

PART SIX – ENDGAMES FOR CLASS “A” (1800-1999)

Part Six

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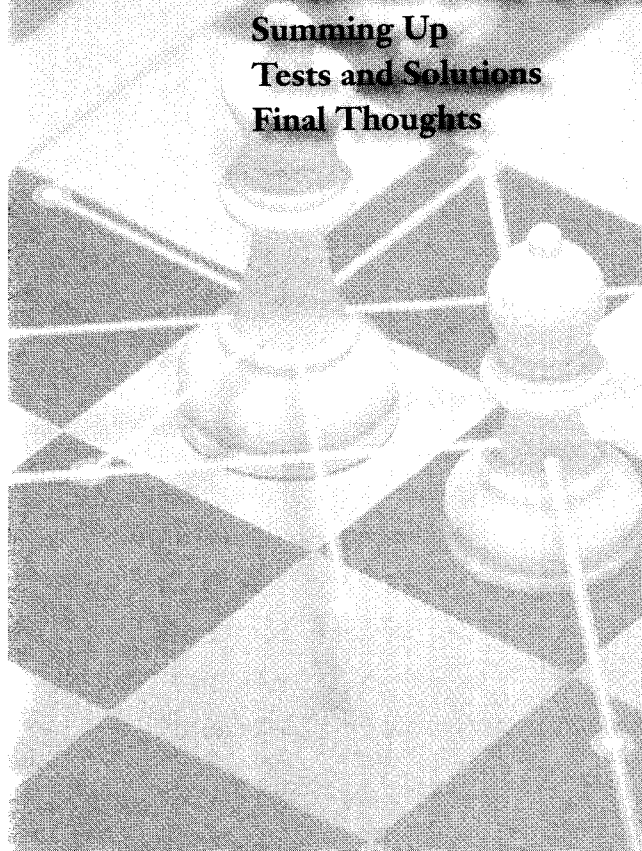
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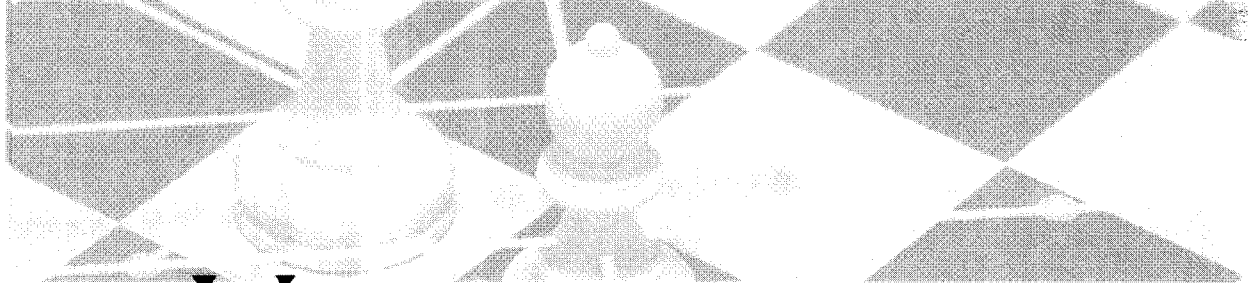
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You've come a long way and *finally* enjoy an elite rating. As you've moved up the ladder, you might have noticed that more and more games reach endings, and often they prove to be rather complex. Now, more than ever, you'll need to have mastered all the endgame material in past sections and assimilate the new material here.

Believe it or not, if you completely master everything through Part Six, you will have an understanding of endgame basics that far surpasses 75% of those in the Expert (2000-2199) category. And it's that lack of general endgame knowledge among tournament players who pride themselves on being "good" that will give you a huge advantage over them during the course of your chess career.

Of course, absorbing this new information won't be easy. Everything here is far more difficult than anything we've looked at thus far. But I wouldn't present it if I didn't think it was very learnable and well within the grasp of an "A" class player. So, since you're here and since you seem determined to go to that next level, fasten your seatbelt and let's begin!

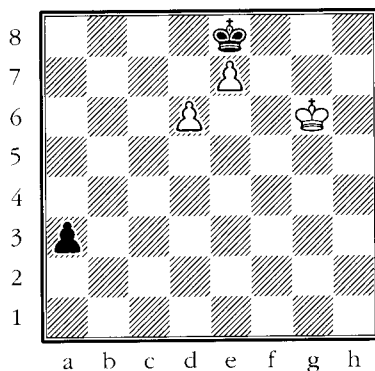
King and Pawn Endgames

You should already be well versed in King and pawn basics, but now it's time to learn a new idea or two that will prepare you for the more expansive, and complicated, examples in Part Seven.

Strange Races

Many King and pawn endgames are decided by simple races that center on whose pawn promotes first. When one side queens and the other can't, it's usually game over. And, when both sides promote, one after the other, it's usually a draw. Much of the beauty of chess, though, lies in the exceptions. And there are several "race exceptions" that are must knows.

Diagram 212



White to move

USEFUL ADVICE

Pawn mates are something you must be familiar with. They form the basis of many (sometimes surprising) victories in more complex pawn endgames.

Black's pawn has a clear, and quick, path to a1, while black's King is trying to hold off the White hoards on d6 and e7. Nevertheless, White wins because mate trumps the queening of a pawn.

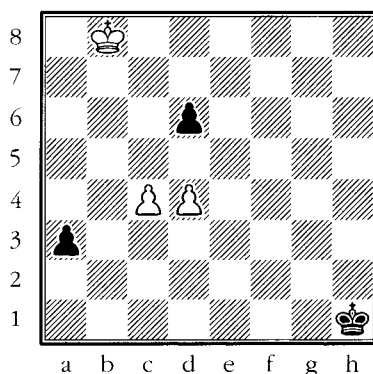
1.Kf6 a2

Black could also play 1...Kd7 but then White wins because his pawn promotes with check: 2.Kf7 a2 3.e8=Q+ and Black loses the race.

2.Ke6 a1=Q 3.d7 mate. Black won the race but lost the war!

Success in many races depends on the knowledge gleaned in past sections. Our next position is an excellent example of this.

Diagram 213



White to move

This position is lost for White since his opponent is clearly ahead in the race. Nevertheless, Black needs to be aware of a little trick or he'll end up botching it.

1.c5 dxc5??

Such an innocent and natural move, but it throws the victory out the window! Correct was 1...a2!, which we'll explore after we finish up with 1...dxc5.

REMEMBER

Even the most innocent move can have life and death ramifications in a King and pawn endgame.

2.dxc5 a2

Isn't Black winning this race? Yes he is, but if you remember your lessons from Part Four, you'll know that White is going to save the game.

3.c6 a1=Q 4.c7 and we have a basic draw—lone Queen vs. pawn on the 7th with the stronger side's King being far out of play can't win against either rook-pawn or bishop-pawn. The end could be: 4...Qe5 5.Kb7 Qb5+ 6.Ka8 Qc6+ 7.Kb8 Qb6+ 8.Ka8! Qxc7 stalemate.

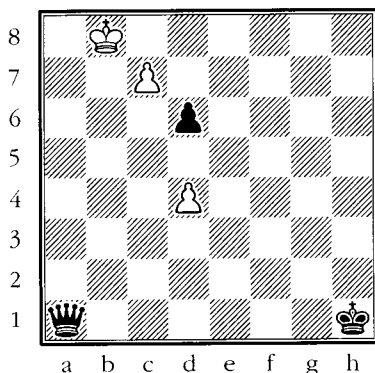
Now let's take a look at the position after...

1.c5 a2 2.c6

Also hopeless is 2.cxd6 a1=Q 3.d7 Qxd4 4.Kc7 Qc5+ 5.Kb7 Qd6 6.Kc8 Qc6+ 7.Kd8 Kb7 and black's King slowly but surely makes its way to the embattled area and wins the game.

2...a1=Q 3.c7

Diagram 214

**Position after 3.c7****Black to move**

White has a c-pawn, so why can't he draw? Two reasons:

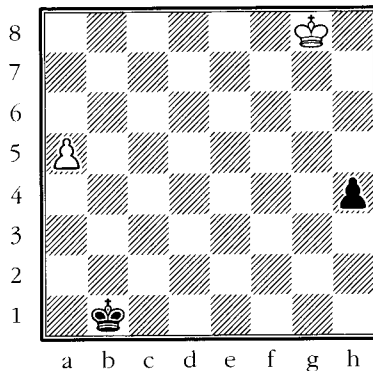
- White's stalemate save (after a later Ka8 ...Qxc7) isn't stalemate anymore due to the existence of the d4-pawn.
- In some lines Black can capture the d4-pawn then give up his Queen for white's remaining pawn on c7. Then it's off to the races for black's pawn on d6!

3...Qb2+ 4.Ka8

Not 4.Ka7? Qxd4+.

4...Qa3+ 5.Kb7 Qb4+ 6.Ka8 Qa5+ 7.Kb7 Qb5+ 8.Ka8 Qc6+ 9.Kb8 Qb6+, 0-1 since 10.Ka8 Qxc7 is no longer stalemate, while 10.Kc8 Qxd4 is no better.

Diagram 215

**White to move and win****REMEMBER**

Complex positions
can't be solved unless
you are firmly trained
in endgame basics!

Even though the race seems to be even, the fact that there are two rook-pawns means that both queening squares connect on the long diagonal. This can easily have decisive ramifications.

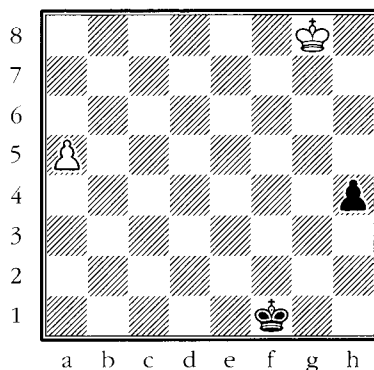
1.a6 h3 2.a7 h2 3.a8=Q, 1-0, since 3...h1=Q 4.Qxh1 isn't pleasant.

However, a slight adjustment in King position can change a position from lost to drawn.

REMEMBER

Hey, they're rook-pawns!
And, as you should know
by now, rook-pawns stand
for results or problems
that are strange/odd/
annoying/unfair. Keep
this in mind whenever a
rook-pawn endgame is
about to be reached!

Diagram 216

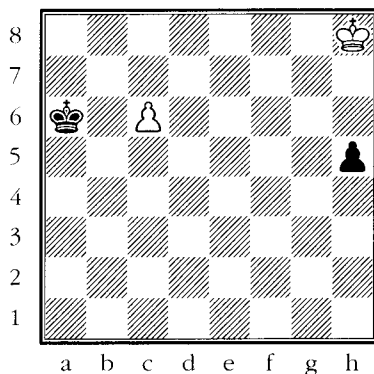


White to move only draws

1.a6 h3 2.a7 h2 3.a8=Q Kg1!, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ (as shown in Part Four).

Thus far we've seen that the result of some races depends on prior knowledge of other endgames, on King position, and/or on whether or not a pawn queens with check. Our next position (a study by the great Réti in 1921) seems completely lost for White—so much so that resignation might be in order!

Diagram 217



White to move and draw

How can White possibly save himself? It's clear that Black is going to win this race hands down, and to make matters worse, the black King is only two moves away from eating white's pawn! However, White makes use of a solid

understanding of the Square of the pawn, good King footwork, and the fact that his pawn queens with check to make the miracle complete.

1.Kg7 h4

Another try is 1...Kb6 2.Kf6 (threatening Kg5) 2...h4 3.Ke5 and the double threat of Kf4 (winning black's pawn) and Kd6 (queening his own pawn) saves the day: 3...h3 4.Kd6 h2 5.c7 Kb7 6.Kd7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

2.Kf6

White's King does a tightrope act—on one hand threatening to escort his pawn to c8, and on the other hand trying to enter the square of black's pawn.

2...h3

Of course, 2...Kb6 3.Ke5! transposes into the note to move one.

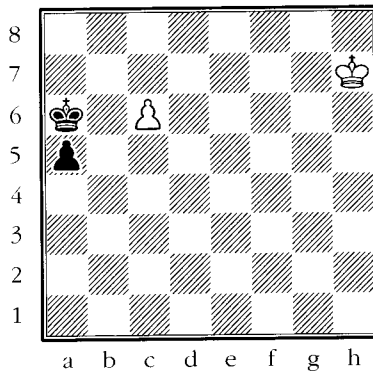
3.Ke7!

3.Ke6 amounts to the same thing.

3...h2 4.c7 Kb7 5.Kd7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$. Magic!

Réti's discovery created quite a stir back in 1921, and other problem composers rushed to emulate him. The following example is one such attempt.

Diagram 218



Adamson 1922

White to move and draw

1.Kg6 a4 2.Kf5 a3

On 2...Kb6 White uses the Réti device: 3.Ke5! (getting ready to step into the Square of the a-pawn) when 3...Kxc6 4.Kd4 and 3...a3 4.Kd6 are both drawn.

3.Ke6 and white's pawn promotes.

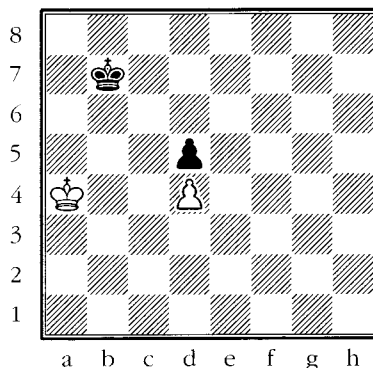
USEFUL ADVICE

King and pawn endgames are always tricky. If you enter one—even one that seems hopeless—take a long think and try to grasp the position's true meaning. This involves taking into account promotion with checks, the Square of a passed pawn, Opposition, Triangulation, Outflanking, and a King's ability to escort its pawn to the 8th rank.

King and Pawn vs. King and Pawn

All versions of this endgame have already been addressed (or indirectly addressed) via Strange Races, via Trébuchet (in Part Four), or in any of the King and pawn vs. King positions that can so easily occur. Here are a few more examples that should firm up the knowledge you already possess.

Diagram 219



White to move, draw

White will force the win of black's pawn on d5, but the resulting position (if Black responds properly!) is a basic draw:

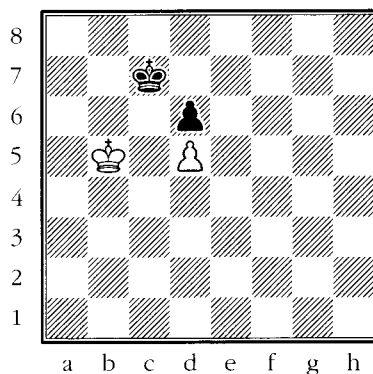
1.Kb5 Kc7 2.Kc5 Kd8!

Wisely avoiding 2...Kd7?? 3.Kxd5 when White wins since he has the Opposition. You should be thoroughly familiar with the position after 3.Kxd5.

I should add that 2...Kc8! achieves the same result.

3.Kxd5 Kd7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ since Black now has the Opposition.

Diagram 220



White to move wins

1.Ka6

This forces the win of black’s pawn.

1...Kd8 2.Kb6 Kd7 3.Kb7 Kd8 4.Kc6 Ke7 5.Kc7 Ke8 6.Kxd6 Kd8

Black has the Opposition, but it won’t help him since his inability to move straight back (he’s out of board!) will prevent him from achieving a drawn setup. You should already know this position, but I’ll give the rest anyway.

7.Ke6 Ke8 8.d6

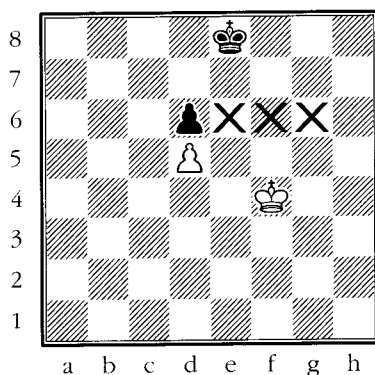
Taking the Opposition.

8...Kd8 9.d7 Kc7 10.Ke7, 1-0.

These two examples were nothing more than glorified versions of basic King and pawn vs. lone King theory. But knowledge of them allows us to solve positions that would be unintelligible otherwise. The last several examples made it clear that, aside from simple race considerations (brought about by both pawns being passed), the real question surrounding King and pawn vs. King and pawn theory is whether or not a pawn can be won. If a pawn does indeed drop, the assessment of the resulting position (which has suddenly transposed into one of our already mastered King and pawn vs. lone King situations) is made by who owns the Opposition. Diagram 219 saw the defender safely take the Opposition (thus gaining a draw). The position after that (diagram 220) had white’s pawn on the 5th rank—a decisive advantage *if* the white King can crash through and pick off the enemy pawn.

The position in diagram 221 takes things a bit further. To fully understand it, you have to use the tools from diagrams 219 and 220, plus all your Opposition skills.

Diagram 221



RULE

This kind of situation, where the defender must give up his pawn but can take the Opposition, is always drawn *unless* white’s pawn is on the 5th rank.

White to move wins, Black to move draws

Since white’s pawn is on the 5th rank, he knows he’ll win if he can pick off black’s pawn. Black’s only hope is to keep the white King from penetrating to e6, f6, or g6, since the d6-pawn will be lost if white’s King reaches any of those squares.

White to move wins by **1.Kg5** when **1...Kf7 2.Kf5** and **1...Ke7 2.Kg6** leads to the loss of d6 and the game.

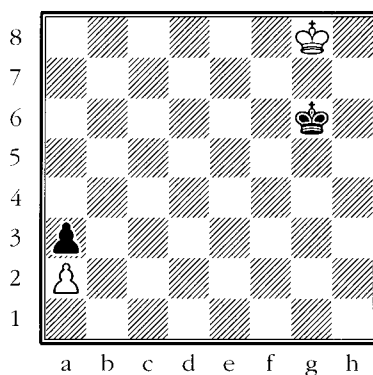
USEFUL ADVICE (IF YOU ARE THE DEFENDER)

Before allowing a position of this nature to occur, make sure the opponent can't penetrate with his King! If he can penetrate, make sure his pawn isn't on the 5th, and that you can take the Opposition when he captures your pawn.

Black to move draws by **1...Kf8!** This takes the Distant Opposition and allows Black to successfully meet **2.Kg5** with **2...Kg7**, and **2.Kf5** with **2...Kf7** when white's King can't get in.

The next position is full of interest, and very instructive.

Diagram 222



White to move

It's clear that Black will win the pawn on a2. This means that White can only draw if he can reach the c2-square. Again, solving this position is only possible with a firm grasp of basic King and pawn vs. King theory.

1.Kh8!!

Visually this seems very odd. However, it makes perfect sense when looked at in the cold light of reason: Moving to f8 allows **1...Kf6** when Black has gotten closer to his goal on a3, but White hasn't gotten closer to his goal on c2 (note how the black King would block white's King from stepping forward). After **1.Kf8?? Kf6**, black's win is illustrated by the following obvious moves: **2.Ke8 Ke5 3.Ke7 Kd4 4.Ke6 Kc3 5.Kd5 Kb2 6.Kc4 Kxa2 7.Kc3 Kb1** and the pawn promotes.

On the other hand, **1.Kh8 Kh6** takes Black farther away from his a3-goal. That only leaves ...

1...Kf5

Or **1...Kf6 2.Kh7**, which amounts to the same thing.

2.Kg7 Ke5 3.Kg6 Kd4 4.Kf5 Kc3 5.Ke4 Kb2 6.Kd3 Kxa2 7.Kc2, 1/2-1/2.

Rook Endings

The *practical* study of King and pawn endgames is finite—truly complex/impractical King and pawn endgames become the stuff of theorists or very strong players with a fetish for such things. However, the study of Rook endgames—no matter how complex—always remains eminently useful simply because they occur so often and in so many different forms.

Though the student might think that the first five parts of this book has left him with a sizeable amount of Rook endgame skill, the daunting fact is that you are still in Rook endgame infancy and will continue to be long after you make master. Nevertheless, don't be depressed by this news. The material presented here in Part Six will leave you with a very solid base of Rook endgame understanding and—on a competitive level—this knowledge will far outgun that which most of your Opposition will ever possess.

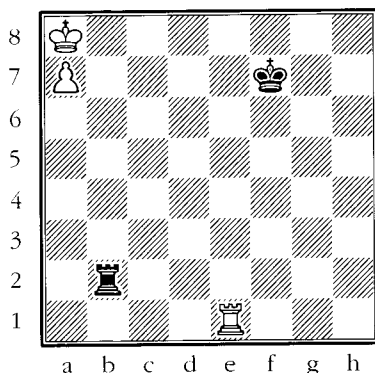
“Lucena” with a Rook-Pawn

We've learned that achieving a Lucena Position guarantees a win, *unless* the extra pawn is a rook-pawn. The rule with a “Lucena” rook-pawn—I'm using the word “Lucena” loosely here, since a real Lucena Position only occurs with a knight-pawn, bishop-pawn, or center pawn—is that black's King needs to be cut off by *four or more files* for White to win (one file is sufficient in a real Lucena).

RULE

If you're into memory prompts, and numbers such as “four or more files” don't do the job for you, another way of stating this rule is, “It's a win if the enemy King is cut off on or beyond the farthest bishop-file.”

Diagram 223



White wins

White's only plan is to get a Rook to b8 and escape with the King. Thanks to the fact that black's King is four files away from the pawn, White can force a win. However, the technique for achieving this is far more difficult than one might imagine!

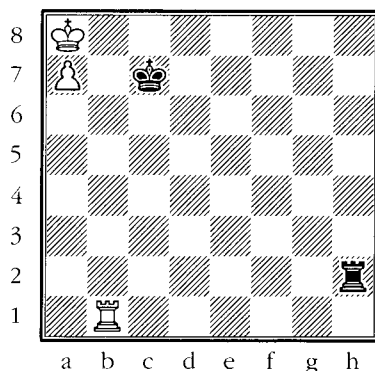
1.Rc1 Ke7 2.Rc8 Kd6!

2...Kd7 3.Rb8 Ra2 4.Kb7 (and not 4.Rb7+?? Kc8, =) 4...Rb2+ 5.Ka6 Ra2+ 6.Kb6 Rb2+ 7.Kc5 and the King walks towards the Rook and soon forces resignation.

3.Rb8 Ra2 4.Kb7

Escaping from the pit. Leading to nothing is 4.Rb7 (threatening Kb8) 4...Rh2 when 5.Kb8?? Rh8 mate is embarrassing, 5.Rg7 Rb2 6.Rb7 Rh2 just repeats the position, and 5.Rb1 Kc7 is a dead draw.

Diagram 224



Dead draw

Let's spend a moment explaining why this is so drawn. First, Black to move (from diagram 224) would play 1...Rc2 when White can't even dream of winning: 2.Rh1 (or 2.Rb7+ Kc8 3.Rb8+ Kc7 and white's King will never escape from the corner) 2...Rc3 3.Rh7+ Kc8 4.Rh8+ Kc7 and it should now be clear that white's King is forever entombed on a8.

White to move (from diagram 224): 1.Rc1+ Kd7 2.Kb7 (no choice, since 2.Rd1+ Kc7 only helps Black, 2.Rb1 Kc7 gets nowhere fast, and trying to build a Lucena bridge by 3.Rc4 fails to 3...Rb2) 2...Rb2+ 3.Ka6 Ra2+ 4.Kb6 Rb2+ 5.Kc5 Ra2, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

4...Rb2+ 5.Kc8

The only good move. 5.Ka6 Ra2+ 6.Kb6 Rb2+ is nothing, and White would have to repeat with 7.Ka6 Ra2+ 8.Kb7 Rb2+ 9.Kc8 in order to get back on the right path.

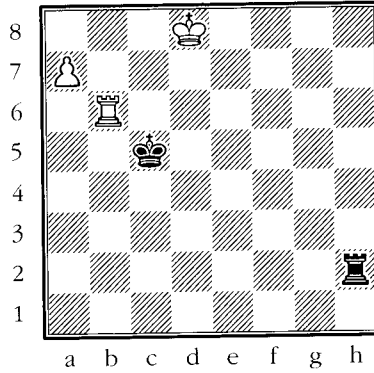
5...Rc2+ 6.Kd8 Rh2! 7.Rb6+

Of course, 7.a8=Q?? allows 7...Rh8 mate, while 7.Ke8?? fails to 7...Rh8+ 8.Kf7 Rh7+ followed by 9...Rxa7 with a draw.

7...Kc5

7...Ke5 makes things easy for White after 8.Ra6 Rh8+ 9.Kc7 Ra8 10.Kb7, etc.

Diagram 225



White wins if you know the key!

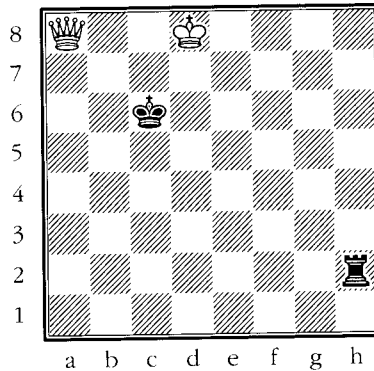
8.Rc6+!

The key to this endgame. 8.Ra6 fails to 8...Rh8+ 9.Ke7 Rh7+ 10.Kf8 (10.Kf6?? Rh6+) 10...Rh8+ 11.Kg7 Ra8 followed by ...Kb5 when the pawn is lost.

Now, after 8.Rc6+!, Black realizes that taking the Rook allows the white pawn to promote to a Queen with check—not a happy thing for Black to face, but 8...Kb5 (8...Kd5 9.Ra6) 9.Rc8 Rh8+ 10.Kc7 Rh7+ 11.Kb8, 1-0, is even worse!

8...Kxc6 9.a8=Q+

Diagram 226



White wins easily

I can imagine some of you looking on in horror and thinking, “I’m not sure if I know how to win Queen vs. Rook!” To make matters worse, a glance in our Contents shows that I don’t even cover that endgame! What’s going on? First,

calm down, you don't need to understand the ins and outs of Queen vs. Rook theory (which I feel is too rare and too hard for this book) to easily win this position. You see, Queen vs. Rook is only difficult if the Rook is fairly close to its King or, at the very least, on the same side of the board (saving it from a Rook-winning fork by white's Queen). In our present position, the Rook and King are far away from each other, and a simple series of checks will pick up the Rook and end the game.

9...Kc5

9...Kb5 (9...Kd6 10.Qb8+ and 11.Qxh2) 10.Qb8+ and 11.Qxh2 is even more abrupt!

10.Qc8+

White wants to swing his King over the kingside (placing his Queen between the black King and its Rook!) when just about any combination of checks will lead to the Rook's demise.

10...Kd4

10...Kd5 11.Qf5+ amounts to the same thing as our main line.

11.Qg4+ Kd5

Black would love to get closer to his Rook, but 11...Kc3/11...Kd3/11...Ke3 all drop the Rook immediately to 12.Qg3+. Note that 11...Ke5 12.Qg3+ and 11...Kc5 12.Qg1+ also lead to instant resignation.

12.Qf5+ Kc6

The only way to stretch things out a bit. 12...Kc4/12...Kd4/12...Kd6 all hang the Rook to 13.Qf4+.

13.Qe6+ Kb7

Again, there's no choice. 13...Kb5/13...Kc5 14.Qe5+ is game over.

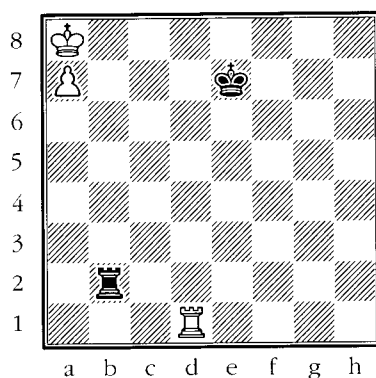
14.Qc8+ Ka7 15.Qc7+, 1-0 since 16.Qxh2 follows.

RULE

If you possess the "Lucena" rook-pawn (King in front of its pawn and enemy Rook trapping it there), you can only win if the enemy King is trapped four or more files away/cut off on or beyond the further bishop-file.

As demonstrated in the last example, it's a draw if the defending King is three files away (or closer) from the pawn. Much of this was explained in the note to white's 4th move in the previous example (diagram 224), but let's start from scratch just to ram the point home.

Diagram 227



White to move, draw

Black's King is close enough to trap white's monarch in the corner.

1.Rh1 Kd7 2.Rh8

Of course, 2.Rh7+ Kc8 only helps Black.

2...Kc7 3.Rb8 Rh2 4.Rb7+ Kc8! 5.Rb1 White's last chance to get his King out is to play Rc1+ (though even that would lead to a draw, as illustrated in diagram 224), so Black ends this hope by 5...Rc2! when White can't dream of progress here as long as Black has c7 and c8 available to the King.

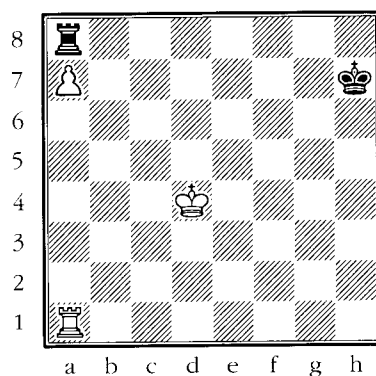
REMEMBER

Rook-pawns tend to be a bother for the attacker and a joy for the defender!

Rook in Front of its 7th Rank Pawn

When a Rook is trying to shepherd a pawn down the board, it usually dreams of being *behind* the pawn.

Diagram 228



Black is busted

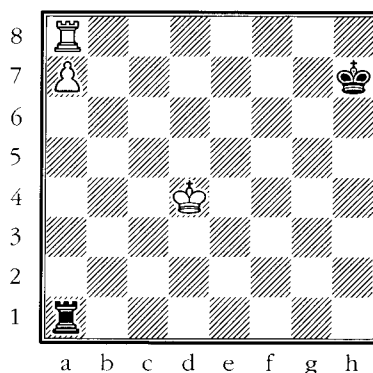
Note how white's Rook is a tower of strength that is helping to push the pawn home. In comparison, black's Rook is passively stopping the inevitable. White wins by Kd4-c5-b6-b7.

RULE

Both sides should try to get their Rook behind a passed pawn.

This means that defensively, having one's Rook behind the enemy passed pawn is of enormous importance. To illustrate, let's take the previous diagram—quite hopeless for Black when white's Rook is behind its pawn—and reverse the position of the Rooks.

Diagram 229



Draw

White can't win because Black now has an ideal defensive stance with his Rook, while white's Rook is stuck in a corner guarding its pawn. White's only chance is to defend the pawn with his King, then bring his Rook out. But this fails:

1.Kc5 Ra2

Many moves are fine. For example, 1...Kg7 also does the job, while 1...Rc1+ 2.Kb6 Rb1+ 3.Kc5 Rc1+ is quite sufficient, though Black can't get too overzealous with his checks: 4.Kb4 Rb1+ 5.Kc3 Rc1?? (5...Ra1, draw) 6.Kb2 when suddenly black's Rook isn't able to get back behind the passed pawn! White wins after 6...Rc7 7.Rh8+ Kxh8 8.a8=Q+ with a theoretical win that's a bit too complex for our present course of study.

I should point out that another way to lose after 1.Kc5 is 1...Ra5+?? since this lets White attack the Rook and guard his pawn at the same time by 2.Kb6. The continuation might then be: 2...Ra1 3.Rb8 (Freedom at last! This Rook can finally take an active part in the battle to promote the pawn.) 3...Rb1+ 4.Kc7 Rc1+ 5.Kb7 Rb1+ 6.Ka8 Rg1 7.Rb7+ Kh6 8.Kb8 (threatening a8=Q) 8...Rg8+ 9.Kc7 (threatening Rb8) 9...Rg7+ (or 9...Ra8 10.Kb6 followed by 11.Rb8)

10.Kb6 Rg6+ 11.Ka5 Rg1 (A last trick. No better is 11...Rg5+ 12.Ka6 Rg6+ 13.Rb6, 1-0) 12.Rb6+ (And not 12.a8=Q?? Ra1+ and 13...Rxa8, =) 12...Kh7 13.Ka6, 1-0, since 13...Ra1+ 14.Kb7 and 13...Rg8 14.Rb7+ Kh6 15.Rb8 Rg6+ 16.Rb6 are both game over.

2.Kb6 Rb2+

RULE

In these positions, whenever the King touches its pawn (trying to free its Rook), the defender should smack it away immediately with a check!

3.Kc7 Ra2

REMEMBER

The defending Rook needs to be behind the enemy passed pawn. Failing to do so will allow the stronger side's Rook to get out of its cage!

4.Kb7 Rb2+ 5.Kc6 Ra2

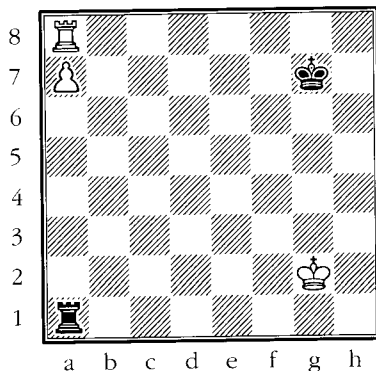
White's insurmountable problem is now clear: Black will check white's King whenever it touches its pawn. Then, when that King/pawn contact is lost, the Rook will leap in back of the pawn and leave White with no constructive ideas.

After 5...Ra2, White should just shake hands and accept a draw.

USEFUL ADVICE

It's often critically important to get your Rook behind a passed pawn (be it your passed pawn or your opponent's).

Diagram 230



Draw, but watch out for the trap!

Here Black should just move his Rook back and forth along the a-file, and/or he can break the monotony by doing a little jig with his King via ...Kg7-h7-g7-h7 when White has to accept the draw. But what if White whispers (in evil fashion), “Hey, can’t you just walk over to the queenside with your King and win my pawn?”

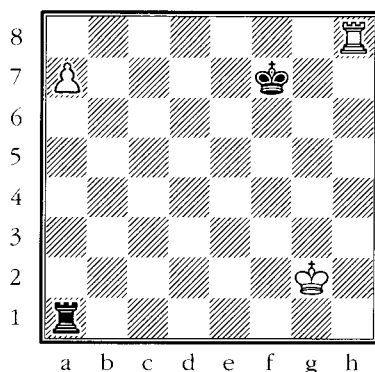
Obviously, the voice of greed has dragged many a good man and woman to their doom, so let's demonstrate what happens if such a queenside trek is attempted:

1...Kf7??

It's clear that 1...Kf6?? 2.Rf8+ followed by 3.a8=Q is a disaster!

2.Rh8!

Diagram 231



A key tactical idea

And the trap is sprung! White threatens 3.a8=Q, and since 2...Rxa7 loses to 3.Rh7+, Black must resign. This tactical idea is extremely important in this kind of endgame, and its influence drastically effects many more complex situations.

REMEMBER

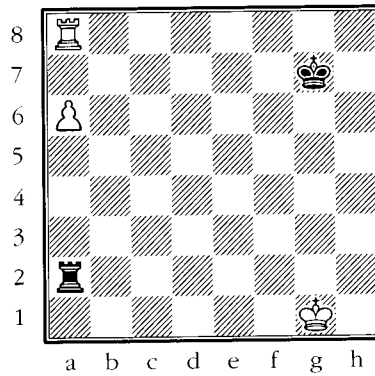
Many class "A" players have fallen victim to this trap, so always be on the lookout for it!

As we can see, having a pawn on the 7th rank, with your Rook in front, is a doubled edged sword. On one hand it dooms your Rook to passivity. On the other, it forces the black King to everlasting imprisonment on h7 and g7 (otherwise the above tactic ends matters quickly). This brings up an important question: If Black gets his Rook behind your pawn (with your Rook in front of it), but the pawn is only on the 6th rank, should you push it to the 7th or leave it where it is?

(See diagram 232)

Pushing the pawn to a7 creates an instant draw (the previous examples should have convinced you of this!) because white's Rook would remain forever passive and any attempt to defend the pawn with the white King would fail because black's Rook would just check it away and then return to its defensive position behind the passed pawn.

Diagram 232



To push or not to push?

The real question here is, how can White try to win? It turns out that White has many advantages:

- His King can easily break black’s “block” on the 2nd rank (by scuttling over to b1) and then march up the board to its pawn.
- When the pawn is on the 7th rank, white’s King would have nowhere to hide. With the pawn on the 6th, the King can hide in front of it (on a7). This finally frees the a8-Rook.
- Black’s King is forever stuck on h7 and g7 since any attempt to rush over to the queenside fails to a well-timed a6-a7 when the poor King would be stuck in no-man’s land.

All these facts make it sound as if White should prevail, and if Black tries to maintain his Rook’s position behind the passed pawn White will indeed be able to claim victory:

1.Kf1 Kh7

Note that black’s King can’t participate in the defense: 1...Kf7 2.Ke1 (2.a7 Kg7! is our basic draw) 2...Ke7?? (Making a dash for the queenside, but this backfires horribly!) 3.a7! and suddenly black’s King can’t get back to the safe squares on g7 and h7. Both 3...Kd7 and 3...Kf7 lose to 4.Rh8 Rxa7 5.Rh7+.

2.Ke1 Kg7 3.Kd1 Kh7 4.Kc1 Kg7 5.Kb1

Finally breaking black’s 2nd rank blockade.

5...Ra5 6.Kb2 Ra4 7.Kb3 Ra1 8.Kb4 Kf7

Black doesn’t intend to go too far—he sees that the immediate 9.a7 is safely answered by 9...Kg7! with a draw.

9.Kb5

Defending the pawn and threatening to free the a8-Rook.

9...Rb1+ 10.Kc6 Rc1+ 11.Kb7 Rb1+ 12.Ka7

White's King has reached the safe haven on a7. The white Rook is finally ready to emerge.

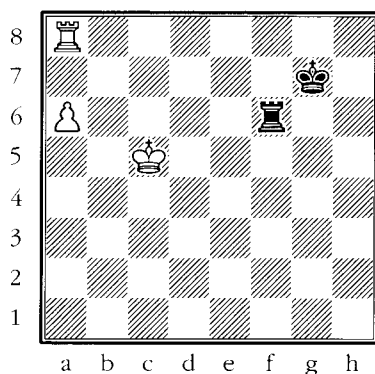
12...Ke7 13.Rb8 Ra1 14.Rb6 Kd7 15.Kb7 and, since a6-a7-a8 can't be prevented, Black must resign.

RULE

When defending these positions, the normally successful "passive defense" (i.e., moving the King back and forth, and giving a check when the stronger side's King touches its pawn)—which works so well with the stronger side's pawn on the 7th rank and his Rook in front of it—doesn't succeed if the pawn is only on the 6th rank.

Is this a win after all? No, Black can save the game if he's familiar with the surprisingly little known (though extremely important!) *Vancura Position*.

Diagram 233



Either side to move, Black draws

Just as the pawn on the 7th deprived white's King of any cover, the flexible position of the defensive Rook (and the unfortunate position of the stronger side's Rook) effectively does the same thing since:

- Black can check along the f-file.
- His Rook attacks a6 and thus keeps the white Rook cornered.
- White's King has nowhere to hide (if White had a b-pawn instead of an a-pawn, this would no longer be the case since white's King could hide on a6).

1.Kb5

Defending the pawn and threatening to free the a8-Rook. Of course, 1.a7 Ra6! 2.Kb5 Ra1 is an easy draw, and 1.Ra7+ Kg6 is also nothing for White.

1...Rf5+ 2.Kc6 Rf6+ 3.Kd5

There are no gains for White after 3.Kb7 Rf7+.

3...Rb6

This important move keeps contact with the a6-pawn and continues to force white's Rook to act as a permanent babysitter.

4.Ke5 Rc6

Black could also draw with 4...Kh7 (the King on h7 and Rook on g6 is as fully adequate as the King on g7 and Rook on f6). However, some care must be given since 4...Rf6?? instantly drops the game to 5.Rg8+ Kxg8 6.Kxf6, 1-0.

5.Ra7+

White is running out of ideas since he's already tried moving his King to the queenside, while 5.a7 Ra6 is a mindlessly simple draw.

5...Kg6 6.Kd5 Rf6 7.Kc5 Rf5+ 8.Kb6 Rf6+ 9.Kb7 Rf7+ 10.Ka8 Rf8+,
 $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$. White can't make any progress.

Diagram 234

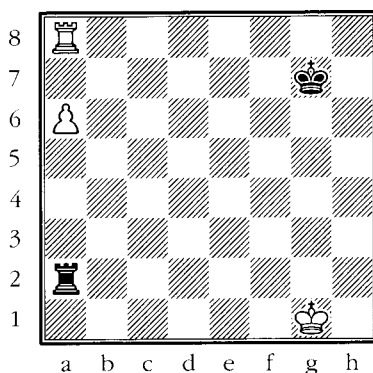
**Black finds the correct path to a draw**

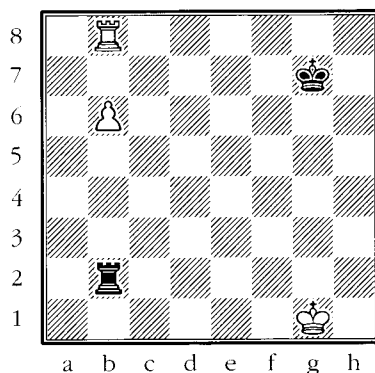
Diagram 234 takes us back to the position (seen earlier in diagram 232) we didn't quite solve. Now we should have the knowledge to find black's draw. Since staying behind the pawn doesn't work, his correct defensive strategy is to set up a Vancura Position.

1.Kf1 Ra5! 2.Ke2 Re5+

This doesn't give white's Rook a chance to escape from its prison on a8.

3.Kd3 Re6! 4.Kc4 Rf6 5.Kb5 Rf5+, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

Diagram 235



Can Black draw?

As was the case with the a-pawn, White wants to rush his King to the front of his pawn (b7) with a won game. Now the Vancura Position doesn't work since white's King has access to a6:

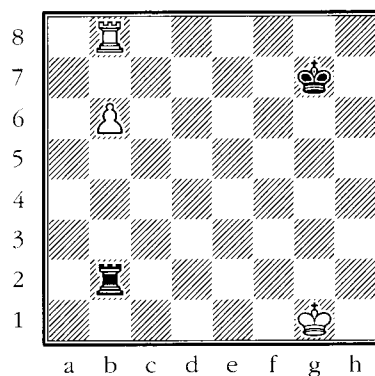
1.Kf1

Of course, 1.b7? Kh7 is still a total draw.

1...Rb5 2.Ke2 Re5+ 3.Kd3 Re6 4.Kc4 Rf6 5.Kb5 Rf5+ 6.Ka6, 1-0.

However, the pawn on b6 is closer to black's King, so a more straightforward drawing idea is possible, this time keeping the black Rook behind the passed pawn.

Diagram 236



Let's try it again!

1.Kf1 Kf7! 2.Ke1

1.b7 Kg7!, =.

2...Ke7!

Bravely entering no-man's land. Though this fails with the a-pawn, it does the trick with the closer b-pawn.

3.b7

Else ...Kd7 and ...Kc6 picks up the b-pawn. Now White threatens to win by 4.Rh8.

3...Kd7 4.Rh8

4.Kc1 can be met by 4...Rb6 followed by ...Kc7 or even by the immediate 4...Kc7.

4...Rxb7 5.Rh7+ Kc8, 1/2-1/2.

Thus, we have two important rules:

RULES

When combating a rook-pawn on the 6th (with the stronger side's Rook in front of its pawn and the stronger side's King off in the hinterlands), the Vancura Position is the defender's road to salvation.

When combating a knight-pawn on the 6th (with the stronger side's Rook in front of its pawn and the stronger side's King off in the hinterlands), the Vancura Position is no longer sufficient for a draw. However, keeping the Rook behind the pawn and rushing the King towards the embattled area should pick up the pawn and draw the game.

Rook and Pawn (on 4th or 5th) vs. Rook

We've already determined that the game is easily drawn if the defending King can get in front of the pawn (i.e., using the Philidor Position, as shown in Part Four). However, what happens if the defending King is trapped one or more files to the side of the pawn?

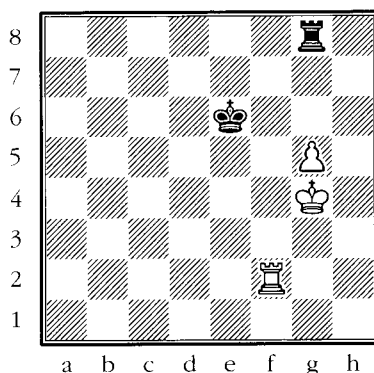
The result of this endgame depends on whether or not the stronger side can reach a Lucena position, and this is determined by the following specific rules (as usual, rook-pawns form exceptions, so we'll only explore positions with a knight-pawn, bishop-pawn, or center pawn):

RULES

A pawn on the 5th rank or beyond wins if the defending King is cut off by one file on the Long Side of the board!

A pawn on the 4th rank wins if the defending King is cut off by two files. A knight-pawn is an exception and takes three files.

Diagram 237



White wins

The position in diagram 237 is a good illustration of our 5th rank rule—a pawn on the 5th rank or beyond wins if the defending King is cut off by one file on the **Long Side** of the board. White easily achieves a Lucena Position because black's King is on the Long Side of the board.

Now it's time to address the Long Side and **Short Side** of the pawn: The Short Side is the side with the least amount of squares from the pawn to the side of the board. In general, the defender should always move his King to the Short Side of the pawn. Placing the defending King on the Short Side is extremely important! The point is that the defending Rook can use the Long Side for long distance checking (known as **Checking Distance**) without having to worry about his King getting in the way of those checks! By blasting the enemy King with long distance checks, the beleaguered King won't be able to find shelter since approaching the nasty Rook would entail a long trek that completely abandons the battle zone.

1.Kh5

Preparing to advance the pawn. If Black does nothing, White will win easily by 2.g6, 3.Kh6, etc.

1...Rh8+ 2.Kg6

Threatening to play 3.Kg7 and 4.g6.

2...Rg8+ 3.Kh6 Rh8+ 4.Kg7 Rh1 5.g6 Rg1

Else White would play 6.Kg8 and 7.g7.

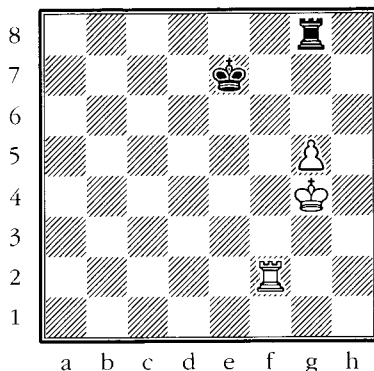
6.Kh7 Ke7 7.g7 Rh1+ 8.Kg8 and White has a basic Lucena Position which, as you know, is an easy win.

RULE

In a pawn down Rook endgame where the defending King can no longer stay in front of the enemy pawn, the defender should always move his King to the Short Side of the board so that his Rook will have Checking Distance.

That was easy! But be careful that the defending King really is cut off.

Diagram 238

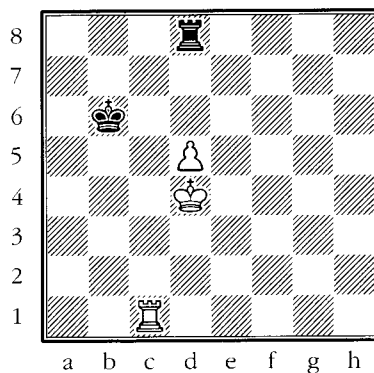


Black to move and draw

This is almost identical to our previous position, which was won for White. However, the “almost” proves to be very important—instead of being on e6, black’s King resides on e7. Also, Black has the move. This allows **1...Rf8!**. Suddenly it’s clear that black’s King wasn’t cut off at all! Now **2.Rxf8 Kxf8** is a dead draw, while **2.Ra1 Kf7!** gets the King to the front of the pawn, achieving a drawn position.

Our next example shows how the defender can draw against a pawn on the 5th if his King is correctly placed on the Short Side of the board.

Diagram 239



Black’s King is on the Short Side of the pawn

Black draws by giving his Rook Checking Distance on the Long Side of the board.

1...Rh8!

Suddenly Black threatens a cascade of checks along the distant h-file. Incredibly, White has no answer to this!

2.d6

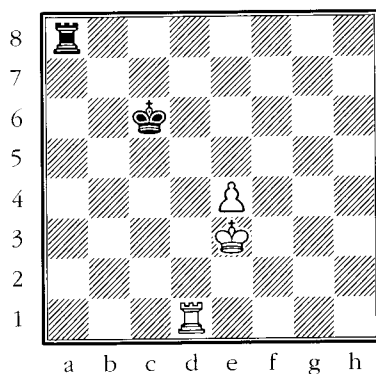
The attempt to block the checks with the white Rook via 2.Re1 fails to 2...Kc7 when black's King gets in front of the pawn with a drawn position. Counting on the King to do the job also doesn't work: 2.Ke5 Rh5+ 3.Ke6 Rh6+ 4.Kd7 Rh7+ 5.Kc8 Rh8+ 6.Kd7 Rh7+ 7.Ke6 Rh6+ 8.Kf7 Rh7+ (8...Rd6 is also fine) 9.Kg6 Rd7 (Now that white's King is far from its pawn, Black is able to pile up on the abandoned unit and win it.) 10.Rd1 Kc5, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

2...Rh4+ 3.Ke5 Rh5+ 4.Kf6

Or 4.Kf4 Rd5 and the pawn is lost.

4...Rh6+ 5.Ke7 Rh7+ 6.Kf8 Rd7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

Diagram 240



White to move, draw

Earlier we stated that a pawn on the 4th rank wins if the defending King is cut off by two files. The position in diagram 240 is drawn because the defending king is only cut off by one file.

1.Kf4

The tempting 1.e5 seems strong, since 1...Re8?? 2.Ke4 takes us to our first rule: *A pawn on the 5th rank or beyond wins if the enemy King is cut off by one file on the Long Side of the board.* However, instead of the compliant 1...Re8, Black can answer 1.e5 with 1...Ra4! when white's King is cut off from its pawn! Now moves that takes the white Rook off the d-file allows ...Kd7 with an immediate draw, 2.Rd6+ Kc7 also leaves White without a good follow-up, and 2.Rd4 Rxd4 is a drawn King and pawn vs. King endgame. Thus: 1.e5 Ra4 2.e6. Now White threatens to win by 3.e7 Ra8 4.Rd8, but 2...Kc7! (stopping the aforementioned possibility of e7 followed by Rd8) holds the draw: 3.Rd7+ (3.e7 Ra8 followed by ...Re8, =) 3...Kc8 4.Rh7 (4.Kd3 or 4.Rd1 run into 4...Ra6, =) 4...Kd8, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

1...Rf8+

This frontal check defense is quite effective against a pawn on the 4th rank.

2.Kg5

Note that 2...Ke5 Re8+ 3.Kf5 Rf8+ 4.Ke6 Re8+ gets White absolutely nowhere due to the vulnerability of the pawn.

2...Re8!

And not 2...Rg8+?? 3.Kf6 when 3...Rf8+ 4.Ke7 and 3...Re8 4.e5 both lose for Black. Also note that 3...Rh8 doesn't give Black enough Checking Distance because black's King is on the Long Side: 4.e5 Rh6+ 5.Kg5 Re6 (5...Rh8 6.e6) 6.Kf5 Re8 7.e6, winning.

The annoying attack against e4 (2...Re8) freezes the pawn in its tracks and forces White to lose time defending the pawn.

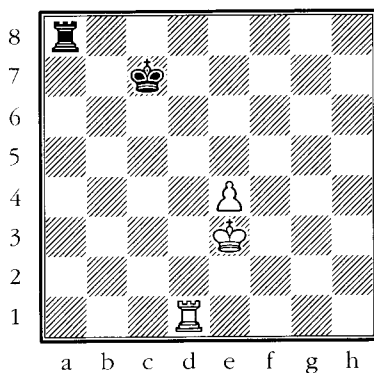
3.Kf5 Rf8+ 4.Kg6 Re8! 5.Rd4

White's last shot (which threatens 6.Kf7 Re5 7.Kf6 Re8 8.e5), since 5.Re1 Kd6 is completely drawn.

5...Kc5!

A *very important* resource! Note that if our original position had started with black's King on c7 instead of c6, this move wouldn't be possible and the result would be very different:

Diagram 241



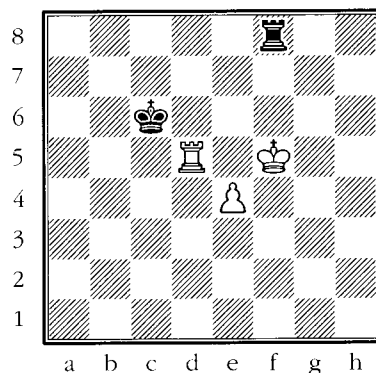
Black to move draws, White to move wins

Black to move draws in two different ways: 1...Kc6 (which takes us back to diagram 240) or 1...Rd8 2.Rxd8 Kxd8 3.Kf4 Ke8!, 1/2-1/2.

White to move wins because he can take advantage of the fact that Black no longer has the ...Kc5 defensive idea at his disposal: 1.Kf4 Rf8+ 2.Kg5 Re8 3.Kf5 Rf8+ 4.Kg6 Re8! 5.Rd4 Kc6 6.Kf7 Re5 (6...Kc5 7.Rd5+, 1-0) 7.Kf6 Re8 8.e5, 1-0.

6.Rd5+ Kc6 7.Kf5 Rf8+

Diagram 242

**It's still tricky****8.Ke5**

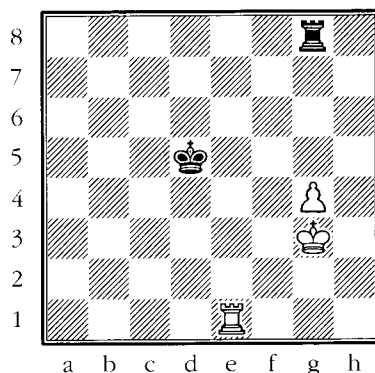
The alternative, 8.Kg4, also forces Black to use some care: 8...Re8 9.Kf4 Rf8+ 10.Rf5 Ra8 11.Rf7 (11.e5 Kd7 will achieve an easily drawn Philidor Position) 11...Kd6 12.Kf5 Ra5+ 13.Kf6 Re5 14.Rd7+ Kxd7 15.Kxe5 Ke7 and, since Black has the Opposition, the game is drawn.

8...Re8+ 9.Kd4 Re7 10.e5 Rd7!

An idea that we've already seen. The Rook move allows the black King to make its way to the front of the pawn.

11.Rxd7 Kxd7 12.Kd5 Ke7 13.e6 Ke8 14.Kd6 Kd8 15.e7+ Ke8 16.Ke6 stalemate.

Diagram 243

**Draw**

Though the stronger side wins with a bishop-pawn or center-pawn on the 4th rank if the defending King is trapped two files away, a knight-pawn on the 4th

is more problematic. In this case the stronger side usually wins if the defending King is trapped three files away.

The position in diagram 243 is drawn since the defending King is only two files away.

1.Re2

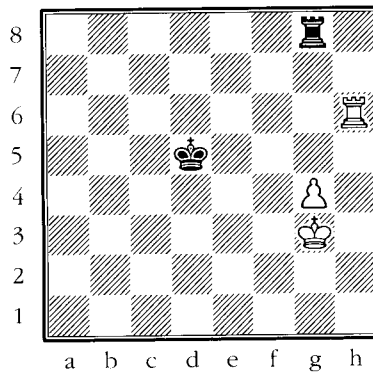
White can't improve his position so he “passes” in the hope that Black will make a mistake.

1...Kd6!

Oddly, this is the only way to draw! Let's look at the alternatives and see why:

- 1...Rg7?? destroys the Rook's Checking Distance. Black is toast after 2.Kh4 Rh7+ 3.Kg5 Rg7+ 4.Kh5 Rh7+ 5.Kg6.
- 1...Ra8?? 2.g5 is hopeless.
- 1...Kd4?? is the most interesting blunder since it allows White to cut the black King off on a rank by 2.Re6! Kd5 3.Rh6.

Diagram 244



Black is lost!

Suddenly black's game is lost! His King can't get back into the fight since the 6th rank is a no-pass zone, and the white Rook blocks all checks along the h-file which allows the King to calmly march up to h5. A sample of what could occur: 3...Ke5 4.Kh4 Rg7 5.Kh5 Rg8 6.g5 Kf5 7.Rf6+ Ke5 8.Kh6 Rh8+ 9.Kg7 Rh1 10.Rf2 Ke6 11.g6 and White will achieve the desired Lucena Position.

USEFUL ADVICE

Sometimes cutting the defending King off along a rank is as good as cutting it off along a file.

2.Re4

Otherwise Black just moves his King back and forth between d6 and d5. By defending his pawn with the Rook, White hopes to relieve his King of guard duty which will allow it to march triumphantly down the board.

2...Kd5!

Chasing the Rook away from its good position. A major mistake would be 2...Kd7?? 3.Kh4 Rh8+ 4.Kg5 Rg8+ 5.Kf6 Rf8+ (or 6.g5 would have followed) 6.Kg7 and White wins.

3.Re1

Black draws easily after 3.Ra4 Ke6.

3...Kd6 and White must agree to a draw since he can't make any progress.

Minor Piece Endgames

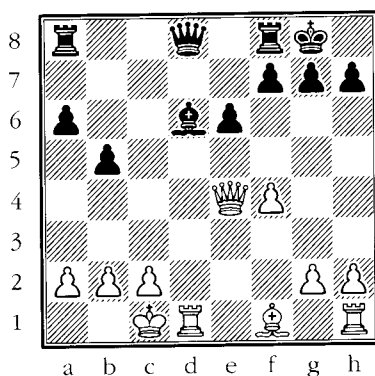
Bishop of Opposite Colors (Bishop and Two Connected Passers vs. Lone Bishop and King)

One would think that this endgame would be an easy win for the two connected passed pawns. However, this simply isn't the case. To illustrate my point, allow me to indulge in a little story.

The year was 1978, the city was London, and I was playing my second game with the white pieces in the span of a few months against Jonathan Speelman. I had won the first and now my opponent was after blood. The opening promised a sharp struggle:

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 a6 6.Bg5 Nc6 7.Qd2 e6
8.0-0-0 Bd7 9.f4 b5 10.Nxc6 Bxc6 11.Qe3 Be7 12.Bxf6 Bxf6 13.e5 Be7
14.exd6 Bxd6 15.Ne4 Bxe4 16.Qxe4 0-0

Diagram 245

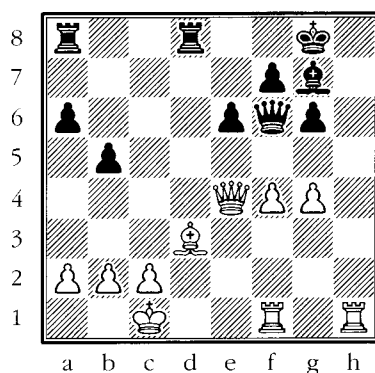


How not to prepare

I had prepared this system a year before, and whatever theory I had access to at that time had promised me good chances with 17.Bd3 g6 18.h4. Indeed,

it looks dangerous for Black, but as I sat there wondering why my opponent exuded an air of confidence, I decided to take a deep look at the position for the first time (Mindlessly memorizing book, and exploring a variation seriously, are two very different things!). Sure enough, after pondering the situation for a long while I realized that White didn't have anything at all! It occurred to me that after 18...Qf6 19.Rdf1 Rfd8 20.h5 Bf8 21.hxg6 hxg6 22.g4 Bg7 my opponent's Bishop would be very happy on g7 where it would defend the black King while simultaneously eyeing my monarch in a lecherous state of rut.

Diagram 246



Killer Bishop on g7

(Years later the position after 21.hxg6 hxg6 22.g4 Bg7 did indeed occur, with this result: 23.c3 b4 24.f5 exf5 25.gxf5 g5, 0-1, Santo Roman - Palac, Cannes 2000).

RULE

Opposite colored Bishops are wonderful attacking weapons in the middlegame (or in endgames with many pieces remaining) since one Bishop can attack something that the other can't defend.

Whatever the truth about this line might be, during the game I began to panic, and this led to a "cowardly" act on my part (from diagram 245):

17.Qd4 Bc7 18.Qxd8 Raxd8 19.Rxd8 Rxd8 20.g3

Yes, I renounced my manhood and shamelessly played for a draw!

20...h5 21.Be2 h4 22.Rd1

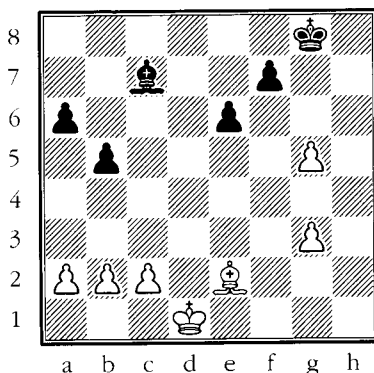
Since leaving too many pieces on would actually make the Bishops of opposite colors useful to Black, I made sure to exchange everything that wasn't nailed down.

RULE

Bishops of opposite colors often give the defender serious drawing chances in the endgame even if he's one or two pawns behind!

22...Rxd1+ 23.Kxd1 g5 24.fxg5 hxg3 25.hxg3 we arrived at the following situation.

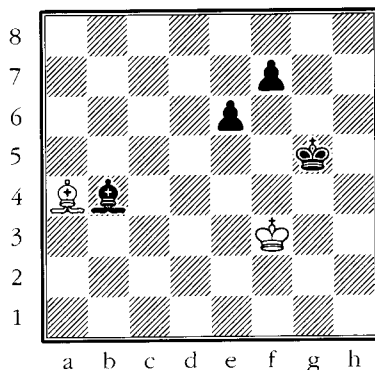
Diagram 247



Is Black getting something?

My opponent was getting a bit excited, no doubt due to the fact that both my g-pawns were in bad shape. Losing them would lead to two black connected passed pawns marching down the board. Was it time for me to get hysterical? Not at all! Why? Because I knew that the following position (a true worst case scenario) was dead drawn.

Diagram 248



Dead draw!

That's right. If White loses both g-pawns *and* his three queenside pawns for black's two, the game is still a draw!

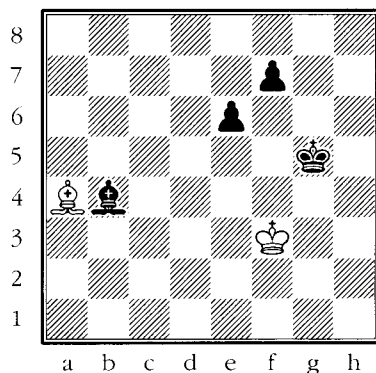
The extreme position in the last diagram didn't occur though, and the actual game ended without any adventures:

25...Kg7 26.a4 bxa4 27.Bxa6 Kg6 28.Bb5 Bxg3 29.Bxa4 Kxg5 30.Ke2 f5 31.Kf3 Bd6 32.c3 e5 33.Bc2, 1/2-1/2.

Okay, after seeing me label diagram 248 a dead draw, many of you might be thinking, "Someone let Silman loose in the pharmaceuticals again!" So, just in case you doubt this humble writer, let me try and prove my point of view.

We'll explore two different methods for Black.

Diagram 249



Dead draw!

Method 1

Black tries to bring his King to d4 without pushing his pawns.

1...Kf5 2.Be8!

So that the f7-pawn won't be defending the e6-pawn anymore.

2...f6 3.Bd7!

Now the black King is stuck defending the e6-pawn. He has to give up his plan and try

3...Ke5 4.Bc8 Kd6 5.Ke4

But now Black will have to push his pawns if he wants to win, and that will be examined next. However, we've discovered an important idea (brought to light by the moves 2.Be8! and 3.Bd7!) when defending this kind of opposite colored Bishop endgame: The defender can tie his opponent's King down by using his Bishop to attack the pawns.

We'll see many examples of this rule in action.

Method 2

Black shoves his pawns forward!

(From diagram 249)

1...f5 2.Bb3!

RULE

The defender must attack an enemy pawn with his Bishop in order to tie down the enemy King.

This fine move gives Black two choices: he can play ...Kf6 and simply guard the pawn for the rest of the game (which means he'll make no progress whatsoever), or he can push the pawn to e5, which is clearly what Black was aiming for anyway. However, once this pawn moves to e5, White can then demonstrate his key defensive plan.

2...e5

Now Black threatens (after something hideous such as 3.Ba4??) 3...e4+ 4.Ke3 Bc5+ 5.Ke2 f4 when the pawns will soon make their way to the 6th rank: 6.Bc2 f3+ 7.Ke1 Kf4 8.Bb1 e3 9.Bd3 Bb4+ 10.Kf1 Ke5 (Black will march his King around to d2 so he can play ...e3-e2+ without letting White sacrifice his Bishop for both enemy pawns. White can't do anything to prevent this plan.) 11.Ba6 Kd4 12.Bb5 Kc3 13.Ke1 Kc2+ 14.Kf1 Kd2, 0-1.

RULE

In this kind of endgame, two connected passed pawns on the sixth are winning. The defender must not allow the pawns to get that far!

3.Bc2!

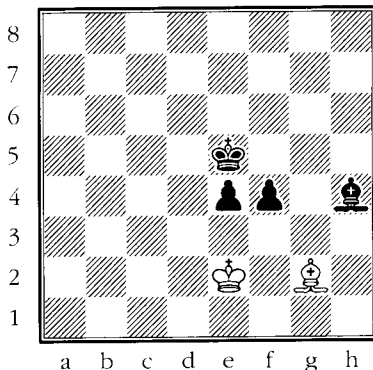
Believe it or not, this simple move, which stops ...e4+ due to Bxe4, ends the game. Black is no longer able to generate any kind of threat whatsoever.

3...Kf6 4.Bd3 Ke6 5.Bc2

Black would have chances if he could get his King to d4 (which would help the e-pawn safely advance to e4), but white's attack on f5 freezes the enemy King in its tracks. Since white's defensive plan now calls for nothing more than Bc2-b1-c2-b1, the game should be declared drawn.

Let's now compare two positions that seem to be very similar, yet their result turns out to be vastly different!

Diagram 250

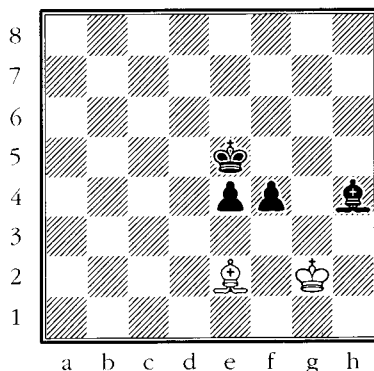


Draw agreed

This position is literally over (White didn't let the Black pawns get to the sixth, as mentioned earlier), and should be agreed drawn. White will simply play Bg2-h1 and Black can't make progress since ...f4-f3+ is always met by Bxf3. Note how the Bishop ties the black King to the defense of its e-pawn.

However, our next position is won for Black.

Diagram 251



White loses!

Ah, the lovely sound of chess players mumbling in confusion! Why is diagram 250 a dead draw while this one is dead lost? Understanding the difference will give you the true key to this whole endgame!

In the drawn version of this position (diagram 250), black's King is forever doomed to baby-sit the e4-pawn. That means he can't get the King to g3 (which would allow a winning ...f4-f3 push) because the e-pawn would hang. Of course, if Black tries ...e4-e3, then White just moves his Bishop mindlessly (and endlessly!) along the h1-a8 diagonal, forming a perfect block to both enemy pawns.

In the losing version (diagram 251), the e4-pawn is not attacked by the white Bishop. Now the black King is indeed free to roam, and after ...Kd4-e3, the ...f4-f3 advance will seal the deal.

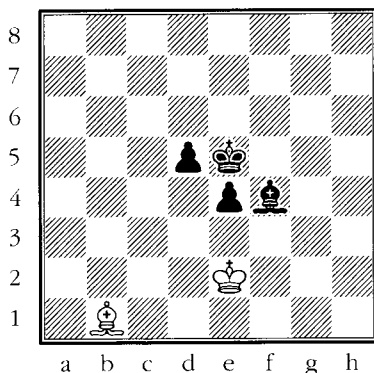
REMEMBER

The correct defensive stance calls for the defender's Bishop to tie the enemy King down to the defense of its pawn.

Some of you might now be wondering what happens if Black leaves his pawns back a bit and instead strives to improve the position of his King (in an effort to avoid the drawn position we have just seen). If you glance back to Method 1 (it probably didn't make much sense earlier!), you'll finally understand what I was trying to do—the defender will answer this strategy by attacking the pawns with his Bishop and force their advance!

Let’s look at a simple example of this:

Diagram 252



Black has one last shot

In this position, we’re familiar with $1\dots d4$ $2.Bc2$ when we have our basic dead drawn defensive posture. But suppose Black refuses to take the bait and instead tries to activate his King by $1\dots Kd4$. Here’s a quick white suicide that will serve as an example of what Black has in mind: $2.Bc2$ $Kc3$ $3.Bb1??$ ($3.Kd1!$) $3\dots Kb2$ when the Bishop, and the game, are lost!

Fortunately, after $1\dots Kd4$ White can easily draw if he remembers to always restrict the enemy King’s movements by forcing it to defend its pawns. Thus $2.Ba2!$ stops the King’s march in its tracks! After $2\dots Bg5$ (Hoping White will move his Bishop off the d5-pawn.) $3.Bb3$ (Nope. White can go $Bb3-a2-b3$ all day!) $3\dots Kc5$ $4.Ba2$ $d4$ $5.Bb1!$ $Kd5$ $6.Bc2$ and we once again have our ideal drawing posture.

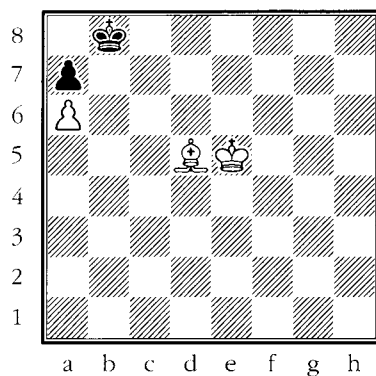
Fortresses in Bishop-up Endgames

The idea of a defensive fortress is an important one. In general, you’re *not* expected to memorize lots of fortress examples. Instead, seeing a few patterns and keeping the possibility in mind will serve you well.

Fortresses in Bishop-up endgames are fairly common due to the Bishop’s inability to control a whole color complex. These usually occur when the stronger side’s rook-pawn or knight-pawn get down to the sixth and/or 7th rank, or if a rook-pawn of the wrong color is lurking on the board. Here are a few examples that don’t need much explanation.

RULE

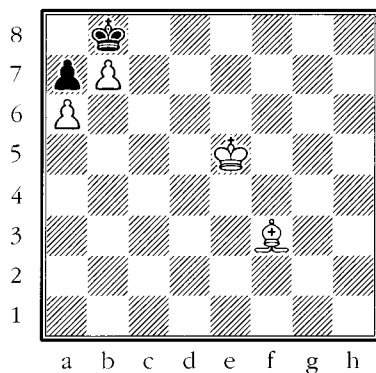
There are *no* fortresses for bishop-pawn, queen-pawn or king-pawn!



Draw

White reaches a dead end if Black shuffles his King between b8 and c8. Allowing black's King access to a8 also doesn't get the job done: **1.Be6 Ka8 2.Kd6 Kb8**, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

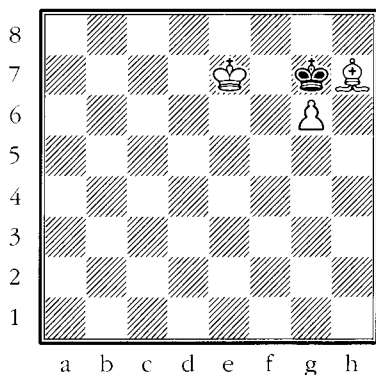
Diagram 254



Draw

White is up a Bishop and pawn, yet the game's a draw since white's King can't approach without delivering stalemate. Note that sacrificing the b-pawn (in the hope of giving black's King more wiggle room) leads to the previous diagram after **1.Bd5 Kc7 2.b8=Q+ Kxb8**.

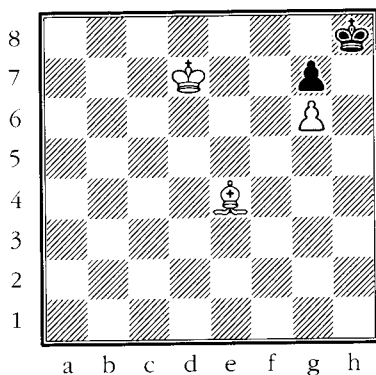
Diagram 255



Draw

The dreadful position of white's Bishop allows Black to draw. His mindless plan of ...Kg7-h8-g7, etc. is unbreakable. Oddly, if white's Bishop were to turn into a pawn, then White would win by 1.h8=Q+ Kxh8 2.Kf6. In other words, the Bishop on h7 is *worse* than a pawn!

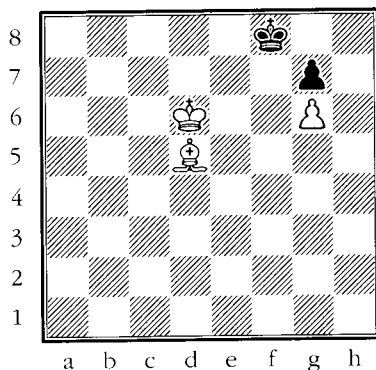
Diagram 256



Draw

Black happily dances between g8 and h8 until White finally gives up and stalemates his opponent.

Diagram 257

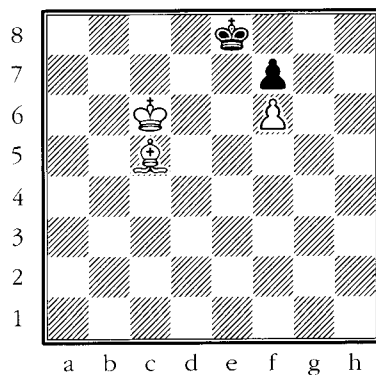


Draw

We've seen that White has no chance of winning if black's King gets to g8/h8. That means that white's Bishop must prevent this by staying on the a2-g8 diagonal. However, now Black skips between e8 and f8 and, again, White must eventually tip his hat to the draw.

As stated earlier, c/-, d-, and e-pawns prevent such blockades, as show by the following example:

Diagram 258



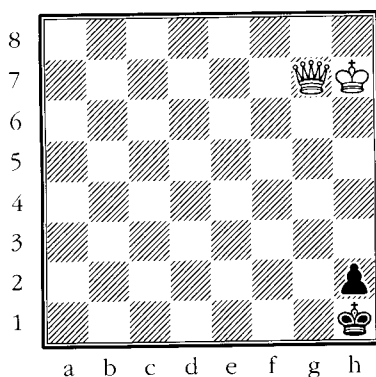
White Wins

1.Bb6 Kf8 2.Kd7 Kg8 3.Ke7, 1-0. It doesn't get too much easier than that!

Queen Endgames

(A Trick Win in Queen vs. Rook-Pawn and Queen vs. Bishop-Pawn on the 7th)

Diagram 259



White to move wins

Usually a rook-pawn will draw in a Queen vs. King and pawn on the 7th rank endgame. However, the position in the diagram is an exception, and the technique White makes use of is important. It shows how, in some endgames, you can allow one side to promote his pawn to a Queen and still win by weaving a back rank mating net.

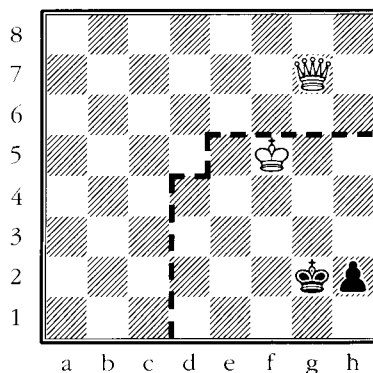
1.Kg6

Not 1.Kh6?? since that would stalemate the black King! By 1.Kg6, White moves his King closer to the enemy pawn and simultaneously blocks the Queen's control over the g-file, thus preventing an unpleasant stalemate.

1...Kg2 2.Kf5+

In this kind of endgame, White wins if he can get his King into the box shown in diagram 260. The reason for this will be clear in a moment.

Diagram 260



Black's lost

2...Kf2

Black realizes that 2...Kh1 3.Kg4! just helps White get closer with his King.

3.Qb2+ Kg1

Black loses immediately after 3...Kg3 4.Qb7 when the pawn is permanently frozen.

4.Kg4!

White lets Black make a Queen!

4...h1=Q 5.Kg3 and Black must resign since he can't stop Qf2 mate or a back rank mate unless he gives away his Queen.

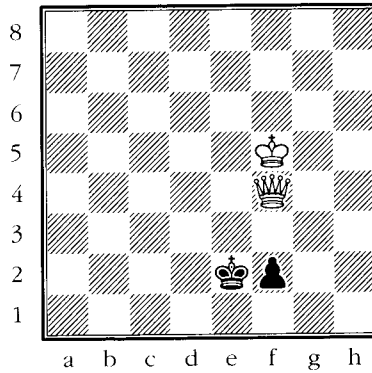
As you can see, in the case of a rook-pawn vs. a Queen and close King (diagrams 259 and 260), the Queen can easily create this mate from any position along its 2nd rank (the moves after diagram 260 had White's Queen settling on b2). Thus, if the white King gets in the box shown in diagram 260 (with White having the move or Black being in check), he always wins.

Note that this idea is sometimes possible against a bishop-pawn—whether it does or doesn't work against the other pawns is of no consequence since the Queen easily beats a knight-pawn or center pawn no matter where the Kings might stand. In a situation where Black turns his bishop-pawn into a new Queen *and* has the move, the white King has to be on its third rank in front of the enemy King, and the white Queen must be on a2 or e2 in the case of a c-pawn/h2 or d2 in the case of an f-pawn. Diagrams 261 and 262 clearly illustrate both situations.

From diagram 261: **1.Qh2!** (the best possible square) **1...Ke1 2.Kf4 f1=Q+ 3.Ke3** and black can't stop mate since White's Queen prevents all black checks

by covering e2, f2, g1, and h3 (White’s King defends against the other checks on its own).

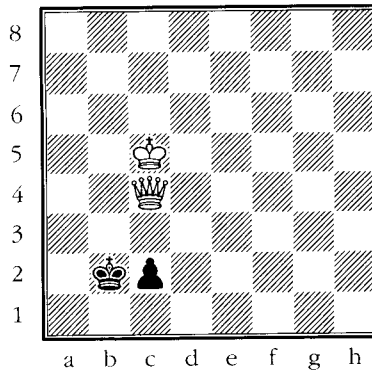
Diagram 261



White to move and win

White won (in diagram 261) because the Queen on h2 keeps the Black King out of the corner and doesn’t allow him any stalemate tricks.

Diagram 262



White to move, draw

The position in diagram 262 looks promising for White since his King is quite close: 1.Qe2 Kb1?? 2.Kc4 c1=Q+ 3.Kb3 mates. Sadly, **1.Qe2 Ka1!** is a huge improvement which forces a draw: **2.Qd2** (2.Qxc2 stalemate) **2...Kb1 3.Kb4 c1=Q** and White can’t win.

In the case of a bishop-pawn, mate is only possible if White has the move immediately after Black promotes his pawn to a Queen, or if the Queen can safely reach one of the specified squares (i.e., c-pawn = a2 or e2, while the f-pawn = h2 or d2). As we’ve seen (in diagram 262), the Queen on e2 doesn’t always ice the win, but getting the Queen to h2 (as in diagram 261) grabs the brass ring and doesn’t let go.

Summing Up

Overview

- Complex positions can't be solved unless you are firmly trained in endgame basics!

King and Pawn endgames

- In a King and pawn vs. King and pawn situation, when the defending side can give up his pawn but take the Opposition, the game is drawn unless the stronger side's pawn is on the 5th rank.
- It's clear that, aside from simple race considerations (brought about by both pawns being passed), the real question surrounding King and pawn vs. King and pawn theory is whether or not a pawn can be won. If a pawn does indeed drop, the assessment of the resulting position (which has suddenly transposed into one of our already mastered King and pawn vs. lone King situations) is made by who owns the Opposition.

Rook Endgames

- In a Rook and pawn endgame, a "Lucena" with a rook-pawn is only won if the defending King is cut off by four or more files. Another way of putting it is: It's a win if the enemy King is cut off on or beyond the farthest bishop-file.
- In general, both sides should strive to get their Rooks behind a passed pawn.
- In the case of a passed rook-pawn on the 6th with the defending Rook behind it, the stronger side's King must try and wend its way down the board and find shelter in front of its pawn. When this is going to happen, having the defending Rook behind the passed pawn doesn't quite hold up, so a knowledge of the Vancura Position is necessary.
- The Vancura Position doesn't suffice if it's facing any pawn other than a rook-pawn.

➤ In the case of a Rook and pawn vs. Rook endgame where the defending King is trapped one or more files to the side of the pawn, the result depends on whether or not the stronger side can achieve a Lucena Position. This is determined by the following rules:

- A pawn on the 5th rank or beyond wins if the enemy King is cut off by one file on the Long Side of the board!
- A pawn on the 4th rank wins if the enemy King is cut off by two files. A knight-pawn is an exception and takes three files.

Bishops of Opposite Color Endgames

➤ Bishop and two connected pawns vs. Bishop

- Two connected pawns on the 6th rank are winning.
- The correct defensive stance (only valid if both pawns don't make it to the 6th) calls for the defender's King to be in front of the pawns, while the Bishop ties the enemy King down to the defense of its pawn. Ideally, this freezes the pawns since one push allows a total blockade, while the other allows the defender to sacrifice his Bishop for the two remaining pawns.

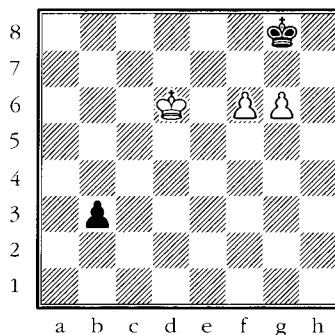
Fortresses in Bishop Endgames

➤ Fortresses in Bishop-up endgames are fairly common due to the Bishop's inability to control a whole color complex. These usually occur when the stronger side's rook-pawn or knight-pawn get down to the 6th and/or 7th rank, or if a rook-pawn of the wrong color is lurking on the board. There are *no* fortresses for a bishop-pawn, queen-pawn or king-pawn!

Tests and Solutions

TEST 1

Diagram 263

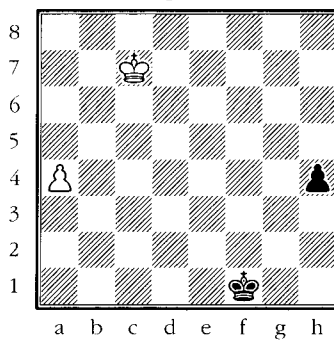


White to move

Can White win?

TEST 2

Diagram 264

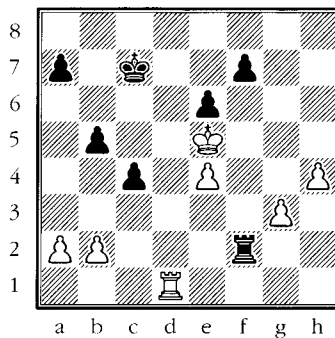


White to move

Who wins this position?

TEST 3

Diagram 265

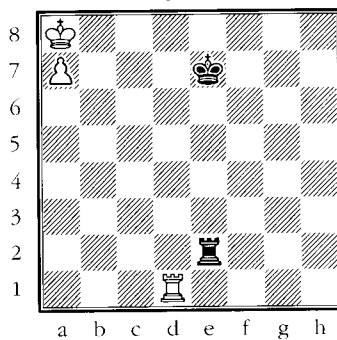


White to move

What's going on?

TEST 4

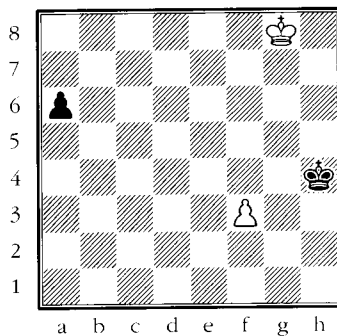
Diagram 266

**Black to move**

Can White win or is this a draw?

TEST 5

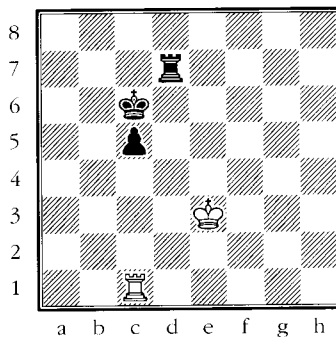
Diagram 267

**White to move**

White appears to be lost. How can he save himself?

TEST 6

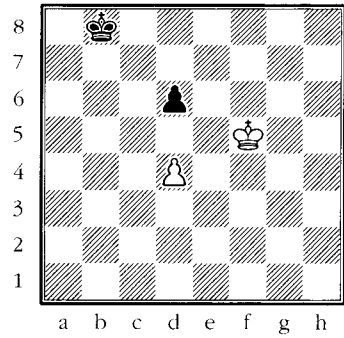
Diagram 268

**White to move**

Consider both 1.Ke2 and 1.Ke4, which is correct?

TEST 7

Diagram 269

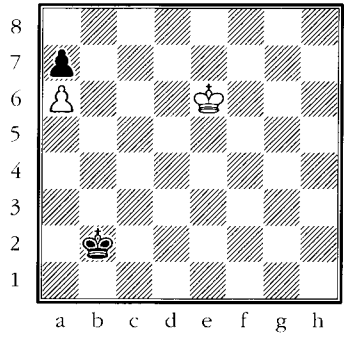


Black to move

Can Black save himself?

TEST 8

Diagram 270

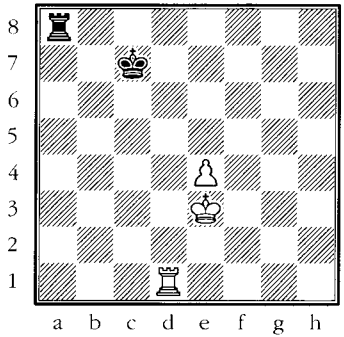


Black to move

White is targeting the a7-pawn. Can Black save himself?

TEST 9

Diagram 271

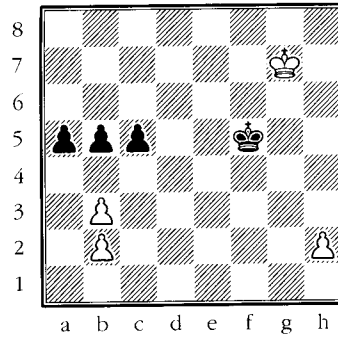


Black to move

Black has two ways to draw this position. What's the easiest one?

TEST 10

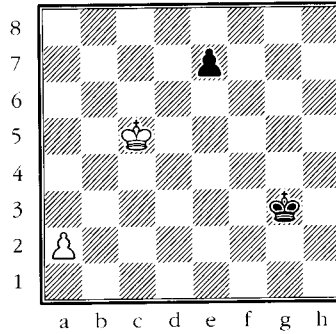
Diagram 272

**White to move**

Who is winning?

TEST 11

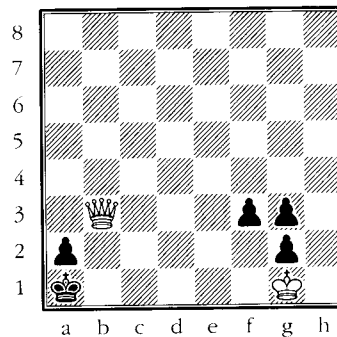
Diagram 273

**White to move**

How do you assess this position?

TEST 12

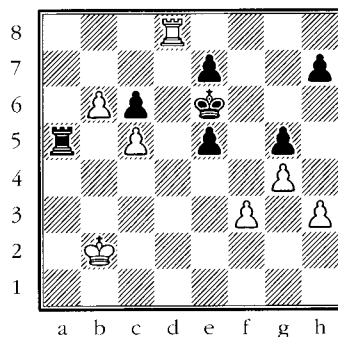
Diagram 274

**White to move**

What in the world is going on here?

TEST 13

Diagram 275

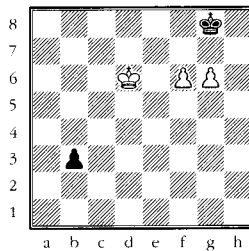
**White to move**

White's clearly better, but can he win?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOLUTION 1

Diagram 263

**White to move**

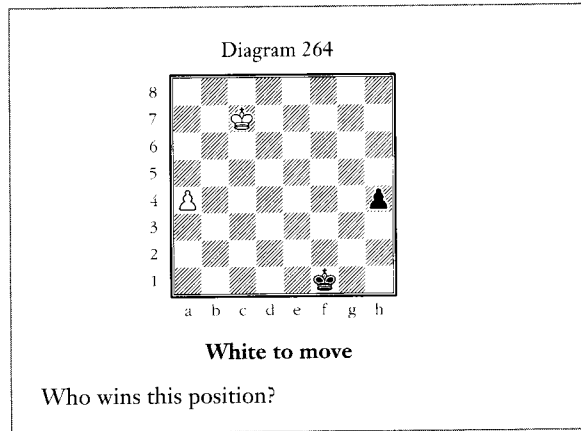
Can White win?

White wins easily after ...

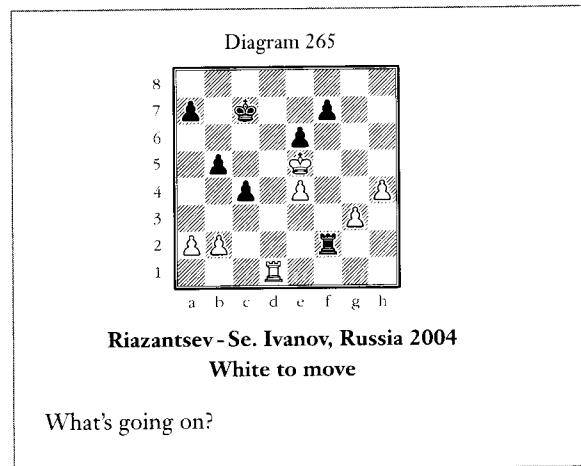
1.f7+ Kf8

1...Kg7 2.Ke7 b2 3.f8=Q+.

2.Ke6! b2 3.Kf6 b1=Q 4.g7 mate.

SOLUTION 2

White can draw: **1.a5 h3 2.a6 h2 3.a7 h1=Q 4.Kb8!**, =.

SOLUTION 3

White has a forced win.

1.Rh1!

By leaping behind the passed pawn (“Rooks belong behind passed pawns.”), White turns it into a run away train that will ultimately force the win of the enemy Rook.

1...Rxb2 2.h5 Rd2

2...Rxa2 3.h6 Rd2 4.h7 Rd8 5.h8=Q Rxh8 6.Rxh8 a5 7.Kd4 wins. Analysis by Riazantsev.

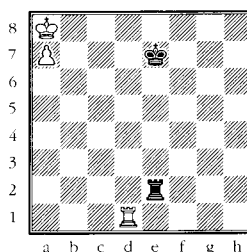
3.h6 Rd8 4.h7 Rh8 5.Kf6 a5 6.Kxf7

An important move that turns the g-pawn into a passer.

6...b4 7.Kg7 Rd8 8.h8=Q Rxh8 9.Kxh8 b3 10.axb3 cxb3 11.g4 a4 12.Rb1!, 1-0.

SOLUTION 4

Diagram 266



Black to move

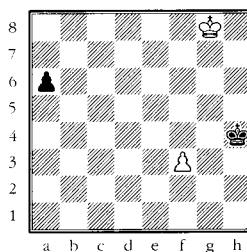
Can White win or is this a draw?

Black draws because his King is only cut off three files from the pawn. To win, White needs to cut the black King off by four or more files!

1...Rb2! (Trapping the white King on a8) **2.Rh1 Kd7 3.Rh8 Kc7 4.Rb8 Rc2 5.Rb7+ Kc8** and White can't free his King. Thus, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

SOLUTION 5

Diagram 267



Study by Prokes 1946

White to move

White appears to be lost. How can he save himself?

1.Kf7

An obvious move that threatens to enter the Square of the a6-pawn (thus stopping it) by Ke6.

1...a5 2.f4!

Not 2.Ke6?? a4 3.f4 a3 4.f5 a2 5.f6 a1=Q 6.f7 Qa3 followed by 7...Qf8.

2...a4

Black also fails to secure victory with 2...Kg4 due to 3.Ke6! Kxf4 (3...a4 4.f5 is a draw since both sides promote) 4.Kd5 and White has entered the a-pawn's square.

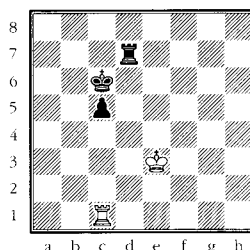
3.f5 a3 4.f6 a2 5.Kg8!

An important move since 5.Ke7?? a1=Q 6.f7 Qe5+ 7.Kd7 Qf6 8.Ke8 Qe6+ 9.Kf8 Kg5 lets the black King get too close: 10.Kg7 Qe7 11.Kg8 (11.Kh8 loses to 11...Qc1+, and not 11...Qxc2 stalemate) 11...Kg6 12.f8=N+ (Note that 12.f8=Q fails to 12...Qh7 mate) 12...Kh6, 0-1.

5...a1=Q 6.f7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

SOLUTION 6

Diagram 268



Kochiev - Smyslov, Lvov 1978

White to move

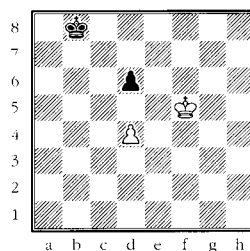
Consider both 1.Ke2 and 1.Ke4, which is correct?

In the actual game, Kochiev played 1.Ke2?, which loses: 1...Kb5 2.Rb1+ Ka4 3.Rc1 Kb4 4.Rb1+ Ka3 5.Rc1 Rd5! 6.Ke3 Kb2 7.Rc4 Kb3, 0-1. It's interesting to see how even grandmasters sometimes botch these basic theoretical positions!

1.Ke4 is a draw since 1...Rd4+ 2.Ke3 Kb5 3.Rh1 Kb4 4.Rb1+ Ka3 5.Rc1 Rd5 and now 6.Ke4! saves the day. Compare this with the actual game continuation where Ke4 wasn't available.

SOLUTION 7

Diagram 269



Black to move

Can Black save himself?

White will win if he is allowed to push his pawn to d5: 1...Kc7?? 2.d5 Kb6 (2...Kd7 3.Kf6 Kd8 4.Ke6 Kc7 5.Ke7 Kc8 6.Kxd6 is also winning) 3.Kf6! (And not 3.Ke6?? Kc5 with a winning Trébuchet for Black!) 3...Kb5 4.Ke7! Kc5 5.Ke6, 1-0.

To prevent white's pawn from reaching the 5th rank, Black must play:

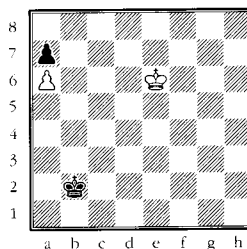
1...d5!

He knows he's losing his pawn, but he also knows he will be able to take the Opposition and make a draw.

2.Ke6 Kc7 3.Kxd5 Kd7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

SOLUTION 8

Diagram 270



Schlage - Ahues, 1921

Black to move

White is targeting the a7-pawn. Can Black save himself?

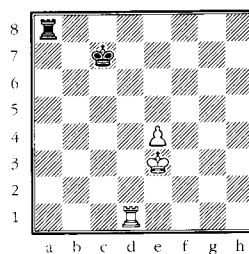
No, Black is quite lost.

1...Kc3 2.Kd5!! wins. (This move was discovered by Maizelis.)

In the actual game, White blundered with 2.Kd6?? and drew after 2...Kd4 3.Kc6 Ke5 4.Kb7 Kd6 5.Kxa7 Kc7, $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$.

SOLUTION 9

Diagram 271



Black to move

Black has two ways to draw this position. What's the easiest one?

White to move wins by 1.Kf4. Fortunately, Black has the move and is able to improve the position of his King in two fundamentally different ways.

1...Rd8!

Simplest. Black also draws with 1...Kc6 intending to meet 2.Kf4 with 2...Rf8+ 3.Kg5 Re8 4.Kf5 Rf8+ 5.Kg6 Re8 6.Rd4 Kc5!

2.Rxd8

Naturally, 2.Rh1 Kd7 poses no problems for Black, who will get his King in front of the pawn and draw by making use of Philidor's Position.

2...Kxd8 3.Kf4 Ke8!

The only move! Now Black can take the Opposition on any advance by white's King. Losing choices are 3...Kd7?? 4.Kf5 Ke7 5.Ke5, and 3...Kc7 4.Ke5 Kd7 5.Kf6.

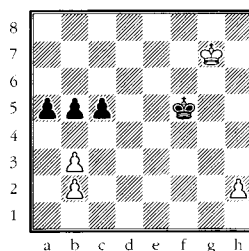
4.Kf5

Obviously 4.Ke5 Ke7 and 4.Kg5 Ke7 also give Black the Opposition, while 4.Kg4 Ke7 (and not 4...Kd7?? 5.Kf5) 5.Kf5 Kf7, is equal.

4...Kf7, =.

SOLUTION 10

Diagram 272



Em. Lasker - Tarrasch, St. Petersburg 1914

White to move

Who is winning?

A glance might convince us that White is losing, but Lasker found a nice idea that, up to that time, had never been seen before.

1.h4! Kg4 2.Kg6!

This is it! White threatens to promote his pawn, but if it's taken the white King has a faster road to the queenside than black's.

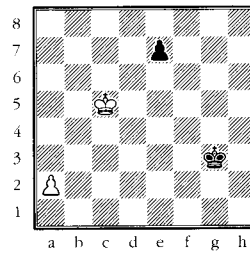
2...Kxh4 3.Kf5

Suddenly it's Black who is fighting for a draw!

3...Kg3 4.Ke4 Kf2 5.Kd5 Ke3 6.Kxc5 Kd3 7.Kxb5 Kc2 8.Kxa5 Kxb3, 1/2-1/2.

SOLUTION 11

Diagram 273



Composition by Pal Benko
White to move

How do you assess this position?

White wins by forcing the black King on to a square that will allow the a-pawn to promote with check.

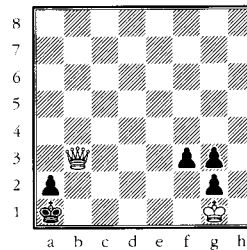
1.a4

Not 1.Kd4? Kf4 2.a4 e5+ 3.Kc3 e4 4.a5 e3 5.a6 Kg3! 6.Kd3 Kf2, =.

1...e5 2.a5 e4 3.Kd4 Kf4 4.a6 e3 5.Kd3 Kf3 6.a7 e2 7.a8=Q+, 1-0.

SOLUTION 12

Diagram 274



Horwitz, 1879
White to move

What in the world is going on here?

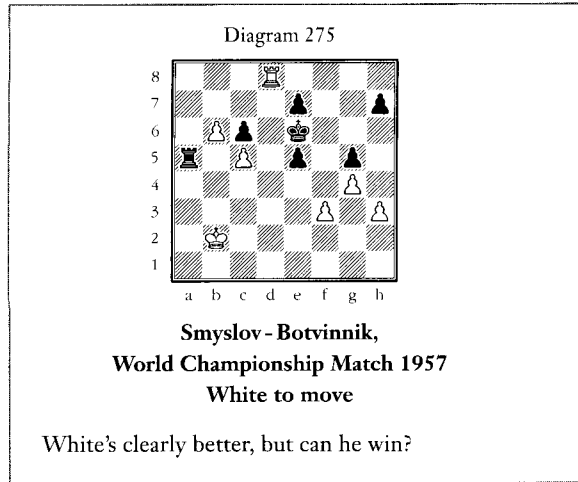
The problem White faces is not so much his opponent's three kingside pawns, but rather the fact that his King is far from the queenside. This means that if we removed all the kingside pawns, the resulting position is drawn.

The solution is to use the movements of the kingside pawns to get white's King a bit closer, then employ the idea we learned in "A Trick Win in Queen vs. rook-pawn on 7th" (diagram 259) which allows Black to promote his a-pawn, only to find himself in a mating net.

1.Qb6 f2+ 2.Kxg2 f1=Q+ 3.Kxf1 g2+ 4.Ke2 g1=Q 5.Qxg1+ Kb2 6.Kd2 a1=Q 7.Qb6+ Ka3 8.Qa5+ Kb2 9.Qb4+ Ka2 10.Kc2 and mates. Personally I

would now give 10...Qc3+ a go, since 11.Qxc3 is stalemate! Of course, 10...Qc3+ 11.Kxc3 forces mate next move.

SOLUTION 13



White wins by placing his Rook behind his passed pawn. Once he freezes black's Rook on b8, he can then decisively penetrate into black's helpless kingside with his King.

1.Rd3 Ra8 2.Kb3 Ra5 and Black resigned without waiting for a reply. Why? Because black's kingside pawns fall like ripe fruit after 3.Kb4 Rb5+ 4.Kc4 Rb1 5.Rb3 Rc1+ 6.Kd3 Rd1+ 7.Ke3 Rd8 8.b7 Rb8 9.Ke4 Kd7 10.Kf5! Analysis by Botvinnik.



Final Thoughts

Complex Rook endgames are the main focus of this section, and it takes a certain amount of chess strength (i.e., tactical clarity and the ability to absorb complicated patterns) and work ethic to absorb the advanced material presented here. Apparently, you've succeeded in doing so. This not only verifies that you belong in the "A" class, but it also speaks volumes about your dedication to climbing up the rating ladder.

At this point, you could easily rest on your endgame laurels for the rest of your life and never have to back-down to anyone when the final phase of a game is reached. However, why stop here? You've done the vast majority of "grunt-work" and will be surprised to find that the Expert section concentrates more on concepts and making use of the material you already possess than the memorization of alien ideas and rules.

So, when you've recovered from the effort you've just made and feel that it's time to leave the "A" class behind and become an Expert, feel free to open yourself up to the mysteries of Part Seven.