Award of Julia's Fairies 2015/I informal tourney

(January - June, 2015)

Judge: Kostas Prentos

When Julia Vysotska invited me to judge the informal tourney of *Julia's Fairies* for the first half of 2015, neither of us expected such a large number of entries: 169 original compositions and versions, by 57 composers were published at juliasfairies.com between January and June of 2015. The amount of work required to provide a responsible judgment overwhelmed me at first. This is the main reason, together with other obligations, that I postponed getting started for a very long time. Once I forced myself to dedicate the required time, it turned out to be an interesting, rewarding and even enjoyable experience. I apologize to Julia and all the tourney participants for taking well over two years to finish this award.

The good presentation of the originals greatly facilitated the judging task. Not only were all the fairy definitions available for each problem, but the animated solutions also became an indispensable tool. I am grateful to Dmitri Turevski for creating Py2Web and to Julia for implementing it on her website. Occasionally, the comments provided by the authors and other commentators were very useful; some were especially insightful and penetrating.

The level of the competition was, as expected, very high. Most of the originals published during this period were at least interesting. In order to reach a reasonable number of selected problems, I applied very strict criteria, bordering on being unpleasant or unfair. Nonetheless, there were numerous originals of excellent quality, some featuring deep strategy, others having great technical merit or economy; this resulted in a large number of prizes and honorable mentions.

Many originals had content that struck me as computer generated: Two or more fairy conditions, some of which were not used adequately; two or more phases (twins or solutions) with little or no relation with each other. I awarded only a few of the problems with these features; mainly those that made a strong impression to me, or achieved certain homogeneity. Some interesting problems of this group that nevertheless were not selected are listed as follows: 679, 714, 732, 786, 787, 791, 805, 809, 812.1, 834, 841, 843, 845. Furthermore, in 714 the rRf3 stands in check in the beginning of two phases, 791 has the same first move in both solutions, 843 and 845 have partially or completely symmetrical solutions.

The combination of Alphabetic Chess and Madrasi was a convenient way to achieve multiple promotions. Therefore, problems 820, 824, 830, 844 failed to impress me.

A number of other entries were not selected for a variety of reasons:

678: Interesting fairy AUW, but several repeated moves.

699: A wealth of mating positions, but in loosely related solutions, with a static BLc8.

715: Interesting content achieved with an offensive royal Grasshopper and rather mechanical play, as a result of the fairy condition UltraSchachZwang.

717: Mates with changed guards, but repeated self-blocks and insufficient variety.

733: The AUW is a good find, but the Excelsiors are dry.

743: Essentially anticipated by P1287395 in PDB.

750: The use of two fairy pieces is not justified. Orthodox pieces could have achieved a similar result.

759: Nice cyclic shift of four guards, but the bad twinning and fairy pawns are hard to digest.

764: Complete cycle of moves, but not quite original and economical.

768: Ambitious double AUW content, but the fairy pawns and the convenient stipulation highly detract.

779: Rich play, but the neutral Knight does not participate in two final mating positions.

780: Rather typical royal battery creation in a helpselfmate. Compare for example, with 378002 in yacpdb.

790: Interesting diagram without any white pieces, but very little, if any, relation in the three phases.

799: Surpassed by the example quoted in the comments.

801: Neat 5/6 of a super-AUW in long helpmate form, but with repetitions and generally uninteresting advance of the royal pawn.

831: Complete echo-mates, but strategically uneven solutions.

839, 840: Nice content, but a single phase is not adequate.

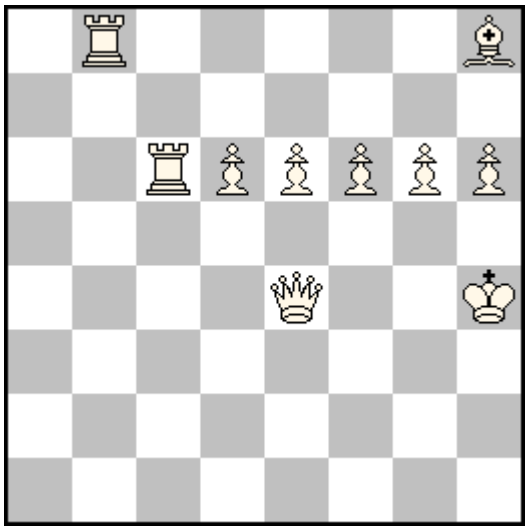
846: Pales in comparison with 826.

Finally, there were a few more problems I considered, but ultimately did not select. An incomplete list includes the following: 687, 695, 697, 702, 762, 777, 827, 837. The compositions with a single pawn performing a consecutive Albino (or Pickaninny) should be added on this list. I selected only one: 800.1, but probably more of them deserved to be mentioned.

Before moving on to the distribution of honors,

I would like to thank Julia Vysotska for entrusting me with this demanding task, for her patience and understanding and last but not least, for her immense contribution to our small society.

No.838v René J. Millour
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
1st Prize



h#9½ 11 Black Invisibles (10+0)

1...Qg2 2.Ixh6 Bg7 3.Ixg6 Kg4 4.Ixf6 Kf4 5.Ixe6 Ke4 6.Ixd6 Kd4 7.Ixc6 Kc4 8.Be7 Kb4 9.Ixb8 Ka4 10.Bd7 Qxg6#.

Imagine an Invisible on e5: For self-check reasons, after 3...Kg4 this Invisible cannot be a S, after 4...Kf4 it cannot be a K, Q, B or P and after 5...Ke4 it cannot be a R; thus, there is no Invisible on e5! Imagine an Invisible on h5: It cannot be a K, Q or R (not parried check to the wKh4), a B or P (check after 3...Kg4) or a S (check after 4...Kf4). In fact, the King's march Kh4-g4-f4-e4-d4-c4-b4-a4 proves there is no static or mobile Invisible on any of the squares of the 5th row. In particular, there is no bK on the squares h5, g5, f5, e5, d5, c5, b6, b7, c7, d7, e7, f7, g7, h7.

1…Qg2 2.Ixh6 Bg7: The Ih6 is not a K (there is no legal departure square) and not a Q or R (check, whereas 2...Bg7 is played).

3.Ixg6 Kg4: The Ig6 could not have come from h6, as we know Ih6 is not a K, Q or R. The Ig6 is a new Invisible. Furthermore, the Ih6 is not a S, due to self-check.

4.Ixf6 Kf4: Similarly, the If6 is not a K, Q or R. The Ig6 is not a S. The Ih6 is not a B, thus it can only be a P. This means that 2.Ixh6 was 2.g7xh6 and the wBh8 promoted via h7. This forces 5 captures by the white pawns, which together with the 11 Invisibles from the stipulation, close the black balance. All the black pieces that were not captured by pawns are on the board! The If6 is a new Invisible not coming from g6 as Ig6 is not a K, Q or R. Further applying the same reasoning, all successive Invisibles are new, not a Q or R because the wK plays on the file and not a K as we already know.

5.Ixe6 Ke4: The If6 is not a S. The Ig6 is not a B, thus it is a P.

6.Ixd6 Kd4: The Ie6 is not a S. The If6 is not a B, thus it is a P. Now we know that Ih6 and If6 are pawns having played g7xh6 and e7xf6. The bBf8 could never leave f8 or be captured, because all the black pieces not captured by the wPs must be on the board. Thus, another Invisible is revealed: If8 is a Bishop.

7.Ixc6 Kc4: The Id6 is not a S. The Ie6 is not a B, thus it is a P.

8.Be7 Kb4: After the identity and whereabouts of the Bf8 are revealed, it becomes an ordinary piece and the move Be7 is visible in accordance with the rules. 8...Kb4 proves the Ic6 is not a S. The Id6 is not a B, thus it is a P.

9.Ixb8 Ka4: Now we know the Ib8 has not come from c6 and is a new I. The Ic6 is not a B, thus it is a P. All 6 Invisibles on the sixth rank are pawns, having captured: g7xh6, f7xg6, e7xf6, d7xe6, c7xd6 and b7xc6. Not h7xg6? obstructing the promotion on h8. Three new Invisibles are revealed: Bc8, Qd8 and Ke8, which could never have left their home-squares, with the black pawns standing on g7, f7, e7, d7, c7 and b7. Now we know that the Ib8 is not the K (standing on e8), not a B (9.Bc7xb8 is incompatible with 6.c7xd6 and 9.Ba7xb8 is disproved by 6...Kd4) and not a S (9.Sd7xb8 is incompatible with 5.d7xe6 and 9.Sa6xb8 is disproved by 8...Kb4). 9.Ixb8 can only be 9.Ra8xb8+ (or 9.Qa8xb8+). Consequently, the last Invisible piece stands on b8.

10.Bd7 Qxg6#: Again, the Bc8 is an ordinary piece and the move 10.Bd7 is fully visible. The squares d7, d8 and e7 are blocked. The following diagram shows the position with the 11 Invisibles, just before the mate 10...Qxg6#:

The move order must be chosen carefully throughout the solution: Not 1...Kg4? 2.Ixh6 Qg2, nor 1...Qg2 2.Ixg6? Kg4 3.Ixh6, because the Ih6 could have been a Rook in both cases. Not 5.Ixd6? Ke4 6.Ixe6 because the Ie6 could have been a Rook coming from e8.

The move 9.Ixb8 must be played to reveal the 11th Invisible piece, otherwise there could be a promoted Q or B on g8-h7, or a R on g1, parrying the mate. However, if played one move earlier, 8.Ixb8? could have been 8.I(Sc6)xb8!. The move 8...Kb4 (proving the Ic6 is not a S) must precede 9.Ixb8.

Instead of 8...Kb4, the move 8...Kd4? followed by 9...Ke4 would prove the Ic6 is not a S or B, but fail to prove that the Id6 is not a Bishop.

Finally, there is a crucial point holding together the entire composition: The tries 1...Qb1/Qc2/Qd3? fail because the move 7.Ixc6 could have been 7.Kb5xc6!, with two Invisibles closing the lines of the wQ and wRb8 to the squares b5 or c6. After the key 1...Qg2!, no Invisible piece can stand on d5 (as proved by the white King's march) and the square f3 must be vacant for Qe4-g2. Therefore, the move 7.I(Kb5)xc6 is now illegal.

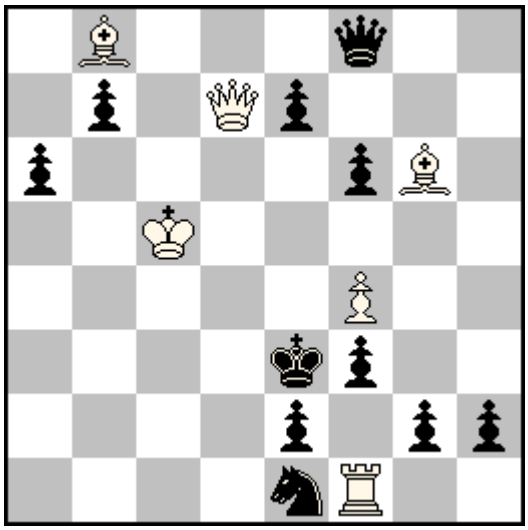
The original version was cooked: After all the Invisibles were revealed, simple retroanalysis proved it could not have been White's turn to move in the initial position. The author successfully replaced the wPa5 with a wRb8.

This outstanding composition skillfully borrows ideas from different genres, specifically fairies, proof games and classical retros. The proof game enthusiast will recognize the method of logical *reductio ad absurdum*, used to prove the unique type of a promoted piece that is captured without moving (Schnoebelen). The King with his moves disproves all the other possibilities, except for one. Here, the effect is applied on a massive scale, with the King's walk from h4 to a4 proving the type of six black Invisibles.

The legality of the position is imperative. In the course of the solution, uncomplicated retroanalysis demonstrates that all the black pieces are accounted for, due to the necessity to promote a pawn on h8. This component is used to reveal the identity of four more Invisibles.

However, the content is mainly fairy and the reconstruction of the position is accomplished in the forward play. After each move, new evidence emerges and gradually the whereabouts of the Invisible pieces become evident. The solution flows flawlessly, with exemplary geometry and depth. The King's moves appear mechanical after a while, but numerous tries illustrate that every step must be planned and carried out with precision to the end. Especially the Queen's tries on the first move and their surprising refutation emphasize the complexity associated with the Invisibles. An extremely intricate work.

No.785 Petko A. Petkov
Bulgaria
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
2nd Prize



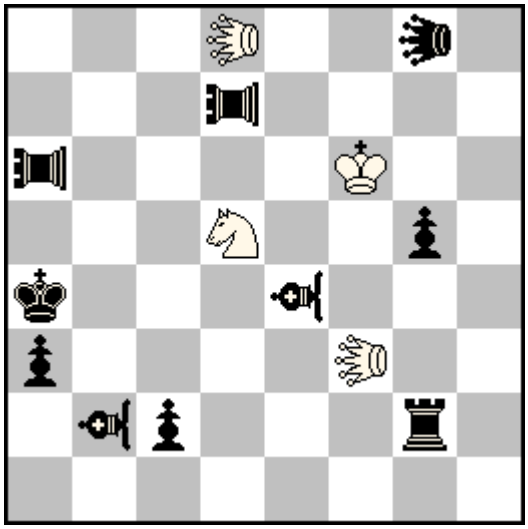
hs#3½ b) ♙b7→b5 (6+11)
Circle Snek
Anti-Andernach

a) 1…g1=S(=w) 2.Bd3(=b) hxg1=B (wSd7) 3.Sb6(=b) Qd8(=w) 4.Qxd3 (bBe1)+ Kxd3 (wQf1)#
Not 2...hxg1=Q (wSd7)? due to 5.QxQg1!
b) 1…g1=R(=w) 2.Be4(=b) hxg1=Q (wRb8) 3.Rb6(=b) Qa8(=w) 4.Qxe4 (bBe1)+ Kxe4 (wQf1)#
Not 2...hxg1=B (wRb8)? due to 5.QxBg1!

The author thoroughly described the thematic content: Creation of royal batteries K/B and K/Q after bi-color AUW (wS/bB and wR/bQ), realized only with black moves; dual-avoidance tries; change of functions between Qd7/Bb8; line-openings for the bQf8 after the moves of Sd7/Rb8; anticipatory sacrifices of Bg6 on d3/e4. Furthermore, bSe1/wRf1 change phases and Qd7/Bb8 change phases, colors and roles.

The two solutions are perfectly matched, move by move. This is an astonishing example of how to create harmony from chaos. The fairy condition Circle SneK is volatile by nature, but somehow the solutions of this problem are very harmonious and interconnected. For instance, the choice of the first promotion 1…g1=S/R(=w) is determined by the need to guard a square near the black King (d5 or c6), and cannot be switched. The same is evident, even more emphatically, with the second promotion. If the type of piece is not chosen carefully, the wQf1 will be able to capture it (5.Qxg1!). The final mates are fairy specific: 5.QxBg1 (bBb6)?? in a) and 5.QxQg1 (bQb6)?? in b) are illegal due to the phase change of the piece on b6, per Circle SneK rules. Similarly, 5.Qf2(=b)?? is illegal due to the color change, per Anti-Andernach rules.

No.772 Ladislav Salai jr. & Michal Dragoun
Slovakia / Czechia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
3rd Prize



h#2 4 solutions (4+10)
♙=Bishop-Lion
=Rook-Lion
=Lion

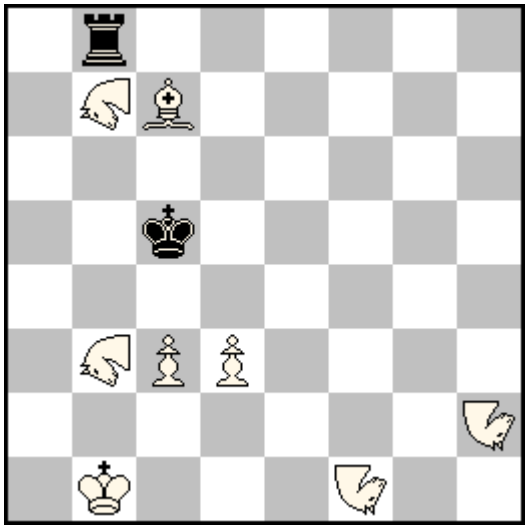
1.BLa8 LIb7 2.BLc6+ Sb6#
1.RLd1 LId2 2.RLd4+ Sc3#
1.Re2 LId1+ 2.Ka5 LIxg5#
1.LIb8 LIa8+ 2.Kb3 LIf7#

A fine "helpmate of the future", with fairy pieces of the Lion family. In the first pair of solutions, the black piece (BLe4/RLd7) clears the line for the white Lion that stands behind it and on the next move uses the Lion as a hurdle, to move in the opposite direction. Black's second move (BLc6/RLd4) is played with the intention of closing the line of RLa6 or BLb2, so that the white Knight can give the final blow without exposing the wKf6. The anti-battery check on B2 is parried by cross-check (and mate) that creates an anti-battery effect, exploiting the Lion's move on W1. The two solutions of this pair are perfectly matched in ODT.

The second pair of solutions is less spectacular, but still well matched and interesting. B1 creates a hurdle for the white Lions f3 or d8, which move to a different line from that of the first pair. The bK moves on B2 and the mate is given by the second Lion, using the Sd5 as a hurdle. The harmony is slightly spoiled by the role of bRg2. Not only is the Rg2 the only orthodox piece besides the wSd5, but

also its function has little relevance with the rest of the play. It might be better to replace it with a bBLh5 as suggested in the comments (adding a bPg2 to maintain the soundness), so that B1 would unify the two solutions, as well as improve the relation between the two pairs. In spite of the extra pawn, I would probably favor this option, but it is certainly a matter of choice. The problem is outstanding anyway.

No.807 Petko A. Petkov
Bulgaria
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
4th Prize



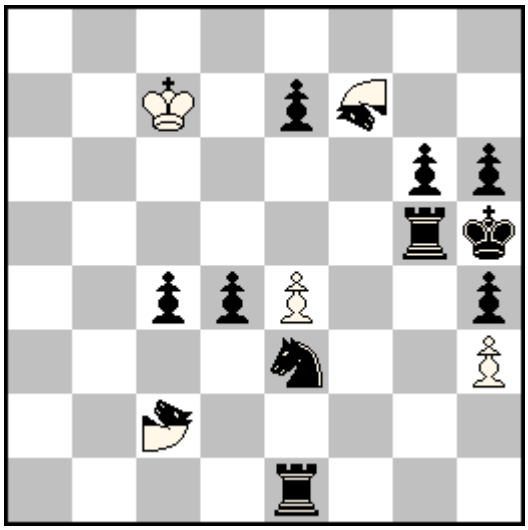
hs#2½ b) **p**d3→d5 (8+2)
c) **p**d3→e4
d) **p**d3→a4
Andernach
Disparate PY
g=Camel
N=Nightrider

a) 1…Ra8 2.CAc6 Ra4 3.CAxa4(=b) Kxc6#
b) 1…Re8 2.CAc4 Re2 3.CAxe2(=b) Kxc4#
c) 1…Rd8 2.Nb5 Rd2 3.Nxd2(=b) Kxb5#
d) 1…Rf8 2.Nd5 Rf3 3.Nxf3(=b) Kxd5#

Quite simple concept, presented with remarkable clarity and economy: On W3, one of the white pieces will capture and change its color per Andernach, while at the same time "observing" the wK. This is not an illegal self-check according to the Disparate condition, because Black cannot move the same piece and capture the wK right away. Unable to move this piece, Black is in Zugzwang and must move his King. The result of this sequence is that the white King is paralyzed because of B3, the check that was "pending" from W3 is now in effect and it is mate. There is a condition to this scenario: If the second piece of the same type with the piece that gives mate is present at the end, White can escape the mate by moving it, causing the paralysis of the mating piece. Therefore, the counterpart of the mating piece must be sacrificed.

It is instructive to analyze how this theory is put into practice. B1, W2 and B2 serve as the necessary prelude to the grand finale. The twinning mechanism leaves only one possibility for these moves each time. For example, in twin a) after 1...Rd8? the wPd3 obstructs the bR's access to d2, after 1...Re8? the wPd3 controls c4, and after 1...Rf8? Black can defend with 3...Kb5!. Only 1...Ra8! 2.CAc6! Ra4! works. The other twins are similar, although the effects are not always the same. This rich content is achieved very economically, with black Minimal and without any cook-stoppers. In addition, there is Zilahi, King's Cross, change of functions between two pairs of white pieces of the same type (Nf1/Nh2 and CAb3/Cab7). A memorable problem!

No.763.1 Franz Pachl & Petko A. Petkov
Germany / Bulgaria
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
5th Prize



h#3 b) **p**e4→e5 (3+10+2)
Anti-Circe
♕=Camel
=Zebra

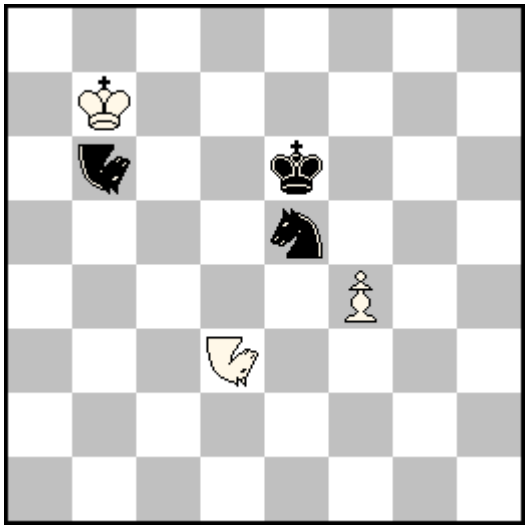
a) 1.Rc1 Kc6 2.nCAxe4 (+nCAe1) nCAf4
3.Sd5 nZxf4 (+nZf8)#
b) 1.Rd1 Kd7 2.nZxe5 (+nZe1) nZg4
3.Sf5 nCAxg4 (+nCAg8)#

The neutral fairy piece that gives the final check must be incarcerated, so that it will not be able to run away when moved by Black. The wK and bS are the

blocking pieces in both phases. In order for the wK to legally perform this task on the squares c6 or d7, the relevant rebirth squares c1 or d1 must be blocked in advance by the bR. The two solutions are perfectly matched, with reciprocal captures of the two fairy pieces.

Showing this idea with orthodox pieces seems impossible, because the rebirth squares, related to the position of the two Kings, would be the same; a Rook is the only exception to this rule, but it would not make a good problem, anyway. Therefore, it is safe to say that the use of fairy pieces in this problem is justified.

No.781 Eric Huber & Vlaicu Crișan
Romania
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
6th Prize



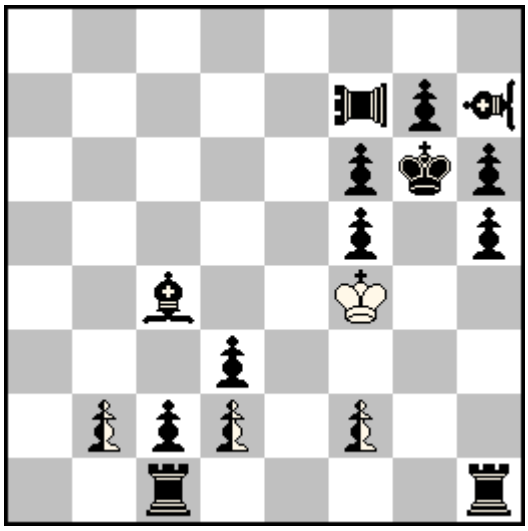
hs#2½ b) e5→d5 (3+3)
Isardam
Super-Circe
N♘=Nightrider

a) 1…Sxd3 (+wNb4) 2.Kc6 Nxf4 (+wNd8)
3.Kd5+ Sxb4 (+wNb6)#
b) 1…Sxf4 (+wPd6) 2.Kxb6 (+bNe4) Kxd6 (+wNc8)
3.Kc5+ Sxd3 (+wNa6)#

Typical Isardam strategy of spiking the King between two pieces of the same type and different colors results in nice chameleon echo mates. For the solution to work, the black King must be spiked first, in order to allow the white King to approach him on W3. This move gives check, forcing Black's reply, which is spiking the wK, through the capture and rebirth of the second white Nightrider. The capturing piece (the wS) gives mate to the paralyzed white King.

Keeping the Super-Circe rebirths under control can be tricky, but here the crystal-clear strategy forces the unique rebirths. The economy is superb and the use of Super-Circe indispensable. Some slight differences between the two solutions are insignificant and in fact, they enhance the unifying effects.

No.700 Michel Caillaud
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
7th Prize

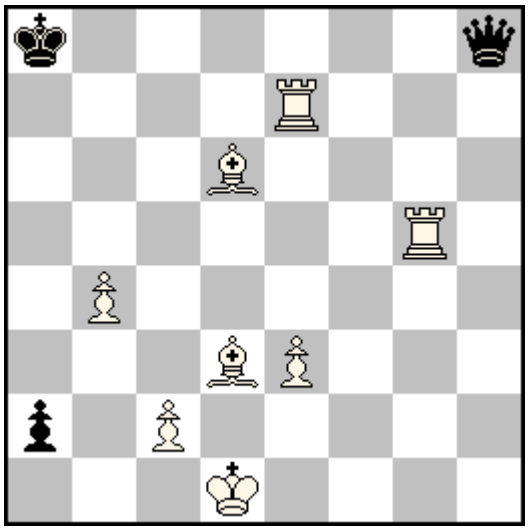


h#3 2 solutions (1+13+3)
♙=Vao
 =Pao

1.f1=nVA nVAxc4 2.d1=nVA nVAe2
3.b1=nVA nVAxd3#
1.b1=nPA nPAxh1 2.d1=nPA nPAdg1
3.f1=nPA Kg3#

There are three neutral pawns on the second rank, without any other white pieces to give mate, so obviously these pawns have to get down to work immediately. The fairy pieces on f7 and h7 ensure that no mate with orthodox pieces is possible on the weak f5 square (e.g., with nQd3 & nBf5). Attempts to mate with neutral Paos or Vaos need to prevent the mating piece from moving away. This is accomplished nicely, by incarcerating the mating piece with other pieces of the same type. The move order is forced efficiently taking advantage of the fact that the neutral pawns can promote only on Black's turn. The final mates are memorable: Neutral Vaos on c4, d3, e2, or neutral Paos on f1, g1, h1. The economy comes across as suboptimal, but the truth is that all the black pieces on the south half of the board are necessary to bring on the mates. A lovely find!

No.686 Aleksey Oganesjan
Russia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
8th Prize



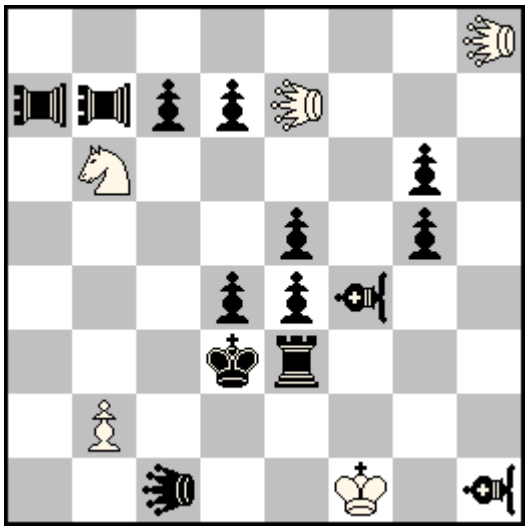
hs#4 2 solutions (8+3)

1.Rd5 a1=S 2.Be4 Sb3 3.Bh1 Sc1 4.Rd2+ Qxh1#
1.Ba6 a1=B 2.Ra5 Bc3 3.Ra1 Be1 4.Be2+ Qxa1#

This was the best "orthodox" composition of this tourney. Although helpselfmates without fairy pieces or conditions are officially fairy, I consider them orthodox and have a special affection for them. Here, we witness a beautiful reciprocal battery creation between the wBd3 and wRg5. The front piece of the battery plays first, closing the line for the rear piece. After the battery is set up, the rear piece moves along the line into the black Queen's range. The battery is fired with a self-block and the Queen is forced to capture the rear piece giving mate. Meanwhile, Black promoted the a-pawn and brought the promoted piece to control the second flight square around the white King.

Nicely matched solutions, in a rather economical setting. The long corner-to-corner moves by the black Queen, as well as the maneuvers by the white pieces are very appealing. The static white pieces and the technical pawns slightly spoil the impression, but they seem unavoidable.

No.724 Ladislav Salai Jr & Emil Klemanic
Slovakia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
9th Prize



h#2 4 solutions (5+14)

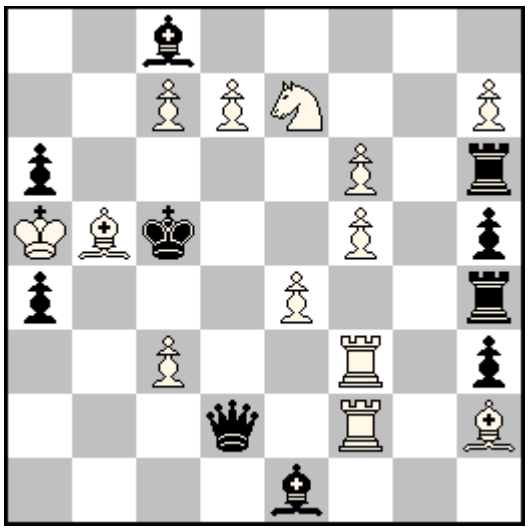
♙=Vao
 =Pao
=Leo

1.c5 LExd4 2.Kxd4 LEd8#
1.VAf3 LExe4 2.Kxe4 LEh7#
1.LEc2 LEe6 2.dxe6 LEd8#
1.LEd2 LEh5 2.gxh5 LEh7#

A well-balanced "helpmate of the future" with a very clear connection between the two pairs of solutions. On W1, a white Leo sacrifices, in order to eliminate one of the two pawns on the lines d8-d3 or h7-d3. The other Leo mates on W2, exploiting the half opened lines. The mates are given on the same squares d8 or h7 by a different Leo each time. Black's role is auxiliary: Blocking a flight on B1, either directly or anticipatorily, or capturing the sacrificed Leo on B2. This rather simple strategy precluded a higher ranking.

1...axb5 2.f7 Ra6#

No.825.1 Narayan Shankar Ram
India
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
1st Honorable Mention



r#2 2 solutions (13+10)

1.Bxa6? (B) ~ 2.f7 (P) Rxa6#
1...Bxd7 2.Rf4 (Q) Qxc3#
1...Qxc3+ 2.Kxa4 Qb4#
1...Rxh7!
1...Bxa6!

1.Bxa4? (A) ~ 2.Rf4 (Q) Qxc3#
1...Bxd7 2.e5 (R) Rxa4#
1...Qxc3+ 2.Rxc3+ Bxc3#
1...Kc4!

1.Bd3! (C) ~ 2.e5 (R) Qxc3#
1...Bxd7 2.f7 (P) Qxc3#
1...Qxc3+ 2.Kxa4 Qb4#

1.Rf4? (Q) ~ 2.Bxa4 (A) Qxc3#
1...Bxd7 2.Bxa6 (B) Qxc3#
1...Kd6!

1.f7? (P) ~ 2.Bxa6 (B) Rxa6#
1...Bxd7 2.Bd3 (C) Qxc3#
1...Rxh7!

1.e5! (R) ~ 2.Bd3 (C) Qxc3#
1...Bxd7 2.Bxa4 (A) Rxa4#
1...Rb4 2.cxb4+ Qxb4#
1...Rc4 2.Rf4 Qxc3#
1...Qxc3+ 2.Rxc3+ Bxc3#

I do not belong to the Cyclone cult, so I critically examine any composition that shows Cyclone themes. In this particular case, it is obvious that something extraordinary is happening. The author describes it as "Cyclic Le Grand (=Ukraine) theme doubled, and 6-fold sequence reversal of White's 1st and 2nd moves". See the table below:

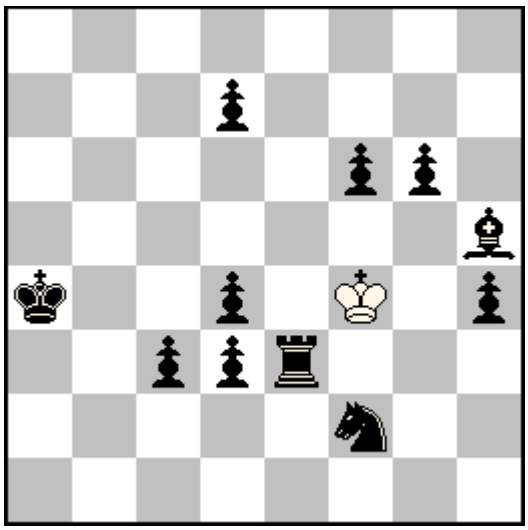
Try/Key	Threat	1..Bxd7
B?	P	Q
A?	Q	R
C!	R	P
Q?	A	B
P?	B	C
R!	C	A

It is indeed an impressive achievement and this problem was selected for the FIDE album, via the WCCI process. It is quite interesting that the judges' scores range from 1 to 3½ points. Undoubtedly, ranking this problem is a very difficult task, especially for someone who has never composed a Cyclone problem. I will try to explain what influenced my decision.

First of all, for an "orthodox" composition like this - see my comment to the 8th Prize - the legality of the position is crucial. Luckily, the author found a way to make the initial position legal; otherwise, I would not even consider it for the award. The thematic content looks exciting and somewhat paradoxical, even to an alien to the genre like me. The 2 solutions and 4 tries form, instead of the normal 1+5, feels quite natural and highlights the two separate, but interlinked cycles.

There are two serious flaws that made me downgrade this problem from a Prize. First and most important is the double refutation in one of the tries. I am not quite sure what compromises are accepted by Cyclone composers, but in my view, a double refutation of a thematic try severely undermines the thematic integrity of a composition. Compared to this, the plug on f2 is almost justifiable, as the only way to make the position legal.

No.822 Petko A. Petkov
Bulgaria
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
2nd Honorable Mention



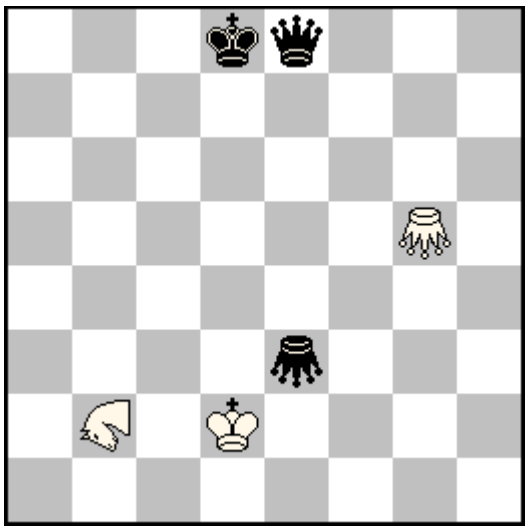
ser-h#3 3 solutions (1+11)
Anti-Andernach
Disparate PY

1.Be2(=w) 2.Rxe2 3.Ra2(=w) Kf3#
1.Sd1(=w) 2.Bxd1 3.Bb3(=w) Kg4#
1.Re4(=w) 2.Sxe4 3.Sc5(=w) Ke4#

On the third move of each solution, a black piece changes its color and gives check. When it is White's turn to move, this piece is temporarily paralyzed (per Disparate rules). Instead, White moves his King, paralyzing the black King, who is unable to parry the check now in effect, and it is mate.

Each thematic square around the white King (e4, f3, g4) is guarded twice in the diagram position. Black cyclically eliminates the guards by removing the two pieces that control each square: On the first move, a black piece changes color; on the second move it is captured by another black piece, which moves away on the third move. The thematic content features cyclic Zilahi and specific royal batteries in perfect harmony, with an economical Meredith position and white Rex-Solus.

No.690 Václav Kotěšovec
Czechia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
3rd Honorable Mention

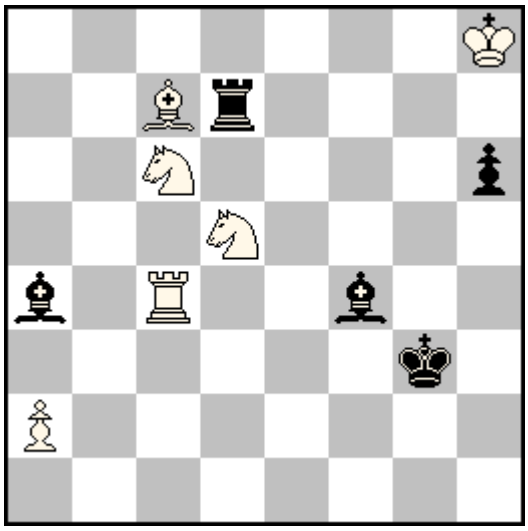


ser-!=24 2 solutions (3+3)
PWC
g=Zebra
♘=Grasshopper

1.Kd3 2.Gd2 3.Ga2 4.Zd5 5.Za7 6.Ga8 7.Zc4 8.Ze7 10.Kxe3 (+Ge4) 12.Kd5 13.Gxe4 (+Ga8) 14.Kc5 15.Gxe8 (+Qe4) 16.Zg4 17.Zd6 18.Zg8 19.Gh8 20.Gf8 21.Zd6 22.Zxa8 (+Gd6) 23.Kxd6 (+Gc5) 24.Gxc5 (+Gf8) auto=
1.Ze4 2.Zh6 3.Zxe8 (+Qh6) 4.Kxe3 (+Gd2) 5.Gxd2 (+Gg5) 6.Zxg5 (+Ge8) 7.Gf4 9.Kc5 10.Gxh6 (+Qf4) 11.Zd3 12.Zf6 13.Ge6 14.Zc4 15.Ze7 16.Gxe8 (+Ge6) 17.Zh5 18.Zf8 19.Gg8 20.Zd5 21.Zb8 23.Kxe6 (+Gd5) 24.Gxd5 (+Gg8) auto=

Two echo chameleon stalemates: The Zebra is incarcerated by the white King and Grasshopper, which are immobilized in the middle of the board by the black pieces. It is impressive there are two solutions of equal length resulting in closely related final positions - presumably the outcome of an exhaustive research with the computer. As is often the case with PWC, the play is rather tedious, yet it is comprehensible to the human mind.

No.676 Pierre Tritten
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
4th Honorable Mention

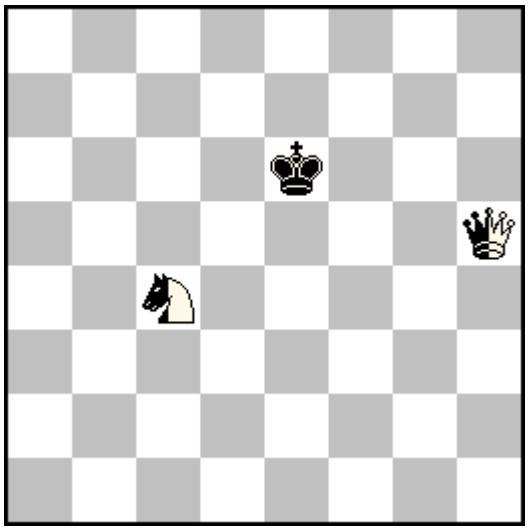


h#2 2 solutions (6+5)
Take & Make

1.Rxd5→c3 Rxc3→f3+ 2.Kxf3→a3 Bxf4→c1#
1.Bxc6→d8 Bxd8→h4+ 2.Kxh4→d8 Rxf4→b8#

A very intensive Take & Make composition with two matched solutions, featuring Zilahi, ODT and change of functions between three pairs of pieces: [bBa4/bRd7], [wSc6/wSd5] and [wBc7/wRc4]. All the moves in both solutions are Take & Make specific, resulting in two completely diverse model mates with the participation of the surviving pieces after all the captures. The black King ends up on two distant parts of the board, enhancing the feeling of a well implemented fairy condition.

No.757 Geoff Foster
Australia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
5th Honorable Mention

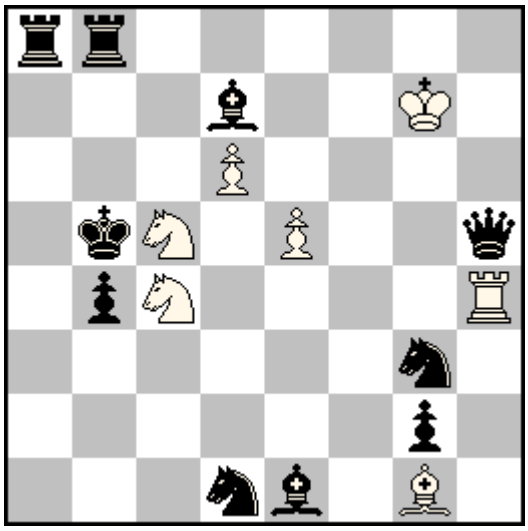


h#2½ 3 solutions (0+1+2)
Back-To-Back

1…nSa3 2.Kf6 nQf7+ 3.Kb2 nQa2#
1....nQc5+ 2.nSa4 nQe7+ 3.Kb3 nQa3#
1…nSa5 2.Ke7 nQe8+ 3.Kb4 nQa4#

Three exact echo mates on the edge of the board illustrate ideally the properties of Back-To-Back with neutral pieces: In the mate positions, with the Knight standing on the square above the Queen, White gives check because both pieces adopt the moving properties of the Queen. With Black to move, both pieces move like Knights. Yet, if Black moved the neutral Queen like a Knight, trying to abolish the check, she would still attack the King from all possible arrival squares. So it is mate. This precious gem is the epitome of economy and elegance!

No.734 Thomas Pantalacci
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
6th Honorable Mention



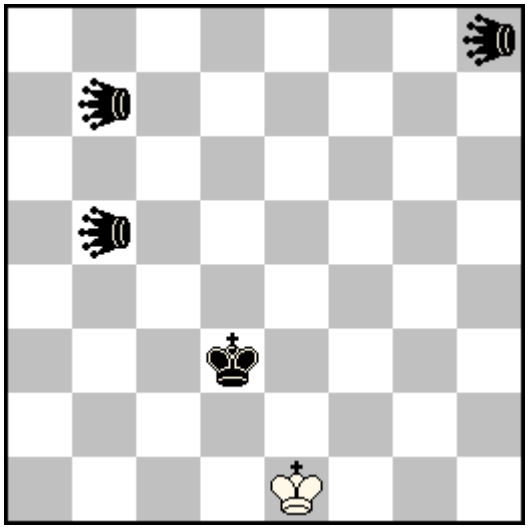
h#2½ 2 solutions (7+10)
Patrol Chess

1…Rd4 2.Ka4 Be3 3.Bb5 Rg4#
1…Bd4 2.Ka5 Re4 3.Rb5 Bf2#

On the first move, White moves one of his pieces to d4, closing the white line that observed one of the Knights and creating a Patrol specific battery. This allows the black King to play to the square that is no longer controlled by that Knight on B2. On W2, the rear piece of the battery moves along the same line to a more favorable position, so that it will not be interfered with, later. After the bK's flight is blocked on B3, White withdraws the front piece of the battery from d4. As a result, the white line to observe the Knight reopens and simultaneously a black line closes, preventing the capture of the rear piece of the fairy battery.

A beautiful demonstration of Patrol Chess properties. The two solutions are in perfect harmony, with orthogonal-diagonal correspondence. The fairy battery works indirectly, with the white Knight acting as a proxy that delivers the mate, when observed. It is interesting that the moves 2...Bf2? or 2...Rf4? would not work, because the black Knight that could not capture in the solution, would now be able to close the thematic line, by 4.Se3! or 4.Se4!, even if not observed.

No.826 Václav Kotěšovec
Czechia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
7th Honorable Mention

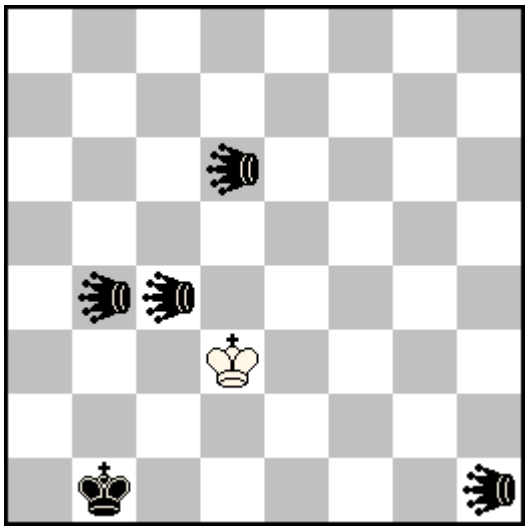


hs=7½ 3 solutions (1+4)
Maximummer
=Double-Grasshopper

1...Ke4 2.Kf1 DGf4 3.Kg1 Kf3 4.Kh2 DGe4 5.Kg1 DGe2 6.Kh1 DGc4 7.Kh2 DGg3 8.Kh3 DGg2=
1...Kc4 2.Kd2 DGe1 3.Kc2 DGb1 4.Kb2 DGc1 5.Ka3 DGb5 6.Ka4 DGa5 7.Ka3 DGb4+ 8.Ka4 DGc3=
1...DGc4 2.Kf2 DGg2 3.Kg3 DGc6 4.Kh4 DGc3 5.Kg3 DGd2 6.Kf2 DGb7 7.Ke1 DGd2 8.Kd1 DGe2=

Three exact echo stalemates on distant parts of the board are an admirable achievement. Especially considering that there are hardly any repetitions of moves throughout the three solutions. Although the technical aspect of the problem is extraordinary, further unified by the echoes, the artistic element is rather low, as is usually the case with most problems of this type. The surprising maneuvers by the white King, motivated by a variety of reasons, are lost amidst the ocean of tiring moves by the fairy pieces.

No.691 Václav Kotěšovec
Czechia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
8th Honorable Mention

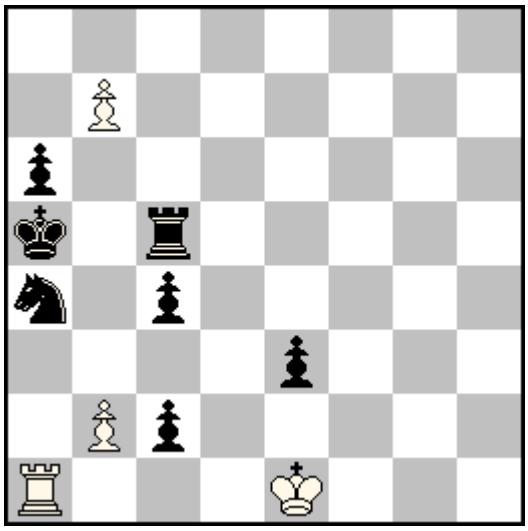


hs#15 3 solutions (1+5)
Maximummer
=Kangaroo

1.Ke4 KAf4 2.Ke5 KAg3 3.Kd6 KAc7 4.Kc6 KAc3 5.Kc5 KAc6 6.Kd5 KAb7 7.Kc5 KAc3 8.Kd4 KAg4 9.Kc4 KAb4 10.Kd4 KAa4 11.Kc4 KAd4 12.Kd3 Ka2 13.Kc2 Ka3 14.Kb1 Kb3 15.Ka1 KAb2#
1.Ke2 Kc2 2.Ke3 Kd1 3.Kd3 Ke1 4.Kd4 KAe4 5.Kd5 KAc6 6.Ke5 Kf2 7.Kf6 KAg6 8.Ke6 KAh6 9.Kd6 KAc6 10.Ke5 Kg1 11.Kf4 KAg4 12.Ke3 Kh2 13.Kf2 Kh3 14.Kg1 Kg3 15.Kh1 KAg2#
1.Kd4 KAe4 2.Kd5 KAc6 3.Kc5 KAc7 4.Kc4 KAc3 5.Kd5 KAb7 6.Ke6 KAf6 7.Kd5 Kc2 8.Kc5 Kd3 9.Kd5 KAd2 10.Kd6 KAd7 11.Ke6 Kc4 12.Kf5 Kd5 13.Kg6 Ke6 14.Kh7 Kf7 15.Kh8 KAg7#

The white King is mated on three different corners of the board. Nice echo mates unify the three solutions. Another impressive technical achievement by the specialist of this type of problems, but my comment about the low artistic impact of the 7th Honorable Mention applies here, as well. In fact, the weakness of the monotonous play is amplified, due to the long solutions.

No.788 Aleksey Oganesjan
Russia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
9th Honorable Mention



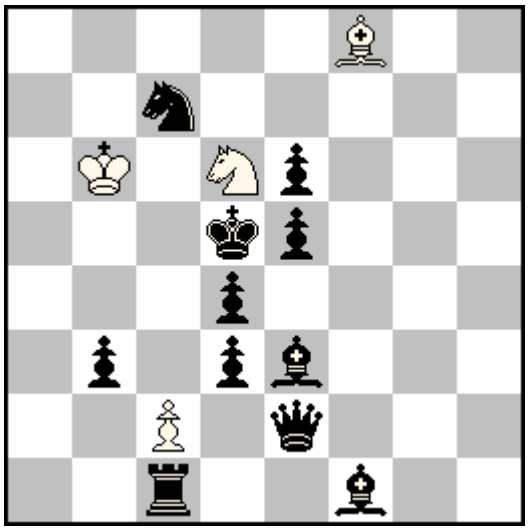
hs#4½ (4+7)

1...c1=S 2.b8=R (2.b8=Q?) Sb3 3.Rb7 Sd2 4.0-0-0 Rc6 5.b4+ cxb3 e.p.#

White must choose carefully the type of the promoted piece on b8. A Rook or a Queen is required, but the correct choice will become evident later. White's third move must be a waiting move and only the promoted piece can move without losing the castling rights. After White's castling, Black must play a waiting move, right before the forcible end. If White chose to promote to a Queen, there would be no waiting move without a damaging effect, in particular 2.b8=Q? Sb3 3.Qb7?! Sd2 4.0-0-0 Rc6?! 5.b4+ cxb3 ep.+ 6.Qxc6!. So, White must promote to a Rook and the waiting move 3.Rb7! allows Black's waiting move 4...Rc6!.

A single phase helpselfmate in economical Meredith setting, featuring the Valladão task with two underpromotions. This alone would not be enough for a distinction, but the additional white and black tempo play nicely complements the thematic complex.

No.800.1 Nikola Predrag
Croatia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
10th Honorable Mention

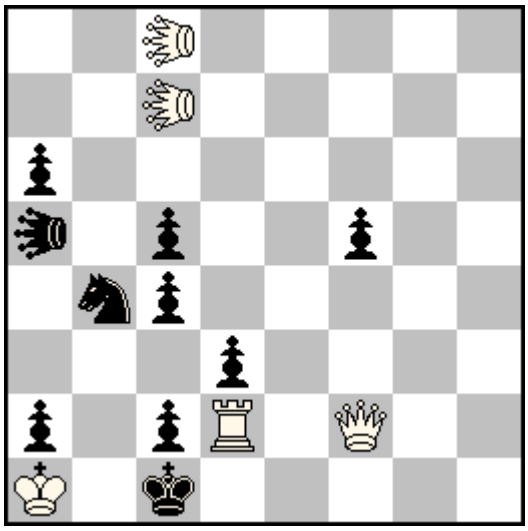


pser-s#9 Circe (4+11)

1.c3! 2.c4+ Rxc4 (+Pc2) 3.cxd3 (+Pd7) 4.dxc4 (+Ra8)+ Qxc4 (+Pc2) 5.cxb3 (+Pb7) 6.bxc4 (+Qd8)+ Bxc4 (+Pc2) 7.Sxc4 (+Bc8) 8.Sd6 9.c4+ dxc3 e.p. (+Pc2)#

There were several originals in this tourney showing a single pawn Albino. I selected only the one I considered the most interesting among them. Here, the black pieces are not only the tools for the Albino, but they also play an active role. The bRc1, bQe2 and bBf1 parry the check by capturing the offender wPc4 and they are captured one after the other. From their rebirth squares, they control the white King's flights a5, c7, b7, building the cage for the final selfmate. The combination of Circe and parry-series was very fortunate to this end.

No.829 James Quah
Singapore
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
11th Honorable Mention



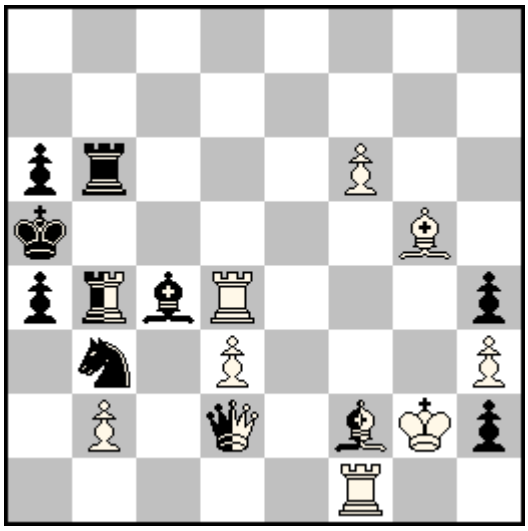
#2 =Kangaroo (5+10)

1.KAxc4! A ~ 2.KAc3# B
1...Sc6 2.Qe1# C

1.KAc3? B ~ 2.Qe1# C
1…Sc6 2.KAxc4# A
1…Sd5!

Djurašević is a difficult theme for orthodox compositions. When fairy pieces or conditions are involved, the task becomes easier, due to the special attributes of fairy chess. Kangaroos seem to be suitable for this job. Here, there are two thematic lines: The c-file and the diagonal a5-e1. The try 1.KAc3? closes the diagonal and threatens mate by 2.Qe1#. Moving the Sb4, Black re-opens the diagonal and controls e1. The thematic defense 1...Sc6 provides a hurdle to the second Kangaroo and allows 2.KAxc4#. 1...Sd5! is the refutation. After the key 1.KAxc4! the threat is now 2.KAc3#. Black closes the file with 1...Sc6 adding a hurdle, but at the same time it removes a hurdle from the diagonal, allowing 2.Qe1#. The mechanism is simple, but effective - toying with added and removed hurdles on the two thematic lines. The economy is somewhat burdened by the need to limit the mobility of the bSb4 to one extra square, besides the thematic c6.

No.688 Igor Kochulov
Russia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
12th Honorable Mention



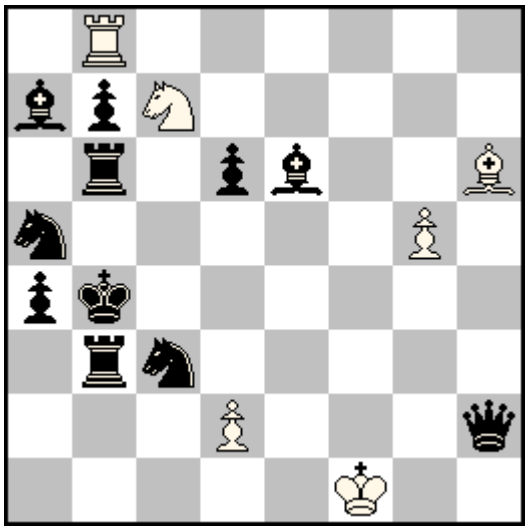
hs#2½ Duplex (8+8+3)
Take & Make

1…nBxd4→d7+ 2.nQe1 nBc6+ 3.nRxc4→d5+ nRxg5→d2#
1…nRxc4→e6+ 2.nQc2 nRe5+ 3.nBxd4→d5+ nBxb3→d2#

The following description of the content is copied almost verbatim from Geoff Foster's excellent comment: There are four neutral batteries (two batteries with nQ that exist in the diagram, and two nR/nB batteries that are set up during the play). In each solution, a check from a neutral piece is answered by a Take & Make double-check (setting up a neutral battery), which is answered by a Take & Make cross-double check and mate! The final move is made to d2, which is the nQ's initial square. In each solution the nB captures the wRd4, and the nR captures the bBc4, with different "Makes" each time.

All the moves are played by the three neutral pieces. The other pieces are the extras in this performance. They are there to pave the way for the stars of the show. Although there are many static pieces, some of which are half-employed, and the economy is not good, I could not resist the temptation to include this problem in the award, rewarding it for the spectacular solutions.

No.735 Thomas Pantalacci
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
1st Commendation

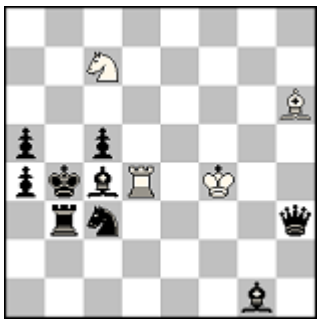


h#2½ b) -♙a4 (6+11)
Anti-Circe

a) 1...d3 2.Bxb8(+Bf8) Bxf8(+Bc1) 3.Qh8 Ba3#
b) 1...d4 2.Qxh6(+Qd8) Rxd8(+Ra1) 3.Bg8 Ra4#

In order for the intended mates (3...Ba3 and 3...Ra4) to work, there are three things that need to be done: a) control the flight c4 or c5 b) bring the white mating piece to its rebirth square c1 or a1 and c) deprive Black from the defense 4.Rxa3 (+Rh8) or Sxa4 (+Sg8). On the 2nd move, Black captures the white piece not needed for the mate, in order to bring a black unit within the other white piece's reach; an interesting motivation for a Zilahi. B3 is also specific to Anti-Circe: Occupying a rebirth square so that the piece is unable to capture.

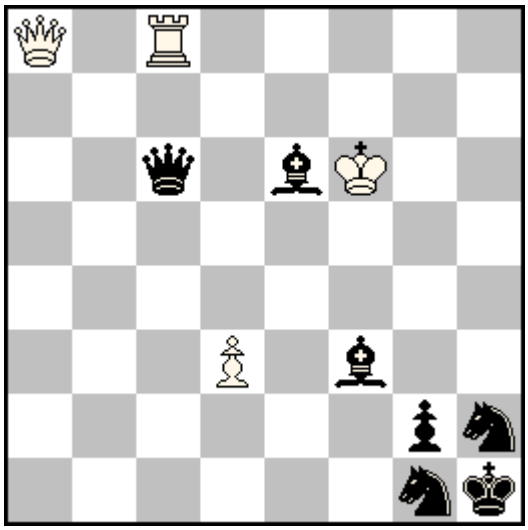
The thematic play features intensive Anti-Circe effects, with the exception of the first move, which despite the correspondence is rather plain (simple control of a flight). This makes me wonder whether the h#2 form would be preferable. Something like…



h#2 b) -♙a4 (4+9)

…seems more compact to me. A good problem, in any case.

No.711 Pierre Tritten & Chris Feather
France / England
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
2nd Commendation

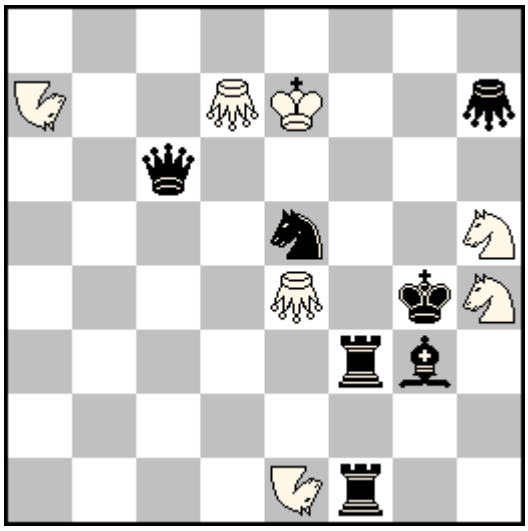


h#2 2 solutions (4+7)
Take & Make

1.Qxc8→c4 dxc4→c8=S 2.Bxa8→a7 Sxa7→f2#
1.Qxa8→e4 dxe4→a8=S 2.Bxc8→c7 Sxc7→g3#

Black captures one of the pieces on a8 or c8 in order to vacate the promotion square; then captures the other in order to help teleport the promoted Knight near the black King. Good Take & Make content, highly concentrated, achieved economically and lucidly.

No.694 Krassimir Gandev
Bulgaria
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
3rd Commendation



h#2 b) g3→h3 (7+7)
N=Nightrider
♘=Grasshopper

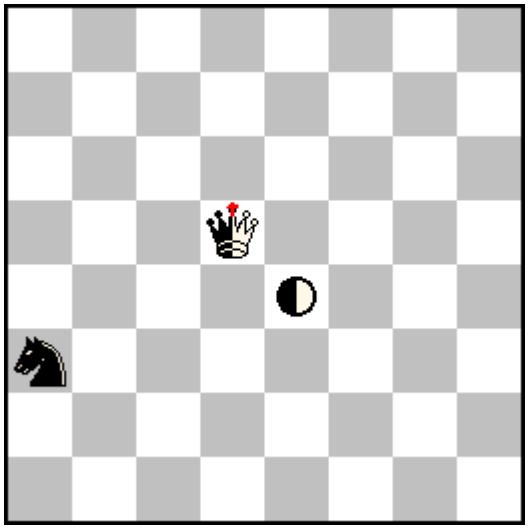
a) 1.Sxd7 Sg6 2.Rf5 Shf4#
b) 1.Qxe4 Sg7 2.Rf4 Shf5#

Once more, I will quote one of the commentators, Kjell Widlert, who described the thematic content perfectly: The mechanism depends on the two white Grasshopper anti-batteries and the Nightrider half-pin. One of the anti-batteries is used for mate; the other is destroyed by a capture out of the half-pin, so that Black can block the square next to the King on the anti-battery line. The choice of the Knight move on W1 is a good addition. It is a slight pity that only one of those choices is forced dynamically (Sg6 is necessary only because Black will play Rf5), while the other is static (the line h7-d7 must always be closed). The matrix did not allow full analogy here.

Commendable is the good construction without pawns and the clear presentation of the idea in two

well matched solutions. The inconsistency that was pointed out in the comment is a valid one, but not a deal breaker.

No.692 Peter Harris
South Africa
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
4th Commendation

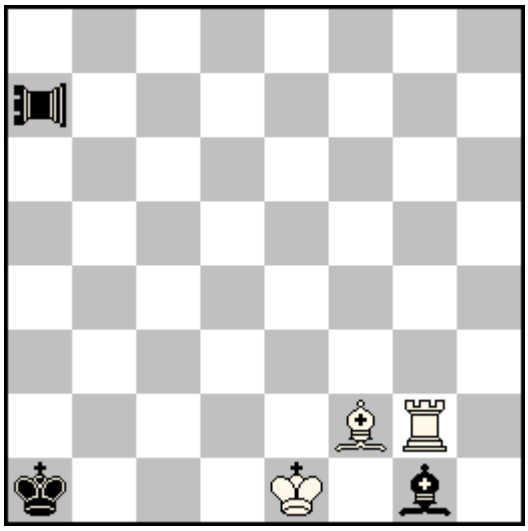


ser-hs#8 b) ser-hs=8 (0+1+1+1i)
Maximummer
Chameleon Chess
Royal nQd5
Imitator e4

a) 1.nrQa2=nrS (Ib1) 2.Sc4=B (Id2) 3.Bg8=R (Ih6) 4.Ra8=Q (Ib6) 5.Qf3=S (Ig1) 6.Sg5=B (Ih3) 7.Bd8=R (Ie6) nrSc3=nrB (Ig7) 8.Rd2=Q (Ig1)#
b) 1.nrQg2=nrS (Ih1) 2.nrSe3=nrB (If2) 3.nrBa7=nrR (Ib6) 4.nrRg7=nrQ (Ih6) 5.nrQb2=nrS (Ic1) 6.Sc4=B (Ie2) 7.Bf7=R (Ih5) nrSa4=nrB (Ig7) 8.Rf1=Q (Ig1)=

What an ingenious idea: Changing the stipulation from mate to stalemate leads to two completely different move sequences that result in similar final positions. In both, the Imitator stands on g1 and the position nrBc3/bQd2 is mate, while the position nrBa4/bQf1 is stalemate. The moves are hard to follow without the py2web animation; they seem incoherent, but in the end, everything falls into place. In one phase, the black Knight performs two full cycles of Chameleon transformations; in the other, each piece performs a full cycle. I can't help wondering how on earth a problem like this was created. Determining the correct dosage of fairy pieces, conditions and stipulations before feeding a position to the machine requires a wild imagination. Even if this is all it takes, kudos Mr. Harris!

No.739v René J. Millour & Tadashi Wakashima
France / Japan
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
5th Commendation



h#2 2 solutions (3+3)
2 White Invisibles
=Pao

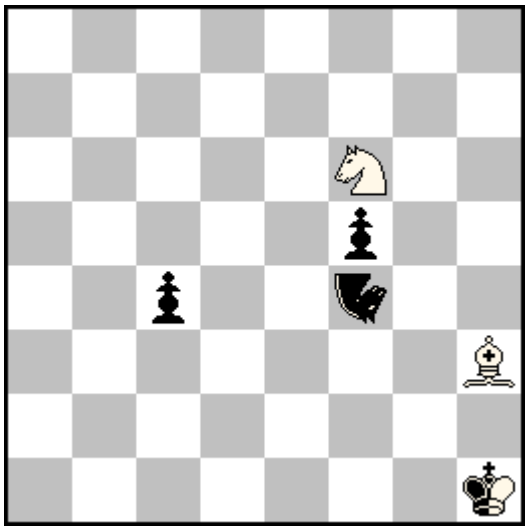
1.PAh7 Ba7 2.PAxa7 Ixg1#
1.Bxf2+ Rxf2 2.PAf7 Kg1#

The move 2.PAxa7 in the first solution, proves that an Invisible piece stands somewhere on the b7-g7 line. In retrospect, it also proves that 1.PAh7 was actually a capture: 1.PAxIh7. The move 2...Ixg1 is possible only when wIg7=PA and the move is actually 2...PAxg1#. The move 2...Kg1 in the other solution, can only be 2...0-0 with a white Invisible Rook on h1. The move 2.PAf7! reveals the second Invisible piece. In order for 2...0-0 to be legal, the second white Invisible must be standing on the f-file, otherwise the PAf7 would observe the square f1. Therefore, Black cannot claim that there is another Invisible piece on the first rank and the move 2...0-0 is mate.

This light example demonstrates very clearly the properties of the Invisible pieces, making logical

deductions in the style of classical retroanalysis. The analysis is not complicated and the solutions are diverse, but the common denominator is that the whereabouts of both white Invisibles are revealed and the mate from the first rank cannot be disturbed. The use of the fairy piece is well justified in both solutions.

No.789 Julia Vysotska
Latvia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
6th Commendation



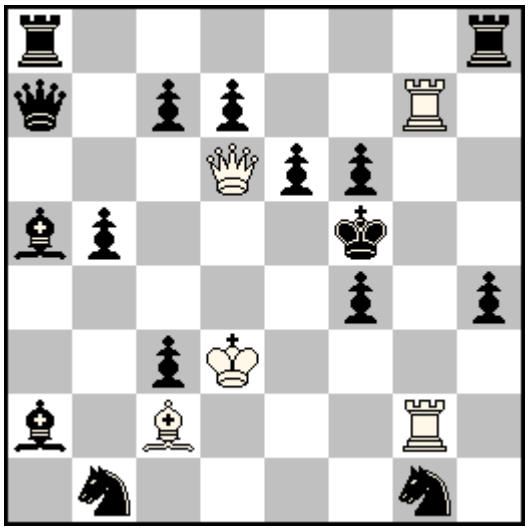
hs#4½ b) ♘f4→g7 (2+3+1)
Back-To-Back
♘=Nightrider

a) 1…h4 2.Sg8 Nd8 3.nKh2+ nKd6
4.Bd7+ nKf8 5.nKg7+ nKh5#
b) 1…d4 2.nKg1 d3 3.Bg2+ nKa7
4.Sd7 Ne3 5.Ba8+ nKd4#

Clever mix of a neutral King with Back-To-Back. The goal of the help-play is to bring a position, in which the neutral King (when moved by Black) is forced by White's last move to find shelter on a square above the black pawn. With White to move next, the neutral King is mated, because the only available flight is controlled by the Nightrider. In one solution, the nK is in check standing BTB the wS and the wB controls 3 flight squares; in the other, the roles are reversed: the nK and wB are BTB, with the wS controlling 3 flights.

There are some minor differences regarding the role of the Nightrider, but for the most part the solutions are well unified. The play is quite interesting throughout and it takes some BTB work to bring the nK to the other side of the board. However, there is a serious flaw that was pointed out in the comments and prevented a higher ranking: The fairy piece is not justified. An orthodox Knight would do more or less the same job.

No.784 Vincenzo Tinebra
Italy
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
7th Commendation



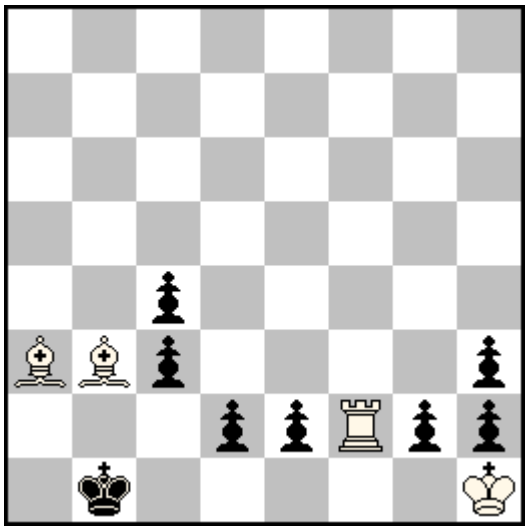
#2 Anti-Circe (5+16)

1.Rh7! ~ 2.Rh5#
1...Rag8 2.Ke2#
1...Raf8 2.Kxc3(+Ke1)#
1...Rae8 2.Ke4#
1...Rad8 2.Kd4#
1...Rac8 2.Kc4#
1...Rab8 2.Kd2#
(1...Rhg8, Sf3, Sh3 2.Ke2#
1...Bc4+ 2.Kxc4(+Ke1)#
1...Qe3+ 2.Kxe3(+Ke1)#
1...Qd4+ 2.Kxd4(+Ke1)#)

After the key, the bRa8 moves to vacate the rebirth square of bRh8. Each of the six possible defenses allows a unique answer by the white King. The effects are familiar in Anti-Circe, but the duel between the black Rook and the white King makes all the difference. The construction is solid, with excellent white economy. Although certainly a good problem, the position calls for the 7th missing variation to show the complete task, utilizing also the

squares h8 and e3; I would rank something like this much higher.

No.736 Thomas Pantalacci
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
8th Commendation

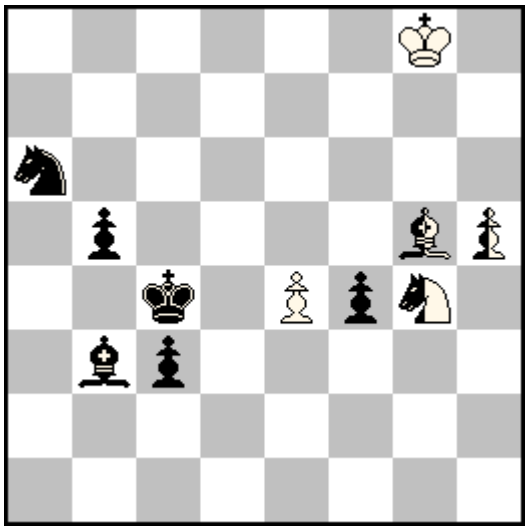


h=3 b) ♙d2→d3 (4+8)
Lortap

a) 1.e1=S Rxg2 2.Sc2 Rg1 3.Sa1 Rd1=
b) 1.g1=Q Rxe2 2.Qa7 Bc1 3.Qa1 Ba2=

A different promoted piece blocks the square a1 in each solution. This piece is not allowed to capture in the final stalemate position, per Lortap rules, but also its non-capturing move would close a white line causing an illegal self-check. The same effect would occur, if one of the apparently mobile black pawns moved. It is stalemate! Two spectacular endings are achieved with adequately homogenous play.

No.753 Julia Vysotska
Latvia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
9th Commendation



h#2 2 solutions (2+6+3)
Back-To-Back
Take & Make

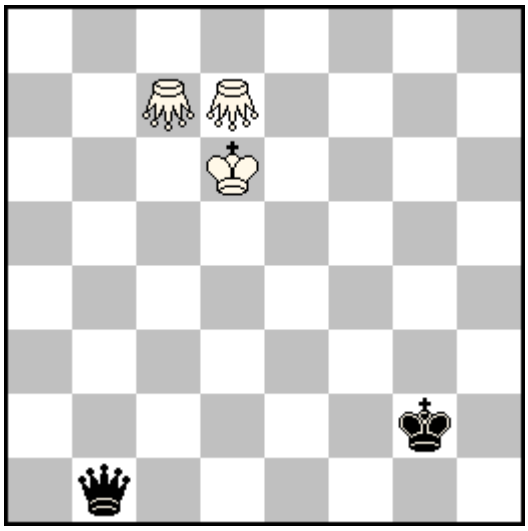
1.b4 nBh3 2.hxg4→f2 nBf1#
1.Sb4 h6 2.hxg5→e6 nSe5#

An attractive combination of Back-To-Back and Take & Make with neutral pieces: After the initial choice of block on b4, the thematic neutral pieces take over. The neutral pawn captures a different piece each time and with the help of the surviving neutral piece creates two specific neutral BTB mates. When moved by White, both pieces nBf1/nPf2 in the first solution and nSe5/nPe6 in the second have the moving properties of the piece that stands below (nB or nS), so they give check. Black to move cannot escape by moving away the nB or nS, because both these pieces move like pawns and they are blocked. So, it is mate.

An interesting demonstration of BTB effects with neutral pieces. The T&M part is not very intensive and its main purpose is to transfer the neutral pawn closer to the black King. Yet, it adds some

complexity to the solution and the capture of two different neutral pieces by the same neutral pawn connects the two phases well. It is unclear if this is enough.

No.765 Anatoly Stepochkin
Russia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
10th Commendation



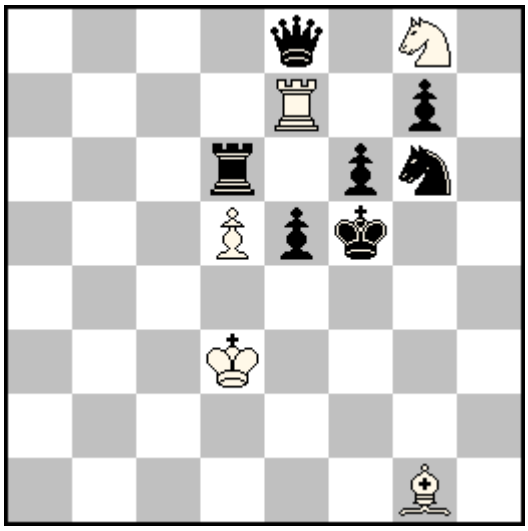
s#5 2 solutions (3+2)
Köko
Maximummer
=Grasshopper

1.Ge7! Qh1 2.Gd5
2...Qf1 3.Ke6 Qf8 4.Ke5 Qf1 5.Ge4 Qf6#
2...Qh3 3.Ke5 Qd7 4.Ge4 Qh3 5.Kd4 Qc3#

1.Ge5! Qh1 2.Kd5
2...Qf1 3.Gd4 Qf6 4.Gd6 Qf1 5.Ke6 Qf7#
2...Qh3 3.Gd4 Qc3 4.Gc5 Qh3 5.Kc4 Qb3#

Four Köko specific echo chameleon mates in a selfmate with two solutions. In the solution beginning with 1.Ge7, the mirrored mates are achieved nicely, with asymmetrical play. Unfortunately, this is not possible in the 1.Ge5 solution and the symmetrical play blurs the good impression.

No.703 Thomas Pantalacci
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
11th Commendation

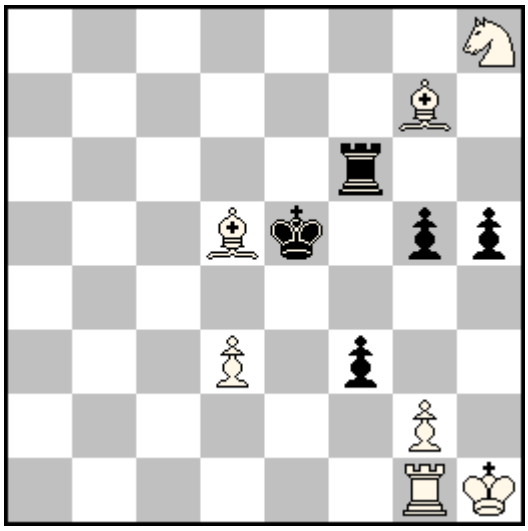


h#2 b) **p**d5→h3 (5+7)
Provocation Chess

a) 1.Qxe7 Be3 2.Qa7 Sh6#
b) 1.Qxg8 Bh2 2.Qa2 Rxe5#

In Provocation Chess, to be able to capture, a piece must be observed by a hostile unit. This pretty much explains the logic behind Black's moves: On the first move, the Queen captures the white piece that was observing a black pawn, so that the latter is no longer able to capture the white piece that will give mate later. On the second move, the same Queen observes the white Bishop so that the latter can guard flights. The strategy is simple, but also clear-cut and attractive.

No.792 Nikola Predrag
Croatia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
Dedicated to Aleksey Oganesjan
12th Commendation



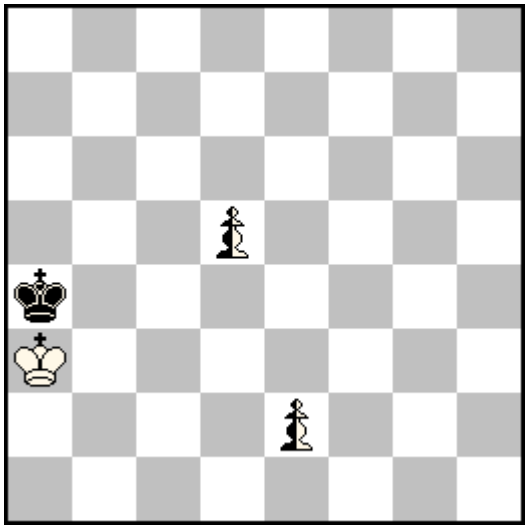
hs#3½ v(v) (7+5)

Plan A: 1...Kf4? 2.Be4? Rh6 3.Bd4 h4 4.g3+? but 4...Kg4!=**X** (flight g4). Now, 4.g4?! would correct **X**, but is pointless. **Correction of A:** 1...Kf4? 2.Be6?! Rh6 3.Bd4 h4 4.g3+ hxg3+ but 5.Bh3!=**Y** (open line e6-h3). Plan B corrects **Y** and **X** by altering the interpretation of the same key move (as unpin and tempo) and by the changed guard of g4, but introduces a new line-defect: **Plan B:** 1...Kf4?! 2.d4 Rh6 3.Be5+ Kf5 4.g4+?! hxg4+ 5.Bh2!=**Z** (open line e5-h2). The solution avoids all 3 defects (**X,Y,Z**), correcting plan B exactly by the combined effects of 4.g3 & 4.g4, which were already tried with separate effects. **Correction of B (Solution):** 1...Kf5! 2.d4 Rh6 3.Be5 h4! 4.g4+! hxg3 e.p.#

An interesting attempt to introduce a consecutive try and error logical sequence in a help-play problem. The idea is known from longer direct mates (and has also been applied successfully in other antagonistic genres). In a helpmate, the concept of defense has no meaning and the "tries" are alternative ways to reach the solution that fail for one reason or another. Adding the selfmate part on the last move does not leave enough time for true defensive play. The 1st try fails because Black defends well with 4...Kg4! instead of 4...hxg3#. However, in the intended corrections (2nd and 3rd tries) Black's last move is forced and the tries fail because of a flaw in White's plan during the help-play. This is inherent to the helpmate genre and not something that went wrong with this problem.

That said, the three tries are well devised, have explicit defects and are well integrated in the thematic content. The solution shows corrective strategy except that it corrects two of the three defects of the tries (the line e6-h3 is irrelevant now). The bi-valve effect is nice, as is the whole thematic complex, despite the aforementioned objections.

No.696 Chris Feather
England
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
13th Commendation

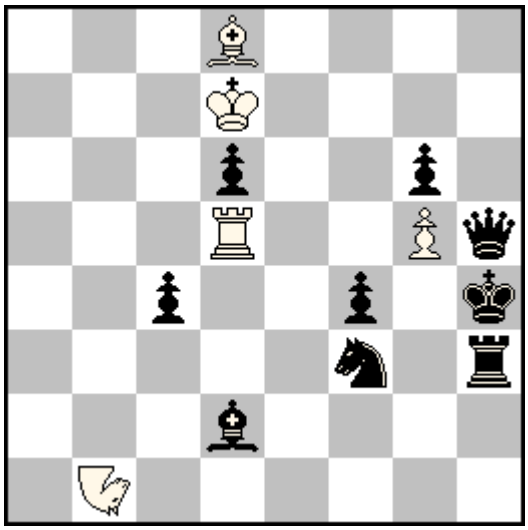


h#3 b) ⌓d5→c5 (1+1+2)
c) ⌓d5→a7
Phantom Chess
Anti-Kings

a) 1.e1=nS Kb4 2.nSc6 Kb5 3.Ka3+ Kxc6#
b) 1.e1=nQ nQb3 2.Kb5 Ka2 3.Kb6 cxb3#
c) 1.e1=nB a8=nR 2.Ka5 nRh6 3.Ka6 nBxh6#

The two fairy conditions are combined skillfully to achieve three different mates by isolating the bK. The Phantom Chess effects are concentrated and the whole strategy is defined by the Anti-Kings play. The AUW by the neutral pawns is a welcome bonus.

No.718 Gani Ganapathi & Juraj Lörinc
India / Slovakia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
14th Commendation



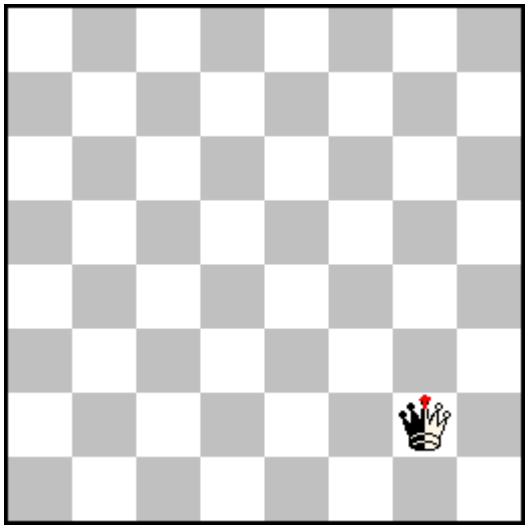
h#2½ 4 solutions (5+9)
N=Nightrider

1…Rd3 2.Be1 Rxf3 3.Bg3 Rxf4#
1...Ba5 2.Sh2 Bxd2 3.Sg4 Be1#
1…Na3 2.Qxg5 Rxg5 3.c3 Nxg6#
1...Nxd2 2.Qxg5 Bxg5+ 3.Kh5 Nf6#

A "helpmate of the future" with two clearly distinct pairs of solutions. In the first pair, the half-pin on the Nightrider's line turns into a battery, when one of the half-pinned pieces is captured and the other moves away to block a flight. In the second pair, the bQg5 is captured twice resulting in two Nightrider mates.

The content is almost orthodox and while it is positive that there are no extraneous pieces or conditions, it also gives the impression that even this fairy piece could be spared. Indeed, the first pair of solutions can easily be done with an orthodox line piece instead of the Nightrider and the other pair is hardly fairy, anyway. This is the main reason, together with the repetition of 2.Qxg5, that this problem is not ranked higher. Perhaps the combination of four solutions with the Nightrider playing a central role justifies its use.

No.810 Peter Harris
South Africa
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
15th Commendation

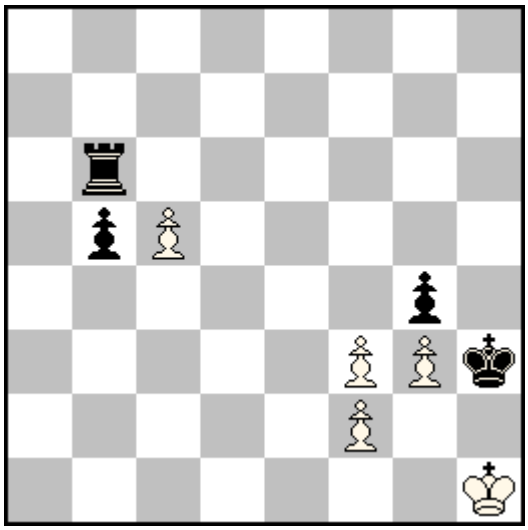


h#2½ 2 solutions (0+0+1)
Super-Circe
Anti-Circe
Sentinels Pion Neutre
Royal nQg2

1...nrQc6 (+nPg2) 2.nrQxg2 (+nrQd8) (+nPb6) (+nPc6) nrQd7+ 3.nrQd6 (+nPd7) nrQc7 (+nPd6)#
1...nrQf3 (+nPg2)+ 2.nrQf7 (+nPf3) nrQe7 (+nPf7) 3.fxg2 (+Pg7) (+nPd8=nS) nrQf8 (+nPe7)#

One does not expect deep strategy from a problem like this, with only one piece on the board and three fairy conditions. Here, there is some interesting play and two loosely related solutions. Except for the Sentinels, the other two fairy conditions are not used very well, especially the Super-Circe, but even so, they are necessary for the final result. Among many problems of this type, this one has a certain quality that sets it apart from the lot.

No.722 Sébastien Luce
France
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
16th Commendation

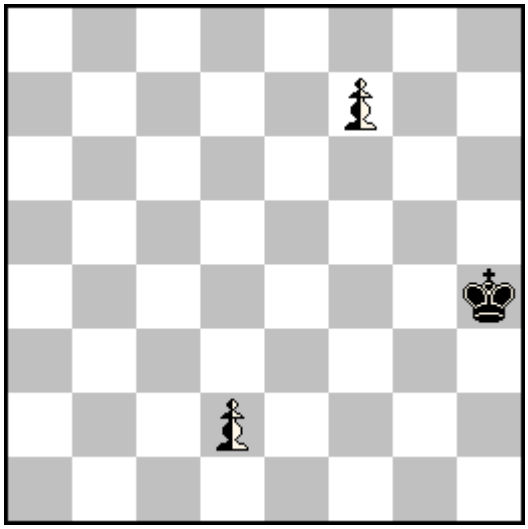


h==6½ 2 solutions (5+4)
Madrasi

1...cxb6 2.b4 b7 3.b3 b8=S 4.b2 Sc6 5.b1=S Sd4 6.Sd2 Se2 7.Sxf3 Sg1==
1...c6 2.Rb8 c7 3.Rd8 cxd8=R 4.b4 Rd1 5.b3 Rg1 6.b2 Rg2 7.b1=R+ Rg1==

Two long solutions lead to double stalemate with a white piece paralyzed on g1. The play is well varied, in spite of the limited free material. Of course, the corresponding promotions in Madrasi are no surprise, but at least, the solution with the Rook promotions is very interesting.

No.771 Michael Grushko
Israel
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
Dedicated to Geoff Foster
17th Commendation

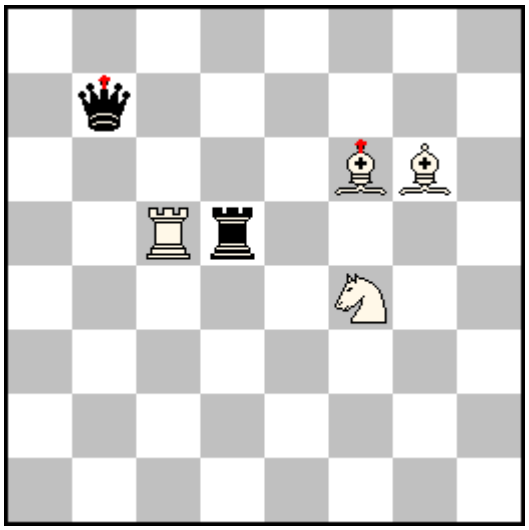


h#2½ b) ⌓d2→e2 (0+1+2)
Phantom Chess

a) 1...f8=nQ 2.d1=nS nQf6+ 3.Kh5 nSa3#
b) 1...f8=nR 2.nRf6 nRf2 3.e1=nB nRa4#

Both twins show battery play. In the first solution, any move by the neutral Knight would give a specific discovered check, but only 3...nSa3 hides the Knight away from the "virtual" diagonal d1-h5. In the second solution, a direct battery is created between the nBe1 and nRf2. Black can promote the nPe2 only after the promoted nR has moved to f2. On the second move, Black needs a waiting move and 2.nRf6 is the only one available. The Phantom Chess content and neutral AUW are convincing, starring the spectacular 2.nRf6!

No.723 Peter Harris
South Africa
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
18th Commendation

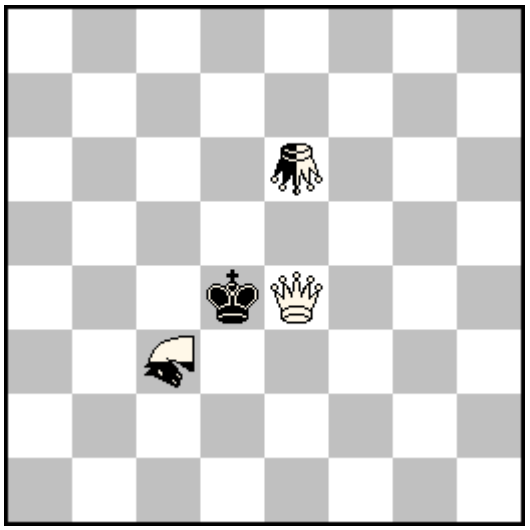


h#2½ 3 solutions (4+2)
Super-Circe
Royal wBf6
Royal bQb7

1...Bh7 2.rQxh7 (+Bf7) Sh5 3.Rxh5 (+Sg7) Rxh5 (+Re4)#
1...Rc8 2.rQxc8 (+Rf7) Sxd5 (+Re7) 3.rQg8 Sxe7 (+Rf8)#
1...Bb1 2.rQxb1 (+Bb2) Sd3 3.Rxd3 (+Sb4) Rc1#

Three different cages for the royal Queen are built in the course of the solution, with good use of the fairy condition. The pseudo-sacrifice of a white piece on the first move of each solution is a somewhat unifying effect.

No.682 Kostěj Šoulivý
Czechia
Julia's Fairies 2015/I
19th Commendation



h#2 3 solutions (1+1+2)
Patrol Chess
♕=Camel
∓=Grasshopper

1.nGe3 nGb3 2.Ke3 Qd3#
1.nCAf4 Qf5 2.nGg4 Qe4#
1.Kc5 nCAd6 2.Kb6 Qc6#

Three exact echo mates in the middle of the board, without any repeated moves throughout the three solutions. Devoid of deep strategy, but the echoes are well matched.