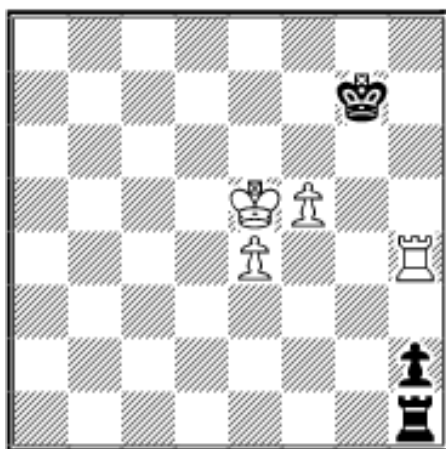




## Mysterious Rook Endgames

I have received several queries from readers about rook endgames. In particular, Chi Minh Nguyen sent me the following two examples.

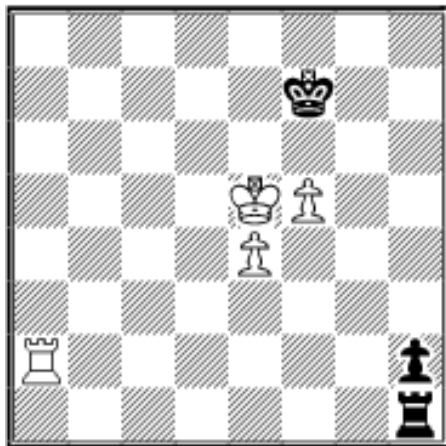
**73.01 C.Foisor (2409) - H.Daurelle (2201)**  
Bethune 2005



White should first patiently improve the position of the rook, as shown by Chi Minh Nguyen.

**65.f6+?**

65.Rg4+ Kf8 66.Rg2 Kf7 67.Ra2

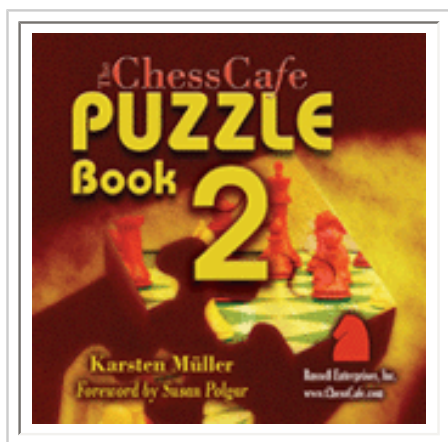


Black is in fatal zugzwang: 67...Ke7 (67...Kg7 68.Ke6 Re1 69.f6++-) 68.Ra7+ Ke8 69.Rh7 Kf8 70.Kf6 Kg8 71.Rg7+ Kf8 72.Rg2+-.

## COLUMNISTS

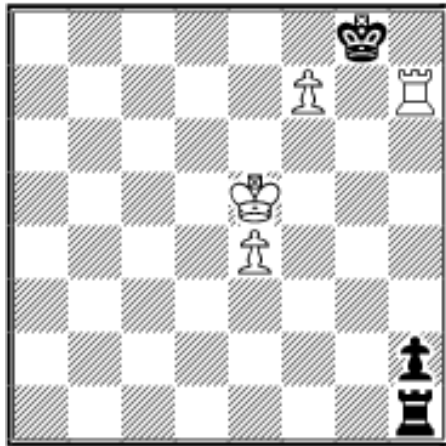
### Endgame Corner

Karsten Müller



**65...Kg6 66.Rg4+ Kf7 67.Rg7+ Kf8 68.Rh7 Kg8 69.f7+**

Now Black missed a stalemate resource.



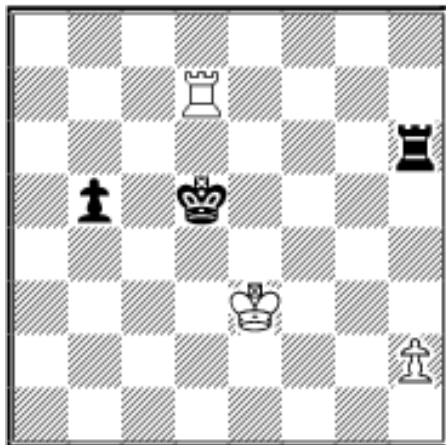
**69...Kxh7?**

69...Kf8 70.Ke6 Rf1 71.Rxh2 Rf6+ 72.Kxf6 stalemate.

**70.f8Q Rg1 71.Qf7+ Kh6 72.Qf4+ Rg5+ 73.Kf6 1-0**

The difficulty of seemingly simple rook endings is exemplified in the following example.

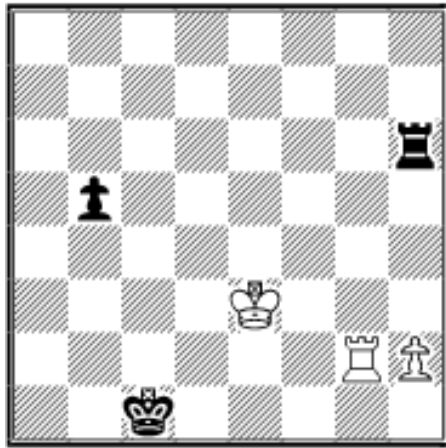
**73.02 C.Nguyen (2343) - G.Camus de Solliers (2307)**  
APSAP Open Paris 2006



**39...Kc4! 40.Rd4+ Kc3!**

40...Kb3? 41.h4!=.

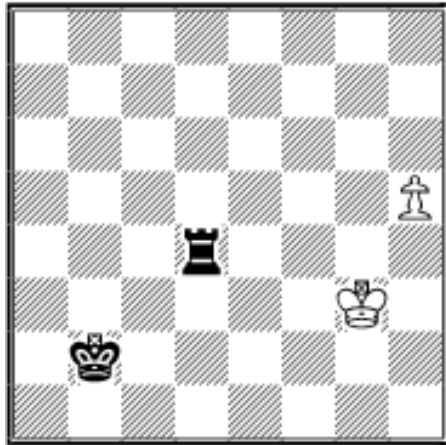
**41.Rd3+ Kc4 42.Rd4+ Kc3! 43.Rd3+ Kc2 44.Rd2+ Kc1! 45.Rg2!?**



Now the critical moment is reached and the first priority must be to cut off White's king.

**45...b4?**

45...Rh4! 46.Kf3 (46.Kd3 b4 47.Rg1+ Kb2) 46...b4 47.Kg3 Rd4 48.h4 b3 49.h5 b2 50. Rxb2 Kxb2



The cut off on the fourth rank is decisive, e.g. 51.h6 Rd6 52.h7 Rh6+.

**46.Kf4!**

White draws relatively easily with his active counterplay.

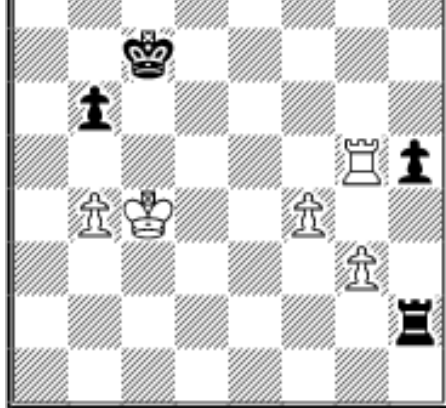
**46...Rh7 47.Rg1+ Kc2 48.Rh1 Rh4+ 49.Kg5 Rh3 50.Kg4 Rd3 51.h4 b3 52.h5 b2 53.h6 Rd7 54.Kg5 ½-½**

The next example is from my friend Hannes Langrock, author of [The Modern Morra Gambit](#).

**73.03 G.Putzbach - H.Langrock**  
Ani-Cup Hamburg 2006



White is winning but underestimated Black's counterplay.



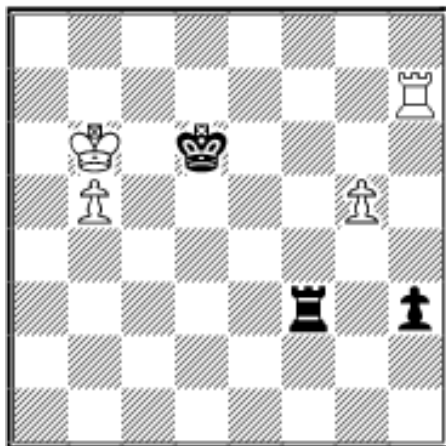
**46.Kb5! h4 47.Rg7+ Kd6 48.Kxb6?!**

Now the passed h-pawn is a constant source of worry. 48.gxh4 Rxh4 49.Kxb6 Rxf4 50.b5 is much easier.

**48...Rg2 49.g4 h3 50.g5 Rg4!?**

50...h2 51.Rh7 Ke6 52.b5 Kf5 53.Rh4+-.

**51.Rh7 Rxf4 52.b5 Rf3**



Now White should have forced the exchange of his g-pawn for Black's h-pawn to stop any counterplay.

**53.Kb7?**

53.g6! Rg3 (53...Ke6 54.Rh8+-) 54.g7 Kd5 55.Rxh3 Rg6+ 56.Ka7 Rxg7+ 57.Ka6 Kc5 58.Rc3++-.

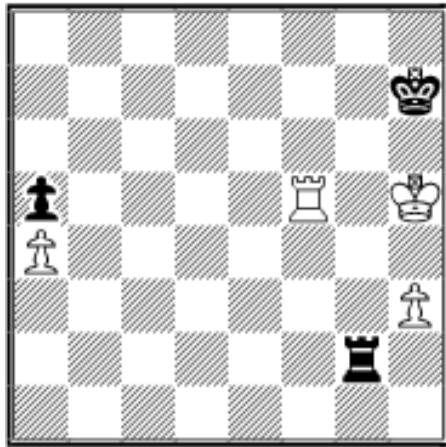
**53...Rb3 54.b6**

54.Kb6 Ke6 55.Kc5 Kf5 56.Kc4 Re3 57.b6 Re4+=.

**54...Ke6 55.Kc7 Kf5 56.b7 Rc3+ 57.Kd6 Rb3 58.Kc7 Rc3+ 59.Kd8 Rb3 60.Kc8 Rc3+ ½-½**

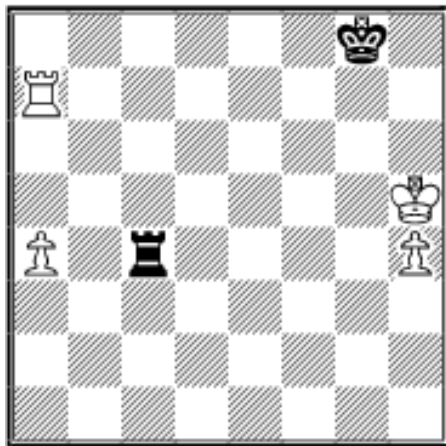
Finally, Martin Petr has found a flaw in a previous column.

**73.04 E.Berg - H.Kallio**



He writes, “this position is taken from the June 2002 Endgame Corner, [Rooks Revisited](#). In the game E. Berg - H. Kallio, after White’s forty-fifth move, Black resigned, because the position is considered to be a theoretical draw, but I disagree.

**1...Rc2 2.Rxa5 Rc4 3.h4 Kg7 4.Ra7+ Kg8**



**5.Ra6!**

The difference between this position and a well-known theoretical draw (Vancura’s Defense) is the placement of White’s king on h5, as the white king is not usually in front of the h-pawn in “normal” positions. After 5.a5?, Black can apply Vancura’s defensive method: 5...Rc5+ 6.Kg4 Kh8 7.a6 Rc6 8.h5 Kg8 9.Kf3 Kh8 10.Ke4 Kg8 11.Kd5 Rf6 12.Ra8+ Kh7 13.Kc5 Rf5+ 14.Kb6 Rf6+ 15.Kb7 Rf7+=.

**5...Kf7**

Black has to avoid the check. 5...Kh7 6.Rh6+ Kg7 7.Rg6+ Kh7 8.Rg4 Rc6 9.Rg5 Rh6+ (9...Rc4 10.a5 Rd4 11.Rb5+–) 10.Kg4 Rd6 11.a5 Rd4+ 12.Kf5 Rxh4 13.Ke6 Rd4 14.Rd5+– with an easy win; 5...Rc5+ 6.Kg6+–.

**6.a5! Rc5+**

6...Rd4 7.Rg6 Rd5+ 8.Rg5 Rd6 (8...Rd4 9.a6+–) 9.Rf5+ Ke7 (9...Kg7 10.Kg5 Rd1 11.h5 Rg1+ 12.Kf4 Ra1 13.Ke4 Kh6 14.Kd4+–) 10.Kg5+–.

**7.Kh6!**

White's position should be won.

**7...Rc4**

7...Rc8 8.Rg6+–.

**8.h5 Rc5 9.Ra7+ Kf6 10.Ra8 Kf5**

10...Kf7 11.a6 Rc6+ 12.Kh7 Kf6 13.Rg8! Rc7+ 14.Kh6 Ra7 15.Rg6+ Kf5 16.Rb6 (*zugzwang*) 16...Ra8 17.Kg7+–.

**11.Rg8 Kf4 12.a6 Ra5 13.Rg6+ (*zugzwang*) 13...Kf3 14.Rf6+ Kg4 15.Kg6 Rg5+ 16.Kf7 Rxb5 17.Ke7 Kg5 18.a7+– .”**

Thank you, Martin!



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