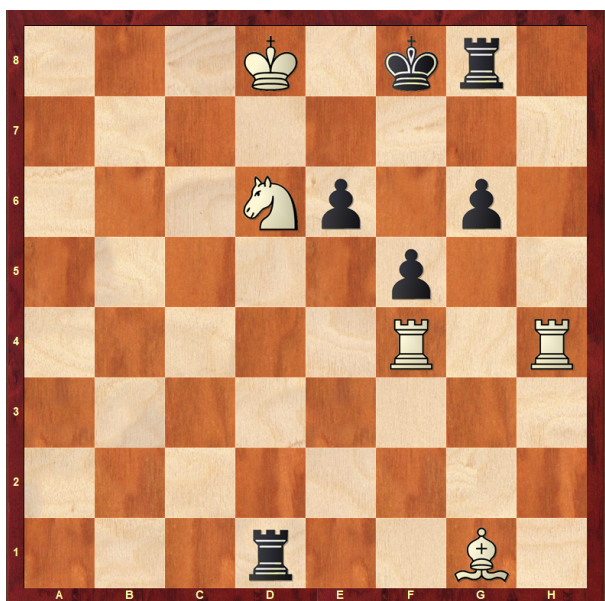


Award Problemist Ukraine 2021

I had the honor of judging 22 entries from the Problemist Ukraine 2021. Thank you to Vladimir Samilo for trusting me with the job. The quality was very mixed, but with some interesting and novel concepts shown in the top studies. Looking at the lower placed studies, I sometimes felt that the authors were unaware of the roles surprise and paradox ought to play in our genre. Often the spectator was dealing with technically perfect works where the win or the draw was achieved by a series of precise, correct moves. But such studies without depth or paradox remain sterile and will not be able to excite anyone.

With the hope for peace for Ukraine, I move on to the seven awarded studies. The annotations are by the composers themselves.



Win

Amatzia Avni, Israel

1st prize

The amusing face-off of two rooks vs two pawns is not new (and even occurred in the game (!) Van Dongen - Wijsman 2005, <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1725453>). But the quality of the introduction, especially 4. Bf8+!, makes a large difference in the composer's favor.

White has a large material advantage, but both his knight and bishop are under attack.

1. Bd4!

Thematic try 1. Bc5 Rxd6+! (1...Kg7+? 2. Ke7 Rxd6 too late (2... g5 3. Rd4 Rc1 4. Rc4 +-) 3. Rf1 (3. Bd4+)Rd5 (3... Rdd8 4. Bd4+ Rxd4 5. Rxd4+-) 4. Rfh1)

2. Bxd6+ (2. Kc7 g5 3. Bxd6+ Kf7=) 2... Kf7+! 3. Kd7 g5=)

Try: 1. Rd4 Rxg1 2. Ne8 Ra1! = (2... Rb1? 3. Rd7 Rb8+ 4. Kc7 Rxe8 5. Rhh7 +-)

1... e5

1... g5? 2. Rh7+-

2. Bxe5 (try:) 2. Rh7 \$5 Rg7 3. Rh8+ (3. Rxc7 exf4=) 3... Rg8 4. Rxc8+ Kxc8 5. Bxe5 Rd5! wins a piece and draws.

2... Rxd6+! 3. Bxd6+ Kg7+

3... Kf7+ 4. Bf8 transfers

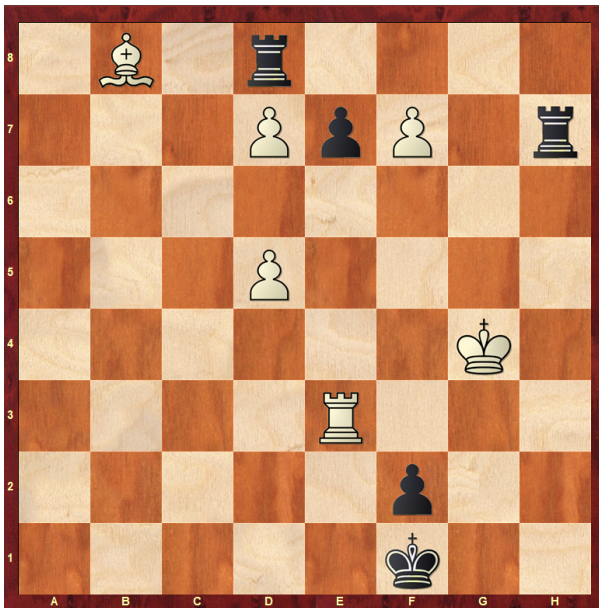
4. Bf8+!

Diverting the rook to the f-file (4. Ke7 g5=)

4... Rxf8+ 5. Ke7 g5 6. Rhg4!

Clarifying the point of the 4th move

6...Rf7+ 7. Ke6 Rf6+ 8. Ke5 1-0



Draw

Oleg Pervakov, Russia

2nd prize

A typically large-scale study by Oleg Pervakov. Very difficult through out, but sprinkled with interesting mini-tactics and choices. The most exciting moment comes on the eight move when the bishop has the choice of several promising squares but only the move to h8 works. At the tenth move it turns out that the corner on a1 is another safe square for the bishop.

While the introduction is interesting in its own right, it is not thematically connected to the finale. At the same time the finale has the feel of a tablebase product. All in all, I don't consider this among Pervakov's finest studies.

1. Bc7

1. Ba7 Rxf7 2. Re5 Rxd7

1. Bg3 Rxf7

1... Kg1

1... Rg7+ 2. Kf5 Kg1 3. Bb6 Rxf7+ 4. Ke6 Rf6+ 5. Kxe7 Rxb6 6. Rg3+ Kh1 7. Rf3=

1... Kg2 2. Re2 Rg7+ 3. Kf5 Rxf7+ 4. Ke6=

2. Bb6 Kh1

2... Rxf7 3. Rg3+ Kh2 4. Rh3+ Kg2 5. Rg3+ Kf1 6.

Bxd8 Ke2 7. Re3+ Kxe3 8. Bb6+ Ke4 9. Bxf2=

3. Rh3+ Rxh3 4. Bxf2 Rhh8

4...Rh6 5. Bh4

4... Rh7 5. Bb6 Rg7+ 6. Kf5 Rxf7+ 7. Ke6

5. Bd4

5. Kf5? Rxd7 6. Ke6 Rd6+ 7. Kxe7 Rxd5 8. f8=Q Rxf8 9. Kxf8 Rf5+

5... Rhf8 6. Kf5 Rxd7 7. Ke6 Rxf7

7... Rxd5 8. Kxd5 Rxf7 9. Ke6 Rf4 10. Bc5 Re4+ 11. Kd7 (11. Kf7) e5 12. Ke6 Re2 (12... Rc4 13. Kd5 Rc2 14. Bd6) (12... Re1 13. Kf5 Kg2 14. Bb4) 13. Kf5 Kg2 14. Bd6 e4 15. Kf4 Kf2 16. Bc5+ Ke1 17. Be3=

8. Bh8

8. Ba1? Rxd5 9. Kxf7 Rd1 10. Be5 Re1

8. Bc3? Rxd5 9. Kxf7 Rd3 10. Be5 Re3

8. Be5? Rxd5 9. Kxd5 Rf2

8. Kxd7? e5+ 9. Ke6 exd4 10. Kxf7 d3 11. d6 d2 12. d7 d1=Q

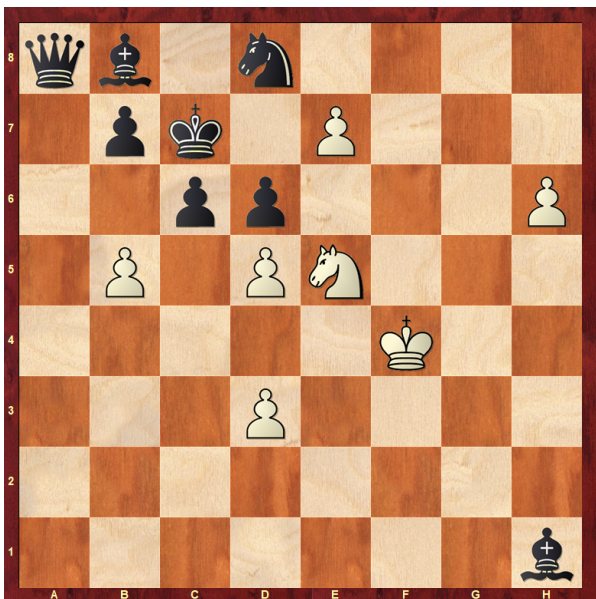
8... Rxd5 9. Kxf7 Rh5 10. Ba1

10. Bg7 Rh7

10. Bc3 Rh3

10... Ra5 11. Bc3 Ra3

12. Bb4 ½-½



Draw

Sergiy Didukh, Ukraine

1st honorable mention

The idea of interrupted exchange on h7 and stalemate is great, but the heavy, unnatural construction destroys it a bit for me.

1. b6+ Kc8 2. Nf7 Ne6+ 3. dxe6 Qa4+ 4. Kf5

4. Kg5? c5 5. h7 Qe8 6. h8=Q Qxh8 7. Nxh8 Bc6 8.

Ng6 d5 9. Kf6 c4-+

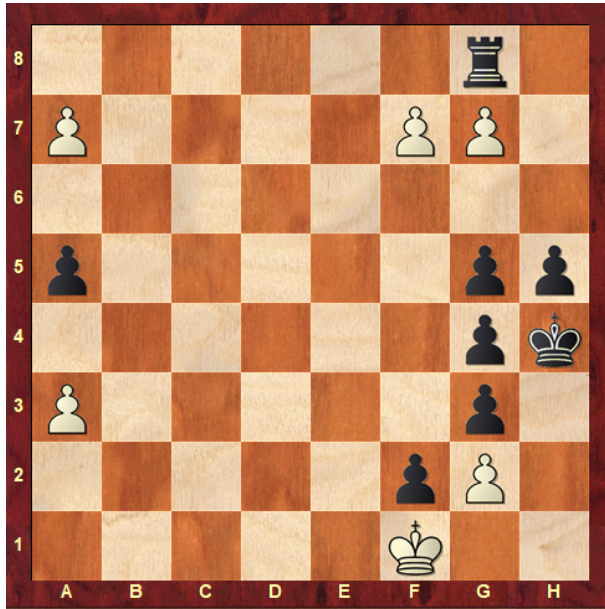
4... Qb5+!

4... c5 5. h7 Qe8 6. h8=Q Qxh8 7. Nxh8 Bc6 8. Ng6 (or 8. Nf7) d5 9. Ne5 Ba4 10. Kf6 Bd6
11. Nf3=

5. Kg6 c5 6. h7 Qxd3+ 7. Kg7 Qxh7+ 8. Kf8!

8. Kxh7? Bc6 9. Kg7 c4 10. Kf8 c3 11. e8=Q+ Bxe8 12. Kxe8 c2 13. e7 c1=Q 14. Kf8 Qc6
15. e8=Q+ Qxe8+ 16. Kxe8 d5 -+

8... Bc6 9. Nxd6+ Bxd6 1/2-1/2



Win

Ilham Aliev, Azerbaijan

2nd honorable mention

It is hard not to get a bit annoyed by the mass of Black pawns surrounding his king, but I consider the 3. g8=N-move excellently original, though the final knight vs rook domination is known from Yochanan Afek's famous Bb5+ study and others (HHDBVI #49633).

1. a8=Q!

Try 1. fxg8=Q? a4 2. Qb3 axb3 3. a8=Q b2 4. Qb7 b1=Q+ 5. Qxb1 stalemate

1... Rxa8 2. f8=N!

2. f8=Q? a4! 3. Qxa8 stalemate

2... Ra6

MAIN B: 2... Rxf8 3. gxf8=N! a4 4. Ng6#

3. g8=N!

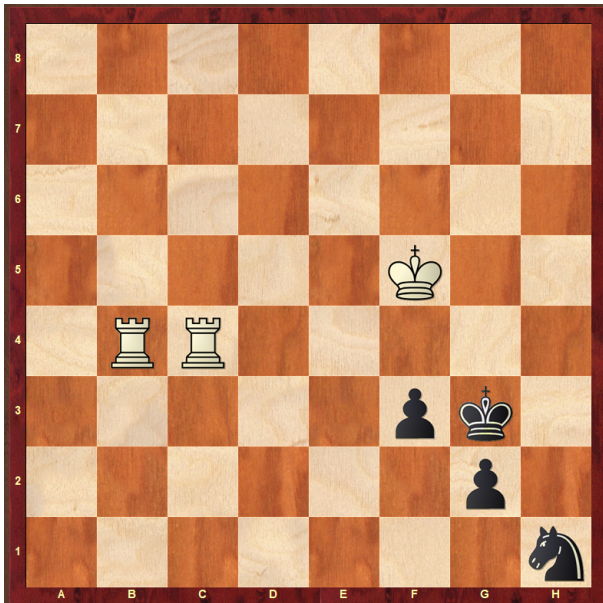
Try: 3. g8=Q? Rd6 4. Ng6+ (4. Qb3 a4= 4... Rxc6 5. Qxc6 a4

6. Ke2 f1=Q+ 7. Kxf1 stalemate

3... Rd6 4. Ng6+!

4. Ke2? Rc6

4... Rxc6 5. Ne7 Rf6 6. a4 ZZ Re6 (6... Rf7 7. Ng6#) 7. Nf5# 1-0



Win

Pavel Arestov, Russia
3rd honorable mention

The highlight of this study is the logical choice on move 3. It is amusing that the choice between h7 and h8 is logically connected with later moving that rook to a7 (not mate) and a8 (mate) to the very far side of the board.

The Black duals against 3. Rh8? is the reason the study is not placed higher. Also, I must admit to a certain (perhaps irrational) dislike of this material distribution. Stopping Black pawns with two rooks is just not my cup of tea.

1. Rg4+ Kh2 2. Rh4+ Kg3 3. Rh7!

3. Rh8? Kf2 4. Rb2+ Ke3 5. Re8+ Kd3 6. Rd8+ Kc3 7. Rb7 g1=Q (or 7...Ng3+ first) White will not have mate by the rook on a7; 8. Rc7+ Kb2 (8... Kb3) (8... Kb4).

3... Kf2

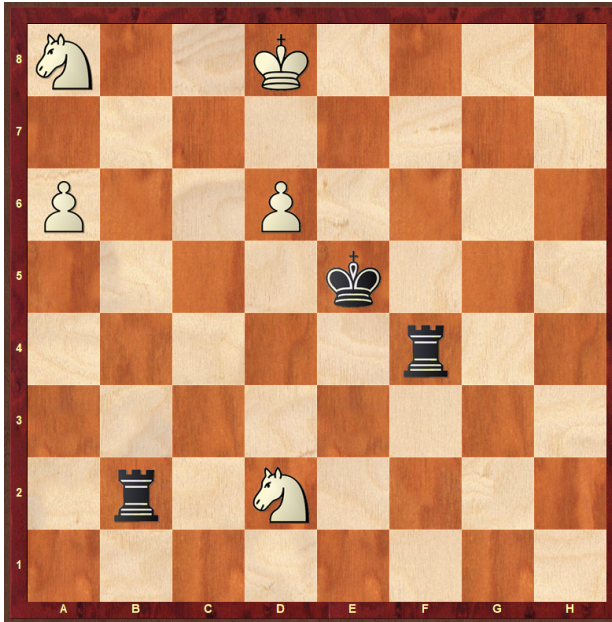
MAIN B 3... Nf2 4. Rg7+ Kh2 5. Kf4 g1=Q 6. Rxc1 Nh3+ 7. Kg4! (7.

Kxf3? Nxc1+ 8. Kf2 Nh3+) 7... Nxc1 (7... Kxc1 8. Kxf3 Ng5+ 9. Kg3) 8. Rb2+ Ne2

9. Kxf3

4. Rb2+ Ke3 5. Re7+ Kd4 6. Rd7+ Kc3 7. Rb8 g1=Q 8. Rc8+ Kb4 9. Rb7+

Ka5 10. Ra8+ 1-0

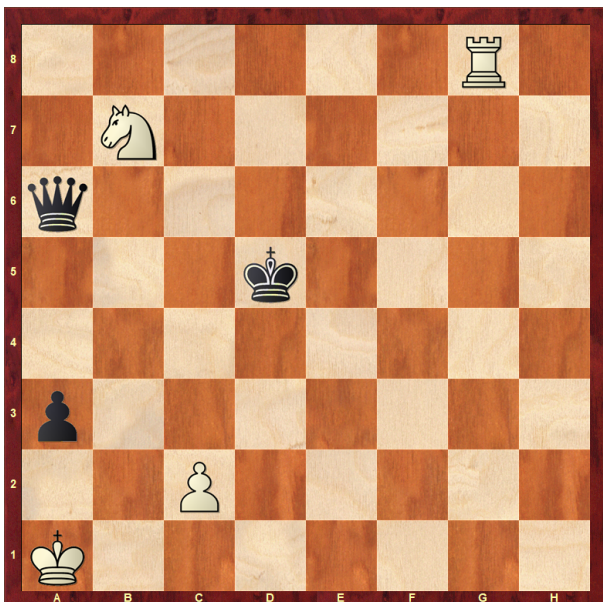


Draw

Michal Hlinka, Lubos Kekely, Slovakia

1st commendation

After a fair introduction there is a good positional draw of queen vs two dangerous rooks. **1. a7 Kxd6 2. Nc4+ Rxc4 3. Nb6 Rxb6 4. a8=Q Rcb4 5. Kc8 Rc4+ 6. Kd8 Ra4 7. Qc8 Ra7 8. Ke8 Re7+ 9. Kf8 Rbb7 10. Qd8+ Ke6 11. Qc8+ Kd6 12. Qd8+ 1/2-1/2**



Draw

David Gurgendidze, Georgia

2nd commendation

An elegant study with two nicely linked, economical main lines. But I still lack some large-scale ambition from the grandmaster here.

1. Rd8+ Kc4

1...Ke5 2. Rd3 Qc6 3. Re3+ Kd4 4. Rd3+ Ke4 5. Rxa3 Qxc2 6. Rb3=

2. Nd6+ Kc3 3. Ne4+ Kxc2 4. Rd2+ Kc1 5. Nc5 Qf6+

5... Qb5 6. Nb3+ Qxb3 7. Rc2+ Kd1 8. Rd2+ Ke1 9. Re2+ Kxe2

6. Ka2 Kxd2 7. Ne4+=

As is my habit, I will also share some comments on the studies not in the award (in order of appearance in the four issues of Problemist Ukraine 2021). All studies can be seen in the pgn-version of the award available at Arves.org.

D147 PU 2021

Andrzej Jasik, Poland

The study is built around a complicated mutual zugzwang occurring on move 5.

I am not sure I see the artistic elements apart from the zugzwang.

D148 PU 2021

Jean Carf, France

This is a rerun of the final part of HHDBVI#13434, Bazlov 1st prize, Sadikov MT 2006

D149 PU 2021

Jean Carf, France

A precise win without real surprises or artistic moments, the main surprise being that White has only this one road to victory.

D150 PU 2021

Sergiy Borodavkin, Ukraine

White secures a drawing position against bishops and rook-pawn. Again a study of precision rather than surprise.

D152 PU 2021

Michal Hlinka & Lubos Kekely, Slovakia

The introduction to the pawn endgame may be defended by the switchback to d8 on the 5th move. But I see no red thread or surprises in the pawn endgame.

D157 PU 2021

Andrei Sergiienko, Ukraine

I lack some surprise here from the young Ukrainian composer. The endgame is more like a pleasant textbook exercise.

D158 PU 2021

Leonid Topko, Ukraine

The surprise effect of 3. Ng5 is not large enough to put this study in the

award. This is in part due to the heavy setting.

D 160 PU 2021

Vladimir Samilo, Ukraine

Probably the best move of this study is Black's 2...Kb2, though it remains unsuccessful, as White creates a fortress

D161 PU 2021

Vladislav Boreisho, Ukraine

This promotion study has some clear qualities, but the opening exchange on c6 and the captures on both a7 and c7 prevent it from ending up in the award.

D162 PU 2021

Arkady Vorovich, Ukraine

The nice final point of this study is known from numerous predecessors. The good flow of the introduction is therefore not enough to put the study in the award.

D163 PU 2021

Anatoly Bezgodkov (+), Vladislav Tarasiuk and Vladimir Samilo, Ukraine

A synthesis of two known ideas (rambling rook and the rook sacrifice 8. Rc2). The starting position is really unpleasant to the eye.

D 164 PU 2021

Charles Ouellet, Canada

A study without surprises and with a heavy setting.

D166 PU 2021

Michael Pasman, Israel

Clearly the most ambitious work, that is not in the award. From an economical and aesthetic point of view I consider the exchange on c2 just prior to the mate unacceptable – especially since the queen sac would work without capture (with the queen coming from h7, for instance). What is the point of a pure, beautiful mate when it is brought about by violence? The ambitious, creative play in the introduction (for instance the amusing fact that 1. Qb2+ Bc2 is echoed on the 10th move after the queen has completed a switchback to b2 via b4 and e7) does not make up for this. I know that other judges feel differently about this. For instance, Michael won first prize with a similar exchange prior to the mate in the ChessStar 2021 tournament (Win section).

D167 PU 2021

Ivan Malyi, Ukraine

A small logical pawn study.

D168 PU 2021

Ivan Malyi, Ukraine

This is a version of a previously awarded study by the same author (HHDBVI #18170) and as such cannot be considered for the award.