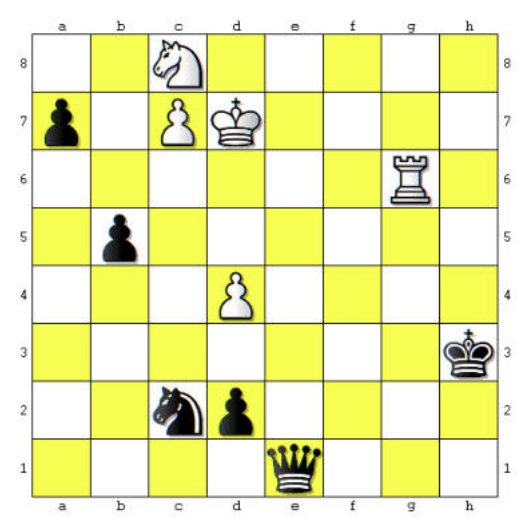




Alain Pallier

White to move and win

12th Commendation

It is somehow fitting that Pallier appears both at the very top of the regular Honorable Mentions and at the very bottom of the regular Commendations. It could seem, at first sight, to get in touch with two versions of Pallier: the chaotic yet rational one, and the completely wild one.

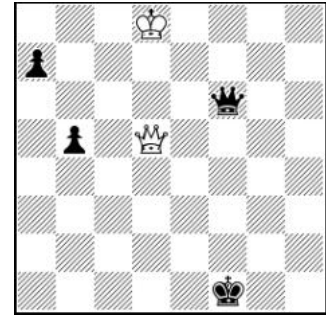
The earlier study rewarded by the judge possessed, despite all its analytical complexity, a clearly recognizable thematic heart: the reader could always feel the gravitational centre of the play, even while navigating through highly chaotic variations. The present work moves in the opposite direction: here, almost all sense of immediate orientation is deliberately sacrificed in favour of an immense and tangled analytical net, filled with hidden pins, precise Queen placements, quiet

King manoeuvres (some moves are astonishing, even if no human could understand why), and elusive drawing mechanisms that often seem to survive by a single tempo. At times, the study borders on opacity; following its logic: it requires unusual concentration even from experienced solvers. And yet, despite this excess, the work retains a strange fascination. One feels throughout the analysis the sincerity of the compositional effort, the refusal to simplify, and the determination to push the position as far as its internal logic would permit. The result is not entirely harmonious, but undeniably alive.

In a tourney explicitly devoted to the outer edges of chess composition, such uncompromising artistic honesty deserved recognition. Unlike in the 1st Honorable Mention, where I made some edits, here I will report the solution *exactly* as the Author has presented it. I am sure this will contribute to enrich the somehow perverse charm that derives from this apparent chess nonsense. Additional honors will be granted to those able to understand what happens here below without computer assistance.

Solution: **1.Ne7!**

1.Nd6? Qh4 (d1Q) 2.c8Q d1Q (Qh4) -+ but not 1...Nxd4? 2.c8Q d1Q 3.Qh8+ Qh4
 4.Rh6 Qg4+ =
1...d1Q (Nxd4)
2.c8Q Nxd4 (d1Q)
3.Kc7+
 3.Ke8+? Kh4(2) -+
3...Kh4



3...Ne6+ 4.Rxe6 Qg3+ 5.Kb7! (5.Re5+? Qdg4 -+) eg 5...Qgf3+ 6.Nc6 Kg2 7.Qc7 =

4.Qh8+

4.Rh6+? Kg5! 5.Qg8+ Kf4! -+

4...Qh5

5.Qxd4+ Kh3

6.Kc8!

First quiet white K-move (with Ne7 *en prise*). White must avoid a Q-pin with wKc7 and bQd6, leading to a Q-exchange that wins for Black. On d4, white Queen is on its optimal square and must not immediately move.

6.Qd3+? Kh2 7.Nc6 Qh7+! 8.Kd6 Qhh4! 9.Kc7 (9.Qxb5 and, eg, 9...Qd1+ -+) 9...Qef2

10.Qd6+ Qhf4 -+

Other annoying pins occur after 6.Qd7+? Kh2 7.Rd6 and, eg, 7...Qc3+ 8.Nc6 b4 -+ or

7.Re6 and, eg, 7...Qed1 8.Rd6 Qe5 9.Nc6 Qf4 -+

6...Qed1!

6...Qc1+ 7.Kb8 Qe1 and, eg, 8.Kc8=

7.Qf4(6)!

- 7.Qc3+? Qdf3 8.Qg7 and, eg, 8...Qc5+ 9.Rc6+ Qxc6+ 10.Nxc6 Qxc6+ 11.Kb8 a5 -+ or

8.Qd4 Qh4 9.Qd7+ Kh2 10.Nc6 Qfh3 11.Re6 Q4g4 12.Qd6+ Kg1 13.Nd8 b4 -+

- 7.Qe3+? Qdf3! 8.Qe6+ Kh2 9.Qd6+ (9.Rh6? Qf8+ -+) 9...Kh1 10.Kc7 (10.Re6 and, eg,

10...Qhg4 11.Kc7 Qgf4 12.Re5 b4 13.Nd5 Qh4 14.Qxb4 Qxb4 15.Nxb4 a5 -+) 10...Qe3

11.Qc6+ Qhf3! 12.Rh6+ Kg1(2) 13.Rg6+ Kf2 14.Qc2+ and, eg, 14...Ke1 15.Qb1+ Qd1

16.Qb4+ Qdd2 17.Qh4+ Kd1 18.Qh5+ (18.Rd6 Qe5/c5+) 18...Qee2 19.Rg1+ Kc2

20.Qg6+ Qed3 -+

7...Qdf3

7...Qh8+ (if 7.Qf4 played) 8.Rg8 =

8.Qd6!

d6 is another optimal square for white Queen. On other squares, Black quickly wins.

8.Qg7? and, eg, 8...Qc5+ 9.Rc6 Qxc6+ 10.Nxc6 Qxc6+ 11.Kb8 a5 -+

8.Qd4? and, eg, 8...Qh4 9.Qe5 b4 -+

8...Qh8+

8...Qe3!? 9.Nd5! Qf5+ 10.Kd8! Qef3 11.Rh6+ Kg2 12.Rg6+ Kf1 13.Rf6 Q3(5)xd5

14.Qxd5 Qxf6+ with a first 'thematic' Q-ending:

and now only 15.Kd7! draws.

9.Kc7!

Not 9.Kd7? Qb7+ 10.Ke6 Qb6! 11.Nc6 Qe3+ 12.Ne5 b4 -+ nor 9.Rg8? Qhf6! 10.Qd7+ Kh2 11.Qc7+ Kh1 12.Qc1+ Qf1 -+

9...Qe3

9...Qfc3+ 10.Kb7 Qhe5 11.Qd7+! Kh2 and, eg, 12.Nc6 Qf4 13.Qh7+ Qh3 14.Qg7 = 9...Qhc3+ 10.Kb8 Qf8+ 11.Kb7 Qcf3+ 12.Ka6 b4 13.Rh6+ Kg2 14.Qd2+ Qf2 15.Rh6+ =

10.Kd7!!

Second quiet move by white King (possible now that 9...Qe3 has been played).

And not 10.Nd5? Qc1+! 11.Qc6 Qh7+ -+

a) 10...a5

10...Qh4 11.Nf5(d5) Qh7+ 12.Ne7 a6 (a5) 13.Qf6 Qexe7+ 14.Qxe7 Qxg6 and White draws.

11.Qd5! Qa7+

12.Ke6! Qb6+

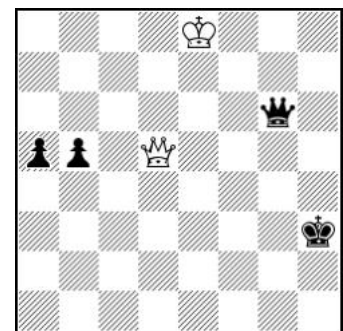
13.Kf7 Qh7+

13...Qf2+ 14.Ke6! Qe3+ 15.Kd7! (15.Kf7? Qh7+ 16.Rg7 Qf2+ -+) 15...Qa7+ (15...Qhd4+ 16.Rg3+/Rh6+ =) or 14...Qe2+ 15.Kd7! (15.Kf7? Qh7+ 16.Rg7 Qf1+ -+) 15...Kh2 16.Re6! Qh3 17.Qd6+! Kg1 18.Qc5+ Kf1 19.Qc1+ Kf2 20.Qc5+ Kg2 (20...Qee3 21.Qxe3+ Qxe3 22.Rxe3 Kxe3 and, eg, 23.Nc6 =) 21.Qc6+ Qef3 22.Qc2+ and White draws.

14.Ke8!

14...Q(~)xg6+

15.Rxg6 Qxg6+



16.Ke7!

16.Kd8? Qb6+ 17.Kc8(Kd7) b4 -+ ;

16.Kd7? Qg4+ and 17...Qc4 -+

16...b4

16...Qg4 (for 17.Qxb5? Qb4+ -+) 17.Qh1+ Kg3 18.Qg1(Qe1)+ = ; 16...Qg7+ and, eg, 17.Kd6 =

17.Qh1+! Kg4

18.Qg1(2)+ Kh5

19.Qh1(2)+ Kg5

20.Qc1(d2)+ and White draws.

b) 10...a6

11.Qd5!

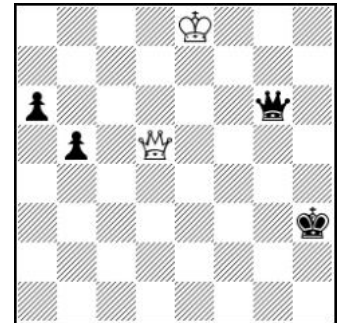
11.Qxa6? and, eg, 11...Qh4 (Qf8) -+

11...Qa7+ 12.Ke6 Qb6+ 13.Kf7 Qh7+

13...Qf2+ 14.Ke6 Qb6+ 15.Kf7 =

14.Ke8 Q(~)xg6+

15.Rxg6 Qxg6+



16.Kd8!

-16.Ke7? Qg7+ 17.Ke8 (17.Kd6/8 Qc3 -+) 17...Qg4! 18.Qh1+ Kg3 19.Qe1+ Kg2! 20.Qd2+ Kf1 21.Qc1+ Kf2! 22.Qc5+ Kg2 23.Qc2+ Kg3 24.Qc7+ Qf4 25.Qc3+ and, eg, 25...Qf3 26.Qe1+ Kf4 27.Qh4+ Ke3 28.Qh6+ Kf2 29.Qh2+ Kf1 and no more check,

Black wins.

-16.Kd7? Qg4+! 17.Kd8 and, eg, 17...Kh4 18.Qh1+ Kg5 19.Qd5+ Qf5 20.Qg2+ Kf6 21.Qc6+ Kf7 22.Qc7+ Kg6 23.Qd6+ Qf6+ 23.Ke8 Kf5! (23...Qxd6 stalemate) 24.Qd3+ Kg4 25.Qe2+ Kg3 26.Qe1+ Kg2 27.Qd2+ Qf2 28.Qg5+ Kf1 and Black wins.

16...Qb6+

17.Kd7! 17.Kc8? b4 -+

and White draws, eg 17...b4 18.Qf3+ etc.

Here the difference with a) is that, some moves later, in position

W: Kd7,Qg2/B: Kg7,Qb6,a6,b4, btm,

Black can not interpose ...bQg6 because a-pawn is on a6 (after...Qg6, Qb2+! and Qxb4 draws). With a-pawn on a5, b4 is defended.

Or 16...Qg4

17.Qh1+! Kg3

18.Qg1(e1)+ and White draws.