

International Judge: Marco GUIDA

I received only 12 problems from 9 authors representative of 7 Countries. Most of the problems are of clearly modern style, giving priority to complex combinations of modern elements versus strategic content. The average quality is good, even if most entries have some (minor or major) flaws and no one really stands out from the crowd.

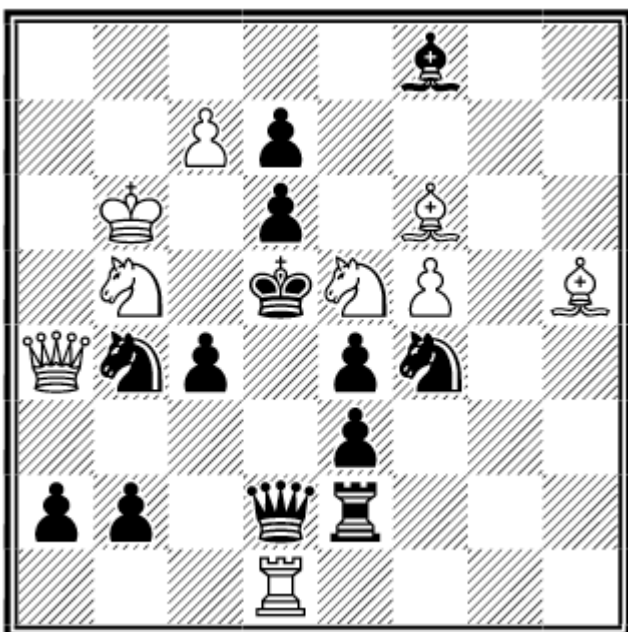
I decided to award only 7 of entries; main reasons for excluding the others (and, to a certain extent, criteria that has determined the final ranking among awarded entries) are one or more of the following:

- Too simple thematic ideas: in a couple of cases I could not see anything really interesting beyond just a composer "divertissement"; in other cases, some reported tries appear meaningless under the thematic perspective, being not linked enough each to the others (and to the solution) to create a coherent and convincing thematic blend.
- Lack of originality in ideas and/or execution (e.g. exploiting mechanisms and matrixes seen already hundreds of time).
- Constructional flaws, not sufficiently justified vs. the complexity and the interest of the ideas shown, such as: thematic mates introduced by other than thematic defences; brutal and/or too obvious refutations to Tries; different tries with the same refutation; double refutations not justified enough thematically.

The attempt to combine "too many" modern thematic elements into a single problem, while it might well be very challenging from a technical and constructional standpoint, in some cases has resulted in poor clarity and lack of strategic interest, leading to symmetrical and somehow "mechanical" rendering of the ideas. I have a personal preference for those works that combine modern ideas with interesting strategic elements, and this personal taste has certainly influenced my final ranking.

1st Prize

Alexander Pankratiev (Kb6 – Kd5) – Version by the Author (+ Black Pawn a2)

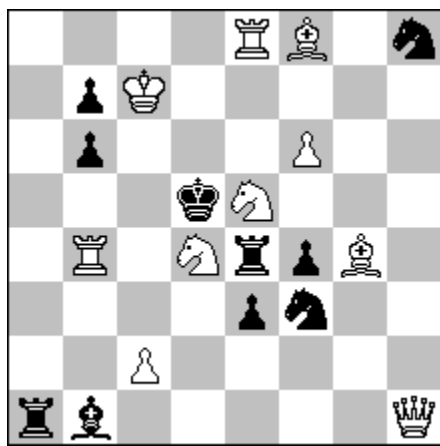


1...c3 2.Qb3 # 1...Sc6(Sa6) 2.Q:c4 #
 1...Qd4+2.R:d4 # 1.c8Q?---2.Qc:c4 # 1...d:e5!
 1...Sc6 2.Qa:c4 # 1...Qd4+R:d4 #
 1.Sf3(Sg4,S:d7)?---2.Sc3#(A) 1...b1S!
 1.Sc6?!---2.Sc3 (A) S:b4 (B)# 1...Sb:d3 !
 1.Sg6?!---2.Sc3 (A) S:f4 (B) # 1...Sfd3 !
 1.Sd3 ! ---2.S:b4 (B) S:f4 (C) #
 1...Q:d3 2.Sc3 (A) # 1...Sb:d3 2.Qa8 #
 1...Sf:d3 2.Bf7 # 1...c:d3 (c3) 2.Qb3 # 1...e:d3
 2. Bf3 #

The thematic core of the problem is the correction play of Se5 across 2 Tries (1. Sc6? 1. Sg6!?) and the Solution (1. Sd3!), all exploiting the pinning line of the Black Queen d2 and introducing a cycle of double-threats. In both Tries, refutations un-pin the Black Queen and exploit the closing of white lines. In the Solution, the Key itself un-pins the Queen, making impossible the threat 2. Sc3, that returns as a mate after the Queen self-pins. After the Key, 5 captures on square d3 trigger 5 nice variations. The additional Tries of Se5 (1. Sf3?, Sg4? Sxd7?), all introducing the single threat 2. Sc3, are nice additions that contribute to make the search for a suitable landing square by Se5 more interesting for the solver, even if I do not feel they add much to the core thematic content of the problem. I found this entry well-constructed, overall convincing and harmonic, and the most interesting under the strategic perspective.

2nd Prize

Givi Mosiashvili (Kc7 – Kd5)



2#

10+10

1.Qd1? >2.Rb5# & 2.c4#, 1...Rd4 2.Bf3#, 1...Re5 2.Sf3#, but 1...Sd2!

1.Qh5? >2.Rd8# & 2.Be6#, 1...Re5 2.Bf3#, 1...Rd4 2.Sf3#, but 1...Sg5!

1.Bc8? >2.Bb7#, 1...Sd4 2.c4#, 1...Se5 2.Be6#, but 1...Ra7!

1.Qh7! >2.Qd7#, 1...Rd4 2.Rb5#, 1...Re5 2.Rd8#, 1...Se5 2.Be6#, 1...Sf7 2.Qf7#

Barns, Dombrovskis, antiduali, canges mates

A well-engineered blend of modern themes, resulting in a Zagoruijko, 2x Dombvroskis Paradox and Dual-Avoidance. The matrix used is fully symmetrical and the strategy simple; as a result, the play looks a bit mechanical. Nevertheless, the 4 phases, strategically well correlated among each others, combine harmonically and convincingly. The matrix and the basic setting look familiar; yet I could not find a straight anticipation.

1st Honorable Mention

Valery Shansin (Kg7 – Ke6)



2#

8+10

- 1.Dc6? – 2.D:d6#, 1...c4(x)!
- 1.e4? – 2.Lg8(A), D:d7(B)#
- 1...L:d5(a) 2.D:d5#
- 1...S:e5(b) 2.T:d6(C)#, 1...Sf6(y)!
- 1.Se~? – 2.Lg8(A), T:d6(C)#, 1...L:d5(a), T:f5(c)!
- 1.Sc4? – 2.Lg8(A), T:d6(C)#, 1...T:f5(c)!
- 1.Sg6!? – 2.Lg8(A)# [NOT 2.T:d6(C)?]
- 1...Se5(b)/Sf6 2.Sf8#
- 1...T:f5(c) 2.T:d6(C)#, 1...L:d5(a)!
- 1.Lf6! – 2.T:d6(C)#
- 1...T:f5(c) 2.Lg8(A)#
- 1...L:d5(a) 2.D:d7(B)#,
- 1...c4(x) 2.Sd4#
- 1...S:f6(y) 2.Df7#

Combination Motchalkin (A,B – a,b) between II Try and Solution

White Correction + Threat Correction between III, IV and V Tries

Pseudo le Grand (A,C) between V Try and Solution

Cycle defences (ab – bc – ca) between II, V Tries and Solution with changed of mates

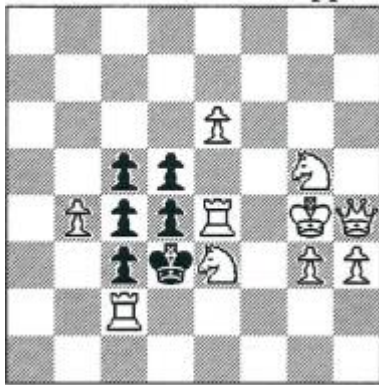
Charikov-theme (a,c) between III Try and Solution

Changed function black moves (x,y) between I, II Tries and Solution (Author)

In my view much of the value of this problem is the cycle of defences (ab – bc – ca) and the Motchalkin combination, that trigger changed mates after the 3 thematic defences and a Pseudo-Le Grand. The problem is actually rich of few other thematic elements (White Correction + Threat Correction; changed functions of secondary defences; Dombrovskis nuances). The Correction play of Se5, highlighted by the author, is not fully convincing: 1. S moves?, a! c!; 1. Sc4 !?, c!;... but no other correction Try refuted by a!). The richness of the thematic blend is, in my opinion, hampered by the “spaghetti-like” complexity of the interrelationship across the phases. The end-result is somehow cumbersome and the real thematic intention of the author does not neatly appear. I would have preferred less richness in favour of a clearer, cleaner and more focused rendering: “Too much” is not always the best!

2rd Honorable Mention

Eugene Fomichev (Kg4 – Kd3)



2#

10+6

1.Re5? – 2.Qh7#, 1...de3!
1.Sxd5? (ZZ) cb4 2.Sxb4#, 1...Kxc2!
1.Kf3? (ZZ) cb4. de4+ 2.Rxd4, Q4xe4#, 1...de3!
1.Qh8? (ZZ) cb4, de3 2.Qxd4, Qxc3#, 1...de4!
1.Rf4? (ZZ) de3, Kxe3 2.Qh7, Rf3#, 1...cb4!
1.Qh7! – 2.Re5#, 1...de3, de4 2.Rf4, Q7xe4#
Salazar, Zagorujko (1...cb4, de3), change (1...de4), Urania (Qh7). Light setting – only 16 pieces.

An economical and well-constructed problem that nicely combines a number of modern themes (Urania, Key-Mate Reversal, Key-Threat Reversal, 1x Dombrovskis Paradox) around the core Zagorujko 3x2 after the thematic defences 1..., cxb4 and 1..., dxe3. An additional change of mate after 1..., dxe4 is a nice cherry on the pie. I like the mix of Zugzwang and Threat Tries. Despite the significant achievement, the problem is not free of some flaws, most notably the refutation 1..., dxe3! used after both 1. Re5? and 1. Kf3?, and the obvious and brutal refutation 1. Sxd5?, Kxc2! that exploits a flight given by the Key. The White Queen out of play in the set position offers a good hint in the search for the Key,

1st Commendation

Zoltan Labai (Kb1 – Ke4)



2#

15+9

Set play:

1...cxb5 2.Qc2# A
1...Re6 2.Qf4# B
1...Sb6~ 2.d3# C
1...Se7~ 2.Bf5# D
1...Sf7~ 2.Rf4#

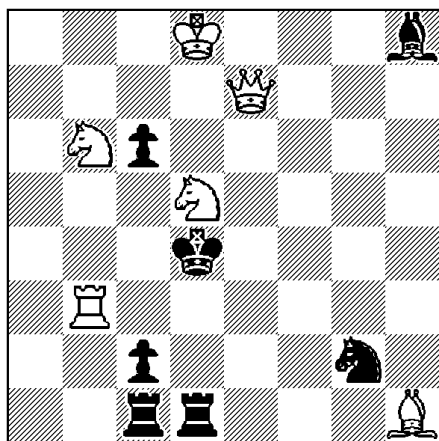
Solution: 1.Sxd5! 2.Sc3#

1...cxd5 2.Qc2# A
1...Rxd5 2.Qf4# B
1...Sbxd5 2.d3# C
1...Sexd5 2.Bf5# D
1...Bxd5 2.Rf4# E
1...Kxd5 2.e4#

Thematically very simple, but very nice: 5 transferred mates across Setplay and Solution. In the Setplay the 5 thematic mates follow generic moves of 4 of the 5 black thematic pieces; a pity that for Rd6 only 1. ... Re6 is meaningful. In the Solution the 5 thematic mates all follow the capture of the key piece on square d5. A good hint for the Key is Re1 completely out of play in the set position. A good flight giving key, and, after 1..., Kxd5, a new mate, different from the threatened one, is the classical “cherry on the pie”.

2nd Commendation

Givi Mosiashwili (Kd8 – Kd4) – Version by the Author, with Bg7 → h8



2#

6+7

1.Sf4? >2.Se2#, 1...Sf4 2.Qe3#, 1...Re1 2.Rd3#, but 1...Rd2!

1.Se3? >2.Sf5#, 1...Se3 2.Qe3#, 1...Sh4 2.Qd6#, but 1...Rf1!

1.Qd6# >2.Sf6#, 1...Sf4 2.Sf4#, 1...Se3 2.Se3#, !...Be5 2.Qb4#, 1...Rd3 2.Rb4#

Vladimirov teme, changes mates, functional change mover Qd6

The old, but always difficult, Vladimirov theme is shown here in a very economical and aerial setting, enriched with change of mates. The underlying mechanism is pretty classical, even if I could not find straight anticipations.

3rd Commendation

Philippe Robert (Kb3 – Kd5)



2#

10+7

1. Tc6 ? [2. Cf6] A , not : [2. Fc6 ?] B ?

1...bxc5 a 2. Td6 C

1...e4 2. Dh5 1...Tf8 !

1. d4 ! [2. Fc6] B, not : [2. Td6 ?] C ?

1...bxc5 a 2. Cf6 A

1....Re4 2. Df3

1....exd4 2. Dxd4.

Cycle including virtual mates (Papack cycle).

The difficult Papack Cycle is shown here in a light and clean setting, even if taking advantage from an unprovided flight in the set position. The mechanism to avoid the threat 2. Bc6 ? in the Try, with the Key piece occupying the critical square, is a bit brutal.

Milano, September 3rd, 2014

Marco GUIDA

International Judge

Many thanks to Marco Guida for the detailed award, that will remain opened 15 days after the publication date.

Problems not included in this award return available to authors.

Send claims to Francesco Simoni [francesco.chessproblems\(AT\)gmail.com](mailto:francesco.chessproblems(AT)gmail.com)