

"You have some wonderful heads here," said Rainsford as he ate a particularly well cooked filet mignon. "That Cape buffalo is the largest I ever saw."

"Oh, that fellow. Yes, he was a monster."

"Did he charge you?"

"Hurled me against a tree," said the general. "Fractured my skull. But I got the brute."

"I've always thought," said Rainsford, "that the Cape buffalo is the most dangerous of all big game."

For a moment the general did not reply; he was smiling his curious red-lipped smile. Then he said slowly: "No. You are wrong, sir. The Cape buffalo is not the most dangerous big game." He sipped his wine. "Here in my preserve on this island," he said, in the same slow tone, "I hunt more dangerous game."

Rainsford expressed his surprise. "Is there big game on this island?"

The general nodded. "The biggest."

"Really?"

"Oh, it isn't here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island."

"What have you imported, General?"

Rainsford asked. "Tigers?"

The general smiled. "No," he said. "Hunting tigers ceased to interest me some years ago. I exhausted their possibilities, you see. No thrill left in tigers, no real danger. I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford."

The general took from his pocket a gold cigarette case and offered his guest a long black cigarette with a silver tip; it was perfumed and gave off a smell like incense.

"We will have some capital hunting, you and I," said the general. "I shall be most glad to have your society."

"But what game—" began Rainsford.

"I'll tell you," said the general. "You will be amused, I know. I think I may say, in all modesty, that I have done a rare thing. I have invented a new sensation. May I pour you another glass of port, Mr. Rainsford?"

“Thank you, General.”

The general filled both glasses and said: “God makes some men poets. Some he makes kings, some beggars. Me he made a hunter. My hand was made for the trigger, my father said. He was a very rich man with a quarter of a million acres in the Crimea, and he was an ardent sportsman. When I was only five years old, he gave me a little gun, specially made in Moscow for me, to shoot sparrows with. When I shot some of his prize turkeys with it, he did not punish me; he complimented me on my marksmanship. I killed my first bear in the Caucasus<sup>9</sup> when I was ten. My whole life has been one prolonged hunt. I went into the army—it was expected of noble- men’s sons—and for a time commanded a divi- sion of Cossack cavalry, but my real interest was always the hunt. I have hunted every kind of game in every land. It would be impossible for me to tell you how many animals I have killed.”

The general puffed at his cigarette.

“After the debacle<sup>10</sup> in Russia I left the country, for it was imprudent<sup>11</sup> for an officer of the Tsar to stay there. Many noble Russians lost everything. I, luckily, had invested heavily in American securities, so I shall never have to open a tearoom in Monte Carlo or drive a taxi in Paris. Naturally, I continued to hunt— grizzlies in your Rockies, crocodiles in the Ganges,<sup>12</sup> rhinoceroses in East Africa. It was in Africa that the Cape buffalo hit me and laid me up for six months. As soon as I recovered, I started for the Amazon to hunt jaguars, for I had heard they were unusually cunning. They weren’t.” The Cossack sighed. “They were no match at all for a hunter with his wits about him, and a high-powered rifle. I was bitterly disappointed. I was lying in my tent with a splitting headache one night when a terrible thought pushed its way into my mind. Hunting was beginning to bore me! And hunting, remember, had been my life. I have heard that in America businessmen often go to pieces when they give up the business that has been their life.”

“Yes, that’s so,” said Rainsford.

The general smiled. “I had no wish to go to pieces,” he said. “I must do something. Now, mine is an analytical mind, Mr. Rainsford. Doubtless that is why I enjoy the problems of the chase.”

“No doubt, General Zaroff.”

“So,” continued the general, “I asked myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. You are much younger than I am, Mr. Rainsford, and have not hunted as much, but you perhaps can guess the answer.”

“What was it?”

“Simply this: hunting had ceased to be what you call ‘a sporting proposition.’ It had become too easy. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection.”

The general lit a fresh cigarette.

“No animal had a chance with me any more. That is no boast; it is a mathematical certainty. The animal had nothing but his legs and his instinct. Instinct is no match for reason. When I thought of this, it was a tragic moment for me, I can tell you.”

Rainsford leaned across the table, absorbed in what his host was saying.

“It came to me as an inspiration what I must do,” the general went on.

“And that was?”

The general smiled the quiet smile of one who has faced an obstacle and surmounted it with success. “I had to invent a new animal to hunt,” he said.

“A new animal? You’re joking.”

“Not at all,” said the general. “I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one. So I bought this island, built this house,

9. *Crimea* (krī-mē’ə) . . . *Caucasus* (kō’kə-səs): regions in the southern part of the former Russian Empire, near the Black Sea.

10. *debacle* (dē-bā’kəl): a disastrous defeat; rout (a reference to the 1917 Russian Revolution that overthrew the czar).

11. *imprudent*: showing poor judgment; unwise.

12. *Ganges* (gān’jēz’): a river in northern India.

and here I do my hunting. The island is perfect for my purposes—there are jungles with a maze of trails in them, hills, swamps—”

“But the animal, General Zaroff?”

“Oh,” said the general, “it supplies me with the most exciting hunting in the world. No other hunting compares with it for an instant. Every day I hunt, and I never grow bored now, for I have a quarry with which I can match my wits.”

Rainsford’s bewilderment showed in his face.

“I wanted the ideal animal to hunt,” explained the general. “So I said: ‘What are the attributes of an ideal quarry?’ And the answer was, of course: ‘It must have courage, cunning,

believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you seem to be harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war—”

“Did not make me condone cold-blooded murder,” finished Rainsford, stiffly.

Laughter shook the general. “How extraordinarily droll you are!” he said. “One does not expect nowadays to find a young man of the educated class, even in America, with such a naïve, and, if I may say so, mid-Victorian point of view. It’s like finding a snuffbox in a limousine. Ah, well, doubtless you had Puritan ancestors. So many Americans

appear to have had. I’ll wager you’ll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You’ve a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford.”

“Thank you, I’m a hunter, not a murderer.”

“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.”

“Yes?”

“Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong, and, if needs 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? I hunt the scum of the earth—sailors from tramp ships—lascars,<sup>14</sup> blacks, Chinese, whites, mongrels—a thoroughbred horse or hound is worth more than a score of them.”

“But they are men,” said Rainsford, hotly.

and, above all, it must be able to reason.”

“But no animal can reason,” objected Rainsford.

“My dear fellow,” said the general, “there is one that can.”

“But you can’t mean—” gasped Rainsford.

“And why not?”

“I can’t believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grisly<sup>13</sup> joke.”

“Why should I not be serious? I am speaking of hunting.”

“Hunting? Good God, General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder.”

The general laughed with entire good nature. He regarded Rainsford quizzically. “I refuse to

“EVERY DAY I HUNT, AND I NEVER GROW BORED  
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WORDS **condone** (kən-dōn') *v.* to overlook, forgive, or disregard

TO **droll** (drōl) *adj.* amusingly odd or comical

KNOW **scruple** (skrōō'pəl) *n.* an uneasy feeling arising from one's conscience or principles

13. **grisly** (grīz'lē): horrible; ghastly.

14. **lascars** (lās'kərz): sailors from India.

“Precisely,” said the general. “That is why I use them. It gives me pleasure. They can reason, after a fashion. So they are dangerous.”

“But where do you get them?”

The general’s left eyelid fluttered down in a wink. “This island is called Ship Trap,” he answered. “Sometimes an angry god of the high seas sends them to me. Sometimes, when Providence is not so kind, I help Providence a bit. Come to the window with me.”

Rainsford went to the window and looked out toward the sea.

“Watch! Out there!” exclaimed the general, pointing into the night. Rainsford’s eyes saw only blackness, and then, as the general pressed a button, far out to sea Rainsford saw the flash of lights.

The general chuckled. “They indicate a channel,” he said, “where there’s none: giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws. They can crush a ship as easily as I crush this nut.” He dropped a walnut on the hardwood floor and brought his heel grinding down on it. “Oh, yes,” he said, casually, as if in answer to a question, “I have electricity. We try to be civilized here.”

“Civilized? And you shoot down men?”

A trace of anger was in the general’s black eyes, but it was there for but a second, and he said, in his most pleasant manner: “Dear me, what a righteous young man you are! I assure you I do not do the thing you suggest. That would be barbarous. I treat these visitors with every consideration. They get plenty of good food and exercise. They get into splendid physical condition. You shall see for yourself tomorrow.”

“What do you mean?”

“We’ll visit my training school,” smiled the general. “It’s in the cellar. I have about a dozen pupils down there now. They’re from the

Spanish bark *Sanlúcar* that had the bad luck to go on the rocks out there. A very inferior lot, I regret to say. Poor specimens and more accustomed to the deck than to the jungle.”

He raised his hand, and Ivan, who served as waiter, brought thick Turkish coffee. Rainsford, with an effort, held his tongue in check.

“It’s a game, you see,” pursued the general, blandly. “I suggest to one of them that we go hunting. I give him a supply of food and an excellent hunting knife. I give him three hours’ start. I am to follow, armed only with a pistol of the smallest caliber and range. If my quarry eludes me for three whole days, he wins the game. If I find him”—the general smiled—“he loses.”

“Suppose he refuses to be hunted?”

“Oh,” said the general, “I give him his option, of course. He need not play that game if he doesn’t wish to. If he does not wish to hunt, I turn him over to Ivan. Ivan once had the honor of serving as official knouter<sup>15</sup> to the Great White Tsar, and he has his own ideas of sport. Invariably, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt.”

“And if they win?”

The smile on the general’s face widened. “To date I have not lost,” he said.

Then he added, hastily: “I don’t wish you to think me a braggart, Mr. Rainsford. Many of them afford only the most elementary sort of problem. Occasionally I strike a tartar.<sup>16</sup> One almost did win. I eventually had to use the dogs.”

“The dogs?”

“This way, please. I’ll show you.”

The general steered Rainsford to a window. The lights from the windows sent a flickering

15. *knouter* (nou'tər): a person who whipped criminals in Russia.

16. *strike a tartar*: encounter a fierce opponent.

illumination that made grotesque patterns on the courtyard below, and Rainsford could see moving about there a dozen or so huge black shapes; as they turned toward him, their eyes glittered greenly.

“A rather good lot, I think,” observed the general. “They are let out at seven every night. If anyone should try to get into my house—or out of it—something extremely regrettable would occur to him.” He hummed a snatch of song from the *Folies Bergère*.<sup>17</sup>

“And now,” said the general, “I want to show you my new collection of heads. Will you come with me to the library?”

“I hope,” said Rainsford, “that you will excuse me tonight, General Zaroff. I’m really not feeling at all well.”

“Ah, indeed?” the general inquired, solicitously. “Well, I suppose that’s only natural, after your long swim. You need a good, restful night’s sleep. Tomorrow you’ll feel like a new man, I’ll wager. Then we’ll hunt, eh? I’ve one rather promising prospect—”

Rainsford was hurrying from the room.

“Sorry you can’t go with me tonight,” called the general. “I expect rather fair sport—a big, strong black. He looks resourceful— Well, good night, Mr. Rainsford; I hope you have a good night’s rest.”



**THE BED WAS GOOD, AND**  
**THE** pajamas of the softest silk, and he was tired in every fiber of his being, but nevertheless Rainsford could not quiet his brain with the opiate of sleep. He lay, eyes wide open. Once he thought he heard stealthy steps in the corridor outside his room. He sought to throw open the door; it would not open. He went to the

window and looked out. His room was high up in one of the towers. The lights of the château were out now, and it was dark and silent, but there was a fragment of sallow moon, and by its wan light he could see, dimly, the courtyard; there, weaving in and out in the pattern of shadow, were black, noiseless forms; the hounds heard him at the window and looked up, expectantly, with their green eyes. Rainsford went back to the bed and lay down. By many methods he tried to put himself to sleep. He had achieved a doze when, just as morning began to come, he heard, far off in the jungle, the faint report of a pistol.

General Zaroff did not appear until luncheon. He was dressed faultlessly in the tweeds of a country squire. He was solicitous about the state of Rainsford’s health.

“As for me,” sighed the general, “I do not feel so well. I am worried, Mr. Rainsford. Last night I detected traces of my old complaint.”

To Rainsford’s questioning glance the general said: “Ennui. Boredom.”

Then, taking a second helping of crêpes suzettes, the general explained: “The hunting was not good last night. The fellow lost his head. He made a straight trail that offered no problems at all. That’s the trouble with these sailors; they have dull brains to begin with, and they do not know how to get about in the woods. They do excessively stupid and obvious things. It’s most annoying. Will you have another glass of Chablis, Mr. Rainsford?”

“General,” said Rainsford, firmly, “I wish to leave this island at once.”

The general raised his thickets of eyebrows; he seemed hurt. “But, my dear fellow,” the general protested, “you’ve only just come.

17. *Folies Bergère* (fô-lê’ bër-zhër’): a music hall in Paris, famous for its variety shows.

WORDS  
TO  
KNOW

**solicitously** (sə-lī’s-ī-təs-lē) *adv.* with an expression of care or concern

You've had no hunting—”

“I wish to go today,” said Rainsford. He saw the dead black eyes of the general on him, studying him. General Zaroff's face suddenly brightened.

He filled Rainsford's glass with venerable Chablis from a dusty bottle.

“Tonight,” said the general, “we will hunt—you and I.”

Rainsford shook his head. “No, General,” he said. “I will not hunt.”

The general shrugged his shoulders and delicately ate a hothouse grape. “As you wish, my friend,” he said. “The choice rests entirely with you. But may I not venture to suggest that you will find my idea of sport more diverting than Ivan's?”

He nodded toward the corner to where the giant stood, scowling, his thick arms crossed on his hogshead of chest.

“You don't mean—” cried Rainsford.

“My dear fellow,” said the general, “have I not told you I always mean what I say about hunting? This is really an inspiration. I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel—at last.”

The general raised his glass, but Rainsford sat staring at him.

“You'll find this game worth playing,” the general said, enthusiastically. “Your brain against mine. Your woodcraft against mine. Your strength and stamina against mine. Outdoor chess! And the stake is not without value, eh?”

“And if I win—” began Rainsford, huskily.

“I'll cheerfully acknowledge myself defeated if I do not find you by midnight of the third day,” said General Zaroff. “My sloop will place you on the mainland near a town.”

The general read what Rainsford was thinking.

“Oh, you can trust me,” said the Cossack. “I will give you my word as a gentleman and a

sportsman. Of course, you, in turn, must agree to say nothing of your visit here.”

“I'll agree to nothing of the kind,” said Rainsford.

“Oh,” said the general, “in that case— But why discuss that now? Three days hence we can discuss it over a bottle of Veuve Cliquot, unless—”

The general sipped his wine.

Then a businesslike air animated him. “Ivan,” he said to Rainsford, “will supply you with hunting clothes, food, a knife. I suggest you wear moccasins; they leave a poorer trail. I suggest, too, that you avoid the big swamp in the southeast corner of the island. We call it Death Swamp. There's quicksand there. One foolish fellow tried it. The deplorable part of it was that Lazarus followed him. You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Rainsford. I loved Lazarus; he was the finest hound in my pack. Well, I must beg you to excuse me now. I always take a siesta after lunch. You'll hardly have time for a nap, I fear. You'll want to start, no doubt. I shall not follow till dusk. Hunting at night is so much more exciting than by day, don't you think? Au revoir,<sup>18</sup> Mr. Rainsford, au revoir.”

General Zaroff, with a deep, courtly bow, strolled from the room.

From another door came Ivan. Under one arm he carried khaki hunting clothes, a haversack of food, a leather sheath containing a long-bladed hunting knife; his right hand rested on a cocked revolver thrust in the crimson sash about his waist. . . .

Rainsford had fought his way through the bush for two hours. “I must keep my nerve. I must keep my nerve,” he said, through tight teeth.

He had not been entirely clear-headed when

18. *au revoir* (ō' rə-vwār'): goodbye; farewell until we meet again

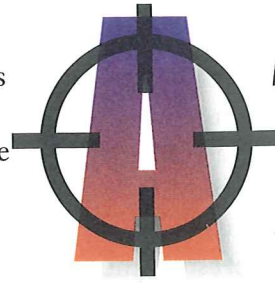
WORDS  
TO  
KNOW

**stamina** (stām'ə-nə) *n.* physical or moral strength; endurance  
**deplorable** (dī-plōr'ə-bəl) *adj.* deeply regrettable; unfortunate

the château gates snapped shut behind him. His whole idea at first was to put distance between himself and General Zaroff, and, to this end, he had plunged along, spurred on by the sharp rowels of something very like panic. Now he had got a grip on himself, had stopped, and was taking stock of himself and the situation.

He saw that straight flight was futile; inevitably it would bring him face to face with the sea. He was in a picture with a frame of water, and his operations, clearly, must take place within that frame.

“I’ll give him a trail to follow,” muttered Rainsford, and he struck off from the rude path he had been following into the trackless wilderness. He executed a series of intricate loops; he doubled on his trail again and again, recalling all the lore of the fox hunt, and all the dodges of the fox. Night found him leg-weary, with hands and face lashed by the branches, on a thickly wooded ridge. He knew it would be insane to blunder on through the dark, even if he had the strength. His need for rest was imperative, and he thought, “I have played the fox; now I must play the cat of the fable.” A big tree with a thick trunk and outspread branches was nearby, and, taking care to leave not the slightest mark, he climbed up into the crotch and, stretching out on one of the broad limbs, after a fashion, rested. Rest brought him new confidence and almost a feeling of security. Even so zealous a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there, he told himself; only the devil himself could follow that complicated trail through the jungle after dark. But perhaps the general was a devil—



## AN APPREHENSIVE NIGHT

crawled slowly by like a wounded snake, and sleep did not visit Rainsford, although the silence of a dead world was on the jungle. Toward morning, when a dingy gray was varnishing the sky, the cry of some startled bird focused Rainsford’s attention in that direction. Something was coming through the bush, coming slowly, carefully, coming by the same winding way Rainsford had come. He flattened himself down on the limb, and through a screen of leaves almost as thick as tapestry, he watched. The thing that was approaching was a man.

It was General Zaroff. He made his way along with his eyes fixed in utmost concentration on the ground before him. He paused, almost beneath the tree, dropped to his knees, and studied the ground. Rainsford’s impulse was to hurl himself down like a panther, but he saw that the general’s right hand held something metallic—a small automatic pistol.

The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were puzzled. Then he straightened up and took from his case one of his black cigarettes; its pungent, incenselike smoke floated up to Rainsford’s nostrils.

Rainsford held his breath. The general’s eyes had left the ground and were traveling inch by inch up the tree. Rainsford froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring. But the sharp eyes of the hunter stopped before they reached the limb where Rainsford lay; a smile spread over his brown face. Very deliberately he blew a smoke ring into the air; then he turned his back on the tree and walked carelessly away, back along the trail he had come. The swish of the underbrush against his hunting boots grew fainter and fainter.

WORDS  
TO  
KNOW

**imperative** (ĩm-pĕr’ĕ-tĭv) *adj.* absolutely necessary  
**zealous** (zĕl’ĕs) *adj.* intensely devoted and enthusiastic

The pent-up air burst hotly from Rainsford's lungs. His first thought made him feel sick and numb. The general could follow a trail through the woods at night; he could follow an extremely difficult trail; he must have uncanny powers; only by the merest chance had the Cossack failed to see his quarry.

Rainsford's second thought was even more terrible. It sent a shudder of cold horror through his whole being. Why had the general smiled? Why had he turned back?

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him

The job was finished at last, and he threw himself down behind a fallen log a hundred feet away. He did not have to wait long. The cat was coming again to play with the mouse.

Following the trail with the sureness of a bloodhound came General Zaroff. Nothing escaped those searching black eyes, no crushed blade of grass, no bent twig, no mark, no matter how faint, in the moss. So intent was the Cossack on his stalking that he was upon the thing Rainsford had made before he saw it. His foot touched the protruding bough<sup>19</sup> that was the trigger. Even as he touched it, the general sensed his danger and leaped back with the agility of an ape. But he was not quite quick enough; the dead tree, delicately

adjusted to rest on the cut living one, crashed down and struck the general a glancing blow on the shoulder as it fell; but for his alertness, he must have been smashed beneath it. He staggered, but he did not

THE COSSACK WAS THE CAT; HE WAS  
THE MOUSE. THEN IT WAS THAT  
RAINSFORD KNEW THE FULL  
MEANING OF TERROR.

for another day's sport! The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror.

"I will not lose my nerve. I will not."

He slid down from the tree and struck off again into the woods. His face was set, and he forced the machinery of his mind to function. Three hundred yards from his hiding place he stopped where a huge dead tree leaned precariously on a smaller, living one. Throwing off his sack of food, Rainsford took his knife from its sheath and began to work with all his energy.

fall; nor did he drop his revolver. He stood there, rubbing his injured shoulder, and Rainsford, with fear again gripping his heart, heard the general's mocking laugh ring through the jungle.

"Rainsford," called the general, "if you are within sound of my voice, as I suppose you are, let me congratulate you. Not many men know how to make a Malay man-catcher.

19. protruding bough (bou): a tree branch that extends or juts out.

WORDS  
TO KNOW **uncanny** (ŭn-kăn'ē) *adj.* so remarkable as to seem supernatural





*The Voice of the Casuarina* (1985), Julio Larraz. Oil on canvas, 60½" × 60½", private collection, courtesy of Nohra Haime Gallery, New York.

Luckily for me I, too, have hunted in Malacca.<sup>20</sup> You are proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford. I am going now to have my wound dressed; it's only a slight one. But I shall be back. I shall be back."

When the general, nursing his bruised shoulder, had gone, Rainsford took up his flight again. It was flight now, a desperate,

hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on. The ground grew softer under his moccasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser;

20. Malay (mə-lā') . . . Malacca (mə-lăk'ə): The Malays are a people of southeast Asia. Malacca is a region they inhabit, just south of Thailand.

insects bit him savagely. Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze. He tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech. With a violent effort he tore his foot loose. He knew where he was now. Death Swamp and its quicksand.

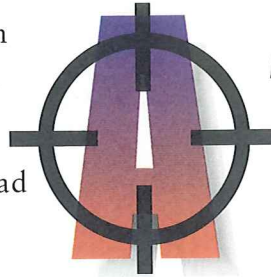
His hands were tight closed as if his nerve were something tangible that someone in the darkness was trying to tear from his grip. The softness of the earth had given him an idea. He stepped back from the quicksand a dozen feet or so, and like some huge prehistoric beaver, he began to dig.

Rainsford had dug himself in in France when a second's delay meant death. That had been a placid pastime compared to his digging now. The pit grew deeper; when it was above his shoulders, he climbed out and from some hard saplings cut stakes and sharpened them to a fine point. These stakes he planted in the bottom of the pit with the points sticking up. With flying fingers he wove a rough carpet of weeds and branches, and with it he covered the mouth of the pit. Then, wet with sweat and aching with tiredness, he crouched behind the stump of a lightning-charred tree.

He knew his pursuer was coming; he heard the padding sound of feet on the soft earth, and the night breeze brought him the perfume of the general's cigarette. It seemed to Rainsford that the general was coming with unusual swiftness; he was not feeling his way along, foot by foot. Rainsford, crouching there, could not see the general, nor could he see the pit. He lived a year in a minute. Then he 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; he heard the sharp scream of pain as the pointed stakes found their mark. He leaped up from

his place of concealment. Then he covered back. Three feet from the pit a man was standing, with an electric torch in his hand.

"You've done well, Rainsford," the voice of the general called. "Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my best dogs. Again you score. I think, Mr. Rainsford, I'll see what you can do against my whole pack. I'm going home for a rest now. Thank you for a most amusing evening."



**AT DAYBREAK RAINSFORD**, lying near the swamp, was awakened by a sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear. It was a distant sound, faint and wavering, but he knew it. It was the baying of a pack of hounds.

Rainsford knew he could do one of two things. He could stay where he was and wait. That was suicide. He could flee. That was postponing the inevitable. For a moment he stood there, thinking. An idea that held a wild chance came to him, and, tightening his belt, he headed away from the swamp.

The baying of the hounds grew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a watercourse, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him, Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash.

They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid