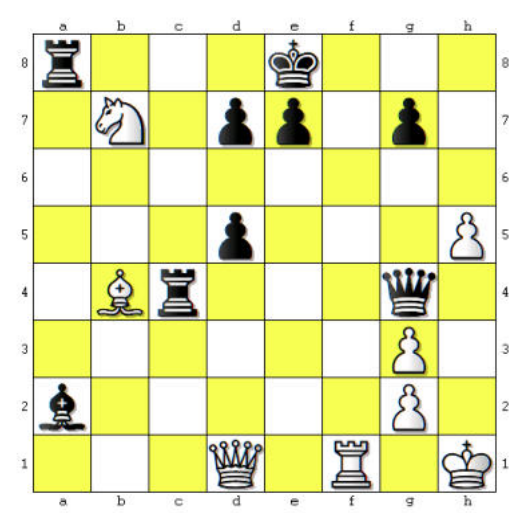




Alexander Stavrietsky
 White to move and draw
Special Commendation

This study offers an elegant elaboration of a previously known thematic mechanism. The energetic introduction beginning with 1.Nd6+! leads to a carefully orchestrated sequence of exchanges in which White deliberately dismantles the position in order to reach a remarkable positional draw. The final oscillation of the Bishop and Rook creates an attractive impression of dynamic equilibrium, while Black's preserved castling right contributes an unusual and memorable feature to the concluding position.

Although the thematic core was anticipated in earlier studies by Pogosyants and later developed by Aliev, Stavrietsky introduces an aesthetically pleasing symmetrical duplication of the mechanism, giving the construction greater structural completeness. This addition does not fundamentally transform the underlying idea, but it enriches its presentation sufficiently to deserve recognition as a refined development of established material. For this reason, already explained in the introduction to the final award, the study is awarded a **Special Commendation** rather than a higher distinction (which was originally the 8th Honorable Mention).

Solution: 1. Nd6+! exd6 2. Qxd5 Qh4+! 3. gxh4 Rxh4+ 4. Kg1 Bxd5 5. Bxd6

{Main A:} 5. ... Bf7 6. Re1+ Be6 7. Rf1 Bf7 8. Re1+ Be6 9. Rf1 {positional draw.}

{Main B:} 5. ... O-O-O 6. Rb1 Bb7 7. Rc1+ Bc6 8. Rb1 {positional draw.}