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GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading and writing

8700/1

Insert

The source that follows is:

SOURCE A: 20th Century prose-fiction

‘A Sound of Thunder’ by Ray Bradbury

An extract from the middle of a short story, published in 1952.

Please turn the page over to see the source

SOURCE A

Using a time machine, an organisation called Time Safari transports clients into the past to take part in hunting expeditions. A group that includes Mr Eckels, together with their guide, Travis, is visiting a prehistoric jungle in order to shoot a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

1 The jungle was high and the jungle was broad.
Sounds like music and flying tents filled the sky,
and those were pterodactyls soaring with huge grey wings.

5 'I've hunted tiger, wild boar, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it,' said Eckels. 'I'm shaking like a kid.'

'Ah,' said Travis.

Everyone stopped.

Travis raised his hand. 'Ahead,' he whispered, 'in
10 the mist. There he is. There's his Royal Majesty now.'

The jungle was wide and full of twitterings,
13 rustlings, murmurs, and sighs.

Suddenly it all ceased, as if someone had shut a
15 door.

Silence.

A sound of thunder.

**Out of the mist, one hundred yards away, came
Tyrannosaurus Rex.**

20 'It,' whispered Eckels, 'it.....'

'Ssh!'

**22 It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs. It
towered thirty feet above half of the trees, a great
evil god, folding its delicate watchmaker's claws
25 close to its oily reptilian chest. Each lower leg was
a piston, a thousand pounds of white bone, sunk in
thick ropes of muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of
pebbled skin like the armour of a terrible warrior.
Each thigh was a ton of meat, ivory, and steel mesh.
30 And from the great breathing cage of the upper
body those two delicate arms dangled out front,
arms with hands which might pick up and examine
men like toys, while the snake neck coiled. And the
head itself, a ton of sculptured stone, lifted easily
35 upon the sky. Its mouth gaped, exposing a fence of
teeth like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich eggs,
empty of all expression save hunger. It closed its
mouth in a death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones
crushing aside trees and bushes, its taloned feet
40 clawing damp earth, leaving prints six inches deep
41 wherever it settled its weight.**

**It ran with a gliding ballet step, far too poised and
balanced for its ten tons. It moved into a sunlit area
warily, its beautifully reptilian hands feeling the air.**

[Turn over]

45 'Why, why..., ' Eckels twitched his mouth, 'it could reach up and grab the moon.'

'Ssh!' Travis jerked angrily. 'He hasn't seen us yet.'

48 'It can't be killed.' Eckels pronounced this verdict quietly, as if there could be no argument. He had
50 weighed the evidence and this was his considered opinion. The rifle in his hands seemed like a toy gun. 'We were fools to come. This is impossible.'

'Shut up!' hissed Travis.

'Nightmare.'

55 'Turn around,' commanded Travis. 'Walk quietly to the Machine. We'll remit half your fee.'

'I didn't realize it would be this big,' said Eckels. 'I miscalculated, that's all. And now I want out.'

'It sees us!'

60 'There's the red paint on its chest.'

The Tyrant Lizard raised itself. Its armoured flesh glittered like a thousand green coins. The coins, crusted with slime, steamed. In the slime, tiny insects wriggled, so that the entire body seemed to
65 twitch and undulate, even while the monster itself did not move. It exhaled. The stink of raw flesh blew down the wilderness.

70 ‘Get me out of here,’ said Eckels. ‘It was never like this before. I was always sure I’d come through alive. I had good guides, good safaris, and safety. This time, I figured wrong. I’ve met my match and admit it. This is too much for me to get hold of.’

‘Don’t run,’ said Lesperance. ‘Turn around. Hide in the Machine.’

75 ‘Yes.’ Eckels seemed to be numb. He looked at his feet as if trying to make them move. He gave a grunt of helplessness.

‘Eckels!’

He took a few steps, blinking, shuffling.

80 ‘Not that way!’

The Monster, at the first motion, lunged forward with a terrible scream. It covered one hundred yards in six seconds. The rifles jerked up and blazed fire. A windstorm from the beast’s mouth
85 engulfed them in the stench of slime and old blood. The Monster roared, teeth glittering with sun.

The rifles cracked again, but their sound was lost in shriek and lizard thunder. The great level of the reptile’s tail swung up, lashed sideways. Trees
90 exploded in clouds of leaf and branch. The Monster twitched its jeweller’s hands down to fondle at the men, to twist them in half, to crush them like berries, to cram them into its teeth and its

[Turn over]

**95 screaming throat. Its boulder-stone eyes levelled
with the men. They saw themselves mirrored. They
fired at the metallic eyelids and the blazing black
iris.**

**Like a stone idol, like a mountain avalanche,
Tyrannosaurus fell.**

END OF SOURCE

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