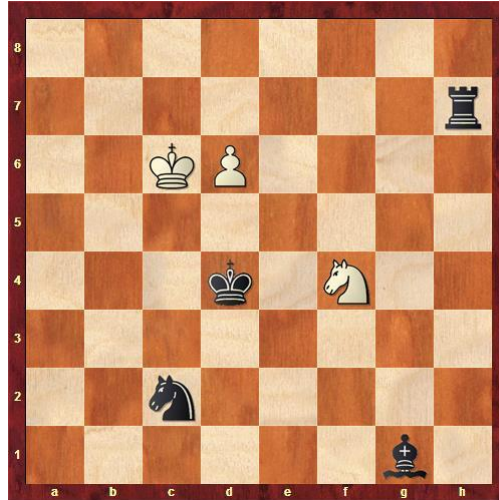


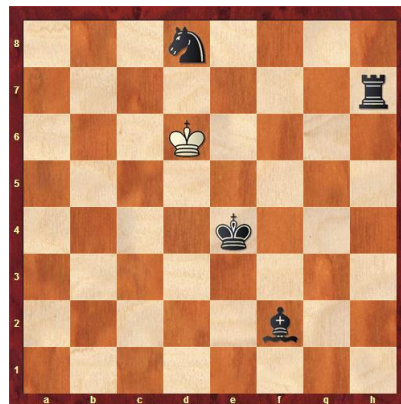
The Study of the Year 2013

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Prize, 6th Jenever thematic tourney 2013



Draw

White's only chance for a draw is his d-pawn: **1.d7 Ke5!** Surprisingly, Black allows the pawn to promote, but **2.d8Q?** fails to **2...Sd4+** **3.Kb6(c5) Se6+**. After **2.Sg6+?** **Ke4!** **3.d8Q Sd4+** **4.Kd6 Bh2+** and another S-fork decides). **2.Sd3+!** **Ke4!** (**2...Ke6** **3.d8Q** and no fork on e6) White now seems to be completely lost, as promotion still fails to the knight forks. But White has the marvellous defence **3.Sf2+!** **Bxf2** **4.d8Q Sd4+** **5.Kc5!** (**5.Kd6?** **Bg3+** **6.Kc5 Se6+**, or **5.Kb6?** **Se6+**) The point of the sacrifice **3.Sf2+!** is that now the S-fork **5...Se6+** does not win: **6.Kd6!** **Sxe8** stalemate.



All squares around the stalemated white king are not occupied by any piece. That is a so-called mirror stalemate (which was the theme of the tourney). In addition, all squares around the white king are only guarded by a single black piece. Moreover, every black piece on the board play a role in the stalemate picture. Composers call this an ideal stalemate.

It is interesting to note that the similar, and more natural, 3.Sc5+? Bxc5 4.d8Q Sd4+! 5.Kxc5 Se6+ 6.Kd6 Sxd8 is not a stalemate as Black got rid of his bishop. As a consequence, (only) square b6 is accessible.

But that is not all! Black has a *Zwischenschach*: **5...Rh5+!** Now the natural 6.Kc4? fails to 5...Rc5+! 7.Kxc5 Se6+ 8.Kd6 Sxd8 and now the stalemate of the previous diagram is lifted, because the black rook at h7 has gone. That is another thematic try. The other option 6.Kb4? fails to another S-fork at c6. The remaining option **6.Kb6!** allows Black to fire a nasty battery: **6...Se6+ 7.Ka6 Sxd8** stalemate



Another mirror stalemate!