ing, while the doubled pawns control important squares in the centre. The game might continue:


40th lesson

No. 1
31. Gf7! De8. Black has to surrender a pawn, whereas after 31... Exf7 it is mate: 32. Dh5+ Dh7 33. Dxe6+ Dxe6 34. De1+ Dd6 35. Dh5+ Dd7 36. Df5+ Dd6 37. De6#.
32. Dx6 Dxe6 33. Dd8 Dd4 34. Dxc6.

No. 2
28. Dd1! c6. The threat of g4-g5 is quite unpleasant, for example, 28... Dh8 29. g5! f5 30. ef g6 31. g2 or 28... h6 29. g5! h5 30. gf+ xf6 31. e2 c6 32. dc Dxc6 33. f4 Dg7 34. f5.
29. dc Dxc6 (29... Dxc6 30. g5! Db7 31. gf+ Dxf6 32. Gg4 Dxc3 33. Dxc3 Dw8 34. Db5 Dxe4 35. a4 h5 36. Gb3) 30. Dxb5 (30... Dxc8 31. Dd5 Dxc3 32. Dxd7+ Dxd7 33. Dxc3+). Black resigned.

No. 3
16...Da3+ 17. Da2 b5! This enables black to build a strong attack.

41st lesson

No. 1
17. dc bc 18. b5! The black passed pawn is not dangerous, whereas white has the chance to create a distant passed pawn.
18... a6 (18... Da5 19. De5 Dd7 20. D b3!) 19. a4 ab 20. ab Da7 21. Da4! with much better play for white.

No. 2
28. Da4! bc 29. b6! Dc8 30. Dc5. Having sacrificed a pawn white has gained a strong passed pawn, which black will soon have to exchange for a piece.

No. 3
38. Dg7+! Dg7 (38... Dg7 39. Dh8+ Df8 40. D b8) 39. Dxf8! Dxf8 40. Dd8 De6 41. Dxf8+ Df8 42. b8 Dg7 43. Da7+ Dh6?! 44. Dh7! Black resigned.
No. 1

35. \( \text{c3}+ \) \( \text{d7} \) (35...\( \text{b8} \) 36. \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{a7} \) 37. \( \text{b2} \!) \( \text{e5} \) 38. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{c4} \) 39. \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 40. \( \text{c3}+\) or 37...\( \text{d8} \) 38. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{dd6} \) 39. \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 40. \( \text{f4}+\) ) 36. \( \text{c5}+ \) \( \text{d6} \) 37. \( \text{xb7}+! \) \( \text{d7} \) 38. \( \text{c5}! \) \( \text{xb7} \) 39. \( \text{c6}+ \) \( \text{e7} \) 40. \( \text{xb7}+ \) \( \text{f6} \) 41. \( \text{b6} \) d4 42. \( \text{c7} \) d3 43. \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e5} \) 44. b7. Black resigned.

No. 2

34...a4! 35. ba b3! 36. ab \( \text{xb3}+ \) 37. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{h6}+ \) 38. \( \text{dd2} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 39. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{h7} \) 40. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{b5}! \) 41. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{e2} \) 42. g4 \( \text{e1}+ \) 43. \( \text{b2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 44. \( \text{c8} \) \( \text{c1}+ \). White resigned.

No. 3

32. \( \text{g6}! \) \( \text{f5} \) (32...\( \text{xd8} \) 33. \( \text{g7}+\) ) 33. \( \text{f6}+ \) \( \text{g8} \) 34. \( \text{xe8}+ \) \( \text{xe8} \) 35. \( \text{xf7} \) e3 36. \( \text{e5} \). Black resigned.

43rd lesson

No. 1

42. \( \text{a5}! \) The hurried 42. a7?! \( \text{g2}+ \) 43. \( \text{b3} \) (or 43. \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f3}+ \) 44. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g2}+ \) 45. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{h3}+ \) 46. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{g4}+ \) 47. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{f3}+\) ) 43...\( \text{d5}+ \) 44. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g2}+ \) leads to a draw by perpetual check.

42...\( \text{a8} \) (42...\( \text{e2}+ \) 43. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 44. a7 \( \text{d1}+ \) 45. \( \text{a2} \) ) 43. a7 d5 44. \( \text{b4} \) d4 45. \( \text{d5} \) dc 46. bc \( \text{g7} \) 47. \( \text{b3} \). Black resigned.

No. 2

27. \( \text{fd1}! \) (white launches a crushing attack on the king) 27...\( \text{xb2} \). Let’s consider alternative variations:

27...\( \text{xd1}+ \) 28. \( \text{xd1} \) \( \text{xb7} \) 29. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d7} \) 30. \( \text{xc4} \) a5 31. \( \text{f4}! \) \( \text{b6} \) 32. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{b5} \) 33. \( \text{b3}+\) ;

27...\( \text{xd7} \) 28. \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{b8} \) 29. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e8} \) (29...\( \text{d7} \) 30. \( \text{a5}! \) \( \text{c5} \) 31. \( \text{g7}+ \) \( \text{c8} \) 32. \( \text{xf7} \) 30. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{e1}+ \) 31. \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{xa7} \) 32. \( \text{xc4} \). 

28. \( \text{d6}+ \) \( \text{b8} \) 29. \( \text{db1} \) \( \text{xd7} \).

It looks like he cannot save the game:

29...\( \text{c3} \) 30. \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{xa7} \) (30...\( \text{xe7} \) 31. \( \text{b7}+ \) \( \text{a8} \) 32. \( \text{xb4} \) 31. \( \text{b5}+ \) \( \text{a6} \) 32. \( \text{xc3} \) bc 33. \( \text{b4}+\) ;

29...\( \text{d2} \) 30. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c3} \) 31. \( \text{a4}! \) \( \text{b3} \) 32. \( \text{a5}! \) \( \text{a8} \) (32...\( \text{b2} \) 33. \( \text{b4}+ \) \( \text{a8} \) 34. \( \text{xb2} \) ) 33. \( \text{a3}! \) \( \text{xe7} \) 34. \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{b7} \) 35. \( \text{xa7}+\) .

30. \( \text{xe4}+ \) \( \text{c7} \) 31. \( \text{a6}! \) \( \text{b8} \) 32. \( \text{xa7}+ \) \( \text{xd6} \) 33. \( \text{xb8} \) \( \text{g4} \) 34. \( \text{d8}+ \) \( \text{c6} \) 35. \( \text{b4}! \) Black resigned.

No. 3

23. \( \text{xa6}! \) \( \text{a8} \) 24. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 25. \( \text{xa4} \). White has gained a rook, bishop and pawn for his queen. Moreover, black now has weak pawns on b6 and d5, while white has the chance to occupy the c-file after doubling rooks.

25...\( \text{a5} \) 26. \( \text{a6} \) \( \text{a8} \) 27. \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{c4} \) 28. \( \text{c2} \) h6 29. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a5} \) 30. \( \text{b4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 31. \( \text{cxd5}! \) \( \text{xd5} \) 32.
\( \text{xd}5 \text{ xd}5 \text{ c7}+ \text{ f8} \text{ c4}. \text{ Black resigned.} \\
\text{44th lesson} \\
\text{No. 1} \\
1...\text{ef?} 2. \text{ xd}4! \text{ xe}4 3. \text{ xg}7+ \text{ xg}7 4. \text{ xe}4 with a very strong attack. \\
\text{No. 2} \\
\text{Sacrifice it!} 23...\text{ xg}4! 24. \text{ hg} \text{ xc}5 25. \text{ xc}8! \text{ xc}5 26. \text{ xd}7 \text{ e}5! 27. \text{ d}4 \text{ b}5) 25...\text{ xc}8. \text{ Black's chances are better.} \\
\text{No. 3} \\
28. \text{ g}4 \text{ g}4 29. \text{ h}5! \text{ f}8 (29...\text{ xh}5 30. \text{ xh}5+ \text{ f}8 31. \text{ h}8+ \text{ f}7 32. \text{ g}8# or 30...\text{ f}7 31. \text{ g}8+ \text{ f}8 32. \text{ xc}5) 30. \text{ xc}5! \text{ xc}5 31. \text{ h}5+. \text{ Black resigned.} \\
\text{No. 4} \\
\text{Yes, white in any case gains three minor pieces for two rooks together with an excellent position:} \\
1. \text{ xc}5! \text{ ed} (or 1...\text{ xc}5 2. \text{ xc}6! \text{ xd}3 3. \text{ xc}5) 2. \text{ xc}6! \text{ bc} (2...\text{ de} 3. \text{ xb}6 \text{ xd}3 4. \text{ xb}7 \text{ d}1+ 5. \text{ f}1) 3. \text{ g}5 \text{ f}6 4. \text{ e}1 \text{ b}5 5. \text{ f}4+. \\
\text{45th lesson} \\
\text{No. 1} \\
26...\text{ xc}4!! 27. \text{ xb}8 \text{ c}1+ 28. \text{ f}1 \text{ xb}8 29. \text{ c}3 \text{ bb}1 30. \text{ d}3 (30. \text{ a}8+ \text{ f}8 31. \text{ a}6 \text{ e}4 32. \text{ g}4 \text{ xc}3 33. \text{ xc}3 \text{ xc}3 34. \text{ g}2 \text{ a3}) 30...\text{ a}3! \text{ White cannot cope with the passed pawn.} \\
31. \text{ xa}6 \text{ a}2! 32. \text{ g}4 \text{ xf}1+! 33. \text{ xf}1 \text{ e}4! 34. \text{ a}1 \text{ d}2. \text{ White resigned.} \\
\text{No. 2} \\
24. \text{ b}4!! \text{ White sacrifices his queen for a rook, thereby gaining dangerous passed pawns.} \\
24...\text{ xc}6 25. \text{ dc} (despite his material advantage black has nothing good here) 25...\text{ e}6. \text{ Other replies are no better:} 25...\text{ cb} 26. \text{ b}6, 25...\text{ b}6 26. \text{ c}4! \text{ a}8 27. \text{ a}1! \text{ xa}1 28. \text{ xa}1 \text{ e}6 29. \text{ a}6 \text{ c}7 30. \text{ bc} \text{ dc} 31. \text{ xc}5. \\
26. \text{ ed}1! (26. \text{ bc} \text{ d}5 27. \text{ b}6 \text{ d}4 28. \text{ c}7 \text{ e}7!) 26...\text{ b}8 (26...\text{ cb} 27. \text{ b}6, 26...\text{ d}5 27. \text{ xc}5 \text{ d}4 28. \text{ b}6) 27. \text{ bc} \text{ d}5 28. \text{ ed} \text{ ed} 29. \text{ xd}5 \text{ e}8 30. \text{ c}7 \text{ f}7 31. \text{ b}6! \text{ xd}5 32. \text{ b}7. \text{ Black resigned.} \\
\text{No. 3} \\
28. \text{ cb}! \text{ e}1+ 29. \text{ xe}1 \text{ xb}5 30. \text{ ba} \text{ c}6 31. \text{ h}7 32. \text{ b}8. \text{ Black resigned.} \\
\text{46th lesson} \\
\text{No. 1} \\
The game continued 23.\text{ c}5? (23.\text{ xa}7 \text{ f}3 24.\text{ h}1 \text{ b}5!? leads to an unclear position, but that was white’s best option) 23...\text{ f}3 24.\text{ xf}8 (24.\text{ h}1 \text{ f}4! 25.\text{ c}4 \text{ b}6 26.\text{ e}3 \text{ xc}4 27.\text{ a}3 \text{ e}4++ ) 24...\text{ xf}8 25.\text{ xb}7 \text{ fx}2 26.\text{ xg}2 From the material point of view white is fine,
but black’s strong bishop pair together with the exposed position of the white king will decide the game.

\[ \text{Diagram 1} \]

26...\texttt{Qf7}! 27.\texttt{ab1} 27.\texttt{b3} e4 28.c4 \texttt{xc4}! 29.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{f3} 30.\texttt{g1} h3--  27...e4!? 27...\texttt{xc3} 28.\texttt{g1} e4 is also good.

28.f4 28.\texttt{g1} c5; 28.f3 \texttt{xc3} 29.fxe4 \texttt{c2} 30.\texttt{h1} \texttt{h5}--

28...\texttt{xc3} 29.\texttt{b3}

\[ \text{Diagram 2} \]

29...\texttt{d3} 30.\texttt{a8} \texttt{c2} 31.\texttt{f2} h3 was even stronger. He could also have played 29...\texttt{c2} 30.\texttt{f2} h3 31.\texttt{xh3} \texttt{xb7} 32.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{xf2} 33.\texttt{xa7} e3 34.\texttt{a6} e2 35.\texttt{e6} \texttt{b4}.

30.\texttt{f5} Desperation. 30...\texttt{d2} 31.\texttt{f2} \texttt{xf2} 32.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xf5} 33.\texttt{e1} \texttt{c5} ... White resigned.

No. 2 46. \texttt{d4}!! (46. \texttt{c7} \texttt{a8} and 46. \texttt{b6} \texttt{e8} are less clear) 46...\texttt{f4} 47. \texttt{d5} e3 48. \texttt{e1} f3 49. \texttt{c7}! \texttt{f8} (49... \texttt{a8} 50. \texttt{d6}) 50. \texttt{d6} \texttt{d4} 51. \texttt{d3}+ \texttt{h7} (51... \texttt{f8} 52. \texttt{d7} \texttt{xc4}+ 53. \texttt{d6}) 52. \texttt{d3}. Black resigned.

No. 3 46. \texttt{c3}! (46. a5 \texttt{d6} 47. \texttt{d4} \texttt{xe4}! 48. \texttt{xe4}+? \texttt{f5}) 46...\texttt{d6} 47. \texttt{xc6}! bc 48. a5 c5 49. a6 \texttt{b5} 50. \texttt{e3} c4 51. \texttt{d2} \texttt{d6} 52. \texttt{e3} \texttt{e6}. Draw.

No. 4 36. \texttt{hf5}! gf 37. \texttt{xf5} \texttt{f6} 38. \texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 39. \texttt{e8} \texttt{g5} 40. \texttt{xf7} \texttt{g7} 41. \texttt{b3} \texttt{f6} 42. \texttt{f4} \texttt{g6} 43. \texttt{f5} \texttt{gf8} 44. \texttt{h4} \texttt{h7} 45. \texttt{h3} \texttt{g7} 46. \texttt{g4} \texttt{h7} 47. \texttt{c1} \texttt{g7} 48. g5 hg 49. hg. Black resigned.

47th lesson

No. 1 36...h3+ 37. \texttt{g1} (37. \texttt{f2} \texttt{f5} 38. \texttt{f4} \texttt{e1}#) 37...\texttt{e1}+ 38. \texttt{f2} \texttt{f1}+! White resigned.
No. 2
41...\(\text{dx}e5!\) 42. \(\text{dxe}5\) \(\text{dxd}4!\) 42...\(\text{dx}e5\) 43. \(\text{dxe}1\) \(\text{c}7!\)
(the bishop and two pawns are clearly better than the rook here)
44. \(\text{ee}8+\) (44. \(\text{ee}7\) \(\text{d}d7\)) 44...\(\text{g}7\) 45. \(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 46. \(\text{d}d1\) \(\text{b}7\)
47. \(\text{f}4\) (47. \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{e}5\)) 47...\(\text{d}4+\) 48. \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}3\). White resigned in view of
the following lines: 49. \(\text{e}2\) \(\text{xf}5!\) 50. \(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{g}4+\) 51. \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xd}1\) or
49. \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{b}2+\) 50. \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xf}3\) 51. \(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{e}2+.\)

No. 3
16...\(\text{xf}1!\) 17. \(\text{xa}8\) \(\text{xg}2\) 18. \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{xd}5\). Black has the advantage
as the white pawns are weak.

48th lesson

No. 1
34. \(\text{xd}7!\) \(\text{x}d7\) 35. \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{f}7\)
(35...\(\text{e}7\) 36. \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}5\) 37. \(\text{g}1\)
\(\text{h}8\) 38. \(\text{d}4!\)) 36. \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{g}5\) 37. \(\text{e}6!\) \(\text{fb}7\) 38. \(\text{g}1\) \(\text{d}8\) (38...
\(\text{h}5?\) 39. \(\text{g}4\) 39. \(\text{f}1!\) \(\text{a}6\) 40.
\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{a}2\) 41. \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{d}2\) (41...\(\text{g}5\) 42. \(\text{xf}4!\)) 42. \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}3\) 43. \(\text{f}5+\) \(\text{g}8\)
(43...\(\text{h}8\) 44. \(\text{c}8\) \(\text{xf}3\) 45. \(\text{e}6\))
44. \(\text{c}8!\) \(\text{xf}3\) (44...\(\text{f}7\) 45. \(\text{e}6\)
45. \(\text{e}6+\). Black resigned.

No. 2
28. \(\text{e}7!\) \(\text{f}5\) (28...\(\text{g}8\) 29. \(\text{f}1!\)) 29. \(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xg}3\) 30. \(\text{f}g\) (material on the board is about equal,
but the bishop dominates black’s rooks) 30...\(\text{g}8\) (he would not have
ultimately saved himself with the still better move 30...\(\text{xh}5\) 31. \(\text{g}2\)
\(\text{g}6\) 32. \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{e}5\) 33. \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{a}6\) 34. \(\text{d}6\) \(\text{e}8\) 35. \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{e}4\) 36. \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{e}2+\)
37. \(\text{f}2\) \(\text{e}4\) 38. \(\text{d}2\), where white
should gradually win) 31. \(\text{g}2!\)
\(\text{xh}5\) 32. \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 33. \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{h}7\)
(33...\(\text{a}6\) 34. \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 35. \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{e}6\)
was more stubborn) 34. \(\text{g}4\) \(\text{b}4\) 35.
\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{b}3\) 36. \(\text{a}3\) \(\text{ac}8\) 37. \(\text{h}4\) \(\text{g}6\) 38.
\(\text{h}5\). Black resigned.

No. 3
21...\(\text{xd}3!\) 22. \(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{e}4\) 23. \(\text{d}2\)
(23. \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}5\)) 23...\(\text{xe}4\) 24. \(\text{fd}1\) \(\text{d}5\). Black has gained good
positional compensation for the ex-
change, taking the initiative away
from white.

49th lesson

No. 1
21. \(\text{xf}5!\) \(\text{xc}3\) 22. \(\text{xd}6\) \(\text{b}8\)
23. \(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 24. \(\text{d}2!\) White’s
pawns are stronger than the piece.
He threatens to advance his e-pawn.

No. 2
45. \(\text{xc}6!\) 45. \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 46. \(\text{hg}\)
47. \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{h}7\) 48. \(\text{f}1\) \(\text{g}3\) is worse,
handing the initiative to black.
45...\(\text{bc}\) 46. \(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{f}7\) (46...\(\text{a}7\)
47. \(\text{c}8+\) \(\text{h}7\) 48. \(\text{f}5+\) was weak,
but 46...\(\text{g}6\) was more stubborn)
47. \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{g}7\) 48. \(\text{xa}6\). White has
the advantage and he gradually con-
verted it into a full point.
No. 3


20...\textit{xe2} 21. \textit{xe2}! \textit{xf6} 22. \textit{b1} \textit{a5} 23. \textit{b4}! \textit{xb4} 24. \textit{xa3} \textit{xb4} 25. \textit{c4}. With the queens on board and black’s king exposed the knight is clearly stronger than the pawns.

50th lesson

No. 1

11. \textit{b4}!! (11. \textit{a3} \textit{c5} 12. \textit{d1} 0-0 only leads to equality) 11...\textit{ab} 12. \textit{xb5} \textit{d5} (12...\textit{e7} 13. \textit{c5} \textit{d8} 14. \textit{a7}) 13. \textit{d6}+ \textit{e7} 14. \textit{c5} \textit{a6} 15. \textit{c2}. White threatens a queenside pawn advance, where-as it’s not clear how black can untie himself: the white knight has stapled down black’s entire position.


No. 2

27. \textit{xb7}! (27. \textit{xa6}? ba 28. \textit{xa6} \textit{c8} 29. \textit{b7} \textit{d7} is worse) 27...\textit{xb7} 28. \textit{a5} \textit{c6}. 28...\textit{b8} 29. \textit{c6} \textit{xc6} 30. \textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 31. \textit{xc6} \textit{d2} 32. \textit{xa6} is also useless, and then: 32...\textit{xb1} 33. \textit{xb1} \textit{a8} 34. \textit{b7} \textit{xa5} 35. \textit{c8} or 32...\textit{xf1} 33. \textit{xf1} \textit{d7} 34. \textit{a6} \textit{d6} 35. \textit{c7}.

29. \textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 30. \textit{xa6} \textit{b8}. He could have resisted better with 30...\textit{a8} 31. \textit{xb7} \textit{xb7} (31...\textit{xb7} 32. \textit{d3}) 32. \textit{a1} \textit{a6} 33. \textit{fb1} \textit{g7}, although white should win here after 34. \textit{a3}.

31. \textit{b5}? (now there is no stopping the avalanche of white pawns) 31...\textit{c8} 32. \textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 33. \textit{a6} \textit{g7} 34. \textit{b4}!? \textit{d6} 35. \textit{a4} \textit{xa4} 36. \textit{xa4} \textit{c8} 37. \textit{b4}! \textit{a7} 38. \textit{ba} \textit{a8} 39. \textit{e6}! (39. \textit{b7} \textit{xa7} 40. \textit{xa7} \textit{xa7} 41. \textit{a1} \textit{f7}) 39...\textit{xa7} 40. \textit{c1} (40...\textit{fc7} 41. \textit{b7} \textit{f7} 42. \textit{xa7} \textit{xa7} 43. \textit{c7}). Black resigned.

No. 3


No. 4

Via 15...\textit{c8} 16. \textit{b3} \textit{xa3}?! 16...\textit{a5} 17.gxf5 \textit{xb5} would have led to an approximately equal battle. The game was played with shortened time control, so black’s calculation was fully justified — white is faced with complicated practical problems.

17.bxa3 \textit{xc3} 18. \textit{d1} \textit{c6} 19.gxf5 exf5 20.e2 \textit{xa3} 21.d5
It would have been better to play 21.\text{g}1 \text{f}8 22.\text{g}5 \text{a}5 23.\text{h}5 \text{g}7 24.\text{g}2 \text{h}6 with an approximately equal position.

21...\text{b}4

22.\text{g}3
He should have activated his pieces despite the material loss: 22.\text{d}4 \text{d}3 23.\text{g}1+ \text{f}8 24.\text{x}f5.

22...\text{d}3 23.\text{e}2

Here too 23.\text{x}f5 was better.

23...\text{a}1 24.\text{d}2 \text{a}2

25.\text{a}2
His last throw of the dice was to play 25.\text{e}2 \text{x}f2 26.\text{g}1 \text{x}d2 27.\text{x}d2 \text{e}3 28.\text{e}2 \text{h}3 with good drawing chances — the black pawns are weak.

25...\text{xa}2 26.\text{e}2 \text{a}1 27.\text{g}2 \text{f}4#.