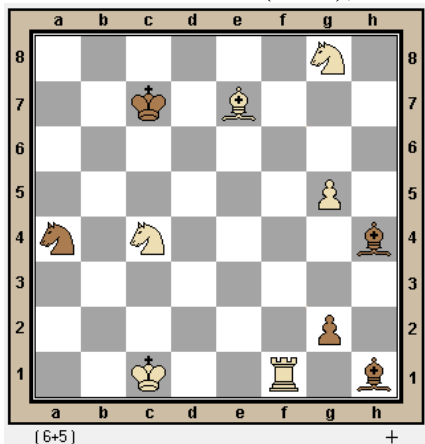


#1 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, 3rd FIDE World Cup, 4th – 8th Prize, 2013



6N1/2k1B3/8/6P1/n1N4b/8/6p1/2K2R1b

1.Bd6+! {The play should go in a precise order!} (1.Rg1? Bf2 2.Bd6+ (2.Rxg2 Bxg2 3.Nf6 Nc3 4.g6 Nd5 =) 2...Kd8! 3.Bh2 Nc3 4.Kc2 Bxg1 5.Bxg1 Ne2 =) (1.Rd1? Nc3 =)

1...Kc6! (1...Kd7 2.Rg1 Bxg5 (2...Bf2 3.Bh2 Nc3 Nf6+ +-) 3.Kc2 Nb6 4.Be7! +-)
(1...Kd8 2.Rf8+ Kd7 3.Nf6+ Kc6 4.Bh2 +-)

2.Rg1 Bxg5+ (2...Bf2 3.Bh2 Nc3 4.Kb2! Bxg1 5.Bxg1 Ne2 6.g6! Nxg1 7.Ne3 Ne2 8.Nxg2 Kd6 9.Nf6 Bxg2 10.g7 +-) (2...Nc3 3.Kc2 Ne2 4.Ne7+ Kd7 5.g6 Bf6 (5...Nxg1 6.g7 Nf3 7.g8=Q g1=Q 8.Qc8#) 6.Nd5 Bg7 7.Bh2 Nxg1 8.Bxg1 Ke6 9.Nce3 +-)

3.Kc2! (3.Kd1? Nc3+ 4.Ke1 Bh4+ 5.Kd2 Ne4+ =) **3...Nb6!** (3...Kd5 2.Ra1 +-)

4.Ne5+! {Black's Knight is trying to sacrifice himself, but he gets a rejection!}

(4.Nxb6? Kxd6 5.Re1 (5.Nc4+ Ke6 =) 5...Bh4! 6.Rd1+ Ke5 7.Nh6 Ke4 8.Ng4 Kf4 =)
(4.Be7? Bf4! 5.Nxb6 Be3 =) (4.Ne7+ Bxe7 5.Bxe7 Nxc4 6.Kd3 Kd5 7.Bh4 Ne5+ 8.Ke3 Ng4+ 9.Kf4 Nh2 10.Rd1+ (10.Bf2 Nf1 =) 10...Kc4 11.Bf2 Nf3! =)

4...Kxd6 5.Nf7+ Ke6 6.Nxg5+ Kf5 7.Nf3 (7.Nf7? Nd5! =)

7...Kf4 8.Nd2! (8.Ne1? Kg3 9.Nf6 Kf2 10.Ng4+ Kxg1 11.Kd1 Kf1 =)

(8.Nd4? Ke3 9.Rd1 Kf2 10.Rd2+ Ke3 11.Rd3+ Kf2 12.Nf3 g1=Q 13.Nxg1 Be4! =)

8...Kg3 (8...Nd5 9.Nh6! Kg3 10.Ra1 Nf6! 11.Nf7! Kf2 12.Ng5 g1=N 13.Rf1+ +-)

9.Nf6! (9.Nh6? Nc4 10.Ra1 Ne5! 11.Kc3 Kh2 12.Nf1+ Kh3 13.Ne3 Nf3 14.Nxg2 Bxg2 =)

9...Kf2 10.Ng4+ (10.Kd1? Nd7! =)

10...Kxg1 (10...Kg3 11.Rb1! Nd7 (11...Kxg4 12.Rxb6 g1=Q 13.Rg6+ +-) 12.Ne3 Ne5 13.Re1!

Kf2 (13...Nf7 14.Nd1! Ng5 15.Nc3 Kf2 16.Re2+ Kg3 17.Re5 Kf4 18.Re1 Nh3 19.Ne2+ Ke3 20.Ne4! Kxe4 21.Ng1+ +-)
(13...Nc6 14.Kd3! Ne5+ 15.Ke2 Kh2 16.Rg1! Kxg1 17.Ng4! Nxg4 18.Nf3#) **14.Nxg2 Bxg2 15.Rxe5 +-)**

11.Kd1! (11.Kd3? Nc4 12.Kxc4 {stalemate})

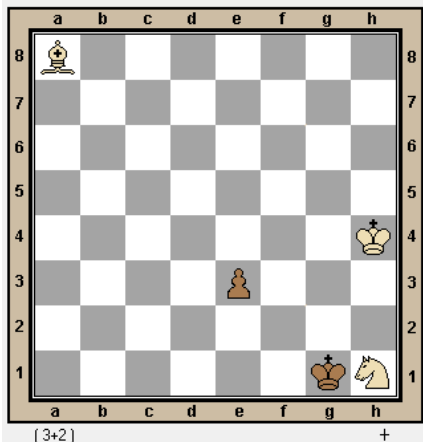
11...Nc4! 12.Nf3+! {The Knight is unsuccessful again in his try to sacrifice himself!}

12...Kf1 13.Nfh2+ Kg1 14.Ke1! (14.Ke2? Ne5! {zz WTM} 15.Ke1 Nd3+ 16.Kd2 Nf4! 17.Ke3 Nd5+ 18.Ke2 Nf4+ 19.Ke1 Nd3+ =)

14...Ne5 15.Ke2 {zz BTM - the last rejection of the Knight's sacrifice!} **15...Nxg4 16.Nf3#**

This study delivers a very intense fight. Black sacrificed his Knight multiple times but White rejected these sacrifices. Black's King took a long trip to a point of his death, where White's Rock sacrificed itself. A tempo play around mutual zugzvangs led to a mate by a single Knight.

#2 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, "Ural's Problemist-20", Special Prize, 2013



B7/8/8/8/7K/4p3/8/6kN

1.Ng3

(1.Bf3? e2 =)

1...Kf2 2.Ne4+ Kg1 3.Nc3 Kf2 4.Nd1+ Ke2 5.Nb2 Kf1!

{Other variations are not as much sophisticated, but they are interesting.}

(5...Kf2 6.Nd3+ Kf1 (6...Ke2 7.Be4 Kd2 8.Kg3 e2 9.Kf2) 7.Kg3! (7.Kh3? e2 8.Bg2+ Kg1 {zz WTM!} 9.Be4 Kf1 10.Bg2+ Kg1 {= positional draw or stalemate after} 11.Kg3 e1=Q 12.Nxe1)

7...e2 8.Bg2+ +-)

(5...Kd2 6.Nc4+ Kd3 7.Ne5+ Kd4 8.Nf3+ +- {The King and the Night are dancing tango!})

(5...Ke1 6.Kg3 e2 7.Bd5 Kd2 8.Nc4+ Kd3 9.Kf2 +-)

6.Bc6!!

{While we will go through the solution, it will become obvious that this move is the only one winning move. Let us start with the explanation of why a natural move 6.Kg3 is not good}

(6.Kg3? e2 7.Bg2+ Kg1! 8.Nd3 e1=Q 9.Nxe1 {stalemate})

6...e2 7.Bb5 Ke1!

(7...Kf2 8.Nd3+ Ke3 9.Kg3 Kd2 10.Kf2 +-)

8.Kg3 Kd2 9.Nc4+

{If White had play 6.Bd5? e2 7.Bc4 Ke1! 8.Kg3 Kd2 they would not win because square c4 would be taken by the Bishop and it would not be available for the Knight.}

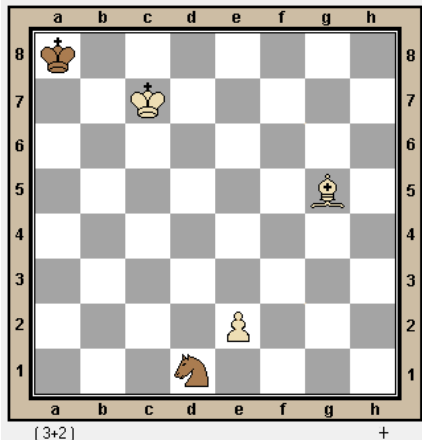
9...Kd1 10.Ba4+!

{If White had play 6.Bb7? e2 7.Ba6 Ke1! 8.Kg3 Kd2 9.Nc4+ Kd1 they would end up with a perpetual check 10.Ne3+ Kd2 11.Nc4+ Kd1 12.Nb2+ Kd2}

10...Kc1 11.Kf2 +-)

A charming 5-men study with natural and sophisticated play!

#3 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, MT “Zahodyakin–100”, Special Prize, 2014



k7/2K5/8/6B1/8/8/4P3/3n4

1.e4 Ne3! (1...Nc3 2.e5 Nb5+ 3.Kc6 Nd4+ 5.Kd5 Nf5 6.e6 Kb7 7.Ke5 Ng7 8.e7 +-) **2.e5** (2.Bxe3? {stalemate}) **2...Nf5 3.e6 Ka7 4.Bf6!** {First zz *BTM*} **4...Ka8!** (4...Ka6 5.Kc6 {discussed further}) **5.Be5!** ({Otherwise after 5...Ka7 there will be no progress}) **5...Ka7 6.Kc6!** ({Second zz *BTM*. But not} 6.Kd7? Kb7 7.Ke8 Kc6 8.Kf7 Nh6+ 9.Kf8 Nf5 10.Bf4 Kd5 =)

{Solution splits into three variations:}

I. 6...Ka6 7.Bf6! {Third zz *BTM*. If it would be White’s move then 8.Kd5 Nh6! 9.Bg5 Ng8 10.Kc6 Ka7 11.Kd7 Kb6 12.Ke8 Kc6 13.Ke7 Kd6! 14.Bf4+ Kd5 = zz *WTM!*} **7...Ka7 8.Kd5 Kb7** {now Black can’t play 8...Nh6 because of 9.Bd4+} **9.Ke5 Nh6 10.e7 +-**

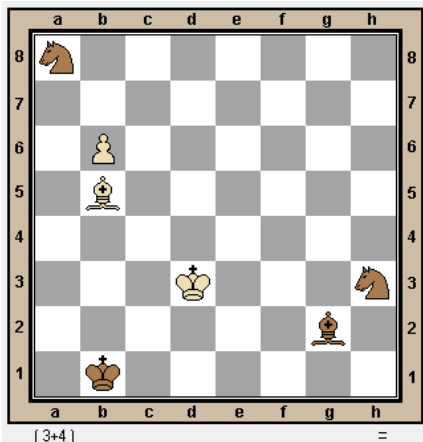
II. 6...Ne7+ 7.Kd7 {The White’s King breaks away from the Black’s counterpart by attacking the Knight.} **7...Nf5 8.Ke8 Kb7 9.Kf7 Nh6+ 10.Kf8!** ({The rest is the waste of time:} 10.Kg6 Ng8 11.Kf7 Nh6+ 12.Kg7 Nf5+ 13.Kf7) **10...Nf5 11.Bf4! Kc6 12.Kf7 Kd5 13.Kf6 Ng7 14.e7 Ne8+ 15.Kf7 +-**

III. 6...Ka8! 7.Kb6! {Both Kings are in no hurry to get to the battlefield!} **7...Nd6 8.Kc7** (8.Bxd6? {stalemate or} 8.e7? Nc8+ = {The only way to win is to build a position that will arise after the ninth move of White in main line. However, White can waste time on the waiting moves, for example,} 8.Ka5 Nc8 9.Ka6 Ne7 10.Kb6 Nf5 11.Bh2 Ne7 12.Bd6 Nf5 13.Kc7) **8...Nf5 9.Bd6 Ka7 10.Bc5+ Ka6 11.Kc6 Ka5 12.Kd5 Nh6! 13.e7 Ng8 14.e8N!** +- ({Black’s Knight is going to be caught, for instance,} 14...Nh6 15.Ke6 Ng4 16.Bg1 Kb4 17.Nd6 Kc3 18.Kf5 Nh6 19.Kg5 Ng8 20.Nc8)

An excelsior with an underpromotion; the complicated maneuvers of White with the mutual zugzwangs; a tenacious defense of Black featuring stalemates – a rich in content 5-men study.

Эксельсиор со слабым превращением, тонкие маневры белых с серией взаимных цугцвангов, цепкая защита чёрных с использованием патовых возможностей – богатая по содержанию малютка.

#4 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, "Sochi-2014", Special Prize, 2014



n7/8/1P6/1B6/8/3K3n/6b1/1k6
b)Pb6->g5

a). **1.Ke3!** (1.Kd4? Ng5 2.Kc5 Ne4+ 3.Kd4 Nd6 -+)

{Solution splits into two variations:}

I. 1...Ng5 2.Kf4! (2.Bf1? Bb7! 3.Kf4 Ne6+ 4.Ke5 Nc5 5.Kd4 Nb3+ -+) **2...Ne6+** (2...Nf7 3.Bd3+ Kb2 4.Be4 =) **3.Ke5 Nc5 4.b7!** (4.Kd6? Nb7+ 5.Kd7 Na5 -+) **4...Bxb7** (4...Nxb7 5.Bd3+ Kb2 6.Be4 =) **5.Kd6 Ne4+ 6.Kd7! Nf6+ 7.Kd6! Ne4+** (7...Bc8 8.Bc6 Nb6 9.Kc7 =) (7...Nb6 8.Kc7 =) **8.Kd7**

{Now come two echo-finals:}

Ia. 8...Kb2 9.Bc6 Nc5+ 10.Kd6 Ne4+ 11.Kd7=

{A perpetual threat to exchange the Bishops is causing a perpetual check by the Knight "e4".}

Ib. 8...Bd5 9.Bc6 Nb6+ 10.Kc7 Na8+ 11.Kd7 =

{A perpetual threat to exchange the Bishops is causing a perpetual check by the Knight "a8".
An echo of the final Ia symmetrical with respect to the diagonal a4-e8!}

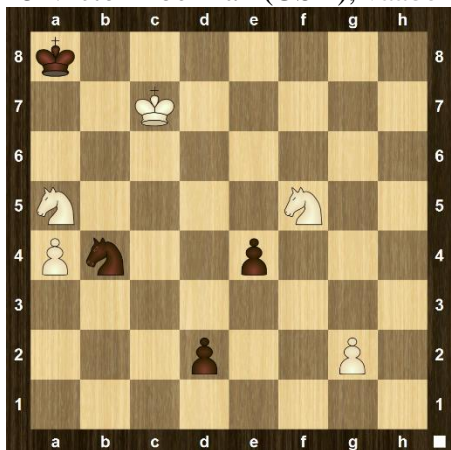
II. 1...Nxb6 2.Bd3+ Kb2 3.Be4 (3...Nc4+ Kd4 4.Bf1 Bd3 =) **3...Bf1 4.Bd3 Bg2** (4...Nd5+ 5.Kd4 Bg2 6.Be4 =) **5.Be4** {= A perpetual threat to exchange the Bishops.}

b). 1.g6 Nb6! (1...Nf4+ 2.Ke3! (2.Kd4? Nc7 -+) 2...Nc7! (2...Nd5+ 3.Kd4 Nac7 4.Bc6 =) 3.g7! Bd5 4.Bc6! =) (1...Nc7 2.g7! Bd5 3.Bc4 =) **2.Kd4!** (2.g7? Bd5 3.Kd4 Bg8! 4.Kc5 Nd5 5.Bc4 Nhf4 -+) (2.Ke3? Kb2 3.Be8 Kc3 4.Bf7 Nd5+ 5.Ke2 Ndf4+ 6.Ke3 Nh5 -+) **2...Nf4 3.g7!** (3.Kc5? Nc8! 4.Bc4 (4.Bd7 Ne7 5.g7 Nh5 6.Kd6 Ng8 7.Be6 Nhf6 -+) 4...Bh3! 5.g7 Ne6+ 6.Bxe6 Bxe6 7.Kc6 Bb3 8.Kd7 Nb6+ -+) **3...Ne6+** (3...Bd5 4.Kc5 =) **4.Ke5 Nxc7 5.Kf6 Nh5+ 6.Kg5 Ng3** (6...Bf3 7.Be8 Ng7 (7...Ng3 8.Kf4 =) 8.Bg6+ Kb2 9.Kf6 =) **7.Kf4 Nf1** (7...Nh5+ 8.Kg5 Ng7 9.Kf6 =) **8.Bd3+ Kb2 9.Be4 Bh3 10.Bf5 Bg2** (10...Nd5+ 11.Ke5 Bg2 12.Be4+ =)

11.Be4 {= A perpetual threat to exchange the Bishops. An echo of the variation II of the first twin symmetrical with respect to the diagonal a8-h1!}

The two couples of the positional draws in the form of the echo-finals is a significant achievement for a miniature, even considering the use of the twins and the fact that one of these positional draws is well known.

#5 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, 22nd MT "Z. Birnov", 3rd Prize, 2015



(5+4) k7/2K5/8/N4N2/Pn2p3/8/3p2P1/8 +

1.Ne3 d1=Q! (1...Nd5+ 2.Nxd5 d1=Q 3.Nb6+ Ka7 4.Nc6+ Ka6 5.Nd7 Qxa4 6.Nc5+ +- {the Mkhedruli theme!}) **2.Nxd1 Nd5+ 3.Kc8!!** {The farsighted choice of a safe square for the King.} (3. Kd8? e3 4. Nxe3 Nxe3 5. g3 Nf5! 6.g4 Nh6! 7. g5 Nf7+ =) **3...e3 4.Nxe3 Nxe3 5.g3 Nf1!** (5...Ka7 6. Kc7 Ka6 7. Nb3 +-) **6.g4 Nh2! 7.g5 Nf3! 8.g6 Nh4!** {If the King had been on c6 or d7 it would be a draw after 8.Ne5+.} **9.g7 Nf5!** {It would be a check with the King on d6.} **10.g8=N!** {A slow excelsior with the phoenix of the Knight!} **10...Ka7 11.Kd7!!** {An excellent exact move. A set of the thematic tries represents a study in a study!}

I. 11.Nc6+? **Kb6!** (11...Ka6? 12.Kd7! +- {see main}) **12. Kd7 Nd4! 13.Nge7 Kc5!** {zz WTM} **14.Kc7 Ne6+ 15.Kb8! Nd8!** (15...Kb6? 16.a5+ Kb5 17.Nd5! Nd4! 18.Ndb4! Nxc6+ 19.Nxc6 Kxc6 20.a6 +-) **16.Kc7 Ne6+ 17.Kc8 Kb6! 18.a5+ Kb5 19.Nd5 Nd4!** (19...Nc5? 20.Ndb4 Kc4 21.Kb8! Kb5 22.Kc7 Kc4 23.Nd3!! Kxd3 24.Ne5+ Kc3 25.Kb6 Kb4 26.Nd3+! Nxd3 27.a6 +-) **20.Ndb4 Nxc6 21.Nxc6 Kxc6 22.a6 Kb6 =**

II. 11.Kc7? **Ka6 12.Nb7** (12.Nc6 Nd4 13.Nge7 Nxc6 14.Nxc6 {stalemate}) **12... Nd4! 13.Ne7 Nb5+! 14.Kb8 Nd6! 15.Nc5+ Ka5 16.Nc6+** (16.Kc7 Nb5+ 17.Kb7 Nd6+ 18.Kc7 Nb5+ =) **16... Kb6 17.a5+ Kxc5!** (17...Kxc6? 18.a6 Nb5 19.Na4 {zz BTM} Kd7 20.Nc3! +-) **18. a6 Nb5 19. Kb7 Nd6+ 20. Kb8 Nb5 =**

III. 11.Nf6? **Ka6 12.Nb3** (12.Nb7 Nd6+! =) **12...Nd4! 13.Nc5+ Ka5 14.Kb7 Nf5! 15.Nfe4** (15.Nd5 Nd6+ 16.Kc6 Nc4 =) **15... Kb4 16.Kc6** (16.Kb6 Ne3 17.Nd2 Nd5+ 18.Kc6 Nc3 =) **16... Nd4+ 17. Kb6 Nb3!** {zz WTM =}

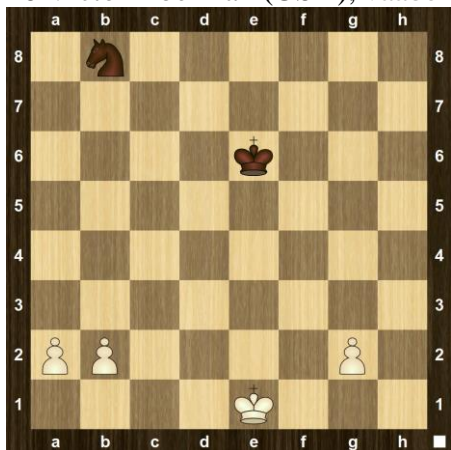
IV. 11. Nc4? **Ka6 12. Kc7 Ne3! 13.Nb6** (13.Nb2 Nd4+ =) **13...Nd1 =**

{Let us go back to main line, where Black ran out of tricks.}

11...Ka6 (11...Kb6 12.Nc4+! (12.Nc6? Nd4! {= see try I}) 12...Kc5 13. Nb2 Kb4 14.Ne7 +-) **12.Nc6!** (12.Nc4? Ne3! 13.Nb2 Nd5 =) (12.Nb3? Nd4! 13.Nc5 Kb6 14.Kd6 Nb5 15.Kd5 Nc3+ =) **12...Nd4!** (12...Kb6 13. Nf6 Ne3 14. a5+ Kb5 15. Ne8 Nc4 16. Nd6+ +-) **13.Nge7!** {Black no longer has a stalemate defense against this move!} **13...Nb3** (13...Nb5 14.Nd5 +-) **14.Kd6 +-**

A list of the achievements of this study includes slow excelsior with the phoenix of the Knight and two excellent exact choices of a proper move in a main line; mutual zugzwangs, a stalemate defense and the Knight's sacrifices in the tries; the Mkhedruli theme in an additional variation.

#6 Victor Aberman (USA), vaaberman@gmail.com, 4-th FIDE World Cup, Special HM, 2015



(4+2) 1n6/8/4k3/8/8/PP4P1/4K3 +

{Almost all pieces are standing on the same squares as at the beginning of a chess game. It looks like Lord invites us to play with him!}

1.Kd2 Nd7! 2.Kc3!

{Solution splits into two variations:}

I. 2...Ne5 3.Kd4 Kd6 4.Ke4! (4.b3? Nd7! 5.Ke4 Nc5+! 6.Kf5 Nd3! 7.a3 Ne1! 8.g4 Nc2! 9.a4 Nd4+ =) **4...Ng4** (4...Ke6 5.b3! Kd6 6.g3! (6.a3? Nc6! 7.g4 Na5! 8.b4 Nc4! 9.a4 Nb6! 10.a5 Nd5 11.b5 Nc3+ =) 11...Nc7! 12.a7 Kc6 =) Ke6 7.b4! +- (7.a3? Kd6! Main zz WTM 8.Kf4 Nc6! 9.b4 Nd4! 10.a4 Ne2! 11.Kf3 Nc3 12.a5 Kc6 =) **5.b3! Nf2+ 6.Ke3! Nd1+ 7.Kd4! Nf2 8.a3!** (8.Kc4? Ne4! zz WTM 9.a3 Nd2+ 10.Kc3 Nb1+ 11.Kb4 Nd2 12.g4 Ne4 =) **8...Ng4 9.Ke4 Ne5 10.g3 !** Main zz BTM. {All three Pawns made a short move from the second row!} **10...Ke6 11.Kf4 Nd3+ (11...Kf6 12.a4! Nd3+ 13.Ke3! Nc5 14.a5! Nxb3 15.a6 Na5 16.a7 Nc6 17.a8=Q** {+- A slow Excelsior of the Pawn "a"!}) **(11...Nc6 12.a4! Nd4 13.b4 Ne2+ 14.Kf3 Nd4+ 15.Kg2! Nc6 16.b5 Ne5 17.Kh3! Nc4 18.Kg4 Kf6 19.Kh5 Kg7 20.Kg5!** +- (20.g4? Kh7 {zz WTM} 21.Kg5 Kg7 {zz WTM} 22.Kh5 Kh7 23.g5 Nd6 {zz WTM} 24.g6+ Kg7 {zz WTM} 25.b6 Nb7 {zz WTM} 26.Kg5 Na5 {zz WTM} 27.Kf5 Nc4! 28.b7 Nd6+ =)) **12.Kg5/Kg4** {a light dual} **12...Nc5 13.b4 Ne4+ 14.Kh4 Nc3 15.g4! Kf6 16.Kh5 Kg7 17.Kg5 Nd5 18.b5 Nb6 19.Kf5 Na4 20.Ke5** (20.Ke6? Nc3! 21.b6 Na4! 22. b7 Nc5+ =) **20...Nc3! 21.b6 Na4! 22. b7 Nc5! 23.b8=N!** +- {A slow Excelsior of the Pawn "b" with an underpromotion}

II. 2...Kd6 3.Kb4! (3.Kc4? Kc6! {A positional draw}) **3...Ne5 4.Kb5 Kc7 5.b3!** (5.b4? Kb7! 6.a3 Ng4! 7.Kc5 Ne3 8.g3 Kc7 9.a4 Ng4 10.Kd4 Nf2! 11.b5 Nh1! 12.g4 Nf2! 13.g5 Nh3! 14.g6 Nf4! 15.g7 Ne6+ = {echo of the finals!}) **5...Ng4 6.Ka6 Ne3 7.g3 Nc2! 8.a4 Nb4+ 9.Kb5! Nc6 10.g4!** (10.Kc5? Ne5! 11.Kd5 Nd7! {zz WTM} 12.a5 Kb7 13.b4 Nf6! 14.Ke5 Ng4+ 15.Kf4 Nf6! =) **10...Nd4+ 11.Kc4 Nf3! 12.Kd5 Nh2! 13.g5 Nf3! 14.g6 Nh4! 15.g7 Nf5! 16.g8=N!** +- {A slow excelsior of the Pawn "g" with an underpromotion is an echo of a final in a variation I!}

The study shows a minefield theme in the modern interpretation. White filigree maneuvering allows them to bypass many ingenious attacks of the Black's Knight. Triple slow Excelsior with two underpromotions in a form of an echo as well as the mutual zugzwangs are the remarkable achievements of this endgame. We can only kneel before the Lord with whom we were lucky enough to play a study on a chessboard!