

Avni-70, Preliminary Award

35 composers submitted 50 entries to my JT. The quality was very good, with some outstanding works. Consequently, I included almost half of the entries in the award.

I am deeply indebted to my friend **Gady Costeff**. As director, he delivered me the entries in anonymized standard English; checked the studies for anticipation and gave valuable advice regarding some professional dilemmas. Gady also sorted out things with composers who erroneously sent logical studies (in contrast with the tourney announcement).

In the absence of established criteria for judgement of studies, the award reflects my own opinion and taste, and nothing more.

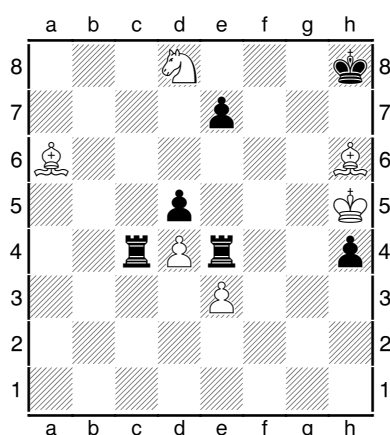
Appeals may be put forward until 17/1/2025 and then the award will become final.

All participants get a copy of my new free book – "*Exploration of Study-Composition*".

Thank you all.

Amatzia Avni,
17 December 2024, Israel

1st prize (31) - Oleg Pervakov



(6+6) White to play and draw

1.Nf7+ 1.Bb7? Rb4! 2.Bc6 (2.Bc8 Rb8 3.Bf5 Rxd8 4.Bxe4 dxe4 5.Kxh4 e6-+; 2.Bxd5 Rb5-+)
2...Rb6 3.Bd7 Kg8 4.Bf4 Rxf4! 5.exf4 Rd6 6.Kxh4 Rxd7 7.Ne6 Kf7 8.f5 Rd6-+

1...Kg8 2.Nd6!! Fork by knight

2.Ng5? Rxe3 3.Bxc4 dxc4 4.Kxh4 c3 5.Nh3 Re1-+; 2.Bb7? Rb4! 3.Nd6 Rxb7 4.Nxe4 dxe4
5.Kxh4 Kf7-+

2...exd6 3.Bb7! Kh7! 3...Rexd4 4.exd4 Rxd4 5.Bc8= **4.Bxd5** Fork by bishop

4...Rc5! 5.Bg5! 5.dxc5? Re5+ 6.Kxh4 Rxd5 7.Bf8 dxc5 8.e4 Re5-+

5...Re5! Self-fork by pawn! 5...Rxd5= Stalemate; 5...Rxd4 6.Be4+! Rxe4 Stalemate

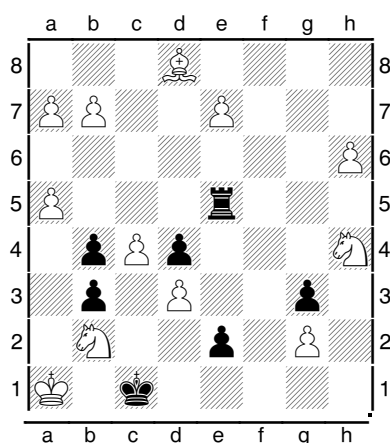
6.dxe5 Rxd5 7.Kxh4 Kg6! 8.Kg4 dxe5 Main A

Main B 8...Rxe5 9.Bf4 Re6 10.Kf3 d5 (10...Kf5 11.e4+!=) 11.Ke2! Kf5 12.Kd3! 1st Fortress

9.Bh4! Rd3 9...Rd1 10.Kf3!= **10.Bf2 Kf6 11.e4!** 2nd fortress. 1/2

Fascinating play with punches and counter punches. Following white's amazing second move, black finds some remarkable ideas, but at the end it proves insufficient against white's stalemate defences and fortresses.

2nd prize (48) - Jason Ke



(12+7) White to play and win

1.Nf3 1.b8Q?? e1N!-+ **1...e1N (Q)**

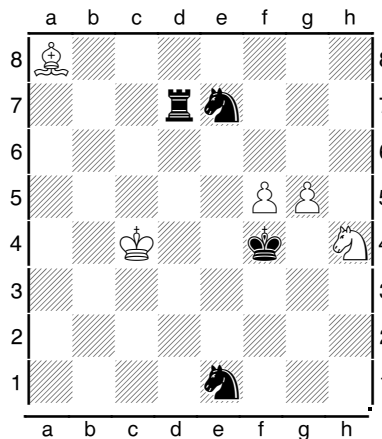
2.Nxe1 Rxe1 3.e8R! 3.e8Q? Kc2+! 4.Qxe1=

3...Rxe8 3...Rh1 4.Re2+-

4.b8B!! 4.b8Q? Re1 5.Qe5! Kc2+!= (5...Rxe5? 6.a8Q Re1 7.Qf3 Kc2+ 8.Qd1+-); 4.Bh4??
Re1 5.Bxg3 Rh1-+

4...Kc2 4...Re1 5.Bxg3 Rh1 6.Bdh4! Kc2+ 7.Be1+- White's two dark square bishops can defend each other and defend the back rank.
5.Bxg3 Rxd8 6.Bd6! Black was threatening Rf8 following by Rf1#.
6...Re8 6...Rxd6 7.a8Q Rf6 8.Qf3!+-
7.Bxb4 Rh8 7...Rg8 8.Nd1! Rxd6 9.a8Q Rg1 10.Be1! (10.Qf3?? b2+) 10...Rxe1 11.Qg2+-
8.g3! 8.g4? Throws the win, as if 8...Rxb6 9.a8B Rf6 10.Bg2 Rf2 11.Bh3 Rh2+- The g4 square is occupied and has no defense to Rh1#
8...Rxb6 9.a8B! 9.a8Q? Rh1+ 10.Qxh1=
9...Rf6 10.Bg2 Rf2 11.Bh3 Rh2 12.Bg4 Rh1+ 13.Bd1+- 13.Nd1?? b2+-+ **1-0**
 White finally coordinates the back rank defense.
Mate, stalemate, a feast of minor promotions, the preventive 6.Bd6 and a delicate 8.g3. A carnival.

3rd prize (36) - Michael Pasman

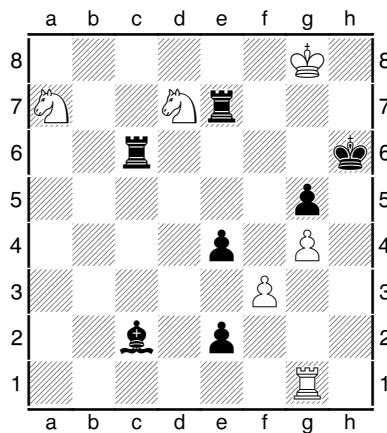


(5+4) White to play and draw

1.f6 Nf5 1...Nc8 2.g6! Ke5 (2...Nd6+ 3.Kc5 Nd3+ 4.Kb6 Nc8+ 5.Kb5! main line) 3.g7 Rd8
 4.Bd5! Nd6+ 5.Kc5! Nd3+ 6.Kb6! Kxd5 7.Ng6! Ke6 8.Ne7! Nc8+ 9.Kc7! Nxe7 10.Kxd8=
2.g6! Nd6+ 2...Ke5 3.Nxf5; 2...Rd8 3.g7 Nd6+ 4.Kc5! Nd3+ 5.Kb6! Rxa8 6.Ng6+
3.Kc5! 3.Kd5? Ne4+! 4.Ke6 Nc5#
3...Nd3+ 4.Kb6 Nc8+ 5.Kb5! 5.Kc6 Ne5+ **5...Ne5 5...Rd8 6.g7! Ke5 7.Bd5!!** Nd6+ (or
 7...Kxd5 8.Nf5! Ke6 (8...Ne5 9.Nh6) 9.Nh6!) 8.Kb6! Kxd5 9.Ng6! Ke6 10.Ne7 Nc8+ 11.Kc7
 Nxe7 12.Kxd8=; 5...Nd6+ 6.Kb6! Nc8+ 7.Kb5!
6.g7 Rd8 7.Ka6!! 7.Kb4 Ne7! 8.Bg2 Ng8!; White's idea is Bd5 but if at once 7.Bd5? Rxd5+
 so white moves the king
7...Ne7! Attacking the bishop and preparing Ng8; 7...Nd6 8.Bd5; 7...Kg5 8.Bd5!
8.Bc6!! 8.Ng6+ N5xg6 9.f7 Ke5! 10.Be4 Kf6! (10...Kxe4 11.Kb7 Kf5 12.Kc7 Rc8+ 13.Kb7)
 11.Bxg6 Kxg7+-; 8.Bg2 Rd6+ /Ng8; 8.fxe7 Rxa8+
8...N7xc6 Now we can appreciate 8.Bc6!! On 8...Ng8 9.Ng6+! Nxg6 10.f7 Nh6 (10...Ke5??
 11.Be8) 11.Be8!
9.Ng6+! Nxg6 9...Kg5 10.Nf8; 9...Ke3 10.Nf8
10.f7 Nce7 11.Kb7! Despite having the move with a large material advantage, black can't win
11...Ke5 11...Kg5 12.Kc7 Ra8 13.Kb7 Rd8 14.Kc7 Rc8+ 15.Kb7
12.Kc7 Ra8 12...Rc8+ 13.Kb7 Kd6 14.g8Q!
13.Kb7 Rd8 14.Kc7 Rc8+ 15.Kb7 Positional draw.
15...Kd6 16.g8Q Nxg8 17.Kxc8 1/2

A battle of pawns vs. pieces. Splendid introduction, remarkable 8.Bc6!! is echoed by 7. Bd5!! in a side variation. Brilliant and surprising.

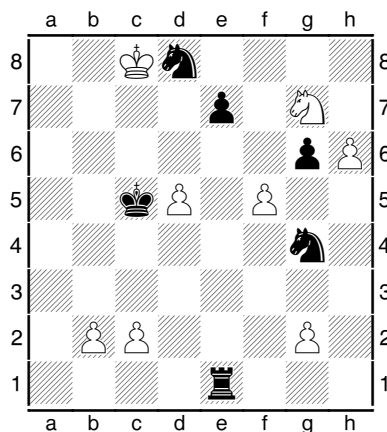
4th prize (10) - Jan Sprenger



(6+7) White to play and draw

- 1.Nf8** with a mate threat **1.Rh1+?** **Kg6** **2.Nf8+** **Kf6** **3.Rh6+** **Ke5** **4.Nxc6+** **Kf4-**+
1...Bb3+ **2.Kh8** **Rh7+!** **3.Nxh7** **Rd6** preparing **Rd8+** and **Rd1**
4.Nc6! Umnov; try **4.Nf8?** **Rd1** **5.Rg2** **e1Q** **6.Rh2+** **Qh4-**+
4...Rd1 **4...Rxc6?** **5.Nf8+**-
5.Rg3! thematic try **5.f4?** **gxf4** (**5...Rxc6!**? **6.fxc6+** **Kg6** **7.Ne5#**) **6.Rg2** **Rd8+**! **7.Nxd8** **e1Q**
8.Rh2+ **Kg6** **9.Rh5** **Qc3+**! **/Qa1+**; **5.Rg2?** **e1Q** (but also **5...Rd8+!**? **6.Nxd8** **e1Q** **7.Rh2+** **Kg6-**
+) **6.Rh2+** **Qh4** **7.f4** **Qxh2!** **8.fxc6+** **Kg6** **9.Ne5+** **Qxe5+** square **e5** controlled
5...e1Q **5...Rd8+!**? **6.Nxd8** **e1Q** **7.Rh3+** **Kg6** **8.Nf8+** **Kf6** **9.fxe4** **Ke7** **10.Ng6+** **Kxd8** **11.Rxb3**
Qxe4 **12.Kg7=** EGTB
6.Rh3+ **Qh4** **7.f4!** **Rd8+**! **7...Qxh3??** **8.fxc6+** **Kg6** **9.Ne5#**
8.Nxd8 **Qxh3** **9.Nf7+!** **Bxf7** **9...Kg6??** **10.Ne5+** **Kh6** **11.fxc6#**
10.fxc6+ **Kg6** 1/2 pin stalemate with active block of the white pawns.
Fascinating play, full of tension and drama. 7.f4! is great.

5th prize (41) - Michael Pasman



(8+6) White to play and draw

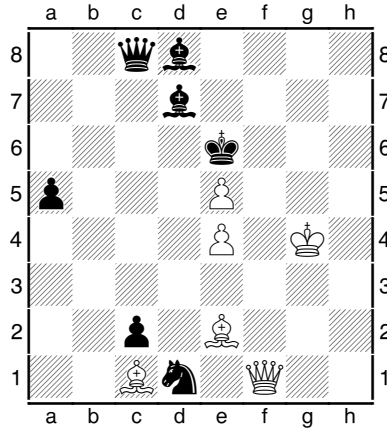
- 1.h7** **1.fxc6** **Nxh6-**+
1...Rh1 **2.Nh5!** Novotny-like sacrifice, evacuating the **g7** square; **2.fxc6?** **Ne5** **3.Kxd8** **Nxg6-**+
2...Rxh5 **2...Nf7** **3.fxc6**
3.fxc6 **Nf6** **4.g4!** Umnov. **Rh5** allows this move with tempo. **4.Kxd8?** **Nxh7** **5.Kxe7** **Re5+-**+
4...Rh4 **4...Rxh7** **5.gxh7** **Nf7** **6.g5** **Nxh7** **7.Kd7** (**7.g6?** **Kxd5** **8.Kd7** (**8.c4+** **Kxc4** **9.b3+** **Kd5-**
+) **8...e5-**+) **7...Nhxg5** (**7...Nd6** **8.Kxe7** **Nxg5=**) **8.Kxe7=**
5.g5 **Nxh7** **6.g7!** **Nf6** **7.gxf6** **Rg4** **8.fxe7** **Nb7!** **8...Nf7?** **9.Kd7**
9.b4+! **9.e8Q** **Nd6+**; **9.e8N** **Nd6+**; **9.Kxb7** **Rxg7-**+

9...Kxd5 10.e4+! 10.e8Q Nd6+ 10...Kxc4 11.e8N! 1/2

Excelsior with Phoenix.

White's 9th and 10th move, deflecting the black king, allows domination of the black knight

6th prize (21) - M.S.Cabrero & M.L.Gonzalez



(6+7) White to play and win

1.Qf5+! 1.Kh5? Be8+! 2.Kh6 Qc6! 3.Qf5+ Ke7+ 4.Kg7 Qg6+ 5.Qxg6 Bxg6=

1...Ke7 2.Ba3+ Ke8 3.e6! Ne3+! 3...Be7 4.Qf7+ Kd8 5.Qxe7++-

4.Kh3! Bxe6 4...Nxf5 5.Bh5#

5.Bb5+ Bd7 6.Qe6+ Pelle move - move along a pin line.

6...Be7 7.Bxe7! 7.Kh2? Qc7+-+

7...Nd5! 8.Bg5+! 8.exd5? Qc3+ 9.Kg4 (9.Kh4 Qh8+ 10.Kg3 Qc3+) 9...Qc4+! =; 8.Bb4+? Kd8

9.Bxa5+ Nc7 10.Bxd7 Qxd7=

8...Ne7 8...Kf8 9.Bh6# 9.Bxe7 9.Kg2? Qd8! =

9...c1Q 10.Bb4+! 10.Bg5+? Kf8-+

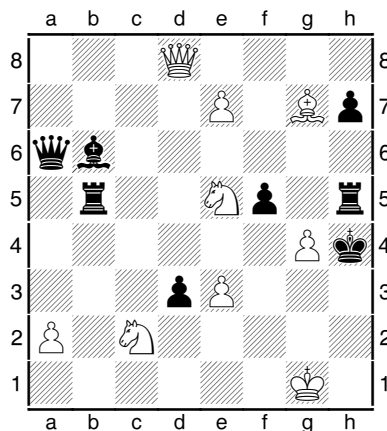
10...Kd8 11.Bxa5+ Q1c7 11...Q8c7 12.Qxd7#

12.Bxd7! Q8xd7 13.Qxd7+! 13.Bxc7+? Kxc7 14.Qxd7+ Kxd7=

13...Kxd7 14.Bxc7 Kxc7 15.Kg4 Kd6 16.Kf5 Ke7 17.Ke5 1-0

Lots of pins and counter-pins leave a strong impression.

Special prize (22) - Oleg Pervakov



(9+8) White to play and win

1.Qd5!! 1.e8Q+? Kg3! 2.Nxd3 Rb1+ 3.Nce1 Rxe1+ 4.Nxe1 Rh1+! 5.Kxh1 Qf1#;

1.Nf3+? Kxg4 2.Qxd3 Rb1+ 3.Kg2 Qxd3 4.Ne5+ Kg5 5.Nxd3 Bc7! 6.Nf4 Rb8 7.Ne6+ Kg6
8.Nxc7 Kxg7 9.e8Q Rxe8 10.Nxe8+ Kf7= 11.Nd6+ Ke6 12.Nb5 Ke5 13.a4 f4 14.exf4+
Kxf4;

1.Kg2? Qb7+ 2.Nf3+ Kxg4 3.Nce1 Bxd8 4.exd8Q Qxg7-+; .Kh2? Rxe5! 2.gxh5 dxc2=

1...Rxd5 2.e8Q Rg5! 2...fxg4 3.Bf6+ Kg3 4.Qxh5+-

3.Bf6 Bxe3+! **4.Kg2!!** 4.Nxe3? Qxf6 5.Nxd5 Rxg4+ 6.Nxg4 Qa1+ 7.Kg2 Qxa2+ 8.Nf2
Qxd5+=

4...Qxf6 4...fxg4 5.Ng6+! Kh5 (5...hxg6 6.Qh8#) 6.Nf4+ Kh6 7.Qf8+-

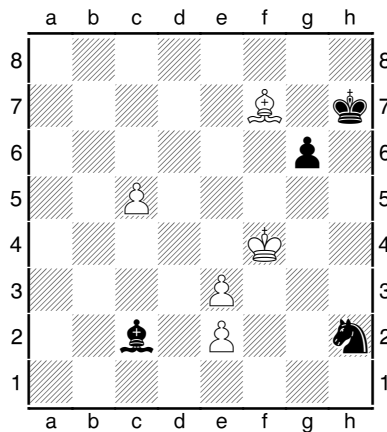
5.Qh5+!! Rxb5 6.Nf3+ Kxg4 And now checkers:

7.Nxe3+ Kf4 8.Nxd5+ Ke4 9.Nxf6+ Ke3 10.Nxh5 d2 11.Nxd2 Kxd2 12.a4! 12.Nf4? Kc3!

13.Ne2+ Kb4! 14.Kg3 h5=1-0

In the starting position, activating of battery 1.e8=Q discovered check, is begged to be played. Instead, white dismantle the battery with astonishing sacrifice. Tactical play continues unfolding into a humorous finale. However, the checkers theme is well known from many studies - perhaps the best is Belyavsky 2008.

1st honor mention (23) - Oleg Pervakov



(5+4) White to play and draw

1.c6 Try 1.Be6? g5+! 2.Kxg5 Bd1 3.c6 Bxe2 4.c7 Ba6 5.Kf6 (5.e4 Kg7=) 5...Nf1! 6.Bc4!?
(6.e4 Ne3=) 6...Nxe3! 7.Bxa6 Nd5+=

1...Bf5! 1...Ba4 2.c7 Bd7 3.Ke5! Bc8 4.Be6 Ba6 5.Kd6 g5 6.Kc5 g4 7.Kb6 g3 8.Kxa6 g2
9.c8Q g1Q 10.Bf5+-

2.Be8! 2.Kg5? Bc8 3.Bxg6+ Kg7 4.Bf5 Ba6 5.c7 Nf1=; 2.Ke5? Ng4+ 3.Kd6 Nxe3 4.c7 Bc8
5.Be6 Nf5+=; 2.e4? Bc8 3.Ke5 Ng4+ 4.Kd6 Nf6 5.e5 Kg7! 6.Bc4 Ne4+ 7.Ke7 g5 8.Kd8
(8.Be6 Bxe6 9.Kxe6 Nc5+=) 8...Bg4! 9.e6 Kf6=

2...Ng4 2...Bc8 3.Bd7 Ba6 4.Bh3! Bxe2 5.c7 Ba6 6.Kg3+-

3.e4! 3.Bd7? Nh6! 4.e4 Bxd7 5.cxd7 Nf7 6.e5 Nd8=

3...Nf6! Main A

Main B 3...Be6 4.Bd7 g5+! 5.Kxg5 (5.Kg3? Ne5! 6.Bxe6 Nxc6=) 5...Bxd7 (5...Ne5 6.Bxe6
Nxc6 7.Kf6+-) 6.cxd7 Ne5 7.d8N!+-

4.Bxg6+! **Bxg6** 4...Kxg6 5.exf5+-

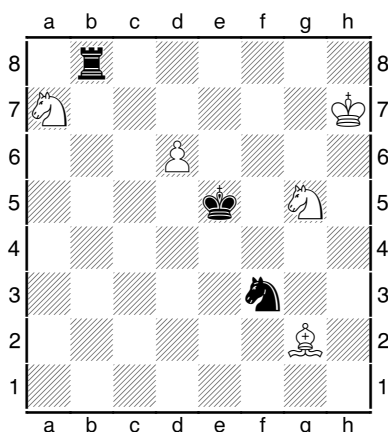
5.c7 Bf5! switch-back

6.Kxf5 6.exf5? Nd5+=

6...Ne8 7.c8N! 1-0 Chameleon echo.

Strong play and active counterplay, with scant material.

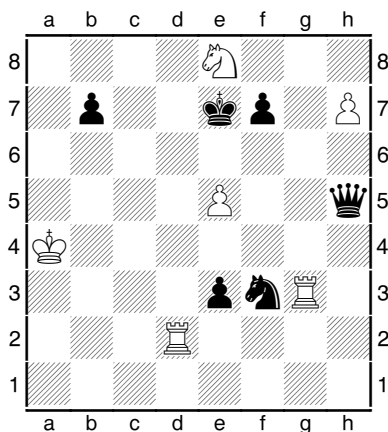
2nd honor mention (14) - Itay Richardson



(5+3) White to play and win

- 1.Nf7+** 1.Nc6+? Kxd6 2.Nxb8 Nxc5+=
1...Kf6 1...Ke6 2.Nc6 Rf8 (2...Rb7 3.Ncd8+-) 3.Ncd8+-
2.d7 2.Bxf3? Kxf7 3.d7 Rb2!=
2...Kxf7 **3.Nc6** 3.Nc8? Rb4!+=; 3.Bxf3? Rb2!=
3...Ng5+ 3...Rf8 4.Bxf3+-
4.Kh6 Rg8 **5.Bd5+ Ne6** **6.d8R!** 6.d8Q? Rh8+! 7.Qxh8 stalemate
6...Rg6+ 6...Rg3 7.Kh5 Kf6 8.Rd6+- Re3 9.Nd8
7.Kh5 Kf6 7...Kg7 8.Rd7+ Kh8 (8...Kf6 9.Rd6+-) 9.Rf7+- in this line white has other winning options
8.Rd6+- 8.Bxe6? Kxe6!= 9.Kxg6 stalemate **1-0**
Beautiful staff. with simple means and flowing play, we have minor promotion and a stalemate avoidance.

3rd honor mention (25) - Pavel Arestov



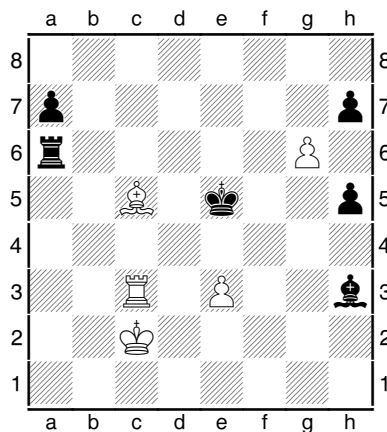
(6+6) White to play and draw

- 1.Rd7+!** 1.Re2? Qxh7 2.Nf6 Qd3 3.Rxe3! Qd4+! 4.Kb5 Qb2+ 5.Kc5 b6+ 6.Kc6 Nxe5+-+
1...Kxe8! 1...Kxd7?? 2.Nf6+-
2.e6! **Qxh7** 2...Qh4+ 3.Ka3 Qxh7 4.exf7+ Kxd7 5.f8N+=
3.exf7+ Kxd7 **4.f8N+!** Phenix
4.f8Q? Qc2+ 5.Ka3 Qc3+ 6.Ka2 Qa5+ 7.Kb3 Nd2+ 8.Kc2 Qc7+-+
4...Kc7 4...Ke8 5.Nxe7 e2 6.Nf6+ Kf7 7.Rxf3=
5.Nxe7 b5+! 5...e2 6.Rg7+ main line

6.Ka3! 6.Kxb5? e2 7.Rg7+ Kd8! 8.Rg8+ Ke7 9.Rg7+ Ke6 10.Nf8+ Kf6 11.Rg6+ Kf7 12.Re6 Nd4+–; 6.Kb3? e2 7.Rg7+ Kd6 8.Rg6+ Kc5 9.Re6 Nd4+–; 6.Kb4? (Ka5) 6...e2 7.Rg7+ Kd6 8.Rg6+ Ke5 9.Rg8 (Nf8) 9...e1Q+–
6...b4+! **7.Ka4!** 7.Kb2? e2 8.Rg7+ Kd6 9.Rg6+ Ke7! 10.Rg7+ Ke6 11.Nf8+ Kf6 12.Rg6+ Kf5 13.Re6 Ne5 14.Ng6!? Nd3+! 15.Kc2 Kxe6–; 7.Ka2? b3+! 8.Kxb3 e2 9.Rg7+ Kd6 10.Rg6+ Ke5 11.Ng5! Nd4+! 12.Kc4 Kf5! (but not 12...e1Q? 13.Re6+! Nxe6 14.Nf3+=) 13.Kxd4 e1Q+–
7...e2 8.Rg7+ Kd8 8...Kd6 9.Rg6+ Kd5 10.Nf6+ Kc4 11.Rg4+ Kd3 12.Re4=
9.Rg8+ Ke7 10.Rg7+ Ke6 10...Ke8 11.Nf6+ Kf8 12.Rg8+ Kf7 13.Re8=
11.Nf8+ 11.Rg6+? Kf7 12.Rf6+ Ke7–+
11...Kf6 12.Rg6+ Kf5 13.Re6 Ne5 14.Ng6!! 14.Nd7? Kxe6–+
14...Kxe6 14...Nxc6 15.Rxe2=; 14...e1Q 15.Rxe5+=
15.Nf4+ Kd6 16.Nxe2= 1/2

I don't think that the first moves add anything, real fight starts with 5...b5+ when the white king must play accurately. The highlight comes with 14.Ng6!!.

4th honor mention (7) - Daniele Gatti & Martin Minski



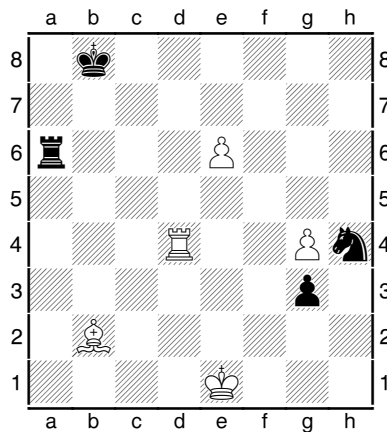
(5+5) White to play and win

1.Bd4+ 1.gxh7? Bf5+ 2.Kb2 Bxh7=
1...Kd6 2.e4 attacking the BB while covering the f5 square.
2...Bg2 3.g7 3.gxh7? Bxe4+=
3...Bxe4+ 4.Rd3! Selfpin with battery creation
4...Rc6+ 4...Ra2+ 5.Bb2+! battery activation 5...Bxd3+ 6.Kxd3+–
5.Bc5+! Second selfpin: double-countercheck with both pieces pinned
 5.Kd2? Rc8! 6.Bc5+ Ke6! Draw (6...Ke5? 7.Bf8+–; 6...Kxc5 7.Rc3++–; 6...Kc6 7.Bf8+–)
5...Kxc5 6.g8Q Rd6 7.Qc8+ Kb6 8.Qb8+ 1–0
Achieving decisive result with self-pins is bound to bring a positive impression. economical structure, solver friendly.

(see diagram next page)

1.Re4 1.e7? Re6+= **1...g2 2.Kf2 Ra2 3.Re2!** 3.Rb4+? Kc8 4.e7 Kd7 5.Rb7+ Ke8=
3...Ra4! 4.Be5+! 4.e7? Rf4+! 5.Kg3 g1Q+=
4...Kc8 5.Rb2 g1Q+! 5...Kd8 6.Bd6! Ra8 7.Rb1 Ra2+ (7...Ke8 8.Kg1) 8.Kg3 Rb2 9.Ra1!
 (9.Rg1? Ng6 10.Rxg2 Rb3+! 11.Kh2 Re3=) 9...Ra2 10.Rg1 Ng6 11.Rxg2 Ra6 12.Rd2!+–
6.Kxg1 Nf3+ 7.Kh1! 7.Kf1? Nxe5 8.Rb8+?! Kxb8 9.e7 Rf4+ 10.Kg2 (10.Ke2 Re4+)
 10...Rxg4+ 11.Kh3 Rg8–+7...Nxe5 **8.Rb8+!** 8.e7? Kd7=

5th honor mention (43) - Vladislav Tarasiuk

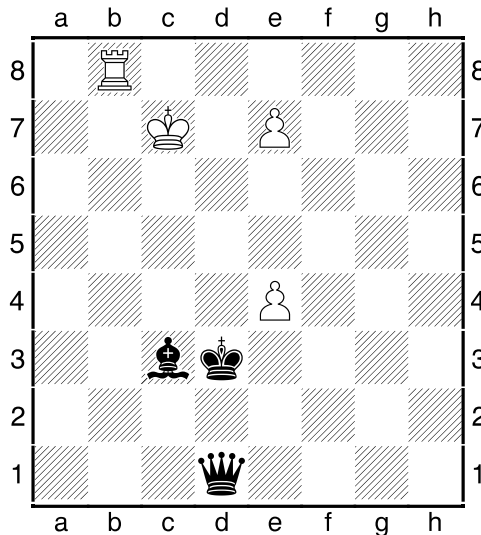


(5+4) White to play and win

8...Kxb8 9.e7 Ra1+ 10.Kg2 Ra2+ 11.Kf1! 11.Kh3? Rh2+! 12.Kxh2 Nxb4+ 13.Kg3 Nf6=;
 11.Kg3 Ra3+ 12.Kg2 waste of time
11...Ra1+! 11...Rf2+?! 12.Kg1!+- **12.Ke2 Ra2+ 13.Kd1 Ra1+ 13...Rd2+?! 14.Kc1!+-**
14.Kc2 Ra2+ 15.Kb1! 15.Kb3? Ra3+! 16.Kb4 Nc6+ 17.Kxa3 Nxe7=
15...Rb2+! **16.Ka1!** 16.Kc1? Nd3+ 17.Kd1 Rb1+ 18.Kd2 Re1-+; 16.Kxb2? Nc4+ 17.Kc3
 Nd6= **16...Kc7 17.e8Q 1-0**

An excellent and neat demonstration of the known theme of corner-to-corner journey: to promote the e-pawn the white king must visit both h1 and a1.

6th honor mention (6) - Daniele Gatti & Mario Micaloni

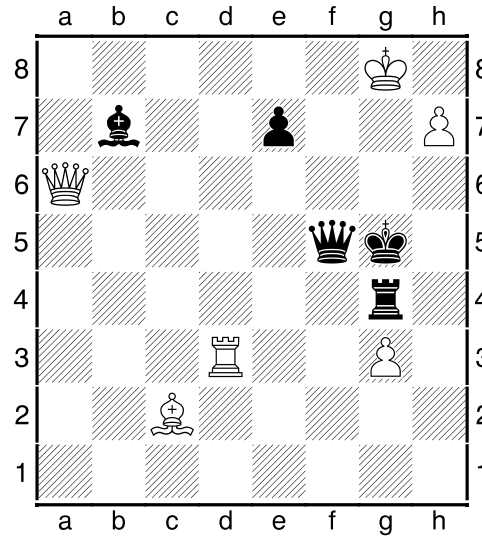


(4+3) White to play and win

1.e8Q 1.Rd8+? Bd4= 1...Qa1 2.Qb5+ Kxe4 3.Kc6! a quiet move; 3.Re8+? Be5+!
3...Ke3 3...Be5 4.Qd5+! Kf5 5.Qf7+! Ke4 6.Rb4+! Ke3 7.Qc4! Kd2 8.Qd5+! Kc1 9.Kb7!
 another quiet, decisive move
4.Re8+ Kf4 5.Rf8+ 5.Qc4+? Kg5! 6.Rg8+ Bg7!
5...Bf6 6.Qf1+! Kg5 6...Qxf1 7.Rxf6+ Ke3 8.Rxf1 7.Rg8+ Bg7 7...Kh6 8.Qh3+ Bh4 9.Qxh4#
8.Qxa1 1-0

There are several studies with this material, which contain quite moves, e.g. Arestov 2020 and Becker 2017; but this one has a certain degree of originality and charm: 6.Qf1+! and later dragging the BB to be pinned, so the black queen can be captured.

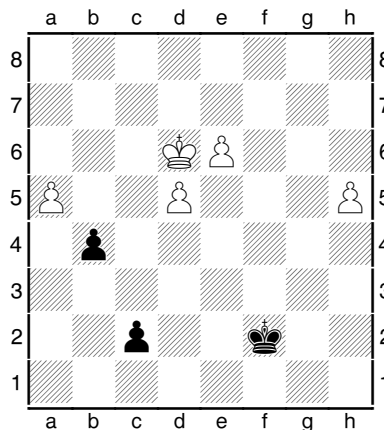
7th honor mention (3) - Martin Minski



(6+5) White to play and draw

1.Rd4! 1.h8Q? Bxa6 2.Rc3 (2.Qg7+ Kh5+-) 2...Bc4+ 3.Rxc4 Qd5+ 4.Kg7 Qe5+ 5.Kh7 Qxh8+ 6.Kxh8 Rxc4+-; 1.Rd8? Kh5+-+ 1...Bd5+ 1...Bxa6 2.Bxf5=; 1...Kh5+? 2.Rxg4+-
2.Rxd5 Kh5+ 3.Kh8 Qxd5 4.Bg6+! Rxg6 4...Kh6 5.Bf5+ e6 6.Qxe6+ Qxe6 7.Bxe6=
5.Qe2+ Kh6 5...Rg4 6.Qh2+ Kg6 7.Qh6+! Kxh6 stalemate; 5...Kg5 6.Qxe7+ Rf6 7.Kg7=
6.Qh2+ Qh5 6...Kg5 7.Qh4+ Kf5 8.Qh5+ Rg5 9.g4+= with a subsequent Q-sacrifice to enforce stalemate
7.g4!! 7.Qxh5+? Kxh5 8.g4+ Kh4!-+; 7.Qd2+? Rg5 8.g4 Qe8#
7...Qxh2 8.g5+ and stalemate. **1/2**
Play is forced but pleasant, culminating with the nice shot 8.g4!!

8th honor mention (34) - Beat Neuenschwander

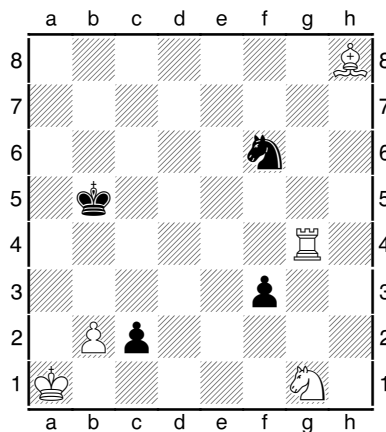


(5+3) White to play and win

1.e7 b3! Delayed queening is the most dangerous; 1...c1Q 2.e8Q poses White no problems
2.h6! 2nd delayed queening. 2.e8Q? b2 white is lost with his temporary extra queen 3.Qf7+ Ke1!
 4.Qe6+ Kd2! 5.a6 (5.Qh6+ Kd1+-) 5...b1Q! (5...c1Q? 6.a7 b1Q 7.a8Q=) 6.a7 Qb6+-+

2...c1Q 2...b2 3.h7! b1Q 4.h8Q Qb4+ (4...c1Q 5.Qd4+= (5.e8Q? Qb4+--+) 5.Kd7 Qb5+
 6.Kd6 c1Q 7.Qh2+ Kf3 8.Qh3+ Ke4 9.Qe6+ Kd4 10.Qe5+ Kd3 11.Qf5+ Kc3 12.Qc8+ Kb2
 13.Qxc1+ Kxc1 14.Ke6=
3.e8Q Qf4+ 3...b2 4.Qf7+! Ke1 5.h7 b1Q 6.h8Q=; 3...Qxh6+ 4.Qe6! Qf4+ 5.Kd7!=
4.Kd7! 4.Kc5? b2 4...Qa4+ **5.Ke7** (5.Kd8)
5...Qxe8+ 6.Kxe8 b2 7.d6! 3rd delayed queening; 7.h7? b1Q 8.h8Q Qb8+--+
 7...b1Q 8.d7 Qg6+ **9.Ke7** 9.Kd8? Qxh6 10.Kc7 Qf4+--+
9...Qg5+ 10.Ke8 Qe5+ 11.Kd8! 11.Kf7? Qd6 12.Ke8 Qe6+--+
11...Qxa5+ 12.Ke7 (12.Ke8) **12...Qe5+ 13.Kf7** 13.Kf8? Qf6+--+
13...Qd6 14.h7! Qxd7+ 15.Kg8 1/2
the repeated delayed promotion to a queen, by both black and white, is intriguing.

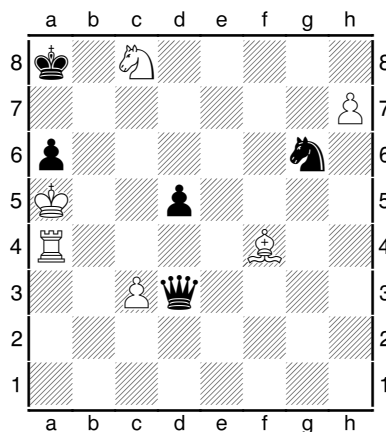
9th honor mention (19) - Yochanan Afek



(5+4) White to play and draw

1.Rg5+ 1.Bxf6? f2--+; 1.Ne2? Nxc4 2.Nd4+ Kc4 3.Nxc2 f2--+ **1...Nd5!** best
2.Ne2! 2.Rxd5+? Kc6! 3.Nxf3 c1Q+ 4.Ka2 Qc4+! (4...Kxd5 5.Bc3=) 5.Ka3 Qxd5--+
 (5...Kxd5? 6.Bc3! fortress)
2...fxe2 3.Rg1 Ne3! 4.Rc1 e1Q! 5.Rxe1 Nd1 6.Re5+ Kb4 7.Rc5! Echo try: 7.Re4+? Kb3!
 8.Rc4!? Kxc4 9.b3+ Kd3! (But not 9...Kxb3 10.Bb2!)=) 10.Bb2 Nxb2 11.Kxb2 Kd2--+
7...Kxc5 8.b4+ Kxb4 9.Bb2= 1/2
The elements are known, yet the play as a whole is aesthetic.

10th honor mention (27) - Yecheil Robinson

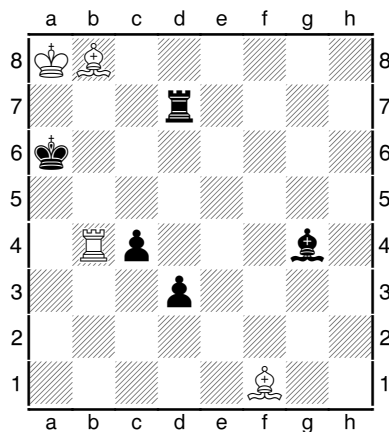


(6+5) White to play and win

1.Rc4! 1.Rb4? Qxc3! 2.Nb6+ Ka7 3.Bb8+ Kxb8 4.Nxd5+ Qxb4+ 5.Kxb4 Nh8=
1...dxc4 2.Kxa6 Qd8 3.Nb6+ Qxb6+ 4.Kxb6 Nf8 5.h8N! 5.h8Q? stalemate; 5.h8B? allows several paths to a draw, for example: 5...Ng6 6.Bg3 Nf4 7.Kb5 Ne2 8.Bge5 Nxc3+ 9.Bxc3; 5.Bd6 or Bg5 5...Nxb7 6.Be7 achieves domination of the knight, but it takes too long for White to walk his king across the board to capture it, for example: 6...Kb8 7.Kc6 Ka7! 8.Kd5 Kb6 9.Ke6 Kb5 10.Kf7 Ka4 11.Kg6 Kb3 12.Bb4 Nf8+!= and White must either give up his only pawn or allow the Black knight to escape.
5...Ng6 6.Bg3! Nxb7 7.Kc7 Nf7 8.Bf4 Nh8 8...Ka7 9.Kd7!+-
9.Kd7 Or 9.Kd6
9...Kb7 10.Ke6 Ng6 11.Bg3 Nf8+ 12.Ke7 Nh7 13.Bh4! 13.Bf4 also dominates the knight, but Black can walk his king to attack the bishop, costing White a crucial tempo: 13...Kc6 14.Kf7 Kd5 15.Kg7 Ke4 16.Bd2 Kd3=
13...Kc6 14.Kf7 Kd5 15.Kg7 Ke4 16.Kxh7 Kd3 17.Bf6 1-0

I find the first four moves redundant; the sequence 5.h8=N Ng6 is known from Matous (1985) and Vlasenko (1985) but here the author took a fresh direction - not a chase for stalemate but an accurate path to isolate the black knight and capture it.

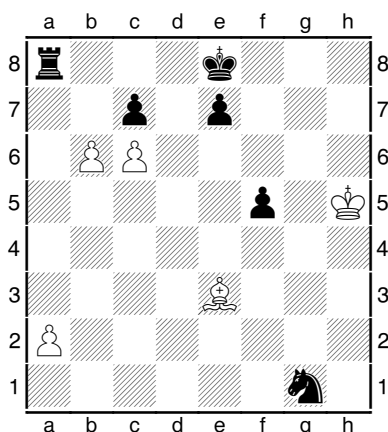
11th honor mention (9) - Steffen Nielsen



(4+5) White to play and draw

1.Bc7! 1.Bg2? e.g. 1...d2-+; 1.Bg3?? Rd8+ 2.Bb8 Bf3+-+
1...Rxc7 1...d2?? 2.Bxc4#
2.Rxc4 Ra7+ 2...Rxc4 3.Bxd3=; 2...Bf3+ 3.Kb8 Rb7+ 4.Kc8=
3.Kb8 Rb7+ 4.Ka8 Bf3 4...Be2 5.Ra4+! (5.Bxe2? dxe2 6.Re4 Rb2-+) 5...Kb5 6.Bxe2 dxe2 7.Re4=
5.Bxd3 5.Ra4+? Kb5 6.Ra1 e.g. 6...Kc5-+
5...Rb4+ 5...Re7+ 6.Kb8=; 5...Rb3+ 6.Be4= (6.Rc6+=); 5...Rd7+ 6.Kb8=
6.Rc6+! Ka5 7.Be4! Rxe4!? 7...Bxe4 8.Ka7 Bxc6= Stalemate
8.Kb8! 8.Rc7? Re8+ 9.Ka7 Ra8# (9...Kb5-+); 8.Rc8?-+ e.g. 8...Kb6; 8.Ka7? Re7+
8...Rb4+ or 8...Re8+ 9.Rc8=
9.Ka7 Bxc6= Stalemate 1/2
Simple, yet attractive.

12th honor mention (16) - Yehuda Hoch

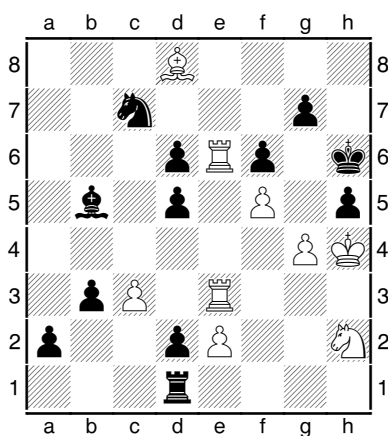


(5+6) White to play and win

- 1.b7** 1.bxc7? Ne2; 1.Bxg1? cxb6
1...Rb8 1...Rd8 2.Bxg1 Kf7 3.Bb6! (3.Bh2 Kf6 4.Kh4 e5 5.a4 Ke6 6.a5 Kd6 7.a6 Kxc6=; 3.Ba7 Ke6 4.b8Q Rxb8 5.Bxb8 Kd6=) 3...Kf6 threatens mate 4.Kh4 Rh8+ 5.Kg3 Ke6 6.Bxc7 Kd5 7.Bd8! Rxd8 8.c7+–
2.Ba7! 2.Bxg1? Kf7 3.Bb6 (3.Ba7 Rh8+ 4.Kg5 Ke6) 3...Ke6 4.Bxc7 Kd5 5.Bxb8 Kxc6= 2...Nf3 2...Rd8 3.Bxg1 wins as before
3.Bxb8 Ne5 4.Ba7! minor dual. white can change order of moves 4,5; 4.Bxc7 Nxc6 5.a4 Kd7 6.Bf4 Nb8 7.Bxb8 Kc6= 4...Nxc6 5.a4 Kd7 5...f4 6.Kg4+– **6.a5 Nb8!** 6...f4 7.a6 f3 8.Bf2+–
7.Bxb8 Kc6 8.a6 Kb6 9.Ba7+! 9.Bxc7+? Kxc7 10.Kg5 e6 11.Kf4 Kb8 12.Ke5 Kc7 mutual zugzwang 13.Kf4 Kb8= 9...Kxa7 **10.Kg5 c5** 10...e6 11.Kf4 c5 12.Ke5 c4 13.Kd6 c3 14.Kc7+–
11.Kxf5 c4 12.Kf4! 12.Ke4 e5 mutual zugzwang 13.Ke3 Kb8 14.Ke4 Kc7= 12...e6 **13.Ke3** [(f3) (13.Ke4? e5= 13...e5 14.Ke4 Kb8 15.Kd5 c3 16.Kc6 c2 17.Kb6 c1Q 18.a7# 1–0

The tactics in the side-variation 1...Rd8 are known; the difference between 9. B:c7+ and 9. Ba7+ is nice. Surprisingly, it is the non-capture which brings a winning ending for white.

13th honor mention (30) - Jan Timman

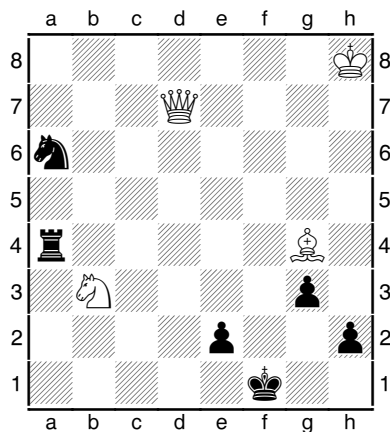


(9+12) White to play and win

- 1.g5+ Kh7 2.g6+ Kh6 3.Re8!** The play for mate starts 3.Bxf6 Rg1! 4.Bxg7+ Kxg7 5.Re7+ Kg8 6.Rxc7 d1Q= (6...a1Q=)

3...Nxe8 3...Bxe8 4.Rxe8 Nxe8 5.Bb6+–
4.Ng4+! to restrict the scope of Black's rook and bishop **4.Rh3? Rg1–+ (4...Bxe2–+)** ; **4.Rxe8? Bxe8 5.Bb6 Bxg6–+**
4...hxg4 5.Rh3! Rg1! Restricting White's king. **5...gxh3 6.Bb6+–**
6.Bb6 d4! **6...d1N 7.Bxg1 gxh3 8.Bh2+–;** **6...Rg3 7.Rxg3 d1N 8.c4 d4 (8...a1Q 9.Kxg4+–)**
9.Ba5! a1Q 10.Bd2+ Ne3 11.Rxe3+–
7.Bxd4 Rg3! 8.Rxg3 d1N 9.Rg1 9.c4 Bxc4 10.Re3 Nc7 (or 10...Bb5=)
9...a1N! A second knight promotion to fight for square e3.
10.Rxd1 Nc2 11.Bf2! **11.Bg1 Nc7 12.c4 Bxc4 13.Rxd6 Ne6 14.Rxe6? Bxe6 15.e4 g3–+**
11...Nc7 12.c4! A pawn sacrifice to force Black's bishop into a less favorable square. **12.Rxd6 Be8! 13.Kxg4 Bxg6 14.fxg6 Na3! 15.Rb6 Nab5 16.Be3+ Kxg6 17.Bc1 Nxc3=; 12.Bg3 Ne6! 13.fxe6 Kxg6=**
12...Bxc4 13.Rxd6 Ne6! 14.Rxe6! 14.fxe6 b2 15.Rb6 Bxe6 16.Rxb2 Na3=
14...Bxe6 15.e4! Keeps the mating threat of the White bishop.
15...Bf7 15...b2 16.Bg3+–
16.gxf7 b2 17.f8Q b1Q 17...Kh7 18.Qb8+– 18.Qh8# 1–0
tactical fight from beginning to end, lots of sacrifices, minor promotions, but the overall feeling is of too much noise and turmoil, over-complexity in a structure which resembles an opening more than an endgame.

1st com. (29) - Jan Timman



(4+6) White to play and win

1.Bh3+! The right order of moves: **1.Nd2+ Ke1! 2.Nf3+ Kf1 3.Bh3+ (3.Nxh2+ gxh2 4.Bxe2+ Kxe2=)** **3...Kf2! 4.Qxa4 h1Q 5.Qd4+ Kxf3 6.Qd5+ Kf2=; 1.Qf5+? Kgl 2.Qb1+ Kg2–+**
1...g2 1...Ke1 2.Qd2+ Kf2 3.Nd4! h1Q 4.Qf4+ Ke1 5.Qc1+ Kf2 6.Qxh1 Rxd4 7.Qg2+ Ke3 8.Qg1+! (8.Qxg3+? Kd2=) **8...Kd3 9.Bf5+–;** **1...Kf2 2.Qf7+ Ke3 3.Qe6+ Kf2 4.Qf6+ Ke3 (4...Ke1 5.Bg2+–) 5.Qb6+– (5.Bg2+–)**
2.Nd2+ 2.Qf7+ Ke1! 3.Bxg2 Rh4+ 4.Kg7 Rg4+–
2...Kg1 2...Ke1 3.Bxg2 Nc5 (3...Rh4+ 4.Kg8! (4.Kg7? Nc5 5.Nf3+ Kf2 6.Qf5 Rf4!)=) 4...Nc5 5.Nf3+ Kf2 6.Qf5!+–) 4.Nf3+ Kf2 5.Qh3!+–
3.Qa7+ Forcing the Black king to the corner.
3...Nc5! A knight sacrifice to ensure that Black's rook has the a8 square.
4.Qxc5+ Kh1 5.Qf2! Try: **5.Qg5? e1N! 6.Bxg2+ Nxg2 7.Nf3 Rf4= (7...Rh4+)=** ; **5.Ne4 Rxe4 6.Qf2 Re8+ 7.Kh7 Re7+ 8.Kh6 Rg7!–**
5...Ra8+ 6.Kh7 Ra7+ 7.Kh6! **7.Qxa7? e1Q=**
7...Ra6+ 8.Kh5 The White king has to stay on the h-file.
8...Ra5+ 9.Kh4 Ra4+ 10.Kg3 Ra3+ [10...Rg4+ 11.Kxg4 g1Q+ 12.Kf3 Qxf2+ 13.Kxf2 e1Q+ 14.Kxe1 Kg1 15.Nf3+––]

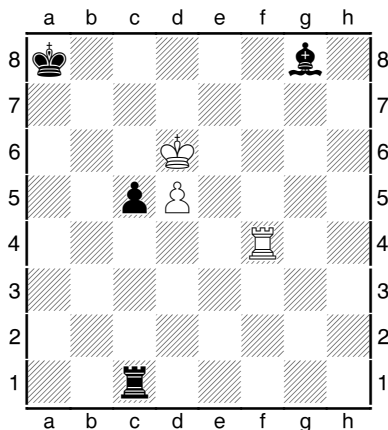
11.Nf3 Rxf3+ 12.Kxf3 e1N+! Playing for stalemate.

13.Ke2! 13.Qxe1+? g1N+!= (13...g1Q 14.Bg2#)

13...g1Q 14.Qf1! Qxf1+ 15.Kxf1 Nc2 16.Bg2# 1-0

Clever defence by black and amusing position after 14.Qf1! with reciprocal zugzwang

2nd com. (5) - Michail Croitor



(3+4) White to play and win

1.Kc7! checkmate threat; 1.Rf8+? Kb7 2.Rxg8 c4=

1...c4 1...Ra1 2.Rf8+ Ka7 3.Rxg8+-

2.d6 Bh7 2...Rb1 3.Rf8+ Ka7 4.Rxg8 Rb7+ 5.Kc6+-; 2...Be6 3.Re4 (3.Rf6) 3...Bh3 4.Re3+-

3.Rd4! Supports pawn

3...Rb1 3...Bf5 4.Rd5+- (4.Rf4)

4.d7 Rb7+ 5.Kc6 Rb8 5...Rxd7 6.Rxd7 Bf5 (6...Be4+ 7.Kb6+-) 7.Rf7 Be4+ 8.Kb6

6.d8Q 6.Rxc4? Rd8 7.Kc7 Rxd7+ 8.Kxd7 Kb7! 9.Rb4+ Ka6=

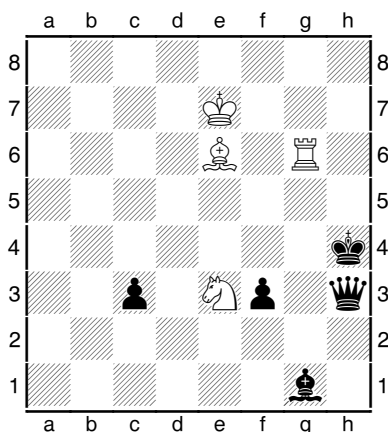
6...Be4+! 6...Rxd8 7.Rxd8+ Ka7 8.Rd7+

7.Kc7! Rxd8 8.Rxc4! Bd3 8...Rc8+ 9.Kxc8 Bf5+ 10.Kc7+-

9.Ra4+ 1-0

On his 8th move white may choose to capture a black rook or a bishop, but he opts for a third option, the only way to win.

3rd com. (37) - Yuri Bazlov



(4+5) White to play and win

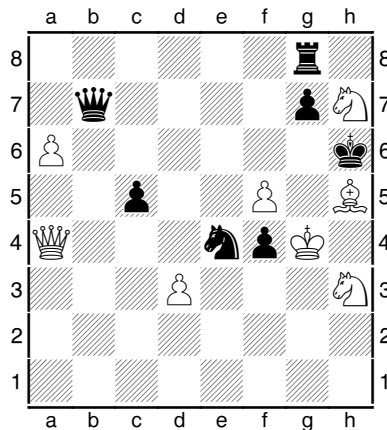
1.Nf5+ 1.Bxh3 Bxe3 2.Bf5 f2=; 1.Rh6+ Kg5 2.Rxh3 Bxe3 3.Rg3+ (3.Bb3 f2 4.Rh1 Kf4)

3...Kf4 4.Rg4+ Ke5 5.Rc4 Bd4=

1...Kh5 1...Qxf5 2.Bxf5 f2 3.Rg4+ Kh5 4.Rf4 Kg5 5.Rf3+-
2.Rg7! 2.Rh6+ Kg5 3.Rxh3 Bc5+ 4.Kd7 c2 5.Rh1 Ba3=; 2.Rxg1 Qg2!-+
2...Bc5+ 2...Qxf5 3.Bxf5 f2 4.Kf6 Kh4 5.Rg4+ Kh5 6.Rf4
3.Ke8 Qxf5 4.Bxf5 f2 5.Bd3 f1Q 5...c2 6.Rh7+ Kg4 7.Rh1
6.Bxf1 c2! 7.Be2+ Kh6 8.Kf7! c1Q 9.Rg6+ Kh7 10.Bd3! Qa3 10...Qe3
11.Rd6+ Qxd3 12.Rxd3 Kh6 13.Kf6 Kh7 14.Rd7+! Kh6 14...Kg8 15.Rf7+-
15.Rd1 or 15.Rd2
15...Kh7 16.Rd3! Bb4 16...Bb6 17.Kf7
17.Rg3! Bd2 18.Rg6! Bc3+ 19.Kf7 1-0

White refrains twice from capturing a black queen and does it only after a prolonged battle. the move 10. Bd3! resembles Hoch (1975) and Topko (1999). the concluding moves are technical.

4th com. (42) - Alexey Gasparyan



(8+7) Black to play, white wins

1...Nf6+ 2.Kh4 2.Nxf6? Qg2+
2...Qh1 3.Qxf4+ Kxh7 4.Qf1 4.Bf3? Qe1+
4...Qh2 4...Qxf1 5.Ng5+ Kh8 6.Nf7+ Kh7 7.Bg6#
5.Qe2 Qh1 6.Qd1 Qh2 7.Qc2 Qh1 8.Qb1 Qh2 9.Qb2 Qh1 10.Qa1 Qh2 11.Qe5! Qh1
12.Bf3 1-0

An amusing zig-zag maneuver of the white queen to deflect its black colleague.