

The Most Dangerous Game

“Off there to the right—somewhere—is a large island”, said Whitney, peering through the dark night. It's rather a mystery.

“What island is it?” Rainsford asked, curious.

The old charts call it 'Ship-Trap Island,' Whitney replied. A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don't know why. Some superstition.

Ugh! It's like moist black velvet, Rainsford said as he tried to pierce the thick darkness surrounding the yacht.

Great sport, hunting, Rainsford remarked, turning his thoughts to their upcoming adventure.

The best sport in the world, agreed Whitney. For the hunter, not for the jaguar.

Don't talk rot, Whitney, said Rainsford. Who cares how a jaguar feels? They've no understanding.

Perhaps the jaguar does, observed Whitney quietly. They understand one thing—fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death.

Rainsford dismissed the idea with a laugh. This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. The world is made up of two classes—the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are hunters.

Question 1: What do Rainsford and Whitney disagree about regarding hunting?

- a) The best type of animal to hunt
- b) The feelings of the animals being hunted
- c) The best place to hunt
- d) The weather conditions during hunting

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat on the yacht, but the steady throb of the engine as it cut through the Caribbean Sea. The darkness was so complete that it felt like a heavy blanket pressing down on him, and he mused that he could sleep without closing his eyes.

Suddenly, a sharp sound broke the silence. Rainsford's ears, trained to detect the slightest noise in the wild, recognized it immediately—gunshots. Three of them, fired in quick succession. Startled, Rainsford jumped up and moved quickly to the rail, straining his eyes to see through the impenetrable darkness. He climbed onto the rail to get a better view, but in his haste, his pipe slipped from his mouth. Reaching out to grab it, he lost his balance and plunged into the warm waters of the Caribbean.

The water closed over Rainsford's head, and he struggled to the surface, choking and gasping for air. Desperately, he tried to swim after the yacht, but it was moving too quickly. The lights of the yacht grew fainter and fainter until they disappeared entirely, leaving Rainsford alone in the dark sea.

Remembering the gunshots, Rainsford began swimming in that direction. He fought the sea for what felt like an eternity, his strength waning with every stroke. Just as he was about to give up, he heard the sound of waves crashing against a rocky shore. With the last of his strength, he swam toward the sound and dragged himself onto the rocks. Exhausted, he collapsed and fell into the deepest sleep of his life.

Question 2: What causes Rainsford to fall into the sea?

- a) He was pushed by Whitney
- b) He lost his balance while reaching for his pipe
- c) He jumped off the yacht on purpose
- d) The yacht hit something and shook him off

Question 3: What does Rainsford decide to do after he falls into the sea?

- a) Swim back to the yacht
- b) Call for help
- c) Swim toward the sound of gunshots
- d) Wait for rescue

When Rainsford awoke, the sun was high in the sky, and the afternoon heat was intense. His hunger gnawed at him, and his first thought was of survival. Where there are gunshots, there are men. Where there are men, there is food, he told himself, pushing aside his fear.

The jungle that surrounded him was dense and overgrown, a tangled mass of trees and underbrush that seemed almost impenetrable. The jungle weeds were crushed down and the moss was *laden*; one patch of weeds was stained crimson. As he moved cautiously along the shore, he noticed signs of a struggle—a large animal had clearly thrashed about in the underbrush. Nearby, he spotted an empty cartridge case. A .22, he noted, puzzled. That's odd. It must have been a fairly large animal for such a light gun. The hunter must have had nerve.

Following the trail left by the hunter, Rainsford continued along the coastline until, as night began to fall, he came upon a remarkable sight. At the top of a high bluff stood a grand chateau, its pointed towers looming against the darkening sky. A mirage, Rainsford thought at first, rubbing his eyes. But as he drew closer, the building remained solid and real.

Gathering his courage, Rainsford approached the massive iron gate and knocked. The gate creaked open slowly, revealing a vast courtyard. As he stepped forward, the front door of the chateau opened, and a giant of a man with a long-barreled revolver in hand stood before him. Rainsford introduced himself hastily, "I'm Sanger Rainsford of New York. I fell off a yacht. I am hungry."

The giant did not reply, but moments later, a tall, elegant man appeared, his smile warm and welcoming. "It is a pleasure and honor to welcome you, Mr. Rainsford. I am General Zaroff." He was a tall man past middle age, for his hair was a *vivid* white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military mustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come.

Question 4: What does Rainsford first think when he sees the chateau?

- a) It's a village
- b) It's a mirage
- c) It's a dream
- d) It's a small house

Question 5: How does General Zaroff greet Rainsford?

- a) He ignores him
- b) He orders him to leave
- c) He welcomes him warmly
- d) He challenges him to a duel

Inside the chateau, Rainsford was treated to a luxurious dinner, surrounded by the trappings of wealth and power. The dining room was filled with mounted heads of animals from all over the world—trophies of Zaroff's hunting expeditions. As they dined and enjoyed the **amenities** of civilization, Zaroff spoke of his passion for hunting, his voice filled with excitement. "I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford," he declared, his eyes gleaming.

Rainsford was impressed by Zaroff's achievements, but his curiosity was piqued when Zaroff hinted at something more. "I hunt more dangerous game here on my island," Zaroff said, leaning forward.

"What could be more dangerous than Cape buffalo? "I had heard they were unusually **cunning**." Rainsford asked, intrigued.

Zaroff smiled, a strange, chilling smile. "Here on my island, I hunt the most dangerous game—human beings. They can reason, after a fashion, which makes them the most dangerous game of all."

Rainsford was stunned, his appetite suddenly gone. "But that's murder! That's deplorable!" he exclaimed.

Zaroff waved away Rainsford's objection with a casual hand. "Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong. The weak were put here to give the strong pleasure. Why should I not use my gift?" he said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Question 6: What does General Zaroff reveal about the game he hunts on his island?

- a) He hunts mythical creatures
- b) He hunts other hunters
- c) He hunts animals larger than Cape buffalo
- d) He hunts human beings

Question 7: How does Rainsford react to Zaroff's revelation?

- a) He agrees with Zaroff
- b) He is horrified
- c) He tries to join Zaroff in the hunt
- d) He laughs it off as a joke

Zaroff continued, explaining the twisted rules of his deadly game. "I suggest to my guests that we go hunting. I give them a knife and three hours' head start. If my *quarry* eludes me for three days, they win. If not, they lose."

Rainsford, still reeling from the revelation, asked, "What happens if they refuse to hunt?"

Zaroff's smile widened. "They have a choice," he replied with a sinister gleam in his eye. "They need not play that game if they don't wish to. If they do not wish to hunt, I turn them over to Ivan. *Invariably*, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt."

Rainsford realized the full extent of his peril. Zaroff suggested they hunt together, as fellow sportsmen, but Rainsford refused. "I am not a murderer," he declared firmly.

"Dear me," said the general, quite unruffled, "again that unpleasant word. But I think I can show you that your *scruples* are quite ill founded." Perhaps you'd like to experience the hunt from the other side?" he offered, as if it were a casual invitation.

Rainsford knew he had no choice. He was now the prey, and the hunt was on.

Question 8: What does Zaroff offer his guests if they refuse to hunt?

- a) A way to escape the island
- b) A place to hide
- c) A duel with Zaroff
- d) The option to face Ivan, the giant

Question 9: How does Rainsford respond to Zaroff's suggestion to join him in the hunt?

- a) He agrees to join
- b) He tries to escape
- c) He refuses to hunt
- d) He attacks Zaroff

Rainsford fled into the dense jungle, his mind racing with fear and desperation.

He knew he had to create a complex trail to throw off Zaroff, who was undoubtedly an expert tracker. He ran through the thick underbrush, doubling back on his trail and leaving false paths, all the while his heart pounding in his chest. “Even so **zealous** a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there”, he told himself.

As night fell, Rainsford climbed a large tree to rest, hoping that the height would keep him safe. But his rest was uneasy, and his fears were confirmed when, just before dawn, he saw Zaroff calmly tracking him. The general moved with the precision of a seasoned hunter, pausing beneath the very tree where Rainsford was hiding. The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were trying to **reconcile** what he saw with the evidence of his eyes. Rainsford held his breath, every muscle tense as Zaroff scanned the ground. Then, to Rainsford’s horror, Zaroff looked up, directly at the branch where he was hiding, and smiled. But instead of calling out, Zaroff simply turned and walked away, whistling a tune.

“He’s playing with me,” Rainsford realized with a cold shudder. “I am the mouse, and he is the cat.” An **apprehensive** night crawled slowly by like a wounded snake.

The next day, Rainsford knew he had to fight back. He set his first trap—a dead tree rigged to fall when triggered. The trap worked, but only wounded Zaroff, who laughed and called out, “Not many men know how to make a **Malay man-catcher**. You’re proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford!”

Determined, Rainsford set a second trap—a pit filled with sharpened stakes, covered with a thin layer of branches and leaves. Hours later, he heard the trap spring, followed by a sharp yelp of pain. But when he approached, he found that the pit had claimed only one of Zaroff’s dogs, not the man himself.

Question 10: Why does Rainsford create such a complex trail in the jungle?

- a) To confuse Zaroff
- b) To find a way off the island
- c) To explore the jungle
- d) To avoid the wild animals

Question 11: How does Zaroff react when he finds Rainsford hiding in the tree?

- a) He attacks immediately
- b) He ignores Rainsford and moves on
- c) He frowns and walks away
- d) He calls for his dogs

On the second day, Rainsford knew he had to use his wits to survive. After the failure of his first trap, he decided to create something deadlier. Remembering a trick he had learned during one of his hunts in Burma, Rainsford began digging. He spent hours digging a deep pit in a patch of soft earth, his hands blistered and raw by the time he was done. He lined the bottom with sharp wooden stakes, each sharpened to a deadly point, and carefully covered the pit with branches and leaves.

Exhausted but hopeful, Rainsford took shelter nearby, waiting to see if his trap would work. The hours dragged on, and just when Rainsford feared his effort had been in vain, he heard the distant sound of Zaroff's hounds. The dogs were getting closer, their howls growing louder. Rainsford's heart pounded in his chest as he gripped the hunting knife Zaroff had given him.

Rainsford felt an **impulse** to cry aloud with joy, for he heard the sharp crackle of the breaking branches as the cover of the pit gave way. Rainsford peered through the underbrush and saw that his pit had worked—one of Zaroff's best dogs had fallen in, impaled on the stakes below. Zaroff arrived moments later, his expression unreadable. He looked down at the pit and then up at Rainsford, who was hiding nearby.

"You've done well, Rainsford," Zaroff called out, his voice echoing through the jungle. "Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my finest hounds. But I still have plenty more. The hunt continues!"

Question 13: How does Rainsford prepare his second trap?

- a) He builds a wooden trap
- b) He sets up a snare
- c) He digs a pit with sharpened stakes
- d) He hides behind a tree with his knife

Question 14: What is the result of Rainsford's second trap?

- a) It kills Zaroff
- b) It kills one of Zaroff's dogs
- c) It wounds Zaroff
- d) It traps Ivan

The third day found Rainsford weary but determined. He knew the endgame was near. The loss of Zaroff's dog had bought him some time, but now Zaroff was closing in fast, and the baying of the remaining hounds was relentless. As he wandered, the ground grew softer under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, more *treacherous*. Rainsford had one last trick up his sleeve, a trap he had learned from a native hunter in Uganda.

With quick, efficient movements, Rainsford bent a young sapling back, securing it with a strip of wild grapevine. He fastened his hunting knife to the sapling, blade pointed outwards, and tied the vine so that when it was released, the knife would be flung forward with deadly force. Satisfied with his work, Rainsford positioned the trap along the path he knew Zaroff would follow, then retreated to a safer distance.

The hounds were almost upon him when he heard the trap spring. The sounds of their baying suddenly stopped, followed by a short, sharp cry. Rainsford climbed a nearby tree to see what had happened. From his vantage point, he saw Ivan lying dead, the knife embedded deep in his chest. Zaroff stood nearby, his face dark with anger.

"You're proving a worthy opponent, Rainsford," Zaroff shouted. "But the game is not over yet!"

Question 15: How does Rainsford set up his final trap?

- a) He digs another pit
- b) He bends a sapling with a knife attached to it
- c) He sets up a net
- d) He hides in the jungle with his knife

Question 16: What happens when Rainsford's final trap is triggered?

- a) It kills Zaroff
- b) It wounds Zaroff
- c) It kills Ivan
- d) It has no effect

With Zaroff and his remaining dogs closing in, Rainsford knew his options were running out. The relentless pursuit had driven him to the edge—literally. He found himself standing at the edge of a high cliff, the sea roaring below. The baying of the hounds was growing louder, and Rainsford knew he was out of time.

In a final, desperate move, Rainsford leaped off the cliff and into the sea. The water was cold and unforgiving, but Rainsford's will to survive drove him to swim. As he swam, he heard Zaroff and his hounds reach the cliff's edge above, but they did not follow.

That night, Zaroff dined alone in his grand hall, disappointed that Rainsford had seemingly escaped his game. But when he retired to his bedroom, ready to claim victory, he found a surprise waiting for him.

Rainsford stood in the shadows, his clothes dripping wet. "I am still a beast at bay," Rainsford said, his voice low and menacing. "Get ready, General."

Zaroff, ever the sportsman, smiled and bowed. "Splendid!" he exclaimed. "One of us is to furnish a repast for the hounds. The other will sleep in this very excellent bed. On guard, Rainsford."

The final confrontation was swift and brutal. In the end, it was Rainsford who emerged victorious. Zaroff lay dead, and Rainsford, exhausted but alive, climbed into the bed.

He had never slept in a better bed.

Question 17: What does Rainsford do when he realizes he has no other options?

- a) He surrenders
- b) He leaps into the sea
- c) He tries to negotiate with Zaroff
- d) He hides in the jungle

Question 18: What is Zaroff's reaction when he finds Rainsford waiting for him?

- a) He attacks Rainsford immediately
- b) He surrenders to Rainsford
- c) He smiles and prepares for a final battle
- d) He tries to escape

Question 19: What is the outcome of the final confrontation between Rainsford and Zaroff?

- a) Zaroff wins and kills Rainsford
- b) Rainsford wins and kills Zaroff
- c) They agree to end the hunt
- d) Ivan saves Zaroff at the last moment

Question 20: How does Rainsford feel at the end of the story?

- a) He is relieved and victorious
- b) He is regretful and saddened
- c) He is fearful of the future
- d) He is angry and vengeful