

URSACREATURECORNER

Intro

Jordan: Hi, I'm Jordan.

Kit: And I'm Kit.

Jordan: Welcome to Starry Time

Kit: Asterisms edition,

Jordan: Where stars plus lines equal stories.

Kit: With an asterisk.

Jordan: In these episodes, we'll explore ideas, concepts, or people that didn't make it into the main show, or just certain topics we want to talk about a little bit more.

Kit: And this week, unsurprisingly, we're headed to Creature Corner to talk about real bears and then our favorite fictional bears.

Creature Corner

Jordan: Let's start off with our usual Creature Corner query. What do you know about bears?

Kit: Well, I'm from New Hampshire. We're both from New Hampshire. So I have seen a bear before. Uh, we have black bears in New Hampshire, and I have indeed seen a black bear. So I think that I'm kind of an expert. Um, okay, so what I actually know about bears is that in the US we have black bears and grizzly bears. Black bears tend to be less aggressive than grizzly bears. Polar bears we don't have in the continental U.S. but they will mess you up. That's what I know. I know they're mammals.

Jordan: Great. Yeah. Good place to start.

Kit: Um, I know that the best way to not be eaten by a bear is to carry bear spray. I know that bears hibernate in the winter. I know that they can catch fish.

Jordan: Great. They love fish. Yes.

Kit: Yeah, I seen those, uh, you know, videos. They're very protective of their cubs. No, no more dangerous bear than a mama bear. They're very cute, in my opinion, but they should be treated with respect. So, um, yeah, that's where I'm at on bears. Do not know if they ever had tails a la the constellation. Uh, don't know what other kinds of bears there are. Don't know any sort of histories or bear evolution. But, uh, I do know they're cute.

Jordan: Well, Kit, let's start out with how many types of bears there are. There's a brown bear, a black bear, a polar bear, a moon bear, a sun bear, a sloth bear, a speckled bear, and a panda bear.

Kit: I'm looking at a sun bear right now. Woah- there's so many more bears than I realized.

Jordan: So the brown bear is the most widespread of all bears. They range from small little European brown bears to even smaller Syrian bears to of course, the giant grizzlies or the Kodiaks in Alaska. But they're all still the same species. They can also interbreed with black and polar bears. A, ah, brown or grizzly polar hybrid is called a Grolar bear or a Pizzly bear.

Kit: Grolar or Pizzly. I'm not sure which. Which one's better.

Jordan: That's, uh, up to our listeners to decide. Just like us humans, bears are intelligent. They have long memories. They have been recorded using tools. They're good at solving food related puzzles such as opening cars and garbage bins. Bears are also a lot like humans in that they are plantigrade, which means they walk on their heels rather than their toes, like cats and dogs, which are called digitrads. And the diet of all bears, except polar bears consists mostly of plant material, berries, leaves, things like that. But yes, each species of bear is uniquely suited to its environment. And with the exception of panda bears, they are adapted for the broadest diet possible. The panda bear, they are the farthest evolutionary offshoot. They have a carnivorous digestive system, but at some point decided they only want to eat bamboo. They can digest meat. They just don't like it, even though they need to eat, a ton of bamboo for the same amount of energy.

Kit: Right.

Jordan: And my favorite panda fact is that female pandas need at least, at least two

males around to reproduce because they will choose between them. That's why for a long time people had trouble breeding them in captivity. So apparently bears not only they have personalities. They're also very picky.

Kit: Fair enough.

Jordan: Bear enough. They're a lot like us. so those are all my bear facts.

Kit: Did you find out, did they ever have longer tails? Or is that just?

Jordan: The bear dog Daphoenodon

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Jordan: 20 million years ago does have a tail, but it seems like they lost it sometime long before humans.

Kit: But what about before Zeus?

Jordan: Yeah, great point. I did actually have one more bear fact. It's about one individual bear. It's a black bear that was found in a Campground in 2004 in Seattle. It was found unconscious. It had broken into a cooler and used its claws and teeth to open dozens of beer cans.

Kit: No.

Jordan: And although it sampled other types of beer.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: It chose to drink all the cans of only one type of beer. Bears, they're just like us.

Kit: Just like us.

Favorite Fictional Bears

Which I think is a great segue into how we want to wrap up this episode, which is by talking about, first of all, how there is just an extensive list of fictional bears, um, on Wikipedia. And Wikipedia doesn't even have all fictional bears. And so I think we just wanted to wrap up our Creature corner here, just talking about some of our favorite fictional bears, giving them a little bit of a shout out. Uh, Jordan, do you want to start us off? I'm sure we'll have some overlapping, but just, uh, favorite bears.

Jordan: Of course, the first bear I can remember is Baloo.

Kit: Uh-huh.

Jordan: The bear from the Jungle Book who's just a chiller. So, Baloo, maybe was my first bear. Or perhaps it was Winnie the Pooh Bear Winnie the Pooh Bear, I think is my choice for favorite bear.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: And there's a few reasons for that. I admire his lack of ambition, his lack of

drive. He's very secure in who he is.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: I like that about Pooh. And in case you didn't know, we are also celebrating the 100th anniversary of Pooh Bear.

Kit: Yeah. So, I mean, Pooh has been with us for a long time. Ah. That hundred year mark is why we're getting like, Pooh knockoffs now. Because it's no longer under copyright. So if you want to see like, Pooh, but horror, explicit horror, um, you can see that. Um, Baloo definitely on my list. But I think I like Baloo because you like Baloo.

Jordan: Because yeah,

Kit: I mean, like, I'm like, I know you have a fondness for Jungle Book, so I feel like I have a fondness for it because I have a fondness for you. So I had two choices too. Um, again, sort of like you. One that I liked wasn't my favorite. Well, yeah, I kind have three. Okay. So the first one is Fozzy Bear.

Jordan: Fozzy Bear. Bow ties are cool.

Kit: Bowties are cool. We're talking about from the Muppets. Waka waa waa. Kermit's best friend. That's a character I like that makes me, you know, nostalgia brain. A second option I had, which I have again, I have like, um. I don't have direct fondness for, but I feel like needs a shout out. Who is Duffy

Jordan: mmm. The Disney Bear.

Kit: The Disney Bear Duffy, who is very prominent in, um, Tokyo's Disney parks. And I've listened to multiple podcasts about Duffy. And, um, listen, I don't know Duffy. I have never been to DisneySea. Um, Tokyo Disney Never been there. But I've heard a lot about Duffy. It sounds pretty compelling.

Jordan: Duffy looks like a real cutie.

Kit: But ultimately my favorite. My favorite favorite. And I think this one on, as soon as I say it, you'll be like, that makes sense. Is Paddington Bear.

Jordan: Oh, Paddington. We had one of those in our house as well.

Kit: Yeah. Yes. I still have a a little mini Paddington that our mom got me. Um, it sits in like a little. In the little bag that Paddington that has like the Words like please look after this bear. I'm looking at it right now. I can see it from where I'm sitting. I have a real fondness for the little raincoat and little hat and. Yeah, very cute.

Jordan: Little battered suitcase and a duffle coat.

Kit: Yes, exactly. Very British.

Jordan: I mean, I gotta get the British credit. They don't have a ton of bears there, but they came up with Paddington and Winnie the Pooh. Um, Paddington, I think was definitely on my list of favorite bears. Devan Coggan, writing for the Entertainment Weekly, saw a similarity between Paddington and Winnie the Pooh, referring to them as two, quote, extremely polite British bears without pants.

Kit: Mhm.

Jordan: Adding that both bears share a philosophy of kindness and integrity. Do you have any other backup favorites or honorable mentions?

Kit: Yeah, I mean, Smokey the Bear fits on there. What about the Berenstain bears?

Jordan: Love the Berenstain bears. Besides that. The last bear that I can really think

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Jordan: of, the Teddy bear, which are named after Teddy Roosevelt or Theodore Roosevelt. And the name comes from an incident in 1902 where Theodore Roosevelt, uh, you know, an accomplished hunter and big gamesman, came upon a bear that was tied to a tree and refused to shoot it because, you know, it's not good. It's not being a good sport. This was a bear that Teddy Roosevelt adopted and uh, brought into the White House.

Kit: Yeah, like we said, there are so many, um, fictional bears, bears sort of in um, pop culture and so please let us know over on our socials at starrytimepod on the Universeodon server of, uh, Mastodon. Let us know what your favorite fictional bears are or you know, ones that you dont care care for as much.

Outro

This has been Kit

Jordan: and Jordan

Kit: sisters who love stars and stories

Jordan: and we well see you next time

Kit: on Starry Time.

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