

SAINT LOUIS RAPID & BLITZ, PT. 2

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

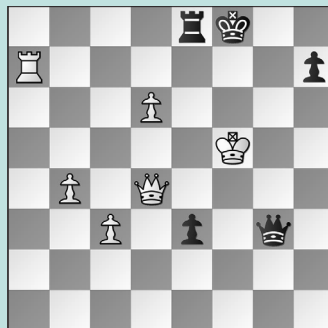
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



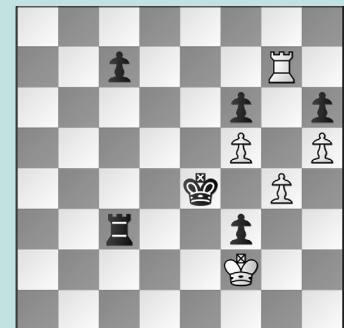
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



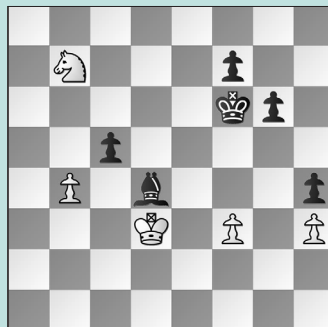
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 41. ... **Ra2** Surprise! A mating net! 42. **Bc6** Otherwise, White has to give up a full rook to stop mate. 42. ... **e4+** Black went on to win. (Oparin – Aronian, St. Louis, 2025) **PUZZLE 2.** 55. ... **Qh3+** The right square. After 55. ... **Qf3+?** 56. **Kg5 Qg3+ 57. Kf5**, a draw was agreed. 56. **Kg5** Or 56. **Qg4 Re5+** wins the queen for a rook, while 56. **Kf4 Qh4+** nets a full queen! 56. ... **h6+!** Hard to spot in time trouble. Black wins the queen by force: 57. **Kg6 Qg3+** Note: 57. ... **Qg2+** is equivalent. 58. **Kh7 Qg8+** 59. **Kxh6 Re6+** 60. **Kh5 Qg6+** 61. **Kh4 Re4+** Winning the queen. (Gukesh – Vachier-Lagrave, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 3.** 71. **Kg3!** The only move to save the game.

White played 71. **g5?? hgx5** and resigned after 72. **h6 Rc2+** 73. **Kg3 Rg2+** 74. **Kh3 Rg1 75. Re7+ Kf4** with mate incoming. 71. ... **Rc2** Black has no good way to stop **Rg7-e7+** to win the f3-pawn. 72. **Re7+ Kd5 73. Kxf3** White is out of danger. (Caruana – Abdusattorov, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 4.** 56. ... **Re2+** The proper defense. Black went for the win with 56. ... **Ke3??** but 57. **Rc3+! Kd4 58. Rxc2!** forced Black's resignation instead. 57. **Kf1 Re8 58. Rxc7 Kd2 59. h7 c1=Q+ 60. Rxc1 Kxc1** If Black was worried that he can't win this, that's correct. But, as we saw, his alternative was to lose! (Dominguez – Le, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 5.** 57. ... **cxh4!** It's hard to believe this wins with White's king so close to the b-pawn.

And yet! After 57. ... **Ke5** the players drew 16 moves later. 58. **Kxd4 b3 59. Kc3** Or 59. **Nd6 b2 60. Ne4+ Kf5 61. Nd2 Kf4** still reaches a won pawn-versus-piece endgame for Black! 59. ... **Ke5 60. Nd8 f6 61. Kxb3 Kf4** The king is too far and the knight is too slow. Black wins. (Aronian – Vachier-Lagrave, St. Louis, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 6.** 17. **Qb2 Qe5 18. Qxb7 Rb8 19. Qxa7 Bxf1 20. Rd1!!** The *intermezzo* White missed. After 20. **Rxf1 Qc5?** White traded queens and won, but 20. ... **Qd6!** 21. **Rc1 c5** was level. 20. ... **Qe6 21. Bxf1** Without a hanging rook on a1, White has a far more active recapture. 21. ... **Rd8 22. Bg7 Rg8 23. Bc3** It's hard to argue with White's plan of **Bc3-a5** and **Bf1-a6**, dominating! (Le – Shankland, St. Louis, 2025, analysis)