In “A Sound of Thunder,” Travis is talking to Eckels about man and his relationship with Time. He counsels him not to change the Past because it might change the Future. “Who knows? Who really can say he knows? We don’t know. We’re guessing. But until we do know for certain whether our messing around in Time can make a big roar or a little rustle in history, we’re being careful. (227)” It is clear that Travis is speaking as the author cautioning humans to be aware of the consequences of their choices. By personifying Time, the reader appreciates Time as a symbol and as a character that can “roar” or “rustle” depending on the magnitude of the change. A careful reader will see foreshadowing here because ultimately Eckels doesn’t listen to the advice and steps off the Path. At the end of the story, Eckels returns to the present and sees the sign outside of the Safari, Inc. offices. He realizes that he made a huge mistake in the Past by stepping on the butterfly and wandering off the Path. He says: “Can’t we,” he pleaded to the world, to himself, to the officials, to the Machine, “can’t we take it back, can’t we make it alive again? Can’t we start over? (236)” . By saying this, Eckels wants to undo his choice. The magnitude of stepping on the butterfly changed the whole world, and Eckels suddenly remembers Travis’s warning about the effects of stepping off the Path. By referring to the problem as something “we” should fix, Eckels realizes just how catastrophic his decision was and he knows he cannot fix it himself- he needs Travis, the Machine, and the world’s forgiveness. The author is using this dialogue to show the reader the consequences of Eckels’ actions. We know that there is no returning to the Past and that the world needs Travis now to fix the error. Travis shoots Eckels, as he had promised he would do. The author, Ray Bradbury, uses this story as a cautionary tale to his 1950’s audience who were at that time worried about the Cold War and the imminent bombing by Russia. It is similar to the WWII worries we see in “Most Dangerous Game,” which was written in 1927. The author, Connell, used Zaroff as a symbol for humans who think they are gods. Like Travis, Rainsford must kill the problem and even though both men are murderers at the end of the story, they acted like heroes for mankind.

In “A Sound of Thunder” by Ray Bradbury, As the mouthpiece of the author, Travis is cautioning Eckels (and the reader) about the consequences of messing with time or not respecting scientific laws. At this point in the story, Travis is impressing the importance of the Rules. He says: “Who knows? Who really can say he knows? We don’t know. We’re guessing. But until we do know for certain whether our messing around in Time can make a big roar or a little rustle in history, we’re being careful. (227)” This quote foreshadows the ending and predicts Travis’s greatest fear: stupidity and ignorance. As the leader of the expedition, he is always worried about something critical going wrong, and Eckels is the walking embodiment of that fear. At the end of the story, it becomes clear that Eckels did not listen to Travis’s rules, and that his actions will have devastating consequences.

At the end of the story, when Eckels has seen the changed future illustrated by the diction changes on the Safari, Inc. sign, the person at the desk, and the different victor of the Presidential election, and finally, the crushed butterfly on his shoe, he crumples in regret. He says: “Can’t we,” he pleaded to the world, to himself, to the officials, to the Machine, “can’t we take it back, can’t we make it alive again? Can’t we start over? (236)” Eckels does not want to admit that the changes are because of his fear, his flight, and his refusal to shoot the dinosaur. Most importantly, he refuses to admit that the butterfly was the catalyst for this final devastation to the human race. Because he says “we” instead of “I”, it is clear that he needs others to clean up his mess. Travis knows, however, that the cycle will continue, therefore Eckels must be shot, so that this does not happen again.
THESIS PARAGRAPH SAMPLE:

Authors often use their stories as a way to comment on the world we live in. Three authors specifically have presented humans in crisis and situations which require escape. Ray Bradbury, Val Plumwood and Richard Connell each describe life-threatening crises and show the reader what kinds of skills are necessary to survive against great odds. Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder,” Plumwood’s “Being Prey,” and Connell’s “The Most Dangerous Game” explore the narrative conflicts of man versus man and man versus nature. These conflicts revolve around the theme of the importance of the rules and stress that all actions have consequences.

THE FORMAT OF YOUR ESSAY:

THESIS

INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH: AUTHOR’S VIEW OF ESCAPE (ALL THREE STORIES MENTIONED)

CHARACTER A STUDY: BODY PARAGRAPHS (ONE STORY MENTIONED)

TRANSITION

CHARACTER B STUDY: BODY PARAGRAPHS (ONE STORY MENTIONED)

TRANSITION

CHARACTER C STUDY: BODY PARAGRAPHS (ONE STORY MENTIONED)

TRANSITION TO THEME CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH(S): AUTHOR’S THEMES (ALL THREE STORIES MENTIONED)
Write a paragraph where you discuss the three authors’s ideas about escape.
1) What do the characters have to escape?
2) What is gained or lost in the escaping?
3) What does the author say that man has to escape?

**Travis**
Eckels’ mistake: stepping off the Path, killing the butterfly
Dinosaur threat: he has to step in to rescue Eckels
reccrimination from society/work
fear of future changing; can he go back w/o Eckels to fix?

**Eckels**
being killed by T Rex
his own mistake: gravity of situation, fear of responsibility
being killed by Travis; consequence of breaking rules

**Rainsford**
Zaroff will kill him
being hunted & failing to escape his traps
effects of his experience on the island; will be become Z?
dogs- painful death--- chooses the unknown death

**Plumwood**
men hunting crocs: pleas for their safety
not getting away from croc; hurting, dying
not making back to camp; all this for nothing
dingoes/hypothermia
Conclusion: The author’s themes about life.

Bradbury: A Sound of Thunder
Author’s theme: Bradbury uses this story to explain to the reader that our actions, no matter how small, will have consequences. He fears technology, but he fears human stupidity and ignorance more. Therefore, this 1950’s tale is a teaching experience for his readers, and a cautionary tale for the future.

Quote from the story to use as support:

Now, try your hand at writing the theme conclusions for the other two stories. Remember, this section is about how the AUTHOR incorporates the theme into the story. Include one concrete detail or quote from the story and your examination of the author’s theme.

Plumwood: Being Prey
Author’s theme: Plumwood’s point in writing this essay was to.....

Quote from the story to use as support:

Connell: The Most Dangerous Game
Author’s theme: Connell wrote this story in 1927 as an illustration of....

Quote from the story to use as support: