

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 145 Burrowing Owl Girl

By Katherine Sandford

Elinor's Question: What kind of owl is awake in the daytime and lives on the ground?

Logline: Elinor thinks she knows everything there is to know about owls until, while visiting her grandparents, she meets a Burrowing Owl.

Curriculum Goals:LS6. Understand that individuals of the same kind of plant or animal are recognizable as similar but can also vary in many ways: a. Contrast individuals of the same kinds of plant and animal (Elinor compares and contrasts what she knows about Owls with what she observes about Burrowing Owls).

SEP3. Planning and carrying out investigations a. Identify and use a greater variety of tools to extend the senses for observing, measuring, and recording data about objects and events b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail (Elinor and her grandmother plan and execute an investigation into Burrowing Owls).

SEP4. Analyzing and interpreting data a. Collect, describe, and record observations in greater detail and in various ways b. Use the 5 senses and simple tools to gather and record data d. Talk about and reflect on what happened during an investigation or when solving a problem, and why it might have happened. (Elinor and her grandmother collect data about the Burrowing Owl through sight and sound and, with research and discussion, decide if it is an Owl).

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elinor, BiBi, Mr. Rabbit

SECONDARY: Ranger Rabbit

SETTING: Grandparents' Living Room, Back Yard, Desert.

PROPS: Owl Girl Costume, small Saguaro cactuses, gardening apron, trowel, lizard (maybe), Burrowing Owl, burrow, Sand Tortoise, rocks and sticks.

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FIRST DRAFT: August 21, 2019

1. INT. ELINOR'S GRANDPARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

BIBI (Elinor's Grandma) is tending to a small cactus in a pot and is getting ready to go out to the back yard, when the <SFX: DOORBELL RINGS>. She opens the door and we see that MR. RABBIT and RANGER RABBIT are here for a visit.

1 MR. RABBIT 1
Did anyone order a rabbit family?

2 BIBI 2
Ahh, come here you!

She grabs his cheeks and shakes them all about comically.

3 BIBI (CONT'D) 3
My favorite son!

Mr. Rabbit recovers from the shaking.

4 MR. RABBIT 4
Your favorite? Uh, Mom, I'm your
only son.

5 BIBI 5
Well, it's a good thing you're my
favorite then.
(to Ranger Rabbit)
Hello, Dear.

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6                               RANGER RABBIT                                6
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Hi, BiBi.
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BiBi gives Ranger Rabbit a kiss on the cheek then she realizes something:

7 BIBI 7
Where's Elinor?

8 MR. RABBIT 8
Elinor, I'm not sure. But I know
someone WHOOO has a special
surprise for you.

Elinor jumps from behind Ranger Rabbit, dressed in her owl girl costume.

9 ELINOR 9
(calling out)
Surprise! It's me!! Whoo, whoooo!

10	BIBI	10
	Oh, wow! An owl!	
	(bends down to Elinor)	
	(MORE)	

BIBI (CONT'D)

What a special visit. I've never
had an owl at my door before.
Hello, Owl, how are you?

11	ELINOR	11
	BiBi! It's me! Elinor!	

Elinor takes off her cowl to show BiBi it's her.

12	BIBI	12
	Elinor! I thought you were a real owl.	

13	ELINOR	13
	Fooled ya! Do you like my owl costume? I made it for costume day at school. Mom helped a little.	

14	MR. RABBIT	14
	Yes, and since then she's been wearing it... a lot.	

15	ELINOR	15
	Every day! Owls are one of my favorite animals.	

16	BIBI	16
	Really? I love owls too.	

17	BIBI AND ELINOR	17
	(in unison)	
	They're SOOOO interesting!	

18	MR. RABBIT	18
	(to Elinor)	
	Well, we're going to run some errands in town, honey bunny, and that means you're going to stay with BiBi for the afternoon.	

19	ELINOR	19
	Awesome! But where's Baba?	

20	BIBI	20
	Your grandpa is helping out at the community center today, so it's just you and me, kiddo.	

21	ELINOR	21
	Yay! I can't wait to tell you alll about owls, BiBi. I know everything there is to know about them!	

22 BIBI 22
Everything?

23 ELINOR 23
Yep. Everything!

24 BIBI 24
Well, I wouldn't be so sure of
that, Elinor. Nature always seems
to find a way to surprise you.

Elinor thinks about this for a beat.

25 ELINOR 25
Hmmm... No, I'm pretty sure I know
everything about owls. Watch me!

She runs around the living room, hooting <SFX: HOOT, HOOT
WALLA> On everyone's <SFX: LAUGHTER> we CROSSFADE TO:

2. EXT. BACK YARD -- A LITTLE LATER

Elinor is flying around the back yard (still in costume).
<SFX: HOOT, HOOT, HOOT WALLA> BiBi putters near her potting
shed (DESIGN NOTE: BiBi is now wearing her gardening apron,
where she keeps a trowel). Elinor swoops in.

26 ELINOR 26
Whatcha doin' BiBi?

27 BIBI 27
A little investigation. I'm trying
to figure out which type of sand my
cactuses like the best.

ANGLE ON: Three small-ish Saguaro cactuses (this is the
classic desert cactus with arms)
<https://images.app.goo.gl/ZUhz15K37j6yUx5R7>

28 ELINOR 28
Whoa, cool!! Well, I did a lot of
investigating about owls with my
Mom, and that's how I know all
about them.

THOUGHT BUBBLE, we see what Elinor knows about owls:

29 ELINOR (CONT'D) 29
Owls sleep all day, and they are
only awake at night. They are
super good at flying (whoosh!), and
they live waaay up in the trees. I
observed them myself!

BiBi looks at her fondly.

30	BIBI	30
	That's wonderful, Owl Girl Elinor, but just remember, a good scientist knows there's always more to find out, so keep asking questions.	

Elinor has heard this all before.

31	ELINOR	31
	And making lots and lots and LOTS of OBSERVATIONS!	

32	BIBI	32
	Exactly!	

33	ELINOR	33
	I'm going to make some observations right now.	

Elinor continues to fly around <SFX: HOOT, HOOT WALLA> and starts looking around the yard while BiBi continues repotting her cactuses. After noticing some interesting things close by (a rock, a flower on a cactus, a beetle) <SFX: OOOH WALLA> Elinor looks out beyond the yard (there's no fence) where she can see the wide-open desert.

34	ELINOR (CONT'D)	34
	Wooooow!	

3. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor walks out (not too far) and enjoys the view of the beautiful desert. She sees a dune, a huge cactus, maybe a lizard who scurries off. Suddenly Elinor hears a little <SFX: RUSTLING> in the grass just beyond.

35	ELINOR	35
	What's that?	

She peers over to see...Two big yellow eyes!

36	ELINOR (CONT'D)	36
	Eyes?	

The two yellow eyes reveal themselves to be a small bird that looks like an owl.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/2FtVzY9KbcV7WZXFA>

37 ELINOR (CONT'D) 37
(to herself)
<GASP!> It's an OWL! Hello, little
owl! Look at me, I'm an owl too!
Hoot! Hoot!

The owl stares back.

38

ELINOR (CONT'D)

(realizing)

Wait a minute...

(checks the sky)

It's the middle of the day.

(To the owl)

Why are you awake? You're supposed to be sleeping right now, so you can be awake at night. That's what owls do!

(Back to herself, puzzled)

Why isn't this owl sleeping?

(determined)

I need more observations!

38

Elinor slowly approaches the owl, moving between shrubs. Suddenly, the owl takes off running.

39 ELINOR (CONT'D) 39
What? An owl that runs on the
ground? Now I'm really confused.
Owls are supposed to fly in the
sky.
(thinking)
Is that even an owl?

CU: On Elinor's confused look, we crossfade to.

4. EXT. BACK YARD -- DAY

BiBi is tending to her cactuses when suddenly Elinor runs up.

40 ELINOR 40
BiBi! BiBi! I just saw an
impossible animal!

41		BIBI	41
	A what?		

42 ELINOR 42
An animal that can't be! It looks
like an animal that I know, but
it's not doing the things that it's
supposed to do!

BiBi is intrigued.

43	BIBI	43
	An impossible animal? That is sooo interesting.	

44	ELINOR	44
	I know, right?	

45	BIBI	45
	Well, you know what a scientist does when she sees something she doesn't understand.	

Elinor thinks about it for a beat, then...

46	ELINOR	46
	Yes! She gets...	

47	BIBI AND ELINOR	47
	(in unison)	
	MORE OBSERVATIONS!	

48	ELINOR	48
	Come on, BiBi!	

BiBi and Elinor head out into the desert behind BiBi's house to observe the mysterious animal.

5. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor and BiBi find a good observation spot.

49	ELINOR	49
	This is where I saw the impossible animal.	

50	BIBI	50
	Ok, let's wait and watch.	

51	ELINOR	51
	We'd better hide, so we don't scare it off.	

52	BIBI	52
	Good idea.	

BiBi and Elinor hide behind a small pile of rocks. A beat then they both (comically) rise up from behind the rocks together. They are in full recon mode. Elinor looks one way, BiBi looks the other, then they switch. Suddenly...

53 ELINOR 53
 (whispering)
 There it is!

Elinor points. ANGLE ON: the little owl.

54 ELINOR (CONT'D) 54
That's the animal I saw earlier.
It's a bird.

55	BIBI	55
	How do you know?	

56 ELINOR 56
It has wings, feathers and a beak
and it *looks* like an owl, but it
can't be.

57 BIBI 57
Why not?

58 ELINOR 58
Because this bird is awake during
the day and owls are only awake at
NIGHT.

At this point, BiBi realizes what's going on.

59 BIBI 59
Ooooh, I see.

The little owl hops over closer to them, and they have a moment together to admire it.

60 ELINOR 60
Awww. It's so cute.

61 BIBI 61
It sure is.

At that moment the owl runs off!

62 ELINOR 62
BiBi look! The owl is RUNNING
AWAY! Let's follow it and keep
observing.

CUTE ACTION SEQUENCE: Elinor and BiBi keep a respectful (and humorous) distance, hiding as they go. They follow the little owl (which can run surprisingly fast) across the desert.

ANGLE ON: The little bird ducks into its burrowing hole.
Elinor stops and points.

63	ELINOR (CONT'D) (amazed) BiBi! The little bird ducked into that hole in the ground.	63
64	BIBI Really? (looking closer) Oh, I see. That's a special little hole called a burrow.	64
65	ELINOR A burrow. Does it live in there?	65
66	BIBI What do you think?	66
ANGLE ON: The little owl pokes its head out, then retreats.		
67	ELINOR Sure looks like it. (making up her mind) Then it's definitely <i>not</i> an owl, because owls live in trees. I OBSERVED them.	67
The owl comes out and starts puttering around the burrow. Elinor observes it and starts to have second thoughts.		
68	ELINOR (CONT'D) (unsure) Only...it really does look like an owl. It's got big eyes, and a beak, and feathers...	68
69	BIBI That's true.	69
70	ELINOR But how can it be an owl if it's awake in the day, and runs on the ground, and lives in a hole?	70
71	BIBI That's a really good question Elinor.	71
72	ELINOR (confused) I just don't get it.	72

Peak confusion for Elinor. BiBi thinks about how to help. Suddenly, she spots an odd-looking little cactus to the side of them.(maybe a Buckthorn Cholla
https://cals.arizona.edu/yuma/plant_index/cylindropuntia_acanthocarpa%20.htm

Or something else cool - here are other options:
<https://www.foldingguides.com/product/cacti-of-the-desert-southwest-poster-cardset-of-6-greeting-cards/>

73 BIBI 73
 Elinor, look over there...

BiBi points to the unusual cactus and makes a show of finding it.

74 BIBI (CONT'D) 74
 I found another cactus for my collection. Isn't it a beauty?

BiBi uses her spade to dig it out and show it to Elinor.

75 ELINOR 75
 Uhhhm, are you sure that's a cactus, BiBi? It doesn't look anything like your other cactuses.

76 BIBI 76
 Good observation! But this IS a cactus.

CU: on the cactus plant, BiBi compares it to a nearby example of the Saguaro cactus.

77 BIBI (CONT'D) 77
 There are many different kinds of cactuses, and they are not all the same. That happens a lot in Nature.

A realization dawns on Elinor.

78 ELINOR 78
 Ooooooh.

She looks back at the owl.

79 ELINOR (CONT'D) 79
 Hmmm... Maybe this IS an owl, but it's a different kind of owl.

CU: On the cute little bird.

80	ELINOR (CONT'D) Maybe this is the kind of owl that doesn't sleep all day, or fly up high or live in trees.	80
81	BIBI Hmmmm. Now THAT is in interesting idea.	81
BiBi puts her cactus in her gardening apron.		
82	ELINOR What do you think, BiBi? Is it just a different kind of owl?	82
83	BIBI As a matter fact, it is. Good thinking, little scientist. There ARE different kinds of owls, just like there are different kinds of cactuses. This one here is called a burrowing owl.	83
84	ELINOR Oh, don't tell me! Burrowing Owls live in the desert, stay awake during the day, and live in little holes in the ground called BURROWS.	84
85	BIBI That's right, and guess what else. Burrowing Owls don't make the holes they live in. They borrow unused holes from digging animals - like tortoises.	85
86	ELINOR Awww, what a smart little owl.	86
CU: On the owl, it does look smart.		
87	ELINOR (CONT'D) I thought I knew everything there was to know about owls, but I guess I didn't.	87
88	BIBI Nature is full of surprises, Elinor. There's always more to learn.	88

At that moment, as they look at the owl, they observe it laying small rocks and bits of (natural) desert debris out in front of its burrow.

89 ELINOR 89
What's it doing now?

90 BIBI 90
I don't know. I've never seen a
burrowing owl do that. I wonder
why.

91 ELINOR 91
Maybe it's decorating it's front
door.

92 BIBI 92
Maybe. Or maybe that's it's rock
collection.

93 ELINOR 93
But there's sticks too.

94 BIBI 94
Right.

ANGLE ON: The owl puts the desert debris in a little semi-
circle around its hole.

95 ELINOR 95
Looks like its making a little
fence or something.

A sand tortoise walks by, then pauses and keeps going.

96 ELINOR (CONT'D) 96
Maybe the owl put up that little
fence to tell everyone to keep out.

97 BIBI 97
I think you're right Elinor.
That's amazing. I didn't know
burrowing owls did that.

98 ELINOR 98
You didn't? Really? I guess there
IS always more to learn. Even for
my BiBi!

SONG - Elinor and BiBi sing together.

99 ELINOR AND BIBI 99
ALL: Nature is full of surprises,
The closer you look,
The more you will see,
They come in all shapes and sizes
Nature is FULL of surprises.

BIBI: The same kind of bird might
not look the same
ELINOR: They have different likes,
and a different name.
BIBI: So keep your mind open, and
look all around,
ELINOR: You might find an owl that
runs on the ground.

ALL: Nature is full of surprises,
The closer you look,
The more you will see,
They come in all shapes and sizes
Nature is FULL of surprises.

We CROSS FADE:

6. INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

We only see BiBi (and a pile of couch cushions) as the <SFX:
DOORBELL RINGS> again. BiBi opens the door.

100	MR. RABBIT	100
	We're back!	
101	BIBI	101
	Aww, my favourite rabbit family.	
They exchange kisses.		
102	RANGER RABBIT	102
	So, did you scientists have fun making observations today?	
103	BIBI	103
	Of course! It was all sooo interesting.	
104	MR. RABBIT	104
	Life is always interesting with Owl Girl Elinor.	
105	RANGER RABBIT	105
	Where is she anyway?	
106	BIBI	106
	Oh, I'm not sure. She was around here some...	

Suddenly, Elinor comes out of a burrow she had made from the
couch cushions.

