

# British Endgame Study News

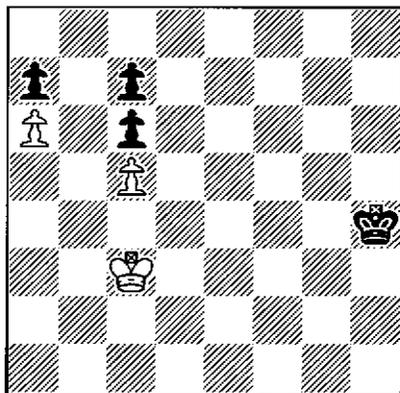
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Some studies by

**Josef Hašek**

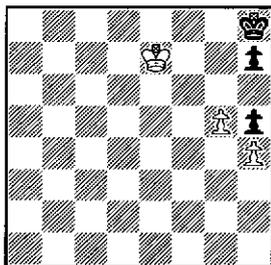


White to play and win

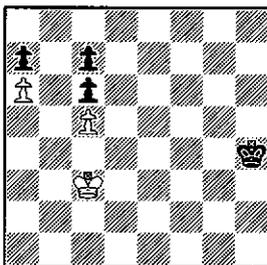
## Some studies by Josef Hašek

One of the most attractive schools of chess study composition has been that of the Czechs and their Central European neighbours. I say "school" with slight reservations, because the number of participants has barely crept into double figures, but nevertheless a style and pattern is apparent. It is characterized by naturalness of position combined with piquancy of play, and is much closer to the parent game than the more artificial "puzzle" study pioneered by Troitzky in Russia (though Troitzky's positions seem naturalness itself compared with what is being offered nowadays). If Réti and Mandler are its best known figures, there were several others who also produced some first-rate work: Oldřich Duras, Josef Moravec, František Dedrlé ...

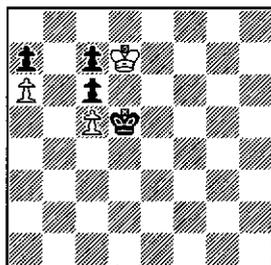
One was Josef Hašek (1897-1976), a collection of whose studies has just been produced by Vladimír Kos in Brno. Emil Vlasák, reviewing it for the composition magazine *Šachová skladba*, gently chides its lack of biographical information: how could a writer from Moravia have failed to mention Hašek's lifelong love of wine? (They are quietly proud of their wine in Moravia; Emil comes from Bohemia, which is beer country.) But one cannot spend all day drinking, or so my wife keeps telling me, and the studies make up for any oenological deficiencies. Several have appeared in textbooks and anthologies (there are two in *Endgame magic*), and they have helped to make the "book" what it is.



1 - win



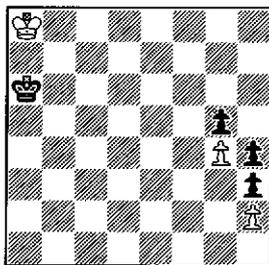
2 - win



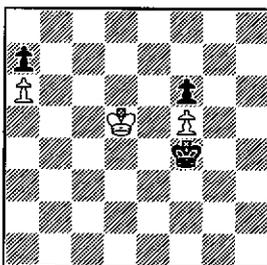
2a - after 4...Kd5

Take for example **1** (*Deutsche Schachzeitung*, 1928). If White thoughtlessly plays 1 Kf7, there is no win; 1...h6 2 Kg6 hxg5 3 hxg5 Kg8! 4 Kxh5 Kg7, or 2 Kf8 Kh7 3 Kf7 Kh8! and White can make no progress. The move is **1 Kf8! h6** and only now **2 Kf7**, after which both 2...Kh7 and 2...hxg5 will allow White to promote a g-pawn. This is "book" now, but was it "book" in 1928? The editor of *Deutsche Schachzeitung* didn't think so, at any rate.

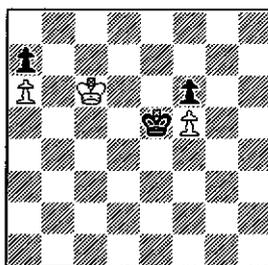
**2** (28. říjen 1924) has become famous. White goes for the Black pawns, **1 Kd4 Kg4 2 Ke5**, and Black must aim for c5 in reply: **2...Kf3**. There follows **3 Ke6 Ke4 4 Kd7 Kd5**, and we have **2a**. Now the natural 5 Kxc7 fails (5...Kxc5 6 Kb7 Kd6 7 Kxa7 Kc7 and White is shut in), and the winning move is the remarkable **5 Kc8!** There follows **5...Kxc5 6 Kb7** and wPa6 will promote. By leaving bPc7 on the board, White has barred this crucial square to bK.



3 - draw



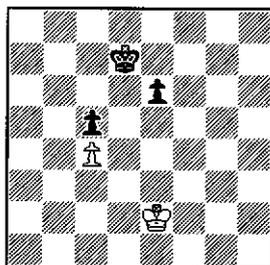
4 - win



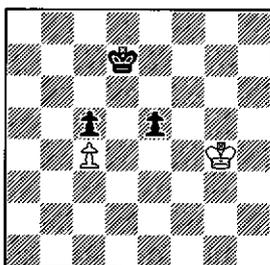
4a - see text

3 (*Zadachy i etudy* 1928) is another famous Hašek study. After the automatic **1 Kb8 Kb6**, the natural **2 Kc8** loses; Black replies **2...Kc6**, and if White plays **3 Kd8** he goes for the g-pawn and if **3 Kb8** he goes for the h-pawn. The drawing move is **2 Ka8!!**. An attack on the h-pawn now fails (**2...Kc6 3 Ka7 Kd5 4 Kb6 Ke4 5 Kc5 Kf3 6 Kd4 Kg2 7 Ke3 Kxh2 8 Kf2**), and if Black takes the g-pawn instead, **6...Kxg4**, White goes for **g1/h1** and lies doggo in the corner. (Black can bring **bPg5** to **g3** and meet **Kh1** by **...Kf2**, so forcing **hxg3**, but it doesn't help because **...hxg3** is stalemate.)

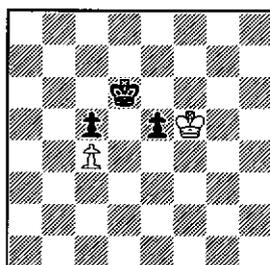
Add the lose-a-move study 4 (*Československý šach* 1928), which is in *Endgame magic*, and we have a trio of which any composer might be proud. Here we have **1 Kc6 Ke5**, giving **4a**, and the immediate attack **2-3 Kxa7** fails because **bK** can get back to **c7**. However, White can play **2 Kc7 Kd5** (else **bK** gets too far away from **c7** and **3-4 Kxa7** wins) **3 Kd7** (now going for **bPf7** instead) **Ke5** (no choice) **4 Kc6** and we are back at **4a** but with Black to move: **4...Kxf5** (nothing better) **5 Kb7** etc.



5 - draw



5a - after **2 Kg4**



5b - after **3...Kd6**

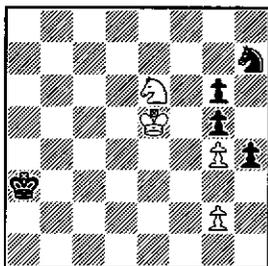
I quote **5** (*Práce* 1946) with more diffidence, because it must have risked anticipation even in 1946, but it is so instructive that I think it deserves attention. White starts **1 Kf3** ready to meet Black's eventual **...Kd6** or **...Kf6** by **Ke4**, after which any advance of **bPe6** will cost material (**1...Kd6 2 Ke4 e5 3 Kf5** etc, **1...Ke7 2 Kf4! Kf6 3 Ke4 e5 4 Kd5** and **5 Kxc5** with a draw). But Black can play **1...e5**, after which **2 Ke4 Ke6** will give him an easy win. The answer is **2 Kg4!** (see **5a**). Now **2...Kd6 3 Kf5** is easy and **2...Ke6 3 Kg5** is almost as easy (Black can sacrifice **bPe5** to win **wPc4**, but White meets **...Kxc4** by **Kc2** and draws); and if **2...Ke7** then **3 Kf5 Kd6** gives **5b**, and the remarkable **4 Kg4!** (the only move) holds the draw.



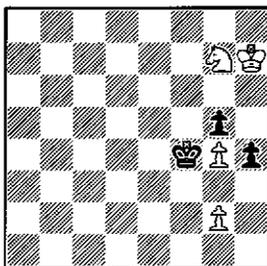
for *White* because Black can never capture *wPb2*. Hence **1 Kd4 a5 2 Nc5**, ready to meet **2...a4** with **3 Nxa4**. However, Black has **2...Bg8** (see **8a**), and surely *wN* must retreat and allow Black to play **...a4** next move?

No, because *White* has **3 Na4!** Black can capture this impertinent horseman, **3...Kxa4**, but *White* replies **4 Kc5** (see **8b**) and simply plays his king to and fro between *c5* and *b6*. Now the Black king will never get out, and his bishop can do nothing on its own.

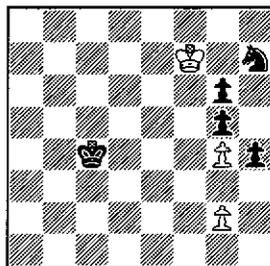
(We may remark in passing that Black cannot use his bishop to keep the knight out of *a4*, say by putting *bK* on *b6* and *bB* on *e8* while *wN* is on *c5*, because this will allow *White* to play *Nxb3*. *White* will then leave his king at *d4*, ready to come to *c3* as soon as the pawn on *b4* moves, and Black will be unable to make progress.)



**9** - win



**9a** - 1 Ng7, after 5...Kf4

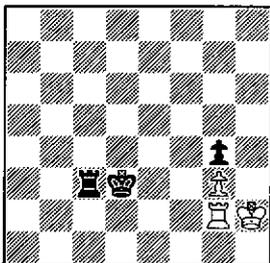


**9b** - main line, 4...Kc4

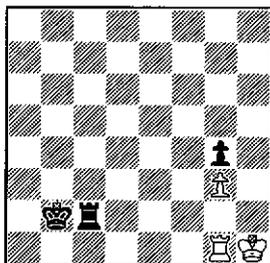
Black's king is distant in **9** (*La Stratégie* 1928), but his knight and pawns have organized a workmanlike defence and *White*'s knight obstructs his king. How is *White* going to break through before *bK* can get back to help? *White* would like to play **1 Nf8** but *bNh7* prevents it, and lines such as **1 Ng7** and **2-4 Kxg6** are much too slow; Black simply leaves his knight on *h7* to be taken, and concentrates on eliminating *White*'s pawns (**1 Ng7 Kb3 2-4 Kxg6 Ke3 5 Kxh7 Kf4** and neither *wP* will survive, see **9a**).

The answer is the move we instinctively rejected: **1 Nf8!!** Black must capture, **1...Nxf8**, but now follows **2 Kd6!** (not **2 Kf6**, when the knight will escape via *d7*) **Kb3 3 Ke7 Nh7** (hoping to gain time - if **3...Kc4** then **4 Kxf8 Kd4 5-6 Kxg6 Kf4 7 Kh5** and Black has arrived one move too late) **4 Kf7 Kc4** (see **9b**) **5 Kg7** (avoiding the temptation to be too clever - **4 Kxg6 Nf8+** and Black will draw) **Kd4** (**5...Nf8** doesn't help, since the one move by which it delays *White* merely makes up for the extra move it costs Black) **6 Kxh7 Ke5 7 Kxg6 Kf4** (nothing better) **8 Kh5** and once more Black has arrived one move too late.

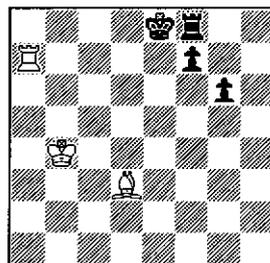
I have looked at this study several times without being quite sure why it works. It seems quite incredible that *White* can attack successfully *without* the aid of his knight, yet cannot succeed *with* it. Yet the study is undoubtedly correct - my computer thinks so as well - and I suspect that we must just put it down as another of those paradoxes in which chess endgames are so rich. I have set it as the "have a look at this, answer next time" study in my current *BCM* column, and I suspect it may cause quite a lot of head-scratching.



10 - draw



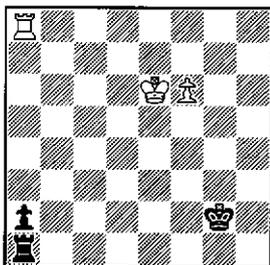
10a - after 4...Kb2



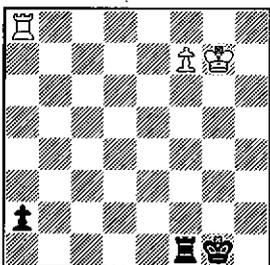
11 - win

10 (*Československý šach* 1928) is quietly instructive. Black's only chance of a win lies in an exchange of rooks (if wR gets into action, White will have enough counterplay to draw), and if White is careless this will duly happen: 1 Rf2 Rc2 2 Rxc2 Kxc2 3 Kg2 Kd2 and bK will soon win wP. Hence 1 Rg1, but 1...Rc2+ 2 Kh1 Kd2 renews the threat (if instead Black goes for the pawn by 2...Ke3, White plays 3 Rf1, and wR will get into play). So White checks, 3 Rg2+, and only 3...Kc3/Kc1 offers hope of progress. But in each case White plays 4 Rg1(+), and after 4...Kb2 we have 10a. Now the move is 5 Rf1! If he is to exchange rooks, Black must pin, 5...Rc1, but its journey to b2 has put bK is too far away and 6 Kg2 leaves any winning chances with White.

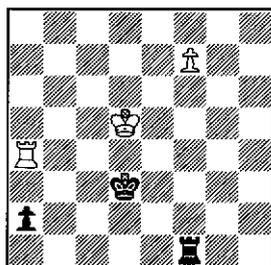
11 (*Československý šach* 1929) adds a new twist to an ancient idea. White must play for mate or win of bR, but 1 Kc5 f5 2 Kd6 can be met by 2...Rf6+. Now try the effect of a preliminary 1 Bf5! Black might as well play 1...gxf5 (other moves are no better), but now f5 is blocked and we have 2 Kc5 f6 3 Kd6 Rg8 4 Ke6 Kf8 5 Kxf6; Black can avoid mate only by permitting a skewer instead.



12 - win



12a - 1...Rg1, after 5 Ra8



12b - 2...Ke3, after 5...Rf1

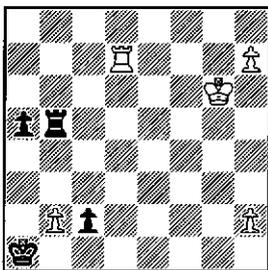
12 (*Československý šach* 1936) is another study that has found its way into the textbooks. It owes something to a famous study by Lasker (*Deutsches Wochensach* 1890, wKc8, Rh7, Pc7, bKa5, Rc2, Ph2, win by 1 Kb7 Rb2+ 2 Ka7 Rc2 3 Rh5+ Ka4 4 Kb6 Rb2+ 5 Ka6 Rc2 6 Rh4+ Ka3 7 Kb6 Rb2+ 8 Ka5 Rc2 9 Rh3+ Ka2 10 Rxh2), but here the White pawn starts one square further back and this significantly alters the play.

An immediate 1 f7 merely allows bR to start checking, and if wK wanders far from

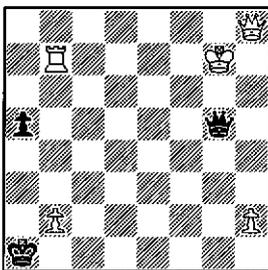
wP Black will draw by ...Rf1 (for example, 1...Re1+ 2 Kd5 Rd1+ 3 Kc4 Rf1 4 Rxa2+ Kg3 5 Ra7 Kg4 6 Kd5 Kg5 7 Ke6 Kg6 8 Rb7 Rf6+ and wP will fall). Correct is **1 Kf7** blocking wP! An instructive line is now 1...Kg1 2 Kg7 Kh1 hoping to keep bK out of the way of bR, but White pushes him back into the way by 3 Rh8+ Kg1 and 4 f7 Rf1 5 Ra8 wins (see 12a).

The main line is **1...Kf3** keeping Black's options open, to which White's reply is **2 Ra4!** penning bK below the fourth rank. Black must now decide which way he wishes to go. Suppose he chooses **2...Ke3**; White continues **3 Ke6 Kd3 4 f7 Re1+ 5 Kd5**, and Black must play **5...Rf1** to prevent White's promotion (see 12b). 6 Rxa2 Rxf7 will now merely draw, but White has **6 Ra3+** driving bK back to the second rank and now **7 Rxa2+** will capture bP with check.

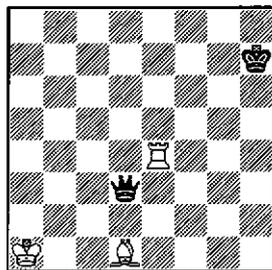
And if Black chooses **2...Kg3**, White has the same manoeuvre on the other side: **3 Kg6 Kh3 4 f7 Rg1+ 5 Kh5 Rf1 6 Ra3+** etc.



13 - win



13a - 2 Kg7, after 4...Qg5+

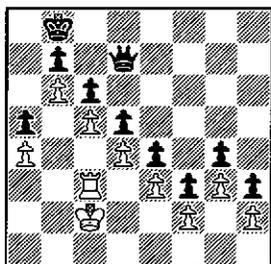


14 - draw

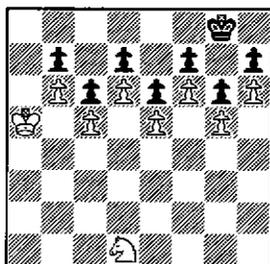
13 (*Sach* 1941) is also instructive, if more artificial. 1 h8Q will be met by 1...c1Q, but 1 Rc7 puts the c-pawn under control and now h8Q is a threat. Black's only hope is to check, 1...Rb6+, and if 2 Kg7 he can pin wR by 2...Rb7. This is enough to draw; after 3 Rxb7 c1Q 4 h8Q Qg5+ (see 13a) Black will either give perpetual check or win the rook.

White must therefore come down the board, 2 Kg5, and after 2...Rb5+ 3 Kg4 Rb4+ 4 Kg3 Rb3+ 5 Kg2 Black has no more checks. He does however have 5...Rxb2, after which 6 h8Q will be met by 6...c1Q+ and White will actually lose. So wK must go back again, 6 Kg3 Rb3+ 7 Kg4 Rb4+ 8 Kg5 Rb5+ 9 Kg6 Rb6+, and now we see the point: after 10 Kg7 Rb7 11 Rxc7 c1Q 12 h8Q Qg5+ we have 13a without wPb2, and White's king move will discover check and give him time to regroup.

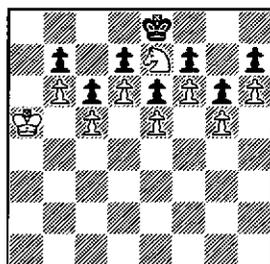
R + B v Q is normally drawn, but White's position in 14 (*Národní listy* 1930) is so loose that he is bound to lose material; how can he arrange to lose it to advantage? Tempting is 1 Bc2, provoking 1...Qxc2 to stalemate wK, but there is no way of forcing bK to capture wR; White's checks run out after either 2 Re7+ Kh6 3 Re6+ Kg5 4 Re5+ Kf4 or 2 Rh4+ Kg7 3 Rg4+ Kf6 4 Rf4+ Ke5. Better is 1 Bb3, because if 1...Qxb3 we have 2 Rh4+ Kg8 (say) 3 Rh8+ with a perpetual check on the h-file (or if bK runs to the west, say to b5 and a4, a quick draw by sacrifice on the a- or b-file). And if alternatively 1...Qxe4, White has 2 Bc2 and this time the stalemate is forced.



15 - draw



16 - win

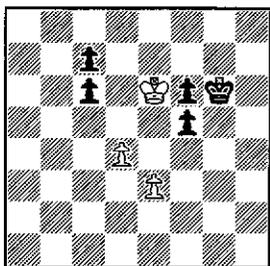


16a - after 6 Ne7 and 7 Ka5

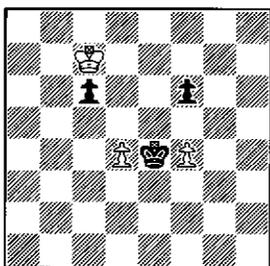
Hašek also enjoyed himself composing exotic studies featuring chains of blocked pawns. There is a famous one in *Endgame magic*; here are two more.

In 15 (*Československý šach* 1956), Black threatens to invade along the diagonal a6-f1, and a little experiment suggests that White has no chance. However, he has a hidden defence: **1 Kd2 Ke8** (nothing else is quicker) **2 Rc1 Kd8 3 Rh1! Qc8 4 Ke1 Qa8 5 Kf1 Qa6+ 6 Kg1**, and bQ must withdraw to release the stalemate.

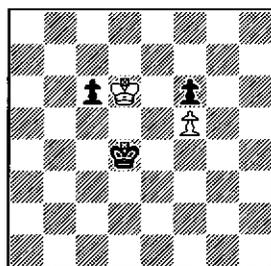
16 (*Československý šach* 1955) is quoted by Kos without wPh6, but I think this must be a misprint. If wK were not in the way, 1-3 Na5 and 4 Nxb7 would win; as it is, White must play **1 Nc3 Kf8 2 Nb5 Ke8** (2...cxb5 3 c6 etc) **3 Na7 Kd8 4 K-- Ke8 5 Nc8 Kd8 6 Ne7! Ke8 7 K--** (see 16a). Now bK must move, and we have 7...Kd8 8 Nxc6 and 7...Kf8 8 Nxc6. Without wPh6, 7...Kd8 8 Nxc6 hxc6 would draw.



17 - draw



17a - after 3...Ke4



17b - after 5 Kd6

But while an occasional exotic dish is fun, I prefer something less artificial from day to day. 17 (*Shakhmaty v SSSR* 1966) features a whole series of good moves. White starts **1 Kd7**, and **1...f4!** brings bK into play. There follows **2 exf4 Kf5 3 Kxc7**, and now **3...Ke4!** (the d-pawn must go first). This gives 17a, and **4 Kxc6 Kxd4** is an easy win for Black. White resigns? No, he has **4 f5! Kxd4 5 Kd6!!** abandoning the c-pawn to go for the f-pawn (see 17b). Now it's drawn, **5...c5 6-7 Kxf6 c3 8 Kg7 c2 9 f6 c1Q 10 f7**; a fitting conclusion to good play by both sides.

Hašek's studies are short, natural, and piquant: just what a columnist looks for. In making this collection available, Vladimír Kos and his publisher Zdeněk Závodný (Hoblíkova 8, CZ - 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic) have performed a notable service.