

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

SECOND DRAFT: 16-Jan-20

POLISH DRAFT: 07-Feb-20

1. EXT. OLIVE'S HOUSE - FIELD - DAY

It's a snowy day in Animal Town. Wearing their snow clothes, ELINOR, ARI, OLIVE, KOA, and SILAS have gathered next to the field beside Olive's house to play a game. The field is covered in deep snow (up to about their knees). We start with a CU: just Elinor's face looking from side to side as she dramatically introduces today's game.

DIALOGUE NOTE: there are multiple characters saying the word "tag" in this episode. We want to make sure that the voice direction keeps this word consistent across actors, and from getting too Canadian sounding. We're hoping for a word that rhymes with "flag" rather than "plague."

1 ELINOR 1
Okay, everyone. I THINK we're ready
for today's game, but let's make
sure. Do we have... snow?

WIDEN to reveal the kids standing on the side of the field, where the snow is not as deep. Ari grabs a handful of snow and holds it up.

2 ARI 2
We have snow!

3 ELINOR 3
Do we have our snow clothes?

Olive pats the sides of her snowsuit.

4 OLIVE 4
We're warm and toasty.

5 ELINOR 5
Do we have a bunch of awesome
friends?

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

6 KOA 6
We are totally awesome.

7 ELINOR 7
Great! It looks like we're ready to
play a game of... SNOW TAG!

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.

8	ARI	8
	Wait. I thought you said we were going to play Snow TENNIS.	
	Ari lowers his arms.	
9	ELINOR	9
	Snow Tennis? How do you play that?	
10	ARI	10
	I don't know. I thought you knew!	
	But that's why I brought these rackets.	*
	He holds the rackets in front of him.	
11	OLIVE	11
	(giggles)	
	Ari, we're playing Snow TAG today.	
	It's just like regular tag, but we play it in the snow.	
12	ELINOR	12
	Yeah, snow tag is much cooler.	
	(giggling) Get it? Because it's colder?	
	The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.	
13	ARI	13
	Ok! I guess I won't be needing these.	
	Ari tosses the tennis rackets to the side in the field and immediately perks up. Elinor steps out and notices how deep the snow is.	
14	ELINOR	14
	Wow, there is so much snow today.	
	Look how deep it is.	
	Olive wades in.	
15	OLIVE	15
	Yeah, that might make it a little hard to run around.	*
	Ari runs out into the field, followed by Silas who kicks up a flurry of snow. Ari runs in place and Silas runs a quick loop around, and it's clear that the snow keeps them from running at full speed.	*

24	SILAS	24	
	Ready or not, here I come!		
	Silas looks around and, as the kids all <SFX: GIGGLE>, he makes a few starts towards some of other kids, trying to figure out who to go after. There's snow and giggles flying everywhere. Finally, he hones in on Ari.		
25	ARI	25	
	Uh oh.		
	Ari makes a run for it and scrambles through the snow. Silas gives chase. (Note: Silas is faster than the other kids, but he's not cartoony fast. See the "Look What I Can Do" episode, and halve that effect for deep snow). It's a good natured chase, but Silas catches up to Ari and tags him.		
26	SILAS	26	
	Tag!		*
			*
	ARI <SFX: AWWWS/GIGGLES> as he catches his breath.		
27	ARI	27	
	Nice one, Silas. Now I'M it.		*
			*
	After a beat, he makes a run towards Silas, but Silas is too fast, and he ends up going after Elinor and Olive, who are nearest to him. Eventually, he stops to take another breath.		
28	ARI (CONT'D)	28	
	(panting)		*
	It's... really... hard... to move		
	in this snow.		
	Elinor and Olive, who are near him, also stop to catch their breath.		
29	OLIVE	29	
	(panting also)		*
	Yeah... (pew)... I have to lift my		
	foot up high to take a step and		
	then it sinks in the snow.		
30	ELINOR	30	
	Me too.		*
			*
	As Elinor demonstrates, she gets caught by her curiosity.		
31	ELINOR (CONT'D)	31	
	Hmm. I wonder if there's a way to		*
	run better in the snow.		

At that moment, something catches Olive's attention. Off in the distance, we see Gael Lynx approaching the group from afar and waving. *

(VOICE RECORD NOTE: the Spanish pronunciation of Gael rhymes with Babel, or kale (Kal-El). "Tale" should be ok in the song because the second syllable is stressed and it rhymes.) *

32 OLIVE (O.S.) 32
Oh look, it's Gael.

Ari, Olive, and Elinor approach the other kids, wading through the snow and also catching their breath. They all move to the side of the field, where the snow isn't as deep. *

33 ARI 33
Who's Gael?

34 OLIVE 34
He's new in town! His family just moved here from up north. (to Gael, who just arrived) Hi, Gael!

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). Like lynxes in real life, he has extra big paws and feet. *

35 GAEL 35
Hi, everybody. I'm Gael.

The kids all greet him (SFX: WALLA HI/HELLO!>.

36 KOA 36
Cool! Welcome to Animal Town.

37 GAEL 37
Thanks, I really like it here, but it's different from where I come from. *

38 ARI 38
What's it like up north, Gael?

39 GAEL 39
Well, it's but snowier. *

40 ELINOR 40
Is it really cold? *

41 GAEL 41
Yeah. But don't worry. I'm a lynx, and lynxes have really thick fur to keep us warm.

There's general appreciation of that by all the kids <SFX: WALLA WHOA/COOL>.

42 OLIVE 42
Well, Gael, you're just in time.
We're playing a game of Snow Tag.
Want to join us?

43 GAEL 43
Great! (he suddenly looks confused)
Um, what's Snow Tag?

44 OLIVE 44
It's the same as regular tag, but
we play it when it's snowy outside.

45 ARI 45
And right now, it's REALLY snowy.

Ari steps into the deep snow.

46 GAEL 46
Mmm, where I'm from, it's almost
always snowy, so we just call it
regular tag.

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

47 ELINOR 47
Ok. Olive was It, but we should
start over because Gael is here.
Does anyone want to be It this
time?

48 GAEL 48
I'll be It.

49 ELINOR 49
Ok, count to ten and then, it's
snow tag time!

The kids all start to scatter. Olive stays behind to give
Gael a tip.

50 OLIVE 50
Watch out for Silas. He's really
fast.

Olive wades out into the snow and joins the others as Gael
counts.

69 ARI 69
Yeah, I got tired just watching it!
Did you eat some kind of special
breakfast this morning?

70 GAEL 70
Uh, I don't think so. I ate the
same thing I eat every morning:
Oatmeal with extra maple syrup. We
eat a lot of maple syrup up north.

71 ARI 71
Mmm, I love maple syrup.

His stomach grumbles a little and the kids <SFX: GIGGLE> a
bit.

72 ELINOR 72
(thoughtful) Hmm. Gael, we noticed
that you don't sink in the snow as
much as we do. Is that why you can
run faster?

73 OLIVE 73
Yeah, when we walk in the snow, we
sink down but you don't.

Olive steps over to the field to demonstrate.

74 GAEL 74
Huh. I hadn't thought about it
before.

He walks over next to Olive, and it's clear that Olive sinks
down a lot more.

75 GAEL (CONT'D) 75
You're right! I always walk on top
of the snow. It's what lynxes do.

Koa wades in, sinks, and look up at Gael.

76 KOA 76
Whoa, that is so cool.

77 ELINOR 77
Hmmm... I wonder why you don't sink
in the snow like we do, Gael.
You're about the same size as us.

From Elinor's POV, we see her use her hand to compare Gael's size to another kid standing on the side of the field. Back on Elinor, we see her scratching her chin.

78	ELINOR (CONT'D)	78	
	There must be another reason. We need more observations!		*

Ari joins in the hypothesizing.

79	ARI	79	
	Maybe it's because Gael is a cat, and cats can walk on top of the snow.		* *

80	OLIVE	80	
	But cheetahs are also cats, and Silas can't walk on top of the snow.		*

ANGLE ON: Silas, still panting. Elinor has an idea.

81	ELINOR	81	
	Gael has thick fur. Maybe thick fur helps you run on top of the snow?		

82	KOA	82	
	Umm, I also have thick fur, but I sink in the snow.		

83	ELINOR	83	
	True. I know, Gael has long ears. Maybe having long ears keep you from sinking in the snow.		

Olive looks at Elinor's ears and maybe points at them.

84	OLIVE	84	
	Uh, Elinor...		

Elinor suddenly realizes what she's saying. She looks up as if trying to see her own ears, turning her head from side to side, then bending them down.

85	ELINOR	85	
	Oops, I forgot I have long ears too, and I sink in the snow.		

She and the other kids <SFX: GIGGLE>.

86	ARI	86	
	Well, whatever the reason, I think it's super awesome, Gael. Give me a high five!		

Gael flops backwards onto the snow next to Ari, his feet sticking up. He high-fives Ari and we see their two hands meet up close. Elinor <SFX: GASPS>.

87	ELINOR	87	
	Gael, I see something else that's different about you. Your paws and your feet are bigger than our paws and feet.		
In a SCIENCE CLOSE-UP: we see that Gael's paws and feet are amazing - they're huge, wide, and furry compared to Ari's.			
88	OLIVE	88	
	They are SO COOL. They're big and wide and furry.		
The kids all take a thoughtful moment to hold up their paws and feet and look at them.			
89	GAEL	89	
	Oh, thank you! We lynxes all have paws and feet like this.		*
90	ELINOR	90	
	Maybe that's why you don't sink as much, Gael.		
91	ARI	91	
	Yeah, none of us has paws like that!		
92	ELINOR	92	
	When we step in the snow, our smaller feet sink.		
She steps into the snow and we see her feet sink.			
93	ELINOR (CONT'D)	93	
	But maybe because your feet are so wide, they don't sink as much.		
Gael hops to his feet. He moves his feet up and down and we see that because of their width, they don't pierce through the snow as easily.			
94	GAEL	94	
	I think you're right!		
95	OLIVE	95	
	We figured it out!		
On their good cheers, we go into the DITTY MONTAGE. They sing			
(COMPOSER RECORD NOTE: the Spanish pronunciation of Gael rhymes with Babel, or kale (Kal-El). "Tale" should be ok in the song because the second syllable is stressed and it rhymes.)			
			*
			*
			*
			*

96	ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI	96
	Listen up, friends, And we'll tell you the tale Of our new lynx friend, The unsinkable Gael!	
	OLIVE: His feet are wide. He's got fluffy toes. ELINOR: These amazing feet Won't sink in the snow.	
	ARI: Having wide feet Help you stay on top ELINOR: So you can run faster and never stop	
	ALL: Listen up, friends, And we'll tell you the tale Of our new lynx friend, The unsinkable Gael!	
	The kids all cheer their new friend. Ari is especially excited. He jumps in the air and flutters.	*
97	ARI	97
	Look at me! I'm not sinking in the snow, just like Gael!	* *
	Suddenly Ari loses his balance, <WHOOOPS> does a little flip and lands on the pair of rackets he had tossed earlier.	* *
	He looks down and, grasping the netting with his foot claws, he lifts them one by one.	*
98	ARI (CONT'D)	98
	Haha, hey look, now I have wide feet like Gael, and I don't sink in the snow!	
	He takes a few steps around the snow using the rackets like snow shoes.	
99	ELINOR	99
	Ari, you just gave me an idea. Maybe we can ALL have feet like Gael.	
100	OLIVE	100
	(catching on) Yeah, if we can find wide things to put on our feet, then we can walk on top of the snow, too.	

101	KOA	101
	I've got two flying discs [Frisbees] at home I could use.	
102	SILAS	102
	I have some toy plates at home.	
103	OLIVE	103
	I have a couple of ping-pong paddles.	
104	ELINOR	104
	And I have things at home I can use, too. Gael, will you wait for us here?	
105	GAEL	105
	Of course!	
106	ELINOR	106
	Great, let's see what we can make!	

The kids all scramble, and through a quick Watterson split-screen cross-fade montage, we see the different kids grabbing their things and jerry-rigging them. On the last cross-fade, we end up back at the snow field to reveal that everyone has a version of snow-shoes.

Triumphantly, Elinor holds up the makeshift snowshoes she has on her feet. She took a pair of twigs and wrapped them around to form a loop, then used twine or cloth to wrap and make a surface that attaches to her feet.

107	ELINOR (CONT'D)	107
	Ta-da! We did it.	
108	GAEL	108
	Those look awesome.	
109	KOA	109
	Cool, I have lynx feet.	
110	ELINOR	110
	Who wants to try theirs first?	
111	OLIVE	111
	I do!	

Olive steps out in the snow with her ping-pong paddle shoes.

112	OLIVE (CONT'D)	112
	(laughing) They work! Having wide feet keeps you from sinking in the snow.	

113	ARI	113
	And now we can run on top of the snow instead of through the snow. Watch me zoom like Gael!	
	He gets a little over eager, and trips and tumbles in the snow.	
114	ARI (CONT'D)	114
	Umm, it might take some practice to be like Gael.	
	The kids all <SFX: GIGGLE>.	
115	OLIVE	115
	What do you think about our lynx shoes, Gael?	
116	GAEL	116
	They're great. All this tromping around in snow makes me feel like I'm back up north. Thanks for making me feel so welcome today.	
117	ELINOR	117
	Thank YOU for teaching us something new today, Gael. Now... who wants to play... SNOW TAG!	
	Elinor catches herself.	
118	ELINOR (CONT'D)	118
	Oh, uh, or should I say, who wants to play REGULAR TAG!	

The kids all <SFX: LAUGH AND WALLA CHEER> as they run out into the field and chase each other. The camera pans up into the winter sky as we...

IRIS OUT

END.

*