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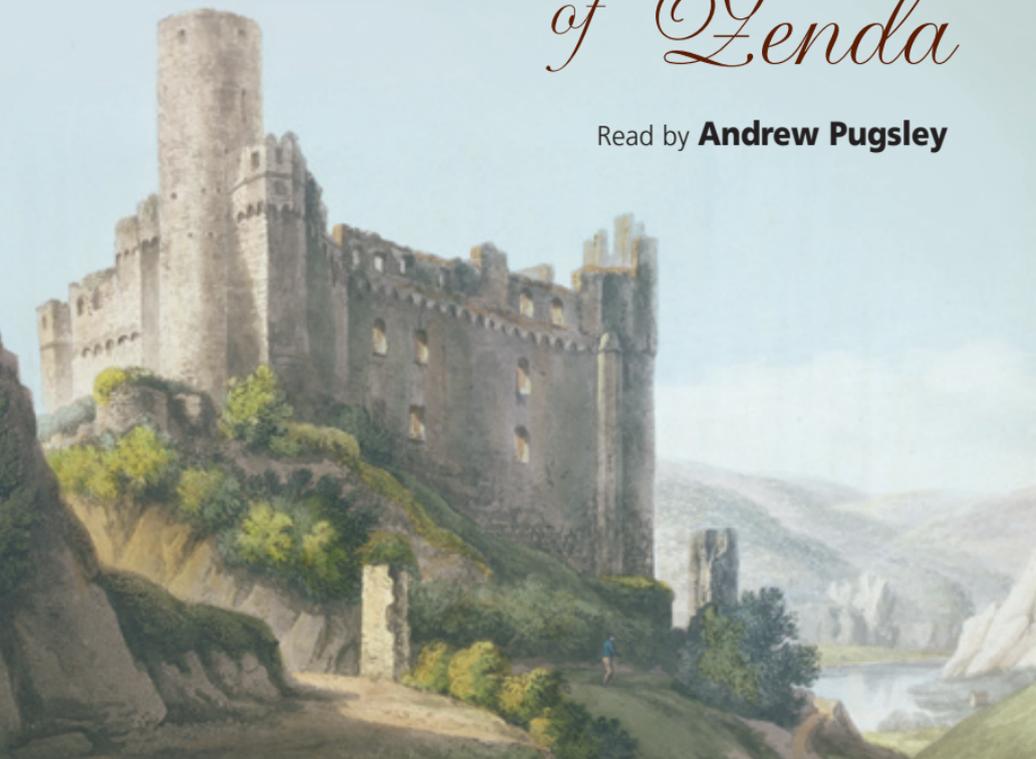
**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

**Anthony Hope**

*The Prisoner  
of Zenda*

Read by **Andrew Pugsley**



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<b>1</b>	<b><i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i> by Anthony Hope – Chapter 1</b>	3:56
2	Well then – and I must premise that I am going...	4:11
3	‘The difference between you and Robert,’ said my sister-in-law...	5:03
4	Chapter 2: Concerning the Colour of Men’s Hair	4:47
5	‘You’ve got a charming travelling companion,’ he said...	4:05
6	I threw myself back in my deep armchair...	4:56
7	Chapter 3: A Merry Evening with a Distant Relative	5:20
8	‘He’s the height, too!’ I heard the elder murmur...	5:18
9	‘Enough, sire,’ said I. ‘I’ll leave Ruritania today.’	5:49
10	Chapter 4: The King Keeps His Appointment	4:38
11	‘The King would never forgive it,’ I stammered.	3:44
12	I put the King’s helmet on my head.	4:51
13	Chapter 5: The Adventures of an Understudy	4:47
14	‘Why this change in our order, Marshal?’ said I.	5:05
15	And then came the Duke of Strelsau.	4:52
16	Chapter 6: The Secret of a Cellar	5:20
17	‘I shall be sorry for the doorkeeper if Michael finds out...’	3:54
18	‘To Zenda, then!’ and setting spurs to his horse, galloped on.	4:14
19	Chapter 7: His Majesty Sleeps in Strelsau	4:42
20	‘Perhaps,’ said Sapt. ‘Come! To Strelsau!’	4:25

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21	Pausing an instant, we made a bandage...	4:18
22	Chapter 8: A Fair Cousin and a Dark Brother	4:37
23	I ordered my horse...	4:18
24	As I spoke, there came a cheer from the street.	3:48
25	Then, fearing Michael would say something...	3:19
26	Chapter 9: A New Use for a Tea-table	4:46
27	'Ask him what woman would do most to prevent...'	5:02
28	'I have my game to play too. If he finds out...'	3:42
29	I took up the little iron table.	3:15
30	Chapter 10: A Great Chance for a Villain	5:16
31	The ball was a sumptuous affair.	4:57
32	I met his eye full and square...	5:20
33	Chapter 11: Hunting a Very Big Boar	4:27
34	Soon I tore myself away from her...	6:05
35	Our plans were now all made...	5:42
36	Chapter 12: I Receive a Visitor and Bait a Hook	5:37
37	'If my brother has scarlet fever,' said I...	4:07
38	'Well, how is Johann?' I asked...	4:58
39	Chapter 13: An Improvement on Jacob's Ladder	4:55
40	I suppose that I was put to bed...	5:12

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41	The fellow's story was rudely told...	4:45
42	Chapter 14: A Night Outside the Castle	4:19
43	Late next night I rose from table...	4:33
44	Leaving him where he lay, a huddled mass...	5:41
45	Chapter 15: I Talk with a Tempter	5:20
46	He promised to obey me, and I rode on...	4:37
47	'I'll hear nothing from Black Michael,' said I.	4:49
48	Chapter 16: A Desperate Plan.	5:25
49	'And how do they guard the King now?' I asked...	4:40
50	Here is the plan I had made.	4:40
51	Chapter 17: Young Rupert's Midnight Diversions	4:44
52	The drawbridge was still in its place.	4:54
53	'Enough, enough! We mustn't quarrel, Rupert.'	4:24
54	Chapter 18: The Forcing of the Trap	4:43
55	What became of him then?	4:01
56	No glory do I take for that contest.	4:04
57	Chapter 19: Face to Face in the Forest	4:33
58	At that very moment I heard a rush of feet...	4:52
59	Presently he rode towards me, keeping his distance...	5:00
60	Chapter 20: The Prisoner and the King	4:04

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61	The same moment found my friends on the scene.	4:17
62	The enterprise of the King's rescue...	4:41
63	But at this moment Sapt came riding from the Castle...	4:15
64	Chapter 21: If love were all!	5:12
65	Outside, Fritz turned, not to the right...	5:23
66	I made no answer.	5:49
67	Chapter 22: Present, Past – and Future?	4:22
68	I had one more battle left to fight...	3:49
69	'It's a remarkable likeness, you see,' said I.	3:22
70	Thus led, my broodings leave the future...	3:58

**Total time: 5:27:53**

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## Anthony Hope

(1863–1933)

# *The Prisoner of Zenda*

Anthony Hope Hawkins was, like his hero Rudolph Rassendyll in *The Prisoner of Zenda*, the epitome of the English gentleman. He had an exemplary education: Marlborough public school, then Balliol College, Oxford, where he achieved a first-class degree and was President of the Union. In 1887 he took silk, and became a barrister. Under the pen-name of Anthony Hope he had begun to write short stories and novels, which met with little popular success. He nevertheless felt drawn to the literary world, even though writing fiction conflicted with his legal work. And then, in 1893, as he recalled in his autobiography: 'I was walking back from Westminster County Court, when the idea of Ruritania came into my head.'

*The Prisoner of Zenda*, the result of Hope's idea of Ruritania, was a hugely successful novel, and it gave the English language a new adjective: 'Ruritanian'. Published in 1894, it went into several editions, was turned into a stage play, and

has also been filmed several times, firstly in the silent era in 1913 and then in 1922, with Ramon Navarro. The classic version is perhaps that of 1937, which starred Ronald Colman, followed closely by the 1952 version with Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr and James Mason. In 1979 Peter Sellers appeared in a knockabout satirical version.

The book has as its hero the red-haired Rudolph Rassendyll, a minor English aristocrat who, through a common ancestor in the 18th century, bears an uncanny resemblance to Rudolph Elphberg, who is about to be crowned King of Ruritania. Travelling to Ruritania out of curiosity to see the coronation, Rassendyll becomes enmeshed in court and political intrigue when the future King's younger brother, 'Black' Michael, attempts to usurp the throne. Michael's plan is to drug his brother and so delay the coronation, but he is foiled by the King's faithful officers, Colonel Sapt and Von Tarlenheim, who persuade

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Rassendyll to take advantage of his close likeness to the future King and impersonate him at the coronation. Their plan is successful until Michael finds the real King in hiding, and imprisons him in the dungeon at Zenda castle. Rassendyll, while still pretending to be the King, works on a plan to release the rightful monarch. The situation is further complicated when Rassendyll falls in love with the King's intended bride, Princess Flavia, who is unaware of the impersonation. The subsequent adventures, and the sense of ironic playfulness throughout, have been models for many similar adventures in other novels, and a score of swashbuckling film scripts.

*The Prisoner of Zenda* is a classic novel in the new 'romantic' genre that was so popular at the end of the 19th century. Hope said of this genre: 'From romance we gain fresh courage, fresh aspiration, fresh confidence in the power of the human spirit and in the unconquered confidence of the human mind.' Less academically, he also stated that those who enjoyed romantic fiction 'dream, and are none the worse for their dreams'.

It is interesting to consider why a taste developed in the late 19th century for tales set in imaginary, fanciful kingdoms

somewhere in Europe, where monarchs are under threat from rival usurpers, and a hero aids the struggle for the rightful monarch to prevail. Ruritania was one of many such. Hope created another, Kravonia, in a later novel, *Sophy of Kravonia* (1906); Dracula's Transylvania might also be included in this list.

In the Europe of 1894 the political balance showed signs of change. England was experiencing social unrest and a growth of radicalism. There was political uncertainty in Bulgaria and Hungary. In Russia Tsar Nicolas II, a weak man manipulated by the monk Rasputin, ascended the throne. Nicolas would be the last Tsar, his poor government leading to the Russian revolution – a sequence of events that might itself be the outline of a plot for a Ruritanian adventure! The French President was assassinated by an Italian anarchist, and the infamous Dreyfus case uncovered corruption in the French government at the highest level. Concern also grew about the territorial ambitions of the German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II. It is no wonder that escapist literature such as *The Prisoner of Zenda* proved to be so popular.

The indolent Englishman Rudolph

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Rassendyll spawned other fictional heroes who, without a sense of purpose, find their true role in life only through action for a cause; examples are Richard Hannay in John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* or Bulldog Drummond in Herman McNeile's eponymous novel. Hope instils the feudal ideas of loyalty, allegiance and even courtly love into the modern Englishman, Rassendyll, by placing him in a fantasy land in which time seems to have stood still, in which such medieval virtues are still pertinent. Rassendyll returns to late-19th-century England with these virtues that ought to belong to every Victorian gentleman still intact and indeed reinforced, ready to be utilised in the modern world. His moral rectitude, particularly in his treatment of Princess Flavia, is an example of behaviour found lacking in the true King (who did not have the advantage of an English education). There is no doubt that Hope wanted to create a hero who would be a role-model for the England of 1894. Rassendyll is not without vulnerability, however. The flashy and reckless Rupert of Hentzau, almost Rassendyll's equal in class and intelligence yet on the other side in the conspiracy, sows the seed of dishonour in Rassendyll's mind regarding the ultra-feminine Princess Flavia.

Should he follow Love or Honour? It provides a few tricky moments of indecision on our hero's part. Honour of course prevails.

In response to the success of *The Prisoner of Zenda* Hope gave up the law to be a full-time writer. His dashing character Rupert of Hentzau gave his name to a swashbuckling sequel in 1898, but Hope never quite achieved again the same popular triumph. (In another vein entirely was his *The Dolly Dialogues*, also published in 1894; this satire on late-Victorian society manners, witty and flirtatious in tone, can still charm today.) In 1914, with the outbreak of war, Hope was drafted in to assist the English government in their efforts to counter German propaganda. His literary skills, as exemplified in *The Prisoner of Zenda*, were so effective that he received a knighthood for his services in 1918.

Hope was modest about the achievement of his famous novel: 'The root idea is of course merely a variation on an old and widespread theme of mistaken identity ... I think that two variations which struck the popular fancy in my little book were royalty and red hair.'

**Notes by David Timson**



**Andrew Pugsley** gained an MA (Honours) degree in English Literature from Edinburgh University before going on to study Musical Theatre at the Circle In The Square Theatre School in New York. His theatre credits include Claus in *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus* (Big Wooden Horse Theatre Company), Black Dog in *Treasure Island* (UK Tour) and Count Fosco in *The Woman in White* (The Carriageworks, Leeds). His screen and radio credits include PC Walker in *Police Federation Bravery Reconstructions* and Thomas Winter in *The Penny Dreadfuls Present: Guy Fawkes* (BBC Radio 4).

## Credits

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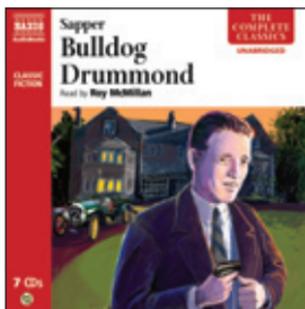
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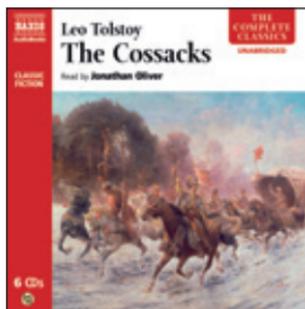
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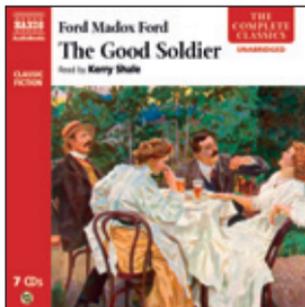
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**Anthony Hope**

*The Prisoner  
of Zenda*

Read by **Andrew Pugsley**

*The Prisoner of Zenda* is a classic mistaken-identity thriller. Rudolph Rassendyll, a dashing English gentleman travelling in Ruritania, bears an uncanny resemblance to its future monarch. This likeness draws him into a world of treachery, when Rassendyll is called upon to save the future King who has been imprisoned by his scheming brother 'Black' Michael.

Packed with romance and swashbuckling action, the tale is considered by some to be the best adventure story ever written.



**Andrew Pugsley's** theatre credits include Black Dog in *Treasure Island* (UK Tour) and Count Fosco in *The Woman in White* (The Carriageworks, Leeds). His radio credits include Thomas Winter in *The Penny Dreadfuls Present: Guy Fawkes* (BBC Radio 4).

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