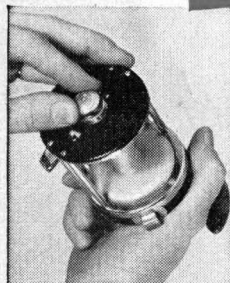


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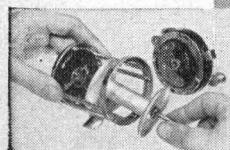
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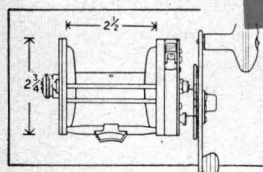
LIFT locking pin

TURN cap slightly

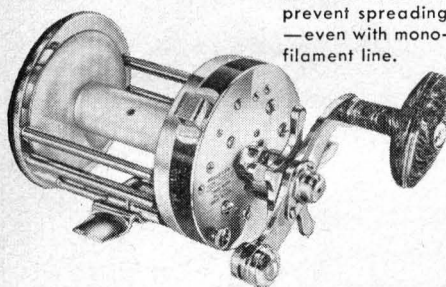


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Field & Stream

AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE
SPORTSMAN'S MAGAZINE

MARCH 1954 CONTENTS VOL. LVIII No. 11

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FIELD & STREAM MARCH 1954



Flanked by white hunters Andy Holmberg (standing) and Harry Selby (right), the author poses with his unearned rhinoceros

Collected But Not Earned

By ROBERT C. RUARK

PART TWO

TECHNICALLY it was the second day of safari—the second safari, and my first trip to the Northern Frontier of Kenya. In the first two hours of the first day we had shot a 110-pound-per-tusk elephant by sheer accidental meeting, a skip-and-jump out of a camp we hadn't even made yet. Since 100-plus elephants come very few to the million acres, this was roughly like buying a Geiger counter in the five-and-ten and then turning up a uranium lode just outside the local supermarket.

We had shot the elephant rather dramatically, in a driving rain accompanied by changing winds, with a charging bull at the end of it and two other bulls mixed up in the act. Not the slightest complication was contained in the fact that all three elephants were bright pink—from rolling in wet ocher clay—and nobody needs three pink elephants on the day after New Year's. Or, as Harry Selby might say, on any other bloody day.

All the celebration was over now. The tusks had been hewed from the great beast's head, the nerves removed, the ends plugged with grass, and the weighing accomplished. Because of remarkably small nerves, the old boy went a good ten pounds higher than our brightest expectations, and when you pass 75 pounds every ounce

is important. We toasted him right nobly over lunch, and then went out to polish off a few guinea-fowl and francolin on the Seralippe lugger at which we were camped.

The lugger—the dry river-bed—was really in business. There was a Samburu-Rendille *manyatta* (camp) just up the road a piece, close onto where we had first encountered Jumbo, and they seemed to own all the livestock from Isiolo to Addis Ababa. They drove their flocks of goats and sheep and high-humped red, black, and white cattle and their vast herds of Somali donkeys right through the side of the camp down to where they had dug the deep wells in the moist sands of the Seralippe river-bed. They were being jostled by what seemed an alarming number of elephants and rhino that trampled in the wells and otherwise made their presence known. The Samburu-Rendille, a pleasant bloke who is actually a displaced Masai and a great nomad, is handsome to look at, but accumulates millions of flies.

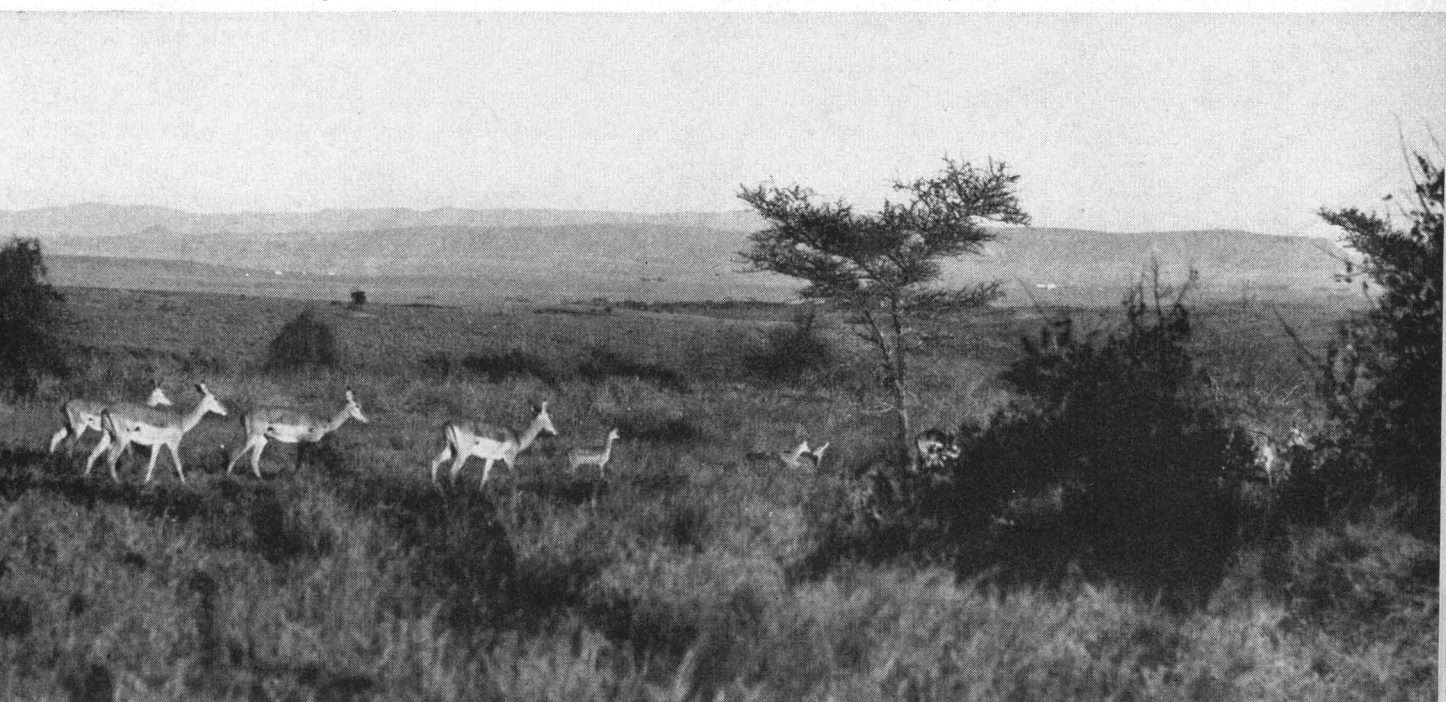
We didn't bother to get up very early that second day, having been up late to celebrate the elephant. Mostly we sat around the fire and talked about luck—the kind of luck we hadn't had on the first safari, where we hunted our legs off for rhino and kudu and even oryx for week after dreary week, for nothing but thorn scars and stone bruises. And here (*Continued on page 107*)



In Africa, the same as anywhere else on earth, it's the work, trial, uncertainty and challenge of the hunt that count

It's better to work hard, climb hills, endure hardships and beat yourself up in general, and in the end not get your quarry, than it is to have it handed to you on a platter. Otherwise you miss the real "meat" of a hunt – the stuff that makes memories

Sometimes hunting on the Dark Continent is like strolling through a zoo; others, like stalking trout in Death Valley



What is more, chances are she will remain in this semi-wild state for many years to come. No new resorts may be built because of an established rule of the power company that owns her shores. Though there are only about thirty resorts on the big water, she funnels in fishing parties from resorts within a 50-mile radius. Still an angler may sometimes fish all day without seeing another boat.

Accommodations are as varied as may be found anywhere in the world, from expensive de luxe cottages down to housekeeping log cabins at \$35 per week. Almost all the resorts on the American plan also have cabins in which meals may be cooked if desired, and there is even an up-to-date, sporty golf course at the well-appointed hotel and cabin resort on Barker Lake on the Chippewa's east fork. Then, too, there are ample parking areas for trailorites, and camping sites for the tenters. The islands have campsites with fireplaces, and the anglers may bring their boats or rent one.

Dave Oliphant and Bob Griffith, both of Hayward, have all the particulars concerning such things. Robert Helsing of Radisson is another who knows the country, since he has lived there all his life. Robert is my fishing friend. He grew up fishing the Brunet and Couderay Rivers and the Chippewa herself. Most of the people of the area are like them—ready to lend a hand to a fisherman as though he were a life-long friend.

However, not even the men who roamed her bottom-lands before she became a lake know all there is to know about the Big Chip. Nor will anyone ever know all the secrets of her swift rivers, black stump-filled bays, placid pools, high ridge woods or gloomy impenetrable swamps. No single man has been allotted enough years on this sphere to delve that deeply.

COLLECTED BUT NOT EARNED

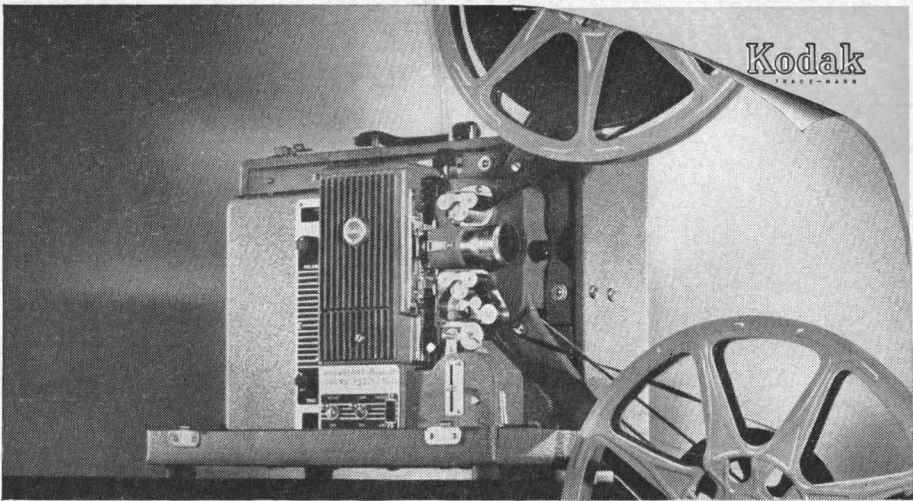
(Continued from page 72)

I'd already shot a very decent oryx for camp meat, an hour out of Isiolo, and the very next morning the toughest of all to get, a really good elephant, in less than two hours.

"Let's see how the luck holds with rhino," Selby said after breakfast. "Must be a few thousand of them around here. They don't come really high in the horn, like the forest rhino on the side of Mt. Kenya, but they're actually a better and more representative beast. They are bigger and much more rugged in the horn, but they don't go to those slim and freakish lengths that the mountain ones tend to. Anyhow, we need some rhino footage for Blackie's camera."

Blackie—Chester Kronfeld, the photographer—had already been off to a rather startling start for a city boy new-come to Kenya. His first hour out of town had yielded him a charging rhino cow with calf, and he had wound up on an ant-hill.

The next day, before he dug the sleep out of his eyes, we had hit him over the head with three bull elephants, one of which we had to shoot out of our laps, and Blackie had taken his first elephant photos of a big charging bull in the rain. We didn't know then how the movies would come out, because of the shifting light and the



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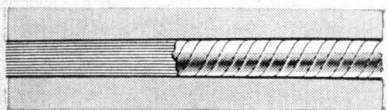
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rain, but they came out so horribly well that I got goose-pimples all over again when I saw the developed film six months later.

We piled into the jeeps, Harry Selby and I in one, Kronfeld and Andy Holmberg, the other pro, in the other, and meandered down the dry river-bed slowly, looking for rhino sign. There was plenty of it—strawy, kicked-up dung and a flock of tracks leading across the lugger into the bush. We'd not gone more than a mile when Harry killed the jeep, and Andy pulled up abreast and stopped his car. It was a good track, a bull's track, and very fresh. The still-damp sand from the early-morning dew was crumbly at the top of the track.

"Very nice, I think," Selby said. "Good bull, from the size of his hoof. Couldn't say about the horn, of course, but worth a little work. Let's go and investigate this gentleman. Even if he isn't worth the gun, we can get Blackie some footage, and rhino is what we need for this film, what?"

The expedition unloaded. It was quite an expedition—Selby and I and two gun-bearers and a car-boy, and Blackie and Holmberg and a camera-carrier and two gun-bearers. We looked like a young army heading into the bush, Selby out ahead with Metheke and Chalo tracking, me just behind, and the others straggling up to the rear.

I say we were tracking. We weren't, really. I have tracked with Selby when you had to depend on disarranged dew on a blade of grass, a holly berry of blood every five hundred yards, a slightly scuffed stone in rock-hard, bone-dry country. That is tracking, and I can't do it. This was not tracking. This was following the spoor of a Sherman tank through fresh snow on Park Avenue.

We just walked, at route step. Through that rain-soft earth and on that dewy grass our man Faro left a spoor that a blind beggar could have followed with his cane. We came to another stack of kicked-up dung, and it was hot and steaming in the morning air. Then all of a sudden things got complicated. Another set of tracks joined his and led into a patch of myrrh bush.

"O-ho," said Mr. Selby. "Love in bloom. He has matched himself up with a manamouki. He is in that bush with a cow. This is breeding time, and I imagine he'll not like it if we disturb him in his tryst." Selby actually talks like that.

"Disturb him in his tryst, yet," I said. "How delicate can you get in this business?"

Selby snickered and pointed.

A horn poked out of the bush and pointed inquiringly in our direction. It wasn't very much of a horn, but there was three tons of cow rhino under it. She backed into the bush. These things are funny. The cow had made no threat, although we weren't more than twenty to thirty yards away. But with that queer detachment you get I noticed that we non-gun carriers were suddenly wearing double rifles cocked at a 45-degree angle across our chests and that all safeties were off. This operation happened without anybody being conscious of it, which is why you hire gun-bearers in the first place. A good gun-bearer is never more than a yard from you when he is carrying the gun, and when he is tracking ahead you are toting the artillery.

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We circled around the bush, and then Mr. Selby did a thing that I consider very brave in calculated bravery, not bravado. At least I wouldn't do it. Not to a bush which had in it one rhino you knew about and another you didn't know about. Mr. Selby duck-walked right up to the edge of that bush and parted a branch with his gun barrel and looked in. The whole patch of bush couldn't have been more than twenty-five feet thick; so in effect Mr. Selby was within a minimum ten feet of one, maybe two, large, evilly disposed, nasty-tempered rhino in love.

He looked and looked, then duck-waddled backward and stood up. Motioning us off to the right, he spoke in a low voice. "Nothing in there but the cow. Doumi's beggared off someplace. Must've got our scent when we first saw the cow, from the other side. Let's go quietly away and leave the old girl to her tender memories."

We went quietly away, but the wind skirled around again and the lady caught our scent and departed the bush with a whoosh. So we gave the weapons back to the bearers and headed out for the scant few hundred yards in the direction of the jeeps.

"Hey!" said Mr. Kronfeld, the photographer, who was staggering along under a tripod. "Look a-yonder." He pointed over to a small meadow in the bush.

There was the bull. He was a damned fine bull, too, with a very good horn and a second horn nearly as good as the first, and he was standing just outside the bush no more than forty yards away. Black hands gave guns to white hands in something under one-hundredth of a second. You knew those guns were loaded. You didn't have to look to see if they were loaded. We froze.

"I say," Selby said, putting his mental calipers to work. "That's a jolly nice horn, very well-proportioned. Nothing stupendous, mind you, but I like a good representative trophy better than the freaks. He'll go 22 inches anyhow, and I never saw anything larger up here in recent years. I'd suggest we take him. We've got that second license, you know, in case we have to shoot another one to protect Blackie when we're doing the rhino footage, and if we run onto a monster we can better him. You want him?"

While I was saying "Yes" my mind was whipping back to another safari, in Tanganyika, where Selby and I got up at 5 A.M. and tortured ourselves until as late as 10 P.M. over miserable roads, crawling through marsh, climbing mountains, baking our brains out in the sun, and running from big, evil-tempered cows and big, evil-tempered calves and big, evil-tempered short-horned bulls. Twenty-eight rhino we ran from. Trees we climbed. Shoot we did not.

"You are damned well right I want to shoot him," I said. "I earned him last year."

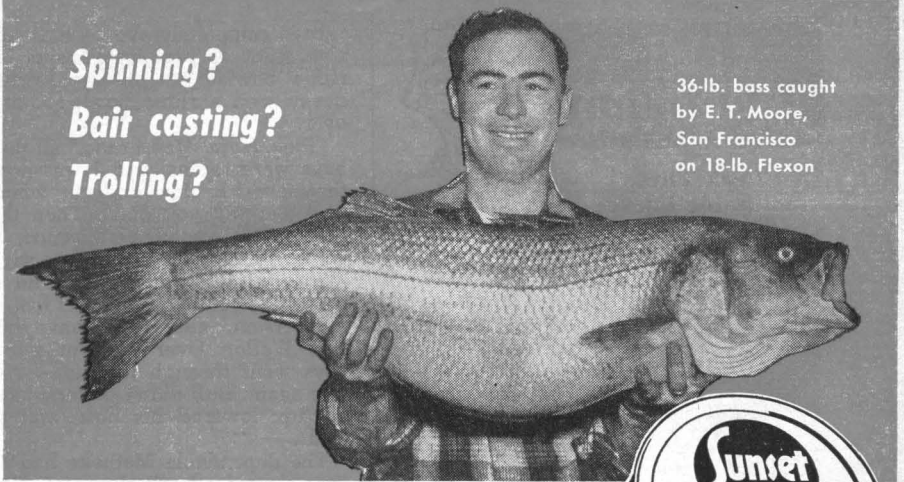
"Bust him, then."

I flipped a glance over my shoulder. The light was lousy, but Kronfeld had his camera set up. I looked at the big bull, which was beginning to work out of the meadow, edging off into the bush.

"Now," Harry said. "He's leaving, and I don't want him in that bush."

He was a touch far for surety, but I held on his shoulder and pulled. He

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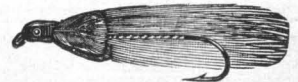
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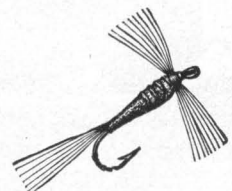
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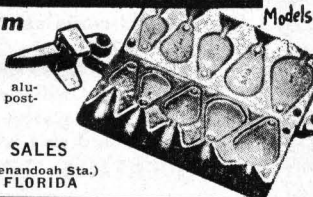
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turned completely over, a most impressive sight if you have never seen a rhino bowled completely over. I had never seen a rhino bowled completely over.

"Piga. Kufa. Mzuri sana," all the black boys were saying, and I was acquiring that feverish glow you get when they like the way you do it. Then the bull got up. He was piga-ed mzuri, but he wasn't kufa sana, which is to say I had busted him real good, but he wasn't very dead yet. He was on his feet, three-quarters on, and I let him have the other half. Wallop. Over he went again. The boys went through the piga-kufa routine again. Bull didn't understand it. He got up, lowered his horn and started at us.

The dependable Metheke had by this time shoved a fresh clump of .470's into my fist and the tricky Westley Richards was fueled and I clobbered this thing again. Down. Piga. Kufa. Up he got again, groggy but gutty, still headed our way. Boom. Down again. Then he began to roar and screech and shake his horn high in the air, whirling round and round and raising the roof. He paused for a second, and I gave him the other one. Down. Up. One more. Down. Up—and headed our way.

This seemed to go on for quite a time. I knew where I was hitting and what I was hitting him with, because the rhino is the one big animal I'm not frightened of and don't get excited about. This seemed to be the most durable beast I had met, save one buffalo.

When he got up, he came like a shot, straight onto the lot of us. I let him come, and when his head went down there was an awful lot of neck showing with spine under it, and I pointed the gun down and broke his back more or less in our laps. He didn't need the finisher that I told Harry to give him in the head. The reason I told Harry to finish him was that my middle finger was split open from knuckle to nail like an overcooked hot dog. All guns kick me because I hold them wrong, and I had fired this cannon exactly eleven times since yesterday morning, and it wasn't even 10 A.M. today. One of the explosions had been double, when both triggers touched off on the elephant, and 150 grains of cordite is hard on a finger.

Everything that I had put into this beast, except the back-buster, was a killing shot. Everything was in the heart, smack on the shoulders. There is no trick to shooting a rhino in the heart. You more or less aim for where he's biggest. But, bowled over all those times, he still came and was still coming and would have continued to come some more if I had not ruptured his motive machinery. There is no living man who can explain why some come and some don't—as witness the fact that a month later I killed a Cape buffalo stone dead with a .30-06, whereas others have been known to take up to sixteen .470's through the front and still come on.

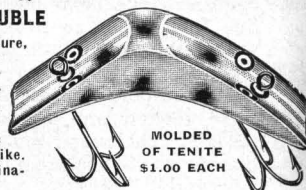
He is a dreadful-looking beast, the rhino, but this seemed to be a good one. His horn measured out at 23 inches and a bit and was as big around the base as it was long. It had green moss on it. He was not covered with ticks, and it occurred to me that this was the only rhino I ever saw that wasn't infested with ticks and covered with tick-birds. I tied a handkerchief around my bleeding finger.



"... HAS ALL
THE
ACTION
A BAIT
COULD
HAVE"

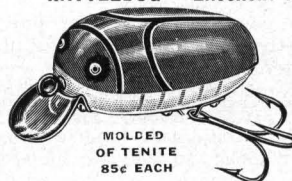
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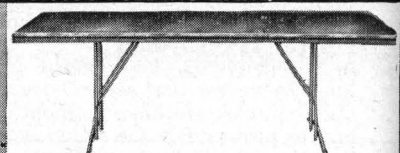
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"Why didn't he stay down?" I asked Selby. "Look at those holes. Five hundred grains of solid .470, smack through the shoulders every time, only one a little low, and up he gets and lands in our arms. I thought you said these things are easy to kill!"

"They're supposed to be," Harry said. "Except I've noticed one thing. If they know you're there and are charging and you wallop them right, they'll go over and stay down. But if you shoot them unsuspectingly and they go down, apt as not it's from shock, like hitting a man in the chin when he isn't looking. There's no counter-resistance to make the bullet's impact greater. I don't know, really. He's dead, and we'll skin him out for a couple of kibokos—quirts, you call them—and take the head-skin and then we'll go on back to camp for a little lunch."

For three weeks thereafter I worked harder than I've ever worked hunting, and so did everybody else. What we wanted was rhino footage. We fanned out in two cars daily, looking for rhino, in that down-bearing Northern Frontier District heat. We rode the dongas and the luggers and climbed the mountains and perused the plains. We saw a lot of rhino we couldn't photograph, and three or four we could. But all save one were cowards. Finally the rhino just disappeared from the Northern Frontier. We worked three weeks thereafter for nothing at all except scenery.

Then the Metro-Goldwyn Mayer people came in to put the finishing touches to a film they were making for Clark Gable and Ava Gardner to star in, and we pushed on back to Nairobi.

In the end, I reckoned we earned both the elephant and the rhino. After three months and after being charged by a great many elephant and rhino in places where it was illegal to shoot elephant and rhino—after changing a tire in the middle of a herd of the most ill-natured elephants I ever met—I came to a profound conclusion.

The conclusion was that it's better to work hard for it and not get it at the end than to get it easy and stupidly, luckily on a platter. Apart from the thrill of standing off the big elephant, a split-second thrill when we were waiting him out and hoping he'd turn, I really had nothing of the elephant. I hadn't walked those bitter dusty days, or climbed the hills, or plodded the luggers, or fought the thorn. I hadn't been cheated by uncontrollable, unlucky breaks, as I'd been cheated before on the kudu and on the rhino in Tanganyika. I had not earned my elephant. I had not this time earned my rhino, even though I paid fully in later weeks when we were hunting them for the camera.

I've never really been able to define what it is that holds a man to shooting. The best I ever was able to do was say that hunting is like a long and carefully constructed sentence that needs a period at the end to give it perfection. If you put the period at the beginning, it wrecks the construction of the sentence.

I have no more interest in rhino, but I hope to hunt elephant one day, and I hope to work my legs off and be scared stiff, and finally, at the tired end, I hope to see some old dream bull with monster tusks that will make the work worth while. If you collect it before you earn it, it is really not worth a damn.



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