

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

EP 145 Burrowing Owl Girl

By Katherine Sandford

Elinor's Question: What kind of owl is awake in the daytime and lives on the ground?

Logline: Elinor thinks she knows everything there is to know about owls until, while visiting her grandparents, she meets a Burrowing Owl.

Curriculum Goals:LS6. Understand that individuals of the same kind of plant or animal are recognizable as similar but can also vary in many ways: a. Contrast individuals of the same kinds of plant and animal (Elinor compares and contrasts what she knows about Owls with what she observes about Burrowing Owls).

SEP3. Planning and carrying out investigations a. Identify and use a greater variety of tools to extend the senses for observing, measuring, and recording data about objects and events b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail (Elinor and her grandmother plan and execute an investigation into Burrowing Owls).

SEP4. Analyzing and interpreting data a. Collect, describe, and record observations in greater detail and in various ways b. Use the 5 senses and simple tools to gather and record data d. Talk about and reflect on what happened during an investigation or when solving a problem, and why it might have happened. (Elinor and her grandmother collect data about the Burrowing Owl through sight and sound and, with research and discussion, decide if it is an Owl).

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elinor, BiBi, Mr. Rabbit

SECONDARY: Ranger Rabbit

SETTING: Grandparents' Living Room, Back Yard, Desert.

PROPS: Owl Girl Costume, small Saguaro cactuses, gardening apron, trowel, lizard (maybe), Burrowing Owl, burrow, Sand Tortoise, rocks and sticks.

OUTLINE - July 18, 2019
FIRST DRAFT: August 21, 2019
SECOND DRAFT: Sept. 19, 2019

1. INT. ELINOR'S GRANDPARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

BIBI (Elinor's Grandma) is tending to a small cactus in a pot and is getting ready to go out to the back yard, when the <SFX: DOORBELL RINGS>. She opens the door and we see that MR. RABBIT and RANGER RABBIT are here for a visit.

1 MR. RABBIT 1
Did anyone order a rabbit family?

2 BIBI 2
Ahh, come here you!

She grabs his cheeks and shakes them all about comically.

3 BIBI (CONT'D) 3
My favorite son!

Mr. Rabbit recovers from the shaking.

4 MR. RABBIT 4
Your favorite? Uh, Mom, I'm your
only son.

5 BIBI 5
Well, it's a good thing you're my
favorite then.
(to Ranger Rabbit)
Hello, Dear.

[illegible]

BiBi gives Ranger Rabbit a kiss on the cheek then she realizes something:

7 BIBI 7
Where's Elinor?

BiBi wonks at Mr. Rabbit.

8 MR. RABBIT 8

I don't know. But guess WH000 has a *
special surprise for you. *

Elinor jumps from behind Ranger Rabbit, dressed in her owl girl costume.

9 ELINOR 9
(calling out)
Surprise! It's me!! Whoo, whoooo!

10	BIBI	10	
	Oh, wow! An owl!		
	(bends down to Elinor)		
	I've never had an owl visit me		*
	before.		*
11	ELINOR	11	
	BiBi! It's me!		*
12	BIBI	12	
	Elinor! I thought you were a real		
	owl.		
13	ELINOR	13	
	Fooled ya! Do you like my owl		
	costume? I made it for costume day		
	at school. Mom helped a little.		
14	MR. RABBIT	14	
	Yes, and since then she's been		
	wearing it... a lot.		
15	ELINOR	15	
	Every day! Owls are one of my		
	favorite animals.		
16	BIBI	16	
	Really? I love owls too.		
17	BIBI AND ELINOR	17	
	(in unison)		
	They're SOOOO interesting!		
18	MR. RABBIT	18	
	(to Elinor)		
	Well, we're helping your Grandpa		*
	today, honey bunny, and that means		*
	you're going to stay with BiBi for		
	the afternoon.		
19	ELINOR	19	
	Awesome! But where IS Baba?		*
20	BIBI	20	
	He's doing some work over at the		*
	community center, so it's just you		*
	and me, kiddo.		
21	ELINOR	21	
	Yay! I can't wait to tell you all		*
	about owls, BiBi. I know everything		
	there is to know about them!		

22 BIBI 22
Everything?

23 ELINOR 23
Yep. Everything!

24 BIBI 24
Well, I wouldn't be so sure of
that, Elinor. Nature always seems
to find a way to surprise you.

Elinor thinks about this for a beat.

25 ELINOR 25
Hmmm... No, I'm pretty sure I know
everything about owls. Watch me!

Elinor runs around the living room, hooting <SFX: HOOT, HOOT
WALLA> as her parents watch from the doorway. On everyone's
<SFX: LAUGHTER> we CROSSFADE TO:

*
*

2. EXT. BACK YARD -- A LITTLE LATER

Elinor is flying around the back yard (still in costume).
<SFX: HOOT, HOOT, HOOT WALLA> BiBi putters near her potting
shed (DESIGN NOTE: BiBi is now wearing her gardening apron,
where she keeps a trowel). Elinor swoops in.

26 ELINOR 26
Whatcha doin' BiBi?

27 BIBI 27
A little investigation. I'm trying
to figure out which type of sand my
cactuses like the best.

ANGLE ON: Three small-ish Saguaro cactuses (this is the
classic desert cactus with arms) in pots.
<https://images.app.goo.gl/ZUhz15K37j6yUx5R7>

*

28 ELINOR 28
Whoa, cool!! Well, I did a lot of
investigating about owls with my
Mom, and that's how I know all
about them.

THOUGHT BUBBLE, we see what Elinor knows about owls:

29 ELINOR (CONT'D) 29
Owls sleep all day, and they're
only awake at night.
(MORE)

*

ELINOR (CONT'D)

They're super good at flying
(whoosh!), and they live waaay up
in the trees. I observed them
myself!

*

BiBi looks at her fondly.

30

BIBI

30

That's wonderful, Owl Girl Elinor,
but just remember, a good scientist
knows there's always more to find
out, so keep asking questions.

Elinor has heard this all before.

31

ELINOR

31

And that means make lots and LOTS
of OBSERVATIONS!

*

32

BIBI

32

Exactly!

Elinor continues to fly around <SFX: HOOT, HOOT WALLA> and
starts looking around the yard while BiBi continues repotting
her cactuses. After noticing some interesting things close by
(a rock, a flower on a cactus, a beetle) <SFX: OOOH WALLA>
Elinor looks out beyond the yard (there's no fence) where she
can see the wide-open desert.

*

33

ELINOR

33

Wooooow!

3. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor walks out (not too far) and enjoys the view of the
beautiful desert. She sees a dune, a huge cactus, maybe a
lizard who scurries off. Suddenly Elinor hears a little <SFX:
RUSTLING> in the grass just beyond.

34

ELINOR

34

What's that?

She peers over to see...Two big yellow eyes!

35

ELINOR (CONT'D)

35

Two eyes?

*

The two yellow eyes reveal themselves to be a small bird that
looks like an owl.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/2FtVzY9KbcV7WZXFA>

36 ELINOR (CONT'D) 36
(to herself)
<GASP!> It's an OWL! Hello, little
owl. Look at me, I'm an owl too. *

The owl stares back.

37 ELINOR (CONT'D) 37
(realizing)
Wait a minute...
(checks the sky)
It's the middle of the day.
(To the owl)
Why are you awake, little owl? *
You're supposed to be sleeping
right now, so you can be awake at
night. That's what owls do!
(Back to herself, puzzled)
Why isn't this owl sleeping?
(determined)
I need more observations!

Elinor slowly approaches the owl, moving between shrubs.
Suddenly, the owl takes off running.

38 ELINOR (CONT'D) 38
What? Now it's running on the
ground? But owls are supposed to
fly in the sky.
(thinking)
Is that even an owl?

CU: On Elinor's confused look, we crossfade to.

4. EXT. BACK YARD -- DAY

BiBi is tending to her cactuses when suddenly Elinor runs up.

39 ELINOR 39
BiBi! BiBi! I just saw an
impossible animal!

40 BIBI 40
A what?

41 ELINOR 41
An animal that can't be! It looks
like an animal that I know, but
it's not doing the things that it's
supposed to do!

BiBi is intrigued.

42	BIBI	42	
	An impossible animal? That is sooo interesting.		
43	ELINOR	43	
	I know. I don't understand.		*
44	BIBI	44	
	Well, you know what a scientist does when she sees something she doesn't understand.		
Elinor thinks about it for a beat, then...			
45	ELINOR	45	
	Yes! She needs...		*
46	BIBI AND ELINOR	46	
	(in unison)		
	MORE OBSERVATIONS!		
47	ELINOR	47	
	Come on, BiBi!		

BiBi and Elinor head out into the desert behind BiBi's house to observe the mysterious animal.

5. EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Elinor and BiBi find a good observation spot.

48	ELINOR	48	
	This is where I saw the impossible animal.		
49	BIBI	49	
	Ok, let's wait and watch.		
50	ELINOR	50	
	We'd better hide, so we don't scare it off.		
51	BIBI	51	
	Good idea.		

BiBi and Elinor hide behind a small pile of rocks. A beat, then their ears rise up first and scan around. Another beat, then their faces both (comically) rise up from behind the rocks together. They are in full recon mode. Elinor looks one way, BiBi looks the other, then they switch. Suddenly...

*
*
*

52 ELINOR 52
(whispering)
There it is!

Elinor points. ANGLE ON: the little owl.

53 ELINOR (CONT'D) 53
 That's the animal I saw earlier. *

54	BIBI	54
	I looks like an owl.	*

55	ELINOR	55
	It <i>looks</i> like an owl, but it can't	*
	be an owl.	*

56 BIBI 56

Why not?

57 ELINOR 57

Because this bird is awake during
the day and owls are only awake at
NIGHT. I also saw it run on the
ground, but owls are supposed to
fly.

*
*
*

At this point, BiBi realizes what's going on.

58 BIBI 58
Ooooh, I see.

The little owl hops over closer to them, and they have a moment together to admire it.

59 ELINOR 59
It's coming closer. *

60 BIBI 60
Aww, it's pretty cute. *

At that moment the owl runs off!

61	ELINOR	61
	BiBi look! It's running away!	*
	Let's follow it so we can keep	*
	observing.	

CUTE ACTION SEQUENCE: Elinor and BiBi keep a respectful (and humorous) distance, hiding as they go. They follow the little owl (which can run surprisingly fast) across the desert.

ANGLE ON: The little bird runs into its burrowing hole. *
Elinor stops and points.

62 ELINOR (CONT'D) 62
(amazed)
BiBi! The little bird went into *
that hole in the ground. Do you *
think that's where it lives? *

63	BIBI	63	
	Sure looks like it. Holes in the		*
	ground like that are called		*
	burrows.		*

ANGLE ON: The little owl pokes its head out, then retreats. *

64 ELINOR 64
Wow.
(making up her mind)
Then it's definitely *not* an owl,
because owls live in trees. I
OBSERVED them.

The owl comes out and starts puttering around the burrow. Elinor observes it and starts to have second thoughts.

65 ELINOR (CONT'D) 65
 (unsure)
 Only...it really does look like an
 owl. It's got big eyes, and a
 beak, and feathers...

66 BIBI 66
That's true.

67 ELINOR 67
But how can it be an owl if it's
awake in the day, and runs on the
ground, and lives in a hole?

68 BIBI 68
That's a really good question
Elinor.

69 ELINOR 69
(confused)
I just don't get it.

Peak confusion for Elinor. BiBi thinks about how to help. Suddenly, she spots an odd-looking little cactus to the side of them. (maybe a Buckthorn Cholla) *
https://cals.arizona.edu/yuma/plant_index/cylindropuntia_acanthocarpa%20.htm *

Or something else cool - here are other options:
<https://www.foldingguides.com/product/cacti-of-the-desert-southwest-poster-cardset-of-6-greeting-cards/>

70 BIBI 70
Oh, look. Just what I was looking
for. *

BiBi points to the unusual cactus and makes a show of finding it.

71 BIBI (CONT'D) 71
I found another cactus for my
investigation. Isn't it a beauty? *

BiBi uses her spade to dig it out and show it to Elinor.

72 ELINOR 72
Uhhhm, are you sure that's a
cactus, BiBi? It doesn't look
anything like your other cactuses.

73 BIBI 73
Good observation! But this IS a
cactus.

CU: on the cactus plant, BiBi compares it to a nearby example of the Saguaro cactus.

74 BIBI (CONT'D) 74
There are many different kinds of
cactuses, and they are not all the
same. Some of them look different
or do different things. That
happens a lot in Nature. *

Elinor appreciates what Bibi just said. She looks back and forth between the owl and the cactuses. After a beat, a realization starts to dawn on Elinor. *

75 ELINOR 75
Ooooooh.

She looks back at the owl.

76 ELINOR (CONT'D) 76
Hmmm... Maybe this animal IS an owl,
but it's just a different kind of
owl. *

CU: On the cute little bird.

77 ELINOR (CONT'D) 77
Maybe that kind of owl doesn't
sleep all day, or fly up high or
live in trees. *

78 BIBI 78
 Hmmm. Now THAT is an interesting
 idea.

BiBi puts her cactus in her gardening apron.

79 ELINOR 79
 What do you think, BiBi? Is it a
 different kind of owl? *

80 BIBI 80
 As a matter fact, it is. Good
 thinking, little scientist. There
 ARE different kinds of owls, just
 like there are different kinds of
 cactuses. This one here is called
 a burrowing owl.

81 ELINOR 81
 Oh, don't tell me! It's because
 they live in burrows. *

82 BIBI 82
 That's right. Burrowing Owls live
 in the desert and stay awake during
 the day. And guess what else? They
 don't make the holes they live in.
 They use holes that other animals
 don't need anymore. *

83 ELINOR 83
 Awww, what a smart little owl.

CU: On the owl, it does look smart.

84 ELINOR (CONT'D) 84
 I thought I knew everything there
 was to know about owls, but I guess
 I didn't.

85 BIBI 85
 Nature is full of surprises,
 Elinor. There's always more to
 learn.

At that moment, as they look at the owl, they observe it
 laying small rocks and bits of (natural) desert debris out in
 front of its burrow.

86 ELINOR 86
 What's it doing now?

87 BIBI 87
I don't know. I've never seen a
burrowing owl do that. I wonder
why.

88 ELINOR 88
Maybe it's decorating its front
door.

89 BIBI 89
Maybe. Or maybe that's its rock
collection.

They <SFX: GIGGLE > together. *

ANGLE ON: The owl puts the desert debris in a little semi-
circle around its hole.

90 ELINOR 90
It looks like its making a little
fence. *

A sand tortoise walks by, then pauses and keeps going.

91 ELINOR (CONT'D) 91 *
Look! That turtle was going to walk *
into the hole, but it got turned *
away by the sticks and rocks. *
(a beat, then she *
realizes) *
Maybe the owl put them there to *
keep other animals out. *

92 BIBI 92
I think you're right Elinor.
That's amazing. I didn't know
burrowing owls did that.

93 ELINOR 93
You didn't? Really? I guess there
IS always more to learn. Even for
my BiBi!

SONG - Elinor and BiBi sing together.

94 ELINOR AND BIBI 94
ALL: Nature is full of surprises,
The closer you look,
The more you will see,
They come in all shapes and sizes
Nature is FULL of surprises.

ELINOR: I thought there was only *
one kind of owl. *
(MORE)

ELINOR AND BIBI (CONT'D)

That sleeps all day and flies
about.

BIBI: But keep your mind open, and
look all around,

ELINOR: You might find an owl that
runs on the ground.

*
*
*
*
*
*

ALL: Nature is full of surprises,
The closer you look,
The more you will see,
They come in all shapes and sizes
Nature is FULL of surprises.

We CROSS FADE:

6. INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

We only see BiBi (and a pile of couch cushions) as the <SFX:
DOORBELL RINGS> again. BiBi opens the door.

95	MR. RABBIT	95
	We're back!	

96	BIBI	96
	Aww, my favourite rabbit family.	

They exchange kisses.

97	RANGER RABBIT	97
	So, did you and Elinor have fun today?	

*
*

98	BIBI	98
	Of course! We made lots of observations. It was all sooo interesting.	

*
*

99	RANGER RABBIT	99
	Where is Elinor anyway?	

*
*

100	BIBI	100
	Oh, I'm not sure. She was around here some...	

Suddenly, Elinor comes out of a burrow she had made from the
couch cushions.

101	ELINOR	101
	Surprise!	

After <SFX: LAUGHTER> Elinor gestures to the mound of
pillows.

102	ELINOR (CONT'D)	102	
	Whooo-whoo. Do you like my burrow?		
103	MR. RABBIT	103	
	Your burrow? I didn't know Owls had burrows.		
104	ELINOR	104	*
	Neither did I. But then Bibi and I met a special kind of owl. It's awake during the day, runs on the ground, and lives in a burrow!		* * * *
105	MR. RABBIT	105	*
	Really!		
106	ELINOR	106	*
	It's amazing, isn't it? Nature is full of surprises.		*
107	RANGER RABBIT	107	*
	Well, I'm glad you had fun Owl Girl Elinor.		*
108	ELINOR	108	
	That's Burrowing Owl Girl Elinor, Mom. And you know what that means...		
109	RANGER RABBIT	109	
	What?		
	Elinor takes off running around the room.		*
110	ELINOR	110	
	You can't catch meeeee!		
	We end in <SFX: LAUGHTER>.		
	FADE OUT, THE END		