

**THE PRISONER OF ZENDA;
BEING THE HISTORY OF
THREE MONTHS IN THE LIFE
OF AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN**

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The prisoner of Zenda; being the history of three months in the life of an English gentleman by Anthony Hope

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ANTHONY HOPE

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OF AN ENGLISH GENTLEMAN**

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA



See page 160

1 . . . Sword in hand, vaulted over the parapet

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

*Being the history of three months in
the life of an English
Gentleman*

ANTHONY HOPE

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"Anthony Hope" was the pseudonym of Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins (1863-1933).

THE PRISONER OF ZENDA

CHAPTER I

THE RASSENDYLLS—WITH A WORD ON THE ELPHBERGS

"I WONDER when in the world you're going to do anything, Rudolf?" said my brother's wife.

"My dear Rose," I answered, laying down my egg-spoon, "why in the world should I do anything? My position is a comfortable one. I have an income nearly sufficient for my wants (no one's income is ever quite sufficient, you know), I enjoy an enviable social position: I am brother to Lord Burlesdon, and brother-in-law to that most charming lady, his countess. Behold, it is enough!"

"You are nine-and-twenty," she observed, "and you've done nothing but——"

"Knock about? It is true. Our family doesn't need to do things."

This remark of mine rather annoyed Rose, for everybody knows (and therefore there can be no harm in referring to the fact) that, pretty and accomplished as she herself is, her family is hardly of the same standing as the Rassendylls. Besides her attractions, she possessed a large fortune, and my brother Robert was wise enough not to mind about her ancestry. Ancestry is, in fact, a matter concerning which the next observation of Rose's has some truth.

"Good families are generally worse than any others," she said.

Upon this I stroked my hair: I knew quite well what she meant.