

The Prisoner of Zenda

Anthony Hope



'He has the same hair and the same face! He is the King!'

Rudolf of Elphberg is about to become the new King of Ruritania. Young Rudolf Rassendyll of England, the 'double' of the new king, is in Ruritania for the coronation.

And when Black Michael kidnaps the King, only Rudolf can save him

Level 2 Pre-Intermediate

with
glossary
&
activities

Part 1

Glossary **9**

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People in the story

Rudolf Rassendyll – Young English gentleman visiting Ruritania. 'Double' of Rudolf Elphberg

Rudolf Elphberg – new King of Ruritania.

Princess Flavia – soon to marry King Rudolf.

Sapt & Fritz – loyal friends of King Rudolf

Black Michael – wants to replace Rudolf as King

Antoinette de Mauban –mistress of Black Michael

Places in the story

London - where Rudolf comes from,

Paris - where Rudolf first sees Antoinette

Ruritania – country in central Europe

Strelsau – capital of Ruritania

Zenda - another town in Ruritania.

'What are you going to do, [Rudolf](#)?' said Rose.
'You're twenty-nine, but you don't work. You don't do anything! The red-haired Rassendylls are all the same!'

My brother Robert came into the room.
Rose is Robert's wife.

'Rose wants me to work, Robert,' I said. I looked at Rose and smiled. 'And she doesn't like my red hair.'

'You have red hair and the Elphberg nose, too,' Robert said. .

I am a distant cousin of Prince [Rudolf Elphberg of Ruritania](#). People said that we looked like identical twins. I was the '[double](#)' of the new king.

'But you don't do anything, Rudolf' said Rose.

'I'll find a job,' I said.
'But first I want to go away for six months.'

'Where will you go?'
'I'm not sure. Did you see that story about Ruritania in The Times?'

Robert nodded.
'Young Rudolf the Fifth is about to become King.'

'Perhaps I could go to his [coronation](#) in [Strelsau](#).'

Robert and Rose looked at me in horror. No Rassendylls had ever been to Ruritania. "Rudolf, you can't! People will mistake you for the new king."

'I was only joking,' I lied. 'I'm going to go walking in Austria.'

Journey to Strelsau

I went first to Paris. I stayed a night with my friend George. 'Two of the most famous people in Ruritania have been here in Paris,' he told me.

'The beautiful and '[Black](#)' [Michael](#).'

'Tell me about them.'

'Antoinette is a rich young woman. She's in love with Black Michael - he's the half-brother of the new King. Many people in Ruritania don't like him.'

'Is Black Michael in Paris now?' I asked.

'No. He's in Ruritania for the Coronation,' said George. 'But I don't think that Michael will marry Antoinette. He wants to marry the Princess.'

The next day George and I went to the station. I bought my ticket. George talked to a very beautiful woman. 'You're lucky!' he told me after. 'That's Antoinette de Mauban. She's also going to Dresden.'

But Antoinette did not speak to me on the train. When we crossed into [Ruritania](#) I asked the ticket collector about hotels in Strelsau.

'You won't find a hotel in there tonight,' he said. 'There are too many people there for the Coronation.'

I quickly changed my plans, and got off the train at [Zenda](#). Zenda is a quiet town with a famous castle. It is about fifty miles from Strelsau.



The New King

I watched the train move away. Antoinette stayed on the train.

I went into the town. An old lady gave me a room in her hotel. I could see the castle from the hotel. It was about a mile from the town.

I had dinner with the old woman and her daughter. 'It's Michael of Strelsau castle,' said the old lady. 'He lives here in Ruritania. The new King only came back to the country last week.'

'And now no one knows him,' said the daughter. 'My Johan told me.'

'Johan works for Michael in his [forest](#),' said the old lady. 'He has a hunting-lodge there. The King is staying in the hunting-lodge now. He only

likes hunting, and drinking and pretty girls. I want Michael to be King.'

'I don't like Black Michael,' said the daughter. 'I want an Elphberg with red hair.' She looked at me and laughed.

'Where is Michael now?' I asked.

'He's in Strelsau for the Coronation.'

'Then why is the King here? Are he and Michael friends?'

'Yes,' said the old woman.

The daughter laughed. 'Two men want to be King. And two men want the same wife.'

'Who do they want to marry?' I asked.

'Princess Flavia,' she said. 'Black Michael -'

Suddenly we heard an angry voice. 'Who said, 'Black Michael?'

It was Johan. He saw me and stopped.

'What's the matter, Johan?' asked the daughter. 'This young man is from England. . He wants to see the Coronation on Wednesday.'

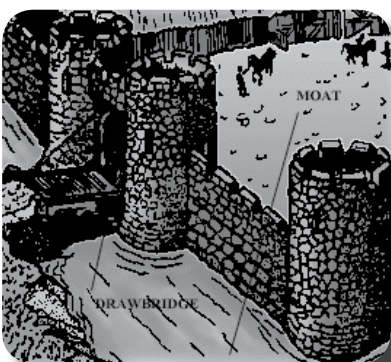
Johan left the room. The daughter said, 'Johan doesn't like the colour of your hair.'

I smiled and said, 'The colour of a man's hair is not important.'

But I was wrong!

The Castle

The next morning I sent my bags to Strelsau. My plan was to catch the train at a small station on the other side of the forest. I walked up the hill to the Castle. Behind a very



big old building there was a new building. Between the two buildings there was a **moat**. A **drawbridge** crossed the moat. I walked on into the forest. It was very beautiful. After some time I became tired. I

sat against a tree and closed my eyes.

Suddenly I heard a voice.

'It isn't possible! He is the King.'

I opened my eyes and saw two men. One was short and strong. The other was younger and darker. I stood up and smiled. The younger man also smiled

'This is Sapt. My name is Fritz. We work for the King of Ruritania.'

I took off my hat and answered. 'I am Rudolf Rassendyll. I come from England.'

Sapt looked at me. Suddenly he said, 'Your hair tells me your story. Everyone here in Ruritania knows about Amelia.'

Suddenly we heard a voice. 'It's the King,' said Fritz.

Danger

A young man came up to us. I looked at him - and it was like looking in a mirror! We were identical! The King of Ruritania was Rudolf Rassendyll. Rudolf Rassendyll was the King.

'Sapt - Fritz - who is this man?'

Sapt came between the King and me. He said something in the King's ear. The King did not speak. Then he began to laugh.

'What are you doing here in Ruritania?'

'I am going to the Coronation in Strelsau.'

The King laughed again. 'What will Michael say? Now he has two brothers.' 'You mustn't go to Strelsau,' said Sapt. 'There is danger there.'

'I will leave Ruritania today,' I told the King.

'No, you must stay have dinner with me ' he answered.'

'But were leaving early tomorrow,' said Fritz.

'I know,' said the King. 'But I don't meet a new 'brother' every day. Well have dinner tonight.'

A present from Black Michael

We walked to the **hunting lodge**. It was a small building. A little man met us. His name was Joseph.

That night we ate a very big dinner. We also drank many bottles of wine. Fritz tried to stop the King. 'We must leave early tomorrow morning,' he said.

But the King did not stop. At midnight Joseph came into the room with a very old bottle of wine. 'This is from Michael of Strelsau,' said Joseph.

'Thank you, Black Michael!' said the King. 'Open the bottle!'

Joseph opened the bottle. The King drank a glass. Then he took the bottle and drank all the wine. That is all I remember of that night.

A King Goes To Strelsau

I opened my eyes. My face, hair and clothes were all wet. Sapt and Fritz were near me. I was very angry.

'Why did you throw water over me?'

'Its five o'clock,' said Sapt. 'And look at the King.'

The King was on the floor. His face was red. Sapt kicked him. He did not move.

'We threw water over him, too,' said Fritz. 'But it was no good.'

I looked at Sapt and Fritz. We were afraid. I remembered the last bottle - what was in it?'

'We must get a doctor.'

'There's no doctor near here,' said Sapt. 'And a thousand doctor cannot help us. He will not move for six or seven hours.'

'What about the Coronation?'

'The King is ill,' said Fritz. 'We must send a message to Strelsau.'

'Nobody will believe it,' said Sapt. 'And Black Michael knows that.'

'Half the people in Strelsau want Black Michael to be King,' said Sapt. 'And now it will happen.'

We said nothing. Then Sapt spoke to me. 'You can help us,' he said. 'You can go to Strelsau. You can be the King at the coronation.'

'But it is not possible!' I said.

'There is some danger. Are you afraid?'

'Don't say that!'

'I'm sorry,' said Sapt. 'But the King is in great danger.'

I did not answer. Sapt looked at me. 'Will you go?'

'Yes, I'll go,' I said.

'Tonight we will be in the Palace,' said Sapt. 'Fritz will keep everyone away from the Kings bedroom. You and I will ride back here.'

'And then what will happen?'

'The King will ride with me to Strelsau. You will leave the country.'

Sapt left the room. He returned with Joseph. A few minutes later they began to cut the hair from my face.

'What will you do with the King?' I asked.

'I'll leave him in the wine **cellar**.'

'What will happen if they find him?'

'They won't find him. Joseph will stop them. But we can't escape danger.'

Joseph worked on me for half an hour. After Fritz said, 'Well do it!'



I was the king

I got off the train in Strelsau. Fritz and Sapt walked behind me.

Many important men were at the station. But Black Michael did not come to meet

us.

We travelled on horses through Strelsau. Near the palace there were many people on the streets. Some threw flowers at me. I caught one and wore it on my coat.

Now I was not afraid. I was the King. Then I looked up and saw - Antoinette de Mauban!

She looked at me for a long time. Her mouth moved. I put my hand down to my gun. But nothing happened.

I walked past the great men and beautiful women. I heard music. After some time we came to a beautiful old church.

I only remember two things about the coronation. One was the face of a beautiful girl with red hair. The other was my 'brother', Black Michael.

The woman with red hair came to me from her place. Somebody called out, 'The Princess Flavia!'

You must be careful

The princess took my hand and kissed it. I kissed her twice on the face. She was very beautiful!

Michael came and kissed my hand. He did not look at me. He was afraid.

We went back to the palace with Princess Flavia. I heard people call from the street for Black Michael. Someone said, 'When are you going to marry her?'

Princess Flavia sat beside me. 'Your face is different today, Rudolf,' she said suddenly.

I was a little afraid.

'Its thinner and - nicer.' She smiled. Then she said quietly. 'You must be careful about Black Michael. He wants -'

'I know! He wants to be King. He wants to marry a princess. But perhaps I will marry her one day.'

Princess Flavia looked at me, but she said nothing. Then I heard music and the sound of guns. We were at the Palace.

Later that night I sat with Fritz and Sapt. We were in one of the Kings rooms. I was very tired. Sapt and Fritz were happy.

'You'll remember this day!' said Fritz. 'But you must be careful. Black Michael looked very angry. You talked to the Princess for a long time.'

'She is very beautiful!' I said.

'Forget her,' said Sapt. 'We must go. Are you ready?'

The road to Zenda

**I
was
Afraid**

I was ready, but I did not want to go. It was five o'clock.

'In seven hours I will be Rudolf Rassendyll again.'

'You will stay here, Fritz,' said Sapt.

'Remember, the King is very tired. He does not want to see anybody.'

Sapt then turned to me. 'Put on this coat and hat. You'll look like one of my men.'

Sapt took me through a secret door in the wall. We came out on a quiet street behind the Palace gardens. A man was there with two horses for us. We rode out of the city and on to the road to Zenda.

Three hours later Sapt suddenly stopped. 'Listen!' he said.

They may be waiting

I listened and heard the sound of horses. They were only a mile behind us. We rode on and came to the forest of Zenda. We hid the horses and waited behind a tree. Sapt had his gun in his hand.

The horses came nearer. It was Black Michael. A second man was with him. They

came very close to us and stopped.

'Which way?' asked Black Michael.

'To the Castle, my Lord. We must find out what has happened.'

Black Michael hesitated. 'I thought I heard horses,' he said.

'I didn't hear anything,' said the second man.

'Why don't we go to the hunting-lodge?'

'Because they may be waiting for us there. The message said, 'All is well.' And we don't want to lose time.'

Michael hesitated a moment longer. Sapt put his hand on his gun. Finally Black Michael cried 'To Zenda!' and they rode away.

Is the King Safe?

We waited for ten minutes before coming out. Sapt said, 'They've sent him news that 'all is well' 'But what does that mean?' I asked. 'I don't know,' said Sapt. 'I just hope the King is safe. Let's ride to the lodge as fast as we can.'

We rode on to the lodge in worried silence. 'All is well'. What did it mean? Was all well with the King?

At last the lodge came into sight. We rode up to the gate and We got off our horses. All was quiet.

Suddenly Sapt caught me by the arm. 'Look there!' he said pointing to the ground. 'Someone has just been here.'

We hurried towards the door. It was unlocked. We went into the room where we had been the night before. There was food from our dinner and bottles on the table.

We went down the stairs. The door the wine cellar was open. Suddenly Sapt cried out. His face went white. I looked down and saw

Joseph on the floor. He was dead.

Sapt looked at me. 'Where is the King?' he cried.

'The King is not here,' I answered.

Where is the king?

I helped Sapt up the stairs. For ten minutes we sat in silence. Then Sapt took his hands from his face and said, 'They've got the King!'

'Yes,' I answered. 'That was the message to Black Michael. "All is well". When did he get it?'

'He had the message before your coronation. But what is he doing now?'

I stood up. 'We must go back to Strelsau,' I said. 'We'll get every man in the city. Then we'll fight Michael.'

Sapt did not answer.

'We can't stay here,' I said. 'The King is in danger. Come on. We must go.'

Again Sapt did not answer. Suddenly he began to laugh. 'Yes, we'll go back to Strelsau. The King will be in his Palace again.'

'I don't understand.'

'We cannot tell the people our story. They'll be very angry us - and with the King, too. Black Michael will tell his story. And they will believe him.'

Sapt got up. He put his hand on my arm. 'You can help the King. Go back and be the King.'

'But Michael knows -'

'Yes, but they can't say anything,' said Sapt. 'They cannot say, "This man is not the King. The King is our prisoner." But we must



have a King in Strelsau.'

'But will they kill the King?'

'No, they won't. It's too dangerous for them. Come back to Strelsau with me.'

Will they try to kill me?

Sapt went and found some new horses. I carried Joseph up the stairs.

'Come on,' said Sapt. 'We must go now.'

We went outside. Far away I could see men on horses. 'Michael's men are coming here,' I said. 'We must do something for poor Joseph.'

We hid with our horses behind the lodge. After a few minutes we heard a voice.

'Now!' said Sapt.

We rode to the front of the lodge and fought Michael's men. I killed two men. Sapt killed one. Someone cut my hand.

We rode away fast. 'That was for little Joseph!' I said.

We came to Strelsau in the early morning. We rode in the same gate. We were very tired. The streets were very quiet after the coronation.

We went to the King's rooms in the Palace. We found Fritz. He looked at me. 'The King!' he said.

Sapt smiled. 'You're doing well, boy,' he said to me.

Fritz looked at me again. 'Whereas the King?' he said.

'He is in the hands of Black Michael.'

Somebody came to the door. Sapt turned to me. 'Go into the bedroom. Take off your hat and shoes. Get into bed. Remember, you're now the King!'

A King works very hard. After breakfast I met many important people. For many hours I

could not talk to Fritz and Sapt.

That night they came to my room.

'We must do something,' said Fritz. 'Are we going after Black Michael?'

'No, we can't,' said Sapt. 'We can't tell anybody about Black Michael. And he can't tell anybody out us.'

'He'll kill the King,' said Fritz.

'He won't,' said Sapt. 'Black Michael is back in Strelsau. Some of his men are with him. The others are in Zenda with the King.'

'Will they try to kill me?' I asked.

'Perhaps,' said Sapt. 'You must be very careful. But we cannot do anything now. We must wait.'

A Visit

The next day I went to see the Princess Flavia.

'The people speak well of their King,' she said. 'But what do I call you now?'

'Please call me by my name.'

'Thank you, Rudolf.'

'My brother is back in Strelsau,' I said.

I saw from her face that she did not like him! This made me very happy.

We talked a little more until we heard the sound of a horse. Princess Flavia ran to the window.

'It's Michael of Strelsau!' she said

I smiled. The Princess went back to her seat. I talked about different things.

Suddenly the Princess said, 'Are you trying to make him angry?'

'Who?'

'Michael is waiting outside.'

'Why doesn't he come in?'

She looked surprised. 'You are in the room, Rudolf. Nobody can come in with the



King here. You know that!

'I'm sorry,' I said. 'I never remember these things.'

I opened the door. Michael sat at a table. He looked very angry. Three more men stood near him.

'My dear brother,' I said. 'It's good to see you.'

'You cut your hand,' he said. 'How did you do that?'

'In a game with a dog,' I said.

Black Michael looked at me. Suddenly he said, 'Will you meet my friends?'

'Be careful!'

They came and kissed my hand. The first was De Gautet. He was tall and thin. The second was a fat man called Bersonin. The third was the English man, Detchard. He had a red face and short yellow hair.

My brother and his friends left. Soon after I said goodbye to Princess Flavia.

'Rudolf,' she said. 'Be careful!'

'About what?'

'You know - I can't say. But remember you're important to Ruritania.'

'Am I only important to Ruritania?'

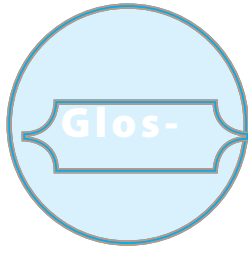
'You're important to your friends, too.'

'Friends?'

'And to a Princess,' she said in a quiet voice.

I could not speak. I kissed her hand and left.

End of Part 1



double - someone who looks exactly like someone else

cellar - room under building. Can be used to store wine

coronation - special ceremony to crown new king or queen

drawbridge - bridge over moat. Can be raised for defence

forest. - area of land covered by trees

hunting-lodge - holiday house in the country used for hunting animals

moat - water around a castle.

drawbridge - bridge over moat. You raise this to keep attackers out.

Before you read on:

What do you think will happen next?

What will happen to:

- a) the King b) Rudolf Rassendyll c) Black Michael
c) Princess Flavia d) Antoinette de Maubin***

Click here for more [activities](#)

Click here for [part 2:](#)