ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 123B Olive's Tree

By: Michael Foulke

Elinor's Question: Why did Olive's tree fall down?

Logline: When Olive's favorite tree falls over, she and her friends learn that the tree has just moved on to the next stage of its life cycle.

Curriculum Goals:
LS4. Understand that all animals and plants have a life cycle, can reproduce, and change and grow over time. (Elinor and her friends trace the life cycle of an oak tree).
ND4: Appreciate the way that elements in the natural world change, interact and are re-used.(Elinor and her friends observe the ways the apple tree was used in the past (for shade, for climbing - and the way it is used now that it's fallen - as a home for forest creatures).
SEP 1: Asking questions (science) c. Ask and/or identify cause and effect questions that can be answered by an investigation. (Elinor and her friends investigate why the tree fell.)
SEP 6: Constructing explanations (science) a. Use back-ground knowledge experiences, and data to construct reasonable explanations and theories of natural phenom-ena (science) (Elinor and her friends conclude that the tree fell because it was old and diseased).

SEP 7: Engaging in argument from evidence
a. Engage in discussions before, during, and after investigations
b. Support thinking and argue ideas with evidence (Elinor and her friends theorize as they examine the evidence around and including the fallen tree).

MAINS: Elinor, Ari, Olive, Ranger Rabbit

SECONDARY: None

LOCATIONS: Forest, Forest clearing

PROPS: Acorns, Picnic Basket, Picnic Blanket

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1. EXT. FOREST -- DAY

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS: ELINOR, ARI and OLIVE skip through the forest. Ari begins to fidget and points at a random tree.

1 ARI 1
Are we there yet?

2 OLIVE 2
No.

Ari points at another tree.

3 ARI 3
Is that it?

4 OLIVE 4
(playful)
Nope.

Ari points at yet another tree.

5 ARI 5
What about that one?

6 OLIVE 6
Sorry.

7 ARI 7
Is this the place?

8 OLIVE 8
(gentle laugh)
Soon.

ANGLE ON: The kids then climb over a boulder.

9 ARI 9
What about now?

10 OLIVE 10
Uh-uh.

ANGLE ON: The kids now carefully step through a stream.

11 ARI 11
How about now?

12 ELINOR 12
(giggle)
Not yet, Ari. Olive will tell us when we're there.

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13 ARI 13
(sighs, good-humoured)
Why does it take so long?

14 OLIVE 14
We're almost there, Ari. You'll see, it's the best spot in the whole forest.

15 ARI 15
Whoa, cool! I just have one more question.

16 OLIVE 16
Sure! What is it?

17 ARI 17
Are we there yet?

18 OLIVE 18
Actually, yes!

19 ARI 19
(surprised)
Really?! That's never worked before.

20 OLIVE 20
It's just over here. Follow me!

The kids follow Olive OS.

2. EXT. FOREST CLEARING ON A HILL -- CONTINUOUS

As the kids leave the forest, they enter a clearing, where they find one lone oak tree high up on a picturesque hill, all by itself (not too far from Animal Town, which we can see in the near-distance). The sun is shining right on the tree, giving it a majestic look that the kids marvel at. <SFX: WHOA WALLA> DIRECTOR'S NOTE: Animal Town is a large area, creating this layout is a large asset. When they are walking to get here, we'll see familiar areas and can trust they're still close to Animal Town as we do in many episodes.

21 OLIVE 21
Welcome to my tree!

22 ELINOR 22
Oh, Olive, it's sooo beautiful!

We then pan over to find Ari giving the tree a big bear hug. His hands don't come close to making it all the way around.

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23 ARI 23
(in awe)
This is the most amazing tree I've ever seen.

24 OLIVE 24
Yeah, it's pretty special. My mom and I come here all the time. And she used to come here when SHE was little, just like me.

THOUGHT BUBBLE shows Olive coming to the tree with her mom, which crossfades to Olive's mom when she was little playing around the tree.

25 ELINOR: 25
Wow... this tree must be really old.

26 OLIVE 26
Yep, and it's the best place in the world for playing, climbing, napping, picnicking...

Suddenly, Ari pops out from behind the tree.

27 ARI 27
Did I hear picnicking?

The kids <SFX: GIGGLE> as Ari smacks his lips and rubs his tummy.

28 ELINOR 28
What should we do first, Olive?

29 OLIVE 29
Anything we want!

MONTAGE OF the kids having fun at Olive's tree:

They chase each other around, playing tag. Olive and Elinor go one way, Ari goes the other - <SFX: boo!>

They (safely) climb the tree, using its many branches to brace themselves. Olive helps Elinor up, but Ari just flutters to a higher branch.

Finally, Elinor is watching the sun beginning to set as Olive writes in her notebook.

Suddenly, Ari's upside down head pops down from the top of frame. As he talks, we pull out to reveal he is hanging upside down from a branch.

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30 ARI 30
Whatcha doing now, Olive?

31 OLIVE 31
Drawing a picture of my special tree. I draw a new one every time I come up here. I've been here so many times I've almost filled up this whole book!

32 ARI 32
Cool. I wanna see!

Ari does a loop-de-loop as he hops down to a lower branch, which shakes, causing an acorn to fall and <SFX: BOP> Ari on the head.

33 ARI (CONT'D) 33
Yow! I'm okay, but something hit me.

34 ELINOR 34
It fell off the tree.

35 ARI 35
Is the tree mad at me?

36 OLIVE 36
Noooo. It's just dropping a seed on the ground.

37 ARI 37
Trees have seeds?

Ari picks up the acorn, he looks at it and shows it to Elinor.

38 OLIVE 38
Uh-huh. My Mom told me acorns like this one are oak tree seeds - and this is an oak tree.

39 ELINOR 39
Wow, Olive, you sure know a lot about trees.

40 OLIVE 40
Yeah. My Mom and I really love trees.

Now carrying the acorn, Ari goes to sit down next to Olive, but she stops him.

41 OLIVE (CONT'D) 41
Wait, Ari! Don't sit there, you'll shmush that tree!

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Olive points to a little sprout coming out of the ground as Ari and Elinor lean down to examine it.

42 ARI 42
Are you sure that's a tree? It looks like a little weed to me.

43 OLIVE 43
(proud of her knowledge)
Nope, that's what a tree looks like when it first comes out of the seed. Here, take a look.

Olive pulls out Elinor's magnifying glass. MAGNIFIED POV: as she and her friends get on the ground to look at the sprout.

44 ELINOR 44
So this little plant is a baby tree?

45 OLIVE 45
Yep. My mom said trees start out as seeds, then they become little sprouts like this one and finally, big grown-up trees - like this!

Olive gestures to her big tree!

46 ARI 46
Wow, it's so neat to think that this giant tree came from a tiny acorn.

Ari hops up on the tree again, putting his hands on a branch to pull himself up and we hear the <SFX: CREAK> of wood breaking as the branch snaps and falls to the ground with an SFX: THUD!

Luckily, Ari flaps his wings and safely glides to the ground.

47 ELINOR 47
Oh, no! Are you okay, Ari?

48 ARI 48
Yeah. I'm fine.

Olive checks on Ari, then looks up at where the branch used to be.

49 OLIVE 49
I wonder what happened to the branch.

50 ARI 50
I don't know. It just broke.

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51 OLIVEN 51
Aww, poor tree.

Olive puts a comforting hand on the tree, but Elinor, in turn, puts a comforting hand on her.

52 ELINOR (O.S.) 52
It'll be okay, Olive. Your tree has lots of branches.

Olive grimaces as she inspects the branch, whose wood is oddly dark on the inside.

53 OLIVE 53
Yeah, I guess you're right. And this branch looks kinda different anyway.
(a pause as she inspects the tree more closely)
I've been a little worried about the tree lately. The bark is getting crumbly and falling off in spots.

She points to a patch of brittle bark.

54 ELINOR 54
I'm sure it's ok. We can come check the tree again some other day.

At that moment, the wind blows, Elinor crosses her arms with a <BRRRR>.

55 ARI 55
Brrr... it's getting windy. We should probably head home.

56 ELINOR 56
Yeah. I think it's almost time for dinner.

57 ARI 57
Did you say dinner? Let's go!

Elinor and Ari <SFX: GIGGLE> as they head off. Olive stays a little behind and puts a comforting hand on the tree.

58 OLIVE 58
Okay. See you later, tree!

As the kids walk away in the distance, the WIND suddenly kicks up, pushing the branches around with an SFX: HOWL. We see a piece of the bark fall off.

DISSOLVE TO:

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3. EXT. ANIMAL TOWN -- NIGHT TO MORNING

We see the sun set over Animal Town as the wind continues to blow overnight. Then the sun rises again - another calm, sunny day!

We push in on the PARK, where Elinor, Olive and Ari walk around, helping Ranger pick up the fallen branches that lay all over. Each of the kids picks up something off the ground: Olive grabs a branch, still full of leaves as Ari jumps over a whole group of branches. At the same time, Elinor thinks as she examines the jagged, broken end of a branch.

59 ELINOR 59
Did the wind really blow down all of this, Mom?

60 RANGER RABBIT 60
It sure did. There were some very strong winds last night.

61 ARI 61
Strong enough to knock branches off of trees?

Ranger Rabbit nods <SFX: MM-HMM>.

62 ELINOR 62
Mom, can the wind blow over a whole tree?

63 RANGER RABBIT 63
Well, trees have roots that go into the ground, and that helps keep them from getting blown over. But...

If the wind is strong enough, it *could* blow over a whole tree.

At this, Olive looks to Elinor, concerned.

64 OLIVE 64
(gasp)
My tree!

65 ELINOR 65
(to Mom)
Mom, we have to go and check Olive's tree.

66 RANGER RABBIT 66
Okay, you go ahead and I'll catch up.

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The kids all excitedly run off as Ranger Rabbit follows closely behind.

4. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

Elinor, Olive and Ari all head up the clearing.

67 ELINOR 67
I'm sure your tree is ok, Olive.

68 ARI 68
Yeah, I can't wait to climb--

Suddenly, Olive interrupts Ari, as she exclaims:

69 OLIVE 69
<GASP!> My tree!

70 ARI 70
Exactly! I can't wait to climb your tree.

71 OLIVE 71
No, my tree! Look!

The kids all look up to see that Olive's tree has fallen down! They all quickly run to inspect the scene to find the tree on its side with its roots exposed, as if it had been pushed over.

72 ELINOR 72
Oh, no! Poor tree.

73 OLIVE 73
What happened? It looks like it just... fell.

74 ELINOR 74
It was the wind! The wind must have pushed the tree over last night!

75 ARI 75
Okay, then let's push it back up. I got this. I'll just...

<SFX: GRUNTING> Ari gives pushing it back into place a shot, but quickly realizes that's not happening.

76 ARI (CONT'D) 76
Nope. Not happening.

Meanwhile, Olive is very worried about her tree.

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77 OLIVE 77
(worried)
But we have to do something! My tree can't stay on the ground.

Suddenly, Ranger Rabbit comes through the clearing.

78 RANGER RABBIT 78
What's going on kids?

79 ELINOR 79
Mom! You're just in time! We have to put Olive's tree back up.

Ranger Rabbit notices the tree and realizes what happened <SFX: UH OH>.

Ranger Rabbit inspects the fallen tree, looking at the wood and the bark as the kids stand by, watching hopefully.

80 ELINOR (CONT'D) 80
Can you fix it, Mom?

81 RANGER RABBIT 81
I'm sorry, kids, it looks like this tree was very old. It must have gotten sick.

82 OLIVE 82
Trees get sick?

83 RANGER RABBIT 83
They do, Olive. Sometimes you can tell when a tree is sick.

84 ELINOR 84
Mom! Yesterday, one of the branches broke, and it looked really dark inside.

85 ARI 85
And the bark looked kinda funny in some spots.

86 OLIVE 86
Does that mean that the tree was sick?

87 RANGER RABBIT 87
Yes, it looks like it's been sick for a while. See?

The kids look at the bottom of the tree and see that there is a big hole in the middle of the tree.

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88 ELINOR 88
There's a big hole in the tree.

Ranger Rabbit nods.

89 RANGER RABBIT 89
When a tree gets sick like this, it becomes weak and can't hold itself up very well. The wind last night must have been strong enough to just push it over.

As Ranger Rabbit talks, this all begins to sink in for Olive.

90 OLIVE 90
So... we can't put my tree back up... ever?

91 RANGER RABBIT 91
I'm afraid not, Olive.

92 OLIVE 92
(realizing)
Oh...

Olive sits down next to the tree, looking sad. Ranger Rabbit puts her arms around her.

93 RANGER RABBIT 93
I'm so sorry Olive. Elinor told me this was your special tree. It sounds like you had a lot of really fun times here.

94 OLIVE 94
Yeah, I did. Me and my Mom and my Grandma too.

Olive takes out her notebook, and looks around longingly as she reads and points out certain locations around the tree as a thought bubble appears above her, showing what she describes.

95 OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D) 95
One time, my Mom and I counted the stars all night, then slept under our tree.
(then)
And one time we spent all day raking up my tree's leaves and then I jumped in the pile.
(then)
And this... was the branch we used when my mom taught me how to climb.
(MORE)

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OLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(sad)
But now the tree fell down and we
won't be able to climb it again.

Olive puts her head in Ranger Rabbit's shoulder and they share a hug. Ari and Elinor also get in on this hug.

96 RANGER RABBIT 96
I know, Olive, and I understand why
that would make you sad.

97 ELINOR 97
Mom... what happens to trees when
they fall down?

98 RANGER RABBIT 98
That's a good question, Elinor. And I
think the answer might help make you
all feel a little better.

Olive looks up at Ranger Rabbit.

99 RANGER RABBIT (CONT'D) 99
Your special tree will still be
around for many more years. It's
going to become what we Park Rangers
call a wildlife tree.

100 OLIVE 100
A wildlife tree?

101 RANGER RABBIT 101
Yes. A wildlife tree is the very last
step in a tree's life cycle.

102 ELINOR 102
What's a life cycle, Mom?

103 ARI 103
I know. My mom has one of those in
the garage. She loves to exercise.

104 RANGER RABBIT 104
(smiling)
That's a different kind of cycle,
Ari.

105 OLIVE 105
Wait, I think I know. Is the life
cycle like how this tree started as
an acorn, then grew all the way up
from a sprout to a big tree?

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106 RANGER RABBIT 106
That’s right, Olive! And becoming a wildlife tree is the very last step in a tree’s life cycle. Come here, I’ll show you.

The kids follow Ranger Rabbit out as we crossfade to the next scene.

5. EXT. FOREST -- DAY

The group arrives at a decaying wildlife tree, covered in moss and already starting to break down.

107 ELINOR 107
So this is a wildlife tree?

108 RANGER RABBIT 108
It sure is, Elinor. This is a tree that fell down a long time ago, and now it's a very important part of the forest. Wildlife trees are homes to lots of different types of creatures.

109 ARI 109
Look! A lizard!

Ari points to the tree and the kids turn to see a lizard crawling on the wildlife tree.

110 OLIVE 110
And look! A bird made a nest in the tree.

The kids then observe a mama bird feeding her babies in a nest.

111 ELINOR 111
That’s SO interesting.

112 RANGER RABBIT 112
Yes. And as the tree gets even older, it’s going to break down and become part of the soil, helping new plants and trees grow in its place.

As Ranger Rabbit speaks, we see a **THOUGHT BUBBLE** that illustrates a tree breaking down and enriching the soil, which grows new, healthy plants.

113 OLIVE 113
Wow, so even if a tree falls down, it’s still a part of the forest.

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Ranger Rabbit nods <SFX: MM-HMM>. We take a last look at the wildlife tree, still full of life and at home in the forest. As Olive thinks about this, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

7. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DAY

Back with her favorite tree, Olive is still deep in thought.

114 OLIVE 114
I know that my tree is going to help lots of plants and creatures, but... I'm still gonna miss seeing it stand up big and tall.

Elinor stands beside her friend and puts her arm around her.

115 ELINOR 115
It was a really nice tree, Olive. Maybe we can still come visit all the time.

Ari stands on the other side and puts his arm around Olive too.

116 ARI 116
Yeah, think of all the new kinds of fun we can have with it now that it's a wildlife tree. Maybe we'll meet some new creatures.

117 OLIVE 117
(finally accepting)
I guess it will be pretty cool to see what kinds of animals and plants make my tree their home.

118 RANGER RABBIT 118
I don't think you're going to have to wait very long to find out. Look!

Ranger Rabbit points. The kids look over and see a salamander crawl up inside a hollowed out section of the tree's trunk and curl for a nap. <SFX: WHOAA/AMAZING WALLA>

As Olive finally cracks a smile, music rises. The kids sing a song while dancing around the wildlife tree.

119 *OLIVE/ELINOR/ARI* 119
A tree can grow both big and small
No matter the size, we love them all!
(MORE)

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OLIVE/ELINOR/ARI (CONT'D)
We climb their branches and give us shade!
Trees are the best things ever made!

ELINOR: It starts with a seed planted in the ground
That becomes a sprout, they're all around!

ARI: It grows bigger, as big as me
But real soon, it's a full grown tree!

OLIVE: Then one day, it's a wildlife tree
Just as important I hope you'll see
Because it helps new plants to grow
And it's home to animals we know!

ALL: A tree can grow both big and small
No matter the size, we love them all!
We climb their branches and give us shade!
Trees are the best things ever made!

5. EXT. FOREST CLEARING -- DUSK

After the song, as the sun sets in the distance again, Olive draws in her notebook, sitting on the ground as Ari, Elinor and Ranger Rabbit walk over to her.

120 ELINOR 120
How are you feeling now, Olive?

121 OLIVE 121
Better, thanks. My mom's gonna be sad that the tree fell down, but I think she'll be happy to know it's still a part of the forest.

122 ARI 122
And Olive, don't forget one thing...

Ari then leads the kids over to the sprout they observed earlier. The kids excitedly crowd around.

123 OLIVE 123
The sprout! You're right, Ari. I forgot this tree sprout is going to grow into a big, big tree!

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124 RANGER RABBIT 124
Hmm, there are no other trees around, so this sprout must be from an acorn that fell off your tree, Olive.

The kids <SFX: GASP/AWW>. Olive goes to pat the old wildlife tree.

125 OLIVE 125
Don’t you worry one bit, old tree. I’ll take care of your sprout so it grows up big and tall, just like you.

Elinor peeks at the remaining pages in Olive’s notebook.

126 ELINOR 126
I think you’re gonna need another notebook, Olive.

As everyone smiles and <SFX: LIGHT GIGGLES> Olive takes a seat on the stump of her wildlife tree, we:

FADE OUT.

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