

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.

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POLISH: May 6, 2020

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.

Olive stops playing, to chime in. *

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

Elinor laughs. She's excited too.

She spreads her arms wide. Sally smiles.

Elinor goes a bit dreamy, picturing it...

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 PAD OF PAPER from her bag.

9	OLIVE	9
	Good thing I brought a lot of paper. Because 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	SALLY	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
	NOW we can go.	

17	OLIVE	17
	Wait. First we have to do our 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
 Okay! 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')

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.)

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?

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

26 OLIVE 26
 (chuckling)
Ari.

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 the 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-STRUMMM!>*

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	ARI (CONT'D)	51
	Where's the lizard?	

52	TITO	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
	This is strange. On our <i>last</i>	
	exploring walk, we saw all kinds 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! <i>Why <u>aren't</u></i>	
	<i>we seeing many wild creatures</i>	
	<i>today?</i>	
	(resolved)	
	We need more observations.	

58	ARI	58	
	But that's what we've been <i>trying</i>		
	to do. We've been looking all		*
	morning.		*

Elinor nods.

59	ELINOR	59	
	Looking with our eyes. But 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 sure don't want to TASTE		*
	any wild creatures. <i>Blecch</i> .		*
	Ari shudders, making Elinor laugh.		*
63	ELINOR	63	*
	(giggle) Me, neither. But we <i>could</i>		*
	try to listen?		*
64	TITO	64	*
	Oh, yeah - good idea!		*
	Tito tucks his drumsticks away -		
65	TITO (CONT'D)	65	
	I'll close my eyes, I listen		
	better, that way.		
	- 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	
	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 bullfrog! Finally.

Olive eagerly pulls out her paper and pencil.

70 OLIVE (CONT'D) 70
(to the frog)
Now hold still, 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. We can 'jam!'

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

74 ELINOR (PLAYFUL) 74
Count us in, Mister Bullfrog.

<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, singing and <CLASHING> his cymbals. Elinor tries to get his attention. *

	ARI (SINGS)	ELINOR	*
	<i>Singing as we march along</i>	(over the din)	*
	<i>Our forest friends will all</i>	It's gone, Ari. (beat) Ari.	*
	<i>come out</i>	ARI!!!	*
	<i>To hear our Exploring Song...</i>		*

Finally, Ari hears Elinor, and stops playing. *

76	ARI	76	*
	Sorry, what did you say?		*

77	ELINOR	77	*
	The frog's gone. It swam away.		*

Olive waves her unfinished drawing in the air.

78	OLIVE	78	*
	I couldn't even finish drawing it!		*

79	ARI	79	*
	(sigh) Maybe he only likes songs about frogs.		*

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

ON Sally, looking thoughtful.

80	SALLY	80	*
	Or maybe the problem is something else. Elinor, you said frogs 'sing' to talk to each other, right?		*

81	ELINOR	81	
	Yes?		

82	SALLY	82	*
	Well, maybe it's like just now, when Ari couldn't hear you, because of the noise.		*
			*

Elinor nods, understanding.

83	ELINOR	83	*
	You mean, the frog couldn't hear his friends, because we were too loud?		

Ari makes a dismissive gesture.

84	ARI	84	*
	Aw, we're not <i>that</i> 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.

85 ARI (CONT'D) 85
Heh. I guess we are loud.

Sally shakes off her muddy, wet foot.

86 SALLY 86
 That scared me! *

Olive pops up from behind a bush.

87 Me too! HAZEL 87

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

88 ELINOR 88

Me *three*.

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

89 TITO 89
Loud noises *always* make me jump. *

They bother my ears. *

Elinor flexes her own long ears, looking thoughtful.

90	ELINOR	90	
	I wonder if loud sounds bother bird	*	
	and frog ears, too?	*	
	(dismayed gasp)		
	Our noise might be <i>scaring</i> them		
	away!	*	

91 OLIVE 91
Oh, no! I don't want to do that.
But how can we find out for sure?

Elinor considers the ukulele in her hands.

92 ELINOR 92

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 quiet, instead?

93 ARI 93
Quiet. Got it!

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

94 ARI (CONT'D) 94
Sorry! Sorry.

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

95 ELINOR (LOW) 95
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 put aside. The forest is beautifully quiet, until - <CHOMP!>

ON Ari, biting into a very crispy APPLE he brought along. He <CHEWS> loudly.

The other kids turn to <SFX: SHHHHH> him.

96 ARI 96
 (normal volume)
 I'm not *talking*, I'm just *eating*.

The others give him a meaningful look, fingers to their lips. Ari reluctantly puts his apple back into a baggie.

97 ARI (CONT'D) 97
 (whispers)
 Okay, okay.

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.

98 ELINOR 98
 (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.

99 OLIVE 99
 (whispers, happy)
 I can hardly draw fast enough.

100 TITO 100
 (whispers)
 I never really *listened* to the
 forest before. It sounds nice.

Elinor nods in agreement.

101 ELINOR 101
 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.

102 ELINOR (CONT'D) 102
 (whispers)
 Like the sound of the trees...

CUT TO the robin, <SINGING> joyfully.

103 ELINOR (CONT'D) 103
 (whispers)
 ...and the birds...

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

104 ARI 104
 (whispers)
 ...and the frogs!

WIDE to include all of the quiet, patient Explorers.

In her quietest voice, Elinor sings a gentle REPRISE:

105 ELINOR (SINGS QUIETLY) 105
*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*

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;

106

SONG

106

(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>