

The starting position actually inspires questions about what play could possibly have led up to it, and for some tastes the board would seem a bit 'busy'. I do not mind this sort of thing so much in studies – I have even settled upon a phrase to describe this area of taste: I call it a person's *tolerance for scenery*. Importantly, there is no better or worse tolerance, it is entirely a matter of personal taste. Obviously we all appreciate an idea neatly encapsulated in an economical setting, but the fact is that some ideas need a few more pieces on the board, and this is a case in point. **1.Bb5+ Ka5** (1...Kb7 2.Bf1 or hxg3) **2.Sd2 Sa6+ 3.Bxa6** (else 3.Kc6 Sb8+ 4.Kc5 Sa6+ drawing) **g2 4.Bf1!!** A cracking move, and also, for our purposes, a storytelling point. If Bf1 had been the first move, it would not have seemed as remarkable. The introductory play, or preamble, is really there to showcase this move and what follows. This does not mean that the first move in a study *cannot* be the star move (and in fact I rather like such studies), but it is interesting to note that when this happens the move and why it is vital are usually heavily disguised, that disguise being the point of the study. **4...g1=Q 5.h6**. White wants to play Sc4+, Sd6+ and Sb7 mate, so he prevents ...Qg7 which would guard b7. The solver is already aware that the study is entering an unexpected new phase and that it is not just about Bf1. It is moving to 'the next chapter' as our Editor insightfully pointed out at the meeting. **5...Qh1** (The queen must keep attacking the bishop. 5...e4 is refuted by 6.h4! Qh1 7.Kc6 Qg1 8.h5 Qh1 9.Bb5! f1=Q 10.Bxf1 Qg1 11.Bb5 and wins) **6.e4** (to shut off the diagonal escape route) **6...Qg1 7.h3!!** In playing through these pawn moves, the solver realises the unique sequence required, which all adds to the dramatic effect. **7...Qh1 8.h4 Qg1 9.h5** (if 9.Kc6 Qg6+) **Qh1 10.Kc6! Qg1 11.Sc4+ Ka6**. This heralds a completely unexpected shift of the action to the top of the board. **12.Bh3!! Qg8 13.Sd6!! Qa8+ 14.Kc7!!** and with Bf1 and Sb7 coming in, White wins.

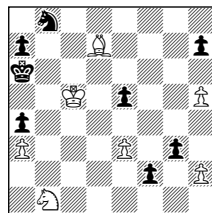
But stories do not *have* to be lengthy epics. They can be short and sweet. I find this study (6) by Kubbel, which is all of four moves by White, an especially witty anecdote. White's task in stopping the a-pawn does look impossible at first. **1.g4 Kxh3** (else 2.Kg2 mates) **2.Kh1! a2 3.Bg1!** (so that if Black promotes to a queen or rook it is stalemate) **a1=B!! 4.Bd4!!** draw. The twist at the end. And of course everybody thinks they have solved the study after 3.Bg1. For completeness, 3.a1=S is only good enough for a draw after 4.Bb6.

Following Kubbel's lightweight it is natural to ask how far things can be taken the other way, with an *extended* storyline. In recent years I have been revisiting the theme of the king in an enemy corner blocking his own pawn from promotion. Now for some this might immediately sound a bit old-fashioned, but, just like old recipes in cookery, it was probably found appealing in the first place for very enduring reasons and I have to confess I do find myself liking it. So I composed a study (7) that packed as many 'king in the corner' ideas in as I could (harmoniously).

At the meeting the main part of the study was turned into a move-by-move quiz. Readers who are seasoned solvers are encouraged to cover up the solution and have a go.

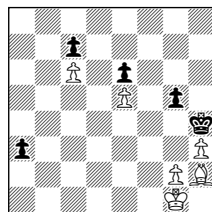
The individual motifs expressed in the solution are named in brackets after the moves that introduce them. They can be thought of as individual scenes or events within the story. The pieces, of course, can be characters in the tale. **1.Kb8 Sc7** (*Motif 1*: Clearance sacrifice guarding the promotion square) **2.dxc7 Qa8+** (*Motif 2*: Queen sacrifice to get the king back into the corner) **3.Kxa8 Kc8** (*Motif 3*: The Lock-in) **4.Qa4** A queen sacrifice to safeguard the long diagonal. If 4.Qxa6+ Bxa6 5.c6 Bb5 wins **4...Bxa4 5.bxa4 h4!** (*Motif 4*: A single diagonal for a bishop to cover. Otherwise Bf2, controlling the e1-h4 diagonal in front of the pawns, is a positional draw. White simply advances his pawns as far as they'll go and Black will have to capture the bishop to make progress, but that will then be stalemate. But after h4 the black pawns cannot be stopped.) **6.a5!** (*Motif 5*: Setting up a Bb6 self-incarceration stalemate). Else Black will play ...a5 himself and White will have no Bb6 stalemate (see below). And now if: 6...Kxc7 7.c6 as in the main line, but most spectacularly also 7.Bh2!! Kc8 8.Bxe5!! fxe5 9.c6 h3 10.c4 h2 11.c5 is a draw (!!!) even if Black tries promoting to a rook. One of my favourites. The way Black cannot help stumbling over his own feet whatever he does has to be seen to be believed. (*Motif 6*: The Diagonal Pin Stalemate Zugzwang) 6...h3 7.c6 and if now Kxc7 the same dual solution with 8.Bh2!! Kc8 9.Bxe5!! fxe5 10.c4 h2 11.c5 draw. 6...h3 7.c6 f5 8.c4 f4 9.Bb6!! h2 10.c5 draw. 6...h3 7.c6 e4 8.Bb6!! h2 9.c4 h1=Q 10.c5 draw (!). (*Motif 7*: The Bb6 stalemate with an additional blocking of the long

5 Oleg Pervakov
Prize Shakhmatnaya
Kompositzia 2003



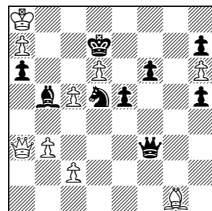
Win

6 L.I.Kubbel
Smena 1916



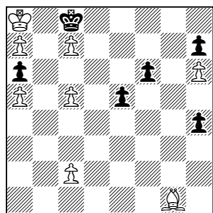
Draw

7 Caspar Bates
The Problemist
September 2016



Draw

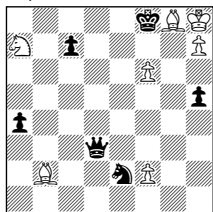
7a Caspar Bates



Position after 6.a5!

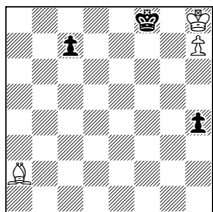
8 Caspar Bates

The Problemist
September 2017



Draw

8a



Position after 9...h4!

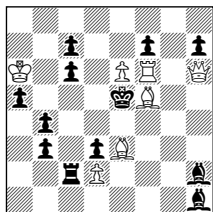
else, e.g. ...Se6, 7.f6!! and Black must capture White's knight to avoid being mated; if 5...Sf3 6.Sd4!! and now 6...Sg5 7.Se6+ Sxe6 8.f6 draw, or 6...a1=Q 7.f6 and 8.Se6+ draw. 5...Sxc6! 6.f6 Se7 7.fxe7+ Kxe7 8.f8=Q+ Kxf8 9.Bxa2 h4! (because of 9...c5 10.Bc4 h4 11.Be6 zugzwang and wins, and 9...c6 10.Bd5(!) c5 11.Bc4 h4 12.Be6 zugzwang and wins).

And we come to the diagrammed position at the very start of this article (8a). How can White possibly draw this position? Incidentally, this is of course exactly the sort of position to memorise, then show casually to a highly rated player: "That's odd, I would have expected you to be good at bishop and pawn endings..." **10.Bd5! h3 11.Bg2!!!** Professor Plum...in the billiard room...with the candlestick...! **11...h2** Black has been forced to expend his spare tempo to avoid zugzwang **12.Bc6! Kf7 13.Bd5+! Kf8 14.Bc6!** pendulum draw.

Wilfred Colin Evans – Part 2, by Brian Stephenson (continued from January, p13)

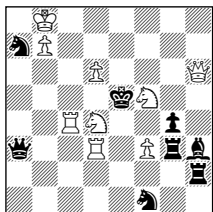
The rather makeshift key of **J**, another production from the Evans/Ricketts team, threatens a clearance by the wR. The variations show some good mates and there is an extra clearance when the rook travels one move further after 1...c5. It is good that the key pawn has a use in addition to making the key. 1.exf7! (2.Rd6 & 3.Qe6, Qf6#); 1...Kd5 2.Rd6+ Kc4/Ke5/Bxd6, cxd6 3.Bxd3/Qe6, Qf6/Qe6#; 1...Be4 2.Qxh2+ Kd5/Kxf6

J W.C. Evans & T.C.D. Ricketts
3 Pr The Problemist 1970



#3

K W.C. Evans & T.C.D. Ricketts
Šachoví umení 1970



#3

3.Be6/f8Q#; 1...Bd5 2.Re6+ Kxf5/Bxe6 3.Qh3, Qxe6#; 1...Bg1, Bf4 2.Q(x)f4+ Kd5/Kxf6 3.Be6, Qd4/f8Q#; 1...c5 2.Rc6 (3.Qe6#) Bd5 3.Qf6#.

Ricketts is helping again in **K**. Two queen sacrifices and some good mates. 1.Sg7! (2.Qg5+ Kxd6 3.Sb3, Sb5# and 2.Qe6+ Kf4 3.Qf5, Qf6#); 1...Qxd6+ 2.Qxd6+ Kxd6 3.Sc6#; 1...gxf3 2.Qf4+ Kxf4/Kd5 3.Sxf3/Sb3#; 1...Qxd3 2.Rc5+ Kxd4 3.Se6#; 1...Rxf3 2.Sxf3+ gxf3 3.Qf4#.

L won a first prize in that remarkable chess magazine *Busmen's Chess Review*. Its intended audience was just busmen but it attracted good original problems from home and abroad. 1.Qh3!