

# British Endgame Study News

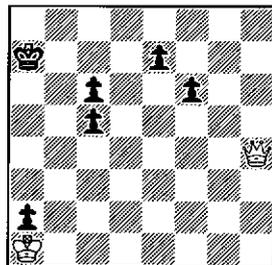
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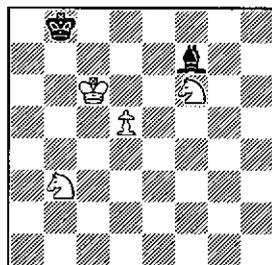


by David Blundell  
White to play and win

**This issue.** Our special number looks at more foreign studies which first appeared here, and there is the usual composite index. Try the above before looking inside.

**A prophet not without honour?** The *BCM* wrote kindly about *51 flights*, and to my amazement the September *Československý šach* included a full-page review (A4, small print) and quoted eight of the endgame studies.

**Spotlight** (see also back page). Regarding Paul Byway's study on page 434 of the September issue, Timothy Whitworth sends me a copy of the relevant pages from Aleksandr Herbstman's 1964 book *Selected chess studies* with translations of the key comments (thank you!), and points out that I had not fully appreciated what Herbstman was trying to do in his earlier version of the study. Herbstman identifies  $wNc5/Pd6 \ v \ bBb3$  as a target winning configuration for White, who has two possible ways of getting there: advancing the pawn at once, or playing  $Nd7+$  first. If  $1 \ Nd7+ \ Kc8 \ 2 \ d6$  then  $2...Be8$  pins the knight, and after  $3 \ Nc5 \ Kd8$  we have a positional draw with White's mobile knight unable to come into play because it is tied to the defence of its pinned colleague. If instead  $1 \ d6$ , we have the actual solution.

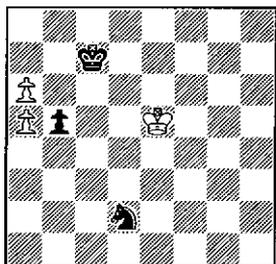


by A. O. Herbstman  
White to play and win

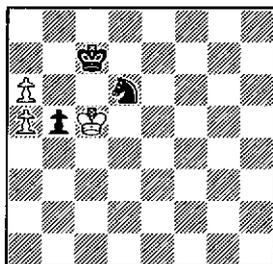
Yes, but... In effect, the knight on b3 is present only to create a false trail. In itself, the positional draw is attractive, but it is not well served by being presented as the refutation of a wrong line whose existence demands the presence of an extra White knight. However, I agree with Timothy that Herbstman would have seen that he needed only one knight to make the main line work, and that Paul's version is no more than an attractive simplification properly attributed to "Byway, after Herbstman".

**Accounts for 2009.** Most readers have now paid up to termination, but UK readers who have not are being charged £8 for the year (£9 to the rest of Europe, £11 elsewhere). There is a reminder letter with this issue if your subscription has run out.

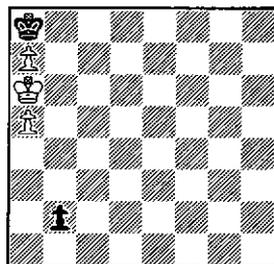
## Recently published British originals



1 - draw

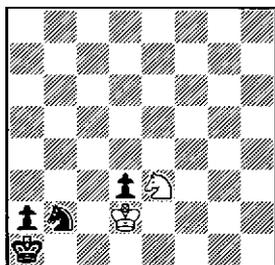


1a - 1 Kd5, after 2...Nd6

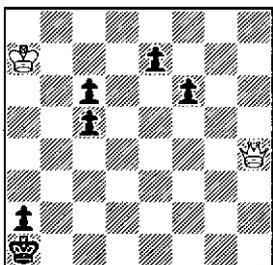


1b - main line, after 8 Ka6

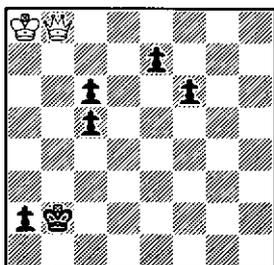
Paul Michelet's **1** was in the July *BCM*. Try 1 Kd5: no, 1...Nc4 2 Kc5 Nd6 (see **1a**), and Black will stop White's pawns and win at leisure. Better is **1 Kd4 Nc4 2 Kd5 Nd6 3 Kc5**, when we again have **1a** but with Black to play. But does not **3...Kb8** win almost off-hand? No, **4 Kxd6!!** (pardon?) **b4 5 Kc5 b3 6 Kb6 b2 7 a7+ Ka8 8 Ka6** (see **1b**), and promotion to queen or rook will give stalemate. The finish has been known since the middle of the nineteenth century and **1a** with Black to play has been seen before, but the fact that it is reciprocal zugzwang does not appear to have been successfully exploited. The Soviet composer Badai tried to do so in 1965, but his setting allowed Black an alternative line which won.



2 - draw



3 - win



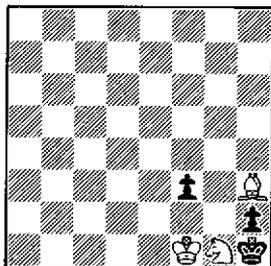
3a - after 5 Qb8+

Also in the July *BCM* was John Roycroft's amusing little **2**. **1 Nc2+** is obvious, and 1...Kb1 2 Na3+ Ka1 3 Nc2+ repeats the position. **1...dxc2**, therefore, and now the move is not the natural 2 Kxc2, when 2...Nd3 wins for Black, but **2 Kc1!** with the capture postponed until next move. Basic endgame theory made gently piquant.

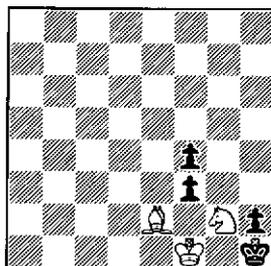
David Blundell's **3** was in the September *BCM*. Immediate queen moves get nowhere, and the answer is **1 Ka8!!** There might follow **1...Kb1** (1...Kb2 2 Qh2+ and as below) **2 Qh1+ Kb2 3 Qh2+ Ka3** (3...Kb1/Kb3 4 Qb8+) **4 Qg3+ Kb2 5 Qb8+** (see **3a**), and we see why White's king had to clear the a-file without obstructing the b-file. Play continues **5...Ka3/Kc~ 6 Qa7(+)** **Kb~ 7 Qb6+ Ka3/Kc~ 8 Qxc5+**, and the rest will be routine.

## More on Thomas à Becket

Noam Elkies responded to the "Thomas à Becket" position in *51 flights* by sending me several more. I was well aware that it was not unique (we can stack further Black pawns on the f and h files), but I did not expect radically different alternatives.



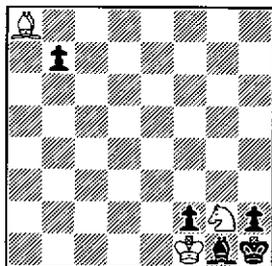
1



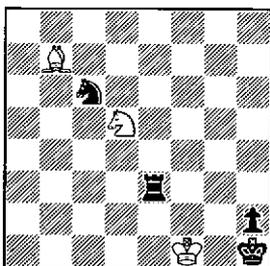
2

1 is my original position from 1994. As set, White has nothing better than 1 Nxf3 giving stalemate, but if we remove either the knight or the bishop he can mate in two.

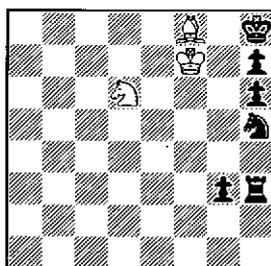
Noam's 2 uses a different mechanism. Both White men are under attack and he can only draw, but the knight alone could mate in three, and the bishop alone in one.



3



4



5

In 3, what Noam calls the "preposterously obtrusive" bishop on a8 means that moves like Ne3 give stalemate, while the knight means that Bxb7 is stalemate.

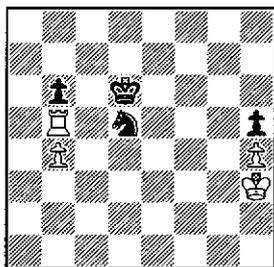
4, which uses only one Black pawn, has a similar motivation. As set, Nxe3 gives stalemate, and everything else loses; without the bishop, Nxe3 mates in three.

And in 5, which uses a quite different mechanism, we have an ultimate in non-cooperation between knight and bishop: *all* White moves lose.

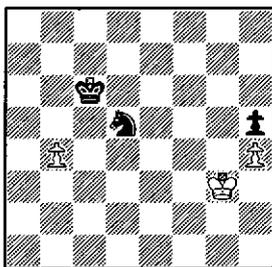
Noam wonders if I have asked "the database wizards" whether 1 might be a unique setting with six or fewer men. No, I haven't, but he points out that if you have the complete six-man databases to hand (which I haven't) it is a straightforward scanning exercise. Any volunteers?

## More British studies from the past

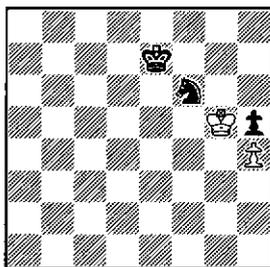
There has been something of a spate of British originals during the past year, but I think we are now up to date, and this gives me space for some more studies which escaped my "Some British studies from ..." trawls.



1 - BTM, White to draw



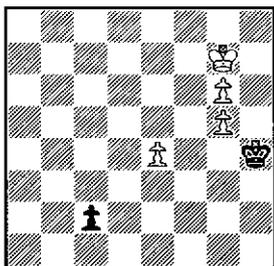
1a - after 3...Kc6



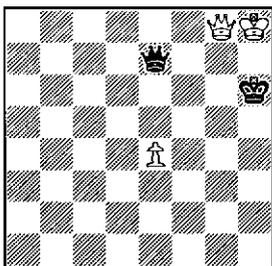
1b - after 9 Kg5

J. Lowenthal's 1 appeared in the *Chess Player's Chronicle* in 1870. White's rook is trapped and 1...Kc6 wins it, and if 2 Rxd5 then 2...Kxd5 3 Kg3 Ke4 wins (but not 3...Kc4, when 4 Kf4 draws). It is the less likely move 2 Rxb6+! which works, and after 2...Kxb6 (2...Nxb6 3 Kg3 Nd5 gives the same position) 3 Kg3 Kc6 we have 1a.

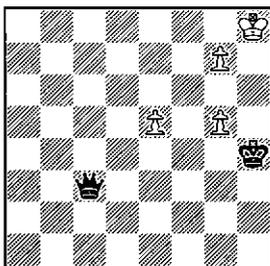
Now comes another surprise: 4 b5+!! This diverts the Black king a second time, and after 4...Kxb5 (declining the sacrifice doesn't help) 5 Kf3 Kc6 6 Ke4 Kd6 7 Kf5 Ke7 8 Kg6 (8 Kg5 also works) Nf6 9 Kg5 we have 1b. Black is now held: 9...Ke6 10 Kg6 Ke5 11 Kg5, or 9...Kf7 10 Kh6 (but not 10 Kf5, when 10...Nh7 wins).



2 - draw

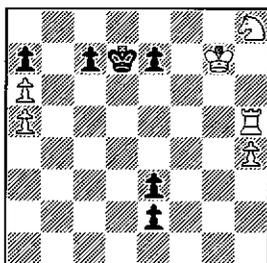


2a - 1 Kh7, after 6...Kh6

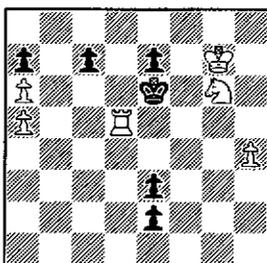


2b - main line, after 3 e5

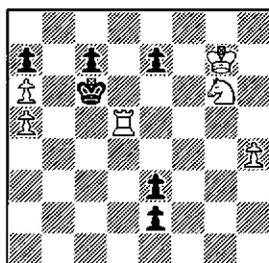
Erich Zepler's 2 appeared in the *BCM* in 1939. Try 1 Kh7: no, 1...c1Q 2 g7 Qc7 3 Kh8 Qe5 4 Kh7 Qe7 5 Kh8 Kxg5! 6 g8Q+ Kh6 gives 2a, and Black mates in a few. Better is to start 1 Kh8, and after 1...c1Q 2 g7 Qc3 to interpose 3 e5! (see 2b). Black has only 3...Qxe5, after which 4 Kh7 Qe7 5 Kh8 Kxg5 6 g8Q+ Kh6 gives 2a but with no e-pawn. Now White can draw by 7 Qe6+! since the recapture 7...Qxe6 will give stalemate. Zepler was a German who fled his own country to escape the Nazis. He was primarily a problemist, but his few endgame studies were good ones.



3 - win



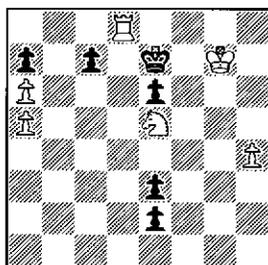
3a - 1...Ke6, after 2 Ng6



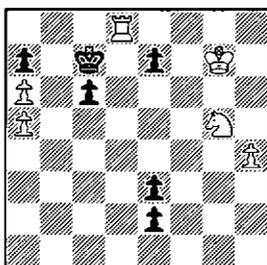
3b - 1...Kc6, after 2 Ng6

Harold Lommer sent his four-fold echo study **3** to the *New Statesman* in 1954 as an ordinary column piece. Play **1 Rd5+**, and Black has four moves. If **1...Ke6** then **2 Ng6** threatening mate on f4 (see **3a**), and after **2...Kxd5 3 Nf4+** the pawn is caught and White wins without undue difficulty (given is **3...Ke4 4 Nxe2 Kf3 5 Nc3 Kg4 6 Kg6 Kxh4 7 Kf5** etc).

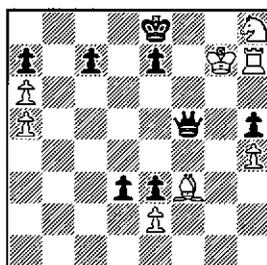
If **1...Kc6** then again **2 Ng6**, this time threatening mate on e7 (see **3b**), and again the same.



3c - 1...Ke8, after 4 Ne5



3d - 1...Kc8, after 4 Ng5



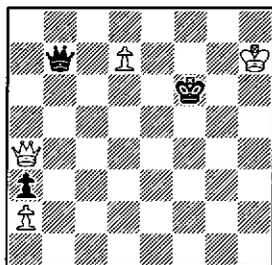
4 - win

If **1...Ke8** then **2 Nf7** (threatening mate on d8) **e6** (if **2...e5** then **3 Rxe5+** and **4 Rxe3**) **3 Rd8+ Ke7 4 Ne5** threatening mate on c6 (see **3c**) with **4...Kxd8 5 Nf3** etc, and we notice how the crucial blocking pawn on e6 has moved there in the course of the play.

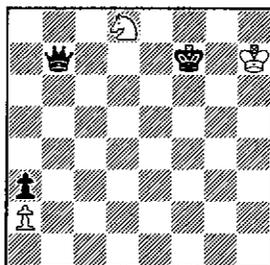
And if **1...Kc8** then **2 Nf7 e6** (**2...c5 3 Rxc5+** and **4...Rc1**) **3 Rd8+ Kc7 4 Ng5**, this time threatening mate on e6 (see **3d**), and again the crucial blocking pawn has moved into place during the play.

This was recently brought to my attention by Paul Valois. You may well ask why I missed it in my earlier trawls, and the answer is that it is in Harold van der Heijden's "Endgame study database III" only in the extended form **4**, which appeared in the second edition of Chéron's *Lehr- und Handbuch der Endspiele* (volume 3, page 328). This had intention **1 Bc6+ Qd7 2 Bxd7+ Kxd7 3 Rxh5 dxe2** giving **3**, and it cooked by **3 Nf7**. I looked at it, and saw only the ugly position, the clumsy introductory play, and the cook; the beauty lying within escaped me.

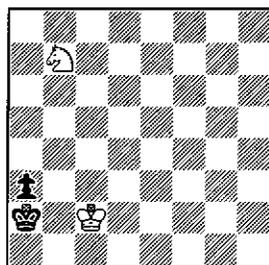
## From the world at large



1 - win

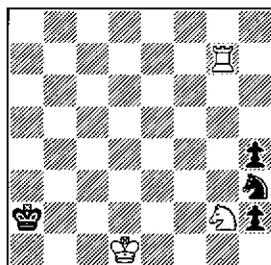


1a - after 3 d8N+

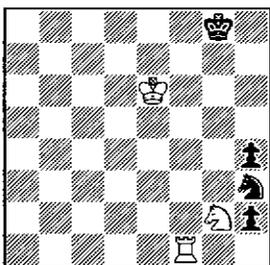


1b - after 9 Kc2

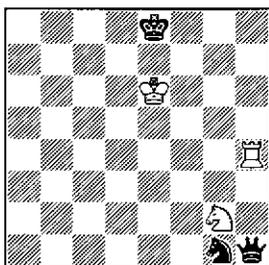
John Roycroft showed Velimir Kalandadze's beautiful little 1 (1st Special Prize, Nona 2008) at the October Pushkin House meeting. White's d-pawn is pinned, but **1 Qf4+ Ke6/Ke7 2 Qf7+!** spectacularly unpins it, and after **2...Kxf7** the fork **3 d8N+** wins back the queen (see 1a). But Black will go for White's remaining pawn, **3...Kf6+ 4 Nxb7 Ke5**, and how will White's knight defend it? He doesn't need to; **5 Kg6 Kd4 6 Kf5 Kc3 7 Ke4 Kb2 8 Kd3 Kxa2 9 Kc2** gives 1b, and White will mate with the lone knight. It is a lovely introduction to a classic finale.



2 - draw



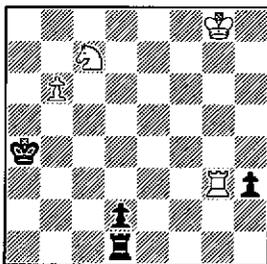
2a - after 11 Rf1



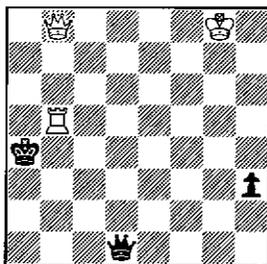
2b - after 15 Rxh4

Euboš Kekely recently sent me a copy of *Slovenský výber II*, a selection of Slovak compositions from the period 1999-2004, and one that took my eye was 2 by himself and Mário Kamody (IHM Martin-Žilina 2002-3). **1 Kc2** threatens mate and leads to a familiar chase, **1...Ka3 2 Kc3 Ka4 3 Kc4 Ka5 4 Kc5 Ka6 5 Rg6+ Kb7 6 Rg7+ Kc8 7 Kc6 Kd8 8 Kd6 Ke8 9 Ke6**, and after **9...Kf8 10 Rf7+ Kg8 11 Rf1** the pawn is temporarily stopped (see 2a). But **11...Ng1** forces promotion; what now?

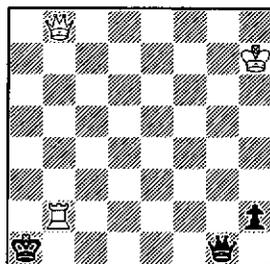
The answer is **12 Rf4**, and if **12...h1Q** (we'll look at the alternatives in a moment) then **13 Rg4+ Kf8** (13...Kh~ 14 Rxh4+) **14 Rf4+ Ke8** (14...Kg~ 15 Rg4+ repeating) **15 Rxh4!** (see 2b) and if **15...Nh3** then **16 Rh8** mate. If **12...Nf3** then **13 Nxb4**, and Black will get nowhere (given is **13...Ng5+ 14 Kf5 Nh3 15 Rf1 Ng1 16 Nf3 Nxf3 17 Rh1**); if **12...Nh3** then **13 Rf1** repeating; and if **12...h3** then **13 Rg4+ Kf8 14 Rf4+ Kg7 15 Rg4+** with **15...Kh6 16 Kf6 Nf3 17 Nf4** or **15...Kh7 16 Kf7 Nf3 17 Rg7+**.



3 - win

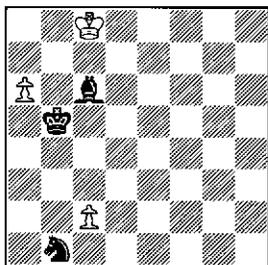


3a - after 6 b8Q

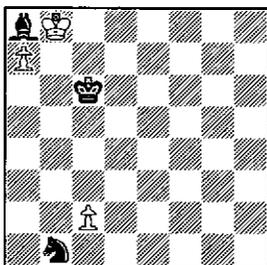


3b - after 10...Ka1

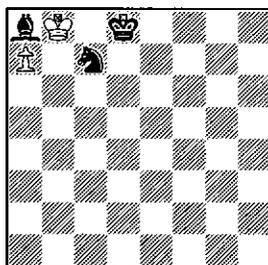
Jim Vickery contributed an article "Are 'classic' studies still being composed?" to *EG 177* which included no fewer than four examples by Mario Matouš. The superb 3 gained 2nd Prize in *Československý šach 2001*. **1 Rg4+** (1 b7 Rb1 2 Rg4+ Ka3) **Ka5** (but now 1...Ka3 is met by 2 Nb5+ and 3 b7) **2 b7 Rb1 3 Rg5+ Ka4 4 Nb5** (4 Rb5 d1Q and draws easily) **Rxb5** (4...d1Q 5 Nc3+ Ka3 6 Nxb1+ Qxb1 7 Ra5+, or 6...Kb~ 7 b8Q+ Kxc3 8 Rc5+ and soon mates) **5 Rxb5 d1Q** (5...Kxb5 6 b8Q+ and simplest is 7 Qb1) **6 b8Q+** (see 3a) **Qg1+** (6...h2 7 Qe8 etc, 6...Qg4+ 7 Kf8 Qf3+ 8 Kc7 with 8...h2 9 Qe8 or 8...Qa3+ 9 Ke8 h2 10 Qb6) **7 Kh7 h2 8 Rb4+ Ka3 9 Rb3+ Ka2 10 Rb2+ Ka1** (see 3b) **11 Qh8!** (but not the more obvious 11 Qe5, when attacks on the queen by say 11...Qe3 hold the draw) and White soon mates (11...h1Q+ 12 Rh2+ etc). Position 3b was featured on the magazine's front cover.



4 - draw



4a - after 2...Kc6



4b - 7...Nxc7 stalemate

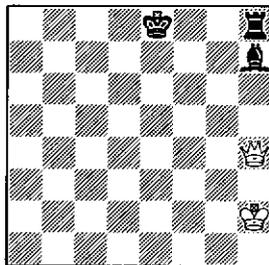
Editions feenschach-phénix in Aachen have produced an Annex to the 1998-2000 Fide Album (see June 2008) containing all the compositions which missed selection by half a point. 4, by Sergei Osintsev, Andrei Selivanov, and K. Tarnopolsky, gained 4th Prize in the 1998 Neidze-60 tourney. **1 a7** (1 Kc7 Nc3 2 a7 Nd5+ 3 Kb8 Nb6), and if 1...Kb6 then 2 Kb8 Ba8 3 c4 (not 3 Kxa8 Kc7 with 4...Kc8 and 5-7...N(x)c7 mate, nor 3 c3 Kc6 4 c4 Na3 and as below) Nc3 4 c5+ Kc6 5 Kxa8 Kc7 6 c6 Kc8 7 c7 with stalemate. Better is **1...Ba8 2 Kb8 Kc6** giving 4a, and if now 3 c4 then 3...Na3 (say) 4 Kc8 Nc2 5 Kb8 Nb4 6 Kxa8 Kc7 and soon mates. Hence **3 c3!** leading to **3...Na3 4 c4 Kd7** (4...Kd6 5 c5+ Kd7 6 c6+, 4...Nxc4 5 Kxa8) **5 c5 Nb5 6 c6+ Kd8 7 c7+ Nxc7** and White is stalemated anyway (see 4b). Tempo fights with a king buried in the corner are common enough, but the final stalemate is quite unexpected.

## News and notices

**Meetings.** The next **Pushkin House** meeting will be on **Friday January 8** at 6.00 pm (offers of talks to roycroft@btinternet.com please). 5A Bloomsbury Square, London (Holborn tube, Bloomsbury Way, SW corner of the square).

**EG for 2010.** The 2010 sterling subscription to *EG* is unchanged at **£20**, and I am again willing to receive subscriptions. Cheques payable to J. D. Beasley, please.

**3-6 man zugzwangs.** Further to last time's notice, Guy Haworth's colleague Giuseppe Di Fatta has been converting the reciprocal zugzwangs into PGN form, thus producing a file which can be searched by CQL (see June 2004). As a first trial, done on a preliminary file containing just the 3-5 man positions, Guy suggested searching for positions which could be flipped so that a king and a rook were on their home squares. This gave six positions, one of which is shown alongside. White to play cannot win (1 Qh6 Kf7 is drawn, any king move allowing a check), but Black to play loses (1...Kf7 2 Qh6 Kg8 3 Kg3 etc) unless he can still castle, when 0-0 saves him.



Reciprocal zugzwang?

Guy thought that this little curiosity might not have been noted before. All 372 reciprocal zugzwangs with  $Q \vee R + B$  were published in *EG* 112, but the list was sorted only by depth and I imagine that few have waded through it in detail. The PGN file can be downloaded without charge from the ICGA web site <[www.icga.org](http://www.icga.org)>.

**Spotlight** continued. Noam Elkies thinks "Punchinello" (1 in special number 60) was surely a pseudonym; it is an Anglicization of "Pulcinella", which was a stock character in *Commedia dell'Arte* and puppetry. He is our "Punch", of course.

Noam is unsurprised by the Elekes anticipation of the "Elkies" zugzwang (4 in the special number) - he had said from the start that he expected this setup to be already known, "though perhaps not as early as 1921, nor with an amusing near-coincidence of names". As he says, the thematic try is easily found by looking for foreplay without captures, so he is not surprised that it too is in the 1921 study.

Noam also gently challenges my statement on page 436 that the chess problem was invented because the precision of "mate within  $n$  moves" was essential for serious competitive solving. I had in mind the medieval wager problems referred to by Murray and others, but as Noam correctly points out, "mate within  $n$  moves" was appearing in the literature long before these.

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