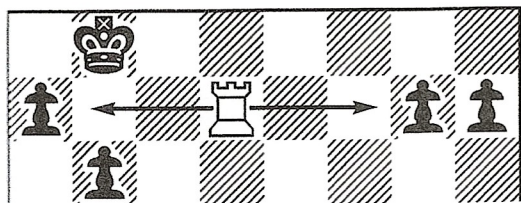


Rooks are usually glad when pawns and pieces get traded. That's because the rooks grow stronger as the position becomes more "open".

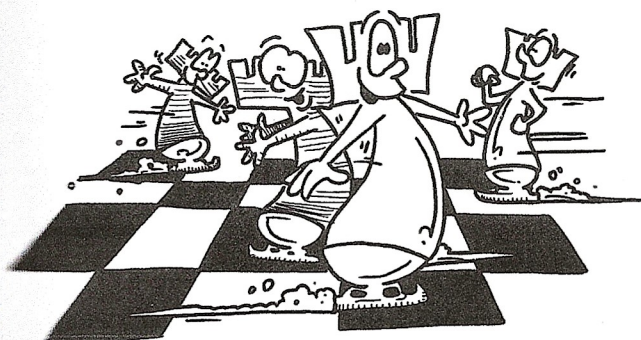
The favourite place for a rook to be is on the "seventh rank".



That means the seventh row from your own side of the board. For a black rook, it is rank number 2.

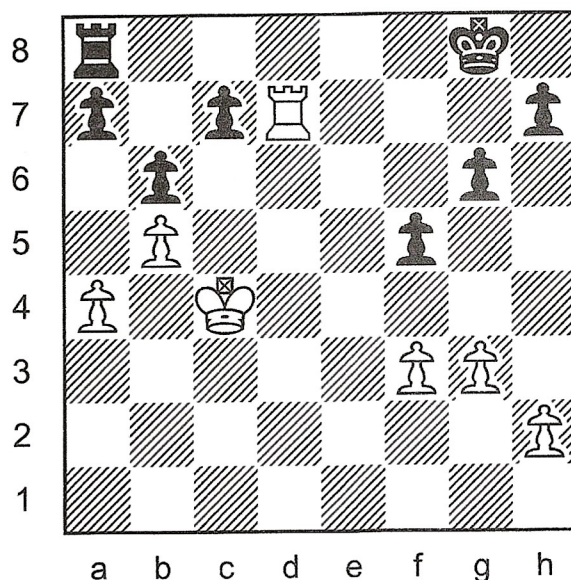
A "rook on the seventh" can do two cool things:

- attack unmoved pawns from the side.
- trap the king on the back row.



Sometimes it's worth sacking a pawn to get a rook on the seventh rank.

Black is up a pawn in this position. But white just played the powerful 1.Rd7!



The white rook cuts the black king off along the last rank. Now the king can't "come out to play".

The black pawns at c7 and h7 are also attacked. Because pawns can only go forward, they can't defend themselves very well from the side. Black will have to use pieces to protect them.

White has a winning advantage.



To save the pawn on c7, black has to defend it with the rook. Playing 1...c5 looks like a good idea. But white could take it *en passant*! (2.bxc6 e.p.)

Have you ever been a victim of the *en passant* rule? (See pages 94 and 212.)

1. . . . **Rc8**

2. **Kd5**

Now that the black pieces are stuck on guard duty, white plans to walk his king up and start winning pawns. Black has no good way to counter this plan.

2. . . . **h6**

3. **Kc6** **Kf8**

4. **Rxc7**

If black guards a7 now with 4...Ra8, white drives him out by 5.Kb7!

4. . . . **Rxc7+**

5. **Kxc7** **1-0**

The pawn endgame is losing for black because the white king is better placed. (5...Ke7 6.Kb7 Kd6 7.Kxa7)

