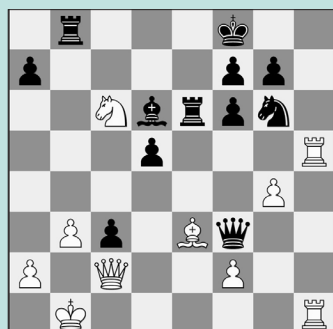


2025 U.S. MASTERS, PT. 2

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ DECEMBER 10, 2025

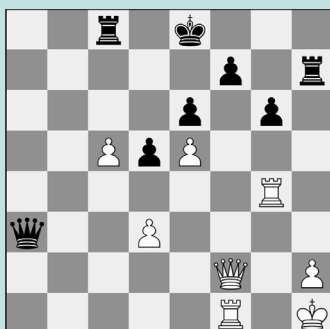
BY JJ LANG

PUZZLE 1.



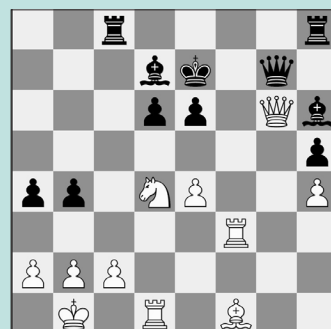
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



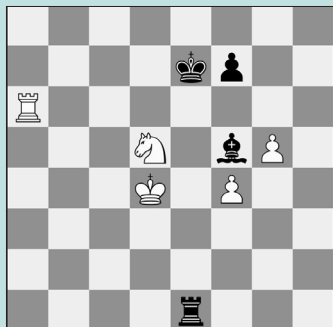
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



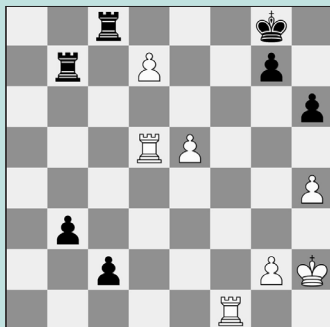
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



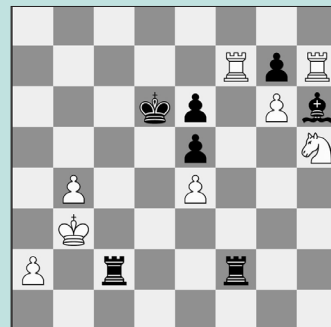
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 27. ... **Bh2!!** This *intermezzo* saves the game. After 27. ... **Ke8** 28. **Nxb8 Bxb8** 29. **Qxc3 Qe4+ 30. Qc2** Black was simply down material. 28. **R1xh2** If 28. **R5xh2** **Rxc6** play remains level. 28. ... **Rxc6** 29. **Rh8+ Nxh8** 30. **Rxh8+ Ke7** 31. **Rxb8 d4!** The key deflection, preparing ... **Qf3-h1+** when there is no **Be3-c1**. (Parkhov – Zia, Charlotte, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 2.** 33. **Rh4** What a deflection! 33. ... **Rxh4** If 33. ... **Rg7** then 34. **Rh8+ Kd7** 35. **Qxf7+!!** wins: 35. ... **Rxf7** 36. **Rxf7+ Kc6** 37. **Rxc8+ Kb5** 38. **Rb7+ Ka6** 39. **Ra8+** regaining the queen. 34. **Qxf7+ Kd8** 35. **Qf8+ Kc7** 36. **Qd6+ Kb7** 37. **c6+ Rxc6** 38. **Qxa3** and White won five moves later. (Becerra – Li, Charlotte, 2025)

PUZZLE 3. 28. **Nf5+!!** Ripping open the sixth rank wins the game. 28. ... **exf5** 29. **Qxd6+ Ke8** 30. **Bb5** and Black resigned in light of **Qd6-e6+** threats. (Shabalov – Nyzhnyk, Charlotte, 2025) **PUZZLE 4.** 85. ... **Kf8** The passive move holds. In the game, 85. ... **Kd7??** 86. **Ra7+ Kd6** 87. **Ra6+ Kd7** 88. **Ra7+ Kd6** 89. **Ne3!** was winning, with **f4-f5** coming. 86. **Nf6** White sets a mating net. 86. ... **Rc1** The threats can be parried. (Bok – Song, Charlotte, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 5.** 39. ... **Rd8** The only way to win! Instead, 39. ... **Rxd7??** 40. **Rxd7 Rf8** 41. **Ra1 b2** 42. **Raa7** and a draw was agreed due to the impending perpetual check. 40. **e6 b2** 41. **e7 Rbb8!** It looks passive, but it wins. 42. **Rdd1** Mirroring Black's plan loses to 42. ... **Rxd7!** 43. **Rxd7 c1=Q!**

Not 43. ... **b1=Q??** 44. **Rd8+ Kh7** 45. **e8=Q Rxd8** 46. **Qe4+ Kh8** 47. **Rxb1** winning. 44. **Rd8+ Kh7** 45. **e8=Q Rxd8** There's no perpetual. The b-pawn decides things in Black's favor. (Harsha – Defromont, Charlotte, 2025, analysis) **PUZZLE 6.** 40. ... **Rb2+** Forcing a miraculous draw. Black played 40. ... **Rfe2** and lost. 41. **Ka4 Rxa2+** 42. **Kb5** Forced, as 42. **Kb3??** **Rfb2+** 43. **Kc4 Bd2!** sets a mating net: 44. **Rb7 Ra6** 45. **Kb5 Rc6** mate is threatened beginning with taking on b4. 42. ... **Rxf7** 43. **gxf7 Rf2** 44. **Nxg7 Bxg7** 45. **Rxg7 Rxf7!** The stalemate trick behind the whole variation! The rook is untouchable, but the position is drawn otherwise. What an astounding, study-like idea to end this mini-series! (Tanenbaum – Budisavljevic, Charlotte, 2025, analysis)