

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP.115 "Elinor Stops the Squish"

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *How do animals protect themselves?*

Logline: *Elinor worries that the cupcake Olive wants to bring to school for Mrs. Mole will get squished - so she comes up with a nature-inspired way to protect it.*

SEP 1d) - Asking Questions. Identify a problem that can be solved by the design of a new or improved object or tool.

SEP 6a) - Constructing Explanations. Use background knowledge experience and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena. Elinor works out that 'hard outsides' protect 'soft insides'.

LS2 - Understand that animals have different body parts that are used in different ways to meet their needs, and that plants have different parts that help them survive and grow. Elinor observes the tough skin and shells of animals and plants that protect them.

ND3 - Understand that structures and materials in the natural world can be used or can inspire the engineering of structures with similar function in the designed world. Elinor and friends make a cupcake carrier out of a coconut.

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FIRST DRAFT: February 5th, 2019

We join Elinor's class during the happy hubbub of snack time. ARI and ELINOR have their SNACK BAGS in hand as they settle into side-by-side chairs, saving one for Olive. Ari does a jazzy little wiggle as he opens his bag.

2 ELINOR 2
I got carrot sticks!

3 ELINOR (CONT'D) 3
Olive? Did you find your snack?

4 OLIVE 4
It's in here somewhere... aha!
Found it.

ZOOM IN on a BIRTHDAY CAKE pictogram, with Mrs. Mole's face.

5 OLIVE (LOW, URGENT) (CONT'D) 5
Elinor! Ari! Did you notice? It's
Mrs. Mole's birthday tomorrow!

7 ELINOR (CHUCKLING) 7
Of course they do. Let's do
something nice for her!

CUT TO Mrs. Mole, who is busy cleaning the chalkboard, beside a whole wall-full of KID-DRAWN PICTURES of herself.

9 ARI 9
Enh, she has a lot of pictures.

10 ELINOR 10
How about a craft?

CUT TO: the teacher's desk, groaning under a collection of CRAFTS. (PENCIL CUPS, WALNUTS WITH GOOGLY EYES, etc.)

11 OLIVE (PART OS) 11
She has a lot of those, too. (beat)
I know! I'll bring her a cupcake
tomorrow! Mom made a whole batch
for her book club. *In fact...* I got
one for snack!

With great ceremony, Olive reaches into her snack bag and pulls out - a SLIGHTLY SQUASHED CUPCAKE. Her face falls.

12 OLIVE (DISAPPOINTED) (CONT'D) 12
Aw! It squished. How'd that happen?

13 ELINOR (GENTLY) 13
You *do* carry a lot of stuff in your
bag.

14 MRS. MOLE (OS) 14
Is everything all right?

CUT TO Mrs. Mole as she turns from the chalk-board, her glasses coated in chalk dust. As she pauses to clean them -

- Olive, Elinor, and Ari zip into an awkward tableau, to block her view of the cupcake on the table.

15 OLIVE / ELINOR / ARI 15
Yes! / Fine! / Nuthin' to see!

Mrs. Mole squints at them for a moment, then nods and goes back to what she was doing. The kids look relieved.

16 ARI 16
Phew! She didn't see it. I'd hate
to spoil the surprise.

17 OLIVE (WORRIED) 17
And I'd hate to spoil her cupcake
tomorrow. What if it goes 'squish'
like this one?

18 ELINOR 18
Don't worry, Olive. We'll just have
to find a way to stop the squish!

Off her expression of deep thought, we DISSOLVE TO:

2. EXT. TOWN - DAY

After school, Elinor, Ari and Olive walk home together, brainstorming a solution to their cupcake conundrum.

19 ELINOR 19
Maybe you could carry the cupcake
on a plate?

20 OLIVE 20
I could... but what if I trip?

THOUGHT BUBBLE - Olive imagines herself carrying a plate with a cupcake on it, as she hikes down a path full of exaggerated obstacles. Rocks, tree roots, banana peels...

21 OLIVE (CONT'D) 21
Whoa... whoa... OOF!

Olive slips on a banana peel, and falls forward. <SQUISH!>

BACK TO SCENE. Ari nods, agreeing.

22 ARI 22

That would squish it all right.
What if I fly it to school?

THOUGHT BUBBLE - Ari imagines himself holding the cupcake as he flies. But since Ari's paw is connected to his wing, the cupcake goes up and down as he flies. Up, down, up, down, UP -

23		ARI (CONT'D)	23
	WHOA!		

- he loses his grip, and the cupcake arcs through the air!

IN THE SCHOOLYARD - It lands on Mrs. Mole's head. <SPLAT!>

BACK TO SCENE. Elinor cringes, just thinking about it.

24 ELINOR 24
That might be risky too...

By now, they're passing a PARK. Suddenly, a volleyball comes bouncing across their path.

25 ROLLIE (OS) 25
 Heads up!

The ball misses them, but it does bounce over and <BONK> –

- A TURTLE, who was creeping along at the side of the path. He quickly pulls his head and limbs inside his shell.

26 ELINOR (DISMAYED) 26
Oh, no! Is it hurt?

Elinor rushes over, with Ari and Olive close behind. But she's surprised to see the turtle peek his head out - then his legs pop out and he resumes his leisurely stroll.

27 OLIVE 27
No. He hardly noticed!

Elinor is surprised - and very curious.

28 ELINOR 28
That's SOO interesting! How did the
turtle protect itself?

Cautiously, she reaches out and <RAPS> on his shell.

29 ELINOR (CONT'D) 29
His shell is really hard.

Ari and Olive gently <TAP> on it with their knuckles too.

ARI
Yeah. Reminds me of my bike helmet.

31 ELINOR (THOUGHTFUL) 31
 Maybe his shell works the same way
 as a helmet? You know, to keep him
 safe.

Just then, ROLLIE (an ARMADILLO) enters looking for his ball.

32 ROLLIE 32
 Sorry about that!

He retrieves it from the bushes.

33 ROLLIE (CONT'D) 33
My sister was trying to hit me with
the ball, but she missed.

34 ELINOR (SURPRISED) 34
Hit you with it?

Ari points at the ball.

ARI
Well, don't give it back to her!

36 ROLLIE (GRINS) 36
 (laugh) It's okay, we're playing
 dodgeball. It's part of the game.

Rollie tosses the ball in the air and playfully bounces it off his chest - it flies off screen.

37 ELINOR 37
But doesn't that hurt?

38 ROLLIE 38
Nah. I have armour. See?

He <TAPS> on his own armour plates.

39 ROLLIE (CONT'D) 39
Nice and hard! (shrugs) It's an
armadillo thing.

40 ROLLIE'S SISTER (OS, DISTANT) 40
Rollie! C'mon!

Rollie looks OS, then waves to Elinor, Ari and Olive.

[illegible]

Rollie heads OS to rejoin the game.

42	OLIVE		42
	Wow. His armour protects him.		

43 ARI 43
Like a helmet. Or a turtle shell!

Elinor absorbs this new information.

44 ELINOR 44
I wonder if anything else in nature
is like that?
(excited)
We need more observations!

As Elinor rallies her friends OS, we launch into...

3. EXT. TOWN - SONG MOMENT - "A SHELL"

We FOLLOW Elinor, Ari and Olive as they pass through town on their way home, encountering a few other creatures with 'tough outsides'.

45	ELINOR / ARI / OLIVE (SING)	45
	<i>A shell, a shell</i>	
	<i>Protected by a shell</i>	
	<i>A shell is such a clever way</i>	
	<i>To keep you safe and well</i>	

Just then, Elinor sees -

- A JUNE BUG in flight! Suddenly, it bumps into the side of a building and loses altitude -

46 ELINOR (SINGS) 46
There's a beetle, look how small!

47 OLIVE (SINGS) 47
Oops - it bumped into a wall!

- but the bug quickly recovers and they watch it fly away.

48 ELINOR (SINGS) 48
But that's okay, 'cause after all,
A beetle has a shell

They walk onward, singing -

49 ELINOR / ARI / OLIVE (SING) 49
A shell, a shell
Protected by a shell
A shell is such a clever way
To keep you safe and well

Ari points to a SNAIL, climbing up a sturdy plant stalk. A bird hops closer...

50 ARI (PART OS; SINGS) 50
 You see that snail? I have a hunch
 A bird would like him for her lunch

...but when the bird tries to snap up the snail, its beak glances off the hard shell. The bird gives up and moves on.

51 ELINOR (SINGS) 51
But shells are much too hard to
crunch
That's why it has a shell!

The three friends skip onward through town, singing -

52 ELINOR / OLIVE / ARI (SING) 52
A shell, a shell
Protected by a shell
A shell is such a clever way
To keep you safe and well

The SONG ENDS, and the kids scamper OS!

CUT TO:

4. EXT. MRS. GORILLA'S JUICE CART - MOMENTS LATER

As the kids continue home, Ari wipes his brow.

53 ARI 53
 (Whew!) I'm thirsty.

54 MRS. GORILLA (PART OS) 54
Well you came to the right place!

REVERSE ANGLE - they're approaching a JUICE STAND run by an effusive MRS. GORILLA. The stand is decorated and stocked with BANANAS, COCONUTS and ORANGES.

55 MRS. GORILLA (CONT'D) 55
Would you like a free sample of
coconut water?

Smiling brightly, she holds up a coconut in one hand.

56 ELINOR 56
Yes, please! Thanks, Mrs. Gorilla.

57 OLIVE 57
Can I squeeze out the juice? I love
making orange juice at home.

Mrs. Gorilla is a bit taken aback.

58 MRS. GORILLA 58
Oh! But - coconuts are a bit
different than oranges...

But Olive is already squeezing a hard-shelled coconut over a cup as hard as she can, with her hands, then her trunk.

59 OLIVE 59
(strain) Wow. The outside is *hard!*

60 ARI (CONFIDENT) 60
I think you have to peel it first.
Like this!

Ari takes the coconut, and pries at it - with no luck.

61 ARI (CONT'D) 61
 (strains) How're you supposed to
 get into this thing?!

Mrs. Gorilla smiles.

62 MRS. GORILLA 62
You have to break the shell. I'll
show you!

She takes the coconut back, and punctures the hard shell twice with an Mallet and an Awl, then pours out the coconut water into three small cups.

63 ELINOR 63
So *that's* how you get the coconut
water out.

64 MRS. GORILLA 64
And there's *more* good stuff inside.
Stand back!

With a big KNIFE, <THUNK!> she splits the coconut neatly in two, revealing the hollow space inside. Then, with a SPOON, she scrapes up some coconut 'meat' for them to try.

65 OLIVE (NIBBLING) 65
Mm. Thank you! The inside is softer
than the outside.

66 ELINOR 66
Hey, I just realized. It isn't just
turtles, beetles and snails that
have shells to protect their
insides. Some plants do too!

67 ARI 67
Huh! That IS pretty cool.

ANGLE ON Elinor, having a brainstorm.

68 ELINOR 68
And I just got an idea for how to
protect Mrs. Mole's cupcake.

Elinor turns to Mrs. Gorilla.

69 ELINOR (CONT'D) 69
Mrs. Gorilla, do you mind if we
keep this coconut shell?

70 MRS. GORILLA 70
Be my quest!

Off Elinor's excited look, we DISSOLVE TO:

5. EXT. OLIVE'S HOUSE / INT. OLIVE'S KITCHEN

ESTABLISH Olive's house. A short time later.

71 ARI (PART OS; MOUTH FULL) 71
Mm. Delishush. Mrs. Mole's going to
love her birthday cupcake.

INSIDE - Ari, Elinor and Olive sit at the kitchen table. Ari and Elinor are sharing a cupcake. Two more PINK-FROSTED CUPCAKES remain on a plate in the middle of the table.

72 OLIVE 72
IF I can get one to school without
squashing it. So what's your idea,
Elinor?

ON Elinor. She holds the two coconut halves.

73 ELINOR 73
Well, we know that shells can stop
things from getting squashed...

74 ARI / OLIVE (NODDING) 74
Yes? / So?

75 ELINOR 75
So, this coconut shell is just the
right size to hold a cupcake!

Elinor places one cupcake inside the half shell, and fits the other half on top, like a lid.

76 ELINOR (CONT'D) 76
Ta-da! One cupcake carrier.

She lifts the lid off again. The swirl of icing is intact!

77 ARI 77
AMAZING! But how's the lid going to
stay on?

OLIVE

Hang on - I might have something...

Olive grabs her schoolbag and digs around inside it. Ari shares a grin with Elinor.

79	ARI	79
	...in your bag? Of course you do.	

80 OLIVE 80
Elastic bands!

Olive has found TWO ELASTIC BANDS. She puts these around the (closed) coconut, which holds the halves together nicely.

81 ELINOR 81
That might work! Can I see?

Olive hands the coconut to Ari, to pass to Elinor – but Ari's hands are still slippery with frosting, and he fumbles it!

6. EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

WIDE on the schoolyard, the next morning. Mrs. Mole supervises as her STUDENTS arrive and greet each other.

91 VARIOUS STUDENTS 91
(school yard walla)

CLOSER - Ari, Olive and Elinor huddle around the elastic-closed coconut. Elinor holds it while Ari presses his finger on a ribbon that Olive is tying into a BOW on top.

92 OLIVE 92
Hold it tight, Ari. I've never gift-
wrapped a coconut before.

93 ELINOR 93
You should give it to her, Olive.
The cupcake was your idea.

94 OLIVE 94
But the coconut carrier was yours!

95 ARI 95
You can both do it. Ready?

ANOTHER ANGLE - as they all turn towards their teacher.

96 ARI / OLIVE / ELINOR (CHEER) 96
Happy birthday Mrs. Mole!

But as the girls turn, they accidentally swing Ari around too... because *his finger got tied into the bow!*

97 ARI 97

Whoa! Hey!

Ari yanks his hand around, with the coconut tied on. He finally shakes it off - but accidentally throws the coconut!

98 OLIVE / ELINOR 98
Oh no! / Look out!

It flies in an arc, right to Mrs. Mole - who catches it like an outfielder catching a pop fly.

99 MRS. MOLE (CHUCKLING) 99
My goodness! What do we have here?

Elinor, Olive and Ari come closer, sharing a worried look.

100 ELINOR (NERVOUS) 100
Uh. Better open it, and find out.

- a perfectly INTACT CUPCAKE! The kids beam with relief.

FADE OUT.