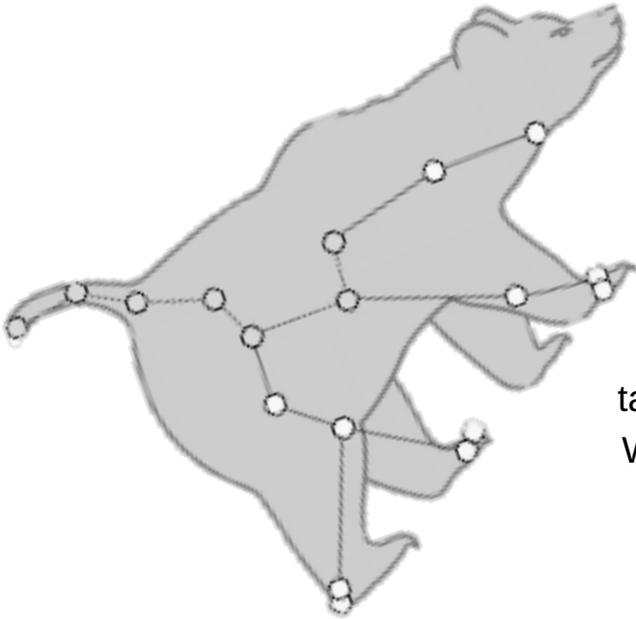


The Big Dipper (Ursa Major)



This story of the Big Dipper constellation is from the Wasco tribe from Oregon.

A long time ago, Coyote lived with five Wolf Brothers. Every day the Wolf Brothers went out hunting deer and elk, and brought their meat back to share with Coyote.

One night, Coyote heard the Wolf Brothers talking about something they had seen in the sky. When Coyote asked what they were speaking of, the brothers told him they saw two strange animals high in the sky, but were unable to get near them.

Coyote then shot many arrows into the sky until they formed a ladder. Coyote and the Wolf Brothers spent many days and nights climbing the ladder until they finally reached the sky. There they saw the strange animals they had seen from below. They were two fierce grizzly bears. The two youngest brothers were unafraid and began approaching the bears. When nothing bad happened, the rest of the brothers started nearing the bears as well.

Coyote thought the the image of the Wolf Brothers approaching the bears made a lovely picture. He wanted it to stay there, to be a story in the sky. Coyote quickly climbed back down from the sky and broke the arrows apart as he went, until his ladder was gone. This way, the Wolf Brothers could not climb down. They would remain a picture in the sky that Coyote could look at each night

The Big Dipper, which makes up part of Ursa Major ("the great bear"), looks like a spoon. The three older Wolf Brothers make up the spoon's handle, the left side of the spoon is the two younger brothers and the right side is the two grizzly bears.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the Big Dipper can be seen throughout the entire year.

Cassiopeia the Queen

This story of the Cassiopeia constellation is based on Greek mythology.



Cassiopeia was the queen of a land called Philistia. She often bragged that she was the most beautiful woman in the world. Eventually, she boasted that her beauty even exceeded that of the gods.

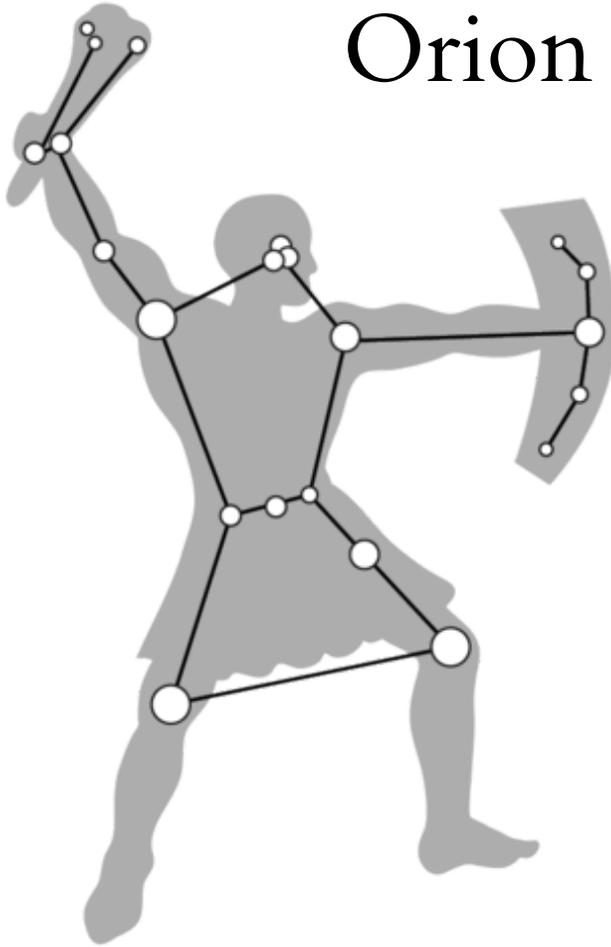
Poseidon, the god of the sea, took offense at this statement, for he created sea nymphs, the most beautiful beings ever. In his anger, he created a great sea monster, Cetus, to ravage the seas. Cetus sank ships and destroyed villages along the coast. This caused great fear among the people of Philistia. In an effort to stop this destruction, the people went to Poseidon and asked what could be done to stop this monster.

Poseidon replied that he would stop the monster if Cassiopeia admitted that his sea nymphs were more beautiful than she, but Cassiopeia refused. The people asked if there was any other way. Poseidon replied that Cetus would stop its destruction if Cassiopeia's only daughter, Andromeda, were to be sacrificed to it.

The people took Andromeda to the coast to be sacrificed to Cetus. However, she was saved by the hero Perseus, who turned Cetus to stone. As punishment for being so proud about her looks, the gods placed Cassiopeia in the sky where she would be embarrassingly upside down during the fall, when her constellation is best seen.

In the Northern Hemisphere, Cassiopeia can be seen all year, but is most clearly visible during the autumn months. Look for five bright stars in the shape of a 'W'.

Orion the Hunter



This story of the Orion constellation is based on Greek mythology.

Orion was a great hunter who provided meat for the gods. One day, Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, joined Orion on his daily hunt. As they were hunting, they saw a deer. Orion carefully fitted an arrow to his bow and shot.

So sure was his shot that the deer died instantly, which greatly pleased Artemis.

At dinner that evening, Artemis told everyone of Orion's great ability with the bow. All of the praise pleased Orion, who vowed to impress Artemis even more the next day.

Arising at dawn, Orion went to the forest and shot every animal he found there. He then made a large pile of these animals near the door to Artemis's house. Knocking on her door, he asked her to come outside and see the great surprise he had for her.

Upon seeing the large pile of dead animals, Artemis was horrified! For you see, Artemis was also the protector of animals and punished those who killed more than they could eat.

In her anger, she stomped her foot on the ground and out of the dust came a great scorpion, which stung Orion on the heel, causing him to die. But in honor of his great service to the gods, Zeus placed Orion's constellation in the sky. The scorpion that killed him is also a constellation, Scorpio. It is said to be forever chasing Orion across the sky.

In the Northern Hemisphere, Orion is most clearly visible during the winter months. Try looking first for the straight line of three bright stars that make up Orion's Belt.