Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson
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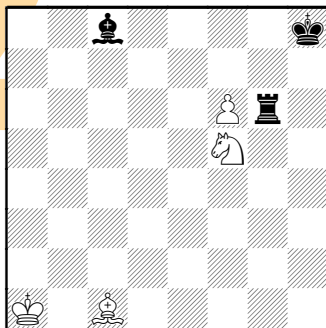

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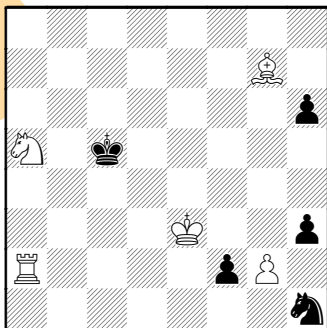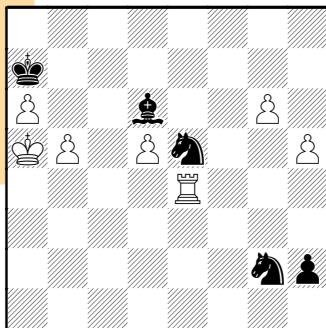
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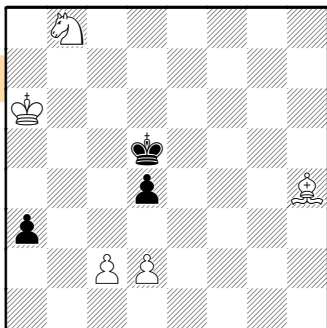
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WIN

Remembering the Classics

Four of the finest studies ever. I mainly put lesser-known or new studies in this column, so it's time for some balance-redressing.

These are classics, but do you remember them? Many of you will have seen these studies before, but that doesn't automatically mean you can recall the full solution, so solving them will either test your solving skills or test your memory (or both). For the expert aficionados, who can remember both, here's a further challenge - can you remember: the composers? the publications or tourneys they appeared in? and even remember the years? Good luck with those...

I was reminded of these superb studies by reading a book by Werner Keym "Anything But Average - chess classics and off-beat problems". It's about many kinds of chess puzzles, but its first chapters are dedicated to the most famous over-the-board games and the most splendid studies. (It's published by Nightrider Unlimited. The ISBN is 978-3-935586-16-0, and if you Google that ISBN you'll find the distributor's website.) This month's studies are all in Werner's book.

If these studies are new to you, you truly have a treat; if you know them, you have a different but equal pleasure: wallowing in the nostalgia of the first times you saw them, as I have been doing.

A solving challenge (or just read on for the solution!)

Another *magnum opus* from Ljubomir! - typically resourceful play is featured. On first inspection of the diagram who would surmise that in the final mate position, with the black king at c8 (to which the logistics determine he can only move late on in the solution, on move seven), one of the black rooks would have landed up at b8? And, of course, there is intricate needlework as the white bishop (like Evgeny's problem, this is a *minimal*) and white king thread their ways through to d7 and e7 respectively - 1.f3 ♔h2 2.f4 ♔h3 3.♖a5 ♔xg4 4.g5 ♗e8 5.♖a8 ♔f5 6.g6+ ♔f6 7.♔c8 ♔e7 8.♖b8 ♗d7.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

No.1 By Leonid Kubbel
published in Shakhmatny Listok in 1922

1.♘c6 ♔xc6 2.♗f6 ♔d5 3.d3 a2 4.c4+ ♔c5 5.♗b7 a1♕ 6.♗e7 mate. 3.d3 is nearly impossible to foresee, or even to see when you get to move three.

No.2 By Vladimir Korolkov
published in Lelo in 1951

However, you can have all the points if, instead, you gave the composer as John Selman, the publication as *Tijdschrift v.d. KNSB*, and the year as 1949. That's because Selman composed a very similar position, with a very similar solution, so arguably has priority.

1.f7 ♖a6+ 2.♗a3 ♖xa3+ 3.♔b2 ♖a2+ 4.♔c1 ♖a1+ 5.♔d2 ♖a2+ 6.♔e3 ♖a3+ 7.♔f4 ♖a4+ 8.♔g5 ♖g4+ 9.♔h6 ♖g8 10.♘e7 ♗e6 11.fxg8♕+ ♗xg8 12.♘g6 mate. Magically.

1...♖f6 2.♗b2; 1...♖g8 2.fxg8♕+ ♔xg8 3.♘e7+. 2.♔b1? ♗xf5+; 2.♔b2? ♖f6. From move three, White's king steps along the Black squares to avoid bishop checks. 4.♔c3? ♖c2+ 5.♔d4 ♖d2+ 6.♔~ ♖d8 or in this line 5.♔b4 ♖b2+ 6.♔c5 ♖c2+ 7.♔b6 ♖b2+ 8.♔c7 ♖b7+ 9.♔xg4? ♗xf5+; 9.♔h5/f6? ♖g8.

No.3 By Abram Gurvich
 and Genrikh Kasparyan
All Union Physical Culture & Sport, 1955

1.♗d4+ ♔d5 2.♔e2 h2 3.♖a1 f1♕+ 4.♔xf1 ♔xd4 5.g4 ♘g3+ 6.♔g2 h1♕+ 7.♔xg3 and wins because the queen is, astonishingly, dominated.

1.♖xf2? ♘xf2 2.gxh3 ♘xh3 3.♗xh6 ♔d5 4.♔f3 ♔e5 5.♔g3 ♘g1 6.♔f2 ♘h3+. 4.♖xf1? ♘g3+. 5.♖a4+? ♔e5 6.♖h4 ♘g3+ 7.♔f2 h1♕ 8.♖xh1 ♘xh1+ 9.♔f3 h5.

No.4 By Leopold Mitrofanov
Rustaveli Memorial Tourney, 1967

However, that 1967 setting was found to be incorrect and the diagram position is a corrected version that was published in *Vecherny Leningrad* in 1971. Multiple bonus points if you knew all that!

1.b6+ ♔a8 2.♖e1 ♘xe1 3.g7 h1♕ 4.g8♕+ ♗b8 5.a7 ♘c6+ 6.dxc6 ♕xh5+ 7.♕g5 ♕xg5+ 8.♔a6 ♗xa7 9.c7 ♕a5+ 10.♔xa5 ♔b7 11.bxa7 wins.

1...Kb8 would block the b8 square that Black's bishop needs on move four. 2.g7? h1♕ 3.g8♕+ ♗b8 4.a7 ♕a1+. 7.♔a6? ♕e2+. 8...♕a5+ 9.♔xa5 ♗xa7 10.c7.

Such a queen sacrifice to deflect a queen has become known as "Mitrofanov's move". One writer also called it "A move from another world."