**The Most Dangerous Game Summary**

"[The Most Dangerous Game](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-most-dangerous-game/)" opens with a conversation between two men, [Whitney](http://www.gradesaver.com/character.html?character=41713) and Rainsford. The pair are on a yacht headed to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the time of the story, they find themselves somewhere in the Caribbean. Both men are aficionados of big-game hunting. They discuss the ability of an animal to understand a hunt. Rainsford believes that animals are incapable of feeling or understanding any human emotion.

Shortly after their discussion, Whitney retires for the evening. Rainsford decides to stay on deck to smoke his pipe. He suddenly hears the sound of gunshots and in his attempt to see the source of the sound, he falls into the water. After a brief moment of panic, Rainsford rallies and decides to swim toward the source of the gunshots. When he finally makes it ashore, he falls asleep.

The next morning he decides to investigate his surroundings. He finds a pool of blood and surmises that it is from the prey that was shot the night before. Near the blood he sees the footprints of hunting boots. He elects to follow them. After a long hike Rainsford arrives at a palatial estate. He is greeted at the door by a large man wielding a gun. A second man enters and explains that his assistant, [Ivan](http://www.gradesaver.com/character.html?character=41709), is deaf and dumb. The man is dressed elegantly and has an air of sophistication about him. He introduces himself as [General Zaroff](http://www.gradesaver.com/character.html?character=41707).

Zaroff is familiar with Rainsford's book on hunting snow leopards. After getting settled, Rainsford and Zaroff dine together and discuss the merits of hunting. It is during this conversation that Rainsford learns that Zaroff hunts men on the island. As a result of becoming bored with the available game in the world, Zaroff has turned to hunting those that can reason and present a greater challenge. Rainsford is horrified by Zaroff's revelation. Zaroff invites Rainsford to hunt with him but Rainsford declines citing exhaustion.

That night Rainsford is unable to sleep. The next day he learns that he is either to serve as Zaroff's newest prey or fall into the burly, violent hands of Ivan. He elects the former and immediately sets off into the jungle. After a few hours of zigzagging through the dense jungle, he climbs a tree to hide from his adversary. Incredibly, despite the elusive trail, Zaroff is able to easily find Rainsford. However, in order to prolong the fun of the game, Zaroff leaves Rainsford without harming him.

Rainsford panics and is subject to a few other encounters with Zaroff. Each time he gets closer and closer to defeating his foe through the use of primitive traps. Unfortunately, he is unable to trap his pursuer. He does manage to kill one of Zaroff's prized dogs and Ivan. In the final chase, Rainsford dives off the edge of the cliff into the ocean. Zaroff is disappointed to have lost his worthy adversary and returns to his house crestfallen.

After a hearty meal and much reminiscing of the day's events, Zaroff decides to retire for the evening. Upon entering his bedroom, he is confronted by Rainsford, who has been hiding behind the bed curtains. Zaroff is delighted that he has been defeated. However, Rainsford is not willing to let the game end there. He challenges Zaroff to one final duel. Zaroff accepts and says that whoever loses shall be fed to the dogs, and the winner would sleep in Zaroff's bed. The story ends with an indirect ending-- Rainsford cites that he had never slept in a better bed.

**Character List**

**Captain Nielsen**

The Swedish captain of the boat from which Rainsford falls. Along with his crew, he believes that Ship-Trap Island is a place of evil.

**General Zaroff**

A renowned hunter and Cossack refugee who turned to hunting men after being unsatisfied by the challenge posed by the fiercest of animals. Zaroff is a man of contradictions, both highly refined in manners and deeply uncivilized in morals.

**Ivan**

General Zaroff's mute assistant. Provides much of the muscle needed to maintain Zaroff's fantasy island by offering an alternative to the hunt: those chosen by Zaroff either participate in the hunt or face Ivan's burly, violent hands.

**Sanger Rainsford**

The protagonist of the story, Rainsford is a well-known, highly experienced big-game hunter who has the great misfortune of being recruited as prey by General Zaroff. He is able to maintain his intellectual composure during the most frightening of circumstances. He uses this to his advantage in an attempt to outsmart Zaroff.

**Witney:** Rainsford's traveling companion who first cites the rumors of evil and cannibalism that surround Ship-Trap Island.