

简易英汉对照读物

The Prisoner of Zenda

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赞达的囚犯



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(简写本)

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前 言

安东尼·霍普·霍金斯爵士(Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins)生于一八六三年，在一八九四年写《赞达的囚犯》(*The Prisoner of Zenda*)一书之前，一直当律师。因本书颇受欢迎，作者便立志当一名专业作家。他用安东尼·霍普署名写过许多小说，但只有《鲁珀特·亨扎》(*Rupert of Hentzau*)与《赞达的囚犯》一样获得了成功。这两本书都是描写在一个虚构的国家鲁里塔尼亚所发生的富于浪漫色彩的冒险故事。

在《赞达的囚犯》一书中，有个名叫鲁道夫·拉森迪尔的青年，他长得很清秀，又有钱。他到鲁里塔尼亚去度假，因外貌长得同那个国家的国王很相象，从而保住了国王的王位和生命，同时，也赢得美丽的弗莱维娅公主的爱情。

《赞达的囚犯》是安东尼·霍普·霍金斯的成名之作，在世界上享有较高的声誉。这个简写本保留了原作的主要情节，语言流畅，通俗易懂，是大、中学生及自学英语者较好的课外读物。

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1. RUDOLF RASSENDYLL

Rose, my brother's wife, is a charming woman. She is seldom angry, but that morning, at breakfast, she was very angry.

"Rudolf," she began, "you're lazy. You're twenty-nine and so far you've done nothing. You've only wasted your life."

I said nothing, and she went on, "At twenty-nine, a man ought to have a good position. Why don't you work?"

"My dear Rose," I answered, "why should I work? I have plenty of money. My brother, Lord Burlesdon, is an important man. I have a good social position. My brother's wife is charming and"

"Listen, Rudolf! Listen! You must do something. You simply must. Think of all the years you've wasted!"

I drank my coffee and began thinking. No, she was wrong. I had not wasted my time. I had finished a German University. I was able to speak German as perfectly as I spoke English. I was also good at French. I had travelled far, and I knew a lot about other places and other peoples. I was a very good swordsman and horseman. No. Rose was wrong, but I didn't tell her so. While I was thinking what to say, my brother Robert entered the breakfast-room.

"Good morning," he greeted us. When he saw Rose's

angry face, he asked, "What is the matter?"

"I was telling Rudolf that he must do something."

"You're right, my dear. I think the same. I've thought so for a long time. What is more, I've found an interesting job for him."

"Oh!" I said, "What is it?"

"My old friend, Sir Jacob Borrodaile, will be an ambassador in six months' time. He'll take you with him as an attache."

"Where is he going?"

"To Ruritania."

That sounded interesting. Ruritania was the only country in central Europe that I had never visited. The idea pleased me. Rose looked at me and saw the interest on my face.

"You'll go with him, Rudolf, won't you?" she begged.

"I'll think about it," I answered.

"The work will be interesting and the experience useful," Robert said. "If you do well, you may be an ambassador yourself one day."

"Oh, Rudolf, do go!" Rose begged. She was no longer angry. She smiled at me as she said, "Do go to please me!"

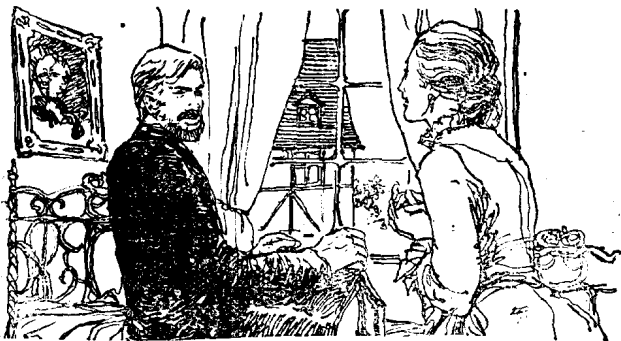
Rose is charming when she smiles. I could not refuse her. At the same time, I could not make a promise. "I'll think about it," I repeated. Then I added, "It will certainly be interesting. Yes, in six months' time, if Sir Jacob wants

me to go with him, I'll go with him."

"I'm so glad!" Rose said. My brother said nothing but he looked very pleased. We finished our breakfast happily.

Then came this question: What should I do in the next six months? I wanted to pass the time in an interesting way. At once I thought of travelling. Where should I go? Suddenly I had an idea. Why not go to Ruritania to look at the place? The Coronation of the young King, Rudolf the Fifth, was to take place within the next few weeks. That would be very interesting. A coronation is always an exciting event. There is music, dancing, great excitement in the streets, and joy everywhere. Yes, I decided I should go to see the Coronation in Strelsau, the capital of Ruritania.

At once I began to pack. I said nothing to my family about my plans. I never tell them where I am going. Usually they never ask me. This time Rose did.



"I'm going for a walking tour in the Alps," I told her.

"Oh, Rudolf! You'll be wasting your time again."

"Well, I may write a book on the life of the people there"

"That's a good idea," she said, her face brightening. "isn't it, Robert?"

"A very good idea," my brother agreed. "Write a book on the social and political problems of the place. If you do, you will make a name for yourself. Such a book will help your career."

I had spoken of a book only to please Rose. I did not mean to write one. All the same, I am writing a book. It is not about the Alps. It is not about social and political problems. It is not a book that will satisfy Rose or Robert. Never mind ! It satisfies me.

2. RASSENDYLL ARRIVES IN ZENDA

When I decide on a plan, I like to act on it at once. I left London for Ruritania the next day. On the way, the train stopped for an hour in Paris. My old friend, George, came to see me at the station. We had a cup of coffee together and then stood talking outside my carriage. "Excuse me a moment," he said suddenly and left me to speak to a lady. She was a very beautiful woman, tall and dark. She was beautifully dressed too. When he came back, he explained.

"That's Antoinette de Mauban, a very rich widow. Duke Michael of Strelsau, the brother of King Rudolf, is interested in her. She's on her way to Strelsau."

"For the Coronation?"

"For the Coronation and the Duke. They say she's very fond of him."

"She's very beautiful."

"She's travelling in your train. You may be able to talk to her."

The train whistled then and the guard waved his flag. I jumped into my carriage. Later, when I passed along the corridor on my way to the dining-car, I saw Antoinette de Mauban. She was reading and did not see me. She was still reading when I returned after lunch, so I had no chance to talk to her.

We reached the frontier of Ruritania late in the evening. The train stopped for the usual customs examination. The customs officer looked hard at me. "Does he think I'm a smuggler?" I wondered, "Or is it just my red hair?" People often stare at my hair, which is a flaming red. I had little luggage and nothing to declare. The customs officer soon left. I went out and bought a newspaper from a kiosk on the platform.

It was lucky that I bought that newspaper. There was some news in it that was important for me. The date of the Coronation had been changed. The new date was much earlier. It was the day after tomorrow. Already Strelsau

was crowded with people. Hotels were full, and so were private houses. There was no hope of my getting a room in Strelsau. Accordingly, I decided to stop at Zenda, a small town about fifty miles from the capital. My plan was to sleep there that night. I could spend the next day, Tuesday, walking in the forest. Then, early on Wednesday morning, I could take the train to Strelsau.

The train reached Zenda late in the evening. I got out and asked my way to the nearest inn. I was lucky. The inn was in a quiet spot. It had a fine view of Zenda's famous Castle, which was on a hill-top a mile away. Besides this, the old lady who kept the inn was kindness itself. She welcomed me very kindly. Her daughter, a very pretty girl, showed me to my room. This was very clean and comfortable. I could see the Castle from my window. Its white towers rose high above the green forest surrounding it. It looked like a castle in a fairy tale. I felt very glad that I had come. I washed and went downstairs for dinner.

The dinner was excellent. The old lady was certainly a very good cook. Her wine was beyond praise. The meal was served by her pretty daughter. I ate with a good appetite, enjoying everything. After dinner, we began talking in a friendly way. Naturally, we spoke about the Coronation.

"It's a pity that Duke Michael isn't King," the old lady said. "We all know the Duke. He lives among us. The King is so often abroad that we never see him. Few people

know what he looks like."

"Nobody knows what he looks like now," her daughter said, "because he's shaved off his beard."

"Who told you so?" her mother asked.

"Johann told me last night."

"Johann is the Duke's forest-guard," the old lady explained to me. "The King is staying here, in the Duke's hunting-lodge, till Wednesday."

This was interesting news. If I went for a walk in the forest, I might meet the King!

"Is the King fond of hunting?" I asked.

"Oh very! I wish he would stay at his hunting and let the Duke be King," the old lady said.

"I don't," said her daughter. "I hate Black Michael."

"Duke Michael," her mother corrected her, with a stern look.

"If the King is here, where is Duke Michael?" I asked.

"He's in Strelsau. He's arranging everything for the Coronation," the old lady answered.

"Then the King and his brother are friends?"

"Yes," said the old lady.

"No," said her daughter. "How can they be friends when they both want the throne and the Princess Flavia?"

"The Princess Flavia?"

"Yes, everybody knows that Black Michael — the Duke — is in love with his cousin, the Princess Flavia. Black Michael....." She stopped as the door opened suddenly and a

man came in.

"Who's talking about Black Michael?" the man asked. It was Johann, the Duke's forest-guard.

"I was," said the girl, looking a little afraid. But Johann was not looking at her. He was looking at me. He was looking at me as if I were a ghost. He showed the same astonishment that I had seen on the face of the customs officer.

"What's the matter, Johann?" the old lady asked. "This is an English gentleman who has travelled here to see the Coronation."



Johann seemed too astonished to speak.

"Good evening," I said to him.

"Good evening, sir," he answered.

I rose from the table. "I'm a little tired from my journey," I said. "I shall go to bed now. Good night to you

all." The daughter brought me a lamp and led me to my room. On the way, I asked her,

"Why was Johann so surprised to see me?"

"I think your hair surprised him, sir. It's so red. The King's hair is exactly the same colour. All our royal family have hair of that colour."

"And Johann doesn't like it?"

"He prefers black," she said with a laugh. "That's Black Michael's colour."

"I see."

"I like red — your colour," she said, laughing.

"That's nice of you," I said. I kissed her for her kindness and said "Good night" with a laugh.

3. RUDOLF RASSENDYLL MEETS

KING RUDOLF THE FIFTH

I'm fond of walking and so I set out early the next morning. I said goodbye to the kind old lady and her pretty daughter. Then I began my walk. It was a beautiful morning. The air was fresh. The sun was already bright and warm. I felt I could not leave Zenda without a visit to its famous old Castle. Accordingly, I began walking in that direction. I climbed the hill and was soon at the top.

The Castle was in front of me. It looked more than ever like a castle in a fairy story. It was very old. Fierce

battles had been fought there long ago. Although it was ancient, it was not a ruin. On the contrary, it was in a good state. Like most old castles, it was surrounded by a moat. Across the moat there was a drawbridge. When the drawbridge was drawn up, nobody could enter the Castle unless they swam across the moat. On the other side of the bridge, there was a modern building. This was the country-house of Duke Michael. It was a fine building. It made me think to myself, "Duke Michael has little to complain of. It is true that he cannot have the throne or the Princess, but what a beautiful house he has!"

The sun was now hot and I turned towards the forest where there was some shade. It was delightfully cool there. I walked among the trees for an hour or two. Then, feeling tired, I sat down to rest. I took out my pipe and began to smoke. It was so peaceful there that I felt free of all care. Soon I fell asleep.

A deep voice awoke me:

"If he had no beard, he would look exactly like the King."

"True. Nobody would see any difference," a quieter voice said.

I sat up. Two men were standing beside me and they were looking at me with great interest. Both men were dressed for hunting. The older man was rather short and stout. He had a big, square head, a grey moustache and small, blue eyes. The younger man was thin and dark. Both were