

Part Five

Endgames for Class “B” (1600-1799)

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All Hail the 7th Rank!

Minor Piece Endgames

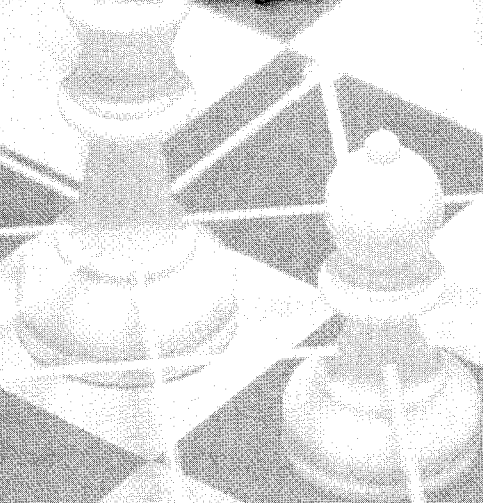
Two Bishops vs. Lone King

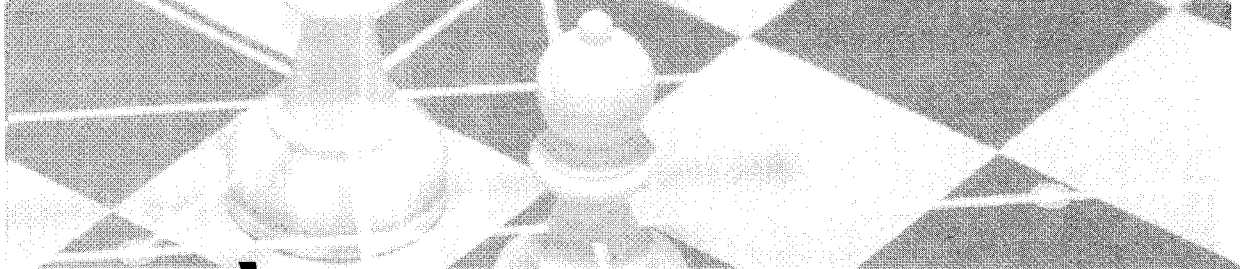
Bishops of opposite colors (Two Pawns Down and
Loving it!)

Summing Up

Tests and Solutions

Final Thoughts





After slogging through the seemingly endless expanse of Part Four, you should suddenly possess more endgame knowledge than you might have thought possible. Now, as a “B” player, we’re ready to finish up the “basics” and leave you lording it over the unschooled masses—the fact is, few other non-Russian “B” players will know what you know (they should have learned this information, but they didn’t).

I must admit that when I scaled the rating list and finally hit 1600, I ignorantly thought I knew all the endgames that I would ever need. The reality was that I only knew about forty percent of the material that encompasses the first five parts of this book. Now that I have a lifetime of teaching experience, it’s become clear to me that most players under 1800 know even less, as proved by their many unnecessary defeats—losses that often occur as soon as an endgame appears.

Why throw away games in this fashion when the easy task of learning the material through Part Five will allow you to dominate others in your new (“B”) rating class in most endgame situations? Not only that, but if you have a goal of reaching class “A” or Expert, knowing this material is an absolute must.

Compared to the ocean of information in Part Four, the lessons here will seem “a walk in the park!” In fact, most of Part Five’s lessons are merely tune-ups and add-ons to the endgame skills you’ve already assimilated.

King and Pawn Endgames

At this point you have a wealth of knowledge about King and pawn endgames. You know the importance of using your King, all forms of Opposition, the Square of the Pawn, the strength of Outside Passed Pawns, Fox in the Chicken Coup, all aspects of King and pawn vs. King situations, the drawish tendencies of rook-pawns, the ins and outs of Trébuchet, and quite a bit more. It's now time to solidify your grasp of King and pawn basics.

The following material will enable you to play most King and pawn endgames with some real skill, and set you up for the more detailed knowledge that's required of players in the "A," Expert, and Master categories.

King and Two Healthy Pawns vs. Lone King

We've already seen (in Part Four) that a King and two safe doubled pawns (non rook-pawns!) win against a lone King. With that in mind, it's logical to assume that two non-doubled pawns should be even more decisive. Indeed, such situations are usually trivial wins, but there are two cases the might pose problems to the uninitiated:

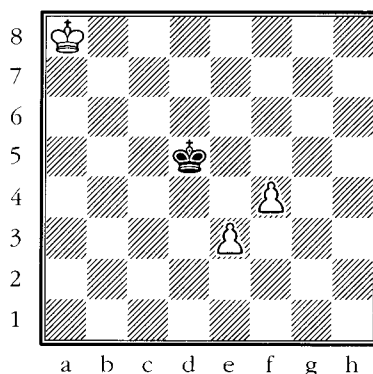
- Split pawns
- Connected pawns

When you are two pawns up, the only way your opponent will survive is if you blunder into a stalemate, or if one of your pawns is lost. This "lost pawn" scenario usually occurs when the stronger side's King is far from the action, leaving the poor pawns to fend for themselves.

RULE

Two connected passed pawns can defend themselves against a lone King.

Diagram 162



Black to move

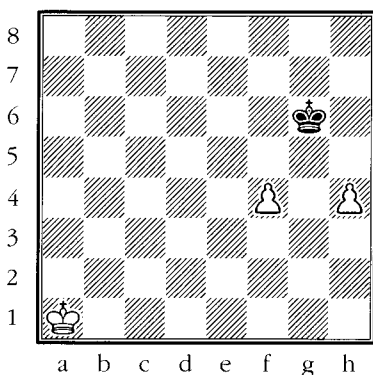
The white King isn't participating, but he has nothing to worry about since connected pawns always defend themselves.

1...Ke4 2.Kb7 and white's King can approach the embattled area at its leisure since **2...Kxe3 3.f5** leads to the quick promotion of the f-pawn.

RULE

Two passed pawns, on the same rank but separated by one file, have the ability to defend themselves from attacks by the enemy King. When the King attacks one, push the other and the attacked pawn suddenly becomes poison!

Diagram 163



Black to move

White's King is, once again, light-years away, and it looks like his pawns might be vulnerable. However, it turns out that the two disconnected pawns do a great job protecting themselves!

1...Kh5

1...Kf5 is met by **2.h5!**

2.f5!

Suddenly it becomes clear that **2...Kxh4** fails to **3.f6** when the pawn promotes.

2...Kh6 3.Kb2

White's King begins its winning journey. If Black can't pick up one of the white pawns, he's doomed!

3...Kg7

Naturally, 3...Kh5 4.Kc3 is easy for White since the h-pawn is still immune from capture.

4.h5!

An important move. Bringing the King up by 4.Kc3 loses the f-pawn and allows a draw after 4...Kf6 followed by 5...Kxf5.

4...Kf6 5.h6!

More punishment for Black. Now 5...Kxf5 loses to 6.h7.

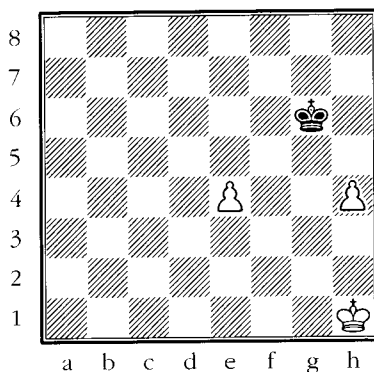
5...Kf7 6.Kc3 Kg8 7.f6

Actually, White could also win by 7.Kd4 Kh7 8.Ke5 Kxh6 9.Kf6. The advance of the f-pawn, though, is even stronger and forces a new Queen without the King's help.

7...Kh7 8.f7, 1-0.**RULE**

Two passed pawns, on the 6th rank but separated by one file, can force the creation of a new Queen even without help from their King.

Diagram 164



Black to move draws

Black can force a draw since one of the pawns will fall.

1...Kh5 2.e5

Giving up the h-pawn doesn't change the result: 2.Kg2 Kxh4 3.Kf3 Kg5 4.Ke3 Kf6 4.Kd4 Ke6 with a basic draw.

2...Kg6!

The big difference between this position and the previous one where the pawns were only one file apart is now clear. In that case, the advance of the f-pawn covered the g6-square and forced the black King to step straight backwards (when it poses no threat to the advanced pawn). In the present example, though, the King move to g6 threatens to pick off the e-pawn by ...Kf5.

3.Kg2

No better is 3.h5+ Kxh5 4.e6 Kg6 5.e7 Kf7, 1/2-1/2.

3...Kf5 4.Kf3 Kxe5 5.Kg4 Kf6

with a basic draw.

Nevertheless, in our last example Black drew because White ended up with a rook-pawn. If we slightly tweak that example, things might well have been different.

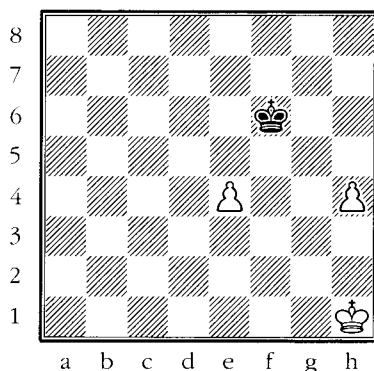
RULE

The result of King and two pawns on the same rank two files apart vs. lone King usually depends on whether or not the stronger side can sacrifice one of his pawns, using the time gained to bring his King into the game and create a winning King and pawn vs. King position.

REMEMBER

As we can see, pawns that are only one file apart tend to be a simple win, while pawns two files apart give the defender some hope in certain positions.

Diagram 165



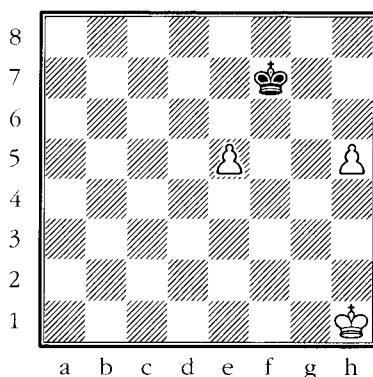
Black to move loses

This is the same position as the previous one, except now the black King stands on f6 instead of g6. This is enough to turn the position into a win for White because now he will be left with a center pawn instead of an h-pawn and, as a result, can create a winning King and pawn vs. King position.

1...Ke5 2.h5 Kf6 3.Kg2 Kg5 4.Kf3 Kxh5 5.Kf4 Kg6 6.Ke5 Kf7 7.Kd6, 1-0.

If the pawns get to the 5th rank, then (unless the defending King can immediately capture one of the them) black's cause is hopeless.

Diagram 166



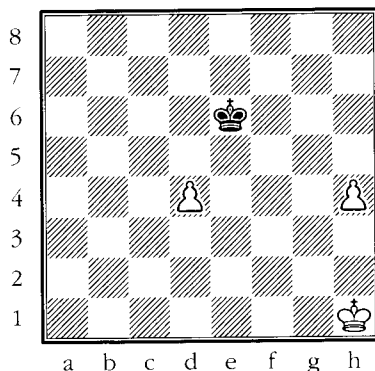
Black loses

RULE

King and two pawns on the fifth rank two files apart vs. lone King is an easy win for the pawns.

1...Ke6 2.h6 Kf7 3.e6+ and one of the pawns will turn into a Queen.

Diagram 167



Black to move

Black's a goner.

1...Kd5 2.h5 Ke6

Alas, 2...Kxd4 3.h6 is clear sailing for White.

3.d5+ Kf6

Again, 3...Kxd5 4.h6 is finis.

4.d6 Ke6 5.h6, 1-0. Too easy!

To sum up our observations about self-defending (Kingless) pawns:

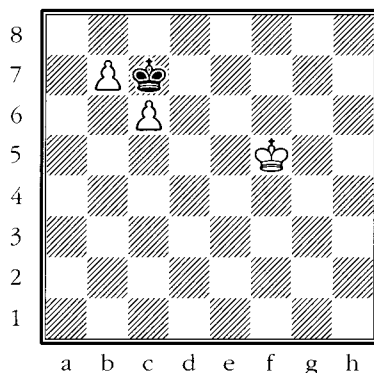
- Connected pawns always defend each other.
- Pawns that are one file apart on any rank can usually defend themselves until the King arrives to shuttle one of them down the board.
- The defender has his best survival chances if the pawns are two files apart. However, if those pawns are on the 5th rank or farther then the game is resignable unless one of the pawns can be instantly captured.
- Pawns that are three files or more apart (on any rank) are too much for the defending King to handle.

Two connected passed pawns vs. a lone King almost always wins easily. The only time connected pawns pose a problem is if one of them is a rook-pawn.

RULE

If the pawns are three or more files apart (and not yet on the 5th rank), the defender loses unless he can immediately capture one of the pawns.

Diagram 168



Black to move

No rook-pawn here! Black should resign but, evidently, he still has to be shown.

1...Kb8

As usual, the pawns defend themselves. 1...Kxc6 2.b8=Q.

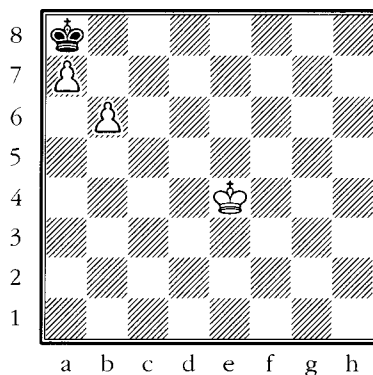
2.Ke6 Kc7 3.Ke7

Also good is 3.b8=Q+ Kxb8 4.Kd7, 1-0.

3...Kb8 4.Kd7, 1-0.

As mentioned before, the difficulty level goes way, way up if we make one of the pawns a rook-pawn.

Diagram 169



Black to move

White still wins, but now he must earn the point by showing a bit of skill.

1...Kb7 2.Kd5 Ka8 3.Kc5

The first chance to go wrong was 3.Kc6?? stalemate! Many players give 3.Kd6 a try here, but it also fails to do the job: 3...Kb7 4.Kd7 Ka8 5.Kc7?? stalemate.

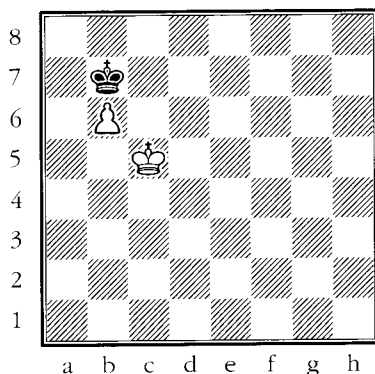
3...Kb7 4.a8=Q+!

The key to this endgame and many other King and pawn endgames as well. By giving up the a-pawn White does two things:

- He ends most stalemating tricks.
- He forces Black to give White the Opposition, which in this position will prove decisive.

In effect, we have this situation:

Diagram 170



Black to move

If Black follows the advice from earlier parts of this book and steps straight back with 1...Kb8, the game is a draw. However, if he plays 1...Ka8?? or 1...Kc8??, the game is lost because White gets the Opposition and forces the black King away from the front of the pawn.

In our example of two vs. one (diagram 169), the move 4.a8=Q+! forces Black to make that losing move and enter a lost King and pawn vs. King endgame.

4...Kxa8 5.Kc6

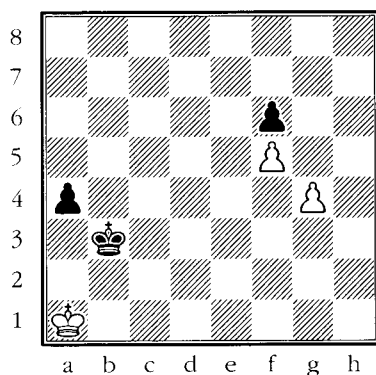
Taking the Opposition and icing the win.

5...Kb8 6.b7 Ka7 7.Kc7, 1-0.

Tactical Bombs

In King and pawn endgames, there are quite a few tactical breaks—some pretty cool—that one must be aware of. We'll only look at a couple basic examples here, but more complex tactical ideas are available Part Nine, Tactics.

Diagram 171



White to move

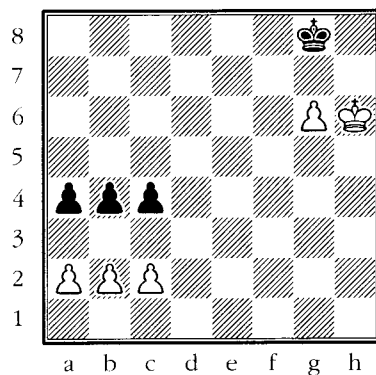
Black feels pretty confident since he has a passed a-pawn and his one kingside pawn appears to stop white's two. However, this is shown to be an illusion.

1.g5!

Turning his two vs. one pawn majority into an unstoppable passed pawn. Of course, waiting around with 1.Kb1 Kc4 2.Ka2?? (2.g5! would still do the trick) 2...Kd5 wins for Black thanks to the good old Chicken Coup routine.

1...fxg5 2.f6 g4 3.f7 g3 4.f8=Q g2 and now both 5.Qb1+ and 5.Qf2 followed by Qxg2 end the game in white's favor.

Diagram 172



White to move

White is a pawn up and should win the game by using our favorite Chicken Coup technique (i.e., running over to the queenside and feasting on black pawns while the enemy King deals with the g-pawn).

1.Kg5??

White follows his Chicken Coup plan, certain of victory. He's hoping for 1...Kg7 2.Kf5 a3?? 3.bxa3 bxa3 4.c3 Kg8 5.Ke5 when black's queenside pawns are toast. Sadly, he's in for a painful surprise.

Other losing moves for White are 1.a3?? c3! and 1.c3?? a3! when Black makes a new Queen.

1...b3!

A very important tactical motif that will save you grief if you avoid it, and bring you points if you make use of it. White is suddenly dead lost!

2.axb3

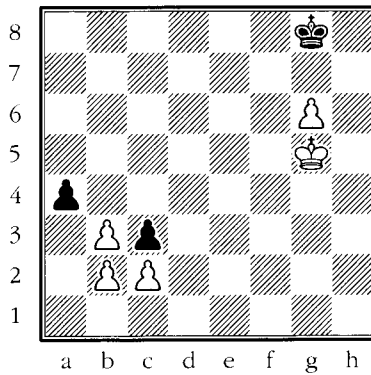
If White had tried 2.cxb3 then Black ends things with 2...a3!! 3.bxa3 c3 when the c-pawn will promote to a Queen.

2...c3!!

REMEMBER

Shocking pawn breaks are common in King and pawn endgames. Being conversant with such themes means you can make use of them in some situations, and avoid them in others.

Diagram 173



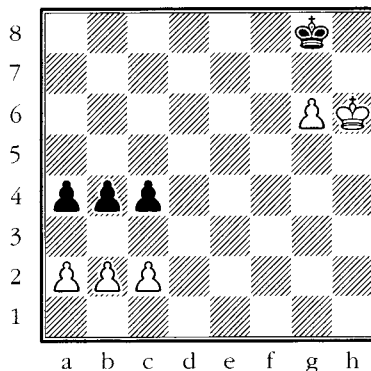
White to move, Black wins

The point. White clears away the b2-pawn which allows the black a-pawn to make a dash for the back rank.

3.bxc3 a3, 0-1.

So what did White do wrong from our initial position?

Diagram 174



White to move and win

Obviously, White can't allow the tactical explosion we just witnessed. That means he must block it.

1.b3! axb3

Naturally, 1...cxb3 is answered by 2.cxb3 when Black isn't allowed a passed pawn.

2.axb3

Suicide was still possible by 2.cxb3?? c3, 0-1.

2...cxb3

A quicker death results from 2...c3 3.g7 Kf7 4.Kh7, 1-0.

3.cxb3 Kh8 4.Kg5

Correctly making use of the Chicken Coup idea, and avoiding 4.g7+?? Kg8 5.Kg6 stalemate. Note that after 4.g7+?? Kg8 it was already too late for White to undo the harm: 5.Kg5 Kxg7 6.Kf5 Kf7 7.Ke5 Ke7 8.Kd5 Kd7 9.Kc5 Kc7 10.Kxb4 Kb6, 1/2-1/2.

4...Kg7 5.Kf5 Kg8

Avoiding 5...Kf8 6.Kf6 Kg8 7.g7, 1-0.

6.Ke5

Feeding time!

6...Kg7 7.Kd5 Kxg6 8.Kc5 Kf6 9.Kxb4 Ke7 10.Kc5 Kd8 11.Kb6 Kc8 12.b4 Kb8 13.b5 Ka8 14.Kc7 Ka7 15.b6+, 1-0.

Triangulation

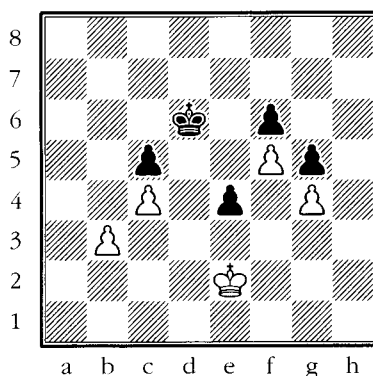
Triangulation is a seemingly complicated term that makes a chess player seem intellectually superior to everyone else when he says, "I won because I Triangulated my King, gained the Opposition, and ultimately left my opponent in zugzwang." Very impressive indeed!

The fact of the matter is that Triangulation's the name of a very small, often uncomplicated maneuver designed to give your opponent the move and, as a result, you the Opposition. But don't pass this on to the non-chess playing public—why not let them continue to think that chess players are geniuses?

The position in diagram 175 is our first realistic multi-pawn King endgame. And it looks complicated too! But the result really boils down to two questions:

► Can White win black's e-pawn?

Diagram 175



Does having the move make a difference?

➤ Can Black successfully penetrate with his King to f4 (where it will eat white's pawns on g4 and f5)?

First, let's see what happens if Black has the move.

1...Ke5

On 1...Kc6 White plays 2.Ke3 and wins the e4-pawn: 2...Kb6 3.Kxe4 Ka5 4.Kd5 Kb4 5.Kd6 and Black has to give up c5, and with it the game.

2.Ke3

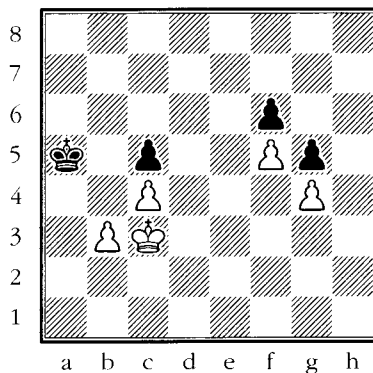
Taking the Opposition and forcing black's King backwards.

2...Kd6 3.Kxe4 Kc6 4.Kd3

White's plan is to exchange his b-pawn for black's c-pawn, creating a passed pawn on c4. He'll then make use of the Chicken Coup idea to pick off black's remaining pawns on f6 and g5.

4...Kb6 5.Kc3 Ka5

Diagram 176



White to move

Has Black stopped white's plans?

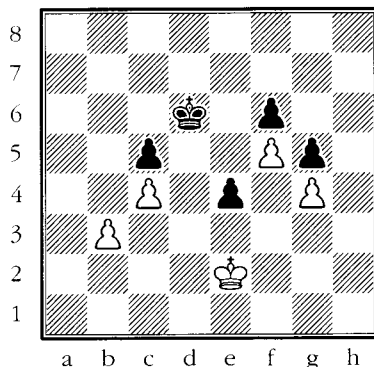
6.b4+!

No, this instructive idea makes it clear that Black has no chance whatsoever of saving the game.

6...cxb4+ 7.Kb3 Kb6 8.Kxb4 Kc6 9.c5 Kc7 10.Kb5 Kb7 11.c6+ Kc7 12.Kc5 Kc8 13.Kd6 Kd8 14.Ke6, 1-0.

Okay, that was simple enough. But now let's see if we get the same result if White moves first.

Diagram 177



White to move

Many people would play 1.Ke3?? here, but after 1...Ke5 Black takes the Opposition and forces White backwards: 2.Ke2 Kf4 and white's pawns fall like ducks in hunting season.

Clearly, the direct approach is a horrible failure in our diagrammed position. However, White can turn the tables by playing 1.Kd2 or 1.Kf2, when 1...Ke5 2.Ke3 leaves White in possession of the Opposition. Both Kd2 and Kf2 are Triangulation maneuvers—White steps to the side, then moves diagonally forward to create a small triangle. Believe it or not, that's what Triangulation (in its most basic form) is all about.

So let's see White, with correct play, win from diagram 177:

1.Kf2!

By the way, this move also takes the Indirect Opposition, while 1.Kd2! would take Distant Opposition.

1...e3+!

The best try. As stated earlier, 1...Ke5 2.Ke3 is an easy win for White.

2.Ke2!

Not falling for 2.Kxe3?? Ke5! when Black once again takes the Opposition and manages to penetrate with his King to d4 or f4. White's 2.Ke2 is yet another example of Triangulation.

I should add that 2.Kf3! also does the job, since 2...e2 3.Kxe2 Ke5 4.Ke3 gives White the Opposition.

2...Ke5 3.Kxe3, 1-0.

RULE

Basic Triangulation is a maneuver where the King steps to the side and then moves forward diagonally, thus losing a move and gaining the Opposition.

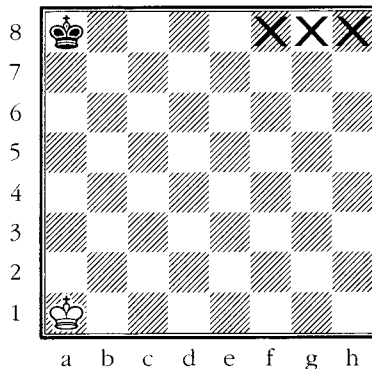
Outflanking

Outflanking is a simple but useful tool to know. With it a player can make inroads into a position that were not otherwise possible. Admittedly, this often costs the Opposition, but it must be remembered that the Opposition is only a means to an end, not the end itself!

RULE

Outflanking is a maneuver where the stronger side's King moves to the side, placing a file between the Kings (sometimes even giving the opponent the Opposition while doing so!). This allows the Outflanking King to march forward towards the target, without allowing the enemy monarch to step in front of it and take Direct Opposition.

Diagram 178



White to move and reach f8, g8, or h8 by force!

Believe it or not, a close study of this position and its correct handling will teach the student the finer points of Opposition, Outflanking, and Triangulation. White to play has the Opposition. His goal is to reach f8, g8 or h8 in at most seventeen moves. Black will constantly try to stop this, using Opposition (i.e., the threat to retake the Opposition) as a defensive device.

Once you've mastered this position and the techniques involved, we'll say that you have earned your "King diploma."

1.Ka2!

The only way to take the Opposition. The more direct path fails because it allows Black to take the Opposition: 1.Kb2?? Kb8! (It is already impossible to reach the target squares.) 2.Kc3 Kc7 3.Kd4 Kd6 4.Ke4 Ke6 and White will not get close to his targets.

1...Kb8!

A fine defensive move! Now 2.Ka3? loses the Opposition since Black has his choice of two squares on the a-file and thus can make it either odd or even (2...Ka7!). White will also fail to reach his goals after 2.Kb3? Kb7.

REMEMBER

Direct Opposition occurs when you create an odd number of squares between the Kings with the opponent to move.

2.Kb2

Heading over to the target side of the board.

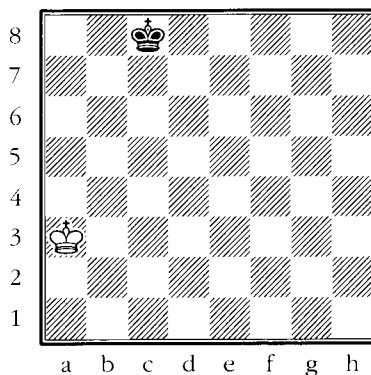
2...Kc8

Still keeping white's options to a minimum. The seemingly more active 2...Kc7 3.Kc3 only aids White.

3.Kc2

Still heading for the kingside. Instead White could try to Outflank Black, but at the moment this would fail to achieve the set goal. Let's look at an example of Outflanking by having White play 3.Ka3 instead of the superior 3.Kc2:

Diagram 179



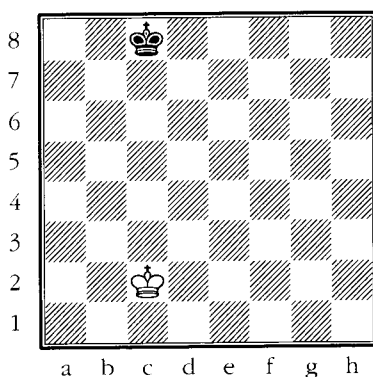
White plays 3.Ka3 instead of the correct 3.Kc2

By putting a file between the Kings, White prevents Black from taking Direct Opposition while simultaneously making forward progress. This process is called Outflanking. After 3.Ka3 Black can take the Opposition with 3...Kc7 (forming connecting points on c7, c3, a3 and a7) but White will be able to move forward: 4.Ka4 Kc6 5.Ka5 Kc5 6.Ka6 Kc6. White has managed to make inroads into black's position, but he will never be able to get over to the kingside.

To solve the problem posed in diagram 178, White must first go to the target side of board (kingside) and only then Outflank his opponent. The logic for this is easy to understand: when you are on the kingside, any forward motion will allow White to land on his goal squares.

Back to the position after 3.Kc2:

Diagram 180



Black to move

3...Kd8 4.Kd2 Ke8 5.Ke2 Kf8 6.Kf2 Kg8 7.Kg2

White is now on the optimum file since his King stands right in the middle of the target squares.

7...Kh8

Or 7...Kf8 8.Kh3.

8.Kf3

The Outflanking process finally takes place.

8...Kg7

Black could take the Opposition by 8...Kh7 but after 9.Kf4 Kh6 10.Kf5 Kh5 11.Kf6 White would be able to conquer the target square on f8. This idea of giving up the Opposition for a higher prize is a major part of Outflanking.

9.Kg3!

Satisfied that he has advanced one rank, White retakes the Opposition. Blunders would be 9.Kf4? Kf6 and 9.Kg4? Kg6. In both cases White will never reach his goal.

9...Kf7

9...Kh7 10.Kf4 leads to the same type of play.

10.Kh4!

Another Outflanking maneuver. White once again offers Black the Opposition.

10...Kg6

And Black once again refused to take it! After 10...Kf6 11.Kh5 Kf5 Black would clearly have the Opposition, but White would dance forward with 12.Kh6 and claim h8 for himself.

11.Kg4

Once more grabbing the Opposition.

11...Kh6

Or 11...Kf7 12.Kf5 Kg7 13.Kg5 Kh7 14.Kf6, etc.

12.Kf5 Kg7 13.Kg5 Kf7 14.Kh6 Kg8 15.Kg6 Kf8 16.Kh7 and White cannot be prevented from achieving his goal by 17.Kh8.

Please study the information on the Opposition and Outflanking carefully. Don't let the scientific names or the strange Xs in diagram 178 scare you away from learning something that is both easy to understand and highly useful! I should add that the position in diagram 178 is a fun one to show friends. They will not be able to solve it and will be amazed when you demonstrate how one King can actually be stronger than another just by understanding the basics of the Opposition and Outflanking.

Rook Endings

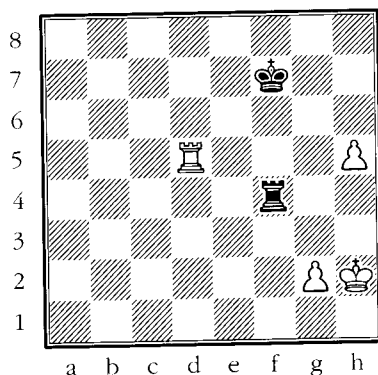
Ready to take another step in deepening your understanding of Rook end-game basics? Here we'll look at how one goes about winning with a Rook and two connected passed pawns vs. a lone Rook. We'll settle for this one position because, though it sounds easy, it's actually quite a pain to win!

Rook and Two Connected Pawns vs. Rook

A Rook endgame where one side is up two connected passed pawns is usually, as you might imagine, a clear win. Surprisingly, it can be quite time consuming and success is often dependent on you knowing the key ideas, and on you avoiding the many stalemate tricks that are lurking in the shadows. This endgame occurs quite a lot, and therefore the ideas involved in herding your pawns safely down the board must be mastered.

A word of warning: You'll find this to be the most complicated situation in the book thus far, so look over the information slowly, and don't get frustrated. It will take you a bit of time before you fully master it!

Diagram 181



White to move

Connected rook-pawns and knight-pawns is the hardest case. So if you learn to handle this, you'll have no problem icing connected central pawns.

RULE

The trick to making life easy in such positions is to advance your pawns together so your King has shelter, your pawns can defend one another, and blockades can be avoided—don't allow one pawn to madly charge down the board on its own!

USEFUL ADVICE

Also, make sure your King and pawns are in close contact. As in most chess situations, a team effort is needed for a successful result.

In the present position, white's h-pawn is ahead of the rest of its forces. Thus white's first order of business is to patiently move his King and g-pawn forward so they join the h-pawn and form one connected whole.

1.Kh3

The King steps up so it can support its pawns.

1...Kf6

There is little Black can do, so he brings his King closer to the white pawns and then waits to see how White will improve his position.

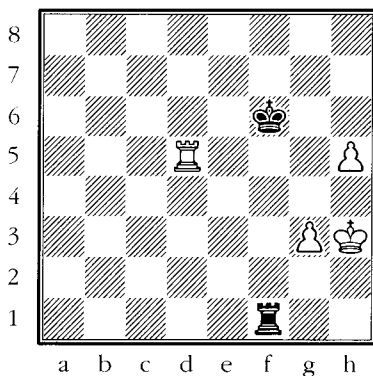
2.g3

Also good was 2.g4, but 2.g3 gives white's King access to the g4-square in some lines.

2...Rf1

Preparing to unleash some checks from the back rank. Also possible was 2...Ra4 3.g4 Kg7 4.Kh4 (4.g5, which also wins, leaves white's King cut off from its pawns. In general, you should avoid this kind of thing like the plague! 4.Kh4 is the proper way to handle these positions: always keep your King and pawns together!) 4...Kh6 5.Rd6+ Kh7 6.h6 Rb4 (or 6...Ra1 7.Kh5 Rh1+ 8.Kg5) 7.Kh5 Ra5+ 8.Kh5 with the same kind of play as that which occurs in the game.

Diagram 182



White to move

3.Kg4!

Preparing the push the black King back.

3...Rf2

More active ideas don't change anything: 3...Ra1 4.Rd6+ Kg7 5.Kg5 Ra5+ 6.Kh4 Ra4+ 7.g4, etc.

4.Rd6+

Forcing Black to relinquish control of the g5-square.

4...Ke7

Moving back to g7 is met by 5.Kg5, while 4...Ke5 5.Ra6 puts black's King on the side (instead of in front) of white's pawns.

5.Ra6**REMEMBER**

In Rook endings it is always a good idea to put your Rook as far away from the enemy King as possible. This is called “Checking Distance.”

5...Rb2 6.Kh4

Preparing to push the g-pawn. Note that White can use his pawns to shield his King from checks: 6...Rb4+ 7.g4 or 6...Rh2+ 7.Kg5.

6...Kf7 7.g4

Following our rule that the pawns must stay close together.

REMEMBER

Make sure that your pawns can shield your King from checks!

7...Kg7 8.h6+

As usual, White leads with his rook-pawn. 8.g5? would allow 8...Rb4+ when white's King is without a good hiding place.

An excellent alternative to 8.h6+ would be 8.Ra7+ when 8...Kh6?? 9.g5 is mate, while 8...Kf6? 9.g5+ Kf5 (9...Ke6 10.h6 is also easy) 10.Rf7+ Ke6 11.Rf6+ Ke7 12.h6 and Black can resign since his King is cut off from the battlefield on the kingside, and 12...Rh2+ is met by 13.Kg4 Rg2+ 14.Kh5 followed by Kg6. After 8.Ra7+ Black would do best to play 8...Kh8 with likely transposition into our main line analysis.

8...Kh7 9.Kh5

Hopefully you're becoming familiar with the pattern of allowing the g-pawn to guard the King against checks—in this position the pawn guards against checks along the rank in the case of 9...Rb5+ 10.g5 and along the file in the case of 9...Rh2+ 10.Kg5.

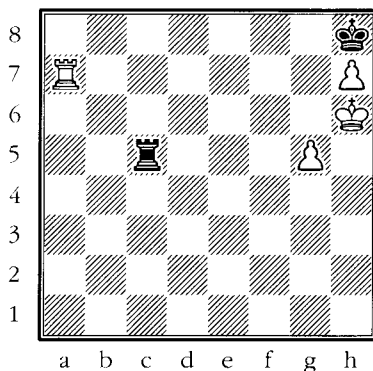
9...Rb5+ 10.g5 Rc5

Keeping the pawn pinned is the best chance. Worse is 10...Rb7? 11.g6+ Kg8 12.Ra8+ leads to immediate defeat.

11.Ra7+ Kh8

Black sticks his King in the corner and sets up possible stalemates. One of the best examples of such a stalemate can occur after 11...Kg8 12.h7+?? Kh8 13.Kh6

Diagram 183



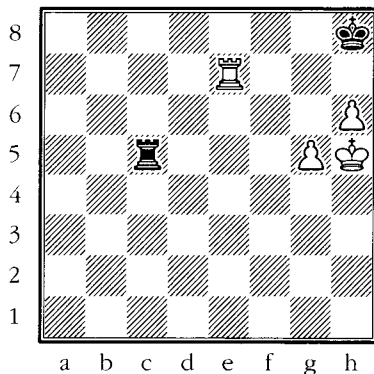
Black to move draws

13...Rc6+ 14.g6 Rxg6+! 15.Kxg6 stalemate. An important idea to be aware of!

After 11...Kg8, White should play 12.Rg7+ Kh8 (12...Kf8? 13.Kg6 Rc6+ 14.Kh7 is easy for White since black's King is now deprived of access to g8 and h8—in general, the defender needs to keep his King in front of the enemy pawns. Allowing the stronger side's King to get in front of its own pawns is a recipe for disaster!) 13.Re7 (and not 13.Kg6?? Rxg5+! 14.Kxg5 stalemate) transposing back into our main line analysis.

12.Re7!

Diagram 184



The key idea!

What are the points of this odd move?

- White would like to bring his King to f7 when enemy checks along the 7th rank would be blocked.
- Sometimes white's King will march to f6 when a black check along the 6th rank can be met by Re6.
- Once white's g-pawn gets to g6, a back rank mate will be threatened. To stop this, Black will have to pull his Rook to its 1st rank. White then wins by marching his King to f7 or d7 and trading Rooks by Re8+. The resulting King and two pawns vs. King endgame would then give Black every reason to resign.

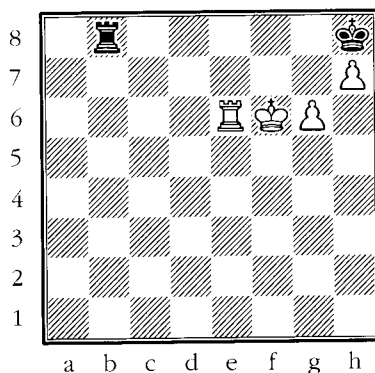
Don't panic if this sounds too complicated! Look over the solution several times and the winning plans will soon become remarkably easy to execute.

12...Rc8

Another try is 12...Kg8 13.Kg6 Rc6+ 14.Kf5 Rc5+ 15.Kf6 Rc6+ 16.Re6 (this is our first clear illustration of one of the virtues of 12.Re7) 16...Rc8 17.g6 Rb8 18.Rd6 Ra8 (of course, 18...Rf8+ 19.Ke7 helps White) 19.Ke7 takes us back to the winning idea in our main line.

Oddly, there is a more accurate win on move 18, namely 18.h7+ (instead of 18.Rd6): 18...Kh8 19.Kg5 when Kh6 will follow, with a quick mate. Just be careful about pushing your pawn to h7 in this fashion! Take a look at the two diagrams below and you'll see why I'm putting up red flags.

Diagram 185

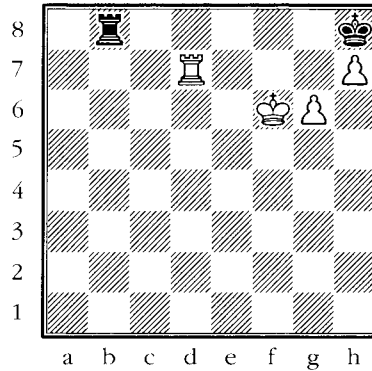


A quick mate is in store

RULE

King, Rook, knight-pawn, and rook-pawn on the same side of the board vs. King and Rook give the defender some stalemate tricks thanks to the rook-pawn's eternal "pain-in-the-ass" factor.

Diagram 186



Black to move draws

In diagram 185, Black can't stop White from playing Kg5 and Kh6 when it's all over. Note that the tricky 1...Rb6, hoping for 2.Rxb6?? stalemate, fails to 2.g7+ (giving black's King some freedom so he can safely capture the Rook) 2...Kxh7 3.Rxb6.

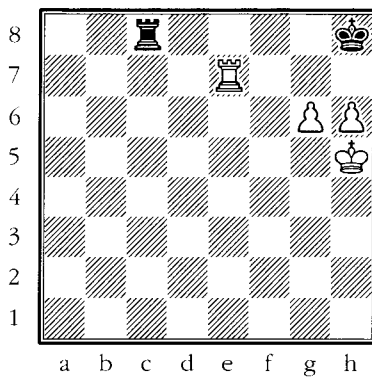
In diagram 186, black's King has no legal moves—as in diagram 185. However, due to white's Rook being on the 7th rank instead of on the 6th (where it stopped 6th rank checks), Black can force a draw by “sacrificially throwing his Rook into the volcano”: 1...Rb6+ (White to move would have won by 1.Rd6 followed by Kg5 and Kh6) 2.Kf5 (2.Kg5 Rxb6+! 3.Kxb6 stalemate) 2...Rf6+! (“Take my Rook!”) 3.Kg5 Rxb6+ (“Take it! I insist!”) 4.Kxb6 stalemate.

13.g6

USEFUL ADVICE

In this endgame, only push the pawn to h7 if you're 100% sure you've avoided the sacrificial stalemate tricks.

Diagram 187



No stalemates allowed!

Once again, White must be very certain that pushing the h-pawn to h7 doesn't create stalemate difficulties. In this case, 13.h7?? throws away the win after 13...Rc7! when moving the Rook away allows ...Kxh7 with a draw, while 14.Rxc7 is a stalemate.

13...Rc5+ 14.Kg4 Rc4+ 15.Kf5 Rc8

More checks just force white's King to where it wants to go: 15...Rc5+ 16.Kf6 Rc6+ 17.Kf7.

16.Ke6

Threatening 17.Kd7 Ra8 18.Re8+ trading Rooks (which would/should be enough to make Black immediately resign).

16...Ra8 17.Rd7

Intending Ke7 and Rd8+, exchanging Rooks. The tempting 17.Kf7 leaves black's King without a legal move (which we don't want to do!) and allows 17...Rf8+! when 18.Kxf8?? is a draw by stalemate. Fortunately, after 17...Rf8+ White could backtrack by 18.Ke6.

17...Re8+

Attacking the g-pawn by 17...Rg8 runs into the annoying 18.Rh7 mate.

18.Kf7 Rg8

Of course, 18...Rf8+ 19.Ke7! allows White to set up his Rook exchange by 20.Rd8.

19.g7+




White avoids 19.Re7 Rf8+! since 20.Ke6 would take a bit longer to win the game. However, another easy way to end things is 19.Rd5! (“Wasting” a move so that black's Rook has to give up its attack against g6. This allows white's King to then move to e7 since it no longer has to defend the pawn.) 19...Ra8 (19...Rf8+ 20.Ke7) 20.Ke7 Ra7+ 21.Rd7 Ra8 22.Rd8+, etc.

19...Kh7 20.Re7 Ra8

Or 20...Kxh6 21.Kxg8, 1-0.

21.Re8 Ra7+ 22.Kf8, 1-0.

Okay, a first look at this example might horrify you, but calm down and let's take another look at the step-by-step winning process:

-  Advance your pawns together so your King has shelter, your pawns can defend one another, and blockades can be avoided—don't allow one pawn to madly charge down the board on its own!
-  Make sure your King and pawns are in close contact. As in most chess situations, a team effort is needed for a successful result.
-  Make sure that your pawns can shield your King from checks!

- Be patient! Push the enemy King back slowly, always making sure the above conditions have been met.
- Once you have forced the enemy King to the back rank, move your Rook (which should be on the 7th rank) a couple files to the side of your pawns.

Your plan now is to:

- Place both your pawns on the 6th rank (forcing black's Rook to guard against back rank mates).
- Bring your King to the 7th rank—your Rook on the 7th will prevent checks along that rank.
- Give check by moving your Rook (protected by your King on the 7th rank!) to the 8th rank, forcing an exchange. The resulting King and two pawns vs. lone King endgame should be baby stuff for you at this point.

WARNING

Only move your h-pawn to h7 if you are 100% sure you have prevented the many stalemate tricks that are so commonly found in these positions! Don't forget the need for (yes, I'm repeating myself) *patience*!

With all this in mind, go back, play through the endgame again, and it will make more sense.

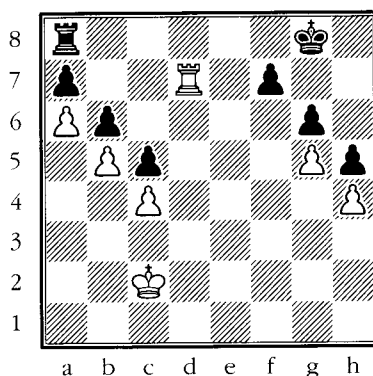
All Hail the 7th Rank!

Everyone has heard that “Rooks belong on the 7th rank.” However, can you explain why a Rook isn't equally delighted to be on the 6th rank or even the 8th?

The appeal of the 7th rank is twofold:

- Usually the enemy has many pawns on his 2nd rank, so placing a Rook on the 7th targets them for extermination.
- The defender's King is often on its 1st rank. A Rook on the 7th freezes the King, preventing it from becoming active and—in some instances—setting up possible back rank mating threats.

Diagram 188



Black to move is lost

This position shows us the domination that a simple Rook jump to the 7th bestows. Black's Rook is doomed to stay on a8 so it can defend a7, while black's King can't leave the safety of f8 or g7 for fear of hanging f7. Though Black is a pawn ahead, he's completely lost.

1...Kf8

Naturally, 1...f5 would be met by 2.gxf6 e.p.

2.Rb7 Ke8 3.Kc3!

White avoids 3.Kd3 Rd8+ 4.Ke4 Rd7 5.Ke5 Kd8. The text (3.Kc3) places Black in zugzwang—any move he makes worsens his position.

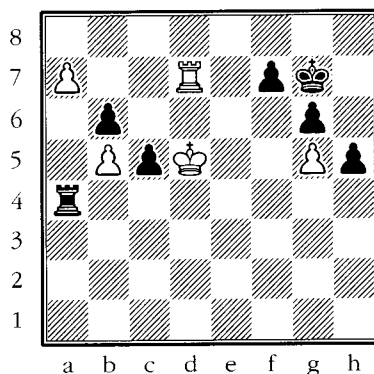
3...Kf8 4.Kd3 Rd8+

Seeing that 4...Ke8 5.Ke4 gives him no chance at all (unless White falls for 5...Kf8 6.Ke5 Re8+ 7.Kf6?? Re6 mate!), Black makes a bid for counterplay.

5.Ke4 Re8+

More challenging is 5...Rd4+, but White still wins: 6.Ke5 Rxc4 7.Rxa7 Rxh4 (7...Rb4 8.Rb7 Rxb5 9.a7 Ra5 10.Rb8+ Kg7 11.a8=Q) 8.Rd7! (Far stronger than 8.Rb7 Ra4 followed by 9...h4) 8...Ra4 9.a7 Kg7 10.Kd5

Diagram 189



Black loses

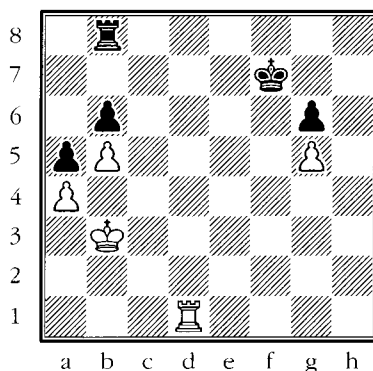
Though two pawns down, two things guarantee white's victory: 1) His King is going to play a major part in the action, compared to black's which is sitting on the sidelines (it's nice to be a King ahead!); 2) White's passed pawns are more advanced than black's. 10...h4 11.Kc6 h3 12.Kxb6 h2 13.Rd1, 1-0.

6.Kd5 Re7 7.Kd6 Re6+

Also unattractive are both 7...Rxb7 8.axb7, and 7...Re4 8.Rxa7 Rxc4 9.Rc7.

8.Kc7 Re7+ 9.Kb8, 1-0.

Diagram 190



White to move

1.Rd6!

Instead, 1.Rd7+? would be a mistake since it neither attacks the enemy pawns nor traps the enemy King. After 1...Ke6, black's King is free to roam.

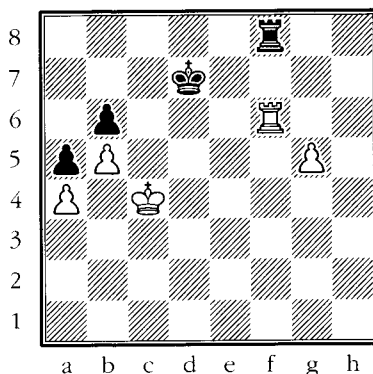
1.Rd6, on the other hand, stops the defending King from ever moving past its 3rd rank, while also eyeing both b6 and g6. In other words, in our diagrammed position a Rook on the 6th rank has all the advantages that a Rook on the 7th usually possesses.

1...Re8

Desperation, but passive defense is hopeless: 1...Rb7 2.Kc4 Rb8 3.Kd5 with Kc6 to follow.

Another stab at active counterplay is 1...Ke7 (Black is trying to swing his King over to the queenside where it will defend b6. Though he will sacrifice his g-pawn, he hopes to get his Rook active and create threats against white's pawn on a4.), but White easily prevails after 2.Rxg6 Kd7 3.Kc4 (don't forget to use your King!) 3...Rf8 (or 3...Kc7 4.Rc6+ Kb7 5.g6 when Black can resign) 4.Rf6! (Simplest. black's Rook is chased to a square that allows the white King to successfully penetrate. Also possible is 4.Rxb6, but why allow the complications of 4...Rf4+ and 5...Rxa4 when the text leaves Black without counterplay or hope?)

Diagram 191



No counterplay!

USEFUL ADVICE

In Rook endgames, it's always a good idea to deprive your opponent of counterplay by keeping his Rook and/or King caged and inactive whenever possible.

4...Rh8 (4...Re8 5.Kd5 or 4...Rg8 5.g6 are no better, while 4...Rxf6 5.gxf6 Ke6 6.f7 Kxf7 7.Kd5 followed by Kc6 and Kxb6 is resignable) 5.Kd5 Rh4 6.Rxb6 Rxa4 7.Rb7+ Kc8 8.Rf7 Rg4 9.Kc6! (threatening a “tiny” back rank mate) 9...Kd8 10.b6 Rxc5 11.Rd7+ Ke8 (11...Kc8 12.b7+ Kb8 13.Rd8+ leads to a quick mate) 12.b7 Rg6+ 13.Rd6, 1-0.

2.Rf6+!

This move forces Black to step to g7, thus pushing it farther away from the war zone on the queenside.

2...Kg7 3.Rxb6 Re3+ 4.Kc4 Re4+ 5.Kc5 Rxa4 6.Rb7+ Kf8 7.b6 Rg4 8.Rc7 Rxc5+ 9.Kc6 Rg1 10.b7 Rb1 11.Rc8+ Kf7 12.b8=Q Rxb8 13.Rxb8 Kf6 14.Kd5

White will win the a-pawn as his leisure, but first he lets his King personally deal with the g-pawn.

14...Kf5

Or 14...a4 15.Ke4 a3 16.Ra8.

15.Rf8+ Kg4 16.Ke4 g5 17.Ra8 Kg3 18.Rxa5 g4 19.Rg5 Kh3 20.Kf4 winning black's final pawn.



Minor Piece Endgames

We took our first tentative steps into the world of minor piece endgames in Part Four. Here I'll continue to gently introduce you to basic endgame positions that involve Bishops and/or Knights—we'll ingest a bit more about Bishops of opposite colors, we'll tackle very basic two pawns vs. one on the same side of the board, and we'll even address two Bishops vs. lone King, which is far easier than you might imagine.

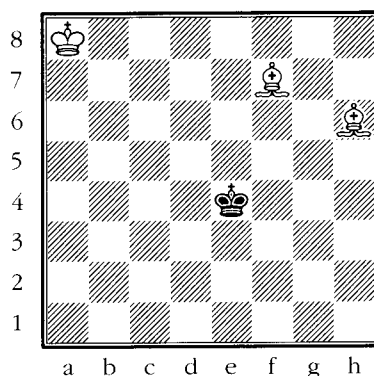
Two Bishops vs. Lone King

Some of you might be wondering when I'm going to teach you Bishop and Knight vs. lone King. The shocking (almost heretical!) answer is, "Never!" My reasoning is very simple: I personally have had this position once in my whole career. That's right, just once! My good friend (and well known chess author) IM John Watson has never had it at all! On top of that, Bishop and Knight vs. King is not at all easy to learn, and mastering it would take a significant chunk of time. Should the chess hopeful really spend many of the precious hours he's put aside for chess study learning an endgame that he'll achieve (at most) only once or twice in his lifetime?

In general, every position I give in this book will happen fairly often, or understanding it will allow you to solve other positions with similar themes. I don't feel Bishop and Knight vs. King falls into this category, but then, two Bishops vs. King is also a rare bird in tournament play. So why should I insist you learn two Bishops vs. lone King? There are three reasons for its inclusion:

- I find the need to use all three of your pieces in a balanced team effort to be quite instructive.
- Seeing how powerful two Bishops are when working together can be enlightening.
- It's very easy to learn and only involves a small expenditure of time to fully understand.

Diagram 192



White to move

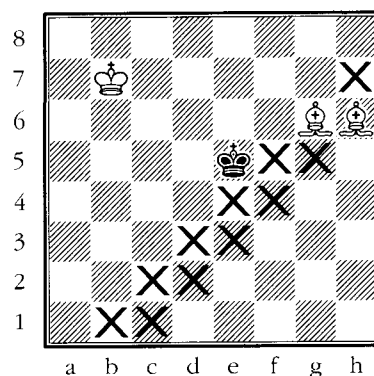
The keys to this endgame:

- Use the Bishops to cut off two “connected” diagonals at the same time. This traps the defending King in one sector of the board.
- The Bishops will be able to take away other important squares while also making whole diagonals impassable.
- You will need your own King to win, so bring it up so it can directly challenge its counterpart.
- Bit by bit, shrink the “diagonal Box,” in much the same way we shrink the Box in Rook vs. King or Queen vs. King.
- You will need to chase the defending King to a corner. Once there, you’ll easily deliver mate.

1.Bg6+ Ke5 2.Kb7

The King heads for the embattled area. Also note that white’s Bishops control the b1-h7 and c1-h6 diagonals. Black’s King can’t pass through this “fence”—a fence White intends to shrink when the time is right.

Diagram 193



A thick, impenetrable fence

2...Kf6 3.Bh7

Watch out! Don't fall asleep and let the desperate enemy King snap off one of your Bishops! Now the Bishops can't be approached.

3...Ke5 4.Kc6 Kd4 5.Bf4

Depriving black's King of the e5-square.

5...Kc4

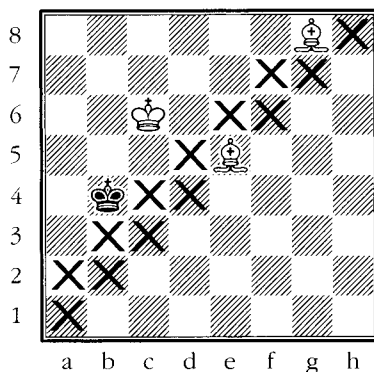
Even easier for White is 5...Kc3 6.Kc5.

6.Be5

The diagonal Box has shrunk. Now White controls a1-h8 and b1-h7.

6...Kb4 7.Bg8

Diagram 194

**The Box has shrunk**

Once again shrinking the Box by laying claim to the a2-g8 diagonal.

7...Ka3 8.Kc5 Ka4 9.Bb2

The final phase: White takes away the a3-square and herds black's King towards the a8-corner.

9...Ka5 10.Bb3

There goes the a4-square!

10...Ka6 11.Kc6 Ka7

Or 11...Ka5 12.Bc3+ Ka6 13.Bc4+ Ka7 14.Kc7 Ka8 15.Bd2 (Wasting a tempo so that a check can be given when the black King goes to a7) 15...Ka7 16.Be3+ Ka8 17.Bd5 mate.

12.Be5

It's as if the Bishop is saying, "Sorry, but I can't allow you to run out of the corner via the b8-square."

12...Ka6

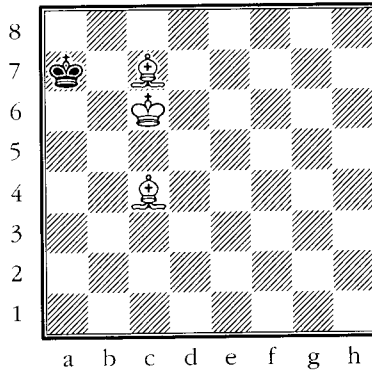
12...Ka8 13.Kc7 Ka7 14.Bc4 Ka8 15.Bf4 Ka7 16.Be3+ Ka8 17.Bd5 mate.

13.Bc7

Now both a5 and b8 are off limits.

13...Ka7 14.Bc4

Diagram 195

**Trapped in a tiny Box**

And now only a7 and a8 are available to Black.

14...Ka8 15.Be5

Having done its job, the dark-squared Bishop now puts some Checking Distance between it and black's King. As always, watch out for stalemates! 15.Kb6 stalemate would be a disaster.

15...Ka7 16.Kc7

White's King frees the dark-squared Bishop of b8 guard duty.

16...Ka8 17.Bf4

Wasting a move and waiting for ...Ka7, when a check-cascade and mate will follow.

If the player of the Black pieces is your spouse and you fear later retribution, you may wish to play 17.Bd4?? stalemate, thus drawing the game and keeping marital harmony intact.

17...Ka7 18.Be3+ Ka8 19.Bd5 mate.**REMEMBER**

Watch out for stalemates!

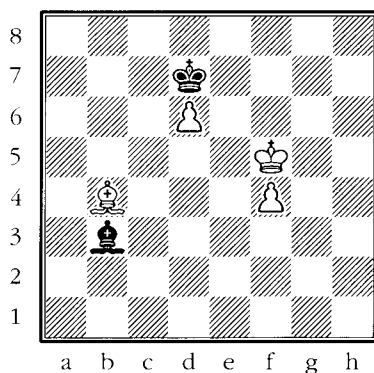
Bishops of Opposite Colors (Two Pawns Down and Loving it!)

In Part Four, we saw that a one-pawn advantage is often not enough to guarantee victory. At times, a two-pawn advantage (with no other pawns on the board) isn't enough when there is only one file between them. The reason? White's King and Bishop can team up to blockade both pawns.

RULE

Bishops of opposite colors, two pawns vs. none with the pawns only one file apart, is often drawn since the defending King and Bishop can combine their powers to stop the pawns in their tracks.

Diagram 196



White to move, draw

With the pawn on d6 firmly blocked, the result hinges on whether or not White can force Black to give up his Bishop for white's f-pawn.

1.Kg6

Taking control over f7 and getting out of the way of the f-pawn. Is Black doomed?

1...Ba2

He seems unconcerned.

2.f5 Bb3 3.f6 Ke8

Now we can see why one file between the pawns isn't enough: black's King can eye both key squares on d7 and f7 and thus create a blockade. Yes, White can win the Bishop with 4.d7+ Kxd7 5.f7 Bxf7+ but, since no other pawns exist, that would be an immediate draw.

Since Black can now do the old Bishop shuffle (...Bb3-a2-b3-a2, etc.), White marches his King to the other side in one last effort.

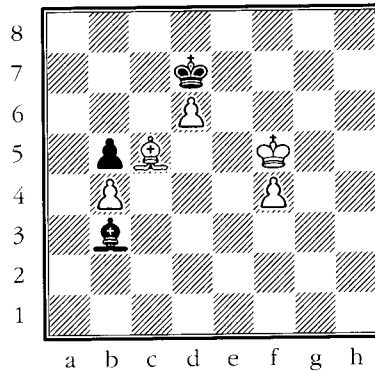
4.Kf5 Ba2 5.Ke5 Bb3 6.Kd4 Ba2

And not 6...Kf7?? 7.d7 when White makes a new Queen.

7.Kc5 Kd7 and, since White isn't getting anywhere, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

Of course, if each side had one extra pawn, the result would be different:

Diagram 197



White to move wins

White now plays as he did in the previous example, but the addition of those b-pawns is enough to bring him victory.

1.Kg6 Ba2 2.f5 Bb3 3.f6 Ke8

The same moves that we saw from diagram 196, but the addition of one set of pawns proves decisive for White.

4.d7+ Kxd7 5.f7 Bxf7+ 6.Kxf7 Kc6 7.Ke6 Kc7 8.Kd5 Kb7 9.Kd6 Ka6 10.Bd4

Not falling for the hasty 10.Kc6?? stalemate!

10...Kb7 11.Kc5 Ka6 12.Be5

Again, 12.Kc6?? is a draw by stalemate.

12...Kb7 13.Kxb5, 1-0.

As we've seen, a two-pawn advantage with the pawns only being one file apart isn't always decisive. However, when the pawns are two or more files from each other the stronger side's winning chances go way up.

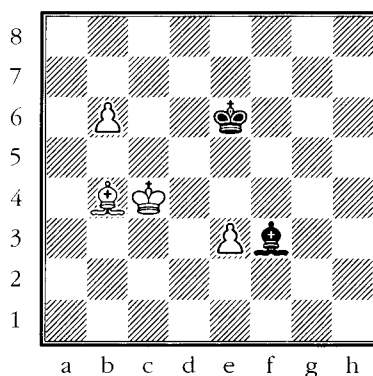
There are many cases of White winning when the pawns are two files apart, but the defender does have drawing chances if his Bishop can freeze both pawns at the same time.

In diagram 198 it's clear that neither pawn is going anywhere without help from its King. Since 1.Kd4 (threatening 2.e4) is stymied by 1...Kf5! 2.Kc5 Ke6 when the Bishop is still stopping both pawns in their tracks, White comes up with the idea of bringing his King to a6 in an effort to help escort the b-pawn to the Promised Land.

RULE

Bishops of opposite colors, two pawns to none, pawns two squares apart. When the Bishop, on one diagonal, can stop both pawns from advancing at the same time, and when the defending King can work with its Bishop to retain control over the key advance squares, the game will often be drawn.

Diagram 198



White to move, draw

1.Kb5 Kd7! 2.Ka6

On 2.Kc5 Black would play 2...Ke6! so as to meet Kd4 with ...Kf5.

2...Kc8

Now Black has stopped both pawns again, and any Bishop moves by White will be met with the same back and forth wandering (along the h1-a8 diagonal) by Black.

3.Kb5 Kd7 4.Kc5 Ke6! 5.Bc3 Bg2

The Bishop moves are tossed in merely to show that both players can waste infinite amounts of time without changing the nature of the position.

6.Kd4

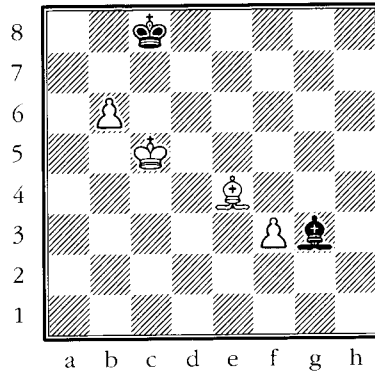
Trying to play e3-e4.

6...Kf5!, 1/2-1/2.

What allowed Black to draw this position? Here are the key defensive elements:

- Both pawns can only advance to light-colored squares, thus, white's Bishop wasn't able to take part in the fight to move forward.
- Black's Bishop covered the squares in front of both pawns at the same time.
- Black's King was able to shadow white's King whenever it moved to the aid of either pawn. The blockading combination of black King and Bishop is enough to stop any progress by White.

Diagram 199



White wins

1.Bd5

White isn't in any hurry, so he frees the e4-square for his King since he knows that it eventually has to march over to the kingside and escort the f-pawn down the board.

1...Kb8 2.Kc4

And not 2.Kd4?? Bf2+ followed by 3...Bxb6.

2...Bf2 3.b7 Bg3 4.Kd4 Bd6 5.Ke4 Kc7

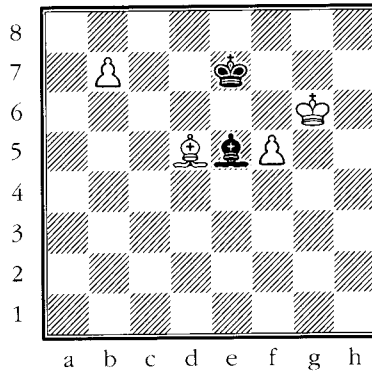
Doing nothing allows White to ultimately win black's Bishop for the f-pawn. Thus, black's King will rush to the kingside and try and stave off the inevitable.

6.Kf5 Kd8 7.f4

Playing 7.Kf6 or 7.Kg6 makes it impossible to safely push the f-pawn to f4.

7...Ke7 8.Kg5 Bc7 9.f5 Be5 10.Kg6

Diagram 200



Black is in zugzwang

If Black could retain this defensive position, he would draw. Unfortunately, any Bishop move would give up control over b8 or f6, while a King move allows the f-pawn to plow through f6.

RULE

As you might imagine, three or more files separating the pawns (as long as one of the pawns isn't a wrong colored rook-pawn!) is usually decisive since the defending King can't help prevent the advance of both pawns.

10...Bb8

Of course, 10...Kd6 allows 11.b8=Q+.

11.f6+ Kf8

No better is 11...Kd6 12.f7 Ke7 13.Kg7 and the f-pawn promotes.

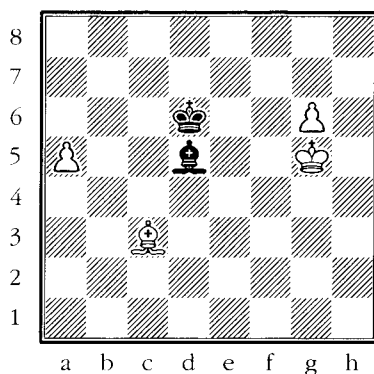
12.f7 Be5

Also easy for White is 12...Bd6 13.Kf6 followed by Ke6. Note that 12...Ke7 13.Kg7 wins immediately.

13.Kf5 Bb8 14.Ke6 Bg3 15.Kd7 Bf4 16.Kc8 followed by b8=Q, winning a piece and the game.

The only time Black can draw split pawns that are three or more files apart is when one of them is a rook-pawn of the wrong color.

Diagram 201

**Black draws**

Black draws easily by rushing over to b7 and allowing White to win a piece for his g-pawn.

1.Kh6 Kc6 2.Kh7 Kb7 3.g7 Ka8 4.g8=Q Bxg8+ 5.Kxg8 and we have the classic Bishop and rook-pawn of the wrong color draw.

In a nutshell, when one side is two pawns up (vs. lone King and Bishop) in a Bishop of opposite color endgame, here are some rules to chew on:

- Positions where the pawns are separated by one file are often drawn since the defending Bishop and King are close enough to work together in creating a blockade against both pawns.
- Positions where the pawns are separated by two files offer some drawing chances, particularly if the defending Bishop eyes the advance squares of both pawns at the same time.
- Positions where the pawns are separated by three or more files offer few defensive chances. However, a draw is likely if one of the pawns is a rook-pawn of the wrong color.

RULE

As usual in Bishop endgames, watch out for the old wrong colored rook-pawn trick.

Summing Up

King and Pawn Endgames

- King and two connected pawns vs. lone King always wins.
- King and two split pawns vs. lone King:
 - Pawns that are one file apart on any rank can usually defend themselves until the King arrives to shuttle one of them down the board.
 - Pawns that are several files apart (on any rank) are too much for the defending King to handle.
 - The defender has his best survival chances if the pawns are two files apart. However, if those pawns are on the 5th rank or farther then the game is resignable.
- Triangulation is the name of a very small, often uncomplicated maneuver designed to give your opponent the move and, as a result, you the Opposition.
- Outflanking is a maneuver where the stronger side's King moves to the side, placing a file between the Kings (sometimes even giving the opponent the Opposition while doing so!). This allows the Outflanking King to march forward towards the target, without allowing the enemy monarch to step in front of it and take Direct Opposition.

Rook Endgames

- Rook and two connected passed pawns (knight-pawn and rook-pawn, which is the hardest case) vs. lone Rook. Here is the step-by-step winning process:
 - Advance your pawns together so your King has shelter, your pawns can defend one another, and blockades can be avoided—don't allow one pawn to madly charge down the board on its own!
 - Make sure your King and pawns are in close contact. As in most chess situations, a team effort is needed for a successful result.

- Make sure that your pawns can shield your King from checks!
- Be patient! Push the enemy King back slowly, always making sure the above conditions have been met.
- Once you have forced the enemy King to the back rank, move your Rook (which should be on the 7th rank) a couple files to the side of your pawns.
- Place both your pawns on the 6th rank (forcing black's Rook to guard against back rank mates).
- Bring your King to the 7th rank—your Rook on the 7th will prevent checks along that rank.
- Give check by moving your Rook (protected by your King on the 7th rank!) to the 8th rank, forcing an exchange. The resulting King and two pawns vs. lone King endgame should be baby stuff for you at this point.

► Rooks belong on the 7th rank, but only if the Rook inconveniences the enemy King (usually by trapping it on the back rank) and/or attacks one or more enemy pawns.

Minor Piece Endgames

► Two Bishops vs. Lone King. The keys to this endgame are:

- Use the Bishops to cut off two “connected” diagonals at the same time. This traps the defending King in one sector of the board.
- The Bishops will be able to take away other important squares while also making whole diagonals impassable.
- You will need to use your King to win, so bring it up so it can directly challenge its counterpart.
- Bit by bit, shrink the “diagonal Box”, in much the same way we shrink the Box in Rook vs. King or Queen vs. King.
- You will need to chase the defending King to a corner. Once there, you'll easily deliver mate.

► Bishop and two split pawns vs. Bishop of the opposite color:

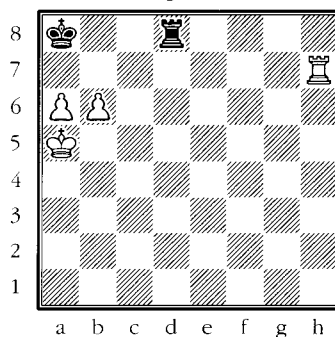
- Positions where the pawns are separated by one file are often drawn since the defending Bishop and King are close enough to work together in creating a blockade against both pawns.

- Positions where the pawns are separated by two files offer some drawing chances, particularly if the defending Bishop eyes the advance squares of both pawns at the same time.
- Positions where the pawns are separated by three or more files offer few defensive chances. However, a draw is likely if one of the pawns is a rook-pawn of the wrong color.

Tests and Solutions

TEST 1

Diagram 202

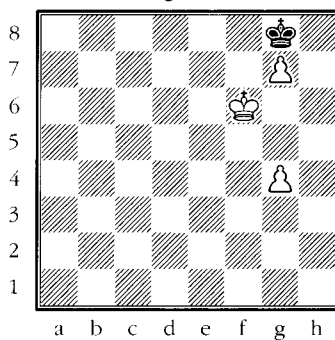


White to move

Is 1.a7 a good idea?

TEST 2

Diagram 203

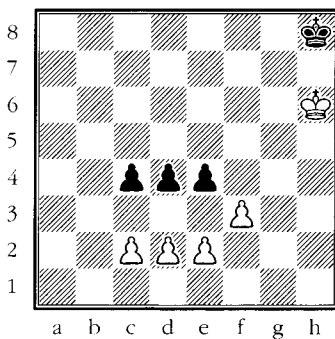


White to move

Does 1.Kf5 win?

TEST 3

Diagram 204

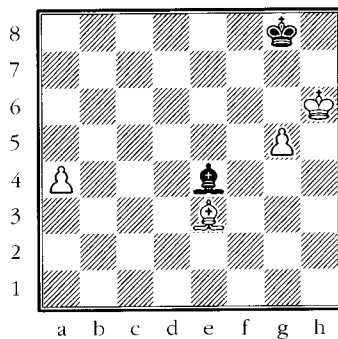


Black to move

Is Black doomed?

TEST 4

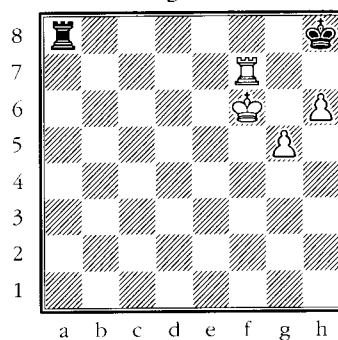
Diagram 205

**Black to move**

Can Black draw?

TEST 5

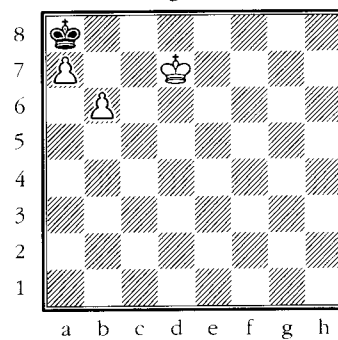
Diagram 206

**White to move**

Is 1.g6 a good move?

TEST 6

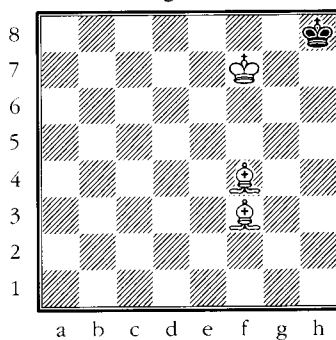
Diagram 207

**White to move**

Look at 1.Kc8, 1.Kc7, 1.Kc6, and 1.b7+. Which one wins for White?

TEST 7

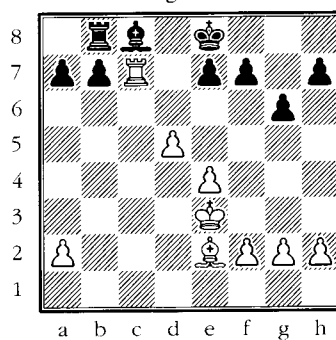
Diagram 208

**White to move**

Is 1.Be4 a good move?

TEST 8

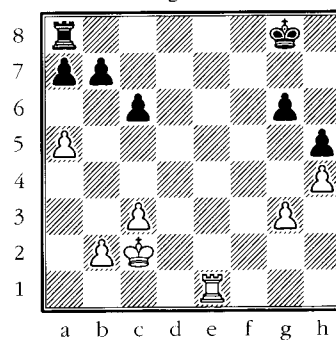
Diagram 209

**White to move**

White has two strong moves at his disposal that both make use of a similar theme. If you see the position's theme, you'll find the moves.

TEST 9

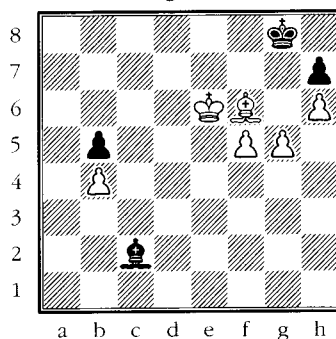
Diagram 210

**White to move**

Does White have winning chances?

TEST 10

Diagram 211



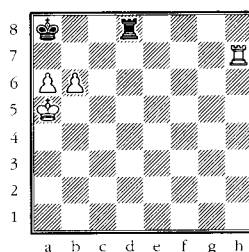
Black to move

White is two pawns up. Can Black save himself?

* * * * *

SOLUTION 1

Diagram 202



White to move

Is 1.a7 a good idea?

No! By taking away all of the black King's legal moves, you've allowed Black to force a draw by playing directly for a stalemate.

1.a7?? Rd5+ 2.Ka4

2.Ka6 Ra5+! 3.Kxa5 stalemate.

2...Ra5+!

“Take my Rook!”

3.Kb4 Rb5+

“Take it!”

4.Kc4 Rb4+

Also good is 4...Rxb6. 4...Rb4+, trying to make white's King run to the other side of the board before taking on b6, is more melodramatic!

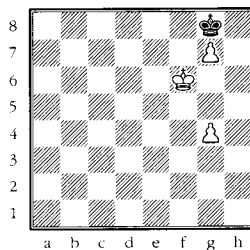
5.Kd3 Rb3+ 6.Ke4 Rb4+

Again, ...Rxb6 is still an instant draw.

7.Kd5 Rb5+ 8.Kc6 Rxb6+! 9.Kxb6 stalemate.

SOLUTION 2

Diagram 203



White to move

Does 1.Kf5 win?

It's clear that 1.Kg6?? creates a draw by stalemate, and that 1.Kg5?? Kxg7 also draws since Black would have the Opposition. One obvious way to win from our initial position is 1.g5 Kh7 2.g8=Q+! (avoiding 2.Kf7?? stalemate, and 2.g6+?? Kg8 with a draw) 2...Kxg8 3.Kg6 Kh8 4.Kf7 Kh7 5.g6+ and the pawn turns into a Queen.

The question, though, was whether White could win by the odd looking 1.Kf5. The answer is yes:

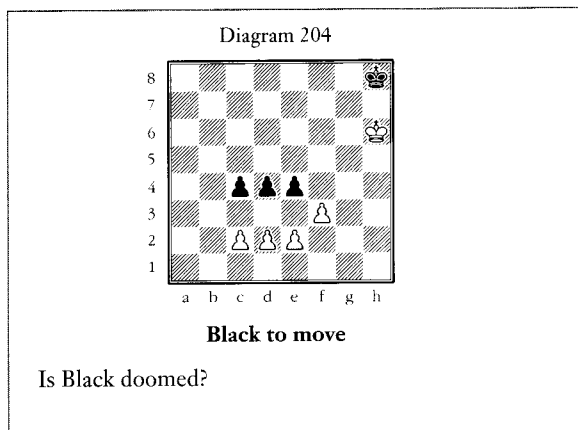
1...Kf7!

A good try. The more mundane 1...Kxg7 2.Kg5 takes the Opposition and is an easy win.

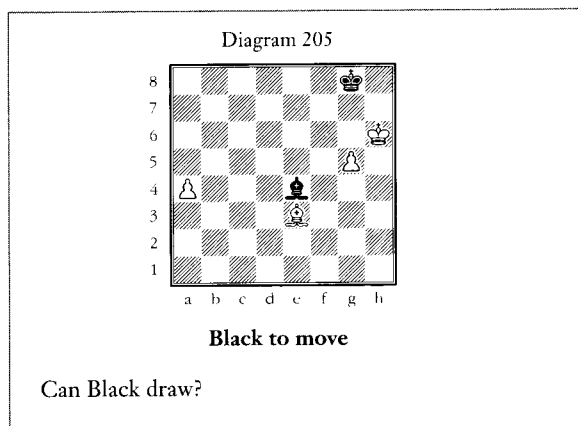
2.g8=Q+!

Not falling for 2.Kg5?? Kxg7 when Black has the Opposition and draws, while 2.g5?? Kxg7 3.g6 Kg8 is a basic draw.

2...Kxg8 3.Kg6! and the Opposition will prove decisive (3...Kh8 4.Kh6 Kg8 5.g5 Kh8 6.g6 Kg8 7.g7, 1-0).

SOLUTION 3

Black wins by using a typical “tactical bomb” trick: **1...d3!! 2.cxd3 e3!! 3.dxe3 c3** and black’s last remaining pawn promotes.

SOLUTION 4

The defender usually loses when the pawns are this far apart (black’s two pieces can’t work together against both enemy pawns, and this ensures that his Bishop will eventually be lost.), but in this case it’s a draw because the rook-pawn is of the wrong color.

1...Kf7

Heading for the queenside. Black knows he will ultimately lose his Bishop, but this won’t matter if he can get his King to b7.

2.a5 Ke7 3.g6

No better is **3.a6 Kd7 4.a7 Kc7 5.g6 Kb7 6.g7 Bd5**, 1/2-1/2.

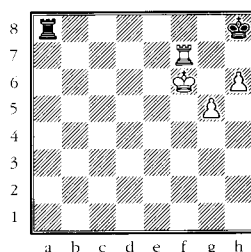
3...Kd7 4.g7 Bd5 5.a6 Kc7

And not **5...Kc8?? 6.Bf4!** and White wins since black’s King won’t get to b7 or a8.

6.Kh7 Kb8 7.g8=Q+ Bxg8+ 8.Kxg8 Ka8, 1/2-1/2.

SOLUTION 5

Diagram 206

**Curt Hansen – E Agrest, Malmo 2004****White to move**

Is 1.g6 a good move?

Yes, 1.g6 is excellent since it creates back rank mate possibilities if black's Rook moves off its 1st rank. All White has to do is avoid stalemate tricks and victory will be his:

1.g6 Kg8

No better is 1...Ra6+ 2.Kg5 (threatening 3.Rf8 mate) 2...Ra5+ 3.Rf5 Ra8 4.Rd5 and White wins since he'll follow by moving the King to e7 and exchanging Rooks by Rd8+.

2.Rg7+ Kh8 3.Rd7

An important move, since leaving the Rook on g7 stalemates the black King—something you don't want to do in this endgame!

After 3.Rd7, White threatens to trade Rooks by Ke7 followed by Rd8+.

3...Re8

Momentarily stopping Ke7.

4.Kf7 Rg8

Again stopping Ke7.

5.Rd6

Defending g6 and finally threatening to end things with 6.Kd7 and 7.Rd8.

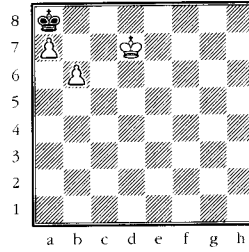
5...Rf8+

A last bit of desperation. Of course, 6.Kxf8?? would draw by stalemate.

6.Ke7, 1-0.

SOLUTION 6

Diagram 207



White to move

Look at 1.Kc8, 1.Kc7, 1.Kc6, and 1.b7+. Which one wins for White?

All four of these moves are blunders that throw away the win. It's clear that 1.Kc8, 1.Kc7, and 1.Kc6 all lead to stalemate and an immediate draw. 1.b7+ is tricky, but also leads to a draw after 1...Kxb7! (and not 1...Kxa7?? 2.Kc7 when White promotes his b-pawn).

The correct way to ice this position is

1.Kd6 Kb7 2.a8=Q+!

Giving up this pawn allows white's King to move to c6—taking the Opposition!—without a stalemate occurring.

2...Kxa8 3.Kc6!

Defly avoiding 3.Kc7?? stalemate.

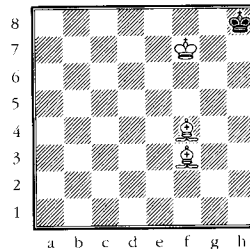
3...Kb8 4.b7 Ka7 5.Kc7 Ka6 6.b8=Q Ka5 7.Qb3!

Fastest. This forces Black to step towards white's King.

7...Ka6 8.Qb6 mate.

SOLUTION 7

Diagram 208



White to move

Is 1.Be4 a good move?

It's a great move if you want a draw (since it creates an immediate stalemate),

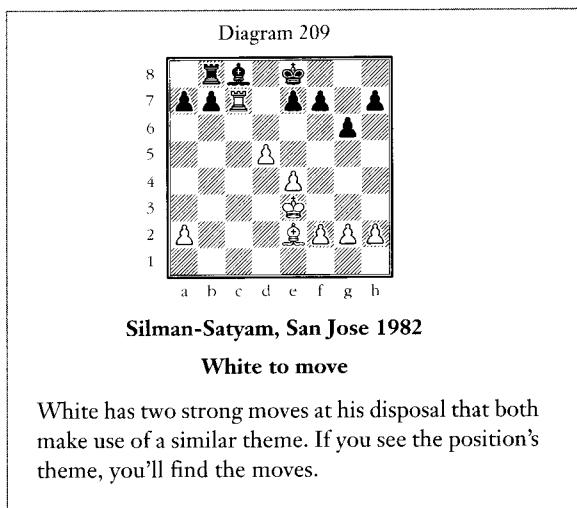
but if victory tastes sweeter, then waste a move and only play your Bishop to e4 when it's a check:

1.Be3

Keeping this Bishop on the c1-h6 diagonal stops the black King from running out of the corner since h6 is now untouchable. Also, don't chase black's King out of the corner by 1.Be5+ Kh7 2.Be4+ Kh6, and don't stalemate by 1.Be5+ Kh7 2.Bg7??, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

1...Kh7 2.Be4+ Kh8 3.Bd4 mate.

SOLUTION 8



The theme is to give white's Rook control of the absolute 7th rank and and, as a result, leave black's pieces passive and helpless (in other words, no counterplay for Black!). Since Black threatens to chase the Rook away with ...Kd8, White needs to give his Rook some breathing room on the 7th.

1.d6!

Creating absolute 7th rank. The other way of doing this is 1.Bb5!+ Kd8 (or 1...Kf8 2.Bc4 with the threat of d6) 2.d6!.

Very good for White, but not as strong, is 1.e5 Kd8 2.d6 Bd7.

1...exd6

1...Bd7 2.dxe7 is bad for Black since 2...Kxe7 is met by 3.Bb5 Rd8 4.Rxb7, while 2...a6 3.Bc4 Kxe7 4.Bxf7 Kd6 5.Rc2 is an easy win for White.

2.Bb5+ Kf8 3.Bc4 Be6 4.Bxe6 fxe6 5.Rxh7

White's Rook now rules the 7th. Black won't be able to avoid material losses.

5...Kg8

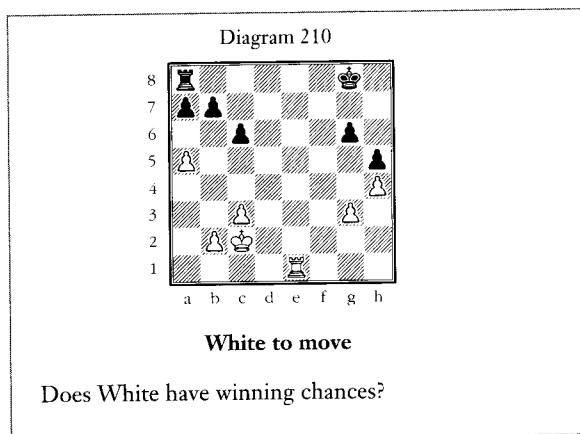
Preventing Rh8+, which White picks up black's Rook.

6.Re7 e5 7.Re6 Kf7 8.Rxd6 Rc8 9.Rd7+ Kf6 10.Rxb7

With two healthy extra pawns, White is assured of victory. All he has to do is patiently improve his position.

10...Rc3+ 11.Kd2 Ra3 12.Rb2 Kg5 13.Ke2 Kf4 14.f3 Kg5 15.g3 Ra5 16.Kf2 Kf6 17.g4 Rc5 18.Rd2 Ra5 19.Kg3 Ra3 20.h4 a5 21.Rd7 Ke6 22.Rg7 Kf6 23.Ra7 g5 24.hxg5+ Kxg5 25.Rf7 Kg6 26.Rf5 Rxa2 27.Rxe5 Ra1 28.Kf4 a4 29.Ra5 a3 30.Ra6+ Kf7 31.Kf5 a2 32.Ra7+ Kf8 33.f4, 1-0.

SOLUTION 9



White has a winning position after ...

1.Re7 Rb8

1...b6 2.a6 fixes the target on a7 and only makes things worse for Black.

2.Kd3 a6

This prevents White from answering ...b7-b6 with a5-a6.

3.Rc7! Kf8

Or 3...b6 4.Rxc6 bxa5 5.Rxg6+ Kf7 6.Rg5 with an easy win.

4.b4

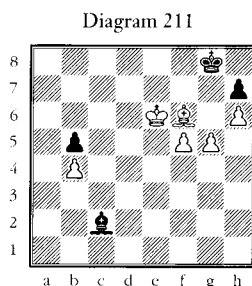
White takes his time and continues to fix the enemy pawns, while also placing his own pawns on protected squares.

4...Ke8 5.Kc4

Stopping ideas based on ...Rd8 followed by ...Rd7.

5...Kd8 6.Rg7, 1-0. Black wasn't able to do more than whimper!

SOLUTION 10



Najdorf-S Garcia, Buenos Aires 1968

Black to move

White is two pawns up. Can Black save himself?

The game would be drawn if the b-pawns didn't exist. But with them on the board, White will easily score the full point. He has two ways of doing this:

Plan 1: Exchange his g-pawn for black's h-pawn. Then force the win of black's Bishop for white's two kingside pawns. Once this is done, white's King will march over to the queenside and eat the b5-pawn, ending the game.

Plan 2: Exchange his f- and g-pawns for black's b-pawn and h-pawn. White's two passed pawns would then be too far from each other for Black to deal with.

1...Bb3+

Even easier for White is 1...Kf8 2.g6 Kg8 (2...hxg6 3.h7 promotes the h-pawn) 3.gxh7+ Kxh7 4.Bg5 Kg8 5.f6 Bb3+ (5...Kf8 6.h7 Bxh7 7.Bh6+ Ke8 8.f7+ promotes the f-pawn) 6.Ke7 Bc4 7.h7+ Kxh7 8.f7 Bxf7 9.Kxf7, 1-0. This is a good illustration of white's first plan.

2.Kd6 Bc2 3.Kc5

Najdorf decides to take his time and torture his opponent. He's hoping for 3...Bxf5 4.Kxb5 when Black would draw if he could get his King to b7, but that's clearly not possible here: 4...Kf7 5.Kc6 Be4+ 6.Kb6 Ke8 (Keeping the King on the kingside is also hopeless: 6...Kg8 7.b5 Kf7 8.Kc7 Kg8 9.b6 Kf7 10.b7 Bxb7 11.Kxb7 Kg8 12.Kc7 Kf7 13.Kd6 Kg8 14.Ke6 Kf8 5.Kf5 Kf7 16.g6+ hg6+ 17.Kg5 Kg8 18.Kxg6 and White promotes his pawn because it queens on the same color as his Bishop) 7.b5 Kd7 (7...Bd3 8.Kc6 Be4+ 9.Kc7) 8.Ka7 Kc7 9.b6+ Kc8 10.g6! when the poor Bishop can't defend b7 and g6 at once. Since 10...hxg6 is killed by 11.h7, Black would have to resign.

Nevertheless, instead of 3.Kc5, it was faster to go for victory by plan one: 3.Ke5 Bd3 4.Be7 Bc2 (4...Kf7 5.g6+ hxg6 7.h7 Kg7 7.f6+ Kxh7 8.f7, etc.)

5.Bd6 Bd3 6.Kf6 Be4 7.g6 Bc2 8.gxh7+ Kxh7 9.Bf4 Bd3 10.Ke6 Bc4+ 11.Ke7 Kg8
12.f6 Bb3 13.h7+ Kxh7 14.f7 when White wins black's Bishop and the game.

3...Bd3 4.Kb6 Kf7 5.g6+ Kg8

Not falling for 5...hxg6 6.h7.

6.Bg7 Bc4 7.Be5 Bd3 8.Bf4

Still hoping for 8...Bxf4 when 9.gxh7+ Kxh7 10.Kxb5 is easy for White.
However, Black refuses to bite.

8...Bf1 9.Kc6 Bd3 10.Kc5 Bf1

Black's King can't move: 10...Kh8 fails to 11.f6! Bxg6 12.Kxb5, while 10...Kf8
11.gxh7 makes a new Queen.

11.Kd4

Finally, after torturing both his opponent and us, Najdorf goes back to the
kingside and Plan 1.

11...Bc4 12.Ke5 Bd3 13.gxh7+ Kxh7 14.Kc6 Kg8 15.f6 Bg6 16.Ke7, 1-0.



Final Thoughts

Triangulation? Outflanking? Have I gone berserk? For those that felt panic when they eyed the contents of Part Five, I would guess that you've now calmed down a bit—the material might have been a bit ponderous to go over, but far from difficult to learn.

So what's your reward for slogging through topics like Rook and two connected passers vs. lone Rook? How about an extremely tight understanding of basic endgames that will give you a lifetime of confidence every time the final phase of the game is reached.

Make no mistake about it: you *can* make due (even with an "A" or Expert rating) with the material through Part Five (plus the bits and pieces you pick up from experience) for the rest of your life. Your endgame foundation is *that* good!

So, if you feel that you've now put more than enough effort into the endgame, you can put this book aside without guilt or misgivings. You worked hard and have come a long way, and that's very impressive! However, for these "I never want to see another endgame book for the rest of my life" people, may I suggest that you spend a bit of time with the three chapters in Endgames for Pure Pleasure (Part Nine). I think that material will send you off in style, and with a smile on your face.

For those that have serious aspirations towards Class "A" or even Expert, and who want to know more about the endgame than others in those classes, things will get a bit difficult in Parts Six and Seven. Are you going to tough it out? If so, I'll see you there.