

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

158: THE UNSINKABLE LYNX

Written by
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Elinor's Question: *How do lynx move fast in deep snow?*

Logline: *When the kids discover that Gael the lynx's feet prevent him from sinking in the deep snow, they make their own snowshoes.*

Curriculum Goals: **LS2.** Living things have different body parts to suit their needs. [The kids learn that Gael, who comes from Up North, has wide, flat, fluffy feet that help him walk on snow.]

ND3. (RTL Crosscutting concept 'Structure and Function'):
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. [Inspired by a lynx's feet, the kids design their own set of snowshoes.]

SEP3b: Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail [The kids compare themselves with Gael to determine which variable is causing Gael to sink into snow.]

SEP6a: Use background knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenomena [The kids hypothesize that wider feet make it easier to move in snow.]

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Gael, Koa, Silas (in winter clothes)

Props: Two tennis rackets, roll of duct tape, shoelaces, twigs, pieces of felt, sheet of shiny snowflake stickers, bag of banana chips

Locations: Field near Olive's house

FIRST DRAFT: 20-Dec-19

It's a snowy day. Wearing their snow clothes, ELINOR, ARI, OLIVE, KOA, and SILAS have gathered in the field beside Olive's house to play a game. They're standing in a spot with relatively little snow (perhaps at the top of a hill?). However, the snow is deep in other parts of the field (we'll find that out later). We start with a CU: just Elinor's face looking at the camera as she dramatically introduces today's game.

WIDEN to reveal Elinor, Ari, Olive, Koa, and Silas standing in the field. Ari grabs a handful of snow and holds it up.

Olive pats the sides of her snowsuit.

Koa reaches up his hands and high fives the two characters to his left and right simultaneously.

The kids <SFX: YEAH> and throw their arms in the air in excitement. But when Ari raises his arms, he's holding a tennis racket in each hand. He pauses, looking confused.

Ari lowers his arms.

9	ELINOR	9
	Oh! I didn't know there was such thing as Snow Tennis.	
10	ARI	10
	(thoughtfully) I guess there isn't. But there isn't such thing as Snow Tag, either. It's just what we call tag that we play when it's snowy outside.	
11	OLIVE	11
	That's true. But calling it Snow Tag makes it sound so much cooler.	
	She holds her sides and shivers comically.	
12	OLIVE (CONT'D)	12
	Get it? Cooler?	
	The kids <SFX: LAUGH>.	
13	ARI	13
	Well, I guess I won't be needing these.	
	Ari drops the tennis rackets onto the snow and immediately perks up.	
14	ARI (CONT'D)	14
	Good thing I love Snow Tag too. I'm going to run really fast!	
15	SILAS	15
	I'm going to run... (he zooms out of frame, then zooms back) ...even faster.	
	All the kids <SFX: LAUGH>.	
16	OLIVE	16
	I can't run very fast in my snowsuit. But Snow Tag isn't just about being fast. I'm going to try to OUT-THINK whoever's It.	
17	ELINOR	17
	That's a smart idea, Olive. (pauses, then announces) So, let's play some Snow Tag!	

ANGLE ON: Olive, who notices something far away. She turns to
look and squints.

18	OLIVE	18
	Hold on a sec.	
CUT TO: Gael the lynx approaching the group from afar and waving.		
19	OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)	19
	I see my new friend Gael coming.	
	Let's wait for him.	
BACN ON: to the kids.		
20	ARI	20
	Who's Gael?	
21	OLIVE	21
	He's a new kid! He just moved here.	
	I invited him to come play with us.	
Gael bounds up to the kids and stands next to Olive. He's a cheerful and affable lynx. He's not wearing mittens or boots (he doesn't need them).		
22	Gael	22
	Sorry I'm late. Hi, everybody. I'm Gael the lynx. My family just moved here from Up North.	
23	KOA	23
	Cool! What's it like Up North, Gael?	
24	Gael	24
	It's a lot like here, but snowier and colder. It gets pretty dark in the winter. Oh, and we make REALLY good maple syrup.	
25	OLIVE	25
	Well, Gael, you're just in time for a game of Snow Tag.	
26	Gael	26
	Great! (he suddenly looks confused) Um, what's Snow Tag?	
27	OLIVE	27
	It's exactly the same as regular tag, but we play it when it's snowy outside.	
28	Gael	28
	Got it. Where I'm from, we just call that Tag.	

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

29 ELINOR 29
So, who wants to be It first?

30 SILAS 30
(shyly) I'll be It.

31 ELINOR 31
Ok! Everybody else run away!

The kids all scatter. ANGLE ON: Olive and Gael running.

32 OLIVE 32
Watch out for Silas. He's the
fastest kid in town.

33 GAEL 33
Got it.

BACK ON: Silas.

34 SILAS 34
Okay, I'm going to start counting.
I think I'll count to... 25.

He takes a deep breath and begins counting really fast.

35 SILAS (CONT'D) 35
(really fast)
One, two, three, four, five, six-
seven, eight nine, ten eleven,
twelve, thirteen, fourteen,
fifteen, sixteen, seventeen,
eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-
one, twenty-two, twenty-three,
twenty-four, twenty-five.

ANGLE ON: Gael and Olive, who stop running and look back.
They can hear Silas counting.

36 OLIVE 36
(To Gael, partway through Silas'
counting) See, he even COUNTS fast!

BACK ON: Silas, who finishes counting.

37 SILAS 37
Ready or not, here I come!

Silas zooms towards Koa and quickly tags him, then zooms
away.

38 SILAS (CONT'D) 38
You're It. (his voice fades away as
he runs away) Remember, no
touchbaaaaaacks

CUT TO: Ari, Olive, and Elinor.

39 ELINOR 39
Wow. That was his fastest tag yet.

40	ARI	40
	He's one speedy cheetah.	

41 OLIVE 41

I wonder if there's a way to escape
someone even if they're faster than
I am. Maybe I'll try running in a
zigzag.

42	ARI	42
	Here comes Koa!	

43	OLIVE	43
	Ok, zigzag time.	

*

Koa chases after Olive. She runs in a zigzag, but Koa catches and tags her after a few zags.

44 KOA 44

You're It.

Koa runs away.

45 OLIVE 45
 (to herself, thoughtfully)
 Hmm, I have another idea.

She runs a little way as if she's playing tag normally, and then she quickly ducks behind a tree (or bench or rock). Silas, still zooming around, zooms by. He doesn't notice her.

SILAS

Hey everybody, where did Olive go?

Olive jumps out from behind the tree and tags Silas.

47 OLIVE 47
You're It.

48 SILAS 48
Aah! You surprised me!

Both Silas and Olive <SFX: GIGGLE>.

49 OLIVE 49
Wow. I can't believe I tagged you,
Silas.

50 SILAS 50
Nice job, Olive. That was some
smart thinking.

ANGLE ON: Ari, Elinor, and Gael, who are standing next to
each other.

51 ARI 51
Uh oh, who is Silas going to chase
now?

52 ELINOR 52
Whoever it is, they're going to get
a workout.

BACK ON: Silas, who looks around for a second, then bounds
after Gael.

53 GAEL 53
Oh no!

Silas chases Gael into a slightly lower area with deep snow.
But Silas begins to sink deep into the snow, and he slows
down, making a snow trench.

54 SILAS 54
Gosh. The snow sure is deep over
here.

Gael continues to run almost on top of the snow; it doesn't
slow him down. Eventually Silas slows to a stop. He's out of
breath.

55 SILAS (CONT'D) 55
(pants)

Gael turns back and walks over to him.

56 GAEL 56
You ok, Silas?

Silas pants, takes a deep breath, then reaches out and tags
Gael.

57 SILAS 57
(pants, takes a deep breath) You're
it.

Elinor suddenly realizes what she's saying. She looks up as if trying to see her own ears. She wiggles them.

68 ELINOR 68
 Oops, I forgot that I have long
 ears too! It's easy to forget them
 when they're hard for me to see.

She and the other kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

69 ARI 69
 Oh! I just realized that I left my
 tennis rackets over in the other
 part of the field. I'm going to go
 get them before they sink into the
 snow.

70 ELINOR 70
 Sure, Ari. We'll wait for you. We
 could use a break, anyway.

Silas folds up his hands as if he's sleeping.

71 SILAS 71
 Yup, I need little cat nap.

Ari pushes away through the snow.

72 KOA 72
 Well, Gael, one thing's for sure:
 You're one awesome dude. Give me a
 high five!

Koa high-fives Gael. Everyone <SFX: GASPS>. In a SCIENCE
 CLOSE-UP: we see that Gael's paws are amazing - they're huge,
 wide, and furry.

73 KOA (CONT'D) 73
 Wow, you're good at high fives.

74 ELINOR 74
 Gael, your paws are SO COOL.
 They're big and wide and furry.

75 ARI 75
 Yeah, none of us has paws like
 that!

The kids all take a thoughtful moment to hold up their paws
 and look at them. Gael sticks out a forepaw and foot and
 wiggles them thoughtfully. His feet are also huge, wide, and
 furry.

76 GAEL 76
 Why, thank you! I'm pretty happy
 with my paws, but we're sort of...
 stuck with each other.

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

77	ELINOR	77
	Hmm.	

We see another SCIENCE CLOSE-UP of Gael's paws as Elinor thinks.

78	ELINOR (CONT'D)	78
	Maybe Gael is fast because of his special paws. We need MORE OBSERVATIONS. Gael and Silas, will you walk along beside each other in the snow? That way, we can see how you move.	

79	SILAS	79
	Sure.	

80	GAEL	80
	Can do.	

Walking next to each other through the deep snow, Gael and Silas head away from their other friends, then back. Silas pants as he pushes his way through the snow, leaving a trench. Gael is able to comfortably walk without sinking very much.

81	OLIVE	81
	Look. Silas sinks way down in the snow, but Gael doesn't sink as much.	

82	ELINOR	82
	That's SO INTERESTING. Gael, if you don't sink as much, then you don't have to work as hard to push through all that deep snow.	

83	SILAS	83
	(panting) I didn't think ANYTHING could slow me down, but pushing through the snow is hard work.	

At that moment, Ari returns. He drops his tennis rackets on top of the snow.

84	ARI	84
	I'll say. I'm out of breath just from walking over here. This deep snow is SNOW joke.	

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>. In a SCIENCE CLOSE-UP, we see that Ari's tennis rackets haven't sunk very far into the snow.

85 ELINOR 85
Wait. Ari. Look at your tennis rackets. They don't sink very much in the snow. That's SO INTERESTING.

86 OLIVE 86
I guess they're sort of like Gael's paws. They're wide and flat. Maybe wide, flat things don't sink as much?

BACK ON: The kids.

87 ELINOR 87
Oh! I bet that's it! Gael's wide, flat feet stop him from sinking as much in the snow. So, it's easier for him to get around - and easier for him to play Snow Tag.

All the kids <SFX: WOW>. Koa and Gael high five again.

88 ARI 88
Gosh. I sure wish I had lynx paws.

Ari looks at his tennis rackets.

89 ARI (CONT'D) 89
Wait. I have an idea. What if I stand on my tennis rackets? Then I'll have wide feet like Gael's.

90 ELINOR 90
It's worth a try.

Ari lifts up his feet and puts one on each racket. He doesn't sink as much.

91 ARI 91
Hey, it works! Could we try turning my tennis rackets into shoes somehow? Then we could walk around without sinking as much.

92 ELINOR 92
That's an interesting idea. Does anyone have anything in their pockets that we could use to attach these rackets to our feet and make them into lynx shoes?

The kids all rummage around in their jackets and snowsuits. Koa pulls out a roll of duct tape.

93 KOA 93
I've got this cool roll of tape.

Ari pulls out some old shoelaces.

94 ARI 94
I found two old shoelaces.

Gael pulls out some twigs.

95 GAEL 95
I have some small twigs.

Elinor pulls out a few pieces of felt and a sheet of shiny snowflake stickers.

96 ELINOR 96
I've got some pieces of felt, and
also some stickers to help us
decorate our creation. They're
sparkly - see?

She moves them in the light so they sparkle. The kids <SFX:
OOH>. Then Olive pulls out a bag of banana chips.

97 OLIVE 97
I just have a bag of banana chips.
Okay, they're not useful for making
shoes, but they ARE delicious.

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE> as Olive <SFX: MUNCHES> on a banana
chip, then passes them around for other to share.

98 ELINOR 98
Okay, let's see what we can make!

SONG MONTAGE

The kids begin to work on their jury-rigged snowshoes. They
try tying things together and untying them, testing the
snowshoes on their feet, adding stickers, etc. They sing:

99 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 99
Listen up, friends,
And we'll tell you the tale
Of the unsinkable lynx,
Our new friend Gael!

OLIVE: His feet are wide.
He's got fluffy toes.
ELINOR: These amazing feet
Won't sink in the snow.

ARI: If we work hard,
(MORE)

ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (CONT'D)

We can build snow shoes.
ELINOR: With wide, flat feet,
We'll be unsinkable, too!

ALL: Listen up, friends,
And we'll tell you the tale
Of the unsinkable lynx,
Our new friend Gael!

Triumphantly, Elinor holds up the makeshift snowshoes.
They're clearly a group effort, with stickers and all sorts
of bits taped and tied together.

100	ELINOR	100
	Ta-da! We did it.	

101	KOA	101
	They look great. Elinor, your stickers really make them shine.	

102	ELINOR	102
	Thank you. Who wants to try them first?	

103	OLIVE	103
	I do!	

Olive takes the snowshoes. ANGLE ON Olive as she sticks her
feet in them and walks around.

104	OLIVE (CONT'D)	104
	Here I go. They're working! We did it. We used our brains to figure out how to get better at Snow Tag.	

Olive suddenly faceplants safely in the snow.

105	OLIVE (CONT'D)	105
	(laughing) Oof. I guess they'll take a little bit of getting used to.	

BACK ON: All the kids.

106	SILAS	106
	I want to try.	

107	ARI	107
	Me too.	

Olive and Gael step back and watch the other kids try the
snowshoes. They're <SFX: LAUGH>ing, falling over, and having
a great time.

108 OLIVE 108
What do you think about our lynx
shoes, Gael?

109 GAEL 109
I love them. I feel like I'm back
Up North. Thanks for making me feel
so welcome today.

110 OLIVE 110
Hooray! I'm so glad you're here.
Banana chip?

111 GAEL 111
Sure.

Olive hands Gael a banana chip. Gael pops it into his mouth
and chews thoughtfully.

112 GAEL (CONT'D) 112
You know... these would be really
great with a little maple syrup.

113 OLIVE 113
Gael the Unsinkable Lynx, I like
the way you think.

IRIS OUT

THE END

END.