

A beautiful stratagem

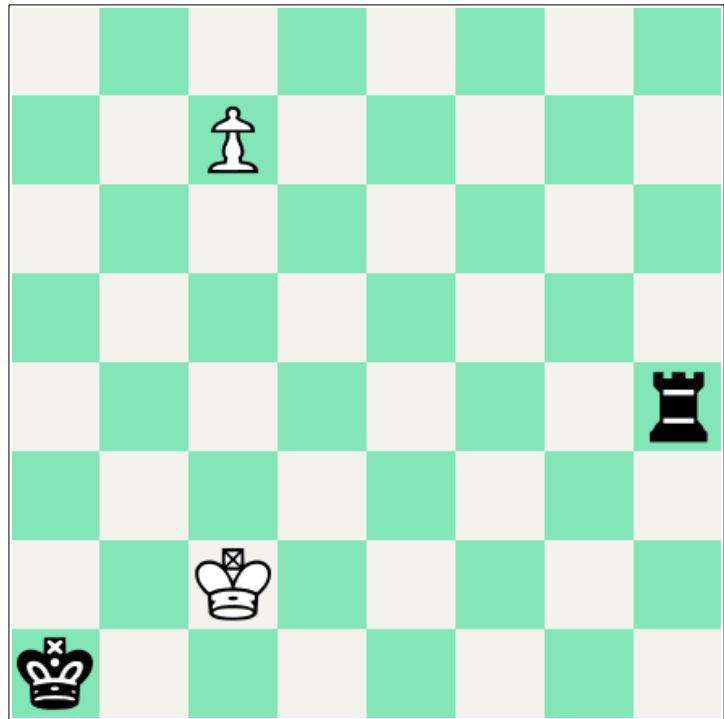
This is one of my favorite endgame studies.

It is White to move and win. Any King move allows ...Rh8-c8-c7 picking up the pawn.

So White must promote the pawn.

If White forges ahead with
1. c8=Q? Rc4+! 2. Qxc4 stalemate!

But observe what happens if White promotes the pawn to a *rook* instead of a queen.



	White	Black
1.	c8=R!	...

Now ...Rc4+ doesn't work since Rxc4 isn't stalemate. White is also threatening mate on a8. Black can try ...Ka2 but after Ra8+ Black's interposition ...Ra4 is useless. The only way for Black to prevent mate is

1.	...	Ra4
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Now White plays the remarkable

2.	Kb3!!	Resigns
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White is now threatening mate on c1.

If black rook moves, then either it is captured or White plays Rc1#.

If the black king moves, then the black rook is promptly captured and White goes on to win with a king and rook against king. The ending might look like
2. ... Kb1 3. Kxa4 Kb2 4. Rc4 Ka2 5. Rc2+ Kb1 6. Kb3 Ka1 7. Rc1#