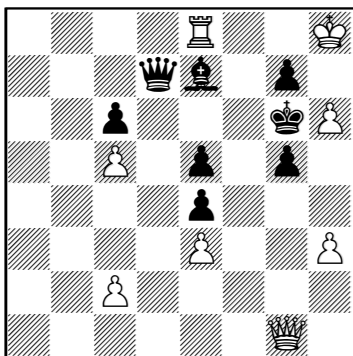


It is impossible for White to stop black's h-pawn, and still the stipulation is a win! His plan is to construct a mate, but Black sacrifices his new Queen and gets another one instead. The amazing move 6.e3 anticipates on the fact that that future Queen wants to play to b6.

2nd Prize  
Nikolai Kralin  
Russia



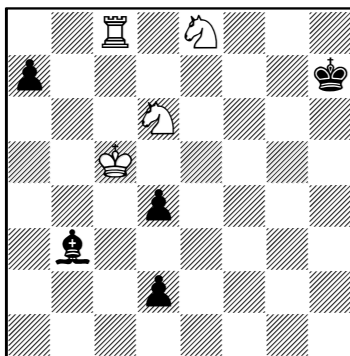
Win

1.♖g8/i ♔xh6/ii 2.♚g4!/iii ♚xg4 3.hxg4 ♕f8! 4.c3!/iv g6 5.♖g7! ♕xg7+ 6.♔g8 ♕f6 7.♔f7!/v ♕d8 8.♔e6 ♕a5 9.♔d6 ♕xc3 10.♔xc6 ♕d4 11.♔b5 ♕xe3 12.c6 ♕b6 13.♔xb6 e3 14.c7 e2 15.c8♚ e1♚ 16.♚h8 mate.

- i) 1.hxg7? ♚xh3+.
- ii) 1...♕f8 2.♚f1.
- iii) 2.h4? g4.
- iv) Thematic try: 4.c4? g6 5.♖g7 ♕xg7+ 6.♔g8 ♕f6 7.♔f8 ♕d8 8.♔e6 ♕a5 9.♔d6 and 9...♕d2! since the white pawn is now on c4 instead of c3.
- v) 7.♔f8? ♔h7! =.

One wonders who survives the tactical introduction. It is even uncertain who wins the end-game. Only by 4.c3! White finds a tricky way to do so. The composer has brilliantly succeeded to turn the apparently insignificant difference with the thematic try into a crystal clear point.

1st Prize  
Luis Miguel Gonzalez  
Spain



Win

1.♖c7+ ♔g8!/i 2.♔f6+ ♔f8 3.♔h5!/ii ♔g8!/iii 4.♖g7+ ♔f8!/iv 5.♖xa7 ♔g8 6.♖g7+ ♔f8/v 7.♖b7!/vi ♔g8 8.♔f6+/vii ♔f8 9.♔d7+ ♔e7! 10.♔f5+/viii ♔f7/ix 11.♖b6!/x d1♚/xi 12.♔e5+ ♔g8 13.♖b8+ ♔h7 14.♖b7+ ♔g8 15.♔h6+ ♔f8 16.♔g6+ ♔e8 17.♔d6 and mates.

- i) 1...♔h6 2.♖g7 wins, or 1...♔g6 2.♖g7+ ♔h5 3.♔f5 wins, or 1...♔h8 2.♔f6 ♕c2 3.♔de8 d1♚ 4.♖g7 wins.
- ii) 3.♔d7+? ♔e7 4.♔f5+ ♔f7 5.♖c6 d1♚ 6.♔e5+ ♔g8 7.♖c8+ ♔h7 8.♖c7+ ♔g8 9.♔h6+ ♔f8 10.♔g6+ ♔e8 11.♔d6 ♚c2 draw.

iii) 3...d1♚ 4.♖c8+ ♔e7 5.♖e8+ ♔d7 6.♔f6+ ♔c7 7.♖c8 mate.

iv) 4...♔h8 5.♖g1 d1♚ 6.♔f7+ ♕xf7 7.♖xd1 ♕xh5 8.♖h1 wins.

v) 6...♔h8 7.♖g1! d1♚ 8.♔f7+ ♕xf7 9.♖xh1 ♕xh5 10.♖h1! wins.

vi) 7.♖a(c)7 waste of time.

vii) 8.♖xb3? d1♚ draws, thanks to the black pawn; e.g. 9.♖g3+ ♔f8 10.♔f6 d3 11.♖g8+ ♔e7 12.♔d5+ ♔d7 13.♖g7+ ♔d8 14.♔f7+ ♔e8 15.♔e5 ♚c1+ 16.♔d6 ♚h6+, or 9.♖b8+ ♔h7, or 9.♔f6+ ♔g7 10.♔fe8+ ♔f8 11.♖b8 d3 12.♔c7+ ♔g7 draw.

viii) 10.♔e5+? ♔e6! 11.♖xb3 d1♚ 12.♖d3 ♚a4 13.♔dc4 ♚a7+ draw.

ix) 10...♔e8 11.♔e5, or 10...♔d8 11.♔d6, or 10...♔e6 11.♔xd4+ ♔f7 12.♔e5++ ♔g8 13.♔e6! ♕xe6 14.♖b8+ ♔g7 15.♖d8 wins.

x) The quiet move. If 11.♔e5++? ♔f6! 12.♔xd4 d1♚ 13.♔d7+ ♔e7 14.♔b8+ ♔e8 15.♔xb3 ♚c2+ 16.♔d6 ♚d3+ 17.♔c7 ♚h7+ draw.

xi) 11...♔g8 12.♖g6+ ♔f7 13.♖g7+ ♔e6 14.♔xd4 mate; 11...♕e6 12.♔e5+ ♔f6 13.♔g4+ ♔g5 14.♔f2 ♕xf5 15.♖b2 wins.

The judges at first sight immediately shouted out loud: ♔d6! Nobody knew exactly why. And at various instances this move did seem to work, but failed on second thoughts. The quiet move 11.♖b6! is fantastic, and we should not forget the whole manoeuvre to make this move possible, and all this to satisfy our demands: 17.♔d6!