



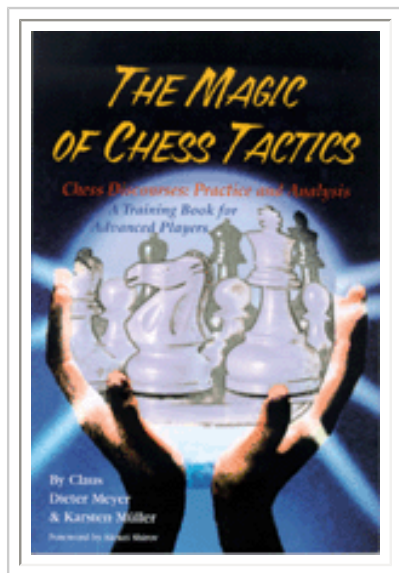
The Strongest Piece is the Rook, Part One

Obviously a queen is by definition even better than a rook, but I rather like the phrase coined by the famous Russian trainer Mark Dvoretsky in *Secrets of Chess Training* (p.117) – that an active rook in an open position can work wonders. Let's begin with rook vs. bishop.

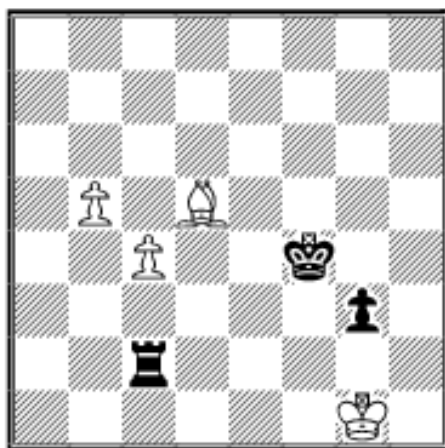
COLUMNISTS

Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



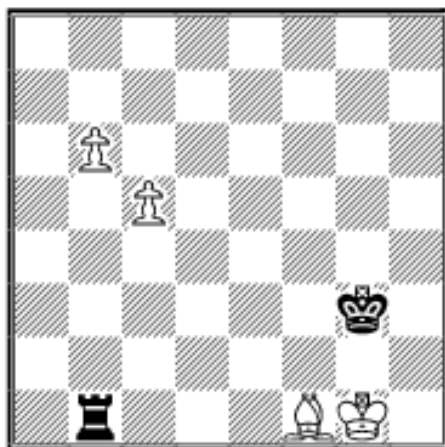
54.01 R.Fyllingen (2395) - S.Agdestein (2571)
ch-NOR Sandnes 2005



The connected passed pawns give White a draw, but he has to be careful.

86...g2!? 87.Bxg2 Rxc4?!

This makes it relatively easy for White.
87...Kg3 88.Bf1 Rc1 89.b6 Rb1 90.c5:

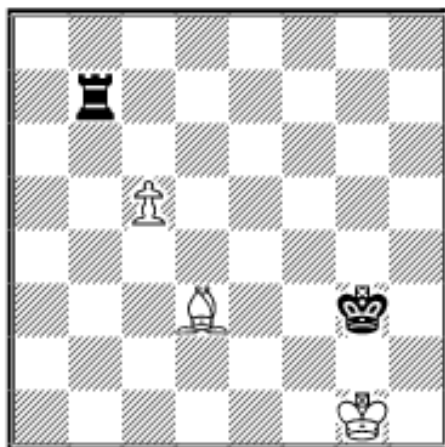


Now the lone rook is trying to win against the bishop and two connected passed pawns, but they're too far advanced:
90...Rb3 Black wants to lose a tempo with his rook (90...Kf3? 91.b7+-) 91.Bg2?!

A) 91.Bc4! is better as Black can't achieve his aim now.

B) 91.Kh1 Kf2 92.Bg2 Rb5 93.b7 Rxc5 94.b8Q= (94.Kh2? Rh5+ 95.Bh3 Rh8—+)

91...Rb4 92.Bf1 (92.c6 Rxb6 93.Be4 Rb4 94.Bg6 Rc4 95.Kf1 is playable as well.) 92...Rb1 93.c6 (93.b7? is the wrong way to sacrifice a pawn as White's king is firmly caught in the dangerous corner: 93...Rxb7 94.Bd3:



And now Black wins in typical fashion 94...Rd7 95.Be2 (95.Bc2 Rd2 96.Bb3 Rb2+) 95...Ra7 96.c6 Ra1+ 97.Bf1 Rc1+) 93...Rxb6 94.Bd3 Rxc6 95.Kf1 Kf3 96.Be2+ Ke3 97.Bh5 and the d1–h5 diagonal is long enough to prevent Black from winning.

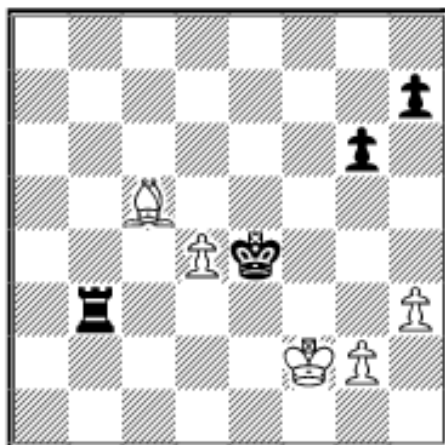
58.Bc6 Rc2 59.Kf1 Ke3 60.Kg1

Black can't make any real progress, so agreed to draw after a few more moves.

In the next position, Black again has moderate winning potential, but this time the rook prevails.

54.02 M. Wahls (2551) - A. Braun (2480)

German Bundesliga 2005

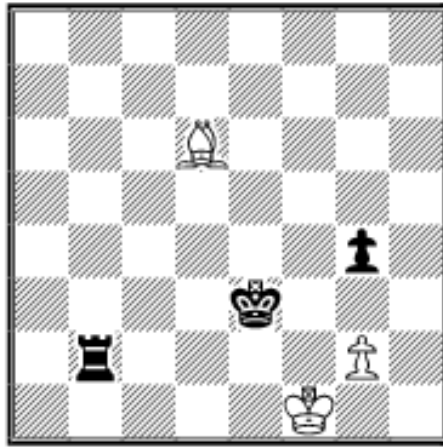


White has to act very carefully to defend his fortress.

50.Kg1

The immediate sacrifice 50.d5!? was also possible, but White must know what he is doing: 50...Kxd5 51.Ba7 Ke4 52.Bc5 h5 53.Ba7 g5 54.Bc5 Rb2+ (54...g4 55.hxg4 hxg4 56.Bd6 Rb2+ 57.Kg3=) 55.Kf1 g4 (55...Kf5 56.Ba3 Rc2 57.Bd6 g4 58.hxg4+

Kxg4 59.Kg1=) 56.hxg4 hxg4 57.Bd6 Ke3:



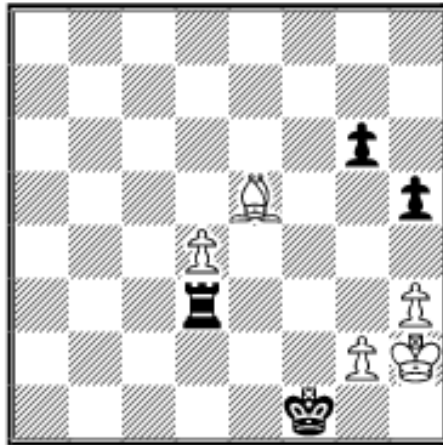
And now the activation of White's king saves the day: 58.Kg1 Ke2 59.Kh2 Kf1 60.Kg3 Rxc2+ 61.Kf4 Kf2 62.Bc5+ Ke2 63.Be7 Kf2 64.Bh4+ g3 65.Kg4=.

50...Ke3 51.Kh2 Ke2 52.Bd6 Kf1 53.Bf4 Rd3!?

Black shows good technique against the two time German champion! The greedy 53...Rb2 54.Kg3 Rxc2+ leads to a draw

because of counterplay with the d-pawn: 55.Kf3 g5 56.Be3 h5 57.d5 g4+ 58.hxc4 Rxc4 59.d6=.

54.Be5 h5



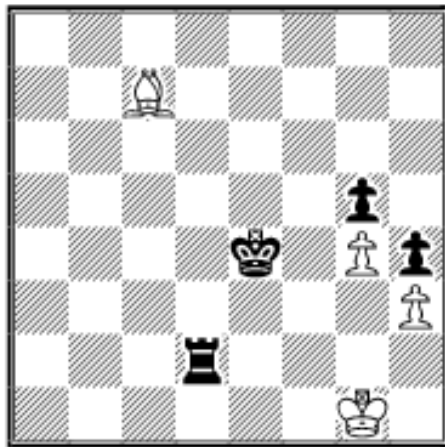
Again, White has to tread carefully. The foot of his fortress must remain on g2.

55.g4?

55.Bf6 Rd2 (55...Kf2 56.Bh4+ Kf1 57.Bf6=) 56.Kg3 Rf2 (56...Rxc2+ 57.Kf4=) 57.Be7 Rf5 58.Kh2 g5 59.Kh1 Ra5 60.Bd8 Rb5 61.Be7 g4 (61...Kf2 62.Kh2=) 62.hxc4 hxc4 63.Kh2 Rb2 64.Kg3 Rxc2+ 65.Kf4=.

55...h4! 56.Bf6 Rd2+ 57.Kh1 Kf2 58.Bxh4+

58.Be5 doesn't help as the h2-b8 diagonal is surprisingly too short: 58...Rd1+ 59.Kh2 Kf3 60.Bb8 (60.g5 Rd2+ 61.Kg1 Rg2+ 62.Kf1 Rxc2+ 60...Rxd4 61.Kg1 Rd8 62.Bc7 Rc8 63.Be5 Ke4 64.Bd6 (64.Bf6 Rc1+ 65.Kf2 Rc2+ 66.Kg1 Kf4 67.Bxh4 g5 68.Be1 Kf3+) 64...g5 65.Kg2 (65.Be7 Kf3 66.Bd6 Rd8 67.Bc7 Rd7+) 65...Rd8 66.Bc7 Rd2+ 67.Kg1:



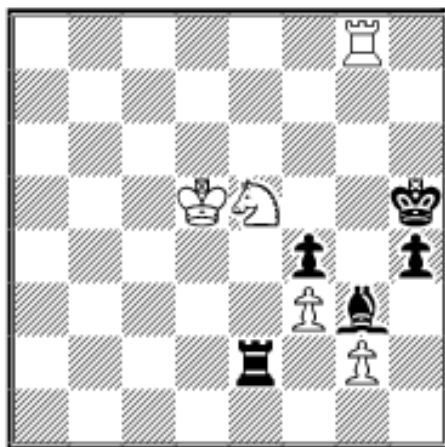
And now Black proves that the diagonal is indeed too short: 67...Rd7 68.Bb8 (68.Bh2 Rd1+ 69.Kg2 Rd2+ 70.Kg1 Rxh2 71.Kxh2 Kf3—+) 68...Kd5 69.Kg2 Rb7 when White's bishop is dominated: 70.Bh2 Rb2+ 71.Kg1 Rxh2 72.Kxh2 Ke4 73.Kg2 Ke3—+.

58...Kf3 59.Bg5 Rxd4 60.Kh2 Ra4 61.Bd8 Ra2+ 62.Kg1 Rg2+ 63.Kh1 Kg3 64.g5 Kxh3 65.Bf6 Rg4 66.Bd8 Rd4 67.Bb6 Rd5 68.Be3 Re5 0–1

In the following two examples I start a bit earlier to include some interesting attacks.

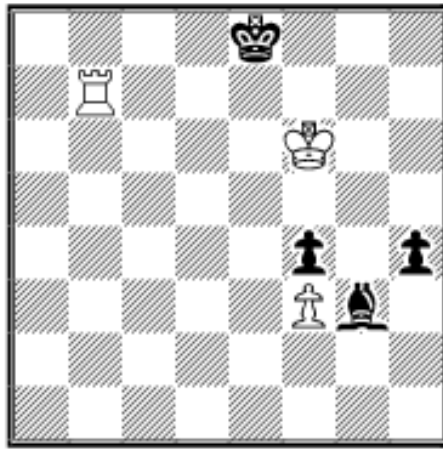
54.03 A.Evdokimov (2503) - F.Amonatov (2599)

RUS-chT Sochi (5), 23.04.2005



Black took the poisoned pawn: **71...Rxf6?** After 71...Kh6 72.Ke6 Kh7 73.Rg5 Ra2 White has all the fun, but Black should be able to save the draw. **72.Ke6 Ra2** (72...h3? 73.Kf5 Kh6 74.Ng4+ Kh7 75.Nf6+ Kh6 76.Rg6#) **73.Kf5** and Black must lose the exchange to stop immediate mate, which actually helps in the long run: **73...Ra6 74.Rg5+ Kh6 75.Ng4+ Kh7 76.Nf6+ Rxf6+ 77.Kxf6 Kh6 77...Be1 78.Rh5+ Kg8 79.Rd5 Kh7 80.Kg5 Bg3 81.Rd7+ Kg8 82.Kf6 h3 (82...Be1 83.Kg6**

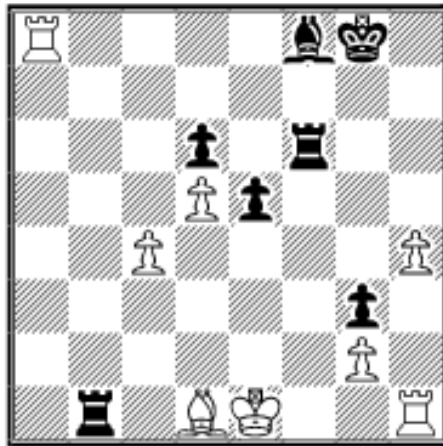
Kf8 84.Rf7++-) 83.Rg7+ Kf8 (83...Kh8 84.Kg6 h2 85.Re7 h1Q 86.Re8#) 84.Rh7+-. **78.Rg6+ Kh7 79.Rg7+** White follows the typical do not rush strategy. He repeats the position to show his opponent, who is in control. **79...Kh6 80.Rg6+ Kh7 81.Kg5 Bf2 82.Re6 Bg3 83.Re7+ Kg8 84.Kf6 Kf8 85.Rh7 Ke8 86.Ke6 Kf8 87.Kf6 Ke8 88.Re7+ Kf8 89.Re5 Bf2 90.Rh5 Ke8 91.Rh7 Bg3 92.Re7+ Kf8 93.Rb7 Ke8**



94.Ra7! and Black will inevitably fall into zugzwang: **94...h3 95.Re7+ Kd8 96.Rh7 h2 97.Ke6 Kc8 98.Kd6 Kb8 99.Kc6 Ka8 100.Kb6 Bf2+ 101.Ka6 Kb8 102.Rxh2 Be3 103.Rc2 1-0**

54.04 P.Müller - R.Stellwagen (2139)

Hamburg rapid 2005



Black has a strong attack with opposite colored bishops and plays instructively. Please note that White can't castle.

44...Rf2

44...Rf4!? is strongly met with 45.Kd2 when White should survive, but matters aren't completely clear: (45.c5? Rb2 46.Ra4 dxc5 47.Rxf4 exf4 48.Rf1 Bd6—) 45...Rf2+ 46.Kd3 Rxc2 47.c5 dxc5 48.Ke3 Rb7 (48...Rc1 49.Ke4) 49.Rf1 Rf7

50.Rxf7 Kxf7 51.Bh5+ Kg7 52.Kf3 Rd2 53.Kxg3.

45.Rg1

45.h5? Kh7 46.Ra7+ Kh6 47.Rg1 e4! (Stellwagen) 48.Ra3 Bg7 49.Rxg3 Bd4—.

45...Kf7?

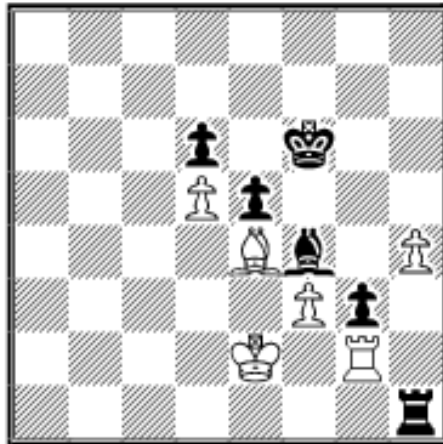
45...Kh7! 46.Ra7+ Bg7 -+ was much stronger according to Stellwagen.

46.Ra3

Upon 46.Ra7+? Black's king runs to the queenside: 46...Ke8 47.Ra8+ Kd7 48.Ra7+ Kc8 49.Ra8+ (49.Rh7 e4—) 49...Kc7 50.Ra7+ Kb6 51.Ra3 Rfb2 52.Ra8 (52.Rxg3 Bh6—) 52...Bh6 53.Rb8+ Kc5 54.Rxb2 Rxb2—.

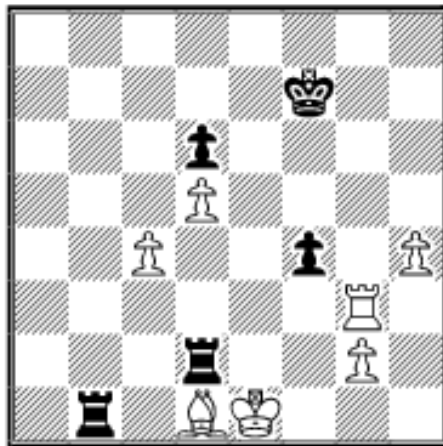
46...Bh6 47.Rxg3

47.Rf3+? Rxf3 48.gxf3 Bf4 49.Rg2 Rc1 50.c5 (50.Rc2? Be3!! 51.Rg2 Bf2+--+) 50...Rxc5 51.Bc2 Kf6 52.Be4 Rc1+ 53.Ke2 Rh1:



And Black's activity should be enough to win, e.g. 54.Bd3 Rxh4 55.Kf1 Rh1+ 56.Rg1 Rh3 57.Rg2 Be3 58.Re2 Bf2 59.Re4 Rh1+ 60.Kg2 Rg1+ 61.Kh3 Rd1 62.Bc4 Kf5 63.Rg4 Rh1+ 64.Kg2 Rh2+ 65.Kf1 e4 66.Rxe4 Bc5 67.Rg4 Rf2+ 68.Kg1 Rc2+ 69.Kf1 g2+ 70.Rxg2 Rxc4+.

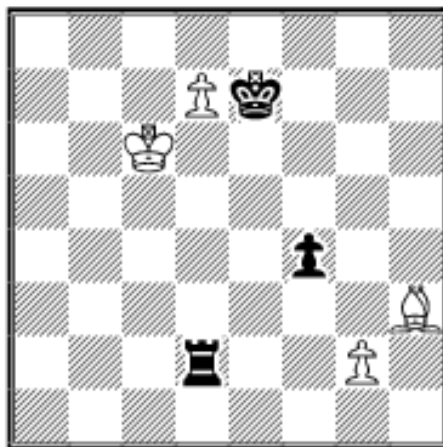
47...Rd2 48.Rf1+ Bf4 49.Rxf4+ exf4



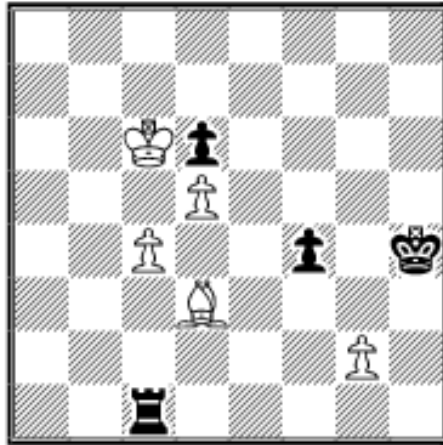
Here Philipp Müller missed his chance: **50.Kxd2?** At first I was convinced that this should draw as well, but I didn't manage to find one! Maybe one of the readers can do better?

50.Rg7+! was called for because the pawn structure is now better for White's bishop and the exchange sacrifice on f3 is ineffective: 50...Kxg7 51.Kxd2 Rb2+ (51...Kf6 52.Bf3 Ke5 53.Kc3=) 52.Bc2

Kh6 53.Kc3 Ra2 54.Kb3 (54.Be4?! Kh5 55.Bf3+ Kxh4 56.c5 dxc5 57.Kc4 Rd2 58.Kxc5 Kg5 59.d6 Kf6 60.Kc6 Ke5 61.d7 Ke6 62.Bg4+ Ke7 63.Bh3:



Seems to be drawn as well.) 54...Ra1 55.Kb4 Kh5 56.Kb5 Rc1 (56...Kxh4 57.c5 dxc5 58.d6=) 57.Bd3 Kxh4 58.Kc6:

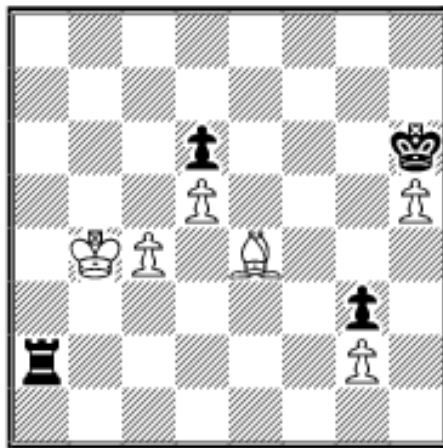


And White's counterplay is fast enough.

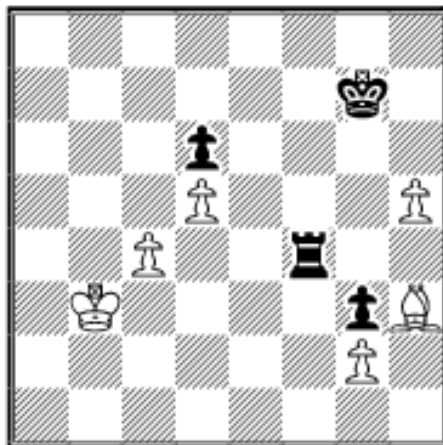
50...fxg3 51.Bf3

51.Be2 Rb3+.

51.h5 Rb2+ 52.Bc2 Kg7 53.Kc3 Ra2
54.Kb3 (54.c5 is strongly met with
54...Ra5 55.cxd6 Rxd5+) 54...Ra8 55.Bf5
(55.Kb4 Rb8+ 56.Kc3 Kh6 57.Bd3 Ra8
58.Kb4 Ra2 59.Be4:



And now Black starts to repeatedly use the
Rxf3 motif: 59...Re2 60.Bf3 Rb2+ 61.Kc3
Rf2 62.Be4 Kxh5 63.c5 dxc5 64.d6 Rf6
65.d7 Rd6 66.Bf5 Rd4+) 55...Rf8 56.Be6
Rf2 57.Bh3 Rf4:

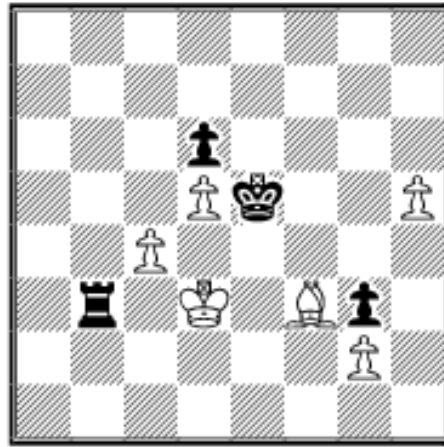


For a change Black plays for 57...Rhx3
58.Kc3 Rh4 59.Be6 Rxh5+.

51...Kf6 52.Kd3

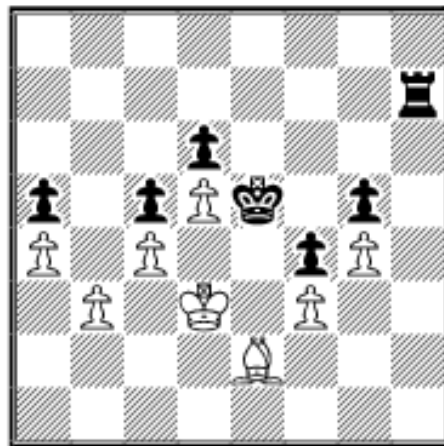
52.Ke3 Ke5 53.Be2 Rh1 54.Kf3 (54.h5
Rh4 55.Kd3 Re4+) 54...Rxh4 55.Kxg3
Rf4 56.Bd3 Rf7 57.Kg4 Kd4 58.Bf5 Rg7+
59.Kf3 Kxc4 60.Be6 Kd4 61.g4 Ke5+.

52...Ke5 53.h5 Rb3+



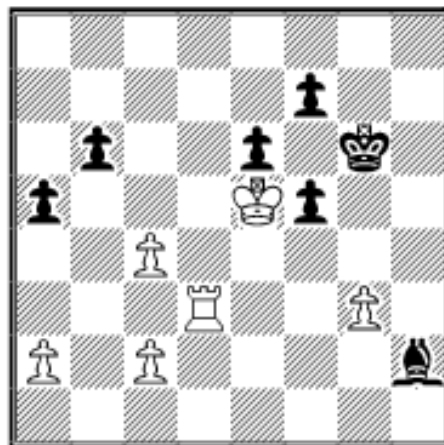
54.Kc2?! makes it very easy, but it was over anyway as Black's forces dominate:
 54.Ke2 Kd4 55.Bg4 Re3+ 56.Kd2 Re4
 57.Bf3 Re8 58.Be2 Rf8— **54...Rxf3 0–1**

Exercises (solutions next month)



E54.01 H.Nordahl (2423) - L.Johannessen (2543)
 ch-NOR Sandnes 2005

Find Black's winning plan!



E54.02 P.Czarnota (2478) - S.Sulskis (2545)
 6th EICC Warsaw 2005

Can White storm Black's fortress?



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