

# **ELINOR WONDERS WHY**

EP.115 "Elinor Stops the Squish"

By: Karen Moonah

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

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

**ET 1b)** - Define a problem that can be solved by the design of a new or improved tool or technology. (Elinor and her friends define the problem of the fragile cupcake that needs protection)

**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'.

**SEP 6d)** - Designing Solutions (Engineering) Use evidence to support a theory or solution to a problem. (Elinor and her friend observe how animals and plants in nature are protected by shells, and decide that a shell will protect their cupcake).

**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.

Line Count - 93 Lines

Mains - Elinor, Ari, Olive, Mrs. Gorilla, Mz Mole (also in 108A Glasses)

Secondary: Rollie,

Locations: School, Park, Juice Cart, Town

Props: Pictogram calendar, Cupcake (squished and unsquished), ball, turtle, bananas, coconuts, oranges, june bug, snail, coconut shell holder for cupcake.

OUTLINE: January. 17, 2019

FIRST DRAFT: February 5th, 2019

SECOND DRAFT: February 25, 2019

POLISH: March 12, 2019

**1. EXT. ELINOR'S SCHOOL - DAY**

It's another clear day at Elinor's school. As we TRUCK IN, we hear Mz. Mole, just wrapping up 'circle time'.

|   |                                 |   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | MZ. MOLE (OS)                   | 1 |
|   | ...and that's the end of the    |   |
|   | lesson, kids. Which means, it's |   |
|   | time for...                     |   |

**2. INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS**

|   |                                                            |   |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 2 | The kids sit in a semi-circle on the floor, with MZ. MOLE. | 2 |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------|---|

|   |                               |   |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| 2 | ARI/OLIVE/ELINOR/OTHER KIDS?  | 2 |
|   | Snack time! / Yay! / Woo-hoo! |   |

Her students get up and happily hurry to get their snacks from their bags. Mz. Mole turns to the chalk board, picks up an eraser, and starts cleaning it, <HUMMING> to herself.

ARI and ELINOR have their SNACK BAGS in hand as they settle into side-by-side chairs at a TABLE, saving a spot for Olive. Ari does a jazzy little wiggle as he opens his bag.

|   |                                            |   |
|---|--------------------------------------------|---|
| 3 | ARI                                        | 3 |
|   | <i>Snack time, snack time... I loooove</i> |   |
|   | <i>snack time! Let's see what I got...</i> |   |
|   | <i>I got...</i>                            |   |

He pulls out CARROT STICKS. He looks mildly disappointed.

|   |                    |   |
|---|--------------------|---|
| 4 | ARI (CONT'D)       | 4 |
|   | Hm. Carrot sticks. |   |

|   |                                     |   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 5 | ELINOR (EXCITED)                    | 5 |
|   | Ari, you got carrot sticks! I LOVE  |   |
|   | carrot sticks, they're my favorite! |   |
|   | Let's see what I got...             |   |

Elinor pulls out a BAG OF RAISINS. She looks mildly disappointed.

|   |                 |   |
|---|-----------------|---|
| 6 | ELINOR (CONT'D) | 6 |
|   | Hm. Raisins.    |   |

|   |                                   |   |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 7 | ARI                               | 7 |
|   | Elinor, you got raisins! That's   |   |
|   | awesome, raisins are MY favorite! |   |

They both look at their respective snacks, not too excited. Suddenly, they both realize the obvious solution, and grin.

8 ELINOR/ARI (UNISON) 8  
Wanna share?

The kids happily take a bit of each other's snack to enjoy.

Elinor looks OFF towards the cloakroom area.

9 ELINOR 9  
Olive? Did you find your snack?

CLOAKROOM AREA - Olive is still digging deep in her bag. She takes out SEVERAL HARDCOVER BOOKS, a JUMBO BOX OF CRAYONS...

```
10                                OLIVE                                10
    It's in here somewhere... aha!
    Found it.
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Olive finally pulls out a rather crumpled SMALL BROWN BAG and heads back to join them. On the way, she passes a big WALL CALENDAR, with pictograms on special days. She double-takes.

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

Olive brightens! She hurries to join her friends.

11 OLIVE (LOW, URGENT) (CONT'D) 11  
Elinor! Ari! Did you notice? It's  
Mz. Mole's birthday tomorrow!

ARI

*Teachers* have birthdays?

13 ELINOR (CHUCKLING) 13  
Of course they do. Let's do  
something nice for her!

14 OLIVE 14  
We could make her a picture?

CUT TO Mz. Mole, who is busy erasing the chalkboard, beside a whole wall-full of KID-DRAWN PICTURES of herself. She has raised a little chalk dust cloud, which makes her sneeze.  
<SFX: SNEEZE>

15                                 ARI (CALLS)                                 15  
Bless you!  
    (quieter, to the girls)  
She already has a lot of pictures.

16                                ELINOR                                16  
How about a craft?

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

17 OLIVE (PART OS) 17  
 She has a lot of those, too. (beat)  
 I know! I'll bring her a cupcake  
 tomorrow! My mom made a whole batch  
 for her book club. *In fact...*  
 (trunk trumpet, 'ta-da!')  
 I got one for a snack!

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

18 OLIVE (DISAPPOINTED) (CONT'D) 18  
 Aw! It squished. I wonder how that  
 happened?

19 ELINOR (EMPATHIZES) 19  
 It must have gotten squished inside  
 your bag.

20 ARI (GENTLY) 20  
 You *do* carry a lot of stuff in your  
 bag, Olive.

SWISH PAN to Olive's bag, which is indeed straining to contain all the heavy books and things crammed inside. WIDEN to include Olive holding the squished cupcake in her hand.

21 OLIVE (NODS) 21  
 Oh. Yeah.

22 MZ. MOLE (OS) 22  
 Is everything all right, kids?

CUT TO Mz. Mole as she turns from the chalk-board, her glasses covered in dust. She wipes her glasses while still wearing them. By the time they're clear again -

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

23 OLIVE / ELINOR / ARI 23  
 Yes! / Fine! / There's no cupcake!

Mz. Mole squints at them for a moment, shrugs good-naturedly then goes back to what she was doing.

24 ARI (RELIEVED) 24  
 Whew! Good thing I played it cool.  
 I'd hate to spoil the surprise.

Olive and Elinor share a look. *That* was playing it cool?

25 OLIVE (WORRIED) 25  
Well, I'd hate to spoil the cupcake  
tomorrow. What if it goes 'squish'  
inside my bag like this one?

26 ELINOR 26  
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:

### 3. EXT. TOWN - DAY

After school, Elinor, Ari and Olive walk home together, brainstorming a solution to their cupcake conundrum. (Olive carries her very full bag.)

27 ELINOR 27  
Maybe you could carry the cupcake  
on a plate, so it doesn't squish?

28 OLIVE 28  
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...

29 OLIVE (CONT'D) 29  
Whoa... whoa... OOF!

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

BACK TO SCENE. Ari nods, agreeing.

30 ARI 30  
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 -

31 ARI (CONT'D) 31  
WHOA!

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

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

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

32 ELINOR 32  
That might squish the cupcake too.

By now, they're passing a PARK. Suddenly, a big soft playground ball comes bouncing across their path.

33 ROLLIE (OS) 33  
*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.

34 ELINOR (DISMAYED) 34  
Oh, no! Poor turtle!

Elinor rushes over, with Ari and Olive close behind. At the same time, ROLLIE (an ARMADILLO) enters.

35 ROLLIE 35  
Sorry about that! Is the turtle okay?

ANGLE ON the turtle - who slowly peeks his head out. Then his legs pop out, and he looks up at the kids, seemingly unfazed.

36 ARI 36  
(Phew.) Yeah, he's okay.

37 OLIVE 37  
(chuckle) He hardly even noticed!

The turtle looks up at them. Rollie is relieved. \*

38 ARI 38  
He's a tough little guy.

ON Elinor, relieved but also very curious.

39 ELINOR 39  
The ball just bounced off his shell. \*

OLIVE  
Yeah, turtles have really hard shells. I read about it in my Nature book. \*

Olive takes out her Nature book and opens it. She reads from the section about turtles. \*

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Turtles are born with shells, and  
it grows bigger as they get older.

ARI

Whoa.

In the book, we see a little baby turtle emerging from an egg  
on one side, and a progression of a turtle growing up on the  
other side.

OLIVE

They have shells to protect them  
from other animals.

ARI

And balls!

Elinor looks on as the turtle resumes its leisurely walk.  
Meanwhile, Rollie retrieves his ball from the bushes.

40

OLIVE

40

What are you playing, Rollie?

41

ROLLIE (CASUALLY)

41

Oh, my sister and I are just  
bumping the ball back and forth.

Rollie tosses the ball in the air and playfully <BOUNCES> it  
off the shell on his upper back.

42

ELINOR (SURPRISED)

42

Doesn't that hurt?

43

ROLLIE

43

Nah. Us armadillos have a  
protective shell, see?

ARI

Just like a turtle! Can you hide  
your head and your arms inside your  
shell, too?

ROLLIE

Uh no, but I can curl up really  
tight!

Rollie curls up on the ground, tucking his tail and head  
under his shell (Rollie is a nine-banded armadillo and  
doesn't curl up into a perfect ball).

ARI

Whoa!

OLIVE

It's like you turned into a ball!

Rollie makes some <SFX: MUMBLE SOUNDS> from under his shell.

ARI

What did you say, Rollie?

Rollie peeks his head out.

ROLLIE

I said, the shell helps protect me.

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>. Ari <TAPS> on the armour plates.  
Rollie uncurls and jumps up.

44                                 ROLLIE (CONT'D)                                 44  
Nice and hard! Anyway, I gotta  
roll. See you later!

45       Rollie waves to Elinor, Ari and Olive, then heads OS to       45  
rejoin the game.

Elinor and her friends continue walking.

45                                 OLIVE                                 45  
Wow. That's so cool.

46                                 ARI                                 46  
It's like he has a helmet for his  
WHOLE BODY!

Elinor glances back at the turtle, and absorbs this information.

47                                          ELINOR                                          47

Hmm . . .

CUT TO:

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

As the kids continue home, Ari wipes his brow.

48                               ARI                               48  
    (Whew!) Speaking of 'whole body',  
    my whole body is thirsty.

49 MRS. GORILLA (PART OS) 49  
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.

50 MRS. GORILLA (CONT'D) 50  
Would you like a free sample of  
coconut water?

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

51 ELINOR 51  
Yes, please! Thanks, Mrs. Gorilla.

52 OLIVE 52  
Ooh, can I squeeze out the juice? I  
do it all the time with oranges.

Olive drops her heavy bag, and picks up a coconut that's sitting out on the stand. Mrs. Gorilla looks a bit surprised.

53 MRS. GORILLA 53  
Oh! But - coconuts are a bit  
different than oranges...

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

54 OLIVE 54  
(strain) Wow. The outside of this  
coconut is *hard!*

55 ARI (CONFIDENT) 55  
I think you have to peel it first.  
Like this!

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

56 ARI (CONT'D) 56  
(strains) How're you supposed to  
get into this thing?!

Mrs. Gorilla smiles.

57 MRS. GORILLA 57  
You have to get through the shell.  
I'll show you!

She takes the coconut back, and pokes a hole on the hard shell with an MALLET and an AWL, then pours out the coconut water into three small CUPS.

58 ELINOR 58  
So *that's* how you get coconut water  
out.

59 OLIVE 59  
It's delicious!

60 ARI 60  
Yeah!

Elinor curiously examines the coconut shell. \*

ELINOR \*  
Mrs. Gorilla, why are coconuts so \*  
hard? \*

MRS. GORILLA \*  
Ah, good question, Elinor! Coconuts \*  
are the fruit of palm trees. \*

As she talks, we go to a shared thought balloon that shows a \*  
tall palm tree. \*

MRS. GORILLA (CONT'D) \*  
Palm trees grow really high, so the \*  
shell protects the coconut when it \*  
falls off the tree. \*

The thought bubble shows a coconut falling from a palm tree \*  
and bouncing off the ground, unharmed. \*

MRS. GORILLA (CONT'D) \*  
The shell also protects the coconut \*  
until it's ready to grow. Sometimes \*  
the coconut travels a long way \*  
before it finds the right place to \*  
grow. \*

The coconut gets picked up by the tide and travels across the \*  
water to another beach, where it sprouts a stem and some \*  
green leaves. The thought bubble pops and we return to the \*  
scene. \*

ELINOR \*  
Whoa... \*

ARI \*  
That is... coco-cool. \*

While Olive and Ari talk to Mrs. Gorilla, Elinor studies the \*  
coconut. \*

61 MRS. GORILLA 61  
And what brings you to the park  
today, kids?

62 OLIVE 62  
Well, Mrs. Gorilla, we're trying to  
figure out how to stop the squish!

63 MRS. GORILLA 63  
The squish?

Elinor shakes the coconut - there's still a little <SWISH> of  
liquid inside. She <TAPS> on it, feeling the hard shell.

64 ARI 64  
Olive wants to bring a cupcake  
tomorrow for Mz. Mole's birthday,  
but everything Olive puts in her  
bag gets squished!

CUT TO Olive, as she gestures to her bag. The square outline  
of books can be seen through the fabric - it's STUFFED.

65 OLIVE 65  
(shrugs, a bit sheepish)  
I like to carry a lot of things.

66 MRS. GORILLA 66  
I see! That IS a hard problem.  
Or... a soft and squishy problem?

Just then, Elinor has a realization.

67 ELINOR 67  
That is SO INTERESTING! It isn't  
just turtles and armadillos that  
have shells to protect their  
insides. Coconuts have them too!

68 ARI 68  
Huh! That IS pretty cool.

69 MRS. GORILLA 69  
That's right, Elinor! Lots of  
things in Nature have shells to  
protect them. Let's take a look  
around, and see!

70 ELINOR 70  
Yeah! We need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

As Elinor and her friends rally around Mrs. Gorilla we hear  
the beginning of a song...

**5. EXT. TOWN - SONG MOMENT - "A SHELL"**

We FOLLOW Mrs. Gorilla, Elinor, Ari and Olive as they step away from the stand and pass through town, encountering a few other creatures with 'tough outsides'.

71

MRS. GORILLA/ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI

71

(sing)

*ALL: A shell, a shell*

*Protected by a shell*

*A shell is such a clever way*

*To keep you safe and well*

Just then, Elinor sees -

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

*ELINOR- There's a beetle,*

*ARI -Look how small!*

*OLIVE - Oops - it bumped into a wall!*

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

*ELINOR -But see? It didn't hurt at*

*all,*

*It has a kind of shell*

They walk onward, singing -

*ALL: 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...

*ARI: 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.

*OLIVE: But shells are much too hard to crunch*

*ELINOR: That's why it has a shell!*

The three friends and Mrs. Gorilla skip onward through town and back to the fruit stand, singing -

(MORE)



ANOTHER ANGLE - as they all turn towards their teacher. Ari is holding their gift in his hands: a coconut, with a bow tied around it!

79 OLIVE / ELINOR / ARI (IN UNISON) 79  
Happy birthday Mz. Mole!

Mz. Mole reacts with surprise and delight! But as Ari holds up the gift a little higher...

80 ARI 80  
We got you a birthday - gift -

...he realizes that something is wrong. *His finger accidentally got tied into the bow!*

81 ARI (CONT'D) 81  
Huh? Hey!

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

82 OLIVE / ELINOR 82  
Oh no! / Watch out!

- as the coconut flies through the air towards the play structure! It lands on the SLIDE, (<WHUMP!>) rolls a little way up, then gravity takes over and it comes rolling back -

83 ARI 83  
I can't look!

(Ari hides his eyes - then peeks anyway.)

The coconut bounces across the ground, finally rolling to a stop at Mz. Mole's feet. She picks it up, amused.

84 MZ. MOLE (CHUCKLING) 84  
My goodness! What do we have here?

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

85 ELINOR (NERVOUS) 85  
Uh. Better open it, and find out.

ANGLE ON Mz. Mole, as she slowly and dramatically opens the split-in-half coconut to reveal -

86 MZ. MOLE 86  
(gasp) Oh, it's beautiful!

CLOSE ON a PERFECTLY INTACT CUPCAKE!

87 MZ. MOLE (PART OS) (CONT'D) 87  
Thank you, kids! What a clever idea  
to put it inside a coconut shell.

Olive grins.

88 OLIVE 88  
We did it so it wouldn't get  
squished in my bag.

89 ELINOR 89  
We noticed that lots of animals and  
plants have hard outsides to  
protect their insides. So we made a  
coconut shell into a cupcake  
carrier!

Mz. Mole tugs the cupcake out of a carved-out niche in the  
coconut 'meat'.

90 MZ. MOLE (IMPRESSED) 90  
And there's even a snug little  
pocket to hold the cupcake!

91 ARI 91  
Mrs. Gorilla scooped it out of the  
inside of the coconut for us.

Elinor reaches into her own bag, with a playful smile.

92 ELINOR (GRINNING) 92  
That means you aren't the *only* one  
with a special snack today, Mz.  
Mole...

Elinor pulls out a clear container full of coconut meat.

93 ELINOR (CONT'D) 93  
...we brought coconut to share!

As the other students <SFX: CLASSROOM LAUGH AND CHEER>, we  
PULL BACK and...

FADE OUT.