

[music] Intro

[00:00:15] **Jordan:** Hi, I'm Jordan.

[00:00:17] **Kit:** And I'm Kit.

[00:00:18] **Jordan:** Welcome to *Starry Time*, where stars plus lines-

[00:00:22] **Kit:** -equal stories.

[00:00:23] **Jordan:** In this week's episode, we'll be getting a little silly and exploring the pop culture of the constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

[00:00:31] **Kit:** In this episode, we share our favorite and least favorite occurrences of the month's constellations in pop culture.

[00:00:38] **Jordan:** Very, very broadly defined.

[00:00:41] **Kit:** Then we end by taking over the brand to wish upon a star for what we wish existed.

[00:00:48] **Jordan:** This week we were pretty flexible on our requirements. Basically, anything Ursa related counted as well as any of the Dipper asterisms. They were on the table as well.

[00:00:59] **Kit:** Surprisingly, there were actually some choices that used the actual names of the constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor out there, but I think opening it up really expanded our options and I think we will have some interesting things to discuss.

[00:01:13] **Jordan:** Agreed, Kit.

Favorites

[00:01:14] **Jordan:** Let's get started with our favorites. Would you mind starting off?

[00:01:18] **Kit:** Yes. I decided to go with the appearance of the asterism in popular culture, and I think this is popular culture. I've decided to go with, and I honestly wouldn't be surprised if you chose the same thing, a very, very famous painting from 1888 entitled *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh. This is a beautiful, beautiful painting that prominently displays the asterism of the Big Dipper. Yes, it's beautiful. Maybe it's a Small Dipper, but I'm pretty sure it's the Big Dipper. This is a beautiful painting that I have a very strong fondness for because of its use in *Doctor Who*.

[00:02:06] **Jordan:** It is a phenomenal painting. It looks like the Big Dipper to me. No, my brain didn't even make it this far to taking a Big Dipper and putting it where actually would be in pop culture. I was very literal for worse or for worse. I'm glad that you were able to take this where it needed to go, to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Of course, I think most people will be familiar with this painting once they see it. It's  
Completed: 01/18/2025

iconic work of, you said it, pop culture.

**[00:02:36] Kit:** Yes, I will definitely be sure to post it and it's *Doctor Who* revamp, I guess you should say, over on our socials.

**[00:02:45] Jordan:** I forgot there was the whole *Doctor Who* Vincent Van Gogh episode where he is staring up at the stars and that's why the Doctor comes. I remember the exploding TARDIS part, but I forgot that he was actually painting *Starry Night*. Ah, yes, I remember that giant chicken creature which we loved.

**[00:03:05] Kit:** We loved. [laughs]

**[00:03:06] Jordan:** Yes. This *Starry Night* painted by Vincent Van Gogh, age 35 in 1888. All right, Kit, I did take this very literal. My first choice for favorite was Ursa Major, which is a mutant from the *X Men* franchise from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. He is a Russian super soldier, fights for the Russian version of *The Avengers*. He is a man by the name of Mikhail Uriokovitch Ursus. His mutant ability is to transform into a large anthropomorphic bear.

While in this form, Ursa Major retains his human intelligence and ability to speak, though his personality does become more feral as he begins to lose control over his human intelligence if he remains in his transformed state. I like this guy for a few reasons. First of all, he goes hand to hand with the Hulk and survives. This guy's a real heavy hitter. Also, I just like how literal they were with it. Like I said, I was very literal with this assignment.

**[00:04:14] Kit:** Big Bear.

**[00:04:16] Jordan:** Big Bear. He does make a brief appearance in *Black Widow* in his human form and beats up the Romanoff's foster dad. Just seems like a pretty cool mutant ability. You get to be a giant bear, you can take on the Hulk, superhuman strength, stamina. What more could you want? I hope this guy gets the lead with super soldiers.

**[00:04:36] Kit:** [laughs] Yes, it's compelling. Love a mutant. Also, the animation of this character is quite good. Yes, I did see Ursa Major, the Marvel character.

**[00:04:47] Jordan:** I do you also like that he introduced me to the Russian version of Professor X, I'm guessing, who is Piotr Phobos or Dr. Phobos.

**[00:04:58] Kit:** Phobos is an interesting choice because it's one of Mars' moons as folks might know. Also, the god of fear and panic. Interesting choice.

**[00:05:08] Jordan:** Yes. All right, great. Yes, so my favorite is definitely Ursa Major. Ursa Major. Ursa Major. I did have a backup honorable mention favorite.

**[00:05:16] Kit:** Okay, yes, what was it?

**[00:05:17] Jordan:** This one is slightly less literal, but only barely. My second favorite honorable mention is the Great Bear roller coaster, which is an inverted roller coaster, which means the seats are underneath the track. It is located at Hersheypark in Pennsylvania, and it's got its name, the Great Bear, because it has apparently seven elements to the track, like the seven stars. Then the ride reaches speeds as fast as 70 miles per hour. This is a roller coaster that was built in the late '90s. I really liked their logo and I liked that they had seven elements and they couldn't figure out what to do with the name, so they just decided to name it after a Big Dipper and Ursa Major, so works for me.

**[00:06:06] Kit:** Yes, it's got a good color scheme too, I'll say, this roller coaster and the logo is very good.

**[00:06:12] Jordan:** Very, very good. Great Bear. When I found out that they actually did try to tie it into the actual-- it's like, "Okay." I did really get how it connected to the Hershey lore, unless there's a Hershey bear that I don't know about.

**[00:06:25] Kit:** [laughs] I do have a couple of other not really favorites, so I'll wait until after our least favorites and then I can share those if they don't make the list of anything else. Do you want to move over to least favorites? Do you want to start us off?

#### Least Favorites

**[00:06:38] Jordan:** I would be happy to start us off with our least favorite. All right, so my least favorite appears in the 2013 film *After Earth*, starring Will Smith and his kid, whose name I-- Jaden Smith. In this movie, the Ursa are the main antagonists. They are an alien species that can detect fear pheromones. The whole point of the movie is that you have to be able to manage your fear so that they can't see you. They look kind of like the aliens from *Alien*, but dumbed down and with more legs. They just seemed very derivative, and their explanation as to why they were called the Ursa even in lore was very dumb. It's just like the guy thought they looked kind of like a grizzly bear.

**[00:07:26] Kit:** This looks like a poop with legs.

**[00:07:29] Jordan:** Yes. There you go. I didn't know the right way to put it.

**[00:07:35] Kit:** [laughs] Was that the right way?

**[00:07:38] Jordan:** Yes, derivative. As a derivative of previous alien designs, and then at the very end, after chewing up all the other alien designs, you poop out this Ursa from *After Earth* and no, it's not pleasant to look at.

**[00:07:52] Kit:** No.

**[00:07:53] Jordan:** It's not a compelling villain. I don't like anything about the Ursa from *After Earth*. Spoilers, I have not seen the movie *After Earth*, even though I've

Completed: 01/18/2025

had 11 years now to see it. All right, Kit, what was your least favorite appearance of Ursa in pop culture?

**[00:08:07] Kit:** Well, I have a few things that I did not like. Probably the first one, which I don't really have much to say about, but I was just like, "Why?" Apparently, there is a Dragline excavator, the third largest ever built, and it is known as the Ursa Major. I'm like, "Why are we naming these things after animals?"

**[00:08:33] Jordan:** Yes, there does seem to be a very conflicting interest here, doesn't there? Yes.

**[00:08:40] Kit:** I don't have much more to say about that except for didn't like it. I had another one that mostly just made me-- I just didn't understand. This is the fact that apparently Ursa is the genus for orb weaver spiders.

**[00:08:58] Jordan:** Must be a big spider.

**[00:09:00] Kit:** I mean maybe they're really big, but they don't have bear energy to me.

**[00:09:05] Jordan:** No.

**[00:09:06] Kit:** I'm like, "The word literally means bear."

**[00:09:11] Jordan:** That's kind of how I felt about this Ursa from *After Earth*. Just misapplication of the name. Bear is not just any fluffy thing that's kind of unusual looking. If you want to know what makes a bear a bear, tune in next week for Creature Corner. We'll get all sorts of deep into bear facts.

Other Mentions

**[00:09:29] Kit:** Do we want to talk about any other interesting Bear Ursa related things that we found? If there's any other ones that you wanted to shout out, maybe neither favorite nor least favorite or maybe things you just had thoughts about?

**[00:09:42] Jordan:** Yes, I had a few thoughts about a couple more things that I saw. One was a book titled *Songs in Ursa Major* which was a roman a clef or a sort of story based on a real story based on James Taylor and Joni Mitchell and the music industry in 1969. Then another thing that caught my eye, which almost was my least favorite until I got to *After Earth* was Ursa the girlfriend bear from *Bear in the Big Blue House*. Did you meet Ursa girlfriend bear?

**[00:10:17] Kit:** No.

**[00:10:18] Jordan:** Do you happen to remember *Bear in the Big Blue House*?

**[00:10:21] Kit:** No.

**[00:10:22] Jordan:** *Bear in the Big Blue House* was Nickelodeon kids show featuring  
Completed: 01/18/2025

large anthropomorphic muppet sized bears. Ursa is the love interest and originally from Spain and helps teach the kids Spanish. Ursa, you're not my favorite. You're not my least favorite. I do find you somewhat unsettling to look at. I would describe you only as like if Big Bird was a bear, but yes, you're not nearly as bad as the ones from *After Earth*. What about you? What did you find?

**[00:10:59] Kit:** Well, the state flag of Alaska displays the eight gold stars forming the Big Dipper and Polaris. That is another representation. I also saw that Third Eye Blind has two albums, one called *Ursa Major* and one called *Ursa Minor*. Haven't listened to them but I liked that they use both as Separate album names. I also saw that Ursa was the name of Zuko and Azula's mother in *Avatar the Last Airbender*. I couldn't really remember that much about their mom except that she's kind of absent. She might have a good reason for it in the comics, but I haven't delved into that universe.

[music]

**[00:11:49] Jordan:** All right, so those were some of our favorites and least favorites. If we missed yours, let us know over on our socials.

**[00:11:55] Kit:** We're at starrytimepod on Mastodon on the Universeodon server, and that's the place you can find us.

Wish Upon A Star

**[00:12:01] Jordan:** Now we get to our next segment and last segment here where we wish upon a star and we choose something that we wish existed. Featuring this month's constellations, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. Kit, what did you wish upon the star with the Ursa brand?

**[00:12:18] Kit:** I really struggled with this and ultimately I'm not super happy with what I came up with. In fact, I'm looking at it because I worked on this a little while ago and I'm like, "Wow, you didn't come with anything better, but, okay, this is what you have here." I will read you what I have written here in my notes. [laughs] I would like to replace the words-- [laughs] parent and child with the words Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, so you can be like, "Oh, yes, my Ursa Major grounded me." Or, "My Ursa Minor is learning to walk." That is how I would like these words to be used now.

**[00:13:10] Jordan:** As we will get into Creature Corner, there are a lot of similarities between humans and members of the ursine family, so, hey, I don't mind that at all. It's gender neutral and it pays allegiance to one of our mammalian forebears, the bear.

**[00:13:25] Kit:** Thank you. Yes, that's the new slang. I'll be calling our mom Ursa Major from now on, so just get ready.

**[00:13:32] Jordan:** I think you should, next time you're speaking with her, just answer the phone, "Yes, Ursa Major," and just hear what she has to say in response.

Completed: 01/18/2025

[00:13:39] **Kit:** [laughs] How about you, Jordan? What did you wish upon a star for?

[00:13:44] **Jordan:** When I wished upon a star, I took the word Ursa and as we've done so many times before, turned it into an acronym. My first thought was a bear armor suit called The Ursa. I looked up bear armor and I found this picture of 1800s Siberian bear armor. It was this horrifying nightmare fuel that made me not want to know how the bear armor development has gone in the past 200 years since then or contribute my addition to it now. I took one look at the bear armor market and tapped out.

[00:14:29] **Kit:** Horrifying.

[00:14:31] **Jordan:** Truly looks like a torture device. I just didn't want to try to follow up in that. I mean, what could be better, really? How could I beat the original?

[00:14:42] **Kit:** Improve on that.

[00:14:43] **Jordan:** Yes. How can I improve on the original? I thought of something that might be a little bit more useful for you and me when we go camping. What I've come up with is the ultimate repellent spray agent Ursa, which is a bear spray.

[00:14:59] **Kit:** I did listen to something recently where I was talking to somebody who was a bear expert, and they were basically just like, "Just carry bear spray. It's so effective. Then you don't need to worry about the bear attacking you."

[00:15:11] **Jordan:** You don't have to look like you're something out of a Halloween nightmare maze.

[00:15:16] **Kit:** Yes. I will post this over on our socials. It's very disturbing.

[00:15:20] **Jordan:** Very disturbing. Enough to turn one off the bare armor industry entirely. Well, Kit, it's only a matter of time before one of our wishes comes true.

[music]

Outro

[00:15:37] **Kit:** This has been Kit.

[00:15:39] **Jordan:** And Jordan.

[00:15:40] **Kit:** Sisters who love stars and stories.

[00:15:43] **Jordan:** We'll see you next week-

[00:15:45] **Kit:** -on *Starry Time*.

[music]

Completed: 01/18/2025



[00:16:05] [END OF AUDIO]