

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP. 170 "The Band of Explorers"

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *Why aren't we seeing any wildlife, on our nature hike?*

Logline: *When Elinor and her friends bring musical instruments on a hike, they don't understand why they aren't seeing any creatures - until they realize that wildlife needs quiet.*

ES3. Understand that things people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them, but they can make choices that reduce their impacts on the land, water, air, and other living things. c. Participate in simple activities to care for the environment (When Elinor and her friends realize their music is disturbing the forest animals, they decide not to play their instruments)

SEP1. Asking questions (science) and defining questions. (engineering) c) Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation.

SEP4. Analysing and Interpreting Data: b) use the five senses and simple tools to gather and record data.

SEP7. Engaging in Argument from Evidence: b) support thinking and argue ideas with evidence. Through observation and investigation, Elinor and her friends decide their music is having the unintentional effect of disturbing the animals.

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FIRST DRAFT: April 06, 2020

Most of the members of the Explorers' Club (ELINOR, OLIVE, SALLY and HAZEL) have gathered outside their clubhouse. Each one has an open BACKPACK or BAG. As Elinor runs through a pictogram CHECKLIST, they hold up the relevant items.

They each hold up a REUSABLE BOTTLE.

They hold up healthy SNACK BAGS.

Just then, ARI bursts into the clearing, panting.

He drops his straining pack - it <CLASHES> softly. Olive and Elinor share a grin.

Everyone raises a MUSICAL INSTRUMENT. Hazel has a UKULELE, Olive has a TRUMPET, Sally has a XYLOPHONE with a neck strap, and Ari (with difficulty) pulls out a big pair of CYMBALS.

9 ELINOR 9
Me too. So let's get going on our
nature hike!

They all start shouldering their bags and backpacks, and getting instruments ready to play. Elinor is stoked.

10 ELINOR (CONT'D) 10
This is going to be great. Why
didn't we ever do a *musical* hike
before?

11 SALLY 11
Because we didn't know we all had
instruments.

Olive shows them her notebook, before putting it in her bag.

12 OLIVE (EXCITED) 12
I brought my notebook, to keep
track of all the animals we're
going to see.

13 ELINOR 13
Great! We might see a lot more than
usual. I mean, we like music, so
the animals must like it too.

14 HAZEL 14
(confident)
Definitely. They'll come from all
over the forest to hear us play.

WIDE - everyone now has packs on, and instruments in hand.

15 ELINOR 15
Are we ready?

16 OLIVE 16

Wait! First we have to do our
Exploring Club pledge.

ON: Elinor.

17 ELINOR 17
Oh, right! Good thinking, Olive.

BACK ON: The kids all have put down their instruments. They do their pledge with hand gestures.

18 OLIVE / ARI / HAZEL / SALLY/ ELINOR 18
An Explorer is Brave, and Explorer
is kind, an Explorer is CURIOUS,
who knows what we'll find!

ON: Elinor's happy face.

19 ELINOR 19
Now are we ready?

BACK ON:: The kids have their instruments in hand.

20 OLIVE / ARI / HAZEL / SALLY 20

Ready!

Elinor hurries to the head of the group, wearing her drum on a neck strap. She raises her drumsticks.

21 ELINOR 21
Instruments up... and MARCH! Two,
three, four!

With Elinor <DRUMMING> in the lead, the kids all march off down the trail.

2. EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

As the 'Band of Explorers' parades along, they play an energetic marching song. (Think '76 Trombones')

THE EXPLORERS' MARCHING SONG:

(NOTE: as they march down the trail, we see creatures in the foreground sense them coming, and depart before the kids can spot them. BUTTERFLIES perched on a tree flutter OS. An OWL swivels its head to note their approach - and flies away.)

22 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI/HAZEL/SALLY (SING) 22
*We're off to play for the animals,
 Because the animals
 will think it's grand
 They'll all appear
 Because they want to hear
 The Explorers' Marching Band*
 (Elinor drums)
 <BOOMPA-BOOM, BOOMPA-BOOM, BOOMPA-
 BOOM!>

Elinor stops marching to look around. The others 'boxcar' into her. <SFX: IMPACT WALLA WHOOP< OOF>

23 ELINOR (HOPEFUL) 23
Do you see any animals?

They look around - but nothing stirs. The forest is quiet.

24 ARI / OLIVE / SALLY 24
 (ad lib 'No. Not yet.)

But Hazel is confident.

25 HAZEL 25

We will. I think we just need a little more *showmanship*, to get the animals attention. You know, sing louder! Knees up high!

She demonstrates, marching proudly on the spot.

26 ELINOR 26
Sure! We can do that.

27 ARI 27
Yeah, let's try again.

They all line up again, and set off down the trail, singing and playing louder than ever.

28	SONG	28
	<i>We're off to play for the animals,</i>	
	<i>Because the animals</i>	
	<i>Will think it's grand</i>	
	<i>They'll all appear</i>	
	<i>Because they want to hear</i>	
	<i>The Explorers' Marching Band</i>	
	(Feature Olive on TRUMPET)	
	<BRAP-A-BAP, BRAP-A-BAP, BRAP-A-	
	BAP!>	

Suddenly Olive spots something OS. She stops in her tracks.

POV - down a side trail, up in a tree, we just glimpse the flash of a BIRD'S WING in the foliage.

29 OLIVE (PART OS) 29
Wait! I see a bird!
 (pointing)
This way.

Excited, the band pivots and marches off in the direction Olive indicated.

30	SONG	30
	<i>We're off to play for the animals, Because the animals, will think it's grand They'll all appear 'cause they want to hear The Explorers' Marching Band</i>	

Ari rhythmically <CRASHES> his BIG CYMBALS as we CUT TO:

3. EXT. A HIGH TREE BRANCH

A PAIR OF DOVES are sitting on a high branch. As the band approaches, with Ari crashing his noisy CYMBALS -

OS <CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!>

The doves startle and fly OS, before the kids can see them.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. TRAIL - BELOW THE TREE

The marchers halt below the tree and look up, but -

LOW ANGLE POV - the tree is deserted.

31 ELINOR 31
Hm. Are you *sure* you saw a bird?

32 OLIVE 32

Positive!

33 SALLY 33
Then why didn't it stay to hear us
play?

34 ARI 34
Yeah. Birds 'sing', so they should
love our music... right?

35 HAZEL (SHRUGS) 35
 Makes sense to me.

Olive shakes her head, still looking up.

OLIVE

Well, I don't see any birds now.

Ari elbows her - but he's looking OFF, not up.

ARI
I see something!

38 OLIVE 38
 (excited looking up)
Where? Where?

Ari points them in the right direction.

39 ARI 39
Not in the tree - over there, on
top of the log.

They all turn to look at a CLEARING up ahead, dominated by a big LOG. On top of the log, a LIZARD basks in the sun.

40 ELINOR (OS, DELIGHTED) 40
I see it! I think it's a lizard!

41 HAZEL 41
Finally, an audience.

Excited, Elinor beckons to her friends.

ELINOR

Come on, let's go play for it!

They all happily fall into formation and strike up their marching song again, as they head towards the sunny clearing.

43 SONG 43
We're off to play for the animals,
Because the animals
Will think it's grand
They'll all appear
Because they want to hear
The Explorers' Marching Band
 (feature Hazel on UKULELE)
<STRUMMA-STRUM, STRUMMA-STRUM,
STRUMMA-STRUMMM!>

5. EXT. FOREST CLEARING

As they arrive, Hazel <STRUMS> a big finish like a rock star.

44 HAZEL 44
Woo-hoo! Yeah!

But when they turn to the log, they react with SFX: <DISMAY.>

ANGLE ON THE LOG - the lizard is gone!

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Heyyy. Where's the lizard?

[illegible]

47 ELINOR 47
Wow. Tough audience.

Olive pulls out her notebook to show the day's blank page.

48 OLIVE (DISMAYED) 48
I didn't even get a chance to draw
it.

The kids slump. Sally shakes her head, puzzled.

49 SALLY 49
This is weird. On our *last* nature
hike, we saw all kinds of animals.

[illegible]

ARI
And when we do, they take off.

ANGLE ON Elinor, looking thoughtful.

52 ELINOR 52
That's SO interesting! *Why aren't*
we seeing any animals?
(resolved)
We need more observations.

53 ARI 53
Observe what? That's the problem.
There's nothing to see!

Just then, we hear a <CROAK>. Elinor's ears prick up.

54 ELINOR 54
Maybe, but I can *hear* something.
Listen -

The <RHYTHMIC CROAKING> continues. Curious, Elinor leads her friends across the clearing, to...

6. EXT. A MARSHY AREA

Following the <CROAKS>, they come upon a large BULLFROG, sitting on a rock at the edge of a puddle.

[illegible]

Olive eagerly tallies the sighting in their notebook.

56 OLIVE (CONT'D) 56
 'One bullfrog'.
 (to the frog)
Hold still, so I can draw you.

CLOSE ON the BULLFROG, puffing up his throat with each rhythmic <CROAK>.

Elinor and the others watch from nearby, delighted.

57 ELINOR 57
What a great sound. My mom says
frogs 'sing' like that, to talk to
other frogs.

ARI
They *sing*? Then maybe he'd like to sing with our band?

SALLY

That's a great idea. We can 'jam!'

Everyone (except for Olive, who's sketching) raises his or her instruments to play.

60 ELINOR (PLAYFUL) 60
Count us in, Mister Bullfrog.

<CROAK. CROAK. CROAK. CROAK.>

Taking their tempo from the frog's croak, the kids launch into their noisy song again -

SONG

We're off to play for -

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<SPLASH!> The frog hops into the puddle, and swims away.
Olive droops, her frog half-drawn.
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62 OLIVE (GROANS) 62
Aw, come on!

ARI

63 Maybe we're playing the wrong song.

Ari puts his cymbals down (precariously) on a TREE STUMP.

64 HAZEL (PART OS) 64
No, our song is great! *I think the
frog just didn't want to share the
spotlight.*

65 SALLY 65
You think it wanted to sing alone?

ANGLE ON Elinor, looking thoughtful. She nods.

66 ELINOR 66
You may be right. If the frog was
talking to *other* frogs, then I
guess we were drowning out the
conversation.

Ari spreads his wings in a gesture -

67 ARI 67
We're not *that* loud -

- and accidentally knocks his cymbals off the stump. They land with a loud <CRASH!> They all jump, startled. <SFX: AHH WALLA>

SALLY stumbles backwards into the pond, getting a 'soaker'.

CUT TO ARI, now dangling from a tree overhead. He sheepishly glides down again.

68		ARI (CONT'D)	68
	Ooh.	I guess we are loud.	

Sally shakes off her muddy, wet foot.

69 SALLY 69
That scared me.

Hazel clutches her chest rather dramatically.

70 Me too! HAZEL 70

71 ELINOR 71
Maybe that's *another* reason we're
not seeing animals. Our noise might
be scaring them away?

72 OLIVE 72
You think so? But how can we find
out for sure?

73 ELINOR 73
Well, the whole time we've been in
the forest, we've been pretty loud.
And we haven't seen any animals.
But I wonder what would happen if
we stayed quiet?

74 ARI 74
Quiet? Let's try it!

Ari picks up his fallen cymbals, accidentally <CRASHING> them together again. They all cringe.

75 ARI (CONT'D) 75
Oops. Sorry! Sorry.

The kids all <SFX: GIGGLE> Elinor gestures to the clearing with the log.

76 ELINOR 76
 Let's go sit over there for a
 while. *Shh!*

She puts a finger to her lips. The others nod and 'shh' too,
 and they all tiptoe OS, back the way they came.

DISSOLVE TO:

7. EXT. FOREST CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

WIDE on the clearing, as they all perch on the log in
 expectant silence. Their instruments have been packed away.
 The forest is silent.

ON Hazel, getting restless.

77 HAZEL 77
 (normal volume)
 How long do we have to be quiet?

The other kids gently <SFX: SHHHHH> her.

78 HAZEL (CONT'D) 78
 (normal volume)
 I'm not *talking*, I'm just *asking*.

The others give her a meaningful look, fingers to their lips.

79 HAZEL (CONT'D) 79
 (whispers)
 Okay, okay. But being quiet is
hard.

Just then, with a <FLUTTER>, the TWO DOVES fly down and start
 pecking at the ground in front of them. SFX: <SOFT COOING>.

The kids' faces light up with silent delight! Olive remembers
 her notebook, sitting on the log beside her. She quietly
 picks it up, and starts sketching.

CUT TO: a ROBIN appears, landing on a tree branch. <CHIRP!>

CUT TO: the BULLFROG reappears, at the edge of the clearing.
 He <CROAKS>. The LIZARD clambers onto a sunny rock.

ANGLE ON Sally - two BUTTERFLIES dance right past her face.

80 SALLY 80
 (whispers)
 It's working. Now that we're quiet,
 the animals are coming out!

CLOSE ON Olive's notebook page, which is filling up with childlike DRAWINGS of the animals they're seeing.

81 OLIVE 81
(whispers)
I never really *listened* to the
forest before. It sounds nice.

82 ELINOR 82
(nods, whispering)
I know! We were so busy playing our
music, we didn't notice that the
forest already *has* beautiful music.

CUT TO the trees, <RUSTLING> in the breeze.

83 ELINOR (CONT'D) 83
(whispers)
Like the sound of the trees...

CUT TO the robin, <SINGING> joyfully.

84 ELINOR (CONT'D) 84
(whispers)
...and the birds...

Ari beams as the bullfrog hops closer, <CROAKING>.

85 ARI 85
(whispers)
...and the animals!

WIDE to include all of the quiet, patient Explorers.

In her quietest voice, Elinor sings a gentle REPRISE:

86 ELINOR (SINGS QUIETLY) 86
*We came to play for the animals
And the animals
all stayed away
But when we all agree,
to listen quietly
We hear the forest music play*

They all pause to listen for a quiet BEAT - and are rewarded when a FUZZY BUMBLEBEE flies by, <BUZZING GENTLY>. <SFX: quiet ooohs of appreciation>

After the bee departs, the whole group joins in Elinor's song, singing in their most quiet voices;

87 SONG 87
(SING QUIETLY)
We came to play for the animals
(MORE)

SONG (CONT'D)

*And the animals
all stayed away
But when we all agree,
to listen quietly
We hear the forest music play.*

As they all pause to listen to the beautiful forest music of
<BUZZES, CROAKS and BIRDSONG>, we PULL BACK and...

FADE OUT.

REFERENCE:

BULLFROG CALL - (around the 8 minute mark)

<https://ca.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=yfp-t&p=frog+calls#id=1&vid=51481521f73c4968564c422b9882cafd&action=view>