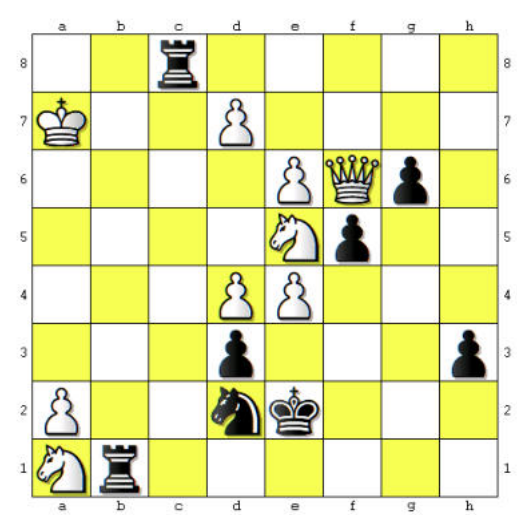




Alain Pallier

Black to move – White wins

1st Honorable Mention

A highly imaginative and ambitious study, whose analytical complexity occasionally threatens to overwhelm the construction itself.

Yet despite its excesses, this work comes remarkably close to capturing the central spirit of the tourney: the attempt to push a study beyond conventional boundaries in search of something genuinely new.

The main attraction is the subtle contrast between the tempting but premature 2.Ka6?, refuted after the striking resource 3...Ra7+, and the correct 2.Ka8!, where the same Rook-fork mechanism reappears much later under completely transformed circumstances, this time as a decisive winning device. The delayed realization of this thematic idea creates a powerful sense of unity amidst the apparent disorder and gives the study its distinctive artistic identity.

The play is rich in underpromotions, tactical reversals and mutual counterplay, generating an atmosphere of creative turbulence that often feels close to the edge of control. Not every aspect of the construction reaches the level of refinement one might wish for, and the analytical jungle occasionally obscures the underlying concept. Nevertheless, the originality of the conception, the fighting energy of the play, and the Author's willingness to embrace considerable artistic risk elevate the study above a mere curiosity.

If the prize-winning studies represent successful expeditions beyond the usual frontiers of endgame composition, this work stands as a fascinating near-miss: an explorer reaching the edge of new territory, even if not every step of the journey proves equally secure.

Solution: 1...Rc7+! 2.Ka8!

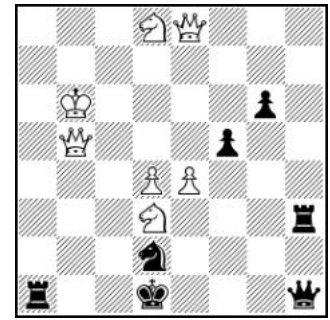
Logical try: 2.Ka6? Rbb7! (2...Rc3? 3.d8=Q Ra3+ 4.Qa5 Rxa5+ 5.Kxa5 h2 6.e7 h1=Q 7.e8=Q Qc1 8.Qfc6! Qb2 9.a4! Qxd4 10.Ka6! +- or 7...Rxa1 8.a4 Nb3+ 9.Ka6 +-) 3.d8=N (3.e7 h2 4.d8=Q Ra7+ 5.Kb6 Rab7+ 6.Ka5 h1=Q 7.Qxc7 Rxc7 8.e8=Q Qxa1 =) 3...Ra7+ 4.Kb6 h2 5.Qh4 Rh7 6.Qg3 (6.Qxh2+ Rxh2 7.Kxa7 Nxe4 =) 6...Rxa2! (6...h1=Q? 7.Qxd3+ Ke1 8.Nc2+ Kd1 9.Nc4 Qh2 10.e5 +-) 7.Qxd3+ Kd1 8.e7 h1=Q! (8...fxe4? 9.Qc3! h1=Q 10.Nb3! Qh3 and, eg, 11.Qxh3 Rxh3 12.Nxd2 and 13.e8=Q +- ; 8...Rxe7? and, eg, 9.Qh3 fxe4 10.Ndc6 Rb2+ 11.Kc5 Reb7 12.Qh4 +-) 9.e8=Q Rh3! (9...fxe4? 10.Qg3! Rh3 11.Qg4+ Kc1 and, eg, 12.Ndc6 Rxa1 13.d5 +-) 10.Qdb5! Rxa1! (10...Qxe4? 11.Qxg6 Qxd4+ 12. Kc7 Ra7+ 13.Nb7 Rxa1 14.Nc6 Rc1 14.Qbxf5 +-)

11.Nd3 [Diagram, BTM]

Rxd3! (11...fxe4? 12.Qg3! Rh3 13.Qg4+ Kc1 and, eg, 14.Ndc6 Rc3 15.Qexg6 Kb2 16.Qg1 +- or 11...Qf1? 12.Nb2+ Kc2

13.Qxf1 Nxf1 +-) 12.Qxd3 Ra3!! and white Queen has no flight square: 13.Oxa3 is now forced with 13...Nc4+ 14.Kc7 Nxa3 = (15.e5 Qe4 16.e6 f4 17.Qc6 Qe3! 18.Qa4+ Kc1 19.Kd7

f3 20.e7 f2 21.e8=Q Qh3+ 22.Ke7 f1=Q or 15.Qa4 Nc2 16.e5 Qe4 17.e6 f4 18.Qc6 Qxc6+ 19.Nxc6 f3 20.e7 f2 21.e8=Q f1=Q 21.d5 Qc4 22.Qe5 Nb4=)



2...Rbb7 3.d8=N! Rba7+

3...h2 4.Qh4 Rh7 and, eg, 5.Qxh2+ Rxh2 6.Kxb7 Rh8 7.e7 Re8 8.Ndc6 Nxe4 9.Nb3 d2 10.Nxd2 Kxd2 11.Kc7 g5 12.d5 g4 13.d6 +-

4.Kb8 h2 5.Qh4 Rh7 6.Qg3!

6.Qxh2? Rxh2 7.Kxa7 = eg 7...Nxe4 8.Nb3 Rh8 9.e7 d2 10.Nxd2 Kxd2 = or 9.Ndf7 Re8 10.d5 d2 11.Nxd2 Kxd2 =

6...Rxa2 (6...h1=Q 7.Qxd3 Kd1 8.Qc2+ Ke2 9.Nb3 Qxe4 10.Qxd2+ +-)

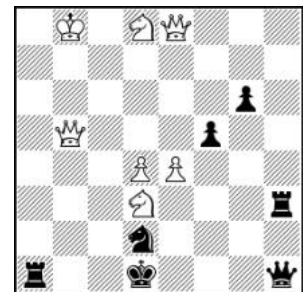
a1) 9...Rh3 10.Qdb5! Rxa1 11.Nd3! [Diagram, BTM]

11. ... Rxd3 12.Qxd3 and, with wK on b8, there is no fork, foresight effect! - White now wins, eg 12...Rb1+ 13.Nb7.

Instead of **9...Rh3**, Black's defence can be improved with:

7.Qxd3+ Rd1 8.e7!

a) 8...h1=Q 9.e8D



a2) 9...fxe4! 10.Qg3!

10.Qe3? Qf1! 11.Qc6 Rxa1 12.Qec3 Rha7 = ; 10.Qc3? Rh3! 11.Qc8 e3 12.Qec6 Rxa1 13.Qc2+ Ke1 14.Q8c6 and, eg, 14...Rb1+ 15.Kc7 Qxc6+ 16.Ndxc6 e2 =

10...e3! 11.Qc6!

(11.Qg4+? e2 12.Qc6 and, eg, 12...Qh3 =)

11... Rb2+ 12.Kc8 Qxc6+ 13.Ndxc6! (13.Nexc6? e2(Nc4) =)

13...Rh8+ 14.Nd8!

loss of time : 14.Kc7?! Rh7+ 15.Kc8! Rh8+ 16.Nd8 +- since 15.Nd7? fails to 15...e2 16.Qa3 and, eg, 16...e1=Q 17.Qxb2 Qg3 18.Ne5 Rh3 =

14...e2 15.Nd3! and White wins - but not 15.Nf3? and, eg, 15...Rh1 =

-b) 8...fxe4 9.Qg3!

9.Qc3? and, eg, 9...h1=Q 10.Nb3 e3 11.Qc1+ Ke2 12.Qxh1 Rxh1 13.e8=Q Rb2 14.Qc6
Rxb3+ 15.Kc8 Rh4 =

9...Rb2+

9...h1=Q 10.Qg4+ Kc1 11.e8=Q Rh8 (or 10.e8=Q Rh8 10.Qg4+ Kc1) 11.Qc6(8)+ +-

10.Kc8 Ra2! (Now 11.e8=Q?? Ra8#)

11.Qg4+! and White wins

but not: -11.Nd7? Ra8+! 12.Nb8 Rxe7 13.Qxh2 Raa7! 14.d5 Re(a)c7+ 15.Qxc7 Rxc7+
16.Kxc7 e3 = or 14.Qg1+ Ke2 15.Qg3 Kd1! = -11.Qg2? h1=Q 12.Qxh1+ Rxh1 13.e8=Q
Rh7 14.Nd7 Ra7 15.Nb7 Ra8+ 16.Nb8 Ra7 = and not 11...Ra8+? 12.Kb7 h1=Q
13.Qxh1+ Rxh1 14.e8=Q Rxa1 15.Ne6 e3 16.Nd3 +- -11.Qxh2? Rxh2 12.e8=Q Rh7!
13.Nd7 Ra7 14.Nb7 Ra8+ 15. Nb8 Ra7 16.Nd6 Rxa1 17.Nxe4 Nxe4 18.Qxe4 Raa7 = or
13.Nef7 Rxa1 14.Qe6 Rc1 15.Kd7 Rc3 16.Qxg6 e3 17.Qg1+ Kc2 18.Qe1 Rd3 =

c) 8...Rh8 9.Nxg6!

9.Nc4? h1=Q 10.Nc2 Qh2+ 11.e5 f4 12.Nb4 Qh4 13.Nxa2 Rxd8+ 14.exd8=Q Qxd8+
15.Kb7 Qd(e)7+ 16.Kb6 Qd8+ 17.Kc6 Qe8+ 18.Kd6 Qf8+ 19.Ke6 Qg8+ 20.Kf6 Qxc4!
21.Qxc4 Nxc4 22.e6 Kd2! 23.e7 f3 24.Nc3 (24.e8=Q f2 25.Qxg6 f1=Q+ =) 23...Nd6!
24.Ke5 f2 25.Kxd6 f1=Q 26.e8=Q Kxc3 =

9... fxe4 10.Qb5 Rxa1 11.Nxh8 h1=Q 12. e8=Q

and White wins, eg, 12...Rb1 13.Qxb1+ Nxb1 13.Qa4+ Kd2 14.Qa2+ Kc1 15.Ng6 Qf1
16.Kc7 Qb5 17.Nc6 Nc3 18.Qa3+ Qb2 19.Qc5 e3 20.Nf4 +-

d) 8...Rxe7 9.Qh3 Rb2+ 10.Kc8 Ra2 11.Nd7!

11.Nec6? Ra8+ 12.Nb8 fxe4 (Raa7) 13.Qxh2 Raa7 (fxe4) =

11...Rxa1

11...Nxe4 eg 12.Qf1+ Kd2 13.Qg2+ Ke3 14.Qxa2 Rh7 15.Nf6 h1=Q 16.Na3+ Ke1
17.Nxh7 Qxh7 18.Nc4 or 11...Rxe4 12.Qxh2 Rxa1 13.d5 (Nc6) and White wins +-

12.Nc6!

12.exf5? Re2 13.fxg6 Kc2! 14.g7 Rg1! = or 13.f6 Rc1+! 14.Kb8 Rb1+ 15.Kc7 Rb3 =;
12.Qxh2? Ra7! =

12...Rxe4 13.Qxh2 and White wins.