

Contents

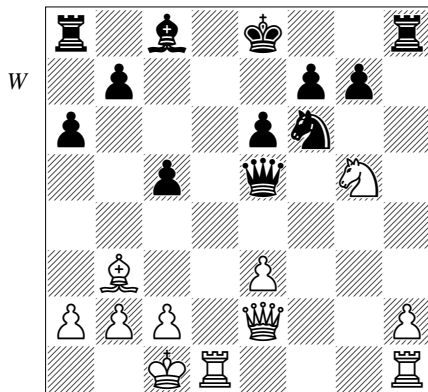
Symbols	4
Introduction	5
1 Fork	7
2 Battery Play	14
3 Pinning and Unpinning	22
4 The Skewer	31
5 Deflection and Decoy	40
6 Trapping a Piece	50
7 Removing a Guard	61
8 Line-Opening and Line-Closing	68
9 Back-Rank Weakness	77
10 Pawn Promotion	87
11 Zwischenzug	97
12 Devious Draws: Perpetual Check	104
13 Devious Draws: Stalemate	110
14 The Ultimate Goal: Mate!	119
15 Combined Motifs	126
16 It's Your Move!	131
Index of Names	142

4 The Skewer

A skewer occurs when a line-moving piece attacks an enemy unit, and moving the attacked piece would expose a second enemy piece standing behind it on the same line.

The most common and dangerous type of skewer is when the king is the front enemy piece. If the attacking piece cannot be captured and nothing can interpose, then the checked king must move and thus expose his fellow piece to capture.

The skewer resembles the pin as in both cases a piece takes advantage of two enemy pieces standing on the same line. However, the difference is the order of the pieces on the line. In the pin the rear piece is the more valuable one, while in the skewer it is the front one (or they have the same value; for example, a bishop might skewer two rooks occupying the same diagonal).




Tal – Benko
Amsterdam Interzonal 1964

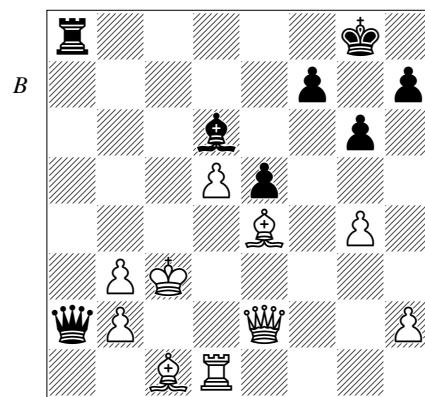
It is the last call before Black castles. Can White hinder this plan?

The reader won't find it too hard to spot the skewer:

19 ♖d8+! ♔e7

The alternative is being forked: 19...♔xd8
20 ♖xf7+ +-.


20 ♖xh8 ♔xg5 21 ♔d2 1-0



Honfi – Tal
Sukhumi 1972

Black has invested some material to expose the white king. How can he now cash in?

While in the previous example we saw a white horizontal skewer, here we witness a black diagonal one in action. It is prepared by a bishop sacrifice:

31...♗b4+!! 32 ♔xb4 ♕a5+ 33 ♔c4 ♕a6+
0-1

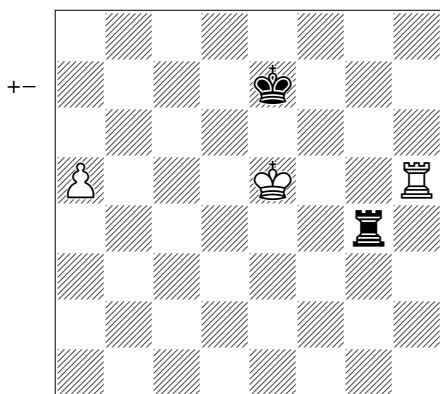
Following this decisive skewer, White's entire camp falls apart in no time.

In the diagram overleaf, can White achieve more than the likely-looking draw?

He can, by employing the most common skewer combination in chess practice.

1 a6

The 'logical' option leads to a dead end following 1 ♖h7+? ♔d8 2 a6 ♜a4 3 a7 ♔c8 4 ♔d6 ♜a6+ 5 ♔c5 ♜a1 6 ♔b6 ♜b1+, drawing.



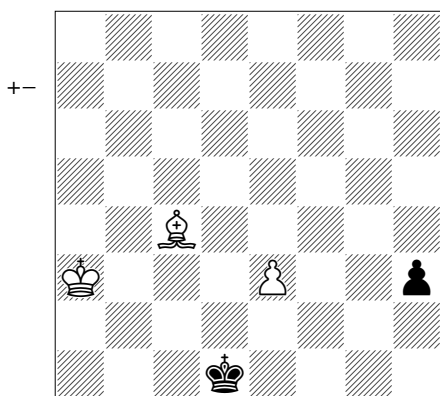
W. Proskurowski
Szachy, 1959

1...♖a4 2 a7! ♔d7

Black avoids one skewer: 2...♖xa7 3 ♖h7+.

3 ♖h8! ♖xa7 4 ♖h7+ +–

...but falls into another one.



L. Prokeš

Jak Řešit Šachové Ulohy a Studie, 1946

A skewer by promoting – or right after – is fairly common in the endgame. Can White stop Black's promotion while securing his own?

That is unlikely but there is a surprising alternative:

1 ♔d5 ♔e2

1...h2 allows White time to regroup by 2 ♔h1! (care is needed: not 2 ♔g2? ♔e1 3 e4 ♔f2) 2...♔e2 3 e4 ♔f2 4 e5 ♔g1 5 ♔a8.

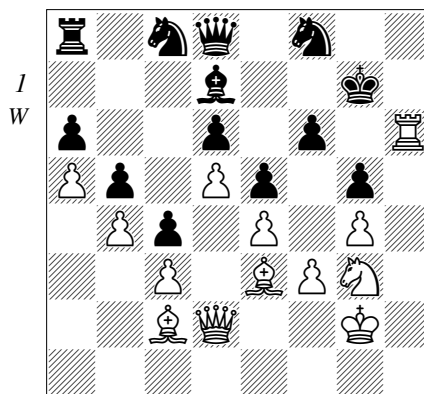
2 e4 ♔e3 3 e5 ♔d4 4 e6! ♔xd5

The king has been lured to the critical diagonal...

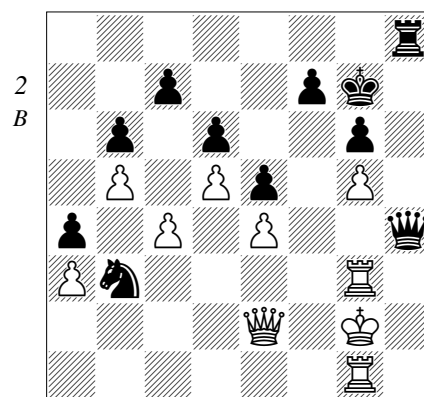
5 e7 h2 6 e8 ♔h1 ♔7 ♔a8+ +–

...to be hit by a lethal skewer.

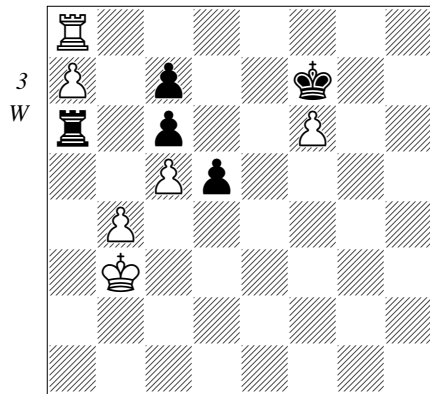
Skewer Exercises



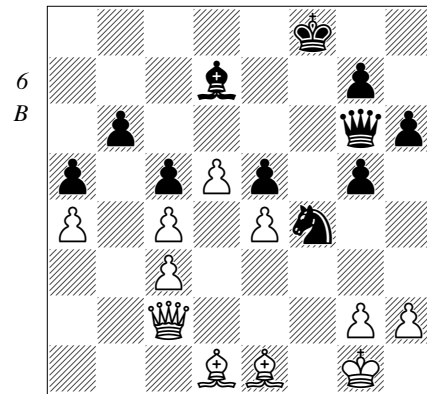
Black seems to have created a kind of stone-wall. Can White break it?



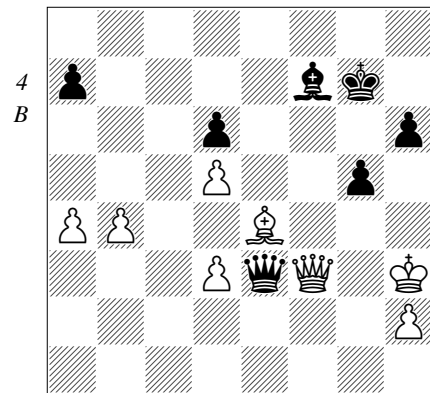
The black pieces are menacingly placed. What is the most effective way to make use of this?



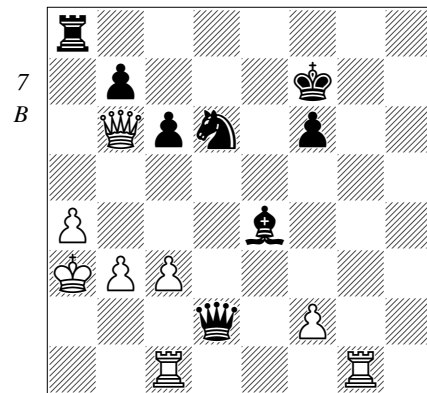
How can White make progress and achieve victory?



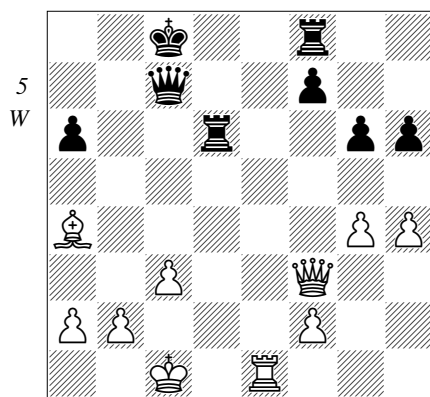
Find a way for Black to exploit the overloaded white queen.



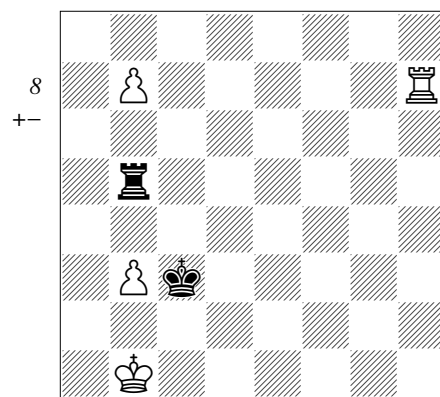
Show how Black can most wisely use his initiative.



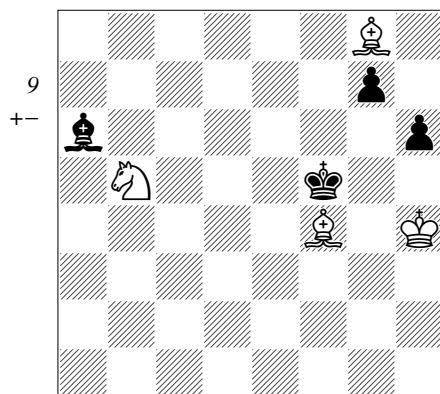
Black now smoked out the white king. How?



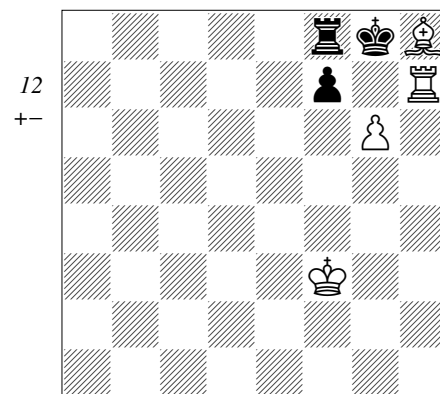
How does White act forcefully against the exposed black king?



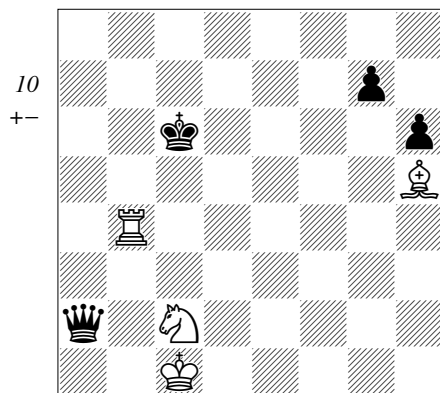
How can White create winning chances even though his pawns are barely defensible?



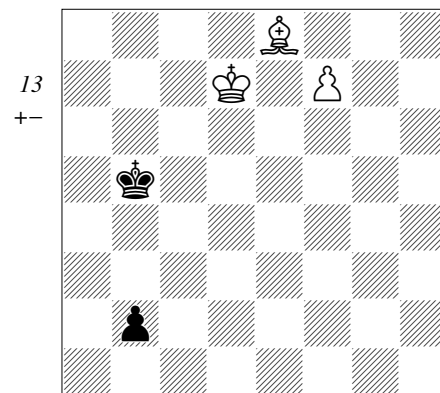
Facing a double threat, can White maintain a decisive material superiority?



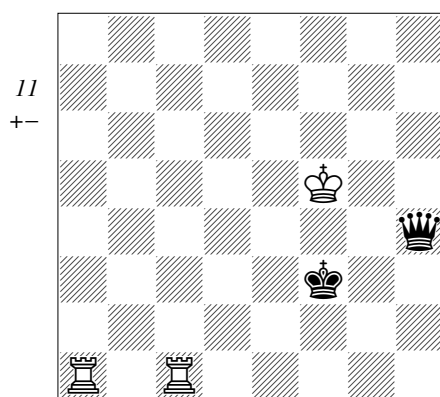
Can White win this odd-looking position?



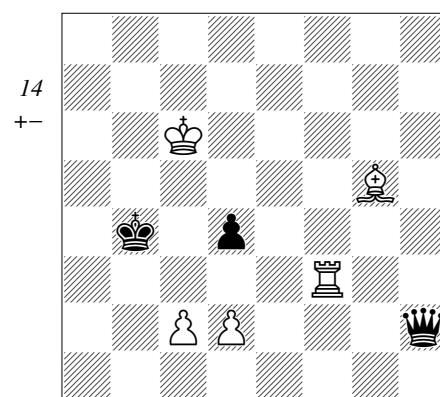
Can the white trio dominate the enemy queen?



How should White put his extra bishop to use?



Is there a way for the two rooks to defeat the royal couple?



Can White make use of his queenside superiority? Is the black king in trouble?