

Comparison and contrast (most dangerous game)



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Most people would never believe that an island inhabited by a human-hunting gentleman would ever exist in real life. That kind of setting comes alive in Richard Connell's short story, "The Most Dangerous Game". The protagonist in this short story is Rainsford, a land-locked sailor who must fight using his wits to survive. He is also recognized for his ingenious hunting skills and knowledge. He ends up trapped on an island and is hunted by Zaroff. Zaroff, the antagonist, is a cunning gentleman who hides his true colors under a mask of pure courtesy. He is seen as an expert hunter who has hunted practically every animal known to man. Because of this, he has grown bored of it and wants to find a more challenging species, so he results to hunting men. Rainsford and Zaroff have various character traits that are similar and different. They both share mannerisms and have their own alterations from each other. Rainsford and Zaroff have a couple of similar traits, especially when it comes to playing the game of hunting. Both of these characters are expert hunters. Rainsford has hunted many animals and knows skillful tactics on evading them. He uses them by creating a trap and jumping in the ocean to avoid Zaroff's rabid hounds (Connell 33-34). Zaroff has hunted practically every threatening animal and wants to move on to a more challenging species. He admits to this claim, saying, "No animal had a chance with me anymore," (24). Both Rainsford and Zaroff are very competitive. Rainsford refuses to give up and will not lose his level head. He keeps calm and doesn't give in to fear when Zaroff is hunting him and almost spots him. Rainsford continually repeats to himself, "I will not lose my nerve. I will not," (31). Zaroff loves to win and shows it when he smiles and says, "To date I have not lost," (28). Both men are clever and can judge a person's strengths and weaknesses. Rainsford can tell that Zaroff has the upper hand

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when he's being hunted and does his best to avoid traps and tricks. When the hunt first starts, Rainsford spends a long time trying to throw off Zaroff by going in a complicated path that would usually be hard to follow (30). Zaroff can tell that Rainsford is an exceptional hunter. He doesn't misjudge his skills, which is shown by him saying, " I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel- at last," (29). These similarities are a good example of how the characters' actions can reflect off of each other in certain situations. Rainsford and Zaroff may have some similarities, but their thought-processing shows many differences in character. Zaroff loves to hunt people for sport, while Rainsford is against cold-blooded murder. Zaroff explains how he takes in sailors from passing ships and forces them to train so he can hunt them. He likes for them to be in splendid physical condition so the hunt will be as fair as it can get (26). He wants Rainsford to hunt the sailors, but Rainsford knows that is cold-blooded murder. He refuses to do so, saying, " No, general, I will not hunt, " (29). Another difference is that Rainsford doesn't take people for granted. Zaroff is always so sure he'll win the hunt. He expects weaker humans to exist just for the use of stronger humans. He mentions, " Life is for the strong and to be lived by the strong, " (26). Rainsford values human life and doesn't underestimate Zaroff in the game. Because Zaroff takes him for granted, Rainsford is able to catch him off guard in the end. He is not expecting it when Rainsford suddenly appears in his room, which completely throws him off track (34). Another differing fact is that Rainsford can deal with unexpected situations very well, unlike Zaroff. Being trapped on the island and hunted by a man are unexpected obstacles, but Rainsford manages to pull through. At the very end, it proves this by providing the information that Rainsford gets to sleep in Zaroff's bed, which

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means that he defeated Zaroff (34). Zaroff loses in the end when he lets his guard down, and Rainsford sneaks into his room. The immediate, unforeseen state of affairs is what he is least expecting and leads to his death (34).

These differences signify the firm line between Zaroff's and Rainsford's character traits. In my opinion, I think I relate to Rainsford because I can keep a cool head. Whenever Rainsford is being hunted by Zaroff, he tells himself not to lose his nerve. It's a frightening, unexpected ordeal, and he knows that he has to make it through alive, or else Zaroff will keep killing. Rainsford calms himself and deals with the situation at hand. I have to do that many times. Whenever times are stressful and I am overloaded with work, I take a deep breath and calmly complete everything in an orderly fashion. Whenever an emergency occurs, I calm myself and keep an open mind of what's at hand. Rainsford and I can be very similar when it comes to that. Zaroff and Rainsford definitely have astounding similarities and differences in their thoughts and actions. They can both be so focused with hunting, yet have polar-opposite viewpoints on human life. Overall, both characters are very unique and strangely alike at the same time. While Zaroff is recognized as bad and Rainsford is seen as good, both men have character traits that are very similar in their own special way.