**Excerpt from "Rowan of Zebak" by Emily Rodda 1999 Pages 1 & 2**

Chapter - "The Warning"

The grach flew west following the scent. It had flown for a long time and it was tired and hungry, but did not think of feeding or stopping to rest. There was no thought at all behind its flat yellow eyes. Just one fixed idea. To follow the scent, reach the place it had been told to reach, and take back to its masters what it had been told to take.

The grach was called Bara and it was one hundred and twenty years old. It had been trained well. Not kindly, perhaps, but cleverly, and for many, many years. The idea that now, far away from the whips and shouts of its masters, it had the freedom to choose what it did, never entered its mind.

The sea had been left behind long ago, and dimly the grach was aware that below it now were rolling green hills and a winding stream glinting bright in the sunlight. It was aware that a mountain, its peak hidden in the cloud, rose in the blue distance ahead.

But its eyes were not important now. Its ears, closed against the rushing of the wind, and the beating of its own wings, were not important either. All that was important was it forked tongue, flicking in and out, tasting the air, tasting the scent.

It knew it was close to its goal. The scent was stronger - the warm animal scent that made its jaws drip with hunger. Bukshah. It even knew the name.

"Bukshah" its masters had said, so many times, flourishing the grey woolly hide in front of its face, feeding its bloody pieces of meat so that the delicious taste mingled with the hide smell. When they had sent it away on this quest they had said it again. "Bukshah, seek." And then they had loosened it chain.

The Bukshah scent was strong, but there were other scents too. Some the grach had tasted before, one it had not. The one it had not tasted was full of danger. It was fire, snow and ice. It was hot breath, dripping fangs and ancient, jealous power.

The leathery spines on the grach's back prickled with warning. But its yellow, lizard eyes did not flicker, and the beating of its scaly, mottled wings did not falter as it flew on to Rin.

**Writing an entertaining beginning**

**Task:**Describe how Emily Rodda uses these strategies in this introduction of "Rowan of Zebak"

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| Action  What was the main character in the setting doing?  How was it interesting and relevant to the story?  *ex. Joey ran full steam ahead across the corral and jumped on the back of the*  *wild stallion* |  |
| Dialogue or exclamation  What was main character saying?  *ex. “I can’t wait to see the Grand Canyon!” I shouted.* |  |
| Main characters thought & feelings  How did she show the main character’s thoughts, or raise a story question?  *ex. I wondered if we’d make it out alive.* |  |
| A sound  How did she grab the reader’s attention through the use of a sound?  *ex. BOOM! Jack flinched as the thunder and lightning rolled in over the hills* |  |
| What story questions did the author raise for you? |  |