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The Problemist, 2013 (v.)

#1



Shortest retraction to (12+13)

castling or en passant?

B.a2P to b3

A. a particularly nice try type: 1.Rg5? Kb6 2.Rd5 Kc7 3.Rd8 Sb6 4.Rd4(+R) Kc8 5.Bd4 (-)0-0-0, but this is half a move longer than...

1...e3! 2.Bf5(+R!)(+Q? 2...Qd8+?) Rd8 3.Rh8 d7(-R) 4.Rb8 d6 5.Bc8 dee.p.(6.d7) 4.5 moves. W's fP captures an original B officer and BfP marches to promotion to replace.

1.Rh8? e3 2.Rb8(+R) Rd8 3.~ d7 4.Bf5 d6 5.Bc8 dee.p. is a half move too long as well.

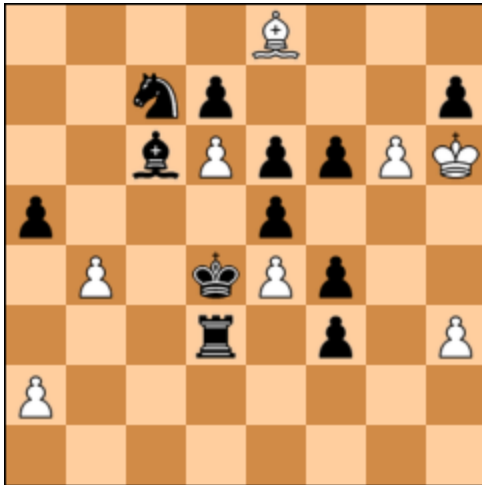
B.

1...Rf4 2.Qa1 Rf1 3.Qa3 Kf2 4.Ra1 Kg1 5.Ra2 (-)0-0 4.5 moves. BdP captures on c2 and promotes, offering itself or replacing a unit offered on b3 for wP cap. Even if the WfP is captured, the BfP cannot march to promotion to serve this same purpose because castling would not have been permitted. Instead, the BfP is captured on file, WfP marches and promotes, providing the 2<sup>nd</sup> piece for B pawn caps.

Valladao theme. Equal-length solutions. Paired W+B fP marches. The RA shows that no additional uncaptures can occur in the solutions.

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The Problemist 2013 #2



SH#4 Alsatian Circle (8+12)

A. Diagram B. e8B to a3  
(to Cedric Lytton)

A. 1. Bxe4 [+wPe2] 2. Bxg6 [+wPg2] 3. Kd4-e4 4. Ke4-f5 Bxg6 [+bBc8] #  
(5. hg [+wBf1]???)

B. 1. Rb3 2. Rxb4 [+wPb2] 3. Kd4-c5 4. Kxd6 [+wPd2] Bxb4 [+bRh8] #  
(5. ab [+wBc1]???)

Model mates, matching annihilations and K-walks, illegal inward pawn captures

DIAGRAM: 7-caps, 8 units.

AFTER B CAPTURES 2<sup>nd</sup> WP: wB is promoted wP, one original bishop unavailable for capture, caps and units balanced 7-7.

AFTER MATING MOVE: 5. PxB is illegal. WB is original and now the former promoted pawn is available for bP capture, but one original WR now is unavailable instead, the net available units being unchanged. The resulting capture produces 8-7!

There is also a try in B. that could catch the unwary solver: it is of the kind,  
1. Rd2!? 2. ab 4. Kxd6, Bxb4(Pb7)???. And this p-rebirth results in an illegal bB.

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The Problemist, 2014 #3



#2 Alsatian Circe (14+11)

WcP has made two caps to reach a-file, Wd,e pawns have made one cap each to the right, the gP, one to the left, balancing missing B men. BhP captures wQ and WhP marches and promotes giving itself up on b-file accounting for two bP caps.

1.Se3/Be3+? Rxe3(Sg1)/(Bc1)! 2.Se2/Bxe3(**Rh8**)+,Rxe2(Sb1)/ illegal!  
1.Se6+? 1...dxe6(Sb1) 2.Rxb4(Pb7)# 1...fxe6(Sb1)!

1.axb6,fxg4? (2.Rxb4(Pb7)#) 1...Rb3,Sc2!  
1.Sd3? (2.Be3#) 1...Rxd3(Sb1) 2.Rc4# 1...Sc2!

1.Sh4! (2.Sf5#) 2...gxf5(Sb1)(a)??? is illegal,

(i)as this will result in an orthodox position where there is one too many bP caps for inventory.

(ii) assume f5P now is original BeP: then WgP now makes one capture to the left, the hP, two to the left. The BhP marches and promotes and can give itself up to a wP cap but the WdP can only march and cannot be captured by a bP, nor can it promote to be given up as it is blocked by the d7P.

1...d6,d5(b) (error by unblocking) 2.Rxb4(**Pb7**)# This mating move can be made now as B has provided an alternate escape for the c8B and consequently, the bR for inventory purposes.

1...Rxa4!?(**Rh1**?)(c)(defense by inventory provision) 2.Be3# (Kxe3(**Bc1**)?) circe-mate. The wR is not reborn creating one additional piece of inventory allowing (a) to stop the threat line.

1...bxc5!?(**Sg1**)(d)(defense by undoubling pawns) 2.Se2# move of reborn knight. B now has only one capture in the position, and (a) is now allowed to stop the threat line.

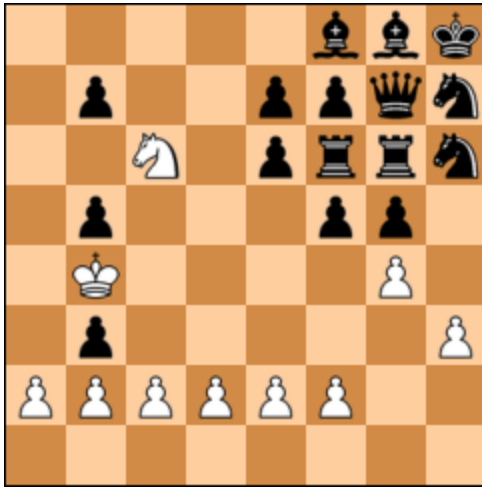
Significant Circe effects in bold. All lines of play are Alsatian Circe thematic. Important inventory conditions for both White and Black pawn captures.

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The Problemist 2014

#4



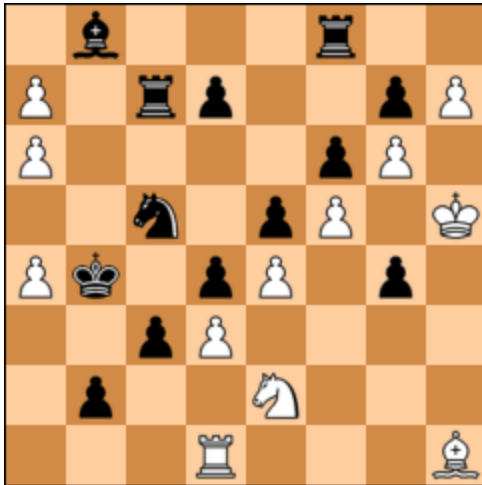
Last 14 single moves? (10+16)

1.Ka3! ba4(+R) 2.Rg3 b6 3.Rg1 bc7(+R) 4.Rb3 a5 5.bRg3 a6 6.3Rg2 a7 7.g3 Sg4.

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StrateGems 2015

#5



Shortest retraction to castling? (12+13)

A.Diagram B.c7R to g2

Black's pawns on the left side of the board make 3 captures, BhP makes one capture on g-file, while White's pawns make 3 captures on the left side of the board balancing missing men, so no other uncaptures can occur in the following solutions:

A.1.Kg5 f7 2.Kf4 e6(e7??) 3.Ke3 d5 4.Kd2 c4 5.Kc1 b3(ba3(+S,B)??)\* 6.-(0-0-0)  
(1.Kc4? d2 2.Kd5 e3??)

\*bad timing: the WaP cannot retract to a2

B.1.Kc4 d2 2.Kd5 e3 3.Ke6 f4 4.Kf7 g5 5.Kg8 h6 6.-(0-0)  
(1.Kg5? f7 2.Kf4 e6??)

-Matching K-marches, kings and pawns occupy the same squares

-exact and dual-free sequences

-paradoxically, the two closer-distance attempts, Black -(0-0-0) and White -(0-0) take one move longer (4K,1R,1B,uncastling). e.g. 3.Kb7 a5 4.Kc8 a6 5.Ba7 6.Rd8 7.-(0-0-0)

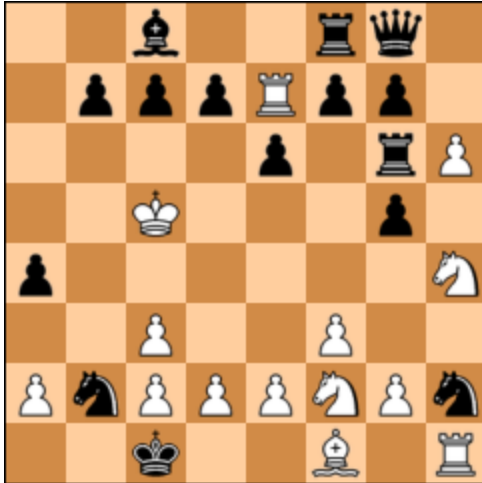
-twinning device opens a Black line, closes a White line-separating the solutions and tries

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StrateGems-2015

#6



Shortest retraction to pawn capture? v  
B.h2S to e8 (14+15)

A. Try 1.Sf5? Sg4 2.Rh4...In a variety of ways, White continues to return a R to b1, while Black shields his king by un-capturing a white bishop e.g. 2...Sf6 3.Sh1, *Kd1*(+B) 4.Rb4, *Sc4* 5.Rb1, Qh8 6.cb2(+B), but a half-move shorter is...

1.h5! Rd8 2.Re8, Qh7 3.Rh8, Qg8 4.Rh6, Rf6 5.Rg6, **gh6(+Q/B)**

The solution's maze-like maneuvers preclude Black from un-capturing an available white piece, due to retro-blockage. WSh4 prevents the alternate retraction h4 and 5.Rh5.

B. Try 1.Sd6? h5 2.Rd8...6.gh6(+Q/B), but a half-move shorter is...

1.*Sd1*! Sf5 2.Kb2, Rh4 3.Ka3, Rb4 4.a5, Rb1 5.Ka4, **cb2(+B)**

A faster sequence than the one found in the previous phase's try is necessary, precluding a move by the f2S. New moves for the black king and knight emerge. Again, no other un-capture of an available White piece is possible (e.g. 5.Ka4(+B)? due to bishop incarceration). WK prevents the alternate 5.Kb4.

-Reciprocal try and solution: choice of W/B un-captures, the tries, each failing by one half-move

-Dual-free, quiet and same-5-move length sequences leading up to the thematic captures

-Rook exit, rook entrance, no alternate un-captures possible in solutions

-In wP un-capture: changed *king and knight moves* from try to actual play, "wrong" wRh1!