ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP. 170 “The Band of Explorers”

By: Karen Moonah

Elinor's Question: *Why aren't we seeing many wild creatures, on our exploring walk?*

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.

OUTLINE: Mar. 16, 2020

FIRST DRAFT: April 06, 2020

SECOND DRAFT: April 24, 2020

POLISH: May 11, 2020

1. EXT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

ELINOR, OLIVE, SALLY and TITO have gathered at the clubhouse, for an unusual meeting of the Exploring Club. Today, they've all brought musical instruments! Elinor is tuning a UKULELE, Olive plays a TRUMPET, Sally has a TOY XYLOPHONE (on a neck strap), and Tito has a DRUM, also on a neck strap. There's a <MUSICAL DIN> as they all noodle around, warming up.

1 SALLY 1
This is a great idea, Elinor. I can't believe we've never done it before.

Olive stops playing, to chime in.

2 OLIVE 2
Yeah, a *musical* exploring walk. It's going to be super FUN!

Olive <BLASTS> a fanfare. Tito winces and holds his ears.

3 TITO 3
(wincing) And super LOUD.

Elinor laughs. She's excited too.

4 ELINOR 4
That's good, Tito. I want every bird, lizard, and frog in the whole *forest* to hear us! *

She spreads her arms wide. Sally smiles.

5 SALLY 5
Do you think they'll like our music?

6 ELINOR (CONFIDENT) 6
Sure, Sally! *We* like music, so birds, lizards and frogs must like it too. *

Elinor goes a bit dreamy, picturing it...

7 ELINOR (CONT'D) 7
I bet we'll see *more* wild creatures than usual. *

IMAGINATION BUBBLE - Elinor pictures the Exploring Band, <PLAYING> as they march down a trail. An unlikely horde of BIRDS, FROGS and GEESE flock to them and follow along behind.

8 ELINOR (VO; CONT'D) (CONT'D) 8
...a LOT more.

ON: Elinor, proudly leading the parade like the Pied Piper! PAN DOWN TO:

Olive chuckles as she digs a SKETCH PAD from her bag. *

9 OLIVE 9
Good thing I brought a *lot* of
paper. I want to draw every bird, *
bug and frog we see.

Tito is getting excited.

10 TITO 10
Are we ready? Let's go!

11 ELINOR 11 *
We can't. Ari isn't here yet.

12 ARI (OS, BREATHLESS) 12
Yes I am!

On cue, ARI runs in, carrying a large pair of CYMBALS.

13 ARI (CONT'D) 13
Sorry I'm late. I had trouble
closing my bag.

14 OLIVE 14
Because your cymbals wouldn't fit?

15 ARI 15
No. Because of all my snacks.

He shows them a BULGING BACKPACK. (Tito might drum a <RIM-SHOT> to punctuate the joke.) The kids <SFX: LAUGH>

16 ELINOR 16
Okay, NOW we can go. *

17 OLIVE 17
Wait. First we have to do the *
Exploring Club pledge.

ON: Elinor.

18 ELINOR 18
Oh, right! Good thinking, Olive.

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

19 OLIVE / ARI / HAZEL / SALLY/ ELINOR 19
An Explorer is Brave, an Explorer
is kind, an Explorer is CURIOUS,
who knows what we'll find!

ON: Elinor's happy face.

20 ELINOR 20
Now who wants to go and see LOTS of *
birds and frogs and bugs?

BACK ON: The kids have their instruments in hand.

21 OLIVE / ARI / HAZEL / SALLY 21
We do!

Elinor hurries to the head of the group, with her ukulele.

22 ELINOR 22
Then let's play!
(counting in)
And-a one, two, three four!

With Elinor <STRUMMING> 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')

<u>THE EXPLORERS' MARCHING SONG:</u>

(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.)

23 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI/TITO/SALLY (SING) 23
Oh we're off to play in the forest
Singing as we march along
So our forest friends will all come out
To hear our Exploring Song
(Tito drums)
<BOOMPA-BOOM, BOOMPA-BOOM, BOOMPA-BOOM!>

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

24 TITO 24
Whoa, why'd you stop, Elinor? *

25 ARI (HOPEFUL) 25
Is it snack time already?

26 OLIVE 26
(chuckling)
Ari. We just started. *

Elinor is looking all around, hoping to see wildlife.

27 ELINOR 27
I'm just looking for birds and frogs and other creatures. Do you see any?

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

28 ARI / OLIVE / SALLY 28
(ad lib 'No. Nothing. Nuh-uh.')

Elinor is mildly surprised.

29 ELINOR 29
Hm.

30 SALLY 30
Maybe they can't hear us?

31 ARI 31
That must be it. Let's try playing *louder.*

Tito is a tiny bit hesitant - loud noises aren't his thing.

32 TITO 32
Louder? I guess we can do that.

33 ELINOR 33
(counting in)
Ah-one, two, three, four!

They all set off again, singing and playing louder than ever.

34 SONG 34
Oh we're off to play in the forest
Singing as we march along
So our forest friends will all come out
To hear our Exploring Song
(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 flapping of a BLUE BIRD'S WING.

35 OLIVE (PART OS) 35
Wait - I see some birds.
(pointing)
Over there. C'mon!

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

36 SONG 36
Oh we're off to play in the forest
Singing as we march along
So our forest friends will all come out
To hear our Exploring Song

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

3. EXT. A HIGH TREE BRANCH

TWO BIRDS are sitting on a high branch. As the band approaches, with Ari crashing his noisy CYMBALS -

OS <CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!>

The birds startle and fly OS, before the kids can really get a good look.

CUT TO:

4. EXT. TRAIL - BELOW THE TREE

The marchers halt below the tree, and they all look up. Olive eagerly takes out her notebook and pencil to draw, but -

LOW ANGLE POV - the tree is deserted.

37 OLIVE 37
Where'd they go?

38 TITO 38
Are you *sure* you saw birds?

39 OLIVE 39
Yes! They were here a minute ago.

40 SALLY 40
Then why they didn't stay to hear us play? Don't they like music?

41 ELINOR (PUZZLED) 41
They *must* like it. Birds 'sing' all the time.

Olive looks up, clutching at faint hope.

42 OLIVE 42
Maybe they went to tell all their bird friends about us.

Just then, Ari sees something OS. He elbows Olive.

43 ARI 43
(gasp) Look! On the trunk!

Olive quickly looks down and brushes off her own trunk, as if there were a spider on her.

44 OLIVE 44
(with mild alarm)
What? What's on my trunk?

Ari points off in the direction he meant.

45 ARI (PART OS) 45
Not YOUR trunk. On that TREE trunk. *

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

46 ELINOR (OS, DELIGHTED) 46
It's a lizard!

47 TITO 47
I see it too!

Excited, Elinor beckons to her friends.

48 ELINOR 48
Come on!

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

49 SONG 49
Oh we're off to play in the forest
Singing as we march along
So our forest friends will all come out
To hear our Exploring Song
(feature Elinor on UKULELE)
<STRUMMA-STRUM, STRUMMA-STRUM, STRUMMA-STRUMMMM!>

5. EXT. FOREST CLEARING

As they arrive, Ari <CLASHES> his cymbals for a big finish.

50 ARI 50
(like a rock star)
Yeah! Woo-hoo!

Then - they all react to the log with SFX: <DISMAY.>

ANGLE ON THE LOG - the lizard is gone!

51 TITO 51 *
Where's the lizard?

52 ARI 52 *
It was here. I saw it.

53 ELINOR 53
But it ran off. Just like the birds.

Olive pulls out her paper to show a blank page.

54 OLIVE (DISAPPOINTED) 54
I didn't even get a chance to draw it.

The kids slump. Sally shakes her head, puzzled.

55 SALLY 55
I don't get it. On our *last* * exploring walk, we saw lots of * birds, bugs and frogs.

56 ARI 56
But today, we're hardly seeing any.

ANGLE ON Elinor, looking thoughtful.

57 ELINOR 57
That's SO interesting! *Why <u>aren't</u> we seeing many wild creatures today?*
(resolved)
Let's see if we can figure it out. *
We need more observations.

58 ARI 58
But Elinor, that's what we've been * *trying* to do. We've been trying to * observe creatures all morning. *

Elinor nods.

59 ELINOR 59
You're right, Ari. But we've been looking with our *eyes.* Being a good observer means using ALL your senses to notice things. *

Olive raises her trunk to sniff around.

60 OLIVE 60
All our senses? Well, (sniff) I don't <u>smell</u> any wild creatures...

61 SALLY 61
...and we can't touch any...

62 ARI (JOKING) 62
...and I don't think I want to TASTE any wild creatures. *

Elinor <SFX: GIGGLES>. *

63 ELINOR 63
(giggle) Me, neither. But maybe we can use our ears. *

64 TITO 64
Oh, yeah, we can listen - good idea! *

Tito tucks his drumsticks away -

65 TITO (CONT'D) 65
I'll close my eyes so I can listen better. *

- and covers his eyes with his hands.

WIDE - they all listen carefully for a BEAT. Finally...
<CROAK!>

ON: Elinor. Her ears prick up.

66 ELINOR (LOW) 66
(gasp) Did you hear that? *

The <CROAK> comes again. They all turn towards a marshy area.

67 ELINOR (WHISPER) (CONT'D) 67
I think it came from over there...

Curious, Elinor leads her friends across the clearing. Tito remains - he still has his eyes covered. Sally doubles back to grab him and bring him along.

68 SALLY 68
Tito, come on!

6. EXT. A MARSHY AREA

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

69 OLIVE 69
A frog! Finally. *

Olive eagerly starts to pull out her paper and pencil. *

70 OLIVE (CONT'D) 70
(to the frog)
Now hold still frog, so I can draw *
you.

CLOSE ON the BULLFROG, puffing up his throat with each <CROAK>. When he pauses, there's an OS <ANSWERING CROAK>.

The Exploring Club watches from nearby, delighted.

71 ELINOR 71
My mom says frogs 'sing' like that,
to talk to other frogs.

72 ARI 72
Frogs sing too? Hey, maybe he'd
like to sing with our band?

73 SALLY 73
That would be fun. *

Everyone (except for Olive, who's busy settling in to start * sketching) raises his or her instruments to play.

74 ELINOR (PLAYFUL) 74
Let's play together, Mister *
Bullfrog. Count us in. *

<CROAK. CROAK. CROAK...>

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

75 SONG 75
Oh, we're off to play in the forest-

<SPLASH!> The frog hops into the puddle and swims away.

But Ari doesn't notice right away - he continues marching on the spot, <CLASHING> his cymbals. Elinor tries to get his attention. *

76 ELINOR 76 *
(over the din)
Ari. (beat) *Ari.* ARI!!! *

Finally, Ari hears Elinor, and stops playing.

77 ARI 77
Oh sorry, what did you say? *

78 ELINOR 78
The frog's gone. It swam away.

Olive waves her barely started drawing in the air. *

79 OLIVE 79
I couldn't even draw it! *

80 ARI 80
(sigh) Maybe he only likes songs about frogs.

Ari leans his cymbals (precariously) against a TREE STUMP.

ON Sally, looking thoughtful.

81 SALLY 81
Or maybe it's something else. *
Elinor, you said frogs 'sing' to talk to each other, right?

82 ELINOR 82
Yes?

83 SALLY 83
Well, maybe they couldn't hear each *
other because our music is too *
loud. *

Elinor nods, understanding.

84 ELINOR 84
Ohhh... You mean like how Ari *
couldn't hear me because his *
playing was too loud? *

Ari makes a dismissive gesture.

85 ARI 85
Aw, we're not *that* loud.

Just then, his teetering cymbals fall over with a loud <CRASH>. The kids simultaneously SFX: <REACT, STARTLED!>

Elinor and Olive jump in the bushes. Tito dives into a HOLLOW LOG. Sally stumbles into the puddle, getting a 'soaker'.

CUT TO Ari, who flew straight up in surprise, and is now dangling from a tree. He sheepishly glides down again.

86 ARI (CONT'D) 86
Heh. I guess we *are* pretty loud. *

Sally shakes off her muddy, wet foot.

87 SALLY 87
That startled me! *

Olive pops up from behind a bush.

88 HAZEL 88
Me too!

Elinor pops up too, with a twig on her head.

89 ELINOR 89
Me *three.*

Tito climbs back out of the log, rubbing his ears.

90 TITO 90
Loud noises *always* make me jump. *

Elinor flexes her own long ears, looking thoughtful.

91 ELINOR 91
I wonder if loud sounds bother bird
and frog ears, too?
(dismayed gasp)
Our loud music might not be letting *
them talk, and it might be *scaring* *
them! *

92 OLIVE 92
Oh, no! What should we do? *

Elinor considers the ukulele in her hands.

93 ELINOR 93
Well, the whole time we've been in
the forest, we've been pretty loud.
And we haven't seen many creatures.
I wonder what would happen if we
stayed <u>quiet</u>, instead?

94 ARI 94
Good idea, Elinor. I can be quiet! *

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

95 ARI (CONT'D) 95
Sorry! Sorry.

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

96 ELINOR (LOW) 96
Let's go sit on that log 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 put aside. The forest is beautifully quiet, until - <CHOMP!>

ON Sally, biting into a very crispy APPLE she brought along. *
She <CHEWS> loudly. *

The other kids turn to her. *

97 ARI 97
(normal volume)
Heh heh. *Sorry.* *

Sally puts her apple away. *

98 ELINOR 98 *
(whispers)
Okay, everyone. Let's be quiet and *
listen. *

Just then, with a <FLUTTER>, 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.

99 ELINOR (CONT'D) 99
(whispers)
Being quiet is working. Look at all the creatures that are coming out!

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

100 OLIVE 100
(whispers, happy)
I can hardly draw fast enough.

101 TITO 101
(whispers)
I never really *listened* to the forest before. It sounds nice.

Elinor nods in agreement.

102 ELINOR 102
Yes! 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.

103 ELINOR (CONT'D) 103
(whispers)
Like the sound of the trees...

CUT TO the robin, <SINGING> joyfully.

104 ELINOR (CONT'D) 104
(whispers)
...and the birds...

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

105 ARI 105
(whispers)
...and the frogs!

WIDE to include all of the quiet, patient Explorers.

In her quietest voice, Elinor sings a gentle REPRISE:

106 ELINOR (SINGS QUIETLY) 106
We played our song in the forest
But the creatures stayed away
(MORE)

ELINOR (SINGS QUIETLY) (CONT'D)
Until we used our ears to hear
What the forest had to say

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;

107 SONG 107
(SING QUIETLY)
We played our song in the forest
But the creatures stayed away
Until we used our ears to hear
What the forest had to say

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