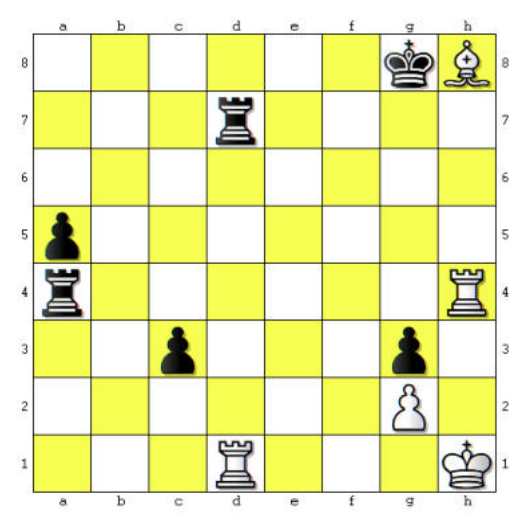




Peter Boll & Sergey Osintsev

White to move and draw

> 6th Prize <

A logical study built entirely without captures, where the battle is fought through manoeuvring, timing and subtle positional transformations. The play revolves around a series of thematic attempts in which White comes tantalizingly close to securing a draw, only to discover that a single lost tempo allows

Black's machinery to function. The recurring motif is the precise placement of the Rooks: seemingly similar positions must be reached under slightly different circumstances, and these small differences completely change the evaluation.

Particularly attractive is the gradual evolution of the defensive setup. The same strategic ideas reappear several times with Black's Rook transferred from one rank to another, creating a chain of related positions linked by delicate move-order nuances. The study thus acquires the character of a logical proof, where every detail matters and every tempo has a purpose.

There are no spectacular sacrifices, promotions or mating finales. Instead, the artistic content lies in the purity of the construction, the economy of the play and the impressive consistency with which the central idea is developed. A fine example of modern logical study composition.

Solution: **1. Bd4!**

(1. Rxa4 ?? Rxd1#)

1. .. c2 2. Rh8+ (2. Rg4+ ?? Kh7 {! -+})

2. .. Kf7 3. Rf1+ Ke6 4. Bb2

(4. Re8+ ?? Kd5 -+)

(4. Re1+ ?? Kd5 -+)

4. .. Rd1

(4. .. Rb4 5. Bc1 Rd1 6. Re8+ Kd7 7. Ree1 Rbd4 8. Kg1 a4 9. Re2 Rh4 10. Ree1 Rhd4 11. Re2 {Positional draw with the black Rook on the fourth rank})

5. Re8+ Kd7 6. Ree1 Rad4 7. Kg1 !! {Thematic try}

(7. Bxd4 {?? counterplay to stalemate} c1=Q 8. Rf7+ Kc6 9. Rf6+ Kb5 !

{And not} (9. .. Kd5 ?? 10. Bg1 Rxe1 11. Rd6+ (11. Rf5+) 11. .. Kxd6 {! stalemate with

the Bishop pin)) 10. Bg1 Qc4!
 {And not} (10. .. Qc7 ?? 11. Rb6+ ! Qxb6 (11. .. Ka4 12. Re4+ {check} Ka3) 12. Re5+ Ka6 13. Rxa5+ ! Kb7 14. Ra7+ Kc6 15. Rc7+ Kb5 16. Rc5+ Qxc5 {stalemate with the Bishop pin} 11. Rb6+ Ka4 12. Re4 {without check} Rxc1+ !
 {And not} (12. .. Qxe4 ?? 13. Rb4+ ! Qxb4 {stalemate with the Bishop pin}) 13. Kxg1 Qxe4 -+)

7. .. Rd6 {main line}
 (7. .. R4d3 8. Re2 ! {loss of tempo} (8. Bc1 ?? a4 9. Re2 Rc3 10. Ree1 Rxe1 11. Rxe1 {Position A1 with bRc3 – there is a move 11...a3} a3 12. Kf1 a2 -+) 8. .. Rc3 ! (8. .. R3d2 9. Rxd2+ Rxd2 10. Re1 Rd1 11. Kf1 Rd2) 9. Ree1 Rcd3 (9. .. Rxe1 10. Rxe1 Rb3 11. Bc1) 10. Re2 {! Positional draw with the black Rook on the third rank})
 ({main line} 7. .. R4d2 8. Bc1 Rd3 9. Re2 {Positional draw with the black Rook on the third rank} Rc3 10. Ree1 (10. Re4) 10. .. Rcd3 11. Re2!)

8. Bc1
 {Thematic try} (8. Re2 ?? 8. .. Re6 ! 9. Rxc2 Ree1 10. Rd2+ Rxd2 11. Rxe1 Rxb2 12. Kf1 Rf2+ ! (12. .. Kc6 ?? 13. Re3 Kc5 14. Rxc3 a4 15. Ke1 Kb4 16. Kd1) 13. Kg1 Ra2 14. Kf1 a4 15. Re3 Ra1+ 16. Ke2 a3 17. Rxc3 a2 18. Ra3 Rg1 19. Rxa2 Rxc2+ {-+ skewer})
 ({Thematic try} 8. Ba3 {?? Loss of tempo.} R6d3 ! 9. Bc1 a4 10. Re2 Rc3 11. Ree1 Rxe1 12. Rxe1 {Position A1 with bRc3 - there is a move 12...a3} a3 13. Kf1 a2 -+)

8. .. a4 9. Re2
 (9. Rf7+ ?? Kc6 {! -+})
9. .. Rc6 10. Ree1 {Position B with wRe1}
 {Thematic try} (10. Re3 ?? Re6 ! 11. Rxc3 Ree1 {Position B1 with bRe1. The black and white Rooks have swapped places!} 12. Rf3 Rxc1 -+)

10. .. Rcd6 11. Re2 Rf6 12. Ree1!
 (12. Rfe1 ?? Rf2 -+)

12. .. Rfd6
 (12. .. Rxe1 13. Rxe1 { Position A with bRf6 - no move 13...a3})

13. Re2 {! Positional draw with the black Rook on the sixth rank. Game without captures!} 1/2- 1/2

Judge's Appendix: Bending the Rules Without Bending Them at All

Evaluating the correct placement of this study was not simple. At first sight, it does not seem to belong naturally among the prize winners of a tourney dedicated to pushing the

boundaries of endgame study art. It contains no paradoxical promotions, no spectacular violations of convention, and no attempt to redefine what an endgame study can be. Yet, during the judging process, I found it impossible to ignore the extraordinary precision of the construction. Every manoeuvre, every tempo, every transposition appears to have been calculated with almost mathematical exactness. The study possesses a quiet but undeniable artistic authority: one feels that nothing could be added, removed, or displaced without damaging the whole mechanism.

For this reason I ultimately decided to award it a Prize. If many other awarded studies challenged the rules of chess composition, this one achieves something different:

it bends the rules of the tourney itself.

Perhaps it's the highest compliment I can pay to a study like this. Its beauty emerges not from breaking conventions, but from perfecting them. And this cannot leave the judge indifferent.