

SUPERPROBLEM HELPMATES IN 2 MOVES 2022 AWARD

It was an honor to be invited to judge the annual informal tourney of this prestigious and popular online outlet. I received 31 originals carefully prepared by the editor. I was expecting the overall quality to be higher, but sadly I found only 7 compositions worthy of a distinction.

Here are some remarks on a few unsuccessful problems:

E1176 (Csák): This problem was already awarded with the 4th Hon. Mention in A. Styopochkin-60 JT in September 2022.

E1180 (Gavriliv): The black Rh4 (and the black pawn h5) can be removed, so the white half-pin is artificial.

E1183 (Majoros): Further developed to a h#3 with two white tempo moves, see *Misha Shapiro & Béla Majoros, 1 Pr 8th FRME Ty 2022* (WID 870771).

E1213 (Ignatenko): Not particularly analogous play.

E1215 (Kalkavouras): The twin shifts the knight that delivers the mate in part (a), while the thematic white pawn d7 is not needed in part (a).

E1224 (Medintsev & Skripnik): Improved unity, better form and lighter setting than *Vitaly Medintsev, 3 HM 2nd FRME TT 2020* (WID 796178), but this version cannot be honored again.

E1227 (Kalkavouras): There is no dual avoidance as claimed; the forerunner *Valery Gurov, 3 Pr Quick Composing Ty Netanya 1999* (WID 41665, PDB P0583658) shows the correct implementation.

E1245 (Pankratiev & Gorbatenko): Substantially anticipated by *Ladislav Salai Jr, Emil Klemanič & Michal Dragoun, 2 HM feenschach 2014* (WID 530094, PDB P1291582).

E1246 (Nefyodov): I prefer the original rendering of the idea by Michael McDowell (PDB P1402142).

E1249 (Pankratiev): It has few differences with the lovely forerunner of *Vitaly Medintsev, 2 Pr diagrammes 2008* (WID 382518, PDB P1187943), but the earlier problem is so elegant that leaves no space for a distinction.

I propose the following ranking:

1st Prize E1254 Anatoly Skripnik (Russia)

A fourfold cycle of white moves in the two pairs of solutions in (a) and (b) is the main dish served with the right garniture: the pair of solutions in (c) shows different blocks on bK's initial square and as a whole we enjoy a bK and a wB star. A clear and convincing winner. The version E1254a is more economic, but I do not like that the thematic move Bxe3 is a capture.

2nd Prize E1236 Pavel Murashev (Russia)

Ambitious strategy in a loaded setting; it is obvious that the composer had to overcome many constructional obstacles. Double Zilahi in HOTF style with impressive (pure) interferences by the black knights in the first pair of solutions and a black Grimshaw with self-block in the second pair.

3rd Prize E1235 Pavel Murashev (Russia)

Cyclic pin-mates of the black Q/R and model battery mates along three lines with varied tactics. Less fascinating than the previous two compositions, but still worthy of a prize.

1st Hon. Mention E1221 Misha Shapiro & Menachem Witztum (Israel)

Each of the white knight and rook is self-pinned twice and cannot deliver mate, the theme set in the 265th thematic tourney. Ambitious rendering of the idea, but due to the bK-shift twinning a lot of black material is used only in one phase.

2nd Hon. Mention E1208 Vitaly Medintsev (Russia)

Well-hidden interferences of the bQ by the unpinned bR/B and ambushes in the W1 moves. Rich line play, unexpected mates, four white pieces move in the solutions altogether, perfect harmony, elegant setting. Alas, the setup of these queen-interferences is familiar, see *Petko Petkov, Die Presse 1990* (WID 16924, PDB P0540353), or *Vitaly Medintsev, Šachové umění 2016* (WID 629176), both with ambushes, pin-mates and moves by two white actors.

Commendation E1222 Dmitry Turevsky (Russia)

A HOTF 2x2 little gem with hesitation and dual avoidance in the first pair and chameleon echo mates in the second pair.

Commendation E1250 Aleksandr Pankratiev (Russia)

Captures of white pieces by the bQ, which in turn is captured in the mating move, and sacrifices of these white pieces to a pawn so that the wQ-line opens. Dual avoidance in the black promotions. Twenty units seem too many for the idea.

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