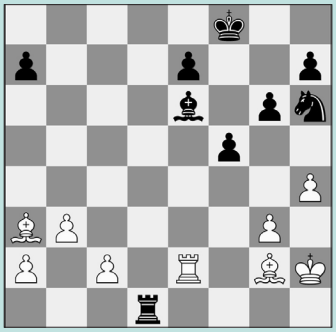
20TH ANNUAL SPICE CUP

WEDNESDAY WORKOUT ■ NOVEMBER 18, 2026

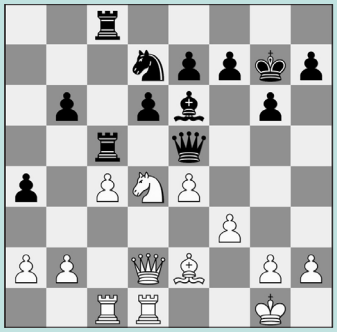
BY **JJ LANG**

PUZZLE 1.



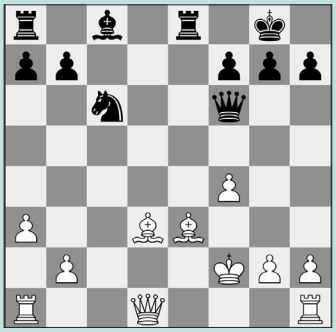
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 3.



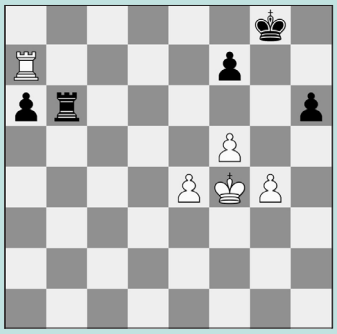
BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 4.



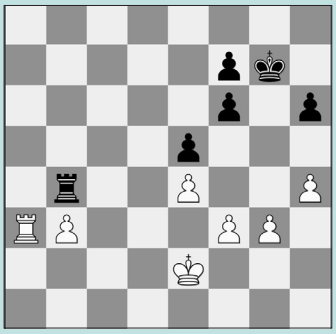
WHITE TO MOVE

PUZZLE 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

PUZZLE 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

SOLUTIONS

PUZZLE 1. 32. Bf3! Easy to understand, but also easy to miss. Not 32. Rxe6 Ng4+ 33. Kh3 Nf2+ with a draw. **32. ... Ng4+** Or 32. ... Bf7 33. Rxe7 wins. **33. Kg2!** Black loses material. Not 33. Bxg4?? Bd5! with a cold shower. Note: 33. Kh3 Kf7 34. Rxe6 Kxe6 35. Bxd1 Nf2+ keeps Black's chances alive. (Cordova – Meadors, Bellevue, 2026) **PUZZLE 2. 21. f4 Qf6** Or 21. ... Qxe4 22. Bf3 traps the queen. **22. e5! dxe5** The game concluded: **22. ... Qh4 23. Nxe6+ fxe6 24. g3 Qh3 25. exd6 exd6 26. Qxd6 Nf6 27. Qe7+** when Black resigned. **23. Nxe6+ Qxe6 24. Qxd7** Winning the piece. (Lee – Taylor) **PUZZLE 3. 18. ... Rxe3** Black is better, but this forces the win. **19. Kxe3 Qd4+ 20. Kf3 Ne5+!** There's the rub! **21. fxe5** Or 21. Kg3 Qe3+ wins. **21. ... Bg4+ 22. Kg3 Bxd1** and **White resigned** five moves later. (Mohan – Wang) **PUZZLE 4. 9. e5!** Demolition! **9. ... dxe5** White wins material by force. The game continued **9. ... d5 10. Nd6** Note: 10. b4 was even better. **10. ... Bc6 11. b4 cxb4 12. Qb3 Nd7 13. axb4** and Black resigned just five moves later. **10. Qxd8+ Kxd8 11. Nxe5 Ke7** Or 11. ... Nf6 12. Nd6 wins. **12. Nc7** Trapping the rook! (Belous – Willy) **PUZZLE 5. 56. ... f6** Counterintuitively, extending White's rook's reach along the seventh rank is the only way to hold on. White has no way to make progress. As we'll see in the lines below, allowing e4-e5 is the decisive mistake. After **56. ... Kf8?? 57. Rc7** f6! gave White one more chance, while 57. Ra7 or 57. e5 would have kept the edge. Instead, **57. ... Kg8?? 58. Rc8+ Kg7 59. Ra8 Rc6 60. e5 Rc4+ 61. Kf3 Rc3+ 62. Ke4 Rc4+ 63. Kd5 Rxg4 64. f6+ Kh7 65. Rf8** and Black resigned. (Mikaelyan – Porter, analysis) **PUZZLE 6. 39. ... f5!** Creating counterplay is the only way to salvage the draw. After **39. ... Rd4?? 40. Ra2** Or *40. Ra4* or 40. Ra1 were also great. **40. ... Rb4 41. Rb2 Kf8 42. Kd3 Ke7** White dislodges the blockade with **43. Kc3** going on to roll the b-pawn to victory. **40. exf5** If 40. Kd3 fxe4+ 41. fxe4 Rd4+ White cannot approach the queenside. **40. ... e4! 41. f4** After 41. fxe4 Rxe4+ 42. Kd2 Rg4 Black's rook is a hero. **41. ... h5! 42. Kd2 Kf6 43. Kc3 Rb8! 44. Ra5 Rg8** Counterplay! (Atwell – Qiu, analysis)

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