ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP. 166 “Dandy Dandelions”

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *Are weeds like dandelions good for anything?*

Logline: *Elinor learns that every plant has a purpose in nature, even the ones we call 'weeds'.*

LS3. Understand that all animals need food to live and grow, that they get their food from plants or from other animals, and that plants need water and light to live and grow:

a.) Observe ways that animals and plants get what they need to live and grow

c.) Help care for living things at home or in the classroom (Elinor learns that a garden needs to be 'weeded' to thrive)

LS5: Begin to understand that animals and plants depend on other living things and nonliving things in the environment to meet some of their needs:

d.) Identify and observe the consequences of how plants and animals impact the environment. (e.g. Dandelions provide food for bees, and building material for nests.)

SEP7: Engaging in argument from evidence a.) Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations.

b.) Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence

SEP8: Obtaining, evaluating and communicating information

a.) Obtain information through discussing prior knowledge and observations with experts including teachers or knowledgeable adults

Line Count: 115

Mains: Elinor, Mr. Rabbit, Deputy (Joe) Mouse, Mz. Llama

Secondary: Olive, Ari

Locations: Path, Joe's Yard, Park

Props: GARDEN GLOVES, DANDELIONS, BASKET, WEEDING TOOL, BUCKETS, COMPOSTER, SALAD BOWLS, SALAD DRESSING BOTTLES, OUTDOOR TABLES,

DANDELION 'CROWN'

OUTLINE: Jan 23, 2020

FIRST DRAFT: Feb. 14, 2020

SECOND DRAFT: March 13, 2020

POLISH: March 27, 2020

1. EXT. PATH - DAY

ELINOR and her father walk down a forest path. MR. RABBIT carries GARDEN GLOVES. Elinor skips on ahead to blow on a DANDELION that has gone to seed - the fluff swirls away. <SFX: PUFF, GIGGLE>

1 ELINOR 1
I love dandelions.

2 MR. RABBIT 2
Yep, they're just dandy.

Elinor looks curiously at the dandelions and some yellow flowers nearby.

3 ELINOR 3
Dad... I always see these yellow *
flowers next to the white, fluffy *
dandelions. Do they always grow *
together like that?

4 MR. RABBIT 4
Actually, Elinor, they're the same *
plant.

5 ELINOR (SURPRISED) 5
They are? But they look different.

Mr. Rabbit crouches down with Elinor, and the plant.

6 MR. RABBIT 6
That's because dandelion flowers
start out yellow, and then they *
turn into this white fluff. That's *
how they spread their seeds. (pft!) *

He blows on the seed fluff, to illustrate.

7 ELINOR 7
Wow. Dandelions are SO interesting! *

8 MR. RABBIT 8
Yes, they are! *
(standing up)
Well, we better get going to Deputy
Mouse's house. He said he needed
help in his garden, right away.

9 ELINOR 9
Is something wrong with his garden?

10 MR. RABBIT 10
Well, he just came back from vacation, and it's all overgrown.

11 ELINOR (CONCERNED) 11
Overgrown? Are plants growing all over his house?

THOUGHT BUBBLE: She imagines Deputy Mouse, with a suitcase, coming home to find his home encased in vines. (BUBBLE POPS.)

12 MR. RABBIT 12
(laugh) I sure hope not.

ANOTHER ANGLE - as the two round a bend, they see MZ. LLAMA approaching, carrying an empty basket. *DESIGN NOTE: Both MZ. LLAMA and (later) DEPUTY MOUSE are in civilian clothes today.

13 ELINOR 13
Hi, Mz. Llama.

14 MZ. LLAMA 14
(singsong)
Good morniiing! I hope you're both still planning to come to my salad party, at the park later. *

15 MR. RABBIT 15
We sure are! I've already made my famous carrot-and-raisin salad to * bring.

16 MZ. LLAMA 16
Sounds yummy!
(re. her basket)
I'm just off to Farmer Bear's to get some spinach, for my own special salad. Well, I'll see you at lunchtime, then. 'Ta' for now!

She waves as she exits. Elinor and her father wave back.

17 ELINOR 17
Bye, Mz. Llama!

Elinor and Mr. Rabbit carry on down the path to...

2. EXT. DEPUTY JOE MOUSE'S HOUSE (YARD WITH GARDEN)

The two arrive at their friend's *not-so*-overgrown house. They follow the sound of grumbling to his garden...

18 DEPUTY MOUSE (PART OS) 18
Oh, my poor vegetables. This garden is a complete *mess!* *

19 MR. RABBIT 19
Hi, Deputy Mouse. Your gardening crew has arrived.

Mr. Rabbit 'salutes' with the garden gloves.

20 ELINOR 20
Is everything okay with your garden, Deputy Mouse?

21 DEPUTY MOUSE (RELIEVED) 21 *
Elinor and Mr. Rabbit! I'm so glad you're here. Everything is NOT okay with my garden. Look - it's being invaded by WEEDS! *

Elinor looks.

POV - his garden beds are full of DANDELIONS. A few TOMATO and BEAN PLANTS peek out here and there.

22 ELINOR (CONFUSED) 22
Weeds? I only see dandelions.

23 DEPUTY MOUSE 23
A 'weed' is any plant that's growing in the wrong place. And this is my *vegetable* garden, not a *dandelion* garden. * *

Deputy Mouse parts the dandelions, to reveal a struggling tomato plant. Then, tenderly...

24 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 24
My poor veggies can't *grow* properly, with dandelions taking up all the space, water and sunshine.

25 MR. RABBIT 25
How can we help, Deputy Mouse?

26 DEPUTY MOUSE 26
By helping me pull up all these dandelions, that's how! Then my vegetables will have room to grow. *

27 MR. RABBIT 27
Okay, we're on it.

Deputy Mouse picks up an EMPTY BUCKET and a WEEDER.

28 DEPUTY MOUSE (RELIEVED) 28
Great. Thank you SO much. I'll start over there. *
(heads OS, muttering)
Silly weeds. I'll show 'em who's boss...

Elinor turns to her Dad, confused.

29 ELINOR 29
Pull up the dandelions? But, Mom always says we shouldn't pick flowers.

30 MR. RABBIT 30
Well, that rule is for flowers growing in the wild. It's okay to pick things in a garden, IF you have permission.

CUT TO the Deputy, his hands now wrapped around the biggest dandelion in his garden. He's struggling to pull it up.

31 DEPUTY MOUSE 31
And you definitely have my (grunt) permission. You *really* do.

BACK ON Mr. Rabbit and Elinor.

32 MR. RABBIT 32
It's called weeding. In a garden, it's good to 'weed' out the plants you *don't* need, so that the plants you *want,* can grow better.

Elinor nods, getting it.

33 ELINOR 33
Ohhh.

Mr. Rabbit picks up an empty bucket, and hands it to Elinor, then picks up a weeding tool to use.

34 MR. RABBIT 34
Okay, let's get started. First, you want to loosen up the soil around the plant...

He uses the weeder to loosen the soil.

35 MR. RABBIT (CONT'D) 35
...then, you get a good grip around the bottom part, and *pull up.* (Oof)

He grips the base and pulls up the plant, root and all.

36 ELINOR (IMPRESSED) 36
Whoa, the roots came up too!

37 MR. RABBIT 37
That's the idea! And the plants we pull out, go in our bucket.

He puts the plant neatly into the bucket she's holding. Elinor looks at all the weeds in the garden.

38 ELINOR 38
I can do that.

39 MR. RABBIT 39
Great! (grins) Because we'll have to do it about a hundred times.

He hands her a pair of gloves and a weeder of her own.

Elinor <SFX: CHUCKLES> As the two get busy weeding, we DISSOLVE TO:

3. EXT. DEPUTY MOUSE'S GARDEN / YARD (MINUTES LATER)

Elinor sings-songs to herself as she weeds a garden bed.

40 ELINOR (SING-SONG) 40
Gardening, is my new thing, it makes me want to siiing!

Mr. Rabbit is working nearby. He grins.

Elinor pulls up an especially big dandelion, revealing a struggling bean plant underneath.

41 ELINOR (CONT'D) 41
Hi, green bean plant. Look, now you have more room to grow! *

She smooths the soil down, then adds the dandelion to a pile in their weeding bucket.

42 ELINOR (CONT'D) 42
Hm, it looks like our bucket is full. *
(calling OS)
Deputy Mouse? What should we do with the dandelions we pull up?

ON Deputy Joe, popping up from behind a tall bushy dandelion.

43 DEPUTY MOUSE 43
Come here, I'll show you.

Bringing the bucket of weeds, Elinor follows the Deputy over to a COMPOSTER. He opens a little door on the unit.

44 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 44
They go into my composter. We just open it up... dump in the weeds...
(he dumps in the weeds)
...and shovel dirt on top.

He pitches a shovelful of dirt on top of the dandelions.

45 ELINOR (SURPRISED) 45
Wha- why?

46 DEPUTY MOUSE 46
Because it helps the dandelions to break down, and rot. Before you know it, they'll turn into compost.

Elinor nods, recognizing the word.

47 ELINOR 47
Compost. That's plant food, to help your garden grow, right?

48 DEPUTY MOUSE 48
Right. It'll be great for my veggies. Thanks, Elinor.

Deputy Mouse returns to where he was working. Elinor goes back to her garden bed with the empty bucket. She kneels down, looking thoughtful.

49 ELINOR 49
Hmm.

50 MR. RABBIT 50
Everything okay?

51 ELINOR 51
I guess. Deputy Mouse says we should put the dandelions into the composter, so they can rot.

Elinor takes a dandelion from her Dad for the bucket.

52 ELINOR (CONT'D) 52
But that seems like throwing out a healthy plant. Are dandelions really not good for anything other than compost?

53 MR. RABBIT 53
Hmm. I've never known a plant to be *
'not good for anything... '

54 ELINOR 54 *
Then what *are* dandelions good for? *

Just then, a BUMBLEBEE flies between them, visiting a dandelion in the bed. Elinor brightens. (Mr. Rabbit and Elinor both stay quite calm and still, and just observe it.)

55 ELINOR (CONT'D) 55
It's a bumblebee.

56 MR. RABBIT 56
Mm, that's a big one.

TRACK WITH the bee, as it bee flies off to another dandelion. (This one's in the lawn.) Then another.

Curious, Elinor gets up to follow from a safe distance.

57 ELINOR 57
It's going from dandelion to
dandelion.

Elinor passes Deputy Mouse, still comically tugging at the same dandelion that just doesn't want to come up. <SFX: RRRR>

58 ELINOR (CONT'D) 58
I wonder why it's doing that?

Deputy Mouse pauses to wipe his forehead.

59 DEPUTY MOUSE 59
The bee? It's drinking nectar and
getting pollen from the flowers. *

Elinor crouches quietly, a safe distance from the bee. *

CLOSE ON the bee, busy exploring a yellow dandelion. The *
bee's body 'fuzz' is covered in fluffy yellow pollen. *

60 ELINOR (OS) 60
What's all that powdery stuff on *
the bee?

61 DEPUTY MOUSE 61
That's the flower pollen. It takes *
that back to the nest, along with
the nectar, for the young bees to
eat.

BACK TO WIDE - as the bee flies away. Elinor stands up. *

62 ELINOR 62
So, bees get food from dandelions?

63 DEPUTY MOUSE 63
Yep. Especially in the Spring, when
no other plants have their flowers, *
yet.

<SFX: Oooh> She watches the bee for a few moments. Then, a HUMMINGBIRD <WHIRS> past, seizing her attention.

64 ELINOR (DELIGHTED) 64
(gasp) A hummingbird!

Deputy Mouse notices too. *

65 DEPUTY MOUSE 65 *
Oh yes! Here, you can use my - *

He looks around for something he can't immediately find. *

66 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 66 *
- now, where'd I put them? Oh, *
there they are... *

The Deputy has spotted his BINOCULARS, on a GARDEN BENCH. He *
gets them, and hands them to Elinor. *

67 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 67 *
My binoculars. They help me get a *
closer look when I'm bird-watching. *

68 ELINOR 68 *
Thanks! *

She gratefully takes the binoculars, then heads out of frame *
to follow the bird. Deputy Joe pushes up his sleeves and *
resumes his battle with the big dandelion.

ANGLE ON a dandelion which has gone to seed, as the hummingbird hovers over to it.

Elinor moves closer and raises the binoculars to her eyes. *

BINOCULAR MATTE - the hummingbird comes into focus, just in time for Elinor to see it take a beak full of white fluff.

69 ELINOR (OS) (CONT'D) 69
It's taking some fluffy seeds. I
wonder why?

The bird zips OS. Elinor lowers the binoculars, excited. *

70 ELINOR (CONT'D) 70
I need more observations.

Elinor quickly follows the bird to the edge of the yard, * where it has a TINY NEST in the fork of a slender tree. *

BINOCULAR MATTE - It tucks the seed fluff into its nest. (The * nest is already partly lined with it.)

71 ELINOR (OS) (CONT'D) 71
Oh, wow. It's using the fluff to make its nest. Ooh, I bet that makes the nest soft and warm.

BACK ON Elinor as her Dad quietly joins her.

72 MR. RABBIT 72
Looks cozy, doesn't it?

73 ELINOR 73
Yes. That's a smart bird!

Elinor looks thoughtful as she counts on her fingers.

74 ELINOR (CONT'D) 74
So, dandelions make food for bees, *and* their seed fluff is good for making bird nests?

75 MR. RABBIT 75
That's right. Some birds *eat* the dandelion seeds, too.

76 ELINOR 76
Wow. Dandelions are good for *lots* * of things.

Mr. Rabbit nods in agreement.

77 MR. RABBIT 77
It's like I said - in nature, *everything* has a place. Even weeds.

78 DEPUTY MOUSE (OS, BREATHLESS) 78
That's true...

CUT TO Deputy Mouse, who is losing patience with the giant dandelion that is still refusing to be pulled out.

79 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 79
...but that place does NOT have to be in my veggie garden! (strains)

Elinor and Mr. Rabbit <SFX: TRY NOT TO LAUGH> Just then -

80 MZ. LLAMA (OS) 80
Deputy Mouse? Are you home? *

WIDE - they turn to see Mz. Llama approaching, still carrying a basket. She chuckles when she sees them.

81 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 81
Oh, hello again, Mr. Rabbit! Hello, Elinor.

Deputy Mouse dusts off his hands for a moment.

82 DEPUTY MOUSE 82
Morning, Mz. Llama. Can I help you?

83 MZ. LLAMA (HOPEFUL) 83
I hope so. Do you have any spinach growing in your garden right now?

He makes a grumpy face.

84 DEPUTY MOUSE 84
I *wish*. It's mostly dandelions.

85 MZ. LLAMA (DISAPPOINTED) 85
I see. Hmm...

Joe (still preoccupied with his big weed) goes back to work. Elinor notices Ms. Llama's dismay.

86 ELINOR 86
What's the matter, Mz. Llama?

87 MZ. LLAMA 87
I went to Farmer Bear's to get spinach for my Spinach Surprise salad. But the surprise was on me. She's all out of spinach!

Mz. Llama shows them her still-empty basket.

88 ELINOR (SYMPATHETIC) 88
Oh, no. *

Mr. Rabbit adds a sympathetic <SFX: HMM>. *

89 MZ. LLAMA 89 *
And now I don't know what to bring to my own party! How can I make a salad, with no leafy greens?

ANGLE ON Elinor. She looks down at the weeding bucket, which is brimming with picked dandelions. She gets an idea.

90 ELINOR 90
Hmm. (beat) Dad, are dandelions safe to eat?

91 MR. RABBIT 91
Good question! Lots of plants and flowers are NOT safe to eat, so you should always ask an adult, before you eat anything in a garden. *

Mr. Rabbit plucks a leaf out of the bucket.

92 MR. RABBIT (CONT'D) 92
But as a matter of fact, dandelion *leaves are* safe to eat.

ANGLE ON Mz. Llama, who has perked right up.

93 MZ. LLAMA 93
Oh, and not just safe - they're delicious in a salad.

Elinor looks excited.

94 ELINOR 94
Mz. Llama, why don't you use dandelion leaves, to make your salad? There's LOTS of dandelions here. * * *

95 MR. RABBIT 95
That's a great idea, Elinor.

96 MZ. LLAMA 96
It certainly is! But are you sure Deputy Mouse has enough to spare? *

Elinor grins. She's pretty sure. *

97 ELINOR 97
Let's ask him.
(calls)
Deputy Mouse? Would you mind if Mz. Llama took some of your dandelions?

CUT TO the Deputy, pulling with all his might on his 'Moby Dick' of a dandelion. Just then, it finally comes free -

<SFX: STRAIN AND RELEASE> - sending him flying backwards into big, soft clump of even MORE dandelions! He sits up, holding the bushy plant.

98 DEPUTY MOUSE 98
(Oof) Mind? I'd be thrilled! Take 'em, *please!* Take 'em all!

As the friends <SFX: CHUCKLE> and Mz. Llama accepts a bucketful of dandelions with delight. *

99 MS. LLAMA 99 *
See you at my salad party. *

Ms. Llama exits and we CROSSFADE to a MONTAGE of Elinor and her Dad making their way through the park to the salad party. *

SONG MOMENT: 'Dandy Dandelions' *

Elinor looks at each dandelion, finally flopping down on her belly to admire one closely. *

100 ELINOR (SINGS) 100 *
Oh you may wonder why I care *
about a plant that's everywhere *
But it helps Nature here and there *
It's more than just a weed *

A bee flies over to visit the plant in front of her. *

The bumblebees can't get enough *
They eat its tasty flower stuff *

The bee departs, and a hummingbird appears, taking a beak full of fluff with it. *

And hummingbirds like its cozy *
fluff. It's more than just a weed *

Elinor jumps up to dance on the grass as she sings the CHORUS. (She hops over the dandelions, in time to the song.) *

Dandy Dandelions, *
you're more than just a weed *
Like every single living thing *
you're something nature needs *

Her Dad joins Elinor, and the kids dance a sort of conga line that snakes around the tufts of dandelions. *

101 *ELINOR/ DAD* 101 *
Dandy Dandelions, *
you're more than just a weed *
Like every single living thing *
you're something nature needs *

The SONG ENDS, *

DISSOLVE TO:

4. EXT. PARK - 'SALAD PARTY' - LATER *

LATER THAT DAY. Elinor, Mr. Rabbit, Mz. Llama and Deputy Mouse, RANGER RABBIT, ARI, OLIVE and MRS. COW all gather in the park. Two PICNIC TABLES have been pushed together to make one long dining table. Right down the middle are a line of SALAD BOWLS, containing a selection of potluck salads. *

102 OLIVE 102
Mm. Great fruit salad, Ari. *

103 ARI 103
Thanks!

Mz. Llama is standing up, with a salad bowl.

104 MZ. LLAMA 104
Who wants the last of my dandelion leaf salad? *

105 DEPUTY MOUSE (QUICKLY) 105
I do!

Elinor looks at him in surprise. He shrugs, sheepish. *

106 DEPUTY MOUSE (CONT'D) 106
What? Can't let it go to waste... *

He takes another bite of salad from his plate, and smiles. *
Elinor smiles back. *

107 ELINOR 107 *
(laugh) Just what I was thinking. *

Elinor passes the salad bowl from Mz. Llama to Joe, *

On the way back to the group, Elinor glances at a THIRD *
'PREP' TABLE nearby, which has a CUTTING BOARD, KNIFE, SALAD *
DRESSING BOTTLES and a bowl of DANDELION FLOWERS AND STEMS. *

108 ELINOR (CONT'D) 108
Ms. Llama? *
(picking up the bowl) *
What's going to happen to all the dandelion flowers and stems that *
are *not* good to eat?

109 MZ. LLAMA 109
Oh! Compost them eventually, but first...

Mz. Llama beckons, and Elinor brings the bowl to her.

110 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 110
I used to do this all the time, as a little girl... (ALT: 'cria')

Ari, Olive and Elinor lean in to watch as Mz. Llama quickly ties the flowers together, BELOW FRAME.

111 MZ. LLAMA (CONT'D) 111
You tie the stems together, like so... and before you know it... Ta-daa! One dandelion crown.

She holds up her finished DANDELION 'CROWN' and places it on Elinor's head. <SFX: OOOOH ADMIRATION WALLA>

112 MR. RABBIT 112
Well, that looks... *dandy!*

<SFX: LAUGH WALLA> Elinor turns to her friends.

113 ELINOR 113
Let's make one for everybody!

<SFX: LAUGH WALLA> As the guests resume their <SFX: CHATTER> and the kids get busy tying flower crowns, we PULL BACK and...

FADE OUT.