The Deadliest Game

Roger Zelazny

Uncle Dudley sat in his study, gaze fixed on the blank screen of the set which hung on the wall before him. A rack of rifles hung to his right, flanked by the heads of Cape Buffalo and lion.

“Which was the deadliest of all?” I asked him.

He nodded directly ahead.

I studied the machine closely, saw the silvery ears laid flat along its brow as if it had been attacking when it took the hit. 30.06, I judged.

“Extinct now, aren’t they?” I asked.

He fingered the scar on his cheek and nodded.

“Good thing, too,” he said.

Notes

This short-short story was requested for an anthology in which every piece had to be exactly 100 words (a century) in length, not a syllable more, not a letter less (excluding the title). This nonsense rule about syllables and letters is deliberate because the Drabble Project was inspired by the humor of Monty Python[[1]](#footnote-1). Monty Python’s Big Red Book defines “drabble” as “a word game for 2 to 4 players. The four players sit from left to right and the first person to write a novel wins.”[[2]](#footnote-2) To recreate this game in the real world a “drabble” came to mean a story of one hundred words.

The deadliest game has numerous meanings (including hunting humans for sport), and this case has the Zelazny twist. Cape Buffalo or African Buffalo weigh 900 kg or more and can defend themselves against lions.

1. The Drabble Rules: The One Hundred Word Variant, by Dave B. Wake, http://www.meades.org/drabble.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Monty Python’s Big Red Book, Terry Gilliam et al., Eyre Methuen 1972. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)