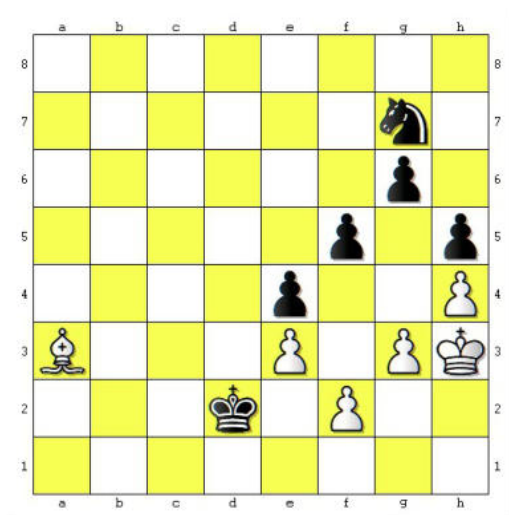




Volker Hergert

White to move and draw

1st Special Honorable Mention

The Author comments in his email: *"It is a study that explores corresponding squares between Bishop and Knight with touching no less than 14 of these square pairs in the main line. I created this example already at the end of 2023 and it has remained unpublished so far as I have always thought that it does not follow the strict formal rules of typical*

formal tournaments - the pawns do not move in the solution, the Kings make just one alibi move each, so it's all about the funny hunting game of Bishop and Knight. I have used this study in the last two years only as a showcase for corresponding squares in my lectures on study composition, but now that you write in your invitation that you appreciate a sense of humour rather than strict formal perfection and adherence to conventions, I feel motivated to make it an entry to your JT. "

Well done! The study is lovely and funny. One must strive a lot to understand why some squares are good and some others not (14 couples of corresponding squares is something very close to a task, something in-between chess composition and chess research), and that's one of the reasons why chess is such a mysterious and fascinating world. But the dance of the minor pieces is the key point, besides everything. And that is a point of remarkable artistic value. I didn't penalize the rigidity of the pawn structure or the poor activity of the Kings because I think that the overall impression of the study easily outscores these little flaws.

Solution: **1. Kg2!** (1. Be7? Ke1! 2. Kg2 Ke2 {-+ mutual zugzwang}) (1. Bb2 ? Ne6 2. Kg2 Ke2 -+) **1. .. Ke2 2. Be7** {! White should not allow the Knight to reach any of the key squares d1, d3 or g4. This is a situation of mutual zugzwang and from here onwards it's all about corresponding squares between Bishop and Knight in ongoing zugzwangs for Black.} **Ne8** (2. .. Ne6 3. Bd6 !0) **3. Bd8 Nd6 4. Bf6 Nc8** (4. .. Nc4 5. Bd4 Na5 (5. .. Nd2 6. Bb2 Nf3 7. Bc3) 6. Bc5 Nc6 (6. .. Nb3 7. Ba3) 7. Bd6) (4. .. Nb5 5. Be5 Na7 6. Bc7 Draw) (4. .. Nf7 5. Bg7 !0) **5. Bd8 Na7 6. Bc7 Nc6 7. Bd6 Na5 8. Bc5 Nb3 9. Ba3 Nd2 10. Bb2 Nf3 11. Bc3** {The solution explores 14 corresponding squares between Bishop and Knight: g7/e7, e6/d6, e8/d8, d6/f6, c8/d8, c4/d4, b5/e5, f7/g7, a5/c5, d2/b2, c6/d6, b3/a3, f3/c3, and a7/c7!} **Ne1+** {Finally breaking the series of zugzwangs and corresponding squares, but the pawns endgame is also a draw.} **12. Bxe1 Kxe1 13. Kg1 Ke2 14. Kg2** Draw 1/2-1/2