

*General Zaroff and Rainsford sit talking after dinner*

General Zaroff: I had to ask myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. Can you predict my answer?

Rainsford: No, what was it?

General Zaroff: Hunting had become too easy for me. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection. No animal stood a chance with me. All an animal has is instinct, but I have reason. Instinct is no match for reason. So, I figured out what to do.

Rainsford: What?

General Zaroff: I had to invent a new animal to hunt.

Rainsford: A new animal? You're joking.

General Zaroff: Not at all. I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one, so I bought this island, built this house, and I do my hunting here. The island is perfect for my purposes—there are jungles with a maze of trails in them, hills, swamps—

Rainsford: What's the animal, General Zaroff?

General Zaroff: Oh, it is the most exciting thing to hunt in the world. Everyday I hunt and I never get bored. For I have a quarry that can match my wits. It has courage, cunning, and above all reason.

Rainsford: But no animal has reason.

General Zaroff: My dear fellow, there is one that can...

Rainsford: WHAT?! You can't mean...

General Zaroff: And why not?

Rainsford: I can't believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grizzly joke. What you speak of is not hunting—it's murder!

General Zaroff: I refuse to believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war—“

Rainsford: My experiences in the war do not make me condone murder!

General Zaroff: How droll you are. I wager you'll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You've a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford.

Rainsford: Thank you, but I'm a hunter, NOT a murderer.

General Rainsford: Life is for the strong to be lived by the strong, and if need be, taken by the strong. The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not?

Rainsford: Who do you hunt?

General Zaroff: I hunt the scum of the earth—sailors, and people who are different races than I am.

Rainsford: But they are men!

General Zaroff: Precisely, that is why I use them. It gives me pleasure because they can reason, so they are dangerous.

Rainsford: But where do you get them?

General Zaroff: (laughing) Well, this is called Ship Trap Island.