4 ♖g1+ 78.♔f5 ♖a1 79.h6+!

Finally we can push our pawn, but the continuation remains difficult.

79...♔h7 80.♔g4!

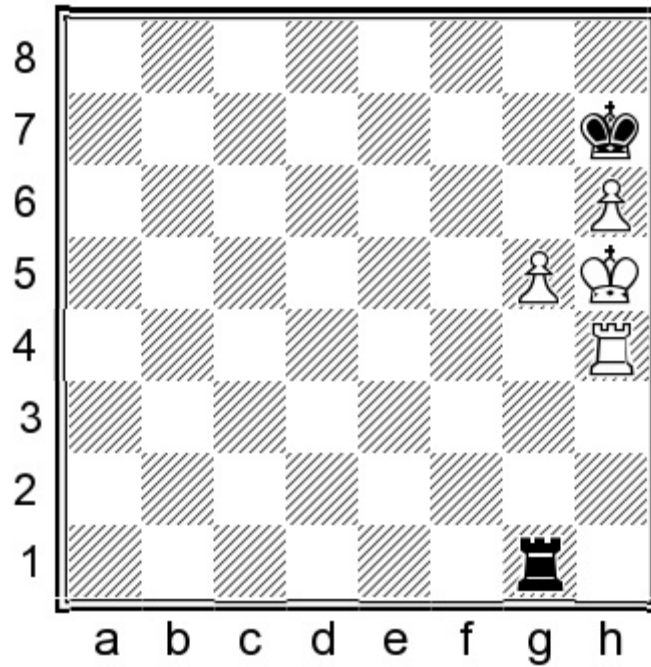
Trying to find shelter on h5!

80...♖g1+

This time it would only make the job easier if the king were to go between the pawns with 80...♔g6 because of 81.♖f6+ ♔h7 82.♖f7+ ♔g8 (82...♔g6 83.♖g7#) 83.♖d7+-

81.♔h5 ♖h1+ 82.♖h4 ♖g1

Here we are! How should White continue?



83. ♖h2!

A very important move, which places Black in zugzwang! He has only one way by which he can prevent the g6 move...

83... ♖g3

However, with this move, the rook comes too close to the king, and the checks will no longer be a threat.

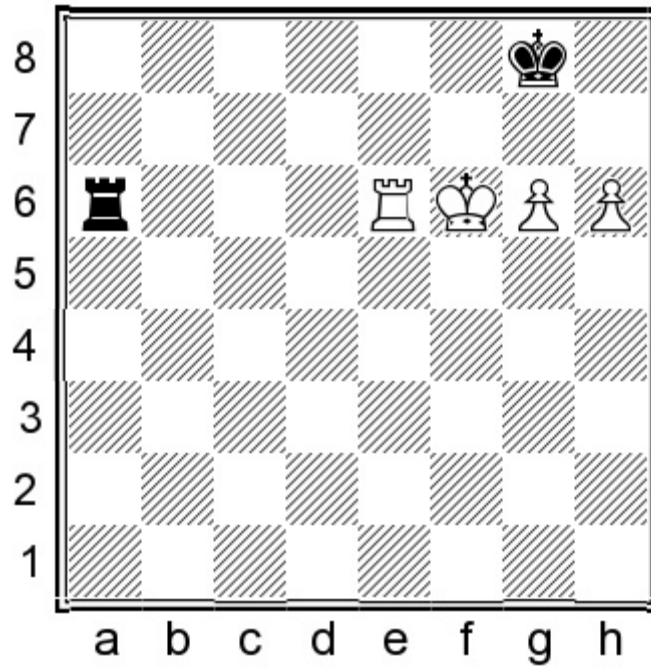
84. ♖e2! ♖h3+ 85. ♔g4 ♖a3 86. ♖e7+

When Black's king is forced to the back rank, the win is very close.

86... ♔g8

86... ♔g6 87. ♖g7#

87.g6 ♖a4+ 88. ♔f5 ♖a5+ 89. ♔f6 ♖a6+ 90. ♖e6



90...♖a8

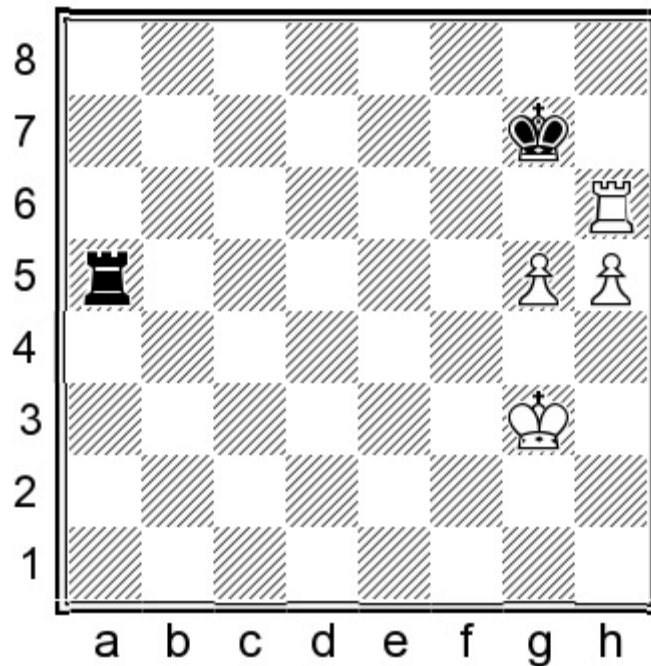
Due to the threatened mate on the 8th rank, the rook is forced into passive defence.

91.♗d6 ♖c8 92.♔e7!

And White exchanges the rooks on the next move, and wins the game.

1-0

13



Black holds the draw even without keeping his king between the white pawns. The rook is obliged to passively defend the pawns, but this means his king remains unprotected from the side checks!

1. ♖g6+

1. ♔f4 ♜a4+=

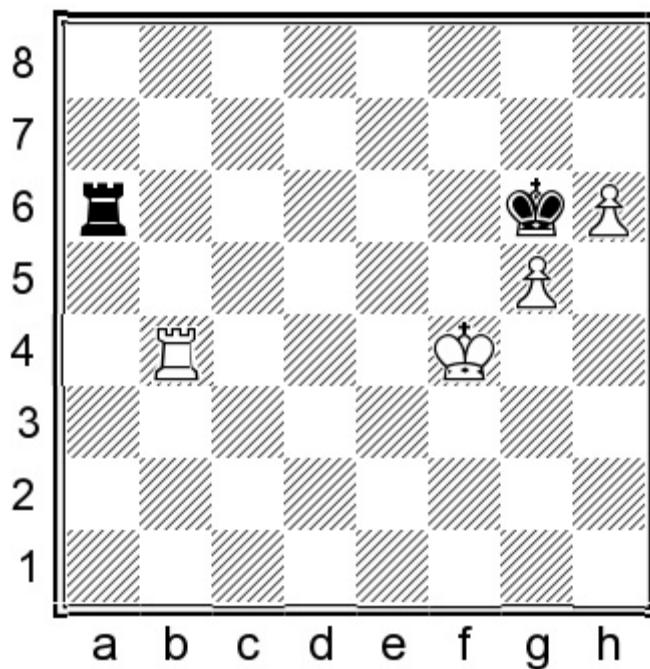
1. ♖g6+ ♔h7

White must settle for the draw!

1/2

14

J. Kling, 1851



The following example is probably the most important defensive position, in which Black can hold the draw with several exact moves. Kling and Horwitz published this endgame in 1851, which is 167 years ago! Let's see why White can't win!

1. ♖d4 ♜b6

Black defends against the 6th rank checks, and by passing with his rook, he waits for White to find a plan.

2. ♖d8!

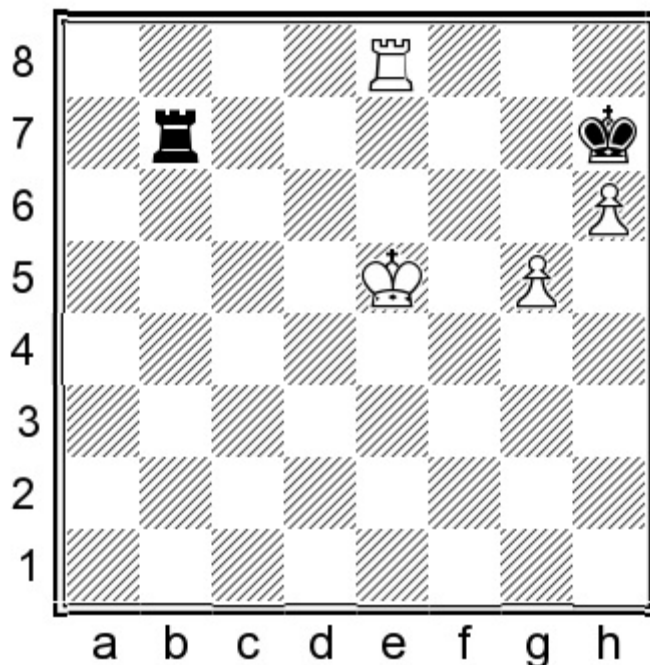
The best chance! The point is, that after the check, the g5-pawn cannot be taken, since the h-pawn promotes. At the same time, he threatens ♜g8 check!

2...♖b4+ 3.♔e5 ♜b7!

An extremely important move, controlling the h7-square, so the g5-pawn really is hanging now.

3...♔xg5?? 4.h7+-; Losing instructively is 3...♞g4? 4.♞g8+ ♔h7 because of 5.♔f5!+- (5.♞g7+? would have been a mistake: 5...♔h8 6.♔f5 ♜f4+! 7.♔g6 ♜f6+! 8.♔h5 ♞xh6+! due to this nice stalemate idea!) ; 3...♞b5+ also draws, but in a more difficult way than 3...♞b7! 4.♞d5 (4.♔e6 ♞xg5) 4...♞b7 5.♔e6 ♞a7 6.♞d7 ♞a6+ 7.♞d6 (7.♔e7 ♔xg5 8.h7 ♞a8 9.♔f7 ♔h6=) 7...♞a7= as Dvoretsky showed in his book.

4.♞g8+ ♔h7 5.♞e8

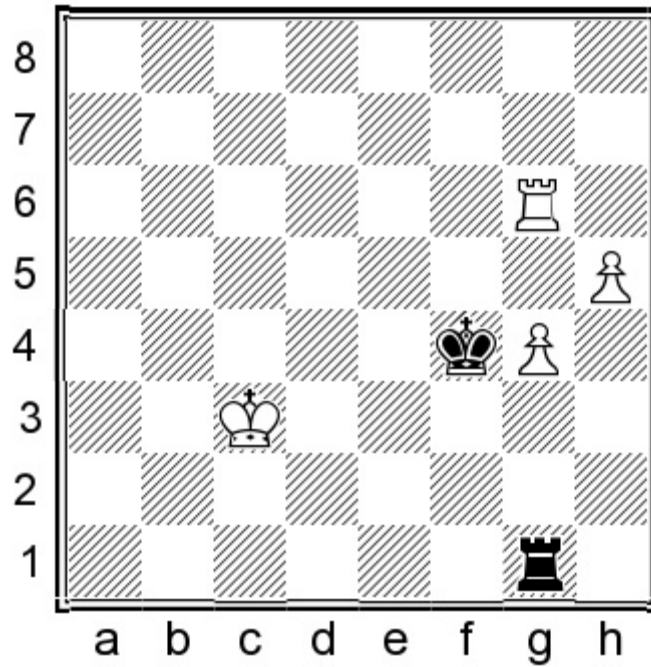


5...♔g6

With the help of a nice trick, Black has the chance to force a draw immediately: 5...♞b5+ 6.♔f6 ♞xg5!=

6.♔f4 ♞b4+ 7.♞e4 ♞b6= 1/2

And we are back to the initial position.



Let's get acquainted with this kind of 'self-helper' pawn duo. The h-pawn promotes to a queen, even without the help of the king. Black cannot stop him. Almost anything could be played by Black, but White's next moves are h6, g5, ♖g7, and then, h7, g6, ♖g8, and finally h8=♚.

1.h6 ♖h1 2.g5 ♜f5 3.♖g7

and Black has no way to get closer with his king. The next moves are h7, g6 and ♖g8.

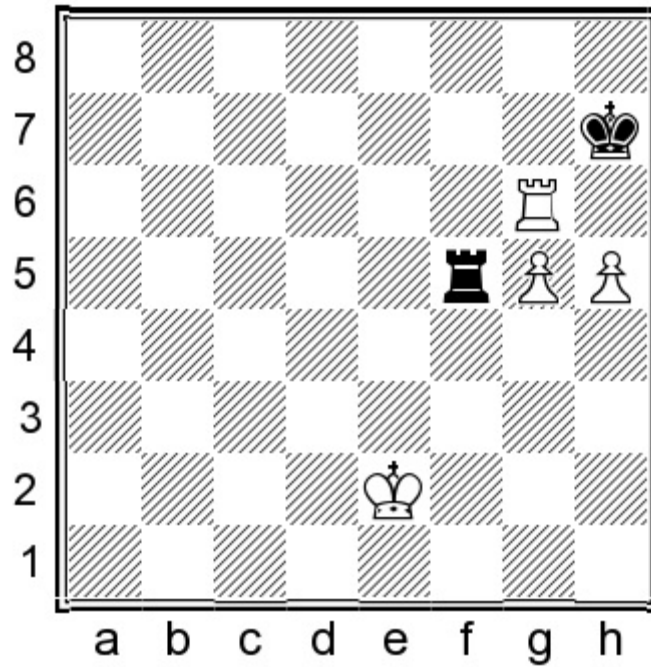
1-0

16

V. Topalov

A. Grischuk

Wijk aan Zee, 2003



65...♖a5!

‘Sticking’ to the g5-pawn forever! The rook cannot leave the g6 square and if the king tries to help by protecting the g5 pawn it will face a lot of sidechecks.

A draw is inevitable.

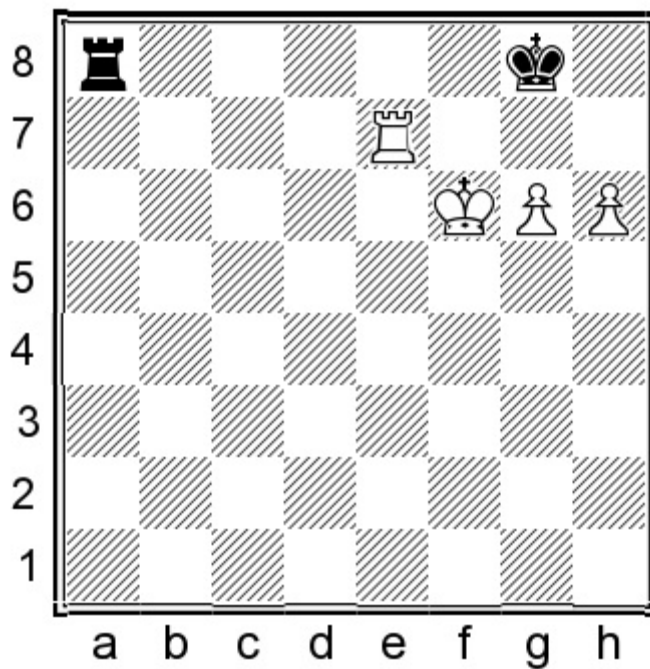
66.♔d3 1/2

17

K. Kull

R. Narva

Kilingi Nomme, 2002



73.h7+??

It was necessary to prepare this move:

73.♞e5! ♜b8 74.♔g5 ♞a8 75.h7+ ♔h8 76.♔h6

73.h7+?? ♔h8 74.♔f7 ♞f8+!

Pat defence!

75.♔e6 ♞f6+!

Another one!

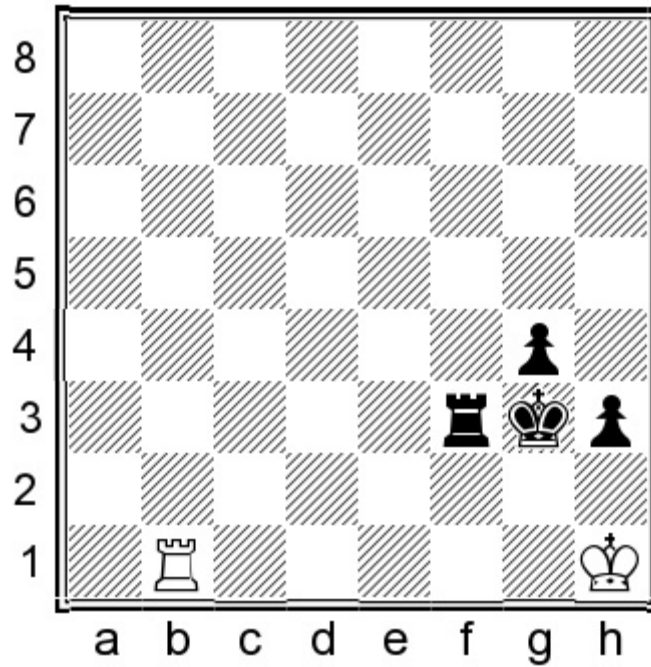
76.♔e5 ♞xg6 77.♔f5 ♞g7 78.♞xg7 ♔xg7 1/2

18

I. Andrenko

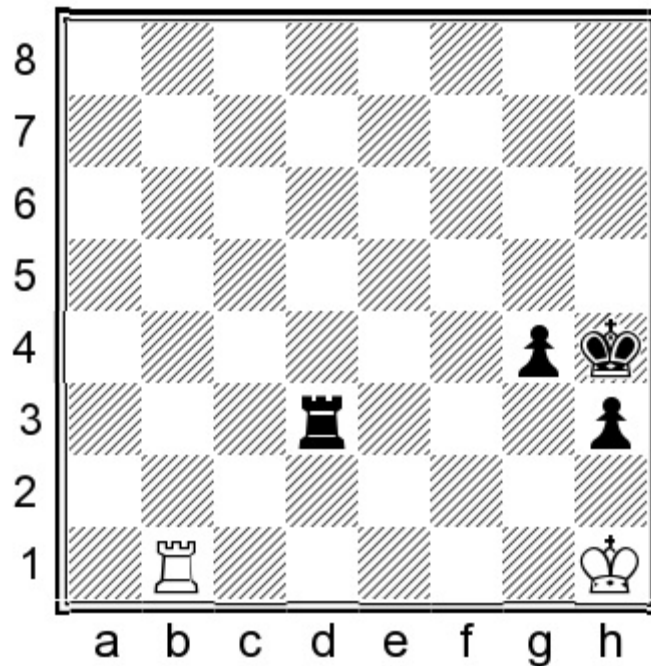
Z. Mammadov

Albena, 2012



81...h2??

The correct path to the win is quite precise: 81...♖d3 82.♖f1 ♔h4 83.♖b1



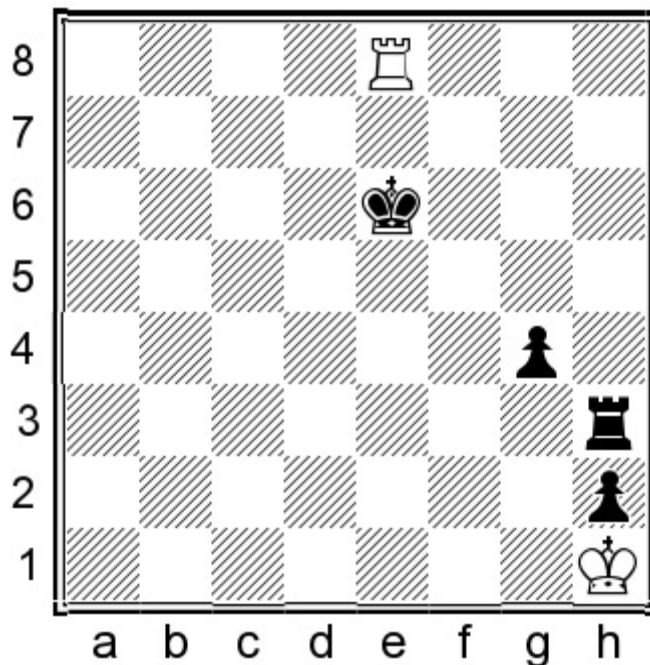
83...♖d4! Important prophylaxis: before pushing the g-pawn it is necessary to eliminate checks on the fourth rank. 84.♖e1 g3 85.♖b1 ♖f4 86.♖a1 h2 87.♔g2 ♖f2+ 88.♔h1 ♔h3 and it's time to resign.

81...h2?? 82.♖b3 ♔h4 83.♖b4!

Of course, the transition into a pawn ending here is bad.

83.♖xf3?? gxf3 84.♔xh2 ♔g4 85.♔h1 ♔f4 86.♔g1 ♔e3 87.♔f1 f2-+

83...♖h3 84.♞b8 ♔g5 85.♞g8+ ♕f5 86.♞f8+ ♕e6 87.♞e8+

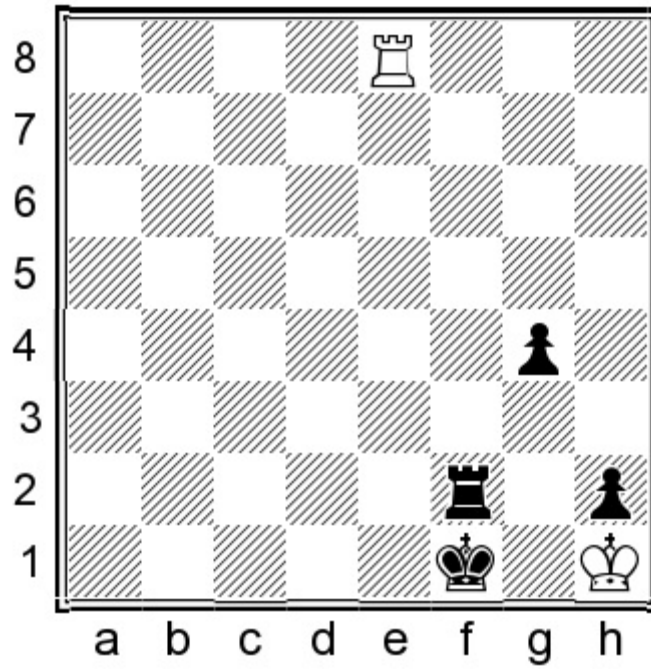


87...♕f5

87...♕f7 88.♞e4 g3 (88...♞h4 89.♞e3 ♕f6 90.♞g3 ♕f5 91.♞g2 ♕f4 92.♞f2+ ♕e3 93.♞g2 ♕f3 94.♞f2+! Again, a pat defence!) 89.♞g4 ♕f6 90.♞g8 ♕f5 91.♞g7 ♕f4 92.♞f7+ ♕e5 93.♞g7 Black's pawns and rook cannot move and his king can't help, so...draw!

88.♞f8+ ♕e4 89.♞e8+ ♕f3 90.♞f8+ ♕e2 91.♞f2+ ♕e3 92.♞f8 ♞f3 93.♞a8 g3

93...♞f2 94.♞e8+ ♕f3 95.♞f8+ ♕e2 96.♞e8+ ♕f1



97.♗e1+!!

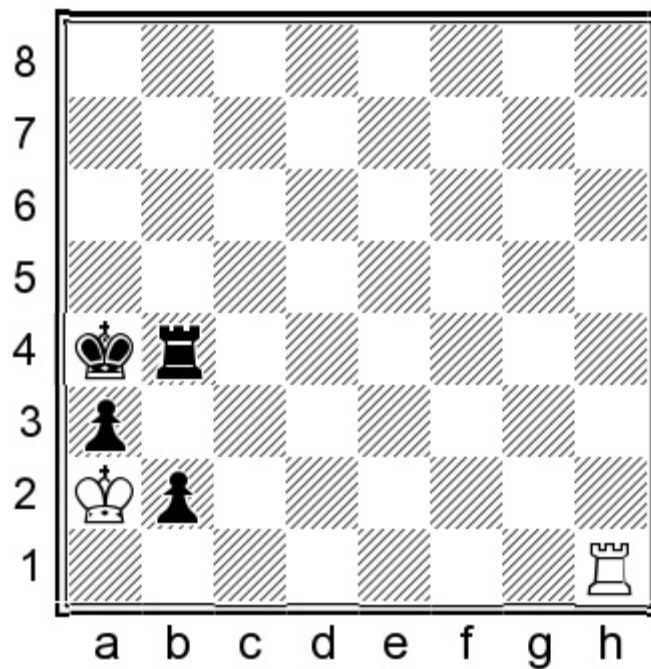
94.♖a3+ ♔f4 95.♗xf3+ ♔xf3 1/2

19

M. Vidmar

V. Mikenas

Warsaw, 1935



85...♗c4??

Winning was the simple plan with 85...♖b3! 86.♖h4+ ♔b5 87.♖h1 ♖c3 88.♖f1 ♖c1

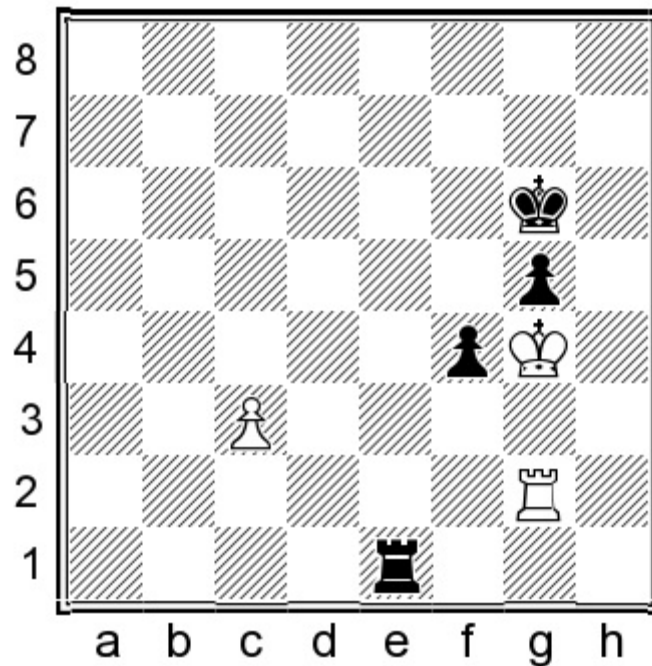
85...♖c4?? 86.♖h3! ♖c1 87.♖xa3+ ♔b4 88.♖b3+ 1/2

20

Z. Varga

K. Troff

Budapest, 2013



53...♖e3?

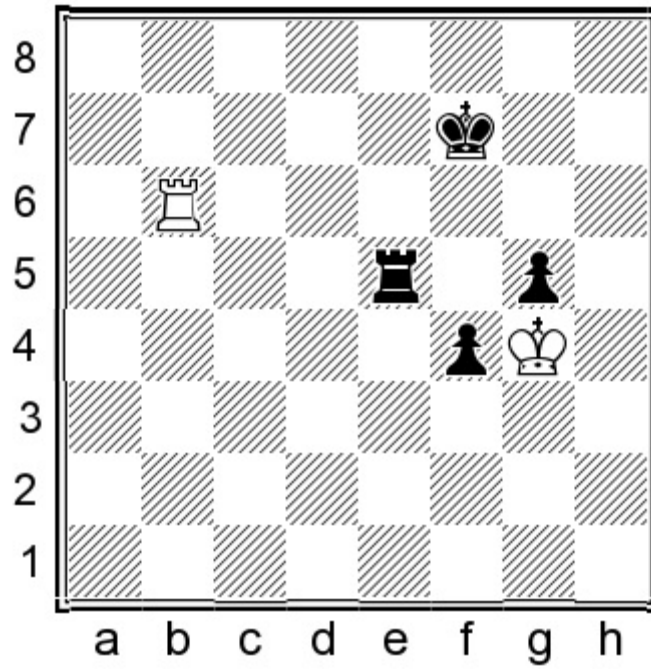
The wrong plan. The main task has to be to remove the blockading king. This can be achieved by playing 53...♖h1! 54.♖c2 ♖h4+ 55.♔f3 ♔f5 56.c4 g4+ 57.♔g2 f3+ 58.♔g1 g3-+

53...♖e3? 54.c4 ♖c3 55.c5! ♖xc5 56.♖a2!

After the pawn sacrifice and activation of the rook, the blockade cannot be easily removed.

56...♖e5 57.♖a6+ ♔f7 58.♖b6

Black can't win and the next moves are just senseless!



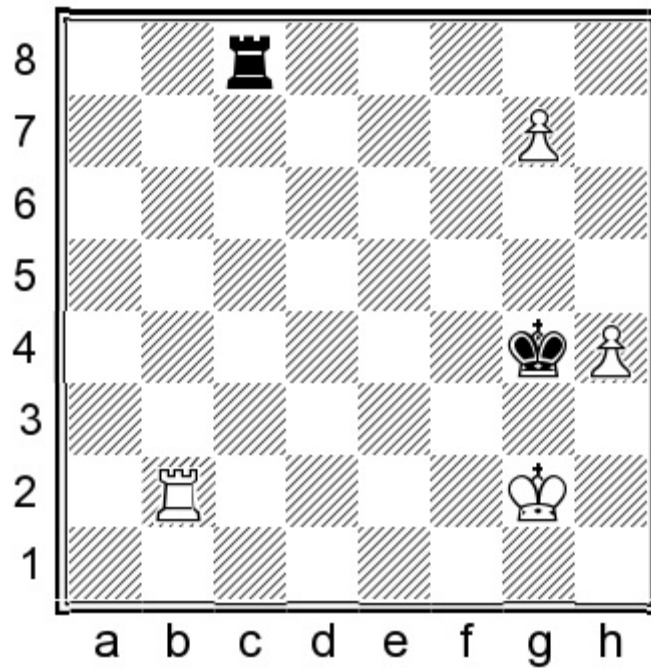
58...♔e7 59.♖g6 ♜a5 60.♞b6 ♕f7 1/2

21

E. Sukhareva

E. Ubiennykh

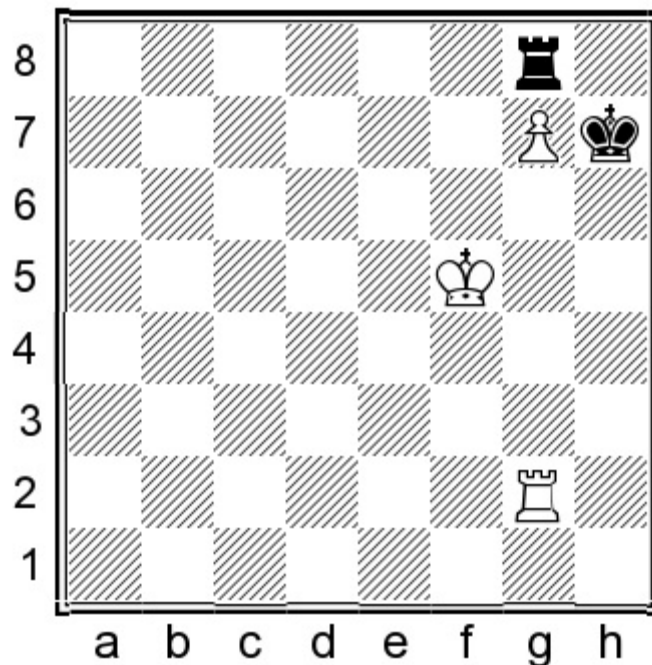
Khanty-Mansiysk, 2014



62...♕xh4??

An easy draw was to be had after 62...♞g8 63.♞b7 ♕xh4 64.♕f3 ♕g5=

62...♔xh4?? 63.♔f3 ♕h5 64.♖g2 ♖g8 65.♔f4 ♕h6 66.♔f5 ♕h7



67.♔f6

And we have a theoretically-winning position.

67...♖f8+

A very pretty stalemate idea, but it doesn't help.

67...♖a8 68.♖h2+ ♔g8 69.♖h8#

68.gxf8=♗+!

Underpromotion!

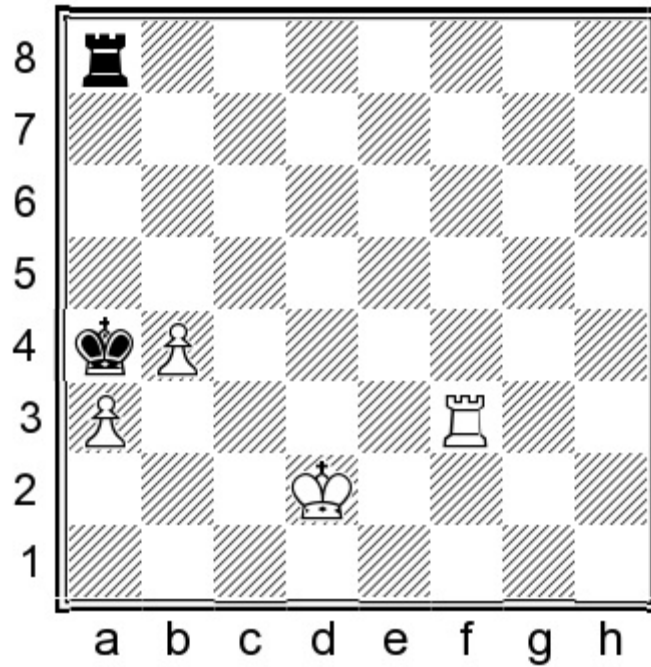
1-0

22

G. Serper

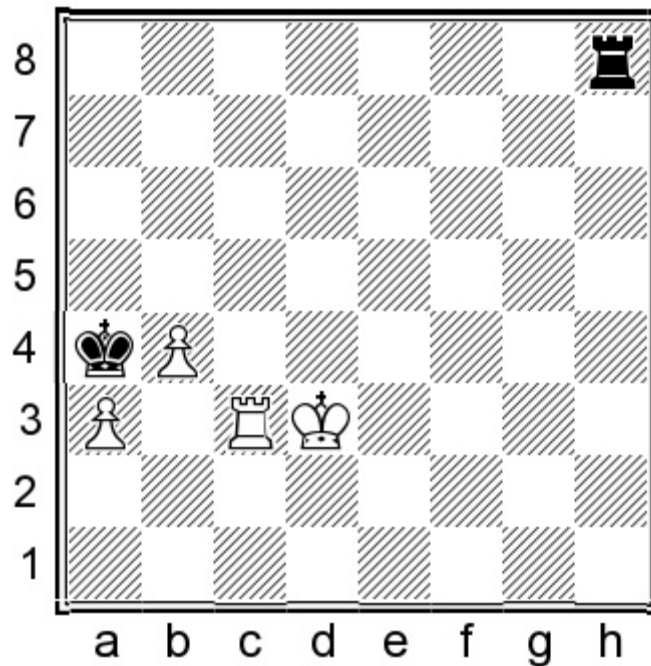
A. Chernin

Groningen, 1993



1...♖d8+??

In this important position the correct way to the draw was 1...♖c8 2.♖c3 ♖h8! 3.♔d3



3...♖h4! 4.♖c8 (4.♖c7 ♔xa3 5.b5 ♔b4 6.b6 ♔a5 7.b7 ♖b4=) 4...♔xa3 5.b5 ♔b4 6.b6 ♖h7 7.♖c7 ♖h8 8.b7 ♖b8=

or 1...♖h8 2.♖c3 (2.♔c3 ♔xa3 3.♖f5 ♖h3+) 2...♖h2+ 3.♔d3 ♖h4! =

1...♖d8+?? 2.♔c3! 2...♖c8+

2...♔xa3 3.♖f5! ♖c8+ 4.♖c5 ♖a8 5.♖a5+ ♖xa5 6.bxa5+-

3.♔b2! ♖h8 4.♖f6!

4.♖f5? ♖h5! 5.♖f8 (5.♖f6 ♔b5=) 5...♖h2+ 6.♔c3 ♖h3+ 7.♔c4 ♖h4+ 8.♔c5 ♖h5+ 9.♔b6 ♖h6+=

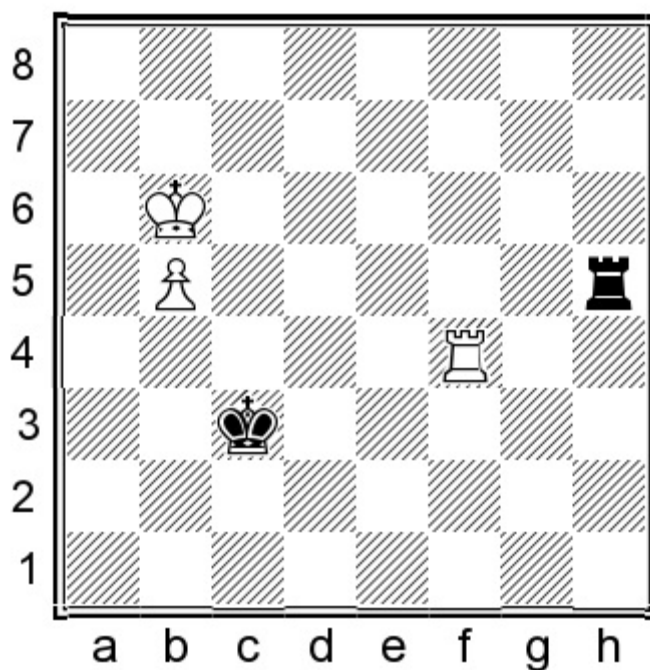
4...♖h2+ 5.♔c3 ♖h3+ 6.♔c4 ♖h4+ 7.♔c5 ♖h5+

7...♔xa3 8.b5+-

8.♔b6 ♔xa3

8...♖b5+ 9.♔a6 ♖b8 (9...♖h5 10.b5!+-) 10.♖f5!+- intending b5

9.b5 ♔b4 10.♖f4+ ♔c3



11.♔a6

Now we have an easily-winning basic position.

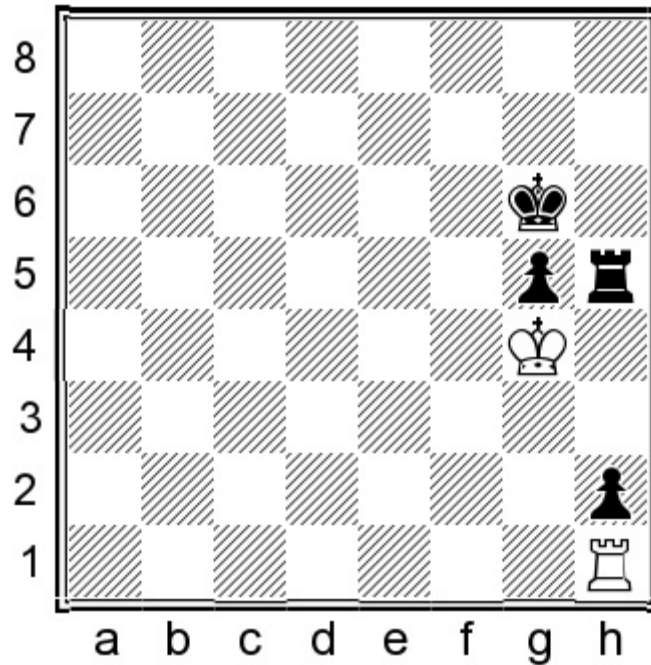
1-0

23

S. Shurygin

J. Stocek

Pardubice, 1995



1.♔g3 ♕f5 2.♕f3?

The route to the draw was not so easy: 2.♖f1+ ♔e4 3.♗e1+ ♕d3 4.♔g2! (4.♖h1? ♕e2 5.♔g2 ♖h8 6.♔g3 ♖h4‡ 7.♔g2 ♖g4+ 8.♔h3 ♖g1 9.♖xh2+ ♕f3 10.♖g2 ♖h1+ 11.♖h2 g4+-+; 4.♖d1+? ♕e2 5.♖h1 ♖h4) 4...♕d2 (4...h1=♗+ 5.♖xh1 ♖xh1 6.♕xh1 ♕e3 7.♔g2 ♕f4 8.♕f2=) 5.♖a1!=

2...♖h3+ 3.♕f2 ♕f4 4.♔g2 ♕g4 5.♕f2 ♖a3 6.♖xh2 ♖a2+ 7.♕g1 ♖xh2 8.♕xh2 ♕f3

Now the pawn endgame is easily won by Black.

9.♕h3 g4+ 10.♕h2 ♕f2

10...g3+?? 11.♕h1=

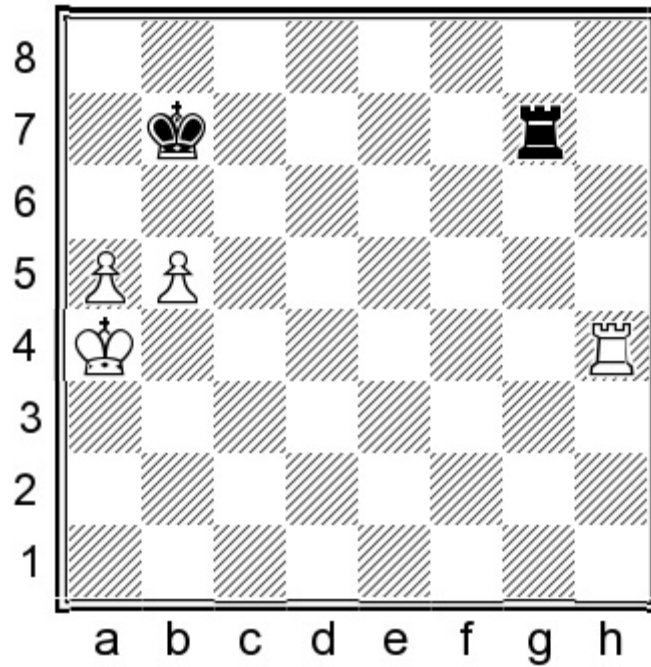
11.♕h1 ♕g3 0-1

24

D. Eggleston

J. Groh

Teplice, 2009



1.a6+ ♔b6 2.♔b4??

The win was to be found by deflecting the king from the pawns:

2.♖h6+ ♔c5 3.♗c6+ ♔d5 4.♗c8

2...♗g6!

As mentioned in the chapter intro, Kling and Horwitz first established this draw in 1851!

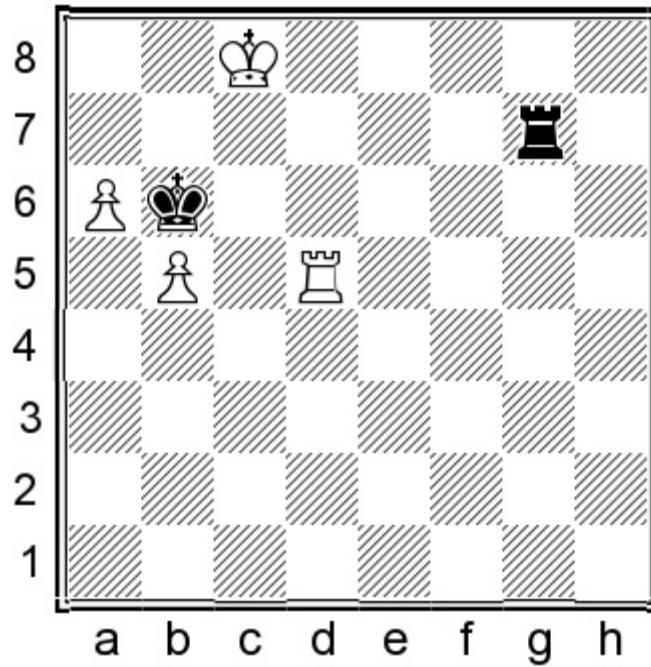
3.♗d4 ♖h6 4.♗d8 ♖h4+ 5.♔c3 ♖h3+ 6.♔c4 ♖h4+ 7.♔d5 ♖h7! 8.♖b8+ ♔a7 9.♗e8 ♔b6 1/2

25

D. Eggleston

J. Groh

Teplice, 2009



1...♖g8+ 2.♞d8 ♞g5??

The draw can be secured in a few different ways 2...♞g7 3.♔b8 ♞h7 4.♞d6+ ♔c5! 5.a7 ♔xd6 6.b6 ♞h8+ 7.♔b7 ♔c5=; 2...♞g6 3.♔b8 ♞g7

3.♞d6+ ♔c5

3...♔xb5 4.a7 ♞g8+ 5.♞d8

4.♞c6+ ♔xb5 5.a7 1-0

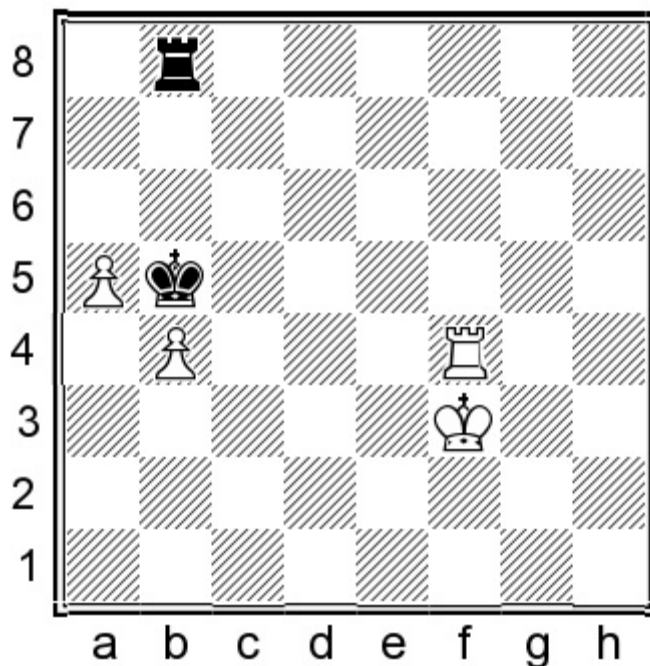
26

V. Malakhov

A. Kveinys

New Delhi, 2000

This position appears to be comfortable for Black, who has completed his blockade, but the rook's position on b8 is dangerous. Every other position on the back rank would be better.



60. ♖f6!!

This preventive move stops the capture on b4 and does not allow Black's rook to leave the b-file because of ♖b6.

60... ♖b7 61. ♔f4

The king cannot show his nose just yet!

61. ♔e4?? ♖e7+

61... ♖b8 62. ♔f5 ♖b7 63. ♔g6!+-

and the king gets past the rook from the bottom of the board.

63... ♖b8 64. ♔f7 ♖b7+ 65. ♔e8 ♖b8+ 66. ♔d7 1-0

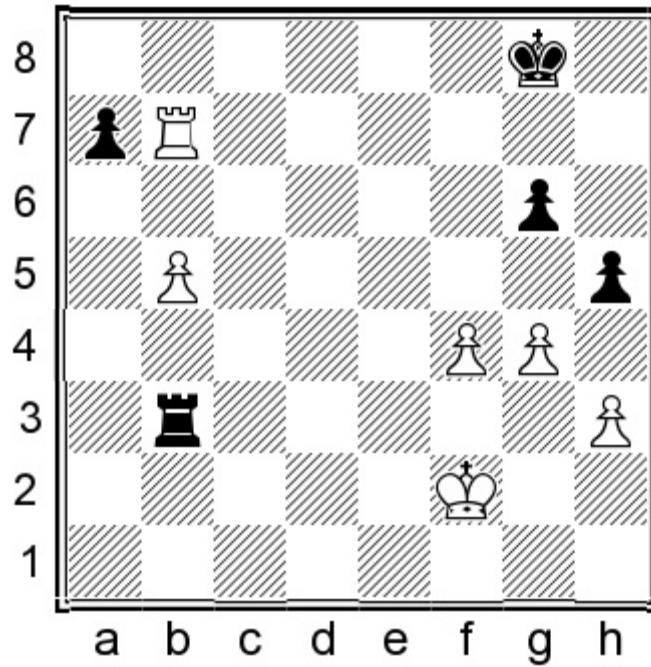
27

V. Sakalauskas

A. Nadianian

Polanica Zdroj, 1996

Here we can see great preparation of the basic drawing schema.



1...♖xh3! 2.♖xa7 ♖b3 3.gxh5 g5!!

Other moves are losing: 3...gxh5 4.♖b7+-; 3...♖xb5 4.hxg6 ♖f5 (4...♖b6 5.f5 ♖f6 6.♖a5+-) 5.♔e3 ♖f6 6.g7+-

4.fxg5 ♖xb5 5.♖a8+ ♔g7!

5...♔h7 6.g6+-

6.h6+ ♔g6!

6...♔h7? 7.♖a7+-

7.♖g8+

7.♖a6+ ♔xg5=

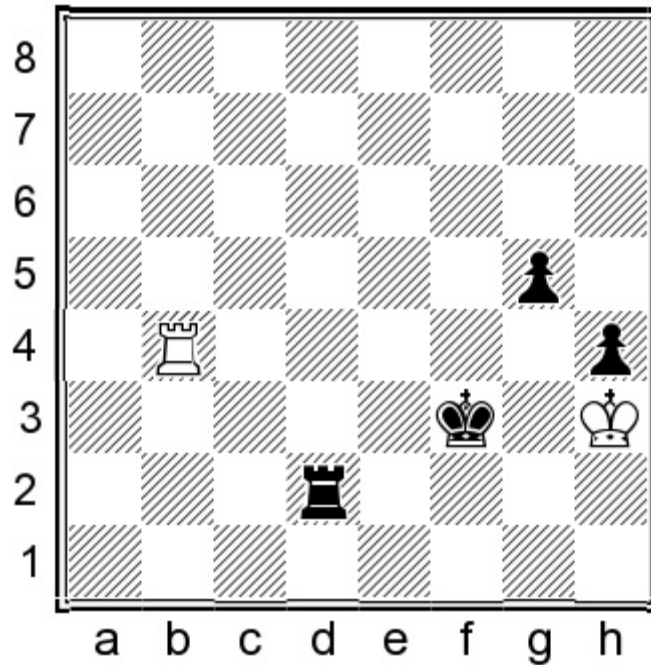
7...♔h7 8.♖g7+ ♔h8 1/2

28

N. Arsenault

M. Baba

Budapest, 2010



There are quite instructive games where players did not chose the correct path, but this just shows the difficulty of these quasi-simple positions.

72. ♖b3+??

There was a nice way to draw: 72. ♖b5 g4+ (The logical defence is met by the stalemate idea 72... ♔f4 73. ♖xg5! ♔xg5) 73. ♔xh4 ♖h2+ 74. ♔g5 g3 75. ♖b3+ ♔f2 76. ♖b2+ ♔g1 (or 76... ♔e1 77. ♖b1+ ♔e2 78. ♖b2+ ♔d1 79. ♖b1+ ♔d2 80. ♖g1 g2 81. ♔f4 ♔e2 82. ♔g3) 77. ♖b1+ ♔g2 78. ♔g4

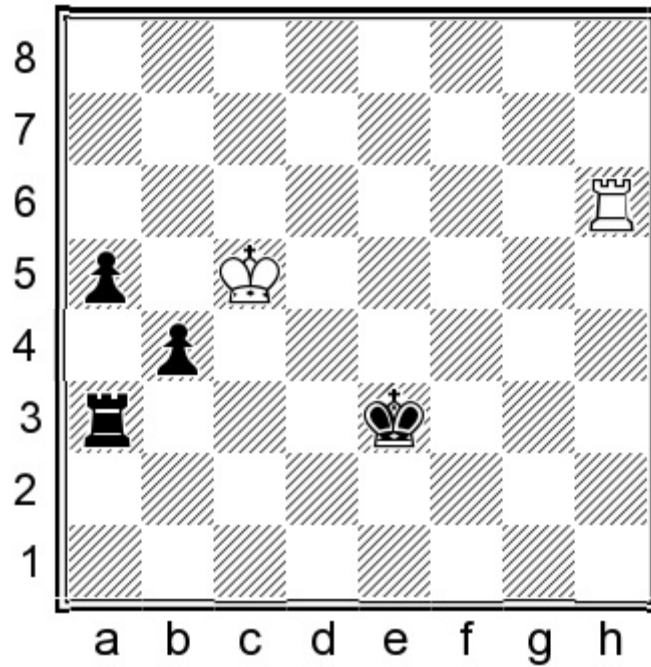
72. ♖b3+?? ♔e4 73. ♖b4+ ♖d4 74. ♖b5 ♖d3+ 75. ♔h2 g4 0-1

29

E. Moreno Tejera

S. Gomez Gomez

Villa de Albox, 2002



65...♞c3+?

As was mentioned before, such 'self-moving' pawns are unstoppable, here after 65...b3 66.♔b5 a4 67.♔b4 ♞a2 68.♞a6 b2-+

65...♞c3+? 66.♔b5 b3 67.♞h2!

Stopping the b-pawn.

67...♔d3 68.♞b2! ♔d4 69.♔xa5 ♔c4 70.♔a4 ♞h3 71.♞b1

Simpler was 71.♔a3

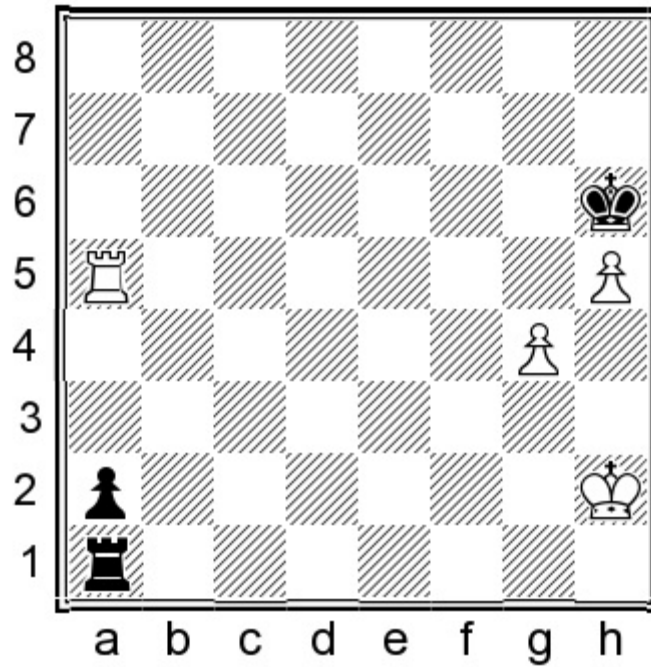
71...♞c3 72.♔a3 ♞h3 73.♞c1+ ♔d4 74.♞b1 ♔c4 75.♞c1+ ♞c3 76.♞b1 1/2

30

E. L'Ami

M. Cornette

Novi Sad, 2009



55.♔g2 ♕g7??

Here it was correct to play 55...♖b1 to get the king between the pawns 56.♖xa2 ♔g5 57.♖a4 ♖b3 reaching an elementary drawn position.

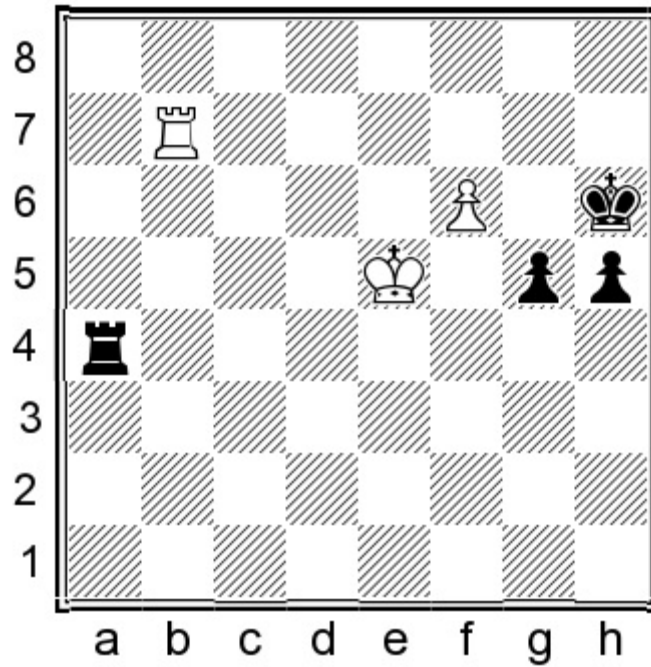
56.♖a6 ♔g8 57.♖a7 ♕h8 58.♔h2 ♕g8 59.g5 ♕h8 60.♖a8+ ♔g7 61.h6+ ♔g6 62.♖a6+ 1-0

31

N. Pogonina

A. Stefanova

Monte-Carlo, 2015



97.f7?

There were a few ways to draw: 97.♖g7;

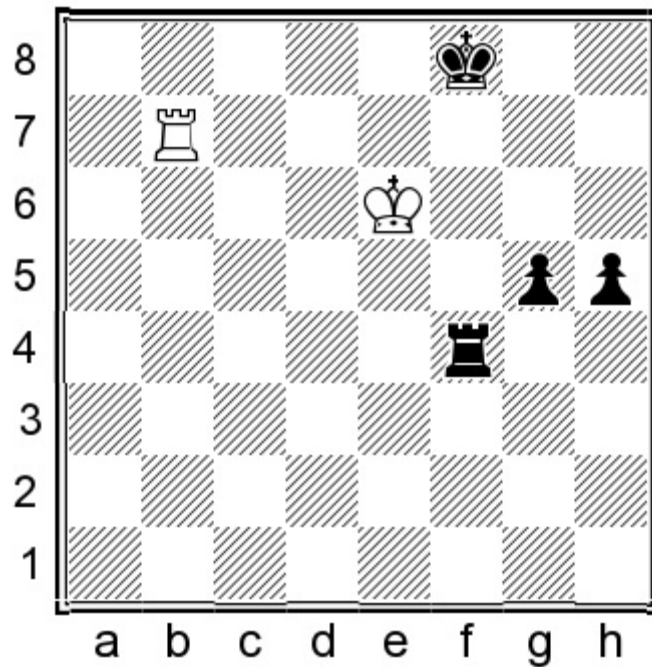
or 97.♖b8;

or the simplest 97.♔e6! ♖e4+ 98.♔f5 ♖f4+ 99.♔e6 h4 100.♖b8 g4 101.f7 (or 101.♖h8+ ♔g6 102.♖g8+ ♔h7 103.f7 g3 104.♔e7) 101...g3 102.f8=♙+ ♖xf8 103.♖xf8 g2 104.♔f6! As the black king is cramped for space, there is no way to escape a draw after 104...♔h7 105.♖f7+ ♔h8 106.♖f8+ ♔h7 107.♖f7+ ♔h6 108.♖g7 h3 109.♖g3 ♔h5 110.♖xh3+ ♔g4 111.♖h8

97.f7? ♖f4 98.♔e6 ♔g7?

Black could win with the correct king move here: 98...♔g6 99.♖b6 ♖xf7 100.♔e5+ ♔g7 101.♖b3 h4

99.f8=♙+! ♔xf8



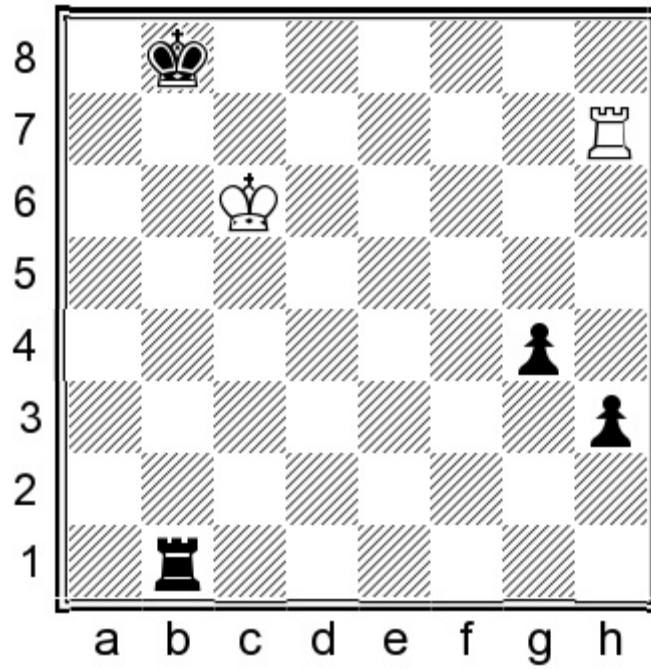
100. ♖h7?

A draw could easily be achieved with 100. ♖b5 ♜g4 101. ♔f6

100...h4 101. ♜h5 ♜g4 102. ♔f5

Of no help is 102. ♔f6 ♔g8 103. ♔g6 ♜g3 and there follows the classical 'roll' ...h4-h3, then ...g5-g4, then ...♜g3-g2 and so on.

102...♜g3 103. ♜h7 h3 104. ♔f6 ♔e8 105. ♔e6 ♔d8 106. ♔d6 ♔c8 107. ♔c6 ♔b8 108. ♔b6 ♜b3+ 109. ♔c6 g4 110. ♜h4 ♜b1! 111. ♜h7



111...♖b2

Or 111...g3 112.♖xh3 g2

112.♖h4 h2 113.♖h7 g3

There were so many ways to draw that Pogonina missed all of the right ones!

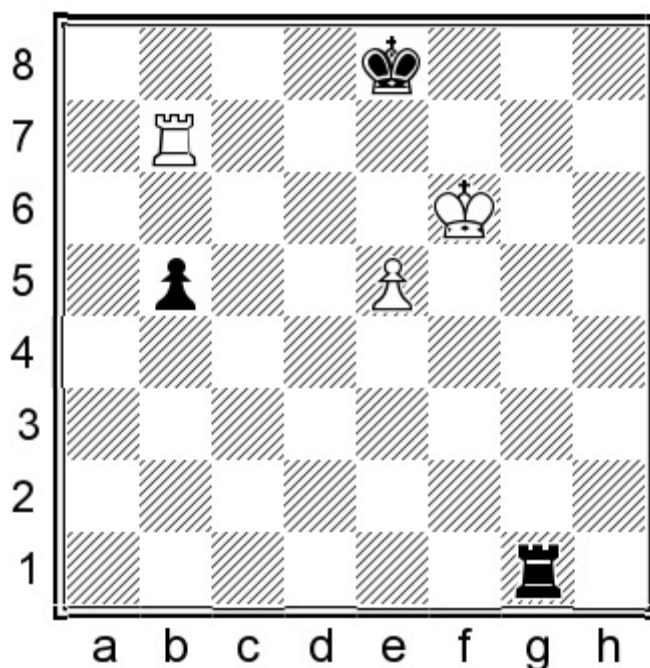
0-1

CHAPTER 6

METHODS

As we mentioned, there are basic positions and there are complicated ones; the latter we must play using special methods or tactical possibilities to transfer into the basic positions. Knowledge of these methods is absolutely necessary to play rook endings at a high level. The most effective tools are such specialities as ‘sticking’, the ‘shield’ and others.

1
S. Winawer
S. Tarrasch
Budapest, 1896

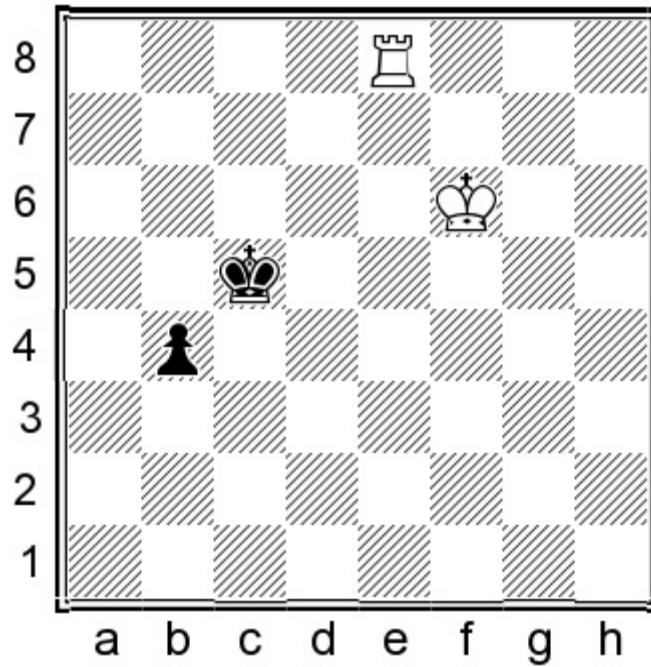


A very effective and simple method is known as ‘sticking’, when the rook or king are attacking an opponent’s pawn, or control some important squares, and it is impossible to drive them out.

73...♖h1?

The great teacher of German chess did not know at that time the sticking method: 73...♖e1! The simplest way to draw. 74.♔e6 ♔f8 75.♖b8+ ♔g7 76.♖e8 ♖a1

73...♖h1? 74.♖b8+ ♔d7 75.e6+ ♔d6 76.♖d8+ ♔c5 77.e7 ♖e1 78.e8=♖ ♖xe8 79.♖xe8 b4



This version of rook against pawn is easily won.

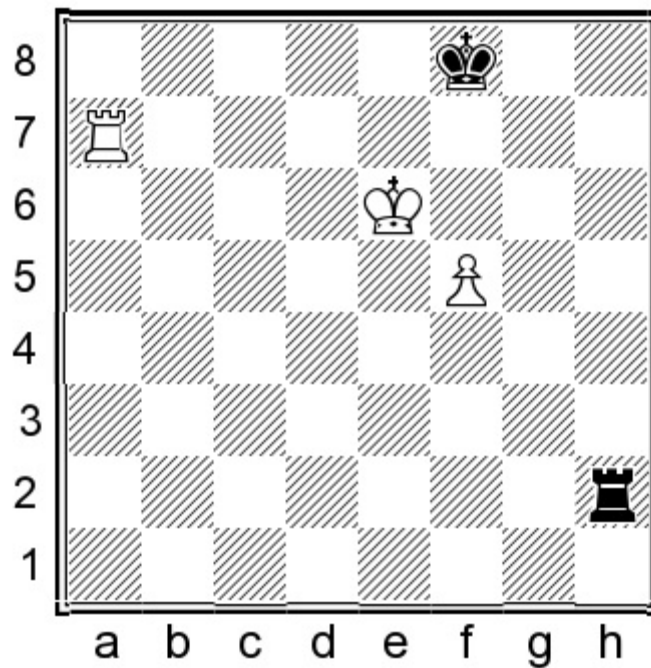
80.♔e5 ♕c4 81.♔e4 ♕c3 82.♔e3 b3 83.♖c8+ ♔b2 84.♔d2 ♕a1 85.♔c3 b2 86.♖a8+ ♔b1 87.♖b8 ♕a1 88.♔c2 b1=♚+ 89.♖xb1+ 1-0

2

F. Portisch

S. Biro

Zalakaros, 1996



52...♖e2+?

Black does not know the basic positions and main defensive ideas in rook endings! ‘Sticking’ could be performed in the easiest way here with 52...♖f2! 53.♔f6 ♖g8 54.♞a8+ ♔h7 55.♔e6 ♔g7

52...♞e2+? 53.♔f6 ♞e8?

A draw was still possible with the classical ‘rook on the long side’, but even Carlsen did not perform this method well. 53...♔g8 54.♞a8+ ♔h7 55.♔f7 ♞b2 56.f6 (56.♞e8 ♞b7+ 57.♞e7 (57.♔f8 ♞b6) 57...♞b8 58.f6 ♞a8 59.♞e8 ♞a7+ 60.♔e6 ♞a6+ 61.♔f5 ♞a5+ 62.♞e5 ♞a6 (62...♞xe5+ 63.♔xe5 ♔g8 64.♔e6 ♔f8 65.f7) 63.♔g5 ♞a1) 56...♞b7+

54.♔g6 ♞e1

54...♔g8 55.f6 ♞b8 56.♞g7+ ♔f8 57.♞h7 ♔g8 58.f7+

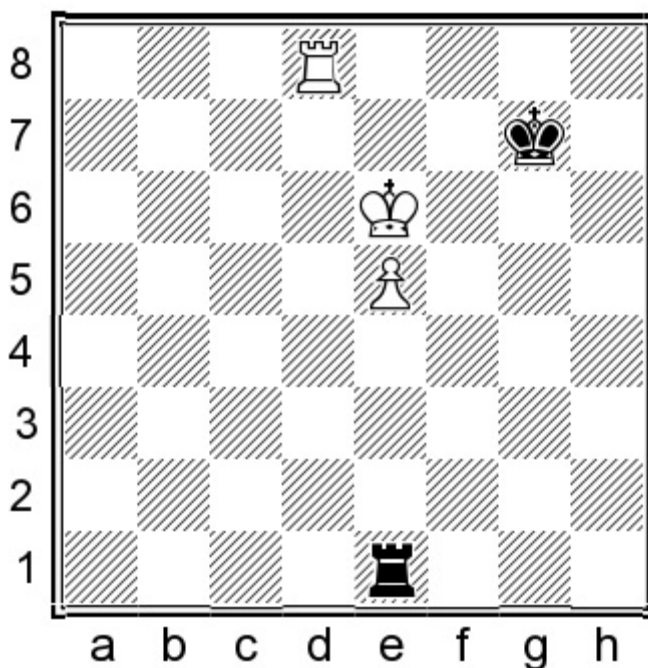
55.♞a8+ ♔e7 56.f6+ ♔d7 57.f7 1–0

3

L. Aronian

M. Carlsen

Moscow, 2006



There was a choice here; to use the sticking idea, or else the classical rook on the long side and king on the short. But the first method is much simpler and can be performed even by amateurs, whereas the second demands proper procedures, like control over the back rank. In some cases it is necessary to find ‘only moves’ to survive.

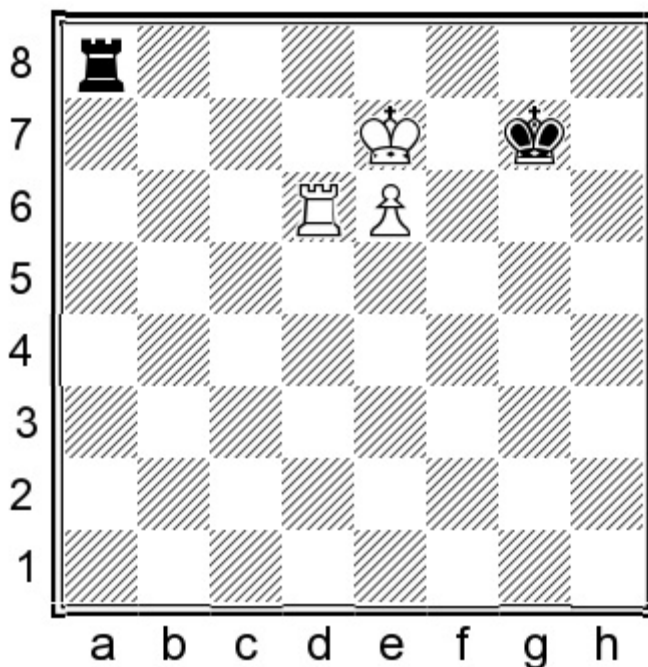
69...♞a1

Magnus has achieved the classical sticking position, but suddenly he decides to switch to the other classical method, the rook long side/king short side. 69...♖e2! Simply sticking to the pawn. 70.♔d6 (70.♖e8 ♖a2 71.♔d7 (71.♖b8 ♖e2) 71...♖a7+ 72.♔d6 ♖a6+ 73.♔d5 ♖a5+ 74.♔d4 ♔f7) 70...♔f7 71.♖d7+ ♔e8 72.e6 ♖d2+ 73.♔c7 ♖e2

69...♖a1 70.♔e7 ♖a5 71.e6 ♖a7+ 72.♖d7 ♖a8

Magnus knew that the key to this position is control over the seventh rank.

73.♖d6



73...♖a7+?

The only move maintaining a drawn position was 73...♔g6! 74.♔d7 ♔f6 75.e7+ ♔f7 76.♖d1 ♖a7+ 77.♔d8 ♖a8+ (77...♖xe7 78.♖f1+ ♔e6 79.♖e1+); 73...♖b8 74.♖d8 ♖b6 (74...♖b7+ 75.♔d6 ♔f6 (75...♖b6+ 76.♔d7 ♖b7+ 77.♔c6 ♖e7 78.♔d6 ♔f6 79.♖f8+) 76.♖f8+ ♔g7 77.e7) 75.♔d7 ♖b7+ 76.♔c6 ♖e7 77.♔d6 ♔f6 78.♖f8+

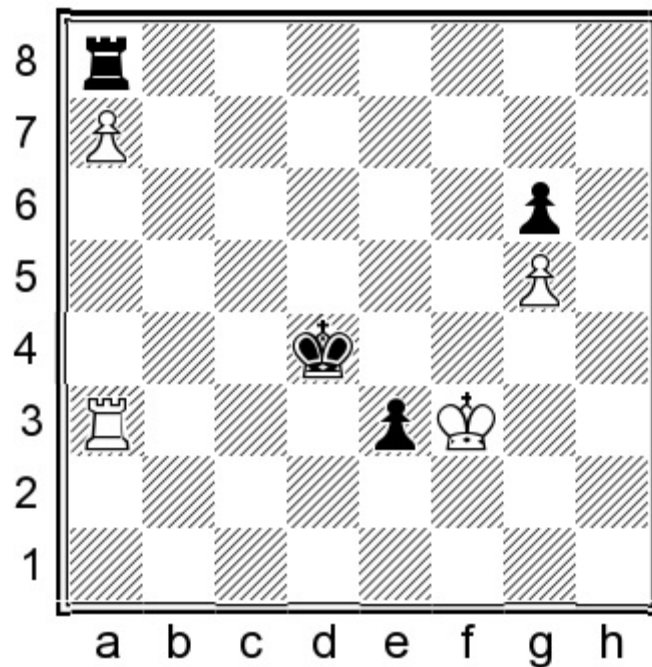
74.♔e8 ♖a8+ 75.♖d8 ♖a7

Of no help was 75...♖a6 76.e7 ♔f6 (76...♖a7 77.♖d1 ♖a8+ 78.♔d7 ♖a7+ 79.♔e6 ♖a6+ 80.♖d6 ♖xd6+ 81.♔xd6 ♔f7 82.♔d7) 77.♔f8

76.♖d7+ 1-0

B. Itkis
USSR, 1985

We have just seen examples of the rook sticking to the pawn, and now we will consider the king in this function.



This is a much more complicated case...

1...e2! 2.♔xe2 ♕e4!

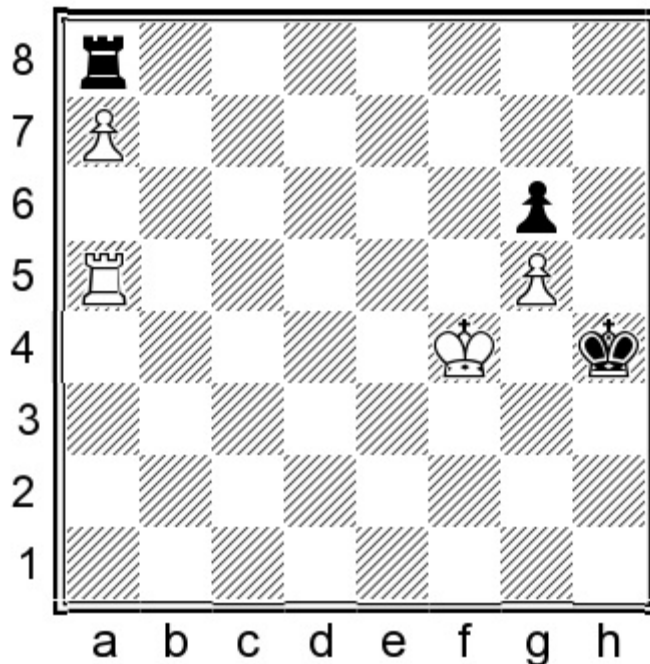
The plan is to come over to the g5-pawn and keep attacking it.

2...♕e5? 3.♕f3 ♕f5 4.♖a5+-

3.♖a5 ♕f4 4.♕f2 ♕g4 5.♕e3 ♕h4! 6.♕d4 ♕g4 7.♕e4 ♕h4!

Other tries were wrong: 7...♖e8+? 8.♕d5 ♖a8 9.♕e6+-; 7...♕h5? 8.♕f4 ♕h4 (8...♖f8+ 9.♕g3 ♖a8 10.♕h3!+-) 9.♖a1 ♖f8+ 10.♕e5 ♖a8 11.♕f6+-

8.♕f4



8...♖f8+! 9.♔e4

It wasn't possible to move forward: 9.♔e5? ♖f5+

9...♞a8 10.♔d4 ♔g4 11.♔c5

Finally White decides to allow the capture on g5.

11...♔xg5 12.♔b6+ ♔f4 13.♞a4+ ♔f3 14.♞a3+ ♔f4 15.♔b7 ♞xa7+ 16.♞xa7 g5

And this endgame of rook against pawn is drawn.

1/2

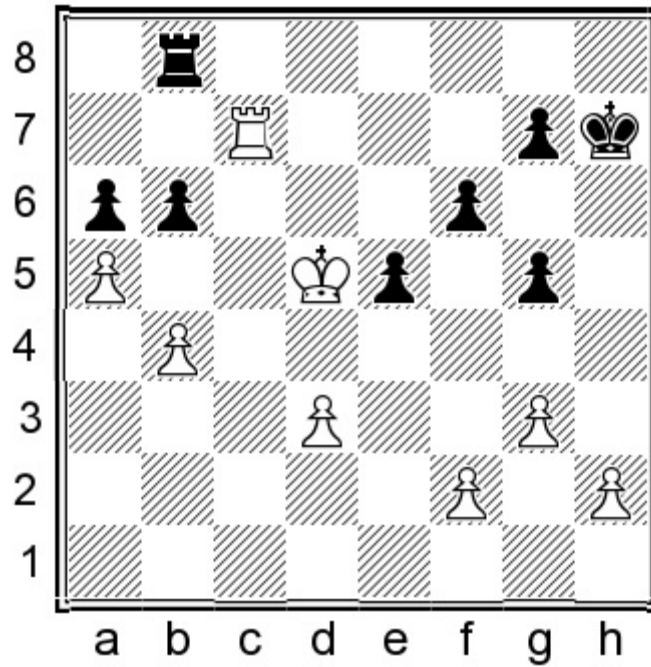
5

L. Fressinet

N. Grandelius

Malmo, 2014

Now we will see some methods which are more typical of pawn endings; pawn breakthroughs and triangulation.



White conducts a nice breakthrough and creates a passed pawn.

45.b5! axb5

Or 45...♖d8+ 46.♔c6 bxa5 47.bxa6

46.a6 ♖d8+ 47.♔c6 b4

47...♖xd3 48.a7 ♖a3 49.♔xb6 b4 50.♔b7 b3 51.a8=♚

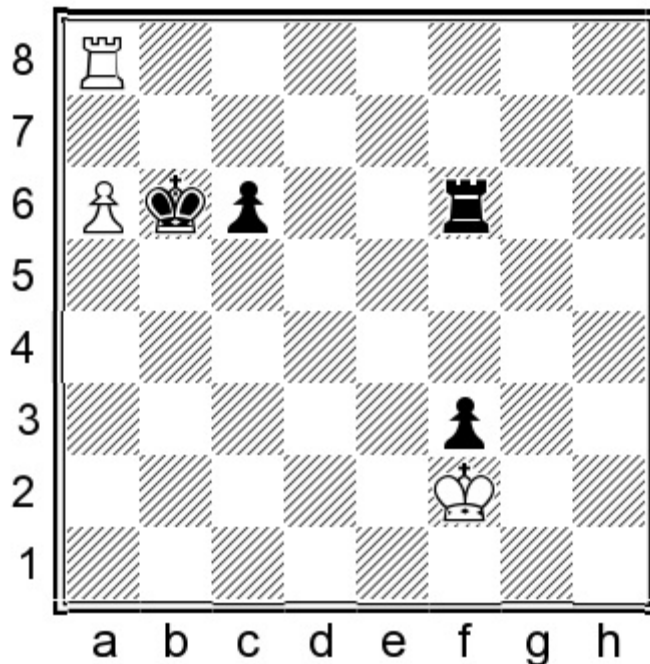
48.♔b7 b3 49.♖c3 1-0

6

F. Apsenieks

A. Alekhine

Buenos Aires, 1939



Black wins by using triangulation to gain an important tempo: we can say that this is a form of zugzwang.

70...♔a5!

A much more complicated way would be 70...c5 71.♖c8 (71.a7 ♜f7) 71...♞f7 72.♞a8 ♞f5 73.a7 ♞f7 74.♞c8 ♞xa7 75.♔xf3 ♞e7

70...♔a5! 71.♞a7

Black faces no problems after 71.a7 ♔b6 72.♞b8+ ♔xa7 73.♞b3 ♔a6

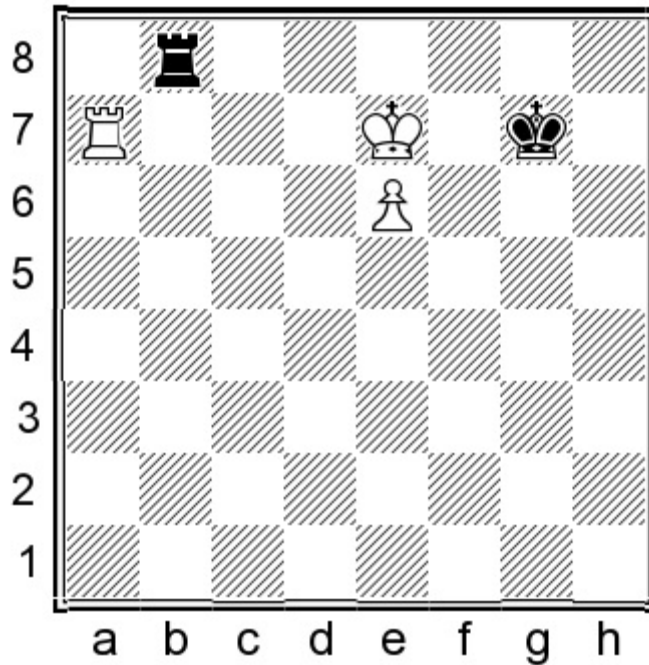
71...♔b5! 72.♞a8 ♔b6 73.a7 ♔b7

Mission complete; the dangerous pawn is eliminated.

74.♞b8+ ♔xa7 75.♞b1 ♔a6 76.♞a1+ ♔b5 77.♞b1+ ♔c4 78.♞c1+ ♔d3 79.♞c5 ♔d4 80.♞c1 c5 81.♞d1+ ♔c4 82.♞b1 ♔d4 83.♞b5 ♞f4 84.♞b1 c4 0-1

7

N. Kopajev, 1952



This is the one of the most complicated wins, involving an incredible triangulation.

1. ♖d6+!

1. ♖a1 ♖b7+ 2. ♗d6 ♖b6+ 3. ♗d7 ♖b7+ 4. ♗c6 ♖b2 5. ♖f1 ♖c2+ 6. ♗d7 ♖d2+ (6... ♖a2 7. e7 ♖a7+ 8. ♗d6 ♖a6+ 9. ♗d5 ♖a5+) 7. ♗e7 ♖a2

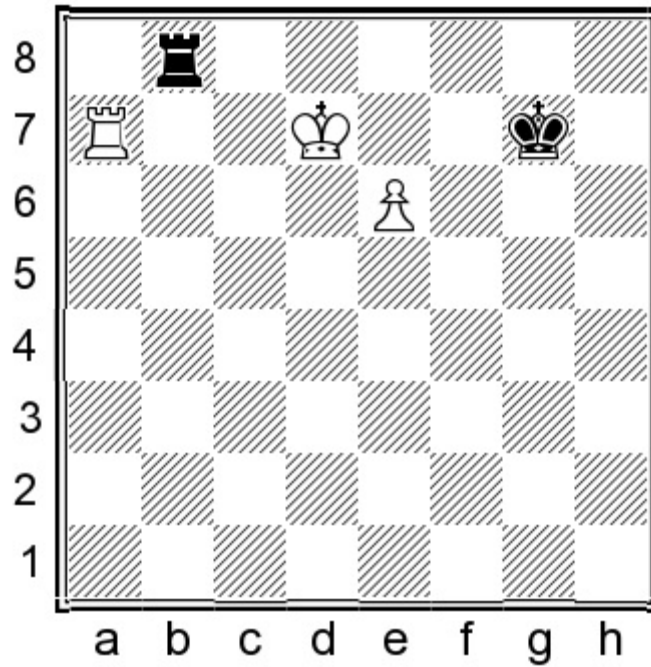
1. ♗d6+! ♗f6

1... ♗g6 2. ♖a1!; 1... ♗f8 2. ♗d7 ♗g8 3. ♗c7! ♖e8 4. ♗d7 ♖b8 5. ♖a1 ♖b7+ 6. ♗c6 ♖b8 7. ♗c7 ♖e8 8. ♗d7 ♖b8 9. ♖g1+ ♗h7 10. e7 ♖b7+ 11. ♗d8 ♖b8+ 12. ♗c7 ♖a8 13. ♖e1 ♖e8 14. ♗d7

2. ♗d7! ♗g7

As always, the idea of triangulation is zugzwang, in this instance to force the black rook to move and thereby achieve the decisive back rank position with his own rook.

2... ♖h8 3. e7 ♗f7 4. ♖a1



3.♔e7!! ♖b1

3...♞c8 4.♞a1 ♞c2 5.♞g1+ ♔h6 6.♔f7 ♞f2+ 7.♔e8

4.♞a8

White controls the back rank, a crucial factor in similar positions.

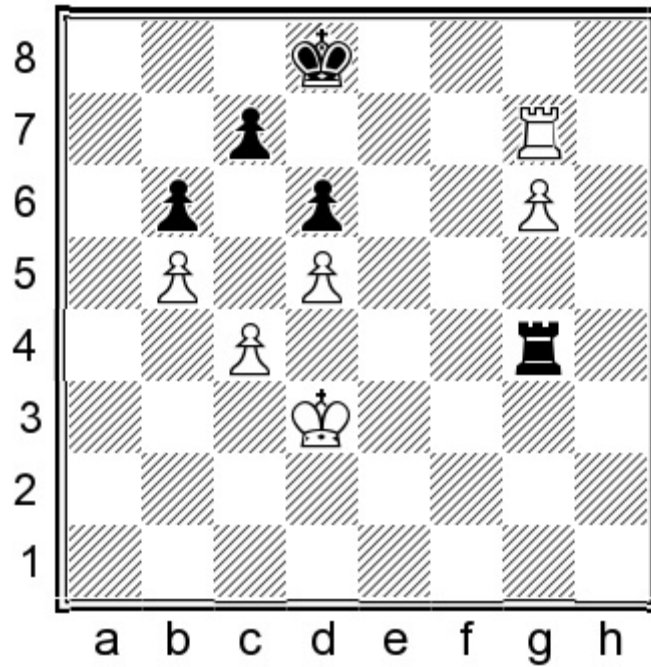
4...♞b7+ 5.♔d6 ♞b6+ 6.♔d7 ♞b7+ 7.♔c6 ♞e7 8.♔d6 ♞b7 9.e7 1-0

8

K. Chernyshov

P. Petran

Balatonbereny, 1993



53.♔c3

Another interesting way was 53.♔e3 ♖xc4 54.♞f7 ♔e8 55.♔f3 ♞c1 56.♔g4 ♞g1+ 57.♔f5 ♞f1+ 58.♔e6

53.♔c3 ♔c8

Of no help is 53...♞g1 54.♔d4 ♞g4+ 55.♔e3 ♔e8 56.♔f3 ♞g1 57.♔f4 ♔f8 58.♞f7+ ♔g8 59.♞xc7 ♞xg6 60.♞b7

54.♔d2 ♔d8

54...♞g3 55.♔e2 ♔d8 56.♔f2 ♞g4 57.♔f3

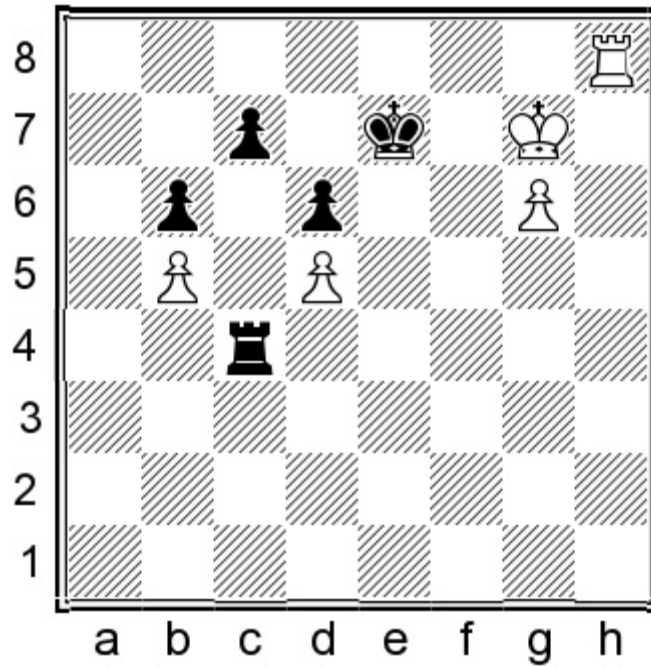
55.♔d3!

Triangulation completed!

55...♞g2

55...♔e8 56.♞xc7 ♞xg6 57.♞b7

56.♔e4 ♞g1 57.♞g8+ ♔e7 58.♔f5 ♞f1+ 59.♔g5 ♞g1+ 60.♔h6 ♞h1+ 61.♔g7 ♞h4 62.♞h8 ♞xc4



63.♖h1

A bit stronger even was 63.♖h7 ♜g4 64.♔h8+ ♔f6 65.g7

1-0

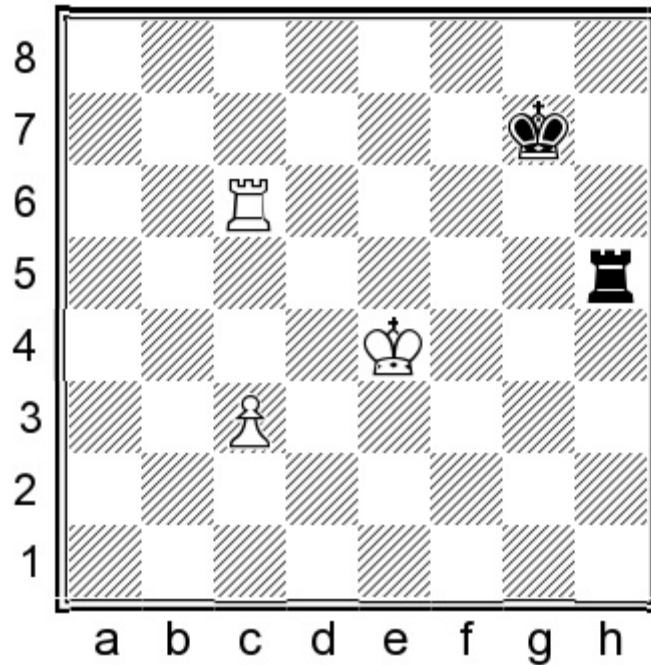
9

I. Glek

R. Rapport

Germany, 2012

A very important tool in rook endings is cutting off the king. There are two forms as we have seen; vertical and horizontal. They are very important methods of gaining time in order to continue pushing our pawns.



52.♖e6!

The first task is to cut off the black king. Weak was 52.c4? ♕f7=

52.♖e6! ♕f7 53.♖e5□

Now it is necessary to ‘uncut’ his own king.

53...♖h8 54.♕d4!

A classic mistake is 54.c4? as Black exchanges into a drawn pawn endgame.

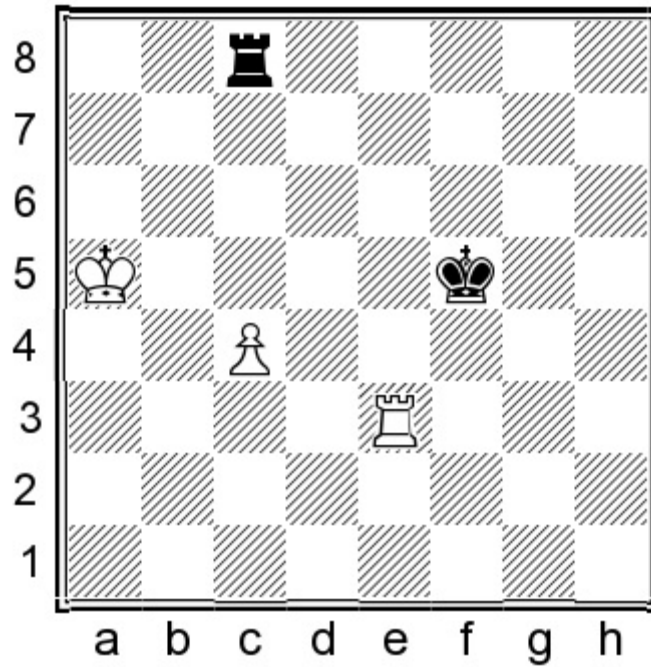
54...♖d8+ 55.♕c5 ♖c8+ 56.♕b4 ♕f6 57.♖e3!

White is ready to advance his pawn.

57...♖b8+ 58.♕c5 ♖c8+ 59.♕d5 ♕f5

Or 59...♖d8+ 60.♕c6 ♖c8+ 61.♕d6 ♕f5 62.♖e5+ ♕f4 63.♖c5 ♖e8 64.♖h5 ♕g4 65.♖e5 ♖c8 66.♖c5 ♖f8 67.c4

60.c4 ♖d8+ 61.♕c6 ♖c8+ 62.♕b5 ♖b8+ 63.♕a5 ♖c8



Now the king goes back, but only temporarily.

64.♔b4 ♚b8+ 65.♕c3 ♚c8 66.♚e1!

The rook is preparing to come and protect his pawn from behind.

66...♕f6 67.♕b4 ♚b8+ 68.♕a5 ♚c8 69.♚c1 ♕e6 70.♕b6! ♕d7 71.♚d1+

The king is kicked away and the pawn runs through the middle, meaning Black's defence has failed.

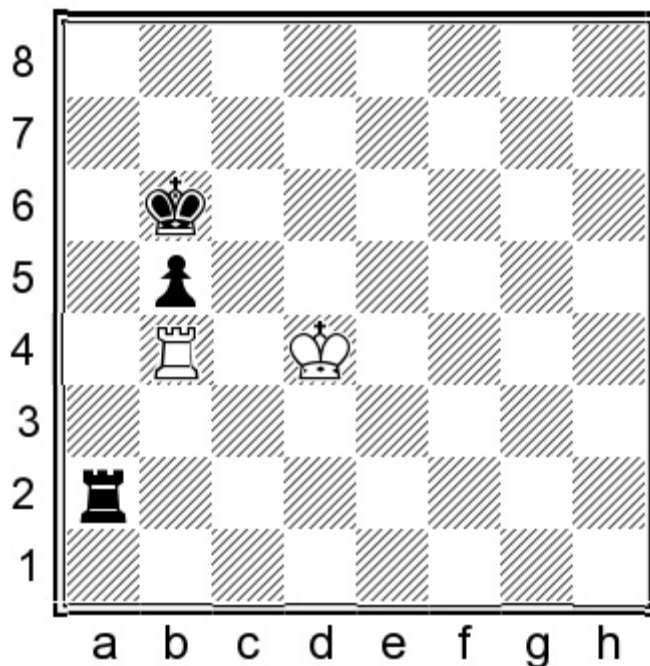
1-0

10

D. Shahinyan

A. Timofeev

Kazan, 2015



Here there is a choice of how to cut the opponent's king off — vertically or horizontally.

52...♖c2?

Black had to cut off the white king along the 3rd rank — either immediately with 52...♖a3! or after 52...♔a5 53.♖b1 ♖a3!

52...♖c2? 53.♖b1 ♖c8

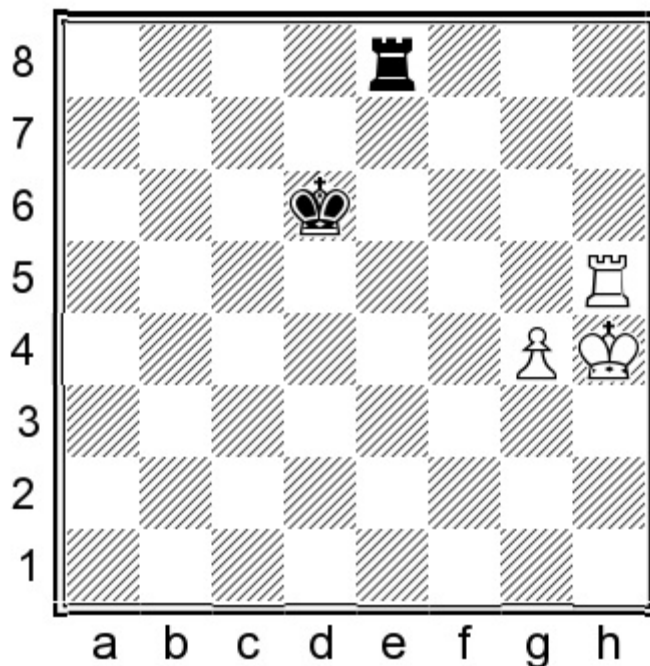
Here it is not enough for a win even to cut the king off on the d-file.

54.♔d3 ♖c5 55.♔d4 ♖c8 56.♔d3 ♖c7 57.♔d4 ♖c4+ 58.♔d3 ♔c5 59.♖b2 ♖c1

Preparing the transition into a basic draw. 59...b4 60.♖c2

60.♔d2 ♖c4 61.♔d3 ♖c1 62.♔d2 ♖h1 63.♖b3 b4 64.♔c2 ♔b5 65.♖g3 ♔a4 66.♔b2 ♖h2+ 67.♔b1 b3 68.♖g8 ♔a3 69.♖a8+ ♔b4 70.♖b8+ ♔a3 71.♖a8+ ♔b4 1/2

11
E. Bareev
B. Lalic
Lucerne, 1997



Here the situation is somewhat similar to the previous game.

64.♖h7!

Only this ‘cutting’ move wins the game, while other logical-looking decisions such as 64.g5? ♖e4+ 65.♔g3 ♔e6

or 64.♖f5? ♔e6 lead only to a draw.

64.♖h7! ♔e6 65.♔h5 ♖f8 66.g5 ♔f5 67.g6 ♔e6

67...♔f6 68.♔h6 ♔e6 69.♔g7

68.♔g5

68.g7 ♖g8 69.♔g6+-

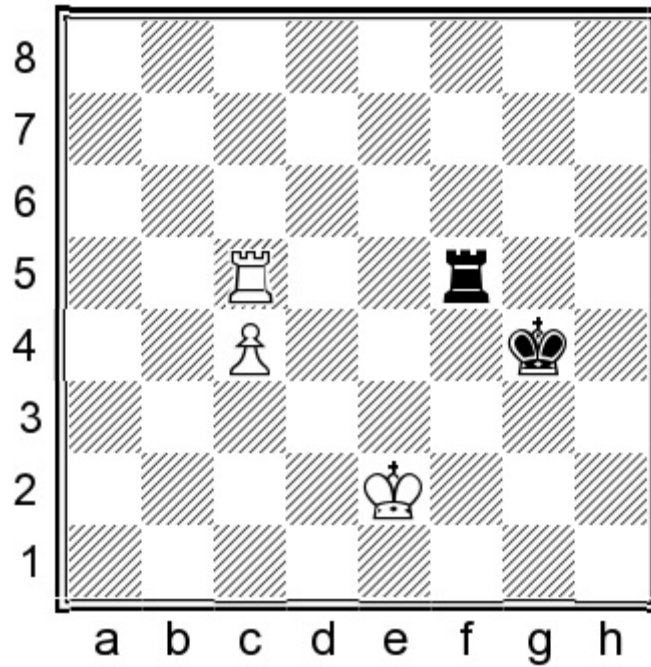
68...♖f1 69.♖a7 ♖h1 70.g7 ♖g1+ 71.♔h6 ♔f6 72.♔h7 ♖h1+ 73.♔g8 ♖g1 74.♔f8 1-0

12

H. Nakamura

Y. Yu

Gibraltar, 2017



Even the absolute world's best are not immune to completely inexplicable decisions.

63.♖b5?

There were three main possibilities and only this one leads to a draw...

White could cut off the enemy king along the 6th rank: 63.♖c6! ♜f8 64.c5 ♔f5 65.♔d3 ♔e5 66.♔c4+-

or along the e-file: 63.♖c8 ♜a5 64.♔d3 ♔f5 65.♖e8+-

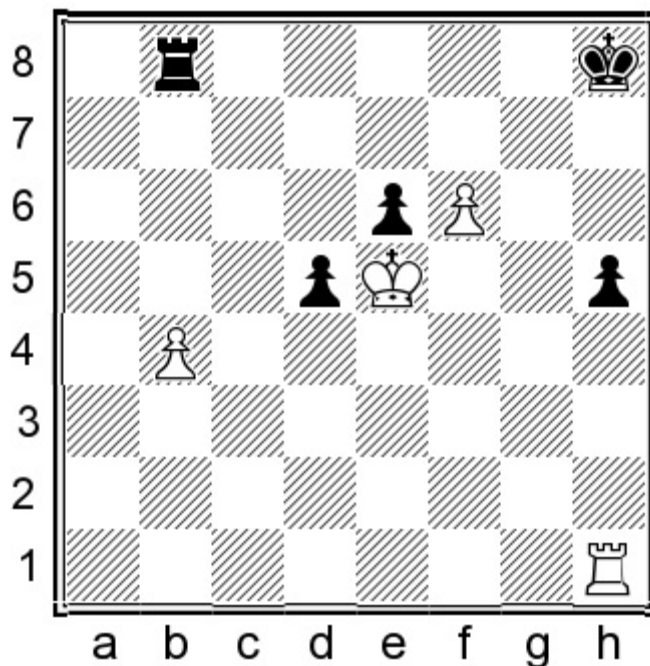
63.♖b5? ♔f4 64.♔d3 ♜xb5 65.cxb5 ♔e5 1/2

13

B. Grachev

D. Gordievsky

Moscow, 2014



Here Black had an important choice to make...

50...♖xb4??

In the endgame the king is often a useful piece and here Black would be OK after 50...♔g8. Instead Black grabbed the b-pawn and paid a heavy price...

50...♖xb4?? 51.♖g1!

Now Black's king is cut off!

51...♖b7 52.♔xe6 ♖b6+ 53.♔f5 ♖b7 54.♖e1! ♖b8

54...♔g8 55.♔g6 ♔f8 56.♖a1 ♖b8 57.♖a7

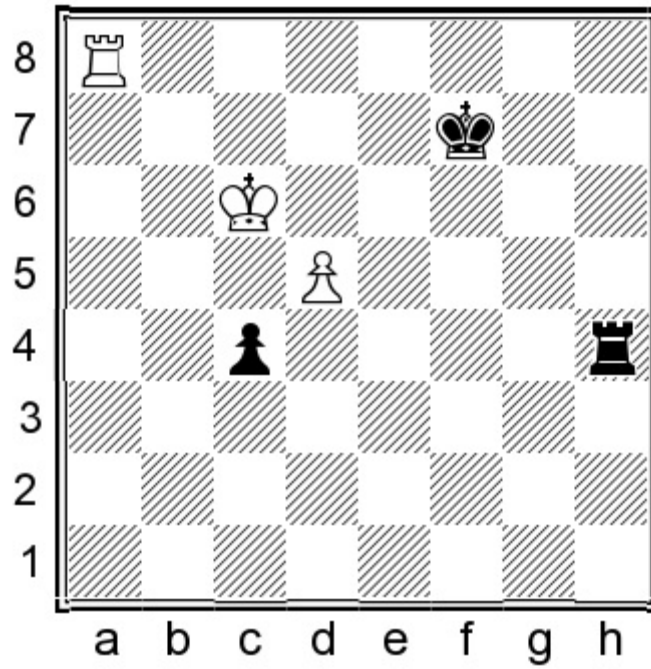
55.♖h1 d4 56.♖xh5+ ♔g8 57.♔g6 ♖b6 58.♖d5 ♖b8 59.♖d7 d3 60.♖g7+ 1-0

14

K. Georgiev

L. Ljubojevic

Linares, 1988



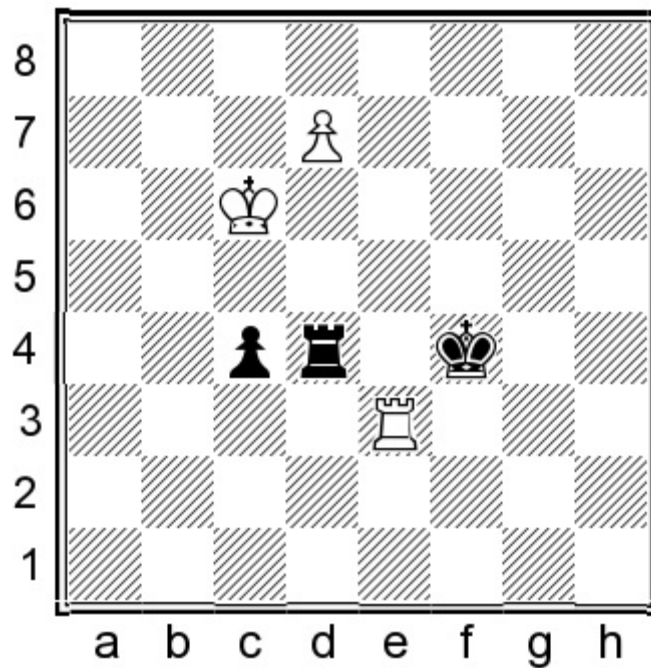
68.♖a3!!

A great prophylactic ‘cut’!

68...♞d4

A more complicated line was 68...♔e8 69.♞a4!+- ♔f7 70.d6 ♞d4 71.♞a3 ♔e8 72.♔c7

69.d6 ♔e6 70.♞e3+ ♔f5 71.d7 ♔f4



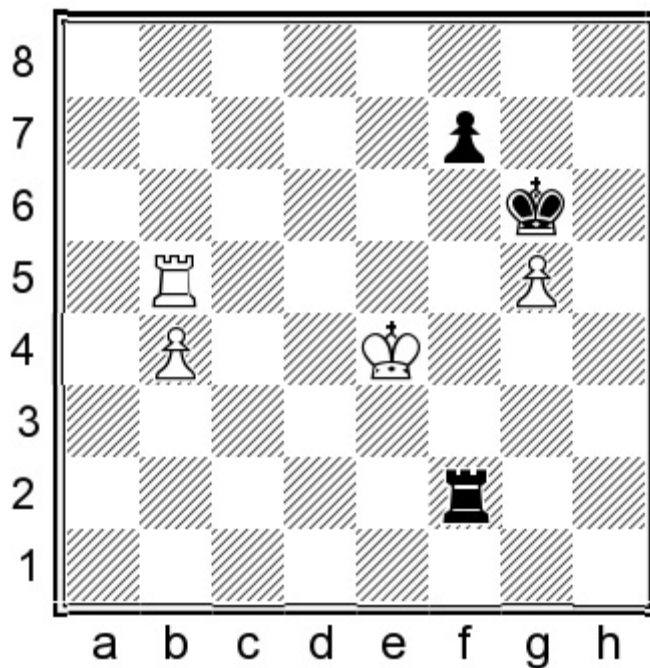
72.♖e1□ 72...c3 73.♔c7 ♜c4+ 74.♔d6 ♞d4+ 75.♔e7 1-0

15

B. Kohlweyer

Ali C. Marandi

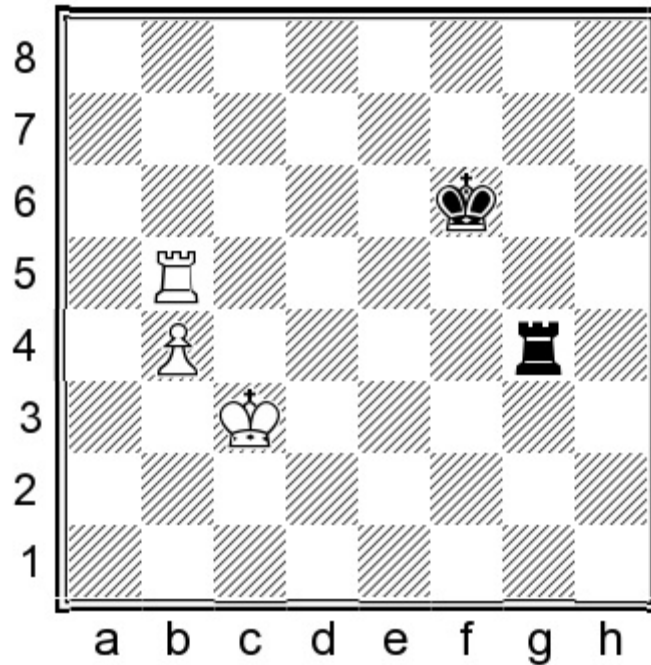
Bosna, 2014



63...♞g2?

It was necessary to first try to cut White's king off: 63...♞d2! 64.♞c5 (64.♞d5 ♞b2 65.b5 f6 66.gxf6 ♔xf6 67.♔d4 ♔e6) 64...♞d1 65.b5 f6 66.gxf6 ♔xf6 67.b6 ♞b1 68.♞c6+ ♔e7 69.♔d5 ♔d8 (69...♔d7 70.♞c7+ ♔d8 71.♔c6+-) 70.♔c5 ♞b2= (70...♞c1+ 71.♔b5 ♞xc6 72.♔xc6 ♔c8 73.b7+ ♔b8 74.♔b6); 63...♞b2 64.♔d4 ♞b1 65.♔c3 ♞c1+ 66.♔b2

63...♞g2? 64.♔d4 ♞g4+ 65.♔c3 f5 66.gxf6 ♔xf6



67.♖d5

Now White has cut off the black king and the result is clear. A basic position.

67...♔e6 68.♖d1 ♖g8 69.b5 ♔e7

Now the horizontal cut is too late: 69...♖g4 70.b6 ♔e7 (70...♖f4 71.♖d8) 71.♖d5 ♖h4 (71...♖g6 72.♖b5 ♖g8 73.b7 ♖b8 74.♔b4) 72.b7 ♖h8 73.♖b5 ♖b8 74.♔b4 ♔d7 75.♔a5 ♔c7 76.♔a6

70.♔b4 ♖d8 71.♖c1 ♔d7 72.♔a5

Possible also was the 'book' win with 72.b6 ♖c8 73.♖c5

72...♖c8 73.♖xc8 ♔xc8 74.♔b6

More direct was 74.♔a6 ♔b8 75.♔b6 ♔a8 76.♔c7 ♔a7 77.b6+

74...♔b8 75.♔c6 ♔a7 76.♔c7 ♔a8 77.♔b6 ♔b8 78.♔a6 ♔a8 79.b6 ♔b8 80.b7 ♔c7 81.♔a7

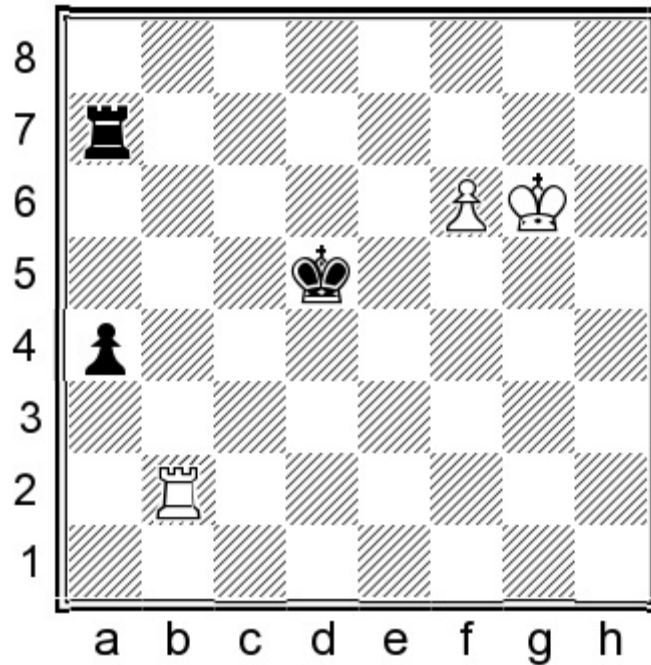
1-0

16

A. Konstantinopolsky

P. Fridman

Lvov, 1940



This is a high-class example of cutting the king!

1.♖c2!!

It's an easy draw after the direct pawn push: 1.f7 ♖xf7 2.♔xf7 ♕c4 3.♔e6 a3 4.♖b8 a2 5.♖a8 ♕b3;

1.♖b4 ♕c5 2.♖f4 ♕b5 3.f7 ♖xf7 4.♖xf7 ♕c4 5.♔f5 a3 6.♖a7 ♕b3 7.♔e4 a2 8.♔d3 ♕b2

1.♖c2!! ♕e6 2.♖c3!!

Another study-like move. White must force the pawn to move.

A primitive draw results from 2.f7? ♖xf7 3.♖e2+ ♕d5 4.♔xf7 ♕c4=

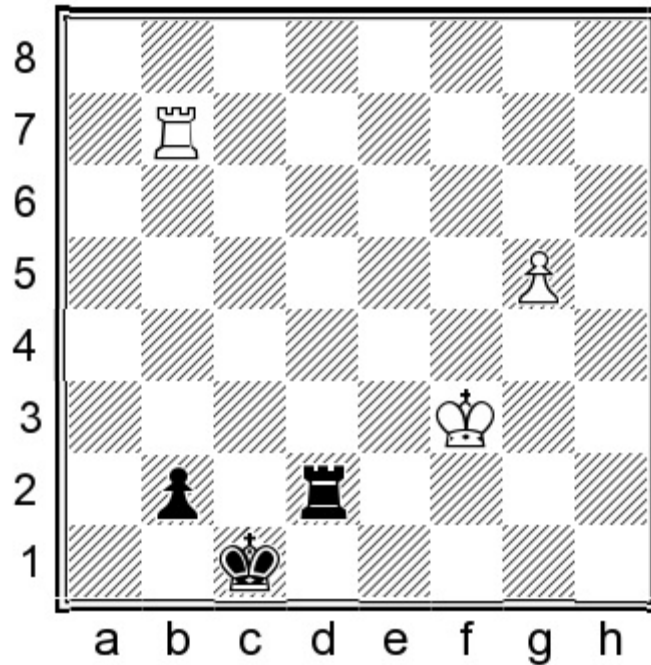
2...a3 3.f7 ♖xf7 4.♖e3+ ♕d5 5.♔xf7 a2 6.♖a3 1-0

17

V. Hansen

G. Jones

Fagernes Norsk, 2011



62...♖d4!

A very important ‘cutting’ of the king.

63.♔e3

The main idea is to make the connection between king and pawn impossible: 63.g6 b1=♚ 64.♖xb1+ ♔xb1 65.g7 ♖d8 66.♔f4 ♖g8

63...♖g4 64.♖c7+ ♔d1 65.♖d7+ ♔c2 66.♖d2+

On 66.♖c7+ then similar developments are seen after 66...♔b3 67.♖b7+ ♖b4

66...♔c1 67.♔f3 ♔xd2 68.♔xg4 b1=♚ 0-1

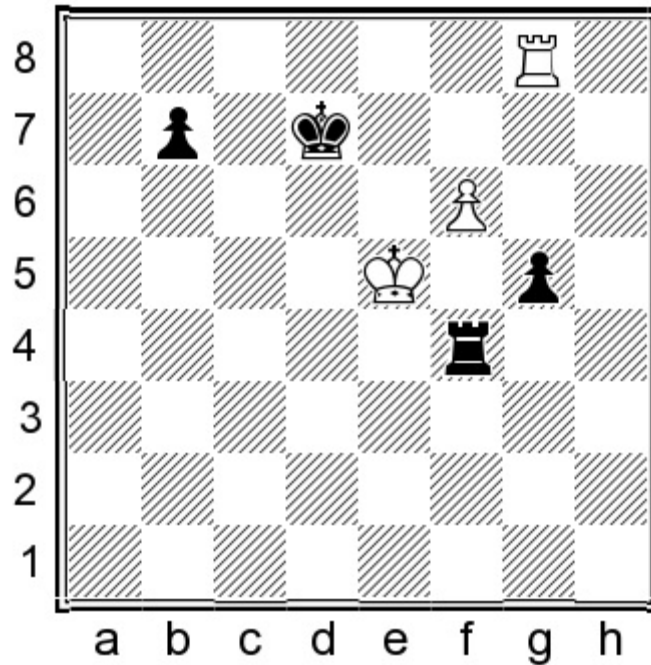
18

A. Kotov

E. Eliskases

Saltsjobaden, 1952

There are many cases when the king is attacked by the opponent’s rook, but in some cases the opponent has problems with his own pawns which are on the files from which the rook must attack. Such ‘umbrella’ pawns can even be prepared by sacrifices.



46. ♖g7+

A materialistic approach is wrong because the g5-pawn is actually a useful element for White, as it will perform the role of 'umbrella' for his king. 46. ♖xg5? ♜f1 47. ♖g7+ ♔e8 48. ♖xb7 ♜e1+ 49. ♔f5 ♜f1+ 50. ♔g6 ♜g1+ 51. ♔h6 ♔f8

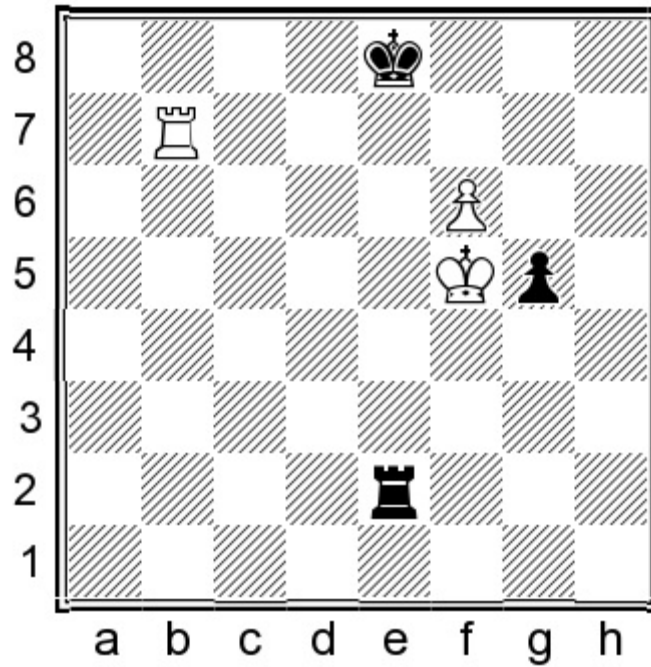
46. ♖g7+ ♔e8 47. ♖xb7

Wrong was 47. ♔e6 ♜e4+ (47... ♔f8 48. ♖xb7) 48. ♔f5 ♜f4+ 49. ♔g6 g4 50. ♜e7+ ♔d8 51. ♜e3 ♔d7 52. f7 g3 53. ♖xg3 b5

47... ♜f2

Nothing is changed by 47... ♜h4 48. ♔e6 ♜e4+ 49. ♔f5 ♜f4+ 50. ♔g6 g4 51. f7+ ♔f8 52. ♖b8+ ♔e7 53. ♜e8+

48. ♔e6 ♜e2+ 49. ♔f5



49...g4

49...♖f2+ 50.♔g6 g4 51.f7+ ♔f8 52.♞b8+ ♔e7 53.♞e8+

50.♔g6! ♞f2

Immediately losing is 50...g3 51.f7+ ♔f8 52.♞b8+

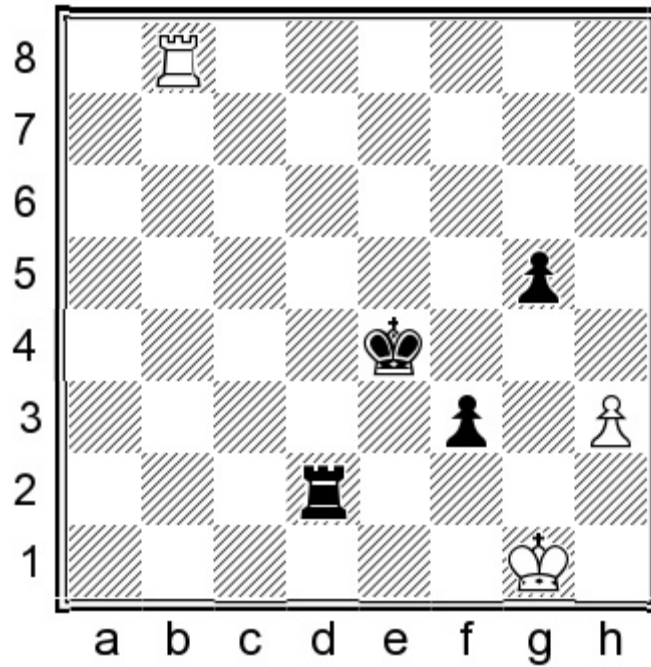
51.f7+ ♔f8 52.♞b8+ ♔e7 53.♞e8+ ♔d6 54.f8=♚+ ♞xf8 55.♞xf8 1-0

19

K. Georgiev

Z. Gyimesi

Porto Carras, 2011



89...g4!

Sacrificing the pawn to obtain a shield.

90.♖g8

The classical shield approach would work after 90.hxg4 ♔f4 (90...♔e3 91.♖e8+ ♔f4 92.♔f1 ♔g3) 91.♖b1 ♔g3 92.g5 ♖g2+ 93.♔f1 ♖h2

90...♔e3 91.hxg4

91.♖e8+ ♔f4

91...♔f4!

The black king's shield is ready. Why not use it?

92.♔f1 ♔g3 93.♔e1 ♖e2+ 94.♔d1 ♖e7

and the f-pawn will be promoted.

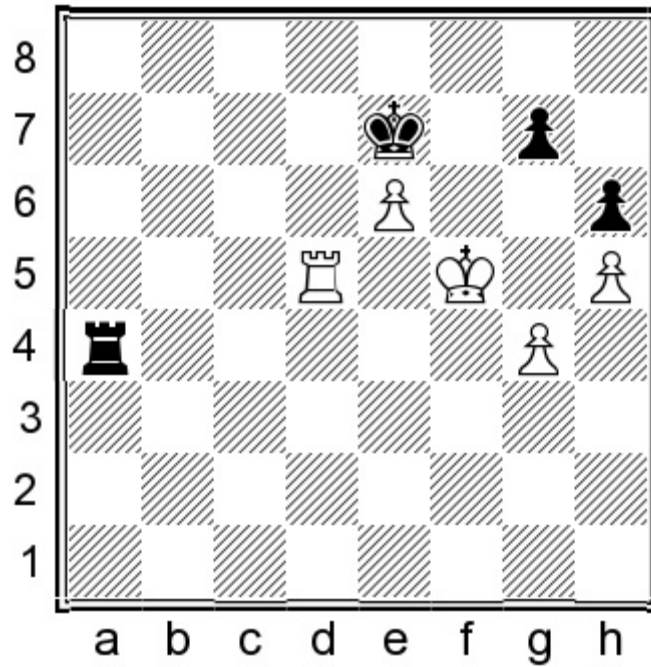
0-1

20

M. Botvinnik

M. Najdorf

Moscow, 1956



67.g5! hxg5 68.♞d7+ ♔f8 69.♞f7+ ♔g8 70.♔g6

Mission accomplished! The pawn on g5 is a perfect shield, or umbrella, for the king. There are no more checks!

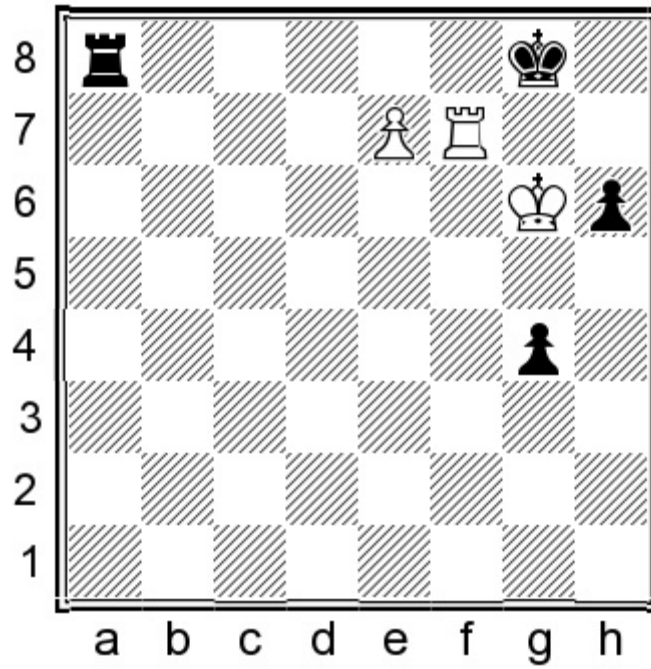
70...g4 71.h6!

A much longer path to the win was 71.♞xg7+

71...gxh6

Nothing is changed by 71...♞a8 72.hxg7 g3 73.e7 g2 74.♞f8+-

72.e7 ♞a8



73. Rf6!

The simplest way.

73. Rf6 g3 (73... Re8 74. Rd6 Rxe7 75. Rd8+) 74. Rd6 Re8 75. Rd8+-;

A bit longer was 73. Rg7+ Kh8 74. Qf7 (74. Qxh6) 74... h5 (74... Ra7 75. Rxg4) 75. Rg5

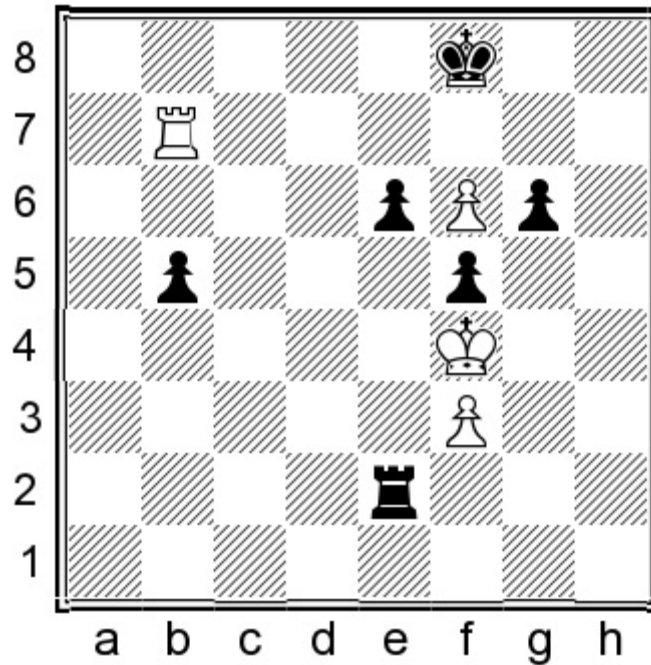
1-0

21

K. Lahno

B. Finegold

Saint Louis, 2011



In the game...

1. ♔g5?

...was played and White duly lost. French GM Robert Fontaine showed that White could have saved the game by playing 1.f7! ♔g7 2.f8=♚+! ♔xf8 3.♔g5= and even three pawns are not as important as the king entering the attack.

1. ♔g5? ♖g2+ 2. ♔h6 b4 3.f4

White would be completely helpless after 3.♖xb4 ♔f7

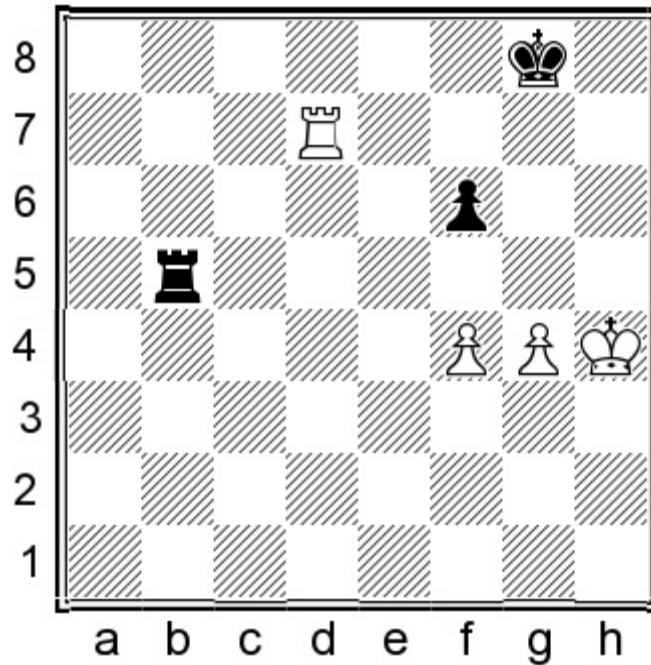
3...b3 4.♔h7 b2 5.♔h6 b1=♚ 6.♖xb1 ♔f7 7.♖b8 ♖h2+ 8.♔g5 ♖h5# 0-1

22

A. Zaitsev

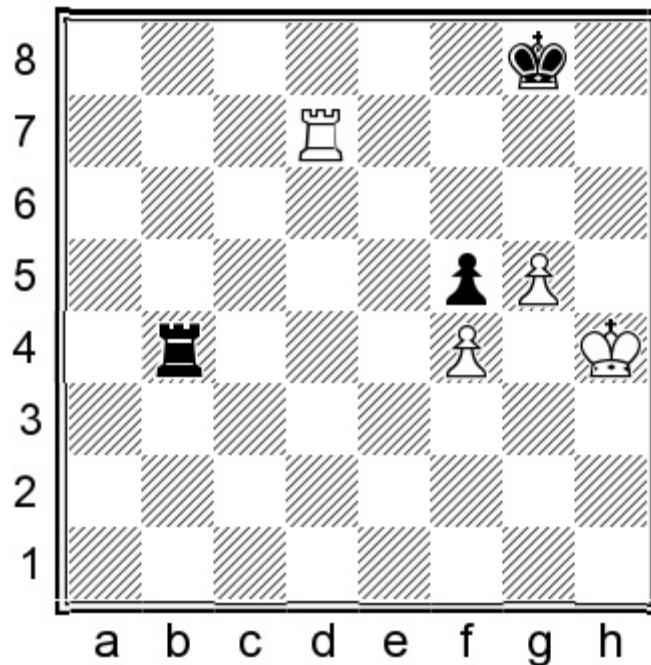
R. Huebner

Buesum, 1969



57...♖b1??

The best way to reach a draw is by 57...♖a5 58.f5 ♖a1 59.♔h5 ♖g1 60.♔g6 ♖xg4+ 61.♔xf6 ♖g1 (The sticking method is also sufficient here: 61...♖f4 62.♖d8+ (62.♔g6 ♖g4+) 62...♔h7 63.♔e6 ♔g7 64.♖d7+ ♔g8 65.f6 ♖e4+ 66.♔f5 ♖e1) 62.♖d8+ ♔h7 63.♔f7 (63.♖f8 ♖a1 64.♔e7 ♖a7+ 65.♔d6);
 On the other hand, 57...f5 58.g5 ♖b4 doesn't save the game...



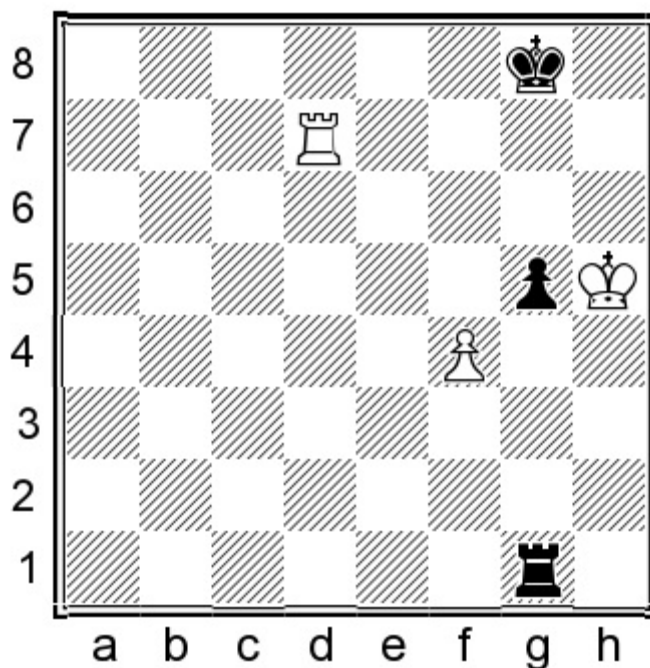
59.♔g3! (59.♔h5 ♖xf4 60.♔g6 ♔f8 61.♔f6 ♖e4 62.♖d8+ (62.g6 ♖e8 63.♖h7 ♔g8) 62...♖e8 63.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 64.g6 ♔f8) 59...♖b3+ 60.♔f2 ♖b4 61.♔e3;
 57...♖a5 58.f5 ♖a1 59.g5 (59.♔h5 ♖g1) 59...♖h1+ 60.♔g4 ♖g1+;

57...♖b2

57...♖b1?? 58.♔h5 ♖g1 59.g5!

This is a typical pawn sacrifice to create a classical shield, or umbrella as it is called in some countries.

59...fxg5



60.f5!

Black's pawn will protect White's king against rook checks!

60.fxg5 ♖a1 61.g6 (61.♔h6 ♖a8)

60...♔f8 61.f6

61.♔g6; 61.♔g6

61...g4 62.♔g6 g3

62...♔e8 63.f7+ ♔f8 64.♖d8+

Black resigned without waiting the mate on d8.

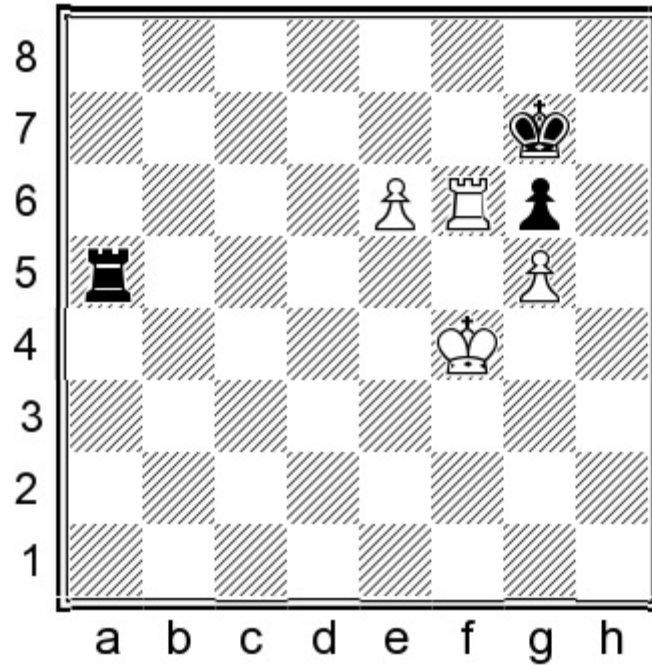
1-0

23

V. Burmakin

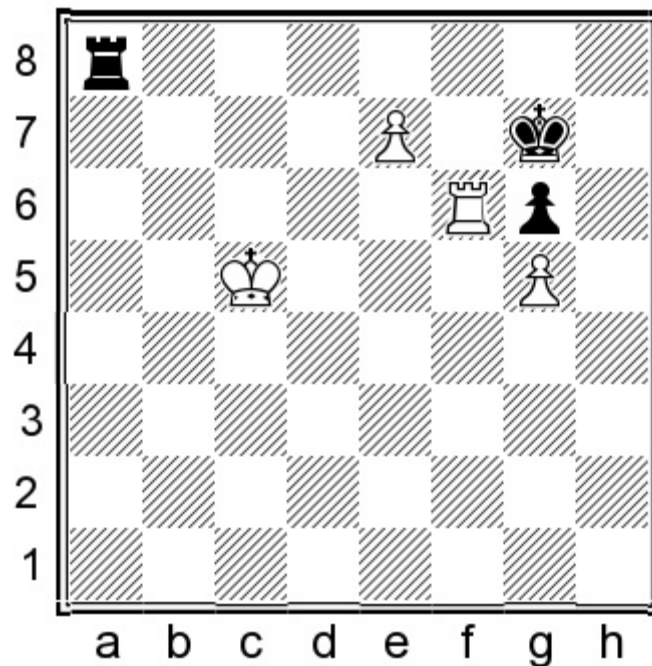
De J. Ramos

A pawn sacrifice is an extremely frequently used method to activate one's own pieces, in order to win time to push the pawn, or sometimes to transfer into a winning pawn ending.



82.e7 ♖a8 83.♗e5 ♖a5+ 84.♗d6 ♖a6+ 85.♗c5 ♖a8

To the same position leads 85...♖a5+ 86.♗c6 ♖a8 87.♖f8



86.♖f8!!

This costs a pawn, but it's a typical transfer into a basic winning pawn ending.

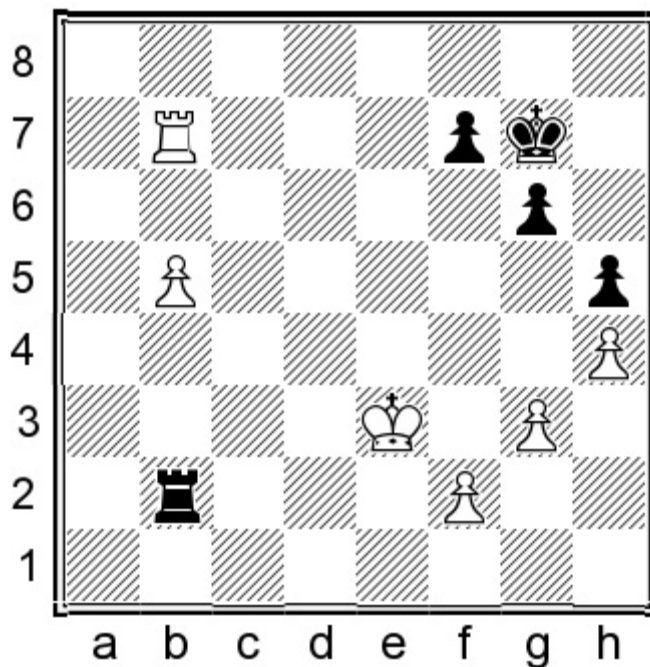
86...♖xf8 87.exf8=♘+ ♔xf8 88.♔d6 ♕f7 89.♔d7 ♕g8 90.♔e7 ♕g7 91.♔e6 ♕g8 92.♔f6 ♕h7 93.♔f7
1-0

24

B. Spassky

V. Antoshin

Sochi, 1965



46.♔d4!

If you need to sacrifice a pawn it is often necessary to do so quickly. Black could fix his defences after 46.b6 ♕f6 47.♔d4 ♔e6

46.♔d4! ♖xf2 47.♖e7!

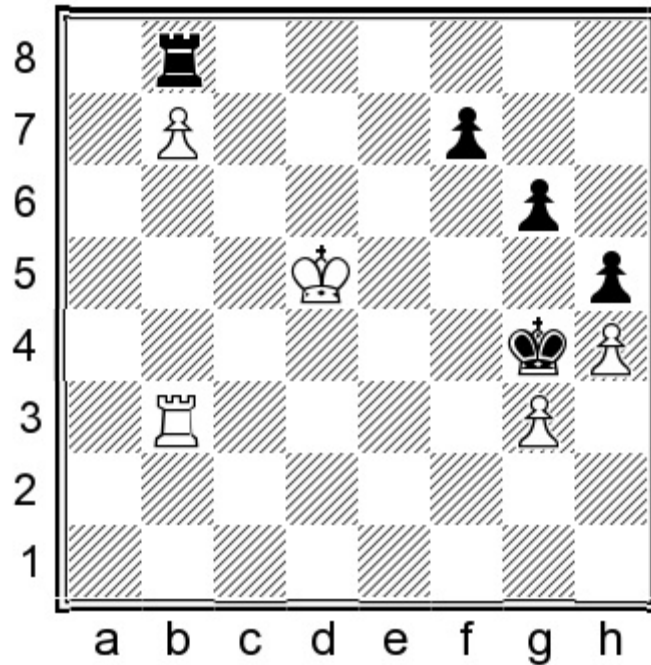
Another possibility was 47.♖c7

47...♖b2 48.♔c4

Spassky tries to play in a controlled way, protecting if necessary the pawn on g3.

Also possible was 48.♔c5 ♖b3 49.b6 ♖xg3 50.♖e5! ♖c3+ 51.♔d6 ♖d3+ 52.♖d5 ♖b3 53.♔c6

48...♔f6 49.♖e3! ♔f5 50.♖b3 ♖c2+ 51.♔d5 ♔g4 52.b6 ♖c8 53.b7 ♖b8



54.♔e5!

This is simpler than the other winning move: 54.♔c6 f6 55.♔c7 ♖e8 56.b8=♚ ♖xb8 57.♖xb8 (57.♔xb8? g5 58.♔c7 (58.hxg5? fxg5 59.♔c7 h4 60.gxh4 gxh4 61.♔d6 h3=) 58...gxh4 59.gxh4 ♔xh4 60.♔d6 ♔g4 61.♔e6 h4=) 57...♔xg3 58.♖g8 f5 59.♖xg6+ ♔xh4 60.♔d6 f4 61.♔e5 f3 62.♖f6 ♔g3 63.♔e4 f2 64.♔e3+-

54...f5 55.♔f6 f4 56.gxf4 ♔xh4 57.♔xg6 ♔g4 58.f5 h4 59.f6 h3 60.f7

and now exact calculation to the end...

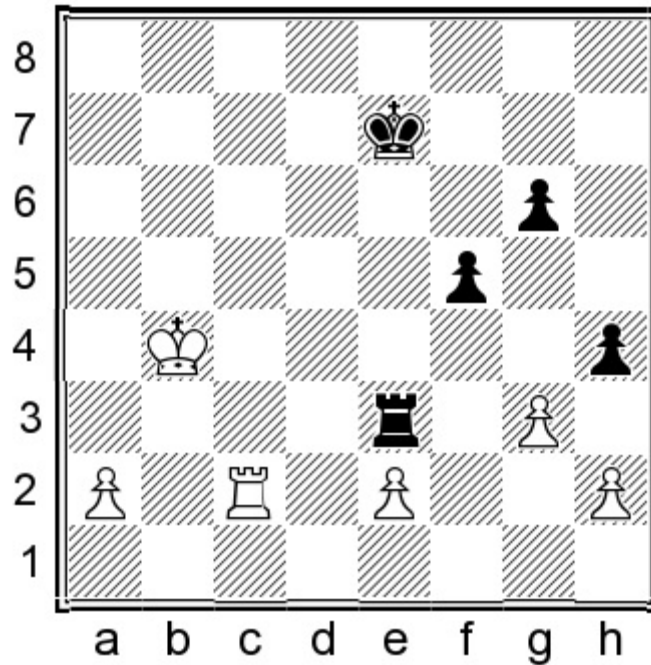
60...h2 61.♖b1 ♖xb7 62.♖xb7 h1=♚ 63.♖b4+ ♔h3 64.f8=♚ ♚g2+ 65.♔h7 ♚c2+ 66.♔h8 ♚c3+ 67.♔g8 ♚g3+ 68.♚g7 1-0

25

A. Mikhalchishin

J. Eslon

Kecskemet, 1983



The extra pawn is not so important: it is necessary to push the passed pawn to the maximum.

45.a4!

Much worse was 45.gxh4 ♖e4+ 46.♔b5 ♖e5+ (46...♖xh4 47.a4 ♖xh2 48.a5) 47.♔c6 ♖e6+ 48.♔c7 ♖a6!

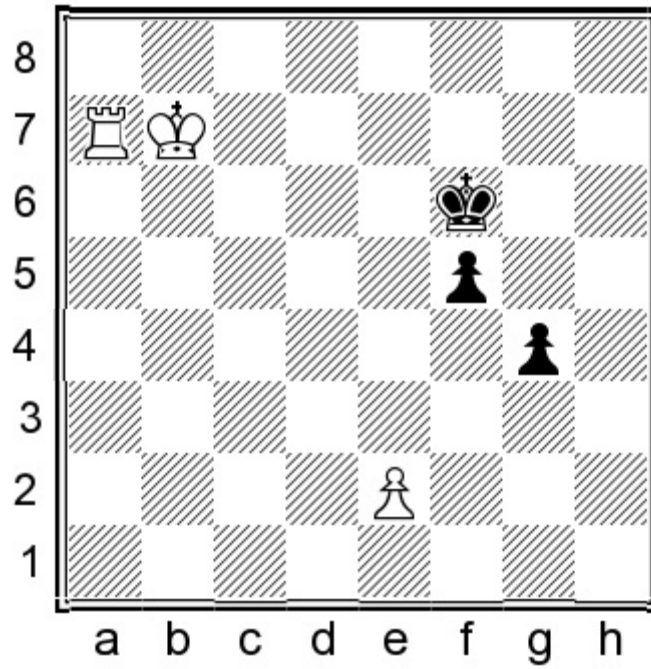
45.a4! hxg3 46.hxg3 ♖xg3 47.a5 ♖g1 48.♖a2!

The rook is ideally placed behind the passed pawn.

48...♖b1+ 49.♔c5 ♖b8

A bit better was not to allow the pawn to reach the seventh rank. 49...♖c1+ 50.♔d5 ♖d1+ 51.♔e5 ♖d7 52.a6 ♖a7 53.♖a4! Zugzwang! 53...f4 (53...♔d7 54.♔f6) 54.♔xf4 ♔f6 55.♖a1 ♔e6 56.♔g5 ♔f7 57.♖f1+ ♔g7 58.♖f6+-

50.a6 g5 51.♔c6 ♔f6 52.a7 ♖a8 53.♔b7 ♖xa7+ 54.♖xa7 g4



55.♔c6

The white king is too close and Black's pawns are not far enough advanced.

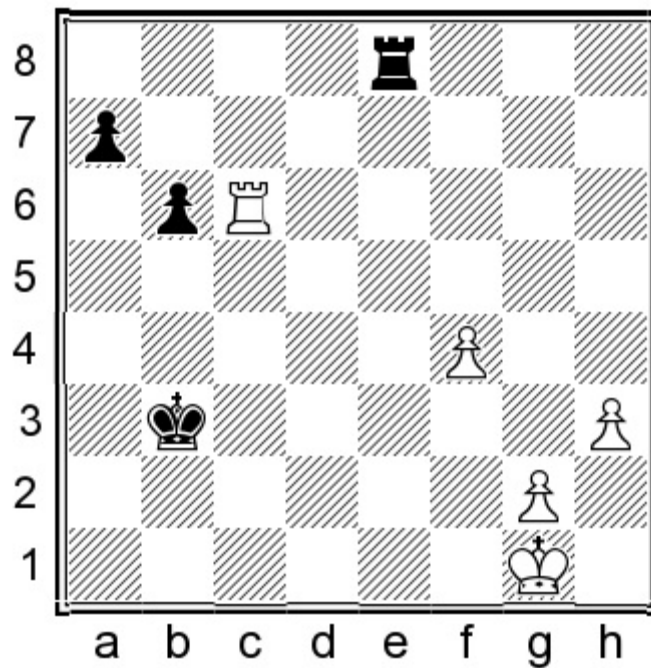
55...♔e5 56.♔c5 g3 57.♔c4 ♔f4 58.♔d3 1-0

26

A. Karpov

A. Miles

Biel, 1990



33...♖f8?

The great Robert Fischer used to say ‘Chess is about timing!’ Here this means that it is necessary to push the pawns, not to run for material: 33...b5□ 34.♖a6 ♖a8 35.f5 ♔c4 36.f6 b4 37.f7 b3 38.♖xa7 ♖f8 39.♖b7 ♔c3 40.g4 b2 41.♖c7+=

33...♖f8? 34.g4!

Karpov acts according to Fischer! Only forward!

34...♖xf4

34...b5 35.f5 a5 36.f6 a4 37.g5 a3 38.♖a6 a2 39.h4 b4 40.h5 ♔b2 41.g6 b3 42.f7 a1=♚+ 43.♖xa1 ♔xa1 44.g7+-

35.g5 b5 36.g6 ♖f8 37.g7

Also possible was 37.h4

37...♖g8 38.♖c7 a5 39.h4 a4 40.h5 a3 41.h6 a2 42.♖a7 ♔b2 43.♔f2 1-0

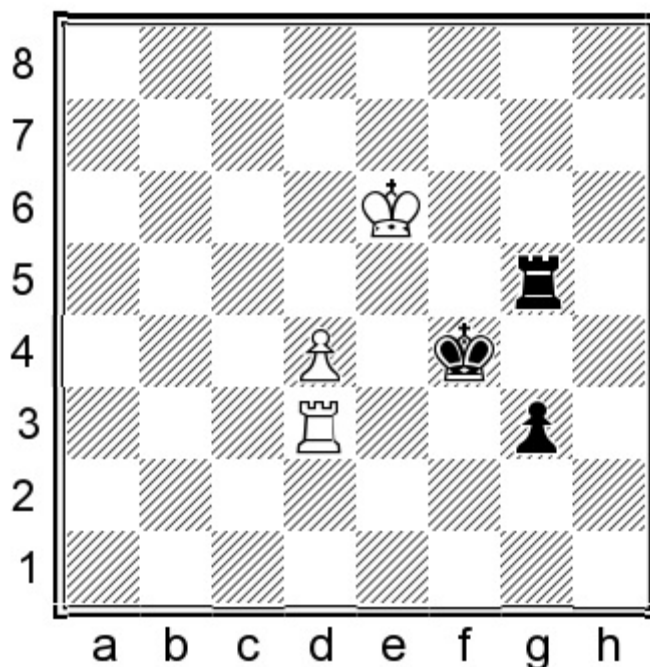
27

V. Korchnoi

G. Kasparov

London, 1983

One more method borrowed from pawn endings; the bodycheck is used in rook endings too, but in a much more complicated way.



In the more complicated cases, the fight between the kings is often important. Here the bodycheck is more camouflaged.

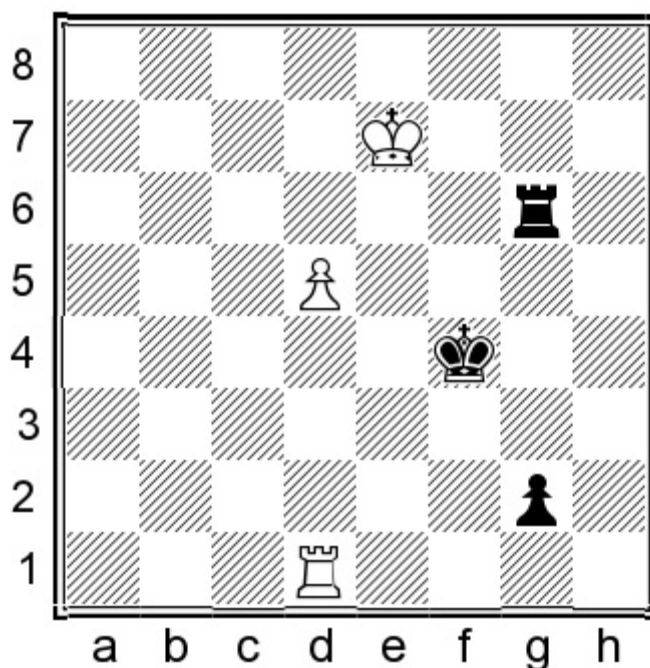
63.d5?

Correct was 63.♖d1! g2 64.♖g1 ♔e4 65.d5 ♖g6+ 66.♔f7=

63.d5? ♖g6+!

Wrong was 63...g2? 64.♖d4+! ♔e3 65.♖d1=

64.♔e7 g2 65.♖d1



65...♔e5!-+

This was underestimated by Korchnoi. He did not see that Black's monarch will go not to help his own pawn, but rather to attack his king.

66.d6

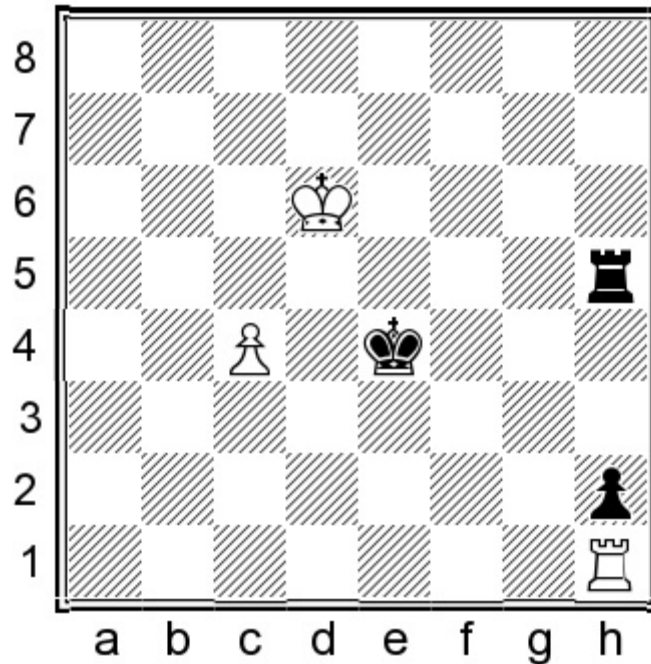
66.♖g1 ♔xd5 67.♔f7 ♖g3 68.♔f6 ♔e4

66...♖e6+ 67.♔d7 ♖xd6+ 68.♖xd6 g1=♚ 69.♖e6+ ♔f5 70.♖d6 ♚a7+ 71.♔d8 ♔e5 72.♖g6 ♚a5+ 73.♔d7 ♚a4+ 74.♔e7 ♚h4+! 75.♔f8 ♚d8+ 76.♔f7 ♔f5 77.♖h6 ♚d7+ 0-1

28

V. Neishtadt

A. Volovich



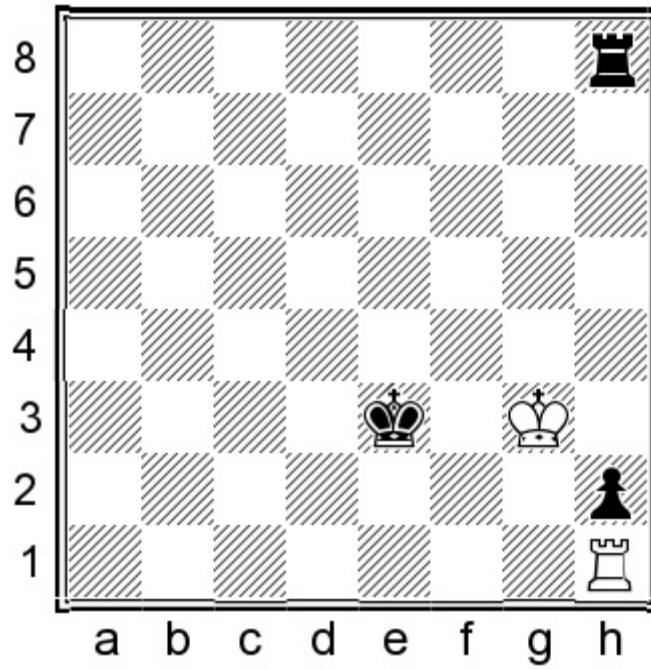
1.c5?

The right way was to immediately avoid an attack by the opponent's king: 1.♔e6! ♕d4 (An easy draw is reached after 1...♔f3 2.c5 ♕g2 3.♖xh2+ ♖xh2 4.c6 ♔f3 5.c7 ♖c2 6.♔d7) 2.♔f6 ♔xc4 3.♔g6 ♖h8 4.♔f5 ♔d3 5.♔f4 ♔e2 6.♔g3 ♖g8+ 7.♔f4!

1.c5? ♖h6+ 2.♔e7 ♔d5!

Now the white king is chased from its pawn and is too far from the h2-pawn.

3.♔f7 ♔xc5 4.♔g7 ♖h3 5.♔g6 ♔d4 6.♔g5 ♔e3 7.♔g4 ♖h8 8.♔g3



8...♖g8+

This check leads to a basic winning position.

9.♔h3

9.♔xh2 ♕f2

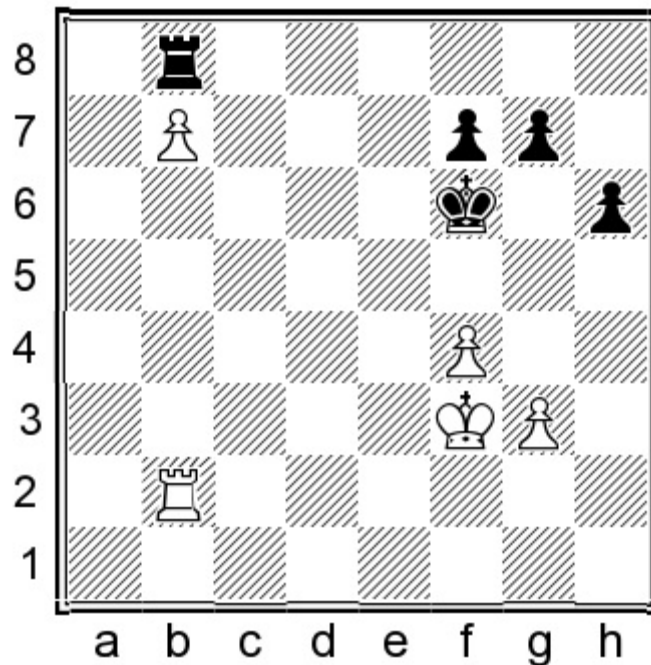
9...♕f2 10.♖xh2+ ♔f3 0-1

CHAPTER 7

ACTIVITY OF THE PIECES: THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROOK

In complicated rook endgames the most important attitude is activity. Activity means maximal use of the king, rook and pawns and constant improvement of all pieces. But to see the power of activity, it is also necessary to see what the disadvantage of passivity is. Activity is more important than material, and in many cases one or two pawns can easily be compensated for by activity. The most active position of the rook can be seen in cases where it not only attacks the opponent's pawns but also protects his own at the same time. Such powerful positions strong players can foresee and even prepare.

1
B. Larsen
W. Browne
Las Palmas, 1982



Black's rook is very passive, but it is not easy for White to bring his king over to the b7-pawn.

1.♔g4!!

The natural 1.♔e4 did not work, e.g. 1...♔e6 2.f5+ ♔d6 (2...♔d7 3.f6!+-) 3.f6 g6 4.♖b1 ♔c6 5.♔e5 ♖e8+ 6.♔d4 ♖b8=

1.♔g4!! ♔e6

Of no help is 1...g6 2.♖b6+ ♔g7 (2...♔e7 3.f5+-) 3.f5 ♔h7 4.♔f4 ♔g7 5.♔e5 ♔h7 6.fxg6+ fxg6 7.♔d6+-

2.f5+ ♔e5

2...♔d7 3.♕h5 intending f6

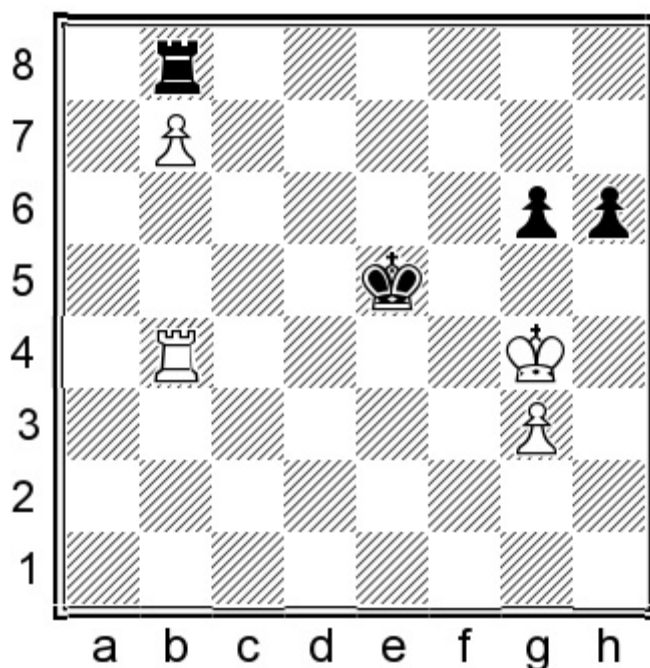
3.♖b4!

Not the only move. Also possible was 3.♖b3.

3...g6

Other options are no better: 3...♔d6 4.♕h5; 3...♕f6 4.♕f4 ♕e7 5.♕e5 ♔d7 6.f6 g6 7.♕d5 ♕c7 8.♖c4+ ♕b6 9.♕d6

4.fxg6 fxg6



5.♖b6!

Now it is time to transfer into a basic rook ending.

5...♕d4

5...♕e4 6.♖e6+

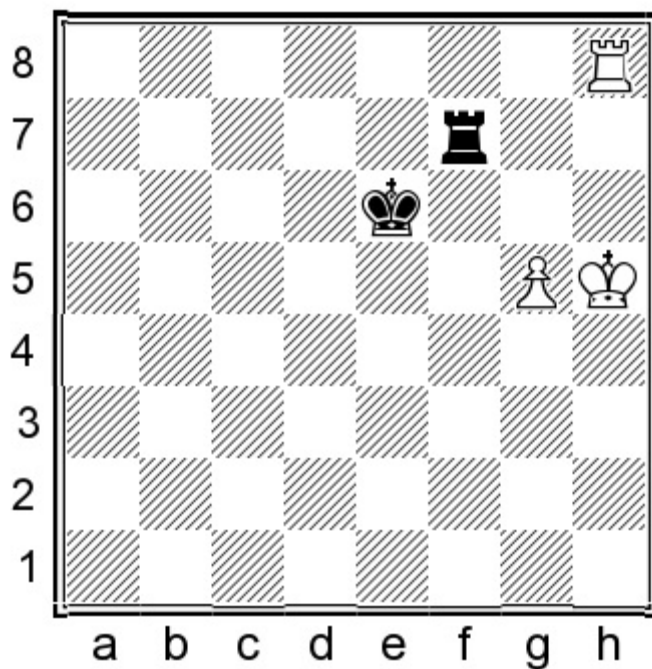
6.♖xg6 ♖xb7 7.♖xh6 ♖g7+

7...♕e5 8.♕h5 ♖b5 9.g4 ♕f4+ 10.♕h4 ♖b4 (10...♖c5 11.♖f6+ ♕e5 12.♖f5+ ♕d6 13.♖xc5 ♕xc5 14.g5) 11.♖f6+ ♕e5 12.♖a6+-

8.♕f4 ♖f7+ 9.♕g5 ♕e5 10.g4 ♖f8

10...♖g7+ 11.♔h5 ♕f4 12.♗f6+ ♔e5 13.g5 ♜h7+ 14.♔g6 ♞h1 15.♔g7 with the classical Lucena position.

11.♔h5 ♞f7 12.g5 ♕f5 13.♞h8 ♔e6



14.♞e8+

Here there a lot of winning moves, e.g. 14.g6

14...♔f5 15.g6 ♞a7 16.♗f8+ ♔e6 17.♞f1

Or 17.♔h6

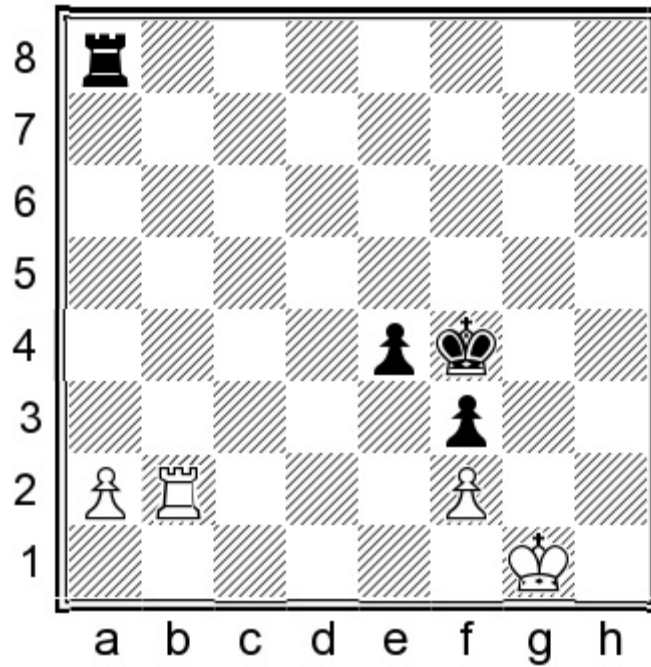
17...♞a2 18.♔h6 ♕e7 19.g7 ♜h2+ 20.♔g6 ♞g2+ 21.♔h7 ♜h2+ 22.♔g8 ♞a2 23.♞h1 1-0

2

S. Garcia

V. Tseshkovsky

Cienfuegos, 1981



1.♖c2?

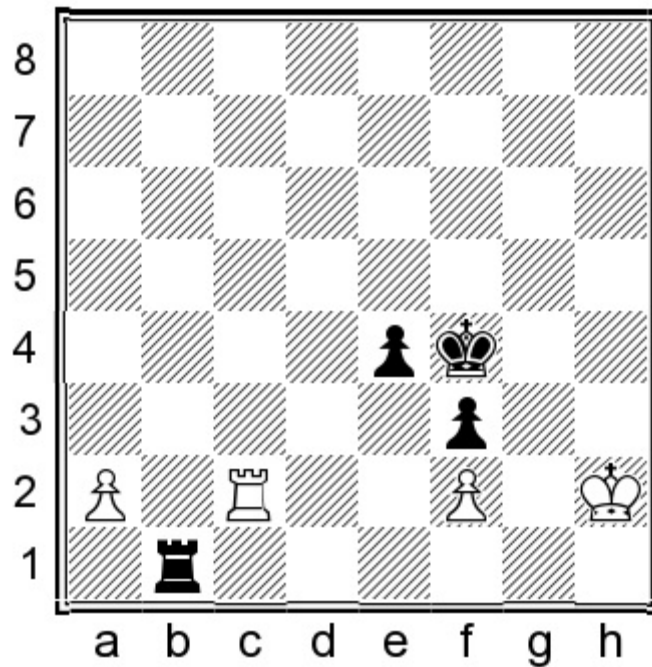
White continues his passive strategy, but in such situations it is usually recommended to sacrifice a pawn to activate the rook:

1.♖b7! ♜xa2 2.♖b4 ♜a1+ 3.♔h2 ♜f1 4.♖b2 e3 5.♖b4+ (5.fxe3+ ♔xe3 6.♖b3+=) 5...♔g5 6.fxe3

1.♖c2? ♜g8+ 2.♔f1 ♜b8 3.♔g1?!

Slightly better was 3.♖c1 but it wouldn't save the game 3...♔g4 4.♖e1 ♜b4 5.a3 ♜c4 6.♖b1 ♔h3 7.♔e1 ♔g2-+

3...♖b1+ 4.♔h2



4...e3!

Black creates his passed pawn and the white rook is not far enough to give sidechecks.

5.fxe3+

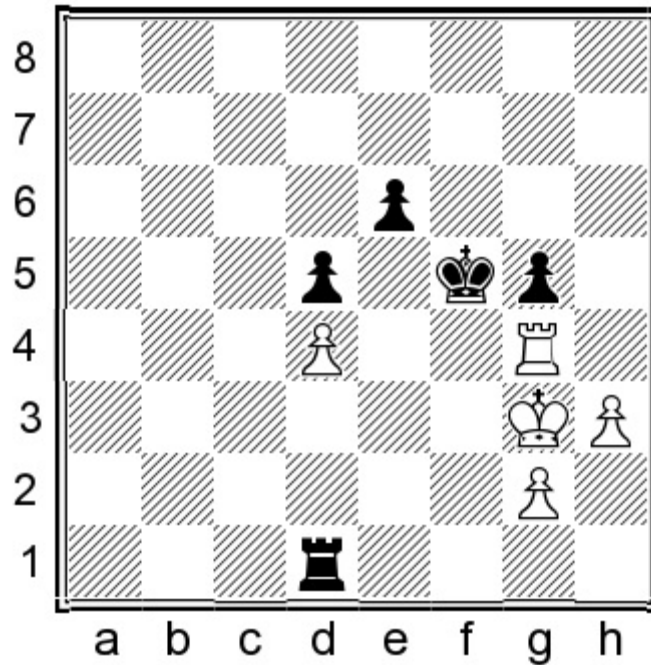
5.♞c4+ ♔e5

5...♙xe3 6.♞c3+ ♔e2 7.♞c2+ ♔d3

and White lost due to the fact that he has not given up the a2-pawn. Had he done so, here he could play 8.♞a2 and the position would be a draw! The shame of materialism!

0-1

3
V. Arbakov
V. Gurevich
 USSR, 1978



This example shows very clearly the difference between an active rook and a passive one. The rook on g4 may seem to have some real function — but in reality it is doing nothing! And it cannot be moved to some other, more serious job.

1...♖c1!

With the very simple and effective plan of ...♖c4 and ...e5.

Nothing is promised by 1...♖e1 2.♔f3 and it is necessary to return to the plan from the game.

1...♖c1! 2.♔f3 ♖c4 3.♔e3 e5! 4.♔d3

4.dxe5 ♖xg4 5.hxg4+ ♔xe5—+

4...♖a4

There was still time for Black to produce a blunder! 4...e4+? 5.♖xe4 dxe4+ 6.♔xc4

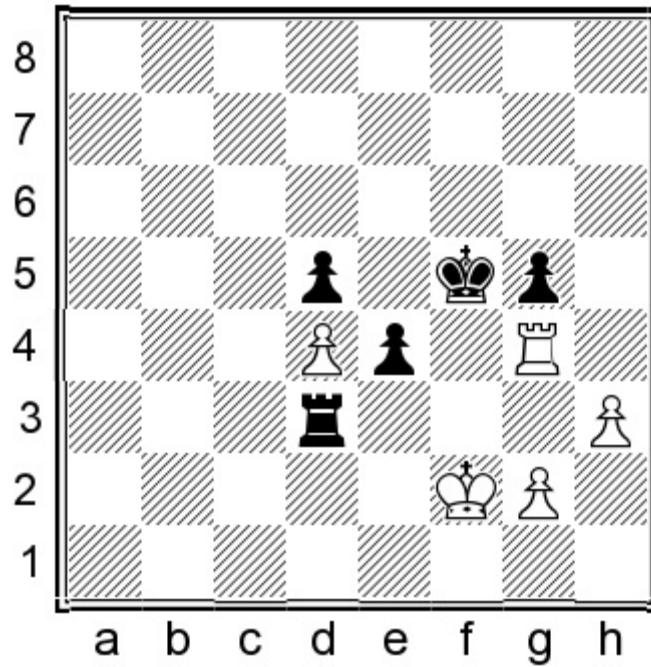
5.♔e3 e4 6.♖g3 ♖a2

6...♖a3+ 7.♔f2 ♖a4

7.♖g4

Of no help is 7.h4 ♖a3+ (7...g4 8.h5 ♖a3+ 9.♔f2 ♖xg3 10.♔xg3 e3—+) 8.♔f2 ♖xg3 9.♔xg3 gxh4+

7...♖a3+ 8.♔f2 ♖d3



9.♖g3

Finally White's rook is able to taste freedom, but Black's connected passed pawns in the centre win easily.

9...♖xd4 10.♖a3 ♖d2+ 11.♔g3 ♔e5 0-1

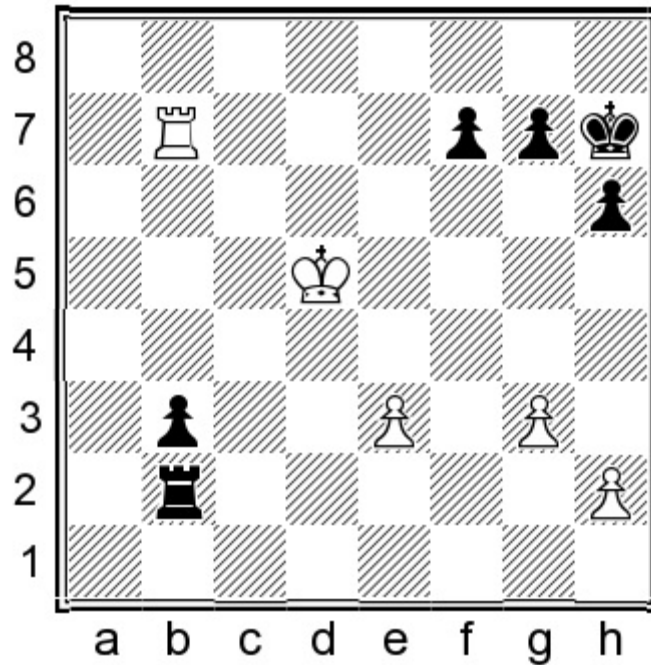
4

V. Kozlov.N

A. Mikhalchishin

USSR, 1978

This game was the turning point in my own understanding of the relationship between material and activity.



1. ♖xf7

There was a serious alternative here: 1. e4 f6 2. e5 fxe5 3. ♔xe5 ♖e2+ 4. ♔f4 b2 Intending ... ♔g6-f6-e6-d5-c4-c3+ 5. h4 ♔g6 6. ♖b6+ ♔f7 7. g4 ♔e7 8. ♔g3 ♔d7 9. ♔f3 (9. ♔f4 ♔c7 10. ♖b5 ♔c6 11. ♖b3 ♔c5 12. ♔g3 ♔c4 13. ♖b8 ♔c3 14. ♔f4 ♔c2 15. ♖c8+ ♔d1 16. ♖b8 ♔c1 17. ♖c8+ ♖c2) 9... ♔c7 10. ♖b4 ♖h2 11. ♔e3 ♔c6 12. ♔d3 ♖xh4 13. ♖xb2 ♖xg4

1. ♖xf7 ♖xh2 2. ♖b7 ♖g2

Nothing is promised by 2... b2 3. e4 ♔g6 (3... ♖d2+ 4. ♔e6! ♔g6 5. e5 ♔h5 6. ♖b8 ♔g4 7. ♔f7=) 4. e5 ♔f5 5. ♖f7+= ♔g4 6. ♖xg7+ ♔f3 7. ♖b7 ♔xg3 8. e6 h5 9. e7 ♖e2 10. ♔d6 h4 11. ♖xb2

3. e4!

I was expecting a pleasant ending on one flank: 3. ♖xb3 ♖xg3 4. ♔d4 h5-+ 5. ♖b5 ♔g6 6. e4 h4

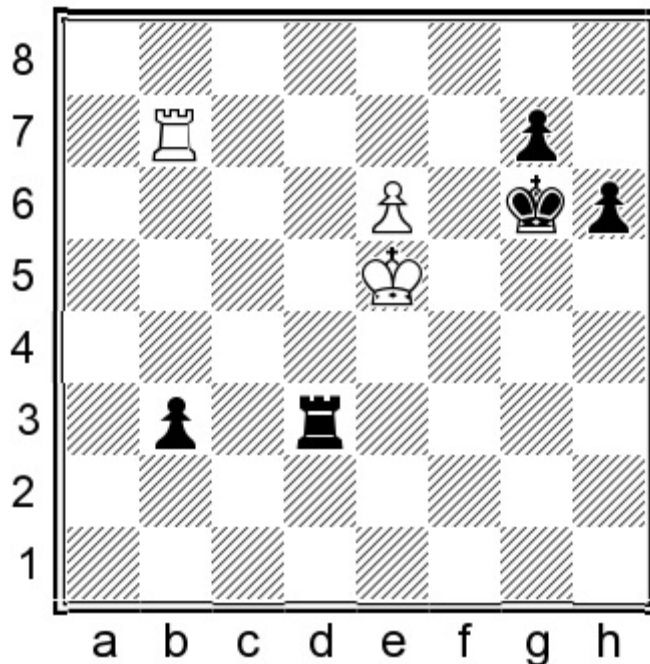
3... ♖xg3 4. e5 ♔g6

The only chance to play for the win lay in the complicated variation 4... h5! 5. e6 ♔g6 6. ♖b8 ♔f6 7. ♖f8+ ♔e7 8. ♖f7+ ♔e8 9. ♖b7 ♖e3 (9... h4 10. ♖b8+ ♔e7 11. ♖b7+ ♔f6 12. ♖f7+ ♔g6 13. ♖f8 ♖e3 14. ♔d6 b2 15. ♖b8 ♔f6 16. ♖f8+ ♔g5 17. ♖b8 ♖d3+ 18. ♔c5 ♔f6) 10. ♔d6 ♖d3+ 11. ♔e5=

5. e6 ♖d3+

Once again it was possible to start running with the 'edge pawn': 5... h5!?

6. ♔e5



Possible, but worse, was 6.♔e4 ♖d2 7.♞xb3 (7.♔e5 ♖b2 8.♞b8 ♗h5 9.e7 ♞e2+ 10.♔d6) 7...♔f6 8.♞b7 ♞e2+-+

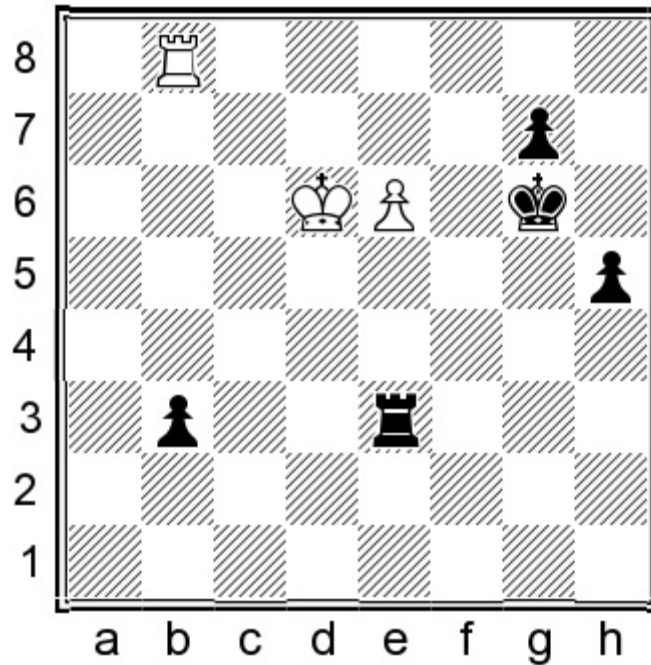
6...♞e3+ 7.♔d6 ♞d3+ 8.♔e5 ♗h5

Now White has managed to activate all his forces and he is fighting with one pawn against three.

9.♞b8 ♞e3+

9...h4 10.e7 ♞e3+ 11.♔d6 ♔f7 (11...♔f5 12.♞xb3 ♞e1 13.♞f3+ ♔g4 14.♞f8 ♗5 15.e8=♞ ♞xe8 16.♞xe8 h3 17.♞h8 ♔g3 18.♔e5 ♗4 19.♔f5 ♔f3 20.♞h4 ♗3 21.♞xh3 ♔f2) 12.♞f8+ ♔g6 13.e8=♞+ ♞xe8 14.♞xe8

10.♔d6



10...♔f6

Other tries did not give any serious winning chances: 10...♔f5 11.♖f8+ ♔e4 12.e7 ♔d4 13.♖f4+ ♔c3 14.♖f3; 10...h4 11.e7 h3 (11...♔f7 12.♖f8+) 12.e8=♚+ (12.♖xb3 ♖e2 13.♖xh3) 12...♖xe8

11.♖f8+ ♔g5 12.e7 b2 13.♖b8 ♔f6 14.♖f8+

Simply bad was 14.♖xb2 ♖e6+ 15.♔d7 ♖xe7+

14...♔g5 15.♖b8

White forces Black to repeat the position.

15...♔f6 16.♖f8+ ♔g5 17.♖b8 1/2

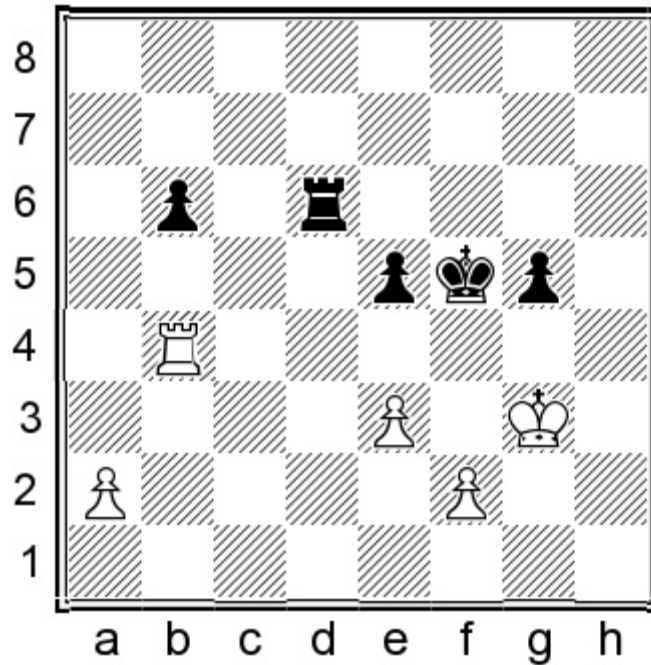
5

M. Taimanov

V. Chekhov

USSR, 1976

This example shows great practical usage of the pawn sacrifice and comfortable control of the draw. Without the pawn sacrifice Black might have faced a lot of problems.



This is a very useful practical position. Black is slightly worse because of his pawn islands and pawn deficit. The pawn sacrifice helps to activate his own rook while making his opponent's one passive!

1...♖d3!

1...♖c6 2.a4 ♖d6 3.e4+ ♔g6 4.♔g4 ♖c6 5.f3 ♖d6 6.♖b5 (6.♖c4) 6...♔f6

1...♖d3! 2.♖xb6 ♖a3 3.♖b2 ♖a4!

The simplest form. This idea could be conducted in a few different ways, e.g. 3...♔g6 4.♔g4 ♖a4+ 5.♔f3 ♖a3 (5...♔f5); 3...e4

4.f3 e4

Leading to a basic theoretical position was 4...g4 5.e4+ ♔g5 6.♖b5 gxf3 7.♖xe5+ ♔f6 8.♖f5+ ♔e6 9.♔xf3 ♖xa2=

5.♖b5+ ♔g6 6.fxe4 ♖xa2 1/2

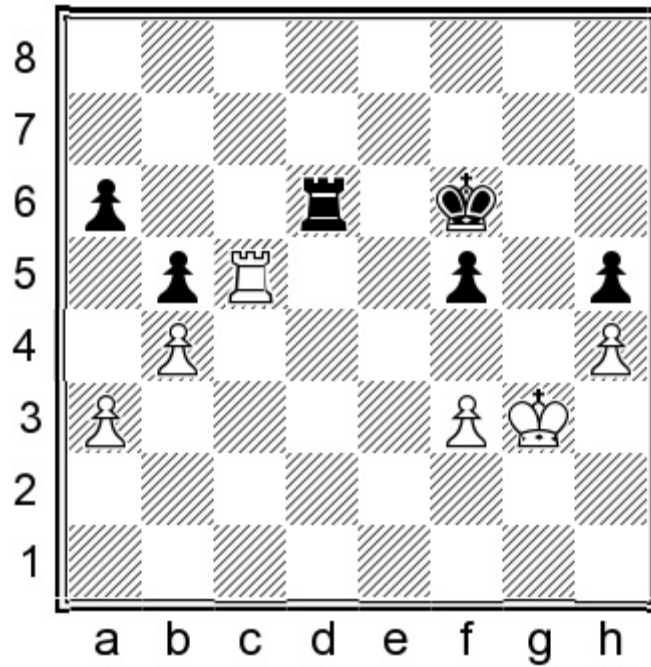
6

D. Barlov

H. Schussler

Haninge, 1988

Equal pawns, but the white rook is much more active. Black can wait and suffer, but there are players who prefer activity, even at the cost of a pawn.



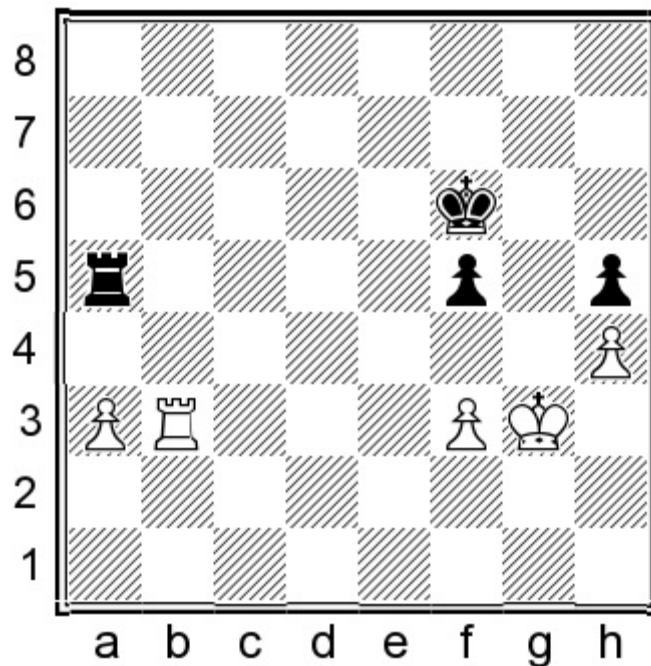
60...a5

...although a better form of activity was 60...♞d3 61.♞c6+ ♔e5 62.♞xa6 f4+ 63.♔f2 ♞d2+ 64.♔e1 ♞a2=

60...a5 61.bxa5

Black would hold after 61.♞xb5 axb4 62.axb4 ♞d4 (62...♞d3 63.♞b6+) 63.♞b6+ ♔e7 64.b5 f4+ 65.♔f2 ♞d2+ 66.♔e1 ♞b2 67.♔d1 ♔d7

61...♞d4 62.♞xb5 ♞a4 63.♞b3 ♞xa5



64.♔f4

Or 64.♖b6+ ♕g7 65.♔f4 ♖xa3

64...♖a4+ 65.♖b4

White can't make progress after 65.♕e3 ♕e5 66.f4+ ♕e6 67.♖c3 ♕e7

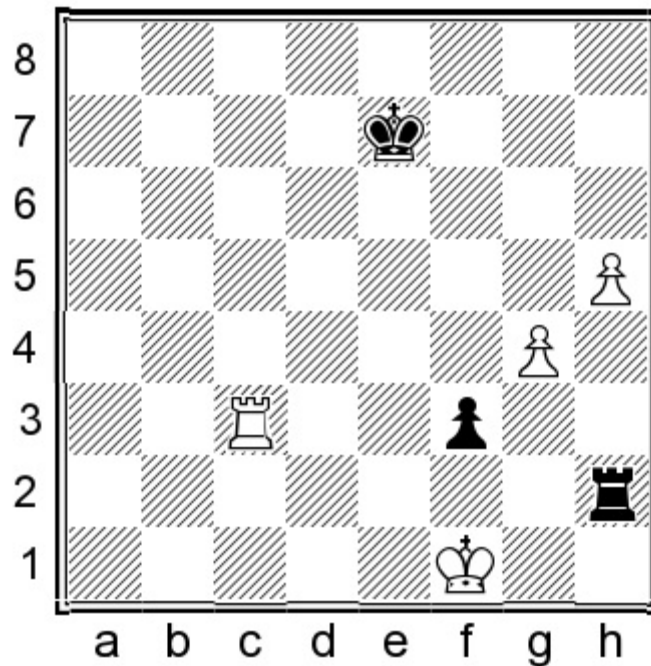
65...♖xa3 66.♖b6+ ♕g7 67.♖e6 ♖b3 68.♖e3 ♖xe3 69.♕xe3 ♕f7 70.♕d3 ♕e7 71.♕c4 ♕d6 1/2

7

T. Reich

M. Saltaev

Muelheim, 2016



54...♖g2?

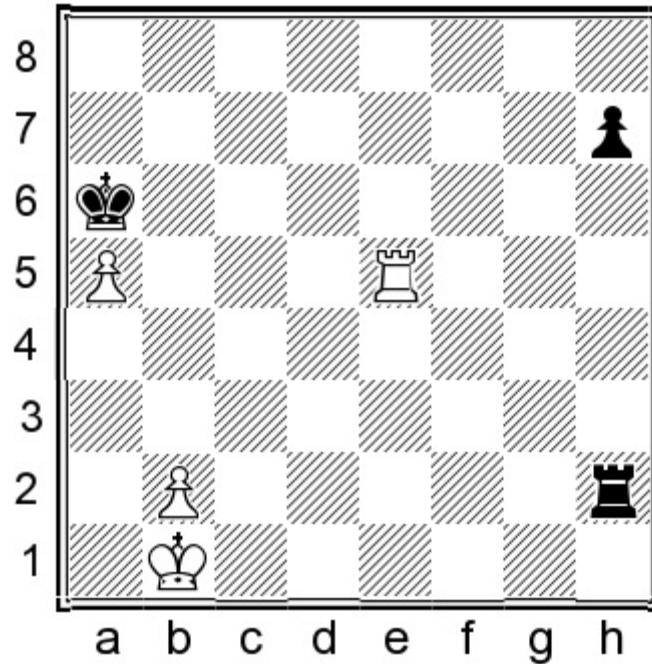
It was necessary instead to activate the king: 54...♕f6 55.♖xf3+ ♕g5 56.♖g3 ♖a2= 57.♖g2 ♖a1+ 58.♕f2 ♕f4 (58...♖a2+ 59.♕f3) 59.h6 ♕g5 60.h7 ♖h1=

54...♖g2? 55.♖e3+?

Winning was 55.h6 ♖xg4 56.h7 ♖h4 57.♖c8! ♖xh7 58.♖c7+

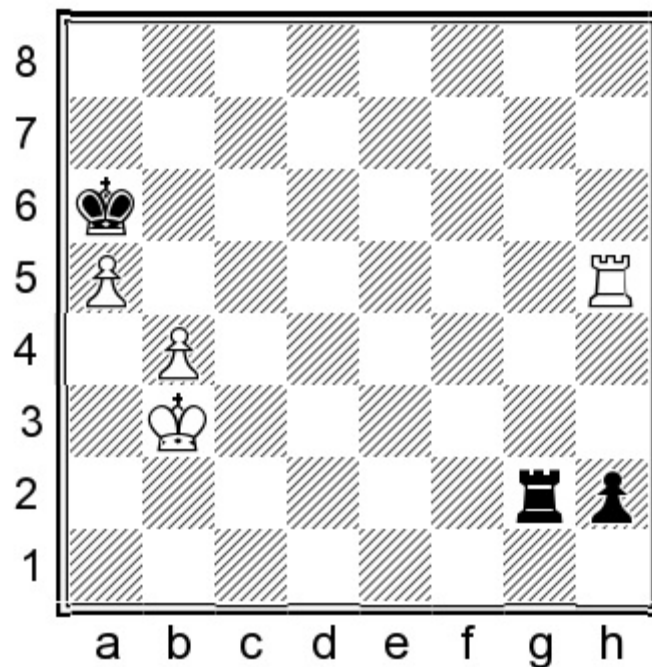
55...♕d6 56.♖e4 ♕d5 57.♖a4 ♕e5 58.h6 ♕f6 59.♖a8 ♖h2 60.♖a5 ♕g6 61.g5 ♖c2 62.♖a8 ♖h2 63.♖g8+ ♕h7 64.♖g7+ ♕h8 65.♖f7 ♖g2 66.♖g7 ♖h2 1/2

8



43.♔a2 h5 44.♔a3 h4 45.♖h5 h3 46.b3 ♖h1?

The rook must be activated to the maximum, to protect its own pawn and attack the opponent's one!
 46...♖g2! 47.b4 h2 48.♔b3



48...♖f2! Waiting to see where White's king will go in in order to prepare the correct check. 49.♖h6+ ♔b7 50.b5 ♖f3+ 51.♔c4 ♖f4+ 52.♔d5 ♖f5+

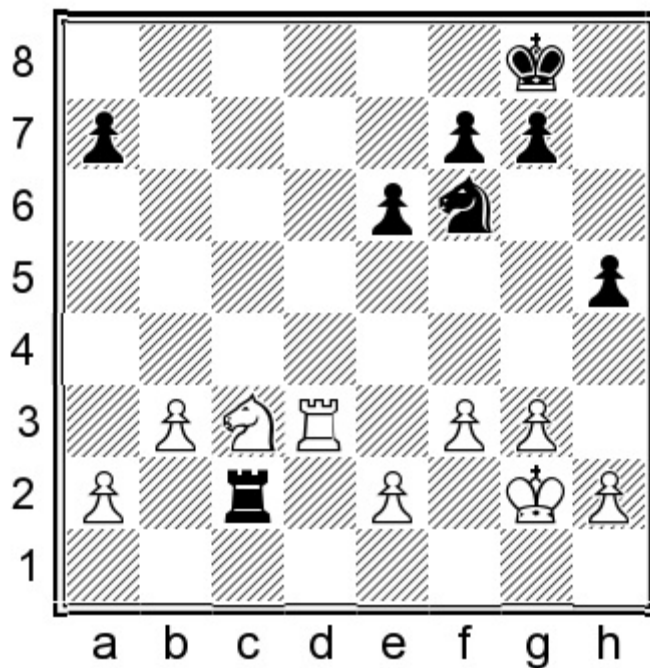
47.♔b4 h2 48.♖h7 ♜g1 49.♖h6+ ♔b7 50.♖xh2 1-0

9

Y. Balashov

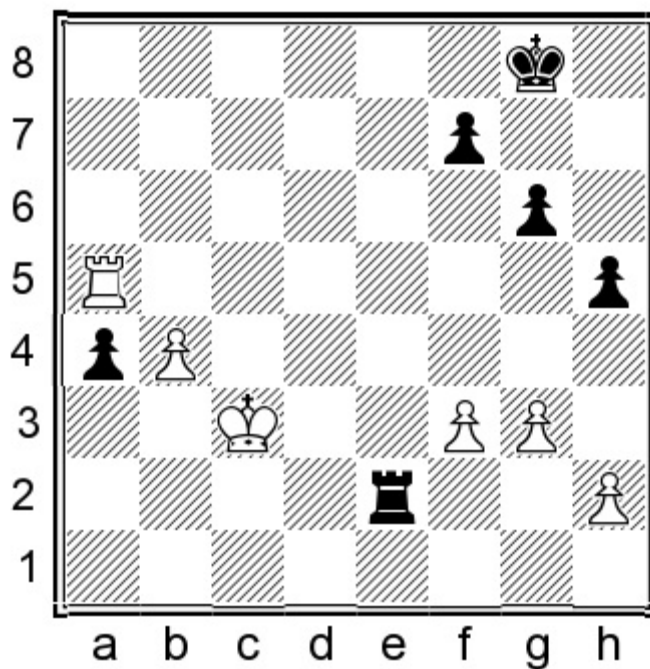
L. Polugaevsky

USSR, 1976



Transferring into a rook endgame leaves Black with a very active rook.

33...♘d5! 34.♘xd5 exd5 35.♔f2 ♜xa2 36.♖xd5 g6 37.♔e3 a5 38.♔d3 a4 39.b4 ♜b2 40.♔c3 ♜xe2 41.♖a5



41...♖xh2?

Better chances for the draw were promised by 41...♔f8! 42.b5 ♕e7 43.♞xa4 ♞xh2 44.b6 ♕d7 45.♞c4 ♞h1 46.♞c7+ ♕d8 (46...♕e6 47.b7 ♞b1 48.♕d4 g5 49.♕c5 ♕e5 50.♞d7!+-) 47.♞xf7 ♕c8 48.♞g7 ♞f1 49.♞xg6 ♞xf3+ 50.♕d4 ♕b7 51.♕e4 ♞f8 52.♞h6 ♞g8 53.♕f4 ♞g4+ 54.♕f3 ♞g5=

42.b5 ♞h1 43.♞xa4 ♞c1+ 44.♕d4

Even stronger would have been 44.♕b4

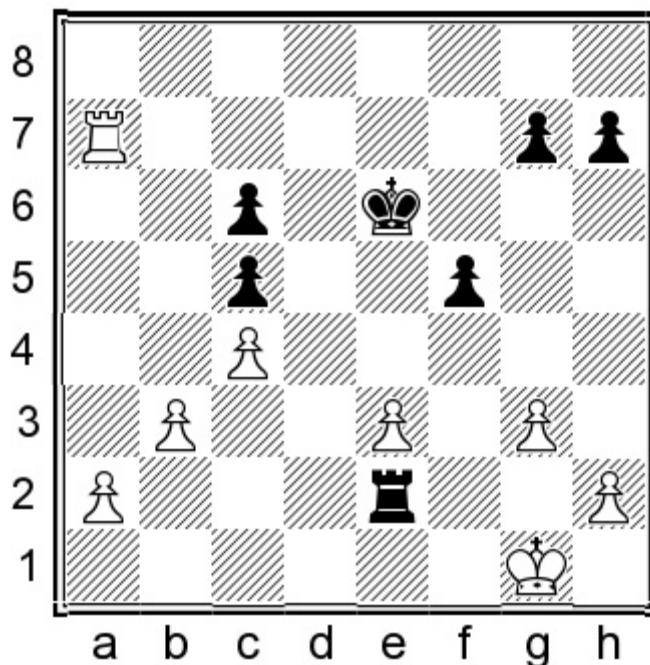
44...♕f8 45.♞b4 ♕e7 46.b6 ♞d1+ 47.♕e3 ♞d8 48.b7 ♞b8 49.♕f4 f6 50.♞b6 g5+ 51.♕f5 ♕d7 52.♞xf6 h4 53.gxh4 gxh4 54.♕g4 ♞h8 55.♞b6 1-0

10

A. Lilienthal

V. Smyslov

Leningrad/Moscow, 1941

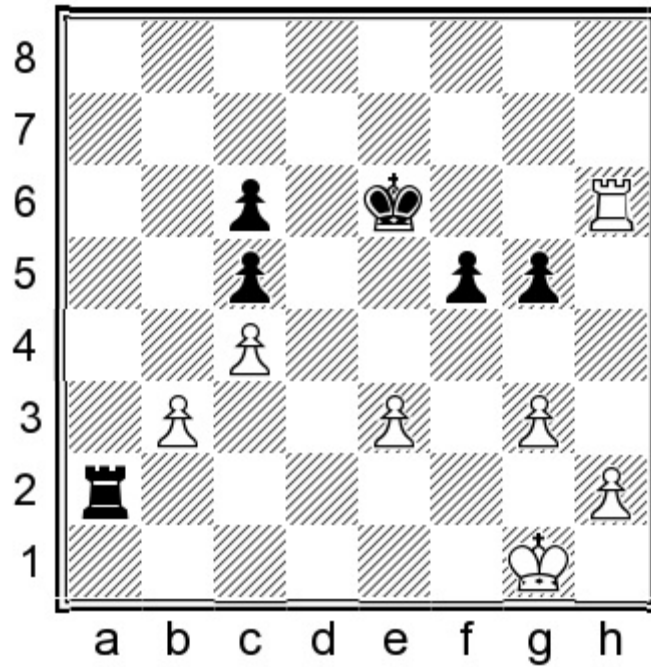


With White's rook being so active, it seems that Black will have huge problems.

29...g5!

A very important move to support the net around his opponent's king

30.♞xh7 ♞xa2 31.♞h6+



White couldn't really destroy the king's 'box': 31.g4 fxg4 32.♖h6+ ♔d7

31...♔e5!

The pawns are not important here — the activity of the rook and king come above all else!

32.♖xc6 ♔e4 33.♖xc5

Nothing is changed by 33.h3 ♔f3 (33...♔xe3 34.♖xc5 f4 35.gxf4 ♖a1+ 36.♔g2 ♖a2+) 34.♖xc5 ♖a1+

33...f4!

Using the umbrella method!

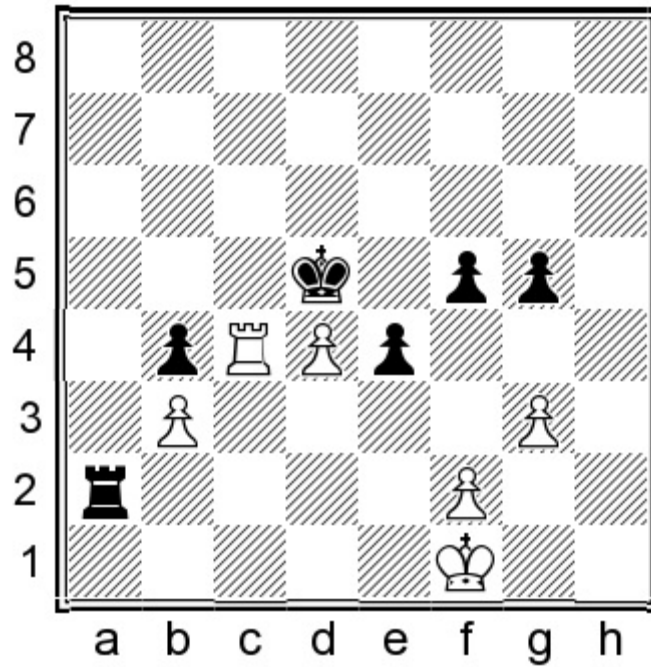
34.exf4 ♔f3 35.h3 ♖a1+ 36.♔h2 ♖a2+ 1/2

11

Y. Pelletier

E. Rozentalis

Yerevan, 1996

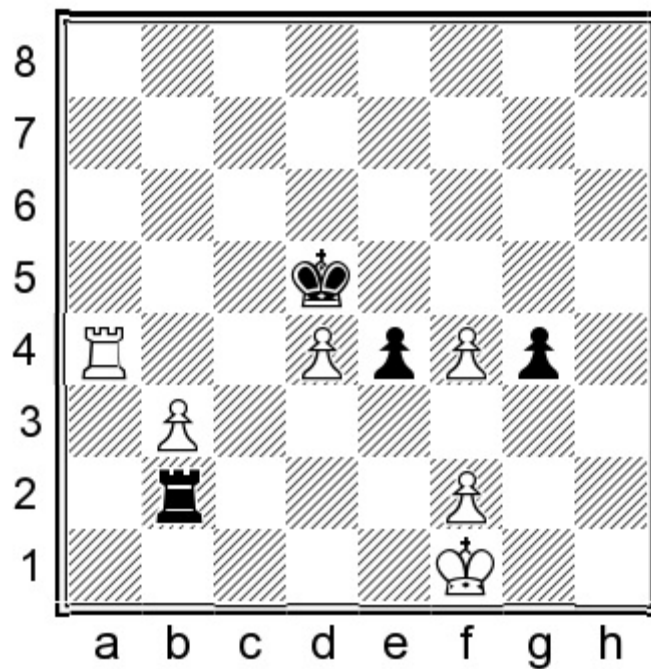


1...g4

A very interesting idea to prepare the penetration of White's position

There was another way, but only enough for a draw: 1...f4 2.gxf4 gxf4 3.♖xb4 f3 (3...e3 4.fxe3 fxe3 5.♖a4 ♖b2 6.b4! ♔e4 7.♖a8 ♔d3 8.♖a3+ ♔d2 9.♖a1!)= 4.♔e1 ♖a1+ 5.♔d2 ♖f1 6.♔e3 ♖e1+ 7.♔f4 ♖e2 8.♔g3=

1...g4 2.♖xb4 f4! 3.♖a4 ♖b2 4.gxf4



4...g3!

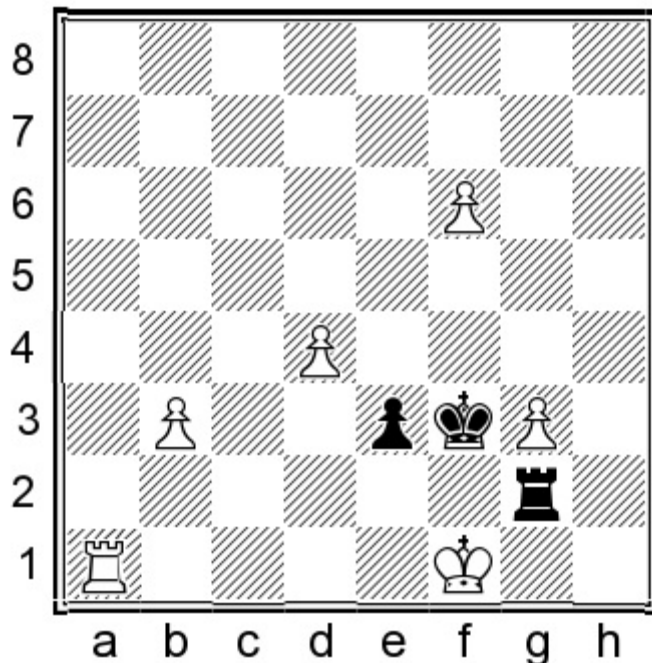
Here it was necessary to decide which pawn would be deadly for the opponent. Wrong was

4...e3 5.fxe3 ♔e4 6.♖a1 ♔xe3 7.♔g1 g3 8.♞c1 ♔f3

5.fxg3 e3 6.f5 ♔e4 7.f6

White is unable to save the game with 7.b4 ♔f3 8.♞a1 ♞f2+ 9.♔g1 ♞g2+ 10.♔h1 ♞xg3 11.♞f1+ (11.f6 ♔f2+) 11...♔e2 12.♞f4 ♞f3+

7...♔f3 8.♞a1 ♞g2!



9.f7

Or 9.♞e1 e2+ 10.♞xe2 ♞xe2 11.f7 ♞f2+ 12.♔e1 ♔e3

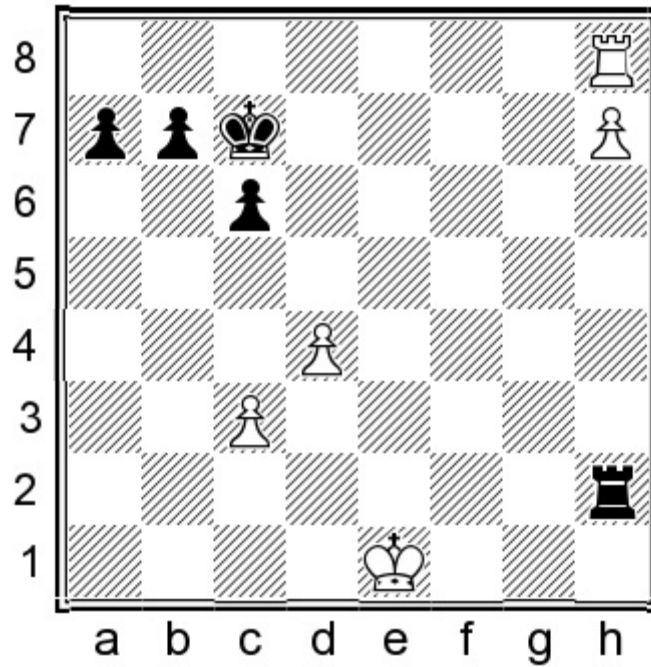
9...e2+ 10.♔e1 ♔e3 11.f8=♞ ♞g1+ 0-1

12

V. Anand

P. Blatny

Baguio City, 1987



1...♔b6??

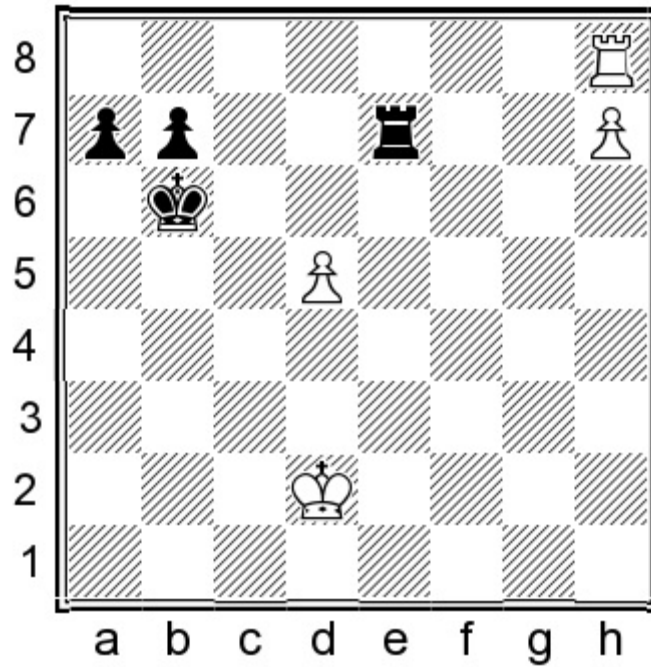
In such situations it is usually a problem deciding which to activate first: the king, rook or pawns? Here it was better to start with the pawns:

1...a5 2.♔d1 a4 3.♔c1 a3 4.♔b1 ♖b2+ 5.♔a1 ♖h2 6.c4 ♔b6! 7.♔b1 (7.d5? ♔c5 intending ♔c4-b3 8.d6 ♔b4) 7...♖b2+=

1...♔b6?? 2.c4 ♖h4?

A very interesting defence was 2...♖h6 3.d5 ♔c5 4.d6 ♖e6+ 5.♔f2 ♖f6+ 6.♔g3 ♖f7

3.d5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♖e4+ 5.♔d2 ♖e7



6.d6??

The winning idea was 6.♔c3! ♔b5 (6...a5 7.d6 ♖g7 8.♔c4+-; 6...♞d7 7.♔d4+-) 7.♔d4+-

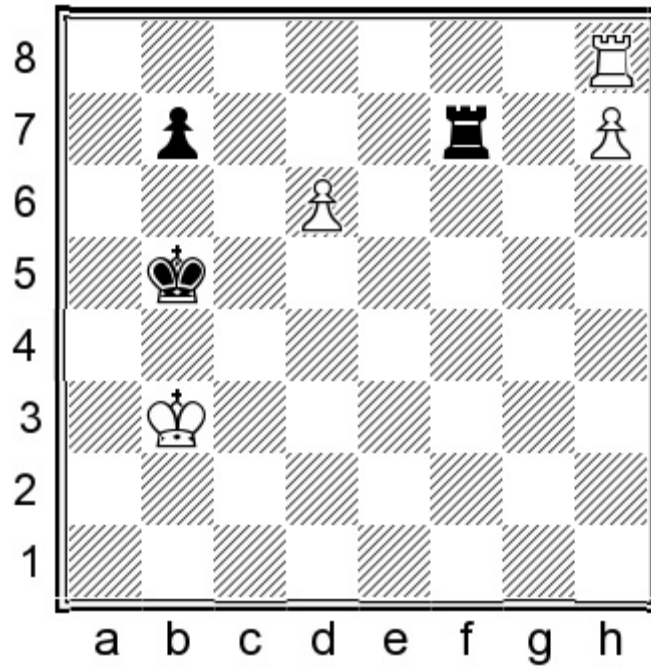
6...♞g7??

Here a draw could be achieved after 6...♞d7 7.♔c3 (7.♔e3 a5 8.♔e4 a4 9.♔e5 a3 10.♔e6 a2 11.♞a8 ♞xh7 12.d7 ♞xd7 13.♔xd7 ♔c5 14.♔e6 b5 15.♔e5 b4 16.♞xa2 b3 17.♞a8 ♔c4 18.♞c8+ ♔d3=) 7...♔b5!= intending ...a5-a4, ...♞f7-d7

7.♔c3+-

Just as good was 7.♔d3.

7...a5 8.♔c4 a4 9.♔b4 a3 10.♔xa3 ♔b5 11.♔b3 ♞f7



12.♗c2!! ♞d7□ 13.♗c3! b6 14.♗b3 ♞g7 15.♗c2 ♞f7

15...♞d7 16.♗c3

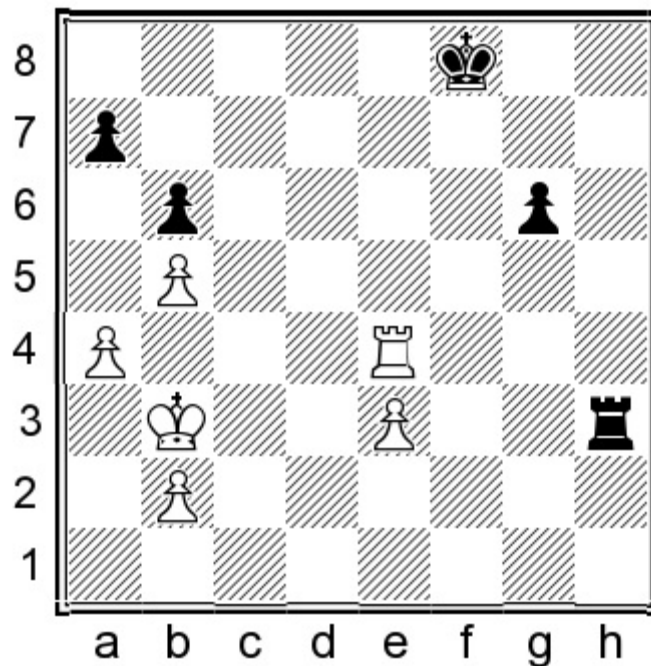
16.♗d3 ♞d7 17.♗e4 1-0

13

V. Smyslov

E. Jimenez

Moscow, 1963



As we have just seen, it is possible to sacrifice pawns for activity. Here White immediately starts to activate his king.

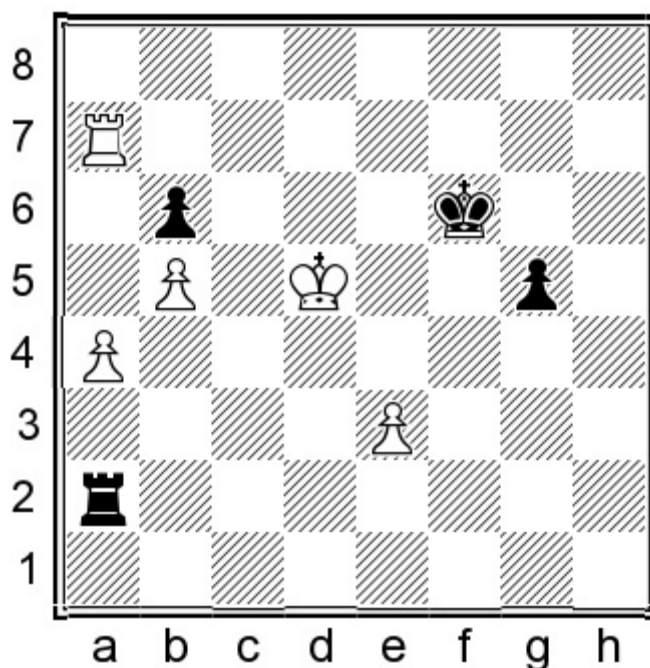
38.♔c4 ♖h2 39.♔d5!

Much slower would be 39.b3 ♔f7 40.♔d5 g5

39...♞xb2 40.♞c4!

It is necessary to activate the rook to attack the opponent's pawns. Smyslov once said that the most important element of rook endings is the activity of the rook.

40...♞a2 41.♞c8+ ♔f7 42.♞c7+ ♔f6 43.♞xa7 g5



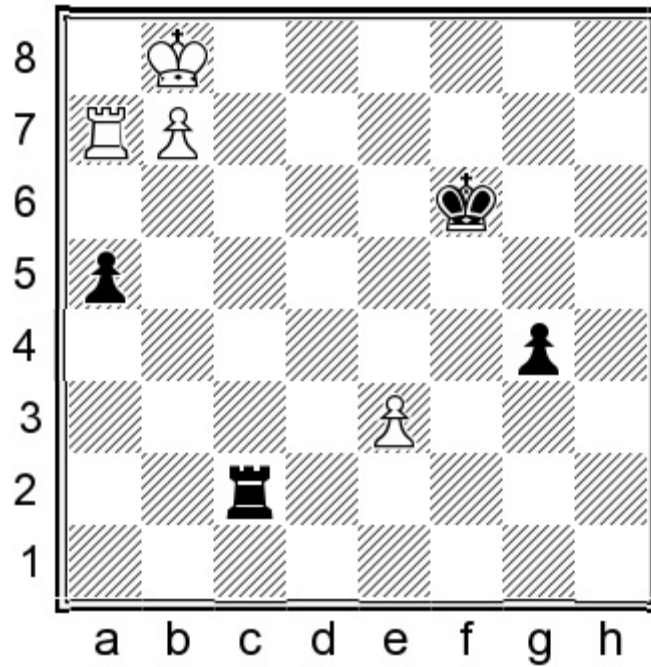
44.a5!

A passed pawn must be created, even at the cost of a second pawn.

44...bxa5 45.b6 ♞b2 46.b7 g4 47.♔c6 ♞c2+

The black pawn will not run too far: 47...g3 48.♞a8 g2 49.♞g8 a4 50.♞xg2

48.♔d7 ♞b2 49.♔c7 ♞c2+ 50.♔b8



50...g3

Similar to the game was 50...♖b2 51.♗xa5 g3 52.♔a8 g2 53.♗a1 ♔f5 54.b8=♚ ♗xb8+ 55.♔xb8 ♔e4 56.♗g1 ♔f3 57.e4

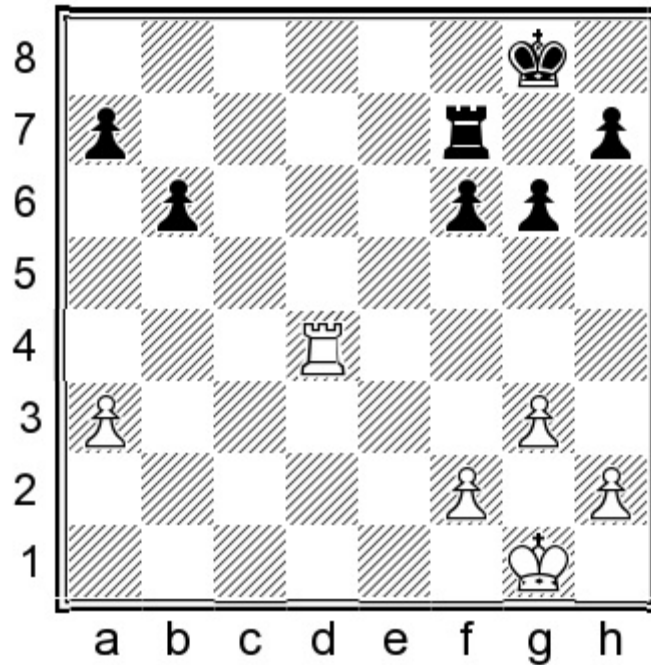
51.♔a8 ♗b2 52.♗xa5 g2 53.♗a1 ♔f5 54.b8=♚ 1-0

14

G. Levenfish

V. Chekhover

Leningrad, 1934



White is a pawn down and his best chance is to keep attacking his opponent's pawns with the rook.

31. ♖d8+ ♔g7 32. ♕f1 ♜e7 33. ♞a8!

The position of this rook keeps the black rook stuck to defence.

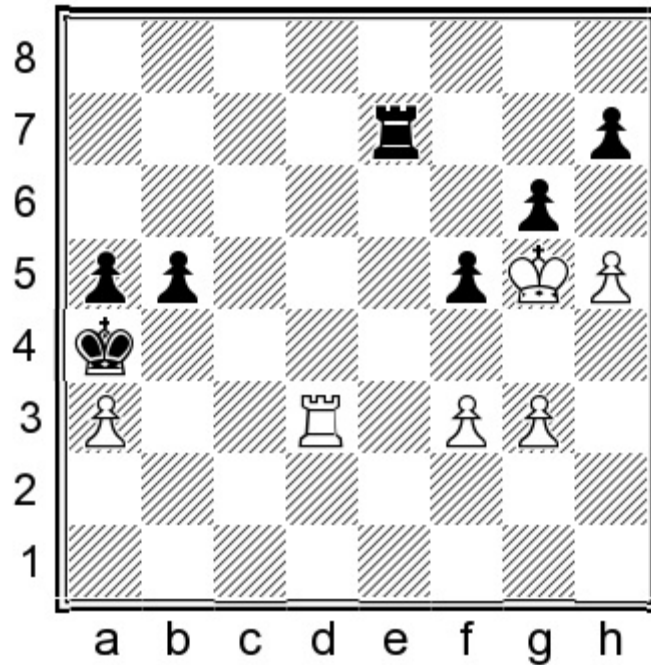
33...f5

Simpler was the immediate 33...♔f7. Anyhow, Black's plan is to bring his king across to the a3-pawn and then to try to create passed pawn on that flank.

34.f3 ♕f6 35.♕f2 ♖e5 36.♕e3 ♕d5+ 37.♕f4

Activity is preferable to the objectively slightly stronger 37.♕d3 ♕c5 38.h4 ♕b5 39.h5 gxh5 40.♞f8 ♕a4 41.♞xf5 ♕xa3 42.f4

37...♕c4 38.♞d8 ♕b3 39.♞d3+ ♕a4 40.h4 a5 41.h5 b5 42.♕g5



42...gxh5

A very logical alternative was 42...♖e6 43.♔h6 (43.h6 ♖e7 44.♖d8 ♔xa3 45.♖g8 b4 46.♖g7 ♖e8 47.♖xh7 b3 48.♖b7 b2 49.h7 a4 (49...♔a2? 50.♖a7) 50.♔xg6 ♔a2 51.♔f7 ♖c8 52.g4 fxg4 53.fxg4 b1=♚ 54.♖xb1 ♔xb1 55.g5 a3 56.g6 a2 57.g7 a1=♚ and Black will mate first.) 43...gxh5+ 44.♔xh5 ♖g6 45.♔h4 b4 46.axb4 axb4 47.♖d7 h6 48.♖a7+ ♔b5 and the b-pawn is ready to run.

43.♔xf5 ♖g7?

Losing a tempo. The pawn had to be pushed immediately with 43...b4.

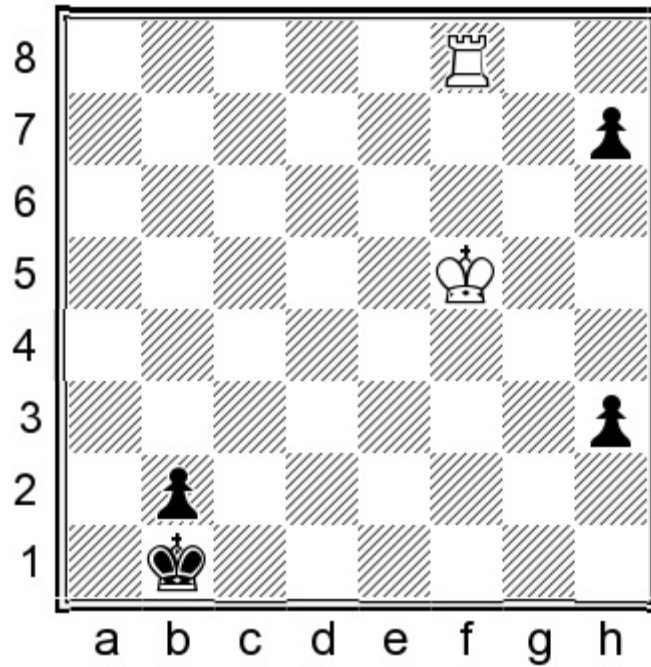
44.f4 b4 45.axb4 axb4 46.♔f6 ♖c7 47.♖d8 b3?

It was necessary to prepare the pawn push with 47...♖c5! 48.f5 b3 49.♖b8 ♖b5.

48.♖a8+ ♔b4 49.♖b8+ ♔c3 50.f5 b2 51.♔e6 ♖g7

Now there is no longer a win: 51...♔c2 52.f6 b1=♚ 53.♖xb1 ♔xb1 54.f7 ♖c8 55.♔e7 ♔c2 56.f8=♚ ♖xf8 57.♔xf8 ♔d3 58.♔g7 ♔e4 59.♔xh7 ♔f3 60.♔g6=

52.♖c8+ ♔d2 53.♖b8 ♔c2 54.♖c8+ ♔b1 55.f6 ♖xg3 56.f7 ♖f3 57.f8=♚ ♖xf8 58.♖xf8 h4 59.♔f5 h3



60.♔g4!

Just in time!

60...♔c2

60...h2 61.♖f1+ ♔c2 62.♔g3

61.♖f2+ ♔c3 62.♖xb2 ♔xb2 63.♔xh3 1/2

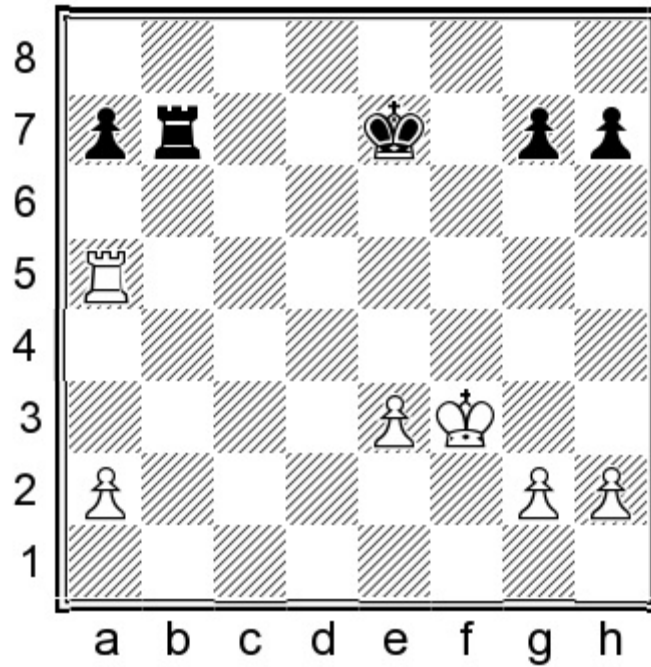
15

A. Rubinstein

E. Lasker

St Petersburg, 1909

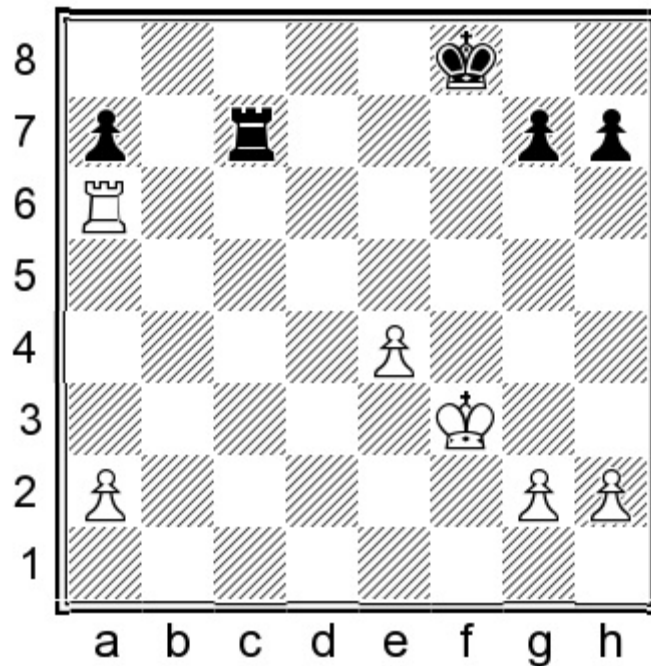
This was an extremely important game in which the rook endgame technique of Akiba Rubinstein made a fantastic impression on the public. And his idea with the powerful rook on a6 was demonstrated for the first time.



28.♖a6!

From this position the rook protects the pawn on a2, attacks the a7-pawn, and also cuts Black's king off. In such situations we call it a multifunctional rook.

28...♔f8 29.e4 ♜c7



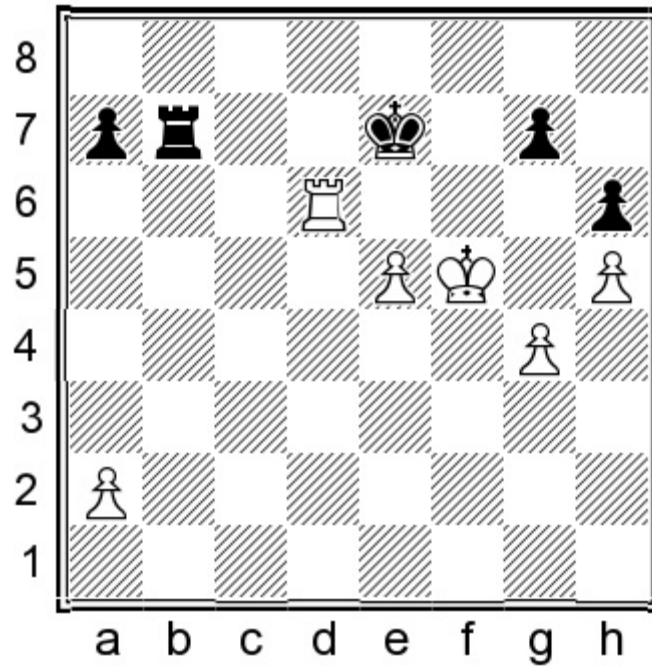
30.h4!

Now it is time to create a second weakness, on the other side.

30...♔f7 31.g4 ♕f8

Of no help was 31...g6 32.h5 gxh5 33.gxh5 ♖e7 34.♔f4

32.♔f4 ♕e7 33.h5 h6 34.♔f5 ♕f7 35.e5 ♖b7 36.♖d6 ♕e7



37.♖a6

Faster was 37.♔g6

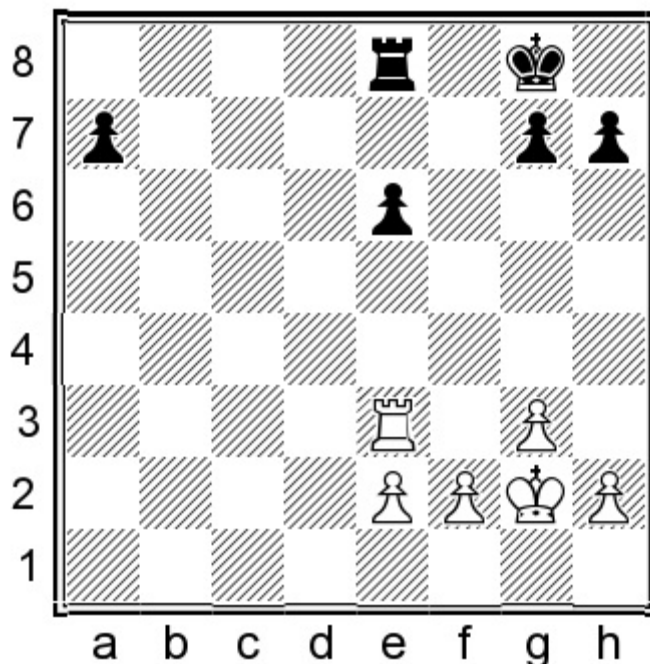
37...♔f7 38.♖d6 ♕f8 39.♖c6 ♕f7 40.a3 ♖e7 41.e6+ ♔g8 42.♖c8+ ♕h7 43.♖d8 ♖b7 44.♖d7 1-0

16

A. Karpov

V. Hort

Waddinxveen, 1979



Here we have an equal number of pawns, but Black has three so-called ‘pawns islands’ and White — just one! So, in such cases it is very important that the rook has the ability to attack pawns and limit the activity of the opponent’s king.

28.♖a3 ♜e7 29.♖a5!

Possible was a manoeuvre similar to the previous game 29.♖a6

29...♔f7 30.h4

Now it is necessary to start activity on the king’s flank, where White’s pawns are in the majority.

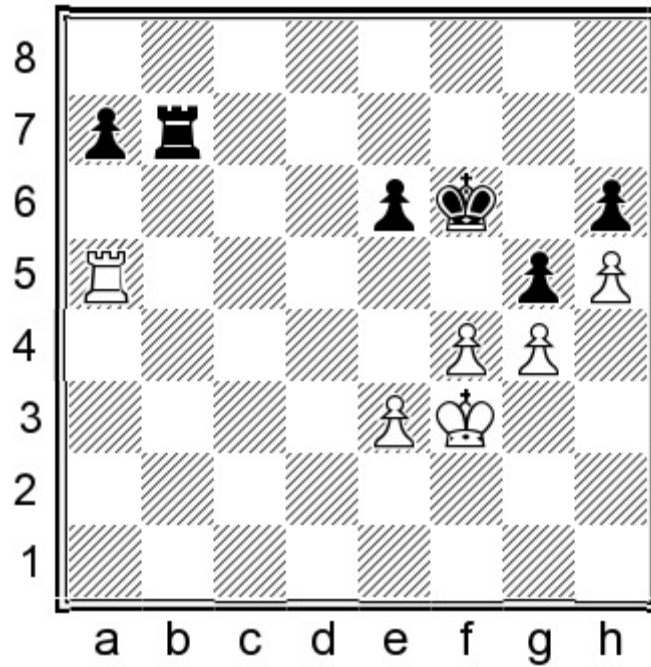
30...h6 31.g4 ♔f6 32.f4 ♜b7 33.♔f3 ♜c7 34.♖a6

Slightly better was to fix the flank with 34.h5

34...g6

After 34...♜b7 35.h5! (Similar was 35.e3 ♜c7 36.h5! ♜b7 37.♖a5) 35...♔f7 36.g5 ♜c7 (36...hxg5 37.fxg5 ♜c7 38.♔f4 ♜b7 39.e4 ♜c7 40.g6+ ♔e7 41.♖a5 ♔f6 42.e5+ ♔e7 43.♔g5 threat is h5-h6.) 37.e4 ♜b7 38.♔g4 ♜c7 39.gxh6 gxh6 40.f5+-

35.♖a5 ♜d7 36.e3 ♜b7 37.h5 g5



The number of Black's weaknesses would increase after 37...gxf4 38.♖xh5 38.♖xh5+-.

38.♖a6! gxf4

38...♔f7 39.f5+-

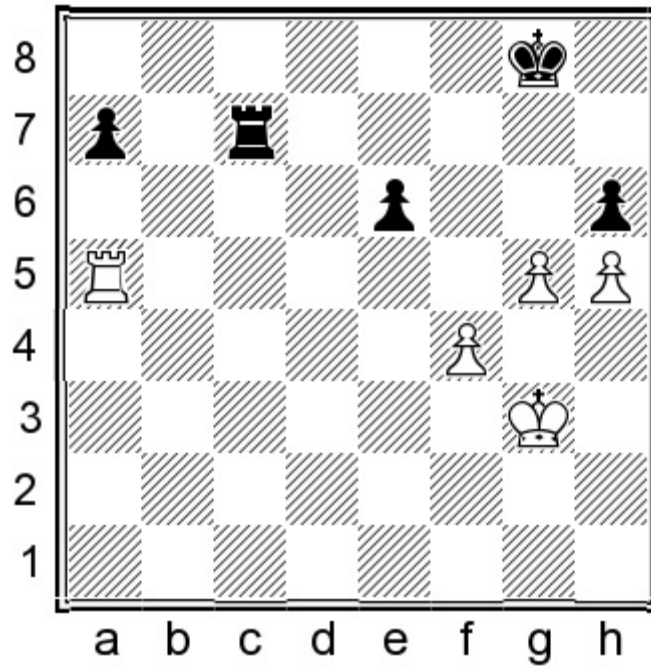
39.exf4 ♖b3+ 40.♔g2 ♖b7 41.♔g3

Just not 41.f5? ♖e7=.

41...♔f7 42.♖a4 ♔g7 43.g5 ♖c7

43...e5 44.fxe5 hxg5 45.♔g4+-

44.♖a5 ♔g8



45.♖b5

In my opinion simpler was 45.♖a6 ♔f7 46.♔g4 hxg5 47.fxg5 ♖c4+ 48.♔f3 ♖c3+ 49.♔e4 ♖c4+ 50.♔d3 ♖c7 51.♔d4

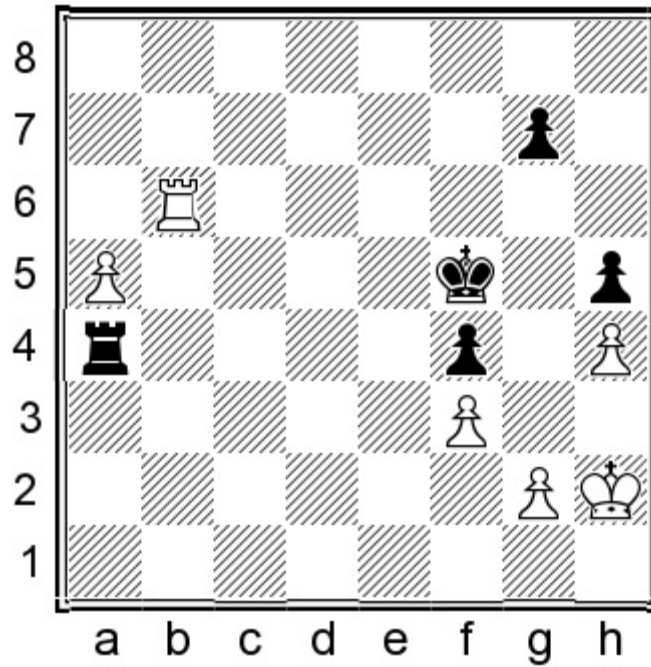
45...♔f7 46.♔g4 a6 47.♖b8 ♖c1 48.g6+ ♔g7 49.♖b7+ ♔f8 50.♖b6 ♖g1+ 51.♔f3 ♖f1+ 52.♔e4 ♖e1+ 53.♔d4 ♔e7 54.♖xa6 ♔f6 55.♖a7 e5+ 56.fxe5+ ♖xe5 57.♖a6+ 1-0

17

B. Gelfand

A. Shirov

Moscow, 2010



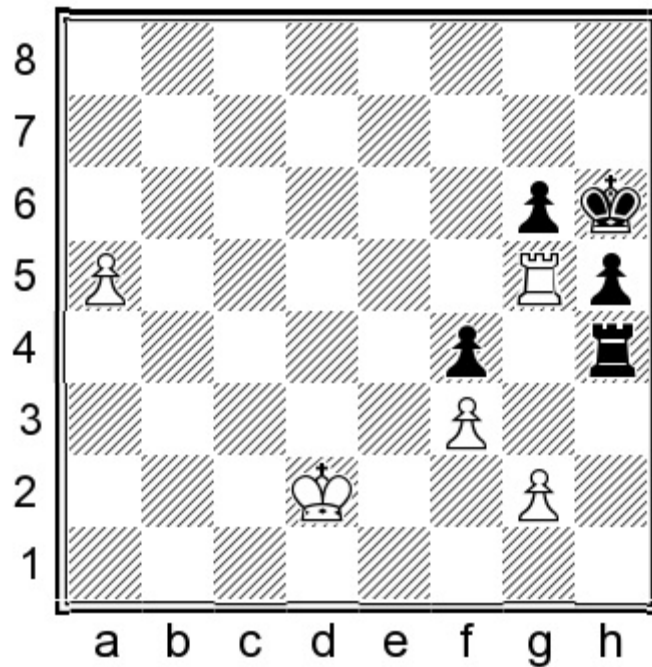
49. ♖b5+ ♔g6 50. ♗g5+!

Now the rook protects both of White's important pawns and makes it possible for his king to go to the queenside to help the passed pawn. It will be an easy task — thanks to the completely multifunctional rook!

50... ♕h6 51. ♕g1

Now White's king heads towards the passed pawn. Black tries his last chance — attacking the h4-pawn — but it is refuted with careful play.

51... ♜a1+ 52. ♔f2 g6 53. ♔e2 ♜h1 54. ♔d2 ♜xh4



55.♖e5!

White is forced to change his rook's position to a defensive one, but his king will be very active now, and Gelfand calculated the line very precisely.

55...♖h2

If 55...♖h1 56.♖e1 ♖h2 57.♖g1 h4 58.♔e2 h3 59.a6 and White wins.

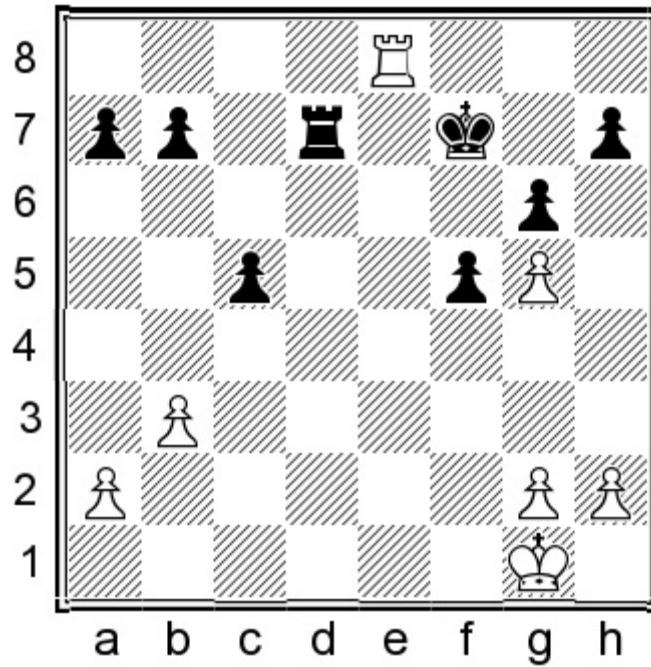
56.♖e2 h4 57.a6 h3 58.a7 hxg2 59.a8=♚ g1=♚ 60.♚h8+ ♔g5 61.♚xh2 1-0

18

S. Volkov

A. Mikhalchishin

Batumi, 1999



Here I had very optimistic expectations...

44.♖c8 b6 45.♖c6!

Completely unexpected for me! A truly multifunctional rook — which stops Black's pawns and prepares the march of his own pawn to h5, attacking g6.

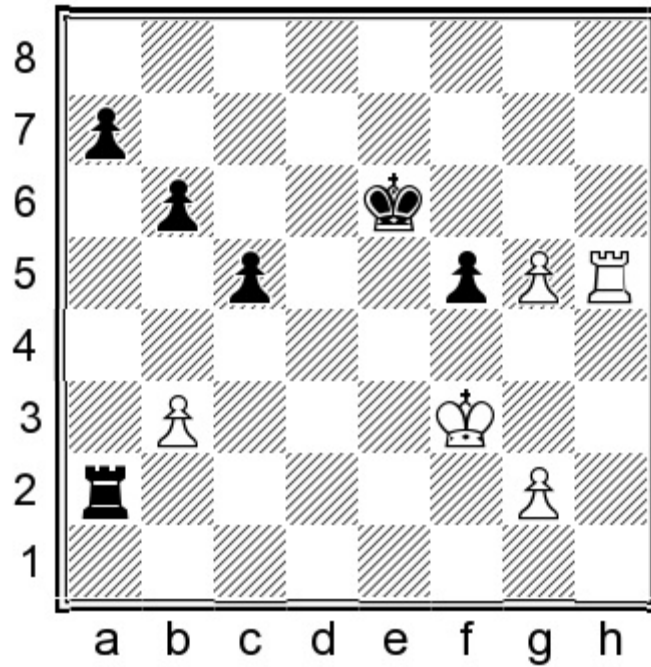
45...♔e7 46.h4! ♔d8 47.♔f1 ♖d1+?

Better was 47...♖d2

48.♔e2 ♖a1 49.h5 ♖xa2+ 50.♔f3 gxh5 51.♖h6 ♔e7

No better was 51...♔e8 52.♖xh7 ♖b2 53.♔f4! intending ♔f5-f6=

52.♖xh7+ ♔e6 53.♖xh5



53. ♖b7 ♖b2 54. g6 ♖xb3+ 55. ♔f4 ♖b4+ 56. ♔g5 ♖g4+-+

53...♔f7

Other moves are also insufficient for a win: 53...♔e5 54. ♖h7 ♖b2 55. ♖e7+=; 53...♖b2 54. ♔f4! ♖xg2 55. ♖h6+ ♔d5 56. ♔xf5=

54. ♖h6! ♔g7 55. ♖c6 ♖d2 56. ♔f4! ♖f2+ 57. ♔g3 ♖b2 58. ♔f4 ♖xg2 59. ♔xf5 ♖f2+ 60. ♔g4 ♖g2+ 61. ♔h5 1/2

CHAPTER 8

PLACEMENT OF THE ROOKS

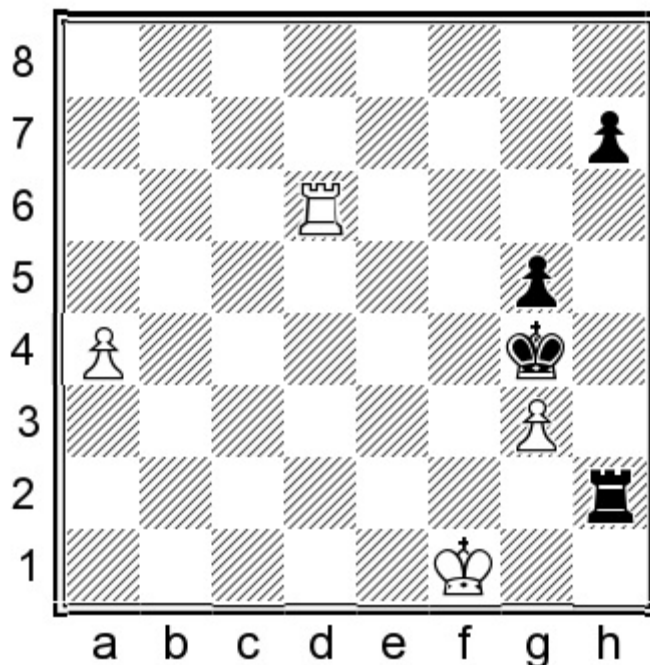
We talked about activation of the rook, but in many cases the rook has to be placed on the proper files or ranks, conducting necessary jobs such as cutting off the opponent's king. As we mentioned before, there is the very important method of 'frontal attack', which works only when the opposing passed pawn has not crossed the middle of the board. The legendary Tarrasch made a rule, that with passed pawns the rook must be placed behind it, no matter if it is our own pawn or the opponent's. Of course, a few methods mentioned previously run contrary to this rule, but only according to the demands of position. Here we will see some technical problems faced by Grandmasters as to where to place the rook.

1

M. Karff

N. Alexandria

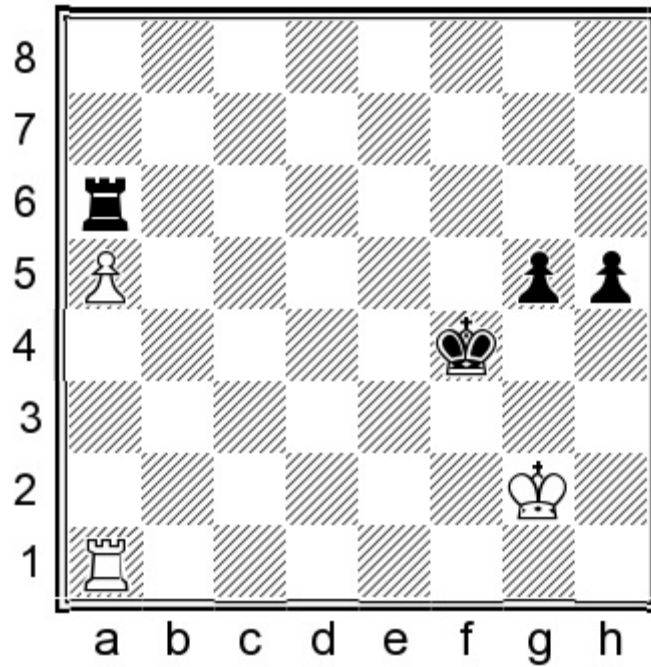
Ohrid, 1971



1.♖d4+! ♔xg3 2.♖d3+ ♔g4 3.♖a3!

The rook has tremendous power from behind the pawn: Black's material advantage cannot be realised.

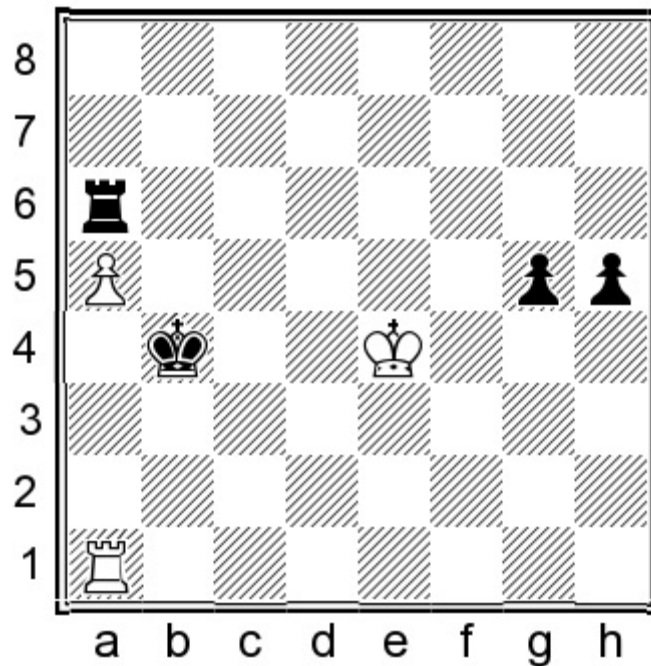
3...♖h6 4.a5 ♖a6 5.♔g2 ♔f4 6.♖a1 h5



7.♖h1??

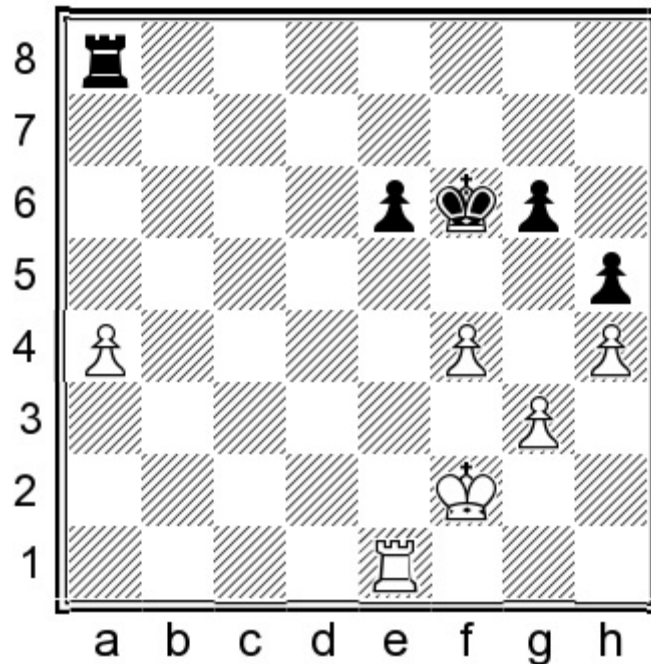
White tries to transpose into a basic drawn endgame with one pawn, but his knowledge here is faulty. An easy draw can be held after either:

7.♖a4+ ♔e5 8.♖a1 ♔d6 9.♕f3 ♔c5 10.♕e4 ♖b4



11.♖b1+ (or 11.♖h1 h4 12.♖b1+ ♔a3 13.♖b5 g4 14.♖g5 g3 15.♕f3) 11...♔xa5 12.♕f5 g4 13.♕g5 or 7.♖f1+ ♔e4 8.♖h1 h4 9.♖a1 g4 10.♖a4+ ♔f5 11.♕h2 h3 12.♕g3 ♖h6 13.♖a2! =

7...♖xa5 8.♖xh5 ♔g4!-+ 9.♖h7 ♖a2+ 10.♕f1 ♔g3 11.♖g7 g4 12.♖g8 ♖a1+ 13.♕e2 ♖g1 0-1



One of the first rules that beginners learn is the maxim of the great chess teacher Siegbert Tarrasch: Always put your rook behind the pawn, whether your own or your opponent's. But in chess we must usually act in very concrete situations and sometimes we must be ready to place our rooks differently.

35.♖a1??

What can be more logical than this natural position for the rook? But here the correct position for the rook was elsewhere: 35.♖e4! ♖a5 (White's task is even easier after 35...♔f5 36.♖e5+ ♔g4 37.♖g5+ ♔h3 38.a5) 36.♔e3 ♖d5 37.♖e5 ♖d7 38.♔e4 ♖d1 39.♖b5 ♖a1 40.a5 ♖a3 41.♔d4! ♖xg3 42.♔c5 ♔f5 43.a6 ♔xf4 44.♖a5 ♖c3+ 45.♔d6 ♖c8 46.♔xe6 ♔g3 47.♖a4

35.♖a1?? ♖a5 36.♔e3 e5!

Counterplay on the king's flank had to be started immediately.

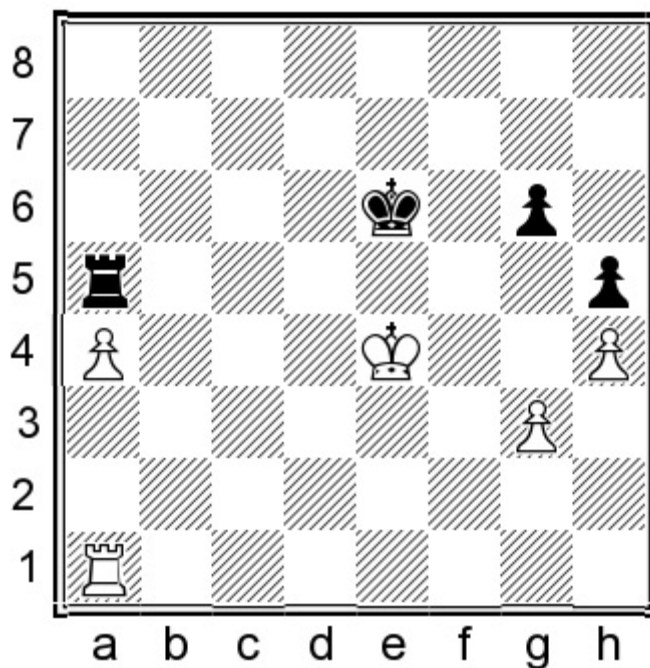
37.♔e4

Another logical try did not promise too much either:

37.fxe5+ ♔xe5 38.♔d3 ♔d5 39.♔c3 ♔c6 40.♔b4 ♖e5 41.♖c1+ (41.a5 ♔b7 42.a6+ ♔a7 43.♖a3 g5=) 41...♔b6 42.♖c4 g5

37...exf4 38.♔xf4 ♔e6 39.♔e4

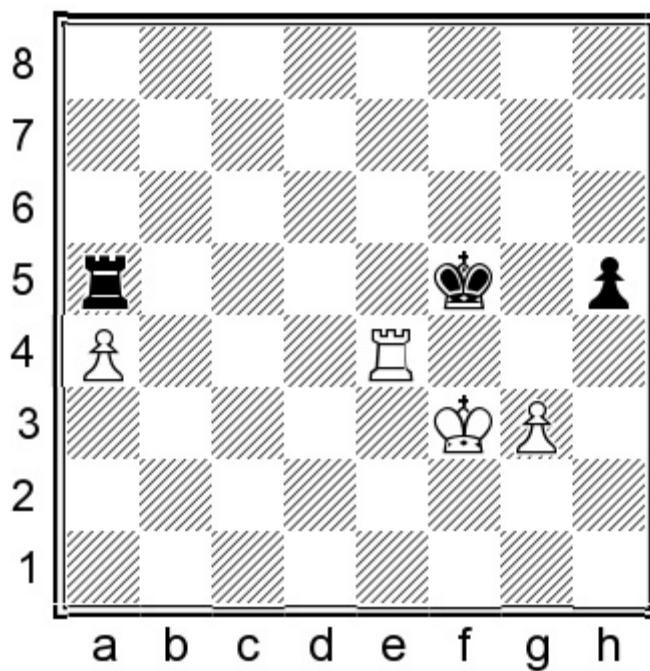
A better attempt was 39.♞e1+ ♔f6 40.♞e4 g5+ 41.♕e3



39...g5!

A rule of defence: reduce the number of pawns and create some weaknesses.

40.hxg5 ♞xg5 41.♕f3 ♞a5 42.♞e1+ ♕f5 43.♞e4



43...♞c5!

Threatening to activate the rook.

44.♞e3 ♞a5 45.♞a3 ♔e5 46.♔e3 ♔e6 47.♔e2 ♔d6

47...h4 48.gxh4 ♞h5=

48.♔f2 ♔e6 49.♞e3+ ♔d5 50.♞a3 ♔e6 51.♔e3 h4 52.g4 ♔f6 53.♔f4 ♔g6 54.♔f3 ♔g5 55.♞a2 h3

Yusupov proposed an easier line: 55...♞a8 56.a5 ♞f8+=

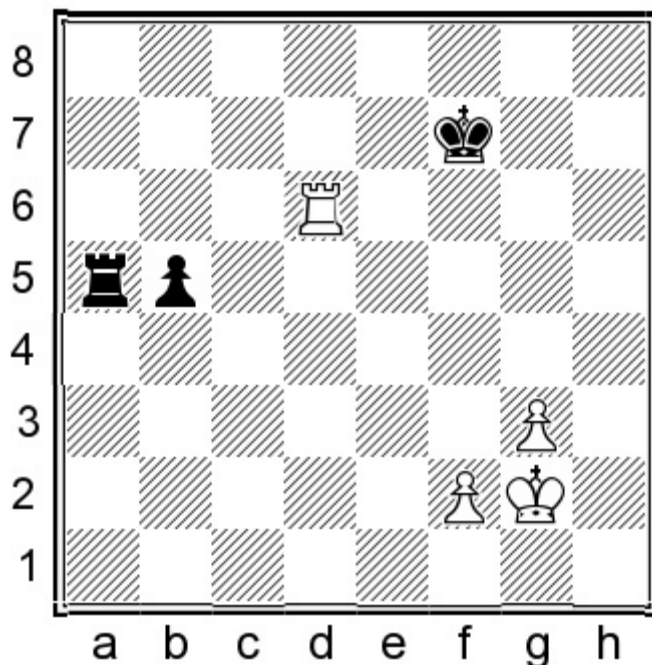
1/2

3

A. Petrosian

N. Monin

St Petersburg, 1993



It seems logical here to place the rook behind the pawn, but in this instance the opponent's king will kick it out and the b-pawn will run forward.

81.♞b6?

Much better was to prepare the position of the rook in the centre to control the pawn:

81.f4 ♔e7 82.♞d5 ♔e6 83.♞e5+ ♔d6 84.g4 ♞a2+ 85.♔f3 ♞a3+ 86.♔e4 b4 87.g5 ♔c6 88.♞e8 ♔c7 89.g6 b3 90.♞b8! A typical small tactic. 90...♔xb8 91.g7

81.♞b6? ♔e7! 82.g4?

Chances were still promised by the other pawn move:

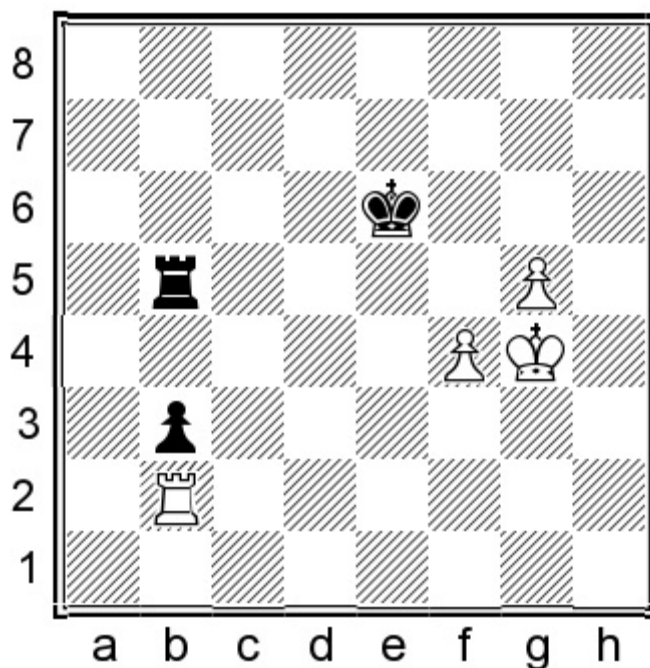
82.f4 ♔d7 83.f5 ♔c7 84.♞e6 b4 85.f6 ♔d7 86.♞e7+ ♔d6 87.g4 ♞g5 (87...b3 88.♞e1) 88.♞e4 ♞g6

89.♖f4 ♜g8 90.f7 ♜f8 91.g5 b3 92.g6 b2 93.♖b4

82...♔d7 83.♔g3

No better was 83.♖f6 ♔c7 84.♖f5 ♔c6 85.g5 ♖a8

83...♔c7 84.♞e6 b4 85.♞e2 b3 86.♞b2 ♞b5 87.f4 ♔d6 88.g5 ♔e6 89.♔g4



89...♞b4!

The pawn advances are stopped and there are no more chances to win.

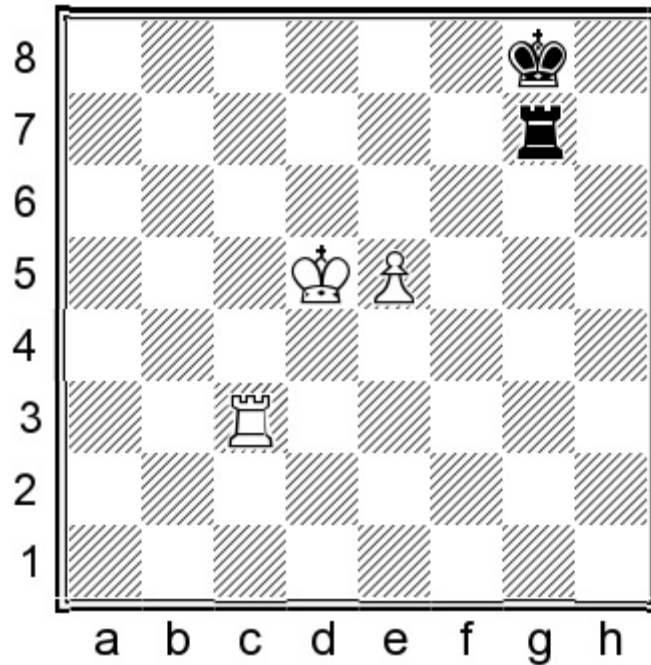
90.♞e2+ ♔f7 91.♞b2 ♔g6 1/2

4

V. Anand

S. Karjakin

Stavanger, 2017



55...♖a7!

Black must move his rook to the 'long side' and as far away from the pawn as possible.

56.♔e6 ♖a6+??

Why hurry with the checks? Two different king moves were sufficient for the draw;

56...♔g7= and 56...♔f8=

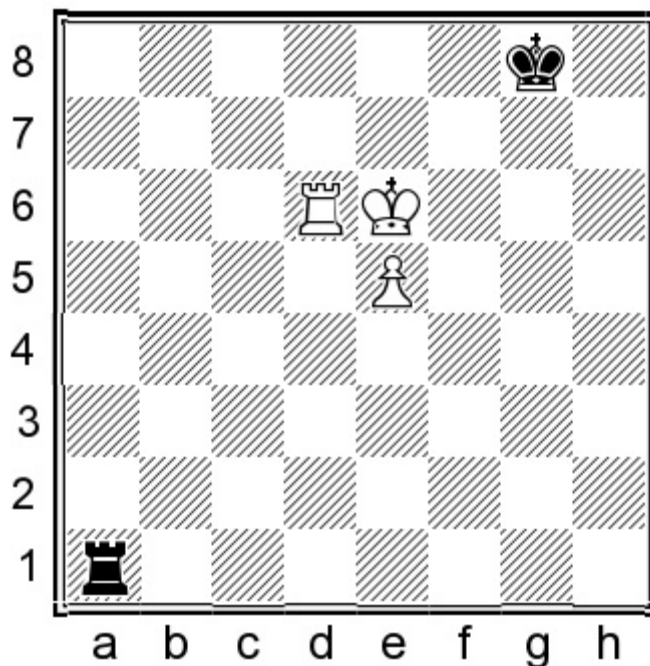
57.♔e7 ♖a7+ 58.♔f6 ♖f7+ 59.♔e6 ♖a7 60.♖d3!

Preparing the defence of his king from checks.

60...♖a6+ 61.♖d6

Simpler and more direct was 61.♔e7 ♖a7+ 62.♔f6 ♖f7+ 63.♔e6 ♖f1 64.♖a3!+- and Black's rook cannot come to the long position.

61...♖a1



62.♔e7?

Winning, as mentioned before, was 62.♔f6! ♖f1+ 63.♔e7 ♖f7+ 64.♔e6 ♖f1 65.♖a6+-

62...♔g7

Now Black has reached a basic drawn position.

63.e6 ♖a7+??

But the only way to keep the balance was to take control of the back rank: 63...♖a8!

64.♖d7??

64.♔e8 ♖a8+ 65.♖d8 ♖a1 66.e7+-

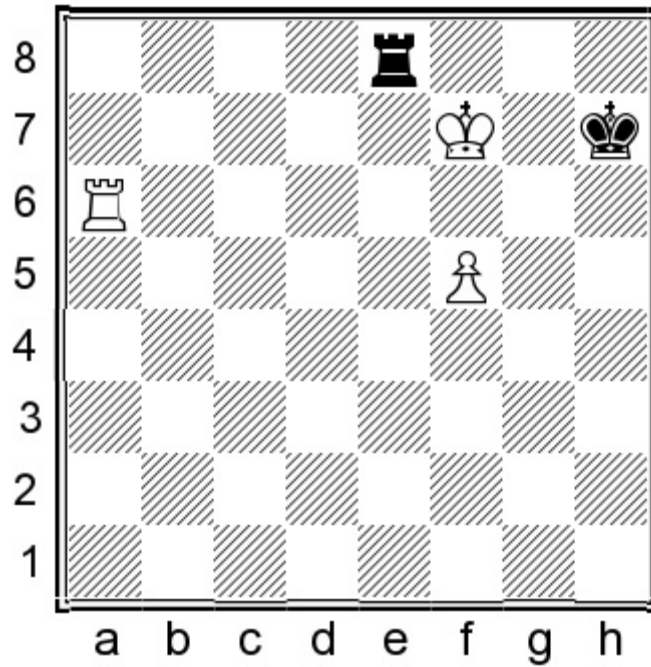
64...♖a8 65.♖d8 ♖a7+ 66.♖d7 ♖a8 67.♖b7 ♔g6 68.♔d6 ♔f6 69.e7 ♔f7 70.♖c7 1/2

5

A. Delchev

Ter-S. Sahakyan

Leon, 2012



80...♖b8 81.♗a7 ♔h6 82.♞e7 ♞a8 83.♞e6+ ♔h7 84.♞e8 ♞a6 85.♞e1 ♞a7+ 86.♕f8 ♞a8+ 87.♞e8

A dangerous position in which mistakes are committed constantly!

87...♞a1??

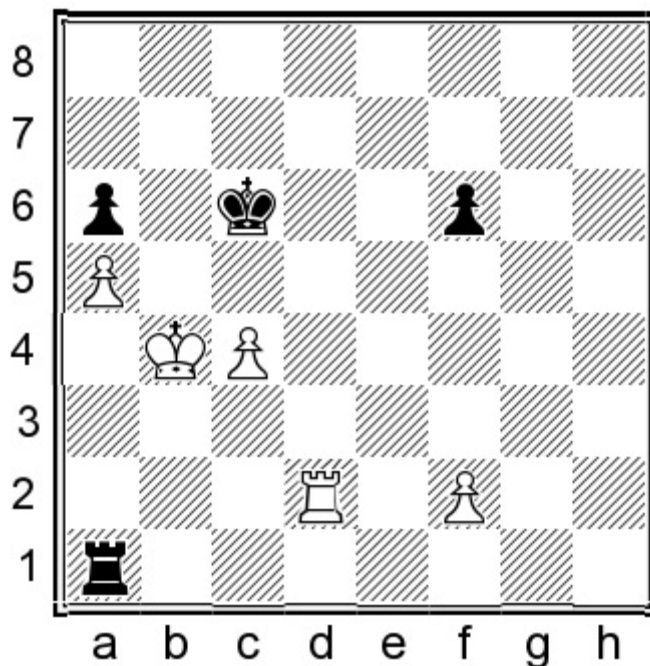
87...♞a6! It was simply necessary to stop the pawn.

88.f6+- ♞b1

Of no help was 88...♞f1 89.f7 ♔g6 90.♞e6+ ♔h7 91.♕e8 ♔g7 92.♞e7!

89.f7 ♞b7 90.♞e1 ♞b8+ 91.♕e7 ♞b7+ 92.♕f6 ♞b6+ 93.♞e6 ♞b8 94.♞e8 1-0

6
V. Smyslov
G. Forintos
Monte Carlo, 1968



68.♖d3!

The rook will be best-placed attacking the f6-pawn, as well as protecting against checks on the third rank.

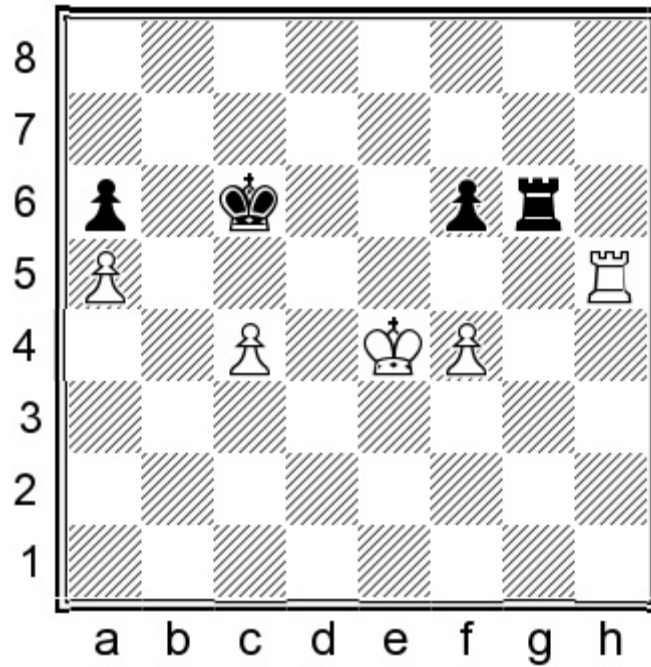
68...♗b1+ 69.♖b3 ♗h1 70.♖f3 ♗h6 71.♖f5!

Here we see another multifunctional position.

71...♔d6 72.♖d5+ ♔c6 73.♖f5 ♔d6 74.f3!

Protecting the third rank against checks and now follows the next step of the plan-activation of the king.

74...♖g6 75.♔b3 ♗h6 76.♔c3 ♔c6 77.♔d4 ♖g6 78.f4 ♗h6 79.♔e4 ♖g6 80.♖h5!



80...♖g1

White was ready to attack the pawn: 80...♔d6 81.♔f5

81.♖h6 ♜e1+ 82.♔f5 ♜a1 83.♖xf6+ ♔b7 84.♖b6+ ♔a7 85.♖e6! ♜xa5+ 86.♔g6

The king will support the direct run of the pawn.

86...♞c5 87.f5!

Protection of the pawn is possible, but it would slow down the win. So, who's counting pawns! 87.♞e4

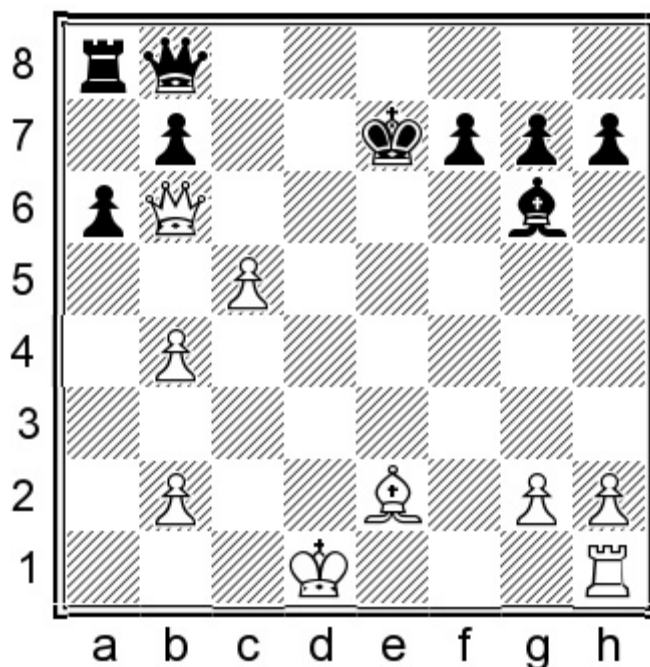
87...♞xc4 88.f6 ♞g4+ 89.♔f5 ♞g1 90.f7 1-0

CHAPTER 9

EXPLOITATION OF THE WEAKNESS

During the middlegame we carry out plans, the aim of which is to find or provoke a weakness and to attack it. The same situation is seen in complicated rook endings, just that some elements are a bit different. We have the tremendous role of the passed pawn, and the activity of the king, for example, but also extremely important is the presence of weaknesses and techniques of how to attack them. From the theory of pawn endgames, we know the expression pawn islands. This usually describes weaknesses; he who has more pawn islands, has more troubles.

1
J. Nunn
A. Mikhalchishin
Saint Jamme, 1973



Here I started some exchanging manoeuvres designed to transfer into a rook endgame. There, I saw that my opponent would have too many weaknesses.

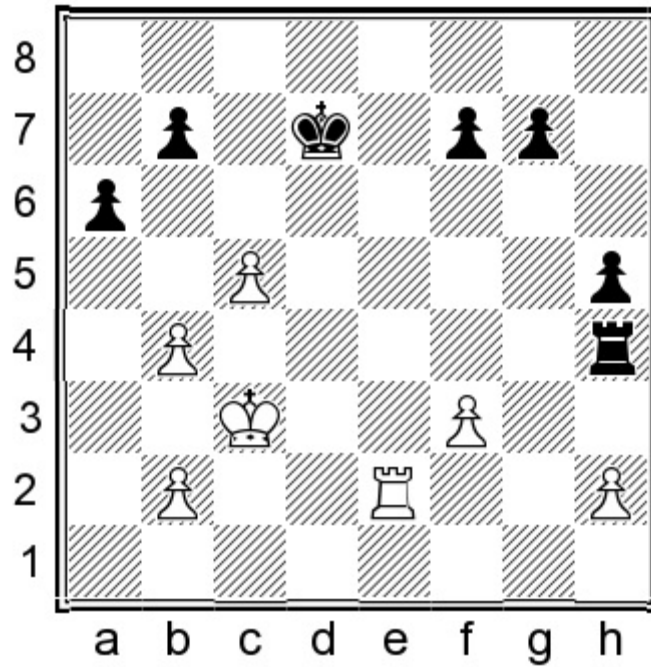
28...♙e4! 29.♙f3 ♙xf3+ 30.gxf3 ♚d8+ 31.♚xd8+ ♜xd8+ 32.♔c2 ♞d4 33.♔c3 ♞f4 34.♞e1+

Nobody can seriously consider the ultra-passive 34.♞f1.

34...♔d7 35.♞e3 h5

Possible was 35...♞h4 36.♞d3+ ♔c7 37.♞e3 ♔c6 38.♞e8 ♞h3

36.♔b3 ♞d4 37.♔c3 ♞h4 38.♞e2



38...♖h3

Trying to push the opponent's rook to a more passive position on f2.

39.♗f2 ♔c6 40.♔c4 ♖h4+ 41.♔c3 ♖f4!-+ 0-1

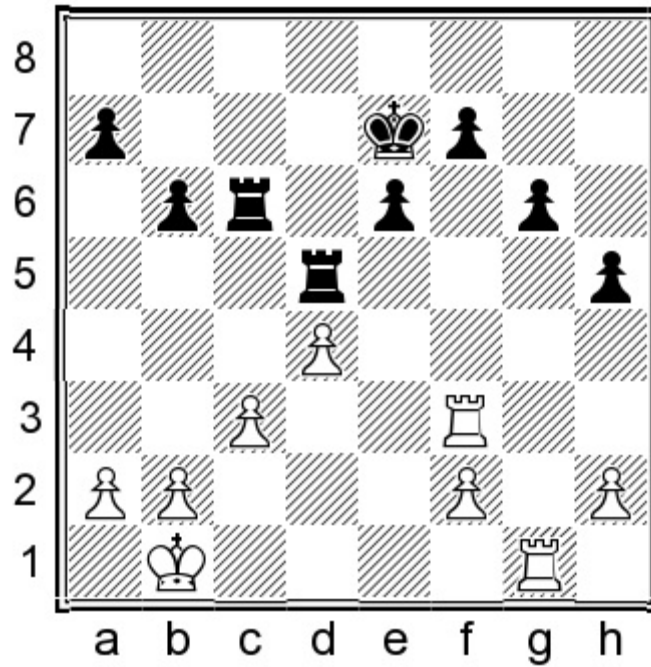
2

C. Schlechter

A. Rubinstein

San Sebastian, 1912

In this next game we can see how the classicist of rook endings, the mighty Akiba, prepares pawn weaknesses, how he manoeuvres with his rook, and how he improves his king and then creates a passed pawn.



25...e5! 26.dxe5 ♖xe5 27.♖e3

The threat was to come to the second rank, so White decided to exchange rooks.

27...♖xe3 28.fxe3 ♖e6 29.♖e1 ♖f6

This is stronger than the blockading move 29...♖e4

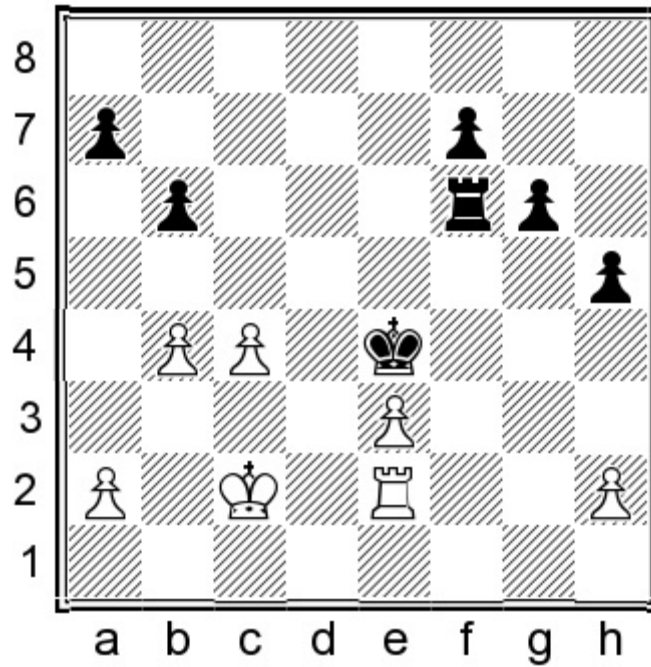
30.♖e2 ♔e6

It is very important to activate the king.

31.♔c2 ♔e5 32.c4

Black's plan could not be stopped by 32.♔d3 ♖d6+ 33.♔c4 ♔e4

32...♔e4 33.b4



33...g5

Both sides are preparing passed pawns, but Black is much faster.

34.♔c3 g4 35.c5 h4 36.♖g2 ♖g6

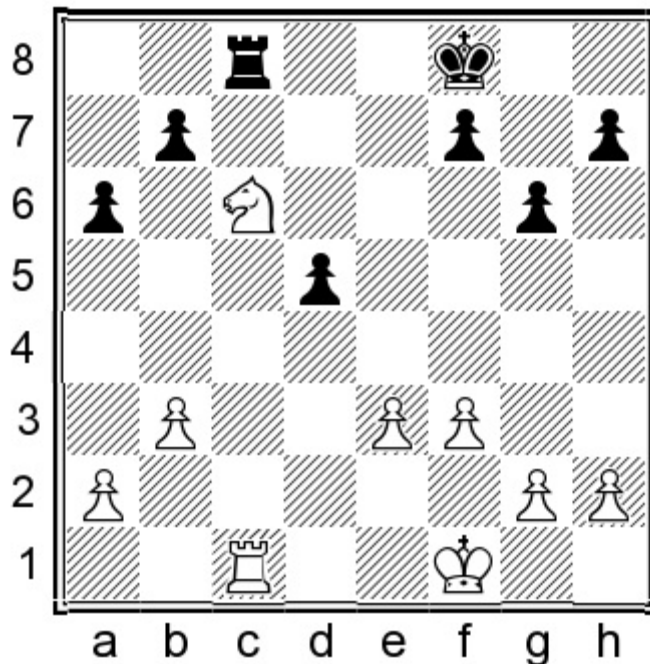
A bit more complicated was 36...♔f3 37.♖g1 g3 38.hxg3 hxg3 39.♖f1+ ♔e2 40.♖xf6 g2

37.♔c4 g3 38.hxg3 hxg3 39.♔b5 bxc5 40.bxc5 ♔f3 41.♖g1 a6+!

An unpleasant check after which White cannot advance his passed pawn.

0-1

3
S. Flohr
M. Vidmar
Nottingham, 1936



31. ♖c5?

White transfers into a rook endgame, but imprecisely. Correct was 31. ♔e2 ♜xc6 32. ♞xc6 bxc6 33. b4 ♔e7 34. ♔d3 ♔d6 35. ♔d4+-

31. ♖c5? bxc6?

It was necessary instead to sacrifice a pawn for activity here: 31... ♜xc6! 32. ♞xd5 (32. ♞xc6 bxc6 33. ♔e2 ♔e7 34. ♔d3 ♔d6 35. b4 c5 36. bxc5+ ♔xc5) 32... ♞c2 with typical compensation in the rook endgame

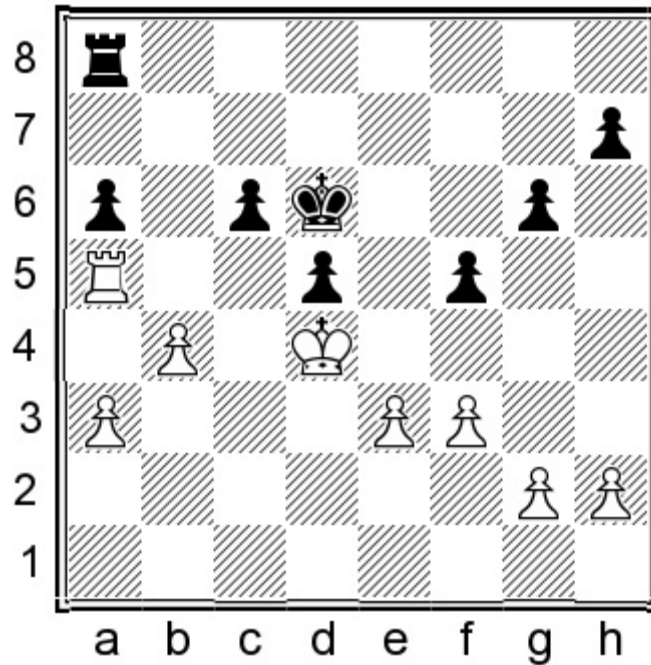
32. ♔e2 ♔e7 33. ♔d3 ♔d6

Now the pawns at c6 and d5 will be blockaded and the weaknesses will be exposed later.

34. ♞a5 ♞a8 35. ♔d4 f5 36. b4

It is time to increase the pressure.

36... ♞b8 37. a3 ♞a8



38.e4!

It is necessary to open the fifth rank, activating the rook. The main idea, as with the attack of any weakness, is to create a second weakness and to combine the attack on both of them. Attacking pieces are always much more mobile than defending ones.

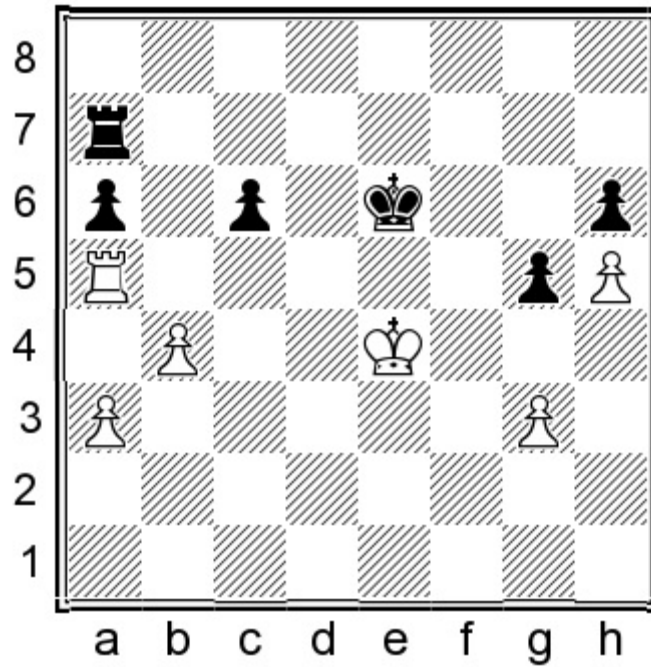
38...fxe4 39.fxe4 dxe4 40.♔xe4 ♖a7 41.♔f4 h6 42.h4 ♕e6 43.♔g4

It is necessary to be precise and careful, preparing the creation of the kingside weakness.

43...♖a8 44.h5 g5

Not much better was **44...♞g8 45.♞xa6 gxh5+ 46.♔xh5 ♞xg2 47.♞xc6+ ♔d7 48.♞xh6**

45.g3 ♖a7 46.♔f3 ♖a8 47.♔e4 ♖a7 48.♔d4 ♔d6 49.♔e4 ♕e6



50. ♖e5+!

This check forces Black to open a path for the white king.

50... ♔d6

Or else opening the other route, with the same end result: 50... ♔f6 51. ♖c5 ♖c7 52. ♖a5 ♖a7 53. ♔d4

51. ♖e8

Possible was 51. ♔f5 ♖f7+ 52. ♔g6 ♖f3 53. ♖a5 ♖xg3 54. ♔xh6

51... c5 52. ♖d8+ ♔c6 53. ♖c8+ ♔b6 54. ♖xc5 ♖h7 55. ♖e5

Now everything is very easy.

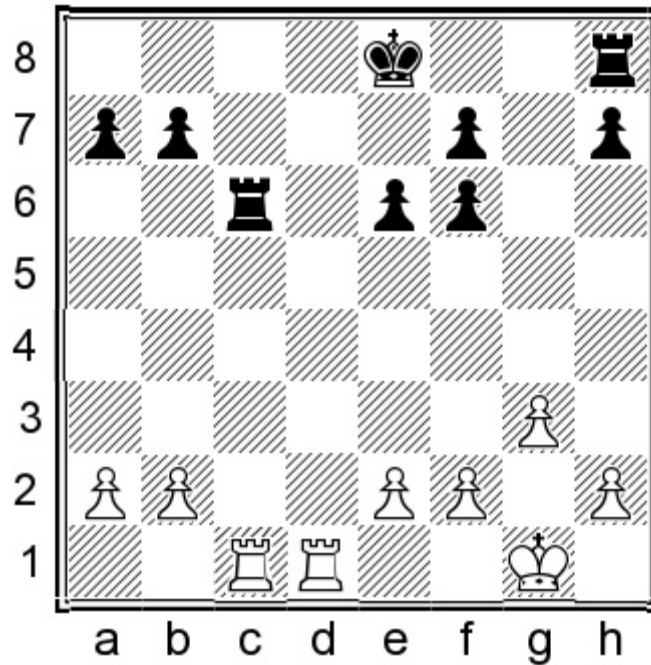
55... ♔c6 56. ♖e6+ ♔b5 57. ♔f5 ♖f7+ 58. ♖f6 1-0

4

A. Lein

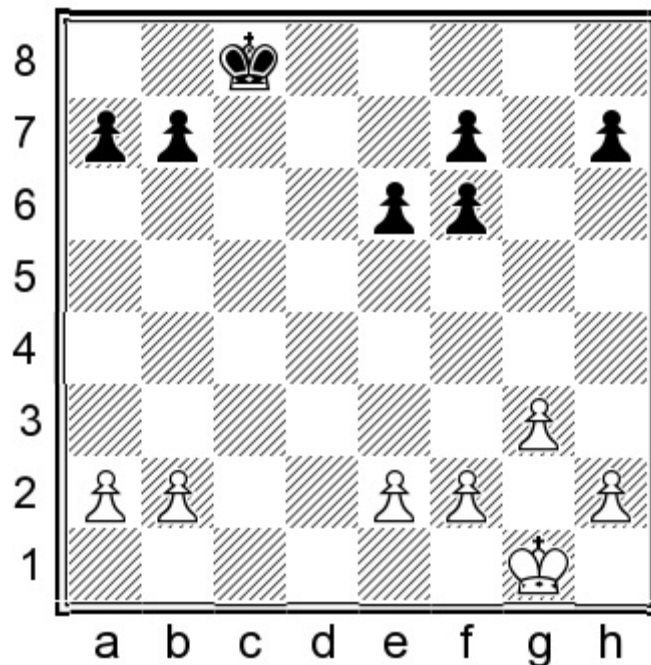
P. Littlewood

Hastings, 1980



20...♔e7

Here there might have appeared an incredible repetition of sorts! After the rook exchange 20...♖xc1 21.♗xc1 ♔d7 22.♖c4 ♖c8 23.♗xc8 ♔xc8



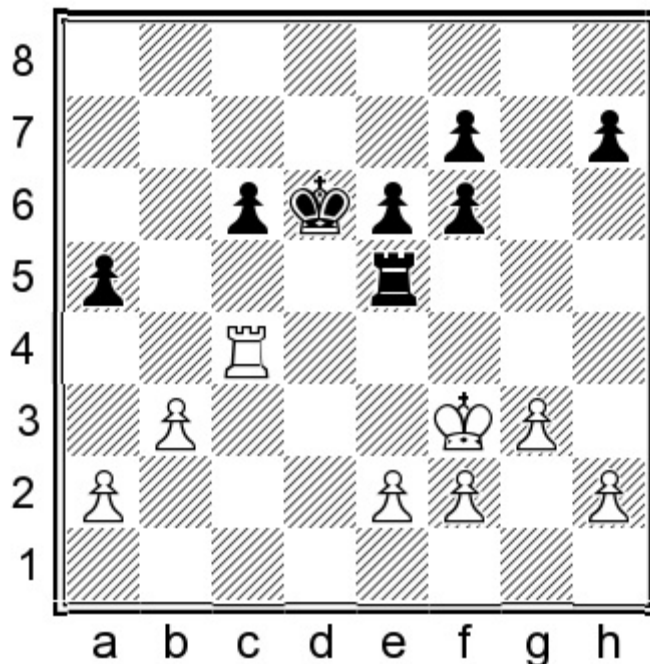
...the position in the pawn endgame would be exactly the same as the famous game Cohn-Rubinstein. There, the great Akiba moved his king to h6 and started pawn activity on the king's flank.

20...♔e7 21.♖xc6 bxc6

Black has a few weaknesses in his position, so White activates his rook via the fourth rank; from here it

will be easier to attack the pawns on both flanks.

22.♞d4! ♜b8 23.b3 ♜b5 24.♞a4 a5 25.♔g2 ♞c5 26.♕f3 ♞e5 27.♞c4 ♔d6



28.♞h4!

Forcing Black's second 'edge' pawn to come to the fourth rank, closing that possible route for Black's rook.

28...h5 29.g4!

Now White creates a passed pawn.

29...hxc4+ 30.♞xc4 ♔e7 31.h4 ♞d5 32.e3 f5

Or **32...♞f5+ 33.♔e2 ♔d6 34.♞d4+ ♔e7 35.♞c4 ♔d6 36.♞f4!**

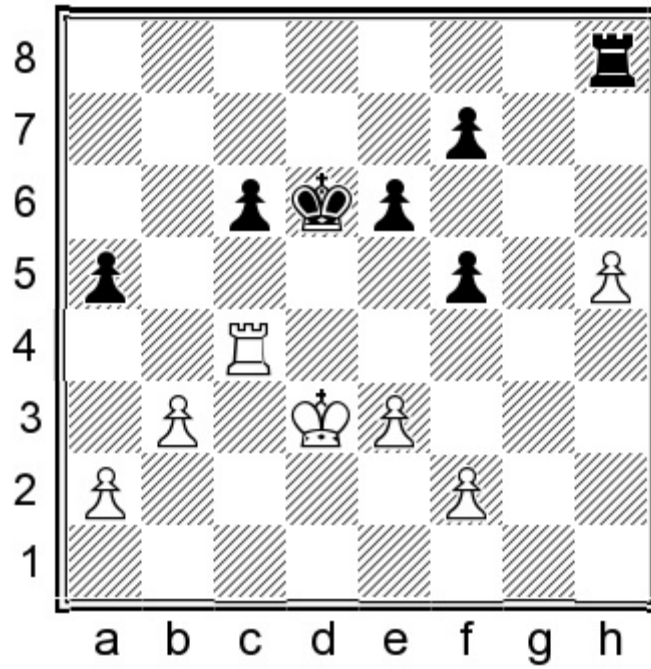
33.♞c4 ♞d2 34.♞a4 ♞d5 35.♔e2

It is necessary to deal with Black's rook activity on the d-file.

35...♞b5 36.♞c4 ♔d6 37.♔d3

The king enters the game and Black's rook must avoid being exchanged, as in this case the pawn h4 will decide the game on its own.

37...♞b8 38.h5 ♞h8



39.♖h4!

The rook behind the pawn is extremely useful.

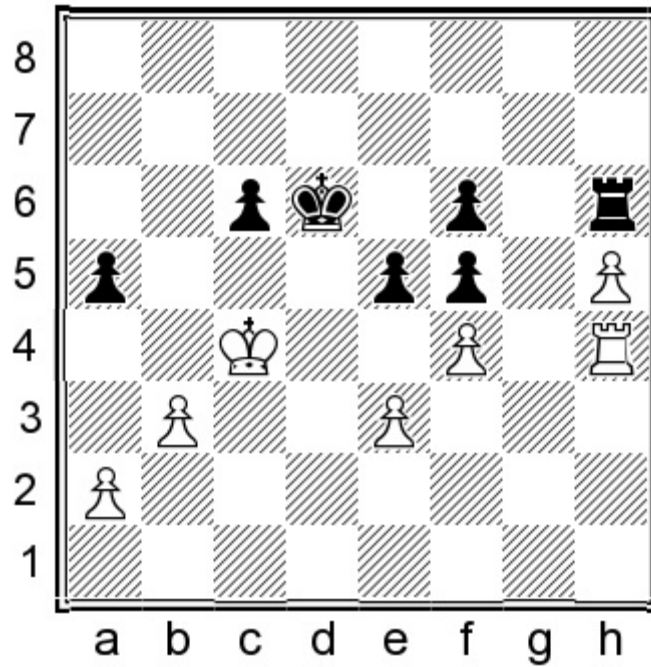
39...♜h6 40.♔c4

As the h-pawn is blocked, the king will start his activity on the other side.

40...e5 41.f4

It was also possible to play simply for zugzwang with 41.♜h1.

41...f6



42.b4!

Now White creates another passed edge pawn.

42...axb4 43.♔xb4 ♕d5 44.a4 c5+ 45.♔c3 ♕e4 46.fxe5+ ♔xe3 47.e6!

White's pawn is stronger than Black's.

47...f4 48.e7 ♖h8 49.♔c4 f3 50.♔xc5 f2 51.♖h1 ♔f3

Also easy was 51...♔e2 52.♔d6 f1=♚ 53.♖xf1 ♔xf1 54.♔d7 similar to the game.

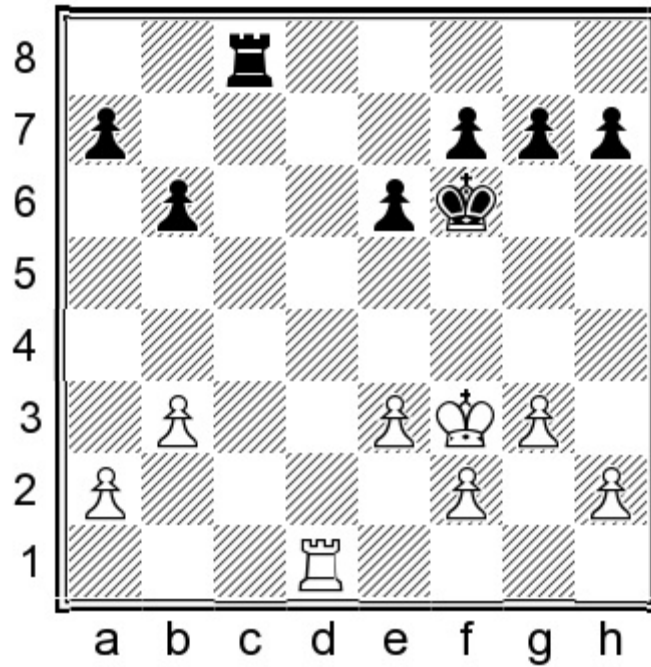
52.♔d6 ♔g2 53.♖a1 f1=♚ 54.♖xf1 ♔xf1 55.♔d7 f5 56.e8=♚ ♖xe8 57.♔xe8 f4 58.h6 1-0

5

M. Tal

L. Polugaevsky

USSR, 1977



26...♖c2 27.a4 ♜c3 28.♞d7!

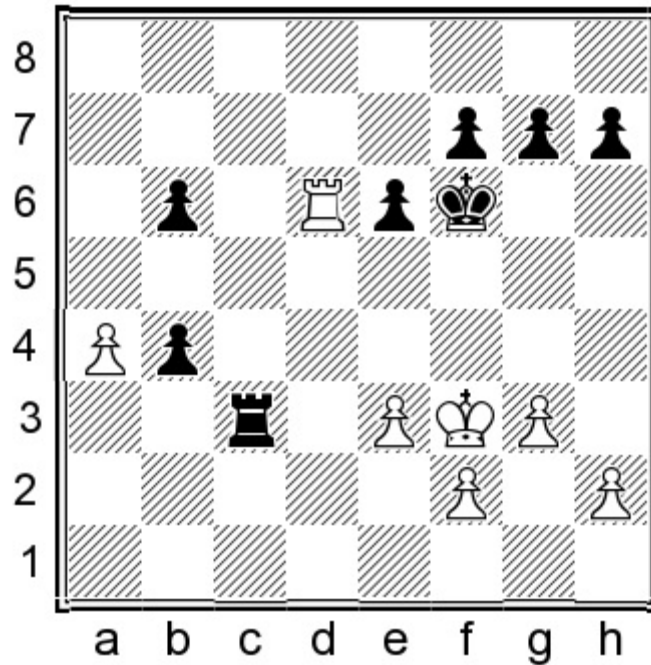
Activity comes first! Much worse was the passive 28.♞b1 a5 29.♔e4 ♜c2

28...a5 29.b4! axb4

Wrong was 29...♞c4 30.b5 ♜xa4 31.♞b7=.

30.♞d6?

Correct was 30.♞d4! ♜b3 31.♞d6 ♜a3 32.♞xb6 ♜xa4 33.♞b7 and the black rook is terribly passive, only protecting his pawn. White would keep great drawing chances.



30...b5!

Such mini-tactics are often overlooked, even by Grandmasters.

31.a5

After 31.axb5 ♖c5 32.b6 ♖b5 Black threatens to advance his passed pawn.

31...b3

The other option was 31...♞a3 32.♞d4 b3 33.♞b4 ♞xa5 34.♞xb3 ♔e5 35.♔e2 ♔d5 and the king comes to help his passed pawn.

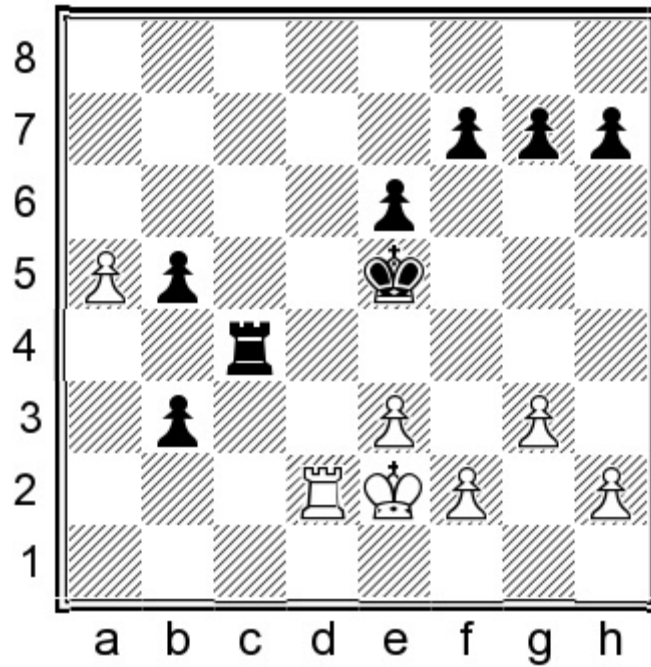
32.♞d2

Not 32.♞d4 ♞c4!-+

32...♔e5! 33.♔e2

Other moves were also insufficient: 33.♞b2 ♔d5-+; or 33.a6 ♞c6 34.a7 ♞a6 35.♞b2 ♞xa7 36.♞xb3 ♞b7-+

33...♞c4



34.♔d1?!

Polugaevsky believed that some chances were promised by 34.♖b2! ♖b4 35.♔d3! (35.a6 ♔d5 36.a7 ♖a4 37.♖xb3 ♔c4—+) 35...♔d5 36.♔c3 ♔c5 37.♖xb3 ♖a4 38.♔b2 ♖xa5 39.♖d3 ♔c6 40.♖d8

34...♖a4 35.♖b2 ♖a3! 36.♔d2 ♔e4 37.♔c3 ♖xa5 38.♖d2

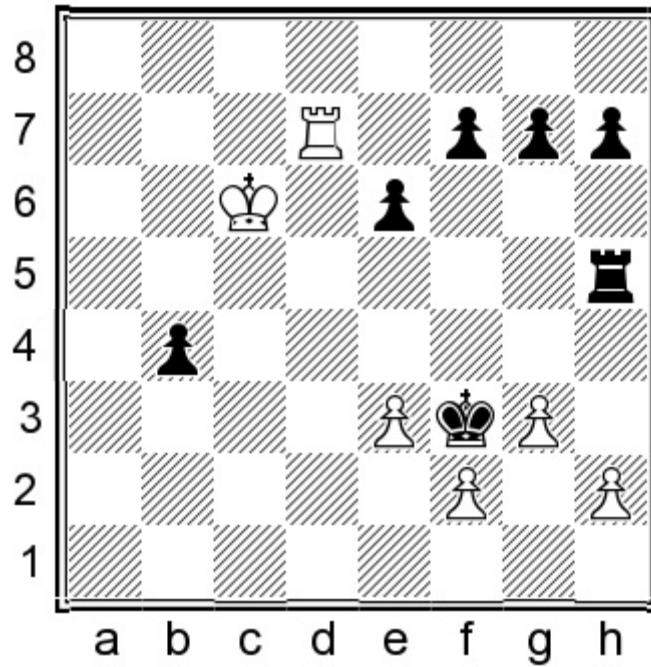
38.♖xb3 ♔f3 39.♖b2 f6 40.♔b4 ♖a1 41.♔xb5 ♖f1

38...♖a7

More direct was 38...♖a2! 39.♖d4+ ♔f3 40.♖f4+ ♔g2 41.♖xf7 ♖xf2 threatening ...b3-b2.

39.♔xb3 ♔f3 40.♔b4 ♖b7 41.♔c5 ♖b4 42.♔c6 ♖b8 43.♔c7 ♖b5 44.♔c6 ♖h5! 45.♖d7

45.h4 ♖f5—+



45...♔xf2! 46.♖xf7+ ♔xe3 47.♖b7

Or 47.h4 ♔d3 48.♖xg7 b3 49.♖b7 ♔c4+

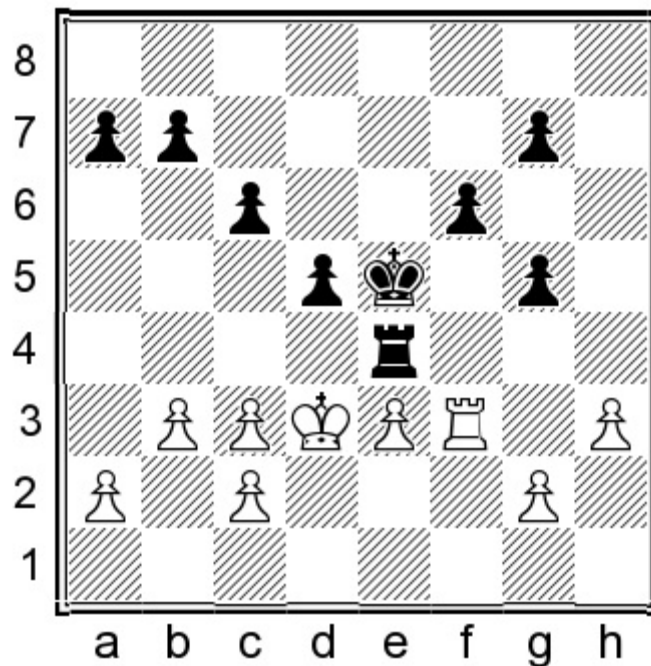
47...♖xh2 48.♔d6 ♖g2 49.♖xg7 b3 50.♔xe6 b2 51.♖b7 h5 52.♔f5 ♔d3 0-1

6

N. Fercec

A. Mikhalchishin

Nova Gorica, 1997



1...g4!

The idea is to create a weakness on the king's flank.

2.♖f1

Other moves are less good:

2.♖g3? f5 3.hxg4 fxg4 and White's rook is well and truly arrested! 2.hxg4!? ♖xg4 3.g3 b5 4.b4 ♖g6 5.a3 ♖h6 intending ♖h3–+

2...gxh3 3.gxh3 ♖h4 4.♖f3 b5 5.♔e2?!

Slightly better was 5.b4 g5 6.♖g3 ♔f5 7.♖f3+ ♔g6 8.♖g3 f5 intending ...g4–+

5...g5 6.♔f2 a5 7.♖g3

7.♔g3 ♖e4 8.♔f2 b4–+

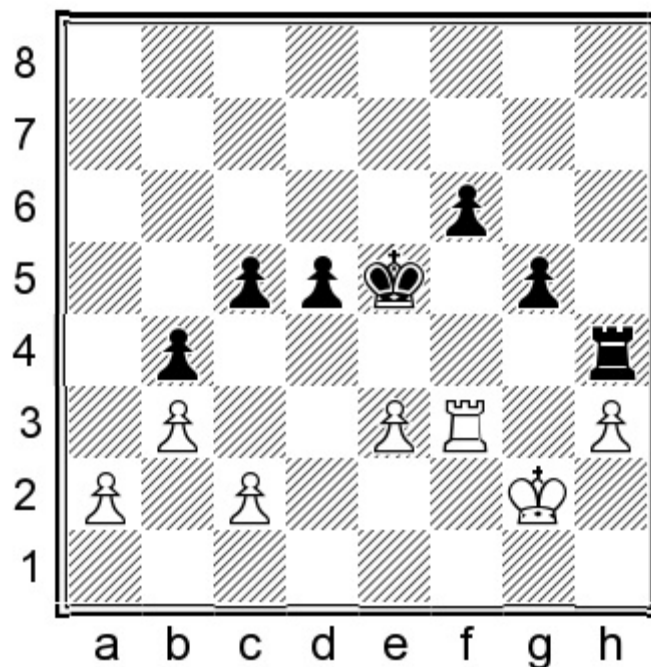
7...c5

Now Black intends to create a weakness on the other side.

8.♔g2

8.a3 a4 9.♔e2 axb3 10.cxb3 ♖h8 intending ...♖a8–+

8...b4 9.cxb4 axb4 10.♖f3



10...♖h8

And a weakness is created on a2 — as simple as that! It really shows the power and mobility of attacking pieces when defenders have very low mobility.

11.♖f1 ♗a8 12.♖a1

The rook is terribly passive here and Black's king is now free to improve his position.

12...♕e4 13.♕f2 f5 14.♕e2 ♖h8

Now the classical 'returning' to the old weakness.

15.♖h1 ♖h4!

Preparing ...g5-g4, which did not work immediately: 15...g4? 16.h4

16.♖g1

White is forced to start a counterattack, but it's not a successful one.

16...♖xh3 17.♖xg5 ♖h2+ 18.♕d1 ♕xe3 19.♖g3+ ♕d4 0-1

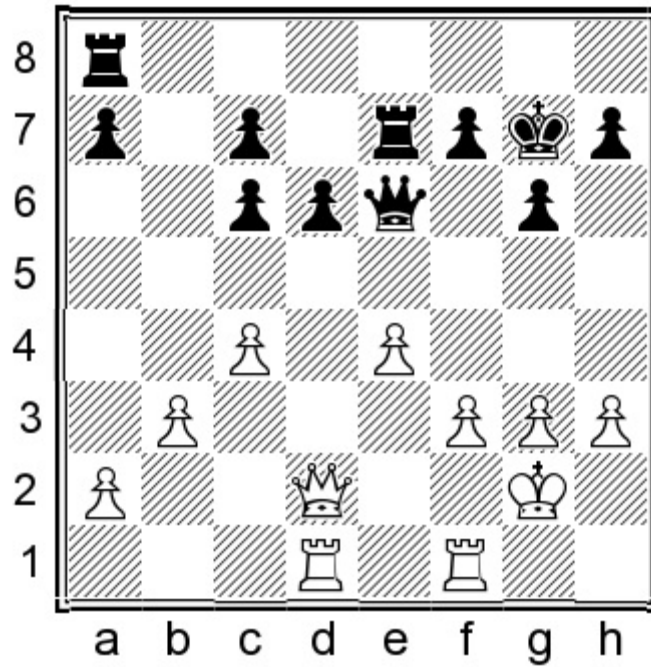
7

A. Mikhalchishin

D. Velimirovic

Jugoslavija, 1992

The great Robert Fischer taught us that chess is about timing! It means here that if Black can play ...c6-c5, then his position will be great. So, White temporarily sacrifices a pawn to destroy his opponent's structure and to create weaknesses.



21.c5!± dxc5 22.♙c3+

It was possible not to exchange queens: 22.♞c1!? ♚e5 23.♙f2

22...♙e5

Even weaker was 22...♙f6 23.♙xf6+ (23.♙xc5) 23...♚xf6 24.♞c1

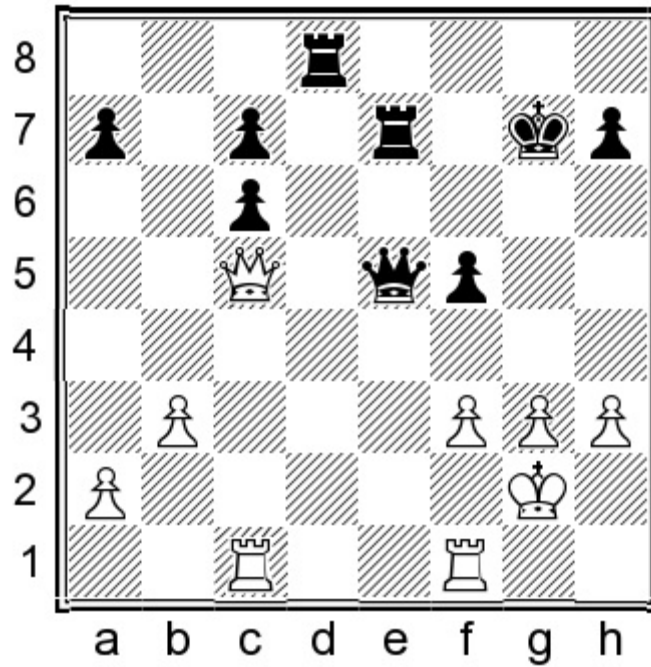
23.♞c1

Less precise was 23.♙xe5+ ♞xe5 24.♞d7 a5! and Black would be able, after ...a5-a4, to create a weakness on the queen's flank.

23...f5

Now this counterplay does not work: 23...a5 24.♙xc5 a4 25.b4±

24.exf5 gxf5 25.♙xc5 ♞d8



26.♖f2!

A prophylactic move controlling the second rank. It is not necessary to hurry here:

26.♜xe5+ ♜xe5 27.♞xc6 ♞e2+ 28.♖f2 ♞dd2 29.♞xc7+ ♔g6 30.♞xe2 ♞xe2+ 31.♔f1 ♞xa2

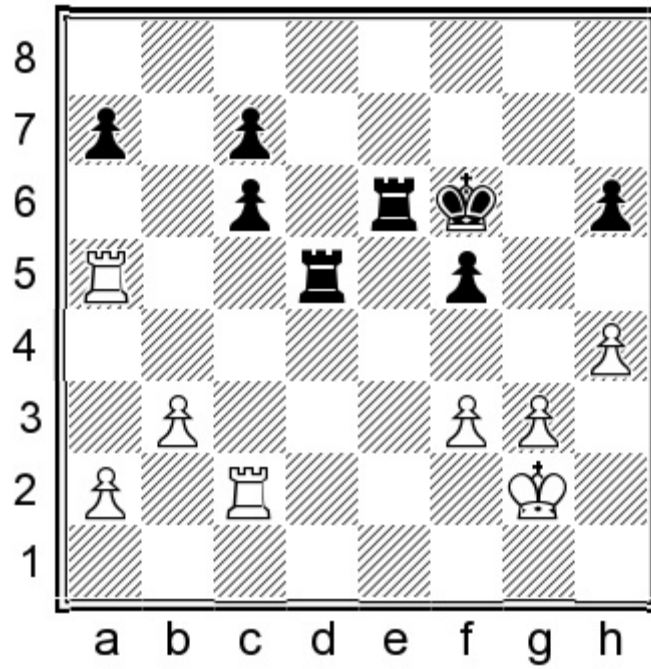
26...♞d6 27.♞c4!

Of course not 27.♜xa7? ♞g6

27...♜xc5 28.♞xc5 ♔f6 29.♞fc2 ♞ee6 30.h4

Very good was 30.g4 fxg4 31.hxg4+- but I did not like the idea of exchanging pawns.

30...h6 31.♞a5 ♞d5



32.♖xa7+-

The pawns start to fall like ripe apples!

32...♜ed6 33.♜xc7 ♜d2+ 34.♜xd2 ♜xd2+ 35.♚h3 ♜c2 36.b4 ♜c4 37.a4! f4 38.a5 fxg3 39.a6 ♜xb4
40.♜xc6+ 1-0

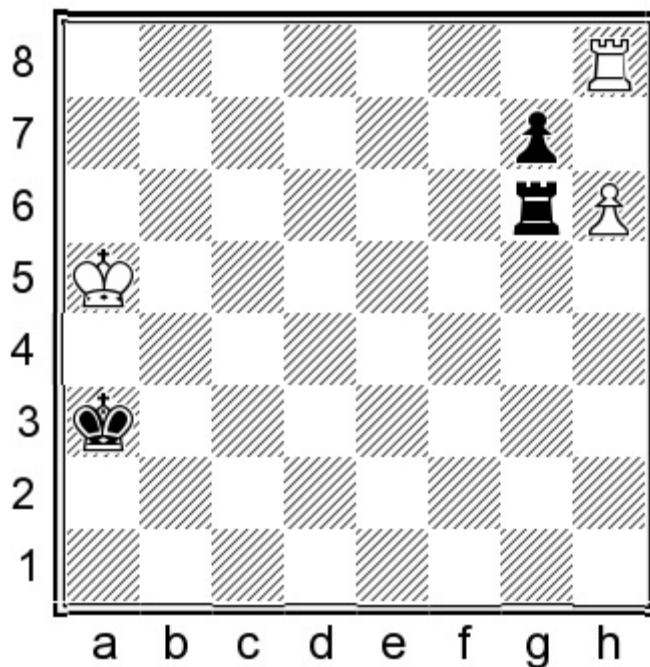
CHAPTER 10

DIFFERENT TACTICS

Tactics are everywhere — helping to conduct winning manoeuvres, accelerating the promotion of pawns and winning material. The quantity of tactics in rook endings is considerably lower than in the middlegame, but here the tactical blows are sometimes even heavier!

1

N. Rossolimo, 1927



There are a few important tactical methods we need to know in rook endings. Of course, they are more direct and simple than in usual middlegame positions. First and foremost in order of importance is the simple check, according to Smyslov. Here we can see a very tricky preparation of the conditions for discovered check by the king, ultimately winning the rook.

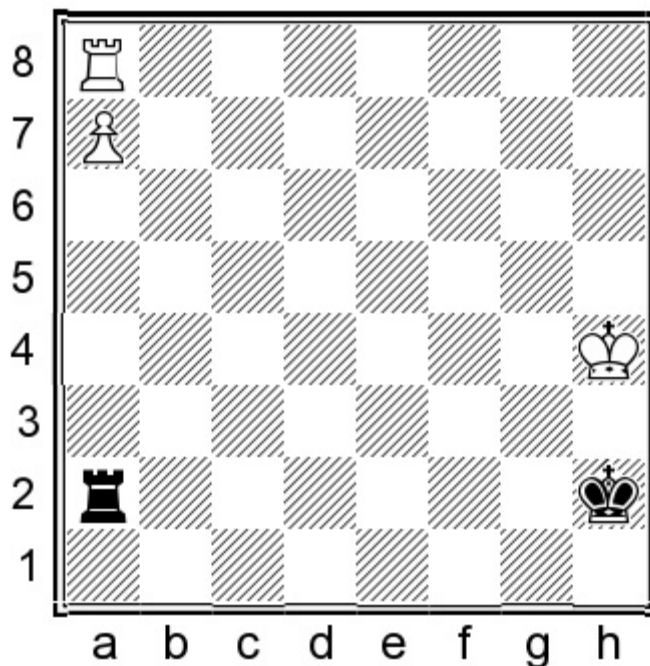
1.h7 ♖h6 2.♗b5 ♗b3 3.♗c5 ♗c3 4.♗d5 ♗d3 5.♗e5 ♗e3 6.♗f5 ♗f3 7.♖f8!

Threatening to queen the pawn, so...

7...♖xh7 8.♗g6+ 1-0

2

A. Troicki, 1910



The 'king' check can be prepared with forced play. The king has to try to come to help the pawn, but at the end the tactical motif of a discovered king check will be necessary.

1. ♖g4 ♖g2 2. ♖f4 ♖f2 3. ♖e4 ♖e2 4. ♖d4 ♖d2 5. ♖c5 ♖c1 6. ♖b6 ♜b2+ 7. ♖c6 ♞a2

7... ♞c2+ 8. ♖d6 ♞d2+ 9. ♖e5 ♞d7 10. ♞c8+

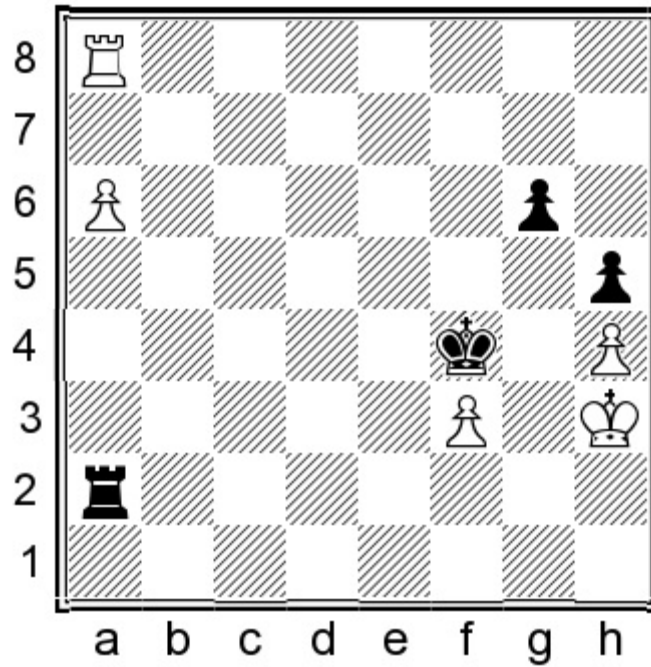
8. ♞c8! ♞xa7 9. ♖b6+ 1-0

3

M. Ulibin

V. Nevednichy

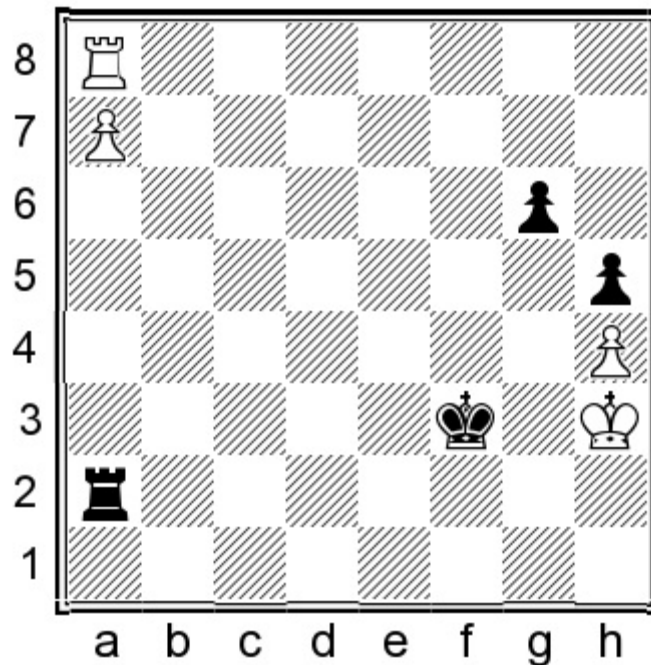
USSR, 1986



1...♔e3?

There was a very tricky preparation of the position, in which the king can 'give a check'.

1...♔xf3! 2.a7



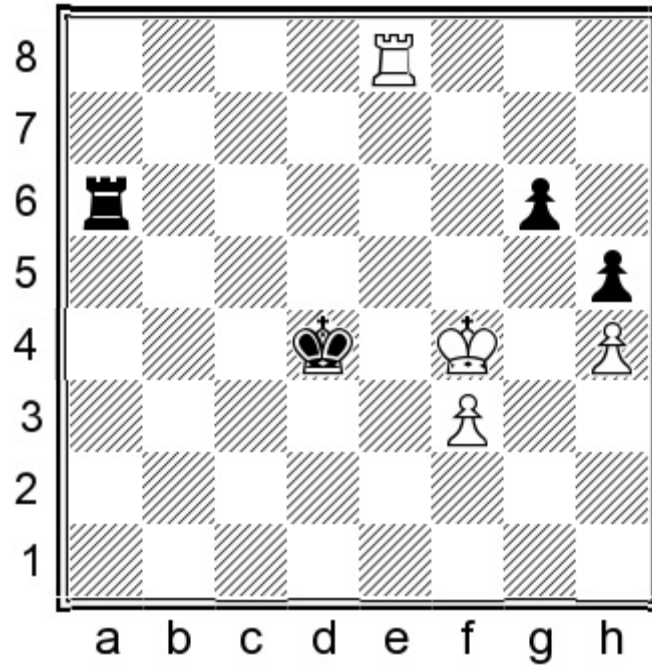
2...♖a3!! = An incredible preparatory move! After White's check, Black will answer with the same!

3.♖f8+? ♔e4+

1...♔e3? 2.♔g3 ♖a1 3.♖e8+!

Not winning was 3.a7 ♖g1+ 4.♔h2 ♔f2=.

3...♔d4 4.♕f4 ♖xa6



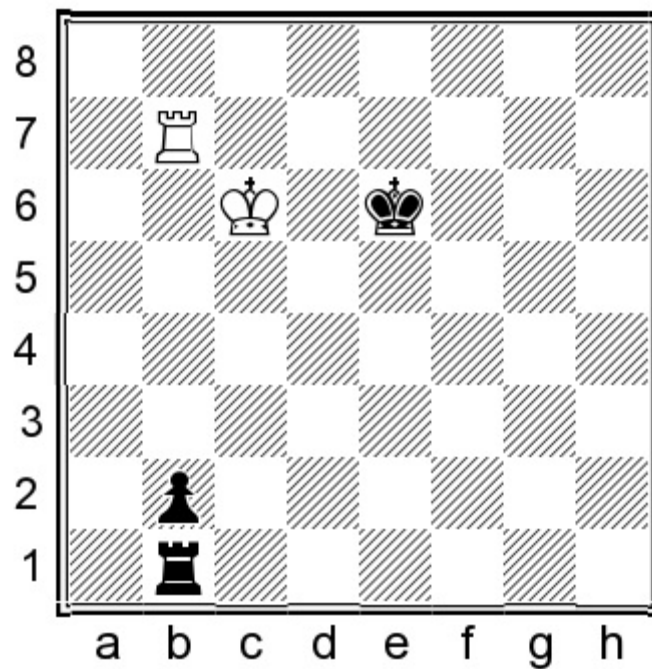
5.♖d8+!

Even the simple attack of the pawn must be prepared well: 5.♔g5 ♖b6 6.♖f8 ♔e3=.

5...♔c5 6.♔g5+-

4

H. Herberg, 1939



This was a fantastic study using the same idea in a defensive role.

1.♖b6!!

The idea is to hide behind his own rook.

1...♞c1+ 2.♔b7+!

Hiding from check, giving check himself and... winning the pawn!

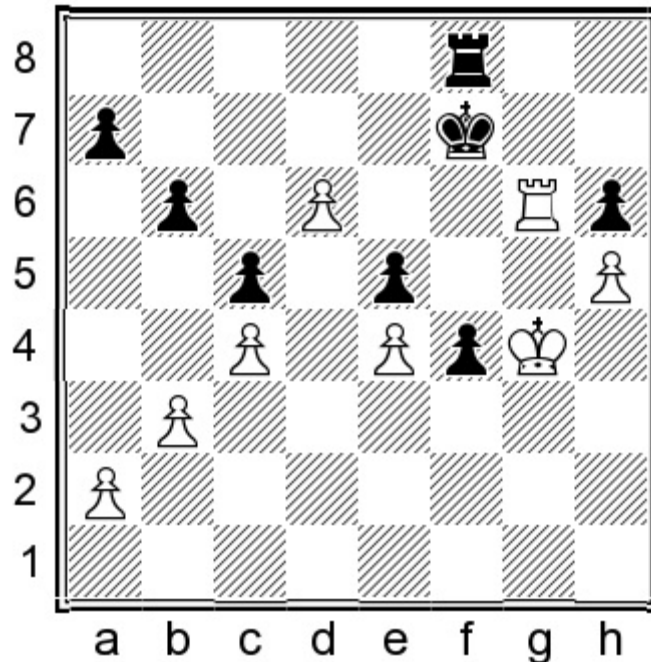
1/2

5

T. Petrosian

V. Kortschnoj

Moscow, 1963



The World Champion decided to win a pawn, thinking that he could stop his illustrious opponent's passed pawn very easily. But... he failed to consider the 'king's check'!

35.♞xh6?? f3!! 36.♔g5

Petrosian had overlooked 36.♔xf3 ♔g7+ winning the rook.

36...♔e8!

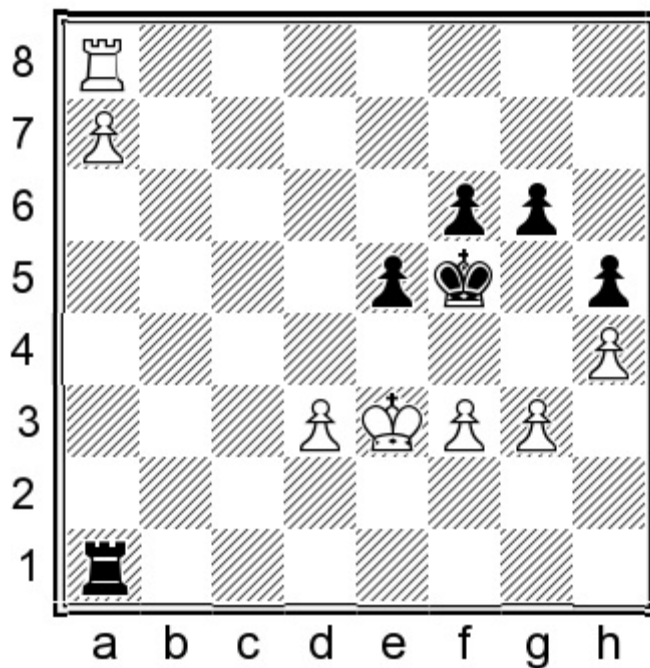
A calm move. It was not necessary to give the opponent real chances to save the game with, e.g. 36...f2? 37.♞f6+ ♔g8 38.♞g6+ ♔h7 39.♞h6+ ♔g7 40.♞g6+ ♔f7 41.♞f6+ ♔g8 (41...♔e8? 42.d7+)

6

P. Glavina Rossi

J. Oms Pallisse

Casablanca, 2010



It is necessary to expose the black king to checks by offering pawn sacrifices, opening the files.

36.g4+! hxg4 37.fxg4+ ♔xg4 38.h5!

White either successfully exposes the king or creates another passed pawn.

38...gxh5

38...♔xh5 39.♖h8+

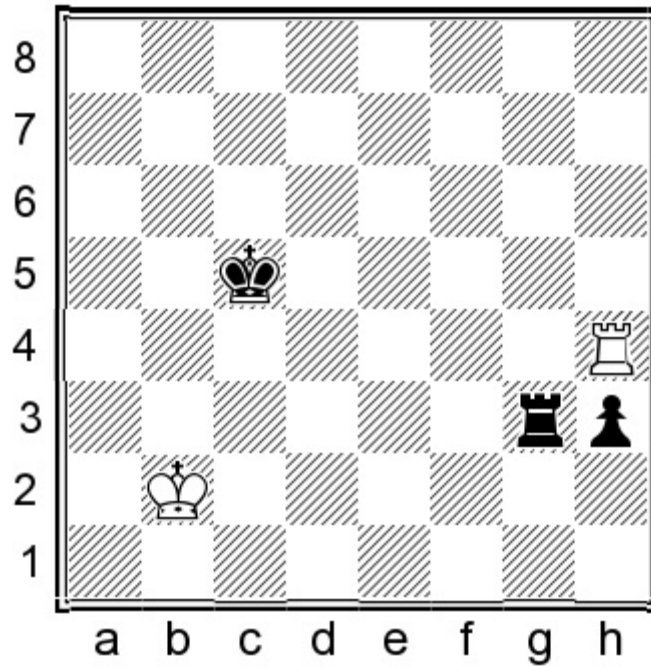
39.♖g8+ 1-0

7

A. Vyzmanavin

K. Lerner

Lvov, 1984



74.♔c2

Here we will see the very frequently used motif of the skewer.

74...♖a3 75.♔d2??

It was necessary to simply return! 75.♔b2=

75...h2!

And there is no defence against what happens in the game...

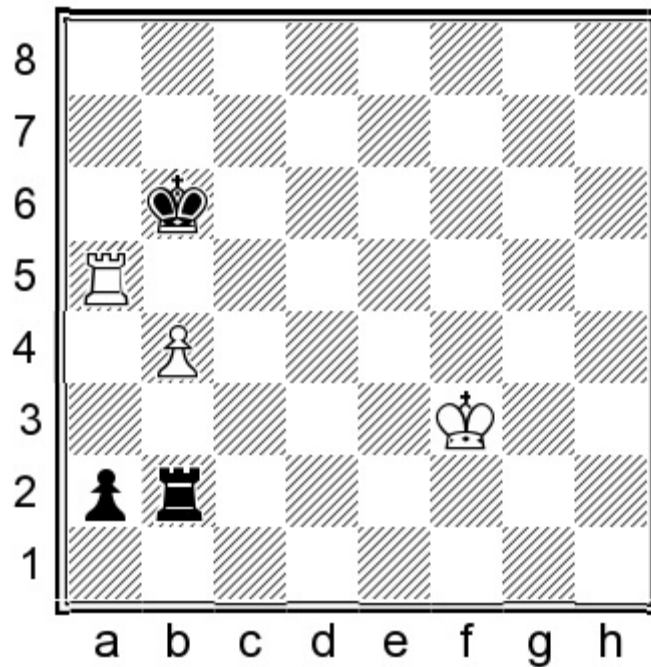
76.♔e2 ♖a1! 77.♖xh2 ♖a2+ 0-1

8

Z. Varga

H. Groetz

Austria, 2007



77...♖b3+ 78.♔e2??

It is incredible that an experienced Grandmaster made such an elementary mistake against a much weaker player! There were two easy drawing options:

78.♔g2 and 78.♔f2 ♖h3 79.♔g2

78...♖h3!

Probably came as lightning from blue sky!

79.♔d2 ♖h1

and as in the previous game...

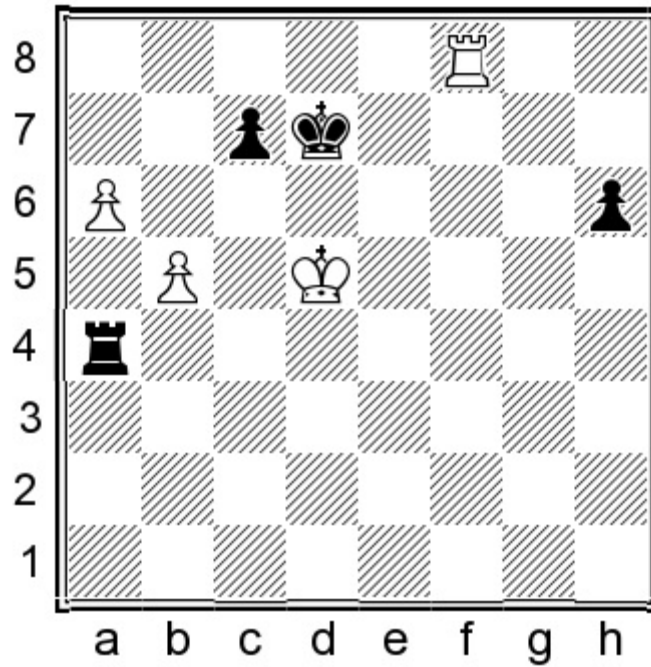
0-1

9

A. Shirov

V. Kramnik

Belgrade, 1999



59.♖a8?

Not spoiling the position yet, but a top player did not spot the winning tactical manoeuvre!

59.b6 ♖a5+ (59...cxb6 60.a7; 59...c6+ 60.♔e5 ♖a5+ 61.♔f6 ♖xa6 62.b7) 60.♔c4 ♖a4+ 61.♔b5

59.♖a8? ♖a1

Also failing to save the game was 59...h5 60.a7 h4 61.b6

60.a7!

Now Shirov finds it in a more complicated form.

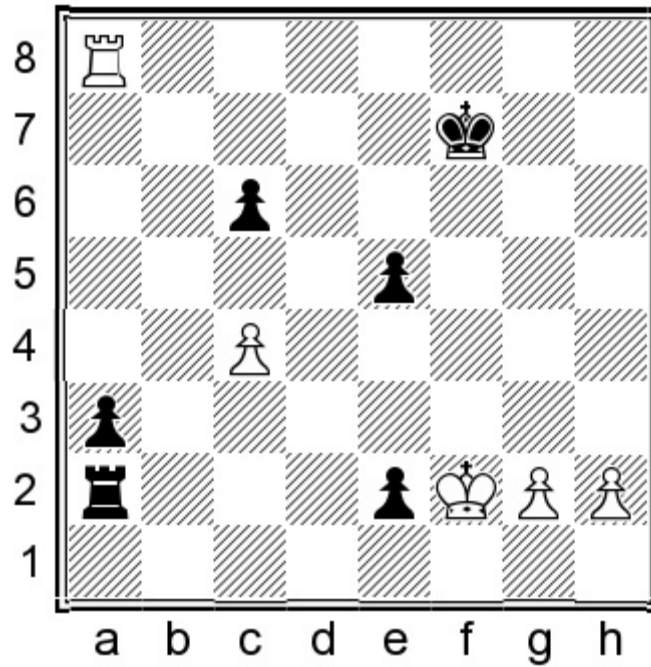
60...♞d1+ 61.♔e4 ♞e1+ 62.♔f3 ♞a1 63.b6! cxb6 64.♞h8 1-0

10

I. Smirin

G. Kasparov

Yerevan, 1996



Kasparov conducted the method.

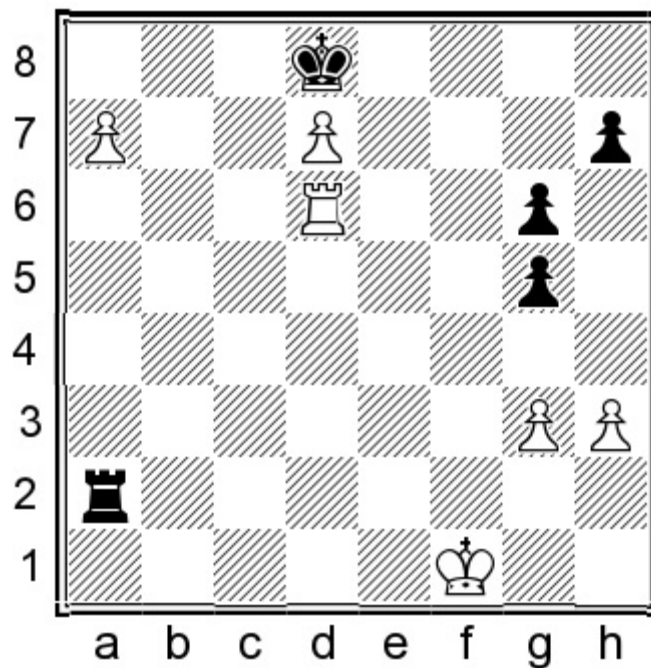
39...♖a1! 40.♙xe2 a2 41.♙f2 e4 42.h4 e3+ 0-1

11

E. Bukic

D. Marovic

Yugoslavia, 1968



Here there was even a double form of this tactical motif!

59.♖f6! ♔xd7

Another variation on the theme is seen in 59...♖xa7 60.♖f8+ ♔xd7 61.♖f7+

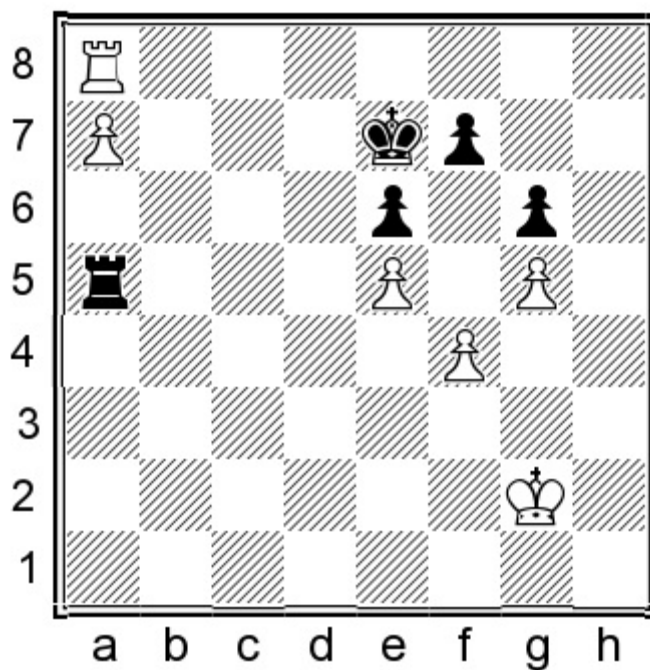
60.♖f8! ♖xa7 61.♖f7+ 1-0

12

I. Vistaneckis

A. Sardarov

USSR, 1961



The old masters performed it powerfully. Just one remark; with the king on g7 it does not work!

1.f5!! exf5

Or 1...gxf5 2.g6 fxg6 3.♖h8

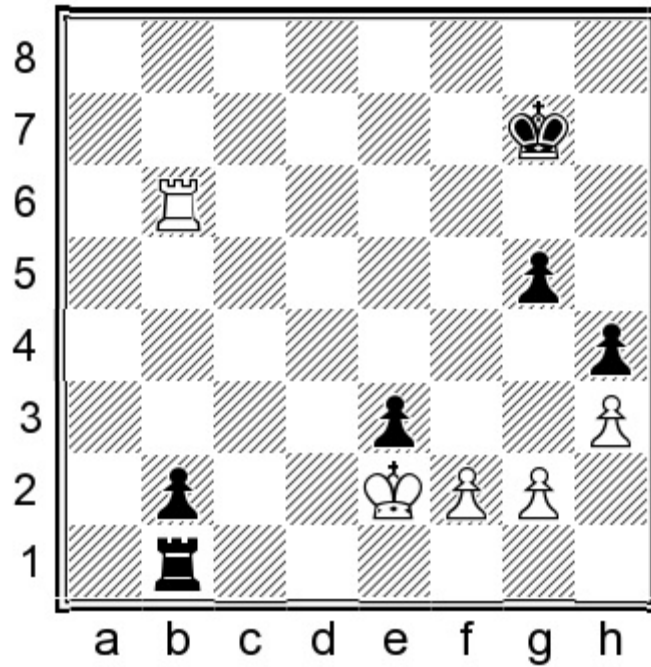
2.e6 ♖a4 3.exf7 ♔xf7 4.♖h8 1-0

13

S. Martinovici

A. Dumpor

Novi Becej, 1986



1...g4! 2.hxg4

Black's idea was to take on f2, then play ...h4-h3, and after the capture on h3 opens the second rank, he plays ...♖h1 completing the manoeuvre.

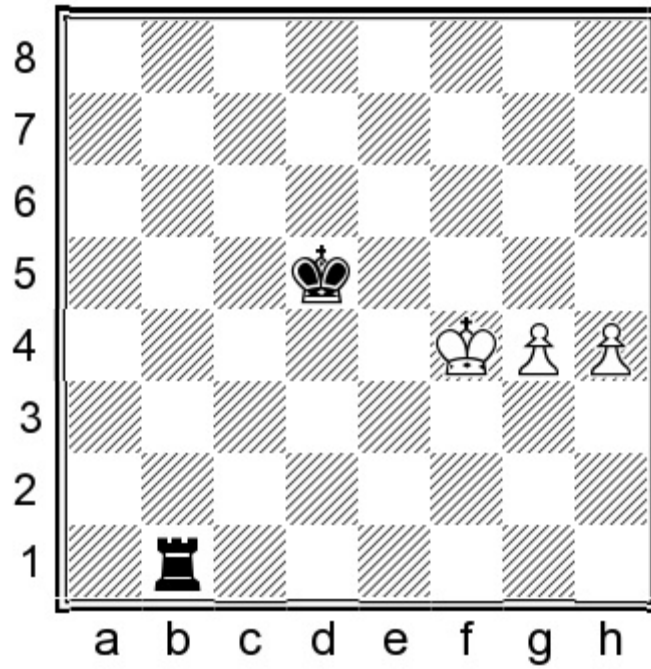
2...h3! 3.gxh3 exf2

Mission complete.

4.♖b7+

4.♔xf2 ♖h1

4...♔f6 5.♖b6+ ♔e5 6.♖b5+ ♔d4 7.♔xf2 ♖h1 8.♔g3 b1=♙ 9.♖xb1 ♖xb1 10.♔f4 ♔d5 11.h4



11...♖f1+ 12.♔g5 ♕e6 13.♔g6 ♖f6+

A slightly easier win was to be had after 13...♖f4.

14.♔g7 ♖f7+ 15.♔g8 ♖a7! 0-1

14

A. Evelev

A. Mikljeva

Moscow, 1993



1.♔c5?

This tactical motif was well hidden here but could have been performed by 1.g5! ♖a1 2.f5! gxf5 3.g6 Sacrificing two pawns to clear the seventh rank! 3...♔f6 4.gxf7 ♔xf7 5.♖h8

1.♔c5? ♔f6!

If the king is transferred to g7, then this tactic will not be possible.

2.♔b6 ♖b2+ 3.♔c7 ♖c2+ 4.♔d7 ♖a2 1/2

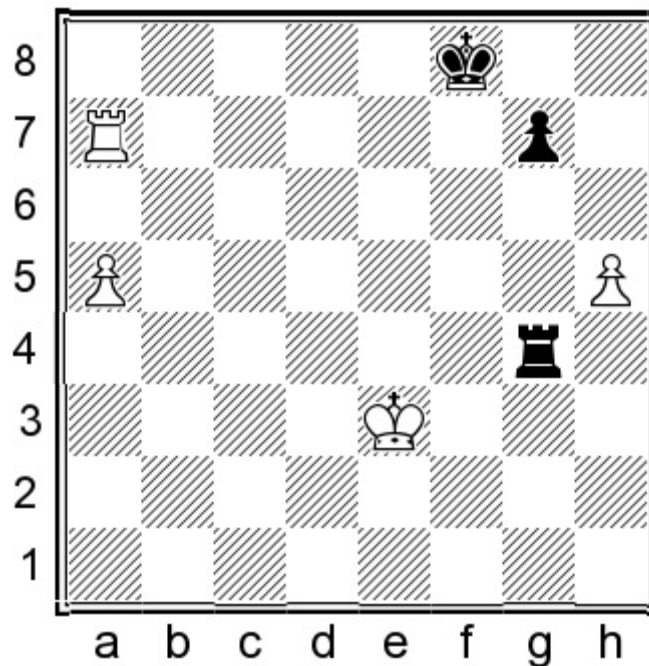
15

L. Polugaevsky

B. Parma

Soviet Union, 1965

Sometimes, even at the top level, tragedies and comedies appear.



White plan is to reach the classical position we have been looking at after opening the seventh rank.

60.a6 ♖a4 61.♖a8+ ♔f7 62.a7 ♖a5 63.h6

and Black resigned, as he only saw the ‘forced’ capture on h6 and the subsequent rook to h8 and ♖h7+ winning manouevre. But in chess, capturing is not obligatory!!

63...♔g6! 64.♔d4 ♔h7!!

and Black can achieve a draw!

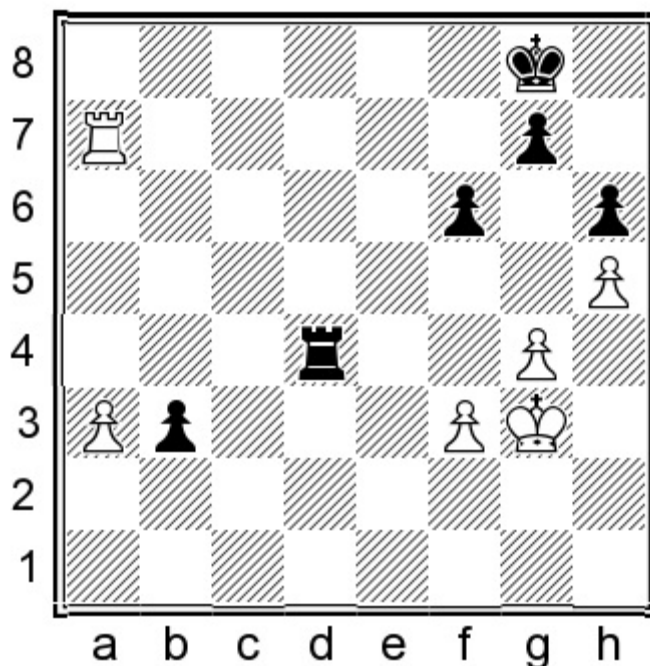
1-0

16

R. Berthoolee

J. Polgar

Amsterdam, 1990



35...♖b4!!

In reality, this is a tactical prevention against White placing his rook behind the black pawn! But tactically it also allows the b3-pawn to queen.

36.axb4 b2 37.♖a5 b1=♚ 38.♖f5 ♚xb4 39.♔g2 ♔f7 40.♔f2 ♔e6 41.♔g2 ♚b2+ 42.♔g3 ♚b1

Black threatens to transfer into a pawn ending with an extra pawn and all rook moves lose here.

43.♖f4

43.♖c5 ♚g1+;

43.♖a5 ♚e1+

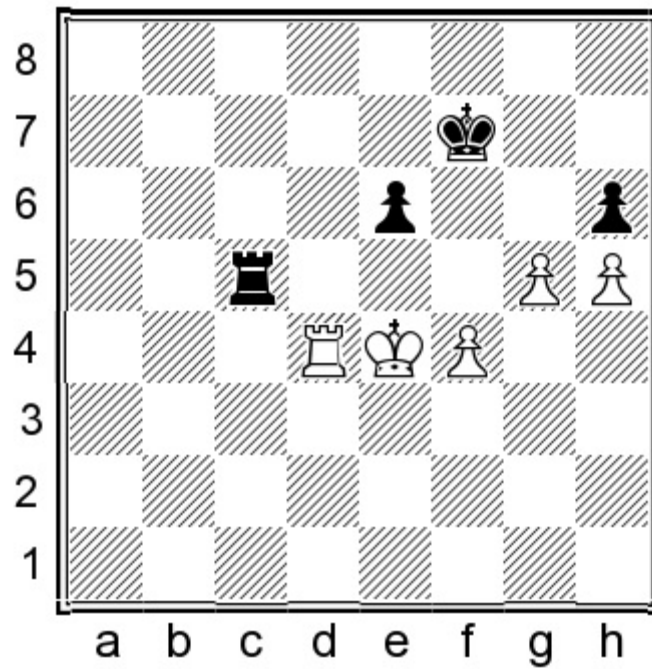
43...♚b8!

A deadly pin decides the game.

0-1

17

S. Volkov



62.g6+ ♔e7 63.♖d8!

Threatening g6-g7.

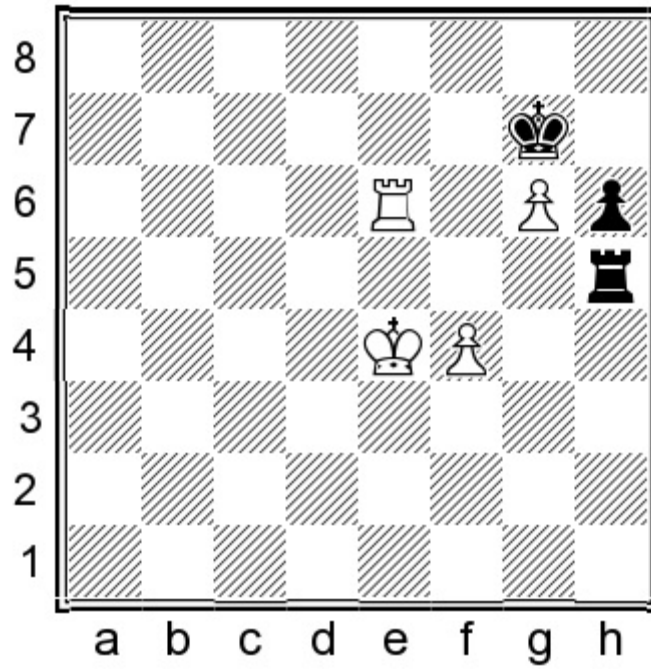
63...♔f6 64.♖f8+

Or 64.♖d7 ♖c4+ (64...♖xh5 65.g7) 65.♔f3 e5 66.♖f7+ ♔e6 67.f5+ ♔d5 68.g7

64...♔g7 65.♖f7+ ♔g8 66.♖f6 ♖xh5

66...♖c6 67.♔e5

67.♖xe6 ♔g7



68.f5

With such connected pawns the win is easy.

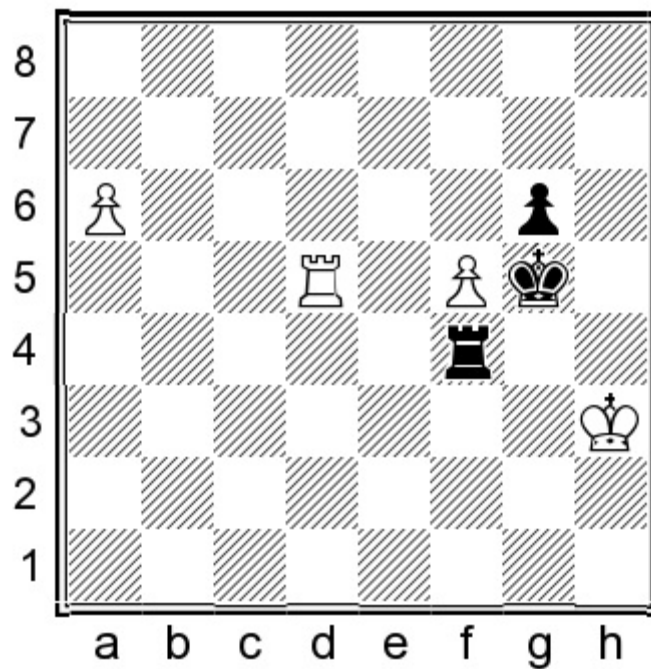
1-0

18

L. Fressinet

M. Parligras

Erevan, 2014



Fressinet finds a pretty tactical idea.

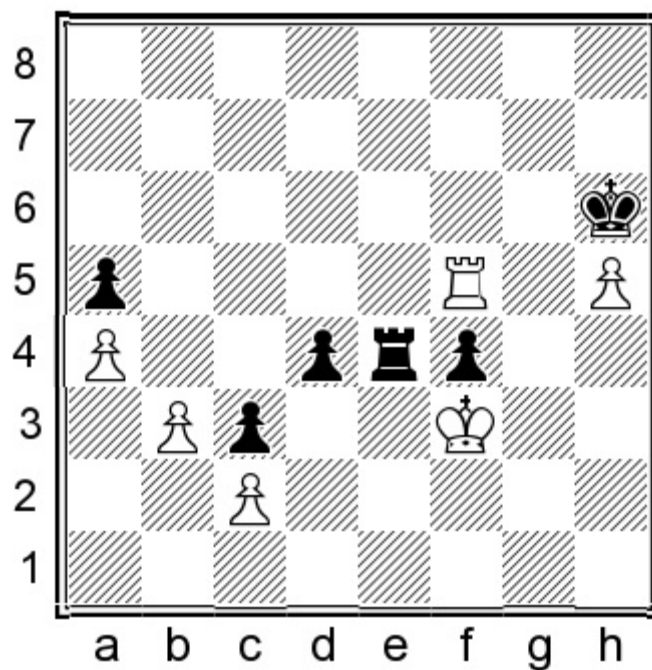
69.f6+! ♔xf6 70.♖a5 1-0

19

Munoz H. Sotomayor

Salazar H. Jacob

Novi Sad, 1990



55...d3! 56.cxd3

56.♖c5 d2 57.♖d5 ♖e1

56...♖c4!!

The main task is to protect the 'back' of the running pawn!

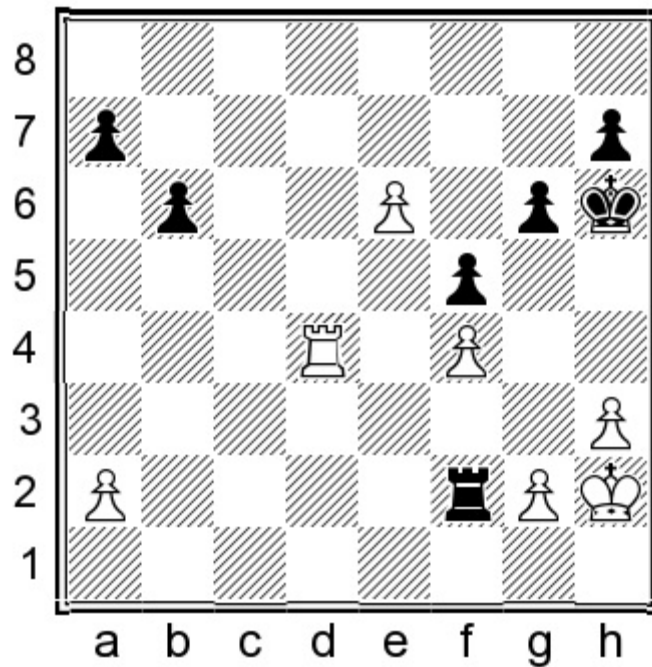
57.bxc4 c2 58.♔xf4 c1=♚+ 59.♔e4 ♚d1 0-1

20

M. Vidmar

G. Martinolich

Vienna, 1907



32.♖e4!

A similar blockade of the file on which the passed pawn runs.

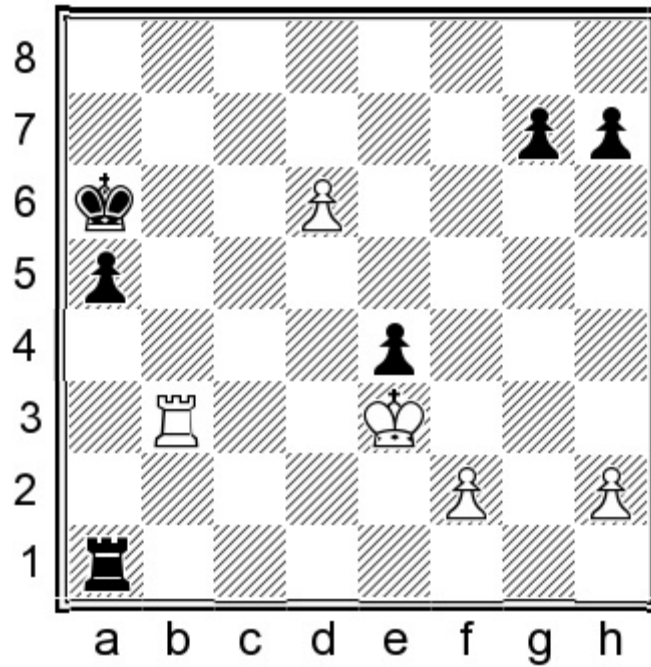
32...fxe4 33.e7 ♖xf4 34.e8=♚ ♖f2 35.♚xe4 ♖xa2 36.♚h4+ ♔g7 37.♚e7+ ♔h6 38.♚f8+ ♔g5 39.♚f7
1-0

21

A. Wojtkiewicz

J. Grasis

USSR, 1988



There is a way to promote the d-pawn!

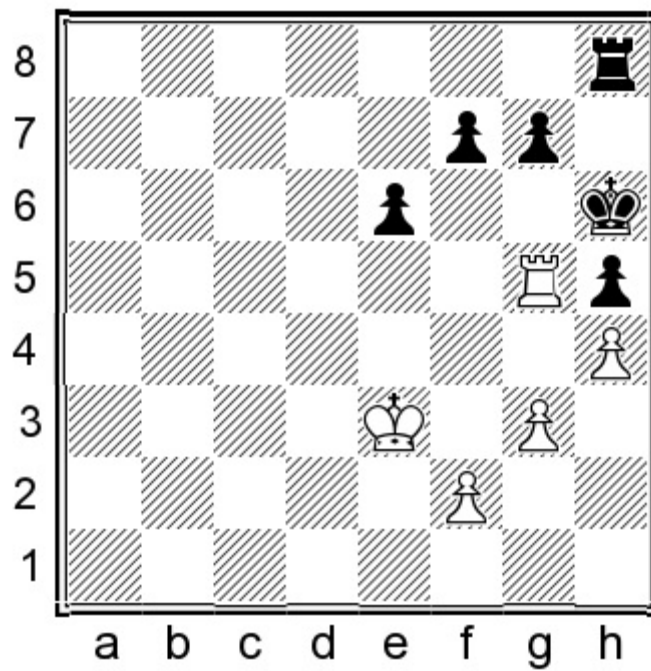
34.♞d3!! exd3 35.d7 ♞e1+ 36.♕d2 ♞e2+ 37.♕d1 ♞xf2 38.d8=♚ 1-0

22

O. Duras

A. Nimzowitsch

San Sebastian, 1912



57...f5!

Suddenly White's rook is cut off from the game. Black need only exploit this moment properly...

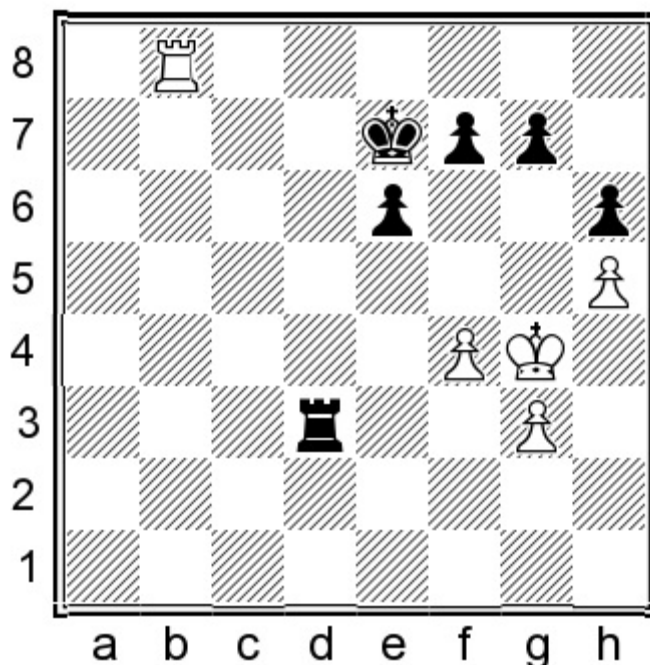
58.♔f4 ♖a8 59.♔e5 ♖a6 60.♔f4 ♖a4+ 61.♔e5 ♖e4+ 62.♔d6 g6 63.f3 ♖e3 64.g4 fxg4 65.fxg4 ♖g3 66.gxh5 ♖xg5 67.hxg5+ ♔xh5! 0-1

23

Bellon J. Lopez

V. Chekhov

Barcelona, 1984



33.♖g8??

Faulty 'materialism'! White was close to the draw after 33.♖b7+

33.♖g8?? ♖d8!

Forcing the capture and starting a successful hunt for the white rook. The pawn endgame is obviously dead lost.

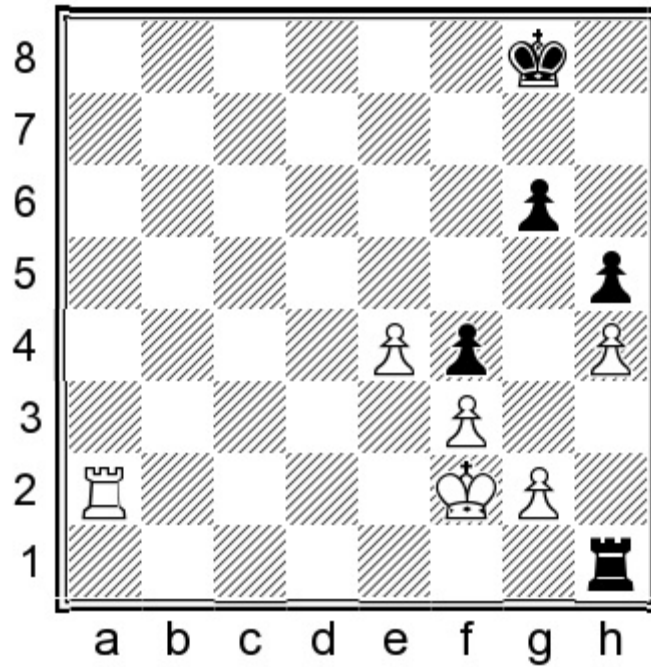
34.♖xg7 ♔f8 35.♖h7 ♔g8 36.♖xh6 ♔g7 37.♔g5 ♖d5+ 0-1

24

A. Gipslis

E. Vasiukov

USSR, 1953



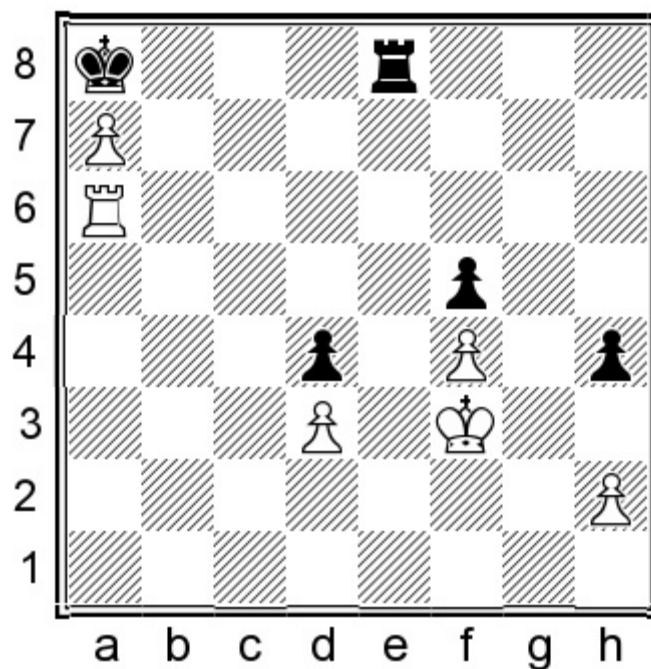
1.e5 ♔f7

Of no help was 1...♖b1 2.♖a4 ♖b5 3.♗e4 when the black king cannot come to the f-file and White's pawn will rush forward.

2.♖a6 ♖xh4 3.♗f6+ ♔g7 4.♔g1 g5 5.♗f5 ♔g6 6.e6! ♔xf5 7.e7 1-0

25

A. Selesniev, 1956



1.♔g2!

Preparing an attack on the h4-pawn.

1...♖g8+

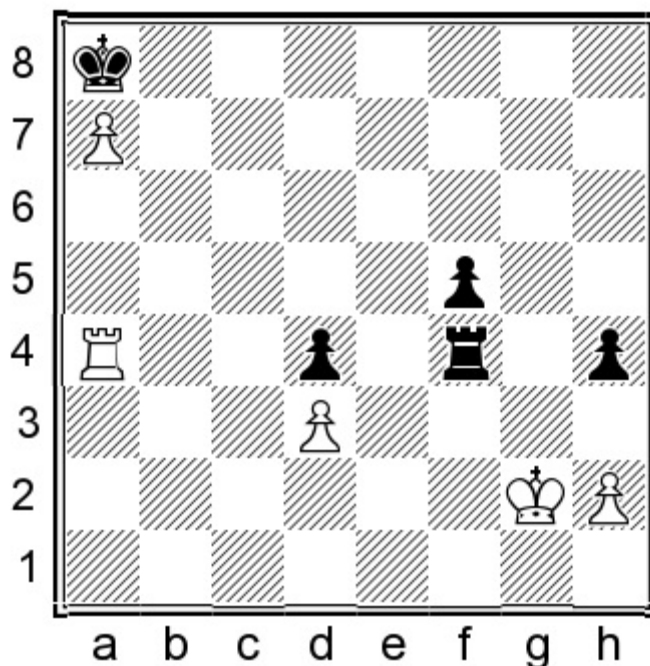
Now 1...♞e3 does not work because of 2.♞a3 h3+ 3.♔f2 ♞e8 4.♔g3 ♞e3+ 5.♔h4 and zugzwang means the rook must retreat and White wins the pawn on h3.

2.♔f2! ♞g4

Black goes for the f4 pawn, but as we will see, it is poisoned.

2...h3! 3.♔f3 ♞g2=

3.♔f3 ♞g1 4.♞a4 ♞f1+ 5.♔g2 ♞xf4



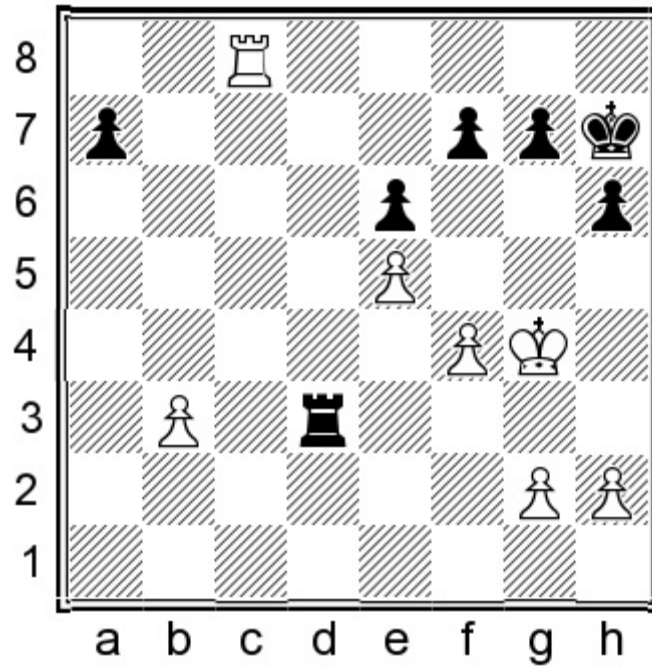
6.h3! 1-0

26

D. Navara

I. Popov

Minsk, 2015



34. h4?? h5+!

Suddenly a mating net is constructed!

35. ♔xh5 ♖g3 0-1

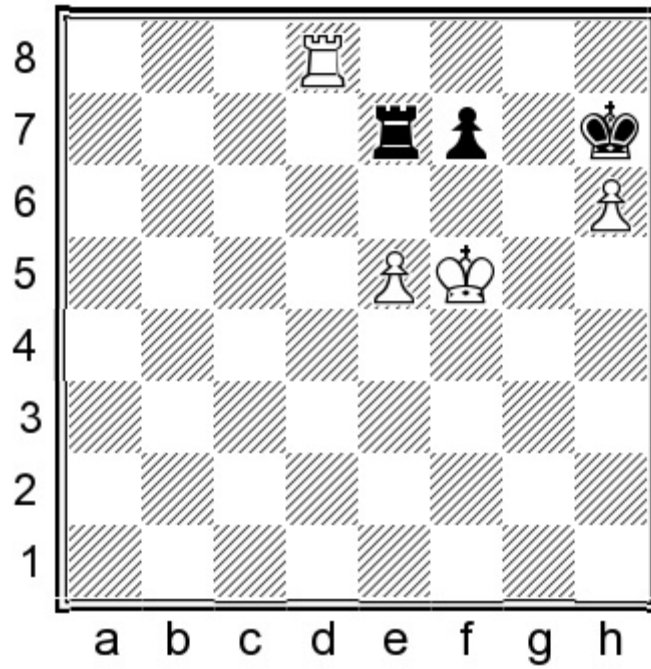
and ...g7-g6 mate!

27

V. Topalov

C. Hansen

Istanbul, 2000



63. ♖f8!

Starting a forcing tactical manoeuvre.

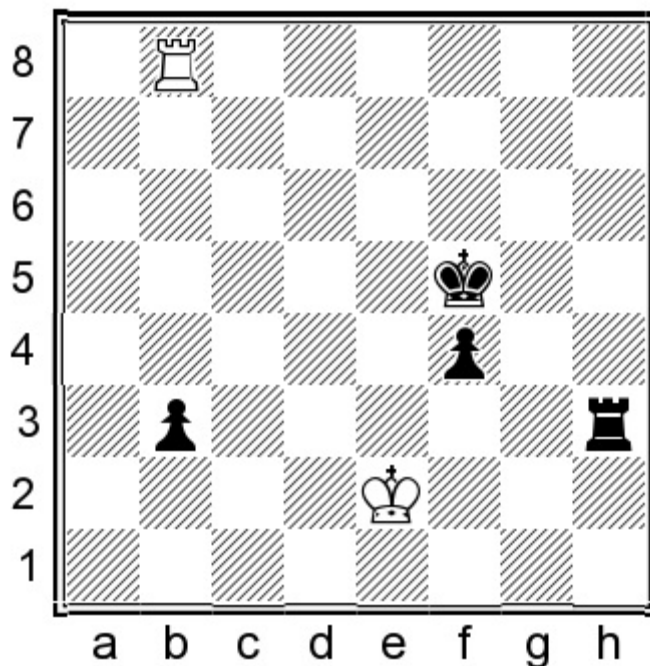
63... ♔xh6

Easily losing was 63... ♖a7 64. ♔f6 ♖a1 65. ♔xf7 ♔xh6 66. e6+-

64. ♔f6 ♖e6+ 65. ♔xf7! ♖xe5 66. ♔f6!

An unexpected backward move! It's a double attack — threatening mate, as well as the rook.

1-0



59...b2??

Carelessness in a winning position. An easy route to the full point, and one we have seen several times, was 59...♔e4 60.♖b4+ ♔d5 61.♖xf4 ♖h1 (61...b2 62.♖f1 ♔c4 63.♔d2 ♔b3–+) 62.♖b4 b2–+

59...b2?? 60.♖xb2! ♔g4

60...♖h2+ 61.♔f3 ♖xb2 Stalemate!

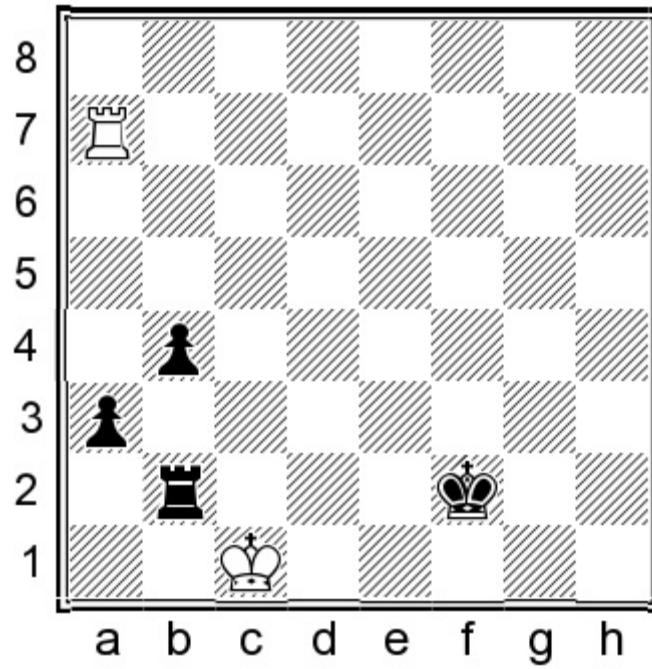
61.♔f1 1/2

3

E. Vorobiov

N. Vitiugov

Moscow, 2007



76...♔e2??

76...♔e3 was the winning move.

76...♔e2?? 77.♖xa3! bxa3 1/2

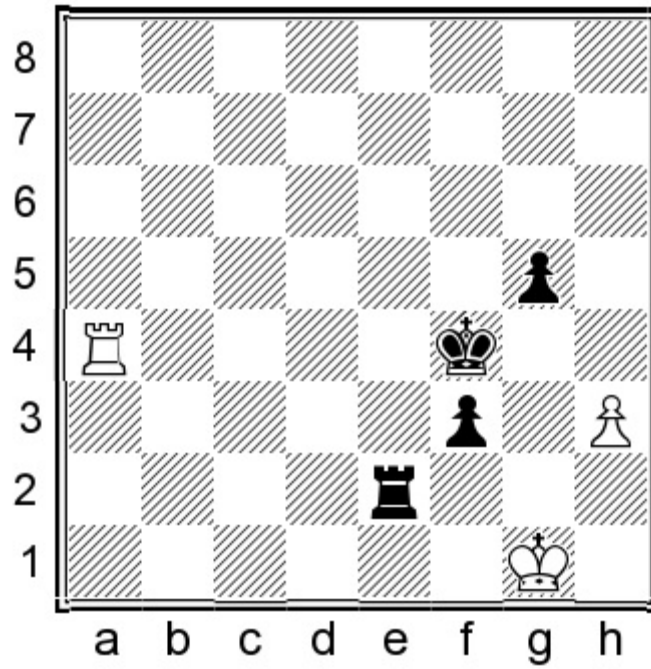
But who could have imagined such a stalemate construction?

4

V. Matviishen

V. Lomasov

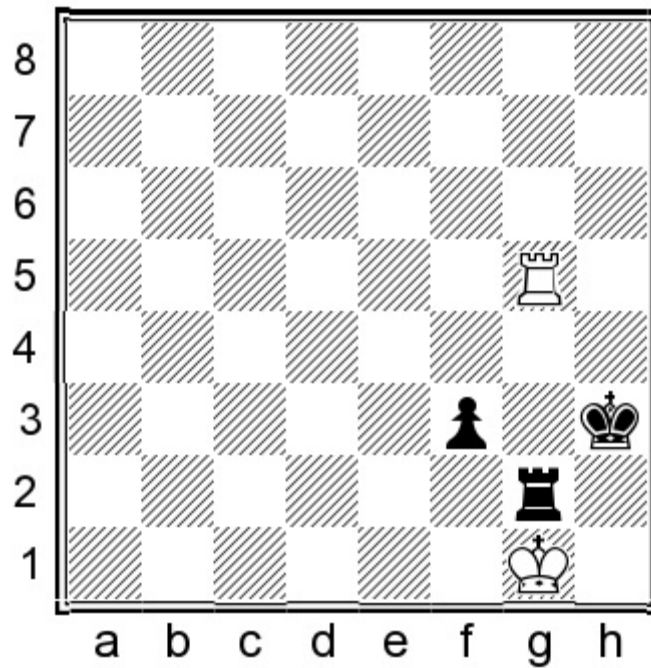
Praha, 2016



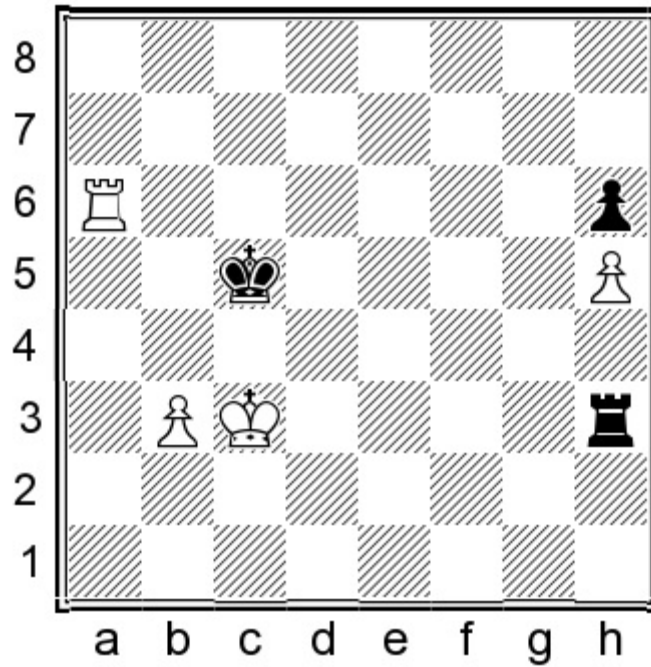
1...♔g3??

Easily winning was 1...♖e4

1...♔g3?? 2.♖g4+ ♔xh3 3.♖xg5 ♖g2+



4.♔h1!! ♖xg5 1/2

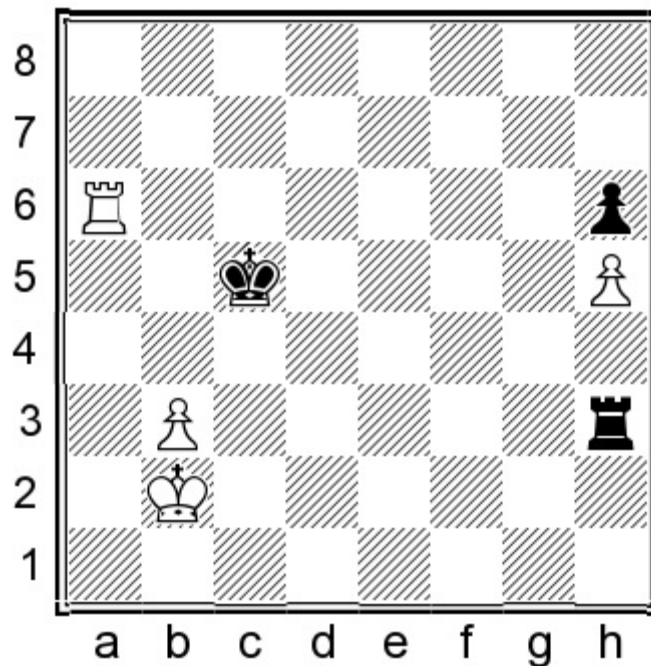


55.♔b2

Neither top-flight player saw the stalemate idea here! Correct instead was the cautious 55.♔c2!

55.♔b2 ♔b4?

As in Bernstein-Smyslov, the 'schema' works:



55...♖xh5!! 56.♖a5+ ♔b4 57.♖xh5=

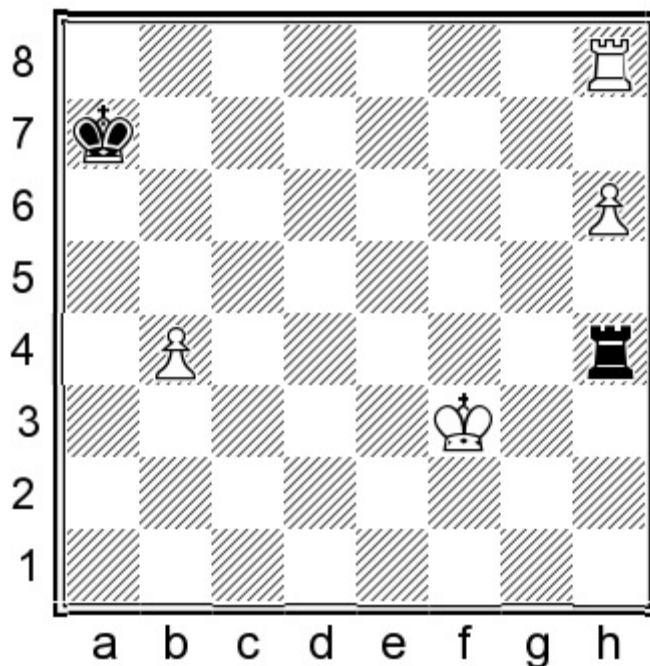
56.♖b6+ ♔c5 57.♖xh6 ♔b4 58.♔c2 ♖c3+ 59.♔d2 ♖h3 60.♖h8 ♔c5 61.♔c2

61.h6 ♔b6 62.h7? ♔b7=

61...♔b5 62.♔d2 ♔c6 63.h6 ♔b7

63...♞xb3 64.h7 ♞h3 65.♞c8+

64.b4 ♔a7 65.♔e2 ♞h4 66.♔f3



66...♞xb4

Sooner or later this pawn has to be captured.

67.♞g8! ♞h4 68.♞g6 ♔b7 69.♔g3

‘Uncutting’ the king, followed by an unstoppable march to g7.

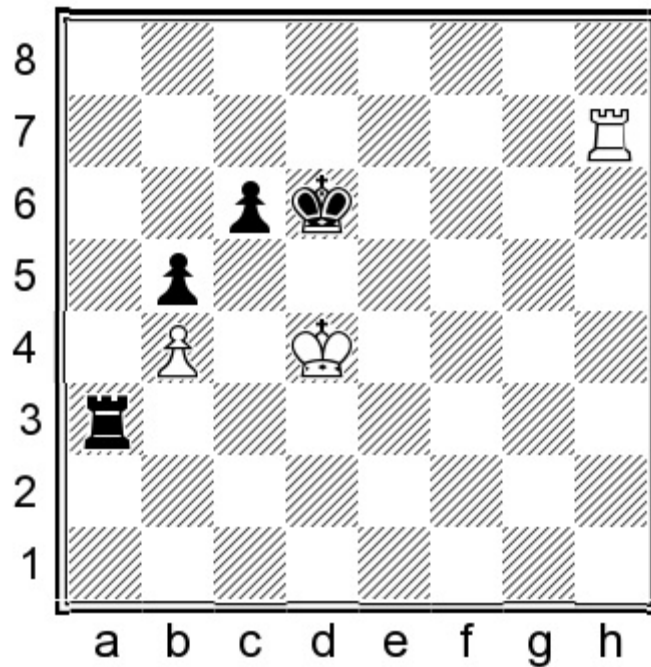
69...♞h1 70.♔f4 ♔c7 71.♔f5 ♔d7 72.♔f6 ♔e8 73.♔g7 1-0

7

P. Motwani

Granda J. Zuniga

Thessaloniki, 1988



50...♖b3

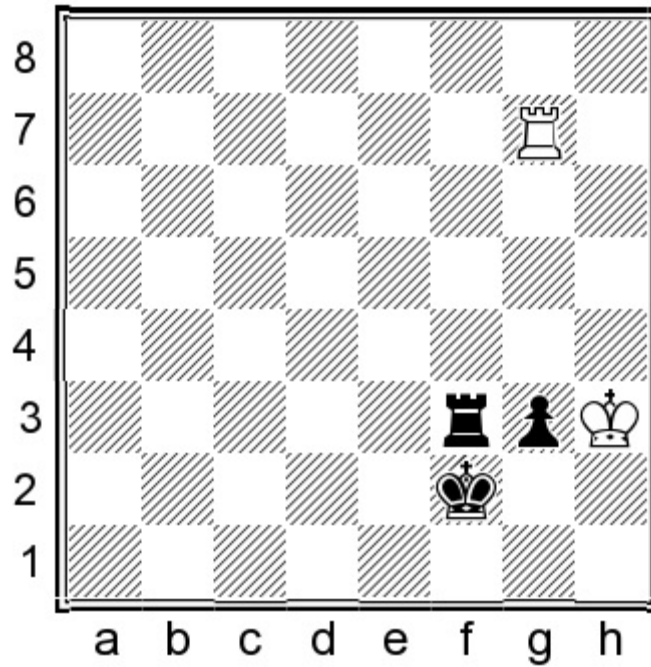
It seems that White will lose the pawn b4, and with it the game. But here there appeared a fantastic stalemate motif, one which is frequently used and which the Scottish Grandmaster had been shown at a tournament the previous year!

51.♖h6+ ♔c7 52.♖h4!! ♖xb4+

52...♔b6 does not promise winning chances: 53.♔e5 c5 (53...♖c3 54.♖g4 ♖c4 55.♖xc4 bxc4 56.♔d4 ♔b5 57.♔c3) 54.♖h6+

53.♔c5 ♖xh4 1/2

8
S. Novikov
D. Jakovenko
Moscow, 2007



Black is threatening with ♖f8 and it seems like there is no defence, but...

80. ♖g4!

Only from this square is it possible to prepare the stalemate!

80... ♖f8

80...g2+ 81. ♔h2

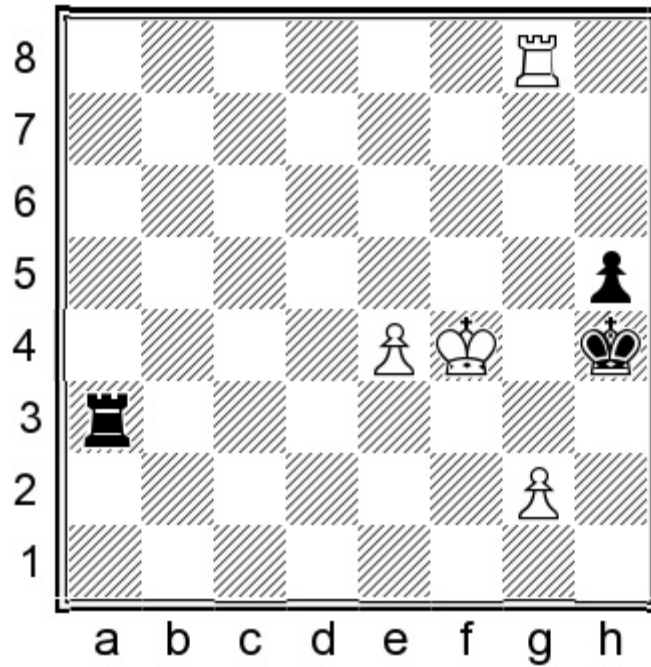
81. ♖f4+! ♖xf4 1/2

9

A. Beliavsky

V. Babula

Bremen, 2005



57...♖g3!=

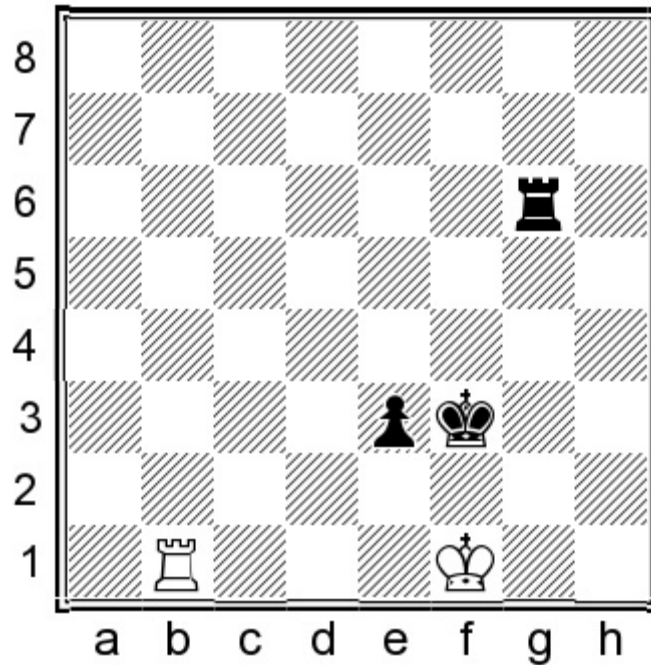
A nice trick, holding the game and thus securing the league title!

58.♖h8 ♜xg2 59.e5 ♜f2+ 60.♔e3 ♜f1 61.♖g8 ♔h3 62.♔e4 h4 63.e6 ♔h2 64.♖g4 h3 65.♔e5 ♜e1+ 66.♔f5 ♜f1+ 67.♖f4 ♜e1

It would be horribly wrong to swap rooks here, as it leads to a classic lost queen ending: 67...♜xf4+?? 68.♔xf4 ♔g2 69.e7 h2 70.e8=♚ h1=♚ 71.♚e2+ ♔g1 72.♔g3+-

1/2

10
W. Uhlmann
B. Gulko
 Niksic, 1978



61.♖b3??

A candidate for the World Championship must know the only stalemate defence in such situations!

61.♖b2! ♖a6 62.♞f2+!! (62.♔g1 ♞a1+ 63.♔h2 e2) 62...exf2;

Losing was 61.♞e1 ♞h6 62.♔g1 e2 63.♞a1 ♞g6+ 64.♔h1 ♔f2

61.♖b3?? ♞a6 62.♞b1

62.♔g1 ♞a1+ 63.♔h2 ♔f2 64.♞b8 e2 65.♞f8+ ♔e3 66.♞e8+ ♔d3

62...♞h6 63.♔g1 ♞g6+

Just be careful not to hurry with 63...e2? 64.♞b3+ ♔e4 65.♔f2=

64.♔h1

64.♔f1 e2+ 65.♔e1 ♞g1+

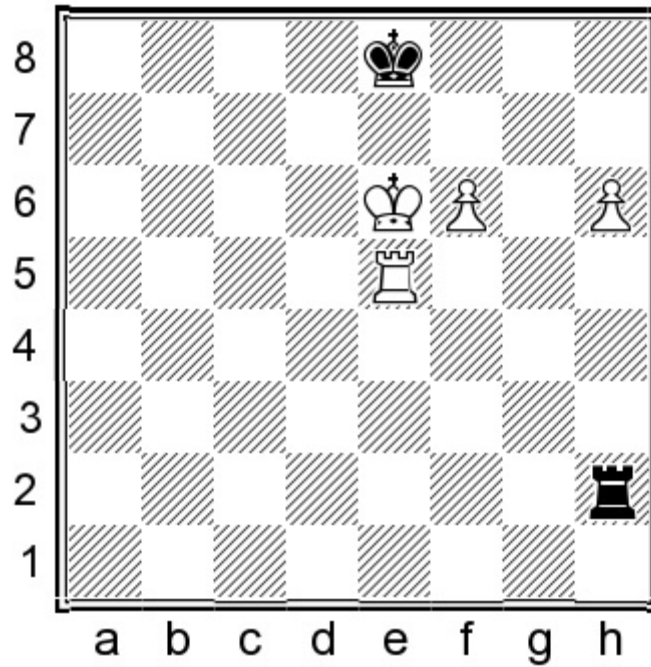
64...e2 0–1

11

I. Farago

T. Tolnai

Budapest, 1988



A similar case, but here the Grandmaster did not know — or at least did not spot — that his opponent had a stalemate defence available!

1.h??

Winning easily was 1.♖a5 ♜e2+ 2.♔f5 ♔f7 3.♞a7+ ♔g8 4.f7+ (4.h7+ ♔h8 5.♞a8+ ♔xh7 6.f7 ♞f2+ 7.♔e6 ♔g7 8.♞g8+) 4...♔f8 5.♞a8+ ♔xf7 6.h7

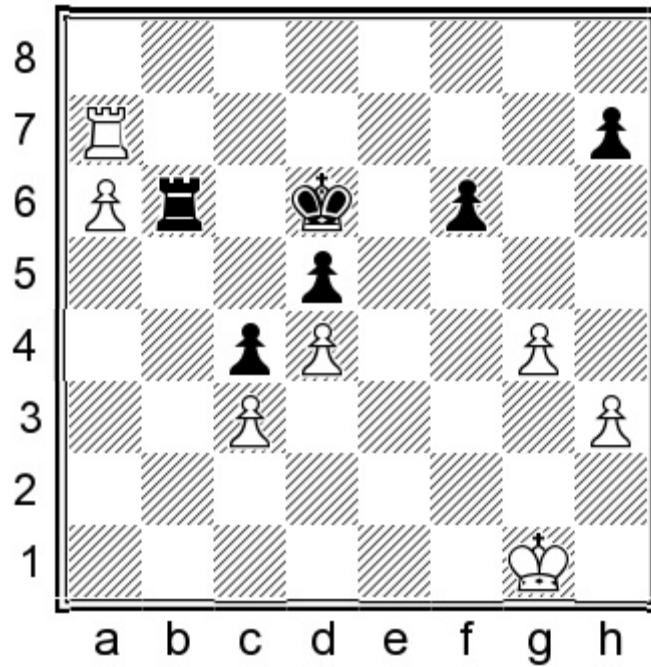
1.h??? ♞xh7 2.♞a5 ♞e7+! 3.fxe7 1/2

12

B. Khotenashvili

N. Batsiashvili

Batumi, 2016



Stalemates are used in complicated endgames too.

37. ♖f7! ♜b1+

37... ♔e6 38. a7 ♜a6 39. ♖xh7

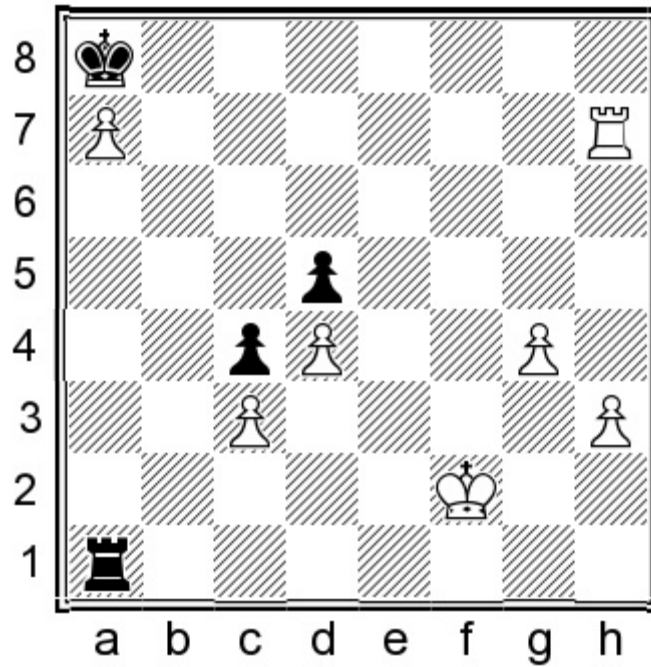
38. ♔f2 ♔c6 39. a7 ♜a1 40. ♖xf6+

An easy win was promised by 40. ♖xh7 ♜a3 41. h4 ♔b6 42. h5

40... ♔b7 41. ♖f7+ ♔a8

The king has reached a safe haven and White has to be very careful now.

42. ♖xh7??



Now Black's rook becomes a BERSERKER! It was necessary to avoid any stalemate construction and to capture this pawn much later, e.g. 42...♖a3 43.h4 ♜xc3 44.♞xh7 ♜c2+ 45.♔f3+-

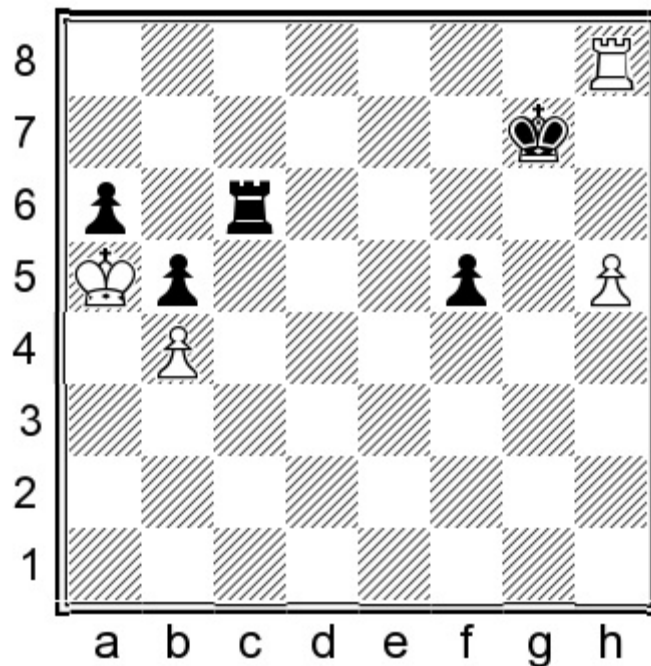
42...♞f1+ 43.♔g3 ♞f3+! 44.♔h4 ♞xh3+! 45.♔xh3 1/2

13

I. Dusthageer

S. Sethuraman

Dharamshala, 2014

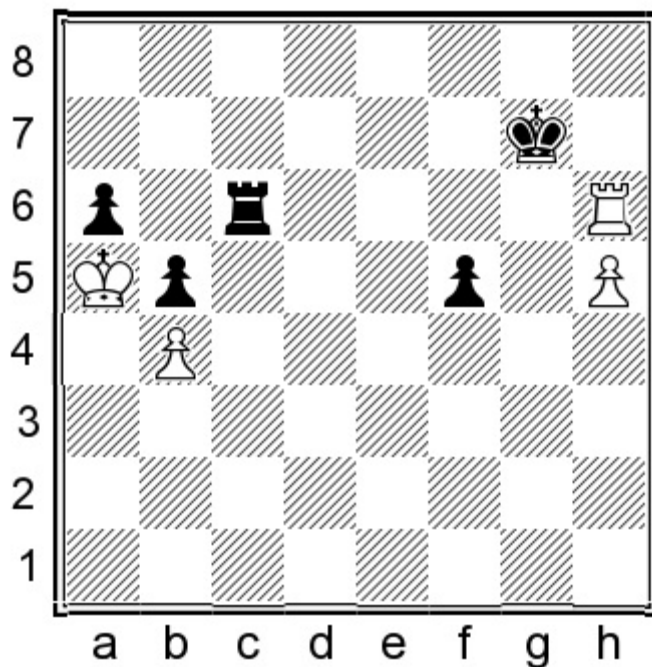


Sometimes a stalemate defence is used incorrectly...

47. ♖h6??

First of all, this position is not technically easy. It was necessary to first sacrifice the pawn with 47. ♖d8! ♜f6 48. h6+! ♔h7 (48... ♕xh6 49. ♖g8 ♖g6 50. ♖h8+ ♔g5 51. ♖h5+ ♔g4 52. ♖xf5) 49. ♖d6 ♖xh6 50. ♖d7+ ♔g6 51. ♖g7+ ♔h5 52. ♖g5+=

47. ♖h6??



47... ♜f6!

and now, instead of stalemate, White must transfer into a completely lost pawn ending.

0-1

CHAPTER 15 MISTAKES

Mistakes committed by strong players in rook endings can be counted in the thousands. Study of the endgame is not carried out sufficiently, on every level — this is well-known. First of all there is the lack of knowledge of basic positions, and the techniques for converting them into wins or draws. We can add to this many simple tactical oversights, and poor knowledge of the correct methods of handling complicated rook endings.

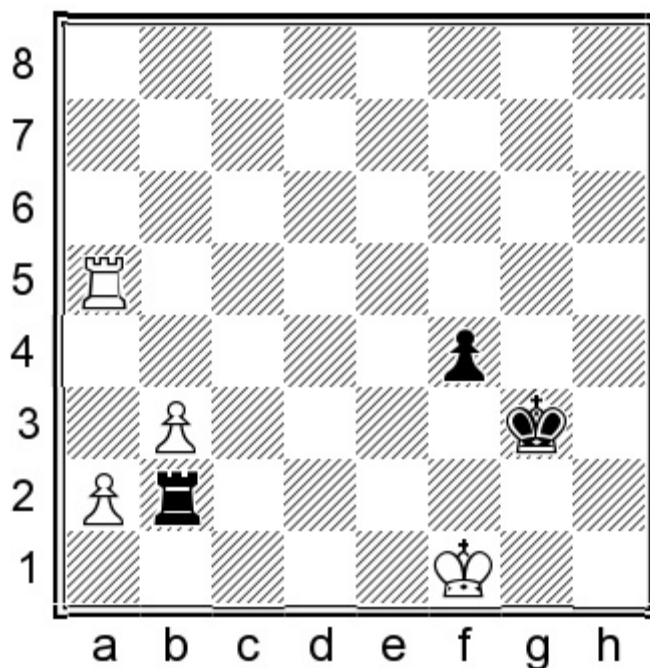
1

Leon M. Hoyos

Y. Vovk

Cappelle la Grande, 2009

In chess endgames we can find a huge amount of instructive mistakes. Often we could study some subjects in the style of ‘How not to play!’ In endgames, in every position there are usually two ways — right and wrong. And it is quite useful to recognize the wrong patterns immediately.



Here White has an extra pawn, but Black's king and rook are very active, so it is necessary to be extremely careful.

43. ♖a8??

White could not lose after 43. ♖g5+ ♔f3 44. ♔e1;

43. ♖f5 ♜xa2 44. b4

43. ♖a8?? ♜b1+ 44. ♔e2 f3+ 45. ♔e3 ♜e1+ 46. ♔d4 f2 47. ♖g8+ ♔h4 48. ♖f8 f1=♚ 49. ♖xf1 ♜xf1 50. a4 ♔g5 51. a5 ♔f6 52. ♔c5 ♔e7 53. ♔c6 ♔d8 54. ♔b7 ♖f7+ 55. ♔b8 ♖f5 56. a6 ♜b5+ 57. ♔a8 ♔c7 58. a7

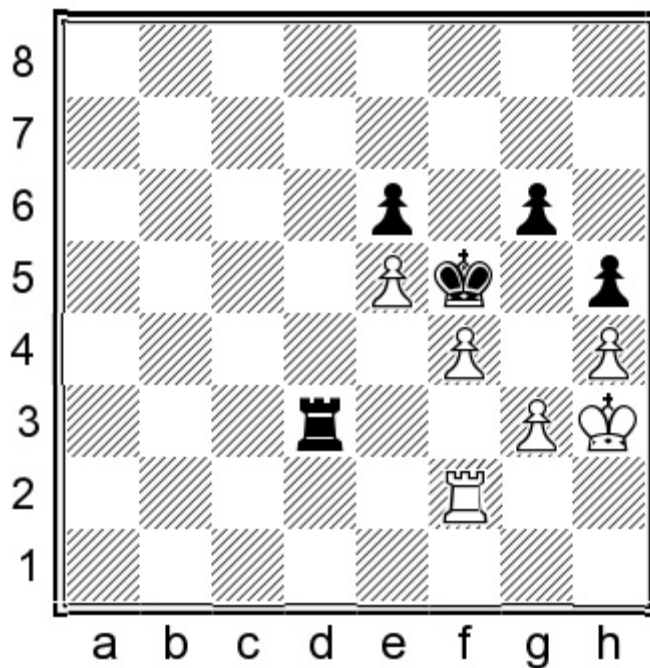
♖h5 0–1

2

K. Radzikovska

H. Erenska

Poland, 1961



1.♔h2

White plays for a small trick, as the ‘normal way’ was insufficient for the win because of Black’s strong counterplay: 1.♖a2 ♜d1 2.♖a7 ♕e4 3.♗g7 (3.♔g2 ♜d2+) 3...♕f3 4.♔h2 ♜d2+ 5.♔h3 ♜d1

1.♔h2 ♕g4??

Black immediately leaps into the trap! The draw could be easily held after the simple 1...♖a3.

2.f5!!

Threatening mate, or otherwise creating a passed pawn.

2...♖xg3

2...exf5 3.♖f4#

3.f6!

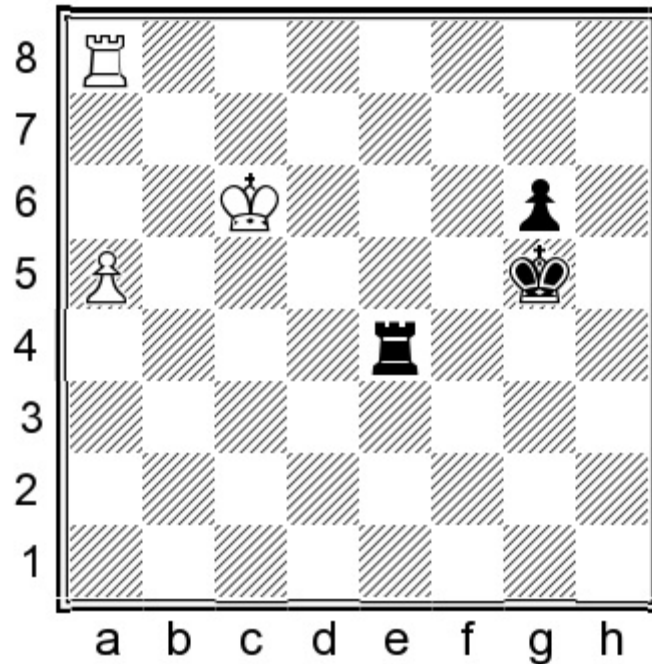
The pawn is unstoppable.

3

Melkumyan H

Mikaelyan A

Erevan, 2014

**106...♖a4**

Very simple was to use Vancura's method of attack from the side: 106...♖e5 107.a6 ♖e6+ 108.♔b5 ♖e5+ 109.♔c4 ♖e6 110.a7 ♖a6 111.♔b5 ♖a1 112.♔b6 ♖b1+=

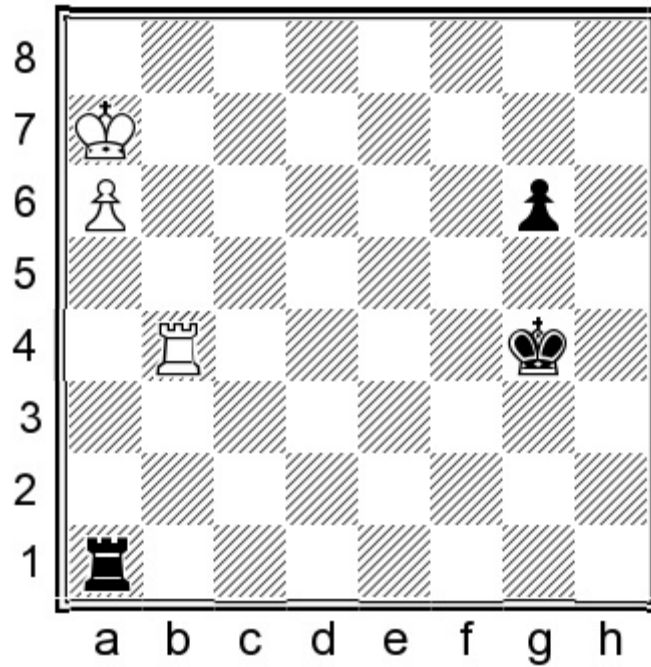
106...♖a4 107.a6 ♖a1

Leading to an easy draw here was the 'normal way': 107...♔g4 108.♔b6 g5 109.a7 ♔f3 110.♖f8+ ♔e3 (110...♔g2? 111.♖f5) 111.a8=♚ ♖xa8 112.♖xa8 g4 113.♔c5 g3 114.♖g8 ♔f2 115.♔d4 g2

108.♔b6 ♖b1+

To the same draw led 108...♔g4 109.a7 g5 110.♖f8 ♖xa7 111.♔xa7 ♔h3 112.♔b6 g4 113.♔c5 g3 114.♔d4 g2

109.♔a7 ♔g4 110.♖b8 ♖a1 111.♖b4+



111...♔h3?

The final chance for a half-point was 111...♔f3 112.♖b5 ♔f4 113.♔b6 ♖xa6+ 114.♔xa6 g5

112.♖b5! ♔h4 113.♔b6 g5

Now it is too late: 113...♖xa6+ 114.♔xa6 g5 115.♔b6 g4 116.♔c5 g3 117.♔d4 g2 118.♖b1 ♔g3 119.♔e3

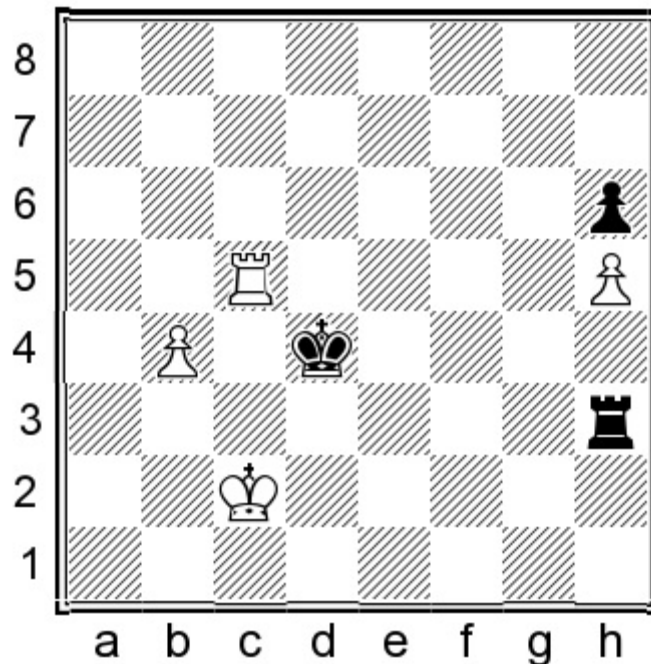
114.♖a5 ♖b1+ 115.♔c7 ♖c1+ 116.♔d7 ♖d1+ 117.♔e7 ♖e1+ 118.♔f7 ♖f1+ 119.♔g7 ♖d1 120.a7 ♖d8 121.a8=♙ ♖xa8 122.♖xa8 g4 1-0

4

H. Melkumyan

L. Fressinet

Erevan, 2014



A critical position.

57...♔e4?

Losing was 57...♖f3 58.♞c6 ♜f5 (58...♞h3 59.♞xh6 ♔c4 60.♞h8 ♞h2+ 61.♔d1 ♔d3 62.♔e1 ♔e3 63.♔f1 ♔f3 64.♞f8+ ♔e4 65.♞e8+ ♔f3 (65...♔d4 66.♞h8 ♔e3 67.♔g1 ♞h4 68.h6+-) 66.♔e1 ♞xh5 67.♔d2 with a winning endgame with a 'cut-off' king.) 59.♞xh6 ♔c4 60.♞h8 ♔xb4 61.h6 ♜f7 62.♔d3;

The only chance was 57...♞e3 58.♞c6 ♞e5 59.♞xh6 ♔c4 60.♞h8 ♔xb4 61.h6 ♞e7 62.h7 ♞b7! Check is not possible, so... draw!

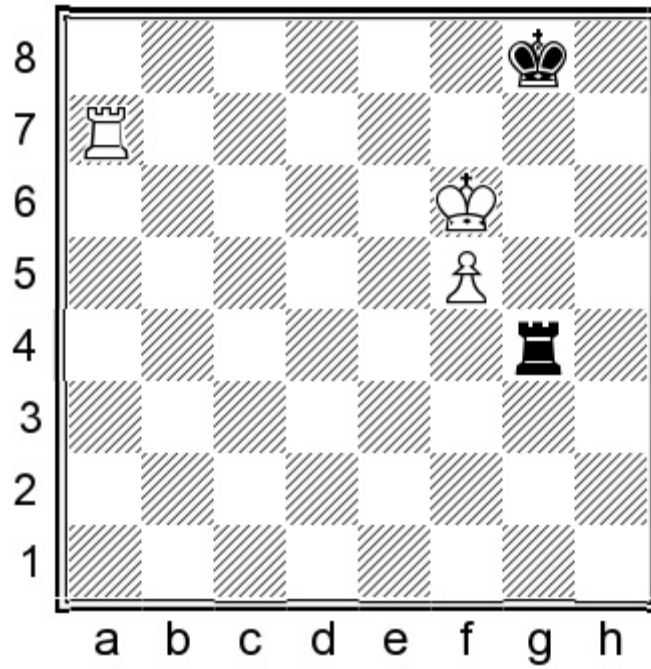
57...♔e4? 58.♞c4+ ♔d5 59.♞c3 ♞h1 60.♔b3 ♔d4 61.♞c4+ ♔d5 62.♞c5+ ♔d4 63.♔a4 ♞h4 64.♔b5 ♞h1 65.♔b6 ♜f1 66.b5 ♞f6+ 67.♞c6 ♜f5 68.♞xh6 ♔c4 69.♔a6 ♞xb5 70.♞c6+ ♔b4 71.♞b6 1-0

5

T. Radjabov

D. Swiercz

Warsaw, 2013



59...♖b4

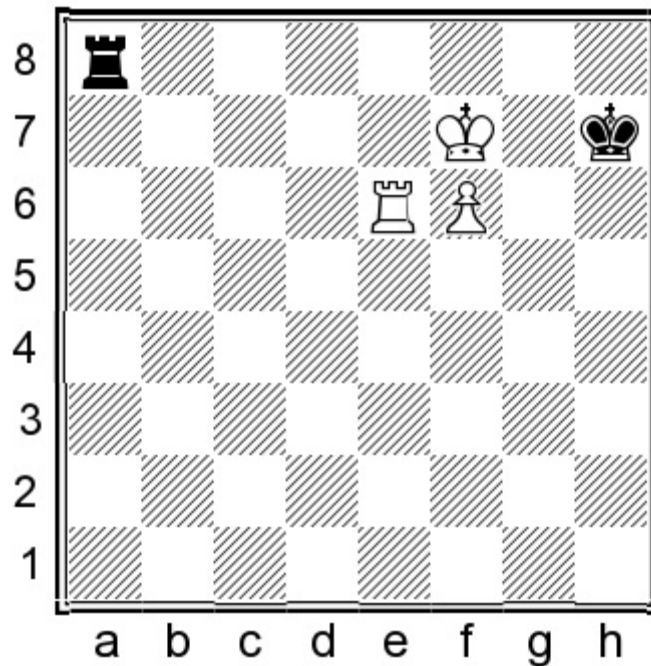
Once more the 'sticking method' was simplest:

59...♖f4 60.♞a8+ ♔h7 61.♕e6 ♔g7 62.♞a7+ ♔g8

59...♖b4 60.♞a8+ ♔h7 61.♞e8 ♖b1

61...♞b6+ 62.♕f7 ♞b5 63.f6

62.♕f7 ♞a1 63.f6 ♞a7+ 64.♞e7 ♞a8 65.♞e6



65...♖a7+?

The young and strong Grandmaster did not know that with this 'long-side method' the key thing is to control the back rank. This is the target for both players!

So 65...♔h6 66.♕e7 ♔g6 67.f7+ ♔g7 or 65...♖b8= both would have held the draw.

66.♕f8!

Now White is winning and Radjabov demonstrates the right technique.

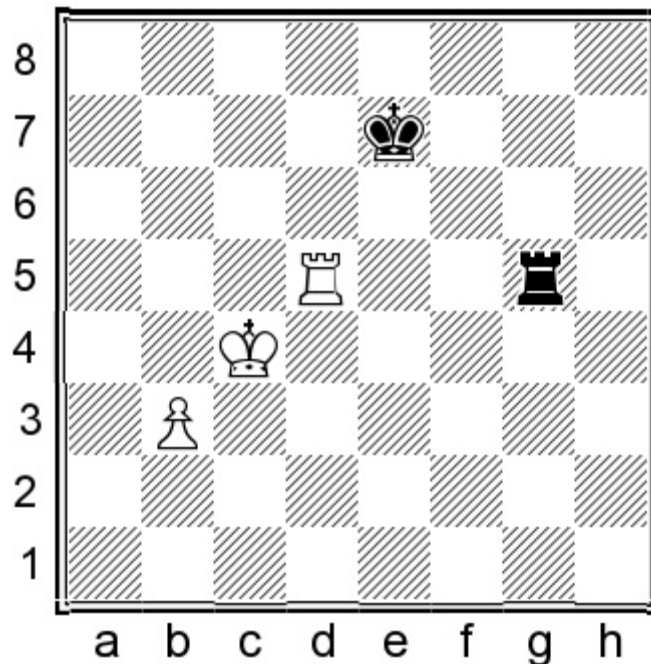
66...♖a8+ 67.♖e8 ♖a6 68.f7 ♖a7 69.♖e1 ♖a8+ 70.♕e7 ♖a7+ 71.♕f6 ♖a6+ 72.♖e6 ♖a8 73.♖e8 ♖a6+ 74.♕e5 1-0

6

Bastidas E. Rodriguez

K. Lie

Istanbul, 2000



49...♖g3?

It is a problem when even strong players forget about classical methods such as the 'frontal attack'.

49...♖g8! 50.b4 ♖c8+ 51.♖c5 (51.♔b5 ♖b8+ 52.♔a4 ♔e6 53.♖c5 ♔d6) 51...♔d7= and the pawn ending is drawn.

49...♖g3? 50.b4 ♔e6 51.♖d1 ♖g5 52.b5 ♔e7 53.♔b4

It makes no great difference now, but more precise was the direct 53.b6.

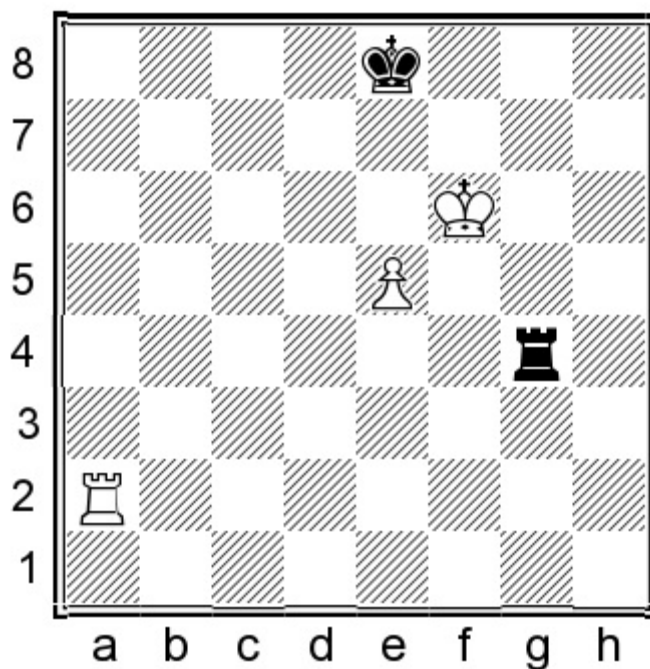
53...♔e8 54.♕a5 ♖g6 55.b6 ♖g2 56.♞d4 ♞a2+ 57.♕b5 ♞b2+ 58.♞b4 ♞xb4+ 59.♕xb4 ♕d7 60.♕b5 ♕d8 61.♕a6 1-0

7

P. Tregubov

Z. Almasi

Yerevan, 2014



54...♞f4+??

The correct way to draw was 54...♞e4 55.♕e6 ♕f8 56.♞a8+ ♕g7 57.♕d6 ♕f7 This sticking method is in many cases a problem for all the top players: Carlsen himself did not perform it correctly against Aronian a few years ago!

54...♞f4+?? 55.♕e6 ♕f8 56.♞a8+ ♕g7 57.♕e7

Now Almasi understood that his rook will be ‘too short’. If it was possible to attack White’s king with checks from the a-file, then it would be a draw!

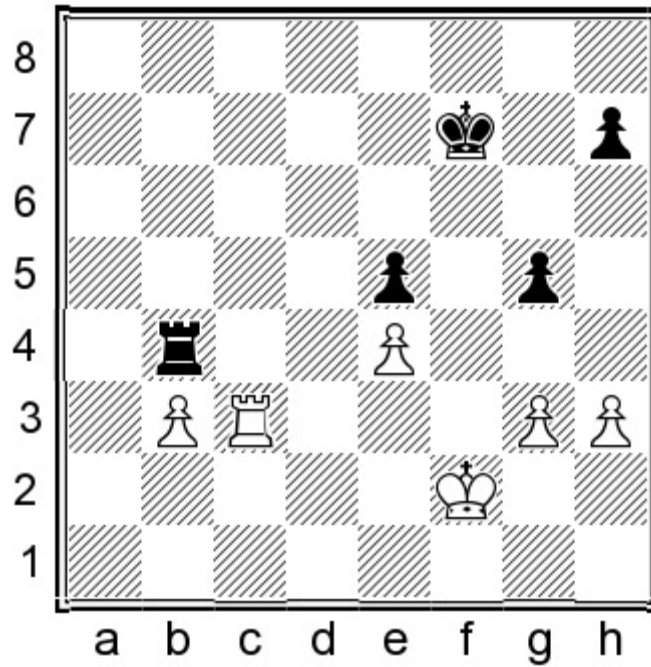
57...♞b4 58.e6 ♞b7+ 59.♕d6 ♞b6+ 60.♕d7 ♞b7+ 61.♕c6 ♞e7 62.♕d6 ♞b7 63.e7 1-0

8

A. Goryachkina

C. Unat

Skopje, 2017



It was preferable to keep the active rook in its attacking position and to play 38...h5. However, the hasty...

38...♖xe4??

...led to a disaster:

39.♖c4!

The black rook is ‘trapped’! Transitioning into a pawn ending with an outside passed pawn gives White a clearly won position.

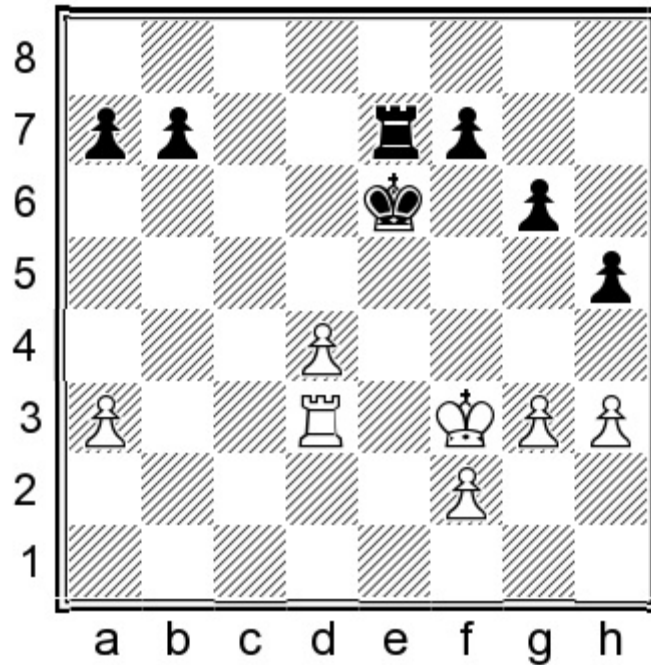
39...♖xc4 40.bxc4 h5 41.♔f3 ♔e6 42.♔e4 ♔d6 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 ♔c5 45.♔xe5 ♔xc4 46.♔f5 ♔d5 47.♔xg5 1-0

9

Z. Andriasian

D. Navara

Yerevan, 2014



41.♖e3+

Very bad was 41.d5+ ♔d6 42.♕f4 ♖e5

41.♖e3+ ♔d6 42.♕e2

The immediate transition into a pawn endgame would give Black chances to deflect White's king by creating a passed pawn on the queenside: 42.♖xe7 ♕xe7 43.♕e4 ♕d6 44.d5 (44.a4 b6 45.♕d3 ♕d5 46.g4 hxg4 47.hxg4 g5 48.♕e3 a6 49.♕d3 b5 50.axb5 axb5 51.♕c3 b4+ 52.♕xb4 ♕xd4 53.♕b5 ♕e4 54.♕c5 ♕f3) 44...b5 45.♕d4 (45.h4 f6 46.♕d4 g5 47.f3 gxh4 48.gxh4 f5 49.f4 a5) 45...g5 46.f3 f5 47.g4 hxg4 48.hxg4 fxg4 49.fxg4 a5 50.♕e4 b4 Deflecting White's king from the e5-pawn. Of no help was 42.h4 ♖xe3+ 43.fxe3 ♕d5 44.♕e2 ♕c4

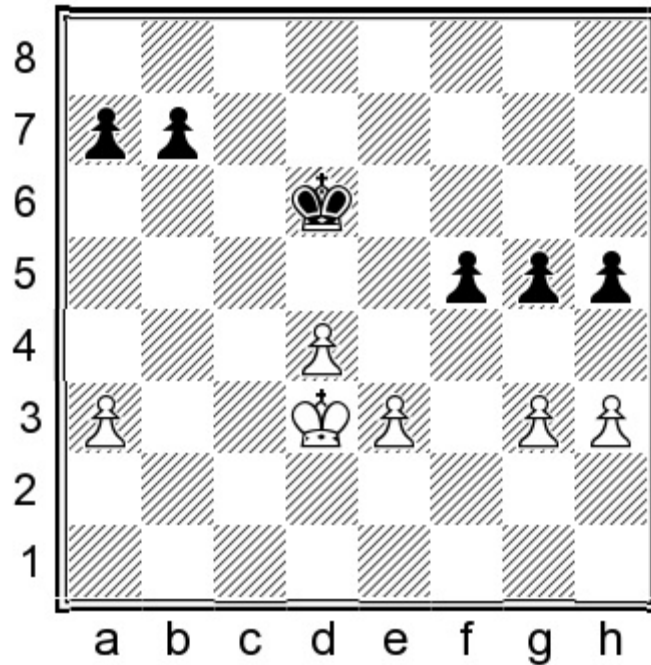
42...g5

The rook exchange 42...♖xe3+ would be premature in view of 43.fxe3 f5 44.♕d3 ♕d5 45.♕c3 b6 46.h4 a6 47.a4 and now Black's king cannot come to the e3-pawn to create a passed pawn on the f-file.

43.♕d3

Much more logical was to try to control the f5-square. 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4

43...♖xe3+ 44.fxe3 f5



45.h4?

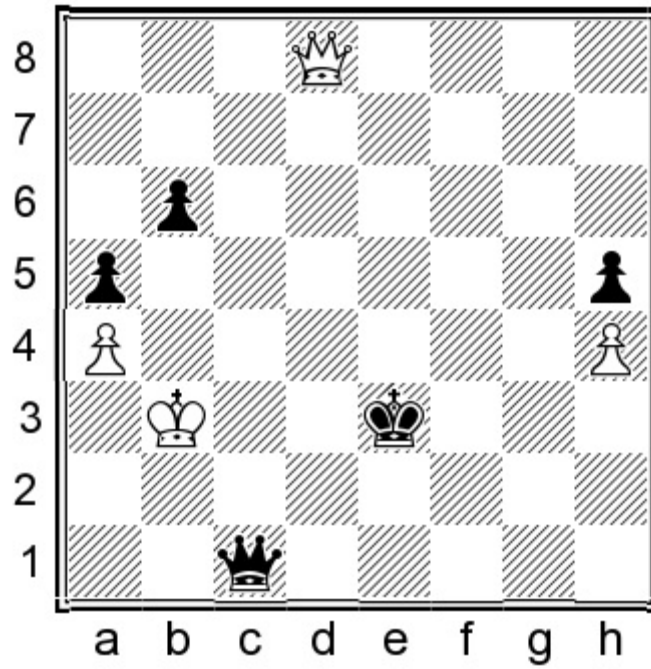
Losing was 45.e4 fxe4+ 46.♔xe4 b5 47.g4 hxg4 48.hxg4 a5 49.♔e3 ♔d5 50.♔d3 b4 51.a4 b3 52.♔c3 b2 53.♔xb2 ♔xd4 54.♔b3 ♔d3 55.♔b2 ♔c4 56.♔c2 ♔b4;

Slightly better for White was 45.♔c4 b6 46.a4 a6 47.♔c3 ♔d5 48.h4 gxh4 49.gxh4 ♔e4 50.♔c4 ♔xe3 51.d5 f4 52.d6 f3 53.d7 f2 54.d8=♚ f1=♚+ 55.♔c3 ♚c1+ 56.♔b3 ♚c5 but even here there are no great hopes for a draw. 57.♚g5+ ♔f3 58.♔a2 although Black still has to overcome White's attack on the h5-pawn, which is not easy to do.

45...gxh4 46.gxh4 ♔d5 47.a4

47.♔c3 a6 48.♔d3 b6 49.♔c3 a5 50.a4 ♔e4 would lead to the game continuation.

47...b6 48.♔c3 a6 49.♔d3 a5 50.♔c3 ♔e4 51.♔c4 ♔xe3 52.d5 f4 53.d6 f3 54.d7 f2 55.d8=♚ f1=♚+ 56.♔c3 ♚c1+ 57.♔b3



57...♔b1+

Now the queen endgame is much worse than in the previous variation.

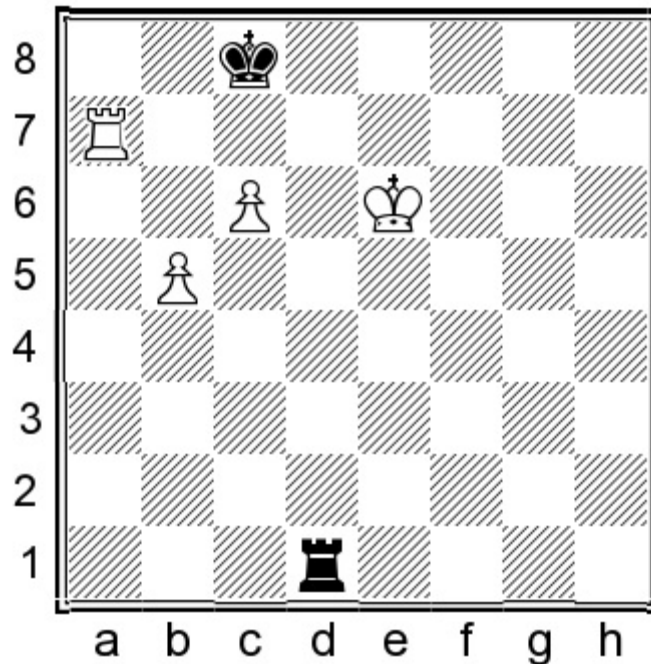
58.♔c3 ♕b4+ 59.♔c2 ♕xa4+ 60.♔b1 ♕b3+ 61.♔a1 ♕a3+ 62.♔b1 ♕d3+ 0-1

10

H. Olafsson

B. Thorfinsson

Reykjavik, 2017



1.♖d7 ♜xd7 2.cxd7+ ♔d8

Suddenly Helgi realized that both moves lead to a draw! And in total disgust just threw the pieces!

3.b6

3.♔d6 is also stalemate;

His opponent was terribly happy, but a few days later in the shower he suddenly started to think about his achievement and found the answer! 3.♔d5 ♜xd7 4.b6 ♔d8 5.♔d6 ♜c8 6.♔c6 ♜b8 7.b7+-

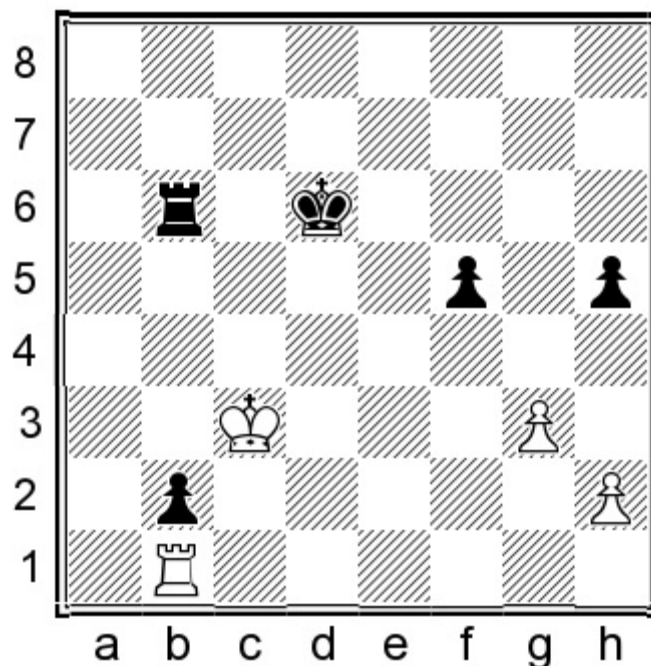
1/2

11

A. Goryachkina

K. Kulon

European Women's TCh, 2017



49...♔e5?

Although this seems very natural, the only winning chance lay in 49...h4! 50.gxh4 (50.♖xb2 ♜xb2 51.♔xb2 hxg3 52.hxg3 ♔d5 53.♔c3 ♔e4 54.♔d2 ♔f3) 50...f4 51.♔d4 ♔e6 52.h5 ♔f6 53.h4 ♔f5 54.♔c3 (54.h6 ♔g6 55.♔e4 ♜b4+ 56.♔f3 ♔xh6 57.♔g4 ♔g6 58.h5+ ♔h6 59.♔h4 f3+ 60.♔g3 ♜b3 61.♔g4 f2) 54...♔g4 55.h6 ♜xh6 56.♖xb2 f3 57.♔d2 ♔g3 58.♔e1 ♜xh4 59.♜b8 f2+

49...♔e5? 50.♖xb2 ♜xb2 51.♔xb2 ♔e4 52.♔c3 ♔e3 53.♔c4 h4

The problem is that the endgame is a draw after the natural 53...♔f2 54.♔d3 ♔g2 55.♔e2 ♔xh2

56.♔f2 ♖h3 57.♔f3

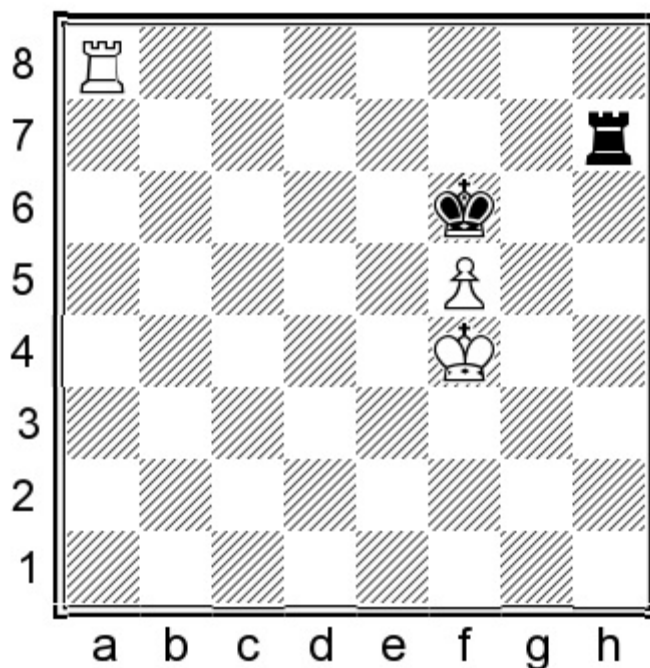
54.♔d5 hxg3 55.hxg3 f4 56.gxf4 ♔xf4 1/2

12

J. Dorfman

A. Onischuk

Cap d'Agde-B, 2000



74.♖a6+

Ribli writes that he thinks Black overlooked this move!

74...♔g7 75.♖a7+ ♔g8??

How is it possible that three great players did not know the famous stalemate from the Smyslov-Bernstein game??

75...♔f6 76.♖xh7

76.♖xh7

The pawn endgame is easily lost.

76...♔xh7 77.♔e5 ♔g7

77...♔g8 78.♔e6 ♔f8 79.♔f6+-

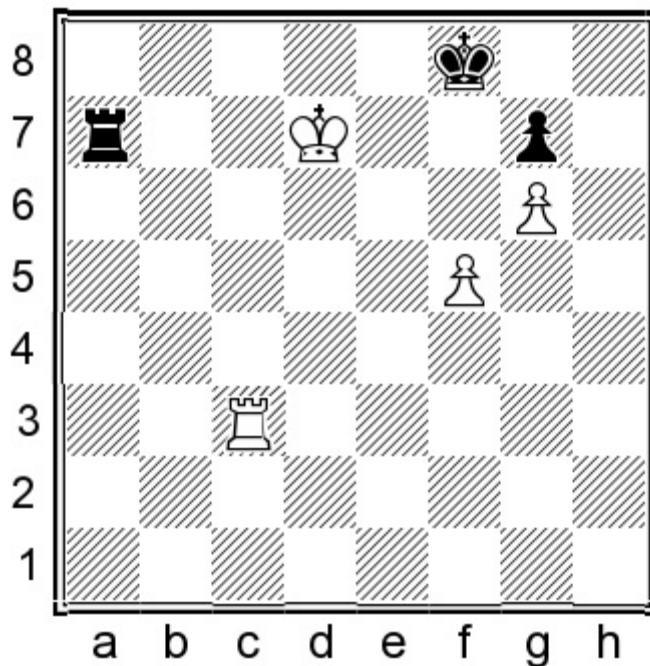
78.♔e6 ♔f8 79.♔f6 1-0

13

A. Danin

J. Stopa

Wunsiedel Open, 2011



It is possible to lose a pawn endgame even with an extra pawn!

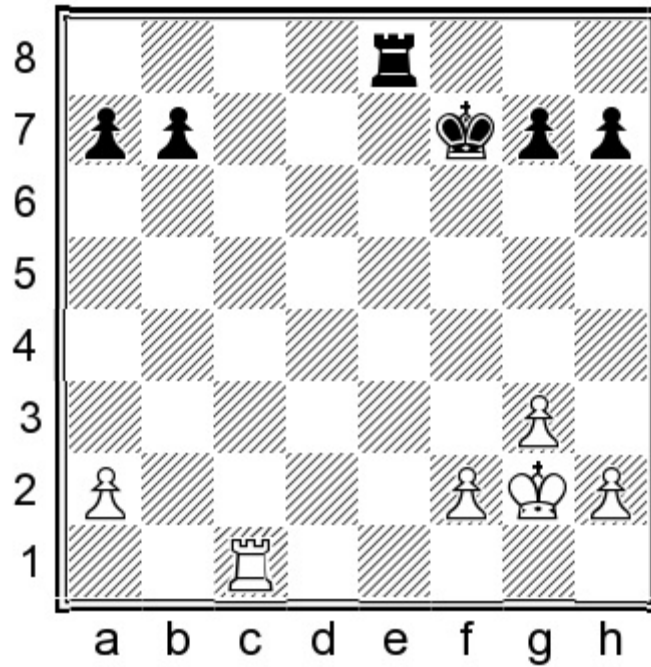
113. ♖c7?? ♜xc7+ 114. ♔xc7 ♕e7 115. ♔c6 ♕f6 116. ♔d5 ♕xf5 117. ♔d4 ♕xg6 118. ♔e4 ♕g5 119. ♔f3 ♕h4 120. ♔g2 ♕g4 121. ♔h2 0-1

14

A. Grischuk

V. Laznicka

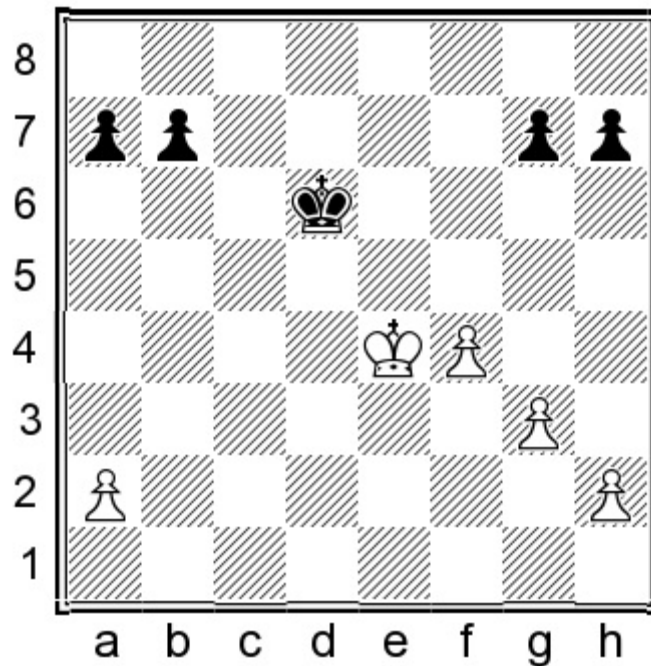
Porto Carras, 2011



34...♙e6?

Laznicka tries to play for a win using his 30 second increments! 34...♞e2 instead maintains a simple draw.

34...♙e6? 35.♞e1+ ♚d7 36.♞xe8 ♙xe8 37.♙f3 ♙d7 38.♙e4 ♙d6 39.f4



39...h5??

There is a general rule — don't play on the flank where you are weaker! Here Black creates terrible

weaknesses around his own pawns.

There were a few simple ways to draw, even 39...b5 40.g4 g6 41.♔d4 h5 42.gxh5 gxh5 43.♕c3 ♕e6 44.♕b4 ♕f5 45.♕xb5 ♕xf4

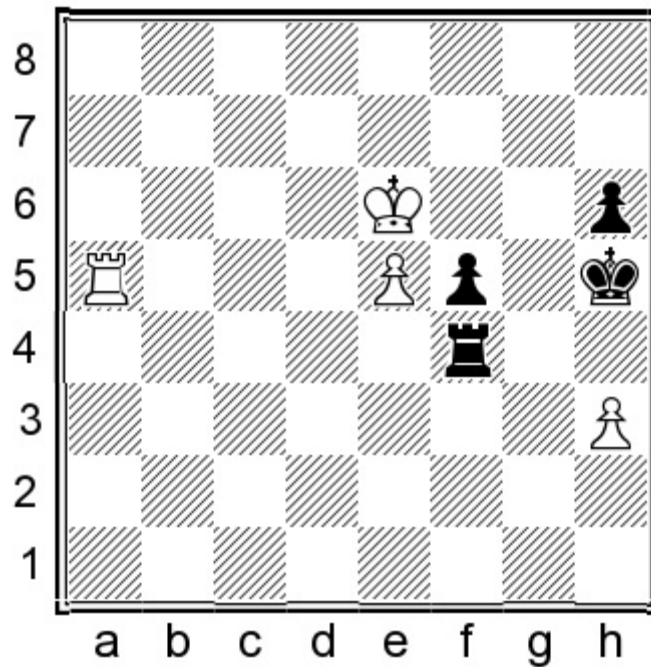
40.♕f5! ♕e7 41.♕g6 ♕f8 42.♕xh5 1-0

15

A. Paramzina

I. Osmak

Tarvisio, 2017



55...♕g6?

It was not possible to allow her opponent's king to come to f6, but better was 55...♕g5! 56.♕f7 (56.♞a1 ♞f3 57.♞g1+ ♕h4 58.♕f6 ♕xh3 59.e6 f4 60.e7 (60.♞e1 ♞a3 61.e7 ♞a8 62.e8=♞ ♞xe8 63.♞xe8 f3 64.♞e3) 60...♞e3) 56...♞f3 57.e6 ♞xh3 58.♞e5 (58.e7 ♞e3 59.♞a3 ♞xe7+ 60.♕xe7 h5! 61.♕e6 h4 62.♕e5 ♕g4 63.♞a8 h3 64.♞g8+ ♕f3=) 58...♞a3 59.e7 ♞a7 60.♕f8 ♞xe7 (60...♞a8+ 61.e8=♞ ♞xe8+ 62.♞xe8 f4 63.♕f7 f3 64.♕e6 ♕g4 65.♞f8 ♕g3 66.♕e5 f2 67.♕e4 ♕g2) 61.♕xe7 ♕g4 62.♕f6 f4 63.♞f5 h5 64.♕e5 h4 65.♞xf4+ ♕g3 66.♞f8 h3 67.♞g8+ ♕f2 68.♞h8 ♕g2 69.♕f4 h2;

Also losing was 55...♞f3 56.♕f6 ♞xh3 57.e6 ♞b3 58.♕xf5 ♕h4 59.e7 ♞b8 60.♕f6 (60.♕g6)

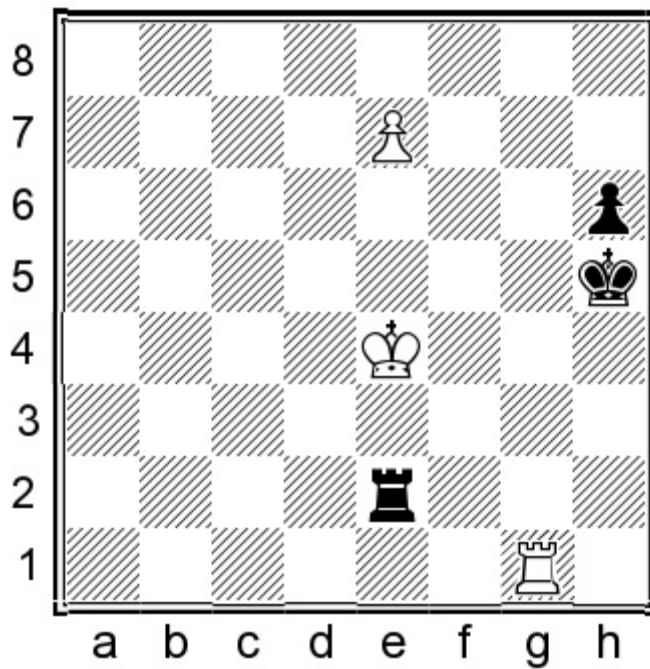
55...♕g6? 56.♞a1

Simpler was 56.♞a3! ♞e4 57.♞g3+

56...♞f3 57.♞g1+ ♕h5 58.♕f6 ♞xh3 59.e6 ♞e3 60.♕xf5 ♞f3+

60...♔h4 61.♖g4+ (61.♕f4) 61...♕h3 62.♗e4

61.♕e4 ♖f2 62.e7 ♗e2+



63.♕f5!

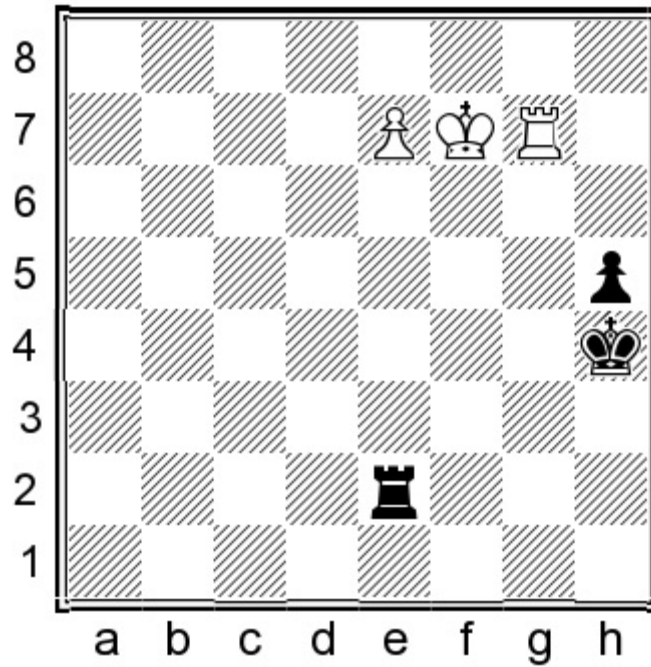
With this mating threat it is possible to win important time!

63...♖f2+ 64.♕e6 ♗e2+ 65.♕f7 ♖f2+ 66.♕g8 ♗e2 67.♗g7 ♕h4 68.♕f7

68.♕f8

68...h5

68...♖f2+ 69.♕g8 ♗e2 70.♕f8



69. ♖g6

69. e8=♔ ♖xe8 70. ♔xe8 ♕h3 71. ♔f7 h4 72. ♔f6 ♕h2 73. ♔f5 h3 74. ♔f4 ♕h1 75. ♔g3 h2 76. ♖a7

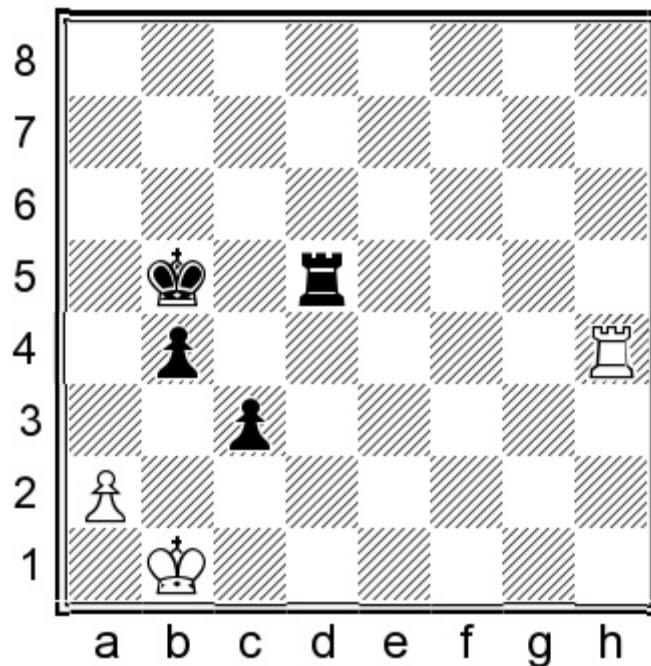
69... ♖xe7+ 70. ♔xe7 ♕h3 71. ♔f6 h4 72. ♔g5 ♕g3 73. ♔h5+ ♕h3 74. ♖g4 1-0

16

Delgado M. Crespo

A. Goryachkina

European Women's TCh, 2017



73. ♖g4?

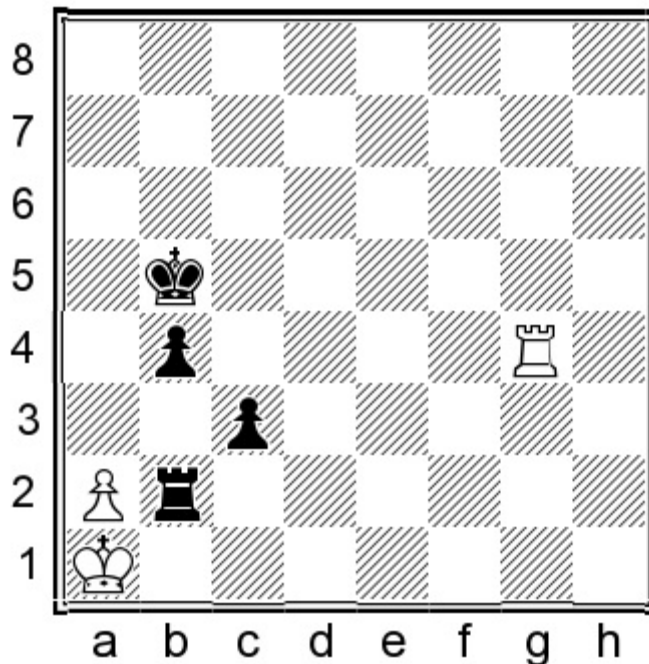
It is usually wrong to wait. As we mentioned previously, the position of the rook is crucial in many cases, and here it was necessary to attack from the rear.

73. ♖h8 ♖d1+ 74. ♔c2 ♖d2+ 75. ♔b1 ♖b2+ 76. ♔a1 ♖g2 (76... ♔c4 77. ♖h4+ ♔d3 78. ♖h3+ ♔d2 (78... ♔d4 79. ♖h4+ ♔e3 80. ♖h3+ ♔f4 81. ♖h4+ ♔g3 82. ♖h7) 79. ♖h2+ ♔c1 80. ♖h1+) 77. ♔b1 ♔c4 78. ♖h4+ One possible approach, but the simplest way to hold was 78. ♖c8+ ♔d3 79. ♖d8+ ♔e2 80. ♖e8+ ♔d1 81. ♖d8+ ♖d2; Wrong, however, would be 78. ♖h1 ♖b2+ 79. ♔a1 ♖e2 80. ♔b1 ♖b3 81. ♖h4+ ♔d3 82. ♖xb3 ♖e1+ 83. ♔a2 ♖c2) 78... ♔d3 79. ♖h3+ ♔d2 80. ♖h1

73. ♖g4? ♖d1+ 74. ♔c2 ♖d2+

Possible was 74... ♖a1 75. ♔b3 ♖b1+ 76. ♔c2 ♖b2+

75. ♔b1 ♖b2+ 76. ♔a1



76... ♔a4?

The win was not far off after 76... ♖f2 77. ♔b1 ♖f1+ 78. ♔c2 ♖a1 79. ♔b3 ♖b1+ 80. ♔c2 ♖b2+

77. ♖g5?

The worst possible place for the rook-it must always have space! The draw was not complicated:

77. ♖g8 ♖f2 78. ♔b1

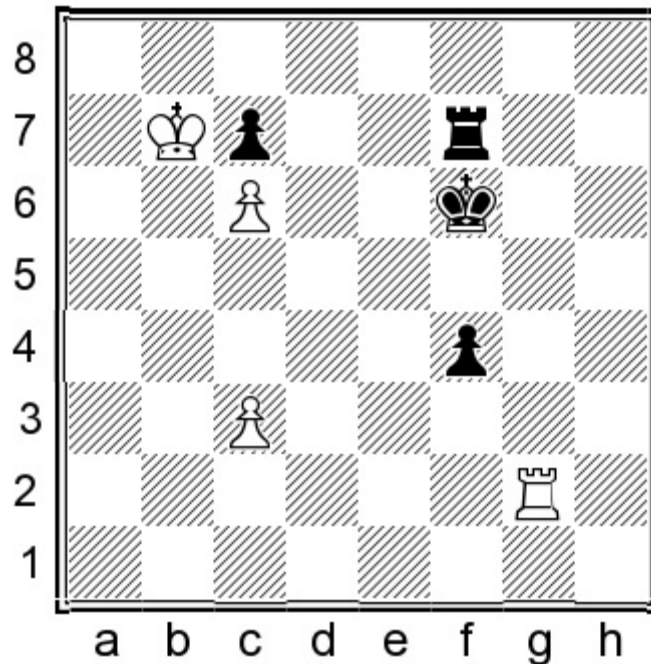
77... ♖e2 78. ♔b1 ♖e1+ 79. ♔c2 ♖a1 80. ♖g8 ♖xa2+ 81. ♔b1 ♖b2+ 82. ♔a1 ♔b3 83. ♖g3 ♖d2 84. ♖g1 ♖a2+ 0-1

17

O. Girya

L. Javakhishvili

European Women's TCh, 2017



59.♖d2??

White had to stop the f-pawn at once, forcing the opponent's king to lose touch with its rook — 59.♖f2 ♔e5 60.♗e2+ ♔f5 61.♗f2 ♔g4 (61...♔e4 62.♗d2 f3 63.♗d7 ♖f8 64.♔xc7 f2 65.♗d1 f1=♚ 66.♗xf1 ♗xf1 67.♔d6 ♗f6+ 68.♔d7 ♔d5 69.c7 (69.c4+ ♔c5 70.c7 ♗f7+ 71.♔d8 ♔d6 72.c5+ ♔d5 73.c8=♚ ♗f8+ 74.♔d7 ♗xc8 75.♔xc8 ♔xc5)) 62.♗g2+ ♔h3 63.♗d2 f3 64.♗d7

59.♗d2?? f3–+ 60.c4 ♔e5 61.c5

61.♗d7 ♔e6 (61...♗f6 62.♔xc7 f2 63.♗d1 f1=♚ 64.♗xf1 ♗xf1 65.♔d7 (65.♔d8 ♔d6) 65...♗f7+ 66.♔d8 ♔d6) 62.♗xf7 ♔xf7 63.♔xc7 f2 64.♔b7 f1=♚ 65.c7 ♚f3+ 66.♔b8 ♚b3+ 67.♔a8 ♚a4+ 68.♔b7 ♚b4+ 69.♔c6 ♚f8 70.♔b7 ♚e7 71.♔b8 ♚d6 72.♔b7

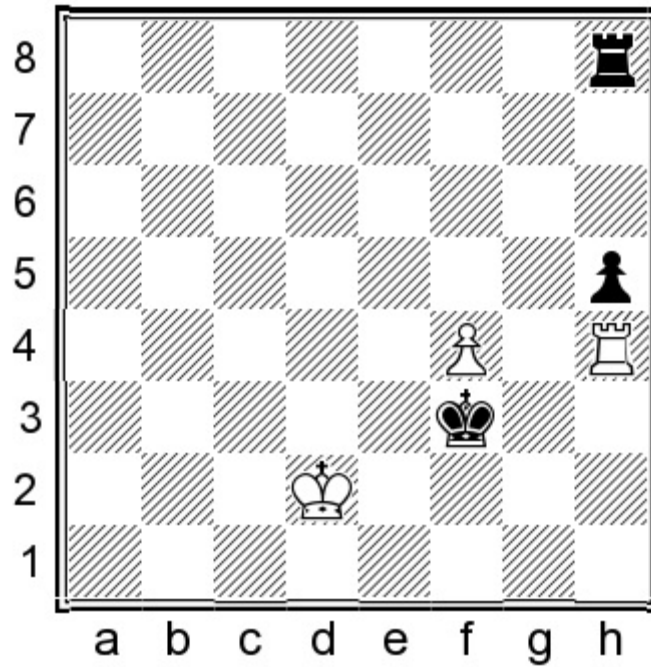
61...f2 62.♗xf2 ♗xf2 63.♔xc7 ♔d5 64.♔b7 ♗b2+ 65.♔c7 ♔xc5 66.♔d7 ♗d2+ 0–1

18

E. Cvitan

T. Gara

European Women's TCh, 2017



78.♔e1??

A more logical approach was 78.f5 ♔g3 79.♖h1 h4 80.♔e3 ♜e8+ 81.♔d4 h3 82.♔d5 h2 83.f6 ♔g2 84.♞xh2+ ♔xh2 85.f7 ♞f8 86.♔e6 drawing comfortably.

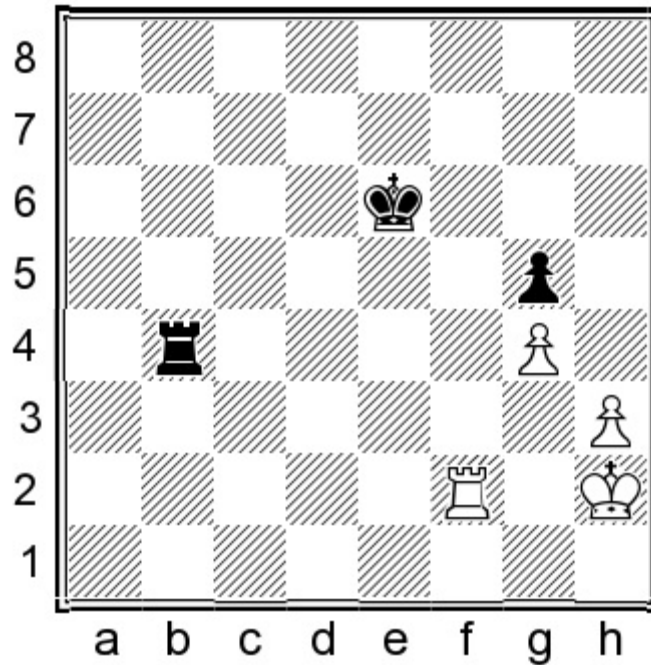
78.♔e1?? ♔g3 79.♖h1 h4 80.♞g1+ ♔f3 81.f5 h3 82.♞f1+ ♔g2 83.f6 ♜e8+ 0-1

19

Z. Kozul

A. Mikhalchishin

Bled, 1996



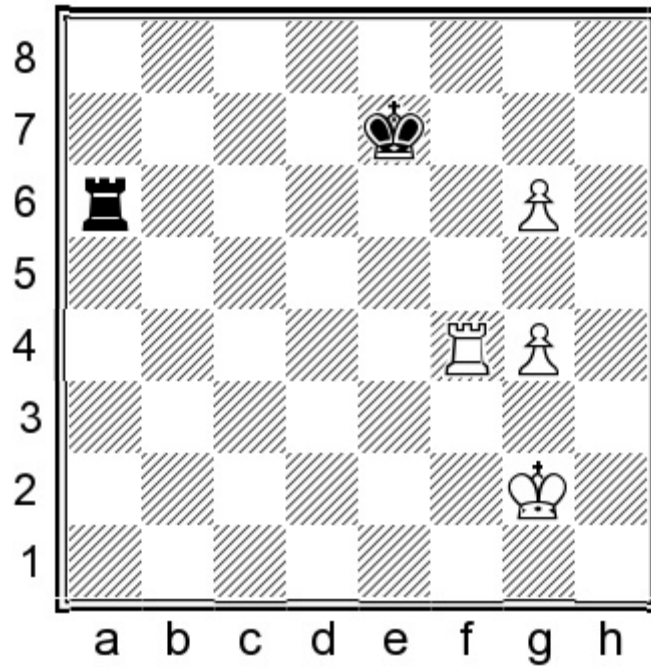
73...♖b5 74.♖f3 ♖b2+ 75.♔g3 ♖d2?

Losing concentration. There were two logical ways to draw: 75...♖b1 76.h4 ♖g1+ 77.♔h3 ♖h1+; and 75...♖b8 with preparation of the frontal attack: 76.h4 gxh4+ 77.♔xh4 ♖h8+ 78.♔g5 ♖g8+ 79.♔h5 ♖h8+ 80.♔g6 ♖g8+

76.h4! ♖d1

A classically lost endgame appears after 76...gxh4+ 77.♔xh4 ♖d8 (77...♖d7 78.♔h5 ♖h7+ 79.♔g6 ♖h4 80.g5) 78.g5

77.hxg5 ♖g1+ 78.♔h3 ♔e7 79.♖f6 ♖h1+ 80.♔g3 ♖a1 81.♖f3 ♖g1+ 82.♔h3 ♖h1+ 83.♔g2 ♖a1 84.♖f4 ♖a3 85.g6 ♖a6



86. ♔g3! ♖f6

Another classical endgame position is seen after 86...♖xg6 87.♔h4 ♖g8 88.♔h5 ♖h8+ 89.♔g6 ♖g8+ 90.♔h7 ♖g5 91.♔h6

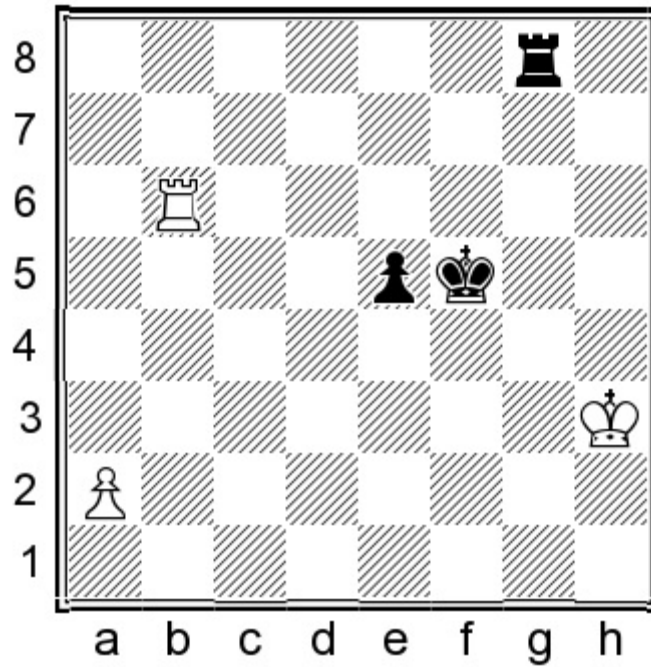
87.g7 ♖g6 88.♔h4 ♖xg7 89.♔h5 1-0

20

S. Franklin

T. Petenyi

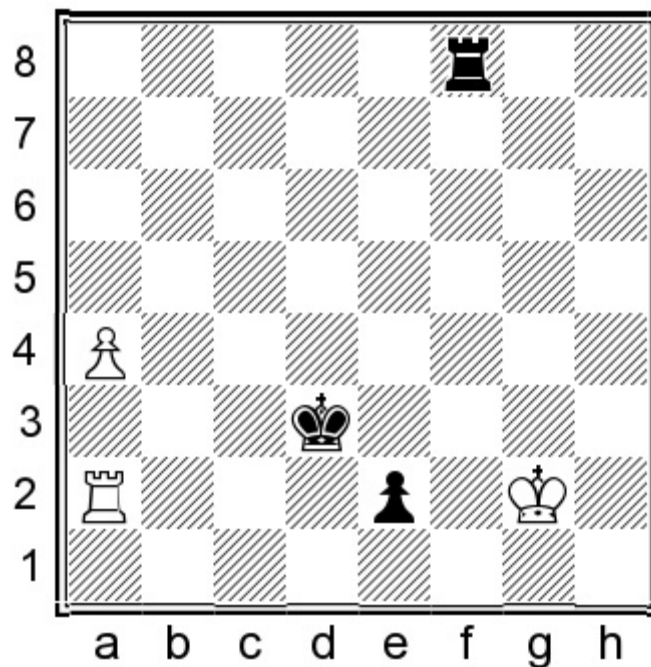
Kocaeli, 2013



43.♖b2?

Here there were a few normal ways to draw, the simplest being 43.a4! e4 (43...♖a8 44.♖b4 e4 45.♔g3) 44.a5 e3 45.♖b7 ♔f4 46.a6=

43.♖b2? ♔f4! 44.♖f2+ ♔e3 45.♖g2 ♖h8+ 46.♔g3 e4 47.a4 ♖a8 48.♔g4 ♔d3 49.♖a2 e3 50.♔f3 ♖f8+ 51.♔g2 e2



A remarkable case, as without the a-pawn White would have a check on the fourth rank, which would allow him to draw after ♖d1.

52. ♖a3+ ♔e4 53. ♖a1 ♖d8

Here without the a4-pawn the draw is achieved by ♔f2, ♖d1 ♖a4, ♔d3 ♖a3, ♔d2 ♖a2

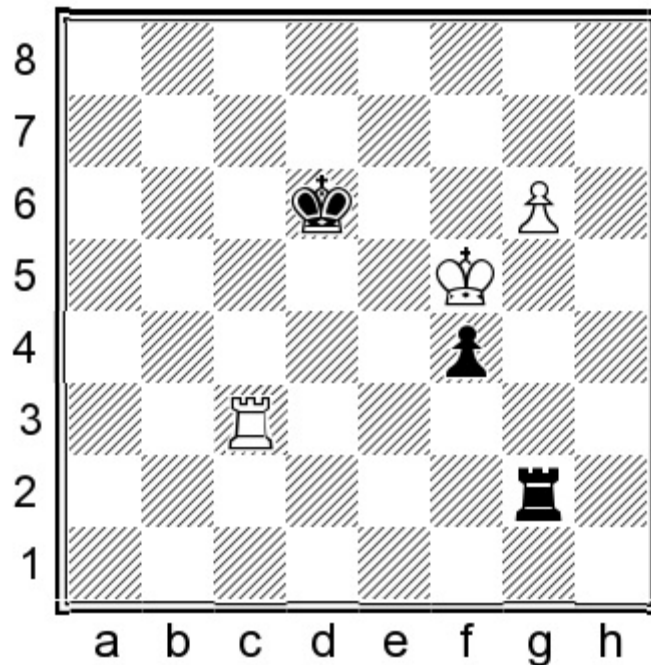
54. ♖e1 ♔e3 0-1

21

H. Hamdouchi

J. Gunnarsson

Rogaska Slatina, 2011



58.♖c4

Wrong would be 58.♔f6 ♔d5 59.g7 ♔e4 60.♔f7 f3 and Black draws comfortably.

58.♖c4 ♔e7?

58...f3 59.♖f4 f2 60.♔f6 ♔c5! Triangulation to avoid zugzwang 61.g7 ♔d5 62.♔f7 ♔e5 63.♖f6 ♔e4 64.g8=♖ ♖xg8 65.♔xg8 ♔e3 and the king will escort his pawn to the queening square.

59.♖c7+

Much more natural was 59.♖e4+ ♔f8 60.♔f6 f3 61.♖b4 ♔e8 62.g7 ♖g1 (Immediately losing is 62...f2 63.♖f4) 63.♖f4 ♖g3 64.♖f5 Zugzwang! 64...♔d7 65.♔f7

59...♔e8?

Correct was 59...♔d6 60.♖c3 ♔e7 61.♖f3 ♔f8 62.♔f6 ♖b2

60.♔f6 f3 61.♖f7?

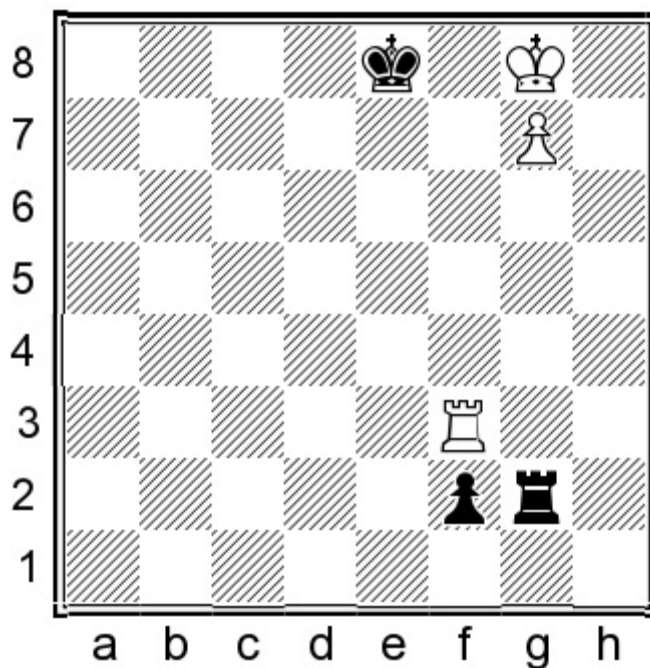
Leading to previous positions was the correct 61.♖e7+ ♔d8 62.♖e5 f2 63.♖f5 ♔e8 64.g7

61...f2 62.♔g7 ♕d8 63.♕h6 ♖h2+ 64.♔g7 ♗g2 65.♕h7 ♕e8

Now it will be very difficult to unlock the white king.

66.♔g7 ♕d8 67.♖f3 ♕e7 68.♕h7 ♖h2+ 69.♔g8 ♗g2 70.g7 ♕e8??

It was necessary to block White's king with 70...♖h2



71.♖f7??

Black could be forced into zugzwang after 71.♕h7 ♖h2+ 72.♔g6 ♗g2+ 73.♕f6 ♕d7 74.♕f7

71...♖h2!

Finally Black finds the correct way to keep the white king in the cage.

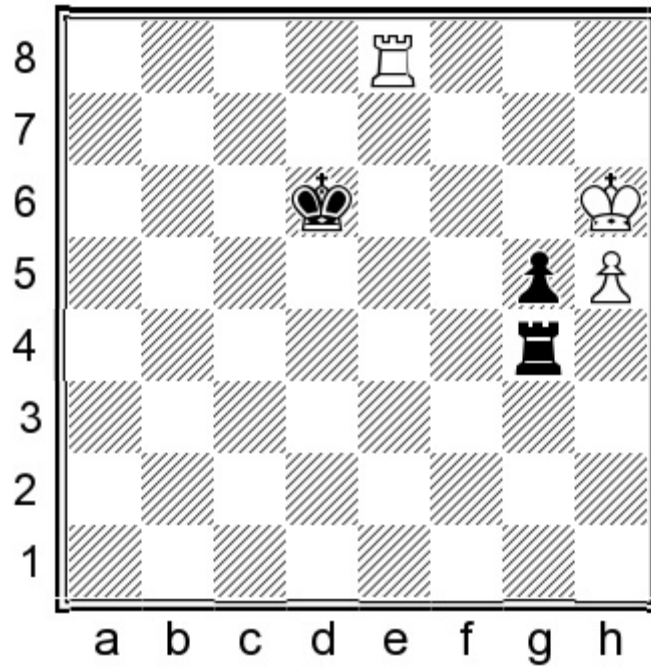
72.♖f4 ♕e7 73.♖e4+ ♕d7 74.♖d4+ ♕e7 75.♖d1 ♕e8 76.♖f1 ♕e7 77.♖a1 ♗g2 78.♖a7+ ♕e8 79.♖f7 ♖h2 1/2

22

R. Laxman

C. Liew-M

2014

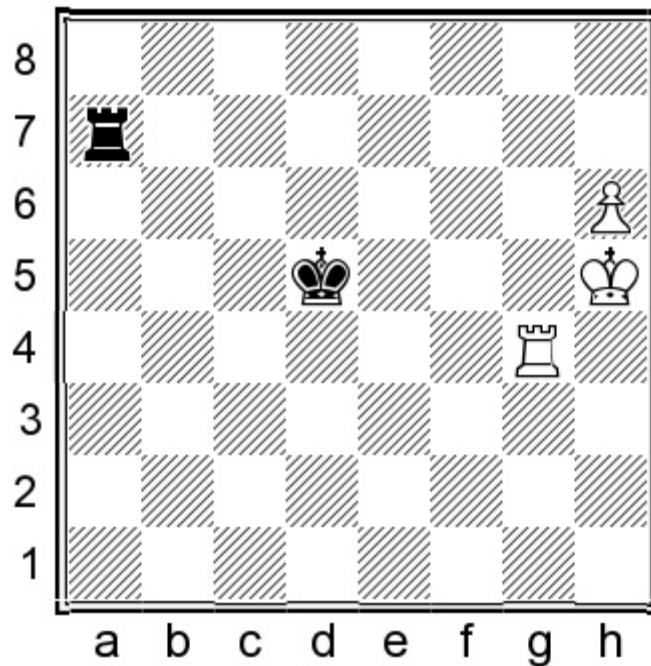


Without the g-pawn it is a draw! Here, however, it provides a perfect umbrella for White's king!

60...♖h4 61.♔g6

Or 61.♔xg5 ♖h1 62.h6 ♖g1+ 63.♔f6 ♖f1+ 64.♔g7 ♖g1+ 65.♔h8 ♔d7 66.♖g8+-

61...g4 62.♖e4 ♔d5 63.♖a4 ♖h2 64.♖xg4 ♖a2 65.h6 ♖a6+ 66.♔h5 ♖a7



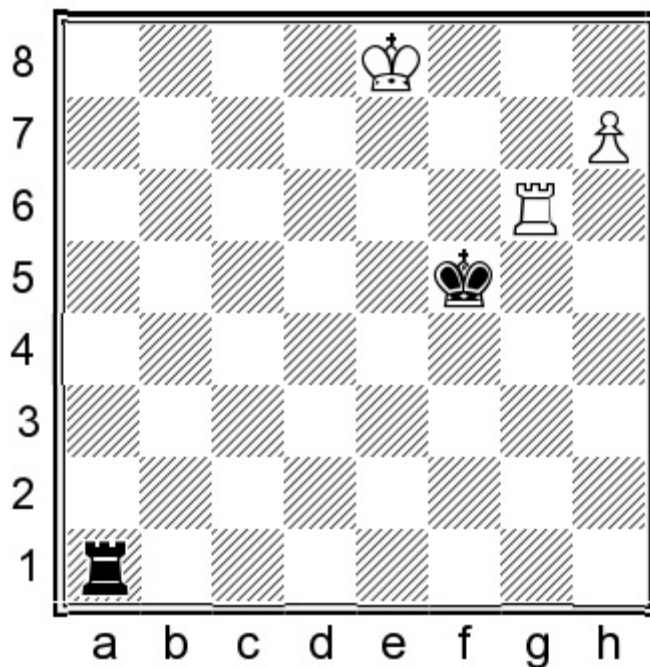
67.♖g7

67.♖h4

67...♖a1 68.h7 ♖h1+ 69.♔g6 ♕e6 70.♖g8 ♖g1+ 71.♔h6 ♖h1+ 72.♔g7 ♖g1+ 73.♔f8 ♖f1+ 74.♔e8 ♖a1

74...♖b1 75.♔d8 ♖d1+ 76.♔c8 ♖c1+ 77.♔b8 ♖b1+ 78.♔a7+-

75.♖g6+ ♔f5



76.♖h6??

76.♖f6+! ♔g5 77.♖f8+-

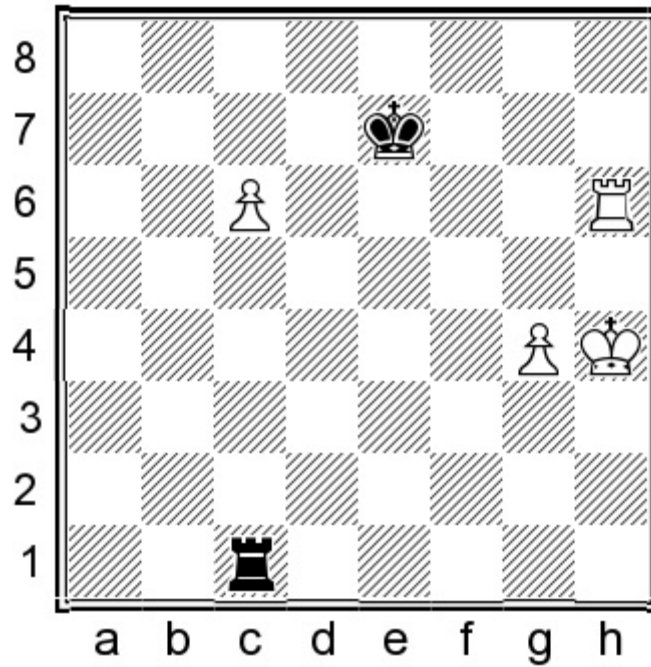
76...♖a8+ 77.♔e7 ♖a7+ 78.♔d8 ♖a8+ 79.♔d7 ♖a7+ 80.♔d8 ♖a8+ 81.♔c7 ♖h8 82.♔d6 ♔g5 83.♖h1
♔g6 84.♔e6 ♖xh7 85.♖g1+ 1/2

23

M. Lomineishvili

A. Galliamova

Adjara, 2015



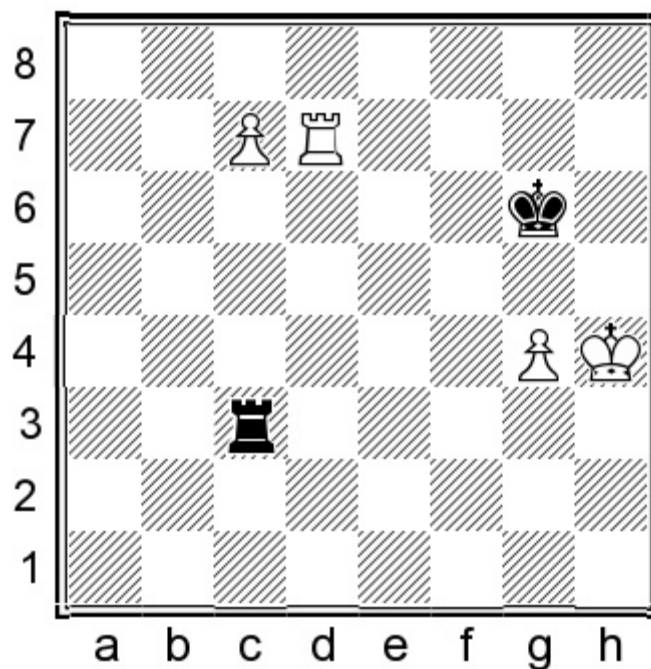
79.c7??

It is incredible, but the position that appears after this blunder is drawn, despite White's two extra pawns. There were a few easy ways to the win, but the move in the game appeared to be the simplest!

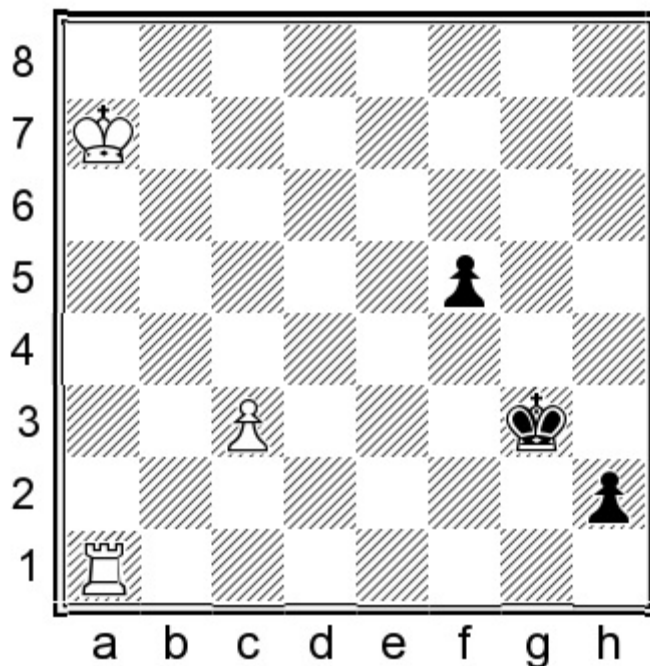
79.g5;

79.♔h5 ♚h1+ 80.♔g5 ♚c1 81.c7 ♚c5+ 82.♔h4 ♚c3 83.g5

79.c7?? ♔f7 80.♚h7+ ♔g6 81.♚d7 ♚c3!



This 'cutting the king' move obviously underlines the helpless position of White's rook.



61. ♔b6

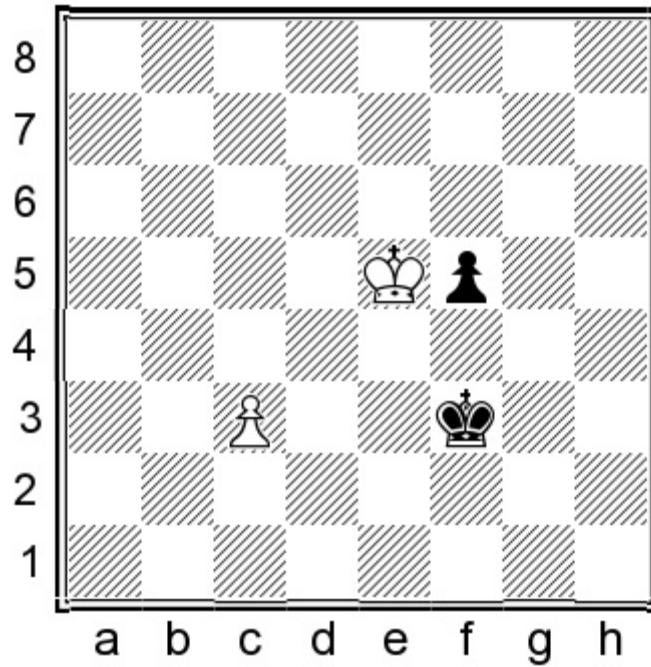
Here Grandmaster Eric Lobron resigned as he could not even imagine that he might be able to use Reti's incredible idea to save the game! And the annotations of the great trainer Makarichev agreed with Lobron's decision! Absolutely wrong! But the question is, how was a strong Grandmaster unable to calculate a long, but rather easy, line?

Svidler saw that the direct pawn push is not winning: 61.c4?? f4 62.c5 f3 63.c6 ♔g2 64.c7 h1=♚ 65.♞xh1 ♔xh1 66.c8=♚ f2=

61. ♔b6 ♔g2

Makarichev only considered the line 61...f4 62.♔c5 f3 63.♔d4 f2 64.♔e3 ♔g2 65.♔e2

62.♔c5 h1=♚ 63.♞xh1 ♔xh1 64.♔d5 ♔g2 65.♔e5 ♔f3!!



Reti's idea!

66.c4 ♔e3 67.♔xf5 ♔d4 1/2

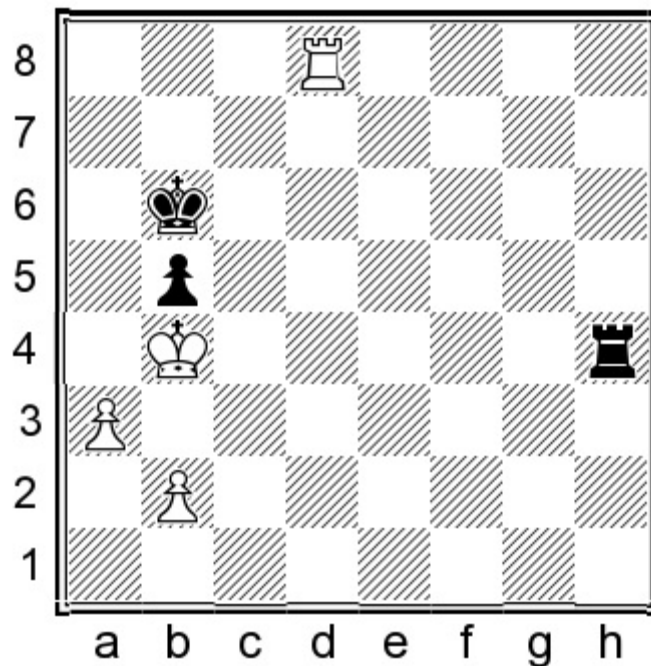
Incredible! If the pawn was on c2, White would win, as ...♔d3 is not possible in the line 66.♔xf5 ♔e3 67.♔e5!

26

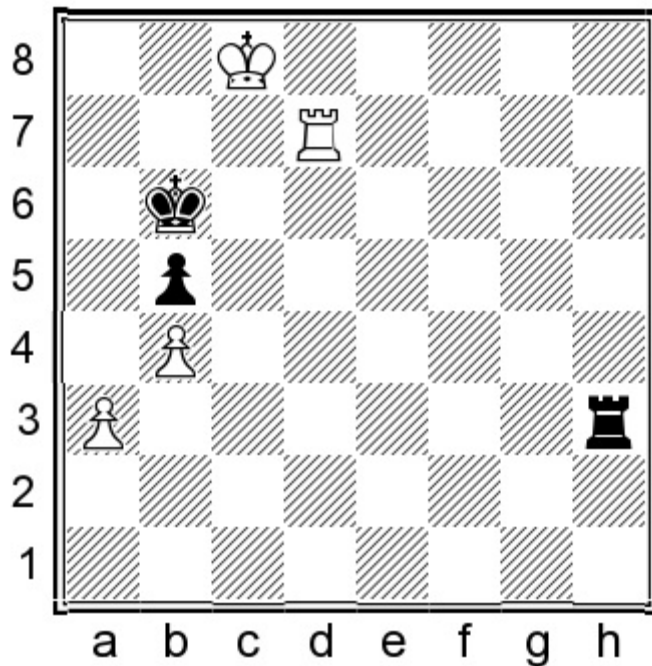
J. Delemarre

B. Tondivar

Leeuwarden, 2004



80.♔c3 ♖c4+ 81.♕d3 ♗c6 82.♕d4 ♗c2 83.♞b8+ ♕a6 84.b3 ♗c1 85.♕d3 ♗c5 86.♕d4 ♗c1 87.♕d5 ♗c3
88.b4 ♗h3 89.♞e8 ♗h5+ 90.♕c6 ♗h6+ 91.♕c7 ♗h7+ 92.♕c8 ♕b6 93.♞e6+ ♕a7 94.♞d6 ♗h3 95.♞d7+
♕b6!



Inviting the opponent's king to come deeper into the position!

96.♕b8??

What a terrible oversight!

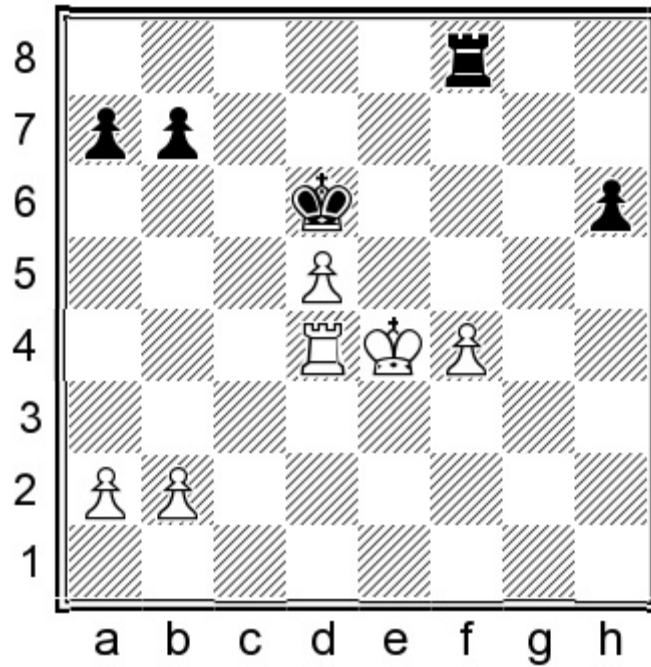
96...♞h8+ 0-1

27

L. Aronian

H. Nakamura

Antalya, 2013



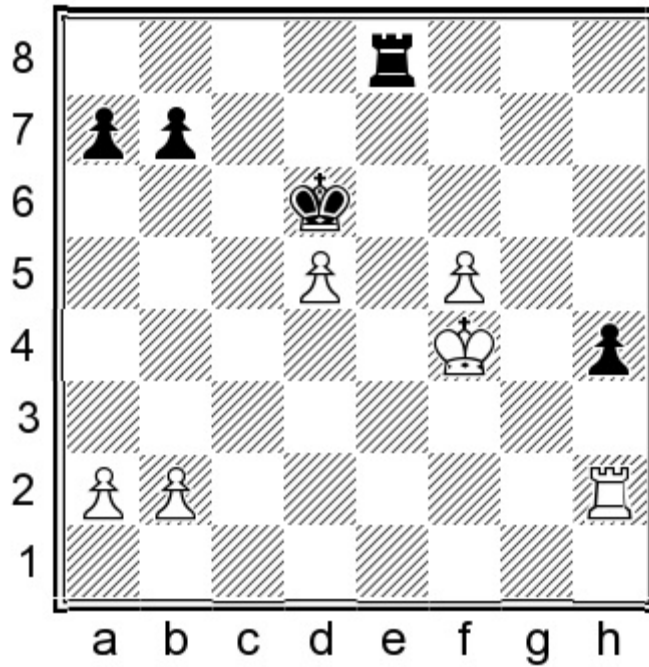
37.♞d2

37.f5 ♞e8+ 38.♔f4 (38.♔f3 ♞e1⇒) 38...♞e1 39.♞d2 ♞f1+ 40.♔e4 ♞e1+ 41.♔d4 h5

37.♞d2 h5?!

It is always necessary to press the opponent's king at the earliest opportunity: 37...♞e8+! 38.♔f5 ♞f8+ forces the king back: 39.♔g4 ♞g8+ 40.♔h5 ♞f8 41.♞f2 ♞f6 42.f5 ♔xd5 43.♔g4 ♔d6 44.♞e2 ♔d7 45.♞e5 ♞b6 with sufficient activity.

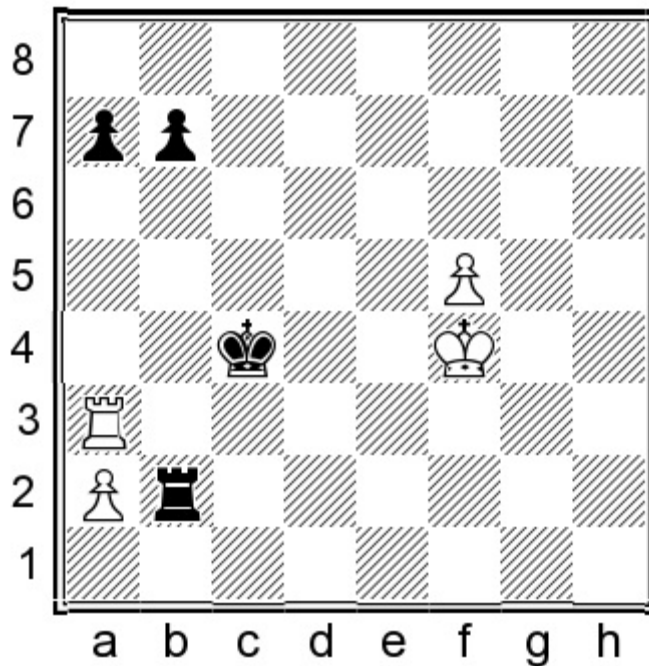
38.f5 h4 39.♞h2 ♞e8+ 40.♔f4



40...♖h8?

This is too passive!

He had to play 40...♔xd5! 41.♞xh4 (41.♞d2+ ♔c6 42.f6 h3 43.♞h2 ♞e6!? 44.♔f5 ♞e3 45.f7 ♞f3+ 46.♔e6 ♞e3+=) 41...♞e2 42.♞h3 ♞xb2 43.♞d3+ ♔c4 44.♞a3



And now the quick run back to reach a basic drawn position.

44...♔d5! 45.♞xa7 ♔d6 46.♞a4 ♔e7

41.f6 ♞e8

What else?

Now 41...♔xd5 42.♕f5 h3 43.f7+- is losing, as is 41...h3 42.♕f5 ♖h4 43.♕g5 ♖d4 44.♖xh3 ♖d2 45.♖f3

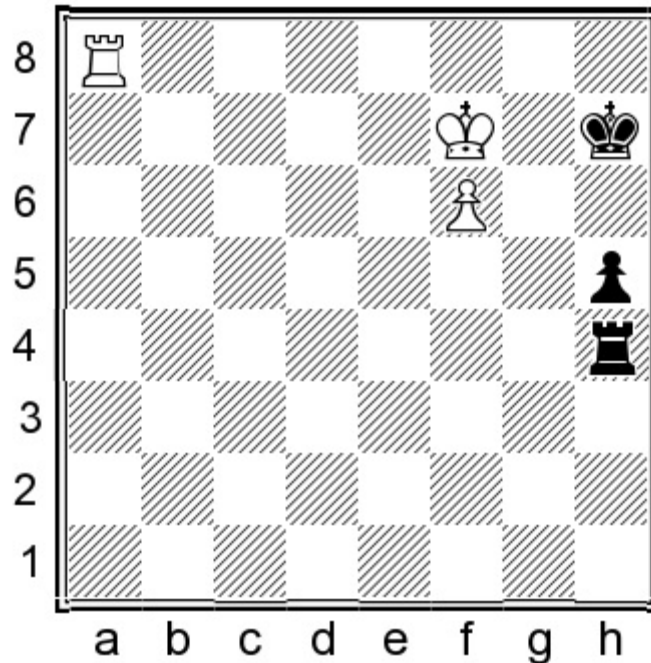
42.♖xh4 1-0

28

V. Gashimov

D. Stellwagen

Novi Sad, 2009



70...♖f4??

An incredibly weak move. There were in fact a few other moves sufficient for the draw.

The most logical was to transfer into rook against pawn by: 70...♖b4 71.♕e8 ♕g6 72.f7 ♖e4+ 73.♕f8 ♖f4 74.♖a6+ ♕g5 75.♕g7 ♖xf7+ 76.♕xf7 h4 77.♖a8 h3 78.♖h8 ♕g4 79.♕g6 ♕g3 80.♕g5 h2;

Also possible was 70...♖e4 71.♕f8 h4 72.f7 h3 73.♖a3 ♖h4 74.♕e7 ♖e4+ 75.♕f6 ♖f4+ 76.♕e6 h2 77.♖h3+ ♕g7;

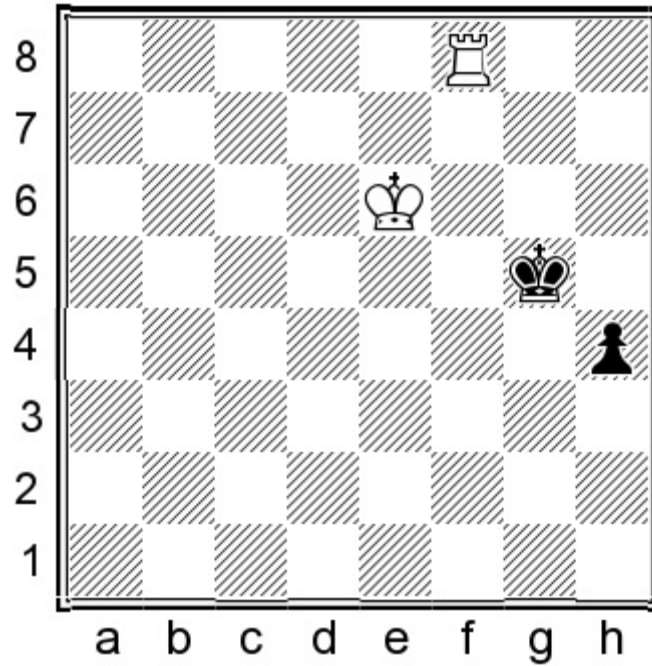
Or even 70...♖h1 71.♖a5 ♕h6 72.♖f5 ♖a1

70...♖f4?? 71.♕e6 h4

The rook is ‘too short’, as it is sometimes expressed. If the rook were, let say, on the first rank, then simply checks would keep the draw.

71...♖e4+ 72.♕f5

72.f7 ♔g6 73.f8=♖ ♜xf8 74.♞xf8 ♔g5



75.♔e5

Black resigned, and thus Azerbaijan became the champions of Europe!

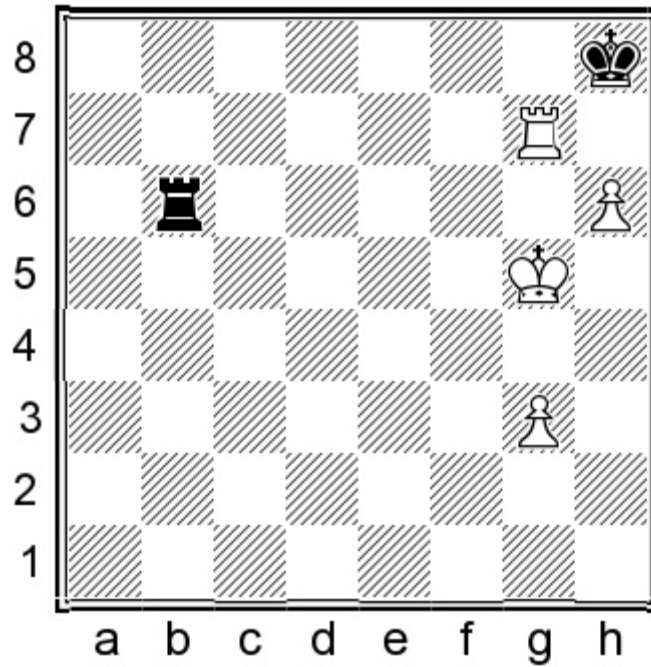
75...♔g4 76.♔e4 ♔g3 77.♔e3 1-0

29

G. Kuzmin

Y. Razuvaev

Tbilisi, 1978



1...♖xh6?

Black had two ways to complete a pat defence, but here he has overlooked a nice trick.

The correct drawing technique was 1...♖b5+ 2.♔f4 ♖b4+ 3.♔e5 ♖b5+ (or 3...♖b6) 4.♔f4 (4.♔d4 ♖b6) 4...♖b6 5.♔g5 ♖b5+

1...♖xh6? 2.♖g8+! ♔h7 3.♖h8+ ♔xh8 4.♔xh6

and we have a basic winning pawn ending.

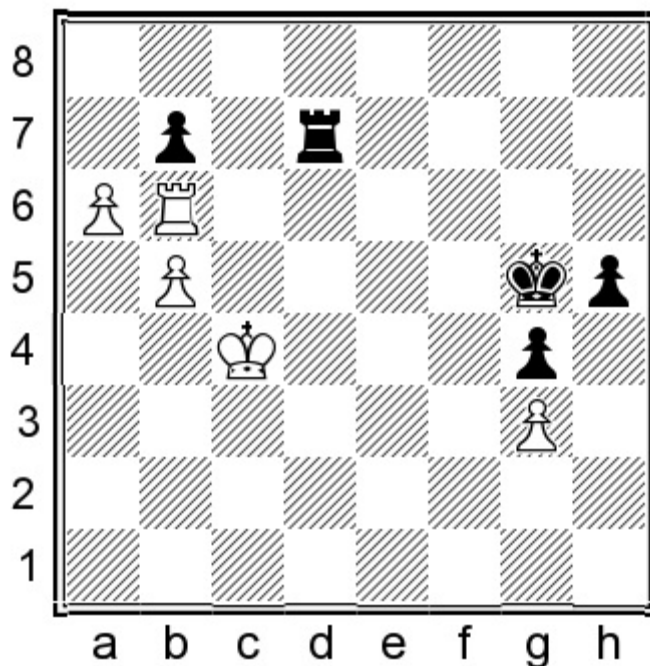
1-0

31

S. Karjakin

A. Morozevich

Tashkent , 2012



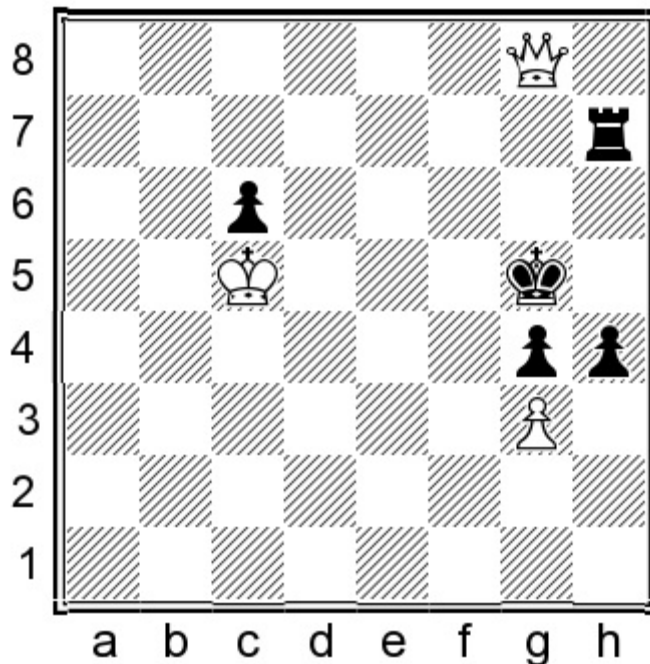
52...♖c7+??

Black would be OK after 52...bxa6 53.bxa6 ♖a7! (Black can also draw after 53...h4 but this line is a bit more complicated — 54.♖b7 ♖d1 (54...♖d6? 55.a7 ♖a6 56.♖b5+ ♔h6 57.♖b6+-) 55.♖b5+ ♔h6 56.♖a5 ♖d8 57.gxh4 ♖c8+ 58.♔d4 g3 59.♔e3 ♖c2 60.a7 g2 61.♖a1 ♖a2=) 54.♖b5+ ♔h6 55.♖a5 h4 56.gxh4 g3 57.♔b5 g2 58.♖a1 ♔h5=

52...♖c7+?? 53.♖c6! bxc6 54.b6

The rook sacrifice has given White two connected passed pawns, which decide the game.

54...♖c8 55.b7 ♖b8 56.♔c5 h4 57.a7 ♖xb7 58.a8=♚ ♖h7 59.♚g8+



With only rook against an active queen, Black has no chances to survive.

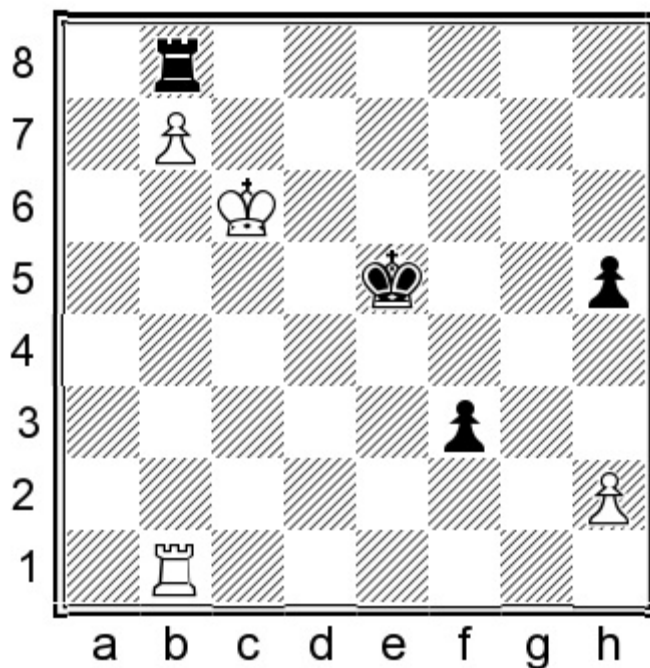
59...♔h6 60.gxh4 ♖g7 61.♚h8+ ♔g6 62.h5+ ♔f7 63.h6 ♖g5+ 64.♔d6 g3 65.♚h7+ ♔f6 66.♚e7+ ♔f5 67.♚xg5+ ♔xg5 68.h7 1-0

32

D. Saduakassova

S. Foisor

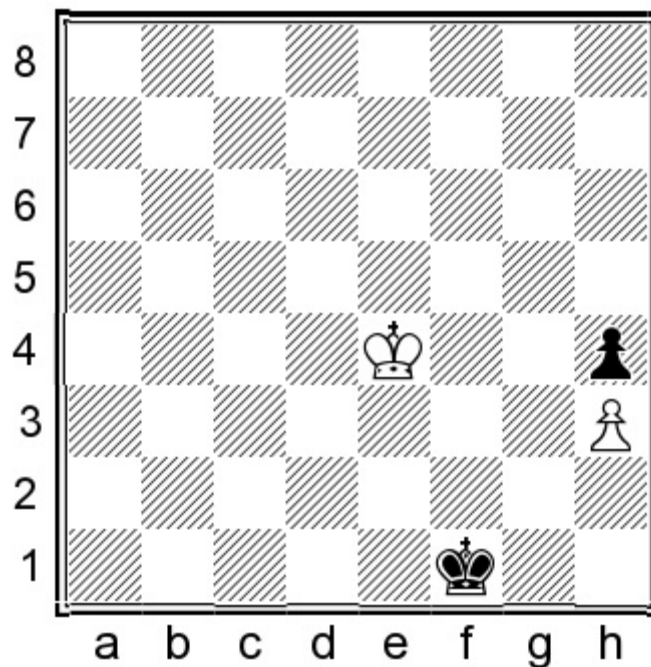
Astana, 2013



A typical endgame with passed pawns on different sides. Usually one side wins a rook and then there is the problem of how to stop the opponent's passed pawn.

53.♔c7 ♖xb7+ 54.♕xb7??

Winning was the other capture: 54.♖xb7 f2 (or 54...h4 55.♔c6 h3 (55...♔e4 56.h3! ♔e3 57.♔d5 f2 58.♖f7 ♔e2 59.♔e4 f1=♚ 60.♖xf1 ♕xf1



61.♔f3! With this classical bodycheck, White wins the pawn on h3 without allowing Black's king to reach the drawing square f4.) 56.♖h7 ♔e4 57.♖h4+! ♔e3 58.♖xh3 ♔e2 59.♖h8 f2 60.♖e8+ ♔d2 61.♖f8) 55.♖b1 ♔e4 56.♔d6 h4 57.h3 ♔f3 58.♔e5 ♔g2 59.♔f4 ♔xh3 (59...f1=♚+ 60.♖xf1 ♕xf1 61.♔g4 ♔f2 62.♔xh4 ♔f3 and White promotes her pawn. 63.♔g5) 60.♔f3 ♔h2 61.♔xf2 h3 62.♖b3 ♔h1 63.♖xh3#

54...h4 55.♔c6

Now it is too late to stop her opponent's pawn: 55.h3 ♔f4 56.♔c6 ♔g3 57.♔d5 ♔xh3 58.♔e4 ♔g2 59.♔e3 f2 60.♔e2 (60.♖b2 h3 61.♖xf2+ ♔g1 62.♖f8 h2) 60...h3

55...h3 56.♖b8

56.♔c5 ♔e4 57.♔c4 f2 58.♔c3 ♔e3;

The main line was 56.♔d7 ♔e4 57.♔e6 f2 58.♔f6 ♔f3 59.♔g5 ♔g2 60.♔g4 ♔xh2 61.♔f3 f1=♚+! 62.♖xf1 Stalemate!

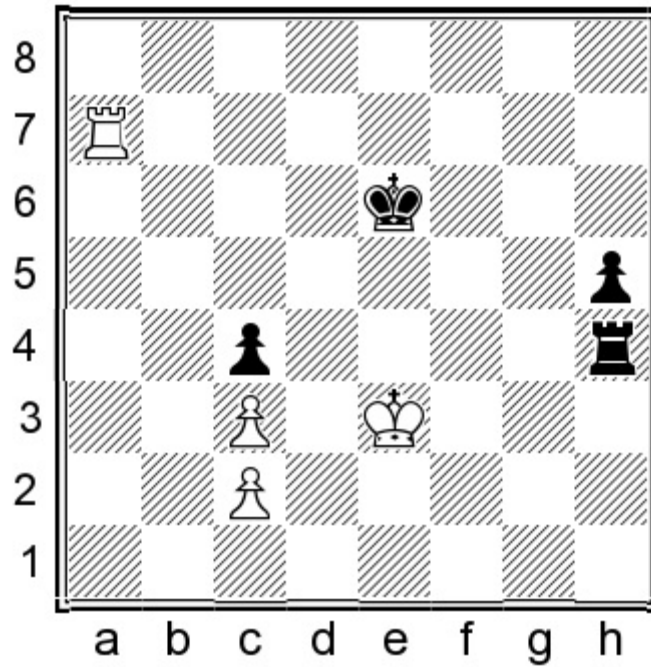
56...♔e4 57.♔d6 f2 58.♖f8 ♔e3 59.♔e5 ♔e2 60.♔e4 f1=♚ 61.♖xf1 ♕xf1 62.♔f3 ♔e1 63.♔g3 ♔e2 64.♔xh3 ♔f3 1/2

33

V. Panov

V. Korchnoi

USSR, 1953



1. ♖a6+?

Why not cut the king off and keep the draw? 1. ♖a5! ♔f6 2. ♖c5 ♔g6 3. ♔f2

1. ♖a6+? ♔f5 2. ♖a5+

And now better was 2. ♖c6

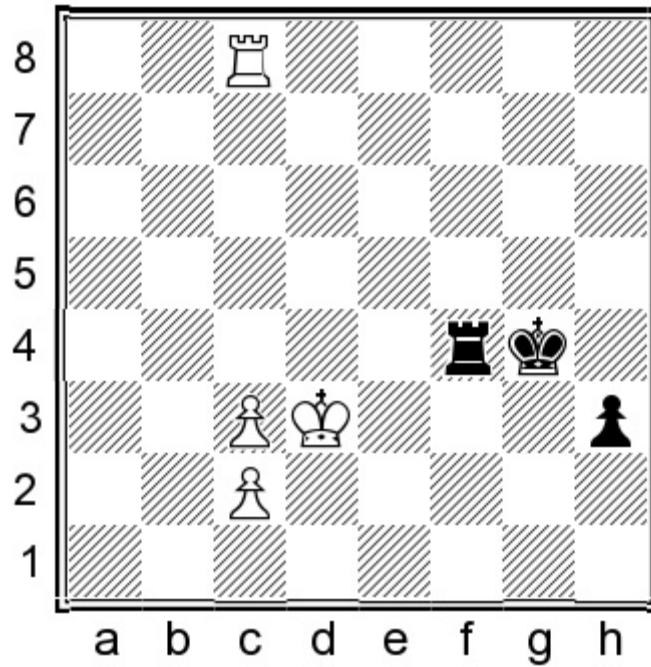
2... ♔g4 3. ♖c5 ♖h3+ 4. ♔d4 ♖f3! 5. ♔xc4 ♖f4+

5... h4 6. ♖c8 ♖f5 7. ♔d4 h3 8. ♖a8 h2 9. ♖a1 ♔g3 10. ♖h1 ♔g2 11. ♖xh2+ ♔xh2 12. c4 ♔g3 13. c5 ♔f4 14. c6=

6. ♔d3 h4 7. ♖c8

Or 7. ♔e3

7... h3



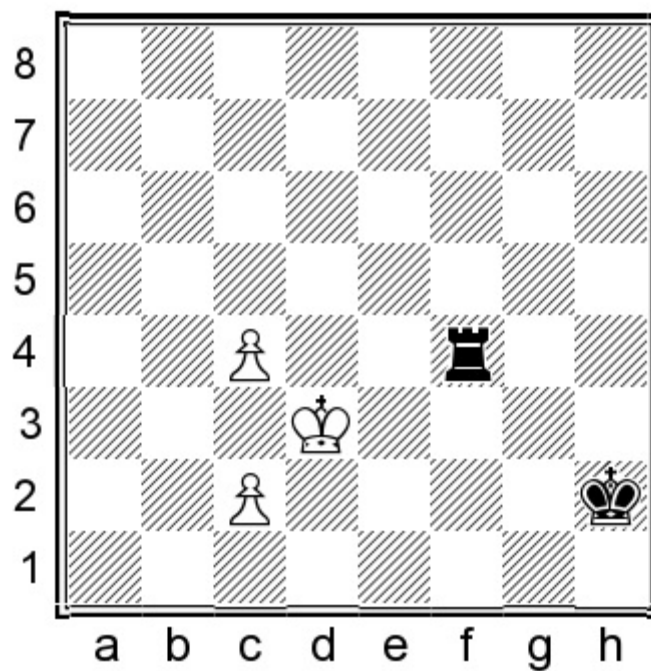
8. ♖h8?

There was still a chance to fight for the draw: 8. ♔e3 ♜f1 9. ♖g8+

8... ♕g3!

Now the h-pawn becomes terribly dangerous.

9. c4 h2 10. ♖xh2 ♕xh2



The white king is cut along the 4th rank and the endgame becomes hopeless.

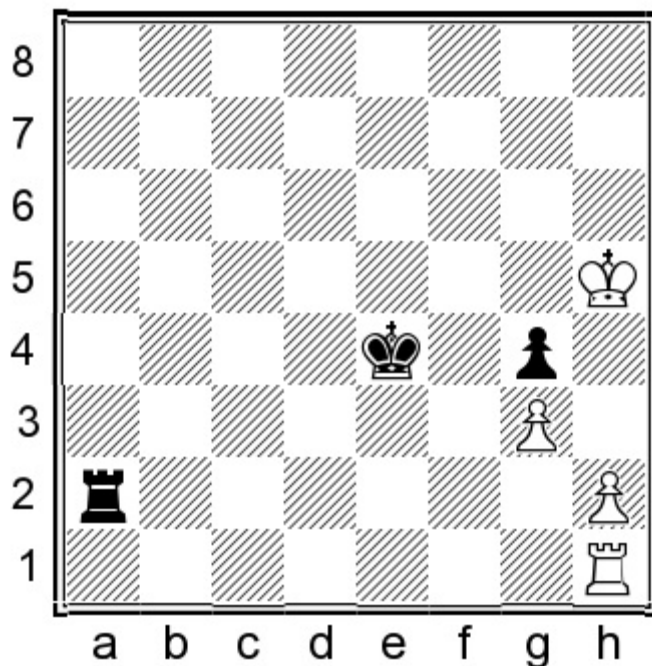
11.c5 ♔g3 12.c6 ♔g4 13.c7 ♖f8 14.♕d4 ♗c8 15.c4 ♖xc7 16.c5 ♔f5 17.♕d5 ♖d7+ 18.♕c6 ♔e6 0–1

34

M. Krasenkov

E. Sveshnikov

Norilsk, 1987



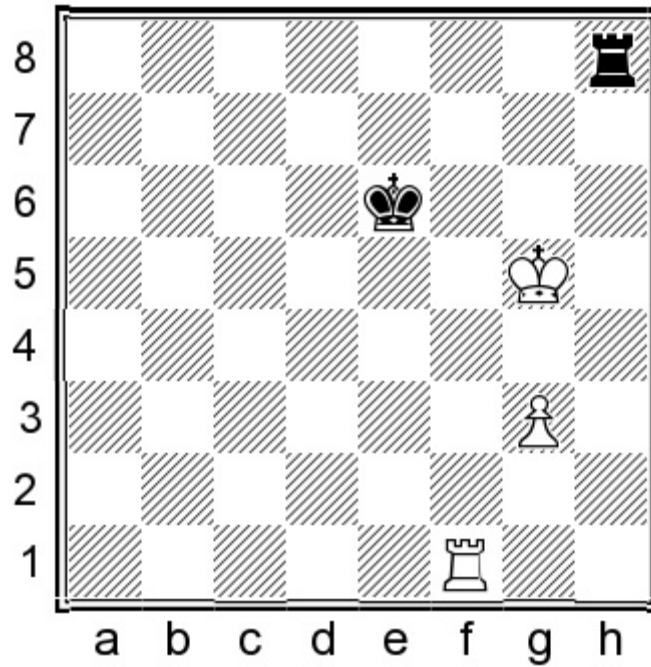
Here Black had two options, like in most endgames. Correct or incorrect. But even strong grandmasters are not immune to making wrong decisions.

74...♔f5??

The draw was achieved by activity:

74...♔f3 75.♖f1+ ♔g2 76.♖f4 ♔xh2 77.♔xg4 ♖a8=

74...♔f5?? 75.♖f1+ ♔e6 76.♔xg4 ♖xh2 77.♔g5 ♖h8



78.♖f6+!+-

Only this move achieves a winning basic position.

Wrong was 78.g4? ♖g8+= launching a frontal attack.

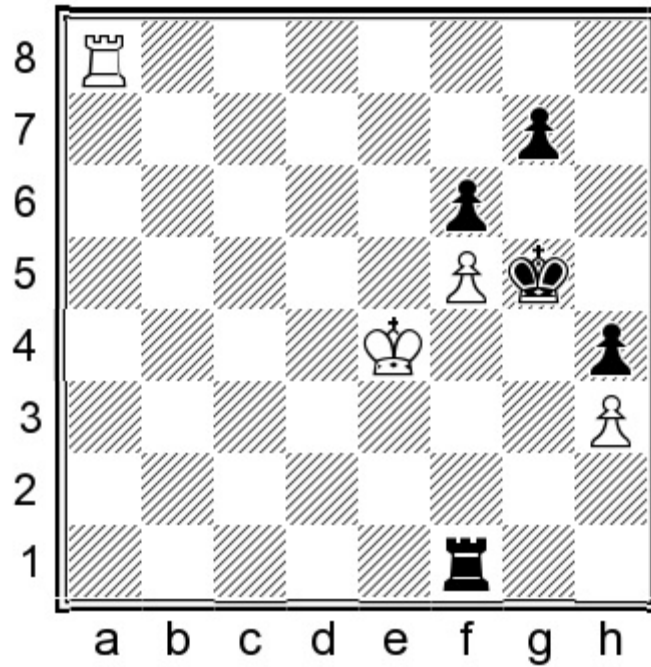
78...♔e7 79.g4 ♖g8+ 80.♖g6 ♖a8 81.♖g7+ ♔f8 82.♔h6 ♖a6+ 83.♔h7 ♖a4 84.g5 ♖h4+ 85.♔g6 ♖g4 86.♖f7+ ♔g8 87.♖a7 ♔f8 88.♖a8+ ♔e7 89.♖g8 1-0

35

A. Saidy

O. Popovych

Gausdal, 1982



Here there is a choice of two rook moves attacking the pawn g7. However, the decision is not so simple sometimes...

66. ♖g8?

66. ♖a7! =

66. ♖g8? ♜e1+ 67. ♔f3 ♜e7

The g7-pawn is well protected, and at the same time the f5-pawn is lost.

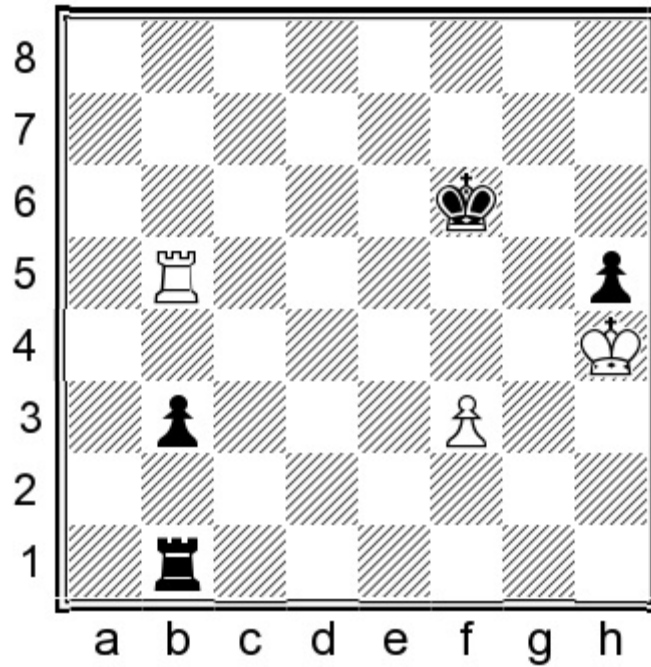
0-1

36

L. Johannessen

P. Harikrishna

Skopje, 2015



55. ♔xh5??

It's hard to explain why White did not play 55. ♔g3

or 55. ♔h3 with an easy draw. The f-pawn ensures that the black king can't easily move to the queenside to attack the white rook.

55. ♔xh5?? b2 0-1

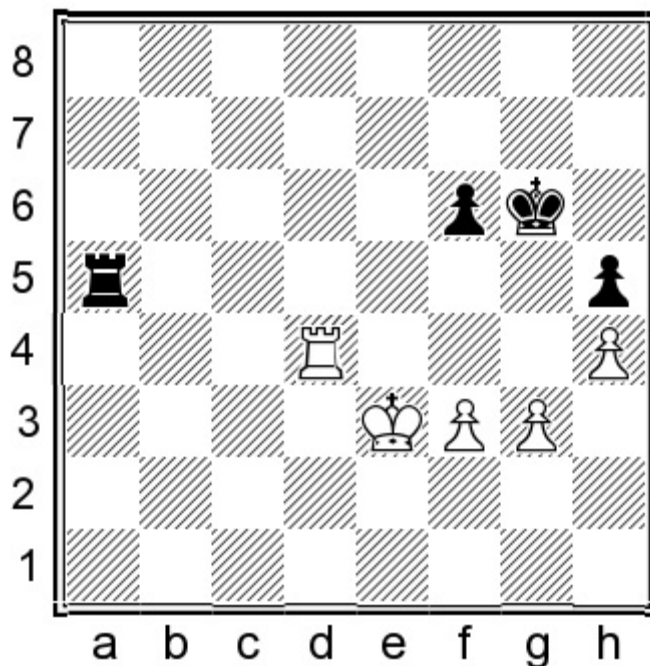
37

L. Ding

A. Onischuk

Istanbul, 2012

Some mistakes we can consider as carelessness, loss of control or even just overlooking small tactical ideas. White tries his last chance, but any pawns swaps are usually more useful to the defender.



54.g4 ♖a1?!

The simplest reaction was 54...♜b5 55.♞d6 ♜b3+ 56.♔f4 ♜b4+ 57.♔g3 hxg4 58.fxg4 ♜b3+

55.g5!

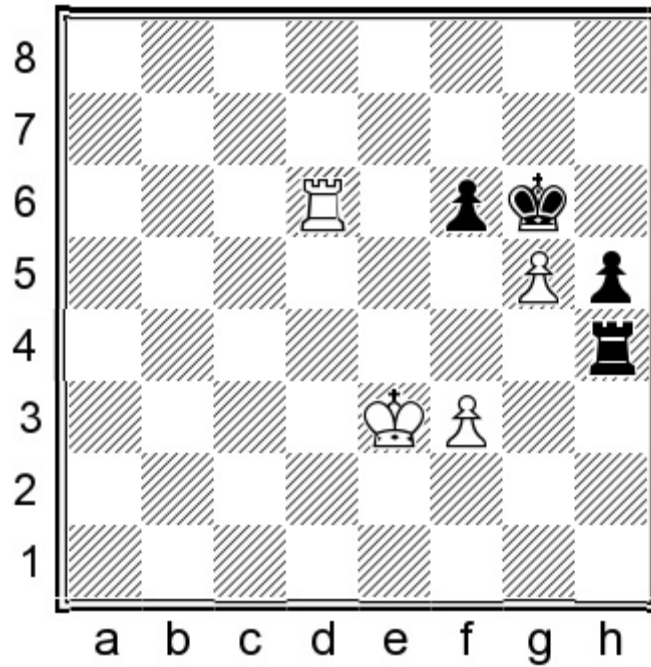
This is nothing serious, but some threats have appeared and Black panicked...

55...♜h1??

It was necessary to reduce the pawns by 55...fxg5 56.♞d6+ ♔f5 57.♞d5+ ♔g6 58.hxg5 h4, and this passed pawn saves Black: 59.f4 h3 60.♞d6+ ♔f5 61.♞f6+ ♔g4 62.g6, and now even 62...♔h5 63.g7 ♞g1=

56.♞d6 ♜xh4

Here comes the unexpected surprise...



57.f4!

It was this move which Black had overlooked! Now White creates connected pawns, which are almost always a terrific weapon.

57...♖h1 58.♖xf6+ ♔g7 59.♖h6 ♖e1+ 60.♔f2 ♖h1 61.♔g2 ♖h4 62.♔f3 ♖h1 63.♔e4 h4 64.♔f5 h3 65.♔g4 h2 66.♔g3 1-0