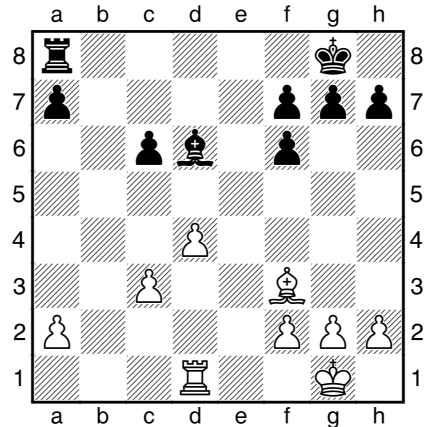


Contents

Symbols	4
Introduction	5
Pawns and Structure	8
Hints	24
Solutions	24
Pieces	48
Hints	70
Solutions	71
Mixed Themes	111
Hints	141
Solutions	143
Index of Players	206
Index of Themes	208

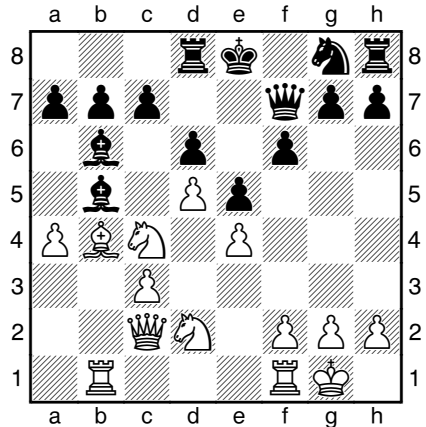
Mixed Themes



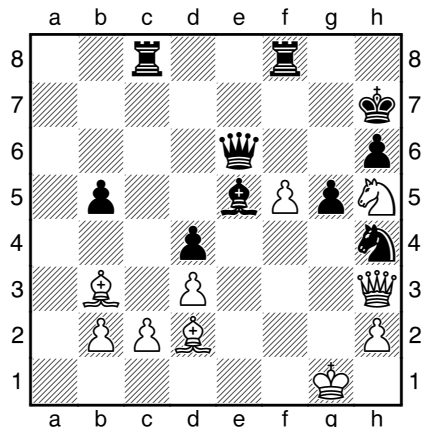
This position occurred in Carlsen-Yu Yangyi, Stavanger 2019, and the players have just exchanged queens. Black was probably counting on 23 ♕xc6? ♖c8 24 d5 ♗b8 with a drawn position since the black bishop is blocking the pawns. But Carlsen played much more strongly. After 23 c4! ♗c8 24 c5 ♕e7 25 ♖f1 White went on to win. Several themes can be distinguished: pawn-structure (White did not allow the dark-squared bishop to blockade his pawns), weaknesses, and position of the pieces (the black rook is tied to the defence of the c6-pawn).

The exercises in this chapter all feature multiple themes. They may include those from the previous sections (pawn-structure and piece-play), although new topics such as prophylaxis and weaknesses will also appear. But it will be for you to identify them! As I mentioned in the Introduction, I decided to avoid categorizing these examples too finely, since specifying a topic can provide too big a hint.

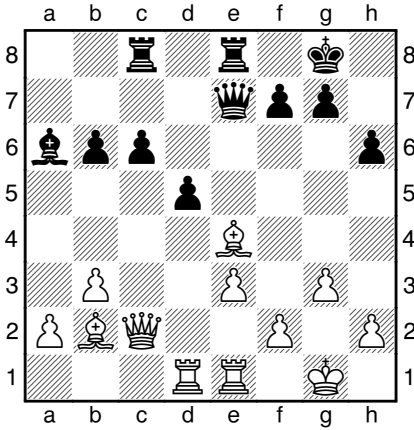
Hints for the level 3 and 4 exercises in this chapter start on page 141, and solutions begin on page 143.



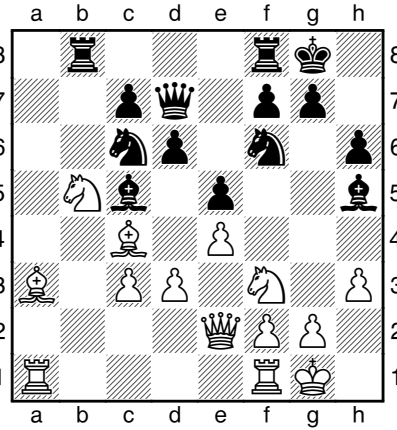
223 B *
Choose between 17... ♕a6 and 17... ♕xc4.



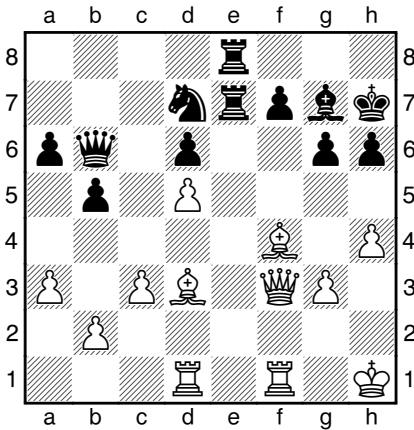
224 W *
Choose between 32 fxe6 and 32 ♕xe6.



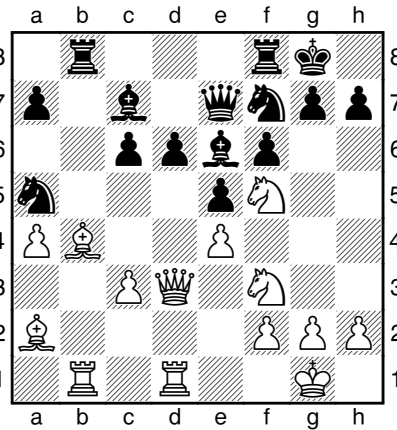
225 B *
Choose between 19...dxe4 and 19...♖xe4.



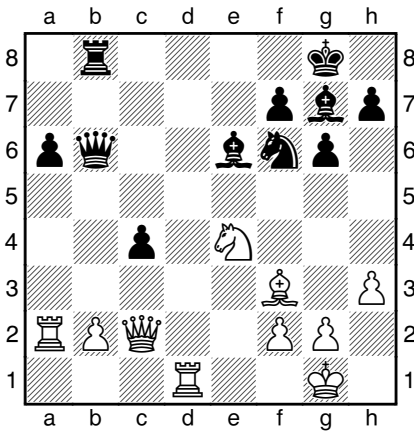
228 B **
Choose between 17...♗xa3 and 17...♗b6.



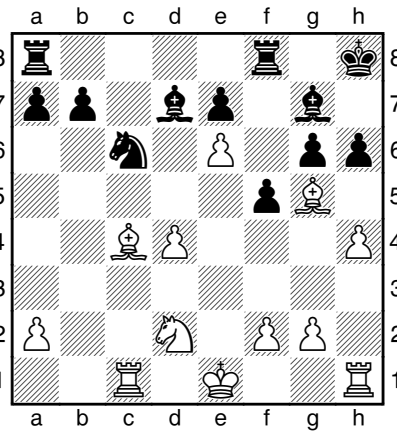
226 B *



229 B **
Choose between 23...♗xf5 and 23...♖d7.



227 W *



230 B **
Choose between 17...♗c8 and 17...♗e8.

Solutions for Mixed Themes Puzzles

223) Zapolskis – D. Johnson (variation)

London 2022

Black cannot prevent the move a5, after which the white rook will end up attacking the b7-pawn. Thus 17...♙xc4? 18 ♖xc4 ♗e7 (or 18...♗b8 19 ♙xd6 +-) 19 a5 +- gives White a decisive advantage.

Therefore, Black needs to preserve his light-squared bishop: after 17...♙a6! 18 a5 ♙c5 19 ♙xc5 dxc5 Black's position looks suspicious, but in reality he doesn't have much of a problem; e.g., 20 ♖a4+ ♗d7 21 ♖a3 ♗e7 22 ♗fd1 ♗h6, and White is perhaps a little better, but Black's game is wholly playable.

224) Lyell – Fishchuk (variation)

Budapest 2022

If White captures the queen with his bishop, he will lose the c2-pawn, but it is much more important to keep the f-file closed. 32 ♙xe6! (after 32 fxe6? ♗a8 +- the queen is out of play on h3, and the bishops cannot defend their king) 32...♗xc2 33 ♙e1 (White can also win by 33 f6 ♗xd2 34 ♙d5 +-; White will soon have mating threats of his own) 33...♗c1 34 ♖f1 ♗a8 35 ♖e2 and due to the fact that the e6-bishop controls a2 and c8, Black cannot create counterplay against the white king and therefore loses.

225) Mosesov – Sonis

Ukraine-Italy juniors (online blitz) 2020

In the game 19...♗xe4?! 20 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 led to an obviously equal position.

The question is what happens if Black plays 19...dxe4!, and the answer hinges on which king will be more secure in the middlegame. Black's king is completely safe, because he can play ...f6 to close off the b2-bishop. In addition, the advanced pawn on e4 makes it possible to place the bishop on d3. 20 ♗c3 f6 21 ♗d4 ♙d3!? (21...c5?! 22 ♗d7 eases White's defensive task) 22 ♗xb6 c5 ♗ gives Black good winning chances. 23 ♙a3?! can be answered with 23...♗ed8 followed by ...♗d5.

226) Dubnevych – A. Maksimenko

Bydgoszcz 2022

Black's control of the e-file enables him to play for a win; he just needs to prevent White from developing an initiative with the h5 advance. 40...♙g8! (40...♗c5?! is inaccurate because e5 is a better route for the knight; after 41 ♙c2, 41...♗e2? 42 ♗d2 will make Black's situation worse) 41 ♙g2 (not the best move, but the continuation is instructive; 41 g4! ♗c7 42 h5 g5 43 ♙g3 ♗e5 44 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 45 ♗d2, seeking to exchange the rook via the e2-square, offers White good chances to hold) 41...♗c7! 42 ♙c2 ♗e5 43 ♙xe5 ♗xe5 ♗ was played in the game. Black had wisely placed his queen on c7 in advance so that he could take with the rook on e5. Now he controls the e-file and has good chances of converting his advantage into victory.

227) Mosesov – Halkias

Internet blitz 2020

After an exchange of knights, Black would have good chances of taking the b2-pawn and achieving a draw. For example: 28 ♗d6? (as played in the game) 28...♗b3 29 ♗xb3 cxb3 30 ♗axa6 ♗xe4 31 ♙xe4 ♙xb2 and White has no advantage at all.

Therefore White should play 28 ♗g5! to take the bishop on e6. Black can't stop this idea and will get a hopeless position. 28...h5 is well met by either 29 ♗e2 or the simple 29 ♗xe6 ♗xe6 30 ♗a4 with a decisive advantage.

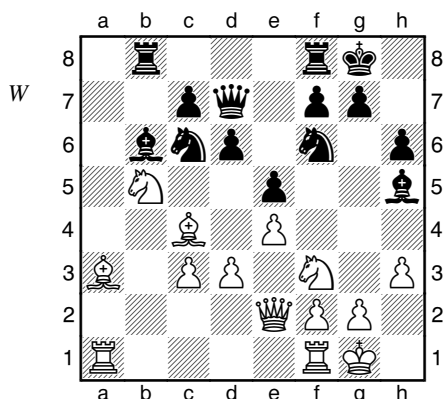
228) J. Marrero Rodriguez – Basualdo de Ornelas (variation)

Vecindario 2022

White's main problem is the unpleasant pin, which he is in no position to break by playing g4. But if White can exchange the dark-squared bishops, he will be able to unpin with ♗e3. Thus 17...♙xa3? 18 ♗xa3 ♗e7 19 ♗e3 leaves Black with only a slight advantage.

17...♙b6! (D) is best.

Now ...♗a5 is threatened, but besides that, Black has the idea of transferring the knight to the kingside by ...♗e7-g6-f4 or playing in the centre with ...c6 and ...d5 after moving the knight to g6. It is very difficult for White to defend, and his position is close to hopeless: 18



♙c1 (18 ♖fb1 is well met by 18...♗e7, or even 18...♖fe8!? 19 ♙c1 d5 20 exd5 ♗xd5 with a huge advantage) 18...♗e7 19 ♗a3 ♗g6 threatening ...♗h4. White is forced to play 20 ♗c2, which Black can meet by 20...c6 intending ...d5.

229) Zapolskis – D. Johnson (variation) *London 2022*

The knight on f5 is certainly unpleasant, but after 23...♙xf5? 24 exf5 ± the white bishop on a2 is a real menace. As Black cannot play ...d5, he has a difficult position. In addition, White threatens ♖a6. Then 24...♗b7 (24...♗h8 25 ♖a6 ±; after 24...c5?! 25 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 26 ♗d2 ♗h8 27 ♙d5 the extra pawn does not play any role, and White's stranglehold on the position will gradually lead to victory) 25 ♖a6 c5 26 ♙a3 ♗a5 27 ♙d5 gives White a large advantage.

Therefore Black should play 23...♗d7! 24 ♙xe6 ♖xc6 25 ♖a6. White will win back the pawn, but without a powerful light-squared bishop this is not even enough for equality. After 25...♖c4 26 ♖xc4 ♗xc4 27 ♗e7+ ♗h8 28 ♗xc6 ♖b7 Black has a slight advantage. He threatens ...a5, while after 29 a5 ♗d8 White's a-pawn becomes vulnerable.

230) Berdnyk – Dubnevych *Omelyk 2021*

Retreating to c8 may seem logical because after White then drops the bishop back from g5, the black knight will take on d4 and the e6-pawn will hang. However, after 17...♙c8? White plays the far stronger 18 d5! hxg5 19 hxg5+ ♗g8 20 dxc6 (as in the game), when it becomes

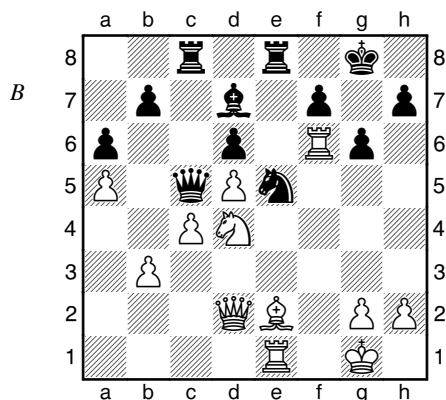
obvious the black bishop chose the wrong direction.

So 17...♙e8! is best: 18 d5 (no better is 18 ♙f4 ♗xd4 followed by ...♙c6) 18...hxg5 19 hxg5+ ♗g8 20 dxc6 ♙xc6 21 ♗f3 ♖fd8 ♣. Two bishops and a superior structure add up to good winning chances.

231) Madaminov – Mosesov *Corum (Under-16) 2019*

It's easy to understand that after 29 ♖xc5?! dxc5 30 ♗c2 (as played in the game) we have a roughly equal position on the board.

It remains to evaluate 29 ♗d2! (D).



The black queen on c5 is greatly restricted by both sides' pawns and it is clear that the white queen is much more useful. True, the pin on the knight raises some concerns, but the c6-square is covered and White just needs to examine moves like 29...♗g4 and 29...♙g4 before making his choice:

a) 29...♗g4 30 ♖f4 (naturally not 30 ♖ff1? ♖e4) 30...♗e3 31 ♙d3 ±. Putting the knight on f5 makes no sense, while 31...♗g4 can be met by 32 ♖c1 intending b4.

b) 29...♙g4!? is more cunning. The point is to meet 30 ♙f1 with 30...♗f3+! 31 gxf3 ♖xe1 32 fxg4 ♖ce8 (32...♖e4 33 ♖f4 ±) with some compensation, although after 33 ♗g2 ♖8e4 34 ♗e2 ♖xg4+ 35 ♗g3 ± the white king is securely covered. But in any case I prefer the simpler move 30 ♖f2 ± with a stable advantage.

232) B. Derakhshani – D. Johnson *London 2022*