



C O L U M N I S T S

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

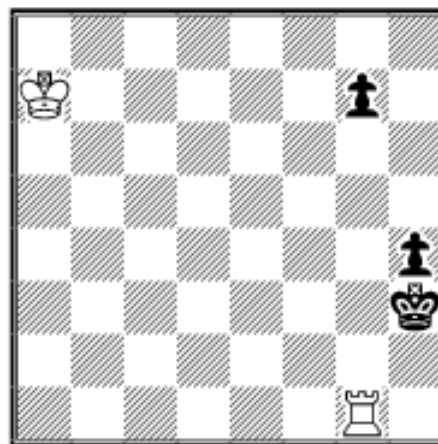
Endgame Training:
Expert Use of the Rooks

I invite readers to solve the following rook endgames (allow an hour to an hour and a half for all six positions). Only the first few examples will be simple (although even there, it will not be hard to go wrong); after that, your task will become more and more difficult. Don't be unhappy if there are some positions you just can't solve. Serious consideration of these problems, followed by a comparison of your ideas with the answers (which are, in my opinion, both interesting and pretty) will undoubtedly be to your benefit.

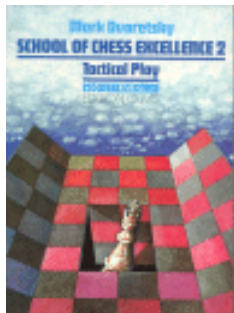
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**Diagram 1***White to move*

How should White continue?



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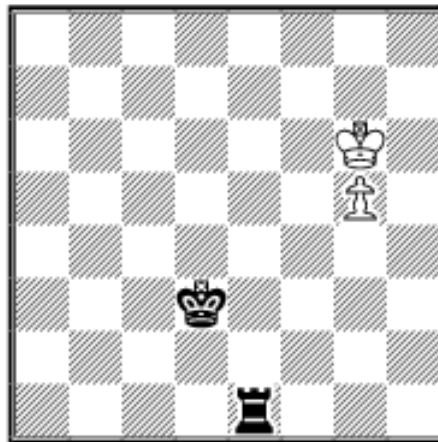


Diagram 2
Black to move
How should Black play?

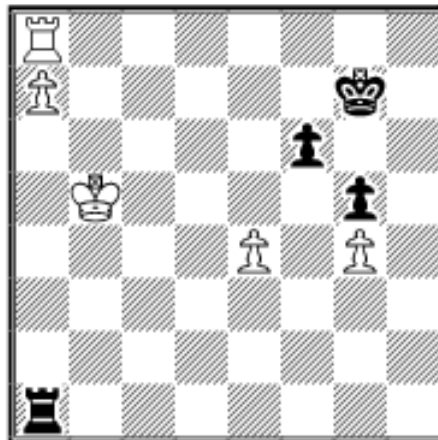


Diagram 3
White to move
Can White win?

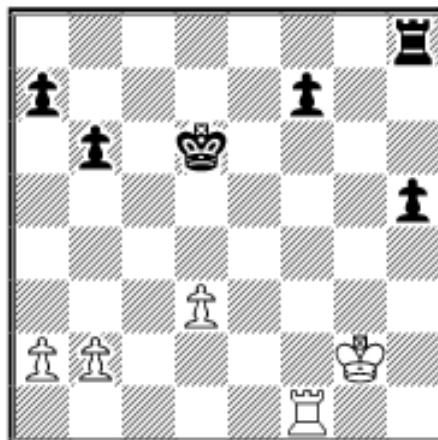


Diagram 4

Black to move
How can Black exploit his advantage?

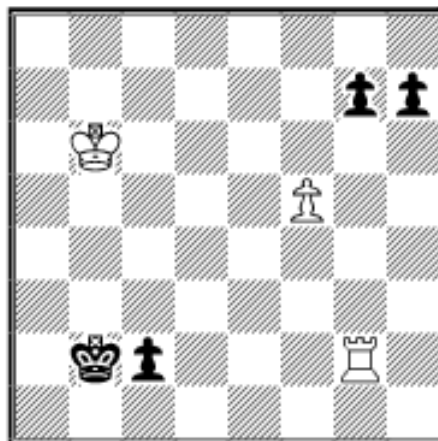


Diagram 5
White to move
How should White continue?

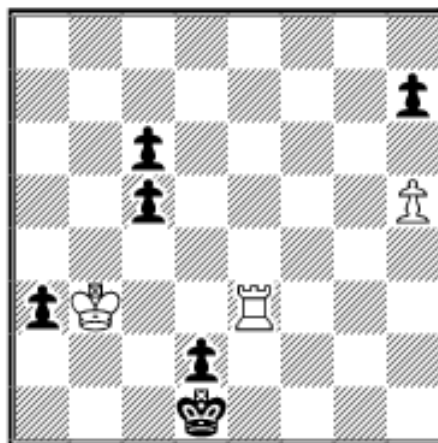


Diagram 6
White to move
How should White continue?

Solutions

1. G. Nadareishvili, 1961

1 Rg5!!

Black is playing for stalemate. In order to gain time for the king to approach, White must prevent the g-pawn from advancing two squares. That is why 1 Kb6? g5!= is inaccurate.

1...Kh2 2 Kb6 h3 3 Kc5 Kh1 4 Kd4 h2 5 Ke3 g6 6 Rg3 g5 7 Kf2 g4 8 Ra3 g3+ 9 Kxg3 Kg1 10 Ra1#

2. Nunn - Smejkal, Lucerne Olympiad 1982

Black only draws with 111...Ke4? 112 Kf6(f7) Rf1+ 113 Ke6 Ra1 (113...Rg1 114 Kf6 Kd5 115 g6 Kd6 116 g7=) 114 g6 Ra6+ 115 Kf7 Kf5 116 g7 Ra7+ 117 Kf8 (117 Kg8! Kg6 118 Kh8=) 117...Kf6 118 g8N+.

111... Rf1!!

Now White's king is unable to "shoulder-block" its Black colleague. For this purpose, even a tempo is not too great a sacrifice!

112 Kh7 Ke4 113 g6 Kf5 114 g7 Rh1+ 115 Kg8 Kg6 116 Kf8 Rf1+ 117 Kg8 Ra1 118 Kh8 Rh1+ White resigned.

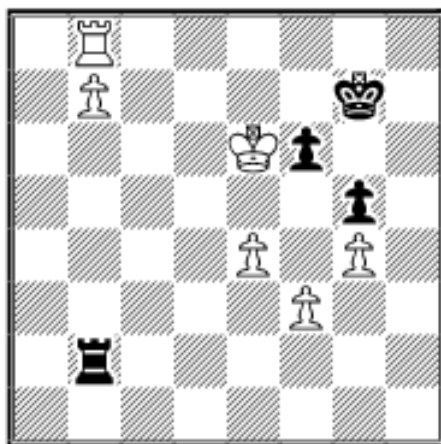
3. Benko - Gereben, Budapest 1951

With accurate defense, the position is drawn.

1 Kb6 Rb1+ 2 Kc6 Rc1+ 3 Kd6 Rd1+!

In the game, Black erred with 3...Ra1?, and after 4 Rc8! (but not 4 Re8? Ra6+! =) 4...Ra6+ 5 Rc6 Rxa7 6 Rc7+ Rxc7 7 Kxc7, White controlled the distant opposition, which was then easily converted to the close opposition: 7...Kh7 8 Kd7! Kg6 9 Ke6 Kg7 10 Ke7 Kg6 11 Kf8, and Black resigned.

4 Ke6 Ra1 5 Rd8 (5 Re8 Ra6+! 6 Kf5 Rxa7 =) **5...Rxa7 6 Rd7+ Rxd7 7 Kxd7 Kh7! =**. Black is saved only by the distant opposition - and not by the close opposition: 7...Kf7? 8 Kd6 is zugzwang, and it is White who takes the opposition.



Let's take a look at an ending recently played between two women grandmasters.

Petz-Kosteniuk, Mainz 2000, 5th match game, White to move.

Almost the same situation, except White has an extra pawn on f3. As a result, the pawn ending that arises after 77 Rd8! Rb6+ 78.Rd6 Rxb7 79 Rd7+ is an elementary win.

In the game there followed 77 **Re8?? Rb6+!** 78 **Kf5 Rxb7** 79 **e5 fe** 80 **Rxe5 Rf7+** 81 **Kxg5 Rxf3** 82 **Re7+ Kf8** 83.**Ra7 Rc3??** 83...Rg3! will maintain the draw, but even simpler is 83...Kg8!, intending 84...Rf8. With knight pawns (and no bishop or central pawns) a passive defense with the Rook on the 8th rank draws.

84 Kh5?? After 84 Kg6! Rc6+ 85 Kh7 Rc5 86 Rg7 the g-pawn would advance, leading to the Lucena position, which is won for White.

84...Kg8 85 Rd7 Rc6 Black sets up the Philidor position, which assures the draw; as they say - "No comment."

4. Estrin - Berliner, Wch-corr. 1965

The Black rook stands behind the passed h-pawn; but since White's king has already arrived to blockade it, the pawn can only be employed as a distracting force. Black must initiate active operations on the opposite wing.

31...Ke6?! is useless after 32 Re1+ (Black cannot allow the White rook to reach the 7th). And after 31...Rh7?! 32 Kh3, it's not easy to make further progress.

31..Rc8! 32 Rxf7 Rc7! 33 Rf2

The pawn ending is lost: 33 Rxc7 Kxc7 34 Kg3 Kd6 35 Kh4 Kd5 36 Kxh5 Kd4, and wins. If 33 Rf8, then 33...Rc2+.

33...Ke5!

Black is now winning: the king goes to d3, preparing Rc2. Berliner gives the following analysis: 34 Kg3 Kd4 35 Kh4 Kxd3 36 Kxh5 Rc2:

A) 37 Rf7 Rc5+ 38 Kg4 Ra5 39 Rf3+! Kd2!! 40 a3 (40 b3 Ra3!) 40...Kc2 41 Rf2+ Kb3 42 Kf4 Rb5! 43 Ke4 Ka2! 44 Rf7 a6! 45 Ra7 Ra5 46 Rb7 b5, and wins;

B) 37 Rf3+ Kd2 38 b3!? (38 b4 Rc3! 39 Rf2+ Ke1 40 Rh2 Ra3 41 Kg5 Ra4 42 Rb2 Kd1 and wins; 38 Ra3 a5 39 Rb3 Rc5+ 40 Kg4 b5 41 Kf4 Kc2 42 Ke4 Kb1 43 Kd4 Rh5 44 Ra3 a4! 45 Kc3 Rh4! and wins) 38...Kc1 39 a4 Rb2! (intending 40...a5 and 41...Kc2) 40 a5 b5 41 a6 b4 42 Kg4 Kc2 43 Rf7 Rxb3 44 Rxa7 Ra3 45 Rb7 b3 46 a7 b2, and wins.

The game actually concluded: **34 a4?! (this move, weakening the queenside pawns, actually makes Black's job easier) 34...Kd4 35 a5 Kxd3 36 Rf3+ Kc2 37 b4 b5! 38 a6 Rc4 39 Rf7 Rxb4 40 Rb7 Rg4+ 41 Kf3 b4 42 Rxa7 b3** White resigned.

5. J. Timman, 1988

The straightforward king march to the kingside pawns comes too late:

1 Kc5? h5! 2 Kd4 (intending 3 Kd3) 2...Kb1 3 Rg1+ c1Q 4 Rxc1+ Kxc1 5 Ke3 (with the king on d5 or d6, White could go after the g7-pawn; but from d4, the road is much too long) 5...Kc2 6 Kf4 Kd3 7 Kg5 Ke4, and wins;

1 Kc6? h5! 2 Kd6 h4! 3 Ke6 h3 (Black has won a vital tempo) 4 Rh2 Kb1 5 Rh1+ c1Q 6 Rxc1+ Kxc1 7 Kf7 h2 8 Kxg7 h1Q, and wins.

1 Kc7!!

The “strategic double attack!” This move not only brings the king closer to the g7-pawn (as may be seen in the variant 1...Kb1 2 Rg1+ c1Q+ 3 Rxc1+ Kxc1 4 Kd7 h5 5 Ke7 h4 6 Kf7 h3 7 Kxg7 h2 8 f6 h1Q 9 f7 =), but at the same time prepares a completely different idea.

1...h5! 2 Kb8!! Kb1 (the same reply comes after 2...h4)
3 Rxc1! c1Q 4 Rb7+ =.

6. J. Afek, 1970

On 1 Rh3? c4+! 2 Kxc4 a2, White's in zugzwang. For example: 3 h6 (or 3 Kb4 c5+ 4 Kc4 h6!) 3...c5! (both sides have used up their extra pawn moves at the same time) 4 Rg3 (4 Kd3 Kc1 wins) 4...Ke2 5 Rg2+ Kf1 and wins (on the g-file, the rook is too close to the pawn - only two files between them!)

So White must lose a move!

1 Rg3!! c4+!

1...a2? 2 Rg1+ Ke2 3 Kc2 would be a mistake - White wins; and Black gets nothing out of 1...Kc1 2 Rc3+ Kb1 3 Rd3.

2 Kxc4 a2

2...Ke2 3 Rg2+ Ke3 4 Rg1 Kf2 5 Rh1=.

3 Rh3!! c5 (3...h6 4 Kb4! c5+ 5 Kc4 is zugzwang) **4 h6!** (and now it's Black who's in zugzwang) **4...Kc2 5 Rc3+ Kb2 5 Rb3+ Kc1 7 Rc3+ Kd1 8 Rh3! Ke2 9 Rh2+ Ke1 10 Rh1+ Ke2 11 Rh2+ Kd1 12 Rh3! =**

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Translated by Jim Marfia

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