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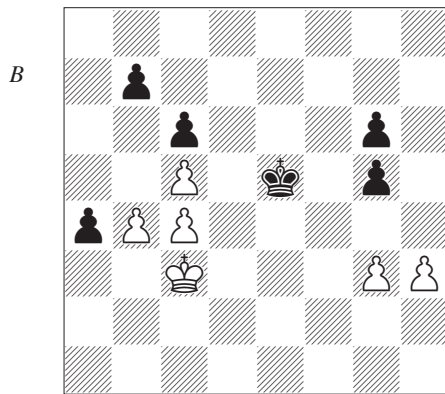
10...♔f3 11 ♖b1 ♕xg3 12 c4 bxc4 13 b4 ♔f3 14 b5 c3 15 b6 ♕e2 16 b7 ♔d1 17 b8♞ c2+ 18 ♔a2 c1♞ 19 ♞b3+ ♕e2 and Black will swap queens on b2, with an easily winning ending.

2b) 8 bxa4 bxa4 9 ♔c4 ♕e4 10 ♔b4 ♔d3 11 ♔xa4 ♔xc3 12 ♔b5 ♔d4 13 ♔c6 ♕e4 14 ♔d6 ♔f3 is the key variation; Black's pawn sacrifice has changed the kingside pawn-structure in his favour, in that taking on g3 and then on g4 defends the g5-pawn, whereas taking on g3 and then h3 didn't.

2...♔d5 3 b4 a4

In this line too, the outside passed pawn proves decisive.

4 c4+ ♕e5 5 ♔c3 (D)



5...g4!

White had set a vicious trap, which Black cleverly avoided. After the obvious 5...♕e4? 6 ♖b2 ♔f3 7 g4! ♔g3 8 ♔a3 ♕xh3 9 ♔xa4 ♕xg4 10 ♔a5 ♔f4 (it doesn't make any real difference where Black moves his king) 11 ♔b6 g4 12 ♔xb7 g3 13 b5 g2 14 bxc6 g1♞ 15 c7 Black is unable to win as he can never force White's king in front of the c7-pawn, nor can he reach a winning queen and pawn ending. The preliminary sacrifice deprives White of his reserve tempo on the kingside, and now Black can win by playing his king to the queenside rather than the kingside.

6 hxg4 g5 7 ♔b2 ♔d4 8 ♔a3 ♔c3! 0-1

The finish might be 9 ♔xa4 ♔xc4 (Marić gave 9...♔b2?? in *Informator*, but this loses to 10 ♔a5) 10 ♔a3 ♔c3 11 ♔a4 ♔b2 12 ♔a5 ♔b3 13 b5 ♔c4 14 bxc6 bxc6 15 ♔b6 ♔d5 and

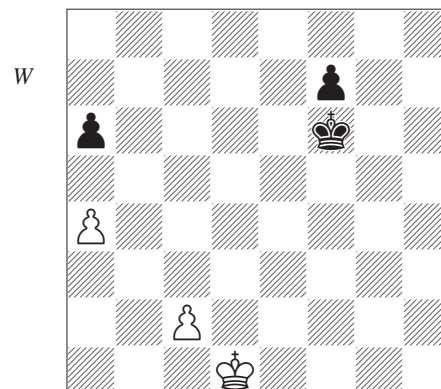
now we see how important it was to deprive White of his spare tempo on the kingside.

Summary:

- An outside passed pawn can be a powerful weapon, drawing the enemy king away from the defence of the remaining pawns.
- Much depends on whether the attacker's king can quickly penetrate into the pawn-mass on the opposite flank to the passed pawn. Sometimes it is necessary to advance pawns to create an opening for the king.
- A pawn-majority that can produce an outside passed pawn may be almost as effective as the passed pawn itself.

2.7.2 Who's Afraid of the Outside Passed Pawn?

Our treatment of outside passed pawns has thus far been rather typical of endgame books in general, but now we depart from the traditional script. After emphasizing the power of outside passed pawns, most books then pass straight on to the next topic. The consequence of this is that most players have an over-inflated idea of the strength of outside passed pawns. As we have seen, there are indeed many positions in which such a pawn gives a decisive advantage, but there are also many positions in which it does not. In this section we shall explore some of the situations in which an outside passed pawn loses its effectiveness.



Mnatsakanian – Vogt
Stary Smokovec 1979

At first sight this is a standard outside passed pawn win, with Black using his f-pawn to deflect the white king while Black's own king gobbles up White's queenside pawns; indeed, so standard did it to appear to Mnatsakanian that he resigned at this point (0-1). However, as Minev pointed out in *Informator*, the position is actually a draw. If the outside passed pawn were on the g- or h-file, then Black would indeed win, but in this position White can take the f-pawn and still make it back to the queenside in time to stop Black's a-pawn.

1 ♖e2

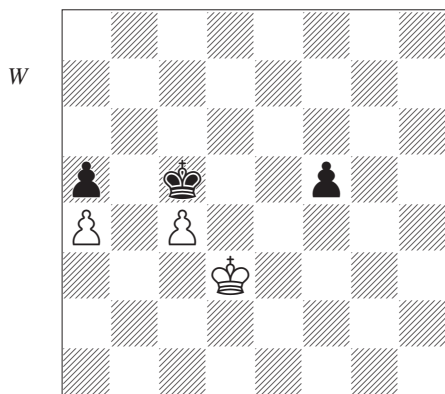
At this stage, White doesn't even have to be particularly accurate. He can also draw by 1 ♖d2, 1 c3, 1 ♖e1 or 1 a5.

1...♗e5 2 ♖d3 ♖d5

2...f5 3 c4 f4 4 c5 ♖d5 5 a5 ♖xc5 6 ♖e4 ♖b5 7 ♖xf4 ♖xa5 8 ♖e3 ♖b4 9 ♖d2 ♖b3 10 ♖c1 is a typical drawing line in which White saves the game by one tempo.

3 c4+ ♖c5 4 ♖c3 a5 5 ♖d3 f5 (D)

Not 5...♗b4?, when White even wins by 6 ♖d4 ♖xa4 7 c5 ♖b5 8 ♖d5 a4 9 c6 ♖b6 10 ♖d6 a3 11 c7 a2 12 c8♞ a1♞ 13 ♞b8+, picking up the queen with a skewer.



6 ♖c3 f4 7 ♖d3 f3

7...♗b4 8 ♖e4 ♖xa4 9 ♖xf4 ♖b4 10 ♖e3 a4 11 ♖d2 also leads to a draw.

8 ♖e3 ♖xc4

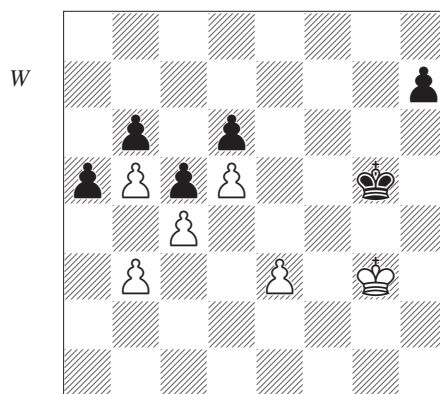
Or 8...♗b4 9 ♖xf3.

9 ♖xf3 ♖b4 10 ♖e3 ♖xa4 11 ♖d2 ♖b3 12 ♖c1

with a draw.

In this position there were two factors that enabled White to draw. The first is that Black's only pawn on the queenside was an a-pawn, so it was only necessary for the white king to return to c1 to save the game. The second was that the outside passed pawn wasn't as far away as it might have been, so that the journey to take the f-pawn and still return to c1 was within the range of White's king.

The next position is rather different. The outside passed pawn is on the edge of the board, and there are plenty of pawns on the opposite flank, but it's a draw for a different reason.



Kirov – Ermenkov

Sofia 1973

Black has an outside passed pawn and at first sight the win should be simple. He pushes the h-pawn, deflects the white king, marches with his king to take the e3- and b3-pawns and then promotes his a-pawn. However, one aspect of the position favours White: he only needs to take the relatively close d6-pawn in order to create a passed pawn of his own. Another factor, which is not obviously relevant in the diagram position, is the weakness of the b6-pawn. These compensating factors mean that White is just able to hold the position, although accurate play is necessary.

1 ♖h3!!

It was quite an achievement for White to find the only move to save the game. Other moves lose:

1) 1 ♖f3? ♖f5 2 ♖g3 ♖e4 3 ♖g4 h6! reaches a position of reciprocal zugzwang. It's

clear that White loses if he is to play, but it's not so obvious that Black can only draw if it is his move. However, the position after $4... \text{♙e3}$ 5 ♜f5 h5 occurs later in the game and we shall see there why it is drawn.

2) 1 e4 ? and now:

2a) $1... \text{♙f6}$? 2 ♗g4 ♙e5 3 ♗g5 is a position of reciprocal zugzwang with Black to play. The result is a draw after $3... \text{♙e4}$ 4 ♙f6 h5 5 ♙e6 h4 6 ♙xd6 h3 7 ♙c7 h2 8 d6 h1 ♚9 d7 , much as in the game (Black's king is on e4 instead of e3, but this makes no difference).

2b) $1... \text{h5}$? is given as winning by Mineev and Milić in *Informator 15*, but actually it allows White to escape: 2 ♙f3 ! (2 ♙h3 ? ♙f4 3 ♙h4 ♙e4 4 ♙xh5 ♙d3 5 ♙g5 ♙c3 6 ♙f6 ♙xb3 7 ♙e6 a4 8 ♙xd6 a3 9 ♙c7 a2 10 d6 a1 ♚11 d7 ♚f6 wins for Black) $2... \text{h4}$ 3 e5 dxe5 4 d6 e4+ 5 ♙xe4 ♙f6 6 ♙d5 h3 7 ♙c6 h2 8 ♙c7 h1 ♚9 d7 with the same type of positional draw as in the game.

2c) $1... \text{h6}$! (this is the winning move) 2 ♙f3 (2 e5 dxe5 3 ♙f3 ♙f5 is similar) $2... \text{♙f6}$ 3 ♙f4 h5 4 e5+ dxe5+ 5 ♙f3 ♙f5 6 ♙g3 e4 and Black wins easily.

$1... \text{♙f5}$

$1... \text{h6}$ 2 ♙g3 ♙f5 3 ♙h4 ♙e4 4 ♙g4 is one of the above reciprocal zugzwangs with Black to play.

2 ♙h4 ♙e4 3 ♙g5 ♙xe3 4 ♙f5 !

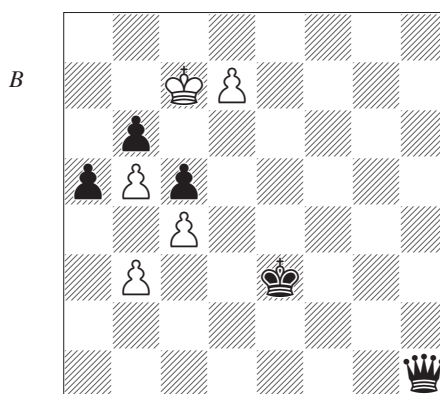
It takes too much time to go for the h-pawn, so White must create his own passed pawn as quickly as possible.

$4... \text{h5}$

This is the only chance, since if Black runs for the b-pawn, White promotes first.

5 ♙e6 h4 6 ♙xd6 h3 7 ♙c7 h2 8 d6 h1 ♚9 d7 (D)

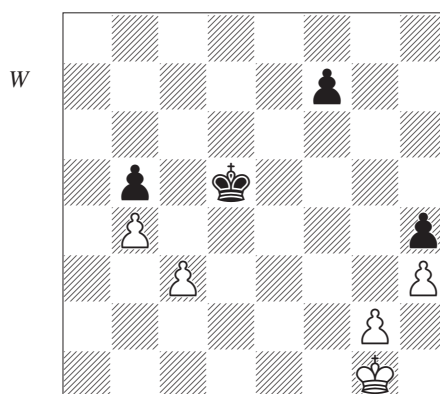
It is perhaps surprising that Black cannot win here, but this is the point at which the weakness of b6 enters the picture. Black cannot force the white king in front of the d-pawn and the best he can do is transfer his queen to e7 with gain of tempo. Then he has a free move before he has to exchange queens on d8. If Black's pawn were on a7 instead of a5, then the resulting king and pawn ending would be winning for Black, but as it is, White is in time to take on b6 and create a passed b-pawn.



$9... \text{♚h2+}$ 10 ♙c8 ♚h3 11 ♙c7 ♚g3+ 12 ♙c8 ♚g4 13 ♙c7 ♚f4+ 14 ♙c8 ♚f5 15 ♙c7 ♚e5+ 16 ♙c8 ♚e6 17 ♙c7 ♚e7 18 ♙c8 $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

After $18... \text{♙d3}$ 19 d8 ♚+ ♚xd8+ 20 ♙xd8 a4 ! ($20... \text{♙c3}$?! 21 ♙c7 ♙xb3 22 ♙xb6 a4 23 ♙xc5 a3 24 b6 a2 25 b7 a1 ♚26 b8 ♚+ ♙c2 ! is also drawn, but it would be a tough task to defend this over the board) 21 bxa4 ♙xc4 22 ♙c7 ♙b4 23 ♙xb6 c4 , the draw is clear.

In the next position, White could choose to make an outside passed pawn on either side of the board, but in the game he picked the wrong one.



Lutz – Nisipeanu
Bundesliga 2005/6

White is a pawn up, but has two backward pawns. He can create a passed b-pawn by playing c4, or a passed h-pawn by playing g3. Which plan is correct?

1 ♖f2 ♗e4 2 ♖e2

The immediate 2 g3? is wrong, because after 2...hxg3+ 3 ♖xg3 ♗e3 Black's f-pawn is just as dangerous as White's h-pawn. Instead, White must manoeuvre to find a better opportunity for playing g3.

2...♗e5

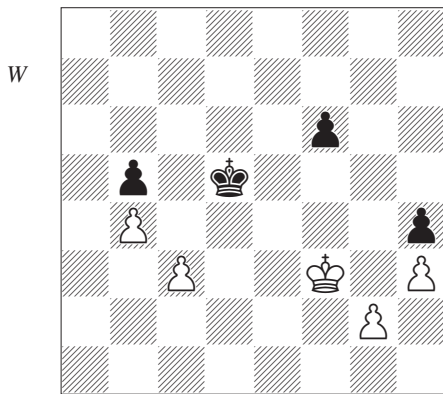
Or 2...f6 3 ♖d2 f5 4 ♖c2! and White wins after 4...♗e5 5 ♖d3 ♗d5 6 c4+ bxc4+ 7 ♖c3 f4 8 b5 or 4...f4 5 c4 bxc4 6 b5 ♗d5 7 ♖c3 ♖c5 8 b6.

3 ♖e3

3 ♖f3 f5 4 ♖e3 ♗d5 5 ♖f4 is also an easy win because Black is in zugzwang; after 5...♖c4 6 g3 hxg3 7 ♖xg3 (Black's king cannot now move to e4) 7...♖xc3 8 h4 ♖xb4 9 h5 the h-pawn is too fast.

3...♗d5 4 ♖f3 f6 (D)

After 4...♖c4 5 g3 White wins easily.

**5 ♖f4?!**

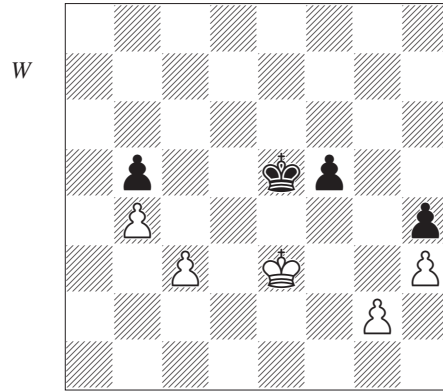
It often happens that a player makes his life more difficult with an inaccuracy, and only then makes a result-changing blunder. Here White could have won at a stroke by 5 g3! hxg3 6 h4 ♖e5 7 ♖xg3 ♗e4 (7...♖f5 8 ♖f3) 8 h5 ♖f5 9 ♖h4 ♖e6 10 ♖g4 and there are no more problems. In the game White decided to play his king to the queenside and create a passed pawn with c4, but this does not win.

5...f5

Now we have the same position as in the note to White's third move, but here it is White to play. He can still win but it is more difficult, as he must first triangulate with his king.

6 ♖e3

6 ♖xf5 only leads to a drawn ending of ♖+h♙ vs ♗.

6...♗e5 (D)**7 ♖d3?**

White has become confused and goes the wrong way with his king. He could have won on the kingside by completing the triangulation: 7 ♖f3 ♗d5 (7...f4 8 ♖g4 ♖e4 9 ♖xh4) 8 ♖f4, transposing into the note to White's third move.

7...♖f4!

Black seizes his chance to force a draw.

8 c4

8 ♖e2 ♖g3 9 ♖f1 f4 10 ♖g1 f3 11 gxf3 ♖xf3 is an easy draw, so White has no choice.

8...bxc4+ 9 ♖xc4?!

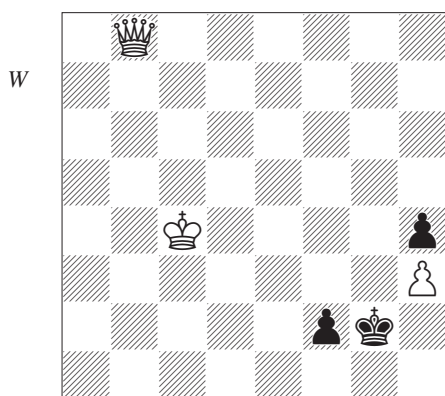
Other moves also lead to a draw, but would have offered more practical chances:

1) 9 ♖c3 ♖g3 10 b5 ♖xg2 11 b6 f4 12 b7 f3 13 b8 ♗f2 14 ♗b7+ (14 ♗g8+?! ♖xh3 is an immediate draw, so when the king is on g2, White has to check on the long diagonal) 14...♖g1 15 ♗g7+ ♖h2 16 ♗f6 ♖g2 17 ♗c6+ ♖g1 18 ♗c5 ♖g2 19 ♗d5+ ♖g1 20 ♗g8+ ♖h2 21 ♗xc4 (by means of a careful sequence of checks, White has managed to take the c-pawn with tempo) 21...♖g2 22 ♗xh4 f1 ♗ 23 ♗g4+ ♖h2 24 h4 and, while the position is a draw, in practice White would have some justification in playing on.

2) 9 ♖d4 and now 9...c3! 10 ♖xc3 ♖g3 11 b5 ♖xg2 is simplest, with the same draw as in the game. Black doesn't have to play ...c3 at once and can delay it for a couple of moves, but

if he waits too long then he will lose; for example, 9...♔g3 10 b5 ♕xg2 11 b6 f4? (this was the last chance for ...c3) 12 b7 f3 13 b8♖ f2 14 ♖g8+ ♕xh3 (14...♕h2 15 ♖xc4 ♕g2 16 ♕e3 f1 ♖ 17 ♖xf1+ ♕xf1 18 ♕f3 and White wins) 15 ♖e6+ ♕h2 16 ♖f5 ♕g2 17 ♖g4+ ♕h2 18 ♖xh4+ ♕g2 19 ♖g4+ ♕h2 20 ♖f3 ♕g1 21 ♖g3+ ♕f1 (Black has to move to f1 because the pawn on c4 destroys the usual stalemate) 22 ♕e3 and White wins.

9...♔g3 10 b5 ♕xg2 11 b6 f4 12 b7 f3 13 b8♖ f2 (D)



The position is a draw since White's king is too far away; indeed, since Black can promote with check, White's winning chances are even less than after 9 ♕c3.

14 ♖b7+ ♕g1 15 ♖g7+ ♕h2 16 ♖f6 ♕g2 17 ♖g5+

17 ♖xh4 f1♖+ is an easy draw, while 17 ♖c6+ ♕h2 18 ♖f3 ♕g1 19 ♖e3 ♕g2 is also drawn as White cannot make progress.

17...♕xh3

17...♕h2 also draws, but this the move played is the simplest.

18 ♖f4 ♕g2 19 ♖g4+ ♕h2 20 ♖xh4+ ♕g1

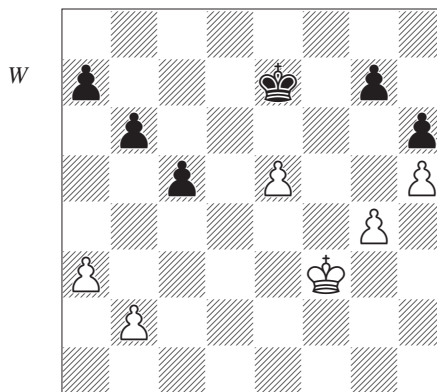
White's king is one square outside the winning zone.

21 ♖g3+ ♕h1 22 ♖xf2 1/2-1/2

It's stalemate.

We have already mentioned that the defender has better chances against an outside passed pawn when the attacker's last pawn is a rook's pawn. In the next example, despite falling into a

dubious position White could have held the game had he spotted a neat idea converting his opponent's g-pawn into an h-pawn.



T. Horvath – Wockenfuss

Hamburg 1980

Black has a queenside pawn-majority which, given enough time, will allow him to create an outside passed pawn. However, at the moment White is not worse since he can easily create counterplay on the kingside.

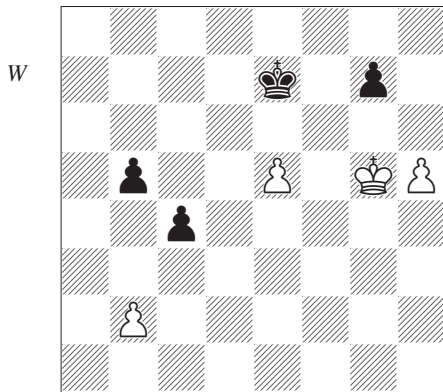
1 a4 a6 2 g5?!

After this White has to take a little care to reach the draw. 2 ♕f4! was sounder and after 2...♕e6 (not 2...b5? 3 axb5 axb5 4 ♕f5 b4 5 ♕e4 c4 6 ♕d4 and White even wins) 3 g5 hxg5+ (not 3...b5? 4 gxh6 gxh6 5 axb5 axb5 6 ♕e4 and White wins after 6...c4 7 ♕d4 or 6...b4 7 b3 c4 8 bxc4 b3 9 ♕d3 ♕xe5 10 ♕c3) 4 ♕xg5 b5 5 ♕g6 c4 6 ♕xg7 b4 7 h6 c3 8 bxc3 bxc3 9 h7 c2 10 h8♖ c1♖ White is even a pawn up in the queen ending. However, it's an easy draw as Black's king is actively placed and the e5-pawn is vulnerable; for example, 11 ♖e8+ ♕f5 12 ♖g6+ ♕xe5 13 ♖xa6 ♖c7+ 14 ♕g6 ♖d6+.

2...hxg5 3 ♕g4 b5 4 axb5 axb5 5 ♕xg5 c4 (D)

6 ♕g6?

This mistake costs White the game. Although the two players promote at the same time, Black has the first check and can use it to launch a mating attack. White could still have drawn by 6 ♕f5! b4 7 ♕e4 c3 8 bxc3 bxc3 9 ♕d3 ♕e6 10 ♕xc3 ♕xe5 11 ♕d3 ♕f5 12 h6!, converting



Black's g-pawn into an h-pawn, after which the draw is obvious.

6...b4 7 ♖xg7 c3 8 bxc3 bxc3 9 h6 c2 10 h7 c1 ♖ 11 h8 ♗ ♖g5+

Black first wins the e-pawn with check.

12 ♖h7 ♗h5+ 13 ♖g7

Or 13 ♖g8 ♗f7#.

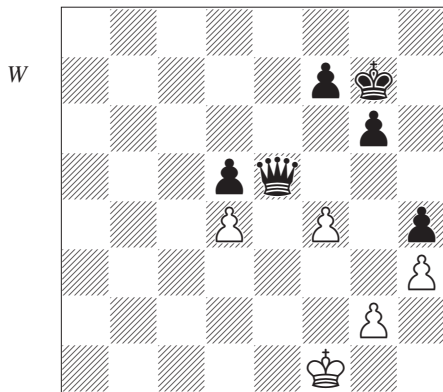
13...♗xe5+ 14 ♖g8 ♗e6+ 15 ♖g7

15 ♖h7 ♗e4+ 16 ♖g7 ♗g4+ transposes.

15...♗g4+ 16 ♖h6 ♗h4+ 0-1

17 ♖g7 ♗g5+ 18 ♖h7 ♖f7 leads to a quick mate.

The propaganda about outside passed pawns sometimes leads players to make the wrong decision when liquidating into a pawn ending.



Flear – Huss
Chiasso 1991

White faces a typical over-the-board decision: which pawn should he recapture with?

The answer isn't obvious, but the result of the game should depend on it. Flear's notes in *Informator 52* claim that both captures lose, but one of them draws.

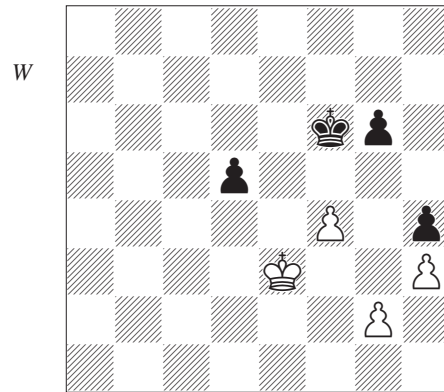
1 fxe5?

The wrong choice, after which Black has a winning position. The correct capture 1 dxe5! may look wrong, as it gives Black an outside passed pawn, but it is relatively close to the pawn-mass and this enables White to hold the game. Black can try:

1) 1...g5? 2 f5 is not equal, as Flear gives, but winning for White.

2) 1...♖f8 2 ♖f2 ♖e7 3 g4! hxg3+ 4 ♖xg3 ♖e6 5 ♖f3 ♖f5 6 ♖e3 leads to a draw after 6...d4+ 7 ♖xd4 ♖xf4 8 ♖d5 ♖f5 9 h4 or 6...g5 7 fxg5 ♖xe5 8 ♖f3 ♖f5 9 ♖e3! ♖xg5 10 ♖d4.

3) 1...f6! (the most troublesome move) 2 ♖f2 ♖f7 (2...fxe5 3 fxe5 ♖f7 4 ♖f3 ♖e6 5 ♖f4 is an easy draw) 3 ♖e3! (3 g3? fxe5 4 fxe5 ♖e6 5 gxh4 ♖xe5 6 ♖e3 d4+ 7 ♖d3 ♖d5 8 ♖d2 ♖e4 9 ♖e2 ♖f4 10 ♖d3 ♖g3 11 ♖xd4 ♖xh3 wins for Black) 3...♖e6 4 exf6 (not 4 ♖d4? fxe5+ 5 fxe5 g5) 4...♖xf6 (D).



We have reached a key moment at which White must choose the correct square for his king in order to draw: 5 ♖f3! (it is surprising that White only draws by moving away from Black's passed pawn, but the right strategy is to wait until the pawn is further advanced before attacking it; 5 ♖d4? loses to 5...♖e6 6 ♖d3 ♖d7 7 ♖c3 ♖c6 8 ♖d4 ♖d6 9 ♖d3 ♖c5 and White is gradually forced backwards) 5...♖e6 (5...♖f5 6 ♖e3 is a position of reciprocal zugzwang; if