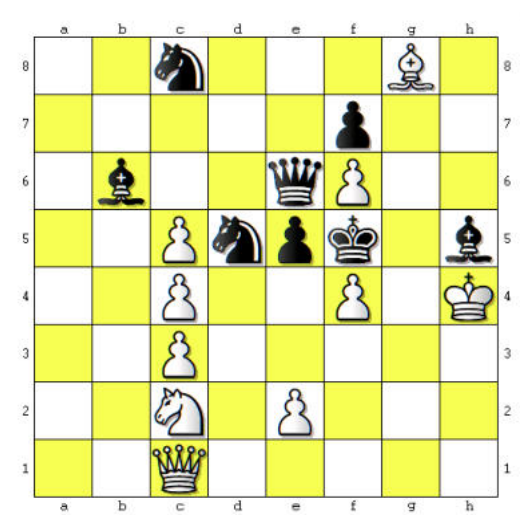




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White to move and win

7th Honorable Mention

The whole study is built towards a striking final image. What initially appears to be the obvious winning move, 1. e4+, proves to be wrong. The advance of the central pawn can succeed only after a carefully orchestrated sequence in which Black is gradually forced to block two crucial escape squares with his own pieces. The artistic climax comes with the ideal

mate delivered by four connected white pawns occupying the central squares, an attractive geometrical picture. Particularly pleasing is the delayed realization of the thematic pawn advance: the very move that fails at the beginning becomes the decisive mating move only after the necessary strategic conditions have been patiently created.

The route to this finale is perhaps less convincing than the final image itself. Parts of the play mainly serve to connect the thematic moments, while the crowded position and the rather constructed manoeuvring occasionally give the solution a somewhat artificial flavour. Nevertheless, the originality of the concluding mating picture compensates for these shortcomings and leaves the solver with a satisfying final impression.

Solution with comments by the Author:

1. Bh7+ !

{Try:} (1. e4+ ? Kxe4 ! (1. .. Kxf6 ? 2. f5 ! Qe8 3. Qg5#) 2. Bh7+ Bg6 {draw.})

1. .. Bg6

(1. .. Kxf6 2. f5 {! +-})

2. Bxg6+ fxg6

{! The best move, but the black pawn blocked the square for its King.}

{Loses immediately} (2. .. Kxg6 3. Qg1+ Kh7 4. Qg7#) (2. .. Kxf6 3. cxd5

Qxd5 4. cxb6 fxg6 5. Qe3 +-)

3. cxd5 Qxf6+ 4. Kg3 Bxc5 5. Nd4+ !

{Misses a win} (5. Ne3+ ? Bxe3 6. Qxe3 Nd6 7. c4 e4 -+)

5. .. Bxd4

(5. .. exd4 6. Qb1+ d3 7. Qxd3#)

6. cxd4 Nd6 !

(6. .. Ke4 7. dxe5 {! +-})

7. fxe5 !

{Thematic try:} (7. dxe5 ? Ne4+ 8. Kf3 Qh8 {! draw. Position X with Pf4.

without Pd4 - no 9. Qf4#})

7. .. Ne4+ 8. Kf3 Ng5+ ! {main}

(8. .. Qh8 {Position X without Pf4, with Pd4} 9. Qf4#)

(8. .. Qh4 9. Qc8+ Kg5 10. Qd8+ +-)

9. Qxg5+ !

(9. Kg3 ?! Ne4+)

9. .. Qxg5 {Blocking of the second square for the black King.}

10. e4# !

{Premature pawn advance is a mistake: the move 1. e4? is just an illusion. The pawn move will become the final mating blow after the center of the board is controlled by the remaining pawns. In the final, an ideal checkmate with four pawns in the center of the board with two active blocked squares.}