Sanger Rainsford Versus General Zaroff In The Most Dangerous Game: Character Analysis

On this glorious day in 1924, the biggest showdown of hunting history is soon to commence. Sanger Rainsford, of our own New York, USA, is faring against the one, the only, General Zaroff of the Russian Cossacks. This match is one for the books; you won't want to miss it! Rainsford ended up stranded on a Caribean island, claimed by Zaroff, and was thrown into the hunt of his lifetime. This hunt, however, is not the average hunt you and I would assume it to be. This hunt is man against man! Stay tuned as we discuss who has the edge when considering abilities, advantages, and attitudes.

First, I'd like to discuss these men's abilities. Let's begin with our own Mr. Rainsford. As pointed out by his good friend Whitney, Rainsford was able to " … pick off a moose moving in the … bush at four hundred yards …" (Connell 25). Now, moose are very large and smart creatures, and four hundred yards is over ten thousand feet. This makes our man extremely talented, if you asked me. However, Zaroff has a few accomplishments under his belt, too. Not only did he allegedly kill "[his] first bear … when [he] was only ten," but he has also "hunted every kind of game in every land" (Connell 33, 33). Not only has this general been hunting for practically all of his life, but he also was, and still is, able to adapt to any and every type of survival attempt, yet he still overcame it all with ease.

Now you may be thinking you have these two figured out, but there's plenty more to consider. We just discussed ability differences, now let's take into account their general advantages and strengths over each other. Starting with General Zaroff this time around, he brags about his game a lot, mentioning the fact that, "to date, [he has] not lost," letting us know that not only is he very skilled, but he has the home field advantage with the jungle that he allegedly knows inch for inch. However, Rainsford isn't coming up empty handed this time, either. He was physically strong enough to "[drag] himself from the roaring waters" and overcome the sharp, jagged rocks along the shoreline (Connell 28). These men's strengths and advantages differ greatly, but are strengths and advantages nonetheless.

At last, we've reached our final comparison: attitude about hunting. When it comes to this topic, Zaroff's morals officially leave the picture. At one point, Zaroff says, "Ihunt the scum of the earth" (Connell 36). This shows how the madman justifies murder to himself by saying he only hunts the people he deems not worthy of living. This is quite different from Rainsford's standpoint. When Zaroff questions Rainsford for questioning him, Rainsford exclaims, "I'm a hunter, not a murderer" (Connell 35). Rainsford does not believe in purposely killing humans without a true reason.

Now, the facts have said a lot, but I'd like to officially make it clear. In my humble opinion, I believe Zaroff has the edge over Rainsford. Rainsford could never shoot a man, but Zaroff barely bats an eyelash when doing so. Plus, he had the ability to adapt and overcome every animal he ever hunted, easily following their survival patterns. Not to mention