

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 146 Olive's Tree

By: Michael Foulke

Elinor's Question: How do we fix Olive's favorite tree?

Logline: When Olive's favorite tree falls over, her friends try to figure out how to fix it for her, but the answer may be more complicated than they thought.

Curriculum Goals:

LS4. Understand that all animals and plants have a life cycle, can reproduce, and change and grow over time. (Elinor and her friends trace the life cycle of an oak tree).

ND4: Appreciate the way that elements in the natural world change, interact and are re-used. (Elinor and her friends observe the ways the apple tree was used in the past (for shade, for climbing - and the way it is used now that it's fallen - as a home for forest creatures).

SEP 1: Asking questions (science) c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation. (Elinor and her friends investigate why the tree fell.)

SEP 6: Constructing explanations (science) a. Use back-ground knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenom-ena (science) (Elinor and her friends conclude that the tree fell because it was old and diseased).

SEP 7: Engaging in argument from evidence

a. Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations
b. Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence (Elinor and her friends theorize as they examine the evidence around and including the fallen tree).

MAINS: Elinor, Ari, Olive, Ranger Rabbit

SECONDARY: None

LOCATIONS: Forest, Forest clearing

PROPS: Acorns, Picnic Basket, Picnic Blanket

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On a beautiful spring day, ELINOR <GIGGLES> as she hides behind a fallen log.

Before Elinor can even finish, ARI interrupts her.

8 ELINOR 8
Really? But I only see
(counting)
One...two...three trees!

9 OLIVE 9
Those are just the big, grown-up
trees, Elinor. There are lots of
OTHER trees here too.

Rather than be confused, Elinor is intrigued by this idea.

10 ELINOR 10
Uhhh - Where?

Olive points to a sprout growing out of the ground.

11 OLIVE 11
Right here!

12 ARI 12
Isn't that a weed?

13 OLIVE 13
(proud of her knowledge)
Nope, it's a sprout. That's what a
tree looks like when it first pops
out of the ground.

Elinor pulls out her magnifying glass. MAGNIFIED POV: as she
and her friends get down on their knees and look at the
sprout.

14 ARI 14
That's a tree?

15 OLIVE 15
It's a baby tree - part of the tree's
life cycle.

16 ELINOR 16
Life cycle? What's a life cycle?

17 ARI 17
I know. My mom has one of those in
the garage. She loves to exercise.

18 OLIVE 18
I think that's a different kind of
life cycle. This is like how you used
to be a baby and now you're a kid,
then one day you'll be a grown up.
Trees are the same. I'll show you.

Olive opens her nature book, which has a diagram of the life
cycle of a tree, with pictures of each stage of the life
cycle.

19 OLIVE (CONT'D) 19
See? Trees start out as tiny seeds,
then little sprouts that grow into
saplings like this one and finally,
big grown-up trees

20 ELINOR 20
But if trees start from seeds, where
do the seeds come from?

At this moment Ari leans against a tree, an acorn falls and
BOPS him on the head.

21 ARI 21
It's okay, I'm fine, everybody. It
was just an acorn.

As Ari picks up the acorn, he looks at it, then looks back at
the tree as a lightbulb goes off for him.

22 ARI (CONT'D) 22
Wait a minute... is an acorn a tree
seed?

23 OLIVE 23
Uh-huh. My Mom told me acorns are oak
tree seeds - and this is an oak tree.

24 ELINOR 24
Wow, Olive you sure know a lot about
trees.

25 OLIVE 25
Yeah. I really love them. So does my
Mom.

They look up at the oak, which stands tall above them.

26 ARI 26
I'll bet a big tree like this makes a
lot of acorns.

27 OLIVE 27
If you think this tree is big, you
should see my special tree. It's the
biggest, bestest tree ever! Wanna
see?

28 ELINOR/ARI 28
Yes!!!

29 OLIVE 29
Come on!

2. EXT. FOREST -- LATER

As the kids continue to walk through the forest, Ari begins to fidget and points at a random tree.

30 ARI 30
Are we at your tree yet, Olive?

31	No.	OLIVE	31
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ARI

What about now?

33	OLIVE	33
No.		

Ari waits a comically short beat.

ARI

What about now?

OLIVE

Yes!

ARI
 (surprised)
 Really?! That's never worked before.

3. EXT. FOREST CLEARING ON A HILL -- CONTINUOUS

As the kids leave the forest, they enter a clearing, where they find one lone oak tree high up on a picturesque hill, all by itself. The sun is shining right on the tree, giving it a majestic look that the kids marvel at. <SFX: WHOA WALLA>

37 OLIVE 37
I know. My Mom and I come here all
the time. It's our favourite spot.

38 ELINOR 38
Now *THAT* is no sapling.

39 OLIVE 39
Nope. This tree is a grown-up -
that's called mature.

ELINOR

Ooh... mature. That's a good word!

41	OLIVE	41
	It's been around so long my Mom used to come here when she was little and her Mom used to come here before that. It's <i>our</i> tree.	
42	ELINOR	42
	That's so nice.	
43	ARI	43
	Sooo, what do we do at your tree, Olive?	
44	OLIVE	44
	Anything we want!	

MONTAGE OF the kids having fun at Olive's tree:

They chase each other around, playing tag. Olive and Elinor go one way, Ari goes the other - boo!

They (safely) climb the tree, using its many branches to brace themselves. Olive helps Elinor up, but Ari just flutters to a higher branch.

Finally, the kids sit under the shady tree and each share a snack from Olive's bag as they watch the sunset in the distance.

CROSSFADE TO:

4. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DUSK

Elinor is watching the sun going down as Olive draws in her notebook.

Suddenly, Ari's upside down head pops down from the top of frame. As he talks, we pull out to reveal he is hanging from a branch.

45	ARI	45
	Whatcha doing now, Olive?	
46	OLIVE	46
	Drawing a picture of my special tree. I do a new one every time I come up here. I've been here so many times I've almost filled up this whole book!	
47	ARI	47
	Cool.	

Ari flutters down and joins his friends at the bottom of the tree. A quiet beat as they enjoy the sunset

48 ELINOR 48
I wonder how your special tree got
all the way up here on the top of the
hill.

49 OLIVE 49

Well, we know it started with an
acorn.

A THOUGHT BUBBLE above her head as she imagines how the tree began.

50 ARI 50
Maybe the acorn walked up here
itself?

51 OLIVE 51
Acorns don't have legs, Ari. Someone
must have brought it up here.

52 ARI 52
Riiight. Maybe pirates thought the
acorns were treasure and buried them.

53 ELINOR 53
Or maybe one of Philbert's squirrel-
friends did. Squirrels do love
acorns.

The THOUGHT BUBBLE bursts.

54 OLIVE 54
However it got up here, it's the only
tree on this hill. That's why it's so
special.

55 ELINOR 55
Well, it's getting late. We should be
heading back soon.

56 ARI 56
Aww... but we just got here! Can't we
stay a little bit longer?!

57 ELINOR 57
Ari, we don't want to be late for
dinner.

Suddenly, Ari changes his tune completely.

58 ARI 58
Dinner?! Wait, I'm coming!

In his hurry, Ari puts his hands on the branch to pull himself up and we hear the SFX: CREAK of wood breaking as the branch snaps and falls to the ground with an SFX: THUD!

Luckily, Ari flaps his wings and safely glides to the ground.

59 ELINOR 59
Oh, no! Are you okay?

60 ARI 60
Oh, yeah. I'm fine.

61 OLIVE 61
But what about my tree, it broke its
branch!

Olive puts a comforting hand on the tree, but Elinor, in turn, puts a comforting hand on her.

62 ELINOR (O.S.) 62
I think it'll be okay, Olive. It has
lots of branches, so it won't miss
just one.

63 OLIVE 63
Yeah, I guess you're right.

64 ELINOR 64
We'll come back tomorrow to check on
your tree and have some more fun!

65 ARI 65
And maybe a picnic too!

Olive takes a satisfied <SIGH> and closes up her book.

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66                OLIVE                                66
        Sounds good! See you tomorrow, tree!
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As the kids start walking back, Olive once again puts a comforting hand on her tree. As she walks away, we push in a bit on the tree as we see a piece of the bark fall off.

DISSOLVE TO:

5. EXT. ANIMAL TOWN NIGHT TO MORNING

We see the sun set over Animal Town, then rise again - another beautiful day!

6. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

Elinor, Olive and Ari all happily head up the clearing, now carrying a picnic basket.

67 ELINOR 67
I can't wait to play tag again!

68 ARI 68

Well, I can't wait to climb--

Suddenly, Olive interrupts Ari, as she exclaims:

69 OLIVE 69
 <GASP!> My tree!

70 ARI 70
Exactly! I can't wait to climb your tree.

71 OLIVE 71
No, my tree! Look!

The kids all look up to see that Olive's tree has fallen down! They all quickly run to inspect the scene to find the tree has fallen over and it's roots are exposed. (NOTE: That seems to be what happens when a tree succumbs to root rot, but this should be checked.)

72 OLIVE (CONT'D) 72
What happened?

73 ELINOR 73
It looks like the tree just... fell
over?

74	ARI	74
	Okay, no problem. I'll just...	
	(Ari tries to lift the	
	tree, but quickly	
	realizes that's not	
	happening.)	
	Nope. Too heavy!	

Meanwhile Olive is very worried about her tree.

75 OLIVE 75
 (despondent)
My tree can't stay on the ground.
What are we going to do?

Elinor thinks, but shakes her head.

76	ELINOR	76
	I'm not sure.	
	(then, idea)	
	But I know just who to ask. Wait	
	right here!	

As Elinor runs off with purpose, we:

FLIP TO:

7. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

Ranger Rabbit inspects the fallen tree, looking at the wood and the bark as the kids stand by, watching hopefully.

77	ELINOR	77
	So... is there a way to put the tree	
	back in the ground, Mom?	

78	RANGER RABBIT	78
	Sorry, kids, but this tree was very	
	old and it looks like it got sick.	
	That's why it fell over.	

79	OLIVE	79
	Trees get sick?	

80	RANGER RABBIT	80
	Yes they can, Olive. And it looks	
	like this one has been sick for a	
	while. The inside was starting to	
	hollow out. See?	

The kids look at the bottom of the tree and see that there is a big hole in the middle of the tree.

81	RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D)	81
	Once the tree got sick, it became too	
	weak to support itself and just...	
	fell over.	

As Ranger Rabbit talks, this all begins to sink in for Olive.

82	OLIVE	82
	So... we can't put my tree back up...	
	ever?	

83	RANGER RABBIT	83
	I'm afraid not, Olive.	

84	OLIVE	84
	Oh, no.	

Olive is truly upset. Ranger Rabbit puts her arms around her.

85	RANGER RABBIT	85
	I'm so sorry Olive. Elinor told me this was your special tree.	

86	OLIVE	86
	Uh-huh. And now I'll never climb it again.	

Olive buries her head in Ranger Rabbit's shoulder and they share a hug.

87	RANGER RABBIT	87
	That's true. And it's very sad. But, Olive, can I tell you something that might make you feel a little better.	

Olive looks at Ranger Rabbit seriously.

88	OLIVE	88
	Uh-huh.	

89	RANGER RABBIT	89
	Your special tree is still going to be around for many more years. It's going to be what we Park Rangers call a wildlife tree.	

90	OLIVE	90
	What's a wildlife tree?	

91	RANGER RABBIT	91
	A wildlife tree is the very last step in a tree's life cycle and it's a very important step because wildlife trees provide shelter and food to many creatures in the forest.	

92	OLIVE	92
	So, my tree is going to become a home for lots of creatures...on the ground?	

93	RANGER RABBIT	93
	That's right.	

94	OLIVE	94
	Oh. I guess that's not so bad.	

95 RANGER RABBIT 95
 And as this tree slowly breaks down
 over the years, it will provide food
 to the soil, which will help new
 plants and trees grow in its place.

Olive sits down on her tree.

96 OLIVE 96
 I know that's a good thing, but I'm
 still gonna miss seeing it stand up
 big and tall.

Elinor sits down beside her friend and puts her arm around her.

97 ELINOR 97
 I know it was a really pretty tree,
 Olive. But just think of all the new
 kinds of fun we can have with it now
 that it's a wildlife tree.

Ari sits on the other side and puts his arm around Olive too.

98 ARI 98
 We'll come visit all the time. Who
 knows what creature might come and
 live here.

99 ELINOR 99
 It'll be soooo interesting. And we'll
 make LOTS of observations.

100 OLIVE 100
 (finally accepting)
 I guess it will be pretty cool to see
 what kinds of creatures make my tree
 their home.

101 RANGER RABBIT 101
 I don't think you're going to have to
 wait very long. Look!

Ranger Rabbit points. The kids look over and see a salamander
 crawl up inside a hollowed out section of the tree's trunk
 and curl for a nap. <SFX: WHOAA/AMAZING WALLA>

102 OLIVE 102
 You were right, Elinor. This next
 stage in my tree's life cycle might
 be kinda interesting after all.

As Olive finally cracks a smile, music rises. The kids sing a
 song while dancing around the wildlife tree.

103

OLIVE/ELINOR/ARI

103

*A tree grows from big to small
No matter the size, we love them all!
They clean the air and give us shade!
Trees are the best thing nature ever
made!*

*ELINOR: It starts with a seed planted
in the ground
That becomes a sprout, poking up from
the ground!*

*ARI Next it's a sapling, as big as me
But real soon, it's a full grown
tree!*

*OLIVE: Then one day, it's a wildlife
tree
Just as important I hope you'll see
Because it helps new plants and trees
to grow
And it's a home to lots of creatures
we know!*

*ALL: A tree grows from big to small
No matter the size, we love them all!
They clean the air and give us shade!
Trees are the best thing nature ever
made!*

8. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DUSK

After the song, as the sun sets in the distance again, Olive draws in her notebook, sitting on the ground with her back against the wildlife tree as Ari, Elinor and Ranger Rabbit walk over to her.

104

ELINOR

104

How are you feeling now, Olive?

105

OLIVE

105

Better, thanks. I'm just finishing up
the very last page of my sketch book.

Olive turns the book around to show the kids a drawing of all of them around the wildlife tree.

106

RANGER RABBIT

106

Very nice.

