

Readers often take the physical location of the setting for granted in a story: a narrative that takes place in New York City might just as well occur in Chicago. Moreover, the temporal location of a story might be equally alterable, albeit not quite as easily, as the physical location. A story that takes place in the 1980s might not work as well when recast to the 1990s, but it wouldn't be as incongruous as setting it in the 1930s. These changes might have little effect on the conflict of the narrative. The same essential conflict would work in New York City and in Chicago, in the 1980s and the 1990s. With some stories, though, the conflict and the setting are intimately linked. Such is the case with Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," in which the physical and temporal locations of the setting constrain the conflict and vice versa.

The most obvious way in which the setting constrains the conflict is the fact that the action takes place on an island. From the beginning, the story creates an ominous mood regarding the island as Whitney explains that "Ship Trap Island," as it's called, holds a place of "curious dread" among the sailors. This description sets the tone of dread and fear for the later developments in the story. While readers know little to nothing about the island, they still experience an anxious dread due to the name. Later in the story, though, we learn that a "sloop to the mainland" is the only way off the island, and even then, due to the "jagged rocks" surrounding the island, it might be difficult to escape. If it is a challenge to escape the island with a boat, then, it's certainly a challenge to get off the island unaided. This is important to the conflict because an escapable hunting ground is a discoverable hunting ground, and discovery would certainly put an end General Zaroff's plans. If the story is set anywhere else, discovery is a constant threat. Therefore, it's critical that the action take place on an isolated island.

Not only does the physical location affect the conflict, but also the temporal location places certain restraints on the narrative. Rainsford and Whitney are traveling by yacht to South America to hunt jaguar when the accident happens and Rainsford "lunges for his pipe" and falls into the water. Were this story set in the late-twentieth century as opposed to the early-twentieth century, Rainsford and his companion would be traveling by plane. Such transportation would render the entire conflict impossible: Ship Trap Island produces water-logged sailors that Zaroff can hunt; Plane Trap Island produces nothing but corpses for Zaroff. Additionally, were a late-twentieth century Zaroff attempt to down planes in order to have captives for hunting, his efforts would not go unnoticed: while a ship might be lost at sea, a plane is never truly lost. Modern technology makes it possible for investigators to determine the exact location of the wreck—even a "lost" yacht—and the causes of the accident. As such, a late-twentieth century Zaroff could only dream of hunting survivors of a lost vessel.

Finally, there is an additional temporal restraint is also directly related to the physical location: the fact that it's an uncharted island.

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*The rest of the piece would continue in a similar vein. The fourth, unfinished paragraph is the final body paragraph. Also needed would be a concluding paragraph.*