

Claus Dieter Meyer
Karsten Müller

Magical Endgames



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Introduction

This book is the last product of my long-term collaboration with the chess trainer and analyst FM Claus Dieter Meyer (1946–2020), whose heart's desire it was to write yet another book on endgames.

Once again, he opened his treasure trove of fascinating current and timeless games and fragments, this time searching for appropriate examples to illustrate certain topics of an ambitious endgame training program. I then put together and structured the key elements of his work and added examples from my own collection.

In order to present the extraordinarily compact and multi-faceted ChessBase DVD 'Magical Chess Endgames' in book form, the range of topics had to be tightened. Selected parts of the original material were maintained and enriched with numerous additional examples that fit into the new concept.

The focus is still on such 'magical topics' as mate, stalemate and zugzwang – especially on examples in which 'magic' and instructive content are linked in a way that many rules of thumb can be illustrated and – what is almost more important – many exceptions to the rules.

I hope that this book is a worthy finale highlight of Claus Dieter Meyer's impressive lifetime achievement in the field of chess.

GM Dr. Karsten Müller

Hamburg, June 2020

Note of thanks

I would particularly like to thank the publisher Robert Ullrich from 'Joachim Beyer Verlag' for the good cooperation, Lothar Nikolaiczuk for his excellent translation and Thomas Beyer for the exemplary layout. I would like to thank 'ChessBase', especially for the permission to use the Fritztrainer DVD 'Magic Chess Endgames' as the basis of this book – and for the new idea of integrating 'QR codes'. My thanks also go to various members of the 'SV Werder Bremen' Bundesliga team for occasional analytical support – and last but not least, to GM Luis Engel for contributing many new examples, exercises and ideas.

Preface

Magic has found its way into our lives. Dragons are circling above our heads and Harry Potter had many battles to fight.

But – is there magic in chess? Claus Dieter Meyer and Dr. Karsten Müller take the reader on a fantastic journey – not to the center of the earth or to the stars, but to magical moments in chess endgames.

Join GM Luis Engel's king's march all over the board. Marvel at Magnus Carlsen's elegance in an endgame with opposite-colored bishops. Be amazed by the blackout of a silicon monster against an opponent of its own kind.

In his inimitable way, Claus Dieter Meyer went in search of such examples. Since the beginning of his coaching career, he has been driven by the desire to discover surprising points, by the joy of researching the subtlety of different move orders and the search for a glimmer of hope in seemingly hopeless situations.

The most brilliant studies and exquisite games from world champions appear next to uncut diamonds from lower leagues. What all the examples have in common, however, is the original idea, the brainstorm, sometimes even a cascade of brilliant maneuvers. Collected by Claus Dieter Meyer and put on paper by Dr. Karsten Müller.

And what, of course, couldn't be missing, is the 'never ending story' of the two authors, so to speak, their personal 'white whale' – the work on the game 'Kunemann – N.N.', which exemplifies the profound analysis and the pure joy of thinking – according to the motto: The way is the goal!

In my capacity as junior coach of the German Chess Federation, I am of course particularly pleased to find GM Luis Engel mentioned several times and in prominent places.

With this book, Dr. Karsten Müller continues the collaboration with his former trainer and later friend Claus Dieter Meyer and carries on his legacy. It's highly recommended as a valuable collection of material and entertaining reading for all players, learners and coaches.

As Tom Hanks said in one of his classics, "It was like – magic."

Bernd Vökler

June 2020

Chapter 1 - Mate

This chapter is dedicated to great tactical ideas – in the spirit of a quote from the old master Kurt Richter, who was nicknamed ‘Executioner from Berlin’ because of his outstanding tactical skills.

This book is intended to incite mating desires and stimulate the mating imagination. Because there’s nothing more joyful for a chess player than to let the opponent know, “Checkmate!” (from Kurt Richter’s book *Schachmatt*, Berlin 1958)

In the endgame, the ultimate goal often takes a back seat, as without queens there’s less attack potential. However, direct attacks on the king do occur, and we have selected some particularly fascinating examples.

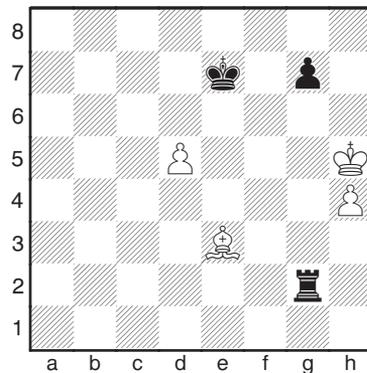
1A) Mate by the last pawn in play

01.01

Mate Bagi (2470)

Vadim Zvjaginsev (2626)

Ulcinj 2019



Black to move

As a former student of the famous Russian trainer Mark Dvoretsky, Vadim Zvjaginsev was most probably already familiar with the following magical motif.

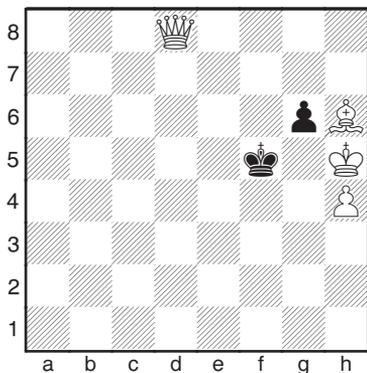
60...♙f6!

This is exactly the right way to tie the mating net.

And not 60...♔d6? 61.♙g5 ♕xd5
 62.♔g6= or 60...♔f7? 61.♙g5 ♖g1
 62.d6 ♜d1 63.♙f4 ♔f6 64.♔g4=.

61.d6 ♜g6!

White resigned, since there's no escape from the mating net; e.g. 62.d7 ♔f5 63.d8♙ ♜h6+! 64.♙xh6 g6#.



Mate by the last pawn in play – and without having taken a single opposing piece. Truly magical!

1B) Mating motifs in queen endings

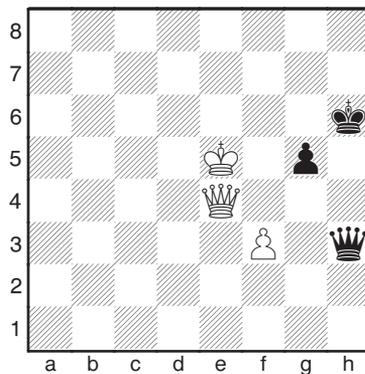
Although such motifs are much less rare, they should not be left out in a book about endgame magic.

01.02

Bulat Murtazin (2384)

A. Pletl (2222)

Palic 2016



White to move

94.♔f6!

The king puts its counterpart in a head-lock.

94...♙h5

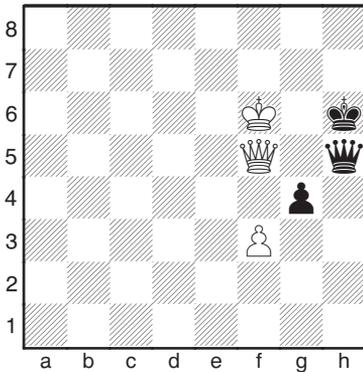
94...♔h5?! 95.♙h7#

95.♙f5!

This is the real point: Black is in deadly zugzwang.

After the faulty attempt 95.♔d3? (Δ95...g4?? 96.♚e3+ ♔h7 97.♚e7+), Black can pull his head out of the noose with 95...♚e8! =.

95...g4



96.♚xg4

– 96.♚f4+! was even simpler: 96...♔h7 97.♚c7+ ♔h6 98.♚g7#.

– But not 96.fxg4? ♚f7+! because 97.♔xf7 leads to a stalemate and after 97.♔e5 ♚e7+ White can no longer win.

Black resigned in view of the following line.

96...♚xg4 97.fxg4 ♔h7 98.g5 ♔g8 99.♔g6!

The decisive opposition.

99...♔h8 100.♔f7 ♔h7 101.g6+

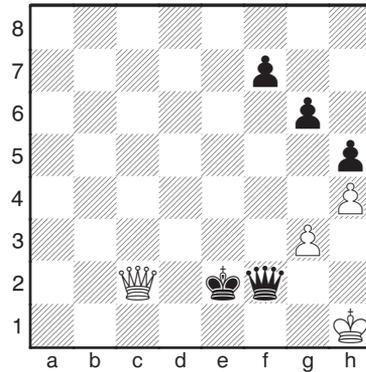
In addition to mating motifs, stalemate motifs are also a regular occurrence in queen endings.

01.03

Jor Cruz (2088)

S. Del Rio de Angelis (2524)

Figueira da Foz 2017



Black to move

84...♔f3!

The king is headed to h3.

– 84...♔f1? 85.♚d1+ ♚e1 86.♚f3+ =

– 84...♔e1? 85.♚c1+ ♔e2 86.♚c4+ ♔e3 87.♚c3+ (87.♚c5+? ♔f3–+) 87...♔e4 88.♚c4+ ♔f3 89.♚f4+ ♔e2 90.♚c4+ =

85.♚d3+

1) 85.♚xf2+ ♔xf2 86.♔h2 f5 87.♔h3 ♔g1–+

2) And 85.♚c6+ doesn't help either because of 85...♔g4.

2a) 86.♚xg6+ ♔h3 87.♚g4+ hxg4 88.h5 ♚f1#

2b) 86. ♖e6+ f5 87. ♖xg6+ ♔h3
88. ♖g4+ hxg4 89. h5 ♖f1#

85...♔g4

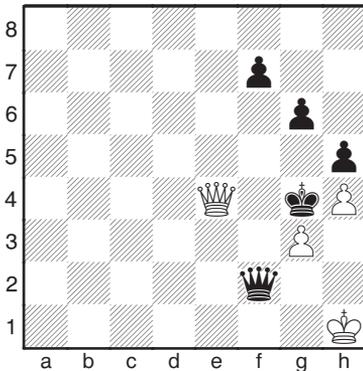
85... ♖e3 is another way to victory; e.g.
86. ♖f1+ ♔g4

(But not 86... ♔xg3? because of
87. ♖g2+ ♔f4 88. ♖g5+ ♔e4 89. ♖e7+
♔d4 90. ♖a7+ ♔d3 91. ♖a3+ ♔e2
92. ♖a2+ ♖d2 93. ♖xf7=.)

87. ♖xf7 ♖e1+ 88. ♔g2 ♖xg3+ 89. ♔h1
♖xh4+ 90. ♔g2 ♖g3+ 91. ♔h1 ♖f3+
-+

86. ♖e4+

The clever attempt 86. ♖xg6+!?
(86. ♖f5+ ♖xf5-+) fails to 86... ♔h3
87. ♖g4+ hxg4 88. h5 ♖f1#.



86...♔h3!

Now the black king is safe, while its counterpart is dead.

Of course not 86... ♔xg3? because of
87. ♖xg6+ ♔xh4 88. ♖g3+ ♔xg3 stale-
mate.

87. ♖g4+ hxg4

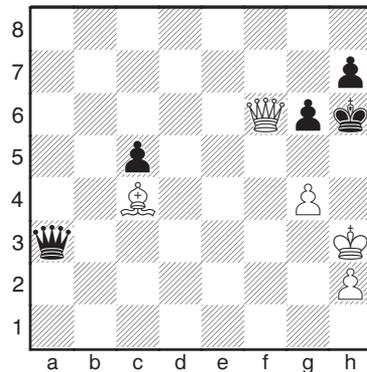
White resigned in view of the banal fi-
nale 88. h5 ♖f1#.

01.04

Sergey Karjakin (2750)

M. Vachier-Lagrave (2778)

Saint Louis 2019



White to move

48. ♔d3!

1) Another way to victory is 48. ♔b3!
♖c1 (48... ♖xb3+ 49. ♔h4+-) 49. g5+!
♖xg5 (49... ♔h5 50. ♔d5+- Δ50... ♖e3+
51. ♔f3+) 50. ♖f8+ ♔h5 51. ♔d1+ +-.

On the other hand, White could still
spoil everything by choosing one of the
two following alternatives.

2) 48. ♔h4? ♖g3+ 49. ♔xg3 stalemate;
49. hxg3 stalemate

3) 48. ♔g2? ♖g3+ and now 49. ♔h1
♖g1+ 50. ♔xg1 stalemate – or 49. ♔f1
♖e1+ followed by either a stalemate
or a repetition of moves.

48...♔xd3+

48...c4 49.♕h4+–

49.♕h4 ♖d4 50.♗f8+ ♖g7 51.g5#

1–0

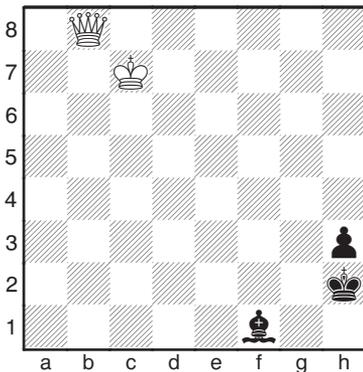
Sometimes a far advanced passed pawn can even rescue a position in a fight against a queen, but in the following case the king of the stronger side is quick enough to give a helping hand.

01.05

Jan Smeets (2602)

Raj Tischbierek (2432)

Germany 2019



White to move

62.♕d6!

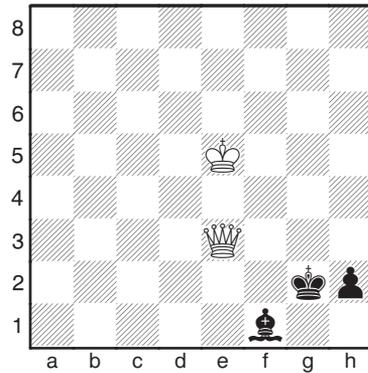
His majesty puts on his seven-league boots and hits the road.

The two faulty attempts 62.♕c6+? ♕g1 63.♗a7+ ♕g2 64.♗a2+ ♕g1 65.♗g8+ ♕g2+ and 62.♕d7+? ♕g1 63.♗g3+ ♕g2 lead to a draw.

62...♕g2 63.♗b2+ ♕g1 64.♗d4+ ♕g2 65.♗d2+ ♕g1

65...♕g3 66.♗e1+ ♕g2 67.♕e5 h2 68.♕f4 h1♖ 69.♗g3#

66.♗e3+ ♕g2 67.♕e5 h2



68.♕f4!

This is the point of the mating attack.

68...h1♖

68...h1♖ 69.♗g3#

69.♗d2+ ♕g1 70.♕f3

Black resigned in view of the possible continuation 70...♕h3 71.♗d4+ ♕h2 72.♗h4 ♕g1 73.♗xh3 ♖f2 74.♗g2#.

1C) Mate by a knight

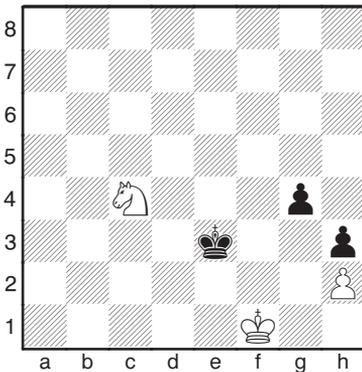
Since a knight moves to a square of a different color with every move, it cannot lose a tempo in the usual sense of this expression. Therefore, you always have to watch out for zugzwang situations.

01.06

M. J. Ouellet (2197)

S. Jacquet (1936)

Quebec Open 2018



Black to move

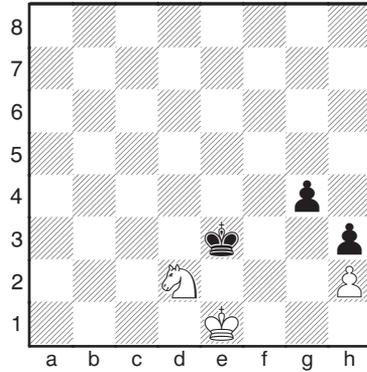
95...♙f3?

After this mistake, Black can be outmaneuvered.

The correct approach 95...♙d4! (95...♙d3? 96.♘e5+ +-) followed by 96.♘d2 ♙d3 97.♙e1 ♙e3 (97...g3=)

leads to a position with mutual zugzwang and *White* to move (in contrast to the following diagram): 98.♘f1+ ♙f3 99.♘g3 ♙g2 100.♙e2 ♙xh2 101.♙f2 stalemate!

96.♘d2+ ♙e3 97.♙e1



mutual zugzwang
with *Black* to move

97...g3

97...♙d3 98.♘f1 ♙e4 99.♙f2 ♙f4 100.♘d2 ♙f5 101.♙g3 ♙g5 102.♘f1 ♙f5 103.♘e3+ +-

98.♘f1+ ♙f3 99.♘xg3

99.hxg3? h2 100.♘xh2+ ♙xg3=

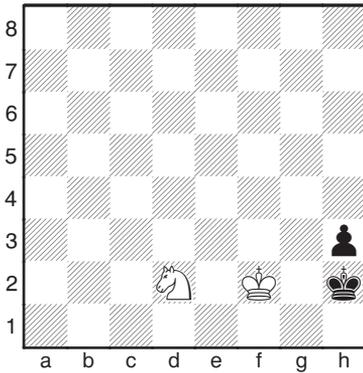
99...♙g2 100.♘f1 ♙f3 101.♘d2+ ♙g2

101...♙e3 102.♘f1+ ♙f3 103.♘g3 ♙e3 104.♙f1 ♙f3 105.♘h1 ♙g4 106.♘f2+ ♙h4 107.♙e2+-

102.♙e2 ♙xh2

102...♙g1 103.♙f3 ♙xh2 104.♙f2+-

103.♙f2

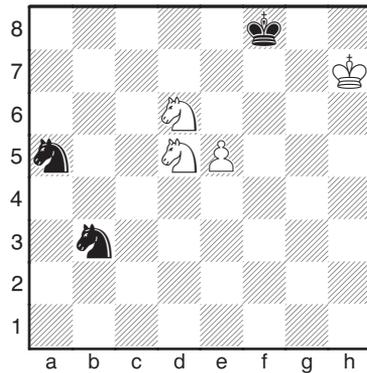


And for dessert: Stamma's (in)famous mate!

103...♔h1 104.♖f1 ♗h2 105.♖g3#

One of the greatest oddities in chess is that (under normal circumstances) two knights alone cannot force a mate. Unless the opponent still has more than just a naked king – for example: two knights!

01.07
Study by Paul Heuäcker
 1937



White to move

Amazingly enough, the pawn isn't needed for victory – in fact it even has to be sacrificed!

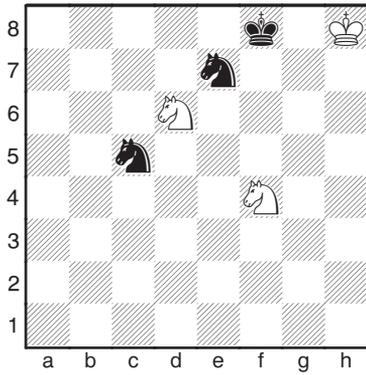
1.e6 ♖c6 2.e7+!

2.♔g6? ♖e7+ =; 2.♔h8? ♖e7=

2...♖xe7 3.♖f4! ♖c5

3...♖d4 4.♔h8 leads to deadly zugzwang.

4.♔h8



4...♖f5

4...♗d5 (Δ5.♗xd5? ♗e6=) 5.♗g6#

5.♗g6#

Chapter 2 – Stalemate

In contrast to mate (which can occur as early as in move 2), a stalemate is a typical endgame topic. Since this magical motif already plays a decisive role in the most minimalist scenario 'king + pawn vs. king', it's important to be familiar with it.

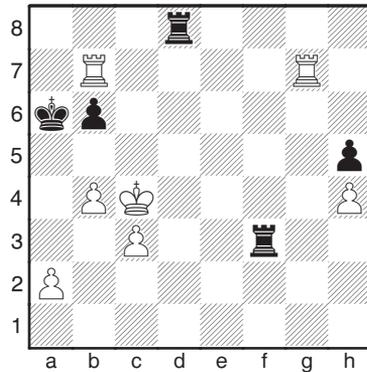
2A) The desperado rook

This is about the following study-like motif: If taking a defender's 'suicidal' rook would result in a stalemate, the crucial question is, whether or not the attacker can shake off the attempted perpetual check.

02.01

M. Haas (2216) -
St. Tschann (2166)

Germany 2019



Black to move

1...b5+!

The pointed beginning of a tricky counter attack.

After 1...♞f4+? 2.♔b3 b5 with the possible continuation 3.♞a7+ ♔b6 4.♞a5 ♞f5 (4...♞xh4 5.♞g5+-) 5.♞ga7 ♔c6 6.a4, Black would be completely lost.

2.♞xb5

2.♔b3 ♞xc3+! 3.♔xc3 ♞d3+ results in a stalemate or a perpetual check, as the desperado rook cannot be shaken off.

2...♞f4+

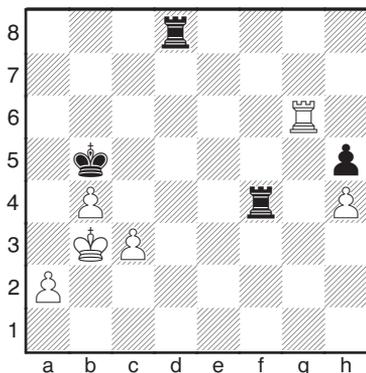
Now White loses his rook on b5, but not without a wicked ulterior motive.

3.♔b3

Of course not 3.♔c5?? because of 3...♞c8+ 4.♔d5 ♔xb5-+.

3...♔xb5 4.♞g6!

This time it's White turn to come up with the only move – and a highly dangerous one at that.



Black has captured a whole rook, but what to do against the threat 5.a4#?

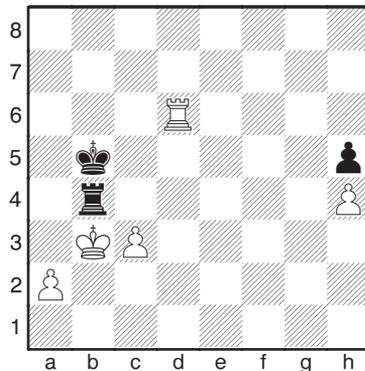
4...♞d6!

1) After 4...♞a8? 5.c4+ ♞xc4 6.♞g5+ ♔b6 7.♔xc4 ♞xa2 8.♞g6+! ♔b7 9.♞h6, White has a won rook ending.

2) 4...♞xb4+!? should also work, although it's unnecessarily complicated: 5.cxb4 ♞d3+ 6.♔c2 ♞h3 7.♞g5+ ♔xb4 8.♞xh5 ♔c4! (8...♔a3? 9.♔d2+-) with a theoretical draw; e.g. 9.a4 (9.♔d2 ♞a3 10.♔e2 ♔d4!)=) 9...♞h2+! 10.♔c1 ♞a2 11.♞g5 (11.♞a5 ♞h2 12.h5 ♔b4=) 11...♔c3 12.♞g3+ (12.♞c5+ ♔b4) 12...♔b4 13.♞g8 (13.♞h3 ♞xa4=) 13...♔c3=.

5.♞xd6 ♞xb4+!

The finale peace-bringing blow.



6.♔c2

6.cxb4 stalemate; 6.♔a3 ♞xh4 7.♔b3 ♞h1=

And after 6...♞xh4= the game ended in a draw.

(Source: Clemens Werner in 'Schach-Magazin 64', May 2019; modified and revised)

Since rook and knight occasionally don't work well together, high precision is required in the following example.