



Ursa Major – The  
Big Bear  
&  
Ursa Minor – The  
Little Bear

- Ursa Major is one of the oldest known constellations and has more named stars in it than any other constellation. It has been known by many names, but the form of the bear has become the most common, even though it's quite difficult to see this image in the stars.
- In Greek mythology, Zeus had many human girlfriends, but his favorite was the beautiful nymph Callisto. His secret visits to earth to meet with her only added to Hera's jealousy and determination to get revenge against these women.

- One day, as Zeus was walking through the forest with Callisto, he saw his wife Hera coming. Unable to hide Callisto in time, he turned her into a large brown bear. When Hera arrived, she saw only Zeus walking by himself through the forest. She looked around, searching for someone with Zeus, but saw only an old brown bear. She still did not trust Zeus and insisted that he return to Mount Olympus. Zeus did not want to go because he wanted to change his girlfriend Callisto back into her human form before leaving. But Hera insisted. So Zeus went with Hera, leaving Callisto as a large brown bear.
- Unknown to Zeus, Arcas, Callisto's son who was a great hunter, was out in the woods hunting that day. As chance would have it, he saw this great big brown bear. He put an arrow to his bow, took careful aim, and shot that great bear through the heart. Right before his startled eyes, Arcas watched the bear as it died change back into the form of his mother Callisto with an arrow through her heart.



- Arcas began to cry loudly for his mother and what he had done to her. When he realized that it was Zeus that had changed her into the bear, he grew even angrier. Zeus, fearing that Hera might hear the cries, went down to earth to try to appease Arcas. In order to hide what he had done, Zeus changed Callisto back into a bear and placed her form, as a constellation, into the northern sky as the Big Dipper. He then changed Arcas into the small bear (the Little Dipper).
- As Arcas was being placed into the sky, he turned to look at his mother Callisto (now the Big Dipper). That is why the Little Dipper is curved toward the Big Dipper, so that Arcas can watch over his mother Callisto for all eternity.





• Thank you for watching!!!

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