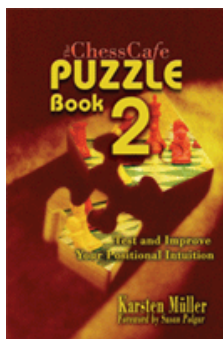




COLUMNISTS

Endgame
Corner

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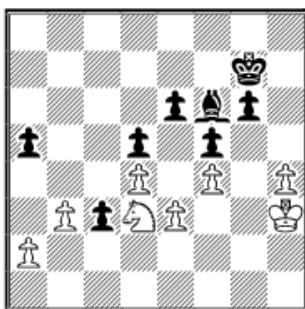


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The Old Riddle of Botvinnik vs. Smyslov

Vassily Smyslov is one of the finest endgame virtuosos of the royal game. One of his most famous victories is the seventeenth game of the 1957 world championship match against Botvinnik. I suspected that White could still draw with 44.a4! and asked Charles Sullivan (California, USA) to look deeply at the arising complications. He confirmed my suspicion, and even found a draw at the forty-fifth move. He has kindly allowed me to incorporate his analysis.

102.01 Botvinnik, Mikhail - Smyslov, Vassily
World Championship Moscow (17), 13.04.1957



41.Ne1?!

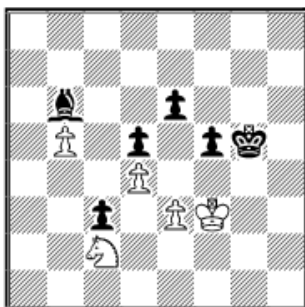
Botvinnik underestimates the danger. White should address the problems on his queenside immediately with 41.b4 axb4 42.Nxb4 Kh6 43.a4= ([Kasparov in My Great Predecessors, Part 2](#), Everyman 2003).

41...Kh6

The sealed move. "The game was adjourned and the following morning Goldberg, Botvinnik's second, sent me an offer of a draw." (Smyslov) But Smyslov had found out that he can play for a win without risk and declined.

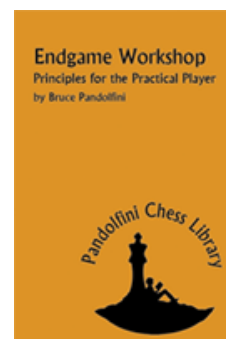
42.Nc2 Be7 43.Kg3?!

Again Botvinnik neglects the urgency of the problems on the queenside. With 43.a3! Kh5 44.b4 axb4 45.axb4 Bxh4 46.b5 Bd8 47.Kg3 g5 48.fxg5 Kxg5 49.Kf3 Bb6



White can hold as Fridstein has proved in a long analysis published in

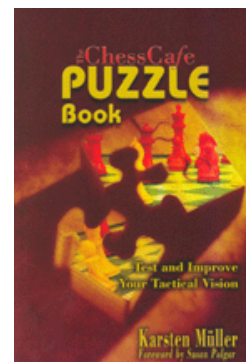
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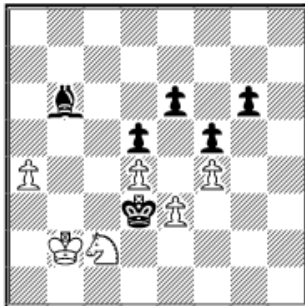
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by Nikolay Mineev



[ChessCafe Puzzle Book](#)
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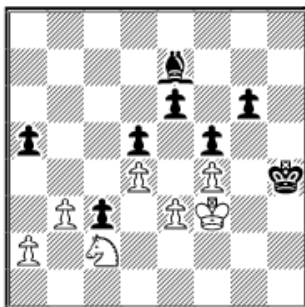
43...Kh5 44.Kf3?!

Now a3 is no longer sufficient, but 44.a4! surprisingly is: 44...Bxh4+ 45. Kf3 Be7 (45...g5 46.fxg5 Bxg5 47.Ke2 Kg4 48.Kd3 Kf3 49.b4 Bd8 50.b5 Bb6 (50...Kf2 51.Na1 Ke1 52.Nb3 Kd1 53.Na1 Bc7 54.Nc2 e5 55.dxe5 Bxe5 56.b6 Kc1 57.b7 Kb2 58.Nd4 Bb8 59.Nc2 Bd6 60.Nd4=) 51.Na1 Kf2 52.Nb3 Bc7 53.Nc5 c2 54.Kxc2 Kxe3 55.Nxe6 Bg3 56.b6 f4 57.Nc7 f3 58.Nxd5+ Kxd4 59.Nc3 Be5 60.Nd1 Kc5 61.b7 Kb6 62.Kd3 Kxb7 63. Ke4 Bh8 64.Nf2 Kc6 65.Nd3 Bf6 66.Kxf3=) 46.Ke2 Kg4 (46...g5 47. fxg5 Kxg5 48.Kd3 Kg4 49.b4! (49.Kxc3 Kf3 50.Kd3=) 49...axb4 50.a5 f4! (50...Bd6? 51.a6 Bb8 52.Nxb4+-) 51.a6 b3 52.a7 b2! 53.Na3 Bxa3 54. Kc2 fxe3 55.a8Q e2 56.Qg8+ Kf3 57.Qf7+ Kg2 58.Qxe6 b1Q+ 59.Kxb1 Kf2=) 47.Kd3 Kf3 48.Kxc3 Ke2 49.b4 Bd8 50.bxa5 Bxa5+ 51.Kb3 Kd3 52.Kb2 Kd2 53.Kb3 Bd8 54.Kb2 Bb6 55.Kb3 Kd3 56.Kb2 (Sullivan)



White seems to be able to hold.

44...Kxh4



45.Ne1?

Just waiting is not sufficient to hold the game as Black's king will creep into the position via the first rank. The last chance to draw is 45.Ke2! Kg4 (45...g5 46.fxg5 Kxg5 47.Kd3 Kg4 48.Kxc3=) 46.Kd3 Kf3 47.a4! Bd6 48. Kxc3 Ke2 49.b4 axb4+ 50.Nxb4 Bc7 (50...Kxe3 51.a5 Bxf4! 52.a6 Bb8 53.Nc6 f4 54.Nxb8 f3 55.a7 f2 56.a8Q f1Q 57.Nc6=) 51.Nc2 Bb6 52.Kb4 Kd3 53.Kb3 Ba5 54.Kb2= (Sullivan).

45...g5 46.fxg5 Kxg5 47.Nc2 Bd6 48.Ne1

48.a3 Kh4 49.b4 a4 50.b5 Bc7 51.Ne1 Kg5 52.Nc2 Ba5— (Smyslov).

48...Kh4! 49.Nc2 Kh3 50.Na1 Kh2 51.Kf2 Bg3+ 52.Kf3 Bh4 53.Nc2 Kg1 54.Ke2 Kg2 55.Na1

55.b4 is met by 55...a4—.

55...Be7 56.Nc2 Kg3 57.Ne1 Bd8 58.Nc2 Bf6 59.a3 Be7 60.b4

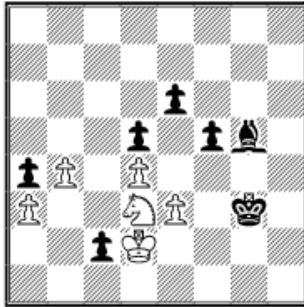
Now it is too late for 60.a4 Bd6 61.Ne1 e5 62.dxe5 Bxe5 63.Nc2 d4 64. exd4 Bd6— (Smyslov).

60...a4!

Black can safely keep his a-pawn, which will be White's undoing in the end.

61.Ne1 Bg5 62.Nc2

62.Nd3 c2 63.Kd2



The combination 63...c1Q+ 64.Nxc1 Kf3 decides: 65.Ne2 Bxe3+ 66.Kd3 f4 67.b5 Kf2 68.b6 f3 69.Ng1 Kg2 70.Nxf3 Kxf3—; 62.b5 Bd8—+.

62...Bf6 63.Kd3

63.b5 Bd8 64.Ne1 Ba5 65.Nc2 Kg4 66.Ne1 Bc7 67.Nc2 Bb6 68.Nb4 f4 69.exf4 Bxd4 70.Kd3 Bb6 71.Kxc3 Kxf4—+ (Smyslov).

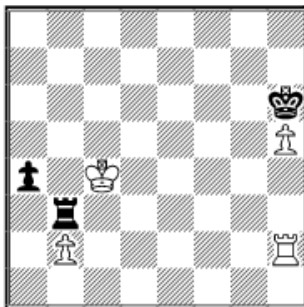
63...Kf2 64.Na1 Bd8 65.Nc2 Bg5 66.b5 Bd8 67.Nb4 Bb6 68.Nc2 Ba5 69.Nb4 Ke1 0–1

The king has almost completed his long march, so Botvinnik resigned.

Solutions to last month exercises

E101.01 Kurnosov,I (2658) - Lalic,B (2508)

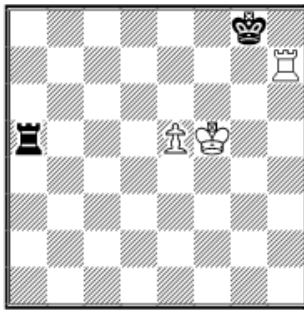
4NCL 2008-9 Staverton ENG (11), 04.05.2009



Lalic only looked at the queenside and played **53...Rb8?** missing the zugzwang after 53...Kg7! 54.h6+ Kh7 (Baburin in *Chess Today*) and White must allow an immediate draw. **54.Kc3 Rb3+ 55.Kc2 Rg3 55...Rb4 56.Rh3 Rf4 57.Kb1 Rb4 58.Ka2 Re4 59.Ka3 Rf4 60.Rg3 Kxh5 61.Rg8+- (Baburin). 56.Rh1 Rf3 57.Rh4 a3 58.b3 Rf1 58...Rf2+ 59.Kc3 a2 60.Rh1+-, 59.Ra4 Kxh5 60.Rxa3 Kg6 61.b4 Rf2+ 62.Kb3 Kf7 63.Ka4 Ke7 64.Rd3 Ra2+ 65.Kb5 Ra8 66.Kc6 1–0**

E101.02 Kamsky,G (2725) - Kramnik,V (2759)

18th Amber Blindfold Nice FRA (6), 20.03.2009



Kamsky missed the win **71.Re7?** takes the e7-square away from White's king. So 71.Rd7 is called for: 71...Ra1 (71...Kf8 72.Kf6 Ke8 73.Rh7 Ra1 74.Rh8+ Kd7 75.e6+ Kd6 76.Rd8+ Kc7 77.e7+-) 72.Kf6 Rf1+ 73.Ke7 Ra1 74.Rd2 Ra7+ 75.Kf6 Rf7+ 76.Ke6 Rf1 77.Ra2 Kg7 78.Ra7+ Kg6 79.Ra8 Kg7 80.Kd7 Rd1+ 81.Ke7 Rb1 82.e6 Rb7+ 83.Kd6 Rb6+ 84.Kd7 Rb7+ 85.Kc6 Rb1 86.e7+-, **71...Ra6 72.Re6 Ra1 73.Rf6 Kg7 74.Ke4 Ra4+ 75.Kd5 Ra5+ 76.Kd4 Ra4+ 77.Kd5 Ra5+ 78.Ke4 Ra4+ 79.Kf5 Ra1 80.Rb6 Kf7 81.Rb7+ Ke8 82.Kf6 Re1 83.Ke6 Kf8 84.Rb8+ Kg7 85.Rd8 Re2 86.Rd5 Kf8 87.Rc5 Re1 88.Rc8+ Kg7 89.Kd6 Kf7 90.Rc7+ Ke8 91.Ke6 Kf8 92.Rf7+ Ke8 93.Rh7 Kf8 94.Rh8+ Kg7 95.Re8 Re2?! 95...Ra1 96.Rd8 Re1 97.Kd6 Kf7= (Karstedt) is easier. **96.Kd7 Rd2+ 97.Ke7 Re2 98.e6 Ra2 99.Rc8 Ra7+ 100.Kd6 Ra6+ 101.Kd7 Ra7+ 102.Rc7 Ra8 103.Ke7 Kg6 104.Rb7 Kg7 105.Rd7 Kg6 106.Rd2 Ra7+ 107.Kf8 Ra8+ 108.Ke7 Ra7+ 109.Kd6 Ra6+ 110.Ke5 Ra5+ 111.Rd5 Ra1 112.Rd8 Ra5+ 113.Kd6 Ra6+ 114.Ke7 Ra7+ 115.Rd7 Ra8 116.Rd6 Kg7!** The rook must keep the maximum checking distance, so the king has to move. 116...Rb8? 117.Rd1 Rb7+ 118.Rd7 Rb8 119.Ra7 Kg7 120.Kd6+ Kf6 121.Kd7 Kg7 122.Ke7 Kg6 123.Ra1 Rb7+ 124.Kd6 Rb6+ 125.Kd7 Rb7+ 126.Kc6 Rb8 127.Kc7 Rb2 128.Re1 Rc2+ 129.Kd7 Rd2+ 130.Ke8+-, **117.Rc6 Ra7+ 118.Ke8 Ra8+ 119.Ke7 Ra7+ 120.Kd8 Kf8! 120...Ra8+? 121.Rc8+-, 121.Rc5 Ra8+ 122.Kd7 Ra7+ 123.Kd6 Ra6+ 124.Rc6 Rxc6+ 125.Kxc6 Ke7 126.Kd5 Ke8 127.Kd6 Kd8 128.e7+ Ke8 129.Ke6 1/2-1/2****

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