

covered in grass, so I couldn't get a good look at it, but I think it may have been the monster."

Looks of concern swept over the crowd.

"What was the creature doing?" said Dart the weasel.

"It was speaking," said Swooper. "It kept repeating the same words over and over again. But each time it sounded a little different. At first it sounded like a cricket, and then it sounded like a raccoon, and then it sounded like an owl!"

"What was it saying?" said Digdown the groundhog.

"I could be mistaken," said Swooper, "but I think it was saying, 'Hello, my name is Roz.'"

The crowd began to chatter.

"Just where was this creature?" said Fink the fox.

Everyone turned as the owl slowly pointed his wing to a grassy lump in the meadow. It was a rather ordinary-looking grassy lump. Until it began to move.

As you probably guessed, that grassy lump was Roz. She had been there the whole time, camouflaged, watching, listening, and with all the animals looking at her she decided to introduce herself. The crowd stared in disbelief as the grassy lump started shaking and bulging upward and crumbling apart, and there was the robot! Then, using her body and voice, the

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robot spoke to the animals in their own language.

"Hello, my name is Roz."

The crowd gasped.

Swooper fluttered up from his branch and screeched, "It's the monster!"

"I am not a monster," said Roz. "I am a robot."

A flock of sparrows suddenly took off.

"Leave us alone!" squeaked Dart as he crouched low in the grass. "Return to whatever horrible place you've come from!"

"I come from here," said Roz. "I have spent my whole life on this island."

"Why haven't you spoken to us sooner?" screeched the owl, from higher up in the tree.

"I did not know the animal language until now," said the robot.

Crownpoint the buck had heard enough, and he slipped into the forest with his family.

"So what do you want from us?" growled Fink.

"I have observed that different animals have different ways of surviving," said the robot. "I would like each of you to teach me your survival techniques."

"I'm not going to help you!" screeched the owl, from the very top of the tree. "You seem so...unnatural!"

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"The monster is just waiting to gobble us up!" shrieked Digdown. And the groundhog disappeared into a hole.

"I will not gobble anyone up," said Roz. "I have no need for food."

"You don't need food?" Fink relaxed a bit. "Well, I need food. And lots of it. Why don't you make yourself useful and find me some food?"

"What would you like me to do?" said Roz.

"Can you hunt?" The fox smiled at a hare on the far side of the gathering. "It's almost time for breakfast."

"I cannot hunt. But I could gather berries."

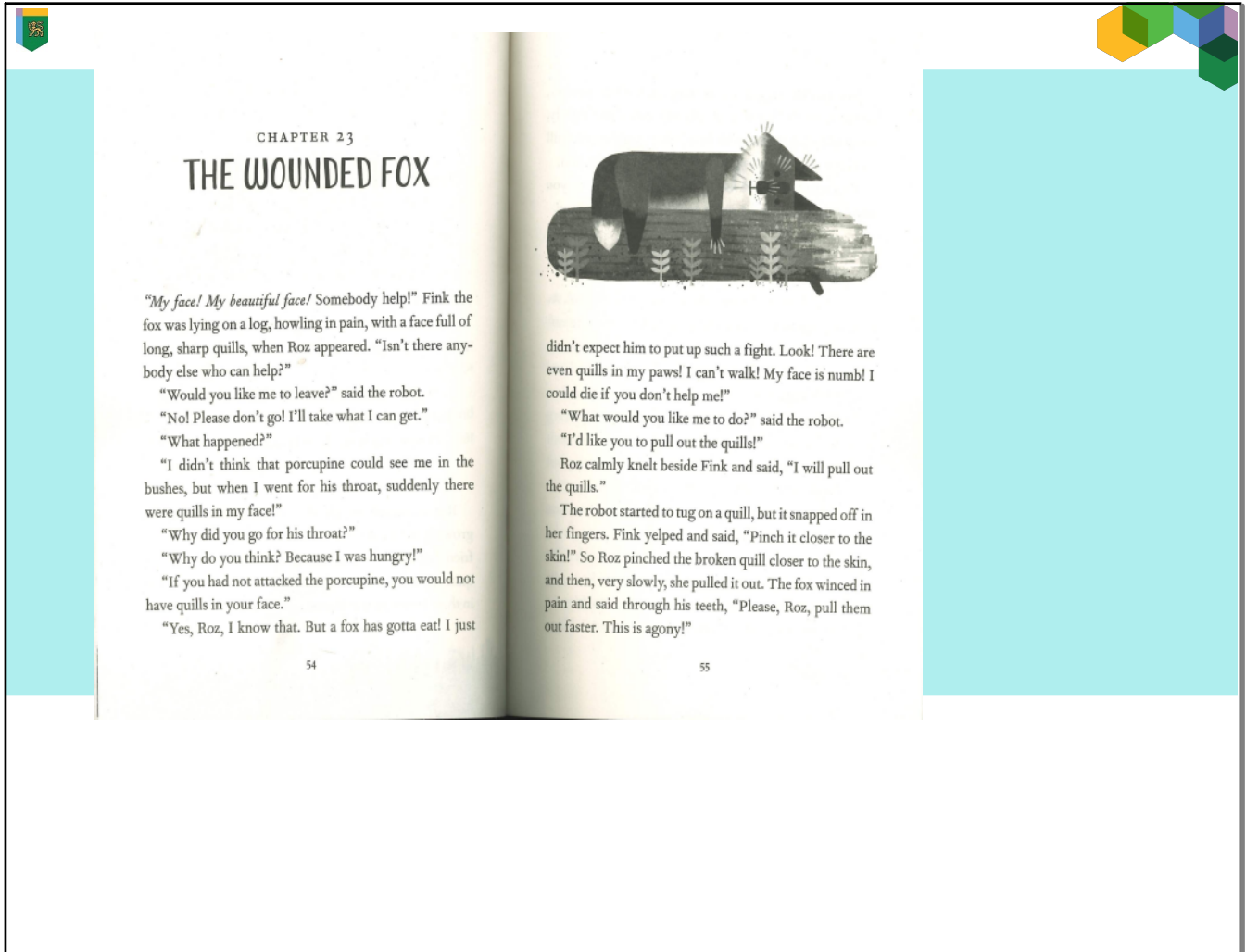
The fox's smile disappeared. "Berries? I'm hungry for meat, not berries! Good luck to you, Roz. You're gonna need it!" And the fox trotted away.

Roz looked up at the tree, but the owl had gone. And when the robot looked down again, she realized that everyone else had gone too.



Discussion

Robots don't feel emotions



Roz quickly tugged out another quill. Then another, and another. The fox lay perfectly still, eyes closed tightly, wind whistling through his nose, until every single quill had been removed and placed in a neat pile beside him.

Fink struggled to his feet. "Thanks, Roz. I...I owe you one." The fox smiled, briefly, and then he limped away.

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## CHAPTER 24

## THE ACCIDENT

*As Roz wandered* through springtime, she saw all the different ways that animals entered the world. She saw birds guarding their eggs like treasures until the chicks finally hatched. She saw deer give birth to fawns who were up and running in a matter of minutes. Many newborns were greeted by loving families. Some were on their own from their very first breath. And, as you're about to find out, a few poor goslings would never even get a chance to hatch.

Roz was climbing down one of the forest cliffs when the accident happened. The wind started blowing out of the north, and suddenly clouds were rushing over the island. With the clouds came a spring shower. A downpour, actually. And there was our robot, clamping her hands onto a wet block of stone on the side of the cliff. But the block couldn't handle the extra weight. And as the heavy robot

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hung there, cracks suddenly shot through the stone and it started breaking apart. Down went the robot, plummeting into the treetops below. She crashed through branch after branch before finally hooking an arm around one. Then she dangled there, gently swinging as rocks roared past her on their way to the forest floor.

When the dust settled, Roz shimmied down the tree trunk. The ground was littered with broken rocks and splintered wood and pulverized shrubs. And within all that rubble was a goose nest that had been torn to shreds. Two dead geese and four smashed eggs lay among the carnage. The robot stared at them with her softly glowing eyes, and something clicked deep inside her computer brain. Roz realized she had caused the deaths of an entire family of geese.

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## CHAPTER 25

## THE EGG

*As Roz stood in the rain, staring down at those poor, lifeless geese, her sensitive ears detected a faint peeping sound coming from somewhere nearby. She followed the peeps over to a clump of wet leaves on the ground. And when she peeled back the leaves, she discovered a single perfect goose egg sunk in the mud.*

*"Mama! Mama!" peeped a tiny, muffled voice from within the egg.*

The robot gently cradled the fragile thing in her hand. Without a family, the unhatched gosling inside would surely die. Roz knew that some animals had to die for others to live. That was how the wilderness worked. But would she allow her accident to cause the death of yet another gosling?

After a moment, the robot started to walk. Carefully

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holding the egg, she moved through the forest and away from that sad scene. But she didn't get far before Fink burst out from the bushes.

"What happened?" The fox panted. "The whole forest was shaking!"

"There was an accident," said the robot. "I was climbing those cliffs when the rocks started to fall."

"You should be more careful," said Fink as he checked out the robot's new scrapes and dents. "I'll need your help if I ever have more porcupine trouble!"

"I will be more careful."

"What do you have there?" said Fink, looking up at Roz's hands.

"A goose egg."

"Oh! I love eggs! Can I eat it?"

"No."

"Please?"

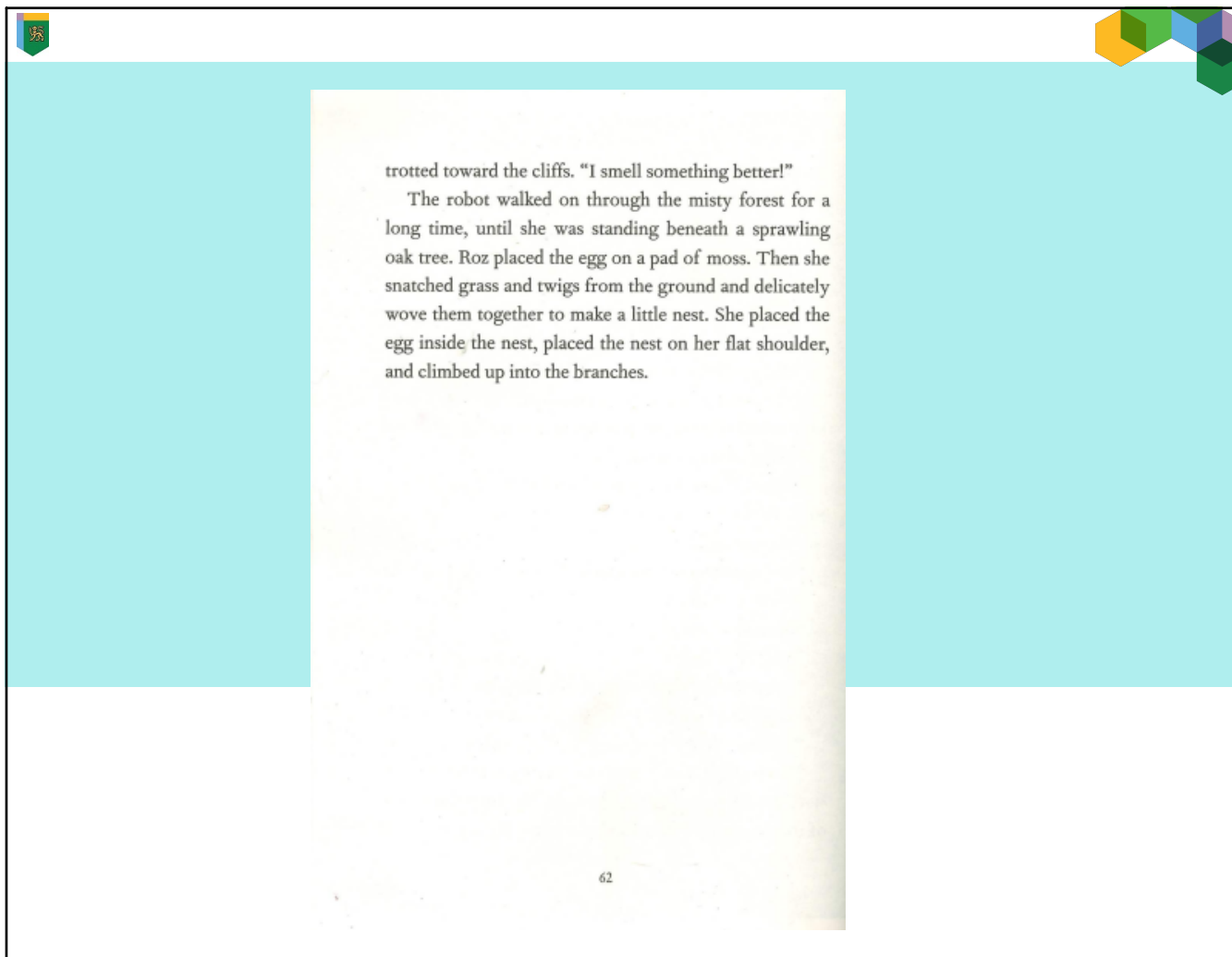
"No."

"Why do you want it?" The fox scowled. "I thought you didn't eat food."

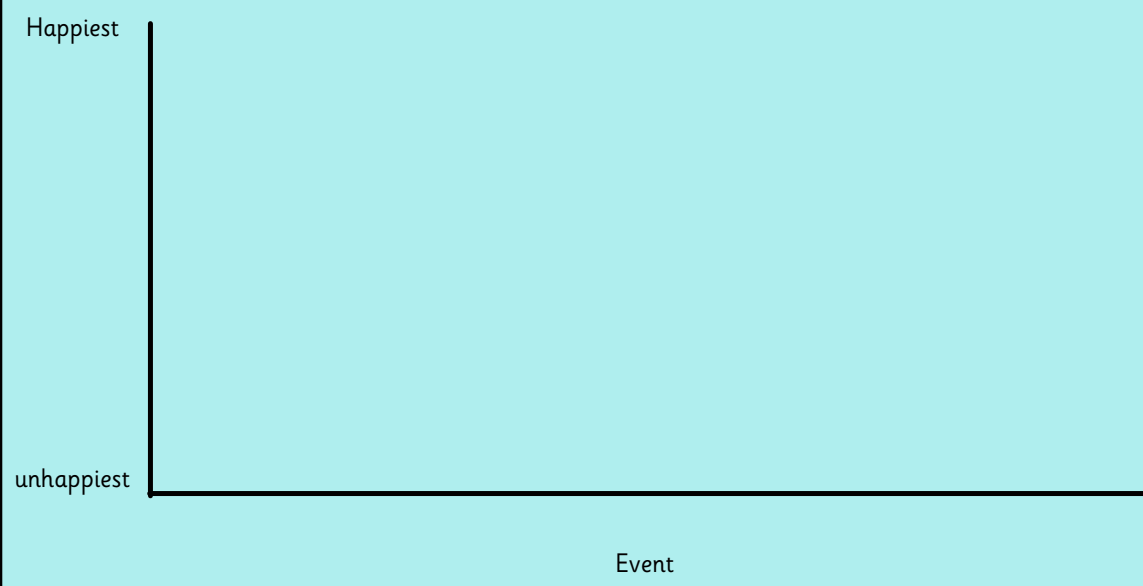
"You may not have this egg, Fink."

The fox sighed. He scratched his chin. And then he started sniffing the breeze. His nose had found the scent of the dead geese. "You can keep your egg!" he said as he

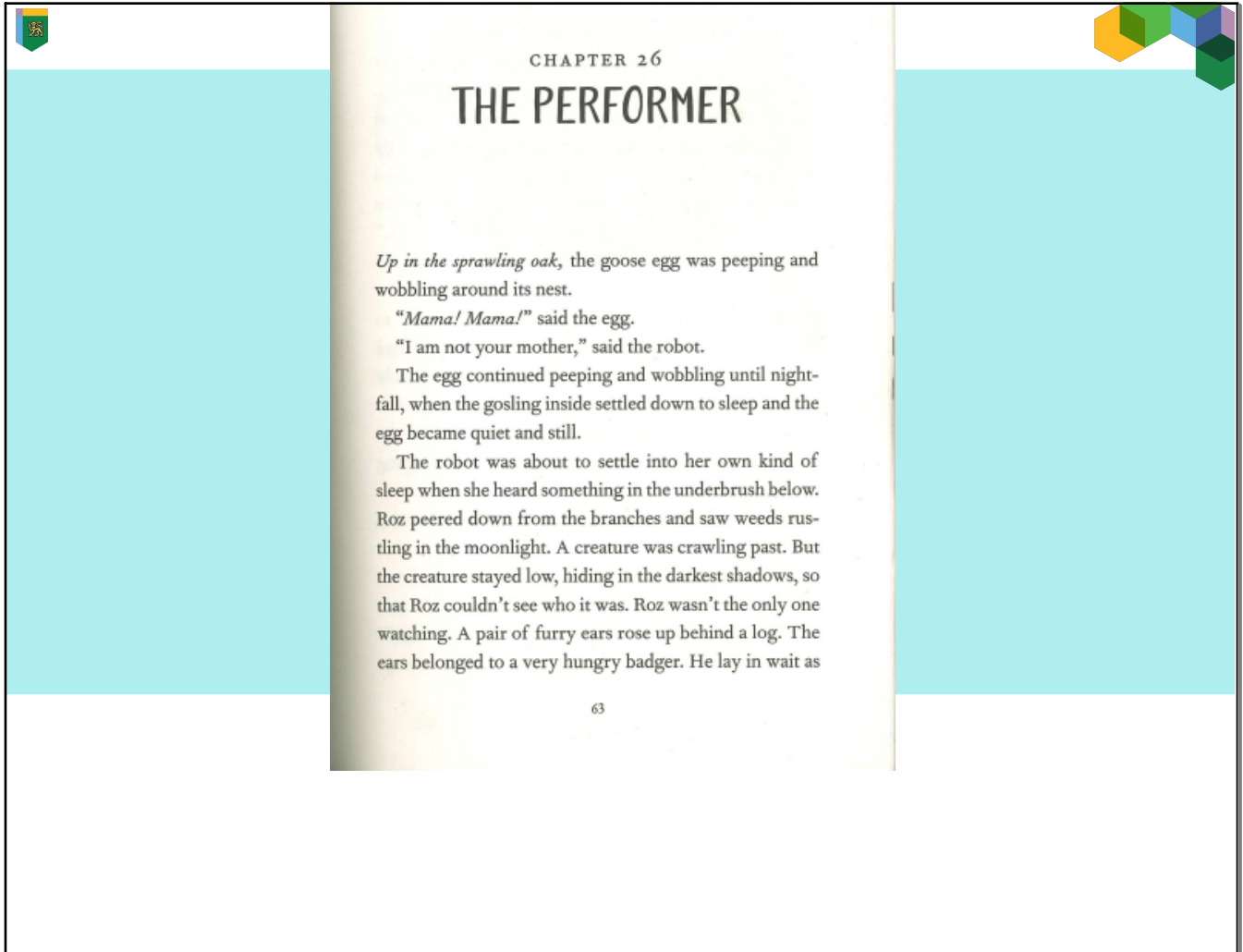




We are going to create an emotions graph for Roz to see how her emotions changed throughout the passage we have just read. First, lets plot the key points



Using a ruler create your own emotions graph in your book



the shadowy creature came closer and closer, and when the time was right, the badger pounced.

You might expect a creature under attack to run for her life, or to defend herself, or at the very least to scream. But when the badger pounced, this creature just rolled onto her back, stuck out her tongue, and died. Not only was she dead, she was rotten, and the badger's face twisted with disgust. "Blech! What a stench!" He pawed at the stinky corpse a few times and then gave up. "No, thanks," he grumbled to himself. "I'd rather eat beetles." And the badger hurried off to find a less disgusting meal.

Had that mysterious creature been frightened to death? And how could her body possibly rot so quickly? Roz was confused. And the robot became considerably more confused an hour later, when the dead creature's ears began to flicker, her nose began to twitch, and she rolled onto her feet and went on her way as if nothing had happened.

The robot's voice called down from the tree. "Are you alive or are you dead?"

The creature's voice hissed up from the shadows. "Who's there? Why have you been watching me?"

"What you just did was unbelievable," said Roz. "I could not look away."

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"Unbelievable? Really?" The creature's voice seemed to be softening. "I thought perhaps I overdid it when I stuck out my tongue."

"I was certain you were dead."

"Oh, what a lovely thing to say!"

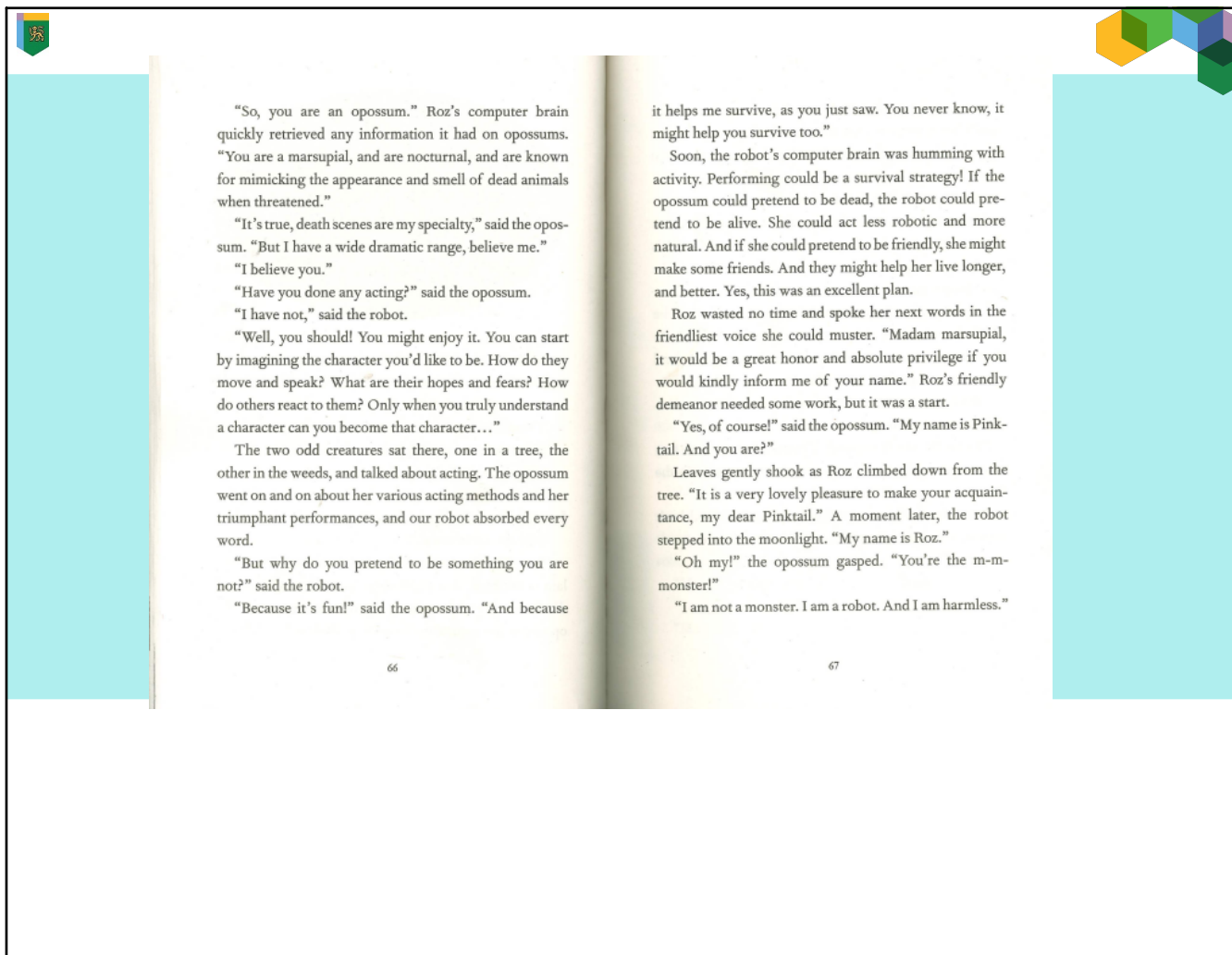
"Were you dead?"

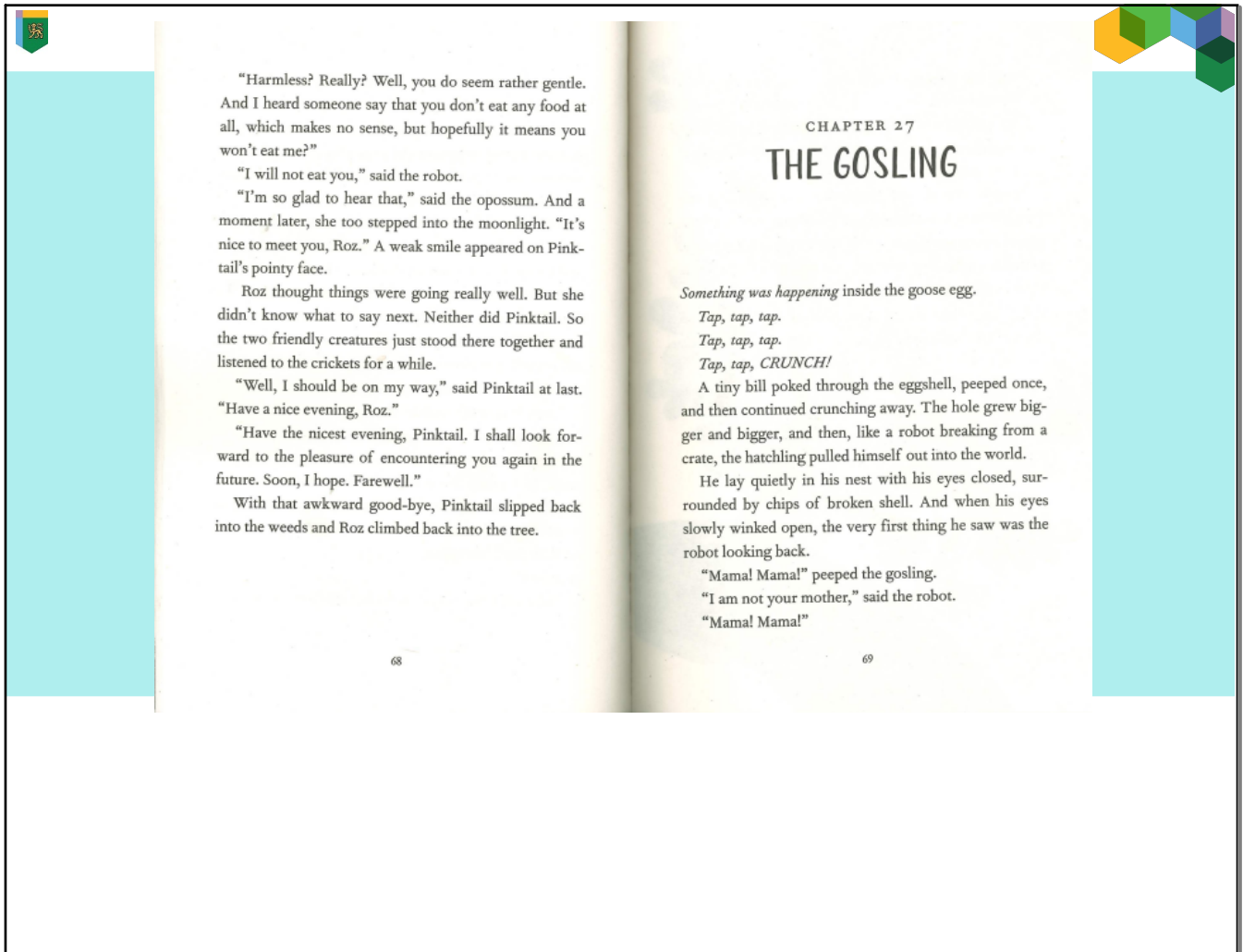
"Well, of course not! Nobody can actually come back from the dead. It was just an act!"

"I do not understand."

"It's simple. I knew that if I played dead and really laid it on thick, that old badger would be so disgusted that he'd run off. And that is exactly what happened. We opossums are natural performers, you know."

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"I am not your mother."

"Food! Food!"

The gosling was hungry. Of course he was. So, using her friendliest voice, Roz said, "What would you like to eat, little darling?"

"Food!" was the only response. The hatchling was far too young to be helpful. Roz needed to find a grown goose. So she scooped up the nest with the gosling inside, placed it on her flat shoulder, and marched through the forest, searching for geese.

CHAPTER 28  
THE OLD GOOSE

Ordinarily, the forest animals would have run away from the monster. But they were awfully curious why she was carrying a hatchling on her shoulder. And once Roz explained the situation, the animals actually tried to help. A frog pointed Roz up to the squirrels. A squirrel recommended that she speak with the magpies. And then a magpie sent them over to the beaver pond.

The ground grew soggy, the grass grew taller, and soon the robot and the gosling were looking across a wide, murky pond. Dragonflies buzzed through the reeds. Turtles sunned themselves on a log. Schools of small fish gathered in the shadows. And there, floating in the center of the pond, was an old gray goose.

"A very good morning to you!" the robot's friendly

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voice boomed over the water. "I have an adorable little gosling with me!"

The goose just stared.

"I am in great need of your assistance!" said Roz. "Actually, the gosling is in need of your assistance!"

The goose didn't move.

"Food!" peeped the gosling. "Food! Food!"

That tiny voice was more than the old goose could bear, and she began gliding across the pond and squawking to the robot, "What are you doing with that hungry hatchling? Where are his parents?"

"There was a terrible accident," said Roz. "It was my fault. This gosling is the only survivor."

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"If there was a terrible accident, why does your voice sound so cheerful?" The goose flapped her wings. "Are you sure you didn't *eat* his parents?"

"I am sure I did not eat his parents," said Roz, returning to her normal voice. "I do not eat anything, including parents."

The goose squinted at the robot. Then she said, "Do you know who his parents were?"

"I do not know."

"Well, they must have belonged to one of the other flocks on the island, because nobody in my flock is missing."

"Will you take the gosling?"

"I most certainly will not!" squawked the goose. "I can't take in every orphan I see! You say this is your fault? It seems to me that it's up to you to make things right."

"Mama! Mama!" peeped the gosling.

"I have tried to tell him that I am not his mother," said the robot. "But he does not understand."

"Well, you'll have to act like his mother if you want him to survive."

There was that word again—*act*. Very slowly, the robot was learning to act friendly. Maybe she could learn to act motherly as well.

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"You do want him to survive, don't you?" said the goose.

"Yes, I do want him to survive," said the robot. "But I do not know how to act like a mother."

"Oh, it's nothing, you just have to provide the gosling with food and water and shelter, make him feel loved but don't pamper him too much, keep him away from danger, and make sure he learns to walk and talk and swim and fly and get along with others and look after himself. And that's really all there is to motherhood!"

The robot just stared.

"Mama! Food!" said the gosling.

"Now would probably be a good time to feed your son," said the goose.

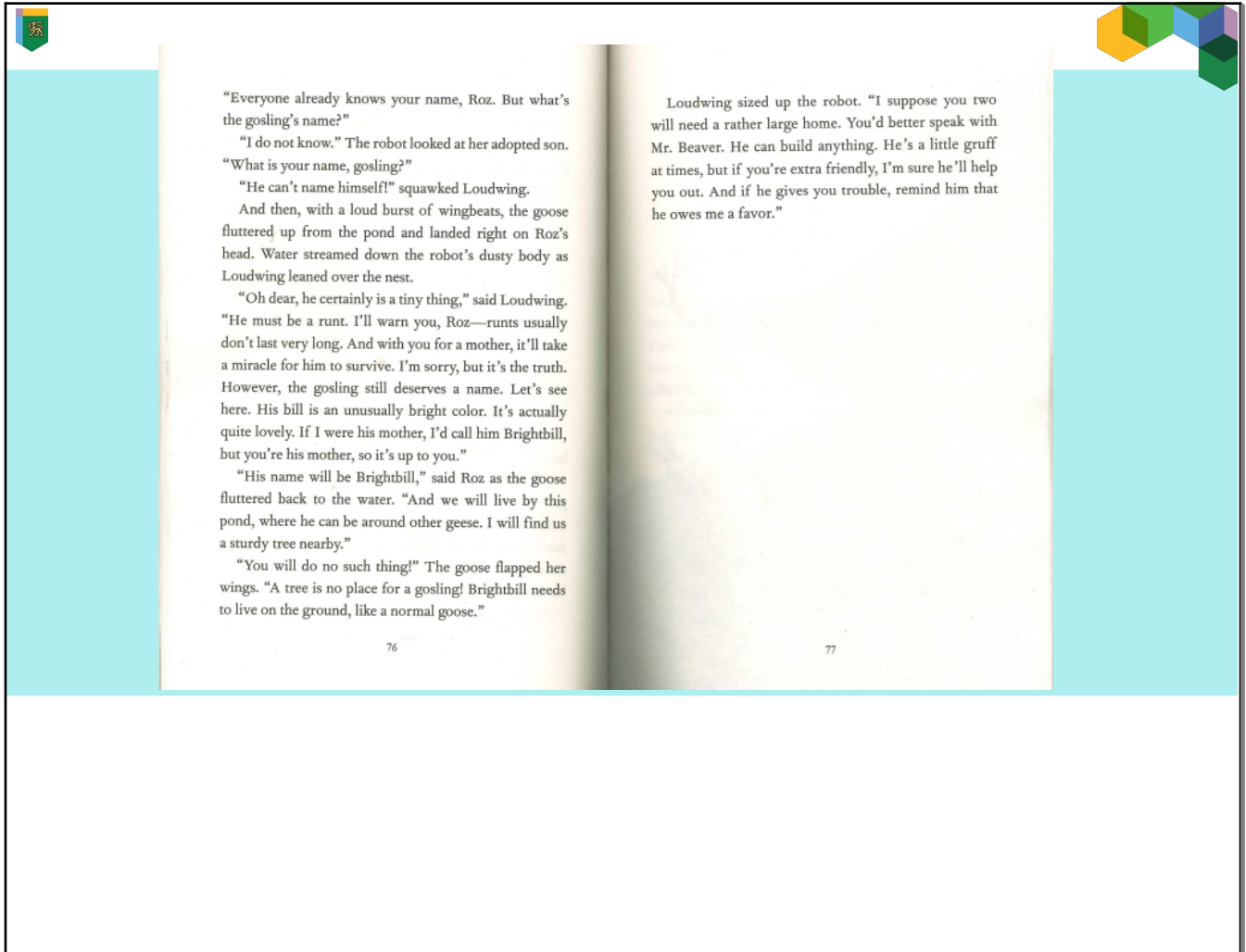
"Yes, of course!" said the robot. "What should I feed him?"

"Give him some mashed-up grass. And if a few insects get in there, all the better."

Roz tore several blades of grass from the ground. She mashed them into a ball and then dropped the ball into the nest. The gosling shook his tail feathers and chewed his very first bites of food.

"By the way, my name is Loudwing," said the goose.

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## Discussion

Do you think being a mother will help or hinder Roz on the island?  
Why do you think Roz agreed to look after the gosling?

After discussion children to write their response in their book