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Narrative of “A Sound of Thunder”

The short story, “A Sound of Thunder” written by Ray Bradbury deals with topics such as time travel and the butterfly effect. In the story an illegal company, Time Safari Inc. runs safaris to the prehistoric times to hunt dinosaurs. To go on these adventures the hunter must have strength, courage and ten thousand dollars. Eckels, the main character, goes on a journey sixty million years into the past to hunt the ultimate game, a tyrannosaurus rex. The company took all precautions to ensure they did not change anything in the past that could impact the present day. There was a floating path the hunters were to stay on to make sure they did not damage the environment. Eckels underestimated his bravery on the trip and was intimidated when he saw the tyrannosaurus rex. Travis sent him back into the machine, but was frightened while walking as the dinosaur started to run towards them. Eckels accidentally stepped off the path, but did not tell anyone as the group frantically shot down the tyrannosaurus. When they returned home, everything had changed including the language, atmosphere and who had won the election. Keith was the president when they left, but that was not the case when they arrived. Deutscher had won the election; he was a president for war and against everything else. Eckels looked at the bottom of his shoes and noticed a blue butterfly stuck to the sole. Travis shot Eckels at the end of the story because the one mistake caused the rest of history to change. A new expository sad and surprise ending was written as the original ending was unresolved. The new ending to the story has some similarities, but also some differences. The new ending is expository sad because the time machine was ruined, and the group would be stuck in the prehistoric times forever. It is also a surprise ending because the reader would not expect Travis to turn on the rest of the group. At the end of the original short story, Travis pointed his rifle at Eckels and after there was a sound of thunder. This is an unresolved ending because the reader must inquire and put together that Travis shot Eckels for stepping on the butterfly and altering present day. The original theme of the story was change, how one small action can cause a ripple effect and alter the future. The new theme related to the ending is intimidation and how a person’s attitude can change when being put under pressure. The original techniques of suspense used was high stakes and complicated matters. The hunters were not allowed to step of the path because if they touched the ground they could affect the environment which in turn would change the future. The new methods of suspense used were using time constraints, applied pressure, dilemmas and unpredictability. The group needed to figure out a way of fixing the time machine before the time runs out while trying to avoid attracting attention from surrounding dinosaurs. While repairing the machine an unexpected character turns on the group leaving them in a dangerous position. Situational irony is used when Travis turns on the group because the reader does not expect this change in the character. This type of conflict is person against person because Travis is in contradiction to the group. There is also person against self with Eckels because he must be brave to help the group despite him feeling overwhelmed. In the story, the author uses indirect characterization by describing Eckels turning red. This implied he was nervous to go on the safari. “A Sound of Thunder” was originally about the butterfly effect and how one small action can create a huge impact. The new ending focuses on how a person not used to dealing with pressure can change and how it can affect their thinking.