Jacob Aagaard

Practical Chess Defence

QUALITY CHESS

Practical Chess Defence

Chess is developing faster now than ever before in history. The appearance of computers in the "chess gym" has not only affected opening theory, but has also changed the way players think. In the past many positions would have been rejected "on principle" as impossible to defend, and even the best players would shy away from capturing material if it meant that they would have to face a difficult defence.

This attitude has changed and today's top players are not afraid of walking a very fine line in defence. In this book Jacob Aagaard gives practical advice on various methods of defence, and offers the reader the chance to test and train his ability with 200 challenging examples.

While not for the faint-hearted, this book will help the reader greatly improve in this vital part of the game.

Jacob Aagaard is one of the most popular chess writers today, but is also a competitive player. His best results so far are scoring 3 GM norms in 2004.

€24.99 £16.99 $27.95

ISBN 91-975244-4-1

9 789197 524445

QUALITY CHESS
www.qualitychessbooks.com

First edition 2006 by Quality Chess Europe AB
Vegagatan 18, SE-413 09 Gothenburg, Sweden

ISBN 10: 91-975244-4-1
ISBN 13: 978-91-975244-4-1

All sales or enquiries should be directed to Quality Chess Europe AB,
Vegagatan 18, SE-413 09 Gothenburg, Sweden.
tel: +46-31-24 47 90 fax: +46-31-24 47 14
e-mail: info@qualitychessbooks.com
website: www.qualitychessbooks.com

Distributed in US and Canada by SCB Distributors, Gardena California
www.scbdistributors.com

Edited by John Shaw
Typeset: Colin McNab
Cover Design: Carole Dunlop
Proofreading: Danny Kristiansen
Printed in Estonia by Tallinna Raamatutrükikoja LLC

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Introduction

When Garry Kasparov published the first volume of his *On My Great Predecessors* series, he said that since we had reached the end of classical chess, the pre-computer period, he had found it natural to write a history of classical chess. The only reaction I saw expressed on this was when a famous reviewer said that Kasparov's invention "advanced chess" (man assisted by a computer) did not seem to be very successful and would not replace classical chess anytime soon. This missed the great man's point by a mile and beyond!

With the introduction of various forms of computer chess programs in chess, we have seen obvious changes in how people play the opening. Increasingly novelties in high-level games are introduced in the middlegame rather than the opening. Together with the reduction in time controls, this is transforming chess, though less than some people think.

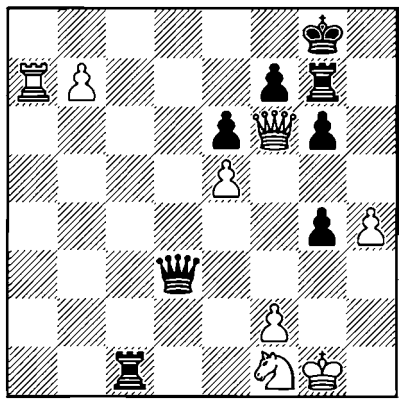
More important than the changes in opening preparation are the changes in top players' creativity and tactical abilities. Most of this has been psychological. Most of the prominent players consult chess-playing programs, so they cannot help adapting their thinking methods, as inspired by the machines. This is seen mainly in two ways:

Firstly, in the ability to spot the so-called "Fritz-moves". These moves were spotted in the "classical period" as well, but will be so maybe five to ten times as frequently today.

Secondly, there has been a philosophical movement away from the notion of given truths in chess, especially in the West, where the best players have always been autodidacts and not part of a great tradition of inherited knowledge, such as characterised the Soviet Chess School. To me it is not surprising that the only Western player who won the World Championship after World War II, Robert Fischer, was a dedicated student of Russian chess magazines, often knowing their content better than the top Russian grandmasters.

But this book is far from being ambitious enough to try to prove any philosophical or historical thesis. It is a book aimed at those who want to improve their defensive abilities. To do so we cannot get around these bizarre Fritz-moves. But let's not talk about beauty; instead we shall look it straight in the eye:

Chernikov – Etruk
Kharkiv 1968



White to play and win – Solution on next page

The increased tactical ability in humans has not only created a larger number of beautiful brilliancies, but also helped us to scrap the less than brilliant brilliancies. It happens quite often that a combination is dismissed when the computer points out a defence overlooked by the players during the game. What is even worse for attacking players like me: people have started to find these defences over the board!

The art of defence is the only part of chess that has developed with the same speed as opening theory. The clearest proclamation of this was Kramnik's demolition of Kasparov in their London 2000 match. The first World Champion of the third millennium defeated the greatest attacking player of all time, with accurate defence!

One of my more important personal realisations has been that it is more difficult to win a game than to draw one. To win against a good player you have to do something special. At times this factor leads to fewer decisive results, to the crowd's displeasure, but it also forces grandmasters to surpass each other in creative achievements. And overall the number of draws today is not higher than it was twenty years ago, when humans were still thinking for themselves.

Chess is changing, for better and for worse. Only one thing can be said with absolutely certainty: chess is becoming much more competitive. An example is the sensation it was when a young Bobby Fischer blitzed out the correct drawing moves in a bishop ending against Mark Taimanov in Buenos Aires 1960. Today there are many players who know not only this theoretical endgame position, but hundreds like them.

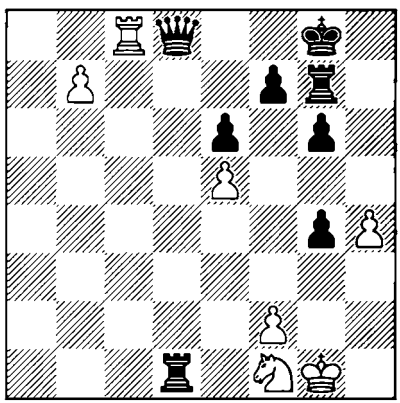
One place where computers have had a positive impact is on one of my favourite kinds of chess books: puzzle books.

A sad majority of puzzle books still have the odd position from the Zurich 1953 Candidates tournament, as well as similar misdeeds. With hundred of thousands of new games played every year, it is hard to see the point of recycling the best books of our past. But at least writers have the decency to check the accuracy of the previous analysis with computer programs. This does not necessarily lead to bullet-proof solutions, but we get much closer to this unobtainable goal than we would have done without computers.

This does depend on the author's level of decency. When *Chess Informant*, re-released one of their older products in digital form, they wrote in the promotions for it that they, of course, had considered reviewing the material before publishing it, but had decided to keep the charm of the original work intact! I don't generally think badly about others, but I do wonder whether the good people from *Sahovski* did not care more about limiting their own efforts than the interests of their audience. My rough estimate is that half of the puzzles on their CD with 3000 puzzles from *Informant* 5 to 91 were suitable as puzzles. Quite a number were unsuitable because the defending side had a surprising defence, consisting of Fritz-moves, or just very accurate defence.

So, on the one hand, this CD contained some beautiful combinations like the Chernikov – Etruk one featured on the previous page, where White wins with:

1.♕d8†!! ♕xd8 2.♖a8 ♖d1 3.♖c8!!

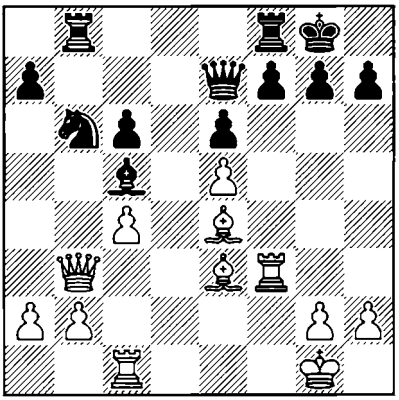


This idea is the core of the position as a puzzle. All that remains for the solver is to calculate correctly that Black cannot give perpetual check.

3...♔h7 4.b8=♕ ♖xf1† 5.♔xf1 ♕d3† 6.♔g1 g5 7.h5 ♔h6 8.♖h8† ♖h7 9.♕f8† ♔xh5 10.♕xf7† ♔h6 11.♕xe6† ♕g6 12.♖xh7† ♔xh7 13.♕xg4 1–0

A truly striking achievement from Mr Chernikov. But, on the other hand, there were many mistakes. It is distressing that something truly great is found side by side with something as horrid as the following example:

Aijala – Sigurjonsson
Graz 1972



Black took his chance to create a double threat.
1...♘d5!

Even though this does not win by force, it creates practical problems for the opponent, and therefore deserves praise.
2.♗xh7†

2.cxd5 ♖xb3 3.♗xc5 (3.d6 ♖xe3! 4.dxe7 ♖e1 mate) 3...♕g5! and Black wins a truckload of toys.
2...♔h8 3.♖h3??

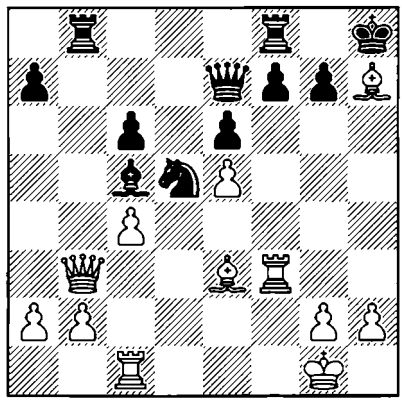
Not the greatest move in chess history. White had a lapse of concentration and overlooked Black's reply.
3...♘f4

Supplied with a generous !! from R. Maric in his annotations. Maybe it would be possible to talk oneself into a single exclam, but two? Come on. White has just blundered more or less every piece he had in one move, and Black has the decency to accept his kind offer. Let's be careful not to overestimate the achievement.

White resigned.
0–1

Do not misunderstand me. Though a bad blunder, it is easy to forgive Maric an analytical mistake. Anyone old enough to have analysed without a computer-provided safety net would know how easily mistakes creep in. This sympathy, however, does not extend to the present-day editors at *Chess Informant*, who have the decency to ask a rather imaginative amount for their products, but not the decency to update them.

It is important to remember: where there are mistakes in chess, there is also room for improvement. This book is largely about the mistakes of others, and about how to learn from them. Because, if we absolutely have to be honest, we would rather learn from the mistakes of others, than commit mistakes of our own to learn from. So, let's return to the position where White blundered the rook.



White to play – find the only move

White's main idea of delivering perpetual check is sound, only the execution was dubious. Massive loss of material is imminent and only radical measures will suffice.

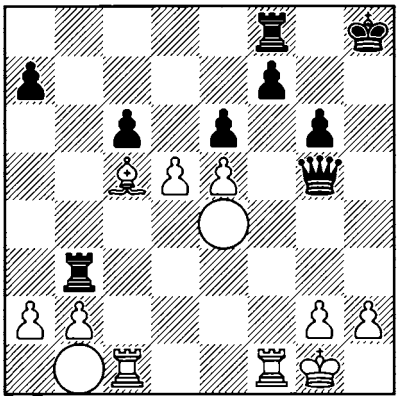
If you have the mindset for it, it is not too hard to see that instead of instantly transferring the rook to the h-file, White can change the move order by bringing the bishop back to one of four squares. But which of these would be best? Let's investigate them one by one:

3.♗d3? is a bad mistake. 3...♗xe3† is winning immediately.

3.♗c2? does not work because of Black's standard winning attempt, 3...g6, when White no longer supports ♗xc5 with the rook.

To decide between 3.♗b1 or 3.♗e4 is more complicated. What we need to do is to go through a forced sequence of moves to see which is better.

This is referred to as the method of elimination. After 3...g6 4.cxd5 ♖xb3 5.♗xc5 ♕g5 6.♖ff1 we reach the following position:



If you made it to this position from the previous diagram, it should not have been too difficult to decide on 3.♗e4, as after 3.♗b1? Black would now have 6...♖xb2, winning a vital tempo by the threat of mate. So the main line goes:

3.♗e4! g6!

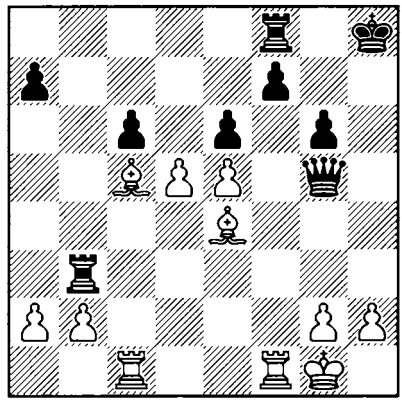
The only way to play for a win. 3...f5?? 4.exf6! would give White a winning attack, queen or not. Now White has to let go of his strongest piece.

4.cxd5

No alternatives, no exclamation marks! It is worth mentioning some of the obvious benefits that the inclusion of the whole dance with the check on h7 before giving up the queen has given White. Firstly, the king no longer defends the f8-rook. Secondly, the black king's position is more fragile than previously. These minor differences change the evaluation of the position.

4...♖xb3 5.♗xc5 ♕g5 6.♖ff1!

Time to choose again, this time for Black. This has little to do with the *Chess Informant* CD, but the position itself deserves attention. It is difficult for White to continue keeping his position alive after Black's three main options, a) 6...♖xb2, b) 6...♖e3 and c) 6...♖bb8. Difficult, yet possible. If you feel so inclined, this is probably a good time to find out what you would do against these three trials.



The first option is the greediest.

a) 6...♖xb2!?

Even though there is no mate on g2 anymore, it makes sense for Black to investigate the capture of a pawn. Especially since White cannot capture on f8 because of the check on e3. Still, my analysis suggests that White can keep the balance.

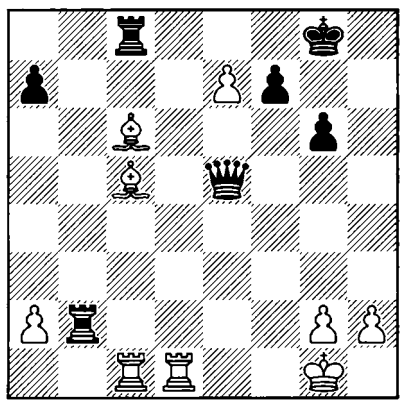
7.dxe6! ♔g8!

7...♕xe5 8.♖fe1! will make it unpleasant to suggest moves for Black, so I will refrain from doing so.

8.♗xc6 ♕xe5!

Again the only move. After 7.dxe6! it is Black who is "making the draw".

9.e7 ♖c8 10.♖fd1



Black to play – what is the only move?

Things look grim for Black. Will White queen his e-pawn and be much better? Well, he would if Black did not possess a surprising defence. For instance, Black cannot play 10...♕g5 because of 11.h4! ♕xh4 12.♖e1! when Black might not hold the game, even with perfect play.

10...♖b1!!

A very surprising move if you don't think in this way. The move is a representative of the "spanner in the works" thinking discussed often in this book. When we have seen the move it is less difficult to calculate the various lines; finding the move is the hard bit, something that can be learned, and will make a lot of difference in the tournament table.

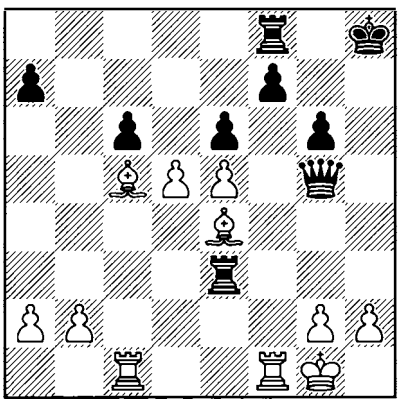
11.♖d8† ♔g7 12.♖xb1 ♕xc5† 13.♔h1 ♕xc6

The endgame is drawn in a number of ways.

Hardly a rough ordeal for White. After finding 3.♗e4, finding the remaining moves was not too demanding. This is not the case after Black's next try, where White forces a draw with the best moves, but only just.

b) 6...♖e3!?

Instead of taking the pawn Black is creating threats. White is in a difficult situation and only accurate play will make a draw.



White to play

The main problem for White is Black's threats against g2. If it wasn't for these, White could happily take on f8 and c6, then trundle to the finish line with his passed pawn. The solution is to distract Black so he cannot attack the main weakness in White's position.

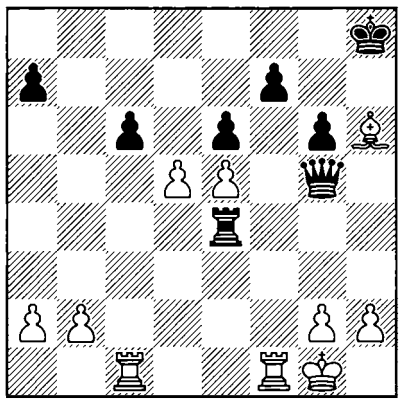
7.♗xf8!

With a sensational idea in mind. The main alternative was 7.h4!?, where Black has two main replies:

7...♕xe5 8.♗xe3 cxd5 9.♗h6 ♕d4† 10.♖f2 ♖b8 11.♗c2 ♖xb2 12.♗g5 I think the control over the dark squares and the potential threats to the black king should give White reasonable chances.

7...♕xh4! is simpler. After 8.♗f3 ♕g5 Black has reinstated his threats, including 9...♖xf3. After something like 9.♖cd1 ♖c8 10.dxc6 ♖xe5 Black is better, though White can create a lot of practical problems for him.

7...♖xe4 8.♗h6!!



The point. White wins a tempo to create counterplay with the c-pawn. After 8.dxc6? ♖e2 White cannot defend.

8...♕xh6!

Black has no real choice. The following lines illustrate his problems:

8...♕xe5 9.dxc6 ♕c7 10.♗d2! ♖e2 11.♗a5 ♕xa5 12.c7 and White wins.

8...♕g4 An attempt to stay focused on g2, which fails badly. 9.h3 ♕g3 10.♖c3 ♕xe5 11.dxc6 ♕c7 12.♖xf7! ♕xf7 13.c7 and once again White wins.

9.dxc6 ♕e3† 10.♔h1 ♖f4 11.♖fd1!

A bit of accuracy is needed. White could have blundered with 11.♖fe1?? when Black wins instantly with 11...♖c4!.

11.♖g1 seems to be possible, but only if after 11...♖h4! White replies with 12.♖gd1! ♕xe5 13.h3 ♕c7 14.♖d7 ♕c8 15.c7, when White is still making the draw.

11...♖h4

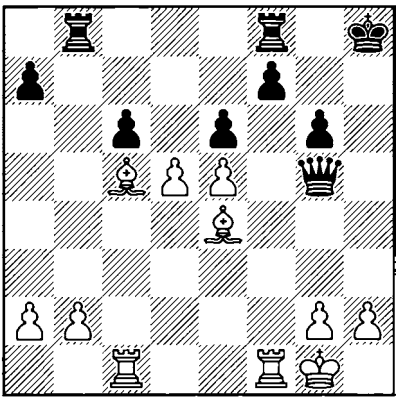
Black has to think about making half a point here. 11...♕e2 12.c7 ♖c4 is maybe also a draw, but not convincingly.

12.c7 ♖xh2†!

With perpetual check. White cannot get his king away from the checks without losing the c-pawn, making avoiding the checks pointless.

Black can improve his play substantially by protecting his pieces:

c) 6...♖bb8!

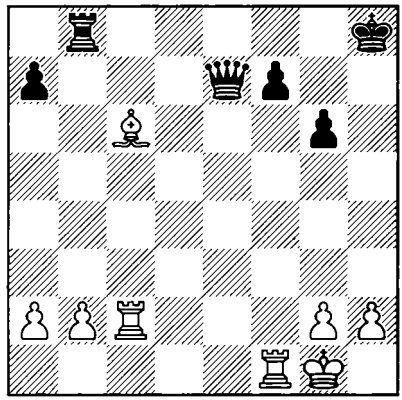


Instead of trying to make White's fragile house of cards collapse, Black prepares to block and eliminate the passed pawns. White does not have time to take on both f8 and c6, so the critical line looks something like this:

7.dxe6 ♕xe5

Black can also try for an advantage with 7...fxe6 8.♗xf8 ♕e3† 9.♔h1 ♕xe4 10.♖ce1 ♕a4 11.♗a3. He does not have a material advantage, but the bishop is misplaced on a3, so he still has some winning chances.

8.e7 ♖fe8 9.♗xc6 ♖xe7 10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♖c2



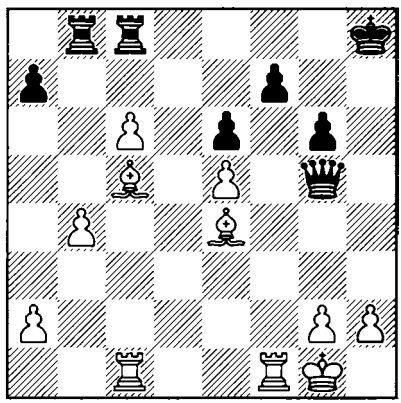
Black has the advantage, but how to exploit it? Presumably he needs to exchange a rook to be able to bully the white pieces, but then White will maybe be able to build a fortress.

White can also try:

7.dxc6

White is happy to stick with his bishops and stay active. The limitation of this approach is that Black can sacrifice an exchange.

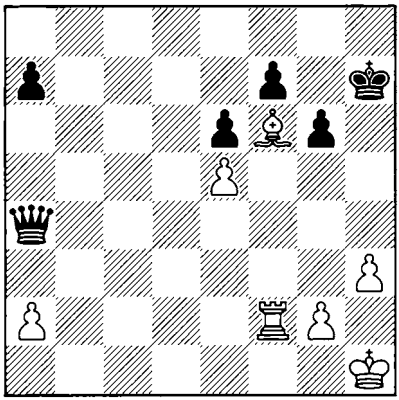
7...♖fc8 8.b4



8...♖xb4!

White's main trumps are the passed pawn and the agility of the bishops. Black returns some of his material superiority rather than

staying pressed against the back rank. After 8...♕xe5 9.♖c4 ♔g8 10.a4 White has a lot of compensation. Though only with two bishops for the queen, a draw should be within reach. **9.♗xb4 ♕e3† 10.♔h1 ♕xe4 11.♗e7 ♖xc6 12.♗f6† ♔h7 13.♖xc6 ♕xc6 14.h3 ♕a4 15.♖f2**



Again White is close to having built a fortress. If Black is able to zugzwang White in some way or activate his king to create threats against the white king, he might break the fortress.

We are quite a bit away from the initial position. We now know that only extensive analysis would have a chance of bringing down the white position. As defenders we have succeeded in making the opponent's task as difficult as possible. The initial position was desperate and Aijala lost after making only two moves. If we assume that White had defended immaculately, would Black have won the game?

It is only fair to begin this book with these two examples, as these were the two positions that encouraged me to do what *Chess Informant* did not find time for: to check all the positions on the CD with a computer program. In the process I found some positions that could be used for a new kind of puzzle book, a book with exercises in defence.

Though a few good books exist on defence, notably Mihail Marin's *Secrets of Chess Defence*, there seems to be no good way for the ambitious player to train defensive abilities. Hopefully this book will change this.

Chapter 1

The Defensive Thinking Frame

Where most people see walls, a blessed few see doors.

– Esben Lund

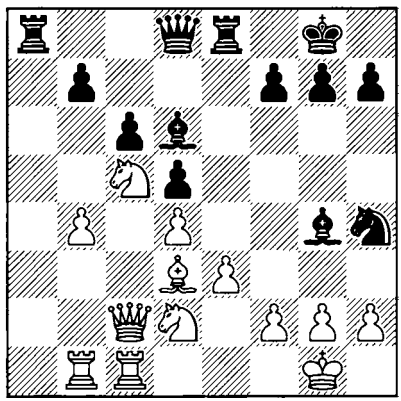
Before we have a look at the "chess" methods of defence, it will be useful to discuss the various thinking methods that can be helpful when defending. I find that the most positive changes to my own play, and that of my students, has come about when we look at the chessboard and see something that was not there before. A sensation not too different from what you get when you are reading a text in a foreign language, which before was a random selection of letters. The same can happen when we see pins, forks and weaknesses for the first time. Previously we did simply not have the vocabulary. In my jollier moods I refer to this experience as the blind man exclaiming: "I was blind and now I can see," right before he walks out in front of a truck.

What we need in chess is not just the ability to see, but also the perseverance to use it. With this emphasis I will in this chapter convey the following ideas: *unforcing thinking*, *the method of elimination*, *prophylaxis*, *an eye for detail* (including *the importance of not taking anything for granted*) and *winners just don't know how to quit*. Together these ideas create what could be called the defensive thinking frame. But we all read the cover, so instead of spinning complex terminology to sound cool, I will limit myself to advice that will help you to defend successfully.

Unforcing thinking

We have a tendency to project deterministic conclusions into our calculation of variations. Some moves have a natural feeling about them, maybe because of their forced nature; a feeling that these *have to* be the correct moves. A generic example is when one of the players sacrifices a piece:

B. Vladimirov – Legky
USSR 1976



Here Black decided that his time had come and took his chance with:
1...♘xg2!

Also possible was 1...♕g5!? 2.g3 ♖xe3! with a strong attack. With all his pieces aimed towards the white king, it is natural for Black to look for a violent solution. This sacrifice seems appropriate. White now assisted by taking the knight.

2.♔xg2? ♕h4!

And Black wins easily. It is hard to guess what White thought was going to happen. My guess is that his mind was foggy and that he could not see beyond accepting the sacrifice. He briefly calculated the alternatives, but at the first sight of danger he lost his confidence and gravitated back to accepting the sacrifice. This gravity is what we must learn to overcome.

3.f4 ♖xe3 4.♘f1 ♗xf4 5.♕f2 ♗f3† 6.♔g1 ♕g5†

White resigned. Black will continue with ...♖xd3 and ...♗e3, winning the queen.

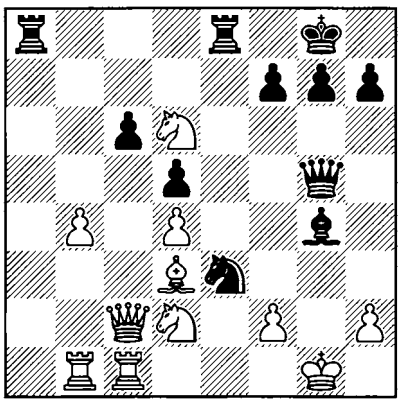
0–1

In his notes to the game Bozic did give a two-move alternative, stating that Black's threats were conclusive.

2.♘xb7!

The natural alternative to taking the knight, which any astute defender will have investigated seriously.

2...♕g5 3.♘xd6 ♘xe3



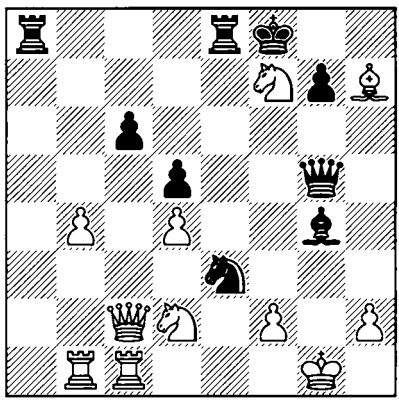
Here Bozic stops, stating that, with various discovered checks, Black is winning. With a direct threat to the white queen this is not stupid, and once upon a time most players would have thought the same way. But to a grandmaster in the 21st century the notion of "danger" has diminished, being replaced with the notion of "messy", which is not only more accurate, but also a better guide dog. In this position Black certainly has a lot of threats, to both king and queen. But then White has a check and an extra piece, so maybe we should not count him out without looking at his options.

4.♗xh7†!

The exclamation mark is for the obvious. A pawn with check, the temptation is simply too strong.

Another interesting desperado is **4.h4**, which leads to a draw by force after 4...♕xh4 5.♗xh7† ♔f8 6.♕c5 ♖e7.

4...♔f8 5.♘xf7!



Another fairly obvious desperado. As the black queen has nowhere sensible to go, he is forced to enter a slightly worse endgame.

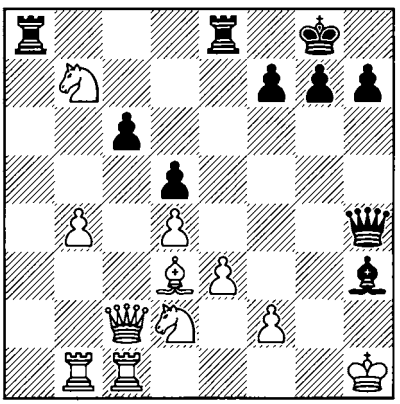
5...♔xf7 6.♕g6† ♕xg6 7.♗xg6† ♔xg6 8.♖xc6†

And White is minimally better.

To develop from talent to grandmaster it is important to learn to take the road less travelled; especially when the main road is leading straight to hell.

This is not only the case when defending. We should also think about less forcing continuations

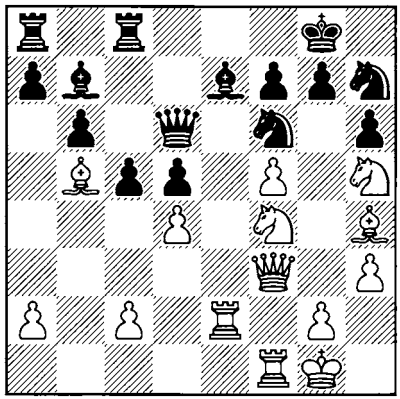
when attacking. In my *Attacking Manual* I will devote some space to the concept of *revolution/evolution*. The basic idea is that we need to be able to rethink our lust for bloodshed and forcing moves, even in the middle of a wild exchange. When revising this example I had originally analysed **2...♗xh2†! 3.♔xh2** (3.♔xg2 ♕h4 and Black wins) **3...♕h4† 4.♔xg2 ♗h3† 5.♔h1 ♖xe3** which leads to a draw, believing it to be the safest course for Black. But taking a critical look at my own analysis I found an unforcing idea for Black, based on *evolution* after the recent *revolution*:



5...♖e6!

After the introduction of another piece to the attack the white king will not survive for long.

The notion of unforcing play is mainly psychological, or counter-psychological if you like. When we progress in chess we do so mainly when we develop our ability to calculate small forced lines. But in order to become strong defenders, we need to be able to sidetrack our opponents' forced lines as well. Sometimes, as in the example above, the defensive ideas would mainly have raised the demands on the attacker, which is not going to work every time, but overall results will improve. But there are also other situations. In **Glek – Naumkin**, Lido degli Estensi 2002, White won in glorious style, something that need not have happened.



1.♘xg7! ♔xg7 2.♘h5† ♔h8 3.♖xe7! ♕xe7 4.♘xf6 ♘xf6 5.♖e1 ♕d6

5...♕d8 6.♖e8†! ♘xe8 7.♗xd8 ♖xd8 8.f6! with a winning attack.

6.♖e6! fxe6

6...♕f8 7.♗xf6† ♔h7 8.♖e7 ♖ab8 9.♕h5 and Black's position collapses.

7.♗xf6† ♔h7 8.♕h5!

1–0

Two strong grandmasters in action, still with a sense of determinism in their moves, a drawback every player feels in his play from time to time. After the initial knight sacrifice Black could have replied 1...♘g5! which would have refuted the whole combination at the start. Instead of conducting a strong attack White would be suffering from a lack of coordination. e.g. 2.♕e3 ♘ge4 and Black is firmly in control. In the previous example the ideas were continuously complicated, and often we need to direct ourselves towards very messy positions. But we also should be able to play the simple moves; well, "simple" once you see them...

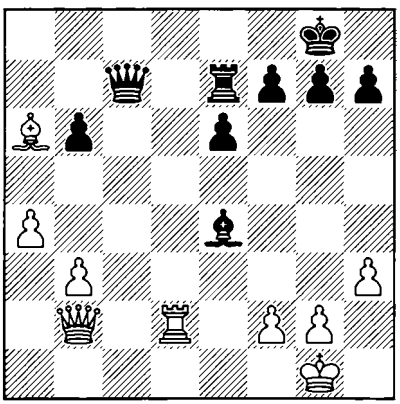
The method of elimination

When we are defending it is normal for us to compare our findings and make a choice. In some situations we are lucky and one option stands out as clearly preferable, but most of

the time we have to choose between seemingly even options. When we are attacking we are in a slightly different situation. We are looking for one good option that will give us good chances of success. But when defending we have to find all the opponent's ideas and an adequate defence to each of them. It is for this reason defending is thought of as the most difficult chess skill to acquire.

Maybe the most important tool that can help us to find the best defence is the method of elimination. It does exactly what it says on the tin: it makes us kill off our options until, ideally, only one is standing or, at the very least, until we have a clearer choice. To do so we need to structure our thinking. It is this that most chess training strives towards achieving.

In **Doroshkievich – Fedorov**, USSR 1981, in this seemingly eventless position



White sprung a surprise on his opponent with:

1.♕e5

Yudovich was apparently so impressed by this double threat that he did not consider the alternatives to Black's next move.

1...♗d5??

It seems that Black did not look at his opponent's ideas carefully when he played this, though we would not be too unfair if we expected Yudovich to be a little more critical in his annotations, as he knew what was coming. We will return to this position in a moment to look at the real options.

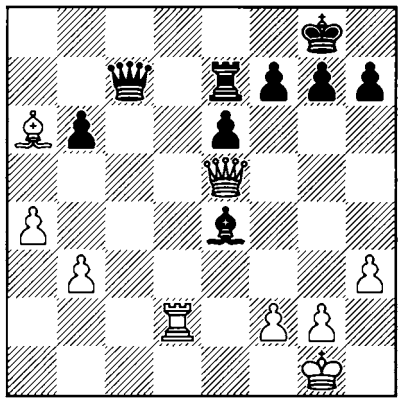
2.♖c2! ♕d7

2...♗c6 loses to 3.♕xc7 ♖xc7 4.♗b5 and White wins a piece. That is all we need to know about this move. The text move did not work out either.

3.♖c8† ♖e8 4.♕c7!

1–0

Though we should expect to anticipate a move like 1.♕e5, we do occasionally miss them, especially in such innocent looking positions. It is more important that once the shock of such a blow has receded, we will be able to sense the danger and look deep into the position to orientate ourselves.



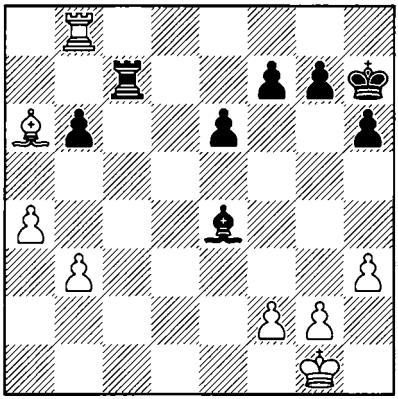
First we need to work out what is real and what is not. White's two threats are real, but Black also has a check on c1, picking up the rook. This gives us four alternatives to the catastrophic text, which we can try to kill off: 1...h6, 1...g6, 1...♔f8 and 1...f6.

Two of these are easy to deal with:

1...h6?

This meets some of the requirements of the position. White cannot play 2.♕xe4 and there is no mate on the back rank. But he can win a pawn with a few energetic moves:

2.♕xc7 ♖xc7 3.♖d8† ♔h7 4.♖b8



The pawn is hard to protect. Black is "unlucky" that the current coordination of his pieces is used against him. But this is exactly what we need to see when we calculate.

4...♖c6

4...♖c1† 5.♔h2 ♖c2 does not work on account of 6.f3!. Black cannot take the pawn because of the unfortunate position of the black king and rook.

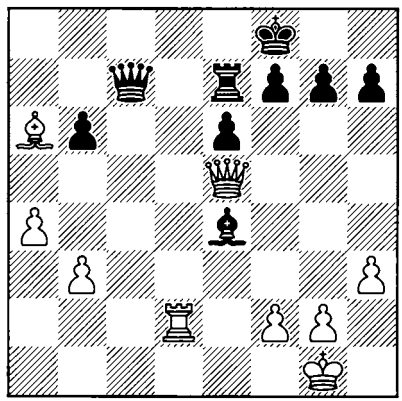
5.♗b7 ♖c1† 6.♔h2 ♗xb7 7.♖xb7

White will win either the f-pawn or get two passed pawns on the queenside. In either case he should win.

Also **1...f6** is relatively easy to deal with. After the not too difficult **2.♕xc7 ♖xc7 3.♗c4!** Black is under pressure. He will probably play **3...♖c6** and all we need to see is that White has several irritating possibilities: 4.♖d4 and 4.♖d7 are enough to reject the line, though actually 4.f3 is the strongest. But we are likely to be wasting our time if we tried to work this out. We know that the trend is against us and we should move on.

This leaves us with a choice between 1...g6 and 1...♔f8. Choosing between them is more difficult, as neither can be refuted in the same way. How we decide to solve this problem depends mainly on how much time we have left before the time control. With less than twenty minutes on the clock, we should most likely make a decision based on intuition, and intuitively I would feel far more comfortable with 1...g6 than 1...♔f8.Luckily this intuition proves sufficient: **1...g6! 2.♕xc7 ♖xc7 3.♖d8† ♔g7 4.♖b8 ♖c1† 5.♔h2 ♖c2 6.♗b7 ♗xb7 7.♖xb7 ♖c6 8.h4 h6** should be a draw without too many problems.

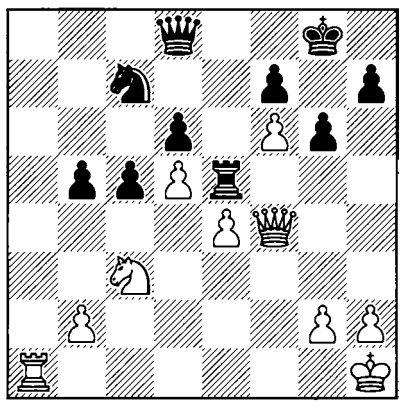
While after **1...♔f8**



we could have a deeper look and find **2.♗b5!** which creates problems for Black. After something like 2...♖d7 3.♕xc7 ♖xc7 4.♖d6 Black will face a passive defence. He may still hold the draw, but the difficulty of the task is mounting.

The method of elimination is often a very good supplement to unforcing thinking, and the other way around. The following naïve example illustrates this perfectly.

Zakharov – Gangiev
USSR 1973



We have a normal Benoni-structure, late in the middlegame. Black has achieved the ...b7-b5 push, while White has managed to advance the f-pawn to a prominent position. Whether this is an advantage is not completely obvious, though in the game it clearly was.

1.♘xb5!?

A tempting sacrifice, which Yudovich gave an exclam in *Chess Informant*. Probably Black had not anticipated this move and now had to consider his response carefully. We usually start by looking for possible ideas. Here the first that comes to mind is 1...♘xb5, but before we can even think about alternatives we spot 2.♕h6 ♕f8 3.♖a8! with mate to come. Black saw this as well, and believed that he could play an intermediate move to change the situation.

1...g5??

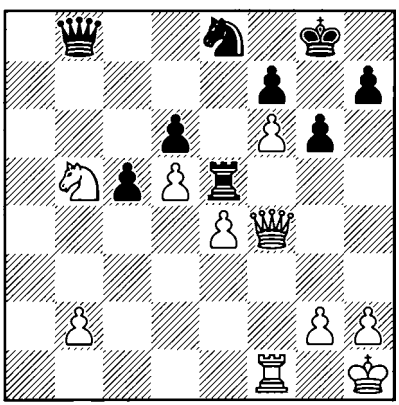
This was probably what White was praying for.

2.♕xe5! dxe5 3.♘xc7

Black resigned. A main point is 3...♕xf6 4.♖a8† ♔g7 5.♘e8†, though White would also win with 4.d6.

1–0

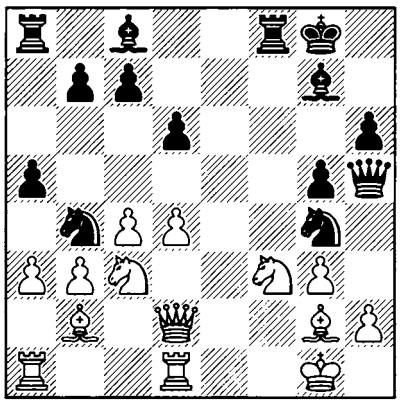
Had Black tried eliminating the various options, he would eventually have settled for a very simple solution. After 1...♘e8! 2.♖f1 ♕b8 Black will regain his pawn with a satisfactory position.



For example: 3.♘c3 ♕xb2 4.♕e3 and the position is more or less level. Note that 3.♘a3, a classic example of forcing thinking, is no good. Black can quickly eliminate jumping into the fork and instead look at the alternatives. As soon as we see 3...♕b4!, which gives Black the advantage, we know we should settle for nothing less.

The next example shows how the absence of structure in the calculations can lead us astray in even the simplest tactics.

Redon – Gatine
France 1992



Black saw no alternatives to retreating, when the game would be a sad affair. Therefore he decided to try a double sacrifice.

1...♖xf3?! 2.♗xf3 ♗xd4†

The idea. A well-trained caged and dangerous circus grandmaster, used to being fed carrots when agile, will look at the six legal moves and through simple elimination quickly find the only move that does not lead to mate.

3.♕xd4??

Redon is no such creation, but a mere man like the best of us. He probably missed Black's fourth move, as well as his own defensive option after 3.♔h1! when 3...♘f2† looks far less dangerous once we give ourselves a chance to find 4.♕xf2!, winning.

So 3.♔h1! was the best move. Black should then try 3...♘d3!?, though White wins after 4.♖f1! ♘xb2 5.♗d5† ♔h7 6.♘b5!. Despite Black

having more material, his position is without hope: ♖ae1, ♘xc7 and ♖f7 are all coming, with deadly effect.

3...♕xh2† 4.♔f1 ♘e3†! 5.♕xe3 ♗h3†

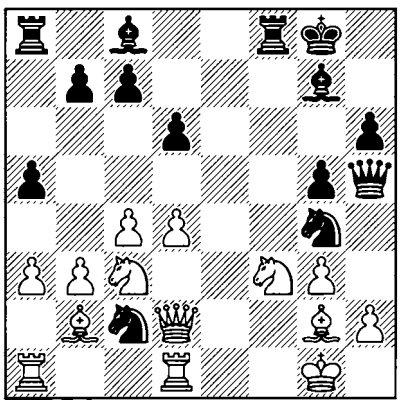
0–1

An idea we will be returning to throughout the book is that of candidate moves. I have already written extensively on this subject in *Excelling at Chess Calculation*, and will therefore not go deeply into it here, though a short definition is probably appropriate.

Candidate moves are moves worth thinking about in a particular position. The terminology was invented by Alexander Kotov in his major work, *Think Like a Grandmaster*. Here he also presented the tree of analysis, an idea of far less value, which is why the book has been somewhat discredited (unfairly so).

When I talk about candidate moves, I am often referring to the various relevant techniques discussed in my book, most importantly that we should actively look for additional opportunities beyond those that come to us automatically when we see a chess position for the first time. If Redon had used this technique he would probably have won the game. But if Gatine had used it first, he would not have given him the chance. Instead of the dubious exchange sacrifice, Black could have uncorked a surprising tactic in the initial position:

1...♘c2!!



With the knight heading for both a1 and e3 White has to accept the challenge.

2.♕xc2 ♘e3

White has various options. For instance, 3.♕d2 ♘xg2 4.♘e1, which does not look too uplifting. The best line is therefore:

3.♕e4 ♘xg2 4.♘d5!

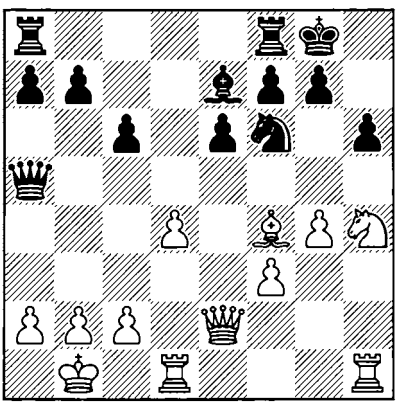
White can easily lose. e.g. 4.♘d2? ♗h3. With the remaining black piece about to enter the attack, White is in deep trouble. 5.♘d5 ♖ae8 6.♘e7† ♖xe7! No perpetual, thank you. 7.♕xe7 ♘f4! 8.♖e1 ♘d3 9.♗c3 ♖f2 and White will not survive the attack.

4...♕xf3 5.♘e7† ♔h8 6.♘g6†

With a draw.

This example will hopefully help to convince the reader that he should always look for additional options, and not just calculate the first line that springs to mind.

Let's have one final example of the method of elimination before we move on to the next topic, prophylaxis.



This position arose in the game **Pritchett – J. Grant, Scottish Championship 2005**. White has creatively sacrificed the h-pawn and now decided to throw more fuel on the fire with a double piece sacrifice.

20.♗xh6! gxh6 21.♘f5

A very difficult position for Black to defend has arisen. Only one move can be fully successful,

and there are many options that look fine to start with, so it is not an easy choice. In the game Black wanted to start a counterattack; had he tried to eliminate his options, he would probably have disregarded it.

21...♘d5?

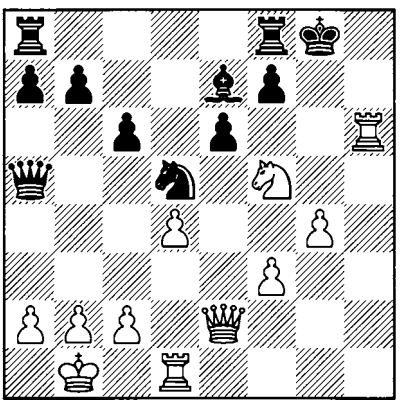
As we shall see this is no good. Some other options also deserve a mention.

21...exf5?! 22.♕xe7 ♕d8! is possible, though the white attack is far too dangerous for this to hold in practical play: 23.♕e5 ♖e8 24.♕xf5 ♘h7 25.♖xh6 ♘f8 26.c3 ♖e6 27.♖xe6 fxe6 28.♕e5 and Black is suffering.

The correct move, which Grant had actually seen, was 21...♖fd8! when the position arising after the natural long line 22.♘xe7† ♔f8 23.♘g6†! fxg6 24.♕xe6 ♕g5 25.f4 ♕xf4 26.♖df1 ♖d6 27.♕e5 ♕xe5 28.dxe5 ♖e6 29.exf6 looks slightly better for White. If analysed extensively the result would most likely be a draw, but in practice it is more fun to be White.

So Black saw the best option, but still misplayed the defence, giving his opponent a chance to win in attacking style. Why? The answer arises after the next move:

22.♖xh6



22...exf5

Here Black had planned a counter sacrifice with 22...♘c3† 23.bxc3 ♗a3, but too late he discovered that White has a winning counter-counter sacrifice in 24.♖g6†!! fxg6 25.♕xe6† ♖f7 26.♘h6† ♔h8 27.♘xf7† ♔g7 28.♘e5 with two extra pawns.

How could this disaster have been averted? With the method of elimination. Black could have tried to refute his highly ambitious counter sacrifice and found this problem.

The game finished after a few more errors.

23.♕h2

Simpler was 23.gxf5! as pointed out by Grant.

23...♗g5 24.♖h8†?

With a lot of time gone on the clock, it is tempting to repeat the position once, just to gain some moves. But the position is not completely identical after the repetition, and surprisingly there is no longer a win. The difference is that after 24.♖h1! White has the threat 25.♖g6†! and is therefore still winning.

24...♔g7 25.♖h7† ♔g8 26.♖h8†

26.♖h1 no longer works. Black can, for instance, play 26...♖fe8 27.♖h8† ♔g7 28.♕h7† ♔f6 29.♕xf5† ♔e7 30.♕xg5† ♔d6 with an advantage.

26...♔g7 27.♖h7† ♔g8 28.♖h8† ♔g7

½–½

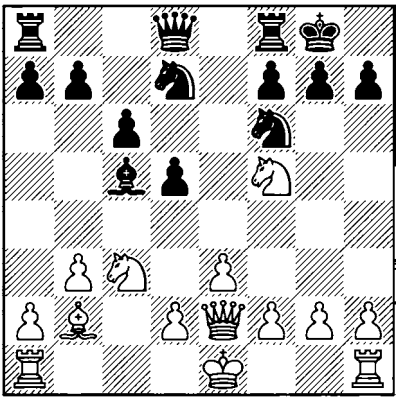
To conclude: when you are under pressure, the method of elimination is often your most important tool.

Prophylaxis

As with the other thinking methods in this chapter, prophylaxis is not only useful when we are defending. However, continuous awareness of the opponent's plans and opportunities is never as important as when we are under pressure.

In the next example we shall see how a slightly worse position after the opening can demand that its owner pays attention to the opponent's wants, needs and lusts. The failure to respect the opponent's strong presence with a seemingly innocent move, led to defeat straight out of the opening for one of the strongest players of the 1980s.

Hickl – Yusupov
Bremen 1998



In this apparently harmless position, White surprised Black with a knight move to the rim.

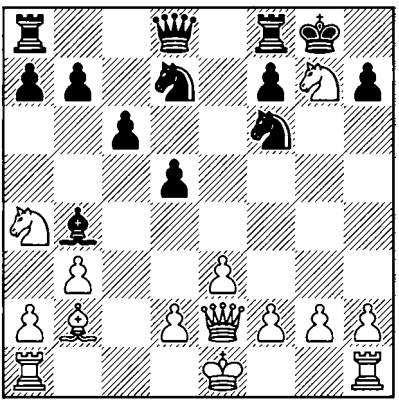
12.♘a4!

Black, a master of prophylaxis, did not fully appreciate his opponent's idea, and acted accordingly.

12...♗b4?

12...♗e7 or 12...♖e8 were possible alternatives. After both moves Black is very close to equality. In the game he was faced with a strong combination.

13.♘xg7!



Of course Yusupov saw this move, but maybe he missed move 15 or 16.

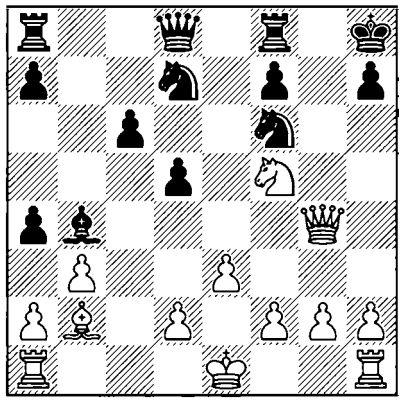
13...b5

The only move. After 13...♔xg7? 14.♕g4† White has won a pawn.

14.♘f5 bxa4 15.♕h5!

With the threat of 16.♕g5†, and the point 15...♘xh5 16.♘h6 mate!

15...♔h8 16.♕g4!



This double threat was difficult to see in advance, especially as you are trying to find your opponent's ideas and not your own. Black now has to return the piece. After this he is OK materially, but the pressure on the long diagonal is uncomfortable and White duly won the game.

16...♗xd2† 17.♔xd2 ♖g8 18.♕xa4 ♖xg2 19.♔e2

White has a clear advantage, as Yusupov no doubt realised when White took on g7.

19...♕g8?

After this careless move the rook will be trapped, but Black was in a bad way all the same.

20.♘g3! ♕g6 21.♖ac1 ♖e8 22.♕f4 c5 23.♔f1 ♖xg3 24.♗xf6† ♘xf6 25.hxg3 ♘e4 26.♖h6 ♕g7 27.♖d1 ♖e5 28.♔g2 ♘g5 29.♖c6 h6 30.♖xh6†

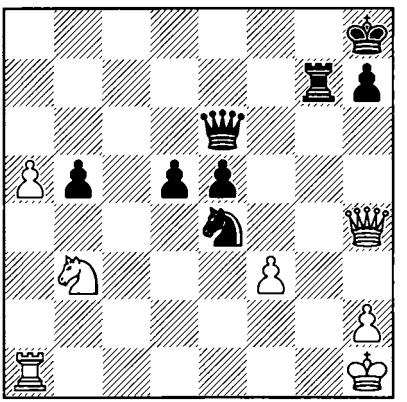
1–0

So what did Black do wrong? White played a very concrete move: the knight has no function on a4, but to attack the bishop and to open up for the white bishop. The black bishop can only go to one square if he wants to avoid being exchanged for one of the white knights. It should

occur to Black that White has seen this and has prepared something. He then needs to figure out what. In the game he failed somewhere in this process, and was hit with the full fist of White's fury.

The following game is a great example of White using prophylactic thinking to realise that he is in a desperate situation and needs to change the course of the game.

Tiviakov – Sherbakov
Russia 1994



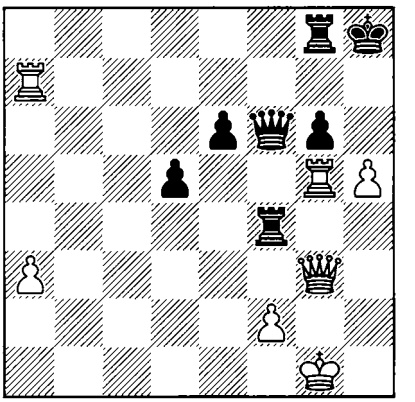
44.fxe4!!

White decides to part with his queen, assured that the a-pawn will give him sufficient counterplay. The alternatives were all horrendous, so it was not a hard decision. 44.♖g1? is met with 44...♕f6! and White needs to resign. The same goes for the attempt for counterplay with 44.♖c1?, which is met with 44...♕h3!, deciding the game instantly.

44...♕g6 45.♕d8† ♖g8 46.♕xg8†! ♕xg8 47.a6 dxe4 48.a7 ♕a8 49.♔g1 e3 50.♔f1! ♕f3† 51.♔g1
½–½

To conciously repeat myself: prophylactic thinking is always useful for the practical player. Yet it is when we are defending that understanding the opponent's plans and ideas comes in most handy. In the following example Black is under severe pressure; White has a rook on the seventh rank and has just increased the tension on the kingside with the compromising 31.h5.

Acs – Korchnoi
Ohrid 2001



Korchnoi approached this position as one needing action and played a (losing) combination. Certainly Acs had anticipated this tactic, and prepared a response. In this way he had used prophylactic thinking.

But actually what I am looking for here is a different take on the position. Instead of the urge for Black to do something, I am looking for an understanding of what White is up to. The answer is: not much. He wants to play 32.hxg6 and only then will he have concrete threats. This gives Black a free move before he needs to do something (we will revisit this scenario in Chapter 2 under the part on "Preparing for the onslaught" – page 44).

In the game Korchnoi probably saw lines such as 31...♖f3? 32.♕e5 with a drawn rook endgame and 31...♕a1†? 32.♔g2 ♖gf8, which looks tempting at first, but is answered strongly with 33.♖a8! when Black will have trouble defending. Eventually he sacrificed his queen.

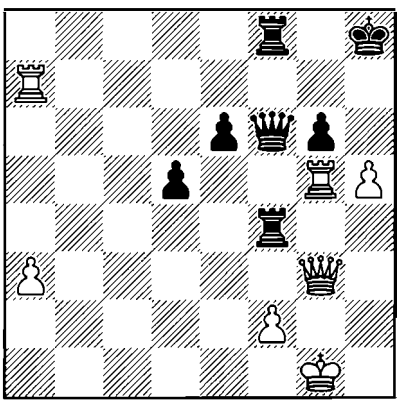
31...♕xg5?? 32.♕xg5 gxh5 33.♖a8!

Black resigned. What Korchnoi had failed to anticipate was that after 33...♖g4†

34.♕xg4 hxg4 35.♖xg8† ♔xg8 36.a4! White is winning the pawn endgame.
1–0

As indicated above, the realisation through prophylactic thinking, that White does not have a direct threat, could have sparked Black to think about less forcing lines. This might sound like a contradiction, but prophylactic thinking is not about adjusting yourself to your opponent's plans; it is about including your opponent's presence in your thinking. This leads to the conclusion that Black can improve his position with one move before he starts direct action.

Therefore the correct solution was 31...♖f8!!, preparing an attack on f2.



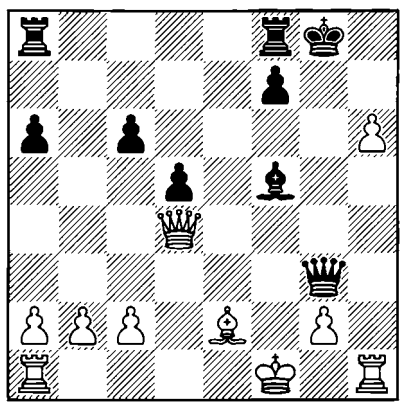
White has nothing sensible to do with his pieces, besides continuing with his plan. And after 32.hxg6 ♕a1† 33.♔g2 ♖xf2† he will suffer substantial material losses.

Many are the times I have analysed with someone, when they have said: "I play this, you have to play this, and then I will win like this, tak, tak, tak..." And quite often, I don't "have to" anything! It is not in my interest to follow their forcing thinking. I should actually fight, kick and scream to make sure that I play something else. It is from these experiences that I realised our tendency towards forcing thinking. It is also from such comments that I know where to look for holes in my students' calculations.

The point is simple. We play best when we think. When we assume, we don't think.

Prophylactic thinking is a distinct expression of unforcing thinking. When we carefully investigate what our opponents really wish for, we will know what can hurt us, and therefore also what freedoms we can allow ourselves. The previous example should have made this clear. Prophylaxis will be useful for you in more or less every type of position, but none more so than when you are against the ropes. Here is a simple example from the Women's European Team Championship 2005.

Dworakowska – Calotescu
Gothenburg 2005



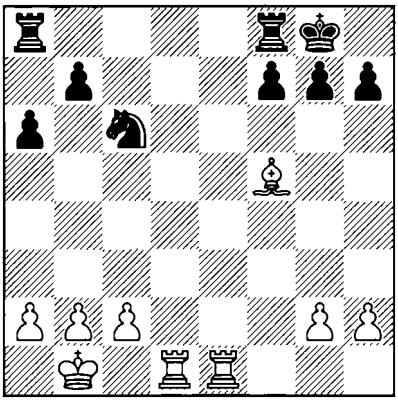
Had Black used prophylactic thinking to look for the opponent's threats, she would probably have played 21...♔h7! when the endgame after 22.♗d3 ♗xd3† 23.♕xd3† ♕xd3† 24.cxd3 ♖ae8 is just a tiny bit better for White. In the game Black played with her hands.
21...♖ae8?

This gives White a golden chance to decide the game instantly with 22.♗g4!. There are details, but these are not what kept White from playing this move, nor what kept Black from preventing it in the first place. Neither player invested sufficient energy in looking for candidate moves.
22.♗d3? ♗xd3† 23.cxd3 ♔h7 24.♖h3 ♕g5

The position is about even. White won, but this had more to do with the difference in playing strength between the players than the position.

Let's finish this short pep talk about respect for all colours, shapes and opponents with an example from one of my own games.

Aagaard – Schacher
Arco 2005



We join the game at the end of my opening preparation. White is a little better in the endgame, being better developed and having bishop against knight. Objectively this is maybe not enough to win, but as far as the opening goes, it has been a disaster for Black. This position holds no winning chances and the draw is not as close as it would have been if he had played a passive variation of the Petroff.

21...♖fe8

21...♖ad8 22.♗d7! ♘b8 23.♗g4 with the idea of ♗g4-f3-d5 with a slight plus.

22.c4?!

My first independent move, so of course it is a mistake. The idea is to put the bishop on d5. Unfortunately giving away the d4- and b4-squares is too committal. Better is 22.♗e4! with an edge.

22...♖xe1!

22...♖ad8 23.♖xd8 ♖xd8 24.♗e4 is a little uncomfortable.

23.♖xe1 g6?!

This does not really help the black position. See below for the improvement.

24.♗d7!

I am good at finding good moves when all other moves are obviously bad. (Elimination!)

24...♔f8 25.♗xc6 bxc6 26.♔c2

The rook endgame is clearly better for White, but not necessarily good enough to win. Black needs to defend passively and hope that the white passed pawn on the queenside does not queen. This did not appeal to my opponent, who tried his luck in the pawn endgame, where no luck was to be found.

26...♖e8?

26...c5 27.♖e5 ♖c8 28.♔c3 ♖c6 29.a3 f6 30.♖d5 ♔e7 31.b4 and Black is worse in the rook endgame.

27.♖xe8† ♔xe8 28.♔c3 ♔e7

This made things easier for me, but White is winning anyway after 28...♔d7 29.♔b4 f5 30.♔c5!. I do not see any alternatives for Black to 30...g5 31.b4 f4 32.b5! cxb5 33.cxb5 axb5 34.♔xb5 and White wins. A classic example of a distant passed pawn ensuring victory. Black is exactly one tempo short of queening.

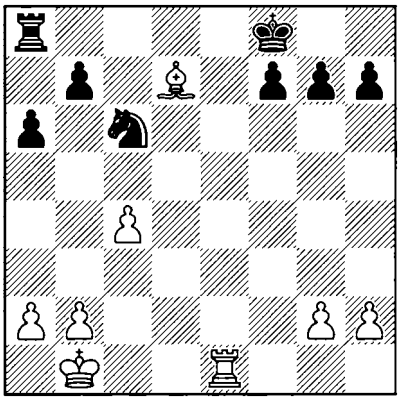
29.♔b4 ♔d6 30.♔a5 f5

Alternatively 30...♔c5 31.♔xa6 f5 32.a4 f4 33.a5 g5 34.h3 h5 35.♔b7 g4 36.hxg4 hxg4 37.a6 f3 38.gxf3 gxf3 39.a7 f2 40.a8=♕ f1=♕ 41.♕a7† ♔d6 42.♕d4† ♔e7 43.♕c5† ♔f7 44.b4 and the queen ending is a simple win for White.

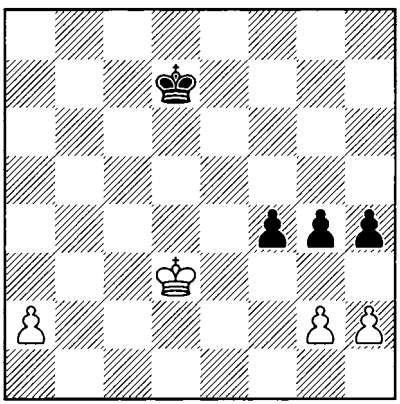
31.♔xa6 g5 32.b4 f4 33.b5 cxb5 34.cxb5 g4 35.b6

1–0

After the game I became intrigued with the position after 22.c4?!. I had a feeling when I played the move, as well as after the game, that this was somehow a violation of positional principles (why I ended up playing it anyway is a good question). After a long night of analysis I came up with a prophylactic idea that seems to equalize. It starts with 23...♔f8, which looks quite logical. Then I cannot find anything more dangerous than 24.♗d7.



It was here that I found the improvement after toying with the position for considerable time. I believe that Black should play 24...h5!!. White has no apparent way to improve his position, and after the forcing 25.♗xc6 bxc6 26.♔c2 ♖e8 27.♖xe8† ♔xe8, the pawn endgame is dissimilar to the game only because of the advanced h-pawn. This is enough, and after 28.♔c3 ♔d7 29.♔b4 g5 30.♔c5 f5 the endgame should be a draw. The main point comes after 31.b4 h4 32.b5?? cxb5 33.cxb5 axb5 34.♔xb5 g4 35.♔c4 f4 36.♔d3

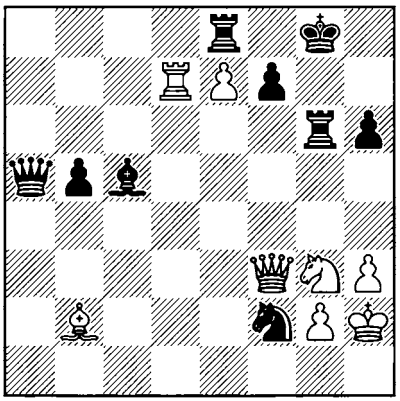


when Black wins with the classic pawn breakthrough 36...f3! 37.gxf3 g3 38.hxg3 h3. Compared to the advanced g-pawn, the h-pawn is a groovy warrior! Prophylactic thinking is a useful tool. Use it well.

An eye for detail

In the 5000 or so positions I have gone through in order to write this book, the awareness of tactical details has been of the greatest significance. Most attacks are misplayed because of blindness to tactical details, and most defences equally so. Look at Dworakowska – Calotescu above.

Looking through one of Peter Svidler's games I found a simple moment that showed how even world-class players can suffer from forcing thinking. Deep into Svidler's analysis of **Svidler – Iordachescu**, Szeged 1994, in *Chess Informant* 61, the following position arises.



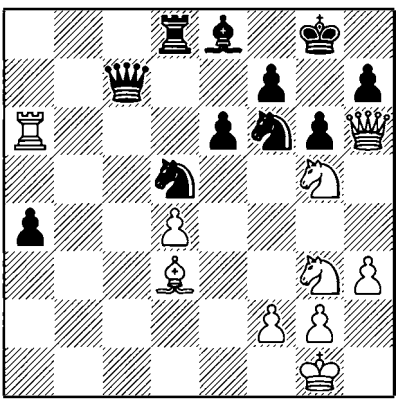
Svidler gives 1.♖d8! ♖xd8 2.♕c3!! as winning for White, which is correct. But Black should display an eye for detail, and play the surprising 1...♕xd8!! 2.exd8=♕ ♖xd8 intending 3.♕c3 ♗d4, when he is by no means worse.

I am sure that this sort of thing mainly happens to Svidler when he is writing his annotations, whereas when he is fully concentrated at the board, he is particularly attentive to this kind of possibility. But then again, Peter Leko, another absolute top player of our time, recently annotated a game (against Kamsky) for *New In Chess*, where he had decided against playing a combination every computer hooked up to ICC and PlayChess had immediately declared to be winning, simply because he had forgotten that he could exchange rooks at some point in his analysis. This is the kind of mistake the rest of us would make on move 2.

At world-class level it happens at move 8 in the calculation – but the problem is still the same.

The following example blends the ideas of prophylaxis and keeping our eyes open for tactical details excellently. Mercantete was very happy with his own play, but actually he should praise his luck for being able to keep the balance in our corrected analysis. So, though he is far off in his analysis, it is easy to forgive him. Just picture the joy it must have been for a club player to defeat a grandmaster in champagne style.

Mercantete – Borges Mateos
Cuba 1997



1.♘h5!? ♘xh5? 2.♕xh7† ♔f8 3.♖xe6!!
The crowd pleaser.
3...♕c1† 4.♗f1 ♕xg5 5.♕h8 mate!
1–0

Black overlooked not one but two defences in reply to the knight sacrifice. He probably overlooking White's rook sacrifice on the third move. This is far from the alertness we hope to achieve as defenders.

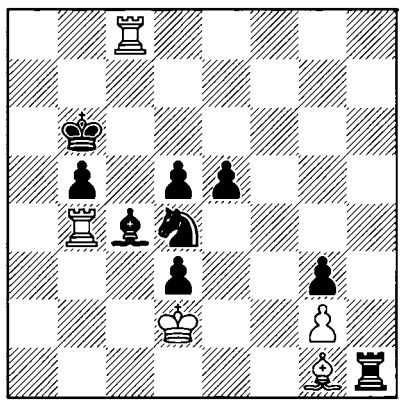
If Black had been at his best, he would probably have seen the choice between two lines:

a) 1...♕c1† 2.♔h2 gxh5 is a simple forcing line. White has to settle for a draw with 3.♗xh7† ♘xh7 4.♕xh7† ♔f8 5.♕h6† ♔e7 6.♖xe6† fxe6 7.♕xe6† ♔f8 8.♕h6† ♔e7 and so on.

b) More treacherous was 1...gxh5! when Mercantete claims to be winning after 2.♗xh7† ♘xh7 3.♕xh7† ♔f8 4.♖xe6, in an echo of the game. However, an eye for detail will notice that the queen can now defend the king by interposing at g8, so Black can cash in with 4...♕c1† 5.♔h2 ♕xg5 with a winning position. White should instead look for a draw arising after 2.♘xh7, but it is not impossible that Mercantete would have followed his published analysis (which is probably his thoughts from the game) and overlooked this little back rank check.

Black also turned his blind eye to the details in this next example.

Palevich – Bonek
Correspondence 1982

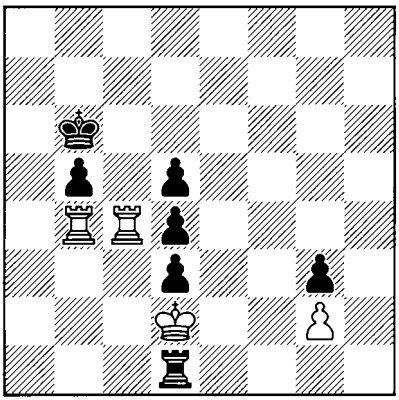


Among commentators Palevich is one of my absolute heroes. His games in *Chess Informant* are always fanciful, bordering on the absurd, and the annotations of the rather simple tactics he presents to us often contain errors, where details of great beauty can be added by narcissistic authors.

In the game White drew with a well-known drawing mechanism: *eternal rook*. But, was this the correct outcome?

1.♗xd4†! exd4 2.♖cxc4! dxc4 3.♖xb5†! ♔c6 4.♖c5† ♔d6 5.♖d5† ♔e6 6.♖e5† ♔f6 7.♖f5† ♔g6 8.♖g5† ♔h6 9.♖g6†!
½–½

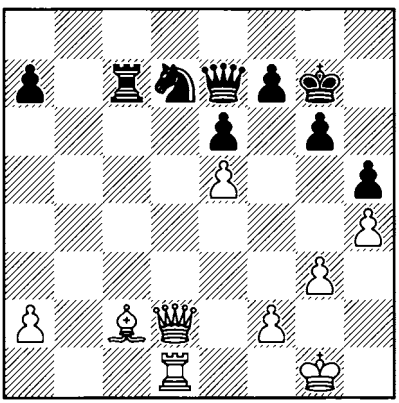
Nice, but anyone with an eye for detail, and three days to look at each move, should have found 2...♖d1†!!, when there is no stalemate, only four pawns advancing to grind down the white monarch.



3.♔xd1 dxc4 4.♔d2 ♔c5 5.♖b1 b4 6.♖e1 b3 and Black will win.

This kind of important detail is not only found in dubious correspondence games. Often you will see games at a high level decided because of a smart detail, or maybe the failure to see a tactical resource, as in the following example from the individual European Championship 2005.

Neubauer – Korneev
Warsaw 2005



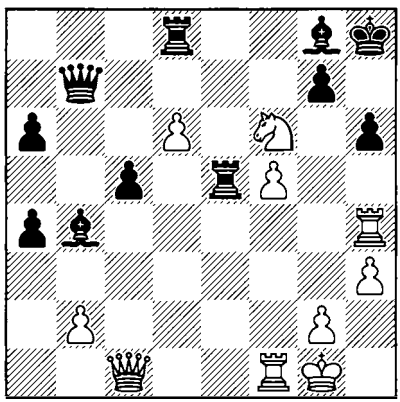
White cannot defend c2 and e5 at the same time. For this reason he decided to give up a pawn and fight it out, but without success. After **30.♗b3? ♘xe5** he was battling against a superior force, and eventually had to bow. It turns out that he could have kept the balance with 30.♕e3!, giving up the bishop. The main point is that after 30...♖xc2 31.♕xa7 White will regain the knight, with a draw as the most likely outcome. For example after 31...♕b4! when White cannot take on d7 with the rook because of his king's safety.

Together with developing an eye for tactical detail comes **the importance of not taking anything for granted.**

As said earlier, it is common to make mistakes when we do not think. When we play with our hands, assuming something, or otherwise take something for granted, we run a high risk of making mistakes; as in all of these cases we are not thinking.

The following example illustrates a standard attack cutting straight through. But in the analysis we can see how Black could have defended with much more resilience and allowed White to throw it all away with a simple hand gesture.

Gumerov – Araslanov
USSR 1971



White has already sacrificed a piece, probably with the following combination in mind.

1.♖xh6†! gxh6 2.♕xh6† ♗h7 3.d7!

3.♘xh7? ♕xh7 4.♕f6† ♕g7 5.♕xd8† ♕g8 and White has nothing better than perpetual check.

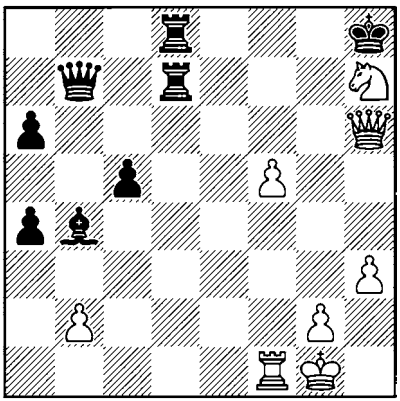
3...♖e7 4.♘xh7 ♖xh7?!

Forcing thinking at its most typical. Black could have tried an interesting defensive possibility, as we shall see below.

5.♕f6† ♖g7 6.♕xd8† ♔h7 7.♕h4† ♔g8 8.d8=♕†

1–0

White won, which was completely justified. But in my analysis of the game I realised that Black could have set a cunning trap with 4...♖exd7:



Would you spot the trap here?

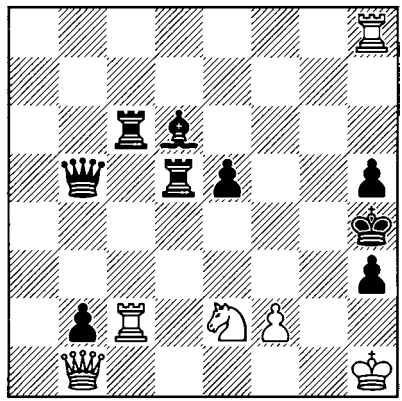
I recently showed this position to a selection of grandmasters and international masters, and a great number of them went straight for the trap with shocking certainty. They suggested the natural move, 5.♘f6†, which turns out to be a grave mistake after 5...♖h7 6.♘xh7 ♕g7!!. White's most promising continuation here, the endgame after 7.♕xg7† (7.♕h4 ♖d4 is equal) 7...♔xg7 8.♘g5 ♔f6 9.♘e6 ♖d3 far from guarantees a full point. It seems that most think "forcingly" with 6...♕xh7 7.♕f6†, and White wins. But as the material was close to even, Black does not have to take the knight.

If White, instead of playing with his hands, stops to think, he will probably find the defence, then realise that he needs to give the check without occupying f6 (the queen's square) and win with 5.♘g5† ♔g8 6.f6 ♕d5 7.♕g6† ♔h8 8.f7.

Analysing all the way to the end

An important aspect of not taking anything for granted is to calculate the various lines all the way to their (forcing) end, and then have a look around, to see if there are any surprises. A perfect example of this is the following study.

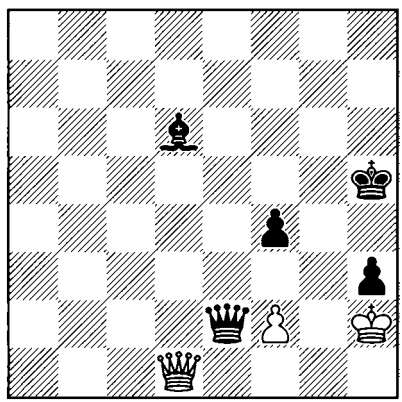
M. van Essen, Y. Afek and A. Wohl
1st prize, Amatzia Avni Jubilee 2005



1.♖xb2 ♖c1†!

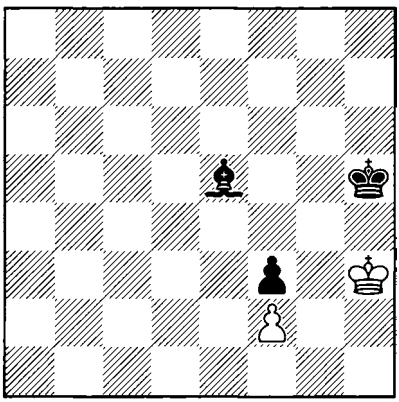
The test. Black is clearing the long diagonal.

2.♕xc1 ♖d1†! 3.♔h2 ♕d5! 4.♖xh5†! ♔xh5 5.♘f4†! exf4 6.♖b5! ♕xb5 7.♕xd1† ♕e2!!



If you did not know this was a study, but instead had encountered this position in your calculations during a game, what are the chances that you would have decided to channel your energies elsewhere, instead of looking at the position which arises in a straight forced line a few moves down:

8.♕xe2† f3† 9.♕e5†!! ♗xe5† 10.♔xh3

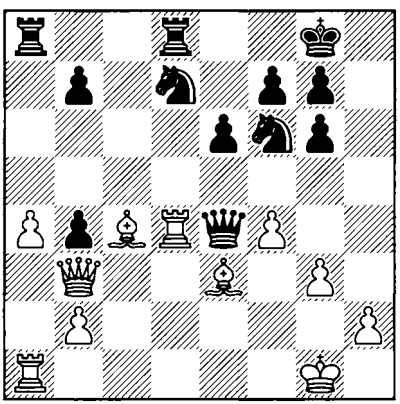


This is the great moment of the study. White is either stalemated, or allowed to approach and eliminate the last remaining black pawn.

½–½

An example of this theme from a real game is the following fragment:

Annageldyev – Akopian
Moscow (ol) 1994



The opening has only recently morphed into a middlegame, but already here the Armenian comes up with a deadly piece sacrifice.

20...♘c5!!

For the piece Black gains access to the second rank and from there to more "sensitive" squares.

21.♖xd8† ♖xd8 22.♗xc5 ♖d2

Very natural. Can we guess that Akopian maybe did not think too much about this move?

23.♗f1?

As we shall see below, 23.♗f2! was a stronger defence.

23...♘g4

With the threat of 24...♖xh2.

24.♕xb4 ♕d5 25.♖e1?

25.♕c4 ♖g2† 26.♗xg2 ♕xc4 27.b4 was the last resort. Black is clearly better, but White has serious hopes of reaching an endgame worth defending.

25...♖xh2 26.♖e4 ♕d1

The twin threats of 27...♕f3 and 27...♖h1† decide.

27.♖e2 ♖xe2 28.♕xb7 ♘h2

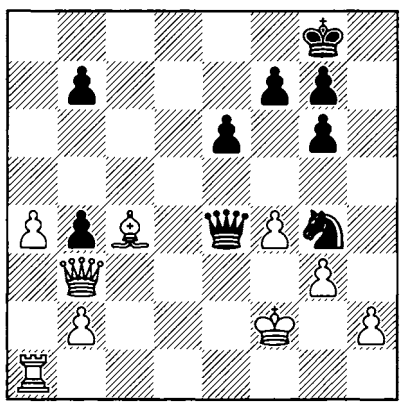
0–1

As said, White could have defended much better. But maybe Annageldyev concluded too early on in his analysis of the following forced line, that things looked grim?

23.♗f2! ♖xf2

This is what Akopian intended. After 23...♘g4? 24.♖e1! the attack is too slow.

24.♔xf2 ♘g4†



25.♔g1? ♕d4† and White is mated was given by one source. Akopian offered a better defence in his annotations.

25.♔f1!

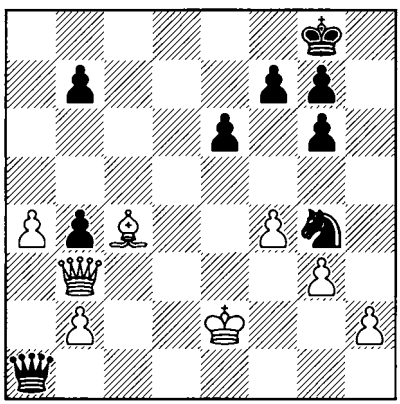
A matter of simple elimination. With two possible squares, the king should go to the one that does not lead to mate. Or is that logic too complicated? What goes through the mind of many players when they look at such a position is that they see that 25.♔f1 loses a rook, they then reject it, thinking 25.♔g1 is forced. This is diametrically opposed to the method of elimination: the method of assumption?

25...♕h1†

This is the only remotely dangerous move. 25...♕d4? 26.♔e2! is plain stupid, and 25...♘e3† 26.♔f2 ♘g4† only offers perpetual check.

26.♔e2 ♕xa1

It is easy to end the analysis here, finding White in trouble because of normal moves such as 27.h3 ♘f6 28.♕xb4 ♕h1 and the attack continues with undiminished strength. Actually White has an important resource.



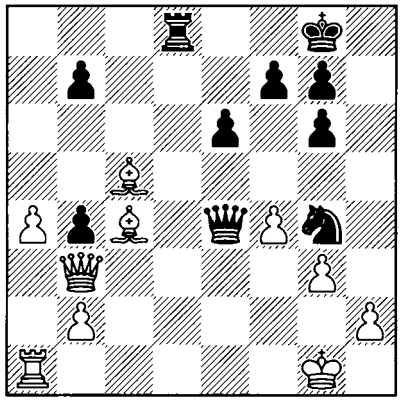
27.♗xe6! fxe6 28.♕xe6† ♔h7 29.♕xg4 ♕xb2†

Even here it is quite possible to be dispirited, unless you look at the position for the few seconds it takes to realise that White is threatening perpetual check. After **30.♔d3!** it is not easy to find an advantage for Black. For example: **30...♕xh2 31.♔c4!** is an immediate draw.

However, all of this should have been redundant. On the 22nd move Akopian allowed his opponent this defence. It is easy to think that he played 22...♖d2 a bit too fast, assuming it to be the only relevant move. As so often before, the move we find obvious turns out to be a mistake.

Black could have forced White to go down the road he did in the game with:

22...♘g4!!



An important tactical tool is the ability to try different move orders. White has nothing better than 23.♗f1:

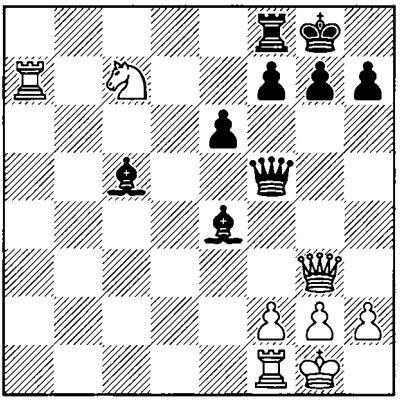
23.♖f1 ♖d2 24.♖f2 ♘xf2 25.♗xf2 ♕b1† 26.♗f1 ♕xb2 27.♕f3 b3 and Black wins.

23.♕xb4 ♕c2 24.♕b3 (24.♕xb7 ♕xh2† 25.♔f1 ♕xg3 and the threats of 26...♖d2 and 26...♕xf4† are too strong to meet) 24...♕xh2† 25.♔f1 ♖d2 26.♕f3 ♖c2. Black regains his piece with a winning advantage: 27.b3?! ♕h5! and White cannot protect both h2 and c5.

So the outcome of the game was the natural conclusion of the combination, but only as a consequence of both players misplaying their chances.

A player who always has been known for his ability to see the minor details hidden far into complicated lines is Garry Kasparov. Even at the end of his career, in his last ever tournament, the difference between Kasparov and his younger opponents was this talent for accuracy.

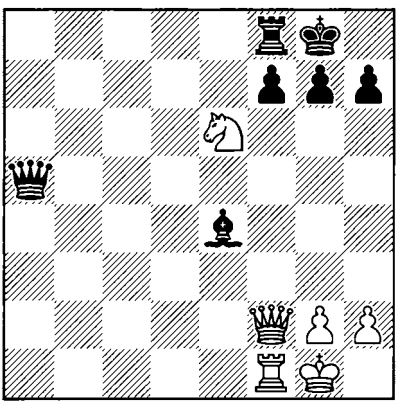
Vallejo Pons – Kasparov
Linares 2005



Kasparov has just played **26...♗e7-c5**, after which it was best to return the rook to a4. Instead Vallejo Pons fell into a trap, playing **27.♖a5?**.

Kasparov had probably not anticipated being allowed the following trick: **27...♗xf2†! 28.♕xf2 ♕xa5**. And Vallejo was in all likelihood looking forward to it, as he had planned the counterpunch **29.♘xe6**, seemingly drawing.

It is here that Kasparov's ability to see further became apparent. Vallejo had probably reckoned with 29...♗d3, leading to a drawn queen ending, while Kasparov had made the candidate search at the end of the line, managing to prepare himself for this queen endgame by snatching another pawn in desperado style with:

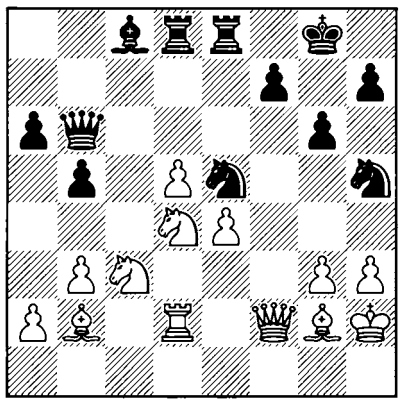


29...♗xg2!

White resigned. 30.♘xf8 ♗xf1 would leave him two pawns in arrears and without any hope, as would both 30.♔xg2 ♕d5† and 30.♕xg2 ♕b6†.
0–1

In our final example to show the importance of analysing all the way to the end of the line, there are additional possibilities asking (demanding?) to be found on the 39th, 41st and 44th moves in the proposed improvement to the following game:

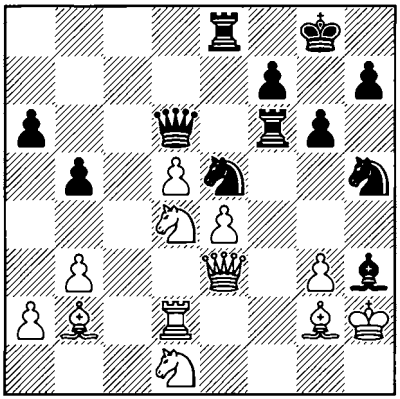
Lazarev – Landa
Trieste 2005



We enter the game a few moves before the critical moment, just to illustrate how rapidly White is falling apart.

At the point when we enter the game he had the chance to get a winning advantage with 34.♘c6 ♕xf2 35.♖xf2 ♘xc6 36.dxc6 followed by a knight jump to d5. But White did not associate the exchange of queens with compensation for the exchange, and instead played passively, after which Black managed to include his least active piece in an attack against the white king.
34.♘d1? ♖d6 35.♕f1 ♖f6 36.♕e2 ♕d6 37.♕e3?

Allowing the following combination:
37...♗xh3!!

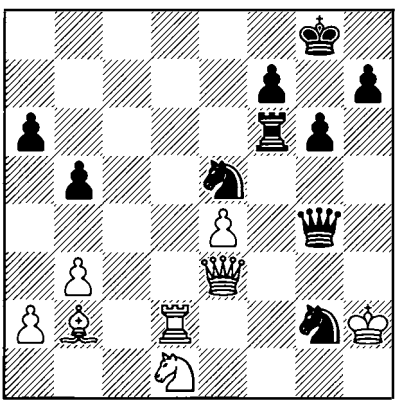


White has gone from a winning position to a very difficult one in only four moves. As happens only too often, he was not emotionally ready for this, and resigned after:

38.♕e1? ♘g4† 39.♔g1 ♗xg2
0–1

If White had been a true defender, he would have fought on as hard as possible to the bitter end. To do so he would have to find a number of resilient moves: 38.♔xh3! ♕d7† 39.♘e6! ♖exe6! 40.dxe6 ♕xe6† 41.g4! ♘f4† (41...♕xg4† 42.♔h2 ♕h4† 43.♔g1 and Black is much worse) 42.♔g3 ♕xg4† 43.♔h2 ♘xg2

We have now reached the end of the line. White loses after 44.♖xg2 ♘f3†, right?



44.♖d8†! ♔g7 45.♕g3 buys more time. Here Black needs to win the queen with 45...♕h5† 46.♔xg2 ♕e2† 47.♔h3 ♖f3 48.♗xe5† ♔h6. In the ensuing endgame Black has a clear advantage, but with three pieces, one of them a rook, White has hopes of creating counterplay against the black king, or even to reach a fortress at some point.

In other words – the battle moves on. The main idea is to find the most accurate defence at all times, and then the attacker, even if in a better position, will be unlikely to break you down. We shall look a bit more at this below.

Winners just don't know how to quit

Failure and success often seem to go hand in hand – a key to understanding how to attain your goals is the knowledge that the successful themselves frequently experience failure. The difference between them and the rest of us is not that disappointment has never been a feature in their lives, but that they try to learn from their mistakes in order to improve performance for next time. The 'mistake' is teaching them how to be better – not that they are never going to make it.

– Dr Raj Persaud

In the exercise section of this book most of the exercises include defences that lead to equality or even an advantage. Yet a few exercises have positions where all but one defence loses straight away, and this defence leads to a tolerable position, though not a desirable one. I pondered for a long time whether I should reject these exercises, as they did not solve all the problems in the position, or if I should include them, because solving them would add to the student's abilities. I chose the latter route, though the choice was by no means easy. Exercises tend to leave a stronger impression when the solution is clear-cut. Eventually I decided that another argument was stronger: this is a book on the most difficult aspect of chess, and as such it will never be a

book that "pleases" the reader. It is supposed to be blunt, challenging and painstaking, and by this approach build up the reader so that he can deal with defensive situations better in the future.

To add to this, it was clear to me from going through the *Chess Informant* CD, my own games, and those of many others, that we tend to collapse once we are put under pressure. This is a very human tendency. We want to choose flight over fight, as you do not get hurt in nature if you are elsewhere when the predator strikes.

These were the realities of the caveman. In modern times it is not fierce animals that are after you (Kasparov has retired, you know), but other human beings, who can reach and wound you, even if you pretend not to be at home (That tournament organiser will return with a lawyer to get your registration fee if you don't cough up soon. Don't say you were not warned!).

The flight tendency exists for us during our games too. When things become dangerous for our egos, there is a human tendency to run to the bar, where you can always think about what you could have done, comforted by the company of your fellow losers, who will tell you that they too were better, but just downright unlucky.

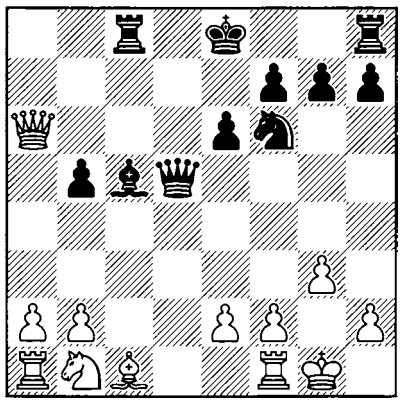
Don't do it.

Choose the fight and do it to the (hopefully not so) bitter end. Don't be hit by disappointment or despair when things are not going your way. Instead listen to John Nunn, who wrote the following in *Understanding Chess Move by Move*.

> *Although you will rarely find it in textbooks, the first such principle* [of defence] *should be 'Don't Panic', because if you don't follow this principle then none of the other ones will do you any good. Even really dangerous-looking attacks can often be countered provided the defender keeps a cool head and makes the most of his chances. All too often, the defender panics and ruins his own position.*

We have seen this several times already, and will continue to do so until the very last page, especially when it comes to the solutions to the exercises. Still, it does not hurt to drive the point home with one more simple example of this phenomenon.

Castagna – T. Ernst
Biel 1982



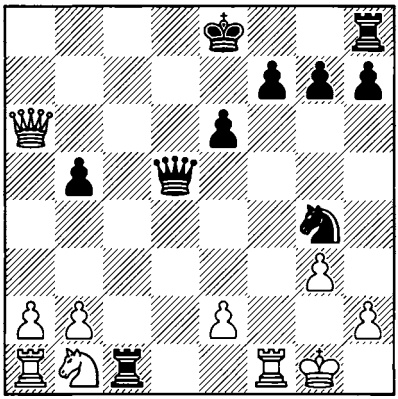
With
1...♗xf2†!

Black started a fantastic combination. Now it is up to White to throw a spanner in the works and show that White's time is not up yet.
2.♔xf2

The other capture leads to the swift demise of the white king: 2.♖xf2 ♖xc1† 3.♖f1 ♖xf1† 4.♔xf1 ♕h1† 5.♔f2 ♘g4 mate!
2...♘g4† 3.♔g1 ♖xc1! 4.♖xc1? ♕d4† 5.♔g2 ♕e4† 6.♔g1 ♕e3† 7.♔g2 ♕xe2† 8.♔h3 ♘f2† 9.♔g2 ♘d1† 10.♔h3 ♕f1† 11.♔h4 g5† 12.♔xg5 ♖g8† 13.♔h4 ♖g4†!

Because of the impending mate, White resigned.
0–1

We could analyse the defence deeply, but after the rook sacrifice on move three all we actually need is a simple move to clarify that the position is far from clear.



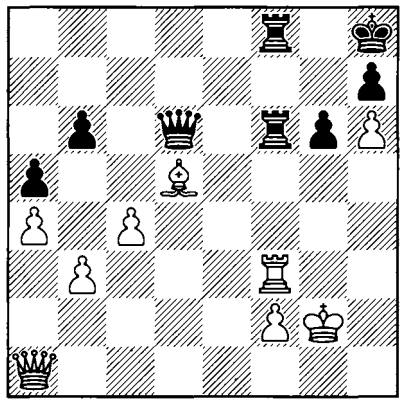
The simple 4.♘c3 would have saved the game. Black has no direct way to penetrate the white defences, which could easily have been confirmed with a little analysis. Whether we should condemn a move like 4.♖xc1? for lack of fighting spirit or for forcing thinking is not that interesting. What is interesting is that we can condition ourselves to find a move like 4.♘c3 through continuous training. Jonathan Rowson shared the following insight in *Chess for Zebras.*

> *Many players 'work' on their chess as if they were working on an academic subject, but improving your chess is much more like improving your driving, or improving your play on a musical instrument, than it is like preparing for an exam. Such improvement can therefore be directed and supervised, but not directly 'taught'.*

I agree with this statement, which is why this is an exercise book. I felt I had a lot of interesting things to say about defensive technique, but the chess was so complex and colourful that any reader who read through the book would do so too quickly. If a majority of the positions in the book were exercises, there was a slight chance some readers would actually solve some of the positions, and gain from this much more than they would have done by reading a book based on the same ideas and positions.

Let's have a simple exercise in fighting spirit:

Rusev – Nikolov
Bulgaria (ch) 2005

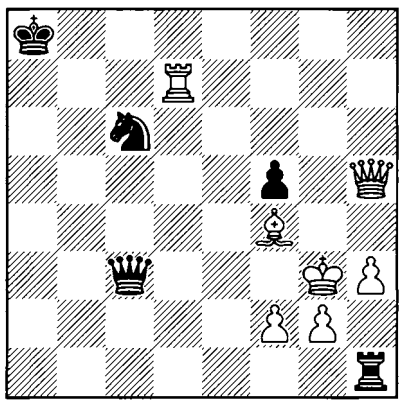


Should Black resign here?

Answer: NO! But, of course, this is exactly what happened in the game... Black saw that White could march his king to g5, and that there is nothing Black can do to prevent it. All true. However, Black should not wish to prevent it. As soon as the king makes it to g4, Black will swing in ...♕h2! when it is White who should think about packing up. White has no way to make progress, and a draw would be a fair result.

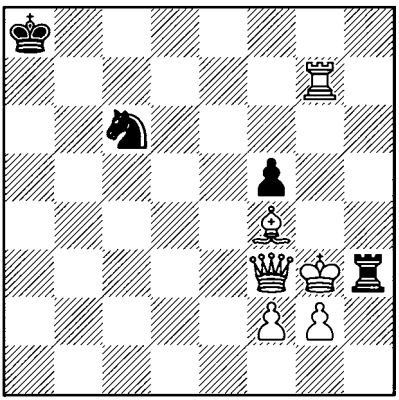
Let's take another example. Tim Krabbe was the first to spot this recent example of a bad resignation:

Klinova – Spence
Gibraltar 2006



42.♕f3?

Black resigned. But instead he could have played 42...♕g7†!! 43.♖xg7 ♖xh3†.



With a stalemate on the way. Both players were guilty of thinking that the game was just over. If White had remained concentrated, she would no doubt have played the king to h4, when there really is nothing more to play for.

1–0

Early resignations are surprisingly popular. A potential future World Champion, Peter Svidler, has managed to do it a few times, and recently Bacrot resigned against Aronian in a drawn endgame in the semi-final of the World Cup 2005. Even Kasparov, a chess god in human form, managed to resign in a position where he could have held a draw in his shameful defeat against Deep Blue.

I want to finish this chapter on thinking methods, of which the resolve to keep fighting is the most important, with a rare situation where I personally displayed resilience against a most resourceful opponent.

Aagaard – Goletiani
Isle of Man 2005

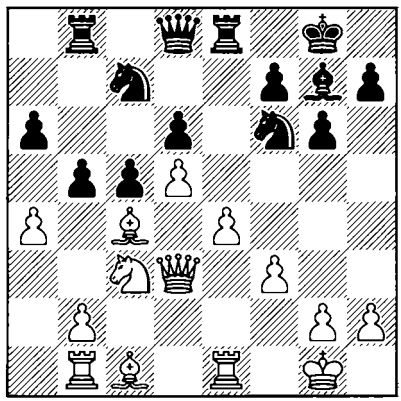
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.♘c3 exd5 6.cxd5 g6 7.♘d2 ♗g7 8.e4 0–0 9.♗e2 ♖e8 10.0–0 b6 11.a4 ♘a6 12.f3 ♘c7 13.♘c4 ♗a6 14.♖e1?!

14.♗g5 is the main line. Also interesting is 14.♖b1. The outcome of the opening is a characteristic result of opening with the wrong pawn on move 1.

14...♖b8 15.♖b1 ♗xc4 16.♗xc4 a6 17.♕d3?

17.♗f1 b5 with good play for Black was necessary.

17...b5!!



I am sure the reader will recognise this situation. I had played my last move rather superficially, analysing only the consequences of 17...♕c8, assuming it was forced, and in the process neglected the most obvious move in the position. I believed three was more than two. At the moment my opponent played her move, I realised that I was wrong. Two is more than three!

Though this surprise was unpleasant, it did bring me out of the mental void I had been in for most of the tournament, and I finally began to think clearly.

18.axb5 axb5 19.♗xb5

Not a difficult decision. Any retreat is hopeless, and after 19.♘xb5 ♘xb5 20.♗xb5 ♕a5 Black wins a piece.

19...♘xb5 20.♘xb5

Here I was certain that things had gone badly wrong, but as I was playing only moves, I had not concentrated enough on my opponent's

possibilities to spot the real idea behind her pawn sacrifice. Both the next and the 24th moves came out of nothing as far as I could see.

This brings up an interesting question. Should I be aware of what would happen after the move I played, as the consequences could be even worse than after the moves I had eliminated? The answer is no. If I had played any of the eliminated moves, I could have resigned almost immediately. If I cannot spot the win after the only remaining move, maybe my opponent will have a bit of trouble doing so too. At least, that is the theory.

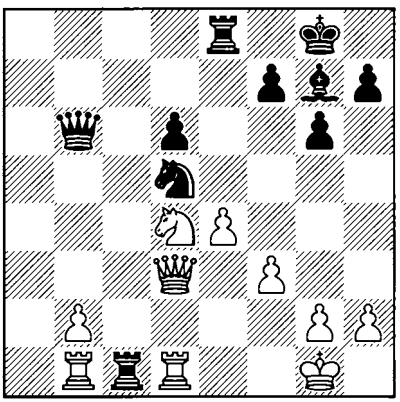
20...c4!

Honestly, I had not seen this. But then I did not really need to, as I had no alternatives. Neither 20...♕a5 21.♘c3 ♘xd5 22.♕xd5 ♗xc3 23.♖d1 ♗d4† 24.♔h1 nor 20...♕b6 21.♘a3! c4† 22.♕e3 ♘xd5 23.♕xb6 ♘xb6 24.♗f4 are really dangerous for White.

21.♕xc4 ♕b6† 22.♘d4 ♖bc8 23.♕d3

Forced again, as the material situation after 23.♕a4 ♘xd5 24.♖d1 ♘c3 25.bxc3 ♕xb1 is hopeless. Fritz claims the position is close to equal, which is absurd. Much more likely is that White is dead lost.

23...♘xd5 24.♖d1 ♖xc1!



Again a move I had not seen, but then there was no way I could have prevented it. By using the method of elimination I had found some decent defensive moves up till now. For the first time I am left with an actual choice.

25.♖dxc1!

The best move, as the white queen will be well placed on d1. 25.♖bxc1 ♘f4 26.♕c4 ♗xd4† 27.♔h1 ♘e6 is nothing but trouble for White.

25...♘f4 26.♕d1 ♗xd4† 27.♔h1 ♕b4! 28.♖c2!

Black was toying with the idea of manoeuvring the knight to d3-f2, while putting the bishop on c5. I realised that the exchange of queens is highly desirable for the defence.

28...♖b8 29.b3

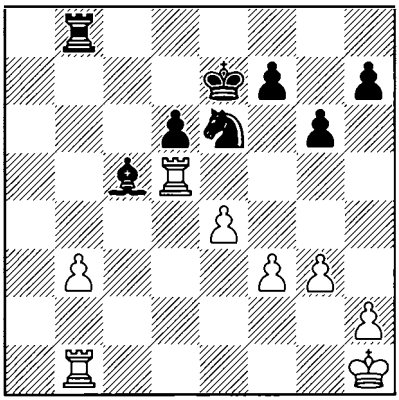
I really wanted to play 29.♕d2, but 29...♕b3! would be strong. Despite a decent defensive effort over the last 12 moves, my opponent still has excellent winning chances. But as happens so often when faced with a resilient defence, Black gets frustrated and commits a few inaccuracies.

29...♗c5?!

29...♘e6! was stronger. It seems clear to me that only the white king is in danger of getting mated. Black should therefore want to keep the queens on the board. My opponent appeared to have different ideas. She apparently felt that her advantage was firstly material in nature, and that the endgame would be a "cakewalk". This is far from the case. The rook generally increases in value the more pieces are removed from the board, and in this particular position we are not far from an endgame I had the luck to know was drawn, having recently edited Esben Lund's treatise *Rook vs. Two Minor Pieces*, a nice little book that unsurprisingly found few readers, but has been worth at least 15 rating points for me in the first year after its publication.

30.♕d2 ♕xd2 31.♖xd2 ♘e6 32.♖d5 ♔f8 33.g3 ♔e7?

Rusudan had not sensed White's wish to exchange her d-pawn. After 33...f6 she would still have the advantage, though it would be somewhat limited by the lack of targets. A main point is that White does not care about saving the b-pawn, but is trying to ensure that Black will not later be able to play ...f5, creating a passed pawn in the centre. Also, the exchange of one set of rooks will make it harder for Black to attack the white king.



34.e5!

White has achieved his main goal of preventing a passed pawn in the centre. I now knew that the position should be a draw. With a limited amount of work at the board, I managed to prove this.

34...dxe5 35.♖xe5 ♔d6 36.♖e4 ♘d4 37.b4 ♔d5 38.♔g2 ♖xb4 39.♖xb4 ♗xb4 40.♖e8 h5 41.♖d8† ♗d6 42.♖e8 ♘f5 43.f4 ♘e7 44.♔f3 ♔e6 45.♖a8 ♘d5 46.♖a6 ♘f6 47.♖b6 ♘g4 48.♔g2 ♔e7 49.♖b7† ♔f8 50.♖d7 ♗c5 51.♖c7 ♗d4 52.♖d7 ♗f6 53.♖b7 ♔g7 54.♖d7 h4 55.♖b7 ♘h6 56.♖b5 ♗e7 57.♖b7 ♘g8 58.♖b5 f5 59.♖b7 ♔h6 60.♔h3 hxg3 61.hxg3 g5 62.fxg5† ♔xg5 63.♔g2 ♗f6 64.♔f3 ♘e7 65.♖b8 ♘g6 66.♖g8 ♗e5 67.♖a8 ♗d6 68.♖a6 ♘e5† 69.♔g2 ♗e7 70.♖a7 ♗f6 71.♖a6 ♘c4 72.♖a4 ♘d2 73.♖a2 ♘e4 74.♔f3 ♗e5 75.♖e2 ♗xg3 76.♖xe4 fxe4† 77.♔xe4

½–½

Not a great game of chess, but still half a point from a lost position! With this precise definition of a successful defence, we end our discussion of the framework of defensive thinking and get a bit more technical.

Chapter 2

Defensive Methods

It's very important in chess to use both pieces.

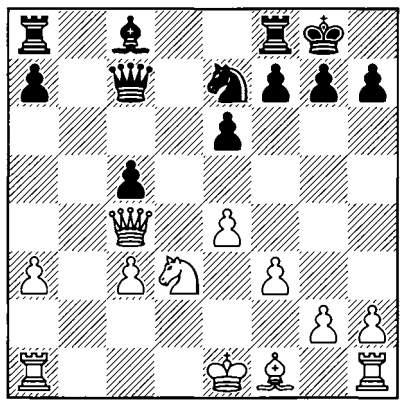
– Andrew Martin on the Fritz9 Multimedia DVD

The defensive thinking framework we discussed in the previous chapter is very useful for the practical player and can be the difference between winning and losing important tournament games. But without a deeper knowledge of what actually constitutes chess defence it cannot be used to its full potential. I will therefore try to give an overview of the most important defensive situations and resources in this chapter, accompanied by a few examples to make them more vivid. The ideas described here include *Surprising tactics*, *Intermediate moves*, *Preparing for the onslaught*, *Defensive combinations*, *Counterattack*, as well as the standard themes of *Perpetual check*, *Stalemate*, *Fortresses*, *Essential drawn endgames* and *Passed pawns*.

Surprising tactics

As said earlier, in my study of defensive play a recurrent theme has been noticeable. Small tactical twists are constantly missed in failed defences. Apparently a major part of defensive play is looking for the little flaw that turns misery into laughter in an otherwise glorious combination. A typical example occurred in one of my own games.

Cox – Aagaard
Isle of Man 2005



In a (unknown to me) theoretical position I fell into deep thought and came up with a long sequence leading to a drawish rook endgame. It was only after the game, when I "Fritzed" it, that I realised my combination was flawed.

16...♘c6?

Not long before our game 16...♗d7 17.♕xc5 ♖ac8 18.♕xc7 ♖xc7 19.♔d2 ♖d8 20.♖c1 ♘c6 gave Black excellent compensation in Bauer – Timman, Gothenburg 2005. That game soon ended in a draw.

17.♕xc5

The only way to test the idea.

17...♗a6 18.♘b4 ♗xf1 19.♘xc6 ♖fc8

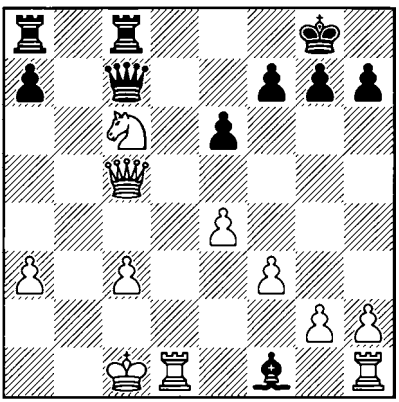
The critical position. John thought for a long time. I was quite confident in my calculations, so

I walked around calmly, looking at all the other games. Had I approached the position on my own board with the same level of scrutiny that I gave the other games in the hall, I would probably have realised that an additional opportunity existed for White. Eventually John gave up on refuting my idea, consoling himself with a drawn endgame.

20.♖xf1? ♕xc6 21.♕xc6 ♖xc6 22.♖c1 ♖b8

Black had enough counterplay for the pawn and later even had serious winning chances.

After the game John showed me an idea that I had failed to consider. White could have played 20.0-0-0!!.

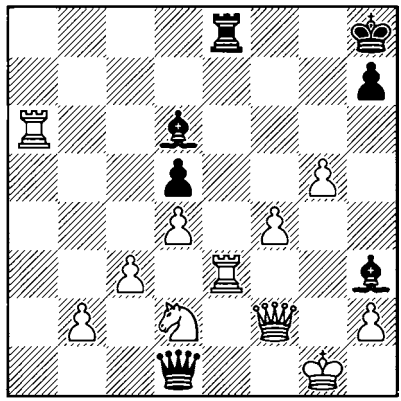


Even then, sitting relaxed with a well-deserved final round lager, with a view over the sea, I failed to take this idea seriously. Somehow I managed to confirm John's original feeling that 20...♗a6 would save the day. It was this option that Fritz later sent to the grave with 21.♘e7† ♔f8 22.♘xc8†!! ♕xc5 23.♖d8 mate!

Black therefore has no choice but to enter the sad line with 20...♕xc6 21.♖d8† ♖xd8 22.♕xc6 ♗xg2 23.♖d1 ♖dc8 24.♕a6 ♗xf3 25.♖d7 ♗xe4 26.♔d2, when White has great winning chances. It is in this line that we see the difference between 20.0-0-0!! and 20.♖d1. After 20.♖d1 the h1-rook would be worse off after 22...♗xg2, as it would not be able to go to d1.

If you go through games at the top level, you will also find these kinds of options missed by the chess gods that walk among us. Just look in the exercise section!

In the next example, taken from **Liang – Blatny**, Novi Sad (ol) 1990, we will just have a brief look at the annotations. In the game Black played **28...♕h5-g4†**. In his notes Blatny suggested that after 28...♕h5-d1†:



White would win with 29.♕f1. Though an impressive idea, I am afraid that this is not the case. Surely Black would manage to find 29...♕g4†, when after 30.♖g3 ♗xf1 31.♖xg4 ♗xa6(!) 32.♘f3 the chances appear more or less even. If the position should favour anyone, it would probably be Black. For this reason 29.♕e1! with a simple draw would be better.

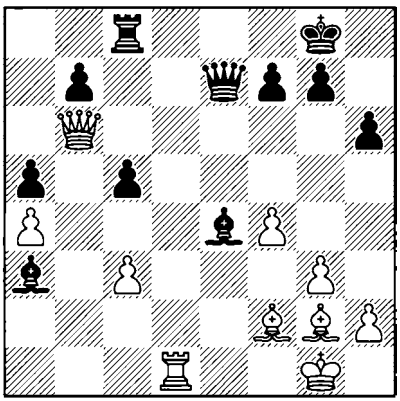
Intermediate moves

You have probably noticed by now that the overriding theme of this book, forcing/unforcing thinking, can be applied to many situations. It is a part of our psychology, a part we need to disconnect if we want to reach the higher echelons of chess. Chess might be a strategic game, but to implement your superior strategy you will need to have control over all of your troops; meaning, your calculation must be in order.

Among the surprising tactics that are often useful in defence we find the intermediate move. The intermediate move is a typical example of unforcing thinking. The basic idea is simple: An apparently forced line is the basis of one move, but instead of following this forced line, you twist it slightly, by interposing a sequence of one or more moves, after which the forced line can be continued with a different outcome.

A good example of this can be found in the following position from the European Women's Championship in Moldova 2005.

Shumiakina – Kononenko
Chisinau 2005



White to play and win

The game was agreed drawn after just a couple more moves:
27.♗xe4? ♕xe4 28.♕xa5 c4
½–½

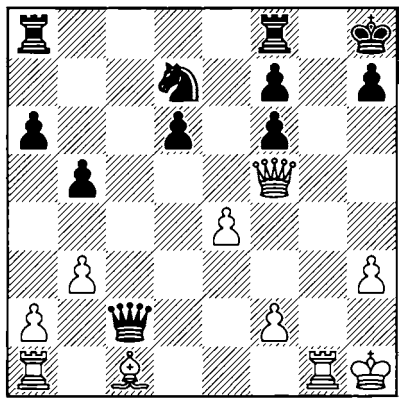
This all seems nice and natural. Especially when you look at lines such as 28.♕b3, which is met with 28...♕e2! 29.♖a1 ♗b2 30.♖b1, when the bishop is trapped, but where Black has strong counterplay after 30...♖d8!! 31.♖xb2 ♖d1† 32.♔g2 ♕f1† and White cannot sensibly avoid perpetual check.

Also 27.♖a1 does not work. Black responds with 27...♗xg2 28.♔xg2 ♕e4† 29.♔g1 ♕xa4, and White is suddenly struggling.

All of this is very neat and tidy, except that White can radically change the properties of the latter line by interposing 27.♖e1!!. Black has no alternative but to play 27...f5, when the same move, 28.♖a1, traps the bishop with a winning advantage. The main difference comes in the line 28...♗xg2 29.♔xg2 ♕e4† 30.♔g1 ♕xa4, when White is happy to find 31.♕e6†! as an additional opportunity.

That last position may not have had a great deal to do with defence. However, this takes nothing away from its instructive clarity. But since you are such a sceptic, I will now present you with an example of how this theme can be applied to a game between two World Champions. It was played in the match between Russia and the Rest of the World. Because it was a rapid game, both of the players had too little time to discover the inner logic of the position that Kasparov's subsequent annotations demonstrated quite beautifully.

Kasparov – Ponomariov
Moscow (rapid) 2002

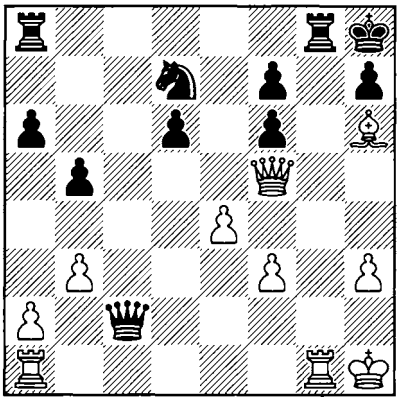


The game was drawn in a few moves from this position, but only after mistakes from both players.
24...♖g8? 25.♗e3?
Kasparov demonstrated a clear advantage in his notes after 25.♗h6!.

The main point arises after 25...♖ae8 26.♖xg8† ♖xg8 27.♖g1, where White is winning a piece, as Black will not survive the following onslaught: 27...♖g6 28.♖c1! ♕e2 29.♖c8† ♖g8 30.♖xg8† ♔xg8 31.♔g2! White's king is now safe, while Black cannot defend his. After 31...♘f8 32.♕d5! White is threatening the lethal 33.♕a8, as well as keeping e4 defended.

Therefore Black is forced to play 25...♕c6 26.♖ac1 ♕b7 27.♗f4 ♖ae8 28.♖xg8† ♖xg8 29.♗xd6, when his position is rather sad. His pieces are inactive and dominated by their fierce white counterparts.

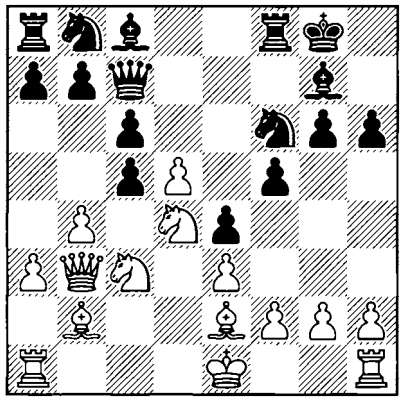
But all of these troubles could have been avoided with an intermediate move. If Ponomariov had sensed the problems, he would maybe also have realised that he needed to create a route for his queen to the kingside. This could be achieved with 24...♖fe8!! 25.f3 ♖g8, when after 26.♗h6



Black has the extra resource 26...♕f2!. The queen will soon appear on h4. White does not have time to cash in on d7, as f3 would be hanging. After 27.♖af1 ♕h4 Kasparov describes the position as "unclear".

The intermediate move is such an integral part of chess tactics that we all have our favourite examples. My own favourite was played by the greatest chess player ever to come out of Denmark.

Porat – Larsen
Moscow (ol) 1956



White has pushed his luck a bit too far in the centre. There was no chance that Bent Larsen, a great fan of taking things, would overlook the following intermediate move.

14...cxd4 15.d6† ♗e6!!

The stunner. White was expecting to win the queen with 15...♕f7 16.♗c4 dxc3 17.♗xf7† ♖xf7 18.♗xc3 ♘bd7, when Black is not necessarily better. But Larsen looked for candidates on every move, assumed nothing, and found a simple move that decided the game in his favour.

16.♕xe6† ♕f7 17.♕xf7† ♖xf7 18.exd4 ♖d7

Black has won a pawn and later went on to win.

The final example of intermediate moves is a true defensive one.

Volokitin – Vescovi
Bermuda 2005

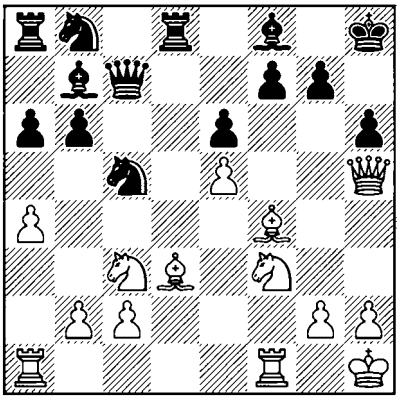
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗e2 ♘f6 6.♘c3 d6 7.0–0 ♗e7 8.f4 0–0 9.a4 ♕c7 10.♔h1 b6 11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 ♘fd7 13.♗f4 ♗b7 14.♗d3 ♘c5 15.♕g4 ♖d8 16.♗g3 ♗f8 17.♘f3 h6

We enter the game in a theoretical position where Volokitin introduces a novelty, threatening a vital pawn.

18.♗f4!? ♔h8

18...♘xd3!? was an interesting and very complicated alternative.

19.♕h5



19...♘c6!

19...♘xd3 20.cxd3 ♖xd3 21.♗xh6! would give White a very strong attack as well, so Black decides to meet the coming storm with as many developed pieces as possible.

White cannot easily strengthen his attack, so he must start kicking down doors.

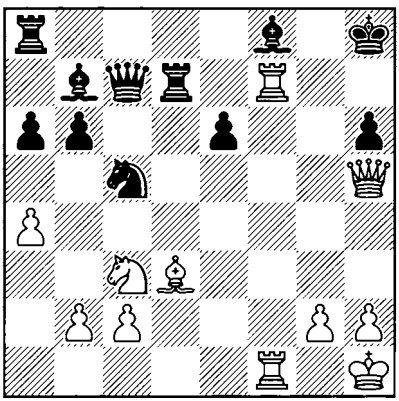
20.♗xh6!

No other move makes sense. For the piece White manages to kick open the door to the black kingside just enough for the remaining white pieces to break through the cracks.

20...gxh6 21.♘g5 ♘xe5

There is no other decent way of protecting f7.

22.♘xf7† ♘xf7 23.♖xf7 ♖d7 24.♖af1



White has pushed his attack forward as aggressively as possible, but Black has made no obvious mistakes. Therefore it might be he thought it was time for one?

24...♘xd3??

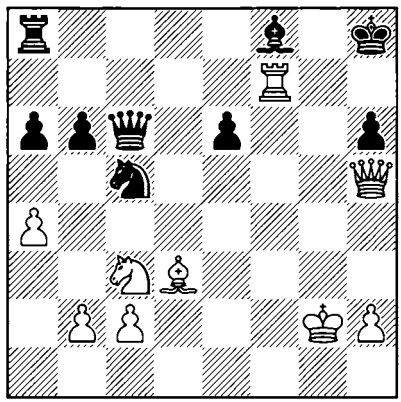
This loses directly, but the situation was not easy for Black.

25.♖xf8† ♖xf8 26.♕xh6†

1–0

It is not clear what Vescovi overlooked in the above diagram. But it is clear what he should have played. As so often when one player has sacrificed a piece, the return of that piece by the defender can more or less restore the balance. It is all quite logical: One player sacrifices a piece to gain some time; then his opponent sacrifices the piece back, to buy back the lost time.

In this game Black should have returned the extra bishop with 24...♗xg2†! 25.♔xg2 (25.♔g1? ♗xf1) 25...♖xf7 26.♖xf7 ♕c6†. The need for the last check is the reason for returning the bishop. All Black needs is this little check in order to stay alive.



White has two different ways to play on:

a) 27.♘e4 ♘xd3 28.♕g6 ♘f4†! 29.♖xf4 ♕xc2† (29...♗g7!?) 30.♖f2 ♕d3 31.♖f7 ♕c2† 32.♔h3 ♕d3† 33.♔h4 ♕d8† and a repetition of moves seems most likely.

b) 27.♔h3! is more challenging. 27...♘xd3 28.cxd3 (28.♕g6 is met with a great point:

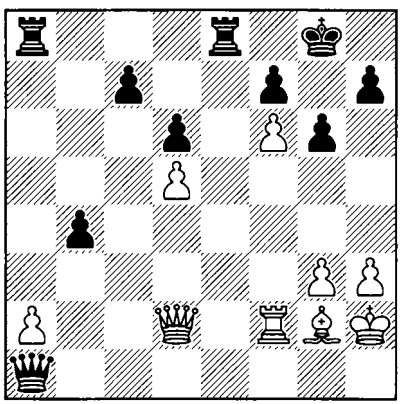
28...♘f4†! 29.♖xf4 ♗g7 with an unclear game. Probably the position is just equal.) 28...♗g7 29.♕g6 ♖g8 30.♘e4 ♕d5 31.♘g3 White is slightly better. It does not make a lot of sense for us to worry about how much, as it is clear that Black remains in the game, and that is all we need to know.

The intermediate move is a powerful tool. We should always be looking carefully at our position to see if the orbit of the earth could be turned ever so slightly, instead of spinning out of control.

Preparing for the onslaught

Sometimes, no matter if you are better or worse, you will be in a situation where you are unable to prevent the attack from hitting you. It will be your move, but you cannot do anything to stop the attack your opponent is planning from starting on the next move. So what do you do? Let's take a painfully simple example where the answer is obvious:

Chiburdanidze – Zsu. Polgar
St Petersburg (4) 1995

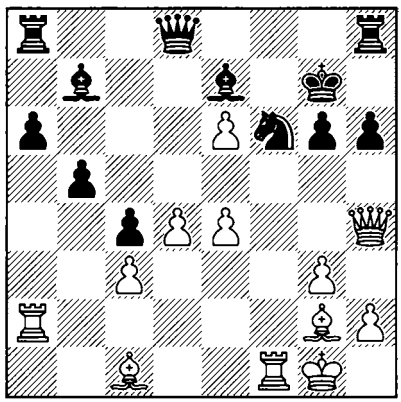


White has simple plans. In principle she is not threatening the black king at the moment, but she is threatening to threaten, which is the same as to threaten, honest! Instead of playing along her own dream and desires, Black decides to prepare for the threat of a threat a few moves in a row. Only when the attack is foiled does she think about her own aggressive ambitions.

26...♔h8 27.♕h6 ♖g8 28.♖f4 g5 29.♖xb4 ♖g6 30.♕h5 ♕xa2 31.♕f3 ♕a1 32.♖b7 ♖xf6 0–1

The chess in this example is of course very simple. But this should only help to underline the point that this strategy of anticipation can easily be used in more complex settings, where it is unclear what the best route is. Take a look at the following example:

Romero Gomez – Yu. Hernandez
Cuba 1994



White has sacrificed a piece for a few central pawns and the hope of creating threats against the black king. He is not threatening anything as of yet, but has clear ambitions of playing ♖a2-f2, e4-e5 and similar, in order to create threats. Though Black has many acceptable moves, one is superior to the rest. In the game Black was far from this. He blundered horribly and lost in more or less one move.

1...♕b6??

As said, there were a number of possibilities. One of them was 1...♕g8!?, aiming at the e6-pawn. White can put the pressure on with 2.♗a3!?, but Black seems to keep his bits together in the following breathtaking line: 2...g5 3.♕h3

g4 4.♕h4 ♕xe6 5.♗xe7 ♕xe7 6.e5 ♗f3! 7.♗xf3 gxf3 8.exf6† ♕xf6 9.♕g4† ♕g6 10.♕xf3 ♖hf8 11.♕b7† ♔g8 and Black is surviving, it seems.

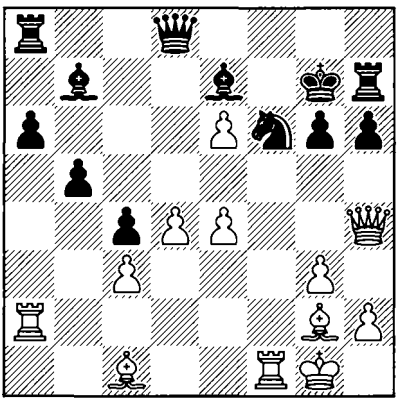
2.e5! ♖af8

2...♘d5 3.♖f7† ♔g8 4.♕g4 and Black cannot defend himself.

3.♗xb7 ♘d5 4.♖xf8!! ♗xh4 5.♖f7† ♔g8 6.♗xd5 ♖h7 7.e7 ♗xe7 8.♖f6†

1–0

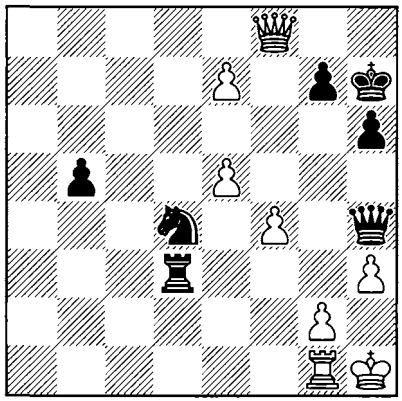
But instead of being direct, Black's best strategy was to prepare for the various white threats. Black wants to be able to deal with the invasion of a rook on the 7th rank, which is difficult to prevent, and at the same time he wishes for his king to be safer. Therefore the right move is 1...♖h7!!.



The first point arises after 2.e5? ♗xg2 3.♔xg2 ♘d5 4.♖f7† ♔g8! and the double threat on h4 and f7 allows Black to neutralise White's pressure completely, ending a piece up. So instead White would at some point have to play d4-d5 and try to prove compensation in a far more rigid structure. Though the position is far from clear, it must be White who is struggling to keep the equilibrium.

Often defending under pressure involves finding a lot of these anticipation moves. It can be very difficult to play such accurate moves, move after move, as can be seen in the following example:

Kozul – Bologan
Sarajevo 2005



White has sacrificed a piece in order to get a pawn to the seventh rank, yet he cannot promote it instantly, as Black is about to sacrifice a rook on h3. There are a number of logical moves that can meet this, but only one is sufficient. Here no intuition or rules will be able to help to decide between the candidates. We will have to apply the method of elimination to choose among the various options.

For instance, it is logical to want to play 43.♖f1. The king is no longer directly mated by the sacrifice, and White also takes control over f3, so there are no sneaky attacks by the knight. However, the problem is that Black will win with 43...♖xh3†! 44.gxh3 ♕xh3† 45.♔g1 ♕g4†! 46.♔h2 (46.♔f2 ♕f3†! with mate to follow) 46...♘e2! 47.♖f3! h5!!. Black wins as White cannot guard the g1- and g3-squares at the same time. Fritz9 amusingly suggests the following defence as the only way to avoid mate: 48.♕f5† ♕xf5 49.e8=♕ ♕g4 50.♕xh5†...

In the game White tried to prepare himself for the rook sacrifice with a different rook move, but the outcome was the same.

43.♖a1? ♖xh3†! 44.gxh3 ♕xh3† 45.♔g1 ♕g4†! 46.♔h1 ♘f3

0–1

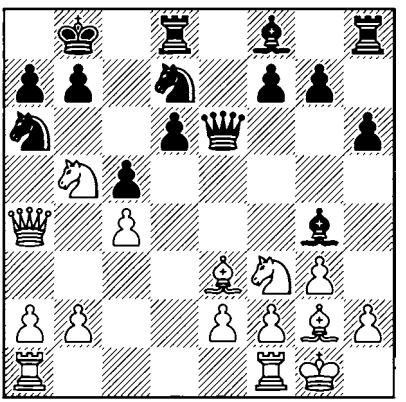
The basic sentiment behind Kozul's thinking was correct. White wants to be as ready as

he can for the onslaught. Only he did not achieve this. The move that would do so was 43.♔h2!, when after 43...♕f2 44.♔h1! or 43...♖d2 44.♔h1! Black does not have any way to improve his position and must therefore go for the repetition. Again we see that the correct defensive move is defending vital squares, more than actually seeking to do something active. Quite a lot of defending relates to this kind of difficult decision.

I like to look at it like this: when an opponent attacks you, you generally have to defend with one defensive move for each of his attacking moves. But if you start defending half a move before his attack begins, then you will have two defensive moves against his first attacking move. Often this will be enough to ride out the storm.

The final example in this section shows a fabulous attack going wrong for just one move, giving Black the chance to defend with accurate moves. He did not find these accurate moves, but they are still quite interesting for us to examine.

Andreev – Vitanov
Bulgaria 1972



In this position White initiated the combination of a lifetime with a double knight sacrifice, using one of the less commented upon aspects of attacking chess: a threat to the queen can be as important as a check or the threat of mate.

1.♘fd4!! cxd4 2.♘xd4 ♕e8 3.♘c6†!! bxc6

3...♔c7 4.♕a5†! would quickly lead to the end.

4.♗xc6?

This was praised by Minev, who claimed 4.♕xc6 ♘dc5 would be a wrong turn for White. A few seconds spent looking at 5.♕a8† ♔c7 6.♕xa7† ♔c8 7.b4 will bring this conclusion into disrepute. Black is in deep trouble. And as we shall see, Black is fine after the text move.

4...♕e7??

A gross blunder. White wins with the most obvious check in the history of the game.

5.♕b5† ♘b6 6.♗xb6

1–0

With two additional pieces, Black only needs to keep his king safe in order to hold the balance. He could have done this by simple means, starting with:

4...♘ac5!

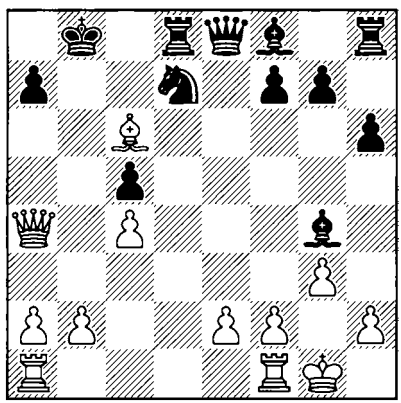
A simple move indeed. The knight was hanging, but is now defended, as well as defending the all-important b7-square.

5.♗xc5

5.♕b5† ♔c7 probably transposes. White cannot live with such a powerful knight on c5 for long.

5...dxc5

A route for the black king has been created, so White probably will not benefit greatly from shooting all his checks off immediately.



6.♖fd1!

The logical and most dangerous move. Something like 6.♕b5† ♔c7 7.♕b7† ♔d6 8.♖fd1† ♔e7 9.♖d2 h5 10.♖ad1 ♖h6 11.♕c7 h4 is far from clear, but I trust Black's position, but cannot honestly say the same about White's position.

The threat of ♕b5† has been restored and Black needs to do something about it. As 6...♕e7 7.♕a6! does not work, Black only has one possible defence.

6...♔c7!!

Black is anticipating the check and moving the king in advance. White will have to move his bishop before taking on a7, which gives the two moves against one effect, allowing Black to put his rook on a better square.

7.♗g2 ♖b8!?

Also possible is 7...♖c8, when all I have been able to find for White is the following repetition of moves: 8.♕xa7† ♔d8 9.♕b6† ♔e7 10.♕d6† ♔d8 with a draw.

Now the position becomes very unclear. White is two pieces down and cannot do real harm to the black king. Black is seriously uncoordinated and underdeveloped. It turns out that White's extra moves and pawns are exactly enough compensation for the missing pieces, and the analysis ends quite logically with a perpetual check.

8.♕xa7† ♔c8 9.♖d2 h5!

A major defender is hastened to the scene of the action. (The rook, not the pawn!)

10.♗c6!

White has no time to fool around. After 10.♖ad1 ♖h6 White's play feels rather slow.

10...♖h6 11.♗xd7† ♗xd7 12.♖ad1 ♖d6!?

12...♖b7 with an immediate draw was also possible.

13.♖xd6 ♗xd6 14.♕a6† ♖b7 15.♖xd6 ♔b8 16.♖b6 ♗c8 17.♖xb7† ♗xb7 18.♕d6† ♔a8 19.♕xc5 ♕xe2

With a draw being the logical outcome.

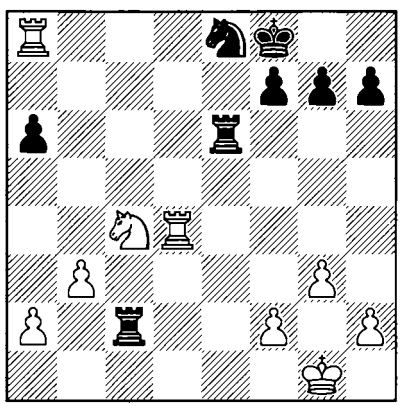
So start to notice how often you can anticipate your opponent's threats in practice, and start to include it more consciously in your thought processes (along with prophylactic thinking). It can only do you good.

Defensive combinations and sacrifices

Like unforcing thinking, prophylactic thinking and the method of elimination, we continuously encounter defensive combinations and sacrifices when we study defensive play. Often when we see a player come under attack, it becomes quite evident that normal moves will no longer suffice. There is a need for something radical. The exercise section is filled with examples of this kind. Even when we are on the receiving end of combinational aggression, we should not be blind to our own possibilities of playing something extraordinary.

In the following example Black is pinned on the 8th rank with no obvious defence to losing the knight, an exchange, or something similar, leaving him in need of nothing less than a miracle. And that is exactly what he comes up with:

Svidler – Radjabov
Morelia 2006



White is threatening to move his a-pawn so Black needs to take it to survive the endgame. But does this not give White time to attack along the eight rank?

33...♖xa2!

33...♖e1† 34.♔g2 ♖ee2 looks natural, but White can use the "2 vs. 1" tool described above. After 35.♔h3!! he has a winning position, based on 35...♖xf2 36.♖e4.

34.♖dd8 h5!!

A very deep move. Black is anticipating White's next move, and preparing active counterplay against the white king.

35.♘d6

I do not see what else White can do. After 35.h4 g6 he does not have any logical way to improve his position other than winning the knight. So let's try:

36.♘e3!?

36.♘d6 ♔e7! is similar to the game.

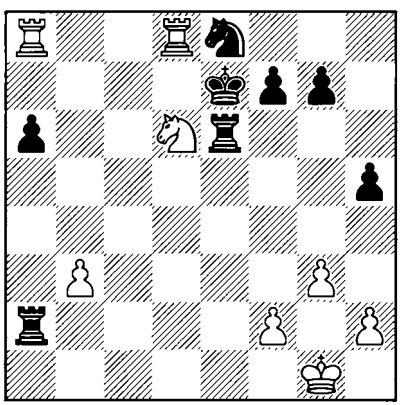
36...♖b2

36...♖a1† 37.♔g2 ♖a2 does not work. White claims an advantage with 38.♘d5! aiming for f4, based on 38...♖ee2 39.♘c3! and White will win material.

37.♘d5♖e1†38.♔g2♖ee239.♘f4♖xf2†40.♔g1 ♖fd2 41.♖xe8† ♔g7 42.♖e1 ♖xb3 43.♘e2

White has successfully managed to win the piece, but it is hard to believe that he will be able to transform this success into winning the game. Most likely is a rook and knight vs. rook endgame, a well-known draw.

35...♔e7!!



The excellent point behind the 34th move. The knight on e8 is no longer with mate, only a harmless check. And if the knight takes it will be more in the way of the white rooks than anything else.

36.♘f5†

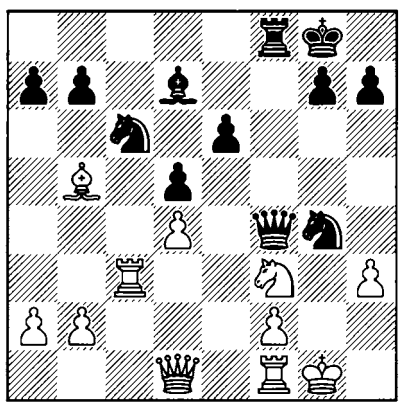
36.♘xe8 ♖e1† 37.♔g2 ♖ee2 and White cannot escape perpetual check. For this reason Svidler looked elsewhere for an advantage, but found nothing.

36...♔f6 37.♘e3 ♘d6 38.♘d5† ♔g5 39.♘f4 ♖e1† 40.♔g2 ♘f5 41.♖e8 ♖xe8 42.♖xe8

½–½

In the following example we have one of the most talented players of my generation, Mikhail Ulibin, deliver an absolutely outstanding combination with Black. Though everything was absolutely correct from his side, it turns out that White could have saved the game, had he thought less in forcing lines.

Sorokin – Ulibin
USSR 1986



1...♘ce5! 2.dxe5 ♗xb5

Black has not done anything special, only exchanged knight for bishop. The depth of the Russian's play is only revealed after the next "auto-move".

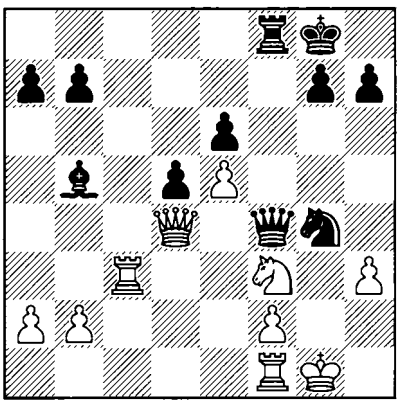
3.♖e1?

The most obvious moves are no good here. 3.hxg4 ♕xg4† 4.♔h1 ♗xf1 and Black wins. Now comes a stunning combination.

3...♘xf2!! 4.♔xf2 d4!

With the venomous threat of 5...♕h2 mate! White can no longer be saved.
5.♖d3 ♕h2† 6.♔f1 ♕g3
0–1

Very elegant. But if White, rather than clinging on to his extra exchange when it was unlikely to be relevant, had instead sought to end Black's attack at all costs, he would have realised the exchange of queens is the key to a successful defence. This could be achieved by playing his queen to d2, c1 or d4. The latter two are more precise and should transpose. Here we shall look at 3.♕d4!.



White returns the rook on f1 in order to reach an endgame, any endgame! Black has two logical ways to continue:

a) 3...♕xd4 4.♘xd4 ♗xf1 5.hxg4 ♗c4 6.f3 ♗xa2 7.♖a3!? ♗c4 8.♖xa7 ♗a6 9.♔f2 I think White is a little better in this endgame. He has ideas such as b2-b4-b5, creating a favourable knight against bishop situation.

b) 3...♗xf1!

This is the real test.

4.♕xf4 ♖xf4 5.♖c8†!!

Absolutely necessary. After 5.♔xf1 ♖xf3! Black will win the pawn ending.

5...♔f7

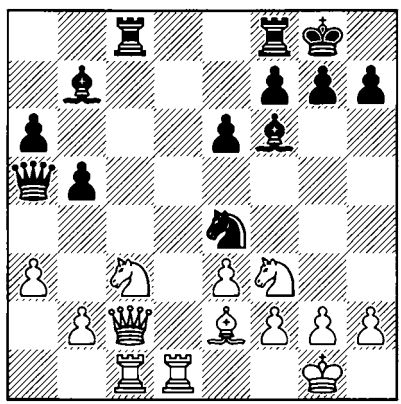
5...♖f8 6.♖xf8† ♔xf8 7.♔xf1 ♘h6 8.♘g5 and White makes the draw.

6.♔xf1 ♖xf3 7.hxg4 ♖f4

7...♔g6 8.♖e8! 8.♖c7† ♔g6 9.♖xb7 a5 10.♖b6 ♖xg4 11.♖xe6† ♔f5 12.♖e8 with very reasonable chances of saving the endgame.

Another important type of combination is those which aims to give up material. Too often we find ourselves in a situation where a positional sacrifice is our only chance. I am certain that you, the reader, can recall many such positions instantly; just think of Petrosian's exchange sacrifices. I have therefore decided only to give one example of this theme here.

C. Walter – Aagaard
Isle of Man 2005



With Black I had managed to do something rare, to outplay my opponent with good moves of my own, rather than due to particularly bad moves from him. Thinking over my last move, I realised that he, my depressed-looking opponent, had lost his fighting spirit (not a good sign for a defender) and was unlikely to play something out of the ordinary. Therefore I had allowed him a chance to offer some defiance with a queen sacrifice: 18.♘xe4! ♖xc2 19.♘xf6† gxf6 20.♖xc2 ♖d8 21.♖dc1 Black is of course clearly better, but there is no easy way to break White's defence, and good technique will still have to be displayed.

In the game White played an innocent looking move, allowing me to take the full point without discussion.

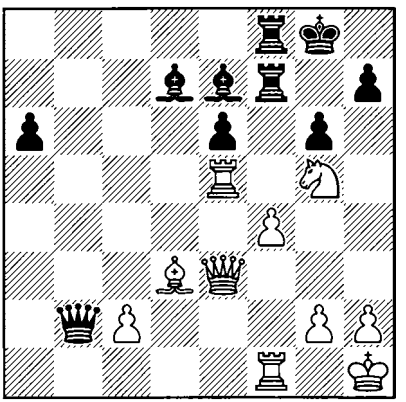
18.♘d4? ♘xc3 19.bxc3 ♕xa3 20.♗f3 ♗xf3 21.gxf3 ♖fd8 22.♖a1 ♕xc3 23.♕xc3 ♖xc3 24.♖xa6 e5
0–1

This happens often. We are under pressure, good advice is hard to find, and we realise that if nothing out of the ordinary happens, we are going to lose. On such occasions a little sacrifice might diminish the anger of the gods.

Another kind of defensive combination is the non-standard one. This basically means that each and every non-standard combination deserves a category of its own, but are collected in a box of mixed sweeties, or something like that. Usually it would not make any sense to write about these, except that they exist. You cannot put everything into boxes. An exact map of the world, is the size of the world.

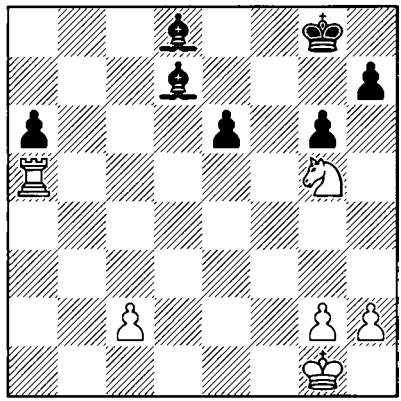
But I have my own personal agenda. The following non-standard combination is a favourite of mine and I have long looked for an excuse to include it in a book.

Pritchett – Polugaevsky
Scotland – USSR (telex) 1981



It pleases me to see a nice guy (and a Scot) making the better side of a draw with a chess legend. Black would be somewhat worse after 1...♗xg5 2.♖xg5 according to Polugaevsky, so instead he embarked on a highly imaginative combination.

1...♖xf4! 2.♖xf4 ♕a1† 3.♗f1 ♕xf1† 4.♖xf1 ♖xf1† 5.♕g1 ♖xg1† 6.♔xg1 ♗f6 7.♖a5 ♗d8!



The players agreed a draw. After 8.♖e5 ♗f6 White has no choice but to repeat the position. The position looks as if taken from a study.
½–½

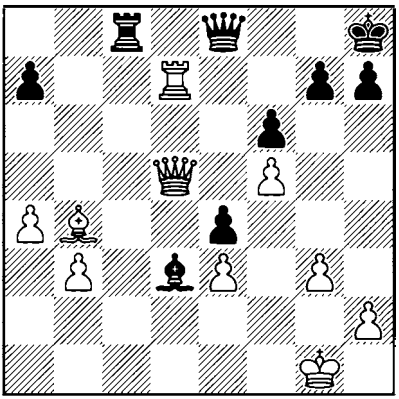
Standard themes

Besides non-standard themes, which will have to be taken one by one, there are some themes we all know very well (or should know), which are especially helpful while defending. I assume those reading this already know these themes, so I will sprint through them, offering only a few examples of how they can be used advantageously.

Perpetual check and other repetitions

The most important part of desperate defensive aggression, at times also called counterplay, is the possibility of reaching a draw by perpetual check. Many hairy positions have been saved by this method, and many more will be in the future. But we have probably seen just as many players fail to find a possible perpetual. I am afraid we will see more of this in the future too. Let us hope you will not be one of them. For instance, we can pray that this kind of thing may never befall you:

Polugaevsky – Wojtkiewicz
Haninge 1990



As a child, when I first saw this game in *Chess Informant* I was very impressed. Especially a previous tactical masterstrokes amazed me, but I was also pleased with the way Polugaevsky dominated his opponent all the way to the end:

40...h6 41.g4 ♕e5 42.♕xe5 fxe5 43.♗d6 ♖c1† 44.♔g2 ♖d1 45.♖xa7 ♗f1† 46.♔f2 ♖xd6 47.♔xf1 ♖b6 48.a5 ♖xb3 49.a6
1–0

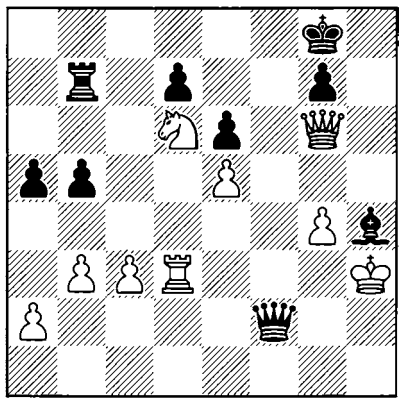
Now, there is a gap of experience between the impressionable young man at 16 and the "veteran" at 32, who will ask all kinds of critical questions. When going through the game again, I stopped at the diagram position, wondering what White would have done if Black had just delivered a lot of checks: 40...♖c1† 41.♔f2 ♖c2† 42.♔e1 ♖c1† 43.♔d2 ♖c2† The position is a draw as 44.♔d1?? ♕h5† is mate.

It is not hard to fathom why Wojtkiewicz missed this chance. He was under pressure all through the game and must have inevitably ended up in time trouble. There he missed the check on h5 and could therefore not see any point in giving the check on c1. What is really hard to understand is why Polugaevsky, who clearly saw the perpetual and prevented it with his 41st move, did not include it in his annotations.

It is of course not enough to say: "You should take the perpetual if you are otherwise lost." Chess books are supposed to be instructive and useful for players of all levels, but you can only take so much Homer Simpson wisdom. *What are you saying? Can you take a bit more?*

OK, here is a great example of how a perpetual check saves the day for an otherwise very troubled young Russian.

Van der Wiel – Kobalia
Wijk aan Zee 1998



The first thing we do is to list our candidates. I can think of two more or less obvious moves:

39...♖b8? loses to 40.♘e4 ♕e1 41.g5! with the double threat of ♘f6† and ♖xd7. The latter becomes possible as soon as the white king has g4 at its disposal, so there is no mate to watch out for on h1.

39...♕e1? is refuted with nice positional play. Black's main problem is the misplaced bishop and the inactive rook. His advantage is the active queen. Therefore White forces the exchange of queens with: 40.♕f7† ♔h7 41.♕f3! ♖b8 42.♕e4† ♔g8 43.g5! Using all the tricks. 43...♗f2 44.♕xe1 ♗xe1 45.g6 White is dominating completely.

So normal moves did not work. We have to look again to see if there are additional opportunities we missed the first time around. Is this how Kobalia was thinking? I fear that the answer is that the young Russian saw the

draw faster than the rest of us would be able to realise that the rook on b7 is hanging. The correct solution was played in the game.

39...♗e7!! 40.♘xb7

40.♕e8† ♗f8! does not get White anywhere.

40...♕f1† 41.♔g3 ♕g1† 42.♔f3 ♕f1† 43.♔e4 ♕e1† 44.♔d4 ♕g1†!

This is the deep point that Kobalia had to see five moves earlier. After 44...♕f2† 45.♖e3! the checks will soon run out.

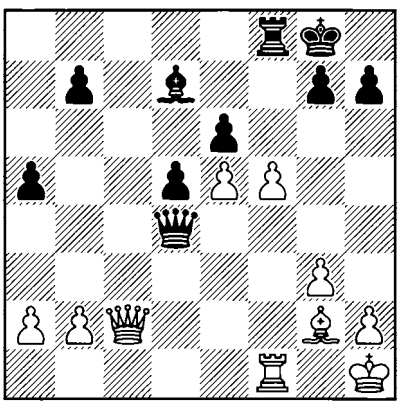
45.♖e3 ♕d1†

A draw was agreed. We have an often seen corner perpetual. The queen and rook are not enough to stop the queen from giving perpetual check. 46.♕d3 ♕xg4† 47.♖e4 ♕g1† 48.♕e3 ♕d1†

½–½

There are also positions that do not end in perpetual, but where the only defence is to force a repetition of some sort. The following example is a great illustration of how this could happen:

Smejkal – Larsen
Leningrad Interzonal 1973



White has overextended his position and he suffers from several weak or hanging pawns. He made everything worse by an unfavourable exchange of queens.

26.♕c3? ♕xc3 27.bxc3 ♖c8

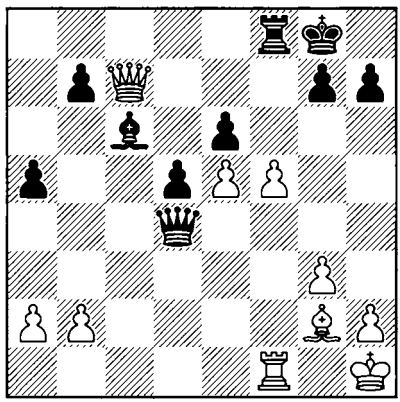
The endgame with many weaknesses is nasty for White: Larsen was ruthless in this kind of position.

28.♖d1 ♖c5 29.fxe6 ♗xe6 30.♔g1 ♔f7 31.♖d3 ♖b5 32.♖d2 a4 33.a3 ♖b3 34.♗xd5 ♖xa3 35.c4 ♖b3 36.♔f2 a3 37.♔e2 ♖b2 38.♖xb2 axb2 39.♗e4 ♗xc4† 40.♔d2 ♗a2

0–1

White could have sought active counterplay against the black king. He should start with:

26.♕c7! ♗c6



The e5-pawn is protected now. White has two similar ways to force a draw. He can either play 27.f6 gxf6 28.♖f4! ♕d1† 29.♖f1! when Black has nothing better than 29...♕d4, or the less obvious 27.♖f4, when the same repetition should occur after 27...♕d1†! (Black should refrain from 27...♕c5 28.f6 ♖f7 29.♕c8† ♖f8 30.f7† ♔h8 31.♕xe6 when White wins) 28.♖f1 ♕d4! and Black keeps the balance. After alternative play such as 28...♕g4 29.♕d6! White has some pressure. But knowing Larsen, this is probably what would have happened in the game. The Danish legend feared draws more than losing, it seems.

I found the first of these two draws back in 2000 while writing *The Stonewall Dutch*, and recently looked at the position again, while revising the book for a second edition destined to be published in Italian, German

and Swedish, but not in English. First of all, I realised that White did not have to push the f-pawn immediately to force the draw, but I also found that he could seek the initiative. After this Black would have to play great defensive moves to hold the balance. In my analysis of the position I seem to have been unable to find a fully satisfactory defence.

27.g4! h6!?

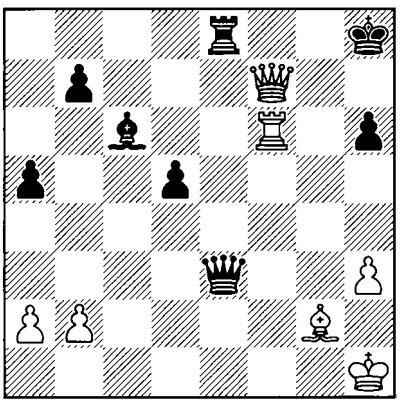
Black should be very careful. After 27...exf5 28.gxf5 ♕xb2 29.f6 gxf6 30.♖g1 White mates in a few moves.

27...♕xg4 28.f6 gxf6 29.♗f3 ♕xf3† 30.♖xf3 d4 31.exf6 ♗xf3† 32.♔g1 ♖xf6 33.♕d8† ♔g7 34.♕xd4 ♗c6 might draw, but is hardly the dish of the day either.

28.♕d6 ♕xg4 29.♕xe6† ♔h8 30.h3 ♕g3!

Black should create active counterplay.

31.f6 ♖e8 32.♕f7 gxf6! 33.♖xf6 ♕e1† 34.♔h2 ♕xe5† 35.♔h1 ♕e3



36.♖g6!

White could still choose to force a perpetual of his own with 36.♖xc6 ♕e1† 37.♗f1! bxc6 38.♕f6†, but why not go for more?

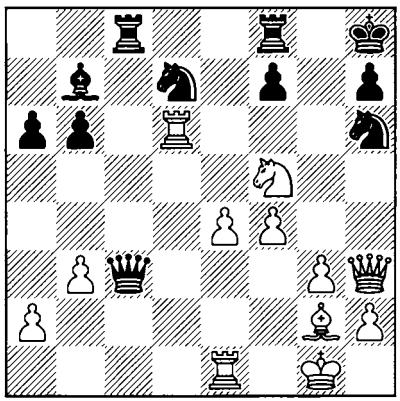
36...♕e1† 37.♔h2 ♕e5† 38.♖g3!

White is continuing to create problems for Black, who could give up the queen and fight in a dubious endgame with rook and bishop for the queen, which is a bit on the short side. Otherwise he will have to find a defence to White's many threats, and quickly!

So even though this example contains a large number of instructive repetitions or perpetual checks, it seems that White should do what he can to steer clear of them and play for a win.

In the final example of this section we shall see a mixture of the two themes. First of all, in the game White showed great resolve and found a nice perpetual check. Then in the analysis we shall see a different solution to White's problems, suggested by Fritz9, which is constantly close to ending with a repetition or perpetual check, but where Black with accurate defensive play can prove an advantage.

Perez Garcia – Zecevic
Pula 1986



1.♕xh6! ♕xe1† 2.♗f1 ♕c3!

Only move. 2...♖g8? 3.♕xh7†! is of no use.

3.♕xh7†!

Brings about a nice perpetual. 3.♖xd7 ♗xe4 4.♖c7 looks flashy, but after 4...♕a1! White has achieved nothing. Unforcing thinking!

½–½

This is all very pleasant and accurate. The position only becomes really interesting when we look at Fritz9's limitations. It suggested a worse move as equal to the text:

1.♖xh6?

Note that defence is not only about avoiding defeat, but also about stopping the opponent's

counterplay, so you can focus on putting the boot in yourself.

1...♕xe1† 2.♗f1 ♘f6 3.♕h4

3.♖xf6 ♕xe4 4.♕g2 ♕xf5 and Black is firmly in control.

3...♖c6!

3...♕c3 4.♕xf6† ♕xf6 5.♖xf6 would give White great play with two pawns for the exchange.

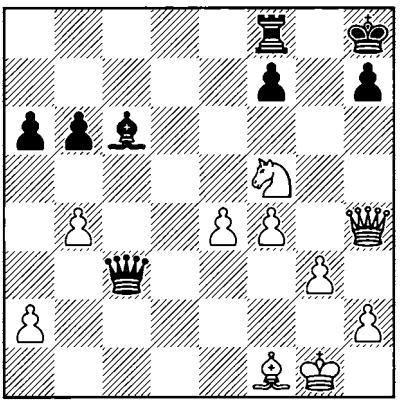
4.♖xf6 ♕c3!

4...♖c2 5.♕xh7†

5.♖xc6 ♗xc6

5...♕xc6? 6.♗c4 would give White the initiative. The black king is under threat.

6.b4!



With the idea of e4-e5.

6...f6!

Otherwise White wins with 7.♕h6! ♖g8 8.e5!.

7.♕h6 ♖f7 8.♕h5 ♖c7! 9.♕h6

If 9.♕d1 then ♖c8.

9...♔g8 10.e5 ♕xb4

10...♕f3 11.exf6 and, surprisingly, Black has nothing more than a perpetual.

11.♘e3! ♕e1 12.♘g4 ♖f7 13.♕h5! ♔f8 14.♕h6† ♔e7!

14...♔e8 15.♕h5 fxe5 16.♕xe5† ♕xe5 17.♘xe5 ♖c7 18.♗xa6 and White should be fine.

15.exf6† ♔e8

15...♔d8 16.♕g5 ♗b5 17.♕g8† ♕e8 18.♕g5 allows White to escape with a draw.

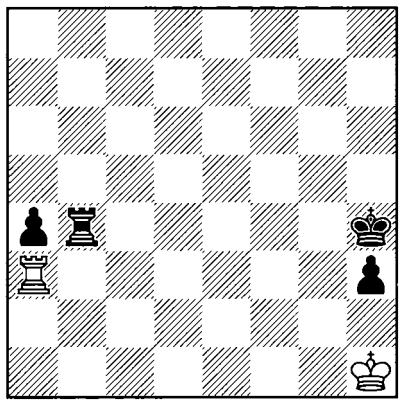
16.♕g5 ♗b5!

It seems that Black will be able to reach a winning endgame.

Stalemate

Another high scorer on the desperate-defenders-Christmas-wish-list is stalemate. Having already seen one missed stalemate at the end of the previous chapter, we shall see plenty more in the exercise section. Therefore, we will look at only two examples here, one simple and one complex.

Timman – Karpov
Belfort 1988



I have previously used this example in *Excelling at Technical Chess*. The only mistake I have been made aware of in that book comes exactly here, where Black should win in a million ways, but allowed White to draw with a simple stalemate trick *according to my database*. I replicated the moves without looking more deeply at them, but actually I do not think that this was what happened in the game. Probably Black played the best 72...♖e4, instead of walking directly into the stalemate.

72...♖g4??

Black also wins rather trivially after 72...♔g4 73.♔g1 ♔f4 because of 74.♖xh3 ♖b3! and White loses precious time.

73.♖c3

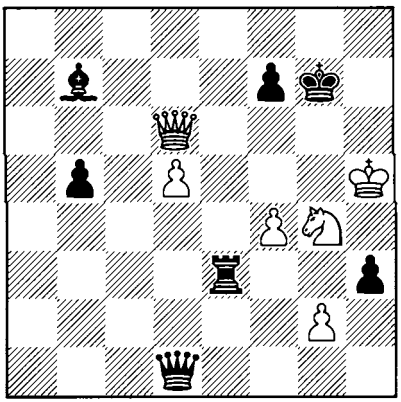
73.♖xh3†! ♔g5 74.♖f3 with a theoretically drawn endgame.

73...♔g5 74.♔h2 ♖h4

0–1

Also in the next example White misses the chance of drawing with a stalemate trick, but the big difference between the two examples is that this chance was not created after the event by a reckless misreading of a player's scoresheet, but actually happened on the board!

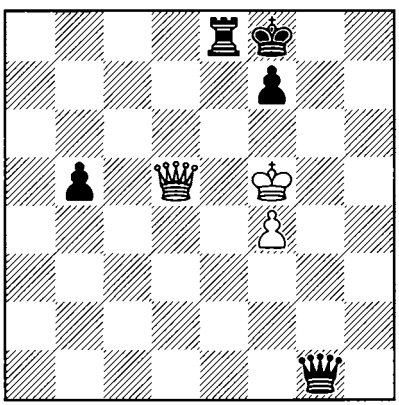
Vescovi – L'Ami
Wijk aan Zee 2006



49.f5?

Maxim Notkin found the following fabulous variation: 49.♕h6† ♔g8 50.♔h4! ♕xg4† (50...♕e1† is not better, nor worse for that matter) 51.♔xg4 hxg2 52.♕g5† ♔f8 53.♔f5!!

Here Notkin's line goes another way, but the simplest illustration of his main idea comes after 53...♗xd5, when White defends with 54.♕d8† ♖e8 55.♕xd5 g1=♕



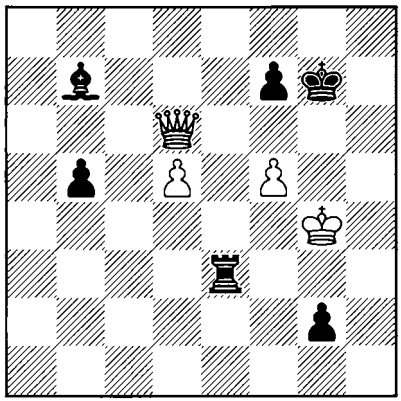
56.♕xf7†!! and the draw is only half a move away.

49...♕xg4†?

This looks clever, but is actually the opposite. Now White has a chance to save the game with a perpetual check.

Black missed a stunning win with 49...h2 50.♕h6† ♔g8 51.♕g5† ♔f8 52.♕h6† ♔e7! 53.♕xe3† ♔d7 54.♔g5 ♕xg4†!! 55.♔xg4 h1=♕ and Black is a full piece up. But 49...hxg2! was simpler. Then after 50.♕h6† ♔g8 51.♕xe3 ♔f8! Black wins. In both cases it is easy to understand why the young Dutchman failed. The sacrifice at the end of the first line is easily overlooked, and it is also easy not to trust the final move in the second line.

50.♔xg4 hxg2



51.f6†?

White could have secured the half point by 51.♕h2! ♗xd5 (51...♖e2 52.♔f3 ♖d2 53.♕g3† and White has perpetual check) 52.f6†! ♔g8 53.♕b8† with a draw.

51...♔g6 52.♕h2 ♖e5!

Simplest. White resigned.

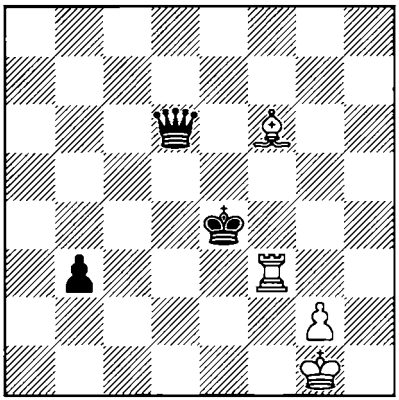
0–1

Fortresses

Fortresses have always been the last hope of defence for those losing in war and chess. It does not matter how much material you are down if

your opponent cannot penetrate your defences. The first example is a recent variation of one of the best-known fortresses.

Adams – Morozevich
San Luis 2005

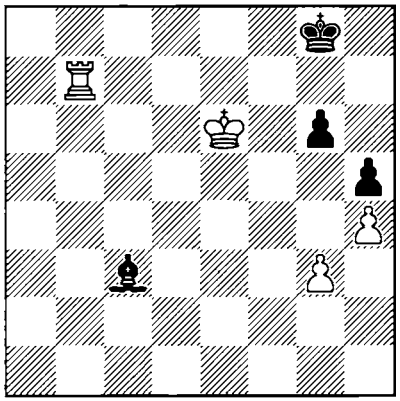


The game continued for close to 20 moves for no apparent reason. Black was making sure that there was no way to send a Trojan horse into the white camp, although even he must have found it difficult to believe the position was anything but a dead draw. Eventually Black pushed the b-pawn, White gave up the bishop and reached a famous fortress.

Knowledge of the most common fortresses is a good inclusion in a practical player's arsenal. Besides the freaky ones (which are probably a majority of the fortresses we see in practical games) there are but a handful that a tournament player should know. The best place to study these is *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* – together with all the other endgames you need to know.

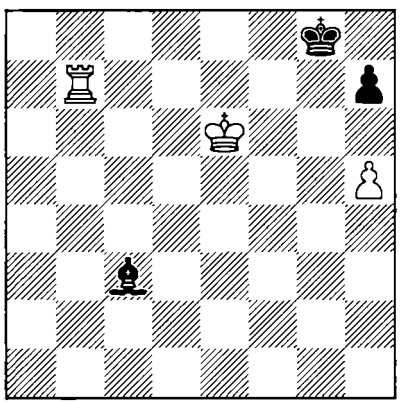
The following game is an example of how the awareness of a standard fortress helped the poor author in his decision-making. Though I did not understand and remember everything, it helped me to move in the correct direction and create sufficient problems for my opponent.

The fortress I knew in advance was this:



I am not sure about the origin of this position, but it has been known for a long time that White cannot make progress. The bishop works with the pawns to keep the white king at bay. This would not be the case if the black h-pawn were still at h7 or h6 when White would be able to advance his h-pawn. Either to put it on h6 to create mating threats, or on h5, blocked by a black pawn on h6, when Black would be unable to hold the fortress on the light squares. The win is still difficult and, in my experience, not possible to find over the board. It was only after the game that I was able to look up the theory, which referred to an ancient piece of Danish analysis:

J. Enevoldsen
1949

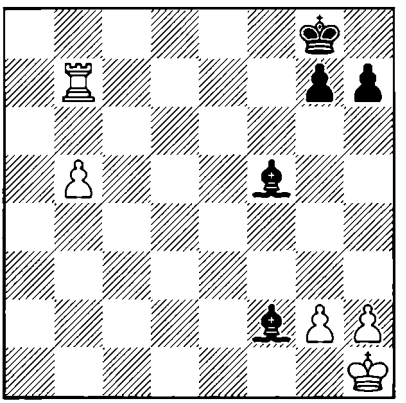


1...h6 2.♔f5 ♗d2 3.♔g6 ♔f8 4.♖f7† ♔e8 5.♖f2 ♗g5 6.♔g7 ♔e7 7.♖e2† ♔d7 8.♔f7 ♔d6 9.♖e4! ♗c1 10.♖e6† ♔d5 11.♔f6 ♗d2 12.♔f5 ♗g5 13.♖g6 ♗d2 14.♖g2 ♗e3 15.♖g3 ♗c1 16.♖d3† ♔c4 17.♖d7 ♗g5 18.♔g6 ♔c5 19.♖h7 ♔d6 20.♖xh6

White wins.

Not easy! Let's see how this influences practical play.

Aagaard – Lindberg
Sweden 2004



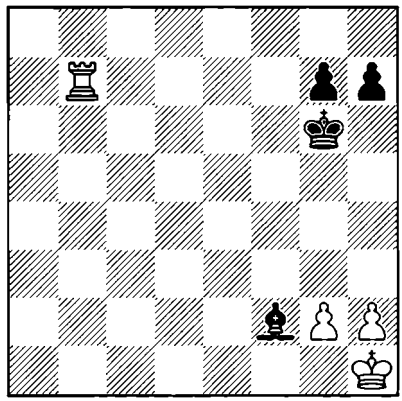
I have just managed to swindle my opponent ever so badly. Ten moves earlier I had hoped to be able to draw with rook vs. two bishops. Now I will win a bishop for the pawn, reaching a promising endgame.

40...♔f8??

I would like to attribute this move to time trouble, but, as I recall the game, my opponent had half an hour. A better explanation for this move is the age difference. Being 10 years older than my opponent, I had a chance to see this kind of important fortress before. Actually I saw it for the first time in 1996, only eight years earlier...

One clear way to draw was 40...♗e4 41.♖b8† ♔f7 42.b6 ♔g6 when Black is a tempo up compared to the game. After 43.♖e8 ♗b7 44.♖e7 ♗d5 45.b7 ♗xb7 46.♖xb7 h5! White cannot avoid the fortress mentioned above. Note that a white g4-pawn against a black g6-pawn is one possible variation of the fortress. The white king will never be allowed to come to g5. Black will play his bishop to f6, and if White tries to prevent this by putting the rook on the 6th rank, Black can put the king on g7.

41.b6 ♗e4 42.♖b8† ♔f7 43.b7 ♗xb7 44.♖xb7† ♔g6



We have reached a generic version of the endgame. Black to play will draw, as we already know. White to play wins.

45.g4!

This prevents the fortress. Now comes a typical display of practical endgame technique. Instead of forcing the theoretical position, where White would face the full burden of proof, I manoeuvred around in the hope that my opponent would give me an additional opportunity, which is exactly what he did. This happens more often than not, and is an important strategy.

45...♗d4 46.♖b5!

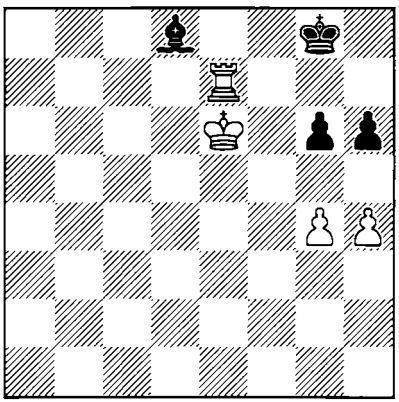
Black is threatening to rid himself of the h-pawn, when the win would be questionable.

46...♔f6 47.♖h5 h6 48.♖f5† ♔e6 49.♔g2 g6 50.♖a5 ♗f6 51.♔f3 ♗g5 52.♖a6† ♔f7 53.♖a7† ♔f6 54.♖h7 ♗c1 55.h4 ♗d2 56.♔e4 ♔e6 57.♔d4 ♗f4 58.♔e4 ♗d2 59.♖h8 ♔f6 60.♔d5 ♔g7 61.♖e8 ♔f7 62.♖e2 ♗a5 63.♖f2† ♔g7 64.♔e6 ♗d8 65.♖f7† ♔g8

We have reached a standard position. I had a pretty strong feeling that 66.h5 was the winning

move, and we now know that this is true. But I could not see everything to the end. For this reason I found a different idea, which is probably not winning, but at least allowed my opponent to go wrong.

66.♖e7!



66...♗b6?

A blunder. Now the white king comes to f6. The idea behind fortresses is to prevent penetration, so this reaction must be said to be rather careless. 66...♗a5! 67.♖d7 ♗c3 would force me to find the win after 68.h5.

67.♖d7!

And the king comes to f6 decisively.

67...♗f2 68.♔f6 h5 69.♔xg6 ♗xh4 70.♖a7 ♔f8 71.♖a8† ♔e7 72.gxh5

1–0

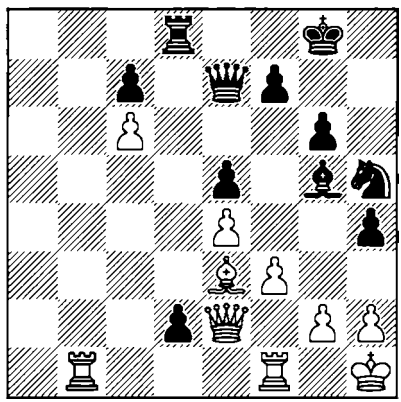
Passed pawns

I have noticed that one of the defensive ideas that is most often missed in practical play, and which is most stunning when executed, is when a heavy amount of material is invested in return for a powerful passed pawn. Passed pawns are simply under appreciated. Maybe it is their size?

The following example is rather wild, actually so wild that when I noticed it, I became suspicious concerning the position. I know Golod as a hardworking and reliable annotator, but the position was just too wild to believe; too perfect in some way. So I looked the game up, amazed to see that it *was* a real game, and that it was funky as anything, despite its mistakes. So I will give the game in full just for the taste.

Golod – Mittelman
Beer Sheva 1998

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗e2 0–0 6.♘f3 e5 7.d5 a5 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4 ♘a6 10.♘d2 ♕e8 11.0–0 ♗d7 12.♔h1 ♘h7 13.♖b1 h5 14.f3 ♗f6 15.♗f2 h4 16.b3 ♗g5 17.a3 ♕e7 18.b4 axb4 19.axb4 ♘f6 20.c5 dxc5 21.♗xa6 cxb4 22.♗xb7 bxc3 23.♗xa8 cxd2 24.♗c6 ♗xc6 25.dxc6 ♘h5 26.♕e2 ♖d8 27.♗e3?



This brings the g5-bishop into play and allows Black to sacrifice a knight. Better would be 27.♗a7 as given by Golod, or 27.♖fd1.

27...♘g3†!! 28.hxg3 hxg3 29.♗a7?

29.♗f2!? was the only move, but Black should be winning after such a concession. The text move should have been mated in four moves.

29.♔g1 is met with 29...♗xe3† 30.♕xe3 ♕h4 31.♖fd1 ♖d3!! and Black wins. The main line goes: 32.♕a7 ♖xf3 33.gxf3 ♕h2† 34.♔f1 g2† 35.♔e2 g1=♕† 36.♔d3 ♕xa7.

29...♗f4??

29...♗e3! is just mate.

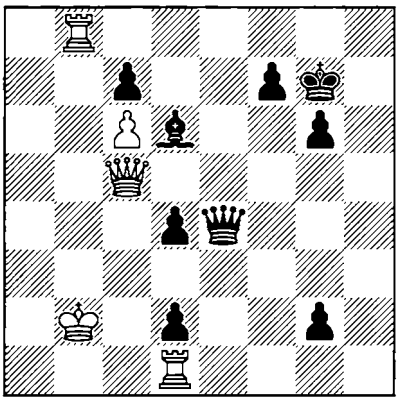
30.♖fd1 ♖d4 31.♔g1 ♕h4 32.♗xd4 exd4 33.♖b8†?

This is a big mistake. The rook is needed to protect d1. White could have defended better with 33.♕a6!, creating an escape route for the king.

33...♔g7 34.♕c4 ♕h2† 35.♔f1 ♕h1† 36.♔e2 ♕xg2† 37.♔d3 ♕xf3† 38.♔c2 ♕xe4† 39.♔b2 g2 40.♕c5 ♗d6?

Even at this stage, Black could have won the game with 40...♕e2!.

You will be surprised to hear that after such an eventful game, it is only now that we come to the position of interest. We shall see four(!) passed pawn in action over the next five moves and the notes to them.



41.♕xd6!!

White sacrifices the queen mainly to eliminate the powerful black bishop, but also so that the c-pawn can leap straight from childhood to adulthood, with little time for puberty issues. Black can only create problems for White by pushing his own passed pawns.

By the way, 41.♕g5 is bad because of 41...♕d3! and Black wins due to 42.♕d8 ♕a3† 43.♔b1 ♕c1†! 44.♖xc1 (44.♔a2 ♕c2†) 44...dxc1=♕† 45.♔b2 ♕h1! and White can do no damage to the black king.

41...cxd6 42.c7 g1=♕! 43.♖xg1

43.c8=♕? would be a bad mistake. 43...♕h2!

43...d1=♕!?

43...♕e2 was also good, but White is able to save the day with the generous 44.♖d1!!, when after 44...♕xd1 45.c8=♕ ♔f6! the chances are even.

44.♖xd1 ♕e2† 45.♔a3!

45.♔b3?? looks clever, but would lose to the even more clever 45...♕xd1† 46.♔b4 ♕b1† 47.♔a5 ♕f5†! 48.♔b6 d3 49.c8=♕ ♕xc8 50.♖xc8 d2 and the pawn will queen. I am sure you did not anticipate that the d4-pawn would become the deciding factor when you looked at the diagram before White's 41st move, did you?

45...♕f3† 46.♔a2

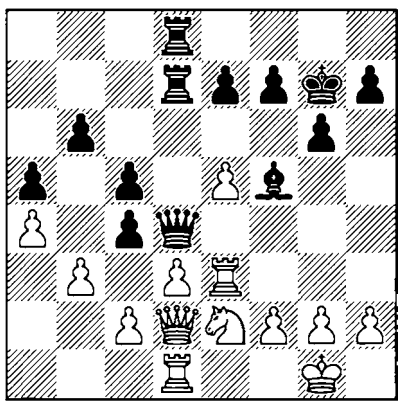
46.♔b2?? ♕c3†

46...♕e2† 47.♔a3

½–½

This example is rather extreme, but examples with passed pawns usually are. The following two are even worse! Pay attention to those little guys. They might not run you over with a steamroller, but, because of their stature, they are likely to take you by surprise.

Ang. Hernandez – Camacho Penate
Cuba 1998



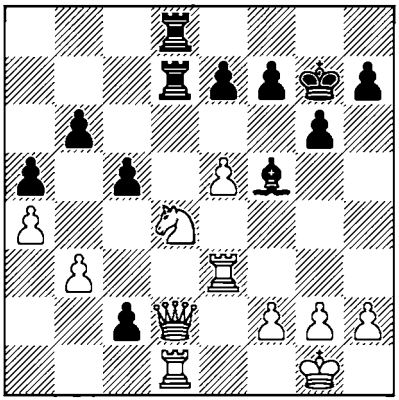
In a seemingly slightly worse position, Black managed to sacrifice his queen for a mere two pawns.

1...cxd3!!

1...♕h4 2.bxc4 ♕xc4 was also quite acceptable for Black, but the text move sets White a lot of problems.

2.♘xd4 dxc2!

The point. The passed pawn is now dominating the white position, and White will have to think deeply before he can find the possible defences.



3.♖de1?

This loses because of a rather wonderful detail. But actually there is a simple logic to this position. White's main problem is the defence of the first rank. His weakest point seems to be c1, but this is actually not the case, at least not when it comes to the potential queening of the pawn. The queen can help from c3 and both rooks should be able to help on the first rank, and in this way give sufficient control.

The text move fails for the simplest reason: it blocks the other rook's return to the first rank. White's idea was no doubt that the rook should come back after ...♖e3xe1, but this is not going to happen. Instead Black will unleash his brilliant fifth move.

The main alternatives are discussed below. Not surprisingly two of them are equal, because both of them meet the main concern head-on.

3.♘xf5†? gxf5 leads nowhere.

3.♖c1? fails as the rook is impossible to defend with anything apart from the other rook. Black wins directly after 3...♖xd4 4.♕c3 ♖d1† 5.♖e1 ♖xc1! 6.♖xc1 ♖d1† 7.♕e1 ♖xe1† 8.♖xe1 ♗e6! and, with the fall of the queenside, White will be facing four connected passed pawns, enough to feed a full-scale nightmare.

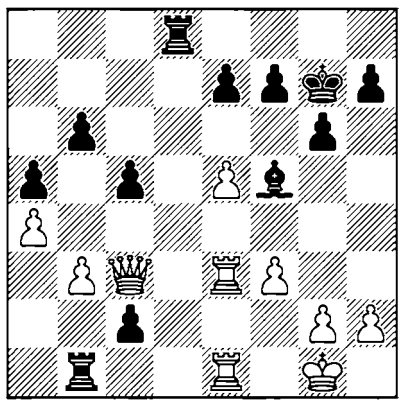
3.♖a1(!) is the most logical move. The queen will help both rooks keep control over the first rank. After 3...♖xd4 4.♕c3 ♖d1† 5.♖e1 ♖b1 White can force an equal ending in two ways: 6.g4 ♖d3 7.♕xc2 ♖xa1 8.♖xa1 ♖g3† 9.hxg3 ♗xc2 and 6.♖axb1 cxb1=♕ 7.♖xb1 ♗xb1 8.f3 ♖d4, in both cases with a likely draw.

3.♖f1(!) also works. This time the rook is not defended by the queen, but by the king so the exchange of rooks does not lead to mate, but would allow the white king to come closer. Basically White has an extra move on move 5, which comes in very handy. 3...♖xd4 4.♕c3 ♖d1 5.h3 (5.f4 ♖8d2 is also OK for Black. From White's side, the text move is just one of many equal possibilities.) 5...♖8d2 (5...♖b1 6.♖ee1 ♖dd1 7.♖xd1 cxd1=♕ 8.♖xd1 ♖xd1† 9.♔h2 ♖d4 gives Black the advantage it would seem, but White has counterplay against e7, so actually Black should be a little careful: 10.♕f3 ♗e6 11.♕b7 ♖b4 12.♕xe7 ♗xb3) 6.e6† f6 7.g4 ♗d3 (The forced line after 7...♖xf1† 8.♔xf1 ♖d1† 9.♖e1 c1=♕ 10.♕xc1 ♖xc1 11.♖xc1 ♗xe6 12.♖c3 ♗d5 also has strong drawish tendencies) 8.♖xd3 ♖xf1† 9.♔xf1 ♖d1† 10.♔e2 c1=♕ 11.♕xc1 ♖xc1 12.♖d7 and the endgame is a draw after White wins the e7-pawn.

3...♖xd4 4.♕c3 ♖d1 5.f3

There are other possible moves here, but I cannot see why any of them should offer White better chances than this.

5...♖b1!!



6.g4?

This loses directly. The only try was to prepare for the other rook to help with the defence of the first rank. However, after 6.♖f1 ♖dd1 7.♖ee1 c1=♕ 8.♕xc1 ♖dxc1! 9.♖xc1 ♖xb3 Black is close to winning in the endgame, despite only having two pawns for the exchange. The power of the c-pawn and the activity of the pieces will tell.

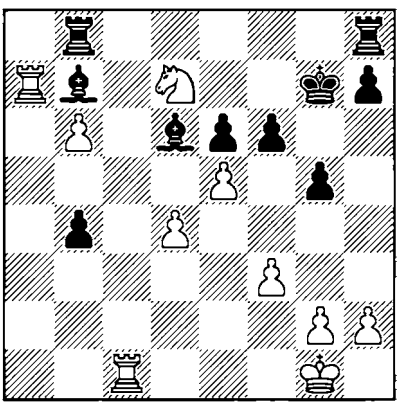
6...♖dd1 7.gxf5 c1=♕ 8.♕xc1 ♖bxc1

0–1

Once again we saw the passed pawn in a starring role, even if its name was not on top of the billboard. Most chess players simply undervalue the strength of passed pawns. I cannot emphasise this enough.

The next example sees the value of passed pawns being put to the test in a thinking method I have not spent ink on in this book, but which is a tool all chess players should have in their toolbox: the method of comparison.

Rashkovsky – Chernin
Belgrade 1988



OK, let's have a look at the situation: Black is provisionally a piece up, but both the b8-rook and the bishop on d6 are under attack. Furthermore, White has a strong pin across the seventh rank, ready to poison Black's existence, as well as a check coming on c7.

Black, for his part, does have a passed b-pawn.

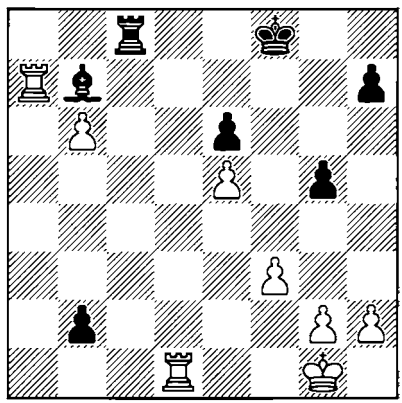
Chernin wrote in his annotations that the real question in this position is whether or not Black should take on e5 before retreating the bishop to e7. Only after the game did he find the correct answer to this question, and the reason why.

28...fxe5?

So in the game he chose incorrectly. Also 28...♖bc8 is bad, as after 29.♖e1! White will regain his piece with a winning advantage.

29.dxe5 ♗e7 30.♘xb8 ♖xb8 31.♖c7 b3 32.♖c3??

White misses his chance. The reason the pawn exchange was misguided is that White is able to use the d-file to bring the rook back and stop the b-pawn, if only for a minute. In other words: White could have won with 32.♖xe7†! ♔f8 (32...♔g6 33.♖a1) 33.♖d7 b2 34.♖d1 ♖c8



Now comes a spectacular attacking sequence found by Chernin back in the days when chess players were still thinking for themselves.

35.♔f2!! ♖c1

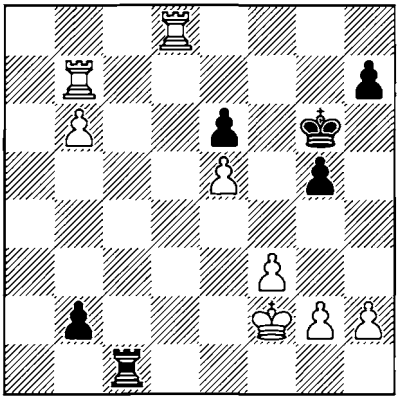
35...♖c2† 36.♔g3 ♖c1 37.♖d8† ♔g7 38.♖xb7† ♔g6 39.♖f8 b1=♕ 40.♖f6† ♔h5 41.♔h3! with the idea of 42.g4 and mate is coming.

36.♖d8† ♔f7

36...♔e7 37.♖b8 ♔d7 38.♖bxb7† ♔c8 (38...♔c6 39.♖c7† ♔d5 40.♖a5† ♔d4 41.♖b5 and White is winning the endgame) 39.♖xh7 ♔b8 40.♖ab7† ♔a8 41.♖bd7 ♔b8 42.b7 and White wins.

37.♖xb7† ♔g6

White cannot stop the pawn, but he can mate the black king!



38.♖f8!! ♖f1†

Or 38...♖c2† 39.♔e3! ♖c3† 40.♔e2! ♖c2† 41.♔d3! ♖xg2 42.♖f6† ♔h5 43.♖xh7 mate.

39.♔e3! ♖xf3† 40.♔xf3! b1=♕ 41.♖f6† ♔h5 42.g4† ♔h4 43.♖h6 mate.

32...♔g6?!

Simpler was 32...b2 33.♖b3 ♗c5† 34.♔f1 ♗d4 and Black wins.

33.♖xb3 ♗c5† 34.♔f1

34.♔h1 might have given a bit more resistance.

34...♗d5 35.♖b1 ♗c4† 36.♔e1 ♗xb6 37.♖aa1 g4! 38.fxg4 ♖f8 39.♔d2 ♗d4 40.♖a4 ♖f2† 41.♔d1 ♗d3

0–1

It appears that after the exchange of pawns White is winning, if only with godlike play. Chernin gives the following line as an improvement for Black, leading to a draw: 28...♗e7!? 29.♘xb8 ♖xb8 30.♖c7 b3 31.♖xe7† ♔f8 White cannot play ♖d7 and ♖d1, so instead we have a drawn rook endgame after 32.♖xh7 ♔g8! 33.♖hxb7 ♖xb7 34.♖a1 fxe5 35.dxe5 ♖xb6.

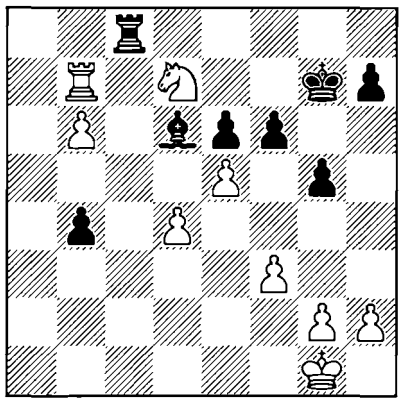
It should be no surprise to the reader that I was utterly gobsmacked by this example. The logic is pristine as virgin snow and the geometry that of Cleopatra's nose, perfect from every angle. Or is it? At some point I started to go beyond being a fan and into being a man, wondering if Black was getting everything he could out of his precious b-pawn. I noticed that after the exchange of pawns, as played in the game, Black had an additional opportunity in 29...♖hc8 that leads to a drawish position. Never mind how, as it is of little interest once the logical continuation of this analysis reaches its port, and the rook swing is investigated on the previous move where it is much stronger.

28...♖hc8!!

As I said above, passed pawns are highly underrated. Even strong players such as Rashkovsky, Chernin, Fritz9 and me (?!) fail to notice their importance. Had I not seen the examples above I fear I would never have looked for such a radical solution.

The next few moves appear forced.

29.♖xc8 ♖xc8 30.♖xb7



30...♔h6!!

The b-pawn is temporarily within reach of the knight, and all Black has to do is choose between two possible squares. After 30...♔g6 31.♖a7 b3 32.b7 ♖d8 33.b8=♕ ♗xb8 34.♖b7 ♗xe5 35.dxe5 b2 36.♖xb2 ♖xd7 the game should be a draw. The main difference between the two lines is an inconvenient knight check on f8 (if the king is on g6). (Ignore the double exclam. It is just me getting carried away. Most strong players would

naturally put the king out of reach of the knight, even if no sensible checks were in sight. But there you go; strung out and emotional as ever.)

31.exd6 b3 32.♖c7 b2 33.♖xc8 b1=♕†

Black is close to winning.

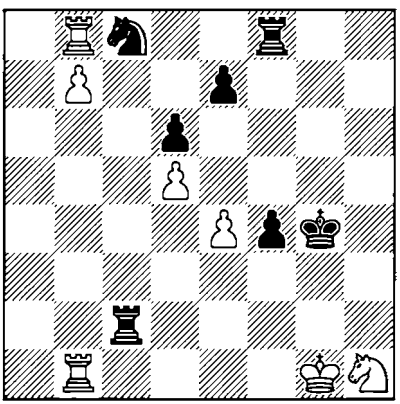
I offered this example as being about comparison. It was. Only the best move had very little to do with comparison, except if you were wondering which rook to put on c8.

With these extremities I think it is time to go to the last section of this chapter, where the first two examples will show the strength of passed pawns as well, though under slightly different circumstances.

Making it into a drawn endgame

Another escape route often offered to the resilient defender is the difficult but drawn endgame. We saw this already in Aagaard – Goletiani on page 36. This is probably a speciality of mine. The following example should make you believe in a life after death, or at least that some people do walk on water...

Hutters – Aagaard
Copenhagen 1995



40.bxc8=♕†?

White could have won rather quickly with 40.♖a8!, preparing to queen the b-pawn. Black has no real counterplay, but can try things like 40...♖g8 41.b8=♕ ♔h3† 42.♔f1 ♔h2 where White is close to being mated, but can give up the queen with 43.♕b6! ♘xb6 44.♖xg8, and be a rook up. It is easy to understand why my opponent did not see all of this with just a few seconds left on his clock, and instead decided to cash in.

However, an interesting endgame now arises, which to the disappointment of White happens to be drawn.

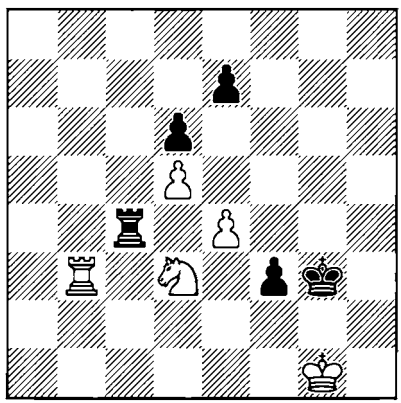
40...♖fxc8 41.♖xc8 ♖xc8 42.♘f2†

42.♔f1 f3 43.♘f2† ♔g3 and it is difficult for White to defend against the counterplay on the first and second ranks.

42...♔g3 43.♖b3†

43.♘d3 ♖c4 also gives Black sufficient compensation for the piece to make a draw.

43...f3 44.♘d3 ♖c4!



White is unable to win, as the black king is very active. Soon all the pawns will leave the board – at least the white ones.

45.♘e1

45.♔f1 e6! 46.dxe6 ♖xe4 and the endgame is a theoretical draw.

45...♔f4 46.♘xf3 ♖c1† 47.♔f2 ♖c2† 48.♔e1 ♔xe4 49.♘d2† ♔xd5 50.♔e2 ♖c8

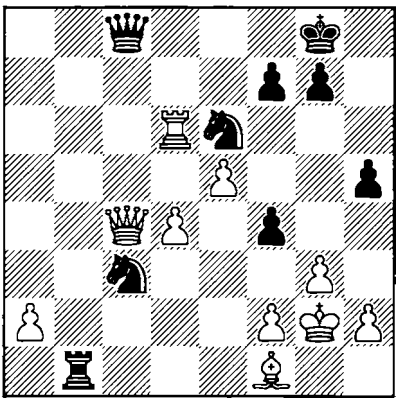
½–½

In this example the passed f-pawn was strong not because it could promote, but because it was

protecting the active king from checks from the side and helping in the domination of the white pieces.

In the next example the white passers are very much looking for promotion in their battle against the extra black knight. We start from a position where Black could have won with an attack, but instead aimed for a winning endgame. However, White managed to trick him and make a draw with a freaky exception to standard chess values.

Gelfand – Ivanchuk
Wijk aan Zee 2006



40...♕xc4?

40...f3†! 41.♔xf3 ♘g5† 42.♔e3 ♘d1† 43.♔d2 ♘e4† 44.♔c2 ♕b7 and White is soon mated, or worse.

41.♗xc4 ♘e4 42.♗d3 ♖e1

42...♘xd6 43.♗xb1 ♘b5 44.d5 ♘ed4 might look like a win, but Black could easily end up with two knights against a king after 45.♗e4 ♘c3 46.f3 fxg3 47.hxg3 ♘xa2 48.d6 ♔f8 49.d7 ♔e7 50.♗d5 ♘b4 51.♗xf7. It is hard to tell if he would be able to get this endgame in a winnable version.

43.♖b6 g6 44.♗xe4 ♖xe4 45.d5 ♘f8?

45...♘c5! would probably still have won the game rather cleanly. Now comes this weird exception to chess logic.

46.gxf4 ♖xf4

46...g5!? is likely to be an improvement, but the more pawns that are exchanged, the closer the draw is as well.

47.♖b8 ♖d4 48.e6 fxe6 49.dxe6 ♖e4

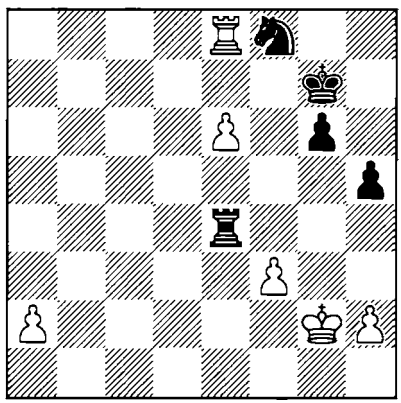
It seems that the white e-pawn is now lost and that Black will slowly disentangle himself. However, this is far from being the case. Although Black might still be winning, he has a lot of work to do!

50.♖e8! ♔g7!

50...♖xe6 was the most logical move, but surprisingly the resulting endgame is likely to be a draw: 51.♖xe6 ♘xe6 52.♔f3! The king needs to assist the a-pawn and dominate the knight. 52...♔f7 53.♔e4 ♔e7 (other moves exist, but not other results) 54.♔d5 ♔d7 55.♔e5 g5 56.♔f5 ♔d6 57.f3 and White will eliminate the black pawns shortly.

There might be a win in the endgame after the exchange of rooks, but I have not been able to find it. So it is safe to say that Gelfand has achieved his defensive aims in making the greatest possible resistance. Here his opponent was not a nobody, but one of the most impressive players of 2005, Vassily Ivanchuk.

51.f3



51...♖e5?

The only winning chance was 51...♖e2†! 52.♔f1 ♖e5! (52...♖e3? 53.♔f2 ♖e5 54.f4 ♖e4 55.♔f3 ♖e1 56.♔f2 ♖e4 57.♔f3 is a very peculiar draw indeed) 53.♖e7†! ♔h6 54.a4 ♘xe6

55.h4! (55.a5? ♔g5! 56.a6 ♔f6 57.a7 ♖a5 and Black should win) 55...g5 56.a5 ♔g6 57.a6 ♔f6 58.♖h7 ♘f4 59.hxg5† ♔xg5 60.a7 ♖a5 and I think Black should win, but it is not clear-cut.
52.♖e7† ♔h6 53.f4 ♖e2† 54.♔f3!

The major difference from the position arising in the previous note: Black cannot keep the rook on the e-file.

54...♖xa2 55.♖e8 ♘h7 56.e7 ♖a3† 57.♔f2 ♖a7 58.h4!

Black cannot make progress. The passed pawn has made the draw.

58...♘f6 59.♖h8† ♔g7 60.e8=♕ ♘xe8 61.♖xe8
½–½

There are quite a few standard ways to make a draw in an endgame, most of them already known to the experienced player. It would make little sense to give them here; instead I recommend that those interested in the endgame should read Mark Dvoretsky's *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* for the theoretical endgames (endgames with a maximum of one piece each) and my own *Excelling at Technical Chess* for a more general understanding of the endgame.

With this you should be fully educated in the art of defence. If you are not convinced, test yourself with a couple of hundred exercises...

Exercise Section

We have arrived at the largest part of the book, the exercises section, where you will get a chance to investigate the practicality of the advice given on the previous pages, as well as your own abilities as a defender. The exercises have been divided into four sections: Warming Up!, and Levels 1, 2 and 3. I have tried to organise the exercises within each section so they are of increasing difficulty, but most certainly I will have failed to completely achieve this. At least I tried...

There are a few things I would like to say about the exercises and especially about the solutions, before we move on. They are really important, so I have highlighted the headlines in order to catch the attention of those who would otherwise not read a full page of prose.

The exercises reflect practical play. This means that the solution to an exercise can be to sacrifice the exchange to get into a defendable endgame. Basically the exercises are about finding the best practical defence, not about forcing a draw.

That we are dealing with practical defence also means that two solutions to a problem can exist, and that you have to choose the better one.

The solutions reflect how interesting the positions are. A lot of the positions in the exercise section are quite interesting and aesthetic and are for this reason not at all limited to just giving the solution. This can give the impression that you should have calculated a million variations a second to see everything, which is not far off, as Fritz8 and his agile younger brother Fritz9 have been very keen to help with the analysis for this book.

You do not have to see everything, but it is also not enough just to see the first move. What I mean by this is that it is easy to give yourself thumbs up if you find the correct first move. Often this does not mean that you would have played correctly all the way in a practical game. Therefore it is important to aim at finding the point of the position, which at times can be a rather vague concept.

Though imitating practical play, these exercises are at times more demanding. In practical play you would often "guess" the correct move. I warmly recommend you to "solve" the exercises here, which is best explained by a question I used to asked my 12-year-old students when they claimed to have solved an exercise: "Are you willing to bet your pinkie? If you are wrong, will you allow me to jump up and down on your pinkie with iron mounted boots?" To solve an exercise is to know what the solution is, not to have a qualified guess.

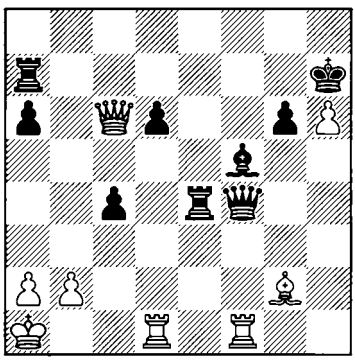
Armed with this disturbing imagery I would expect you to be ready to face the ordeals of Level 1, but I recommend you go through the Warming Up! section, where your ability to see what is right in front of your eyes will be thoroughly tested.

Chapter 3

Warming Up!

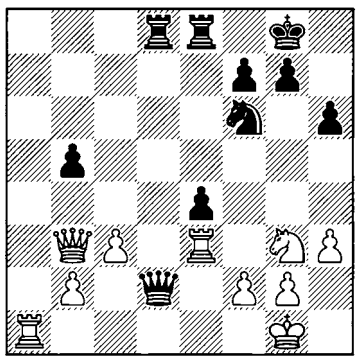
In this section you will find 30 exercises of increasing difficulty, which in most cases require a limited amount of calculation to be solved, though they will require a bit of imagination and attention. For most it will be possible to solve these exercises directly from the page, and some of them quite quickly. Still, I hope you will find a few challenging and have at least one surprise on your way.

1 Lautier – Piket
Cannes 1990



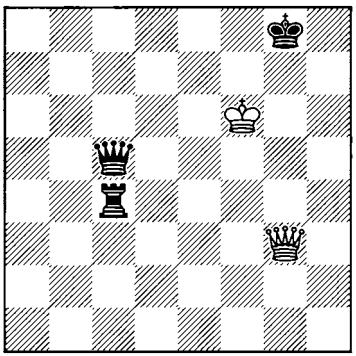
Black to play – The situation is rather critical for Black. In the game he did failed to solve his problems. Which move did he overlook?

2 De Guzman – Atalik
Reno 2005



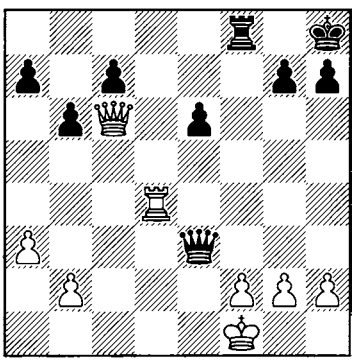
White to play – Test your defensive skills on this one. It should not be too hard. What is White's best possibility here?

3 Gromov
5th Prize, Shakhmatnaya Nedelia 2003



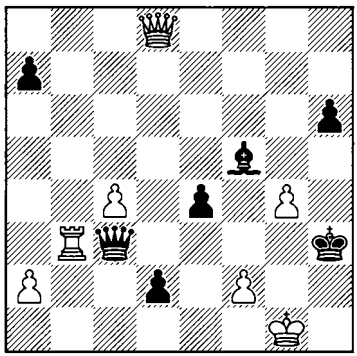
Black to play – In the notes to Gromov's truly beautiful study you can find this position, where Black loses in all lines bar one.

4 Letzelter – Faivre
France 1971



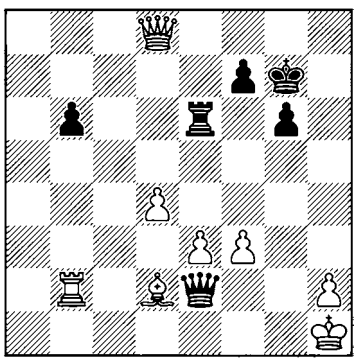
White to play – Having escaped from a simply lost position, White still resides in this mess. He is a pawn down and torn between defending against a mate on f2 and saving the hanging rook. Quite understandably White decided to call it a day, but this was a mistake, as he could have saved the game with the only move.

5 Chakhoian – Turkenishvili
USSR 1971



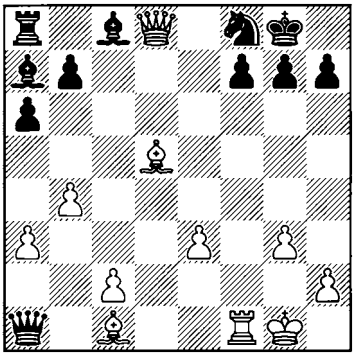
Black to play – At first glance it is hard to tell if the black king on h3 is attacking the white king or into troubles of his own. Add the pin on the black queen and the position appears to be ready for resignation. Actually this is very far from being the case.

6 Stupica – Cvetkovic
Yugoslavia 1969



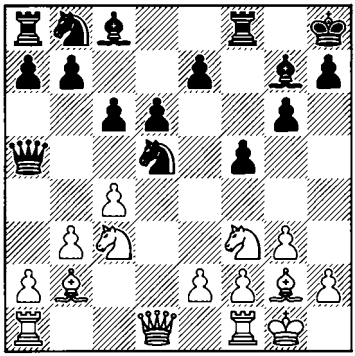
White to play – Black has sacrificed a piece so the black queen can gain access to the white king's chambers. With the white pieces pinned and uncoordinated Black was eventually successful in turning his pressure into a full point. But this was far from the correct outcome.

7 Gonzales – Hay
Skopje (ol) 1972



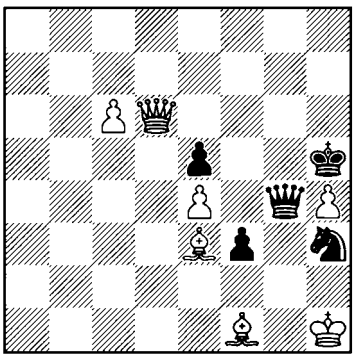
Black to play – In the absence of the black king's major defenders White has sacrificed a piece for a direct attack. Please find the hole in White's combination.

9 Robatsch – Jansa
Sochi 1974



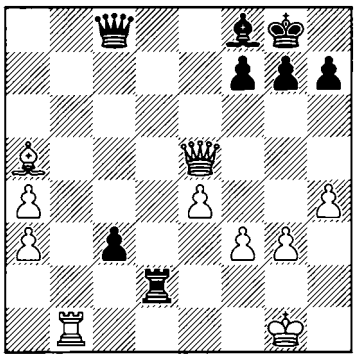
White to play – Black has just executed a very simple combination. But is White not leading in development and generally well placed? How did White scorn Black's ambitions?

8 Rodriguez Cordoba – Vaisman
Bucharest 1974



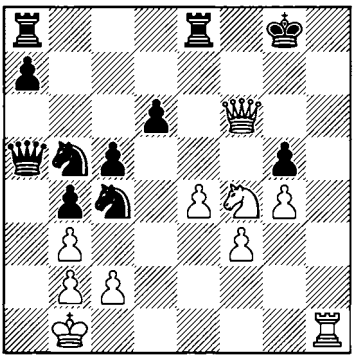
Black to play – Black seems to be losing in every way known to man, but with two pieces within shooting range of the white monarch there is still hope!

10 Yudasin – Smirin
USSR (ch) 1990



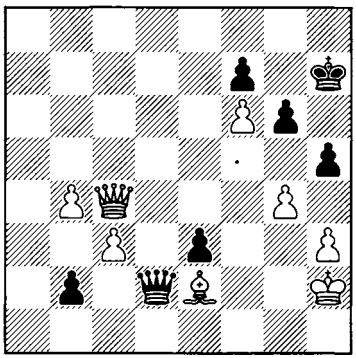
White to play – You have reached the last move before the time control and you are duly worried about the passed c-pawn. What do you do?

11 Georgiev – Panbukchian
Varna 1977



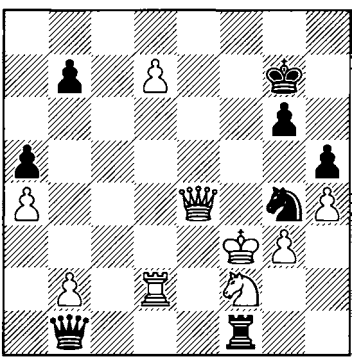
Black to play – Somehow Black managed to resign in this position! What is the strongest way to avert White's attack?

13 Polovodin – Zhelnin
USSR 1980 (analysis)



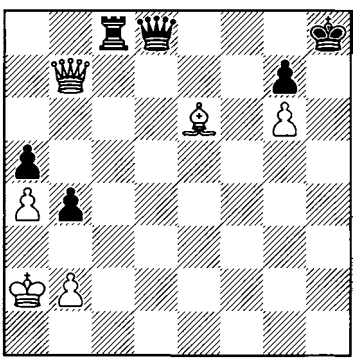
White to play – Faced with the approaching promotion of the black b-pawn White is in great need of a miracle. With the last move (not played in the game) such an opportunity has arisen.

12 Sampilov – Aborin
USSR 1971



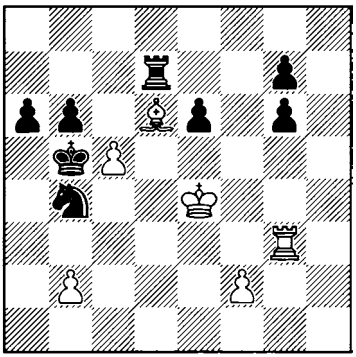
Black to play – Both players have their trumps. Black is harassing the white king, while White has advanced his d-pawn significantly, hoping for a quick coronation.

14 Minic – Savic
Porec 1989



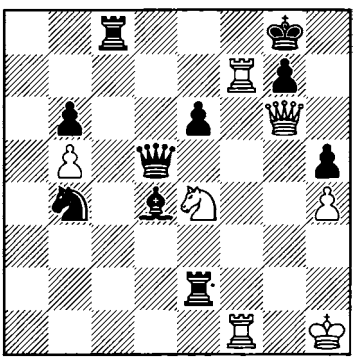
Black to play – Black is an exchange up and should be in the driving seat, but he is faced with uncomfortable threats, all magnified by the open position of his entrenched king.

15 Yudasin – Kir. Georgiev
Manila (izt) 1990



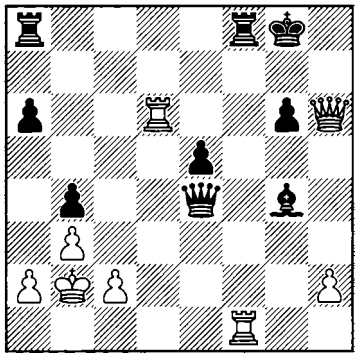
White to play – In this apparently innocent endgame we see that White is very active, but is significantly lacking in material. A solution to his problems should be found now, as later it would be, well, too late...

16 Miles – Nedobora
Seville 1994



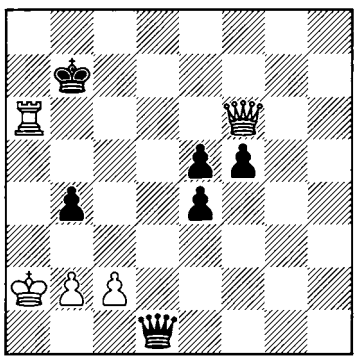
White to play – In this scenario of total war, White finds that he has been defeated on all fronts, be they material or dynamic. Still, as long as the fat canon has not sung, even the shakiest house will stand.

17 Manca – Stohl
Austria 2003



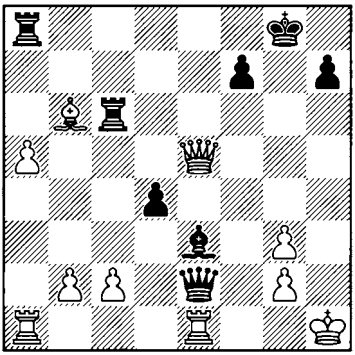
Black to play – In this razor sharp position Black accomplished the not too difficult feat of losing in very few moves. However, he could have unveiled a saving grace just here.

18 Kobese – Areshchenko
Gibraltar 2005



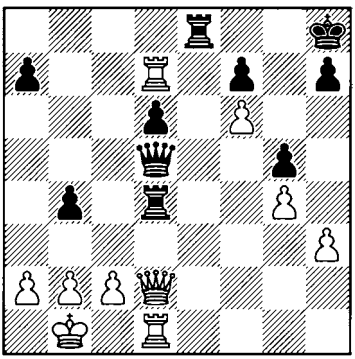
Black to play – With a solid rook more Kobese is on his way to beating his young opponent, a rising superstar from Ukraine. Or at least he must have thought so.

19 Xie Jun – Spassky
Prague 1995 (analysis)



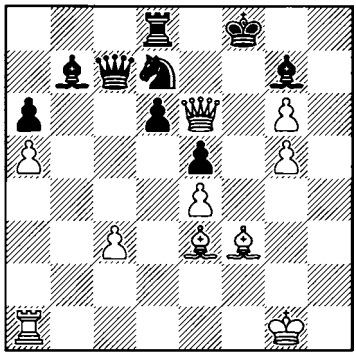
White to play – In his annotations to the game Boensch noted that White should be wary of falling for a dangerous trap. His annotations end with the above position, where White is supposed to be lost.

20 Popovic – Simic
Herceg Novi 2000 (analysis)



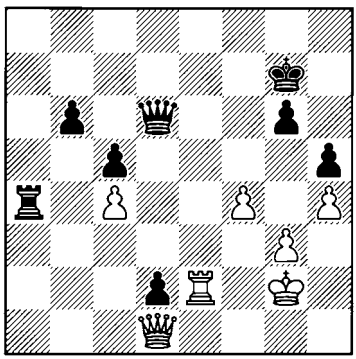
White to play – Analysing this game I found that this position could have occurred, had White gone astray. Black now has very direct threats to the white king, yet all is not lost.

21 Vaisman – Liangov
Sandomierz 1976 (analysis)



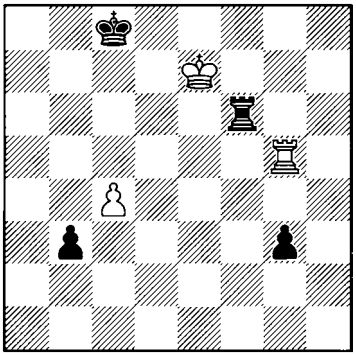
Black to play – In his annotations to this game Vaisman gave the above position as winning for White.

22 Andersson – Browne
Siegen (ol) 1970 (pawn inserted on f4)



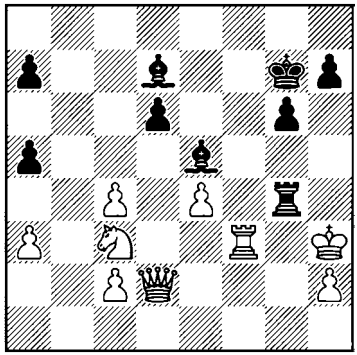
White to play – Black has just played 1...♖xa4. It looks as if between this invasion from the side and the gravity drawing the passed d-pawn towards the first rank, White will surely lose. Actually the situation is not that grim, and White can still keep the balance with the correct defence.

23 Pritchett – Aagaard
Oban 2005



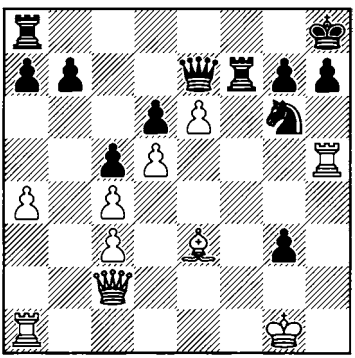
White to play – In mutual sudden death time trouble I decided to stir things up against my experienced opponent with a rook sacrifice. With the clock ticking towards defeat, he did not manage to find the correct defence.

25 Bitman – Alexeev
USSR 1969 (analysis)



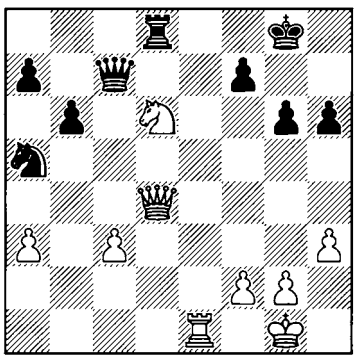
White to play – Black has sacrificed his queen for a very direct attack on the white king. In the game White declined the sacrifice and lost instantly, but maybe all hope is not gone?

24 Grigorian – Romanishin
USSR 1971



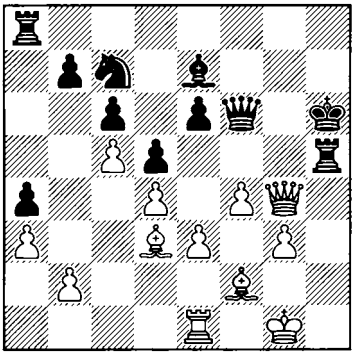
Black to play – White has launched a fierce attack on the kingside, sacrificing a number of pawns on the way. He has achieved significant gains, such as the pawn on e6 as well as the pressure on g6 and h7. Not surprisingly Black crumbled under the pressure.

26 Minev – Keller
Bern 1977



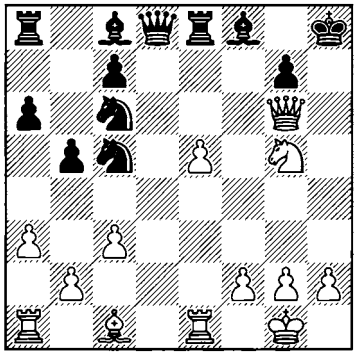
Black to play – White is in a nasty pin, but with his latest move, 1.♕d5-d4, he has created real counterplay through threats to the black king.

27 Geller – Notaros
Novi Sad 1978



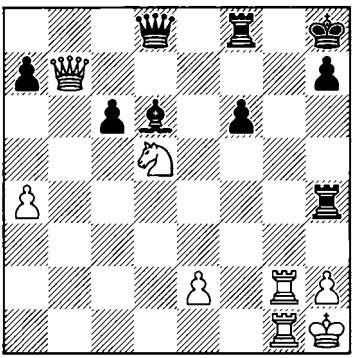
White to play – The great tactician Efim Geller has sacrificed a rook for an attack, but it is not clear that it has materialised. Black will surely fend off the attack and soon capitalise on his defensive efforts?

29 Lane – Adams
London 1993



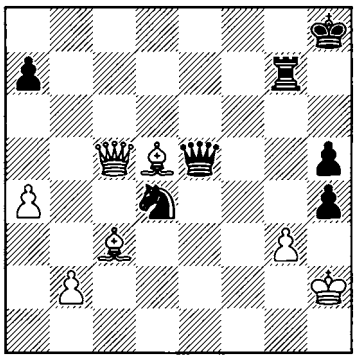
Black to play – White has sacrificed two pieces and went on to sensationally beat his famous opponent. But a closer look reveals that Black could have defended.

28 Sherbakov – Rublevsky
Cheliabinsk 2000 (analysis)



Black to play – In a sublime effort by Ruslan Sherbakov, he managed moves ahead to foresee this very promising position he could have reached with White, as well as Black's defence!

30 Dehesdin – Aagaard
Cappelle la Grande 2005



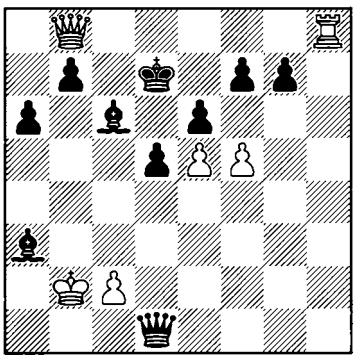
White to play – With less than 10 seconds on my clock, I later managed to mate White close to move 100. I was particularly proud of the play that had led to this position. But maybe I had not seen everything?

Chapter 4

Level 1

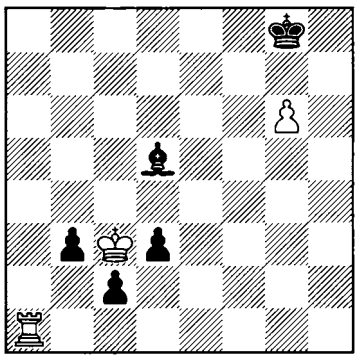
Welcome to level one. You guide on this trip will be your ability to find candidate moves/ideas and to spot the differences between seemingly equal opportunities. We have a lot to see, so expect to move quite smoothly through the gallery, which consists of both modern and older artists, at their best and worst. Be prepared to open your mind and do not think that you can guess the solutions – the author has prepared trapdoors everywhere...

31 Velimirovic – A. Sokolov
Bar 1997



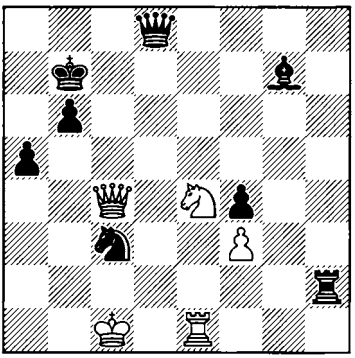
White to play – Black has just sacrificed a bishop with check, and besides this enjoys a great material advantage. Still White has a faint hope supported by his threat of mate, death and disaster on the 8th rank.

32 Gdanski – Se. Ivanov
Poland 1990



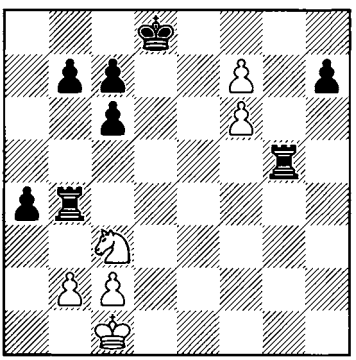
White to play – With three connected passed pawns Black probably did not feel that it was too unfair when he managed to win this game. What do you think?

33 Goldin – Ryabov
USSR 1972



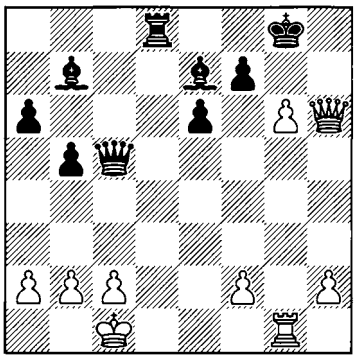
White to play – White is under a lot of pressure and surely down and out materially. Still there is a simple way to make it home safe and dry.

34 Peresypkin – Romanishin
USSR 1972



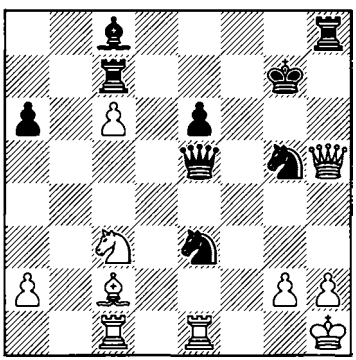
Black to play – We are at the end of a fabulous combination that has created an unstoppable passed pawn. In recognition of his opponent's achievement, Black resigned.

35 A. Guseinov – Balajan
USSR 1975



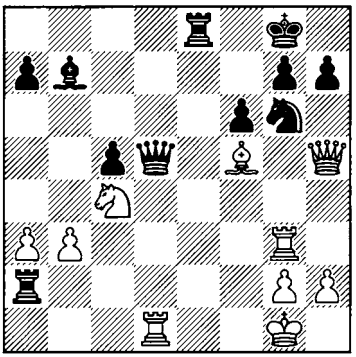
Black to play – Today the name Guseinov is synonymous with a talented young grandmaster from Azerbaijan. In this example another Guisenov has benefited from a Torre-style double bishop sacrifice. The mating threats made his prudent opponent resign.

36 Ermenkov – Bischoff
Novi Sad (ol) 1990



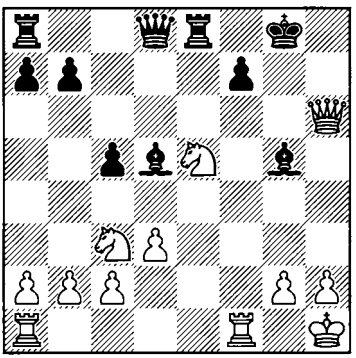
White to play – The white queen is in trouble, but the game is not finished yet. Still a fate worse than death (being killed twice?) is threatening and only with a cunning combination could White escape.

37 Bruzon – Timman
Curacao 2005



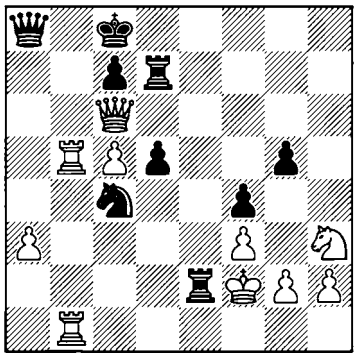
White to play – In connection with the release of "Curacao 1962" Timman played a mini-match "on location" against the strongest Latin American player, Bruzon from Cuba. Timman did well in the rapid games, and Bruzon well in the ordinary games. This rapid game was won quickly by Timman. Improve on White's play.

38 Landa – Gagarin
Bratislava 1990 (analysis)



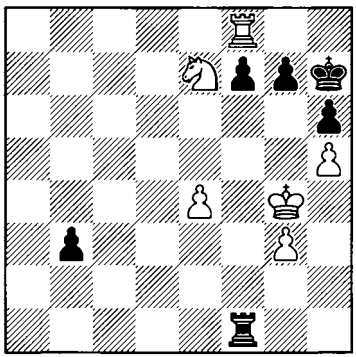
White to play – White is faced with a strong double attack. Black had completely relied on this position and White avoided it. Looking at it, who wouldn't?

39 Starck – Thormann
East Germany 1977



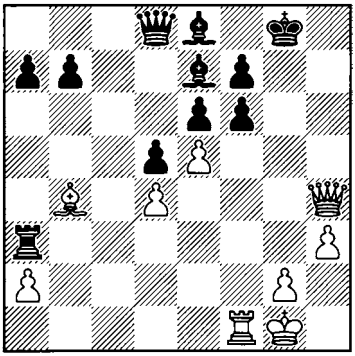
White to play – It always hurts the most when you have three legal moves, and only two real possibilities, and you still play the wrong one. In the game White was not punished for his indiscretion.

40 Miles – L.A. Schneider
Philadelphia 1980



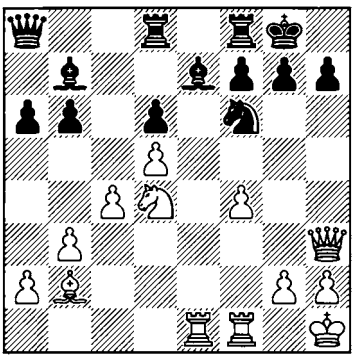
Black to play – The late English grandmaster has played quite well to win a piece. In the game he managed to clinch the full point already on the next move. But actually Black can still draw this position.

41 Magarashvili – Ikitishvili
USSR 1980



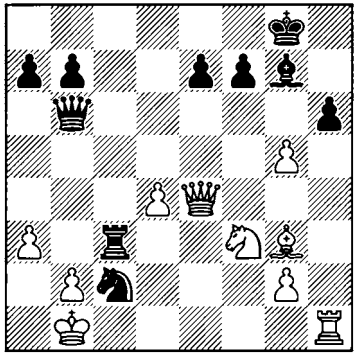
Black to play – Another of those sad resignations. Black decided to throw in the towel in a position where experienced defenders would still be looking for ideas.

42 Zatulovskaya – Grinfeld
USSR 1981



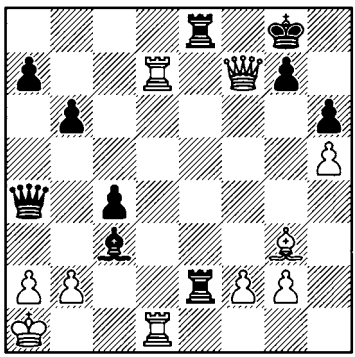
Black to play – White has seemingly ingeniously sacrificed a knight on d5 to open up lines for her pieces. In the game Black sank like a stone.

43 Dahlberg – Hillary
USA 1982 (analysis)



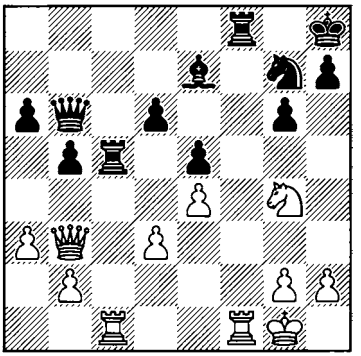
White to play – This game was a splendid effort by Hillary, but at one moment White could have defended better. Though Black should still be able to secure himself a clear advantage, it would not be too unlikely that in practical play this position could have occurred.

44 Miles – Pritchett
London 1982



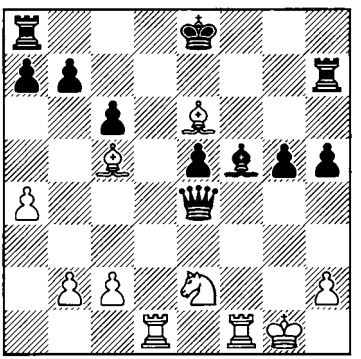
Black to play – A famous game that soon ended abruptly. Pritchett, the first Scot to make it to IM, chose the wrong move here. However, his real strength was revealed when he claimed the Scottish Championship in 1977 and 2005!

45 Kratkovski – Lapshis
USSR 1982



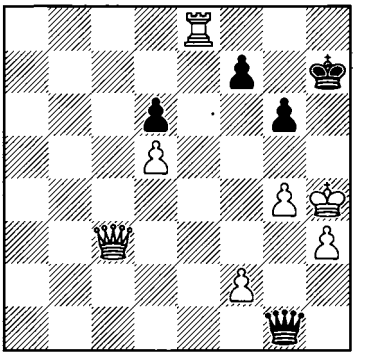
White to play – White has probably been a little bit too optimistic about his attacking chances and in the course of the game lost a piece. But he can still pull a little fat white rabbit out of his hat.

46 L. Barczay – Auskalari
Correspondence 1982



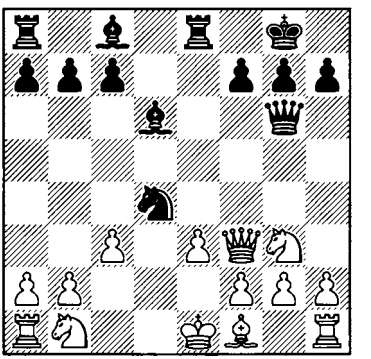
Black to play – White has sacrificed his queen and went on to win in glorious style. However, in a correspondence game one could have expected Black to defend better.

47 Najdorf – Kurtic
Mar del Plata 1984



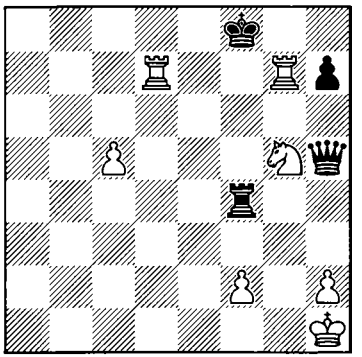
Black to play – Don Miguel, here in his later days, has managed to rob his opponent of a full rook. Still Black had not yet given up on all hope and found a neat way to save the game.

48 Srinivas – Ravikumar
India 1984



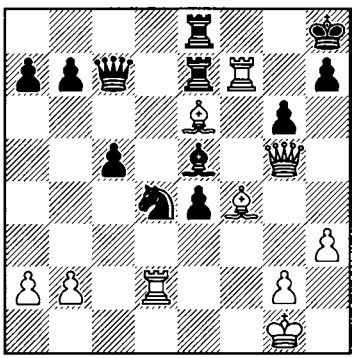
White to play – We are dealing with a classic. The chances that you have seen this combination somewhere before are high. But maybe not everything is as it should be.

49 Ivanchuk – Chuchelov
Warsaw 2005



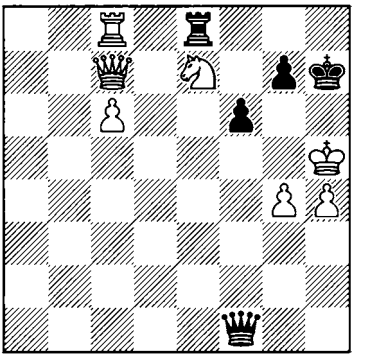
Black to play – Vassily Ivanchuk is well known in chess circles for his passion for the game, which makes him the most active top player today. Here he is trying to defend his 2004 European Championship. Though he failed it was not because of lack of luck, as here Black resigned.

50 Rausis – Gofshtein
Sofia 1988



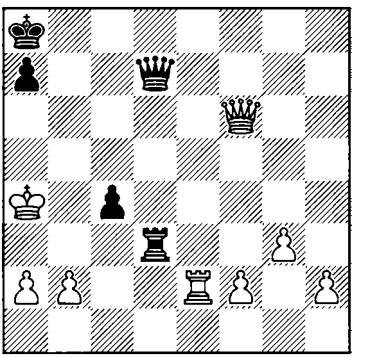
Black to play – White has just flashed out 1.♗c4-e6!, which impressed his opponent so much that he annotated the game for *Chess Informant*. However, he did not include how he could have defended the position.

51 Van der Sterren – Douven
Amsterdam 1989



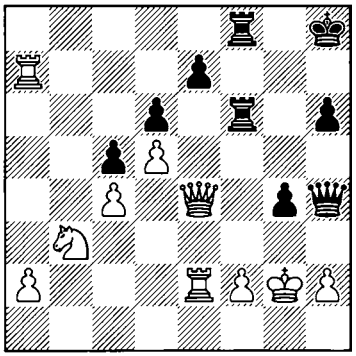
Black to play – Black is certainly in a tight squeeze here. How did he manage to get himself out of trouble?

52 W. Watson – Ciric
San Bernardino 1991



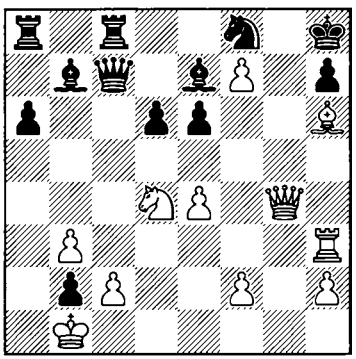
White to play – Those checks, those chicks... Black is three pawns down, but seems to have the white king on the ropes.

53 Kovalevsky – Gagarin
Russia 1991



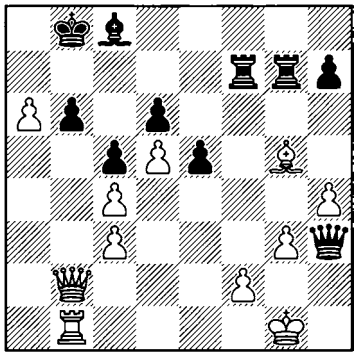
White to play – Black has sacrificed a piece for threats against the white king. In the game White "swam like an axe" as the Russians like to say it. Curiously, this incorrect combination was still featured in *Anthology of Chess Combinations 3*.

54 Soto – Colina
Havana 1994



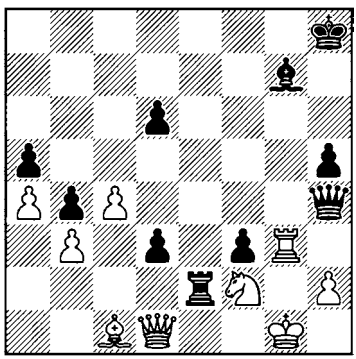
Black to play – "The only problem with the Sicilian Defence is that you sometimes get mated." So wrote Danish IM Erling Mortensen. This was Black's fate in this game.

55 Gulko – Hernandez
Mondariz Balneario 1997



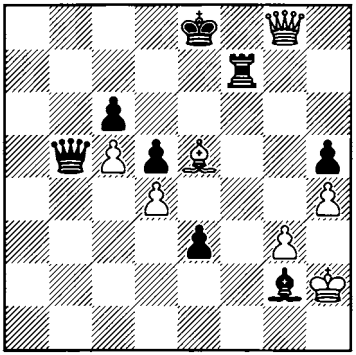
Black to play – Boris Gulko is that rare breed of grandmaster who publish really well-annotated games, often diminishing his own efforts. He won this game in nice style, but also found a refutation to his attack.

56 Smetankin – Sergeev
Poland 2001



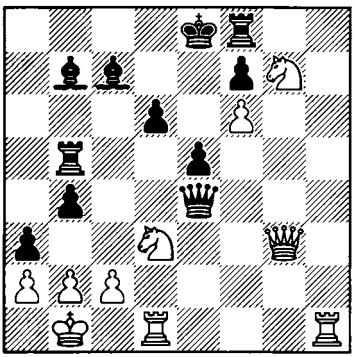
White to play – Black has just advanced his d-pawn to open up for his bishop. White has one, and only one, way to save the game. But remember to see all of Black's possibilities as well!

57 Dreev – Gelfand
Russia – World Cup (Blitz) 2005



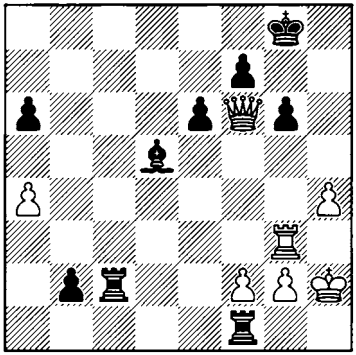
Black to play – The worst situation that you can find yourself in when you play chess at a high level, is when you have to make a choice between two equally sound-looking moves in just a few seconds, and thousands of dollars can be gained or lost in that short space of time. Well, thinking about it, maybe it's not that bad!

58 Cheparinov – Nikolov
Pleven 2005



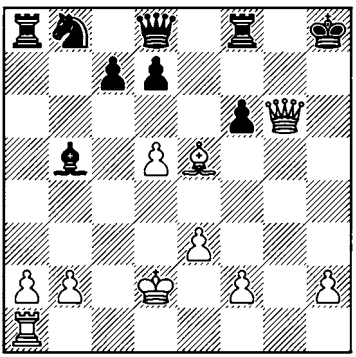
Black to play – Nikolov had some bad luck in the 2005 edition of the Bulgarian Championship. Here he is left with that old question – two squares, one king: Where to go?

59 Smolen – Palo
Cappelle la Grande 2005



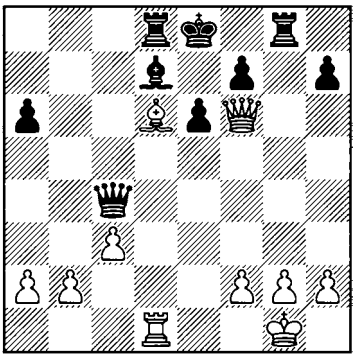
White to play – Born in Sarajevo but raised in Denmark, Davor Palo is the youngest Danish grandmaster and a player of quite substantial talent. Here, however, he gave White an extra chance by advancing his b-pawn prematurely. Instead of taking his chance, White resigned.

60 Gutman – Vitolinsh
Riga 1979



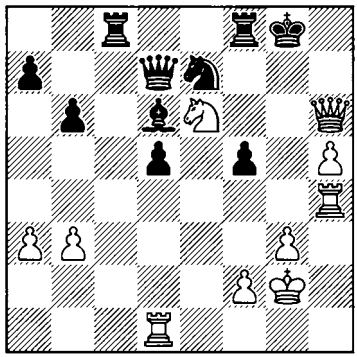
Black to play – Vitolinsh was well known inside the Soviet Union for both his great level of creativity and his mental torments. Here he found a very creative solution to his mounting problems.

61 Gimpel – Shubin
USSR 1977



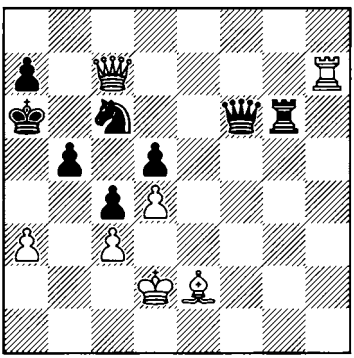
Black to play – Attacks usually happen mainly on squares of one colour. Here White is in total control over the dark squares.

63 Fridman – Kabatianski
Arnhem (rapid) 2006



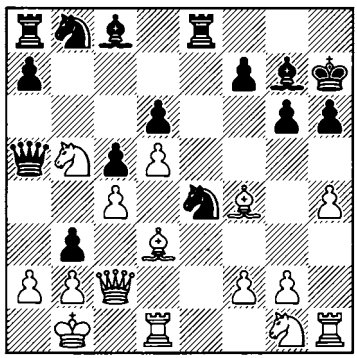
Black to play – White has (rather desperately) sacrificed a bishop to generate some threats. As this was a rapid game Black did not manage to solve his problems, and White's decision was rewarded.

62 Inarkiev – Volkov
Kazan 2005



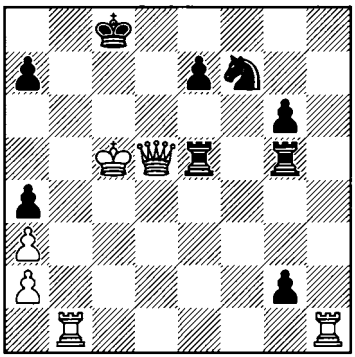
White to play – Ernesto Inarkiev is the latest in a long line of Russian grandmasters helped in their development by Mark Dvoretsky. Here he has sacrificed a pawn against another rising Russian star, Sergey Volkov, but needs to find justification quickly before things start to go wrong.

64 Tozer – Anagnostopoulos
London 1991



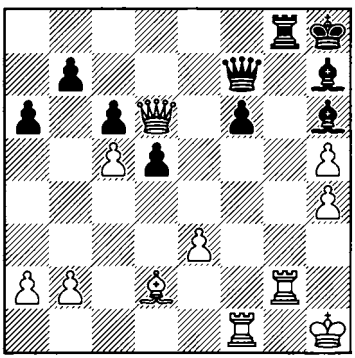
White to play – Black has just sprung a surprise on his opponent (guess what) and thus changed the face of the struggle. Now White needs to find the best move a few times to survive.

65 Kuznetsov – Kotkov
Russia 1993



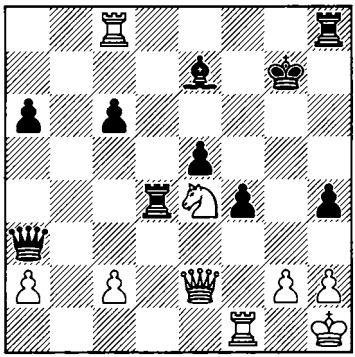
White to play – White is up by quite a load of material, but unfortunately this is a very temporary situation. Both ...♖xd5 and ...gxh1=♕ are threatened.

66 Korchnoi – Sakaev
Copenhagen 2005 (analysis)



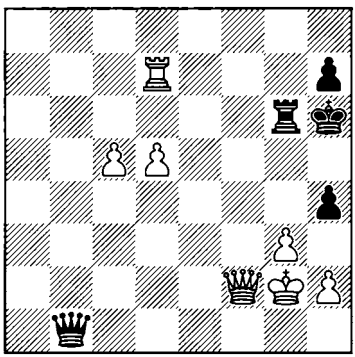
Black to play – Instead of playing glamorously, as in the game, the strongest veteran in the world could have caused his heavyweight grandmaster colleague real grievances with 1.♕g3-d6!, reaching this position.

67 Tolnai – Kir. Georgiev
Saint John 1988 (analysis)



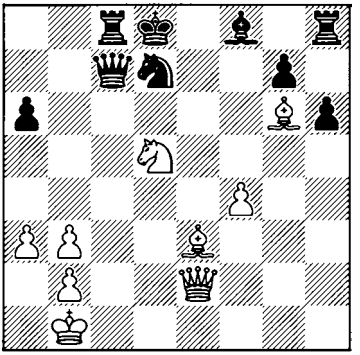
Black to play – Playing the Black side of the sharp Poisoned Pawn variation in the Sicilian, Georgiev at one point sacrificed a rook to avoid this position, rewarding his decision with a double exclam.

68 Tiberger – Drelinkiewicz
Poland 1970



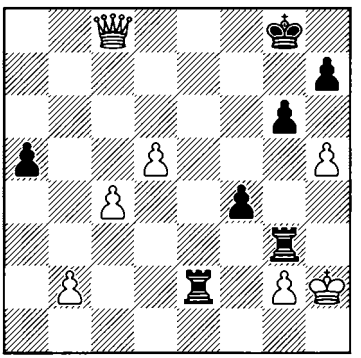
Black to play – With a few pawns fewer and some general troubles with the king, a swift solution is needed.

69 Aagaard – Kritz
Isle of Man 2005 (pawns added on a3 and h6)



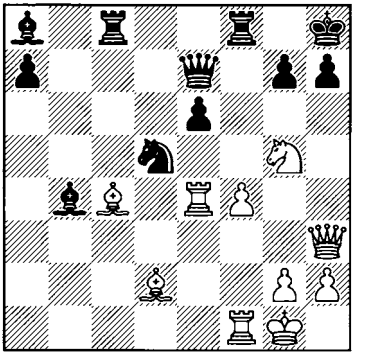
Black to play – In my game with this likeable young German GM a position close to this arose in my calculation. I forgot about it because of the checks on h1 and a5. However, here there are no such checks and Black suddenly has only one defence at his disposal.

70 Nataf – Wang Yue
Internet 2004



Black to play – Checks are simple, they limit our opportunities. But then again, you never wish for your tax return to be checked, or for your wife/husband to check up on you.

71 Epishin – Tregubov
St Petersburg 2004 (analysis)



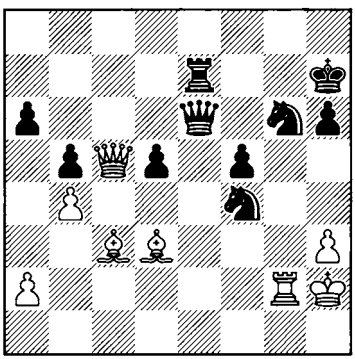
Black to play – While analysing this game, Dautov spotted a fine defence to the numerous problems Black is facing. If you can solve this you are truly ready to advance to Level 2.

Chapter 5

Level 2

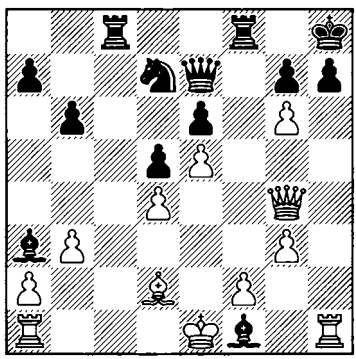
Welcome to Level 2. Your guide on this level will be Calculation, the goddess of good results. If you follow her every instruction, and pay attention to the hints she will give you, you are bound to enjoy your trip through this level. You may find many obstacles here, but persistence will eventually get you through.

72 J. Littlewood – Perkins
England 1975



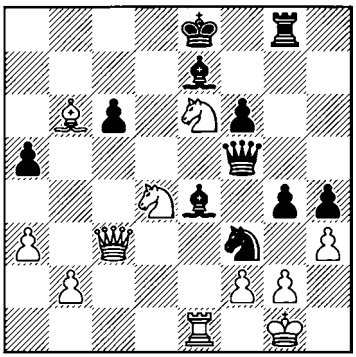
White to play – Being down two pawns and currently in a fork White is in real trouble. In the game White escaped by the back door.

73 Gofshtein – Shchekachev
France 1996



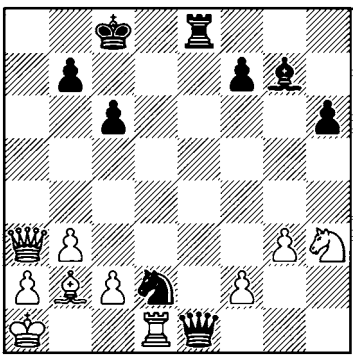
Black to play – We are facing one of Gofshtein's many sacrificial rampages. Here Black failed in his defensive efforts and White struck gold.

74 Shirov – Kramnik
Novgorod 1994



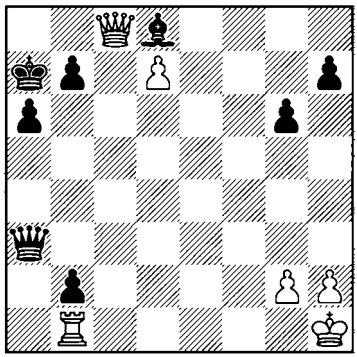
White to play – Black has just delivered a strong knight sacrifice and left White with five possible replies. He can take with the pawn, the knight and the queen, as well as move his king to the left or right.

75 Mitov – Popov
Albena 1977



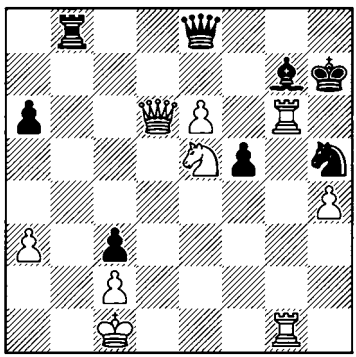
White to play – Black is a pawn down, but being out for blood he has invested all his strength in creating a back rank mate.

76 Marrero – Perez
Havana 2005



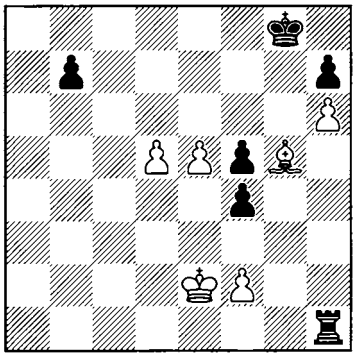
White to play – In this non-standard position Black has two pawns for the exchange, and good prospects should the two advanced pawns be exchanged. Instead White can use clever tactics to solve all problems.

77 Timofeev – Lugovoi
Kazan 2005



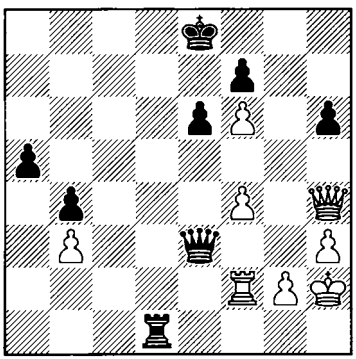
Black to play – One of the great recent additions to the world of chess has been the Russian Super Championship, a tournament played with some invited players and some players qualified from semi-finals. In 2005 the semi-finals included players such as Khalifman, Volkov and Timofeev. In this game the latter was a bit lucky in his qualification efforts.

78 Belozerov – Van Ketel
Saint Vincent 2005



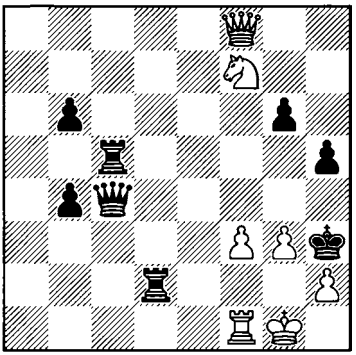
Black to play – White has sacrificed the exchange and just made the time control. It is not easy to know if the grandmaster had been in time trouble, but clearly his amateur opponent was not, as he now managed to save this seemingly horrible endgame with a precise defence.

79 Kiriakov – Thorfinnsson
Saint Vincent 2005



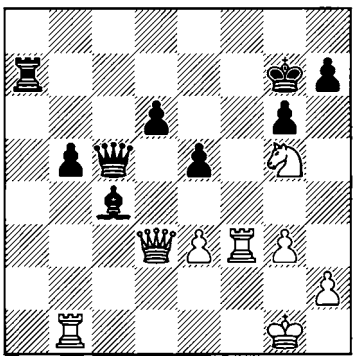
White to play – The grandmaster had been suffering for the whole game, and when his chance finally came, he was not ready to take it.

80 Jelen – Larsen
Ljubljana 1977



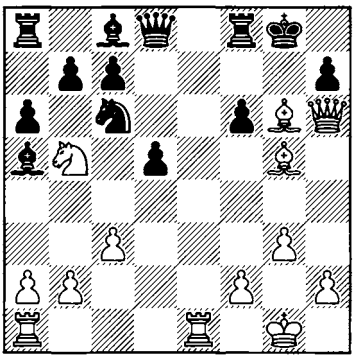
White to play – The black king is seemingly in grave danger. In reality it is White who suffers. White could have made a draw here, but only through the absolutely best defence. One thing is to find the first move or two, a much harder task is to foretell your opponent's ideas and be able to defend against them. White failed at that.

81 Portisch – Forintos
Hungary 1971



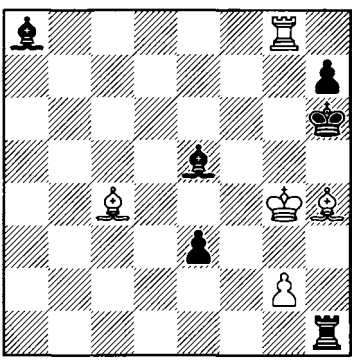
Black to play – Queen sacrifices are spectacular. They immediately catch our attention. Here Portisch has managed to catch the attention of his opponent and, while he was not looking, Lajos stole the full point.

82 Chudinovsky – Nikulin
USSR 1982



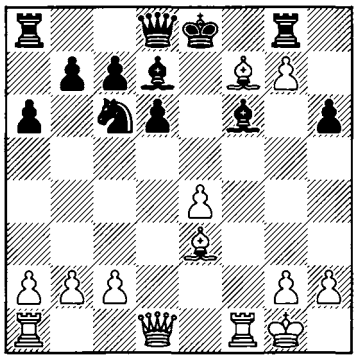
Black to play – Sometimes things are not really developing the way you want them to. Here Black would surely prefer not to be in this position. But he is.

83 Bator – Bareev
Saltsjöbaden 1987



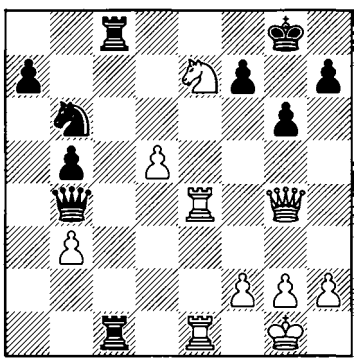
Black to play – Saltsjöbaden is a lovely picturesque place on the outskirts of Stockholm where a few famous tournaments have been played. I was there once when I took the wrong train after a rough night on the town. In the position we have a very young Evgeny Bareev in deep trouble against a local junior.

84 Zezulkin – Kozakov
Poland 1993



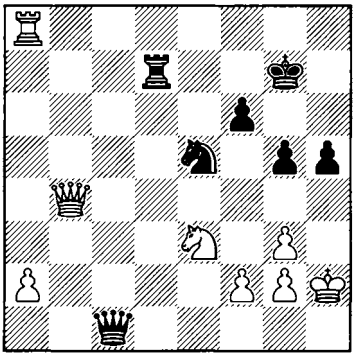
Black to play – Disasters are things that happen to other people – and you are not me... Here Black was (not so) suddenly physically assaulted in the most brutal way.

85 Pedzich – Shirov
Santiago 1990



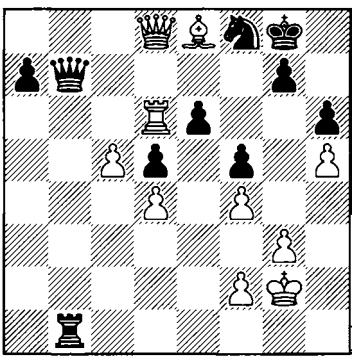
Black to play – Alexei Shirov was a very talented young man, who later won the right to play a match for the World Championship with Kasparov and made it all the way to the final of the 2000 FIDE Knock-out World Championship. Here we are investigating his younger days, where he has three ways to go with the king.

86 Martinez Alpizar – Bezanilla
Cuba 1995



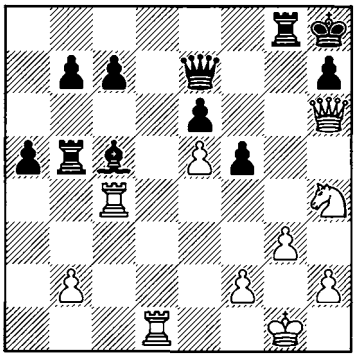
Black to play – Here we have one of the wonderful pieces of chess art that would have been unknown to us if Nogueiras had not sent it to *Chess Informant*. Black, who is under the cosh, finds a very nice solution to his problems down to the tiniest detail.

87 Mikhalchishin – Jeric
Slovenia 2000



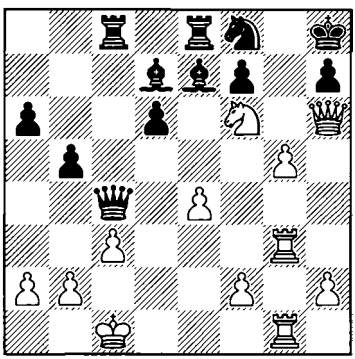
Black to play – White's pieces are coming close to the black monarch. In the game they were allowed to deliver the lethal punch.

88 Prusikhin – Buhmann
Griesheim 2003



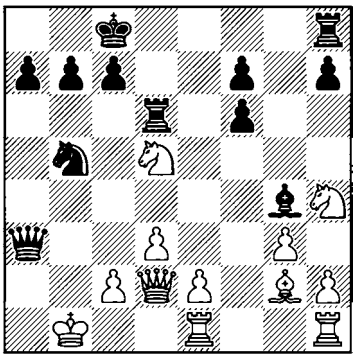
White to play – White is a pawn down, with a knight that is seemingly out of play, while the attack has come to nothing. A gruelling defence seems to be what the future offers.

89 Anand – Wegner
London 1987 (analysis)



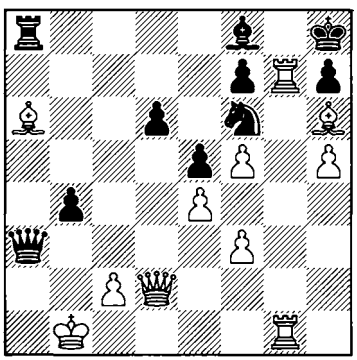
Black to play – When I first encountered this position in my analysis of the game, it looked to me as if White was crashing through like a herd of elephants through a china shop.

90 Danielsen – Vea
Copenhagen 2005



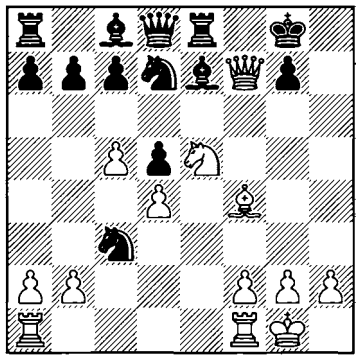
White to play – Defence is many things. It is not always about not losing, at times it is also about winning. Here White has accepted a piece sacrifice and could have forced a win.

91 Lopez Martinez – G. Guseinov
Warsaw 2005



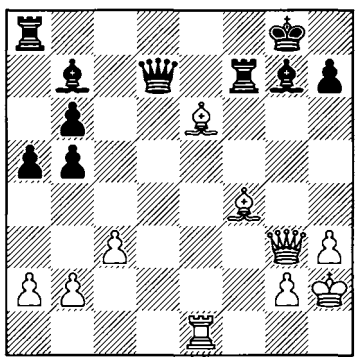
Black to play – In this game between two up and coming players White has just surprised his opponent with 1.♗d3-a6. How should Black react to this move, which verges between logic and insanity?

92 Dvoretsky – Raskin
Moscow 1967



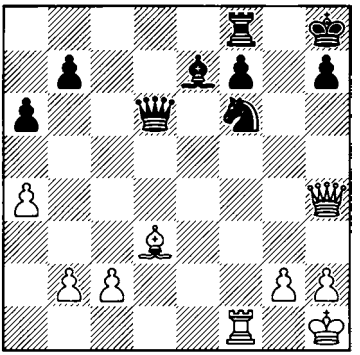
Black to play – I am a fan of Mark Dvoretsky's books aswell as of the man. I was therefore thrilled when he offered to let me use a few examples from his card files for this book. I accepted one (exercise 188), but also found this example that I have not seen in his books. Black now needs to choose, and choose well.

93 Ang. Hernandez – Moreno Ramon
Cuba 1994



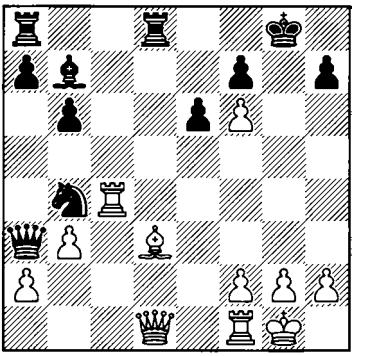
Black to play – Once again we have one of those examples where several moves seems to be possible, but only one suffices. Black is a rook up and should not be losing.

94 Yudasin – Arnason
Novi Sad (ol) 1990



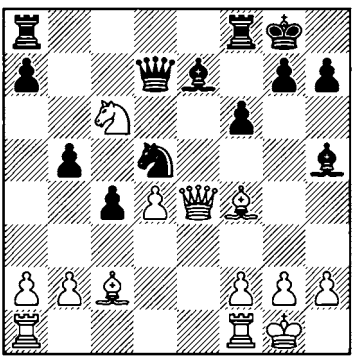
Black to play – White is clearly aiming at a ♖xf6 and ♕xh7 mate combination. However, Black has not exhausted all his resources yet and can stay in the game with accurate defence.

96 Bellon Lopez – Kosmo
Stockholm 2004



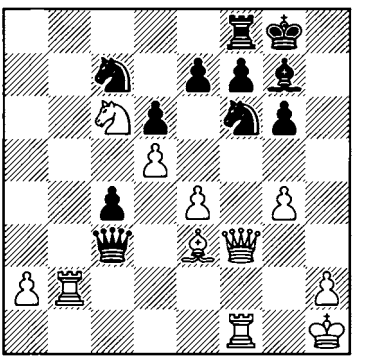
Black to play – I was sitting next to Bellon during this game, where he went on one of his standard savage assaults. As so often he was successful, however, Black could have defended better here.

95 Kempinski – Ogaard
Saint Vincent 2005



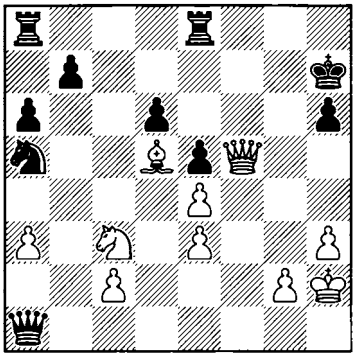
Black to play – Once again a game from the recent European Cup. A true feast of opportunities seems to await White, still Black would have been able to keep the balance with an accurate defence.

97 V. Georgiev – Bosboom
Wijk aan Zee 2005



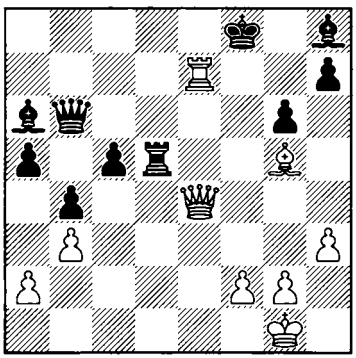
Black to play – White has just sacrificed a rook with an innocent-looking knight move. Black now drank from the drains, something no man should force himself to do.

98 Melao – Blank Goncalves
Sao Paulo 1995 (analysis)



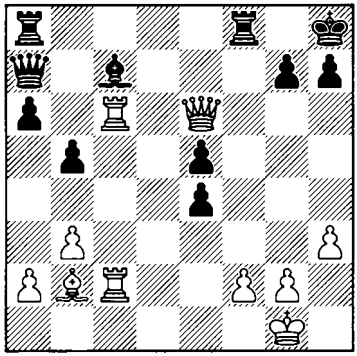
Black to play – This exercise comes from a long piece of analysis that is not really relevant for the evaluation of the game, but still offers an excellent exercise.

99 Zvjaginsev – Khalifman
Moscow 2005



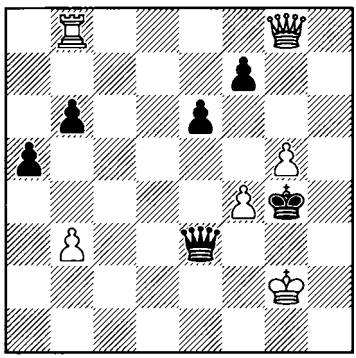
Black to play – Zvjaginsev made headlines with this game. Not because he sacrificed a piece and Khalifman misplayed the defence, but because he played 1.e4 c5 2.♘a3!?.

100 Sasikiran – Sakaev
Copenhagen 2003



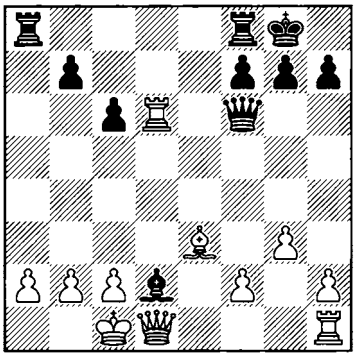
Black to play – During the 2003 edition of the Politiken Cup, the traditional summer open in Copenhagen, I was running the commentary. When at one point this position appeared on the top board someone in the audience remarked that Black could escape from his problems in a rather neat way.

101 Donner – Unzicker
West Germany 1971 (analysis)



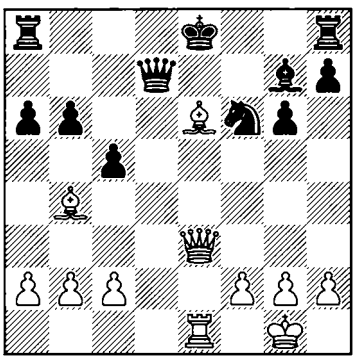
White to play – This game between two of Western Europe's post-war giants was agreed drawn two moves before this position could have occurred. Though this result was correct, Black should probably have tested his opponent none the less, as his threats are harder to meet than it looks at first.

102 Chernishev – Ostrivny
USSR 1968



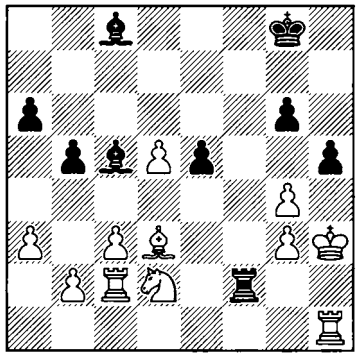
White to play – With the sparkling sacrifice 1...♗a5-d2† Black successfully managed to upset the coordination of the white pieces. But then again, who would not have lost his way here?

103 Borodiansky – Bobolovich
USSR 1972



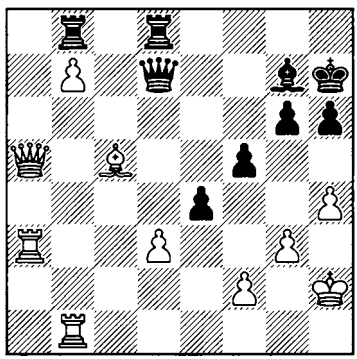
Black to play – White has sacrificed a rook for rather obvious reasons. Now it is Black's turn to turn off all channels and leave the world for a moment to find the best defence.

104 Mastilovich – Belic
Yugoslavia 1976



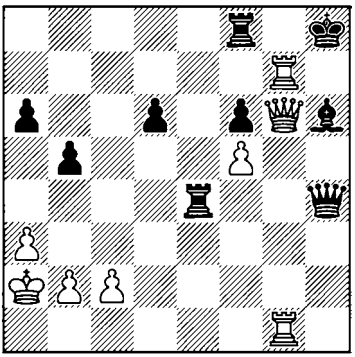
White to play – Black has a very dangerous attack against the white king. It is now your job to find the only way not to lose the game immediately.

105 Kaminski – Stefansson
Cappelle la Grande 1993



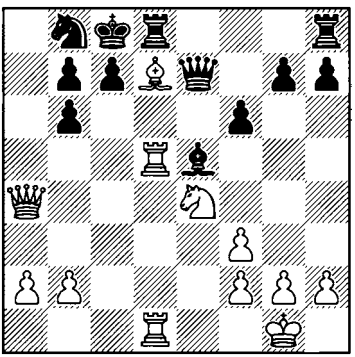
Black to play – Hannes Stefansson has for some time been the strongest active Icelandic grandmaster. Here he found a fantastic defence in a difficult position.

106 C.M. Lopez – Villegas
Cuba 1996 (though maybe it looked different...)



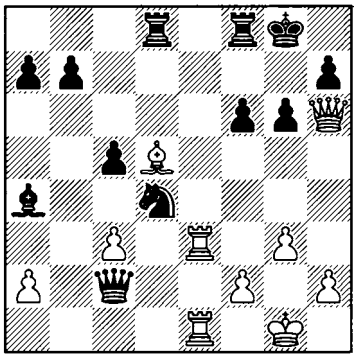
Black to play – Before the days of e-mail we had the post office. Back then something went wrong with this example, posted from Cuba to Belgrade and printed in *Chess Informant*. In this position White has just played 1.♕h5-g6 instead of the game's supposed 1.♖h7†, which I just cannot make sense of...

107 Shportko – Kashenko
Correspondence 1974 (analysis)



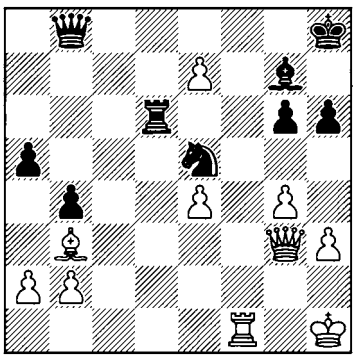
Black to play – In the game White did not play this 1.♗b5-d7†, but instead forced resignation with 1.♘c5! However, it is still interesting to see why he did not give the bishop check.

108 Botvinnik – Smyslov
Moscow (18) 1958 (analysis)



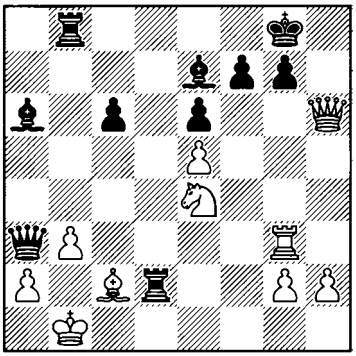
Black to play – While going over this game a long time ago, I noticed that Botvinnik gave this position as winning in his annotations. I did not really trust it, and a few minutes invested found a clever defence for Black. Later I saw that I was far from the first to spot this defence.

109 Di Benedetto – Lafuente
Buenos Aires 2005



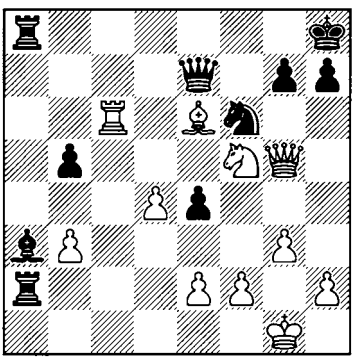
Black to play– The passed pawn on e7 is clearly a thorn in Black's flesh, and in the game he proved incapable of dealing with it. However Black can force an immediate draw here.

110 Exercise from analysis of a line in the Sicilian



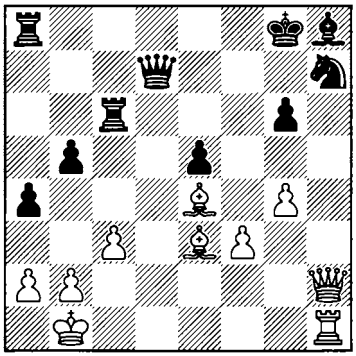
Black to play – When looking for improvements for the update of *Experts vs. the Sicilian*, I stumbled upon this position in my analysis. Here White has sacrificed a rook, but Black can reach an advantageous endgame with the best defensive sequence.

111 Kozul – Yusupov
Belgrade 1989 (analysis)



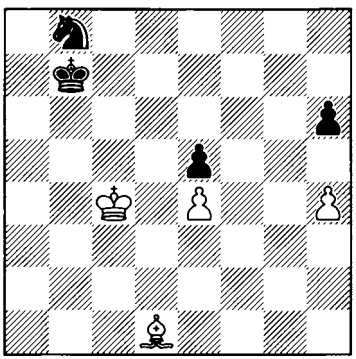
Black to play – The two players in this example are among the most interesting of their generation. Yusupov was by far the stronger, but Kozul had his great moments, this game being one of them. In the game White could have sacrificed a rook to end up in this position, where Black has a stunning defensive idea Kozul missed in his annotations.

112 Kuzmin – Alterman
Herson 1989



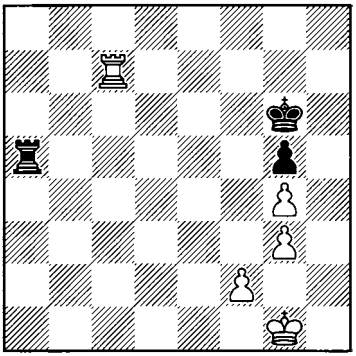
Black to play – White has spectacularly sacrificed a rook for an attack. Alterman analysed this game carefully for *Chess Informant* with his trainer, but they did not spot the only defensive idea.

113 E. Berg – Barkhagen
Gothenburg 2004



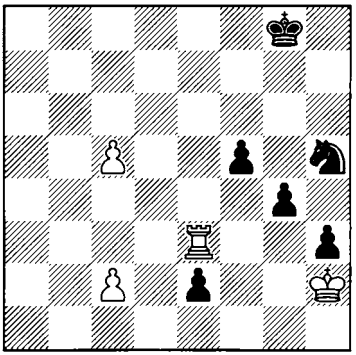
Black to play – Endgames are simple, but difficult. Here Black went astray from the path leading to freedom and, more importantly, a draw.

114 Morozevich – Kir. Georgiev
Calvia (ol) 2004



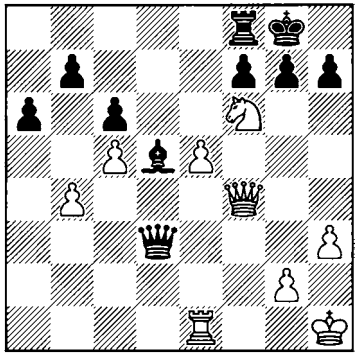
Black to play – In *Excelling at Chess* I went after Kiril Georgiev a bit because of his deficient abilities in the endgame. So it is nice sometimes to be proven wrong and see him defend an endgame two pawns down against world-class opposition.

115 Szabo – Petrosian
Saltsjöbaden 1952 (analysis)



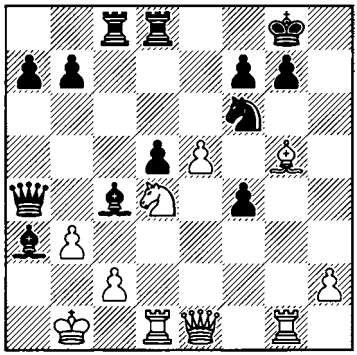
Black to play – Our first book in Quality Chess was *Learn from the Legends* by Marin. Rarely has a new publisher been blessed with such a talented writer. The book was nominated for the BCF's book of the year and won www.ChessCafe.com's book of the year. Here we are deep into a sideline to the 40th move of a classic game from Marin's chapter on Petrosian.

116 Kreiman – Kaidanov
USA 1994



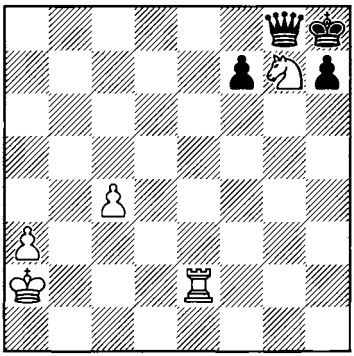
Black to play – The usual question. Take or not. It is all about accuracy. What would you suggest is the most precise?

117 Matulovic – Indjic
Yugoslavia 1995 (analysis)



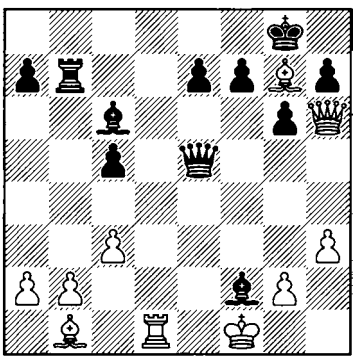
Black to play – Matulovic wrote in his annotations that White was winning here. I feel compelled to exclaim: "You can call names all you want; I have the reader on my side!"

118 Exercise based on a study by Przepiorka



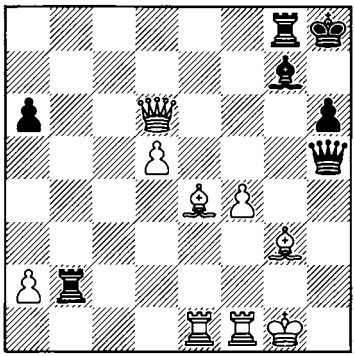
Black to play – Mark Dvoretsky invented this variation of a famous study (in which the pawn was on a4) for his lectures. At one of those yours truly found an imaginative defensive move.

119 Bartrina – Ghitescu
Olot 1974



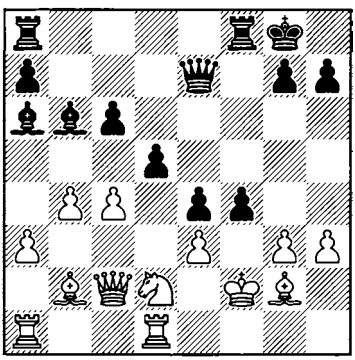
Black to play – I confess that this position has been used in a few other books, but I like it so much that I could not resist including it here. How can Black save the game?

120 Thorsteins – Granda Zuniga
Rio de Janeiro 1982



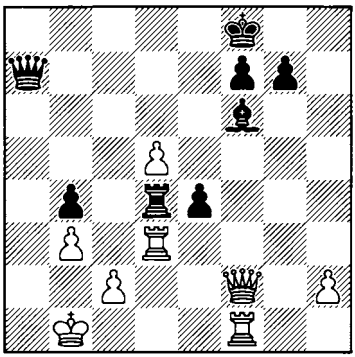
White to play – Granda Zuniga is one of the most original grandmasters to come out of South America. Here he is in the middle of a tactical onslaught.

121 Rajkovic – Abramovic
Bela Crkva 1987



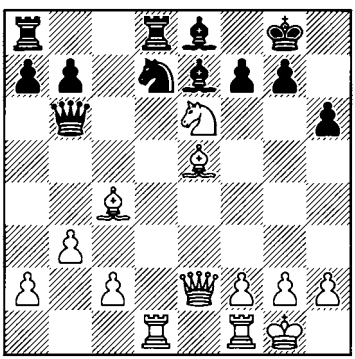
White to play – Do you like having pieces sacrificed against you? No, I did not think so. But then your opponents are not out to please you. Here White has had a knight thrust upon him and must now find the great defence on his own.

122 Goldberg – Kovalev
Berlin 1987



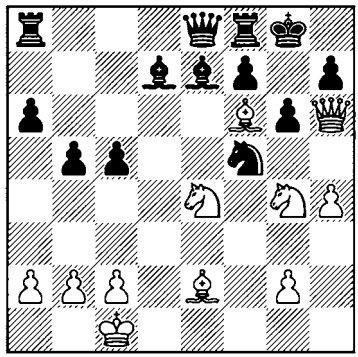
White to play – Black has just sacrificed the exchange in what would have been one of the greatest combinations of the 20th century, if not for one little detail.

123 Abramovic – Marinkovic
Kladovo 1996



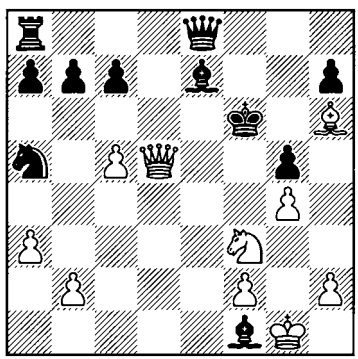
Black to play – We have gotten ourselves sacrificed against again, haven't we? The reason why defence is deemed more difficult than attack is that you must foresee all of your opponent's ideas, while in attacking you can choose your paths more freely. In order to to decide if he should take on e6 or e5, Black needs to understand what his opponent is up to and then find the only correct defence.

124 Duckworth – Silman
USA 1988



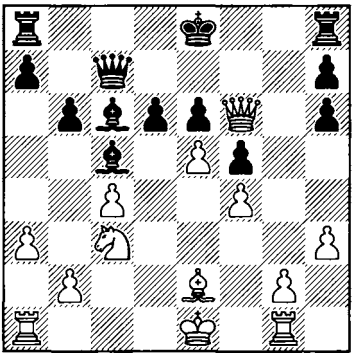
Black to play – In his notes to this game, IM Jeremy Silman gives this position as part of a line leading to a draw. However, Black is actually winning here. Can you find the line that would have entered chess history, had it happened in the game?

125 Pribyl – Stulik
USSR 1969 (analysis)



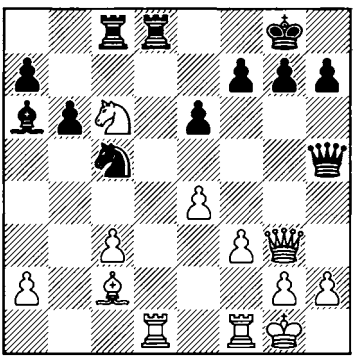
Black to play – While going over this game, I noticed that Black could improve his defensive play with a simple move, but then also that White had the very strong advance g2-g4, creating the threat of mate in one.

126 Krasenkow – Dydyshko
Lubniewice 2005



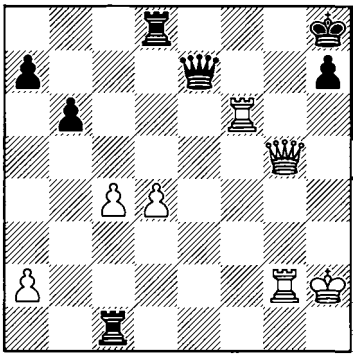
Black to play – Krasenkow has had a yo-yo career. Less than 10 years ago he made it almost to the very top, then a few years later he went below 2600. Now he is looking strong again and is back in the top 30. Here he won a nice game in his adoptive Poland, but not without help from his opponent.

127 Kaplan – Huguet
Skopje (ol) 1972



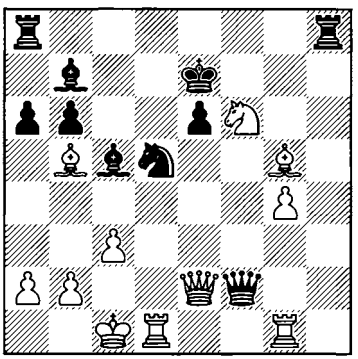
Black to play – Both players have several pieces hanging. How should Black behave in this desperado scenario?

128 Rukavina – Kishnev
Sibenik 1987



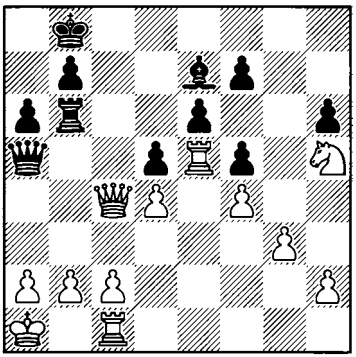
Black to play – White's king is completely open, but because of the active white pieces, it is the black king that is in danger.

129 Edlund – Z. Peng
Stockholm 2004



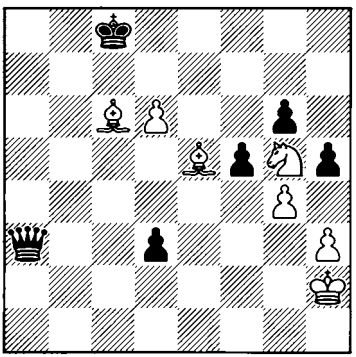
Black to play – One of the most difficult situations to navigate in is when there are as many threats as there are here. Peng, the strongest female player in Holland, did (for once) not navigate well in this position, and only because her opponent fared even worse did she manage to take the full point.

130 Acers – Crockett
USA 1980



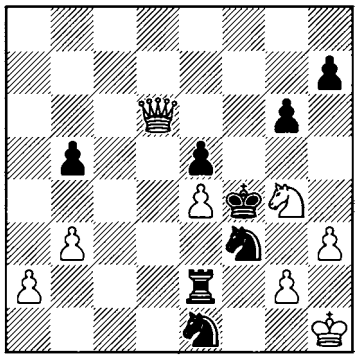
Black to play – White has just accepted the gift of a full rook. Black should now find a few accurate moves and he would be happy, but instead he managed to lose the game quite quickly.

131 Goldin – Terentiev
USSR 1982



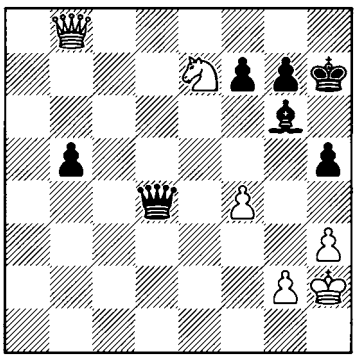
Black to play – Some examples are so wonderful that you suspect they were actually composed. In this case I trust *Chess Informant* and congratulate Terentiev on his great performance in saving this seemingly hopeless position. But here, more than twenty years later, I think this would come too late. I would much rather congratulate you, but then you have to solve it first!

132 Anand – Shirov
Buenos Aires 1994 (analysis)



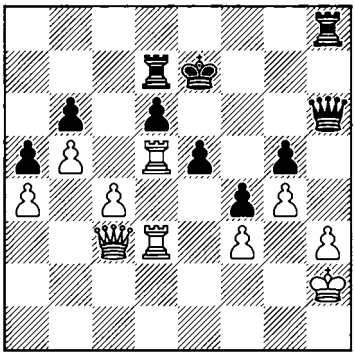
White to play – Anand avoided this position, convinced that it was lost for him. Though he did play soundly in the game, he was not correct concerning this evaluation. White still has one fabulous saving move. Can you find what Anand could not?

133 Arkhipov – Danilchenko
USSR 1971



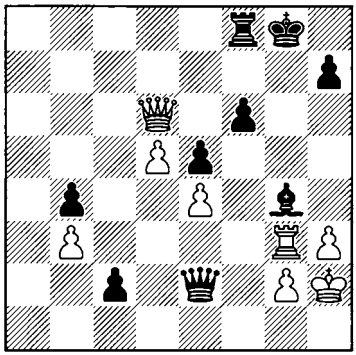
Black to play – White's latest pawn advance has created serious threats against the black king. In the game Black did not find the highly original defence at his disposal here.

134 Hausner – Spiridonov
Zamardi 1980



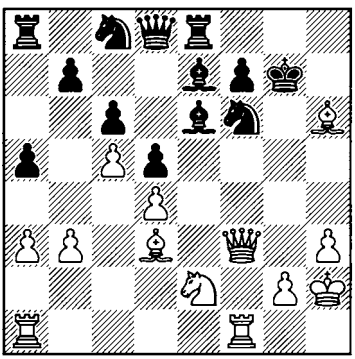
White to play – It is obvious what Black is planning to play. However, it is far from obvious what White can do about it. In the game he failed miserably.

136 Rohde – Shabalov
Philadelphia 1990



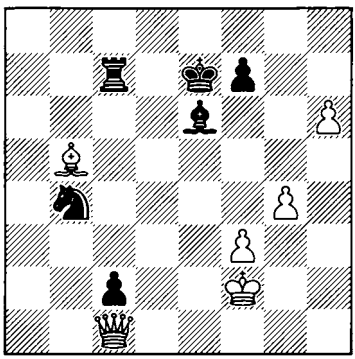
White to play – Black has defended in the normal way by throwing a baby in front of a tank. It is a sacrifice that Black is willing to make, especially when thinking of how will soon be enriched!

135 Fauvel – Tomas
Sitges 1981



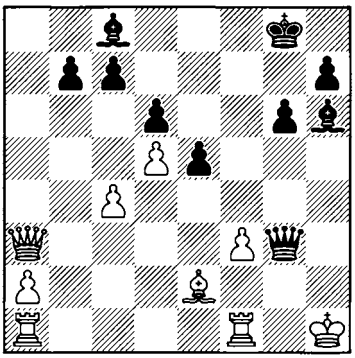
Black to play – White has just sacrificed his second piece. Moments like these call for deep reflection, and after thorough calculation you should come up with an answer. Would you like to dance – or not?

137 Knaak – Schoene
East Germany 1983



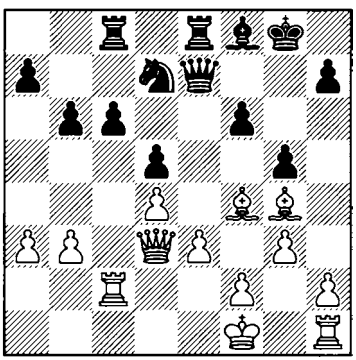
Black to play – German GM Rainer Knaak is today well known as the editor of various ChessBase products. But in previous times, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, he was known as a very strong East German grandmaster and analyst. He won this game in great style, but also showed how his opponent could have kept his head above water with accurate play.

138 Steffensen – Hamilton
Canberra 1994



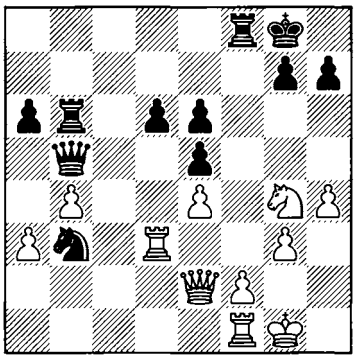
White to play – A few players publish great combinations from their own country worldwide. From Cuba we have Nogueiras, and from Australia, Ian Rogers. In this example Rogers overlooked a truly remarkable defensive idea, as did the White player.

139 Topalov – J. Polgar
Wijk aan Zee 2005



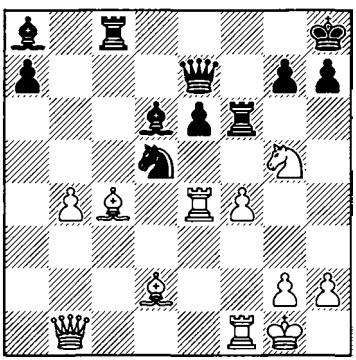
White to play – At the beginning of 2005 few would have anticipated that the year would see the emergence of Bulgarian bulldog Veselin Topalov as World Champion. Here he has blundered a bishop, but could still have saved the game.

140 Ivanchuk – Lautier
Monaco (blindfold) 1999



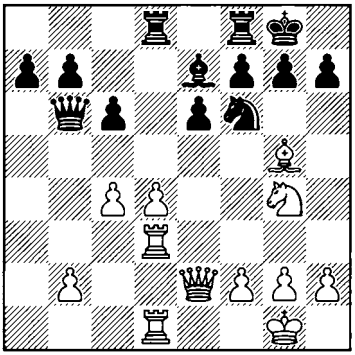
White to play – White is under some pressure. Soon Black will cement his knight on d4 and White will be under continuous pressure for the rest of the game, even if he manages to draw it. For this reason Ivanchuk found an ingenious solution that solved all of White's problems at once.

141 Epishin – Tregubov
St Petersburg 2004 (analysis)



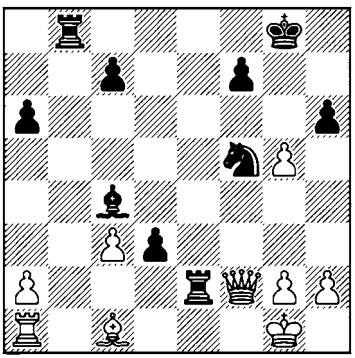
Black to play – Yet another look at this game from the Russian Championship Semi-final, where Dautov found a very nice way for Black to solve his rather obvious problems.

142 N.N. – C. MacDonald
Glasgow 2004



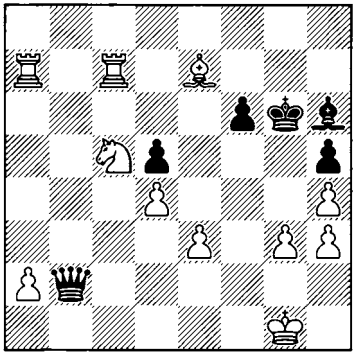
Black to play – White has good control over the centre and exerts real pressure on the kingside. In the game Black was walking on a knife-edge for most of the game after this, but it could all have been so different...

143 Martin del Campo – Hjartarson
Novi Sad (ol) 1990



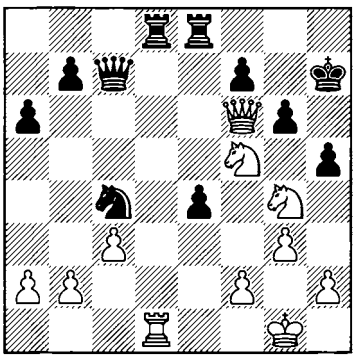
White to play – Black has sacrificed his queen rather spectacularly, though maybe not correctly. White is now faced with a very difficult choice: How to defend this perilous position?

144 Kostic – Dumpor
Yugoslavia 1986



White to play – Black has just sacrificed a pawn and a piece in a rather flashy manner and won deservedly in a few moves. However, an injustice could have been done to him, had White found the one and only defence.

145 Kapengut – Begun
USSR 1977 (analysis)



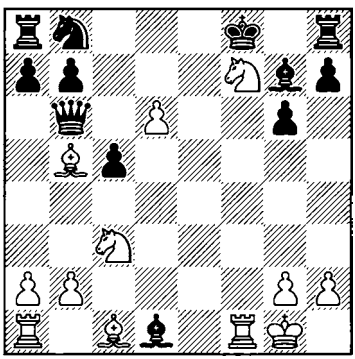
Black to play – Kapengut was famously the trainer of Boris Gelfand. But before this he was also a player in his own right. Here we are examining a variation from one of his games, which he incorrectly portrayed as winning for White.

Chapter 6

Level 3

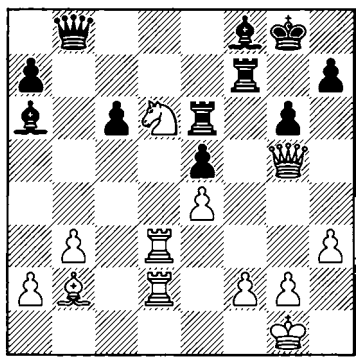
Welcome to level three. Your guide on this tour will be your own persistence. The peaks you will have to climb to make it safely to the other side of this mountain range are slippery, sharp and rocky. But with a focused, organised and persistent effort you should be able to silence any voice of doubt in your talent. This is where you prove what you can do by taking your limitations head-on. This is where you decide who you are.

146 J.C. Perez – M.A. Gonzalez
Havana 1993 (analysis)



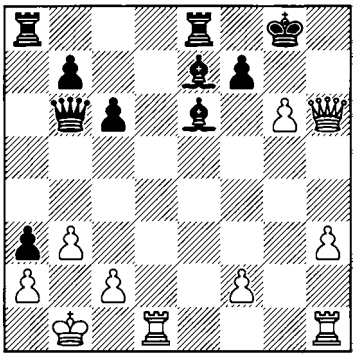
Black to play – Perez has sublimely sacrificed his queen and won this game in glorious style. However, I found a small problem with one of his sidelines...

147 Becerra Rivero – Spangenberg
Matanzas 1994



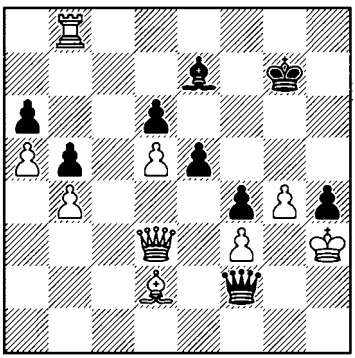
Black to play – White has just set the board in flames with a desperado sacrifice. Black now has a large number of options, but only one of these manages to save the game.

148 V.Ivanov – Hermlin
Helsinki 1996



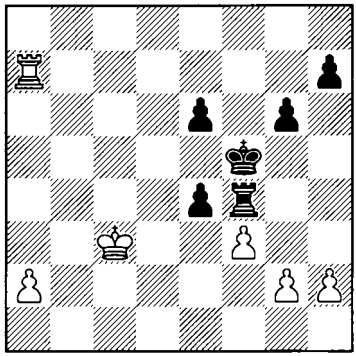
Black to play – In an echo of a previous exercise, we once again take on a position after a double bishop sacrifice on h7 and g7 and the advance of a pawn to g6. From this position Black only managed to survive a few more moves.

149 Otero – Rivera
Cuba 2002



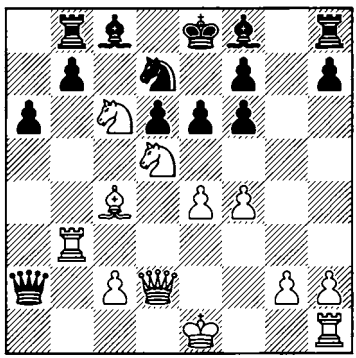
White to play – We know the scenario by now and, if you have worked your way through this book, you should be better prepared to face it than most. White is about to get mated, but it is his move and he still has a chance to turn things around.

150 Lenic – Predojevic
Portoroz 2005



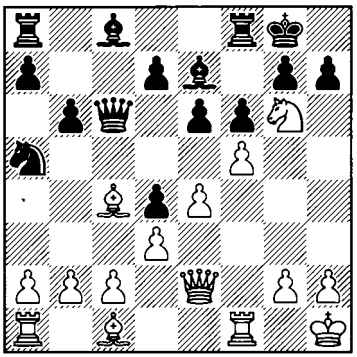
Black to play – Rook endgames are difficult to play, as minor differences between two moves can be decisive, even when they both look like good stuffing for the Christmas turkey.

151 Najdorf analysis



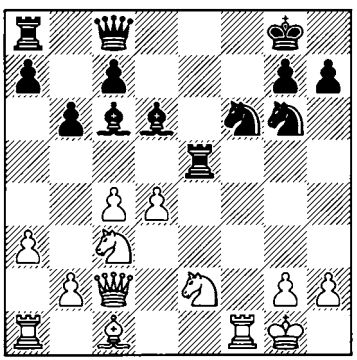
Black to play – When working on *Experts vs. the Sicilian* I went to Germany to assist GM Thomas Luther in writing about the 6.♗g5 Najdorf. While most of the chapter is Thomas' work, I did annotate the first game of the chapter. In the process I came across this position, which looks very dangerous for Black (mate in 1!).

152 Arnold – Natsis
Groningen 1978



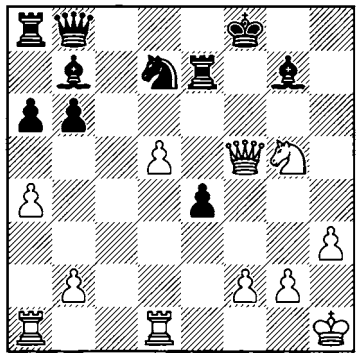
Black to play – White has just offered his knight for nothing, except for maybe the chance to deliver a deadly checkmate. While all other aspects of the game are going well for Black, this must be said to be a slight nuisance.

153 Karlsson – Palevich
Correspondence 1982



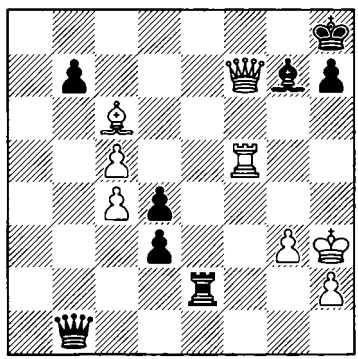
White to play – Black has planned a big slaughter-feast, which worked like clockwork in the game. Can you see his intentions, and maybe also what he missed?

154 Greenfeld – Loeffler
Israel 1995



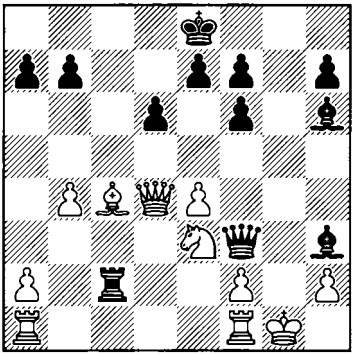
Black to play – White has sacrificed two pieces for the attack, which seems justified by the black pieces stacked in a pile in the far corner of the board.

155 Janosevic – Velimirovic
Yugoslavia 1973



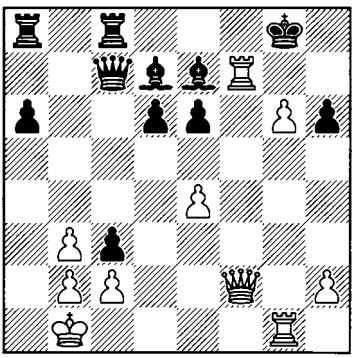
Black to play – Black has a lot of things going for him. He has a passed pawn close to promotion, he can take the white bishop, and his king is in principle well placed. However, White is creating real threats currently, and it is not easy to find a safe harbour in the calculations for Black. But there is one, I promise, and Black did find it. Will you sail away with him?

156 Botto – Christiansen
Buenos Aires 1975



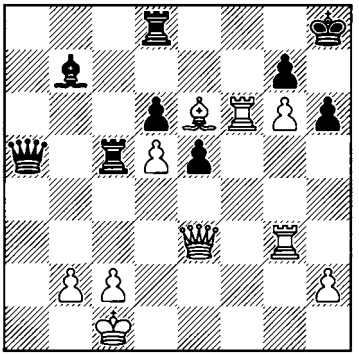
White to play – Larry Christiansen uses this example to illustrate how you can play "beautiful" sacrifices needlessly. During the game he realised that he had ruined a winning position. So I was surprised when 20 years later I found the game in *Chess Informant*'s book of combinations, without any mention of the defence at White's disposal.

157 Panchenko – Shestoperov
USSR 1978



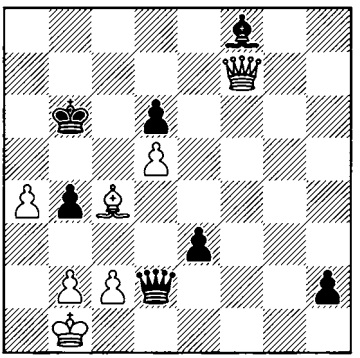
Black to play – Imagine: it is just one of those days... Soviet Union 1978: there is nothing good on TV (never is), your job stinks (it is your boss, actually) and you cannot find a place to buy a toothbrush (but then, you don't have any teeth anyway). Well, at least you are two pieces up – and then you get mated. Can you help our poor comrade to avoid this sad outcome?

158 Ioseliani – Nutu Gajic
Lucerne (ol) 1982 (analysis)



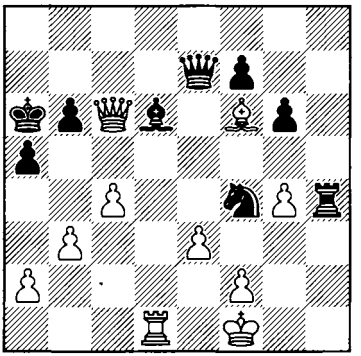
Black to play – Gufeld gave a great combination as an improvement to the game in *Chess Informant*. But he did not find the absolutely only defence.

159 Motylev – Wojtaszek
Warsaw 2005



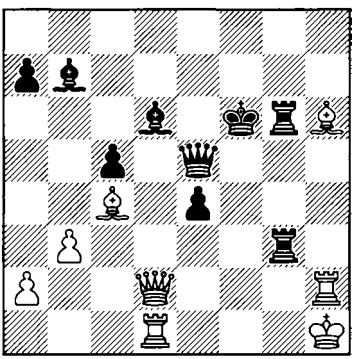
White to play – White did everything right. He knew the line he played well, he sacrificed a knight on d5 when needed, and accordingly Black's position deteriorated. Then real life started to kick in. The win went from obvious to likely, later probable, until everything went wrong in time trouble. Here we are on move 41 where Black is in the process of queening both his passed pawns.

160 Sher – Korchnoi
Nordhorn 1996



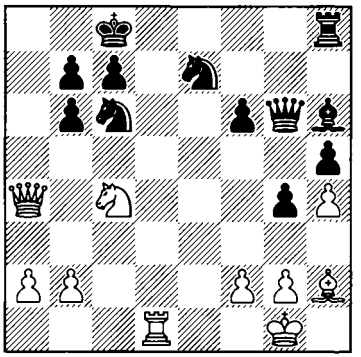
Black to play – Viktor Korchnoi's love for chess combined with at times childish behaviour is flavoured with a completely open nature. In his autobiography he reveals the truth about himself to a degree that forces even the most critical critic to feel respect for the old man. Here he found a nice escape in an otherwise unpleasant position.

161 Vasquez – Friedel
Minneapolis 2005



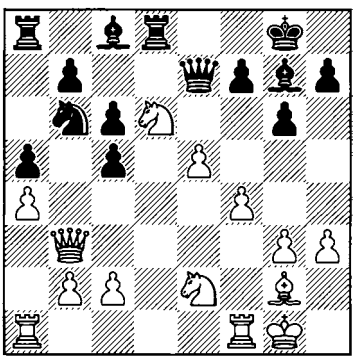
White to play – Here we have a most unusual position from an American tournament that received a great deal of attention because of its unprecedented high prizes. Hopefully we will see more of these tournaments in the future.

162 Sznapik – Drasko
Polanica Zdroj 1985 (analysis)



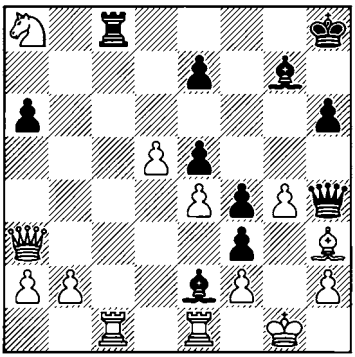
Black to play – For a long time I could not make my mind up on how to use this example. There were so many rich moments. In the end I decided that this is the most fascinating moment, and that Black's solitary defensive line here was worth ignoring the rest of the game for.

163 Grigorov – Boudy
Varna 1979



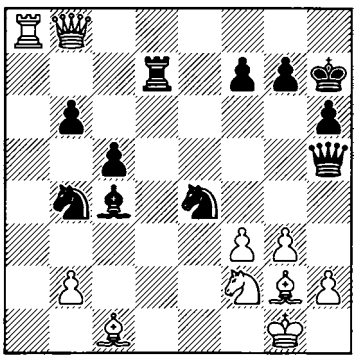
Black to play – Black is level on material, but positionally he is going bankrupt. And tactically the threat to the knight on b6 is especially annoying. For this reason Black found an easy way to escape the responsibility of a long and gruelling defence.

164 Frumkin – Dubinsky
New York 2000 (analysis)



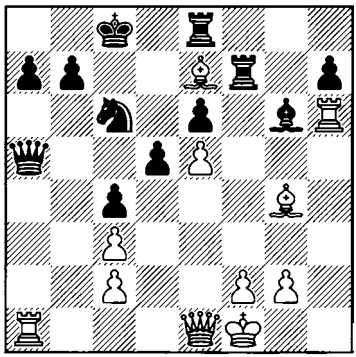
White to play – In the game Black blundered horribly and lost immediately. Instead he should have reached for this position, as pointed out by Dubinsky. Now to avoid being mated White needs to come with everything he has.

165 Solozhenkin – Todorovic
Yugoslavia 1996



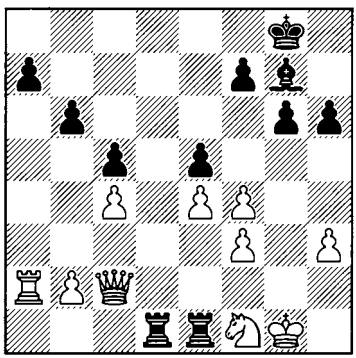
White to play – Todorovic is an average grandmaster, the kind you can pick up on every street corner in Yugoslavia. But he is also a very gifted tactician, who here has sacrificed a knight splendidly.

166 Short – Psakhis
Port Erin 1999



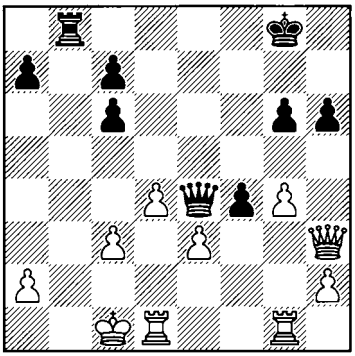
Black to play – In this position we have joined the height of the battle between two of the greatest experts on the French Defence. Black found no way to defend against the multiple threats White has managed to establish, however this does not mean that no such defence exists.

167 Volinsky – Kalinichenko
USSR 1970



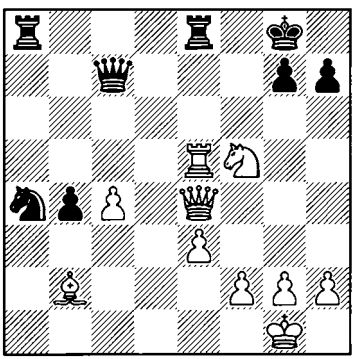
White to play – Black has creatively sacrificed the queen for a rook and received substantial pressure along the first rank in return. In the game White failed to find a defence, but a deeper look reveals that this moment was his chance.

168 Ivanov – Shmelev
USSR 1974



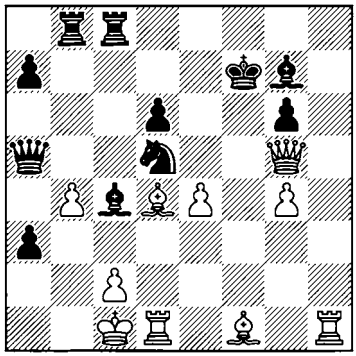
White to play – There has been a lot of discussion about "rules" for playing better chess recently, something I find very interesting. My experience has been that rules are far more useful when you have the advantage. When you are defending it is important that you calculate really really well, so that you find all the creative possibilities.

169 Korelov – Marjan
Correspondence 1980



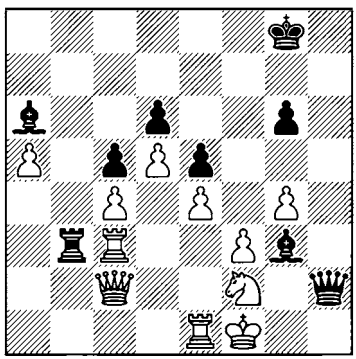
Black to play – "I cannot understand how anyone can lose a correspondence game", Swedish legend Ulf Andersson once said. Well, even he eventually did so. These days few correspondence games are won due to one player missing a tactical opportunity, as in this game. Instead they are won with displays of superior understanding of chess, and sadly, computer chess.

170 Zso. Polgar – Vescovi
Matinhos 1994



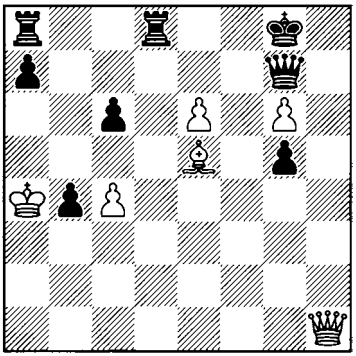
Black to play – White has just played a real stunner, leaving Black with lots of threats and possibilities, but very little help from rules and intuition.

171 Huss – Lobron
Beer-Sheva 1985



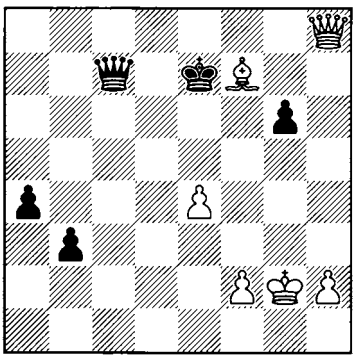
White to play – When your pieces have so many defensive tasks as the white pieces here, it is not surprising that a surprise can hit you, in the same way as it did when Lobron uncorked ...♖b8-b3 on Huss. However, when you are doing this well materially, it is also not uncommon that you can find a defence.

172 Palevich – Luzniak
Correspondence 1985 (analysis)



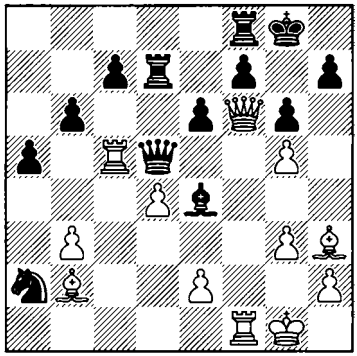
Black to play – This is probably my favourite example in this book. Palevich misplayed the attack and Luzniak misplayed the defence. Oblivious to this, Palevich gave this position as winning for White.

173 Cifuentes Parada – Milos
Santiago (zt) 1987



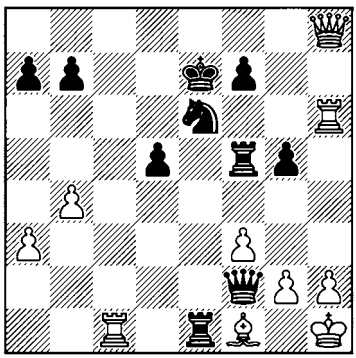
Black to play – Black is a piece down, but has two passed pawns. I should probably warn you that reclaiming the piece immediately is not advisable.

174 Linn – Rosenfield
Correspondence 1987



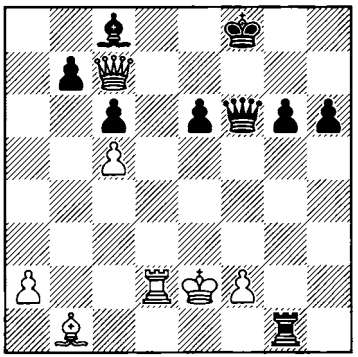
Black to play – Another misplayed combination from a correspondence game! Here White has just sacrificed a rook and Black has, let's say, fifteen days to come up with a defence. The greatest surprise is not that Black did not find the defence, but that White also did not, as it is not mentioned in his annotations.

175 Galliamova – Korchnoi
Amsterdam 2001



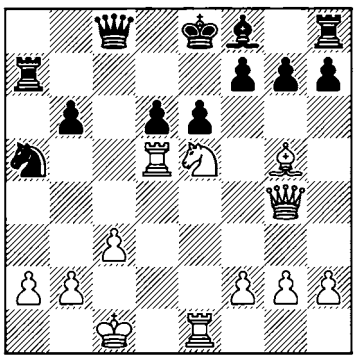
White to play – Korchnoi usually has very little respect for women's chess, which has not made him immune to defeats at the hands of women. Here he is on the right course, and eventually won the game. But White can force a draw here with a brilliant sequence, as pointed out by a great fan of the ladies, Mark Taimanov.

176 Braun – Siebrecht
Vienna 2005



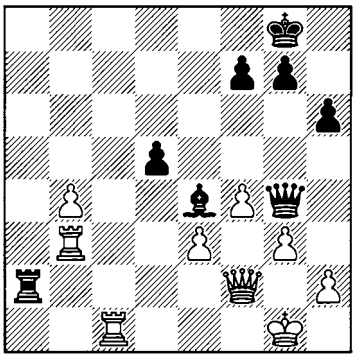
Black to play – Seeing Andre Schulz present an earlier moment of this game on ChessBase TV prompted a deeper look at the game, revealing that Braun had made a pig's ear of his position, eventually ending up in this position. Here my old friend Sebastian Siebrecht could have forced a draw, had he not been short of time as usual...

177 Shtofel – Makhno
USSR 1981



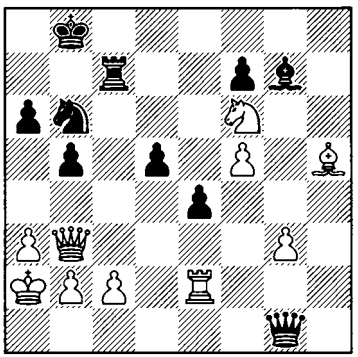
Black to play – Yep, you got it. You are Black (again), under attack (again), being sacrificed against (again) and in desperate need of finding the only defence (again). Do you think you can do it (again?)?

178 Naumkin – Rozentalis
Vilnius 1988



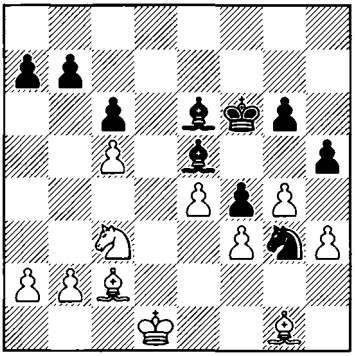
White to play – Black has sacrificed the exchange and now offers a rook as well. The idea is basic: Penetration with the queen and "check, check, check" until he goes blue in the face. But White could have claimed a great advantage, probably enough to win, with a series of very precise moves.

179 Bolzoni – Plachetka
Virton 1990



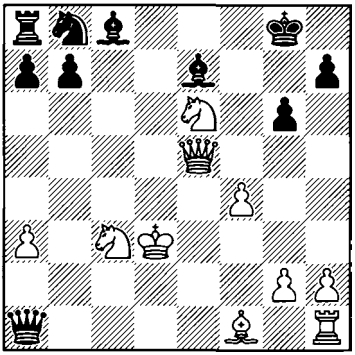
White to play – Plachetka has just played ...♗h6-g7, a move he proudly gave !!. Though his play was truly creative in the game, I am not convinced that this evaluation is objective. What could White have done to throw a spanner in the works?

180 Morovic Fernandez – Kozul
Calvia (ol) 2004



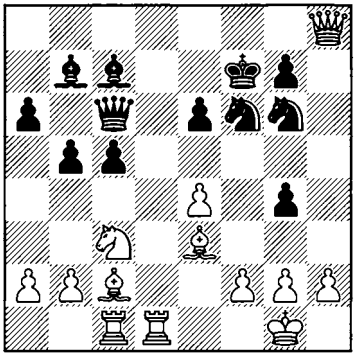
White to play – Black is a pawn down, but the activity of his pieces means that it is White who is in danger of losing, something he actually did in the game. In this position Israeli GM Boris Avrukh pointed out the only defensive plan.

181 Shirov – Eingorn
Stockholm 1989



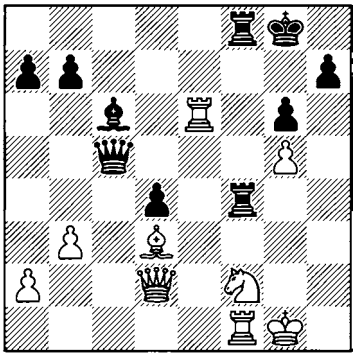
Black to play – Though the white king is surfing on the current in the middle of the board, his subordinates ensure that it is Black's king that is in danger. Still, with a cascade of brilliant moves, Black would be able to hold the balance.

182 L.B. Hansen – Illescas Cordoba
Moscow (ol) 1994



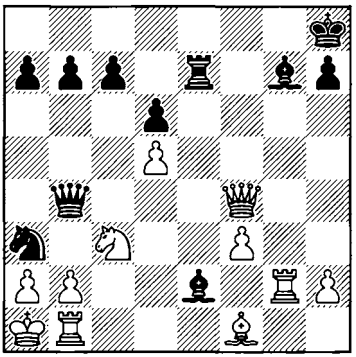
White to play – The queen is clearly in trouble; and his king might very well be so too! We are turning the last corner of the track. From here on the competition is going to be tough. Can you take the pressure? Can you solve this (deep) problem?

183 Soos – Teschner
West Germany 1971 (analysis)



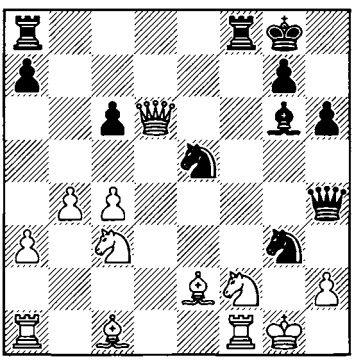
White to play – Black has sacrificed a piece to unravel the pawn structure around the white king. In the game White was not prepared for this huge defensive task, so I have helped him with a few moves.

184 Aleksandrovich – Borisov
USSR 1974



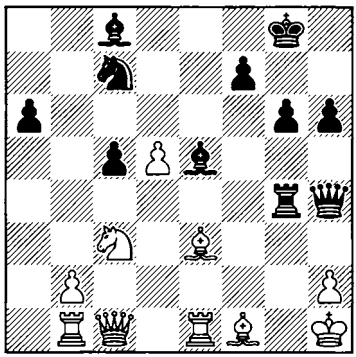
White to play – When you see this diagram for the first time, the first thing that sticks out is probably the oddly placed bishop on e2. From there it does not take long to realise that we have entered a true madhouse of tactics, and that White will need to surpass his opponent in "madness" to survive. How mad are you?

185 Pavlovic – Crepinsek
Yugoslavia 1977



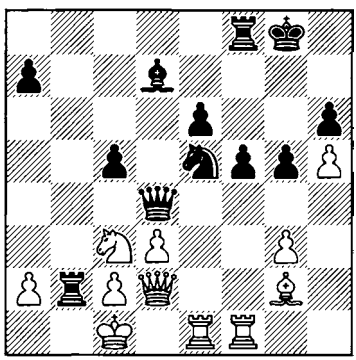
White to play – Black has just cheekily sacrificed a knight on g3 for nothing; there was not even a pawn on that square! Close analysis shows that the black attack is very resourceful, as Pavlovic discovered in the game. However, even closer analysis shows that White has a spectacular defence.

186 Goldin – Arbakov
USSR 1978



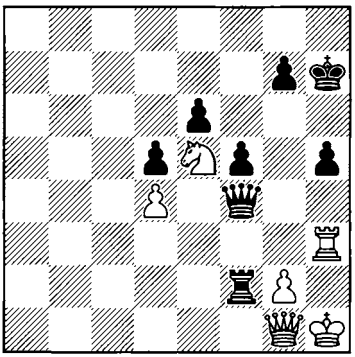
White to play – Black has sacrificed a rook for very direct threats against the white king, as well as a number of emerging threats. However, all is not yet lost: White can defend, but only in one way.

187 Alper – Bronznik
Hanover 1998



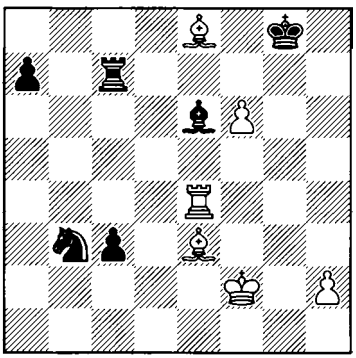
White to play – Bronznik has written a book on the Chigorin Defence that was published in several languages. He is also a very nice guy, who had the courtesy to say that he liked my books. Though his own book is also supposed to be good, I am less sure about the rook sacrifice he has just played in a great position. It worked well in the game, but White could have defended better.

188 Gelfand – Shirov
Monte Carlo (rapid) 2003



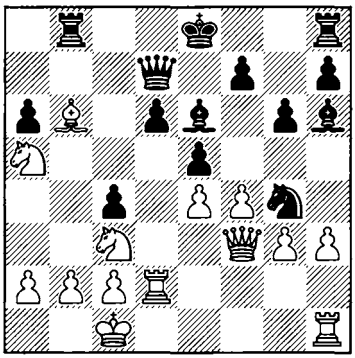
Black to play – Mark Dvoretsky offered me a look inside his card files to look for additional examples for this book. This example, which is actually a flawed "White to play and win" exercise, was especially recommended by Mark, and I have to say that I also found it very appealing.

189 Dreev – Yudasin
Manila (izt) 1990



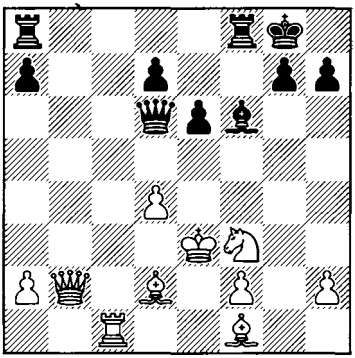
Black to play – I know a lot of the examples in this book appear as less than flattering to the players, as they contain improvements. However, it has not been my intention to put anyone down, but rather to show how rich chess defence is by using a lot of unseen opportunities. But occasionally you have to say "hats off!" to the great defensive play of our masters, as with this game.

190 Anand – Kasimdzhanov
San Luis 2005



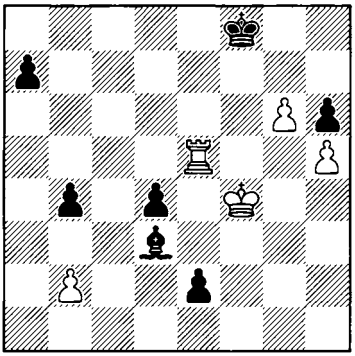
Black to play – It was widely known that the chances of Kasimdzhanov retaining his title at the World Championship in San Luis were too small to be seen with most microscopes. Still he played with a smile and never whined publicly. Here the pre-tournament favourite Anand was able to do bad things to the champ, with just a little help.

191 Hadzimanolis – Gershon
Kavala 2004



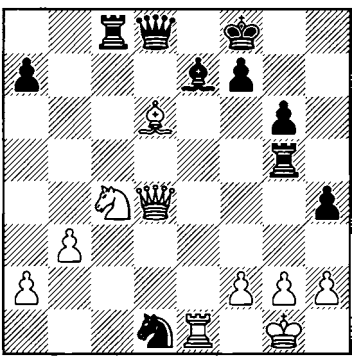
White to play – Black has a rook and pawn for bishop and knight. Usually this can be said to be just slightly short of change. But here the white king is inconveniently placed on e3 instead of the natural g1, and so it is White who needs to be concerned. What is the only move?

192 Nakamura – Ibragimov
San Diego 2004



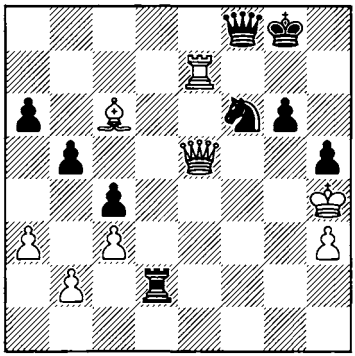
Black to play – Unfortunately for Black his pawns are under control and White is far advanced with his own play. In the game Black did not find the right path, and White went on to win the game, and later this tournament, which was the American Championship, at the age of only 16.

193 Rechlis – Avrukh
Israel 2005



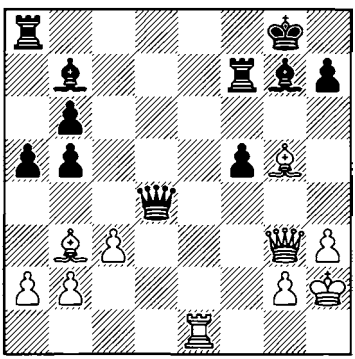
Black to play – Boris Avrukh has long been one of the most promising young Israeli players. It was finally in 2005 that he fully delivered, among others with great performances for the Israeli national team. Here he is in trouble against his countryman and fellow grandmaster Gad Rechlis.

194 Navarovszky – Lukacs
Hungary 1972



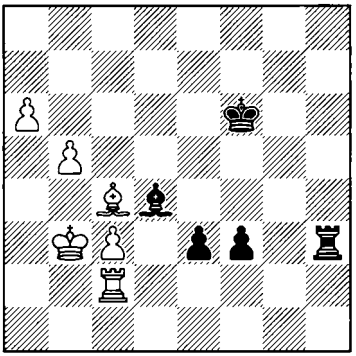
Black to play – White has complete domination and, though he is a pawn down, his prospects look promising. But with an only one move Black could have stayed in the game.

195 Ang. Hernandez – Moreno Ramon
Cuba 1994



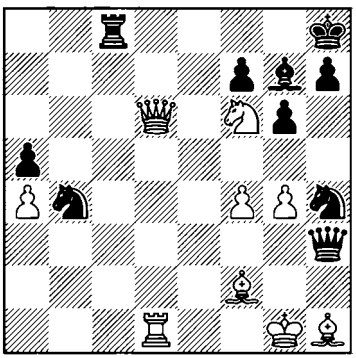
Black to play – As said earlier, creativity is not something that is only connected to sacrificing a rook, as White has done here, but just as often it is connected to the unforcing possibilities and surprising ideas that can save even the most difficult position.

196 McShane – Ni Hua
Tiayuan 2005



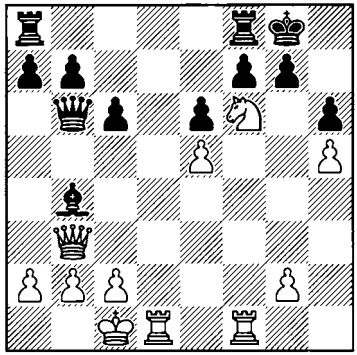
White to play – Everything seems to be up in the air. White has a pawn more, but Black's pawns are further advanced. In the game White did not manage to find the best line, but maybe you can?

197 Norwood – Gelfand
Arnhem 1987



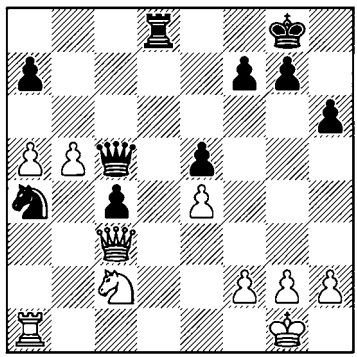
White to play – David Norwood is a normal English grandmaster who on the side is a very successful businessman. Here he is playing a future star in a famous junior tournament almost twenty years ago. The game quickly went into the dumpster for White, but here he could have played better.

198 Emms – Hinks-Edwards
Birmingham 2001 (analysis)



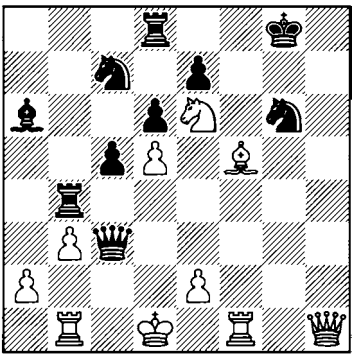
Black to play – Black has just managed to get his king into safety, and White has not hesitated to throw a grenade into the shelter. How should Black react to this? Be sure that you find the five forced moves which Black will have to play to survive.

199 Terentiev – Domuls
USSR 1980



White to play – Checklist check. Knight sacrificed, yes. Under pressure (do-di-do-di-do-do), yes. Risk of immediate failure? Always! A possible defence, yes. Can you find it? (yes?).

200 Arnelind – M. Göransson
Gothenburg 2005



Black to play – From a local tournament in Gothenburg, we find the most challenging exercise in this book. My editor, Ari Ziegler, pointed out that Mikael Göransson had some very interesting analysis to a game of his, including defensive and counter-attacking ideas. As I had exactly 199 exercises I liked at that point, I was very happy to add this last minute example.

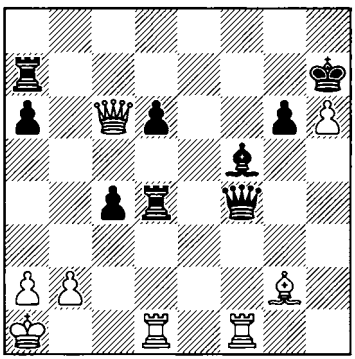
First find the best move, then go to the solutions for the five exercises contained in this one example.

Chapter 7

Solutions to Warming Up!

1 Lautier – Piket
Cannes 1990

Black lost after a horrible mistake.
1...♕e5??
1...♖d4! was the only move.

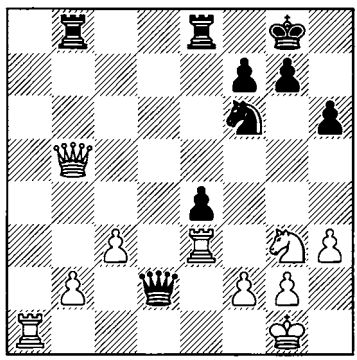


The position is probably about equal then, with many possibilities for both players. The most important observation from a practical point of view is that Black does not lose material instantly (as he did in the game).
2.♗xe4 ♗xe4 3.♕xd6
White won.

How this exercise could have been solved: If you simply looked carefully for possible moves, then you would see that you could prevent the capture of both your heavy pieces with this only move.

2 De Guzman – Atalik
Reno 2005

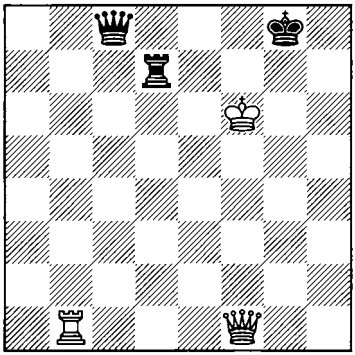
1.♖ae1??
White totally missed that he could win a pawn for nothing. After 1.♕xb5! ♖b8 he can play:



2.♖e2!
Atalik thinks that White is winning, which is probably a bit much, but clearly his winning chances are very good with an extra pawn.
1...♖e5
The fight is even. Eventually Black won.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is very tempting to look at taking a free pawn, so naturally it should be investigated more closely. For the practical player it is useful to understand that chances such as this will come along, and that you have to focus your attention when they do.

3 Gromov
5th Prize, Shakhmatnaya Nedelia 2003



This is a beautiful study, to which the exercise does not do full justice.

1.♕g1†!

Only here. The point is 1...♔f8 2.♕c5†! and Black will be back ranked.

1...♔h8 2.♕h2†!

Forces the rook to take the king's only escape square.

2...♖h7 3.♕b8!!

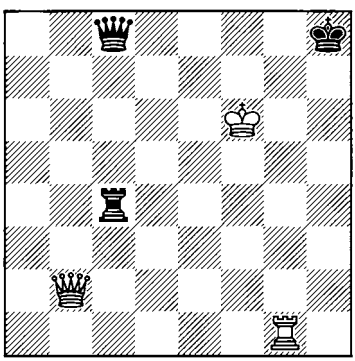
A beautiful act of domination. 3.♕e5? ♕f8†! leads to an exchange of queens and a draw.

3...♖c7

3...♖h6† 4.♔g5 ♖c6 5.♕e5† ♔g8 6.♖b8 and we have a theoretically winning endgame.

4.♖h1† ♔g8 5.♕b3† ♖c4 6.♖g1†! ♔f8!

The only move. After 6...♔h8 White has the fantastic 7.♕b2!!.



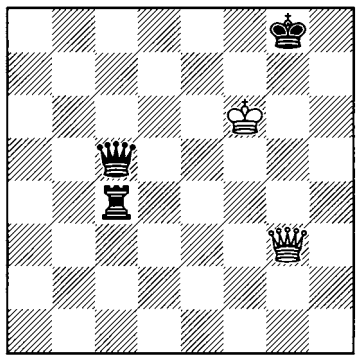
The threatened discovered check forces the reply 7...♖c3, but White wins easily with 8.♖h1† ♔g8 9.♕g2†.

7.♕a3† ♕c5

7...♖c5 8.♖g8†! ♔xg8 9.♕g3† and mate is coming.

8.♕a8†!

Our exercise arises after 8.♖g8†? ♔xg8 9.♕g3†.



The only way for Black to escape mate is with 9...♖g4!! (9...♔f8 does not work. White wins with 10.♕b8†! ♕c8 11.♕d6† ♔g8 12.♕d5† ♔h8 13.♕h5† ♔g8 14.♕f7† ♔h8 15.♕g7 mate.) 10.♕xg4† ♔f8 and I think it is safe to say that this will be a draw...

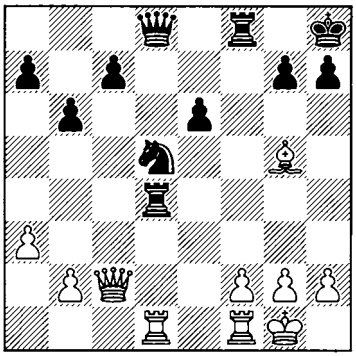
In the main line of the study White wins in the way described after 9...♔f8.

8...♕c8 9.♖g8†! ♔xg8 10.♕d5†! ♔h8 11.♕h5†

And White wins.

How this exercise could have been solved: Since this is an exercise book, it is probably relatively easy to guess the answer to this exercise, though it might be a little harder to solve. It should take about five seconds to realise that there are two options only, and that giving back the rook is a dead draw. The key to solving the exercise is to find the win after the king move. The simple comparison between the two lines should help make the correct judgement.

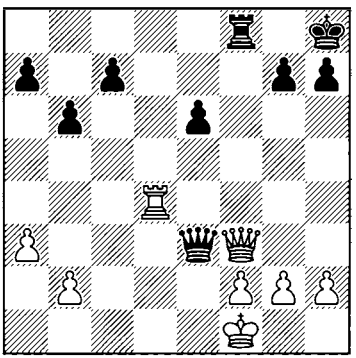
4 Letzelter – Faivre
France 1971



Black to play and win!

This example from *Chess Informant* starts where Black sacrificed the exchange:
1...♕xg5??
Actually this is a simple blunder. Black wins a piece trivially with 1...♖xd1 2.♗xd8 ♖xf1† 3.♔xf1 ♘e3†. Now White is let back in the game.
2.♖xd4 ♘e3
Clearly Black's idea.
3.♕c6 ♘xf1 4.♔xf1 ♕e3
White resigned and we have our exercise.
0-1

Looking for possible moves shows that only one can be played.
5.♕f3!
Only this does not lose everything immediately. Well, actually it does not lose at all!

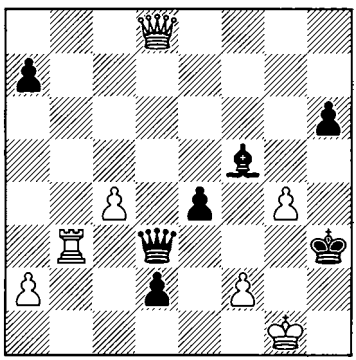


5...♕xf3 6.gxf3 g5!? 7.♖d7 ♖xf3 8.♖xc7
Black is a pawn up in the endgame, which of course gives him some chances to win, but it is much more likely that the queenside pawns will disappear and that it will be a comfortable draw for White.

How this exercise could have been solved: In such a desperate position it is relatively easy to see why a move is not working, and so it should not take a long time to eliminate most of the legal white moves. In the end only this strange pseudo queen sacrifice remains, and that will have to do.

5 Chakhoian – Turkenishvili
USSR 1971

Black won quite easily with a simple move, preparing the promotion of the d-pawn.
1...♕d3!



2.♕xd3†
2.♖xd3† exd3 and the imminent ...d1=♕ will decide.
2...exd3 3.♖b1 ♗xg4
White resigned.
0-1

How this exercise could have been solved:
Our efforts should deal with imagination and looking for additional opportunities. The exercise is only half a move long, really, and most of us should be able to find half a move.

6 Stupica – Cvetkovic
Yugoslavia 1969

1.♔g1?

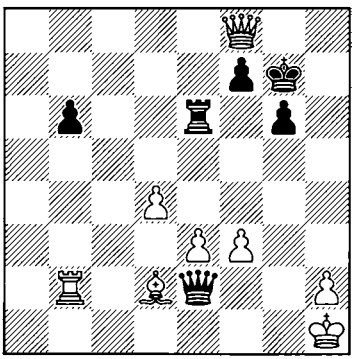
This was what White actually played. He could see no further than the mate in one. After:

1...♕xf3 2.♕g5 ♖f6!

He found himself under an attack he did not manage to fend off. Milic gave 1.♕g5 as a better option, and indeed it is, as it leads directly to a draw by perpetual check.

However, White had an easy way to win the game in one move with:

1.♕f8†!



White will either take on f7 or reclaim his queen, in both cases with a trivial win.

How this exercise could have been solved: Searching for options is an important part of analysing a chess position. In this position the possible discovered attack on the black queen should also have helped to kick-start your brain cells. As we play chess one move at a time, it is important that we do not overlook any of our opportunities on move one. If you can avoid that, you are probably already a very strong player.

7 Gonzales – Hay
Skopje (ol) 1972

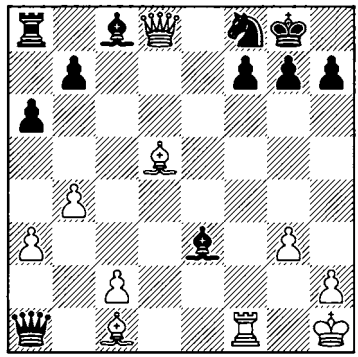
The solution to this defence is attack.

1...♗xe3†!

1...♗e6 also defends f7, but after 2.♕xa8 ♗xd5 3.♕xa7 White is winning on points.

2.♔h1

The only move. 2.♗xe3 ♕xf1†! is the point of the bishop sacrifice. Black finishes a rook up.



2...♗e6!

The slight change in the position has made the rook sacrifice lethal. Black just wins.

3.♕d6

3.♕xa8 ♗xd5† with mate to follow.

3...♗xc1 4.♗xe6 ♘xe6 5.♕d7 ♖f8 6.♕xb7 ♕xa3 7.c4 ♗d2

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a matter of candidates and of tactical awareness. Somehow most players would have a feeling that the queen is loose on d8. If this was a difficult exercise for you, I recommend that you go through a lot of combination books. They will definitely help you.

8 Rodriguez Cordoba – Vaisman
Bucharest 1974

Stalemate is of course an important tool in the box for the defender. Here it comes in combination with perpetual check.

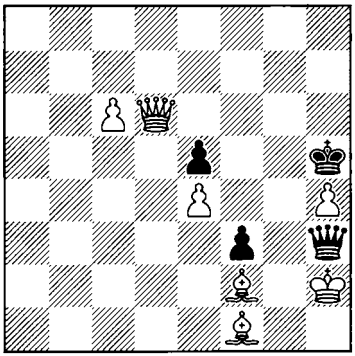
1...♘f2†! 2.♗xf2

White can avoid the draw only with 2.♔h2?? ♕xh4† and it is Black who wins!

2...♕h3† 3.♔g1

3.♗xh3 is stalemate.

3...♕g4† 4.♔h2 ♕h3†

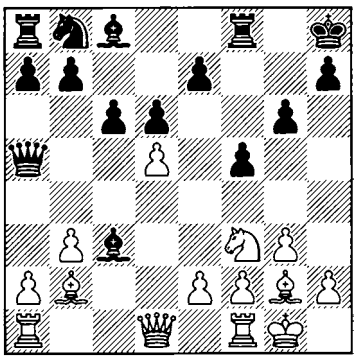


½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The threats against the black king were mounting and White has a clear material plus. It is natural to look for desperate measures, such as stalemate, when you are low on material and going down fast. If it is not yet natural to you, then working with this book should help.

9 Robatsch – Jansa
Sochi 1974

White does not really have any satisfactory alternatives to taking the knight.
1.cxd5 ♗xc3



And now White wins a piece with a simple cross pin.
2.♕d2!
1–0

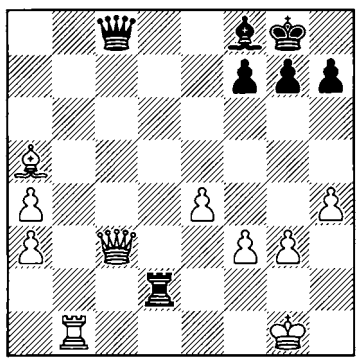
How this exercise could have been solved: You need to look for options on move 1, where only one move will present itself, and then on move two, where you should be able to find this move just by looking for options that do not come to you by themselves.

10 Yudasin – Smirin
USSR (ch) 1990

This position is probably not any harder to solve, but there are a few more lines than the previous exercises.
1.♕xc3??

1.♗xc3? leads to a position with very unclear play after complications like these: 1...f6! 2.♖b8! Forced, otherwise the bishop hangs. 2...♖d1† 3.♔g2 ♕c4! 4.♖xf8†! ♔xf8 5.♕b8† ♔f7 6.♕a7† ♔g6 7.h5† ♔xh5 8.g4† ♔g6 9.♕a5 With level chances.

The answer to the question – what do you do about the c-pawn? – is simple: you ignore it! White wins after 1.♖b8! ♕xb8 (1...♕d7 2.♗xc3 and White wins, which he also does after 1...♖d1† 2.♔f2 ♖d2† 3.♔e3 ♕d7 4.♗xc3 f6 5.♕c5.) 2.♕xb8 ♖d1† 3.♔g2 c2 4.♗b4 h6 5.♕xf8† ♔h7 6.♗c3 and so on.



1...♗c5†??

1...♕h3! 2.♕xd2 ♗c5† and it is all over.
2.♔f1 ♕h3†??

This move is even more horrible than the previous one. 2...♖h2! 3.♕d3 ♕h3† 4.♔e1 ♕xg3† 5.♔d1 ♖a2 still gave Black a toxic attack,

though the missives for the white castle have yet to be signed over.

3.♔e1

White is just winning.

3...♖d8? 4.♗xd8

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Every threat or combination should always be investigated carefully. One of the ways to do this is to look at the end of the combination to find out if it is really real. Here you would find that White's emerging threats are stronger than those he is facing from Black.

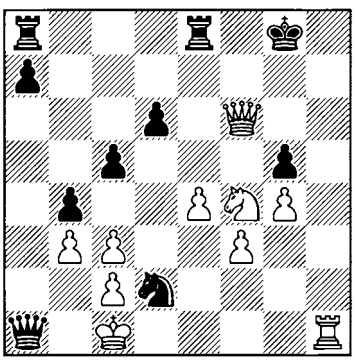
11 Georgiev – Panbukchian
Varna 1977

I was flabbergasted when I first saw this position. Quite clearly White has some threats, but Black has two available checks – and neither loses!

1...♘c3†!

This is the solution after which Black wins rather simply. 1...♘d2†?! is worse, and the real reason why this exercise is in the book. You can call it a trap if you like. Several of my students fell for it, and even a member of a national team I was coaching... 2.♔c1 ♕a1† 3.♔xd2 ♕xh1 and White should give perpetual check.

2.bxc3 ♘d2† 3.♔c1 ♕a1†

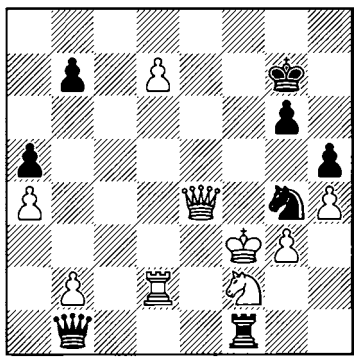


4.♔xd2 ♕xc3† 5.♕xc3 bxc3† 6.♔xc3 gxf4

Black is a rook up and will win without any difficulties.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is about candidate moves. Most players will spot in a second that 1...♘d2† saves the game, but it is really lazy not to look at the other natural check as well. And after the knight check on c3 the rest of the moves are simple forced checks. So staying awake should be enough to solve this exercise!

12 Sampilov – Aborin
USSR 1971



1...♖xf2†??

Yudovich awarded this an exclamation mark, which makes you wonder how they were actually working with these games at the *Chess Informant* headquarters. It cannot have included an investigation of the game.

2.♖xf2

Now it is a quite cute perpetual check.

2...♕h1† 3.♔f4 ♕c1† 4.♔f3 ♕h1†

½–½

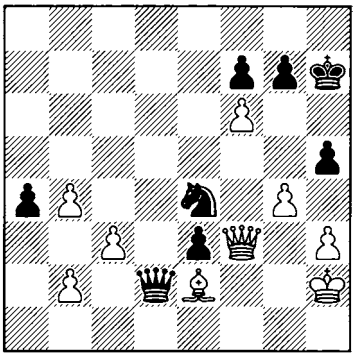
Actually Black can win in in a single move.

1...♕d1†!

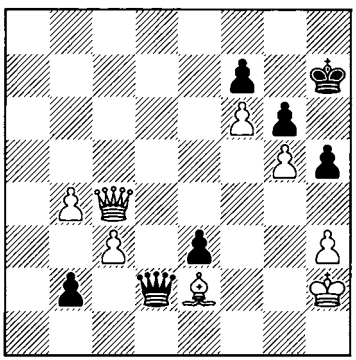
White is faced with mate or loss of all limbs with check. So the correct solution is not the perpetual check, but a simple mating combination.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is all about looking for candidates and displaying patience. The position is so strung-up that it is natural that tactics are available. And just because it is an exercise it does not mean that you should be happy with the first available idea...

13 Polovodin – Zhelnin
USSR 1980



Black won this game with really excellent play.
1...a3!
Undermining the c3-pawn and thereby taking advantage of the pin along the 2nd rank.
2.♕xe4† g6 3.♕c4
3.bxa3♕xe2†4.♕g2 fails to defend. Blackwins in several ways, most elegantly with 4...♕d2!.
3...a2!
The correct move. The point is that the bishop can never catch the pawn, so Black is threatening to exchange queens by ...♕d6† and ...♕e6.
After 3...axb2? we reach our exercise, where White draws onlywith 4.g5! (4.h4 does not work because of 4...♕d6† 5.♔h3 ♕xf6 and the two passed pawns along with the threats to the white king are too hard to defend against. Black wins after 6.♕d3 ♕f2.) 4...♔g8 5.♕c8† ♔h7 6.♕c4



With a repetition of moves.

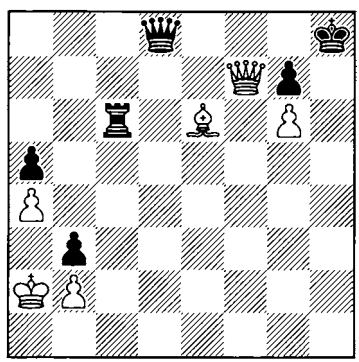
4.gxh5
All hope is gone. 4.g5 ♕d6† 5.♔g2 ♕e6 and Black wins.
4...♕d6† 5.♔g2 ♕xf6!
White resigned. The game could have ended 6.♕xa2 ♕f2† 7.♔h1 ♕e1†! and Black wins.

How this exercise could have been solved: I think the easiest way is through a trial and error process. You try 4.♕xf7† and see that it does not work due to the king march to h6-g5-h4 and then get the idea to lock in the king with either 4.g5 or 4.h4. You investigate both carefully to find that one of them is flawed, while the other is not.

14 Minic – Savic
Porec 1989

Minic was probably both surprised and disappointed not to win this game, but after
1...♖c6!!
there was really not a lot he could do. The game was agreed drawn immediately.
½–½

The main lines are:
2.♕xc6 ♕d5† 3.♕xd5 b3† with stalemate.
2.♗f7 ♖xg6 (2...b3† also draws, though less cleanly) 3.♗xg6 ♕d5† 4.♕xd5 b3† and Black will be stalemated on the next move.
Only concerning **2.♕f7?** did Savicmakea small mistake in his annotations. Instead of 2...♖xe6 leading to a draw similar to before, Black could play 2...b3†!!



and after 3.♗xb3 ♖f6 Black will take the g6-pawn and have real winning chances. However, this is not something we need to see when we are faced with the threat of direct mate.

How this exercise could have been solved: Using the method of elimination. Most moves can quickly be dismissed as leading to mate. Only this holds the idea of stalemate. Of course, if you do not get this idea, you are in trouble.

15 Yudasin – Kir. Georgiev
Manila (izt) 1990

White is facing an endgame at least a pawn down, so, being in need, he found a clever forced draw.
1.c6!

The alternatives all smell funny:

1.♖g5 ♔c6 gives Black a clear edge. A comical point is 2.♖xg6 ♘d3!? based on 3.♔xd3?! bxc5 winning.

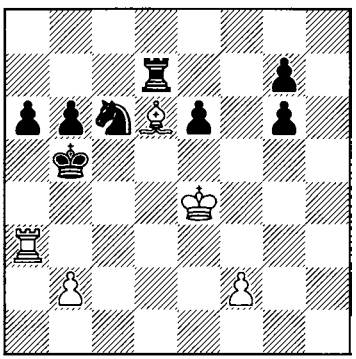
1.♖xg6 bxc5 is a pawn up.

1.♔e5 bxc5 2.♔xe6 ♖b7 White is 1–2 pawns down here, and the black knight will not have problems finding good squares on d3 or c6-d4.

1...♘xc6

Black has no alternative but to allow the perpetual check. 1...♔xc6 2.♗xb4 does not work and 1...♖xd6 2.c7 ♖c6 3.♖c3 would drop the exchange.

2.♖b3† ♔a5 3.♖a3† ♔b5



4.♖b3†
½–½

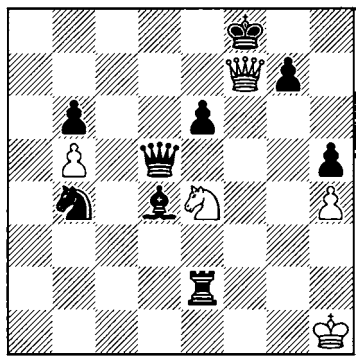
How this exercise could have been solved: If you do not spot this pawn advance in your first try, then the failure to make anything else work should make you return to the starting position to have a fresh look, which would give you a second chance to spot this little trick.

16 Miles – Nedobora
Seville 1994

White escapes by forcing stalemate.
1.♖f8†!

1.♖7f4 loses to a lot of moves. The computer quite amusingly prefers 1...♖e3!? with the basic idea that 2.♖f8 is no longer stalemate.

1...♖xf8 2.♖xf8† ♔xf8 3.♕f7†



3...♔xf7
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: I think it should not take too long to see that White is out of ammo. The idea of stalemate should occur then.

17 Manca – Stohl
Austria 2003

Igor Stohl is a famous commentator, lately doing well with his best-selling books on Kasparov's Best Games, a publication he did have a lot of luck with, as at the time when the first book was just about to come out Kasparov not only retired from professional chess, and thereby

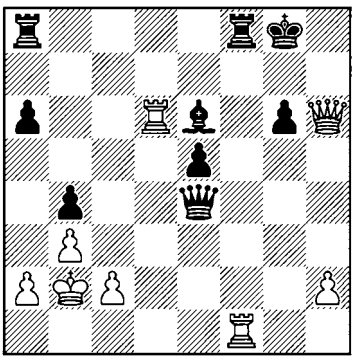
made Stohl's book a work that would cover the great man's entire career; Kasparov also decided to expand his own series of books on the World Champions by a few volumes, thereby shoving the final volume, Kasparov on Kasparov, a good deal of time into the future.

Besides being an interesting writer, Stohl is a grandmaster in his own right, maybe with a slight tendency to time trouble. The White player, Frederico Manca from Italy, is a very nice man and a strong IM with an attractive style. Here he has overextended himself a bit, but he still brought home the pasta!

1...♖xf1??

Black probably did not fail to spot the problems with this move, but rather failed to see an alternative.

But the simple 1...♗e6!!



protecting against 2.♖xg6†, which is the only problem Black is facing, was available. Obviously 2.♖xe6 ♕d4† is not going to work, with or without capturing on f8 first, so White will have to try 2.♖e1 when Black has a pleasant choice between 2...♕xe1 with a draw, or 2...♕f5! with an extra piece for very little.

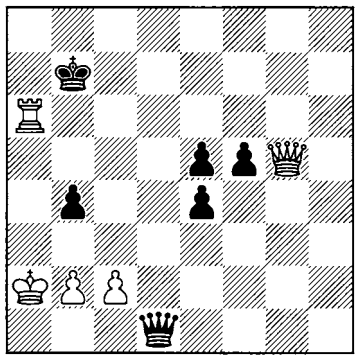
2.♖xg6† ♔f7 3.♕h7†

Black resigned, in view of 3...♔e8 4.♖g8† ♖f8 5.♖xf8† ♔xf8 6.♕xe4!. Surprise!

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: The natural thing is to first investigate the result of capturing on f1. Quite quickly the forced sequence leading to Black's demise should be found, and we should start to look for more original ideas. I think 1...♗e6 should spring to mind at some point. From getting the idea to seeing that it works wonders should not be too far.

18 Kobese – Areshchenko
Gibraltar 2005

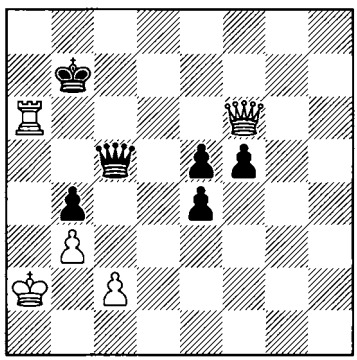


White is really sailing to victory. For instance 1.♖f6, 1.♖h6, 1.♖g6 and 1.♖a5 all lead to total destruction. Probably White could not understand why his opponent did not resign, but found out when he carelessly played:

1.♕f6?? ♕d5† 2.b3

2.♔b1 ♕d1† 3.♔a2 ♕d5† is going nowhere.

2...♕c5!!



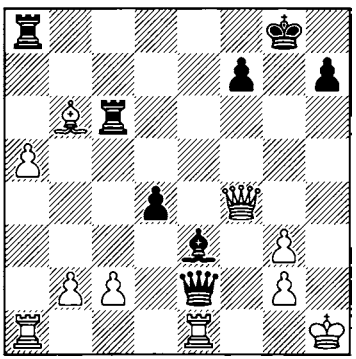
This is a true miracle (If you are Black that is – and I am only talking about the pieces...). White cannot escape the repetition of moves.

3.♔a1
3.♔b2 ♕d4† 4.♔c1 ♕g1†
3...♕g1† 4.♔b2 ♕d4† 5.♔a2 ♕c5
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: White is ready with the big hammer and you are the nail. It is clear that the check is the only move, so the thing is after 2.b3 to find a move that does not lose immediately (elimination) and also creates counterplay. Only one move meets these criteria.

19 Xie Jun – Spassky
Prague 1995 (analysis)

Boensch overlooked that White could have continued the fight with:
1.♕f4!!



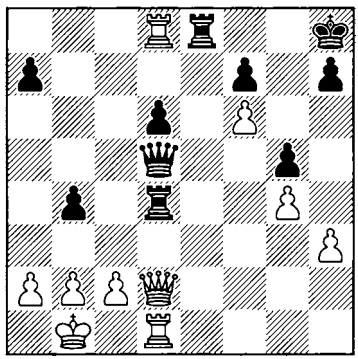
This leads to a position where Black is better, having an extra exchange, but where White has serious chances of a successful defence because of the strength of his bishop.

1.♕g5† however fails to work, as after 1...♗xg5 2.♖xe2 ♖xb6 the bishop is not hanging on f4, and Black wins after 3.axb6 ♖xa1† 4.♔h2 ♖a8.
1...♕xc2
This is probably the critical test.
2.♖xe3 dxe3
Both 3.♗xe3 and 3.♖f1 lead to positions that are more pleasant for Black, but I have not been able to find a convincing win. And as there are no alternatives from the starting position, this is definitely worth a shot.

How this exercise could have been solved: Basically mate is near and something has to be done about it. As the black queen is hanging, it is actually a desperado scenario, so White should have more spiritual freedom to look for options. In the end only two queen moves prevent the mate and then it only remains to calculate a few lines and find that one loses quickly, while the other is just hanging on, even if only barely.

20 Popovic – Simic
Herceg Novi 2000 (analysis)

The position we deal with was not even close to happening in the game, so we will ignore reality and choose the fantasy. In our fairy tale White cannot take on d4 because of the back rank mate. In the end only two rook moves make sense. The best of these is:
1.♖d8!!



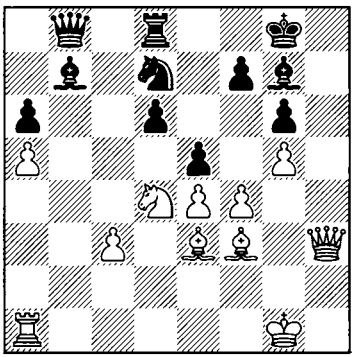
After this White will have either a better middlegame or endgame, which one is up to Black.

1.♖e7? ♖xe7 2.fxe7 ♖xd2 3.e8=♕† ♔g7 leaves White a pawn down. He should probably lose the queen ending, though those are always tricky, of course.

How this exercise could have been solved: Again we are dealing with a desperate scenario. It is easy to immediately discount most legal moves. In this kind of position I like to think of moving the piece, rather than an actual move.

For instance, I look at all queen moves or all moves with the d1-rook. In the end I will find that only moves with the d7-rook makes sense. Hopefully I will spot both. Or if I find that 1.♖e7 is not satisfactory, I will try to see if I have missed anything, and then, hopefully, find 1.♖d8.

21 Vaisman – Liangov
Sandomierz 1976



1.♘e6! fxe6

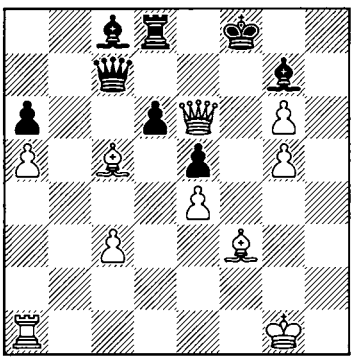
Actually Black is forced to play 1...exf4 when after 2.♘xd8 ♕xd8 3.♗xf4 ♗xc3 he has reasonable compensation for the exchange, though White remains better.

2.♕xe6† ♔f8

2...♔h8 3.♔g2 does not work.

3.f5! ♘c5

3...♕c7 loses directly to 4.f6, but in the game's annotations 4.fxg6? was given as best. But Black can defend with: 4...♘c5! 5.♗xc5 ♗c8! (5...♕xc5† 6.♔g2 ♕c7 7.♖f1 is clearly not healthy)



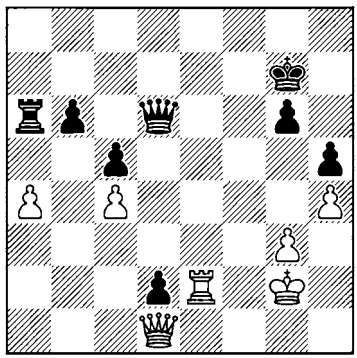
Black now has an easier game. White is probably forced to seek compensation with 6.♗b6 which according to my analysis gives reasonable drawing chances. But also 5.♕c4 should be OK for White. The main point is that 4...♘c5 saves the day.

White now won trivially.

4.♗xc5 gxf5 5.♗h5 ♕c7 6.♗xd6†
1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: It is a matter of unforcing thinking. It is not too hard to see that 4...♘c5 has to be played. The challenge is not to recapture with check. Of course you have to look at this, but when you see it does not work, it is important to rid yourself of the feeling that it *has to* be played. Only then can you solve the exercise, and probably quite easily.

22 Andersson – Browne
Siegen (ol) 1970



We start with the position half a move before our exercise, as it looked in the game, without a pawn on f4. Black now sacrificed a rook.

1...♖xa4!

This is obviously a very strong move. White played:

2.♕xa4?!

Allowing Black to promote the pawn.

2...d1=♕ 3.♕e8

Even the eccentric 3...♕c6† would give winning chances, but Black has two better ways to defend. One of them he played in the game:

3...♕d8!

White resigned because of 4.♖e7† ♔h6 and the x-ray protection of h8 forces White to exchange queens.

0-1

Also 3...♕f6 takes control over f8 and h8 and therefore 4.♖f2 ♕dd8! also wins.

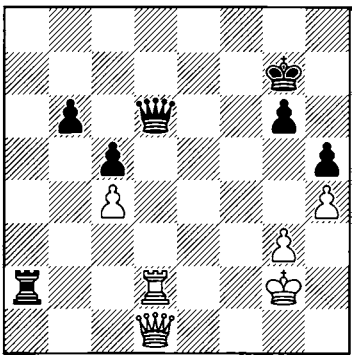
But the whole idea behind Black's combination is less impressive than was first thought – or, if you prefer, White's defence is even more impressive.

2.♖xd2

Black was now relying on

2...♖a2!

to win the game.

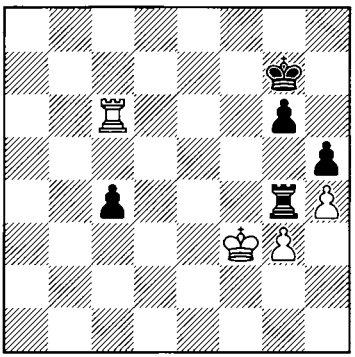


But here White can defend with:

3.♕a1†! ♖xa1 4.♖xd6

In this position the white rook is ideally placed on the sixth rank and this could give White some drawing chances. However, Black can find an even better place for his rook on g4 and after:

4...♖a4 5.♖xb6 ♖xc4 6.♔f3 ♖g4! 7.♖c6 c4

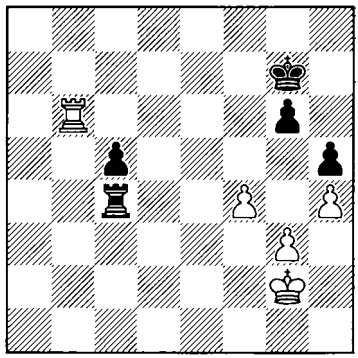


The black king is free to help the advance of the c-pawn, while the white king is tied to the defence of the g-pawn. Trying to exchange the pawns is useless:

8.♔e2 ♔f7 9.♔d2 ♔e7 10.♔c3 ♖xg3† 11.♔xc4 ♖g4†

And Black wins the endgame.

White probably draws if he plays the more tenacious **6.♖c6!**, but to make the position more instructive, a pawn is inserted on f4.



In this case the rook endgame is more or less immediately drawn, not only because White is no longer a pawn in arrears, but also because Black does not have the lovely g4-square at his disposal.

How this exercise could have been solved: This exercise displays a series of only moves. White needs to investigate all his options carefully before he can find 3.♕a1†. This can only be done if he is really searching for options, and does not have set parameters in his head. Andersson clearly did not manage this in the game. If you decide the conclusion of a position before you have investigated all possibilities, you will only obstruct yourself.

23 Pritchett – Aagaard
Oban 2005

With less than three minutes each I played ...♖xf6, well knowing that it should lead to a draw by force.

Luckily I managed to confuse my opponent, who did not think of stopping the pawns at the "first rank border control", beyond which no pawn can proceed without proper authority.

1.♖xg3?

Also 1.♖c5† ♔b7 2.♖b5† ♖b6 wins easily for Black.

1...♖b6 2.c5 b2!

2...♖b4? fails to win. After 3.♔d6 b2 4.♖g8† ♔b7 5.c6† ♔a7 6.♖g7† ♔a6 7.c7 ♔b7 8.♖g8 there is no win. Black will have to accept a draw shortly.

3.cxb6 b1=♕ 4.♖g8† ♔b7 5.♔f7 ♕xb6...

And I eventually succeeded in mating my opponent on g7.

0-1

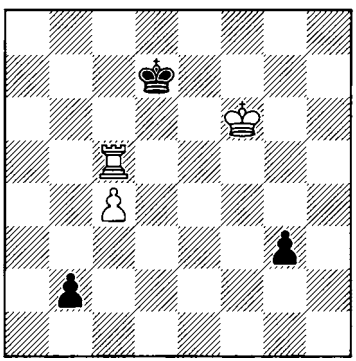
However!

1.♔xf6!

This draws rather easily. It is easy to forget about this move, especially since it is an exercise. It seems as if Black's idea will now be allowed to unfold itself. But then Black's idea is nothing but a bluff...

The point my opponent overlooked was that after:

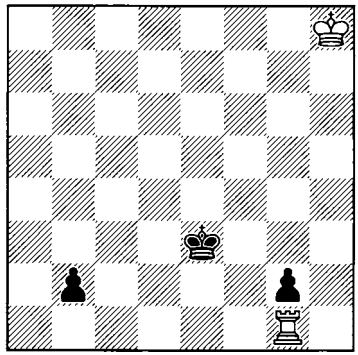
1...b2 2.♖c5† ♔d7



He can play the simple:

3.♖d5† ♔c6 4.♖d1!

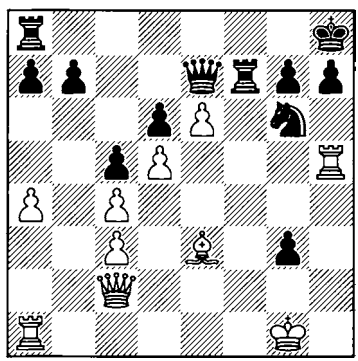
White stops the pawns. Even if the white king were trapped in a cage on h8, the position would be a theoretical draw, in a position everyone should know:



White draws with a peculiar repetition with 1.♖b1! ♔d3 2.♖g1!. But in our game this would not even have been necessary, as the white king could easily pick up the g-pawn.

How this exercise could have been solved: We are dealing with a simple calculation exercise with not many options. White should seriously calculate about 20 half-moves in total in order to understand the impact of all the relevant lines, or 34 if you insist on seeing everything to the end. In the game he failed to do so accurately, only because of the psychological pressure of the clock ticking. He fell into the trap of believing the opponent, and his desire to avoid the obvious main line was based on feeling rather than calculation.

24 Grigorian – Romanishin
USSR 1971



The position is obviously dangerous for Black, but this does not mean that he should allow himself to be scared and play moves such as:

1...♖f6?

As he did in the game. After this White wins quite comfortably with:

2.♗g5

Now this happened:

2...♖af8?

Another bad blunder. 2...♔g8 3.♗xf6 gxf6 4.♖f1 is no holiday either, but at least it would have offered a few last moves of resistance.

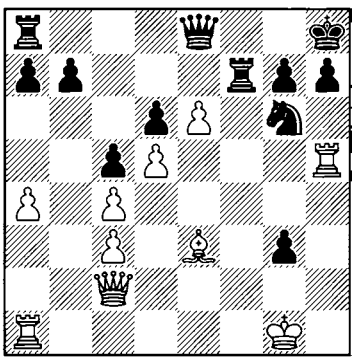
3.♕xg6!

1-0

Also 1...♘f8 does not work, as White can remove the bishop with tempo and win with 2.♗g5 when after 2...♖f2 he can choose between 3.♕xh7†! or the more prosaic 3.♗xe7 ♖xc2 4.♗xd6 with an absolutely winning position.

The correct solution is:

1...♕e8!!



This brilliant quiet move is difficult for the human eye to spot as the queen is defending the rook and the knight through x-rays, discovered attacks and pins, all in one! However, for a strong player it should not be too hard to spot, so one wonders if Romanishin was short of time, or if he just had a bad feeling about his position and therefore did not concentrate as much as he could have.

We do not need to calculate a lot of variations to see that this is the only move, but, as the author, it is my duty to prove that the move is not just fresh paint on a rotten wall, but the move that can save the game. Therefore please forgive me for these rather complex variations and move on if you do not feel curious...

2.♕xg6!

The most interesting opportunity as it is the only one that tries to challenge Black. White sacrifices his queen for an advanced passed pawn. If he moves his rook, Black will play 2...♖f6 with approximately even chances.

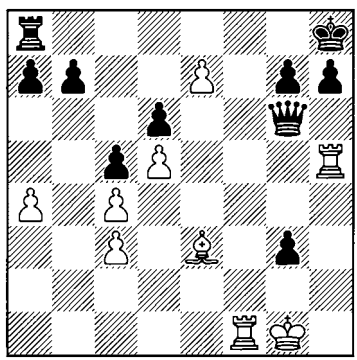
The other options are:

2.exf7?? ♕xe3† and Black wins because of either ...♘f4† or ...♕f3†, in both cases winning the rook.

2.♕e4 ♖f6 3.♗g5 ♖f2 is unclear. There is no direct way for either player to play for a win.

2...♖f1† 3.♖xf1 ♕xg6 4.e7

In this challenging position it turns out that both of Black's reasonable moves lead to a draw by force:



4...h6!?

This challenging idea was found during a training session with Chris MacDonald, when we could not find a win after 4...♖g8 5.♖hf5 ♕e8 (5...g2 6.♖1f3 is no improvement) 6.♖f7! (6.♗g5?? ♕h5! and Black wins instantly) 6...h6 7.♔g2. Black has two ways of trying to improve his position (notice that 8.♗xh6 is a serious threat): 7...♔h7 8.♖1f6! ♔h8 9.♖f1 OK, that did not work, so what about: 9...♕d7 10.♗xh6! Only move, but good enough. 10...gxh6 11.♖1f6 Black has to move his rook

along the 8th rank, and White will simply give perpetual check.

5.♖f8† ♔h7 6.♖e5!!

To be honest, Chris and I totally missed this one. We only looked at 6.♖xa8? ♕b1† 7.♔g2 ♕e4†! and Black has excellent winning chances. After he grabs the pawn on the next move, the lack of coordination between the white pieces means that one of them will fall. Maybe White can make a draw with accurate play, but it will be some ordeal if nothing else.

6...♕c2

This is the most beautiful line, but also after other moves there is no win:

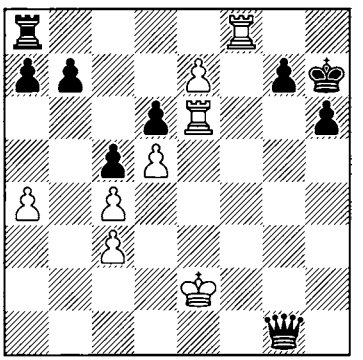
6...♖e8 7.♖e6 ♕h5 8.♖xe8 Here Black must hurry to give perpetual check, as after 8...♕xe8? 9.♗f4 he is lost. White will be able to zugzwang him.

The main point of the last rook move is of course that after 6...dxe5 White will not lose his passed pawn, and the position after 7.♖xa8 ♕b1† 8.♔g2 ♕e4† 9.♔h3! holds nothing better for Black than a few checks and half a point.

7.♖e6!

The kamikaze rook must now opt for survival! 7.♖xa8 ♕h2† 8.♔f1 g2† 9.♔e1 ♕xe5! and Black wins.

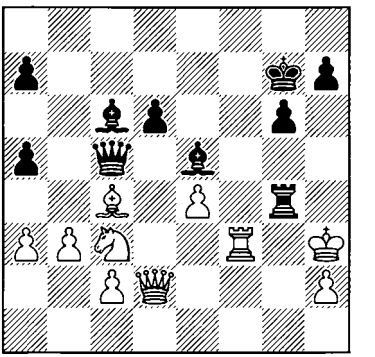
7...♕h2† 8.♔f1 g2† 9.♔e1 g1=♕† 10.♗xg1 ♕xg1† 11.♔e2



The passed pawn supported by the rook on e6 is fully adequate compensation for the queen. Black has nothing better than to give perpetual check.

How this exercise could have been solved: Once again it is all about elimination and the selection of candidates. We look at the various moves and eliminate them as not working. If we have not seen 1...♕e8 to start with, we need to take a second look at the position when it is clear that nothing is working. I know that a lot of people would start over looking at the same downtrodden moves again, but what we really need to do is to open our mind to additional opportunities that we might have missed the first time around.

25 Bitman – Alexeev
USSR 1969



In the game Black designed a spectacular idea, based on preventing ♖f7† and at the same time trapping the king on h3. He played a sparkling queen sacrifice with:

1...♕xc4?

Who in their right mind could have resisted this idea? Well, probably quite a few people, because if we looked for candidate moves in the starting position, we would very quickly find a simple knockout punch. Black wins easily with 1...♗f4! when only instant resignation makes any sense.

2.♔xg4?

White was not surprisingly confused and did not know how to react. But this move loses a piece without any resistance, and White's only intention after losing this piece is apparently to resign, so the move makes little sense. But that

is the nature of chess. Often our moves do not make sense.

2...♕e6† 3.♔h4 h6

White resigned.

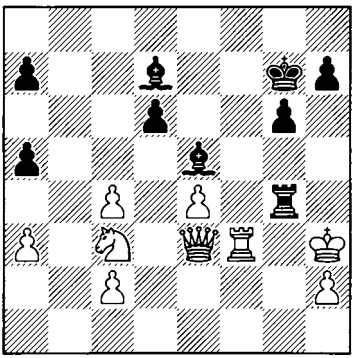
0-1

The only chance was to accept the sacrifice.

2.bxc4 ♗d7!

Black has a number of threats, most notably ...♖g3†, with or without ...g5† to follow. It so happens that White can defend himself against this with a "small" move that just defends all the key squares.

3.♕e3!!



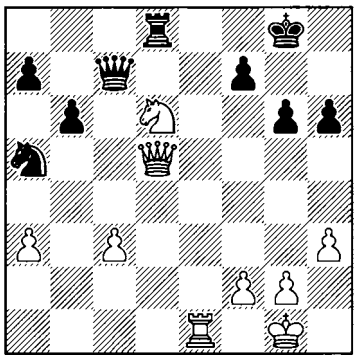
Black does not have anything better than perpetual check.

3...♖g3† 4.♔h4 ♖g4† 5.♔h3

All other moves, such as 3.♖f5? and similar, are truly desperate. After 3...gxf5 you have delayed the loss for one move, but without increasing your chances of saving the game. These kinds of moves are impractical, while a move like 2.bxc4 is very practical. At least there is a chance that there is a saving move after 2...♗d7, while after 2.♔xg4 the position is far less complicated, and it is easy to see that White loses a piece for nothing.

How this exercise could have been solved: Again it is a matter of elimination of moves, but you could also think of which squares you need to protect: f3 and g5. The queen can only do this from e3. For some reason this is very hard to see, and the entire Norwegian national team (no Carlsen present though) failed to solve this exercise.

26 Minev – Keller
Bern 1977



Minev was very happy with his move in the game.

1.♕d4!?

1.♖e8† ♖xe8 2.♘xe8 ♕xc3 and similar leads to a bad endgame, however not completely without saving chances. Now in the game Black did not play the strongest.

1...♕c6?

Minev gives the following alternatives (the question marks are mine):

1...♖xd6?? and 1...♕xd6? both lose to 2.♖e8†.

1...♘c6? 2.♕f6! is equal according to Minev, but actually White has a number of very strong threats. First of all there is ♘e8 winning everything, but also after 2...♕d7 defending against this, White has 3.♖e3 with the idea ♖f3 as well as 3.♘xf7 winning a pawn. No matter which, White has serious winning chances.

Beyond that, a student of mine tried 1...♘b7?? completely oblivious to 2.♖e8†, which is winning instantly. When asked what he had been thinking I would reply, he was short of an answer.

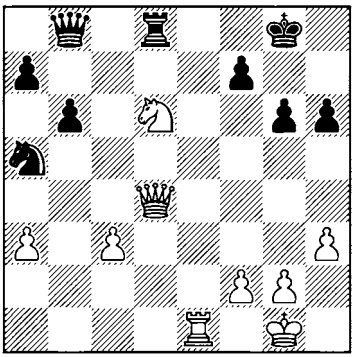
2.♘f5!

The only move, but good enough for a draw.

2...♖xd4 3.♘e7† ♔f8 4.♘xc6 ♖a4 5.♘xa7 ♖xa3 6.♖b1

½–½

The solution to the exercise starts with a move that somehow slipped Minev's attention. Black can control the e8-square in the same way as from c6 by playing:
1...♕b8!!



Now there are no funny tactics, so either ...♖xd6 or ...♘b7 will win on the next move. It is as simple as that.

How this exercise could have been solved: Keller came quite close with the move he played, only he had overlooked 2.♘f5!. He wanted to control e8 and attack d6 at the same time, which is exactly what Black should be trying to do. Had he seen his opponent's response he would probably have tried to find another way to do the same, and thus found the solution to the problem.

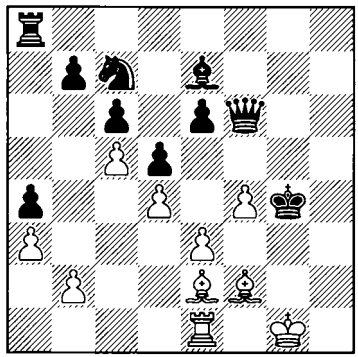
27 Geller – Notaros
Novi Sad 1978

It was not like Efim Geller to miss chances like this one, and indeed he did not. White draws with a funny queen sacrifice.
1.♕xh5†!

Other moves such as 1.♗e2? are too slow. Black is winning after for example 1...♕g6 and White will be a piece down for two pawns.

Also slow is 1.♔g2? when after 1...♕g7 2.♕xh5† ♔xh5 3.♖h1† ♔g4 4.♗e2† ♔f5 Black dances away.
1...♔xh5 2.g4†! ♔xg4

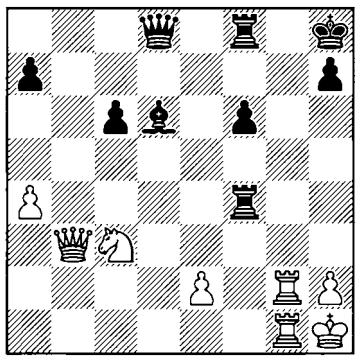
2...♔h6 3.g5† ♕xg5† 4.fxg5† ♗xg5 5.♔g2 will give White a much better endgame. The a8-rook will have to go to the kingside and the a-pawn will be lost.
3.♗e2†



A draw was agreed because of the perpetual checks on f1, e2 and d3.
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Actually the queen sacrifice should suggest itself. After that it only remains to find 2.g4†. This should not be too difficult, as it will be clear immediately that no other follow-up will do. The danger is that we reject the queen sacrifice, because we do not actually *look* for a follow-up, but only think about 2.♗e2†, which is clearly no good. Some form of discipline is needed.

28 Sherbakov – Rublevsky
Cheliabinsk (1) 2000



Sherbakov played really excellent attacking chess in this game. As his first move he chose:
1.♘b5! ♗e5

There are no real alternatives. 1...cxb5 2.♕g3 and there is no defence against mate. The same is the situation after 1...♖b4 2.♘xd6! with the idea 2...♖xb3 3.♖g8†! ♖xg8 4.♘f7 mate.
2.♘d6!

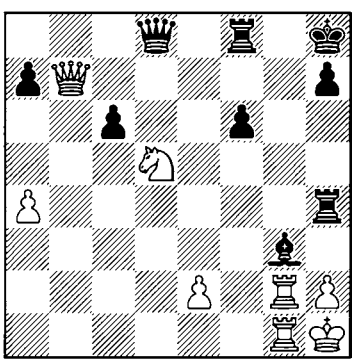
A very elegant move. Sherbakovand Rublevsky gave 2.♕g3!? f5 3.♘d6 h6 as equal, but with 4.♘c4! it becomes clear that the bishop is overloaded.
2...♖g4

A sad necessity. 2...♕xd6 3.♕g8† and 2...♗xd6 3.♕g3 both lead to mate in a few moves.
3.♖xg4 ♗xd6 4.♕d3!

With threats such as 5.♕xh7 and 5.♖d4 this finished the game.
4...♖f7 5.♕xd6!
1–0

Our exercise arises after:
1.♘d5? ♖h4 2.♕b7

This is apparently leading to mate more or less instantly. But Sherbakov had spotted the best defence:
2...♗g3!!



Now he says that after
3.♕xc6

White has the initiative. Actually Black can hold a draw with simple moves, as we shall see below.

3.♖xg3 leads to a direct draw: 3...♕xd5† 4.♖1g2 (White cannot play 4.♖3g2?? ♖g8! where Black wins because of the triple threat of ...♖xg2, ...♖xh2† and ...♖hg4, all extremely deadly.) 4...♕d1† 5.♖g1 ♕d5† with a draw by repetition.
3...♕d6! 4.♕xd6

4.♕b7 leads to a draw by force with 4...♖b8 5.♕e7 ♕xd5 6.♕xf6† ♔g8 7.♕xh4 ♕xg2†! 8.♔xg2 ♗xh4 9.♔h3† ♔f7 10.♔xh4 ♖b2 and White cannot defend both e2 and a4.
4...♗xd6 5.♘xf6 ♖xh2†! 6.♖xh2 ♗xh2 7.♘xh7 ♔xh7 8.♔xh2 ♖f2† 9.♖g2 ♖f4

With a simple draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: The threat of mate on g7 is rather imminent and only moves that solve this problem can be considered. This will very quickly lead to the discovery of 2...♗g3, or at least it should. If you failed this exercise, you need to do something to expand "the possible" in your mind.

29 Lane – Adams
London 1993

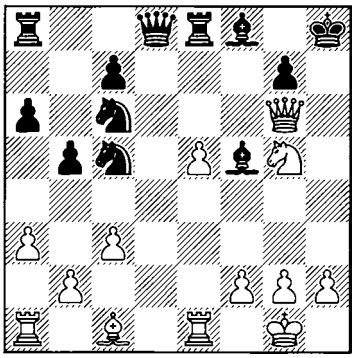
Black did not find a way out of the threats.
1...♕xg5? 2.♗xg5 ♗e6

Not the best, but it does not really matter anymore.
3.b4

Black is lost. He cannot both keep all three pieces for the queen and prevent the rook lift from e1 to e4 and h4. White won in 43 moves...
1-0

The point in the position is of course that 1...♕d3? loses to 2.♕xe8 ♗b7 3.♕h5† ♔g8 4.♖e3 with the double threat of ♕h7 mate and ♕f7† followed by ♖h3 mate. The only attempt to stop these, 4...♕f5, can be dealt with in many ways, among others 5.♖f3, winning the queen.

So Black had to give back a piece to connect the rooks and draw the white queen a little bit away from the black king.
1...♗f5!!



White can force a perpetual check immediately, or he can try for a win with:
2.♕xf5!?
Now Black will hold his own.
2...♕d3 3.♕f7 ♘xe5 4.♕h5† ♔g8
I cannot find better for White than the perpetual check after 5.♖xe5, as Black is threatening 5...♕g6 with complete control.

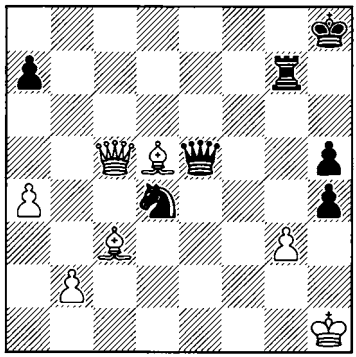
How this exercise could have been solved: This exercise is a matter of elimination and rethinking your options. To give up the queen equals resignation. The white attack will not stop because the black queen disappears. Therefore you will have to look for other options. What happened to Adams was that he reassured himself that no alternatives existed before he had looked closely enough to find out if any existed. Because White is threatening mate in one, the number of legal moves that actually have any interest is rather low, and it is better to look at all of them before you resign yourself to defeat.

30 Dehesdin – Aagaard
Cappelle la Grande 2005

The game went:
1.♕c8†? ♔h7 2.♗xd4 ♕xg3† 3.♔h1 ♕e1† 4.♔h2 ♕d2† 5.♔h1 ♕xd4 6.♕f5† ♔h6 7.♗g2 a5

Black has a winning advantage, though some technical problems. In the game I managed to win in usual hair-raising style.

But all that would not have happened, had White found:
1.♔h1!!



All Black's ideas are based on giving a check on g3 and then mating, but if there is no check on g3, this is not going to happen. Black is in a nasty pin on the long diagonal, and will have to force a draw with:
1...♕e2
1...♕f5 2.♕xd4 is the same story.
2.♕xd4
Bishop takes gives the same outcome, in the same way, only with a different piece.
2...♕f1† 3.♕g1 ♕h3† 4.♕h2 ♕f1†
The position is a draw.

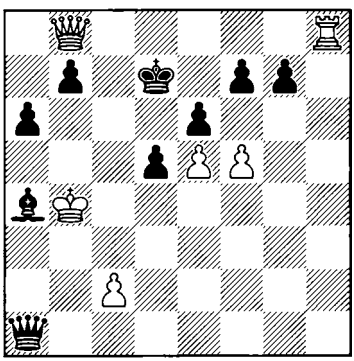
How this exercise could have been solved: I think this is one of these positions where you first try various checks with the queen, as my opponent did in the game, but eventually end up realising that active moves will not work. Then you turn to the problems of the kingside, and see that everything is connected to this check on g3. If this does not prompt 1.♔h1 then I am not sure what will.

Chapter 8

Solutions to Level 1

31 Velimirovic – A. Sokolov
Bar 1997

White did not manage to find the only defence.
34.♔xa3?
34.♔b3? ♕b1† 35.♔xa3 ♕a1† transposes to the game.
34.♔c3? loses in many ways: 34...♕e1† 35.♔d3 ♗b5† 36.c4 ♗xc4† 37.♔c2 ♕c1 mate.
34.♔a2! ♕xc2† 35.♔xa3 looks very dangerous, but Black has no way to bring the bishop into the attack directly. For some reason Atlas did not see this when he annotated the game for ChessBase magazine, while Sokolov mentioned it in his notes in *Chess Informant 71*.
34...♕a1† 35.♔b3 ♗a4† 36.♔b4

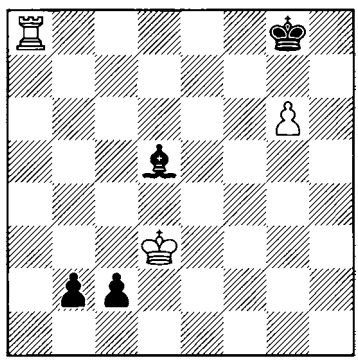


36...a5†!!
This move is easy to miss, and as such, seeing this is what the exercise is all about.
37.♔xa5
37.♔c5 ♕g1 mate!
37...♗xc2†
37...♗c6† 38.♔b4 ♕b2† 39.♔c5 b6† 40.♕xb6 ♕c3 was the fastest way to mate.
38.♔b4 ♕b2† 39.♔c5 ♕c3† 40.♔b6
40.♔b5 ♕c4† 41.♔b6 ♕c6† 42.♔a5 ♕c5 mate.
40...♕c6† 41.♔a5 ♕c5 mate.
0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: The best way to solve this exercise is the method of elimination. You simply have to try to find the refutation to the various king moves. One of them will be very hard to get rid of. This is your move.

32 Gdanski – Se. Ivanov
Poland 1990

1.♖g1??
The draw arises after 1.♔xd3! b2 with the point 2.♖a8†!!



and both black pawns will disappear.

1...♗e4!

Now the promotion of at least one pawn cannot be stopped.

2.g7 d2 3.♔xd2 b2 4.♖e1 b1=♕

0-1

How this exercise could have been solved: It is important to always look carefully at the moves that would be great to play. Here this is 1.♔xd3. Only, there is a problem. But if we lose faith at the first appearance of problems, we will never be good defenders; or good chess players in general for that matter.

33 Goldin – Ryabov
USSR 1972

1.♘d6†!

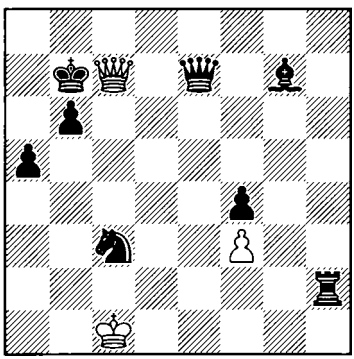
1.♕f7† ♔a8 and White is mated. Other king moves also win, but this is the simplest.

1...♕xd6

1...♔a7? 2.♕f7†.

1...♔b8 2.♕c6! and Black has nothing better than perpetual check.

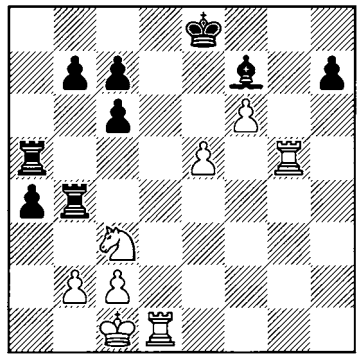
2.♖e7†! ♕xe7 3.♕c7†



½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: If not first time around, then eventually the idea of being stalemated should occur to you, especially in a book on defence where you have seen it in action a few times by now.

34 Peresypkin – Romanishin
USSR 1972



In a critical position White found a fantastic dynamic solution to all his problems.

1.e6!!

A wonderful double rook sacrifice.

1...♖xg5 2.♖d8†! ♔xd8 3.exf7

Black resigned and we have our exercise. There is no way to stop the queening of the f-pawn, but before all counterplay is exhausted there is no reason to resign. The fat white lady might be getting ready to go on stage, but she is certainly not singing yet...

3...♖g1†!

No other moves make any sense. If you fell, I hope it was not here you stumbled. Now we have two lines to consider:

a) **4.♘d1**

This gives Black a target to assault. He can draw in a number of ways:

4...♖d4! 5.f8=♕† ♔d7 6.♕e7† ♔c8 7.♕e8† ♖d8 White has no way to improve his position.

4...♔d7 5.f8=♕ ♖d4! transposes.

4...♖e4!? is a little quirky, but White has no way to prove a plus. 5.f8=♕† ♖e8 6.♕c5 ♖ee1 draws.

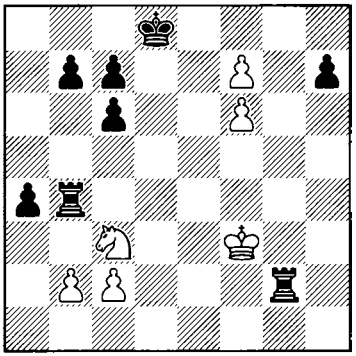
b) White cannot escape the checks if he comes out of his cave.

4.♔d2 ♖g2† 5.♔e3 ♖g3†

The position is a draw, as after 6.♔f2?? Black simply waves goodbye to his rook with 6...♖f4† in order to pick up the pawns.

6.♔e2 ♖g2† 7.♔f3??

This is not a clever way to zigzag Black, but a silly way to lose the game!

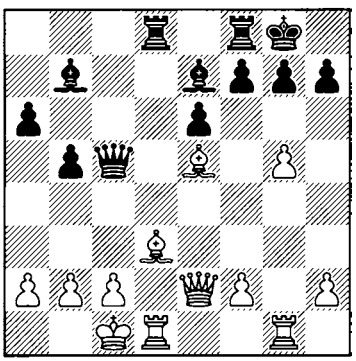


7...♖f2†!

How this exercise could have been solved: On the first move we must conclude that there are no alternatives to the rook check. White then has two possible replies. I do not think that it is too difficult to find the counterplay against the d1-knight in some form. If we look at the position the option should come to us rather quickly. We then have to deal with the king coming out.

I think it is possible to think up various artificial ways to defend that just do not work, but the lesson here is: always investigate the checks. We actually do not have to prove anything here, as it is a simple perpetual check.

35 A. Guseinov – Balajan
USSR 1975



1.♗xh7†!?

White does not appear to have anything stronger than this combination. The normal 1.f4 ♖d5! should give Black adequate counter chances.

1...♔xh7 2.♖xd8!

The only way: 2.♕h5† ♔g8 and now neither 3.♗xg7 ♖xd1† nor 3.♖xd8 ♕xe5 works.

2...♖xd8 3.♕h5† ♔g8 4.♗xg7 ♔xg7 5.♕h6† ♔g8 6.g6

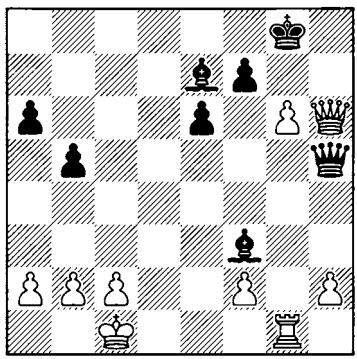
1-0

Black resigned here, which again is a little strange to me. Obviously White has managed to create real threats, but it would be more practical to try a few moves. Actually it turns out that Black is not even worse after the only moves that postpone the mate without losing truckloads of material on the way.

6...♖d1†!

A move like this is of course very beautiful, but it should not be too hard to find.

7.♔xd1 ♗f3† 8.♔c1 ♕h5



So what is the real task here? Black needed to defend h7 and h8. This is clearly the way to do it. Now White can play 9.♕e3 without any venom, but Black should also not worry about:

9.gxf7† ♔xf7 10.♕f4† ♕f5

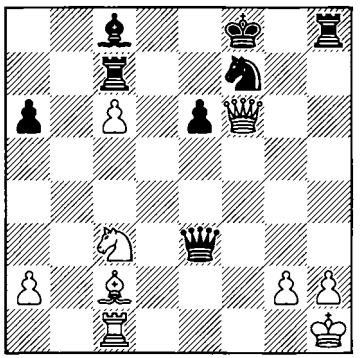
The two bishops give Black sufficient counterplay. White can probably still create some problems for him because of the open king, but the rook will find it difficult to be really active when the bishops are dominating so many squares.

Gufeld, a lover of chess beauty, must be turning in his grave for not having spotted this defence before submitting the position to *Chess Informant*.

How this exercise could have been solved: Basically you are looking for desperate moves, and so the check on d1 should come to you rather quickly. Then the check on f3 will follow quite naturally, and only then will you need to find 8...♕h5. This should not prove too big a task.

36 Ermenkov – Bischoff
Novi Sad (ol) 1990

White is in all kinds of trouble, but managed to save the day with a drawing combination.
1.♖xe3!! ♕xe3 2.♕g6† ♔f8 3.♕f6† ♘f7



4.♖f1!

The real point of the exercise. 4.♖d1!? ♔g8 5.♕g6† ♔f8 6.♕f6 works in more or less the same way.

4...♔g8

4...♔e8?? 5.♗g6 ♖f8 6.♖d1! and Black is lost.

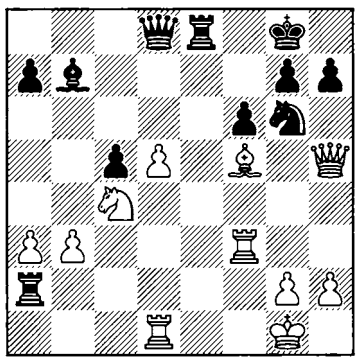
5.♕g6†

5.♗g6!? (Chris MacDonald) was a more dangerous option. After 5...♖h7 6.♘e4 ♖g7 7.♖d1 ♖xg6 8.♕xg6† ♔f8 Black holds on none the less. Also good enough looks 5...♖xh2† with an exchange of queens coming up.

5...♔f8 6.♕f6 ♔g8 7.♕g6†
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The first few moves are clearly forced. So the main point, I guess, is to start looking for candidates in the position where hard thought appears necessary.

37 Bruzon – Timman
Curacao Rapid (4) 2005



We are entering one move before our exercise. Bruzon has completely murdered his opponent, but now committed a gross blunder.

1.♖g3?

After the simple 1.♗xg6 hxg6 2.♕xg6 ♖ee2 3.♖g3 White would have won easily.

1...♕xd5!

Oops! Now we have arrived at our exercise.

2.♕g4?

Defending g2 and d4, but it gives Black a chance to land another punch.

2.♗xg6?! hxg6 (2...♕d4† 3.♖e3! ♖xg2† 4.♔f1 ♕f4† 5.♖f3! and Black will have to defend an endgame a piece down) 3.♕xd5† ♗xd5 is also possible, but the endgame after something like 4.h3 ♗f7 does not look appealing. If you do not believe me, try to play it against Fritz where it has a minute per move, and you will quickly see how difficult White's position is.

2...♖ee2?!

2...h5! was even stronger. Black should win without too much difficulty.

3.♘d2?

3.♕xe2 ♖xe2 4.♖xd5 ♗xd5 5.♗xg6 hxg6 6.♖xg6 with a bad endgame was better, but to

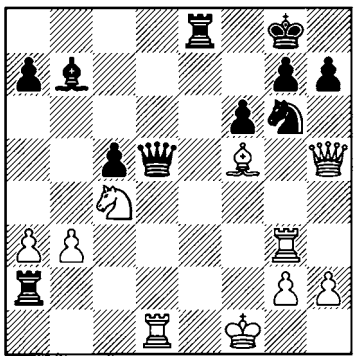
go from a winning position to a more or less lost position in only two moves is tough going for anyone, and it is reasonable to assume that Bruzon had not readjusted yet.

3...♖axd2 4.♗e6† ♖xe6

0–1

White could have defended with a surprising king move.

2.♔f1!!



Defending against the mate on e1, against the check on g2, and also threatening the black queen. What more can you ask from a single move?

2...♕f7

The only move. 2...♕c6 3.♗xg6 hxg6 4.♕xg6 and White wins.

3.♖d7!

I can see no attraction for White in avoiding the forced draw after something like 3.♕g4 ♗a6!.

3...♖e7

Black can of course force a perpetual immediately with 3...♖a1†.

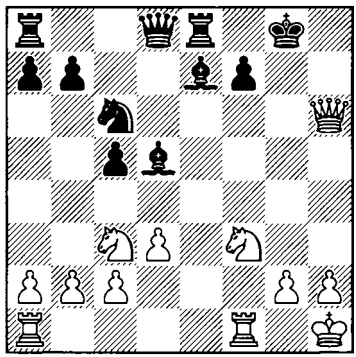
4.♖d8†

With a draw by repetition.

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all you need to find candidates that protect both d1 and g2. If we look carefully, we should be able to find not only the obvious 2.♕g4 and 2.♗xg6, but also the more surprising solution. From then on it is about eliminating the various options.

38 Landa – Gagarin
Bratislava 1990

We enter the game just before Black plays a rather dubious combination.



1...♘e5?!

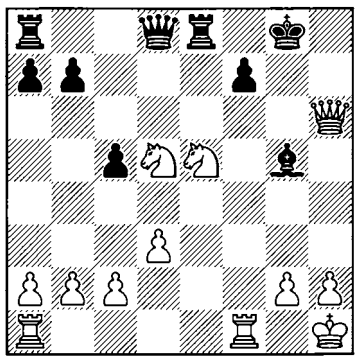
1...♗f8 2.♕h5 is supposed to be dangerous, but after 2...♗xf3 3.♖xf3 ♘e5 4.♖h3 ♗g7 the position looks more unclear than anything.

1...♘b4!? is strongest according to Fritz. The main idea is apparently to protect the d5-bishop. Then White should maybe follow the digital highway with 2.♕h5! ♗f6 3.♖f2 with compensation and chances for both sides.

2.♕h5?

Our exercise starts after 2.♘xe5 ♗g5 which was Gagarin's idea. White can play 3.♕h5 with some compensation, but only of the dubious kind, slightly mouldy like last year's cheese.

Instead the solution is 3.♘xd5!!, which surprisingly is good enough for a draw.



3...♗xh6 4.♘f6† ♔f8 (4...♔g7 5.♘h5† and the only move is 5...♔g8 allowing the perpetual) 5.♘h7† Black can either live with the draw, or play 5...♔g7? (5...♔e7? 6.♖ae1! and the queen cannot be saved without grave problems for Black: 6...♕c8 7.♘xf7† ♔d7 8.♘f6† ♔c6 9.♖xe8 and the queen is trapped none the less.) 6.♖xf7† ♔h8 7.♘f6! ♕xf6 (7...♖e7 8.♘g6 mate!) 8.♖xf6 ♗g7 9.♘f7† ♔g8 10.♖f2 ♗xb2 11.♖af1 and the endgame is stone cold winning for White.

But the strongest move was actually 2.♘xd5! when 2...♕xd5 3.♘g5 ♗xg5 4.♕xg5† ♔f8 is clearly better for Black according to Gagarin. But after 5.♖ae1! ♖e6 6.♖e4! White has a lot of pressure on the black position, with moves like ♖f5 coming up. I believe White is better.

2...♗f6?!

2...♗xf3! 3.gxf3 ♘g6 and the attack is unlikely to succeed.

3.♖ae1?

White misses his chance. This time there will be no escape. 3.♘xd5 ♕xd5 4.♘g5! would have kept the position unclear. The main point is that after 4...♘g4?! 5.h4!! White has a clear advantage based on 5...♗xg5 6.♕xg4 ♖e5 7.♖ae1!.

3...♗xf3! 4.gxf3 ♘g6

Black is clearly better and won the game without too much trouble.

5.♖xe8† ♕xe8 6.♘e4 ♕c6 7.f4 ♔f8 8.b3 ♖e8 9.♕f5 ♖e6 10.h3 b6 11.♕g4 ♖xe4 12.dxe4 ♕xe4† 13.♕g2 ♕f5 14.♕a8† ♔g7 15.♕g2 ♗d4 16.♕g4 ♕xc2 17.h4 ♕e4† 18.♔h2 f5 19.♕g2 ♕xg2† 20.♔xg2 ♘xh4† 21.♔g3 ♘g6 22.♖h1 ♗e3

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all we should realise that it is not possible to play on without the piece. Then the need for investigating the queen sacrifice becomes obvious, and the details need to be checked.

39 Starck – Thormann
East Germany 1977

Not really a complicated example. White managed to think that whatever he played made no difference, and Black did the same, which meant that he missed his chance to win the game.

1.♔f1?

1.♔xe2? naturally loses to 1...♖e7† and Black is now free to take the queen.

1.♔g1! ♖e1† 2.♔f2 ♖e2† with a draw by repetition was the correct outcome and our solution.

1...♖e1†?

Here Black missed his chance for greatness, and more importantly an extra half point. The game was agreed a draw...

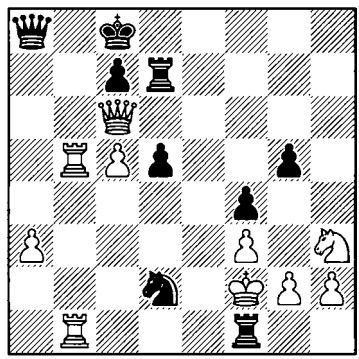
½–½

Black could have forced the king to the e-file or the b1-rook to be deflected, in both cases with loss of the queen as the consequence.

1...♘d2†! 2.♔g1

2.♔xe2 ♖e7†

2...♖e1† 3.♔f2 ♖f1†!!



No matter what, White loses his queen.

How this exercise could have been solved: It does not take a long time to realise that White has two possible moves at his disposal. Personally I would do one of two things. Either look at the way the position "works": that Black is hoping to force White to either come out onto the e-file, or to move the rook away from b1. This should make me smell the danger.

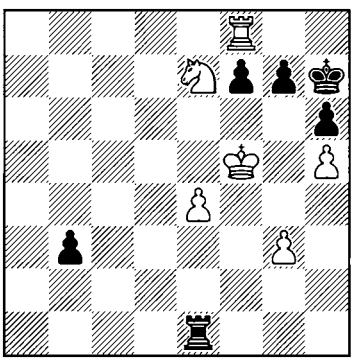
Or I would look very carefully for options after both moves, and see that Black has this extra knight check, which I would not want to

give him (I do not play for traps in this way, and cannot recommend it – either the opponent will see the trap, or it is no trap, but just a blunder he will probably not play anyway). That we need to see the reason why 3.♔f1 loses to choose the best move is not obvious to me, but it is not that difficult to see once you are on the right track.

40 Miles – L.A. Schneider
Philadelphia 1980

Miles won the game with a simple but attractive combination after:
1...b2?
1...♖a1 2.♖b8 makes little sense.
2.♘g6!
1–0

But Black could have saved the game fairly easily.
1...♖e1! 2.♔f5

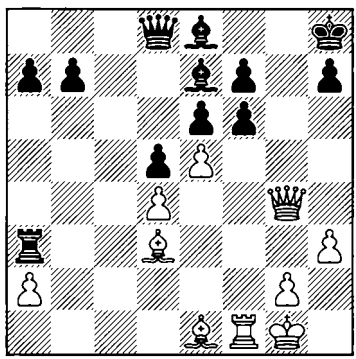


2...♖f1†!
Black combines two strategies to save the game. He will harass the white king and attack the white pawns. At the same time, as he is not being mated anymore, he forces White to look out for the advance of the b-pawn. All combined together, this gives Black the opportunity to liquidate enough pawns to make a draw.
2...b2? is bad as 3.♘g6! wins again.
2...g6† also does not work: 3.♔e5 b2 4.♖xf7† ♔h8 5.hxg6 ♖xe4† 6.♔f6 and Black is mated.
3.♔e5 ♖g1!
The simplest is just to continue the attack on the white pawns.
3...♖f6!? 4.♘d5 ♖b6 5.♘c3 b2 also looks as if it can make a draw, but from a practical point of view it is more dangerous for Black.
4.♖b8 ♖xg3 5.♘f5
5.♔f4 ♖h3 6.♔g4 ♖e3 7.♖b4 b2 8.♔f4 ♖h3 with a draw.
5...♖h3 6.♖b7 b2 7.♖xb2 ♖xh5 8.♖b7 f6† 9.♔f4 ♖g5
Even if all the pawns disappeared, the endgame would be drawn.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first idea is to avoid the simple way to lose the game. After you have seen this, you already know that a rook move is needed. The idea to attack the white pawns and eliminate them should come to you pretty easily, and then you just have to look hard for the right way to do it.

41 Magarashvili – Ikitishvili
USSR 1980

We enter the game just as White is about to misplay an easily winning position. First comes a strong sacrifice.



1.♗xh7! ♔xh7 2.♕h4† ♔g8 3.♗b4??
Black resigned. He probably expected White to play 3.exf6, which surely should have brought about resignation quite soon. Then when another move came, it looked convincing as well.
1–0

We have another of these midway resignations. Why do people want to resign so badly that they do so when all the pieces are hanging? Black could at least play a few more moves to see what his opponent was up to! Who knows, he might have found something he did not see immediately.

3...♗xb4!

There is really no alternative to this move. It should not take long to see that 3...♗b5 4.♗xe7 ♕xe7 5.♖xf6! gives Black a very bad endgame. He seems to be forced to play 5...♕f8 6.♖h6 ♕xh6 7.♕xh6 ♖xa2 8.♕g5† ♔f8 when the march of the h-pawn towards the 8th rank is very dispiriting.

4.exf6

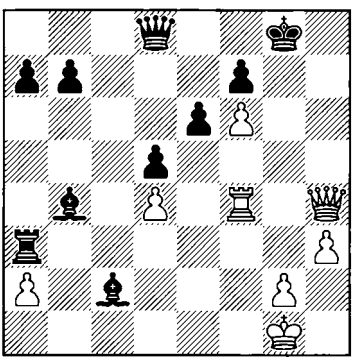
4.♖f4? does not work. Black can play something artificial like 4...♗e1!? or just normal moves such as 4...♕c7 5.♕h6 ♕c1† (5...♖g3 6.♖h4 ♖xg2† is only a draw) 6.♔h2 f5!. White now has nothing better than to win the queen with 7.♖g4† fxg4 8.♕xc1 when after 8...g3† 9.♔g1 a5 his chances of saving the game are close to zero.

4...♗a4!

From a practical viewpoint this is strongest, but 4...♗b5 is not objectively worse. The main difference is that here White can force a draw with 5.♖f4 ♗d3 6.♕h6 (6.♖g4† transposes to our main line) 6...♕f8 7.♖g4† ♗g6 8.♖xg6† with a perpetual. We should not give the opponent a choice, unless the main lines are bad for us.

5.♖f4 ♗c2

The whole idea is of course that the bishop can enter this diagonal and defend the king. Now White cannot proceed in any other way than winning the queen.



6.♖g4†

Here is the difference: After 6.♕h6? Black replies coolly 6...♖g3! 7.♖h4 ♗h7!! and stays a piece up. All this was hard to see from move three, which is exactly my point. There was no need to resign before the position was absolutely clear.

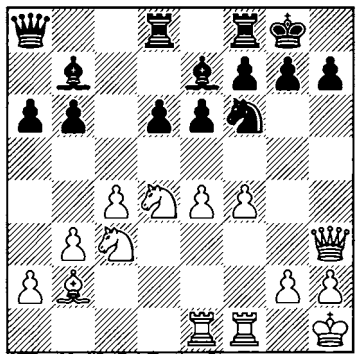
6...♗g6 7.♖xg6† fxg6 8.f7† ♔xf7 9.♕xd8 ♖xa2

Black is slightly better here according to Fritz, but I must say that I am dubious about this (which is why 4...♗b5 and 4...♗a4 have equal value in my book). I think the endgame should be a draw. Black's best strategy must be to organise an attack on the d4-pawn as quickly as possible. White, on the other hand, will try to attack g6 and create a passed pawn on the rim.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is natural to investigate the quality of a sacrifice when we defend. A simple look for candidates after 4.exf6 should lead us to bringing the bishop around to g6. Then we should evaluate the consequences of losing the queen to 8.f7† without prejudice.

42 Zatulovskaya – Grinfeld
USSR 1981

White won seemingly very convincingly with a classic knight sacrifice.



1.♘d5! exd5 2.exd5?

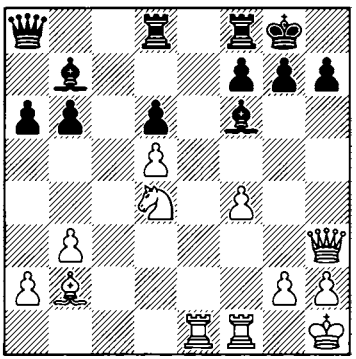
But this is wrong. Here she could have continued with the much stronger 2.♘f5 ♖de8

3.♕g3 ♘h5 4.♕g4 ♗c8 5.♘xe7† ♖xe7 6.♕xh5 ♖xe4 7.cxd5 and White is slightly better because her bishop is active, and because of the potential invasion down the c-file.

2...♖fe8??

A natural move that sleepwalks straight into a winning combination.

Black could have refuted the attack instantly with the counter sacrifice 2...♘xd5! when after 3.cxd5 (3.♘f5? ♗f6 leads nowhere) 3...♗f6



Black is dominating the diagonal. Very soon she will play ...♗xd5. White also has something going for her, so the evaluation is only that Black has solved her problems satisfactorily and can hope for a small advantage with accurate play.

Another way to defend is 2...♗c8 3.♕g3 ♘h5 4.♕f3 ♗h4. White has various ways to put Black under pressure, and will probably be able to squeeze a small advantage out of the position, but nothing beyond that.

2...♖de8? 3.♖xe7 is similar to the game.

3.♖xe7!

3.♘f5 ♗f8 4.♘h6†! is also strong, but the game is absolutely conclusive.

3...♖xe7 4.♘f5 ♔f8

4...♖de8 5.♗xf6 ♖e1 6.♘h6†! ♔f8 7.♗xg7† ♔xg7 8.♕g3† and Black is mated in a few moves.

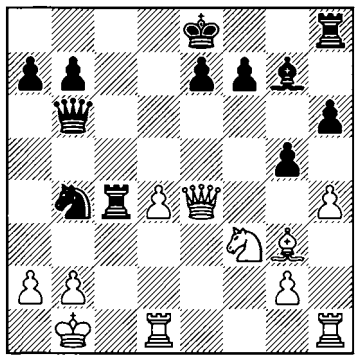
5.♗xf6 gxf6 6.♘xe7 ♔xe7 7.♖e1† ♔f8 8.♕xh7

Black is mated on the next move.

1-0

How this exercise could have been solved: If you cannot control the position with your extra material, you should always consider returning it. Here it is clear that Black is getting murdered on the long diagonal and would very much like to take control of it.

43 Dahlberg – Hillary
USA 1982



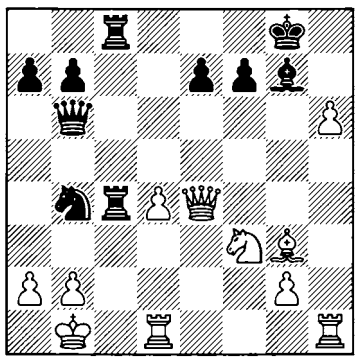
Black decided that he wanted to launch an attack against the white king. He could also have played to exploit his extra pawn with 1...♕a5 2.a3 ♕d5 or something similar. His advantage would be undisputed.

1...0–0!? 2.hxg5 ♖fc8

Here Black is surely ready to do the thing to White, who played on as if this was a simple race to the finish line.

3.gxh6?

Now Black won in style.



3...♘xa2!

Threatening 4...♘c3†.

4.♗e1

Nothing can save White anymore:

4.♔xa2 ♖a4† 5.♔b1 ♕a5 and Black wins.

4.♖d3 ♖c2! with irresistible threats.

4.♕g4 ♘c3† 5.♔c1 ♘xd1† 6.♔xd1 ♕b3†! 7.♔e2 ♖c2† 8.♔f1 ♕d3† 9.♔g1 ♕e3† 10.♔h2 ♕xh6† and Black is winning.

4...♖c1†

4...♕b3 was even cleaner.

5.♔xa2 ♕a6† 6.♗a5 ♕xa5† 7.♔b3 ♕b5† 8.♔a3 ♖8c3†

0–1

A much stronger defence would have been:

3.a3!

Anticipating the way Black that can split the king's position open. Now Black has two main lines:

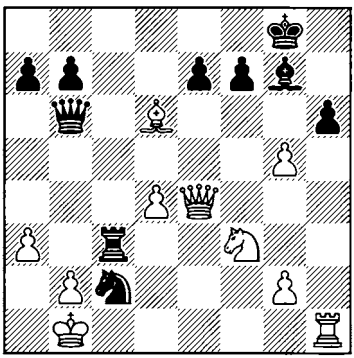
a) 3...♘c2 4.♖d3 ♖c3 5.♖xc3 ♖xc3

This has led to our exercise. Here White can force a draw.

6.♗d6!!

6.♗e5 ♘xa3† 7.♔a1 ♘c4 8.♕b1 ♕a5† 9.♕a2 ♖a3! and Black wins.

6.♔c1 ♖c6! and I do not see a way for White to defend himself.



6...exd6

6...♘xd4 7.♘xd4 ♗xd4 8.gxh6 ♖e3 9.♕g4† ♔h7 10.♕f5† ♔h8 11.♕c8† is a draw as well.

7.♕e8† ♗f8 8.gxh6

Here the counterplay is so strong that it is Black who needs to force a draw.

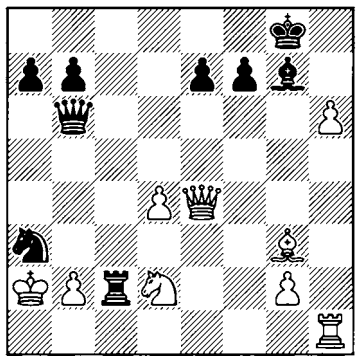
But Black could have kept his advantage with accurate play.

b) 3...♖c2! 4.♖d2!

4.axb4 ♖xb2†! and Black wins.

4...♖xd2 5.♘xd2 ♘c2! 6.gxh6 ♘xa3† 7.♔a2 ♘c2!

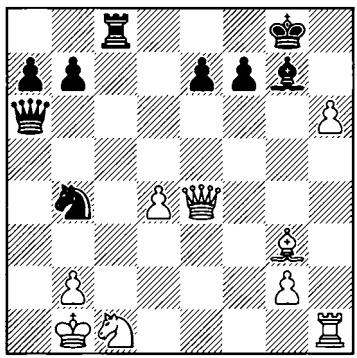
7...♖c2 gives White another brilliant defence:



8.♘c4!! ♕b5 9.hxg7 ♕xc4† 10.♔xa3 ♕a6† 11.♔b3 ♕c4† with a draw.

8.♔b1 ♕a6! 9.♘b3 ♘b4 10.♘c1

Worse is 10.h7† ♔h8 11.♘c1 e6 12.d5 exd5 13.♕xb4 ♕g6† 14.♔a2 ♕xg3 and I do not think that White will be able to save the game.

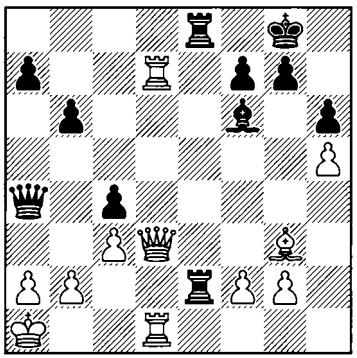


10...♖xc1†! 11.♔xc1 ♗xh6† 12.♖xh6 ♕xh6† 13.♔d1 ♕h5† 14.♔d2 e6

Black has good winning chances in the endgame.

How this exercise could have been solved: We should always approach all our problems with an open mind. Here 6...♘xa3† was a great problem, and a move like 6.♗d6 should be considered just on principle, as it does prevent the opponent's immediate threat, if only for a minute. If we do not consider it, then we have little chance to see that it actually offers more than just losing a piece.

44 Miles – Pritchett
London 1982



There is no doubt that the late Tony Miles was an absolutely fantastic player; especially his endgame technique was excellent. However, as an annotator he was often more emotional than accurate. In this example we join the game where Miles is completely lost, though we hear nothing about it.

1.♕d5

1.♕b1 is objectively better, but after 1...b5 or 1...♗xc3 2.bxc3 ♕a3 Black is still winning comfortably. So instead Miles went for the attack.

1...♗xc3??

Here Black wins very simply with 1...♕c2 2.♖b1 ♖e1 and there is no defence against back rank mate that does not lose the queen. I find it hard to understand that Pritchett overlooked this. Maybe he just thought that the game was over? The main problem is that Black's direct threat can be protected against with a fantastic counterpunch.

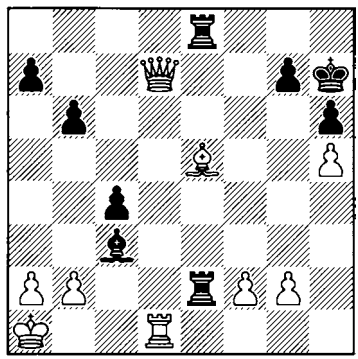
2.♕xf7†

So here we have our exercise. I am convinced that Pritchett was expecting "Resigns" as the reply to both his legal moves, and therefore did not care to check out the difference between them.

2...♔h8??

This loses by force. The reason is that White can give a very deadly check on e8.

The solution was 2...♔h7 when after 3.♗e5 ♕xd7 4.♕xd7



Black can play 4...♗xe5! with an indirect defence of the e8-rook. Now after more or less any move, the position appears to be rather balanced. Fritz prefers 5.♔b1!? ♖xb2† 6.♔c1 ♖e2 with equal play. White has escaped from the corner, but the price has been high.

White now won with a famous obstruction of the black pieces.

3.♗e5!!

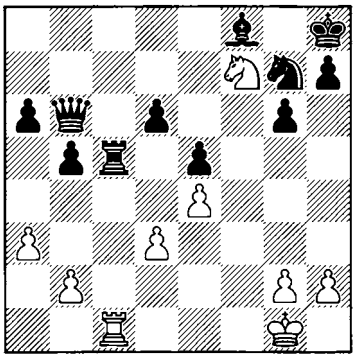
1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: It is very important to be able to foresee the opponent's ideas, even when they are far from obvious.

45 Kratkovski – Lapshis
USSR 1982

White is a bishop down, so when a combination such as the following is possible, he should not hesitate.

1.♖xf8† ♗xf8 2.♕g8†! ♔xg8 3.♘h6† ♔h8 4.♘f7†



4...♔g8

There is not a lot to add.

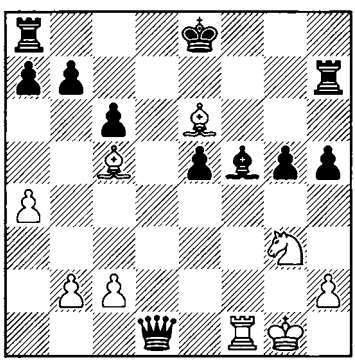
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Being a piece down White needs to realise that he does not have time to spare. Therefore all tactics should be investigated.

46 L. Barczay – Auskalari
Correspondence 1982

1...♕xc2?

Black missed a liquidation of material leading to a simple win: 1...♕g4† 2.♘g3 ♕xd1!



3.♖xd1 ♗xe6

Possibilities like these should not be missed. But it seems that Black was determined not to part with his queen under any circumstances.

2.♘c3! ♖f7

2...♕xd1?! 3.♘xd1 ♗xe6 4.♖f8† ♔d7 5.♖xa8 a6 6.♘c3 ♗d5 is a better endgame for White, though with so few pawns left, Black still has drawing chances.

3.♗xf7† ♔xf7 4.♖f2 ♕b3?

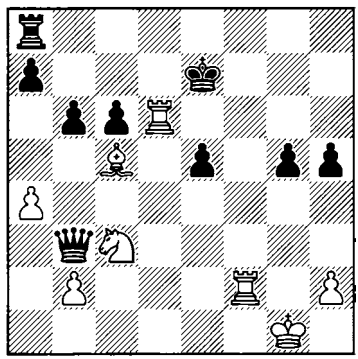
4...♕xd1† 5.♘xd1 ♔e6 does not appear to be severely worse for Black. Three pawns for the piece and no easy way for White to attack them.

5.♖xf5† ♔e6

5...♔g6 6.♖xe5 ♔f6 7.♖e7! followed by ♖f1† also gives White a decisive attack.

6.♖f2 b6 7.♖d6† ♔e7

We come to the moment Black probably missed when analysing the position earlier on. White wins in one way only.



8.♘d5†!

1-0

How this exercise could have been solved: We should always consider returning sacrificed material. Here the queen is kicked around. Instead of moving it from hotspot to snotspot, we should step out of the "forced" lines to serve our own interests.

47 Najdorf – Kurtic
Mar del Plata 1984

This exercise is a straightforward stalemate exercise and should not be too challenging.

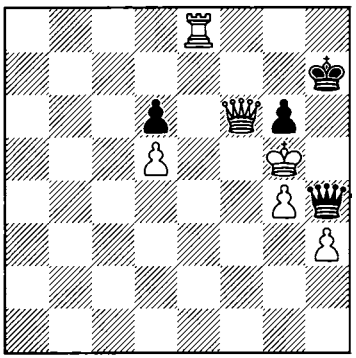
1...♕xf2†

All other moves are mate in at most three moves.

2.♔g5

2.♕g3? g5† would be a tragedy.

2...f6†! 3.♕xf6 ♕h4†!

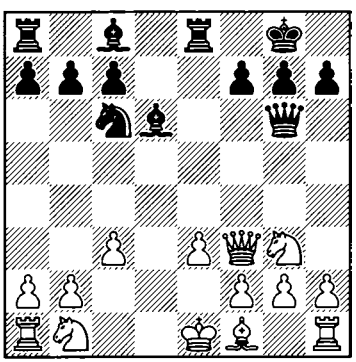


A draw was agreed.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: As no material can be won, either perpetual or stalemate should be sought out.

48 Srinivas – Ravikumar
India 1984



Black has quite a good position. For example 1...♕c2 would have been quite unpleasant for White. Instead came a knight sacrifice, originally accompanied with a !!, which brings us to our exercise.

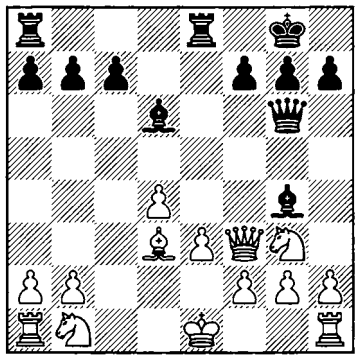
1...♘d4?

White has to take the knight, so the real exercise is on the next move. This is done to divide the sheep from the lambs, as a Danish idiom goes. If you failed to capture the knight you are probably one of those that find *The Silence of the Lambs* a very scary movie.

2.cxd4 ♗g4 3.♕xb7??

3.♕d5 ♕xb1†! changes nothing.

But what about the creation of a desperado scenario with 3.♗d3!!.



This appears to be completely winning. One could imagine 3...♕xd3 4.♕xg4 ♗b4† 5.♘c3 ♗xc3† 6.bxc3 ♕xc3† 7.♔e2 ♕c4† 8.♔d2 ♕b4† 9.♔d1 as a logical continuation. The checks will soon come to a halt, so White could have been a piece up, instead of being mated in three moves.

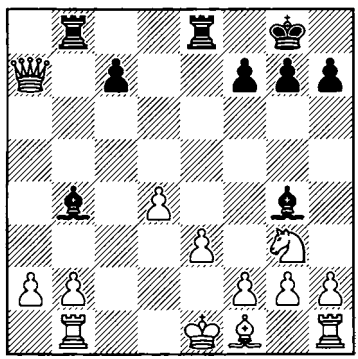
3...♖ab8 4.♕xa7

Nothing really matters anymore.

4...♕xb1†!

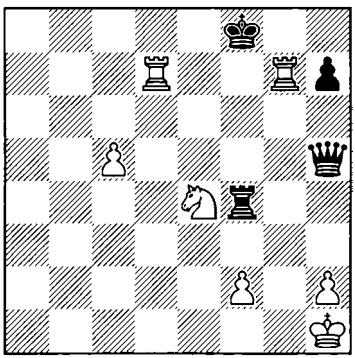
0–1

Quite a nice finish. A criss-cross mate arises after White's recapture:



How this exercise could have been solved: Candidate moves. If we look very carefully at our opportunities at each move, we shall see that we have to take the knight, but that we are not forced to move the queen. Of course it is also important to spot the mating combination. Defence always starts with noticing what the opponent is trying to do, which is why it is so difficult.

49 Ivanchuk – Chuchelov
Warsaw 2005



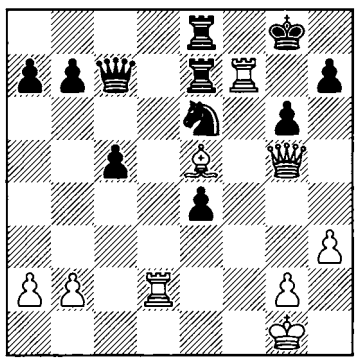
1.♘g5?
This move made Black resign.
1-0

Actually this was his chance. Instead White should have played 1.♖xh7! when Black only just hangs on with 1...♕f3† 2.♔g1 ♔g8. White's best shot is 3.♖d8†! ♖f8 4.♖xf8† ♔xf8 5.♖h4 with excellent winning chances, but no guarantees.
1...♕e2!
No other move makes any sense. Probably both players completely missed this move. Now White has nothing better than:
2.♘xh7† ♔e8 3.♖ge7† ♕xe7 4.♖xe7† ♔xe7
With a trivial draw.

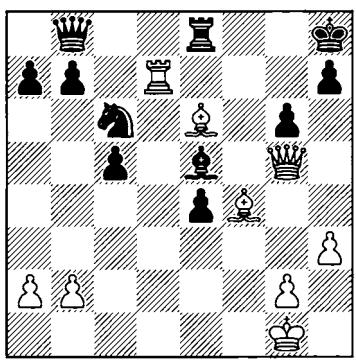
How this exercise could have been solved: By looking for candidate moves you should have hopefully stumbled into the move missed in the game.

50 Rausis – Gofshtein
Sofia 1988

In the game Black played badly and lost quickly.
1...♘c6?
1...♘f5 2.♖xe7! and White wins.
1...♘xe6! would however have kept the balance. **2.♗xe5† ♔g8**



3.♕f6 (3.♕h4 ♖xf7 4.♗xc7 e3 5.♖e2 ♘xc7 and Black is probably quite a bit better) **3...♕xe5 4.♕xe5 ♔xf7 5.♕xe4 b6** With the strong knight outpost on d4 or c5, it is not easy to see how White is going to create weaknesses in the black position. Of course White is the one pressurising, but it is far from clear that it will lead to anything.
2.♖d7
2.♖xe7 also wins: 2...♖xe7 3.♗xe5† ♕xe5 4.♖d8† ♔g7 5.♖g8 mate.
2...♖xd7 3.♖xd7 ♕b8



4.♖xh7†!
1-0

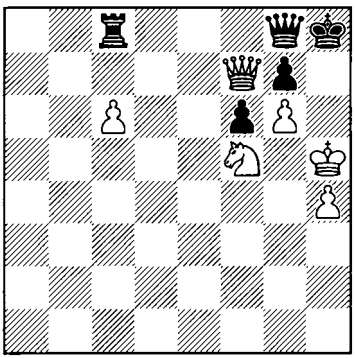
How this exercise could have been solved: Unforcing thinking is the key. So you cannot avoid losing the queen? Dry your eyes and move on.

51 van der Sterren – Douven
Amsterdam 1989

The threat of 2.♘f5 is rather obvious, as are the other disadvantages in the black position. In the game Black was able to come up with a clever defence.

1...♖xe7!

1...♕c4 2.♘f5 ♕g8 loses to the study-like: 3.g5!! ♖xc8 4.g6† ♔h8 5.♕f7!!



Black now has no defence against c7 and ♘e7.

2.♖h8†

The only winning attempt. 2.♕xe7 ♕f5†! gives White a choice between stalemate or the suicidal 3.g5?? ♕f3 mate.

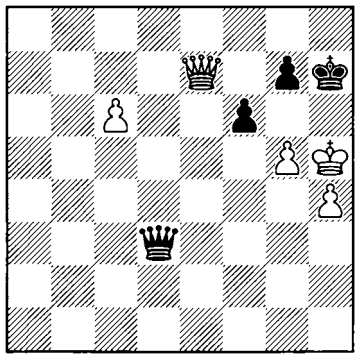
2...♔xh8 3.♕xe7 ♕d3!

By bringing the queen to this diagonal, Black threatens mate. White can only avoid this with one move, after which perpetual check becomes unavoidable.

4.g5 ♔h7!

The best and simplest move to force a draw. The threat of mate is annoying, so White simply cannot make any progress because of the exposed position of the king.

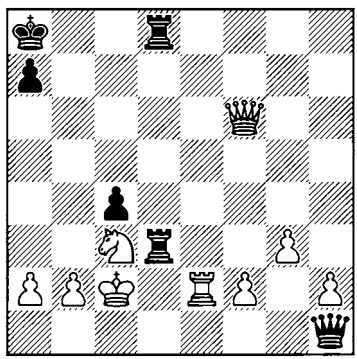
4...♕f5 5.c7 ♔g8 is quite funnily drawn as well.



5.♔g4 ♕c4†
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The difficulty of the exercise is to see White's continuing attempts to play for a win and be prepared for them. This is done with a little patience, and the memory that we are all trying to do what is best for ourselves, not just follow seemingly forced lines.

52 W. Watson – Ciric
San Bernardino 1991



Black was worse in this endgame, but after a sudden mistake from White, he got a tactical shot in.

1...♖xc3†! 2.♔xc3 ♖d3†!

2...♕d5!? was also good enough for a draw. White needs then to find 3.♕e5!. All other

moves lose by force. The queen needs to assist with the defence. 3...♕d3† 4.♔b4 ♖b8† 5.♔a4 ♕d7† with perpetual check.

3.♔b4 ♕b7† 4.♔a4 ♕d7†

Finally we have arrived at our exercise.

5.♔b4?

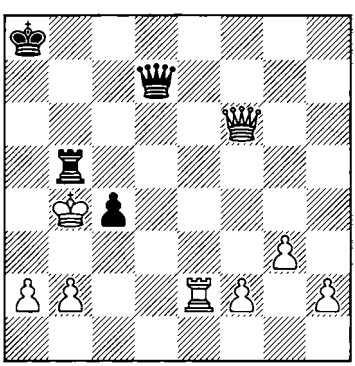
This move loses because of a very neat point. The main difference between this and 5.♔a5!!, which draws, is that Black should not be allowed the possibility of sacrificing the a-pawn. He does not get this chance after 5...♖d5† 6.♔b4 as the rook no longer controls a3. Black has nothing better than 6...♖b5† 7.♔a3 ♖a5† 8.♔b4 ♖a4† 9.♔c5 ♖a5† 10.♔b4 with a peculiar perpetual.

5...a5†!!

This move leads to mate by force.

6.♔xa5 ♖d5† 7.♔b4 ♖b5†!

Black is winning with only moves all the way. 7...♕b5†? might look strong, but after 8.♔c3 White is dancing away.



8.♔xc4

8.♔a3 ♕a7†, with mate on the next move, as there no longer is a pawn on a7, is the point of the exercise.

8...♕d5† 9.♔c3 ♖c5†

0-1

How this exercise could have been solved: Now it has become just a little more difficult! Here we have two moves. If we analyse them both carefully and look for the difference, we should not have too much trouble in deciding on the correct solution. After all, there are no more than 25 half-moves in the solution. We should be able to organise those in our head in, let's say, five minutes.

53 Kovalevsky – Gagarin
Russia 1991

The threat against f2 can be covered in two ways. White chose the wrong one. It is surprising that Gagarin did not consider the alternative in his annotations.

1.♕e3??

1.♕c2! was the correct move. Actually I do not feel that there is a lot to say about this move. Black has no creative ideas as far as I can see. White is just a piece up.

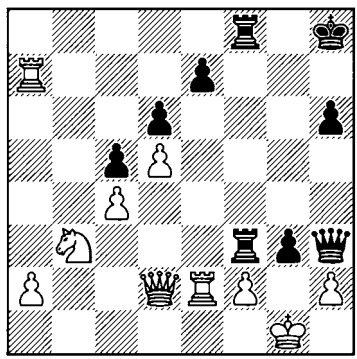
1...♖f3 2.♕d2?

Apparently White was running short of time here. Otherwise he would probably have gone for 2.♖xe7! ♖xe3 3.♖7xe3 with an uncomfortable but not necessarily lost position.

2...♕h3†

2...♖h3 was also good enough, so it would not be a justification to state that White had overlooked Black's final punch.

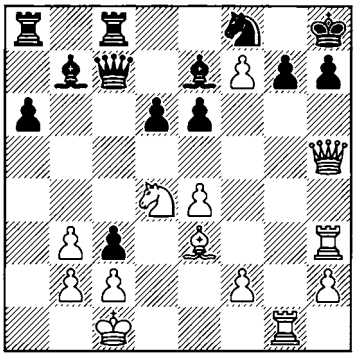
3.♔g1 g3!



0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: Method of elimination. Try to eliminate the two moves, and you will only succeed in getting rid of one.

54 Soto – Colina
Havana 1994



1.♖xg7! cxb2† 2.♔b1 ♔xg7 3.♗h6†?

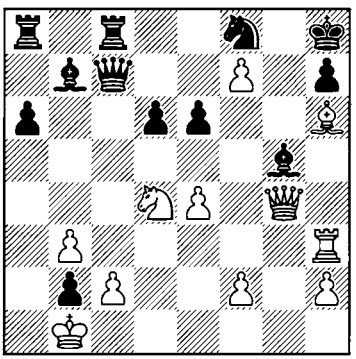
Still good enough to win the game, but 3.♘xe6†! is mate in four. 3.♖g3† is also winning.

3...♔h8 4.♕g4?

4.♗xf8? ♗xe4! is standard defensive stuff. But after 4.♖g3! ♘g6 5.♖xg6 hxg6 6.♕xg6 ♖g8 7.♕h5!! White still has a very strong attack. The f-pawn is needed as an attacker and should not be exchanged for the silly rook on a8 at this point. Black can only defend in one way, and it proves insufficient: 7...♗xe4 8.fxg8=♖† ♔xg8 9.♕g4† and White is winning.

4...♘g6??

According to Rabelo & Gil, this is the only move. Actually they could not be further from the truth. Black defends quite easily with 4...♗g5!, which, given the lack of decent alternatives, should be rather easy to find.



Now it is up to White to prove compensation, which he manages only with 5.♗g7†! (5.♕xg5 ♕xf7 and the attack is repelled. 5.♗xf8 ♕xf7 is similar.) 5...♔xg7 6.♕xg5† ♔xf7 7.♖f3† ♔e8 8.♖xf8†! ♔xf8 9.♘xe6† ♔f7 10.♕f5†! Taking the queen for the knight is suspicious. White must give perpetual check to be sure of half a point. 10...♔e8 11.♕f8† ♔d7 12.♕f7† ♔c6 13.♘xc7 ♖xc7 14.♕c4† ♔d7 15.♕f7† with a draw.

5.♕xg6!

Not a very surprising combination.

5...♖g8 6.fxg8=♕†

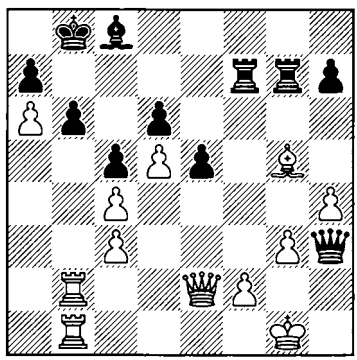
6.♕xh7†! ♔xh7 7.♗f8†! was nicer.

6...♖xg8 7.♗g7†! ♖xg7 8.♖xh7† ♖xh7 9.♕e8† ♔g7 10.♘xe6† ♔f6 11.♘xc7

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: If you look at the position with open eyes, you will quickly find that most moves lose, and that you need to play something special. The bishop move then springs to mind as a way of gaining time to bring the queen to the kingside defence.

55 Gulko – Hernandez
Mondariz Balneario 1997



Gulko had a low opinion of his position, fearing 1...♖g6 and 1...h6, therefore he believed that the direct rook sacrifice was his best chance.

1.♖xb6†! axb6 2.♕b2?!

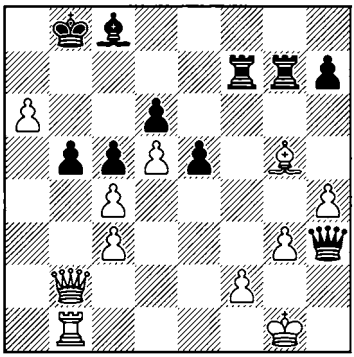
But here he made a mistake. Better was 2.♖xb6†! ♔a7 3.♖xd6 which should lead to a draw: 3...♕g4! 4.♕b2 ♕d1† 5.♔g2! ♕f3†

6.♔g1 ♔a8 7.♖b6 ♔a7 8.♖c6 ♗h3 9.♕b6† ♔a8 10.♕d8†

We have our exercise. White's attack could be parried quite easily by closing the line towards the black king.

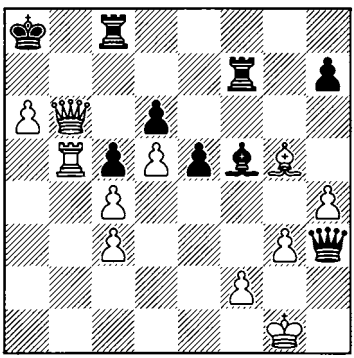
2...♗xa6?

This does not work, but allows White to build a strong attack. Gulko thought Black should have played 2...b5!!. We look at White's two options.



a) 3.♕xb5† gives Black the chance to execute the idea behind the pawn move. 3...♖b7! and Black wins the queen or a rook in all lines. This is not possible in the game, where the queen can take on d6 with check.

b) The best try is 3.♕a2!, which is met strongly with 3...♖a7 with an extra rook in the complications, which can always be helpful. But all life has not been sucked out of the attack. The line that Gulko gives is not entirely accurate. After 3...♗f5 4.♖xb5† ♔a8 5.♕a5 ♖g8 6.♕b6 ♖c8 he claims that Black is winning.



But White has 7.a7!! ♖xa7 8.♖a5 and Black cannot escape perpetual check. Still, a draw is much better than being flattened as was the case for Black in the game.

3.♕xb6† ♖b7

3...♗b7 4.♕xd6† ♖c7 5.♕xe5 and Black will be massacred on the dark squares.

4.♕xd6† ♖gc7 5.♖a1! ♗xc4 6.♗d8 ♗b5?

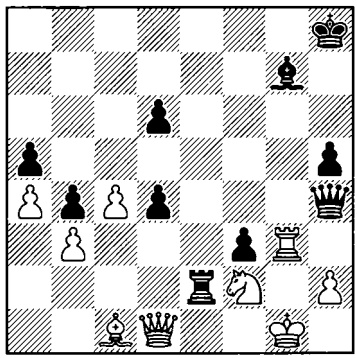
6...♕d7 7.♗xc7† ♖xc7 would have held the position together for now, though the long-term prospects remain bad. But Black was running short of time as well, so it was not an enviable task to defend this position.

7.♗xc7† ♖xc7 8.♕b6†

1-0

How this exercise could have been solved: If you look carefully for candidate moves this should not be too hard an exercise to solve. However, the ability to look at more or less *every* candidate move is rarer than true talent among chess players.

56 Smetankin – Sergeev
Poland 2001



Black is a piece down, but he created real threats by advancing the pawn to open lines for his bishop.

1...d3! 2.♗g5!

The absolutely only move. Obviously it is necessary to see the only sensible reply and a reaction to this, to say that you have solved the exercise.

2.♖xf3 ♗d4! 3.♕f1 does not work because of 3...♕g4†!, when Black is winning easily after 4.♖g3 with 4...♕e6 or 4...♕e4, or even 4...♕f5; ...♕e6 will come next.

2...d2!

Black is advancing his trump.

3.♕xd2?

The only move was 3.♗xd2! when we have two alternate paths to equality:

a) 3...♕d4 4.♖xf3 ♖xd2 and now, for example, 5.♕b1 and there is no reason why White should be worse (nor better).

b) 3...♗d4 is probably the safest. 4.♗e1 ♕e4 looks dangerous, but White is hanging on with 5.♔f1 ♕e3 6.♖xf3 ♖xe1† 7.♕xe1 ♕xf3 8.♕e8† and Black cannot sensibly avoid the perpetual check.

3...♕xg5?

3...♕d4! would have won on the spot. In the game Black was still doing pretty well though.

4.♖xg5 ♖xd2 5.♖xh5† ♔g8 6.♖f5 ♖b2 7.♖xf3 ♗c3!

With a very good endgame for Black.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first move seems pretty obvious, and so does the response if you stop to think about it. Then comes clear calculation and the time to eliminate the various options.

57 Dreev – Gelfand
Russia – World Cup (Blitz) 2005

With very little time on his clock, even for a blitz game, Gelfand showed his excellent sense of danger. The game ended rather uneventfully.

1...♖f8! 2.♕e6† ♔d8 3.♕d6† ♔e8 4.♕e6† ♔d8 5.♕d6† ♔e8 6.♕e6† ♔d8 7.♕d6† ½–½

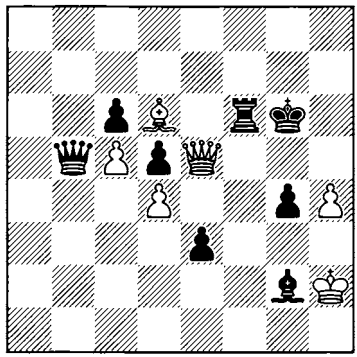
Probably Gelfand did not realise that the alternative was flawed, but just played the move that appeared less risky. Simple and sound decision-making indeed. I do actually think that Dreev would have come up with the correct continuation:

1...♔e7?

This looks sound as well, but White wins due to a wonderful extra resource.

2.♗d6† ♔f6

2...♔e6 loses in similar ways after 3.g4! hxg4 4.♕g6† ♖f6 5.♕e8† ♔f5 6.♕e5† ♔g6



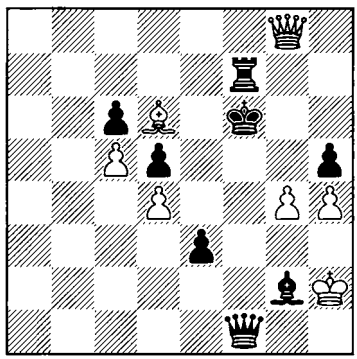
7.h5†! ♔g7 8.♕e7† ♖f7 9.♗e5† ♔g8 10.♕g5† ♔h7 11.♕g6 mate.

3.g4!!

The key idea behind this move is that the white h-pawn will be able to join the attack in most lines; and of course that 4.g5† is threatened.

3...♕f1

3...hxg4 4.♕g5† ♔e6 5.♕g6† ♖f6 6.♕e8† and so on. See 2...♔e6.



4.♕h8†! ♔e6

4...♖g7 5.♗e5† and White wins. And 4...♔g6 loses very nicely to the geometrical 5.gxh5† ♔f5 6.♕e5† ♔g4 7.♕g3† ♔xh5 8.♕g5 mate.

5.♕e8† ♔f6 6.♗e5† ♔g6 7.♕g8† ♔h6 8.g5 mate!

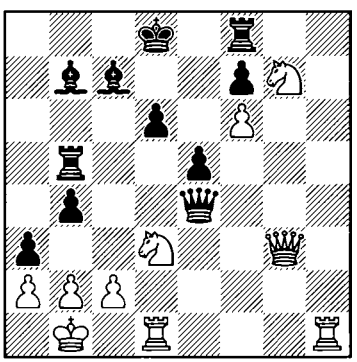
How this exercise could have been solved: You have two possible options. Clearly neither of them offers you more than a draw, however one of them seems a bit shaky, while the other is clear-cut. Already here you should have solved the exercise. Otherwise you need to find 3.g4!!, I guess, but it is a bit unnecessary, isn't it?

58 Cheparinov – Nikolov
Pleven 2005

1...♔d8?

This loses to a fairly straightforward combination.

1...♔d7 2.♕h3† ♔c6 is wildly unclear and clearly the better alternative. It is also possible to play 2...♔d8!?, when White should probably play 3.♖he1 with unclear play, and maybe even some pressure. Though he is winning the exchange after 3.♘e6† fxe6 4.♕h6 ♖f7 5.♕h8† ♔d7 6.♕g8 ♖xf6 7.♕g7† ♔c6 8.♕xf6 ♔b6 9.♕xe6 ♗d5, Black appears to be absolutely okay.



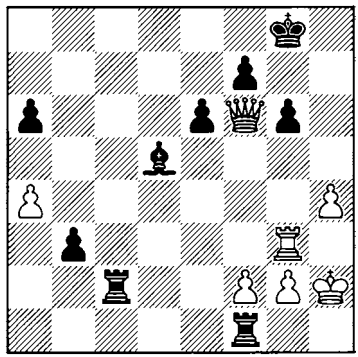
2.♘e6†! fxe6 3.♕g7

Black resigned. He is losing after 3...♖e8 4.♖h8 ♖xh8 5.♕xh8† ♔d7 6.f7, and the extra queen is going to come in handy quite soon.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: The method of elimination should quite quickly pick up that only one of these two legal moves does not lose on the spot.

59 Smolen – Palo
Cappelle la Grande 2005



This is a grotesque position, where both rook captures on f2 win easily. For some reason both players overlooked the extra chance offered to White, according to the database. Actually these things are quite tricky, and it is easy for a chess writer to sit in his office and write a lot of garbage. A recent example of this was James Rizzitano's book on the Queen's Gambit Accepted, where he builds his whole repertoire around an improvement to the game Grischuk – Rublevsky, Russia 2005. Only, Rizzitano somehow has 19.♕b3-g3 as the 19th move, which is incorrect. In the game Grischuk played the stronger 19.♕e3!, which really does put the whole line under a cloud, and Rizzitano's improvement, as well as his repertoire, just falls apart. This could have happened to anyone (and probably has) who has ever put himself in the firing line through the risky endeavour of writing a chess book.

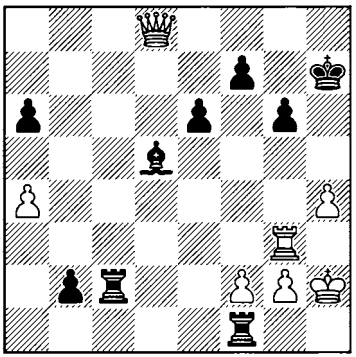
1...b2?

But let us trust that this was indeed the final move of the game. Apparently the solution to how to draw with White is quite difficult. A friend of mine with a 2300+ rating failed to solve it despite giving it a fair shot. Instead he came up with 2.h5?, which leads nowhere. The same goes for 2.♖xg6†?, where the black king is going to dance away along the 8th rank. Only one move is going to save the day. In the game White did not choose the right move. Instead we have another bad resignation.

0-1

White should continue playing with:
2.♕d8†! ♔h7

The king move to g7 changes nothing if White plays the rook sacrifice. Now both of White's direct moves are good enough to save the game.



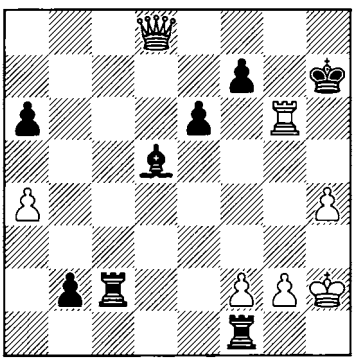
a) **3.h5!**

I probably prefer this slightly as it includes a silly trap.
3...♖fxf2

The trap is 3...♖h1†?? 4.♔xh1 b1=♕† 5.♔h2. Now White has a winning attack. Black only has a bishop more, and not one of his three pieces is defending the king. White wins after 5...♕c1 6.hxg6† ♔g7 7.♕h4 ♖c7 8.♖h3! ♖c8 9.f4! and the black king will not escape.
4.hxg6† ♔g7 5.gxf7† ♔xf7 6.♕d7† ♔f6 7.♕g7† ♔f5 8.♕g5† ♔e4 9.♕e3† ♔f5 10.♕g5†

With a perpetual check.

b) **3.♖xg6!**



The thematic drawing sacrifice. Black cannot escape perpetual check.
3...♖h1†!? 4.♔g3!

4.♔xh1? b1=♕† 5.♔h2 might seem OK, but Black wins with the nice deflection 5...♖c8!! and Black will end up with an extra piece, and soon after an extra point.
4...♖c3† 5.♔g4

Other moves also draw, but the finish here is funny.
5...♗f3† 6.♔f4! e5† 7.♔g5!

There are no more checks, so Black will have to accept the draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: The check obviously needs to be checked, as the direct sacrifice does not work. Then you will probably find the solution that suits you best on the second move without too much difficulty. It is just a question of hanging on to the optimism.

60 Gutman – Vitolinsh
Riga 1979

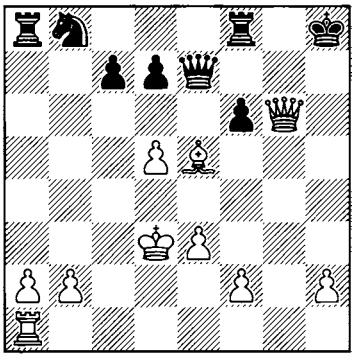
Seemingly Black is lost, but actually it is White who will have to digest the sour fruit of defeat after Vitolinsh' brilliant defence!
1...♗d3!!

1...♕e7 2.♕h6† ♕h7 3.♕xf8† ♕g8 4.♕h6† ♕h7 5.♕xf6† ♔g8 6.♖g1† is a straightforward win for White.

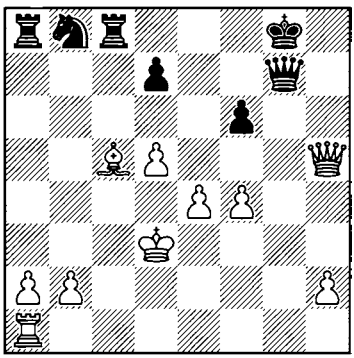
One of my students attempted to play 1...fxe5. Although he did sort of understand that he would be mated after 2.♕h6† ♔g8 3.♖g1†, he failed to appreciate that 3...♔f7 4.♖g7† immediately delivers the final blow.

This is a situation where forcing thinking can really block finding a solution to the grave problem Black is facing. If you somehow cannot release yourself from looking at taking the bishop or playing the queen to e7, then you are in trouble. You need to set your mind free and be able to find the text move, not necessarily understanding why it is good at first, but just seeing that it is possible. Then you will have a good chance to see that it actually changes

everything, because ...♕h7 would be with check, and suddenly it is Black who wins.
2.♔xd3 ♕e7



The difference should be clear for all to see. Otherwise it is explained above.
3.e4 ♕g7 4.♕h5†?!
4.♕xg7† ♔xg7 5.♗xc7 would have lasted longer, but White is certainly not OK, nor better as Fritz8 seems to think.
5...♔g8 6.♗d4 c5!!
The calculation of this move has to be impeccable for it to work.
7.♗xc5 ♖c8 8.f4

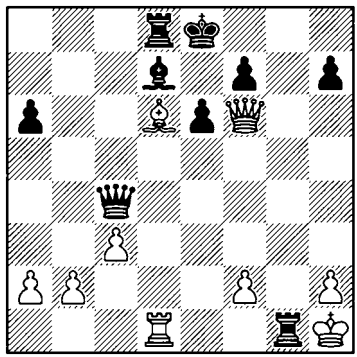


8...♘a6!
The final point of Black's defence. 8...♖xc5 9.♕e8† with a draw.
9.♗f2 ♘b4† 10.♔e2 ♖xa2
0–1
A truly great effort by Black.

How this exercise could have been solved: When normal moves do not prevent mate, you will have to look at *all* (!) moves. Here one of these does indeed help out.

61 Gimpel – Shubin
USSR 1977

This should not have been too difficult to solve, as the lack of alternatives should dominate!
1...♖xg2†! 2.♔h1
2.♔xg2?? ♕g4†
2...♖g1†!
2...♖xh2† 3.♔xh2 and there are no sensible checks.



3.♖xg1
3.♔xg1? ♕g4†
3...♗c6† 4.f3 ♗xf3†
Here was the only trap, but not a serious one. After 4...♖xd6?? White wins with 5.♖g8† ♔d7 6.♕xf7 mate.
5.♕xf3 ♖xd6
A draw was agreed, as the queens will shortly be exchanged to leave a rook endgame as flat as the world before 1492.
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: As you are soon to be mated, the notion of giving as many checks as possible should not be too foreign. Here this alone will lead you all the way.

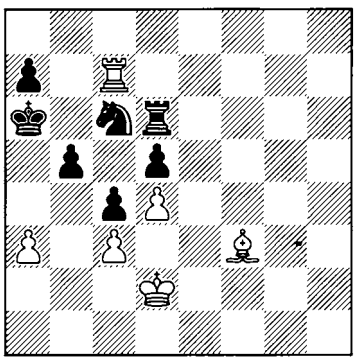
62 Inarkiev – Volkov
Kazan 2005

Realising that the position could be unpleasant and need hours of intensive care, Inarkiev spotted a simple way to force a perpetual check by sacrificing a pawn to block the black king's escape path.

1.a4!

After foolish checks such as 1.♕b7†?! ♔a5 2.♕c7† ♔a4, the black king is just as much an attacking piece as a target. I would worry more about the white king's safety here.

1.♖f7 is met with 1...♕d6! (1...♕g5† 2.♔c2 and Black has no strong follow-up) when White has no direct way to equalise. He should still draw the game, but the easy way to do so has gone. The play could now continue 2.♗f3 ♕xc7 3.♖xc7 ♖d6 with an extra pawn and the idea of ...a5 and ...b4 to create play. A draw, yes, but not a pleasant one.



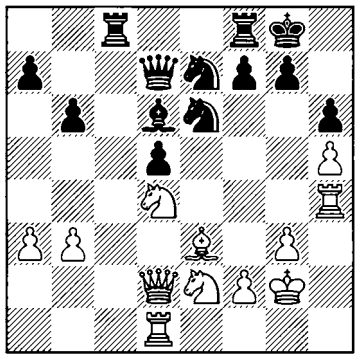
Notice that 4.♗xd5?! ♘xd4 5.cxd4 ♖xd5 is the path to trouble for White. The endgame is very promising for Black after 6.♔c3 ♔b6 7.♖c8 ♔a5! with the plan ...a6 followed by activation of the rook.

1...bxa4 2.♕b7† ♔a5 3.♕c7† ♔a6 4.♕b7† ♔a5 5.♕c7†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: If you have any kind of active selection of candidates, you will consider the active pawn push and then you have your draw. After some time you will probably realise that you have nothing beyond that.

63 Fridman – Kabatianski
Arnhem (rapid) 2006



Being a pawn down, White decided to sacrifice a piece to create an attack.

1.♗xh6!? ♘xd4 2.♘xd4 gxh6 3.♕xh6 f5?

3...f6! would have kept control.

4.♘e6?

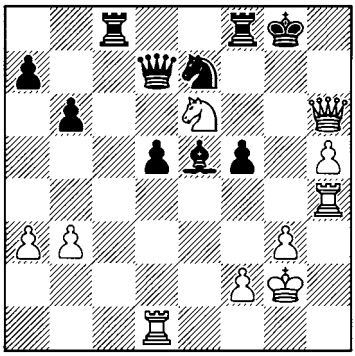
White missed a great chance. He should have played: 4.♖e1! ♖f7 5.♖e6 ♗c5 6.♖g6† ♘xg6 7.hxg6 ♗xd4 8.gxf7† ♔xf7 9.♖xd4 and the king is running naked through the woods.

4...♖f7??

Overlooking White's next move.

4...♔f7? looks very dubious to me. Black will have to walk a very thin line before ending up in a very uncomfortable position. After 5.♕g7† ♔xe6 6.♖e1† ♗e5 7.♖xe5† ♔d6 8.h6 Black is as uncoordinated as can be. The only move is 8...♖cd8, which does not solve all the problems. The strongest line appears to be 9.♖d4 ♖f7! 10.♕xf7 ♔xe5 11.♕g7† ♔d6 12.h7 ♕e8 13.♖a4! ♕f8 14.♕g5 ♖a8 15.♖h4 ♕h8 16.♖h6† ♔d7 17.♕f4 ♔e8 18.g4 and White has a winning attack. Such a long line can always be incorrect in some way, but the overall impression, that Black is in deep trouble, remains.

The only move was 4...♗e5! defending the important g7-square, but also the equally important d4-square.



After 5.♖e1 (5.♘xf8 ♖xf8 and the position is unclear/slightly better for Black) 5...♗f6! Black seems to defend very well (5...♕d6 also does not seem to give White any advantage). For example: 6.g4 ♖f7 7.g5 ♗g7 8.♘xg7 ♖xg7 and White does not have enough compensation for the piece.

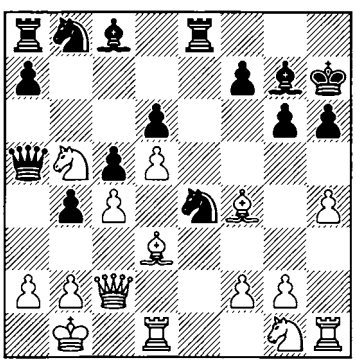
5.♖dd4!

Black resigned. A possible end could be: 5...♗e5 6.♖dg4† fxg4 7.♖xg4† ♘g6 8.♖xg6† ♗g7 9.♘xg7 ♖xg7 10.♖xg7† ♕xg7 11.♕e6† and White wins the endgame.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a standard elimination exercise. The need to protect g7 is obvious, and as running with the king looks very dodgy indeed, there are only two serious moves to consider. The whole exercise is about seeing that one of these loses outright.

64 Tozer – Anagnostopoulos
London 1991



White was probably content with his position at this point. The d6-pawn is hanging and the pressure from c2/d3 towards h7 is increased by the potential h4-h5 move. Nevertheless, he managed to lose the game, making only one more move!

1...b3!

Definitely the best move, everything else is a disaster.

2.axb3??

This is a clear example of forcing thinking. White respects the one-move threat, but does not see deeply enough into the position to realise that this is not particularly disturbing; actually the two-move threat coming up is not just a threat, but a direct win. Once it was White's turn to move again the two-mover had turned into an unstoppable one-mover.

2...♘a6!

Actually this knight development is so strong that after 2...♗g4!? Black would still get a clear edge because of the threat of 3...♘a6, forcing White to seek complications with 3.b4!?

White resigned.

0–1

3.♘a3 ♗f5 followed by 4...♘b4 and White is just gone gone gone.

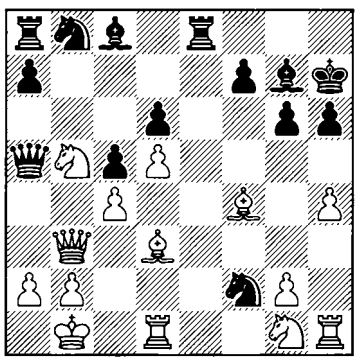
Also possible is 3.♗xe4 ♘b4 4.♕e2 ♖xe4! and White's position collapses.

Instead White should have ignored the threat against f2.

2.♕xb3!

Black probably needs to continue:

2...♘xf2



White's strongest strategy is to try to develop an initiative. If he does so, he will hardly notice that he is playing with an exchange less.

3.♘f3!

3.♘xd6? is met by the strong 3...♘xd1!!. The exchange really has little significance in the position. After 4.♘xe8 ♕e1 5.♗c1 ♗xb2! White is under a horrible attack, though not completely without chances to withstand it. But for us this does not hold a lot of importance. It is clearly not a path White should go down.

3...♘xd1!

Weaker is 3...♘xd3 4.♖xd3 ♗f5 when White seems to be winning after 5.♘xd6 ♗xd3† (5...♖e2 6.♗c1! ♗xd3† 7.♕xd3 is a forced loss for Black. Forgive me for the long analysis here. The main line goes 7...♖xg2 8.♘g5† hxg5 9.hxg5† ♔g8 10.♕f3! ♕c7 11.♘e4 ♗xb2 12.♗xb2 ♖xb2† 13.♔xb2 ♘d7 14.♕c3 and wins.) 6.♕xd3 Black is forced to play 6...♖e7 when White has a winning initiative after 7.h5 or 7.♗d2 ♕b6 8.♘g5†.

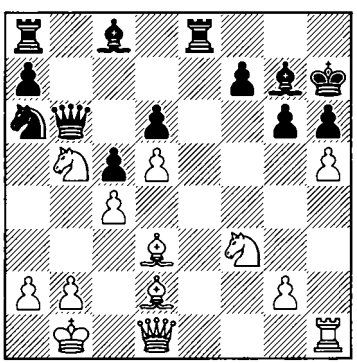
4.♕xd1!

Also 4.♖xd1 clearly gives White compensation for the exchange. But the rook is better placed on h1, where it is supporting the attack on the black king. After 4...♗g4! we enter a complicated middlegame with chances for both sides.

4...♘a6

Trying to reclaim the initiative. Though the position remains complex, I think that energetic play from White should give him the better chances. Best is:

5.♗d2! ♕b6 6.h5



With an attack.

How this exercise could have been solved: First you need to understand why Black is sacrificing a pawn. For some reason, the people to whom I have shown this exercise have not picked up on this quickly. But when you do, you are already safely home. It is standard unforcing thinking. You should not be afraid of the seemingly devastating fork on f2, but of the truly devastating fork on b4. Choose to live in the real world.

65 Kuznetsov – Kotkov
Russia 1993

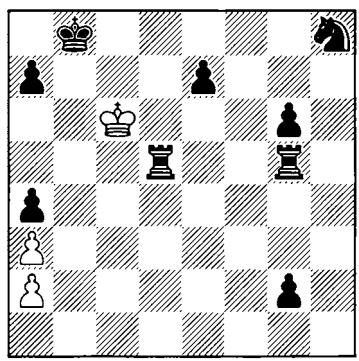
This looks more like a study then a real game position. White is able secure the draw in two different variations of the same trick. To solve the exercise you only need to see one of White's miracle saves.

1.♖h8†

1.♔c6? does not work because of 1...♖xd5 2.♖b8† ♔xb8 3.♖h8† ♖d8 and suddenly the draw has evaporated.

1.♖b8† ♔xb8 2.♖b1† ♔c8 3.♔c6 is very similar to the game continuation. Black is forced to take the queen and accept stalemate, as 3...♘d8† 4.♕xd8† ♔xd8 5.♖b8 mate, is a true disaster.

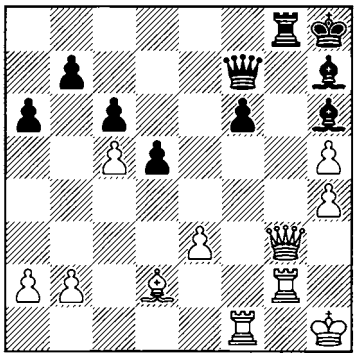
1...♘xh8 2.♔c6! ♖xd5 3.♖b8† ♔xb8



½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Stalemate should be a recurring idea in positions where you are losing all your material. Then you just need to work out the specifics.

66 Korchnoi – Sakaev
Copenhagen 2005



In the game Korchnoi played a spectacular queen sacrifice, but we should interest ourselves more with what would have happened, had he played for a win instead of a draw.

1.♕xg8†!? ♗xg8 2.♖g6 ♗g7

2...♗xe3!? 3.♗xe3 d4 4.♗d2 ♕d5† 5.♔g1 leads to a very unclear and sharp scenario, which will probably end in a draw nonetheless.

3.♖fg1 ♗h7 4.♖xg7 ♕xg7 5.♖xg7 ♔xg7 6.♗c3 ♗b1 7.a3 ♔h6

½–½

As said, more intriguing was:

1.♕d6!

This would have forced Black to come up with a stunning defence.

1...♗e4!!

The only move.

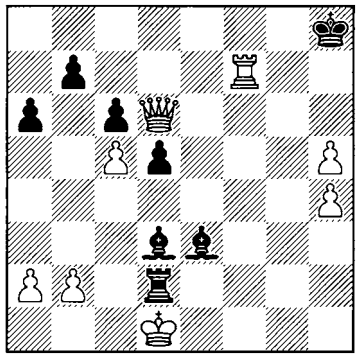
1...♖xg2 2.♔xg2 ♗e4† 3.♔h3 ♕g7 4.♖f2 and Black does not have a strong defence against 5.♕xf6.

1...♗g7 2.♔g1 ♗e4 3.♖g3 and White is leading by an exchange and seemingly staying in control.

2.♖xf6

Also the only move, and the one Black should have been preparing himself for. Now the queen sacrifice is obligatory, but also a fairly easy ride.

2...♖xg2 3.♖xf7 ♖xd2† 4.♔g1 ♗xe3† 5.♔f1 ♗d3† 6.♔e1 ♖e2† 7.♔d1 ♖d2†



And the game would have ended with a draw by perpetual check.

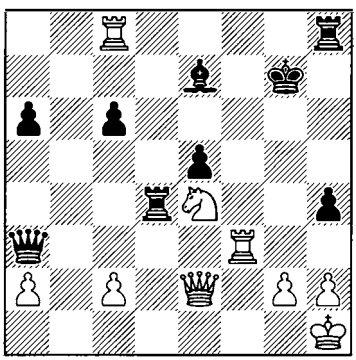
How this exercise could have been solved: The first move is the most natural move in the position, and it might look winning until you spot the reply. Then you need to continue your calculations long enough to include the natural capture on g2 in your candidates, and you are done. The danger is throwing away a perfectly good move just because it loses the queen...

67 Tolnai – Kir. Georgiev
Saint John 1988 (analysis)

In the game Black sacrificed a rook to avoid this position and gave himself a double exclamation mark for it. But here Black wins by closing off the white queen.

1...f3! 2.♖xf3

Otherwise 2...♖xc8 with a winning position.



2...♖xe4!

The back rank counts. Black is a piece up for nothing. 2...♕c1† 3.♖f1 ♖xe4! has similar consequences.

3.♕f1

3.♕xe4 ♕c1†

3...♕xa2 4.♖xh8 ♔xh8 5.♖f8† ♔g7

Black wins.

How this exercise could have been solved: The main problem in the position is the check on g4. It should come into your mind somehow to put a spanner in the works and prevent White's main idea.

68 Tiberger – Drelinkiewicz
Poland 1970

Black, being in serious trouble, found a nice combination of stalemate and perpetual check, a feature the Russians call eternal rook.

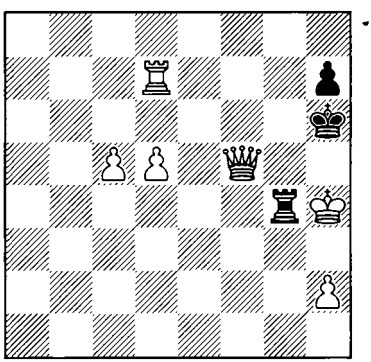
1...h3†!

1...♕e4† 2.♔g1! ♕b1† 3.♕f1 ♕b4 is the only alternative I have been able to find, but White wins after 4.♕c1† ♖g5 5.♖d6† ♔h5 6.♕d1† ♖g4 7.h3 ♕d4† 8.♕xd4 ♖xd4 9.c6 and the endgame is easily won.

2.♔xh3 ♕f5†

The point behind the last move. As the white rook is hanging, he has no alternative but to accept the gift.

3.♕xf5 ♖xg3†! 4.♔h4 ♖g4†!



With stalemate or perpetual.

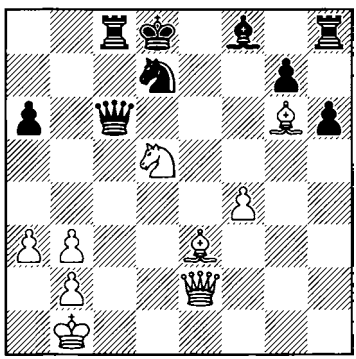
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The desperate situation should prompt you to find the most active moves. The following combination, including both the elements of perpetual check and stalemate, is not too hard to find if you always look out for these defensive tools.

69 Aagaard – Kritz
Isle of Man 2005 (pawns added on a3 and h6 to analysis to the game)

The key to the exercise is to protect the e8-square against the threatened 2.♗b6(†) ♘xb6 3.♕e8 mate without losing the queen. Black wins with:

1...♕c6!



All other moves leave Black worse.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a simple version of positioning yourself correctly for the opponent's coming combination. For Black it is vital to protect e8. You should realise this, or such problems will be hard to solve.

70 Nataf – Wang Yue
Internet 2004

According to ChessBase Magazine this was played under a normal time control, which I somehow doubt. Internet games are usually played as rapid or blitz. Here the king can only go to one square, and Black did not find it. For that reason it is reasonable to assume that he was short of time, ergo blitz...

1...♔g7??

1...♔f7! 2.♕c7† ♔e8! and, having crossed the f-file without permitting ♕xf4†, Black is assured a draw by perpetual check.

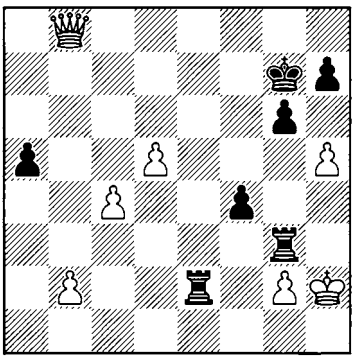
2.♕c7†!

The king cannot go to h6 because of the check on f4, and Black loses in the same manner as in the game.

2...♔g8 3.♕b8†!

Keeping an eye on that all-important f4-square.

3...♔g7



4.h6†! ♔xh6 5.♕xf4† ♖g5 6.♕f8†!

Black resigned. On the next move the check on f3 will decide.

1-0

How this exercise could have been solved: If you look carefully at the two opportunities with the idea of eliminating one of them, you should quickly find the moves of the game – and avoid them.

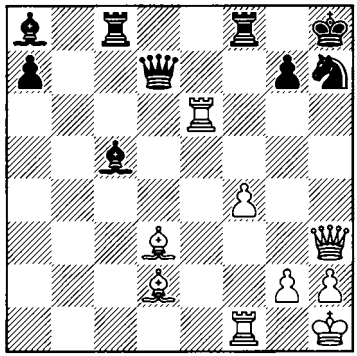
71 Epishin – Tregubov
St Petersburg 2004 (analysis)

I found this in some analysis by Dautov. Black needs to find a nice riposte.

1...♘f6!

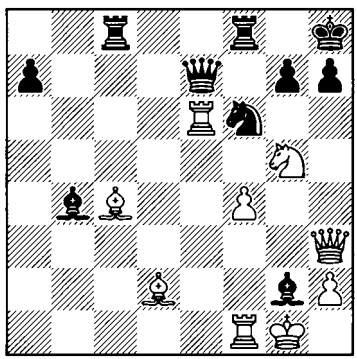
1...h6? 2.♖xe6 and White wins.

1...♗c5†? 2.♔h1 ♘f6 also does not work, as White is very close to winning after 3.♖xe6 ♕d7 4.♘xh7! ♘xh7 5.♗d3.



This, of course, seems very believable, but the proof is unfortunately quite long. The forced line goes like this: 5...g6 6.♗c3† ♗d4 7.♗xd4† ♕xd4 8.♖e7 ♗xg2† 9.♔xg2 ♕d5† 10.♖f3 ♕g8 11.♖xa7 and White has strong threats such as 12.♕d7, which might leave Black with nothing better than 11...♖a8 12.♗c4! ♖xa7 13.♗xg8 ♔xg8 and a bitter struggle for a draw. Anyway, for us it is not too important if Black will succeed in holding this or not, it is enough to know that he is much worse.

2.♖xe6 ♗xg2!!



Dautov attributes this move to Fritz, and indeed this is the kind of move it likes to serve us. I have a feeling that White should force a draw, as the position could easily be worse for him because of the open king.

2...♕c5† 3.♗e3 ♕xc4 4.♖xf6 ♕d3 5.f5 ♕xe3† 6.♕xe3 gxf6 7.♘e6 is also pretty grim for Black.

3.♖xe7!

Actually it is not necessary for the practical player to see even half of the following analysis. I just give it here to prove a point (I think I had one, really, didn't I?).

3.♔xg2? ♕b7† is already worse for White.

3.♕f5? ♕c7 **4.♗xb4** ♕xc4 5.♖b1 looks very artificial, and after 5...♗d5 6.♗xf8 ♕a2 7.♗xg7† ♔g8! White can only defend with 8.♖e2 ♕xe2 9.♕xc8† ♔xg7 10.♕h3 h6, when the knight is trapped on g5.

3.♕xg2?! ♕c5† **4.**♔h1 ♕xc4 5.♗xb4 ♕xb4 is just a pawn up for Black.

3.♕h4!? ♕c7! **4.**♗d3 ♗xf1 5.♗xh7 ♗xd2 6.♗d3† ♔g8 7.♗h7† ♔h8 is another draw.

3...♗xh3 4.♗xb4 ♖xc4 5.♘xh3 ♖xb4 6.♖xa7

White should never lose this endgame.

How this exercise could have been solved: When we are looking at the most natural and therefore "forced" lines it is important to keep an eye out for moves that will change the course of these tsunamis. This alone should lead you to thinking about taking on g2. Remember – threats to the queen are often as useful as checks.

Chapter 9

Solutions to Level 2

72 J. Littlewood – Perkins
England 1975

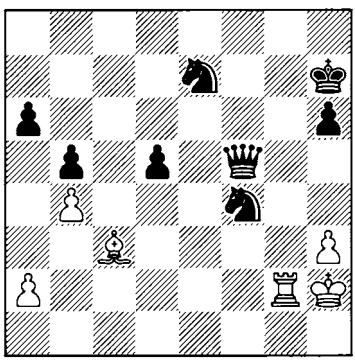
When everything has gone wrong it is nice to be able to escape with a trick. White found such a trick in the game.

1.♗xf5! ♕xf5

Black does not even try to win. He could have done so with 1...♕e3??, but would lose instead after simple moves such as 2.♗d4 ♕e1 3.♕d6, which is not the only way to do it.

A better attempt was 1...♕f7!? forcing White to find 2.♕d6! putting real pressure on g6. (2.♖g3!? should also draw, but it does not force the draw in the same way, and is therefore more risky) 2...♖e4?! (2...♕xf5! still draws) 3.♗xe4 dxe4 4.♖c2 ♘d5 5.♕g3 and White starts to have some chances.

2.♕xe7†! ♘xe7



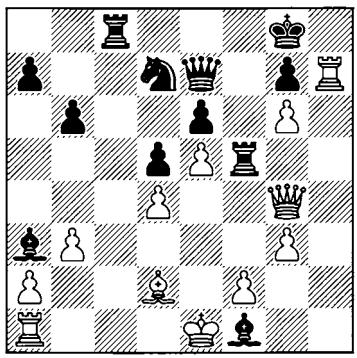
3.♖g7† ♔h8 4.♖g1†
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Clearly the situation is drastic. There is a fork and a material deficit. It is natural to look for a combination in such a situation, as all other moves seem to fail immediately.

73 Gofshtein – Shchekachev
France 1996

1...h6??

Black can defend this position without too much trouble with 1...♔g8 2.♖xh7 ♖f5.



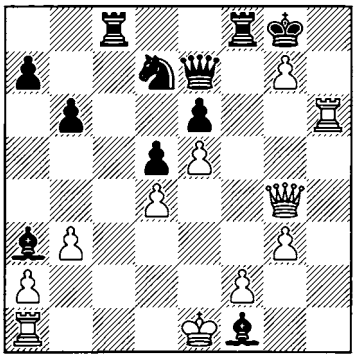
I cannot see anything for White here. The queen cannot access the h-file, and after 3.♔xf1 Black has time to play 3...♘f8 followed by ...♕e8. It is not only h7 the knight is attacking!

1...♖f5 2.♖xh7† ♔g8 transposes.

2.♗xh6!

Now White won more or less trivially, with about one ounce of beauty. But actually a final great defence existed.

2...gxh6 3.♖xh6† ♔g8 4.g7!



4...♕b4†??

Black could still have held the position. Again we have an instance of forcing thinking. Black probably thought that after **4...**♕xg7 5.♖g6 he would have option but to take the rook, but much stronger is 5...♔h8!. This move is rather difficult to foresee. Black does not claim a rook for his queen, he is much more interested in the activity of his three (!) extra minor pieces. (5...♖c2 6.♖xg7† ♔h8 should transpose) 6.♖xg7 ♖c2 7.♔d1! The only winning attempt. (7.♖g8† ♖xg8 8.♕xe6 ♗d3 9.♕h3† ♗h7 10.♕xd7 ♖f8 11.f4 ♗b4† 12.♔f1 ♗d3† 13.♔g1 ♗c3 and Black has sufficient counterplay) 7...♗e2† 8.♔xc2 ♗xg4 9.♖xg4 ♖xf2† 10.♔d3 ♖f3† 11.♔e2 ♖f7 and Black does not look that much worse. He should be careful not to allow White to penetrate on the c-file, but, besides that, I am not really sure how White can create problems for his opponent.

5.♔xf1 ♖xf2† 6.♔g1!

Black resigned.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: The tool to solve this kind of exercise is a basic one – you need to be able to ask yourself just how real the threat is. This was a clear example of a cure being worse than the disease. When we are under attack, we need to have an imagination that goes beyond automatic first impressions of what the right move is, such as 1...h6?.

74 Shirov – Kramnik
Novgorod 1994

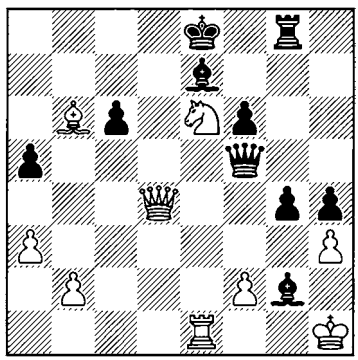
In the game White lost badly after what Kramnik thought of as a bad blunder. The position is of course not easy to get a clear picture of, but that only means that White is suffering for his inability to pull the game in a more pleasant direction.

1.♔f1??

Now Black wins immediately. Here are the alternatives:

1.♘xf3?? gxf3 is over in one move.

1.♔h1? ♘xd4 2.♕xd4 (2.♘xd4 ♕xf2 3.♘f3 ♕xb6 and Black is a piece up) 2...♗xg2†!!



3.♔xg2 ♕f3† 4.♔f1 gxh3 The immediate threat is ...♖g1†!. White has many moves but they all lose:

a) 5.♕e4 ♕xe4 6.♖xe4 f5! 7.♖e3 h2 8.♖h3 ♖g1† 9.♔e2 h1=♕ 10.♖xh1 ♖xh1 11.♗xa5 h3 12.♔f3 ♖g1 13.♗c7 ♔d7 and Black wins.

b) 5.♘f4 is best met with 5...♕h1† (and not Kramnik's 5...h2?? when White mates with 6.♕d8†!) 6.♔e2 ♕xe1†! 7.♔xe1 h2 and Black is an exchange up for very little.

c) 5.♘g7†!? ♔f8! 6.♕e4 (6.♗c5 h2!) 6...♕xe4 7.♖xe4 f5 8.♖e3 ♖xg7 9.♖xh3 a4 and Black should be able to carry the endgame home after a display of good technique.

d) 5.♘c7† ♔f8 6.♘e6† ♔f7 7.♘f4 (7.♘d8† ♔e8 and White has nothing) 7...h2 8.♕c4† ♔g7! 9.♖xe7† (9.♘h5† ♔f8) 9...♔h6 10.♕xg8 (10.♖h7† ♔xh7 11.♕f7† ♖g7) 10...h1=♕† 11.♕g1 ♕d1† and Black wins.

The correct solution was the exchange of queens after 1.♕xf3!!. Play is likely to continue 1...gxf3 2.♘xf5 ♗xf5 3.♘d4! ♖xg2† 4.♔h1 ♗d7 5.♗c5 ♖g7 6.♘xf3 ♗xh3 7.♘xh4 when the draw is not too far away.

1...♗d3† 2.♖e2 ♗xe2† 3.♔xe2 ♕e4† 4.♕e3

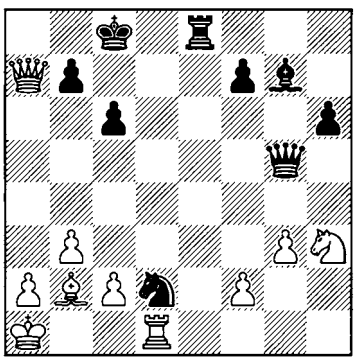
4.♔f1 ♘h2† 5.♔g1 ♕b1† 6.♔xh2 g3† and Black wins the queen.

4...♘xd4† 5.♘xd4 ♕xe3† 6.♔xe3 gxh3 7.gxh3 ♖g5 8.♘xc6 ♗c5† 9.♗xc5 ♖xc5 10.♘d4 a4 11.♔d3 ♖c1

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: Yet another exercise where the method of elimination comes in handy. It is hard to say why Shirov played as poorly as he did, but to solve this exercise it should be enough to organise it clearly in your head. The difficult thing is to take the five options and look at them carefully one at a time.

75 Mitov – Popov
Albena 1977



Black came up with an inventive series of queen sacrifices, all impossible to accept. He could also have forced a draw by simpler means, but neglecting the opponent's chances of replicating these desperado moves meant that Black became too optimistic. He got away with it only because White saw absolutely nothing.

1...♕e5!?

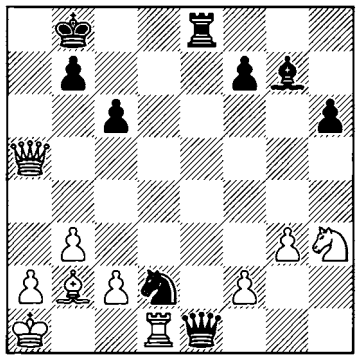
Also possible was the prosaic 1...♗xb2† 2.♔xb2 ♕e5† 3.c3 ♕e2 4.♔c1 ♕d3 and White can no longer avoid taking the perpetual check. 5.♕a8† ♔c7 6.♕a5† b6 7.♕a7† and that is how they dance...

2.♕a3 ♕e1!

The idea behind Black's play.

3.♕a8† ♔c7 4.♕a5† ♔b8?

Very ambitious, and successful – but not terribly good. 4...♔c8 with a draw was better.



5.♕h5??

Trying to protect d1, but this is easily blocked.

5.♕xd2 ♕xd2 and 6...♖e1 obviously leads to mate.

But White could have stepped into the desperado way of thinking himself with a queen sacrifice: 5.♕d8†!! Black is forced to take the queen and defend the endgame with a pawn less, but where his activity gives him some compensation. For if he plays 5...♔a7? White not only has a perpetual, but can win the game with 6.♗d4†! c5 7.♕a5† and now the queen is really hanging on e1.

5...♖e2!

Now it is all over.

6.♗xg7 ♕xd1† 7.♔b2 ♘c4†! 8.♔c3 ♖xc2† 9.♔b4 ♕xh5

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: The main point is to realise that this is a desperado setting, and that you can defend by throwing the inhibitions that govern us in normal positions overboard.

76 Marrero – Perez
Havana 2005

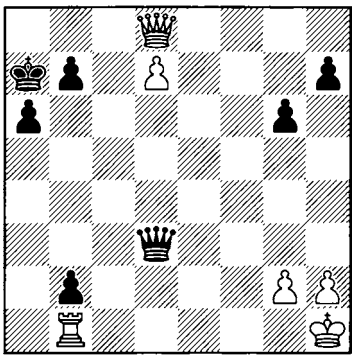
As said in the text for the exercise, I do not fancy White's chances after 1.♕c2 ♕d6 2.♖xb2 ♕xd7. I think Black is a little better and therefore this should be avoided by White, if possible. And that this is possible is the claim of the exercise. In the game White won in just two moves, but on the way he was lost!

1.♕xd8??

Correct was the calm 1.h3!! when White is threatening just to take on b2 and d8. Black still draws easily with 1...♕a5.

1...♕a1??

Natural, unless you have seen the reply. Now any queen check wins for White, which gives an indication that this was not a grandmaster game. 1...♕d3!! would, on the other hand, have exploited the weakness of White's first rank to the maximum.



Black is winning instantly.

2.♕a8†!

Black resigned. 3.d8=♕† follows, and then 4.♕d4† and 5.♕xb2.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: It comes down to a question of candidate moves. You would probably spot the winning queen sacrifice quite quickly, but the key is to see 1...♕d3!, and then to make sure you avoid it. Only great talent, luck, or the process of actually looking for options can find this kind of move. The evaluation of the position after 1.♕c2 can perhaps be disputed, so I left a clear indication in the text for the exercise that I believe Black to be a little better after it.

77 Timofeev – Lugovoi
Kazan 2005

White won quickly after:

1...♖b7? 2.♘d7!

One of several winning moves.

2...♕d8 3.♖xg7†

1–0

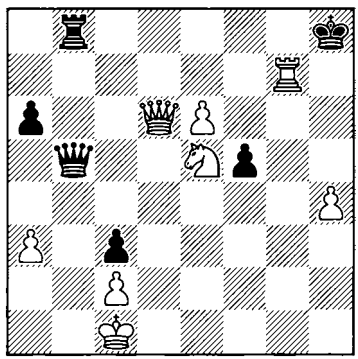
The only defence is to forget about the kingside where all the defensive walls have fallen heavily and hard, and instead create counterplay on the queenside, where Black has had some level of success.

1...♕b5!

White will have to accept a draw after:

2.♖xg7† ♘xg7 3.♖xg7† ♔h8!

3...♔xg7? 4.♕e7† with mate to follow.



4.♖h7†

4.♘g6† only gives perpetual check, and also 4.♘f7†?! ♔xg7 5.♕g3† ♔f8 6.♕xc3 ♕f1† should not attract White. Black is a little better in this endgame.

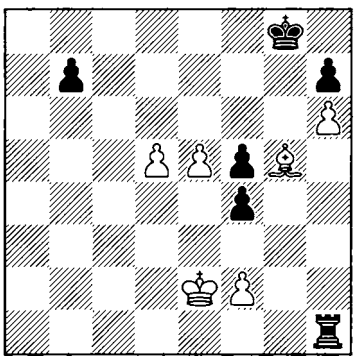
4...♔g8! 5.♖g7† ♔h8!

White cannot improve his position. A main point is of course that Black is threatening a check both on b1 and f1.

How this exercise could have been solved: Unforcing thinking. The real exercise is of course to see that the rook need not be captured and that White cannot hurt the black king. When you are short of time it is hard to leave your king unprotected, like here, but part of good defence is to know exactly how many guards his majesty needs, and how many troops can be sent to the front.

78 Belozerov – Van Ketel
Saint Vincent 2005

White has just mishandled his position, and now Black got a chance to save the game.



1...f3†!

This move is not too hard to find, once we have investigated all the alternatives – or you could say it another way – there are no alternatives. This has to work, and it does.

1...♔f8 loses to 2.d6! f3† 3.♔d2! when it is impossible to stop the white pawns.

Also after 1...♖a1 2.d6 the pawn cannot be stopped.

2.♔d3

White did not fancy a race with 2.♔xf3 ♖d1 3.♔f4 b5 4.♔xf5 b4. This is not hard to understand. It seems as if Black will cross the finish line first.

2.♔d2 is met strongly with 2...♖a1 when White needs to advance his king, as after 3.d6? ♖a5! the pawns are effectively stopped, and White is likely to be lost.

2...♖d1† 3.♗d2

3.♔c4!? was an interesting alternative: Black can still lose the game with 3...b5†??. Instead, bringing the king towards the centre (either f7 or f8) is much more sensible, when the outcome should be a draw. 4.♔c5 b4 5.e6 b3 6.♗f6 The white pawns are too far advanced to be stopped. White wins after 6...♖c1† 7.♔b6! b2 8.♗xb2 ♖b1 9.d6 ♖xb2† 10.♔c7 ♔f8 11.e7† ♔f7 12.d7.

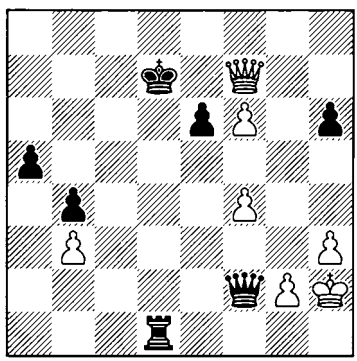
3...♔f7 4.e6† ♔e7 5.♔c2 ♖f1 6.♗b4† ♔f6 7.♗c3† ♔e7 8.♗b4† ♔f6 9.♗c3† ♔e7
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Trial and failure. It should be quickly seen that rook moves and king moves do not solve the problems. For instance, 1...♖h5 2.d6! and the pawn queens. As there are no additional moves, the check comes into your mind and you see the advantages of it.

79 Kiriakov – Thorfinnsson
Saint Vincent 2005

1.♕h5?

An honest attempt to make a perpetual check, but given from the wrong side! White would have drawn with 1.♕g4! when after 1...♕xf2 2.♕g8† ♔d7 3.♕xf7†



Black should not try to win, but satisfy himself with being checked out a little bit, as after 3...♔c6 4.♕xe6† ♖d6? 5.♕e4† ♔b6 6.f7 ♖f6 7.f8=♕ ♖xf8 8.♕e6† ♔b5 9.♕d7† ♔a6 10.♕d6†

White will have chances in the queen endgame.
1...♕xf2 2.♕b5† ♔d8

Black dances across the board better than most ballerinas.
3.♕b8† ♔d7 4.♕b7† ♔d6 5.♕b8† ♔c6 6.♕a8† ♔c7
0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: To me it is quite clear that White needs to look for a perpetual check. From then on it only remains to calculate in which way it is best to seek this.

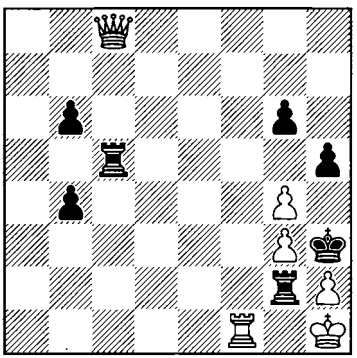
80 Jelen – Larsen
Ljubljana/Portoroz 1977

1.♕c8†!

The only move that delays the mate, but it is also close to delivering mate itself!
1...♕g4!

Impressive, though obviously the only move. 1...♖xc8 2.♘g5 mate, was probably the moment of glory that White was dreaming of. However now it is all gone.
2.♘g5†!

Necessary and the point of the exercise. The trap is that after 2.fxg4?? ♖g2†! 3.♔h1 ♖xh2† 4.♔g1 ♖xc8 5.♘g5† ♔xg4 we have a winning endgame for Black.
2...♖xg5 3.fxg4 ♖g2† 4.♔h1 ♖c5!!



The move that really makes the game, and it is to your credit if you foresaw this move. White, assuming that he has blown it in the attack, was probably comforted by the idea of a draw. Now, with very little time on the clock, he is faced with the threat of ...♖cc2 and a mating attack.

The remarkable thing here is that Larsen is playing for a win a queen down.
5.♕d8??

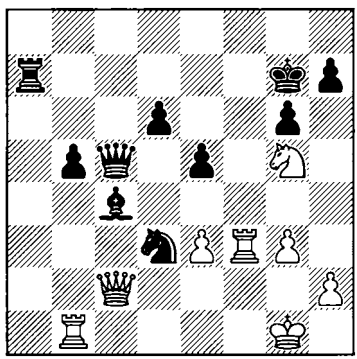
White would still have drawn after either 5.♕e6! or 5.♕d7!.
5...♖xh2† 6.♔g1 g5!

There is no defence against 7...♖cc2 with a mating attack on the next move. White played:
7.♖b1

But probably resigned before Larsen returned to the board.
0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: It is a question of looking into what the opponent is up to. Once this becomes clear, it should not be hard to see that something needs to be done, something more than just going through the motions. By the way, whether you see all the way to 5.♕e6! is not too important. To find (and play!) the only moves is enough for the practical player.

81 Portisch – Forintos
Hungary 1971



At first it looks as if White has nothing at all, but then comes a spectacular queen sacrifice.
1.♕xd3!

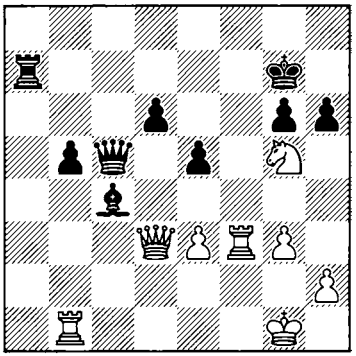
Now White is a rook up, so Black needs something quite concrete to stay alive. In the

game he went for the "forced" reply and quickly ended up in a horrible endgame.

1...♗xd3?

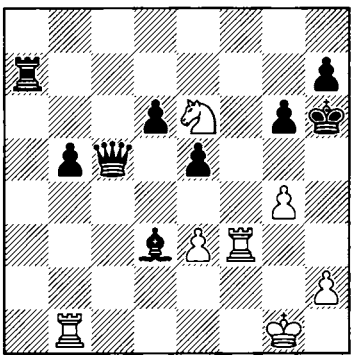
Black could have survived by creating a desperado scenario.

The only move was 1...h6!!



when Black is a rook down, but is aiming at two white pieces. I see no advantage for White anywhere. 2.♘e6† ♗xe6 3.♕xb5 ♕xb5 4.♖xb5 ♗c4 5.♖b1 (5.♖b8 ♖a1† 6.♔f2 ♗d5 with a direct draw) 5...♗d3 6.♖c1 d5 I think Black has enough compensation to draw this endgame. If White managed to exchange a rook things would be different, but it is not so easy to see how he can achieve this. Basically he needs to keep both the first and second rank protected, or Black will immediately get active counterplay. Also, at the right moment Black can push his d-pawn, which, supported by the bishop, will ensure him a draw as well.

2.♘e6† ♔h6 3.g4!!



This was the point. Black can only reply in one way in the face of mate.

3...g5 4.♖f6† ♗g6 5.♘xc5 dxc5 6.♖xb5

White has a clear plus and went on to win.

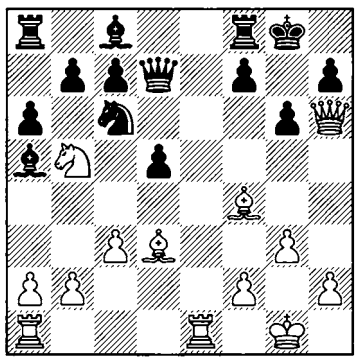
6...♖a1† 7.♔f2 ♖a2† 8.♔g3 ♖a3 9.♔f3 e4† 10.♔f2 ♖a2† 11.♔g3 ♖a3 12.h4 gxh4† 13.♔xh4 ♔g7 14.♖c6 ♖xe3 15.♖b7† ♗f7 16.♖xc5 ♖f3 17.♖g5† ♔f8 18.♖b8† ♔e7 19.♖e5† ♔f6 20.♖xe4 h6 21.♖b5 ♔g6 22.♖e7 ♖f6 23.♖f5 ♗e6 24.♖xf6† ♔xf6 25.♖xe6† 1–0

Maybe I should remember to tell those looking for this example in other sources that *Informant* has listed the game as Portisch – Honfi, Hungary 1972. This may be correct, but I have chosen to go with ChessBase, which has the whole game.

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all it is natural to check the consequences of accepting the queen sacrifice. Once it has been established that it is losing, you need to look at all possible crazy ideas, including 1...h6.

82 Chudinovsky – Nikulin
USSR 1982

Chudinovsky was obviously rather proud of his combination in this game, and reasonably so. The first move was quite a stunner.



1.♗f5! ♕d8

Only move, but the queen is running short of squares.

1...♕xf5? 2.♕xf8†!

2.♗g5! f6 3.♗xg6

We have now arrived at our exercise. Black has only one move, which can be quite quickly detected once the game continuation has been investigated.

3...♕d7? 4.♗xf6!

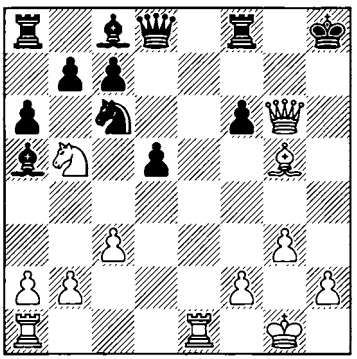
Did Black miss this? The main threat is of course 5.♖e7, so Black decided to test his opponent's calculation.

4...♖xf6 5.♖e8† ♕xe8 6.♕xh7† ♔f8 7.♕h8† 1–0

Sometimes we have no real choice. We need to accept a piece and hope that our opponent has nothing better than perpetual. It is not very sexy, but it is good defence.

3...hxg6 4.♕xg6† ♔h8

White can push for a full point with one move only.



5.♖e8!?

This leaves Black with the first dilemma. Both captures lose the queen, but only one of them runs the risk of losing the game as well.

5...♕xe8!

The alternative is worse: 5...♖xe8? 6.♗xf6† ♕xf6 7.♕xf6† ♔g8 8.♕g5† ♔f8 9.♕f4† ♔g8 10.♘xc7 ♗xc7 11.♕xc7 White has three pawns on the queenside and a queen against a rainbow of alternatives. White is better, but maybe Black can hold? In practice this is not something we want to investigate when we do not have to!

6.♗xf6† ♖xf6 7.♕xe8† ♔g7

White now has no way of attacking c7.

8.♘d4 ♗b6 9.♖e1 ♗xd4 10.cxd4 ♖b8

It is not unthinkable that Black is a little better, and that White therefore should consider taking the perpetual check on move 5.

How this exercise could have been solved: Method of elimination. You have two options, and you have to check which one of them can be killed off quickly. Then the other is your best shot. Also, though this is an exercise book, you should actually calculate the obvious moves...

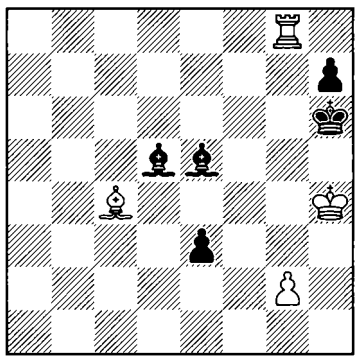
83 Bator – Bareev
Saltsjöbaden 1987

Black draws by eliminating the mate and using a fork to advance his e-pawn.

1...♖xh4†!

All other moves lose.

2.♔xh4 ♗d5!



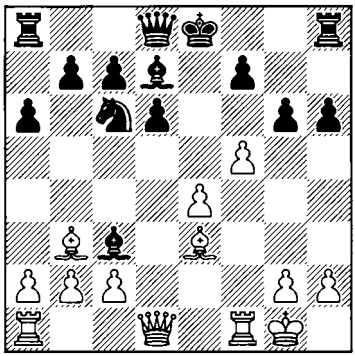
This is the stunner. White has a very limited choice. 3.♖c8 ♗c3 4.♗xd5 e2 with an immediate draw, or 3.♖g4 ♗f6†. Black can draw in many other ways as well. 4.♔g3 ♗e5† 5.♔h3 e2 6.♖h4† ♔g5 7.♗xe2 ♗xg2† and everything is hoovered off the board.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The first move is forced, but after this a justification needs to be found. I hope it is not too hard to see that the e-pawn is Black's only trump. From there it should not be too hard.

84 Zezulkin – Kozakov
Poland 1993

White started this attack in classic style, then went astray:



1.fxg6! ♗f6 2.g7! ♖g8

2...♗xg7 does not work. After 3.♕h5 Black cannot counter the triple threat against f7.

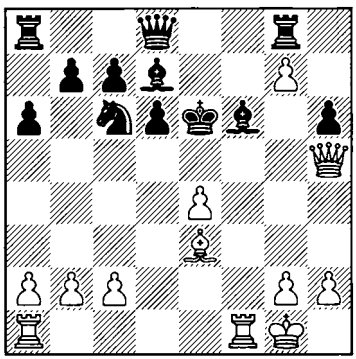
3.♗xf7†?

3.♕f3! wins back the piece and leaves Black unable to protect both h6 and f7, so White will end a pawn up. After the game move Black can hold a draw with accurate play.

3...♔e7?

Or 3...♔xf7 4.♕h5† ♔e7 5.♖xf6! ♖xg7 6.♖af1 ♘e5 7.♕h4 with a winning attack according to Zezulkin. This is of course correct. It is also correct that White could improve on this with 7.♕xe5†! with mate to follow.

But, most importantly, Black could play **4...♔e6!!**



and White has nothing better than perpetual check. It is that simple. The main point is that the rook sacrifice on f6 does not work, as Black can recapture with the queen.

4.♖xf6!

Almost everything sensible wins.

4...♔xf6 5.♕h5 ♖xg7 6.♖f1† ♔e7 7.♕h4† ♔f8 8.♗e6† ♔e8 9.♕h5† ♔e7 10.♖f7† ♔xe6 11.♕d5 mate.

1–0

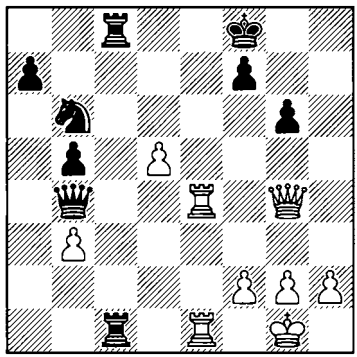
How this exercise could have been solved: It is all about keeping an open mind. The rook sacrifice on f6 should not be too hard to see, so Black has to take the bishop. Then comes a simple selection of candidates, or the realisation that the king cannot go to e7.

85 Pedzich – Shirov
Santiago 1990

1...♔g7!

The correct square.

1...♔f8?? loses to 2.♘xg6†! hxg6 (2...♔g7 3.♘e5† ♔f8 4.♘d7† ♘xd7 5.♖e8† and White wins)



3.♖e8†!! and White wins.

1...♔h8? allows White to escape with 2.♕e2 ♖xe1† 3.♕xe1 with maybe slightly better chances for Black, but really only very slightly. The main point is that after 3...♕xe4?? White would have a cheeky check with **4.♕a1†**, with immediate mate.

2.♕e2

2.♘f5† loses to 2...♔h8! 3.♕e2 ♕xe1† 4.♕xe1 ♖xe1† 5.♖xe1 and now the endgame is quite a bit better for Black after 5...gxf5...

2.♖f1 fails to 2...♖xf1† 3.♔xf1 ♖c1† 4.♔e2 ♖e1† 5.♔f3 ♕c3† 6.♖e3 ♖xe3† 7.fxe3 ♕f6† and Black picks up a piece.

2...♖xe1† 3.♕xe1 ♕xe4!

0-1

How this exercise could have been solved: It is a simple version of the method of elimination. You try to find the finer tactical points behind all three first moves, as if you were the opponent faced with them, and then you throw away those that give the worst result, keeping your favourite.

86 Martinez Alpizar – Bezanilla
Cuba 1995

Black drew with a nice combination.

1...♕xe3! 2.♕f8†

The most testing. White has nothing in the rook endgame: 2.fxe3 ♘g4† 3.♕xg4 (3.♔h3 ♘f2†) 3...hxg4 4.♔g1 (4.a4 ♖d1! with an instant draw) 4...♖d2 5.♔f1 (5.a4 ♖e2!) 5...♖b2 6.a4 ♖b1† 7.♔e2 ♖b2† White cannot win this endgame. But if he insists, it might still be possible to lose it.

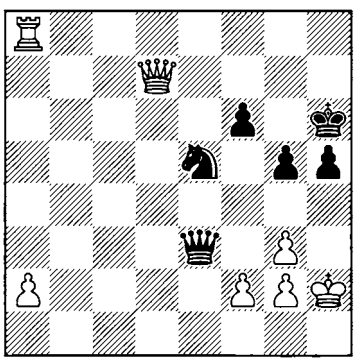
2...♔g6

2...♔h7 3.♕h8† ♔g6 4.♕e8† ♔h6 5.♕xd7 transposes.

3.♕e8†

3.♕g8† ♔f5 and it is time to give Black his perpetual check.

3...♔h6 4.♕xd7!



Did you see this? It is necessary to see this kind of idea when you sacrifice your queen. If not, you are lucky that you have a defence.

4...♘f3†! 5.gxf3 ♕xf2† 6.♔h3 ♕f1†

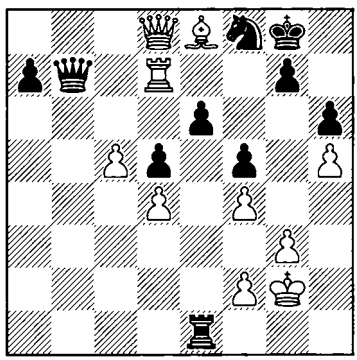
½-½

How this exercise could have been solved: Everything starts with the initial queen sacrifice. It is clear that White cannot accept it and play for a win, but also that he still has some checks. You should then see the desperado capture on d7, but not be discouraged, which is the difficulty of the exercise. It is important always to end calculations of tactics with a quick scan for ideas/candidates.

87 Mikhalchishin – Jeric
Slovenia 2000

White won with a great combination after Black decided that losing the e-pawn was the worst that could happen to him in this position.

1...♖e1? 2.♖d7!!



2...♘xd7

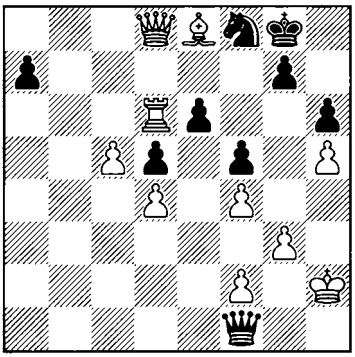
White wins brilliantly after 2...♕b1 with a series of desperado rook sacrifices. 3.♖xg7†! ♔h8 4.♖h7†! ♔g8 5.♖h8†!! ♔xh8 6.♕f6† and mate follows shortly.

3.♗xd7† ♔h7 4.♗e8! g5 5.hxg6† ♔g7 6.c6

1–0

Actually Black could have escaped with a nice little rook sacrifice, winning the necessary tempo.

1...♖g1†!! 2.♔xg1 ♕b1† 3.♔h2 ♕f1

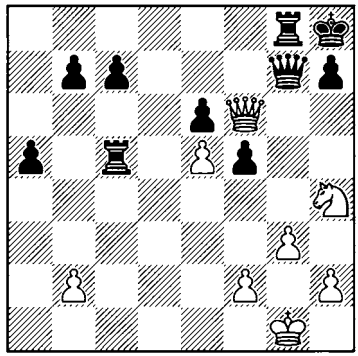


White's only try is to bring the bishop back, but this is not enough to prevent perpetual check.
4.♗b5 ♕xf2† 5.♔h1 ♕f3† 6.♔g1 ♕xg3† 7.♔f1 ♕xf4† 8.♔e1 ♕c1† 9.♔f2 ♕f4† 10.♔e2 ♕e4† 11.♔d2 ♕xd4† 12.♗d3 ♕f2† 13.♗e2 ♕d4† 14.♔e1 ♕g1†
And so on.

How this exercise could have been solved: I would personally feel rather desperate as Black here, and the idea of pulling a Houdini would be close to my mind. Perpetuals should always be a part of your "miracle bag", and this would be a typical set-up to look for exactly such a miracle.

88 Prusikhin – Buhmann
Griesheim 2003

White is clearly worse seen from a static point of view. He is a pawn down and his pieces are not really working together. Only by sacrificing all his pieces is he able to escape from defending a sad endgame.
1.♖xc5!! ♖xc5
1...♕xc5? 2.♕f6†
2.♖d7!! ♕xd7
2...♖c1† 3.♔g2 changes nothing. Forcing thinkingwould maybe assume that White should take the rook?
3.♕f6† ♕g7
3...♖g7 **4.♕f8†** ♖g8 5.♕f6† and we are back where we started. It looks as if everything is protected, but White still has one bullet left. It is as they said in the Wild West – God created people different, Mr Colt made them equal.

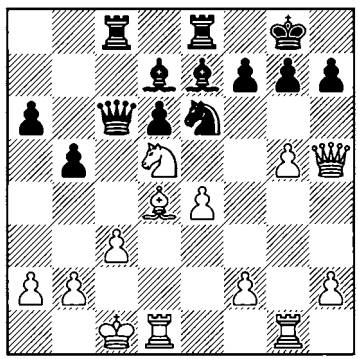


4.♘g6†! hxg6 5.♕h4† ♕h7 6.♕f6† ♖g7 7.♕d8†
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: This is really a standard combination. If you have problems solving such an exercise you should probably plough through a book such as *Anthology of Chess Combinations 3* from *Chess Informant*. As far as I can tell few mistakes remains in this excellent collection.

89 Anand – Wegner
London 1987

White won bycrashing through in the traditional style of an elephant in a porcelain shop; but Black could have shot him down...



1.♗xg7! ♔xg7!

The knight is covering squares from e6, but not really from g7.

1...♘xg7 2.♘f6† ♗xf6 3.gxf6 ♔h8 might look a bit like a defence. Black hopes for 4.♖xg7 ♕xe4 and maybe he can fight. But White has the much stronger 4.♕xf7!! ♘h5 5.♕xh5 and Blackcannot defend. One line goes 5...♕xe4 6.♕h6 ♖g8 7.f7! and Black must resign.

White now saw a wonderful tactic and went for it.

2.♘f6?

2.♕h6† ♔h8 3.♘xe7 ♖xe7 4.♕f6† ♔g8 5.♕xe7 ♗e8 6.♕xd6 Maybe with some advantage, was a far better idea. Now Black should do fine.

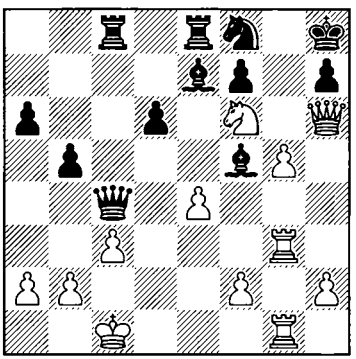
2...♗xf6?

This loses fairly easily. A better defence would have been 2...♘f8 when after the logical moves 3.♖d3 ♕c4 4.♕h6† ♔h8 5.♖dg3 we have arrived at our exercise. We should now take a look at the various options:

a) 5...♕d4?! leads to trouble after an elegant breakthrough that exploits the overloaded black knight. 6.g6! ♗xf6 (6...fxg6 7.♖xg6 ♖xc3† 8.♔b1 and Black has to part with the queen to make the game last a few more moves) 7.gxf7! (7.g7†? ♗xg7 8.♖xg7 ♖xc3†! and Black wins) 7...♗g7 8.♕xg7† (8.♖xg7? ♖xc3† and Black draws with perpetual check) 8...♕xg7 9.♖xg7 ♘g6 10.fxe8=♖† ♗xe8 11.♖a7 and White enjoys a nice endgame edge.

b) 5...♗g4? 6.♖xg4 just postpones things, and is therefore a short-lived favourite of computer engines.

c) The correct move is 5...♗f5!!.



This wonderful move protects h7 for one move, just enough time for the black queen to come to f4 and save the game.

6.♘h5? ♘e6 7.exf5 ♗f8 8.♕f6† ♘g7 9.g6 ♕xa2 10.gxf7 ♖e2! and White is mated.

6.exf5? ♕f4† 7.♖e3 ♗xf6 8.♕xf6† ♔g8 and White has nothing.

6.♘xe8 ♖xe8 7.exf5 ♕f4† 8.♖e3 ♘d7 is relatively best, but Black remains better.

3.gxf6† ♔h8

It was now too late to dream of survival. White wins in style after 3...♔xf6 4.♕h4† ♔e5 5.♖d5† ♕xd5 6.♕h5†! ♔xe4 7.♖e1† and the king is like a fish out of water, suffocating in the fresh air.

4.♖d5!

Black resigned because of 4...♖g8 5.♕xh7† ♔xh7 6.♖h5 mate. 4...♕xd5 lasts longer, but does not save the game.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a really hard exercise. The main way to solve it, I guess, is to realise that White is on the verge of breaking through, and that Black does not have time for quiet moves, but needs to address the problem instantly.

90 Danielsen – Vea
Copenhagen 2005

According to the computer White has three acceptable moves in the position, the least of these, 1.h3, being something White can survive. But it takes some time to see that the move played by the grandmaster, against an opponent rated 400 points lower, does not win the game.

1.c4?

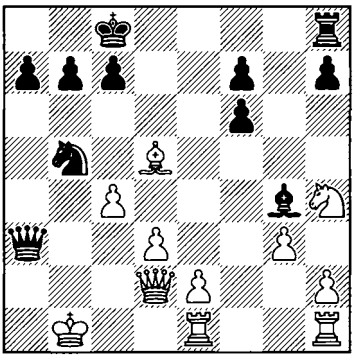
This gives Black a fairly simple perpetual check. But when a grandmaster can make a pig's ear of this position, it shows that there is some value in solving the position.

The winning move was 1.♕b4! and White is simply a piece up. It is true that Black regains it with 1...♖xd5, but after 2.♕xa3 ♘xa3† 3.♔b2 ♖a5 4.♖a1 the feeling of euphoria must be said to be temporary.

1...♖xd5! 2.♗xd5

White has two alternatives. After 2.cxd5 Black draws in the same way as he could have in the game.

The other option is 2.♕b2 ♘c3† 3.♔c2 ♕xb2† 4.♔xb2 ♘a4† 5.♔a3 ♖a5 6.♔b4 ♖a6 7.♖hf1 ♖e8 with chances for both sides. It seems obvious to me that Black is not worse.



2...♕b3†?

This is just bad calculation. Probably the 2100 player has this rating because he is not sufficiently structured in his calculation.

Black draws with 2...♘c3† 3.♔c2 ♕a2†! when White is unable to escape the perpetual check: 4.♔xc3 ♕a5† 5.♔c2 ♕a2† 6.♔d1 ♕b1† 7.♕c1 ♕xd3† Probably this was the move which was overlooked by both players. 8.♕d2 ♕b1† and so on...

3.♔c1 ♘c3 4.♕c2

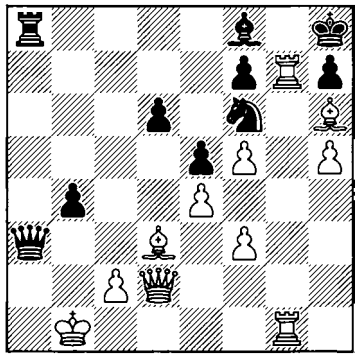
Now the white king sleepwalks from the danger zone.

4...♘a2† 5.♔d2 ♕b4† 6.♔e3 ♘c3 7.♔f2 ♕c5† 8.d4 ♕xd4† 9.e3 ♕e5 10.♖c1 ♘e2 11.♗f3

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Candidates should solve it. 1.♕b4 is rather conclusive. Why Danielsen did not play this, I cannot truly say. Maybe he overlooked the possibility of forcing a draw? But even so, having something complex to calculate is rather reckless, and should be avoided when a simple move closes the discussion.

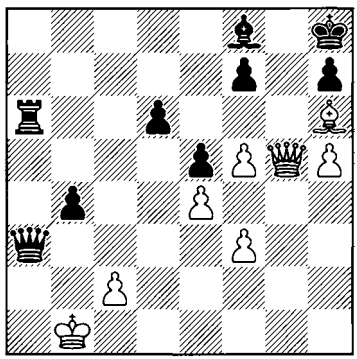
91 Lopez Martinez – G. Guseinov
Warsaw 2005



In this position where 1.♖g8 leads to an immediate draw, White came up with a last trick for Black to fall into. It was your job not to!

1.♗a6!? ♕xa6!

The only move. Black loses after 1...b3? 2.♕g2, while he would be mated rather spectacularly after 1...♖xa6? 2.♖g8†! ♘xg8 3.♖xg8† ♔xg8 4.♕g5† ♔h8.



5.♗g7†!! ♗xg7 6.♕d8† ♗f8 7.♕xf8 mate!

2.♖g8† ♘xg8 3.♖xg8† ♔xg8 4.♕g5†

The players agreed a draw.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: Method of elimination. It makes little sense to ignore the bishop on a6, so the question is: What is the difference? The answer is the control

over the 8th rank. You can probably solve that logically, but it is easier to just look for White's possibilities for instant success and decide which move prevents these.

92 Dvoretsky – Raskin
Moscow 1967

Black had two squares and one hell of a bad day. In the game he allowed White to avoid the exchange of his strongest attacking piece (the knight, not the queen) by giving an intermediate check.

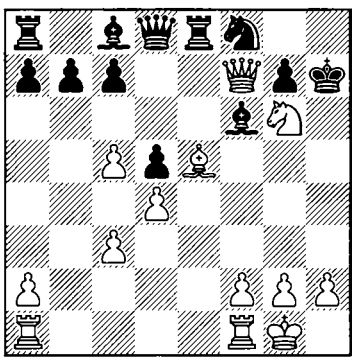
1...♔h8? 2.♘g6†! ♔h7 3.bxc3 ♘f8

3...♘f6 is met strongly with **4.♖fe1!** when the only attempt to pretend that everything is all right, **4...♘e4**, is met with 5.♗xc7 ♕d7 6.♘e5 ♕xc7 7.♕h5† with a winning attack.

3...♗f6 4.♗xc7 ♕xc7 5.♕xe8 ♕d8 6.♕f7 ♕g8 7.♕xg8† ♔xg8 8.♘f4 and Black has no way to protect the d5-pawn, after which White will be some pawns ahead.

4.♗e5 ♗f6!?

The best defence. **4...♘e6** is met strongly with both 5.♘f4 and 5.f4! when Black is suffering badly.



5.♗xc7!

5.♗xf6 ♕xf6 6.♕xe8 ♘xg6 is not completely clear, though probably also in White's favour.

5...♕d7

5...♗e6? 6.♘xf8† and 7.♕h5†.

6.♘xf8†

6.♕xf8? ♔xg6 and Black is on top. For those who like computers' strange choices, 6...♔h6!? also gives Black a strong position. All it does is lose a tempo.

6...♖xf8 7.♕xf8 ♕xc7 8.♖ae1

White has a winning attack.

8...b6 9.♖e8 bxc5 10.g4! ♗xg4

10...♔g6 11.♕h8 ♔f7 12.♖f8† and the last piece joins the joy-kill of the black king.

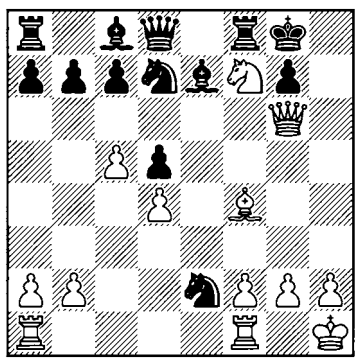
11.♖xa8

Now it is all over.

11...♕f4 12.♕h8† ♔g6 13.♕e8† ♔h7 14.♕e3 ♕f5 15.♕g3 cxd4 16.cxd4 ♗xd4 17.♕h4† ♗h5 18.♖f8! ♗f6 19.♖e1 ♕g6† 20.♕g3 ♕f5 21.♕h4 ♕g6† 22.♕g3 ♕f5 23.h3 d4 24.♔h2 d3 25.♖xf6! ♕xf6 26.♕xd3† ♗g6 27.♕g3 ♗f7 28.a3 ♗d5 29.♖e5 ♗f3 30.♖a5 a6 31.♕e5 ♕b6 32.♔g3 ♗c6 33.♕f5† ♔g8 34.♕e6†

1–0

1...♔h7! was the correct choice. Black probably did not fear the perpetual check, but rather losing his queen after 2.♕g6† (2.♗h6 ♗f6 and there is nothing besides the perpetual. No other ideas seem to exist.) 2...♔g8 3.♘f7? ♘e2† 4.♔h1. Now **4...♘xf4** allowing White to escape with a perpetual check was given by a ChessBase employee, probably copied from a comment of an older date. At least it should be said that the company's strongest product, Fritz9, finds **4...♖f8!!**



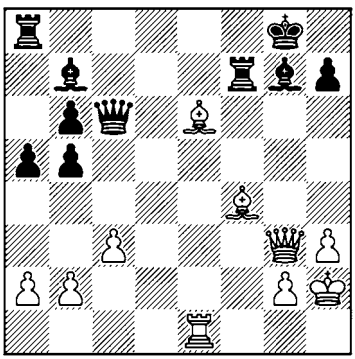
forcing a very favourable material situation, arising after 5.♘xd8 ♘xf4 6.♕g3 ♗xd8 with four (!) pieces for the queen. Black should have a swell time.

How this exercise could have been solved: Same principle as in the previous exercise: the method of elimination. You only have two moves. So is there a problem with one of them? If not, then closer examination is necessary. Otherwise a decision can possibly be made without too much effort.

93 Ang. Hernandez – Moreno Ramon
Cuba 1994

One of those exercises where the correct approach is to protect some important squares.
1...♕e8?

After this White has several ways to prove an advantage, with the easiest being as in the game. Instead, Black could have saved the game with 1...♕c6!. Here we have a few options:



a) 2.♗h6 ♔h8 3.♗xf7 ♗xh6 4.♖e6 is not as bad for Black as it looks, and this is not because of 4...♕d7, but because of 4...♗f4! settling things once and for all.

b) After 2.♗xf7† ♔xf7 3.♗e5!? (3.♖e7† is an instant draw) Black will have to display a degree of accuracy. Strongest is 3...♗xe5 4.♖xe5 ♗c8 5.♕h4 ♕f6 6.♕xh7† ♔f8 7.♖xb5 ♕f4† 8.♔g1 and Black should give perpetual check. But Black should also make a draw reasonably comfortably with 3...♕xg2† 4.♕xg2 ♗xe5† 5.♖xe5 ♗xg2 6.♔xg2 b4 and the rook endgame is no problem.
2.♗h6 ♔h8

White also wins after 2...♕b8 when he has a beautiful finish: 3.♗xf7† ♔xf7 4.♖f1† ♔g8 (otherwise 5.♗f4 wins against most moves) 5.♖f4! Black can only defend g7 with the queen, when 6.♗xg7 and 7.♖g4 wins.
3.♗xf7 ♕xf7 4.♕xg7† ♕xg7 5.♗xg7† ♔xg7 6.♖e7†

Black resigned. The rook endgame is going nowhere. We will return to this game in level 3 in exercise 195.
1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Actually, I am not sure this exercise should be too hard. It is all about finding the best square for the queen. Not many are available. The e8-square is horrible, as the queen is threatened after ♗xf7. To find a good one is harder, but a methodical examination of the various options should solve this problem within a realistic timeframe.

94 Yudasin – Arnason
Novi Sad (ol) 1990

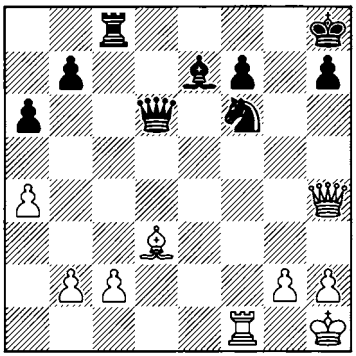
Black looked through his options and decided that his best chance was a rotten endgame.
1...♕b4? 2.♕xb4 ♗xb4 3.♖xf6

This endgame should be hopeless for Black, a pawn down and with plenty of weaknesses on the light squares.
3...♗c5 4.♖h6 ♖e8 5.g3 a5 6.♖xh7† ♔g8 7.♖h5 b6 8.♔g2 ♖e1 9.♖g5† ♔f8 10.h4 ♖b1 11.h5 ♖e1 12.h6 ♗d4 13.♖d5??

Starting an awful series of blunders. Better was 13.b3 and White is surely winning.
13...♗xb2 14.g4? ♖e5!

Surprisingly White cannot escape the exchange of rooks, after which Black can set up a fortress because White's chance to create a passed pawn on the queenside has gone.
15.♖d6 ♖e6 16.♖xe6 fxe6 17.♔f3 ♗c1 18.h7 ♔g7 19.♗e4 ♗g5 20.♔e2 ♗f4 21.♔d3 ♗g5 22.♔c4 ♗e3 23.♔b5 ♗c5 24.♔c6 ♗d4 25.♔d6 ♗c3
½–½

1...♕b4? was the only move according to Yudasin, which is of course not the case. The solution is more inventive: 1...♖c8!!



The idea is to meet 2.♖xf6 with 2...♕xd3! and Black wins.

Yudasin had anticipated this and believed that White would win all the same after 2.♕h3? however 2...♕e6! (Yudasin only considered 2...♕d7 3.♗f5 where White wins the exchange) 3.♗f5 ♕e2! and Black wins a tempo, and after something like 4.♗d3 ♕g4 5.♕xg4 ♘xg4 6.♖xf7 ♗c5 he should be able to win the endgame.

So, as his assumptions were incorrect, Yudasin would have had to settle for a more modest option. 2.♕h6! will still make the draw, as the c1-square is now protected. Black just needs to find 2...♔g8! when after 3.♖xf6 ♕xf6 4.♗xh7† we have a standard perpetual check.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is one of those exercises where you cannot prevent the opponent from carrying out his combination, but you can position yourself in a way that allows you to hit back with a counter combination. After that it becomes harder. Ideally you should see White's various ideas and the responses to them, but of course this is not always possible (or necessary) over the board.

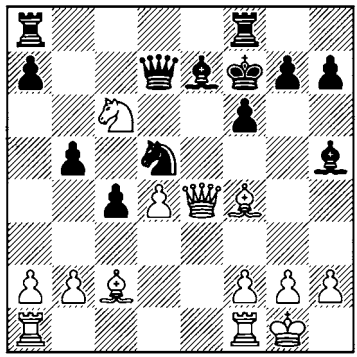
95 Kempinski – Ogaard
Saint Vincent 2005

Black only has one move that protects everything. In the game he did not find it, and instead started a series of exchanges that left his king wide open.

1...♘xf4?

1...♗g6? 2.♕xd5†! is an important threat.

1...♔f7!! was the only move.



Now if White captures on h7 the bishop on f4 can be taken. The position after 2.♘xe7 ♘xe7 3.♕xh7 ♖h8 4.♕e4 ♗g6 5.♕e2 ♗xc2 6.♕xc2 ♕xd4 appears as if it could go either way.

2.♘xe7† ♔f7 3.♕xf4 ♕xe7 4.♖fe1 ♕b4

White wins in all variations. 4...♕d7 5.♗f5! and the check on e6 will hurt. Fritz now gives 5...g5 6.♗xd7 gxf4 7.♗xb5 as the only chance, but an endgame two pawns down is not necessarily better than the unfortunate end to the game.

Also worth noting is 4...♕d8 5.♕f5 g6 6.♕e6† ♔g7 7.g4! and White wins a piece.

5.♕f5 g6 6.♕d7†

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: An unbiased and open scan for candidates should solve this problem quite quickly.

96 Bellon Lopez – Kosmo
Stockholm 2004

Black was viciously murdered in the game.

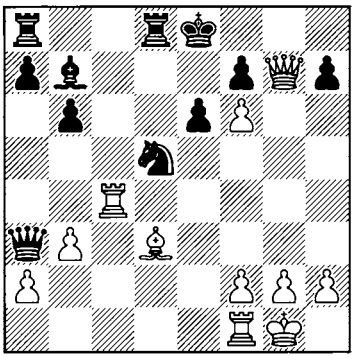
1...♘d5?

1...♔f8? 2.♕g4 (2.♖c7 should also win) 2...♘c6 (2...♘d5 transposes) 3.♗xh7 ♔e8 4.♗g6! and Black is in deep trouble.

1...♔h8! defends without too much trouble. I feel confident that Black had overlooked his time-gaining option on move three. 2.♖h4 ♘xd3 3.♕h5 (3.♖xh7†? does not work. Black

can dance: 3...♔xh7 4.♕h5† ♔g8 5.♕h6 ♕f8 6.♕g5† ♔h7 7.♕h5† ♕h6 8.♕xf7† ♔h8 and Black is leading with an army of heavy artillery.) 3...♗e4! Defending h7 and winning the necessary time. 4.♖xe4 No other moves really exist. 4...♖d5 (4...♕c5!? and 4...♕a5!? also look better for Black) 5.♕xf7 ♕f8 and we are heading for an endgame White could only hold by a miracle, and no such miracle is in focus.

2.♕g4† ♔f8 3.♕g7† ♔e8



4.♖a4!

Besides the main point of the defence, it is very likely that Black overlooked this. White has 5.♗b5†, and Black has trouble with the queen.

4...♕c5

4...♕d6 5.♗b5† ♗c6 6.♕g8† ♔d7 7.♕xf7† ♔c8 8.♗xc6 and White wins.

5.♕g8† ♔d7

Slightly preferable was maybe 5...♕f8 6.♗b5† ♖d7 7.♕xf8† ♔xf8 8.♗xd7 ♘xf6 9.♗b5, though the endgame is winning for White.

6.♕xf7† ♔d6

6...♔c8 7.♖c4

7.♕xb7

Black decided not to try the endgame two pawns down against his GM-opponent. Instead he resigned.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Putting the king on h8 is quite natural and the position after 3.♕h5 should arise quickly in your calculation. With two pieces more it should be quite normal to investigate returning one of them for a tempo. I guess it is about keeping an open mind, and not throwing away an option quickly just because mate is threatened.

97 V. Georgiev – Bosboom
Wijk aan Zee 2005

White has just sacrificed needlessly on b2, which worked well in practice, but does not work in the details.

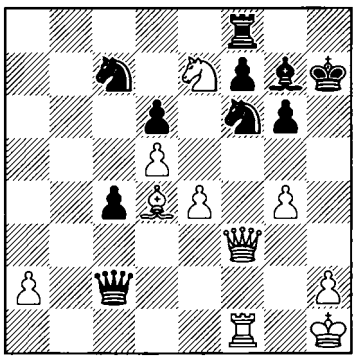
1...♕xb2 2.♗d4 ♕c2!

The game continued 2...♕xd4?? 3.♘xd4 and White won comfortably.

2...♕d2?! 3.♘xe7† ♔h7 4.♗xf6 (4.♕h3† ♕h6 is less clear. The power of the passed c-pawn increases when the queens come off.) 4...♗xf6 5.♕xf6 and White has a clear advantage, though Black is still in there with some counterplay.

3.♘xe7† ♔h7!

3...♔h8? 4.♗xf6 does not work for Black, as White can recapture on f6 with check.



4.♕h3†?!

This is the main line because this is probably the one that made Black shy away from being greedy.

4.♖f2!? is possibly the best move, but after 4...♕d3! 5.♗xf6 ♗xf6 6.♕xf6 ♕xe4† 7.♖f3 ♘e8 8.♕c3 ♘g7 it is clear that it is more fun to be Black.

4.♗xf6 ♗xf6 5.♕xf6 ♕xe4† 6.♖f3 ♘e8 7.♕c3 ♘g7 is the same thing, of course.

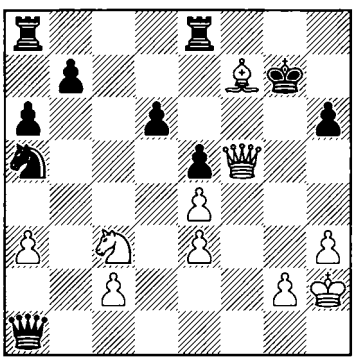
4...♘h5! 5.gxh5 ♕xe4† 6.♖f3 g5!

In view of Black's various threats, White has no alternative to:
7.♕f5† ♕xf5 8.♘xf5 ♗xd4 9.♘xd4 ♘xd5
Black has very serious winning chances in the endgame.

How this exercise could have been solved: Returning the knight on h5 is very natural to me, but I have used a lot of energy investigating attack and defence in the last few years. In this exercise I find it natural to take the rook and try to tough it out. With a little will and some imagination it should not be too hard to figure out how to do this.

98 Melao – Blank Goncalves
Sao Paulo 1995 (analysis)

This is an excellent exercise to use the method of elimination. Basically you have two moves that look more or less identical, and you want to find a flaw in one of them, and then play the other. Here the correct move is:
1...♔h8!
Actually this move was disregarded in the analysis because of 2.♕g6, but then Black should play 2...♖e7! and he is absolutely fine.
1...♔g7? does not work because White can increase his threats with 2.♗f7!! with a winning attack.

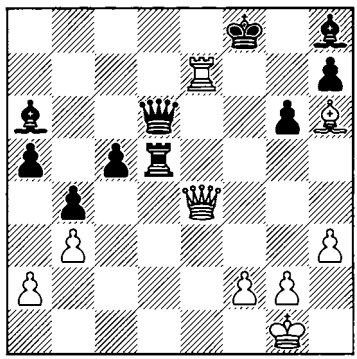


The main point comes after 2...♕xc3 when White wins with 3.♕g6† ♔f8 4.♕f6! and Black will be mated in no more than three moves.

How this exercise could have been solved: The method of elimination. The key is to realise that the black pieces are far away, and that White has time enough to create real threats. Then it is only remains to find out which move is best to deal with these.

99 Zvjaginsev – Khalifman
Moscow 2005

1...♖d1†?
It is natural to include the check, but it also opens up for ♕a8†, which is the move that decides the game.
1...♖xg5? loses directly to 2.♖e8† ♔g7 3.♕e7† ♔h6 4.♖xh8 ♖xg2† 5.♔h1! and Black is mated.
1...♕d6! was the only move: 2.♗h6† (2.♖e8† ♔f7 is harmless)



2...♗g7! The point. The bishop is returned as a sort of desperado sacrifice. (2...♔g8? 3.♖e8† ♔f7 4.♖f8† and White wins) 3.♗xg7† ♔g8 4.f4 Now Black can draw in several ways. 4...♗b5 (John Shaw) is probably simplest. (4...♗d3 5.♕e3 ♗b5 also draws, though with more accuracy needed. 6.♗h6 ♖d3! 7.♕e4 ♗c6 8.♖g7† ♔h8 9.♕e5 ♕xe5 10.fxe5 ♖d7! and the game should end as a draw.) 5.♗h6 ♗c6! White has nothing better than 6.♕e6† ♕xe6 7.♖xe6 ♗b5 8.♖e7 ♖d7 9.♖e5 ♖c7 and the endgame is harmless for Black.
2.♔h2 ♕d6† 3.f4 ♗f6
3...♗b5 4.♗h6† ♔g8 5.♕b7! and there is no defence against 6.♖g7, because 5...♗d7 loses to 6.♕a8† ♗c8 7.♕xc8† ♕d8 8.♕e6 mate.

3..♖d5 is a tempo down on the other lines. White wins after 4.♗h6† ♔g8 5.♖e8† ♔f7 6.♖f8†!.

4.♗h6† ♔g8

4...♗g7 5.♖xg7 is not the same as in the analysis to move one. Black is no longer threatening to back rank White.

5.♕a8† ♕d8 6.♖e8†

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: If you calculate both lines with ...♕d6, with and without the check, you will probably find the solution with standard elimination. But there is another method, the method of comparison, where you try to figure out what the difference between the two is: the check on a8.

100 Sasikiran – Sakaev
Copenhagen 2003

The game finished:

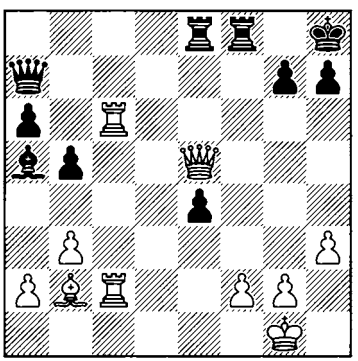
1...♗a5?

1...♗d8? 2.♗a3 ♖g8 3.♕xe5 is also hopeless.

1...♖f6 2.♕d7 ♖xc6 3.♕xc6 ♗b6 4.♕c8† ♗d8 5.♕f5 h6 6.♕xe4 and White has a very strong positional bind on Black. To escape in one piece will not be easy.

2.♕xe5 ♖ae8

2...♕d7 3.♕xe4 and White is a clear pawn up. Better than the game, but far from good...



3.♖xa6!

1–0

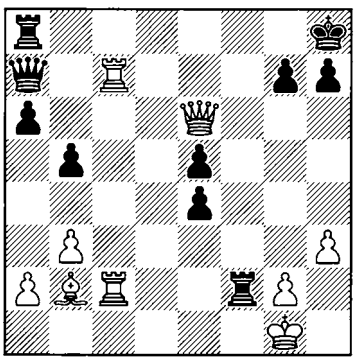
Black could have solved all the problems with a rook sacrifice:

1...♖xf2!

He probably feared that White would reciprocate.

2.♖xc7

White's only try for a win looks very dodgy: 2.♖xf2 ♖f8 3.♗d4?! (3.♖cc2 is better, but after 3...♗b6 Black is at least equal) 3...♕xd4 4.♖cc2 h6 I honestly cannot even see how White can defend this position. After 5.♖cd2 ♕b6 then 6.♕g4 with suffering is forced, as 6.♕e7 ♖xf2 7.♖xf2 ♗d6 8.♕e8† ♔h7 leaves White desperate. Particularly as 9.♔f1 ♕d4! wins on the spot.



2...♖f1†!!

Probably the move Sakaev overlooked. In the commentary room we had all seen it!

3.♔h2

3.♔xf1 ♖f8† and Black has a mating attack: 4.♔e1 ♕g1† 5.♔d2 ♖f2† 6.♔c3 ♕e1† 7.♖d2 ♕xd2 mate.

3...♕g1† 4.♔g3

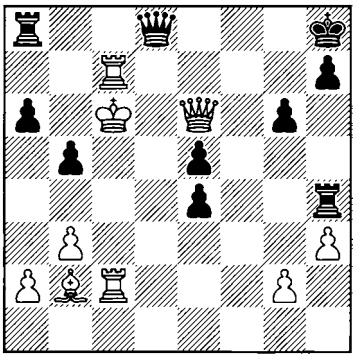
Now 4...♕e3† leads to an instant draw, which is the solution. However, we shall continue the annotations with the refutation of the other "perpetual".

4...♖f3†??

This surprisingly loses to one of the most amazing king walks I have ever witnessed.

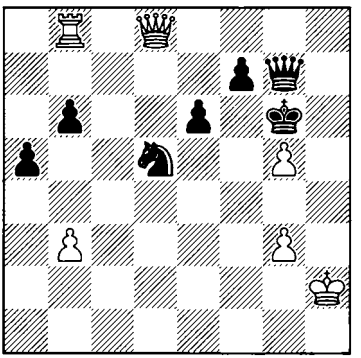
5.♔g4 ♖f4† 6.♔h5 g6† 7.♔h6! ♖h4† 8.♔g5 ♕e3† 9.♔f6 ♕f4† 10.♔e7 ♕f8† 11.♔d7 ♕d8† 12.♔c6

White wins.



How this exercise could have been solved: In a sad situation like this, it is natural to use the only active pieces you have and examine the sacrifice on f2. The only move that could make you reject this is 2.♖xc7. This is when you take a deeper look, which is probably what Sakaev forgot to do!?

101 Donner – Unzicker
West Germany 1971



This fragment contains many interesting tactics. Though it is not clear that Black is worse here, Unzicker found it useful to force a perpetual with an attractive king march and a knight sacrifice.

1...♔f5!? 2.♕g8

2.♕h8!? was another option, but Black is not worse.

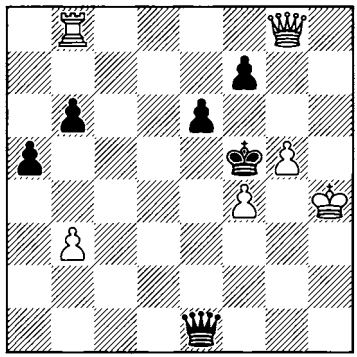
2...♕b2† 3.♔h3

3.♔h1 ♕c1† 4.♔h2 ♕d2† forces White to play 5.♔h3, as after 5.♔g1?? he loses in a few different ways, including 5...♔g4! with a mating attack!

3...♘f4†!

The main reason for this sacrifice is to create a cover for the king.

4.gxf4 ♕c3†! 5.♔h4 ♕e1†!



½–½

OK, so the players agreed a draw here, most likely on Black's suggestion. But White would still have had to show some great defending to prove that this is the accurate result.

6.♔h3 ♕e3† 7.♔g2 ♔g4!

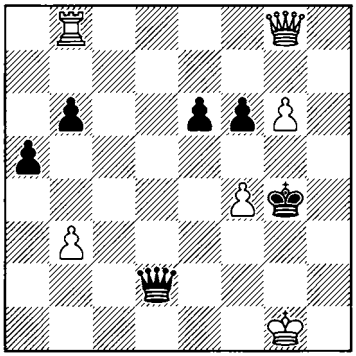
This is where our exercise starts. White's queen and rook are cut off from the action, and only one idea can save them from dishonouring the flag.

8.g6! ♕d2†!

This is the most dangerous, but White would also have to find some strong moves after 8...♕e2† 9.♔g1 f6!, continuing to cut off the white queen. (9...f5 10.♕d8! is a not too difficult draw) 10.♕xe6†!! The only defence. (10.♕c8? does not work. Black wins after 10...♕e1† 11.♔g2 ♕d2†! as from here the queen dominates c3. 12.♔f1 ♔g3 and it is all over.) 10...♕xe6 11.g7 Sensationally Black has nothing better than perpetual check. The main point is that White needs to find 11...♕e1† 12.♔g2 ♕g3† 13.♔h1! when he has a check on h8 in reserve for unpleasant threats.

9.♔g1 f6!!

The point is the same as in the 8...♕e2 line, but here the queen is not at e2, so it cannot be deflected as easily.



10.♕xe6† ♔g3 11.♕g4†!!

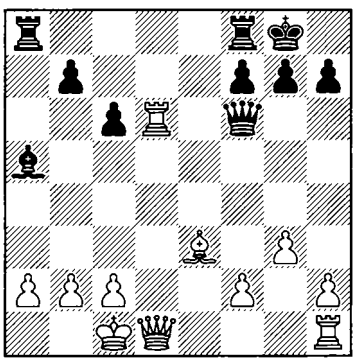
But the king can! White again draws with no margin to spare.

11...♔xg4 12.g7

Black has nothing better than perpetual check.

How this exercise could have been solved: Once you realise that there is no normal way to prevent mate, desperation should start to set in and desperate measures should occur to you. A good defender does not panic, but he does sense the desperation of the position. The problem is that the files are all closed, so it is logical that a queen sacrifice in order to open them (e and g) is the way to crack the puzzle.

102 Chernishev – Ostrivny
USSR 1968



Black was not happy with his compensation for the pawn and therefore tried to change things with an imaginative piece sacrifice.

1...♗d2†!?

Very tricky. White now went straight into the gutter. I prefer the modest 1...♕e7, when the position is less clear than could be thought.

2.♔b1??

2.♖xd2? ♖xa2 loses the queen for insufficient compensation.

2...♕xd6

Oops!

3.♕xd2 ♕xd2

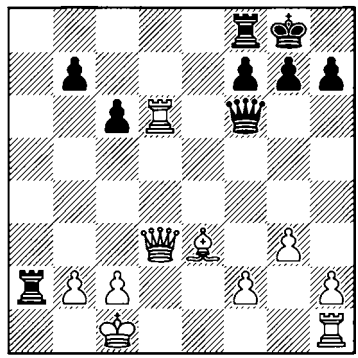
Black has the advantage in the endgame.

The solution is:

2.♕xd2!

OK, this move was not too hard, but the idea behind it is more difficult.

2...♖xa2 3.♕d3!



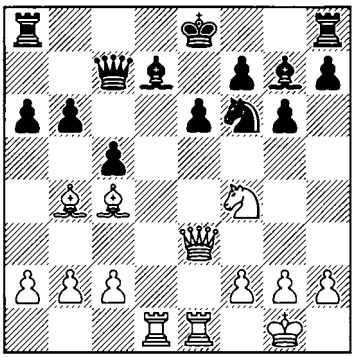
Black has very little for his piece. After 3...♕xb2† 4.♔d2 it is only a pawn, and White should quickly untangle himself and prove his advantage.

Yudovich only gives 3.♕b4?!, when a very funny draw occurs. 3...♖d8!! 4.♔b1! (4.♖xd8†? ♕xd8 5.♔b1 ♕a8 and Black wins) 4...♖da8 5.♔c1 ♖d8! with a repetition of moves. Very clever, but not the best.

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all, it is necessary to take the bishop with the

queen, as all other moves lose immediately. Then after the rook takes on a2, it is time to take a closer look. A careful look for candidates should eventually reveal 3.♕d3!, and from there it just takes a little calculation to see that Black has very little for his piece. Thematically we are talking about positioning yourself for the opponent's attack.

103 Borodiansky – Bobolovich
USSR 1972



White has some compensation for his pawn, and could probably have kept the equilibrium with normal play (1.♗c3). Instead he thought it was time to prove the strength of his lead in development with a cascade of sacrifices.

1.♖xd7?! ♕xd7!

On other recaptures the bishop sacrifice on e6 is very dangerous.

2.♘xe6?!

Technically speaking this is a mistake, but of course it is the idea behind the previous move.

2...fxe6 3.♗xe6 ♕d8?

3...♕c7? 4.♗c3 ♔f8 5.♕f3 ♕d8 6.♕b7 ♘d7 7.♖d1 and it is not hard to believe that the attack is absolutely conclusive.

3...♕d4? loses to simple materialism. 4.♕xd4 cxd4 5.♗d5† and White has a very large advantage in the endgame.

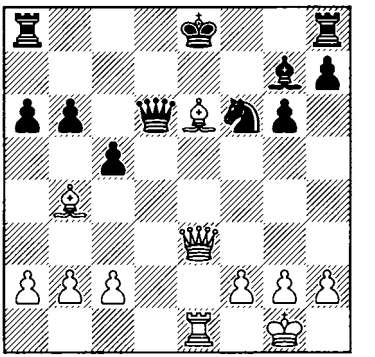
4.♗d5† ♔f8 5.♗xc5†

Even queen takes wins... Black resigned.

1-0

The magical move is:

3...♕d6!!



There are several reasons why this move is superior. First of all, the queen is very well placed on d6, no white piece can easily attack it. Also, the e7-square is left vacant for the rook, which will come to the defence quite shortly. Finally, and most importantly, the queen is not on a light square...

4.♕f3

I detest comments such as "What else?" in chess books, but here it is difficult to see any constructive move for White, and that is the point of the position! White has sacrificed his rook and placed all his pieces on the same open file as the black king, but there is just no way he will be able to control the most important squares, e7 and f7.

4.♗d5† ♔f8 5.♗xa8 cxb4 and it is hard to find any targets for White's forces. Black will play ...h5 and manoeuvre his king out of the danger zone. After this the extra piece will make a telling contribution.

4...♖a7

The only move.

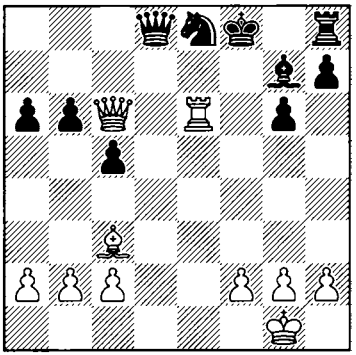
5.♗c3 ♖e7

Black is fully armoured. White's only way to continue the struggle is:

6.♕a8† ♕d8 7.♕f3

Black has at least a repetition, but can also try for more.

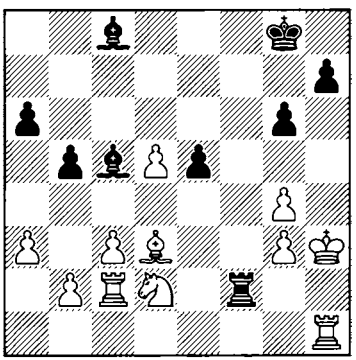
7...♖xe6 8.♕c6† ♔f8 9.♖xe6 ♘e8



Though White has some compensation for the piece, it does not seem to be enough when combined with only one pawn. With two pawns it should be, but not with one. Note that 10.♕xe8† ♕xe8 11.♖xe8† ♔xe8 12.♗xg7 ♖g8 13.♗e5 ♔d7 is rather hopeless for White.

How this exercise could have been solved: Every possible square for the queen needs to be investigated. Most of them can immediately be disregarded, but a few remain. Then the method of elimination, plus the will to bring the rook into the defence should eventually solve this exercise.

104 Mastilovich – Belic
Yugoslavia 1976



1...h5!

Black obviously has a very dangerous attack against the white king. It was now your job to find the only way to avoid losing immediately.

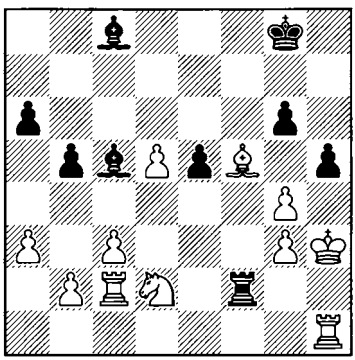
2.♘e4?

That's not it. The same goes for:

2.♗xg6 ♗xg4† 3.♔h4 ♗e7 mate.

2.♔h4 ♗xg4!! (2...♖xd2 3.♖xd2 ♗xg4 was given as winning by Gufeld, which is semi-correct. A player familiar with the idea of unforcing play will find 3.♗xg6! and Black's attack does not appear to be sufficient. Also after 2...hxg4 3.♗xg6 White should win.) 3.♘e4 (3.d6 ♗xd6 4.♘e4 ♗e7† 5.♘g5 ♔g7 and there is no defence against 6...♔h6. And after 3.♔g5 ♔g7! the mate is coming from all angles.) 3...♗e7† 4.♘g5 ♔g7!! 5.d6 ♗d8 6.♖xf2 ♔h6 Black wins. Mate can only be postponed for an additional move.

The only defence was 2.♗f5!!.



The point is that the white king is struggling to escape in all lines because of the black pawns surrounding it. Now at least the h5-pawn is eliminated. Play could continue 2...gxf5 3.gxh5 f4† 4.g4. Obviously Black has a lot of compensation for the exchange, but the outcome of this position is not easy to predict. Black still has the initiative and good chances, but in practice what matters is that White is not getting mated. From there on the rest of the game is more open.

In the game Black won rather elegantly.

2...hxg4†

2...♗xg4† 3.♔h4 ♗e7† 4.♘g5 ♔g7 also worked.

3.♔h4 ♗e7† 4.♘g5 ♔g7!! 5.♗e2

Neither 5.♖xf2 ♔h6 nor 5.d6 ♗d8 makes any difference.

5...♖f8 6.♗xg4 ♖h8†

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: Method of elimination. I am sure that the solution will not be among your original candidates, but once you have eliminated all of your ideas, it is probably time for a fresh look?

105 Kaminski – Stefansson
Cappelle la Grande 1993

Black is generally suffering in this position. Here are two examples of what could happen to him, should he fail to change the current situation:

1...♗f6? 2.♖ab3 exd3 3.♗a7 d2 4.♗xb8 ♖xb8 5.♖d1 and White wins rather trivially.

1...♗d4? 2.♗xd4 ♕xd4 3.♕c7† ♕d7 4.♖c3 exd3 5.♕f4 and Black does not have any defence.

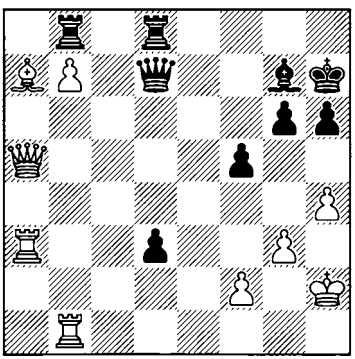
But instead of going down this road, Stefansson found a brilliant solution to his problems.

1...exd3!

The prelude to a number of sacrifices.

2.♗a7

White does not have any other way to bother Black.



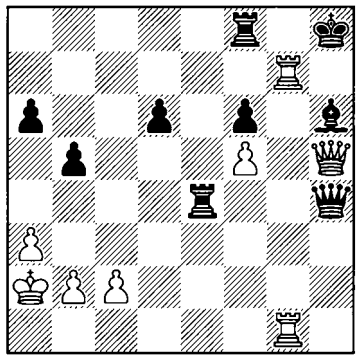
2...♖xb7!! 3.♖xb7 d2!! 4.♖xd7 ♖xd7

White cannot stop the black pawn from queening, therefore the players decided on a draw.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: In our bag of tricks we have the advanced passed pawn, as seen in several exercises already. It should be natural to consider taking on d3, and then take an open look at the position after 2.♗a7. From there the idea of getting a way to advance the d-pawn should hopefully occur.

106 C.M. Lopez – Villegas
Cuba 1996



Apparently White played **1.♖h7†??** here, and it caused resignation. I find that really hard to believe. Something is clearly wrong, but nothing is wrong with the level of the exercise after:

1.♕g6!?

Black draws in only one way, by securing a perpetual check.

1...♗g5!

This is not too hard to see, but what about the position after:

2.♖xg5 fxg5 3.♖a7

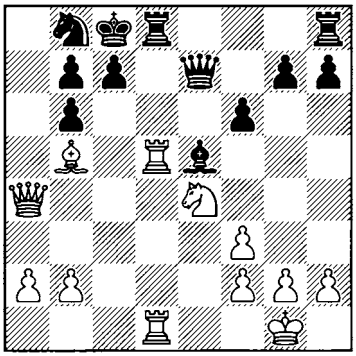
Or any other sensible rook move along the 7th. Apparently Black has no defence. This would be a standard position for one of these bad resignations we have seen, as Black draws by returning the rook and then giving perpetual check.

3...♖e7!! 4.♖xe7 ♕c4†

With a draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: The image of the perpetual check should be well known to all serious players, so the main trick in the exercise is not to lose hope too soon, when the rook moves along the 7th rank, and remain open to all moves, including bringing back the rook.

107 Shportko – Kashenko
Correspondence 1974



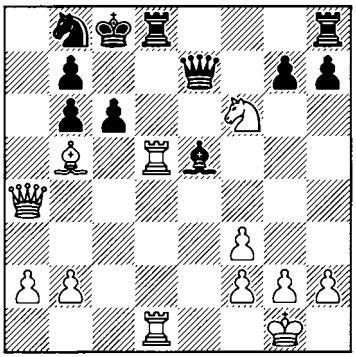
White found an impressive way to overcome the black defences, but then he also had enough time to do so. The move to uncork the champagne was:

1.♘c5!!

Black resigned. 1...♖xd5 2.♕g4† ♘d7 3.♖xd5 h5 4.♕a4 ♘b8 5.♗d7† and White wins.

1–0

1.♘xf6? with the same idea is another funny move. It looked to me as if White was winning because of 2.♕g4†, but Black has a miraculous defence in 1...c6!!.



Everything ends with perpetual after 2.♕g4† ♔c7 3.♖xd8 ♖xd8 4.♖xd8 ♕xd8 5.♕xg7† ♔c8 6.♕g4† ♔c7. This is one reason why 1.♘c5 is so strong.

White could also have gone completely wrong with:

1.♗d7†?

Our exercise begins here.

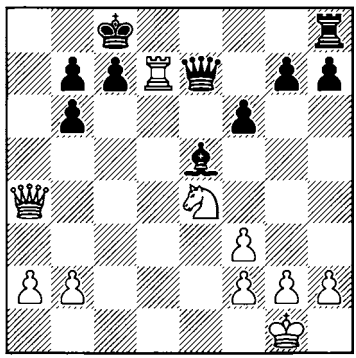
1...♖xd7

1...♘xd7? 2.♖xd7 and White wins.

2.♖xd7 ♘xd7

2...♕e8? 3.♕a8! and Black will have to part with the queen, which is no fun.

3.♖xd7



3...♕e8!!

Black should now be winning, as he will have time to follow up with ...b5, which illustrates that the white queen is overloaded.

3...b5!? is another funny move, but after the exchange of queens it is not clear that Black is really better.

Now the best option is maybe 4.♖d4, which is awful, as after:

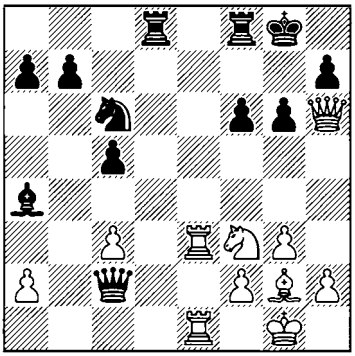
4.f4 ♗d6

Nothing has changed. Black will soon play ...b5, winning.

How this exercise could have been solved: Unforcing thinking at its best. The threat is stronger than the execution, Nimzowitsch said. This is indeed the case here. The rook cannot be captured immediately, but it can be pinned and then eaten at a later date. There is a "trapped in a web" feeling about the solution... Imagination is essential for the practical player, as we all know, but what a lot of people do not realise is that

it can be trained by solving exercises that target imagination. Chess is after all a practical game, played move by move.

108 Botvinnik – Smyslov
Moscow (18) 1958



After:
1.♗h3? ♘e5 2.♘xe5 fxe5 3.f4?
3.♗e6† ♔h8 4.f3 with even chances was the correct path.
3...♗c6
White was struggling, though he eventually managed to turn the ship around and win the game.

In his notes Botvinnik gave the following combination as winning:
1.♘d4!! ♘xd4 2.♗d5† ♖xd5 3.♖e7
But several sources give a nice defence here. Black interposes the surprising check:
3...♘e2†!! 4.♔f1
On g2 the king would invite unpleasant checks, so only this is sensible. And 4.♖1xe2 ♖d1† 5.♔g2 ♗c6† 6.f3 ♗xf3†! gives Black a winning attack, or just a few extra pawns.
4...♖f7 5.♖xf7 ♔xf7 6.♕xh7† ♔f8
Here it is White who needs to be grateful that he has a perpetual check.

However, the combination turns out to be correct, only the order of the moves needs to be reversed. After 2.♖e7! ♖f7 3.♗d5 Black is busted.

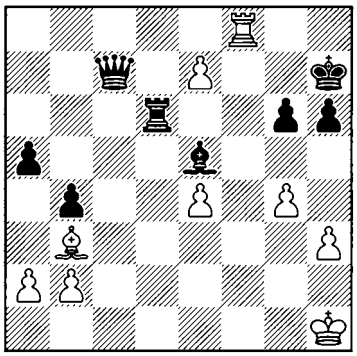
How this exercise could have been solved: A tired metaphor that I have worn as thin as Kramnik's claim to the World Championship is the "spanner in the works" image. With very few moves not leading directly to mate, it should not be too difficult to get the idea of the knight check. Then simple calculation should take you home.

109 Di Benedetto – Lafuente
Buenos Aires 2005

This game was played in the 2005 American Continental Championships, a tournament that was overshadowed by 15 year-old Argentinian Needleman being the only player eliminated in the rapid playoff for spaces in the World Cup. With an early defeat, Needleman was singled out as a weak target. Subsequently the six experienced grandmasters made many quick draws and all qualified. Later Needleman received a wild card to the World Cup...

Turning to our exercise, this is one of those positions where you cannot solve every problem with one move, and therefore you have to anticipate the opponent's threats in the best possible way. Here this is abandoning the 8th rank, to prevent checks there.
1...♖d7?
1...♖f6? 2.♖d1 and Black has no suitable replies. Now White delivered a nice combination, which I hope you anticipated.
2.♖f8†! ♗xf8 3.♕xe5†!
Mate on g8 will be Black's sad end.
1–0

The best move was:
1...♔h7!
This leads to a funny draw, which is often seen.
2.♕xe5
2.♖f8 ♗xf8 3.♕xe5 ♗xe7 and White only has perpetual, as Black is protecting the vital g8-square.
2...♗xe5 3.♖f8 ♕c7!
The most precise. Black is creating threats of his own.



4.♖f7†!

4.e8=♕? ♕c1† 5.♔g2 ♖d2† 6.♖f2 ♖xf2† 7.♔xf2 ♕f4† and Black is in the driving seat.

4...♗g7 5.♖xg7†

5.e8=♕ ♕c1† 6.♔g2 ♖d2† 7.♖f2 is a draw too.

5...♔h8! 6.♖g8† ♔h7

White needs to take the draw, as after 7.♖h8†? ♔xh8 8.e8=♕† ♔g7 9.♕g8† ♔f6 Black should be winning.

Black can also survive after another move:

1...♕e8!?

This is more normal, but it gives Black some problems to solve.

2.♕xe5

2.♖f8† transposes.

2...♗xe5 3.♖f8† ♔g7 4.♖xe8

4.♖g8†?! ♔f6! and Black has won a not too important, but still real, tempo.

4...♔f6

5.♗d5 ♗xb2 6.♖h8 ♔xe7 7.♖xh6

White is a pawn up in an opposite coloured bishop endgame. This should be a draw, but in practice Black will still have to suffer, and practical play is what we are training for.

How this exercise could have been solved: The idea of just improving your position is hopefully a part of your defence toolbox. Here most lines include a check on the 8th rank, so it should be natural to consider getting the king out of the way.

110 Exercise from analysis of a line in the Sicilian

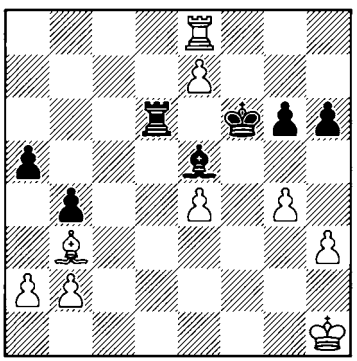
This position comes from a sideline of the Rauzer, specifically analysis to the game Wapner – Pavasovic, Bled 1996. Black has two ways to defend, and one is better than the other.

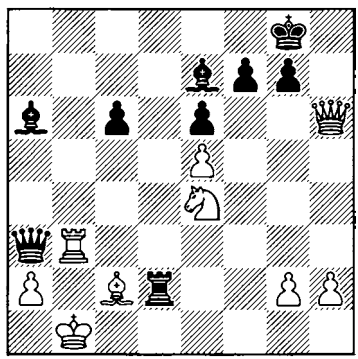
1...♖xb3†!

The surprise is that this move is played first. It is not too difficult to find the alternative defence with 1...♖d1†?!. This is a tempting move, but after 2.♗xd1 ♗d3† 3.♔a1 g5 4.♖xg5† (4.♘xg5 ♕c1 is the main idea behind sacrificing the rook) 4...♗xg5 5.♕xg5† ♔f8 6.♕h6† ♔e7 7.♘d6 ♕c5 8.♕f6† White will give perpetual check. After the main move Black is better.

2.♖xb3!

2.axb3? ♖d1†! 3.♗xd1 ♗d3† 4.♗c2 ♕xb3† 5.♔a1 ♕a3† 6.♔b1 ♗xc2† 7.♔xc2 ♕xg3 8.♘xg3 gxh6 and White is struggling for survival.





2...♖d1†!!

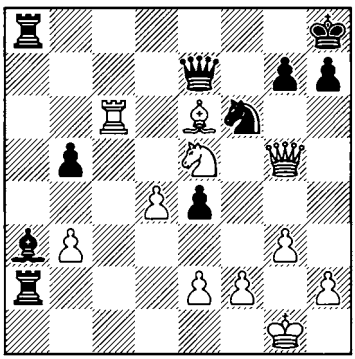
2...♕xb3† 3.axb3 gxh6 4.♘xd2 is drawish.

3.♗xd1 ♗d3† 4.♔a1 gxh6 5.♖xa3 ♗xa3

This is a better endgame for Black. This version is the best Black can get. The white king is badly placed on a1 and the black bishops dominate.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a difficult exercise because there are several ways to solve the problems. To detect the best of these was the big challenge. This is probably easiest through toying with the move order (which we should do as often as possible). Another trick is not to stop thinking once a possible solution has been found. Chess is hard work.

111 Kozul – Yusupov
Belgrade 1989



If instead of 1.♕h4!? White had played

1.♘f7†

as mentioned by Kozul in his notes, Black would have a wonderful way to escape from the repetition Kozul believed would have been the result.

1...♔g8 2.♘h6† ♔h8 3.♘f5?

This is the exercise. Instead 3.♘f7† looks rather drawish...

3...♕a7!

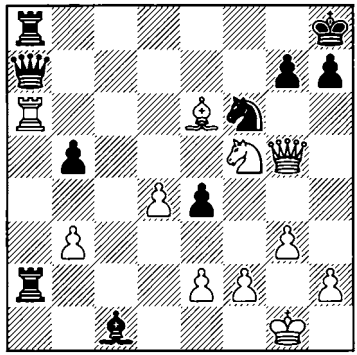
3...♕f8 4.♖c7 ♘e8 5.♖f7 ♕g8 6.♘h6! gxh6 7.♕xg8† ♔xg8 8.♖a7† ♔f8 (8...♔h8? 9.♖xa8!) 9.♖f7† leads only to a draw.

Kozul only gives 3...♕b7 4.♖b6 ♕c7 5.♖c6 with a draw. Clearly overlooking that after

4.♖a6

Black has a fabulous winning reply:

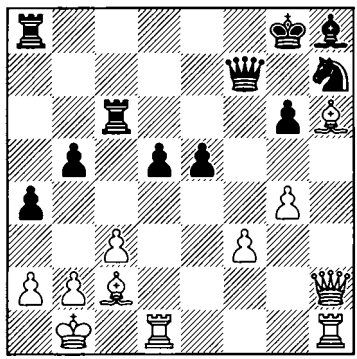
4...♗c1!!



This solves everything. Black wins.

How this exercise could have been solved: Candidates, candidates, and so on. The queen has only a few squares to go to. White's replies are more or less forced. Then we "just" have to look carefully at them one by one. Carried out with an open mind, this should be enough.

112 Kuzmin – Alterman
Herson 1989



White has a strong attack, and now turned it up a notch.

1.♖xd5!? ♕xd5 2.♗e4 ♕d7 3.♗e3!

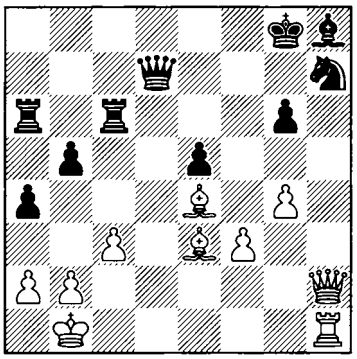
This was the idea. White is threatening down the h-file and from e4 to a8. Alterman failed to find a defence during the game and after the

game, together with his trainer, he still did not see the solution.

3...♖ac8?

3...♖c7 4.♗xa8 ♕d3† 5.♕c2 ♕xe3 does win a piece for Black, but after 6.♕xg6† ♔f8 7.♗d5! he is unable to keep his bits together. The only variation that can create a bit of uncertainty is the following: 7...♖g7 8.♕f5† ♔e7 9.♕e6† ♔d8 10.♕d6† ♔c8 11.♕c6† ♔d8 12.♕a8† ♔d7 13.♕xh8 and White wins. He could also win in different ways, but this is simple and "human".

The only move was to protect the c6-rook as well as protecting the king. This could only be done by 3...♖aa6!!.



After 4.♗d5† ♖e6 5.♗c5 it is anyone's guess if there is enough compensation for the rook.

My guess is yes, but not enough for an advantage as well. But from a practical point of view, this is less important. This is clearly the only available defence, and the title of this book does quite clearly point out that the practical side of defence is what is in question here...

4.♗d5†!

This is the killer.

4...♕xd5

Forced. 4...♔f8 5.♗xc6 ♖xc6 6.♕xh7 and the endgame is awful for Black.

5.♕xh7† ♔f8 6.♕xh8† ♔f7

6...♕g8 7.♕xe5 with a winning attack.

7.♕h7† ♔f8

7...♔e8 8.♕g7! forces 8...♕f7 9.♕xe5† ♕e7 10.♖h8† ♔d7 11.♕d5† ♖d6 12.♕xb5† and so on. White has a winning attack.

8.♗g5!

The most direct.

8...♕xf3

This loses by force, but no move really works here. 8...♕d6 9.♗e7† ♕xe7 10.♕h8† ♔f7 11.♖h7† ♔e6 12.♖xe7† ♔xe7 13.♕xe5† ♖e6 14.♕xb5 and White has a winning endgame.

Also 9.f4! with a continuing attack is very strong.

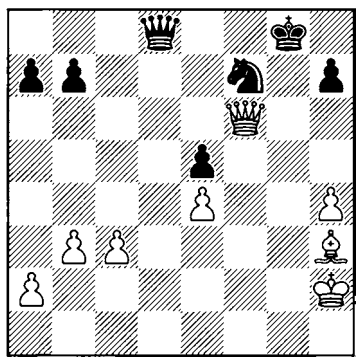
9.♕h8† ♔f7 10.♖h7† ♔e6 11.♖e7†

Black resigned. Mate is near.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: A defence is needed against both 3.♗xc6 and 3.♗d5†. To me this is quite clear. A search for this should, with any luck, be enough to solve this exercise.

113 E. Berg – Barkhagen
Gothenburg 2004



I want to start here, because I find that the theme of the endgame starts already at this point. White has a strong bishop that can dominate the black king and knight, but only towards the end of the game, some thirty moves later, does this actually happen. Instead in the game White played rather mechanically, thinking his extra pawn would convert itself.

1.♕xd8† ♘xd8 2.♔g3?

Berg points out that 2.♗f1!! should have been played. 2...♔g7 3.♗c4 followed by 4.♗d5 stalemates Black's knight. White is a pawn up

and Black cannot allow an exchange of knight versus bishop, so the game would be decided.
2...♔g7 3.♗d7 ♘f7 4.♗e6 ♘d6 5.♗d5 b6 6.a4 ♔f6 7.♔g4 h6 8.♗c6 ♔g6 9.♗d7 ♔f6 10.♔f3 ♔g6 11.♗g4 ♘e8 12.♔e3 ♔f6 13.♔d3 ♔e7 14.♗h5 ♘c7 15.♔c4 ♔d6 16.b4 ♔c6 17.♗f7 ♔d6 18.♔d3 ♔e7 19.♗g6 ♔f6 20.♗f5 ♔e7 21.♔e3 ♔f6 22.♔f3 ♔e7 23.♔g4 ♔f6 24.♗d7 ♔g6 25.♗f5† ♔f6 26.♔h5 ♔g7 27.♗d7 ♔h7 28.b5 ♔g7 29.c4 ♔h7 30.♗f5† ♔g7 31.♗d7 ♔h7 32.c5 bxc5 33.a5 ♔g7?

33...c4 was better – Berg.

34.b6 axb6 35.axb6 ♘a6 36.♗a4?

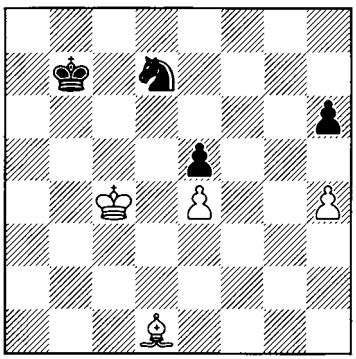
36.♗b5! was winning – Berg.

36...c4 37.b7 c3 38.♗d1 ♘b8 39.♔g4 ♔f6 40.♔f3 ♔e7 41.♔e3 ♔d6 42.♔d3 ♔c7 43.♔xc3 ♔xb7 44.♔c4

Finally, we have arrived at our exercise. Here Black played an awful blunder.

44...♔c6??

A seemingly natural move. Black prevents the white king from reaching d5, but his knight on b8 will now be out of squares leading to the loss of the game. Instead 44...♘d7!



was necessary, and after 45.♔d5 ♔c7 46.♗e2! (46.♔e6 ♘c5† 47.♔xe5 ♔d7! [47...♘xe4?? loses to 48.♔xe4 ♔d6 49.♔f5 ♔e7 50.♔g6 ♔f8 51.♗b3 and Black does not make it to the corner] 48.♔f5 ♘xe4 and Black draws comfortably.) 46...♔d8 47.♗b5 ♘f6† 48.♔xe5 ♘xe4! 49.♔xe4 ♔e7 50.♔f5 ♔f7 the black king reaches the corner in time, with a theoretical drawn position.

45.♗a4†! ♔d6 46.♗b5! h5

46...♘c6 47.♗xc6 ♔xc6 48.h5! ♔d6 49.♔b5 ♔e6 50.♔c6 ♔f6 51.♔d6 ♔g5 52.♔xe5 ♔xh5 53.♔f5! and White wins.

The best chance for Black was 46...♔c7 47.♔c5 ♔b7 48.♔d6 ♔b6 49.♗e8 ♘a6 50.♔xe5, but this is lost as well. Black is too far away to have a realistic chance of getting his king to the h8-corner.

47.♔b4!

Zugzwang in its most natural form. Black cannot protect both his knight and the pawns.

47...♔c7

47...♔e7 48.♔c5 ♔e6 49.♔b6 ♔d6 50.♗a4 and White wins.

48.♔c5 ♔b7 49.♔d6 ♔b6 50.♗e8 ♘a6 51.♗xh5 ♘c5 52.♗g6 ♘d3 53.h5 ♘f4

Black resigned. White wins with any legal move that does not lose the h-pawn.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: With so few pawns remaining, the idea of sacrificing the knight for a pawn or two should occur to us. From there we are close to seeing that the white bishop is the wrong colour, and that the main goal should be to get the king to h8. Then you are halfway there – working out how is hard work, but when you know what you are doing, it should become a good deal easier.

A comment on the exercise. In the game Barkhagen was probably running short of time, so though the solution is quite clear in some ways, we should never fall into the trap of talking down the players. However, when we talk about analysts who did not even try, I think we can talk more freely...

114 Morozevich – Kir. Georgiev
Calvia (ol) 2004

Black looks absolutely lost, but he miraculously manages to win back a pawn and hold the draw.

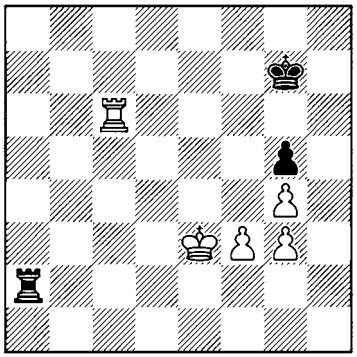
1...♖a4!!

Forcing White to create the pawn structure desired by Black.

2.♖c6† ♔g7 3.f3 ♖a3 4.♔f2

4.♔g2 ♖a2† 5.♔h3 ♖a3 and White has made no progress.

4...♖a2† 5.♔f1 ♖a1† 6.♔e2 ♖a2† 7.♔e3



Eventually this position is forced to arise. Black wins a pawn and reaches a drawn endgame.

7...♖g2 8.♖c5 ♔g6 9.♖c6† ♔g7 10.♔e4 ♖xg3 11.♖d6 ♖h3 12.♖d3

With the threat of 13.♔f5.

12...♔f6!

The only defence. 12...♔g6? is bad because of 13.f4! with the point 13...♖xd3 14.f5† and White is winning.

13.♖c3 ♖h8!

The rook is activated and again White cannot get his king to f5 without making concessions.

14.♖c6† ♔g7 15.♔f5 ♖f8† 16.♔xg5 ♖xf3 17.♖c7† ♔g8 18.♔g6 ♖f8 19.g5 ♖a8 20.♔h6 ♖a6† 21.g6 ♖a8 22.♖g7† ♔h8 23.♖h7†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all we should come to terms with the fact that we cannot survive without winning back a pawn. From that realisation to the solution there should not be too far. Harassing the king is about the only idea left.

115 Szabo – Petrosian
Saltsjöbaden 1952 (analysis)

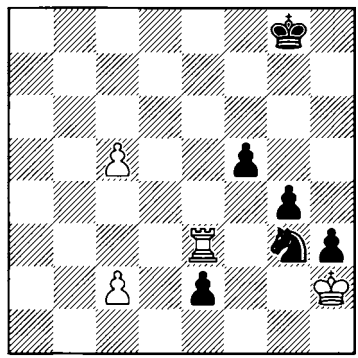
Black cannot stop the c-pawn by normal means, so has to find a precise sequence to make a draw.

1...f4 2.♖xe2 f3 3.♖e5 f2 4.♖f5 ♔g7 5.c6 and wins.

1...♘f4 2.c6 ♘d5 3.♖xe2 ♔f7 4.♖e5 ♘c7 5.♖xf5† ♔e7 6.♖g5 and White will win the endgame without too much trouble.

The correct solution is:

1...♘g3!!



Now it is White's turn to have to find the only move.

2.♖xe2!!

Hopefully you had seen that White was going to play this? All other moves just win for Black. 2.♔g1 h2†!, 2.♖e5 ♘e4, 2.♔xg3 f4†! 3.♔xf4 h2 and of course 2.c6 ♘f1†.

2...♘xe2

It is worth considering odd options, but here they do not work. 2...♘f1†? 3.♔g1! h2† 4.♖xh2 ♘xh2 5.c6 ♘f3† 6.♔h1! and White wins.

3.c6 g3†!

Necessary, but also sufficient.

4.♔xh3 ♘f4† 5.♔xg3 ♘g6

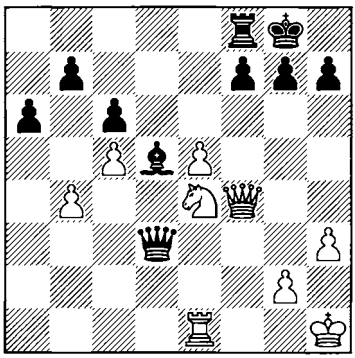
Or 5...♘e6 6.c7! with a draw.

6.c7 ♘e7 7.♔f4

With a draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: A sense of urgency is essential. The white c-pawn is advancing quickly and uncontested. Advancing the black pawns leads nowhere, so more creative ideas are needed. Once the knight move has been found, it should not be too hard to find the rook sacrifice as well. From there on the calculations are quite simple.

116 Kreiman – Kaidanov
USA 1994



White came up with a nice punch:
1.♘f6†!

Such positions occur reasonably often in chess practice. Many of the properties of this combination have been seen before. Still, it is always the final twist that makes the difference between yes and no, to stay or to go, and to accept or decline.

1...♔h8?!

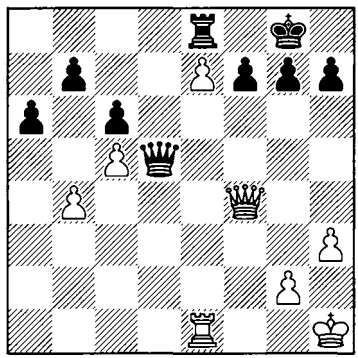
This is weak. White will now be able to create real trouble for Black with the e-pawn. Kaidanov was apparently under the impression that this was the safer option, a judgement invalidated by the game.

1...gxf6 is met by 2.♖e3. Now Black should find the precise counter sacrifice 2...♗xg2†! (2...♕g6 3.♖g3 is better for White, but maybe defendable. The problem is that White might be able to create a passed pawn on the h-file and thereby cause Black real concerns.) 3.♔xg2 (otherwise 3...♕f1 and Black is even better) 3...♕d2† White will now either have to accept the perpetual check or play 4.♔g3!?. But Black then has 4...h6! 5.♔h4 ♖d8 6.♖g3† ♔f8 7.♕xf6 ♖d4† 8.♔h5 ♕f4, and the game stays even.

2.♘xd5 ♕xd5 3.e6! ♔g8?

Natural – and losing. It was necessary to play 3...h6 4.♖e5 ♕b3 5.♔h2 when White has the advantage, but Black should be able to hold the position.

4.e7 ♖e8



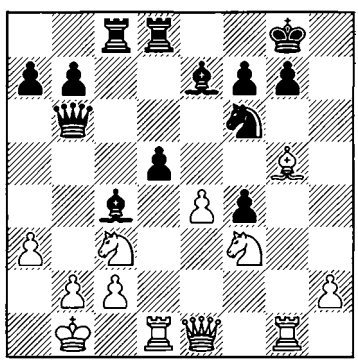
5.♕c7?

Young Kreiman misses his chance for immortality. White could have won with 5.♕b8!! ♕d7 6.♕d6 ♕c8 7.♖d1! f6 8.♕d8 ♔f7 9.♕xc8 ♖xc8 10.♖d8.

Now the game ended in a draw.
5...f6 6.♕xb7 ♔f7 7.♕xa6 ♖xe7 8.♖xe7† ♔xe7 9.♕b7† ♕d7 10.♕b8 h6 11.♕g8 g5 12.♕h7† ♔e6 13.♕e4† ♔f7 14.♕h7† ♔e6
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: This exercise is difficult, because it is tempting to do the same as Kaidanov: to see that there is no direct win after the king goes to the corner. But then the e-pawn is dangerous, and we should avoid drifting. Therefore we should take a deeper look, and see that accepting the sacrifice leads to a draw.

117 Matulovic – Indjic
Yugoslavia 1995

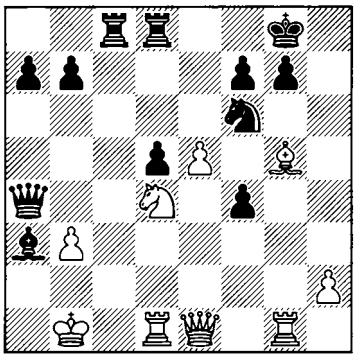


White regretted having played the rather feeble 1.♘xd5? due to time trouble. But his winning line:

1.e5 ♗xa3 2.♘a4 ♕b5 3.♘d4 ♕xa4 4.b3?

is fairly dubious. (But a little improvement, 4.♗xf6! ♗b4 5.b3!, is winning. Maybe that is what Matulovic intended to write?) Here we have our exercise.

4...♗xb3! 5.cxb3



5...♖c1†!! 6.♖xc1

Forced. 6.♔a2 ♕a6 7.♕f1 ♕a5 8.♖xc1 ♗c5† 9.♔b1 ♗xd4 and Black has a winning attack.

6...♕xd4

White has no choice.

7.♕c3

7.♖c2 ♗b4 8.♕f1 ♕xe5 and Black has three pawns for the exchange and a much superior king.

7...♕xc3 8.♖xc3 ♘e4

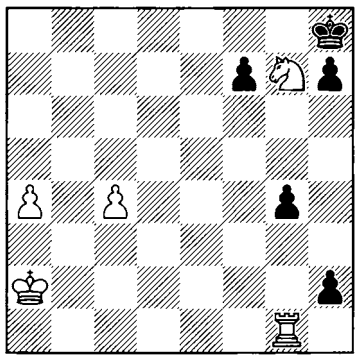
Black is at least not worse.

How this exercise could have been solved: Compared to the previous exercises this one should not be too hard. The two piece sacrifices are quite logical. If you had problems solving this exercise it was probably because you did not focus, or maybe simply overlooked something stupid; for example, you did not focus...

118 Exercise based on a study by Przepiorka

Przepiorka made three versions of this study. This one is probably my favourite:

Przepiorka
Szachista Polski 1920



Most of the moves are forced, but they are very beautiful nonetheless.

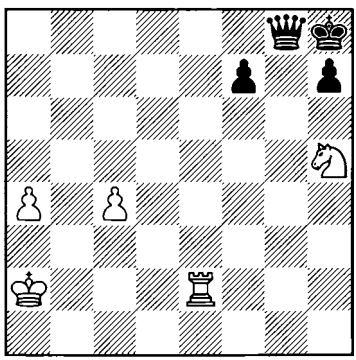
1.♖h1 g3 2.♘h5!

2.♘f5 g2 3.♖xh2 g1=♕ 4.♖d2 h5 and Black wins.

2...g2 3.♖xh2 g1=♕ 4.♖e2!

The e8-square is the only square the black queen cannot defend. Now White is threatening (for example after 4...h6) to play 5.♖e8† ♔h7 6.♘f6† and 7.♖g8†, winning the queen.

4...♕g8



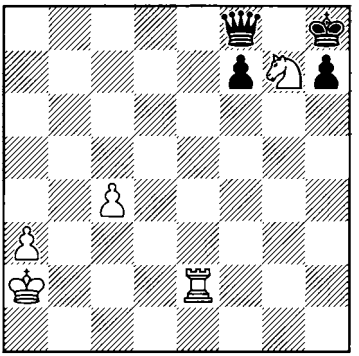
5.♘g7!!

The only way to win. After 5.♘f6 ♕g1 White can still ensure himself of the full point by repeating with 6.♘h5, but he will not win after 6.♖e8† ♔g7 7.♖g8† ♔h6!! when 8.♖xg1 is stalemate.

5...♕xg7

5...h5 6.♖e8 ♕xe8 7.♘xe8 h4 8.♘f6 ♔g7 9.a5 and White will be first.
6.♖e8† ♕g8 7.♖xg8† ♔xg8 8.a5
White wins.

In our version the pawn is on a3, so the pawn race is slightly different. When looking at the position we will quickly recognise that Black cannot take the white knight, as a rook check and exchange on g8, followed by a quick race to a8 decides the game in White's favour.
1...♕f8!!



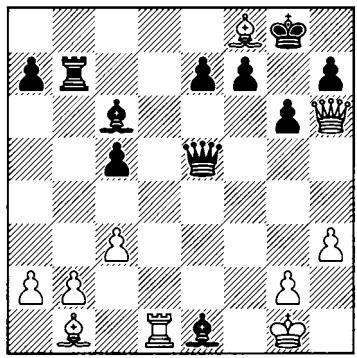
A fantastic move. White can still win the queen, but now the black king will be on f8 instead of g8, which is inside the square of the a-pawn. The white king will remain very distant.

Dvoretsky had a clever point in using this variation of the study, which occurs after 1...h5?!. White draws with 2.♖e8 ♔xg7 3.♖xg8† ♔xg8 4.a4 h4 5.c5!. This pawn cannot queen, but the threat of queening it with check forces the black king closer, but not close enough to catch the a-pawn. 6...♔f8 7.a5 h3 8.c6 The c-pawn closes the diagonal from a8 to h1 quite conveniently. 8...♔e7 9.a6 h2 10.a7 h1=♕ 11.a8=♕ with a draw. Quite a nice variation, but the solution is even better.
2.♘f5
The best try. After 2.♖e8 ♔xg7 3.♖xf8 ♔xf8 the pawn ending is won.
2...h5
I am a little afraid of calling this a technically winning endgame, but that is what I think it is...

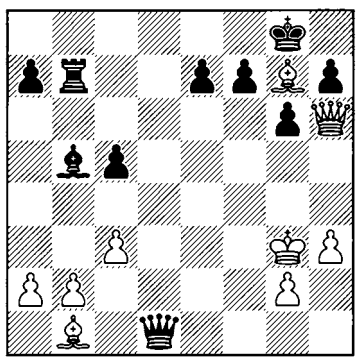
How this exercise could have been solved: To find moves like 1...♕f8!! you must have an open mind. Perhaps this idea can come to you once you realise the main problem is that the king cannot keep up with the a-pawn. But we are moving into the difficult exercises, where only a methodical examination of the positions will succeed consistently, and a methodical approach to this position is probably the surest way to success.

119 Bartrina – Ghitescu
Olot 1974

Our position starts with a nice tactic:



1.♗g7!!
1.♖d8? would lose to 1...♗f2†! 2.♔xf2 ♖xb2† with a killing attack.
1...♗f2† 2.♔f1 ♗b5†?
Facing all the complications, Black did not find the right path. Now White wins in glorious style.
3.♔xf2 ♕e2† 4.♔g3 ♕xd1



5.♗h8!!

This was the trick you had to foresee.

5...♕d6† 6.♔f2

Black resigned.

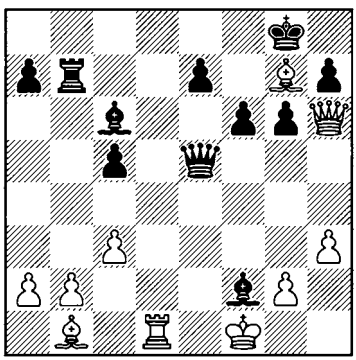
1–0

White also wins after 2...♗xg2† 3.♔xf2! ♖xb2† 4.♔g1! and just about everything hangs, and the black king's safety is a seriously neglected issue.

It should be said about this line that 4.♖d2? was given as winning by Neikirkh in his otherwise excellent analysis. But it is not obvious that the endgame is bad for Black. Moreover, he has a very clever resource in: 4...♕h2!! 5.♗e5 (5.♖xb2 ♗b7† 6.♔e1 ♕xb2 7.♗h8 and Black gives perpetual check) 5...♕xe5 6.♖xb2 ♕h2 7.♕d2! Somehow the only move. Don't ask. Now 7...♗c6† 8.♔e3 ♕e5† 9.♔f2 ♕h2† 10.♔e1 ♕h1† is only a draw.

The solution is:

2...f6!!



3.♗h8

The test.

3.♗xg6 leads to a draw in two different ways:

Simplest is 3...hxg6 4.♕h8† ♔f7 5.♕f8† ♔e6 6.♕c8† ♔f7 7.♕f8†. White has nothing better.

But also possible is 3...♗xg2† 4.♔xf2 hxg6! (4...♖xb2†? 5.♔g1 hxg6 is worse. After 6.♗xf6! White wins the queen and has real chances of winning after 6...♕xf6 7.♖d8† ♔f7 8.♖f8† ♔e6 9.♖xf6† ♔xf6 10.h4!. The c-pawn falls.) 5.♕h8† ♔f7 6.♕f8† ♔e6 7.♕c8† ♔f7 8.♕f8† and so on.

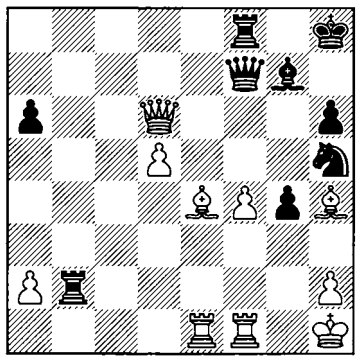
3...♗b5† 4.♔xf2 ♕e2† 5.♔g3 ♕e5†!

This is the important difference compared to the game. Black now draws with a perpetual check.

6.♔f2 ♕e2†

How this exercise could have been solved: First the main line, as occurred in the game, needs to be investigated. Hopefully you will see the winning move at the end of the line, and this will lead you to search for alternatives. The idea of a perpetual should not be too far off, and you will probably see more than one line where this fails because the e5-square is not available, which leads you to 2...f6!!.

120 Thorsteins – Granda Zuniga
Rio de Janeiro 1982



Black is in a bad state: a pawn down with the opponent enjoying the two bishops and two passers. To get out of this mess Black attempted a combination.

1...g3!? 2.hxg3?

2.♗g2! was stronger, when White keeps the advantage.

2...♘xg3†! 3.♗xg3 ♕h5† 4.♔g1 ♖g8!?

4...♗d4† 5.♗f2 ♖g8† would transpose to the solution as given below. But the text gives White the chance to fail!

5.♖f2?

5.♕c5? also does not work. After 5...♖d2! the bishop check will be decisive.

5...♗d4

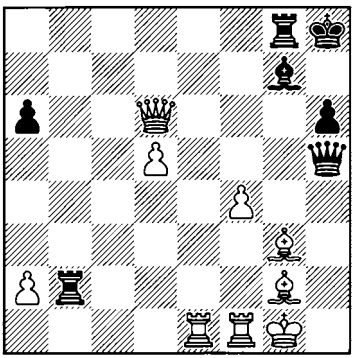
Now White's position collapses like a house of cards.

6.♔f1 ♕h3† 7.♗g2 ♖xf2† 8.♗xf2 ♕xg2† 9.♔e2 ♕xf2† 10.♔d3 ♖g3†

0–1

White should have defended with:

5.♗g2!



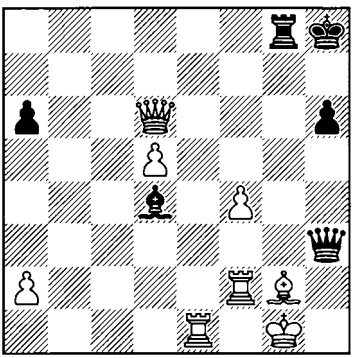
This forces Black to look for a draw, but let's look at what would happen if Black insists.

5...♗d4† 6.♗f2 ♖xf2

6...♖xg2† is an instant perpetual.

7.♖xf2 ♕h3?!

7...♖xg2† 8.♔xg2 ♕g4† 9.♔f1 ♕h3† 10.♔e2 ♕e3† 11.♔d1 ♕d3† with a draw is correct, but when we are talking about defence, we need to brace ourselves for an ambitious attacker! Here White needs to find a nice move to achieve a slight advantage, though a simple draw also exists.



8.♖e3!!

Using the fact that the black queen and bishop both have more than one occupation. 8.♕e5† ♗xe5 9.fxe5 ♕c3! allows Black to draw after 10.♖ee2 ♖g5 11.e6 ♕a1† 12.♔h2 ♖h5† 13.♗h3 ♕c3, and White must force a perpetual.

8...♖xg2†

The only move. After 8...♗xe3? White plays 9.♕f6† ♔h7 10.♕f7† ♔h8 11.♕xg8†!.

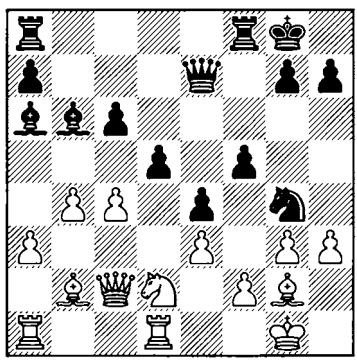
9.♖xg2 ♗xe3† 10.♔f1 ♕f3† 11.♔e1 ♕xg2 12.♕xh6† ♔g8 13.♕e6† ♔f8 14.♕xe3

Black would not be thrilled at having to defend this ending, but losing it would be pretty bad.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is one of those exercises where you cannot prevent the opponent's attack, but you can prepare a defence against it, and in this way play two defensive moves against one attacking move.

121 Rajkovic – Abramovic
Bela Crkva 1987

Black sensed that going backwards was against the spirit of the position, and swung the axe.



1...♘xf2!

With a decisive advantage according to Abramovic. However, this is not the case, even though the move is the best in the position.

2.♔xf2 f4?!

The patient, yet aggressive, 2...♕g5! was stronger. Now White went astray.

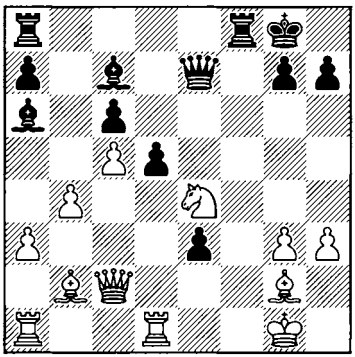
3.c5?

This makes little sense at first glance, but White had planned to escape with a counter sacrifice. Only, Black had seen further.

3...fxe3† 4.♔g1

4.♔xe3 ♕g5† 5.♔d4 ♕f6† 6.♔e3 ♕f2 mate.

4...♗c7 5.♘xe4



5...e2! 6.♖e1 dxe4 7.♖xe2

White is lost. 7.♕xe4 ♕xe4 8.♗xe4 ♗xg3 and 7.♗xe4 ♕g5 both decide.

7...♗xe2 8.♕xe2 ♕g5 9.♕g4

9.♗xe4 ♖ae8 10.♕d3 ♗xg3 and Black has a winning attack.

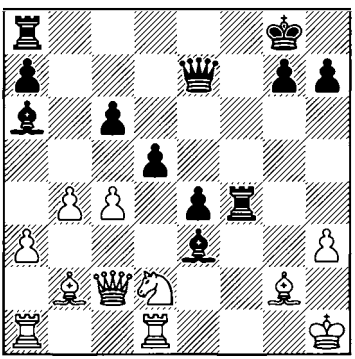
9...♕xg4 10.hxg4 e3 11.♗d4 e2 12.♗xc6 ♖ad8 0–1

White's only defence was a connection of logical moves. Basically White should care about king safety and little else.

3.gxf4! ♖xf4† 4.♔g1!

4.♔e2? ♕g5! 5.♖g1 ♖f2† and Black wins.

4...♗xe3† 5.♔h1



It might look as if Black's attack is exhausted, but this is far from the case (which is probably what scared White). Black has various dangerous ways to continue. For us, as practical players, this is less relevant. White had no sound alternative to this retreat, so we should play it. My analysis suggests that the following is the critical line:

5...♖f2

The most obvious thing for Black to do is to attack without any procrastination.

6.cxd5

This might look reckless, but White is trying to bring his queen into the defence through a triangular movement.

6...♖xg2!

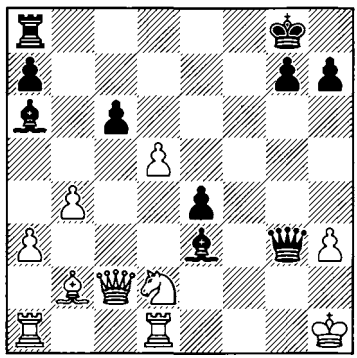
Eliminating the main defender.

7.♔xg2

To a draw leads 7.d6 ♕g5 8.♕xc6 ♖b8 9.♘xe4 ♗b7 10.♕xb7 ♖h2† 11.♔xh2 ♕f4† 12.♘g3 ♖xb7 13.d7 ♖xd7 14.♖xd7 ♕f2† 15.♔h1, and Black needs to take the perpetual check.

7...♕g5† 8.♔h1 ♕g3!

8...♕h5 9.♘f1 ♗e2 10.♘h2! does not really work: 10...♖f8? 11.dxc6!



9.♗e5!?

A winning attempt. 9.♘xe4 ♕xh3† 10.♕h2 ♕f3† 11.♕g2 ♕h5† gives a perpetual check.

9...♕xe5 10.♕xc6 ♕f5

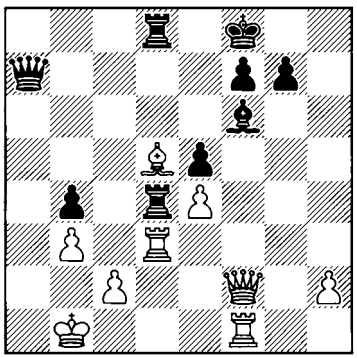
Other moves are also reasonable. It is getting a bit speculative around here.

11.♕e6† ♕xe6 12.dxe6 ♖e8 13.♘f1 ♗b6 14.♖d6 ♗c8 15.♘d2 e3 16.♘c4 ♗c7 17.♖e1

White has some advantage, but not too much.

How this exercise could have been solved: Hopefully, when you defend, king safety is high on your list. Here there should be little doubt that you have to take on f4; the question is where should the king go next? The corner holds a lot of attraction, as the black pieces are currently not aiming at it. But for some reason those who have attempted to solve this exercise have consistently been running for the centre. There the black bishops will form a welcoming committee.

122 Goldberg – Kovalev
Berlin 1987



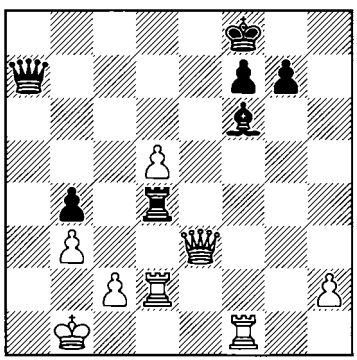
1...♖8xd5?

A very tempting combination, which however has a major flaw. 1...♖d6!? with a strong attack was better.

2.exd5 e4 3.♖d2?

This looks rather innocent, but Black comes up with a great set of double threats.

3...e3! 4.♕xe3



4...♖f4!!

What can you say? This is surely an image to please the eye.

0–1

3.♕f5 does not work for a series of reasons. Clearest is probably 3...♖c4! 4.c3 (4.♔c1 exd3 5.bxc4 ♕a1† 6.♔d2 ♕c3† 7.♔e3 dxc2† and the black pawns decide) 4...bxc3! 5.bxc4 ♕b6† with mate to follow.

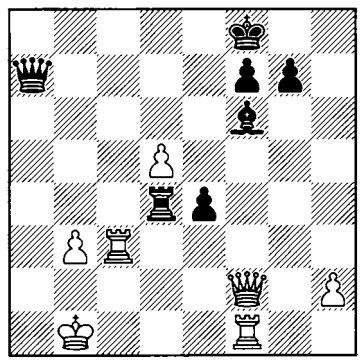
The only idea that works involves closing the long diagonal.

3.c3!! bxc3

3...exd3 4.cxd4 ♗xd4 5.♕a2 would bring about an endgame. After 5...♕xa2† 6.♔xa2 ♔e7 7.♖d1 ♔d6 8.♖xd3 ♔xd5 9.♖f3 Black is probably drawing without too many difficulties, but White should still give it a squeeze to test him.

4.♖xd4!

Forced! 4.♖xc3? loses amazingly to two kamikaze rook checks:



4...♖d1†!! 5.♔c2 ♖c1†!! Moments like this enchant a man and give him passion for chess for the rest of his life. 6.♔xc1 ♕a1† 7.♔d2 ♕xc3† 8.♔d1 ♕a1† 9.♔d2 ♕b2† 10.♔d1 ♕b1† 11.♔d2 ♕d3† 12.♔c1 e3 Black wins.

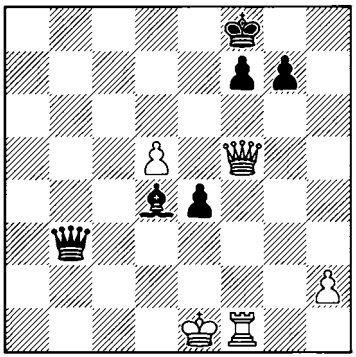
4...♗xd4

4...c2† 5.♕xc2 ♕xd4 6.♕c8† ♔e7 7.♕c7† ♔e8 8.♕c6† ♔e7 9.d6† ♔e6 10.♕c4† is again an endgame Black is better off without. This time it probably holds real perils for him.

5.♕f5

5.♕c2?! is also OK according to Fritz, but it looks rather suspicious to me. And more importantly, we do not need it, so away with it!
5...c2†

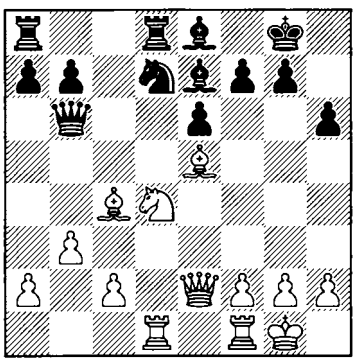
Black needs to create something concrete eventually.
6.♔xc2 ♕a2† 7.♔d1 ♕xb3† 8.♔e1!



The only square, but good enough for a draw. Black only has perpetual check as far as I can see.

How this exercise could have been solved: In this exercise you need to evade an avalanche of clever tactics. Our two goals are to see them in advance, and to somehow limit Black's firepower. Hard work and accurate calculation are the doctor's sour apples.

123 Abramovic – Marinkovic
Kladovo 1996



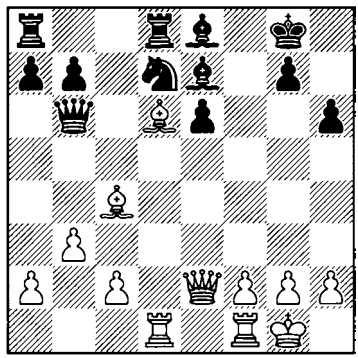
White might be a tad better in this typical French Tarrasch structure, but in the game, and also in his annotations, Abramovic attempted to prove that his position was actually winning. Unfortunately for him Black has a wonderful defence.
1.♘xe6?

A very tempting combination, especially if you have anticipated what actually happens in the game.
1...♘xe5?

Quite clever really. Black is trying to trap the white knight on d8, but this does not quite work.

After the natural 1...fxe6 bad is 2.♗c7?! ♕xc7 3.♕xe6† ♔h7 when White is either a piece down for only two pawns, or two pieces down for a few checks after 4.♕g8† ♔g6 5.♗d3† ♔f6 6.♖de1 ♘f8. I do not think White can create serious threats to the black king.

White had intended 2.♗d6!. Black now has a long list of moves that can be killed off one by one. Only one stands the test.



2...♗f6? does not work. 3.♕xe6† ♔h7 4.♕g8† ♔g6 5.♗d3† ♔g5 6.♕e6 and White wins. The same goes for 2...♗h4 and 2...♗g5, which are met by 3.♕xe6† ♔h7 4.♕g8† ♔g6 5.♖d5! and Black has no defence.

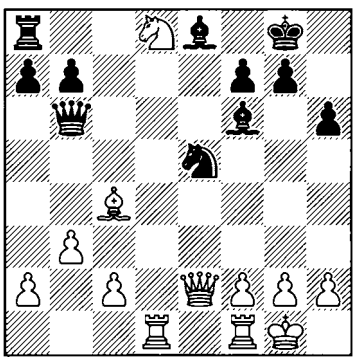
The right move is 2...♗xd6!, when White is prompted to play 3.♕xe6†, which is met with 3...♗f7!!: the core of the solution. (3...♔h7? 4.♖xd6) 4.♕xf7† ♔h8 White has two pawns for his piece, but Black can easily protect the holes

around his king, so the win should be a sure thing, even though such a thing does not exist in chess.

2.♘xd8

Also good enough for a full point is 2.♖xd8!? ♗xd8 3.♘xd8 ♕c7!? though White has to find a few good moves. 4.f4! (4.♖e1?! ♖xd8 5.♕xe5 ♕xe5 6.♖xe5 ♖d1† 7.♗f1 ♔f8 8.f3 f6 9.♖e3 ♗g6 is fairly good for White; he does have an extra pawn, but Black certainly has some counterplay.) 4...♘xc4! It might be objectively better just to be a pawn down, but that is not a very sexy message. So Black needs to go for the complications. 5.♕xe8† ♔h7 6.♕e4† ♔g8 7.♘xf7 ♘d2 8.♘xh6† ♔h8 9.♕d5 ♘xf1 10.♘f7† ♔h7 11.♘g5† ♔h8 12.♕d3 g6 13.♕xg6 ♕g7 14.♕h5† ♔g8 15.♔xf1 White has four pawns for the exchange, and is therefore winning. Still it took a lot of sweat to get here, and will probably take a bit more before we can call it the end.

2...♗f6



3.♖d5!

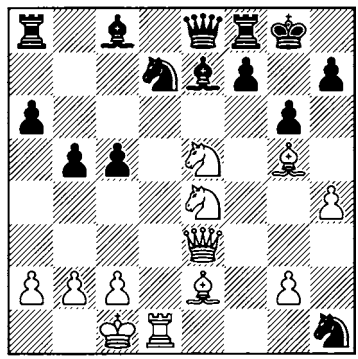
Only this "sneaker" secures the advantage for White.

3...♖xd8 4.♖xe5 ♗xe5 5.♕xe5

White is a pawn up and has a winning position.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first task is to find out what White is up to. Black probably did so, and then accepted it as the truth. This is a well known psychological phenomenon. If the opponent plays a tactical idea we had not anticipated, we lose faith in ourselves and believe our opponent. Instead we should always carefully consider if we can alter the flow of moves towards our interests. When the positions are tricky, small tricks are usually all it takes!

124 Duckworth – Silman
USA 1988



1.♘xd7

After this White is lost, but there seems to be nothing better.

1...♗xd7 2.♗f6

2.♗h6 was a little better, but still not really good.

2...♘g3!

A nice defensive move. The white queen will have to abandon the idea of going to h6, as the knight is heading for f5. Black has enough time to eliminate the white defenders.

3.♕xg3 ♗c6 4.♘d6 ♗xd6 5.♖xd6 ♕xe2 6.♕f4 ♖ae8 7.♗g5 ♖e6 8.♖d2 ♕c4

Black won.

Silman gave

1.♖xd7!?

a double exclam, which is based on missing two strong defences.

1...♗xd7?!

The first is 1...f6!, a typical winning desperado defence.

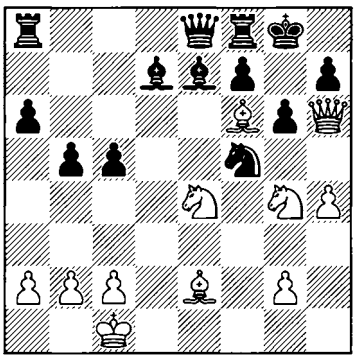
2.♗f6! ♘g3!

The best line for White starts with 3.♕xg3!,

though he still ends up clearly worse – Dvoretsky. 3...♕d8 4.♕f4 (4.♕g5 h6! leads to a clear advantage for Black after some complications) 4...♗f5 5.♘c6 ♗xf6 6.♘xd8 ♗xd8 7.♘xc5 ♗b6 – Dvoretsky. . Instead Silman was of the belief that White could have held the position with by playing for mate.

3.♕h6?! ♘f5 4.♘g4!

This brings us to our exercise. Black wins with a series of fine moves.



4...♗d8!

4...♗d6? is strongly met with 5.♗e5! and Black is lost. 4...♕b8 5.♘g5 ♕f4† 6.♔d1 ♕xg5 is actually playable, but compared to the main line it is clearly wrong.

5.♘g5

The only dangerous continuation. The remains of the white army are heading straight for the king. 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.♘g5 ♕e3†!! and the white attack is stopped before it has started.

5...♕e3†

All other moves allow mate in one.

6.♔d1

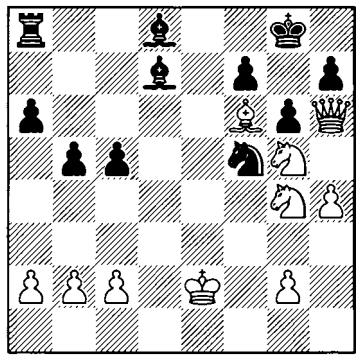
Silman considered either giving the perpetual check or sacrificing the queen on g5, the latter ending in unclear play. But here Black can win in an amazing way:

6...♕xe2†!! 7.♔xe2 ♖e8†

Now the king can run, but not hide.

8.♔f2 ♖e2†!! 9.♔xe2

Having sacrificed queen and rook for a bishop, Black has finally cleared a path for his king and can cash in.



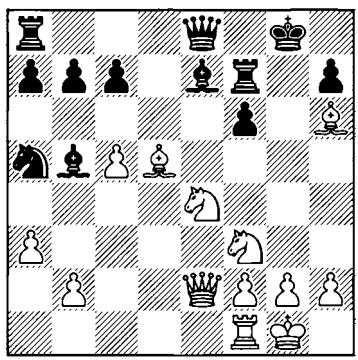
9...♘xh6 10.♘xh6† ♔f8 11.♘xh7† ♔e8

The endgame should be a trivial win.

How this exercise could have been solved: Hard to say. First of all, the perpetual check is immediately there. Since this is an exercise, you should guess that more probably exists. However, it is impossible to play for a win without taking the white queen sooner or later. Then, maybe, you start to consider under what circumstances you would be able to do so. This, combined with the queen sacrifice being one of the few moves that does not lose instantly, should direct you towards the solution.

125 Pribyl – Stulik
USSR 1969

We join this complicated game as White is about to lose the exchange, but enjoys a strong attack.



1.♗xf7† ♔xf7 2.♘eg5†?

2.♕d1!? leads to unclear play, but White is much better after 2.♕d2! with the idea 2...♗xf1 (2...♕d8! is objectively best, but after 3.♖e1 ♕xd2 4.♘fxd2 White is just a pawn up) 3.♕d5† ♔g6 4.♘g3!! ♔xh6 5.♘f5† ♔h5 6.g4† ♔xg4 7.♘e3† ♔h3 8.♕f5 mate.

2...fxg5 3.♕e5! ♗xf1

3...♗f6 4.♕f5! with threats to g5 and h7 is not in Black's interests.

4.♕d5†! ♔g6??

See below for the alternative.

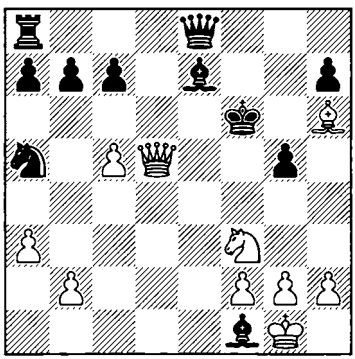
5.♕e6† ♗f6 6.♘e5†

Did this somehow slip Black's mind? He now he resigned as after 6...♔xh6 7.♕xf6† ♕g6 8.♘f7† ♔h5 9.♕f3† g4 10.♕d5† ♔h4 11.g3† ♔h3 12.♕g5, mate is coming. OK, this was the artistic way to do it. 8.♘xg6 would be enough to make any self-respecting person let it go.

1–0

Black could have defended with:

4...♔f6!



5.g4!

The most dangerous attempt on Black's life. 5.♕xg5† was the winning move according to some analysis by Maric, but Black can improve immediately with 5...♔e6!. White has various options, but probably nothing better than 6.♘d4† ♔d7 7.♕f5† ♔d8, and White has no more than a draw here.

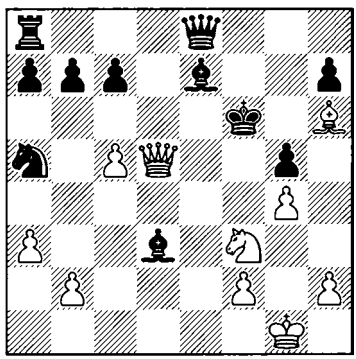
5...♗d3!!

Absolutely the only move. The main idea is that White will now have to move the queen to a worse square before assaulting the black king. The bishop would be lost anyway, so here we are clearly talking about a spanner in the works (again), or: a kind of desperado defence.

5...♕g6? might seem natural, but White can use his pawns aggressively, and Black will not be able to withstand the pressure. 6.h4 ♗f8 (6...♗xc5 7.♕e5† ♔f7 8.♘xg5† ♔g8 9.♕d5† ♔h8 10.♘f7† and White wins the queen) 7.♕e5† ♔f7 8.♘xg5† ♔g8 9.♕d5† ♔h8 10.♘f7† ♕xf7 11.♕xf7 ♗xh6 12.♔xf1 Though Black has three pieces for the queen, White is completely winning. The c7-pawn will fall and Black will be overrun on both sides. The advantage in material cannot be felt. The black pieces simply do not communicate or coordinate with each other.

5...♕c8 leads to trouble after simple moves. 6.♕xg5† ♔f7 7.♕h5† ♔f6 8.♔xf1 ♗f8 Sadly the only move. 9.♕g5† ♔f7 10.♕d5† ♔f6 11.♕d4† ♔f7 12.♘g5† ♔e8 13.♗xf8 ♕d7 14.♕f4 White has a strong attack and two pawns for the exchange. His advantage is massive, but not absolutely conclusive. 14.♕xd7†!? ♔xd7 15.♘xh7 with three pawns for the exchange also looks good, but I am less convinced, as the odd positions of the white minor pieces can still be a source of some problems. But White is close to winning here too.

5...♗xc5 6.♕xg5† ♔f7 7.♕d5† ♔f6 8.♕f5† ♔e7 9.♕xc5† ♔d8 10.♔xf1 Again White has a very strong attack and a pawn for the exchange, equalling more than enough compensation. White probably has a clear advantage.

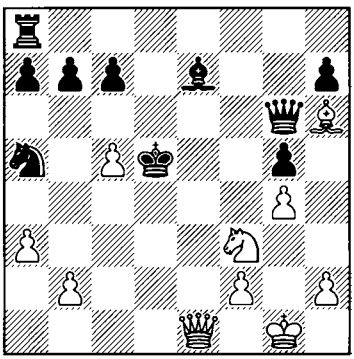


6.h4

The other options are:

6.♕d4† ♔f7 (6...♔e6 also leads to a draw) 7.♕xd3 ♔g8 8.♘xg5 ♗xg5 9.♕d5† ♕f7 10.♕xg5† and all White has is a perpetual check.

6.♕xd3 The most dangerous attempt, but still not one to give White the advantage. 6...♕g6 This is an important point of giving up the bishop on d3. The queen comes to g6 with gain of tempo. 7.♕c3† ♔e6 8.♕e1† ♔d5 White has choices, but none that leads to an advantage it seems. Sometimes we have to be ready to accept these kinds of problems in return for a rook. Remember, dangerous is an adjective, not a conclusion.



Here we should look at two options:

a) 9.♕xa5 allows Black a draw after 9...♕e4! 10.♕xc7 ♕xg4† 11.♔f1 ♕c4†, but probably nothing more than that.

b) 9.♕e5†!? ♔c6 10.♕xe7 ♕xh6 11.♘d4† ♔d5 12.♕d7† ♔c4 13.♕a4† ♔xc5 14.♘f5 ♕f8 15.b4† ♔d5 and the position remains unclear. White is missing the extra piece that would create real problems for Black.

6...♗f8!

Simplest. White does not have any real threats. 6...♗xc5 might also hold, but it seems problematic. 7.♕xd3 ♔e7! (Probably the only move. 7...♕g6 is met with 8.♕d7! with winning threats, and 7...♕c6 with 8.♘xg5! ♗xf2† 9.♔xf2 ♕b6† 10.♔f1 ♕a6 11.♘xh7† ♔e6 12.♕xa6† bxa6. This endgame might hold for Black, but it still seems a bit creepy. Finally 7...♗b6 8.♕f5† ♔e7 9.♗xg5† ♔d6 10.♗f4† ♔e7 11.♘e5! sees Black under renewed pressure.) 8.♗xg5† ♔f8 9.♕xh7 ♕e2! The counterplay against f2 secures a half point.

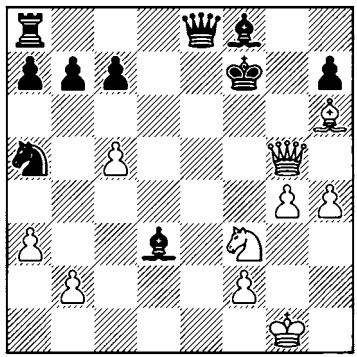
Now after

7.♕xg5†

both 7...♔e6!? and the safe

7...♔f7

should lead to a draw. Here White has nothing better than



8.♕d5† ♔f6 9.♕g5†

with perpetual check. 9.g5†? ♔e7! is completely wrong. There is no longer a mate with ♗g5 after pushing the pawn.

How this exercise could have been solved: If you try out the various natural-looking moves, you will quickly find that something different is needed. And as the bishop is lost on f1 anyway, it makes sense to consider including it in your thoughts, and your plans, even if it distracts the white queen for only a second.

126 Krasenkow – Dydyshko
Lubniewice 2005

Black is in an uncomfortable position where only the best is good enough.

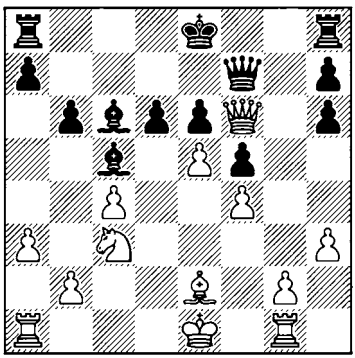
1...♕f7?

This fails to a nice tactical blow. There are several other moves which are insufficient as well:

1...♖f8? 2.♗h5† ♔d7 3.♕g7† ♔c8 4.♕xf8† ♔b7 5.♕f6 ♗xg1 6.♘b5! ♗xb5 7.cxb5 and White has the advantage. Black will feel particularly ill on the light squares, starting with e6 and a8.

1...♔d7? 2.♕g7† ♔c8 3.♕xh8† ♔b7 4.♕f6 ♗xg1 5.♘b5 ♗xb5 6.cxb5 transposes to 1...♖f8.

1...♗xg1? 2.♕xh8† ♔d7 3.♕xh7† ♔c8 4.♕xh6 is somewhat similar to the variation with 1...♖f8, except that White is 1–2 pawns better off here.



2.♗h5!!

A fantastic blow. White is arriving first.

2...♕xh5 3.♕xh8† ♔d7 4.♕xh7† ♔c8 5.♘b5!

5.♖h1 ♕h4† would be unclear, but White could also have tried 5.exd6!?.

5...♗xb5 6.cxb5 ♗xg1

Maybe objectively a mistake, but sometimes you need to know.

7.♕g8† ♔d7

7...♔b7 8.♕g7† ♔c8 9.♕f8† ♔b7 10.♕e7† ♔c8 11.♖c1† ♗c5 12.exd6 and Black is mated. Now he knows...

8.♕xa8 ♕h4† 9.♔d1 dxe5 10.♕xa7† ♔e8 11.♕b8† ♔f7 12.♕c7† ♔f8 13.♕xe5 ♕f2 14.♕f6† ♔g8 15.♕xe6† ♔g7 16.♕e5† ♔g6 17.♖c1 ♕f1† 18.♔c2 ♕xg2† 19.♔b1

1–0

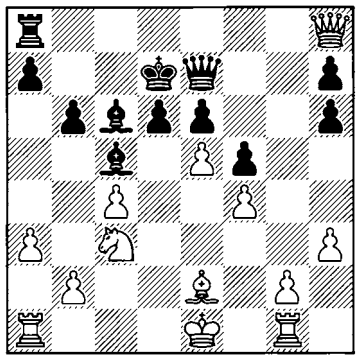
The only move was:

1...♕e7! 2.♕xh8†

Black can now reply

2...♔d7

when the king is on the right side of the queen. White is worse no matter what he does.



3.exd6

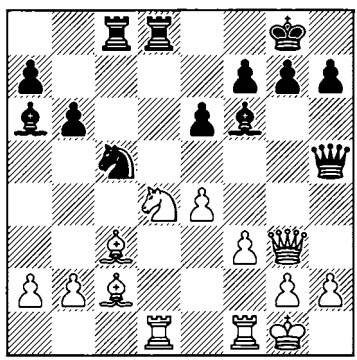
3.♕f6 ♕xf6 4.exf6 also gives Black a better endgame. The two bishops are clearly better placed than the white minors, as long as Black remembers to play 4...♗xg1.

3...♕h4†! 4.g3 ♖xh8 5.gxh4 ♗xg1

The endgame favours Black. The white pawns resemble ripe fruit.

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all, you need to see the combination played in the game, which you should, if you are alert to the opponent's opportunities. After this you should look at various alternatives, hopefully including the text move. Basically, looking for candidates should do the deed.

127 Kaplan – Huguet
Skopje (ol) 1972



Kaplan won this game in style, and proudly annotated it for *Chess Informant*. It turns out that Black could have defended much better.

1.♘c6 ♗xc3

The only move.

2.bxc3??

A forgivable mistake, when you win. Still 2.♖xd8† ♖xd8 3.bxc3 ♖e8 4.♖d1 with even chances was objectively much better.

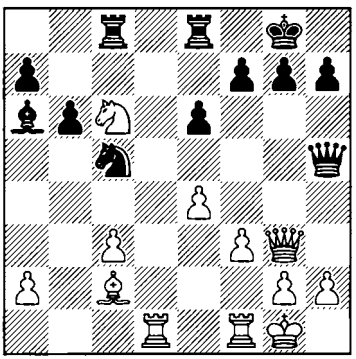
2...♗xf1??

A horrible blunder. I have seen this quite often: in desperado situations the players have a feeling that they "have to" capture something, and often the player who steps away from this forcing thinking, with an unforcing move, is the one who emerges victorious from the exchanges. The same happens in this game.

Black could also have lost very beautifully after 2...♖xd1 3.♖xd1 ♔h8?! (3...♖f8 is better, but still bad) 4.♕c7! ♕g5? (4...♕h4 5.♕xf7 and White is doing well) 5.♕xc8†!! ♗xc8 6.f4 ♕f6 7.e5 ♕h4 8.g3 and White wins – Kaplan.

But imagine a cartoon, where the villain (let's say Tom, the cat) comes running with a ram directly at the hero (in this case Jerry, the mouse), and the clever little beast (the mouse that is) is enough of a "spoilsport" to simply step out of the way, so as not to be hit on the head.

Here Black could have done the same with 2...♖e8!!.



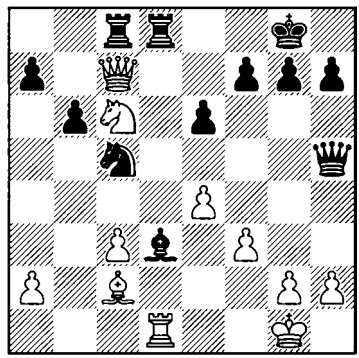
The idea is quite simple. White is hanging on f1 and c6. Yet such a little move can be quite hard to see.

White cannot do better than 3.♕d6, but is suffering after 3...♘b7! (3...♗xf1 is also better for Black) 4.♘e7† ♔h8 5.♘xc8 (5.♕a3 ♕c5† and Black wins) 5...♘xd6 6.♘xd6 ♗xf1 7.♘xe8 ♗e2 8.♖d8 ♕c5† 9.♔h1 g6 and Black should win.

Now White takes over the initiative with a stunner.

3.♕c7!! ♖f8?!

This loses very fast. Black could have kept himself in the game by closing the d-file with 3...♗d3!!.



White needs to win some material. So after 4.♘e7† ♔f8 5.♘xc8 ♖d7 6.♕b8 ♖d8 7.♕xa7 ♖xc8 8.♕xb6 ♕e5 9.♗xd3 ♕xc3 10.♗f1 he would have very good winning chances. The game is still far from finished, but the extra pawn is useful none the less.

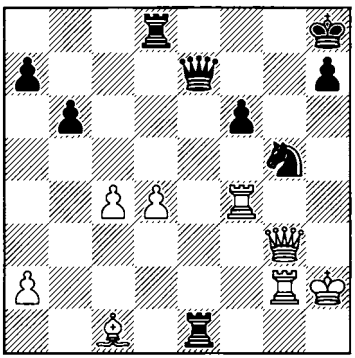
4.♘e7† ♔h8 5.♘xc8

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all, we probably look at the forced line. Now, instead of re-examining it again and again, assuring yourself of the dreadful end approaching with every tick of the clock, as indeed many people would do over the board, you should look for ways to avoid this doom. Unforcing thinking is the tool. Once you have it in your hand, it will not be hard to hit your opponent on the head with it, if allowed by the tournament rules, or else to use it to gently push the rook to the side...

128 Rukavina – Kishnev
Sibenik 1987

Kishnev was astounded by the marvellous play of his higher-rated opponent in this game, and rightly so. That we, twenty years later, can find a surprising defence with the help of modern technology does not take anything away from the forceful play of Rukavina.



1.♖xf6!

An excellent exchange sacrifice, demolishing the dark squares around the black king.

1...♖xc1

1...♕xf6 2.♗xg5 ♕f1 looks like a possible defence, were it not for 3.♕xe1!!, winning instantly.

1...♘e6 2.♖ff2! followed by 3.♗b2 will decide the game. Black cannot play 2...♖xc1 because of 3.♕e5†.

2.♕xg5

White is threatening 3.♖f8† followed by 4.♕e5†, winning. Now there is only one way for Black to defend.

2...♕c7†?

This is a natural reply, but it loses to a wonderful sequence.

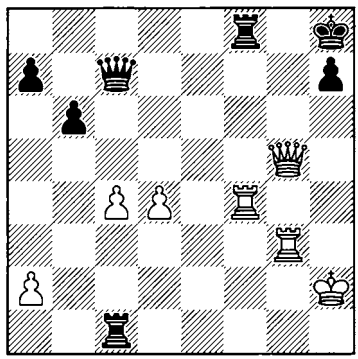
2...♖e8?! is also not good enough, though it does not lose as dramatically. White can use the chance to advance the d-pawn to the seventh: 3.d5! ♖e1 4.d6 ♕e5† 5.♕xe5 ♖1xe5 6.d7 ♖d8 7.♖f7 This endgame should be winning for White. I have tried to find a way for Black to defend it, but with no luck.

The only defence was 2...♖e1!!, protecting both the queen and the e5-square. 3.♖f4!? The best winning attempt, which shows that White has nothing to show. (3.d5 ♖e2! with the idea of 4...♖xg2† and 5...♖g8, winning the queen. White needs to play 4.♕h4 or 4.♖f5, as the pawn endgame after 4.♖g6 ♖xg2† 5.♔xg2 ♕xg5† 6.♖xg5 ♖g8 is a draw.) After 3...♕xg5 4.♖xg5 ♖e2† 5.♖g2 ♖xg2† 6.♔xg2 ♔g7 Black should hold the draw, though some careful play is necessary.

3.♖f4

Now 4.♕f6† is a big threat. Black only has one move, after which the main point of this exercise is revealed.

3...♖f8 4.♖g3!!



A brilliant point. Without this White would be struggling.

4...♖c2†

Other moves make no sense.

5.♔h3 ♕d7† 6.♖gg4

White is building an amazing bridge for the king to cross without peril.

6...♖c3† 7.♔h4

Black resigned. Mate, in some shape or form, can only be delayed for a few moves.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a really dreadful exercise. My apologies. But then, chess presents us with these kinds of hard choices all the time. Here the main task is to anticipate White's threats, and to defend against

them in advance. Protecting the queen and the e5-square achieves this, as a close look at all the possibilities will show.

129 Edlund – Z. Peng
Stockholm 2004

In this highly frightening scenario it would seem logical that the Dutch international decided to get rid of the queens, but a deeper look shows that it was absolutely essential to first give a check. This is the method of comparison in practice.

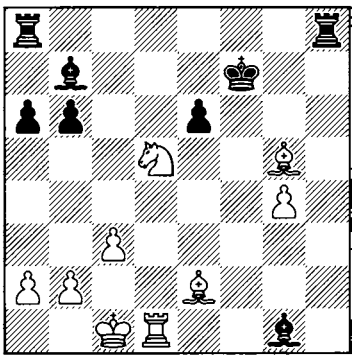
1...♕xe2?

1...♗e3†!! was the best move. As we shall see, the only change in the position is that Black will have 5...♗e4†.

2.♔b1 (2.♗xe3 ♕xe3† simply favours Black: all the white bits are suddenly hanging.) 2...♕xe2 3.♘xd5† ♔f7 4.♗xe2 ♗xg1 5.♘c7 ♗e4†! 6.♔a1 ♖a7 7.♖f1† ♔g6 8.♘xe6 ♖h1, with chances for both sides, but mainly with chances for a draw.

2.♘xd5† ♔f7 3.♗xe2 ♗xg1

3...♗xd5 4.♖gf1† ♔g6 5.♗f4 and White is better with his extra pawn.



4.♘xb6?

After this the position become less clear and we will depart from the game. White could have claimed a significant advantage with 4.♘c7!. Black's best try is 4...♖h1! (4...♖a7 now makes no sense without the check on e4. And 4...♖ac8 5.♖d7† ♔g8 6.♗c4 just wins.) 5.♘xa8 ♗xa8 6.♖f1† and, with good technique, White should carry the endgame home.

How this exercise could have been solved: You need to realise that the check is possible, of course. Once you have done so, it is time to find out what the difference is between this move and the alternative.

130 Acers – Crockett
USA 1980

This exercise has proved counterintuitive to some of my students. Black starts with a tempting rook sacrifice:

1...♖xb2! 2.♖b1!

2.♔xb2 loses instantly, not to 2...♕a3†, as Acers thought, but to 2...♗a3†! followed by 3...♕d2 and White has no defence.

2.♖d1 loses in various ways. For instance to 2...♗b4 (with the main idea 3...♗c3) 3.♖b1 ♕a3 4.♖xd5. This no longer works, as after 4...♗c3 White is mated.

2...♕a3?

A strong move according to Acers. But Black could have won quickly with 2...b5!! 3.♖xb2 dxc4, when White has no defence against the various threats on the dark squares.

3.♖xd5!

The only move.

3...♖xa2†??

It would appear that Black believed this led to perpetual check, probably overlooking either 5.♕b2 or the possibility of 6.♖xa5. After 3...exd5 4.♕xd5 Black can make a draw in various ways, or maybe even play for a win with 4...♖b4!?, but most notably he can draw with 4...♖xa2† 5.♕xa2 ♕c3† and we have a standard perpetual check.

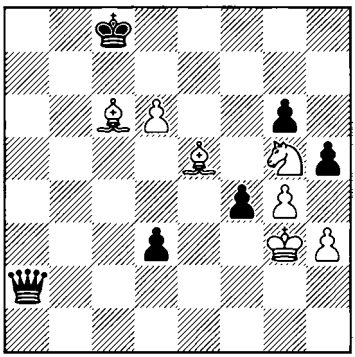
4.♕xa2

1–0

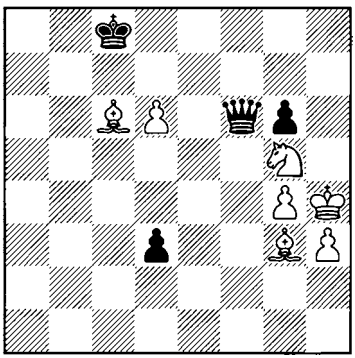
How this exercise could have been solved: The first move should not be too difficult and if you are looking at candidates, the second should not really be too hard either. It is only because we tend to be rubbish at looking for candidates that this exercise belongs this deep into the book.

131 Goldin – Terentiev
USSR 1982

Black draws with a funny and elaborate sequence.
1...♕a2† 2.♔g3 f4†!!



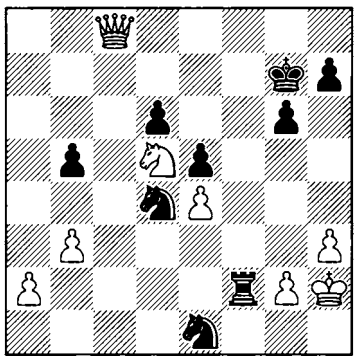
2...h4†? does not work because of 3.♔xh4 ♕f2† 4.♗g3 ♕a2 5.d7† ♔d8 6.♗e1! and White will queen his pawn before long.
3.♗xf4
Forced. 3.♔f3? ♕e2† 4.♔xf4 ♕d2† 5.♔e4 ♕xg5 and Black should be winning.
3...h4†!
Only now. The final repetition is quite amusing.
4.♔xh4 ♕f2† 5.♗g3 ♕f6!!



The only square. But amazingly the queen is in control of all the white pieces from here.
6.♗e5!
Forced, and forcing a draw. The inferior alternatives all merge into the following line: **6.♗f4? d2 7.d7† ♔d8 8.♗a4 ♔e7! 9.♗e3** (9.♔g3 ♕d4!) **9...♕h8† 10.♔g3 ♕e5† 11.♔f2 ♕h2† 12.♔f1 ♕h1† 13.♗g1 d1=♕† 14.♗xd1 ♕d5** Black wins a piece, and soon also the d-pawn. There will be no escape for White.
6...♕f2† 7.♗g3 ♕f6 8.♗e5
½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: This exercise consists of a long line of forced moves. If you look at the various options and keep your faith, you should be able to find the right way. It is a matter of structuring your thinking.

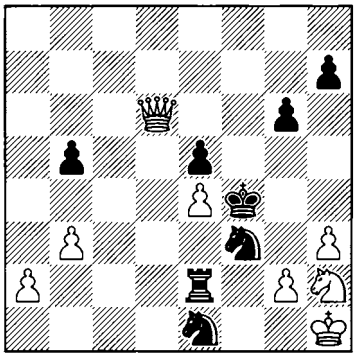
132 Anand – Shirov
Buenos Aires 1994



In his usual "energy-saving" style Anand made a big mistake here, right after the time control. He could have won easily with 1.♕c7† ♔h6 2.♘e3! and the black king is trapped in a mating net. Instead he played:
1.♕d7†??
The difference is that there is no 4.♕c1† mating in the game.
1...♔h6! 2.♘e3 ♖e2 3.♘g4† ♔g5 4.♔g1!
Anand was very happy with this defensive move, which he believed saved the game. But as we shall see, White can also draw after 4.♕xd6 (? – Anand) 4...♘df3† 5.♔h1 ♔f4!!. The move that Anand feared. Black is establishing a mating attack with: 6.gxf3 ♘xf3 7.♕d3 ♖xa2 8.♕f1 ♔g3! and White has no defence against ...h5 – Anand.

Also 6.♘xe5? does not work. After 6...♘xe5 7.a4 ♘xg2 8.axb5 ♘e1 Black has a decisive attack.

But White can save the game with 6.♘h2!!.



A difficult move to find, but once you see it, it is clear that White will be OK. For example, 6...♘xh2 7.♕f6† ♔e3 8.♔xh2 ♖xg2† 9.♔h1 ♖g3 and Black has exactly enough counterplay to make a draw.

4...♔f4 5.♕xd6 ♖xg2† 6.♔f1 ♘df3 7.♘xe5

7.♕b6 also held.

7...♖g1† 8.♔f2 ♖g2†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: If you found Anand's line, you probably realised that something had to happen. I am sure that the idea of a perpetual was not far from your mind, but did you realise that the key is preventing the king from going to g3?

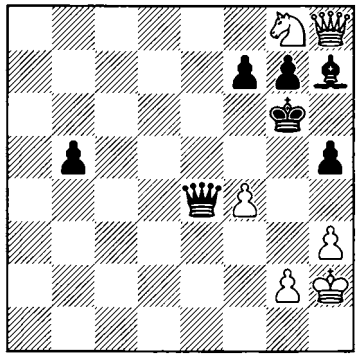
133 Arkhipov – Danilchenko
USSR 1971

The challenge White has set for his opponent by advancing the f-pawn cannot be underestimated. In the game Black did not manage to find the only way to defend the position.

1...♕e4?

The idea was probably to protect the f5-square somehow, and at the same time kick the knight away, but White wins with a neat tactical sequence.

2.♕g8† ♔h6 3.♕h8† ♗h7 4.♘g8† ♔g6



5.f5†!!

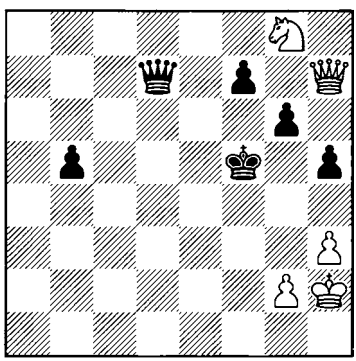
Black is lost. The most illustrative line is probably 5...♔g5 6.♕xg7†! ♔f4 7.♘f6! and White will take the bishop in his own good time.

1–0

Let's have a look at the alternatives:

1...♕c3?! 2.f5 (2.♕g8†? ♔h6 3.♕h8† ♗h7 4.♘g8† ♔g6 5.f5† does not work now. After 5...♔g5! White will not be able to avoid perpetual check.) 2...♕c5 (2...h4 3.fxg6† fxg6 4.♕f4 ♕f6 5.♕e4! and Black is completely dominated) 3.fxg6† fxg6 4.♕g8† ♔h6 5.♕e6 with a clear advantage for White. It will be difficult to convert it into a full point, but Black's suffering will be extensive.

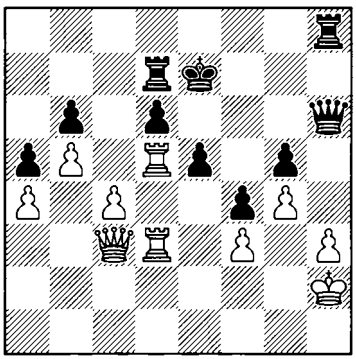
The correct defence is the sensational **1...♕d7!!** with the point that after 2.♕g8† ♔h6 3.♕h8† ♗h7 4.♘g8† ♔g6 5.f5†! ♔xf5 6.♕xh7† g6



White has absolutely no way to bring his queen into the game quickly. Also, his knight is completely out of play. My computer promises Black a draw in all lines, but actually it is not completely obvious why Black should not try to make something out of his b-pawn. I do think that White should draw, as the black king will find it hard to hide, but it is indeed White who needs to draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a really hard exercise. First you need to find out what the opponent is threatening. Then you need to work out that you cannot prevent it. Finally, you will be ready to position yourself for it to happen... Not easy!

134 Hausner – Spiridonov
Zamardi 1980



1.♔g1? ♕xh3

White resigned because of things like 2.♕xe5† ♔d8 3.♕xg5† ♔c7 4.♕xf4 ♕h1† 5.♔f2 ♖h2† 6.♔e3 ♖e7† 7.♔d4 ♕g1† 8.♔c3 ♕a1† 9.♔b3 ♕b2 mate.

2...♔f7 3.♕f5† ♔e8! also wins.

0-1

The solution to the exercise is extraordinary.

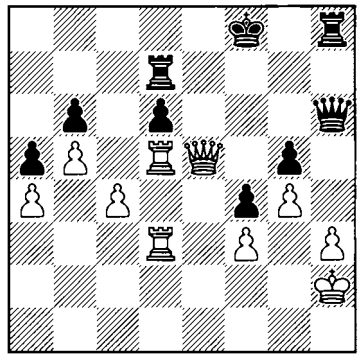
1.♕xe5†! ♔f8!

The only reasonable move.

1...dxe5? 2.♖xd7† ♔e8 3.♖d8† ♔e7 4.♖3d7† ♔e6 5.♖d6† ♔e7 6.♖8d7† ♔e8 7.♖xh6 ♖xh6 8.♖g7 and White wins.

1...♔d8? 2.♕xg5† This is the main difference from the move order in the game.

1...♔f7? 2.♕f5† ♔e8 3.♖e5† and White wins.



2.♔g1!!

2.♕f5† ♖f7 3.♕c8† ♔g7 and White will have to part with his queen to stop mate; and this time there is no counterplay.

2...dxe5

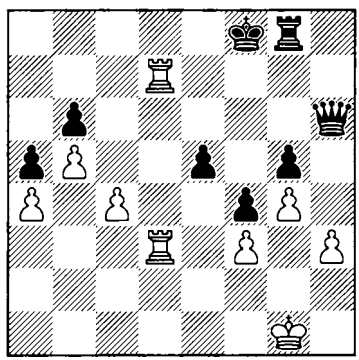
With the king differently placed White can now force a perpetual. 2...♕xh3 is met with 3.♕f6† ♔e8 4.♖e5†!! dxe5 5.♕e6† ♔f8 6.♕f6† with a perpetual check.

3.♖xd7

White's threat of perpetual check is very hard to meet. Every move but one leads to a draw immediately. And in order to create winning chances here, Black will have to take substantial risks, not all of them healthy.

3...♖g8!?

For example 3...♕e6 4.♖3d6 ♕xc4 and check, check, check.



4.♖c7!!

It is about up to here you needed to see to solve the exercise. And maybe not even this far, because where were the alternatives? Still, a thorough analysis of the position is quite rewarding, if not in other ways, then at least aesthetically.

First of all, the rook belongs on c7 rather than b7 or a7 because of the extra option of ♖c6 in many positions.

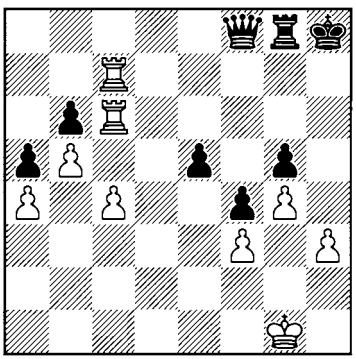
Here it makes most sense to split the analysis into two branches.

a) **4...♕f6**

White can force a draw with perpetual check here, or even play for a win!

5.♖dd7

5.♖c8† ♔e7! is a perpetual check. 5...♔f7 is also OK. 6.♖d7† ♔e6 7.♖c6† ♔xd7 8.♖xf6 ♖c8 is the main line in line b. The most amazing zugzwang arises after 5...♔g7? 6.♖d7† ♔h8 7.♖c6 ♕f8 (7...♖g6! gives better chances to survive, but obviously Black would only march his king to h8 in an attempt to win). Black has managed to hide his king, but the white rooks are so active they are able to dominate Black completely. The great move is 8.♖dc7!!.



Black has no moves. White wins. It had to be the rooks to the c-file because the c6-rook is protected, as shown after 8...♖g6 9.♖c8 ♖xc6 10.♖xf8† when White ends a rook up.

5...♔e8 6.♖c6! ♕h8?

6...♔xd7! 7.♖xf6 ♖c8! transposes to the main line of line b, more or less.

White can either force a draw with 7.♖cc7 or 7.♖b7 ♔d8 8.♖b8†, or play for a win with a neat tactic.

7.♖a7 ♔d8 8.♖g6!? ♖xg6 9.♖a8† ♔c7 10.♖xh8 ♖d6 11.♖g8 ♖d4 12.♖xg5 ♖xc4 13.♖xe5 ♖xa4 14.g5

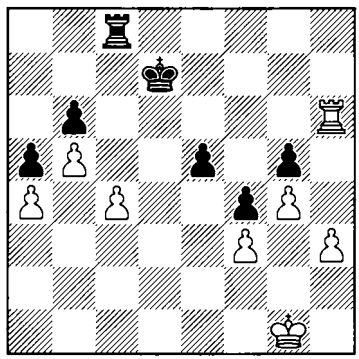
White seems to be winning, but I am not completely confident about this line.

b) **4...♔e8 5.♖c8† ♔f7?!**

Since there are no winning chances, Black should be happy with a draw. 5...♔e7 allows a perpetual after 6.♖c7, or 6.♖xg8 ♕h4 7.♖gd8 and either side can end up giving a perpetual, depending on who becomes nervous first.

6.♖d7† ♔e6 7.♖c6† ♔xd7 8.♖xh6 ♖c8

Black is very active, but White has an extra pawn and is pretty active himself, so it turns out that it is Black who should prove the draw. So this is, of course, not the best course of action, but it is the main line, as so many other lines transpose to it.



9.♖xb6

White can even play the pawn endgame with 9.♖c6!? ♖xc6 10.bxc6† ♔xc6 11.♔h2!? (or 11.♔g2) 11...♔c5 12.h4 gxh4! 13.g5 ♔d6 14.♔h3 with a draw.

Note that 11...e4?? does not win, but lose! 12.fxe4 ♔d6 13.♔g2 ♔e5 14.♔f3 ♔d4 15.h4! and White wins. The more resistant 13...♔e6 loses to the elegant 14.♔f2 ♔d6 15.♔e2 ♔e6 16.♔d2 ♔d6 17.♔c3 ♔e5 18.♔d3. White will

be able to play e5, ♔e4 and h4, undermining the protection of the passed pawn.

9...♖xc4 10.♖g6 ♖xa4 11.♖xg5 ♖b4 12.♖xe5 a4 13.♖d5† ♔c7 14.♖d1

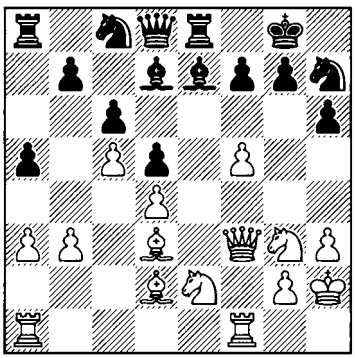
14.♖d3 ♖b3!

14...a3 15.♖a1 ♖b3 16.h4 ♖xf3 17.h5 ♖g3† 18.♔h2 ♖xg4 19.♖xa3 ♖g5 20.h6 ♖xb5 21.h7 ♖b8

And Black makes the draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is another exercise where you anticipate the opponent's idea and defend against it in advance. Here that idea is simply the check on h3. To balance the breakthrough in the centre with stepping out of the way is quite a difficult task, but one that should be possible for a flexible mind.

135 Fauvel – Tomas
Sitges 1981



White is very well represented on the kingside and thus decided it was time to open lines for his pieces.

1.f6! ♘xf6

1...♗xf6 2.♘h5 with ideas such as 3.♗xh6 and 3.♗xh7† followed by 4.♕d3† and 5.♘xf6 are devastating.

2.♘h5 ♗e6 3.♘xg7?

There is a characteristic mistake when attacking. A possible sacrifice presents itself, the attacker gets lost in tangled lines that look promising, but he is not really certain. Then eventually he feels obliged to follow the rule of "thought-move must be played". In many situations it makes much more sense to include an extra piece into the attack.

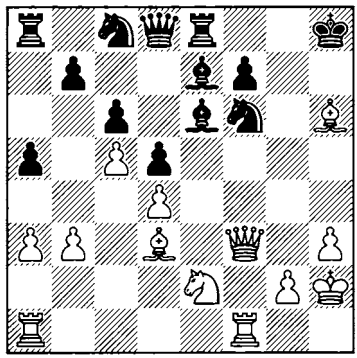
White could have won relatively easily with 3.♘ef4!. After 3...♕c7 White is ready for war (3...♖f8 4.♘xe6 fxe6 5.♗xh6 and so on). 4.♘xg7! (4.♔h1!? is also strong, but the attack works now) 4...♔xg7 5.♕g3† ♘g4† Otherwise the queen is lost. 6.hxg4 ♔g8 7.♘xe6 ♕xg3† 8.♔xg3 fxe6 9.♗xh6 and it's, tra la la, over baby-baby.

3...♔xg7 4.♗xh6†

Here we have our exercise. Really, there should be nothing to calculate, but White has messed up with his overeager play. In the game Black trusted him, which was a very bad decision.

4...♔h8?

The choice was between two pieces of fruit, one ripe and tasty, the other dried up and starting to rot. Why did Black take the second one?



5.♗f4!

The threat of 6.♗e5 is very annoying.

5...♔g7

5...a4 is for some reason appealing to Fritz. Not knowing much about how an engine works, I guess it is because of the threat of 6...axb3, so that after 6.b4 the dangers would be one move further away on the horizon. Computers often seem to work according to the old dictum: If I cannot see you, you cannot eat me. This concept is especially popular with two year olds and ostriches.

6.♕g3†

Also strong was 6.♗e5 ♖h8 7.♕f4 ♖h5 8.♘g3 with a winning attack.

6...♘g4†

6...♔h8 7.♗c7 ♕d7 8.♗e5 and White wins.

7.hxg4 ♖h8†

7...♗g5 was better, but if nothing else, White is a pawn up.

8.♔g1 ♗g5 9.♗e5† f6 10.♘f4

10.♖xf6 ♗xf6 11.g5! also wins.

10...♗f7

10...♗xf4 11.♕xf4 fxe5 12.♕xe5† with mate to follow.

11.♗xf6†

Another way to break through was 11.♘h5†! ♗xh5 12.♖xf6 ♗xf6 13.gxh5† ♔f8 14.♖f1 ♖h6 15.♕g5 and Black collapses.

11...♗xf6 12.♘h5† ♗xh5 13.gxh5† ♗g5

13...♔f8 14.♕g6

14.♗g6

This is still winning, but 14.♖f5 ♔h6 15.♖e1 was stronger. However, Fauvel clearly does not like to include all his pieces in the attack. It has always been my philosophy that an attack should be conducted with minimum effort by the pieces, not the player!

14...♔h6

14...♖f8 15.♖xf8

15.♖f7!

Black resigned because of 15...♘e7 16.♗c2! ♕b8 17.♕d3 according to the annotations to the game, but here 17...♕g8 18.♖af1 ♖e8 still offers a little resistance, though White should win. Therefore 17.♕f3 is simpler.

1–0

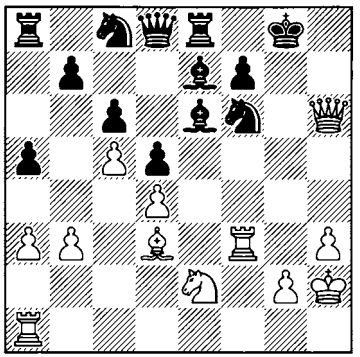
Correct was:

4...♔xh6 5.♕f4† ♔g7 6.♕g5† ♔f8 7.♕h6† ♔g8

From here I have been unable to find a way to continue the attack for White. The standard idea of bringing the rook into the defence does not work.

8.♖f3?

8.♖xf6 ♗xf6 is a draw. So is 8.♕g5†, of course.



8...♗f8!

The standard "get lost" defence. White can now regain a piece on f6, but simple arithmetic shows that this is not enough.

8...♘g4†? 9.hxg4 ♗g5 also does not work. A king is usually unhappy when being nudged towards the centre and fiercely attacked. 10.♕h7† ♔f8 11.♖af1 ♕c7† 12.♘g3 Black has no way to defend. Fritz is contemplating 12...♗h6 here, but we shall just look at a line that makes some sense. 12...b6 13.♗g6 ♖a7 14.cxb6 ♘xb6 15.♕h8† ♔e7 16.♖xf7† ♗xf7 17.♖xf7† ♔d8 18.♕xe8†! Winning two rooks in one shot! 18...♔xe8 19.♖xc7† ♔d8 20.♖xa7.

9.♖g3† ♗g4!

This is the point of the defence. Things can easily go wrong here with: 9...♘g4†? Yippee a check! 10.♖xg4† ♗xg4 11.♕h7 Oops! A mate!

Honestly, I do not see any way for White to save the game.

10.♕g5† ♗g7 11.♖f1

This would be the "logical" way to exhaust every attacking possibility, but there seems to be no next move, so Black can simply play:

11...♕e7

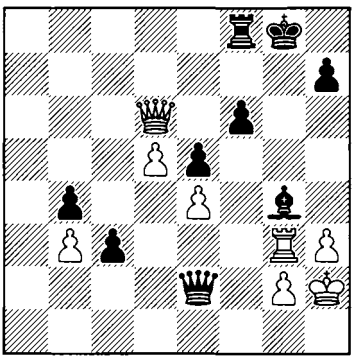
Winning.

How this exercise could have been solved: You have two possible lines. If you look at both of them carefully, you will see that they are both different from the way they first appear. Accepting the sacrifice is possible. And the king retreat is not answered by a random threat

against the g7-square, but by a long list of continuous threats.

A close look should be enough to solve this exercise.

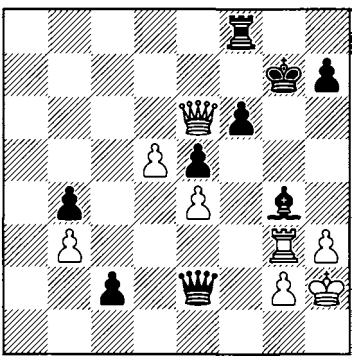
136 Rohde – Shabalov
Philadelphia 1990



Shabalov was very unhappy about his first move after the time control. But a closer look reveals that his play was immaculate.

1...h5!

1...c2?, which was given by Shabalov as the winner, is the move that leads to our exercise. White can draw with: 2.♕e6† (2.♕c7 h5!) 2...♔g7! The most testing (2...♔h8 3.♕e7 ♖c8 4.♖xg4 ♕xg4 5.hxg4 c1=♕ 6.♕xf6† with perpetual check).



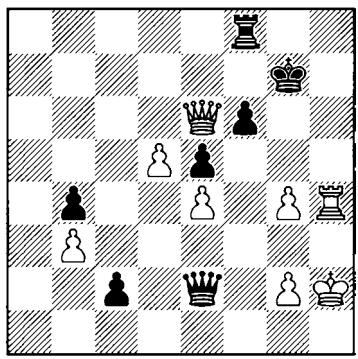
3.♕d7†!! (Shabalov only gave 3.♖xg4†? when Black wins after 3...♕xg4!! 4.♕xg4† ♔h8 and the pawn cannot be stopped) Now Black can only try to win with 3...♔h6?, which is, of course, foolish. Black should accept a transposition to the note to Black's second move above. 4.♕e7 (4.hxg4 ♔g6 5.g5 is maybe even stronger) 4...♖g8 5.hxg4 ♔g6 6.g5 ♕f2 7.♕e6 White has a dangerous attack.

2.♕xb4?

This loses outright. Shabalov believed that White would be able to save himself with 2.hxg4 h4 3.♕e6† (3.♖f3 c2 4.♖xf6 ♖xf6 5.♕xf6 ♕xe4! 6.♕d8† ♔g7 7.♕e7† ♔g6 also wins for Black) 3...♔g7 4.♖h3. Here we have reached a divide.

a) 4...♕xe4 5.♖xh4 ♕g6 was supposed to be clearly better for Black according to a suggestion from Maxim Dlugy, but the reality is that after 6.♕e7† ♔g8 7.♕xb4 c2 8.♕c4 ♕g5 9.d6† ♔g7 10.♕c7† ♖f7 11.♖h7† ♔xh7 12.♕xf7† White has perpetual check.

b) 4...c2! 5.♖xh4



Now the cunning 5...♕f2!! decides the game in Black's favour. The check on f4 supports the c-pawn, and the defence of f6 prevents White's counterplay. For example, 6.♕e7† ♖f7 7.♖h7† ♔xh7 8.♕xf7† ♔h6 9.♕f8† ♔g5 10.♕g7† ♔f4 and it is time to resign.

Shabalov now won the game without significant problems.

2...c2 3.♕c5 ♕d1 4.hxg4 c1=♕ 5.gxh5† ♕g5 6.♖xg5† fxg5 7.d6 ♕xh5† 8.♔g1 ♕d1† 9.♔h2 ♖d8 10.♕c4† ♔f8 11.♕e6 ♕xd6 12.♕f5† ♔e7 13.♕h7† ♔e8 14.♕g8† ♔d7 15.♕f7† ♔c6 16.♕c4† ♔b6 17.b4 ♕h6†

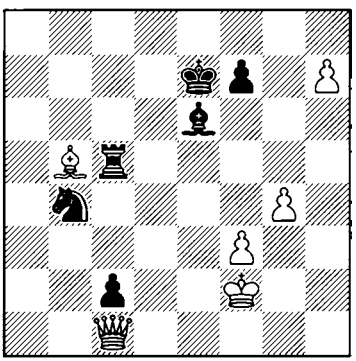
0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: The real key is to look for candidate moves. You should not find it too difficult to see that 3.♖xg4 loses, and therefore start searching for something else. If you really do look carefully, you should see the queen check. Otherwise, there is something wrong with the way you are looking at the chessboard, which could be very useful information.

137 Knaak – Schoene
East Germany 1983

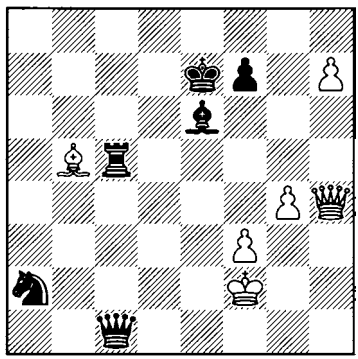
White won in fine style.
1...♘a2?! 2.♕a3† ♔f6 3.h7 ♖c8
3...♔g7 4.h8=♕†! ♔xh8 5.♕f8† ♔h7 6.♗d3† f5 7.gxf5 ♘b4 8.♗xc2! and White wins.
4.♕b2† ♔e7 5.♗a6!
The black rook is overloaded.
It will have to let go of either c2 or h8. Black could maybe have struggled on with 5...c1=♕ 6.♕xc1 ♖xc1 7.h8=♕ ♘c3, but instead he decided not to discomfort himself needlessly, and called it a day.
1–0

1...♖c5 2.h7



2...♘a2!
This was Knaak's original solution, and very original it is too. If you found the secondary solution, and not this, you should still be proud of yourself.

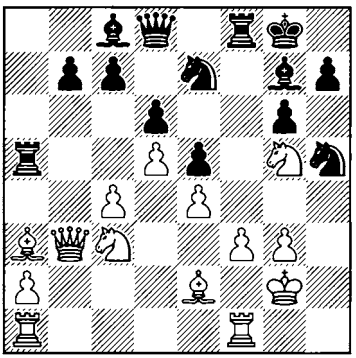
Black also makes a draw after 2...♖xb5!? 3.♔g3 ♖b8 (3...♖c5? 4.h8=♕ ♘d3 5.♕ch6 with a mating attack. Was it Nimzowitsch who said ♕ch6 is always a good move? Probably not.) 4.♕d2! (4.♕f4 ♘a6 5.♕c1 should make a draw, but this at least puts the burden of proof on Black) 4...♗b3! 5.♕e3† ♔f6 6.♕f4† ♔g7 7.♕xb8 ♔xh7 8.♕xb4 c1=♕ 9.♕xb3. This endgame is a draw, and usually we would not be unhappy about reaching it. So though the forced draw is preferable, either solution is acceptable.
3.♕h6!
This is the hardest test. Knaak's main idea was 3.h8=♕ ♘xc1 and White cannot win the black rook. He should therefore limit his dreams to finding a draw.
3...c1=♕ 4.♕h4†!
4.♕xc1? and White is slightly short of change, though probably still able to hold the draw.
The play in this position is actually very unusual, even unique. I cannot remember having seen anything like it. Without the support of a computer program it would be impossible to come to any useful conclusions. I have now analysed two different variations:



a) **4...♖g5?!** 5.h8=♕ ♕c5† 6.♔g2 ♕xb5 7.♕d4 f6 8.♕h7† ♔e8 9.♕h8† ♖g8 10.♕hxf6 and Black is struggling somewhat.
b) **4...f6** 5.h8=♕ ♖c2† (5...♕b2† 6.♔g3 ♕e5† 7.♔h3 ♖xb5 8.♕g7† ♗f7 9.♕f2 and White has the attack) 6.♗e2 ♖xe2†! 7.♔xe2 ♗c4† 8.♔f2 ♕f1† 9.♔g3 ♕e1† With a draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first idea to find is ...♘a2, preferably without White having a check. If you want this badly enough, you should see that 1...♖c5! achieves this. From then on it is close to impossible to see White's ideas of avoiding exchanging queens, or at least to take it seriously. We cannot predict everything, nor should we burden ourselves with the ambition to do so.

138 Steffensen – Hamilton
Canberra 1994



In the game Black played a romantic sacrifice and won in splendid fashion. But White had a chance to defend near the end, after Black had rejected some simpler wins that did not contend for greatness.

1...♘xg3!

1...♘c6!? 2.♗c1 ♘d4 with a clear advantage was a less stylish alternative. If nothing else, Black is threatening 3...♘f4† with the idea of playing ...exf4 and ...♕h4 with a devastating attack.

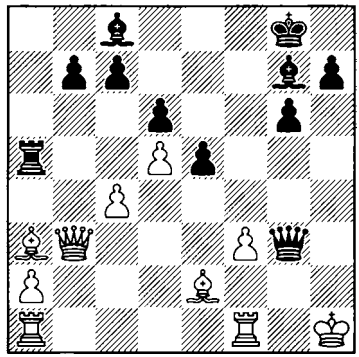
2.♔xg3 ♘f5† 3.exf5 ♕xg5† 4.♔f2 ♕h4† 5.♔g2

5.♔e3 ♕d4 mate.

5...♖xf5 6.♘e4 ♖g5†! 7.♘xg5 ♕xg5† 8.♔f2 ♕h4† 9.♔g1 ♕g3†

9...♗h3 also wins. White's only possible defence is: 10.f4 exf4 11.♖ad1 ♕g5† 12.♔f2 ♕g3† 13.♕xg3 fxg3† 14.♔xg3 ♗xf1 15.♖xf1 ♖xa3† 16.♔f2 ♖xa2 Black has a winning endgame, though the opposite coloured bishops make it an unattractive way to convert the advantage. But at least the win is not in doubt.

10.♔h1



10...♖xa3?

Black is clearly imagining this game in a future "The Best Combinations of the 20th Century" collection, but by failing to spot a glorious defence, and a less glorious win, this is actually a mistake.

10...♗h6? 11.f4 is not quite clear. But after 10...♕h3† 11.♔g1 e4! White is in deep trouble. 12.♗b2 ♕g3† 13.♔h1 ♕h4† 14.♔g1 ♗h3 15.fxe4 ♗xb2 White is now suffering from various threats such as ...♕g5†, ...♖a3 and ...♗d4. Not surprisingly, he cannot defend against all of them. The computer suggests 16.♕f3 as the best: 16...♗d4† 17.♖f2 ♗xf2† 18.♕xf2 ♕g5† 19.♔h1 ♖a3 Besides the extra pawn, Black has a nice mating attack to comfort him, but now chess history would have to be written without including his name.

11.♕xa3 ♗h6

This was the idea. We have finally arrived at our exercise.

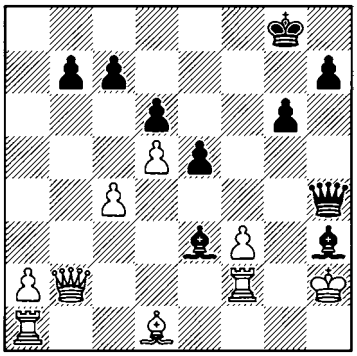
12.♗d1?

This is no defence at all. Black now wins mechanically.

12...♗f4 13.♕b2 ♕h4† 14.♔g1 ♗e3† 15.♖f2 ♗h3!

15...♕g3† 16.♔f1 ♗f5 and 17...♗d3 is also absolutely winning.

16.♔h2



16...♗f5†

Rogers was very happy with this decision, but beyond the obvious winning moves, Black had the very funny 16...♗f1†! 17.♔g1 ♕h3 with mate on the next move.

17.♔g1 ♕g3† 18.♔h1 ♗xf2 19.♗e2 ♕h3 mate.

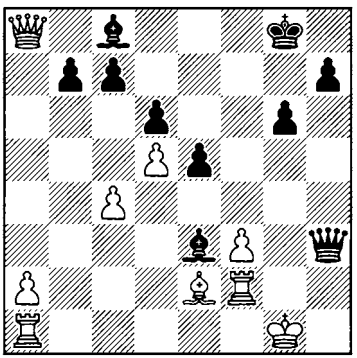
0–1

Two queen moves deserve to be considered as alternatives to the feeble 12th move.

a) **12.♕a8?**

This looks like a real attempt, but Black wins with a very nice manoeuvre.

12...♕h3† 13.♔g1 ♗e3† 14.♖f2



14...♔g7!!

A cool waiting move. The king will be able to escape to h6, and the white queen will not be able to give her check on c8, from where she could return to g4.

15.♖af1

White hopes to return some material.

15.♕b8 ♕g3† 16.♔h1 ♗h3! 17.♕xc7† ♔h6 and White has no defence.

15...♕g3† 16.♔h1 ♗h3!

16...♗xf2 17.♕xc8 and White defends.

17.♕d8 ♗xf2 18.♕e7† ♔h6 19.♕f8† ♔h5 20.f4† ♗g4 21.♗xg4† ♔xg4

White is utterly lost. Black can win a decisive amount of material in more ways than a linguist like me can count.

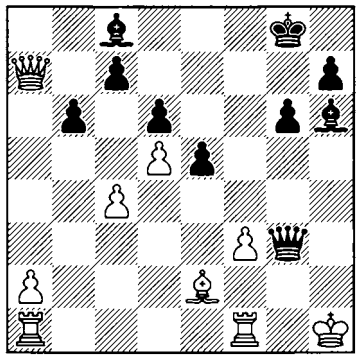
b) The solution is to attack the black king and to win a tempo by threatening to bring the queen home for the defence.

12.♕a7!!

This achieves exactly that.

12...b6

12...♗h3? 13.♕f2 and the attack is stopped.



13.♕b8!

Aimed against the king march we saw above.

13.♕a8? ♕h3† 14.♔g1 ♗e3† 15.♖f2 ♔g7! wins for Black. He will play ...♗f5 and then cash in on f2. Once he has regained the rook, his attack more than compensates for the remaining deficit of an exchange.

13.f4! also seems to make a draw. This move prevents the h6-bishop from entering the attack, and if the c8-bishop does, White has effective checks on b8 and c7.

13...♕h3† 14.♔g1 ♗e3† 15.♖f2 ♔g7 16.♕xc7† ♔h6

White has won some time over variation a.

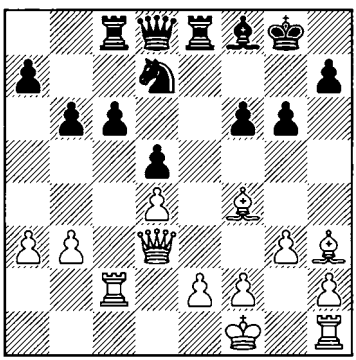
17.♕xd6

With the threat of 18.♕xe5 and the idea that: **17...♕g3† 18.♔h1 ♗xf2 19.♕f8† ♔h5 20.♕xc8**

forces Black to take a perpetual check as quickly as possible.

How this exercise could have been solved: I am not sure how difficult it is to see that only the queen can come to the aid of the king. I would suspect that this realisation should come fairly early on. Then you know what to do, it is just a matter of how to do it. A close look will probably reveal that f2 or g1 are available from a7.

139 Topalov – J. Polgar
Wijk aan Zee 2005



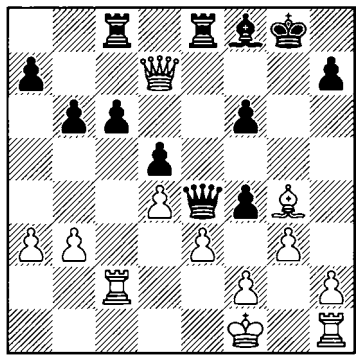
White is probably very slightly better in this typical Queen's Indian Defence position. A normal plan would be 1.♔g2 and 2.♖hc1. Somehow it occurred to Topalov to exploit the weaknesses on the kingside with h2-h4-h5. Though positionally sound, the execution was rather unfortunate.

1.e3 ♕e7 2.♗g4 g5!

Judit Polgar did not hesitate to grab her chance. Topalov now resigned himself to losing a piece, never suspecting that a miraculous drawing combination existed.

3.♕f5 gxf4 4.gxf4?

White could have held the game with 4.♕xd7, which is met with 4...♕e4. This must be the move Topalov missed earlier. Soon word of a defence spread through the Internet community.



5.♖g1!! The key move. Now after 5...♕xc2 6.♗f5 Black has two ways to play the position:

a) 6...♕d1† 7.♔g2 ♕h5 Black looks on top, but we should check for options at the end of the lines. 8.♗e6† ♔h8 9.♗f7 ♖ed8 Now 10.♕xc8! with a drawish endgame. Not 10.♕xd8? ♕f5!!.

b) 6...♖c7!? 7.gxf4† ♔h8 8.♕xe8 ♕d1† 9.♔g2 ♖g7† 10.♔h3 ♕xg1 11.♕xf8† ♖g8 12.♕xf6† ♕g7!? I am not sure that Black should persist in trying to claim an advantage. Maybe a draw is for the common good? 13.♕xg7† ♖xg7 14.b4 ♖g1 15.♗d7 ♖c1 16.♔g4 with chances for both sides.

Critical is Mark Dvoretsky's 5...fxe3:

a) 5.♗f5? e2†! (5...♖c7 6.♕xc7 ♕xf5 7.♖e2! with unclear play) 6.♔e1 ♖c7 7.♗xe4! (7.♕xc7? loses to 7...♕xf5 8.♕xc6 ♖e6! 9.♕c8 ♔f7 10.♕c7† ♔g6 11.♕c3 ♗xa3 12.g4 ♕f4 13.♖g3 ♗b4 14.♕xb4 ♕e4) 7...♖xd7 8.♗f5 ♗xa3 9.♖xe2 ♗b4† 10.♔d1 ♖de7 11.♖xe7 ♖xe7 Black wins.

b) 5.♖e2! ♖cd8 6.♖xe3 ♕xd4 (6...♖xd7 7.♖xe4 ♖xe4 8.♗xd7 ♗xa3 9.♗xc6 ♖xd4 10.♔e2 is not too bad) 7.♗e6† ♔h8 8.♕f7 ♗c5 9.♕c7!! ♗d6 ♖f8 10.♗f5 ♕d1† 11.♔g2 ♕h5 12.g4 ♕h4 13.♖g3 with unclear play) 10.♕xc6 ♗xa3 11.♔g2 White is slightly worse.

4...♔h8 5.♖g1 ♖c7

Black went on to win the game.

How this exercise could have been solved: You should go beneath the surface and analyse the lines to the end. It takes patience and hard work, but if you are willing to pay your dues, you should be able to find this amazing resource.

140 Ivanchuk – Lautier
Monaco (blindfold) 1999

Ivanchuk solved all his problems with a wonderful combination:

1.♘h6†! ♔h8

1...gxh6 2.♕g4† ♔h8 3.♖xb3 is better for White. No knight on d4 and weak pawns to target.

2.♖f3!

2.♘f7†?! is possible, but after 2...♖xf7 3.♖c3 ♕e8 4.♖xb3 a5, White still has some problems. The Black pawns are not weak in this line, but b4 is. Still, this is better than if Black had been able to put a knight on d4.

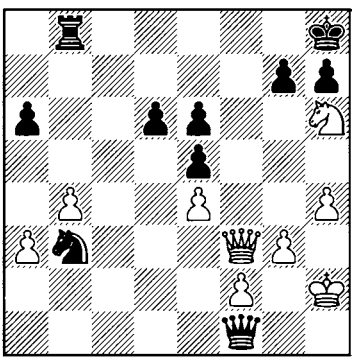
2...♖xf3 3.♕xf3 ♕xf1†

Did you see this? If not count yourself lucky – but don't count the exercises as solved.

4.♔h2

Of course not 4.♔xf1 ♘d2† and Black wins.

4...♖b8



5.♕f7!!

Accompanied with a draw offer that was accepted. Black has to take the knight, after which the king cannot escape perpetual check.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The first thing you need to realise is that the pin from b5 to e2 is a major cause of concern. The check on h6 then springs to mind. After the king moves, the rook to f3 becomes a logical idea, trying to make mating threats on the back rank. The real challenge is not to give up the search after 3...♕xf1†, but first allow Black to show how he wants to avoid mate. From then on it should not be so hard.

141 Epishin – Tregubov
St Petersburg 2004 (analysis)

We are revisiting this game, where Fritz whispered a little improvement in the ear of Rustam Dautov.

1...♖g6!

It is my claim that no other move suffices.

1...♖f5? 2.♖xe6 ♖xg5 3.♖xe7 ♖xg2† 4.♔xg2 ♘c3† 5.♔g3 ♘xb1 6.♖e2 and White is an exchange up with quite decent winning chances.

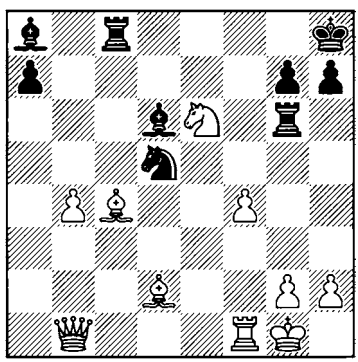
1...♕e8? 2.♖xe6 ♕g8 (2...♕h5 3.♗xd5 ♗xd5 4.♖xf6 gxf6 5.♕f5 and White is threatening more or less everything) 3.♗xd5 ♗xd5 4.♖xf6 gxf6 5.♕a1 With an extra pawn and pleasant pressure for White.

1...g6? 2.♕a1! (2.♕b2? is wrong because of 2...♗xb4! when after 3.♗xb4 ♕xb4 White does not have time to play 4.♗xd5, as he would after 2.♕a1) 2...♔g8 (2...♗xb4 3.♗xb4!) 3.♖fe1 and life is really unpleasant for Black.

2.♖xe6

It is hard to find a better move for White. 2.♖fe1 is met strongly with 2...♘xf4 (though 2...♕b7!? is also OK) 3.♗xf4 ♖xg5 4.♗xg5 ♕xg5 and White needs to look for a draw with 5.♗xe6.

2...♕xe6! 3.♘xe6



3...♖xg2†!

The combination that was prepared by 1...♖g6.

4.♔xg2

4.♔h1?? ♘c3 and Black wins.

4...♘c3† 5.♔f2 ♘xb1 6.♖xb1 ♖xc4

The endgame looks rather drawish.

How this exercise could have been solved: Another of those exercises where you cannot prevent the opponent's combination, but you can position yourself for it.

142 N.N. – C. MacDonald
Glasgow 2005

This example is taken from a game my student Chris MacDonald played in a Glasgow League one-hour game, so I do not want you to be too hard on him for not finding the best defence. I have not been able to find out the name of his opponent. Chris cannot remember, nor find the scoresheet…

Chris played:

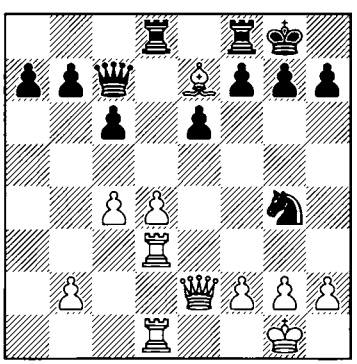
1...♕c7?

which should have lost by force.

1...♘d5 was possible. The cheeky 2.♗h6 is met by 2...♘c7 and nothing is achieved. Instead White can play 2.cxd5 ♗xg5 3.dxe6, when the position might be slightly easier to play for White, but that is about it.

1...♔h8 is met strongly with 2.♘xf6 (2.♖h3? ♖xd4! and White's attack is not strong enough) 2...♗xf6 3.♗xf6 gxf6 4.♕h5 ♖g8 5.♕xf7 and the discomfort is with Black.

The correct solution is "falling for the pin" like a beginner with 1...♘xg4! 2.♗xe7 ♕c7!!.



Black is a pawn up for very dubious compensation and a likely winner of the game.

2.♘xf6† ♗xf6 3.♗xf6 gxf6 4.♕g4†?

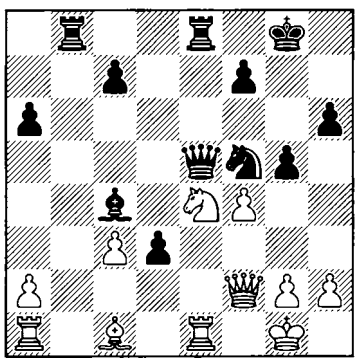
Chris had predicted 4.♕h5 which he wanted to answer with 4...♕f4, but he had completely missed the threat to the queen with 5.♖f3!, when Black has no other decent approach to the position except resigning.

4...♔h8 5.♕h4

Black was suffering, but, through mutual assistance, the players managed to turn this game into a draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: If you look for candidates, you should at least take a short look at taking on g4. If you do not look, you will never see...

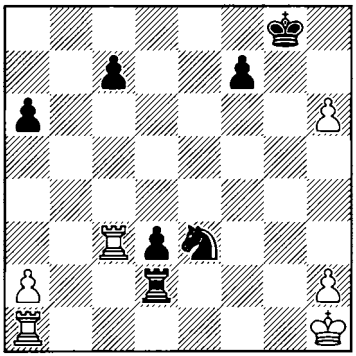
143 Martin del Campo – Hjartarson
Novi Sad (ol) 1990



White was in trouble after a brutal queen sacrifice.

1...♕xe4!?

But 1...♕g7 was probably even stronger. The point is that after 2.fxg5 ♖xe4! 3.♖xe4 ♕xc3, White is in serious trouble as well. Hjartarson found the only defence in 4.♗b2! ♕xb2 (4...♖xb2? 5.♕xf5 and Black only has 5...♖e2, preventing mate, but allowing an attack after 6.♖b1!) 5.♕xb2 ♖xb2 6.♖xc4 with "unclear play". This is not completely correct. After 6...♘e3 7.♖c3! (7.♖xc7 d2 8.♖d7 ♖c2! and Black wins) 7...♖xg2† 8.♔h1 ♖d2 White is struggling, based on 9.gxh6?!



9...♖d1†!! 10.♖xd1 ♘xd1 and White cannot stop the d-pawn without losing his rook.

2.♖xe4 ♖xe4 3.fxg5 ♖e2!

Prepared in advance. Without this move the combination did not make sense. Now we have arrived at our exercise.

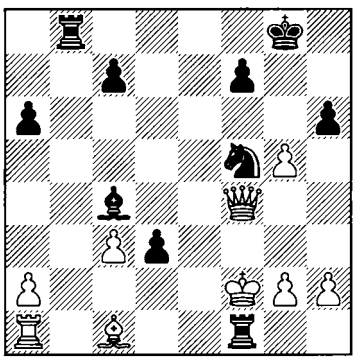
4.♕f4?

The losing mistake in a difficult position.

4.♕c5 is refuted by 4...♖e1† 5.♔f2 ♖f1†! 6.♔xf1 d2† 7.♔f2 d1=♕ 8.♕xc4 ♖e8 9.♕f1. All absolutely forced, transposing back to the game. Note that 9.gxh6 ♕e1† 10.♔f3 ♘h4† loses the queen.

4.♕f1 is too passive. 4...♖be8 5.♗f4 ♗d5 6.g3 (otherwise 6...♘h4) 6...d2 7.♗xd2 ♖g2† and Black will be a piece up in the endgame, or win in some other way.

4...♖e1† 5.♔f2 ♖f1†!



6.♔xf1 d2† 7.♕xc4 d1=♕†!?

7...dxc1=♕† 8.♖xc1 ♘e3† and the immediate 7...♘e3† both won easily, but the game is convincing enough.

8.♔f2 ♖e8 9.♕f1

9.gxh6 ♕e1† 10.♔f3 ♘h4† 11.♔g4 ♖e4† and Black still wins.

9...♕c2† 10.♔g1 ♘h4

With the threat of 11...♖e1!.

11.♗f4 ♖e2 12.♔h1 ♕e4 13.g6

Black also wins after the best possible defence: 13.♖d1 ♖xg2 14.♖d8† ♔h7 15.♕d3 (15.♖d4 ♖f2†!) 15...♕xd3 16.♖xd3 ♖f2! 17.♗e3 ♖f3! 18.♖d4 ♖f1† 19.♗g1 ♖xg1† 20.♔xg1 ♘f3† 21.♔f2 ♘xd4 22.cxd4 hxg5 The pawn endgame is an elementary win.

13...♖xg2 14.gxf7† ♔xf7

0–1

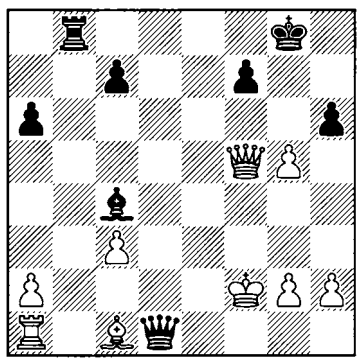
The only defence was to take the knight.

4.♕xf5! ♖e1† 5.♔f2

Black is of course still planning the rook check:

5...♖f1†! 6.♔xf1 d2† 7.♔f2 d1=♕

Now White should be able to keep his position together with accurate play, probably starting with:



8.♕e4!

8.♕f3? is the only move according to Hjartarson, but 8...♕f1† 9.♔g3 ♕e1†! 10.♕f2 ♕xc3† picks up the a1-rook.

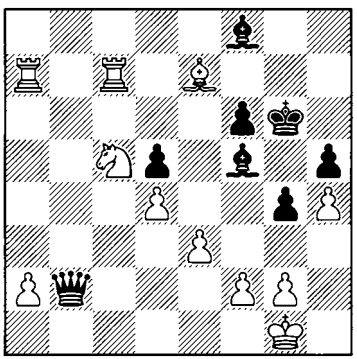
8.♕e5!? ♕c2† 9.♔g3 ♖b6 and it is not so easy for White to continue, due to ...♖e6-e2.

8...♕f1† 9.♔g3 hxg5 10.h3

I cannot see why White should be much worse here. A draw is likely after good play.

How this exercise could have been solved: This exercise is based on the standard method of elimination. You go through the various options and try to refute them one by one. At the end you will only find one that does not lose. This is your move.

144 Kostic – Dumpor
Yugoslavia 1986



Everything apparently looks as if it is going White's way. He has a material advantage and an attack going. However Black managed to turn the game around with a brilliant resource, and not only save the game, but shamelessly steal it from his, no doubt disappointed, opponent.

1...g3! 2.fxg3 ♗h3!!

Weaker is 2...♗h6 when after 3.♗xf6! ♗xe3† 4.♔h2 ♕c1 5.♖g7† ♔h6 6.♗g5† White wins.

3.gxh3 ♗h6!

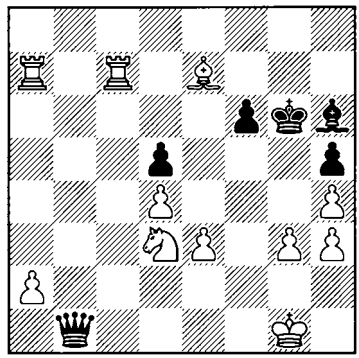
The start of the exercise. It looks at first sight as if it is Black who is struggling for equality, but a closer look shows that White's behind is in trouble.

4.♘d3!

Worse is 4.♔f1? ♕c1†! 5.♔e2 ♕xe3† 6.♔f1 ♕c1† 7.♔g2 ♕d2† 8.♔f1 ♗e3 and nothing sensible can be done about the threat of mate.

4...♕b1†!

The most testing. 4...♗xe3† 5.♔f1 ♕d2 6.♖a3 ♕d1† 7.♘e1 ♗d2 also looks dangerous, but here too White can defend. The best way is 8.♖f3! ♗xe1 (8...f5 9.♖c6† ♔h7 10.♔g2 ♗xe1 11.♖e6 and White is no worse) 9.♖xf6† ♔g7 10.♗d8†! ♔g8 and now White can draw as he likes. And 11.♔g2!? might even give him an advantage?



5.♘c1?

Out of four possibilities that must be calculated, White fails to find the one that would have saved the game. Actually, logic and a limited amount of calculation could have solved this task.

5.♔h2? does not work. The king is caught in the corner. Black wins after 5...♗xe3 6.♘f4† ♔f5.

5.♔f2? ♕xd3 Black has a winning attack. The check on e3 will hurt.

5.♔g2!! was the only move. White is out of the checks and at the same time not caught in the corner. 5...♕xd3! (5...♗xe3? 6.♗c5 ♕xd3 7.♖g7† ♔h6 [7...♔f5 8.g4†] 8.♖h7† ♕xh7 9.♖xh7† ♔xh7 10.a4 and 1–0) 6.♖c6! This is the point. The check on f6 is so powerful that Black cannot survive it. And as the king in moving only on light squares, the bishop cannot enter the attack. 6...♕e2† 7.♔h1 Black has perpetual check, but no more. After 7...♗g7!? White should have plenty of good moves, most obviously 8.♗xf6! ♗xf6 9.♖aa6. Black should really not delay the perpetual check anymore.

5...♗xe3† 6.♔h1

6.♔f1 ♕f5† and Black wins.

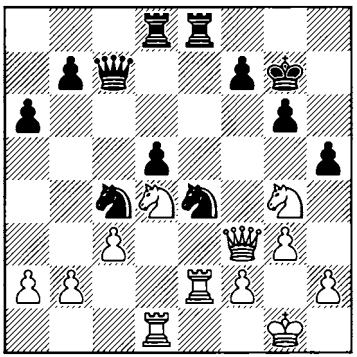
6...♕f5

White has no defence against mate.

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: Unforcing thinking is obligatory, of course. It is not too difficult to see that the knight should come to the aid of the king, but to subsequently give it up for a tempo is counterintuitive. But if you have gone through the previous exercises in this book, such a contradiction should not be a stumbling block for you.

145 Kapengut – Begun
USSR 1977



White went for it all with an exchange sacrifice.

1.♖xe4! hxg4?

We will look at the alternatives below.

2.♖xg4 ♘xb2 3.♘f5† ♔f8 4.♘h4! ♖e6?!

4...♘xd1?? 5.♘xg6† ♔g8 6.♘e7† ♔f8 7.♕f6! with mate is a nice line.

But more relevant was the calm 4...♔g7 5.♖xd5 ♖xd5 6.♕xd5 where White has the advantage, but Black also has some counterplay because of the weak first rank and the disorganised white forces.

5.♖dd4?!

White plays very clearly for the draw here. But actually he could have caused Black a lot of trouble. Strongest is probably 5.♖xg6! with the idea 5...♘xd1 6.♖xe6 ♕xc3 7.♕f4! and White's attack simply cannot be stopped. One line to illustrate this is 7...♖c8 8.♘g6† ♔g7 9.♕g5!! and mate can only be postponed a few moves. Best is therefore 5...♖xg6 6.♘xg6† ♔g7 7.♖b1 fxg6 8.♖xb2, though White remains a clear pawn up.

Also 5.♖d2 ♘c4 6.♖e2 ♖xe2 7.♘xg6† winning a pawn was an option.

5...♕c6 6.♖g5?

6.♕f4! would still offer White a clear advantage as pointed out by Mark Dvoretsky.

6...♘c4! 7.♖gxd5 ♖xd5 8.♖xd5 ♖e1† 9.♔g2 ♘e5 10.♖d8† ♔e7 11.♕xc6 ♘xc6 12.♘f3 ♖a1 13.♖d2 ♖c1 14.♖e2† ♔f8

Black has a lot of compensation for the pawn, so, unable to find any way to make progress, White conceded a draw.

½–½

Better was the equal 1...♖xe4!? 2.♕f6† ♔f8! as discovered by Mark Dvoretsky, or to follow the line of thought of the players and revel in wild complications:

1...dxe4!?

when White was intending to continue with:

2.♕f6† ♔h7 3.♘f5!

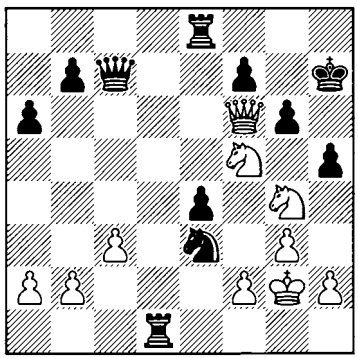
Black is faced with mate and can only save himself with a great perpetual check.

3...♖xd1†

The only move, but maybe not too difficult. I gave exactly this position, allowing for confusion to invade you. Sorry about that.

3...♖g8? 4.♕g5 ♖xd1† 5.♔g2 ♘e3† does not transpose. White wins after 6.♘fxe3! hxg4 7.♘xg4 and mate cannot be averted.

4.♔g2 ♘e3†!!



Only like this. 4...♖g8? 5.♕g5 transposes to 3...♖g8.

5.fxe3

5.♘gxe3 gxf5! (5...♖g8?! 6.♘xd1 gxf5 7.♕xf5† gives White two pawns for the exchange and also play against the black king. I think White is a little better, and so Black should clearly prefer the forced draw.) 6.♘xf5 ♕e5! and White does not have more than perpetual check. 7.♕h6† ♔g8 8.♕g5† and so on.

5.♘fxe3? ♖d6 6.♕g5 hxg4 gives White nothing to show for his now substantial material deficit.

5...♖g8!

Black should be careful not to delay the protection of g7 till it is too late. After 5...♖d2† 6.♔g1 ♖d1† 7.♔f2 ♖d2† 8.♔e1 ♖g8 White can suddenly play 9.♔xd2 ♕c4 (9...♕d8† does not work here, as the white queen is protected. After 10.♔c1 hxg4 11.♕xf7† ♔h8 12.♘e7 Black is busted.) 10.b3 ♕d3† 11.♔c1 ♕f1† 12.♔b2 ♕xf5 13.♕xf5 gxf5 14.♘f6† ♔g7 15.♘xg8 ♔xg8. The pawn endgame is a disaster for Black. White can easily create a passed pawn on the queenside, while Black can do no such thing on the kingside. Easiest is 16.♔a3 ♔f8 17.♔b4 winning.

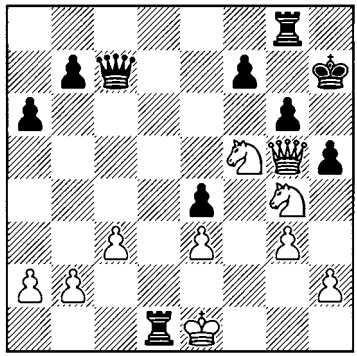
6.♕g5

White needs to renew his threats. Naturally, Black should have seen this coming and prepared his defence.

6...♖d2† 7.♔g1

7.♔f1?? ♕c4†!

7...♖d1† 8.♔f2 ♖d2† 9.♔e1 ♖d1†!!



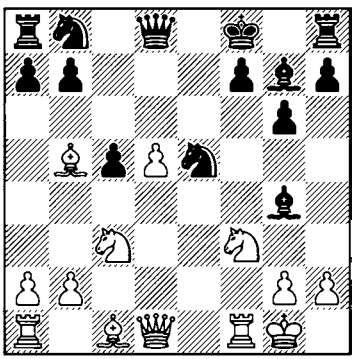
White cannot make progress because of 10.♔xd1?? ♕d8† and Black wins.

How this exercise could have been solved: The great challenge of the exercise is to change the move order between ...♖g8 and ...♘e3†, but then if you look closely at 4...♖g8 and find the problem, you might consider doing this. But, first of all, you have to find the idea of the perpetual.

Chapter 10

Solutions to Level 3

146 J.C. Perez – M.A. Gonzalez
Havana 1993



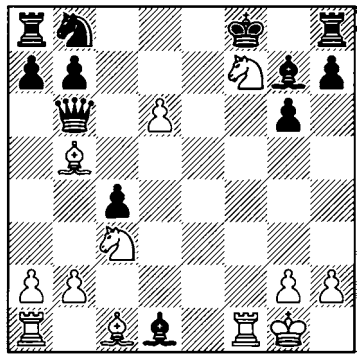
White played a beautiful combination and won convincingly. And now a snotty snoring lousy chess writer has to come along a dozen years later and point out that there is a minor flaw in the analysis given with the game...

1.♘xe5!

A natural queen sacrifice for any attacking player.

1...♗xd1 2.♘xf7 ♕h4!

The best move, although White now won in style. Against 2...♕b6 he had planned 3.d6? based on a long elegant mating line. Unfortunately, Black can throw a spanner in the works with 3...c4†!!.



Part one of a two-move sequence. (3...♘c6 4.♘e5† ♔e8 5.d7† ♔d8 6.♗g5† and White wins. 3...♗e2 4.♗xe2 also makes little sense.) 4.♔h1 ♗e2!! This is the stunner. White has no sensible way to continue. 5.♘xe2 (5.d7 ♗xf1 6.d8=♕† ♕xd8 7.♘xd8 a6 8.♗a4 b5 and Black is simply material up. There are still a lot of complications, but it is clear that the flow is with Black.) 5...♕xb5 6.d7 (6.♘xh8† ♔g8 7.♘f7 ♘d7 and Black wins) 6...♕xd7! 7.♘e5† ♕f5 8.♖xf5† gxf5 and Black is a clear exchange up.

Instead of all this, better is 3.♘h6† ♔e7 4.♗g5† ♔d6 5.♗f4† ♔e7 6.♖e1† ♔d8 7.♘f7† ♔c8 8.♘xh8 and White wins trivially.

3.♗g5! ♕d4† 4.♔h1 ♗c2 5.♖ae1!

Bring all the toys to the nursery party!

5...♘a6?

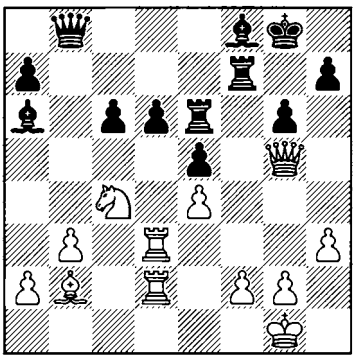
5...♗f5 was better, but after 6.♘d8! Black is still in trouble. Play could continue 6...♘c6!? 7.♘e6† ♔g8 8.♘xd4 ♘xd4 and Black still has some chances of survival.

6.♘h6† ♗f5 7.♗e7 mate.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: We have arrived at the toughest exercises in this book and this question will be increasingly difficult for me to answer. In this exercise the main way to survive is to find some way of distracting the white pieces from the attack on the king. Thematically, we are talking about a desperado defence.

147 Becerra Rivero – Spangenberg
Matanzas 1994



White won the game with a tricky sacrifice against which his opponent did not know how to react.

1.♘xd6?!

But actually 1.♖xd6! was the correct way to eliminate the defence of the dark squares. Black has nothing better than 1...♗xd6 2.♘xd6 ♖d7. White can try 3.♘f5 ♖xd2 4.♘h6† ♔g7 5.♕xd2 when 6.♘g4 will give him a fantastic attack and probably a winning position.

1...♖xd6?

This fails, as do the following alternatives:

1...h6? 2.♕g3 does not improve Black's position at all.

1...♗e7? 2.♕g3 ♗xd6 (2...♖xd6 3.♕xe5 and all fall down) 3.♖xd6 ♖xd6 4.♕xe5 ♖ff6 5.♖xd6 ♕xd6 6.♕xf6 and White should win this endgame without too much trouble.

1...♗xd3? 2.♘xf7 ♗xe4 (2...♔xf7 3.♖xd3 and Black cannot prevent a direct invasion. Oh yes, and he has lost his d-pawn for nothing.) 3.♖d8 ♕b4 This leads to a nice mate, but Black is lost all the same. (3...♕c7 4.♘h6† ♔g7 5.♘g4 and ♗xe5† will decide) 4.♘h6† ♔g7 5.♖d7† ♗e7 6.♗xe5† ♔f8 7.♖d8†! ♗xd8 8.♕xd8† ♖e8 9.♕f6 mate.

1...♖d7?! is best met with 2.♕g4! ♖ee7 3.♗xe5 ♗xd3 4.♖xd3 ♕d8 5.♗g3. White is completely dominating and should win. The point is that after 2.♘c4?! ♖xd3 3.♖xd3 ♗xc4 4.♖d8 ♕b6! (4...♕b4 5.♕c1! is pretty, but irrelevant) 5.♗a3 c5 6.bxc4 ♕a5 7.♗b2 ♕e1† 8.♔h2 ♕xe4 Black might be able to escape!?

2.♕xe5

White has a winning attack.

2...♖fd7

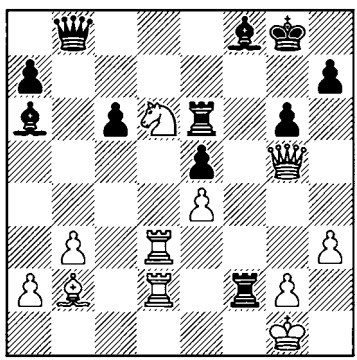
2...♖ff6 3.♖xd6 ♖xd6 4.♕h8† ♔f7 5.♗e5 and White wins. For example 5...♕b4 6.♕xf8†!.

3.♕h8† ♔f7 4.♖f3† ♔e7 5.♕g8

1–0

Black could have defended in this way:

1...♖xf2!!



2.♔xf2

2.♖xf2 does not seem to provide White with anything. The main line goes 2...♗xd3 3.♘f7 ♗c5 4.♘h6† ♔g7 5.♘g4 ♗xf2† 6.♘xf2 ♕b6

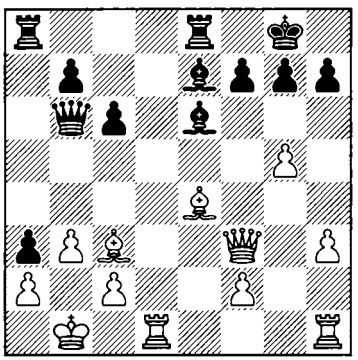
with fairly even chances, though the position is very complicated of course.

2...♗xd3 3.♖xd3 ♗xd6

Black is a little worse, and a player like Karpov would squeeze you in his characteristic unfriendly technical style for hours. But I think most players would consider Black's chances for a draw reasonable. Whatever the debate about this final position would bring, it is clear that it holds the only chance Black has for surviving the game.

How this exercise could have been solved: Trial and error. Once it becomes clear that normal moves do not work, Black will be on the lookout for something extra. With a bit of luck, you will realise what Black did not in the game: that it is actually a desperado position, where White is planning to take on f7. So by taking on f2 you will gain an extra pawn. This is the key to the position. I am not entirely sure how you could solve it without this realisation.

148 V. Ivanov – Hermlin
Helsinki 1996



White began with a great Greek Gift sacrifice, but then decided he would be better off with a double bishop sacrifice. In practice it led to victory, but there was a major flaw in his calculations.

1.♗xh7†! ♔xh7 2.♕h5† ♔g8 3.♗xg7?

White could have won pretty straight forwardly with 3.♖d4! ♗xg5 (3...♗xb3?! 4.♖h4! and White will win) 4.♕xg5 f6 5.♕g6 ♗f7 6.♕g3 and the attack is murderous.

3...♔xg7 4.♕h6† ♔g8 5.g6 ♗g5?

Here only one defence existed. But there were several points to it that had to be foreseen.

6.♕h7† ♔f8 7.♖d7!

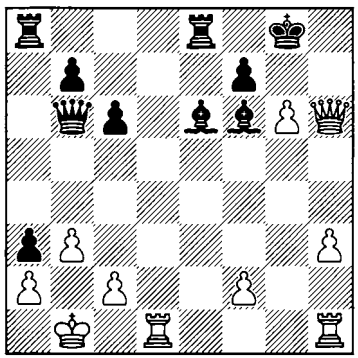
Black is busted.

7...♕xb3†!? 8.axb3! a2† 9.♔b2 ♗f6† 10.c3 ♗g7 11.gxf7 ♗xf7 12.♕d3! b5 13.♕f3 ♖e7 14.♖xe7 ♔xe7 15.♕xc6

1–0

The correct defence starts with a seemingly standard move.

5...♗f6!



This defends vital squares and attacks the white king.

6.♖d7!

6.g7 loses to the prettiest sacrifice of all: 6...♕xb3†!! 7.cxb3 ♗f5† 8.♔c1 ♗b2† 9.♔d2 ♖ad8† with mate next move.

6...♗g7!

6...♖e7?? 7.♖xe7 ♕d4 does not work. White has 8.♕h7† ♔f8 9.♖xf7†! with mate coming on the next move.

7.♕h7†

7.gxf7† ♗xf7 8.♖g1 ♖e1†!

7...♔f8 8.gxf7

Now Black has two ways to claim the point.

8...♗xd7

Possibly simplest. 8...♗xf7 9.♖g1 also wins for Black after the decoy 9...♖e1†!! 10.♖xe1 ♕xf2 11.♕e4 ♔g8 when White does not really have anything going for him. Still, practical problems exist.

9.♕g8† ♔e7 10.♕xg7 ♖f8

I cannot find anything very dangerous here.

11.♕g5† ♔xf7 12.♖d1 ♗e6 13.♕f4† ♔e8 14.♕e5 ♕b4 15.♕xe6† ♕e7

The attack seems to have been denied.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a matter of accurate calculation. I have a feeling that Black only saw the possibility of a queen sacrifice on b3 after he had decided where to put the bishop.

149 Otero – Rivera
Cuba 2002

The situation is clearly drastic, but to resign prematurely will only make you a target for writers with no sensitivity to your troubles!

1.♗xf4!

The way to go. White is aiming for stalemate and preventing the mate on the way.

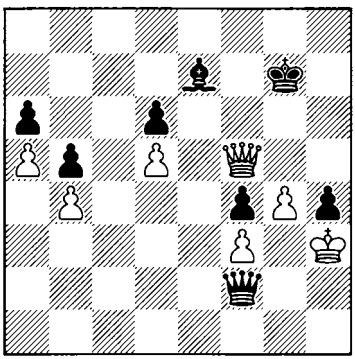
1.♖g8†? ♔xg8 2.♗xf4 ♔g7! does not transpose. Instead, White will be squeezed.

1...exf4 2.♖g8†! ♔xg8 3.♕g6† ♔f8

3...♔h8? 4.♕e8† and suddenly White wins.

4.♕f5† ♔g7

4...♔e8 5.♕c8† also draws.



5.♕g5†!

The main point. If the bishop takes, the g-pawn is blocked and we have the stalemate. Black decided to accept a perpetual instead.

5...♔f7 6.♕h5† ♔f8 7.♕f5†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: We have to dig deep into our box of defensive tools. A couple of our favourite tools are perpetual check and stalemate, and in this exercise a combination of the two of them is enough to save the game.

150 Lenic – Predojevic
Portoroz 2005

Black really does not have many choices here. Either he plays 1...♖h4 with a possible draw, or he goes for it. The latter takes very accurate calculation.

1...exf3!! 2.♖f7† ♔g5!

2...♔e5? 3.♖xf4 fxg2 4.♖g4 is another story; a bad tragicomedy?

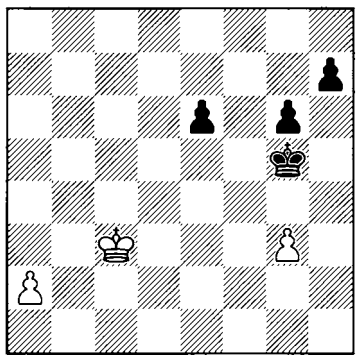
3.♖xf4

3.h4†! was actually the best chance. After 3...♖xh4 4.♖xf3 e5 Black should probably win, but, with the a-pawn in reserve, White can still fight for a draw.

3...fxg2 4.♖f3

Hopefully you saw this. Otherwise return to Level 1 (just kidding – go to Warming Up!).

4...g1=♕ 5.♖g3† ♕xg3† 6.hxg3



6...♔f6!!

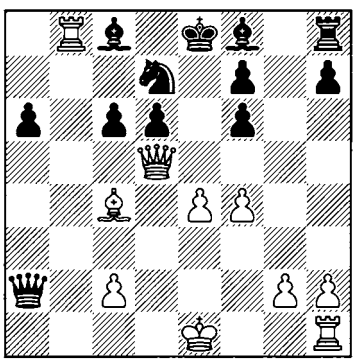
This is the major point of the exercise. The king needs to stop the a-pawn. It leaves behind three against one. It would be a mistake to play the automatic 6...♔f5??, as White now wins with 7.g4†!! ♔e5 (7...♔xg4 8.a4 and the white pawn comes first) 8.g5. The black king will have

to go to the queenside, and the white king will scoop up the black pawns in the meantime.
7.a4 ♔e5 8.g4 h5 9.gxh5 gxh5 10.♔d3 ♔d5 11.♔e3 ♔c5
0-1

How this exercise could have been solved: It is tempting to take on f3, as it is a simple combination to start out with. But by looking for candidates at the end (after taking on g2) you should see that there is more to calculate. It is important not to lose hope. The same goes for when you see 7.g4†. It is always important to have an extra look so you do not rely on first impressions, but actually think.

151 Najdorf analysis

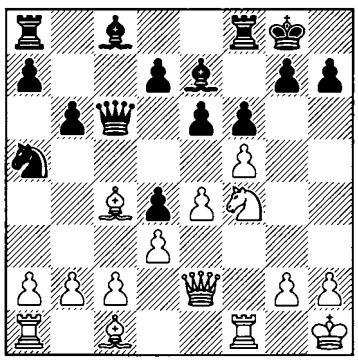
Black has few options, but needs to calculate the lines correctly nonetheless.
1...exd5
Absolutely forced, but also dangerous. After something passive like 1...♗e7 2.♘c7† ♔f8 White can play 3.0–0 or 3.f5!? with a crushing attack.
2.♕xd5 bxc6
The only follow-up, as otherwise 3.♕xf7† hurts.
3.♖xb8



3...♕b1†!!
The great point behind the exercise. After this Black ends up with a material advantage. If instead 3...♕a1†?! then 4.♔f2 cxd5 5.♖xc8† ♔e7 6.♖xa1 dxc4 7.♖xa6 looks more or less equal. And 3...cxd5? 4.♖xc8† ♔e7 5.♗xa2 dxe4 would leave White with a clear positional advantage. I greatly doubt that Black can survive such an endgame.
4.♖xb1 cxd5 5.♗xd5
Black is clearly better and can either develop normally or play:
5...f5!? 6.exf5 ♘f6 7.♖b8 ♘xd5 8.♖xc8† ♔d7
With the advantage.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first few moves are not too difficult, as long as the double threat after White's third move does not scare you. However, at some point imagination will have to supersede resignation, and that is the hard bit.

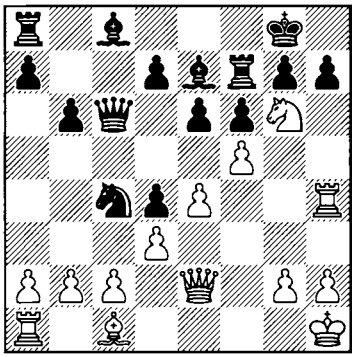
152 Arnold – Natsis
Groningen 1978



White came up with a standard piece sacrifice.
1.♘g6!? ♖f7?
The rook could be said to be protecting g7 and the seventh rank in general, but actually it is just placed awkwardly here; especially as hxg6 seems to be a necessity sooner or later. By the way, 1...hxg6 2.fxg6 ♕c5 3.♗d5 is a simple win for White.
2.♖f4 ♘xc4
Other possibilities:
2...exf5? loses to 3.♘xe7†.
2...♕c5 3.♖h4! hxg6 4.fxg6 shows just how silly the rook is on f7. Note that 4...♗d6 is met with 5.♖h5! ♗e5 6.♖h7 ♗d6 7.♗d5! and the queen will be able to enter the attack with deadly effect.

2...h6 allows 3.♖h4 followed by 4.♗xh6 winning.

3.♖h4!



Threatening to take on h7.

3...h6 4.♗xh6! gxh6 5.♖xh6

Black resigned. The attack cuts straight through.

1–0

1...♖e8!

This was the better defence. White should probably just take on e7 with slightly better chances. But let us instead have a look at the two main attacking options to show that Black has appropriate defensive resources when the rook is on e8.

2.♖f4

2.♕h5 ♘xc4 3.♖f4 with the plan 4.♖h4 winning was Bozic's comment. Actually Black is OK in several ways here. 3...exf5! (3...♗d6!? 4.♖h4 hxg6 5.♕xg6 ♘e5!! [5...♖f8? 6.♖h7 ♖f7 7.♗h6 ♗f8 8.♗g5!! fxg5 9.♕h5 g6 10.♕xg6† ♗g7 11.f6 and Black is mated] 6.♕xe8† ♗f8 and the white attack does not seem to be sufficiently strong to compensate for the sacrificed material.) 4.♘h8! (4.exf5 ♗b7 and the tide is going the wrong way) 4...♘e5! (4...♗f8?! 5.♖h4 h6 6.♕f7† ♔xh8 7.♗xh6 gxh6 8.♕xe8 ♔g7 9.♖xh6! ♔xh6 10.♕xf8† with perpetual check) 5.♕xe8† ♗f8 6.♖h4 g5! and, amazingly, Black has everything covered.

2...♘xc4 3.♖h4

3.♕h5 transposes.

3...exf5

3...hxg6 4.fxg6 ♗d6 should also win.

4.♖xh7!?

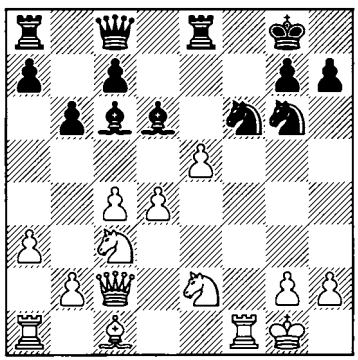
The best chance, but not enough.

4...♔xh7 5.♕h5† ♔g8 6.♕h8† ♔f7 7.♕h5 ♔e6 8.♕xf5† ♔f7 9.♕h5 ♕c5 10.♘h8† ♔g8 11.♕xe8† ♗f8

Black has repelled the attack.

How this exercise could have been solved: If you calculate possible lines with both rook moves, you should at some point decide to make a comparison, which will come out in favour of putting the rook on e8.

153 Karlsson – Palevich
Correspondence 1982



1...♖xe5??

This rook sacrifice looks attractive, but does not work. 1...♕g4! with a strong attack was much better.

2.dxe5

2.♖xf6 ♖xe2! and Black wins.

2...♗c5†

2...♕g4 3.♘f4 and White has the edge with his extra exchange.

3.♔h1

3.♖f2? ♘g4 is not the idea.

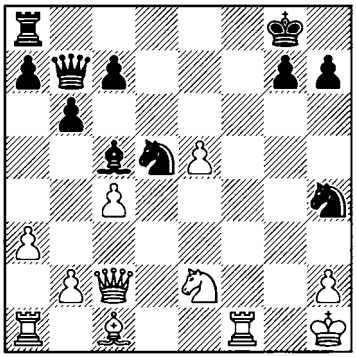
3...♗xg2†

Black is going all the way. 3...♕g4 4.♘f4 ♘xe5 5.♘cd5 and White is in control.

4.♔xg2 ♘h4† 5.♔h1

5.♔g3?? ♕g4 mate.

5...♕b7† 6.♘d5 ♘xd5



7.cxd5 ♕xd5†

White resigned.

0–1

All very pretty, except for 7.cxd5??. Instead 7.♕e4! would have stopped the attack and won the game.

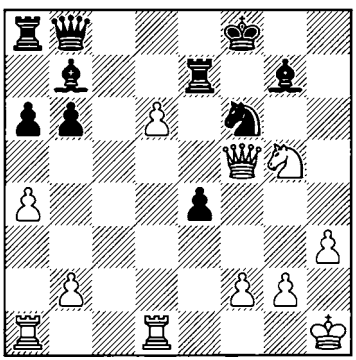
How this exercise could have been solved: Pure calculation with the ability to scan for candidates at each and every move should solve this exercise without too much fuss.

154 Greenfeld – Loeffler
Israel 1995

In this complicated position Black failed to find the only defence, mainly due to time trouble.

1...♗f6?

1...♘f6? loses to 2.d6, when we have three options:

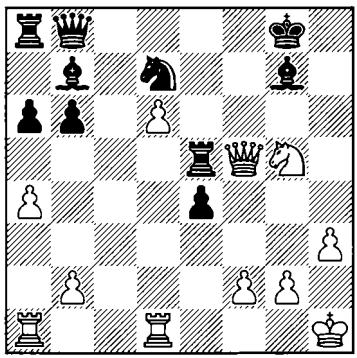


a) 2...♖e8 3.♘h7†! ♔g8 (3...♔f7 4.♖ac1 and Black has no defence) 4.♘xf6† ♗xf6 5.♕xf6 ♕d8 6.♕g6† ♔h8 7.♕h6† ♔g8 8.♖ac1 and Black cannot defend against 9.♖c7.

b) 2...♖f7 3.d7! ♖e7 4.♘e6† ♖xe6 5.d8=♕† ♕xd8 6.♖xd8† ♖xd8 7.♕xe6 and the endgame should be winning for White.

c) 2...♖d7 3.♘h7† ♔g8 4.♘xf6† ♗xf6 5.♕xd7 ♕c8 6.♕xc8† ♖xc8 7.♖ac1 and White is close to winning.

1...♔g8! was the only move. After 2.d6 ♖e5



White has a perpetual, but nothing else.

2.d6 ♖e5

2...♖g7 3.♘e6† and both g7 and d7 will fall.

3.♘h7†! ♔g7 4.♕xd7† ♔g6 5.♘xf6 ♔xf6 6.♖ac1

Black is a piece up, but his king is naked.

6...♗d5 7.♖xd5!

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: The method of elimination. The problem there is to see the knight check on h7. And, well, either you see it or you don't.

155 Janosevic – Velimirovic
Yugoslavia 1973

1...bxc6!

The only move. But the real difficulty is to continue playing accurately after White's reply. Alternatively, Black could go wrong with:

1...♕e1? 2.♖d5! and Black is lost.

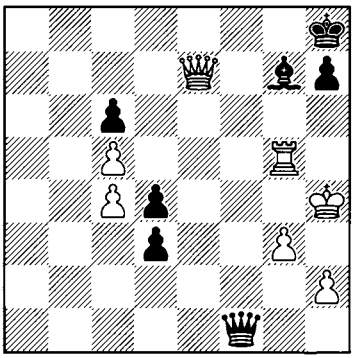
1...♕g1? 2.♗d5 ♖xh2† 3.♔g4 ♕d1† 4.♖f3 h5† 5.♔g5 ♕d2† 6.♖f4 and mate is comimg soon.

2.♖g5 ♖e7!

Forced, but nice. All other moves (besides 2...♕f1†) lead to mate.

3.♕xe7 ♕f1† 4.♔h4

4.♔g4?? ♕e2†!



4...♕f6!!

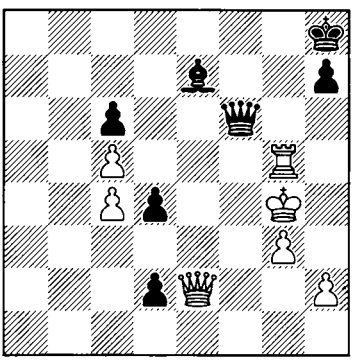
This forces a draw, but it is White who will need to find the good moves. The endgame after 4...♕f8? 5.♕xf8† ♗xf8 6.♖f5 ♗e7† 7.♔g4 d2 8.♖f1 ♗xc5 9.♔f3 ♗b4 10.♔e2 ♔g7 is very good for White. I think Black might be able to draw, but I wouldn't count on it. If White is to win he will have to create some kind of zugzwang like this: ♖c7, h7, ♔e2 vs. ♔h8, ♗b4, d2, d4, c5.

5.♕e8† ♗f8

6...h6 is threatened.

6.♔g4! d2 7.♕e2 ♗h6

Good enough for a draw, but 7...♗e7! would have given White a serious headache.



There are two ways for White to play, both of them leading to a troublesome draw.

8.♖h5 d3! 9.♕xd3 ♕f7 10.♕b1 ♗xc5! 11.♕d3 ♕xc4† 12.♕xc4 d1=♕† 13.♔h4 ♗e7† 14.♖g5 ♕d8 15.♕c1 h6 16.♕xc6 ♗xg5† 17.♔h5 This endgame is a draw. One point is that if the queens come off and White were to lose both his pawns, he would still make the draw.

8.h4 d1=♕! 9.♕xd1 ♕e6† 10.♔f3! (10.♔f4? would bring White a whole lot of trouble. 10...♗xg5† 11.hxg5 ♕xc4 and White is struggling to find a good defence. For instance: 12.♕e1 d3† 13.♔e3 ♕xc5† 14.♔xd3 ♕d5† 15.♔c2 ♕a2†!! White cannot avoid the exchange of queens, and the pawn endgame is lost – so Black wins.) 10...♗xg5 11.hxg5 ♕e3† 12.♔g2 and White survives.

8.♕e8†

Now it is just a repetition.

8...♗f8

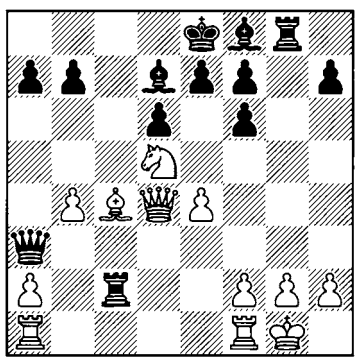
8...♕f8 9.♕e5† ♗g7 10.♕e2 ♕f6 11.♕e8† is also a draw.

9.♕e2

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The first three moves can be found by elimination. The fourth one, I guess, cannot be thought up, but has to be seen. Here, at what should be the critical position in your mind, a scan for candidates should solve the problems.

156 Botto – Christiansen
Buenos Aires 1975



In his book *Storming the Barricades*, Larry Christiansen uses this game as an example of when not to play "beautifully". He was tempted by a sparkling combination, but soon realised that it did not work because of a defence he had missed when he initiated the tactics. 30 years later it is still included in *Chess Informant*'s selection of combinations...

1...♖xg2†??

As Christiansen pointed out, Black would win easily with 1...♕f3 2.g3 ♗h3 when the same combination occurs, only with a rook more: 3.♗b5† ♔d8 4.♘e3 ♗h6 5.♕d1 ♕xe3! and Black wins because of 6.fxe3 (6.♕xc2 ♕f3) 6...♗xe3† 7.♖f2 ♖xf2 and mate will follow.

2.♔xg2 ♗h3† 3.♔g1 ♕f3 4.♘e3

4.♘f4 ♕g4† 5.♔h1 ♕xf4 and Black is absolutely winning.

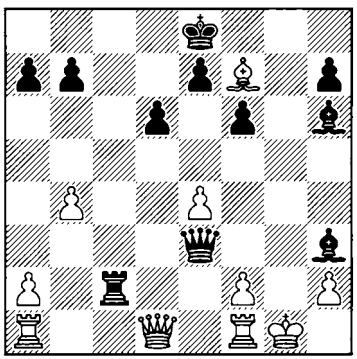
4...♗h6 5.♕d1!

5.♗b5† ♔d8 6.♕d1 ♕xe3 7.♕h5 is possible, but after the simple exchange of queens by 7...♕g5† 8.♕xg5 ♗xg5 the position is very bad for White. Black is dominating, and has two pawns for the exchange.

5...♕xe3! 6.♕d5?

Now Black wins easily. 6.♕h5?! ♕g5† is still bad for White, and 6.fxe3? ♗xe3† 7.♖f2 ♖xf2 is just mate.

But, to his horror, Christiansen noticed that White can play 6.♗xf7†!!:



a) 6...♔xf7 7.fxe3 ♗xe3† 8.♖f2 ♖xf2 9.♕b3†! and White wins. This is the first important difference.

b) 6...♔d8! 7.♕h5 ♕g5† (7...♗f4 8.fxe3 is a perpetual, as after 8...♗xe3†? 9.♖f2 ♖xf2 the bishop hangs on h3: 10.♕xh3) 8.♕xg5 ♗xg5 9.♗b3 The difference from the line given at move 5 is that White has won a pawn. Fritz9 still finds Black's position slightly preferable, but really, it is not.

6...♕f3

White is dead.

7.♕xf7† ♔d7 8.♗b5† ♖c6!

Easy to overlook; hard to meet.

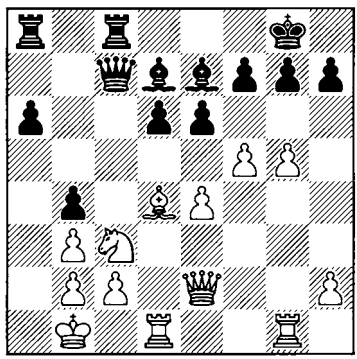
9.♕g8 ♗g5!

Mate is unavoidable.

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: When your opponent executes such a combination it is natural to investigate all your possibilities, including the check on f7. Not necessarily with an idea already in mind, but more to see if any ideas spring from it. With a bit of luck, they will.

157 Panchenko – Shestoperov
USSR 1978



In Sicilian positions with castling on opposite sides, time is very important. Here White does not delay his attack by letting his knight be kicked around, even though 1.♘a4 is a perfectly possible option.

1.g6!? fxg6 2.fxg6

2.fxe6!? ♗xe6 3.♘d5 ♗xd5 4.exd5 with chances for both sides was also possible.

2...h6!

A standard defensive idea. Black wants to keep the lines closed. 2...hxg6 3.♖xg6 ♗f8 4.♗xg7! and White comes crashing through.

3.♗xg7?!

3.♘a4 with even chances was better. Now White has a tough task ahead, but, in his usual style, Yudovich simply assumed that White was winning without looking at the most obvious moves.

3...♔xg7

The natural option. Black can also take the knight, though after 3...bxc3?! 4.♗xc3 e5 5.♕h5 White has enough compensation for the piece and maybe even better chances.

4.♖df1 bxc3?

Unnecessarily greedy. 4...♖f8 5.♖f7† looks very dangerous for Black. He cannot allow lines to be opened, so bringing a rook to f8 is pointless. Actually 4...♗e8! would probably have repulsed the attack. In many lines Yudovich believes that White will simply play ♖f7† and then gxf7† with a winning attack. Just a little bit of attention would bring up ...♗g5 blocking the attack and leaving Black a piece, a rook, or more, up.

5.♖f7† ♔g8 6.♕f2!

This is the idea behind White's attack, and the starting position of our exercise. White is threatening 7.♖g7†!.

6.♖xe7? ♗b5 and White is probably lost in the endgame.

6...♖f8? 7.♕d4!

Black must somehow have missed this. He now resigned as he is absolutely done in all lines. For example: 7...♖xf7 8.gxf7† ♔xf7 9.♕g7† ♔e8 10.♕h8† ♗f8 11.♖f1

1–0

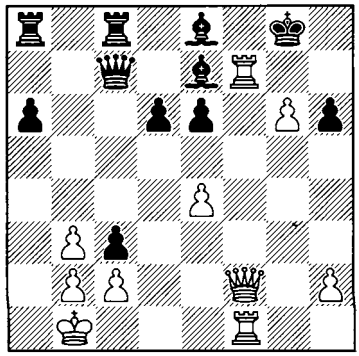
The improvement is quite natural, but the second move takes some work to find.

6...♗e8!

This is the natural move, and I expect you to find this. The real challenge comes now.

7.♖f1!

The most dangerous by far. White is threatening to eliminate the e8-bishop.



7...♕c5!!

The queen is needed in the defence of the king, so a tempo is gained by threatening to exchange queens.

7...h5 gives the king a square on h6, but White wins in the following forced line: 8.♖f8† ♔g7 9.♖xe8 ♖xe8 10.♕f7† ♔h6 11.h4! ♖h8 12.g7 ♖hf8 (White is threatening 13.♖g1) 13.gxf8=♕† ♖xf8 14.♖f6†! and White should win the endgame without too much effort.

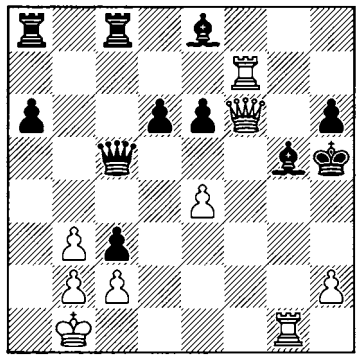
8.♖f8†

White has no time to lose. After 8.♕f3? ♕g5! 9.♖f8† ♔g7 10.♖xe8 ♕f6! the attack comes to a halt.

8...♔g7 9.♖f7†

Now all legal king moves save the game, including:

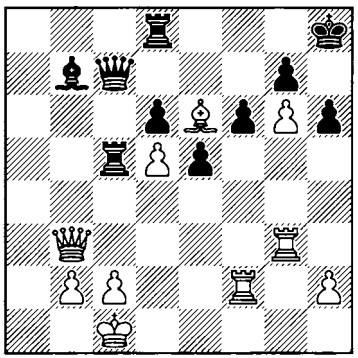
9...♔xg6 10.♖g1† ♗g5 11.♕f6† ♔h5



White has nothing better than 12.♕f3† ♔g6 with a repetition.

How this exercise could have been solved: The first move is not too difficult, but the second will take more pondering. The key idea is that you need representation on the kingside, or your two extra pieces will fail to do you any good. Bringing pieces to the aid of the king should always be high on our list of priorities.

158 Ioseliani – Nutu Gajic
Lucerne (ol) 1982



1.c3?!

Instead of this submissive move, White should have attempted a rook sacrifice, though it was objectively not much better.

1...♖b8

Other moves are good too.

2.♕d1?

White is completely falling apart. 2.♖xf6!? ♗xd5 3.♗xd5 ♕d8 4.♖e6 ♖xb3 5.♗xb3 with some compensation was better; but Black has the chances.

2...♕a5 3.♕b3 ♕a7 4.♕d1 ♗xd5 5.♗xd5 ♕a1†

0–1

The real battle arises after:

1.♖xf6!? ♕a5 2.♕e3!!

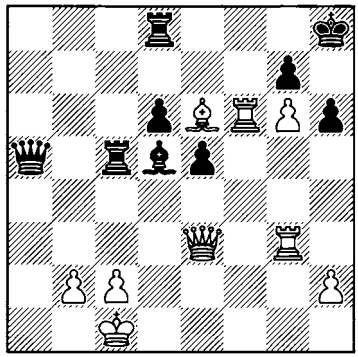
This was given by Gufeld as a winning combination. It is beautiful, but the defence against it is not bad either.

2...♕a1†!!

Time is everything. Only by this series of checks can Black defend herself.

2...♕a8 3.♖h3! (3.♖f7 should also win) 3...♕a1† 4.♔d2 ♖xd5† 5.♗xd5 ♕a5† 6.♔e2 ♕xd5 7.♖xh6† ♔g8 8.♖h8† and Black is mated.

2...♗xd5 loses brilliantly:



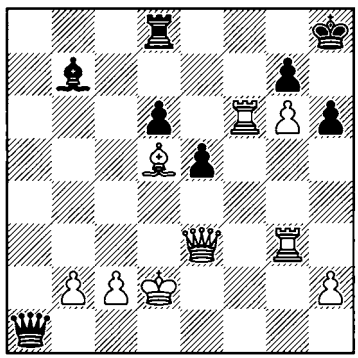
3.♖f8†!! ♖xf8 **4.♕xh6†** gxh6 **5.g7†** ♔h7 **6.gxf8=♘†!** ♔h8 **7.♖g8 mate.**

3.♔d2 ♖xd5†!!

It has to be like this. 3...♕a5†? 4.c3 ♖xd5† 5.♔e2! White is threatening ♖f8† again, and is winning after 5...♗a6† 6.♔f2 ♕c5 7.♗xd5 ♕xd5 8.♖gf3! with sufficient control, and a good deal of material.

4.♗xd5

4.♔e2 ♕d1†



4...♕a5†!

The queen has done her duty and is now needed in the defence again. 4...♗xd5 5.♕b6!! ♖e8 6.♖xd6 ♕h1 7.♖d3 or 7.♖d8 and White is consolidating.

5.♔e2 ♗xd5

5...♕xd5!? is also possible, though it appears to be slightly inferior. At least we can say that both players have their chances here.

6.b3!

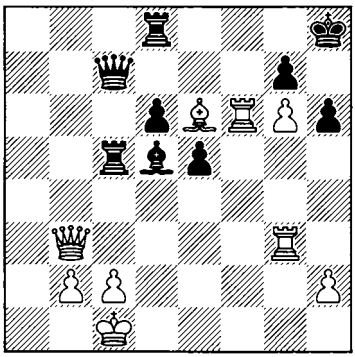
6.♖f5 ♕b5† and 7...♕xb2 with great play for Black.

6...♖c8!?

The position is unclear and no player with any self-respect would want to evaluate it as anything else. Black is in the game, which is enough for us, as no other lines offer this.

Actually Gufeld's combination should be met by a counter combination:

1...♗xd5!!



2.♗xd5 ♕a5 3.c4 ♖xd5 4.cxd5 ♖c8† 5.♔d1 gxf6!

This move suddenly becomes feasible.

6.g7† ♔g8

Black has a clear advantage. White cannot get within striking distance.

How this exercise could have been solved: Of course some feeling for compensation is necessary, as Black has compensation for the exchange in the final position. I know this will be a hurdle for many, but it was still worth doing the exercise even if you rejected the solution because you did not see anything concrete for the exchange. Besides this, it is a matter of understanding the urgency of the situation, something that is only possible once you have seen all the amazing ideas White has been able to combine.

159 Motylev – Wojtaszek
Warsaw 2005

White was probably completely dispirited, and resigned himself to playing:

1.♗f1? b3

This, and more or less everything else, wins.

2.cxb3 h1=♕ 3.♕xf8 ♕hxd5 4.♗c4 ♕b7 5.♔a2 ♔a7 6.♕f4

0–1

White could have tried the complicated:

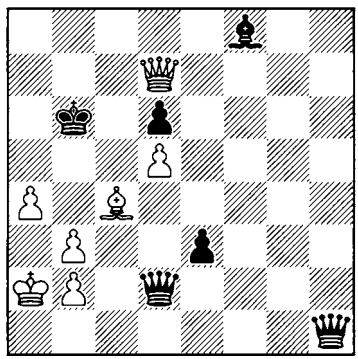
1.♔a2?!

This gives Black an additional opportunity compared to the solution presented below.

1...b3†!!

The difference. Black will find it useful to be able to bring the queen back with ...♕a5 in various lines.

2.cxb3 h1=♕ 3.♕d7



Now Black has two attempts for the full point.

a) **3...♕hxd5 4.♗xd5 ♕xd5 5.♕d8† ♔c5 6.♕xf8 ♔d4 7.♕f1**

This endgame is likely to be a draw, but I am not absolutely certain.

b) **3...♕h3!!**

This resource creates serious problems for White in a long variation.

4.♕c6†

4.♕xh3 ♗g7 and Black wins.

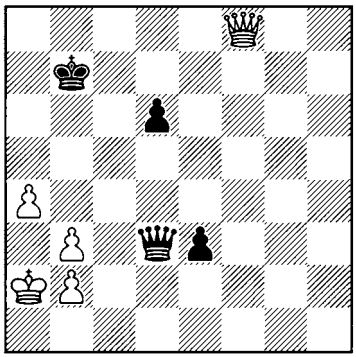
4...♔a7 5.♕c7† ♔a8 6.♗b5!

Without this White would be lost. Now maybe he is not.

6...♕xd5 7.♗c6† ♕xc6 8.♕xc6† ♔b8 9.♕e8† ♕c8 10.♕b5†

With a perpetual check or the following queen endgame.

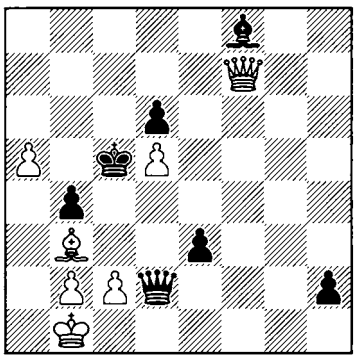
10...♔a7! 11.♕a5† ♕a6 12.♕c7† ♔a8 13.♕d8† ♔b7 14.♕xf8 ♕d3!



White would have a tough job to draw.

The correct way to create the mating threat is with:

1.a5†! ♔c5 2.♗b3!!



Now Black only has one way to play for a win.

2...h1=♕† 3.♔a2 ♕hxd5!

Otherwise a draw is imminent.

4.♕a7† ♔c6

4...♔b5?? 5.♕b6 mate.

5.♕a8† ♔b5 6.♗xd5 b3† 7.♗xb3 ♕xa5† 8.♕xa5† ♔xa5 9.♗c4

But the position is a dead draw all the same.

How this exercise could have been solved: Exercises like these are much easier when you realise that there is a solution. The mating pattern should not be impossibly hard to find. The main task was to decide in which way to play for it. This can be decided by simple comparison. After moving the king first Black has an extra option. That is not in White's interests.

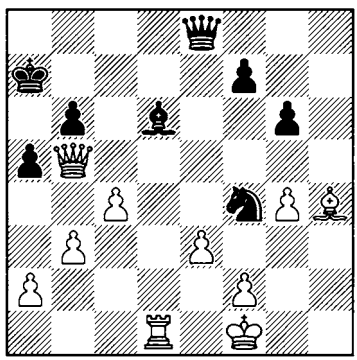
160 Sher – Korchnoi
Nordhorn 1996

Black is in a predicament, but he has his own resources too.

1...♕e8!!

A standard decoy, but White can take the rook all the same.

2.♕b5†! ♔a7 3.♗xh4



3...♕e4!!

The point. Either White gives perpetual or allows Black to do so.

4.exf4 ♕h1† 5.♔e2 ♕e4†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: It should not be too hard if you scan for candidates, and calculate the lines all the way to the end, not stopping the moment the opponent has an important resource.

161 Vasquez – Friedel
Minneapolis 2005

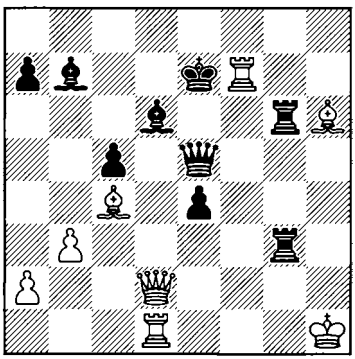
This positions is one of five or so in this book that were found by John Shaw when preparing for our, now no longer existing, weekly radio show on playchess.com. There we tried to keep our listeners up to date with what was happening in the world of chess, while insulting each other.

White has been busted all game, but now he has received a golden chance, which however was too freaky to spot.

1.♕f2†?

1.♗e3 ♔e7! is the end of any counterplay. After 2.♖h7† ♖g7 3.♕h2 ♖xh7 4.♕xh7† ♔d8 Black is winning: 5.♕h6 ♖g6!

1.♖f2†!! would have made the draw. The point is that 1...♔e7 2.♖f7†



only allows Black to accept a perpetual check by laying his weight on one leg at a time, on e8 and e7. After 2...♔d8?? 3.♕a5†! ♔c8 4.♖f8†! White mates in a few moves.

1...♔e7 2.♕f7†

2.♗e3 ♕g7 with a winning attack every which way.

2...♔d8 3.♗f4 ♕d4!

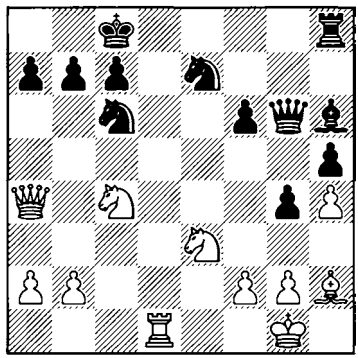
Maybe White missed this. Now the long diagonal will be opened.

4.♗xg3 e3†

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: The exercise is not so hard in itself. White has perpetual check directly. On the other hand so many pieces are hanging that it is easy to get confused. The only advice I can give is: don't.

162 Sznapik – Drasko
Polanica Zdroj 1985



White found a nice piece sacrifice.

1.♘b6†! ♔b8?

Yes, he played this, but I accepted the knight for you.

Firstly, we should consider and reject 1...cxb6?! 2.♘c4! ♗e3 3.♘xe3 ♖d8 4.♖c1 with a healthy attack, or unhealthy, if you happen to be Black.

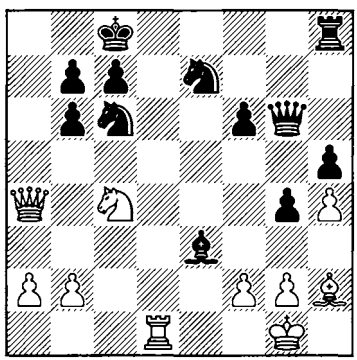
1...axb6 2.♘c4! was White's idea. Now we have arrived at our exercise, where only one move does not lose instantly.

a) 2...♔b8? 3.♘xb6 ♘a7 4.♘d7† ♔a8 5.♗xc7 and Black is done for.

b) 2...♘b8? 3.♘xb6†! cxb6 4.♕c4† ♘bc6 5.♕e6 mate.

c) 2...♘a5? 3.♘xb6†! and mate follows.

d) The correct defence was 2...♗e3!!.



3.♕a8† (3.♘xe3 ♔b8 and White hardly has an advantage anymore. And 3.fxe3? g3! is one of the main points of Black.s defence. White no longer has an indirect attack on the b8-square.) 3...♘b8 4.♘xe3 ♕e4 White clearly has some pressure, but it is not enough to be called a significant advantage: 5.♖c1 ♘ec6 6.♘c4 (6.b4!? – Dvoretsky) ♕d4! 7.b4 ♖d8!? 8.♗g3 ♘e5 9.♘xe5 fxe5 and Black is still in the game.

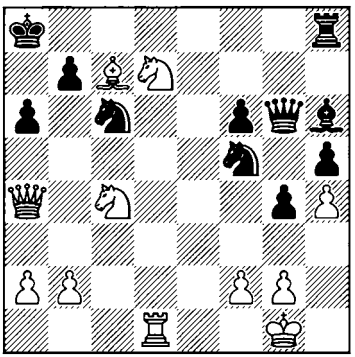
2.♘d7† ♔a8 3.♘c4

Black now has no defence against ♗xc7. For instance, 3...♖c8 4.♗xc7! solves little.

3...a6

After 3...♘e5 4.♘dxe5 fxe5 5.♗xe5 ♖c8, White would be able to hold on to the initiative with 6.♕d7!.

4.♗xc7 ♘f5



5.♗b6?!

Still winning, but far from being one of the better moves in the position. 5.♘cb6† ♔a7 6.♘d5 ♖c8 7.♕a3 is mate.

5...g3 6.♗c5 gxf2† 7.♗xf2 ♖g8 8.♘cb6† ♔a7 9.♘d5† b6 10.♗xb6† ♔b7 11.♘c5† ♔b8 12.♘xa6† ♔b7 13.♘c5†

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: This is a combination of a desperado defence and simply looking at all of the candidates. To return a piece to distract your opponent, if only for one move, should not seem an uncommon idea by now.

163 Grigorov – Boudy
Varna 1979

If White had time to consolidate he could either keep the knight on d6 or just take on c8 and bury the g7-bishop. But Black can strike instantly with a brilliant tactic.

1...♖xd6! 2.exd6

2.♕xb6 ♖d2 leads only to problems.

2...♕xe2 3.♕xb6

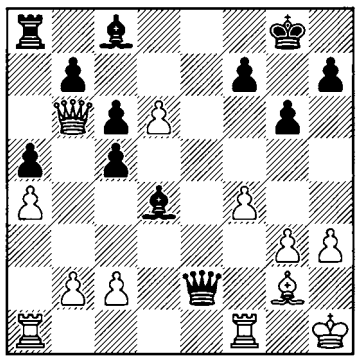
3.♖ae1 ♗d4† 4.♔h1 ♕a6 and Black has a material advantage that cannot be ignored.

3...♗d4†

3...♗xh3 transposes.

4.♔h1

4.♔h2?? ♗xh3! 5.♔xh3 ♕h5 mate.



4...♗xh3!!

The real point of the exercise. Now the game finished with a peculiar repetition.

5.♗xh3

5.♗f3?? ♗g2†!

5...♕h5 6.♔h2 ♕e2†

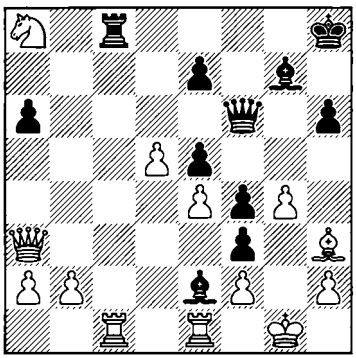
A draw was agreed.

White can only "play for a win" by giving up his extra rook. And after 7.♖f2!? ♕xf2† 8.♗g2 Black has 8...♖e8! (8...♕e2 still draws trivially, but now Black wants more) 9.d7 ♖e2 10.d8=♕† ♔g7 11.♕xd4† ♕xd4 12.♔h1 (The only move. 12.c3? ♕d5! 13.♖g1 ♕h5 mate.) 12...♕f2 13.♖g1 ♕xg3 14.♕d8 ♖xc2 and Black should win the endgame with his ton of extra pawns.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: This sensational drawing combination is a combination of alertness to the various options and being able to use the hammer on this "nail in the shoe" problem.

164 Frumkin – Dubinsky
New York 2000



This exercise reveals a beautiful light-squared solution.

1...♕h4!!

This was far stronger than the game, which continued 1...♖xc1?? 2.♖xc1 ♕h4 3.♕c5! and White won.

2.♖xc8†

2.♕xe7 ♕xh3! and White is mated.

2...♔h7

This is the critical position. White draws in only one way.

3.♖h8†!!

The only saving move.

a) 3.♔h1? ♕xh3 4.♖g1 ♗f1! with mate soon.

b) 3.♕c5? ♕xh3 4.♖h8† ♗xh8! 5.♕xe7† ♗g7 and mate.

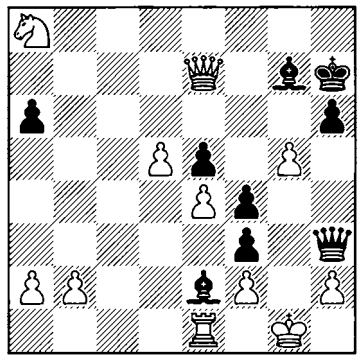
c) 3.♖xe2? ♕xh3 4.♕xf3 ♕xf3 5.♖ec2 (5.♖cc2 ♕xg4† 6.♔f1 f3 and Black wins) 5...♕d1† 6.♔g2 f3† 7.♔g3 ♕h1 and again the white king is hunted down like a duck...

d) 3.♖g8? ♔xg8! (3...♕xh3? 4.♖xg7†! ♔h8 5.♖h7†! ♔g8 6.♖g7†! with a draw) 4.♕c5 ♕xh3 5.♕c8† ♗f8! 6.♕e6† ♔h8 7.♕xe5† ♗g7 8.♕b8† ♔h7 and mate is near.

3...♔xh8

This leads to a forced draw. Also leading to a draw is 3...♔g6 4.♖g8!! ♕xh3 5.♖xg7† ♔xg7 6.♕xe7† with perpetual check.

But Black should stay away from 3...♗xh8?, when White wins with the magnificent 4.g5!! ♕xh3 5.♕xe7† ♗g7.



6.g6†!! with a coming exchange of queens.

4.♕c5

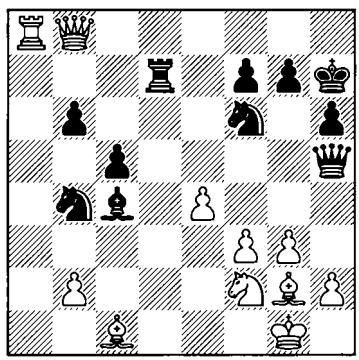
4.♕c3 transposes.

4...♕xh3 5.♕c8† ♔h7 6.♕f5† ♔g8 7.♕e6†!

With a draw, while 7.♕c8†?? ♗f8! transposes to 3.♖g8?.

How this exercise could have been solved: Time is clearly the problem, so we should look for any means to gain time, so that we are not mated. This realisation and a little work is hopefully all it takes.

165 Solozhenkin – Todorovic
Yugoslavia 1996



Black came up with an energetic knight sacrifice, which leads to our exercise.

1...♘xe4!? 2.♘xe4?

Now White loses quickly.

2.fxe4? ♖d1†! 3.♘xd1 ♕xd1† 4.♔f2 ♕e2†

2.g4? ♕h4! 3.fxe4 ♖d1†! and White is mated.

2.♕f4? ♘xf2 3.♕xc4 ♖d1† 4.♔xf2 (4.♗f1 ♕xf3 and mate follows) 4...♖xc1 and Black has a winning attack.

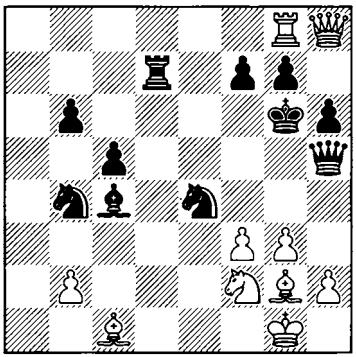
2.♕g8†? ♔g6 3.♕e8 ♗e6! and the attack has lost none of its strength: 4.fxe4 ♖d1† 5.♗f1 ♗c4 and Black wins.

2...♖d1† 3.♔f2 ♕xh2 4.♘g5† ♔g6 5.f4 ♖f1† 6.♔e3 ♕g1†

0–1

The only defence is attack!

2.♕h8†!! ♔g6 3.♖g8



Black has no way to avoid a crucial weakening of the light squares.

3...f5!

The only move. 3...f6 4.g4! ♕h4 5.♖xg7†! ♖xg7 6.♕e8† ♔h7 7.♕xe4† and White wins material.

4.♖d8

This move, leading by force to a draw, is probably strongest. 4.♖xg7†!? ♖xg7 5.fxe4 is also approximately equal, but more risky.

4...♖xd8 5.♕xd8 ♘xf2 6.♕xb6† ♔h7 7.♕xc5!

A major point.

7...♘fd3 8.♕xc4 ♕e8 9.♕c3 ♕e2 10.♕d2 ♘xc1 11.♕xc1 ♘d3 12.♕f1 ♕e3† 13.♔h1

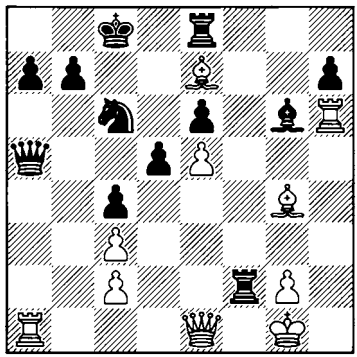
The draw is quite close.

How this exercise could have been solved: The idea of counterattacking is natural, and to attack the opponent's weakest spot is something most of us have a good feeling for already. Beyond that, it is a matter of calculation, and the realisation that the sacrifice cannot be accepted, so other means are needed.

166 Short – Psakhis
Port Erin 1999

1...♖fxe7?

1...♖xf2†! was forced. After the critical 2.♔g1! Psakhis missed the best move, and apparently also the more natural move, which would still lead to a defendable position. (Note that 2.♔xf2 ♕b6† 3.♕e3 ♕xe3† 4.♔xe3 ♖xe7 leads to a simple advantage for Black. White is struggling with all his weaknesses.)



2...♖e2!! This is the fantastic point behind the initial rook sacrifice. (2...♕b6 should be OK for Black too, though White retains some chances) 3.♗xe2 (3.♗xe6† ♔b8 4.♗d6† ♔a8 5.♕d1 ♕xc3 and Black wins) 3...♕b6† 4.♔h1 ♖xe7 Black has a clear edge. White is suffering from having a host of weak pawns and probably also a weaker king.

2.♖xa5 ♘xa5 3.♕d2 ♘c6??

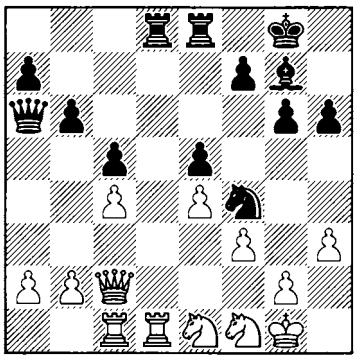
A gross blunder. 3...♔c7! 4.♗h5 with some advantage to White was better.

4.♕xd5 ♔b8 5.♕xc4 ♖c7 6.♕f4 ♘e7 7.♗xe6 ♘c6 8.♗d5 ♘xe5 9.c4 a6 10.♖h3 ♗xc2 11.♖e3 ♖ce7 12.♔g1 ♔a8 13.c5 ♗g6 14.♕f6

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: I have found that an important thing in tactics is to realise when you are in a desperado setting. Usually it just takes a few hanging pieces and you are likely to be there. Here we have three: a5, e7 and e6. This fact alone should inspire us to look for "crazy" ideas.

167 Volinsky – Kalinichenko
USSR 1970



Blackwent in for a very interesting, but hardly logical, queen sacrifice.

1...♕xa2?!

1...♖xd1 2.♖xd1 ♕xa2 looks like a pawn up to me. But that is without risk, of course...

2.♖a1 ♖xd1 3.♖xa2 ♖xe1 4.g3

Simpler was 4.♔f2! ♖e2† 5.♕xe2 ♘xe2 6.♔xe2 and White should have enough compensation to make a draw.

4...♖d8!?

4...♖e2 was probably stronger: 5.♕a4 ♘xh3† 6.♔h1 ♖d8 and Black has a strong attack.

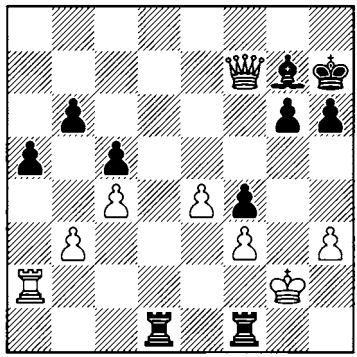
5.gxf4 ♖dd1

Finally we have arrived at our exercise. Here White decided to completely abandon his defensive tasks, and the game. Many moves do not work here, but one does.

6.f5?

6.♕g2? exf4 is hopeless, of course. The same goes for 6.♔g2? exf4! when after 7.♕a4 ♖e2† White is mated.

6.♕a4!! was the only defence. It is crucial for White that he will be able to keep the black bishop out of the attack, and he can only do so by pinning it. Now Black has two very similar tries. 6...♖xf1† (6...exf4 7.♕e8† ♗f8 (7...♔h7 8.♕xf7 transposes) 8.♖xa7 and Black has nothing better than perpetual check) 7.♔g2 exf4 8.♕e8† ♔h7 9.♕xf7 a5 10.b3



Without the bishop Black is unable to create threats against the white king. Perpetual check is a wise choice here, before White's e-pawn starts moving.

6...♖xf1† 7.♔g2 ♗f6

7...♖g1† 8.♔f2 ♗f6 was maybe a little simpler, but Black wins all the same, so it is all about marks for style; and this system has not yet made its way from ice-skating and ski-jumping into chess.

8.♕a4 ♖g1† 9.♔f2

White could still have created a few problems for Black, though he would probably have been able to find the only moves in the following line. 9.♔h2 ♗h4 10.♕e8† ♔g7 11.♕xe5† ♔h7 12.fxg6† ♔xg6 13.♕f5† ♔g7 14.♕e5† ♔h7 15.♕f5† ♔g8 16.♕c8† ♔g7 and Black wins. Other winning moves exist on move 9, but they make the task harder for Black.

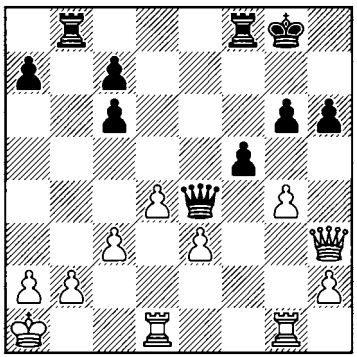
9...♗h4†

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: If you calculate various normal lines, you will probably realise that the bishop check arrives with deadly effect in most of them. It will then be natural to try to prevent this and, as it is not possible to

bring any pieces to the defence, it is necessary simply to close down the bishop. Associated with all the positions we have seen where this is the case, it should not be too hard to see that this is a position where the queen is able to distract/annoy the opponent's pieces in a substantial way. Maybe we even find this because the idea of a perpetual check occurs to us.

168 Ivanov – Shmelev
USSR 1974



White seemed to be in good shape and things were progressing well on the kingside, but then Black unleashed a very powerful attack, which met with no resistance in the game. Actually it is very difficult to find White's defence, as it contains some surprises as well as various geometric images. So the fact that Velimoric and Milic did not find it can easily be forgiven. However, Fritz sees it miles ahead, and in the third millennium a responsible chess trainer will include every tool in broadening the horizons of his pupils.

1...♖xb2!

White is one move away from creating threats. Therefore now is the time to act.

2.♔xb2!

There is no alternative. 2.gxf5? ♖xa2†! and White is mated after a lot of checks, one of them coming from a6.

The two annotators believed that 2.♖b1 was perhaps better. However, this was based on their oversight at move four. Black would obtain a clear edge after 2...♖xb1† 3.♖xb1 ♕c2 4.e4 fxg4 5.♕g3 h5.

2...♖b8† 3.♔c1

3.♔a1 ♕c2 with threats to b2 and c3.

3...f4!

This move makes life more difficult for White. Also objectively equal is 3...♖b1† 4.♔d2 ♖b2† 5.♔e1 ♕c2 6.♕f3 when Black only has a perpetual check. Fritz9 likes 6.♖g2?!, which only creates problems for White. The rook on d1 is impossible to activate in the rook endgame and, though it must be drawn, White is on the defending side.

4.exf4?

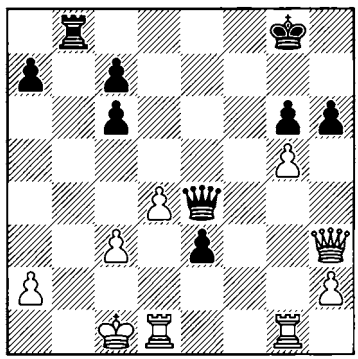
Losing to a mate in three! But it is difficult to find something that works for White here:

4.♔d2? ♖b2† 5.♔e1 f3! and the e3-pawn cannot be defended.

4.♖g2? ♖b1† 5.♔d2 ♖b2† 6.♔e1 ♖xg2 and White is far from solving his problems. Black wins.

But 4.g5!! would miraculously have saved the game. Now we have the following options.

a) 4...fxe3 The main line. The main defence is:



5.♖d3!! This simple deflection means that after 5...♕xd3 6.♕e6† White is able to give perpetual check. He cannot defend the king, but he can prevent Black from getting that final check in.

b) 4...♖b1† 5.♔d2 ♖b2† 6.♔e1 f3 allows a simpler perpetual after 7.♕c8† ♔h7 8.♕xc7†.

c) 4...hxg5 5.♖d3 is similar to 4...fxe3. 5.♔d2!? f3 6.♖b1 is also OK.

d) 4...f3 5.♖d3 ♕xd3 6.♕e6† ♔f8 7.♕f6†

♔e8 8.♕xc6† ♔d8 9.♕f6† ♔c8 10.♕e6† ♔b7 11.♕b3†! with perpetual check – Dvoretsky.

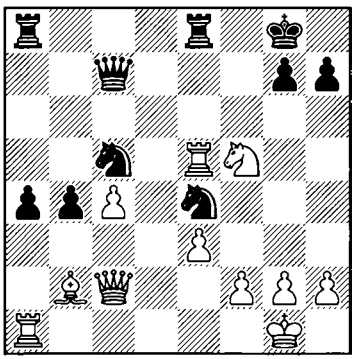
4...♖b1†

White resigned. He is mated in two moves.

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: I can explain this exercise logically, but it will not explain how to solve it. I think the correct way to solve it is to look for the perpetual, or just any sort of counterplay, and then combine this with a very good imagination.

169 Korelov – Marjan
Correspondence 1980



Having destroyed the opponent's centre, White now found himself in a funhouse of opportunities, but instead of just breaking fake kitchen plates and throwing a cream cake in the face of the principal, he decided to tussle with the school bully. That he got away with it just shows that it was his year.

1.♖xa4?!

An exchange sacrifice that fails to only one absolutely adequate defence. White could claim a strong initiative against a very open black king after 1.♖xe8† ♖xe8 2.♘xg7 when the black passers are not that terrifying.

1...♘xa4

There are no real alternatives.

2.♕xe4 ♕d7?

2...♖xe5? does not work, as the geometry fits really well into White's purposes: 3.♕xa8† (3.♗xe5!? is also interesting, but this is clear) 3...♔f7 4.♗xe5 ♕xe5 5.♕xa4 ♕xf5 6.♕xb4 and the endgame wins trivially.

2...♖ed8? 3.g3! would leave Black defenceless against 4.♘e7† with a mating attack. And after 3...♕f7 then 4.♖e7 is a simple solution.

3.♘e7†!

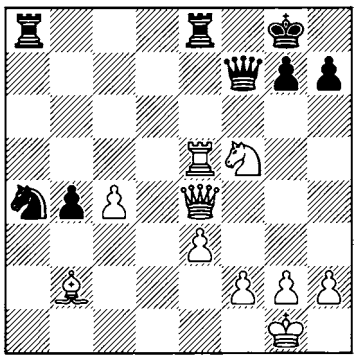
Black resigned on account of 3...♔h8 4.♕xh7† ♔xh7 5.♖h5 mate.

1–0

Black could have held the balance with:

2...♕f7!!

The idea behind this move is to bring the queen closer to the kingside, as well as to defend against White's threatened combination of ♘e7† and ♕xh7†.



3.♕g4

3.♗d4!? is interesting. Black has to play 3...♘c3 4.♖xe8† ♖xe8 5.♕g4 ♕g6 6.♕f3 ♘e2†! 7.♕xe2 ♕xf5 when the chances are roughly even, though the position is not clear at all.

3.♘e7†? ♔h8 achieves nothing now that the h5-square is protected.

3...♕g6 4.♕f3 ♖ad8 5.♖xe8†

5.♖d5 ♖xd5 6.♕xd5† ♕f7! is better for Black. The b-pawn will claim a victim.

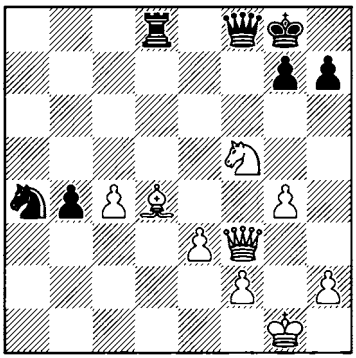
5...♕xe8 6.♗d4 ♕f8

I think it is already time to conclude that Black has survived the tactical onslaught, and that White has a tough time proving an advantage. But let's look at some actual moves to make sure this is not just talk.

7.g4!?

7.♕e4 b3 gives Black enough counterplay, and maybe even the better chances.

7.♕g3 ♘c3 8.♕g5 ♖a8 9.g3 ♘e2† 10.♔g2 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 ♖a2 Black has decent counterplay. Actually, I think the chances are about even, and that White should consider taking the repetition after 12.♕d5† ♕f7 13.♕d8† ♕f8 14.♕d5†...



7...g6!

Necessary. Now White needs to sacrifice a piece if he wants to create winning chances.

7...b3? 8.♕b7 b2 9.♗xb2 ♘xb2 10.♕xb2 clearly favours White.

8.♕f4!

8.♘h6† ♕xh6 9.♕f6 ♖f8 is just a draw.

8...gxf5 9.♕g5† ♔f7 10.♕xf5†!?

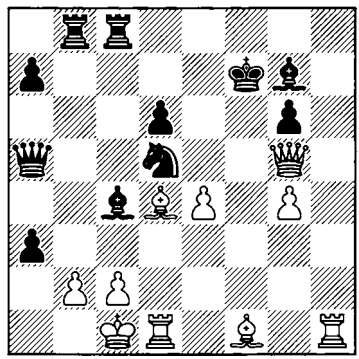
10.♕f6† draws.

10...♔g8 11.♕g5† ♔f7 12.♕f6† ♔g8 13.♕h8† ♔f7 14.♕xh7† ♔e8

This position is deeply unclear. White has four pawns for the rook, but nothing can be decided based on experience. I am going to stick my neck out and declare that Black is fully in the game.

How this exercise could have been solved: There are many ways to solve an exercise like this, just as there are even more ways to fail to do so. Personally, I would probably have done so (if I had solved it) by seeing that I had a problem on e8 and on g6, and that the natural idea of bringing the queen to the defence would protect both of these squares.

170 Zso. Polgar – Vescovi
Matinhos 1994



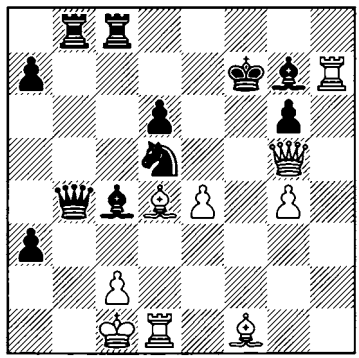
White won this equal position with a very imaginative defensive move that leads us to Black's defensive moment.

1.b4!!

An aesthetically pleasing move.

1...a2?!

1...♕xb4? would work against 2.♗xc4? ♕xc4 3.♖df1† ♘f6 4.♖xf6† ♔g8 5.♖h8† ♔xh8 6.♖f8† ♔h7 7.♕h4† ♗h6†! and White needs to seriously consider resigning here. 2.♗xg7? loses to a long forced line: 2...♗e2! 3.♗xe2 ♖xc2† 4.♔xc2 ♖c8† 5.♗c4 ♕xc4† 6.♔d2 ♕c2† 7.♔e1 ♕xe4† 8.♔f2 ♖c2† 9.♖d2 ♖xd2† 10.♕xd2 ♕xh1 and Black has a winning endgame. But all of this is irrelevant as White would win with 2.♖h7!.



We need to split the lines up to get a good overview:

a) 2...♕b1† 3.♔d2 ♕b4† 4.c3 and White wins.

b) 2...♖g8 3.♗xc4 ♕xc4 4.exd5 and Black cannot resist all the threats.

c) 2...♕b2† 3.♗xb2 axb2† 4.♔d2 ♘f6 5.♗xc4† ♖xc4 6.♖f1 and White wins.

d) 2...♗b3 3.♕xg6†! First among equals. 3...♔xg6 4.♖xg7† ♔h6 5.g5† ♔h5 6.♗e2† ♔h4 7.♖h1† ♔g3 8.♖g1† ♔f4 9.♖g4 mate.

2.bxa5 ♗xd4

2...♖b1† 3.♔d2 ♖xd1† 4.♔xd1 ♗xd4 5.♖h7† transposes to the game.

3.♖h7† ♗g7 4.♔d2 ♖b1 5.♗xc4 ♖xd1† 6.♔xd1 a1=♕† 7.♔e2 ♕d4?

The losing mistake. Also not good is 7...♔g8? 8.♖h2 and the checks will hurt.

7...♕e5! was the best move. After 8.♗xd5† ♔f8 White probably has nothing better than 9.♕xe5 dxe5 10.♔d3 ♖c5 11.♖h1 ♖xa5 12.♖f1† ♔e8 13.♗f7† ♔d8 14.♗xg6 with a solid extra pawn in the endgame. But that can prove to be quite an annoyance for Black. White is clearly better.

8.♗xd5† ♔e8

8...♔f8 9.♕f4† and White wins.

9.♕xg6† ♔d8 10.♕xd6† ♔e8

1–0

1...♖xb4!

This was the best move. Now Fritz9 is overjoyed with:

2.♗xc4

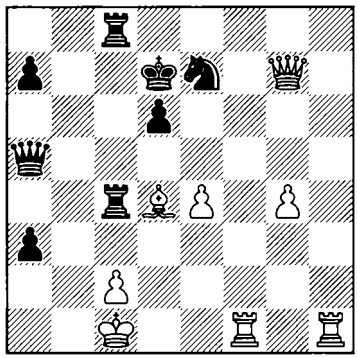
But only for half a minute. Actually White is fighting for a draw. I guess this is one of those moments where the Fritz programmers explain that the main point is not the evaluation, but that Fritz is finding the best move. This is useful information for those who argue: "But Fritz says I am better here!" The programmers use the evaluation to choose between options, not to educate the rest of us!

2.♖h7? ♖b1†! and Black wins on the spot.

2...♖bxc4 3.♖df1† ♔e8 4.♕xg6† ♔d7 5.♕xg7†!

5.♖f7† looks very risky. I would not put complete faith in the following probable line: 5...♔c6 6.♖xa7 ♗xd4 7.♖xa5 ♗b2† 8.♔d1 ♖d4† 9.♔e1 ♗c3† 10.♔f2 ♖d2† 11.♔g3 ♗e5† 12.♔f3 ♖f8† and Black has a slight edge in the probably drawn endgame.

5...♘e7



6.♕xe7†!!

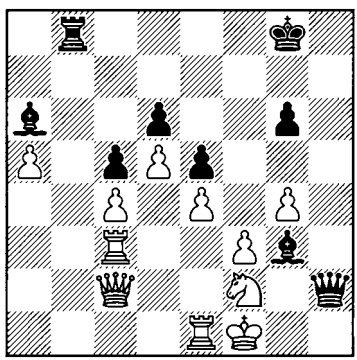
White draws with perpetual check.

6...♔xe7 7.♖h7† ♔e8 8.♖h8† ♔d7 9.♖f7† ♔e6 10.♖f6†

And so on.

How this exercise could have been solved: Basically you need to structure your thinking excellently, and then be able to foresee the opponent's best moves, as well as your own best moves. This is hard and methodical work, but it can be done.

171 Huss – Lobron
Beer-Sheva 1985



Back in the 1980s Eric Lobron was a strong player and a cunning tactician. Here he took his opponent completely by surprise with two stunning sacrifices.

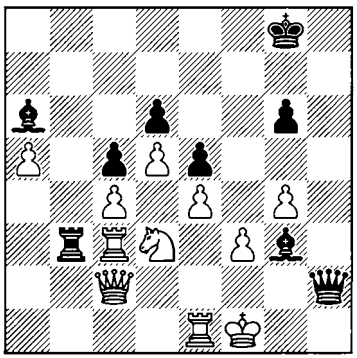
1...♖b3!!

Very beautiful, but not hard to understand. The rook is immune so White needs to find a way to defend.

2.♖e2?

This is not it. Also after 2.♖xb3? ♗xc4†! White would have no answer.

The correct move was 2.♘d3!!.

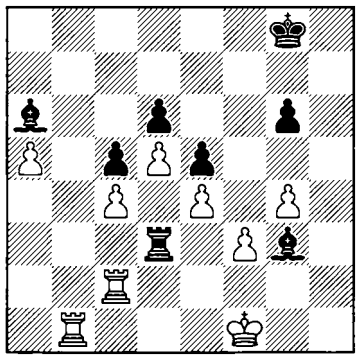


This is the only way to defend. White blocks the diagonal from a6 to f1 in exchange for a piece. But then again, he was an exchange and two pawns up to start with! Let's look at the options.

a) 2...♖xc3 3.♕xc3 ♕h1† 4.♔e2 ♕g2† 5.♔d1 ♕xf3† 6.♖e2 and I do not see why Black should have more than adequate compensation for the material. It will not be easy for White to untangle himself, but he has an exchange more and a (not to be underestimated) passer on a5.

b) 2...♕h1† 3.♔e2 ♕g2† 4.♔d1 ♕xf3† 5.♖e2 ♕f1†!? (5...♖xc3 transposes to 2...♖xc3) 6.♘e1 Black is running out of bullets. A forced line goes 6...♖b4 7.♖xg3! ♖xc4 8.♖f2 ♖d4† 9.♖d3! ♖xd3† 10.♕xd3 ♗xd3 11.♖xf1 ♗xf1 12.♔d2. The endgame is probably a draw, but it is Black who will have to suffer.

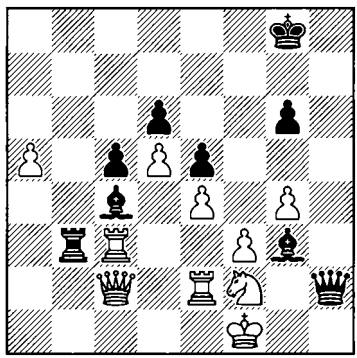
c) 2...♕xc2 3.♖xc2 ♖xd3 (3...♗xe1 4.♘xe1 ♖b4 and White will have a pawn more in the endgame. He should probably score around 55–60% from this position.) 4.♖b1



Here White has good counterplay, though not necessarily an advantage. The following line illustrates the situation. 4...♖a3 5.♖b6 ♖xa5 6.♖xd6 ♔f7 7.♔g2 ♗f4 8.♖d7† ♔f6 9.♖a7 ♖a4 10.♖b2 ♗b5 11.♖xa4 ♗xa4 12.♖b6† and White is definitely not worse.

The game finished in style.

2...♗xc4!!



3.♖xc4 ♖xf3

White is trapped in so many pins that he cannot escape.

4.♔e1

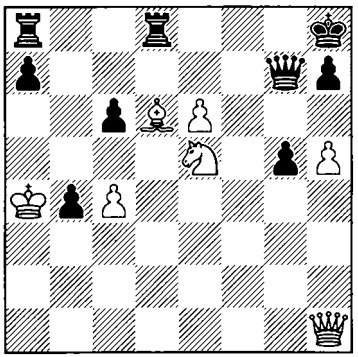
4.♖d2 ♕h1† 5.♔e2 ♖xf2† 6.♔d3 ♕f3 mate.

4...♕g1†

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: When we fail to find any normal way to prevent this bishop check, we eventually should turn to moves such as 2.♘d3!!, which can turn out to be better than they look at first.

172 Palevich – Luzniak
Correspondence 1985



This correspondence game was not particularly well played, and the annotations to the game were more or less all wrong, but the tactical possibilities arising in the analysis of the game are deeply fascinating!

White started with a needless combination.

1.♘g6†??

This is simply bad. White could have won easily with less violent play: 1.♘f7† ♔g8 2.♗e5 ♕f8 3.♕f3 with the devastating threat of 4.♕f6, forcing Black to accept 3...♕e7 4.♘h6 mate as a serious possibility. This line should not be hard to find in a correspondence game, but when you spot a beautiful combination you can easily lose your way.

One International Master I discussed this book with, said that whenever he saw the line "correspondence game", he knew the game would be bad. Though not very kind, there is some truth to this. Correspondence chess has not attracted many real grandmasters and most correspondence games are between amateurs, with more important things on their minds than chess. At least that is one explanation. Another could be that human beings are basically stupid, and the more time we have to think, the worse the outcome...

1...♔g8?!

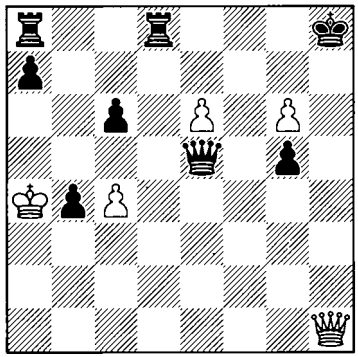
Though I dislike this move, I have to admit that Black is not lost here.

2.♘e7† ♔h8

2...♔f8? 3.♕f3† and Black is crucified.

3.♗e5! ♕xe5 4.♘g6†! ♔g7??

Black misses a last chance. He could still have made a draw with 4...hxg6 5.hxg6†



5...♕h2!! It is hard for me to understand how this can be overlooked in analysis. The other moves are mate in two! After 6.♕xh2† ♔g7 7.♕h7† ♔f6 8.♕f7† ♔e5 9.e7 ♖g8 it is not easy to see how White can win the game. Actually we discussed this position in our last lecture on Glasgow 3rd Floor Chess Radio, a radio show John Shaw and I did on playchess.com for a year. It was suggested that White cannot win this position. After having toyed with it on my own, I have come to embrace this conclusion!

5.♘xe5

White won. So ends Palevich's comments. At least that is an evaluation that cannot be contested.

1-0

But there was nothing wrong with taking the knight with:

1...hxg6

Here Palevich had planned:

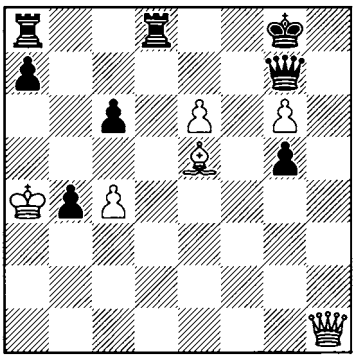
2.hxg6†??

And as we are talking about a correspondence player, we should believe him! Much better was 2.♗e5! ♖ab8 (2...b3 3.hxg6† ♔g8 4.♗xg7 ♔xg7 5.♕h7† ♔f6 6.♕f7† ♔e5 7.♔xb3 a5 should be a draw as well, but White still has some tricks with putting the passed pawns on the 7th and the queen on f8. For this one rook will need to

be on g8 to defend the position. Maybe White can win the c-pawn in some way and prove an advantage? I doubt it.) 3.♕a1! ♕xe5 4.♕xe5† ♔h7 5.♕xg5 gxh5 6.♕xh5† with a draw.

2...♔g8 3.♗e5!

Palevich ends his line here with the comment +–, but Black has an exceptional defence/counterattack at his disposal, which turns that evaluation on its head.



3...♖d1!!

Though not too hard to find, it is difficult not to reward this rook's entry onto the stage with full acclamation.

3...♖ab8!? 4.♗xg7 ♔xg7 5.♕h7† ♔f6 6.♕f7† ♔e5 7.e7 ♖g8 8.♔b3 a5 seems to be sufficient for a draw. It is as if the players thought: White wins the queen and the game is over because of his mighty passed pawns. If you ever want an example to explain forcing thinking to someone, this one should do.

4.♕h5

4.♕xd1 ♕xe5 5.♕h1 ♔f8 and Black is just winning.

4...♖a1† 5.♔b3

5.♔xb4 a5† 6.♔b3 ♕b7† with a mating attack.

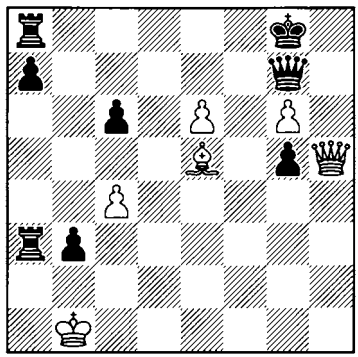
5...♖a3† 6.♔c2 b3†

Black can also play: 6...♖h3?! 7.♕xh3 ♕xg6† 8.♔b3 ♕h7 This is likely to win, but practical problems await.

7.♔b1

7.♔d3 loses to 7...b2†.

Has White managed to hide his king without opening any files? It appears not!



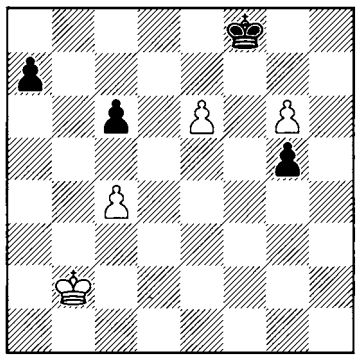
7...♖a1†!! 8.♗xa1 b2!!

The brilliant point behind Black's defence.

9.♗xb2 ♖b8 10.♕h2 ♖xb2†!

10...♕xg6†?! should also win, but this is simplest.

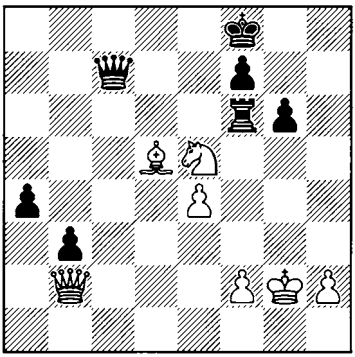
11.♕xb2 ♕xb2† 12.♔xb2 ♔f8



The pawn endgame is winning. Black's pawns are too far from each other, while the white pawns are within reach of "father's quick hand".

How this exercise could have been solved: Three Norwegian 12-year olds managed to solve this exercise with their hands in five minutes while we were eating pizza during the Arco Open 2005. Somehow the most difficult matter is probably to remain focused and see the rook check on a1. The problem is that the whole line might be rejected before we realise that there is a combination after 7.♔b1. Once again the key is not to reject a line of action prematurely.

173 Cifuentes Parada – Milos
Santiago (zt) 1987



White started with a flashy sacrifice. Calm play would have worked out better.

1.♘xf7?!

This does not work because of a great defence. 1.♘d7†?! ♕xd7 2.♕xf6 ♕g4† would allow a perpetual check; but White could have won with 1.♘g4! ♖f4 (1...♖b6 2.♕h8† ♔e7 3.♗xf7!) 2.♕h8† ♔e7 3.♘e3 with very strong threats such as ♗c4 followed by ♘d5.

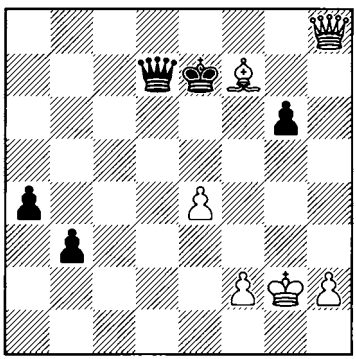
1.♕d4!? also looks strong. Black is tied down.

1...♖xf7 2.♕h8† ♔e7 3.♗xf7

This is our exercise. Apparently White is a piece up, but Black can change the situation with a nice little move that threatens perpetual check as well as regaining the piece.

3...♕d6?

This loses by force. Instead Black could have defended with 3...♕d7!!.



The double threat of 4...♕g4† and 4...♔xf7 ensures the draw after 4.♗xb3 ♕g4† 5.♔f1 axb3 6.♕g7† ♔e6 7.♕g8† ♔f6 8.e5† ♔xe5 9.♕xb3. Fritz likes to dream that White is better here, but that is all it is, a dream. There is no way White can force an exchange of queens, and even if he should achieve this, the pawn ending is not necessarily going to be winning.

4.♕e8† ♔f6 5.e5†!

Simplest, this gives a winning ending.

5...♕xe5 6.♕h8†! ♔f5 7.♗xg6† ♔e6 8.♕xe5† ♔xe5 9.♗f7!

The pawns are stopped. Amusingly Fritz9 does not realise that this is a win for White straight away. And after one minute it only talks about a clear advantage. Milos, being a capable grandmaster, had another take on things.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Candidates, candidates, candidates. A close and patient scan should reveal the subtle queen move.

174 Linn – Rosenfield
Correspondence 1987

White has just sacrificed a rook with 1.♖c1-c5?!, aiming for the long diagonal. Instead he could have played the superhuman 1.♖c4!, with the following idea: 1...♖e8!? 2.♖f4 ♖de7!? I actually thought this was a defence, but Dvoretsky pointed out 3.♔f2!! preparing ♖xe4 and d5. White is close to winning.

But in practice the rook sacrifice created problems that Black was unable to solve.

1...bxc5!

A rook for free – grab it! 1...♕d6? 2.♖e5! leaves White winning. Here are the options:

a) 2...♗d5 3.e4 ♗b7 4.♖xe6 and there is no defence against 5.d5 winning.

b) 2...♗f5 3.d5!

c) 2...♗b7 3.d5! exd5 4.♖e6! Black cannot defend.

Basically Black cannot prevent the breakthrough and White has opened the long diagonal for free.

2.dxc5 ♕xc5†

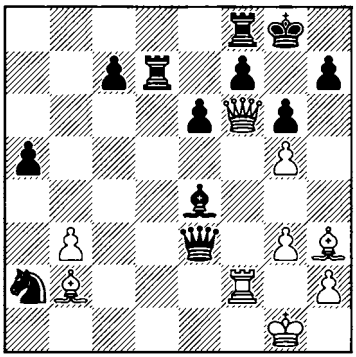
2...e5? 3.♗xe5 transposes to later notes.

2...♘c3? 3.♗xc3 ♕xc5† 4.e3 ♕xe3† 5.♖f2 ♖d1† 6.♗f1 kind of transposes to the game, though not exactly: Black has a knight less!

3.e3!

White would be lost after 3.♖f2?? ♖d1† 4.♗f1 e5!. Black can delay this in a few ways, but this is how it makes most sense, when 5.♗xe5 is met with 5...♖xf1†! 6.♔xf1 ♕c1 mate.

3...♕xe3† 4.♖f2



4...♖d1†?

4...e5 5.♗xe5 transposes.

The only defence was the weird queen sacrifice 4...♕c1†!!. This is probably best answered by 5.♗f1! (5.♗xc1?! ♘xc1 is a tempo or two down for White. It depends on where you want to put the pieces. 5.♖f1 ♕e3† 6.♖f2 ♕c1† is a very odd repetition.) 5...♕xb2 6.♕xb2 ♘b4. This position is highly unclear. White probably has a very slight advantage because of his domination of the dark squares, but I seriously doubt that it is enough to win the game. The white king is too open and Black has good squares for all his pieces.

5.♗f1

Black has a limited number of checks before he must enter a lost endgame.

5...♖xf1† 6.♔xf1 e5 7.♗xe5 ♕c1† 8.♔e2 ♘c3† 9.♗xc3 ♕c2† 10.♔e3 ♕d3† 11.♔f4 ♕d6† 12.♕xd6 cxd6 13.♔xe4

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: The method of elimination should be helpful here. Eventually you should realise that the bishop needs elimination.

175 Galliamova – Korchnoi
Amsterdam 2001

White escapes with:

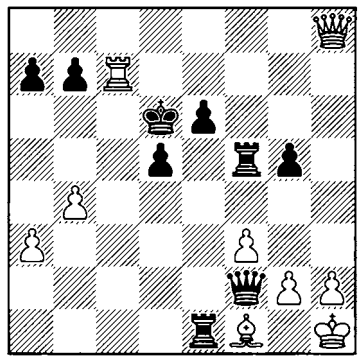
1.♖xe6†! fxe6

1...♖xe6 2.♖c7† ♔d6 3.♖c1! ♔e7! with a repetition of moves.

2.♕g7†?

After this Black can dance.

Instead Taimanov found the following wonderful drawing combination: 2.♖c7†! ♔d6



3.♖c6†!! ♔xc6 (3...bxc6 4.♕d8† ♔e5 5.♕b8†! and Black cannot escape with the king) 4.♕c8† ♔d6 (4...♔b6 5.♕d8†!) 5.♕d8† ♔e5 6.♕b8†! and Black has to accept the draw because of 6...♔d4?? 7.♕xa7†, when it is White who wins.

2...♖f7 3.♕xg5†

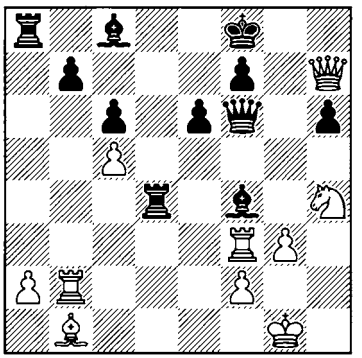
3.♖c7† ♔d6

3...♔d7 4.♖xe1 ♕xe1 5.♔g1 a6 6.h4 d4 7.b5 d3 8.♕g6 ♕e3† 9.♔h1 ♖f4 10.♕h7† ♔d8 11.bxa6 bxa6 12.♕h8† ♔c7 13.♕c3† ♔b6 14.g3 ♖d4 15.f4 ♖d5 16.♗g2 ♕d4 17.♕b3† ♔a5 18.♗f3 ♖b5 19.♕xe6 ♕f2 20.♗g2 d2 21.♕d6 ♕e1† 22.♔h2 d1=♕ 23.♕c7† ♔a4 24.♕c6 ♔b3 25.♕xa6 ♕g1† 26.♔h3 ♕d7†

0-1

How this exercise could have been solved: The idea of a perpetual check is pretty obvious; the only question is how. To investigate every possibility, especially all checks, should not be too remote an idea for us.

176 Braun – Siebrecht
Vienna 2005



We enter this game at a point where Black has just allowed White to bring a lot of pieces to the kingside, presumably to derail them (?), trap them (??) and burn them alive (???). Actually White is close to winning after the very nice move played in the game.

1.♖d2!!

Simple exploitation of a piece that is overloaded.

1...♖aa4

The only move. 1...♖xd2 2.♖xf4 and the attack crashes through.

2.♖xf4!?

2.♖xd4 ♖xd4 3.♘g2 wins the piece in a better way, I think. Still the game is not 100% over.

2...♖xf4 3.gxf4 ♖xf4 4.♘g6†?!

4.♘g2 with a clear edge was better. The knight check should not have worked, but surely time trouble was affecting the players by now.

4...fxg6 5.♕c7 ♖g4†?

Black could have defended here with 5...♕g5† 6.♔f1 ♖f7! 7.♕xc8† ♔g7 8.♕d8 ♕xc5 I doubt that White can seriously attempt to win this endgame.

6.♔f1 ♖g1†!

A nice bluff.

7.♔e2??

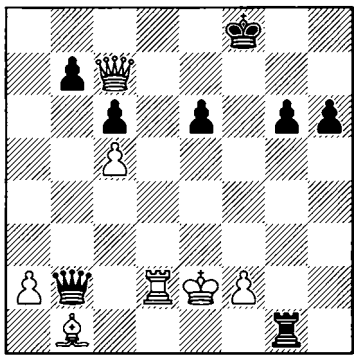
White should have played 7.♔xg1! ♕g5† 8.♔f1 ♕xd2 9.♕xc8† ♔g7 10.♕xb7† with a winning endgame.

We now have our exercise.

7...♗d7!!

The correct idea, but played out of desperation.

8.♖xd7 ♕b2† 9.♖d2



9...♕b5†??

Losing instantly. Instead a draw occurs after 9...♖e1†!! 10.♔xe1 ♕xb1† 11.♔e2 ♕e4† with perpetual check.

10.♔f3 ♕xb1 11.♖d8 mate.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: A standard knowledge of the various patterns of perpetual check should definitely help here.

177 Shtofel – Makhno
USSR 1981

1...dxe5?

This loses. So do a lot of other moves:

1...f6 2.♕h5†!

1...♗e7 2.♗xe7! and Black is in trouble. He can only take the various hanging pieces one at a time.

1...♖c7 loses to 2.♖xa5! bxa5 3.♕a4† ♖d7 4.♘xd7 ♕xd7 5.♕xa5 and White has a pawn and attacking chances, leading to a won position.

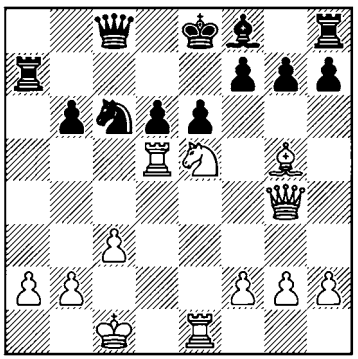
1...b5 loses directly to 2.♕b4!, when the pawn will fall either with check or with tempo:

a) 2...f6 3.♕xb5† ♔d8 4.♗e3 and White has a winning attack.

b) 2...exd5 loses to an amusing sequence. 3.♕xb5† ♘c6 4.♘xc6† ♗e7 5.♘xe7† ♔d8 6.♘g8† f6 7.♖e8† ♔c7 8.♖e7† ♔d8 9.♕e8 mate.

c) 2...♘c6 3.♘xc6 ♕xc6 4.♖xb5 and Black will not survive.

The only move was 1...♘c6! to challenge the strong e5-knight:



a) 2.♘xc6 ♕xc6 3.♖d4 (3.♖xe6† leads nowhere because of the a7-rook) 3...d5! 4.♕f3 ♖d7 and White lacks real threats, meaning that Black is probably a little better. 4...♗c5!? 5.♕xd5 ♕xd5 6.♖xd5 0–0 with even chances is also possible.

b) 2.♕c4 ♖c7! (2...dxe5? 3.♕xc6†!) 3.♘xc6 ♖xc6 4.♕b5 ♕d7 and Black is keeping his bits together.

Now White won with a standard combination.

2.♕a4†! ♖d7

2...♘c6 3.♕xc6†!

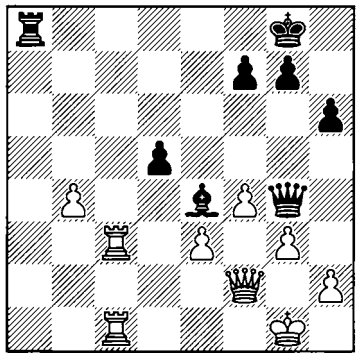
3.♖xd7

Black resigned, realising that after 3...♕xd7 4.♖d1! the show is over.

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: Of course it is necessary to see the combination played in the game before you can understand the position. From then on it is time to look at the various candidates, and there are many. Only an organised mind can do this effectively.

178 Naumkin – Rozentalis
Vilnius 1988



This game was a creative success for Rozentalis, even if not entirely correct...

1...♖a4!?

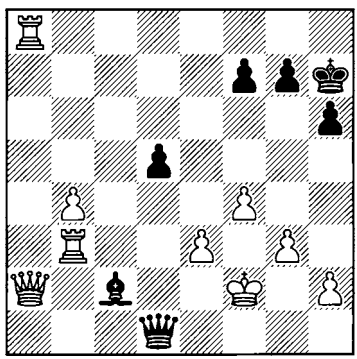
1...♖a2? 2.♕xa2 ♕f3 3.♖1c2! and the white king has a safe route to b2 (Rozentalis).

2.♖b3 ♖a2!?

This was the point of Black's last move. Now there is no longer any ♖1c2 move, as after ...♗xc2 White cannot recapture with the queen, which would be lost after ...♕xh2†.

3.♕xa2 ♕f3 4.♖a1?

This allows Black to escape with a perpetual check. Rozentalis actually did manage to anticipate the strongest defence 4.♖c8†! ♔h7 5.♖a8, protecting the queen, but believed that he would be able to refute it with 5...♕d1† 6.♔f2 ♗c2!. But here White has a fantastic extra possibility:



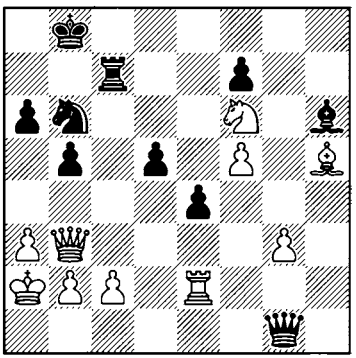
7.♕a6!! (7.f5 with the idea of giving the king an escape square does not look too clear after 7...♕d2† 8.♔f3 ♕d1† 9.♔f4 f6! and it could easily turn out that the white king has marched into trouble.) Black is now forced to accept that after 7...♗xb3 8.♕e2 ♕b1 9.g4 ♗c4 10.♕e1 ♕c2† 11.♔g3 he does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn and exchange. A possible winning line for White could be: 11...♗d3 12.♖a7 ♗e4 13.♕f2 ♕c3 14.♖xf7 ♕xb4 15.f5 ♔g8 16.♖c7 and White's attack is clearly the more dangerous. And that is on top of the material advantage!

4...♕h1† 5.♔f2 ♕xh2† 6.♔e1 ♕g1† 7.♔d2 ♕f2† 8.♔c1 ♕e1† 9.♔b2 ♕e2†

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The difficulty here of course lies in seeing the move 7.♕a6!!. The key idea is to bring the queen back to the defence, even at the cost of an entire rook.

179 Bolzoni – Plachetka
Virton 1990



In a winning position Plachetka decided to try a tempting combination. Only, it was incorrect and should have ruined the game. A simple move like 1...♕d4!, taking control, should assist Black in his pursuit of a full point. Instead a bishop sacrifice was initiated.

1...♗g7?! 2.♘e8?

White humours Black and plays the "fork".

2...♗xb2!

Now everything works.

3.♕xb2

3.♔xb2 ♘a4†

3...♘a4 4.♘xc7

4.♕a1 ♘c3† 5.♔b2 ♕d4! leaves Black completely dominating (5...♘xe2 also wins). 6.♘xc7 ♘xe2† 7.♔a2 ♘c3† 8.♔b3 ♕c4† 9.♔b2 ♔xc7 and the attack can no longer be stopped despite Black's limited material.

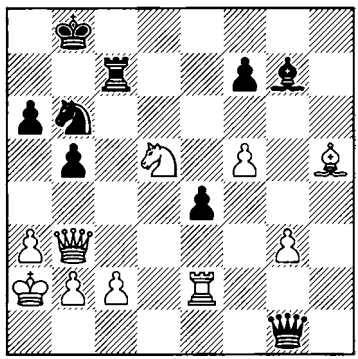
4...♘xb2 5.♘xa6† ♔a7 6.♔xb2 ♔xa6 7.♗xf7 ♕xg3

7...♕f1! was easier, but White has no fortress anyway.

8.♗xd5 ♕e5† 9.♔c1 ♕xd5 10.f6 ♕g5† 11.♔d1 ♕f4! 12.♔e1 ♕c1† 13.♔f2 ♕xa3

Black won.

2.♘xd5!



This was the only defence. The key point is visible after:

2...♗xb2! 3.♕xb2!

3.♔xb2? ♕d4† 4.c3 ♘c4†! was Plachetka's justification in *Chess Informant*.

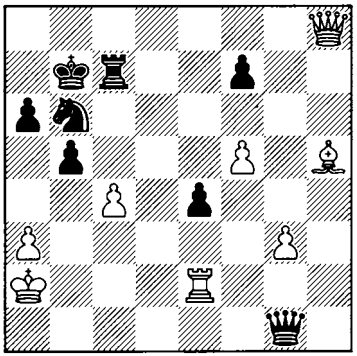
3...♘xd5

White has to do something about the threat of 4...♘c3†. Now comes a strong series of moves.

4.c4!

A wonderful defensive move, which should not be too hard to find if one looks carefully.

4...♘b6! 5.♕h8† ♔b7



6.♕e5!

This centralising move is necessary. After 6.♕e8?! ♕c5! 7.♕xe4† ♔a7 Black has a very strong initiative.

6...♘xc4 7.♕xe4† ♔a7 8.♕f4!

The exchange of queens is a necessity: the white king is too open.

8...♕c5 9.♕f2

White should make a draw, though a few problems persist.

9...♕xf2 10.♖xf2 f6 11.g4

Black is minimally better, but it is possible for things to go completely wrong for him. For example:

11...♖g7?! 12.♖e2 ♘e5?? 13.♖xe5 fxe5 14.f6

And the pawns march to the back rank.

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all, it is important to understand what the opponent is up to (prophylactic thinking), then with unforcing thinking we need to look for a way to avoid this flow towards doom. To return the piece to distract the opponent should be among our considerations.

180 Morovic Fernandez – Kozul
Calvia (ol) 2004

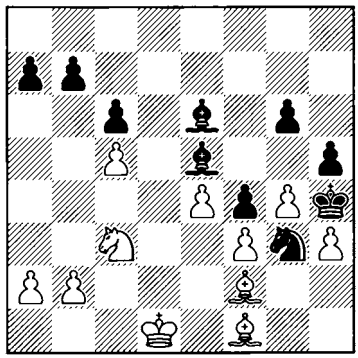
1.♗b3?

This is not best, as it leaves White lost. Here is another illustrative line (besides the game) to show what happens if White loses the h-pawn: 1.♔d2 ♔g5 2.♔d3 ♔h4 3.♗d4 ♗c7 4.♘e2 ♔xh3 5.gxh5 gxh5 6.e5 ♘xe2 7.♔xe2 ♔g2 8.♗b3 ♗xb3 9.axb3 h4 10.e6 ♗d8 11.♗e5 h3 12.♗xf4 a5! 13.♗d6 h2 14.♗xh2 ♔xh2 15.♔d3 ♔g3 16.♔e4 ♗e7 17.f4 ♔g4 18.♔e5 ♗xc5 19.f5 ♔g5 20.f6 ♔g6 21.e7 ♔f7.

Also 1.gxh5 g5!? is good for Black. The same goes for 1...♗xh3 2.hxg6 ♗g2 and Black has the advantage, though, like Avrukh, I would prefer to keep as many pawns on the board as possible.

Avrukh found a clever defence in this difficult endgame:

1.♗d3! ♔g5 2.♗f2! ♔h4 3.♗f1!



The h-pawn is now safely defended and Black cannot break through. 3...♔g5 (3...♗xc3 4.bxc3 ♗xa2 is treacherous. After 5.c4! Black will have problems keeping an eye on the white e-pawn: 5...♔g5 6.♗d3 ♔h4 7.e5! ♔g5 8.♗d4 and the e-pawn advances.) 4.♗d3 ♔h4 with a repetition to remember.

1...♗xb3† 2.axb3 ♔g5

The h-pawn decides.

3.♘b1

Avrukh gives the following cute winning line for Black. 3.♘a2 ♔h4 4.♘b4 ♔xh3 5.♘d3 ♔g2! 6.♘xe5 ♔xg1 7.♘xg6 hxg4 8.♘xf4 gxf3 9.♘h3† ♔g2 10.♘f4† ♔h2 11.♔e1 ♘xe4 and White cannot resist for long.

3...♔h4 4.♘d2 ♔xh3 5.♘c4 ♗g7

Simplest. 5...♔g2 wins as in the last note.

6.e5 hxg4 7.e6 ♘f5 8.♘d6 ♗f8

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: First we should realise that the endgame without the h-pawn is full of hazards. The defence of it then becomes important. Imagination and the search for candidates are our best tools to defend the pawn. Avrukh could do it because he had the necessary will- (and brain-) power.

181 Shirov – Eingorn
Stockholm 1989

1...♔f7?

This loses. So does 1...♗xe6? 2.♕xe6† ♔f8 3.♕c8† ♔g7 4.♕xb7 and White wins.

2.♕g7†!

2.♔c2? ♗f6! (2...♗xe6? 3.♗c4!!) 3.♕c7† ♘d7 4.♕c4 ♕xc3† 5.♕xc3 ♗xc3 6.♘c7 ♖b8 7.♗c4† ♔f6 8.♔xc3 ♘b6 would give Black decent chances to hold the endgame.

2...♔e8

Against 2...♔xe6 White needs to find 3.♔c2! (3.g3 is also pretty strong, though less clear) 3...♕xa3, and now he can win either elegantly or naturally. 4.♗b5! Very pleasing to the eye, and the only win according to Shirov back in 1989. 4...♘c6 5.♗c4† ♔d7 6.♖d1† and White wins. Simpler for us humans is probably a long line of forced checks: 4.♗c4† ♔d7 5.♖d1† ♔c6 6.♗d5† ♔b6 7.♖b1† ♗b4 8.♕f6† ♘c6 9.♗xc6 bxc6 10.♖xb4† and White wins.

3.♘c7†

3.♔c2 ♕xa3 4.♕g8† ♔d7 5.♗b5† ♘c6 6.♖d1† transposes to the line above.

3...♔d8 4.♕h8† ♔d7 5.♘xa8 ♕xa3 6.♔c2
1–0

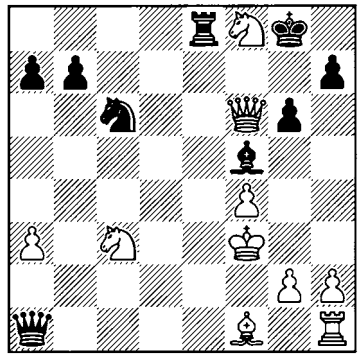
The correct idea is to defend the king, even at the cost of a bishop.

1...♗f8! 2.♘xf8 ♘c6! 3.♕f6 ♗f5†!

3...♕xa3?! was stylishly refuted by Shirov in his annotations: 4.♔d2!! (4.♘xg6? ♗f5†! gives Black a mighty attack all of a sudden) 4...♕b2† 5.♔e1 and White retains a strong attack.

4.♔e3 ♖e8† 5.♔f3

And White wins according to Shirov. This is not the case.

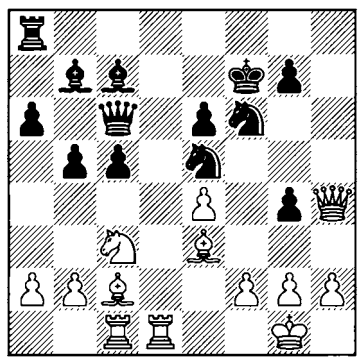


5...♘e5†!! 6.♕xe5 ♖xe5! 7.♗c4† ♔xf8 8.♖xa1 ♖c5!

A great point to finish such long calculations. Black makes the draw, and probably the better end of it.

How this exercise could have been solved: Obviously this exercise takes immense calculation, as demonstrated by Shirov failing to solve it over the board and later in his home analysis. Probably he was looking at the position with the belief that he had played very well with White and therefore deserved to win. We have been looking at the position knowing that Black has a defence. Therefore it is possible to reach 5...♘e5†! by steering away from lines where the only question is how fast White will win, which is when we have a chance to top Shirov.

182 L.B. Hansen – Illescas Cordoba
Moscow (ol) 1994



Illescas came up with a rather inventive rook sacrifice, bringing us to our exercise.

1...♖h8!!

The alternatives are worse:

1...♘g6 2.♕g5 ♗e5 (2...♖h8 3.♕xc5 and Black cannot avoid the exchange of queens with sensible moves) 3.♘d5! (Illescas Cordoba) White has the initiative, plus a little extra material to chuck in the fire on a cold winter night.

1...b4 2.♗a4 ♕b6 3.♘e2 ♗xe4 4.♖xc5 and White is firmly in the driver's seat.

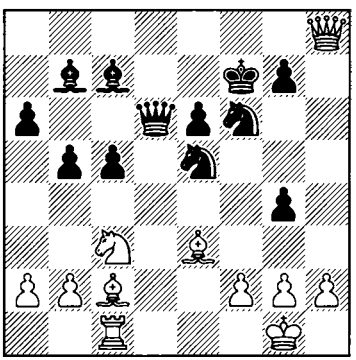
2.♕xh8

White needs to accept.

2...♘g6 3.♕d8?

Illescas Cordoba gives this an exclam, but it is the root of all White's problems. Instead White could have equalised by returning the rook, leading to a standard perpetual check:

3.♖d6!! ♕xd6 (3...♗xd6 4.♕d8 and White has an exchange more) 4.e5 (5.♗xg6† is in the air) 4...♘xe5



This position gives a clear edge to Black according to Illescas Cordoba, but a closer look shows that White has a forced draw. Let's be really analytical for a moment:

a) 5.♘e2? ♘d3! 6.♗xd3 ♕xd3 7.♗xc5 ♕e4 and White is in big trouble.

b) 5.b4 cxb4 6.♘e2 ♕d5! 7.♘f4 ♘f3† 8.gxf3 ♗xf4 and Black has a winning attack on the light squares.

c) 5.♖e1!? b4 (5...♕c6 6.♘e4! ♘xe4 7.♗h6 ♘d2! with chances for both sides) 6.♖d1! leads amusingly to a draw in the same way as in the next note. Apparently Black cannot exploit his extra tempo.

d) 5.♖d1! ♕c6 6.♘e4!! ♘xe4 7.♕h5† ♔g8 (7...♔e7 8.♕h8! and Black has nothing better than 8...♔f7 with a repetition) 8.♗xe4 ♕xe4 9.♕e8† with a draw.

3...♗xd8 4.♖xd8 b4! 5.♘e2 ♘xe4

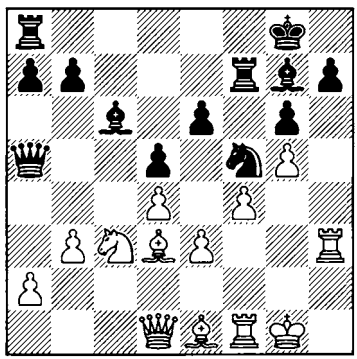
Black has a clear advantage and went on to win with accurate play.

6.♖cd1 ♘e5 7.♖b8 ♘f6 8.♘f4 g5 9.♖xb7† ♕xb7 10.♘d3 ♘xd3 11.♗xd3 ♘e4 12.♖c1 a5 13.g3 ♕d5 14.♗xe4 ♕xe4 15.♖xc5 ♕b1† 16.♔g2 a4 17.♖xg5 ♕e4† 18.♔g1 e5 19.♖h5 ♕b1† 20.♔g2 ♕xb2 21.♖h7† ♔e6 22.♗c5 ♕c2 23.♖h6† ♔f7 24.♗d6 ♕c6†

0–1

How this exercise could be solved? The first thing you need to do is to realise that you will do badly if you part with your queen. So the black attack will have to be endured. The initial counter sacrifice is not too hard to see, but it takes a lot of thought to find the final solution to the problems. This is why this exercise is found in Level 3.

183 Soos – Teschner
West Germany 1971



1...♘xe3!

Black opens White's king position with a classic piece sacrifice.

2.♖xe3 ♗xd4 3.♕d2 ♕c5 4.♘d1 ♖af8

4...♖e8!? in order to push ...e5 is interesting too.

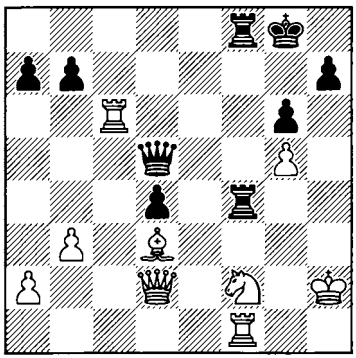
5.♗f2

5.♗g3!? was probably better – Maric.

5...♖xf4 6.♖g3?!

A resistant defensive try would have been 6.♖xe6 which can be challenged with 6...♗xf2† 7.♘xf2 d4 when White has to play the absolutely best moves to survive:

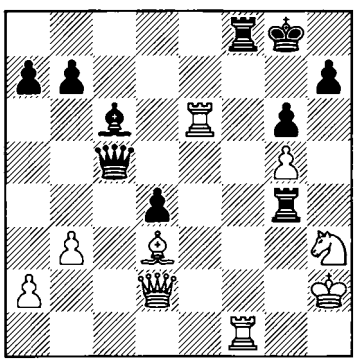
a) 8.♔h2? ♕d5 9.♖xc6 (9.♖e4 ♕d6 10.♔g1 ♖h4!! and White has no choice but to enter a lost endgame, as he cannot prevent mate otherwise)



9...♕e5!! The only winning move, and a move only a top defender would spot. Now Black wins in all lines: 10.♗c4† ♔h8 and White has no moves.

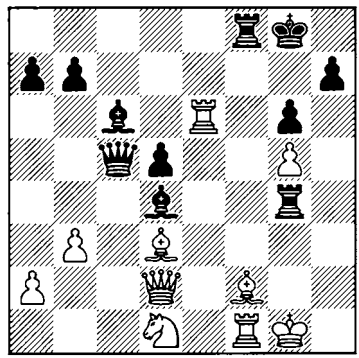
b) 8.♘e4? ♖g4† 9.♔h2 ♖xf1! 10.♗xf1 ♗xe4 Two pawns up with a strong attack. Black is easily winning.

c) 8.♘h3!! ♖g4† (After 8...♖f3 9.♖xf3 ♖xf3 10.♗c4 ♔h8 11.♕e1 it appears that Black is under more pressure than White, though the position is not quite clear.) 9.♔h2



9...♖g2† Without winning the queen no progress seems possible. (9...♗f3!? 10.♖fe1 ♕c7† 11.♖1e5 and I do not see any way for Black to win the game. However, there is a cute draw with 11...♕c1!? 12.♕xc1 ♖g2†.) 10.♕xg2 ♗xg2 11.♔xg2 ♖xf1 12.♔xf1 ♕c3 13.♔e2 ♕b2† 14.♔f3 ♕xa2 15.♗c4 ♔f8 16.♘f4 The white pieces are starting to work together. The black king could easily end up in trouble.

But all of this is a little academic, as Black would probably have met 6.♖xe6 with 6...♖g4†!:



7.♔h2 ♗d7 8.♗xd4 ♕xd4 9.♖xf8† ♔xf8 10.♖f6† ♔g8 11.♘f2 ♕e5† 12.♔h1 ♖xg5 13.♖f4 ♖g3 14.♘e4 ♖xd3 15.♕xd3 dxe4 16.♕e3 ♕a1† 17.♕g1 ♕c3 But despite Black's dominance in the endgame, White still has some hope.

6...e5 7.♗e3 ♗xe3† 8.♕xe3?

After 8.♘xe3 ♕d4 White is feeling the heat, but not yet collapsing.

8...d4 9.♕e1?

9.♕d2 ♕d5 10.♕h2 ♖xf1† 11.♗xf1 ♕e4 and White is under great pressure.

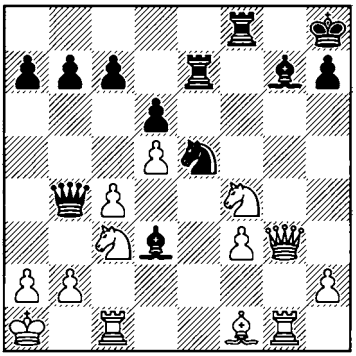
9...♕d5!!

White resigned. The main line goes 10.♗c4 ♖xf1† 11.♕xf1 ♖xf1† 12.♔xf1 ♗b5! and Black wins.

0–1

How this exercise could have been solved: This is one of these exercises where it is important to think about covering squares. So that kind of thinking would definitely help. Otherwise I guess it is down to trial and error.

184 Aleksandrovich – Borisov
USSR 1974



This is a fairly typical everything-has-gone-wrong King's Indian (probably Sämisch) for White. Black should be able to win easily. He started off quite well.

1...♖xf4! 2.♕xf4 ♘xc4 3.♖g2 ♗e2!

A wonderful line-closer.

4.♖b1?

4.♖c2 was better, though after 4...♘e3 (4...♗xf1 5.♕h4!! ♖e8 6.♖xg7! and White survives) 5.♕xb4 ♘xc2† 6.♔b1 ♘xb4 7.♗xe2 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xd5 Black is very likely to win the endgame anyway.

4...♘a3??

After having done everything so beautifully, Black messes it up. 4...♘e3! won in one move. With his unique sense of precision, Yudovich gives 4...♘a3 an exclam, instead of actually looking at the position...

5.♕f5? ♖f7!

White resigned. He cannot keep control over c2 and must therefore lose the queen.

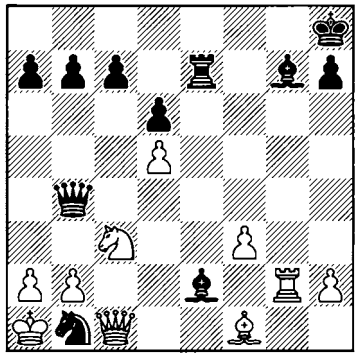
0–1

The solution starts with a not too surprising defensive move, which however is just the start of a long list of precise moves.

5.♕c1!! ♘xb1

5...♗xc3 can be met by 6.♖xe2 ♖xe2 7.♗xe2 ♗e5 8.♗d3 ♘xb1 9.♗xb1. White should never lose here. The idea is that the queen really belongs in front of the bishop, so White can create threats against the black king.

5...♗xf1 was winning according to Yudovich, but White has 6.♖xg7! ♖xg7 7.bxa3 ♕d4 8.♖xb7 ♖g8 9.♖b1 with unclear play.



Now White has two main ways of defending himself:

a) White should probably hold after:

6.♖xe2!? ♖xe2 7.♗xe2

7.♘xe2 ♘d2! is troublesome for White.

7...♗xc3!

7...♘xc3 8.♕g5!! and White will give perpetual check.

8.♗d3!!

8.♔xb1?! ♗e5 is a little bit awkward, but probably objectively OK.

8...♗f6 9.♗xb1

White should make a draw easily.

b) The most convincing solution is:

6.♕g5!!

For maybe purely aesthetical reasons, I think this is the best move. The backwards queen move avoided the smothered mate, but now the rook is gone, the queen can return to where she was before.

6...♖f7

6...♘a3 7.♕xe7 and Black will have to give perpetual.

7.♗xe2!

7.♖xe2 ♘xc3 8.♖e8† ♗f8 9.♕h6 ♕f4 is probably also a draw, but slightly uncomfortable.

7...♘xc3 8.♕d8† ♖f8 9.♕xc7 ♕d4

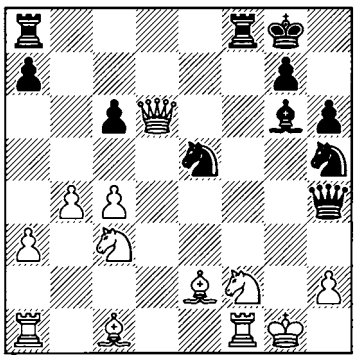
9...♖g8 10.♖xg7

10.♕xc3 ♕xc3 11.bxc3 ♗xc3† 12.♔b1

The endgame is a dead draw:
12...♖f5 13.♗c4 ♖xf3 14.♖g3 ♖xg3 15.hxg3

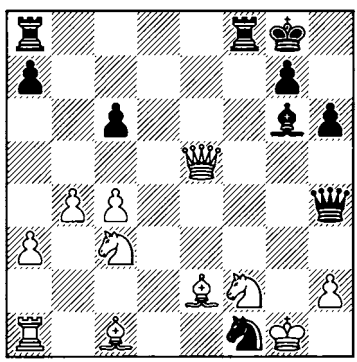
How this exercise could have been solved: The first realisation is that White is leading quite substantially in material. The next is that the position is changed radically once Black takes on b1 and thereby parts with his direct threats. This will hopefully inspire White to create counterplay.

185 Pavlovic – Crepinsek
Yugoslavia 1977



In a desperate situation Black tried a tempting sacrifice that worked like a charm.
1...♘g3! 2.hxg3?
After this White is lost. 2.♗b2? also does not work. Black can force a draw with 2...♕g5, but stronger is 2...♖ae8! bringing more material to the kingside. I have not been able to find a defence for White here:
a) 3.♘h1 ♖xf1† 4.♖xf1 ♘xf1 5.♗xf1 ♕f4! Black has a winning attack. The dominance of the dark squares is more important than anything. The following close to forced line illustrates the situation quite well: 6.c5 ♖f8 7.♗e2 ♕e3† 8.♔g2 ♗e4† 9.♘xe4 ♕xe4† 10.♔h3 ♕xe2 11.♕xe5 ♕f1† 12.♔h4 ♖f4† 13.♔h5 ♕h3† 14.♔g6 ♕g4† 15.♕g5 ♕xg5 mate.
b) 3.hxg3 ♕xg3† 4.♔h1 ♖f4 5.♘g4 ♖xg4 6.♗xg4 ♕h4† 7.♔g2 ♕xg4† 8.♔h1 ♘f3! White has no defence. Either Black plays 9...♖e5 with a deadly attack, or he wins after 9.♖xf3 ♕xf3† 10.♔g1 ♗e4 11.♘xe4 ♖xe4 when White needs to part with the queen.
2...♕xg3† 3.♔h1 ♕xc3 4.♗d2
No other moves work. After 4.♗g5 ♖xf2! and 4.♗xh6 ♖xf2! 5.♖xf2 ♕h3† 6.♔g1 ♗e4 Black wins. Also after 4.♕e6† ♗f7 5.♕e7 ♕xa1 6.♗xh6 ♕d4 Black stays in control.
4...♕g3 5.♕e6†
White has no defence at all. The best option seems to be 5.♕d4 ♖ad8 6.♕e3, but 6...♘f3 7.♗xf3 ♖xf3 8.♕e6† ♔h7 9.♕g4 ♖xd2 10.♕xg3 ♖xg3 gives Black a winning endgame.
5...♔h7 6.♖g1 ♕h4† 7.♘h3
7.♕h3 ♗e4† and it is all over.
7...♖ae8 8.♗g4 ♖xe6 9.♗xe6 ♗e4†
0–1

The correct defence was:
2.♕xe5!! ♘xf1
The only test. 2...♖ae8 does not work: White just takes on g3.



3.♘g4!!
3.♘cd1? ♖ae8 and Black has a winning attack. 4.♕xg7† is the best move according to Fritz9.
3.♗f4 is the only serious alternative, but Black has a clear advantage after 3...♖xf4 4.♖xf1 ♖e8 5.♕d6 ♕g5† 6.♘g4 ♖xg4† 7.♗xg4 ♕xg4† 8.♕g3 ♕d4† followed by ...♗d3xc4 and Black is a pawn up with good chances to clinch the full point.
3...♘xh2!?
3...♖ae8 4.♕d4! ♖d8 5.♘d5 and White is winning with his advantage in material.

4.♗xh6!!

Development and counter-threats at the same time. White benefits from the rook's involvement in the defence. 4.♕xh2? ♕e1† and Black has the initiative.

4...gxh6

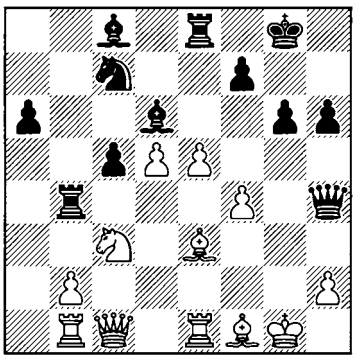
4...♘f3† 5.♗xf3 gxh6 6.♖f1 and White should be in control.

5.♕xh2

White should have a quite a considerable advantage in the endgame, though it is probably a bit less clear-cut than some think, including Fritzie-boy.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is natural to want to take on e5, but to see 3.♘g4!! is the real test here. We are now so deep into the book that we no longer can take anything for granted. We should abandon the idea of gravity and, when so many pieces are hanging, realise that a desperado can be many things: for example, a simple knight move protecting a pawn and the square where it came from.

186 Goldin – Arbakov
USSR 1978



If Black had a beginner's fear of losing pieces, White would be floating on cloud nine. Unfortunately he did not.

1...♖xe5!! 2.fxe5 ♖g4†! 3.♔h1

3.♗g2 will not survive. Black has a winning attack after 3...♗xe5 4.♖e2 (4.♔f1 ♕xh2 5.♖e2 ♖xg2 transposes) 4...♕xh2† 5.♔f1 ♖xg2! 6.♖xg2 ♗h3 7.♕d2 ♕h1† 8.♔e2 ♕xg2† 9.♔d3 ♗f5† 10.♔c4 ♕xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗xc3 and Black is a piece up.

3...♗xe5

Here we have our exercise. The solution is given below.

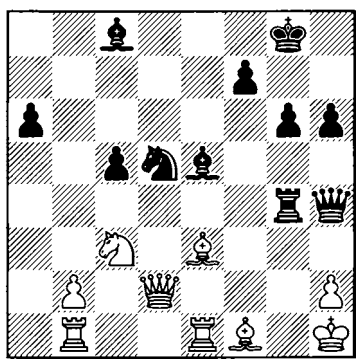
4.♕d2?

4.h3? ♖g3 is hardly an improvement for White. The king's safety is clearly weakened. 5.♖e2 (5.♕d2 ♗xh3 6.♕h2 ♖xe3 7.♖xe3 ♗g2†! and White is completely lost) 5...♘xd5! By now this must be said to be a thematic breakthrough (5...♕h5 also wins). 6.♘xd5 ♗xh3 7.♖h2 ♕e4†! The idea behind the knight sacrifice. White is mated.

4.♕c2? loses to 4...♘xd5! 5.♘xd5 ♗f5! when the attack is deadly. The following main line is a brilliant illustration of how White will sink. 6.♘e7† (6.♗g5!? is what you would be tempted to call the only move. After 6...♕xg5 7.♗d3 ♗e6 8.♗c4 ♗xh2! White is suffering badly, but maybe not completely lost.) 6...♕xe7 7.♗xc5 ♕h4 8.♕d2 ♗f4 9.♕f2 ♗g3 10.♕d2 ♗d7 and White cannot avoid mate without heavy material investments.

4...♘xd5?

This sacrifice is meant to open files towards the white king, but Black could do this more simply with 4...♗b7! 5.♖e2 ♘xd5 6.♕xd5 (6.♘xd5 ♖d4 transposes to the game) 6...♗xd5† 7.♘xd5 ♗d4 and Black has a substantial advantage.



This could also have been the place to pick the exercise from this game:

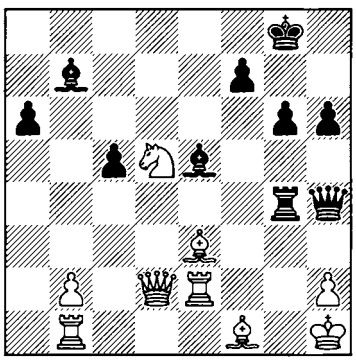
5.♘xd5??

This loses straightaway. White must have overlooked Black's sixth move.

5.♗g1? loses quite quickly to 5...♗b7 6.♗g2 ♗f4! and the queen is in need of a square. The main point is that 7.♕c2 ♘b4 is over in one move.

5.♗g5!! was the best shot. Black still keeps some advantage after 5...♖xg5 (5...♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♖xg5 7.♖b8 ♔g7 8.♖xc8 ♕g4 9.♗g2 ♕xc8 10.♗xd5 and White has some chances with his extra piece, though a draw is most likely) 6.♘xd5 ♗g4! (6...♗b7 7.♖xe5! leads to better chances for White according to my analysis) 7.♖xe5 (7.♖e3 ♔g7 makes it very difficult to defend the white king. One line goes 8.♗xa6 ♖f5 9.♖f1 ♗e2!! 10.♕xe2 ♖xf1† 11.♔g2 ♖f5 with a winning attack.) 7...♗f3† 8.♗g2 ♗xg2† 9.♕xg2 ♖xg2 10.♔xg2 ♕d4 11.♘e7† ♔g7 12.♖e2. White is struggling, but probably he can still scrape home with a draw. Of course, if his pieces were well coordinated he would be fine, but it is not so easy to get the knight into play.

5...♗b7 6.♖e2



6...♖d4!!

Probably White had missed this golden move. Black wins in style.

7.♗xd4

7.♕c2 ♗xd5† 8.♔g1 ♖g4† 9.♗g2 ♕xh2† 10.♔f1 ♗c4 and White is completely criss-crossed.

7...♗xd5† 8.♔g1

8.♖g2 ♕xh2 mate.

8...♗xd4† 9.♖f2

9.♖e3 loses to a lot of moves. For example: 9...♕e4 10.♔f2 ♕f3† 11.♔e1 ♗xe3 12.♕e2 ♕f4 and White cannot defend against the countless threats.

9...♕e4!

0–1

The correct defensive idea is to keep the squares around the king as airtight as possible:

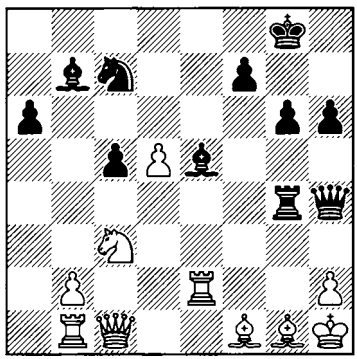
4.♖e2!!

This is the only move that achieves this. And after

4...♗b7

then

5.♗g1!!



Overdefending h2. Note that it had to be played in this move order, as 4...♖xg1† would have put a stop to 4.♗g1.

5...♘xd5 6.♘xd5 ♗xd5† 7.♗g2

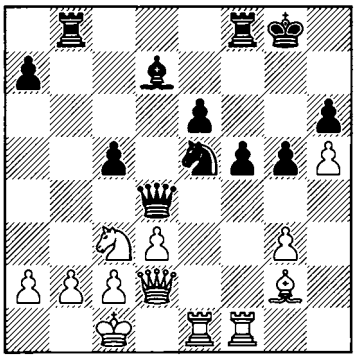
Now White has managed to create a fortress, and Black has nothing better than perpetual check.

7...♗xg2† 8.♖xg2 ♖xg2 9.♔xg2

Both checks will lead to a draw.

How this exercise could have been solved: White needs to bring pieces to his defence, and cover as many squares as possible, especially the mugged h2-square. This, plus realising that Black is about to crash through on the long diagonal, and that g2 therefore needs immediate aid, are the key deductions in solving this exercise.

187 Alper – Bronznik
Hanover 1998



1...♖xb2!?

Other strong moves also exist.

2.♖xe5!

The only move: 2.♔xb2 ♘c4†

2...♖xa2! 3.♖d5?

White could have offered a lot of resistance with a series of rampaging rook moves, not too dissimilar to my wife's parking skills. But look at what happened to the poor guy in the game!

Alternatively we have:

3.♘xa2?? ♕a1 mate.

3.♖fe1? ♖a1† 4.♔b2 ♖b8† 5.♔xa1 ♕b4 6.♖b1 ♕a5† and Black wins.

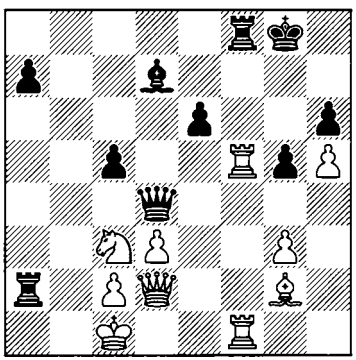
3.♔d1? ♖a1† 4.♔e2 ♕xe5† and wins.

3...♖a1†! 4.♔b2 ♕b4†! 5.♔xa1 ♕a5†

0–1

The best defence was:

3.♖exf5!!



3...♖xf5!

The correct recapture. Calculation shows that after 3...exf5? 4.♗d5† ♕xd5 5.♘xd5 ♖a1† 6.♔b2 ♖xf1 7.♕e2! it is White who has a winning attack.

4.♖xf5 ♖a1†!

This is clearly the most dangerous. 4...♗a4 5.♖f3 ♖xc2† 6.♕xc2 ♗xc2 7.♔xc2 ♕g1 8.♗f1 should be fine for White, though still a little inconvenient.

5.♔b2 ♖a6

The rook is ready for another deadly attack, so White has no choice but to continue the rampage.

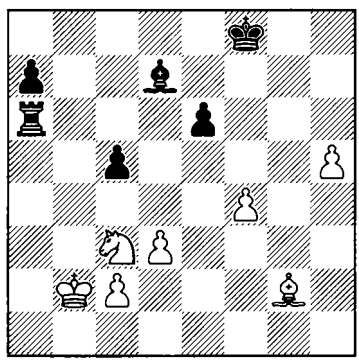
6.♖xg5†! hxg5 7.♕xg5† ♔f8

7...♔f7 8.♗e4!? and suddenly there is counterplay against the king.

8.♕f4† ♕xf4

8...♔e8 9.♕xd4 cxd4 10.♘e4 looks defendable to me. White will quickly advance his passers.

9.gxf4

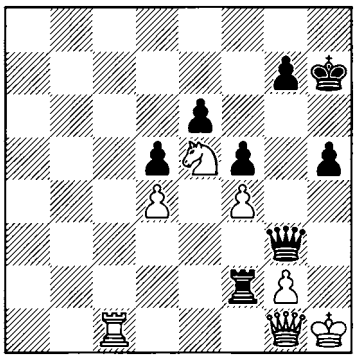


9...♔g7 10.♗h3

Black has winning chances, but it is going to be really tough to convert his advantage. The rook cannot easily get active and the passed pawn can be blocked. The position is unpleasant, but by far the best chance for White.

How this exercise could have been solved: In a situation of despair and hanging pieces, the desperado is often our only hope. This is also the case here. An open mind is all it takes, but an open mind is not easily acquired.

188 Gelfand – Shirov
Monte Carlo 2003



Mark Dvoretsky believed he had found a nice winning combination for White, usable as an exercise in his card files. But a surprising defensive idea ruined the original idea, and made it a great defence exercise, which Mark suggested I could use in this book.

1.♖c3!?

1.♕h2 ♕xh2† 2.♔xh2 ♖xf4 3.♘f3 was better for White in the game, but Black managed to make a draw all the same.

1...♕xf4 2.♖h3

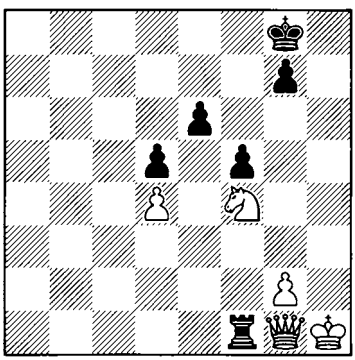
The exercise starts here:

2...♖f1!

The only move, anticipating White's combination.

2...♕xd4 3.♘d3! ♖f4 4.♘xf4 ♕xf4 5.♕e3 and White wins.

3.♖xh5† ♔g8 4.♖h8†! ♔xh8 5.♘g6† ♔g8 6.♘xf4



Apparently White wins trivially. Only after the next move does it become clear that this is not the case.

6...♖xf4!!

A kind of materialistic move. Black reckons that it is better to have a piece each, than to be a spectator at a domination performance by the white knight.

With the rook on e4 it is not easy to see how White can break the fortress. Probably Black should keep the pawn g7. When I played this position against Fritz9 the nine headed mouse-monster could not catch me...

How this exercise could have been solved: The first thing you discover is that White is planning a strong combination. The second thing is probably that there is no way to avoid it. At this point it is important that you carefully investigate each of your moves to see if you have any extra opportunities you did not think of at first. Hopefully this should lead you to taking the knight instead of the queen.

189 Dreev – Yudasin
Manila (izt) 1990

Being under heavy pressure, Yudasin came up with a stunning solution to his problems.

1...♘c5!!

1...♗f7 2.♖g4† ♔h8 3.♖g7 c2 4.♖xf7 ♖xf7 5.♗xf7 c1=♕ 6.♗xc1 ♘xc1 7.♗c4 and there is no defence against the advance of the white pawns.

2.♗xc5

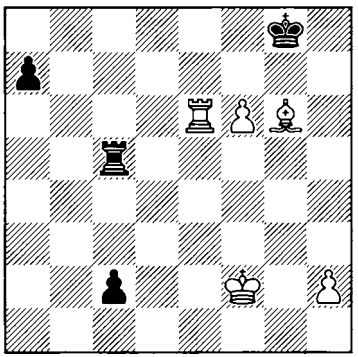
White has no choice: 2.♖d4?! c2 leaves no sensible way to proceed.

2...♖xc5 3.♖xe6 c2 4.♗g6!

The main threat to Black's combination. The c-pawn is under fire, and mate is threatened.

4.f7†? ♔f8 5.♖g6 does not work as 5...♖f5† just wins. But Black also has a funny draw with 5...♔e7?! 6.♖f6 ♔f8.

4.♖e1 c1=♕ is also somewhat dubious. With the king cut off it is not clear that White will make the draw.



4...♖f5†!!

Absolutely the only move. White wins by force after 4...♖c8 5.♖e8† (5.f7† also wins) 5...♖xe8 6.f7† ♔g7 7.fxe8=♕ c1=♕ 8.♕f7† ♔h6 9.♕h7† ♔g5 10.h4† ♔f6 (10...♔g4 11.♕h5† ♔h3 12.♕f3† ♔xh4 13.♕g3 mate) 11.♕f7† ♔e5 12.♕e7† ♔d5 13.♕g5†.

5.♔e2

5.♗xf5? c1=♕ makes no sense; neither does 5.♔g3, even though the endgame after 5...♖g5† 6.♔h3 ♖xg6 7.♖e8† ♔f7 8.♖c8 is still a dead draw.

5...♖xf6 6.♖e8† ♖f8!

6...♔g7 7.♗xc2 ♖h6 should also draw, as the endgame with bishop and rook vs. rook is theoretically drawn. However, this has not prevented many strong players from losing it over the years!

7.♖xf8† ♔xf8 8.♗xc2

The bishop is the wrong colour for the promotion square, and so the endgame is just drawn.

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: First of all, there is your arsenal of defensive ideas, including the rook's pawn and wrong coloured bishop. Then there is a strong will for advancing the c-pawn. Finally, you see your opponent's resources, because you calculate carefully and accurately, and do not despair, but find clever answers to his clever answers.

190 Anand – Kasimdzhanov
San Luis 2005

In this complicated position the reigning World Champion lost in one move, more or less.

1...♘f6??

This is an exceptional mistake for this level. One feels that the tournament is drawing towards the end. Black only had one sensible move in this position, as everything else loses rather trivially, including the text.

1...♖xb6? loses outright to 2.hxg4 ♗xg4 (2...♗g7 3.f5 and White wins a piece) 3.♕e3 with a double threat on b6 and h6.

2.♗c5!

After this Black is plainly lost, which should be easy to see for a World Champion.

2...exf4

White wins after both 2...♗f8 3.♗xd6 ♗xd6 4.fxe5 and 2...0–0 3.♗xd6 ♖fd8 4.♖hd1.

3.gxf4 ♖c8

The "best chance" 3...♗f8 loses to 4.e5 ♕c7 5.♗xd6 ♗xd6 6.♘c6 when Black is completely dominated.

4.♗xd6 ♕d8 5.♗b4

Other moves were possibly more precise, but this is sufficient.

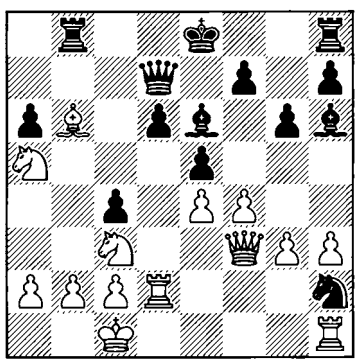
5...♕b6 6.a3 ♘h5 7.♔b1 ♗xf4

7...♘xf4 8.♖d6 ♕b8 9.♘c6 ♕b7 10.♘d5 ♗xd5 11.exd5 0–0 12.♖f6 and White wins.

8.♘d5 ♗xd5 9.♖xd5 ♗b8 10.♖hd1 c3 11.♖d7 1–0

The only move was the following desperado:

1...♘h2!!



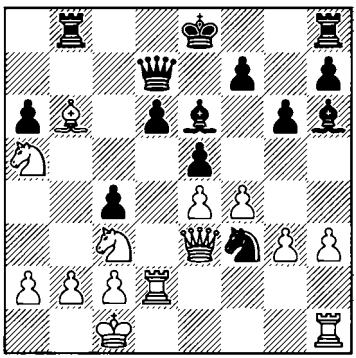
The key idea is to take on b6 without allowing White to play hxg4 with the double threat of f5 and ♖xh6.

2.♕e3

Also worth considering was 2.♖hxh2 ♖xb6 3.♘d5 ♗xd5 4.♖xd5 ♕c7!?. Other moves are also possible. Black is contemplating ...♖b5. 5.♕c3 0–0 6.♕xc4 ♕b8 With the threats against f4 and down the open files, Black has enough counterplay. White may be best off with repeting moves with 7.♘c6 ♕b7 8.♘a5. Black can sidestep this with 8...♕d7 with chances for both sides, but the queen does appear better placed on b8, so it would be a small achievement for White.

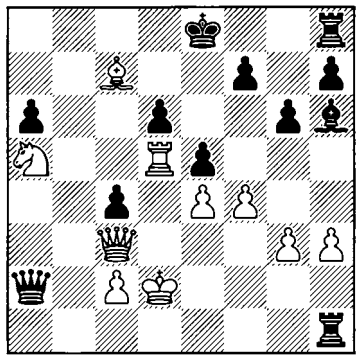
2...♘f3!

Black must be persistent. There are three moves of primary interest:



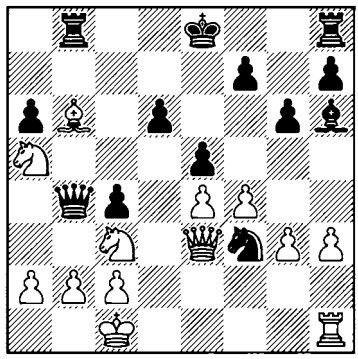
3.♖f2 exf4 4.gxf4 ♘e5 5.♖d1 0–0 is some kind of dynamic balance.

3.♘d5 is weak because of **3...♕a4!** 3...♗xd5 4.♖xd5 exf4 5.gxf4 ♖xb6 6.♕xb6 ♗xf4† 7.♔b1 gives White a clear edge. **4.♕xf3** 4.♘f6† ♔f8 does not achieve anything for White. **4...♗xd5 5.♗c7!** This sets Black the most problems. 5.♖xd5 ♖xb6 6.♔b1 0–0 gives chances for both sides, but maybe with a slight majority of them being on Black's side. **5...♖c8!** 5...♖xb2? 6.♔xb2 ♗xe4! 7.♕c3 ♗xh1 8.♗xd6 f6 9.♘xc4 ♗c6 10.♗b4 with a winning attack for White. 5...♕xa2 6.♖xd5 ♖xb2 7.♕c3!! ♖b1† 8.♔d2 and White is a piece up based on 8...♖xh1



9.♕xe5†!! dxe5 10.♖d8† ♔e7 11.♘c6† ♔f6 12.♗xe5† ♔e6 13.♖d6 mate. **6.♖xd5 ♖xc7 7.♔b1 0–0** The chances are close to even. Certainly Black should not be unhappy with the outcome.

3.♖d5!? This seems to lead to a draw by force with best play. **3...♗xd5** 3...exf4!? 4.gxf4 ♘e5 5.♗c5 ♗xd5 6.♘xd5 ♕d8 7.♕c3 0–0 8.♗e3 ♖b5 9.♘xc4 ♘xc4 10.♕xc4 ♗g7 White has compensation for the exchange because of the glorious knight on d5. But as he has only one pawn for the exchange, Black should not be unhappy either. **4.♘xd5 ♕a4 5.♘c3!** This appears best. 5.♕xf3 gives us an example of how wrong things can go for White. After 5...♖xb6 6.♘xb6 ♕xa5 7.♘xc4 ♕xa2 8.♘xd6† ♔e7 9.♖d1 ♖d8 10.♕d3 ♕a1† 11.♔d2 ♕xd1† 12.♔xd1 ♖xd6 Black will win the endgame. Not a forced line, but White is facing problems. **5...♕b4**



6.♘d5 ♕a4 With a draw by repetition.

How this exercise could have been solved: A Danish idiom goes: necessity teaches a naked woman to purr. Black should realise that the retreat of the knight leads directly to his destruction. To get from this deduction to finding the solution is a long way, but not impossible.

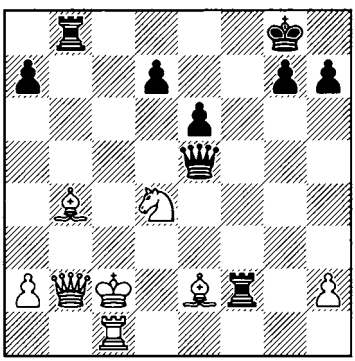
Actually we are once again (surprise, surprise) dealing with a desperado setting, which therefore relieves us from all normal thinking and makes all moves possible.

191 Hadzimanolis – Gershon
Kavala 2004

I personally find this exercise very difficult, but then again, White managed to solve it in the game!

1.♕b4!!

This is absolutely forced. The most natural move in the position is refuted by a fabulous combination: 1.♗b4? ♗xd4†!! 2.♘xd4 (2.♕xd4 ♖xf3†) 2...♕e5† 3.♔d3 ♖f3†! The first important point. 4.♔c2 (4.♘xf3 ♕xb2 is hopeless. Black has more material and much better coordination.) 4...♖xf2† 5.♗e2 (5.♘e2 ♕e4† 6.♔b3 ♖f3† 7.♘c3 a5 and Black regains a piece with a continuing attack) 5...♖b8!!



This quiet move is absolutely winning. Black is threatening moves such as 6...♖f4 and 6...a5. With the king stuck in the middle, there is little White can do to prevent them. For example 6.♕c3 ♖xe2† 7.♘xe2 ♕xe2† 8.♕d2 ♕e4† and Black will be victorious in the rook endgame. An important point of this exercise is to understand that, broadly speaking, Black has a better position.

After quiet moves such as 1.♕c3 Black has time to organise his forces and create an attack against the white king. 1...♗e7!? 2.♔e2 ♖ab8 3.♗g2 ♕d5 4.♔f1 ♕xa2 and Black has a slight material advantage as well as better placed pieces and a passed pawn on the rim. White's future is bleak.

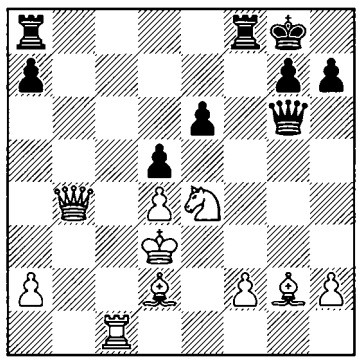
1...♗g5†!

Black needs to keep the initiative. 1...♕d5 2.♕c5! ♕xa2 3.♗c4 allows White to activate his pieces.

2.♘xg5 ♕f4† 3.♔d3 ♕f5† 4.♘e4

4.♔c3?! does not work on account of 4...♖fc8† 5.♗c4 ♖ab8 6.♕e7 ♖xc4†! 7.♔xc4 ♕b5† 8.♔c3 ♖c8† and the queen will dominate the white pieces with the assistance of the pawns, and most likely win the game.

4...d5 5.♗g2 ♕g6



6.♕d6?

A losing mistake. 6.♗h1 ♖xf2 7.♕b7 ♖af8 8.♖c8 was much better. White might even be a little better.

6...♖xf2 7.♕c6 ♖af8 8.♗h1 ♖xh2 9.♗b4

By forcing the play too soon, Black now throws away the win.

9...♖xh1??

The quiet 9...♕f5! would have won rather easily. The threat of 10...♕h3 is very strong, the same goes for 10...♖xh1, which will work

if White plays defensive moves such as 10.♗d2. 10.♖e1 loses to 10...♕h3† 11.♖e3 ♕f1† 12.♔c3 ♕a1† 13.♔d3 ♕b1† 14.♔c3 ♕c2 mate.

10.♖xh1 ♕xe4†

Black is still better, but the win is no longer simple.

11.♔c3 ♕f3† 12.♔b2 ♕g2† 13.♔b3 ♖f3† 14.♔a4 ♕xa2† 15.♔b5 ♕e2† 16.♔a5 h6 17.♖g1! ♔h7 18.♕c7 ♕a2† 19.♔b5 ♕e2† 20.♔a5 ♕a2† 21.♔b5 ♕e2† 22.♔a5

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: By the method of elimination and some sound intuition. As the exercises grow harder, the advice becomes more limited. I cannot give anything better than: use your sense of danger and calculate really well!

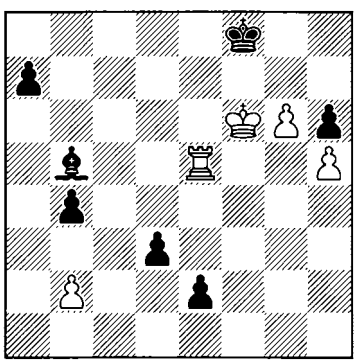
192 Nakamura – Ibragimov
San Diego 2004

The game continued with a natural, but losing, move.

1...a5?

1...♗c4? 2.♔f5 ♔g7 (2...d3 3.♔f6 and White wins easily) 3.♖e7† ♔h8 4.♔f6 d3 5.♖h7† ♔g8 6.♖c7 ♗e6 7.♖e7 and White wins.

1...♗b5!! was the winner. It is important that Black keeps control over the e8-square. The main line goes: 2.♔f5 d3 3.♔f6



3...♗a4!! Controls d1 and avoids the simple ♖xb5. 4.♖e7 e1=♕! Black wins. However, it is also possible to blunder here with 4...d2??, which is met with 5.g7† ♔g8 6.♖f7! and mate cannot be averted.

2.♔f3

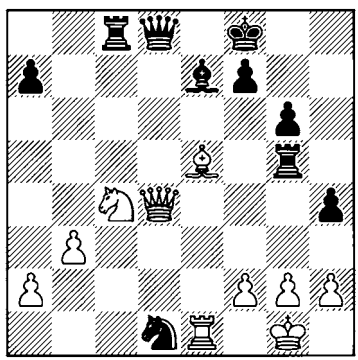
White dominates the black pieces and picks up the pawns one by one.

2...a4 3.♔f2 a3 4.bxa3 b3 5.g7† ♔xg7 6.♖e7† ♔f6 7.♖b7 ♗c4 8.♖b4 ♗f7 9.a4 d3 10.a5 ♗xh5 11.♔e1 ♔e5 12.a6 ♗f3 13.a7 h5 14.♖xb3 ♔d4 15.♖b8 h4 16.♖d8† ♔c3 17.♖c8† ♔d4 18.♔d2 h3 19.a8=♕

1–0

How this exercise could have been solved: One important thing is to understand that White will always win the endgame if he manages to create a passed pawn on the queenside. This, and Black's obvious plan of promoting a pawn, should motivate Black to focus clearly on the passed pawns.

193 Rechlis – Avrukh
Israel 2005



White managed to put a lot of pressure on Black with:

1.♗d6!

With a double threat. Now Avrukh displayed his great skill.

1...♔g8! 2.♖xe7 ♘c3!!

The great point is coming on move 5.

2...♘b2 3.♕xb2 ♖d5 4.♖e1 and although Black can regain some material, White will be left a pawn up.

3.♕xc3

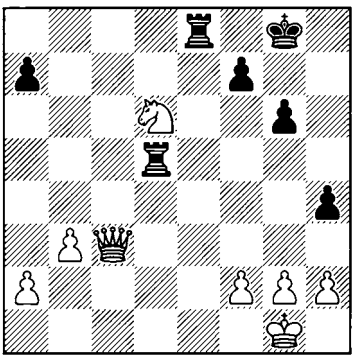
3.♕f6 ♖f5 4.♕xc3 transposes.

Silly moves such as 3.h3 are best met with 3...♕xe7! 4.♗xe7 ♘e2† 5.♔f1 ♘xd4 and Black is better in the endgame.

3...♕xd6

The queen sacrifice is forced. 3...♖d5 4.♕f3 ♖f5 5.♕e2 ♖d5 6.♗b4 and White wins.

4.♖e8† ♖xe8 5.♘xd6 ♖d5!!



This miraculous double threat is the key point of the exercise. If you did not see this, you did not solve the exercise! Black wins the knight and can make a draw with counterplay against the white king.

6.h3 ♖xd6 7.♕b4 ♖d1† 8.♔h2 ♖e2 9.♕b8†

9.♕xh4 ♖dd2 and Black draws.

9...♔g7 10.♕xa7 ♖dd2 11.♔g1 ♖e1† 12.♔h2 ♖ee2 13.a4 ♖xf2 14.♕b7 g5!

With this move Black safeguards the h-pawn, and prepares to create counterplay on the first rank.

15.♕e4

After 15.a5 ♖d1 the threat of 16...♖ff1 forces White to seek counterplay against the black king with either 16.♕e7 or 16.♕b5 f6 17.♕b7† ♔h6 18.♕a8, both leading to a draw.

15...♖fe2 16.♕f3 f6 17.♕b7† ♔g6 18.♕a8

½–½

How this exercise could have been solved: The main line is pretty forced. The principal idea of the exercise is to stick with it even after the queen is lost, when the double threat emerges from the fog in your mind as a saviour in the mist. (hmm – red).

194 Navarovszky – Lukacs
Hungary 1972

This exercise is one of the most difficult exercises I could imagine putting in a book.

1...♖f2?

An understandable mistake. Black's position was extremely difficult and, worst of all, the correct defence involves doing very little: just preparing for the coming tactics by improving the position of the rook ever so slightly.

1...♖d3? loses spectacularly to 2.♗e8! with the obvious threat of 3.♗f7†. Black will be forced to give up the queen, and then White settles it with ♔g5.

2.♖a7! ♖d2

2...♖f5 looks like a possible defence, but White wins with simple moves and only one little trick. 3.♕e6† ♔h8 4.♖a8 ♖f4† 5.♔g3 ♘e4† 6.♕xe4! (6.♗xe4? h4† 7.♔h2 ♖f2† with perpetual check) 6...h4† 7.♔g2 ♖f2† 8.♔h1 ♖f1† 9.♔h2 ♖f2† 10.♕g2! and White stays a piece ahead.

3.♕e6†

White could have won slightly faster with 3.♕g5!, when the following line: 3...♘e8 4.♕xg6† ♘g7 5.♖a8 ♖d8 6.♗d5†! is not very hard to calculate.

3...♔h8 4.♖f7 g5†

Last try, but not enough.

5.♔xg5 ♕g8†

5...♘h7† also does not work. White wins in various ways, for instance 6.♔h4 ♕d8† 7.♖e7! ♕d6 8.♖e8† ♘f8, and now 9.♕f7 wins fastest, but 9.♕xd6 is probably simplest.

5...♕c5† 6.♔xf6 ♖d6 does not win the queen, but allows White to mate with 7.♖f8† ♔h7 8.♗e4†.

6.♔xf6 ♖f2† 7.♔e7 ♕g5† 8.♔d7

1–0

The correct solution was, as said, to nudge the rook a little bit.

1...♖d1!!

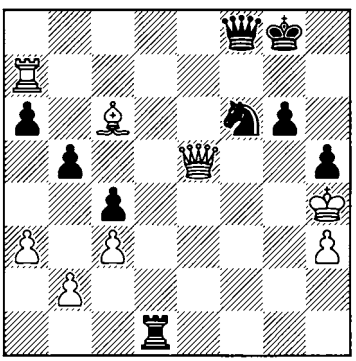
This is the miracle drug. The rook needs to be here for several reasons. Firstly, Black needs to be able to play ...♖d8 in various lines. Secondly, the g1-square will be very useful for counterplay against the white king. The main lines now goes like this:

2.♖a7

2.♕e6†? ♔h8 is bad for White. Suddenly he has to find moves like 3.♗g2! to stay in the game. The position is not that clear, but Black probably has the better chances because of his extra pawn.

The main point is that after 3.♖f7? Black will win with 3...g5†!! 4.♔xg5 ♕c5†. Though the check on g1 is much needed in most lines, it is not in this instance. Both heavy pieces need to be active. After 5.♕f5 ♖g1† 6.♔xf6 ♕xc6† the white king will not be able to find sufficient shelter from the storm.

2.♗e8? also does not work now. The difference from the position after 1...♖d3 is that Black can play 2...♖g1!! 3.♗f7† ♔g7!!. White does not have any useful discovered checks, which means that 4...g5† will win the game.



Black is faced with another difficult choice: Which piece is going to d6?

a) **2...♖d6?**

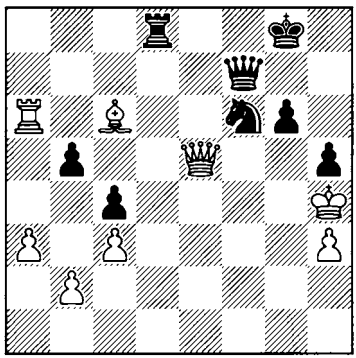
This looks good at first, but close analysis shows that White will control some important squares. The key idea is to annoy the bishop on c6. White can now win back a pawn with

3.♖a8 ♖d8 4.♖xa6

when Black has to play

4...♕f7

which takes control over a lot of squares. White has only one way to prove an advantage, but it is a very convincing one.



5.♗f3!!

A power-move. The bishop is ideally placed on f3, where it is controlling a lot of useful squares. White is now coming with both 6.♕e6, and especially 6.♖xf6.

Weaker is 5.♖a8? ♖xa8 6.♗xa8 ♕f8 7.♗c6 ♕d8 and the knight and queen work well together. The chances should be close to even.

5...♔g7

5...♖f8?! 6.♔g5!! ♘h7† 7.♔h6 ♘f6 8.♕e6 and White wins.

6.♖b6 ♖e8 7.♕f4 ♖e7 8.♗g2

White is winning the b5-pawn and Black will have great trouble finding an adequate defence. He has completely failed to create threats against the white king. Now a forced endgame arises after:

8...♘e4!? 9.♕xf7† ♔xf7 10.♖xb5 ♔f6 11.♗xe4 ♖xe4† 12.♔g3

I would rate White's chances highly.

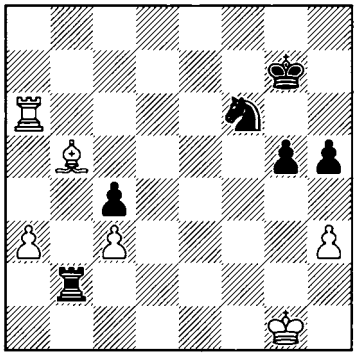
b) **2...♕d6!**

Black's king is in more danger than White's, so Black goes into the endgame.

3.♕xd6 ♖xd6 4.♖xa6 ♔g7 5.♗xb5

5.♔g5 ♘e4† 6.♔f4 ♘c5 and Black is fine.

5...g5† 6.♔g3 ♖d3† 7.♔h2 ♖d2† 8.♔g1 ♖xb2

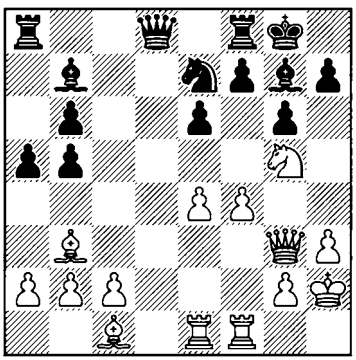


9...♗xc4 ♖c2

Black should be able to draw with a number of accurate moves, but already here the position is probably a bit speculative.

How this exercise could have been solved: When there is nothing active, you need to find the best possible "passive" move. In this position the method would be to find out what White is up to, and then look at possible waiting moves, until you find one that will present you with a defence against all of them. A perfect example of a prophylactic move; but in a very difficult exercise.

195 Ang. Hernandez – Moreno Ramon
Cuba 1994



1.f5! exf5

The only move. 1...a4 is met with 2.f6!.

2.exf5?!

This turns out to be no good. 2.♘xf7! ♖xf7 3.♗g5! would be somewhat similar to the game except, because White has not yet fired all his cannons, Black does not know how to set his sails (18th century naval warfare metaphor, in case you are in doubt). White is probably winning.

2...♘xf5 3.♖xf5 gxf5 4.♘xf7 ♖xf7 5.♗g5

5.♗h6 ♔h8! and Black wins.

5...♕d4

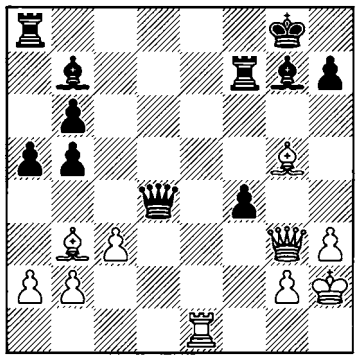
5...♕b8? 6.♗xf7† ♔xf7 7.♖e7† ♔f8 8.♗f4 and White wins.

6.c3

The queen is too well placed and needs to be nudged. Neither 6.♖e7? ♗d5 nor 6.♕c7? ♗d5 works.

6...f4?

Looks clever, but should have lost outright. But how could Black have defended?



7.♗xf4?

A great miss. White wins with 7.♗xf7†! ♔xf7 8.♖e7† followed by 9.♗xf4 and both bishops cannot be protected.

7...♕d7 8.♗e6

8.♗h6?? would be a total catastrophe after 8...♔h8!.

Also 8.♗e5 ♗d5 is not entirely clear, though after 9.♖d1! ♕e8 10.♗xd5 ♕xe5 11.♗xa8 White at least has an extra pawn.

8...♕e8?

As already known from exercise 93, another move would have held here.

9.♗h6 ♔h8

9...♕b8 10.♗xf7† ♔xf7 11.♖f1† ♔g8 12.♖f4! and White wins.

10.♗xf7 ♕xf7 11.♕xg7† ♕xg7 12.♗xg7† ♔xg7 13.♖e7†

1–0

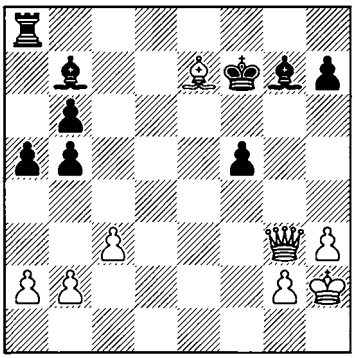
The solution is:

6...♕c5!!

OK, so this is the correct move, but the point is much deeper than just this.

7.♗xf7† ♔xf7 8.♖e7† ♕xe7 9.♗xe7

Black needed to anticipate the stunning next move to solve the problem, and so did you in order to claim that you have solved this exercise.



9...♖e8!!

Either Black will get rook and two bishops against the queen, or make a draw after:

10.♗g5 ♗e5 11.♗f4 ♖g8!

A drawn opposite coloured bishops endgame arises.

How this exercise could have been solved: This is one of those exercises where you cannot prevent the attack, but you can position yourself as well as possible, so when the attack finally hits, you will have sufficient resources. At move 9 this is a tough exercise. Hats off if you solved it from move 6!

196 McShane – Ni Hua
Tiayuan 2005

In the game White lost quite quickly.

1.♗f1? ♗b6! 2.♔c4

White also loses after 2.♗xh3 e2 3.♖d2 though Black will have to find 3...♗e3! (3...e1=♕ 4.♖d6† is far less clear. Fortresses are spooking.) 4.a7 ♗xa7 5.♖d6† ♔g5 6.♖e6 ♔f4 and there is no sensible defence to ...♗e3.

2...♖h1 3.♗d3 f2 4.♗e2

4.♖a2 ♖d1! and Black wins.

4...♖e1 5.♔d3 ♖d1†!

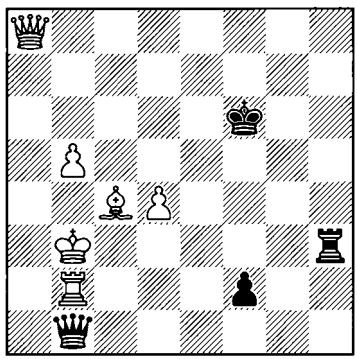
Not falling for the trap: 5...f1=♕?? 6.♗xf1 ♖xf1 7.c4 ♖f2 8.♖c1 ♖d2† 9.♔e4 and the win is at least very far from trivial.

0–1

White could have won by sacrificing an exchange over a number of moves with this wonderful combination:

1.cxd4!! e2 2.a7 e1=♕ 3.a8=♕ ♕b1† 4.♖b2 f2†

Probably Luke saw this far and disregarded the line, for which it is hard to blame him. Still, he shouldn't have.



5.♔a4! ♕xb2 6.♕d8†!

White has a winning attack. A difficult thing to see at any moment in a game with the time controls we are left with in modern chess. It is not made easier by the fact that this exercise started at the game's move 72.

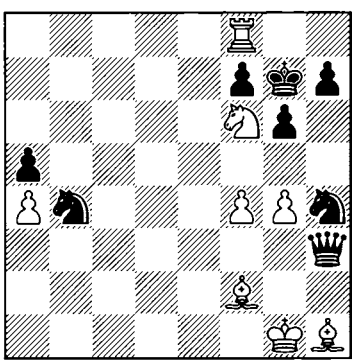
How this exercise could have been solved: When the pawn structures disappear and we have passed pawns on both sides, it becomes difficult to apply normal chess wisdom. It is tempting to take the bishop and enter a race where both players

queen. The thing that makes it all complicated is that Black queens first. Here it is important that we do not stop analysing a forced line before we have a real picture of where it is forcing us to be.

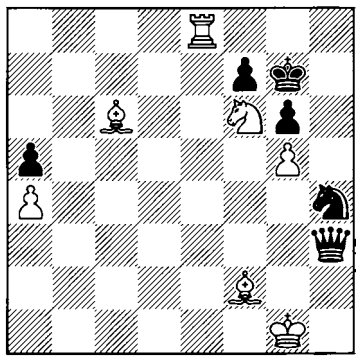
197 Norwood – Gelfand
Arnhem 1987

The game went
1.♕e7? ♘d3!
and Black was winning:
2.♕d7 ♗xf6 3.♕xc8† ♔g7 4.g5?
4.♖xd3 ♕xd3 5.♕c1 would have held the bits together for now, but only for now.
4...♕xc8 5.gxf6† ♔xf6 6.♗xh4† ♔g7 7.♖xd3 ♕c1†
0-1

Norwood found a beautiful draw after the game and published it in *Chess Informant*. On their CD it was still given with Norwood's original notes. However, some time after I had decided to include the position in this book, *Informant* published the third edition of *Encyclopaedia of Combinations*, this time with much corrected analysis. This was not the case for every example in their book, though.
1.♕d8†! ♖xd8 2.♖xd8† ♗f8 3.♖xf8†!
Norwood gave the imaginative 3.g5 ♔g7 4.♘e8† with repetition and a draw, but the position offers more.
3...♔g7



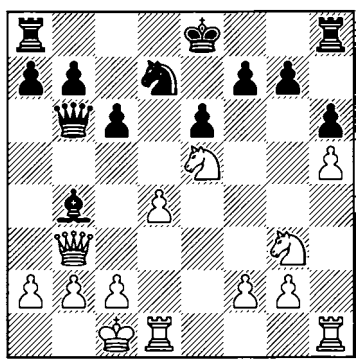
4.♖e8!!
A Fritz discovery. The knight is immune, and White is threatening 5.g5 with mate to follow, as well as 5.♖e3 trapping the queen.
As this is a book on defence, I think we should include the last trick, which has worked a few times on students of mine.
4...♘c6!? 5.♗xc6 h6 6.g5??
Tempting, and failing beautifully. White could win a truckload of farm animals with 6.♖e3!.
6...hxg5 7.fxg5



7...♘f3†! 8.♗xf3 ♕g2†! 9.♔xg2 Stalemate.

How this exercise could have been solved: The queen sacrifice looks tempting and natural, so it's hard not to give it immediate attention. The real trick is to have a look at move 4 to see if there are additional ideas. The same goes for Norwood's idea at move 3. In both cases this patience would be rewarded.

198 Emms – Hinks-Edwards
Birmingham 2001



A standard position has arisen in the opening. White has not played too aggressively, and Black was fine after the normal move (1...♗e7) he played in the game. During the preparation for a game at the Danish Championship I suddenly considered what would happen if Black decided to accept the pawn on f2 with:

1...♘xe5!? 2.dxe5 ♕xf2

It looks dangerous, but is apparently playable. For example:

3.♖hf1

3.♕xb4 ♕xg3 4.♖d7!? is also interesting, but apparently less dangerous after 4...c5!.

3...♕b6 4.♘e4 0–0 5.♘f6†!

Here we have our exercise.

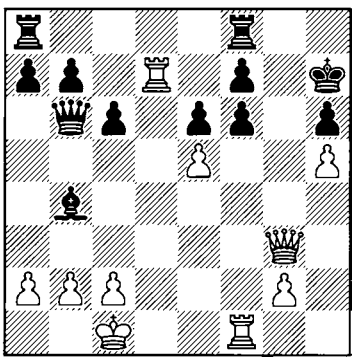
5...gxf6!

This is quite easy, since 5...♔h8?? 6.♕d3! gxf6 7.♖xf6 ♔g7 8.♕g3† ♔h7 9.♕f4 and White wins in a mating attack. But what next?

6.♕g3† ♔h7!

6...♔h8? 7.♖xf6 ♔h7 8.♕f4 still wins.

7.♖d7



7...♔h8!!

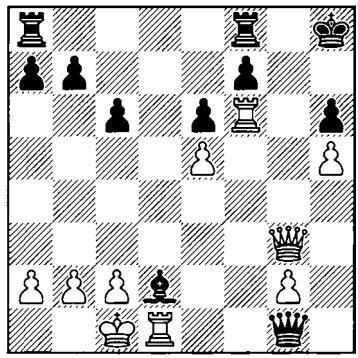
This is the great point of the exercise. White was threatening the lethal ♕g6†. The notable difference is that the rook is worse on d7 than on d1 because of a remarkable counter combination.

7...♖g8? 8.♖xf7† ♔h8 9.♕d3! f5 10.♕d7 and Black is viciously mated.

8.♖xf6

The most testing, which allows Black to show his hand. White can try to keep the pressure after something like 8.♕f4!? ♔h7 9.♕xf6 ♕e3† 10.♔b1 but I do not see a real chance for an advantage: 10...♗c5 11.♖xb7 ♖ab8 12.♖xb8 ♖xb8 13.♕xf7† ♔h8 14.♕f6† ♔g8 15.♕xe6† ♔h8 and probably it is time to take the perpetual check.

8...♕g1† 9.♖d1 ♗d2†!!



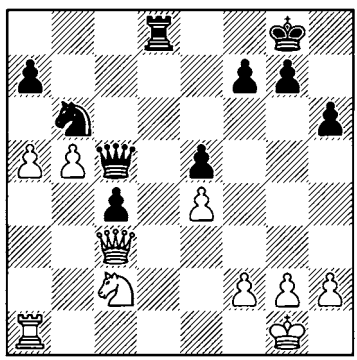
A magical save.

10.♔xd2 ♖fd8† 11.♔c3 ♕c5†

And the game ends with perpetual check.

How this exercise could have been solved: It is quite simple actually, when you think about it. All alternatives to the first three moves are directly mated. But then you might get the impression that the main line leads to mate as well. So the answer to how this exercise could be solved is a combination of the method of elimination, and then a concentrated awareness of *all* the possibilities in the position.

199 Terentiev – Domuls
USSR 1980

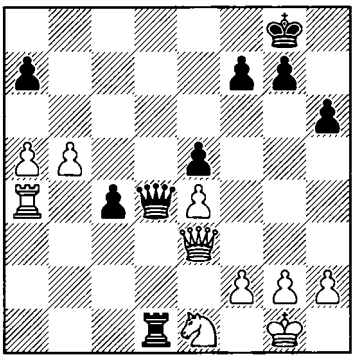


Black found a very strong idea, which was too difficult for White to handle.

1...♘a4!? 2.♖xa4?

Also after 2.♕e3 ♕xb5 3.♕xa7 ♕b2 4.♕e7 ♕xa1† White is lost. 2.♕e1 ♕xb5 is unpleasant as well.

2...♖d1† 3.♘e1 ♕d4 4.♕e3

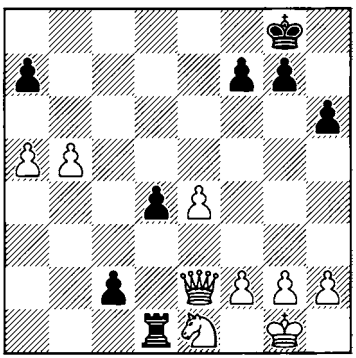


4...c3!!

This advance of the passed pawn had to be anticipated. After insipid play such as 4...♕xe3 5.fxe3 ♖xe1† 6.♔f2 Black is in trouble. He has to play the sad 6...♖d1 to delay defeat, as something like 6...♖b1 7.b6 axb6 8.a6 is over instantly.

5.♖a2

One of the amazing points of the combination occurs after 5.♖xd4 exd4 6.♕e2 c2!!.



Black wins.

5...♕b4!

With the threats of 6...♕b1 and 6...c2. Black also wins after 5...♕xe3, but this is stronger.

6.♔f1

6.♖c2 ♕b1 7.♔f1 ♕xc2 and wins.

6...♕xb5†

The odd 6...♖d2!? also wins.

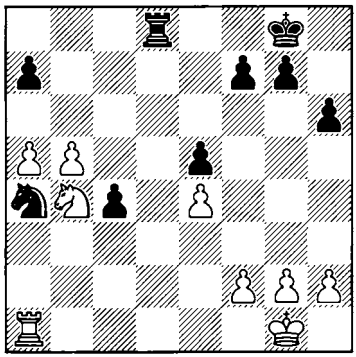
7.♕e2 ♖xe1†! 8.♔xe1 ♕b1† 9.♕d1 ♕xa2 0–1

White could have defended with:

2.♕b4!!

This is the strongest move.

2...♕xb4 3.♘xb4

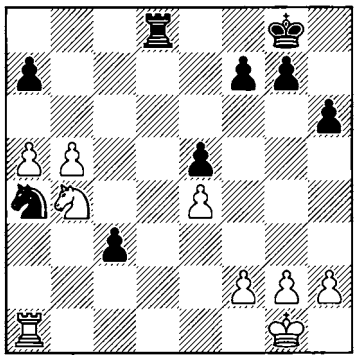


Now at least three lines interest us.

3...♘c3? 4.♘c6 ♖a8 5.♘xa7!! ♖xa7 6.b6 ♖a8 7.a6 ♘b5 8.♔f1 c3 9.♔e2 ♔f8 10.a7 ♘d6 11.♖c1 and White wins.

3...♘c5 4.♘c6 ♖d2 5.♘xe5 c3 6.♘c4 ♘b3 7.♖e1 ♖a2 8.b6 ♘xa5 9.♘xa5 ♖xa5 10.bxa7 ♖xa7 11.♖c1 and the endgame is a draw.

3...c3



4.♘c6!!

I love this move, but 4.f3!? is probably also fine.

4...c2!?

Very tempting, but this combination works at both ends of the board!

4...♖d2 5.♔f1 ♘c5 6.♖c1 ♘xe4 7.f3 with a draw is therefore not worse.

5.♘xd8 ♘c3 6.♖f1!

The only move.

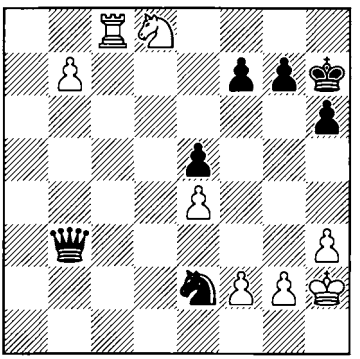
6...♘d1 7.b6 axb6 8.axb6 c1=♕ 9.b7 ♕b1!

9...♕b2? 10.♖xd1 ♕b3 11.♖f1 ♕b6 12.h3! and White wins because of 12...♕b2 13.♔h2 ♔h7 14.♖a1 and so on...

10.h3 ♕b3 11.♔h2 ♘c3 12.♖c1 ♘e2 13.♖c8

13.♖c2!? gives a draw as well.

13...♔h7



14.♘e6!!

White can still go astray with 14.b8=♕?? ♕d1 and Black wins.

14...♕xb7 15.♘f8† ♔g8 16.♘g6† ♕xc8!? 17.♘e7†

The endgame is drawn.

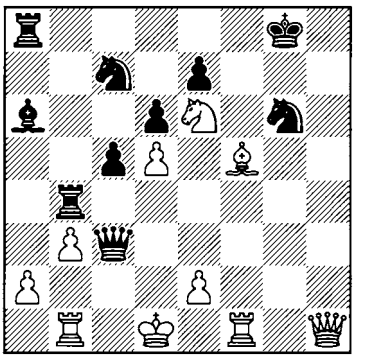
How this exercise could have been solved: The key question is – can I take the knight? The answer, as we saw in the game, is a soft-spoken, sensual NO! So we have to look for alternatives. Maybe it is not too hard to see that the solution is the best bet, but to solve the exercise you need to know if you can actually take the knight on a4, and not guess correctly. It is called solving, not guessing, you know.

200 Arnelind – M. Göransson
Gothenburg 2005

A normal game in a normal weekend tournament can potentially have just as fabulous positions as any other game, and often they do.

1...♖d4†?

The first move is probably possible to find: 1...♖a8!



2.♘xc7 ♗xe2†! reveals the point behind Black's last move. Instead we should look at the various options for White. If you have the time, the energy and the patience, this would be a great moment to sit down and plan your response to all of these moves, and then go through the solutions one by one. The options are:

a) 2.♕g2
b) 2.♕h5
c) 2.♕h6
d) 2.♖f3
e) 2.a4

The game finished a bit unevenly:

2.♘xd4 ♕xd4† 3.♔c2!

After this Black is unable to defend his king.

3...♕e3 4.♕g2?

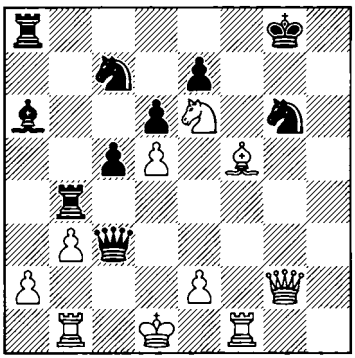
4.♖bd1 ♕xe2† 5.♔b1 would have won even more simply.

4...♕xe2† 5.♕xe2 ♗xe2 6.♖g1 ♗h5?

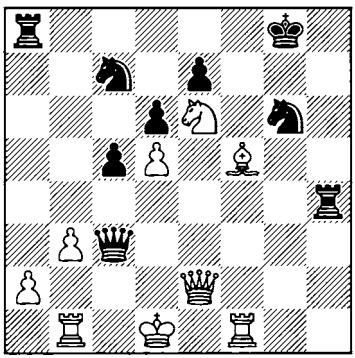
6...♘xd5 7.♖xg6† ♔f7 8.♔d2 e6 would have given Black some chances for a draw.

7.♗xg6 ♗xg6† 8.♖xg6† ♔f7 9.♖g5 ♔f6 10.♖bg1 ♖h8 11.a4 ♖h2† 12.♔c3 ♖e2 13.♖1g4 ♖e5 14.♖xe5 ♔xe5 15.♔c4 ♔f5 16.♖g7 ♔f6 17.♖h7 ♘a6 18.a5 ♘c7 19.♖h1 ♔e5 20.♖e1† ♔f6 21.♖a1 e5 22.a6 e4 23.a7 ♘a8 24.♔b5 ♔e5 25.♔c6
1–0

a) **2.♕g2**



2...♗xe2†!!
2...♖d4†?! 3.♘xd4 ♕xd4† 4.♔e1 ♕c3† 5.♔f2 ♕d4† leads to a draw by perpetual check.
3.♕xe2 ♖h4!!



Truly astonishing. Black will soon eliminate the e6-knight and play the rook to d4. But before that is possible, he will have to create a safe space for his king (h8). This waiting move achieves exactly that.
4.♗xg6
4.♕g2 ♘xe6 5.♕xg6† ♔h8 6.♗d3 ♖g8 7.♖c1 ♕d4 8.♕f5 ♖g3 and Black has a winning attack.
4.♕b2 ♘xd5 and Black wins.
4...♘xe6 5.♗c2
5.♕xe6† ♔h8 and White has no adequate defence to 6...♖d4†.
5.♗d3 ♘f4 and Black wins the exchange.
Now Black has a lot of tempting options. It could be that one is clearly best, but which one? I have chosen to give three here.

a1) **5...♕d4†**
Safest and probably simplest.
6.♕d2
6.♔c1 ♕xd5 and Black is in control. 7.♔b2 ♕d4† 8.♔c1 ♘f4 9.♕xe7 ♖h2 10.♕g5† ♔h8 and he wins, is one example.
6...♖xa2 or 6...♘c7
Black will have very good winning chances with his extra pawn.

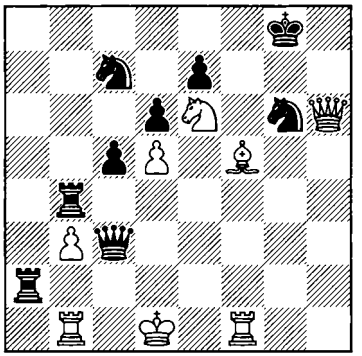
a2) **5...♘f4 6.♖g1†**
6.♕f2 ♖xa2 7.♖g1† ♔f8! 8.♖f1 ♖g4 and Black has a winning attack.
6...♔h8
6...♔f8 7.♕e4 ♕f6 8.♖f1 ♕g5 is also very good for Black.
7.♕f2 ♕d4† 8.♕xd4† cxd4
White is again unlikely to survive.

a3) **5...♘d4 6.♕g2† ♔h8 7.♗e4!**
Black wins in the long forced line: 7.a4? ♘xc2 8.♕xc2 ♖d4† 9.♔c1 ♕e3† 10.♔b2 ♖d2 11.♖h1† ♔g7 12.♖bg1† ♔f7 13.♖h7† ♔e8 14.♖g8† ♔d7 15.♖xa8 ♖xc2† 16.♔xc2 ♕e4† and the rook falls.
7...♖g8 8.♕f2 ♖h3
Black is doing well, but White has some chances of surviving, so this is probably the least impressive of the three options.

b) **2.♕h5 ♗xe2† 3.♕xe2 ♖h4 4.♗xg6 ♘xe6**
White is in deep trouble.

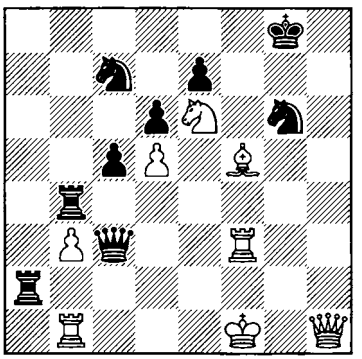
c) **2.♕h6**

This loses to an astonishing combination.
2...♗xe2† 3.♔xe2 ♖xa2† 4.♔d1



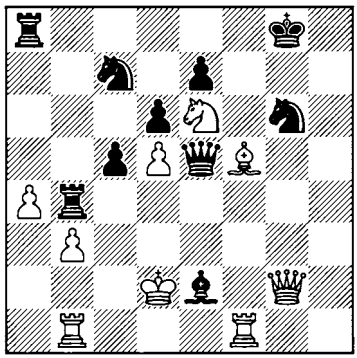
4...♖g4!!
A great defensive move.
5.♖h1 ♖d4† 6.♘xd4 ♕xd4† 7.♔c1 ♕c3† 8.♔d1 ♕f3† 9.♔c1 ♕xf5
Black wins.

d) 2.♖f3 ♗xe2† 3.♔xe2 ♖xa2† 4.♔f1



4...♖h4!! 5.♕g2
5.♗h3 ♕c2! and White's position is falling apart.
5...♖xg2 6.♖xc3 ♖a2 7.♖g3 ♘xe6 8.♖xg6† ♘g7
Black will win the endgame without too much difficulty.

e) 2.a4!
This is, quite logically, the only move. But "logically" is somehow a blasphemous work to utter about anything concerning this position!
2...♕e5
Also possible is 2...♖xb3 3.♗xg6 ♗xe2† 4.♔xe2 ♕e3† 5.♔d1 ♖d3† 6.♗xd3 ♕xd3† with perpetual check, but it is far less fun!
3.♕g2 ♗xe2†!
3...♕xd5† 4.♕xd5 ♘xd5 5.♗xg6 ♘e3† 6.♔d2 ♘xf1† 7.♖xf1 ♖h4 8.♘c7 ♖a7 9.♘e6 and White holds a draw with a weird repetition.
4.♕xe2!
4.♔d2?



Here we have a fantastic gain of time by blocking the g-file twice at reasonable cost.
4...♗g4!! 5.♗xg4 ♖axa4 6.♗d1 (6.bxa4 ♖b2†) 6...♖g4!! and Black is in complete control.
4...♘xd5 5.♕xe5 ♘xe5 6.♔d2 ♔f7
6...♖ab8 7.♖f2 ♖xb3 8.♗h7†! ♔h8 9.♖h1 ♖g3! and the position is oddly drawn!
7.♘g5† ♔e8 8.♖h1 e6 9.♖h8† ♔e7 10.♖xa8 ♖d4† 11.♔c1 exf5 12.♖a7† ♔f6 13.♘h7† ♔g6 14.♘f8† ♔h5
The compensation in the endgame is evidently strong, but who is really better here?

How this exercise could have been solved: I would be kidding you if I told you I had a clue. I tried to solve it, and got nowhere near!

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