

GAMBIT

A Course in Chess Tactics

**Dejan Bojkov and
Vladimir Georgiev**

A step-by-step
approach to
mastering tactics
and combinations

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Vladimir Georgiev**

GAMBIT

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Symbols

+	check
++	double check
#	checkmate
!!	brilliant move
!	good move
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
?	bad move
??	blunder
+−	White is winning
±	White is much better
±	White is slightly better
=	equal position
±	Black is slightly better
±	Black is much better
−+	Black is winning
Ch	championship
1-0	the game ends in a win for White
1/2-1/2	the game ends in a draw
0-1	the game ends in a win for Black
(D)	see next diagram

Introduction

Why are tactics so important?

Most of our readers will have asked themselves this question at some point. Tactics are the chess tools that everyone uses throughout every game. When we start our thinking process, the first thing that we do is calculation: “If I move here, he will answer there, then I will do this and he will answer that.” We are also trying to discover new ideas, follow plans, and strategically outplay our opponents. But in every stage of the game, tactics are following us, supporting our ideas, or ruining the plans of our adversary.

The then young Alexander Beliavsky made the following comment after his exceptional tournament victory in Alicante 1978 where he scored 13 points from 13 games: “Chess is a very easy game; all you need to do is calculate lines, and everything will be OK.” There is a good deal of truth in this apparently naïve statement, as our tactical ability is what enables us to survive the jungle of our beautiful game, and provides a guide in the sea of lines, and supports our reasoning and logic.

Chess is a complex game – while there are many general principles to assist us, there are also many exceptions to them: in one position one principle might work, but in a slightly different position, other factors might prevail, and only our ability to work out the tactical details will enable us to determine the right path in such cases. From a philosophical perspective, one may conclude that tactical calculations are the one true cornerstone of chess. Therefore it is no wonder that chess engines have become so strong. They can calculate millions of chess moves in a second, and they rarely make tactical errors.

What causes tactics to occur?

Two factors are of great importance: energy and time.

An energetic imbalance often enables one of the players to carry out a profitable tactical operation. For instance, overloaded, pinned, and blocked pieces have less mobility, and thus less energy. Their contact with a fully mobile piece may prove lethal for them. On the other hand, more energetic pieces can easily deliver double and discovered attacks. They may be used to deflect and decoy more important and valuable pieces, or be used to disrupt the harmony within the opponent’s army by such means as blocking, interference, etc.

Time is the other factor that will prove us right or wrong in a tactical operation. Chessboard opportunities are fleeting, and we must seize every chance before the opponent is able to secure his position. By striking at the moment when our pieces have more energy, we can either win material (transforming energy into matter) or achieve the highest aim by mating the enemy king. From here the main principle of tactics is seen: with each of our moves we must create a threat. Even ‘silent’ moves create some threat, even if it is maybe not always obvious.

What does this book aim to do?

Our book is separated into two parts. The first one deals in turn with each of the tactical methods that are important in practical chess. We have presented ideas on how to search for each method; indeed, this was the initial intention of our work. However, a question arises: there are 14 essential tactical methods presented, and will not a large number of principles just confuse the reader? And how exactly will he know which question to ask, and which piece of advice to follow before taking

a crucial decision? In a game of chess there is a great deal to think about in addition to possible tactical ideas, and if we need to ask all these questions, our work will be too laborious.

This is not what the book is all about. Our aim is to help you develop an understanding of the principles of chess tactics, so that they become instinctive. With some practice, you will start to sense the crucial moments, to feel danger in your position and to smell when something is wrong in your opponent's camp. Inevitably a chess-player learns by trial and error, but it is possible to progress faster and with fewer failures by learning and applying chess principles. Moreover, tackling and solving carefully chosen exercises will help you subconsciously memorize typical patterns.

The first part of the book is written by Dejan Bojkov. I used a lot of personal examples of mine in this material. This is not to show you how good I am, and what an incredible tactician I am supposed to be (indeed, some of the examples are painful defeats), but because when discussing what went through a player's mind when making a particular decision, and which variations he foresaw, one can speak with far greater authority when the player concerned is oneself! Joel Lautier stated that we "first calculate during the game, and later cover our tactics with words." This emphasizes the importance of tactics in chess; strategic landmarks are primarily a guide for our tactical work.

The second part of the book is written by both authors. It features the three most common positions of a castled king and various attacking patterns against them, as well as three tactical themes that widely occur in practice. We have sought to discuss these strategic themes in the context of the tactical themes that are most relevant to them.

We hope that our work will help you feel more at home in various tactical situations, and that this will increase the pleasure that you derive from chess.

1 Pin

The pin is one of the most common tactical methods in chess. By using a line piece (a queen, a rook or a bishop) we can ‘freeze’ an enemy piece if moving it would expose to attack a more important piece that is behind it on the same line. If the pin is against the king, then we call this an ‘absolute’ pin, as the pinned piece cannot move by the laws of chess. In other cases, it is not illegal for the pinned piece to move, but doing so may involve a loss (or sacrifice) of material.

The lack of mobility of a pinned piece can be exploited by attacking it with additional units, and this often results in material gains. In order to win material, it is not even necessary to have more attackers than there are defenders: we just need to be attacking it with a lower-value unit, and so pawns are ideal for the purpose. If we attack the pinned piece with a piece of the same value, then we will just be exchanging it, as long as the pinned piece can be adequately defended.

A pinned piece is limited in its actions, and is deprived of much of its potential. However, we must bear in mind that a pin is a temporary advantage that must be used promptly. Otherwise our opponent can escape or break the pin. The following example demonstrates a number of these points in the context of a high-level grand-master struggle.

Dreev – Seirawan

Wijk aan Zee 1995

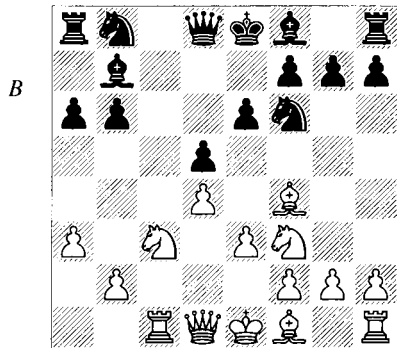
1 d4 ♖f6 2 ♖f3 e6 3 c4 b6 4 a3 c6 5 ♗c3 d5 6 cxd5 cxd5 7 ♗f4 a6 8 ♜c1! ♗b7

White is better developed, and already has some tactical threats: 8...♗e7? loses to 9 ♖a4!, threatening ♗c7, ♖xb6, or even ♜xc8.

9 e3 (D)

9...♗c6

Black is behind in development. While this move is not actually bad (and may in fact be Black’s objectively best move), it is risky as it



gives White an interesting tactical opportunity to make use of a pin. 9...♗e7? again fails to 10 ♖a4! (10 ♖b5 axb5 11 ♗c7 ♜c8 12 ♗xb5+ ♖bd7 13 ♗f4 =) 10...♗c6 (10...♗d6 11 ♜b3 ♗xf4 can be met by 12 exf4 ♖bd7 13 ♗d3 0-0 14 0-0 ± or the more incisive 12 ♜xb6!) 11 ♗e5 ♗xe5 12 ♗xe5 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 ♜xd6 14 ♜c2 ±.

9...♖bd7 is the safest choice, giving White only a slight edge.

10 ♖b5!

The ‘Trojan Horse’ is untouchable due to the pin.

10...♜c8

10...axb5? 11 ♗xb5 ♜c8 12 ♜a4 or 12 ♗e5 puts unbearable pressure on the pinned knight and Black has to part either with it, or with his bishop after ...♗c5, which leaves White completely winning. Note that White is able to attack the pinned piece with further units with great speed.

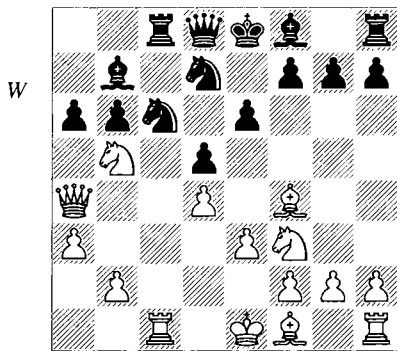
11 ♜a4 ♗d7 (D)

11...♜d7 is another attempt to break the pin. However, after 12 ♗e5 ♗xe5 13 ♜xc8+ ♗xc8 (13...♜xc8?? 14 ♗d6++) 14 ♗xe5 ± White preserves an advantage.

12 ♗c7+

Dreev again wants to use a pin, this time against his opponent’s queen on the c-file.

12 ♗d6+ is a reasonable alternative, though Black has the defensive resource 12...♗xd6 13 ♗xd6 ♗xd4! (discovered attack!) 14 ♜xc8 ♗xf3+ 15 gxf3 ♜xc8 16 ♗d2!. Black’s king



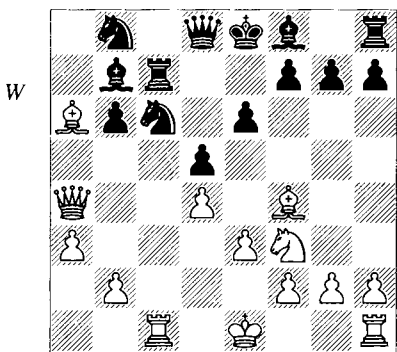
should stay in the centre, while White possesses a strong bishop-pair.

12...♖xc7 13 ♖xa6!?

A tricky move, which intends to deprive Black of the option 13 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 14 ♖xa6 ♜db8 15 ♖xb7 (15 ♖b5 ♖d6) 15...♗xb7 intending ...b5 and Black is ready to break the pin. After 16 ♜e5 b5 17 ♗c2 ♜xe5 18 ♗c8+ ♗xc8 19 ♖xc8+ ♜d7 20 ♖xb8 White still looks somewhat better, but a discovered attack levels the chances: 20...♖b4+ 21 axb4 ♖xb8 22 dxe5 ♖c8 23 ♜d2 ♖c4 =.

13...♜xa6?!

Black falls in line with White's plans, and ends up in a difficult situation. 13...♜db8! (*D*), providing additional support for the pinned knight, was possible here too.



In his notes Dreev points out the 'refutation' 14 ♖xb7?! ♖xb7 15 ♖xb8? (15 ♗b5!?) 15...b5 16 ♗a6 but misses the simple 16...♖b6 17 ♗a8 ♜xb8, when Black wins. Obviously White would have to transpose by 14 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 to the note to White's 13th move, where Black levels the chances.

What has gone wrong? Why does White have no way to achieve an advantage? Actually,

it shouldn't come as a great surprise, as Black did not commit any terrible errors in the opening, while White has been attacking before completing his development. However, Black's defence was by no means easy, and the chances for him to commit serious mistakes were much greater than for White. For instance, the natural 13...e5 is not a simple solution to his problems, as 14 ♖xb7 cannot be met by 14...♖xb7? due to 15 ♗xc6. Thus Black has to fish in troubled waters with 14...♜cb8! (or 14...♜a5!?) 15 0-0 exf4.

14 ♖xc7 ♗xc7 15 ♖xc6 ♗b7 16 ♜e5

White now has a rook and a pawn for two pieces, but he controls the vital open c-file, and can still use the pin to hinder his opponent's development.

16...♜e7 17 b4! f6

In case of 17...♖c4, 18 ♖xb6! (much better than Dreev's continuation 18 ♜xc4) 18...♗xb6 19 ♗xd7+ ♜f8 20 ♜c6 wins for White.

18 b5 ♖xb5 19 ♗xb5 fx5 20 0-0!

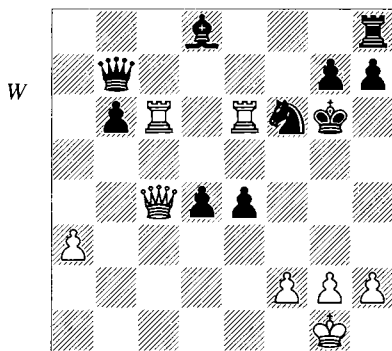
20 ♖xe6 exd4 21 0-0 ♜f7 22 ♖c6 ♜f6.

20...exd4?!

20...♜f7 21 ♖fc1 ♖d8? loses to 22 ♖c7!, but in my opinion Black was obliged to castle at any rate: 20...0-0 21 ♖xe6.

21 ♖fc1! ♜d8?!

Finally Seirawan collapses under the pressure. Dreev gives one more instructive line: 21...♖d8 (only move) 22 ♖xe6+ ♜f7 23 ♖cc6 ♜f6 (23...♜c5 24 ♖ed6 ♖e7 25 ♖xd5 dxe3 26 ♖f5+) 24 e4! dxe4?! (21...♗d7 looks like Black's last chance) 25 ♗c4 ♜g6 (*D*).



Now a cunning use of the pin: 26 ♗xd4 ♜f7 27 ♗c4 ♜g6 28 ♗xe4+ ♜f7 29 ♖xf6+! and White wins.

22 exd4!

Dreev prefers to attack, rather than defend in the line 22 ♖c8+ ♜xc8 23 ♜xc8+ ♕xc8 24 ♜c6+ ♖b8 25 ♜xd7 ♜c8!.

22...♜f8 23 a4! +-

The pawn on b6 is pinned now...

23...♙g5 24 ♖1c2 ♜f4 25 a5 ♜xd4 26 g3 ♜d1+ 27 ♖g2 ♜a1 28 axb6 ♖b8

There is no salvation anyway, since after 28...♜a6 29 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 30 b7 ♜xc6 31 ♜xc6 ♜f6 32 ♜d6 the pawn will promote.

29 ♜d6+ 1-0

Advantage in Development

A pin can be especially effective when our opponent's king is still in the centre. For the sake of opening the position, pawns and even pieces are often sacrificed to set up pins along the central files or the diagonals leading to an exposed king.

Bruzon – Flores

Morelia 2008

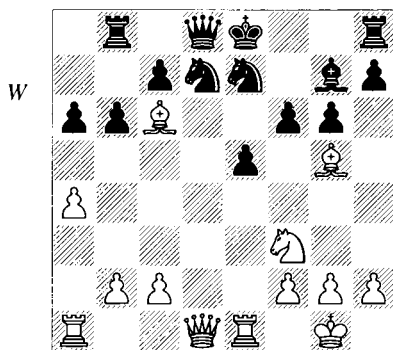
1 d4 g6 2 ♖f3 ♙g7 3 e4 d6 4 ♖c3 ♖d7 5 ♙c4 e6 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 b6 8 ♜e1 ♙b7 9 e5!

Black has played too passively in the opening, and White starts to open lines against his king in the centre.

9...♜xe5 10 d5 exd5 11 ♖xd5 ♖e7 12 ♙g5 ♙xd5

12...f6 13 ♖xe5! ♙xd5 14 ♖xd7 provides no relief for Black.

13 ♙xd5 ♜b8 14 ♙c6 f6 (D)



15 ♙xf6!

"With so many pins and a development advantage, the tactical ideas are clearly justified," states the Brazilian GM Vescovi. 15 ♖xe5 fxe5

is another way to keep the king in the centre. After 16 ♜g4 ♖xc6 17 ♙xd8 ♖xd8 18 ♜ad1 ± Black has three minor pieces for a queen, which usually favours the side with the pieces. However, here the black king cannot find a safe haven, and White is much better. The way that Bruzon chose is more clear-cut, and should lead to victory.

15...♙xf6 16 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 17 ♜xe5 ♜f8 18 ♜d5?!

But here he goes astray. The correct 18 ♜g4! ♜f5 (18...♜f6 19 ♜e6 ♖f8 20 ♙xd7 +-) 19 ♜a1 ♜xe5 20 ♜xe5, with the idea ♜e6-g8#, should lead to a win (Vescovi). In this line White exchanges one of his active rooks, but for Black's only active piece. Both knights are now partially paralysed due to the pin, and this causes pain and suffering among Black's other pieces. 18 ♜e6!? is also good: 18...♜f7 19 ♜d2 ♖f8 20 ♙xd7 +-. It is quite obvious that Black has to part with his superfluous material. In such situations the attacker must seek to regain the material without loosening his grip or giving up the initiative.

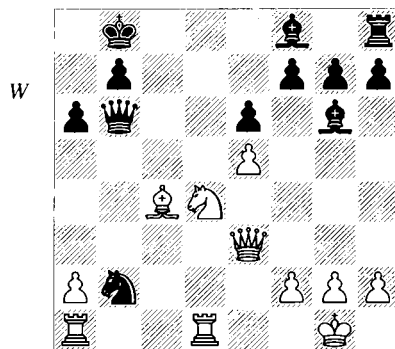
18...♜f7 19 ♜a1 ♖f8

The white queen on d5 is hanging, and so Black relieves his position by eliminating some of White's active pieces.

20 ♜xd7 ♖xc6 21 ♜xc6

White is still better but Black managed to save half a point with stubborn defence.

One of the features of the pin is that **breaking it is time-consuming**. In the next example Svidler cleverly converts his advantage using this fact.



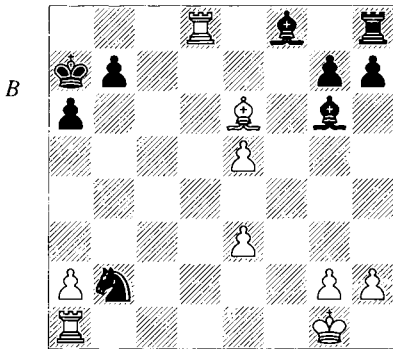
Svidler – Shirov

European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003

22 ♖xe6! ♜xe3

After 22...♗xc4 23 ♜xb6 ♖xb6 24 ♜d8+ ♗a7 25 ♜xf8 Black loses simply.

23 ♜d8+ ♗a7 24 fxe3 fxe6 25 ♗xe6 (D)



1-0

If Black wants to break the pin he needs to move the bishop from g6, and then play ...g6 and ...♗g7. Unfortunately, he lacks the time, since White already threatens ♜f1. After 25...♗d3 he must choose his reply carefully:

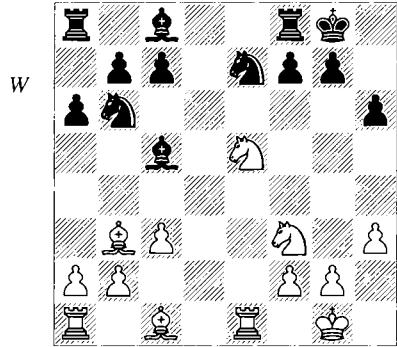
a) Not 26 ♜c1? ♗c5!! when, using the idea of double attack, Black wins the necessary tempo.

b) 26 ♗d5? is also a poor place for the bishop and gives Black additional time for regrouping: 26...♖c4 27 e6 ♖xe3 (now the bishop is under attack and White cannot push the pawn) 28 ♗f3 (28 e7? ♗xe7 29 ♜xh8 ♖xd5 -+) 28...♗c5! 29 ♜xh8 ♖g4+ = with perpetual.

c) 26 ♗b3! g5 27 e6 (Black manages to save the pinned bishop, but White gains enough time to promote his pawn) 27...♗g7 28 e7 ♗g6 (28...♗b5 29 ♜c1) 29 ♜f1 +- and there is no escape from ♜xh8 and ♜ff8, or the immediate ♜ff8.

Sometimes even world champions may miss a useful pin. The following diagram provides an example.

Kramnik chose 15 ♖d3?! and won after a long and hard battle. Instead, everything was ready for a tactical blow based on a pin. Just have a look at all his active pieces – the bishop, rook, and knight on e5, and the second knight ready to join the fray immediately. Correct was 15 ♖xf7! ♜xf7 16 ♜xe7!! removing the strong knight, and deflecting the bishop from its active position. White cannot make use of the pin



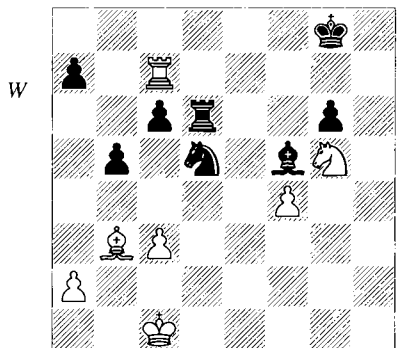
Kramnik – Krasenkov

Wijk aan Zee 2003

otherwise (as 16 ♖e5? is met by 16...♗xf2+ with ...♗bd5 to follow – Black is putting obstacles in the way of the pin, which is a typical defensive method). After 16...♗xe7 17 ♖e5 +- White has won an important pawn, and kept all the advantages of his position.

Both players overlooked this option. Why? “This most probably happened because White was clearly better after proceeding calmly” states Evseev, but I suspect the reason is different – Kramnik saw the idea ...♗xf2+ and abandoned his calculations.

Sometimes our opponent is protecting his pinned piece with all the forces at his disposal, and we lack an additional attacker. But there are still ways of making use of the pin, such as **removing the defending forces**:



Flores – Valerga

Fischer Memorial, Villa Martelli 2008

The d5-knight is pinned but it is well protected by both a pawn and a rook. We do not

have a way to attack it with another piece. But maybe we can break the mechanism of the defence somehow?

39 ♖xc6!

Physically removing one of the defenders and decoying the second one into a double attack.

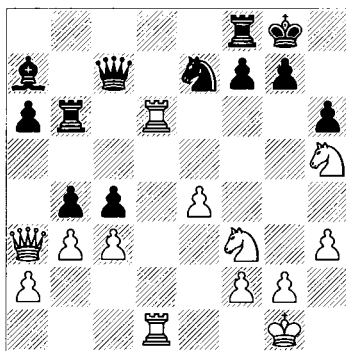
39...♗d7

If 39...♖xc6, then after the fork 40 ♔xd5+ followed by 41 ♔xc6 White emerges a knight ahead.

40 ♖c5 1-0

The job is done; there are no longer enough defenders!

When the pin is against any piece other than the king, we must be on the lookout for **pin-breaking sacrifices**. No doubt you remember Legall's Mate from your early chess education. However, there are many other examples where a pin against a queen proves insufficient to immobilize a piece.



Bosboom – Janssen

Dutch Ch, Hilversum 2007

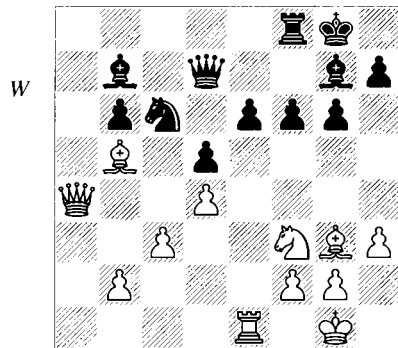
25 ♖a5

White was obviously counting on this pin to save his rook. However, there is a simple and strong reply:

25...♗xd6! 0-1

Black sacrifices his queen, but wins it back with interest: 26 ♖xc7 ♗xd1+ 27 ♖h2 ♔b8 and the white queen is pinned.

Sometimes the ultimate use of a pin is not the destruction of the pinned piece itself, but another target, which the opponent cannot protect due to the pin.



A. Sokolov – Nevednichy

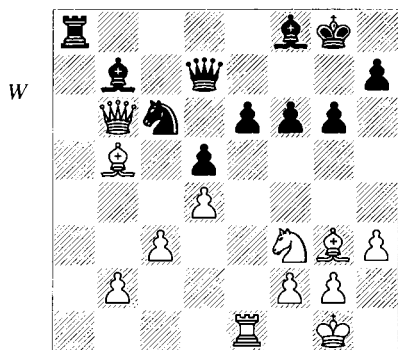
Yugoslav Team Ch, Igalo 1994

Black's knight on c6 is desperately pinned, but how can White strengthen his attack? There are no other pieces that can be brought to bear on the knight. However, if we take a closer look at the position we discover that Black has two weak pawns – those on b6 and e6. This is exactly what Sokolov uses in addition to the pin:

22 ♖a7! ♖a8

After this White wins the b6-pawn, but if 22...♗xa7 then 23 ♔xd7 wins the pawn on e6.

23 ♖xb6 ♔f8 (D)



24 c4

An energetic way of exploiting the pin. White is not only a pawn up, but he keeps the knight pinned, and shall finally win it.

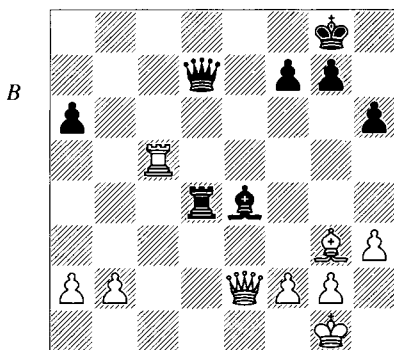
24...g5

24...dxc4 25 ♔xc4 and the pin is towards the king.

25 ♔c7 ♗c8 26 ♖xb7 ♗xc7 27 ♖b6 dxc4 28 ♗xe6! 1-0

The final touch. Black resigned in view of 28...♖xe6 29 ♖xc7 ♗e7 30 ♔xc4 ♗d5 31 ♖b7.

A skilful opponent will generally be well aware of the dangers that a pin may cause. However, we may nevertheless be able to direct the game along the course we desire by **forcing a pin**:

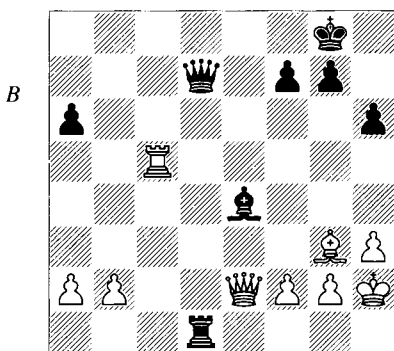


Peredy – Malanca
Budapest 2003

Black first activates his rook:

30...♖d1+! 31 ♔h2 (D)

And now forces his opponent's king to step on a minefield:



31...♖h1+! 32 ♔xh1 ♖xh3+ 0-1

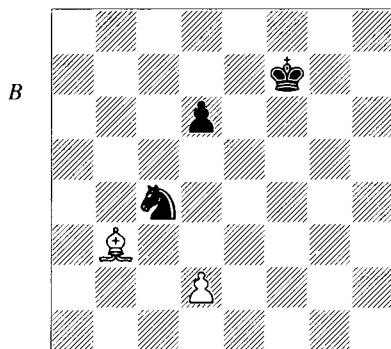
For the hyper-important tempo Black sacrificed a whole rook, and was rewarded with mate.

Defence Against Pins

So far we have only seen how dangerous the pin can be. But what should we do when we are faced with a pin on one of our own pieces? First of all, do not panic; there are many possible ways to neutralize the threats generated by a pin:

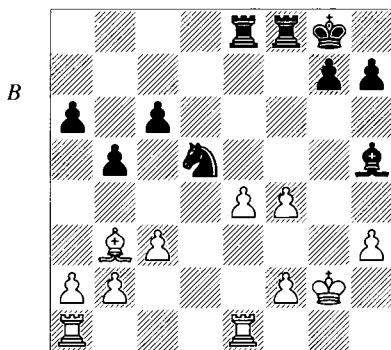
- Exchange off or move the piece against which the pin is made.

- Deflect the pinning piece.
- Support the pinned piece along the line of the pin: a pawn can be useful for this purpose.



Black plays ...d5 and puts an obstacle in the way of the pin.

- Interpose along the line of the pin so as to attack the pinning piece (with a bishop vs a bishop, for example).
- Provide additional support for the pinned piece – less valuable pieces support first.
- Remove the enemy forces that could add to the attack against the pinned piece.



J. Polgar – Aronian
Wijk aan Zee 2008

It looks like Black will lose his knight because of the pin against his king. However, this knight still has some energy left in it, and attacks the important f4-pawn. By using a decoy, Black wins an important tempo and neutralizes the threats with minimal material losses.

23...♞f3+!

Only move. Otherwise, after 23...♞f7 24 exd5 ♞xd5+ 25 ♞xd5+ cxd5 26 ♔g3 White is

a solid pawn up, and has every chance to win the endgame.

24 ♖xf3

Forced. Now the d5-knight and the f8-rook will combine their efforts.

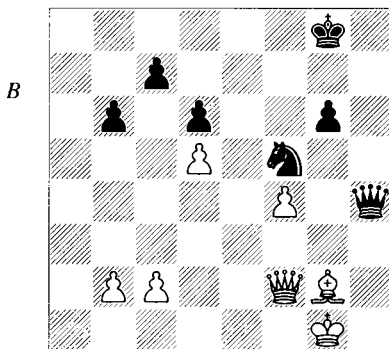
24...♜xf4+

Everyone knows that 'a pinned piece does not defend', but here we see an exception: while the d5-knight is not allowed to move by the laws of chess, by that same set of rules it nevertheless defends the f4-rook against capture by the white king.

25 ♖g3 ♜fxe4 26 ♜xe4 ♜xe4

The position is about equal, and later ended in a draw. This saving idea had already been seen in the game Nakamura-Aronian, Gibraltar 2005.

The Pin as a Defensive Method



Aggelis – Bojkov
Veria 2008

"My position is clearly better," I thought when it arose, "and I only need to find the most precise plan." Unfortunately this was far away from the truth. After some twenty minutes of deliberation I went for what seemed to be my best practical chance:

33...♗g3

This naïve-looking move creates an unpleasant threat of a fork, which my opponent missed.

34 ♖e3?

Since 34 ♖f1?? is not possible because of 34...♖h1#, 34 ♖e4 was White's only move. Then:

a) The problem with 34...♖xf4 is that White recovers his pawn by force: 35 ♖xf4 ♗e2+ 36

♗f2 ♗xf4 37 ♖f3 g5 (37...♗h5 38 ♖xg6) 38 ♗g4 =.

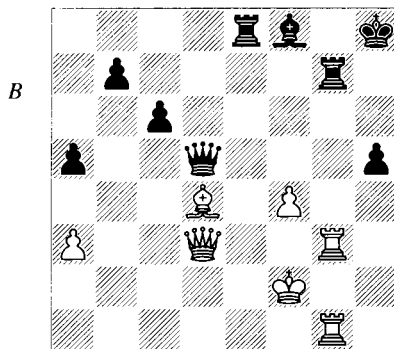
b) 34...♖h3 (threatening the bishop) 35 ♖f3! (White must keep the knight pinned against the queen to gain enough time for defence) 35...♗f7 36 ♖d3 = and the worst is behind White.

c) 34...g5!? is objectively best: 35 fxg5 ♖xe4 36 ♖xg3 ♖xc2 with a slight edge for Black in the endgame.

34...♖xf4 35 ♖e7 ♖f7

Black won an important pawn and soon the game.

A **counterpin** is also a useful defensive method. But never forget that a pinned piece can still exert a lot of influence, despite its lack of mobility:



Miszto – Kloza
Poland 1955

Black's rook is pinned and he decided to free it by means of a counterpin:

1...♖c5?

Unfortunately for him, the bishop remains active enough to support two raging rooks. But first White needs to gain a decisive tempo:

2 ♖h7+!! ♗xh7 3 ♜xg7+ ♗h8

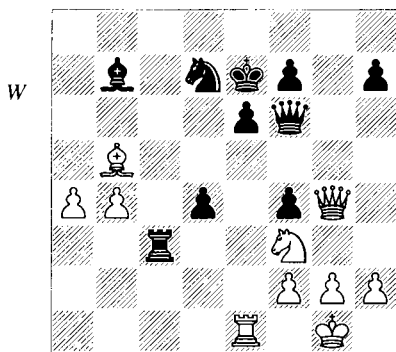
3...♗h6 4 ♜1g6#.

4 ♜g8++ ♗h7 5 ♜1g7+ ♗h6 6 ♜g6+ ♗h7 7 ♜8g7+ ♗h8 8 ♜h6# (1-0)

While this book was being written, the chess world witnessed a remarkable demonstration that everyone can go astray, even the great champions (see following diagram).

29 ♗xd4??

For such a high-level game, this is a terrible blunder, which effectively sealed Kramnik's fate

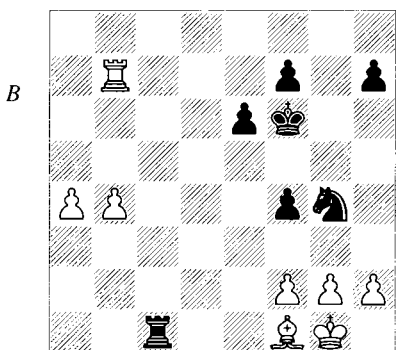


Kramnik – Anand

World Ch match (game 5), Bonn 2008

in the match, and reconfirmed Anand as the world champion. Kramnik obviously saw that his back rank was weak, and also perceived that his bishop rank was weak, and also perceived that his bishop could interpose:

29...♖xd4 30 ♜d1 ♘f6! 31 ♜xd4 ♘xg4 32 ♜d7+ ♔f6 33 ♜xb7 ♜c1+ 34 ♘f1 (D)

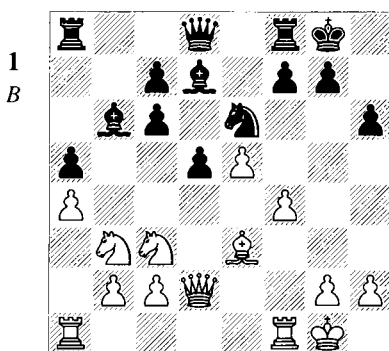


But as he confessed at the press-conference after the game, he overlooked a cunning tactic that achieves one of the ideas we have already described: “put more pressure on the pinned piece”.

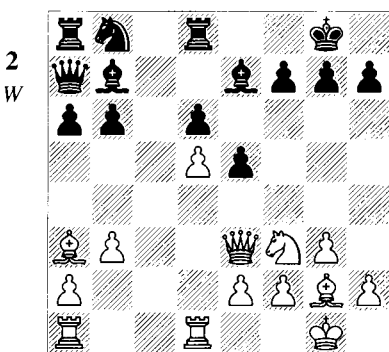
34...♘e3!! 35 fxe3 fxe3 0-1

Since “escaping from a pin is time-consuming”, White cannot avoid the deadly ...e2.

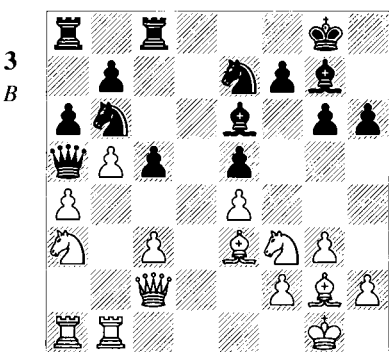
Exercises



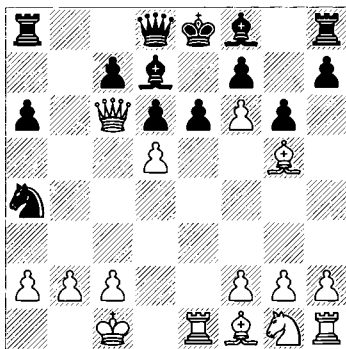
Black’s pieces appear stuck, but he found a way to make use of a pin.



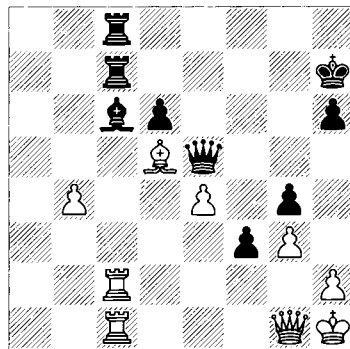
Show how White can exploit a pin.



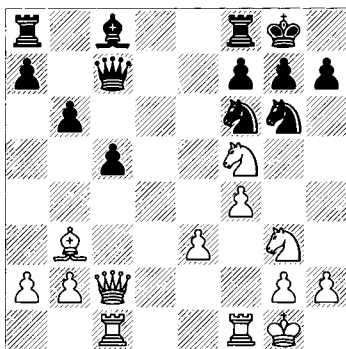
Can Black win a pawn?

4
W

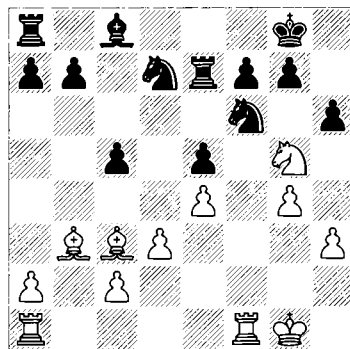
How can White conclude his attack?

7
B

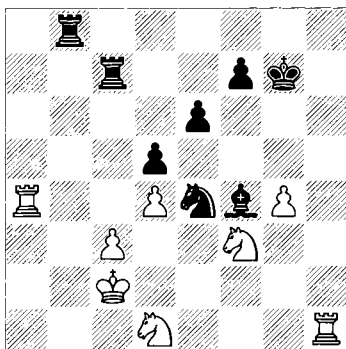
Is Black lost?

5
W

Force Black into a pin!

8
W

Must White retreat?

6
B

Create and exploit a pin by using the tactical features of the position.

2 Deflection

In the course of the game we try to deploy our pieces as actively as we can. We try to dominate our opponent's pieces. Some of them are needed for protection of important squares and lines, and the same goes for our opponent.

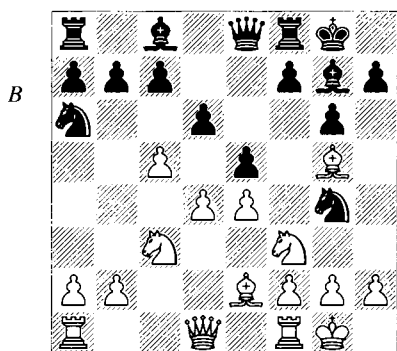
A piece can perform various functions, and it can defend another piece, or pieces, or important defensive points, especially around the king. If the square that particular piece is protecting is vital for our opponent, it may be worth our while to sacrifice material to deflect the piece.

We can use deflection in two general ways: either to profit immediately from it (gain of material or creation of a deadly mating-net) or as an instrument to gain time and, e.g., achieve a decisive attack.

Larino – Bojkov

Ferrol 2008

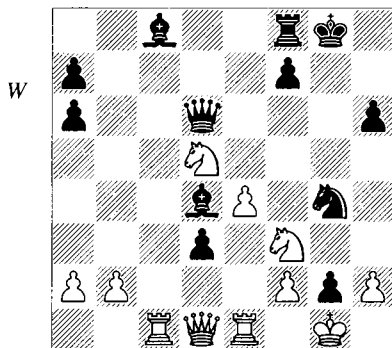
1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♘c3 ♙g7 4 e4 d6 5 ♘f3 0-0 6 ♙e2 ♘a6 7 0-0 e5 8 ♙e3 ♘g4 9 ♙g5 ♚e8 10 c5 (D)



Larino chooses a sharp line with pawn sacrifices that was developed by Ivan Cheparinov. I had analysed this line beforehand, and funnily enough it coincided with Larino's preparation for Black, as we discovered in the post-mortem.

10...h6 11 ♙h4 exd4 12 ♘d5 g5 13 ♙xa6 gxf4 14 ♘xc7 ♚c6 15 cxd6 bxa6 16 ♖c1

♚xd6 17 ♘xa8 h3 18 ♘c7 hxg2 19 ♚e1 d3 20 ♘d5 ♙d4 (D)



I was very happy with my position. The opening complications seem to have come to an end, and for the sacrificed exchange Black has the bishop-pair, a dangerous passed pawn and strong pressure. I considered White's only move to be 21 ♚xd3, giving back the exchange, and I was quite pleased with the position arising after 21...♙xf2+ 22 ♚xg2 ♙xe1 23 ♖xe1 ♙b7 with reasonable counterplay. 21 ♚xg2? was one of the possible lines I was dreaming of, when all my pieces participate in a decisive assault: 21...♘xf2 22 ♚d2 ♙h3+ 23 ♙g1 ♘e4+ and an easy point for me. While I was still day-dreaming, my young opponent played a totally unexpected move:

21 ♚e2!

This is a deep idea based on deflection for both defensive and counterattack purposes. White is again exchanging the dark-squared bishop and returning the exchange, but in this line he also activates his queen to the maximum on the long diagonal, and creates threats against Black's king. Meanwhile, my knight on g4 becomes misplaced and vulnerable. The only drawback of the idea is that Black obtains a passed pawn on e2, the power of which I failed to appreciate. After spending more than half an hour, I could not find anything better than following a forcing line:

21...dxe2 22 ♖xd4 ♟b7

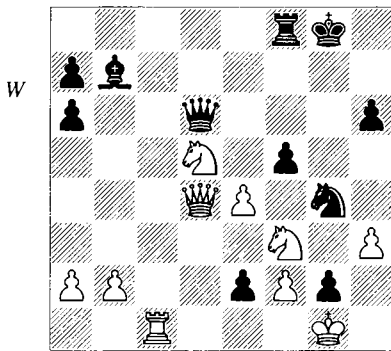
My engine first claimed that after 22...f6 Black has survival chances, but this is hardly the objective truth. White has many options; for instance, 23 ♖e1 (only not 23 ♖c6?!, when suddenly Black's passed pawn starts kicking: 23...e1♖+ 24 ♔xe1 ♖xh2#; 23 ♖c4!? is another idea though) 23...♔e5 24 ♔xe5 fxe5 25 ♖c3, meeting 25...♟g4 with 26 ♖g3 ±.

23 h3

This move forces the exchange of all my active pieces, or at least, so I thought.

23...♟xd5?

While preparing the game as an example for this book, I suddenly discovered that my position was not yet lost and I had a wonderful combination at my disposal: 23...f5!! (D).



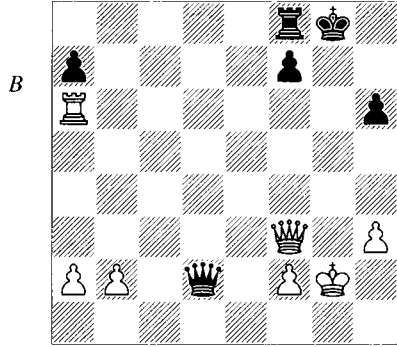
We both saw 24 hxg4 fxe4 25 ♖c7 ♖xc7! 26 ♔xc7 ♖xf3 27 ♖c4+ with a double attack and ended our calculations here. This was a shame – I could have probably saved half a point thanks to the energy left in my pieces, and using the ideas of clearance and deflection. After 27...♟g7 28 ♖xe2 e3! (deflecting his pawn and entirely clearing the long diagonal for my bishop) 29 fxe3 ♖f1+ Black's pieces manage to coordinate their efforts, and the resulting end-game is drawn; for example, 30 ♖xf1 gxf1♖+ 31 ♟xf1 ♟f6 32 ♟f2 ♟e7 (trying to trap the knight; 32...♟g5!? 33 ♟g3 ♟c8 is a fair alternative) 33 e4 ♟d6 34 ♔d5 ♟xd5 35 exd5 ♟xd5 =.

24 exd5 ♔f6 25 ♖c6 ♖xd5 26 ♖xf6 ♖xf3 27 ♖xf3 e1♖+ 28 ♟xg2 ♖d2 29 ♖xa6 (D)

White has won a pawn, and soon the game.

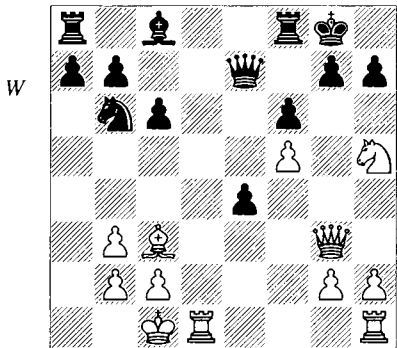
29...♖xb2 30 ♖xh6 ♖d8 31 ♖a6 ♖g7+ 32 ♖g3 ♖d7 33 ♖a4 ♖xg3+ 34 fxg3

The rest of the game is not important to our theme, so I shall not examine it in detail. The



young Spaniard comfortably converted his advantage into victory.

34...♟g7 35 ♖a6 ♖c7 36 h4 ♖c2+ 37 ♟h3 ♖c7 38 h5 ♖d7 39 a4 ♖c7 40 a5 ♖b7 41 ♟h4 ♖c7 42 g4 ♖b7 43 h6+ ♟g8 44 ♟g5 ♟h7 45 ♟h5 ♖c7 46 g5 ♖d7 47 ♟g4 ♖c7 48 ♟f5 ♖b7 49 ♟f6 ♖c7 50 ♖d6 ♟g8 51 ♖d8+ ♟h7 52 ♖f8 ♖c6+ 53 ♟xf7 a6 54 ♟e7 ♖c5 55 ♖f7+ ♟g8 56 g6 ♖c8 57 ♟d7 ♖b8 58 ♟c7 ♖e8 59 ♖d7 1-0

How does deflection work?

Fleuren – Murray
Bunratty 2008

Black's queen is obliged to defend the g7-square. If we can somehow deflect it, we can deliver mate.

21 ♟b4! ♖f7

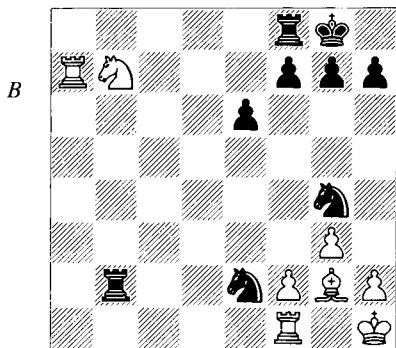
If 21...c5, we can simply grab the pawn, and the same problems remain for Black.

22 ♟xf8 ♖xf8

White has already won an exchange, but the queen still needs to guard the g7 point, which makes a further blow possible.

23 ♖d8! 1-0

How to spot which piece to deflect



Krasenkow – Bacrot
Wijk aan Zee 2008

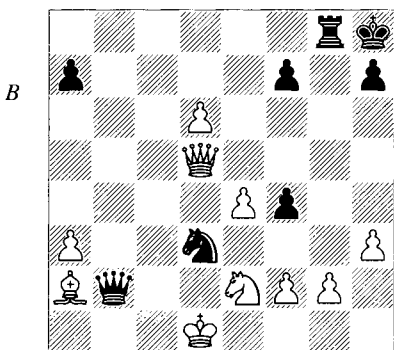
If White's rook were not defending the vital f2-pawn, it would be mate in one with ... dxf2\# . That is why Bacrot deflects the rook.

31... b1! 32 h3

As we know, the rook is poisoned (32 b1 xf2\#), but now the same rook is pinned by its counterpart and Black can grab a pawn:

32... dxf2+ 33 c2 xf1 34 e1 c3 0-1

Two extra pawns are more than enough for an easy win.



Papin – Ovechkin
Voronezh 2008

Let us analyse the situation from Black's point of view.

Material is approximately equal, or else a little worse for us – we have an exchange for a couple of pawns. Our king looks safer than the opponent's. Obviously our chances are in the middlegame, in the form of an attack against

the white king, which is stuck in the centre. We have two excellent attacking pieces: the queen and the knight. However, the black rook is not showing its full potential, and right now our knight is under attack.

If we now take a look at the opponent's camp, which piece is his best defender? That's right: the knight. It protects vital squares around the king, including c1, and shields important squares on the second rank.

Is there a move that can achieve two goals at the same time: activate Black's last piece, and get rid of White's best defender? Yes, there is:

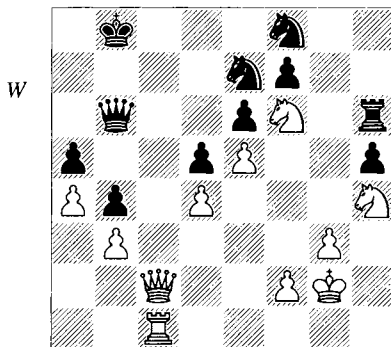
36...f3!

This move deflects the pawn and frees an important square.

0-1

White resigned in view of 37 gxf3 g1+! (now deflecting the knight) 38 dxc1 c1+ 39 e2 d4\# .

Successful deflection is usually based on an **overload** (more on this theme in the next chapter): one of our opponent's pieces has too many duties to take care of. If we spot such a piece, we can bravely attack it – it usually has nowhere to go. It is even better if we can target that piece while also attacking another one, as in the following example:



Kr. Georgiev – Saada
Saint Affrique 2007

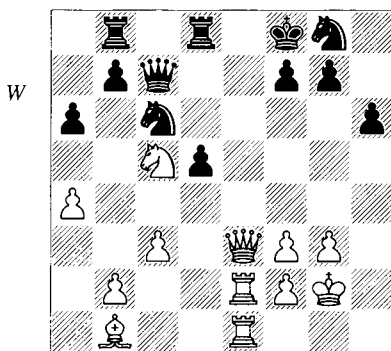
The e7-knight has to guard the vital c8-square, and Georgiev finds a way to deflect it:

53 d8! 1-0

This is also a double attack. Black needs to take by 53... dxc8 but then 54 c8+ a7 55 c7+ wins a queen, and later a double attack

will deal with Black's knights – as an exercise, find it yourself!

Here it is more complicated:



Fedorchuk – Buhmann

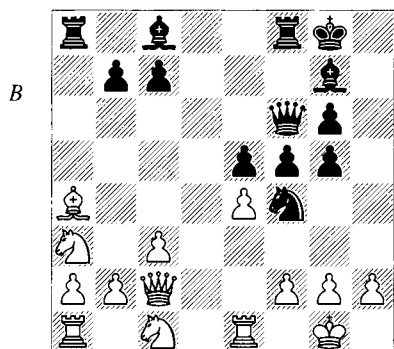
World Under-18 Ch, Oropesa del Mar 1999

Black's king is in a precarious situation, but White needs to hurry to exploit this circumstance. Both the eighth rank and the d7-square seem well protected but White mates with the help of two deflections:

26 ♖f4!! 1-0

This is not just an exchange, but a deflection. After 26...♗xf4 (26...♗c8 27 ♘e6+), 27 ♜e8+! is the second deflection: 27...♞xe8 28 ♘d7#.

Before the decisive break, we may need to identify and deal with the **main defenders** in order to improve our chances for success.



Muse – Mirumian

Berlin 1999

When we build our attack, we try to create a superiority of forces in the part of the board

where the main battle will take place. Deflecting the opponent's forces can tip the balance in our favour before the direct assault. It is especially useful to divert the enemy queen, since this is the most powerful defender.

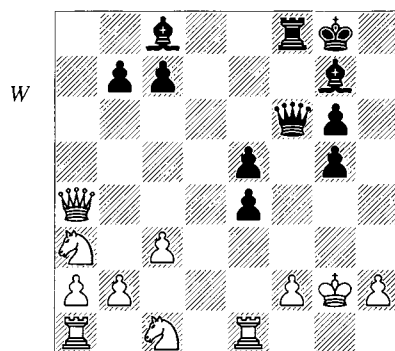
22...♞xa4!

In order to weaken White's castled position, Black sacrifices an exchange to deflect the queen, and to gain precious time. The immediate implementation of his tactical idea by 22...♘xg2? is not yet justified: 23 ♙b3+! ♘h7 24 ♘xg2 fxe4 25 ♖g1 (the queen is protecting the vital f2 point) 25...♙h3 26 ♙d5 +- and the bishop is participating in the defence.

23 ♗xa4 ♘g2!!

Shattering the white king's defences.

24 ♘g2 fxe4 (D)



Black now opens all the files and diagonals for his remaining pieces. White's queen is too far away at the moment when it is most desperately needed, and Black wins in all lines.

25 ♜e2

Or:

a) 25 ♜f1 ♖f3+ 26 ♖g1 ♙h3 +-.

b) 25 ♖c2 (the queen will be one tempo too slow to secure her king) 25...♖f3+ 26 ♖g1 ♙h3 27 ♖xe4 ♖xf2+ 28 ♖h1 ♖f1+ 29 ♞xf1 ♞xf1#.

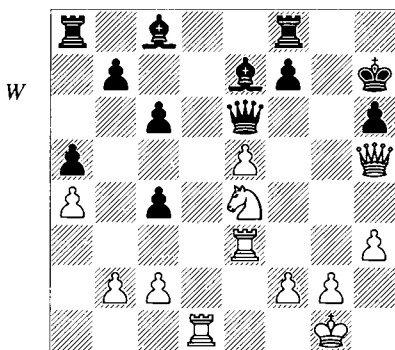
c) 25 ♖c4+ ♖h7 26 ♖c2 (26 ♖f1 ♙h3+!! 27 ♘h3 ♖f3#) 26...♙g4 27 ♖e3 ♙f3+ 28 ♖f1 ♖f5 29 ♜e2 and now 29...♖g4 or 29...♞d8.

d) 25 ♖xe4 ♖xf2+ 26 ♖h1 ♙g4!! and Black wins.

25...♖f3+ 26 ♖g1 e3! 27 ♖c2 ♙h3 0-1

Black invested an exchange in order to deflect the white queen and as a result won two tempi, which was enough to give his attack a decisive impetus.

In the examples that we have examined so far, deflections of key defenders were made in the name of checkmate. Sometimes though we deflect pieces with more prosaic ideas, such as **material gain**:



Hebden – E. Moser

European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008

The pawn on h6 is pinned, and if we imagine for a second that the bishop on e7 does not exist then there will be a decisive fork by ♗g5+ . This thought leads us quickly and logically to find the decisive idea:

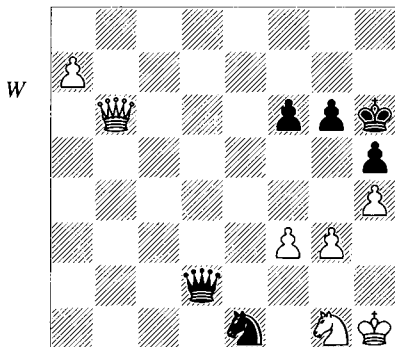
18 ♖d6! ♙xd6

The capture of the rook is forced, since after 18...♗f5 19 ♖xh6+ ♜g7 20 ♖g3+ Black is getting mated.

19 ♜g5+ 1-0

Black also loses the bishop, so she decided to call it a day.

Deflection in Defence



McNab – Berelovich

Jessie Gilbert Memorial, Coulsdon 2008

White has advanced his a-pawn too quickly, and now it looks as if he might have to resign due to the threat of 80...♗g2#. However, a deflection saves the day:

80 ♗e3+!

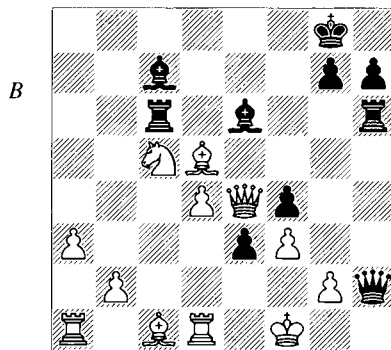
This deflects the black queen away from threatening mate, and gains a vital tempo.

80...♗xe3 81 a8♗

White's sacrifice turns out to be of just a pawn after all! Now he threatens mate on h8, and this gives him the time he needs to parry Black's mating ideas.

81...♜g7 82 ♗b7+ ♜f8 83 ♗b4+ 1/2-1/2

We should now look at a more sophisticated case of deflection.



Sulashvili – G. Guseinov

Baku 2008

The following move is one the most profound deflections I have ever seen:

28...♗h5!!

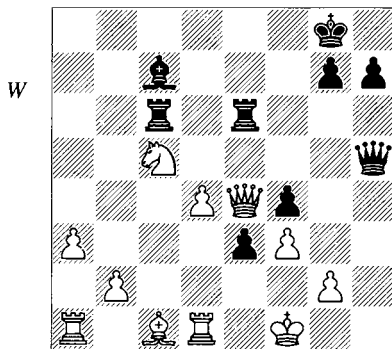
An unbelievable winning move. The point? The answer comes from a logical analysis of the position. White's position is quite shaky, but straightforward methods do not give Black anything: 28...♖g6? 29 ♜e2! or 28...♗h1+? 29 ♜e2 ♗xg2+ 30 ♜d3. To succeed, he needs to deflect both of White's active pieces from the central squares – thus freeing either the c-file for his rook or the a6-f1 diagonal for his bishop.

29 ♙xe6+

In case of 29 ♙xc6 ♙c4+! the diagonal is freed! (or first 29...♗h1+ 30 ♜e2 and now 30...♙c4+!).

29 ♙a2 ♙xa2 30 ♖xa2 ♖he6! is similar to the game.

29...♖hx6! (D)



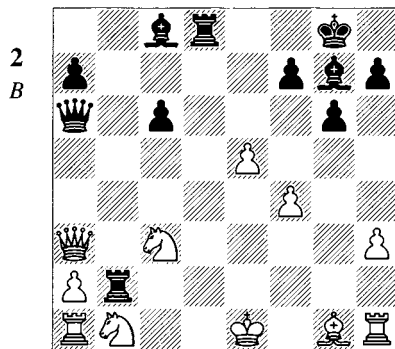
30 ♖xe6+

Desperation, but in the line 30 ♘e6 ♖h1+ 31 ♕e2 ♗xg2+ 32 ♔d3 comes the key point behind Black's 28th move: 32...♗c2#. Black also wins quickly in the line 30 ♗c2 e2+ 31 ♗xe2 ♖h1+ 32 ♕f2 ♗xe2+ 33 ♕xe2 ♗xg2+, etc.

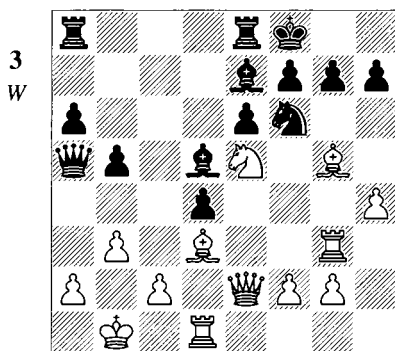
30...♗xe6 31 ♘e6 ♖h1+ 32 ♕e2 ♗xg2+ 33 ♔d3 ♗g6+!

A double attack. Black recovers the material with interest and continues attacking.

34 ♕c3 ♗xe6 35 d5 ♗e5+ 36 ♕c2 ♗a6 0-1

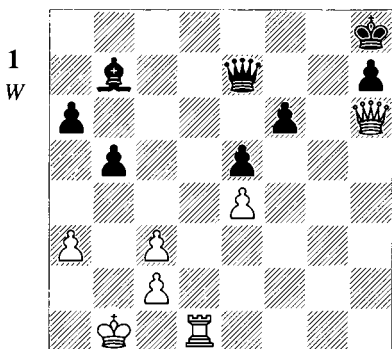


Black needs to find a nice touch.

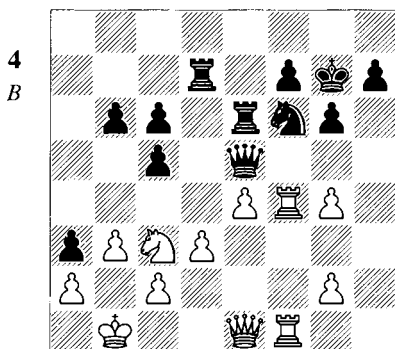


White uses two deflections to give mate.

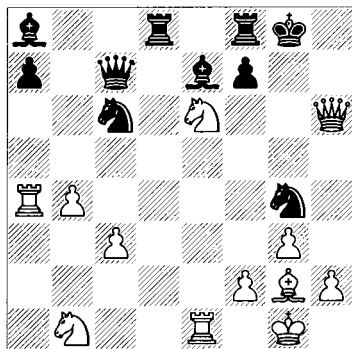
Exercises



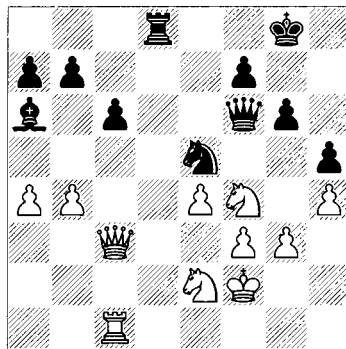
A simple exercise just to check you are concentrating...



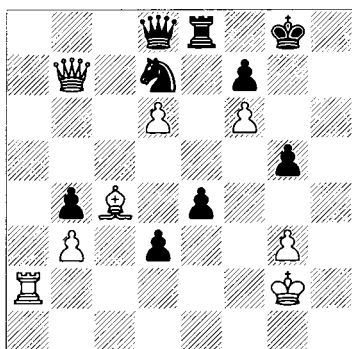
White's b2-square and back rank are both weak. Take advantage of this!

5
B

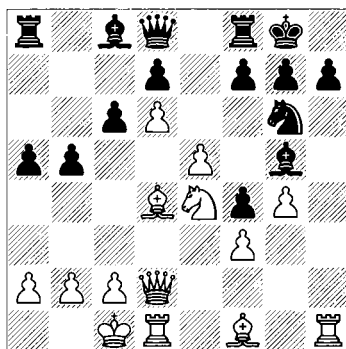
White is on top due to the line 22...♖xh6 23 ♜xc7 ♜b7 24 b5. True or false?

7
B

If only Black could chase the knight away

6
W

How can White start a decisive attack?

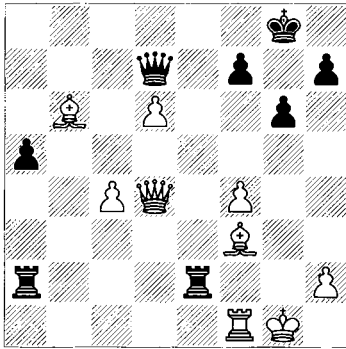
8
W

To the right, to the left...

3 Overload

An overload occurs when a piece has more than one duty, and when it is forced to carry out one of these tasks, this leaves it unable to perform its other functions. For example, a piece might be protecting two or more pieces simultaneously, or might be guarding a number of critical squares.

The removal or annihilation of an overloaded piece may bring about a total collapse of the defence:



Fahenschmidt – Ma. Tseitlin

European Seniors Ch, Bad Homburg 2005

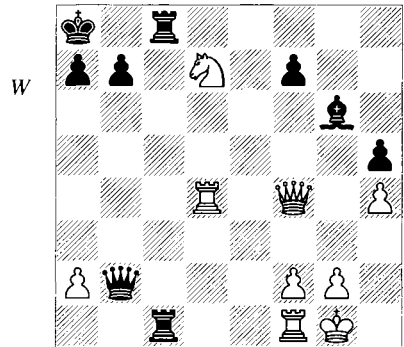
Black would like to give a standard mate with his rooks on White's second rank. For the moment the only piece that prevents this is White's light-squared bishop. Therefore Black can consider any means to remove this piece, even a sacrifice of his most valuable piece:

27... ♖g4+! 0-1

28 ♙xg4 (28 ♖h1 ♜xh2#) 28... ♜g2+ 29 ♖h1 ♜xh2+ 30 ♖g1 ♜ag2#.

Indeed, an overloaded piece only offers a weak or fake defence to the objects it is apparently covering (*see following diagram*).

The black queen is protecting the rook on c1. However, this protection is only partial and insufficient since the queen will need to retreat if a major danger arises:



Humpy Koneru – Murali Krishnan

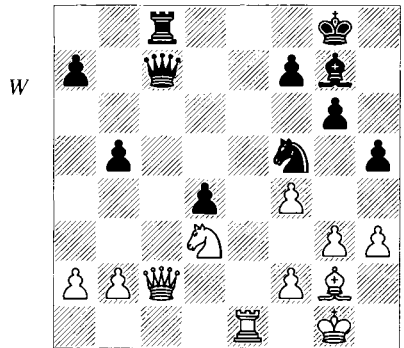
Mumbai 2008

27 ♖b6+! ♜xb6

The priority is to safeguard the king, so Black cannot afford 27...axb6 allowing instant mate by 28 ♜a4#.

28 ♜xc1 ♜xc1+ 29 ♜xc1 1-0

An overloaded piece is also limited in its mobility due to its onerous duties:



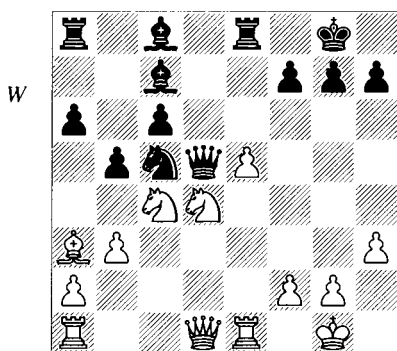
Lechtynsky – Tupy

Pribram (rapid) 1996

The c8-rook needs to protect the black queen. This means that White can easily threaten it even on the back rank, which such a rook would usually cover very naturally:

25 ♜e8+! 1-0

We can also exploit an overloaded piece to gain time to improve our own pieces.



Gil Alba – Fernandez Cardoso
Santa Clara 2003

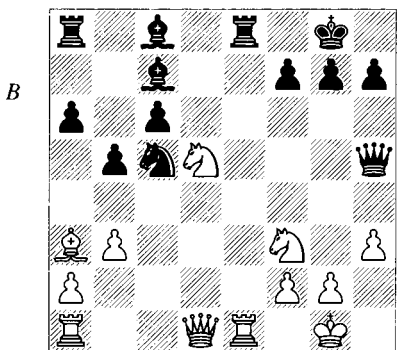
The black queen is tied to the defence of its knight, and White exploits this fact to prepare a deadly discovered attack:

1 ♖e3! ♜xe5 2 ♜f3 ♜h5

2...♜d6 is a self-pin, losing to 3 ♜c2 ♙b6 4 ♜ac1 +-, while 2...♜e7 walks into a discovered attack: 3 ♜d5 +-.

Thus White has chased the queen to a bad square, while simultaneously improving his own pieces.

3 ♜d5!! (D)



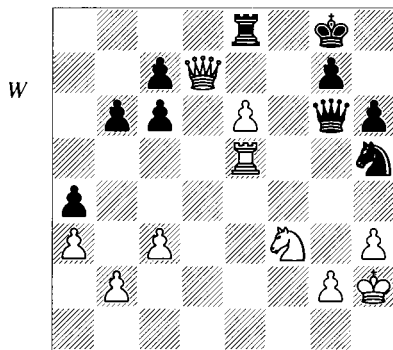
3...♙xh3

3...♜d8 4 ♜xc7 ♜xd1 5 ♜axd1 ♙e6 (5...♜e6 6 ♜d8+! ♜xd8 7 ♜e8#) 6 ♜xa8 h6 7 ♜e5 +-.

3...♜xe1+ 4 ♜xe1 ♙xh3 (4...♜e6 5 ♜xc7 ♜xc7 6 ♜e7 +-) is the most resilient.

4 ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 5 ♜xc7 ♜g4 6 ♜h4 1-0

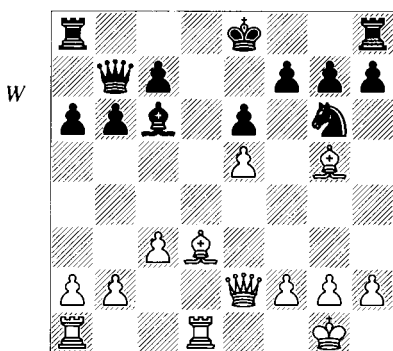
An important skill is being able to **spot which piece is overloaded**.



Rowson – Brunello
Palau 2008

Black is holding the position due to his queen – it protects both the rook and the knight. This provides the setting for an overload, which can be exploited here by removing the queen by exchanging it off:

33 ♜f7+! ♜xf7 34 exf7+ ♙xf7 35 ♙xh5 ♜e2 36 ♜h4 ♜xb2 37 ♜xa4 ♙e6 38 h4 1-0

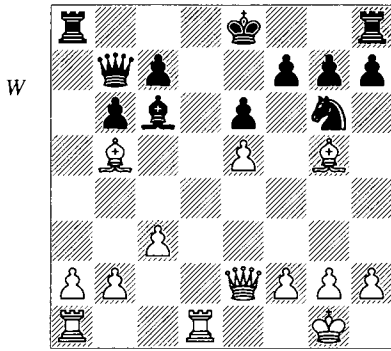


G. Guseinov – Natarajan
Dubai 2008

In many cases it is not obvious which piece can become overloaded. In this example White is attacking the a6-pawn twice, and Black is defending it twice. However, if White captures with the bishop, he opens a line for his rook, and a hidden threat of mate on d8. This means that Black also needs his rook on his back rank – thus it is overloaded, and its defence of a6 turns out to be illusory:

17 ♙xa6! ♜a7 18 ♙b5! ♜b7 (D)

Black cannot even limit the damage to one pawn, since White now uses a double pin to

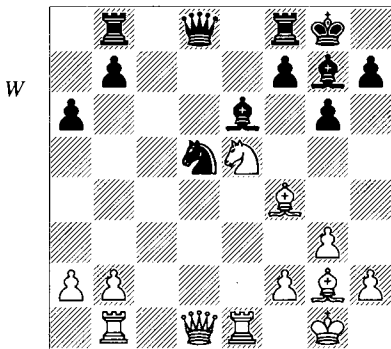


emphasize another overload – this time of the c6-bishop.

19 ♖e4! 1-0

Another way to view this example is that Black delayed castling too long and White was able to deflect the sole defender of the back rank to deliver mate.

One thing is certain: an overload is usually exploited by a deflection.



Adly – Ramesh
Dubai 2008

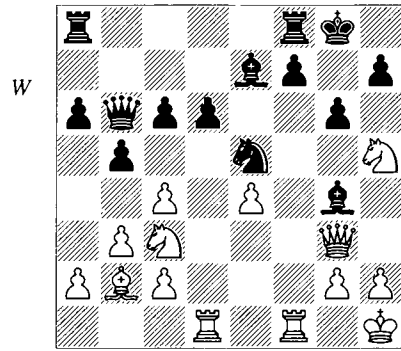
The black queen and the e6-bishop need to guard the d5-knight. One of these pieces can be deflected:

18 ♖xf7! 1-0

After 18...♗xf7 19 ♗xb8 the queen needs to abandon the knight: 19...♖xb8 20 ♗xd5 +–.

Sometimes a whole position turns out to be loose because first one piece and then another is overloaded.

In the following position, the e7-bishop is overloaded since it needs to protect both the d6-pawn and the important f6-square:



Miroshnichenko – Turzo
Budapest 1999

19 ♖xd6! ♗xd6

19...♗xd6 is met by 20 ♖d5 +– with the idea ♗xe5.

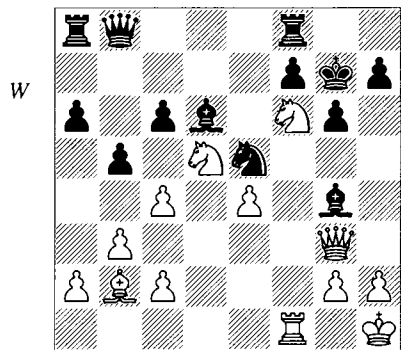
20 ♖f6+ ♖g7

20...♖h8 21 ♖h4 +–.

Now the key piece becomes the e5-knight, which has too many duties: it is the protector of the g4-bishop, but also has the higher duty of guarding its king.

21 ♖cd5! ♖b8 (D)

Black provides extra support for his knight, since his position will collapse after 21...cxd5 22 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 23 ♖xe5 ♖h8 (23...♖b8 24 ♖e8++ ♖h6 25 ♖g7+ ♖g5 26 h4+ ♖xh4 27 ♖h6+ ♗h5 28 ♖f4+ ♖xf4 29 ♖xf4+ ♗g4 30 ♖f6 h5 31 ♖h2 followed by g3#) 24 ♖xg4+ f6 25 ♖xf6 +– with the point 25...♖b8 26 ♖e8+ ♖xe5 27 ♖xf8#.

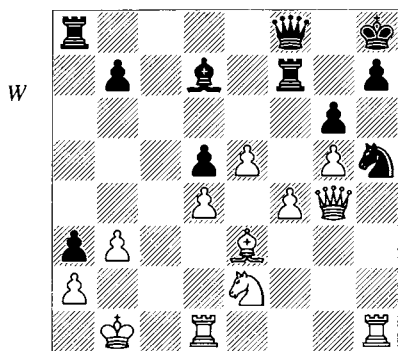


However, it is now the bishop that becomes overburdened.

22 c5!

Black's defences disintegrate under White's pressure.

However, we cannot expect a skilled opponent simply to leave his pieces overstretched in their defensive tasks. Thus we need to consider **how we can create overloaded pieces**.



Shavtvaladze – Avrukh

European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008

The most usual way is by decoying pieces to vulnerable squares.

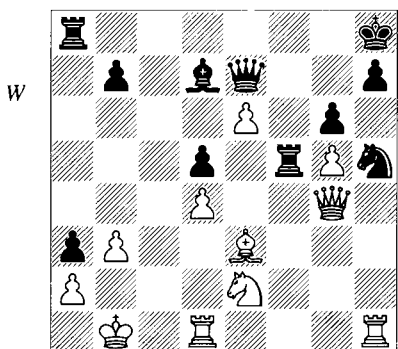
31 e6

Black now saw a pin and became overambitious, missing White's cunning reply:

31... ♖e7? 32 f5!

This decoys the rook to a vulnerable square.

32... ♖xf5 (D)



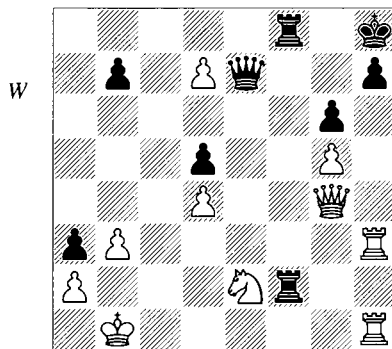
Now the g6-pawn needs to protect both a rook and a knight, which is beyond its abilities. White therefore won material:

33 exd7 ♖xe3 34 ♖xh5 ♖f2 35 ♖h3 ♖e7

35... ♖xe2 loses after 36 ♖xe2 ♖xe2 37 ♖c3 ♖f2 38 ♖c8+ ♖f8 39 ♖xa8 ♖xa8 40 ♖c1.

36 ♖dh1 ♖af8 (D)

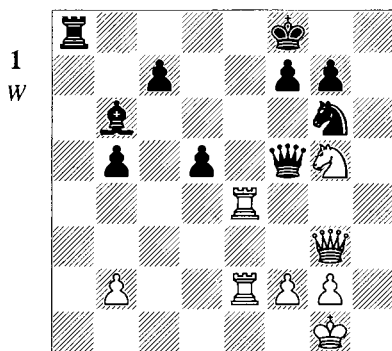
White now found one more overloaded piece – the f8-rook which must defend its colleague on f2:



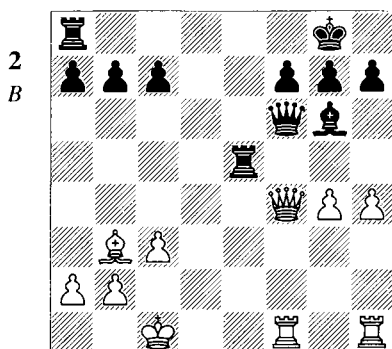
37 d8 ♖! 1-0

Avrukh resigned due to the line 37... ♖xd8 38 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 39 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 40 ♖h4+.

Exercises

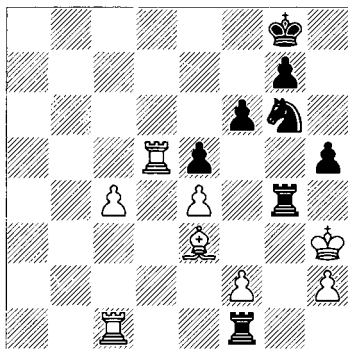


This is a warm-up exercise.



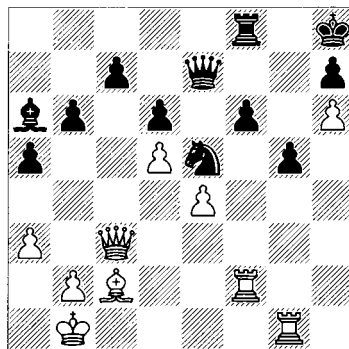
Another warm-up.

3
B



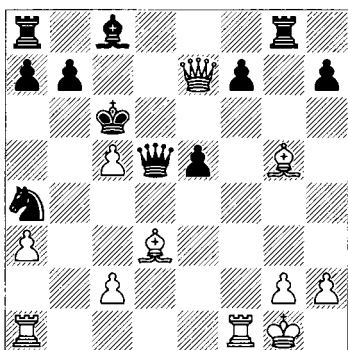
There is no breathing space for White's king, but a soldier still guards him.

6
W



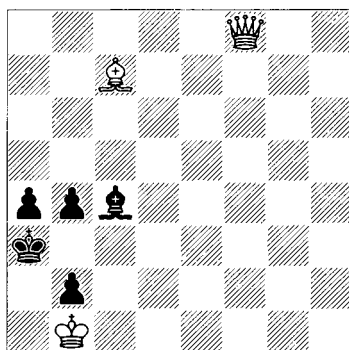
Create an overloaded piece in Black's camp.

4
W



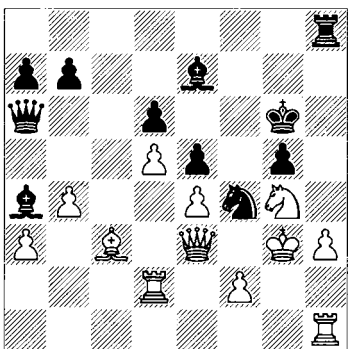
White can win most neatly by exploiting an overloaded piece in Black's camp.

7
W



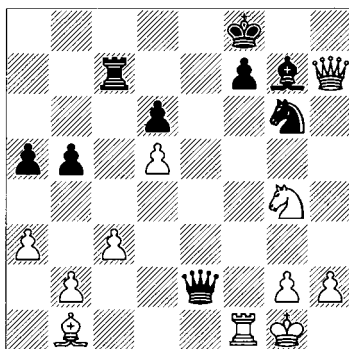
Mate in three.

5
B



If one of White's pieces were not there it would be mate...

8
B



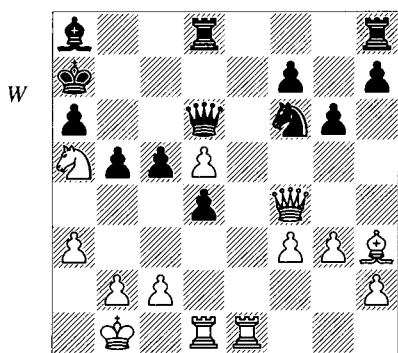
Black is worse, but what is his best practical try?

4 Decoy

Decoy is a tactical method in which we try to force a piece to go onto a particular unfavourable square. We can also call this square **mined**. Once the piece is on this square, we can either win the decoyed piece immediately, or employ some other tactical method (pin, double attack, discovered attack, etc., or even mate) that is possible due to the piece's unfortunate presence on this square.

Decoy can also take the form of dragging out our opponent's king in front of his pawn-chain. Without his safe shelter, the king becomes an easy target for the attacking pieces.

When speaking about the dragging out of a king, Garry Kasparov's ingenious victory over Veselin Topalov naturally springs to mind. Although every chess lover will no doubt have marvelled at this masterpiece already, I would like to go over Kasparov's combination and some of the main variations, with a particular emphasis on the leading role played by decoy:



Kasparov – Topalov
Wijk aan Zee 1999

24 ♖xd4!! cxd4?

As is now well-known, Topalov should have played 24...♗b6!

25 ♖e7+! ♗b6

The king is forced to go for a long and dangerous walk, since after 25...♗b8 26 ♖xd4! White has enough resources to execute Black's

king in his own camp; for example, 26...♗d7 (26...♖xe7 27 ♖b6+ ♗b7 28 ♗c6+ ♗a8 29 ♖a7#) 27 ♗xd7 ♗xd5 28 c4! ♖xe7 29 ♖b6+ ♗a8 30 ♖xa6+ ♗b8 31 ♖b6+ ♗a8 32 ♗c6+! ♗xc6 33 ♗xc6 +-.

26 ♖xd4+ ♗xa5

In the event of 26...♖c5 27 ♖xf6+ ♖d6 Kasparov intended to sacrifice his bishop by 28 ♗e6!! in order to gain a couple of tempi, and to keep Black's pieces locked up: 28...♗xd5 (or 28...♖he8 29 b4! +-) 29 b4! ♗a8 30 ♖xf7 ♖d1+ 31 ♗b2 ♖xf3 32 ♗f5 +-.

27 b4+ ♗a4

Black's king has been dragged out from his pawn-shield. Now the play becomes highly concrete because any check by White is likely to be mate. But in order to give the cherished check, White needs to deal with Black's many defenders with great precision. Various deflection and decoy ideas will support his mission.

28 ♖c3

Later it was discovered that it is even better to start with 28 ♖a7!, which prepares a capture on a6 in order to deflect various defensive forces:

a) 28...♗xd5 29 ♖xa6+!! ♖xa6 30 ♖b2 ♗c3+ 31 ♖xc3 ♗d5 32 ♗b2 and ♖b3+ is inevitable, whereafter the modest c-pawn has the pleasure of delivering mate.

b) 28...♗xd5 29 ♖c3 ♖he8 30 ♗b2 ♖e2 31 ♖c7! +- and Black's bishop blocks his queen's access to d4.

c) 28...♗b7 (the best defence is counter-deflection) 29 ♖xb7 and now:

c1) 29...♗xd5 30 ♗d7! (the threat is 31 ♗xb5+, and the white bishop decoys the black rook onto a mined square) 30...♖xd7 31 ♖b2 ♗xb4 (the only defence) 32 ♖xd7 (now the idea of 30 ♗d7 is revealed – the queen on d6 is overloaded!) 32...♖c5 33 ♖d4 ♖c8 34 ♖b3+ and White wins the queen.

c2) 29...♖xd5 30 ♗b6 a5 (30...♖a8 31 ♖xf6 a5 32 ♗f1 ♖hb8 33 ♖d6 wins for White) 31 ♖a6 ♖a8 32 ♖e3!! ♖xa6 33 ♗b2 axb4 34 axb4

♖a2+ (otherwise mate from a3, with or without a preliminary check on c3) 35 ♗xa2 ♗xb4+ 36 ♗b2 ♖c6 37 ♙f1 ♖a8 38 ♖e7+ ♗a5 39 ♖b7 +-.

Kasparov's combination is especially beautiful for the juggling with his last three remaining pieces that manage always to be one move ahead of the powerful black army. The exuberance of defensive options for Black is another vintage point of his exceptional combination.

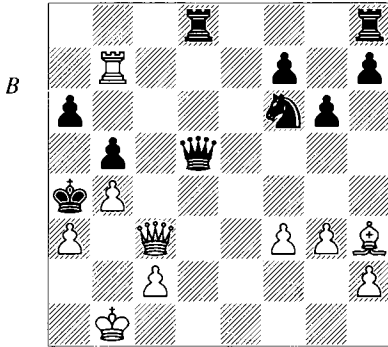
28...♖xd5

28...♙xd5 29 ♗b2 is simple, with mate from b3 with the pawn as above.

29 ♖a7!

29 ♖c7? ♖d1+ will only lead to perpetual check.

29...♙b7! 30 ♖xb7 (D)



30...♖c4

30...♖d6 31 ♖b6!! deflects the rook and gives the white king a chance to make the desired step to b2.

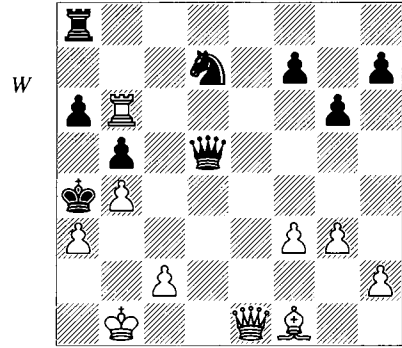
However, in defence the principle of maximum involvement of the pieces is also valid, and Black had to try 30...♖he8!, which should nevertheless lose, but gives White the most chances to go wrong: 31 ♖b6 ♖a8 32 ♙f1!! (the flashy 32 ♙e6? ♖xe6 33 ♖xe6, with the idea 34 ♗b2, is refuted by the no less spectacular 33...♖c4! 34 ♖xc4 bxc4 35 ♖xf6 ♗xa3 36 ♖xf7 ♖e8 and Black's advantage in the endgame is overwhelming; in this line the king turns from prey to a hunter) and now:

a) In the event of 32...♖ed8 Kasparov points out a calm way to build the familiar mating-net: 33 ♖c6! ♗h5 (not 33...♗d7 34 ♖d6!) 34 ♖c5 ♖ac8 35 ♗b2! +- and after the forced exchange of the queens White liquidates to a winning endgame.

b) 32...♗d7 33 ♖d6! (taking both vital squares from the queen) 33...♖ec8 34 ♖b2 and White wins.

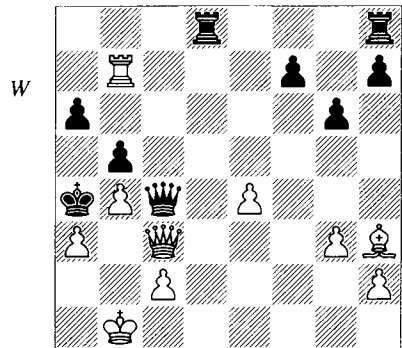
c) 32...♖e6 also fails to save Black: 33 ♖xe6 fxe6 34 ♗b2 +-.

d) 32...♖e1+! 33 ♖xe1 ♗d7 (D).



Suddenly the white rook is trapped, but 34 ♖b7!! ♖xb7 (after 34...♗e5 we witness a double attack for the sake of deflection: 35 ♖c3 ♖xf3 36 ♙d3 ♖d5 37 ♙e4 +-) 35 ♖d1! is an incredible ambush. Even from the first rank the queen can be fearsome. 35...♗xa3 is met with 36 c3 followed by ♖c1+, ♖c2+ and ♖a2#.

30...♗e4! 31 fxe4 ♖c4 (D) is another spectacular saving attempt.

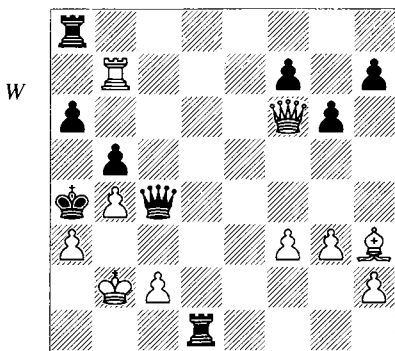


After 32 ♖a7!! ♖d1+ (32...♖a8 loses to 33 ♖e3 and ♗b2, as usual) 33 ♗b2 ♖xc3+ 34 ♗xc3 ♖d6 35 e5 ♖b6 36 ♗b2 ♖e8 Black has managed to liquidate to an endgame, but his king is still in danger. As before, any check is fatal for him, and the white bishop now enters the game: 37 ♙g2! ♖d8 (37...♖xe5 38 ♙b7 +- with the idea 38...♖ee6 39 ♙d5) 38 ♙b7 ♖d7 39 ♙c6!! ♖d8 (39...♖d2 40 ♙e8 +-) 40 ♙d7 +- followed by 41 c4 and either 42 ♖xa6+!!

and ♙xb5\# , or (in case of $\dots\text{♜db8}$ to hamper this plan) ♙g4-d1\# . Magnificent geometry!

31 ♜xf6 ♘xa3

31... ♜d1+! 32 ♘b2 ♝a8 (D) is relatively best.



After 33 ♜b6! ♜d4+ (33... a5 34 ♙d7 +-) 34 ♜xd4 ♜xd4 Black again survives to an end-game, but after 35 ♜xf7 a5 White has a slight advantage in material and a large positional plus, which he will convert into victory after 36 ♙e6 axb4 37 ♙b3+ ♘a5 38 axb4+ ♘b6 (38... ♜xb4 39 c3 +-) 39 ♜xh7 ♜c8 40 h4 +- .

32 ♜xa6+ ♘b4 33 c3+!

This additional decoy idea – which is essential for this line to work – was foreseen well in advance by Kasparov.

33... ♘xc3 34 ♜a1+ ♘d2

34... ♘b4 35 ♜b2+ ♘a5 36 ♜a3+ ♜a4 37 ♜a7+ +- .

35 ♜b2+ ♘d1 36 ♙f1!

Decoying the queen to a poor square.

36... ♜d2

36... ♜xf1 37 ♜c2+ ♘e1 38 ♜e7+ reveals one of the points behind 36 ♙f1 .

37 ♜d7! ♜xd7 38 ♙xc4 bxc4 39 ♜xh8 ♜d3 40 ♜a8 c3 41 ♜a4+ ♘e1 42 f4 f5 43 ♘c1 ♜d2 44 ♜a7 1-0

Glorious, is it not? Without any doubt this is one of the most beautiful chess combinations ever.

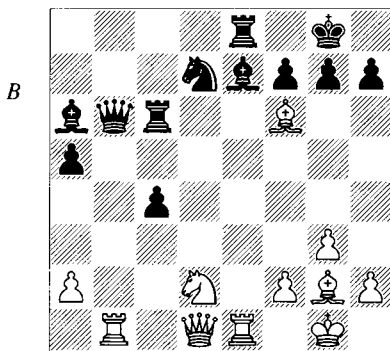
The next game was also praised highly by its winner, who claimed that it was his best to date:

Krasenkow – Nakamura

Barcelona 2007

1 ♙f3 ♙f6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 ♙g2 ♙e7 5 0-0 6 0-0 6 b3 a5 7 ♙c3 c6 8 d4 ♙bd7 9 ♜c2 b6 10

e4 ♙a6 11 ♙d2?! c5! 12 exd5 cxd4 13 ♙b5 exd5 14 ♙xd4 ♜c8 15 ♜e1 b5 16 ♙b2 ♜e8 17 ♜d1 bxc4 18 bxc4 ♜b6 19 ♜b1 dxc4 20 ♙c6? ♜xc6! 21 ♙xf6 (D)

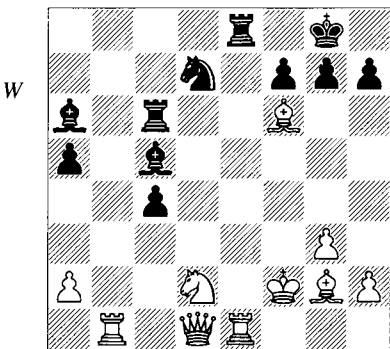


In this crazy position where three of Black's pieces are hanging, Nakamura finds a way to create a forceful attack:

21... ♜xf2+!

Dragging the white king in front of the pawn-chain. Black will have enough material to mate even without his queen. Krasenkow later admitted that he saw this possibility immediately after he took on f6, but it was already too late by then.

22 ♘xf2 ♙c5+! (D)



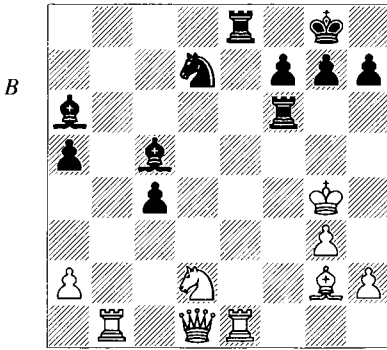
23 ♘f3

After 23 ♘f1 the winning move is 23... c3+! (but not 23... ♜xf6+?? 24 ♙f3 c3+ 25 ♘g2). Remember the principle of involving as many pieces in the attack as you can. After 24 ♜e2 c2! (deflection!) 25 ♜xc2 ♙xe2+ 26 ♘e1 ♙d3+ Black wins back the queen, as well as at least a whole rook as compensation.

23 ♙d4 ♙xd4+ 24 ♘f3 ♜f6+ 25 ♘g4 ♙e5+ leads to a similar position as in the game, with

the sole difference that the bishop is on d4 instead on c5, which is not important.

23...♖xf6+ 24 ♔g4 (D)



For the queen, Black has only a bishop and two pawns, but his attack is unstoppable. The most important thing when dragging a king in front of his pawn-chain is to make sure that it cannot be securely protected by any of its pieces.

24...♗e5+!

This important move had to be foreseen in advance. The attack must be conducted with tempo (preferably with checks, as they are so forcing). This move also opens an important diagonal for the light-squared bishop – the last piece to join the hunt.

25 ♔g5

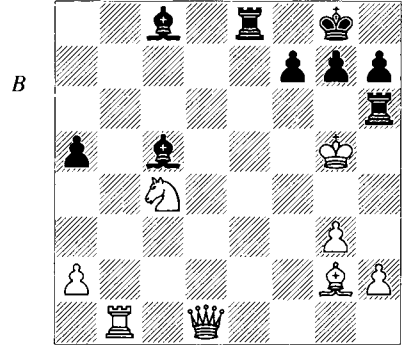
It is more resilient to eliminate the black knight by 25 ♖xe5, but it does not help either: 25...♗c8+! 26 ♗f5 (you should always consider moves like this when sacrificing huge amounts of material!) 26...♗xf5+ 27 ♔h4 ♖h6+ 28 ♔g5 ♗c8 (29...♗e3# is a threat) and then:

a) 29 ♗f1 ♖g6+ 30 ♗f4 ♖f6+ 31 ♔g5 ♖e5+ 32 ♔h4 ♖h6+ 33 ♖h5 ♖exh5#.

b) 29 ♖e1 allows a forced mate, but you do not need to calculate this line in advance, since the simple swap of the rook for the queen is enough to secure a winning endgame. For those interested, here is the mating line: 29...♖e3 30 ♗e4 (30 ♗f3 ♖g6+ 31 ♔h4 ♗e7+ 32 ♗g5 ♖h6#) 30...♖g6+ 31 ♗f4 ♖g4+ 32 ♔e5 ♖g5+ 33 ♗f4 ♖f5+ 34 ♔g4 h5+ 35 ♔h4 ♗e7+ 36 ♗g5 ♗xg5+ 37 ♔xh5 g6+ 38 ♔g4 ♖d5#.

c) 29 ♗xc4 (D) controls both e3 and e5.

However, Black wins by 29...♖g6+ 30 ♗f4 ♖f6+ 31 ♔g5 ♖e5+ (deflecting the knight away from the important diagonal) 32 ♗xe5 ♗e3+ 33 ♔h4 ♖h6+ 34 ♖h5 g5#.



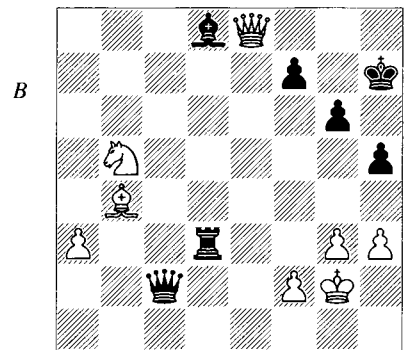
25...♖g6+ 26 ♔h5 f6

...♖h6# is coming. Note that White does not have a piece that can cover the h6-square, despite his material advantage. 26...♗c8 would also work.

27 ♖xe5 ♖xe5+ 28 ♔h4 ♗c8! 0-1

It is mate in six more moves: 29 ♗d5+ ♖xd5 30 g4 ♖d3 31 ♖f3 ♖xf3 32 ♗xf3 ♖xg4+ 33 ♔h5 (33 ♔h3 ♖g5+ 34 ♔h4 ♗f2#) 33...g6+ 34 ♔h6 ♗f8#.

When sacrificing a lot of material for a mating attack, **precise calculation is essential**. If something goes wrong and our opponent escapes, we might be left in a lost position. But do not worry; the calculations are usually simple enough due to the forcing nature of the lines.



Speelman – Peng Xiaomin
Erevan Olympiad 1996

White has some threats, but precise calculations show that a forced mate can be delivered thanks to a sequence of decoys:

44...♖xg3+! 45 ♔xg3 ♗h4+! 46 ♔xh4

46 ♔h2 ♖xf2+ 47 ♔h1 ♖f3+ 48 ♔g1 ♗f2+ 49 ♔f1 ♗g3+ 50 ♔g1 ♖f2+ 51 ♔h1 ♖h2#.

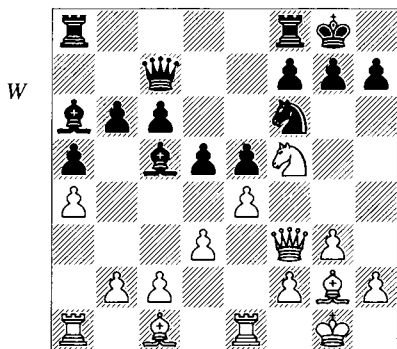
This was a fairly long line, but a forced one, so I am pretty sure that most of my readers could have worked it out for themselves.

46...♖xf2+ 47 ♔g5 ♜f5+

Or 47...f6#.

48 ♔h4 ♜f4# (0-1)

The next example illustrates a noteworthy **decoying pattern** which can be added to your armoury:



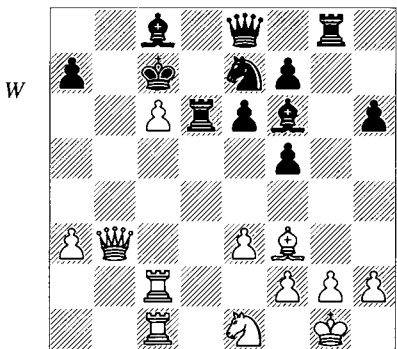
Yuldachev – Belkin

Uzbekistan Ch, Tashkent 1993

15 ♘xg7! 1-0

15...♔xg7 16 ♕h6+ ♔xh6 17 ♜xf6+ ♔h5
18 ♕f3#.

Decoys are based on the **potential power of our pieces**. If we do not find a direct way to make use of our pieces' latent possibilities, then we can seek to create the right preconditions by disrupting our opponent's defensive mechanisms.



Kuporosov – Yudasin

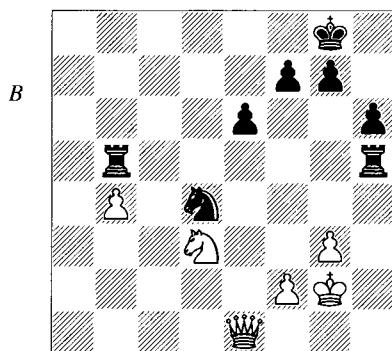
Kostroma 1985

Almost all White's pieces are optimally placed, but for the moment they attack only light squares. The pawn on c6 is the last shield of Black's king. It needs to be advanced or removed. White needs only one move to unleash the energy of his pieces:

28 ♜b8+!! 1-0

Decoing the king onto a fatal square, and releasing the power of the pieces. There would follow 28...♔xb8 29 c7#.

Decoy can be used to place an enemy piece on a square where we can destroy it – a **mined square**:



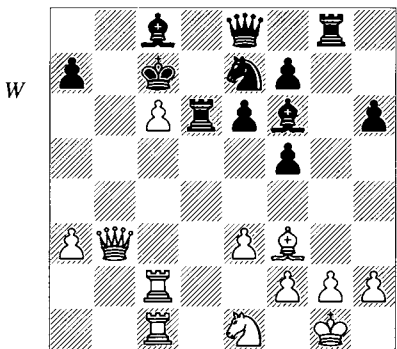
Hendriks – D. Boros

Budapest 2008

We can use a knight fork to win material after decoying the king onto a mined square.

52...♞h2+! 0-1

A decoy can be used to make **material gains**. We decoy an enemy piece, and trap it in:



H. Nguyen – Porat

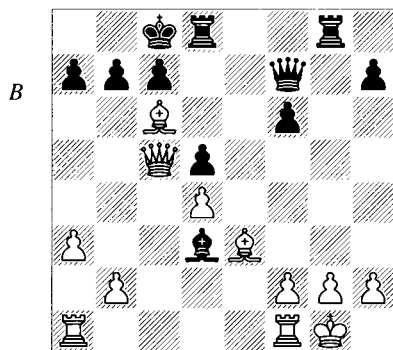
Budapest 2008

26...♞xe5! 0-1

The queen is dragged to a place from which there is no return: 27 ♚xe5 ♜f6.

Decoy as a Defensive Method

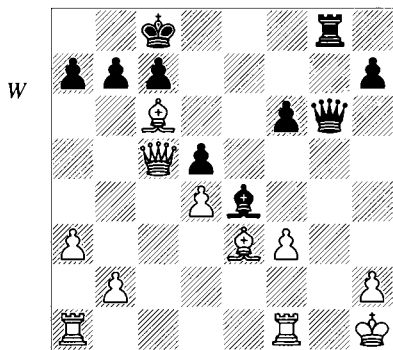
We may also decoy a piece in order to gain an important tempo for our defence:



Klimov – Ovechkin
Novokuznetsk 2008

The position is equal if Black simply recaptures on c6. Instead he thought he had found a beautiful combination:

20...♞xg2+? 21 ♜xg2 ♚g6+ 22 ♜h1 ♜e4+ 23 f3 ♞g8 (D)



This is the position that Black was aiming for. He obviously was counting on the line 24 ♞g1?? ♜xf3+ 25 ♞g2 ♚xg2# or 24 ♞f2?? ♜xf3+! 25 ♞xf3 ♚g2#. However, a cold shower followed:

24 ♜d7+! ♜xd7

Otherwise White will play 25 ♜h3 protecting g2.

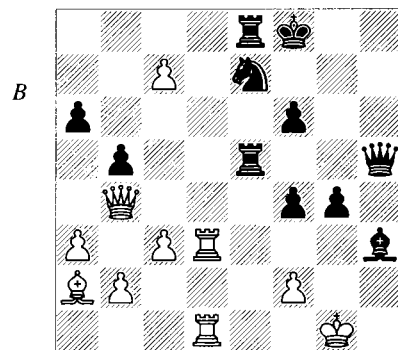
25 ♚b5+!

White has won a decisive tempo to drag and drop his queen back home.

25...♜c8 26 ♚e2 ♜d3 27 ♚d2 ♜xf1 28 ♞xf1

As a result of his superb defence, White has emerged a piece ahead and won the game later.

Here is a sophisticated case of decoy:

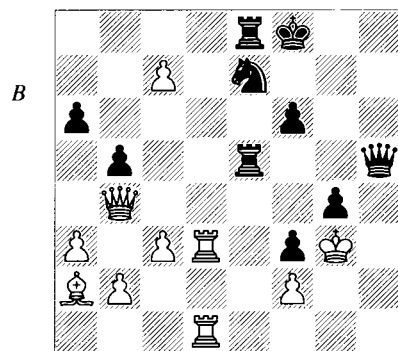


Inarkiev – Kazhgaleev
Moscow 2008

Black is the first to decoy his opponent's king:

38...♜g2! 39 ♜xg2 f3+ 40 ♜g3 (D)

40 ♜g1 ♚h3 is a very simple win for Black.

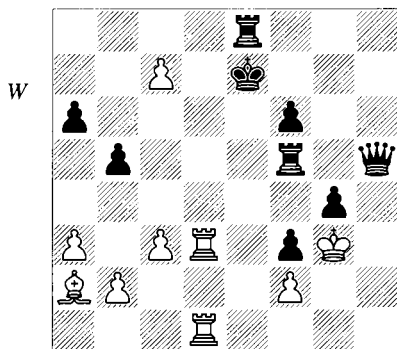


40...♞f5??

Sad but true. One suspects that time-trouble contributed to this losing move. Black could instead have delivered checkmate by force: 40...♚h3+ 41 ♜f4 ♚h2+ 42 ♜xg4 ♚g2+ 43 ♜f4 (43 ♜h4 ♞h5+ 44 ♜xh5 ♚g5#) 43...♞f5+ 44 ♜e4 ♚g4+ 45 ♜e3 ♚g5+ 46 ♜d4 ♚f4#.

41 ♚xe7+! ♜xe7 (D)

Or 41...♞xe7 42 c8♚+ ♞e8 43 ♚xe8+! and White wins material.

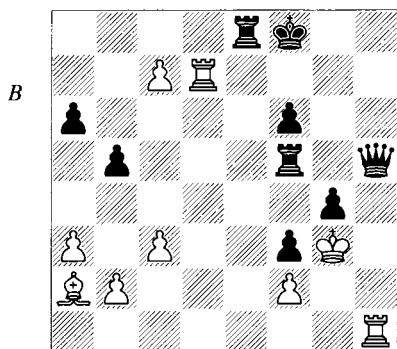


42 ♖d7+ ♕f8

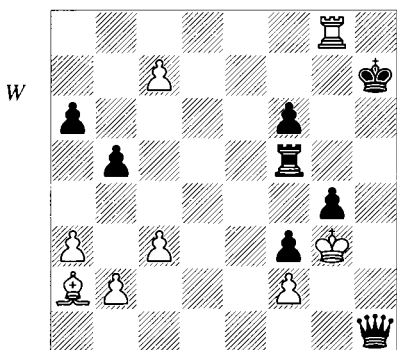
Black will be cruelly punished for letting the mate slip out of his grasp.

43 ♖h1!! (D)

Deflection and decoy: The queen will be vulnerable on h1. 43 ♖f7+ ♕g8! 44 ♖e7+ ♕f8 45 ♖f7+ is only a draw.



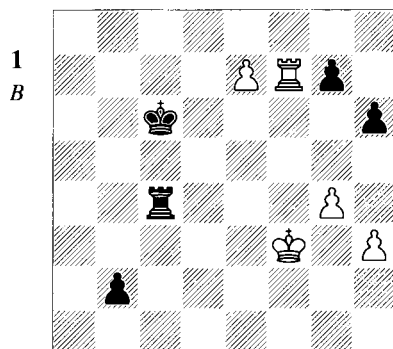
43... ♖xh1 44 ♖f7+ ♕g8 45 ♖e7+ ♕h8 46 ♖xe8+ ♕g7 47 ♖g8+ ♕h7 (D)



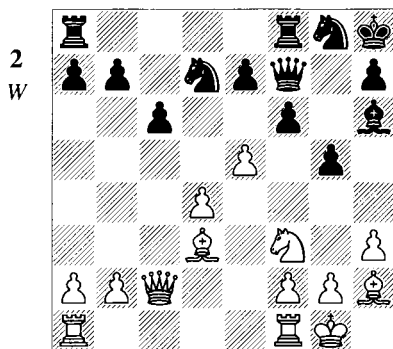
Now White needs to decoy his opponent's king onto its back rank.

48 ♖h8+! ♕xh8 49 c8 ♖+ ♕g7 50 ♖g8+ 1-0
Black loses his queen.

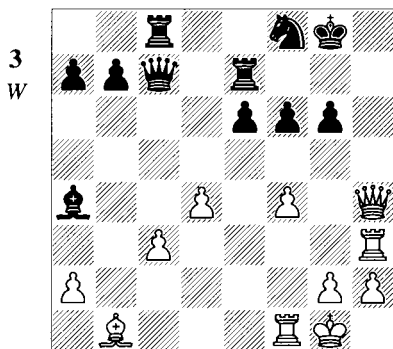
Exercises



After 48... ♕d7 49 e8 ♖++ ♕xe8 50 ♖b7 ♖c2 Black is obviously better, but will that be enough for a win? Or is there something better?

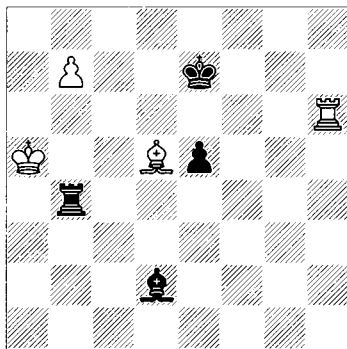


Black is very weak on his light squares. Can we use this fact to win material?



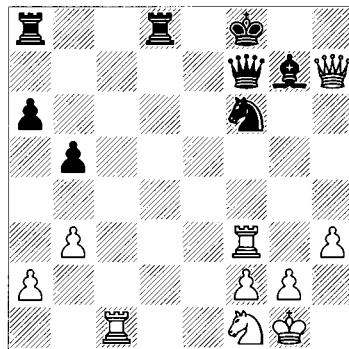
Decoy your opponent's king!

4
W



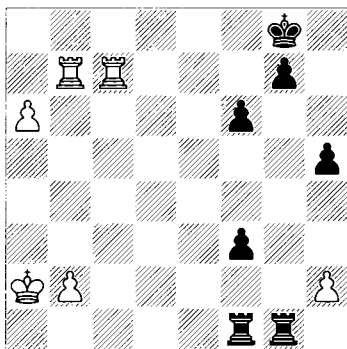
Drag out an enemy piece to promote your pawn.

7
W



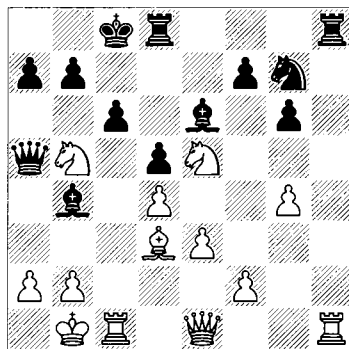
Find a way to break Black's defensive construction.

5
W



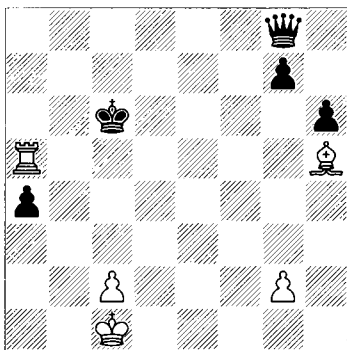
Black's rooks are cooperating perfectly; e.g., 36 a7? ♖a1+ 37 ♖b3 f2 —+. Can we break their synergy, and decoy a rook onto a mined square at the same time?

8
W



Try to calculate as far as you can the attack against Black's king. A hint: it is going for a walk to b3!

6
W



Chase the queen using decoys until she must surrender.

5 Double Attack

Double attack is the most common tactical method. It can be successfully applied by every chess piece, as they are all capable of attacking two targets at the same time.

Some other familiar tactical methods are specific cases of a double attack. Discovered attack is most effective when the moving piece also threatens something (and thus the discovered attack becomes a double attack). Likewise, clearance is also most effective when we perform it with gain of tempo.

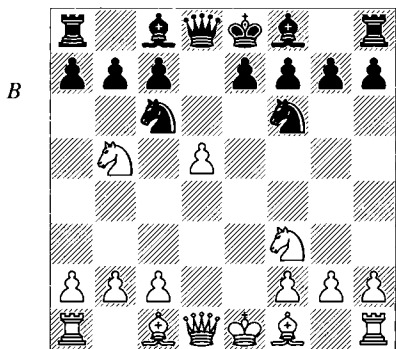
Double attacks are often employed in punishing weak opening play. Here is an example featuring **short-range pieces** at work – knights and pawns in this case, although the king is also an effective double-attacker, given the right circumstances.

Bojkov – Panbukchian Bulgarian Ch, Pleven 2005

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♘c3 ♗d6 4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♙f3 ♘c6?!

In my opinion this move is an inaccuracy, and 5...a6 or 5...c6 is better.

6 ♘b5 ♗d8 7 d5 (D)



This advance is based on a double attack.

7...♘b4

7...♘d5?? loses due to the knight fork 8 ♗xd5 ♗xd5 9 ♘xc7+.

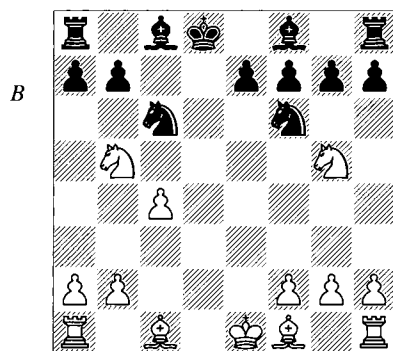
8 c4 c6

Black needs to challenge White's strong centre. In case of 8...e6 9 ♘f4, simple development brings White a superior endgame: 9...♘a6 10 d6 cxd6 11 ♘xd6+ ♘xd6 12 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 13 ♘xd6 with two bishops and better prospects.

9 dxc6 ♗a5?

This is wrong in an underdeveloped position. For better or worse, Black had to liquidate to an endgame by 9...bxc6 10 ♗xd8+ ♙xd8 11 ♘bd4 c5 12 a3 cxd4 13 axb4.

Note that the natural 9...♘xc6? is impossible, as White replies 10 ♗xd8+ ♙xd8 11 ♘g5 (D).



Two forks are in the air (12 ♘xf7+ or 12 ♘c7+ in case of 11...♙e8), so Black needs to proceed with 11...♙e6, but then White is completely dominating: 12 ♘f4 h6 13 ♘xe6+ fxe6 14 0-0-0+ winning.

10 ♙d2 ♘e4

Black was counting on this 'counterattack', but he lacks resources to back it up. 10...bxc6 was somewhat more resilient, although after 11 a3 cxb5 12 axb4 ♗c7 13 c5 (or 13 cxb5!?) White has a huge advantage.

11 ♙xb4

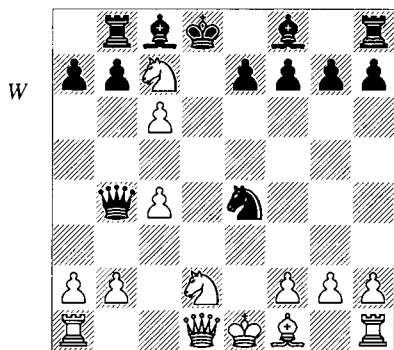
Deflecting Black's queen away from defending the c7-square. Now a fork by ♘c7 will be a threat.

11...♗xb4+ 12 ♘d2 ♗b8?

The final blunder, but Black is lost in any case: 12...♙d8 13 a3 ♗xd2+ 14 ♗xd2+ ♘xd2

15 0-0-0! (15 cxb7 ♗xb7 16 0-0-0) 15...bxc6
16 ♖xd2+ ♗d7 17 ♗e2 and White wins.

13 ♖c7+ ♖d8 (D)



14 ♖d5 1-0

A double attack against the queen and the c7-square terminates Black's resistance. After 14...♖xd2+ 15 ♖xd2 ♖xd2 there is one more double attack, this time also a zwischenzug: 16 c7+.

In the previous game, the double attacks were performed by short-range pieces – knights and pawns. Long-range pieces such as the **bishop** are also highly effective for this purpose, and their double attacks may also be harder to foresee:

Bojkov – Geirnaert Groningen 2008

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♖xd5 3 ♖c3 ♖a5 4 d4 c6 5
♗f3 ♗f6 6 ♗d2 ♖b6 7 ♖a4 ♖d8 8 ♗d3 ♗g4

I needed a win to secure the overall tournament victory, so I had prepared a sharp line, with a small trap in it, into which my opponent fell!

9 c4!? ♗xf3?!

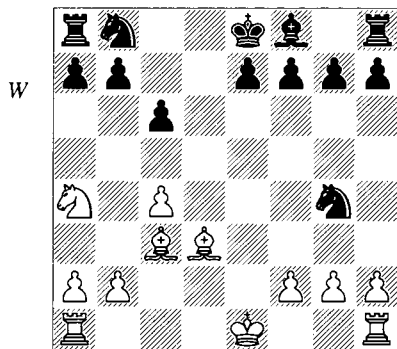
A dubious and risky decision.

10 ♖xf3 ♖xd4 11 ♗c3 ♖g4?

Black falls into the trap. After 11...♖d6 (relatively best) 12 0-0-0 White enjoys a strong initiative: all his pieces will soon join the fray, and to boot he has a huge development advantage and the bishop-pair. Still, this was the lesser evil, as after the move in the text White achieves more.

12 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 (D)

13 ♗f5



A double attack: the obvious one is against the knight, and the other is against the b7-square.

13...♗f6 14 ♗c8

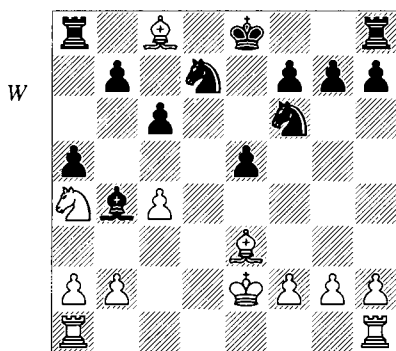
Black can neither protect the pawn, nor move it, since he would lose a whole rook after 14...b6 15 ♗b7.

14...a5 15 ♗d4!

White is not in a hurry to recapture the pawn. With the help of the threat to trap the rook, White will force Black to move his knight, thus creating another double attack.

15...e5 16 ♗e3 ♗b4+ 17 ♖e2 ♖bd7 (D)

Forced.



The bishop has worked gloriously and can now collect its prey.

18 ♗xb7 ♖b8 19 ♗xc6 ♖e7 20 ♖hd1 ♖hc8
21 ♗xd7 ♖xd7 22 b3 ♖c6 23 ♖d5 ♖e6 24
♖ad1 ♖f6

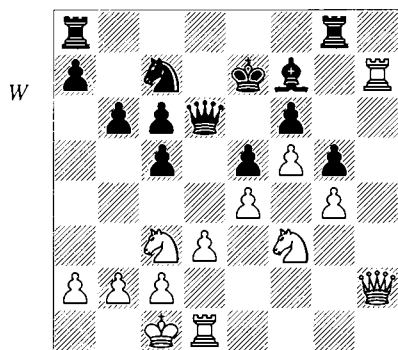
Now White's second bishop can show its worth.

25 f4! e4

Opting for a swift execution. 25...exf4 26 ♗xf4 is yet another double attack of sorts – the bishop is hitting the b8-rook and supporting ♗e5#.

26 ♗e5# (1-0)

Now let's see the **rook** in action.



Bojkov – Misojčić
Golubac 2008

Black is trying to evacuate his king to the queenside. His possible plan is ...♖af8, and then to transfer his king by ...♔d8-c8-b7, which will leave him ultra-solid. Fortunately, I had seen a good idea in advance:

23 d4

This move opens the d-file for the d1-rook, and cuts off the black king's route to safety. The following blows are easy to foresee:

23...cxd4

23...cxd4 leaves the queens facing one another, and so overloads the black king: 24 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 25 ♖xd6 nets a queen.

24 ♖xd4 ♖c5

Now the white rooks will work in harmony on the seventh flank. The first one is sacrificed to enable the other to triumph:

25 ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 26 ♖d7+ 1-0

Now it is the turn of the **queen**, which has the greatest capacity of all for creating double attacks, or indeed multiple attacks. A funny case of mutual chess blindness happened in the following game:

Madan – G. Jones

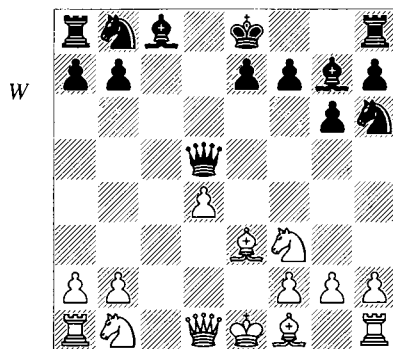
Jessie Gilbert Memorial, Coulsdon 2008

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 g6 3 c3 d5 4 exd5 ♖xd5 5 d4 ♗g7 6 ♕e3 cxd4 7 cxd4

First Black blundered badly with...

7...♘h6?? (D)

But this was left unpunished by his opponent:



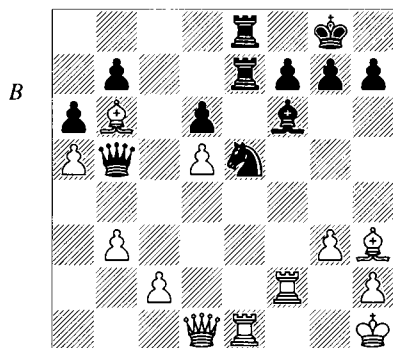
8 ♖c3??

Alex Baburin wrote: "In the first game where this position occurred (Vasiukov-Razuvaev, Polanica Zdroj 1972) White played the correct 8 ♖c1!. Since then about 60% of all players who reached this position with White found that move. But many didn't, including some GMs. Gawain Jones joined a number of GMs who got seduced by the idea ...♘h6-f5 – Razuvaev, Ftačnik and Degraeve. I believe that Alexander Shabalov also made that mistake."

This story only shows how difficult some double attacks can be to spot, especially if they are performed from very far away. After all, here White does not even have to find a combination, but rather a simple double-attacking move. After **8...♖a5** the game ended later in a draw.

How Does it Work?

First of all we are going to demonstrate the double attack with the help of a discovered attack.



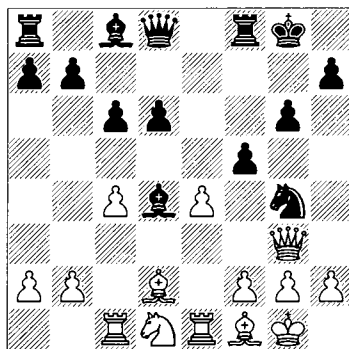
Diamant – Fier
Santos 2008

Black would very much like to remove his knight from e5, unleashing the power of his rooks – better still if the knight can also threaten something at the same time, as this will give White no time to escape. However, Black needs to be precise – only one square is correct:

32...♖d3! 0-1

Attacking **both** rooks, with the point that after 33 ♜xe7 Black has a zwischenzug that wins an exchange: 33...♘xf2+. The importance of the d3-square for the knight is demonstrated by the line 32...♘g4? 33 ♜ff1, where White keeps everything intact (the b6-bishop is eyeing the f2-square!). After the text-move, 33 ♜fe2 is met by 33...♘xe1.

A closely related idea is the **skewer**, in which two pieces are attacked along the same line. We must be very wary of **vulnerable lines** such as this.



Blagojević – Čabrić
Yugoslavia 2000

2...♜xf4! 3 ♖xf4 ♙e5

White no longer has a reply to the skewer on this diagonal. With the loss of the vital h2-pawn, White's position disintegrates and his king is fatally exposed.

4 ♖d2

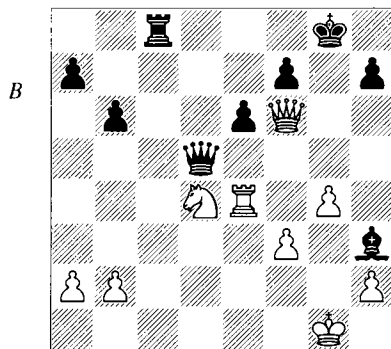
After 4 ♖f3 ♙xh2+ 5 ♙h1 ♖h4 White cannot cover his king: 6 ♖h3 ♘xf2+.

4...♙xh2+ 5 ♙h1 ♖h4

Preparing a decisive discovered and double attack.

6 g3 ♙xg3+ 7 ♙g2 ♖h2+ 8 ♙f3 ♘e5+ 0-1

White did not wait to see the final tactic, which is a skewer: 9 ♙e2 ♙g4+ 10 ♙e3 ♖h6+.



Beliavsky – Khamrakulov
Pamplona 2007

27...♖xe4! 0-1

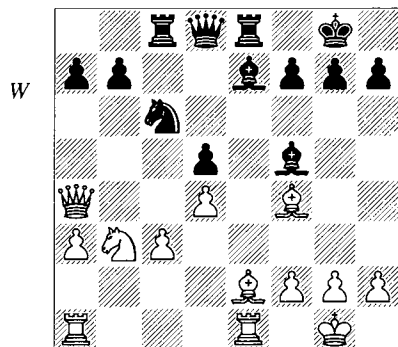
Black clears the f-file. After 28 fxe4 he forces the white king onto this line and wins material: 28...♜c1+ 29 ♙f2 ♜f1+.

In the following diagram, vulnerable pieces on the same diagonal are exploited.

Black has ideas of winning the h2-pawn, but straightforward measures do not prove effective: 1...♙e5 is well met by 2 f4. Therefore, he first needs to tempt the queen closer:

1...f4! 2 ♙xf4

2 ♖d3 allows a double attack by 2...♖h4, while after 2 ♖f3 ♖h4 3 h3 ♘e5 and ...f3 White's kingside collapses.

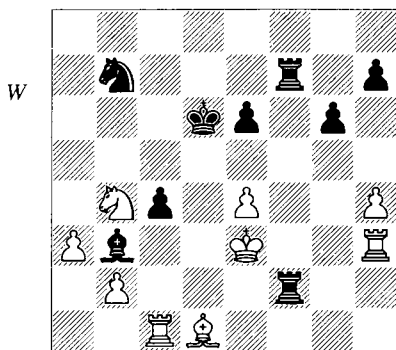


A. Horvath – G. Kovacs
Hungarian Ch, Nyiregyhaza 2008

White blundered badly:

19 ♘c5?? ♙xc5 20 dxc5 ♜e4 0-1

Often we need to work to create a double attack. Here we see a decoy used for this purpose:



Volokitin – Kariakin
Foros 2008

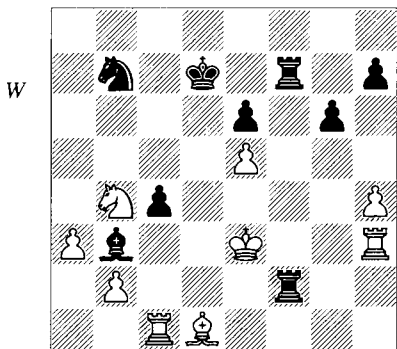
30 e5+

With this multi-purpose move, White opens a diagonal for his bishop and decoys his opponent's king into a series of decisive blows, two of them based on double attack.

30...♔d7 (D)

30...♗xe5? walks into a fork after an exchange of bishops: 31 ♖xb3 cxb3 32 ♘d3+.

30...♗c7 defends the b7-knight but steps into a pin, and White simply captures by 31 ♖xb3.

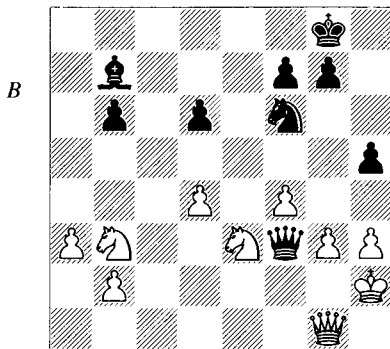


The game continuation allows a move that interferes with the black rooks' defence of one another, thus leaving the f2-rook and the b7-knight both under attack:

31 ♖f3 ♖xb2 32 ♖xb7

White won material and later converted his extra knight into a full point.

In the next example, two decoy ideas are used to set up a decisive double attack:



Peredy – Bojkov
Fourmies 2006

White's knights are on the same line as the black queen, but for the moment the e3-knight is firmly defended by the white queen. The fact that Black has a light-squared bishop and White is holding on the dark squares is not in my favour. So first I decoy his knight onto a light square:

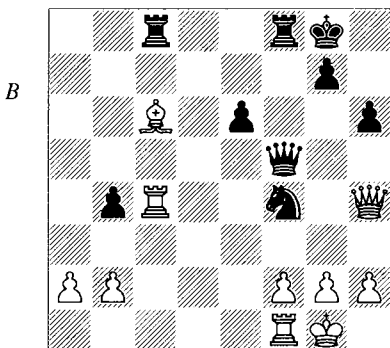
32...♗d5 33 ♘xd5

And then the king:

33...♗e2+! 0-1

34 ♔g2 ♗xg2+ 35 ♗xg2 ♖xd5+.

A double attack may be prepared by removing a vital defensive piece.



Ionesi – Murariu
Predeal 2006

Here White has an excellent bishop, which suggests the idea of a destructive sacrifice:

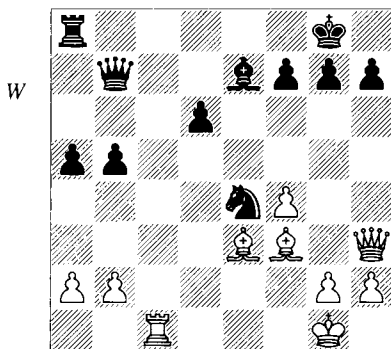
27...♗xc6! 28 ♖xc6

Black has not only deflected the rook from covering the e4-square, but also decoyed it to a vulnerable position.

28...♖e4 0-1

This is in fact a triple attack: against the king (29...♖xg2#), against the rook, and against the queen (29...♗e2+). No wonder that White decided he had seen enough.

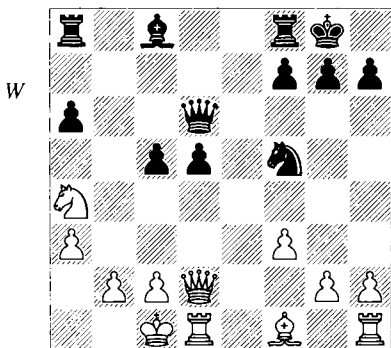
Seeking out overloaded pieces can help us find sore points in the enemy's camp, and allow us to target several pieces with double attacks.



Filipowicz – Silva
Varna Olympiad 1962

After 25 ♖c7! 1-0 it becomes clear that the black queen had too many duties. Thanks to the double attack on the seventh rank White deflects it away from the knight. After 25...♖xc7 26 ♗xe4 White has another double attack, this time against the rook and the king (27 ♖xh7+ and 28 ♖h8# is the second crucial threat).

In the following example both players delivered double attacks until an endgame was reached.



Grishchuk – Volokitin
Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2007

16 ♖xd5 ♖f4+

Black was counting on this double attack to solve his problems.

17 ♖b1 ♖xa4

Another double attack, 17...♗e3, was better although even here White retains the better chances: 18 ♖xa8 ♗xd1 19 ♖e4 ♖xe4 20 fxe4 ♗f2 21 ♖g1 ♗xe4 22 ♗d3 ♗d7 23 ♖e1 ♗xa4 24 ♖xe4 ±. In the inevitable rook endgame, the white pawns should be faster.

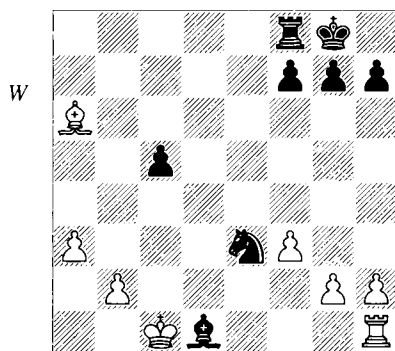
18 ♖xa8 ♗e3 19 ♗d3!?

White is ready to part with his superfluous material in order to reach a technically winning endgame.

19...♗f5 20 ♖xa6

And not 20 ♖b7?? ♗xd3 21 cxd3 ♖c2+ 22 ♖a2 ♗xd1 –.

20...♖xa6 21 ♗xa6 ♗xc2+ 22 ♖c1 ♗xd1 (D)



For the moment it looks like Black has achieved a material advantage, but the next move clears the smoke:

23 ♖e1! ♗xf3

After 23...♖e8 24 ♖d2 White regains material with interest.

24 gxh3 ♗f5 25 ♖e5

White has a good ♖+♗ tandem.

25...♗d4 26 ♗c4 ♗e6

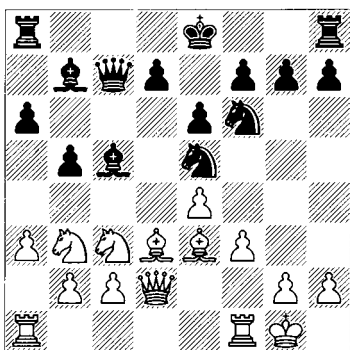
26...♗xf3 27 ♖f5 ♗d4 (27...♗xh2? 28 ♗e2 traps the knight in the corner) 28 ♖xc5 ±.

27 a4 ♖a8 28 b3 ♖a5 29 ♖b2 ♖f8 30 ♗xe6 fxe6 31 ♖xe6

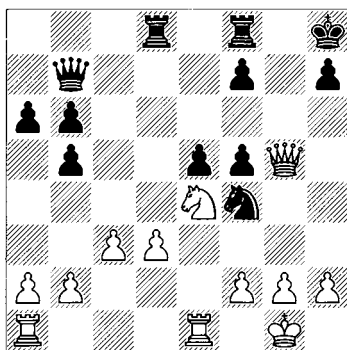
White wins a pawn and soon the game.

31...c4 32 ♖e4 cxb3 33 ♖xb3 ♖h5 34 h4 ♖f5 35 f4 ♖h5 36 ♖b4 ♖xh4 37 a5 ♖h1 38 a6 ♖f7 39 ♖a5 ♗d1 40 a7 ♖d8 41 ♖b4 ♖a8 42 ♖a6 ♖e6 43 ♖b5 ♖f8 44 f5+ ♗d7 45 ♖b7+ 1-0

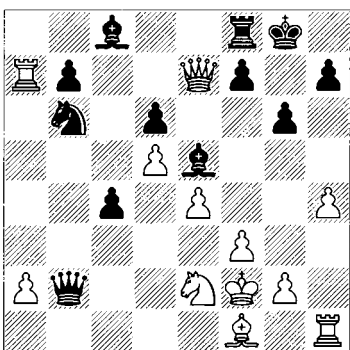
Exercises

1
B

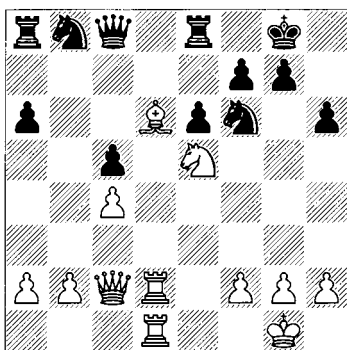
White has just freed himself from a pin by 12 $\text{N}d4-b3$. This was a good idea, wasn't it?

4
B

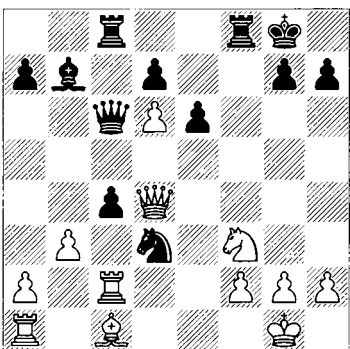
Profit from Black's open lines.

2
B

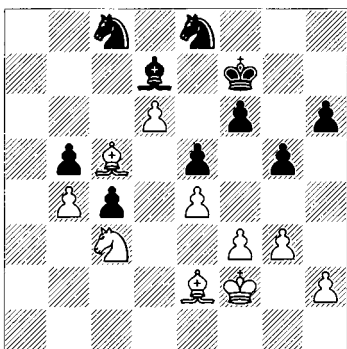
White is ahead on material, but the position of his king is worrying.

5
W

White is very active, but his opponent wants to finish his development.

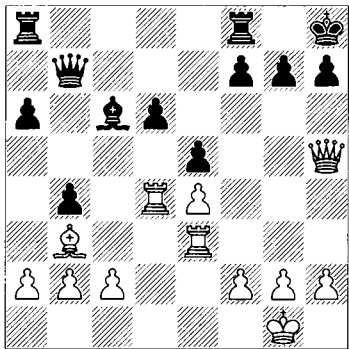
3
B

You need to spot an important detail.

6
W

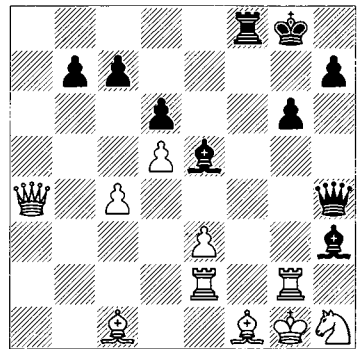
Press home your passed pawn.

7
W



An attack does not always need to be on the
anks.

8
B

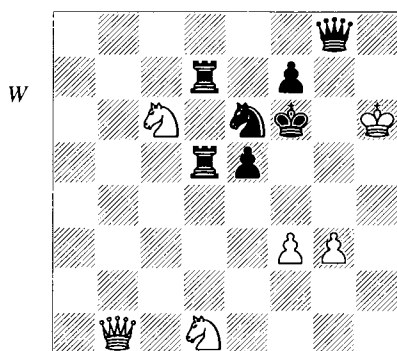


Decoy White's king to reap a rich harvest.

6 Knight Fork

The knight is considered to be the least powerful piece in chess (besides the pawn, of course). As the great world champion Jose Raul Capablanca taught us, the other minor piece, the bishop, is better in 90% of cases. However, due to its specific qualities the knight is a tremendously dangerous piece. It is nimble and its jumps can be quite shocking. That is why a double attack by a knight is usually distinguished from other double attacks and called a fork.

A single knight may cause incredible damage in the right circumstances:

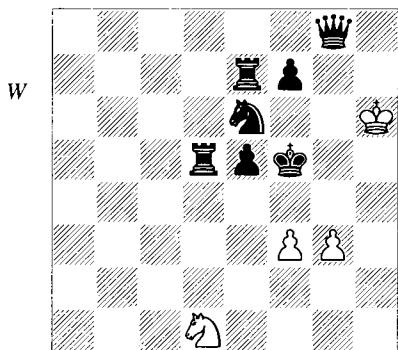


Alb. Beliavsky

1st Prize, *Korolkov-100 Jubilee*, 2008

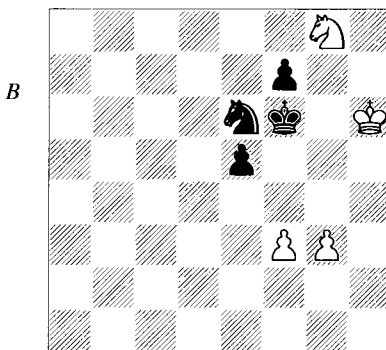
First White decoys his opponent's pieces into forks:

1 ♖f5+!! ♜xf5 2 ♘e7+!! ♜xe7 (D)



White is now a queen and two rooks down – a deficit of approximately 19 ‘pawns’. His only remaining piece is a knight. But a brave one...

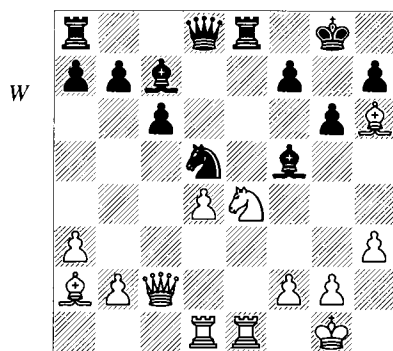
3 ♘e3+ ♜f6 4 ♘xd5+ ♜f5 5 ♘xe7+ ♜f6 6 ♘xg8+ (D)



The knight has managed to remove most of Black's army. Now it is the king's turn to suffer:

6... ♜f5 7 ♘e7+ ♜f6 8 ♘d5+ ♜f5 9 g4#

Our opponent will not be very eager to walk into a fork, so we may need to force it. Deflection and decoy are very common methods:



Ligterink – Pachman

Donner Memorial, Amsterdam 1994

21 ♘xd5 cxd5

White seems to be in an unpleasant pin, but he has fully appreciated the power of his horse.

22 ♖xc7!

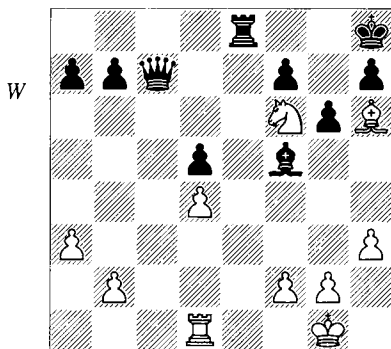
Deflection from the vital f6-square.

22... ♖xc7?

Black had to settle for 22... ♗xe4 23 ♖xb7 with some chances for a draw.

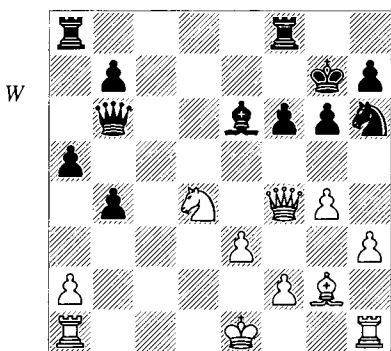
23 ♘f6+ ♖h8 24 ♖xe8+ 1-0

Black realized what was coming after the forced 24... ♖xe8 (D):



25 ♗g7+!! decoys the king to g7, after which the knight picks up a rook and a queen.

Deflection is especially effective in conjunction with decoy.



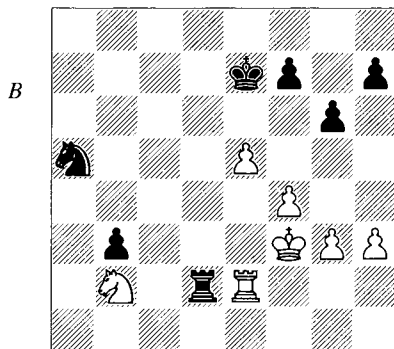
Pashikian – Ozturk
Istanbul 2007

24 ♖c7+! 1-0

It suddenly becomes clear that Black's queen is overloaded.

A far-advanced pawn may also be bait for a piece to be forked (see following diagram):

The passed pawn on b3 is well blockaded 'à la Nimzowitsch' with a knight. However, Black can force a change of guard:



Semionova – Alexandrova
Alushta (Women's Zonal) 1999

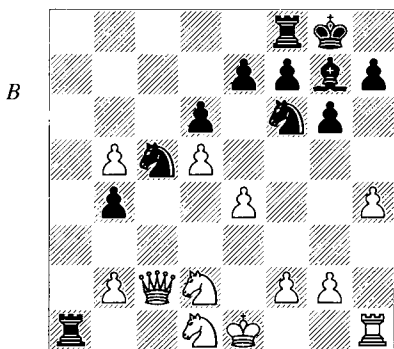
53... ♖xb2! 54 ♖xb2 ♘c4

The knight will usher the b-pawn through to promotion. Because of the possible fork on d2, the pawn is invulnerable.

55 ♖e2 b2 56 ♖e1 b1 ♖ ♗xb1 ♘d2+ 58 ♖g4 ♘xb1 59 ♖g5 ♘d2 60 ♖h6 ♘e4 61 g4 ♘f2 62 ♖xh7 ♘xh3 63 f5 g5 64 ♖g7 ♘f2 65 ♖h6 ♘g4+ 0-1

One last fork before the curtain falls.

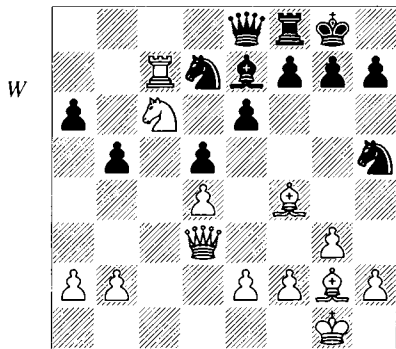
A dominant position of a rook and knight duo can even overpower a queen, as in the following group of diagrams.



Raetsky – Avrukh
Biel 1996

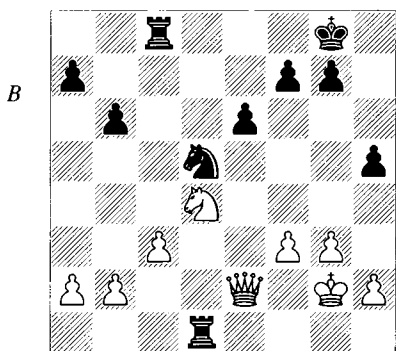
18... ♖c1! 0-1

The next diagram features a similar motif, with the knight executing the fork on a slightly different square. In the second diagram overleaf, the decoy is prefaced by an exchange sacrifice.



Fedorowicz – Pieterse
Ostend 1987

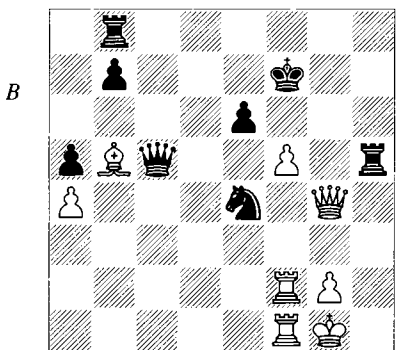
21 ♖c8! 1-0



Kounalakis – Mastrovasilis
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

23...♖xd4! 0-1

24 cxd4 ♖c2 25 ♖xc2 ♗e3+ 26 ♔f2 ♗xc2
nets a knight for Black.

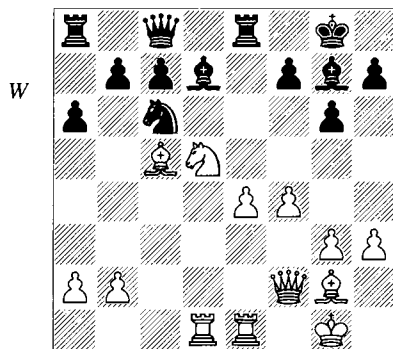


Felgaer – Peralta
Argentine Ch, La Plata 2008

In this position it looks like Black is in trouble, but the tricky knight decides the game by carrying out the decoy on a totally unexpected square.

44...♖xf2+! 45 ♖xf2 ♗h1+!! 0-1

The forking threat may be useful in attacking weak points.



Rogozenko – Voigt
2nd Bundesliga 2006/7

Black's troops are awkwardly placed. In this case forking will give White an option to attack on c7 for free.

21 ♖b6! ♗xh3

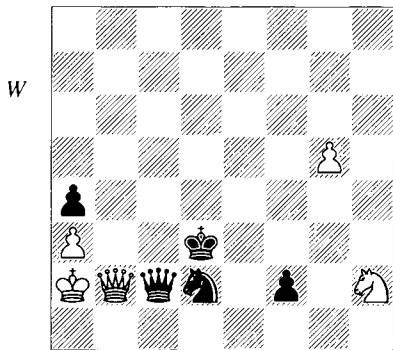
21...cxb6 22 ♗xb6 nets at least a pawn for White.

22 ♗xc7

Another fork.

22...♗xg2 23 ♗xg2 1-0

We should also examine the fork as a defensive method:



E. Pähtz – Stefanova
Reykjavik 2008

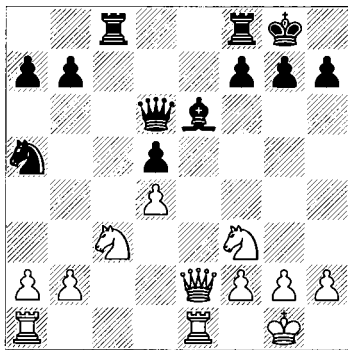
Elisabeth Pähtz could have saved a half-point here, if she had made the most of her tricky knight.

67 ♖a1?

She had to exchange queens first, and advance her passed pawn as far as possible: 67 ♖xc2+ ♗xc2 68 g6 ♗e4 69 g7 ♗f6 and now 70 ♗g4! is an excellent multi-purpose manoeuvre – the knight is attacking the pawn, deflecting the knight, and in fact is still controlling the f1-square due to the fork on e3! After 70...♗xg4 71 g8♗ f1♗ 72 ♖c8+ ♗d2 White has the choice between a simple draw with 73 ♖xg4 or stalemate after 73 ♖c2+ ♗xc2.

67...♖c6 68 ♗f1 ♗xf1 69 ♖xf2 ♖c1+ 70 ♗a2 ♖c4+ 71 ♗a1 ♗e3 72 g6 ♗c2+ 73 ♗b2 ♖b3+ 74 ♗c1 ♖xa3+ 0-1

Chess-players are often advised not to play for traps. And it is a good piece of advice in those cases where the move that lays the trap does not have any other useful purpose. But if you have a chance to set a trap while furthering your constructive ideas in the position, you should do not hesitate to do so. Even if the chances that your opponent will fall into it are small, you are losing nothing.



Bojkov – Schaufelberger
2nd Bundesliga 2007/8

Black's obvious plan is to occupy the e-file with his rooks and initiate simplifications. If I want to keep my slight advantage I need to find the correct way to hinder his plans.

16 ♗g5!

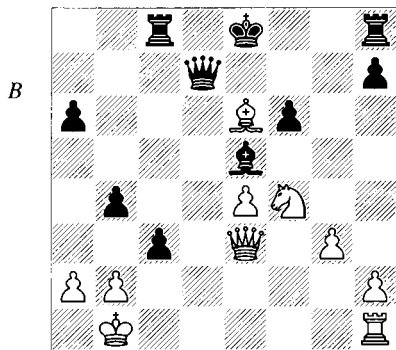
I spent quite a lot of time on this move. Little by little I realized that if he chooses the most natural reply his queen might be hanging!

16...♖ce8!

Correct! To his credit, my experienced opponent sensed or most probably saw the danger: 16...♖fe8? 17 ♖h5 h6 18 ♖xe6! fxe6 19 ♖f7+ ♗h8 20 ♖xe8+! ♖xe8 21 ♗f7+ +-. My trap did not bring immediate victory, but I benefited from the fact that Black's rook abandoned the open c-file. I kept a slight edge and went on to win fairly quickly after some errors by my opponent:

17 ♖d3 g6 18 ♖b5 ♗c6?! 19 ♖ad1 ♖e7 20 ♖c5 ♖d8?! 21 ♖e3 ♖fe8 22 ♗f3 f6 23 ♖de1 ♗f7? 24 ♗b5 1-0

Nisipeanu discovered that Black missed a wonderful and unexpected knight fork in the next position:



Zhadanov – Tutulan
Romania 2003

What? You do not believe him? You do not see a black knight on the board? There, he will show you:

1...♖d1+!

Transposing with 1...c2+ 2 ♗c1 ♖d1+! also works.

2 ♗xd1 c2+ 3 ♗c1 ♗xb2+! 4 ♗xb2

4 ♗d2 c1♗+ 5 ♖xc1 ♗xc1+ 6 ♗e2 ♗xe3 7 ♗xc8 ♗xf4 8 gxf4 a5 is also winning for Black.

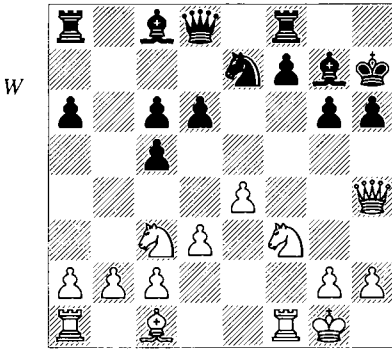
Now rather than 4...cxd1♗ Black plays:

4...cxd1♗+!! 5 ♗b3 ♗xe3 and when the smoke clears, we see that Black is winning: 6 ♗xc8 a5 7 ♗a4 ♗e7 8 ♗a6 (8 ♗b7 ♗f1 -) 8...♗d6 9 ♗xa5 ♖b8 10 ♗b5 (10 ♗a4 ♗g4 11 h4 ♗f2 -) 10...♖a8+ 11 ♗xb4 ♖xa2 12 h4 ♗e5 13 ♗c6 ♗f1 -+.

Unfortunately for Black, he did not appreciate the greatness of the underpromotion and

after 1...♖c6? 2 ♘xc8 ♜xc8 3 ♘d5 ♜c4 4 b3 ♜b5 5 ♞d1 the game became unclear.

Here is a sophisticated case of a fork:



A. Gonzalez Perez – Placencia Santa Clara 2003

Like any other combination, a knight fork may need to be carefully prepared. We have seen various ways of achieving it, and here is one more, in which the attacker first sacrifices a bishop, then a rook, and finally a queen in order to bring his knight to the juicy squares around the enemy king and start the harvest.

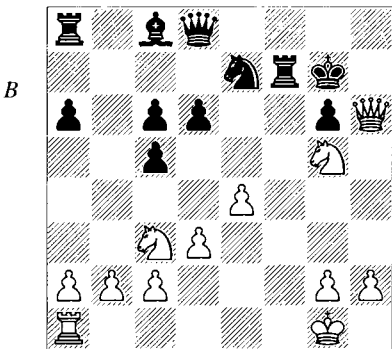
15 ♘xh6!!

This sacrifice has the modest purpose of gaining a tempo. In the game White played the ineffective 15 ♘g5+? and went on to draw.

15...♘xh6 16 ♘g5+ ♔g7 17 ♞xf7+!

Decoy.

17...♞xf7 18 ♜xh6+!! (D)



Another decoy.

18...♔g8

No, thank you very much (18...♔xh6 19 ♘xf7+ ♔g7 20 ♘d8 +-).

19 ♜h8+!!

The gift must nevertheless be accepted.

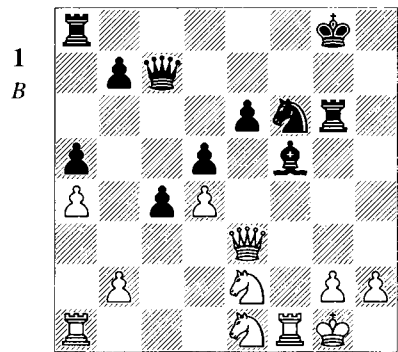
19...♔xh8 20 ♘xf7+ ♔g8 21 ♘d8

White emerges two pawns up. His knight is in danger, but with a few subtle moves and a pawn he manages to retreat it back home.

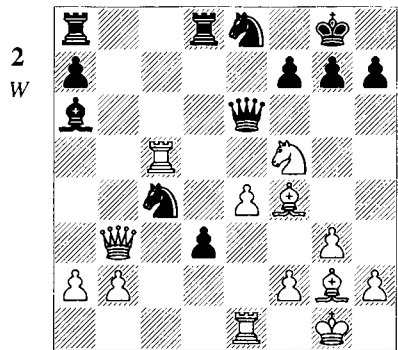
21...♞b8 22 ♞f1 ♞xb2 23 ♞f2! a5 24 h3 ♘a6 25 ♘e6 ♔h8 26 e5 dxe5 27 ♘xc5 ♘c8 28 ♞e2

White has a winning position.

Exercises

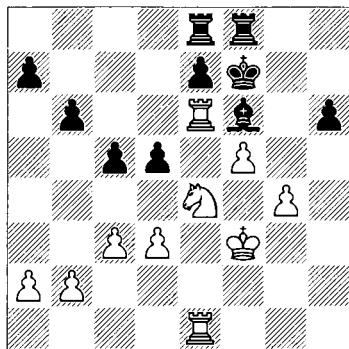


Chop off a pawn.



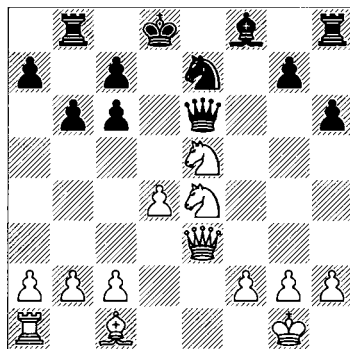
White has very active pieces. Make use of them.

3
W



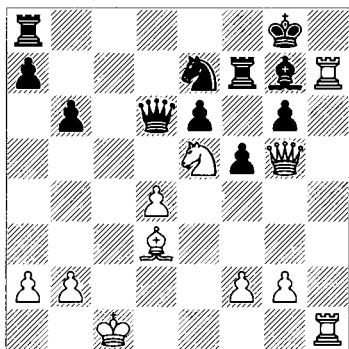
Does White need to retreat the knight?

6
W



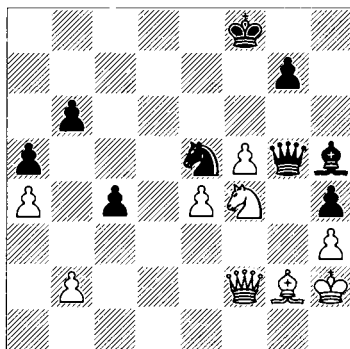
Nigel Short missed a winning move here. Can you find it?

4
W



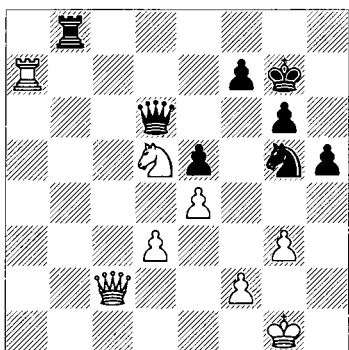
Do you recognize the pattern?

7
B



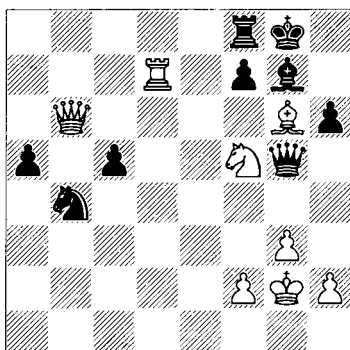
Which is true? 49...♘f3+ is:
A) good for Black and gives him winning chances.
B) a blunder and loses the game.

5
B



Bring your pieces into the attack and win material.

8
W



Use as many forces as you can to crack the f7-square.

7 Discovered Attack

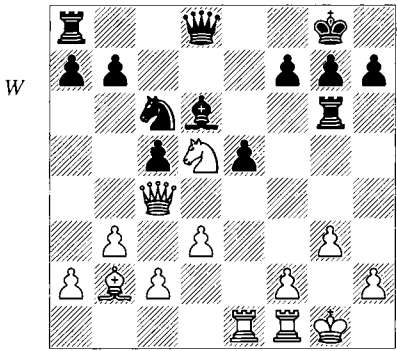
A discovered attack occurs when a piece moves, unmasking an attack from a piece that stands behind it. Obviously the attacking piece must be a long-range line-moving piece (bishop, rook or queen).

When the discovered attack is against the king, this is a special case that is called a discovered check. If the piece that moves also gives check, then we have a double check – a very dangerous situation for the king since his only defence in that case is to flee as it is impossible to block both checks simultaneously or to capture both checking pieces.

A famous attacking mechanism called the see-saw (or the windmill) is based on repeated discovered checks. These make it possible to capture several pieces because the opponent is busy moving his king out of check.

Gelashvili – Gagunashvili Batumi 2001

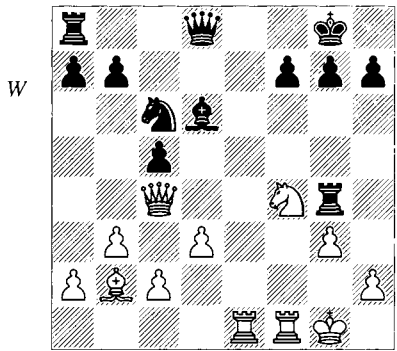
1 e4 c5 2 b3 d6 3 ♖b2 ♟f6 4 ♖b5+ ♕d7 5 ♕xd7+ ♜bxd7 6 d3 e5 7 ♜e2 d5 8 exd5 ♜xd5 9 0-0 ♖e7 10 ♜bc3 ♜xc3 11 ♜xc3 0-0 12 ♜d5 ♕d6 13 ♜f3 ♜e8 14 ♜ae1 ♜c6 15 g3 ♜b8 16 ♜g4 ♜g6 17 ♜c4 ♜c6 (D)



18 f4!
Black's opening play has been none too impressive, as White has been able to occupy excellent positions with his pieces. He now opens

a file for his second rook, the only piece that was not yet playing an active role. With all his troops involved in the attack, it is no wonder that Black's position soon collapses.

18...exf4 19 ♜xf4 ♜g4? (D)



A blunder in a bad position. Curiously the rook is vulnerable on g4.

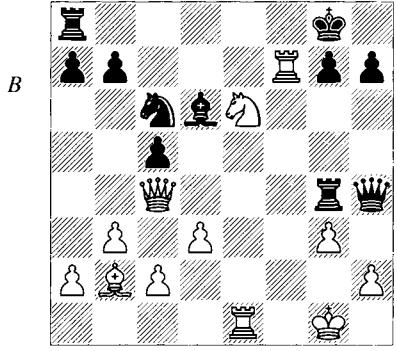
20 ♜e6!!

The first discovered attack. Both Black's rook and queen are hanging.

20...♜h4!

Black finds a clever way to prolong the struggle. 20...♜xc4 21 ♜xd8 ♜xc2 22 ♜e8+ ♕f8 23 ♜xf7 would lead to immediate mate.

21 ♜xf7!! (D)



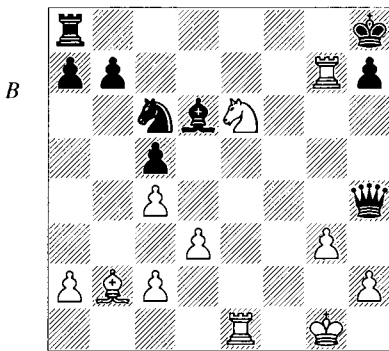
White is breaking in. He now opens all the lines towards the black king and sets up a variety of discovered attacks.

21...♞xc4

In case of 21...♞xf7 White uses the double check idea to decoy Black's king out into the open. You have already seen several examples of the type of king-hunt that then ensues: 22 ♘d8++ ♖g6 (22...♞f8 23 ♖f7#) 23 ♖f7+ ♖h6 24 ♜e6+ ♜g6 25 ♙xg7+ (25 ♜xg6+ also leads to forced mate after 25...hxg6 26 ♖xg7+ ♖h5 27 ♖h7+ ♖g4 28 ♖xh4+ ♖f5 29 ♖h3+ ♖g5 30 ♖e6) 25...♖h5 26 ♖f5+ ♖g5 (26...♜g5 27 ♜h6#) 27 ♖h3+ ♖h4 28 ♖xh4#.

A counterattack by 21...♞xg3+ does not suffice since after 22 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 23 ♖f1 Black needs to step into a double check again: 23...♞xf7 (23...♖h3+ 24 ♖e2 ♖h5+ 25 ♜f3 leaves White a rook ahead) 24 ♘d8++ and after this White's task is pure pleasure: 24...♖g6 25 ♖f7+ ♖g5 (25...♖h6 26 ♙c1+ g5 27 ♜e6#) 26 ♘e6+ ♖h4 27 ♜e4+ and mate is coming soon.

21...♞xg3 also gives White time to wrap up the game in style: 22 ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 (22...♖h8 leads to another double check and then mate: 23 ♜g8++ ♖xg8 24 ♘d8+ ♜xc4 25 ♜e8#) 23 ♘d8+ ♖f8 (23...♖xc4 24 ♜e8#) 24 ♙xg7+ ♖xg7 25 ♖f7+ ♖h6 26 ♜e6+ and White wins.

22 ♜xg7+ ♖h8 23 bxc4 (D)

White is not in a hurry. He is creating a see-saw against which Black is helpless.

23...♖h3 24 ♜g5+ ♘d4

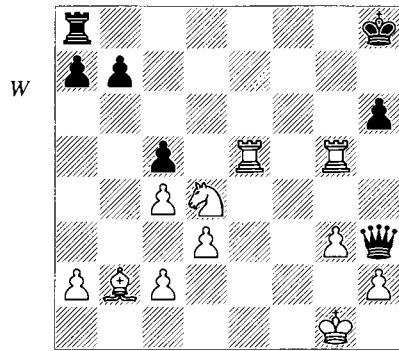
Or 24...♙e5 25 ♜xe5 h6 26 ♜xc5+ ♖h7 27 ♜g7+ ♖h8 and White can set the see-saw in motion: 28 ♖xb7+ ♖g8 29 ♜g7+ ♖h8 30 ♜xc6 and Black is totally helpless.

25 ♘xd4 ♙e5

25...cxd4 26 ♙xd4+ ♙e5 27 ♙xe5#.

26 ♜xe5 h6 (D)

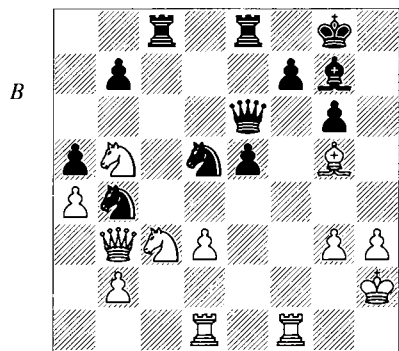
Now the stage is set for the see-saw.

27 ♜e7 hxg5 28 ♘e6+ ♖g8 29 ♜g7+ 1-0

The mechanism is working, and Black resigned rather than see all his pieces disappear after 29...♖h8 30 ♖xb7+ ♖g8 31 ♜g7+ ♖h8 32 ♜xa7+ ♖g8 33 ♜xa8+ ♖f7 34 ♘xg5+.

Various features can help us detect when a discovered attack is effective:

- 1) The piece that we attack is undefended.
- 2) Our attacking piece is supported by our pieces.
- 3) The moving piece also attacks something (thus a discovered attack becomes a double attack).

**Wirthensohn – Nemet**

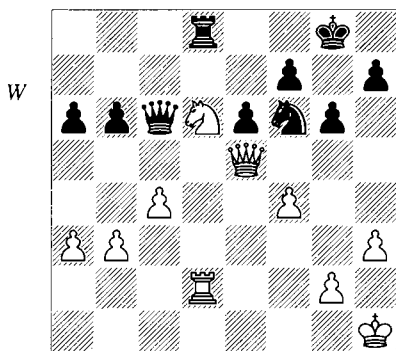
Swiss open Ch, Lucerne 1994

Here all three features apply.

22...♘e3! 0-1

White threw in the towel because:

- 1) White's queen is under attack and is undefended.
- 2) Black's queen supported by both the rook and the pawn.
- 3) The knight that has moved to e3 attacks a rook, and wins it thanks to a zwischenzug: 23 ♖xe6 ♘xf1+ 24 ♜xf1 ♜xe6.



Tiviakov – Langrock

European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008

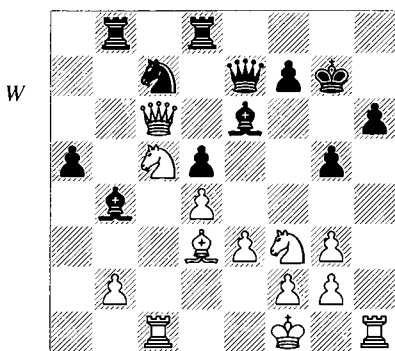
Hint 2 does not matter if the attacked piece is of higher value:

36 ♖f5! ♕e8

The discovered piece is not protected, but if 36...♖xd2 the moved knight wins a whole queen with 37 ♖e7+.

37 ♕xf6 ♖xd2 38 ♖g7# (1-0)

Various tactical methods can help us successfully apply the double attack.



Riazantsev – Maletin

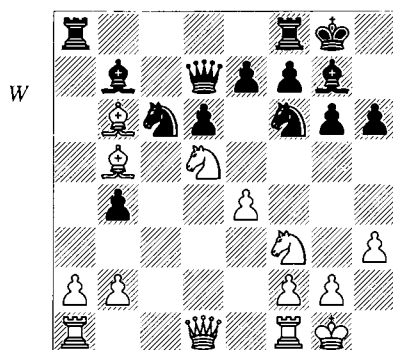
Moscow 2008

White has a mechanism for a discovered attack (such a mechanism is known as a ‘battery’), namely the c1-rook and the c5-knight. But if he continues with 25 ♖xe6+ to win the knight on c7, the latter can recapture on e6 and thus sidestep the attack. White needs more stable prey on c7. A decoy will help prepare the attack:

25 ♕xc7! 1-0

25...♕xc7 26 ♖xe6+ ♖xe6 27 ♖xc7+.

Deflection can also lay the groundwork for a discovered attack:



Amonatov – Zemtsov

Moscow 2008

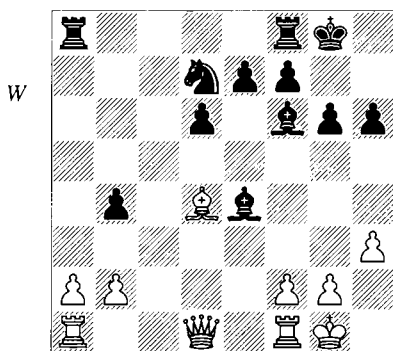
At first glance it is hard to foresee how White can make good use of a discovered attack. However, he finds a way to deflect the d6-pawn and open the d-file. The idea of a knight fork adds the final ingredient to the combination.

17 ♖e5! ♖xe5

17...dxe5 18 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 19 ♕xd7; 17...♕e8

18 ♖xc6 ♖xc6 19 ♖xc6 ♕xc6 20 ♖xe7+.

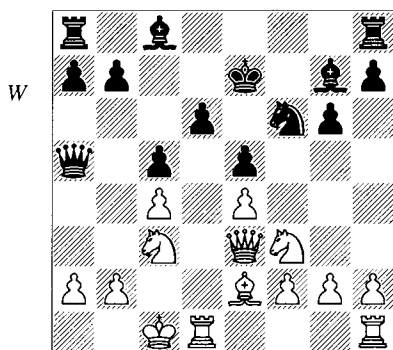
18 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 19 ♖xd7 ♖xd7 20 ♖d4 ♖xe4 (D)



21 ♖e1 e5 22 ♖e3 ♖fd8 23 ♕xd6 ♖c2 24 ♕xb4 e4 25 ♖d4 ♖e5 26 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 27 ♕c5 1-0

We have already seen some examples in which a battery (a mechanism for a discovered attack) already existed and the attacker was simply trying to find the best way to make use of it. Now we shall see how such a mechanism can be created in the cut-and-thrust of a sharp

battle, without giving the opponent any respite to escape.



Korchnoi – Šolak
Basle 2002

First White decoys Black's king into a check.

15 ♖xd6!! ♜g4

The basic idea of the combination becomes clear after 15...♗d6 16 ♖d2+ (building the battery of queen on d2 and c3-knight) 16...♗e6 and exploiting it after 17 ♜g5+ as the king has to step onto a mined square: 17...♗e7 18 ♜d5+ and White wins the queen.

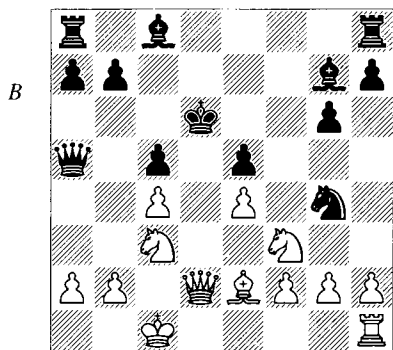
16 ♖g5+

White insists.

16...♗xd6

After 16...♗e8 White can sacrifice his queen to hunt down the enemy king: 17 ♖hd1! ♙h6 18 ♖d8+ ♗f7 19 ♖xh8 ♙xg5+ 20 ♙xg5+ ♗f6 21 h4 h6 22 ♖h7! hxg5 23 ♖d6+ ♙e6 24 ♜d5#.

17 ♖d2+ (D)



17...♗e6

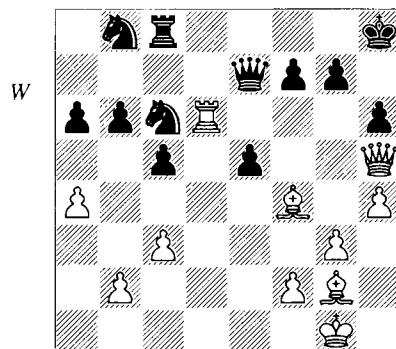
17...♗c6 18 ♖d5+ ♗c7 19 ♜b5+ and Black has to surrender his queen in any case.

18 ♜g5+ ♗f6

Black decided to cut short his agony. 18...♗e7 19 ♜d5+.

19 ♜d5# (1-0)

When you construct a mechanism for a discovered attack and your opponent is tied up and can hardly move, always try to find the best way to collect your bonuses.



Glek – Zapata
Santo Domingo (blitz) 2002

White creates the battery with a rook sacrifice:

1 ♖xh6+! gxh6 2 ♙xh6 ♖e6

The alternative defence 2...f6 also fails after the calm 3 ♙e4!, which takes control over the vital h7-square and thus prevents Black's queen from covering its king: 3...♖d7 4 ♙f5 (4 ♙g5+, as given by Glek, wins as well) 4...♖e8 5 ♙g6 ♖d7 6 ♙g5+ ♗g8 7 ♙xf6 and Black is getting mated.

Now care is needed:

3 ♙e4!

White is in no hurry. Black's king can't go anywhere, and the discovered check can wait until more reserves have been brought up, and it will be more effective.

3...♜e7

3...f5 4 ♙xf5 ♖e8 5 ♙g6 ♖d7 6 ♙g5+ ♗g7 7 ♖h7+ ♗f8 8 ♖h8#.

4 ♙g5+

White has a quicker forced mate by 4 ♙f8+ ♗g8 5 ♙xe7 ♖xe7 6 ♖h7+ ♗f8 7 ♖h8#.

4...♗g7 5 ♙xe7

5 ♖h7+ ♗f8 6 ♙f5+.

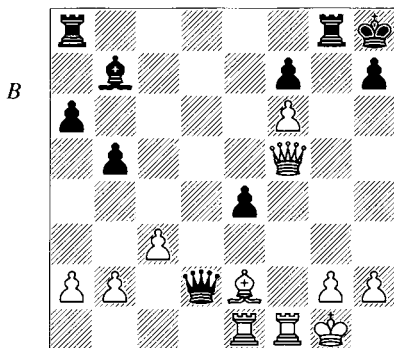
5...♖xe7

5...f5 6 ♙xf5 ♖xe7 7 ♖g6+ ♗f8 8 ♙xc8+.

6 ♖h7+! ♗f6

6...♔f8 7 ♖h8#.
7 ♖h6# (1-0)

When the attacker controls all the vital lines, material tends to be a secondary factor:



A. Gonzalez – Espinosa
Cuba 2004

Black consistently clears the g-file and the long diagonal.

1...♖xg2+!! 2 ♔xg2 ♖g8+ 3 ♔h1

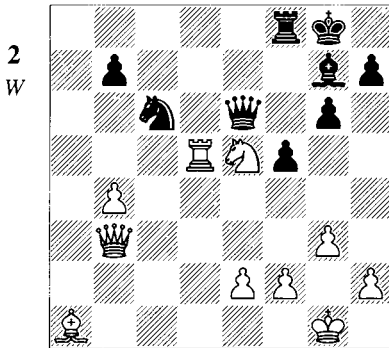
3 ♔h3 ♘c8 —.

3...e3+ 4 ♘f3

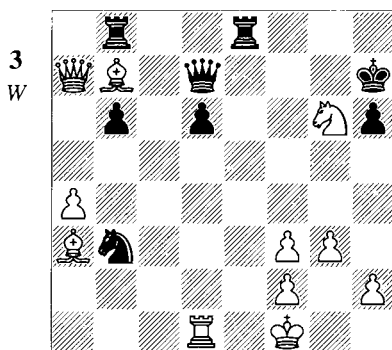
Now Black creates a deadly mating mechanism based on a discovered check:

4...♖g2+!! 0-1

Because of 5 ♘xg2 ♘xg2+ 6 ♔g1 ♘f3+ 7 ♖g4 ♖xg4#.

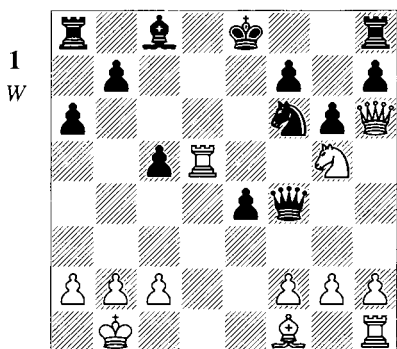


Unleash the power of your pieces!

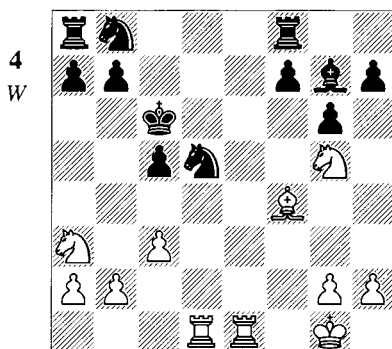


The position is teeming with possible discovered attacks, but what is the best way forward?

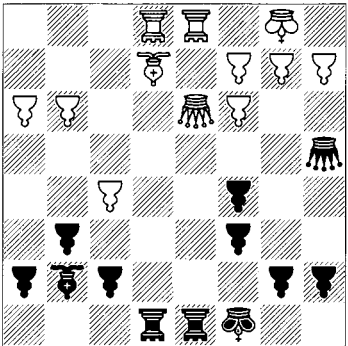
Exercises



White already has a battery set up, so you need only find the best way to use it.

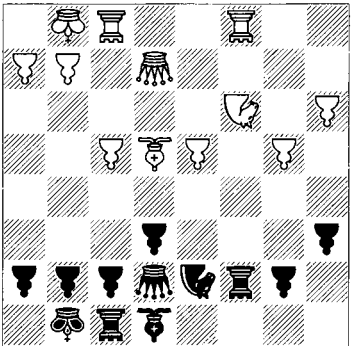


Everything is forced, isn't it?



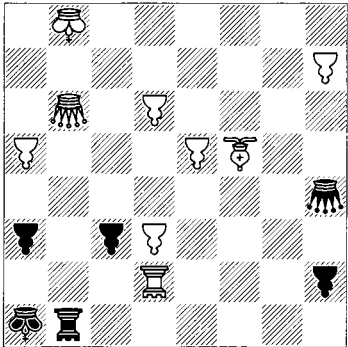
5 W

White will promote thanks to a discovered attack. Do you see how?



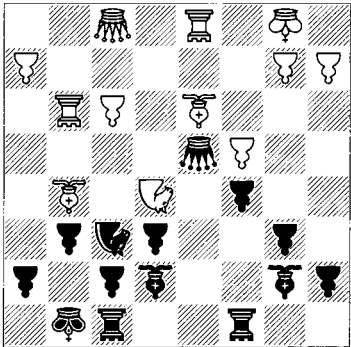
7 W

Discover a discovery.



6 W

White loses his queen and the game. Or does he?



8 W

White is ready to start a decisive attack.

8 Clearance

In 1958 at the Olympiad in Munich, young Mikhail Tal was approached by the world champion Mikhail Botvinnik. “Why did you sacrifice a pawn?” asked the champion. The reply: “It was getting in my way.”

Sometimes one of our pieces is standing in the way of a more important one. But spending time moving the poorly-placed piece might give the opponent time to organize his defences. That is why we may instead seek to sacrifice the piece (or a pawn) to clear an important line or square without losing any time – or, even better, with a gain of time.

Nestorović – Popchev

Stara Pazova 2008

1 e4 g6 2 d4 ♘g7 3 ♖c3 ♗c6 4 ♙e3 d5!? 5 ♗f3 dxe4 6 ♗xe4 ♗h6?! 7 d5! ♗b4 8 ♗d2!

A double attack.

8...a5 9 a3?

Black has not played the opening well, and White could have taken full advantage by 9 ♙xh6 ♙xh6 10 ♗xh6 ♗xc2+ 11 ♖d2; e.g., 11...♙f5 12 ♙c4 ♙xe4 13 ♗g7 ♗f8 14 ♗g5 ± with the point that 14...♙xd5 15 ♖xc2! ♙xc4? loses to 16 ♗ad1 +.

9...♗xd5! 10 axb4

10 0-0-0?? fails to 10...♙xb2+ 11 ♖xb2 ♗a2+ 12 ♖c3 ♗xa3+, etc.

10...♗xe4 11 ♙d3 ♗e6 12 0-0-0?

This is also a double attack. White is threatening 13 ♙b5+, followed by mate on d8, so the h6-knight is lost. However tempting this idea may be, it is wrong. Correct is 12 0-0 ♗f5 13 ♙xf5 ♗xf5 14 ♙d4, with approximate equality.

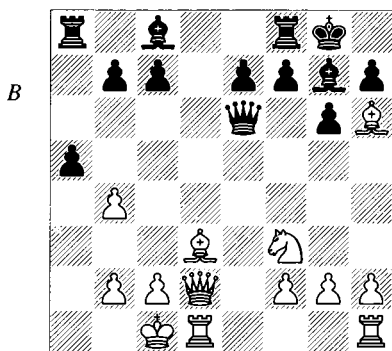
12...0-0! 13 ♙xh6 (D)

13...axb4!

Line clearance. Black has given up a piece, but creates an attack on the open a-file.

14 ♗e3

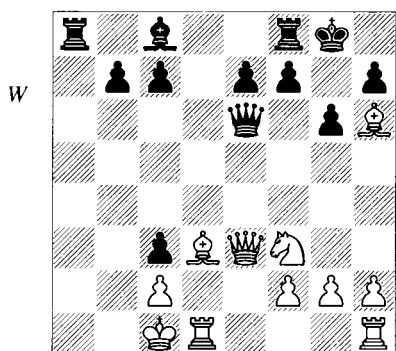
Anything else loses (for example, 14 ♗xb4? ♙xh6+). The queen must leave the d2-square while protecting the bishop.



14...♙c3!

Obstruction! This prevents the escape of the white king by 15 ♖d2.

15 bxc3 bxc3 (D)



Mate looks inevitable now. But White had foreseen the idea:

16 ♙a6!

The best defence: White employs clearance and obstruction for defensive purposes. Now the queen can remove the vital c3-pawn.

16...♗xe3+!

Not 16...♗xa6?? 17 ♗xc3.

17 ♙xe3?!

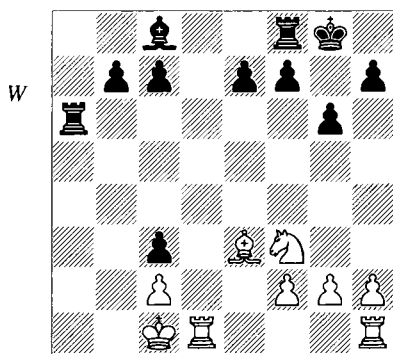
More resilient was 17 fx3 ♗xa6 18 ♖b1 ♗e8! (Black is at most slightly better after 18...♗b6+ 19 ♖c1 ♙e6 20 ♙xf8 ♙a2 21 ♗d2 cxd2+ 22 ♖xd2 ♖xf8), as analysed by Golubev:

a) 19 ♖d5 is met by 19...♗d7!, preventing White's idea of 20 ♖b5 and 21 ♖c1. After 20 ♗d4 ♖e8 21 ♗b3 ♗e6 22 ♖hd1 ♗xd5 23 ♖xd5 ♖d6!/? White is basically lost.

b) Also not helpful is 19 ♗d4 ♗e6 20 ♗b3 ♖e8 followed by ...c5-c4.

c) 19 ♖d3 ♗f5! 20 ♖xc3 ♖e8 21 ♖e1 (or 21 ♖g1) and after the forced sequence 21...♖a1+ 22 ♗b2 ♖a2+ 23 ♗b3 ♗e6+ 24 ♗b4 ♖a4+ 25 ♗c5 ♖a5+ 26 ♗d4 ♖d5+ 27 ♗e4 (even worse for White is 27 ♗c4, after which Black may continue 27...♖d6+ 28 ♗b4 ♖b6+ 29 ♗c5 ♖a4 30 ♗e5 f6) 27...♖a4+ 28 ♗d4 c5 Black emerges with two extra pawns.

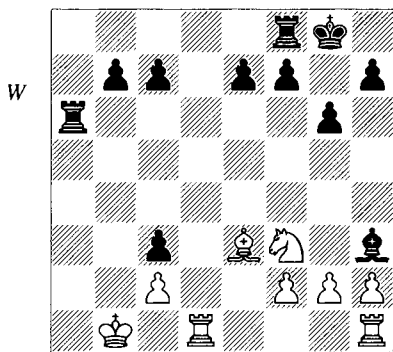
17...♖xa6 (D)



18 ♖b1

It looks like Black's attack has run out of steam. White has exchanged most of the pieces, including the queens, and now the white king has covered his main weakness. However...

18...♗h3! (D) -+

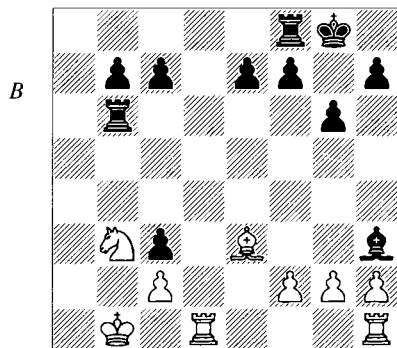


The third clearance of a line. Note that Black does it with the gain of a tempo! Now 19...♖fa8 is the main threat, but the double attack by 19...♗xg2 must also be taken into account.

19 ♗d4

Or 19 gxf3 ♖fa8 20 ♖d8+ (deflection) 20...♖xd8 21 ♗d4 c5 22 ♗b3 c4 with a decisive doubling of the rooks on the a-file.

19...♖b6+ 20 ♗b3 (D)



Now comes the last clearance – this time of a diagonal.

20...♖xb3+!! 21 cxb3 ♗f5+ 22 ♖c1

22 ♖a2 ♖a8+ 23 ♗a7 ♖xa7#.

22...♖a8 0-1

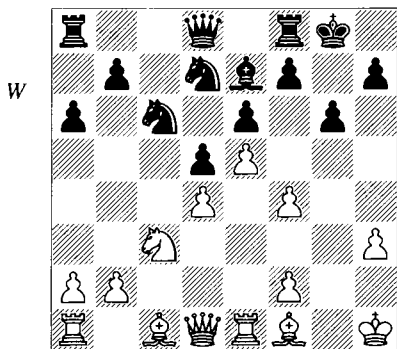
After 23 ♖d8+ ♖xd8 the black rook will return to a8.

In the following friendly blitz game I managed to perform all the ideas of a clearance:

Bojkov – Ermenkov

Sofia (blitz) 2002

1 e4 c5 2 ♗f3 d6 3 ♗b5+ ♗c6 4 0-0 ♗d7 5 ♖e1 ♗f6 6 c3 a6 7 ♗f1 ♗g4 8 d4 cxd4 9 cxd4 d5 10 e5 ♗d7 11 h3 ♗xf3 12 gxf3 e6 13 ♗c3 ♗e7 14 f4 g6 15 ♖h1 0-0 (D)

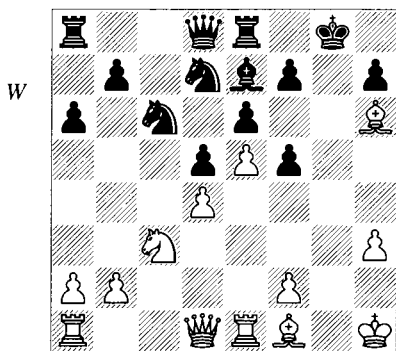


Objectively, White's position is dubious. Seeking counterplay, I clear the diagonal for

my dark-squared bishop and establish a base near his king.

16 f5 gx5 17 ♖h6 ♜e8? (D)

17...♗h8! is a good exchange sacrifice; after 18 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 White's pawns are rather weak.



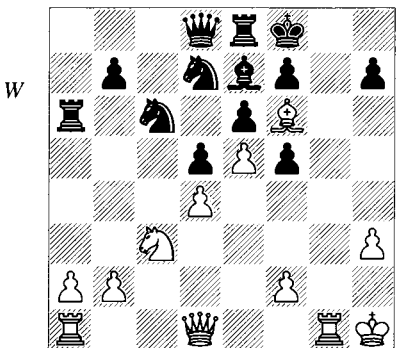
18 ♖xa6!

Clearing a line for my rook, while also grabbing a pawn, and threatening to take a second one with yet another double attack.

18...♞xa6 19 ♖g1+ ♗h8

Before the final blow I improve the position of the bishop.

20 ♖g7+ ♗g8 21 ♖f6+ ♗f8 (D)



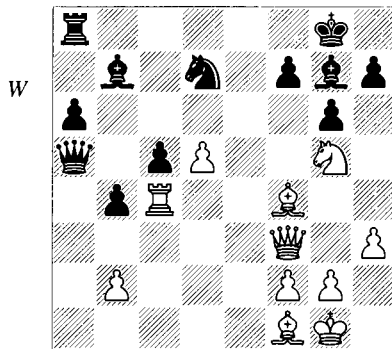
And finally comes a clearing of a square for my most powerful piece.

22 ♞g8+! 1-0

22...♗xg8 23 ♞g1+ ♗f8 24 ♞g7#.

Usually a clearance aims to make way for our major pieces. This is logical, since their power is more significant, and more likely to be sufficient to justify a material sacrifice.

In the following diagram, the bishop on f4 is not only hindering the queen's road to f7, but it prevents the white rook from taking part in the



P. Cramling – Franco

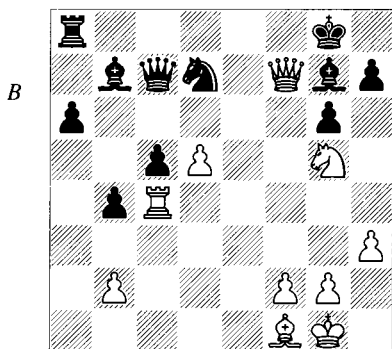
Seville 1988

attack. So the bishop must vacate its post, preferably with tempo!

23 ♖c7!

This is not only clearance, but also a decoy. If our logical analysis enables us to spot this move, then we will surely foresee the next two.

23...♞xc7 24 ♞xf7+ (D)



The first acquisition.

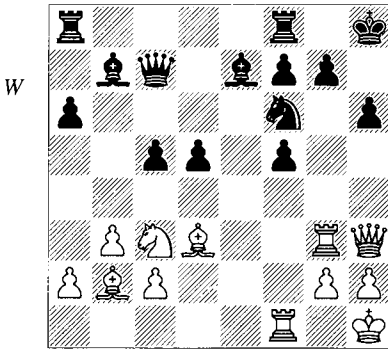
24...♗h8 25 ♞h4 1-0

The second, and decisive achievement – the rook is free to attack. Now we can fully appreciate the importance of 23 ♖c7 – Black lacks the 25...♖f6/f8 resource. After 25 ♞h4 Black can only move the h-pawn:

a) 25...h5 26 ♞xg6 (practical advice: when you calculated the position in advance, it would be enough to stop your calculations here: for the piece White wins three pawns and creates a strong attack) 26...♖f8 27 ♞xh5+ ♗g8 and now comes another clearance – of a diagonal: 28 d6 ♞d7 29 ♖c4+.

b) 25...h6 26 ♞xh6+. This time the deflection assists the queen: 26...♖xh6 27 ♞h7#.

In the next example, we see a key diagonal being cleared, and this has a decisive impact on the position:



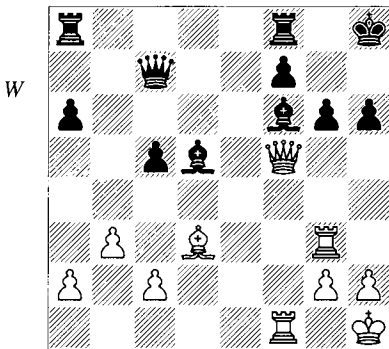
Arencibia – Zapata
Merida 2007

Most of White's pieces are pointing at his opponent's king. However, he still needs to bring up some reinforcements before he can successfully break through. Two pieces are not involved into the assault, and we must take care of them.

20 ♖xd5!

Clearing the long diagonal for the bishop. The fact that White will lose the knight is not that important since he will gain a great deal of attacking power.

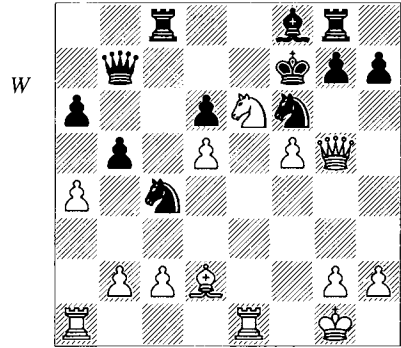
20...♗xd5 21 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 22 ♖xf5 g6 (D)



23 ♖xf6+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of the line-clearances that will inevitably come: 23...♗g8 24 ♗xg6 fxg6 25 ♖xg6+ ♗h7 26 ♖xh6+ ♗g8 27 ♖h8# or 23...♗h7 24 ♗xg6+ fxg6 25 ♖xg6+ ♗h8 26 ♖xh6+ ♖h7 27 ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 28 ♖xf8+ ♗g8 29 ♖f6+ ♖g7 30 ♖xg7#.

Sometimes it is worth a large material sacrifice just to clear a single square. If your opponent's king is obstructed by his own pieces, you must take a closer look at your pieces – any check might possibly be mate. Knights can be especially effective in such situations.



Gongora – Blanco
Cuba 2004

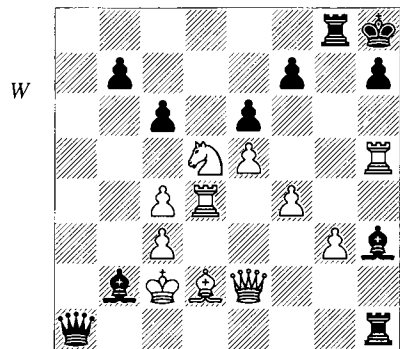
White's knight could potentially deliver mate from two squares: d8 and g5. However, d8 is well protected by the rook, and g5 is occupied by his queen. But this square can be cleared with gain of tempo:

1 ♖g6+!! ♗e7

1...hxg6 2 ♗g5#.

2 ♖f7+!! 1-0

Here is an example with multiple clearance sacrifices:



Corrales – Ferragut
Cuba 2004

White first of all clears a square for his queen:

1 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 2 ♚h5+ ♔g7

But now he parts with his most powerful piece:

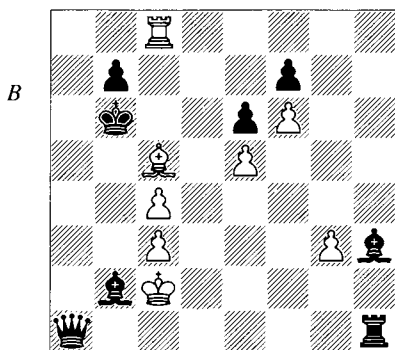
3 ♚h6+!! ♔xh6 4 f5+

The point is that with this move he manages to open a diagonal for his bishop, the fourth rank for his rook, and last, but not least, the modest pawn on f5 will play a decisive part in the black king's execution.

4...♗g5

White also wins after 4...♔g7 5 f6+ ♔f8 6 ♔h6+ ♗g7 7 fxg7+ +- or 4...♔h7 5 ♗h4+ ♔g7 6 ♔h6+ +-.

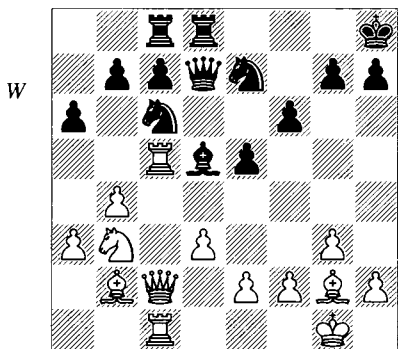
5 ♗h4+ ♔g7 6 f6+ ♔f8 7 ♗h8+ ♗g8 8 ♔h6+ ♔e8 9 ♗xg8+ ♔d7 10 ♖b6+ ♔c7 11 ♗c8+ ♔xb6 12 ♔e3+ c5 13 ♔xc5+ (D)



1-0

And mate from a8. A magnificent piece of art!

But the aim is not always to give a spectacular mate. Here we see clearance ideas leading to material gains:



A. Byron – Motzer
Porto Mannu 2008

White's knight would be only too happy to occupy the c5-square. Unfortunately the rook stands there, and does not have any good retreat-squares. So what else might it do?

22 ♗d5!!

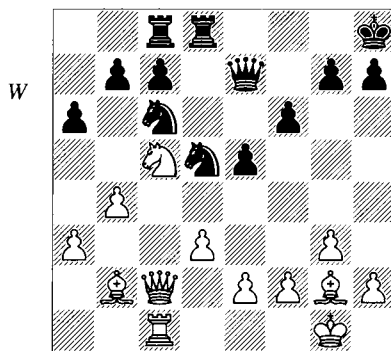
This is both a clearance and a decoy.

22...♖xd5 23 ♖c5

The knight arrives on its cherished square and creates a double attack. Black loses his base on b7 and will have to shed material because this will leave the c6-knight unprotected.

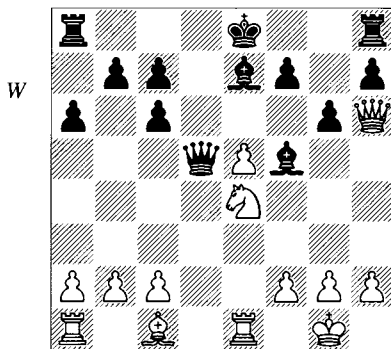
23...♗e7 (D)

23...♗d6 24 ♖xb7 +.



24 ♖xb7 +- ♖d4 25 ♔xd4 exd4 26 ♖xd8 ♗xd8 27 ♔xd5 ♗xd5 28 ♗c6 ♗b5 29 ♗c5 1-0

The next example features a sophisticated case of clearance.



L. Vajda – Ki. Georgiev
Montenegro Team Ch, Herceg Novi 2008

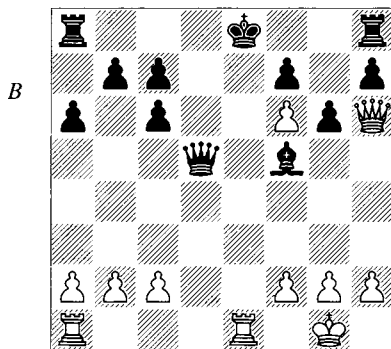
After 16 ♖f6+? ♔xf6 17 exf6+ ♔e6 White is unable to prevent ...0-0-0. If 18 c4 then Black has, at least, 18...♗d3!?, unafraid of 19 ♗xe6+?! fxe6 (Golubev). Instead Vajda finds an elegant

way to bring a key additional unit into the assault:

16 ♖g5! ♗xg5

Black is also suffering after 16...♗xe4 17 ♗xe7 ♖xe7 (if 17...♗xg2, then both 18 ♗f6 and 18 e6 are good) 18 ♖h4+ g5, and now 19 ♗xg5+!

17 ♗f6+!! ♗xf6 18 exf6+ (D)



As Golubev points out, it turns out that *without* the bishop on c1, the evaluation of this position radically changes in White's favour. White has invested a bishop to gain just one tempo – but this tempo is used to bring a rook into play quickly enough to catch the enemy king in the centre. And *that* proves to be worth its weight in gold.

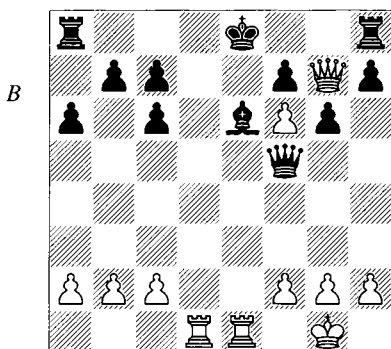
18...♗e6 19 ♖ad1!

The point. White occupies the central files and prevents his opponent from castling and connecting his rooks.

19...♖f5

If Black immediately gives his queen away by 19...0-0-0 20 ♖xd5, he is unlikely to survive.

20 ♖g7! (D)



20...♖f8

But now the black forces are simply paralysed. He never can move the queen to c5 (preparing ...♖d8) because of ♖xe6+ and ♖d7#. White's task is to prepare f4 and ♖e5.

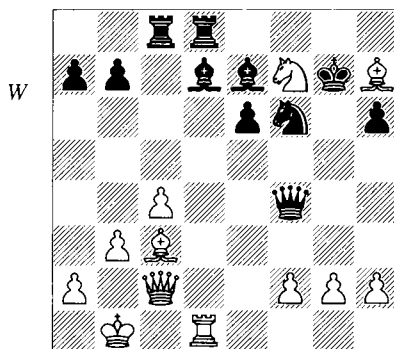
21 h3 h5 22 ♖d4 h4

Otherwise 23 g4 wins.

23 f4!

Black will inevitably lose his queen after ♖e5, and White soon won.

The next example is even more impressive – or it would have been if the correct sequence had actually been played.



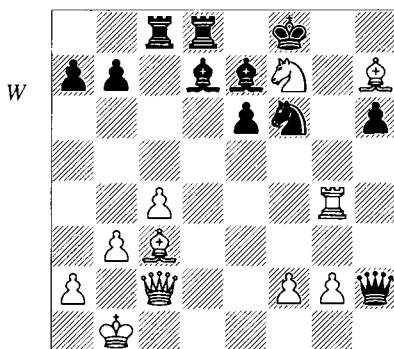
Chan Weng Chee – Ly Hong Nguyen
Singapore 2005

White could have created a piece of fine chessboard art with a series of sacrifices based on clearance ideas:

1 ♖d4!

Chasing away the queen, and bringing the rook into the attack. The game saw 1 ♖g6+?? and later Black won.

1...♖xh2 2 ♖g4+ ♖f8 (D)



And now the fireworks begin:

3 ♖g8+!!

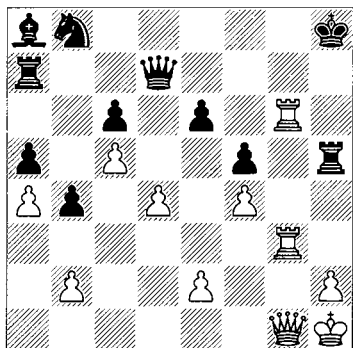
Not 3 ♖g6?? ♖g1+ 4 ♜c2 ♖xf2+ --.

3... ♜xg8 4 ♙g7+!! ♜e8 5 ♜d6+! ♙xd6 6

♖g6+ ♜e7 7 ♙f6+! ♜xf6 8 ♖g7+ ♜e8 9 ♙g6#

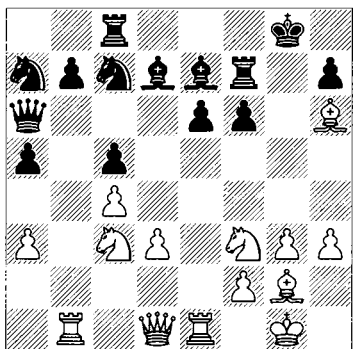
Exercises

1
W



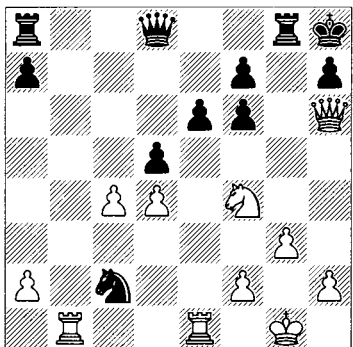
Find a way to use your most powerful piece.

2
W



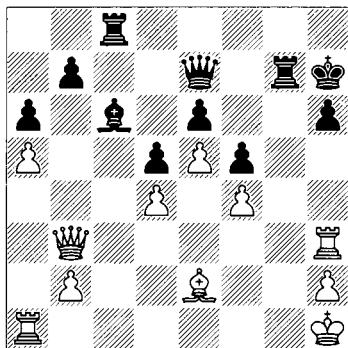
Clear a diagonal.

3
W



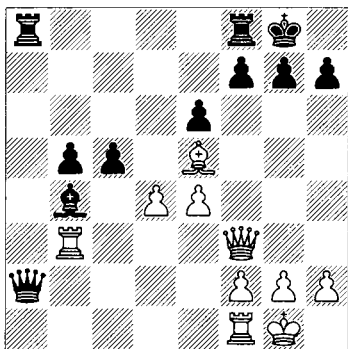
Rooks adore the seventh rank.

4
W



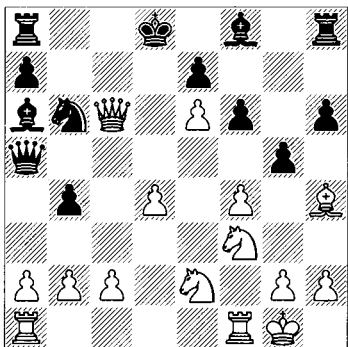
Combine clearance with decoy!

5
W

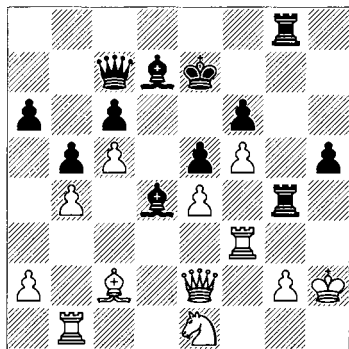


Like a bolt from the blue came...

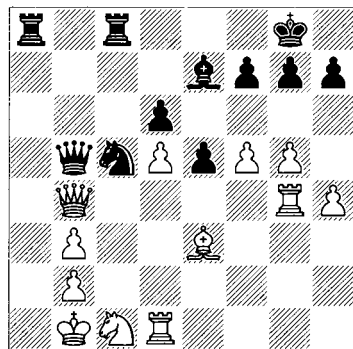
6
W



Black's king has stayed too long in the centre. Find a way to attack it.

7
B

So far Black is attacking with only three pieces...

8
B

Everything looks protected in White's camp. But that could change if lines are opened...

9 Obstruction

The term ‘obstruction’ covers a variety of situations where we seek to benefit from our opponent’s pieces being blocked in their movement by other pieces, whether they be our pieces or the opponent’s own pieces. For example, a blockade of a passed or isolated pawn is a simple way to lessen the power of this pawn by preventing it from advancing. The fact that it is fixed in place also makes it easier if we wish to attack this pawn. Furthermore, the opponent’s pieces may in turn be restricted in their movement by their own pawn; indeed, this is a factor that should be taken into account when we decide on which square to blockade such a pawn.

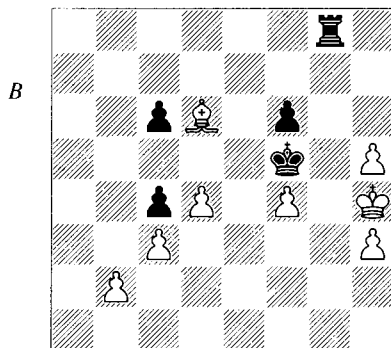
But this is a book about tactics, and here our main focus is on more drastic cases of obstruction. If it is the enemy king that is obstructed, then this can play a vital role in our efforts to checkmate him, while obstruction also comes into play when trapping other pieces, or in preventing them from playing a useful role in the defence of their king or in counterattacking our own sensitive spots.

In most positions it is a good idea to have plenty of pieces around the king, to provide him with a secure defence against the many types of tactical blows that we have seen in other chapters of this book. In many of the following examples we shall see the darker side of ‘defence in numbers’ as these pieces can turn out to hamper the king if his best policy is to flee to another part of the battlefield.

We start off with a deceptive endgame position where obstruction plays a key role (*see following position*).

43...♖e6!!

This cunning move is the prelude to a wonderful blocking idea. During the game, everybody (including the online commentators, Alexei Shirov himself and even the mighty engines) was sure that 44 h6 ♖xd6 45 ♖h5 would now lead to a forced draw. Everyone but Levon Aronian, that is.



Shirov – Aronian
Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006

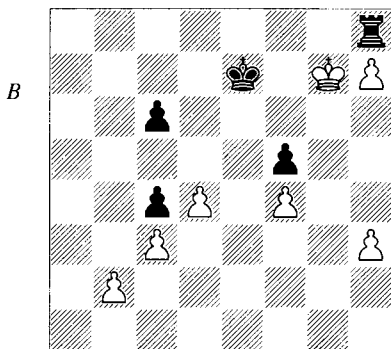
44 h6

44 ♖c5 gives White some chances to save the game.

44...♗xd6 45 ♖h5 f5 46 h7 ♖h8 47 ♖g6 ♖e7!

Obviously Shirov was counting on 47...♞e8 48 ♖g7 ♞e7+ 49 ♖g6 ♞e8 =.

48 ♖g7 (D)



48...♖e8!!

The point. This type of idea has been seen in endgame studies but is very rare in over-the-board contests. If White now takes the rook, then Black plays ...♖f7 or ...♖f8 and waits until White runs out of pawn moves. In the end White will have no choice but to play b3 – Black will capture this pawn and at the same

time free its colleague on c3 (thus ruling out stalemate). Then he will promote his pawn and mate the white king in the corner.

Thus White cannot take the h8-rook, but Black is able to free himself and win:

49 ♖g6 ♜f8 50 h4 ♖e7 51 ♖g7 ♖e8! 52 ♜g6 ♜f8 53 h5 ♖e7 54 ♖g7 ♖e8 55 ♜g6 ♜f8 56 h6 ♖e8 57 ♜f6

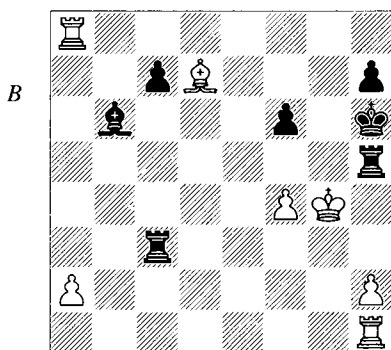
Or 57 ♜g7 ♖e7 58 ♜g6 ♜f8.

57...♞xh7 58 ♜g6 ♞f7! 0-1

If 59 h7 then Black repeats the manoeuvre: 59...♞f8! 60 ♜g7 ♞h8! 61 ♜xh8 ♜f7.

This was a case of a long-term blockade in order to exclude White's king from the game.

If you see that you have a chance for a mating attack but your opponent's king always escapes via a certain square, you should seek ways to block his access to it. As we have already noted, his own pieces may do a perfect job on your behalf.



Epstein – Tuvshintugs

USA Women's Ch, Tulsa 2008

Black first creates a mating-net by coordinating her rooks.

36...♞ch3! 37 ♞f8

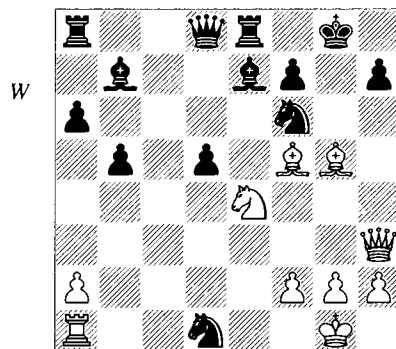
Now 37...♞3h4+ allows the white king to slip away via the third rank, while 37...♞5h4+ provides the f5-square. But this square can be blocked!

37...f5+ 0-1

No matter with which piece White captures, there follows 38...♞5h4#.

We can cover the emergency exits using our pieces too (see following diagram):

21 ♞h6!



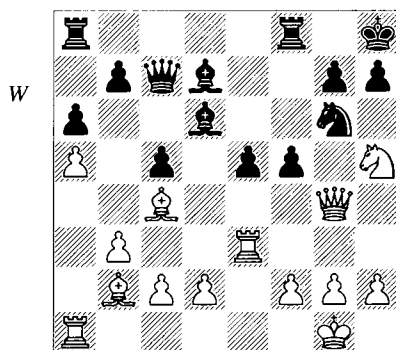
Kriakvin – Kuligin

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

This move takes away the f8-square from the king and prepares a typical mating mechanism:

21...♞c8 22 ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 23 ♜xh7+ 1-0

The next two examples feature the blocking of lines. In this way we can prevent potential defenders from frustrating our plans by denying them access to the lines they need.



Varavin – Nizamov

Russia 2001

White first deflects an important pawn to open up the black king:

1 ♞xg6! hxg6

Now he will move his knight to clear the h-file for his rook. But he must be very precise in his choice of square in order to deny Black the chance to control the critical h3-square.

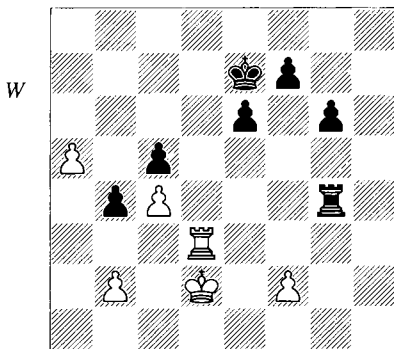
2 ♜f4!

The key move in the combination, blocking the vital c8-h3 diagonal. Mate is inevitable.

2...♜e6 3 ♜xe6 1-0

3...♙f7 4 ♖h3+ ♔g8 5 ♜xg6 followed by 6 ♙h8#.

Here is an example of line-blocking in a study by a world champion.



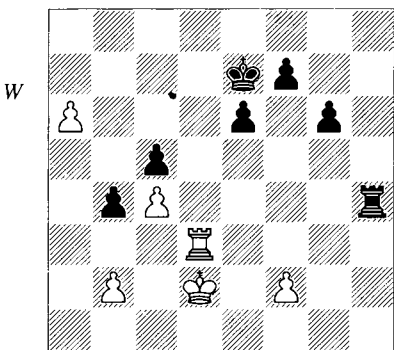
A. Alekhine

Tijdschrift v.d. KNSB, 1933

White needs to exclude his opponent's rook if he wishes to promote his a-pawn. He manages to do so both on the vertical, and on the horizontal:

1 a6 ♙h4 (D)

After 1...♗g1 2 a7 ♖a1, 3 ♖a3! blocks the rook and 3...bxa3 4 a8♚ axb2 5 ♚b7+ is the end.



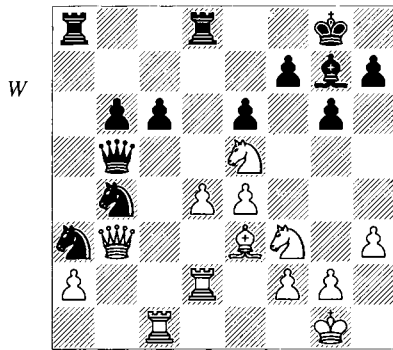
2 ♖d8! ♔xd8

The king has no choice but to block the back rank, with the result that the black rook cannot prevent the a-pawn from slipping through:

3 a7

White wins.

The most remarkable case of obstruction is the **smothered mate**.



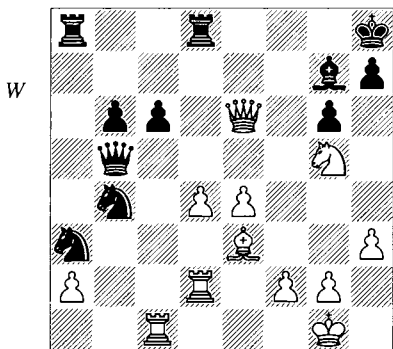
R. Simić – Roeschlau

Schöneck 1988

White noticed the weaknesses in Black's camp and exploited them immediately:

26 ♜xf7! ♖e8

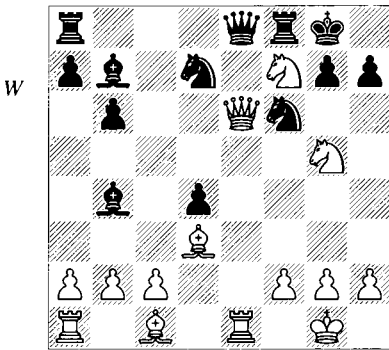
Black declines the sacrifice, but this loses with little more than a murmur. Obviously he saw the more entertaining line that was in store for him if he accepted the offer: 26...♔f7 27 ♜g5+ ♔g8 (27...♔f8 loses prosaically: 28 ♚xe6 ♖a7 29 ♜xh7#) 28 ♚xe6+ ♔h8 (D).



Now White can give mate with the standard smothered mate mechanism, but let's go over it in a little detail. First White improves the position of his knight by 29 ♜f7+ (after the immediate 29 ♚g8+?? Black is not obliged to take back with the rook!) 29...♔g8 30 ♜h6++ (the double check is an essential ingredient, as the knight now covers g8) 30...♔h8. Now White decoys a piece to g8 to block its king: 31 ♚g8+! ♖xg8 (now the king cannot make the capture) and finally delivers the smothered mate: 32 ♜f7#.

27 ♜d6 ♚a5 28 ♜xe8 ♖xe8 29 ♖b2 c5 30 ♜d2 ♚a6 31 ♜xb4 cxb4 32 ♖c6 ♜f8 33 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 34 ♚xe6+ 1-0

Here is a more sophisticated example, with the use of two knights:



Smirin – Ribeiro
Las Palmas 1997

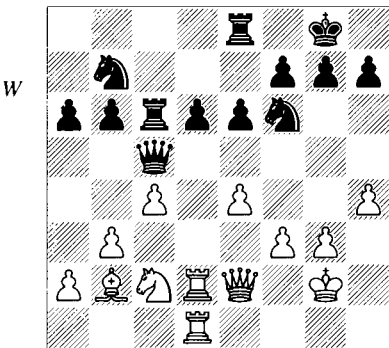
16 ♖xh7+!

This is an important intermezzo, which deflects the black knight from the defence of the g8-square. 16 ♜h6++ ♖h8 17 ♚g8+?? can be met by 17...♜xg8.

1-0

After 16...♜xh7 17 ♜h6++ ♖h8 18 ♚g8+ Black can only capture with the rook, leaving the f7-square ripe for invasion: 18...♖xg8 19 ♜gf7+ ♚xf7 20 ♜xf7#.

We may sacrifice material in order to block an important square or line which an enemy piece needs. In the next example, the sacrificed material is recouped with substantial interest.



Reinderman – Ushenina
Wijk aan Zee 2008

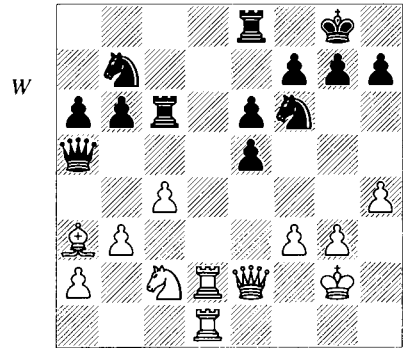
Black's queen looks vulnerable in front of his pawn-chain. However, a direct attack fails

because the queen finds sanctuary on the kingside. But the emergency exit can be shut off:

28 e5!

The most refined approach. 28 ♜xf6?! is another way of winning the queen, but Black earns two rooks for it: 28...gxf6 29 ♖d5 exd5 30 ♖xd5 ±.

28...dxe5 29 ♖a3 ♚a5 (D)

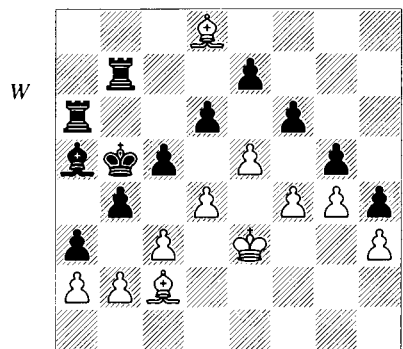


30 ♖b4 ♚xa2 31 ♜a1

Black has only a rook and two pawns for the queen, and later lost.

Obstruction as a Defensive Method

As mentioned earlier, obstruction may take the form of excluding pieces from the game. Here is a remarkable example:



W. Rudolph
The Chess Amateur, 1911

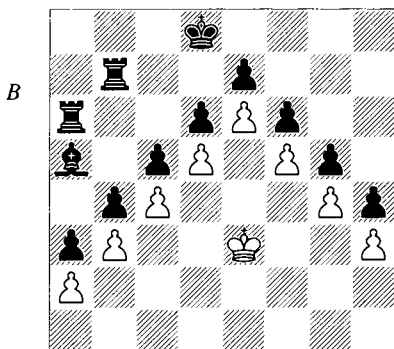
1 ♖a4+!!

White first deflects Black's king in order to win important tempi to close (block) the position.

1...♖xa4

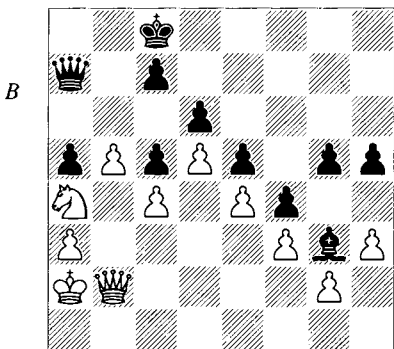
Not 1...♖c4?? 2 ♜b3+ ♖b5 3 c4+!, when White even wins.

2 ♜b3+ ♖b5 3 c4+ ♖c6 4 d5+ ♖d7 5 e6+ ♖xd8 6 f5 (D)



Black is two rooks and a bishop ahead, but nevertheless he cannot win. Rooks need open files, while the bishop is colour-blind and can only attack dark squares.

The last example was of course artificial, but related ideas can be seen in real games too:



A. Petrosian – Hazai
Schilde (Under-18) 1970

45...♖b6!

Black tries his last chance, and it works.

46 ♘xb6+?

White is hypnotized by the value of a whole queen. He needed to decline the gift, keep the knight on the board and target the a5-pawn. His plan should thus be ♖c3 (or ♖d2), ♘b2, and ♖b3-a4. In that case he will win only a pawn, but he will gradually make progress as the position will not be fully blocked.

46...cxb6 47 h4

Apparently opening the game, but it is illusory.

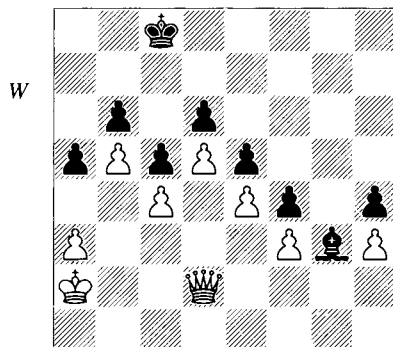
47...gxh4 48 ♖d2

Or 48 ♖c1 h3 49 ♖h1 h2!

48...h3

Possibly this was the idea White missed when he decided to take the queen.

49 gxh3 h4 (D)



White is a queen for a bishop ahead but to no avail. The game soon ended peacefully:

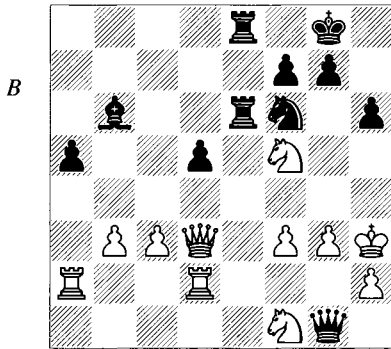
50 ♖b3 ♖b7 51 ♖a4 ♖a7 52 ♖g2 ♖b7 53 ♖b2 ♖a7 54 ♖c2 ♖b7 55 ♖c3 ♖a7 1/2-1/2

Interference

Before we proceed with the exercises, we should take a look at the tactical method called interference. Most writers consider it a distinct tactical method, but its essential idea is obstruction, so I have decided to include it in this chapter.

It often occurs that two of our opponent's pieces are carrying out important functions via lines that intersect at a particular square. Perhaps a bishop is protecting an important square via a diagonal, and a rook is carrying out a similar function via a file. At the point where the file and diagonal intersect, we should look for ways to interfere with their operations by putting one of our own pieces there (we might also take advantage by forcing one of our opponent's pieces to step onto this square). No matter how our opponent takes our piece, the harmony is broken, and one of these pieces will no longer be performing its defensive duty. This complicated-sounding formula is best shown by an example (*see following diagram*):

For the moment White's queen is protecting the knight, and the rook on d2 guards the whole



Martinović – Scherbakov
Belgrade 2000

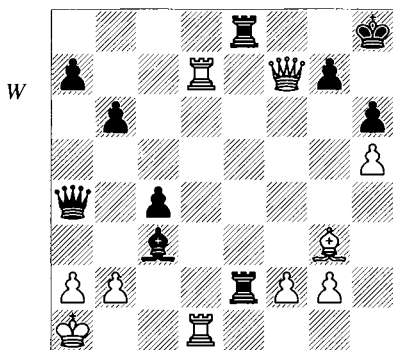
second rank. However, Black's next move destroyed all their happiness, and led to a quick disaster for White:

33...♖e2! 34 ♜xh6+

This desperate move gives the white king some breathing space. 34 ♖xe2 loses at once to 34...♗xf1+ 35 ♔h4 g5#. Other moves are no good, since Black has mating threats, and 34 ♗xe2 loses material.

34...gxf6 35 ♖xe2 ♗xf1+ 36 ♔h4 ♖e5! 37 g4 ♔f2+ 0-1

The next example is an even purer case, and a rare practical instance of a study theme known as a 'Novotny'.



Miles – Pritchett
Lloyds Bank Masters, London 1982

White seems to be facing inevitable mate, while everything in Black's camp looks perfect. The bishop is protecting the vital g7-square, and is untouchable, the two rooks protect each other, and the back rank looks firmly protected.

It took Tony Miles only one move to clarify the situation in his favour, but what a move that was:

34 ♔e5!! 1-0

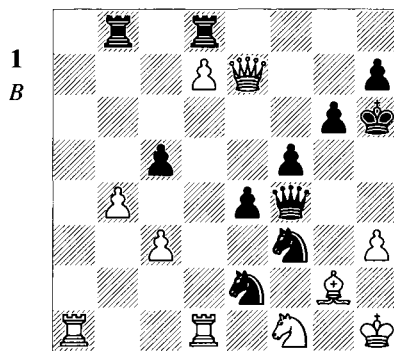
Interference in all its glory. From being the most modest onlooker at the party, the bishop becomes the Belle of the Ball. It attacks g7, defends b2, neutralizes its black counterpart, and cuts the communication between the rooks. What else can we ask of a single move? The lines are simple:

a) 34...♖2xe5 (now the c3-bishop does not defend g7) 35 ♗xg7#.

b) 34...♔xb2+ leads nowhere: 35 ♔xb2.

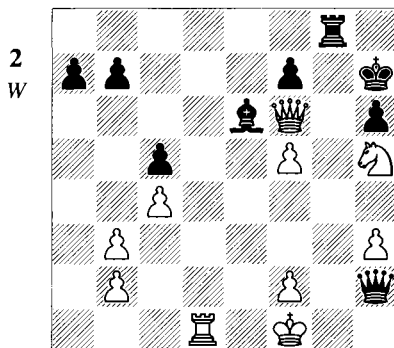
c) 34...♔xe5 leaves the e8-rook undefended: 35 ♗xe8+ ♔h7 36 ♗g6+ ♔g8 37 ♖d8+ ♗e8 38 ♖xe8#.

Exercises



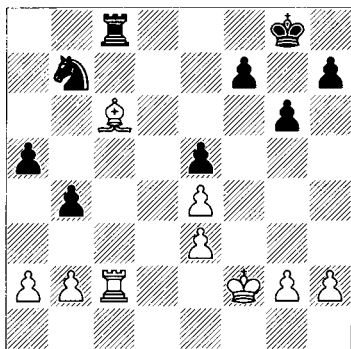
1
B

Mate in two.

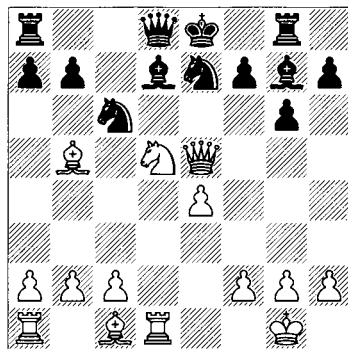


2
W

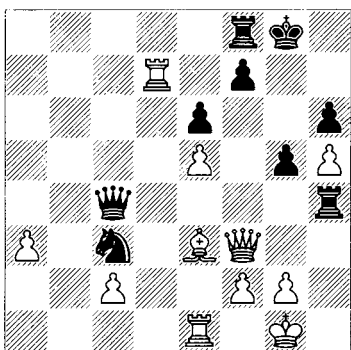
Use obstruction to create a mating-net.

3
B

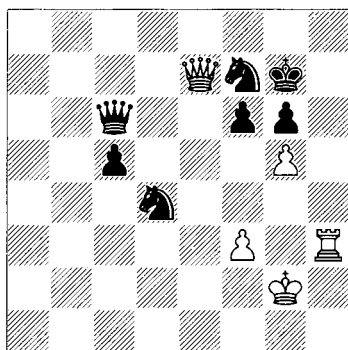
If Black tries to win the pinned piece immediately by 33...♖d8, he will be disappointed after 34 ♗a4. So...

6
W

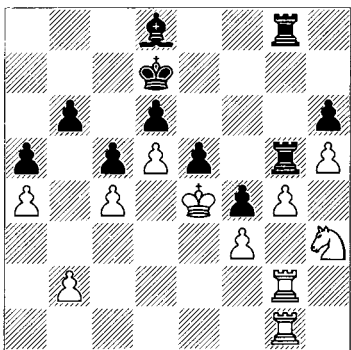
Use obstruction to win material.

4
B

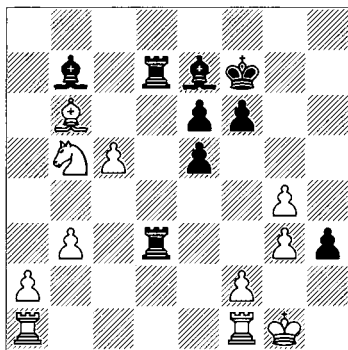
Black missed a golden opportunity here.

7
B

How does Black evade White's cunning attempt to secure a draw?

5
B

Should Black retreat?

8
B

Black first frees an open line, and then freezes his opponent's defences.

10 Removing the Defender

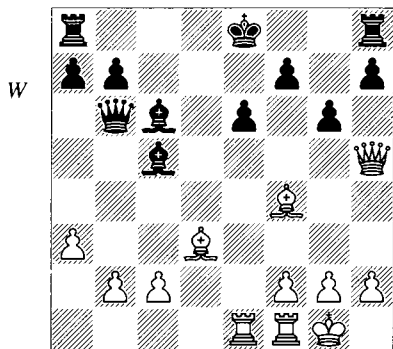
The idea of removing the defender is one of the most common tactical ideas in chess. We have already encountered instances where a key defender is removed by deflection, overloading, pin, or other tactical methods, but in this chapter we shall be focusing on the more direct case of the defender being physically removed by exchange or sacrifice.

When the defences are becoming stretched, there will be some relatively weak links in the defensive chain, normally in the form of key points that are defended only by one piece. Finding and destroying such pieces is then the main task for the attacker. Pawns in front of the enemy king are often a natural target for a destructive sacrifice. Once the pawn-shield is shattered, the enemy king becomes an easy target for the remaining attacking pieces.

The king is especially vulnerable to this type of sacrifice when it has remained in the centre for too long, as we see in the following example.

Bojkov – Yasim
Istanbul 2006

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 ♙b4 4 ♖ge2 dxe4 5 a3 ♙e7 6 ♗xc4 ♗f6 7 ♗2g3 ♗bd7 8 ♙d3 c5 9 dxc5 ♗xc5 10 ♗xc5 ♙xc5 11 0-0 ♙d7 12 ♗h5 ♗xh5 13 ♖xh5 ♖b6 14 ♙f4 ♙c6 15 ♙ael g6? (D)



A king in the centre should sound alarm bells, especially when the attacking forces have as much freedom as White's do here. I did not hesitate long before sacrificing; indeed, I had this in mind when playing 12 ♗h5. It is not so difficult to assess: Black is permanently deprived of his castling rights, and will have no meaningful pawn-cover, making him an easy prey. The attacker will always enjoy good chances in such a position, especially if there are open lines for his pieces, and they can be brought into the attack with gain of tempi.

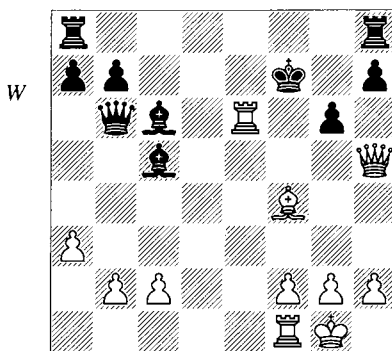
16 ♙xg6!

Due to the pin against his h8-rook, Black must surrender the e-pawn.

16...fxg6 17 ♙xe6+ ♖f7 (D)

17...♙d7 is met by 18 ♖h3, setting up a battery, when 18...♙xg2 attempts to deflect the queen, but White wins in various ways. 19 ♙d6++ ♖c7 20 ♖d7+ ♖b8 21 ♙xb6+ ♙d6 22 ♙xd6# is the line that I planned, but easier and better is 19 ♙d1+ ♖c8 20 ♙e8#.

17...♖f8 18 ♙h6+ ♖f7 19 ♖e5 (powerful centralization!) 19...♖d8 20 ♙e1 and Black is helpless against the threats of 21 ♖g7# and 21 ♖xc5.



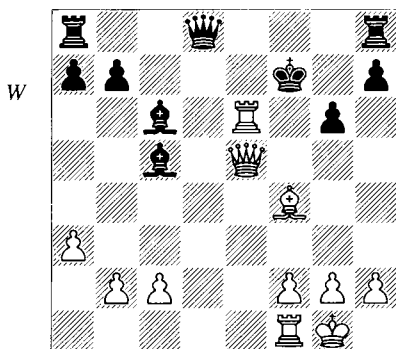
18 ♖e5 ♙he8

After 18...♖g8 19 ♙e3! ♙xe3 there comes the zwischenzug 20 ♙c7 with mate.

18...♙hf8 19 ♙f6+ ♖g8 20 ♖e6+ ♖g7 21 ♙e5 ♖h6 22 ♖h3+ ♖g7 and now 23 ♙xc6+ is

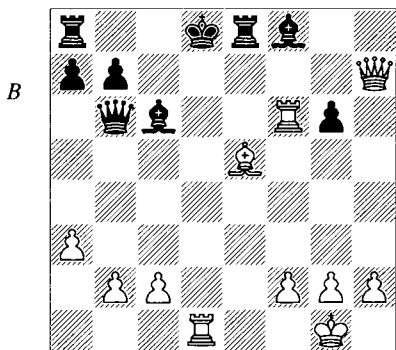
the move that I foresaw, and quite sufficient of course, but the computer finds a forced mate: 23 ♖f4+ ♜f6 24 ♙xf6+ ♚f7 25 ♜xh7+ ♙e6 26 ♜e1+ ♙c4 27 ♜fxe4+ ♚d6 28 ♜e6+ ♚d5 29 ♜d7+ ♙d6 30 ♜6e5+ ♙c4 31 ♜1e4+ ♜d4 32 ♜b5#.

18...♜d8 (D) was the best defence, and it took me some time to calculate the most precise continuation.



White needs to destroy the defender of the dark squares by 19 ♜xc5! ♙xe6 and then to proceed with an attack based on opposite-coloured bishops: 20 ♙g5 ♜f8 21 ♜e1+ ♚d7 22 ♜e7+ ♚c8 23 ♜e5. Black must now surrender his queen by 23...♜xe7 (worse is 23...♜d8 24 ♜c7+ ♜xc7 25 ♜xh8+ ♚d7 26 ♜xh7+ ♙c8 27 ♜h8+ ♚d7 28 ♜h3+) 24 ♙xe7, which leaves White with a material gain of two pawns while still attacking.

19 ♜f6+ ♙g8 20 ♙e5 ♙f8 21 ♜h8+ ♙f7 22 ♜f6+ ♙e7 23 ♜xh7+ ♚d8 24 ♜d1+ (D)



1-0

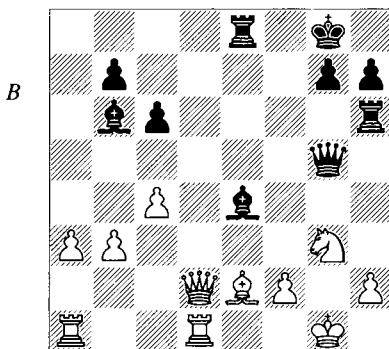
All my pieces take part in the execution of Black's king. Black is mated after 24...♙c8 25 ♜h3+.

At the board I saw about 90% of the lines that I have included in the annotations. Do not be scared, or think that this is beyond your abilities: the lines were forced and involved a lot of natural and logical moves. With enough practice and concentration you will also be able to calculate long forcing lines: it is a skill that can be learnt, as long as you practice actually doing it, such as in the exercises provided in each chapter of this book.

We now take a closer look at how to recognize when a destructive sacrifice might be possible. Our **searching strategy** could be as follows:

1. Which pieces are under attack?
2. Find the defenders of all the pieces that are under attack.
3. Can you capture the defender?

Let's see how this works in practice:



Vaznonis – Sakalauskas
Lithuanian Ch, Kaunas 2008

Question 1: Both queens are under attack. White's kingside is under heavy pressure, especially the knight on g3.

Question 2: The white queen is defended by the rook, while the g3-knight is defended by the pawns on f2 and h2.

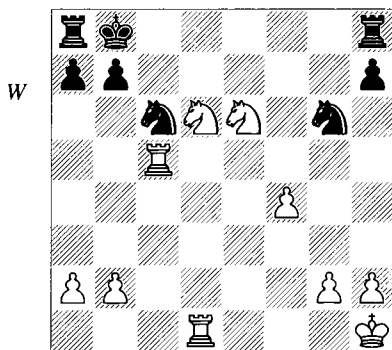
Black has concentrated his troops on the kingside, and asking the first two questions brings us to the conclusion that White's only defender is the knight on g3. The answer to question 3 is a resounding 'yes':

26...♜xg3+!

The f2-pawn is pinned, and thus useless for defence, while the capture with the other pawn opens the h-file:

27 hxg3 ♜h1# (0-1)

The next example is somewhat similar to the previous one. The solution is similar as well – annihilation of Black’s only defender:



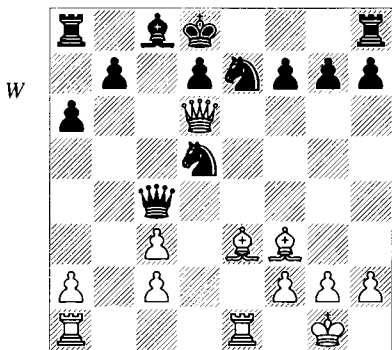
Filipov – Muzammil
Mumbai 2008

28 ♖xc6! bxc6

There is a bonus: not only has Black’s best defender been removed, but the b-file is also opened.

29 ♖d3 a5 30 ♖b3+ 1-0

In general, removing important defenders often does also open lines for our pieces.

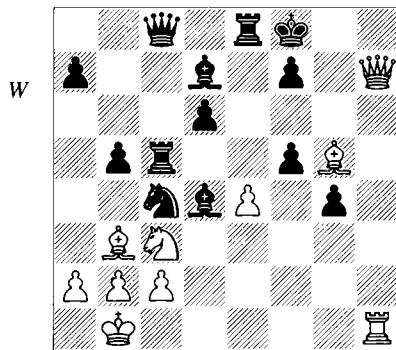


Oral – Kantorik
Slovakian Team Ch 2000

White now physically removes two important defenders, while opening a file for his rook, and a diagonal for the bishop:

15 ♖xd5! ♜xd5 16 ♜xd5! 1-0

If we find a clear answer to the question as to which piece is the most important defender, the rest will often be easy:

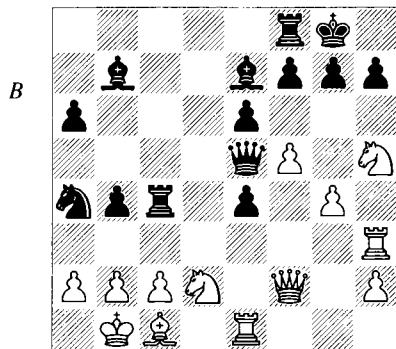


Zeynelabidin – Abello
French Junior Ch 1999

Black’s position is held together by his dark-squared bishop. Seek and destroy!

25 ♜h6+ ♔g7 26 ♖f6!! ♜d2+ 27 ♜a1 ♜xb3+ 28 axb3 1-0

In practice the ‘seek and destroy’ principle is harder to achieve when the enemy king is hiding behind its pawn-cover. But then additional sacrifices might help:



R. Griffiths – Bokros
European Clubs Cup, Antalya 2007

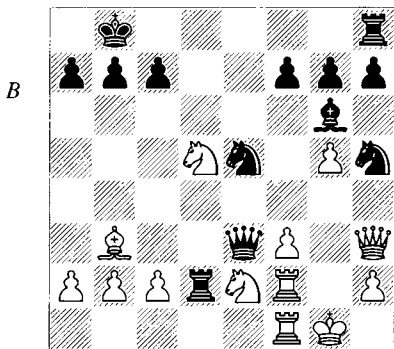
White’s bishop protects the b2-square, but there is a way to destroy it:

27...♖xc2! 28 ♜xc2 ♖c8+ 29 ♜b1

If 29...♜c4 to defend the b2-pawn with his major pieces, Black can bring another piece into the attack with decisive effect: 29...♗d5! –+.

29...♖xc1+! 30 ♜xc1 ♜xb2+ 31 ♜d1 ♜c3+ 32 ♖xc3 bxc3 33 ♜xe4 ♖xe4 0-1

We usually sacrifice material to open up the position of our opponent’s king.



Boudre – Prié
Chamalières 2007

Here Prié could not stand the temptation, took a pawn with check by **20...♖xg5+** and eventually won after a long fight. Later he found a clear-cut solution based on destroying White's most important defender:

20...♞xd5!!

Enemy number one off the board!

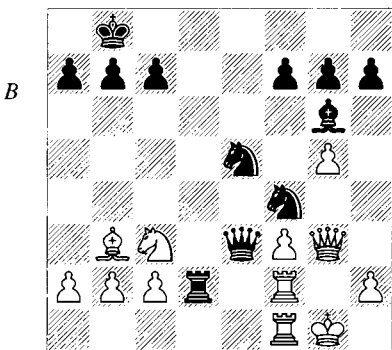
21 ♔xd5

Now Black brings in his reserves with gain of tempo:

21...♞d8! 22 ♔b3 ♞d2

Look how desperate White's pieces are! Due to the pin he cannot move.

23 ♖c3 ♗f4 24 ♖g3 (D)



24...♔h5!

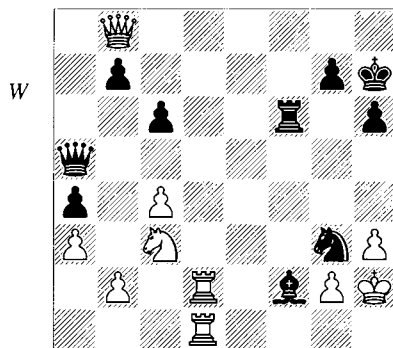
The last piece joins the fray and White is helpless.

25 ♖d1 ♗e2+ 26 ♔g2 ♔xf3+ 27 ♖xf3 ♖xg5+ 28 ♖g3 ♖xg3

Black wins. Simple chess, is it not?!

The idea of removing the defender can also be used to gain material. Most players tend to

keep their pieces guarding one another whenever possible, but this may prove insufficient to keep them safe.



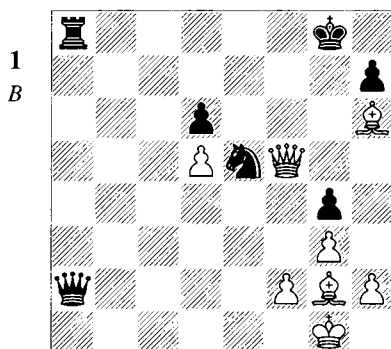
Bacrot – Rausis
European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008

Here is a simple case: Black's bishop is protecting his knight, but we can easily remove it at the price of an exchange.

35 ♞xf2 1-0

White emerges with two minor pieces for a rook.

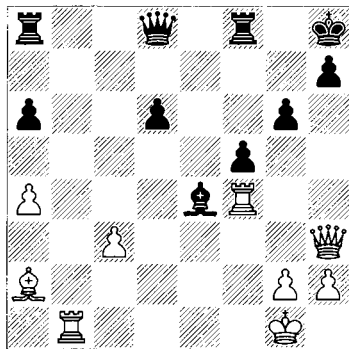
Exercises



1
B

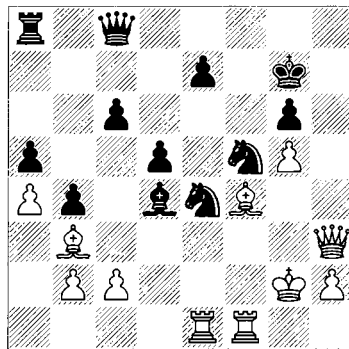
Demolish the last defender of the king!

2
W



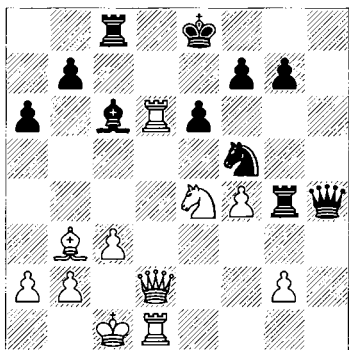
Black has one active piece...

5
W



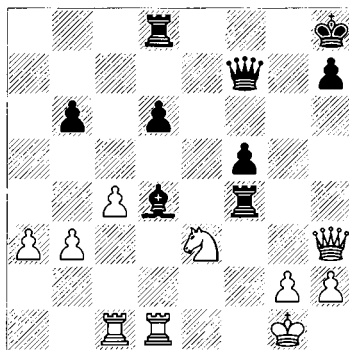
Three in a row.

3
W



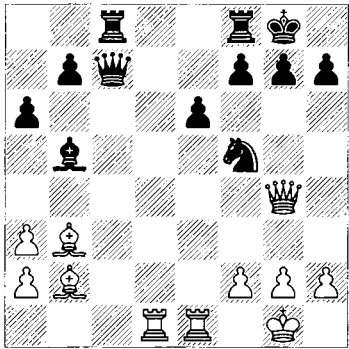
Black has sent too many of his troops to attack the kingside.

6
W



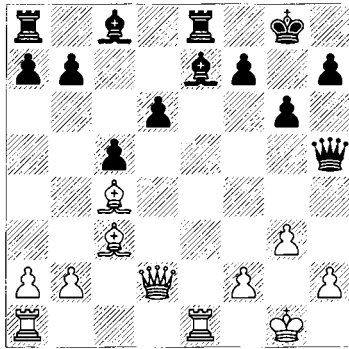
Note the importance of a diagonal.

4
W

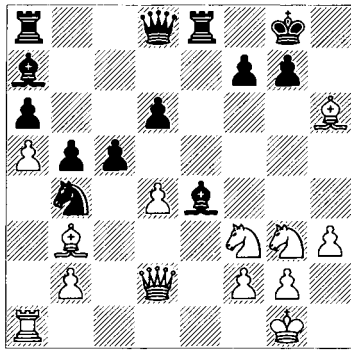


Seek and destroy!

7
W



The fianchetto has weakened Black's dark squares.

8
W

Pawns in front of the king are his best shield.

11 The Power of the Pawn

The pawn is the least powerful piece on the chessboard, but since there are eight of them in each army, these modest footsoldiers define the character of the fight. Pawn-chains provide the strategic outline of the struggle, and the quality of the pawn-cover enjoyed by each king is a major tactical factor. Pawns are great defenders when they remain united and intact on their starting positions, especially as their choice of moving one or two squares gives them extra possibilities if they come under attack.

Pawns can also be used in an attack, as their small value means they can be sacrificed to open lines or force weaknesses without this constituting a major loss of attacking firepower. They can also act as advanced outposts, like thorns in the flesh of your enemy, staking out territory and supporting possible sallies by the more powerful pieces.

But every pawn has a special gift: whenever it reaches the final rank it can turn into a new piece, much stronger than before. It is this special power on which we shall focus in this chapter. We should also note that one must always think carefully before rejecting a pawn sacrifice; it is remarkable how often it happens that a pawn which has been spurned goes on later to wreak havoc with its further advance towards promotion.

I personally witnessed the following game in which the power of a pawn duo was demonstrated.

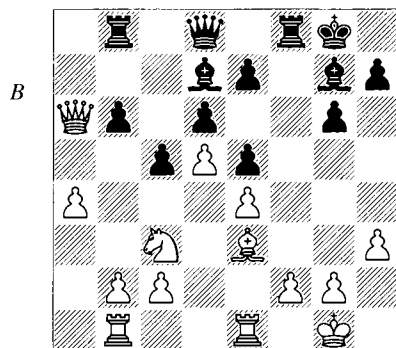
Khalifman – Ermenkov

Burgas 1994

1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 c5 3 d5 g6 4 ♘c3 ♙g7 5 e4 d6 6 ♙e2 0-0 7 0-0 ♘a6 8 ♙f4 ♘c7 9 a4 b6 10 ♖e1 a6 11 h3 ♘d7 12 ♙c4 ♖b8 13 ♗d3 f6 14 ♖ab1 ♘e5 15 ♘xe5 fxe5 16 ♙e3 ♙d7

Black attempts a simplifying combination to free his position.

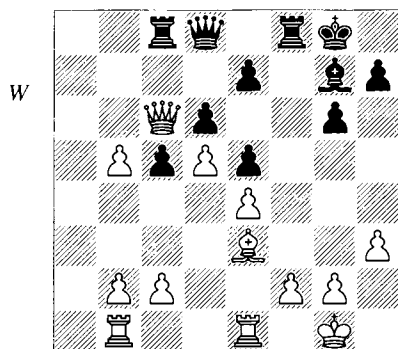
17 ♙xa6 ♘xa6 18 ♗xa6 (D)



18...b5 19 ♘xb5 ♙xb5 20 axb5

Having sacrificed two pawns to close off the white queen's road back home, Ermenkov was expecting that the perpetual attack on the queen would assure him a draw. However, there was a surprise in store for him.

20...♖a8 21 ♗b7 ♖b8 22 ♗a6 ♖a8 23 ♗c6 ♖c8 (D)



After prolonged thought, Khalifman intuitively sacrificed his queen. Obviously he could not calculate all the possible lines here, but he felt that his passed pawns supported by his pieces should net him the full point.

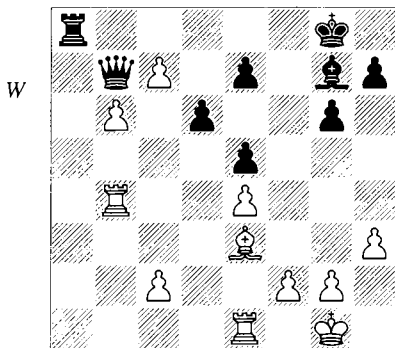
24 b4!! ♖xc6 25 dxc6

White has a rook and a passed pawn duo in return for the queen. His plan should be to assure promotion for at least one of them. Like in a game of curling, White's pieces must now clear the road for the stones (pawns).

25...e6

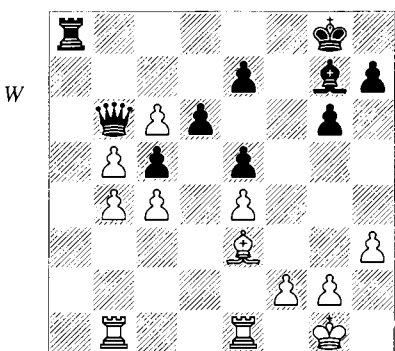
Black had at his disposal two other attempts to blockade the white pawns.

Stohl gave simply 25...cxb4 26 b6 as winning for White, but while this assessment seems to be correct, the line should be analysed further: 26...♖c8! (Black should block the pawns at any rate) 27 c7 ♖b7 28 ♜xb4 ♜a8 (D).



Black has created a solid defensive set-up, but White needs just one more open file to break it: 29 c4! ♟f8 30 ♜d1 e6 31 c5! dxc5 32 ♜bb1 ♟e7 33 ♟xc5! ♟h4 (33...♟xc5 34 ♜d8+ ♟g7 35 ♜xa8 ♖xa8 36 b7 ♖a2 37 b8♖) 34 ♜a1 ♜e8 35 ♜a7 ♖c6 36 ♟e3 ♜f8 37 ♟h2! +-. White doesn't need to hurry; ♜c1 is inevitable.

Another attempt to blockade the pawns starts with 25...♖b6. The following instructive line is also given by Stohl: 26 c4! ♜a8 (D).



Now take care, as the path for the stones must be cleared carefully: 27 ♜a1! (an important move: White must penetrate via the open file; in addition, he swaps one of the defenders) 27...♜xa1 28 ♜xa1 e6 29 ♜a6 ♖c7 30 bxc5 dxc5 31 ♜a8+ ♟f7 32 ♟xc5 ♟f6 33 ♜a7 ♖c8

34 ♟e7+ +- ♟f7 35 b6 ♖xc6 36 ♟g5+ ♟e8 37 b7 promoting.

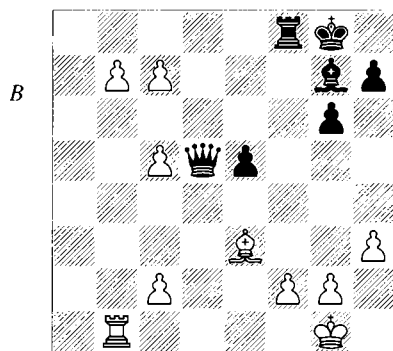
26 ♜ed1!

White can also play 26 bxc5, but after 26...d5 he will have to contend with Black's ideas of ...d4.

26...♖b8

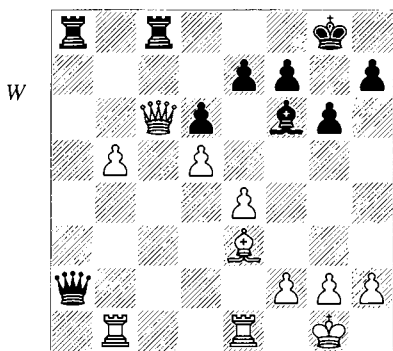
Or: 26...d5 27 ♟xc5 d4 28 b6 +-; 26...♖h4 27 bxc5 dxc5 28 b6 ♖xe4 29 ♟xc5 +-.

27 bxc5 d5 28 exd5 exd5 29 ♜xd5 ♖e8 30 c7 ♖f7 31 b6 ♖xd5 32 b7 (D)

**1-0**

Black is a whole queen up, but has no defence.

Oddly enough, some years later I applied the same winning idea, of creating two connected passed pawns, in the Bulgarian Championship:

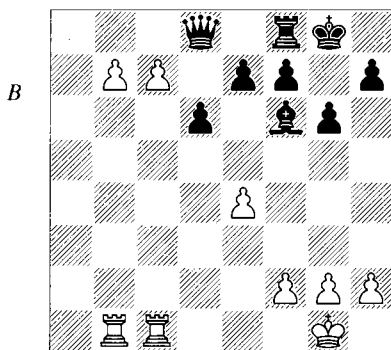
**Bojkov – V. Alexandrov**

Bulgarian Ch, Dupnitsa 1998

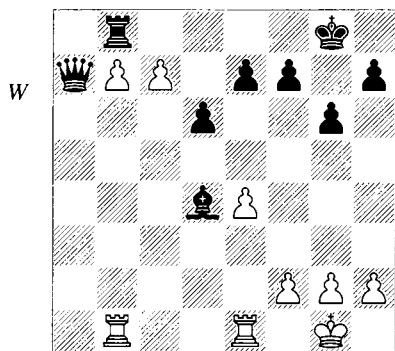
25 b6! ♜ab8

In case of 25...♜c6 26 dxc6 ♜f8 27 b7 ♖a5 28 ♜ec1 the pawns are supported by all White's remaining pieces, and are obviously impossible

to stop. 28...♖c7 29 ♔b6 ♖b8 30 ♔d8 ♖xd8
31 c7 (D) could be a pretty finish:



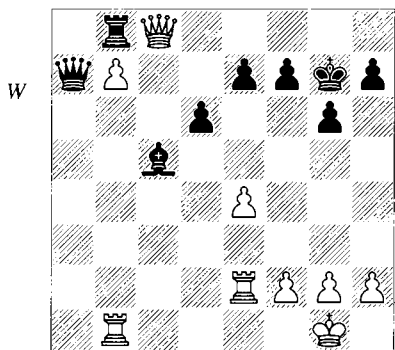
26 b7 ♖xc6 27 dxc6 ♖a5 28 ♔b6 ♖a6 29
♔a7 ♖xa7 30 c7 ♔d4 (D)



31 c8♖+

White has promoted one of the pawns, while keeping the other alive.

31...♔g7 32 ♖e2 ♔c5 (D)

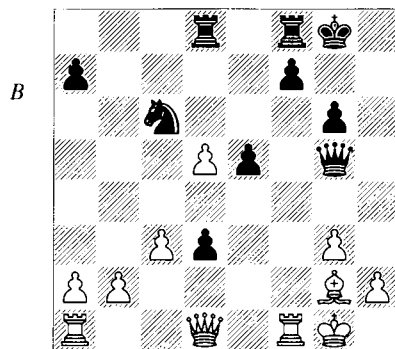


White is already an exchange ahead, but the second passed pawn also deserves promotion. As we said before, the road in front of the pawn should be cleared.

33 ♖xb8! 1-0

Black decided to call it a day due to 33...♖xb8
34 ♖a2 with ♖a8 and b8♖ to follow.

As we have already seen, it can cost a great deal of material to neutralize a well-supported passed pawn. The following example is even more drastic:



Bojkov – Bayram
Izmir 2002

Unfortunately, not all of my experiences with passed-pawn duos are pleasant. In this game I had a lesson – luckily, for free. I had just exchanged knights on d5, and was highly optimistic: I am a pawn ahead, and a second one is coming on the next move. I did not consider seriously the knight sacrifice, but this was exactly what my opponent did!

22...e4!!

Now White is in danger too!

23 dxc6 e3 24 ♖f4 ♖c5 25 ♔h1 ♖fe8 26
♖e4?

Following a passive plan of exchanging rooks that leaves my back rank weak. White should seek counterplay with 26 ♖b3!, the main point being 26...♖e7 27 ♖d4 with complications.

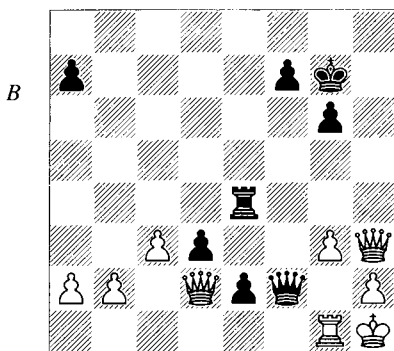
26...♖xe4 27 ♔xe4 e2 28 ♖d2? ♖f2 29 ♖g1
♖e8 30 c7

Having played brilliantly to achieve a won game, Black now blundered in time-trouble:

30...♔h7??

Instead he could have created a true masterpiece by letting me promote: 30...♖xe4!! 31 c8♖+ (with check!) 31...♔g7 32 ♖h3 (D).

An amazing position! Black's pawn duo will cost White *both* his queens. We already know the method; the road should be cleared:



32... ♖xg1+!! 33 ♔xg1 e1 ♕+ 34 ♕xe1 ♖xe1+ 35 ♕f2 d2 -+ and there is nothing more for me to do than congratulate my opponent on his excellent play.

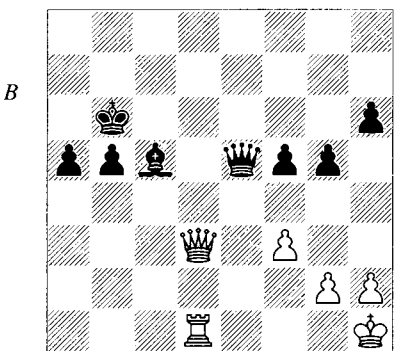
30... ♕g7?! is also better than the move played, and should lead to a draw.

In the game Black managed to win only one queen for his mighty passed pawns, while I made the maximum of my advanced pawn.

31 ♖xd3 ♖xg1+ 32 ♔xg1 e1 ♕+ 33 ♕g2 ♖xe4? 34 c8 c8 ♖e2+ 35 ♕h3 ♖f2 36 ♕h4 ♖e5 37 ♕g4 ♖xh2 38 ♕f4 ♖h5 39 ♖g4 ♖h6+ 39... ♖f5+ 40 ♖dx f5!.

40 ♕xe5 ♖g7+ 41 ♕d5 f5 42 ♖h4+ ♕g8 43 ♖d8+ ♕h7 44 ♖h4+ ♕g8 45 ♖d8+ ♕h7 46 ♕e6 1-0

An important general principle is that the **power of the pawns increases in the endgame**. If there are no other pieces on the board, even a single pawn can become a queen and win the game. As a general rule, two connected passed pawns on the sixth rank overpower a rook if no other pieces can intervene.



Bojkov – Murrey

French Team Ch, Niort 2007

I knew that my position was lost, and that I could only hope for a perpetual check somehow. But when we reached this position, I suddenly realized that the power of the pawn duo gave Black the opportunity to liquidate to a won endgame. My experienced opponent also realized this:

48... ♕d4!!

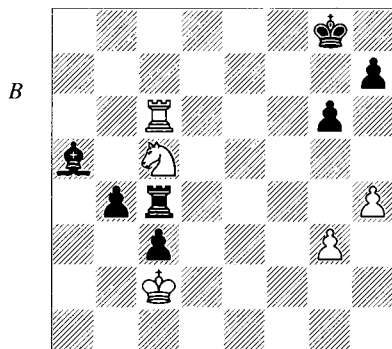
The best practical decision. Murrey does not give me any chances for random combinations and blocks the open d-file.

49 ♖b1

After this move I lost silently, but the line 49 ♖xd4+ ♖xd4 50 ♖xd4 b4 leads to an easy win; for instance, 51 ♖d6+ ♕c5 52 ♖xh6 b3 53 ♖h7 a4 54 ♖b7 ♕c4 and a pawn marches through.

49...a4 50 g3 ♕a5 51 ♕g2 b4 52 ♖c1 g4 53 ♖c6 ♕b6 54 ♖c8 gxf3+ 55 ♕xf3 b3 56 ♖c4 ♖e3+ 57 ♖xe3 ♕xe3 58 ♕xe3 b2 59 ♖c8 a3 60 ♕d4 ♕a6 61 ♖b8 a2 0-1

A single passed pawn generally needs more piece support if it is to make its way to promotion past hostile forces. The supporting pieces may clear the way for the pawn by using various tactical ideas that we have seen in earlier chapters. Particularly common themes in this respect are removing the defender and deflection:



Garcia Palermo – Rowson

Palau 2008

Black's pawns are blockaded, but Black finds a way to set them in motion:

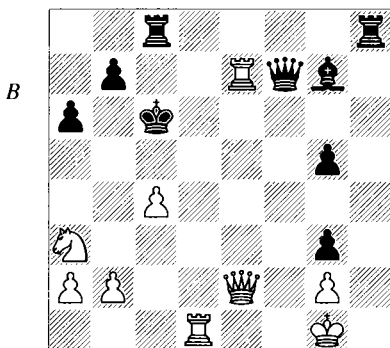
51...b3+!

White must capture with the king, since his knight is pinned.

52 ♕xb3 c2

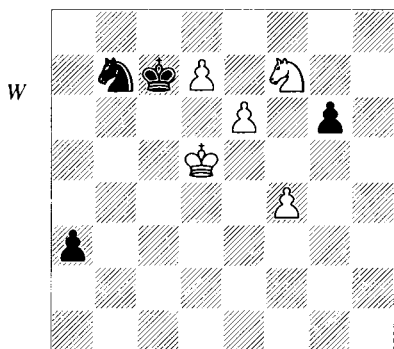
Black soon won.

Here is an example of multiple deflections combined with a mating threat:



C. Saavedra – Suri
Guines 2001

1...♙d4+! 2 ♖xd4 ♕f2+! 3 ♖xf2 ♙h1+!! 4 ♙xh1 gxf2 0-1



Khenkin – Postny
Maalot-Tarshiha 2008

A decoy helps White to promote his pawn:
53 d8♖+! ♗xd8 54 e7 1-0

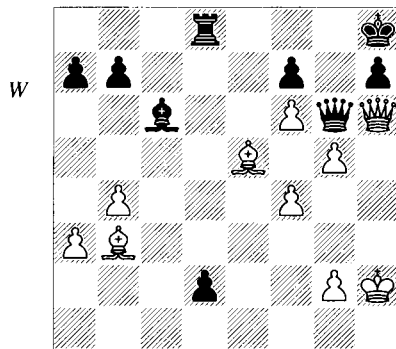
Like in all combinations, time is important when we promote our pawns. Sometimes our own pieces are in the way of our pawns, and we need to find ways to get rid of them with tempo (*see following diagram*).

1 ♙xf7!

White first clears the road for the passed pawn.

1...♖xh6+

Or: **1...♖xf7 2 g6 d1♖ 3 gxf7 +-; 1...d1♖ 2 ♖g7+ ♖xg7 3 fxg7#.**



Jasny – Suchomel
Czech Republic 2004

2 g×h6 d1♖

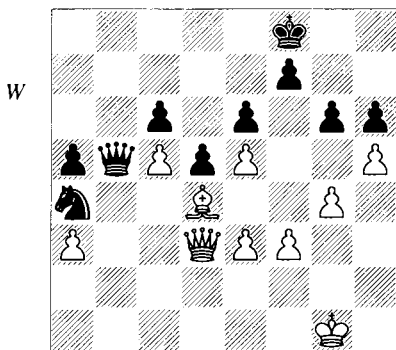
Now the bishop is in the pawn's way. It steps aside while also cutting off the black rook's protection of the back rank:

3 ♙e8!! ♖g8

3...♖xe8 4 f7+ ♖xe5 5 f8♖#; 3...♖h5+ 4 ♙xh5 ♖g8 5 f7+ ♖f8 6 ♙g7+ ♖e7 7 f5 +-.

4 f7+ ♖f8 5 ♙g7+ ♖e7 6 f8♖+ 1-0

So far we have only seen examples of the successful promotion of passed pawns. But we have not seen how these pawns are created. Our most faithful friend in this endeavour is a method called **breakthrough**:



Mecking – Timman
Bazna 2008

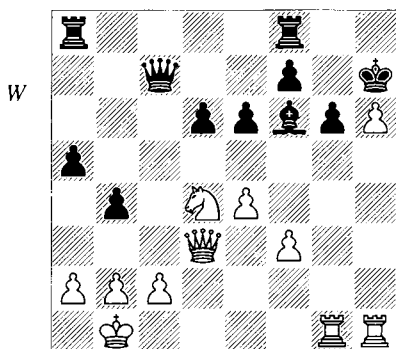
White creates a passed pawn with a simple exchange:

40 ♖xb5 cxb5 41 c6 1-0

The lone passed pawn can be stopped by the king by playing **41...♖e8**, but the main problem comes from the other side: **42 g5!** is a standard

breakthrough, clearing the way for the h-pawn. After 42...hxg5 43 h6, Black's king is incapable of stopping two passed pawns that are so far apart, while the knight on a4 is too far away to have any impact on events.

When the passed pawn is solidly blockaded by the opponent's king, it may be worth major sacrifices to bring the pawn to a different file, especially as this will tend to gain time with a discovered check in cases where the pawn is supported from behind.



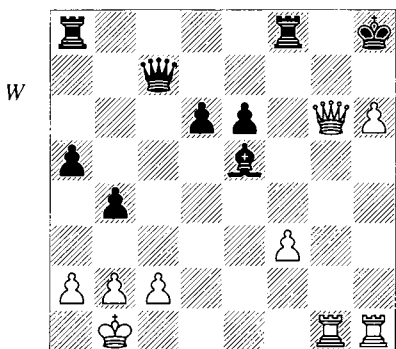
Sada – Y. Rodriguez
Cuba 2000

White first cleared a path for his queen to support the passed pawn:

1 e5! ♖xe5

1...dxe5 2 ♘xe6! +-.

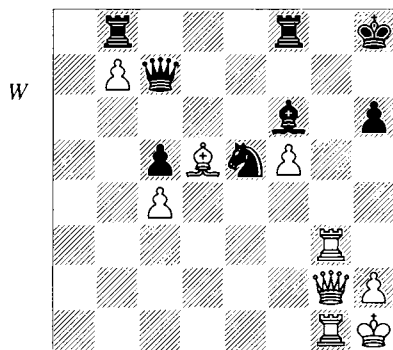
2 ♘xe6! fxex6 3 ♚xg6+ ♔h8 (D)



Now the pawn can be switched to a different file. This costs a whole queen, but the investment is recouped with a lot of interest:

4 ♚g7+!! ♖xg7 5 hxg7++ ♚g8 6 ♜h8+ ♚f7
7 gxf8♚+ ♜xf8 8 ♜h7+ 1-0

Now let's take a look at a case where several threats were combined:



Kotanjian – Zysk
Athens 2006

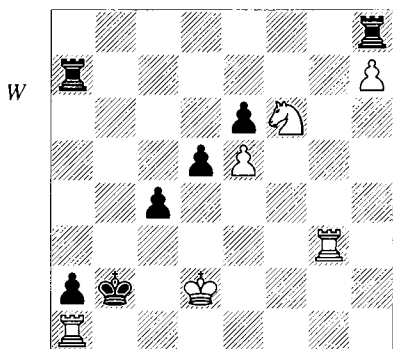
42 ♜g8+ ♔h7

Black rejected the mass exchanges of the major pieces by 42...♜xg8 43 ♚xg8+ ♜xg8 44 ♜xg8+ ♔h7 because White promotes and wins by 45 b8♚. Unfortunately for him, the move 42 ♜g8+ also cleared a line for the queen:

43 ♚g6+! 1-0

43...♗xg6 44 fxg6#.

In some special cases the pawn can transform into a piece other than the queen – which is called an **underpromotion**. The most common case by far is underpromotion to a knight, as this may mean that the promotion comes with check, or creates a knight fork.



Dubinsky – Lapshun
New York 2000

White's position looks dubious but he finds a good move:

1 ♖c1!!

1 ♖ggl? d4 is better for Black.

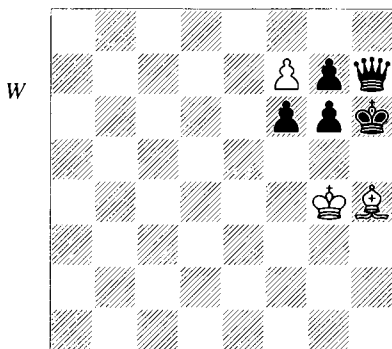
Now it is Black's turn to make a crucial decision and he passes the test:

1...a1♘!

And not 1...a1♙?? 2 ♖c2+ ♘b1 3 ♖g1#.

2 ♖h1! ♘b3+ 3 ♖e2 1/2-1/2

Underpromotion to a rook or bishop is very uncommon in practice, since these pieces have no additional powers compared to a queen. Therefore the only reason to choose a bishop or rook is to avoid stalemate ideas, or else to stalemate oneself, and these themes are normally restricted to composed positions.



E. Pogosiants

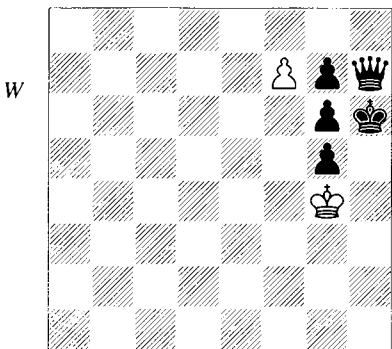
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

White first blocks in all of Black's pieces:

1 ♘g5+!

Not 1 f8♙? g5! = (1...f5+? 2 ♘f4 g5+ 3 ♘xg5+ ♘h5 4 ♙e8+ g6 5 ♙e2#).

1...fxg5 (D)



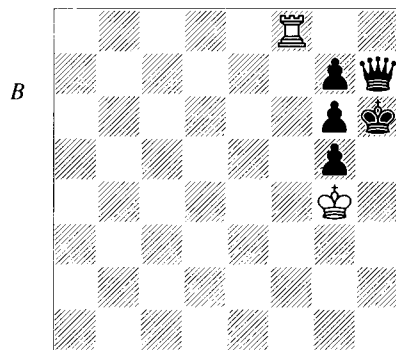
White must now be careful, since he has left Black with very few legal moves.

2 f8♙! (D)

This underpromotion is the only way to win.

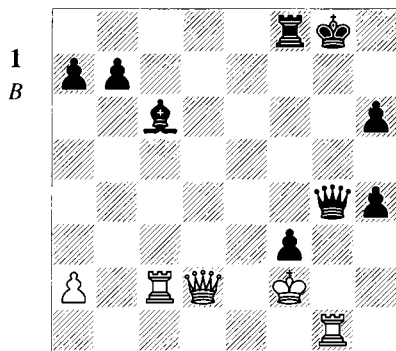
2 f8♙? is only enough for a draw after 2...♙g8

3 ♙xg8 stalemate.

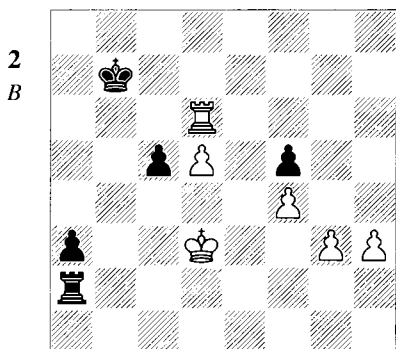


2...♙g8 3 ♖xg8 ♘h7 4 ♖f8 ♘h6 5 ♖h8#

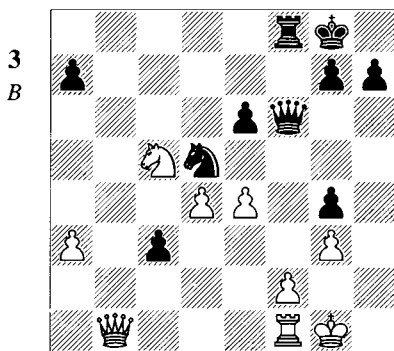
Exercises



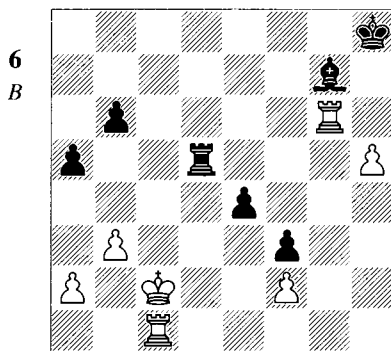
Passed pawns must be pushed!



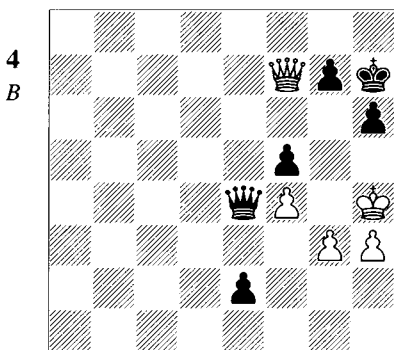
Time is money.



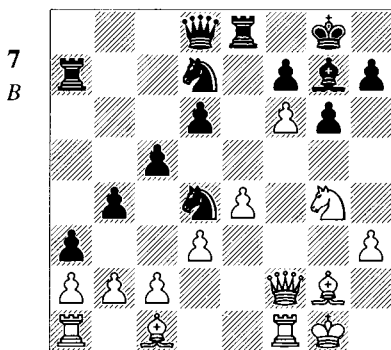
Support the modest footsoldier.



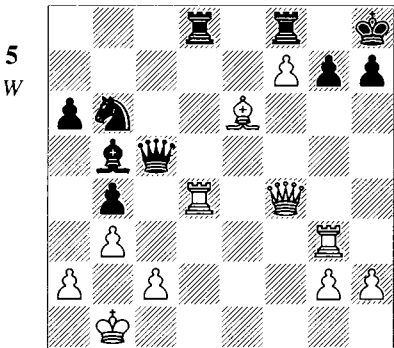
The theme here is breakthrough.



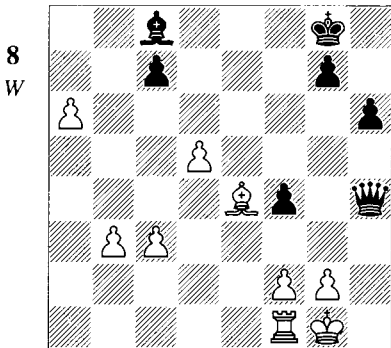
Find a way for Black to win. Greed will be punished!



Pawn power increases into the...?



Passed pawns don't *have* to be promoted in order to be useful.



Pawns have a lust to expand, as Nimzowitsch reminded us.

12 Back-Rank Mate

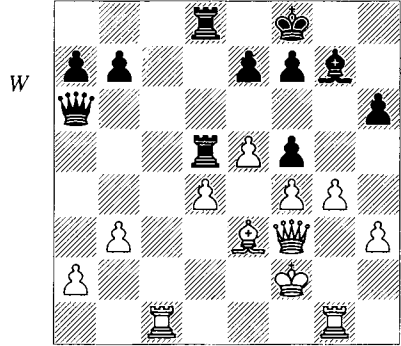
In most chess games it is a good idea to castle early in the game. This is because we need to bring our rooks harmoniously into the game and find a safe haven for our king behind a strong pawn-shield. We generally avoid moving the pawns in front of the king so as not to create weaknesses. If we advance the rook's pawn, then this can invite a sacrifice, while moving the knight's pawn can leave us open to an invasion on the complex of squares this move weakens. Meanwhile, advancing the bishop's pawn leaves the king exposed to checks on the diagonal, and overall loosens our position.

However, sometimes the lack of *luft* – an escape-hatch for the king – might allow another evil: a mate on the back rank. If we spot that our opponent's king does not have any escape-squares on its second rank, we should be alert to ideas by which we might mate him on his back rank with a queen or a rook (or a promoting pawn). Since we are dealing with mate here, a very large sacrifice may be justified to bring this about by removing defenders or deflecting them. Before moving on to specific examples, we should note that a weak back rank often plays a role in chess strategy. Sometimes the battle for the centre hinges upon ideas that are based on an exploitation of a back-rank weakness at the end of a lengthy tactical sequence. In a battle arising from a well-played opening, neither side can necessarily afford to spend a tempo giving their king a flight-square, so this shouldn't be looked upon as just a fluke, but rather as an organic feature of the chessboard struggle.

In the following diagram, Black's king has no flight-squares on its second rank. The d8-rook protects the back rank, but this piece must also protect its colleague on d5. Thus the rook is overloaded, and we immediately see the solution:

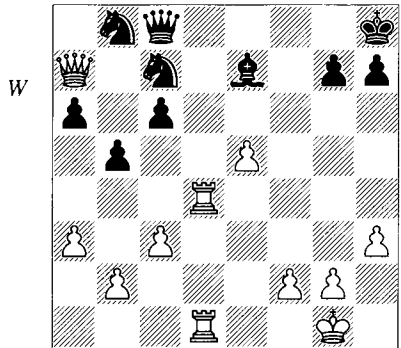
25 ♖xd5! 1-0

Mate follows after 25...♞xd5 26 ♜c8+ ♞d8 27 ♞xd8#.



Timoshenko – C. Foisor
Cappelle la Grande 2008

In the next position, Black's king again lacks *luft*, which White exploits by a deflection.



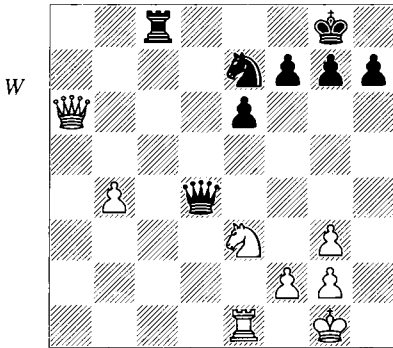
C. Bauer – Renet
French Ch, Aix-les-Bains 2007

White's doubled rooks on the d-file are obviously well-placed, but his most powerful piece, his queen, appears to be out of the game. It would be nice if we could use it to help in the attack...

28 ♖b7! 1-0

White exploits the fact that the defender is overloaded: 28...♖f8 loses a piece after 29 ♖xc7, while 28...♖xb7 allows mate by 29 ♞d8+ ♠xd8 30 ♞xd8+ ♘e8 31 ♞xe8#.

The next example is far from obvious. If you spend a lot of time tackling tactical exercises, then you start to find it easier and easier to spot possibilities like this. Hint: *consider which are the critical squares on the back rank.*



Khmelnitsky – Kabatiansky
USSR 1989

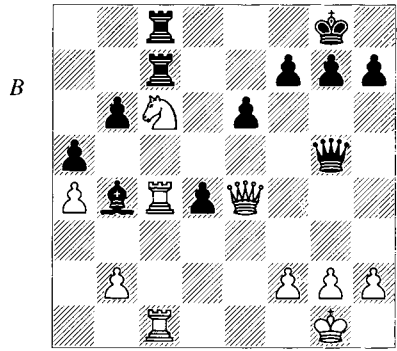
The first precondition is met: Black's king has no flight-squares. But how on earth can we possibly exploit this fact?! The rook on c8 (first critical square) is well protected, and our rook is blocked by no fewer than three pieces on its way to the e8-square (second critical square). Still, knowing that the back-rank defenders must be destroyed or deflected, we might try the following:

1 ♖f5!! 1-0

The black knight must defend the rook, so 1...exf5 is forced, but now we almost have access to the back rank for our rook. We need to hit the first critical square with 2 ♜xc8+! ♞xc8 and enjoy the second one by 3 ♜e8#.

Controlling a critical square can have a decisive importance, and often it is not just a simple matter of counting how many times each side is covering a critical square. We also need to consider potential attacks and X-rays, and calculate the concrete variations with care.

In the following diagram, Black has an excellent concentration of forces on the c-file: the queen is also eyeing c1. This is clearly a critical square, since if Black could put a queen or rook on this square it will be mate. However, it looks like the knight is well protected on c6 (attacked twice but defended three times) and that access to White's back rank is therefore firmly closed



San Segundo – Morović
Spanish Team Ch, Cala Galdana 1994

off. However, it is not the number of attacks on c6 that is decisive here.

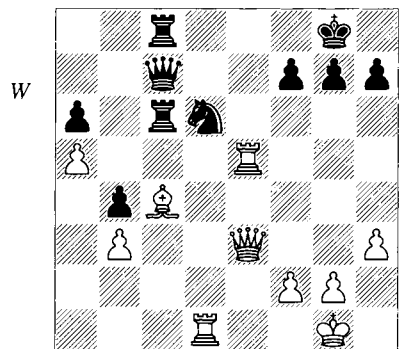
Let us see what will happen if we destroy the knight. We immediately see that taking back with the queen loses material (two rooks for a queen and a knight). But what if he takes back with the rook?

White will win an exchange, but in the process will lose control over the truly critical square, c1. He is only defending it once, while Black is hitting it twice – directly from the queen from g5, and a second one from the X-raying c8-rook.

24...♞xc6! 0-1

25 ♜xc6 ♞xc6 26 ♞xc6 h6 costs White material, while the main idea is 25 ♞xc6 ♜xc1+! 26 ♞xc1 ♞xc1+ 27 ♜e1 ♞xe1#.

We should also calculate if our opponent can cover the check on the critical square with some of his pieces.



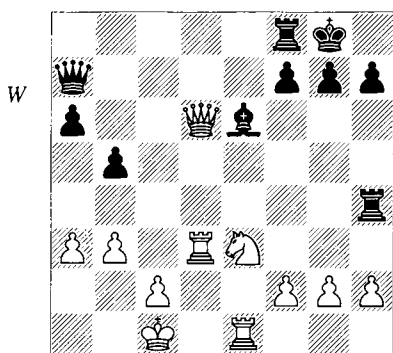
V. Dimitrov – Gligorić
Pozarevac 1995

The critical square here is e8. It is well protected by a knight and a rook. But we can easily remove the knight:

35 ♖xd6! 1-0

Black has two options. After 35...♖xd6 he can no longer cover his king: 36 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 37 ♗xe8#. A more resilient line is 35...♗xd6 36 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 (36...♗f8 loses material after the simple 37 ♖xf8+) 37 ♗xe8+ and now Black can cover his king by 37...♗f8 but this should not worry us, since White wins in two ways: directly with 38 ♔xf7+ ♖h8 39 ♗xf8# or prosaically by 38 ♗xc6.

Escape-squares might be covered by our pieces:



Rohit – Nadig

Commonwealth Ch, Nagpur 2008

White would like to destroy the rook on f8 and deliver mate on the bank rank. However, Black will then have an escape-route via e7. This window should be slammed shut!

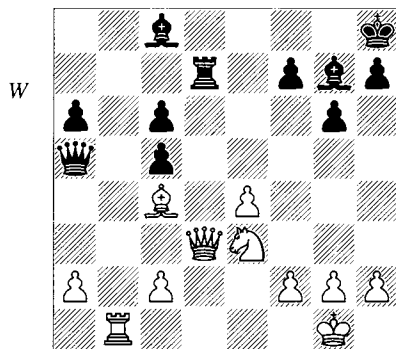
25 ♔f5! 1-0

Simultaneously attacking the rook and taking away the important escape-square on e7. Black resigned due to 25...♔xf5 26 ♗xf8+ ♔xf8 27 ♖d8# or 25...♖h5 26 ♗xf8+ ♔xf8 27 ♖d8#.

A check on the bank rank does not always promise mate, especially when our opponent can interpose and open an escape-square for his king. But this rescue effort may cost significant material (*see following diagram*).

23 ♗xd7! 1-0

By 23...♔xd7 24 ♖b8+ ♔f8 Black manages to escape the back-rank mate, but after 25 ♖xf8+

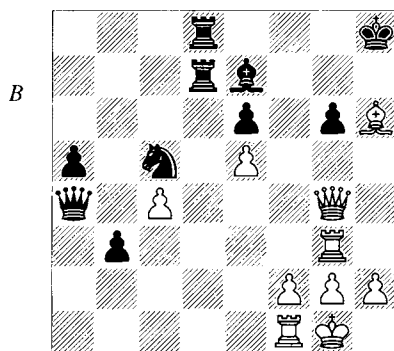


Rublevsky – Zviagintsev

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

♔g7 26 ♖xf7+ and 27 ♖xd7 White will gain a rook and two bishops for the queen. One important detail is that the counterattack against White's own back rank is harmless: 26...♔h6 27 ♖xd7 ♗e1+ 28 ♔f1 covers the king.

We have so far been discussing back-rank mates by rooks and queens. But there is a third piece that can help us exploit a weak back rank – a pawn.



M. Gurevich – Pavasović

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black's position looks critical but it is his move and he is a piece ahead, and has a powerful passed pawn. Additionally, White's king is in danger of a back-rank mate. For the moment the critical d1-square is covered, but this will not last long:

34...♖d1!!

Black destroys the main defender of the back rank – the rook.

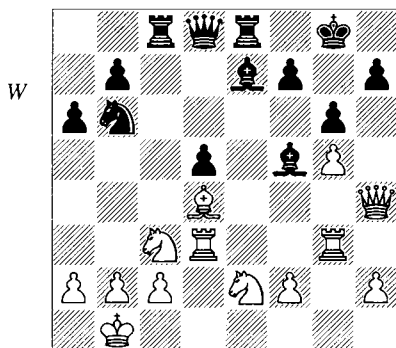
35 ♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 36 ♗xd1

And now comes the finest hour of the brave infantryman.

36...b2! 0-1

White is either mated after 37 ♖xa4 b1♖+ 38 ♖d1 ♖xd1# or loses material after 37 ♖f1 ♖a1, when Black promotes a second pawn.

There are plenty of typical mating pattern that are closely related to the back-rank mate:



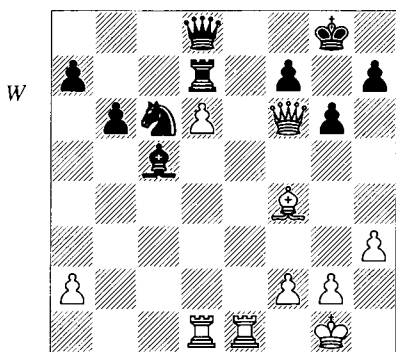
Vasiukov – J. Howell
Yaroslavl 1990

The d4-bishop is controlling the h8- and g7-squares, which makes Black's king vulnerable on the back rank.

21 ♖xh7+! 1-0

21...♖xh7 22 ♖h3+ ♔xh3 23 ♖xh3+ ♖g8 24 ♖h8#.

A vulnerable back rank can be combined with other tactical ideas:



S. Bjerke – C. Andersson
Oslo 2008

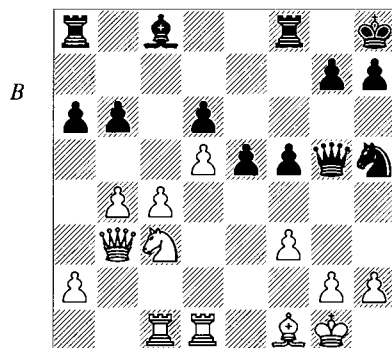
28 ♖h6!

White threatens mate, while simultaneously cutting off the black king's escape-route.

28...♔xf2+ 29 ♖h1 1-0

There follows 29...♖xf6 30 ♖e8# or 29...♔d4 30 ♖xd4.

Mates on the a- and h-files may also be considered back-rank mates. You just need to rotate your view by 90 degrees.



I. Marks – H. Mortensen
Gibraltar 2008

Black first chases his enemy into the corner.

20...♖e3+! 21 ♖h1

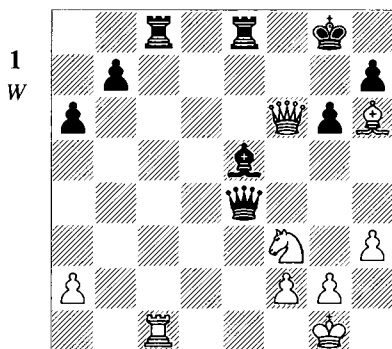
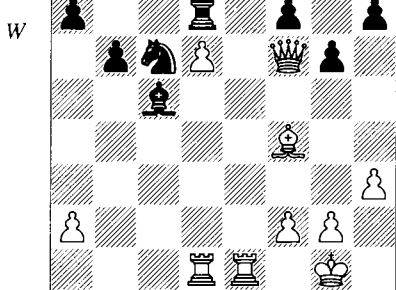
Then he deflects his only protection on the h-file.

21...♔g3+! 22 hxg3

And finally he brings in decisive reinforcements:

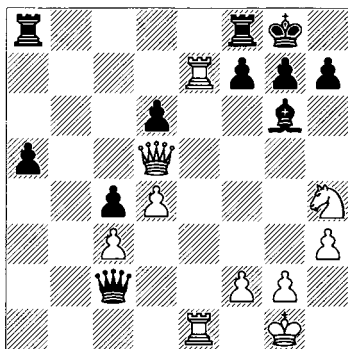
22...♖f6 0-1

Exercises

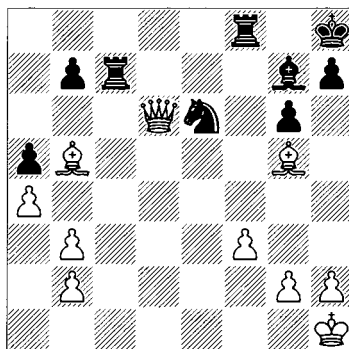


A knight fork will help you mate on the back rank.

2
W



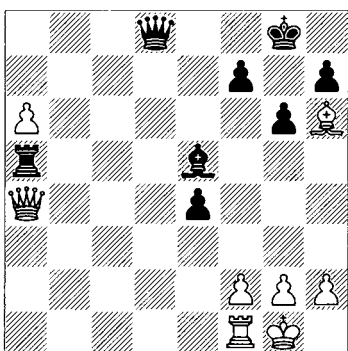
5
B



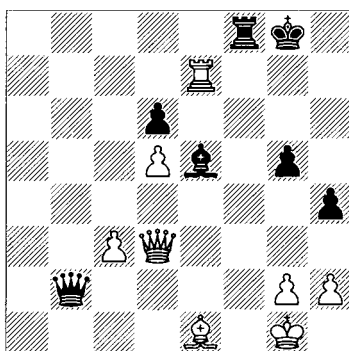
Black has just played 23...a6-a5. Is this move positionally sound, and good for Black, or is it a terrible blunder?

The critical squares here are c1 and ... ?

3
W



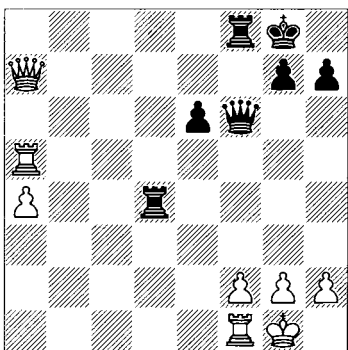
6
B



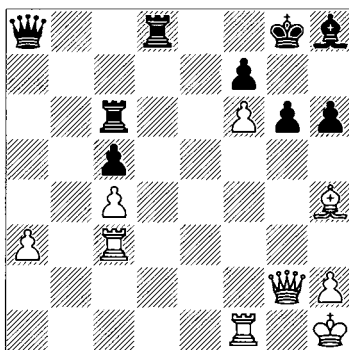
Black's bank rank is hopelessly weak...

35 ♖h7# and 35 ♖g6+ are White's threats. Is it time for Black to resign?

4
B

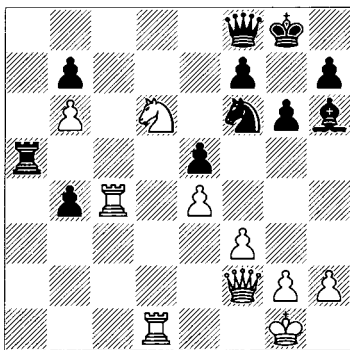


7
B



You are about to discover a typical mating pattern all by yourself!

Black's bishop looks locked in forever and White has enough compensation for his pawn weaknesses. True or false?

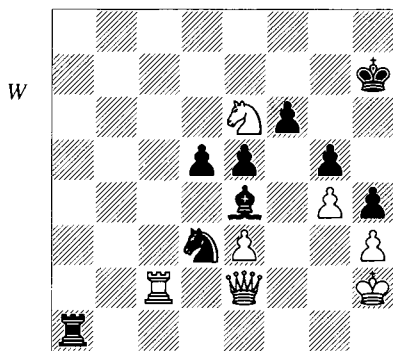
8
B

White had played excellently, winning an exchange. However, his last move was a terrible blunder, which Black punished instantly. Can you spot what was coming?

13 Stalemate

Sometimes things go wrong and we find ourselves in a difficult position. In this situation one should never give up hope and should fight to the very end. Chess is a sport like many others, and resourcefulness and fighting spirit might be well rewarded. In this chapter and the next, we look at some tactical methods that can be used to save difficult positions.

Stalemate is one of the more cunning ways to achieve a draw. It is one of the little quirks of chess that the game is drawn if a player has no legal moves and his king is not under attack, no matter how large his opponent's material advantage might be; there is no reason why we should not seek to take advantage of this. It is important to understand that stalemate ideas don't just happen by accident: we should be thinking about immobilizing our pawns, and be looking for ways to force the opponent to take any remaining pieces. We should also note that many players with a large advantage fail to think about their opponent's stalemate ideas until it is too late...



Bojkov – Borisek

European Team Ch, Gothenburg 2005

The scoring in this event was based on match points and after the other three games finished peacefully, my game was left to decide the match. I had played very badly in the middlegame and my opponent was gradually

increasing his advantage. A move ago he had sacrificed his queen to penetrate onto my first rank, and now threatens an unstoppable mate. With less than a minute I had to find something, and fortunately I spotted that my king lacks moves. The decision: I need to get rid of all my unnecessary pieces!

67 ♖xg5+!

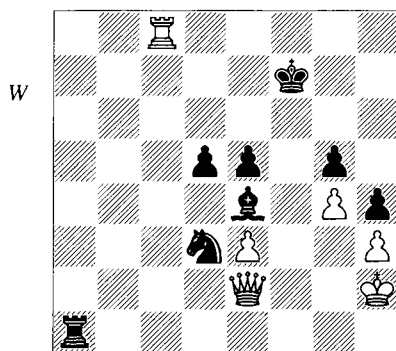
First the minor one that he could easily neglect to take if I left it until last.

67...fxg5

Not, of course, 67...♖h6?? 68 ♖xe4.

68 ♜c7+ ♔g8 69 ♜c8+ ♔f7 (D)

He has to step onto the f-file; otherwise I will keep on checking: 69...♖g7 70 ♜c7+ ♔g6 71 ♜c6+.



70 ♜f8+!

The time for a second sacrifice has come!

70...♔xf8

After 70...♔e7 71 ♜f7+ (or 71 ♜f1 ♖c1 and now 72 ♜f7+ or 72 ♜xc1, both based on the same stalemate ideas) 71...♔d6? (not a good way to avoid the draw, which Black can settle for by 71...♔xf7 or 71...♔e6) White can insist on a repetition by 72 ♜f6+ (when 72...♔c5? fails to 73 ♜f1), but after 72 ♜f1! he is probably winning (72...♖c1 73 ♜f6+).

71 ♜f1+!!

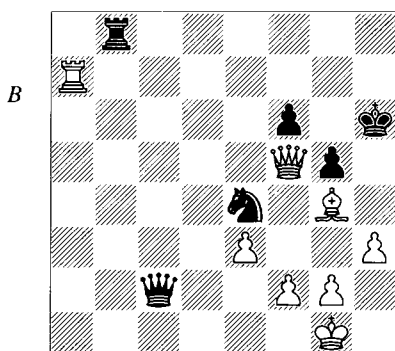
The only move, but good enough. It is also a double attack with my undefended queen. 71 ♜f3+? allows the bishop to move, when I will

have an additional pawn move: 71...♙xf3 72 e4 ♖h1#. 71 ♜f2+? fails to 71...♜f4!.

71...♜xf1 1/2-1/2

Stalemate!

The most important condition before you perform a stalemate idea is to have your king in a 'safety box'. This means a place from where it can neither move, nor be checked. In the previous case (and the next), this is already the case – the king has no squares to move to. Then you must take care of your pawns – are they blocked, or can they move? Unlike a rook or especially a queen, pawns are hard to sacrifice in such a way that the opponent is forced to take them.



Ormos – Betotsky

Budapest 1951

Here Black's pawns are blocked, so he just needs to sacrifice his remaining pieces in a way that doesn't lift the stalemate. The best order is usually minor pieces first, major pieces last. But the vital thing is to sacrifice them in a way that doesn't allow any of them to be ignored, so be sure, as always, to analyse carefully.

1...♜b1+ 2 ♙h2 ♜h1+

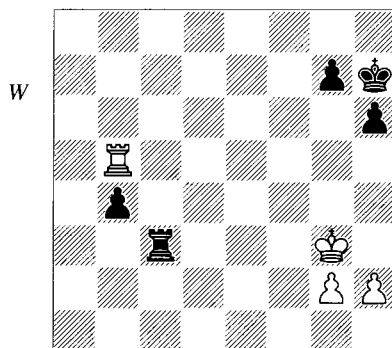
Black sacrifices his rook first, since he is sure that his knight must be taken on the next move.

3 ♙xh1 ♜g3+ 4 fxg3 ♜xg2+ 5 ♙xg2 1/2-1/2

Stalemate!

If the king is not already stalemated, the 'safety box' must be constructed. Some cunning may be required for this, and a consideration of what moves the opponent needs to play if he is to make progress. Once this is achieved, the standard task of sacrificing the remaining

army is all that stands between you and a very satisfying half-point.



Navara – Svidler

FIDE Grand Prix, Sochi 2008

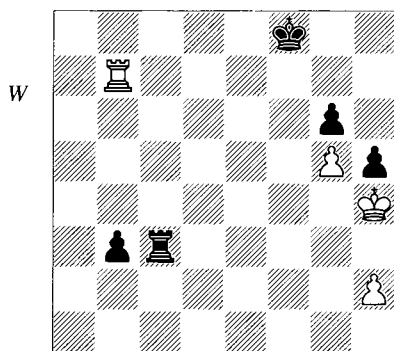
43 ♙h4

White keeps his king active.

43...b3 44 ♜b6 g6

It is hard to gain ground otherwise, since 44...♙g8 45 ♜b7 keeps the king cut off from the action.

45 ♜b7+ ♙g8 46 g4!? ♙f8 47 g5 h5 (D)

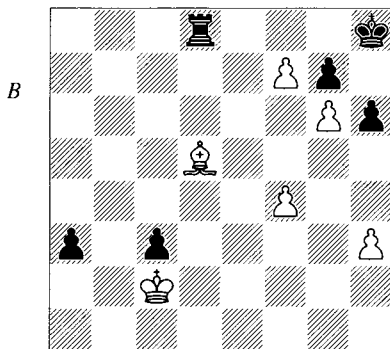


48 h3!

Suddenly everything is ready for a stalemate – the white king has created its own safety box.

48...♙e8 49 ♜xb3 ♜xb3 1/2-1/2

If we can't sacrifice all our pieces to force an actual stalemate, we can in some cases nevertheless use stalemate ideas to save a difficult position. In the situation called the **rampant rook**, a rook repeatedly sacrifices itself, giving the opponent a choice between stalemate or perpetual check.



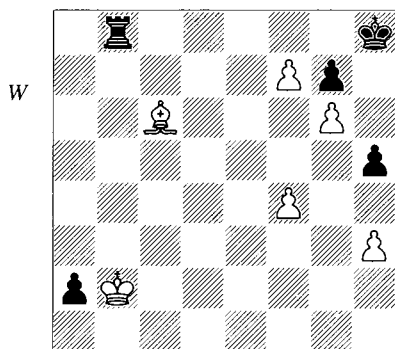
Aronian – Gelfand
Amber Blindfold, Nice 2008

This is an example of this most famous of stalemate suicide ideas.

49...h5!

First Black exhausts all his pawn moves.

50 ♖c6 ♜f8 51 ♚xc3 a2 52 ♚b2 ♜b8+ (D)

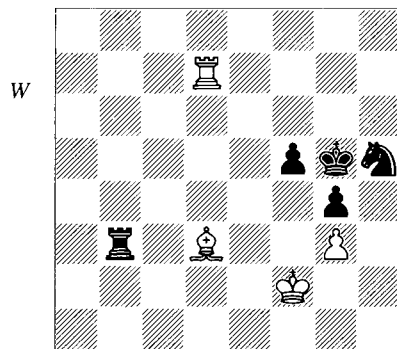


53 ♚a1 h4 1/2-1/2

After 54 ♖e8 ♜b1+ 55 ♚xa2 Black keeps offering the sacrifice of his rampant rook. These sacrifices take place on doubly-attacked squares, but this does not matter, as White has no way to capture the rook that avoids the draw: after 55...♜b2+ 56 ♚a3 ♜b3+ 57 ♚a4 ♜b4+ 58 ♚a5 ♜b5+, both 59 ♚xb5 and 59 ♖xb5 are stalemate.

Other pieces may also become rampant under certain circumstances, but a rook is the most common. Normally a 'rampant queen' will need to be taken quite soon, while the minor pieces can only give a perpetual sacrifice when there is some help from the structure or other pieces.

Rook endgames feature a lot of stalemate ideas. You just need to be aware of them.



Navara – Grishchuk
FIDE Grand Prix, Baku 2008

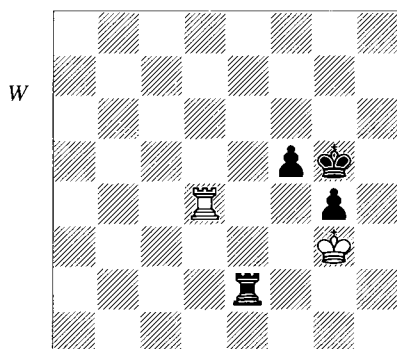
Black is a solid pawn up, and if everything proceeds normally should have every chance to win. This is why it is well worth White's while playing for a trap.

63 ♜d4!?

With this innocent-looking move, Navara sets a devilish trap.

63...♜a3!

Black is alert and sidesteps it. In event of 63...♜b2+ 64 ♖e2 ♜xg3? 65 ♚xg3 ♜xe2 (D) it looks like Black should win easily.



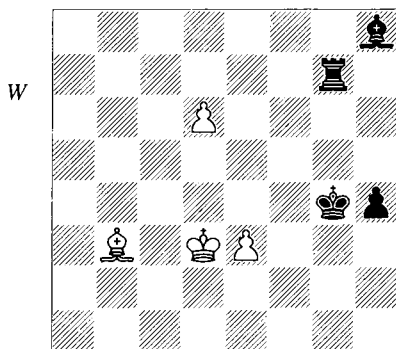
However, there now follows 66 ♜xg4+! fxg4 with a typical stalemate pattern for rook endgames. Declining the sacrifice is no use, as the ♜+♜ vs ♜ ending would be a simple draw.

64 ♜d8 ♜a2+

Grishchuk went on to win on move 86, but your opponent might not be that alert. In any case, setting a trap in a lost position can only increase one's chances for a draw.

Stalemate is most common when the king is near the corners or edges of the board, where it

has fewer squares to move to. However, you should not assume that mid-board stalemates are impossible:

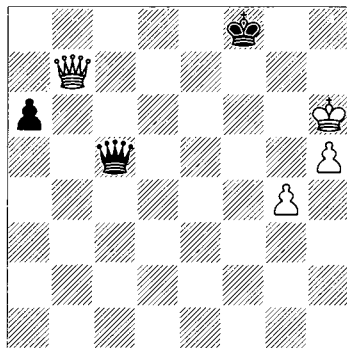


A. Khachikov

Shakhmaty (Riga), 1973

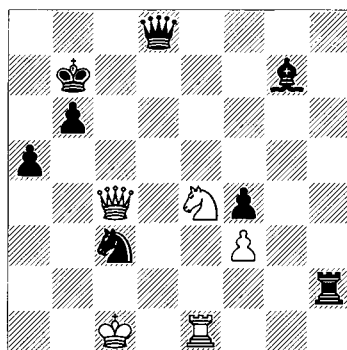
1 ♖e6+ ♜h5 2 d7 ♞g1 3 ♙g4+! ♜xg4 4
d8♞ ♞d1+ 5 ♜e4 ♞xd8
Stalemate.

2
W



Should White take the pawn?

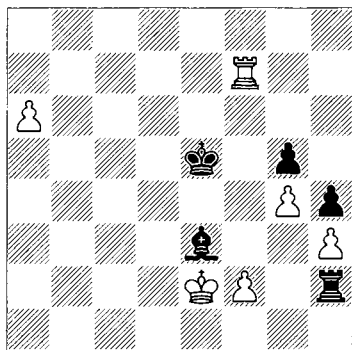
3
W



White's king is already in a safety box. What is next?

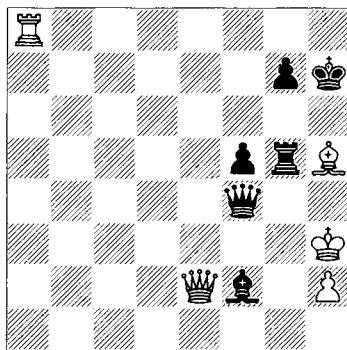
Exercises

1
W



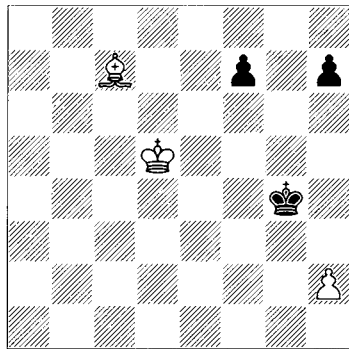
Choose between 58 ♜xe3 and 58 ♞e7+.

4
W

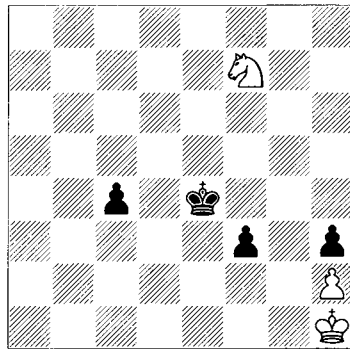


How should the game end?

5
B



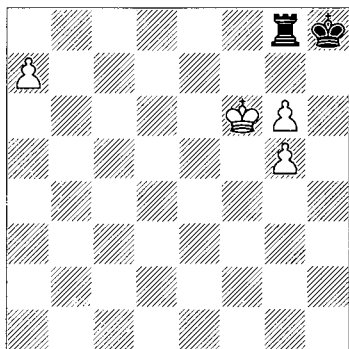
7
W



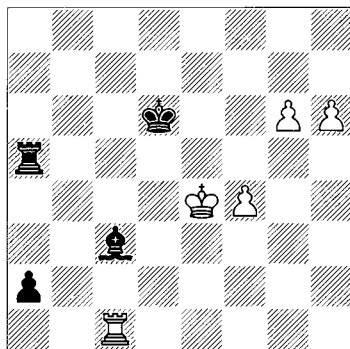
White's bishop is the 'right' one for his rook's pawn, and it seems that Black cannot build a fortress. Time to resign?

Can the knight deal with both the passed pawns?

6
W



8
W



Discover a safety box.

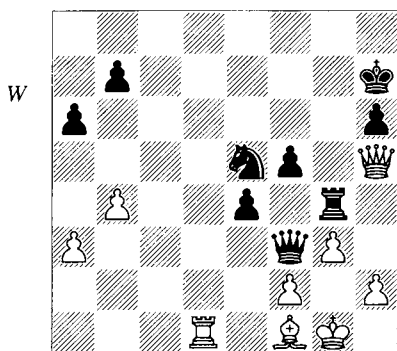
White will inevitably lose his rook. Is this the end of the story?

14 Perpetual Check and Fortresses

Perpetual Check and Perpetual Attack

Another useful method for saving a draw is threefold repetition of position. When this is forced by chasing the king, we call it perpetual check. This can occur either because the king cannot avoid the checks at all, or because avoiding them leads to unpleasant consequences. The king is not the only piece that can be disturbed for eternity; this can happen to any other piece, such as a queen that has strayed too far into enemy territory. In that case we speak about perpetual attack, or a positional draw.

Perpetual check can be the logical result of an attack on the king in an equal position, but it is also a useful idea for saving a dubious or lost position:



Conquest – Edouard

European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008

White's position looks dreadful: his pieces seem uncoordinated, while Black already has serious threats against the white king, including 38...♖xg3+. However, Conquest found a way to force a perpetual:

38 ♖e2!

The only way – White deflects Black's queen from its defence of the f5-pawn. White would

lose material after 38 ♖e2 ♜e3 39 ♖e3 ♖xe3+ 40 ♖h1 ♖f3+ 41 ♖g1 ♖xd1, when it is already too late for a perpetual: 42 ♖e7+ ♖g6 43 ♖e6+ ♖h5 44 ♖xe5 ♖d4+ 45 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 and Black wins.

38...♖xe2 39 ♖xf5+ ♖g6 40 ♖c1

By now White has a choice: 40 ♖d7+ ♖xd7 41 ♖xd7+ ♖g7 (41...♖g8 42 ♖e8+ ♖g7 43 ♖e7+) 42 ♖f5+ ♖g8 43 ♖c8+ ♖f7 44 ♖d7+ is another way to force a draw.

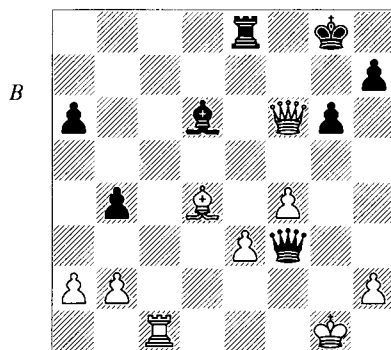
40...♖c6

After 40...♖c6 White only needs to avoid one final trap. After 41 ♖h1 ♖a2 42 ♖c7+ ♖h8, 43 ♖xg6?? loses to 43...♖b1+ 44 ♖g2 ♖g1+ 45 ♖h3 ♖xh2+ 46 ♖g4 ♖e5+, but 43 ♖c8+ ♖h7 44 ♖c7+ is a safe draw.

41 ♖f7+ ♖g7 42 ♖f5+ ♖g8 43 ♖c8+ ♖f7 44 ♖d7+ ♖g6

44...♖f6 45 ♖d6+ doesn't change anything.

45 ♖e6+ ♖h7 1/2-1/2



Valdes – H. Gonzalez

Cuba 2001

This example is more complicated. It looks as if Black is facing inevitable mate. The queen and bishop are lined up on the long diagonal, and if 1...♖g4+ White can simply answer 2 ♖f2 and the checks are over. If Black wants to do something, he must first disrupt the threat against his king.

1...♙e5!

Deflection and interference. This subtle move breaks White's perfect coordination.

2 fxe5

White sacrifices his queen, but this is only sufficient for a draw. Other moves:

a) 2 ♙xe5 allows an immediate perpetual by 2...♖xc6 3 ♗g2 ♖e2+.

b) 2 ♖c6 leads to a drawn rook endgame after 2...♖xc6 3 ♗xc6 ♙xd4 4 exd4 ♗e2.

c) White's best practical chance is 2 ♖xa6! ♙xd4 3 ♖c4+ ♙g7 4 ♖xd4+ ♙h6 5 ♗c7 (or 5 ♗f1 ♖g4+ 6 ♙h1 ♖e2 =) 5...♖xe3+ 6 ♖xe3 ♗xe3 7 ♙f2 (7 ♗c4 should also end peacefully after 7...b3! =) 7...♗h3 8 ♙g2 ♗d3 9 ♗c2 b3, but this is a draw.

2...♖g4+ 3 ♙f2

3 ♙h1 ♖e4+ =.

3...♗f8 4 ♗c7 ♗xf6+ 5 exf6

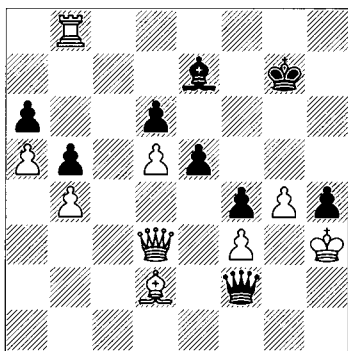
Black has won the white queen thanks to the pin, but is still the weaker side. Therefore he forces a draw:

5...♖h4+ 6 ♙f1 ♖h3+ 7 ♙e1 ♖h4+ 8 ♙d1 ♖g4+ 9 ♙c2

9 ♙d2 ♖g2+ 10 ♙d3 ♖f1+ =.

9...♖e2+ 1/2-1/2

It is naturally possible to use several saving ideas together:



Otero - Rivera
Cuba 2002

White needs to sacrifice something or throw in the towel!

1 ♙xf4!

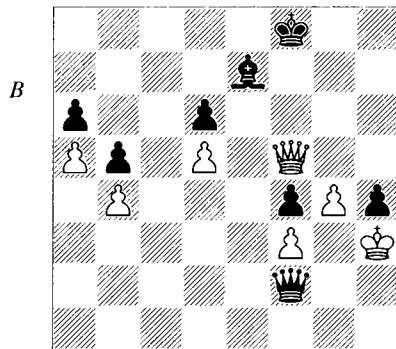
Not 1 ♙e1? ♖xe1 2 ♙h2 h3 3 ♖c2 ♖g3+ 4 ♙h1 ♖xf3+ 5 ♙h2 ♖g3+ 6 ♙h1 ♖e1+ 7 ♙h2 f3, which is hopeless for White, while 1 ♗g8+?

♙xg8 2 ♙xf4 gives Black the additional option 2...♙g7, which, in fact, wins.

1...exf4 2 ♗g8+! ♙xg8 3 ♖g6+ ♙f8

3...♙h8? may even lose after 4 ♖e8+ ♙g7 5 ♖xe7+ ♙g8 6 ♖g5+ ♙f8 7 ♖xf4+.

4 ♖f5+ (D)



4...♙g7

In case of 4...♙e8 White gives perpetual check on the light squares – the opposite colour from Black's bishop. 5 ♖c8+ ♙f7 (5...♙d8 6 ♖e6+ ♙f8 7 ♖f5+ =) 6 ♖f5+ ♙e8 7 ♖c8+ =.

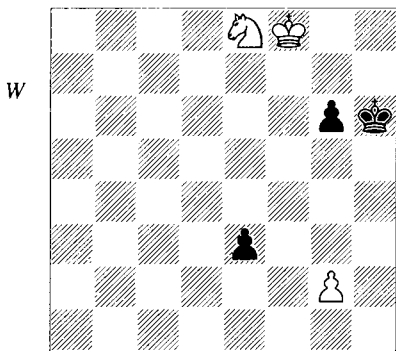
After the text-move, it looks as if White's defensive resources are exhausted. However, he has one final idea:

5 ♖g5+!! ♙f7

Since 5...♙xg5 is stalemate!

6 ♖h5+ ♙f8 7 ♖f5+ 1/2-1/2

The queen is such a powerful piece that in many cases it can deliver perpetual check all on its own, without the support of any other pieces. But other pieces can sometimes perform the same feat with only a little assistance:



G. Zakhodiakin
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

1 ♖d6

Black will queen, but White saves himself with a remarkably simple and effective construction:

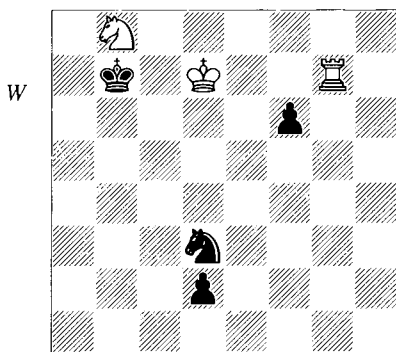
1...e2 2 ♖f7+ ♔h5 3 ♜e5 e1♚ 4 g4+ ♔h6

Both 4...♔h4 5 ♜f3+ and 4...♔g5 5 ♜f3+ lose the queen to a fork.

5 ♜f7+ ♔h7 6 ♜g5+

With a draw.

A rook and a knight may also create a drawing mechanism if they are well coordinated. This was well explained by Nimzowitsch:



A. Nimzowitsch (version)
Rigaer Nachrichten, 1923

1 ♖e6+ ♔b6

1...♔xb8 2 ♖g1 ♜e1 3 ♖g8+ ♔c7 4 ♖g7+ ♔c6 5 ♖d7 =.

2 ♖g1 ♜e1 3 ♖g4! d1♚

Now that Black has promoted, White must act with checks.

4 ♖b4+ ♔a5

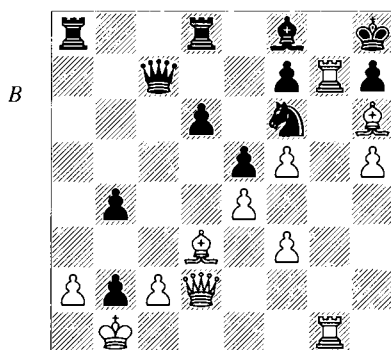
Now the classical drawing mechanism is created. The excellent position of White's king helps him use the same motifs on the c-file: **4...♔c5 5 ♜a6+ ♔c6 6 ♜b8+ ♔c7 7 ♜a6+ = ♔c8?? 8 ♖b8#.**

5 ♜c6+ ♔a6 6 ♜b8+

Remember this pattern. It may help you save a lot of points. I myself saved half a point by using the mechanism in a game against GM Atanas Kolev (La Roda rapid 2001).

Sometimes there is nothing objectively better than taking a draw by perpetual check. But if we have the draw 'in hand', so to speak, then there is no harm in trying a final winning chance. If the

opponent sees through the idea, then so be it, we must then take the draw.



Lopez Martinez – G. Guseinov
European Ch, Warsaw 2005

The position is double-edged and Black defends excellently:

24...♖xa2!

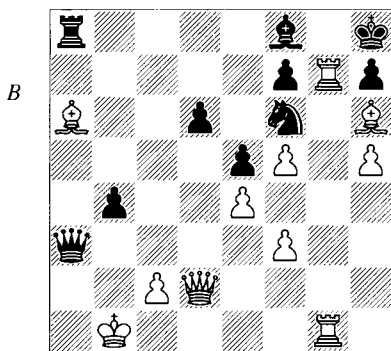
24...♚a7? loses to 25 ♔c4 d5 26 exd5 ♔c5 27 ♚g5 with the idea 28 ♖xh7+.

25 ♔xa2

White could have forced a perpetual by 25 ♖g8+ ♜xg8 26 ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 27 ♚g5+ ♔h8 28 ♚f6+, but he takes his chance.

25...♚a7+ 26 ♔xb2 ♚a3+ 27 ♔b1 ♖a8 28 ♔a6!? (D)

28 ♖g8+ is perpetual again, but why not give our opponent a chance to go wrong?



28...♚xa6!

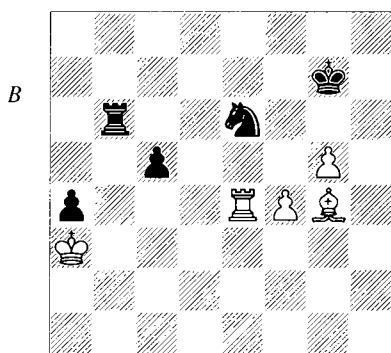
Guseinov is alert. The innocuous-looking bishop on a6 was heavily laced with poison: **28...♖xa6? 29 ♖g8+ ♜xg8 30 ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 31 ♚g5+ ♔h8** and now White triumphs using the blocking/deflection idea **32 ♔g7+! ♔xg7 (or 32...♔g8 33 ♔f6+) 33 ♚d8+ +-.**

29 ♖g8+! ♜xg8 30 ♜xg8+ ♙xg8 31 ♖g5+ 1/2-1/2

Having avoided the trap, Black had earned his half-point.

Fortresses and Insufficient Material

Another important defensive theme is liquidation to a position where one can easily defend by passive means despite a large material disadvantage. There are two distinct cases: ‘fortress’ positions, where the opponent cannot improve his position due to a blockade or other positional factors, and the simpler case of the opponent being left without sufficient material to force checkmate.



Galojan – Tsiganova

European Women’s Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Pawn exchanges can be very effective in endgames. Pawns may become queens, so they are especially dangerous and should sometimes be destroyed even at the cost of a piece. In the diagram, the lazy option for Black would be to retreat her knight, but this would most probably lead to defeat (White has two connected, well-advanced and well-supported passed pawns). It is far better to play actively, and seize the opportunity to destroy White’s pawns.

63...♜xf4!

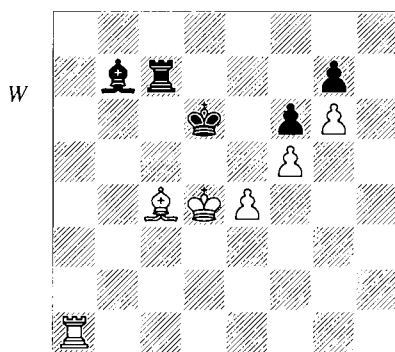
A subtle move. Worse is 63...♜xg5?! 64 fxg5 ♙g6 65 ♙d1. This will lead to the rook vs rook + bishop ending, which in theory is drawn with precise defence, but Black will at least need to suffer for fifty more moves, being very

careful the whole time to avoid blundering into one of the many lost positions. The text-move has the idea of exchanging rooks too.

64 ♜xf4 ♜b4! 65 ♜xb4 cxb4+ 66 ♙xb4 ♙g6 1/2-1/2

White has a bishop more, but the pawns have left the board.

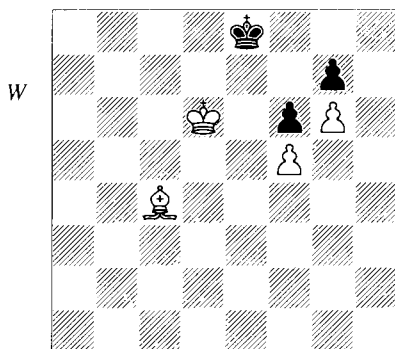
There are many possible fortresses in our game, but I would like to show you one that is not very common.



Vasilev – Todorov

Bulgarian Team Ch, Sunny Beach 2007

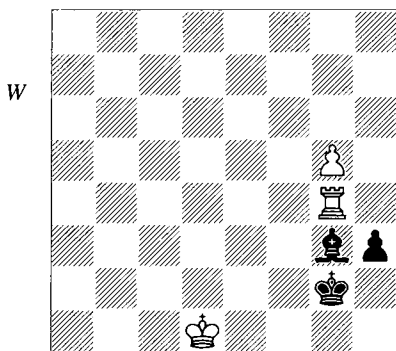
White was aiming for this position, and hoped to exchange all the pieces after 54 ♜a7 (followed by 55 ♙d5). However, when this position actually arose, he realized what Black had in store for him: 54...♙xe4!! with the idea 55 ♜xc7 ♙xc7 56 ♙xe4 and Black’s king goes to f8: 56...♙d6 57 ♙d4 ♙e7 58 ♙c5 ♙f8 59 ♙d6 ♙e8 (D).



White has an extra bishop, but cannot break the fortress. Black simply plays ...♙f8-e8-f8, and holds the draw.

In the game he proceeded with **54 ♖a2 ♟xe4**, but without his extra pawn could not make progress and the game was later drawn.

Some ways in which games can be saved are truly miraculous, and it is no surprise that fortresses and positional draws are very popular amongst endgame study composers.



G. Zakhodiakin
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1982

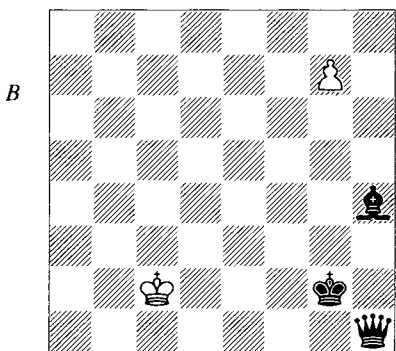
White is an exchange up, but his rook is impotent to stop the black h-pawn, which will clearly promote well before White's g-pawn. Normal means will not suffice to save White.

1 g6 h2 2 ♖h4!

Not **2 g7? h1 ♖+ 3 ♟c2 ♖h7+ 4 ♟d2 ♖g8** →. The text-move appears only to delay the h-pawn's promotion by one move, but there is a cunning point behind luring the bishop to h4.

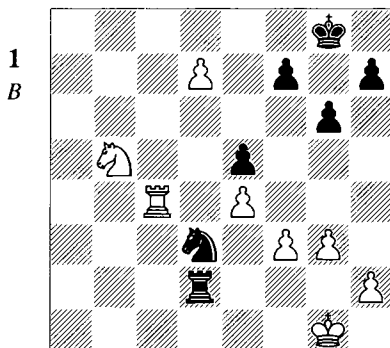
2... ♟xh4 3 g7 h1 ♖+ 4 ♟c2 (D)

The king must move to precisely this square, where neither black piece can check it.

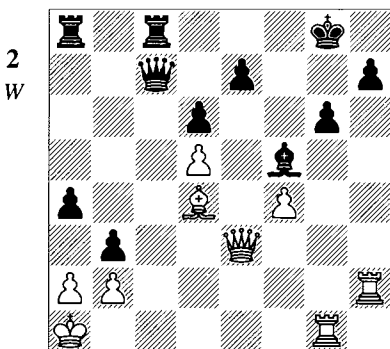


Black is a queen and bishop ahead, and is to move, but cannot avoid a draw.

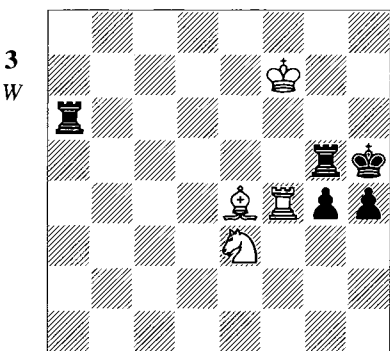
Exercises



If you have read the chapter carefully, this should be easy.

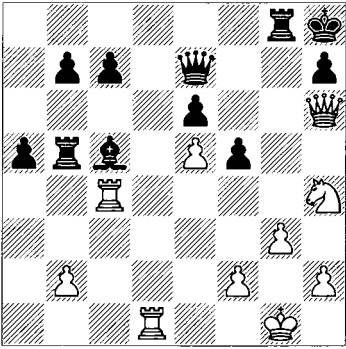


In the race to attack, and White is lagging far behind. It is time to find a safe option?



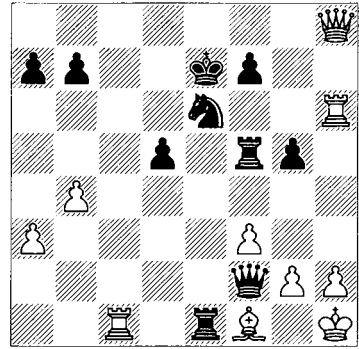
How can White annihilate Black's dangerous pawns?

4
W



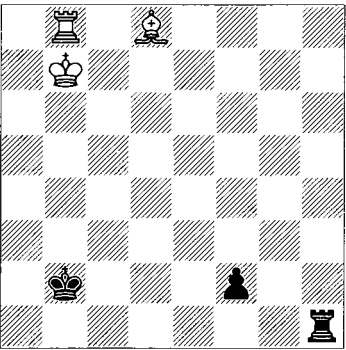
White is a pawn down, and needs to hurry before his opponent consolidates.

7
W



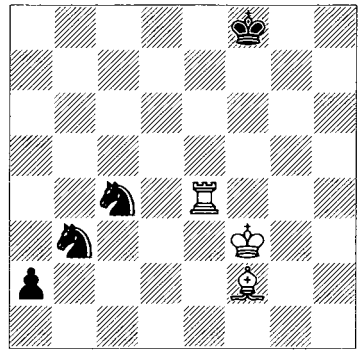
Be very precise when giving perpetual check!

5
W



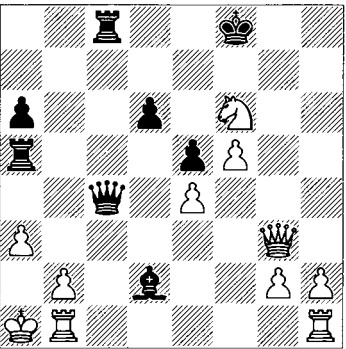
A rook is also capable of glorious deeds.

8
W



Black will queen, but two knights are not sufficient to give mate. So...

6
B



Black is three pawns down, but is very active...

Part 2: Advanced Tactics

The second part of the book features the most typical ways to attack a castled king. A king is well protected in its castled position, with a row of pawns in front and normally with some pieces close at hand (normally a rook and a knight, and often a bishop). However, there are also many possible plans for attacking this set-up. If you study these plans carefully, and assess at the board which one is most appropriate under the specific circumstances, you will often be able to carry out successful attacks.

The most sensitive points in the castled position are those which are only covered by the king, or perhaps only by one other piece. These points might be blown apart with the help of various sacrifices, or targeted by a variety of other attacking manoeuvres and mechanisms.

Never forget that we need to have a local superiority of forces if we want to succeed in our mating plans. And as always, control of the centre is important if we are to supply additional forces and prevent our opponent from bringing over defensive forces to guard the king. But most of all, we need to be quick, and to use every move efficiently and to gain time whenever possible.

We shall be taking a particularly close look at attacks with opposite-coloured bishops. While pure opposite-bishop endings tend to be drawish, in an attack and defence situation, the difference in the value of these minor pieces can prove decisive. The better bishop often wins since the attack can be conducted on the squares of its colour, on which its counterpart is impotent.

Open files are another key ingredient. Rooks are the only pieces that do not need to be centralized to show their full potential; all they need are open files. These chess highways provide good communication between the attacking forces, and assure the success of many tactical operations.

Last, but not least – the trapping of pieces, both physical and virtual (i.e. the excluding of a piece) may also bring us the necessary superiority of forces. A piece that is shut out of play can be compared to a pinned, overloaded, or blocked piece. None of these pieces can act with their full potential, and so may become vulnerable and be lost themselves, or may cause other misfortunes thanks to their passivity.

In the last three chapters, strategy and tactics become merged into one intertwined whole, and this is very normal for such a complicated game as chess.

15 f7: Weak by Presumption

When we observe the initial position of a chess game, one thing inevitably makes an impression. There is one square that is protected only by the king, a square so vulnerable that even novices notice that it is possible to give mate on this square after just a few moves. We are of course talking about the f7-square¹.

We shall consider several typical situations in which an attack against this fragile point may be feasible:

- 1) An explosive early sacrifice before castling.
- 2) After castling, with no rook on f8.
- 3) After castling, with the f7-pawn protected by the rook.
- 4) Step-by-step attack against the weak f7-square.

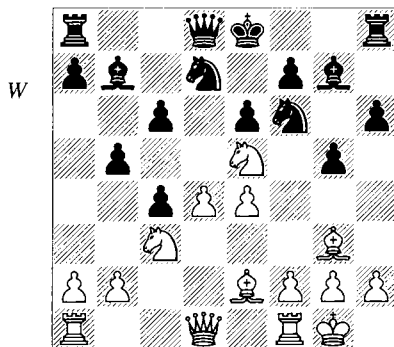
Explosive early sacrifice before castling

As we have already noted, f7 is the most vulnerable square in the initial position, so there is ample scope for early sacrifices on this square. Whole opening plans are based on an early sacrifice on f7, such as the Petroff Defence line 1 e4 e5 2 f3 f6 3 exf7!?, when for the sacrificed knight White earns two pawns, and a long-term attack based on the exposed position of the black king. This was seen, for instance, in the game Topalov-Kramnik, Linares 1999. In general one of the best players in our time, Veselin Topalov is a great advocate of early sacrifices on f7. Using the same method he managed to defeat his old adversary Kramnik in one of the best games of the last decade:

Topalov – Kramnik

Wijk aan Zee 2008

1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 e6 5 g5
h6 6 h4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 g3 b5 9 e2 b7
10 0-0 bd7 11 e5 g7 (D)



12 e5xf7!?:

The second exclamation mark is for the courage to give up a piece against a world-class player at such an early stage of the game. This was Ivan Cheparinov's deep novelty, prepared in 2005 for possible use in the 2006 world championship match. White gets only one pawn for the piece, but develops a strong initiative against the opponent's king. Topalov went on to win a flashy game, and the reader can find annotations in many sources in case he is not already familiar with this game.

Topalov – Anand

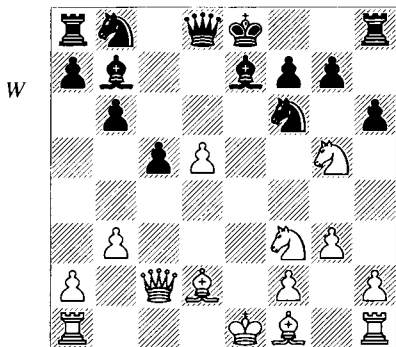
Sofia 2005

1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 f3 b6 4 g3 a6 5 b3
b4+ 6 d2 e7 7 c3 c6 8 e4 d5 9 c2
dxe4 10 e4 b7 11 e5 g5 c5

¹ Or the f2-square in White's position. For ease of reference, we shall in our general discussions refer to the f7-square, but naturally the reader should not assume that White's f2-square is any safer against the ideas we shall present!

After 11...h6 both 12 ♖xf7 and 12 ♖xe6 blow Black's position apart in a similar way to the game continuation.

11...0-0 was given by Topalov as safer, when White can reply 12 0-0-0 with the idea 13 ♖d3. 12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5 h6 (D)



14 ♖xf7! ♔xf7 15 0-0-0

White has a strong initiative against Black's king. He has at his disposal various threats, such as 16 ♖e5+ and 16 d6 followed by ♖c4+, and can use both his rooks in the attack. One very important feature of the position is that after the demolition of the black pawn on f7, a whole complex of light squares has become desperately weak.

15...♖d6 16 ♖h4 ♖c8 17 ♖e1 ♖a6 18 ♖e6 ♖b4

18...♖c7 19 ♖g6+ ♔g8 20 ♖f5 ♖f8 21 ♖c4 underlines the light-square weaknesses in Black's camp.

19 ♖xb4 cxb4 20 ♖c4 b5

Black had other possible defences, such as 20...♖f8 and 20...♖g8, which is aimed against 21 ♖g6, which will be met by 21...b5!. However, the evaluation of the position remains the same: White has a strong attack and any mistake from Black's side will be cruelly punished.

21 ♖xb5 ♖e7?

And here it comes. Better was 21...♖g8!?, meeting 22 ♖g6 with 22...h5!?. Topalov proposed 22 ♖c4 or 22 ♖d1 in reply.

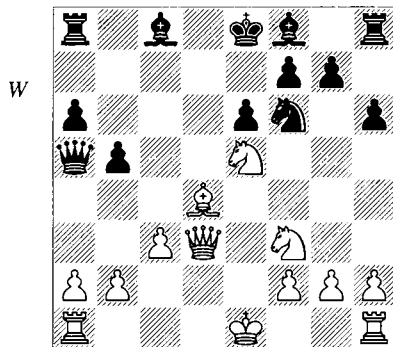
22 ♖g6!? ♖xd5

22...♖xe6 23 dxe6+ ♔g8 24 ♖d1 ♖d5 25 ♖c4 +-

23 ♖xe7+?!

This was White's only flaw in his superb attack. Although he nevertheless won later, we shall leave the game at this point, as it would

distract from the main focus of our discussion here. The subtle 23 ♖e5 ♖b7 24 ♖f5+ ♔g8 25 ♖c4 would have led to an instant win, and is an ideal illustration of the ideas behind the assault on f7.



Alsina Leal – Fluvia Poyatos
Barcelona 2008

The weakness of the light squares can also be highlighted by a sacrifice on a square other than f7. In this case White deflects the f7-pawn, and can destroy it later.

17 ♖g6!

This is practically the same idea as the sacrifice on f7; White just captures the pawn in an unusual way.

17...fxg6 18 ♖xg6+ ♔e7 19 ♖e5 ♖c7 20 ♖f7 ♖g8 21 ♖e5 ♖c6 22 0-0-0

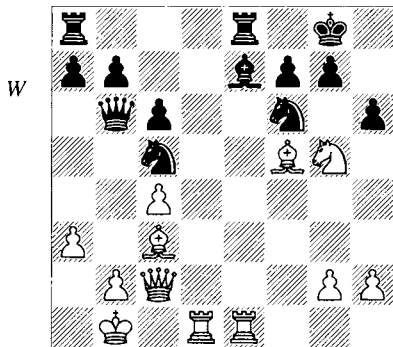
As a result of the sacrifice, Black's king has had to stay in the centre under threats from all the white pieces. It is no wonder that it did not survive for too long.

22...♖d5 23 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 24 ♖d1 ♖b7 25 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 26 ♖xh6 ♖h8 27 ♖f7+ ♔d8 28 ♖c7+ ♔e8 29 ♖f7 1-0

After castling, with no rook on f8

When Black castles kingside, his rook immediately covers the f7-pawn. However, for various reasons the rook may move from f8, possibly to contest an open file, or with some other strategic aim in mind, such as freeing f8 for a knight or bishop. However well motivated this may be, it does leave f7 highly sensitive once again, and various mating mechanisms may then work.

One typical idea is to play ♙h7+ followed by the ♜xf7 sacrifice. The attacker first cuts off the king's way back to his safe squares g8 and h8, and attacks it on the f- and e-files. Naturally, this is most likely to be effective when the e- and f-files are open and in your control.



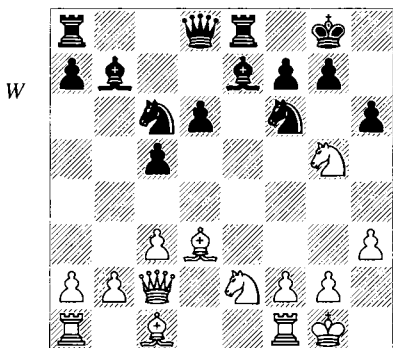
Åkesson – C. van Oosterom
Wijk aan Zee 2007

21 ♙h7+ ♜f8

Since 21... ♜h8 22 ♜xf7\# is instant mate.

22 ♜xf7 ♜xf7 23 ♙g6+ ♜f8 24 ♞e7 ♞xe7
25 ♙xf6 gxf6 26 ♙g8\# (1-0)

The dark-squared bishop can also be used in the action.



L. Dominguez – R. Perez
Cuban Ch 2003

15 ♙h7+ ♜f8 16 ♜xf7!! ♜xf7 17 ♙g6+ ♜f8 18 ♙xh6! gxh6

18... ♜h5 19 ♜f4! ♙f6 20 ♜xh5 +- .

19 ♜f4

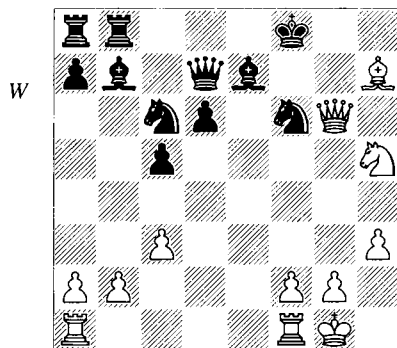
White's knight will also play an active role. Note that Black's main troops are far away on

the queenside and White has a superiority of attacking forces on the kingside.

19... ♙d7 20 ♙xh6+

20 ♜h5 is also good.

20... ♜f7 21 ♙g6+ ♜f8 22 ♜h5 ♞e8 (D)



23 ♞e1

23 ♙h6+ ♜e8 (23... ♜f7 24 ♙g6+ ♜e6 25 ♜f4+ ♜e5 26 ♙g5+ mates) 24 ♙f5 ♙c7 (or 24... ♙xf5 25 ♜g7+) 25 ♜g7+ ♜f8 26 ♜e6++ .

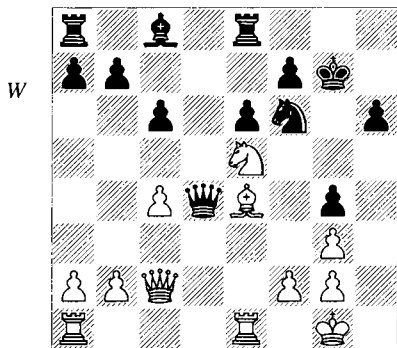
23... ♜xh7 24 ♙xh7 ♜e5

24... ♙c8 25 ♞xe7 ♜xe7 26 ♞e1 .

25 f4 ♙f6 26 ♙h6+ ♙g7 27 fxe5+ ♜g8 28 ♜f6+ 1-0

28... ♙xf6 29 exf6 ♞f8 30 ♙g6+ ♜h8 31 f7 .

As in the case of a sacrifice on f7 against an uncastled king, the attacker can enter on other squares around the king in order to reach f7:



Karthikeyan – Ragger

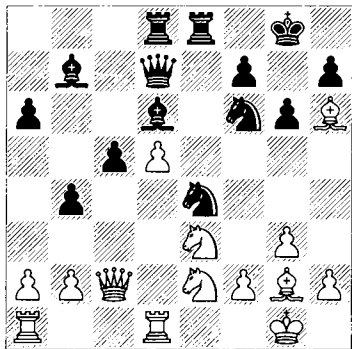
World Junior Ch, Gaziantep 2008

18 ♙g6!

Since the capture on g6 leads to forced mate, and 18... ♞f8 is met by 19 ♙xf7 with similar ideas, Black gave his queen away:

18...♖xe5 19 ♜xe5 fxe6 20 ♖c3 ♔d7 21 ♜d1 ♜ad8 22 ♜e3 ♔c8 23 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 24 ♜d3 1-0

The next example is a famous one, where a series of sacrifices drags the king out into the centre.

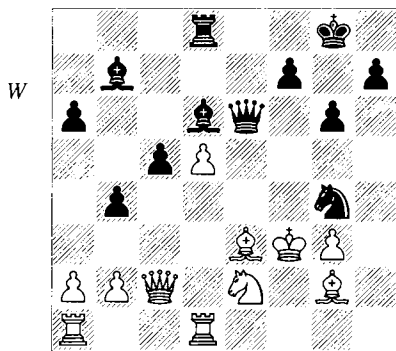


Cifuentes – Zviagintsev
Wijk aan Zee 1995

24...♜xf2! 25 ♖xf2 ♜xe3! 26 ♔xe3

26 ♖xe3 ♜g4+ 27 ♔d2 ♜xh6 gives Black a pawn for an exchange and an overwhelming advantage on the dark squares. Therefore, White might as well try keeping the sacrificed rook, even though his king will now be in great danger.

26...♜g4+ 27 ♖f3 ♜xh2+ 28 ♖f2 ♜g4+ 29 ♖f3 ♖e6! (D)



Black's attack is unstoppable.

30 ♔f4

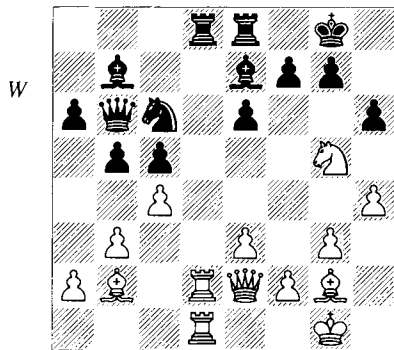
Everything else is equally hopeless: 30 ♖e4 ♖xe4+ 31 ♖e4 ♜e8+; 30 ♖d2? ♜e8; 30 ♔c1 h5! (threatening ...♔d5+ and ...♜e8) 31 ♜f4 ♔xf4 32 gxf4 (or 32 ♔xf4 ♜xd5, mating) 32...♜xd5 33 ♖g3 h4+ 34 ♖xh4 ♜e3, mating.

30...♜e8

30...♔xf4 31 ♖e4!.

31 ♖c4 ♖e3+ 32 ♔xe3 ♜xe3+ 33 ♖xg4 ♔c8+ 34 ♖g5 h6+! 35 ♖xh6 ♜e5 0-1

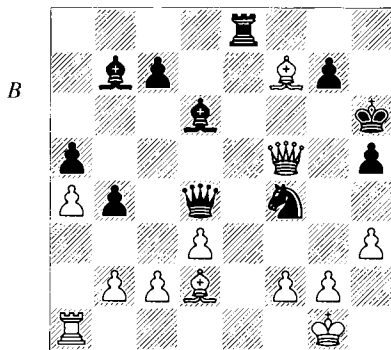
The sacrifice on f7 can be a prelude of a total annihilation of the pawns in front of the king:



Magalashvili – A. Aleksandrov
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

23 ♜xf7! ♖xf7 24 ♖h5+ g6 25 ♖xh6 ♜f8 26 ♔e4 1-0

Or it might clear the road for all the attacking pieces:



Cheparinov – Navara
European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007

27...♖xf2+! 28 ♖xf2 ♜e2+ 29 ♖g1 29 ♖f1 ♔xg2+ 30 ♖g1 ♜xd2 --.

29...♜xg2+?!

29...♜xd2! 30 ♜e1 g6! 31 ♜e6 ♜xg2+ 32 ♖f1 ♜g3! (Ftačnik) favours Black.

30 ♖f1 ♜xd2 31 ♔g8?

After 31 h4! Black has no more than a draw.

31...♙g2+ 32 ♖e1 ♜e2+ 33 ♖d1 ♙f3 34 ♖h7+ ♖g5 35 ♜a2

35 ♖xg7+ ♖h4 36 ♖f6+ ♖xh3 37 ♖c1 ♜e1+ 38 ♖d2 ♜xa1 –+.

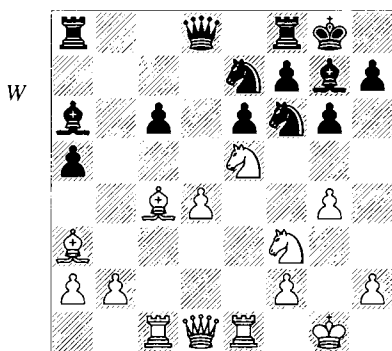
35...♜h2+ 36 ♖e1

36 ♖c1 ♖xd3+ (36...♖e2+ 37 ♖d2 ♖d4+ 38 ♖e3 ♙e5 –+) 37 cxd3 ♙f4+ 38 ♖b1 ♜h1+ 39 ♖c2 ♜c1+ 40 ♖b3 ♙d1#.

36...♖xd3+! 0-1

After castling, with the f7-pawn protected by the rook

The sacrifice is often made when the attacker has a bishop trained on the e6-square. In this case, the defender's extra option of recapturing with his rook may not be a good solution, since the rook is liable to be pinned:



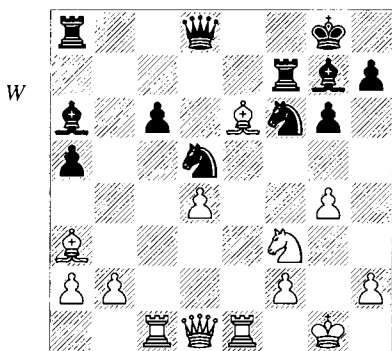
Smirin – Smyslov

USSR Ch, Moscow 1988

22 ♖xf7! ♜xf7

In this case, there is no choice, and Black must take with the rook.

23 ♙xe6 ♖ed5 (D)

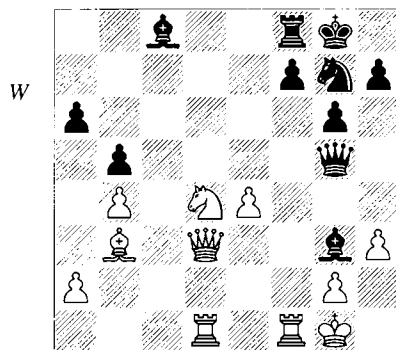


Black opens a line for his queen's rook to defend its colleague on f7.

24 ♖e5 ♜a7 25 ♜xc6

White already has two pawns for a piece, and he will certainly gain at least an exchange. In addition he is not in a hurry and may choose the best moment to recoup his material investment.

25...♖f4 26 ♜xa6 ♜xa6 27 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 28 ♖f3 1-0

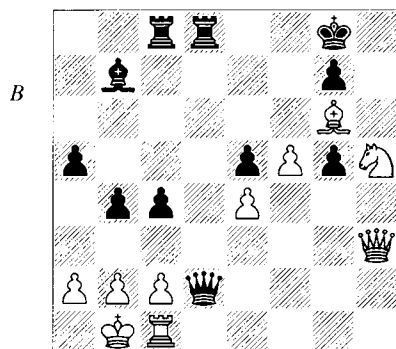


Leko – Mamedyarov

Amber Blindfold, Nice 2008

30 ♜xf7! ♜xf7 31 ♖f3 ♖e7 32 ♖d8+ ♖f8 33 ♖g5 1-0

The typical sacrifice can be very effective in conjunction with a weak back rank:



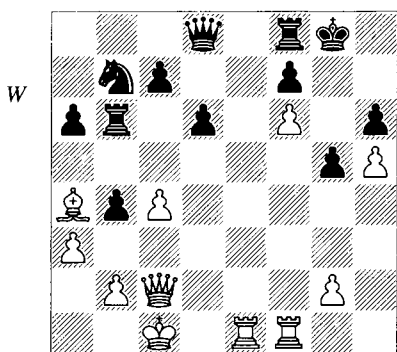
Westin – Fridriksson

Sweden 1973

1...♖xc2+!! 0-1

In following example White managed to give an extra impetus to his far-advanced pawn. But

first, he needed to crack the f7-point, and he found an original way to do so.



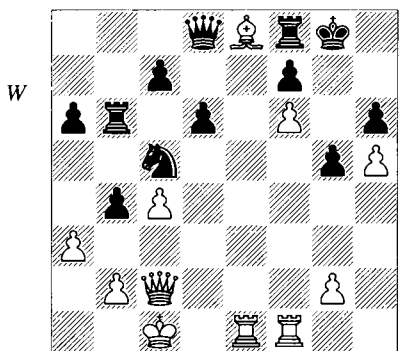
Maksimenko – Komandini
Italy 2003

1 ♙e8! ♜c5 (D)

1...♙xe8 does not work due to the drastic 2 ♖g6+!! fxg6 3 f7+.

1...♞h8 allows a decisive attack on the vulnerable square: 2 ♙e7 bxa3 (2...♙xe8 3 ♙xf7 +-) 3 ♙xf7 axb2+ (3...a2 4 ♙d2 +-) 4 ♙b1 +-.

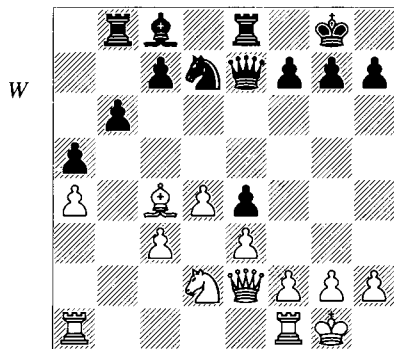
Informator gives in addition the line 1...♙xe8 2 ♙xe8 ♙xe8 3 ♙a4 ♙e4 4 ♙d7, where White also breaks through to the f7-square thanks to the manoeuvre ♙c8+ and ♙f8.



2 ♙xf7+! ♙xf7 3 ♙g6+ ♙f8 4 ♙xh6+ ♙g8 5 ♙f5 ♜d3+ 6 ♙b1 ♙h7 7 f7+ 1-0

Step-by-step attack against the weak f7-square

If we lack a suitable way to smash through with a direct attack, we need to bring up reinforcements first. The most conventional way is to open a file for the rooks.



Moiseev – Luchinkin
Moscow Ch 1979

17 f3!

White first opens a line of attack for his rooks against f7.

17...exf3 18 ♙xf3 ♜f6

The knight is a temporary obstacle, and can be easily removed:

19 e4! ♙g4 20 ♙g3 ♙h5

Black has managed to bring a bishop over to protect f7. However, he lacks space, and as a result will not be able to involve all his forces in the defence. Meanwhile, White can use every single unit in his army.

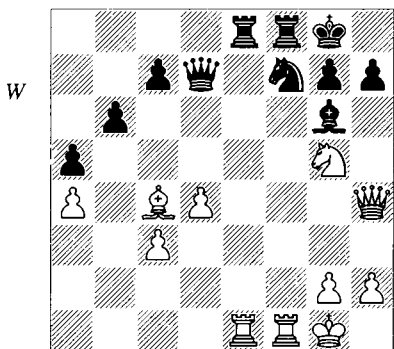
21 e5 ♜d7 22 ♜e4 ♙g6 23 ♜g5

Almost all the white troops have amassed in their siege of the weak point.

23...♙f8 24 e6 ♜e5

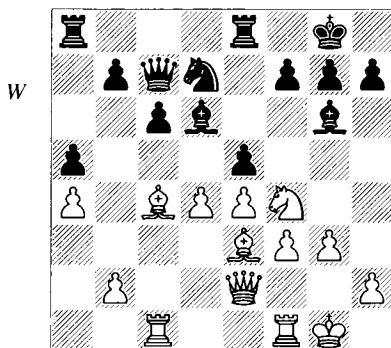
24...♜f6 is better, but still insufficient: 25 ♜xf7 ♙xf7 26 exf7+ ♙h8 27 ♙ae1 wins for White.

25 exf7+ ♜xf7 26 ♙ae1 ♙d7 27 ♙h4 ♙be8 (D)



And after pinning down Black's forces, White delivers the final blow:

28 ♖xf7! ♜xf7 29 ♕xf7+ ♕xf7 30 ♖xh7+ ♜f8 31 ♖f1 1-0



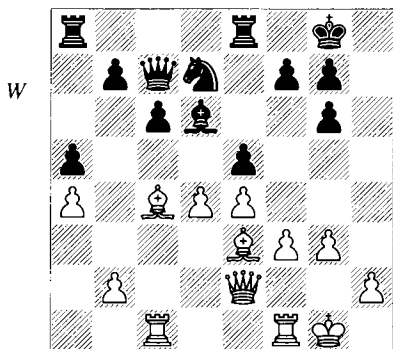
Topalov – Bu Xiangzhi
Sofia 2008

Black has just played 20...e6-e5?, afraid that his bishop on g6 will be excluded from the game. However, this was the lesser evil, since after his actual move, Black has greater problems with f7-square.

21 ♖xg6

A decision based on concrete considerations. Although the bishop was passive, it was an important defender of f7.

21...hxg6 (D)



22 f4

White clears the road for his major pieces. The f1-rook is ready to attack the f7-square.

22...exd4 23 ♕xd4 b6?

23...♕f8 or 23...♖f8 is more resilient. The line 23...♕c5 24 ♕xf7+ ♜xf7 25 ♕xc5 ♖xc5 26 ♖xc5 shows an additional danger from the f7-point. Also bad is 23...♖f6 24 e5 ♕f8 25 ♖d3 ♖ad8 26 exf6 c5 27 ♕b5 and White wins.

24 f5 g5

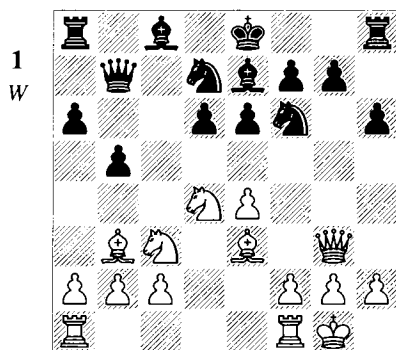
Black tries to keep the f-file closed at any rate. However, the white queen now has free access to h5, and thus the f7-square.

25 ♖h5 ♖f6

Or 25...♖e5 26 f6 g6 27 ♖h6 ♕f8 28 ♕xe5 followed by ♖xg6+.

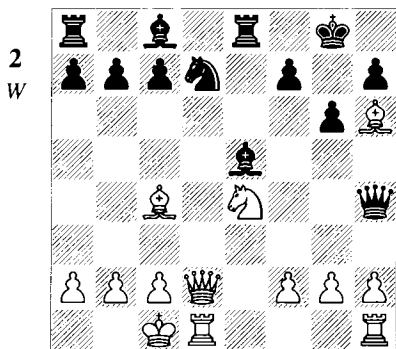
26 ♕xf6 gxf6 27 ♖g6+ ♜f8 28 ♖xf6 ♕e5 29 ♖xg5 ♖e7 30 f6 ♕d4+ 31 ♖f2 1-0

Exercises



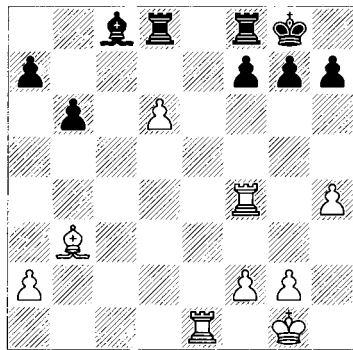
1
W

Black is counting on 13 ♖xg7 ♖g8. Does White have anything better?

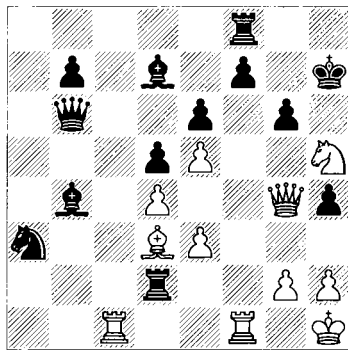


2
W

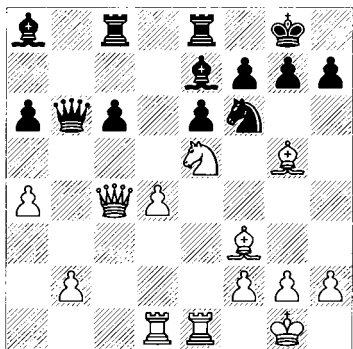
This is an easy nut to crack.

3
W

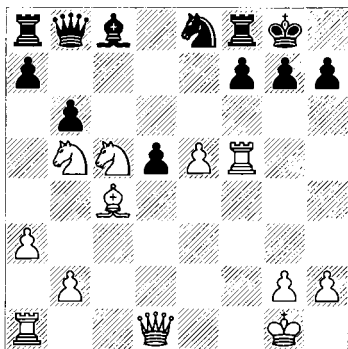
White's passed pawn looks doomed. Is it?

6
W

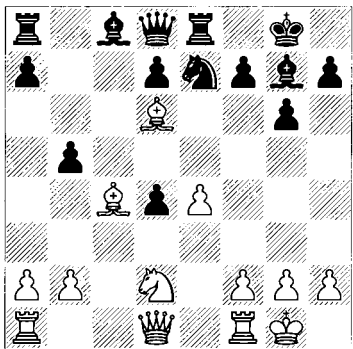
How can White burn down his opponent's house?

4
W

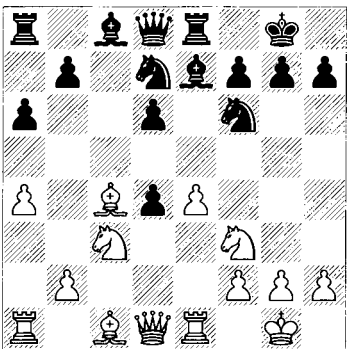
This combination often occurs in positions with an isolated queen's pawn.

7
W

Drag the king out!

5
W

Our focus should be on one particular pawn...

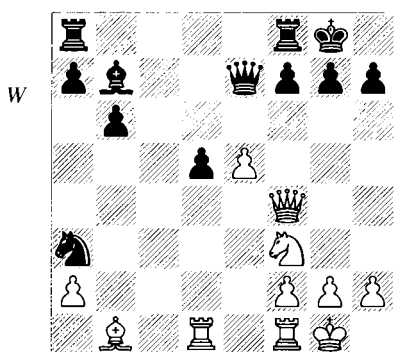
8
W

The rook will be sorry for leaving f8 so early.

16 The Vulnerable Rook's Pawn

Once the king has castled on the kingside, the most vulnerable spot in his camp becomes the rook's pawn on h7 (or h2 in the case of White). It is the furthest from the rest of the forces, and the hardest to protect. The rook has abandoned it, and in many cases it is only the king who keeps an eye on this pawn. Often it is also guarded by the knight on f6, but this piece is more exposed to attack. It can frequently be removed by an attack by a pawn, or else pinned, exchanged, or even annihilated by a sacrifice.

The attacker has at his disposal various attacking mechanisms. **Queen and knight** can form a highly potent attacking team, and there are a variety of ways by which they can drag a king out from behind its pawn-shield:



M. Makarov – Volzhin

Russian Team Ch, Moscow 1994

After White's standard 'Greek Gift' bishop sacrifice, the fate of the game is in the hands of White's queen and knight.

19 ♖xh7+! ♗xh7 20 ♘g5+ ♔g6

Now the king lacks defenders, but 20...♗g8? 21 ♖h4 followed by ♖h7+ and ♖h8# is mate.

21 h4

The h-pawn supports the white knight and will play a role as an attacking unit in its own right.

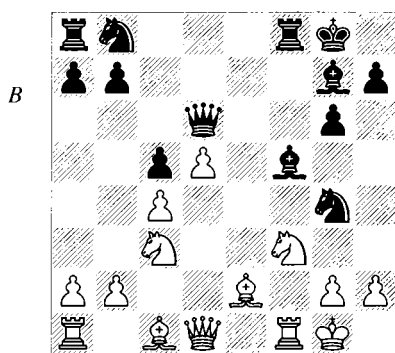
21...f6?

Now White has a forced mate. A critical line runs 21...♗c4 22 ♖fe1 ♖h8 23 ♗d3 f6 24 g4 ♗h6 25 ♗e6+ ♗h7 26 exf6 ♖xf6 27 ♖c7 ♖ae8 28 ♖f3 ♖xe6 29 ♖xf6 ♖xe1+ 30 ♗g2 ♗a8 31 ♖f7, when the mate threat forces Black to give up material. He is fighting for a draw after 31...d4+ 32 f3 ♗xf3+ 33 ♖xf3 ♗e5 34 ♖h5+ ♗g8 35 ♖f8+ ♗xf8 36 ♖xh8+ ♗f7.

22 h5+ ♗h6 23 ♖f5

Dragging the king out into the open.

23...♖e8 24 ♖h7+ ♗xg5 25 f4+ ♗g4 26 ♖xg7+ ♗f5 27 g4+ 1-0



Ponce – Ortiz

Cuba 2002

1...♗c2!

Black needs to annihilate the knight on f3 and he opens a pathway for the demolition crew (in the form of the f8-rook) with gain of tempo.

2 ♖xc2

Or: 2 ♗b5 ♗xd1 3 ♗xd6 ♗xe2 -+; 2 ♖e1 is similar: 2...♗d4+ 3 ♗h1 ♖xf3 -+.

2...♖xf3! 3 g3

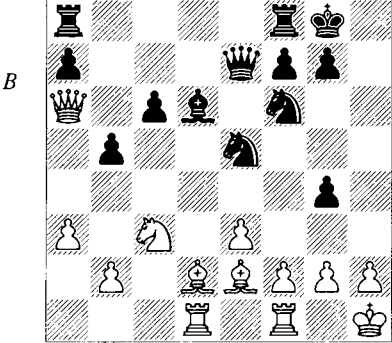
3 ♖xf3 ♖xh2+ 4 ♗f1 ♖h1#.

3...♖xg3+!

The rook is intent on demolishing White's defences and securing its queen's access to deliver mate on h2.

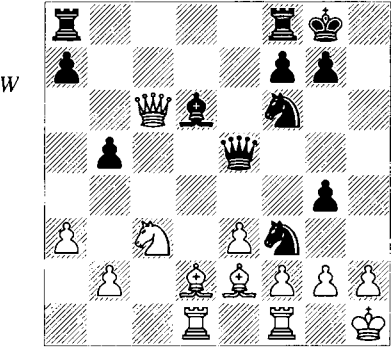
4 ♗h1 ♖g1+! 0-1

Lining up the **queen and bishop** to attack the rook's pawn is especially attractive when the opponent's king is in the corner square:



Volkov – Akopian
Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2005

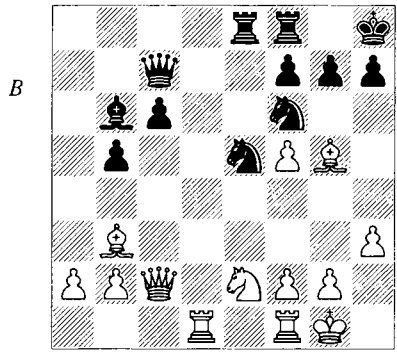
18...♠f3! 19 ♖xc6
19 gxf3 gxf3 20 ♘xf3 ♕e5 is Black's main point, when mate is inevitable. Note that his opponent cannot hinder or block the key diagonal.
19...♕e5 (D)



20 ♖xd6
20 g3 does not suffice, since the queen finds a good location by 20...♕h5. After 21 ♘xf3 gxf3, the f6-knight can come into play by ...♘g4, and when White meets this threat with h4, Black will secure victory by ...♘e7. The same motifs occurs in other lines too.
20...♕xd6 21 gxf3
White has only two minor pieces for the queen, and went on to lose.

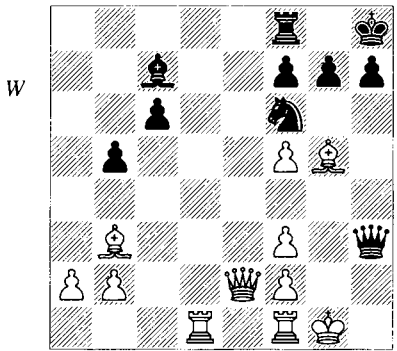
From what we have already seen, one might think that the simplest solution is to advance the pawn one square by playing ...h6. In some

situations this is indeed essential, and a good way to sidestep the most dangerous threats. But it is certainly no panacea, and in many cases the pawn is exposed to a sacrifice, or leaves a very sore point on g6. Here is a model example of how the g6-square can be exploited:



Staniszewski – A. Grigoryan
Warsaw 2008

Black can mobilize his queen and bishop with gain of tempo by using a pin:
23...♠f3+! 24 gxf3 ♗xe2!
Removing an important defender.
25 ♕xe2 ♗g3+ 26 ♔h1 ♕xh3+ 27 ♔g1 ♘c7 (D)



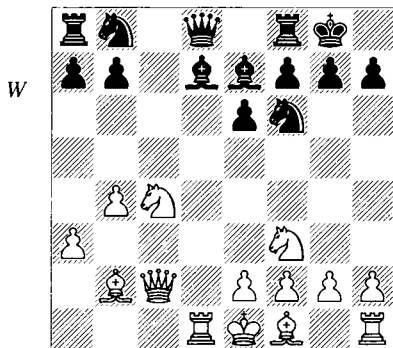
Black's queen and bishop work together in perfect harmony.
28 f4 ♘g4 0-1

Queen and rook constitute a lot of firepower that works well on the rook's file. If the attacking side has not yet castled, or has castled on the opposite wing, then it may be quite straightforward to bring a rook into the assault.

V. Georgiev – Kurajica

Solin 2007

1 d4 ♘f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♘f3 ♖b4+ 4 ♘bd2 d5 5 a3 ♖e7 6 ♖c2 dxc4 7 ♘xc4 c5 8 dxc5 ♖xc5 9 b4 ♖e7 10 ♖b2 0-0 11 ♖d1 ♖d7 (D)



W

Black has not handled the opening very successfully, and White now starts an attack against h7.

12 ♘g5!

For the moment the threat is to exchange the knight, so Black's next move is forced:

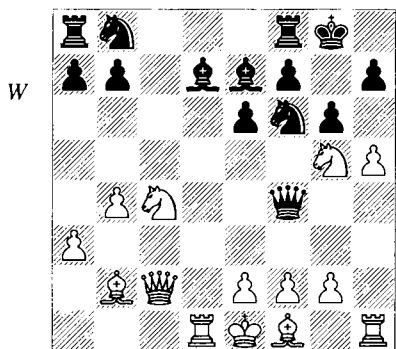
12...g6

However, this advance provides a point of contact which allows White to open the h-file.

13 h4!

Sometimes it is useful to postpone castling!

13...♖c7 14 h5 ♖f4 (D)

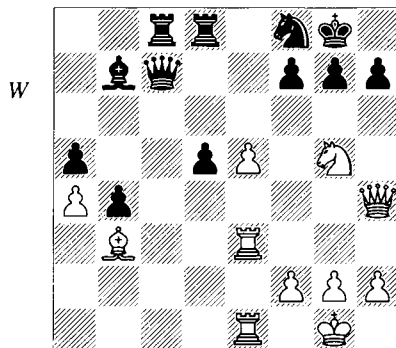


W

White has a decisive advantage of forces on the kingside. The position must be opened now:

15 ♘xh7! ♘xh7 16 hxg6 ♘f6 17 g7 ♖f5 18 gxf8♖+ ♖xf8 19 ♖xf5 exf5 20 ♖h8+ ♘g8 21 e3 ♖e6 22 ♘e5 a6 23 ♖c4 ♖xc4 24 ♘xc4 b5 25 ♘b6 1-0

The ♖+♖ mechanism can also be used after same-side castling with the help of the rook-lift:



W

Keres – Fine

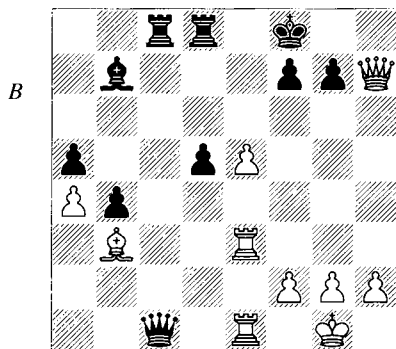
Ostend 1937

The rook reaches the h-file in front of its pawns:

24 ♘xh7! ♘xh7 25 ♖h3 ♖c1

A desperate attempt to deflect White's forces. However, White has achieved enough already.

26 ♖xh7+ ♖f8 27 ♖e3 (D)

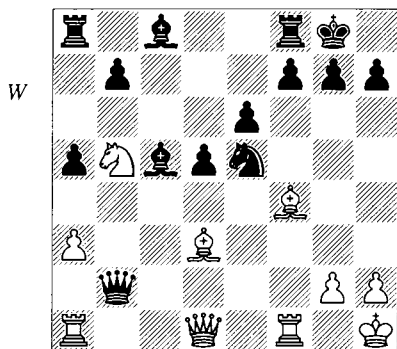


B

27...d4 28 ♖h8+ ♖e7 29 ♖xg7 ♖f8 30 ♖f6+ ♖e8 31 e6 1-0

The double bishop sacrifice is one of the best-known ways to demolish a castled position. Although it is quite rare for the double sacrifice to occur in practice, it is an important method that is in the background in many types of position – one must be familiar with the idea to attack or defend these positions successfully. The first example of it was created by Emanuel Lasker. It has features in common with the ♖+♖ attacks we have just seen, but the difference is

that the stronger side sacrifices two bishops first, in order to open both the g- and the h-files for the major pieces. Here is a recent example:



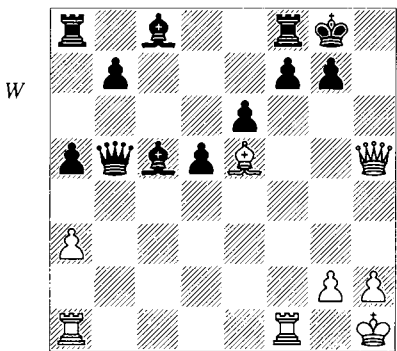
Sutovsky – Vavrak
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

20 ♖xh7+!

White begins destroying the black king's fortifications.

20...♗xh7 21 ♖h5+ ♔g8 22 ♖xe5 ♖xb5 (D)

Or **22...♗c2 23 ♖fc1 ♖f2 24 ♖xg7 ♖xg7 25 ♖g5+ ♔h8 26 ♖c3 e5 27 ♔g4 ♖e3 28 ♖xe3 ♖xg4 29 ♖h6+ ♔g8 30 ♖g1.**



23 ♖xg7!

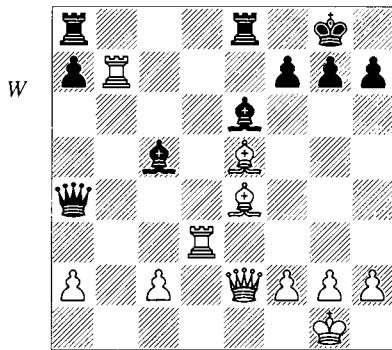
The second sacrifice, which cannot be accepted due to ♖g5+ followed by a rook-lift on third, fourth or sixth rank.

23...f5 24 ♖e5 ♖d8 25 ♖f3 ♖f8 26 ♖g3 1-0

With or without the bishop, White will decisively use the open file.

In the following example White uses the b7-rook as a decisive reinforcement:

20 ♖xh7+! ♗f8



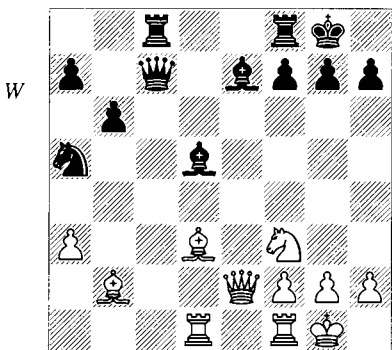
Miroshnichenko – Gunnarsson
European Ch, Ohrid 2001

20...♖xh7 21 ♖h5+ ♔g8 22 ♖h3 ♖xf2+ 23 ♖h1 +–.

21 ♖xg7+! ♖xg7 22 ♖e5+ 1-0

In view of **22...♖h6 23 ♖f6+ ♖xh7 24 ♖h3+ ♖xh3 25 ♖xf7+ or 22...♖xh7 23 ♖h5+ ♔g7 24 ♖g3+**, when again the rook takes part in the assault since it prevents the ...♖g4 covering resource.

And here is an example by Garry Kasparov himself on a closely related theme:



Kasparov – Portisch
Nikšić 1983

19 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 20 ♖xd5 ♔g8 21 ♖xg7!! ♖xg7 22 ♖e5!

The point. White reaches the g- and h-files in an unconventional way. In some lines, the rook might be used via the seventh rank.

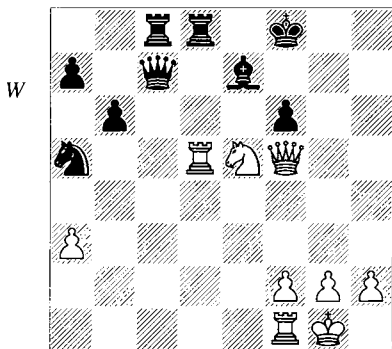
22...♖fd8

Or:

a) **22...f5 23 ♖d7 ♖c5 24 ♖d3** and Black's bishop is lost.

b) 22...♖h8 23 ♖g4+ ♕f8 24 ♖f5 f6 25 ♖e1 ♗c6 (25...♖c1 26 ♖dd1 +-) 26 ♗d7+ ♕f7 27 ♖xe7+ +-.

c) 22...♖c2 23 ♖g4+ ♕h7 24 ♖d3 ♖c3 25 ♖h3+ and 26 ♖xc3.
23 ♖g4+ ♕f8 24 ♖f5 f6 (D)



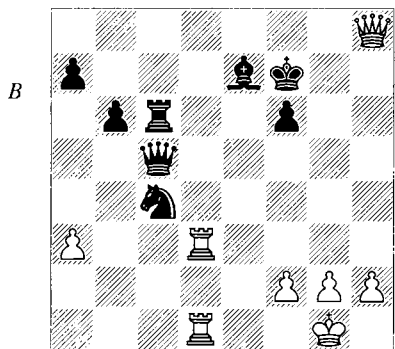
25 ♗d7+!

After 25 ♗g6+, Black must avoid 25...♕e8? 26 ♖h5 ♖xd5 27 ♗e5+ +-, while 25...♕g7 26 ♗f4 ♖xd5 27 ♗xd5 (27 ♖g6+? ♕h8 28 ♗e6? ♖g5) 27...♖c5 28 ♗xe7 leaves White a pawn up. The best defence is 25...♕f7, when 26 ♗e5+ ♕f8 returns to the game position, when White should continue 27 ♗d7+!

25...♖xd7 26 ♖xd7 ♖c5 27 ♖h7 ♖c7 28 ♖h8+!

White has to be precise if he is to keep his raging attack going. Here 28 ♖d3? allows 28...♖xf2+!! 29 ♕xf2 (not 29 ♖xf2?? ♖c1+) 29...♖c5+ 30 ♕g3 ♖xh7, with approximate equality.

28...♕f7 29 ♖d3 ♗c4 30 ♖fd1! (D)



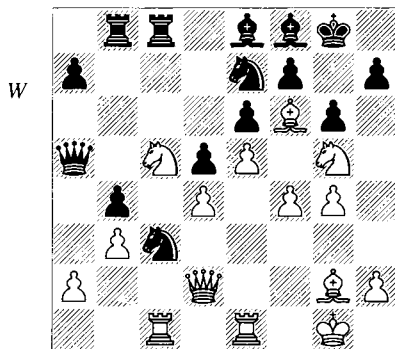
30...♗e5?

30...♗d6 is the only chance to stay in the fight, when 31 ♖d5 ♖c6 (31...♖xa3? 32 ♖xd6)

32 h4 may give White some advantage, while 31 ♖h3 also makes life very difficult for Black. However, this is far from being lost by force for Black, which is the case after his actual choice.

31 ♖h7+ ♕e6 32 ♖g8+ ♕f5 33 ♖g4+ ♕f4 34 ♖d4+ ♕f3 35 ♖b3+ 1-0

The pairing of **rook and bishop** can be very effective if the bishop is supporting a back-rank mate. In that case it makes sense to sacrifice on h7 in order to open the h-file.



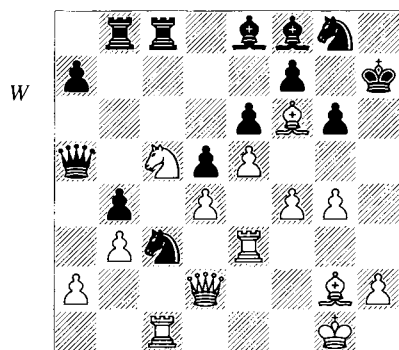
Svetushkin – Economescu
Bucharest 2001

26 ♗xh7! ♕xh7

26...♖xc5 27 ♗xf8 ♖c7 28 f5 +- and white pieces reach the h-file as well.

27 ♖e3 ♗g8 (D)

Black may also try to distract some of the white troops, but they will not be interested: 27...♖xc5 28 ♖h3+ ♗h6 29 f5! ♗e2+ (29...♗g8 30 ♖xh6+! +-) 30 ♕f2 ♗f4 31 ♖xh6+ ♕xh6 32 ♖xc5 +-.



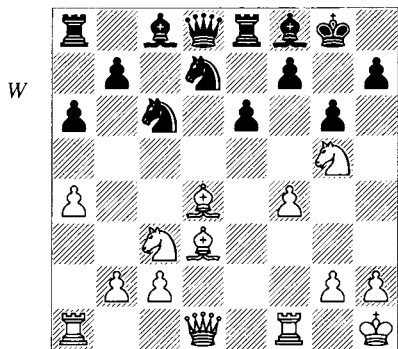
28 ♖h3+ ♗h6 29 f5 ♖xa2

29...♖xc5 30 ♖xh6+! +-.

30 ♖xh6+! ♙xh6 31 g5 1-0

31...♘e2+ 32 ♖h1 +.

Three minor pieces can successfully mate if they control the important diagonals:



Bojkov – Berend
Differdange 2007

18 ♖h5!

A decisive way to bring the most powerful piece into the attack. The queen is poisoned due to a well-known mating pattern called Blackburne's Mate.

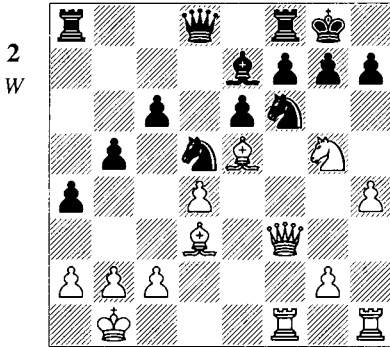
18...h6

18...gxh5 19 ♙xh7#.

19 ♙xg6

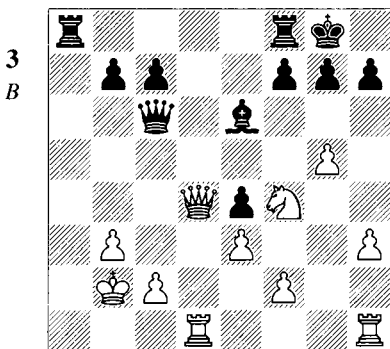
The rest is easy, as White has decisive superiority of force.

19...♗xd4 20 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 21 ♙xe8 ♗f6 22 ♗f7+ ♖g7 1-0



2
W

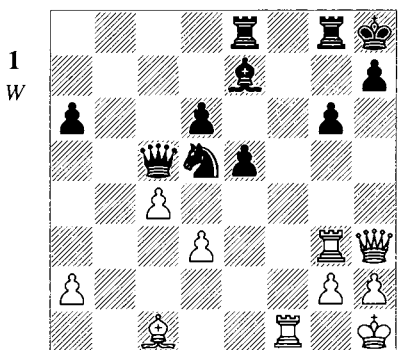
White is attacking h7 twice. Make it three.



3
B

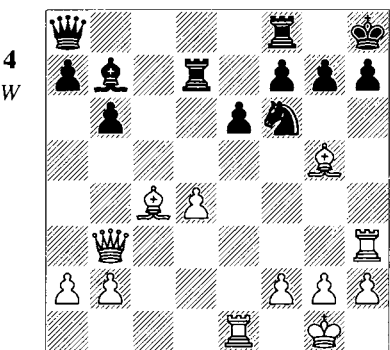
a2 can be just as vulnerable as h7.

Exercises



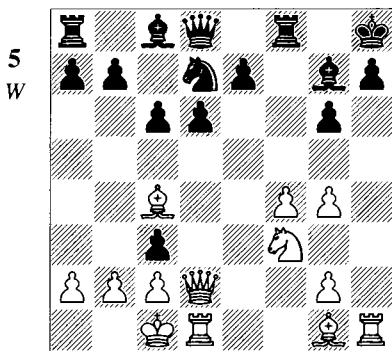
1
W

h7 is protected only by the king, but the rook will soon capture it unless White acts now.

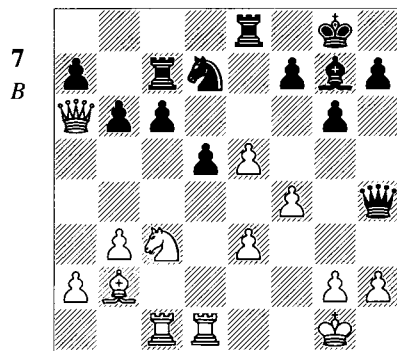


4
W

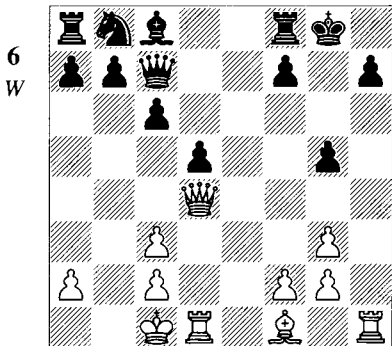
There's no need for a double bishop sacrifice here.



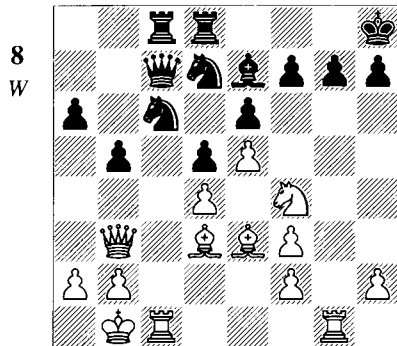
How should White crown his massive attack?



Break through to the most vulnerable square.



Two silent subtleties decide the game.



A disaster should befall Black here.

17 Attacking the Fianchetto

The fianchetto is a very common structure in chess. Many openings are based on it, such as the Dragon, Pirc, King's and Queen's Indian and Grünfeld Defences, Réti and Catalan Openings, etc. From its comfortable position on the long diagonal, the bishop exerts a great influence upon the centre. At the same time, the pawn-shield in front of the king looks stable, with the bishop neatly plugging the gaps left by the knight's pawn. However, if we manage to exchange the bishop, the whole complex of squares that it defends will become vulnerable. We have two standard plans to shatter the fianchetto:

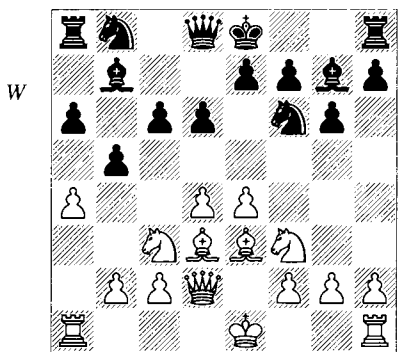
1. Exchange the fianchettoed bishop and attack the weak squares around it.
2. Advance the rook's pawn in order to open the h-file (or a-file), and use the open file to bring in the major pieces.

Exchange the Fianchettoed Bishop

Pogonina – Biriukov

Russian Under-26 Ch, Novokuznetsk 2007

1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 ♖c3 ♙g7 4 ♙e3 c6 5 ♗d2
b5 6 ♙d3 a6 7 a4 ♙b7 8 ♖f3 ♖f6?! (D)



9 ♙h6

This is a standard plan for these positions. White seeks to exploit the squares left weakened by the fianchetto.

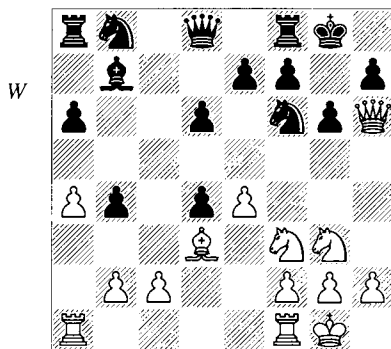
9...0-0 10 0-0 b4 11 ♖e2

The knight is heading for g3 and the king-side.

11...c5 12 ♖g3 ♙xh6?

A bad decision, since the white queen is now too close to the enemy king. Sometimes it is the right decision to draw the queen to the edge of the board in this way in order to strike back in the centre, but this must always be judged very carefully. Here White's attack is too strong. Black should wait for White to exchange on g7.

13 ♗xh6 cxd4 (D)



14 ♖g5!

White continues aggressively. She ties the f6-knight to the defence of the h7-pawn, and prepares an advance of her f-pawn to open the way for the rook to annihilate this knight. The queen feels more than comfortable on h6.

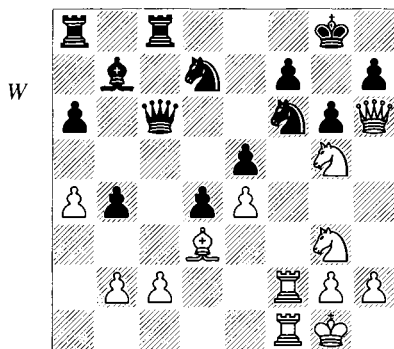
14...e5

In case of 14...♖bd7 White plays 15 f4! with the threat of e5. The main defender is obviously the f6-knight, and it is supported by its colleague from d7. They both need to be removed! Now:

a) 15...♗a5 16 ♖ae1 e5 17 fxe5 ♗xe5 18 ♖f5! gxf5 (after 18...♗e7 19 ♖ef1 both knights will soon be destroyed) 19 ♖xf5 and due to the threat 20 ♗g7#, Black needs to part with his queen.

b) 15...♗c7 16 ♖ae1 (with the idea 17 e5) 16...♗c6 (hitting g2) 17 ♖f2! (protecting g2,

and preparing to double rooks on the f-file) 17...e5 18 fxe5 dxe5 19 ♖ef1 (White is ready to annihilate the knights) 19...♗fc8 (D).

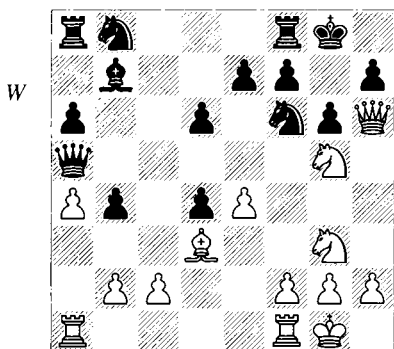


White now has a pleasant choice:

b1) 20 ♖c4 (deflecting the strongest piece away from the king) 20...♗xc4 21 ♖xf6 ♘xf6 22 ♖xf6 ♖c7. The point is that after 23 b3! Black's queen is finally deflected from the f7-square and Black is mated: 23...♗c3 24 ♗xh7+ ♘f8 25 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 26 ♗xf7#.

b2) 20 ♖xf6 is a straightforward approach. 20...♘xf6 21 ♘h5! (it is important that White clears the sixth rank, so that the rook is defended) 21...gxf6 22 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 23 ♗xf6 winning a piece.

14...♗a5 (D) is another defensive try.

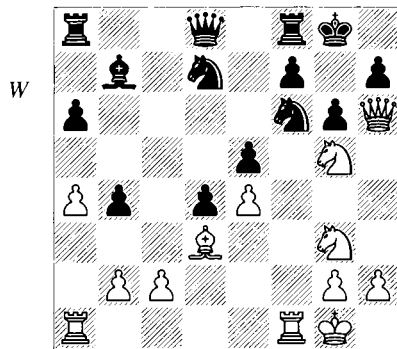


However, it fails to 15 ♘h5!!, opening the b1-h7 diagonal with decisive effect. 15...gxf6 16 e5! ♘bd7 17 exf6 ♘xf6 18 ♖xh7+ ♘h8 19 ♖d3+ (19 ♖e4+ is also good enough to win) 19...♗g8 20 ♖ae1 and Black is totally helpless.

15 f4 ♘bd7 16 fxe5 dxe5 (D)

17 ♖xf6!

17 ♖f3 is also good, but when you have identified the most important defenders and have a



chance to destroy them, there is rarely any need to hesitate!

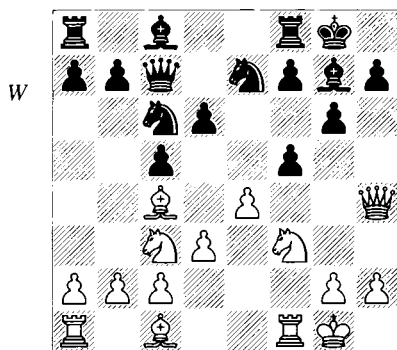
17...♖xf6 18 ♖f1 ♖e8 19 ♘h5!

We have already seen this method in the previous notes.

19...gxf6 20 ♖xf6 ♗xf6 21 ♗xf6 ♖f8 22 ♗h6 1-0

White conducted the attack flawlessly, but her opponent allowed her too much leeway.

Here is a similar case but with a different attacking formation, which is characteristic of the Sicilian Grand Prix Attack:



Rogovsky – Tukhaev

Ukrainian Ch, Alushta 2002

11 ♖h6!

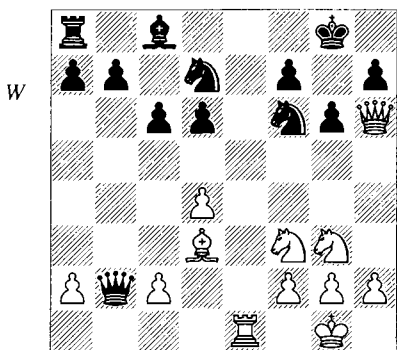
White is ready to build the winning construction with his knight on g5, like in the previous example.

11...♘e5 12 ♘g5 ♖d7

12...♖f6 13 ♖xf8 ♖xg5 14 ♗xg5 ♘xf8 is a little better, although White wins by 15 ♗f6.

13 ♖xg7 ♘xg7 14 ♗xh7+ ♖f6 15 exf5 ♘xf5 16 ♘d5+ ♘xg5 17 ♖xf5+ ♖xf5 18 h4+ ♖g4 19 ♘xc7 ♖h8 20 ♗g7 1-0

Here is a similar attack with additional support from an open e-file:



Gongora – Guerrero
Cuba 2003

1 ♖h5!!

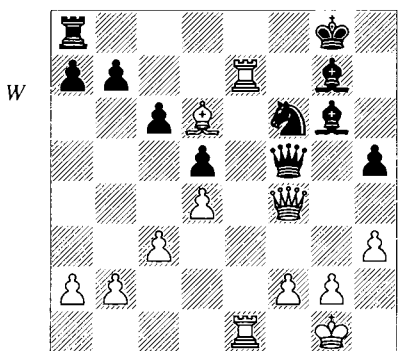
This forces a swift mate. White is really spoiled for choice here, as 1 ♖g5 followed by ♖h5! is another quick way to achieve victory – the same idea as we saw in Pogonina-Biriukov above.

1...gxf5

1...♖xh5 2 ♜e8+ +-.

2 ♜e8+! ♖xe8 3 ♜xh7+ ♔h8 4 ♜g6+ 1-0

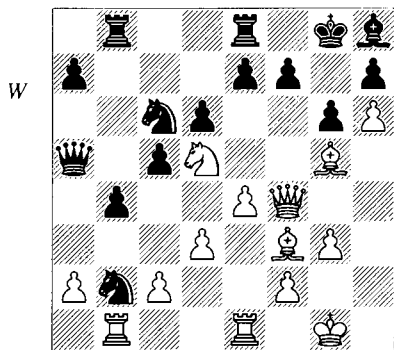
Defenders are rarely naïve enough to exchange off their own fianchettoed bishop and invite a devastating attack. That is why in many cases we need to sacrifice material to achieve this aim.



Ni Hua – Malakhov
Gibraltar 2008

30 ♜xg7+! ♔xg7 31 ♜e7+ ♔g8 32 ♜h6 ♜f7 33 ♜e5! 1-0

The dark squares have been cracked open.



Freidles – Ben-Pinchas
Israel 2002

White needs to get rid of his opponent's bishop and finds an original way to do so:

1 ♖xe7+! ♖xe7

Or 1...♜e7 2 ♜f6 ♜e6 3 ♜xh8 ♔xh8?! 4 ♜xf7 ♜e7 5 ♜f6+ ♔g8 6 e5 and White wins.

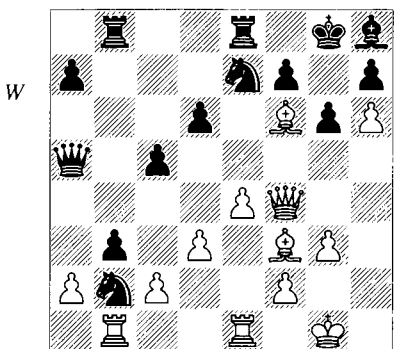
2 ♜f6!!

The point. White exchanges the most important defender, and Black's pieces start to hang. He will now have problems with the dark squares in all lines.

2...b3 (D)

Black seeks counterplay with his passed pawn. Blocking the bishop with 2...♖f5 does not save him: 3 ♜xh8 b3 (3...♔xh8 4 exf5 ♜xe1+ 5 ♜xe1 b3 6 ♜xd6! ♜xe1+ 7 ♔g2 +-) 4 axb3 ♔xh8 5 ♜f1 +-.

2...♖d5 is also insufficient: 3 exd5 ♜xe1+ 4 ♜xe1 b3 5 ♜e3 ♜xe1+ 6 ♜xe1 bxc2 7 ♜g5 ♖xd3 8 ♜e7 +-.



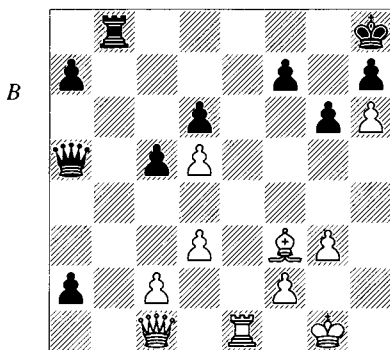
3 ♜xh8 ♖d5 4 ♜c1?!

A reasonable practical choice, but missing 4 exd5! ♜xe1+ 5 ♔g2, when White wins due to his mating ideas.

4...bxa2

4...bxc2 is more resilient, but 5 ♖xb2 ♕xh8 6 ♖xc2 ♖b4 7 ♖a1+ ♕e5 8 ♖b2 is still grim for Black.

5 ♖xb2 ♕xh8 6 ♖xb8 ♖xb8 7 exd5 (D)



7...♕g8?!

7...♖c3 is the only way to prolong the struggle. Now White wins by force as his mating threats trump Black's passed pawn.

8 ♖a1 ♖xe1+

8...f6 9 ♕g2 +-.

9 ♖xe1 ♖b1 10 ♕d1 ♕f8 11 ♖a5! ♖xd1+ 12 ♕g2 1-0

12...a1 ♖ 13 ♖d8#.

White has tried to weaken the fianchetto, but his opponent did not allow the exchange of bishops. White now turns to the second plan we described at the start of the chapter. He can afford to advance his h-pawn thanks to his space advantage and the stable central structure.

18 h4! ♖c6 19 ♖fd1 ♖e7 20 h5 ♖ac8 21 ♖xc8 ♖xc8 22 ♖f4! ±

White hits the sore point g6 with more pieces.

22...♖xd4 23 ♖c2 ♖c5

And not 23...♖xe5 24 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 25 ♖d8+.

24 hxg6

Finally breaking in, even with the bishops on the board.

24...♖xc2

24...hxg6 25 ♖xg6 fxg6 26 ♖xg6 ♕h7 27 ♖xh8 +-.

Riazantsev now concluded the game in style:

25 ♖d8! ♖xd8 26 g7 ♖d1+?!

26...♖g6?! allows 27 ♖xd8+. Black's only attempt to prolong the game was 26...♖d1+ 27 ♕h2 ♖f5 28 gxh8 ♖++ ♕xh8 29 ♖h5 ♖xh5+ (29...f6 fails to 30 ♖xf6+ ♕g8 31 g4 ♖d4 32 ♖e3) 30 ♖xh5 but it is understandable that Yandemirov chose not to bother with this.

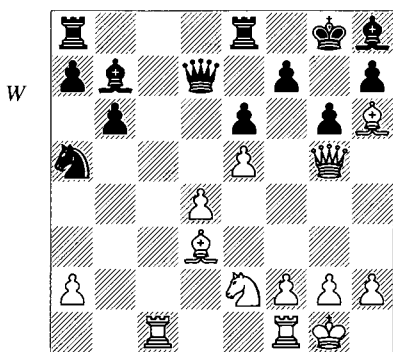
27 ♕h2 ♖f5 28 gxh8 ♖++ ♕xh8 29 ♖h5 f6 30 ♖xf6+ ♕g8 31 ♖f8# (1-0)

Advance the Rook's Pawn

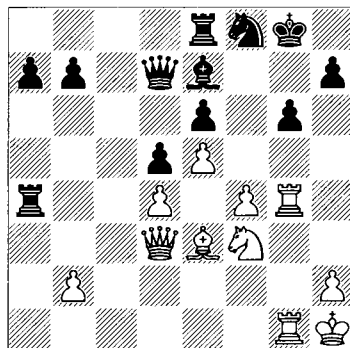
Riazantsev – Yandemirov

Moscow 2008

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 g6 3 ♖c3 d5 4 cxd5 ♖xd5 5 e4 ♖xc3 6 bxc3 ♕g7 7 ♖c4 0-0 8 ♖e2 ♖c6 9 0-0 ♖a5 10 ♖d3 b6 11 ♖e3 ♖d7 12 ♖c1 ♖b7 13 ♖d2 ♖fe8 14 ♖h6 ♖h8 15 e5 c5 16 ♖g5 cxd4 17 cxd4 e6 (D)



The rook's pawn advance is especially effective if the attacker can use the open lines for his rooks:



Topalov – Kramnik

World Ch match (game 2), Elista 2006

This position arose from the Slav Defence. Although technically speaking Black does not have a fianchettoed bishop, his position is weakened with the move ...g6 and is similar.

26 h4! ♖b4

26...♗d8? 27 h5 ♖e7 28 ♘h4 ♖g7 29 f5! ♗xh4 30 f6 wins for White.

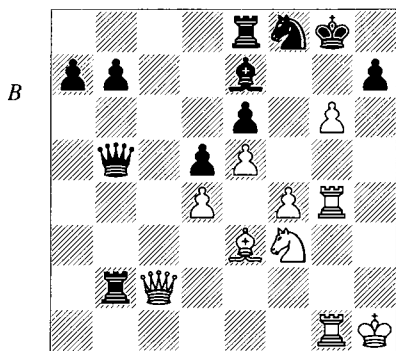
27 h5 ♖b5

At this stage most people who were analysing with their computers and not their brains thought Kramnik was clearly better. However, Topalov had a clear idea that he soon revealed:

28 ♖c2! ♖xb2

28...♖b3 is answered similarly.

29 hxg6!! (D)



29...h5

It suddenly becomes apparent that after 29...♖xc2? 30 gxh7++ ♗xh7 31 ♖g7+ ♗h6 32 f5+ ♗h5 33 ♖7g3!? (or 33 f6) 33...♘g6 34 ♖xg6 ♖h8 35 f6!! Black is getting mated.

30 g7! hxg4

30...♘h7? fails to 31 ♖g6 hxg4 32 ♖xe6+ ♗xg7 33 ♖xg4+.

31 gxh8♖+ ♗xf8??

Black's only option was 31...♗xf8 32 ♖h7 ♖e2 33 ♖h8+ ♗f7 34 ♖h5+ ♗f8 35 ♖xg4 and now 35...♗g5! keeps the game going. After 36 ♖e1! (not 36 fxg5? ♖xe3) 36...♖c2 37 fxg5 (37 ♖xg5 ♖e7) 37...♗e7! Black heads for the hills and prepares ...♖h8+. This looks quite unclear.

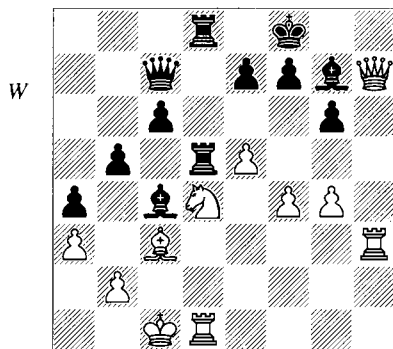
32 ♖g6+??

An incredible case of mutual chess blindness – we wonder what Kasparov must have thought of this!

White had a trivial win by 32 ♖xg4+ ♗g7 (32...♗f7 33 ♖h7+; 32...♗h8 33 ♖h4+ ♗g8 34 ♖h7#) 33 ♖c7 ♖f1+, when 34 ♘g1! covers all the checks. This is an important pattern – with the interposing knight protecting against queen checks – to commit to memory.

After this mistake, Topalov continued to go astray and even lost in the end.

After the opening of the h-file, the fianchettoed bishop remains the key piece to eliminate. Once the bishop is gone, the attacker's major pieces will have more entry points.



Finkel – Kantsler
Kfar-Saba 1999

1 ♖dh1!!

White triples his major pieces, creating a mating threat.

1...e6

A desperate attempt to escape. 1...♖xd4 allows an instant mate by 2 ♖h8+! ♗xh8 3 ♖xh8+ ♗g7 4 ♖h7#.

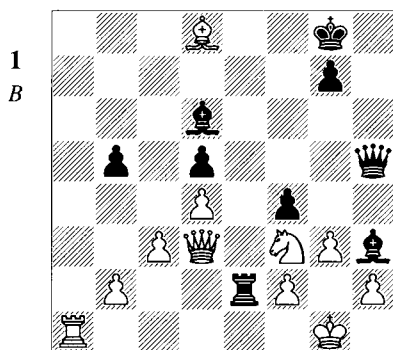
2 ♘xe6+!

But now White clears the seventh rank, and performs the same operation.

2...fxe6 3 ♖h8+!! ♗f7 4 ♖xg7+! ♗xg7 5 ♖h7+ ♗f8 6 ♖h8+ 1-0

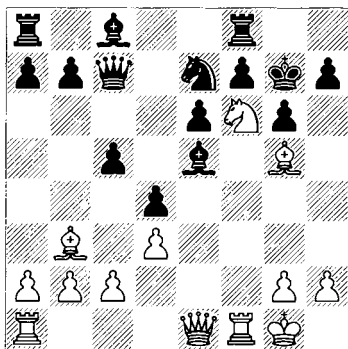
♖h7# follows. Both rooks did a great job!

Exercises



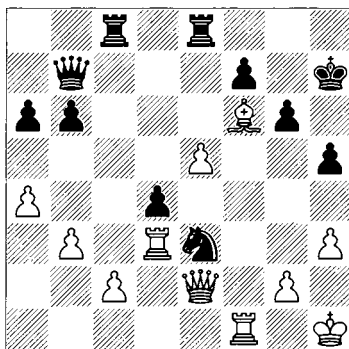
White's fianchetto structure lacks its bishop. Conclude the attack.

2
W



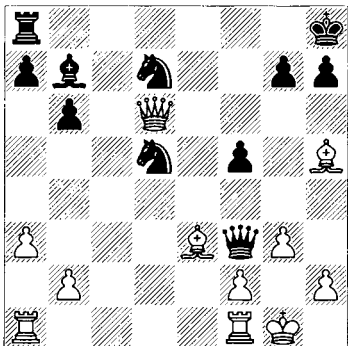
Although not too far away, Black's main defender is missing from his post.

5
W



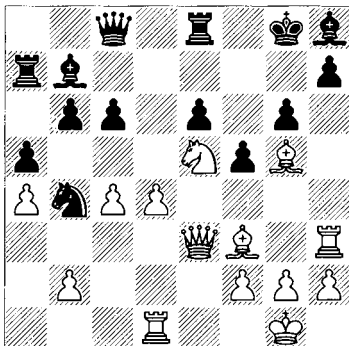
White has an ideal situation with his monster on f6.

3
B



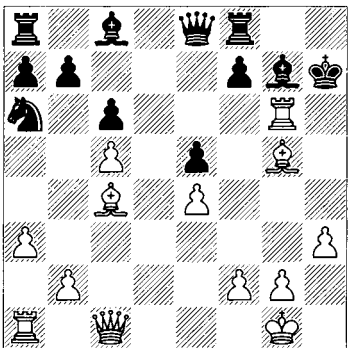
Create and exploit a double check.

6
W



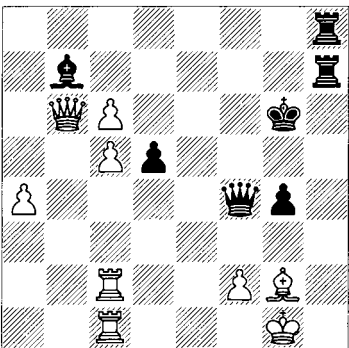
This is a hard exercise. Remember the standard plans, and it will be easier.

4
W

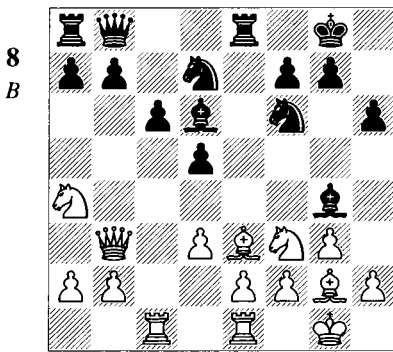


Enemy number one is ... ?

7
B



Play like a world champion!



Is everything rock solid in the white position?

18 The Mystery of the Opposite-Coloured Bishops

In endgames, the presence of opposite-coloured bishops can increase the defender's chances to hold a draw, but in the middlegame they tend to strengthen the attacker's chances. The reason is that the attacker can play mainly on the squares of the colour of his bishop, which the defender's bishop cannot challenge.

Here are some principles to bear in mind in this scenario:

1. The correct strategy is to attack the king. A material or positional advantage is not so important if the king is in danger.
2. Try to conduct the game on the colour of your own bishop.
3. The more major pieces you have on the board, the better are your chances for a successful attack.
4. The presence of knights usually helps the defender, since they may protect squares of both colours and be exchanged for a bishop.
5. Make sure that your bishop is active, even at the cost of a pawn or more.

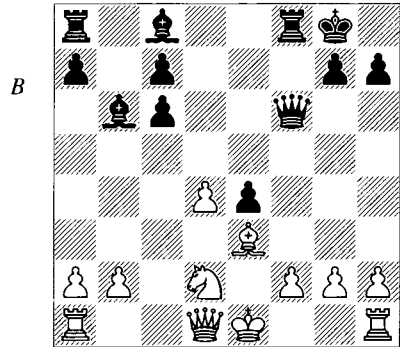
Let's take a look at an example where the king comes under attack in the centre when there are opposite-coloured bishops.

Macieja – Vescovi
Bermuda 2004

1 e4 e5 2 ♟f3 ♞c6 3 ♟c4 ♟c5 4 c3 ♟f6 5 d4 exd4 6 e5 d5 7 ♟b5 ♞e4 8 cxd4 ♟b6 9 ♟c3 0-0 10 ♟xc6 bxc6 11 ♟e3 f5 12 exf6 ♟xf6 13 ♞xe4?

Black takes a firm grip of the game now. 13 h3? ♟a6 is also bad, but White should play 13 ♟b3, which is best met by 13...♟g6!, as in Rowson-I.Sokolov, Selfoss 2003, and not 13...♟h3 14 ♞xe4 ♟e7 15 ♞e5 ♟xg2 16 ♞g3 ♟a5+ 17 ♟d1 ♟xh1 18 ♞xh1 ±, when Black has no compensation for the lost material.

13...♞xe4 14 ♞d2 (D)



14...♟a6!

Black sacrifices a pawn in order to keep his opponent's king in the centre. This is in accordance with the principle 'initiative over material'. 14...♟g6 15 ♟c2 ♟f5 is too passive.

15 ♞xe4

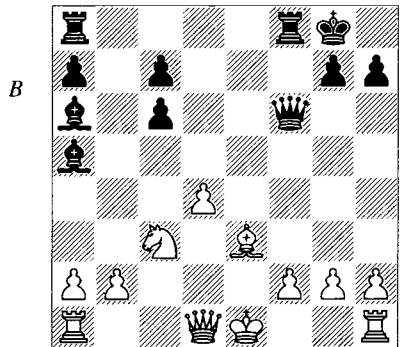
After 15 ♟g4 ♟ae8 Black holds the initiative.

15...♟a5+

Black's position now looks very harmonious. A sense of aesthetics can be quite a useful guide in judging such positions.

16 ♞c3 (D)

16 ♞d2 loses instantly to 16...♟xf2+ followed by ...♟ae8+.



16...♙xc3+!

As the old saying goes, one of the greatest advantages of having the bishop-pair is that you can chose the best moment to give it up! Now we have a position with opposite-coloured bishops, where Black has a winning attack.

17 bxc3 ♖g6

Black strikes on the light squares, where his opponent is weak. 17...c5!? also deserves attention.

18 ♜b1?!

Eventually White will lose the b-file, which is not a surprise, because his king hinders the connection of the rooks. He had to play passively by 18 ♜g1 ♜ab8, since 18 ♖b3+?! ♙h8 19 c4 ♖xg2 is also bad for White.

18...♙d3 19 ♜b7

19 ♜b2 ♜ab8 →.

19...♙c2 20 ♖e2 ♜ab8!

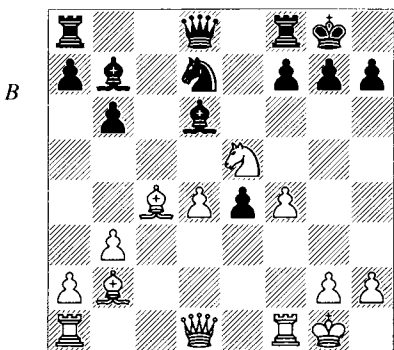
Black seeks a highway for his rook on the open b-file.

21 ♖c4+ ♙h8 22 ♜xb8 ♜xb8

There is no defence against the penetration on the b-file. In addition to his problems on the light squares, White is playing practically without his h1-rook.

23 ♙e2 ♜b2 24 ♖c5 ♙b3+ 25 ♙f3 ♙d5+ 26 ♙f4 ♖e4+ 27 ♙g3 ♖xg2+ 28 ♙h4 ♖xh1 0-1

As noted above, **the initiative is everything** in some opposite-bishop positions.

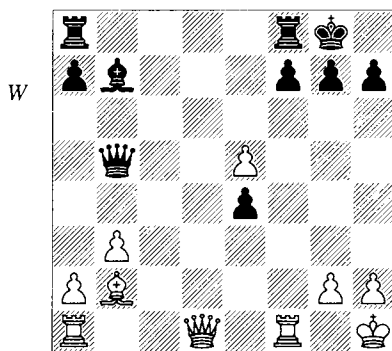


Sargisian – Stellwagen
Wijk aan Zee 2007

15...b5?

The wrong decision. Black is going for opposite-coloured bishops but this will favour White!

16 ♙xb5 ♘xe5 17 fxe5 ♙xe5 18 dxe5 ♖b6+ 19 ♙h1 ♖xb5 (D)



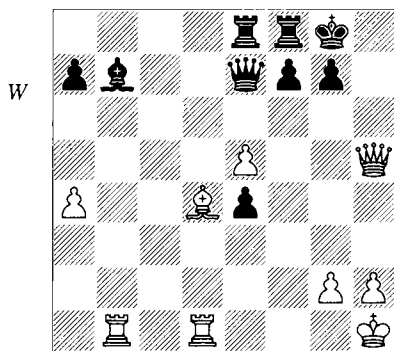
20 ♖g4! ±

The target now is g7.

20...h5 21 ♖xh5 ♙ae8 22 a4 ♖d5 23 ♜fd1 ♖a5 24 b4 ♖b6 25 ♙d4!

White sacrifices a pawn – we know that when we have opposite-coloured bishops, material is less important than the attack. Thus White gains time for his a1-rook to perform a rook-lift and join the attack without delay.

25...♖xb4 26 ♜ab1 ♖e7 (D)



27 ♜b3! +-

The idea is ♜h3.

27...♙c8

Black intends ...♙e6 to blockade the pawn on e5 and thus shut off the d4-bishop.

28 e6!!

White opens a line for his d4-bishop. Remember that the initiative is more important than material with opposite bishops!

28...f6 29 ♜h3 ♙xe6 30 ♖h7+ ♙f7 31 ♜g3 ♜g8 32 ♖xe4?

White fails to follow our principles! 32 ♜f1 wins cleanly: 32...♙f8 (32...♙c4 33 ♜xf6+

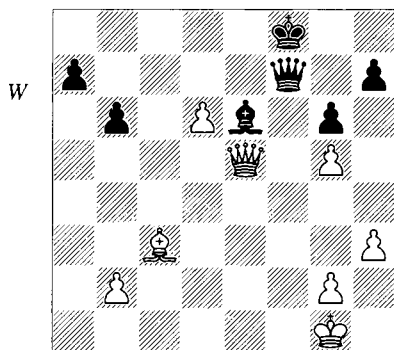
♖xf6 34 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 35 ♖g6+ +-) 33 ♜g6 +-
intending to sacrifice on f6 next move.

32...♜h8?

32...g6 was the only move.

33 ♖g6+ ♜f8 34 ♙c5 1-0

Here is an example of **conducting the attack on the colour squares that your bishop controls**.



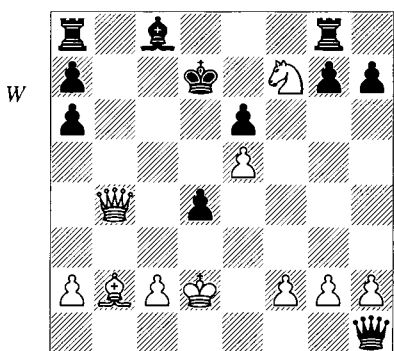
Seirawan – Leenhouts
Dutch Team Ch 2008

White creates a dark-squared mating-net:

54 ♖h8+! ♖g8 55 ♖f6+ ♖f7 56 ♖d8+ ♖e8
57 ♙g7+! 1-0

57...♜f7 58 ♖f6+ ♜g8 59 ♙h6 ♖f7 60 ♖d8+.

Some time ago when analysing a sharp Sicilian line with a student of mine, I (DB) discovered the following position, which convinced me that initiative is everything when attacking with opposite-coloured bishops:

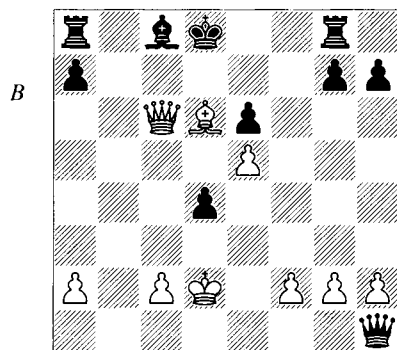


(This position occurs in analysis by Euwe of a sharp line in the Pin Variation.)

18 ♙a3! ♜c7 19 ♖d6+

There is another way to deliver mate: 19 ♖c4+ ♜d7 20 ♖a4+ ♜c7 21 ♙d6+ ♜b7 22 ♖b4+ ♜c6 23 ♖c4+ ♜b6 24 ♙c7+ ♜b7 25 ♙d6#. But we are more interested in a pure opposite-coloured-bishops attack.

19...♜b7 20 ♖e7+ ♜c6 21 ♖c5+ ♜b7 22 ♙d6+ ♜b8 23 ♙b5 axb5 24 ♖xb5+ ♜c7 25 ♙d6+ ♜d8 26 ♖c6 (D)

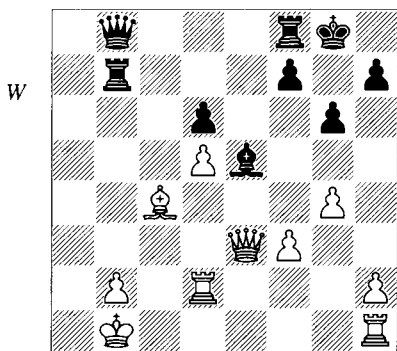


Black is two rooks ahead, but cannot prevent the inevitable mate.

26...♙d7

Black is trying to cover his king with the bishop, but White transfers the attack to the colour of his bishop after capturing the rook.

27 ♖xa8+ ♙c8 28 ♖xa7 ♙d7 29 ♖b8+ ♙c8 30 ♖c7+ ♜e8 31 ♖e7#



Kamsky – Kasparov
Manila Olympiad 1992

When you have an overwhelming advantage on the squares of your bishop, your opponent's only chance might be to surrender an exchange to eliminate the bishop.

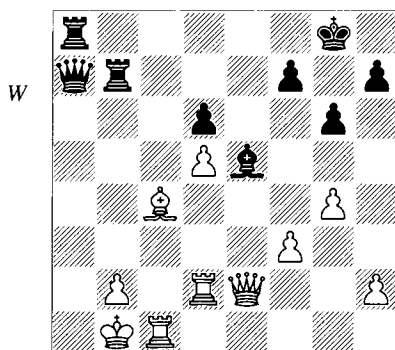
31 ♖e2

31 b3 loses on the spot to 31...♖c8 32 ♕c2 ♖xc4+ 33 bxc4 ♖b2+.

31...♖a7 32 ♖c1

White places his rooks on the diagonal of the black bishop, desperately trying to attract its attention.

32...♖a8 (D)



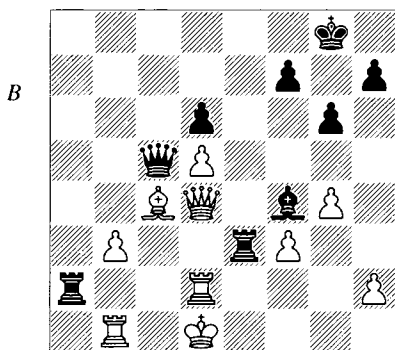
Kasparov is not interested, and rightly plays for the attack. The unopposed bishop is worth more than a mere rook!

33 b3

Now the dark squares in White's camp become hopelessly weak, but Kasparov was already threatening mate: 33 h4 ♖a1+ 34 ♕c2 ♖xb2+ 35 ♕d1 ♖xc1+ 36 ♕xc1 ♖a1#.

33...♗f4 34 ♕c2 ♖e7 35 ♖d3 ♖c5 36 ♖b1 ♖e3 37 ♖d4 ♖a2+ 38 ♕d1 (D)

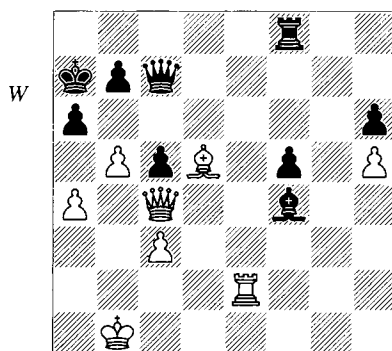
Or 38 ♖b2 ♖xb2+ 39 ♖xb2 ♗e5 40 ♖a2 ♖c3+ and Black mates.



38...♖f3 39 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 40 ♖xa2 ♖g1+ 41 ♕c2 ♖xh2+ 0-1

Clearance ideas are especially effective when there are opposite-coloured bishops. We

use them mainly to open space for our bishop. Here is an example in which a file is opened so a rook can combine its power with that of the bishop.

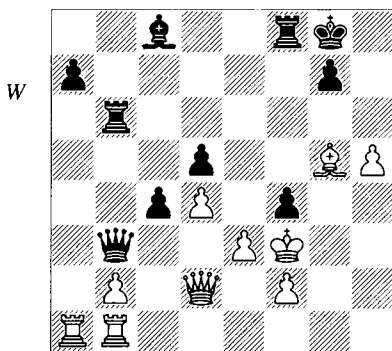


Ki. Georgiev – Macieja
Calvia Olympiad 2004

White's bishop is great, but not his rook. This, however, is subject to change:

49 b6+!! ♖xb6+ 50 ♖b2 ♖f6 51 ♖xf4 1-0

We can also **annihilate the opponent's bishop** if it is too good in its defensive role:



Yakubovich – Simagin
Moscow 1936

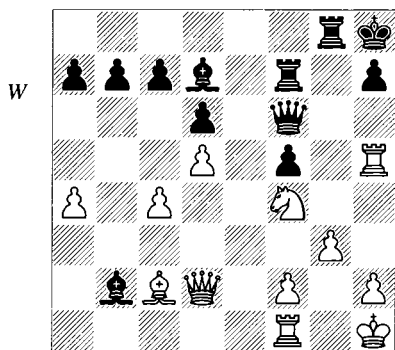
With his last move, ...f4!, Black started a decisive attack. He will now clear all files, ranks and diagonals you may think of!

1 ♗xf4 g5!! 2 hxg6 ♖xf4+!

The bishop was doing a really good job. Instead of continuing the attack on light squares, Black drags his opponent's king into his camp.

3 ♕xf4 ♖f6+ 4 ♕g3 ♖xg6+ 5 ♕f3 ♗g4+ 6 ♕g3 ♗e2+ 7 ♕h4 ♖b7 8 ♖xe2 ♖e7+ 0-1

Here is an example of my own, where I temporarily sacrificed a pawn in order to achieve a favourable opposite-coloured-bishops position:



V. Georgiev – Paragua
Turin 2000

25 ♖e6! ♙xe6 26 dxex6 ♗xe6 27 ♙xf5 ♗f6
27... ♗xf5 28 ♗xf5 ♗xf5 29 ♗xb2+ ♗g7 30
♗xb7 ♗d3 31 ♗e1.

28 ♙e4 ♗e7 29 ♗d3 ♗g5 30 ♗hx7+ ♗hx7
31 ♙hx7 ♗d4 32 ♗b1 b6?

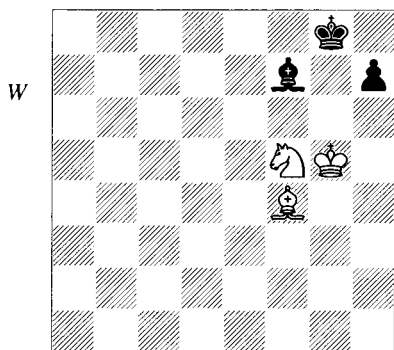
Black had to try 32... ♗xc4.

33 ♙e4?

33 f4 followed by ♗e1 is a more incisive continuation.

33... ♙c3 34 ♙d5 c6 35 ♙xc6 ♗xc4 36 ♙g2
♗g7 37 ♗c1 ♙g8 38 ♗d1 1-0

Even in simple-looking endgames, mating attacks involving opposite-coloured bishops can prove devastating, especially when the defender's king is short of space:



E. Pogosiants
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

In this study Black will have to part with his bishop if he does not want to allow mate.

1 ♙f6

White intends ♙h6, ♗e7+ and ♙g7#.

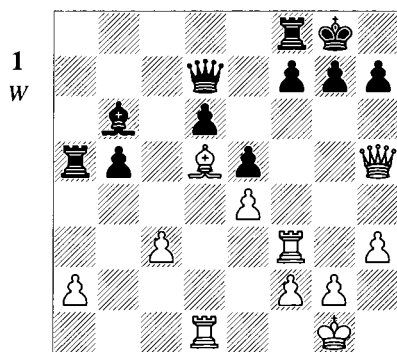
1... ♙f8

1... ♙g6 2 ♗d6 ♙h5 3 ♙h6 ♙g6 (3... ♙g4 4 ♗e7 and the knight lands on f6) 4 ♗c8 and mate.

2 ♙h6+ ♙e8 3 ♗d6+

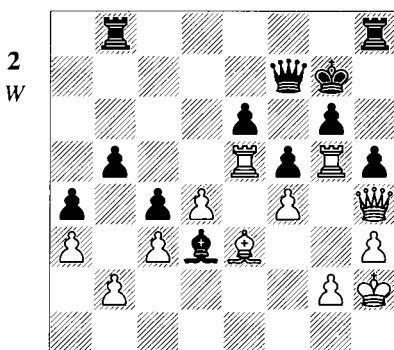
White wins.

Exercises



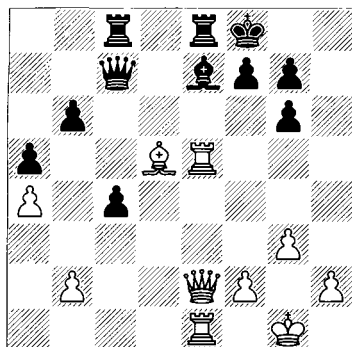
1
W

Make use of your 'extra' piece.

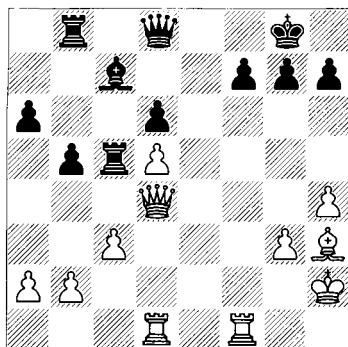


2
W

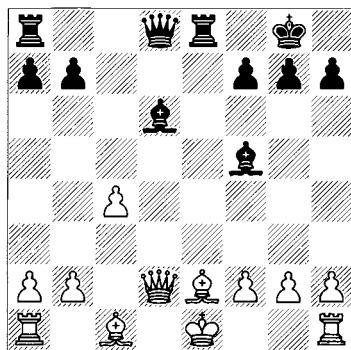
The beast is asleep...

3
W

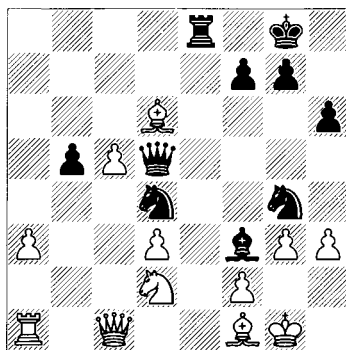
Find a way to break in.

6
W

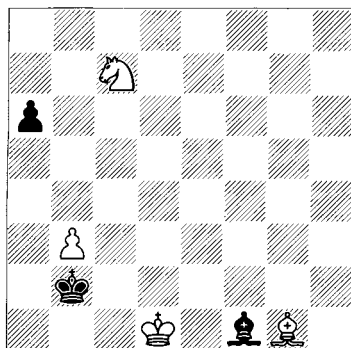
Find a vigorous way for White to press home his attack on the light squares.

4
B

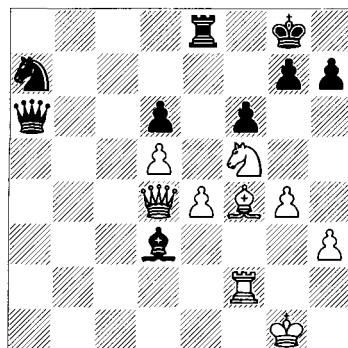
White has not yet castled...

7
B

Black must find a favourable transformation to an opposite-bishops situation.

5
W

White needs to win the black pawn, or else must play for mate.

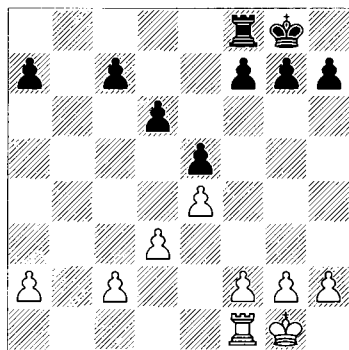
8
W

Remember the principles and find the best way for White to smash through.

19 Chess Highways: Open Files

Pawns shape the chessboard struggle and dictate the natural plans for both sides, so their mere absence from a file marks it out as an important chess highway. An 'open file' is one with no pawns on it, while if it contains only an enemy pawn, then we call it a 'semi-open file'. There is a huge difference between the two, as a semi-open file is a one-way street, while an open file can be used by both players. Open files should in most cases be controlled by major pieces, preferably rooks. Via the open files one can invade the enemy position. You should seek to control open files, and this will often give you a significant advantage. As always there are some exceptions, as a file may have little value if there are no possible entry-squares on it, while contesting an open file over which you will ultimately lose control may only serve to aggravate your problems. And in yet other cases, occupying an open file might only lead to mass exchanges, and a dissipation of your advantage.

We should note that the rook is the only piece that does not need to be centralized to show its full potential. The only thing that it needs is open space.

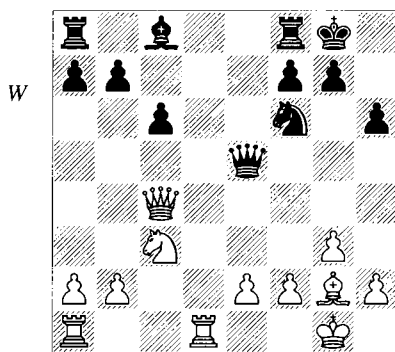


In the diagrammed position, the side that is about to move will certainly occupy the open b-file. In its initial position the rook controls only five squares, while on the b-file the number of squares within its reach increases to 12.

From here it can penetrate the opponent's camp. The seventh rank is an especially juicy target, as there are several enemy pawns on this rank. A further typical benefit of putting a rook on the seventh rank is that this tends to restrict the enemy king.

Here is a summary of some useful general pointers for play with open files:

1. Get control over the open file.
2. Double rooks.
3. The best place for a rook is on the seventh rank.
4. Penetrate the enemy position and destroy it.



Simagin – Kotov
Moscow Ch 1945

15 ♖d4

With this move White fights for the only open file.

15... ♗h5 16 f3 ♔h3?

Better is 16... ♙e6 17 e4 ♜a5 intending ... ♜fd8.

17 e4 ♙xg2 18 ♚xg2 ♜fe8 19 ♜d2!

A typical idea to double rooks on the open file.

19... ♜a5 20 ♜ad1 ♙e7 21 ♜c4 ♜ae8 22 ♜d6 ♜b6

White has gained full control over the only open file. What will be his plan to convert the

advantage? First he needs to advance his pawns, staking out more space.

23 b4 ♖e6 24 ♖6d4!

The side with a dynamic advantage should normally try to avoid exchanges, especially of his most active pieces.

24...♖6e7 25 ♖a4 ♖c7 26 ♖c5 ♖c8 27 ♖1d2 ♖h7 28 h4 ♖f8 29 ♖d6 ♖e6 30 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 31 ♖xe6 ♖xe6 32 ♖d4 ♖f8 33 f4 ♖e8 34 e5 ♖e7 35 a3 a6 36 h5 ♖e6 37 ♖d7 ♖e7 38 ♖xe6!

A good decision: White liquidates to an easily winning ending. This is the simplest way to realize the advantage.

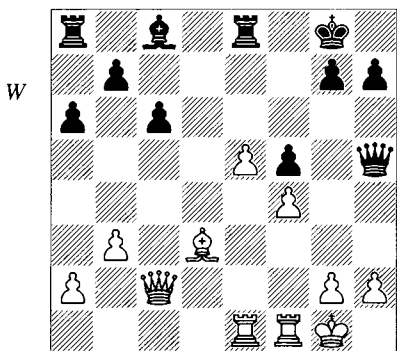
38...fxe6 39 ♖f3 ♖c7 40 ♖e4 ♖f7 41 ♖d6 ♖e7 42 f5!

In order to create a passed pawn.

42...exf5+ 43 ♖xf5 c5 44 bxc5 ♖xc5 45 ♖b6 ♖c7 46 g4 ♖f7 47 a4 ♖e7 48 a5 ♖f7 49 ♖e4 ♖e7 50 ♖d5 ♖d7+ 51 ♖d6 ♖c7 52 e6 ♖e8 53 ♖b6 ♖e7 54 ♖b1 ♖e8 55 ♖b4 ♖c1 56 ♖xb7 ♖d1+ 57 ♖e4 ♖e1+ 58 ♖f5 ♖f1+ 59 ♖g6 ♖f4 60 g5 ♖g4 61 ♖xg7 ♖xg5+ 62 ♖f6 1-0

A very instructive game. White demonstrated a typical plan for making the most of his advantages in this kind of position. The overall plan can be summarized as follows

1. First win the only open file.
2. Then push pawns to get a space advantage.
3. Finally liquidate to a winning rook ending.



Wojtaszek – Bobras
Polish Ch, Lublin 2008

20 ♖d1!

The best place for the rook is the open file.

20...♖e6

White now gains control over the d-file using line-clearance and a zwischenzug:

21 ♖c4! ♖xc4 22 ♖xc4+ ♖f7 23 ♖d7

The best move! Rooks love the seventh rank.

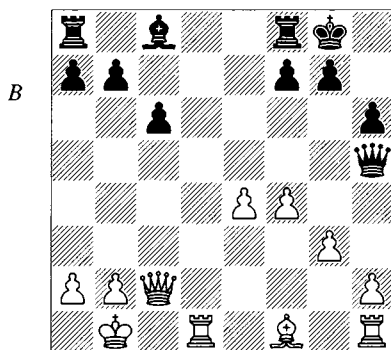
23...♖xc4 24 bxc4 ♖ab8 25 ♖fd1

White is clearly better thanks to his control of the open file, via which he can invade the enemy position.

25...♖f8 26 ♖f2 ♖e7 27 ♖d8+ ♖e8 28 ♖8d6 ♖f7 29 ♖e3 ♖e7

As we know, White should push the pawns first and then create a passed pawn to win the game.

30 c5 ♖e8 31 ♖b1 ♖c7 32 a4 a5 33 g4 fxc4 34 f5 ♖e7 35 ♖f4 ♖f8 36 ♖xg4 ♖b8 37 h4 ♖f7 38 h5 ♖e8 39 ♖f4 ♖ce7 40 ♖e1 h6 41 e6+ 1-0



Mamedyarov – Svidler
European Team Ch, Khersonisos 2007

18...♖g4!

Black takes control of the open d-file by attacking the d1-square. White will never get the chance to double rooks on the d-file.

19 ♖e1

Or **19 ♖d2 ♖ad8 20 ♖d3 ♖d4 21 e5 ♖fd8 22 ♖h7+ ♖h8 23 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 24 ♖c3 ♖f5+ 25 ♖xf5 ♖xf5+ 26 ♖a1 ♖e4** and Black breaks through.

19...♖ad8 20 ♖e2 ♖d4!

Preparing to double rooks on the open file.

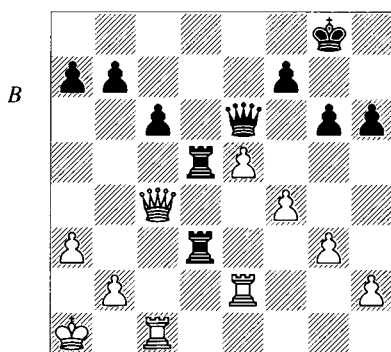
21 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 22 e5

Or **22 ♖d1 ♖fd8 23 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 24 ♖e1 a5 25 ♖c3 ♖d7.**

22...♖fd8

Now Black is getting a firm grip over the d-file.

23 ♖e2 g6 24 ♖c1 ♖d3 25 a3 ♜e6 26 ♜c4
♜8d5 27 ♜a1 (D)



It is time for stage two of our procedure.

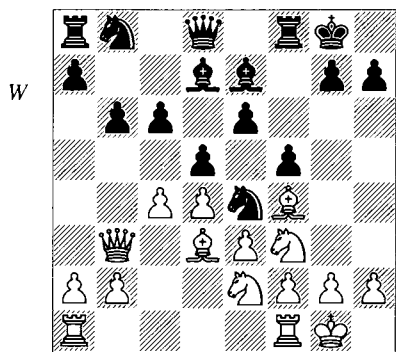
27...a5

As Black's control over the d-file is absolute, he now advances his pawns to start an attack.

28 ♜c2 h5 29 ♖f1 b5 30 ♜f2 ♜f5 31 ♖e1
31 ♜xc6 ♖d1+ 32 ♖xd1 ♖xd1+ 33 ♜a2
♜b1+ 34 ♜b3 ♖d3+.

31...c5 32 e6 fxe6 33 ♖fe2 ♖d6 34 ♜c1 ♜d5
35 ♖e5 ♜b3 0-1

Before we open the position, our rooks sit modestly behind the pawn-chains. We may use the **pawn-shelter** to establish control over a file before we open it. To do this, we double rooks behind our pawn before exchanging it. This is especially effective if the pawn-tension is in our favour (i.e. our opponent does not have a good way to resolve the tension):

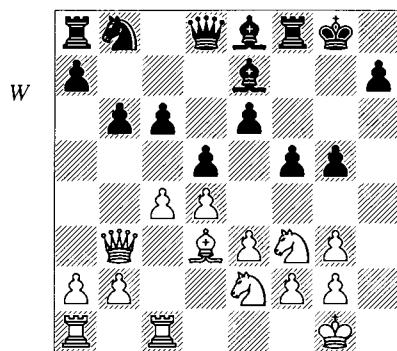


V. Georgiev – Vallejo Pons
Elgoibar 1998

11 ♖fc1!

Getting ready to open the c-file.

11...g5 12 ♖g3 ♜xg3 13 hxg3 ♖e8 (D)



14 ♖c2!

White wants to double rooks first, before the c-file is opened. If White captures on d5 first, Black will take back with his e-pawn, keeping the c-file semi-closed. Note that Black cannot exchange by 14...dxc4 as this destroys his structure; nor can he just sit and wait, as he needs to develop his queenside.

14...♜d7 15 cxd5

Right on time. Now Black has no choice, since the c6-pawn is unprotected.

15...cxd5 16 ♖ac1 ±

White has complete control over the c-file and threatens ♖a6.

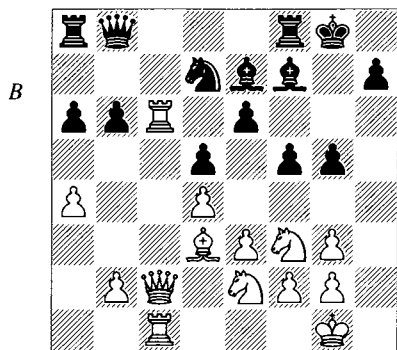
16...a6

Black parries White's threat, but the pawns on their third rank are now rather vulnerable.

17 a4 ♖f7 18 ♖c6

The second step is to enter the enemy position.

18...♜b8 19 ♜c2 (D)



19...h6?!

Black takes measures against White's g4 idea, but this leaves more squares on Black's

third rank unprotected and so allows another potent attacking idea.

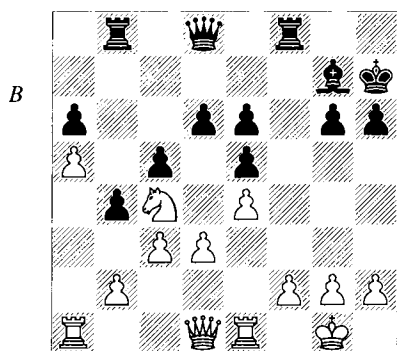
20 ♖xf5!

20 ♜c7 is met by 20...♙e8.

20...exf5 21 ♜xf5 ♙e8 22 ♜xd5+?!

While this move was enough for a win later on, White could have won immediately by 22 ♜e6+ ♜f7 23 ♜c8 ♜xc8 24 ♜xc8 ♜xc8 25 ♘e5 +-. Therefore the rest of the game is not so relevant to our discussion.

An alternative method to gain control over an open file is to install one of our pieces on the file and then to double rooks behind it:



Bojkov – Van den Doel
Zwolle 2007

Although analysis engines tend to be lukewarm about White's chances (and some even evaluate this position in Black's favour!), I am inclined to think that White is strategically winning. The plan is simple: install the knight on b6, which gives Black a difficult choice: allow White to exchange on b4 and later win this pawn, or make the exchange on c3, after which White will double rooks on the b-file in the shadow of the knight and then penetrate with them at the right moment.

25...♜b5?!

This loses some time and only helps White's plans.

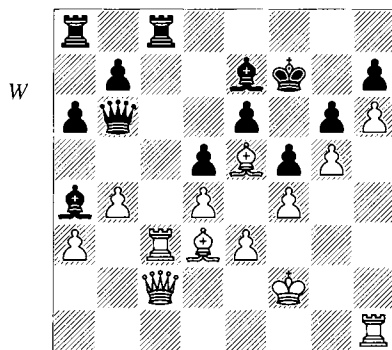
26 ♜e2 ♙f6 27 ♜eb1 ♜b7 28 ♘b6 bxc3 29 bxc3 ♜bf7 30 ♜f1 ♙h4 31 g3 ♙g5 32 ♘c4 ♜d7 33 ♜ab1 ♙d8 34 ♜b8 h5

I started to feel quite nervous in my opponent's time-trouble, and missed the clear win 35 ♜fb1!; e.g., 35...♜xf2 36 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 37 ♙xf2 ♙h6 38 ♜b7 ♙c7 39 ♜h8+ ♙g7 (39...♙g5 40

h4+ ♙g4 41 ♙g2) 40 ♜a8 ♙f6 41 h4 +-. For some reason I thought that somewhere in these lines he could bring his queen to a4 and achieve perpetual check.

Instead 35 ♙g2?! was played in the game and White won later with some difficulties.

We already know the importance of an open file, and how effective its use can be. Under certain circumstances it can be well worth sacrificing material to gain complete control over a vital highway.



V. Milov – Ramesh
Biel (rapid) 2000

1 ♜xc8!? ♙xc2 2 ♜xa8

Sacrificing a bishop to energize his rooks. But 2 ♜xc2!? may be better, dominating the c-file and keeping Black under pressure.

2...♙xd3 3 ♜c1!?

Trying for more than 3 ♜h8 ♜c6 4 ♜xh7+ ♙f8 5 ♜h8+ ♙f7, with a draw. White now threatens 4 ♜h8, and Black must find the right countersacrifice to grant him counterplay.

3...♙d8?

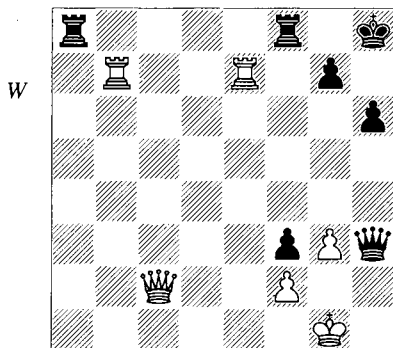
This fails to hinder White's plan, as do 3...♙d6? 4 ♜cc8 and 3...♙xb4? 4 ♜c7+ ♙e7 5 ♜h8. However, 3...♙c4! is a good defence: 4 ♜h8 ♙xb4! 5 ♜xh7+ ♙e8 or 4 ♜xc4 dxc4 5 ♜h8 c3, and Black's counterplay arrives in time to force White to take a draw.

4 ♜cc8 ♜b5 5 ♜xd8 ♙f1 6 ♜f8+ ♙e7 7 ♙f6+ ♙d6 8 ♜ad8+ ♙c7 9 ♜c8+ ♙b6 10 ♙d8+ ♙a7 11 ♜a8+! 1-0

11...♙xa8 12 ♙b6+ and mate.

We have already noted that after occupying an open file, rooks need to strive for the seventh

rank. One bonus idea is that two rooks on the seventh rank are capable of delivering mate on their own:

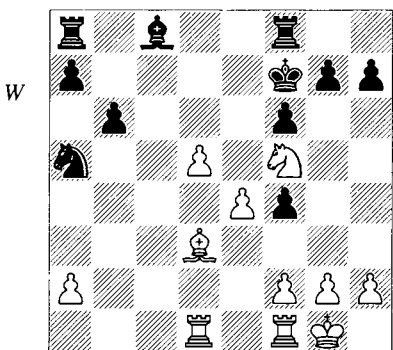


Y. Averbakh

1 ♖h7+! ♔xh7 2 ♜xg7+ ♔h8 3 ♜h7+ ♔g8 4 ♜bg7#

The rooks managed to deliver mate due to the poor position of Black's rook on f8, where it obstructed his own king.

We should note that two rooks supported by a single pawn can give mate without any such assistance from the enemy pieces. Here is an example where White makes use of this fact.



Krasenkow – Kveinys

Polish Team Ch, Lubniewice 2002

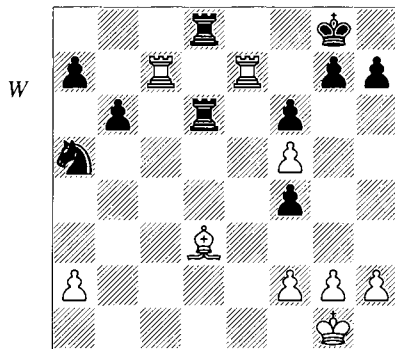
Krasenkow first occupies the open c-file with his rooks:

21 ♜c1! ♕xf5 22 ♜c7+ ♔g8 23 exf5 ♜ad8 24 ♜e1! ♜f7 25 d6 ♜fd7

Then he uses the power of his pawn to secure absolute control over the seventh rank.

26 ♜e7! ♜xd6 (D)

The harvest starts now.



27 ♜xg7+ ♔h8 28 ♜xh7+ ♔g8 29 ♜cg7+ ♕f8 30 ♜xa7 ♔g8

White now wraps up the game by advancing his h-pawn.

31 h4! ♜xd3 32 h5! ♖c6 33 ♜ag7+ ♕f8 34 h6! 1-0

The pawn is protecting the g7-rook, and its colleague is free to finish Black off.

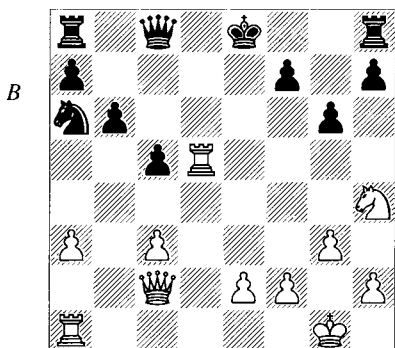
Topalov – Anand

Bilbao 2008

1 d4 ♖f6 2 c4 e6 3 ♖f3 b6 4 g3 ♕a6 5 ♜c2 ♕b7 6 ♕g2 c5 7 d5 exd5 8 cxd5 ♖xd5 9 0-0 ♕e7 10 ♜d1!

A good move. The rook occupies a file that will soon be opened.

10...♜c8 11 a3 ♖f6 12 ♕g5 d5 13 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 14 ♖c3 ♕xc3 15 bxc3 ♖a6 16 ♖h4 g6 17 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 18 ♜xd5 (D)

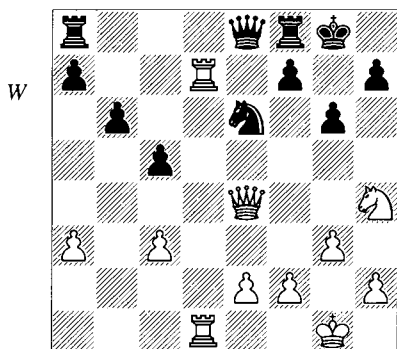


As a result of his accurate play, Topalov has won the only open file.

18...0-0 19 ♜ad1

Doubling rooks, which will help White invade the seventh rank.

19...♖c7 20 ♜d7 ♖e6 21 ♜e4 ♜e8 (D)



22 ♖f3!

With this move, White starts a decisive attack against Black's king thanks to the dominant position of the rook on the seventh rank and the fact that Black's kingside contains weaknesses.

22...c4

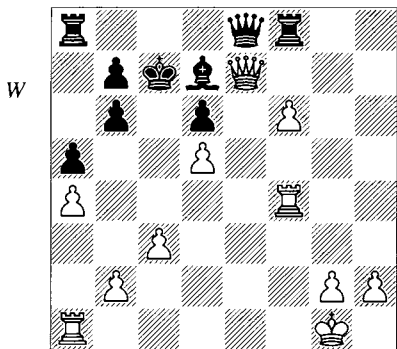
Or:

a) 22...♔d4 23 ♕e5 ♘c6 24 f4 ♘xe5 25 fxe5 ♖e6 26 ♙d6 ♗h3 27 ♖e7 ± with the idea of doubling rooks on the seventh rank while Black lacks any real counterplay.

b) 22...♗d8 again allows White to double his major pieces on the seventh rank: 23 ♗b7! (winning a pawn) 23...♗xd7 24 ♗xd7 ♗a8 25 ♗xf7 ±.

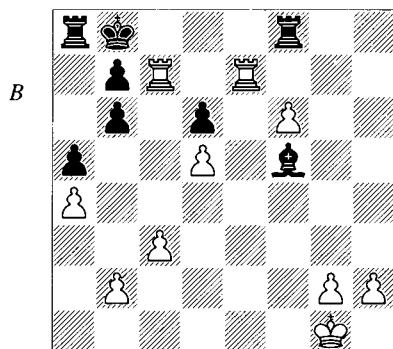
23 ♗h4 ♘c5 24 ♖e7 ♗d8 25 ♗f1 1-0

Doubled rooks on the seventh rank may be very potent in the endgame too. Here is one more example from Topalov:



Topalov – Vallejo Pons
Dos Hermanas (rapid) 2008

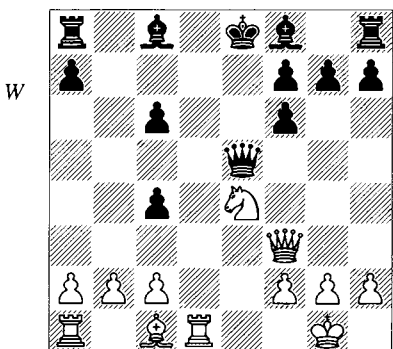
27 ♖e1! ♗xe7 28 ♖c4+ ♖b8 29 ♖xe7 ♘f5
30 ♖cc7! (D)



Finally doubling rooks on the seventh rank. The a8-rook will be out of play for a long time, and Topalov was able to prove his advantage.

30...♗xf6 31 ♗xb7+ ♖c8 32 ♖ec7+ ♖d8 33 ♖g7 ♖c8 34 ♗xb6 ♘d7 35 c4 ♖c7 36 ♖c6+ ♖d8 37 ♖g8+ ♘e8 38 c5 ♖e7 39 ♖c7+ ♖d8 40 ♗h7 dxc5 41 d6 ♗xd6 42 ♗xe8+ ♖xe8 43 ♗h8+ ♖d7 44 ♗xa8 ♖d1+ 45 ♖f2 ♖d2+ 46 ♖f3 ♖d3+ 47 ♖f4 ♗b3 48 ♗xa5 ♗xb2 49 ♖f3 ♖d6 50 ♗a8 c4 51 ♖c8 ♖d5 52 h4 ♗a2 53 h5 ♗xa4 54 h6 ♗a7 55 g4 ♖e5 56 g5 ♖f5 57 ♖c5+ ♖g6 58 ♖g4 ♗a1 59 ♖c6+ ♖h7 60 ♖c7+ ♖g8 61 ♖h5 c3 62 ♗xc3 ♗a6 1-0

Early in the game, it is common for pawn-tension to be created in the centre of the board. Usually both players will fight for the centre in some manner, as no one is willing to surrender his centre without a fight. At some point, one player may find it necessary or beneficial to exchange pawns, so the central files are often the first to open. If this happens when one of the kings is still uncastled, it can easily become a target for the rooks on the open central files.



E. Espinosa – Miranda
Cuba 2004

Black's king has lingered too long in the centre and White proves the folly of such an approach with energetic play.

1 ♖xf6+!! ♜xf6 2 ♙g5!

White sacrifices a second piece to clear both central files for his rooks. We have seen this method in the Clearance chapter.

2... ♜xg5

2... ♜xf3 3 ♜d8#.

3 ♜xc6+ ♙e7 4 ♜d5

Another subtle move. White clears the way for the other rook to occupy the e-file with gain of tempo.

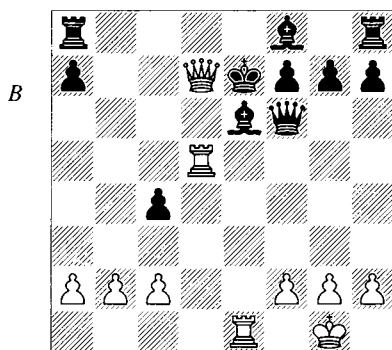
4... ♜f6

Or:

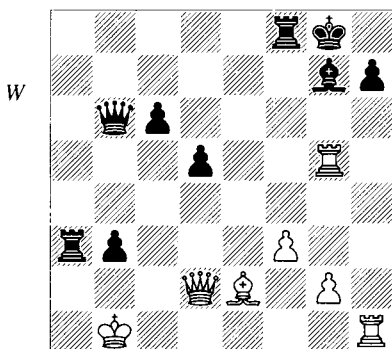
a) 4... ♜f4 5 ♜e1+ ♙e6 6 ♜d7+ ♙f6 7 ♜xf7+! and White wins.

b) 4... ♜h6 5 ♜xa8 ♜a6 (5... ♜e6 6 ♜ad1 ♙f6 7 ♜d8 +-) 6 ♜c5 ♙e6 7 ♜d1 ♙f6 8 ♜f3+ ♙e7 9 ♜c7+ +-.

5 ♜e1+ ♙e6 6 ♜d7# (D)



1-0



Y. Perez – E. Espinosa
Cuba 2004

Open files can also be used against the castled position. Here White has already managed to open the h-file for his rook, and has activated the other one thanks to a rook-lift.

1 ♜xg7+!

White sacrifices both rooks in order to annihilate the last defenders of Black's king. The queen and bishop will do the rest.

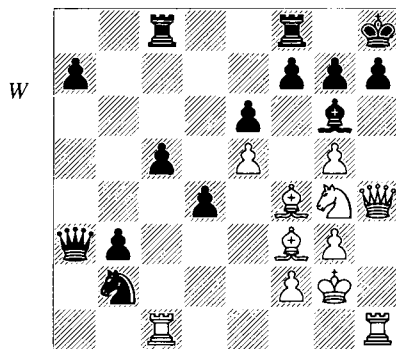
1... ♙xg7 2 ♜g5+ ♙h8

2... ♙f7 also allows a forced mate after 3 ♜xh7+ ♙e6 4 ♜e7+ ♙f5 5 ♜h5+ ♙g6 (5... ♙f4 6 ♜e5#) 6 ♜g5+ ♙h6 7 ♜g7#.

3 ♜xh7+! 1-0

Black resigned due to 3... ♙xh7 4 ♙d3+ ♙h8 5 ♜h6+ ♙g8 6 ♜h7#.

We have seen that rooks work together very well on the seventh rank. They can also coordinate well on the edges of the board, especially if the enemy king has been denuded.



Tovia – Zarate
Cartagena 2005

First White smashes through on the half-open h-file:

1 ♜xh7+!

1 ♖f6! is also effective.

1... ♙xh7 2 ♙e4 ♜fd8

Or:

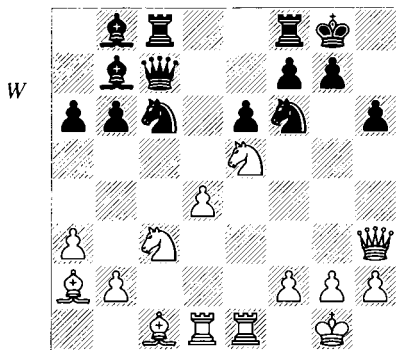
a) 2... ♙g6 3 ♖f6 and ♜xh7#.

b) 2... ♙g8 3 ♙xh7+ ♙h8 4 ♜h4 and mate will follow.

c) 2... ♙f5!? was the best practical chance, although it fails after 3 exf6 ♙g8 4 ♙xh7+ ♙f7 5 ♙g6+! ♙g8 (5... ♙xg6 6 ♖e5+ ♙f5 7 ♙f3! followed by g4#) 6 ♙f7+! ♜xf7 7 ♜h8+! ♙xh8 8 ♙xf7 and Black is mated on the h-file with ♜h1#.

3 ♖f6! gxf6 4 ♜xh7+ ♔g8 5 gxf6
 The threat is simple: ♜ch1.
 5...♗d3 6 ♜ch1 ♖e1+ 7 ♜xe1 1-0

If the kings have castled on the same wing, it is normally too risky to attack the enemy king with a pawn-storm, as this exposes one's own king to a counterattack. In this case we transfer our rooks in front of our pawn-chain. This method is called the **rook-lift**.



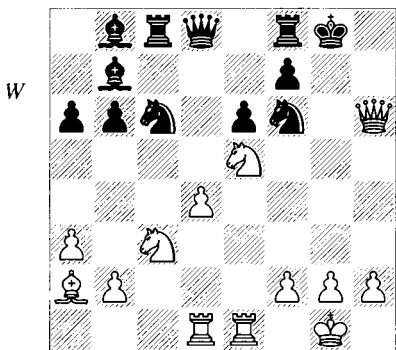
Bargan – Agafii
Chisinau 2005

White first detonates the position of his opponent's king:

1 ♕xh6! gxh6 2 ♜xh6 ♜d8 (D)

2...♗h7 does not prevent the rook-lift: 3 ♜e3 ♗xe5 4 dxe5 ♖h8 5 ♜h3. The rook's mission is accomplished, and Black now has no choice but to open up his king: 5...f5 6 ♕xe6 ♜cd8 7 ♜d7! ♜xd7 8 ♜xf8#.

2...♗xe5 only helps yet another rook-lift, this time along the fifth rank: 3 ♜xe5 ♗h7 4 ♜h5 f5 5 ♕xe6+ ♖h8 6 ♕xc8 ♜xc8 7 ♜e1 with the idea 7...♜f7 8 ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 9 ♜xh7+ ♖xh7 10 ♜e7+ and White wins.



Now the rook joins the fray.

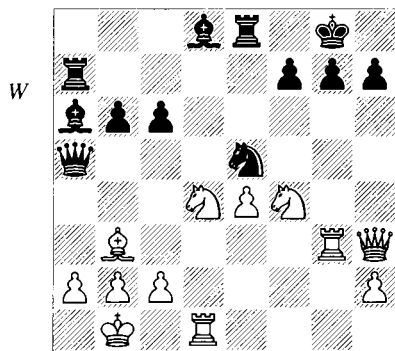
3 ♜d3!

This is the right rook; the other should control e5.

3...♗xe5 4 ♜xe5 ♕xe5 5 ♜h3

Black is helpless.

One open file can be sufficient for a rook to do its evil work:



Maksimenko – P.H. Nielsen
Germany 2003

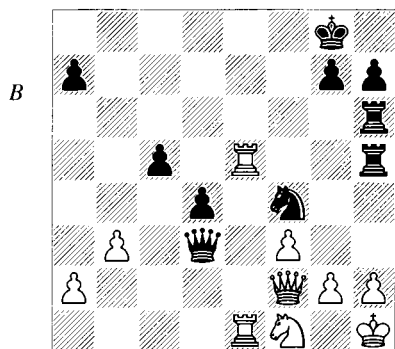
1 ♗xc6! ♗xc6 2 ♜xh7+! ♔xh7

2...♕f8 3 ♜xg7+ (3 ♗g6+ fxg6 4 ♜g8+ ♕e7 5 ♜f7#) 3...♕e7 4 ♜xf7#.

3 ♜h3+ ♔g8 4 ♗g6! 1-0

Black's king has nowhere to run, and ♜h8# is inevitable.

In the following example Black could not deliver mate, but the energy of his pieces on the h-file was sufficient to win material by chasing the white king into forks.



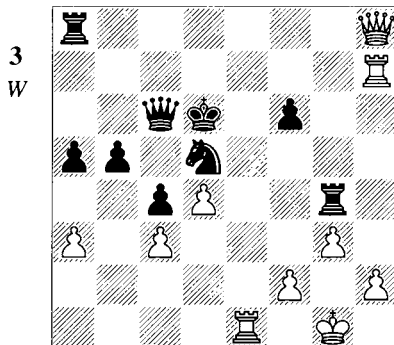
Zavgorodny – Moiseenko
Ukrainian Team Ch, Alushta 2005

32...♖xf1+!! 33 ♖xf1

33 ♜xf1 ♜xh2+ 34 ♔g1 ♜h1#.

33...♜xh2+ 34 ♔g1 ♜h1+ 0-1

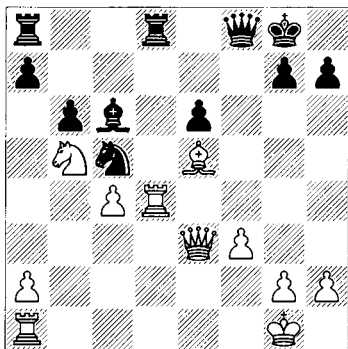
White resigned in view of 35 ♔f2 ♜xf1+ 36 ♔xf1 (or 36 ♜xf1 ♘d3+) 36...♜h1+ 37 ♔f2 ♘d3+.



Exploit the open e-file.

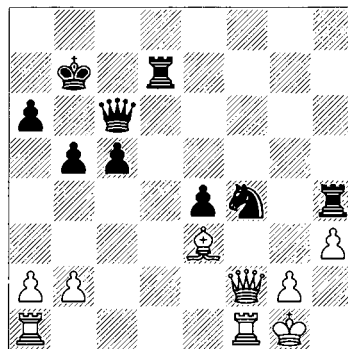
Exercises

1
W



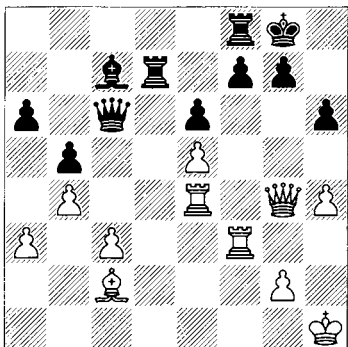
Should White double his rooks on the open file?

4
B



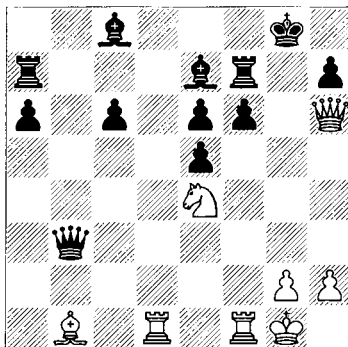
Black can win by a blitzkrieg.

2
W

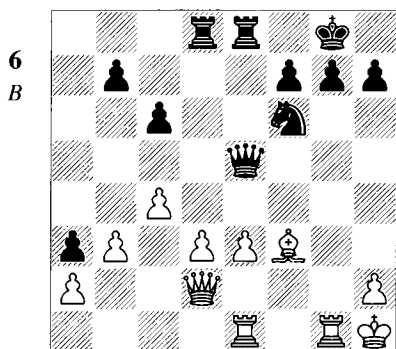


White's major pieces look impressive. Make use of them.

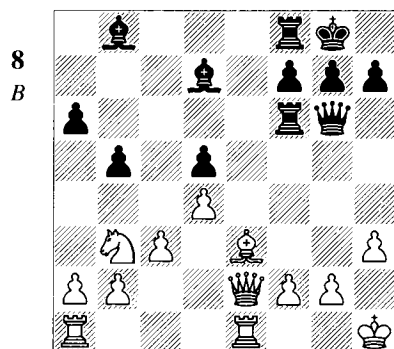
5
W



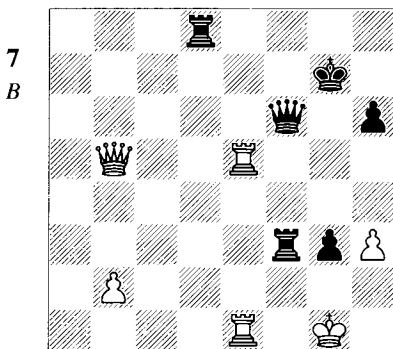
Both rooks are needed here!



Find a tactical way to occupy an important file.



Black has already lifted his rook...



Both kings are in danger, and it is Black to move.

20 Trapping a Piece

We can trap a piece in two ways. The first is the more straightforward: we attack a piece that has no escape-squares, and then capture it. The second method is shutting a piece out of the battle. In this case our opponent still has his piece on the board, but it is so limited (by our dominant pieces or his own troops) that it is practically useless.

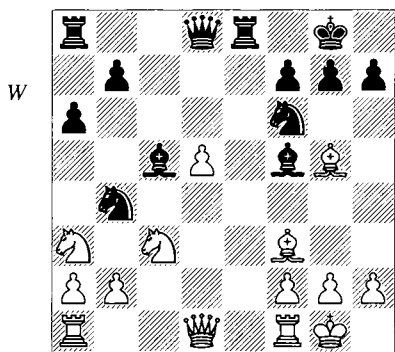
Both methods are very common; mate for instance is limitation of the opponent's king, followed by trapping it. A strategy for trapping starts with the restriction of the opponent's pieces, which makes them vulnerable because they lack good squares. Once we have brought up reinforcements, we can start harvesting the fruit of our strategy.

Here is a famous example where Kasparov paralyzes most of Karpov's army thanks to the supreme coordination of his pieces, and one very well-placed knight in particular.

Karpov – Kasparov

*World Ch match (game 16),
Moscow 1985*

1 e4 c5 2 ♖f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4 ♜c6 5 ♜b5 d6 6 c4 ♜f6 7 ♜1c3 a6 8 ♜a3 d5 9 cxd5 exd5 10 exd5 ♜b4 11 ♙e2 ♙c5? 12 0-0? 0-0 13 ♙f3 ♙f5 14 ♙g5 ♞e8! (D)



15 ♙d2

Karpov does not feel the danger, and decides to keep the pawn. More advisable is 15 ♜c4 ♙d3 16 a3 ♙xc4 (16... ♙xf1? 17 axb4 ♙xc4 18 bxc5 ±) 17 axb4 ♙xb4 18 ♞e1, by which White relieves his defence and obtains an equal game.

15...b5!

This move takes away the c4-square from the a3-knight and forces it to endure a miserable existence. Pawns are very well suited to the task of restricting enemy pieces.

16 ♞ad1 ♜d3!

A knight could not dream of a better career. From this excellent outpost, it denies White's rooks access to both open files, and will play the dominant role for the rest of the game. The principle is the same as for the pawns: it is most effective to restrict enemy pieces with less valuable ones of our own.

17 ♜ab1?

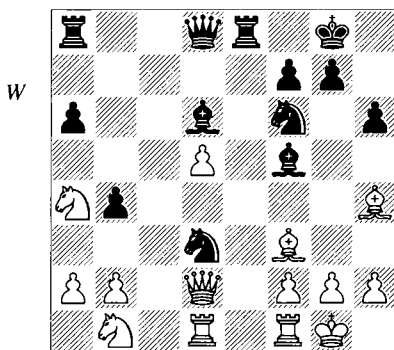
17 d6 is better, and leads to complications.

17...h6! 18 ♙h4 b4! 19 ♜a4

19 ♜e2 g5! 20 ♙xg5 ♜xf2 and Black is on top.

19...♙d6 (D)

Kasparov had this position on his analysis board before the game – an impressive piece of preparation, and a demonstration of how well he understood his opponent and could anticipate his choices.



A mere glance at the position now will convince us that Black has achieved everything

that he could hope for by using the limitation principle. Both white knights lack prospects (and any moves at all), while the same goes for his rooks, and even the white queen has few prospects. At the same time, the black pieces that are restricting them possess great energy. The white pieces are in constant danger of being trapped.

20 ♖g3

20 ♖c2? ♜c8 21 ♖b3 ♘f4 (Black already threatens to trap the queen with 22...♙c2) 22 ♜c1 ♜xc1 23 ♜xc1 g5 24 ♖g3 g4 suddenly traps the bishop. This should not astonish you; many similar lines will follow, in which White's pieces suffer.

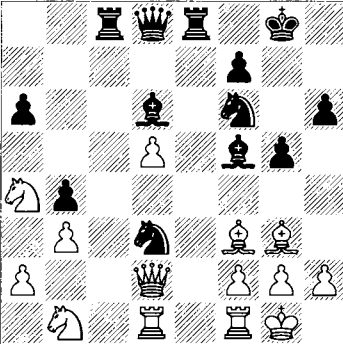
20...♜c8

Thanks to the monster on d3, Black has occupied both open files (remember what we said about bringing up reinforcements!).

21 b3

Karpov wants to bring his knight back into the game via b2.

21...g5!! (D)



This excellent move is still based on the idea of restricting White's pieces: by means of a highly concrete idea, Kasparov prevents his opponent from freeing his position. The loosening of Black's kingside is of no consequence, as long as White lacks active pieces to exploit it.

22 ♙xd6

The point of Black's ...g5 idea is seen in the line 22 ♘b2? ♘xb2 23 ♖xb2 g4, where the white bishop is lost, while after 22 ♙e2? ♘e4 23 ♖xd3 ♘xg3 White loses material. 22 h4 is a weakening move, since White's inability to manoeuvre his pieces makes it hard for him to defend, whereas Black possesses more space and both open files and can easily supply more

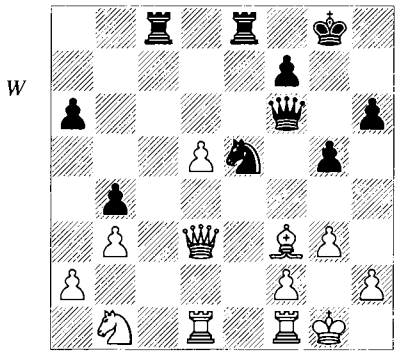
troops: 22...♘e4 23 ♙xe4 ♙xe4 24 hxg5 ♙xg3 25 fxg3 ♖xd5 26 gxh6 ♜e6! and White will not survive the attack.

22...♖xd6 23 g3

Or 23 ♙e2 ♘f4 24 ♙c4 ♘g4 25 g3 ♜xc4! 26 bxc4 ♜e2 27 c5 (27 ♖d4 ♙e4 28 gxf4 ♖xf4 leads to mate, while 27 ♖c1 gives Black a choice between 27...♜c2, nicely trapping the queen, and 27...♘h3+, followed by 28...♙e4+, mating) 27...♖g6 (27...♘h3+ 28 ♘h1 ♘gxf2+ mates) 28 gxf4 ♖h5 and the queen moves in to give mate.

23...♘d7! 24 ♙g2

24 ♘b2 ♖f6!! may lead to another physical trapping after 25 ♘xd3 ♙xd3 26 ♖xd3 ♘e5 (D).



A fork on f3 will follow.

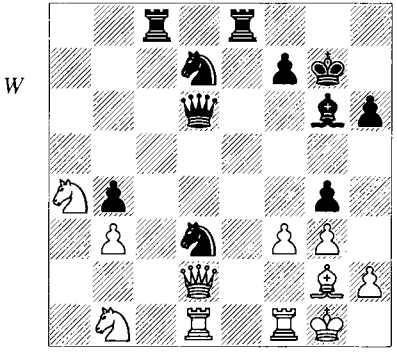
24...♖f6! 25 a3 a5 26 axb4 axb4 27 ♖a2 ♙g6 28 d6

Or: 28 ♘d2 ♜e2 -+; 28 h3 ♘e1!? 29 ♜dxel ♜xel 30 ♜xel ♜c2.

28...g4! 29 ♖d2 ♘g7 30 f3

30 f4 ♖d4+ 31 ♘h1 ♙f5.

30...♖xd6 (D)



31 fxg4

31 ♖b2 gxf3 32 ♙xf3 ♗7e5 33 ♗xd3 ♖b6+ 34 ♖f2 ♗xf3+ 35 ♖g2 ♖e3 is yet another line where Black has total domination.

The rest of the game was played by Kasparov with his usual energy. He first won material and then organized the decisive assault.

31... ♖d4+ 32 ♖h1 ♗f6 33 ♖f4

33 h3 ♖e3! 34 ♖f4 ♖e5 -+.

33... ♗e4 34 ♖xd3 ♗f2+ 35 ♖xf2 ♙xd3 36 ♖fd2 ♖e3! 37 ♖xd3 ♖c1!! 38 ♗b2

Finally the poor knight joins the game, only to discover that it is all over.

38... ♖f2! 39 ♗d2 ♖xd1+

39... ♖e2! mates.

40 ♗xd1 ♖e1+ 0-1

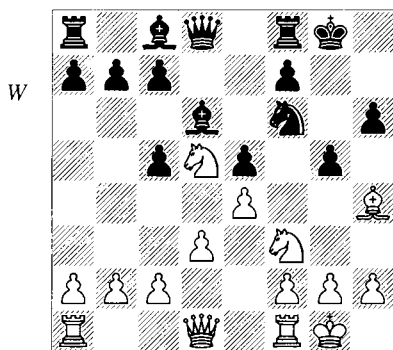
Here is a well-known example, by another of the great champions, on the theme of **shutting a piece out of play**. In this case, a single piece is targeted, and the restriction is made possible by the pawn-structure.

Winter – Capablanca

Hastings 1919

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 ♙b5 ♙b4 5 0-0 0-0 6 ♙xc6 dxc6 7 d3 ♙d6 8 ♙g5 h6 9 ♙h4 c5 10 ♗d5 g5!! (D)

Black is playing against the bishop.



11 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 12 ♙g3 ♙g4 13 h3 ♙xf3 14 ♖xf3 ♖xf3 15 gxf3 f6 16 ♖g2

In effect, White is playing a piece down. The bishop on g3 is locked in, and can only be freed after a pawn sacrifice (♙h2, f4, and after ...exf4 White plays f3, ♖g2 followed by ♙g1). But this is time-consuming and will cost material.

The correct way for Black to realize his advantage is simple: attack on the queenside where

after the appropriate breakthrough and the opening of the flank Black will be a piece up (the d6-bishop).

The general rule is: *play on the other side of the board from the excluded piece*. Simplifications should generally be in your favour since they will underline the absence of this piece.

16... a5 17 a4 ♖f7 18 ♖h1 ♖e6 19 h4 ♖fb8 20 hgx5 hxg5 21 b3 c6 22 ♖a2 b5 23 ♖ha1 c4 24 axb5 cxb3 25 cxb3 ♖xb5 26 ♖a4 ♖xb3 27 d4 ♖b5 28 ♖c4 ♖b4 29 ♖xc6 ♖xd4 0-1

We shall now take a piece-by-piece look at methods for domination, trapping, exclusion and restriction.

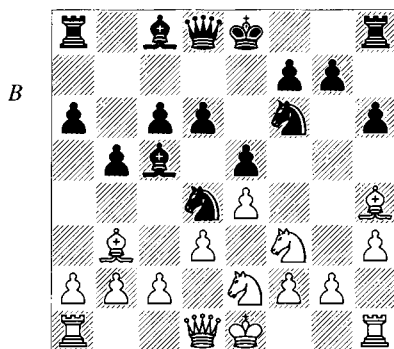
Trapping the Bishop

The easiest way to exclude or trap a bishop is to build a pawn-barrier in its way. Do not forget that bishops are 'colour-blind'. Do not be afraid that the pawns might be on the same colour squares as your own bishop. This bishop will still prosper if its main antagonist is neutralized.

Brener – V. Georgiev

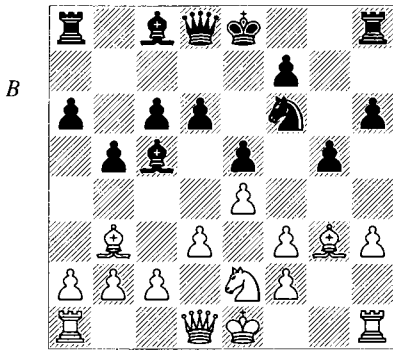
Neuhausen 2007

1 e4 e5 2 ♗f3 ♗c6 3 ♙b5 a6 4 ♙a4 ♗f6 5 d3 ♙c5 6 ♗c3 d6 7 ♙g5 h6 8 ♙h4 b5 9 ♙b3 ♗d4 10 h3 c6 11 ♗e2? (D)



Knowing the basic principles will help you score a lot of points, and enjoy your chess more. I can now exclude White's dark-squared bishop, just as in the classical example we saw above.

11... ♗xf3+ 12 gxf3 g5 13 ♙g3 (D)



13... ♖e7

In order to exclude the bishop, Black needs to protect the e5-pawn in advance, and not to allow a freeing pawn-break by d4.

14 ♖d2 ♗b6!

The idea is to protect the e5-pawn with the bishop if necessary.

15 h4 ♖g8 16 hxg5 hxg5 17 d4 ♗b7 18 0-0-0

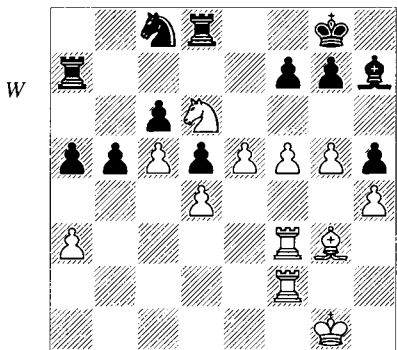
After 18 dxe5 dxe5 19 0-0-0 ♖d8 20 ♖c3 ♗xd1+ 21 ♗xd1 ♘d7 the idea will be ... ♗h8 and ... f6 in order to entrap the bishop on g3 forever.

18...0-0-0 19 ♖c3 ♗c7 20 a4 c5 21 dxe5 dxe5 22 axb5 axb5 23 ♗d5?

White realizes that he is strategically lost and commits a tactical blunder.

23... ♘d5 24 exd5 ♗xd5 25 ♗h7 ♗c4 26 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 27 ♖e3 ♖d6 28 b3 ♖d1+ 0-1

The same method can be successfully applied when actually trapping a piece:



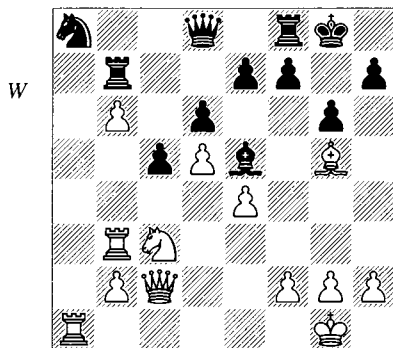
Malakhov – Jobava

European Clubs Cup, Kallithea 2008

52 e6 f6 53 ♗xc8 ♗xc8 54 g6 1-0

Trapping the Knight

Tarrasch claimed that a knight near the corner is always a disgrace. While this is not always so, and indeed modern players are increasingly willing to put their knights on the edge and even near corners, care is needed, as such a knight lacks mobility and can quite easily become shut out of play or trapped.



V. Georgiev – Wornath

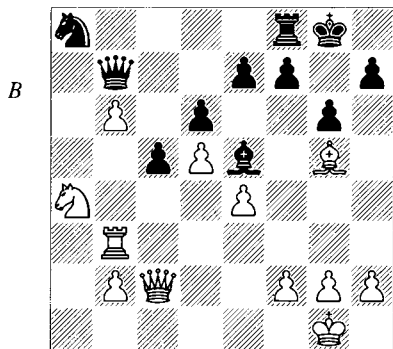
Bundesliga 2000/1

Black's knight is already in danger of exclusion. I just need to keep it in the corner with a simple tactical trick:

20 ♗a7! ♖d7

The pawn of e7 was hanging.

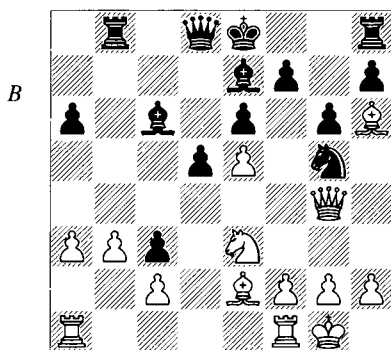
21 ♗xb7 ♖xb7 22 ♘a4 (D)



Having fixed Black's knight on a ridiculous square, I turn my eyes to the other side of the board.

22... ♗b8 23 ♖c4 ♗d4 24 h3 f6 25 ♗d2 ♖g7 26 ♗c3 ♗xc3 27 bxc3 ♖c8 28 ♖b5 ♗b7 29 ♖c6 ♖b8 30 c4 ♖f7 31 f4 h5 32 e5 h4 33 exd6 exd6 34 ♗e3 g5 35 f5 1-0

Knights need stable positions, and advanced posts ideally. Without security they may become an easy prey for practically any piece.



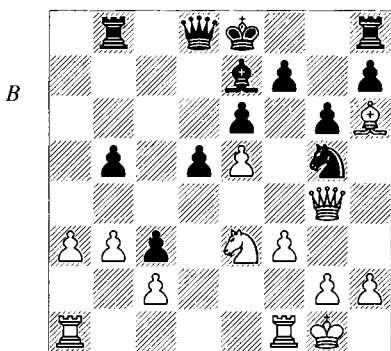
Leko – Ivanchuk
Dortmund 2008

Ivanchuk did not sense the danger and proceeded with his general plan:

23...♙b5?

The only move was 23...♘e4, to bring the knight back into its camp.

24 ♙xb5+ axb5 25 f3! (D)



White cuts off the knight's flight-squares, and will round it up later.

25...♚b6 26 ♖ae1!

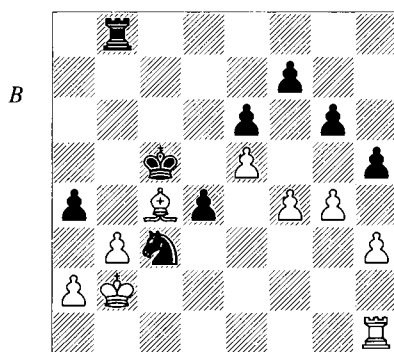
26 ♙xg5? is premature: 26...♙xg5 27 ♚xg5 h6 28 ♚f4 g5 wins back the piece. White need not hurry, as the knight is frozen in place on g5.

26...d4 27 ♘d1 d3+ 28 ♙h1 dxc2 29 ♘f2 ♙c5 30 ♘d3 ♙e3 31 ♙xg5 1-0

Trapping the King

Excluding the king is an especially effective strategy in an endgame, since the king usually

needs to become an active piece and play a full role in the battle.



Tan Zhongyi – Stefanova
FIDE Knockout (Women), Elista 2004

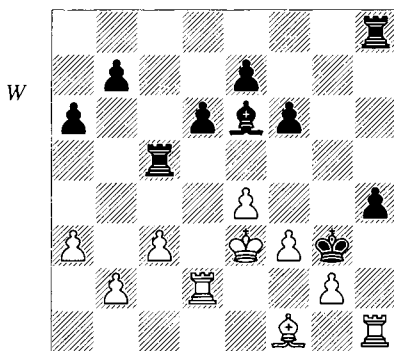
33...a3+! 34 ♔a1

The king has to retreat into the corner, leaving Black practically a piece ahead in the endgame.

34...♗h8 35 g5 ♙b4 36 ♖h2 ♜c8 37 ♖d2 ♜xc4

This exchange sacrifice is possible thanks to Black's dynamic advantage. The combined efforts of a king, knight and passed pawn easily overpower a single rook.

38 bxc4 ♙xc4 39 h4 d3 40 f5 ♘e4 41 fxg6 fxg6 42 ♜c2+ ♙d4 43 ♖d2 ♙e3 44 ♖d1 ♙e2 0-1



S. Pereira – El Debs
São Paulo 2000

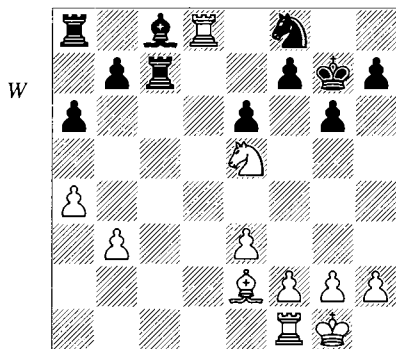
White forces Black's king to the edge, where it is permanently exposed to a discovered check:

31 ♖h3+! ♙xh3 32 gxh3 ♜hc8

32...♖b5 33 ♖g2+ ♔xh3 34 ♖g8+ ♔h2 35
 ♖xh8 ♖xb2 36 ♖xh4+ ♔g1 37 ♕e2 +-.
 33 ♖g2+ ♔xh3 34 ♔f2! 1-0
 ♖g3++ and ♖h3# is inevitable.

Trapping the Rook

Rooks love open spaces, and this is a good reason to keep the enemy rooks behind their own pawns.

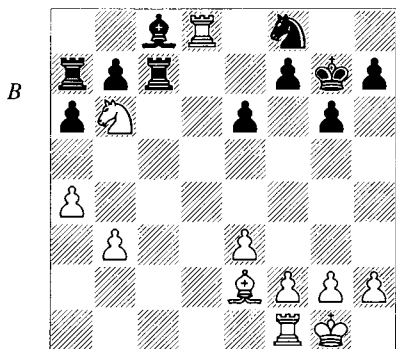


Stefanova – Dworakowska
 Tromsø 2007

25 ♖c4!

The knight is heading for b6, where it will shut in the rook forever.

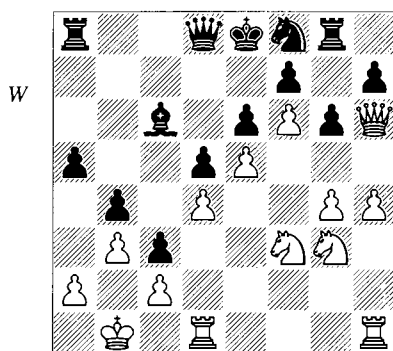
25...♖a7 26 ♖b6 (D)



The knight on b6 will cost Black at least a rook, one way or another, so White is effectively an exchange ahead.

26...♕d7 27 ♖d1 ♕c6 28 b4 ♕e4 29 f3 ♖c6
 30 a5 +- ♖c2 31 fxe4 ♖xe2 32 ♖b8 g5 33 ♖c8
 ♖g6 34 ♔h1 ♖e5 35 ♖xa7 ♖g4 36 ♖c1 ♖xe3
 37 ♖xb7 ♖g6 38 ♖c6 ♖xg2 39 ♖e5+ ♔f6 40
 ♖g4+ ♔g7 41 ♖cc7 1-0

Rooks can be slain in their beds by a queen, especially if it has solid pawn support.



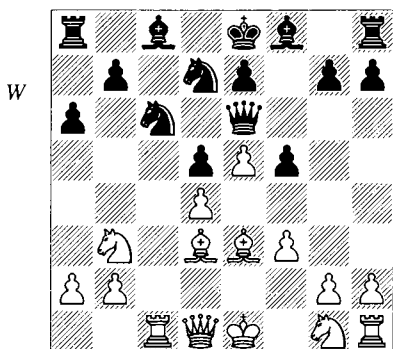
De Vreugt – Groffen
 Dutch Team Ch 2007/8

23 ♖g7! a4 24 ♖h2 1-0

Black is actually exchanging his rook for the f6-pawn.

Trapping the Queen

The queen may become very vulnerable if it joins the play too early. Due to its high value it cannot be exchanged for other pieces, and must flee whenever attacked. That's why as novices we are advised to develop our other pieces first.



Romero – J. Polgar
 Italian Team Ch, Arvier 2008

Black had spent too many moves in the opening moving her queen, and now it becomes a target.

14 ♖h3

White is developing his pieces with gain of tempi.

14...g6

14...♞f7 15 ♘g5 ♞g6 (15...♞g8 16 ♙xf5) 16 h4 h6 17 h5 the queen is trapped.

15 ♘f4 ♞g8 16 ♘xd5! ♞xd5 17 ♙c4

The queen is trapped in mid-board. This often happens if there are many pieces left on the board. White comfortably won later.

Queens also hate closed spaces, since they cannot show their full potential and are easy prey for the lower-rated pieces.

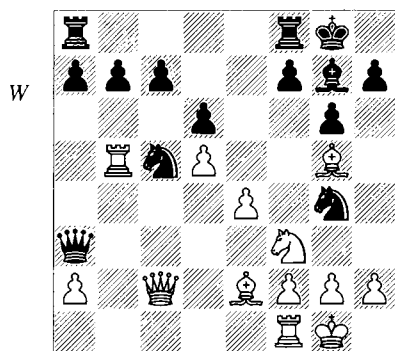


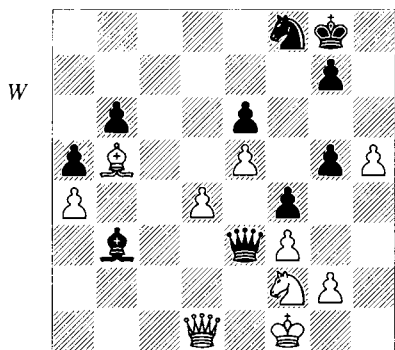
Figura – Puijssers
Bundesliga 2008/9

21 ♘d2!

Now Black loses material.

21...♘e5? 22 ♘b1 1-0

22...♞a4 23 ♜xc5!.



Doettling – D. Gross
Bundesliga 2007/8

Black has just played 35...♙d5-b3?, closing off his queen's emergency exit, and this will cost him dear.

36 ♞a1!

White takes the dark squares away from the black queen, and will now trap it.

36...♙d5 37 ♞b2 ♘f7

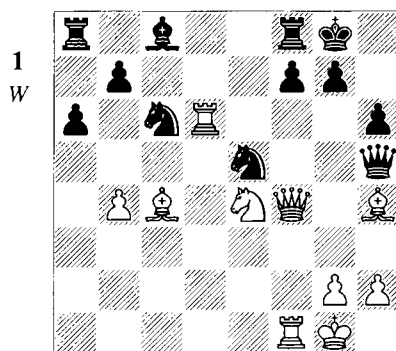
If 37...♞b3 38 ♞xb3 ♙xb3 39 ♘e4 ♘h7 40 ♘e2 ♙d5 (40...♙c2 41 ♙c4 +) 41 ♘d3 ♘f8 42 ♙c4 +- White also wins.

38 ♙d3!

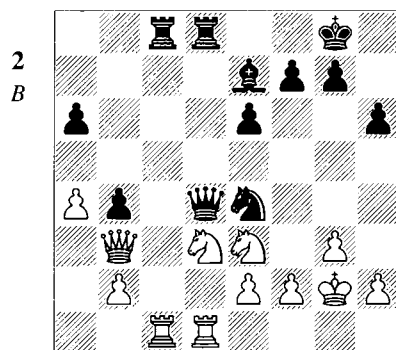
The queen is successfully surrounded, and the last finesse will be to attack it with the knight.

38...♘d7

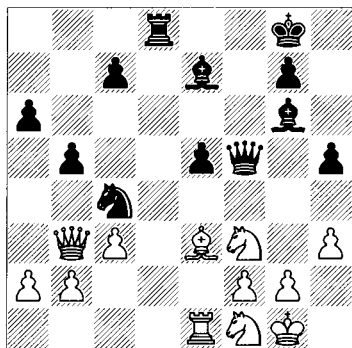
38...g4 39 ♞c3 gxf3 40 g4 +- with the idea ♘d1.

39 ♞c3 ♘e7 40 ♘g4 1-0**Exercises**

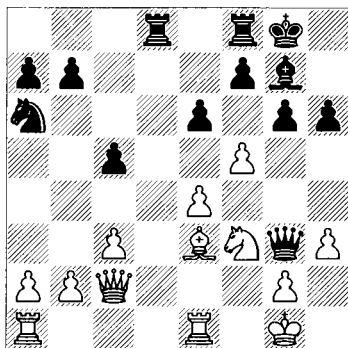
Trap an enemy piece!



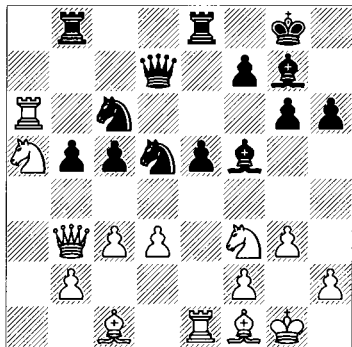
Limitation followed by trapping.

3
B

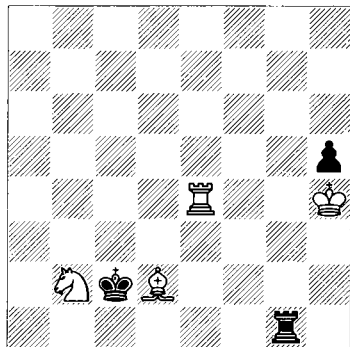
A piece has strayed too far from its own camp.

6
W

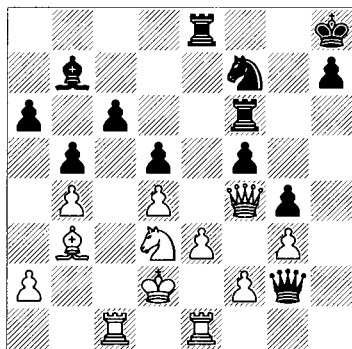
This is similar to the previous one.

4
B

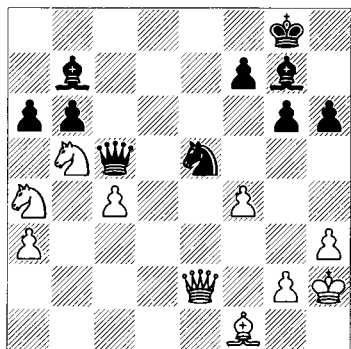
There's no need for a hint here!

7
W

Decoy in order to block.

5
W

Cut off the black queen's way out.

8
B

Simple chess is the best.

21 Practice Makes Perfect

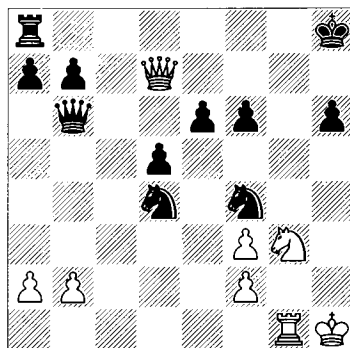
As we said at the beginning of the book, nothing can substitute for your own work on tactics. Regularly solving tactical positions will help you to understand the mechanisms described in the book, and assist the subconscious mind in absorbing many patterns and themes. It will also keep you in good shape for your competitive games. Before a tournament, we recommend you double the time you spend tackling tactical exercises in order to get into your optimal chess form.

Every time when you see a diagram on a sheet of paper, spend some time to find the solution; let this become a useful habit of yours. Another useful method for tactical improvement is to follow the games of the great tacticians, such as Mikhail Tal, Garry Kasparov, Veselin Topalov, Alexander Morozevich, Alexei Shirov, Emil Sutovsky amongst many others. This will help you discover new horizons in tactical art, and fully appreciate the beauty in chess.

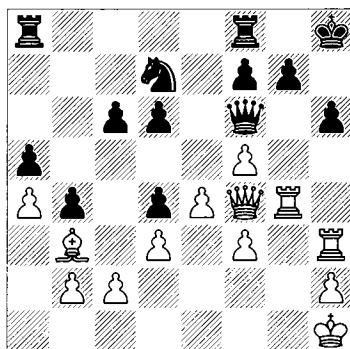
A final tip: do not be afraid to sacrifice material. You will learn more from losing a chess game with honour than you will from gaining a couple of Elo points with a chicken-hearted draw offer. Remember, we are not slaves of our ratings.

In the following fifty exercises, you are told only who is to move. You must decide for yourself if you should be looking for a win or a draw, or just trying to secure a useful advantage. Like in a real game, there are also no clues about what tactical themes the position may feature. By this stage of the book you now have all the tools you need to work that out for yourself!

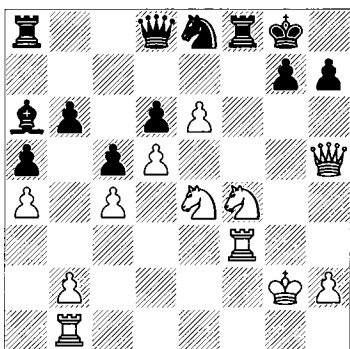
1
W



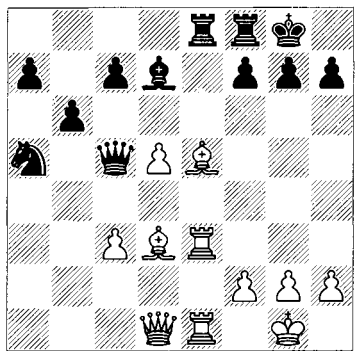
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W



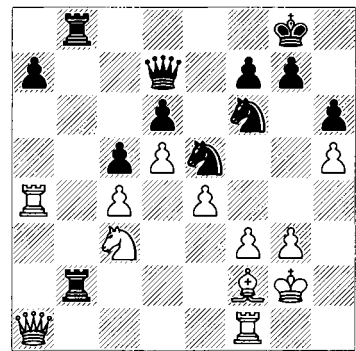
3
W



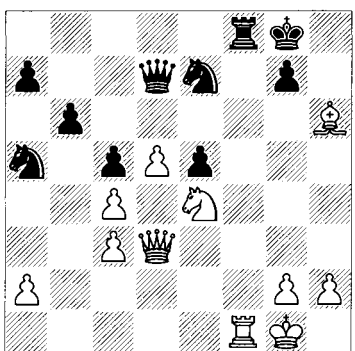
4
W



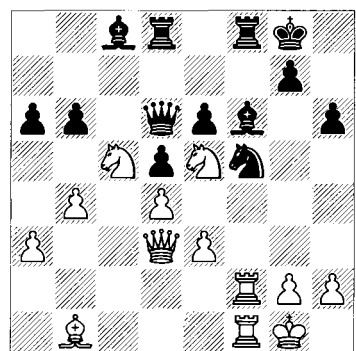
7
B



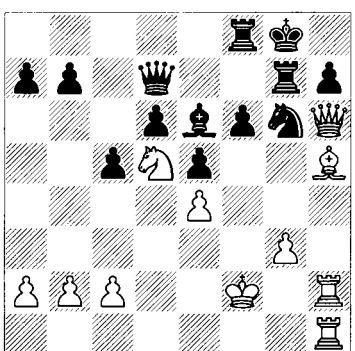
5
W



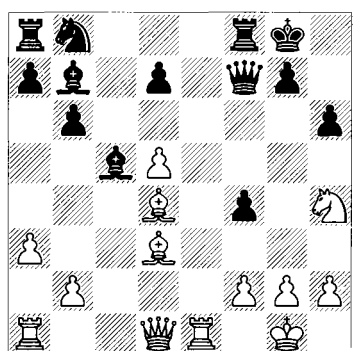
8
W



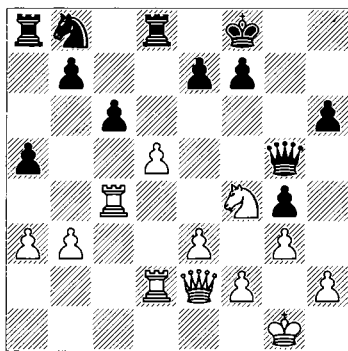
6
W



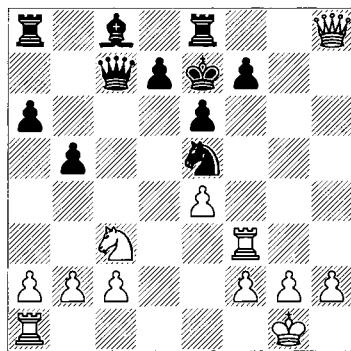
9
W



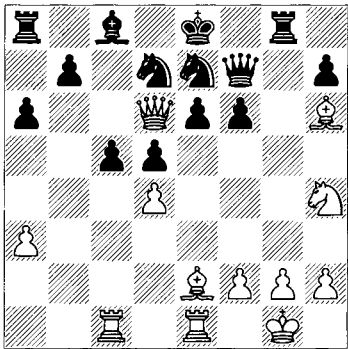
10
W



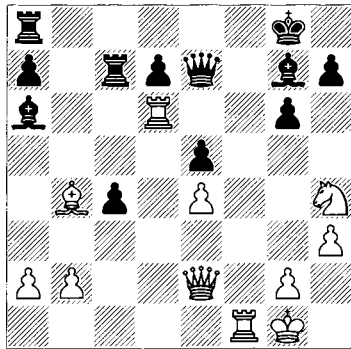
13
W



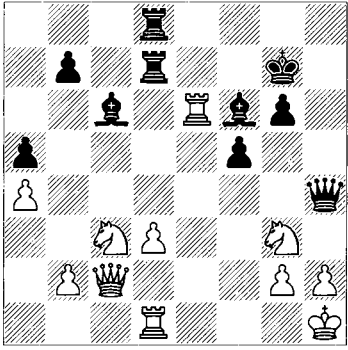
11
W



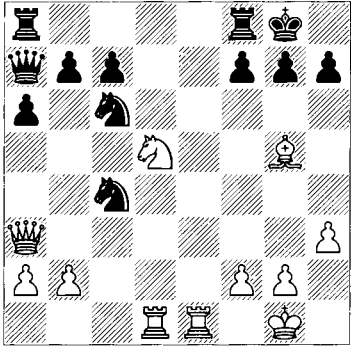
14
W

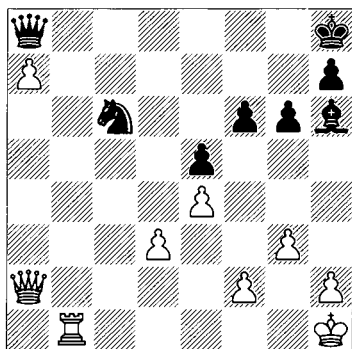
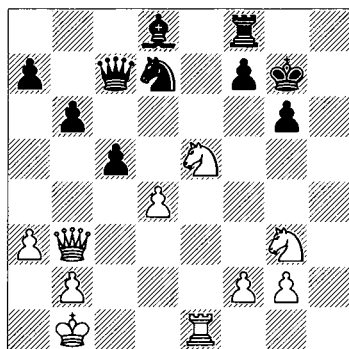
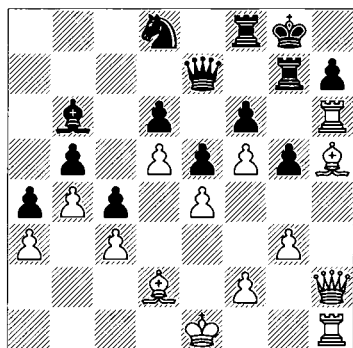
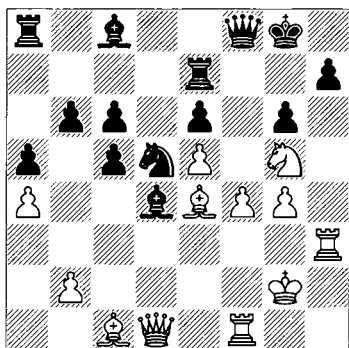
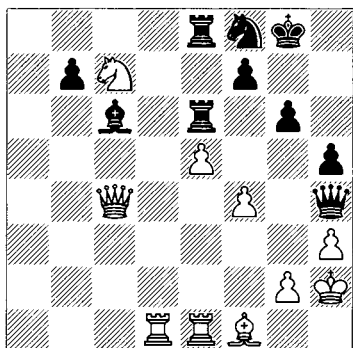
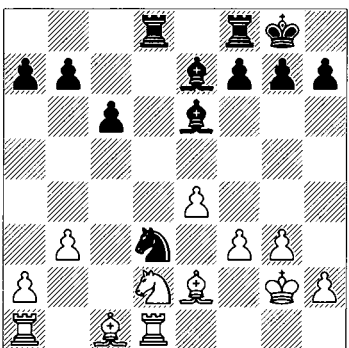


12
B

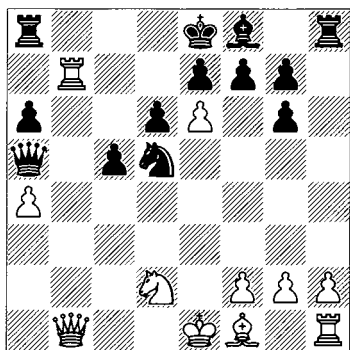


15
W

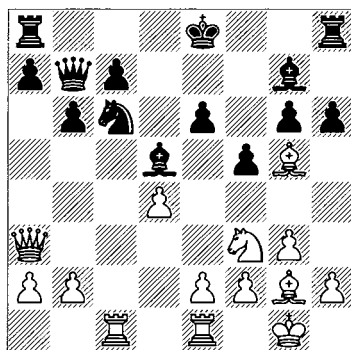


16
W19
W17
W20
W18
B21
B

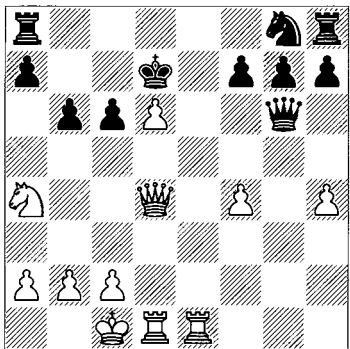
22
W



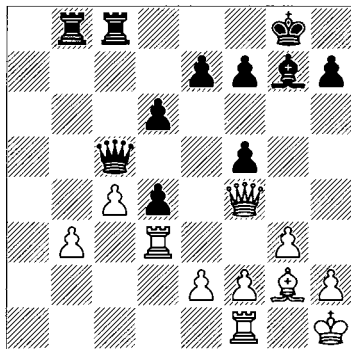
25
W



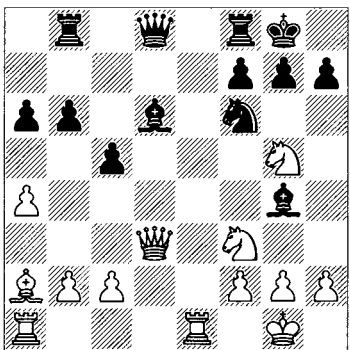
23
W



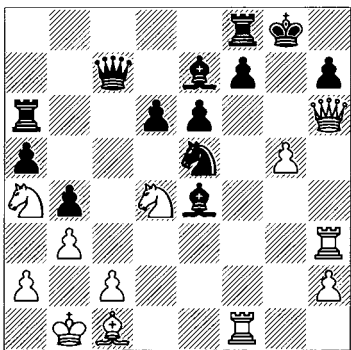
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W

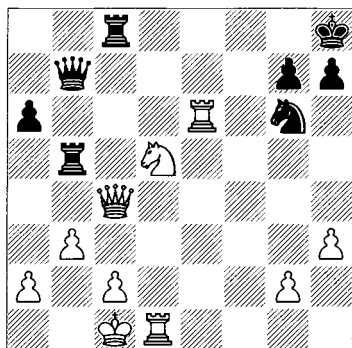
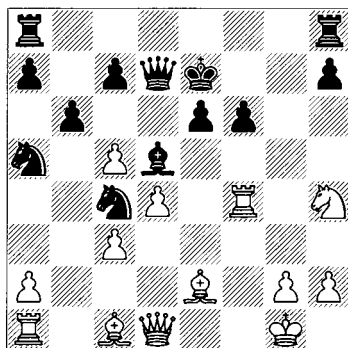
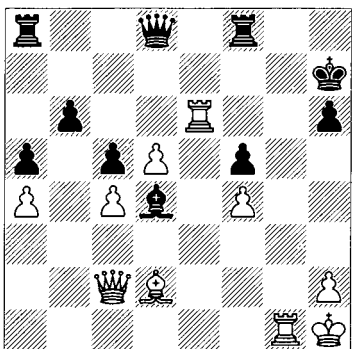
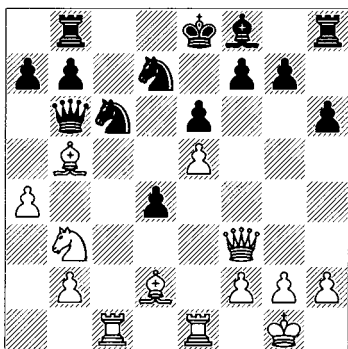
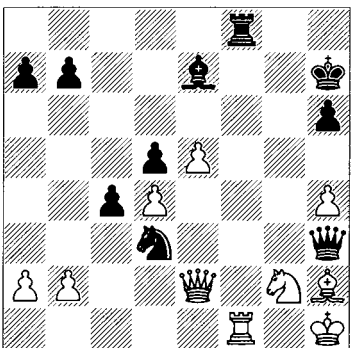
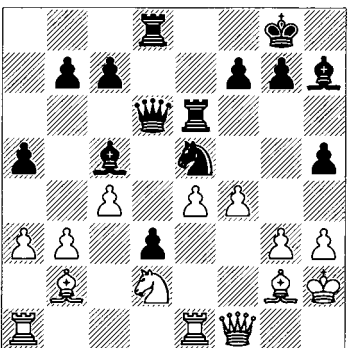


24
W

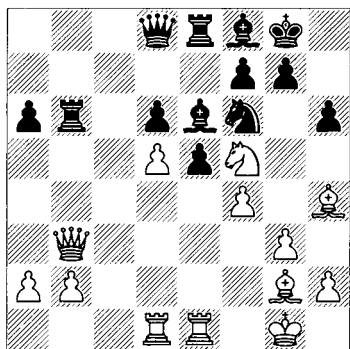


27
W

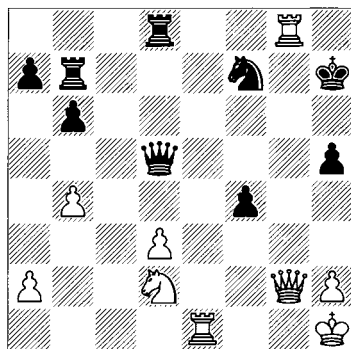


28
W31
W29
W32
W30
B33
B

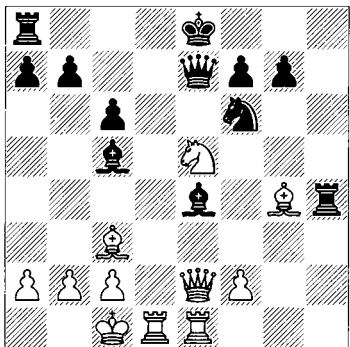
34
W



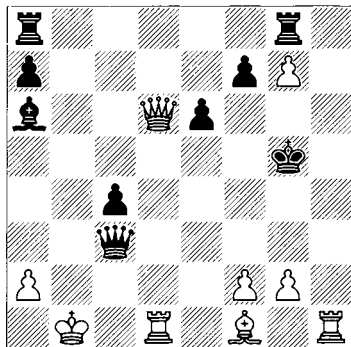
37
W



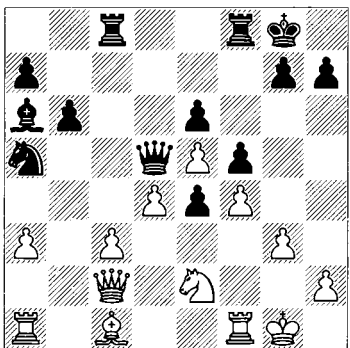
35
W



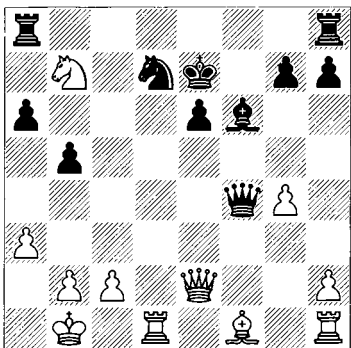
38
W



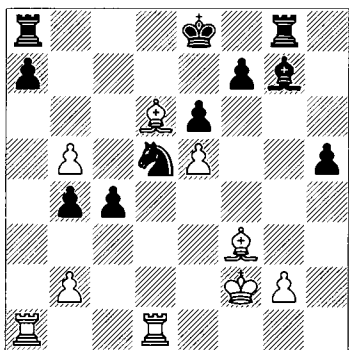
36
B



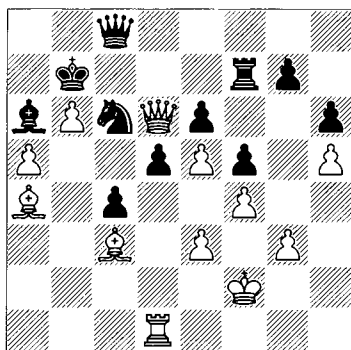
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W



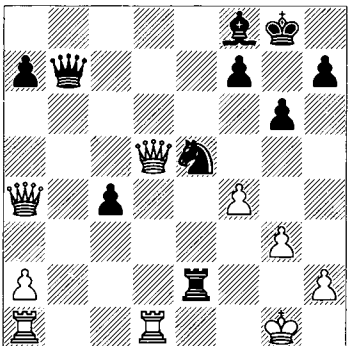
46
W



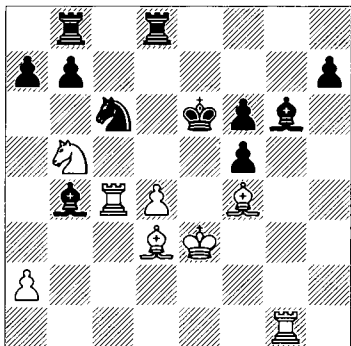
49
W



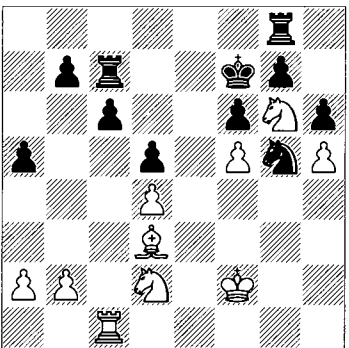
47
B



50
W



48
W



Solutions

Chapter 1

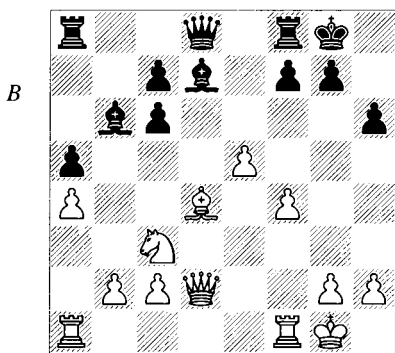
1) Nevanlinna – Sepp

Jyvaskylä 1993

16...d4!

Black forces his opponent into a dreadful pin.

17 ♖xd4 ♗xd4 18 ♕xd4 (D)



18...♕g4!

Precisely here, this move creates an additional pin, puts more pressure on the pinned bishop and prevents ♗d1 ideas. What more could one ask of a single move?

19 ♖ad1 ♕xd1 20 ♗xd1 ♖xd4+ 21 ♖xd4 ♗fd8!

Black has won an exchange, and with precise play converts it into a full point.

22 ♖f2 ♕xf2+ 23 ♖xf2 ♗xd1 24 ♗xd1 ♗d8 25 ♖e2 ♗d4 26 g3 ♗xa4 27 ♗d3 ♗a1 28 ♖d2 ♖f8 29 g4 ♗a4 30 ♖e3 ♗c4 31 c3 g5 32 fxg5 ♗xg4 33 gxh6 ♗h4 34 b3 c5 35 ♗b2 c4 36 ♗xc4 a4 37 ♗d3 axb3 38 ♗a5 ♗h3+ 39 ♗d2 ♗xh2+ 40 ♖c1 ♗c2+ 0-1

2) Nguyen Huynh Minh – Macak

Budapest 2008

18 ♖xe5

This is easy. White wins a pawn due to the pin.

18...♕f6

You had to foresee this counterpin, and see what follows:

19 ♖xf7! ♖xf7 20 ♖e6+ ♖f8 21 ♗ac1 1-0

Black is completely tied up, ♗c7 is coming, and 21...♗d7 is simply bad due to 22 ♕xd6+. This is why he decided to throw in the towel.

3) Narančić – Bistrić

Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

No.

18...♗xa4?

Greed is usually punished, especially in chess. The knight walks into a pin, which White can exploit by simple means. He piles on as much pressure as he can, and at some point Black's defence will crack, since his queen is in front of his army (minor forces should protect first, remember?), which leaves him no chances in further exchanges.

19 ♕f1

20 ♗c4 followed by 21 ♗xa4 is the threat.

19...axb5 20 ♗xb5 ♗c6 21 ♗a3

Adding a rook to the attack.

21...♗c8

The knight will provide support.

22 ♗ba1 ♗cb6 23 c4

With two decisive ideas to break the defence: to add the knight by ♗d2-b1-c3, or the bishop via ♕e2-d1. Black is helpless.

23...♖a6 24 ♗d2 ♕f8 25 ♗c3 ♕d7 26 ♗xa4 1-0

4) Kurnosov – Dzhumayev

Agzamov Memorial, Tashkent 2008

13 ♗xe6+! fxe6

13...♕e7 14 ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 15 ♖xa8+.

14 dxе6! ♕g7

Unfortunately Black has no time to capture the queen: 14...♕xc6 15 f7#.

15 exd7+ 1-0

5) Tatai – Vancini

Italian Ch, Chianciano 1989

19 ♖xg7! ♖xg7 20 ♖c3! ♕g4

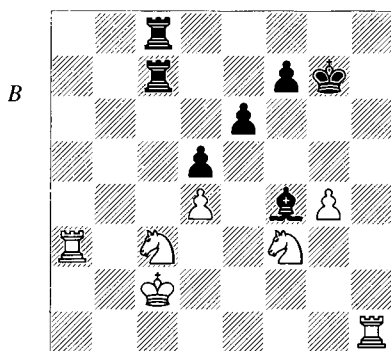
The bishop defends the h5-square, but after White's reply, the black position collapses.

21 h3 ♖e7 22 hxg4 ♕g8 23 ♖f5 1-0

6) Wade – Short

Staunton Memorial, London 2008

39...♖xc3! 40 ♖xc3 ♖bc8 41 ♖a3 (D)



So far it was easy, but Black had to foresee how he could attack the pinned knight once more.

41...♖d6!

Such backward moves are notoriously hard to spot, especially in advance. But if we are looking for ways to put additional pressure on the pinned piece, the solution should come relatively easily.

42 ♖ha1

The point is that after 42 ♖b3 ♖b4! White loses both his knights due to a double attack: 43 ♖xb4 ♖xc3+ 44 ♖d2 ♖xf3 –+.

42...♖b4! –+

Anyway! Naturally, Black prefers to win a whole knight rather than an exchange.

43 ♖d3 ♖xc3+ 44 ♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 45 ♖e2

Black is winning. The rest is pure technique.

45...♖d6 46 ♖a2 ♖f4 47 ♖b2 ♖g6 48 ♖a2 ♖e3+ 49 ♖f2 ♖e4 50 ♖a4 ♖c7 51 g5 ♖f4 52 ♖a7 ♖e3+ 53 ♖g3 ♖xd4 0-1

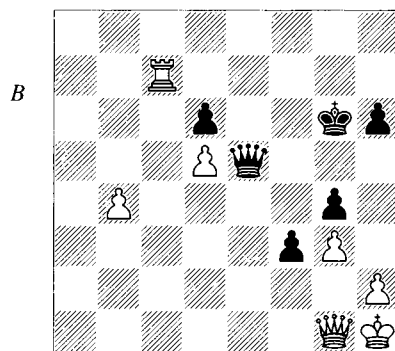
7) Sitnikov – An. Bykhovsky

Elkana 2007

41...♖xd5!

Active defence is the only chance. Black abandons the rook, even though he loses it with check, but creates a drawing mechanism. Passive defence is doomed: 41...♖e8? does not work, since White has an additional attacker: 42 b5 +-.

42 ♖xc7+ ♖xc7 43 ♖xc7+ ♔g6 44 exd5 (D)



Black has lost a rook, but activated his queen to the maximum.

44...♖e4! 45 ♖c1

Or 45 ♖f2 ♖b1+ 46 ♖g1 ♖e4 =, but not 45 h3?? f2+ 46 ♖g2 f1♖+ 47 ♖h2 ♖exg2#.

1/2-1/2

Here the players agreed a draw, with 45...f2+ 46 ♖g2 ♖e1+ 47 ♖f1 ♖e4+ as a possible finish.

8) Pruess – Ippolito

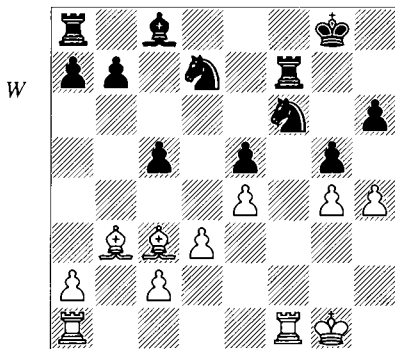
USA Ch, Tulsa 2008

20 ♖xf7!

Excellent. White will coordinate his rooks and bishops and develop his initiative without any risk.

20...♖xf7 21 h4! g5 (D)

The only move. After 21...♖b6 22 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 23 g5 ± White emerges an exchange up.



22 hxg5!

22 ♖xf6!? is another way to continue the attack. White gets rid of the defender, and substitutes his attacking rook with the one from a1. After 22...♖xf6 23 ♖f1 he wins at least a pawn

in all lines; e.g., 23...b5 24 ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 25 ♙xe5 or 23...♙g7 24 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 25 ♙xe5 ♜e6 26 ♖xf6. Still, the method he chooses is preferable, since it is much harder for his opponent to defend with more pieces left on the board.

22...hxg5 23 ♜f5!

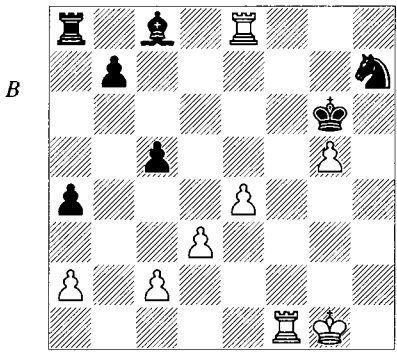
More pressure on the pinned piece!

23...a5?!

Black crumbles under the pressure. But even after 23...♜f8! (relatively best) 24 ♖xf7 (24 ♜af1!? ♜e7 25 ♙d2 ♜e8 26 ♖xg5 ♜g7 27 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 28 ♜xf6 ♜xg4+ 29 ♜f2) 24...♜xf7 25 ♜xg5 White has a rook and a pawn for two knights, is much better developed, and will most likely create another unpleasant pin.

24 ♜af1 ♜a6

24...a4 25 ♜xg5+ (before exchanging the bishop for the rook, White digests a small snack) 25...♜f8 26 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 27 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 28 ♜xe5 ♜g6 29 g5 ♜h7 30 ♜e8! (D).



Pinning again. White has a decisive material and positional advantage.

25 ♙xe5 ♜xe5 26 ♜xe5 ♜c6 27 ♜xg5+ ♜f8 28 ♖xf7 ♜xf7 29 e5 1-0

Chapter 2

1) Brkić – Andonov
Porto San Giorgio 2007

34 ♜d7! 1-0
34...♜xd7 35 ♜f8#.

2) Olszewski – S. Savchenko
Cappelle la Grande 2008

21...♜d1+! 22 ♜xd1
22 ♜xd1 ♜e2#.
22...♜f1# (0-1)

3) Delgado – Llorente
Bayamo 2000

1 ♙h6!

This excellent move deflects the pawn, and in addition opens the g-file for the rook.

1...gxh6

1...♙a3 2 ♜xg7 ♜c3 3 ♜xf7++ ♜g8 4 ♜g4+ ♜xg4 5 ♖xh7+ ♜h8 6 ♜g6#.

2 ♜h5!! ♜xh5 3 ♜d7# (1-0)

4) Inants – Batsanin
Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

22...♜d5!

Black exploits both factors and creates unbearable pressure on White's position. The knight is untouchable, so White has no good options.

23 d4 ♜xd4 24 ♜4f3 ♜xe4! 0-1

5) Tiviakov – Le Quang
Moscow 2008

False! This is what White was aiming for, but he missed that Black's queen can deflect a rook before making its exit from the board.

22...♜e5! 23 ♜c1

The point is that after 23 ♜xe5 ♜d1+ 24 ♖f1 ♜xh6 both White's rook and knight are hanging: 25 ♜xf8 ♜xe5 26 ♜xa7 ♙d5 +. 23 ♜g7+ is a nice try, but also fails: 23...♜xg7 24 ♜xg7 ♜xg7 25 b5 ♜ce5 26 ♖xa8 ♙c5 and Black wins.

23...♜h8!

The queen retreats with gain of tempo, creating a double attack. It is all over for White now.

24 h3 fxe6 25 ♜xe6

After 25 hxg4, Black can choose between 25...♜e5 and 25...♜xf2 26 ♜xf2 ♜h2, winning in both cases.

25...♜xf2 26 ♜g6+ ♜f7 27 ♜xg4 ♜xg2+! 28 ♜f1 ♜e8 0-1

6) Markus – Bologan
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

By deflecting the main defender:

44 ♜a8! ♜xa8 45 ♜xd7

White's queen enters the battle, and now either f7 is doomed, or the queen will reach g7 via f5. Note that the black queen is too far away from the main theatre, and White's pieces are all superior to their black counterparts.

45...e3+

45...♖f8 46 ♗f5 e3+ 47 ♘h2 ♗a2+ 48 ♘h3 leads to mate on g7.

46 ♘h2 ♖e6 47 ♙xe6 ♗f8 48 ♗c8 d2

48...e2 49 ♗xf8+ ♘xf8 50 d7.

49 ♗xf8+ ♘xf8 50 ♙g4 ♘e8 51 ♘g2 e2 52 ♙xe2 ♘d7 53 ♘f2 ♘xd6 54 ♘e3 1-0

7) Shirov – Ivanchuk

Foros 2008

...then the f3-pawn will be under attack, and White's defences will be in ruins. This can be achieved with a study-like deflection which also disrupts the cooperation between the white pieces.

32...♙d3!! 33 ♘xd3

This is forced.

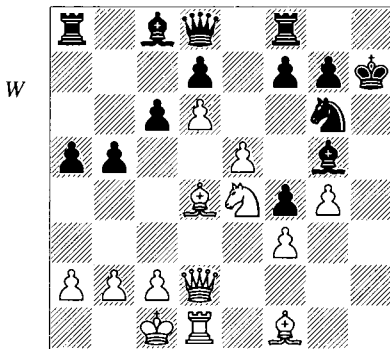
33...♗xf3+ 34 ♘g1 ♙xd3 35 ♗xe5 ♗e3+ 36 ♘h2 ♗xe2+ 0-1

White's king cannot survive after 37 ♘g1 ♗e3+ or 37 ♘h3 ♙xe4 38 ♗e8+ ♘g7 39 ♗e5+ ♘h7.

8) Toczec – Wozniak

Poland 1999

1 ♙xh7!! ♘xh7 (D)



2 ♙b6!

The main defender, as usual, is the queen. After its deflection, the idea behind White's first move becomes clear.

2...♗xb6 3 ♘xg5+ ♘g8

3...♘h6 allows mate in two: 4 ♗h2+ ♘xg5 5 ♗h5#.

4 ♗h2 ♗e3+ 5 ♘b1 ♖e8 6 ♙d3 ♗xd3

The only move. Both 6...♗xe5 7 ♙xg6 fxg6 8 ♗h7+ ♘f8 9 ♗h8# and 6...♗d4 7 ♖h1 lead to mate.

7 cxd3 ♗xe5 8 ♖h1 ♗xg5 9 ♗h7+ ♘f8 10 ♗h8+! 1-0

Chapter 3

1) G. Jones – Hasan

Hastings 2007/8

32 ♗a3+! 1-0

2) Flindt – Bulski

Politiken Cup, Elsinore 2008

22...♖e1+! 0-1

3) Wang Puchen – Bui Vinh

Budapest 2008

42...♗xf2! 0-1

4) Gorovykh – Shimanov

St Petersburg 2008

And a very important one. This is the queen, and after it is deflected away, Black's king is hunted down on the queenside.

21 ♙e4! ♗xe4 22 ♗d6+ ♘b5 23 ♖fb1+ ♘a5 24 ♙d2+ 1-0

5) K. Stein – Movsesian

European Clubs Cup, Panormo 2001

The rook must protect h3, and so can be overloaded:

35...♗f1!! 36 ♘xe5+ dxe5

White is facing an impossible choice, either mate after 37 ♖xf1 ♖xh3+ 38 ♘g4 ♙d7# or losing a whole rook in case of 37 f3 ♗xh1. Therefore...

0-1

6) Akobian – Onishchuk

Philadelphia (blitz) 2002

White opens the f-file to force Black to defend his rook.

1 ♗xg5! fxg5

And now he enjoys the overload created:

2 ♗xc7!! ♘d7

2...♗xf2 3 ♗xe7 ♖f1+ 4 ♘a2 +-. .

3 ♗xd7! 1-0

7) A. Manvelian (end of study)

1st Prize, *Zadachy i Etiudy*, 1997

1 ♗f3+ ♙b3 2 ♗c3!! bxc3 3 ♙d6#

8) G. Singh – Harikrishna

Kolkata 2001

36...♘f4!? 37 ♗xf4??

This natural move is a fatal error, as White neglects his back rank.

White should play either 37 ♖e4, safely neutralizing the danger and claiming a modest advantage after 37...♙c4 (37...♖xg4? 38 ♙xf4) 38 ♖f3, or 37 ♘f2!, when 37...♖xb2? (37...♘xd5 38 ♖e4 is pleasant for White) loses to 38 ♖h4 ♘e2+ 39 ♖h1 ♙e7 40 ♘e4 with an overwhelming attack.

Now Black finds a killing shot:

37...♙d4+! 0-1

White resigned in view of: 38 ♙xd4 ♖e1#; 38 ♖h1 ♖e1+ is also mate; 38 cxd4 ♙c1+.

Chapter 4

1) Knott – S. Haslinger

Hastings 2007/8

48...♙e4!

Decoying the king into a promotion check.

49 ♖xe4 b1♖+ 0-1

2) C. Horvath – Brnas

Croatia Cup, Pula 2001

23 e6! ♖xe6 24 ♙c4 1-0

The queen is trapped.

3) Dudzinski – Mielczarski

Ustron 2008

26 ♖h8+ ♖f7 27 ♙xg6+! ♖xg6

27...♘xg6 28 ♙h7#.

28 ♖h5+

28 ♙g3+ ♖f5 29 ♖h5+ +-.

1-0

28...♖g7 29 ♙g3+ +-.

4) H. Hunt – Petrenko

Calvia (Women's Olympiad) 2004

White first interposes on the b-file.

62 ♙b6! ♙b1+ 63 ♖a6 ♙a1+ 64 ♖b5 ♙b1+

65 ♖c6 ♙c1+

Now she drags her opponent's rook close to her king to escape from the perpetual check:

66 ♙c4! ♙xc4+ 67 ♖b5 ♙b4+ 68 ♖c5 ♙g4

69 b8♖ ♙e3+ 70 ♖d5 ♙xb6 71 ♖xe5+ 1-0

5) De Jong – L. Johannessen

European Clubs Cup, Kemer 2007

36 ♙xg7+! ♙xg7 37 a7 1-0

37...♖xb7 38 a8♖+ ♖g7 39 ♖xb7+.

6)

H. Rinck

Deutsche Schachzeitung, 1903

With simple moves White first destroys an important pawn, then chases the queen to a bad square, traps and finally wins it. The queen has the powers of both bishop and rook, but in this study the combined efforts of these two individual pieces prove of greater value:

1 ♙a8! ♖a2

1...♖xa8 2 ♙f3+; for **1...♖h7 2 ♙g6** see the main line.

2 ♙xa4! ♖g8

2...♖xa4 3 ♙e8+.

3 ♙a8! ♖h7 4 ♙g6! ♖xg6 5 ♙a6+

White's skewer wins Black's queen and the game.

7) Corrales Jimenez – Hungaski

World Junior Ch, Erevan 2007

30 ♙c7!

Decoying the queen onto a mined square.

30...♖xc7

Black lacks time to take the queen: **30...♘xh7 31 ♙xf7+ ♖g8** (**31...♖e8 32 ♙ce7#**) **32 ♙xg7+ ♖f8 33 ♙xh7.**

31 ♙xf6+ ♙xf6

The only move since **31...♖e8** allows mate in two by **32 ♖g8+ ♖d7 33 ♖e6#.**

32 ♖xc7

White has won back the sacrificed piece and emerged two pawns ahead. He was able to capitalize on his material advantage:

32...♙ac8 33 ♖f4 ♖f7 34 ♘e3 ♙d4 35 ♖f3 ♙c1+ 36 ♖h2 ♙c5 37 g4 ♖g6 38 ♖g2 ♙g5 39 ♘f5 ♙f4 40 ♙d3 ♙f6 41 ♘g3+ ♖f7 42 ♖h7+ ♖e6 43 ♘h5 1-0

8) V. Petkov – Sanchez Guirado

Collado Villalba 2008

21 ♘xa7+! ♖c7 22 ♘axc6 bxc6 23 ♘xc6! ♙xe1 24 ♘xa5+ ♖b6

Black's moves are all forced; otherwise he loses material.

25 ♙c6+! ♖xa5 26 ♙a6+ ♖b4 27 a3+ ♖b3 28 ♙b6+ ♖a4

And now comes the most pleasant moment in the combination – a silent deadly move.

29 ♖a2!

As we said before – it doesn't take many pieces to mate a lone king out in the open.

29...♙xh1 30 b3+ ♖a5 31 ♙a6# (1-0)

Chapter 5

1) Wehner – A. Rotstein

German Ch, Bad Wörishofen 2008

In principle it was a good idea, but there is a major tactical flaw here:

12...♖e4! 13 fxe4 ♜xg4 0-1

(The initial moves were 1 e4 c5 2 ♜f3 e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♜xd4 ♜c6 5 ♜c3 ♣c7 6 ♙e3 a6 7 ♣d2 ♜f6 8 f3 ♜e5 9 a3 b5 10 ♙d3 ♙b7 11 0-0 ♙c5 12 ♜b3.)

2) Alexandrov – Danin

Minsk 2006

White's king and rook are situated on the same diagonal, so line clearance should spring to mind!

24...♜xd5!

Black is an exchange down, but makes use of the insecure position of the opponent's king as well as a simple geometrical motif.

25 exd5 ♣b6+

Double attack.

26 ♙e1 ♣xa7

The tables have turned. Now Black is a healthy pawn up and has a decisive attack.

27 h5 ♣e3

Threatening a discovered attack.

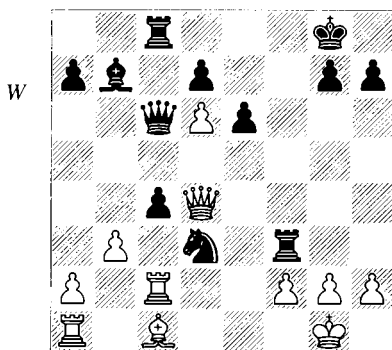
28 ♙d1 c3 0-1

3) Carron – Nemet

Swiss Ch, Silvaplana 2003

The first move is quite obvious: Black annihilates an important defender and opens the long diagonal.

21...♞xf3! (D)



However, White has a zwischenzug:

22 ♞xc4

It was important to see this detail in advance, and to have foreseen the brilliant finish:

22...♞e3!! 0-1

4) Tiviakov – Ponomarev

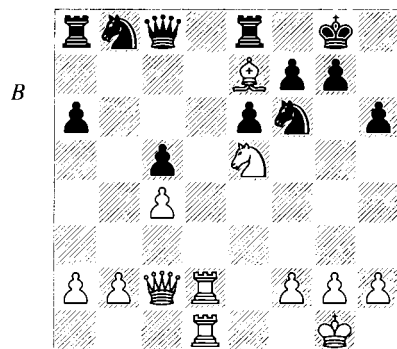
FIDE Knockout, Moscow 2001

23...♜h3+! 24 gxh3 ♞g8 0-1

5) Aronian – Karpov

Hoogeveen 2003

27 ♙e7! (D)



White opens the d-file for his rooks, takes away the d7-square from his opponent's knights, and breaks open Black's shelter on the kingside.

27...♞c7 28 ♙xf6 gxf6 29 ♞e4 ♞a7 30 ♜g4 ♙g7 31 ♞e3 ♞h8 32 ♞d8 1-0

32...♞xd8 33 ♣xh6+ ♙g8 34 ♜xf6#.

6) Esquivel – Gongora

Cuba 2002

A double attack deflects Black's blockading piece:

1 ♜xb5!! ♙xb5 2 ♙xc4+! ♙xc4

Or: **2...♙g6 3 ♙xb5 ♜cxd6 4 ♙c6 ♙f7 5 b5 +-; 2...♙g7 3 ♙xb5 ♜exd6 4 ♙d7 +-.**

3 d7 1-0

The knights are too clumsy to stop a passed pawn that is right next to them.

7) An. Perez – Ordenez

Cuba 2003

1 ♞h3! ♙xe4

After **1...h6 2 ♞xd6** White threatens to take on h6 with the rook, and **2...f6 3 ♣d1** promises White a solid pawn and a winning position. Nevertheless, after the text-move it looks as if the attack has ended. However...

2 ♖d5!

This double attack aims to deflect Black's defender of h7.

2...♙g6!?

A clever move, but insufficient to save the game.

3 ♖xg6! fxg6 4 ♖xh7+! 1-0

Facing 4...♙xh7 5 ♖h4#, Black threw in the towel.

8) Y. Perez – L. Martinez (variation)

Cuba 2004

By decoying the king into a discovered attack, Black bags a mighty trophy – the white queen:

1...♙h2+!! 2 ♙xh2 ♖d7+ 3 ♙g1

And since he can operate with check, before capturing the queen, Black wins two minor pieces for a rook thanks to an overload:

3...♖xf1+! 4 ♙xf1 ♖xh1+ 5 ♖g1 ♖h3+ 6 ♙e1 ♙xa4 –+

Chapter 6

1) Fedorov – Lastin

Voronezh 2007

26...♖xh2+! 27 ♙xh2 ♖g4+ 28 ♙g1 ♖xe3

Black realized his material advantage:

29 ♖f3 ♖g4 30 ♖f4 ♖g7 31 ♖xd5 ♖d8 32 ♖b6 ♖xd4 33 ♖c1 ♖d3 34 ♖d1 e5 35 ♖g3 ♖e2 36 ♖c1 e4 37 b3 ♖f7 38 ♖xg4+ ♖xg4 39 ♖xc4 ♖d1 40 ♖xd1 ♖xd1 41 ♖xa5 ♖e2 42 ♖c2 ♖d3 43 ♖e3 ♙g7 44 ♖ac4 ♖xc4 45 ♖xc4 ♖f6 46 a5 ♙f7 47 ♖d2 ♖f4 48 ♖c4 ♙e6 0-1**2) M. Makarov – Ibragimov**

Russian Ch, Samara 2000

It took only one move for the Russian GM to deal with his colleague:

22 ♖c6! 1-0**22...♖xc6 23 ♖e7+.****3) Praznik – Stojanović**

Bled 2008

Not at all:

28 ♖xf6+! 1-0

White frees a square for a fork, and opens a line for the remaining rook. Thanks to that, Black cannot protect his e8-rook.

4) Fedorowicz – Vaganian

Reykjavik (Summit) 1990

24 ♖h8+! 1-0

This decoys Black's king into the corner as seen above. 24...♙xh8 25 ♖xh8+ ♙xh8 26 ♖xf7+.

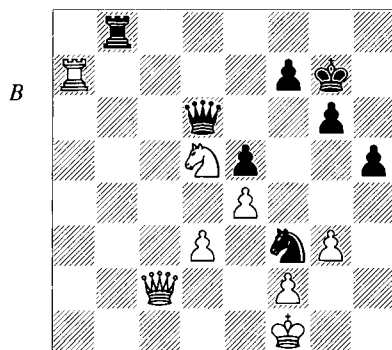
5) Stojanović – Dumpor

Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008

First Black advances his knight:

39...♖f3+ 40 ♙f1 (D)

40 ♙h1 does not help either due to 40...♖e6 with the decisive threat of 41...♖h3#.



And now comes the rook:

40...♖b1+! 0-1

A beautiful deflection. Now three different forks are possible: 41 ♙g2 ♖e1+, 41 ♙e2 ♖d4+ and 41 ♖xb1 ♖d2+.

6) Short – Timman

Staunton Memorial, London 2008

The correct solution is **19 ♖d6!!** cxd6 (or 19...♖xd6 20 ♖f7+) 20 ♖xc6+ ♖d7 21 ♖xb8+.

Instead there followed **19 ♖b3? ♖xb3 20 axb3 ♙c8 21 ♖xa7** and while White was still better, the win is not easy at all, and later Short even lost on time.

7) P. Nikolić – Bindrich

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Answer B is correct.

49...♖f3+??

When going for a combination, we must never forget our opponent's resources, no matter how ridiculous they may look.

50 ♖xf3!

Black was obviously counting on 50 ♙xf3? ♖xf4+ 51 ♙g2 ♖g5+ 52 ♙h2 ♙xf3 with an

edge for Black. However, he forgot that White may take the knight with another piece. No wonder – this type of psychological failing is common even in the practice of experienced grandmasters. Most people simplify their calculation by excluding the ‘unnecessary’ lines.

1-0

After 50...♙xf3 White wins back the queen thanks to the fork 51 ♖e6+ ♗e7 52 ♖xg5 and emerges a piece ahead.

8) F. Chin – Van Weersel

British League (4NCL) 2007/8

In the game White hurried to perform a study-like shot:

25 ♖e6?

However, this appears to be enough only for perpetual check. He needed to deflect Black’s queen away from the vital e7-square instead by 25 f4! ♖g4 and then 26 ♖e6!! ♖xg6 (the point is that after 26...fxe6 27 ♖xg7+ ♗h8 28 ♖h7+ ♗g8, the e7-square is not protected and so there follows 29 ♖e7#) 27 ♖e7+ ♗h7 28 ♖xg6 fxe6 29 ♖xf8+ ♗g8 30 ♖xe6 +–.

25...fxe6 26 ♖xg7+ ♗h8 27 ♖h7+ ♗g8 28 ♖g7+ ♗h8 29 ♖h7+ 1/2-1/2

Chapter 7

1) I. Sokolov – Oll

Pärnu 1996

White only needs to decoy the enemy king onto a mined square:

16 ♖d8+! ♗xd8 17 ♖xf7+ ♗e7 18 ♖xf4 ♗xf7 19 ♖c4+ ♗g7 20 ♖d1 ♖f5 21 ♖c7+ ♗h6 22 h3 1-0

2) Cmilyte – Boric

European Clubs Cup (women), Kallithea 2008

White found a beautiful win:

23 ♖xc6! bxc6

23...♙xa1 24 ♖d8!.

24 ♖d7! 1-0

24...♖xb3 25 ♖xg7+ ♗h8 26 ♖xg6+.

3) Shoker – A. Hernandez Muñoz

Malaga 2008

White’s knight prevents him from delivering a decisive discovered check. The b1-h7 diagonal must be cleared!

26 ♖f8+! 1-0

26...♖xf8 27 ♙e4+.

4) Briscoe – Marlow

British League (4NCL) 2007/8

Black is far behind in development. White must not give him time to finish it.

19 ♖xd5! ♗xd5 20 ♖d1+ ♗c6 21 ♖d6+ ♗c7 22 ♖xg6+ ♗c8 23 ♖xg7 ♖c6 1-0

5) Efremov – Soloviev

corr. 2004

1 ♙g4!! ♖xd3 2 ♖xe8+ ♗d7

2...♗c7 3 ♖xd3 c4 (3...♗b6 4 ♖e7 and White doubles his rooks on the seventh rank) 4 ♖d7+! ♗xd7 5 f6+ ♗xe8 6 fxg7 +–.

3 f6+! 1-0

Black resigned, spotting the line 3...♗xe8 4 fxg7 ♖xd1+ 5 ♙xd1, when nothing can prevent the rebirth of White’s queen.

6) Čabrilo – Matović

Yugoslav Team Ch, Vrnjačka Banja 1999

For a successful discovered attack, White needs to clear a line, and decoy the enemy king.

36 ♖h7+! ♗xh7 37 ♖xg8+!

Not 37 ♙d3+?? f5 –+.

37...♗xg8 38 e7+ ♗g7 39 e8 ♖ ♖e1+ 40 ♗g2 ♖d2+ 41 ♗h3 +–

7) Alexandrova – Chorvatova

Hlohovec 1996

Yes, this was an easy nut to crack:

20 ♖d5! exd5 21 ♙xh7+ 1-0

8) Negi – Grivas

Wijk aan Zee 2008

The first move is obvious: White takes a pawn thanks to the discovered attack, but will drop his proud knight on e5. Still, destroying Black’s castled position should have encouraged you to press on with your analysis of this line.

20 ♙xg6! ♖xe5 21 ♙xh7+! ♖xh7

Or: 21...♗xh7 22 ♖h3+ ♗g8 23 ♙xf6+ ♖g5 24 ♖xg5#; 21...♗h8 22 ♙c2 +–.

22 ♙f4+

And not 22 ♙f6+??, when the attacking piece remains unprotected and it is Black who wins after 22...♖xg3 23 hxg3 ♙xf6.

22...♖g7 23 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7

Black has enough material for the moment, but White has additional prey in his sights:

24 ♖d7 +- ♙f6 25 ♖xb7 ♖cd8 26 ♗h3 ♗h8
27 ♙h6 ♖g8 28 ♖xf7 ♖g1+ 29 ♗c2 1-0

Chapter 8

1) Davies – Dive

Wrexham 1994

31 ♖g8+ ♗h7 32 ♖h8+! 1-0
33 ♖g8+ and 34 ♗g6# will follow.

2) Lujan – Tkeshelashvili

Stockholm (rapid) 2008

20 ♖e5! fxe5 21 ♙xb7 ♗d6 22 ♖e4! 1-0
Funnily enough, the black queen is trapped!

3) Skembris – Timman

Match (game 1), Corfu 1993

25 ♖xe6! 1-0
25...fxe6 26 ♖b7 and mate is unavoidable.

4) Volokitin – Nanu

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

31 ♖xh6+! ♗g8
In case of 31...♗xh6 the king is decoyed in front of its pieces, and White mates thanks to the vacant h3-square for his queen: 32 ♗h3+ ♗g6 33 ♗h5#.
32 ♗h3 ♗c7 33 ♗h4 1-0

5) Gleizerov – Alavkin

Kaluga 2003

23 ♗f6!
A multi-purpose move. It breaks up Black's pawn-shield, threatens mate, and frees a line for the rook to finish the job.

1-0
23...gxf6 24 ♖g3+ ♗h8 25 ♙xf6#.

6) Nayer – Ftačnik

Bundesliga 2007/8

18 ♖e5!
With this beautiful blow White opens the d-file towards the king and with energetic play soon mates it. 19 ♖f7# is the threat.

18...fxe5
In case of 18...♖h7 above everything else White can win a rook using a knight fork: 19 ♗xa8+ ♖xa8 20 ♖c6+.

19 dxe5

Black now tries to close the d-file, but White responds by removing all the bishop's defenders.

19...♙c4 20 ♖fd1+ ♙d5 21 ♙f2! ♖c8 22 ♖xd5+! 1-0
22...♖xd5 (22...♗xd5 23 ♙xb6+) 23 ♗d7#.

7) Jelica – Lujan

Rijeka 2008

29...♙xf5!
This piece cannot play a major role in the attack, but the queen will make grateful use of the square it has vacated.

30 exf5
30 ♖xf5 ♖h4#; it would have been wiser for White to play on a pawn down.
30...♖h4+ 31 ♖h3 e4+ 32 ♗h1 ♖xh3+ 0-1
33 gxh3 ♖g1#.

8) Lovkov – Siugirov

Russian Junior Ch, St Petersburg 2008

27...♖xb3! 28 ♖xb3
28 ♗xb5 ♖al#; 28 ♗xb3 ♖xc1+ nets a whole queen.
28...♗e2! 0-1
This is also a double attack: 29 ♗d2 ♗xg4 or 29 ♖c1 ♗d3+.

Chapter 9

1) Sergienko – Rustemov

Russian Ch, Samara 2000

39...♗h2+! 0-1
A variation on the standard smothered mate follows: 40 ♖hx2 ♖g3#.

2) Casper – Brener

Bundesliga 2007/8

27 ♗g7+! 1-0
White decoys the rook to g7 where it closes off the black king's exit. 27...♖xg7 28 ♖f6+ ♗h8 29 ♖d8+ ♖g8 30 ♖xg8#.

3) Li Shilong – Wang Yue

Chinese Ch, Wuxi 2006

33...b3!
Black blocks the diagonal, and so destroys the defensive mechanism 33...♖d8 34 ♙a4.
34 axb3 ♖d8 35 b4 ♖xc6 0-1

4) Nayer – Nepomniashchy*Moscow 2006*

Black could have won on the spot had he have seen an unusual smothered mate idea, combined with decoy: **31...g4!** 32 ♖g3 and now comes the amazing 32...♙f1+!! White is mated after both 33 ♖xf1 ♜h1# and 33 ♜xf1 ♔e2#.

In the game he played **31...♙b5?** and later lost.

5) Geirnaert – Pel*Groningen 2008*

Of course not!

55...♜5g7??

My (DB) good friend Bonno Pel was very upset about this mistake after the game: "I saw this position from miles and miles away, but then in time-trouble something made me move my rook away..." After some neutral move like 55...♙e7 56 ♔xg5 ♜xg5 or, even better, 55...♖c7 56 ♔xg5 ♜xg5 it is a simple fortress thanks to the blockade. White cannot improve his position.

56 g5 ♙xg5 57 ♖f5 ♜f8+ 58 ♖e4 ♜fg8 59**♔xg5 ♜xg5 60 ♜xg5 hxg5 61 h6**

White got the upper hand and later won.

6) Rafizadeh – L. Truong*Australian Under-18 Ch, Canberra 2001***13 ♜xg7!!**

White decoys the rook to a very bad square where it blocks the king. Black cannot prevent a discovered attack now.

13...♜xg7 14 ♔f6+ ♖f8 15 ♔xd7+ ♖e8**15...♖g8 16 ♔f6+ ♖h8 17 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♙h6 +-.****16 ♔f6+ ♖f8 17 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 18 ♙h6 +-.****7) Kantsler – Malisov***Modein 2000*

White is seeking a perpetual by blocking off the king's escape-route, and this proved successful in the game after **1...fxg5? 2 ♜h7+! ♖xh7 3 ♙xf7+ ♖h6 4 ♙f8+ ♖h7** (4...♖h5?? 5 ♙h8#) **5 ♙f7+ 1/2-1/2**. 1...♔f5? is also met by **2 ♜h7+!** (2 gxf6+? ♖g8 3 ♙a7 ♔g5 +-) 2...♖xh7 3 ♙xf7+ ♖h8 (3...♔g7?? 4 gxf6 +-) 4 ♙f8+ (4 gxf6? ♙c8 +-) 4...♖h7 5 ♙f7+, with a draw, while Black can even lose: 1...♙e6?? 2 gxf6+ ♖g8 (2...♙xf6 3 ♜h7+! +-) 3 ♜h8+! ♖xh8 4 ♙f8+ +-.

1...♖g8! solves Black's problems and wins, as 2 ♜h7? allows 2...♙xf3+, and otherwise White has nothing; e.g., 2 gxf6 ♔f5.

8) Vila Gazquez – Pogorelov*Linares (open) 2005***1...h2+! 2 ♖xh2 ♙f3!**

The key move. The bishop blocks the f-pawn, thus creating a mating-net, and controls the d1-square, not permitting White to exchange rooks. Black now needs to get to the h-file somehow.

3 ♜fe1

This loses at once, but other defences also fail, as shown by Pogorelov:

a) 3 ♜g1 ♙xc5!! 4 ♙xc5 ♖g6 5 ♜g2 ♜h7+ 6 ♖g1 ♜d8 +-.

b) 3 g5!? f5 and now:

b1) 4 ♜ac1 ♜d8! 5 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 6 ♜c4 e4 +-.

b2) 4 g4 f4 (4...♙xg5!?! has the point 5 c6 ♙f4+ 6 ♖g1 ♜d8!) 5 ♜g1 ♖g6 6 ♜g2 ♙xc5 7 ♙xc5 ♜h7+ 8 ♖g1 ♜d8 +- with the idea ...♜dh8.

b3) 4 ♜g1 ♖g6! (and not 4...♙xc5? 5 ♙xc5 ♖g6 6 ♙f8 ♖xg5 7 ♜g2 ♜h7+ 8 ♖g1 ♜d8 9 ♜h2!!), when White turns the tables in his favour) 5 c6 (5 ♜g2 ♙xc5 6 ♙xc5 ♜h7+ 7 ♖g1 ♜d8) 5...♙xc6 6 ♔a7 ♙f3 7 ♜g2 ♙c5 8 ♙xc5 ♜h7+ 9 ♖g1 ♜d8 10 ♔c6 ♙xc6 11 f4 ♙xg2 12 ♖xg2 ♜d2+ 13 ♙f2 ♜c7 +-.

3...♜d8! 4 ♙xd8 ♜xd8 0-1

Chapter 10

1) Claverie – Lemos*Fischer Memorial,**Villa Martelli 2008***31...♙a1+! 32 ♙f1 ♔f3+ 33 ♖g2 ♙xf1+!****34 ♖xf1 ♜a1+ 0-1****2) Shaked – Cherniaev***New York 1993*

...and it hinders White's access to the seventh rank, and must be destroyed:

28 ♜xe4! fxe4 29 ♜b7 h5

Now a subtle queen manoeuvre forces resignation:

30 ♙e3! g5 31 ♙xe4! 1-0

3) P. Carlsson – Braun*Wijk aan Zee 2008*

We hope you noticed that Black has left his king in the centre. Two of its defenders can be removed (destroyed or deflected), and the last one can be blocked.

26 ♖xc6! ♖xc6 27 ♖d7+ ♕f8 28 ♖g5

Mate is threatened on f7 and d8, and Black can't stop both.

28... ♗d6 29 ♖xd6 ♖e1+ 30 ♖d1 ♖e3+ 31 ♖b1 1-0

4) Ushenina – Dvoiryts*Moscow 2008*

White's bishops and queen are perfectly placed, and Black is holding his position together thanks only to his excellent knight. It should be annihilated by a piece that isn't playing a leading role in the attack:

26 ♖e5!

26 ♖xe6? fxe6 27 ♖xe6+ ♕h8 28 ♖xf5 might look attractive if you miss the solution, but after 28... ♖e2! the tables will turn in Black's favour (Aagaard).

1-0

Black resigned, as after 26...g6 27 ♖xf5 exf5 28 ♖d4 he is mated.

5) Afek – Gershaev*Israel 1999*

White has a series of three violent sacrifices that remove two defenders and open a vital diagonal:

1 ♖xe4! dxe4 2 ♖e5+! ♖xe5 3 ♖xf5! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 3... ♖h8 4 ♖f7+ ♕g8 5 ♖xe7+ ♕f8 6 ♖f7+ ♕g8 7 ♖f6+ ♕g7 8 ♖d7# or 3...e6 4 ♖h6+ ♕g8 5 ♖f8+! ♖xf8 6 ♖xe6+ +-.

6) J. Caceres – Nogueiras*Montreal (open) 2002*

The d4-bishop is too strong to be left on the board. It both pins the white knight and defends on the long diagonal. After its removal, the dark squares in Black's camp will be indefensible.

1 ♖xd4! ♖xd4 2 ♖xf5 ♖e4

White already has two pawns for the exchange, and his opponent cannot return the exchange. 2... ♖f6 3 ♖xd4 ♖xd4+ 4 ♕h1 d5 5 cxd5 ♖xd5 6 ♖c3+ +-; 2... ♖f8 3 ♖c3! ♖xf5 4 ♖xd4+ +-.

3 ♖c3+ ♖e5 4 ♖xd6! 1-0

4... ♖f6 5 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 6 ♖f7+ +-.

7) Handke – H. Hernandez*Havana 2003*

And without a bishop to defend them, Black's days are numbered.

23 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 24 ♖xd6 ♖d7

Or: 24... ♖e8 25 ♖xf7+! ♕xf7 26 ♖f6+ ♕g8 27 ♖g7#; 24... ♕f8 25 ♖f6 +-; 24... ♖e6 25 ♖xe7 ♖xc4 26 ♖e1 ♖e6 27 ♖f6 ♕f8 28 ♖xe6 +-.

25 ♖e1! 1-0

25... ♖xd6 26 ♖e8#.

8) Bojković – J. Houska*Belgrade (women) 2008*

21 ♖xg7! ♕xg7

There is no time for 21... ♖xf3? 22 ♖h6.

22 ♖h5+ ♕f8

22... ♕g6 23 ♖f4 +-.

23 ♖h6+ ♕e7 24 ♖xf7!

White has annihilated the pawn-shield and now threatens various tactical strikes. Her position is winning.

24... ♕d7 25 ♖xe8+ ♕c7 26 ♖f6 ♖xf3 27 ♖g7+ ♕b8 28 gxf3 c4 29 ♖d7+ ♕c8 30 ♖e1 ♖c2 31 ♖e7 ♖xd4 32 ♖b6+ ♖xb6 33 axb6 ♖xb6 34 ♖c6 1-0

Chapter 11

1) Gubaydulin – Kasyan*Uzbek Ch, Tashkent 2008*

32... ♖g2+!

Unblocking the pawn, and clearing an important line.

0-1

33 ♖xg2+ fxg2+ 34 ♕g1 ♖f1+ 35 ♕h2 g1 ♖+ 36 ♕h3 ♖g3#.

2) Morchiasvili – S. Novikov*European Ch, Plovdiv 2008*

Black's own rook is hindering the pawn's dreams. So it is sacrificed:

45... ♖d2+!

Much better than the simplistic 45... ♖g2? 46 ♖d7+ ♕b6 47 ♖d8, when White's rook can halt the a-pawn.

46 ♕xd2 a2 47 g4 a1 ♖

The rook and the pawn were 'exchanged' for a queen.

48 gxf5 ♖d4+ 49 ♔c2 c4 50 f6 ♖d3+ 51 ♔b2 0-1

3) **L'Ami – Spoelman**
Wijk aan Zee 2008

Black wins an exchange:

35...♗e3! 36 ♖b3

He had seen the zwischenzug 36 fxe3 c2!, gaining the decisive tempo.

36...♗xf1 37 ♖xf1 ♖f3 0-1

4) **Narciso Dublan – Krivoruchko**
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The young Ukrainian GM Yuri Krivoruchko loudly announced his presence to the world at the 2008 European Championship, where he qualified for the World Cup. Here is one of his wins:

80...e1♗!? 0-1

The hasty 80...e1 ♖? would lead to a huge disappointment after 81 ♖g6+! ♗g8 82 ♖e8+! ♖xe8 stalemate!

We should note that Black has several other ways to win, including the dramatic 80...♖xf4+ 81 gxf4 e1 ♖+, mating with checks, and the prosaic 80...♖d3, threatening 81...♖d8+ and so overloading the white queen. Your basic task here was to notice the stalemate defence and avoid it.

5) **Nijboer – Naumkin**
Hoogeveen 2008

White finds a pretty way to use his passed pawn.

31 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 32 ♖f6! ♖f8

32...gxf6 33 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 34 fxg8 ♖#.

33 ♖xg7 1-0

6) **S. Williams – G. Jones**
Bunratty 2008

But first Black should remove the defender of the back rank:

34...♖c5+ 35 ♔d2 ♖xc1 36 ♔xc1 e3!

Now the breakthrough.

37 ♖g1

37 fxe3 f2.

37...♗d4!

This is a precise move that keeps the pawns intact and creates a duo of passed pawns.

38 ♖h1 e2 39 ♔d2 ♗xf2 40 a3

Black is not in a hurry now. He simply improves his pieces before collecting the point.

40...♗h7 41 b4 axb4 42 axb4 ♔h6 43 b5 e1 ♖+ 44 ♖xe1 ♗xe1+ 45 ♔xe1 ♔xh5 46 ♔f2 ♔g4 0-1

7) **R. Martin – R. Hernandez**
Benasque 2000

...endgame!

1...♗xf6!

The passive 1...♗f8 2 bxa3 bxa3 3 ♖b1 allows White the initiative.

2 ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 3 ♖xf6

Many roads lead to Rome after 3 ♖d2; for instance, 3...♗e2+ 4 ♖xe2 axb2 5 ♗xb2 ♖xb2.

3...♗xf6 4 ♖xf6 ♗xc2 5 ♖b1

5 bxa3 ♗xa1 6 ♖xd6 ♗c2 --.

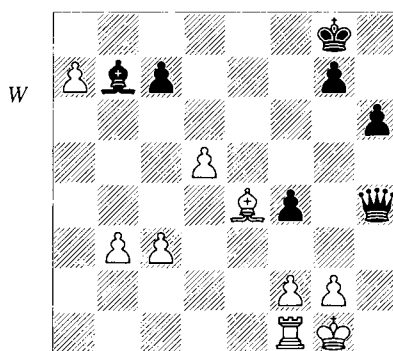
After all the forced exchanges, the breakthrough proves decisive:

5...b3!! 0-1

8) **Hendriks – Michalczak**
Dieren 2008

Some moves earlier White sacrificed his queen in order to create a strong passed pawn. Now he carefully advances it, and creates additional passed pawns too.

29 a7 ♗b7 (D)



30 d6!

For the sake of promotion, White is ready to part with the bishop. He will, of course, gain some tempi in return.

30...♗xe4

30...c6 31 d7 ♖d8 32 ♖d1 forces Black to block the pawn with his most powerful piece. White wins thanks to the plan of b4-b5.

31 dxc7 ♖g4 32 f3 ♗xf3

After 32...♖c8 33 fxe4 ♖a6 34 ♘h2 (with the idea ♖a1) 34...♘h7, White can choose 35 ♖xf4, when the rook will support the pawns, while advancing the third passed pawn by 35 e5 is also good enough.

33 ♖xf3 ♖c8 34 ♖xf4 ♘h7 35 ♖c4 g5 36 a8♖ 1-0

Chapter 12

1) I. Gonzalez – Pulido Havana 2001

1 ♖e6+! ♘h8
Black's problem is obvious after 1...♖xe6 2 ♖xc8+ ♘f7 (2...♖e8 3 ♖xe8+ ♘f7 4 ♘g5+) 3 ♘g5+ +-.
2 ♖xc8! 1-0

2) Fressinet – Macieja European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Unfortunately, even the best-motivated positional moves are not always tactically sound. Here Black did not notice that his back rank might be in danger, obviously counting on his rooks being able to defend the vital e8-square. Sadly for him, one of them may be annihilated immediately, which simultaneously deflects the second one...

24 ♖xa8! 1-0
24...♖xa8 25 ♖e8+ ♖xe8 26 ♖xe8#.

3) Sargisian – Skoberne European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

34 ♖d1! ♘h2+ 35 ♘f1
And not 35 ♘h2??, which gives Black a chance to withdraw his queen with gain of tempo, and win after 35...♖h4+ 36 ♘g1 ♖xa4.
35...♘d6
35...♖d5 does not help either: 36 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 37 ♖e8#.
36 ♖xd6 1-0

4) Pruijssers – Kroeze Dutch Club Ch 2008

25...♖xf2+! 0-1
26 ♖xf2 ♖d1+ 27 ♖f1 ♖dxf1#.

5) Zwanzger – Marković Passau 1997

24...♖d8 0-1

25 ♘xd8 ♖c1+ 26 ♖d1 ♖xd1+ 27 ♘f1 ♖xf1#.

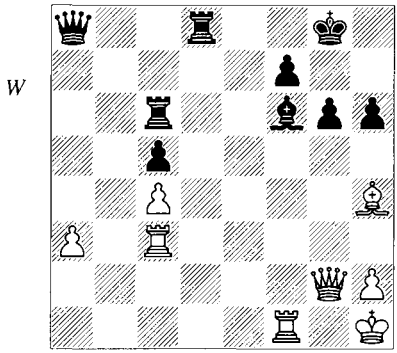
6) Stefanova – Peptan Moscow (Women's Olympiad) 1994

No – it is time for her to win by force! First Black needs to chase her opponent's king into position for a back-rank mate:

34...♖b6+! 35 ♘h1
And then deflect White's only defender:
35...♖b1!! 36 ♖e2 ♖e4!
By now Black even had a choice: 36...♖d1! also wins.
0-1
A painful defeat!

7) Oleksienko – Golubev Odessa 2007

False. White has a weak back rank!
38...♘xf6! (D)



39 ♘xf6
If 39 ♖xf6 ♖d1+ 40 ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 41 ♖xf1 Black should give the discovered check by 41...♖f6+, forcing White to move his queen to a bad square: 42 ♖g2 ♖f1#.

39...♖xf6 40 ♖a1
After 40 ♖xf6? ♖d1+ White loses on the spot, while 40 ♖xa8 ♖xf1+ 41 ♘g2 ♖xa8 42 ♘f1 f5 leads to an endgame that should be won for Black.

40...♖a5 41 ♖f3 ♖xf3 42 ♖xf3 ♖a4 43 ♖e3 ♖xc4 44 ♖c1 ♖d5+ 45 ♘g1 ♖d4 0-1

8) Feller – Bacrot French Ch, Pau 2008

32...♖xd6! 0-1
The critical square is for sure a1, but White can cover the check from there with his queen.

After 33 ♖xd6 ♖a1+ 34 ♗e1 (not 34 ♗f1 ♙e3+ 35 ♖h1 ♖xf1#) 34...♖xe1+ 35 ♖f2 Black has won a piece, but for the moment all his pieces are hanging. However, the b4-pawn will have the decisive word: 35...♖c1! 36 ♖xc1 (36 ♖xb4 leaves Black winning, with two minor pieces for a rook) 36...♙xc1 37 ♖xf6 b3 –+.

Chapter 13

1) Bojkov – Delemarre

World Under-18 Ch, Szeged 1994

Back in 1994, stalemate did not seem an important concept to me. I knew that it sometimes happens to some poor guys, who are just too blind to foresee their opponent's silly threats. This was something that would never happen to me, I thought. And then I had to bite the bitter pill. My position is obviously winning, and I was wondering why on earth my opponent did not resign.

58 ♗e7+??

This awful move chases my opponent's king into a safety box. I saw the winning continuation 58 ♖xe3 ♖hx3+ 59 ♖f3 ♖h1 60 ♖f5+ ♖d6 61 ♖a5. I later admitted to my trainer that the strategy of "this wins as well" does not always bear fruit...

58...♖f4 59 ♖xe3

Now comes the shock.

59...♖xf2+ 1/2-1/2

Black's king will be stalemated almost in the middle of the board.

2) Bojkov – Parker

World Under-18 Ch, Szeged 1994

Unfortunately this was not all. Two days later I had to face a strong player. I managed to outplay him, and this position arose. While I was thinking, my trainer, the colourful IM Stoyan Ivanov (unfortunately he passed away some years ago) saw the position and remarked to his colleagues: "While there is still a pawn, there is no stalemate!" However...

76 ♗xa6??

Again the same principle: depriving my opponent of any chances, or rather trying to... However, chess is a game where the rules are often confronted with the exceptions. In our particular case the pawn on a6 is an irrelevance,

as it is not threatening to promote any time soon. Now Jonathan Parker saves himself using stalemate motifs.

76...♗e3+ 77 g5

77 ♖h7 does not change anything, since after 77...♗e7+ 78 ♖g6 (78 ♖h6?? ♗g7#) 78...♗e6+ 79 ♗xe6 it is stalemate again.

77...♗e6+

I remember that I was desperately gazing at the position for some minutes, even wondering if I should play 78 ♖h7 or 78 g6. And finally, I took the queen.

78 ♗xe6 1/2-1/2

3) I. Goldin – Riabov

Moscow 1972

1 ♖d6+!!

As usual we start the sacrificial policy with the weakest pieces.

1...♗xd6

1...♖a7?? leads to mate in three after 2 ♗f7+ while after 1...♖b8 2 ♗c6 it is Black who needs to force a draw: 2...♖a2+ 3 ♖d1 ♖c3+ =.

2 ♗e7+! ♗xe7 3 ♗c7+! 1/2-1/2

In case of 3...♖a6 White does not capture the queen, but continues 4 ♗c8+! ♖b5 5 ♗c4+ ♖xc4.

4) Atakisi – V. Spasov

Turkish Team Competition 2008

In a severe time-scramble, White played 1 ♗e8? and got mated by 1...♗h4# (0-1).

One can only guess what Umut Atakisi's feelings were when Vasil Spasov demonstrated 1 ♖h8+! ♖hx8 2 ♗e8+ ♖h7 3 ♙g6+, when both 3...♖xg6 4 ♗h8+ ♖hx8 and 3...♖h6 4 ♗h8+ ♖xg6 5 ♗xg7+ ♖xg7 are stalemate. 1 ♙g6+!, based on the same idea, is also sufficient to draw.

5) Fichtl – Hort

Czechoslovak Ch, Košice 1961

43...f5 44 ♖e5 f4 45 ♖e4 f3 46 ♖e3

This pawn advance does not seem to bring Black any relief. Why does he not simply give up?

46...h5 47 ♖f2 h4 48 ♙d6

Zugzwang?

48...♖h3!

No! Black has built a safety box!

1/2-1/2

- 6) **Y. Afek**
Pfeifer Jubilee, 1981
 1 g7+ ♖h7 2 g6+ ♖h6 3 a8♖ ♖xa8 4 ♖f7
 ♖a7+ 5 ♖g8!! ♖xg7+
 5...♖xg6 6 ♖h8.
 6 ♖h8 ♖a7 7 g7 ♖xg7
 Stalemate.

- 7) **E. Pogosiants**
Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981
 1 ♖d6+ ♖d3 2 ♖xc4 ♖e2!?! (2...f2 3 ♖e3
 ♖xe3 stalemate) 3 ♖e5 (not 3 ♖e3? ♖xe3 4
 ♖g1 ♖e2 5 ♖h1 ♖e1 6 ♖g1 f2+ 7 ♖h1 f1♖#)
 3...f2 4 ♖f3 f1♖+ (4...♖e3 5 ♖d2 ♖e2 6 ♖f1
 ♖xf1 stalemate) 5 ♖g1+ ♖f2 stalemate.

- 8) **Spoelman – Hebden**
European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008
 No, the talented Dutch player found a safety
 box and exploited it.
 72 g7! ♖a8 73 ♖f5! a1♖ 74 ♖xa1 ♖xa1 75
 ♖g6! ♖e7 76 f5!
 And not 76 h7?? ♖a6+ or 76 ♖h7? ♖f7 77 f5
 ♖xg7 78 hxg7 ♖d8 79 f6 ♖g8 80 ♖h6 ♖xf6
 –+.
 76...♖g8 77 ♖h7
 77 f6+ transposes and leads to a draw too:
 77...♖xf6 78 ♖h7.
 77...♖f7 78 f6 ♖e5 1/2-1/2

Chapter 14

- 1) **Macieja – Simacek**
Czech Team Ch 2004/5
 41...♖e1 42 ♖d4
 A clever try, but it does not bring White a
 whole point. 42 ♖c8+ doesn't change anything:
 42...♖g7 43 d8♖ ♖xf3+ 44 ♖f1 ♖xh2+ is a
 draw.
 42...exd4 43 d8♖+ ♖g7 44 ♖f1 ♖xf3 45
 ♖c8 ♖xh2+ 1/2-1/2

- 2) **Galkin – Liang Chong**
Internet 2004
 Yes, it is! White needs to save his skin:
 1 ♖xh7! ♖xh7 2 ♖h1+ ♖g8 3 ♖h8+ ♖f7 4
 ♖h7+ ♖e8 5 ♖h8+ ♖d7
 Now the king must be exposed:
 6 ♖xe7+! ♖xe7 7 ♖h7+ ♖e8 8 ♖h8+
 With a draw.

- 3) **Saada – Alanić**
French Team Ch, Lille 2005
 Watching the decisive game of the match I
 realized that my team-mate Julien Saada could
 exchange everything at once and win the match
 by 85 ♖xg4! ♖xg4 86 ♖f3 ♖g6 87 ♖xg4!
 ♖xg4 88 ♖f6 h3 89 ♖f5 h2 90 ♖xg4+ ♖h4 91
 ♖f3, drawing.
 Unfortunately, he failed to see this option,
 chose 85 ♖f5 instead, and it was only his luck
 that saved the half-point in the end.

- 4) **Prusikhin – Buhmann**
Griesheim 2003
 26 ♖xc5!!
 This bishop is protecting an important square.
 26...♖xc5
 Not 26...♖xc5? 27 ♖f6+ ♖g7 28 ♖d8+.
 27 ♖d7!! ♖xd7 28 ♖f6+ ♖g7
 28...♖g7 29 ♖f8+ ♖g8 30 ♖f6+ is an imme-
 diate perpetual check. White now needs to find
 something more.
 29 ♖g6+!
 As we already know, deflection is also useful
 as a defensive method.
 29...hxg6 30 ♖h4+ ♖h7 31 ♖f6+ ♖g7 32
 ♖d8+ 1/2-1/2

- 5) **H. Lommer**
L'Italia Scacchistica, 1933
 White constructs a drawing mechanism based
 on the discovered check:
 1 ♖c8+! ♖c2 2 ♖b7! f1♖ 3 ♖c7+ ♖d3 4
 ♖d7+ ♖c4
 4...♖e4 5 ♖e7+ and Black's king may not
 step onto the f6-square due to the discovered at-
 tack with ♖e1+.
 5 ♖c7+ ♖b5 6 ♖b7+ ♖a6 7 ♖b6+ ♖a7
 7...♖a5 8 ♖b1+.
 8 ♖b7+ ♖a8 9 ♖b8+
 With a draw.

- 6) **Cao Sang – Acs**
Budapest 2000
 ...and needs to profit from his activity imme-
 diately.
 31...♖c3! 32 ♖h7+
 32 ♖d7+ ♖e7 33 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 34 bxc3
 ♖xa3+ 35 ♖b2 ♖cxc3 =.
 32...♖e7 33 f6+
 33 ♖g7+? ♖d8 34 ♖f6+ ♖c7 –+.

33...♔d8 34 ♖xc3 ♖xc3 35 bxc3 ♖xa3+ 36 ♖b2 ♖xc3 1/2-1/2

Perpetual check by ...♖ab3+ and ...♖a3+, etc., will follow.

7) Galliamova – Korchnoi

Amsterdam (Ladies vs Veterans) 2001

34 ♖xe6+! fxe6

Alisa Galliamova now rushed with 35 ♖g7+? and lost after 35...♟f7 36 ♖xg5+ (36 ♖c7+ ♔d6 +-) 36...♔d7, etc.

The correct line was given by Mark Taimanov: 35 ♖c7+! ♔d6 36 ♖c6+!! ♔xc6 (36...bxc6 37 ♖d8+ ♔e5 38 ♖b8+ ♔f6 39 ♖f8+ =) 37 ♖c8+ ♔d6 (37...♔b6 38 ♖d8+ ♔c6 39 ♖c8+ =) 38 ♖d8+ ♔e5 39 ♖b8+! ♔f6 (39...♔d4?? 40 ♖xa7+ +-) 40 ♖f8+ =.

Moral: Sometimes the road to heaven may be very narrow, and every wrong step can be the sin that leaves us outside.

8) G. Zakhodiakin

Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981

1 ♖e1 ♔cd2+ 2 ♔g4!

Precisely here. All White's pieces are now in full harmony.

2...♔b1 3 ♔g3! a1♖ 4 ♔d6+ ♔f7 5 ♖e7+ ♔g6 6 ♖e6+ ♔f7 7 ♖e7+ ♔f6 8 ♔e5+ ♖xe5 9 ♖xe5 ♖xe5

With a draw.

Chapter 15

1) Kravtsiv – Sieciechowicz

Warsaw 2007

Alas, Black's light squares were blown open:

13 ♔xe6! fxe6 14 ♖g6+ 1-0

A forced mate is coming.

2) Khenkin – T. Søndergaard

Esbjerg 2005

Black was definitely sorry that his rook had left the f-file:

13 ♔xf7+! 1-0

13...♔xf7 14 ♖d5+ ♖e6 15 ♔g5+.

3) P. Cramling – Kovalevskaya

European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The pawn has a lot of energy left in it, and provides vital back-up to the assault on f7.

25 ♟xf7! ♟xf7 26 ♖e7 ♔d7

26...♟df8 27 d7 ♔xd7 28 ♖xd7 a5 (28...g6 29 ♖xa7) 29 h5.

27 ♟xf7 ♔h8 28 f3 g6 29 g4 h5 30 g5 ♔f5 31 ♖f6 ♔g7 32 ♖f7+ ♔h8 33 ♖f6 ♔g7 34 ♔f2 ♖f8 35 ♟xf8 ♔xf8 36 ♔e3 ♔e8 37 ♔d4 ♔d7 38 ♔e5 b5 39 ♔d5 a5 40 ♔c5 ♔d3 41 ♔d5 ♔b1 42 ♔c6+ ♔e6 43 ♔e4 1-0

4) Valdes – J. Diaz

Cuba 2001

And it is possible because Black did not occupy the blockading square d5. White now showed his trumps:

1 ♔xf7! ♔xf7 2 ♖xe6+ ♔f8

2...♔g6 3 ♖e5 and ♔e4+ is coming.

3 ♔h5! 1-0

3...g6 4 ♔h6#; 3...♔xh5 4 ♔xe7+ ♖xe7 5 ♖xe7+ ♔g8 6 ♖e6+ +-.

5) Čabrilo – Popović

Yugoslavia (rapid) 2004

...and it is the one in front of the king:

1 ♔xf7+! ♔xf7 2 ♖b3+ ♔f8 3 ♔f3!

With the idea ♔g5.

3...♔f6

In the event of 3...h6 White still plays 4 ♔g5!! hxg5 and then opens the f-file by 5 f4! g4 6 f5 g5 7 f6 +-.

4 e5 ♖b6 5 ♖ad1! ♔b7 6 ♖xd4 ♔xf3 7 ♖f4 1-0

6) Shirov – Korchnoi (variation)

Drammen 2004

28 ♟xf7+! ♟xf7 29 ♖xg6+ ♔h8 30 ♖xf7

Mate follows.

7) Asrian – Karasev

Russia Cup, St Petersburg 1997

21 ♟xf7!! ♟xf7

Or: 21...♟xf7 22 ♖xd5 +-; 21...dxc4 22 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 23 ♖d5 bxc5 24 ♖f1+ ♔f6 25 ♔d6 ♖c7 26 ♖xa8 +-.

22 ♖xd5+ ♔g6 23 ♖c6+ ♔h5 24 ♔e2+ ♔g5 25 ♔e4+ ♔f4 26 ♖f1+ ♔xe5 27 ♖xf8 1-0

8) Sanduleac – Varadi

Szombathely 2003

13 ♔xf7+!! ♔xf7 14 ♔g5+ ♔g6

The only move. Worse is 14...♔g8? 15 ♖b3+ d5 16 ♔xd5 +-.

15 f4!

White's attack proves to be decisive. I hope that you foresaw most of the beautiful supporting lines.

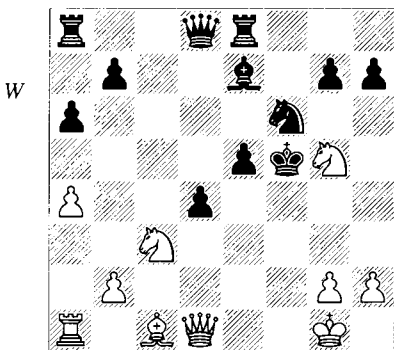
15...♟e5

Or 15...♟c5 16 f5+ ♟xf5 17 exf5+ ♟xf5 18 ♟e6!, and now:

- a) 18...♟d7 19 ♟f3+ ♟g6 20 ♟g3+.
- b) 18...dxc3 19 ♟f3+ ♟g6 20 ♟g3+ +-.
- c) 18...♟xe6 19 ♟d3+ ♟e4 (19...♟g4 20 ♟h3#) 20 ♟xe4+ ♟f6 21 ♟xe6#.

16 f5+ ♟xf5 17 exf5+ ♟xf5 18 ♟xe5+! dxe5 (D)

18...♟xe5 19 ♟e2+ (or 19 ♟f7+ +-) 19...♟f5 20 ♟d3+ ♟e5 21 g3! ♟d7 22 ♟f4+ ♟f6 23 ♟d5#.



19 ♟d3+! e4

19...♟g4 20 ♟h3#.

20 ♟cxe4! ♟b4

Or: 20...♟e5 21 ♟f4+! ♟xf4 22 ♟f7!! ♟f5 23 ♟ed6++ ♟e6 24 ♟f5#; 20...♟c7 21 ♟d6++ ♟e5 22 ♟f4+! ♟d5 (22...♟xf4 23 ♟g3#) 23 ♟b3+ ♟c6 24 ♟c1+ ♟d7 25 ♟e6+ ♟d8 26 ♟gf7#.

21 ♟d6++ ♟e5 22 ♟f4+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 22...♟d5 23 ♟c4# or 22...♟xf4 23 ♟g3#.

Chapter 16

1) Short – Ye Jiangchuan

Taiyuan 2004

We can strike immediately:

27 ♟xh7+!! 1-0

White creates a discovered attack mechanism which forces mate: 27...♟xh7 28 ♟h3+ ♟g7 29 ♟h6+ ♟h7 30 ♟f8+.

2) S.B. Hansen – H. Olafsson

Reykjavik Zonal 1995

We can include the sleeping rook from h1:

19 ♟xh7+! ♟xh7 20 ♟h5 1-0

20...♟hf6 loses to the double exchange on f6, while 20...♟xg5 is met by 21 hxg5!.

3) Bellon – Ask

Rilton Cup, Stockholm 2007/8

21...♟a2+!

One rook is sacrificed, to allow the other one to deliver the decisive blow.

22 ♟xa2 ♟xc2+ 23 ♟a1 ♟a8+ 24 ♟a4 0-1

4) Timofeev – Svidler

Russian Ch, Moscow 2008

An exchange of pieces and a rook sacrifice will have a similar effect:

18 ♟xf6! gxf6 19 ♟xh7+! 1-0

Black resigned because of 19...♟xh7 20 ♟h3+ ♟g7 21 ♟g4+ (remember this stairway: White clears the road for his rook) 21...♟h8 22 ♟e3 ♟e4 23 ♟h3+ ♟h7 24 ♟h4!.

5) Kravtsiv – I. Popov

Lvov 2006

14 ♟xh7+! ♟xh7 15 ♟g5+ ♟h8 16 ♟e1

In an unusual way, the queen is sneaking to the h-file and h7-square.

16...cxb2+ 17 ♟b1 ♟f6 18 ♟h4+ ♟h5 19 gxxh5 ♟h6 20 ♟d4+ 1-0

6) Van Haastert – Broekmeulen

Dutch Club Ch 2008

15 ♟xh7! ♟xh7 16 ♟f6!

The first one, which blocks the f-pawn.

16...♟h8 17 ♟e1!

This is the most important move in the assault. Black is not allowed to escape by ...♟g8.

17...♟e6

17...♟d7 is impossible due to 18 ♟xf7+, while 17...♟d7 is met by 18 ♟xg5 f5 19 ♟d3 +-.

18 ♟xg5 ♟f5 19 ♟d3 ♟g6 20 ♟f6 1-0

7) Amura – Ruan Lufei

Women's World Ch, Nalchik 2008

19...♟xe5! 20 fxe5 ♟xe5 21 h3

21 g3 ♟xg3 will clear both the g- and h-files, and the rook will be transferred via e3 to give mate.

21...♖g3 22 ♖d3 ♜e6! -+

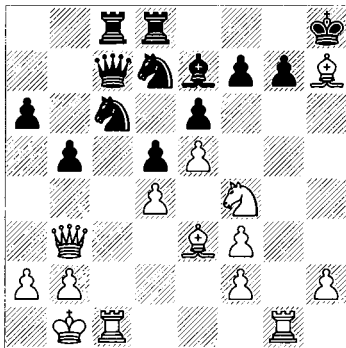
Black breaks in and starts collecting material.

23 ♜f1 ♖h2+ 24 ♖f2 ♙g3+ 25 ♖e2 ♗xg2+ 26 ♖d1 ♗xb2 27 ♜c2 ♗a3 28 e4 ♙e5 29 exd5 ♜d7 30 ♜d2 ♜e7 31 ♜f3 ♗a5 32 d6 ♜xd6 33 ♗xd6 ♙xd6 34 ♜xd6 ♗c5 35 ♜fd3 ♜e3 36 ♖c2 ♜e2+ 37 ♜d2 ♖f5+ 38 ♜6d3 ♜e3 0-1

8) Elianov – Van Wely

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

19 ♙xh7! (D)



It must have been very painful for a top GM to suffer this heavy blow at such an early stage of the game.

19...♗f8

19...♖xh7 20 ♗xe6 (20 ♖d3+ is also winning) 20...fxe6 21 ♖d3+ ♖h8 22 ♜xg7 ♖xg7 23 ♜g1+ ♖h8 24 ♖g6+-.

20 ♙d3

White has won an important pawn and converted it easily into victory:

20...♗b6 21 ♙g4 ♗a5 22 ♖d1 g6 23 ♖f1 ♖g7 24 ♖h3 ♜xc1+ 25 ♙xc1 ♜c8 26 ♙e3 ♗c4 27 ♗xg6 1-0

Chapter 17

1) Anand – Aronian

Morelia/Linares 2008

30...♜e3! 31 fxe3 ♖xf3 32 ♖c2 fvg3 33 hxg3 ♖xg3+ 34 ♖h1 ♙f5 0-1

2) Mitkov – Mikhailuk

Las Vegas 2007

And his king is too vulnerable.

17 ♙h6+! ♖h8

17...♖xh6 18 ♖h4+ and ♖xh7#.

18 ♖h4 ♜g8 19 ♙f8 h5 20 ♖g5 1-0

3) Utiuganov – Konovalov

USSR 1950

Black uses a well-known pattern that involves a double check:

1...♖g2+! 2 ♖xg2 ♗f4++ 3 ♖g1 ♗h3# (0-1)

Yes, a weakened fianchetto can be exploited with a ♙+♗ combination.

4) Pogorelov – Diaz Castro

Dos Hermanas 2004

The bishop, for sure. In this example White gets mate in an unconventional way.

25 ♜xg7+!! ♖xg7 26 ♙f6+!! 1-0

Black did not wish to see 26...♖xf6 (26...♖h7 27 ♖g5 leads to a more standard finish) 27 ♖h6+ ♖e7 28 ♖d6#.

5) Aveskulov – Averianov

Kharkov 2005

To make use of it, he must get his queen nearer the g7-square, or the h-file.

34 ♜xe3! dxe3 35 ♜f5! ♖h6

Or: 35...gxf5 36 ♖xh5+ ♖g8 37 ♖h8#; 35...♖g8 36 ♜xh5+-.

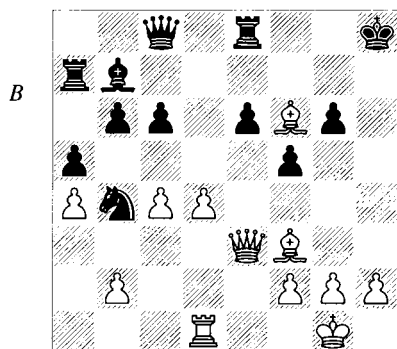
36 ♖xe3+ ♖h7 37 ♜xh5+! gxh5 38 ♖g5 ♖xg2+ 39 ♖xg2 1-0

6) Roiz – Kritz

Biel 2007

In order to destroy the fianchettoed bishop and get control over all the dark squares, White sacrifices a whole rook:

1 ♗xg6!! hxg6 2 ♖xh8+ ♖xh8 3 ♙f6+ (D)



3...♖h7

3...♖g8 4 ♖h6+-.

4 ♖g5

4 ♕d5 exd5 5 ♜h3+ ♘g8 6 ♜h8+ ♖f7 7 ♜g7+ ♖e6 8 ♜e1+ ♖d6 9 ♕e5+ ♜xe5 10 ♜xe5+ ♖d7 11 ♜e7#.

4...e5 5 ♕h5!

5 ♜h4+ is also winning after 5...♘g8 6 ♜h8+ ♖f7 7 ♜g7+ ♖e6 8 dxe5 ♕d5 9 ♜xg6.

1-0

The game could finish like this: 5...♜g8 6 ♕xg6+ ♜xg6 7 ♜h5+ ♜h6 (7...♘g8 8 ♜xg6+ ♖f8 9 ♜g7+ ♖e8 10 ♜e7#) 8 ♜f7#.

7) Kramnik – Anand

Amber Rapid, Nice 2008

It is easy to discover the best move, even if it costs you a whole queen, if we remember which our main enemy is:

42...♜f3!!

The queen has to be taken, since it X-rays the h1-square and threatens mate by ...♜h1+. White gave one last check before resigning:

43 cxb7+ ♖f5 0-1

8) Frois – L. Dominguez

Lisbon 2000

No, Black can break open the fianchetto formation by a rook sacrifice:

13...♕xg3!! 14 hxg3 ♜xe3! 15 fxe3

Now Black wins by force, but if White declines the sacrifice, then Black has simply won a valuable pawn for nothing.

Black comes out on top in the desperado dogfight after 15 ♜xc6 ♕xf3 16 ♜xf6 (16 ♕xf3? ♜xf3 17 exf3 bxc6 leaves Black a piece up) 16...♕xf6 17 ♕xf3 ♜e6, when White does not have enough for the exchange.

15...♜xg3

Suddenly the black queen is frighteningly close to the white king.

16 ♜f1

In all lines Black makes full use of his queen, bishop and knights:

a) 16 ♜xb7 ♕h3! (Black does not mind giving up a whole rook with a check!) 17 ♕h4 ♕g4 18 ♜xa8+ ♖h7 +-.

b) 16 ♜b4 ♕h3 17 ♕h4 g5! wrecks White's defensive fortifications.

c) 16 ♖h1 ♕h3! 17 ♕xh3 ♜xh3+ 18 ♖g1 ♜g3+ 19 ♖h1 ♕g4 20 ♜f1 ♕de5 21 ♜c2 ♜h3+ 22 ♖g1 ♕xe3 23 ♜f2 ♕5g4 +-.

16...♕h3 17 ♕h4

17 ♜f2 ♕g4 18 ♜cf1 ♕de5 19 ♖h1 ♕xf2+ 20 ♜xf2 ♕g4 +-.

17...♕g4 0-1

Chapter 18

1) Z. Almasi – Navara

Reggio Emilia 2007/8

White decided to liquidate into a rook endgame with two pawns more:

32 ♕xf7+! ♜xf7

32...♖h8 33 ♕g6.

33 ♜xd6 ♜a7 34 ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 35 ♜xf7 ♖xf7 36 ♜xb6

and White won later. Thus energy had transformed into material.

2) M. Fuentes – J. Hernandez

Havana 2002

Then awoken him. The price is insignificant: only a pawn!

1 d5! exd5

1...♜he8 2 ♕d4 ♖f8 (2...♖h7 3 g4!! fxg4 4 ♜xh5+! gxh5 5 ♜xh5+ +-) 3 ♜g3 and Black collapses.

2 ♕d4

Now that White has established this bishop on a dominant diagonal, nothing can save Black. The following beautiful lines are only a proof of something that we already know.

2...♖g8

Or:

a) 2...♖f8 3 ♜xg6! ♜xg6 4 ♜e7+ ♖g8 5 ♜e6 ♜f7 6 ♜g5+ ♖f8 7 ♕c5+ +-.

b) 2...♖h6 3 ♜e6!! ♜xe6 4 ♜xh5+! gxh5 5 ♜g5+ ♖h7 6 ♜g7#. This line is my favourite, and wholly logical!

3 ♜e7! ♜xe7 4 ♜xg6+ ♖f8 5 ♕c5!! ♜xc5 6 ♜f6+ ♖e8 7 ♜g7! 1-0

3) Danilov – A. Vajda

Romania 2004

We know that the light squares are vulnerable, and we need to find a way to open lines:

1 ♜h5! ♖g8

1...gxh5 2 ♜xh5 ♖g8 3 ♜xf7+ ♖h7 4 ♜h5#.

2 ♕xf7+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 2...♖xf7 (or the other way round: 2...♖f8 3 ♜h8+ ♖xf7 4 ♜e6#) 3 ♜e6+ ♖f8 4 ♜h8#.

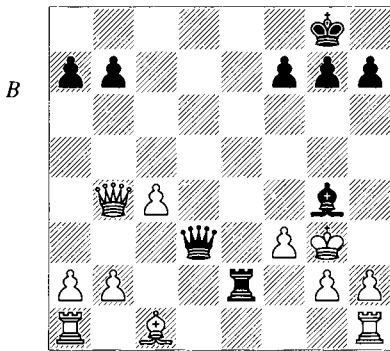
4) **Yuzhakov – Frolianov***Khanty-Mansiisk 2007*

Black decided to prevent White permanently from castling:

1...♙b4! 2 ♖xb4 ♜xe2+!

Black exchanges the main defender in his opponent's position, and keeps pounding on the light squares.

3 ♖xe2 ♜d3+ 4 ♖e1 ♙g4! 5 f3 ♜e8+ 6 ♖f2 ♜e2+ 7 ♖g3 (D)



B

If you have seen this far, I congratulate you.

The end is near:

7...♜xg2+! 8 ♖h4

8 ♖xg2 ♜xf3+ 9 ♖g1 ♙h3 and White cannot protect both f1 and g2.

8...♙xf3 0-1

5) **E. Pogosiants***Shakhmaty v SSSR, 1981*

Black will try to exchange the last remaining pawn, but in the process will have to place his pieces too awkwardly:

1 ♙c5 ♖a4 (1...♖c4 2 ♙e7 ♖b3 3 ♖d2 ♖a4 4 ♙d5 a5 5 ♙c3+ +-) **2 ♖c2 a5** (2...♙c4 3 ♖c3 and now 3...♙g8 allows White the shortcut 4 b5!? axb5 5 ♙b4 and the knight will come round to mate, while after the waiting 3...♙f1 White wins by ♙b6-a5 and ♖d4-c5-b6) **3 b5! ♙xb5 4 ♙d5** and White wins.

6) **Ionica – Jianu***Bucharest 2001*

30 ♜xf7! ♖xf7 31 ♙e6+ ♖g6

Black's king needs to step in front of his army since 31...♖e8 32 ♖xg7 ♜e7 33 ♙f7+ ♖d7 34 ♜g4+ ♖d8 35 ♜g8+ ♖d7 36 ♙e6+ nets material for White.

32 ♜f4! ♜e7

32...♜f6 33 h5+ ♖xh5 34 ♙f7+ is a quick mate.

33 ♙f7+ 1-0

It is mate in two: 33...♜xf7 34 ♜g5#.

33 h5+ would have mated in four: 33...♖xh5 34 ♙g4+ ♖g6 35 ♜f5+ ♖h6 36 ♜h5#.

7) **Moiseenko – Yuldachev***Turin Olympiad 2006*

24...♙e2+!

This temporary piece sacrifice leads to an opposite-coloured bishops position where Black is the more active side.

25 ♙xe2 ♜xe2 26 hxg4 ♜d4 27 ♜f1 ♜xd2

Black recovers the piece, and his attack proved to be decisive.

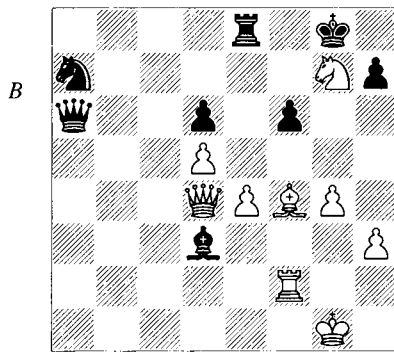
28 ♙f4 ♜xd3 29 ♜e1 ♙c6 30 ♖h2 g5 31 ♙e3 ♜xg4 32 a4 bxa4 33 ♜b1 ♜b3 34 ♜e1 a3 35 ♜a1 a2 36 ♜h3 ♜f3 37 ♙d4 g4 38 ♜f1 ♜b1 0-1

8) **Marin – De Vreugt***Tel Aviv 2000*

It's all about the initiative!

34 ♙xg7! (D)

After the primitive 34 ♙xd6? ♜b8, Black gains counterplay.



B

34...♜xe4

34...♜xg7 is met by two deadly blows: 35 ♙h6+! ♖g8 36 ♜xf6+-.

35 ♜xf6 ♜e1+ 36 ♖h2 ♙e4

The question is who is quicker. It should be the one who starts first, of course.

36...♜f1 37 ♜e6+ ♖h8 38 ♜e8+ ♖xg7 39 ♙h6+!+-.

If 36...♜a1 White wins in various ways: 37 ♜xa1 ♜xa1 38 ♙xd6+- or 37 ♜d8+ ♖xg7 38 ♙h6+! ♖xh6 39 ♜f8+ (or 39 ♜xd6+ ♖g7 40

♖f8+ ♘g6 41 ♖f7+ ♘h6 42 g5+! +-) 39...♘g5
 40 h4+! +-.
 37 ♖e6+
 37 ♖d8+ also wins.
 37...♘h8 38 ♖e8+ ♘xg7 39 ♗h6+! ♘xh6
 40 ♖f8+ 1-0

Chapter 19

1) Fridman – Wells

European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008

No. The d4-rook should switch to another file where it poses much more danger for Black:

24 ♗xg7! 1-0
 24...♘xg7 25 ♖g4+.

2) Haba – Kachar

Pardubice 2004

1 ♖xg7+! 1-0
 1...♘xg7 2 ♖g4+ ♘h8 3 ♖f6 with the idea
 3...♖d1+ 4 ♗xd1 ♘h7 5 ♗c2+ followed by
 ♖xh6#. Both rooks found juicy lines to work
 on.

3) C. Reyes – E. Estevez

Cuba 2005

White will use the open file to deliver mate or win material.

1 ♖he7!
 This move, restoring the coordination of all
 White's troops, proves decisive.
 1...♗xe7
 1...♖xh8 2 ♖le6#.
 2 ♖xf6+ ♘c7
 2...♘d5 3 ♖e5#; 2...♘d7 3 ♖xe7+ ♘c8 4
 ♖f8+ and mate next move.
 3 ♖xe7+ ♘b6
 3...♘b8 4 ♖e5+ ♘c8 5 ♖h8+.
 4 ♖e6 ♖c8
 4...♖xe6 5 ♖xe6+ and Black also loses the
 g4-rook.
 5 d5!
 Forcing the inevitable.
 1-0

4) Gavrillov – Soloviov

St Petersburg 2005

Black opens both g- and h-files and delivers
 mate with a cunning manoeuvre by his queen:

31...♗xh3+!! 32 gxh3 ♖g7+!

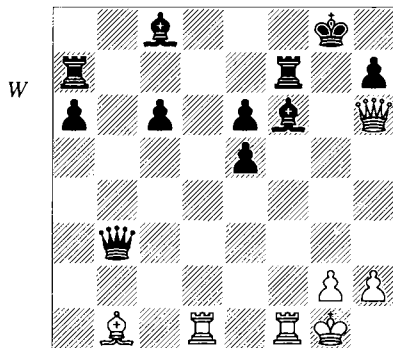
32...♖xh3 33 ♖g2 ♖xe3 +-.
 33 ♘h2 ♖xh3+! 34 ♘xh3 ♖c8+! 0-1

5) Quesada – C. Diaz

Cuba 2000

White uses clearance to bring both the rooks
 and the bishops into the attack:

1 ♗xf6+! ♗xf6 (D)
 1...♖xf6 leads to a forced mate: 2 ♗xh7+
 ♘h8 (2...♘f7 3 ♖g6+ ♘f8 4 ♖g8#) 3 ♗g6+
 ♘g8 4 ♖h7+ ♘f8 5 ♖h8#; 1...♘h8 2 ♗xh7
 ♗c5+ 3 ♘h1 ♖xf1+ 4 ♖xf1 is hopeless as well.



2 ♗xh7+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of a line where the
 f1-rook is the star: 2...♖xh7 (2...♘h8 3 ♗c2+) 3
 ♖d8+! ♗xd8 (3...♘f7 4 ♖xh7#) 4 ♖f8#.

6) Dzagnidze – Stefanova

FIDE Knockout (Women), Elista 2004

Both black rooks are working on semi-open
 files, but it will be even better if they have an
 open file:

23...♗e4! 24 ♗xe4
 The only move. If 24 ♖g2 or 24 ♖c2, then
 24...♖xd3! nets a pawn for Black.
 24...♖xe4+ 25 dxe4 ♖xd2

Black has a large advantage thanks to the control
 of the only open file. She won convincingly:

26 ♖g2 ♖ed8 27 ♖ge2 ♘f8 28 ♘g2 ♖xe2+
 29 ♖xe2 ♖d1 30 ♘f3 ♘e7 31 ♖g2 ♖a1 32 h4
 g6 33 ♖d2 ♖h1 34 b4 ♖h3+ 35 ♘f4 ♖xh4+ 36
 ♘e5 f6+ 37 ♘d4 f5 38 b5 cxb5 39 cxb5 ♖xe4+
 40 ♘c5 ♖xe3 41 ♘b6 ♖e5 42 ♖d3 f4 43 ♖b3
 g5 44 ♘b7 f3 45 b6 g4 46 ♘c6 ♖e6+ 47 ♘d5
 ♖xb6 48 ♖xb6 f2 49 ♖b7+ ♘f6 50 ♖b8 ♘g7
 51 ♖b7+ ♘g6 52 ♖b6+ ♘g5 53 ♖b1 g3 54 ♘e4
 g2 55 ♖b5+ ♘g4 56 ♖b7 f1 ♖ 57 ♖g7+ ♘h5 58
 ♖xh7+ ♘g6 0-1

7) **Bologan – Akopian***FIDE Grand Prix, Moscow 2002***49...♙e3!!**

After this nice tactical idea, based on both clearance and interference, White has no defence. Note that 49...♙b3 is less effective in view of 50 ♖c5, covering f2.

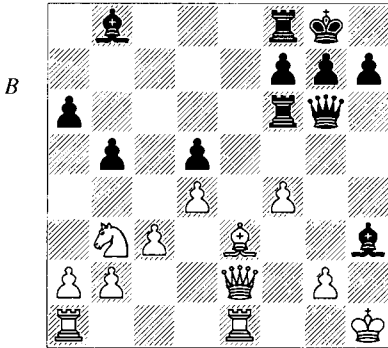
50 ♖b7+ ♖h8 51 ♙f1 ♖xe5 52 ♖b6 ♖g5 53 h4 ♖xh4 0-1

8) **A. Graf – Gustafsson***German Ch, Altenkirchen 2005*

...and finds a way to use it:

23...♙xh3! 24 f4 (D)

24 gxh3 ♖e4+ 25 f3 (or 25 ♖g1 ♙g6+) 25...♙xf3 26 ♖g2 (26 ♖g1 ♙g3+) 26...♙xh3+ 27 ♖g1 ♙g3 +.

**24...♙xg2+!**

Nevertheless.

25 ♖xg2

25 ♖h2 ♙e4 +.

25...♖h5+ 26 ♖h2 ♖f3+ 27 ♖g2 ♙h6+ 28 ♖g1 ♙g6 0-1

Chapter 201) **Shirov – Wang Hao***Russian Team Ch, Sochi 2009***23 ♙xh6!! 1-0**

23...♖xh6 24 ♖f6+ ♖h8 (or 24...♖xf6 25 ♙xf6 gxf6 26 ♖xf6) 25 ♙g5! traps the queen.

2) **Dziuba – Dydysenko***Polanica Zdroj 2000*

Black first shuts the queen out of the game, and wins material:

1...♖d2!! 2 ♖a2

2 ♙xd2 ♙xc1 3 ♖xc1 ♖xd2 costs White an exchange.

2...♙xc1 3 ♖xc1

White's position crumbles after 3 ♙xc1 b3 4 ♖a1 ♙g5 5 ♖f1 ♖e4+ 6 ♖g1 ♖xe2 +.

3...♖e4+ 4 ♖g1 ♙g5 5 ♖f1 ♖c2 0-1

White's rook is trapped.

3) **Godena – Trent***European Union Ch, Liverpool 2008*

It is the white queen that is the target:

26...♙f7

The threat of a discovered attack forces decisive material gains.

27 ♙c1 ♖d2 28 ♖1xd2 ♙xb3 29 axb3 ♖c2 30 b4 e4 0-1

4) **Narančić – Leventić***Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008*

The only piece that is in danger is the a6-rook, and White's own knight has just cut off its retreat.

21...♙cb4 22 cxb4 ♖xb4 23 g4 ♙xd3 24 ♖xe5 ♙xe5 25 ♙xd3 ♖xg4+ 26 ♖h1 ♖f3+ 27 ♖g1 ♖xa6 0-1

5) **V. Milov – V. Meijers***Zwolle 2003*

Black's queen has access to e4, and this square should be blocked.

38 e4!! dxe4

38...♖d6 39 e5 ♖e4+ gives White a chance to create a strong passed pawn: 40 ♙xe4 dxe4 41 exf6 exd3 42 f7 +.

In case of the more resilient 38...♙xe4 39 ♖b8+ ♖g7 40 ♙g1 ♖h2 (40...♖f3 41 ♙d1) 41 ♙h1 ♖g2 42 ♖cg1 ♖f3 43 ♙d1 White also traps the queen.

39 ♙xf7!

An important gain of time, giving Black no respite to free his queen.

39...♙xf7 40 ♖e5 ♙g7

Or: 40...♙fe7 41 ♖e3 ♙xe5 42 dxe5 ♖f3+ 43 ♖xf3 gxf3 44 ♖f4 +; 40...♙xe5 41 dxe5 ♙d7+ 42 ♖e2 ♖f3+ 43 ♖xf3 exf3+ 44 ♖e3 +.

41 ♖e3!

Now ♙g1 is inevitable. Not at once 41 ♙g1? due to 41...e3+.

41...♙xe5 42 dxe5 ♖f3+ 43 ♖xf3

and White soon won.

6) Grishchuk – Sutovsky
European Team Ch, Plovdiv 2003
 White sets up his opponent's pieces for some punishing blows:
21 f6! ♟xf6 22 e5 ♟g5
 22...♟g7 23 ♖e4 is a double attack against both the queen and the b7-pawn. If Black drops that pawn he will also lose his a6-knight.
23 ♟f2 ♖f4 24 ♚e4 ♖f5 25 ♖e2 1-0
 There follows g4.

7) D. Petrov
Sovietsky Shakhmatny Etiudy, 1955
 White gives up both his minor pieces, but traps the black rook in return:
1 ♚e2!
 Not 1 ♘c4? ♟d3 2 ♖f4 ♚g4+ 3 ♚xg4 hxg4 =.
1...♚h1+ 2 ♟g3 ♟xb2 3 ♟e1+! ♟c1 4 ♟g2 ♟d1 5 ♚d2+! ♟xe1 6 ♚d4!
 White wins.

8) B. Maksimović – Bojkov
Varna 2002
 A series of exchanges granted Black time to trap the white knight on the edge of the board:
35...♖xc4 36 ♖xc4 ♘xc4 37 ♟xc4 axb5 38 ♟xb5 ♟d4
 With two mighty bishops, and White's pieces very short of moves, Black's task is very pleasant. Later White even sacrificed the poor knight but this did not save him.

39 g4 ♟f8 40 ♟g3 ♟e7 41 h4 ♟d6 42 h5 gxh5 43 g5 hxg5 44 fxg5 ♟e5 45 ♘xb6 ♟xb6 46 ♟c4 ♟d5 47 ♟xd5 ♟xd5 48 ♟h4 ♟e6 49 ♟xh5 ♟f5 50 ♟h6 ♟d4 51 a4 ♟c3 52 a5 ♟xa5 53 ♟g7 ♟e6 54 ♟h7 ♟c3 55 ♟h6 ♟d2 0-1

Chapter 21

1) Todorović – Kraai
Budapest 2003
 White will obviously clear the g-file for his rook. In doing so he must foresee what to do against Black's only defensive resource – bringing his own rook to the g-file.
26 ♘e4!
 The best place for the knight. It will now cooperate perfectly with the queen.

26...♚g8 27 ♖h7+!!
 The easiest way: White decoys the king into a mate in two.
 However, the simple 27 ♚xg8+ should also give mate: 27...♟xg8 28 ♖e8+ ♟g7 29 ♖e7+ ♟g6 (29...♟h8 30 ♘xf6 is similar) 30 ♖xf6+ ♟h7 (30...♟h5 31 ♘g3#) 31 ♖f7+ ♟h8 32 ♘f6 and mate is inevitable. This is no surprise, since neither of the black pieces can help their king.
1-0
 27...♟xh7 28 ♘xf6+ ♟h8 29 ♚xg8#.

2) An. Rodriguez – Soto
Callao 2007
 All the white pieces are fully active, and it is no wonder that he finds a decisive way to break in:
24 ♚g6! 1-0
 It is forced mate after 24...fxg6 25 ♚xh6+ gxh6 26 ♖xh6#.

3) Gyimesi – Bistrić
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008
 The situation is similar to the previous one. Black king lacks defenders, while White's attacking forces are much superior. There must be a forced win!
25 ♖xh7+! 1-0
 25...♟xh7 26 ♚h3+ ♟g8 27 ♘g6 leads to forced mate.

4) J. Polgar – Karpov
Hoogeveen 2003
25 ♟xh7+!
 Lasker's idea in action. By sacrificing both bishops, White opens up her opponent's king, enabling her major pieces to give mate.

25...♟xh7 26 ♖h5+ 1-0
 26...♟g8 27 ♟xg7 ♟xg7 (after 27...f6 White has various wins, but the best one is to keep on opening lines for her rooks: 28 ♟xf6 ♚xf6 29 ♚g3+ ♟f8 30 ♖h8+ ♟f7 31 ♚g7#) 28 ♚g3+ ♟f6 29 ♖g5#. This must have been a great shock for the ex-world champion!

5) Malakhatkó – Ovechkin
Voronezh 2008
20 ♘f6+!
 White opens a route for his queen.
20...♚xf6

20...gxf6 21 ♖g3+ ♜f7 22 ♖g7+ ♜e8 23 ♖xf8#. This motif will be repeated in all lines.

21 ♜xf6 gxf6

21...gxh6 22 ♖g3+ ♜h7 23 ♜f7+ ♜h8 24 ♖g7#.

22 ♖g3+ ♜g6

22...♜f7 23 ♖g7+ ♜e8 24 ♖f8#.

23 ♖xg6+ ♜h8

As a result of the combination, White has regained the sacrificed material, and is left with by far the best pieces on the board. He has various ways now to conclude the job; domination is the most effective.

24 d6 ♜b7 25 ♙f8 1-0

6) Dimitrijević – K. Stokke

Rilton Cup, Stockholm 2007/8

White has an overwhelming concentration of forces on the h-file. He now needs first to open it, and then to make good use of it.

23 ♙xg6 ♜xg6 24 ♖xg6+! hxg6 25 ♜h8+ ♜f7 26 ♙h7+ ♜e8 27 ♜xf6+ 1-0

White's pieces cooperate in perfect harmony.

7) Dzagnidze – Sulskis

Gibraltar 2008

Black has established control of the open b-file, and penetrated to his seventh rank. Various tactical ideas arise now, but first he needs to bring up some material support for his attack:

29...♜xf3!

With this simple idea, Black introduces two powerful pieces with gain of tempo:

30 ♜xf3 ♖g4+ 31 ♜g2 ♜xh5

...♜f4+ or ...♖xg3+ is inevitable now.

32 ♜d1 ♖xg3+ 33 ♜h1 ♖h3+ 34 ♜g1 ♜g3 0-1

8) Garbisu – Kosić

Budapest 2008

26 ♜xe6!

White has concentrated too many troops against the f5-square to contemplate a cowardly retreat by his knight. By sacrificing a small amount of material, he unleashes the power of the remaining pieces. He will also achieve a pleasant opposite-bishops position.

26...♙xe6 27 ♜xf5 ♙xf5 28 ♖xf5 ♜fe8 29 ♖h7+ ♜f8 30 ♖h8+ 1-0

30...♜e7 31 ♖xg7+ ♙xg7 32 ♜f7+ ♜e6 33 ♙f5#.

9) Siebrecht – Van Haastert

Dutch Team Ch 2007/8

All the light squares on the black kingside are weak, and there ought to be a way to exploit this fact.

21 ♖c2! ♙xd4 22 ♙h7+ ♜h8 23 ♜g6+ ♜xh7 24 ♜xf8++ ♜g8 25 ♖h7+ ♜xf8 26 ♖h8+ ♖g8 27 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 28 ♖xg8+ ♜e7 29 ♜e1+ ♜d6 30 ♖f8+ 1-0

Black loses additional material.

10) P. Nikolić – Swinkels

Dutch Team Ch 2007/8

White has prepared a rook-lift on his fourth rank. Now he exploits the weaknesses in Black's kingside pawn-structure:

30 ♜e6+! fxe6 31 ♜f4+ 1-0

After 31...♜e8 32 ♜xg4 Black loses a queen or a rook.

11) Vitiugov – Diachkov

Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008

A king in the centre is always a juicy target. We should be willing to part with some material in order to open files for our rooks against it, and exploit the pins created:

21 ♙h5! ♖xh5 22 ♜xe6 ♖f7 23 ♜f5

23 ♜ce1 is also possible, but less precise due to 23...♜e5 24 ♜xf6.

23...♜d8 24 ♜xe7 ♖g6 25 ♜xd7+ ♙xd7 26 ♖b6+ 1-0

26...♜e8 27 ♜e1+ ♜f7 28 ♜e7#.

12) De Vreugt – Mchedlishvili

Hilversum 2008

Black has an enormous strategic advantage due to his glorious bishops, and he finds the easiest way to convert it – tactics:

30...♖xg3! 31 hxg3 ♙d4! 0-1

13) Ristić – Kojić

Yugoslav Team Ch, Vrnjačka Banja 1999

White will be happy to include his rook in the assault. However, the immediate 20 ♖f6+ gives Black the additional option 20...♜d6. Thus:

20 ♜d5+! exd5 21 ♖f6+ ♜f8 22 ♜h3 1-0

The powerful tandem of queen and rook is sufficient to mate: 22...♜g6 23 ♜h7 d6 (23...♜e7 24 ♜h8+ ♜xh8 25 ♖xh8#) 24 ♖g7+ ♜e7 25 ♖xf7+ ♜d8 26 ♖xc7#.

14) Tovio – Echavarría
Colombian Ch 2005

White decided to prepare a discovered attack, and wasted precious time by playing 29 ♖e1?, and the game was drawn after 29...c3 30 ♜xg6 ♜xb4? (30...hxg6 31 ♙xe7 cxb2 is a lot less clear) 31 ♜xg7+ ♙xg7 32 ♜g3+ ♙h8 33 ♜xe5+? (33 ♜f7! ♜d4+ 34 ♙h1! ♜g8 35 ♙g6+ ♜xg6 36 ♜h4 is winning for White) 33...♙g8 34 ♜d5+ ♙h8 35 ♜e5+ ♙g8 36 ♜g5+ ♙h8 37 ♙g6+ hxg6 38 ♜h6+ ♙g8 39 ♜xg6+ 1/2-1/2.

However, his major pieces were already well-placed for a decisive assault, and he could have sacrificed his bishop immediately to deflect Black's queen away from the kingside:

29 ♙xg6!! hxg6 30 ♜xg6 ♜xb4

A counter-deflection by 30...c3 does not work since after 31 ♜xa6 ♜xb4 32 ♜xg7+ the white queen has access to the f6-square, and it is forced mate; check it for yourself.

31 ♜xg7+ ♙xg7 32 ♜g4+ ♙h8 33 ♜h5+ ♙g8 34 ♜g5+ ♙h8 35 ♜f7 +-

15) Bologan – Heberla
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White's rooks have occupied both central files, and the black queen is poorly placed on a7. Both black knights are also wandering around on the queenside. This suggests that the position is ripe for an assault on the kingside.

20 ♙f6+ gxf6 21 ♜g3 ffg5 22 ♜xg5+ ♙h8 23 ♜f6+ ♙g8 24 ♜d5 ♙4e5 25 ♜dx5 ♙xe5 26 ♜xe5 ♜fe8

26...h6 was somewhat more resilient, when Black will finally include his queen in the defence after 27 ♜xh6 ♜b6, but only to lose it on the next move: 28 ♜g5+ ♜g6 29 ♜xg6+ ffg6 30 ♜xg6+.

27 ♜g5+ ♙f8 28 ♜f5

The only 'imperfection' in White's play is that 28 ♜h6+ mates in five, one move earlier than the text-move would do.

1-0

16) Kovalevskaya – T. Vasilevich
European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White uses the power of her passed pawn to establish control over the seventh rank.

35 ♜b7

35 ♜a6 is another solution. We gave this example to demonstrate the power of the passed

pawn, and the fact that it can be used in various ways, in this case thanks to a pin: 35...♙xa7 36 ♜b7.

35...♙f8 36 ♜f7 ♙e7 37 ♜xe7 ♙xe7 38 ♜xe7 ♙g8 39 ♜c7 1-0

17) Motylev – Markos
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White needs to break in via the open h-file.

41 ♙g6! ♜f7

41...hxg6 42 ffg6.

42 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 43 ♜h5 ♜e7 44 ♜g6! 1-0

18) Khuzman – Yanev
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black's rooks are forked, and he needs to act promptly if he is not to lose.

43...♙xg2! 44 ♙xg2 ♜c8

The rooks are getting untangled and their power is sufficient to keep the balance.

45 ♙xb7

After 45 ♜c1 ♜e7 Black will make use of the pin.

45...♜b6!

Black's sacrifice on g2 blew open the white king's pawn-shield, so White now cannot afford to capture the rook.

46 ♙g2

Not 46 ♙xc8?, when 46...♜f2+ 47 ♙h1 ♜b2 will be mate.

46...♙e6 47 ♜e4 ♜xc7

Black has broken free of the fork, and is rewarded with half a point for his creativity.

48 f5 ♜xe4 49 ♙xe4 ♜b2+ 50 ♙h1 gxf5 1/2-1/2

19) Jojua – Banikas
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

White drags the black king towards the centre, and mates:

23 ♙f5+! gxf5 24 ♜g3+ ♙f6 25 ♙xd7+ ♜xd7 26 f4 1-0

20) Pantsulaia – Swiercz
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The first move is obvious: White will open the h-file for his rooks.

28 ♙xg6!! hxg6

28...h6 29 ♜fh1 ♙xf4+ 30 ♙xf4 ♜xf4 31 ♙e4 is good for White.

29 ♜fh1 ♜g7

But what now?

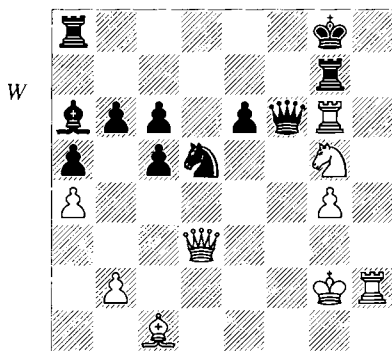
30 ♖h2!

The key move: White has enough time to triple his major pieces on the only open file.

30...♙xe5

Black's only chance is to fish in muddy waters, but it will not work here.

31 fxe5 ♖xe5 32 ♖d3 ♖f6 33 ♖h6 ♙a6 34 ♖xg6+ ♖g7 (D)



35 ♖h8+! ♙xh8 36 ♖h3+ ♙g8 37 ♖h7+! ♙f8 38 ♖h8+ ♙e7 39 ♖xg7+ ♙d6 40 ♖h2+ 1-0

21) Minina – Djingarova

European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008

22...♙h3+!

With this clever strike, Black wins material due to the pin on the d-file.

23 ♙xh3 ♙f2+ 24 ♙g2 ♙xd1 25 ♙xd1 ♙b4 0-1

22) E. Cosma – Calzetta

European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black's queen is overloaded:

18 ♖b8+ ♖xb8 19 ♖xb8+ ♖d8 20 ♙b5+ 1-0

23) Zimina – Zakurdzhaeva

European Women's Ch, Plovdiv 2008

Black's king is desperately weak, and the position is screaming out for the decisive blow:

19 ♙xb6+! axb6 20 ♖xb6 1-0

24) Nayer – Maletin

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

20 ♙xf7!

20 ♖ad1 ♙xf3 21 ♙xf3 ♙e8 22 ♖xa6 ♖f6 23 c3 is also excellent for White, although

Black may then have some hopes based on the opposite-coloured bishops in an endgame. The game continuation is based on the poor coordination of Black's pieces.

20...♖xf7 21 ♙g5 ♙h5 22 ♙xf7 ♙xf7 23 ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 24 ♖ad1 ♙e8 25 ♖xh7!

White plays for the attack, and already has a material advantage. Not **25 ♖xe8? ♙xh2+!** **26 ♙xh2 ♖xd3 27 ♖xd3 ♖xe8**, which lets Black slip away.

25...♖d7 26 ♖d3 b5 27 axb5 axb5 28 ♖e5 ♖d8 29 ♖d5 ♖e6 30 g3 c4 31 ♖f3+ ♙f6 32 ♖xb5 ♙g8 33 ♖b6 ♖e5 34 ♖e3 ♙e4 35 ♖bxd6! 1-0

25) Roiz – B. Savchenko

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

15 ♖xc6! ♙f8

Probably Black had overlooked that after **15...hxg5 16 ♙e5 ♙xe5 17 ♙xd5 exd5 18 ♖e6+** his position is falling apart.

16 ♖xe6+! ♙xe6 17 ♖e3 ♖d5

17...♖c8 18 ♙f6 ♖h7 19 d5.

18 ♙e5 1-0

26) D. Fridman – N. Mamedov

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

21 g4!

Some computer engines take quite while to discover this unexpected blow.

21...fxg4 22 ♙d5!

The point: this opens lines on the kingside, and excludes Black's queen from the defence.

22...e6

White also mates after **22...♖f8 23 ♖xg4 ♖c8 24 ♖h5 e6 25 ♖g1 exd5 26 ♖g5.**

23 ♖xg4 ♙h8 24 ♖h3 ♖g8 25 ♖h5 1-0

25...h6 26 ♖g1 and **♖xh6+** is inevitable.

27) Akopian – Iotov

European Ch, Plovdiv 2008

The e4-bishop protects h7, but an idea based on both interference and pin will make it an ineffective defender.

30 g6! ♙xg6

Now the pin will come into play. The interference theme is seen in the line **30...fxg6 31 ♖xh7#.**

31 ♖g1 ♙g5 32 ♖xg5 f6 1-0

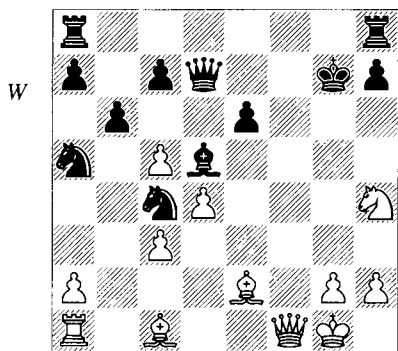
Black resigned since many roads lead to Rome.

28) Vachier-Lagrave – Vitiugov
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008
36 ♖d1 ♖f8 **37** ♖xg6 hxg6 **38** ♖h4+ 1-0
 After 38...♗e8 39 ♗e7+ ♖f7 40 ♖c4+ ♗e8
 41 ♗xg6+ White wins everything.

29) M. Gurevich – Jojua
European Ch, Plovdiv 2008
33 ♗e3!
 Without the fianchettoed bishop, Black col-
 lapses.
33...♗xe3
 33...♗g7 34 ♖xg7+ ♖xg7 35 ♖g2+ ♖h7 36
 ♖g6+ ♖h8 37 ♖xh6+ ♗g8 38 ♖g6+ ♖f7 39
 ♖g7+ ♗e8 40 ♖e6+ ♖e7 41 ♖xe7#.
34 ♖g2 1-0
 34...♖g8 35 ♖xh6+ ♖xh6 36 ♖h3+.

30) Cmilyte – E. Atalik
European Women's Ch, Dresden 2007
35...♖g4! **36** ♖xg4 ♖xf1+ 0-1
 37 ♗g1 ♗f2+ 38 ♖h2 ♗xg4+.

31) Bromberger – Kremenietzky
Gausdal 2008
 By dragging the king out, White will awaken
 his queenside forces:
20 ♖xf6! ♖xf6 **21** ♖f1+! ♗g7 (D)
 21...♗e7 22 ♗g5+ ♗e8 23 ♗h5+.



22 ♗h6+! ♗g8
 22...♖xh6 23 ♖f6#.
23 ♖f6 ♗e4 **24** ♖f1! 1-0

32) Efimenko – Andreikin
Russian Team Ch, Dagomys 2008
 No centralized king is ever safe! White will
 break in by using the queen's need for 'fresh air'.
17 ♗a5! ♗xa5 **18** ♗xd7+ ♖xd7

18...♗e7 19 ♗xa5 ♖xa5 (or 19...♖xd7 20
 ♖xf7+ ♗e7 21 ♗c4!) 20 ♖e4!, planning 21
 ♖f4.

19 ♖xf7+ ♗e7 **20** ♗c5+ ♖xc5
 20...♖d8 21 ♗xe6+ ♖d7 22 ♖c7+.
21 ♖xc5 ♖bf8 **22** ♖xg7 ♖fg8 **23** ♖c7+!
 ♖xc7 **24** ♖xe7+ ♖b8 **25** ♖d6+ ♖a8 **26** ♖xd4
 1-0

33) Lilleoren – Zhu Chen
Gibraltar 2008
 A bishop on c5 is a monster, and Black needs
 an open h-file to support its efforts.
22...♗g4+! **23** hxg4
 23 ♖h1 ♗f2+ 24 ♖h2 h4 25 e5 hxg3+ 26
 ♖xg3 ♖b6 is no picnic either.
23...hxg4 24 ♗f3 ♖h6+ **25** ♗g2 ♖h2+ 0-1

34) Naiditsch – Mas
Dresden Olympiad 2008
 It is not easy to understand what is happen-
 ing at the moment, as there are so many pieces
 hanging.

25 ♗xh6+!
 White creates an overloaded piece in his op-
 ponent's camp while using one of his attacked
 pieces as a desperado.
25...gxh6 26 ♗xf6 ♖xb3 **27** ♗xd8 ♖xb2 **28**
dxe6 ♖xd8 **29** exf7+ ♖xf7 **30** fxe5 ±
 The end of the forced line leaves White a
 solid pawn ahead with a positional advantage.
30...♗e7 31 ♖f1+ ♗g7 **32** e6 ♗f6?
 32...♖f8 is more resilient.
33 ♖c1 d5 **34** ♖c7+ ♗g6 **35** e7 1-0

35) Leventić – Bistrić
Bosnian Team Ch, Neum 2008
 Both central files have been occupied by
 white rooks, and the black king is in the centre.
 He has no chance...
18 ♗d7 ♗xd7 **19** ♖xe4 ♗f8 **20** ♗d7+ ♖d8
21 ♗a5+ 1-0

36) Bluvshstein – Rowson
Dresden Olympiad 2008
20...e3!
 A pawn – even a centre pawn – for a whole
 diagonal is a small price!
21 ♗xe3 ♗b7 **22** ♖f2
 22 ♗c1 ♖h1+ 23 ♖f2 ♖xh2+.
22...♖f3+ 0-1

37) M. Muzychuk – I. Andrenko*Ukrainian Girls' Ch, Odessa 2008*

White has a way to bring a piece into the attack with gain of tempo:

39 ♖e4! ♜xg8 40 ♖f6+ ♖h6 41 ♖xg8+ 1-0

38) Malakhato – Perez Felipe*La Laguna 2008*

With such an exposed king, our task is a pure pleasure:

20 ♖d5+! ♖g6

Or: 20...f5 21 ♖e7+ ♖f6 22 f4+; 20...exd5 21 ♖h6+ ♖f5 22 ♜h5+ ♖e4 23 f3+ ♖d4 24 ♖f6+ ♖c5 25 ♖xc3.

21 ♖d3+!

Interference. White excludes the black queen from the defence and so gives mate.

1-0

21...cxd3 22 ♖g3+ ♖f6 23 ♖g5#.

39) K. Rohonyan – Motoc*Dresden (Women's Olympiad) 2008*

Black's king is not safe on e7, and it will be even worse if dragged into the middle of the board:

18 ♜xd7+! ♖xd7 19 ♖c5+ ♖d6 20 ♖xe6+ ♖xc5

20...♖c7 is not advisable either: 21 ♖f7+ ♖b6 22 ♖d7+ ♖c7 (22...♖a5 23 b4+ ♖a4 24 ♖b3#) 23 ♖xf6+ ♖c8 24 ♖e6+ ♖b8 25 ♖d5 +-.

21 b4+ ♖d4 22 ♖g2 ♖d2

After 22...♖e5 there are mating lines possible, but it is enough if you saw that Black's queen is doomed: 23 ♖d1+ ♖e3 24 ♜e1+.

23 ♖d6+

23 ♖e4+ ♖c3 24 ♖c6+ ♖d4 25 ♖c5# and 23 ♖d5+ ♖e3 24 ♖e4+ ♖f2 25 ♜f1# are both effective too.

1-0

40) Pruess – Chua*USA Ch Qualifier, Chicago 2008*

The rooks have already occupied the vital seventh rank. It is time for White to make use of this:

22 ♜xf7! ♖xd7 23 ♜xg7+ ♖h8 24 ♖c3

Creating a deadly battery.

24...h5

Or 24...♖b5 25 ♜g5+ ♖e5 26 ♖h6 ♖e6 27 ♜xe5 +-.

25 ♖h6

Even better is 25 ♜f7+ ♖g8 26 ♖h6#.

1-0

41) Harikrishna – Svidler*Dresden Olympiad 2008*

25 ♜xc6!

White breaks in thanks to his light-square domination.

25...♖ab8

After 25...fxe6 26 ♖xe6+ ♖h7 27 ♖f3! the white queen switches to the h-file. The attack proves to be decisive since White has an enormous dynamic advantage. 27...♖d4 28 ♖h3+ ♖g7 29 ♖h6+ ♖f6 30 ♖f5! and now:

a) 30...♜xd6 31 ♖xg6+ ♖e7 32 ♜e1+ ♖d8 33 ♖xd6 +-.

b) 30...♖xf2+ 31 ♖g2 ♖d5+ 32 ♖xf2 ♖d4+ 33 ♖g3 and the checks are over.

c) 30...♜g8 31 ♖g5+ ♖g7 32 ♖e7+ ♖h8 33 ♖h4+ ♖g7 34 ♖h6+ ♖h7 35 ♖f8#.

25...♖c8 is answered in a similar way: 26 ♖e4 ♖h7 27 ♖e3 fxe6 28 ♖xe6 +-.

26 ♖f3 ♖c4 27 ♜e7 1-0

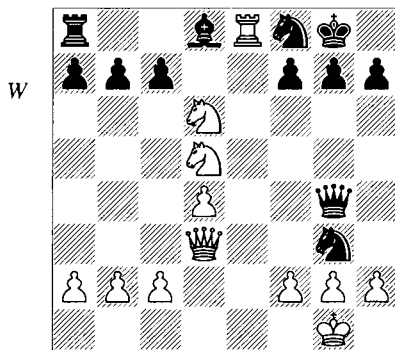
42) Bukowska – Valickova*Trinec 2001*

White first makes use of the vulnerable back rank:

17 ♖xd6!! ♜xe1+ 18 ♜xe1 ♖xg3

18...cxd6 19 ♜e8+ ♖f8 20 ♖xd6 ♖c7 21 ♖e7+ ♖h8 22 ♜xa8 +-.

19 ♜e8+ ♖f8 (D)



w

And now the power of his centralized knights.

20 ♜xd8!! ♖g5

This counterattack had to be foreseen, as White's rook and king are both in danger.

20...♜xd8 is met by 21 ♖e7+ ♖h8 22 ♖xf7#.

21 ♖e3! ♜e2+

Or: 21...♗xe3 22 fxe3 +-; 21...♗xd5 22 ♜xa8 +-; 21...♗xd8 22 ♜e7+ ♗xe7 (only move) 23 ♗xe7 cxd6 24 hxg3 +-.

22 ♗xe2 ♗xd5

22...♗c1+ 23 ♗f1 ♗xf1+ 24 ♖xf1 ♜xd8 25 ♜e7+ ♖h8 26 ♜xf7#. This mating mechanism works in most of the lines.

23 ♜xa8 ♗xd6 24 c3 a6 25 ♗e8 g6 26 ♖d8 1-0

43) Nakamura – N. Ninov

French Team Ch, Evry 2008

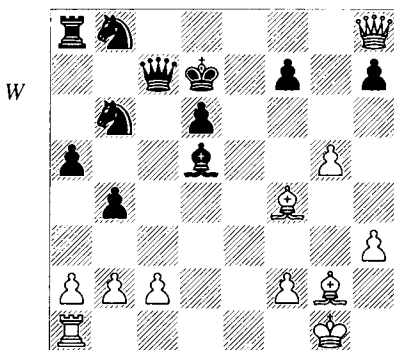
18 ♜e8+!!

With this original idea, White traps the black rook on h8. As a result he wins all the black pawns on the kingside and preserves his attacking possibilities.

18...♖xe8 19 ♗xg7 ♖xd5

19...♜f8 20 ♜e1+ also does not rescue Black.

20 ♗xh8+ ♖d7 (D)



Now White played 21 ♜e1?! and went on to win, but it was better to proceed with 21 ♖xd5! ♜xd5 22 ♗xh7 ♗c5 (22...♜xf4 23 ♗xf7+ ♖c6 24 ♗xf4) 23 ♗xf7+ ♖c6 24 ♗e8+ ♖b7 25 ♖g3 ± (as given by A.Kuzmin) with three pawns for the piece and a dangerous attack.

44) Illas – H. Blanco

Cuba 2004

1...g3+! 2 ♖xg3 ♗f4+!!

If you saw this idea to drag out the white king, I congratulate you!

3 ♖xf4 ♖e5+!

The king will be dragged into the heart of Black's position. As Nunn pointed out in *John Nunn's Chess Puzzle Book*, 3...♜g8! also mates quickly.

4 ♖g5

4 ♖xe5 ♜g6+ 5 ♖d6 ♜c8!! (6...♜b7# is a threat) 6 ♜b1 ♖e8! and now 7...♜c6# will follow.

4...♖f6+

Even better was 4...♜h8 (with the idea 5...♜g6 followed by ...♖f6#). Then 5 g4! ♖f6+ 6 ♖f4 h4 7 g5 e5+ 8 ♖g4 ♖d7# is a possible follow-up. However, the line in the game is equally strong.

5 ♖f4

5 ♖xh5 ♜h8+ 6 ♖g4 ♜g8+ 7 ♖h5 ♜g5+ 8 ♖h6 ♜g8+ 9 ♖h7 ♜h5#.

5...♖h4!

Do not let the king back!

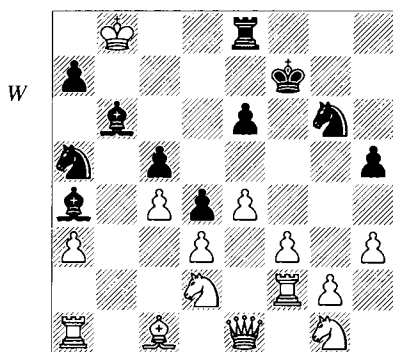
6 ♖e5

6 e5 ♜g6+ 7 ♖e4 ♖c6#.

6...♜g6+ 7 ♖d6 ♖e7+ 8 ♖c7 ♖d8+ 9 ♖b8

9 ♖d6 ♜b7#.

9...♖b6# (D)



(0-1)

45) Khenkin – Kariakin

Dresden Olympiad 2008

34...♜b1+ 35 ♜f1 ♜f4!

White has to part with his queen, since Black is also threatening 36...♜h3#.

36 ♜xe4 ♜xe2+ 37 ♜xe2 ♜xf1+ 38 ♖xf1 ♗d3 39 ♖e1 ♗xa6 40 ♖f2 ♗c4 0-1

46) Babula – Gongora

Dresden Olympiad 2008

27 b6!

Thanks to the pins, Black has no good reply to this breakthrough.

27...♖d7 28 ♜xd5!

The bishop is more important than the rook since it will help the pawn to queen.

28...exd5 29 ♖xd5

The powerful bishop duet makes a pleasant aesthetic impression.

29...a6 30 ♖xa8 ♜xa8 31 b7 1-0

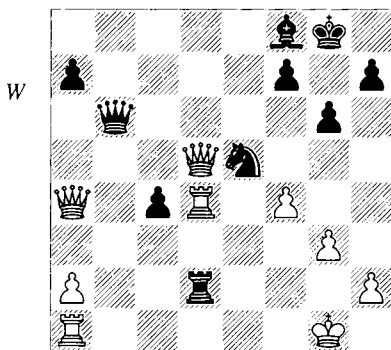
47) Barsov – D. Flores

Dresden Olympiad 2008

The position is anything but usual. White has a great material advantage, but almost all the black pieces are full of energy. His only inactive piece had to join the battle now: 29...♗c5+! 30 ♖h1 ♜e1+ (even better than the line advocated by Golubev: 30...♞xd5+!? 31 ♜xd5 ♖f3, when White is a whole queen ahead, but his only defence is to give it away for free: 32 ♞e8+ ♜xe8 33 ♖g2 ♗d4 and Black should be objectively winning) 31 ♖g2 ♜g1+ 32 ♖h3 (32 ♜xg1 ♞xd5+ 33 ♖h3 ♖g4!! is equally hopeless for White) 32...♞c8+ 33 ♞ad7 ♖xd7 and Black has both a material advantage and a decisive attack.

Instead, the game followed a very different course. Probably both players were in severe time-trouble, which would explain the tactical errors that occurred in the actual play:

29...♞b6+? 30 ♜d4 ♜d2 (D)



31 ♞xe5?!

After 31 ♖f1 ♜xd4 32 ♞db5 ♞e6 33 ♞xe5 ♞h3+ 34 ♖e1 ♜d7 White has a queen for just a bishop, but Black's pieces are very active. The best practical solution for him is then to part with some of the superfluous material by 35 ♜d1! ♜c7 36 ♞xe7 ♗xe7 37 ♞e8+ ♗f8 38 ♜d8 ♞h6 39 ♜c8 +-, when Black's pieces are completely tied up.

31...♜xd4 32 ♞aa5 ♜d1++ 33 ♖g2 ♜d2+??

Further evidence of time-trouble. After the natural 33...♞xa5 34 ♞xa5 ♜xa1 35 ♞xa7 c3

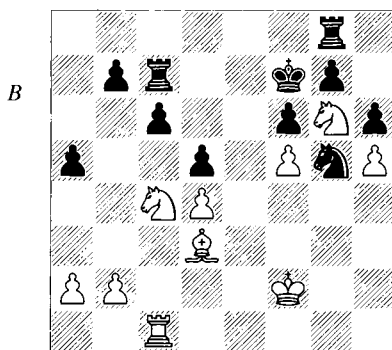
36 ♞a4 ♜b1 the game would still have been unclear.

34 ♞xd2 1-0

48) Jobava – Rowson

Dresden Olympiad 2008

38 ♖c4! (D)



A cunning double attack. Black needs to part with his a5-pawn, since 39 ♖d6# is a much more unpleasant threat...

38...♜d8

After 38...dxc4 39 ♗xc4+ White wins an exchange in addition to the pawn.

39 ♖xa5 ♜a8 40 b4 1-0

49) Topalov – Zhigalko

Dresden Olympiad 2008

39 ♜xd5!

White has various ways of converting his huge advantage, but this small combination is both the shortest and the most beautiful way.

39...exd5 40 e6 1-0

Black resigned in the face of 40...♜f8 41 ♗xc6+ ♞xc6 42 ♞e7+ or 40...♜f6 41 ♗xf6 gxf6 42 e7.

50) Radjabov – Kamsky

Dresden Olympiad 2008

Black has just committed a terrible mistake by 29...♖e7x♗e6??.

30 d5+!

This double decoy forces Black to part with material.

30...♖f7

There's nothing better: 30...♜xd5 31 ♖c7+; 30...♞xd5 31 ♖c7#.

31 dxc6 bxc6 32 ♜xb4 cxb5 33 ♗xb8 +- f4+ 34 ♖xf4 ♗xd3 35 ♗xa7 ♜a8 36 ♜d4 1-0

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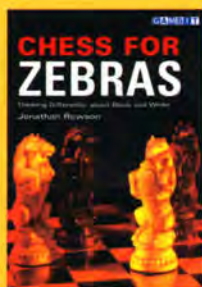
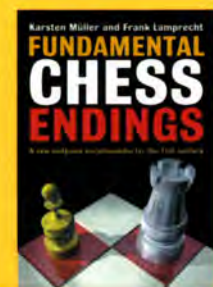
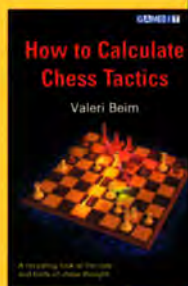
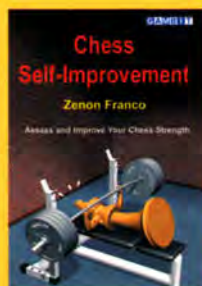
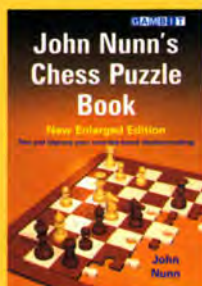
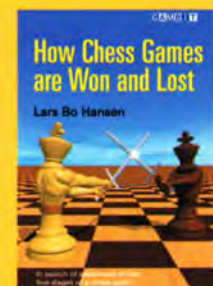
The advice frequently given to chess-players eager to improve their results is straightforward: study tactics! But there is often little useful guidance as to how this is best done. By solving puzzle positions? Or endgame studies? By dissecting the games of great tacticians?

Few books present a structured approach to tactics, so this book fills a valuable niche in the ambitious player's library. The authors present each major tactical theme in turn, explaining how it works and providing inspiring examples. They then explain how you can spot the idea in your own games and use it to your advantage. You immediately get a chance to put your knowledge to the test, as there are challenging exercises throughout the whole book, with detailed solutions.

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Bulgarian grandmaster **Dejan Bojkov** is an extremely active player and writer on chess, whose reports appear on Chessbase.com and in *Chess Today*, among many others.

Vladimir Georgiev is also a grandmaster from Bulgaria, who now plays for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – he has won the national championship of both countries. He is the trainer of former Women's World Champion Antoaneta Stefanova.

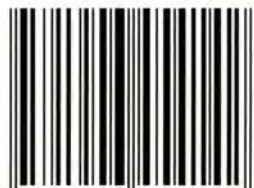


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