Two Rooks Save the Day
A World Champion's Favorite Studies

Sergei Tkachenko

Two Rooks Save the Day: A World Champion's Favorite Studies

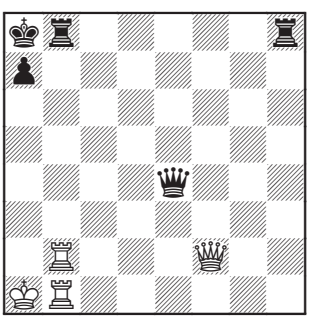
Author: Sergei Tkachenko
Translated from the Russian by Alexei Zakharov
© Elk and Ruby, 2026. All rights reserved
Follow us on Twitter: @ilan_ruby
www.elkandruby.com
ISBN 978-1-918791-39-6

Two Pillars of Strength

The strength of the rook duo was known even when chess was still in its infancy! Many chess players of old suffered from a direct attack on the position of their king by two rooks.

It was only natural, therefore, that the first chess books paid particular attention to the rook pair. The book by Portuguese chess player and pharmacist Pedro Damiano, *Questo libro e da imparare giocare a scachi et de li partiti*, contains examples that show the strength of the two rooks...

No. I
P. Damiano, 1512



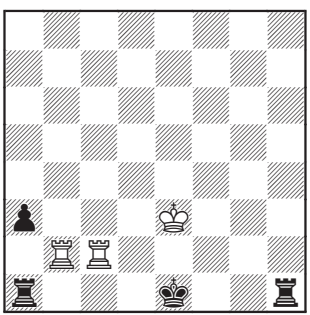
White to play and win

The sacrificial blow **1.♕xa7+! ♔xa7** is followed by the mating hook: **2.♖a2+ ♕a4 3.♖xa4#.** This

ancient mating combination later became the last step for many powerful endgame studies.

The grandfathers of modern endgame studies, Josef Kling and Bernhard Horwitz, did of course draw on the power of the rooks, too. In 1851, they patented an interesting technique that later appeared in many endgame-study revelations.

No. II.
J.Kling, B.Horwitz, 1851



White to play and win

Black has an extra pawn, but this advantage is precisely what dooms him!

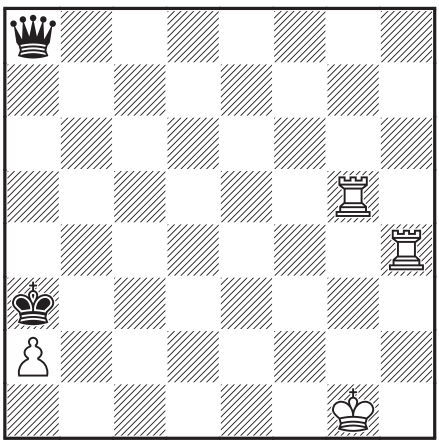
1.♖h2! ♖**f1.** 1...♖xh2 also loses: 2.♖xh2 ♔d1 3.♔d3! (but not 3.♖h1+? ♔c2 4.♖xa1 ♔b2, draw) 3...♔c1 4.♔c3 etc.

2.♖bd2! ♖**g1.** There's no alternative: 2...♖b1 3.♖he2# or 2...♖f8 3.♖de2+ ♔d1 4.♖h1+.

3.♖de2+ ♔d1 4.♔f2!, and white wins.

This book contains 100 instructive endgame studies in which two white rooks successfully attack or coolly defend against various black pieces. The number of moves in their solutions is usually no greater than six (or, in some examples, seven). Such a short length of solutions will help experienced players test their tactical prowess and calculation technique straight from the diagram. For beginner players, studying positions from this book will be useful for development of their chess muscles. Good luck to everyone in your hunt for the secrets of chess!

No. 1

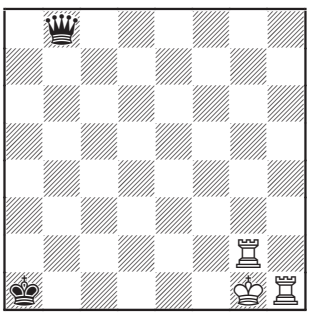


White to play and win

1.♖h3+! Not 1.♖g3+? ♔xa2 2.♖h2+ ♔b1 3.♖gg2 ♕a3, draw.

1...♔xa2. The escape to the eighth rank won't help: 1...♔b4 2.♖g4+ ♔c5 3.♖h5+ ♔d6 4.♖g6+ ♔e7 5.♖h7+ ♔f8 6.♖h8+, winning the queen.

2.♖g2+ ♔a1 3.♖h1! ♕b8.

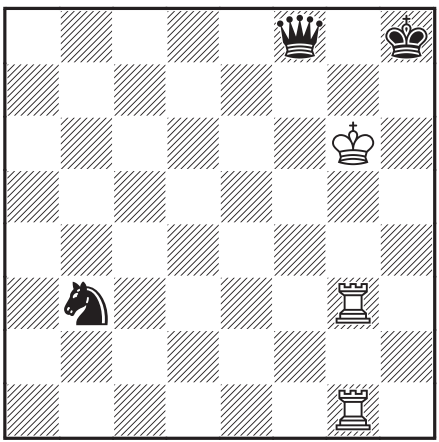


4.♔f2+! But not 4.♖f2? ♕g3+! 5.♖g2 ♕f4, and black is safe.

4...♔b2 5.♔e3+! ♔c3 6.♖c1+ ♔b3 7.♖b1+, and the queen falls. White wins. Exemplary coordination of the king with the rook pair!

Author L. Centurini, 1853

No. 2



White to play and win