Susie Jenkins

Ms. Nelson

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A True Test of Integrity

The most honorable character in Richard Connell’s “The Most Dangerous Game” is Sanger Rainsford.

There are many reasons why Sanger Rainsford is a more honorable character than his adversary General Zaroff. In the beginning of the story, when General Zaroff reveals to Rainsford what he does with his prisoners, Rainsford calls him out saying “I can’t believe you are serious...General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder” (Connell 23). While Zaroff is looking at these trapped sailors as prey, Rainsford is convinced that hunting down human beings is an abhorrent crime and is considered murder. Thus, Rainsford is clearly the more honorable character in this story because of the value he puts on human life.

While Rainsford is the obvious choice of who is the better human being, some will argue that Zaroff is a more honorable person. When Rainsford arrives at Zaroff’s home, he is the most gracious host. Zaroff prepares a room for Rainsford and has clothes “...from a London tailor who ordinarily cut and sewed for none below the rank of duke” (Connell 21). While some may believe that this shows that Zaroff is being a great host is evidence of him being an honorable human being, they are mistaken. Zaroff is simply pampering his guest in order to lull him into a false sense of security before he reveals his true intent: to hunt him like a wild animal. This betrayal of trust proves that Rainsford is the more honorable of the two characters.

All in all, it is clear that between Sanger Rainsford and General Zaroff, Rainsford is the more honorable of the two. General Zaroff is a lowly hunter who puts no value on human life while Rainsford is an innocent victim in the story. Valuing humans over animals is one of the basic moral and ethical values that make people who they are; throwing out these values blurs the line between human and animal. Without humanity, people become no different from the animals from which we evolved.