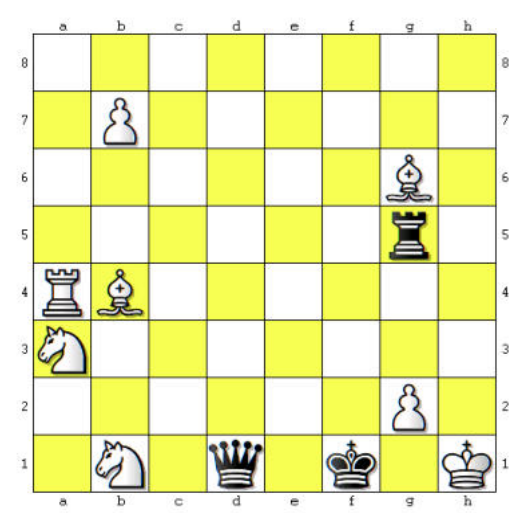




Michael Pasman

White to move and draw

>> 2nd Prize <<

A magnificent exercise in deferred realization. White could promote the b-pawn immediately, yet every attempt fails because Black's persistent mating threats leave no time for this seemingly obvious resource. The entire play therefore revolves around a fascinating sequence of postponements, each forcing White

to discover another subtle resource (the threatened counter-checks are wonderful)

before promotion can finally become possible. The artistic highlight is the extraordinary sacrificial march of the white army. One after another, every white piece disappears, all of them being sacrificed on the first rank, until the board is reduced to the lone b-pawn. Only then does the long-awaited promotion finally occur. The repeated thematic tries with premature promotion create a powerful long-foresight effect, while Black's constant threat ...Kf2+ provides remarkable unity throughout the play.

An elegant and highly original conception in which the delayed promotion is not merely a theme, but the inevitable conclusion of a beautifully organized process of complete self-destruction. A memorable achievement.

Solution with comments of the Author:

{Black has mate threats like Kf2+ and Rh5+. So meantime white has no time for promotion of b7 pawn.}

1. Be1!

{Thematic try: (1. b8=Q ? Kf2+ 2. Be1+ Qxe1+)

(1. Bc5 ? Rh5+)

1. .. Qxe1 *(1. .. Kxe1 ?? 2. Rd4 ! Qxd4 3. Nc2+)*

2. Nc2 !

(2. Re4 ? 2. .. Qf2) ({Thematic try: 2. b8=Q ? Kf2+)

(2. Rf4+ ? Ke2+ 3. Kh2 Qg3+)

2. .. Qc1 *{! The threat is still Kf2+ with mate following}*

(2. .. Qxb1 ?? 3. Ra1)

3. Ra2 !

{Thematic try: 3. b8=Q ? Kf2+} 3. .. Rxc2 {White is prepared to meet} (3. .. Kf2+ {with}

4. Ne1+ !) (3. .. Rxc6 4. b8=Q Rh6+ 5. Qh2 Kf2+ 6. Ne1+ Kxe1 7. Rd2 Rxc2+
8. Kxc2 Qxb1 9. Rd7!)

4. Bd3+!

(4. Bh5 ? Rg1+ 5. Kh2 Qf4+) (4. Ne3+ ? Qxe3 5. Rxc2 Qh3+ 6. Rh2 Qf3+)

4. .. Re2!

(4. .. Kf2+ ?? 5. Ne1+)

5. Bxe2+ {White still has no time for promotion} Kf2+! 6. Ne1!

(6. Bd1 ? Qh6+)

6. .. Qxe1+ 7. Bf1+ ! Kxf1 8. Nd2+!

(8. Nc3 ? Qh4+ 9. Rh2 Qg3)

(*{Thematic try: 8. b8=Q ? Qe4+ 9. Kh2 Qh4#}*)

8. ... Kf2+ 9. Nf1+ ! Kxf1 10. Ra1 {! sacrifices the last piece}

{Thematic try: 10. b8=Q ? Qe4+ 11. Kh2 Qh4#}

**10. .. Qxa1 {White sacrificed all of his pieces and now remains just with one pawn. All
the pieces were sacrificed on the first rank.}**

**11. b8=Q {The pawn could be promoted from the first move, but is promoted only
now, while all other white pieces have been sacrificed.}**

11. ... Kf2+ 12. Kh2 Qg1+ 13. Kh3

1/2-1/2

Judge's Appendix: "Don't impress me. Make me remember".

The decision to award this study the Second Prize deserves a brief explanation.

Several studies in this tournament display deeper tactical complexity or more sophisticated analytical content. However, this work possesses a quality that is considerably rarer:

***it tells a story. And not a normal story, but an extraordinary one.** A story whose emotional structure feels surprisingly close to my own way of thinking about chess composition. And only the even more incredible storytelling of the 1st Prize prevented this study to be the winner of the tourney.*

The story is simple and terrific at the same time. From the very first move White already owns the decisive resource, the promotion of the b-pawn. Yet the composer transforms this obvious possibility into a dramatic objective that remains unattainable until the very end. Every time the reader expects the natural promotion, another hidden obstacle appears. An extremely powerful narrative rhythm. The reader is drawn into the solution almost like watching a psychological thriller, where every apparent resolution only opens the door to a new obstacle.

Even more remarkable is the sacrificial architecture. One after another, every single white piece disappears, all of them deliberately sacrificed on the first rank before the lonely pawn is finally allowed to fulfil its destiny. This extraordinary consistency gives the study an almost literary structure: **the promotion is not simply delayed, but earned**. Only after ten moves does the promotion finally become possible. Perhaps this is one reason why the study affected me so strongly. The promotion is earned only after ten moves of endurance, an image that inevitably reminded me of the ten-year journey celebrated by this tourney.

Whether the complete first-rank annihilation of the entire white army before the final promotion is entirely new I cannot state with certainty. Nevertheless, it creates an unforgettable artistic impression and elevates the work well beyond the value of its individual tactical ideas.

For this reason I have preferred this study to several analytically stronger competitors. Analytical consistency is important, but so is the ability to make the solver remember a composition long after its analytical details have faded.