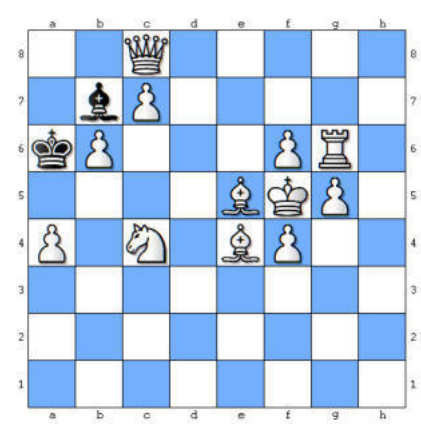




**Anatoly Steepochkin**

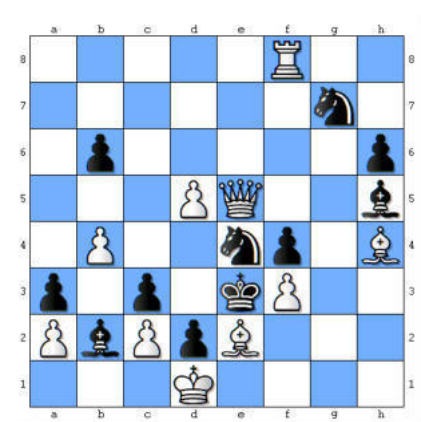
S#13 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commendation**

A nice Black Minimal – Fata Morgana with a surprising sacrifice followed by Phoenix effect in the introduction. Not easy solution.

Set Play: **1...Bxc8#**

Solution: **1. Qa8+!** Bxa8 2. b7 Bxb7 3. c8=Q [Phenix] Ka7 4. Qc5+ Ka6 5. f7+ Bc6 6. Qa5+ Kb7 7. Nd6+ Kb8 8. f8=Q+ Be8 9. Nf7+ Kc8 10. Qc3+ Kd7 11. Bf6! Bxf7 12. Qfc8+ Kd6 13. Qe6+ **Bxe6#**



**Michael Herzberg**

S#11 (C+ - Brute Force tested)

**4<sup>th</sup> Commendation**

As explained in the corresponding re-ranking section, this study has been downgraded and placed at the bottom of the regular Commendations, due to partial anticipation. Nevertheless, I would like to add a few remarks concerning its artistic content, beyond the reasons for its new placement.

The main attraction of this problem lies in the elegant systematic manoeuvring of the white Rook, which gradually prepares the final mating construction through a remarkably harmonious sequence of repositioning moves. The play develops with excellent rhythm and gives the impression of a carefully choreographed strategic dance, where every Rook move contributes to the final geometry. Particularly interesting is the secondary thematic variation, which departs from the principal line and reaches a different mating conclusion through an independent strategic development. This additional content broadens the artistic scope of the problem and shows that the Author did not merely reproduce an established mechanism, but attempted to enrich it with further thematic material.

While the principal matrix belongs to a well-explored family of constructions and is therefore substantially anticipated, the supplementary thematic content preserves sufficient artistic individuality to justify the study's inclusion in the award. Its contribution is admittedly limited, yet it remains a genuine contribution rather than no contribution at all.

Solution: **1. Rc8!** Bc1 2. Ra8 Bb2 3. Rxa3 Bc1 4. Ra7 Bb2 5. Rc7 Ba3 6. Rxg7 Bb2 (6. .. Bxb4 7. a3 Be8 8. axb4 Bb5 9. Bxb5 Kxf3 10. Be2+ Ke3 11. Qxc3+ Nxc3#) 7. Rc7 Ba3 8. Rf7 Bb2 9. Rf5 Bc1 10. Qd4+ Kxd4 11. Bf2+ Nxf2#