

Arthur van de Oudeweetering

Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition

More Key Moves & Motifs in the Middlegame

New in Chess 2016

To my parents, Ferrie and Joke, whose pride was always encouraging to me.
To my wife and children, Edith, Julie and Ilja, who compassionately contributed
in a tumultuous year.

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Preface

In the epilogue of *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* – which from here on I will refer to as IYCPR – I wrote that the number of patterns had by no means been exhausted after the publication of that book. Firstly, at the time some existing material had to be dropped. In addition, I also wrote that I kept running into ‘fresh’ patterns. The two examples with mysterious rook moves which I gave then have grown into an entire chapter in the present book, partly also because it turned out that there was a great link with Nimzowitsch’s writings. And when a pattern returns over the ages, it truly is a pattern! Little has changed in the past year, and even today I am still bumping into ‘fresh’ patterns. Since I also received many enthusiastic reactions to IYCPR, what would be more logical than a follow-up book?

And this is exactly what happened. You’re looking at it! Right away, here I would like to thank Peter Boel and all the members of the New In Chess team for their invaluable patience and dedication. Numerous chapters have again been derived from my columns in the no longer existing *ChessVibes Training* magazine. The others are new. A couple of these have been published in *New In Chess Magazine*, but in a different, more compact fashion.

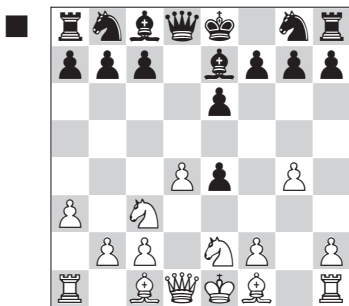
What about the content of *Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition*? To those not familiar with IYCPR I would like to point out that the patterns described in these two books are not tactical, but strategic. They all concern the middlegame, occasionally overlapping into the opening or the endgame. The central pawn sac with ...e7-e6 is an example of the former, while the chapter on major pieces – *Major Pieces in the Twilight Zone?* – could be considered to belong to the latter. Drawing a distinct line between the three stages of the game is not always easy, but neither will it always be relevant. This is precisely why Romanovsky referred to positions with only major pieces as the ‘fourth phase’, because unlike in ‘true’ endgames the king often isn’t able to become active.

In the middlegame, one particular pattern can be a predominant factor, but in our complex game there are bound to be other typical features, and typical counter-reactions, in certain positions. This is a good argument for studying several examples of one pattern and so become acquainted with the typical pros and cons. Therefore, the basic set-up has remained the same: every chapter contains a pattern with an average of seven illustrative game fragments. Occasionally, more examples – sometimes very famous ones – will be referred to. You can easily find these elsewhere, for instance in the online database of *New In Chess*.

For my selection of patterns I preferred those which were not mainly tied to particular openings. These will be supplied in any good opening book. Nevertheless, you will find some exceptions – particular *Arturito’s Exchange Sac*, which I decided to include anyway because, although it is probably quite limited to variations from the Semi-Slav or the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, it’s a wonderful exchange sac, which keeps you guessing about the compensation for quite a while.

Furthermore, I am quite fond of ‘unknown’ or unexpected patterns, like Anand’s piece sac ♖g5 and f2-f4 against So in Shamkir 2015 – see Chapter 7, *A Little Leap Forward*. Of course this idea had been seen in earlier games, but in completely other settings.

However much fun this may be, in practice you would probably benefit more from studying the more common typical manoeuvres, like swinging rooks or the typical ...b7-b5 break. Many of these you will also find in this book. Nice little booklets could even be written on some of them. For instance, the early, sometimes sacrificial g2-g4 advance is nowadays widespread in numerous openings, but Alekhine already experimented with it a long time ago against Euwe. Coincidentally, two months back I noticed my team member IM Stefan Kuipers (against Werle, Groningen 2015) had ventured an advance that was quite similar to Alekhine’s:



Hector’s Gambit: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♗ge2 dxe4 5.a3 ♙e7 6.g4 (Alekhine played 6.♗xe4 ♘c6 7.g4)

Of course, this had been tried out by independent minds like Albin Planinec and Jonny Hector long before. I wouldn’t be surprised if somebody had called it Hector’s Gambit already. Anyway, there is too much material for this book’s format – and also perhaps too much to keep you excited for an entire booklet. However, of course the g2-g4 advance did get a chapter in this book.

Train Your Pattern Recognition is divided into six parts. I think that the first four don’t need a lot of further explanation, as the chapters speak for themselves. But I would like to give a little more comment on the final two parts.

I am very pleased to have included a part on various material imbalances. I don’t know whether we can actually call an imbalance a pattern, but it definitely is a striking feature, which many a chess player will take as a starting point to assess a position. But there are other typical features and general guidelines to be found in such situations. I always love to use these positions in training sessions (but lacked any good books on the subject!), because I think they are helpful for developing a good feeling for the activity and coordination of your pieces – in short, a good sense for the relative value of the pieces.

The final section of this book contains a couple of bad patterns. In the first place, because it is useful to recognize a bad pattern. Some of them may be obvious, but beware: even World Champions have had a terribly bad bishop stuffed away in a miserable corner of the board! Even they realized it too late. And secondly, because many a bad pattern has its good side, as the Dutch soccer hero Johan Cruijff has also pointed out in general terms (his adage 'Every disadvantage has its advantage' is quite famous in the Netherlands). And, as I mentioned before, I simply like to point out surprising, counter-intuitive possibilities. For me they contribute greatly to the charm of our game.

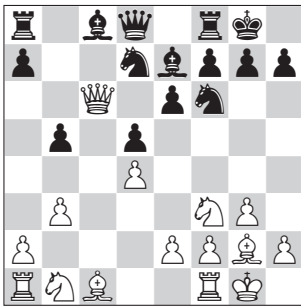
Remember that pattern recognition is only part of the solution, not the solution itself! A lot of work still has to be done once you have spotted a typical idea. You can use the exercises at the end of each part to check your knowledge. But before you do that, have fun with the chapters, and go ahead and *Train Your Pattern Recognition!*

Arthur van de Oudeweetering
February 2016

Part V

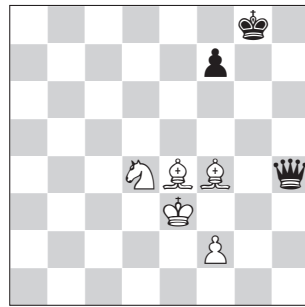
Play With Your Pieces! Stop the Counting

27. Queen or Two Rooks?



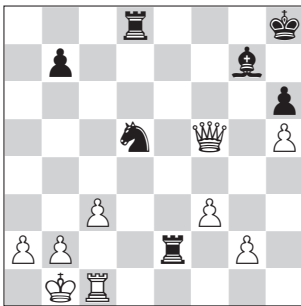
10... ♖b6! 11. ♖xa8 ♘a6

28. The Three Musketeers



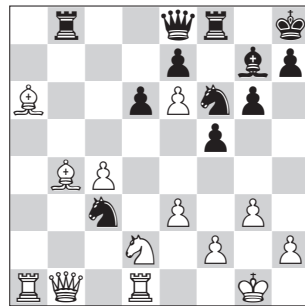
28. ♘f5

29. The Lonesome Queen



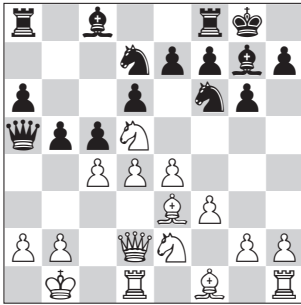
29... ♘e3! 30. ♖b5 ♖dd2

30. The People Versus the Queen



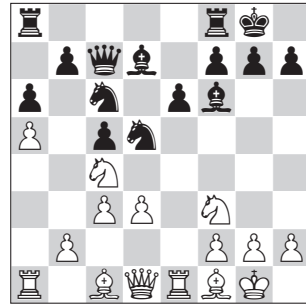
26. ♘xc3! ♖xb1 27. ♖dxb1

31. When Two is Enough



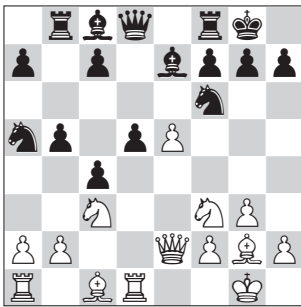
11... ♖xd5!? 12. ♔xa5 ♘xe3

32. Two Minor Pieces or a Rook?



13... ♘xc3?

33. Three Pawns for a Piece



12...c6!? 13.exf6 ♙xf6

Chapter 27

Queen or Two Rooks: How to Choose?

Two rooks are stronger than a queen. This is the rule I initially learned. And indeed, if you count the absolute value of the pieces you will reach a 10-9 score. Not surprisingly, this small difference leaves room for other conclusions – especially in the middlegame, where lots of other factors – piece play and pawn structure – may have influence on the assessment. So which other factors can make a difference?

The Rooks Need Time

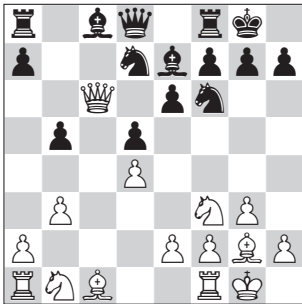
Rooks generally need some time, or, in particular, (half-)open files to become active, while a queen usually gets into the game more easily. Especially in the opening phase of the game, this may be an important factor to take into account when you have to choose between two rooks or a queen.

Levan Pantsulaia

Luka Paichadze

Tbilisi ch-GEO 2012

**1. ♖f3 ♗f6 2. g3 d5 3. ♕g2 e6 4. 0-0
♙e7 5. c4 0-0 6. d4 c6 7. ♖c2 ♗bd7
8. b3 b5 9. cxd5 cxd5 10. ♖c6**



10... ♖b6!

Perhaps 10... ♖b8 was the expected move.

11. ♖xa8 ♙a6 12. ♖xf8+ ♗xf8

This game is a good case in point, although here the white queen can't wreak immediate havoc either.

A perhaps more obvious example where the queen exerts pressure right from the start is Szuper-Shishkin, Krakow 2012: 1. d4 ♗f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♗c3 d5 4. ♙f4 ♙g7 5. e3 0-0 6. ♖c1 ♙e6 7. ♖b3 c5 8. ♖xb7 ♖b6 9. ♖xa8 ♗a6 10. ♖xf8+ ♗xf8, when the black queen was much quicker than White's rooks.

**13. ♗bd2 b4 14. ♙e1 h6 15. ♙b2 g5
16. ♖ac1 g4 17. ♗h4?!**

A strange move, misplacing the knight. However, 17. ♗e5 ♗xe5 18. dxe5 ♗d7 also looks better for Black, as the white e5-pawn is weak and ... ♙c5 is coming.

17... ♗h5 18. e3 ♖a5 19. ♙a1

Acknowledging the failure of White's strategy.

19... ♙d3 20. ♖ec1 ♗g7 21. ♙f1

This exchange allows the black queen to enter decisively on d3, but it's not easy to suggest something sensible for White.

**21... ♙xf1 22. ♗xf1 ♙xh4 23. gxh4
♗f8 24. ♗e2 ♖b5+**

Here comes the queen, while the white rooks are still on the back rank and don't have any scope yet.

**25. ♗d1 ♖d3 26. a3 ♗f6 27. ♗e1
♗g6 28. axb4 ♗e4!**

Black finishes off neatly. If 28... ♗xh4 29. ♖c3.

29. ♗xe4 ♗xh4

White resigned.

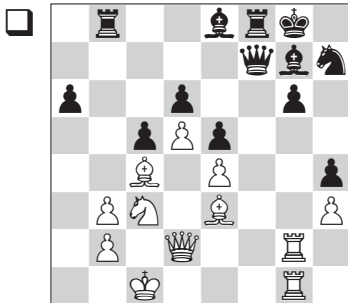
Loose Pawns Drop off – Connect Your Rooks

The queen is capable of conveniently moving across the entire board and picking up weak pawns, using checks or minor threats along the way. The rooks need to cooperate rather than act separately – think of doubling on the seventh rank, attacking a pawn twice, or combining them in an attack against the enemy king.

In the following game things go badly for the rooks:

Zhou Jianchao
Ding Liren

Hefei ch-CHN rapid 2011



24. ♖xg6 ♜xg6 25. ♖xg6 ♜xg6
26. ♜g2

Black has weak pawns on a6 and h4, while the pawn on d6 would also be a nice target. The black rooks have the open f-file, but no easy entrance squares, while the white queen exerts some pressure on the kingside.

26... ♜f6 27. ♖c2?!

27. ♜g4 was the more obvious direct move.

27... a5 28. ♜f2 ♜h5

Black could have profited tactically from White's 27th move and activated his stranded knight: 28... ♖g5 29. ♜xh4 ♖f3.

29. ♜xh4 ♜f4?

Now the rooks start to drift and the pawn on d6 is soon lost. Note that this was a rapid game, which accounts for the mistakes. Much better was 29... ♜g6, restricting the queen's activity on the g-file.

30. ♜e7 ♜f3 31. ♜g6 ♜b6

The black rooks clearly don't cooperate.

32. ♜e6+ ♖h8 33. ♜xd6 ♖f8

34. ♜e7 ♜xe4+ 35. ♖xe4 ♜xe4

36. ♜d8 ♜xd6 37. ♜xd6 a4

38. ♜xc5 axb3+ 39. ♖xb3 ♜d4

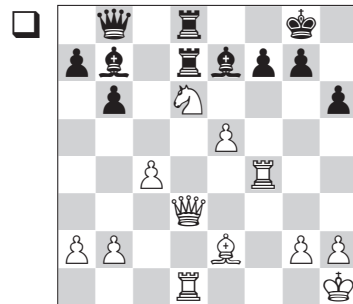
40. ♜e7 ♖h7 41. d6 e4 42. ♜e6 ♜d2

43. ♜f5+ ♖g8 44.d7 1-0

Active Rooks do the Job

Lei Tingjie
Bich Ngoc Pham

Zaozhuang 2012



23. ♜xf7!?

White is of course clearly better; here the talented Chinese girl shows good judgement of the resulting position.

23... ♜xd6 24. exd6 ♜xd6 25. ♜xe7 ♜xd3 26. ♜xd3

In contrast to the two earlier examples, a few more pieces have already been exchanged and the rooks are active – ready to double on the seventh rank.

26... ♜c6 27. ♜g3

Forcing Black to weaken his kingside, which renders her king position open and unprotected.

27...g5 28.♖ge3 ♗f4 29.♔g1 ♕d4
30.b3 ♗a1+ 31.♕f1 ♗xa2 32.♖d3

The black king is cut off on the eighth rank. Soon the mate threats become irresistible.

32...♔f8 33.♖c7 ♕e8 34.♖f3+
♔g8 35.♖c8 ♗a1 36.♖xe8+ ♔g7
37.♖d3 a5 38.♖e6 a4 39.♖xb6 ♗e5
40.♖d7+ ♔f8 41.♖a6 ♗e3+ 42.♔h1
♗e8 43.♖da7 ♗e3 44.♖b7 ♗e8
45.♖xa4 g4 46.c5 g3 47.c6 1-0

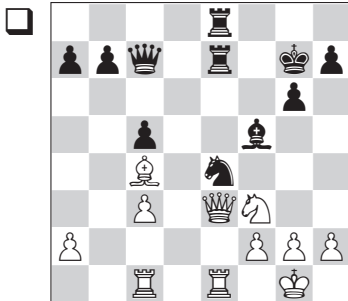
The Vulnerable King

When the two rooks manage to team up against a weakened king's position, they gain considerably in strength.

Momchil Nikolov

Nikola Sedlak

Pleven 2010



22.♕b5!

This seems impossible because of Black's reply, but White has calculated further. Such an element of surprise is often an introduction of the exchange of a queen for two rooks. Sometimes this will have a psychological effect, when initially the other side wrongly thinks that since he has forced the exchange, he should be better. In our first example, Pantsulaia-Paichadze, for instance, White may initially have felt that 10...♗b6 could not be right because he would have the two rooks after taking on a8.

22...♗d6?

Falling for it. 22...♕d7 was called for. Now White is forced to 'give up' his queen.

23.♕xe8 ♖xe3 24.♖xe3 b5 25.♖ce1
♔f6 26.h3 ♗c8 27.♖e7 a6 28.♖1e5

The black king no longer enjoys much protection and is under a heavy attack of all the white pieces.

28...b4 29.g4!

Not so much threatening the bishop, as it does the king: g4-g5 is mate!

29...♕xg4 30.♗g5!

This was the real idea behind 29.g4.

30...♕e6 31.♖7xe6+ ♔g7 32.♖xd6
bxc3 33.♖d7+

Now 33...♔f6 is met with 34.♖de7, and if 33...♔g8 34.♖ee7. Black resigned.

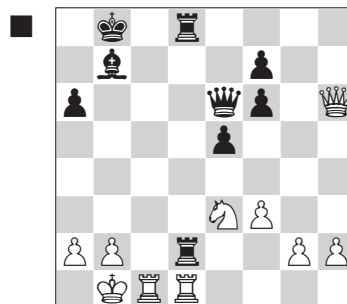
Cooperation

Both the queen and the rooks gain substantially in strength when their forces are combined with a minor piece or a passed pawn. Here we see superb coordination in an attack on the king between the two rooks and a knight.

Sergei Movsesian

Stelios Halkias

Gibraltar 2010



32...f5?

Black is a pawn down, and it's difficult for him to change the static situation. His best try seems to be 32...♖xd1 33.

♖xd1 ♜xd1+ 34.♗xd1 e4, when White still has to work very hard for his advantage.

33. ♜xd2!

White justifiably gives up his queen, considering it the easiest way of converting his advantage. The black king will be helpless against the pair of rooks supported by the knight.

33... ♖xh6

33... ♜xd2 34.♖f8+ ♔a7 35.♖c5+ ♔a8 36.♗c4 ♜xg2 37.♞d1 ♜g8 38.♗b6+ ♔b8 39.♞d6.

34. ♜xd8+ ♔a7 35. ♗c4 e4

35... ♖f6 36.♞cd1 ♜h4 37.♗d6! ♕c6 38.♞f8 is another line that shows how easily the white pieces coordinate. Like in the former example, here too the black king lacks protection.

36. ♗d6 ♕a8

36...exf3 is insufficient: 37.♞c7 ♔b6 38.♞xb7+ ♔c6 39.♞dd7 fxg2 40.♞bc7+ ♔d5 (40...♔b6 41.♗c8+ ♔b5 42.♞d5+ ♔b4 43.♞d4+ ♔b5 44.a4+ ♔a5 45.♞c5#) 41.♗xf7+ ♔e4 42.♞c4+ ♔e3 43.♗xh6 g1♖+ 44.♞c1.

37. ♗c8+! ♔b7 38. ♞d7+ ♔b8

39. ♗d6 ♖f8 40. ♞c8+

Winning straight away, but 40.♞c4! would have been a more thematic finish.

40... ♖xc8 41. ♗xc8 e3 42. ♔c2 1-0

Know Your Endgames

In order to confidently decide on a transposition to the endgame while maintaining the same material imbalance, you will have to know some basic guidelines. When pawns have remained on one wing, the material balance is crucial. With an equal number of pawns, the rooks may attack one twice, and with the counterpart's queen and king defending you may hope to trans- pose into a won pawn ending. So for the

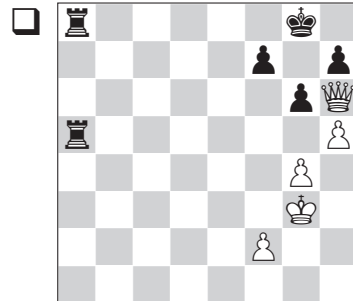
side defending with the queen it will be wise to exchange as many pawns as possible, increasing the chances that the pawn ending may be drawn.

Let's look at a well-known example:

Peter Leko

Vladimir Kramnik

Brissago Wch m 2004 (1)



44. ♖f4?

44.hxg6 hxg6 45.g5 ♞f5 46.f4 ♞a4 47.♖h4, and now the pawn ending is drawn after 47...♞axf4 48.♖xf4 ♞xf4 49.♔xf4 ♔f8 50.♔e4, though after 47...♞a3+ the position also seems hopeless for White, as now the pawn ending is lost after 48.♔g4 ♞xf4+ 49.♔xf4 ♞a4+ 50.♔g3 ♞xh4 51.♔xh4 ♔f8 52.♔g4 ♔e7 53.♔f4 ♔d6.

44...g5!

Black uses tactical means to achieve his strategic goal, i.e. keeping all three pawns on the board, thus rendering the transposition into a pawn ending that is easily winning.

45. ♖f6 h6 46.f3

46.♖xh6 ♞8a6.

46...♞5a6 47. ♖c3 ♞a4

Black now starts a standard plan: regrouping his rooks to attack the most backward pawn.

48. ♖c6 ♞8a6 49. ♖e8+ ♔g7

50. ♖b5 ♞4a5 51. ♖b4 ♞d5 52. ♖b3

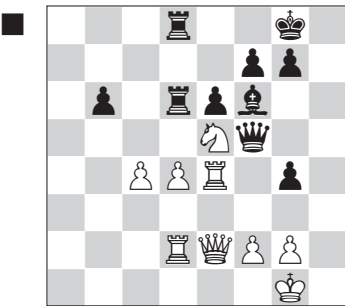
♠ad6 53. ♖c4 ♜d3 54. ♔f2 ♠a3
55. ♖c5 ♠a2+ 56. ♔g3 ♜f6 57. ♖b4
♠aa6 58. ♔g2 ♜f4 59. ♖b2+ ♠af6

Mission accomplished, and the game is also immediately won.

60. ♖e5 ♜xf3 61. ♠a1 ♜f1 62. ♖c3
♜f2+ 63. ♔g3 ♜2f3+ 64. ♖xf3
♜xf3+ 65. ♔xf3 ♔f6 0-1

Anton Korobov
Bartłomiej Maciejka

Lublin POL-UKR 2012



40...g3!

Black prepares the exchange of his queen for the two rooks. Very cleverly, he first weakens the white pawn structure. The immediate 40...♔xe5 41.♜xe5 ♜xd4 42.♜xf5 ♜xd2 is less clear: 43.♖xg4 exf5 44.♖xf5, and White threatens to liquidate the queenside with c4-c5.

41.fxg3 ♔xe5 42.♜xe5 ♜xd4 43.♜xf5
43.♜xd4 ♖b1+ 44.♔h2 ♜xd4 is no picnic either.

43...♜xd2 44. ♖e3 exf5 45. ♖xb6

The loss of the b-pawn is of small significance: Black will definitely win back the c-pawn. White will then be left with a heavily damaged pawn structure on the kingside – as we know, an easy prey for the rooks.

45...♜c8 46. ♖a6 ♜dd8 47. ♔h2 ♜c5
48.g4 fxg4 49. ♔g3 ♜dc8 50. ♔xg4
♜xc4+ 51. ♔g3 ♜4c6

As White is a pawn down, here the transposition into the pawn endgame leaves not a single doubt

52. ♖b7 ♜g6+ 53. ♔h2 ♜h6+ 54. ♔g1
♜c1+ 55. ♔f2 ♜f6+ 56. ♔g3 ♜h1
57. ♖b8+ ♔h7 58. ♖e5 ♜e6 59. ♖c7
♜h5 60. ♔f2 ♜g5 61. ♔g1 ♜e1+
62. ♔f2 ♜e6 63. ♔g1 ♜f6 64. ♖h2+
♔g6 65. ♖c7 ♠a6 66. ♖c2+ ♔h6
67. ♖c3 ♜d6 68. ♖h3+ ♔g6
69. ♖b3 ♜d2 70. ♔h1 ♜d6 71. ♔g1
♜gd5 72. ♖c2+ ♔h6 73. ♔h2 ♜d3
74. ♖c4 ♔h7 75. ♖e4+ g6 76. ♖f4
♔g8 77. ♖e5 ♜6d5 78. ♖e2 ♜d1
79. ♖e8+ ♔g7 80. ♖e3 ♜h5+
81. ♔g3 ♜f1 82. ♖d2 ♔h7 83. ♖e3
♜ff5 84. ♖e7 ♔g7 85. ♖d8 ♜fg5+
86. ♔f2 ♜d5 87. ♖c7 ♜hf5+ 88. ♔g1
♜d1+ 89. ♔h2 ♜h5+ 90. ♔g3 ♜d3+
91. ♔f2 ♜g5

Black has cleverly avoided all checks, and with his king well protected he now soon wins the g-pawn and the game.

92. ♔g1 ♜d1+ 93. ♔h2 ♜f1 94. ♖c3+
♔h7 95. ♖c7 ♜f2 96. ♔h1 ♜gxcg2
97. ♖c4 ♜h2+ 98. ♔g1 ♜hg2+
99. ♔h1 ♜g5 0-1

Summary

Before liquidating to a ♖ vs ♜♜ position, carefully consider the activity of both the rooks or the queen. As – fortunately – chess is not a simple game, other factors will also be of typical importance. Keep your eyes open for a vulnerable king or a devastating cooperation with other pieces. Be careful out there!