

Prizewinners explained

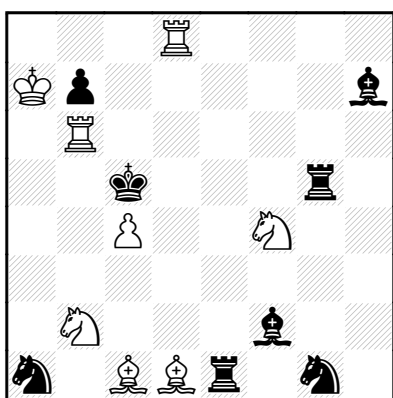
ACTION AT THE CROSSROADS

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The realm of OTB chess usually serves as a dynamic and continuous source of ideas for endgame study composers. Nevertheless, we should also seek inspiration in the backyards of our own neighbourhood: that of chess composition. Several themes and motives, initially born in various direct mate problems, have been gradually transferred to our noble genre and, although it seems not too easy to insert fresh blood into the worn veins of those classical themes, time and again we are still stunned by surprisingly new interpretations occasionally given to them.

Before examining, as usual, a pair of recent such efforts, let us intensively study a handful of classical themes by enjoying once again one of the finest threemovers ever created. Its Russian author is at least as well known as one of the greatest study composers of all time:

A.1 Leonid Kubbel, 1928



Mate in three

The key **1.Bg4!** introduces a **Novotny** threat (named after the Czech composer **Antonin Novotny** (1827-1871) who first used

the theme in a threemover published in 1854) : **2.Bf5!** – an active sacrifice at the crossroad of two unlike moving pieces to mutually disrupt their play: **2...Rxf5 3.Sfd3#; 2...Bxf5 3.Rd5#.**

Against the threat Black has six different defending moves:

1...Sh3 (to meet the threat with **2...Sxf4** which covers both mating squares) enables **2.Bf3!** (threatening **3.Rb5#**) and now: **2...Re4 3.Sfd3#** and **2...Be4 3.Se6#** are 2 **Grimshaw** defences: Mutual interferences of unlike moving pieces. Englishman **Walter Grimshaw** (1832-1890), who was the first to demonstrate this idea in a five mover in 1850, was also the winner of the first solving contest ever (London 1854).

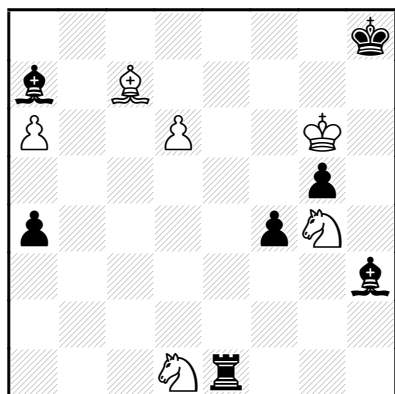
The next pair of defences shows the **Wurzburg-Plachutta** (mutual interferences of like moving pieces): **1...Rge5 2.Se6+! Rxe6 3.Rd5#; 1...Ree5 2.Rd5+! Rxd5 3.Se6#;** Next we have a pair of **mutual obstructions** between a Bishop and a Knight: **1...Bc2 2.Bd2** and **3.Bb4#** (**2...Sc2?**); **1...Sc2 2.Be6** and **3.Sa4#.** (**2...Bc2?**). Finally, the critical **1...Bb1** moves beyond the critical square f5 however proves a bit too critical enabling again **2.Bd2 Sc2 3.Sfd3#.** Amazing contents in a magnificent form!

Equipped with this basic terminology, let us now have a close look at two recent prizewinners.

Here is a delicious starter: an elegant realization of a **Double Novotny**:

A.2 Mirko Markovich

2nd Place 2nd Serbian and Montenegrin
championship 2004-2005

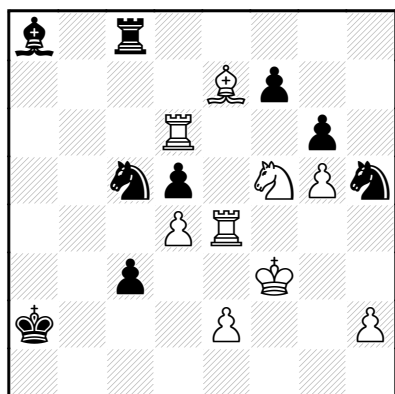


g6h8 0372.23 6/7 Win

1.Sdf2! (To decoy the bB to the other side of the critical square d4; 1.d7? Rxd1 2.Be5+ Kg8 3.Bd4 Rxd4 and Black wins) **1...Bxf2** (Following 1...Re6+ 2.Kxg5 Rxd6 3.Bxd6 Bf1 4.Se4 Bxa6 Black manages to obtain material balance but finds himself in a deadly mate net: 5.Kh6! Bd4 6.Sef6!) **2.d7 Rd1 3.Be5+** All is now set for the first Novotny blow **3...Kg8 4.Bd4! Rxd4** (or 4...Bxd4 5.d8Q mate) **5.a7** (5.Sf6+? Kf8 6.a7 Bxd7 7.a8Q+ Ke7 8.Kg7 Kd6 would lead White nowhere) **5...Bg2 6.Sf6+ Kf8** Now all is set for a second Novotny **7.Sd5! Be4+ 8.Kf6** wins. The **Double Novotny** has disrupted the total black control of the eighth rank thus the lethal promotion has been finally secured.

A.3 Jan Rusinek

1st Prize The Problemist 2004-2005



f3a2 0547.44 9/9 Draw

The main dish is the highly original combination of **Mutual Grimshaw** by **Dr. Jan Rusinek**, a Polish grandmaster and mathematician (57) who was a mega-star in the seventies and eighties and who has regrettably slowed down his composing activity of late. Nevertheless his rather rare appearances these days still suggest that he has never lost Midas' golden touch:

The advanced "c"-pawn would cost White his rook. **1.Re3 c2 2.Rc3 Kb2 3.Rxc2+ Kxc2 4.Se3+ Kc3 5.dxc5 d4+** (5...Rxc5 6.Rd8 Ra5 7.Rc8+ Kb2 8.Kf2 draws) **6.Sd5+ Kc4** Now the battle is over the wS. **7.c6!** Novotny! White employs the old device to gain a critical tempo. (7.Ke4? Rxc5 wins) **7...Bxc6** (Whereas 7...Rxc6 8.Rd8 Bb7 9.e4! draws) **8.Ke4 Ba8** (As 8...Rc5 has just been obstructed. This switchback resumes the threat 9...Rc5) **9.Rd7 Rc6** with the idea 10...Re6+ however at the same time interferes his own bishop (Grimshaw) which allows **10.Bd6!** White Grimshaw! 10.Rd6?? Rxd6! wins a piece and the game. 10...Bxd5 has just been prevented. **10...Rc8 11.Be7** (Against both Bxd5+ and Re8+) **11...Bc6 12.Rd6!** Again this only move against the double attack affords interfering the wB thanks to Blacks own interference (12...Rc5??) An amazingly original mechanism of positional draw by mutual Grimshaw!

Shortage of fresh composing ideas? Quite a few of them might be found in the blooming garden of our neighbours the problemists. Pick up a couple of classical themes and try to figure a scheme which might suit the game-like nature of an endgame study. It is by no means an easy task. Yet it might prove highly rewarding as in my view there must be still plenty of room out there for originality. And if you are still waiting for the desert, here is your challenge – to prepare one yourself!