



Night Skies

by Kenni Alden



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Do you like to watch the night skies? You might see a high cloud. It looks bright as it hurries past the moon.


You might see bright lights blinking as a plane flies by.



A night sky filled with stars, with a dark mountain range visible in the foreground. The stars are scattered across the dark blue and black sky, and the mountains are silhouetted against the horizon.

STARS

Have you tried to watch the stars? On a clear night, once it gets dark enough, you can watch them come out.

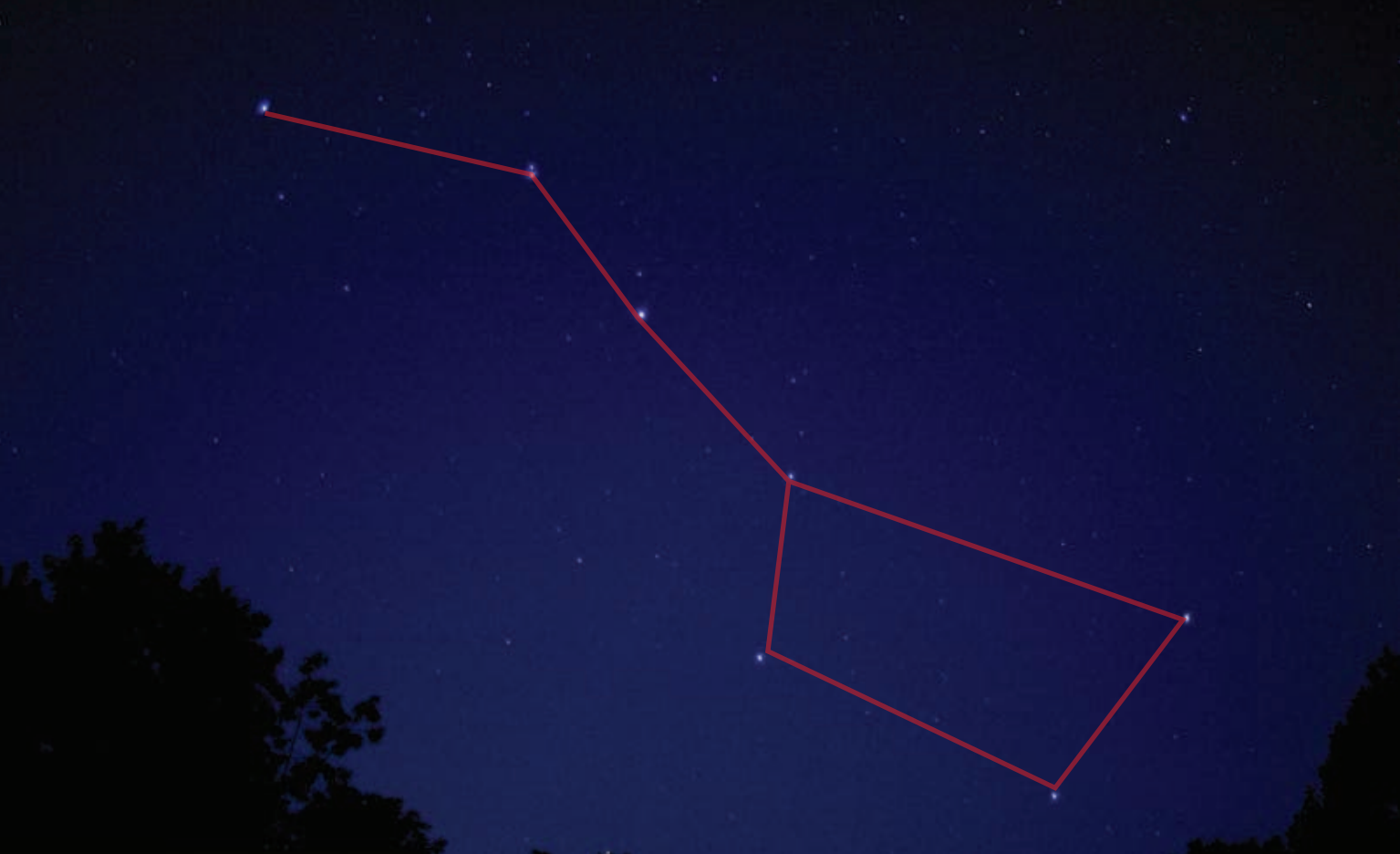
The image is a vertical composition. The left half shows a clear night sky filled with numerous stars of varying brightness, with a faint blueish glow near the horizon. The right half shows a dark night sky with only a few bright stars visible. Below the sky, a cityscape is visible, with lights from buildings and streets creating a bright orange and yellow glow that obscures the stars. The city lights are concentrated in the lower right, with some lights visible in the distance on the left.

Some nights, it is dark enough for stars to fill the sky. If it is not as dark, though, you might see just the bright stars.



CONSTELLATIONS

Bright stars near each other might look like a shape or picture. People have been seeing shapes in the starry skies for a long time. A made-up shape like this is called a constellation.



People in the past named this constellation “The Big Dipper.” A line from star to star makes the shape of a scoop. Have you tried to see shapes in the night sky?

MOON

The moon is very bright in the night skies. It looks big because it is close to Earth.

If you watch the moon every night, it seems to change shape. It can look like a big, bright ball or like a bright smile on its side.





The moon does not change shape, though. Like Earth, it is ball-shaped. We see the part of the ball that is lit by the sun. The sun may light all or only part of it.





SHOOTING STARS

Have you been lucky enough to see a shooting star whiz by? Some people watch for a shooting star and make a wish as it flies by.

A shooting star is not a star at all, though. It is a small rock that burns up as it falls toward Earth. You might only see shooting stars once in a while.



The night skies have been fun to watch for as long as people have been on Earth. Try it and you will see why!

