

**Daniel Naroditsky**

# **Mastering Complex Endgames**

Practical Lessons, Critical Ideas & Plans

**New In Chess 2012**

# Contents

Acknowledgements .....	6
<b>Preface by Yasser Seirawan.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1: What Are Complex Endings?.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Rook Endgames.....</b>	<b>26</b>
Double Rook Endgames.....	26
Single Rook Endgames.....	49
<b>Chapter 3: Rook + Minor Piece(s) vs Rook + Minor Piece(s) .....</b>	<b>75</b>
Rook + Bishop vs. Rook + Bishop.....	75
Opposite-Colored Bishops .....	75
Same-Colored Bishops.....	91
Rook + Bishop vs. Rook + Knight.....	112
<b>Chapter 4: Queen Endgames.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Queen + Minor Piece(s) vs Queen + Minor Piece(s).....</b>	<b>169</b>
Queen + Bishop vs. Queen + Bishop .....	169
Opposite-Colored Bishops .....	169
Same-Colored Bishops.....	193
Queen + Bishop vs. Queen + Knight .....	211
Queen + Knight vs. Queen + Knight .....	258
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>275</b>
Theme 1: Weaknesses.....	275
Theme 2: Passed Pawns .....	280
Theme 3: Passive vs. Active Defense .....	282
Theme 4: Deep Calculation .....	286
Theme 5: King Activity .....	289
Solutions to Exercises.....	291
Symbols .....	300
Bibliography.....	301
Index of Players .....	302

## Preface by Yasser Seirawan

It is a great delight to write a preface for Daniel Naroditsky's work *Mastering Complex Endings*. In early August 2012 Daniel, somewhat shyly, asked if I'd consider writing a preface for a new book that was nearing completion. I jumped at the opportunity and eagerly started to devour his text. Immediately, something stood out: Daniel had worked extremely hard on a subject that is difficult to study and, even more so, to relish. Quite clearly, Daniel had thrown himself into a very difficult subject. To say the least. Let me step back for a moment to offer an insight into my own evolution as a chess player.

When I first began to play chess, as a complete beginner, I lost game after game after game. It must have been out of deep sympathy for my plight that a class player, Jeffrey Parsons, offered me a pearl of wisdom: 'Yasser, if you ever want to get good at chess, you are going to have to learn the endgame.' No wiser chess words had ever been spoken to me. Jeffrey would then sit me down for numerous sessions and show me a large number of *endgame studies*, some of which he had composed himself, infecting me with his own passionate interest in them. In no time, my game was improving by leaps and bounds. (Of course, the cynic might add that my game had no direction to go except upwards.)

Endgame knowledge is simply essential for becoming a successful chess player. What good does it do if you play a fine game, steering your way into a superior rook ending two pawns to the good, if you are unable to win? Endgame technique is an absolute requirement for the skilled player. However, knowing this truth and actually doing something about it are two entirely different things. Studying endgames is certainly difficult even at the best of times. Here the expression, 'no pain, no gain' comes to mind. When we do come across a work that makes the hard task of acquiring endgame knowledge more agreeable we should jump at the opportunity to apply ourselves and study hard.

While reading *Mastering Complex Endings* I was thrown back to memories of my own youth. I have an absolute conviction that to become good we must analyze our own games as deeply as we dare and *write our thoughts down*. It was my own willingness to do precisely that which made me the player I am today. But in my career I had something else going for me: I was *lucky*. At the time when I started tournament play, adjournments existed. I liked adjournments. Many of my adjournments are quite memorable and had a marked positive influence on my career. Accidentally, a game might be stopped just at a moment of enormous complexity. Forcing me to take an evening, a day or sometimes longer, to analyze a given position at great length to try to get to the truth of what was going on. I credit adjournments with making me analyze hard and appreciate the beautiful complexity of chess. Without question I was rewarded for my efforts.

For example, I can still vividly recall playing in the 1979/80 Hastings tournament and having an adjournment of rook versus rook and bishop. My opponent, Israel Zilber, held the superior side. In truth, I had played a miserable game and desperately wanted to save the adjournment as redemption for my previous play. I spent the entire evening, and much of the early morning, learning this ending thoroughly. Confident that I was properly armed with the intricate knowledge needed for this tricky endgame, I easily saved the adjournment. Furthermore, throughout my career, from that point onwards, I'd always achieve the maximum result: winning when the superior side, drawing with the inferior side. Adjournments could be vexing, annoying to the point of total anguish, yet revealing, enchanting, enjoyable, exhausting and, above all, rewarding for my new-found knowledge. Thanks to adjournments and having to study complex endings, I became a far better player.

Another adjournment memory that always brings a smile to my face is a game that involved a player from Columbia, Luis Hoyos Millan. It was at the Biel Chess Festival in 1985. Luis was a master player and had one of the most harrowingly complex adjourned positions that I can remember. The grandmasters Ljubomir Ljubojevic, Ulf Andersson and I were enchanted. Analysis carried on and on for hours. Somehow late at night we all ended up sitting on a park bench in Biel underneath a street lamp arguing on a well-used pocket chess set which plan was best. (The light- and dark-square borders had begun to fade, and it wasn't so easy keeping sight of the central squares.) Luis was overwhelmed by all the helping hands. All our efforts went for naught, however, for the simplest of reasons: the next day, Luis overslept.

It would seem that Daniel has taken a great deal of the above and gone much further in the journey of self-discovery of complex endings than I ever did. Indeed, while he has studied and annotated, for himself, his own games, he has also realized that much could be gained if he applied himself to studying complex endings of other players as well. The result, this work, may be described as a collection of adjourned endgame positions featuring some recent games where adjourned play is no longer practised.

This book is therefore like a throw-back experience for me. Adjourned positions can sometimes be compared to a 'photo'. When we see a familiar old photo we can be immediately transported back to another time and space, when the photo was taken. Experienced players see a diagrammed position and are similarly transported back to when the game was played. Adjournments, like a photo, have a habit of evoking memories of a distant moment. Sometimes the memory is funny, with amusing anecdotes, recall of the lines, and analysis which is joyous at times but on occasion painful. Always productive, always rewarding for those who make the effort to study the material.

In this work I particularly like the way Daniel has done his best to guess at and articulate the 'thoughts' of the players as they might be imagined. This verbalization of how ideas and plans are conceived by the players, together with the author's hindsight and foresight, is extremely valuable, making study of the subject-matter far more useful and easy for the reader. For this we should be grateful, and Daniel can be proud.

Yasser Seirawan, September 2012

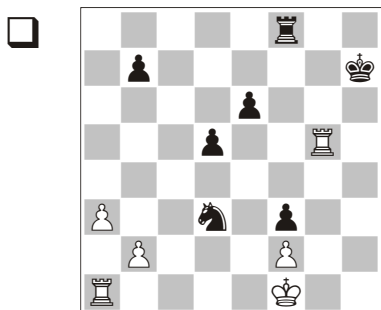
## Chapter 1

# What Are Complex Endings?

What exactly is this book about? Are complex endings queenless positions where there are many pieces on the board, or are they endgames with many tactical possibilities?

In truth, complex endings are **positions in which neither side can depend entirely on endgame theory and common themes in order to find ideas.**

Consider the following example:



### 1. Sandipan-Hertneck

German Bundesliga 2002/03

The position on the board looks rather mundane – White will simply consolidate his pieces, and his material advantage coupled with the awkward placement of Black’s king should tell.

Yet a seasoned reader will notice that there is much more here than meets the eye – in fact, it is even hard to provide a definitive assessment of the position. White is already faced with a nagging dilemma: whether to opt for the materialistic b2-b4, keeping his material advantage intact, or to choose a more active move such as ♖d1, giving up the b2-pawn but activating the rook in return. Note the two fundamentally opposite approaches here: **whether to attack, or to defend.** This vital

theme will be covered in great detail later on, but for now, let’s try to reconstruct Sandipan’s train of thought:

‘Clearly, I can’t dillydally. Black has countless annoying moves at his disposal, including ...♖c8 and ...♗h6. I would love to play b2-b4 and keep my material advantage, but what would I do after, say, ...♗h6 followed by ...e6-e5-e4? My pawn majority on the queenside will not go anywhere without the support of another rook. Let’s take a look at the other option – ♖d1. If ...♘xb2, I’ll reply ♗d4, and there’s just no way Black can consolidate his pieces in time to defend his king. On the other hand, I’ll be threatening ♗h4# and on ...♗h6, I can at least play ♗e5 or ♗g3, when Black will clearly be in serious trouble. Something like ...♖c8 after ♖d1 is also harmless, as I can simply reply ♗g3, and Black’s pieces are tangled up. So, ♖d1 it is!’

Note the logic here: just because an endgame is complex **does not mean** deep calculation is required. A player who has a vast and easily accessible arsenal of ideas will thrive in even the thorniest positions, while an inexperienced player will attempt to solve everything by means of brute-force calculation – a method which often leads to calamitous consequences.

One important rule of thumb is **never to calculate what you don't need to**. In the heat of the battle, it is often quite tempting to look at catchy lines that are unlikely to occur in the game or arise from a line that you have already discarded. When faced with an important decision, you have to evaluate the nature of the position and decide whether calculation is at all necessary. If yes, start calculating immediately. Create a list of candidate moves and examine them systematically.

It is vital to realize that strong moves cannot be made without hard work – it might seem that grandmasters play effortlessly, but in fact they work like lions during the game! At the end of the game, Hertneck probably relaxed – once again, considering his fatigue and the fact that he had played the whole game on a very high level, this is completely forgivable. And yet, the most important and basic rule for playing all endgames that we take out of this game is **never to relax and work hard at every critical juncture**.

All mistakes – whether it's over-aggressiveness or blunders, usually stem not from a player's inability to understand or comprehend ideas, but because of an innate reluctance to work hard at the board.

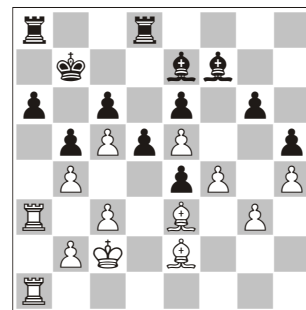
*But if endgames are only about working hard and not about knowing ideas, what's the point of this book?*

This is an excellent question. I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that a player with a vast arsenal of ideas will be much more successful in the endgame than a player whose arsenal is practically empty. It is quite true that an inexperienced player can produce a masterpiece, but it is very important to note that **the knowledge of ideas will decrease the necessity to calculate and start back from the beginning at every critical moment**.

If you know, for example, that a certain position is winning, you will be able to end your calculations in that position, instead of calculating until the end every time. This will not only save you time and energy, but also decrease the chance for a mistake! The longer one calculates, the higher the chances for an error!

All of this may sound a bit vague – and understandably so.

Hopefully, the following game will clear things up. An attentive reader will pay attention not only to the variations, but also to the way in which the white player balances the use of endgame ideas with sharp, accurate calculation.



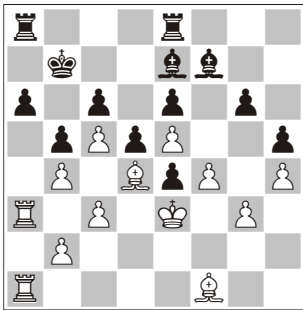
## 2. Suetin-Gufeld

Tbilisi 1969

I first discovered this gem in IM Mikhail Shereshevsky's wonderful book *Endgame Strategy*. However, in order to retain as much originality as possible, I've analyzed this game without looking at his book! The temptation when reading excellent endgame manuals is to quote all of the analysis and not examine the game yourself.

The position on the board looks drawish. White is clearly the one who is holding all the cards, but it isn't even remotely clear how White will break through. Of course, there is absolutely no need to agree to a draw before all the resources have been exhausted. At the very least, White can try to break with b3-c4 and see if Black panics. For now, White improves the position of his king.

1.♔d4 ♖h8 2.♕d2 ♜hd8 3.♖e3  
♜h8 4.♗f1 ♜he8



So far, so good. But what now? White has improved his position to the maximum, but it still is not clear how to make even the slightest progress.

In my view, there is no such thing as a drawn endgame! Even if the position is objectively drawn, you might have excellent practical chances to win the game. Realizing this, Suetin decides on a very tricky and potentially rewarding move.

### 5.c4!

While this move should not have presented Black with many problems, its practical value is very high. In fact, White could have played 5.b3 first, but this was almost certainly what Black was expecting. Black can simply reply 5...♗d8 and after 6.c4 ♗e7 White cannot make any progress.

### 5...♗f8?!

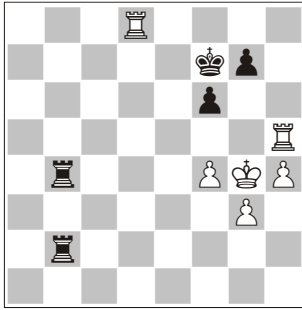
Imprecise. Even in the most innocuous-looking positions, one minuscule inaccuracy can be the difference between a draw and a loss. Gufeld was probably under the impression that everything draws here, but as Suetin demonstrates, this is far from the case.

In fact, both 5...dxc4 and 5...bxc4 seem to do the job. After 5...bxc4 6.b3 cxb3 7.♗xa6+ ♖c7 8.♜xb3 ♜eb8 I can't see a way for White to improve his position. Note that 9.♗c3, with the idea of 10.♖d4, even loses after 9...♗xc5+.

The other move, 5...dxc4, looks a bit more dubious but once again I cannot find a way for White to make inroads after 6.♗g2 ♜ed8 7.♗xe4 ♗e8. White might try for g3-g4 at some point, but Black should be able to defend, since White cannot abandon the a-file completely on account of ...a6-a5.

So what should White do now? As we have done in the previous game, let's try to reconstruct Suetin's train of thought here:

*'If I somehow don't open the a-file to my advantage, I might as well agree to a draw. After 6.cxb5 axb5, I obviously cannot trade rooks because the ensuing endgame will be dead drawn. But how about 7.♗xb5 ?*



### 11. Petrosian-Larsen

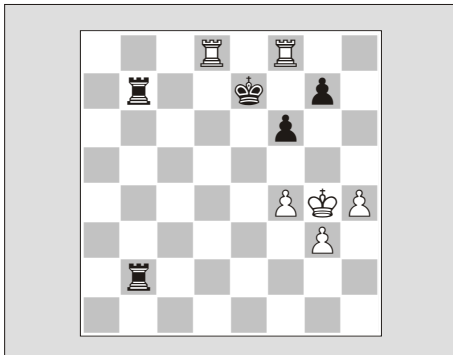
Biel Interzonal 1976

The fact that White is playing for a win is crystal clear; however, since material on the board is very limited, it's extremely hard to obtain winning chances – Black's king is very close to his pawns. The only winning strategy is to immediately switch to an attack of the king, since Black's rooks cannot do anything to help the monarch find shelter.

**1. ♖hh8! ♜b7**

Black defends the important 7th rank, as White had unpleasant ideas of f4-f5 and ♜d7#.

**2. ♜hf8+ ♔e7**



The critical position has arisen. White has activated his rooks and trapped Black's king, but it's unclear how to

continue the onslaught. Since Black's king is now cut off from the pawns, White has to grab the chance if he wants to play for a win. Unfortunately, penetrating with the king also has a drawback – the king is the only piece which is defending White's own pawns, and moving it leaves the pawns totally undefended. In such cases, it's hard to calculate every single variation, as Black has a lot of ways to attack the pawns.

Therefore, White has to use his intuition – when players are inexperienced, they rely less on intuition, as their arsenal of ideas is much less developed than those of experienced players. Petrosian obviously had played and analyzed so many games in his life that his intuition was practically perfect.

However, a common misconception amongst chess players is that intuition is synonymous with laziness. This is not true – intuition is simply the feel for ideas without concrete calculation. Petrosian sensed that Black's king would be in trouble once White reached g6 – of course he had calculated variations, but picture-perfect intuition had led him to search for mating ideas *in the first place*. Since Black's king is extremely weak, he was sure that moving the king forward is completely safe; Black cannot concentrate on White's pawns because of his ailing king.

**3. ♕f5! ♜2b3**

Relatively best. All of Black's other options lead to quick failure:

A) 3... ♜g2? lost immediately after 4. ♜de8+ ♕d7 5. ♜e3 ♕d6 6. ♕g6+- and Black has no defense against ♜f7.



B) 3...♖d2? meets 4.♔g6! ♜xd8  
5.♞f7+, when all Black can do is resign.

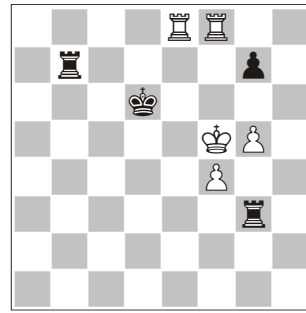
**4.g4 ♞g3**

Black already threatens ...♞b5+ followed by ...♞xg4, so White has to be very careful. Of course, Petrosian finds the fastest way to victory.

**5.♞de8+**

Notice that before making obvious moves, Petrosian improves his position to the maximum. Of course, as I said before, this shouldn't be done if your opponent has strong counterplay, but here, White improves his position and worsens his opponent's simultaneously.

**5...♔d6 6.g5 fxg5 7.hxg5**



**7...♞b5+?!**

This loses immediately, but Black had no chances to save the game anyway. After the relatively best 7...♞a3, White wins easily by means of 8.♔g6, i.e. 8...♞f3 9.♞d8+ ♔c5 10.♞f7 ♞xf7 11.♔xf7 ♞xf4+ 12.♔xg7 with a theoretically won position.

**8.♔g6**

**1-0**

Although intuition was certainly required, White was never in any real danger to lose; if things went wrong, he would always have a draw. It's much harder to decide on a risky continuation in a better position when you burn all the bridges.

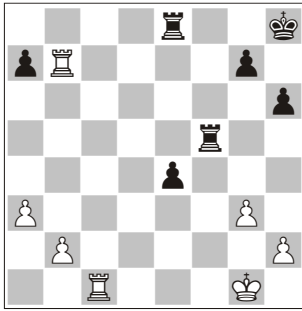
In order to limit mistakes, I offer the reader the following questions that he or she should ask when deciding whether or not to go for a risky continuation:

- A) Is there anything safer that I can choose that gives me real winning chances?
- B) Does my opponent have a wealth of attractive and dangerous-looking options after the continuation in question? If the answer is yes, then chances are he will have an unpleasant counter to your idea.
- C) If things go completely wrong, will I have any saving chances in the resulting type of position?

Of course, these questions aren't engraved in stone, and even if you're leaning towards 'yes' in question B and 'no' in C, you shouldn't totally rule out the option. If you do not have enough time to calculate to the end, it's obviously best to judge the options intuitively and calculate at least some lines.

Question A is probably most important; if the answer is 'yes', then you probably should choose the safe option unless you're practically positive that your risky option works.

Take a look at the following position (next page):



## 12. I. Polgar-Minev

Aasztalos Memorial, Baja 1971

At first sight it might seem that Black has a menacing position, since his passed e-pawn looks very intimidating. However, White is in fact in no danger at all, and can obtain a better endgame by means of 1. ♖f1 ♜xf1+ 2. ♕xf1 a5 3. ♕e2. Polgar (who's not related to the more famous Polgar sisters, by the way), being a strong player, obviously saw the tempting and safe continuation. However, he asked himself just how dangerous the e-pawn really is. If it moves to e2, White will simply block it by means of ♜e1. Otherwise, it just isn't that threatening.

However, before we take a look at Polgar's decision, let us ask ourselves the three important questions I mentioned above:

A) Do I have a safer option that gives me winning chances? Yes – ♜f1, and although Black should hold with very good play, White's winning chances are quite real.

B) Does my opponent have a lot of dangerous and attractive looking moves after the move in question? The answer is harder to determine – one

needs to look at the concrete variations. Of course, the straightforward ...e4-e3 is not hazardous. Therefore, Black has only one or two options – ...♜d5, controlling the d-file, and ...♜fe5, overprotecting the passed pawn. Thus, the answer to the question is 'no'.

C) If everything goes wrong, will I have saving chances in the resulting type of position? Here, the answer is clearly 'no', as the resulting type of position might mean Black promoting his pawn or White getting under a deadly attack.

Thus, we are analyzing only the answers to two questions. The fact that White has a great alternative makes it tempting to go for the safe option, but the answer to question B means that ♜xa7 is much easier to calculate.

Since we haven't gotten a definite conclusion from the questions, it's important to immediately switch to calculation. White was probably in time trouble here (33rd move), and that would mean picking the safe option would have been practically better. White, however, was probably afraid that the position resulting after ♜f1 would have been too drawish, and chose:

### 1. ♜xa7!?

First of all, I would like to say that this move is no worse than the safe continuation, and if two computers were playing, I would have given it an exclamation mark. Before we move on, however, let's take a look at the position arising after 1. ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 2. ♕xf1 a5 3. ♕e2

## Chapter 5

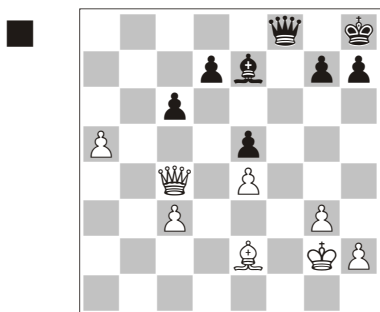
### Queen + Minor Piece(s) vs Queen + Minor Piece(s)

We are again faced with a challenging task. Just as in rook and minor piece endgames, queen and minor piece endgames contain many secrets, principles, and ideas. I really feel that endgame books do not devote enough attention to these types of endings. The main reason is that they are simply very complex! In an endgame manual, covering these types of endgames will take up the entire book. My goal is not to cover everything, but to simply help the reader improve his or her play in such endgames.

#### Queen + Bishop vs. Queen + Bishop

##### Opposite-Colored Bishops

In order to successfully understand these types of endings, it is important to note that Queen + OCB endings (from now on referred to as QOCB endings) have very little in common with Rook + OCB endings (from now on referred to as ROCB endings). First of all, the queen and bishop tandem can be used to produce incredible attacks in a matter of moves, so activating the king is a very difficult task. The passed pawn can still be dangerous, but the queen + bishop tandem can fight the passer much more successfully than a rook and a bishop. I could have included the following game in the end of this section, but in my opinion, analyzing it in the beginning will make it much easier to comprehend the ideas and principles that follow.



#### 78. Smejkal-Karpov

Leningrad Interzonal 1973

The position is very double-edged. White has a far-advanced passed pawn

on a5, but it will not be able to move further than a6.

White's main drawback is his weak king on g2. If Black can manage to place a queen on f2, White will have to switch his attention to the defense of his king. If it were White's move, however, he would play 1. ♖d3 and on 1... ♕c5 reply 2. ♗f3. Therefore, Black has no time to waste:

**1... ♕c5!**

Of course, Black will not be able to achieve a winning attack after 2... ♗f2+, but at least White's king will

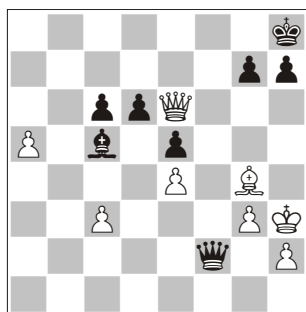
be precariously placed and the passed a-pawn will be restrained.

**2. ♖g4 ♜f2+ 3. ♜h3 d6**

The position has become even sharper. Black has abandoned his own king, but it is not clear how to make use of this factor. Smejkal played the tempting:

**4. ♜d7?!**

This move does not drastically change the evaluation of the position, but White had a very strong alternative: 4. ♜e6!.



Analysis diagram

At first sight, Black seems to be losing. In fact, some commentators proclaimed that Karpov could have resigned had White played 4. ♜e6. Of course, this is not true. The only testing response is 4...g6, after which White's best bet is to play 5. ♜e7! (Karolyi & Aplin), when Black is at a major crossroads (I will quote Karolyi & Aplin's outstanding analysis as well as some of my own):

A) 5...h6 is too weakening. After 6. ♜e6 d5 7. ♜e8+ and 8. ♜xg6 Black is lost.

B) 5...♜e3!? is very interesting, but loses to a study-like refutation. Let's take a look at White's responses:

B1) 6. ♜xd6? leads to a draw after 6...♜f1+ 7. ♜h4 g5+ 8. ♜h5 ♜f7+ 9. ♜h6 ♜g7+.

B2) 6.a6 is no better: 6...♜f1+ 7. ♜h4 and now 7...h6! draws. For example, 8. ♜e8+ ♜g7 9. ♜d7+ ♜h8 10. ♜c8+ ♜g7 and in order to avoid mate, White is forced to give perpetual.

B3) 6. ♜e2! is the only winning response. Black cannot throw more oil into the fire. After 6...h5 7. ♜c4 ♜f3 8. ♜e6! White seems to have parried the counterplay. Karolyi gives an extensive analysis proving that White does indeed win.

C) 5...♜f1+! is in fact the only way to draw. After 6. ♜h4 ♜e3 7. ♜xd6 Black draws with 7...g5+ 8. ♜h5 ♜f7+.

However, since Karpov did not find ...♜f1+ even in his analysis, it is doubtful that he would have found it during the game!

**4...g6 5. ♜xc6 ♜g7**

In two moves, Karpov has drastically improved the position of his king. Now, in case of an assault by Black on White's king, White will not have the additional opportunity of creating counterplay against Black's king.

**6. ♜b5 ♜b2 7.a6 ♜g1 8. ♜e2**



**8...♜xc3!**

Karpov makes the correct decision and keeps the queens on the board. The

## Chapter 6

# Conclusion

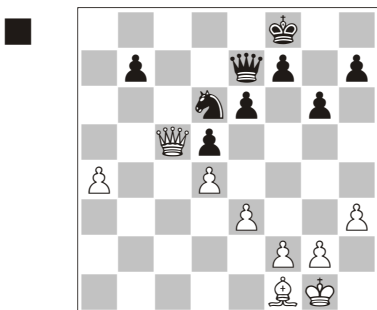
Congratulations! We have officially finished our study of dealing with complex endgames. However, I can still feel the question on the tip of your tongue: *What do I make of all this?* In other words, how is it possible to retain and access such a vast range of ideas during a game?

Although this question can hardly be answered in a single sentence, hard work certainly has a lot to do with true endgame mastery and a systematic study of endgame ideas will no doubt bring you much closer to a comprehensive and deep understanding of the endgame. To conclude the book, I felt that it was of paramount importance to reiterate the main themes that we have observed throughout the book. In the heat of the battle, nothing is as important as feeling *confident* in one's abilities, and I feel that a summary of important points will not be amiss.

I decided to choose five endgame themes, and have tried my best to provide a detailed yet concise summary of the nature of these themes and their implications in a practical game. Each discussion will be supplemented by an additional game that will hopefully elucidate any ambiguities in the text.

### Theme 1: Weaknesses

I hear you. I'm tired of hearing this word too. And yet the ability to take advantage of weak squares in the opponent's camp goes hand in hand with the ability to seamlessly convert a material or positional advantage in the endgame. Recall, for example, the game Savchenko-Kamsky which we examined in Chapter 5.



### 127. Savchenko-Kamsky

President's Cup, Baku 2010

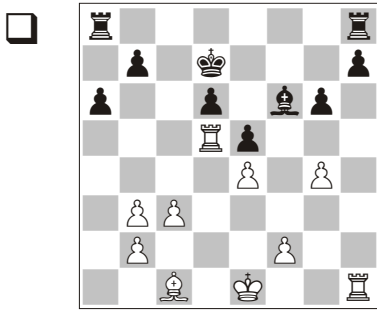
White has a small edge due to the excellent placement of his pieces and...Black's *weakness on b7!* Although the pawn is safely protected for the moment, it forces Black's knight to remain on d6 and Black's queen, in turn, cannot leave the knight! Paradoxically, a pawn which isn't even being attacked is the bane of Black's existence.

In the game, Kamsky masterfully maneuvered his pieces until he had an opportunity to push the pawn one square forward (to b6). The pawn seems to be

as weak (if not weaker) on b6 as it is on b7, but a pawn on b6 'forces' White's queen to remain on c6 to stop the activation of Black's pieces. In turn, Black is given the opportunity to slowly work around White's queen and eventually

push it back. If you look at the game once more, you will notice that the battle revolves solely around this weakness – when Black is given a chance to push White's queen away, he activates his pieces and wins the game!

Flipping through different chapters will reveal many more battles revolving around weaknesses in one or both opponents' camps. In a nutshell, **weaknesses often force you to remain utterly passive.** Although passive defense isn't always bad, the realization that you will never have a chance for counterplay again can be quite defeating and in the majority of cases can lead to a grave error. The following game is a model illustration (unsurprisingly, I found this position in Sherevsky's gem *Endgame Strategy*, to which I referred back in the first chapter!).



### 128. Fischer-Reshevsky

US Championship, New York 1962/63

After a very interesting opening and middlegame struggle, the above position was reached. Clearly, White's position is superior. He has a rook ingrained on d5, and mainly, Black's d6-pawn is very weak. In addition, Black's rook is tied down to the defense of the h7-pawn, while White's h1-rook can either stay on h1 or move to d1, attacking d6. All of this sounds good, but how is White to make any clear progress in this position? Black will place a bishop on e7, and will move his king to e6, thus safeguarding the d6-pawn. The

h7-pawn also cannot be easily attacked – in the worst case scenario, Black will add a second rook to the defense of the pawn.

Fischer understood that in order to make any progress in such a position, he will have to *induce a concession in Black's position*. Black has two weaknesses here, but they cannot be easily exploited. Therefore, White will have to open up a second front on the queen-side, thus forcing Black to overextend and eventually make a serious compromise. Fischer starts out by cementing the weakness on h7.

**1.g5! ♖e7 2.♗e2**

White is in no hurry, and therefore improves the position of his pieces to the fullest extent before making any commitments.

**2...♖af8 3.♕e3 ♖c8 4.b4**

Shereshevsky writes: 'White's pressure grows with every move. He threatens both b4-b5, and also the simple strengthening of his position by 5.♗d3