GRANDMASTER SECRETS ENDINGS

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ENDGAME

ANDREW SOLTIS

GRANDMASTER SECRETS ENDINGS

BY

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Caricatures by Rob Long

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Preface

A lot of readers are under the mistaken impression that authors write chess books in one fluid motion, moving from an idea to an outline to a completed manuscript without interruption. No way–as the history of this book shows.

My original idea for it had been lurking around, undisturbed, in the back of my mind since the Ford Administration: I wondered if you could write a book teaching the endgame by means of a *Socratic dialogue.*

I visualized a conversation, punctuated by diagrams and simple analysis. It was going to be a master talking at length with a young player who already knew all the Trends In The Whatsisname Attack and who could improvise through most middlegames–but who suddenly collapsed in the endgame.

My idea was that by means of Q&A the master and this endgame-challenged amateur could arrive at certain eternal truths about endings and understand *why* they are true. I knew from enough Class B players that they had heard about zugzwang or triangulation or the checking distance of a Rook yet didn't appreciate how or why these things could work in their own games.

But the idea was difficult to flesh out. After all, a lot of smart people have been trying to capture the essence of Socratic dialogue since 399 B.C. without success. I eventually realized this project could turn out to be very wordy, very

philosophic–and not very useful to someone trying to figure out why a Lucena position is not a Philidor position. Like a lot of my ideas, this one remained as a bunch of scribbled notes on yellow legal-sized pads at the back of a very deep file cabinet for more than 15 years.

In the spring of 1993 I was in between books when I exchanged thoughts with Bob Long about our next project. A really honest, down-to-earth book on the endgame would be worthwhile, I wrote Bob, because "most people are bewildered by trying to figure out what they really need to know."

The problem with endgame books, Bob wrote in reply, is that they're usually "terribly designed and poorly written." The information presented is often arcane, the type too small, the wording confusing, the paragraphs too long, the book just ugly. He wondered if I had any idea for a format that would both entertain and teach and yet say something about endings that hadn't been said before.

And so Noah and Pat were born. (The names of the two characters came from my wife Marcy. Blame her.) I revived the idea of a dialogue but, since Pat was your typical '90s junior, it was going to be a conversation with an attitude. Bob and I worked up a plan for separating the analysis from the talk, for using a lot of quote boxes and visual aids, and the rest fell into place. And the title? Well, let's say there were several names on this book before we settled on this one.

Andy Soltis
New York • 1997

Chapter One

What Every Grandmaster Knows About the Endgame...

Scene:
A chess club, the home base of the veteran grandmaster, Noah Tall.

•

Enter Pat Sayre, a talented, but young club amateur. Sayre has just finished a game as White which began:

---

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. f4 e6 7. ♗d3 ♗e7 8. ♕f3 ♘c6 9. ♘xc6 bxc6 10. b3 e5 11. f5 d5 12. ♗b2 g6 13. exd5 cxd5 14. 0-0-0 0-0 15. ♖he1 ♕d6 16. ♘xd5!? ♕xd5 17. ♗e4 ♕c5 18. ♗xa8 ♗xf5 19. ♕c6 ♕f2 20. ♖xe5! ♖c8 21. ♕xc8† ♗xc8 22. ♖xe7 ♗f5 23. ♗e4! ♕e3† 24. ♔b1 ♕e2 25. ♗xf6! ♕xd1† 26. ♔b2 ♗d7 27. ♗d3 ♕g4 28. ♗c4 ♕f5 29. ♗c3 ♗b5 30. ♖xf7 ♕xf7 31. ♗xf7† ♔xf7

Pat: Darn!

Noah: You lost again?

Pat: And from a dead-won game! I should have gotten at least a draw. Let me show you on a board.

Noah: Don't be so hard on yourself.

Pat: Why not? I must be the only idiot in the world who can lose such a position.

Noah: At least you played the middlegame well.

Pat: Well? I was crushing him! A ♕ sac even.

But then something happened after I got his ♕ back. I don't know what my blunder was.

Noah: It wasn't just a blunder. It took many bad moves to lose the win before you lost the draw:

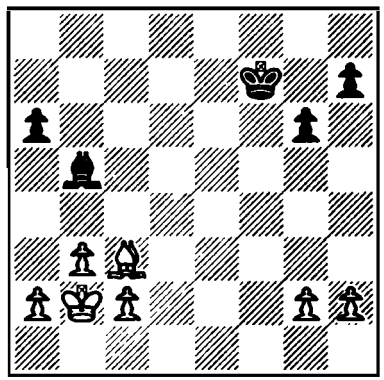
You put your pawns on the wrong color.

You dilly-dallied with your ♔.

You left your ♗ passive.

Pat: And the worst part is I know I'll never get any better. I just **hate** endgames.

Noah: Relax. You're no different from anybody else. All amateurs loathe when the ♕s go off.



1

32. b4?

With 32. ♗d2 and 33. c4 White should win swiftly.

32. . . .	**♗c4**
33. a3?	**♔e6**
34. ♔c1?!	

Loses time compared with ♗g7 and ♔c3.

34. . . .	**♗d5**
35. g3	**♔f5**
36. ♔d2	**♔g4**
37. ♔e3	**♔h3**
38. ♔d4?	

With 38. ♗e5 White is still better.

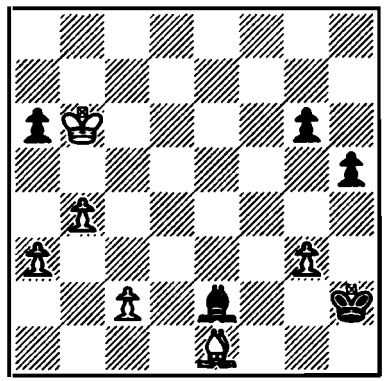
38. . . .	**♗f3**
39. ♔c5	**♔xh2**
40. ♗e1?	

The ♗ still belonged on e5.

40. . . .	**h5**
41. ♔b6	

Here 41. c4 was called for.

41. . . .	**♗e2**

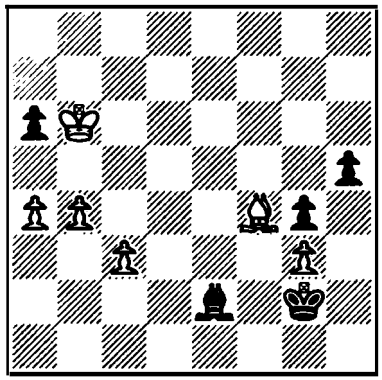


2

42. c3?

To avoid the 42. a4 ♗d1 skewer, but then 43. ♔xa6 ♗xc2 44. a5 might still have won.

42. . . .	**g5**
43. ♗d2	**g4**
44. a4?	**♔g2**
45. ♗f4	



3

45.	**...**	**♔f3**
46.	**b5?**	**axb5**
47.	**axb5**	**h4!**
48.	**♔c5**	**h3**
	Resigns	

The h-♙ promotes in two moves.

Pat: It's not that I'm so great in the middlegame. But there's just so much you need to know about the ending.

Noah: Not that you need to know. Don't believe everything you read in books like Reuben Fine's *Basic Chess Endings*. Seventy percent of the information in them is *impractical*.

Pat: I thought I was the only one who found Fine impossible to read. But what do you mean by "impractical?"

Noah: I mean most of what he covers will never occur in your games.

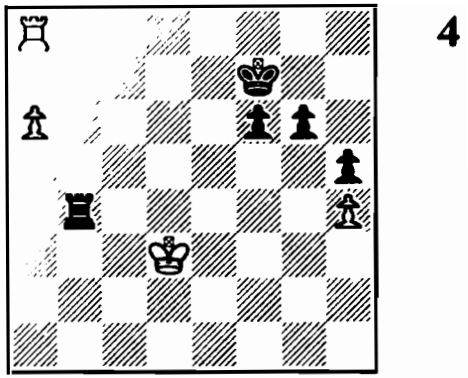
It's nice to master the theory of corresponding squares or be able to play ♔+♖+♗ v. ♔+♖ flawlessly. But the times when you can *use* that knowledge are so extremely rare you don't need to know it.

Pat: So what do I really need to know?

Noah: You can put everything you must absolutely know on a fairly short list. Basically, you need to know what it takes to win.

The Estimated Odds of Your:

Ever Going Bald (if male) ..... 1 in 2.5
Ever Dying of a Heart Attack ..... 1 in 5
Ever Playing ♖+♗+♔ vs. ♖+♔ ..... 1 in 40
Being Robbed This Year ..... 1 in 500
Playing Out ♔+♗+♘ vs. ♔ This Year ..... 1 in 3,000
Being Diagnosed with Lung Cancer This Year ..... 1 in 7,500
Playing ♕+♘-♙+♔ vs. ♕+♔ This Year ..... 1 in 8,000
Being Murdered This Year ..... 1 in 12,000



4

Ambrosz-Ciocaltea
Baile Herculane 1982
White to Play

1. a7!

This should end matters quickly (1... ♖a4 2. ♖h8! ♖a3† 3. ♔c4 ♖a4† 4. ♔b3 ♖xa7 5. ♖h7† ♔e6 6. ♖xa7).

1. . . .	**♖xh4**
2. ♖f8†	**♔xf8**
3. a8=♕†	**♔e7**
4. ♕b7†	**Drawn**

After Black puts his ♖ at some safe square (g4, e5, f5) his fortress is impregnable.

But with 2. ♖h8! White would emerge a clear ♖ ahead and win without much effort.

For example, 2... ♖h3† 3. ♔d4 ♖h4† 4. ♔d5 ♖a4 5. a8=♕ ♖xa8 6. ♖xa8 g5 7. ♔e4 ♔g6 8. ♖a6 and Black runs into zugzwang (8... g4? 9. ♔f4 or 8... h4 9. ♔f3 ♔f5 10. ♖a5† and 11. ♔g4).

Pat: You mean like that you can mate with ♔+2♗ v. ♔ but not with ♔+2♘? Even I know that sort of stuff.

Noah: Perhaps. But you'd be surprised how even veterans of international play err badly.

Here's a case in point (Diag. 4). White has a choice between having an extra ♖ or having his ♔+♕ v. ♔+♖. He makes a disastrous choice.

Pat: I don't get it. The difference between ♕ vs. ♖ and ♖ vs. Nothing is about the same.

So why did Black draw?

Noah: In a middlegame the differences are about the same. But in an ending with none of your own ♙s left, ♕ vs. ♖ can turn out to be just 1 piece vs. 1 piece.

Pat: So what does it take to win?

Noah: In most cases, you need to be able to queen a ♙.

Pat: Speak for yourself. I usually need an extra ♖ or two.

Noah: Well, you do usually need to be a ♖ ahead to win if you have no pawns.

But 99% of all endgames will have pawns. If you can promote one, you'll probably win.

Pat: How does it help to know that?

Noah: As with most rules, this one is most helpful when making *transitions,* that is, when changing the nature of the struggle.

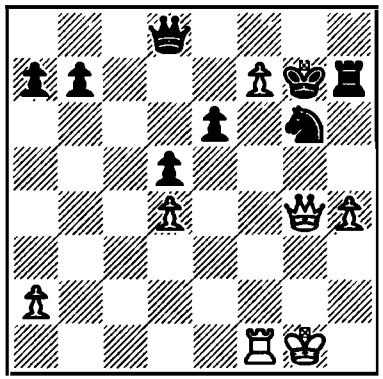
Pat: Like trading ♕s?

Noah: Yes, trading anything is a transition.

In Diagram 5 you see a strong GM throw away his last chance to advance in the candidates' matches by forcing an endgame that wasn't *nearly* as favorable as the middlegame he was in.

Pat: Because he didn't know what it takes to win?

Noah: Because he went with the instinct that told him that if you capture the other guy's ♕, there is no endgame. Instincts are dangerous to have in the endgame.



5

Sax-Korchnoi
Candidates match playoff 1991
White to Play

1. f8=♕†

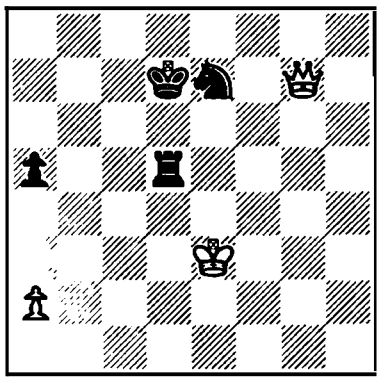
Much stronger is 1. h5!, which probably would have caused immediate resignation.

1. . . . ♕xf8
2. ♖xf8 ♔xf8
3. ♕xe6

Of course, 3. ♕xg6?? ♖g7 loses.

3. . . . ♘xh4

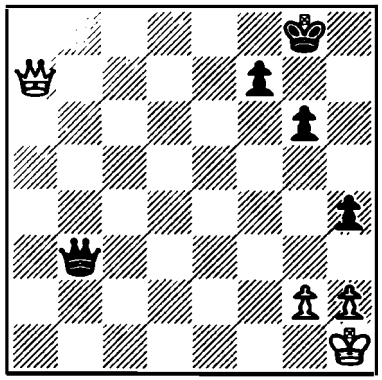
White can only try to win now by grabbing ♙s and trying to promote his own a- or d-♙. Black set up an impregnable fortress (♘/e7, ♖/f5, ♔/d7):



6

After 28... a5.

White played another nine moves before conceding a draw.



7

Alburt-Kasparov
Daugavpils 1978
Black to play

1. . . .	**♕d1†**
2. ♔g1	**♕xg1†**
3. ♔xg1	**♔g7**
4. ♔f2	**♔f6**

Black secures the best ♔-position before he tries to create a passed ♙.

5. ♔e3	**♔e5**
6. ♔f3	**f5**
7. ♔e3	**g5**
8. h3	

Or 8. ♔f3 g4† 9. ♔e3 f4† 10. ♔e2 ♔e4 11. ♔f2 ♔d3! 12. ♔e1 ♔e3 13. ♔f1 g3! and wins quickly. For instance, 14. ♔g1 ♔e2 15. ♔h1 f3! 16. gxf3 ♔f2 and ...g2†.

8. . . .	**♔d5**
9. ♔d3	**♔c5**
10. ♔c3	**g4**

And Black won after 11. **♔d3 gxh3! 12. gxh3 ♔d5 13. ♔e3 ♔e5 14. ♔f3 f4! 15. ♔f2 ♔e4 16. ♔e2 f3† 17. ♔f1 ♔f5!** (See Diagram on next page.)

Pat: But don't I have to know a lot of basic positions to get good?

Noah: It helps–but it's far from essential.

The more basic positions you know, the more opportunities you have to make winning transitions. Take Diagram 7, for example.

Pat: Yuch. A ♕ ending. They are impossible.

Noah: Actually, ♕+♙ endings are among the *easiest* to play.

But the point here is that 15-year old Kasparov headed for the diagram–and violated a general principle–because he recognized the resulting ♔+♙ ending as won.

Pat: What general principle?

Noah: That you should avoid trading ♙s when you're ahead. And in particular you don't want to liquidate all the ♙s on one side of the board if you're only up one ♙ on the other.

Pat: Makes sense to me. But why did Kasparov do it?

Noah: Because he was Kasparov. And because as a schoolboy under Mikhail Botvinnik "I had to work fundamentally on ♔+♙ endings and knew this winning method."

But the point is: He might have won this ending without Botvinnik. Knowing the basic Diagram 8 position just saved him time and energy at the board.

"Don't you know this is a draw?"
–Pal Benko to Walter Browne during their game in the 1973 U.S. Championship.

Pat: Well, I don't have a world champion as a teacher. And I couldn't understand endgames if they provided *Cliff Notes.*

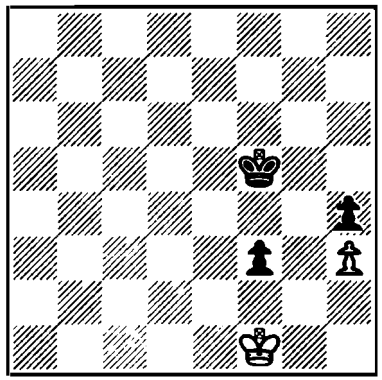
"I know it. But I don't believe it!"
–Browne, before eventually drawing on the 86th move.

Noah: You don't need them. What you need to do is take stock of what you know and don't know about the ending.

Pat: I don't know much at all. How much do I really need?

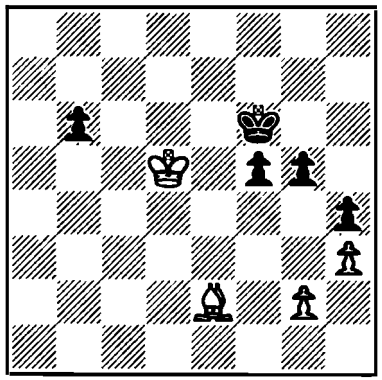
Noah: Well, the endgame books usually list a lot of "essential" stuff, such as when a ♕+♔ beats a ♔+♙ on the 7th rank, and when it results in stalemate.

And the notorious business about the ♖-♙ and wrong-colored ♗. It can't be denied that these positions do arise, and occasionally an alert defender can save himself, the way Black does in Diagram 9.



8

This position (Diagram 8) has been appearing in endgame texts for more than a century. Black wins because his ♔ decisively reaches g3 and wins the h-♙. For example, 18. ♔g1 ♔e5 19. ♔f1 ♔e4 20. ♔f2 ♔f4 (and 21... ♔g3) or 20. ♔g1 ♔e3 21. ♔f1 f2.



9

Shirov-Mascarinas
Manila 1990
Black to play

1. . . . b5!

Otherwise, Black dies the way most piece-down players do, from zugzwang (1... ♔g6 2. ♔e6 f4 3. ♔e5 ♔g7 4. ♔f5 etc.).

2. ♗xb5 g4
3. hxg4 ♔g5!!
Drawn

Because after 4. gxf5 h3! 5. gxh3 ♔xf5 the black ♔ reaches h8 and can't be driven out.

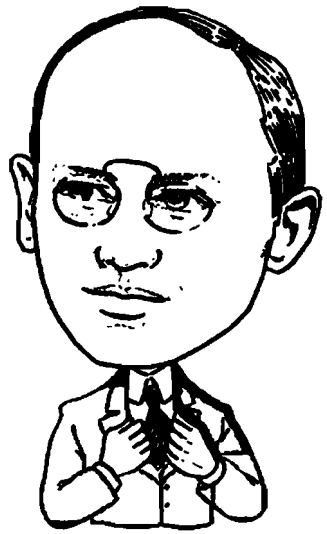
Pat: So this is stuff I really need?

Noah: Not at all. You can become a master by only knowing two basic positions, both of them occuring in ♔+♖+♗ v. ♔+♖.

Pat: Why those?

Noah: Because ♖+♗ endings are *so* common, and they end up so often in one of the two basic positions, **the** key ♖-endings are those with one ♗ and most of them end up either in the winning "Lucena" position or the drawing "Philidor" position.

With a little training you'll be able to visualize well in advance whether you're getting into Lucena or Philidor.



"Chess has three phases:
The first when one hopes one has an advantage;
The second when one believes one has an advantage;
And the third when one knows one is going to lose."
–Savielly Tartakower

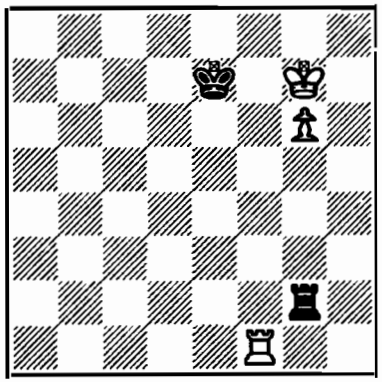
"Burn all the books! Chess shouldn't be a science."
–David Bronstein

Pat: There must have been a Lucena who discovered this.

Noah: A 15th century Spaniard, as a matter of fact. Actually this notorious position was discovered by someone else and it was named after him by mistake 400 years after he was dead. That's chess for you.

Pat: The problem for me is all these positions–Lucena, Philidor, whatever–look the same.

Lucena-type position



10

White to play

1. ♔h7! ♖h2†

Black has no other counterplay to prevent g7-g8=♕.

2. ♔g8! ♖g2

3. g7 ♖h2!

Otherwise 4. ♖h1, followed by 5. ♔h7 and the ♙ queens. For example, 3... ♖g3? 4. ♖h1 ♔f6 5. ♔h8 ♖xg7 6. ♖f1†! Kg6 7. ♖g1† and the ♖ falls.

This is the infamous "Lucena Position."

4. ♖e1† ♔d7

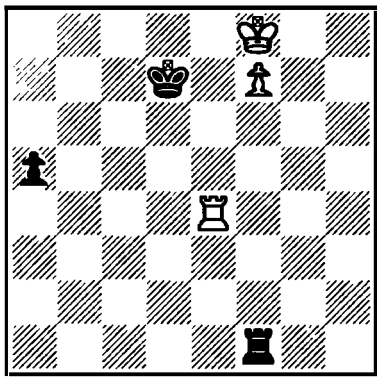
Black must prevent the ♔ from gaining a flight square (4... ♔f6? 5. ♔f8).

5. ♖e4!

And this builds the bridge which enables White's ♔ to escape.

For example, 5... ♖h1 6. ♔f7 ♖f1† 7. ♔g6 ♖g1† 8. ♔h6 (with a threat of ♖e5-g5) ♖h1† 9. ♔g5 ♖g1† 10. ♖g4 and queens.

"Chess isn't a science."
–Henri Poincaré



11

M. Gurevich-Rechlis
Tel Aviv 1989
White to play

1. ♖e5??

Of course, 1. ♖g4, threatening the unstoppable (1... ♔c6 2. ♖g5 a4 3. ♔g7) 2. ♔g8 and 3. f8=♕, would have forced resignation.

1. . . . a4
2. ♖a5 ♖a1??

And Black **resigned** when he saw 3. ♖a7† ♔d8 4. ♖a8† ♔d7 5. ♔g8 wins.

But 2... ♖f4! would have drawn (3. ♔g7 ♖g4† 4. ♔f6 ♖f4† 5. ♔g6 ♔e6) and bridge building with 5. ♖f5?? ♖xf5† 6. ♔xf5 ♔e7 would even have lost.

"Of my 57 years I have applied at least 30 to forgetting most of what I have learned or read."
–Emanuel Lasker

Noah: Once you learn the basic principles it should sink in. Then you just have to remain alert.

In Diagram 11 you have the embarrassing example of the world's 12th ranked player, at the time, becoming confused over Lucena.

If the a-♙ were off the board he would have seen the win and won the game instantly.

Pat: But aren't there dozens of other essential positions in the textbooks you need to know?

Noah: Only if you're a masochist.

The vast majority of material you find in those "Every Endgame Ever Played" tomes is useful the way the stuff in an almanac or library reference is.

Pat: How's that?

Noah: You open them up when you need to know, say, the average annual rainfall of Bolivia.

Pat: I thought the GMs knew it all by heart–even the rainfall.

Noah: Hardly. Once upon a time Salo Flohr–one of the finest endgame players of all time–was about to adjourn in a very favorable-looking position against the great José Capablanca.

"What are you thinking about? The position is drawn," Capa told his 26-year old opponent. "Look in the book!"

Flohr looked and looked and didn't see any draw for Black. So he got upset, sealed a ♔-move and rushed to his hotel room to analyze.

But he still couldn't find a draw. He later admitted he *would* have looked in "the book"–but he didn't have one with him.

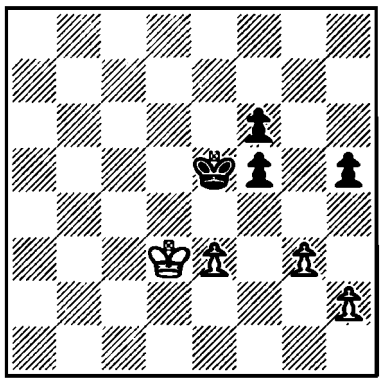
Pat: But that was in the old days, before databases and all the junk they have now.

Way back then there probably wasn't that much to learn about the endgame and none of the modern technology to study it.

Noah: Rubbish. There's always been too much to learn.

The point is you rarely get punished for not knowing some obscure "basic" position.

Here's something (Diagram 14) played by a modern world champion–who also asked his GM opponent: "Why are you continuing to play in this drawn position?"



12

Flohr-Capablanca
Moscow 1935
White to play

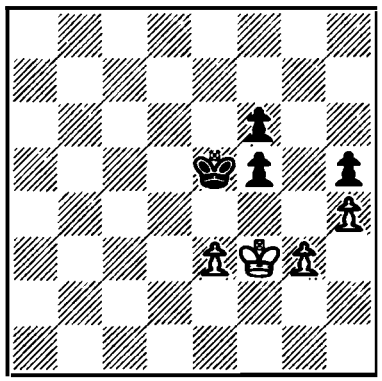
1. ♔e2 ♔e4!

Now 2. ♔f2 h4! 3. gxh4 f4 4. exf4 ♔xf4 will leave White with only the h-♙s–a draw even without the black f-♙.

2. h3 ♔d5!

White counted on 2... ♔e5?, which allows zugzwang after 3. ♔f3 ♔d5 4. ♔f4 ♔e6 5. h4!.

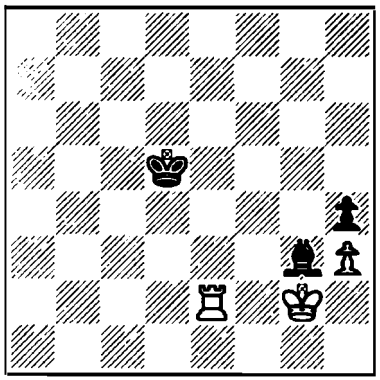
3. ♔f3 ♔e5
4. h4



13

4. . . . ♔d5
5. ♔f4 ♔e6
Drawn

White can make no progress, e.g., 6. e4 fxe4 7. ♔xe4 f5† 8. ♔f4 ♔f6.



14

Pinter-Kasparov
French League 1993
White to play

1.	♔f3	♔d6
2.	♔g4	♔d7
3.	♔f5	♔d6
4.	♖e8	♔d7
5.	♖e6	♔c7
6.	♔e4	♔d7
7.	♔d5	♔c7
8.	♖e7†	♔b6
9.	♖f7	♗h2
10.	♖f2	♗g3

And White struggled another 17 moves before agreeing to a draw.

Pat: Okay, so he knew it was drawn and White didn't. Does that mean I should just bring lots of reference works to every tournament?

Noah: No. Having the right book would only have saved White from having to adjourn.

Pat: You mean that aside from wasting your time–and your opponent's–it doesn't matter whether you know the position on the board is a win or a draw?

Noah: Most of the time? No.

Pat: But why?

Garry Kasparov

Noah: Because it doesn't tell you *how* to win it. Take Diagram 15.

The books will tell you it's a win with the black ♔/e7, but only a draw if it's on e6 or e5. That's the type of impractical information you find all the time in texts like Fine's and Paul Keres.' They give "basic" knowledge a bad name.

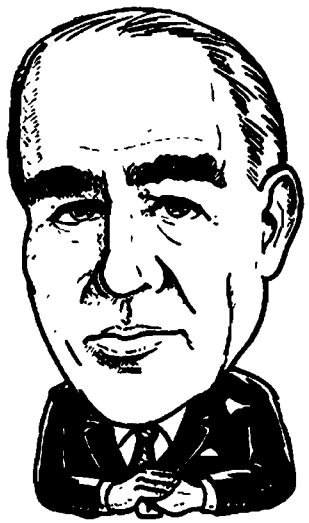
Pat: Wouldn't a GM know instantly whether it's a win or not?

Noah: Probably not. But that would not affect his life at all–unless he was hired as an adjudicator.

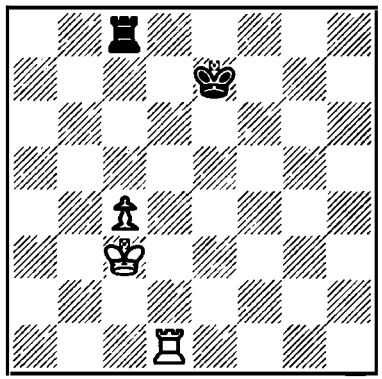
Pat: But why not?

Noah: A good practical player would figure out the only way to win is to advance the ♙. It won't take more than two minutes to realize the best try to do that is **1. ♔b4.** That's true *whether it's a win or a draw.*

Pat: But there must be times when you really need to know which it is?



"An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field."
–Niels Bohr



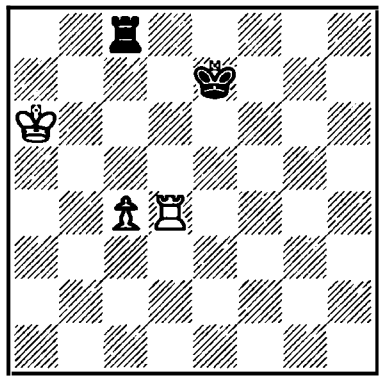
15

White to play

1. ♔b4

Not 1. ♖d4 because 1... ♖d8! 2. ♖xd8 (else the black ♔ gets to the c-file) ♔xd8 3. ♔b4 ♔c8! draws by using the opposition, discussed later in this book (4. ♔c5 ♔c7 5. ♔b5 ♔b7 6. c5 ♔c7 etc.).

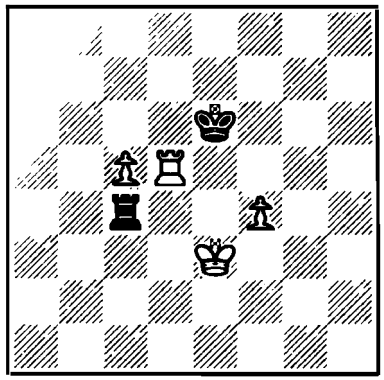
1. . .	**♖b8†**
2. ♔a5	**♖c8!**
3. ♔b5	**♖b8†**
4. ♔a6	**♖c8**
5. ♖d4!	



16

If the ♔ had been at e6 in the previous diagram, Black could now stop the plan with 5... ♔e5, forcing the ♖ to give up the file or the protection of the ♙.

But here the ♙ gets to the fifth rank (5... ♔e6 6. ♔b7 ♔e5? 7. ♖d5† or 6... ♖c5 7. ♔b6! ♖c8 8. c5), reaching a better-known "book" won position–not far from Lucena.



17

Larsen-Torre
Leningrad 1973
White to play

1. ♖e5†!

Now on 1... ♔d7 White plays 2. ♔f3 and the winning plan of ♔g4-5 and f5-f6 can't be stopped.

1. . . . ♔f6
2. ♔d3! ♖xf4
3. ♖e1

And wins because the black ♔ is cut off, e.g., 3... ♖a4 4. c6 ♖a6 5. ♖c1! ♖a8 6. ♔c4 ♔e6 7. ♖d1! followed by ♔b5-b6 and c6-c7, leading inevitably to "Lucena."

Noah: Sure–when you can secure a book draw (if you're losing) or a win by making some major decision, like a trade of pieces or a sacrifice.

Here's a typical example (Diagram 17):

White was one of the half-dozen best players in the world, at the time, and needed a win to make sure of qualifying for the Candidates matches from an interzonal.

Pat: He must have known whether *this* was a win.

Noah: Yeah, but that didn't tell him how to win it. He actually played an error, 1. ♖h5?

Yet 1. ♖e5† wins easily since the black ♔ has to choose between two losing sides of the board.

In fact, White had missed the same kind of transition six moves earlier–and did it again two moves after 1. ♖h5?

Pat: So you're saying I only need to know a handful of positions?

Noah: Yes, because most of the time you can rely on general principles.

Sure, sometimes that doesn't work. For example, Diagram 18, which was analyzed by André Philidor more than 200 years ago.

Pat: Is this the famous "Philidor position" I'm supposed to know?

Noah: Almost. If it is Black's move he draws by keeping his ♖ on his third rank until the pawn advances. *That's* the "Philidor" you need to know.

Pat: So what happens on 1. ♔f6 ?

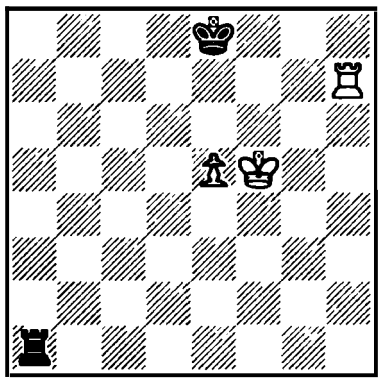
Noah: After that, Black can draw only if he keeps his ♔ a ♘'s move away from White's, and puts his ♖ on the e-file.

It's a useful position to know only because it goes against a crucial general principle in ♖-endgames. **Keep your ♖ as flexibly placed as possible.**

Pat: This principle is so crucial that it doesn't work?

Noah: By putting the ♖ on e1, and giving up the chance for rank checks, Black violates the principle. But he draws because he can stop White's only winning plan. Stopping the plan was just more important here.

By the way, Philidor got the analysis all *wrong*–and concluded that Diagram 18 was a forced loss.



18

White to play

1. ♔f6!

On 1. ♔e6 Black draws with 1... ♖a6†! 2. ♔f5 ♖b6 and if 3. e6, then 3... ♖b1! since the ♔ cannot escape from checks along the files.

1. . . ♖e1!

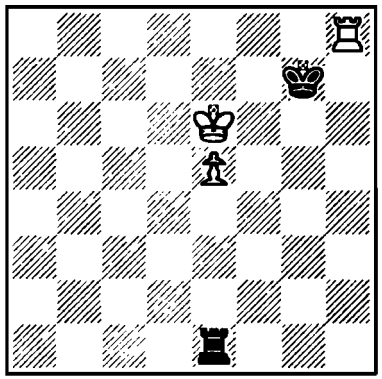
Not 1... ♖a6†? because of 2. e6, threatening mate, and then 2... ♔d8 3. ♖h8† ♔c7 4. ♔f7 and White reaches "Lucena."

And not 1... ♖f1†? because of 2. ♔e6 ♔-moves 3. ♖h8† followed by ♔e7 and e6, again headed to "Lucena."

2. ♔e6!

Not 2. e6 which allows unending "Philidor" checks beginning with 2... ♖f1†.

2. . . . ♔f8!
3. ♖h8† ♔g7



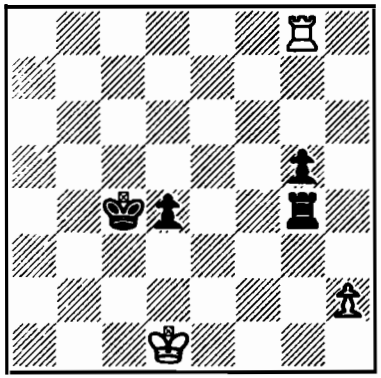
19

4. ♖e8

Otherwise the ♙ can't advance (4. ♖a8 ♖e2! 5. ♔d6 ♔f7).

4. . . . ♖a1!

And draws (5. ♖b8 ♖a6† 6. ♔f5 ♔f7! or 6. ♔d7 ♖a7† 7. ♔e8 ♔g6).



20

Dreev-Belyavsky
Soviet Championship 1989
White to play

1. h4!

Otherwise 1... ♔d3 wins.

1. . . . ♖xh4?

Not 1... ♔d3 2. ♖xg5. But there was an elaborate win in 1... ♖g1† 2. ♔e2 d3† 3. ♔d2 ♖g2† 4. ♔d1 g4.

2. ♖xg5 ♔c3

3. ♖d5!

Drawing (3... d3 4. ♖c5† à la Philidor).

3. . . . ♖h1†

4. ♔e2 ♖h2†

5. ♔d1 ♔d3

6. ♔c1! ♖h1†

7. ♔b2 ♖e1

No better is 7... ♔e3 8. ♔c2.

8. ♖d8!

And a draw as agreed after 8... ♖e4 9. ♔c1 ♔e2 10. ♔c2.

Pat: Yeah, it always seems there are tons of stuff like that in the books. Do they ever happen in real life?

Noah: All the time. A good example of how knowing it helps was Diagram 20. Both players were strong GMs who well knew the "book" of Diagram 18.

But at crunch time in 20 only one of them remembered it. Black erred because he didn't recognize a book draw when he saw one.

Pat: I see–3. ♖d5 is the same as 1... ♖e1 in Diagram 18. All that's happened is the colors have been changed and board's been reversed.

How often does a position like that come up?

Noah: You'd be surprised how often the *possibility* arises. In that same Larsen game that we just looked at, White missed another winning transition, in Diagram 21.

He could have sacrificed the c-♙ to bring about something almost identical to the Philidor position–except that Black's ♖ is so badly placed that White wins.

Pat: Badly placed on c5?

Noah: Sad but true. The point is that even walking "book" encyclopedias can misuse the little that they need to know.

You need to not only *know* a few key positions. You also need to be able to figure out what to do in a slightly different position.

White, who clearly knew "Lucena," didn't look hard enough to see a simple transition to it.

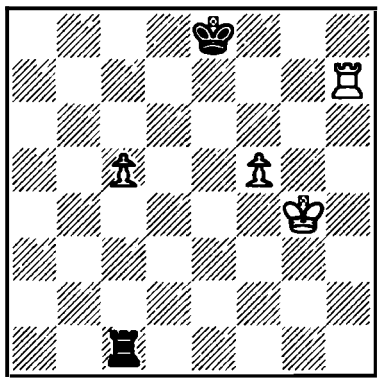
Pat: I'll bet all this is a lot harder than you're making it.

Noah: See for yourself. Endgames aren't that scary.

Come back to the club tomorrow and I can show you what you should be doing.

Interested?

Pat: Hmmm. Lemme think about it.



21

Larsen-Torre
Leningrad 1973
White to play

1. ♔g5!

Not 1. ♖c7? which White played.

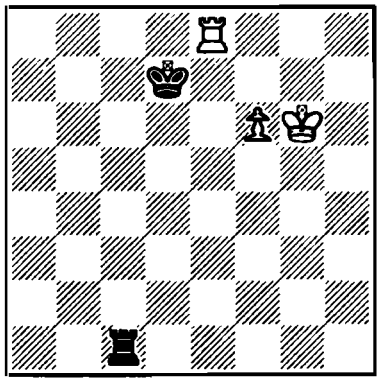
1. . . . Rxc5

Otherwise 2. ♔f6 and 3. ♖h8† allows White to advance the f-♙ to "Lucena."

2. ♔g6!

Black loses–because he can't play 2... ♖f1!, as in Diagram 18.

2. . . . ♖c1
3. ♖h8† ♔e7
4. f6† ♔e6
5. ♖e8†! ♔d7



22

6. f7

And wins (6... Rg1† 7. Kh5 Rh1† 8. Kg4 Rg1† 9. Kh3 etc.).

In which Pat learns about h-pawns and draw offers and converting advantages—and why the first move many grandmasters make in the endgame is with their feet.

Chapter Two: Getting Started

Pat: Okay, I'm back.

Noah: I thought you might be.

Pat: But just to satisfy my curiosity. Suppose I wanted to really get into endgames. Where would I start?

Noah: You begin with this not-to-be-forgotten warning:

An endgame is not a middlegame.

Pat: That's a no-brainer.

Noah: Not true. Many players don't realize or fully appreciate that.

In the endgame there are big differences in thinking. You have to readjust.

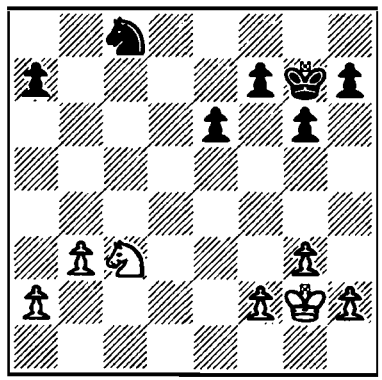
Pat: How?

Noah: You have to start thinking differently about speed and space, not to mention pawn structure, and ♔ safety. Your whole sense of how to evaluate a move or a position changes instantly when the ♕s are removed from the board.

Pat: How do the GMs begin thinking differently when the endgame begins?

Noah: Some of them take a walk.

Pat: They take a walk?



23

Karpov-Timman
Candidates finals 1989
White to play

1. f4?

A good positional move in the middlegame–but an error here.

With 1. ♔f3, threatening to take control on e4, White has good winning chances (1... f5 2. ♔e3 e5 3. ♘b5 ♔f6 4. ♔d3 and ♔c4).

1. . . . f5!

A positional lemon–in the middlegame. The game was drawn after 14 more moves beginning with 2. ♘a4 ♔f6 3. ♘c5 ♘b6 and eventually ...e5.

In the Middlegame

- Speed counts. Often the winner is the player who gets there "fastest with the mostest."
- Space counts. A cramped position is usually a bad position.
- ♔ safety is a major priority.
- The easiest way to win is to accumulate advantages.
- Center ♙s are more valuable than wing ♙s.
- When deciding whether to exchange something, masters try to trade bad pieces for good ones, to avoid losing time, and to exchange ♙s when that opens lines for their pieces.

In the Endgame

- Haste makes waste. Repeating the position is good technique. Losing a tempo often helps.
- Control of more space than your opponent is relatively unimportant.
- ♔s are generally safe. ♔ **activity** is more important.
- The easiest way to win is to **convert** one advantage to another.
- Wing ♙s–particularly if they are passed–are often more valuable because they're easier to queen.
- Trading priorities depend on whether you're winning or losing. Usually the player with the edge wants to trade pieces but not ♙s, and vice versa.

Noah: It's an old Russian idea, suggested in the 1930s by a master named Sergei Belavenets. He said that as soon as you trade ♕s you should stand up and walk around the playing room to calm your nerves and clear your head.

In this game (Diagram 24), White had hardly sat down when the ♕s went off. But he needed to reorient his thinking after 9. ♕xb6. A stroll then wouldn't have hurt.

Pat: Okay, suppose I've traded ♕s and had my walk. What then?

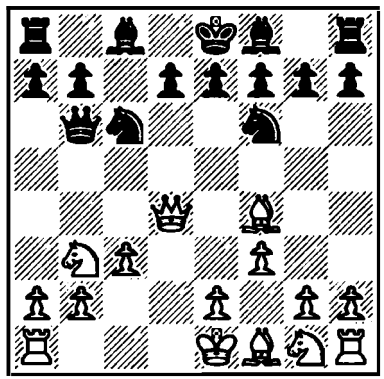
Noah: First, figure out who's better.

One of the things that distinguishes an ending from a middlegame is that it's usually much easier to see in an ending whether you're playing for a win or just trying to draw.

Pat: For sure.

V. Kovacevic-Smirin
Zagreb 1993

1. d4 ♘f6 2. ♗g5 ♘e4 3. ♗f4 c5 4. f3 ♕a5† 5. c3 ♘f6 6. ♘d2 cxd4 7. ♘b3 ♕b6 8. ♕xd4 ♘c6



24

9. ♕xb6 axb6

10. a3?

A low priority move. Better was 10. e4.

10. . . . d5!

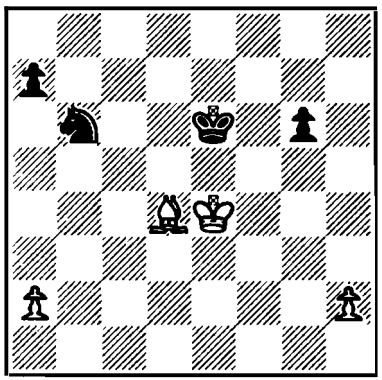
11. ♗c7?

Playing for advantage in what is now an inferior position. Better was 11. ♘d4.

11. . . . e5!

12. ♗xb6 d4

And Black soon had an overwhelming initiative (13. cxd4 ♗e6! 14. ♘c5 ♘d5 15. ♘xe6 fxe6 16. ♗c5 ♘xd4! 17. ♗xd4 exd4 and ...♘e3/...♗b4†.



25

Krnic-Flear
Wijk aan Zee 1988
White to play

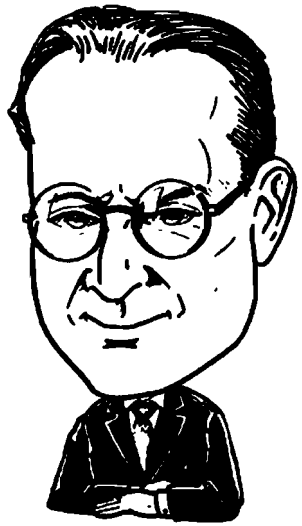
1. Draw accepted??

White is winning:

1. ♔f4 ♔f7 2. ♔e5 invading, or 1... ♘c8 2. ♔g5 ♔f7 3. ♔h6 and wins by zugzwang.

For example, 3... ♘b6 4. ♔h7 ♘c8 5. a4! a6 6. ♗c5! or 5... ♘b6 6. a5 ♘c8 7. h4!.

Black does better with 3... a6 4. ♗c5 ♔f6 but is still losing: 5. h4 ♔f7 6. ♔h7 a5 7. a4! ♔f6 8. ♔g8 ♔f5 9. ♔f7 ♔g4 10. ♔e8 ♔xh4 11. ♔d7 ♔g4 12. ♔xc8 ♔f5 13. ♔b7 ♔e6 14. ♗b6.



"It is a well known phenomenon that the same amateur who can conduct the middlegame quite creditably, is usually perfectly helpless in the endgame."
–Aron Nimzovich

Noah: Yet it constantly shocks amateurs to see how often masters accept draws in winning positions, like Diagram 25, or resign in drawable ones.

Pat: What should White be thinking in that position?

Noah: That he has a very good ♗ and Black has a limping ♘.

That if he wins either of the black pawns he'll win the game.

That he has excellent chances for imposing zugzwang.

And, most important, that with no visible Black counterplay, it costs White **absolutely nothing to play on.**

Pat: But don't you have to know what you're doing next to refuse a draw offer?

Noah: GMs accept draw offers when they see how they can **lose,** not when they're unable to see how to win.

Pat: Okay, so you evaluate the position. Then what?

Noah: Then you try to understand what kind of advantage it is.

Pat: Usually that's obvious. Right?

Noah: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

For instance, with the Exchange for two ♙s, White can't be entirely sure he has any real edge in Diagram 26.

Black's King is closer to White's ♔-side ♙s and Black's ♖ can attack the ♕-side ♙s.

Pat: I sense a "but" coming up.

Noah: *But* White has the Exchange. A basic rule of thumb is:

When you're up the Exchange you want to trade a pair of ♖s.

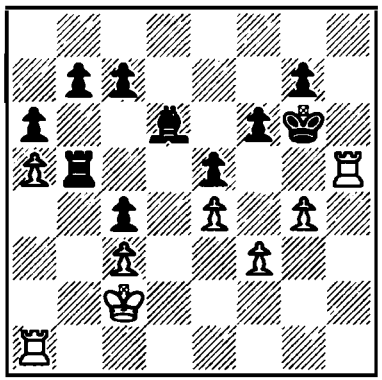
That's because a trade magnifies the mismatch between the remaining ♖ v. piece.

Pat: It's weird that White can retreat the ♖ like that and let the Black ♔ in.

Noah: Yes, but very logical. A ♖ is superior to a ♗ only **when it can act** like a ♖.

That is, only when it has open files. To make such a file–and create a winning ♙–White had to force a ♖ trade.

"Fight the enemy with the weapons he lacks."
–Field Marshall Aleksandr Suvorov of the Russian Imperial Army



26

Hmelnicky-Romanishin
Herson 1989
White to play

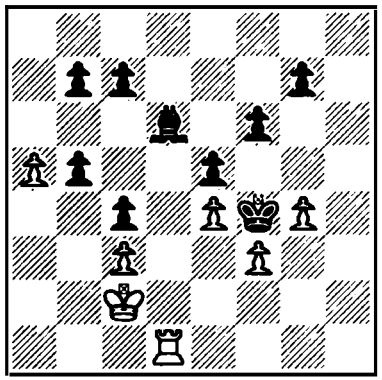
1. ♖hh1! ♔g5

Or 1... b6 2. axb6 ♖xb6 3. ♖hb1 ♖c6 4. ♖b8 and the a-♙ falls.

2. ♖hb1 ♔f4

No better is 2... ♖xb1 3. ♖xb1 ♔f4 4. ♖xb7 ♔xf3 5. ♖a7 ♔xe4 6. ♖xa6 ♔d5 7. ♖a8 g5 8. a6 and wins.

3. ♖xb5 axb5
4. ♖d1!

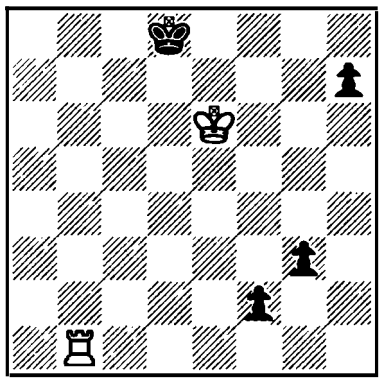


27

Better than 4. ♖b1 b4 5. cxb4 ♔xf3 with drawing chances for Black.

Now the ♖ creates a winning passed a-♙ **–4... ♔xf3 5. ♖d5 b4! 6. ♖b5!** (not 6. ♖xd6?? b3†) **b3† 7. ♔b2 ♔xe4 8. ♖xb7 ♔d5 9. a6 ♔c6 10. ♖b5!** and **11. a7.**

Also 7... g5 8. ♖xb7 ♗c5 9. ♖xc7 ♗e3 10. ♖xc4 ♔xg4 11. a6 ♔f4 12. ♖c7 g4 13. a7 ♗xa7 14. ♖xa7 ♔xe4 15. ♖g7 f5 16. ♔xb3 ♔f3 17. c4 and wins.



28

Arulaid-Gurgenidze
U.S.S.R. 1955
White to play

This position was adjourned and White *resigned*–a blunder since he can draw by threatening mate with 1. ♔d6! and checking.

For example, 1... ♔c8 2. ♖c1† ♔b7 3. ♖b1† ♔a6 4. ♔c6! (threat of 5. ♖a1 mate).

Then 4... ♔a5 5. ♔c5 ♔a4 6. ♔c4 ♔a3 7. ♔c3 ♔a2 8. ♖f1! and since 8... g2?? loses the f-♙ with check, Black has nothing better than 8... h5 9. ♔d3! and White draws with ♔e2-f3.

Pat: What happens if I'm worse when the endgame begins?

Noah: Same sort of thing. You need to know what your opponent's advantage consists of.

But you also have to recognize where your own assets lie–and not to underestimate them.

Pat: You got an example?

Noah: Sure. In Diagram 28 White was so afraid of the black ♙s that he completely overlooked the power of the strongest piece on the board, his own ♖.

Pat: Okay, suppose I know I have the edge and understand what kind of edge it is. What next?

Noah: A good next step is to figure out what specifically it takes to win.

Pat: You mean like winning a ♙ or something else?

Noah: No, you generally don't need to *win* anything in an ending.

Pat: You don't?

...you generally don't need to* win *anything in an ending.
GM Tall

Noah: No. In the endgame the side pressing for a win usually has some kind of advantage already.

What a player needs to do, like White in Diagram 29, is to convert one advantage into a more significant one.

Pat: Seems like White just gives away the Exchange for nothing.

Noah: Actually he eliminates the only good black piece left to stop the c-pawn.

After ♖xe6, Black must try to blockade with his ♖–and a ♖, as you'll learn, is a terrible blockader.

So once White knew what it took to win, the rest was easy. A winning conversion.

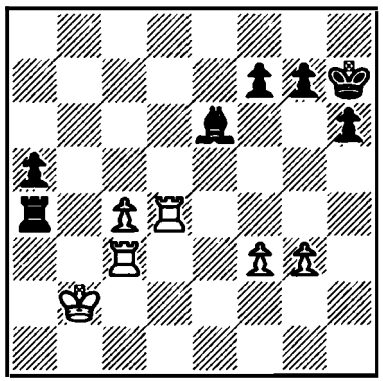
Pat: But what if you're playing for a draw?

Noah: Then you need to know what it will take for *your opponent* to win.

Don't try to figure out what it takes for you to draw.

Usually there is no such thing.

Pat: I'll believe that. Okay, what's happening in Diagram 30?



29

Gelfand-Bareev
Linares 1992
White to play

1. ♖e4!

Threatening 2. ♖xe6!, e.g., 1... h5 2. ♖xe6! fxe6 3. c5 ♖b4† 4. ♔a3 ♖b8 5. c6 g5 6. c7 ♖c8 7. ♔a4 and ♔xa5-b6-b7.

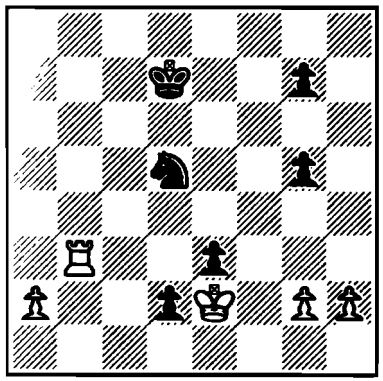
1. . . . ♖b4†
2. ♔a3 ♔g6

Or 2... ♗d7 3. ♖e7.

3. ♖xe6†! fxe6
4. c5

And wins, e.g., 4... ♔f6 5. c6 ♖b8 6. c7 ♖c8 7. ♔a4 ♔e5 8. ♔xa5 ♔d4 9. ♖c6 ♔e3 10. f4 ♔f2 11. ♖c3 and 12. ♔b6.

Too late is 11... ♖xc7 12. ♖xc7 ♔xg3 13. ♖xg7† ♔xf4 14. ♖h7.



30

Marin-Minasian
Debrecen 1992
White to play

1. a4! ♔c6
2. a5 ♔c5
3. a6 ♔c4
4. ♖a3??

White wins with 4. ♖d3!!, e.g., 4... ♘c3† 5. ♔xe3 d1=♕ 6. ♖xd1 ♘xd1† 7. ♔d2 and 8. a7.

Or, 4... ♘f4† 5. ♔xe3 ♘xd3 6. ♔xd2.

4. . . . ♘c3†
5. ♖xc3† ♔xc3
6. a7 ♔c2
Drawn

Because the ♕+♙ ending is dead after 7. a8=♕ d1=♕† 8. ♔xe3 ♕g1† 9. ♔e2 ♕xh2.

Noah: A strange but not at all rare misunderstanding. White may have asked himself at the diagram "Am I better and, if so, why?"

The answer would be: "Of course, I am–but because of the *a*-♙, not so much because of the Exchange." That would have given him the winning plan.

Pat: I guess that makes sense.

Noah: But when it was crunch time, at move four, he tried to keep a ♖ he didn't need–instead of eliminating ♙s–the only counterplay Black had.

Pat: It sure must help if you've won this kind of position before.

Noah: Listen, Pat, it helps more if you've *lost* this kind before.

Now, take Diagram 31. What would you do here?

Pat: I'm not sure. But 1. ♖xc3 looks right.

Noah: Why?

Noah: Because it eliminates a ♙–and a pretty dangerous ♙, it looks like. And it avoids a ♖ endgame after ...♗xe4.

Noah: When you've had more experience you'll know 1. ♖xc3 is a blunder. Trading ♖s only enlarges the advantage of the remaining ♗ over the ♘.

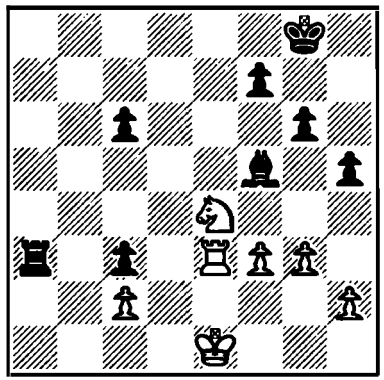
Pat: I guess I see that now. The c-♙ isn't running away and White's ♔ is much more active. But what about the ♖ ending?

Noah: With time you'll also appreciate how notoriously drawish ♖+♙ endings are.

Pat: What if you haven't a clue about what's going on in a position?

Noah: Then a good way to start–after you've had your walk–is to figure out what pieces you want to trade and which you don't.

Pat: For example?



31

Shirov-Karpov
Moscow 1992
White to play

1. ♔e2!

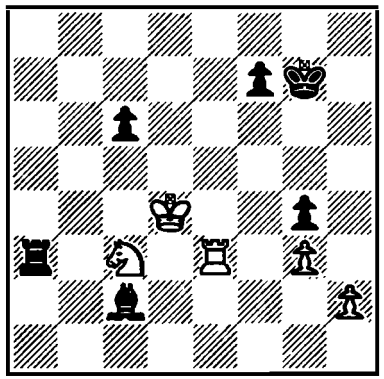
Not 1. ♖xc3? ♖xc3 2. ♘xc3 ♗xc2 which leaves Black with excellent winning chances.

For example, 3. ♔d2 ♗f5 4. ♔e3 ♗h3 5. ♔d4 ♗g2 6. f4 ♔f8 7. ♔e5 ♔e7 and with 8... f6† Black is making progress.

1. . . . ♔g7
2. ♔d3 g5

Or 2... ♖a4 3. ♔xc3 ♗xe4 4. fxe4 ♔f6 5. ♖f3† with enough counterplay to draw.

3. ♔d4! g4
4. fxg4 hxg4
5. ♘xc3! ♗xc2

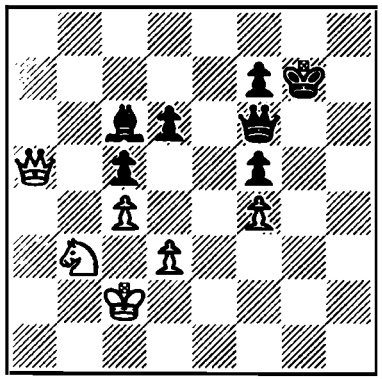


32

6. ♖e5! ♔g6
7. ♖c5 ♖a6
8. ♔e5

And White, with a much more active ♔ and ♖ than Black's, eventually drew.

> ***"It makes no difference whether you win or lose–until you lose."***
> **–Anonymous Loser**



33

Vaganian-Lautier
Manila 1990
White to play

1. ♕c3??

Passing, such as with 1. ♕a6 ♗f3 2. ♕a5!, makes it hard for Black to make progress.

But White counts on 1... ♕xc3† 2. ♔xc3 ♗a4 3. ♘d2 and 4. d4 with a draw.

1. . . . ♗a4!

And Black wins, e.g., 2. ♔d2 ♕xc3† 3. ♔xc3 ♗xb3 4. ♔xb3 ♔g6 5. ♔a4 ♔h5 6. ♔b5 ♔g4 7. ♔c6 ♔xf4 8. ♔xd6 ♔e3.

Noah: For example, Diagram 33. White concluded that he could draw if he managed to trade the ♕s.

Pat: He was wrong?

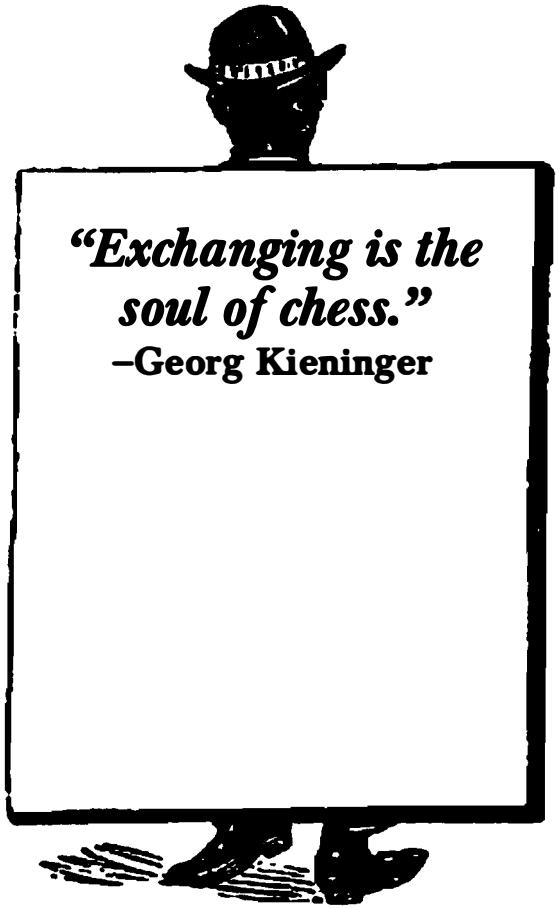
Noah: No, the minor-piece endings *is* drawn because White can liquidate the ♕-side ♙s and keep Black from creating a passed f-♙.

What he overlooked was that Black can force a ♔+♙ ending–which was quite lost.

Pat: So some trades are very good...

Noah: ...and some trades are just awful. Remember what I said about the importance of *transitions.*

An example of good trades on both sides is Diagram 34.



Pat: What's happening here?

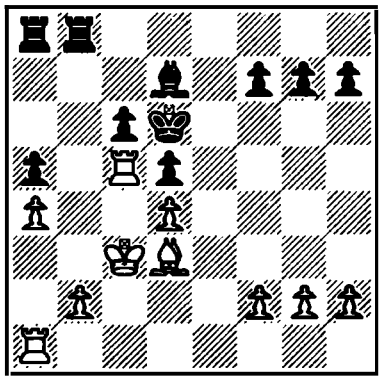
Noah: Your basic plus-over-equals (±) edge for White. He has the better ♗ and his opponent has the weaker targets, at a5 and c6.

If he can trade his a1-♖ for the b8-♖, his remaining pieces will be much better than Black's, and he can take his time with a plan of, say, creating a passed a-♙, with b2-b4.

Pat: But Black makes his own good trade, a bad piece for a good one–even if it louses up his ♙ structure.

Noah: Not so loused up. In the end the f5-♙ is not much worse than the ones at g2 and b2. A draw makes sense.

Pat: You coulda fooled me. I lose positions like the ones grandmasters agree to draws in.



34

Hodgson-Oll
Dos Hermanos 1992
White to play

1. ♖a3!

A good idea (2. ♖b3).

1. . . . g6!

Black also sees a good trade, ...♗f5!.

2. ♖b3 ♖xb3†

Black can avoid the trade with 2... ♖e8, but after 3. ♔d2 (to stop 3... ♖e1) White will have a big edge with 4. ♖b7 or 4. ♖b6 (or 3... ♔c7 4. ♖bb5!).

3. ♔xb3 ♗f5!

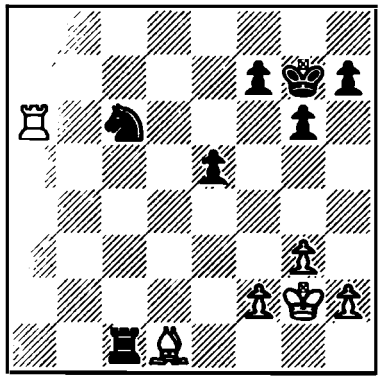
4. ♗xf5

White's best chance was 4. ♗f1!.

4. . . . gxf5

White can make no progress, e.g., 5. ♖c3 (intending 6. ♖f3) ♖b8† 6. ♔a3 ♖g8. After 7. ♖g3? ♖xg3 Black is even better.

A draw was agreed soon after 5. ♔c2 f4 6. b3 h5 7. ♔d3 ♖b8.



35

Burnett-Kaidanov
U.S. 1992
Black to play

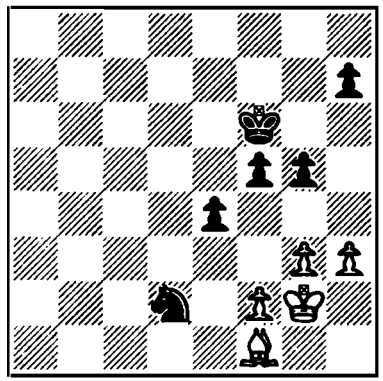
1. . . . e4!

Not 1... ♖xd1? 2. ♖xc6 with very slim winning chances.

2. ♗e2 ♘d4
3. ♖a2 ♖e1
4. ♗f1 g5!

Black prepares to create a passed e-♙ (...f7-f5-f4).

5. ♖d2 ♘f3
6. ♖e2 f5!
7. ♖xe1 ♘xe1†
8. ♔g1 ♘f3†
9. ♔g2 ♔f6
10. h3 ♘d2



36

Now 11... ♘xf1, creating a ♔+♙ ending, would win easily.

11. ♗b5 f4
12. gxf4 gxf4

And Black won after 13. h4 ♘f3 14. ♔h3 h5 15. ♗c6 ♔e5, e.g., 16. ♗e8 e3 17. fxe3 fxe3 18. ♗b5 e2! 19. ♗xe2 ♘g1†.

Noah: With experience you'll learn what a drawable position looks like. Often the exact same position–same ♙s, same ♔ positions–is a win with ♘s on the board or ♕s on.

But it may be a dead draw with the addition of a pair of ♖s or a pair of ♗s. Or vice versa.

Pat: How do you know the vice from the versa?

Noah: By looking ahead and seeing which piece situation would be the easiest to win.

In Diagram 35 Black can see that a trade of all the pieces leads to a ♔+♙ ending that should be won.

But without a ♕-side pawn, a trade of minor pieces only gets him into a ♖+♙ ending with few winning chances.

Pat: And a trade of just ♖s? What happens then?

Noah: Let's work it out.

Having ♙s on only one side of the board makes the ♘'s inferiority disappear. In fact, the ♘ turns out to be a super piece on d2.

White had nothing better than a ♖ exchange–but then he was simply lost.

Pat: You're talking a lot about pieces, but what always confuses me in endings is where to put my ♙s.

I mean, what's the deal with the h-♙s?

In just about every GM game I've ever seen, it seems White plays h2-h4!? and Black replies ...h7-h5!?.

Noah: There are reasons for that. For one thing, it makes it harder for your opponent to create a passed ♙, as Black does in Diagram 37.

Pat: I see. If White had a ♙ at h4 then Black would have had to trade two sets of ♔-side ♙s, starting with ...f6 and ...g5 to create a passed ♙.

Noah: With a likely draw. Trust me.

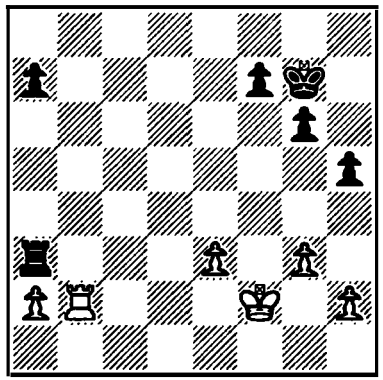
As the game goes, Black forces a favorable trade of ♙s because of the threat of 9... h3.

In other games with a similar ♙ structure you may see Black winning by attacking the enemy ♔-side with ...♔g4 and ...hxg3.

Pat: Is there an ideal endgame ♙ formation?

Noah: That usually depends on whether you're playing to win or draw.

For example, in Diagram 39 Black ends up with the exact same ♔-side structure as his opponent–and loses because of it.



37

Vadasz-Rogers
Kragujevac 1985
Black to play

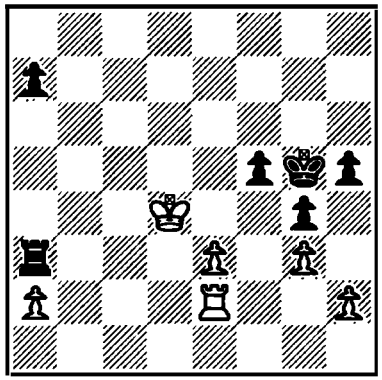
1. . . . g5!

If Black had allowed 2. h4 his advantage would be microscopic.

2. ♔f3 ♖a4
3. ♔e2

White has nothing better. On 3. h3 Black creates a passed ♙ with 3... f5 and ...h4.

3. . . . ♔g6
4. ♔d3 f5
5. ♖c2 g4!
6. ♔c3 ♖a3†
7. ♔d4 ♔g5
8. ♖e2



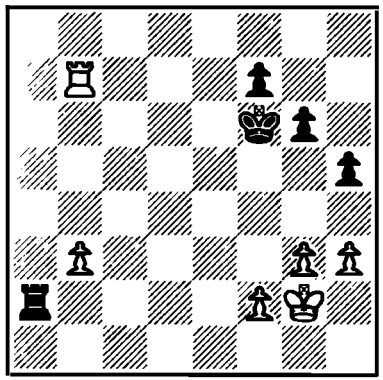
38

8. . . . h4!
9. gxh4†

Otherwise 9... h3 followed by ...♖a6-b6-b1-g1-g2!

9. . . . ♔xh4

Black won after 10. ♔e5 ♔g5 11. ♔d4 ♖a4† 12. ♔d3 ♔f6 and ...♔e5.



39

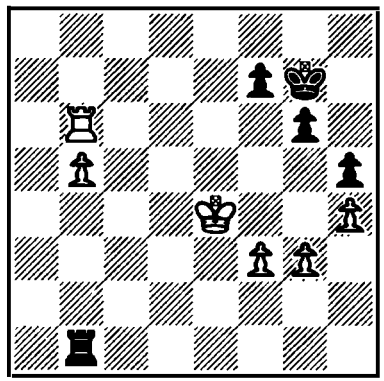
Vaganian-Hellers
New York 1990
White to play

1. h4 ♖b2
2. ♔f3 ♔e6
3. ♔e3 ♔f6

Passing is Black's only policy.

4. f3! ♖g2
5. ♔f4 ♖b2

There followed some more maneuvering as White prepared to push his passed ♙: **6. ♖b6† ♔g7 7. b4 ♖b3 8. ♖b8 ♔f6 9. ♖b6† ♔g7 10. ♔e4 ♖b1 11. b5.**



40

11. . . . f6??

A blunder. More passing, with 11... ♖b3 12. ♖b8 ♔f6 and ...♔e6-f6 would draw.

12. ♖b7† ♔h8
13. ♖b8† ♔g7
14. b6 ♖b3
15. ♔d5! ♖xf3
16. ♔c4

And Black loses because his ♔ plays no role: 16... ♖f1 17. ♖b7† ♔h6 18. ♖d7 ♖b1 19. ♔c5 ♖c1† 20. ♔d6 ♖d1† 21. ♔c7 ♖c1† 22. ♔d8 ♖b1 23. ♖d6 1-0.

Pat: Let's do this one slowly. It seems like I've seen positions like this a jillion times.

Noah: Okay. White starts by restraining Black's g-♙ with 1. h4. That also creates a chain, so he can protect all his ♔-side pawns with a ♔ at e3.

Pat: Why does he take his time in pushing the b-♙?

Noah: Because that would allow Black's ♖ to cut off his ♔ by going to the sixth rank like on 2. b4? ♖b3!

Pat: Okay, so White can move his ♔ to e3, and then push his f-♙.

Noah: That allows his ♔ to go to f4 and protect his entire ♔-side while the b-♙ advances.

But it shouldn't have been enough to win.

Pat: Why?

Noah: Because his only winning plan would have been to advance the ♙ to b6 and then run his ♔ to defend it. Black's ♖ would have eaten most of the ♔-side in the meantime, and he would then draw by sacrificing his ♖ for the b-♙ just before it queened.

Pat: So he lost because...

Noah: He gave his opponent a safer and easier winning plan.

Pat: But what if he...?

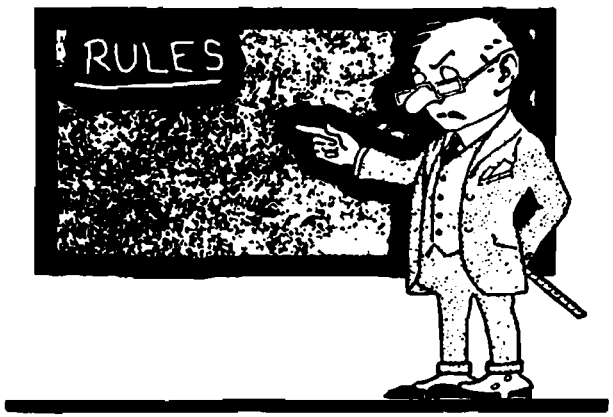
Noah: That's enough for you to absorb in one day. If you're not sick of endgames yet, we'll start again tomorrow. Okay?

Pat: I guess so.

Chapter Three

Rules

In which Pat learns that all rules have exceptions, that some rules are exceptional–and that no rule is a substitute for thinking.



***Read and Forget:* Actual rules laid down in "Basic Chess Endings"–**

In ♔+2♙ vs. ♔+♙: "when White has ♙s on the ♗- and ♘-files, with only one ♙ more, if Black's ♙ is on the ♗-file, he can usually draw but if it is on the ♘-file he will as a rule lose."

"With 3 connected passed ♙s (against a ♗) a win is possible only if all the ♙s can succeed in crossing the 4th rank (except for certain special cases)."

In ♔+♖+2 connected ♙ vs. ♔+♖: "if neither ♙ has reached the sixth rank this is always a draw, but if one is on the sixth and the other is on the fifth, a win is possible provided there are no ♖-♙s."

Pat: I haven't forgotten what we talked about yesterday–yet.

But today I'd like to move on to another reason I hate endgames–the rules. There seems to be a million different rules you have to memorize.

Noah: You mean like "♕+♔+♙ beats ♕+♔ if it's a c-♙ that reaches the sixth rank during a month with an "r" in its name?"

Pat: Yeah, that type.

Noah: Here's a rule of thumb on rules–The more specific the rule, the more exceptions there will be–and the more useless it will be to you.

Pat: I'll buy that.

Noah: The best rules are the simplest, like "Passed Pawns Must be Pushed," a maxim so ancient no one remembers where it came from.

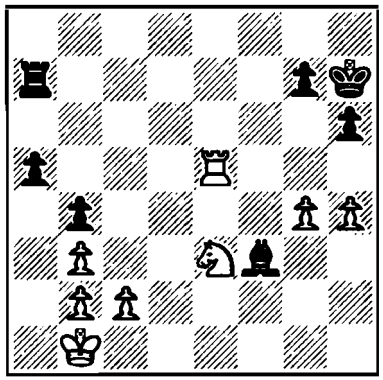
But we don't forget that rule because it works, as Diagram 41 shows.

Pat: Lemme check this out. White's a ♙ ahead but it's doubled. And Black has a good ♗ against the ♘.

Noah: But Black has the weaker ♙s. If White had pushed the c-♙ before move six the win would have been routine.

Pat: I thought speed doesn't count in endings.

Noah: Don't think of these kinds of positions as ♙-races. Pushing the c-♙ is more like converting one kind of advantage into another.



41

Kamsky-M. Gurevich
Belgrade 1991
White to play

1. g5?

With 1. c4 bxc3 2. bxc3 White creates a winning passed ♙. Instead he plays to win the a-♙.

1. . . . hxg5
2. hxg5 ♔g6
3. ♘c4 ♖d7!

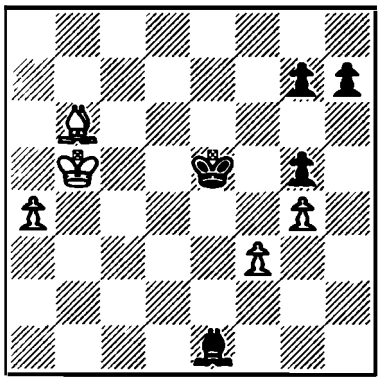
Now on 4. ♖xa5 ♖d5! 5. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 and it will be Black who gets a passed ♙ rolling first.

4. ♘e3 ♖a7
5. ♔c1?

White is still winning after 5. c4!

5. . . . a4!

And Black managed a draw after **6. bxa4 ♖xa4 7. ♔d2 ♖a7 8. ♔d3 ♖c7 9. ♘f5 ♔xg5! 10. ♘xg7† ♔f4** because his ♔ is active and White only has two ♙s left.



42

D. Gurevich-Franzoni
Lucerne 1989
White to play

1. ♗e3?

Going after a ♙ that has no significance. No better was 1. a5? ♗xa5! 2. ♗xa5 ♔f4 which wins both remaining white ♙s.

But winning was: 1. ♗a5! ♗f2 2. ♗c3† ♔f4 3. a5, e.g., 3... ♔xf3 4. a6 ♔xg4 5. ♗b4 and 6. ♗c5.

1. . . . g6!!

Now 2. a5 ♗xa5! 3. ♔xa5 h5 draws, as in the game.

2. ♗xg5 h5
3. a5 ♗xa5!

Drawn

It's only a draw because the remaining white ♙s are eliminated after 4. ♔xa5 hxg4 5. fxg4 ♔e4 6. ♗c1 g5! and 7... ♔f3.

♙s Increase in Value as they Advance.

♙s Increase in Value as they Advance.

Pat: What other kind?

Noah: Closeness of a ♙ to its queening square. The reason is explained by another rule:

♙s Increase in Value as they Advance.

In fact, a ♙ on the sixth rank is often twice as valuable as one on the fourth, particularly in minor-piece endings.

Pat: Why particularly those?

Noah: Because unlike heavier wood, a ♗ or ♘ cannot control more than one or two squares in the path of a ♙ at a given time.

Pat: So?

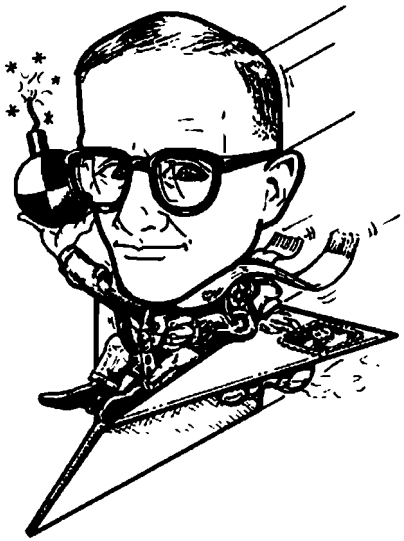
Noah: So in Diagram 42 the only square in the a-♙s' path that the ♗ controls is a5, and once it is kicked away, the ♙ reaches a6 quickly.

Then all White needed to win was to drive the ♗ off the g1-a7 diagonal and promote.

The increased value that a ♙ picks up as it advances is illustrated best by your old friend, "the square."

Even with several minor pieces, you have to keep in mind whether your ♔ is in the square to catch a passed ♙.

Pat: Yeah, the square. That's one of the first things I learned about endgames–and one of the few I remember.



"The lord of the endgame is the passed pawn."
–Cecil Purdy

Noah: And you'd be surprised how much it figures in grandmaster games.

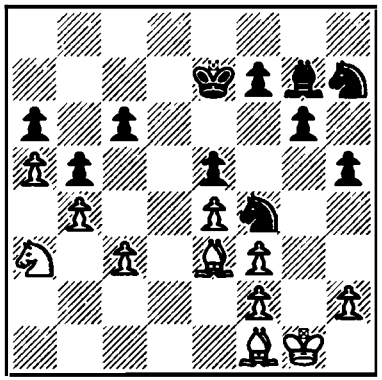
It comes up in many forms, like Diagram 43. Because Black's ♔ is one step out of the square of the a-♙, White can win with an amazing two-piece sacrifice.

Pat: Yeah, pretty amazing. Especially since White can win a ♙, at least temporarily with 1. c4.

Noah: But that allows the enemy ♔ into the square and complicates the win.

As it goes, Black can't accept the second piece sacrifice and the rest is easy.

Pat: Okay, so, "♙s increase in value as they advance" is a good rule to know. But how do I use it?



43

Karpov-Hansen
Biel 1992
White to play

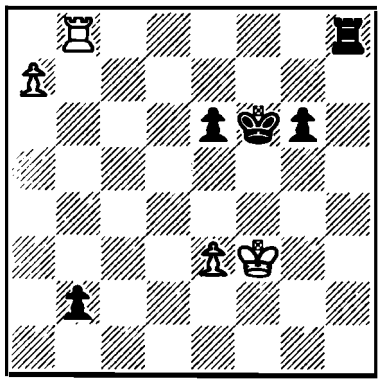
1. ♘xb5!!

Too slow is 1. c4 ♔d7 2. cxb5 cxb5 3. ♘xb5 ♗f8.

1. . . . cxb5
2. ♗xb5

And 2... axb5 loses to 3. a6 because Black's ♔ is out of the square and 3... ♘e6 is met by 4. ♗b6.

So Black had to try something like **2... ♘g5** but resigned soon after **3. ♗xa6 ♘ge6 4. ♗c4 ♔d8 5. a6.**



44

Psakhis-Vaganian
Rostov on Don 1993
White to play

1. Rxb2!

If you're willing to calculate, you'll find: 1. ♖xh8 b1=♕ 2. a8=♕. White wins because Black's checks stop after 2... ♕f1† 3. ♔g3 ♕g1† 4. ♕g2! or 3... ♕e1† 4. ♔h2.

But not: 1. a8=♕ b1=♕ 2. ♖xb1? ♖xa8 which is drawn.

1. . . . **♖a8**
2. ♖a2! **♔g5**
3. ♖a4 **♔f6**

Or 3... ♔f5 4. ♖a5† e5 5. e4† ♔f6 6. ♔g4 and the g-♙ will fall after 7. ♔g5 and 8. ♖a6†.

4. ♖a5! **♔e7**
5. ♔f4 **♔d6**
6. ♔g5 **♔c6**
7. ♔xg6 **Resigns**

Because of 7... ♔b6 8. ♖a1 ♖xa7 9. ♖xa7 ♔xa7 10. ♔f6 ♔b7 11. ♔xe6 and wins.

Trade Pieces When You're Ahead Material, Trade Pawns When You're Behind.

Noah: Once you realize the power of a passed ♙ you'll be alert to the opportunities of trading into a won game, like Diagram 44.

Pat: This looks confusing. *Everybody's* queening.

Noah: It's actually simple once you see that White doesn't have to promote immediately but can get a paralyzing ♖ position with 1. ♖xb2 and 2. ♖a2.

Since White will win any ♔+♙ ending arising from ...♔b7 and ...♖xa7, Black can't do anything but pass with his ♔.

Pat: But how does White queen the a-♙?

Noah: Doesn't need to. He'll run the black ♔ and ♙s out of moves, then pick up both ♙s and, finally, win with the e-♙.

Pat: I like general rules like "♙s increase in value..." Got any more?

Noah: You're probably familiar with this one:

Trade Pieces When You're Ahead Material, Trade Pawns When You're Behind.

Pat: I've heard something like it. What's the reasoning?

Noah: Remember what I said about what it takes to win?

Pat: That generally you need to promote a ♙.

Noah: Correct. Well, the more pieces you trade, the less enemy resistance to keep a ♙ from promoting.

Pat: And the more ♙s you trade?

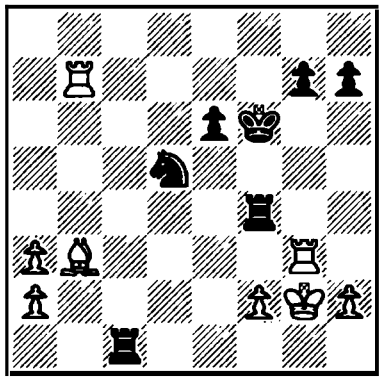
Noah: The fewer ♙s that can be promoted–and the fewer targets to go after.

In Diagram 45 Black, even though two ♙s down after 1... g6/3... exd5, has drawing chances. But he has none after it becomes just ♗ v. ♘.

Pat: The ♘ sure looks sick after 5. ♔xf3.

Noah: And White can promote either on the ♕-side or ♔-side.

That's another unique thing about endgames.



45

Kindermann-Mueller
Bundesliga 1991
Black to play

1. . . . ♘e7?

Black can afford to give up a ♙ in order to obtain counterplay with 1... g6 2. ♖xh7 ♖f5!, threatening 3... ♘f4†.

After 3. ♗xd5 exd5 Black, with his own passed ♙, has excellent drawing chances.

2. ♖b6 ♖c6?!

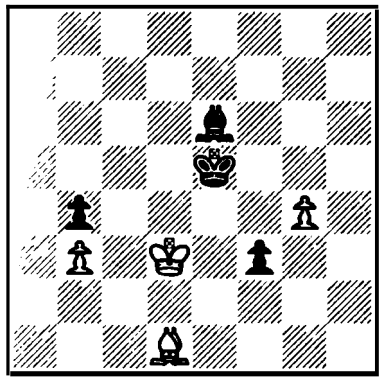
He should keeps ♖s on the board with 2... ♘c6 and possibly ...♘d4.

3. ♖xc6 ♘xc6

4. ♖f3! ♖xf3

5. ♔xf3

White won after **5... ♔e5 6. ♔e3 g5 7. ♗c2 h6 8. ♗e4! ♘a5** (else the a-♙ advances) **9. ♔d3 h5 10. ♗g2!** (pass) **♔d6 11. ♔d4** etc.



46

Karpov-Anand
Roquebrune 1992
Black to play

1. . . . ♗xg4?

With 1... f2 Black wins quickly: 2. ♗e2 ♗xg4! 3. ♗xg4 f1=♕ or 3. ♗f1 ♔f4, etc.

2. ♗xf3!

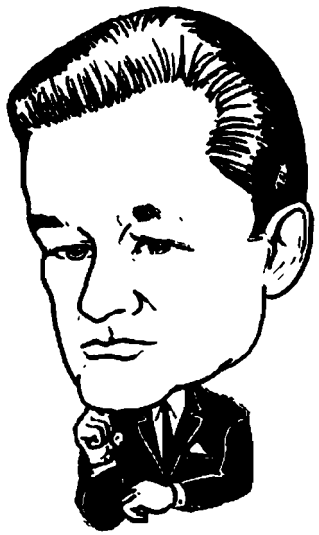
And White forces a draw after: 2... ♗xf3 3. ♔c4 and 4. ♔xb4 or, as the game went, **2... ♗e6 3. ♔c2 ♔d4 4. ♔b2.**

Pat: What's that?

Noah: Since the basic winning technique is to promote a ♙, the defender can usually draw if he eliminates all the enemy ♙s.

That's what saved White in Diagram 46–and should have cost White a win in Diagram 47.

Since ♙s increase in value as they advance, Black's f-♙ is decisive on f2. But it turns out to be only a target on f3.



"The older I get, the more I value pawns."
–Paul Keres

Pat: The first one looks pretty easy but I don't know about 47.

Noah: It's a classic example of trying to win an endgame with middlegame moves.

Instead of taking his time and carrying out a slow–but unbeatable–plan, White simplified with a flashy temporary sacrifice of a ♙.

Remember, ♙s are cheap when you have eight of them–but prohibitively expensive when you have one or two.

Pat: Is this trading rule always true?

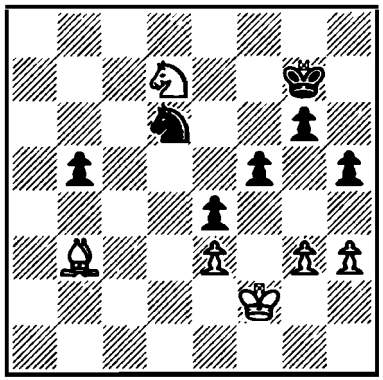
Noah: No, like most rules, it is only *generally* true. Sometimes there are higher laws.

Pat: Like what?

Noah: Like *Fine's Law*:

If you are one ♙ ahead, in 99 cases out of 100, the game is drawn if there are ♙s on only one side of the board.

Pat: And is that true?



47

Lautier-Grunfeld
Palma de Mallorca 1989
White to play

1. g4??

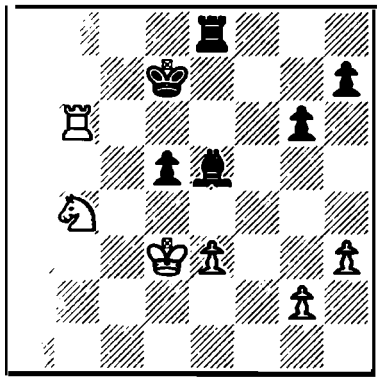
White should win with 1. h4!, sealing the ♔-side, followed by bringing his ♔ to c5.

1. . . . hxg4
2. hxg4 ♔h6!

Much better than 2... fxg4 3. ♘e5. Now Black's ♔ gets to g5.

3. gxf5 gxf5
4. ♔g3 ♔g5

And White, with only one ♙ left, will allow Black to draw with ...♘c4. E.g., **5. ♘c5 ♘c4 6. ♗xc4 bxc4 7. ♘a4 ♔f6** and ...♔g6-f6 (but Black blundered later and lost).



48

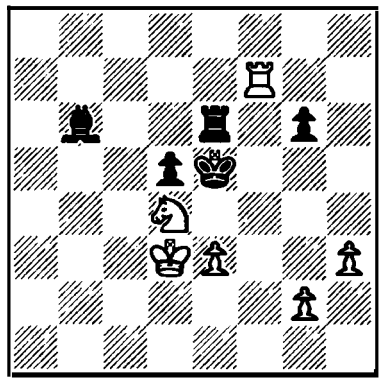
Speelman-Short
Candidates Match 1991
Black to play

1. . . . ♗c7?

With 1... ♖b8! Black should draw.

2. ♖f6 ♖e5
3. ♖f7† ♔d6
4. ♖xh7

And White won soon after **4... ♗b6 5. ♘c2 ♖e6 6. ♖f7 ♔e5 7. ♘d4.**



49

For example, 7... ♗xd4 8. exd4† and 9. ♖a7 wins another ♙ or trades ♖s.

Or, if 7... ♖f6, White can also win with 8. ♘f3† ♔e6 9. ♖g7 ♗d8 and now 10. ♔e2 followed by 11. g4 and Black's g-♙ eventually falls.

Noah: Maybe not 99 out of 100, but in an awful lot of situations. That's why Black loses in Diagram 48.

The minor-piece endgame with only one passed ♙, at e3 after 1... ♖b8!, is drawable because Black's remaining ♙s are hard to attack thanks to *Fine's Law.*

White would have a hard time trying to promote his e-pawn after 2. ♖xb8 and 3. ♘xd5.

Pat: But?

Every rule has exceptions.

Noah: But as played, Black leaves himself with two weak ♙s and an inferior ♖.

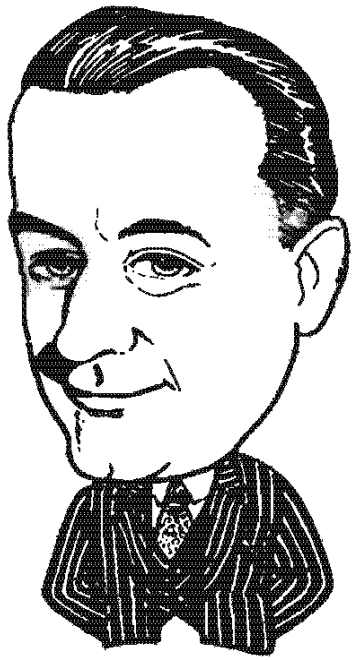
That leads to another rule of thumb on rules:

Every rule has exceptions.

Pat: I was afraid you were going to say that.

Noah: It's true. And sometimes in chess it seems that the exceptions outnumber the rules. Just like in life.

Pat: Uh-huh.



"Put Your Pawns on the Opposite Color of Your Bishop."
–Capablanca

Noah: Some have more exceptions than others, like *Capablanca's Rule–*

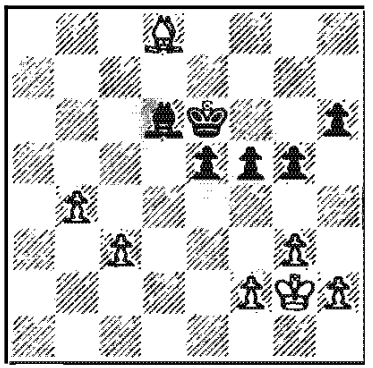
Put Your Pawns on the Opposite Color of Your ♗.

In Diagram 50 Black threatens to put all his ♙s on light squares and draw by keeping the white ♔ at bay and by blockading the ♔-side ♙s.

But White beats him to it, and eventually wins by picking up the Black ♙s on dark squares.

Pat: But you were talking about exceptions. Why isn't *Capablanca's Rule* **always** true?

Noah: Because there are always going to be special cases–like when creating a passed ♙ or locking out the enemy ♔–when "bad" ♙-moves work.



50

Blatny-Adams
Adelaide 1988
White to play

1. h3!

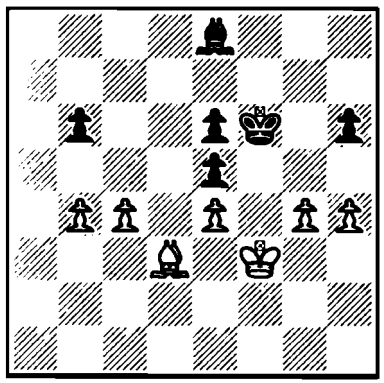
Not 1. ♔f3? e4† 2. ♔e2 g4! and ...♔d5-c4 blockades.

1. . . .	**♔d5**
2. g4!	**f4**
3. ♗f6	**♗f8**

Or 3... ♔c4 4. ♗g7 ♔xc3 5. ♗xh6 ♗e7 6. b5 and wins.

4. f3

The game ended soon after **4... e4 5. fxe4† ♔xe4 6. b5 ♔d5 7. b6 ♔c6 8. ♗d4 ♗e7 9. c4 ♗d8 10. c5** and ♔f3-e4-f5.



51

Sulskis-Slekys
Lithuanian Championship 1994
White to play

1. b5!

Not 1. c5 because 1... b5! locks the ♔-side.

Now 1... ♗d7 allows 2. c5! dxc5 3. b6 ♗c8 4. ♗c4 followed by 5. g5†, which trades a ♔-side ♙ for the black e6-♙. After ♗xe6 White wins with ♗d5! and b6-b7.

1. . . . ♔e7

2. h5!

Here 2. g5? h5! seals the ♔-side.

2. . . . ♗d7

3. c5! bxc5
4. b6 ♗c8
5. g5!

The point.

5. . . . hxg5
6. h6 ♔f6
7. ♗c4 ♔g6
8. ♗xe6! ♗b7

Of course, not 8... ♗xe6 9. b7.

9. ♗d5 ♗c8
10. b7 ♗xb7
11. ♗xb7 c4
12. ♗c8 ♔xh6
13. ♗g4 Resigns

In view of the unstoppable ♔e3-d2-c3 and wins.

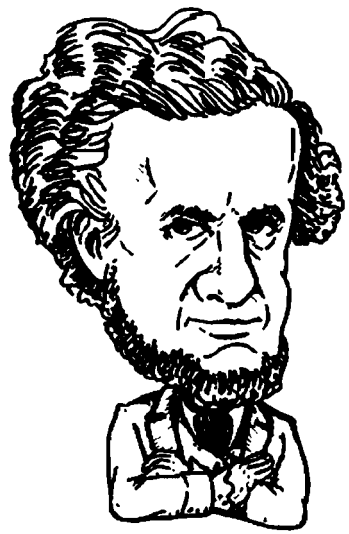
Other Bits of Vintage Advice

"To free your game, take off some of your adversary's men, if possible for nothing."
–Joseph Bertin, 1735

Pat: Can you think of an example?

Noah: For example, in Diagram 51, the chromatically correct moves, c4-c5 and g4-g5, would allow Black to blockade the position and draw.

Pat: Even though he would be making his own ♗ bad and giving White protected passed ♙s?



Noah: True enough. But the proper winning plan involves creating two passed ♙s at b6 and h6, and the only way to do that it to make White's ♗ temporarily into a very bad ♗ by first putting the ♙s at b5 and h5.

This shows how endgame theory changes: Howard Staunton, in the best-selling chess book of the 19th century, said if you have the inferior game you should put your ♙s on the same color as your ♗–so you could protect them much better.

"One Knight, at the end of the game, is generally superior to one Bishop."
–Howard Staunton, 1847

Pat: I just remembered a rule. I heard a long time ago:

All ♖+♙ Endings are Drawn.

At least they always turn out that way when I'm one or two ♙s up.

Noah: We owe that bit of irony to Siegbert Tarrasch. It's not a bad rule–as long as you realize it doesn't work a lot of the time.

For example, in Diagram 52, even at the cost of a ♙, White would have won the ♖+♙ ending after 1... ♗xe5.

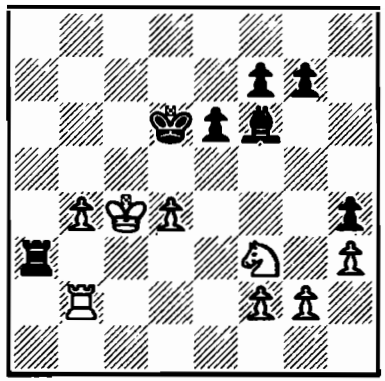
Pat: But he won in the long run...

Noah: ... because he still managed to trade pieces and cut the black ♔ off along the c-file.

White's ♔ and b-♙ were then a mismatch for the enemy ♖, and Black resigned when he saw he'd have to surrender it for the ♙.

If you're looking for useful rules, I'm sure you can create a few of your own.

Pat: Like what?



52

Bareev-Ivanchuk
Linares 1994
White to play

1. ♘e5! **♖a7**

Black must begin to retreat because the ♖+♙ ending is lost after 1... ♗xe5 2. dxe5† ♔xe5 3. b5 ♖a8 4. b6 ♔d6 5. ♔b5 and 6. b7 wins.

2. b5 **♗d8**

Else the ♙ advances decisively.

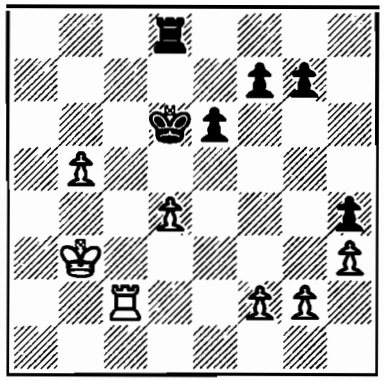
3. ♘c6 **♖a4†**

4. ♔b3! **♖a8**

Best play by Black but...

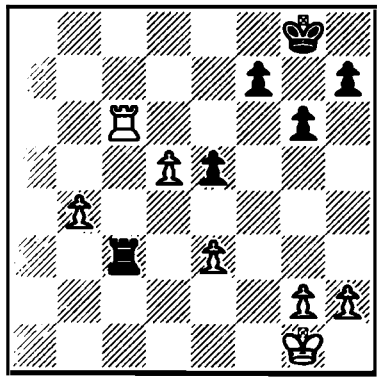
5. ♘xd8! **♖xd8**

6. ♖c2



53

Black **resigned** after **6... ♖a8 7. ♔b4 ♖a1 8. b6 g5 9. ♔b5 ♖b1† 10. ♔a6 ♖a1† 11. ♔b7.**



54

Yudasin-Kramnik
Candidates Match 1994
White to play

1. . . . ♖xe3?

Making it easy for White. With 1... ♖b3! Black can still fight. E.g., 2. ♖b6 ♔f8 3. d6 ♔e8 and 4... ♔d7 or 2. d6 ♔g7 3. ♖c8 ♖d3 4. ♖d8 ♔f6.

2. d6??

Clearly winning is 2. ♖c8† (controlling the queening squares) ♔g7 3. b5!, e.g., 3... ♖b3 4. d6 and 5. d7, or 3... ♖d3 4. b6.

2. . . . ♔g7

Now 3. d7 ♖d3 halts White.

3. b5 ♔f6!
4. d7† ♔e7

And White had nothing better than 5. ♖**d6! ♔d8 6. ♖f6 ♔xd7! 7. ♖xf7† ♔e6 8. ♖xh7 ♖b3 9. ♖b7 ♖b2!.** Black drew thanks to his superior ♖ and ♔.

Of course, some rules apply only to the player with the advantage. And some rules apply only to the one trying to draw.
–GM Tall

Noah: Oh, how about *"It's easier to promote a distant passed ♙ than a near one."*

Pat: Isn't that obvious? Seems to me a ♙ on, say b4 or c4, is always going to be easier to queen than one on g4.

I mean, if both sides castled ♔-side.

Noah: True, but even if they're not on the same *rank,* the distant ♙ often has better chances.

For example, in Diagram 54 Black simplifies the task by permitting White to advance two ♙s to the fifth rank, ensuring that one could queen. He should have stopped the distant one (1... ♖b3!).

Pat: Then where did White go wrong?

Noah: By trying to promote the nearer ♙. If he had pushed the b-♙ instead of the d-♙, Black would have had to commit his ♖–and one of the ♙s would have sailed through.

Pat: Seems like you really enjoy collecting endgame rules.

Noah: You might too if you gave them a chance.

Of course, some rules apply only to the player with the advantage. And some rules apply only to the one trying to draw.

Pat: How does that work?

Noah: Well, something like the last rule goes:

When Defending, Go After the Most Dangerous Enemy ♙.

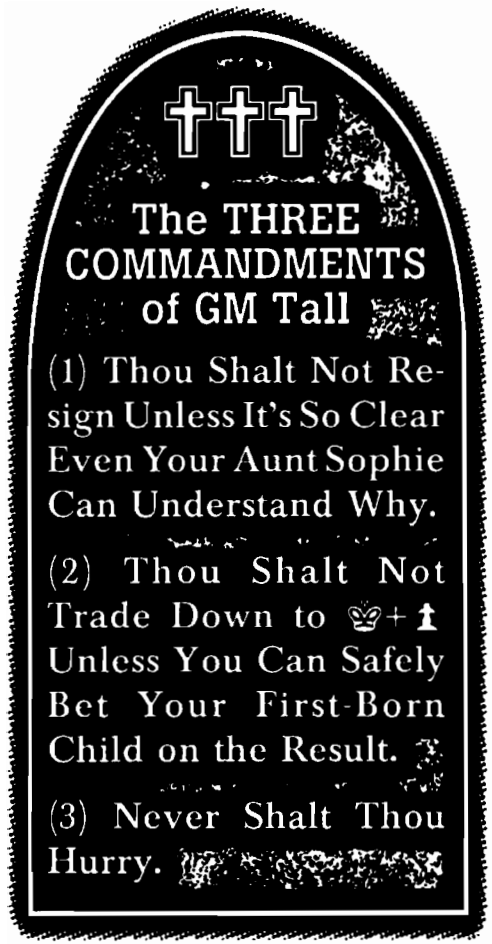
Pat: That *is* too obvious.

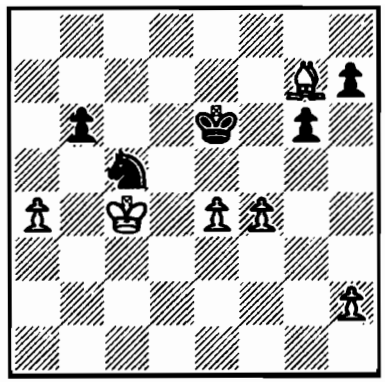
Noah: Not really. In Diagram 55, with only a few ♙s left on the board, Black took the ♙ that didn't threaten him instead of the one that did.

And this was played by the No. 3-ranked player in the world at the time in the closest thing to a world championship match.

Pat: It seems like everyone has some personal rules they need to remember. Do you have any?

Noah: Sure, my Three Commandments.





55

Karpov-Sokolov
Candidates superfinals 1987
Black to play

1. . . . ♘xe4??

After 1... ♘xa4! White's only winning chance is to trap the ♘ by 2. ♗d4.

But 2... ♔d6 followed by 3... ♔c6 and 4... ♘c5 will draw.

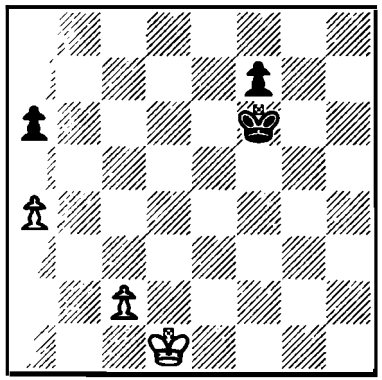
2. ♔b5 ♘c5

3. ♗f8!

Now 3. ♗d4? ♘xa4! would have drawn (4. ♔xa4 ♔f5 5. ♗e5 g5 or 5. ♗e3 ♔g4).

3. . . . ♘d7

And Black **resigned** after **4. ♗a3 ♔d5** (4... ♔f5 5. ♗d6) **5. ♗e7 ♔d4 6. ♗d8.**



56

Mnatsakanian-Vogt
Stary Smokovec 1979
White to play

1. Resigns?

But 1.♔e2♔e5 2.♔d3♔d5 3. c4† ♔c5 4. ♔c3 a5 5. ♔d3! is a draw after all.

For example, 5... f5 6. ♔c3 f4 7. ♔d3 f3 8. ♔e3 ♔xc4 9. ♔xf3 ♔b4 10. ♔e3 ♔xa4 11. ♔d2 ♔b3 12. ♔c1 ♔a2 and ♔c2-1-2 etc.

Pat: Okay, let me start with Commandment No. 1.

How come I see GMs resigning all the time in positions that don't look lost to me?

Noah: In some cases it's a pride thing. They don't want to play out ugly positions in front of spectators. But amateurs can't afford pride.

It's far more embarrassing to resign prematurely. As a practical matter, whether your position is a forced loss should not affect you.

Here, in Diagram 56 for example, White should play the obvious 1. ♔e2 and see what happens.

Pat: But what if you *know* it's a book loss?

Noah: Never resign until you know *your opponent* knows how to win. I'd never stop the clocks in ♕+♔ v. ♖+♔, for example.

Sure, it's a book loss. But almost no one knows the book.

"Let no man surrender so long as he is unwounded and can fight."
–Field Marshal Montgomery to his troops on the eve of the Battle of El Alamein.

Thou Shalt Not Trade Down to ♔+♙ Unless You Can Safely Bet Your First-Born Child On The Result.

Rules

Pat: Every GM must.

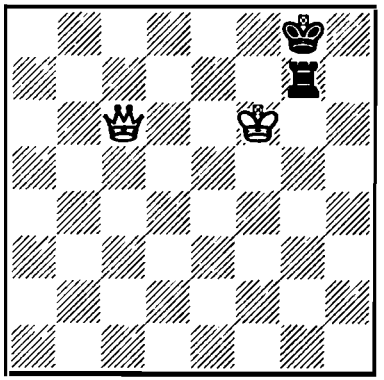
Noah: Then why did Ljubomir Ljubojevic play it out with the ♖ against Gata Kamsky at Linares 1991? Or Nigel Short against Valery Salov at Barcelona 1989, as in Diagram 57.

In fact, Short played out ♕+♔ v. ♔ to the very end. If there's any doubt in your mind that your opponent can win, let him prove it.

Pat: I guess that makes sense.

Noah: That leads to Commandment No. 2:

Thou Shalt Not Trade Down to ♔+♙ Unless You Can Safely Bet Your First-Born Child On The Result.



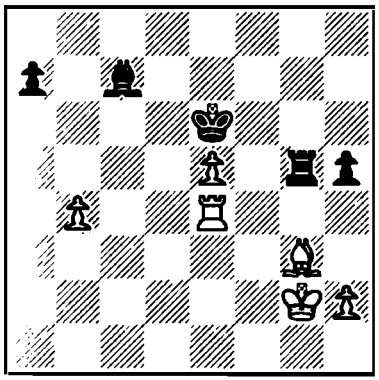
57

Salov-Short
Barcelona 1989
White to play

1. ♕a8+! ♔h7
2. ♕e8!

A zugzwang position that's been in the books for 300 years.

Yet, Black played on: **2... ♖a7 3. ♕h5† ♔g8 4. ♕g4† ♔h7 5. ♕h3† ♔g8 6. ♕g3† ♔h8 7. ♕h2† ♔g8 8. ♕b8† ♔h7 9. ♕xa7† ♔h8 10. ♕g7#.**



58

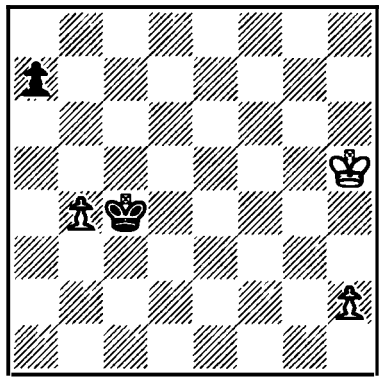
Waulin-Grozspeter
Kecskemet 1993
Black to play

1. . . . ♗xe5??
2. ♔h3!

Black may have assumed 2. ♖xe5† ♖xe5 3. ♗xe5 ♔xe5 4. ♔g3 ♔f5 5. ♔h4 ♔g6 draws.

Or he may just have miscounted what happens here now.

2. . . . ♔d5
3. ♖xe5† ♖xe5
4. ♗xe5 ♔xe5
5. ♔h4 ♔d5
6. ♔xh5 ♔c4



59

7. h4 Resigns

It's obvious after 7... ♔xb4 8. ♔g6 a5 9. h5 a4 10. h6 a3 11. h7.

When In Doubt, Don't.

Pat: That's perfect for me. I always find ♔+♙ endings hard.

Noah: Yes, good players mess them up, too–even when the position is largely a matter of counting, like Diagram 58.

Pat: Counting?

Noah: Sure. If Black had seen 2. ♔h3, a neat but simple gain of a tempo, he could have said to himself: "Okay, all the pieces are going off in two moves.

"The result is ♔+♙s. But I can't stop ♔xh5. Therefore, my only chance is ...♔xb4."

Pat: So far, I'm with you.

Noah: Well, then he continues: "After 4... ♔xe5 it will take White two moves to capture the h-♙, one to get the ♔ out of the way, and five to promote the h-♙. Total: 8 moves."

By the same count, you can see it also takes Black 8 moves to queen–but White moves first.

That means 12. h8=♕ comes in time to answer 12... a1=♕ with 13. ♕xa1!.

Pat: I couldn't see all that.

Noah: That's a corollary to my second commandment–

When In Doubt, Don't.

It's funny how often people rush headlong into lost or drawn ♔+♙ endings long before they've exhausted their options, such as 1... ♔d5 back in Diagram 58. It's the worst trading decision you can make.

"Nobody ever died from playing a King and pawn ending–but why take a chance?"
–GM Tall

Pat: But don't people make other bad trades, into ♖ endings or ♗ endings?

Noah: Yes, but in practical terms there is nothing as final as ♔+♙s. Except maybe death.

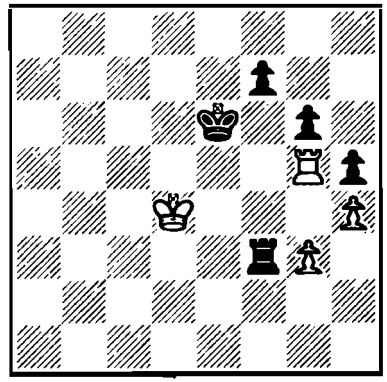
You almost always have some ways of complicating your opponent's life when there's wood on the board.

Yet in Diagram 60 Black had an unstoppable winning plan of 1... ♖a3 followed by bringing his ♔ to g7 and ...f6. That wins the g-♙.

Pat: What about 2. ♔e4?

Noah: Then Black locks up the enemy ♖ with 2... f5†! and White's odds of survival are about one in a million.

Pat: Speaking of odds, I'll bet that game made an impression on Black he'll never forget.



60

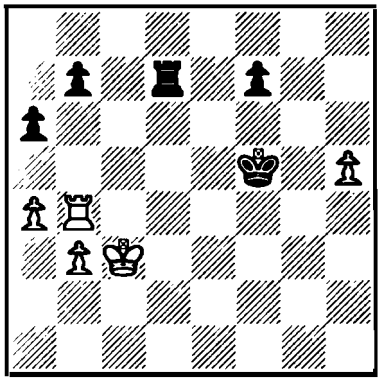
Yusupov-Ljubojevic
Linares 1992
Black to play

1. . . . ♖f5?

White assumes that 2. ♖xf5 is an easy win for Black (it is) and that 2. ♔e4 ♖xg5 is almost as good (it isn't).

2. ♔e4! ♖xg5
3. hxg5 f6
4. gxf6 ♔xf6
5. ♔f4 g5†
6. ♔f3!

And the game is quickly drawn, by **6... ♔f5 7. g4†! hxg4† 8. ♔g3** or 6... ♔f7 7. ♔f2, with distant opposition.



61

Illescas-Ljubojevic
Linares 1988
White to play

1. ♖d4? **♖c7†??**
2. ♔d3 **♔g5**
3. ♖d5† **f5**
4. a5

And White drew after **4... ♖c1 5. ♔d2 ♖c6 6. b4 b5 7. axb6 ♖xb6 8. ♖a5** etc.

Only in the post mortem did a kibitzer point out that 1... ♖xd4 2. ♔xd4 ♔g5 wins because White soon runs out of "passes" (3. ♔e4 a5! 4. ♔e5 b6! 5. ♔e4 f6! 6. ♔d5 ♔xh5 7. ♔c6 f5).

Noah: As a matter of fact, Black had made a very similar error in the same event four years before.

In Diagram 61 he was offered a cold win with 1... ♖xd4–and gave it away.

Pat: That's pretty embarrassing for a top GM.

Noah: It was worse than you think.

The diagram was an *adjourned* position so Black literally had hours to count out moves like 1. ♖d4?

Pat: Ouch. So why did White play 1. ♖d4?

Noah: Simple. He also blundered. People get tired in endgames simply because they are the *ends* of games.

Pat: What if there's no choice but to go into ♔+ ♙ ?

"Fatigue makes cowards of us all."
–General George S. Patton Jr.

Noah: There's almost always a choice.

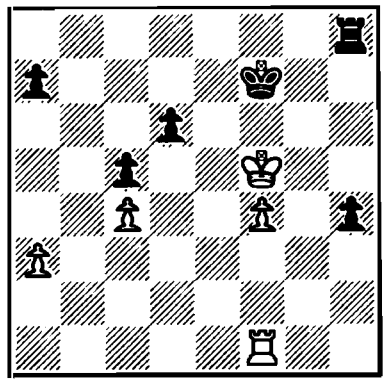
In Diagram 62 White probably thought he was at least drawing–until it was too late.

Pat: Sure looks good after 1. ♖h1. There's no way Black can save the h-♙. Then a trade of ♖s would leave White with the outside passed f-♙.

Noah: But it remains the outside ♙ for about a femtosecond–until 5... d5.

I'm always careful about trading off my last ♖. You can take it off the board but you can't put it on.

Pat: Whatever.



62

Obukhov-Ibragimov
U.S.S.R. 1991
White to play

1. ♖h1??

White sees he can win the h-♙ and thinks that must be a draw.

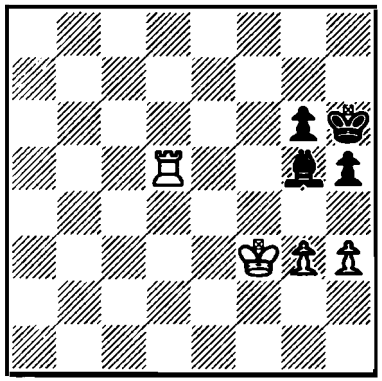
But if he calculates it out, he would force himself to find the active defense: 1. ♖b1! h3 2. ♖b7† and now 2... ♔e8?? 3. ♖b8† and 2... ♔g8?? 3. ♔g6 actually lose.

So the game should end in a draw after 2... ♔f8! 3. ♔g5! and checks at b7 and b8.

1. . . .	**h3**
2. ♖h2	**a6**
3. ♔g4	**♔f6**
4. ♖xh3	**♖xh3**
5. ♔xh3	**d5!**

Resigns

White is out of the square (6. cxd5 c4).



63

Grivas-Minasian
Debrecen 1992
White to play

1. g4??

It's not entirely clear that White is winning after 1. ♔e4 and ♔e5-e6. But there's an excellent chance of it, particularly if the ♔ reaches f7.

1. . . . hxg4†
2. ♔xg4 ♗c1

The game was drawn 22 moves later: **3. ♔f3 ♗g5 4. ♖d4 ♔g7 5. ♔e4 ♗c1 6. ♔d5 ♔f6 7. ♔d6 ♗e3 8. ♖e4 ♗c1 etc.**

Noah: That's another danger in ♔+♙ endings: the margin of error is much smaller than other endings.

Pat: Meaning what?

Noah: Meaning that one error is often fatal–and if you're not winning, you're probably *losing*.

That brings up my third commandment:

Never Shalt Thou Hurry.

Pat: What means "hurry?"

Noah: Anything that rushes into a significant change in the number of ♙s or pieces. For example, in Diagram 63 White should have tried to exploit the target at g6 before he traded off one of his two remaining ♙s.

Pat: Yeah, but usually you see GMs just shifting pieces back and forth for hours. That's not hurrying. But what *is* it?

Noah: Subterfuge. Sometimes it's advantageous just to repeat the position when an opportunity arises.

Pat: Why? Because you want a draw?

"Rashness often succeeds. Still more often it fails."
–Napoleon Bonaparte

Noah: No, it gains time on the clock and scores mind-points. Psychological warfare.

Often the side fighting for a draw will make further weaknesses–to avoid repetition–because he starts doubting himself.

In Diagram 64 White understood that the best winning plan was to sacrifice the Exchange at some point. The problem is figuring out the right point.

Pat: How do you know when it is right?

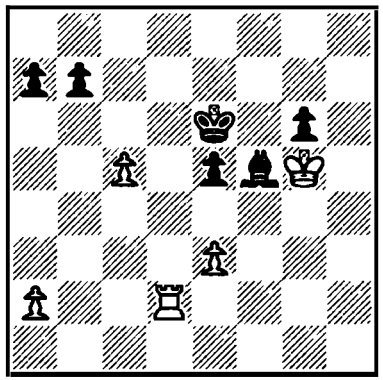
Noah: Usually it's when you can't significantly improve your position further. In this case, White waited until he had exhausted all of the tempo-moves Black could use in the inevitable ♔+♙ ending.

Of course, this applies best to positions like Diagram 64 when the enemy has little or no counterplay.

Pat: As if you're playing without an opponent?

Noah: Exactly. White has that luxury here, so he can wait until the a-♙ has gone as far as it can go.

"The most valuable commodity in the endgame–next to a protected passed pawn–is patience."
–Anonymous



64

Gleizerov-Salai
Pardubice 1992
White to play

1. a4!

Not 1. ♖d6† ♔e7 2. ♖xg6?? ♗xg6 3. ♔xg6 ♔e6 and there's no win (e.g. 4. e4 a5 as in the note to 3. a5).

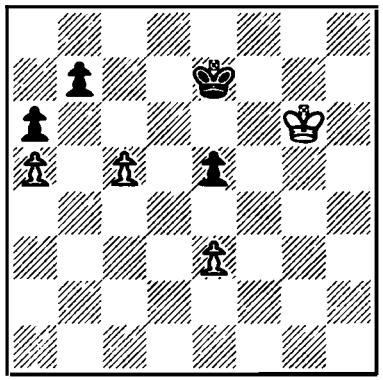
1. . . . ♗e4
2. ♖d6† ♔e7
3. a5!

Still too early (3. ♖xg6?? ♗xg6 4. ♔xg6 ♔e6 5. e4! a5! and Black draws–6. ♔g5 ♔d7 7. ♔f5 ♔c6 8. ♔xe5 ♔xc5 9. ♔f6 b5!).

3. . . . a6

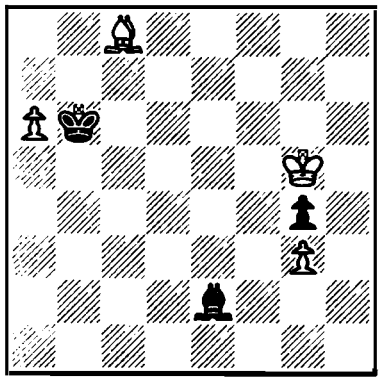
The ♗ can't move (3... ♗c6 4. ♖xg6; 3... ♗f5 4. a6! bxa6 5. ♖xa6 and the a-♙ falls).

4. ♖xg6! ♗xg6
5. ♔xg6



65

And White wins through the opposition: 5... ♔e6 6. e4 ♔-moves 7. ♔f5 or 5... ♔d7 6. ♔f5 ♔c6 7. ♔xe5 ♔xc5 8. e4 b5 9. axb6 ♔xb6 10. ♔d6 and he queens first and wins with checks at b8 and a8.



66

Charushin-Rosengol
Correspondence 1986
White to play

1. ♔f4!

Not 1. ♗xg4 ♗xa6 2. ♔f4 ♔c7 3. ♗f3 ♔d6 4. g4 ♔e7 5. g5 ♔f7 and 6... ♔g7, Black can then draw just by moving his ♗ forever. The g7 blockade can't be broken.

1. . . . ♔a7

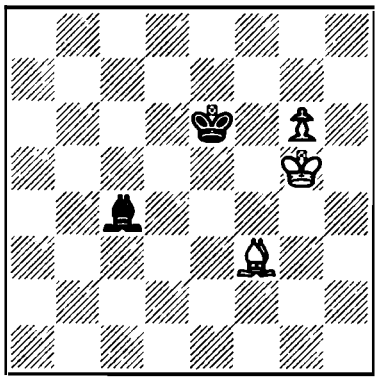
Worse is 1... ♔c7 2. a7 ♗f3 3. ♗xg4. A ♗-move like 1... ♗b5 allows 2. ♔xg4 followed by ♔f4/g4-g5-etc.

And a ♗-move like 1... ♗d1 allows 2. ♗xg4 ♗c2 3. ♗c8 and g4-g5-g6 etc.

2. ♗xg4 ♗xa6
3. ♗f3 ♔b6

It's a race but this time Black's ♔ loses.

4. g4 ♔c5
5. g5 ♔d6
6. g6 ♔e6
7. ♔g5 ♗c4



67

Black **resigned** after **8. g7** because after 8... ♔f7 9. ♔h6 ♔g8 the ♔ can be driven off g8 by 10. ♗e4 ♔f7 11. ♔h7 ♔f6 12. ♔h8! followed by ♗h7-g8.

Noah: Remember, that unless the position has deteriorated into some mad ♙-queening race, you can take your time with a maneuver or two–or four or five.

Also, because of the curious nature of endgames, you can gain tempi by taking your time.

Pat: Huh?

Noah: You heard me right. And Diagram 66 is a perfect example of it.

Pat: Do this one slowly. I have real problems with ♗ endings, even simple ones.

Noah: Okay, what's happening is that White can take on g4 whenever he wants.

And the only way Black can then draw is to meet ♗xg4 with ...♗xa6 followed by rushing his ♔ back to the ♔-side.

Pat: That's a long way to go.

Noah: Sometimes ♔s are surprisingly fast. Anyway, if White takes on g4 immediately, Black gets his ♔ to g7 in plenty of time.

Pat: But...

Noah: But by taking his time with 1. ♔f4! White actually gains two moves. Black then has to try for a blockade on g8 instead of g7. But g8 is a light-colored square and the ♔ can be driven away by White's ♗ of the same color.

Pat: I didn't think there was that much calculation in the endgame.

Noah: Sometimes you must count–but not generally. If you take your time you may not have to. It's like José Capablanca and his endgame eyes.

Capa once came upon a couple of amateurs trying to figure out some complex ending, like Diagram 68.

Without even asking whose turn it was to move, Capa began shifting pieces around until he had found a winning formation for White.

Then he went back to the original position to see how to get from point A to point B.

Pat: What's the point of the story?

Noah: This–in an endgame **Visualizing is often more important than calculating.**

Pat: How's that?

Noah: In the opening, you can get by on memory. But then you start calculating. In the middlegame it's often a matter of how well you calculate your ♔-side attack as it races to beat his ♕-side attack, for example.

Pat: And in the ending?

Noah: Time is cheap. But the ability to visualize is often crucial.

Here White is shooting for a zugzwang position–his ♙ on d3 and Black's ♙ on d7.

Pat: He can't force that, can he?

Noah: No, but he can try. And by not hurrying he sets little traps.

Pat: Which Black eventually falls into–even though it takes 13 moves.

Noah: Because he didn't know what the lost position looked like. White did.

Pat: That's what you mean by endgame eyes.

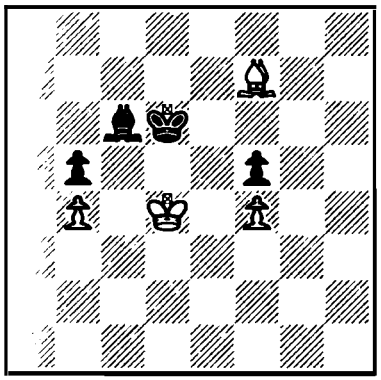
Noah: Sure. As I said about how a master sees a ♖ ending with one ♙ and in most cases he can visualize–without really calculating–whether it will reach the Philidor drawing position or the Lucena winning one.

Pat: One thing I'm sure of–I wasn't born with endgame eyes.

Noah: Nobody is a born endgame player. Bobby Fischer was already a two-time world championship candidate when he decided to master endgames–by locking himself in a Manhattan hotel room for three months with just a set and a mess of books.

Pat: I think I'll pass on that idea, or at least I won't hurry.

Noah: There are better ways than Fischer's. Come back tomorrow and I'll show you something invaluable you won't find in any book.



68

Pinter-Alterman
Beer-Sheva 1991
White to play

Because Black's ♙s are on target squares White has good winning chances.

1. ♗h5 ♗d5
2. ♗d1 ♗b7

Black has other good passes, such as 2... ♗c4 and if 3. ♗c2 ♗e6 4. ♗d3 then 4... ♗d7.

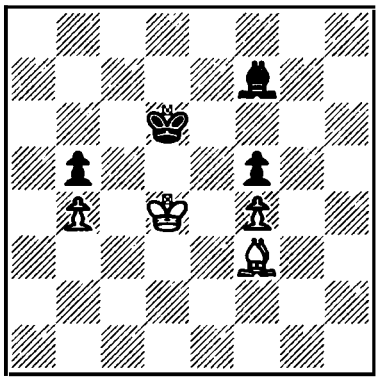
What White is looking for is a zugzwang position: White ♗/d3, Black's ♗/d7 and Black to move.

3. ♗e2 ♗c6
4. ♗f1 ♗e8
5. ♗g2 ♗f7

So far Black has avoided all the little traps. For instance, 5... ♗g6?? would actually lose to 6. ♗h3! and Black is in zugzwang.

For example, 6... ♔c6 7. ♔e5, or 6... ♔e6 7. ♔c5 or 6... ♗h7 7. ♗f1!

6. ♗f3



69

Now the right pass was 6... ♗c4.

6. . . . ♗e8??
7. ♗b7!

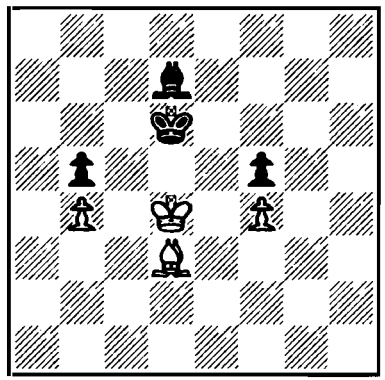
Here 7... ♔c7 8. ♗d5 ♔d6 allows the key zugzwang position– the one White has been playing for.

White continues 9. ♗b3 and now 9... ♗c6 10. ♗c2 ♗d7 11. ♗d3 or 9... ♗d7! 10. ♗d1!! ♗e6 11. ♗e2 ♗d7 12. ♗d3!

The actual game finish was very similar.

7. ... ♗d7
8. ♗d5! ♗e8
9. ♗b3 ♗d7
10. ♗d1!! ♗e6

And Black resigned in view of 11. ♗e2 ♗d7 12. ♗d3 and:



70

White finally reaches the winning position: 12... ♔e6 13. ♔c5 or 12... ♔c6 13. ♔e5.

In which Noah explains why a chess King is like a defensive back in football—and that in either game, two usually beats one.

Chapter Four

Mismatches

Pat: Okay, what's this mysterious secret I won't find in any book?

Noah: It's the single most important principle of endgame play–***the mismatch.***

Pat: The mismatch?

Noah: It's another reminder that an endgame is not a middlegame. Mismatches are unique to the ending.

Pat: How so?

Noah: In middlegames, the board is filled with pieces and the battle is like a tug-of-war.

White may have, say, five pieces attacking a d5-♙ but if Black has five defenders, the situation doesn't change until White adds a sixth. And if Black has one more defender, it's in balance again.

Pat: And in the ending?

Noah: It's more like hand-to-hand combat, one piece against another.

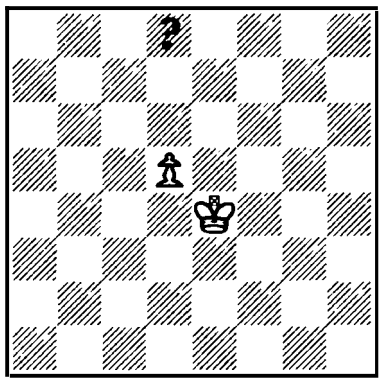
And if you can make it two vs. one, you have a favorable, if not winning, mismatch.

Pat: But it must depend on which two against which one.

Noah: A bit. But, as you can see from Diagram 71, even a ♕ cannot make progress alone against a mere ♔+♙.

Against other single pieces, the ♔+♙ can force progress, even against theoretically stronger pieces.

Pat: But creating a 2 vs. 1 situation only happens if you're ahead material, right?



71

A 2 vs. 1 Mismatch
Black to move

What happens if:

The d8-piece is a ♕–

Black cannot win the ♙. The best an unaided ♕ can do is stop it from advancing, e.g., 1... ♕d6 2. ♔d4 ♕b4† 3. ♔e5 ♕c5 4. ♔e6 ♕e3† etc.

The d8-piece is a ♖–

The ♙ can't be captured or blockaded and its promotion can't be stopped, e.g., 1... ♖e8† 2. ♔f5 ♖d8 3. ♔e6 ♖e8† 4. ♔d7 and 5. d6, etc.

The d8-piece is a ♗–

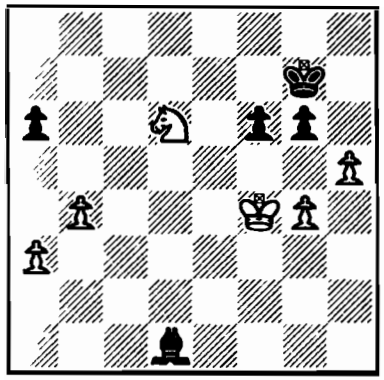
Again, promotion can't be prevented. The ♗ can sacrifice itself for the ♙ after 1... ♗c7.

The d8-piece is a ♘–

The ♘ can still sacrifice itself, e.g., 1... ♘b7 2. ♔f5 ♘d6† 3. ♔e6 ♘c4!

The d8-piece is a ♔–

The ♙ can be halted only by opposition–and then only because of stalemate (1... ♔d7 2. ♔e5 ♔e7 3. d6† ♔d7 4. ♔d5 ♔d8! 5. ♔e6 ♔e8 6. d7† ♔d8 7. ♔d6).



72

Kasparov-Timman
Linares 1992
White to play

1. ♘e8† ♔f7
2. ♘xf6! ♔xf6
3. g5† ♔f7
4. h6 Resigns

For example, 4... ♗a4 (4... ♔e6? 5. h7) 5. ♔e5 ♗d1 6. ♔d6 ♗b3 7. ♔c5 ♗a4 8. ♔b6.

White must create a winning ♙: 9... ♗b5 9. a4! ♗xa4 10. ♔xa6 ♗d7 11. b5 ♗c8† 12. ♔a7 and b6-b7-b8=♕.

Noah: Actually, sometimes you can create a mismatch by giving up material.

In Diagram 72 White wins by taking the black ♔ out of the game with moves 2-4.

Pat: I see, because he must prevent h7-h8=♕.

Noah: Precisely. Black resigned when he saw there was nothing to stop the ♔ from reaching the ♕-side and creating a passed b-♙.

Black must eventually give up the ♗ for the ♙, on b5 or b7, after which White's ♔ returns triumphantly to the ♔-side, where there's another mismatch.

Pat: That must be a pretty rare situation.

"Chess is the movement of pieces eating each other."
–Marcel Duchamp

"The fundamental object of all military combinations is to gain local superiority by concentration."
–Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan

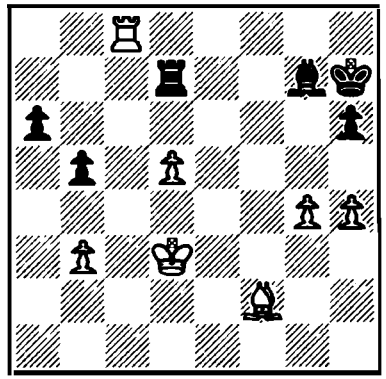
Noah: Not really. It occurs often when one player gets his ♔ involved in the game long before its opposite number–as in Diagram 73.

It looks like White's ♔ should just win easily but there are tactical problems (1. ♔e4 ♖e7†).

Pat: But how can he get away with sacking the Exchange? What's that about?

Noah: It's basically just a trade of one piece for another–but it allows a 2 vs. 1 mismatch to decide the game.

Pat: Okay. I get your point that one guy has a big edge because his ♔ plays and the other ♔ doesn't. But in most endings both players have ♔s.



73

Pinter-Popovic
Thessaloniki 1988
White to play

1. ♖c5!

White makes no progress by 1. ♔e4 ♖e7† (2. ♔f5? ♖e5†).

1. . . . ♗f8
2. ♔d4!

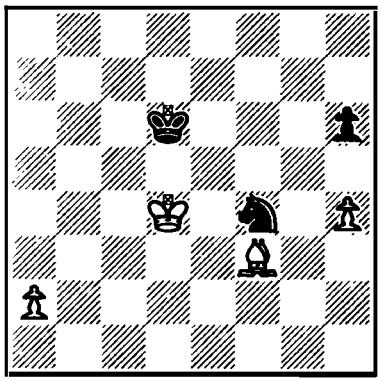
Now 2... ♗g7† is best.

2. . . . ♗xc5†?
3. ♔xc5 ♖c7†

Otherwise the ♖ is just overwhelmed and the ♔ is too slow (3... ♖f7 4. ♗d4 ♔g8 5. d6 ♔f8 6. ♔c6 ♔e8 7. h5).

4. ♔b6 ♖c2
5. ♗c5 ♔g6
6. d6

Black fell on time in a lost position after **6... ♖d2 7. ♔c7 ♖d5 8. b4 a5 9. d7.**



74

Salov-M. Gurevich
Biel 1993
White to play

1. ♔e4

Not 1. ♔c4? ♘g6 2. h5? ♘e5†.

1. . . . **♘g6**
2. h5 **♘e7**
3. ♗e2!

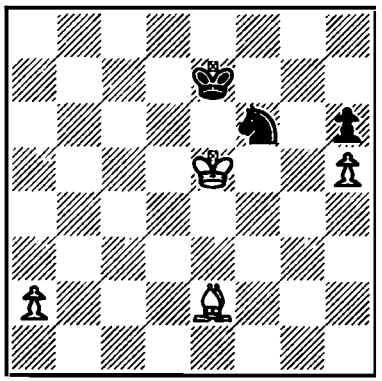
Waiting: 3... ♔c6 allows 4. ♔e5! and 5. ♔f6. Also 3... ♔e6 4. a4 (threat of a5-6-7) ♘c6 5. ♗c4† ♔d6 6. ♔f5 and 5... ♔f6 6. ♔d5.

3. . . . **♘d5**
4. ♔f5!

Now 4... ♘c3 5. ♗c4 and 6. ♔g6, or 4... ♘e7† 5. ♔f6 and 6. ♔g7.

4. . . . **♔e7**
5. ♔e5! **♘f6**

Also 5... ♘c3 6. ♗c4 ♘xa2!? 7. ♗xc2 ♔f8 8. ♔f6 and the Black ♔ never reaches h8 while White plays ♔g6xh6-g6 and h5-6-7-8.



75

6. a4 **♘d7†**
7. ♔f5! **♘c5**
8. a5 **♘e6**

Also 8... ♘b3 9. a6! ♘d4† 10. ♔g6 ♘xe2 11. a7 and queens.

9. a6! **Resigns**

Noah: Yes, but in most cases there is a latent threat of one player's ♔ to run to one wing or the other. That's the case in Diagram 74.

Pat: I don't get it. White has a passed a-♙ but he starts by going to the ♔-side.

Noah: He needs a second winning plan, such as winning the h-♙. If Black then shifts his ♔ to the defense of h6, he allows a ♔+♗ vs. ♘ imbalance on the ♕-side.

Pat: It's even worse after 5. ♔e5. It looks like ♔+♗ vs. nothing.

Noah: That's when Black rushes the ♘ back into action but it's too late. The game's finish, and the similar 8... ♘b3 9. a6! line are typical of mismatches.

Black can just barely hold the fort on the ♔-side–where he has his extra piece–but he's three tempi from salvation on the ♕-side.

Pat: So if mismatches are the greatest thing since the invention of the ♘ move, how do I make them?

Noah: You can walk into a losing mismatch of your own making if you play with only one piece.

Pat: For sure.

Noah: But not always obvious. In Diagram 76 Black plays a losing move because he thinks it will actually give him the edge (1... ♖e3 2. ♖h6? ♔c5).

Pat: I get it. After 2. ♖c8 Black is playing without a ♔. And Black loses if he allows ♔e6xd6 by playing ... ♖xb3.

So the rest of the game...

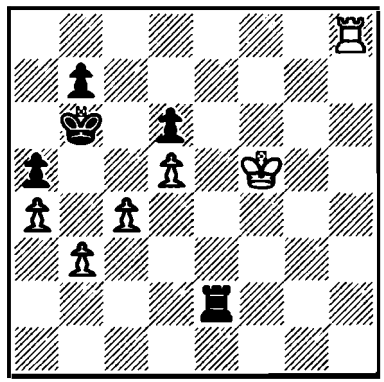
Noah: ...is another mismatch between his ♖ and the White ♔+d-♙.

Pat: Tell me, do mismatches occur in all endings?

Noah: No, you usually need ♙s on both wings for a true mismatch. If all the ♙s are on the same side it's much easier for a mismatched defender to rush from one key square to another one nearby.

But with ♙s on both wings, particularly in ♖+♙ and ♘+♙ endings, it ends up more like football than chess.

Pat: How's that?



76

Browne-Biyiasas
U.S. Championship 1980
Black to play

1. . . . ♖e3?

With 1... ♔c5 Black's ♔-activity ensures a draw. For instance, 2. ♖h6 ♖e3 or 2. ♖h7 b6 3. ♖b7 ♖e3 (a better try is 3. ♖c7† Kb4 4. ♖c6 but after 4... ♔xb3 5. ♖xb6† ♔xc4 6. ♖xd6 ♔b4 both sides will have to give up their ♖s eventually for the last enemy ♙).

2. ♖c8!

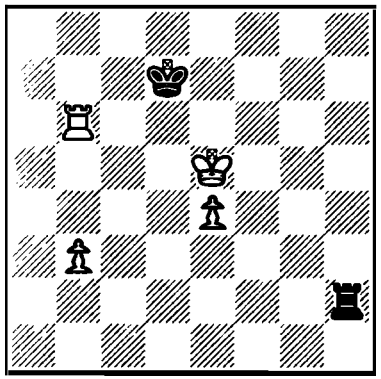
Now 2... ♖xb3 3. ♔e6 wins.

2. . . . ♖e5†
3. ♔f6 ♖e3
4. c5†!

No draw!

4. . . . dxc5
5. d6

And Black resigned after **5... ♖d3 6. ♔e7 ♖e3† 7. ♔d8** in view of 8. d7 followed by queening after 9. ♖c7 and 10. ♔c8.



77

Speelman-Gulko
Hastings 1988-89
White to play

1. ♖d6†! ♔e7

It's easier after 1... ♔c7 2. ♖d3 when Black's ♔ is cut off, leaving Black's ♖ futilely trying to stop the ♔ from advancing the e-♙.

2. ♖d5! ♖b2

Otherwise White reverses direction and advances the b-♙ after 3. ♔d4!.

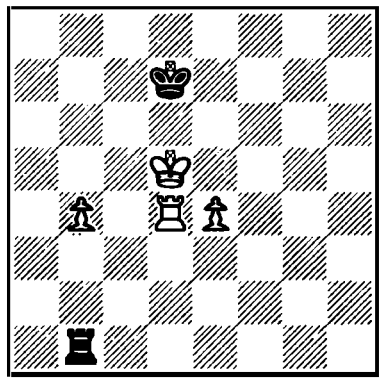
3. ♖b5 ♔d7!
4. ♖b7† ♔c6
5. ♖b4!

Threatening to go back to Plan A: 6. ♖d4!, cutting off the ♔ again, e.g., 5... ♔c5? 6. ♖c4† ♔b5 7. ♔d6 ♖xb3 8. ♖c1 and e5-e6 leads to Lucena.

5. . . . ♔d7!
6. ♖d4† ♔e7

Slowly but surely.

7. b4! ♖b1
8. ♔d5 ♔d7



78

Otherwise Plan B (9. ♔c6 and 10. b5) soon brings about Lucena.

9. e5! ♖e1

To stop 10. e6†.

10. b5

And Black resigned after **10... ♖e2 11. ♔c5† ♔c7 12. b6† ♔c8 13 ♔d6** because the Black ♔ will be cut off (13... ♖b2 14. e6 ♖xb6† 15. ♔e7 or 13... ♔d8 14. ♔c6† ♔c8 15. b7†).

Noah: Well, in Diagram 77, you can see that if White promotes a ♙, he wins. If he fails, it's a draw.

Pat: I've had positions like this–and never figured out how to get the two ♙s moving.

Noah: You don't need *two* ♔s, just one. So White tries to stick his ♔ next to one ♙.

Pat: Where's the football come in?

Noah: Think of Black's ♔ as a free safety. He's the last line of defense.

And like a good free safety he has to move to where the ball–that is, the enemy ♔–is.

Pat: So if White moves his ♔ to the side of the b-♙...

Noah: ...Black must follow suit. Otherwise: touchdown.

In this case, White constantly threatens to cut off the enemy ♔ until he finally isolates it. It turns into ♔+♖+♙ against ♔ either with the b-♙ or the e-♙. In the main line Black has a choice between allowing "Lucena" with the e-♙–or getting mated with the b-♙.

Pat: So the secret to mismatches is to get your pieces fighting weaker ones in a particular section of the board.

Noah: Yes, but it's not always clear which are the weaker ones.

For example, Diagram 79 starts out with Black trying to eliminate the ♕-side as a factor.

Pat: Is it so clear that 2. axb4 would have been a draw?

Noah: Usually a ♘-ending with only one ♙ is a draw.

There are a few exceptions you'll learn. But usually: draw.

Here the only clear winning try is a piece sacrifice to set up a ♔+♙ vs. ♘ battle on the ♕-side.

Pat: Cute.

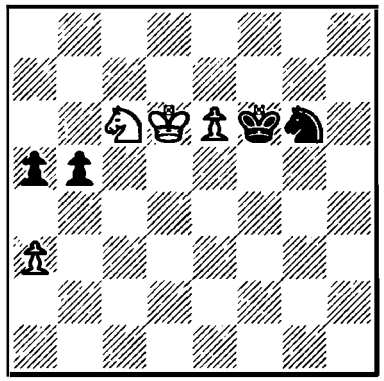
Noah: Often a ♘ can stop a ♔+♙, if only by commiting suicide. But Black's blunder at move 3 was decisive.

He allowed a final sacrifice of a ♙, that left both his ♘ and ♔ on the wrong side of the board.

Pat: You said mismatches occur often in ♖+♙s and ♘+♙s. Why?

Noah: Both ♘s and ♖s can be overpowered by ♔s. Remember a ♘–unlike a ♗–is a short-range piece that moves slowly from one wing to the other.

Pat: Almost as slow as a ♔.



79

Maksimenko-Baikov
U.S.S.R. 1991
Black to play

1. . . . b4!

Standard drawing strategy. If White has only one ♙, Black may draw (2. axb4 axb4 3. ♘xb4 ♘e7 4. ♔d7 ♘g6).

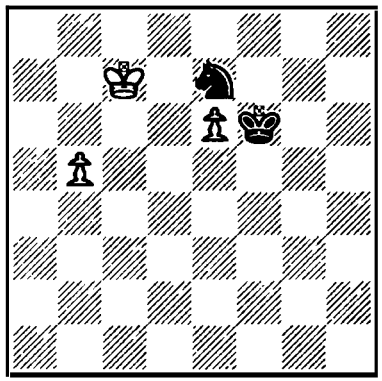
And if 5. ♘d5† ♔g7 6. ♔d8, Black has 6... ♘e5! 7. e7 ♘c6†.

2. ♘xb4! axb4
3. axb4 ♘e7??

To avoid a mismatch, the ♘ has to attack the b-♙ from behind.

That is, 3... ♘e5 4. b5 ♘c4† 5. ♔d7 ♘b6† 6. ♔c6 ♘c4 7. b6 ♘xb6! or 5. ♔c5! ♔xe6 draws.

4. b5 ♘c8†
5. ♔c7 ♘e7

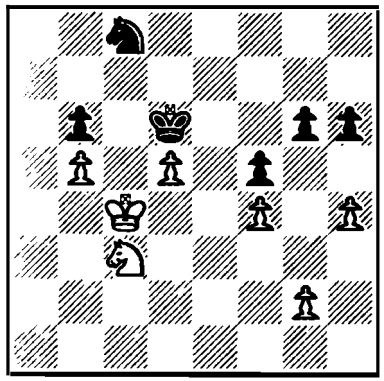


80

6. ♔d7!

Also winning is 6. b6 ♘d5† 7. ♔d8!.

6. . . . ♘d5
7. e7! ♘xe7
8. b6 Resigns



81

Shirov-Hübner
Manila 1992
White to play

1. ♘a4! ♔c7

On 1... ♔e7 2. ♔d4 ♔d6 White wins with 3. ♘b2 and 4. ♘c4†.

The main alternative is 2... ♔f6 after which White creates a mismatch with 3. ♘xb6! ♘xb6 4. ♔c5 and wins (4... ♘d7† 5. ♔d6 ♘b6 6. ♔c6 ♘c4 7. d6 or 4... ♘a4† 5. ♔c6 ♔e7 6. d6† ♔d8 7. b6).

2. ♔d4 ♘d6

Again, 2... ♔d6 3. ♘b2 and 4. ♘c4† wins.

3. ♔e5! ♘xb5

4. h5! gxh5

5. ♔xf5

And White wins (5... ♘d6† 6. ♔e6 b5 7. ♘c5 or 5... ♔d6 6. ♘xb6 ♔c5 7. ♘d7† ♔xd5 8. ♘f6† ♔d4 9. ♘xh5 ♔e3 10. ♔e5).

Noah: That's why the key to winning most ♘+♗ endings is to create a mismatch.

In Diagram 81 the threat of ♘a4-b2-c4† forces Black to choose between putting his ♔ on the ♔-side, around f6 or e7, or the ♕-side, around c7.

Pat: And whichever way he chooses, White runs the other way. Is that it?

Noah: Yes–although it may involve sacrifices (2... ♔f6 3. ♘xb6! or, in the game, 3. ♔e5) for the ♔ to penetrate.

Pat: If mismatches are such a basic winning technique, how come I've never heard of them before?

Noah: Beats me. It also plays a major defensive role by preventing the only enemy threat from being carried out.

Sometimes the key to winning–or drawing–is to prevent your opponent from creating a mismatch.

Pat: How's that?

Noah: Here's a case of winning by avoiding a mismatch. In Diagram 82 Black uses zugzwang to make sure the enemy ♔ goes in the same direction as Black's.

Pat: Why is that good?

Noah: Because White can draw if he can get in a ♔ vs. ♗ battle on either wing, with Black's ♔ on the wrong side.

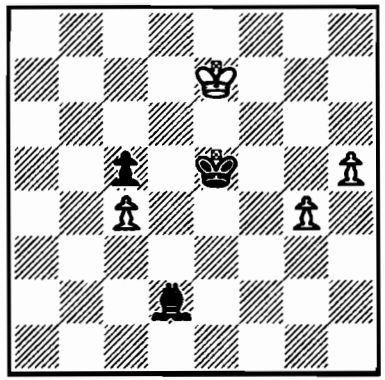
Then White would be able to sacrifice his h-♙ to get rid of the c5-pawn.

Pat: So how can Black win? Eventually he *must* use his ♔ to win the c-♙.

Noah: True, but by that time Black's ♙ is on the sixth rank and he can afford to give up the ♗.

Pat: Not bad. But tell me, if I ace this mismatch business will I finally be able to understand what goes on in the ending.

Noah: Not so fast, my young grossmeister. I said the mismatch is the most important technique in the endgame. But it ain't the only one–as we'll see next time.



82

Christiansen-Kengis
Manila 1992
Black to play

It appears 1... ♗g5† wins–(2. ♔d7 ♔d4! or 2. ♔f7 ♔f4 with a mismatch coming up).

But 2. ♔f7 ♔f4 3. ♔e6! ♔xg4 4. ♔d5 ♗e3 5. h6 ♗xh6 6. ♔xc5 draws.

1. . . . ♗e3!

Zugzwang. Now on 2. ♔f7 ♔f4 3. h6 Black had 3... ♔g5!, which leads to a winning ♔+♙ ending, 4. h7 ♗d4 5. ♔g8 ♔xg4 or 4. ♔e6 ♔xh6.

(But not 3... ♔xg4 4. h7 ♗d4 5. ♔e6 and White eliminates the last ♙ by 6. ♔d5 and 7. h8=♕!.)

2. ♔d7 ♔d4
3. ♔e6 ♔xc4
4. ♔f6 ♔d5

And White **resigned** after **5. g5 c4 6. g6 c3** because of 7. g7 ♗d4† and 8... ♗xg7 is a won ♔+♙, or rather ♕+♔ vs. ♔+♙ ending (9. ♔xg7 c2 10. h6 c1=♕ 11. h7 ♕c7† 12. ♔g8 ♔e6!).

In which Pat learns about elbows, triangles, fortresses and other stratagems unique to the endgame.

Chapter Five

Techniques

Pat: Okay, Noah, I'm feeling sharp today. Like I'm ready to nail all the other key techniques you were talking about.

Noah: Good. Let's start by recalling something one more time...

Pat: Lemme guess. "An endgame is not a middlegame."

Noah: Correct. There are a few techniques which are unique to endgames that you have to learn–and zugzwang is at the top of the list.

But you already know a good deal about zugzwang.

Pat: I do?

Noah: You must. Even beginners know how to win ♔+♖ vs. ♔.

You probably learned it before you knew what a fianchettoed ♗ or the Caro-Kann Defense was.

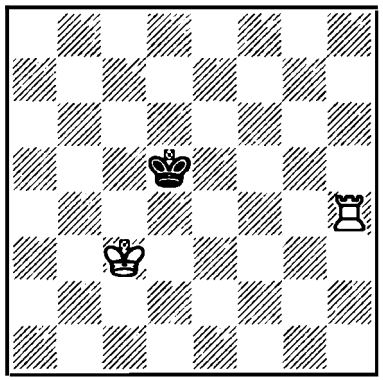
Pat: But I never saw that as zugzwang.

Noah: Zugzwang is actually a misnomer the way we use it. True ZZ is relatively rare and occurs only when neither side has a beneficial move.

But zugzwang has come to mean when one player is run out of moves and it's such a useful term it hardly seems worth correcting the error.

ZZ is one of the relatively modern contributions to endgame theory. In Philidor's day hardly anyone understood it.

Pat: Even the great André?



83

White to move

White makes no progress with "threats," such as 1. ♔d3 (threatening 2. ♖h5†) because of 1... ♔c5! (or 1... ♔e5!).

And if 2. ♔c3, then 2... ♔d5.

1. ♖a4!

This leads quickly to fatal zugzwang (1... ♔c5 2. ♖a5†).

1. . . . **♔e5**
2. ♔d3 **♔f5**
3. ♔e3 **♔g5**

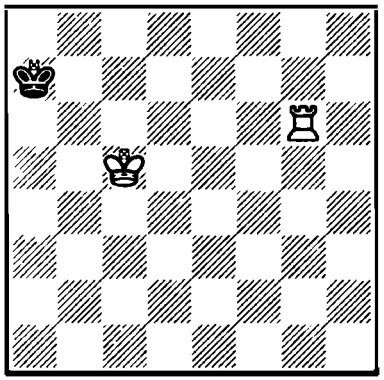
Black continues to be forced (3... ♔e5 4. ♖a5†).

4. ♔f3 **♔h5**
5. ♔g3

Little choice for Black now:

5. . . . **♔g5**
6. ♖a5†

And White repeats the process until, say, 18. ♖a8#.



84

White to play

1. ♖g7†!

Much better than Philidor's 1. ♔b5 ♔b7 2. ♖g7† ♔c8 etc.

1. . . . ♔a6

2. ♖h7!

And mates next, thanks to zugzwang (or 1... ♔b8 2. ♔c6 ♔a8 3. ♔b6).

Noah: Even him. He gave Diagram 84 as a mate in 8. If Philidor had appreciated ZZ he could have saved White 5 or so moves.

Pat: So sometimes you need zugzwang to win and sometimes it just makes the win faster?

Noah: You got it. Zugzwang occurs all the time in piece-up endings. In fact, you often can't win even when *a piece* ahead without ZZ.

Pat: Why piece-up endings? I thought they won themselves.

Other endgames that can't be won without zugzwang include:

♔ + ♕ vs. ♔ + 2♗s

♔ + ♕ vs. ♔ + 2♘s

♔ + ♕ vs. ♔ + ♘

♔ + ♕ vs. ♔ + ♖

♔ + 2♗s vs. ♔

♔ + ♗ + ♘ vs. ♔

Noah: No, they are hard to win in other ways because of the nature of 2-vs.-1 battles that I mentioned yesterday–even when it's two ♙s vs. one ♗.

The player with the extra piece can't always count on picking off the enemy ♙s unless he can force them to advance, as in 2. d5 in Diagram 85. Nor can he count on using his extra piece to crowd the enemy ♔ out.

After 2. d5 there is no way for Black to force the win of any ♙–except by running White out of moves.

As Emanuel Lasker put it, a right, in this case, the right to move, is also an *obligation.*

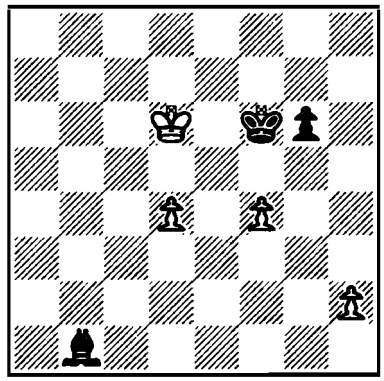
Pat: Sounds like a high school graduation speech.

Noah: Well, Lasker thought ZZ was one of the few things that didn't have a parallel in real life.

But he was wrong. There is something in life like this zugzwang: (see Bisguier pg. 81)

Pat: Cute. But, tell me, how does zugzwang–the chess kind–happen?

Seems like luck to me.



85

Djurhuus–Gipslis
Gausdal 1993
Black to play

The direct 1... ♔f5 allows 2. ♔e7 and the d-♙ and ♔ offer White serious counterplay. Black must try to win ♙s while stopping both d5-6-7 and ♔f6.

1. . . . ♗e4!
2. d5

Or 2. ♔c5 ♔e6 3. h4 ♗f3 and White is out of moves.

If the white ♔ temporizes (2. ♔d7 ♔f5 3. ♔d6) Black can begin a queening race, which he wins after 3... ♔xf4 4. d5 g5 5. ♔e6 ♗f5† 6. ♔e7 g4 7. d6 ♔f3 and ...♔g2.

2. . . . ♗g2!
3. ♔c5 ♔e7
4. h4 ♗f3!

Not 4... ♔d7 because of 5. f5! gxf5 6. h5 ♗e4 7. ♔d4!, drawing.

5. ♔c6 ♔f6!

Now 6. ♔d6 ♔f5 runs White out of useful moves: Zugzwang.

6. ♔c5 ♔f5

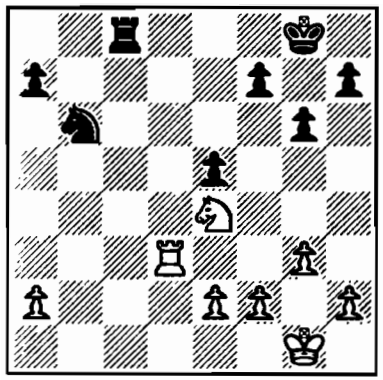
And here 7. d6 ♔e6 is another zugzwang since 8. f5† gxf5 9. h5 loses to 9... ♗xh5 10. ♔c6 ♗e8†.

7. ♔d6 ♗g2!

And not 7... ♔xf4 8. ♔e6! ♗g4† 9. ♔f6 ♗f5 10. d6.

8. ♔c5 ♔xf4
White resigns.

In view of 9. d6 ♗h3 10. ♔c6 ♔g3.



86

Romanishin-Benjamin
Gröningen 1993
White to play

1. ♖a3 ♖c7?

With 1... ♖c4! Black keeps active and can lure White into passivity (2. ♘c3? a5!).

2. ♘f6†! ♔h8

Not 2... ♔g7?? 3. ♘e8† or 2... ♔f8 3. ♘xh7†.

3. g4! h6
4. h4

Now g4-g5, rendering Black's ♔ useless, can't be avoided.

After 4... ♘d7 White wins a ♙ with 5. ♘e8 ♖b7 6. ♘d6.

4. . . . ♖b7
5. ♖a5! ♖e7
6. g5 hxg5
7. hxg5 ♔g7
8. ♖c5 e4
9. a4

The threat of a4-a5 and ♖c8-g8# quickly runs Black out of moves.

The game ended with **9... ♖b7 10. ♖b5 a6 11. ♖b4 a5 12. ♖b5 ♖b8 13. e3!** and Black forfeited.

Noah: Good players make their own luck. It takes only a minor slipup by Black in Diagram 86 to allow White to paralyze him with simple moves.

Pat: Why should Black lose such a position?

Noah: There's nothing wrong with it from a material or structural view.

But by allowing his pieces to become passive, his options are slowly but steadily reduced.

Pat: I see. First he ties his ♖ to the second rank. Then he can't move his ♔ from the ♔-side.

Noah: Notice that White didn't even need his ♔ to win this ending.

Pat: It's hard to imagine zugzwang happening with so much material on the board.

Noah: Zugzwang actually occurs a lot more in pure ♘ endings or ♙ endings, and less so with heavy pieces.

Pat: Why is that?

"Zugzwang is like getting trapped on a safety island in middle of a highway when a thunderstorm starts. You don't want to move. But you have to."
–Arthur Bisguier

"What is difficult about maneuver is to make the devious route the most direct."
–Sun Tzu
The Art of War

"I destroyed the enemy merely by marches."
–Napoleon on the 1805 Austria Campaign

Noah: Simply because with big wood there's less chance to run out of moves.

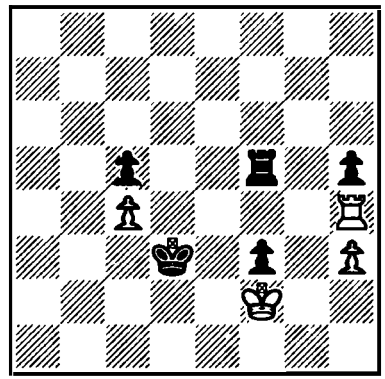
Yet it can happen in any ending–and with quite a bit at stake, as Diagram 87 shows. Boris Spassky advanced to his first world championship match with the help of ZZ in this position.

Pat: Looks like White could give it up immediately. He doesn't have a move.

Noah: So all Black needed to create ZZ was to make it White's turn in the same position.

Pat: Neat.

Noah: And even the foremost endgame authorities can miss a ZZ–as in Diagram 88.



87

Tal-Spassky
Candidates' Match 1965 (3)

1. . . . ♔**d2**

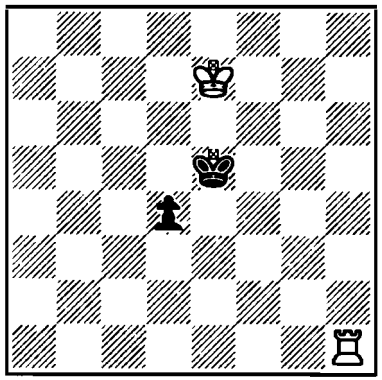
White has only one useful move.

2. ♖**e4** ♔**c3**

Now a ♖-move along the e-file loses the c-♙.

3. ♖**h4** ♔**d3!**

And with no ♖ move, White must allow the f-♙ to advance to victory, 4. ♔e1 f2† 5. ♔f1 ♔e3.



88

White to play

1. ♔d7?

Correct is 1. ♖d1! after which Black's ♔ must give way, e.g., 1... ♔e4 2. ♔d6 d3 3. ♔c5 ♔e3 4. ♔c4 d2 5. ♔c3.

A better try is 1... ♔d5! so that 2. ♔f6 ♔e4! blocks the ♔ out and draws. But 2. ♔d7! wins (2... ♔c4 3. ♔e6 d3 4. ♔e5 etc.).

1. . . .	**d3!**
2. ♔c6	**♔d4**
3. ♔b5	**♔c3**

And draws (4. ♖h3 ♔c2; 4. ♖c1† ♔b2).

Pat: What's happening here?

Noah: Yuri Averbakh, one of the finest endgame analysts ever, once gave 88 as a draw, saying 1. ♔d7 was the best–but insufficient–winning try. Yet it's an easy win.

Pat: I get it. Whichever direction the black ♔ goes, the white ♔ goes the opposite.

Noah: A *very* common theme in the endgame.

Pat: How do you know when you're close to zugzwang?

Noah: There are usually clues.

Pat: Like what?

Several English-language replacements for zugzwang have been suggested. Among them:
Move-bound
Plank walk
Movicide
Squeeze (a bridge term)

Noah: Like when you see your opponent has just about run out of good moves, as Tal had in the previous example.

In Diagram 89 you can readily see that Black's only good "pass" with the ♕ is ...♕c7.

With a bit more examination, you can see that if the white ♕ reaches a7, where it attacks 3 ♙s, one will fall.

Pat: So he just maneuvers until Black runs out of useful moves–and that happens after 2. ♔g1!. It looks a lot easier than I thought.

Noah: It usually takes more to win than just random maneuvers–although it often looks exactly like that. Consider Diagram 90.

What do you think is happening here?

Pat: Let's see. White only has two ♙s left and they're both ♖-♙s. This must be hard to win.

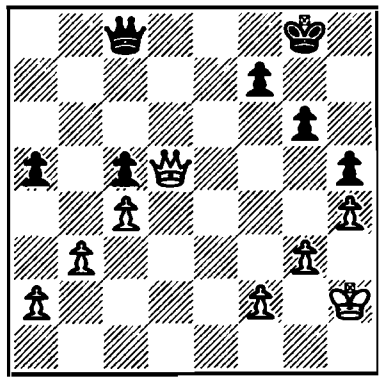
Noah: In fact, there are some endings in which ♖-♙s are better than center ♙s. Remember, endgames...

Pat: ...are not middlegames. Enough already! I got it.

But what's the winning plan here?

Noah: The best plan, sometimes, is no plan–or in this case, several plans.

White wins by shifting back and forth, attacking the a- and c-♙s while threatening to bring his ♔ into Black's camp, at e4 or c4.



89

A.N. Panchenko-Grabarczyk
Katowice 1991
White to play

1. ♕e5!! ♔h7

Zugzwang is relatively rare in ♕+♙ endings but here is one: 1... ♕c6 2. ♕b8† ♔g7 3. ♕a7, winning a ♙, e.g., 3... ♕f3 4. ♕xc5.

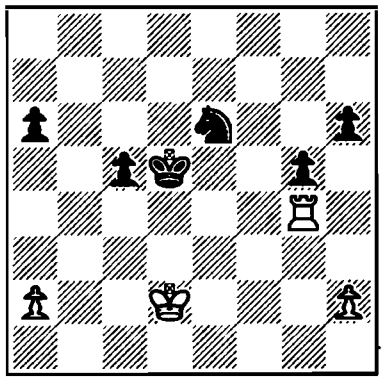
2. ♔g1!

Establishing zugzwang since 2... ♕c6 3. ♕e7 ♔g7 4. ♕a7 is again lost and so is 2... ♔g8 3. ♕e7 and 4. ♕a7.

2. . . . ♔h6
3. ♕e7 ♕f5
4. ♕d8!

Countering the threat of ...♕b1†xa2 with a bigger threat of ♕h8#.

4. . . . ♕b1†
5. ♔h2 ♕b2
6. ♕f8†! Resigns



90

Ftacnik-Browne
San Francisco 1991
White to play

1. ♖a4 Nc7
2. ♔d3 h5

Other moves lose the a-♙ or permit the white ♔ to go to e4/c4.

3. ♖a5 g4

Or 3... h4 4. ♖a4 and Black

must give way (4... ♔e5 5. ♔c4 ♔f4 6. ♔xc5† and 7. ♔c6).

4. ♖a4 ♔e5

White's ♖ and ♔ are too fast after 4... ♘e6 5. ♖xa6 h4 6. ♔e3.

5. ♖e4†!

Forcing a choice: On 5... ♔d5 6. ♖e7 ♘e6 7. ♖a7 White picks off the a-♙.

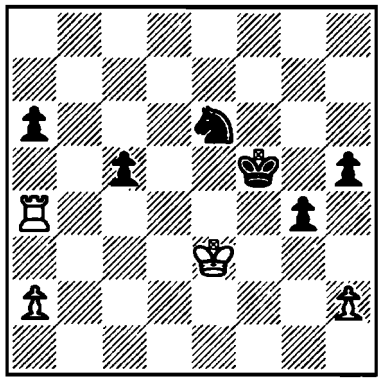
5. . . . ♔f5
6. ♖c4 ♘e6
7. ♔e3 ♔e5

Also: 7... h4 8. ♖a4 g3 loses to 9. hxg3 hxg3 10. ♔f3 ♔e5 11. ♖xa6 ♘d4† 12. ♔xg3 c4 13. ♔f2.

8. ♖a4 ♘c7
9. ♖e4†! ♔f5

And here 9... ♔d5 10. ♖e7 ♔d6 11. ♖h7 or 9... ♔d6 10. ♔d3 ♘e6 11. ♖a4 ♘c7 12. ♔c4 and Black is out of good passes (12... h4 13. ♔d3! wins a ♔-side ♙).

10. ♖c4! ♘e6
11. ♖a4



91

Black is lost because he must move (11... ♘c7 12. ♖a5).

11. . . . h4
12. ♖xa6 g3
13. hxg3 hxg3
14. ♔f3

And Black resigned soon after **14... ♘d4† 15. ♔xg3 ♔e4 16. ♖a3!** and **♔f2.**

Pat: But he can't seem to break through. He just keeps repeating the position.

Noah: It only looks like repetitions. No positions occurs more than once.

Pat: And yet after 11 moves of shifting back and forth with his ♔ and ♖...

Noah: White wins through zugzwang, pure and simple.

Pat: Even though he started with only two ♙s. Amazing.

Noah: But he had enough winning plans. In fact, he had more plans than ♙s.

In this case White had three ways to win:

(a) by capturing the a-♙;

(b) by eliminating all the ♔-side ♙s; and

(c) by penetrating at c4 or e4 with his ♔.

Realizing that Black's ♙s become progressively weaker–and were in no danger of promoting–helped White win.

Pat: But ultimately his "plan" was just to go from one winning idea to another, until Black was out of moves.

Noah: True. And sometimes creating zugzwang requires another special technique–tempo gaining.

Pat: And there's also tempo losing, right?

Noah: Basically, they're the same thing.

Here in Diagram 92 is a double error which delayed the career of one of the world's best players.

White has virtually run a once and future world champion out of moves and has two chances to force a win.

Pat: Where's the tempo business?

Noah: After 1. ♖c8 he could have won by gaining a tempo with 3. ♖g8†! and 4. ♖a8!.

Pat: Which he missed.

Noah: Yes, but when your opponent is this tied up there's often a second chance.

White could have used it by gaining a tempo with 2. ♖g8† before ♖c8.

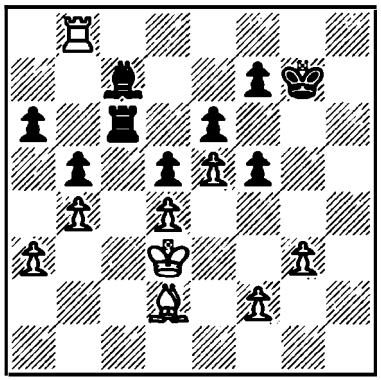
Pat: I never realized how easily you can win material or promote ♙s by doing nothing.

Noah: It's more than "doing nothing." Besides, often when you have a solid material edge you still need a special technique to make it matter.

Pat: Why is that?

Noah: Because when you don't have a passed ♙, you need a point of penetration, an entry square for your ♔ into the enemy stronghold.

Pat: Shouldn't there be entry squares all over the board when there are so few pieces and ♙s left?



92

Anand-Karpov
Candidates' Match 1991
White to play

1. ♖a8?

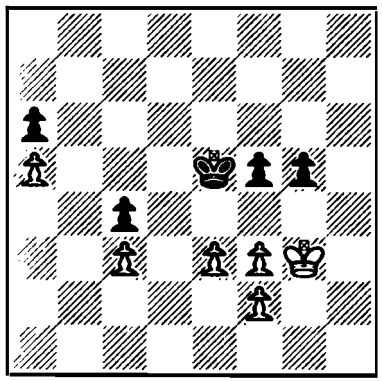
White can win with 1. ♖c8! (threatening ♗g5-e7-d6) ♔g6 2. ♗f4–zugzwang. Then 2... f6 3. exf6 and 2... ♔h7 3. ♗g5! lose quickly, so 2... ♖c4 is best.

But 3. ♖g8†! ♔h7 4. ♖a8! ♖c6 5. ♗g5 ♔g6 6. ♗e7 wins since 7. ♗c5, 8. ♖c8 and 9. ♗d6 must gain material.

1. . . . ♔g6
2. ♖c8? f6!

And Black eventually drew and won the match.

But 2. ♖g8†! would have won a tempo and gotten back into the previous note–2... ♔h7 (not 2... ♔h5 3. ♖g5† ♔h6 4. ♖xf5†) 3. ♖c8 ♔g6 (else 4. ♗g5) 4. ♗f4 etc.



93

Yermolinsky-Komarov
U.S.S.R. 1986
White to play

1. f4†!

The slow method doesn't work: 1. ♔g2 ♔d5! 2. ♔h3 ♔e6! 3. e4 fxe4 4. fxe4 ♔e5 5. f3 ♔f4 6. ♔g2 g4! or 3. f4 gxf4 4. exf4 ♔f6! 5. ♔g3 ♔g6 6. ♔f3 ♔h5.

1. . . . gxf4†

2. ♔f3!

Not 2. exf4†?? ♔e4 followed by 3... ♔d3 and White has created a winning entry square–but for his opponent.

2. . . . fxe3

3. fxe3

And White has established his entry point–f4. The game ended with **3... ♔d5 4. ♔f4 ♔e6 5. e4! fxe4 6. ♔xe4 1-0,** since White wins the c-♙.

Noah: Not necessarily. There are only ♔s and ♙s in Diagram 93 and White is one button ahead, as Bobby Fischer used to put it.

Now ♔+♙ endings are a bit unusual because an extra ♙ really means a lot in them. But here the win is hard because White can't create a passed ♙ and can't penetrate with his ♔.

Pat: I see. The ♔-side is sort of closed. And d3 is off limits to the white ♔.

Noah: Also, playing the ♔ around to b4 doesn't work because when it gets to the ♕-side Black plays ...g5-g4– and makes an entry for his own ♔ at f3.

Pat: Yet he wins by creating an *equal-material* ending.

Noah: Equal in material, but won for White because he has both an entry and zugzwang. After he gets the ♔ to f4 White can force the win of the c-♙ and eventually get a position just like diagram 8.

The flip side of this is that often the only way to draw is to seal off all entry points.

Pat: That must be hard with ♙s on both wings.

Noah: Not that difficult. Diagram 94 is typical: White has the better piece and a much better-placed ♔.

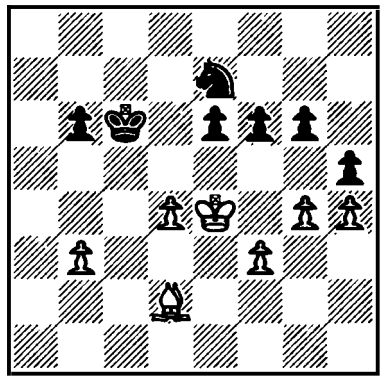
Pat: Seems all he needs to win is to penetrate at e5.

Noah: That's deceptive. White can penetrate–but accurate play by Black can stop him from going any further.

White ends up with plenty of squares for his ♗ but no targets for it. And he has plenty of targets for his ♔ but no squares to go to.

This leads to another technique that is exclusive to the endgame: *the fortress.*

Pat: Never heard of it.



94

Alburt-Seirawan
U.S. Championship 1990
Black to play

1. . . . ♔d7!

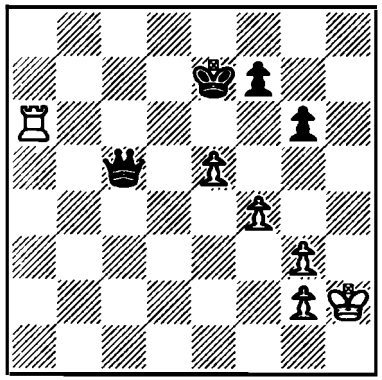
Or else 2. g5 and ♔e5-f6 wins.

2. g5 f5†
3. ♔e5 ♘d5
4. ♗c1!

Playing for zugzwang, e.g., 4... ♔e7 5. ♗a3† ♔d7 6. ♗f8 b5 7. ♗c5! and wins.

4. . . . b5!

And 5... b4 will seal the position. A draw was agreed after **5. ♗a3 b4 6. ♗c1 ♔e7 7. ♗d2 Nc3 8. ♗e1.**



95

Sokolov-Vaganian
Candidates' Match 1986

1. ♖a1! ♔e6
2. ♖f1! ♔d5
3. ♖f3

Completing an impregnable fortress. White shifted his ♔ between g1, h1 and h2, and his ♖ along the third rank for the remaining 26 moves of this drawn game.

Noah: No surprise. Fortress arises much less often than zugzwang or triangulation.

But it is crucial in many positions in which there are few ♙s left and all of them are on the same side of the board. In Diagram 95 this enabled White to avoid defeat despite Black's big material edge–and thereby win a candidates' finals match.

Pat: Neat. Black's ♔ has no way of breaking in.

Noah: It can get as far as g4 or e4 but no further.

Pat: And an exchange of ♙s on g5 doesn't help.

"What is the object of defense? Preservation. It is easier to hold ground than take it."
–Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz

Noah: Okay, you try this one. Find an improvement on Black's play in Diagram 96.

Pat: I'm clueless.

Noah: Then you should start by asking yourself: what are the good things about Black's position?

Pat: Hmmm. I guess you could say he controls a lot of light squares thanks to the ♗.

Noah: Then look for a light-square fortress. A ♗ at c6, protects the b-♙ and can be protected, in turn by a ♖ at c4. Looks like a fortress to me.

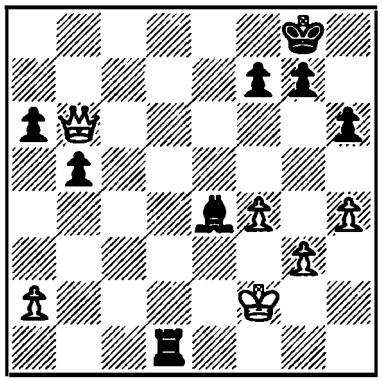
Pat: Me too, I guess.

Black can lose the a-♙, but as long as he keeps the b-♙ and protects his pieces, White doesn't have a winning idea.

Noah: But his failure to secure the ♗ allowed the tactical trick 2. g4! that cost him the game.

Pat: Fortresses must happen a lot in blocked positions.

"Dig or die."
–Traditional army advice for defender constructing fortification.



96

Dorfman-Bonsch
Lvov 1984
Black to play

1. . . . f5?

One improvement is 1... ♖a1 2. ♕xa6 b4, in order to eliminate the a-♙.

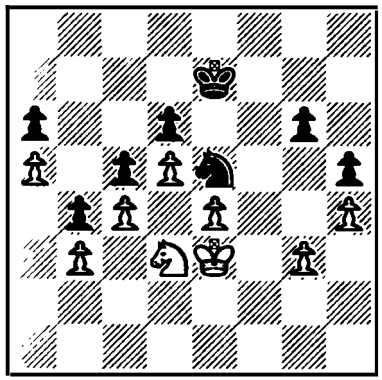
But 1... ♖c1! followed by 2... ♗c6 and perhaps ... ♖c4 may create a real fortress.

2. g4! ♔h7

Not 2... fxg4? 3. ♕e6† and 4. ♕xe4.

3. ♕e6 ♗b1
4. gxf5

And White won after 28 more moves, beginning with **4... ♖d2† 5. ♔e3 ♖d3† 6. ♔e2 ♖g3 7. ♔f2 ♖g4 8. ♔f3 ♖g1 9. ♕xa6 ♗xf5 10. ♕xb5.**



97

Razuvaev-Ostojic
Berlin 1988
White to play

1. g4!!

A good plan would seem to be 1. ♘f2 followed by 2. ♔f4 and 3. g4.

But White can't dally too far from the ♕-side because of ...♘xc4! (and if bxc4, then ...b3-b2).

1. . . . ♘xg4†

Now 1... hxg4 2. ♘xe5 dxe5 is a win for White because of the entry squares at g4/g5 (after 3. ♔f2).

Similarly 1... ♘xd3 2. ♔xd3 hxg4 3. ♔e3 ♔f6 4. ♔f4 wins for White.

2. ♔f4 ♘f6

On the crucial 2... ♔f6 White plays 3. e5†! ♘xe5 4. ♘xe5 dxe5† 5. ♔e4 and wins.

Or 3... dxe5† 4. ♔f3 g5 5. hxg5† ♔xg5 6. ♘xc5 and 7. d6.

3. e5!

And White won soon after **3... dxe5† 4. ♘xe5 ♔d6 5. ♘xg6.**

Noah: But many fortresses can be stormed. Sometimes you have so many positional advantages that you can afford a sacrifice or two to penetrate, as in Diagram 97.

Pat: Why is this hard?

Doesn't 1. ♘xe5 reach a ♔+♙ ending a clear ♙ ahead?

Noah: Very true–except that after 1... dxe5 White has no ♔ entry and the game's deader than the dodo. If White then plays g4 Black ignores it.

Pat: I don't really understand how he can afford to sacrifice two ♙s here.

Noah: It's clever. In the 2... ♔f6/3... ♘xe5 line, Black ends up a ♙ up–but that extra ♙ is the useless one at g6.

Pat: And only the positions of the ♔s matter.

Noah: Correct. What happens in that line is that after 5. ♔e4 White has triangulated–his ♔ going from e3 to f4 to e4.

Pat: That's another mystery to me–triangulating.

Noah: It shouldn't be. Triangulating is just a way of creating an entry point by losing a move.

Pat: Sounds simple–in words. But in moves...

Noah: Well, Diagram 98 is a relatively simple example.

If it's White's move in the diagram, he must allow one of two winning moves, ...♔d4 or ...b3.

Pat: So what you're saying is Black knows he has to lose a tempo.

Noah: He also knows some other things: that White can't play ♔c5 for tactical reasons.

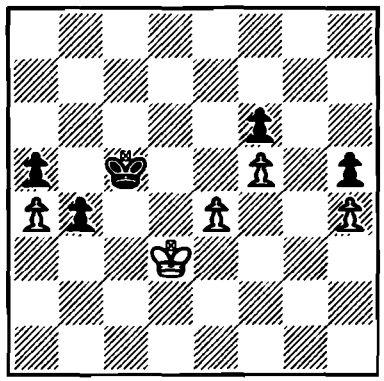
Pat: And White can't play ♔c3 for *legal* reasons.

Noah: So by putting it all together Black can find a way to drive the white ♔ back and manufacture an entry point. Q.E.D.

Pat: What I have trouble with in endgames is that material matters so much. Or so it seems.

But then you get one of these blocked positions–and the number of ♙s doesn't count.

Noah: Exactly. And sometimes you can give up material in a fairly open position to deny access to your opponent. As in Diagram 99.



98

Seirawan-Kasparov
Niksic 1983
Black to play

1. . . . **♔c6**
2. ♔c4 **♔c7!**

Now maintaining opposition with 3. ♔c5 loses to 3... b3. And 3. ♔c3 is impossible.

3. ♔d3 **♔d7!**

Now 4. ♔d4 ♔d6 5. ♔c4 ♔e5 6. ♔d3 b3 wins.

4. ♔e3 **♔c6!**
5. ♔d3 **♔c5**

Recreating the position in the diagram but with White to move.

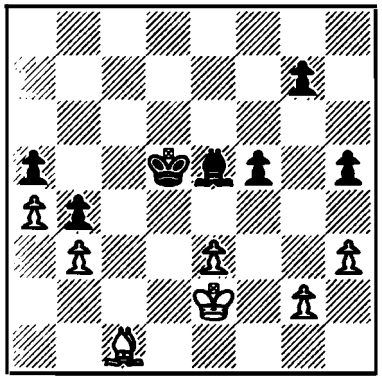
6. ♔e3 **b3**

Not 6... ♔c4 because of 7. e5!.

7. ♔d3 **♔b4**
8. e5 **♔a3!**

And White resigned in view of 9. exf6 b2 10. ♔c2 ♔a2.

"In the endgame, there is no 'later.'"
–Pal Benko



99

I. Ivanov-Christiansen
U.S. Open 1983
White to play

1. ♗d2??

With 1. ♔d3 White keeps the enemy ♔ out.

The key variation is 1... ♗c3 2. e4†! fxe4† 3. ♔e2 and White may draw because e4 is unavailable to Black's ♔.

1. . . . ♔e4!
2. ♗e1 g5

Now 3... h4 and 4... ♗g3 become a danger.

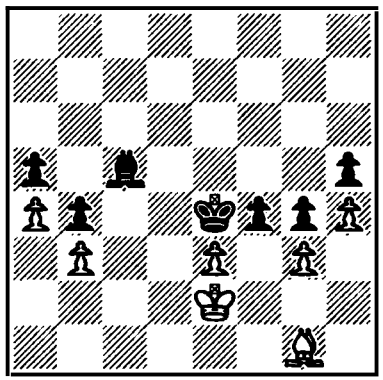
3. h4 g4
4. g3

Or 4. ♗f2 g3 5. ♗e1 and now Black loses a tempo with 5... ♗d6 6. ♔d2 ♗c7! 7. ♔e2 ♗e5! to create a zugzwang position in which White must lose (8. ♔d2 ♗c3†; 8. ♔d1 ♔d3; 8. ♗d2 ♗f6 and 9... ♗xh4).

4. . . . ♗d6
5. ♗f2 ♗c5

A white ♔ move now allows the winning entry at f3 or d3.

6. ♗g1 f4!



100

This creates two connected passed ♙s. Black won after **7. gxf4 g3 8. f5 ♗e7 9. ♔f1 ♔f3!** (not 9... ♗xh4 10. ♔g2 ♔xf5 11. ♔f3).

White tried **10. e4!? g2† 11. ♔e1 ♗xh4† 12. ♔d2** but after **12... ♔xe4 13. ♔e2 ♗f6 14. ♔f2 ♗d4†** he resigned.

Pat: I see. In the 1... ♗c3 line Black ends up an extra ♙ but it's on e4 where it blocks his ♔'s entry.

Noah: And to prevent a ♔-side entry, White ends up putting more ♙s on dark squares–as much as he hates to do it. Eventually it costs him the game.

Pat: Why does it seem there are so many more blunders in endgames than in middlegames?

I mean, you see a load of question-mark moves early on–but in the ending the mistakes rate double question marks.

Noah: There really aren't more blunders in the ending. The reason it may seem so is that in post-mortems we can tell more clearly that endgame errors lead to immediate losses.

Middlegame errors are just as common–but they only lead to bad positions that may be saved later on.

Pat: Okay, we've covered zugzwang, tempo gaining, entry points, fortresses and triangulation. That's an awful lot for one afternoon.

Noah: But there's one more technique you need to know–***elbowing out***.

Pat: News to me.

Noah: Elbowing out is just using your pieces–usually your ♔–to crowd the enemy out of action.

It happens all the time in ♔+♖ vs. ♔+♗ endings.

Pat: Why those in particular?

Noah: Because the way the side with the ♖ usually wins is to elbow out the enemy ♔–as in Diagram 101.

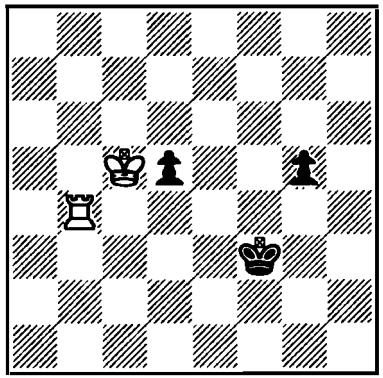
If White had played correctly (1. ♖b3†) the black ♔ would have been elbowed into zugzwang by move 10 and forced to lose both ♗s by move 17. Trust me.

Pat: Yeah, but how often do you play such an ending?

Aren't you being the impractical one now?

Noah: It's learning the basic technique that matters. White didn't need to capture the d-♗ in order to win. But he did need to reduce Black's moves to zero. That's why he had to play 4. ♔d4! in the winning line.

Maybe Diagram 102 is a more practical example.



101

Kalinichev-Sinyavsky
U.S.S.R. 1982
White to play

1. ♔xd5??

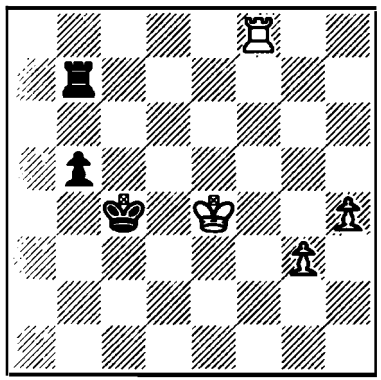
Correct was 1. ♖b3† ♔e4 2. ♖g3 ♔f4 3. ♖g1! and now the white ♔ elbows in until the black ♔ has no moves.

For instance, 3... g4 4. ♔d4! ♔f3 5. ♔d3! g3 6. ♖f1† ♔g4 7. ♔e2 g2 8. ♖d1 ♔g3 9. ♔e3! and Black is out of moves (9... ♔h2 10. ♔f2).

He can delay matters only with 9... d4†! 10. ♔e2 d3† 11. ♔e3! d2 12. ♔e2 ♔h3 13. ♔f3! ♔h2 14. ♔f2.

1. . . . g4
2. ♔e5 g3

And Black draws (3. ♖b3† ♔f2 4. ♔f4 g2).



102

Gavrikov-Hübner
Swiss League 1992
Black to play

1. . . . b4?

After 1... ♔c3!, the issue is very much in doubt (2. ♖c8† ♔d2!/3... b4).

2. ♖c8† ♔b5

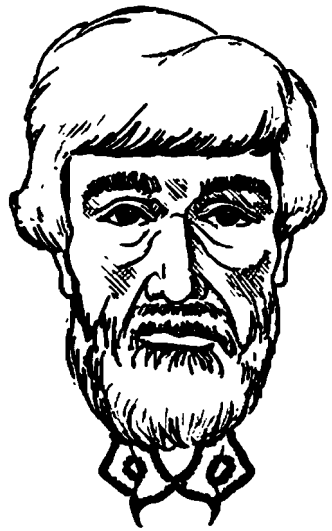
Worse is 2... ♔b3, blocking the ♙, e.g., 3. h5 ♔a2 4. g4 b3 5. g5 b2 6. ♖c2! ♔b3 7. ♖xb2† ♔xb2 8. h6 and the ♙s score.

3. h5 b3
4. ♖c1 b2
5. ♖b1 ♔c6!
6. h6 ♖h7

Or 6... ♔d6 when 7. ♔f5! elbows the ♔ out once more.

7. ♖xb2!

And White converts to a won "basic" position (7... ♖xh6 8. ♖d2! ♖g6 9. ♔f4 ♖f6† 10. ♔g5 ♖f8 11. g4: "Lucena" can't be stopped).



"No man lives without jostling and being jostled; in all ways he has to elbow himself through the world."
–Thomas Carlyle

Pat: Walk me through this one.

Noah: White has an extra ♙ but Black's ♖ is excellently posted to stop the enemy ♙s and also promote the b-♙.

This means White has two winning scenarios. In one he gives up his ♖ for the black ♙ just before it promotes–creating a ♔+2♙ vs. ♖ mismatch on the ♔-side.

Pat: And the second scenario?

Noah: It's what happens in the game–he trades one of his ♙s for Black's, leading to "Lucena."

Pat: Was it all forced?

Noah: No. The key was when Black allowed his ♔ to be elbowed onto the b-file.

Pat: What's the moral here?

Noah: Just this–whenever you see the two ♔s lined up as in that diagram you should consider lending an elbow.

Pat: More like a body block.

Noah: True. Averbakh calls this "the hockey technique" because it's just like a defenseman blocking an advancing forward.

Noah: In Diagrams 103 and 104 you see elbowing at the candidates' match level.

Pat: Let's see. White can trade ♙s with 1. ♖xb2, but he just ends up in that Philidor position again.

Noah: But with 1. ♖b7†! and 4. ♔g6 he creates a model version of elbowing out. Very pleasing.

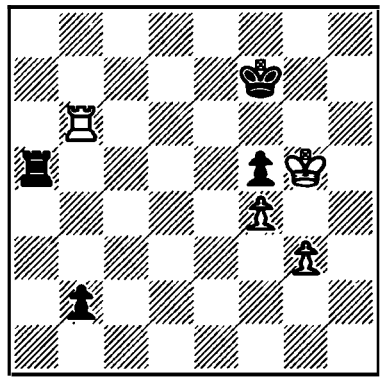
Pat: I don't know about that. It just seems that in the middlegame you have crunching sacrifices, but in the ending you have to use all sorts of methods that aren't very pretty.

Noah: "Winning ugly" in an endgame is redundant.

Pat: Okay, okay, so every time I can get my ♔ lined up like that in a ♖ ending I should...

Noah: Not just ♖s. Elbowing is also one of the key techniques in ♗ endings, as in Diagram 105.

"They don't give medals for endgame technique!"
–Bobby Fischer



103

Dolmatov-Yusupov
Candidates' Match 1991
White to play

On 1. ♖xb2 Black can't defend his ♙ but draws by attacking the enemy's ♙s with 1... ♖a3!.

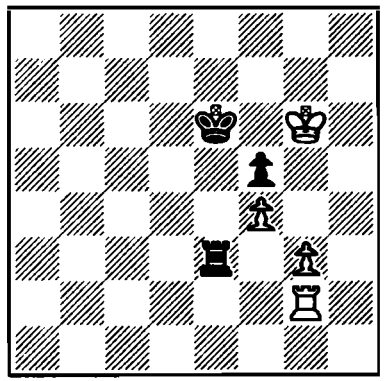
For example 2. ♖g2 ♖a5! or 2. ♔xf5 ♖xg3 3. ♖b7† ♔g8 4. ♔f6 ♖a3 and the lateral checks draw.

1. ♖b7†! **♔e6**

Or 1... ♔e8 2. ♖xb2 ♖a3 3. ♖g2! ♖a5 4. ♔f6! and Black cannot avoid ♖h2-h5.

2. ♖xb2 **♖a3**
3. ♖g2! **♖b3**
4. ♔g6 **♖e3**

To stop 5. ♖e2†!.



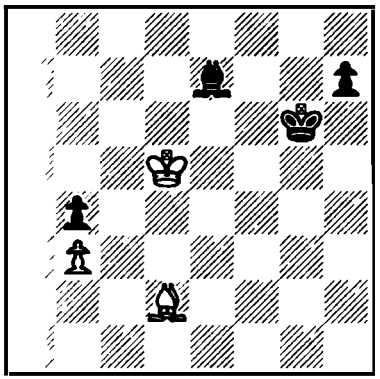
104

5. g4! **fxg4**
6. f5† **♔e5**

Or 6... ♔e7 7. ♔g7, continuing to elbow, with f6-f7-f8=♕.

7. ♖xg4 **♖f3**
8. ♖g1

And Black sealed **8... ♖f2** (8... ♖xf5 9. ♖e1† ♔f4 10. ♖f1†) but resigned in view of 9. ♖e1† and 10. f6.



105

Short-van der Wiel
Rotterdam 1989
Black to play

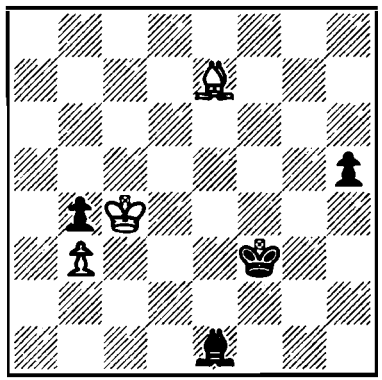
1. . . . ♔f5!

White threatened ♔e4-f3-g2 and ♗xb4!. Now 2. ♗h6 ♗g5 Black breaks the blockade.

2. ♔d4 ♔g4!
3. ♔d3 ♔f3!
4. ♗h6! ♗d6

With ...♗f4 to follow, e.g., 5. ♔c4 ♗f4 6. ♗f8 h5 7. ♗e7 (else 7... h4 and queens) ♗d2!, leading to a position very similar to the next diagram.

5. ♔d4 ♗f4
6. ♗f8 h5
7. ♗e7 ♗g3
8. ♔c5 ♗e1
9. ♔c4



106

9. . . . ♔g2!

Not 9... ♔g3 10. ♔d3 h4 11. ♔e2! ♗c3 12. ♔f1 and 13. ♔g1 will draw.

Now, however, 10. ♔d3 h4 is hopeless.

10. ♗d8 ♔h3!

So he can play ...♗h4. The game ended with **11. ♔d3 ♗h4 12. ♗a5 ♗e7 13. ♔e2 ♔g2! White resigns.**

Pat: Where's the logic in this one? Black only has 2 ♙s and one of them is the ♖-♙ which queens on a light-colored square.

Noah: Correct. If the white ♔ gets to control h1, all he needs to draw is the elimination of the b-♙–which he can do with ♗xb4!

Pat: But...?

Noah: But Black's ♔ dances along the light squares and elbows the other ♔ out with 3... ♔f3! he's half way to victory then.

Pat: Black takes an awful lot of time to push his ♙. He even lets it get blockaded.

Noah: There's no race here. As you'll learn, in such positions White's only chance is to get his own passed ♙ or to get his ♔ in front of Black's.

Pat: So White knew he could always make progress if he kept the white ♔ from f1.

Noah: Elbowing is a natural component of mismatches. A very powerful weapon.

Just don't get carried away with it.

Pat: What's that supposed to mean?

Noah: I mean all these techniques, like zugzwang, triangulation and elbowing, are only means to an end–not an end in themselves.

Pat: So?

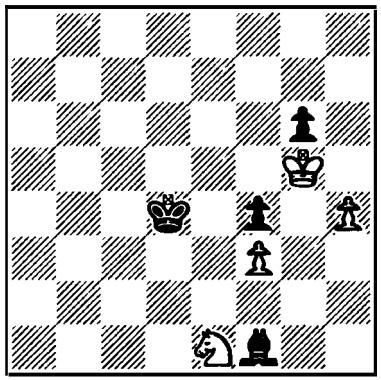
Noah: So you have to be on guard against cases like Diagram 107, where White decides that elbowing out the black ♔ is better than creating a passed ♙–a winning ♙.

White won *squares* with 1. ♔xf4, but only drew the game. He could have won by 1. ♔xg6 and 3. ♔xf4 even though that loses material.

Pat: Endgames didn't seem so confusing when we started this afternoon.

Noah: The more you learn, the more you realize how little you know–like everything else in life.

Maybe it will all be a bit clearer tomorrow. I've got something in mind that puts all these techniques in perspective.



107

Ivanchuk-Belyavsky
Linares 1992
White to play

1. ♔xf4??

After 1. ♔xg6 White queens by force: 1... ♔e3 2. ♔g5 ♔f2 3. ♔xf4! ♔xe1 4. ♔g5 and f4-f5-f6; 2... ♗c4 3. h5 ♗g8 4. h6 ♗h7 5. ♘g2† ♔xf3 6. ♘xf4 and 7. ♘g6 followed by ♔f6-g7.

1. . . . ♗b5

2. ♔g5

No better is 2. ♘g2 ♗c6 3. ♘e3 ♔c5! and ...♔d6-e6-f6.

2. . . . ♗e8

And White conceded the draw in a few moves. He cannot keep both his ♙s and make progress.

In which Noah explains how much a good endgame plan is worth—and why you often need two or three of them to win.

Chapter Six

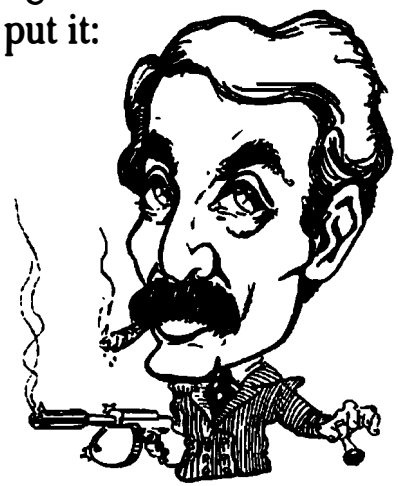
Plans

Pat: Okay, coach, what's on the agenda today?

Noah: How to plan.

Pat: Oh, yeah? I never thought there was any planning in the ending.

Noah: Quite the contrary. That's where strategic thinking began. As a wise man once put it:



"Planning in chess started on its career with the theory of the endgame: King and Rook vs. King."
–Emanuel Lasker

What Lasker meant was in that deceptively simple ending you win only by following a very logical plan, of limiting the enemy ♔ rank by rank until there are no more ranks.

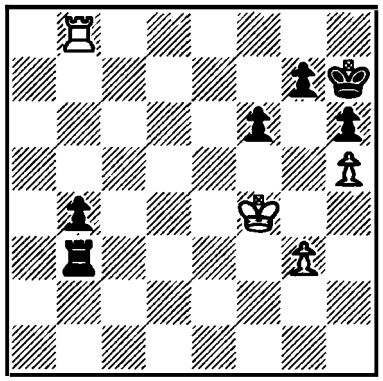
It was, he said, the first true chess plan.

Pat: Yeah, but that must be a rare case. Real planning happens in the middlegame, with junk like minority attacks and ♙ chains and so on.

Noah: Not true. The endings are filled with little plans–although we don't always recognize them as plans. And they're extremely valuable, almost a tangible asset like an extra ♙.

Pat: Oh, come on.

Noah: No, it's true. As a practical example, look at this position:



108

Speelman-Korchnoi
Hastings 1988-89
Black to play

1. . . . ♖b1

The first step in an unstoppable plan–advance the b-♙ to the seventh rank, tying up the enemy ♔ and ♖.

Now 2. ♔g4 b3 3. ♖b7 b2 4. ♖b8 loses to 4... f5†! followed by a ♖ check and queening.

2. g4 b3
3. ♔f3 b2
4. ♔g2!

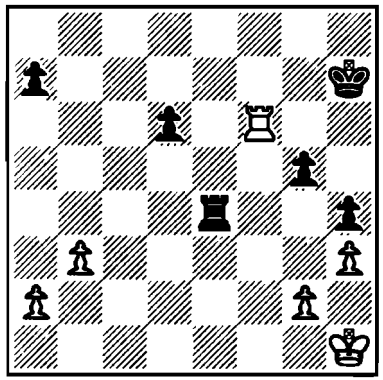
The ♔ is now tied to h2 and g2 (4. ♔f2? ♖h1! 5. ♖xb2 ♖h2†).

4. . . . g5!

The ♔ must now be able to invade, say at f4.

5. ♖b7† ♔g8
6. ♔h2 ♔f8
7. ♔g2 ♔e8
8. ♔h2 ♔d8
9. ♔g2 ♔c8
Resigns

It's clear after 10. ♖h7 ♖c1 and queens, or 10. ♖b3 ♔c7 and ...♔d6-e5.



109

Karpov-Kasparov
World Championship 1990
White to play

1. ♖xd6!

Much better than 1. ♖f7† ♔g6 2. ♖xa7 ♖e2 after which 3. ♔g1 d5 gives Black excellent drawing prospects due to his good ♖ and passed ♙.

1. . . . ♖e7

Normally 1... a5 would be much better than this passive move–but here it loses to 2. ♖d5!

2. ♖a6! ♔g7

3. ♔g1

And Black resigned in view of the obvious winning plan of advancing the ♔ to g4, e.g., 3... ♔f7 4. ♔f2 ♔e8 5. ♔f3, or 3... ♖f7 4. g3! ♔f8 5. ♔g2 and 6. ♖a4.

tical matter a grandmaster may pass up the opportunity for a "better position"–even a materially superior position–in favor of one with a clearer plan.

For example, in Diagram 109 White can get two connected passed ♙s with 1. ♖f7†. But he has no clearcut plan in the variation that ends with 3... d5.

Pat: So he went with the slower idea, 1. ♖xd6.

Noah: Not really slower, as it turned out. Once his opponent appreciated how easily the White winning plan could be carried out he resigned.

And Garry Kasparov is not known for resigning prematurely.

Pat: My problem is that in the ending I'm too busy playing moves to look for a plan.

Noah: You don't have to come

up with some Grand Design, 20 moves long.

But you need to have an idea of what your ultimate goals are.

If Black had taken a moment in Diagram 110 and asked himself, "How am I going to win this?" he would have answered: "By promoting the h-♙."

And that would have made calculating 1... ♖xh2 a lot easier. Instead, he ended up trading too many ♙s and allowed White to draw by blocking his only passer.

Pat: It helps that his ♖ was a lot more active than White's.

Noah: You can execute good plans even if your opponent has the active pieces–provided he doesn't have a good plan of his own.

Pat: Show me.

Noah: Sure. In Diagram 111 White is a ♙ down but his pieces are placed on excellent squares.

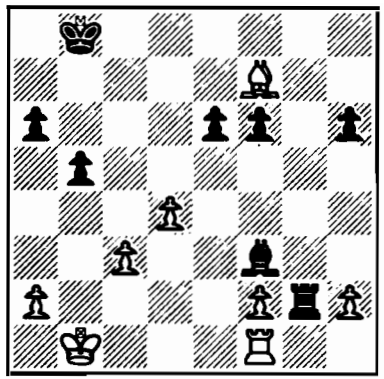
Yet he can't go much further: He lacks a good plan. He can only make minor harassing threats.

That means Black has time to execute an elaborate reorganization that involves freeing the ♘ from the defense of the a-♙ so it can go to g6 and then h4.

Pat: That should take years.

Noah: Actually only nine moves. Time flies when your opponent has no counterplay.

Pat: Doesn't counterplay come



110

Hellers-Adorjan
Esjberg 1988
Black to play

1. . . . e5?

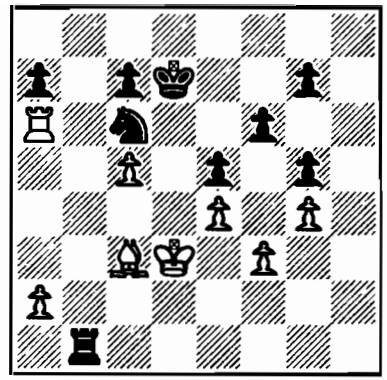
After 1... ♖xh2 2. ♗xe6 h5 there is no stopping the h-♙.

2. dxe5 fxe5
3. ♖e1 ♖xh2?

If Black takes on f2 first Black retains winning chances.

4. ♖xe5 ♖xf2
5. ♗h5!

And in view of 5... ♗b7 6. ♖e6, Black played **5... ♗xh5 6. ♖xh5 ♖f6** but agreed to a draw after **7. ♔b2 ♔c7 8. ♔b3** (and **9. a4**).



111

Romanishin-Timman
Taxco 1985
Black to play

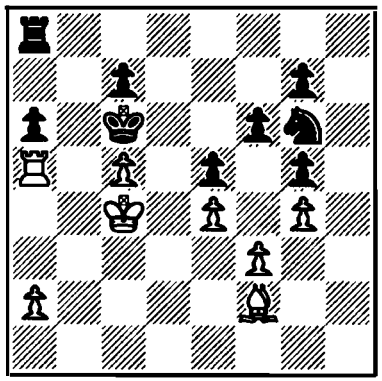
1. . . . ♖b7!
2. ♔c4 ♘b8!
3. ♖a3 ♔c6
4. ♗b4 a6

Intending ...♖a7 and ...♘d7.

5. ♖d3 ♘d7
6. ♖a3 ♖a7
7. ♗e1 ♖a8
8. ♗f2 ♘f8!
9. ♖a5 ♘g6

Completing the first plan. Now Black can attack the f3-pawn and convert his advantage.

Here 10. ♔d3 ♘h4 11. ♔e2 was White's last real hope.

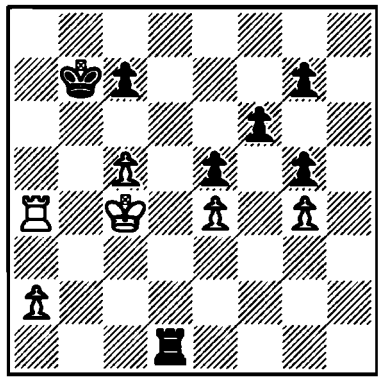


112

10. ♖a3?! a5
11. ♗e3 ♘h4!
12. ♗d2 ♖d8
13. ♗c3

Or 13. ♗xa5 ♖d4†!.

13. . . . ♘xf3
14. ♖xa5 ♘d2†!
15. ♗xd2 ♖xd2
16. ♖a6† ♔b7
17. ♖a4 ♖d1



113

Black took his time and won with **18. a3 ♖d2 19. ♔c3 ♖g2 20. ♔c4 ♖d2!** (not allowing 21. ♔d5 with counterplay).

Eventually the e4 or g4-♙s had to fall: **21. ♔c3 ♖e2 22. ♖c4 ♔c6 23. a4 ♖g2 24. a5 ♖g3† 25. ♔b4 ♖xg4 26. a6 ♖g1 Resigns.**

from well-placed pieces?

Noah: No, it usually comes about when you have **targets** to attack–and here White doesn't.

Or it occurs when you have a plan, like making a passed ♙–which White also lacks here.

Pat: So Black can take his time.

Noah: "Never shalt thou hurry." Remember.

Pat: How can I forget? But tell me this: at what point in a game should I start planning?

Noah: Very soon after the endgame begins.

Pat: After my little stroll around the tournament room.

Noah: Don't laugh. One of the reasons that's a good habit to get into is that it helps get rid of any middlegame plans left around in your head.

For example, if you spent the last three hours looking at the ♔-side or trying to win the enemy d-♙, you'll need a clear head if the best plan in the endgame is to create a passed b-♙.

Pat: How quickly should a plan emerge?

Noah: Often one suggests itself as soon as ♕s go off.

In Diagram 114 Black had just traded ♕s on d4 when he began his plan.

Pat: Which was?

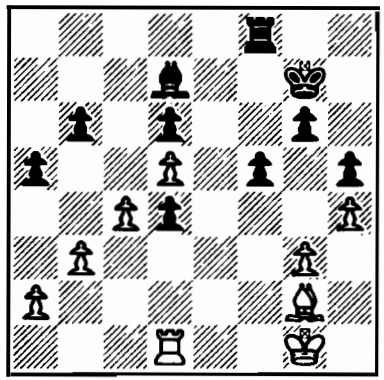
Noah: The most basic of all endgame scripts–to create a passed ♙ and promote it.

Pat: Black didn't actually queen the g-♙.

Noah: No, but a good plan can always be modified. In this case it forced a won ♔+♙ ending.

White was so concerned that the enemy passed ♙ would advance that he traded down to a dead loss.

Pat: I can never figure out my opponent's plans until it's too late. Maybe I'm better off not trying to guess what he's up to.



114

Ehlvest-Karpov
Linares 1991
Black to play

1. . . . f4!

Other "good-looking" moves, like (1... ♖e8 2. ♔f2 ♖e3 3. ♖xd4 ♖c3, achieve little (4. ♖d2).

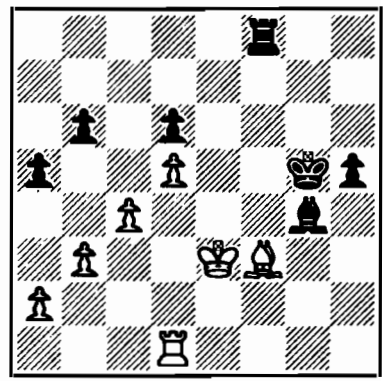
2. ♔f2 fxg3†
3. ♔xg3 ♖e8
4. ♖xd4 ♗f5

Threatening ...♖e2, which would have been answered here by 5. ♖e4!.

5. ♔f2 ♔f6
6. ♗f3 g5!

Now 7. ♗xh5 ♖h8! regains the ♙ favorably.

7. hxg5† ♔xg5
8. ♖d1 ♖f8
9. ♔e3 ♗g4!



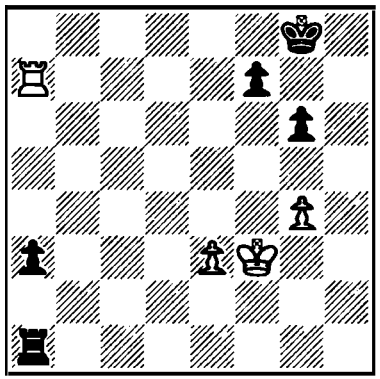
115

10. ♗xg4 hxg4
11. ♖h1 ♖f6!

Another finesse, and better than 11... g3 12. ♖h3! ♔g4 13. ♖h6 followed by ♖g6† or ♖xd6. E.g., 13... ♖g8 14. ♖xd6 g2 15. ♔f2 or 13... ♖e8† 14. ♖e6.

12. ♔e2 g3

And Black won–**13. ♖f1! ♖f4! 14. a3 ♔g4 15. b4 axb4 16. axb4 g2 17. ♖xf4† ♔xf4 18. ♔f2 ♔e5 19. ♔xg2 ♔d4 etc.**



116

Sumjakina-Berezjuk
Bratislava 1992
White to play

1. ♖a8†! ♔g7
2. g5!

Now 2... a2, threatening 3... ♖f1† and 4... a1=♕, can be answered by 3. ♔g2 or 3. ♔e4.

2. . . . ♖g1
3. ♖xa3 ♖xg5
4. ♖a7

Black tried for another 35 moves before agreeing to a draw (**4... ♖f5† 5. ♔g4 ♖f1 6. ♔g3 g5 7. ♔g4 ♔g6 8. ♖a6† f6 9. ♖b6! ♖h1 10. ♖a6 etc.**).

Noah: No. It is very important to know enemy intentions.

See what happens in Diagram 116 when White takes away Black's main plan.

Pat: Which was...?

Noah: Simply to activate Black's ♔ so it could win White's ♙s or shepherd his own ♙ to a1. If Black had gotten his ♔ to f6 or e7 it would have been fairly simple to carry out one of those ideas since White's ♖ would be burdened with three tasks. And that's two too many.

Pat: Three tasks?

Noah: Sure. No. 1: Stop the a-pawn; No. 2: Cut off the ♔; and No. 3: Failing all else, create counterplay by gobbling up the ♔-side.

Pat: What if your opponent has more than one plan?

Noah: Then it becomes tougher to thwart him–but not impossible.

Usually one plan is more dangerous than the other, as in Diagram 117.

Pat: I don't even see one plan, just a blockaded mess.

Noah: That pawn at c6 creates it's own plan.

Remember what I said about ♙s increasing in value the more they advance? That inspires White to devise two plans, the ♗xe5/d6 one that worked and the b5/a5-a6/♗a5 one he didn't need.

Pat: Black's 1... ♗f2 would have stopped the second plan.

Noah: But unfortunately for him, not the first.

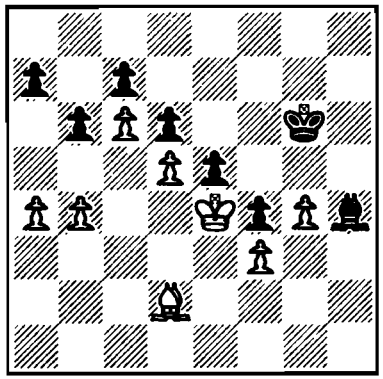
Pat: I'm a little surprised at there being two plans available.

Noah: Don't be. Many positions can't be won with only one.

Pat: Why?

Noah: Because as pieces depart the board, the defender has less to defend. And it's easier to thwart one plan.

Pat: What's Diagram 118 got to do with this?



117

Lagky-Tasic
Chanac 1991
Black to play

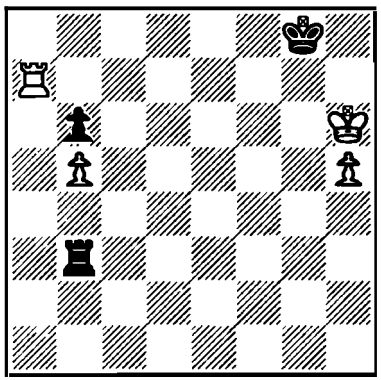
1. . . . ♗f2?
2. ♗c3!

Threatening 3. ♗xe5 dxe5 4. d6 and a ♙ queens.

2. . . . ♗h4
3. ♗xe5! dxe5
4. d6 ♗d8
5. ♔xe5

And the ♗ can't stop all the ♙s: **5... ♔f7 6. b5 ♗f6† 7. ♔d5 ♗d8 8. g5! Resigns.**

Back at the diagram Black should be able to draw with the passive 1... ♗f6, e.g., 2. b5 ♔g5 3. a5 ♔g6 4. a6 ♔g5 5. ♗a5! (threatening ♗xb6!) ♗d8!.



118

1. ♖b7!

The direct 1. ♔g6 fails to 1... ♖g3† 2. ♔f6 ♖b3! and White makes no progress.

1. . . . ♖xb5

If Black allows 2. ♖xb6, White has a variety of winning plans.

2. ♔g6! ♔f8

Else 3. ♖b8 mates.

3. h6 ♖e5

4. ♖b8† ♔e7

5. h7

And the ♙ queens.

Noah: White wants to promote the h-♙ but that idea is easily stopped. So he finds a second plan, winning the b-♙.

Pat: Which is also easily stopped.

Noah: Yes, but then with Black's ♖ badly placed, White wins by returning to the first plan. On b5, with his own ♙ on b6, the black ♖ can't give "Philidor" checks on the third rank or checks on the g-file.

You have to be aware of multiple plans–even in so-called simple positions.

Pat: I suppose that's a subtle hint about Diagram 119.

Noah: Quite right. If White had only one goal–♔c5xc6-b5xa4–he would have lost to ...♔e4-f3-g2.

Pat: That sorta makes sense. White has to capture two ♙s in order to promote his a-♙, but Black only needs to rip off the h-♙.

Noah: You got it.

And if Black had only one goal–to promote the h-♙–White would have drawn by going after the a4-♙. But this time both players had a choice of weapons.

Pat: Why should one plan work and the other one fail?

Noah: When your opponent stops one plan, he usually expends so much energy–that is, piece activity–that he allows the second one to work.

Pat: How many plans can there possibly be in one position?

Noah: Sometimes, several.

For example, you may have:

(1) a mating idea,

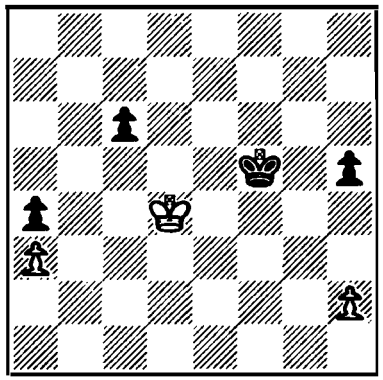
(2) a ♙ that can promote,

(3) enemy ♙s to attack and win, and

(4) chances to trade down to a clearer position, like a won ♔+♙.

And that doesn't include some ideas that are available if you're trying to draw–such as perpetual check, building a fortress or trying for stalemate.

Pat: Okay, what's the story in Diagram 121?



119

Velea-Vidoniak
Rumania 1992
White to play

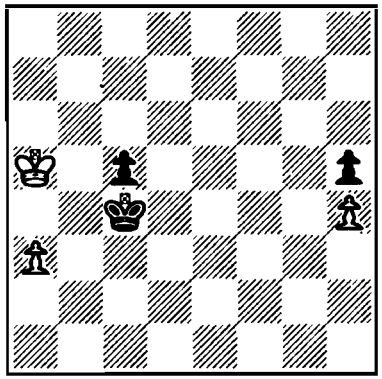
1. ♔c5 ♔e4!

Not 1... ♔g4 because both sides promote after 2. ♔b4! ♔h3 3. ♔xa4 ♔xh2 4. ♔b3 ♔g3 5. a4 h4 6. a5.

2. h4!

Hopeless is 2. ♔xc6 ♔f3 3. ♔b5 h4 4. ♔xa4 ♔g2.

2. . . . ♔d3!
3. ♔b4 ♔d4
4. ♔xa4 ♔c4!
5. ♔a5 c5

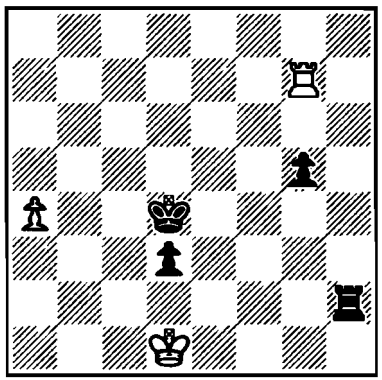


120

A fine example of elbowing out.

6. ♔b6 ♔d4
7. a4 c4

Both players promote but Black trades ♕s into a won ♔+♙ with 11... ♕c5† and 12... ♕d5† or 12... ♕a3†.



121

Wiesniak-Kholmov
Warsaw 1991
Black to play

1. . . . g4!!

Plan No. 1, advancing the d-♙ with the aid of the ♔, fails to 1... ♔c3 2. ♖c7† ♔b4 3. ♖b7†! because now 3... ♔xa4 4. ♖d7 leads, at best to a drawn ♔+♙ ending (4... d2 5. ♖xd2 or 4... ♖h3 5. ♔d2 g4 6. ♖d4†!). So he tries to promote the g-♙.

2. ♖d7†

The point of Black's last move is that foiling Plan No. 2 (2. ♖xg4) makes Plan No. 1 decisive (2... ♔c3 3. ♔e1 [to avoid mate] d2†).

2. . . . ♔c3
3. ♖c7† ♔b4

And now 4. ♖d7 allows 4... g3 and it is Plan No. 2 that triumphs.

4. ♖g7 g3!

Anyway. Here White resigned in view of 5. ♖xg3 ♔c3–Plan No. 1 again–6. ♔e1 (else 6... ♖h1†) ♔c2 and the ♙ queens.

Noah: Another case of how two plans, each a failure on their own, create a forced win when combined. Here Black sees that going for mate with 1... ♔c3 and 2... ♖h1 can be foiled by White checks. So he tries to promote the d-♙–by first threatening to queen the g-♙.

Pat: And that diverts White's ♖ temporarily.

Noah: But when Black pushes the ♙ to g3 White either has to capture it or let it promote.

Capturing allows Black to win control of the key square, d2.

"The most important squares in the endgame... are the squares in front of passed pawns."
–Cecil Purdy

Pat: Seems pretty complicated.

Noah: Not compared to a middlegame. There you're dealing with more than a dozen objectives we might call plans, such as weakening enemy ♙s or harassing his ♕ or creating a pawn majority or Lord knows what else.

In an ending usually only one or two arise. In Diagram 122, for example, White's chief plan involves his prime asset.

Pat: The b-♙.

Noah: Of course. And if there were no ♔-side ♙s–and he was just a ♙ up–the game would easily be drawn. It can only be won via a second plan: attacking the ♔-side with his ♔ and ♖, with machine-like accuracy.

Pat: Computers are machines. How come they play so lousy in unknown positions, like some blocked middlegame, but they're so flawless in "book" positions?

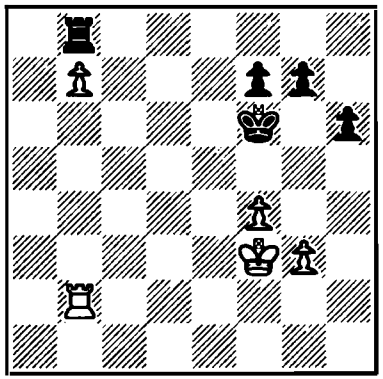
Noah: That's easy to explain. A computer **is** a book.

Pat: That doesn't explain why their weakest play comes in unclear positions.

Noah: That's also easy. Computers can't plan. White eventually wins by doing something that doesn't seem remotely possible at first: he promotes the g-♙.

Of course it takes awhile.

Pat: Twenty moves from Diagram 122 is a lot! How long should it take to carry out a plan?



122

Larsen-Browne
Las Palmas 1982
White to play

1. ♔g4!

White gets nowhere after 1. ♔e4 ♔e7.

1. . . . ♔e6

As good a pass as any. After 1... g6 White creates an entry for his ♔ with 2. ♖b6† and 3. f5, e.g., 2... ♔g7 3. f5 ♔h7 4. ♔f4 and ♔e5.

2. f5† ♔e5

If the ♔ goes to d7, White breaks into the ♔-side with 3. ♔h5 and 4. f6!

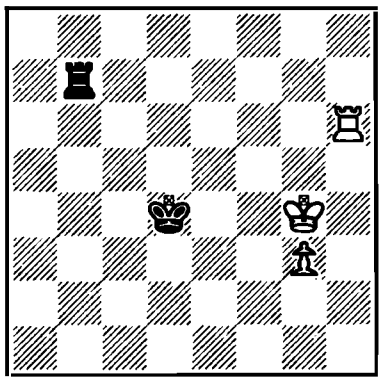
3. ♖b4!

Going for zugzwang. If Black retreats to d6, the 4. ♔h5/f6 idea works.

3. . . . g6
4. fxg6 fxg6
5. ♖b6! ♔d4

It was zugzwang again: 5... ♔e4 6. ♖e6† (elbow) and ♖xg6/h6 reaches Lucena with the g-♙.

6. ♖xg6 ♖xb7
7. ♖xh6



123

The result is a relatively clear won game since the enemy ♔ is crowded out and the ♙ can reach the fifth rank.

The rest went: **7... ♖g7† 8. ♔f4**

♖f7† 9. ♔g5! ♔e5 10. g4 ♖f8 11. ♔h5 ♖f7 12. g5 ♔f5 13. ♖h8 ♔e6 14. ♖e8† ♔f5 15. g6!.

Black played it out to Lucena, another eight moves: 15... ♖a7 16. ♖f8† ♔e6 17. ♖f1 ♖a2 18. ♔h6 ♔e7 19. g7 and so on.

Noah: That depends on the position. It can take 30 moves even in an apparently simple position like Diagram 124.

"Anticipation is 60 per cent of command."
–U.S. Army cliché

"But like 10 years in the penitentiary, it is very easy to say 'Anticipate!' and very hard to do it."
–S.L.A. Marshall

Pat: What's happening here?

Noah: An exception to an old Capablanca rule.

Capa said that a clear Exchange up is a win in the vast majority of cases since you can give it back at the right point to win a ♙–and that should make it easy.

Pat: Is that the plan here? To sac the ♖ for the ♗?

Noah: No, the ♗ is too frisky to be traded off. This requires a plan of several steps. You start by finding a target. Here, there is only one, f7. So the first step is to get the ♔ the closest it can to f7.

Pat: Won't he just be checked away by the ♗?

Noah: Not if you head for e8.

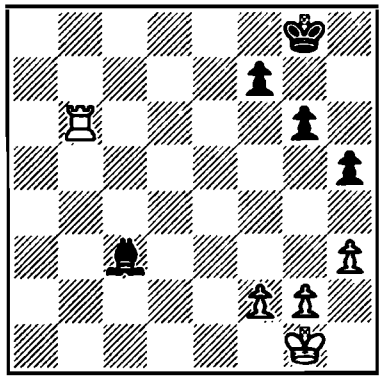
Pat: That takes a lot of time.

Noah: Time flies when the opponent has no counterplay, remember? Black's ♙s are on their best squares and his ♔ cannot reach the White ♙s. So all he can do is: pass.

Pat: But White can't win the f-♙ by force, can he?

Noah: No, but after Black moves his f-♙, he gives e6 up.

Pat: I don't see progress yet.



124

Lputian–Sideif-Zade
USSR 1979
White to play

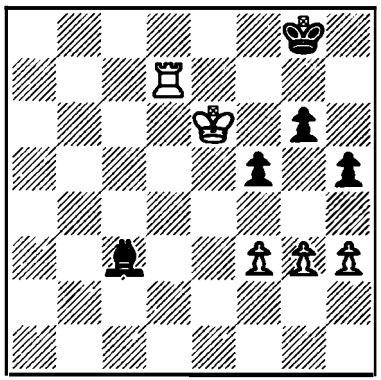
1. ♔f1	**♔g7**
2. ♔e2	**♔g8**
3. ♔e3	**♔g7**
4. ♔e4	**♔g8**
5. ♔d5	**♔g7**
6. ♖b3	**♗a1**
7. ♖b1	**♗c3**
8. ♖c1	**♗b2**
9. ♖c2	**♗a1**

Now that the ♗ is pushed to a bad square White can easily reach e8.

10. ♔d6	**♗d4**
11. ♔e7	**♗e5**
12. ♖c4	**♗b2**
13. ♔e8	**f5**

Else the ♖ reaches the 7th rank and wins the f-♙, e.g., 13... ♗e5 14. ♖c5 ♗d6 15. ♖d6 ♗-moves 16. ♖d7.

14. ♔e7	**♗a1**
15. ♔e6	**♗b2**
16. ♖c7†	**♔g8**
17. ♖d7	**♗c3**
18. f3	**♗b2**
19. g3	**♗c3**



125

20. ♖d3 ♗a1
21. ♖d1! ♗c3
22. ♖g1! ♗d4
23. ♖g2 ♔g7
24. g4! fxg4

On 24... hxg4 25. hxg4 fxg4 26. ♖xg4 threatens to win with f4-f5. If Black defends with ...♔h7 or ...♔h6, he allows ♔f7!.

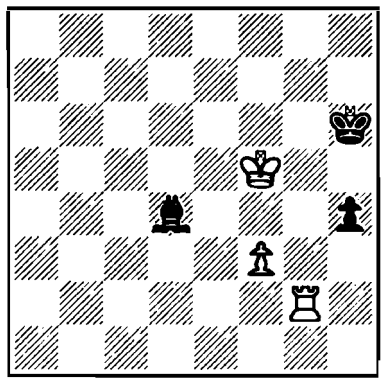
25. hxg4 ♔h6
26. gxh5!

Not 26. ♔f7 h4! 27. ♖d2 ♗e3 28. ♖d6 ♔g5 29. ♖xg6† ♔f4 and Black draws.

26. . . . gxh5

Or 26... ♔xh5 27. ♔f7, because 27... g5 allows 28. ♖h2#.

27. ♔f5 h4



126

28. ♖d2 ♗c3
29. ♖c2 ♗e1
30. ♖c6† ♔g7

Or 30... ♔h5 31. ♖c8 and 32. ♖h8†.

31. ♔g5 ♗g3
32. f4 h3
33. ♖g6† ♔f7
34. ♖h6 h2
35. ♔g4 Resigns

Noah: Wait for the second stage. The new target is g6, so White lines his ♖ up against it, on g2–another light square...

... and then blows the defenses apart with his one g-♙.

Then the ♔ reaches f7 or f5–and it suddenly becomes easy.

Pat: Seems it should have a lot easier.

Noah: No, actually Black had an excellent ♙ structure, considering the color of his ♗. If Black had begun with a light-colored ♗ White would have found another plan.

Pat: Such as?

Noah: Such as penetrating at f6 with his ♔ or advancing his f-♙ to the sixth rank.

It was Mikhail Botvinnik who said that masters generally find the plans that amateurs can't.

Pat: A grandmaster **would** say something like that.

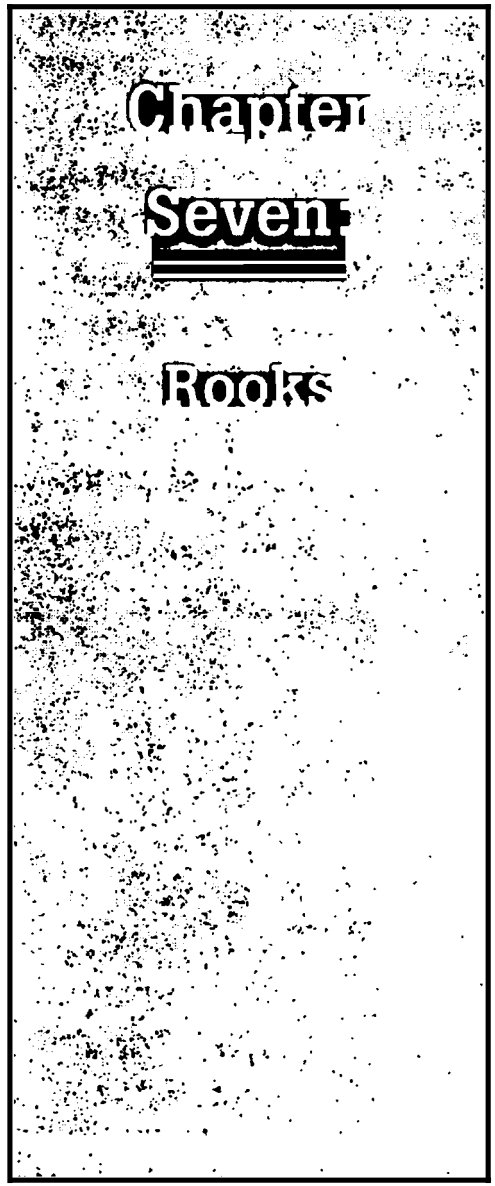
Noah: But Botvinnik didn't believe masters were infallible. As he put it, sometimes "the plan which is so thoroughly explained in the commentaries is only formulated after the game is over."

Pat: You mean, after the masters win, they lie about it.

Noah: You know, Pat, for a young player you're showing remarkable signs of progress.

Plans

In which Pat discovers why the most common of all endgames deserves its reputation for being the trickiest.



Pat: Today I've got a question that's been bugging me. With a limited amount of time–and attention span–what should I be studying?

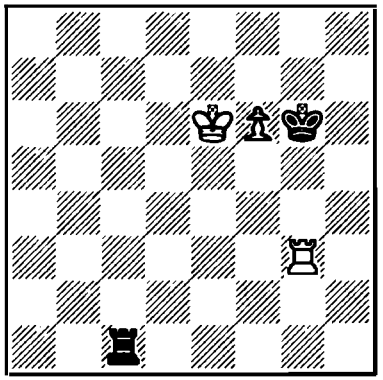
Noah: Study the ♖ endings, either pure ♖+♙(s) v. ♖+♙(s), or ♖ endings with minor pieces.

Pat: But there are all those books on, oh, ♔+♙(s), and ...

Noah: Look at the numbers. Here's a chart of major tournaments showing which endings occur often and which are relatively rare.

The figures don't lie. But sometimes endgame books do.

Pat: Okay, you talked me into starting with ♖+♙(s). But I've got to tell you this is one endgame I'd like to take pass-fail.



127

Sax-Tseshkovsky
Rovinj/Zagreb 1975
Black to Play

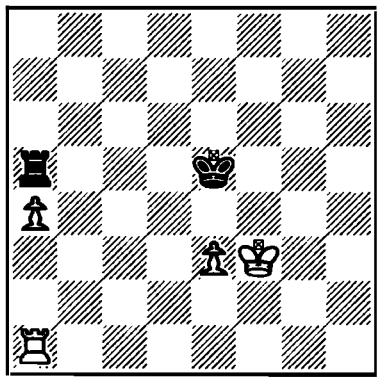
1. . . . Resigns??

But 1... ♔h7 2. f7 Rc8 and White's ♔ can neither advance safely nor attack the ♖. For example, 3. ♔e7 ♖c7† 4. ♔e8 ♖c8† 5. ♔d7 ♖a8 6. ♔c6 ♖f8 and so on.

–PERCENTAGE OF ALL ENDGAMES–

Tournament	♖+♙s	♖+m*♙(s)	♘v♗	♕	♘	♗ same	♗ opp	♙
Karlsbad 1911	19	30	5	14	3	4	.7	1.5
Moscow 1936	26	26	14	9	3	3	3	3
Santa Monica 1966	20	3	9	6	6	3	3	3
Leningrad 1973	26	29	6	12	3	0	3	3
Wijk aan Zee 1975	14	30	8	10	14	3	0	0
First four Kasparov-Karpov matches	21	54	6	9	2	2	0	0
US Chmpshp 1993	19	26	8	22	0	0	4	0

m* = minor pieces and



128

Kasparov-Short
London 1993
PCA World Championship
White to Play

1. e4??

Hurrying. With 1. ♖a2 (pass) ♔f5 2. e4† ♔e5 3. ♔e3 (elbowing) White wins eventually. For example, 3... ♔e6 4. ♔d4 ♔d6 5. ♔c4 ♔e5 6. ♔b4 ♖a8 7. a5 ♔xe4 8. ♔c5 and the a-♙ wins. Or 5... ♔c6 6. ♔b4 ♔b6 7. ♖h2 and ♖h6† makes progress.

1. . . .	**♔e6??**
2. ♔e3	**♔d6**
3. ♔d4	

And **Black resigned** after **3... ♔d7 4. ♔c4 ♔c7 5. ♔b4 ♖e5 6. ♖c1†! ♔b6 7. ♖c4** and **♔c3-d4** (mismatch) leads to Lucena with the e-♙.

But 1... ♖c5! would draw: 2. ♖a3 ♖c4 3. a5 ♖xe4 4. a6 ♖f4† and 5... ♖f8.

Or, 2. a5 ♖c3† 3. ♔e2 ♔xe4 4. a6 ♖c8 5. a7 ♖a8.

Keep the ♖ Active

Noah: Join the club. Everyone finds them hard–because they **are** the hardest endings.

Even with advantages that would be sufficient to win any other endgame–such as White's two solid passed ♙s in Diagram 128, the very best players in the world can blunder big time.

Pat: If they do it, is there any hope for me?

Noah: Well, there are some tips I can offer, like that prime directive of ♖ endings:

Keep the ♖ Active

Pat: Why is that a bigger deal with ♖s than with ♘s or ♗s?

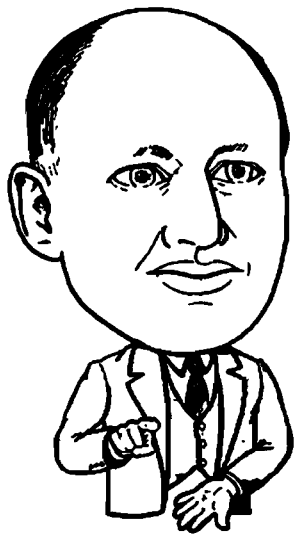
Noah: Because of a ♖'s extraordinary range.

It can go from one wing to another in one move, not three like a ♘ or five like a ♔.

A ♗ can cross the board in one move–if it's on the right diagonal. Even then a ♗ may be useless if, say, you have a dark-squared ♗ trying to attack a ♙ on a light square.

Pat: So if you don't make maximum use of a ♖ ...

Noah: ...you're wasting the strongest piece you've got in most endings. That's part of the reason a ♖ makes such a lousy blockader–like 1... ♖a7?? here. The stronger the piece, the weaker the blockader.



"Nothing is more disastrous in a Rook ending than a passive attitude."
–Rudolph Spielmann

Here the passive ♖ cost Black only a tempo–but it turned out to be fatal.

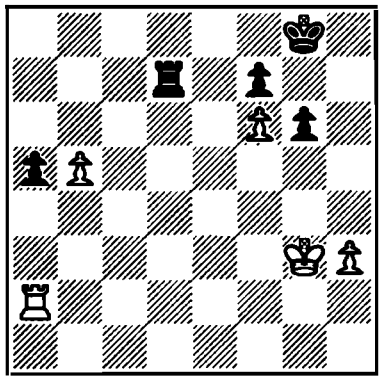
Pat: So how come so many ♖ endings end up in handshakes? You know, "All ♖+♙ endings are drawn!"

Noah: Because an extra ♙–or even two–doesn't count as much in these endings. Active pieces do.

In fact, you could codify another rule:

A More Active Piece In ♔+♖ Endings Is (usually) Worth A Pawn

Pat: How usual is "usually?"



129

Alterman-Miles
Debrecen 1992
Black to Play

1. . . . ♖a7??

Black obtains enough counterplay to draw after 1... ♖d6! 2. ♖xa5 ♖xf6.

For example, 3. ♖a6 ♖f5 4. b6 ♖b5 (or even 4... ♔g7 5. b7 ♖b5! 6. ♖a7 g5! 7. ♔f3 ♔g6 8. ♔e4 f5† 9. ♔d4 f4 10. ♔c4 ♖b1 11. ♔c5 f3 and both passers may queen).

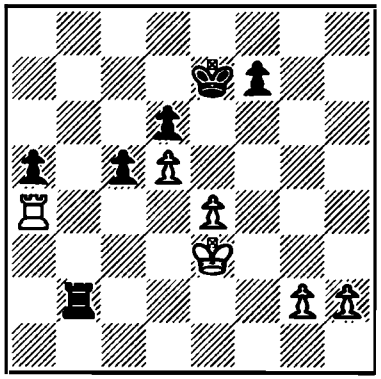
2. ♖a4!

Now Black sees that 2... ♔f8 3. ♔f4 ♔e8 4. ♔e5 ♔d7 5. ♔d5 ♔c7 6. ♔c5 ♔c8 7. b6 is hopeless.

2. . . . ♖b7!?
3. ♖xa5 ♖b6
4. ♔f4 ♖xf6†
5. ♔e5 ♔g7
6. ♔d5

White wins even if Black gets the h-pawn, e.g., 6... ♖f3 7. ♖a4 ♖xh3 8. b6 g5 9. b7 ♖b3 10. ♔c6 ♔g6 11. ♖a5! threatening 12. ♖b5.

Similarly, if Black gets his ♔ going–6... ♔h6 7. ♖a4 ♔h5–he still loses: 8. ♔c5 ♖f5† 9. ♔c6 ♖f6† 10. ♔c7 ♖f3 11. ♖b4! ♖xh3 12. b6 ♔g5 13. b7.



130

Flear-Lyogky
Le Touquet 1991
Black to Play

1. . . . ♔f6!

After 1... ♖xg2 2. ♖xa5 ♖xh2 White draws with 3. ♖a7† ♔f6 4. ♖d7! (4... ♔e5 5. ♖e7†!).

2. ♖xa5?

He still draws with 2. ♔f4! ♖f2†! 3. ♔e3! ♖xg2 4. ♖xa5 ♖xh2 5. ♖a7 ♖h6! 6. ♖d7 ♔g7 because of 7. e5! dxe5 8. ♔e4. Two active pieces versus two passive ones.

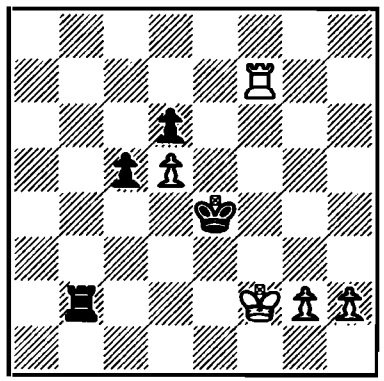
2. . . . ♔e5!
3. ♖a7

Or 3. ♖a3 (stopping checks) ♖xg2 and Black emerges a winning ♙ up.

3. . . . ♖b3†
4. ♔f2 ♔xe4

Now 5. h4 ♖b2† and Black's c-♙ is faster than White's h-♙ because it gets ♔ support. For example, 6. ♔g3 c4 7. h5 c3 8. ♖c7 ♔d3! 9. h6 c2 10. h7 ♖b8.

5. ♖xf7 ♖b2†!



131

A form of elbowing out. Now 6. ♔e1 ♖xg2 7. h4 ♖h2 and ...♔xd5 wins.

6. ♔g3 c4
7. ♖c7 ♔d3
8. h4

If White tries to promote the d-♙ instead, Black stops him with 8. ♖c6 c3 9. ♖xd6 ♖b5.

8. . . . c3

And Black won after **9. h5 c2 10. h6 ♖b1 11. ♔f4 c1=♕† 12. ♖xc1 ♖xc1 13. g4 ♖f1†** (elbow) **14. ♔g5 ♔e4.** E.g., 15. ♔g6 ♖g1 16. h7 ♖xg4† 17. ♔h5 ♖g1 and 18... ♖h1†. Or 15. h7 ♖h1 16. ♔g6 ♔xd5 17. g5 ♔e6 18. ♔g7 d5 19. g6 ♔f5.

Noah: An awful lot. Here's a good example, Diagram 130.

After 1... ♖xg2 Black would have been a ♙ ahead, but White's active ♖ on d7 is enough to draw. Even after the superior 1... ♔f6 White can draw with 2. ♔f4 even though he may have to sac a second ♙ (7. e5!).

Pat: And he loses even though he ends up a ♙ ahead.

Noah: ♙s are cheap in heavy piece endgames because they can be blockaded and captured so easily.

Notice that in an ending a ♖ changes character slightly. In the middlegame he's a long-range controller of files, a distant general. In the ending he's a vicious attacker of ♙s, an invader of seventh ranks.

Incidentally, another reason computers are such poor endgame players is that they think too much about material.

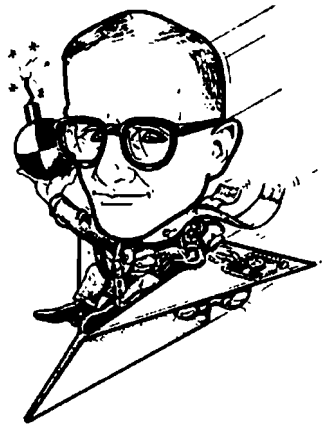
Pat: And not enough about piece activity.

Noah: Quite right. In a highly publicized exhibition game Diagram 132 arose.

Black lost because he thought like a machine, preserving his h-♙s.

Pat: I thought only humans would set a cheap trap like 1... h5 2. ♖xh5?? ♖c5†.

Noah: Sometimes a player's true character comes out in the ending. Even a computer's.



"Pawns cannot escape Rooks by running away... A Rook moves in the same direction as a pawn."
–Cecil Purdy

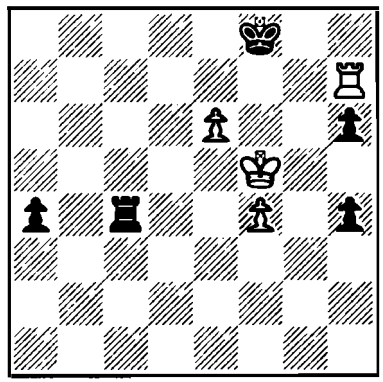
Pat: So, what's the point? I should just keep shifting my pieces around searching for activity?

Noah: No, the object is to find the ideal squares for them. In Diagram 133 Black finds a superb place for his ♔ to blockade the passed ♙s. And he can cut the ♔ off on the c-file. The makes up a two-♙ deficit.

Pat: And White's ♖ is horribly passive at f1.

Noah: True. The only try to win is to put White's ♔ on a forward square, like b7, and then try to activate the ♖ behind the e-♙.

But that shouldn't work.



132

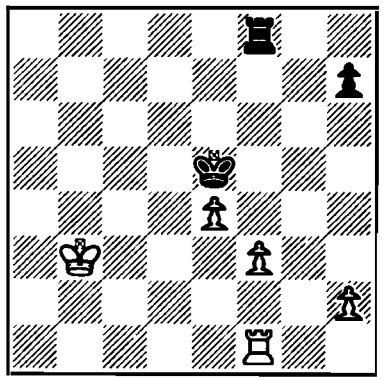
Karpov-Deep Thought
Exhibition Game 1990
Black to play

1. . . . h5??

Black draws easily after 1... h3!, threatening 2... h2 3. ♖xh6 ♖c2, after which the a-♙ wins. For example, 2. ♖xh6 a3! 3. ♖xh3 ♖a4 (behind the ♙!) 4. ♖h1 a2 5. ♖a1 ♔e7, a ♔+♖ vs. ♔ mismatch.

2. ♔e5! h3
3. f5

The threat of 4. f6 ♔g8 5. f7† forced a quick finish (**3... ♔g8 4. ♖xh5 a3 5. ♖xh3 a2 6. ♖a3 ♖c5† 7. ♔f6 Resigns**).



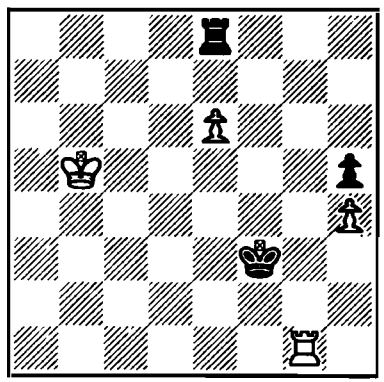
133

Anikaev-Karacev
Severodoentsk 1982
Black to play

1. . . .	**♖c8!**
2. ♔b4	**h5**
3. h4	**♔f4**
4. ♔b5	**♔e3?**

By simply holding the c-file barrier, Black has a solid draw, e.g., 4... ♖c7 5. ♔b6 ♖c8 6. ♔b7 ♖c5 7. ♖e1 ♖e5! (blocking the ♙ and threatening 8... ♔xf3) 8. ♖f1 ♖c5 draw.

5. e5	**♔e2**
6. ♖g1!	**♔xf3**
7. e6	**♖e8**



134

With his ♔ now freed, White proceeded to win with **8. ♖g6 ♔f4 9. ♔c6 ♔f5 10. ♔d7!.**

"Experience in Rook-endings is what you get for failing to find those mate-in-fours in the middlegame."
–Anonymous

Pat: So why did he lose?

Noah: By deciding to play "pseudo-actively," as the winner put it, when just about anything else would draw.

Remember, **active isn't always better than passive.**

Pat: You mean Black tried to win back material with ...♔e3-e2 when he could have maintained a rock-solid blockade with ... ♖e5! at the right moment.

Noah: Quite so.

Pat: Aren't there a lot of times when passive play with the ♔ or ♖ is as good–or even better–than active play?

Noah: Naturally. Chess isn't that simple.

In Diagram 135 Black has a classic choice between a passive defense, leading after 3... ♖a6 to the Philidor drawing trick. Or he can draw with the active defense, attacking the only undefended target, the f4-♙.

Pat: You mean he had *two* ways to draw?

Noah: Why is that surprising? When all the ♙s are located close together and there's no passed ♙, the defender has all sorts of resources in ♖-endings that he doesn't have in other endgames.

Sometimes the hardest part of defending is trying to choose between three convincing lines that all seem to draw.

Pat: But Black loses here and I still don't understand why.

Noah: He lost because he chose an active-looking–but essentially passive plan that gave White a golden penetration square for his ♔ at g6.

Pat: That's funny. Black loses because his own ♗ shields the white ♔ from checks along the files.

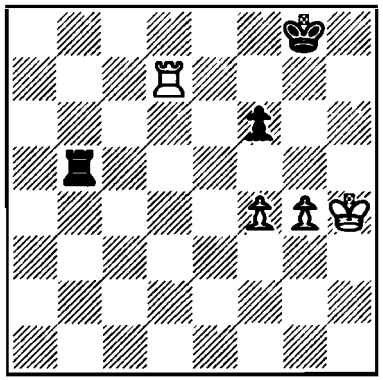
Noah: It's sort of like defeating the ghost of André Philidor.

Pat: Whatever.

I know a ♘ stands badly on the edge of the board and well in the center. Are there any best places for ♖s?

Noah: Yes. As I mentioned, ♖s are long-range pieces, the field-cannons of endgames.

They often belong a good distance away from the center of the action so they can't be attacked or shut out. Like in Diagram 136.



135

Zaitsev-Hübner
Busum 1969
Black to play

Black draws with 1... ♖a5 (pass) and if 2. g5 fxg5† 3. fxg5 ♖a6 (Philidor!) 4. ♔h5 ♖b6 5. g6 ♖b1 and an unstoppable series of checks.

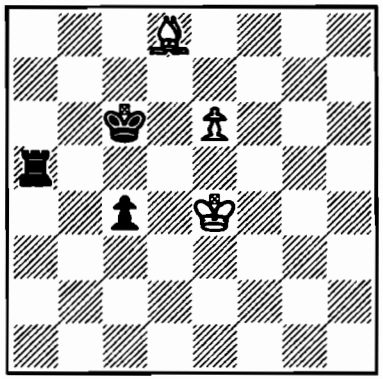
He also draws with 1... ♖b4! 2. f5 ♖b1! 3. g5 ♖h1†! or 3. ♔h5 ♖g1! (4. ♔g6 ♖xg4† 5. ♔xf6 ♖a4 and lateral checks).

1. . . .	**♖b1?**
2. ♔h5	**♖g1**
3. g5	**fxg5**
4. f5!!	

Undoubtedly overlooked by Black.

4. . . .	**♔f8**
5. f6	**Resigns**

There's no defense to 6. ♔g6.



136

Dokhoian-H. Olafsson
Sochi 1988
Black to play

1. . . . ♖a8??

Black wins easily after 1... ♖a1 2. e7 ♖e1† 3. ♔d4 ♔b5 4. ♔c3 ♖e4 with the first of many zugzwangs to come.

2. e7 ♔d7
3. ♔d4 ♖c8
4. ♔c3 ♔e8

Black has no clear way to improve his pieces, particularly the passive ♔.

5. ♔c2 ♖c6
6. ♔d2 ♔d7

And Black offered a draw after another 30 moves (**7. ♔c3 ♖c5 8. ♗b6 ♖c8 9. ♗d8 ♖c6 10. ♔c2 ♖e6 11. ♔c3 ♖e4 12. ♗b6 ♔c6 13. ♗d4**).

Pat: Yeah, I see. The ♖ works much better operating from e1 than from a8.

Noah: On the e-file it cooperates with the black ♔ to advance the c-♙. On a8, or as it turns out on the c-file, the ♖ loses much of its power. And the ♔ loses virtually *all* of its range because it is tied to the enemy ♙.

Pat: So White can draw with little more than ♔-moves.

Noah: That why ♖-management is so important.

Since so many ♖+♙ endings end up as man-on-man battles, the misplacement of the ♖ can lead quickly to a fatal mismatch.

For example, do you think the white ♖ stands well in Diagram 137?

"Most terrible, or rather, most effective, of all maneuvers is sudden attack against the enemy's rear."
–Onasonder,
1st century Greek military writer

"Rook endings are the most democratic endgames of all: Every players gets a chance to badly misplace his Rook."
–Anonymous

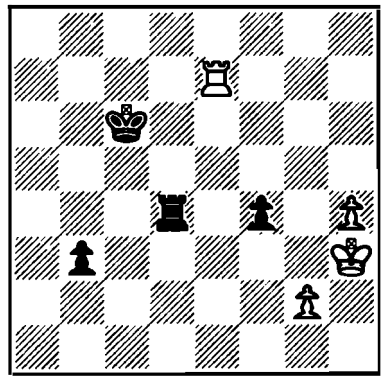
Pat: Don't ♖s always do well on the seventh rank? This one can be used to stop the b-♙ or harass the ♔.

Noah: True, but after two accurate moves the game would have been over. The ♖ just wasn't active **enough.** On e8 the ♖ would have been able to get behind the ♙ at b8.

Pat: Seems you're saying now the more active ♖ always wins.

Noah: Not quite. But what you want to avoid is a serious imbalance–your very passive, almost immobile ♖ against his flexible one.

Pat: What's happening in Diagram 138?



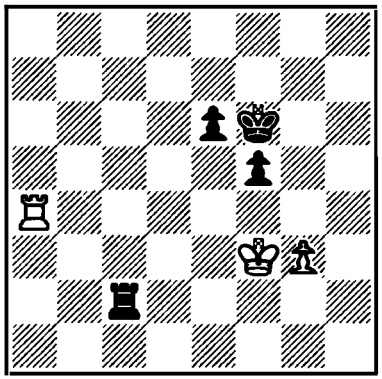
137

Morozevich-Van Wely
Tilburg 1993
Black to play

1. . . . b2??
2. ♖e1 ♖b4
3. ♖b1

And by the time White has to sacrifice the ♖ for the b-♙, his ♔-side ♙s will be too far ahead. Draw.

But in the diagram Black wins immediately with 1... ♖d3† 2. ♔g4 ♖e3!! since the white ♖ has no way of getting to the b-file or first rank (3. ♖f7 b2).



138

Miles-Ermenkov
Aegina 1993
Black to play

1. . . . e5

Played only after 20 moves of jockeying for better ♔ position–without success.

2. ♖a6†??

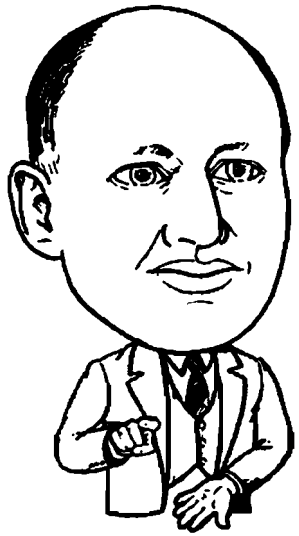
After 2. ♖a8! White can meet 2...♔g5 with checks along the files and 2... e4† 3. ♔e3 ♖c3† 4. ♔f2 ♖f3† 5. ♔g2 ♔e5 with checks along the ranks (6. ♖a5†).

2. . . . ♔g5

The ♔ must reach g4 now with decisive effect.

3. ♖a8 e4†
Resigns

The rest would have been 4. ♔e3 ♔g4! 5. ♖g8† ♔h3 and now 6. ♖g5 is White's only defense. But then 6... ♖c3† 7. ♔f2 ♖f3† 8. ♔e2 ♔g2! creates zugzwang (9. ♖g8 ♖xg3 or 9. ♖h5 ♔xg3 or 9. ♔e1 ♖f2).



"The best squares for the defender's Rook is in the corner, away from the scene of the battle."
–Rudolph Spielmann

Noah: White's ♖ is more "long distance" and should play for the maximum checking possibilities, on files as well as on ranks.

But he violates the principle of flexibility by checking at a6–and allowing the ♔ to reach the terrific g5 square.

Pat: Now you're going to tell me the thing about ♖s belonging behind passed ♙s.

Noah: Well, they do. **Sometimes.**

Pat: Only sometimes?

Noah: Certainly not always. But usually the ♖ belongs behind a passed ♙–whether it's your ♙ or his.

Pat: White looks very bad in Diagram 139 because his ♔ can't get off the first rank.

Noah: Yet he can draw because in the key 1... ♖e4 line he gets his ♖ to b7 where it immobilizes both ♙s–and the enemy ♖ as well.

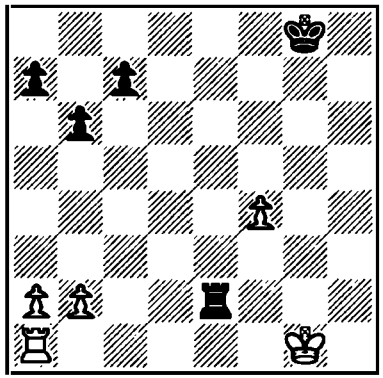
All Black has left to move then is his ♔, but he has to remain near the f-♙ or it may promote.

That illustrates another key principle:

Keep The Enemy Passed ♙ From Advancing

Pat: Another version of "Passed ♙s Must Be Pushed?"

Noah: Sort of the reverse image. Remember hows ♙s increase in value as they get closer to the 8th rank? In Diagram 140 for instance, Black has an extra ♙ and has managed to blockade White's a-♙–the only source of enemy counterplay so far.



139

Savchenko-Naumkin
Pula 1988
White to play

1. b4!

Not 1. ♖c1 c5 or 1. ♖d1 ♖xb2 2. ♖d8† ♔f7 3. ♖d7† ♔e6 4. ♖xc7 ♖xa2 followed by ...♔d6-c6 and ...b5.

1. . . . ♖c2

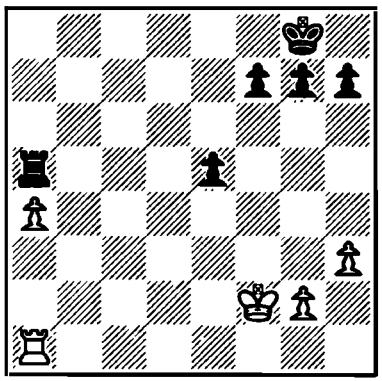
After 1... ♖e4 2. ♖c1 ♖xb4 3. ♖xc7 Black gets nothing from 3... ♖xf4 4. ♖xa7 and little more from 3... ♖a4! 4. ♖b7! ♖xa2 5. f5!.

2. ♖d1! ♔f7

3. ♖d3

And White drew because 3... ♖xa2 allows 4. ♖d7† and other moves allow 4. ♖a3.

Keep The Enemy Passed ♙ From Advancing



140

Kupreichik-Sveshnikov
USSR 1985
Black to play

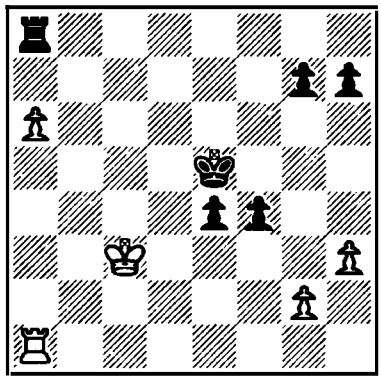
1. . . . f5?

With 1... ♔f8! Black can hold the a-pawn on the fourth rank: 2. ♔e3 ♔e7 3. ♔d3 ♔d6 4. ♔c4 ♔c6 5. ♔b4 ♔b6, and with his ♖ free Black has excellent winning chances.

2. ♔e3 ♔f7
3. ♔d3 ♔e6
4. ♔c4 f4

The Black ♔ is too slow (4... ♔d6 5. ♔b4) so he uses his ♙s.

5. ♔b4 ♖a8
6. a5! e4
7. a6! ♔e5
8. ♔c3!



141

White threatens to use his greater ♖ mobility and eliminate ♙s via 9. ♖a5† and 10. ♔d4.

8. . . . f3!
9. gxf3 exf3
10. ♔d2 ♔f4
11. a7!

White draws. E.g., 11... g5 12. ♔e1 ♔g3 13. ♔f1 (13... ♔xh3 14. ♔f2 g4?? 15. ♖h1#) or 11... ♔g3 12. ♖g1† and 13. ♖xg7.

Pat: Why do I think there's another "but" coming up?

Noah: You're right. "But" he spends a tempo on pushing his own f-♙ and that costs a tempo.

White uses the tempo to break the a5-blockade and tie up the black ♖–not the ♔–on the a-file.

Pat: And that means what?

Noah: That means a mismatch on the ♔-side where Black's lone ♔ is trying to fight two mobile pieces without the benefit of his ♖.

Pat: Black is even in danger of losing in Diagram 141.

Noah: Deservedly. He commited the sin of taking too long to use his ♔–and in an endgame that's often a mortal sin.

Pat: Seems like there are always mismatches in ♖+♙ endgames.

Noah: Naturally. One of the most common themes is shown in Diagram 142.

White's b-♙, with the support of ♖ and ♔, must win a ♖ on the ♕-side. Black's ♖ is no match for *three* enemy units.

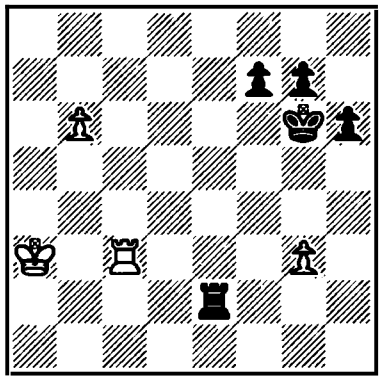
Pat: But if he'd played accurately?

Noah: Then there would be a **balancing** mismatch on the ♔-side. Black's ♔ would create at least one passed ♙ that would eventually cost White his ♖.

But he lost a vital tempo–in fact, he lost three tempi–with his faulty ♖-move.

Knowing when to reposition your ♖–from in front of a ♙ to the side of it or behind it–is one of the most subtle skills in rookdom.

Diagram 143 is a fine illustration.



142

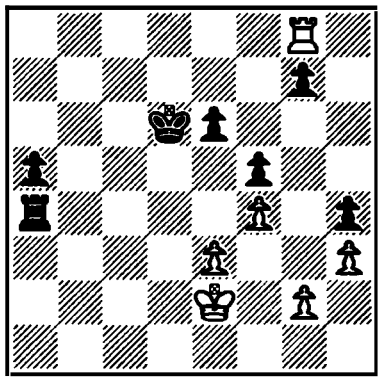
Short-Speelman
Hastings 1987-88
White to play

1. . . . ♖e6??

With 1... ♖e8 2. b7 ♖b8 Black can draw because by the time White plays ♔a7 (and forces ...♖xb7†) he will have created an equalizing passed ♙ on the other wing.

2. b7 Resigns

Because now 1... ♖a6† 2. ♔b2! ♖b6† 3. ♖b3 ♖xb7 is forced, after which Black is three tempi behind the previous line (4. ♖xb7 ♔f6 5. ♔c3 h5 6. ♔d4 g5 7. ♔e4).



143

Pr. Nikolic-Vaganian
Lucerne 1989
Black to play

1. . . . ♖a2†

Here 2. ♔d3 ♖xg2 is hopeless for White.

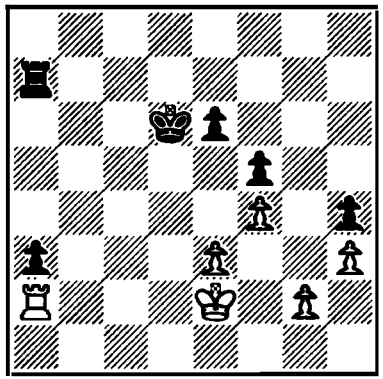
2. ♔f3 ♖c2!

Now on 3. ♖a8 Black wins with 3... ♖c5 and ...♔c6-b7.

3. ♖xg7 ♖c7!
4. ♖g8 ♖a7
5. ♔e2 a4
6. ♖d8†

The only way to get the ♖ back in time.

6. . . . ♔e7
7. ♖d2 a3
8. ♖a2 ♔d6



144

9. ♔d2!?

To avoid the immediate zugzwang which would occur after 9. ♔d3 ♔d5.

9. . . . ♔d5
10. ♔d3 ♖a8

Black wins the opposition (11. ♔e2 ♔c4).

11. ♔c3 ♔e4
12. ♔d2 ♖d8†
Resigns

Because of 13. ♔e2 ♖d3!

Pat: Looks drawish to me since ♖xg7 can't be stopped.

Noah: True, but Black can reposition his ♖ just in time.

Pat: Behind the a-♙?

Noah: Ideally, yes. But it can go to c5 if needed, as in the 3. ♖a8 line in order to free the ♔ so it can chase the white ♖ from its best square, a8.

Pat: So both ♖s get shifted, Black's during moves 1-4 and White's during 6-8. And White gets back just in time.

Noah: But the difference in ♖s in Diagram 144 is terminal. White's ♖ is almost out of moves and space, and he can only pass with his ♔.

It's entirely appropriate that Black finishes off with another repositioning of the ♖–from the a-file to the third rank.

Pat: So sometimes the ♖ is the star of the endgame and sometimes the ♔ is.

Noah: But ideally they should coordinate–as they do after 13... ♖d3! in this case.

"Always put the Rook behind the pawn ... Except when it is incorrect to do so."
–Siegbert Tarrasch

Pat: So when doesn't the ♖ belong behind the ♙?

Noah: When it can be more useful on a rank, as in Diagram 145. White spoiled his chance to advance in the world championship eliminations by following the old cliché.

Pat: I don't get it. What can possibly be wrong with 1. ♖a1?

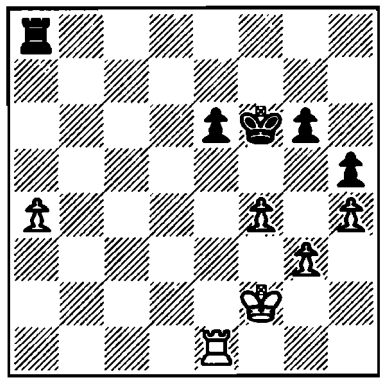
Noah: The ♖ becomes a passive bystander on a1 once Black blockades on a5.

But on e4 it would have kept the e-♙ under attack, creating the possibility of a ♔+♙ vs. ♖ mismatch on the ♕-side.

Pat: I guess a ♖ isn't that much stronger than a ♔.

Noah: As I mentioned earlier, when we were talking about mismatches, usually a ♖ cannot stop a ♔ from advancing a nearby ♙. But there's a big exception.

Pat: Let me guess. It happened in Diagram 146.



145

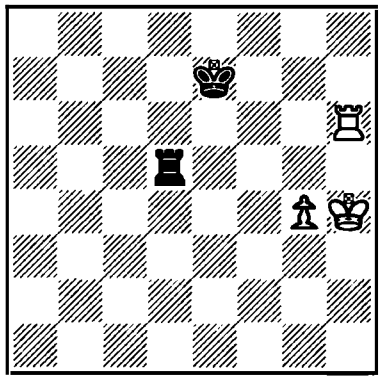
Yusupov-Timman
Candidates Match 1992
White to play

After 1. ♖e4! White's ♔ reaches the ♕-side decisively, e.g., 1... ♔f5 2. ♖e5† and 3. a5 or 1... ♔e7 2. ♔e3 ♔d6 3. ♔d3 and 4. ♔c3.

1. ♖a1?? ♖a5!
2. ♔e3 e5!

And Black draws, e.g., 3. fxe5† ♔xe5 4. ♔d3 ♔d5 5. ♔c3 ♔c6 6. ♔b4 ♖e5 and ...♔b6 followed by ♖ checks.

The game actually went **3. ♔e4 exf4 4. ♔xf4 ♔e6 5. ♔e4 g5!** and was eventually drawn.



146

Adams-Dreev
Debreczen 1992
White to play

1. ♖h5!

The only try. Otherwise 1... ♔f7 guarantees Black the drawn Philidor position.

1. . . . ♖d8!

The seemingly "more active" 1... ♖d1 2. ♖f5 ♖h1†?? allows the ♙ to advance decisively (3. ♔g5 ♖g1 4. ♔h5 ♖h1† 5. ♔g6 and 6. g5).

If the pawn reaches the fifth, White can force Lucena. E.g., 2... ♖d4?? 3. ♔h5 ♖d8 (too late) 4. g5 ♖h8† 5. ♔g6 ♖g8† 6. ♔h7 and 7. g6.

2. ♖f5 ♖h8†

Now 3. ♔g3 ♖g8! keeps the ♙ back, and 4. ♔f4 ♖f8! leads into what happened.

3. ♔g5 ♖g8†
4. ♔f4 ♖f8!
5. ♖xf8 Draw

Black keeps the crucial opposition after 5... ♔xf8 6. ♔g5 ♔g7 7. ♔f5 ♔f7.

"...the checking distance only applies to a Rook in front..."
GM Tall

Noah: Yes, this decided a crucial match in a European Team Championship. Hours of adjournment analysis were rewarded when the diagram was reached.

White wins if he gets the ♙ to the fifth supported by his ♔ while the black ♔ is not in the ♙s path. But Black stops that because he has the "checking distance."

Pat: What's that?

Noah: It's a device that enables a ♖ to prevent a ♔-supported ♙ from advancing by checking the ♔ from in front of the ♙.

If the enemy ♙ is no further than the fourth rank, as it is here, there's plenty of room in *front* of it for a ♖ to check and keep the enemy ♔ from supporting the ♙'s advance.

Bear in mind the checking distance only applies to a ♖ in front, not in back as in 1... ♖d1.

Pat: The problem for me is that all these positions look alike.

Noah: Same for most of us. Even the great authorities on the endgame get mixed up, as in Diagram 147.

Pat: Who played this?

"The simplest Rook-endgames contain a lot of surprising little secrets."
–Mikhail Botvinnik

Noah: No one. It's a study by a famous composer named Nikolai Grigoriev.

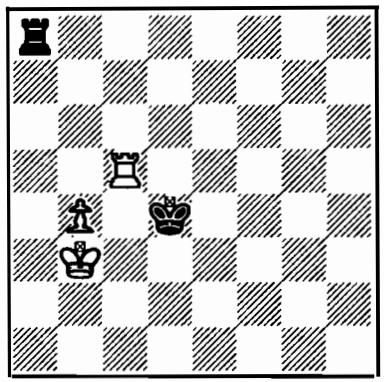
He showed that White can win–even though Black has "the distance"–by cleverly seizing the a-file for his ♔'s approach.

Pat: So?

Noah: What he missed is the main distinguishing feature of the position: That Black's ♔ is cut off by **rank,** not just by file. So 1. ♖h5 wins much faster.

Pat: So much for the great Grigoriev.

Noah: Worse than that. The same study was used in the most respected book on the subject, *Rook Endings,* by Levenfish and Smyslov–with no mention of 1. ♖h5.



147

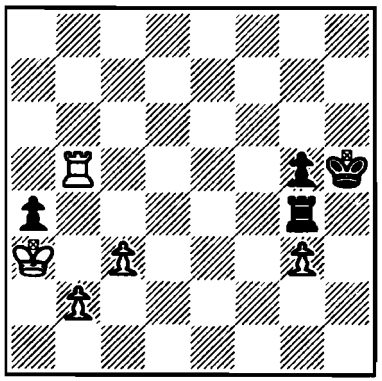
White to play

1. ♖c6?! **♖b8**
2. ♖a6?! **♔d5**
3. ♔a4 **♔c4**
4. ♖c6† **♔d5**
5. b5 **♖a8**
6. ♔b4

And White wins.

But 1. ♖h5! makes 2. b5! unstoppable and therefore saving a bit of time and energy.

Even 2. ♖c5 and 3. ♖h5 wins faster than the book line.



148

Yudasin-Zlotnik
Ponferrada 1992
White to play

1. ♖b8!

Much better than 1. ♖b4 ♖xg3 2. ♔xa4 which prevents the white ♖ from holding up the g-♙'s advance (2... g4!).

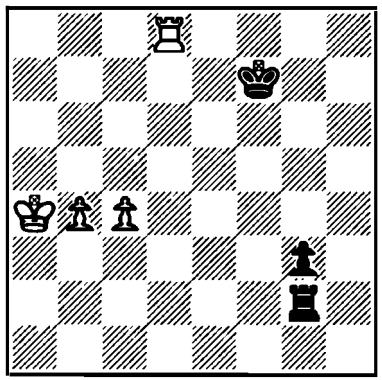
1. . . . Kg6

After 1... ♖xg3 2. ♔xa4 g4 3. c4 ♖f3 4. ♖g8! the ♖ slows the g-♙ while White promotes on the other wing.

2. ♖c8! ♔f7
3. c4 ♖xg3†

Otherwise 4. ♔xa4 wins as in the last note.

4. ♔xa4 g4
5. ♖d8! ♖g2
6. b4 g3



149

7. ♖d3! ♖a2†

Or 7... ♖g1 8. ♔b5 g2 9. ♖d2 and c5-c6 wins.

8. ♔b5 g2
9. ♖g3!

Not 9. ♖d1 ♖f2 (threat of ...♖f1) 10. ♖g1 ♔e7 and Black has two pieces to fight the connected ♙s.

9. . . . ♔e6
10. c5

And wins after 10... ♖b2 11. c6 ♔d6 12. ♖g6†.

Pat: Aren't there any super moves that work in every ♖ ending?

Noah: I'm afraid not. Chess isn't a multiple choice test. White's task in Diagram 148, for instance, is quite hard–even though he not only has an extra ♙ but has the better placed ♖.

Pat: But doesn't Black's ♖ get in the way on the g-file?

Noah: Yes, and thanks to his accurate first two moves, the long-distance white ♖ is able to make a crucial transfer.

Pat: Where?

Noah: At move 7. The ♖ cannot get to g8 where it would slow the march of the enemy ♙. So it goes to d3 where it cuts off the black ♔ from the ♕-side and still slows the g-♙.

Pat: And that's it?

Noah: No, there's one more subtlety at move 9. But there it's just another case of keeping the ♖ more active than Black's.

Pat: I'm getting confused by where or when the ♖ belongs.

Noah: No surprise. The role of the ♖ may constantly change in the course of an ending.

In Diagram 150 Black correctly places his ♖ on d5, where it cuts off the white ♔ from the ♕-side and tries to immobilize the enemy ♖ by tying it to the defense of the c5-♙.

Pat: So White trades ♙s.

Noah: And makes a fine transfer with 4. ♖a3. The ♖ can then (a) cut off the black ♔ from the ♕-side, (b) shield White's own ♔ on its way left, and (c).

Pat: What's (c)?

Noah: That's (c), defend the ♔-side singlehanded against Black's only source of counterplay–an attack by his ♔ and ♙s.

Pat: What is Black's ♖ doing in the meanwhile?

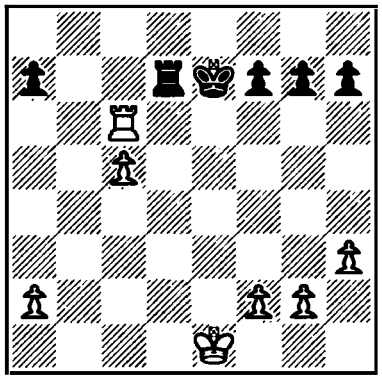
Noah: It was correctly used to prevent the ♔ and ♙ (8... ♖a8!) from advancing.

Pat: But it looks like he missed something later.

Noah: Something big. In Diagram 151 he could have penetrated along the d-file–an active plan. Instead, he kept his ♖ flexible–yet passive–on a8. This allowed White to use his ♔ and ♖ to advance the ♙ to the fifth rank.

Pat: And Black's only chance was to find an entry on the ♔-side for his ♔ to gobble ♙s.

Noah: A good plan but easily stopped by White. It may seem like magic that White makes progress in moves 16-21 and Black doesn't.



150

Karpov-Knaak
Baden Baden 1992
Black to play

1. . . . ♖d5!

Not 1... ♖d4 or any other ♖ move because of 2. ♖a6! (2... ♖d7 3. ♔e2 and White makes progress).

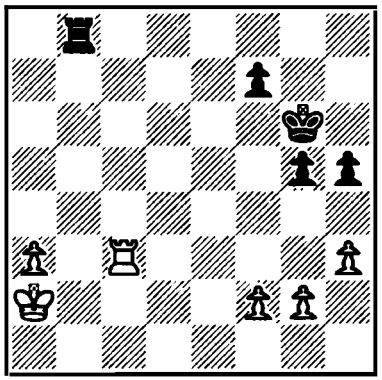
2. ♖a6 ♖xc5
3. ♖xa7† ♔f6
4. ♖a3!

Now 4... ♖c1† 5. ♔d2 ♖a1 gets the ♖ behind the ♙ but it will be ousted after 6. ♔c2 and 7. ♔b2.

4. . . . g5
5. ♔d2 ♔g6
6. ♖c3! ♖a5!
7. a3 h5
8. ♔c2 ♖a8!

This gains checking distance to stop the threatened 9. ♔b3 ♖b5† 10. ♔c4 ♖a5 11. ♔b4 and 12. a4.

9. ♔b3 ♖b8†
10. ♔a2



151

10. . . . ♖a8?

Much better was 10... ♖d8!, threatening 11... ♖d2†. Then 11. ♖c2 allows 11... ♖d3! and the ♔ cannot advance with his a-♙.

11. ♖c4! f5
12. a4 ♔f6
13. ♔a3 ♔e5
14. ♖c5†! ♔e4

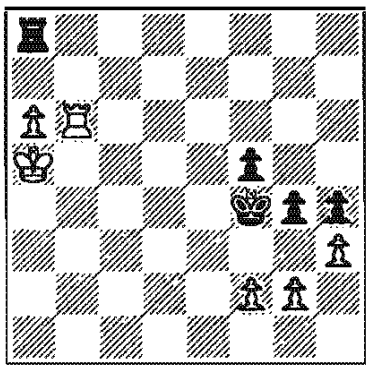
15. a5 h4
16. ♔a4 ♔f4

Not 16... g4 because of 17. hxg4 fxg4 18. ♖h5.

17. ♖c4† ♔e5
18. ♖b4! ♔d5
19. ♖b5† ♔e4
20. ♖b6

Clears the way for 21. a6. Now 20... g4 again allows 21. hxg4 fxg4 22. ♖h6.

20. . . . ♔f4
21. a6 g4
22. ♔a5



152

Here 22... gxh3 23. gxh3? ♔f3 gives Black drawing counterplay.

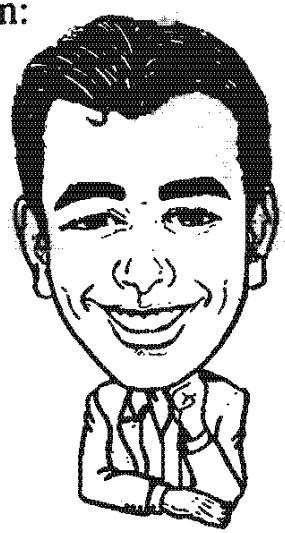
But 23. ♖b4†! kills the idea.

22. . . . g3
23. ♖b4†! ♔e5
24. f3

Black resigned after **24... f4 25. ♖e4† ♔f5 26. ♖e2** and **27. ♔b6.**

Pat: Not magic, just tactics.

Noah: Well, to quote a wise man:



"Good technique is good tactics."
–Yasser Seirawan

Once White had tactically killed off all counterplay his opponent threw in the towel.

Pat: Does the defender have to be just as flexible?

Noah: Sure. He usually has even more useful things he can do with his ♖ than the player with the advantage.

Pat: I don't see that at all.

Noah: Try Diagram 153 on for size. You tell me what should happen.

Pat: Okay. First Black tries to get his ♖ behind his ♙.

Noah: Correct. That allows his ♔ to fight the ♔-side ♙s, a fight he can hold (3. g4) even when it's a case of ♔ and two connected ♙s against a mere ♔.

Pat: But White crosses him up with 3. ♖b6†, which cripples both the ♖ and ♙.

Noah: And what else does that do?

Pat: It forces Black to use his ♔ to break the b6-blockade.

Noah: Right again. Once the blockade is broken the ♔ can return to the ♔-side.

Pat: Then White can win if he cuts off the black ♔ with his ♖.

Noah: But notice how differently Black uses his ♖. At move 10 it swings back to provide a bridge for the ♔ to f7.

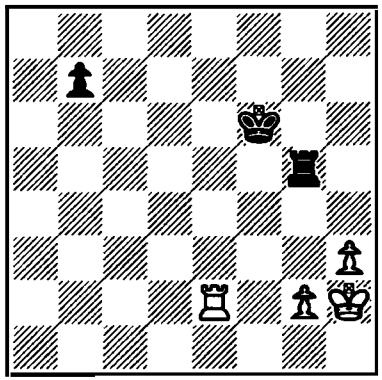
As usual the defender's ♔ is best stationed in front of the enemy ♙s. And that frees the black ♖ for one last duty.

Pat: I see. The checks along the b-file. White can't take his own ♖ away from the first rank or Black queens.

Noah: And if and when he removes his ♔ far from checks, Black attacks the ♔-side pawns with his ♖, creating a final mismatch.

Pat: Aren't there any kind of general rules that you can learn instead of trying to remember all these key positions?

Noah: Hmmm. There is one mildly useful rule for ♖+♙ endgames. But almost no one west of Kiev and south of a 2400 rating knows it: **the Rule of Five.**



153

Dvoiris-Novikov
Polanica Zdroj 1989
Black to play

1. . . . ♖g8!

After 1... b5? 2. ♖b2! Black's ♖ is immobilized and he loses (2... ♔e6 3. g4 ♔d6 4. ♔g3 ♔c5 5. h4 ♖g8 6. g5 ♔c4 7. ♔g4 b4 8. h5–a ♔+2 ♙ vs. ♖ mismatch).

2. ♖b2 ♖b8

3. ♖b6†!

On 3. g4 b5 4. ♔g3 b4 5. h4? b3 6. ♔f4 ♖b4† or 5. ♖b3 ♔g6 6. h4 ♔f6 White can be stopped.

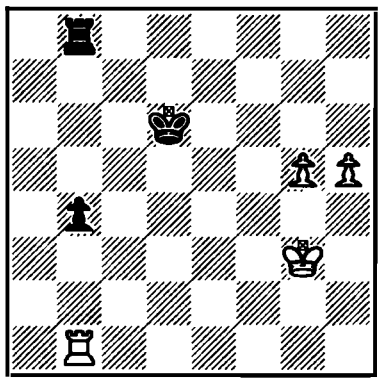
3. . . . ♔e5

Not 3... ♔g7? 4. g4 and Black is

fatally passive, or 3... ♔g5 4. g4 ♔f4 5. ♔g2.

4. g4	**♔d5**
5. g5	**♔c5**
6. ♖b1	**b5**
7. h4	**♔d6**
8. ♔g3	**b4**
9. h5?	

The last chance for a win was the cutoff, 9. ♖e1!. If 9... b3 10. h5 b2, then 11. h6! b1=♕ 12. ♖xb1 ♖xb1 13. h7 ♖h1 14. g6 and queens.



154

9. . . .	**♔e7**
10. ♖f1!	**♖f8!**

Not 10... b3 11. h6 b2 12. h7 b1=♕ 13. ♖xb1 ♖xb1 14. h8=♕ or, 12... ♖h8 13. g6.

11. ♖e1†

Of course, 11. ♖xf8?? loses the ♔+♙ race.

11. . . .	**♔f7**
12. g6†	**♔g8**
13. ♔g4	**b3**
14. ♔g5	**♖b8!**

And the game was drawn after **15. h6 ♖b5† 16. ♔f6 ♖b6† 17. ♔f5 ♖b5† 18. ♔e4 b2 19. ♔d4!** (mate threat) **♖b8! 20. ♖b1 ♖b6! 21. ♔c3.**

Pat: Never heard of it.

Noah: It applies only to endings with one ♙. The rule states:

RULE OF FIVE

Add the number of the rank of the pawn to the number of files the defender's King is cut off. If the sum is more than five it's a win.

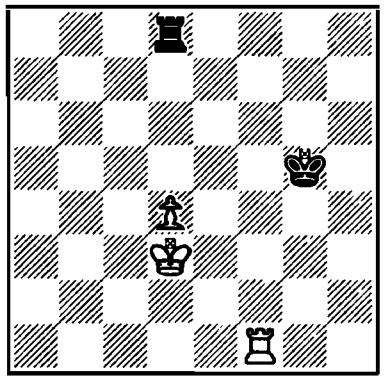
Pat: I'm absolutely lost.

Noah: You shouldn't be. Look at Diagram 155. Take the rank of the ♙. That's four. Add it to the number of files the ♔'s cut off by. That's two. It makes ...

Pat: Six. So it's a win. But what if the black ♔ isn't cut off?

Noah: The rule doesn't apply to any position in which it isn't–because the defender can force the Philidor position.

Pat: A dead draw.



155

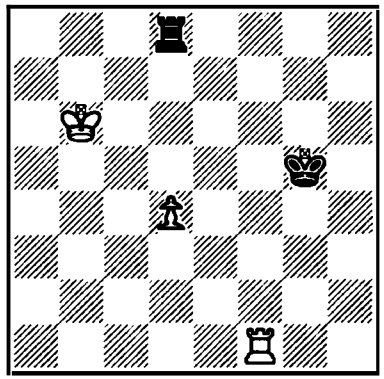
White to play

1. ♔c4 ♖c8†

Black has the checking distance. Otherwise the ♔ promotes the ♙ with 2. d5, 3. ♔c5, 4. d6 etc.

2. ♔b5 ♖d8
3. ♔c5 ♖c8†
4. ♔b6 ♖d8

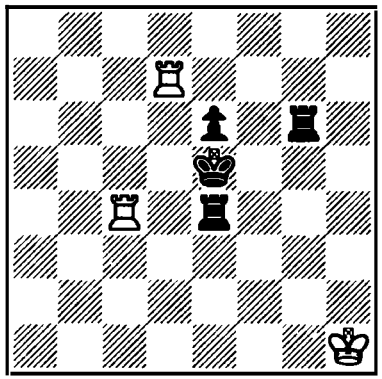
This is classic defense by Black, checking the ♔ away, then attacking the ♙.



156

5. ♖d1! ♔f6
6. ♔c7 ♖a8
7. d5

And wins.



157

Schmittdiel-Brenninkmeijer
Gröningen 1991
White to play

1. ♖xe4†??

With 1. ♖c5† and 2. ♖h5 White kills the mate and should draw.

1. . . .	**♔xe4**
2. ♖d1	**e5**
3. ♖e1†	**♔f4**
Resigns	

Black could also win by 3... ♔d4 4. ♖d1† ♔c3 5. ♖e1 ♖g5 and 6... ♔d2. But White resigned when he saw the faster 3... ♔f4 4. ♖f1† ♔e3 5. ♖e1† ♔f2 and 6... ♖h6#.

Noah: Exactly. Like most rules, the main benefit of the *Rule of Five* comes in transitions: it tells you when to trade ♖s or ♙s to reach a simpler position.

Pat: Don't you still have to calculate positions out?

Noah: Of course–if you have time to do it. Otherwise let the rule be your guide. In Diagram 157 White only saw that mate was threatened on the h-file and assumed that he would draw thanks to the checking distance.

He couldn't–so he traded straight down to a dead loss.

Pat: Because his ♔ was so useless at h1.

Noah: Once more the player with the more active ♔ triumphs.

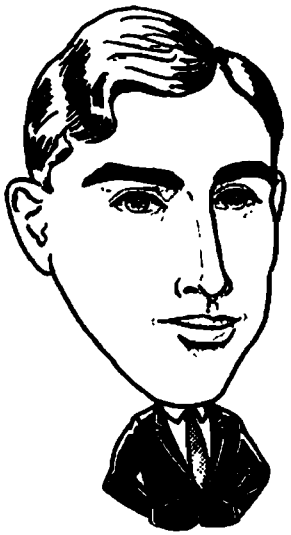
Pat: Can I count on this *Rule of Five* always working?

"Rules are for when brains run out."
–Anonymous

Noah: Of course not. It wouldn't be a rule if it didn't have exceptions. It should only be used as a guideline.

For example, it never works with ♖ – ♙s, and there are a few times it doesn't work with ♘ – ♙s. In fact, André Chéron, a famous French analyst, started with a Rule of Five, then modified it to a Rule of Six–and then gave up when he found there were too many exceptions.

Still, the Rule of Five is a lot easier than memorizing *Basic Chess Endings*.



"Set even a strong club player down to play a master in a Rook and pawn ending and give one player a pawn advantage. Every time the master has the extra pawn he will win; every time the club player has it he will draw (unless he manages to lose)."
–C.H.O'D. Alexander

Pat: Lemme try Diagram 158. Third rank plus three files, makes six. It's a win, right?

Noah: Very good. The advantage of knowing it's a win gives you a huge psychological edge. You still have to find the win, but you know if you look hard enough, it'll be there.

Pat: I've had enough of looking hard today.

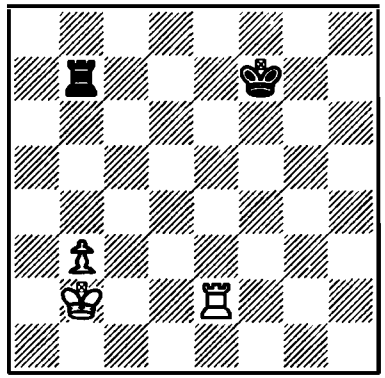
Noah: Just try to remember the important things–the active ♖, the possibilities for mismatch, the best place for the ♖.

If you can also remember stuff like the checking distance and what Lucena looks like, you'll be better than most 2100+ types.

Besides there is a silver lining to studying ♖ endings.

Pat: What's that?

Noah: Almost every other type of ending is easier–as we'll see tomorrow.



158

Vaisman-Adamski
Bucharest 1981
White to play

1. ♖e4!

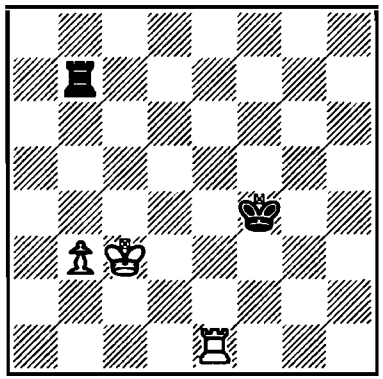
Black's ♖ would be better placed at b8 but even here he has the checking distance. White cannot make progress with 1. ♔c3 because of 1... ♖c7† 2. ♔d4 ♖b7 or 2. ♔b4 ♖b7† 3. ♔c4 ♖c7† 4. ♔d5 ♖b7 5. ♖e3 ♖b8 (checking distance) 6. ♔c5 ♖c8† 7. ♔b6 ♖b8† 8. ♔c7 ♖b4.

1. . . . ♔f6

White was threatening to use his ♖, not his ♔, to advance the ♙ to the fourth rank.

But now 2. b4 ♔f5 forces the ♖ to give way: 3. ♖d4 ♔e5 or 3. ♖c4 ♔e6 4. ♔b3 ♔d7 5. ♔a4 ♖b8! and now 6. b5 ♖c8! draws.

2. ♔c3 ♔f5
3. ♖e3 ♔f4
4. ♖e1 Resigns



159

Black threw in the towel because of 4... ♖c7† 5. ♔d4! ♖b7 6. ♔c4 ♖c7† 7. ♔d5 ♖b7 8. ♖b1! and the ♙ advances undisturbed.

In which Pat learns the two distinct types of ♕+♙ endings and why longer isn't the same as harder.

Chapter Eight

Queens

Why Queen endings seem hard

In a book called *Practical Chess Endings*, Paul Keres devoted 10 of the 35 pages on ♕-endings to ♔+♕ vs. ♔+♖-♙ (!) and another 7 pages to ♔+♕ vs. ♔+♕ (no pawns) or vs. ♔+ other pieces.

In *600 Endings*, Lajos Portisch devotes 76 to ♕ endgames–but most of them to the same endings as Keres.

And in *Queen Endgames*, Yuri Averbakh spends 25 of the 133 pages on ♔+♕ vs. ♔+♙ (or ♙s).

Pat: I hope what you have today, Noah, is easier than ♖s.

Noah: Much. Today we do ♕ endings.

Pat: That's easier?

Noah: People only think they're hard because the endgame textbooks are filled with all sorts of arcane and virtually useless information.

Pat: Useless?

Noah: I'd say ♔+♕ vs. ♔+2♘s is about as useless as you're likely to find in a $28 book.

Yet people who master the real ♕ endings say they're among the easiest to learn–and perhaps the simplest to play.

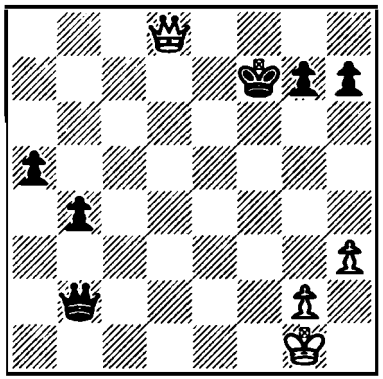
Pat: I don't see simple, even in positions like Diagram 160.

Noah: They're simple because the player with the advantage usually has only one or two ways to win: He can promote a ♙ or he can trade ♕s down to a won ♔+♙ ending.

The other plans and techniques you often see winning an endgame–including zugzwang and triangulation–are fairly rare with ♕s on the board.

Pat: What about the other guy?

Noah: The defender's job is also fairly simple–he either tries to deliver perpetual check or create a passed ♙. Other defenses, such as sacrificing your remaining piece to stop your opponent from queening, clearly don't work in ♕+♙ endings.



160

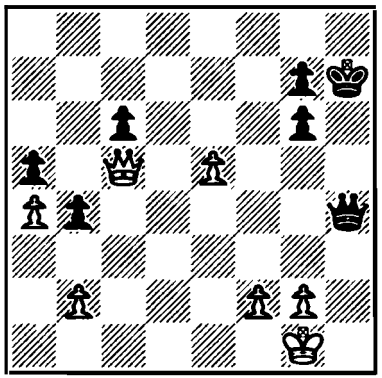
Korchnoi-Lobron
Biel 1993
White to play

1. ♕d7† **♔f6!**
2. ♕d8† **♔e6**
3. ♕b6†

Other checks make little difference since Black's ♔ reaches safety around his ♕. For example, 3. ♕g8† ♔d6 4. ♕f8† ♔d5 5. ♕f5† ♔c4 6. ♕f4†? ♕d4†! or 6. ♕e6† ♔d3 7. ♕f5† ♔c3 as in the game.

3. . . . **♔d5!**
4. ♕xa5† **♔c4**
5. ♕a6† **♔c3**
Resigns

The ♔ is now close enough to the ♕ to be shielded from checks: 6. ♕c6† ♔d2 7. ♕d5† ♔c1 8. ♕g5† ♔b1 9. ♕f5† ♕c2! and Black wins.



161

Kaidanov-P. Nikolic
Gröningen 1993
White to play

1. ♕xc6?

White wins soon after 1. e6.

1. . . . ♕d4!
2. e6 ♕xb2

Now 3. e7? allows 3... ♕a1† 4. ♔h2 ♕e5† and 5... ♕xe7.

3. g3 ♕e5

Both sides have passed ♙s and after 4. ♕d7 b3 both are on the sixth rank. A draw was agreed soon after both sides made a second ♕.

Pat: How about rules? Are there any that work only in ♕ endings?

Noah: No iron laws, I'm afraid. But it helps if you understand this general guideline:

Material In ♕+♙s Isn't As Important As How Advanced Your ♙s Are

Pat: Sort of like "Pawns Increase in Value as They Advance."

Noah: True. With a passed ♙ on e6 White would have won swiftly in Diagram 161. But picking up the irrelevant c-♙ let Black escape with a draw.

Pat: I guess the reason I find ♕+♙ endings so confusing is that there are so many checks and so many ♙ situations.

Noah: And sometimes they last 40 or 50 moves until one player runs out of checks or the other one runs out of patience.

Pat: That's me–the one without patience.

But tell me: What do I *really* have to know about ♕-endings?

> ***"Patience: A minor form of despair, disguised as a virtue."***
> **–Ambrose Bierce**

Noah: What you really need to know is that there are only two basic types of ♕ endings–and how to play each.

They are:

No. 1: The guy trying to win hides his ♔ from checks while his ♕ does all the work.

Pat: That sounds easy enough. What's No. 2?

Noah: In **No. 2** the guy with the edge parks his ♕ on a good centralized square while his ♔ advances to help out.

Pat: Hmmm. I'd never think of bringing my ♔ out into the center of things the way White does in Diagram 162 after 1. ♔f2 and so on up to 6. ♔e4.

Noah: You would if you played a few type No. 2 ♕ endings.

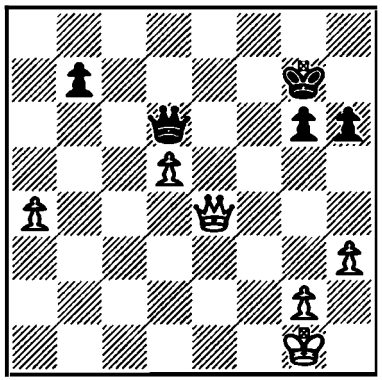
The No. 1 approach, such as 1. ♕e6– to break the blockade on d6–fails. So White only has one other way to make progress: bringing the ♔ to the support of the d-♙.

Pat: But why should he win after Black manages to get back to equal material?

Noah: He wins because of one of the **basic rules of ♕+♙ endgames**:

Rank Has Its Privilege

Or to put it another way, it's usually better to have, say, a passed ♙ on the sixth rank than to be a ♙ or two ahead.



162

Rashkovsky-Krasenkov
Cappelle la Grande 1990
White to play

1. ♔f2!

Usually a ♕ trade will win when you're a ♙ up. But here 1. ♕e6? ♕xe6 and 2... ♔f6 or 1. ♕d4† ♕f6 2. ♕xf6†? ♔xf6 and 3... ♔e5 kills the ♙.

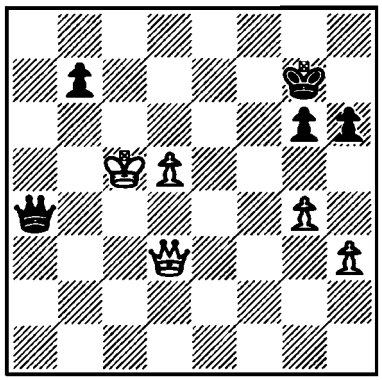
1. . . . ♕f6†

White's ♔ is headed for e4 or d4 and Black has nothing but checks.

2. ♔e2 ♕b2†
3. ♔e3 ♕c3†
4. ♕d3 ♕e5†
5. ♔f3 ♕f6†
6. ♔e4! ♕h4†

White finally had a threat, 7. ♕d4. No better was 6... ♕f5† 7. ♔d4 ♕f4† 8. ♔c5.

7. g4 ♕e1†
8. ♔d4 ♕a1†
9. ♔c5 ♕xa4



163

End of stage one: White has centralized his ♔ at the cost of a ♙ less important than the d-♙. Now 10. ♕d4†?? ♕xd4† 11. ♔xd4 ♔f6 boomerangs for White.

10. ♕c3† ♔f7
11. ♔d6

More accurate, now or a move

before, was ♔b6 and d5-d6.

11. . . . ♕f4†
12. ♔d7 b5

No more checks, so Black has only one other defensive idea.

13. d6 b4
14. ♕c7!

Now 14... b3 loses the ♙ to 15. ♔c6† ♔g8 16. ♕b8†.

Black played **14... ♕e4** but **resigned** after **15. ♔c8† ♔f6 16. ♕c5!** in light of d7-d8=♕. After 16... ♕a8† or 16... ♕e8† White ends the checks with 17. ♔c7.

Pat: But White's d-♙ is still on the fifth rank in Diagram 163 and he's lost a ♙ on the ♕-side.

Noah: And that means Black has a passed b-♙. All true.

But White has made huge progress between the two diagrams. The advance of the ♔ creates a 3-to-1 mismatch. The combination of ♔+♕+♙ beats Black's ♕.

Pat: Aren't you afraid of getting mated when you bring your ♔ into the center?

Noah: No. Mates are very, very rare in ♕ endings. As another wise man once said:

> ***"Nobody ever died of a check."***
> **–Anonymous**

White's ♔ dances all over the board in Diagram 164 and lives to tell the tale.

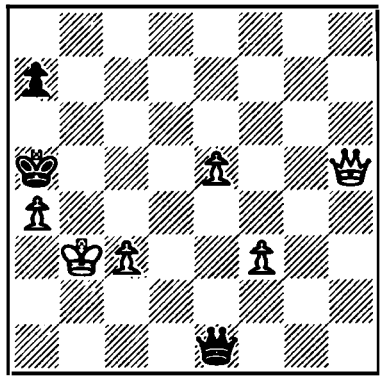
Pat: How come you can be so casual with your ♔ in an ending–but you gotta be so careful in the middlegame?

Noah: Because a ♕ can't mate by herself. In fact, the ♕ actually declines a bit in power in the endgame when compared to other pieces–and in particular to the ♔.

Pat: How so?

Noah: The strength of a ♕ is enhanced by its ability to attack two targets at once. For example, a ♕ at d4 can threaten a ♙ at a7 and another at g7–as well as enemy pieces at a4 and h4 and g1.

But in the endgame there are fewer targets, so the offensive power of the ♕ declines a bit–while that of a ♔, no longer afraid of mate, increases.



164

Piket-Ljubojevic
Monaco 1994
Black to play

White's ♕ is not badly placed to promote a ♔-side ♙. So. . .

1. . . .	**♕d1†**
2. ♔c4!	**♕xa4†**
3. ♔d5!	**♕d7†**
4. ♔e4	**♕c6†**
5. ♔f5	**♕xc3**

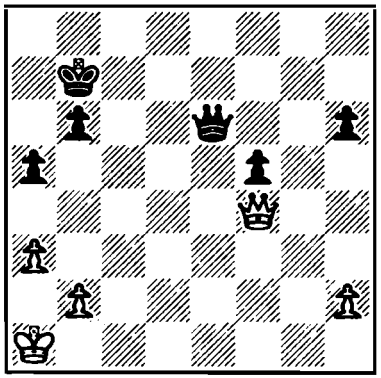
Or 5... ♕d7† 6. e6 and 5... ♕c5 6. ♔g6.

6. e6	**♔b6**

Or 6... ♕d3† 7. ♔f6† and 8. e7.

7. f4	**a5**
8. ♕g6!	

And **Black resigned** after **8... ♕c5† 9. ♔f6 ♕d4† 10. ♔g5 ♕c7 11. ♕f7† ♔c6 12. e7 ♕g1† 13. ♔h6 ♕h2† 14. ♔g7** in view of 14... ♕g3† 15. ♕g6† or 14... ♕b2† 15. ♕f6†.



165

Mainka-Vaganian
Bundesliga 1992
Black to play

1. . . . ♕e4!
2. ♕xh6 f4

Rank has its privilege.

3. ♕g7†

The best defense now is a perpetual check. Clearly too slow is 3. h4.

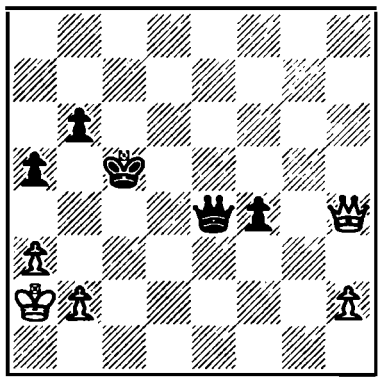
3. . . . ♔c6!

Seeing that 3... ♔a6 4. ♕f7! f3 5. h4 and White may have perpetual checks once the black ♕ clears a path for the f-♙, e.g., 5... ♕e2 6. ♕d5! f2 7. ♕a8† ♔b5 8. ♕d5† ♔a4? 9. ♔a2! threatening 10. ♕b3#.

4. ♕g4 ♔d6!

Threatening 5... ♕e1† 6. ♔a2 ♕e6†!

5. ♕h4 ♔c5
6. ♔a2



166

6. . . . ♔d4!
7. ♕f6† ♔d3
8. ♕d6†

Or 8. ♕c3† ♔e2 and White's out of checks.

8. . . . ♔e2
9. ♕c7 f3

Resigns. White's only defense–♕ checks–run out after 10. ♕xb6 ♕d5† and 11... f2.

Pat: I think I was better off before I learned about the two types of ♕ endings. How am I supposed to tell them apart?

Noah: Well, if you had a choice, which would you try to win with?

Pat: Me? I'd take the one where the ♔ is safely covered with ♙s and I only have to move the ♕.

Noah: That should tell you something: If you can't safeguard your castled ♔ position, then it's type No. 2–as in Diagram 165.

Pat: The trouble for me with type No. 2 is that I hate to give my opponent hours of checks.

Noah: You won't. After Black figures out he doesn't have a type No. 1 position–at move 3–he wins in just six moves. His perfectly centralized ♕ does the trick by shielding him from all sorts of checks.

Even on a square like d4 the ♔ is safe and when it reaches e2 there is no way of stopping the promotion of the f-♙.

Pat: Okay, so the perpetual check defense is crucial. What else is unique about ♕ endings?

Noah: Well, one thing to know is the significance of diagonals.

"All diagonals are created equal–and that lasts until White's first move."
–Anonymous

"In Queen-endgames everything is different."
–Mikhail Botvinnik

That's shown in Diagram 167. After three moves White causes Black to resign–because he seizes the right diagonal.

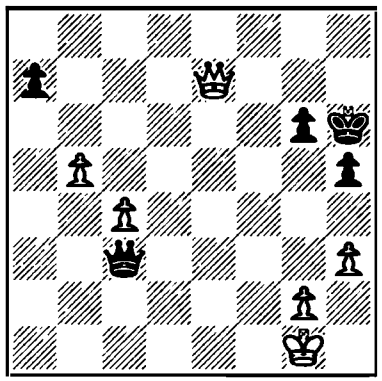
Pat: Is it so obviously hopeless when he gives up?

Noah: See for yourself. Once White nails down h2-b8, Black has no checks.

And without checks, he has no counterplay. The only other defense would be to blockade the b-♙. That's a second best defense and it fails badly here because White also controls the three squares in front of the ♙.

Pat: I see that–but what about other cases?

After all, a ♕ travels on diagonals *and* files. Why are diagonals more important?



167

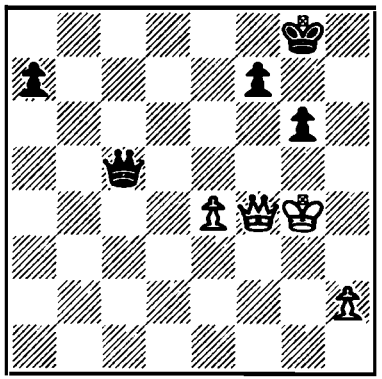
Kasparov-Salov
Dortmund 1992
White to play

1. ♕xa7! **♕c1†**
2. ♔h2 **♕xc4**

Or 2... ♕f4† 3. ♔h1 ♕c1† 4. ♕g1! and then 4... ♕xc4 5. ♕b1! followed by 6. b6, etc.

3. ♕b8! **Resigns**

There is no defense to 4. b6 and 5. b7 now.



168

Hübner-Karpov
Baden-Baden 1992
Black to play

1. . . . ♕d4!

Now 2. ♕b8† ♔g7 accomplishes nothing (3. ♕a8 f5†!).

2. ♔f3 a5
3. ♕c7 a4
4. ♕a5

Otherwise Black wins immediately with 4... a3 followed by 5... ♕b2 (diagonal!) and 6... a2.

4. . . . ♕d3†
5. ♔f4 a3

And White conceded after **6. h4 ♕h3 7. ♔e5 ♕e6† 8. ♔d4 a2 9. h5 ♕f6† 10. e5 ♕f2†** (e.g. 11. ♔c4 ♕f1† and queens).

Noah: Well, in Diagram 168 it should be easy to see that there is one line of squares that's much more important than any other.

Pat: You must be talking about a1-h8 because it controls the queening square for Black's a-♙.

Noah: Not bad. You may have a future in ♕ endings after all.

And yes, that diagonal also controls a key checking line if and when the black ♔ is driven to g7.

Pat: White's moves look pretty feeble. What was he doing?

Noah: The best he could. When you don't have checks or a passed ♙ there's not much a defender can do. Black's a-♙ goes from the second rank to the eighth in 11 moves, pretty fast for a ♕ ending.

Pat: Okay, so diagonals are a big deal. What about mistakes? What are the major blunders I have to avoid in ♕ endings?

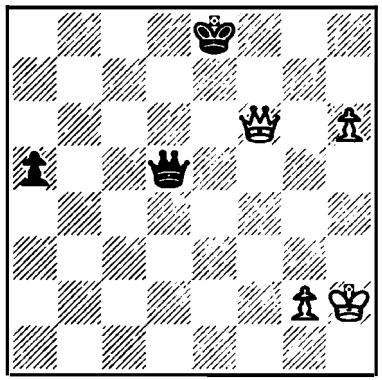
Noah: For the player with the edge the principal errors are allowing perpetual check amd failing to create and push a passed ♙.

For the defender, it's the opposite–missing a chance for perpet, for instance.

And one of the ways **both** sides can err is to decentralize the ♕.

In Diagram 169 White wins because Black puts his ♕ on the side of the board, where it can neither deliver perpet nor advance the a-♙.

Moral: **The center is a very nice place for a ♕ to be.**



169

Bareev-Cvitan
Tilburg 1993
Black to play

1. . . . ♕h5†??

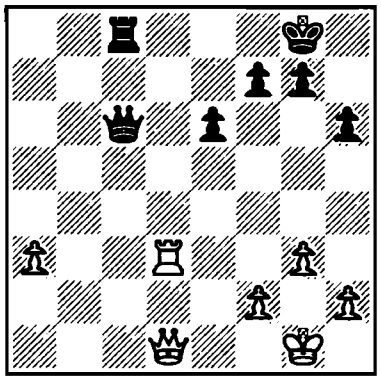
With 1... a4! Black has excellent drawing chances despite the advanced h-♙.

2. ♔g3 a4
3. ♕c6†

Not 3. ♕g7 ♕f7! and Black is alive.

3. . . . ♔e7
4. ♕xa4

And since 4... ♕xh6 allows the fatal 5. ♕h4†!, Black had to play on two ♙s down. He resigned soon after **4... ♕g5† 5. ♔h3 ♕e3† 6. g3 ♕e1 7. ♕f4.**



170

Rivas-Littlewood
Hastings 1981-2
Black to play

1. . . . ♕e4?
2. ♖d8†! ♖xd8
3. ♕xd8† ♔h7
4. ♕d1

Thwarting checks and preparing ♕a1 and a4-5-6-etc.

4. . . . f5
5. a4 ♕b4
6. ♕c2 ♕a5

The blockade is easily broken in most ♕ endings. Here White's idea is ♕b5!, breaking the blockade.

7. ♕c6! e5
8. ♔g2 ♕e1?

Relinquishing the blockade and losing quickly.

9. ♕d5! ♕e2
10. ♕f3 ♕c2
11. a5

And Black soon resigned.

The blockade is easily broken in most ♕ endings.

Pat: Why is that? In ♖ endings you said the defender–and sometimes his opponent as well–is supposed to keep his ♖ on the fringes, like a8.

Noah: Right. But remember that the real power of a ♕ is to land on a square and suddenly attack two things at once. You can't do that much if you keep the ♕ at, say, a8 or a1.

Pat: I also thought ♕+♙ endings were a lot like ♖+♙ endings–because they both get drawn alot.

Noah: Not nearly as much as ♖ endings. Or for that matter ♕ endings with other pieces.

For example, in Diagram 170 which pieces, if any, should Black be interested in swapping?

Pat: I'd say he's better off trading ♕s, like with 1... ♕c1.

Noah: Very good. Either that or keeping all the heavy pieces on with 1... ♔h7.

The pseudo-active move he chose only allowed White to trade down into a ♕ ending–and a very favorable one at that.

Once White got control of the key g2-a8 diagonal and broke the a5-blockade, it was all over.

Pat: But what happens when you don't have any ♙ protection for your ♔? How are you supposed to advance a passed ♙–and avoid perpetual–then?

Noah: You have to use the one crucial winning technique of ♕ endings.

And Diagram 171 illustrates how it works.

Pat: Where's the black ♔?

Noah: Right now there is none.

Pat: How can that be?

Noah: To make a point.

This diagram is sometimes used in books to show the many different ways White has to win–all depending on where the black ♔ is located.

Pat: Interesting, but is this really useful?

Noah: It can be–but the most instructive thing about a position like Diagram 171 is rarely if ever mentioned.

Pat: And that is?

Noah: That it can only be won if a black ♔ is on the board.

Pat: Excuse me?

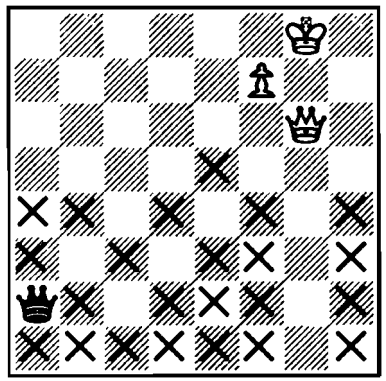
Noah: You heard me. Usually Black's only defenses in such positions are checks and pins, for example, 1. ♔g7 ♕a7.

And White can only get out of those checks with cross-checks. Black loses because he has a ♔.

Pat: But what if there are no cross-checks?

Noah: There almost always is one. The trick is finding where.

A simple example is Diagram 172. How long do you think it should take White to win?



171

White to play

If the black ♔ is on *b2, d2* or *e2*–White trades ♕s with 1. Qg2†.

If the black ♔ is on *a1, b1, c1, d1* or *e1*–White trades ♕s with 1. ♕g1† and 2. ♕g2†.

If the black ♔ is on *a3* or *a4*–White trades with 1. ♕a6†.

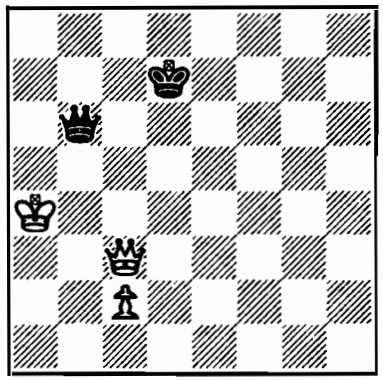
If the black ♔ is on *f1, f2, f3* or *f4*–White promotes with 1. ♔g7 ♕a1† 2. ♕f6†! or 1... ♕a7 2. ♕f6† and 3. ♔h8.

If the black ♔ is on *h1, h2, h3* or *h4*–White promotes with 1. ♕g7 and 2. ♔h8 because checks on the h-file allow 3. ♕h7†.

If the black ♔ is on *b4* or *c3*–White establishes zugzwang with 1. ♕c6 or 1. ♕e4.

If the black ♔ is on *e5*–White promotes with 1. ♔g7 since there is no check on a1 or b2 and 1... ♕a7 allows 2. ♔h6!.

Similarly, if the black ♔ is on *d4* or *e3*–White wins with 1. ♔g7 or 1. ♔h7 respectively.



172

Mirkovic-Nesic
Yugoslavia 1987
White to play

1. ♕d3†! ♔e7

Not 1... ♔e6 2. ♕g6† or 1... ♔e8 2. ♕b5†.

Also 1... ♔c8 2. ♕f5†! ♔c7 3. ♕a5 and 3... ♔b7 4. ♕b5, trading ♕s.

Finally, 1... ♔c7 2. ♕c4† ♔b8 3. ♕b5 or 2... ♔d8 3. ♕d5† ♔e7 (3... ♔e8 4. ♕b5†) 4. ♕e5† and 5. c4.

2. ♕e4† ♔d7

Not 2... ♔f8 3. ♕b4†.

3. ♕d5† ♔c8

Again on 3... ♔e7 White has 4. ♕e5† ♔f8 5. c4.

4. ♕f5† Resigns

Because of 5. ♕a5 or 5. ♕b5.

Pat: Let's see. With the ♙ only on the second rank and Black's ♔ close to the queening square I'd say maybe 30 moves–if at all.

Noah: You're a bit off. White has all sorts of ways of trading ♕s, with cross-checks at b3, b4 and b5.

And he doesn't want to escape to the ♔-side because then the c-♙ advances at will.

Since any ♔+♙ ending is hopeless, Black throws in the towel at the right time.

Pat: Amazing. It only takes four moves.

Noah: ♕ endings usually are longer–and amateurs often mistake that for being harder.

Here at Diagram 173 is a longer example. White begins with the premise that he wins if he can trade ♕s.

Pat: In all cases?

Noah: Maybe not all. But all ♔+♙ endgames in which he keeps his a-♙ are won, even if he loses both other ♙s (2... ♕xg3 3. ♕g5†!).

What this means is that White can play with two plans–promoting and trading ♕s. And to achieve the latter he has to find a magic square or two.

Pat: Magic how?

Noah: Magic because it will allow White to meet a check with a cross-check of his own, thereby forcing a trade.

Pat: Which square is it here?

Noah: Figure it out for yourself. Black's ♔ is pretty well hidden at h6 and can't be checked on files.

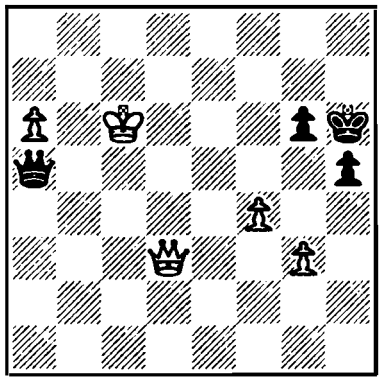
But h6 also has two diagonals and since we mentioned g5, then . . .

Pat: That only leaves f8.

Noah: Yes, so as hard as it may seem, White just has to figure a way to cross-check on f8–and the game's over.

Pat: So the best place for the defender's ♔ in these endings is as far from the action as possible.

Noah: Usually. But having a ♔ on the board isn't **always** a liability for the defender.



173

Dlugy-Benjamin
U.S. Championship 1988
White to play

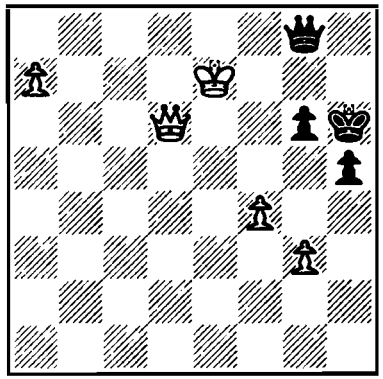
1. ♕b5! **♕c3†**
2. ♕c5 **♕f6†**

On 2... ♕xg3 White has the winning check at g5.

3. ♕d6 **♕f5**

Now the cross-check to aim for is at f8: 3... ♕c3† 4. ♔d7 ♕g7† 5. ♔e8! ♕g8† 6. ♕f8†.

4. a7 **♕e4†**
5. ♔c7 **♕c4†**
6. ♔d8 **♕g8†**
7. ♔e7!



174

Now if Black wins the ♙ (7... ♕g7† and 8... ♕xa7) White forces a won ♔+♙ endgame (8. ♔e8 and 9. ♕f8† ♔h7 10. ♕f7† or 9... ♕g7 10. ♕xg7† ♔xg7 11. ♔e7 ♔h6 12. ♔f6 ♔h7 13. ♕f7 ♔h6 14. ♔g8!).

7. . . . **♕a8**
8. ♕d4 **♕b7†**
9. ♕d7 **♕b4†**

The blockade plan (9... ♕a8) is so passive even 10. ♔f7, with zugzwang, wins.

10. ♔f7 **♕c4†**
11. ♔f8 **♕c5†**
12. ♔g8! **Resigns**

Because mate is threatened on h7, and the only defense to it is 12... ♕c4†, after which 13. ♕f7 ♕c8† 14. ♕f8†! reaches the magic square.

If he's close enough he can help in stopping the enemy from queening, as in a ♖ ending–or just about any ending:

If the defender can get his ♔ to the queening square, it'll probably be a draw. Just like your friend Philidor's position.

Pat: But it must be a lot harder in a ♕ ending because the ♔ can be checked away so easily.

Noah: He doesn't always have to reach the queening square itself. In Diagram 175 it looks like Black's ♔ is badly placed.

Pat: You mean because of possible cross-checks, like on the second rank?

Noah: Correct. But the black ♔ can perform other functions, such as elbowing the enemy ♔ aside–or just blockading the ♙ itself.

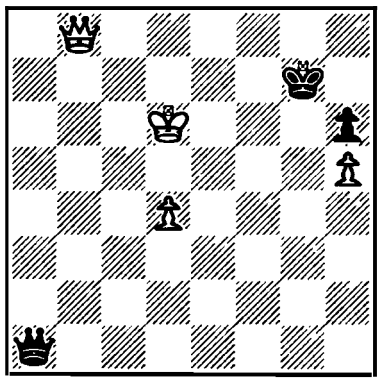
Pat: In the end, Black nearly elbows him off the board.

Noah: So much so that his ♕ can operate at long distance–at h7 or c2. White takes the draw when his opponent's ♔ took part on the attack on his ♙.

But, again, all you really need to know is a few things–like cross-checks, the two kinds of endgames, and the importance of diagonals.

Pat: Okay, I admit ♕ endings aren't as horrible as I thought.

Noah: At least they're not as bad as the books make them look. On the other hand, there are endgames with . . . but let's leave them for tomorrow.



175

Machulsky-Smirin
Pula 1989
White to play

1. ♕c7† ♔f6!

Now on 2. ♕e7† ♔f5 3. ♕e6† ♔g5 the black ♔ provides counterplay (4. ♕g6† ♔h4 takes White's ♕ out of play–and 5. ♕xh6?? ♕a6† takes it off the board).

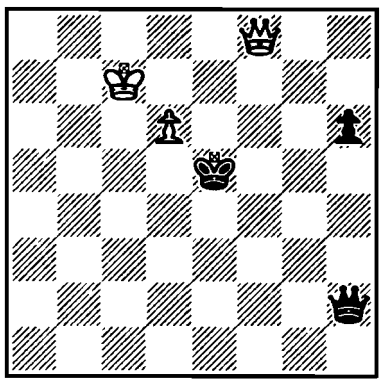
2. ♕c5 ♕a6†
3. ♔c7! ♕e2

There was no other useful move, and 4. ♕c6† was threatened. Now on 4. ♕d6† Black can't approach the queening square (4... ♔f7 5. ♕g6† ♔e7 6. ♕g7† ♔e8 7. ♕xh6 ♕c4† 8. ♕c6†!).

4. d5!? ♕xh5
5. ♕f8† ♔e5!

Now Black's ♕ is out of play and he would lose quickly after 5... ♔g5 6. d6 and 7. d7.

6. d6 ♕h2!?



176

Now 7. ♕e8† ♔d5 8. ♕c6† ♔e6 9. ♕e4† drives the ♔ away and paves the way for the d-♙.

7. d7?? ♔e6†
8. ♔c8 ♕c2†
9. ♔d8 ♕h7!

And White cannot make progress. The game ended with 10. ♕e8† ♔d6! and a draw was agreed.

*In which Pat learns that not all ♙s are created equal—and why chess **isn't** like golf.*

Chapter Nine

Pawns

Pat: I don't know if I'm up to anything heavy today, Noah. You know, midterms and stuff.

Is there any endgame you can sum up in a few minutes?

Noah: Sure, ♔+♙ endings. You already know my advice here: Avoid them.

Pat: Why? Everyone says they're, oh, you know, the most basic endgames of all.

Noah: You mean...

> ***"Pawn endings are to chess what putting is to golf."***
> **–Cecil Purdy**

Pat: Yeah, like that.

Noah: Actually, ♙ endings are more like the par-seven holes of chess–they're rare and very hard to prepare for.

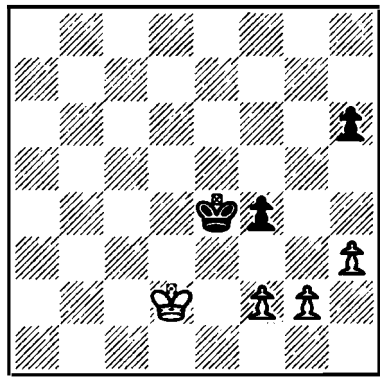
The reason is that ♔+♙ endings are 90% **calculation.** No matter how much book theory you know, even a world class player can err badly, as White did in Diagram 177.

After he miraculously saved the game the spectators were sure White had blundered (he had). But half of them claimed his error was 1. ♔e2 instead of 1. ♔c3 (it isn't).

And the other half correctly blamed 2. gxf3†.

As Anand said after they shook hands "In this game God helped me."

Pat: I could use some divine help in my endgames.



177

Smirin-Anand
Moscow 1994
White to play

Some $5,000 was at stake in this game and White should win without much difficulty.

1. ♔e2

Now 1... ♔e5 2. ♔f3 ♔f5 regains the opposition for Black but White wins with 3. h4 h5 4. g3 fxg3 5. ♔xg3!

Things are obvious then after 5... ♔e4 6. f4!

The key line is 5... ♔e5! 6. ♔f3 ♔f5 7. ♔e3 ♔g4 8. f4 ♔xh4 9. ♔f3! and Black's ♔ is fatally elbowed out.

1. . . . f3†!

The best try in a lost position.

2. gxf3†??

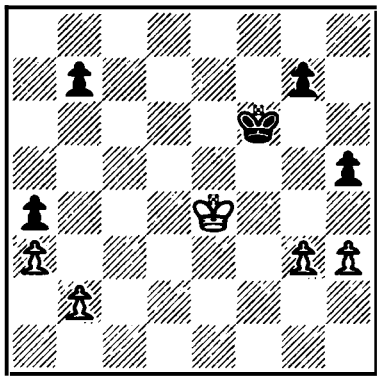
Here 2. ♔f1! would have won: 2... fxg2† 3. ♔xg2 ♔f4 4. f3 h5 5. h4 ♔e5 and now 6. ♔f1! leads to the same won position as in the last note.

For example, 6... ♔d5 7. ♔e2 ♔d4 8. ♔d2 ♔e5 9. ♔e3! ♔f5 10. f4 ♔g4 11. ♔e4 ♔xh4 12. ♔f3.

2. . . . ♔f4

3. ♔e1 ♔xf3

White can no longer win. A draw was agreed soon after **4. ♔f1 h5 5. ♔g1 ♔f4! 6. ♔g2 h4 7. ♔f1** ♔.



178

Vlahovic-Pikula
Yugoslavia 1993
Black to play

1. . . . **♔g5??**
2. ♔e5! **♔g6**

Now 3. ♔e4?? would give Black a second chance.

3. ♔e6 **♔g5**
4. ♔f7 **♔h6**
5. h4 **♔h7**
Drawn

But in the diagram Black is winning with 1... ♔e6!. For example, 2. g4 hxg4 3. hxg4 ♔f6 4. ♔f4 ♔g6 and White has no good move.

For example, 5. g5 ♔h5 6. ♔f5 g6† 7. ♔f6 b6! with zugzwang.

Or 5. ♔f3 ♔g5 6. ♔g3 g6! 7. ♔f3 ♔h4 8. ♔f4 g5† 9. ♔f5 b6, ditto.

Noah: Actually, ♔+♙ endgames **should** be very easy.

There's only one way to win–to queen a ♙–and very few techniques.

There are no mismatches, for example, when the only pieces on the board are the ♔s.

But ♔+♙ endings turn out to be notoriously difficult to evaluate.

Pat: Can't you just count the ♙s?

Noah: Sure, and an extra ♙ or two is almost always decisive.

But the endings in which a player is most likely to mistake a win for a draw–or a loss–are equal-material ♙ endings.

Pat: You think?

Noah: Sure. Look at Diagram 178.

Black jumped at the chance to take a draw by repetition–never suspecting that he not only had the edge but, in fact, had a dead-won game.

He grossly overestimated the power of White's centralized ♔ and underestimated the benefits of his "pass" moves.

Pat: But Black still has to find a lot of good moves to win.

Noah: Yes, but the point is he didn't even *think* of looking for them.

Pat: Okay, so he was tired. He was hungry. The dog ate his copy of *Basic Chess Endings*...

Noah: I know, there are a lot of excuses in chess. But what explains Diagram 179? Anyone who can see up to 3. h4– and count up to seven–can realize the position should be a draw.

Yet White resigned even though he could have analyzed the adjourned position for hours. The other reason ♔+♙ endings **should** be easy is there's only one golden rule to remember:

Never give up the opposition (without a good reason).

Pat: Doesn't that depend a lot on other factors?

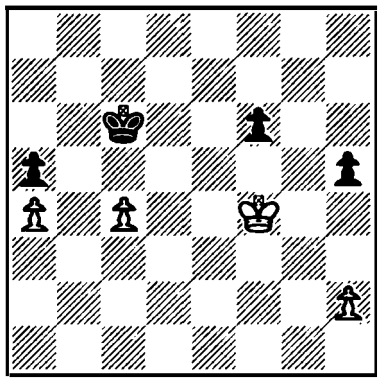
Noah: Sure. If you're half a dozen pawns up, the opposition is **not** going to matter.

But in any ♔+♙ ending whose outcome is in doubt, the opposition is a very high priority. It's basically the simplest and most powerful demonstration of elbowing out.

Pat: I take it 180 is all about opposition.

Noah: Yes. It illustrates a basic point:

White can't win by making a passed ♙ because it is easily blockaded, such as after 4. g5†?



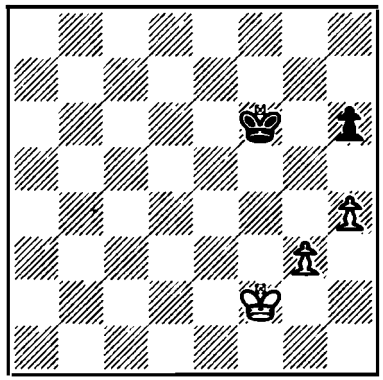
179

Klovan-Elistratov
Spartakiad 1963
Black to play

Before Black could seal his move, White **resigned** (!) because, he said, it was "clear" that Black wins.

Actually 1... ♔c5 2. ♔f5 ♔xc4 (or 2... ♔b4 3. c5!) and now 3. h4! is a draw.

Both sides queen after 3... ♔b4 4. ♔g6 ♔xa4 5. ♔xh5 ♔b3 6. ♔g6 a4 7. h5 and the result is a draw.



180

Chiburdanidze-Watson
Brussels 1987
White to play

1. ♔f3??

Either 1. g4 ♔e5 2. ♔e3 or, the other order, 1. ♔e3 ♔e5 2. g4 keeps the opposition and wins.

After 2... ♔f6 3. ♔f4 ♔g6 4. ♔e5 ♔g7 5. ♔f5 ♔f7 White can finally play 6. h5! because his ♔ gets to g6 (6... ♔g7 7. ♔e6 ♔h7 8. ♔f6).

There's no saving grace in 1. g4 ♔e6 because of 2. ♔e2! and if 2... ♔d6 then 3. ♔f3 (3... ♔e6 4. ♔e4; 3... ♔e5 4. ♔e3).

1. . . . ♔e7!

Black can draw now by taking the opposition after 2. g4 ♔f7! (or block further progress after 2. ♔g4 ♔f6).

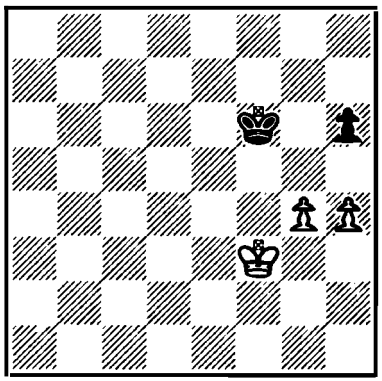
2. ♔f4 ♔e6!

Not 2... ♔f6??, because White gets the opposition back with 3. g4!

3. g4 ♔f6

4. ♔f3

Of course, not 4. g5† hxg5† 5. hxg5† ♔g6, a book draw.



181

4. . . . ♔e7??

The draw was there with 4... ♔f7 (5. ♔e3 ♔e7).

5. ♔e3! ♔f7

6. ♔d4!

Keeps the opposition (6. ♔e4? ♔e6!).

6. . . . ♔f6

7. ♔d5 ♔e7

Or 7... ♔f7 8. ♔e5 ♔e7 9. ♔f5 ♔f7 10. h5!.

8. ♔e5 ♔f7

9. ♔f5 ♔g7

10. ♔e6 ♔g6

11. h5†! ♔g5

Or 11... ♔g7 12. ♔e7 ♔h7 13. ♔f6 as in the last note.

12. ♔f7!

And Black resigned after 12... ♔xg4 13. ♔g6 ♔f4 14. ♔xh6.

One rule of thumb worth remembering is you have to have the opposition **in front of** the ♙s before you can afford that kind of liquidation.

Pat: And pushing the h-♙s doesn't help anybody.

Noah: Right. If Black plays ...h5 he makes the ♙ a target for the enemy and gives White access to the g5 square.

Ditto, White. If he plays h4-h5 too early he gives away g5.

Pat: So what's left? Just a lot of jockeying for position.

Noah: Correction–jockeying for **opposition.** Both players managed to give it away with blunders.

White loses the opposition with his first move, but Black returns the favor at move 4.

Pat: And White wins because...

Noah: ...as yet another wise man once put it:

> ***"The winner is the player who makes the next to the last blunder."***
> **–Savielly Tartakower**

Pat: It seems like any time a master makes a blunder in a ♔+♙ ending it gets published.

Noah: That's because people believe the lie that this is a "simple" ending.

One reason you see so many blunders is that even masters may not appreciate the different values of ♙s.

Pat: What different values? A ♙ is a ♙.

Noah: No, a protected passed ♙ is no mere ♙. In fact, it alone is usually enough to win a ♔+♙s ending, like Diagram 182. Black's ♔ is immobilized by the connected passed ♙s after 1. h6

Pat: What about other kinds of ♙s?

Noah: Next in value comes outside passed ♙s–like Black's c-♙ in Diagram 183. Reuben Fine set down the rule that an outside passer wins if the enemy also has other **attackable** ♙s–like White's ♔-side ♙s in the 5. ♔e4 line.

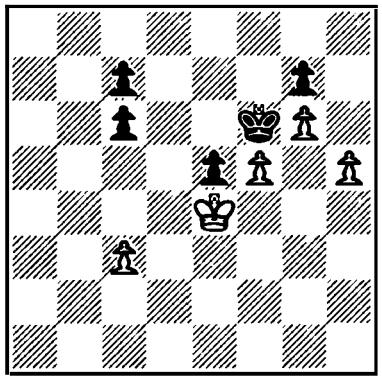
Then comes normal, healthy ♙s. And finally, the weakest ♙s are doubled and backward ones.

Pat: Are they equally weak?

Noah: No, a pair of doubled ♙s on, say, a g-file can stop a pair of healthy f- and g-♙s from creating a passer.

It's tricky to evaluate some ♙s. Nevertheless, most 1700-players know better than to do what White did in Diagram 183, just on general principles.

Pat: What's so terrible?



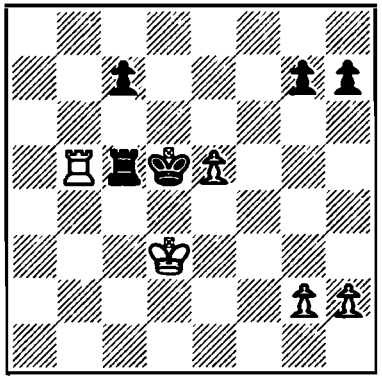
182

Khalifman-Belikov
Podolsk 1992
White to play

1. h6! **gxh6**
2. ♔f3

Even though Black has two passed ♙s, one of them an outside passer, he loses (2... ♔xf5 3. g7).

Play continued **2... h5 3. ♔g3 c5 4. ♔h4 e4 5. ♔g3! Resigns** (5... ♔g7 6. ♔f4 and 7. ♔xe4).



183

Sokolov-Korchnoi
Interpolis 1988
White to play

1. Rxc5†??

With 1. Rb8 White has good drawing chances even a ♙ down.

1. . . . **♔xc5**
2. ♔e4 **♔c6**
3. h4 **♔d7!**

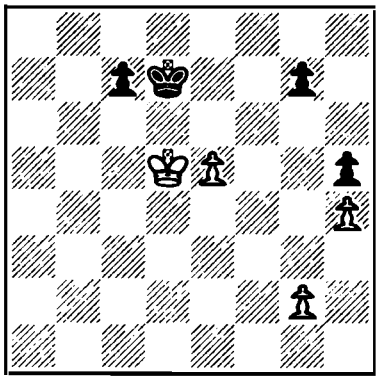
Intending 4... ♔e6 ...c5-c4-c3, etc.

4. ♔d5

Or 4. ♔f5 c5 5. h5 ♔e7 and zugzwang arrives after 6. g3 g6†!– 7. hxg6 hxg6† 8. ♔xg6 c4 or 7. ♔e4 ♔e6 (not 7... gxh5 8. ♔d5) 8.

h6 g5!

4. . . . h5



184

5. e6†

Also 5. ♔e4 ♔e6 6. ♔d4 c6! is zugzwang.

White can then try 7. ♔c5 ♔xe5 8. ♔xc6 but he's dead after 8... ♔f4 9. ♔d5 ♔g3 10. ♔e5 ♔xg2.

5. . . . ♔e7

6. ♔c6

And here 6. ♔e5 c6! 7. ♔f5 ♔d6 8. g3 ♔e7 9. ♔e5 g6 is another zugzwang.

6. . . . ♔xe6

7. ♔xc7 ♔f5

8. ♔d6 ♔g4

9. ♔e5 ♔xh4

10. ♔f4

Or 10. ♔f5 g5, zugzwang.

10. . . . g6

11. ♔f3 g5

White forfeited.

Noah: He commited a hanging offense for a grandmaster. He traded down from a drawable ♖+♙ ending to a ♔+♙ ending in which Black held the outside passer.

Pat: Inexperience? Or time pressure?

Noah: Neither. White spent 35 minutes over 1. ♖xc5†?? And he was about to be named by some professor the 19th greatest player in history.

Pat: It still took an awful lot of calculation to win. And it wasn't clear for 10 moves.

Noah: But it should have been obvious after 1. ♖xc5† that Black had excellent winning chances.

As I said, ♔+♙ endgames are more about calculation than any other endgame–and White just miscalculated very badly.

> ***"Never underestimate the power of human stupidity."***
> **–Robert Heinlein**

Pat: Aren't there some ancient rules that work all the time here?

Noah: What did you have in mind?

Pat: Oh, I don't know. Maybe "Passed pawns must be pushed."

Noah: But only if they're passed. A lot of times you see masters blundering away by advancing a ♙–like in Diagram 185–that only becomes a target for the enemy to attack.

Pat: What should he have done?

Noah: He could pass with his ♔.

That's usually a safe policy when your opponent doesn't have a penetration point for his ♔.

Pat: Yeah, but the way he played, Black had the opposition after 3... ♔g6.

Noah: Unfortunately it was his opponent who had the tempo moves, 4. a4 and 6. g3, that made all the difference.

Pat: Okay, so far you've told me that in ♔+♙ endings the most important things are ♔ position and ♙ quality.

Anything else?

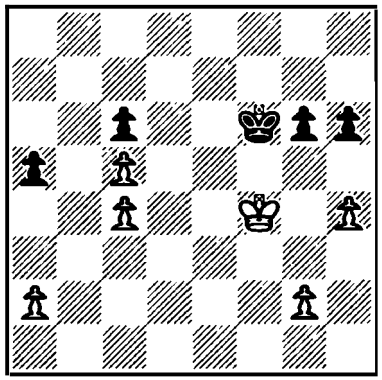
Noah: I thought you could only afford a few minutes?

There is one thing you need to appreciate and I just mentioned them–tempo moves.

Pat: Which are what, exactly?

Noah: Moves that do nothing but allow you to say "I pass" and start your opponent's clock.

In ♙ endings you often reach a standoff like Diagram 186 in which neither side wants to move.



185

Polugaevsky-Ermenkov
Palma de Mallorca 1989
Black to play

1. . . . g5†??

Also losing is 1... h5 (although it takes several more moves) because of 2. a4! and Black reaches zugzwang.

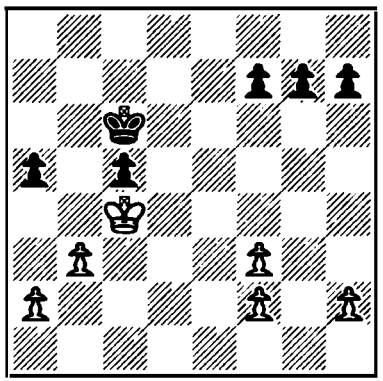
2. hxg5 hxg5†
3. ♔g4 ♔g6
4. a4! ♔f6

No better is 4... ♔h6 5. ♔f5.

5. ♔h5 ♔f5
6. g3! Resigns

In view of 6... ♔f6 7. g4! But passing, with 1... a4 and if 2. a3, then 2... ♔e6, Black can draw.

For example, 3. g4 ♔f6 4. g5† hxg5† 5. hxg5† ♔f7 6. ♔e5 ♔e7! (7. ♔d4 ♔e6 8. ♔c3 ♔e5! 9. ♔b4 ♔d4!).



186

Timman-Sveshnikov
Tilburg 1992
White to play

1. f4!

Begins the zugzwang process (1... ♔d6? 2. ♔b5).

1. . . . ♔b6

Here White played 2. a3??, admitting he had no idea what to do. The game was agreed drawn after 2... ♔c6 3. h3 ♔b6 4. h4.

The only winning try was:

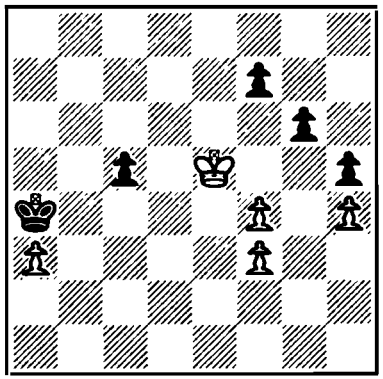
2. ♔d5 ♔b5
3. a3

Now 3... a4 4. bxa4† ♔xa4 5. ♔xc5 allows White to win on the ♔-side. So both sides must use their tempi.

3. . . . g6
4. f3 h6
5. h4 h5

Both sides are out of passes.

6. ♔e5 a4
7. bxa4† ♔xa4



187

What White probably saw at move two is that 8. ♔f6? c4 loses.

What he missed is 8. ♔d5!, after which the best Black can get is a lost ♕+♙ ending after 8... ♔b5! 9. a4†! ♔b4 10. a5.

Pat: But somebody **has** to.

Noah: Right, so what usually occurs is the player with the most tempi ends up forcing his opponent into a very disagreeable situation.

In Diagram 186 White sets up the standoff with 3. a3. He could force matters at any point with ♔e5. But what he should have done is exhaust Black's tempo moves before moving his ♔.

Pat: That's another thing that bugs me. White has to see as far as a ♕ ending to win that position.

Noah: I'm afraid that comes with the territory of ♔+♙. You have to be able to count in queening races. In this case White would have to see that 2. ♔d5 leads to 13. a8=♕ after which he can start picking up the remaining black ♙s with his ♕ and well-centralized ♔.

And sometimes you have to recognize a window of opportunity **after** you promote. Black failed to notice in 188 how he could have reached a won ♕+♔ vs. ♕+♔ position.

Pat: Hmmm. I'd be looking for something like a ♘-check at c6 or d3.

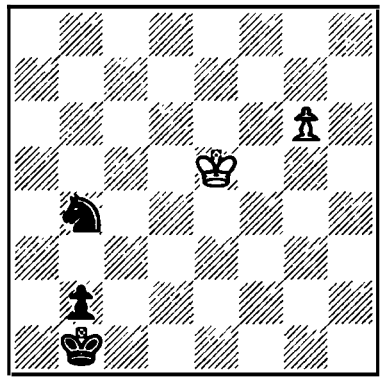
Noah: But when you have a queening race you have to look for chances to exploit the very first move after you promote–as Black would have had here with the 4... ♕b3†! trick.

Pat: Too much calculation for me. I guess you're right about avoiding ♔+♙s.

But one last thing. These endings are bad enough with a few ♙s.

Yet sometimes my opponents offers a trade of ♖s or ♕s or whatever, and so I end up with something impossible like ♔+6 ♙s vs. ♔+6 ♙s.

What do I do then?

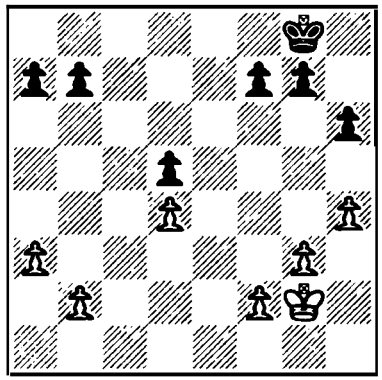


188

Mohr-Conquest
Gausdal 1989
Black to play

1. . . . ♔c1?
2. g7 b1=♕
3. g8=♕ **Drawn**

The extra piece means little here. But Black could have won with 1... ♘d5! threatening 2... ♘e7. Then 2. ♔xd5 ♔c1 and after both sides queen Black has 4... ♕b3†!, skewering the ♔ and ♕.



189

Salov-Short
Linares 1992
White to play

1. ♔f3 f6?

Best was 1... g6 2. ♔f4 f6, after which only 3. h5! offers White chances (3... gxh5? 4. ♔f5 and Black is soon in zugzwang) but 3... ♔g7 may hold).

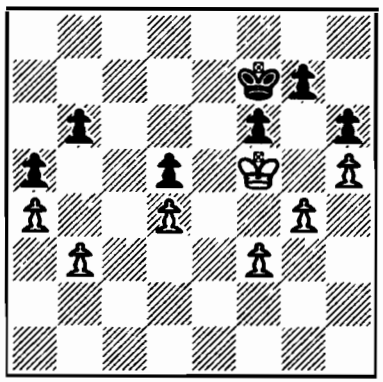
2. h5! ♔f7
3. ♔f4

Now White is threatening to occupy f5 and later go decisively to e6 or g6.

3. . . . ♔e6
4. g4 a6

Black begins to run out of passes. After 4... ♔e7 5. ♔f5 ♔f7 6. a4 we get something like the game.

5. a4	**a5**
6. b3	**b6**
7. f3!	**♔e7!**
8. ♔f5	**♔f7**



190

9. f4

Black must give way: 9... ♔e7 loses to 10. ♔g6 ♔f8 11. g5 fxg5 12. fxg5 hxg5 13. ♔xg5 ♔f7 14. ♔f5.

9. . . .	**g6†!**
10. hxg6†	**♔g7**

Black sets a small trap: 11. g5?? fxg5 12. fxg5 h5!.

11. ♔e6	**♔xg6**
12. f5†!	**♔g5**

Otherwise 13. ♔xd5 wins.

13. ♔f7	**♔xg4**
14. ♔xf6	**h5**
15. ♔e5	**Resigns**

Black can see that after both ♙s queen White wins with 19. ♕g8†.

Noah: Those endings aren't much more difficult than endings with a few ♙s. The techniques we've talked about apply also to multi-♙ endings.

In 189, White has just traded ♕s, on d5, so he gets to move his ♔ first–a big advantage.

He can reach f4 by force and that forces Black to find a way of keeping him out of e5.

Pat: Which he can do with his ♔ or f-♙.

Noah: But the real reason Black loses this game is that White's ♔ gets to f5 and he has enough passes to run Black out of moves.

Pat: It looks like Black is saving himself when he sacks a ♙ with 9... g6†.

Noah: But remember, endgames are all about converting one advantage to another. So White gives back the ♙ in order to penetrate and win either the f6- or d5-♙s.

Pat: In the end Black loses **even with an outside passer.** How did that happen?

Noah: I warned you ♔+♙s were almost impossible. But look on the bright side.

Pat: Bright side?

Noah: Sure, we've done ♕, ♖, and ♙ endings.

There ain't that much left.

In which Noah investigates the trickiest piece of all, and explains how it changes your thinking about good ♙s and bad ♙s.

Chapter Ten: Knights

Pat: Okay, Noah. So **which** endings are you going to tell me to avoid today?

Noah: None. Today we'll do the ending with the trickiest piece–and find they're really fairly easy.

Pat: By tricky you must mean a ♘, right?

Noah: Naturally. There's a cute story GM Leonid Shamkovich loves to tell about showing Diagram 191, a position from a study by our old friend Nikolai Grigoriev, to world champions Shamkovich met over the years. Their reactions were quite different–

Tigran Petrosian quickly became frustrated and just wanted to know the solution.

Vassily Smyslov found the solution in 10 minutes.

Bobby Fischer didn't want to be shown anything–he solved it in a few minutes.

Garry Kasparov solved it almost immediately in his head. He explained that all he needed to do was figure out how to reach the key squares (f1 or g4) with his ♘.

Pat: Is this typical of all endgames with ♘s?

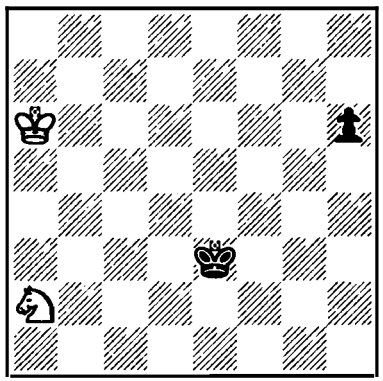
Noah: No, but it illustrates a few important features of them.

It shows the technique of a ♔ elbowing out a ♘. It shows how valuable a wing ♙, rather than a center ♙, is.

Pat: Anything else?

Noah: It also shows that both a ♔ and ♘ can sometimes be pretty fast pieces.

But most of all it shows that speed isn't as important as reaching the right squares.



191

White to play and draw

1. ♘b4! **h5**

Now 2. ♘c2† loses to 2... ♔f2!, setting up a kind of ♔ vs. ♘ opposition.

Another version of that is 2. ♘d5†? ♔f3! and the ♘ is blocked out.

2. ♘c6

So far, so good. Now on 2... h4 White has 3. ♘e5 h3 4. ♘g4† ♔f3 5. ♘h2† ♔g2 6. ♘g4 and draws.

The key point is that 6... ♔g3 can be met by 7. ♘e3! and 7... h2 8. ♘f1† followed by 9. ♘xh2.

2. . . . **♔e4!**

Another form of ♔ v. ♘ opposition. Now 3. ♘e7 h4 4. ♘g6 h3 is hopeless, as is 4. ♘b4 h4.

3. ♘a5!!

Paradoxical but effective. Now 3... ♔d5 allows 4. ♘b3 h4 5. ♘d2 and 6. ♘f1, and White reaches the same f1-h2-g4 cycle.

3. . . . h4
4. ♘c4 ♔f3

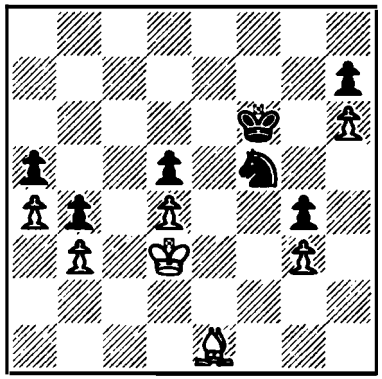
Or 4... h3 5. ♘d2† ♔e3 6. ♘f1† and 7. ♘h2, drawing.

5. ♘e5†

But losing was 5. ♘d2†? ♔e2 6. ♘e4 h3 7. ♘g5 h2 8. ♘e4 ♔f3! – not 8... h1=♕ 9. ♘g3†.

5. . . . ♔g3
6. ♘c4

And the ♘d2-f1† drawing idea is on once more (6... ♔f4 7. ♘d2).



192

Gheorghiu-Yusupov
Lucerne 1985
Black to play

1. . . . ♔g6!

Not 1... ♘xh6?? because of 2. ♗xb4! (2... axb4? 3. a5).

2. ♗d2 ♘xg3
3. ♗xb4

Nothing better.

3. . . . axb4!
4. a5 ♘h5!

And Black won (**5. a6 ♘f4† 6. ♔e3 ♘e6** and **7... ♘c7,** or 5. ♔e3! ♘f6 6. ♔f4 ♔xh6 7. a6 ♘d7 8. a7 ♘b6 9. ♔xg4 ♔g6).

Pat: Yeah, but it's a trick position, a composition. Stuff like that doesn't happen in the real world.

Noah: Don't be so certain.

In Diagram 192 Black won a very subtle ending because he could see that a ♘ on h6 can't get back to a8 in three moves, but a ♘ on h5 could– much like Grigoriev.

Pat: I always thought of ♘s as clumsy and slow and not much use in an ending.

Noah: Not so. Remember when I said, in the 19th century it was widely believed– even by great players–that a ♘ was better than a ♗ in the ending, because a ♗ is limited to half the squares on the board.

Pat: Yeah, right, the good old days, like when they used sandglasses instead of clocks. So, anyway, tell me: what do I **need** to know about ♘ endings?

Noah: Two things. The first is a basic principle:

Keep Your ♘
As Flexible As Possible.

Black loses in Diagram 193 purely because he violates this rule–and because he forgets a basic technique of ♘ endings.

Pat: Which is?

Noah: Triangulation. White zugzwangs Black by taking two moves to get his ♔ from d5 to d6.

Pat: And that's a big deal in ♘ endings?

Noah: Yes, because a ♔ usually can gain or lose a tempo when fighting a ♘.

It usually **can't** do that to a ♗ and rarely to a heavy piece.

Black lost because he made a very inflexible first move.

Pat: You said there were two things I need to know about ♘ endings.

Noah: Yes, the other is *Botvinnik's Law:*

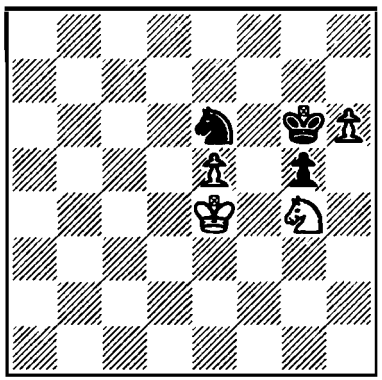
A ♘ Ending Is Really
A ♙ Ending

Pat: What the heck does that mean?

Noah: It means that most of the general rules and techniques of ♙ endings apply here.

For example, a one-♙ advantage is usually decisive if there are lots of ♙s on the board.

A good example of bad thinking is Diagram 194.



193

Chernin-Panno
Buenos Aires 1992
White to play

1. ♔d5 ♘f4†??

Black draws with the flexible 1... ♔f7, leaving his ♘ free to go to f4 or d4, or to retreat.

For example, 2. ♔c6 ♘d4†! 3. ♔d6 ♘b5† 4. ♔d7 ♘d4 or 3. ♔d7 ♘e6 4. h7 ♘f8† 5. ♔d6 ♔g7! and draws.

2. ♔c6!! ♔f7

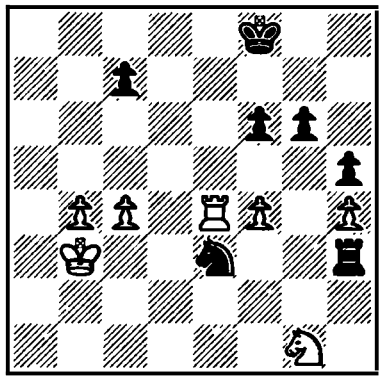
Otherwise a ♙ advances decisively, e.g., 2... ♘e6 3. ♔d6 ♔f7 4. h7! and wins.

3. ♔d6 Resigns

It's zugzwang: 3... ♘e6 4. h7 etc., or 3... ♘g6 4. e6† ♔e8 5. h7 ♘h8 6. ♘f6†.

BOTVINNIK'S LAW

A ♘ Ending Is Really A ♙ Ending



194

Zsu. Polgar-J. Polgar
Monaco 1994
Black to play

1. . . . ♘f1†??

Black could have virtually forced a draw with 1... ♖g3 since White has nothing better than 2. ♘e2 ♖h3 3. ♘g1 ♖g3.

2. ♘xh3 ♘d2†
3. ♔a4 ♘xe4
4. ♔b5 ♔e7
5. ♔c6 ♔d8
6. ♔d5!

And the black ♔-side collapses– 6... ♘d6 7. ♔e6! ♘f5 8. ♔xf6 ♘xh4 9. ♔g5 or 7... ♘xc4 8. ♔xf6 ♘e3 9. ♔xg6 ♘d5 10. f5! ♘xb4 11. f6 and wins.

Pat: With ♖s on the board.

Noah: Yes, but Black walks into a disastrous transition from a drawable ♖+♘ ending to a dead lost ♘+♗ one.

Pat: In what other ways is a ♘ ending like a ♗ ending?

Noah: There's a lot of zugzwang, a great emphasis on gaining tempi and a high premium on outside passed ♙s.

Pat: Aren't outside passers always valuable?

Noah: They're important, but they **alone** don't give you a win in, say, a ♖ ending. In fact, a ♖-♗ can be a real liability in some ♖-endings. A Lucena-like position with a ♖-♗ is only a draw, for example because it's easier for the defender to cut off the ♔'s escape.

But since ♘s can't defend a distant point the way a ♖ or ♗ can, a fast ♖-♗ or ♘-♗ can end a game quickly. Both sides missed this point in Diagram 195.

Pat: I thought you're never supposed to hurry.

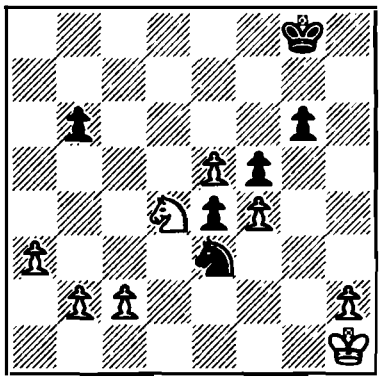
Noah: White wouldn't be hurrying with 2. a4!, he would be creating a positive asset.

But he **was** hurrying with 8. h5?–and that's what cost him a half point.

Pat: So is everything that's true about ♙ endings also true about ♘ endings?

Noah: Not quite. Being a ♙ or two behind in a ♙ ending is usually hopeless–but that's not so true with ♘s.

This explains why the superior side in a ♘ ending is always looking to trade ♘s into a more winnable ♙ endgame.



195

Nunn-Timman
Reykjavik 1988
Black to play

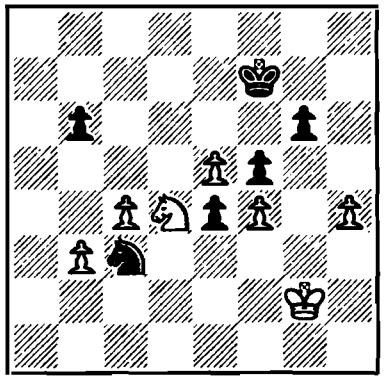
1. . . . ♘d5?

After 1... ♘c4! Black has real drawing chances.

2. ♘e2?

But 2. a4! offers winning chances, e.g., 2... ♘xf4 3. b4 and 4. a5.

2. . . .	**♘e3**
3. ♘d4	**♘c4!**
4. b3	**♘xa3**
5. c4	**♘b1**
6. ♔g2	**♘c3**
7. h4	**♔f7**



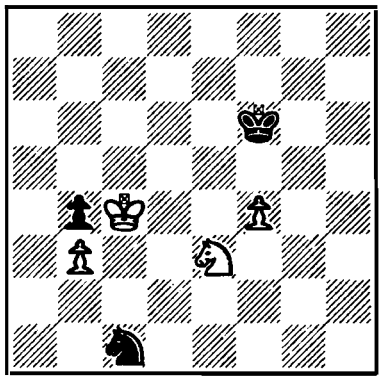
196

With 8. ♔f2 White can prepare a decisive h4-h5.

8. h5?	**gxh5**
9. ♘xf5	**♘e2!**

Now 10. ♘d6† ♔e6 11. ♘c8 gives Black serious counterplay (11... ♘xf4† 12. ♔g3 e3!).

The game went **10. ♔f2 ♘xf4 11. ♔e3 ♘g6 12. ♔xe4 h4** and it was Black who had the outside passed ♙. White offered a draw with **13. ♘xh4.**



197

Kindermann-Lautier
Palma de Mallorca 1989
White to play

1. ♘g2?

White can play 1. ♔xb4! because 1... ♘d3† 2. ♔c4 ♘xf4 allows 3. ♘d5†!, trading into an obviously won ♙ ending.

1. . . . ♘a2
2. ♘e1??

White still wins with 2. ♘e3!, e.g., 2... ♔e6 3. ♘d5 ♔f5 4. ♘xb4.

2. . . . ♔f5

And draws: 3. **♘d3 ♔e4 4. ♘xb4 ♘c1 5. ♘d5 ♘xb3!** or 4. ♔c5!? ♔xd3 5. f5 ♘c3 6. ♔xb4 ♔d4! (7. f6 ♘d5†).

"Some Knights don't leap; they limp."
–Proverb

Noah: That's what cost White in Diagram 197.

Staying in the ♘ ending only drew–even though White might have been **two** ♙s up in one line. Yet he missed a great chance to trade horses (♘s)–and that would have won.

Pat: But generally don't the kind of advantages that are decisive in ♔+♙ endings also win here?

Noah: True. Usually a two-♙ advantage is an easy win with ♘s–but sometimes it requires some precautions as in Diagram 198.

Pat: But Black has **no** ♙s. Shouldn't this be easy?

Noah: No, as you recall our rule about trading when you are behind, the fewer ♙s left on the board the easier it is to draw.

Add a bunch of ♙s to either wing and White would score easily by setting up a mismatch somewhere.

Pat: By forcing Black's ♔ to go in one direction while his own ♔ goes in the other.

Noah: Exactly. But in this case it's a lot harder because of that ancient saying:

> ***"You can't dance at two weddings."***
> **–Anonymous chessmaster/wedding guest**

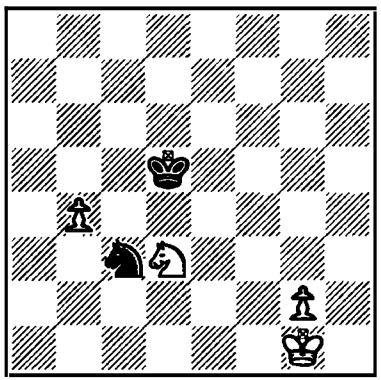
Pat: Another of your wise men?

Noah: Of course. The black ♔ can stop one of the ♙s, but not both.

Pat: Okay, so that's a 2-♙ edge. What about one ♙? Win or draw?

Noah: There's no simple rule. The result varies depending on how many **total** ♙s there are on the board.

We can draw up a chart:



198

Lautier-Yusupov
Baden-Baden 1992
White to play

1. ♘e1!

Not 1. ♔f1 ♔c4 winning a ♙, or 1. g4 ♔e4! 2. ♘f2† ♔d4, with drawing chances.

1. . . . ♔c4
2. ♘c2!

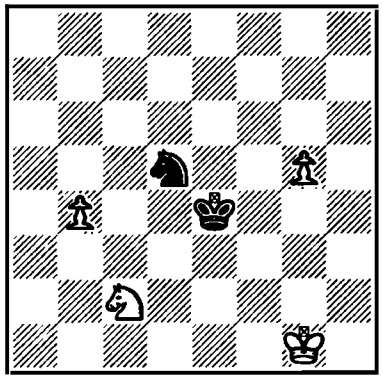
Now 2... ♔d3 allows 3. g4! and the ♔ is too far away (3... ♔xc2 4. g5 ♘d5 5. g6 ♘e7 6. g7 and 7. b5).

A better try is 3... ♔e4! but then the white ♔ enters with 4. ♔g2 ♔f4 5. ♔h3.

2. . . . ♘d5
3. g4 ♔d3
4. g5!

Now 4... ♔xc2 transposes into the previous note, so...

4. . . . ♔e4



199

5. b5!

Since 5... ♔f5 allows 6. ♘e3†! ♘xe3 7. b6 and queens, Black played **5... ♔e5.**

But he **resigned** after **6. ♔f2 ♘c3 7. b6 ♘e4† 8. ♔g2 ♔d6 9. g6 ♘f6 10. g7 ♔d7** [Ed.: 10... ♔c6? and both 11. b7 and 11. ♘d4† will win for White.] **11. ♘b4.**

PAWN POWER

4 ♙s vs. 3 ♙s ➠ Almost always a win.

3 ♙s vs. 2 ♙s ➠ A win if there's a clear passed ♙.

2 ♙s vs. 1 ♙ ➠ A draw most of the time.

1 ♙ vs. 0 ♙s ➠ A draw unless the ♙ reaches the 7th rank (when it usually wins) or the 6th (when it often does).

Pat: Doesn't the quality of the ♙s matter a lot, like it did in ♙-endings?

Noah: Often it does. But even in a case like Diagram 200, where White's extra ♙ is backward, a win can be achieved by accurate use of the ♔ and ♘.

Pat: Okay, so far you've told me ♘+♙ endings are usually like ♔+♙ and sometimes like ♖+♙s or whatever.

But what about the differences? There must be unique things about ♔ and ♘ endings. What works in them and only in them?

Noah: ♘ endings have a few unusual qualities. The first is:

The Winning Side Sacrifices His Piece Much More Often Than In Any Other Ending.

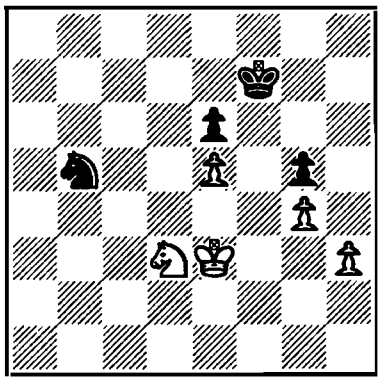
Pat: Why?

Noah: A couple of reasons.

The ♘ is closest in value to a ♙, so a ♘ sac isn't as big a material loss as with other sacrifices.

Also, after a sac a defender often must use both ♔ or ♘ for blockade duty, leaving a mismatch elsewhere on the board.

Pat: I guess a ♘ isn't such a bad blockader, as blockaders go.



200

Serper-Suba
Hastings 1990-1991
White to play

White's extra ♙, at h3, looks useless. But:

1. ♘e1!

After 2. ♘f3 Black's ♔ will be tied to g5, leaving a ♔ vs. ♘ mismatch in the center.

1. . . . **♘c3**
2. ♘f3 **♔g6**
3. ♔d4 **♘d5**
4. ♔c5 **♘f4**
5. ♔d6 **♘xh3**

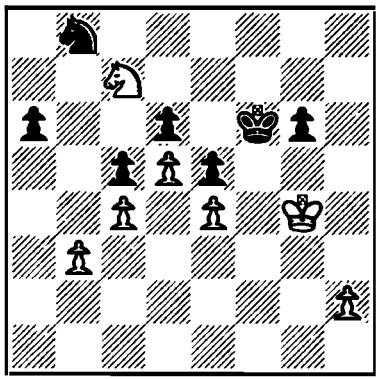
Passive defense, with 5... ♔h6, allows White to elbow the ♔ off the board: 6. ♔d7! ♔g6 7. ♔e7 ♔h6 8. ♔f6!

6. ♔xe6 **♘f2**
7. ♘h2

It's 2 vs. 1 now, but White has created a winning passer, e.g., 7... ♘e4 8. ♔e7 and 9. e6.

7. . . . **♘d3**
8. ♔d6 **♔f7**
9. e6†

And after **9... ♔e8 10. ♘f3 ♘f2** White could afford **11. ♘xg5! ♘xg4** because **12. ♘h7!** wins, e.g., 12... ♔d8 13. e7† ♔e8 14. ♔e6!, zugzwang.



201

Suba-Zapata
Tunis 1985
White to play

1. h4??

White wins with 1. ♘e8† ♔e7 2. ♘xd6! ♔xd6 3. ♔g5.

The main line runs 3... ♔e7 4. ♔xg6 ♘d7 5. h4 ♘f6 6. ♔f5 and Black's ♘ is no match for White's ♔ and passed ♙s.

1.	**. . .**	**♔f7**
2.	**♔f3**	**♔e7**
3.	**♔g3**	**♔f8**
4.	**♔g4**	**♔f7**

And White agreed to a draw 31 moves later.

Noah: Right. And another rare feature of ♘ endings, as I mentioned earlier is:

Wing ♙s Are Better Than Center ♙s. ♖-♙s Are The Best, Followed By ♘-♙s, etc.

Pat: That sounds like the exact opposite of what happens with heavy pieces.

Noah: Just about. With only an a-♙ or an h-♙ it is really difficult, if not impossible to win a ♖ ending or a ♕ ending because it's so hard to find a good place for your ♔.

But the ground rules are different with the ♘s, rather than heavy pieces, for a few reasons:

1) No perpetual check is possible, so the best method of defense is to reach a point in front of the queening square with your ♔ or ♘. And it's harder for them to reach a point in front of a wing ♙ than a central one.

2) If the defender's ♔ can't get in front of the ♙, he'll have to use the ♘. But the closer the ♙ is to the edge of the board, the greater the chance that it will be kicked away, as in Diagram 202.

Noah: The resource that might have saved Black was a check after 6... ♘c2 7. a6 ♘b4 8. a7–but the check would have to be on a fifth-rank square that is to the left of the a-file.

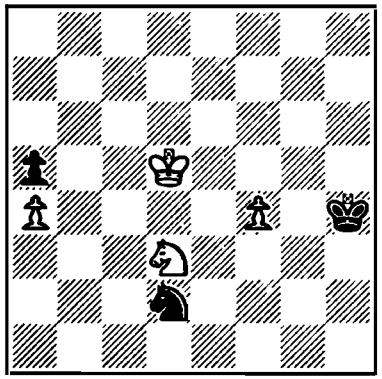
Pat: You mean **off** the board.

Noah: You're lucky. Some day they may add another rank or file to the board and you'll have to relearn a lot about endings.

Pat: I think I'll stick to 64 squares–for now.

Noah: One other thing you ought to keep in mind. In one other way a ♘ ending is quite unlike a ♗ ending.

Pat: How's that?



202

Cifuentes-Brenninkmeijer
Dutch Championship 1992
White to play

1. ♔c6! **♔g4**
2. ♔b5 **♘b3**

White can answer 2... ♔f3 3. ♔xa5 ♔e4 with 4. ♔b4! since 4... ♔xd3 5. a5 ♘c4 6. f5 wins.

3. ♘c5 **♘d4†**

The ♔+ ♗ ending is clearly lost and 3... ♘d2 4. ♔xa5 ♔xf4 loses because the ♘ can't catch the a-♗ after 5. ♔b5 and 6. a5.

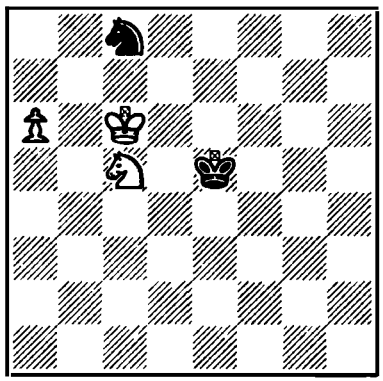
4. ♔xa5 **♔xf4**
5. ♔b6 **♔e5**
6. a5 **♘f5**

Also lost is 6... ♔d6 7. a6 ♘c6 because of 8. ♘b7† ♔d7 9. ♘a5.

7. a6 **♘d6**

So that 8. a7?? allows 8... ♘c8† and 9... ♘xa7, drawing.

8. ♔c6! **♘c8**



203

9. ♘b3!

White sees that when he attacks the ♘ it can only safely go to d6 (9. ♔b7 ♘d6† 10. ♔c7 ♘b5†).

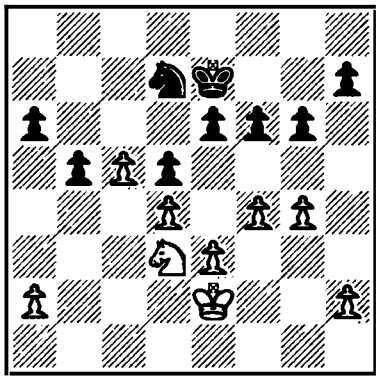
Therefore his own ♘ heads for c4 where it stops ...♘d6.

9. . . . **♘a7†**
10. ♔b7 **♘b5**
11. ♔b6 **♘d6**
12. ♔c5 **♘c8**

Now 13. ♘a5 and 14. ♘c4 would win. But White prefers another way to cover d6.

13. ♘d4 **♔e4**
14. ♘b5 **1-0**

The end would be 14... ♔d3 15. ♘d6 ♘a7 16. ♔b6.



204

Pillsbury-Gunsberg
Hastings 1895
Black to play

1. . . . a5!

Much better than 1... ♘b8?, which lost quickly (2. f5! gxf5 3. gxf5 exf5 4. ♘f4 regaining a ♙ favorably, or 2... g5 3. ♘b4 a5 4. c6!, threatening 5. c7, 4... ♔d6 5. fxe6! axb4 6. e7 ♔xe7 7. c7!).

2. f5? g5!
3. c6 ♘b6
4. ♘c5 exf5
5. gxf5 ♔d6

Black is better! (6. ♘b7† ♔xc6 7. ♘xa5† ♔c7 and ...♘c4-d6).

Noah: In ♘ endings an outside passer is **better** than a protected passer, as that ancient example, Diagram 204, shows.

Pat: Why is it that every ending has to have something unique–and something extra to remember about?

Noah: You wanted to play an **easy** game?

But don't give up on it now–we're in the home stretch. There's only one piece left to confuse you with.

In which Noah explains how some ♗s dance and others blockade, and why connected passed ♙s are often weaker than distant isolated ♙s.

Chapter Eleven

Bishops

Pat: I can't believe we've covered everything but ♗s.

Noah: See, Pat, I told you there wasn't that much you absolutely **had** to know about endgames.

Pat: Okay, so let's start with my favorite question: What makes ♗ endings different from others?

Noah: Well, in general it's more common in endings with the ♗s–and with ♘s for that matter–for the defender to draw because his ♔ is active.

Pat: Why is that?

Noah: Because you can often give up your final piece for an opponent's passed ♙ and then draw by raiding his ♙s on the other side of the board.

Pat: And that just won't work in ♕ endings, and in most ♖ endings, because those pieces are so valuable.

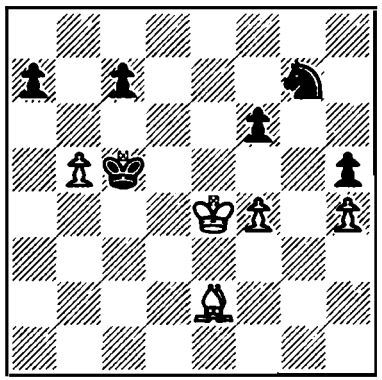
Noah: Exactly.

In Diagram 205 Black's ♘ is tied to the h5-pawn and the invasion square f5. His only winning try is to create a passed ♔-side ♙.

Pat: Yeah, but he can do that by force whenever he wants to.

Noah: True, but if White then gives up his ♗ for the ♙ on a distant square, like a4, he should draw.

He loses because his first move means any ♔ raid (♔d5) will be met by ...♘xf5.



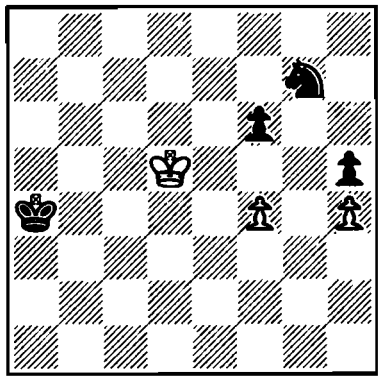
205

Pigusov-Epishin
Biel 1993
White to play and draw

1. f5??	**c6**
2. bxc6	**♔xc6**
3. ♗d1	**a5**
4. ♗a4†	**♔c5**

And Black shepherds the a-♙ (5. ♗d7 ♔b4 6. ♔d3 a4 7. ♔d2 a3 8. ♔c2) before turning his ♔ back to scoop up the ♔-side (8... ♔c4 9. ♔b1 ♔d4 10. ♔a2 ♔e4 and 11... ♘xf5, winning).

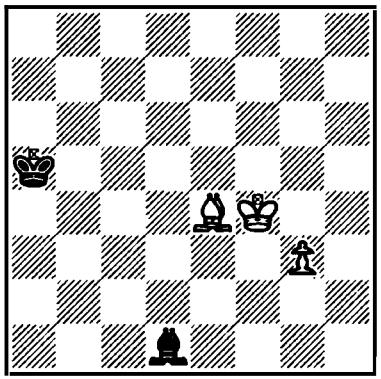
But in the diagram 1. ♗f1 or 1. ♗d3 should draw, e.g., 1... c6 2. bxc6 ♔xc6 3. ♗a6 ♔b6 4. ♗c8! a5 5. ♗d7 ♔c5 6. ♗a4 ♔b4 7. ♗d7 a4 8. ♗xa4! ♔xa4 9. ♔d5.



206

With the White ♙ on f5 this drawing raid doesn't work because of ...♘xf5xh4.

But here it does: 9... ♔b5 10. ♔d6 ♔c4 11. ♔e7 f5 12. ♔f6 or 10... ♘f5† 11. ♔e6 ♘xh4 12. ♔xf6 ♘f3! 13. ♔f5 ♔c6 14. ♔e4 ♘-moves 15. f5 and ♔f4-g5xh5.



207

Kveinis-Vetemaa
Lithuania 1986
Black to play

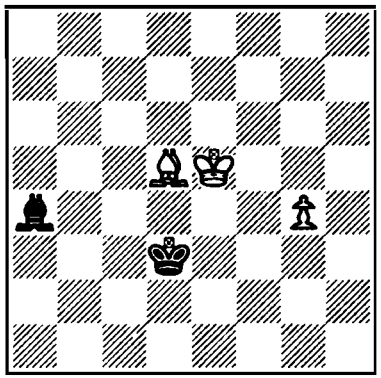
1. . . . ♔b4!

Not 1... ♔b6? because Black loses even if he reaches g8.

For example, 2. ♗f3 ♗c2 3. g4 ♔c7 4. ♗e4 ♗b3 5. ♔e5! (elbow) ♔d8 6. ♔f6! ♔e8 7. g5 ♔f8 8. g6 ♔g8.

Now 9. g7 wins by ♔g6-h6/ ♗h7† as we saw way back in Diagram 67.

2. ♗f3 ♗a4
3. g4 ♔c3!
4. ♔e5 ♔d3
5. ♗d5



208

Now 5... ♔e3 loses to 6. ♗f7 (which stops ...♗e8!) ♗c2 7. g5 ♗d3 8. ♗e6 ♗g6 9. ♔f6.

5. . . . ♗e8!
6. g5 ♔e3
7. ♔f6 ♔f4

White cannot make progress because when he plays ♗f7 Black trades and takes the ♙. And, no better is 8. ♗e6 ♗h5! (pass) 9. ♗d7 ♗f7!

Pat: How often does the active ♔ save the defense?

Noah: A lot. Even in the most basic positions of ♔+♗–♙ vs. ♔+♗ the defender draws if he can get his ♔ in front of the ♙.

Pat: Just like with ♖+♙. I haven't forgotten about the Philidor position–yet.

Noah: I'm sorry to relay the news that there's no iron-clad "Philidor" in ♗ endings.

Still, an alert defender can draw even if he can't blockade the enemy ♙s.

The reason is that he can give up his ♗ for his opponent's last ♙.

Pat: Like the way Black tries to do in Diagram 208, I guess.

Noah: Yes. Generally, if the defender's ♔ can't get securely in front of the ♙ then he absolutely must attack it from the rear.

Pat: And that's good enough? I don't remember seeing this attack-from-behind much in other endgames.

Noah: It doesn't usually work in others. In fact, it only works in certain ♗ endings. For example, Diagram 209 bears a strong resemblance to the previous example if White forces an exchange of his d-♙ for the f-♙.

Pat: Why is that good?

Noah: Because Black's ♔ is then elbowed out, leaving him with only one defense, the attack from behind.

Pat: Which he can do with 7... ♔f5. So why does he lose anyway?

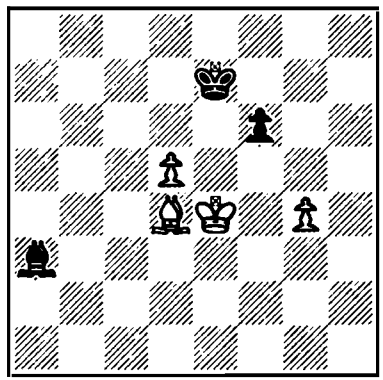
Noah: Because this time we're dealing with a ♘–♙, closer to the edge of the board.

This means the defender's ♗ has fewer squares and can be nudged off the board–like after 8. ♗c1!.

Pat: How does it help me to know that?

Noah: It helps you know when to make good transitions–like White did with 1. ♔f5 and 2. ♗xf6.

It also helps you set good traps, as Black did in Diagram 210.



209

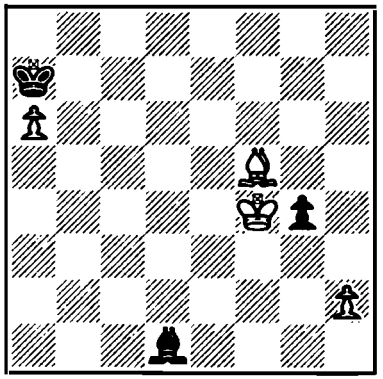
Prasad-Anand
India 1985
White to play

1. ♔f5 ♔d6
2. ♗xf6 ♔xd5
3. g5 ♗f8
4. ♗b2!

Now 4... ♔d6?? 5. ♗a3† or 4... ♔c4 5. ♔e6 and 6. ♔f7 make it easy for White.

4. . . . ♗e7
5. g6 ♗f8
6. ♔f6

And Black resigned after **6... ♔e4 7. ♔f7 ♔f5 8. ♗c1!** and Black has no moves.



210

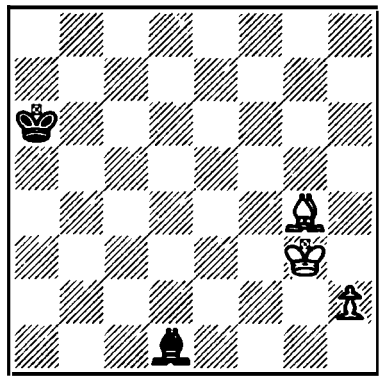
Belyavsky-Kotronias
Belgrade 1993
Black to play

1. . . . g3!
2. ♔xg3!

After 2. hxg3 ♔xa6 it's much harder for White to end the blockade (3. ♗e4 ♔b5 4. ♗f3 ♗b3 5. g4 ♔c4 6. g5 ♔d4 as in Diagram 208).

2. . . . ♔xa6
3. ♗g4??

A basic mistake: White should advance the ♙ first, then drive the enemy ♗ away (3. h4 ♔b6 4. ♗g4).



211

Now 3... ♗a4! draws because the ♗ has an extra tempo to set up a blockade of h5. For example, 4. h4 ♗e8! 5. ♔f4 ♔b6 6. ♔g5 ♔c7 7. ♗f5 ♔d6 8. ♗g6 ♔e7! or 8. ♔f6 ♗h5!

3. . . . ♗c2??

Another basic blunder: Black tries to stop the ♙ from reaching h7 when he could have stopped it from getting to h5 with 3... ♗a4! and 4... ♗e8.

4. ♔f4 ♔b6
5. ♔g5 ♔c7
6. h4 ♔d8
7. ♔f6 ♔e8
8. ♔g7 Resigns

In view of 9. h5, 10. h6 and ♗h5†-g6.

Pat: I'm not used to capturing away from the center. Why is 2. ♔xg3 correct? This isn't a ♘ ending.

Noah: Because while a ♘–♙ is more queenable than a ♗–♙, a ♖–♙ is even better.

The reason is that once White blocks the d1-h5 diagonal, the only places for Black's ♗ to stop the ♖–♙ are along c2-h7 and e8-h5.

Pat: But Black missed a draw later on.

Noah: That's because White delayed getting his ♙ to h4, and the delay should have allowed Black to set up shop with ...♗e8.

Once Black plays ...♗e8, White's only winning chance is to play ♗g6. But by the time he gets that in...

Pat: ...Black's ♔ arrives to the rescue at e7.

So what else do the GMs and other *Informant* types know about making a draw here that I don't?

Noah: They make draws because good defenders know what a lost position looks like several moves in advance–and avoid them.

Take 212, for example.

Pat: Hmmm. White eliminates the ♙s that make Black's ♗ "bad." Explain that one.

Noah: He does it because another rule takes precedence. Do you remember–

Trade ♙s When You're Behind

Pat: Sure.

Noah: Well, it works here because White sees that by the time Black picks off the b-♙, White's ♔ will be very close to the ♙'s queening square and can count on setting up a successful blockade on a square such as b2.

Then all White needs to do to make a draw is trade off the Black g-♙.

Pat: Or give up his ♗ for both ♙s. That's pretty much what happens here, right?

Noah: Exactly. ♗ endings with one ♙ are pretty easy once you figure out how to screen the defender's ♗ by interposing your own.

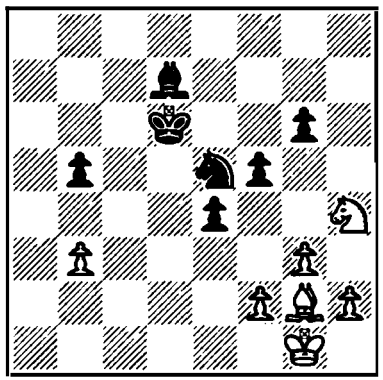
Pat: So that screening thing is a big deal in ♗-endings.

Noah: It is **the** technique to learn in these endings, as important as learning about cross-checks in ♕-endings, or the opposition in ♙-endings.

Make sense?

Pat: I guess so. But ♗ endings are over my head when there are several ♙s and all sorts of confusing things like ZZ.

Noah: Zugzwang does come up a lot in ♗+♙ endings in which one side's ♗ is "bad"–hemmed in by its own ♙s.



212

Belyavsky-Pr. Nikolic
Barcelona 1989
White to play

1. f4!

After 1. ♔f1 ♔c5 the b3-♙ falls and with it the game.

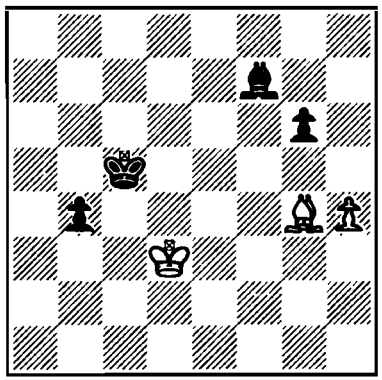
1. . . .	**exf3**
2. ♘xf3	**♘xf3†**

White has an easier time after 2... ♘d3 3. ♗f1.

3. ♗xf3	**♔c5**
4. ♔f2	**♗e6**

Now 5. ♗d1 ♔b4 and 6... ♗xb3 is lost.

5. ♔e3!	**♗xb3**
6. h4	**b4**
7. g4!	**fxg4**
8. ♗xg4	**♗f7**
9. ♔d3	



213

Now 9... b3 10. ♔c3 ♔d6 is drawn–not because of ♗d1xb3 (which leads to a lost ♔+♙ ending)–but because of 11. h5! For example, 11... gxh5 12. ♗xh5! or 11... g5 12. h6 ♗g6 13. ♔xb3.

9. . . .	**♔d5**
10. ♗f3†	**♔e5**

Black's best chance is a ♔-side mismatch.

11. ♗e4!

Threatening 12. ♗xg6! ♗xg6† 13. ♔c4, killing the last ♙.

11. . . . **b3**
12. ♗c6 **♔f4**
13. ♔c3 **♔g4**
14. ♗e4!

And since 14... ♔xh4 15. ♗xg6 is dead, a draw was soon agreed.

Pat: How bad does a bad ♗ have to be?

Noah: Not very. In Diagram 214 Black only has two ♙s on dark squares–but he loses.

Pat: Seems like White bored him to death.

Noah: No, it was more artistic than that, even though it involves a very elaborate set of maneuvers.

What you see here is a remarkable technique that is unique to these endings–the Dance of the ♗s.

Pat: Why is it a "dance"?

Noah: Because it's a sort of pirouette between the two enemy ♗s.

White is looking for any one of a series of zugzwang positions.

Pat: I actually see one of them. It's zugzwang when White's ♗ is on f6 and Black's is on c7, and it's Black's turn.

A ♗ move loses a ♙ and a ♔ move allows ♔b5 or ♔d5.

Noah: It's also ZZ with a ♗/c3 versus a ♗/c7. And there's one with the black ♗/g7 and a ♗/ h2/g3.

Pat: I'll take your word for it.

But what's the point? They dance and they dance...

Noah: ...until at move 10 White gets one of the positions he wanted–the one in the original diagram but with Black to move.

Pat: White lost a tempo.

Noah: You got it. Then all White needs to win is repeat the process–the same ♗ dance–and lose another tempo.

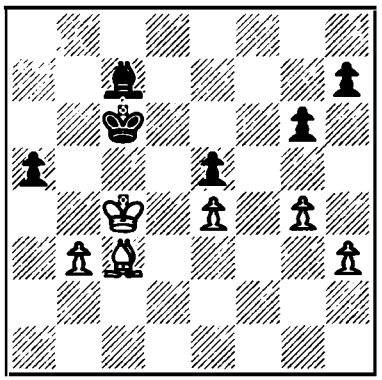
Black runs out of passes at move 21 and fatally loses a ♙.

Pat: I know there are always games in the *Informant* like that–but I can promise you I'll never win anything like it.

Noah: Sometimes the position wins it for you. Certain factors always give you good winning chances in ♗ endings.

Winning Factors
(1) Better ♗
(2) Outside passed ♙
(3) ♔ on the fourth rank

Pat: I'd add another–(4) An opponent who's dumber than you in the endgame.



214

Shabalov-Varavin
U.S.S.R. 1986
White to play

1. ♗d2!

Headed for the h4-d8 diagonal, to take away squares for Black's ♗.

1. . . . ♗d8
2. ♗e1 ♗b6

Not 2... ♗e7 3. ♗xa5, or a 2... ♔-move which would allow ♔d5 or ♔b5.

3. ♗h4 ♗e3

Black must avoid a zugzwang position of 3... ♗c7 4. ♗f6. For example, 3... ♗b8 4. ♗d8 and wins.

4. ♗g3! ♗d4

Or 4... ♗f4 5. ♗e1! and wins (5... ♔b6 6. ♔d5).

5. ♗h2 ♗b2

6. ♗g1!

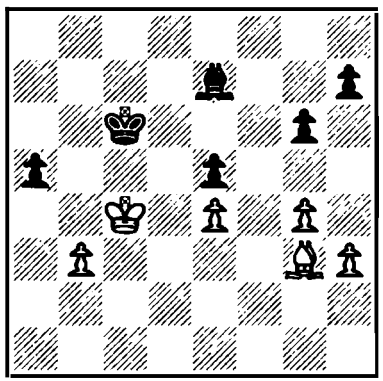
The threat is ♗f2-e1. Now 6... ♗c1 7. ♗f2 ♗d2 allows 8. ♗g3! (8... ♗f4 9. ♗e1 or 8... ♔d6 9. ♔b5 and ♗f2-b6).

6. . . . ♗a3

7. ♗f2 ♗e7

So 8. ♗e1 can be met by 8... ♗d8.

8. ♗g3



215

Now 8... ♗f6 9. ♗h2 ♗g7 10. g5! and White wins with ♗g3-e1.

8. . . . ♗d6

9. ♗e1! ♗c7

10. ♗c3 h5

Only the h-♙ could move.

11. ♗d2 hxg4

12. hxg4 ♗d8

13. ♗e1 ♗b6

14. ♗h4 ♗e3

15. ♗g3 ♗d4

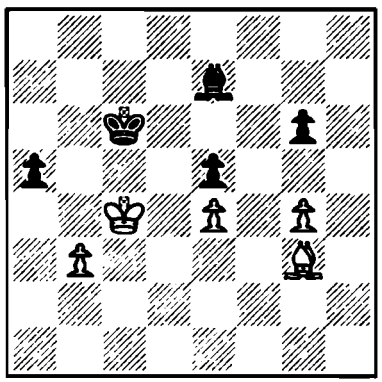
We've seen this before except with h-♙s on the board. Again 15... ♗f4 loses to 16. ♗e1.

16. ♗h2 ♗b2

17. ♗g1 ♗a3

18. ♗f2 ♗e7

19. ♗g3



216

Looks like the last diagram but here 19... ♗d6 loses quickly to 20. ♗e1 ♗c7 21. ♗c3!, zugzwang.

19. . . . ♗f6

20. ♗h2! ♗g7

21. g5! ♗f8

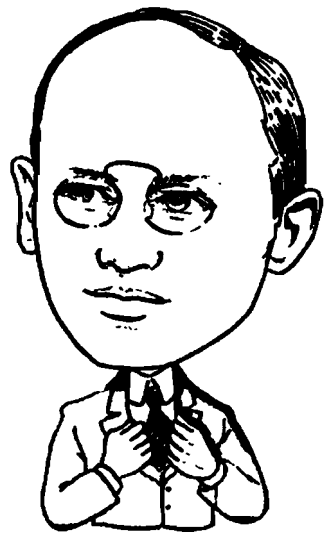
Or 21... ♗h8 22. ♗g3 ♗g7 23. ♗e1 ♔b6 24. ♔d5.

The game went **22. ♗xe5 ♗e7 23. ♗f6 ♗b4 24. ♗c3 ♗e7 25. ♗xa5 ♗xg5 26. b4 ♗f4 27. b5† ♔d6 28. ♗c3 g5 29. e5† ♔c7 30. ♗a5†** and **31. ♔d5.**

Noah: No doubt that would also help–as well as crucial disadvantages for the defender, like having only two-square diagonals.

Pat: What does that mean?

Noah: When a ♗ is severely limited in scope, like Black's in Diagram 217, there is tremendous potential for zugzwang.



"Chess is a fairy tale of 1,001 blunders."
–Savielly Tartakower

Pat: I'm with you so far. I think.

Noah: Black loses this game because when the ♗ sits on c8 he only has two squares he can go to. And on e8 he only has three.

Pat: So what?

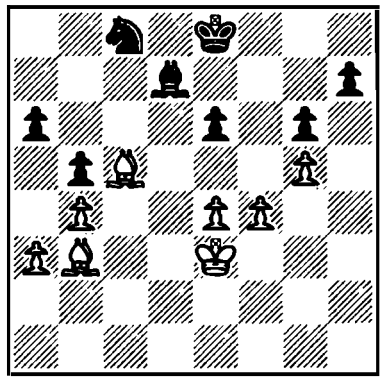
Noah: So White can gain or lose a tempo, like with ♗d1-f3-g4-d1, and break through.

Pat: Still looks like Black was bored to death.

But I'll admit what really surprised me is the way White gave up his dark-squared ♗ at the very beginning.

Noah: It's very logical. The advantage a good ♗ has over a bad one grows as the rest of the pieces are traded off.

The same goes for other transitions. In Diagram 219 the real difference between White and Black may not be instantly evident.



217

Kharlov-Ulybin
Soviet Championship 1991
Black to play

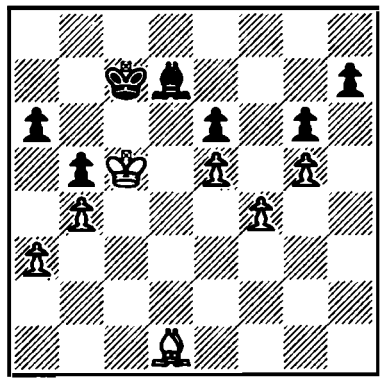
1. . . . ♘e7
2. ♗xe7!

There is no ♔ entry after 2. ♔d4 ♘c6†.

2. . . . ♔xe7
3. e5 ♔d8
4. ♔d4 ♔c8!

The position Black must avoid arises after 4... ♔c7 5. ♔c5 and now 5... ♗c6 6. ♗xe6 or 5... ♔-moves 6. ♔d6, or, finally 5... ♗c8 6. a4! bxa4 7. ♗xa4 followed by ♗e8 or creating zugzwang with ♗b3-c4.

5. ♔c5 ♔c7
6. ♗d1



218

Now Black lost with ***6... ♗e8 7. ♗f3! ♗d7 8. ♗g4 ♗c8 9. ♗d1!*** since a ♔ move allows ♔d6 or ♔b6, and a ♗ move leads to the zugzwang mentioned above (9... ♗d7 10. ♗b3 ♗c8 11. a4).

The game could have gone:

6. . . . ♗c6
7. ♗c2! ♗e8

Not 7... ♗d7 because 8. ♗b3 is that zugzwang again.

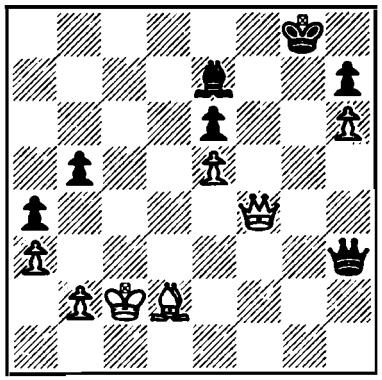
8. ♗e4 ♗d7

Going to f7 allows 9. ♗c6 with

a different zugzwang.

9. ♗g2! ♗e8
10. ♗f3 ♗d7
11. ♗g4 ♗c8
12. ♗d1! ♗d7
13. ♗b3

And wins, as noted above (13... ♗c8 14. a4 bxa4 15. ♗xa4).



219

Browne-Ivanovic
New York 1988
Black to play

1. . . . ♕f5†!
2. ♕xf5

After 2. ♔c3 ♕xf4 3. ♗xf4 ♔f7 Black wins the h-♙ and the game. For example, 4. ♗d2 ♔g6 5. ♔d4 ♗f8 6. ♗b4 ♗xh6! 7. ♔c5 ♗c1 8. ♔xb5 ♗xb2 9. ♔xa4 h5 and Black is faster.

2. . . . exf5
3. e6 ♔f8!
4. ♔c3 ♗c5
5. ♗g5 ♔e8!

And White, out of good moves, must lose. For example, 6. ♗f6 f4 and 7... f3 or 6. ♔d3 ♗e7 7. ♗f4 ♗f6 and ...♔e7xe6.

Pat: You mean the fact that all of White's four ♙s are on dark squares and all of Black's are on light ones.

Noah: You're catching on. This means that Black has a modest **edge** with ♕s on the board because the ♕s mask the badness of the white ♗. But it's a stone-cold **win** after the ♕s are traded.

Pat: Then Black picks up either the h-♙ or the e-♙—or both.

Noah: With a minimum of counterplay for White.

Pat: So that's all I really need to know about ♗ endings?

Noah: That's enough to get by. Except.

Pat: Except what?

Noah: Except that most everything I've said about ♗ endings flies out the window when we're talking about ♗s of-opposite-colors.

Pat: It doesn't apply?

Noah: Almost none of it. For example, with same-colored ♗s Diagram 220 is child's play.

Pat: Well, maybe even I could win it.

Noah: But with "Bees of Opps," as we call them, Black has drawing chances because he can sacrifice the ♗ for both ♙s if White isn't careful.

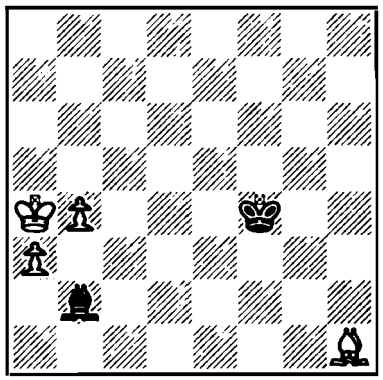
Pat: How'd White screw up?

Noah: He violated a basic "Bs of opps" policy: when you have connected ♙s you need your ♔ **in front** to advance them.

Otherwise the defender can set up a successful blockade on a square like b6 in that example.

Even huge advantages in ♙s–and even the presence of other material on the board–can prove inconsequential when you're stuck with "Bs of Opps."

Pat: Hard to believe Black can't win in Diagram 221. Where'd he go wrong?



220

Somlai-Sherzer
Zalaegerszeg 1990
White to play

1. ♔b3??

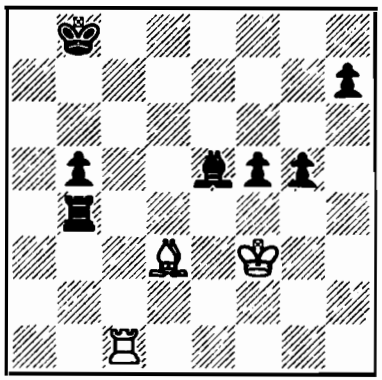
Necessary was 1. b5 ♔e5 2. b6 ♔d6 3. ♔b4 followed by 4. a4 and ♔b5, and the a-♙ goes through.

1. . . .	**Bc1**
2. a4	**♔e5**
3. ♔c4	**♔d6**
4. ♔b5	**Bd2!**

Not 4... ♔c7?? because of 5. ♔a6! followed by 6. b5, 7. a5, 8. b6†, 9. ♔b5 and a6-a7.

5. a5	**♔c7**
6. ♔a4	**Be1**
7. b5	**Bf2!**

White can make no progress and agreed to a draw after **8. b6† Bxb6 9. axb6† ♔xb6.**



221

Norwood-Rodgaard
NatWest Masters 1986
White to play

Black has just captured on b4, a mistake that allows:

1. ♖c5! g4†
2. ♔e2 ♖b2†
3. ♔f1

Note that White's ♔ keeps to light squares.

The game was drawn after **3... ♗d4 4. ♖xb5† ♖xb5 5. ♗xb5 ♔c7 6. ♗d3** since 6... f4 7. ♗f5! sets up a classic blockade, 7... g3 8. ♗xh7 and ♔g2-f3.

Noah: Earlier. In the diagram White draws, even though four ♙s behind and even with a pair of ♖s still alive.

Pat: Looks like an optical illusion. Can't Black do anything, like sac a piece, to keep his winning chances alive?

Noah: Well, he might have kept ♖s on the board, but after 1. ♖c5! he's losing the b-♙ and the f-♙ then same story: draw.

"A special weakness, and at times a saving grace, of Bishops is that two opposing ones may find themselves unable to attack each other. They operate each in a different diocese, and ignore each other."
–Gerald Abrahams

Pat: So, are all Bees-of-opps endings a draw?

Noah: The drawing ability of Bs of Opps is legendary–but sometimes exaggerated. Emanuel Lasker used Diagram 222 in his *Manual of Chess* to illustrate the drawish nature of this kind of endgame.

But these endings are so tricky even Lasker erred–claiming Black can't win.

Pat: He can?

Noah: He can if he can get two of his ♙s to dark squares.

Black can break the dark-square blockade by triangulating and then sacrificing the d-♙. His ♔ then reaches d3 and the rest is more or less easy.

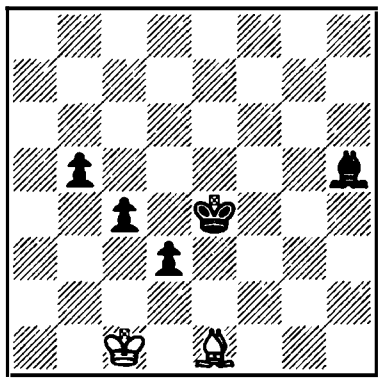
Pat: Are you saying extra ♙s don't usually mean anything?

Noah: No, they do. But you could state this **rule about Bs of Opps** with confidence:

Material Advantages Don't Count (much)

Material Advantages Don't Count (much)

A case in point is Diagram 223. White loses **after** he establishes material equality.



222

Black to play

1. . . . ♔d4
2. ♔b2

White cannot allow 2... c3.

2. . . . ♔e3

Now 3... d2 must be stopped, and 3. ♔c3 fails to 3... ♔e2 4. ♗d2 b4†! So...

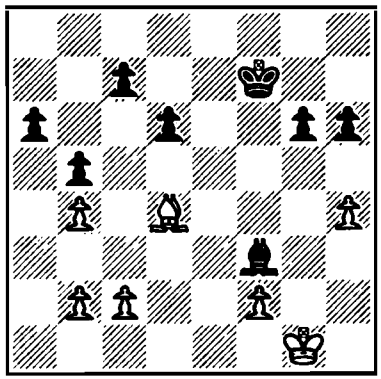
3. ♔c1

Lasker only gave 3... ♔e4 4. ♗a5 ♔d5 5. ♔b2 ♔c5 6. ♔a3 and draws.

3. . . . d2†!
4. ♗xd2 ♔d3

And wins since 5. ♔b2 hangs the ♗.

White must allow the ♙s to advance: 5. ♗b4 c3 6. ♔b1 ♔c4 7. ♗a3 b4 8. ♗c1 b3 9. ♗a3 ♗g6† 10. ♔a1 ♔d3! (not 10... b2† 11. ♗xb2) 11. ♗c1 ♔c2!.



223

Spassky-Yusupov
Linares 1990
White to play

1. ♗e3?

White likely draws after 1. ♔f1! ♔e6 2. ♔e1. If 2... ♔f5 then 3. ♗g7 g5 4. h5! and 5. ♗xh6, preventing the creation of a passed h-

♙ (4. hxg5? ♔xg5!).

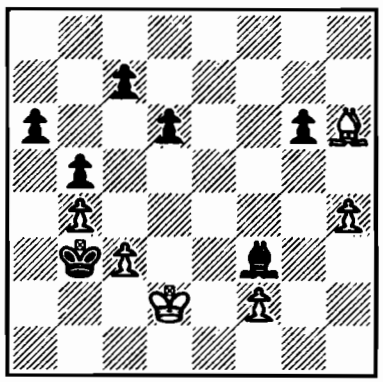
1. . . . **♔e6!**
2. ♗xh6

Now White's ♔ is too slow (2. ♔f1 ♔d5 3. ♔e1 ♔c4).

2. . . . **♔d5**
3. ♔f1 **♔c4**

Now if 4. ♗d2, then 4... ♗d1.

4. c3 **♔b3**
5. ♔e1 **♔xb2**
6. ♔d2 **♔b3**



224

The position may still be saved by 7. ♗f8! and 8. ♗e7. For example, 7... ♔a4 8. ♗e7 d5 9. ♗d8, or even 8... a5 9. ♗d8!!.

7. ♔e3?? **♗d5**
8. ♔d4 **♗c4**

Threatening 9... c5†!.

9. ♗d2 **c5†!**

Now 10. bxc5 dxc5† 11. ♔xc5 loses to 11... ♔c2. For example, 12. ♗e1?? ♔d1 or 12. ♗e3 ♔xc3 and ...b4 or ...a5.

10. ♔e3 **♔c2**
11. f4 **♔d1!**

And White forfeited in this hopeless position.

Pat: Because he doesn't use his ♔ to protect a vulnerable ♕-side.

Noah: Right. He goes after the Black h-♙–but that's little help because he's miles from creating a passed ♔-side ♙.

Pat: I don't get it. Black goes after the b2-♙ even though that doesn't create a passer for him.

Noah: No, not immediately.

White lost because he allowed Black to create two connected passers. He missed a fundamental B-of-Opp technique.

White failed to force the enemy ♙s onto the color of the enemy ♗ so they could be blockaded.

Pat: Like with ♗f8-e7-d8!

Noah: Correct. That would have drawn in Diagram 224.

By the way Boris Spassky, who played White here, once explained why his first two marriages failed.

The reason, he said, is he and his wives were "Bishops of opposite color."

Pat: Very funny. So if material doesn't matter...

Noah: Doesn't matter **much.**

Pat: Have it your way: "doesn't matter much."

But if it doesn't, what does?

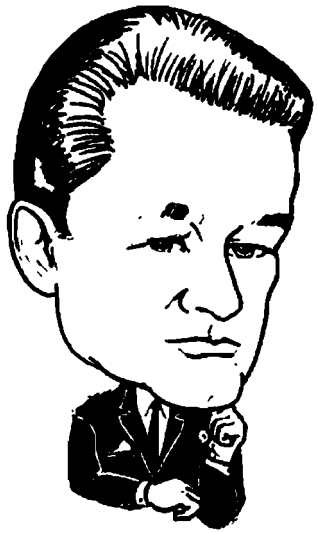
Noah: Proper piece placement–trying saying that three times fast.

Pat: Uhh, I'd rather not.

Noah: All it means is getting the ♗ and ♔ to the right squares.

For instance, in Diagram 225 Black takes his time in bringing his ♔ forward because he knows there is something much more important to do in the diagram.

Pat: That's to stop the White ♗ from reaching g4, right?



"Bishops of opposite color are not much good at supporting the advance of their own pawns... For this reason, the Bishop usually holds up enemy pawns, leaving to the King the task of supporting the advance of his own pawns."
–Paul Keres

Noah: Correct. When your opponent has two passed ♙s you try to find the diagonal that covers squares in front of both ♙s.

In this case, it means d1-h5.

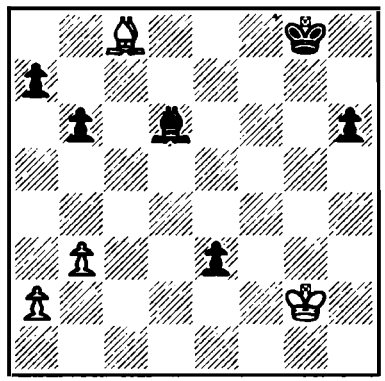
Pat: Can't White draw by setting up some sort of blockade on the light squares?

Noah: You means with a ♗ on h3 and ♔ on f3? It doesn't work because the Black ♙s are so far apart.

That's another unique aspect of "Bs of Opps"–the power of widely separated ♙s.

In some other positions, such as with ♖s, it's only a draw if the only ♙s left on the board are your a-♙ and h-♙.

Pat: But not with ♗s.



225

Slekys-Panchenko
Bratislava 1992
Black to play

1. . . . h5!

White can draw if he gets his ♗ to the key h5-d1 diagonal. For example, 1... ♔g7 2. ♔f3 ♗f4! 3. ♗g4! ♗g5 4. ♗h5 ♔f6 5. ♔e4 ♔e6 6. a4 ♔d6 7. ♔d4 etc.

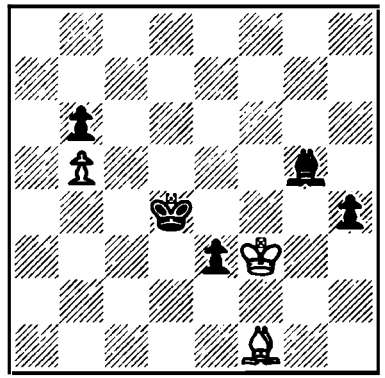
2. ♔f3 ♗f4!

Of course, 3. ♔xf4 e2.

3. ♗a6 ♗g5
4. b4 ♔f7
5. a4 ♔f6
6. a5

This is White's best bet to trade as many ♙s as possible.

6. . . . ♔e5
7. axb6 axb6
8. ♗f1 ♔d4
9. b5 h4



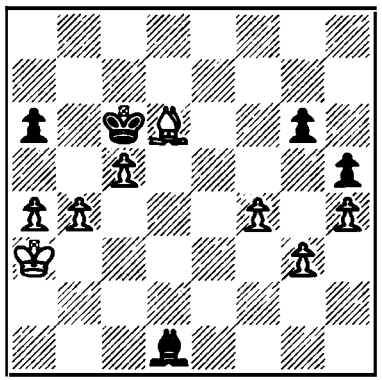
226

Now 10. ♗h3 ♔d3 allows the ♔ to invade (11. ♗f1† ♔d2 12. ♗c4 h3).

10. ♔e2 ♔e4!
11. ♗h3 ♔f4

And Black's ♔ gets to g3 to advance the ♙s: **12. ♗d7 ♔g3 13. ♔f1 h3** (with the threat of 14... e2†! 15. ♔xe2 ♔g2 and ...h2 wins) **14. ♗c6 ♔h2 15. ♗f3 ♗h6! 16. ♗e2 ♔g3 17. ♗c4 e2†** and **White**

resigned in view of 18. ♗xe2 h2 or 18. ♔xe2 ♔g2.



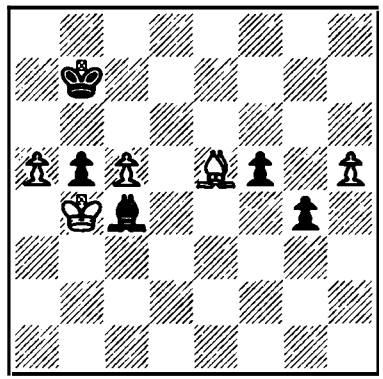
227

Ehlvest-Kupreichik
Moscow 1987
White to play

1. b5†!	**axb5**
2. a5	**♔b7**
3. ♔b4	**♗e2**
4. ♗e5!	

A key move: White is going to sacrifice two ♙s to create a passed h-♙, but must make sure Black's new passed ♙s don't advance far.

4. . . .	**♗c4**
5. g4!	**hxg4**
6. f5!	**gxf5**
7. h5	



228

The threat is 8. h6. For example, 7... ♗f7 8. h6 ♗g6 9. ♔xb5 and 10. a6† ♔a7 11. c6 wins.

7. . . .	**f4**
8. ♗xf4	**♗d3**
9. h6	**♔c6**

Black was in zugzwang. He lost after: **10. a6 ♗e4 11. a7 ♔b7 12. ♔xb5 ♗d3† 13. ♔a5 ♔xa7 14. c6 ♔a8 15. ♔b6 and wins.**

Noah: No, the farther apart the better.

See for yourself in Diagram 227. At first glance it looks easy because White is three ♙s ahead.

On **second** glance it looks hard because White has no passers.

Pat: I have a feeling there's gonna be a third glance.

Noah: On **third** glance White wins even after he creates material equality–and gives Black three passers of his own.

But Black's passers are stopped–thanks to 4. ♗e5–and Black's ♔ and ♗ helplessly try to stop promotions at a8, c8 and h8.

Pat: So unlike a middlegame, isolated ♙s are good in these endings?

Noah: They're usually better than connected ♙s. And the more isolated the better.

Pat: Is there a rule here?

Noah: Not hard and fast. But you can say that if only two ♙s are left and they are separated by one file, it's usually a draw–because the defender's ♔ can easily shift from blockading one to blockading the other.

Pat: But with two or more files in between...

Noah: ...there's more chance for a mismatch. The defender's ♔ has to choose between which ♙ to protect.

In Diagram 229, for example, Black correctly goes into a B-of-Opp ending.

He can draw at various points even though he misses the fastest way, forcing the ♔-side ♙s to light squares.

Pat: With ...♗b4-e1.

Noah: On the button. In these endings it's usually best to attack enemy ♙s from **behind.**

But Black could still draw at various points by playing his g-♙ to the fourth rank.

Pat: What does that do?

Noah: It means that when the inevitable ♙ trades comes, White will be left with a d-♙ and most probably an f-♙.

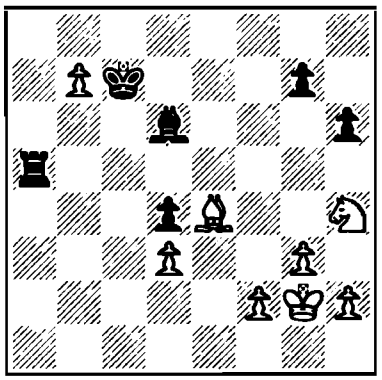
Pat: Separated by only one file–a draw, right?

Noah: Right. But as the game goes Black allows him to create an h-♙–three files from the d-♙.

Pat: A win. Makes sense so far.

And I guess that for the guy with the advantage, breaking the blockade is all-important.

Noah: Yes, and that should be clear in Diagram 231.



229

Ftacnik-Xu Jun
Thessaloniki 1988
White to play

1. ♘f5?

With 1. ♘g6, White has good winning chances.

1. . . . ♖xf5!
2. ♗xf5 ♔xb7
3. ♔f3 ♔c7?

The easiest way to draw is 3... Bb4! and 4... ♗e1. For example, 4. ♔e4 ♗e1 6. f3 ♗f2.

4. ♔e4 ♔d8!

Black cannot allow ♔d5-e6. The loss of the d-♙ is serious, but far from fatal.

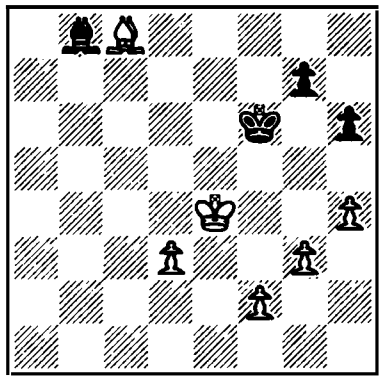
5. ♔xd4 ♔e7
6. h4! ♗b8?!

Black can draw if he plays ...g5, preventing the creation of a passed g- or h-♙, e.g., 6... ♔f6 7. ♔e4 g5!.

7. ♔e4 ♔f6

Now 8. f4 g5! 9. fxg5† hxg5 10. h5 ♗xg3 is drawn.

8. ♗c8



230

Here again 8... g5! draws (as does 10... g5!).

8. . . . ♗c7?!
9. d4 ♗d6
10. f4 ♗b4?
11. g4 ♗d2
12. g5† hxg5?

Clearer is 12... ♔f7 13. ♔f5 ♗e1! and if 14. h5, then 14... ♗d2! and at best Whites gets a passed f-♙.

13. fxg5†! ♔e7?

The final error. With 13... ♔g6 Black still draws. For example, 14. d5 ♔h5 and 15... ♔xh4 or 14. ♗g4 ♗e1.

14. ♔f5 ♗c3
15. d5 ♗b2
16. ♗e6 ♗c3
17. ♔g6 ♗d4
18. ♔h7 ♗c3

Or 18... ♔f8 19. h5 ♗d2 20. h6 gxh6 21. g6!. Now the h-♙ queens.

19. h5 ♗d4
20. ♔g8 Resigns.

Pat: Okay, I think I understand why White doesn't need the f-♙ here.

But why doesn't Black draw? He has two passed ♙s of his own after 1... ♗xf2.

Noah: White's fine fourth move prevented them from advancing without ♔ support.

Pat: But Black has material equality.

If he can draw a ♙ or two down in other positions, why not here?

Noah: Because White's ♙s are not blockaded and threaten to advance.

Bee-of-opps endgames are all about ♙ mobility. Immobile ♙s are useless ♙s.

Pat: But in order to advance the c-♙ White has to allow Black's ♔ to get in front.

Noah: True. But White gets his ♙ to c6 and there's always a threat to promote the c-♙ in two moves.

That means Black's ♗ is tied to the h2-c7 diagonal. It also means the white ♔ no longer has to defend b6 and is free to reach d7–decisively.

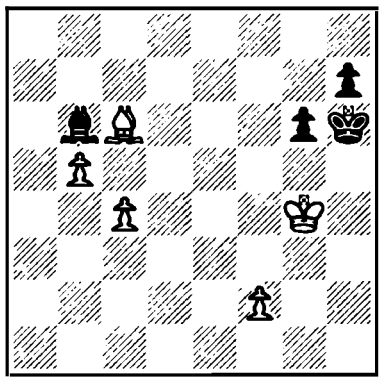
Pat: Maybe I'll just talk my opponents into playing ♗ endings with same-colored ♗s only.

Noah: Or just mate them in the middlegame. Saves time.

Pat: Yeah, but somehow I'm not so scared of endings anymore. Or so it seems now. I'll let you know Monday, after the club Swiss.

Noah: Good luck.

Pat: I'll need it.



231

Kaminski-Prandstetter
Berlin 1991
White to play

1. ♔f4!

The ♔ must reach d6 now. A bad error is 1. f4??, preserving a ♙, but allowing 1... ♔g7 2. ♔f3 ♔f6 3. ♔e4 ♔e6, drawing.

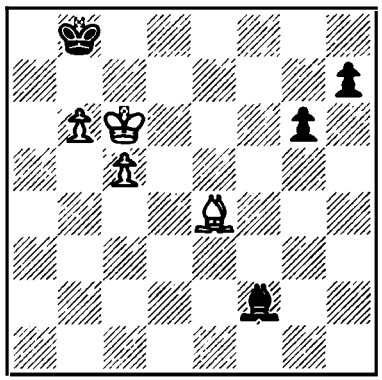
1. . . .	**♗xf2**
2. ♔e5	**♔g7!**
3. ♔d6	**♔f8**
4. ♗e4!	

Now on 4... ♔g7 5. c5 h5 6. b6 White's ♙s are much faster.

4. ...	**♔e8**
5. ♔c7!	**♗g3†**
6. ♔b7	**♗f2**

Correctly restraining the c-♙.

7. ♔c6	**♔d8**
8. b6	**♔c8**
9. c5	**♔b8**



232

10. ♔b5	**♗e3**
11. c6	**♗f4**
12. ♗d5	

White gets the ♗ to the h3-c8 line. For example, 13. ♗g8 h5 14. ♗f7 h4 15. ♗e6! as in the game.

12. . . .	**h5**
13. ♗f7	**h4**
14. ♗e6!	**g5**
15. ♗g4	**♗g3**

Not 15... ♗e3?? 16. c7†, which

explains White's ♗ maneuver.

16.	**♔c4**	**♗h2**
17.	**♔d5**	**♗g3**
18.	**♔e6**	

Threat of ♔d7.

18.	**. . .**	**♗f2**
19.	**c7†**	**Resigns.**

Bishops

Chapter Twelve

The Chess Club

Scene:
The chess club, three days later. Pat (possesor of the white pieces) is showing off a tournament game. It began:

---

1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 ♘c6 6. ♗e3 e5 7. ♘f3 ♗e7 8. ♗c4 0-0 9. 0-0 ♘a5 10. ♗e2 ♗e6 11. h3 ♘c4 12. ♗c1 ♖c8 13. ♕d3 h6 14. b3 ♘b6 15. ♖d1 a6 16. ♗b2 ♕c7 17. a4! d5? 18. exd5 ♘bxd5 19. ♘xd5 ♗xd5 20. ♗xe5! ♕xc2 21. ♕xc2 ♖xc2.

Noah: Let me get this straight. You forced an equal-material **ending?**

Pat: I guess so. It just looked so good I couldn't pass it up.

Even after I walked around the room I still liked my position–because he couldn't stop my ♘ from getting to f5.

Noah: True. You'd have had great chances even if Black could keep a ♖ on the seventh.

Pat: But I did pass up the ♖ ending I coulda got after 24. ♘xe7†. You know how drawish ♖ endings are.

Noah: Uh huh.

Pat: The hard part was deciding to trade away the two-♗ advantage at move 27.

Noah: But you were able to visualize how strong your chances were after 28. ♖f3 and how little counterplay he had.

Pat: And it took me a while to see that what I really wanted was a ♔+♗+♙s. I mean, I knew enough not to trade a lot of ♙s.

Noah: Right. Pieces, not ♙s.

You also made a good decision in bringing your ♖s to the most flexible squares, f3 and d1.

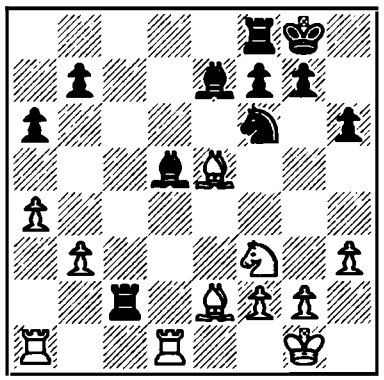
Pat: Yeah, even in the postmortem he couldn't understand why his ♖ on the 7th didn't mean anything.

Noah: So, he ended up trading it off. I like the way you got the other pair of ♖s off–and then ran your ♔ to the ♕-side.

Pat: Yeah, the way I saw it, I could always create a passed ♙ on the ♔-side when I was ready.

Noah: In other words, you didn't hurry.

Pat: Yeah, I guess I didn't.



233

22. ♘d4! **♖cc8**

Or 22... ♖b2 23. ♘f5! ♖xe2 24. ♘xe7† ♔h7 25. ♗xf6 ♗xb3! 26. ♖db1 ♗c2 27. ♖xb7 gxf6 28. ♘d5!.

23. ♘f5 **♖fe8**

24. ♘xg7!

White is only slightly better after 24. ♘xe7† ♖xe7 25. ♗xf6 gxf6 26. ♖xd5 ♖xe2.

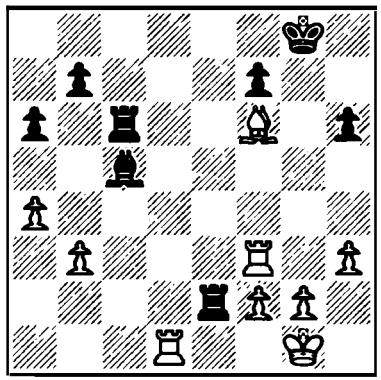
24. . . . **♔xg7**

25. ♖xd5 **♔g8**

26. ♖d3 **♗c5**

Or 26... ♖c2 27. ♗f3 and the b-♙ is a target (27... b5 28. axb5 axb5 29. ♖a6 and ♖b6).

27.	**♗xf6!**	**♖xe2**
28.	**♖f3**	**♖c6**
29.	**♖d1!**	



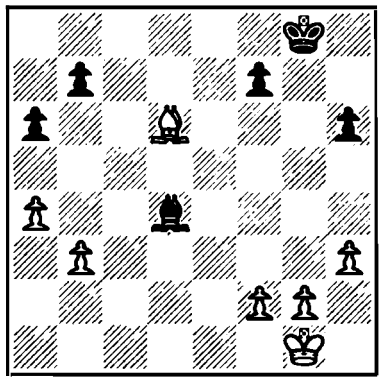
234

Now 29... ♗xf2† allows 30. ♔f1! ♖ec2 31. ♖d8†. For example, 31... ♔h7 32. ♖h8† ♔g6 33. ♖g8† ♔h7 34. ♖g7† and a winning discovered check, ♖xf7†.

29.	**. . .**	**♗b6**
30.	**♗h4**	**♖e4**
31.	**♗g3**	**♖d4**
32.	**♖xd4**	**♗xd4**
33.	**♖d3**	**♗f6**
34.	**♖d6!**	

Now 34... ♖c1† 35. ♔h2 ♔g7 36. ♖b6 wins another ♙.

34.	**. . .**	**♖xd6**
35.	**♗xd6**	**♗d4!**



235

The only way to activate Black's ♔ and restrict White's.

36.	**♔f1**	**♔g7**
37.	**♔e2**	**♔g6**

Or 37... ♔f6 38. g4 ♔e6? 39. ♗f8.

38.	**♗f4**	**h5**
39.	**g4**	**hxg4**
40.	**hxg4**	**♔f6**
41.	**♗e3**	**♗b2**
42.	**♔d3**	**♔e5**
43.	**♔c4**	**♗a3!**

Otherwise 44. ♔c5 and 45.

Continued on page 208

Noah: I also like the way you forced the second pair of ♖s off at move 34 by threatening to win a ♔-side ♙.

Pat: Well, I didn't really need to win another ♙. I just had to make the power of my ♙s grow by trading material.

Noah: And you figured out where your ♔-side ♙s were best placed.

Pat: Sort of.

Noah: What was your thinking after 43. ♔c4 ?

Pat: I thought I had two ways to win. I could create a passed g-♙. Or I could penetrate at c5 and b6 and win the b-♙.

Noah: You couldn't win with just one plan.

Pat: Yeah. And it turned out it all depended on what he did with his ♔. Whichever way he went I could create a, you know, mismatch.

Noah: He did use his ♗ nicely to keep your ♔ from c5.

Pat: Yeah, but that's no fortress. So I just shuffled around for a few moves until I figured out what to do.

After all, there was no rush in an ending like this. Did you know an ending is not like a middle game?

Noah: I've heard.

Pat: When I found 48. ♗h6 I knew I was winning. I saw I could elbow his ♔ from the center with the help of ♗g7† and ♗f8.

Noah: And that last ♗ maneuver to the a5-d2 diagonal was also very nice. It stopped ...♔a5 and prepared the advance of the ♔-side ♙s.

Pat: There was really **nothing** he could do after that. His ♔ was on the wrong side to stop the g-♙.

Noah: Sometimes a good plan wins by itself.

Pat: I'd like to say I saw it all back when I traded ♕s...

Noah: ...but you're not strong enough to lie that well.

Pat: I just want to be strong enough not to embarass myself.

Noah: About that, I wouldn't worry any more.

EPILOGUE

Scene: The chess club, three weeks later. Enter Terry Belfisch, a promising, but inexperienced amateur who has just lost a tournament game.

Terry: Darn!

Pat: You lost again?

Terry: And from a won game. I must be the only idiot in the world who could lose a ♘ endgame two ♙s up.

Pat: Don't be so hard on yourself. Show me how it happened and maybe I can spot what you did wrong.

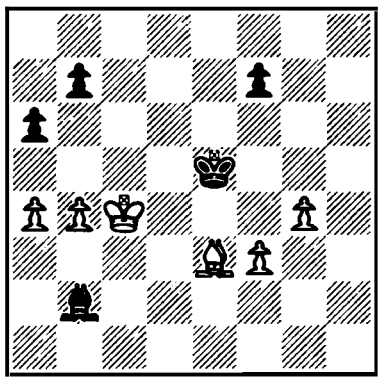
You know, as a famous man once said...

♔b6 wins the b-♙.

44. b4 ♗b2

Not 44... ♔e4? 45. ♔b3!, trapping the ♗.

45. ♔c5 ♗a3
46. ♔c4 ♗b2
47. f3!



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Stopping ...♔e4 and setting up a mini-zugzwang. Now 47... ♔e6 48. ♔c5 ♗a3 49. ♗d2 ♔d7 50. ♔b6 ♔c8 51. g5 and White creates a winning g-♙.

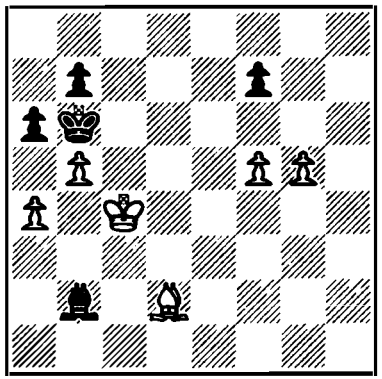
47. . . . ♗a1
48. ♗h6! ♔d6

The threat of 49. ♗g7† forces a ♔ retreat.

49. ♗f8†! ♔c6

Or 49... ♔e6 50. ♔c5.

50. b5† ♔b6
51. ♗b4 ♗b2
52. ♗d2 ♗g7
53. f4 ♗f6
54. g5 ♗g7
55. f5 ♗b2



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56. ♗c3 ♗c1
57. g6 fxg6
58. fxg6 ♗h6

Last trap: 59. a5†? ♔a7 60. b6† ♔a8 61. g7 ♗xg7 and White can't win.

59. g7 ♗xg7
60. ♗xg7 ♔a5
61. ♔c5! Resigns

It's clear after 60... ♔xa4 61. b6.

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Colophon

Grandmaster Secrets: Endgame was typeset in Berthold Baskerville and Boton for the copy. The title page is in Microgramma, Crimmon, and Bremen. The diagrams were done in our *C.R. Horowitz.*

Layout and design: Bob Long
Cover and Photography: Rob Long
Caricatures: Rob Long
Keyboarding and editing: Bob Long
Proofing: Bob Long and Andy Soltis

A 3.5 inch. *ChessBase* disk is available with all the analyzed positions contained within this work–the comments of the GM and his protegé have been left out. This disk is available from Thinkers' Press, Inc. at the nominal price of $10.00.

Accelerated Dragon B34-B35 ... $18.95
s1Editrice editors.
368 pages, © 1995. OP97597

35 main lines and 234 variations! 577 footnotes. Black seems to do as well as White with a Tiviakov claim in 1995 of equality. Black plays ...g6 early, on the second move!

Accelerated Dragon Maroczy Variation (B36-B39) $13.95
s1Editrice editors.
147 pages, © 1995. OP77882

17 main lines beginning with 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cd4 4. Nd4 g6 5. c4. 109 variants with 376 footnotes. Many Black wins.

Against the Maroczy Bind $19.95
Crouch/Kulagin.
108 pages, © 1995. OP75958

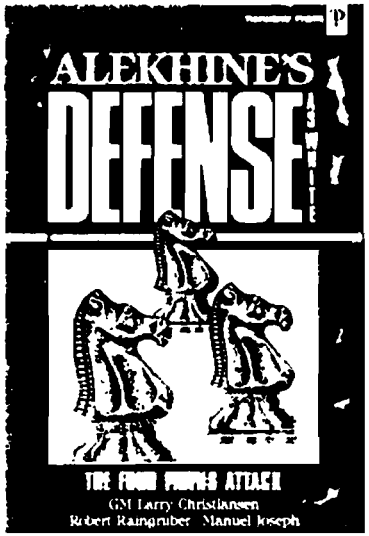
This is the middlegame reference book about the Maroczy system of the Sicilian Defense. There are 60 basic games and 70 supplementary ones. Games by Larsen have some prominence. The annotations vary in length. Black will find this book useful.

Alapin French, Tactics for White $13.95
Sawyer.
87 pages, © 1995. OP27572

50 complete and deeply annotated games/ 220 fragments. White is scoring 77%! If Black tries to play the French to avoid facing the BDG he can end up with his worst nightmare! Tim Harding says: "...a neat volume... covering a little-known gambit for White... which I know from experience to be dangerous. Black can equalise if he's careful but there's no known refutation and Black can easily be hammered if he treats the gambit without respect... essential reading for players who want an aggressive way to meet the French and for defenders who need a guide through the gambit's maze of variations."

Alekhine's Defense as White, Four Pawns Attack $12.95
Christiansen, Raingruber, Joseph.
63 pages, © 1989. OP57882

The book which changed a lot of the thinking on Alekhine's Defense. Included are: Intro-



duction, Knight Retreat Variation, Pawn Exchange Deferred Variations, Ljubojevic Variation, King's Bishop Variation, and four sections on the Queen's Knight Variation. An essential "problems" section is also included.

Answer Guide to How to Become a Candidate Master $4.95
Dunne.
23 pages, © 1986. TR57885

The follow-up book to Dunne's successful *How to Become a Candidate Master.* The ratings of the players, answers to questions posed in the book, and corrections to the first edition.

Benoni Defence Taimanov Variation (A67) $12.50
Tirabassi.
116 pages, © 1993. OP77529

A dynamic system for causing great grief for the Black side of the Benoni is presented by the sequence: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. Nc3 ed5 5. cd5 d6 6. e4 g6 7. f4 Bg7 8. Bb5. In symbolic notation except for the Introduction (English). Hundreds of games and much analysis.

Big Book of Busts, The $22.95
Watson&Schiller.
293 pages, © 1995. OP92878

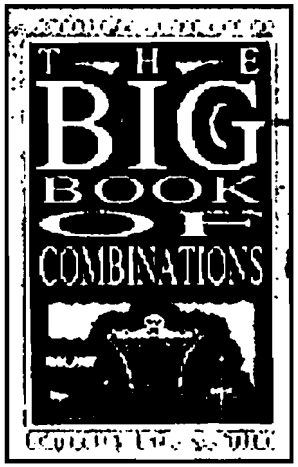
Offbeat variations do gain points, but many of them are rife with flaws! Some of the systems included here are: Grob, Dunst/van Geet, Gloria, Durkin, From's Gambit, Lisitsyn, Englund, Woozle, Franco-Sicilian, Mexican Defense, Colle, Budapest, Vulture, Staunton Gambit, St. George, Sicilian 2 b3, Smith-Morra, Portuguese, Fried Liver Attack, Veresov, the Torre, Albin, Djin, King's Indian Four Pawns, and a lot more. Included is a symbology index (such as the skull and crossbones!) ranking the "status" of the opening from horrible to quite playable. Some are

Catalog
Thinkers' Press

Thinkers' Press
Hypermodern Press
s1Editrice

postage paid
minimum order $25.

dull. There are refutations to stupid junk.



Big Book of Combinations, The $17.95

Schiller.

280 pages, © 1994. TR92879

There are 1000 combinations inviting solution by you or your computer (sometimes the human finds a better and more efficient win). The author discovered in his "rating testings" that many lower-rated players have excellent tactical ability but poor opening knowledge–your cue to improvement and knowledge of yourself.

Bird Variation in the Ruy Lopez, The. $14.00

Rotariu & Cimmino.

128 pages, © 1992. OP72987

Making a strong comeback ever since the release of McCormick's and Soltis' book on the Bird Variation: 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bg5 Nd4. Many games and considerable analysis by the Romanian correspondence GM Rotariu.

Blackmar-Diemer gambit keybook $21.95

Sawyer.

137 pages, © 1992. OP57887

A book of real gambits! 700 games (including many by the author) are dissected and offered in the avoided and declined lines, the Ziegler, Euwe, Bogoljubow, Gunderam (not even mentioned in the Chess Digest book!), and the popular Teichmann. This system barely merits a line in ECO and yet this book is rife with White wins, many at the master level!

Bobby Fischer I Knew, The..... $19.95

Denker&Parr.

359 pages, © 1995. EN92972

Great stories and writing about Fischer and the rest of the best in chess. Other players of note are: Fine, Reshevsky, Botvinnik, Don MacMurray (the "brain"), and more in an extensive index. Captioned photos and fabulous stories about Capablanca, Alekhine, Simonson, Kupchik, Lasker (the former world champion was Denker's bridge partner), Whitaker, and many more. Also included is a good and overdue section on Irving Chernev, one of chess' best authors. Descriptive notation.

Cambridge Springs Variation in the Queen's Gambit (D52-QO15.2) $12.50

s1Editrice editors.

74 pages, © 1994. OP92788

Ten major chapters + the Anti-Cambridge Springs. This rough and tumble chess variation begins: 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Nbd7 5. e3 c6 6. Nf3 Qa5. 282 games and analysis.

Caro-Kann Defence Advance Variation (B12) $14.00

Tirabassi.

140 pages, © 1994. OP77558

Much more than Seirawan's ECO book. 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5, and unlike the French Defense, the Queen's Bishop gets out. The lines of coverage are: 3... Bf5, 3... c5, and 3... Na6. Also includes the hot 3... Bf5 4. Nc3 e6 5. g4. 251 games and lots of analysis. One of the best variations of the Caro-Kann.

Caro-Kann Defence Classical (B18-B19) $19.95

s1Editrice editors.

176 pages, © 1995. OP97727

A considerable sum was spent on the research for this book and the information is worth it. The 14 main lines run: 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 de4 4. Nxe4 Bf5. There are 85 variations and 316 footnotes. A very important system in the Caro-Kann.

Caro-Kann Exchange Variation (B13) $16.25

Luccioni.

199 pages, © 1995. OP77857

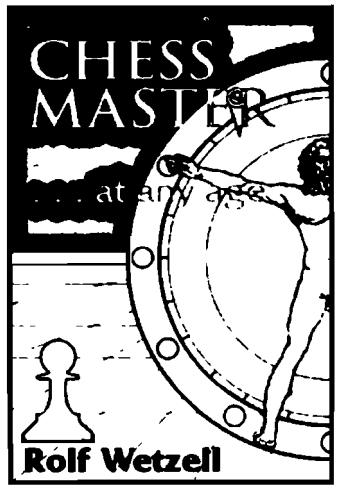
52 lines in 18 sections are documented beginning with: 1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. ed5 cd5. An extensive two-page English introduction explains the points of this variation. There are 277 variations and 579 footnotes. 546 games, some annotated. White's chances seem to be better.

Caro-Kann Defence Knight Variation 4... ♘f6 (B15-B16) $12.50

Curtacci.

96 pages, © 1992. OP72982

Popular with such GMs as Karpov and Seirawan, this "secret" weapon contains lines not as numerous nor as complex as others in the Caro-Kann. 100s of decisive games. Indices, figurine algebraic notation, English intro.



Chess Master... at any age $23.95

Wetzell.

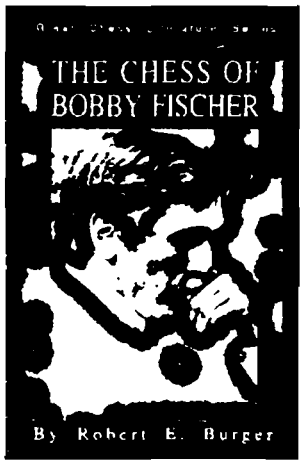
301 pages, © 1994. TR79778

One buyer, an investment counselor, told us this was one of the two best books he had read on chess because there is a definite plan–a plan which worked for Rolf Wetzell. After years

of frustration and trying and trying, Wetzell discovered it was time to change approaches from all the traditional methods. At age 50 he made it. Showing exceptional insight into human nature, Wetzell works on his system throughout the book and appends 16 of his own games. He is concerned with the study of the buyer's games–nothing else–what an innovative idea! If you want to be a master, you have to master yourself. GM Lev Alburt told me has recommended this book to his students.

Chess of Bobby Fischer, The $24.95
Burger.
345 pages, © 1975, 1994. BI92972

Few have been qualified to dissect Fischer's play the way master/psychologist Burger is. The



contents: The Endgame, The Name of the Game, Combinations, Ideas, Just for Fun!, and The Logic of Chess. The material is very revealing and helpful to all levels of players. Full of ideas.

Complete Guide to Correspondence Chess $14.95
Dunne.
147 pages, © 1991. RE58285

For far too long postal players have been neglected in both their history, games, and analyses. In this handbook Dunne sets the records straight, explains the rules, includes famous games, and offers an extensive glossary of the ins and outs of the various types of correspondence play. Some of the best play comes from correspondence chess.

Dutch Defence Leningrad Variation 7... ♘c6 (A89) 14.00
Luccioni.
157 pages, © 1994. OP87982

One of the most important lines of the Dutch Defense, a fighting defense! The 7... Nc6 line is extremely critical, and is considered the main line. 515 complete games!

English Opening (A21) $12.50
Tirabassi.
96 pages, © 1993. OP77557

A really hot variation in the English, covered in much less detail in New in Chess #28. Features 200 unannotated games plus plenty of analysis. The introduction is in English and there are three major lines and four minor variations.

English Opening Lukin's Variation, The (A21) $16.50
s1Editrice editors.
60 pages, © 1994. OP95525

White's having major problems with: 1. c4 e5 2. Nc3 d6 3. Nf3 f5 4. d4 e4. This novel idea is being propagated by Andrei Lukin from St. Petersburg. There are 132 games (including partials) and lots of evaluations ending in the "unclear" appellation of this "killer system" for Black.

Flohr-Mikenas (A18-A19) $14.00
Konikowski.
145 pages, © 1994. OP92787

The system goes: 1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 e6 3. e4 and there are 180 selective games by good players and tons of analysis. Black's two moves of merit are 3... d5 and 3... c5. It is very important for Black to realize the implications of these variations–White can easily set Black on his ear because the system looks "weird." It isn't.

French Defence Tarrasch 3... a6 Variation C03 ..... $17.00
Luccioni.
215 pages, © 1995. OP97527

Black stops the Bishop from going to b5, although allowing the possibility of an isolated pawn which often gives Black good play. 24 lines to consider. Often Black will transpose by playing 3... c5 first. 24 lines with 405 games/partial games. An excellent English introduction.

French Defence Winawer Variation C15-19 ..... $17.50
Myers.
120 pages, © 1994. OP87987

27 chapters containing one or two extensively annotated games on critical responses to the Winawer variation. A very comprehensive study showing how complex this system is to tackle. Necessary for all French players. Extensive bibliographic listings are included.

Genesis of Power Chess, The ... $25.95
Ault.
346 pages, © 1993. TR72872

Unlike many books on improvement, the author takes you through a subject (an ending, a combination, etc.), shows you diagrams from real play, and then offers an explanation of what really happened or could have happened. It's done from the viewpoint of the endgame/middlegame emphasizing the winning capabilities of pawns as well as all the usual tactics and strategies of chess. 8 chapters, exercises, and solutions. 700 diagrammed examples.

Grünfeld Indian Exchange Variation D85 ..... $16.50
s1Editrice editors.
74 pages, © 1994. OP95299

The wholesale liquidation of forces begins with: 7. Nf3 c5 8. Be3. White/Black is trying to eke out a slight edge. With the introduction of 7... c5 it seems play is now in White's court. Important contributions from Karpov, Kasparov, et al. 247 games/game fragments.

Guide to Good Chess (11th ed.) $16.95
Purdy.
138 pages, © 1996. IN78295

Perhaps the best guide to chess improve-

ment ever written by one of its greatest chess writers. Purdy had a knack for knowing where players needed improvement. He uses excellent examples and uses exactly the right words you need to read. He believed chess has certain "real" principles which will help you find the right moves. They are listed with their exceptions. One of the major Purdy books. Now in an algebraic edition.

Henrique Mecking, Latin Chess Genius $17.95
Gordon.
172 pages, © 1993. BI72989

Included are 344 games, many seldom seen, many not seen, and most missing from the major databases. 24 games are annotated and diagrammed. Also included are: a biography, crosstables, his opening repertoire, and recent news of his comeback attempts. The most complete biography of a modern day chess player in quite some time–the best to come from South America. His games epitomized tension and preparedness–never one afraid of current theory.

How to Become a Candidate Master (3rd printing) $18.95
Dunne.
252 pages, © 1992. TR58288

Fifty fully annotated games offering a wide variety of openings, with the view of taking a Class A player and turning him into an Expert (2000-2199 Elo). Dunne shows how the expert "thinks" and how much you have to exert yourself to become one. The very interesting notes and Dale Carnegie-like "positive" messages have made this a perennial favorite among aspiring Expert chess players.

How to Create Combinations .. $17.95
Pafnutieff.
200 pages, © 1996. TR90255

This instructive work attempts to break down the combinational process into its components. Then example after example drills the ideas into your chess brain. Fourteen chapters illustrate the various kinds of combinations. Complete solutions are also given. There are also 70 games from the author's own play.

Italian Game, The (C53-C54) ... $16.50
s1Editrice editors.
103 pages, © 1994. OP95528

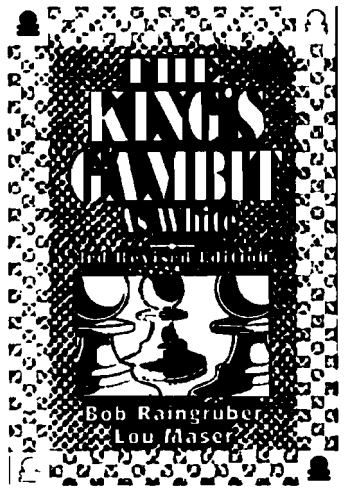
Includes the Giuoco Piano and the Evans Gambit (see Conquest-Kaidanov, an important game). 288 games/partials referenced. Besides new games, many older ones are included which have withstood time's tests. Often the "main" lines are the older games!

Journal of a Chess Original $19.95
Gerzadowicz.
173 pages, © 1995. BI89778

Postal correspondence master and wielder of the literary pen, Gerz takes us through his stint in the 8th U.S. Correspondence Chess Championship Finals with the strongest players in the country. During his Midlife Crisis(?) he plays 1. e4!!. The USCF 88 Absolute pitches the strongest chess gladiators against each other. Finally, the Gerzadowicz Cup has games against strong Northeastern players for one of the weirdest trophies ever seen! Packed with analysis and humor. His first book *Journal of a Chess Master is* now out of print.

King's Gambit As White, The 3rd ed. $22.95
Raingruber&Maser.
212 pages, © 1995. OP58295

More games, problems, and solutions. KGAW is built like a textbook. It's purpose has been to successfully teach how to play winning systems in the King's Gambit and to deflect all of Black's counterproposals, 16 chapters of them! It is loaded with restorative analysis, many new games, and sections offering totally new theory



as Black desperately looks for a way to combat the Kieseritzky system. Even 2... Nc6 is included. Nearly 20% new material.

King's Indian Four Pawns Attack (A66-A69) 14.95
s1Editrice editors.
79 pages, © 1995. OP97785

A transpositional Goliath, the "main" way goes: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 c5 3. d5 e6 4. Nc3 ed5 5. cd5 d6 6. e4 g6 7. f4. The variation A67 has been dealt with in The Benoni Defence Taimanov Variation A67. 8 "main" lines have 55 variations and 137 footnotes.

Labourdonnais System in the Sicilian Defence (B32) $18.95
Neumann.
269 pages, © 1995. OP78289

Harping on the move ...e5 for Black, this time it comes early: 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cd4 4. Nxd4 e5. English/German introduction. 416 games. There is much new theory to give Black's game a strong impetus. 45 lines of play with 675 footnotes. There are many wins by Black and improvements for Black's play.

LDL Sicilian $5.00
Dunne.
34 pages, © 1987. OP58298

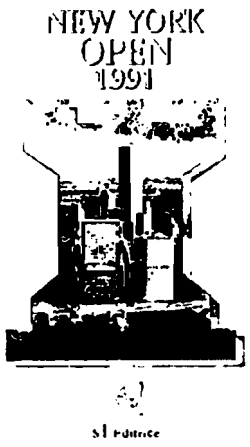
Master (over the board and in correspondence play), educator, and writer, Dunne has uncovered a little known line against the Sicilian, based on a suggestion by former world champion Emanuel Lasker. Dunne has gone on to win many games with this variation. In this book he gives the variations and 18 of his own games. A players' index with relevant lines are included on its #10 business envelope-sized pages.

Modern Chess Brilliancies..... $19.95
Evans.
287 pages, © 1970, 1994. GC92882

Fantastic games with penetrating notes. It can be frenetic to see how fast one's game can collapse due to an inaccuracy. The best and the unknowns are seen here in 101 games. Tal's play is represented 21 times–the master of !!

Modern Postal Masterpieces $16.95
Dunne.
141 pages, © 1994. CR87758

Fifty games by some of the best in the correspondence chess business. Of those, twenty seven are deeply annotated. Among these gems you will find Aronoff, Eisen, Bovay III, Dunne, Zilberberg, Spitzer, Palciauskas, Osbun, and others. Some of these people have real lives and you'll get to find out about them (photos of many) and a wide variety of openings. There are also 23 amazing unannotated games.



New York 1991 ..... $11.00
s1Editrice editors.
62 pages, © 1994. GC95289

100 games with notes to the last ("best") two. A selection of cream from the 600+ participants. Won by GM Goldin, ranked 20th at the beginning of the event.

Nimzo-Indian Capablanca Variation E32-E39 ..... $19.95
s1Editrice editors.
327 pages, © 1995. OP97728

From 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 with improvements for White. 56 "main" lines and 357 variations. 795 footnotes. Many games and evaluations. A monster-sized book.

On Top of The Chess World, The 1995 World Chess Championship..... $14.95
Christiansen, Fedorowicz&I. Gurevich.
129 pages, © 1995. MA98727

An informative and entertaining book on the big event of 1995, the match between Kasparov and Anand. Experience everyone's exasperation at the contested "draws" in the first 8 games, and then the unleashed fury which ensued after that. Relieve Kasparov's enthusiasm for using the Sicilian Dragon in crucial games. Wonderful commentary, analyses by three of the best in the U.S., and photos make this a keepsake to look at many times.

Persona Non Grata $8.95
Kortchnoi & Cavallaro.
147 pages, © 1981. BI58522

At one time Viktor Kortchnoi was the second strongest (some say "strongest") chess player in the world (1974-1978). After being the first chess defector from the Soviet Union, he played Karpov, in effect, two more times for the world's chess title. In fact, according to the Divinsky/Keene scale, Kortchnoi is the 7th strongest chess player of all time and was the only non-world champion in the top 10! This book was published to detail the trials and tribulations of an ex-patriot, a man who became very much the anti-Soviet establishment. His story, and the games from the controversial 1978 match in Manila, present a picture of a complex man who had an unswerving desire to win and yet is just as able to believe in the arcane "arts" of mysticism to accomplish his goals. Contains previously unpublished photos, and many documents in the appendix not previously published. Originally published in a smaller edition, in German, as "Anti-Schach."

Petrosian's Legacy 12.95
Petrosian.
123 pages, © 1990. BI59887

Petrosian lays it on the line, in his experiences with Fischer, San Antonio 1972, and what he believes is necessary to teach chess players how to play better and learn more. Very frank.

Pirc Defence Czech Variation 3... c6 B07 ..... $16.25
Pieri.
203 pages, © 1995. OP78292

49 lines in this "chameleon-like" defensive system for Black. 265 variations with 591 footnotes. Its characteristics are the indirect attack on the center, and defense and counter-attack on the King-side. An interesting introduction about the vicissitudes of this system.

Play the Schliemann Defence! .. $19.95
V. Ivanov&Kulagin.
172 pages, © 1994. OP28828

A detailed study of this wily attack (...f5) against the venerable Ruy Lopez. 330 games are annotated There are 35 core or basic games, 95 supplemental games, and 205 study games.

Queen's Gambit Accepted (D20-D29) $18.95
s1E editors.
179 pages, © 1995 OP29958

Black looks for a way to relieve his cramped game in the regular Queen's Gambit, and the Accepted version allows this. White and Black have so many different plans at their disposal that this book covers them in six main lines and 566 games. **A very limited supply.**

Russian for Chessplayers $12.95
Russell.
53 pages, © 1991. RE58529

Veteran translator of Russian books on chess, Russell has updated a book he had published twenty-five years earlier. 2,000 copies sold out in a short amount of time. Now a considerable amount of new info has been added to the book including a very much expanded dictionary of chess-related terms. You will see how to translate chess newspaper columns and "read" verbs, nouns, and adjectives. To help with the pronunciation of many grandmaster names appearing in the Cyrillic alphabet, a six page addition gives the correct spelling of 175 names and how to pronounce them (with the proper stress).

Ruy Lopez vol. 1 Exchange Variation (C68) $15.50
Falchetta.
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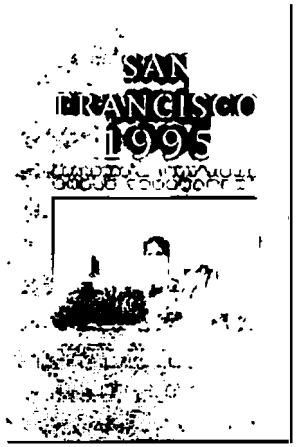

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