

Question:

From Rey, p. 16: "The human eye wants to see shapes with a meaning." I've picked a small part of the night sky for you to work with. You could do a similar activity with your audience either at the Jacobsen Observatory or in the planetarium, only using pencil and paper, of course. What I would like you to do here is, if possible, copy this image to an image editor such as Paint Shop Pro, PhotoShop, or Acorn and outline YOUR constellation. Put together a short story to go with your constellation. If you don't use an image editor, then print out the star field, and do the "seeing of shapes with a meaning" with paper and pencil - but still put your short story into this quiz form.

My constellation is a squid who's body is in the upper right hand and who's 4 tentacles come outward and towards the left from the body. This giant squid, also known as Architeuthis the Atrox, terrified the first Sea tribe that all mankind descends from. With the help of a the sperm whale named Clocks, the first Sea tribe was able slay Architeuthis the Atrox and safely explore and hunt in the primeval ocean. 4

Zeus' daughter made him his favorite cupcake one day. She wanted to surprise her dad, so she left it on the counter for him to find. When she brought him into the kitchen to show him, they caught Pisces trying to sneak a bite of the dessert. Zeus' daughter began to cry hysterically and Zeus lost his temper. He grabbed the cupcake and threw out the window into the heavens above. And as punishment to Pisces, he threw the fish into the night sky, where he will always be out of reach of the cupcake as it sits deliciously uneaten for eternity in front of his face.

65 million years ago, a meteor was heading towards the Earth. The dinosaurs knew that they were going to become extinct so they got prepared. One ceratopsian, Milton, didn't want to die so he created an elaborate plan to ensure that he would live forever. Milton secretly prepared for the impact of the meteor by finding out where it would land and then creating a trampoline out of rubber trees next to where the impact crater would be. When the meteor landed Milton was standing in place and he got shot up to the stars! He got his wish to live forever and landed there with a surprised look on his face. You can still see him in the stars to this day. 4

Alright, well, I've been playing with the image for a bit now and the best I could come up with was something that looks similar to a helicopter. I don't think I can show my image here but I'll try to describe it. Its inclined sort of at a 45 degree angle CW. The tail of the copter is the upper-leftmost three bright stars and the body is below that. The propeller blades are an elliptic blur whose edge is defined by the brighter stars in the upper-right-hand side minus the most upper-right bright star. See it? Probably not; it's hard to describe. Anyways one day I borrowed my friend's really expensive remote control helicopter and lost it when I flew it into the ocean. I told him that I flew it too high too fast and it escaped the earth and is continuing to ascend into space. He didn't buy it. That is until I pointed it out to him one dark night! Ha! 4

The evil giant octopus Ecthelion tormented the people of Ferngully for many years. It would always steal people's left shoes, blow out candles of birthday cakes, replace doormats with jellyfish, and other such atrocities. One day the people of Ferngully set up a catapult trap and sent Ecthelion far into the sky, where he still is today, still holding a left shoe. 4

There once lived a man who lived in the forest. He was very good friends with all the forest creatures. He was on a first name basis with most of them, Peter the possum, Otis the owl, Horatio the hawk, Baton-Rouge the bear, Edgar the eagle, Sandra the squirrel, and Tiffany the trout to name a few. This large array of friends allowed him to be quite aware of the all goings on in the forest. The creatures new the man as Herbert the human. Now on the night of every full moon Herbert would go up to the top of the highest mountain of the forest with his magical musical horn. He would sound it off so loud it would echo throughout the forest until morning. You might think that the forest creatures would not appreciate the nightly disturbance, however they were quite happy with Herbert and his horn. They found it more of a lullaby than a ruckus. Herbert did this for many many moons, until one day, when Stinky the starling showed up in the forest. Stinky was from an far away land and no one knows why he came to the forest, but his mark would forever be remembered (not a good memory to be sure). You see Stinky really thought that he had to whip this forest into shape. The first thing he did was to pick on Sandra the squirrel. He raided barged into her nest and told her that she needed to loose weight and that nuts were too full of fat for her to eat. So he took all her nuts. Then he went after Baton Rouge the bear and told him they couldn't hibernate because his breath stunk to bad when he woke up. Then he went to Tiffany the trout and told her she couldn't jump out of the water anymore because he didn't said she splashed him. Finally he went up to Herbert the human and pooped on his horn's mouth piece and said it was too loud and disturbed him when he ate his cookies (which he had every full moon). Well as you can imagine the creatures and the man really didn't like this so they devised a plan. Herbert was to take his horn, climb up to Stinky's nest and blast it so loud that Stinky is shot to the next forest. Well in order to prepare for this last stand, Herbert practiced day and night on holding his breath. He knew that the longer he held his breath before blowing the louder the sound. So he practiced and practiced until he could hold his breath for three days straight. So three days before the full moon he took the largest inhale ever taken by any man. At night of the third day he snuck his way up the tree and got into position. He put his lips to his horn in preparation, when all of the sudden he realized that STINKY POOPED ON HIS MOUTH PIECE! A mixture of sound, spit, and vomit fiercer than the trumpet blast that crushed the walls of Jericho was laid upon poor Stinky the starling. No one ever saw Stinky after that moment, some say he wasn't even in the nest at the time, some say that he just flew away in disgust, however some say that the sound blew him to bits and pieces of the bird were cast into the heavens and made a sort of projection in the night sky of the man and his horn. 4

This is a constellation of a dog's face with floppy ears. His name is Aesop and he was the dog of Zeus, the ancient god. When another god named Herakles demanded that such an adorable dog could only belong to him, the two gods began a battle over the custody of Aesop. Zeus and Herakles stomped, tackled each other and rolled around with their spears. Their battle caused an earth-quake of such magnitude that Aesop the dog was bounced into the air and lodged into the night sky. He remains there to this day observing the happenings on earth as a punishment for Herakles and Zeus's selfishness. 4

Martin Maximus. In this image I see the great Martin hurrying to class to hand in the homework he has just scribbled on the back on a paper towel. The arc of stars in the the upper right quadrant is his arm, he is clutching a sheet of paper which is the bright star above that arc in the right upper most part. 4

My constellation is a small dog named Charlotte located towards the bottom left of the image. It is made up of 6 stars. Charlotte became stuck in the sky when she was running for a stick that her master threw up in the night sky for her to catch. When she jumped for it, she became forever stuck. If you look close enough above her, you can see a stick in the sky. 4

The Great Owl constellation's story is about an owl in the forest who's eyes were so sharp that it saw everything going on in the forest. He flew as high as he could every night to find his food. One night he flew too high and got stuck in the sky. 4

This is the "man with a magnifying glass" constellation. As you can clearly see, the diamond of stars on the left is actually a circle, and below it a handle which a human hand is grasping. Following that is the elbow, arm, and torso. Finally the head is encountered, which is looking through the glass at a slight distance and is arching its eyebrow in pleasure because they are looking at grains of sand at extreme close up range. How he got up the stars is quite easy to explain. You see, this was a very curious scientist that was attached to the court of the Sun God. However, he (the scientist) died in a tragic pyramid accident, and in honor of his discoveries and curiosity, the Sun God decided to place the man in space, where he could spend all eternity exploring the great universe. 4

This is the Great Slug constellation. Identified by ancient pygmy populations of present day Mongolia, the all-seeing eye of the great slug always watches over the autumn harvest. The Slug was given extreme reverence because of its moist morphology. The pygmy's lived in an incredibly arid climate where extra moisture was a sign of divine splendor. They prayed to this slug in hopes that it would sprinkle precious water from the heavens to aid the harvest before the brutal winters. 4

Crab, a delicacy savored by the Gods. A food, which, for the men who fish for them, are known as the deadliest catch. Every year, men venture into the frigid and dangerous Bering Strait from all corners of the globe, in search of this illusive catch. Late one night, during the midst of a icy storm, the crabbing boat Big Valley, was struck by a wild, rogue wave, and the boat capsized, sending all 6 men into the frigid waters. After Hours of searching, only 1 survivor was found and pulled from the the strait's icy grip. The lifeless bodies of 2 others were located shortly thereafter. The remains of the final 3 fishermen, were never found. As the Gods looked down upon the lowly survivor, and the remaining crab boats, still pushing bravely on, they pulled the wreckage of the Big Valley from the Berings icy floor, crab pot still attached, and placed it in the sky, for all to see. For all to see and remember those who would sacrifice themselves in service of their gods, those who will never be forgotten. The men and women who couragesly brave the dangers of the Bering Strait every year 4

The Honey Bee Constellation:

One of the biggest modern day mysteries is the disappearance of the honeybees. Some attribute this to colony collapse disorder and others to global warming, but possibly the most intriguing and promising theories are Dr. M. Night Shyamalan's plant neurotoxin theory, explored in his recent movie "The Happening", and an Mayan myth describing the honeybees' last epic migration into the cosmos to escape Earth's impending doom in 2012. Yet with astronomer's new discovery of the Honey Bee Constellation, recently appearing in the night sky two days ago, the Mayan's ancient myth has been confirmed. Apparently, scientists all over the world are now reporting remnants of giant honey launch pads and

space ship catacombs of extremely complex technological make up. Now that we know where the honey bees have gone, it seems an even more disturbing question has arose: How did they make it into space and does this mean the world is really going to end in 2012? 4

The Harvester (sickle shape on the left being held by rough face on the left). Over many years, the Harvester has swung his sickle towards the earth, when it finally reaches the Earth, then will all people be judged. 3

My constellation is a gluttonous cheetah. A long time ago there was a teenage boy who thought that he was hot stuff because he was a rich Prince. To entertain himself he took up hunting and one day, despite being told not to, he went hunting alone. Late in the afternoon, he became very tired and laid down for a nap. Unbeknownst to him, a hungry cheetah had been watching him hoping he'd do just that. As soon as the boy fell asleep the cheetah ate him up. Having never tasted a human before, the cheetah found them to be quite delicious and began craving humans daily. To satisfy his cravings, he began stealing other teenagers from the Prince's village during the night time. These very rich snacks began to (literally) weigh on his appearance and soon the cheetah became very fat. One night, the cheetah made too much noise entering the village and the Queen, the Prince's mother, caught sight of him sneaking into the home of their neighbor. Outraged and bitter from her son's death, the Queen ran after the cheetah with a cast iron skillet and the cheetah, too fat to run away, was batted with the skillet into the sky, far away from the village or humans of any sort. The Queen, realizing she had an amazing swing, invented the game of softball and became a world-famous batter. The end. 4

I couldn't upload my images but I drew a bear and a bowl of macaroni. Here's my short story: Mr. Bear was walking through the woods one day and he found himself very hungry. Mr. Bear was a vegetarian so at times it was hard for him to find delicious food. While roaming through the woods he met an little girl. At first she was frightened by Mr. Bear but once she looked into his kind eyes she knew he was a gentle bear. He told her how hungry he was and how hard it was for him to find food because he was a vegetarian. The little girl took his great big paw and said "Come with me Mr. Bear!". So the little girl and Mr. Bear walked to a tiny cottage in the woods where the little girl's mother had just prepared a huge pot of macaroni. She dished up three great big bowls and they all sat down and ate their macaroni together. 4

Leonard the winking giraffe. (Not to be confused with Leo the lion) Leonard was a giraffe. However did a giraffe ever stumble his way into Greek mythology? Easy, when Darius I of Persian Empire fame rolled into Greece and got beat at Marathon by the Athenians, he brought Leonard, a docile giraffe, along for the journey. You see, Darius I was a tad eccentric, and loved things which were ridiculous. This brings me to the giraffe. Leonard could wink. In fact, Leonard the giraffe winked like Sarah Palin in a Vice-Presidential debate. Darius, for some reason, thought this was wicked awesome. Adding to the giraffe's allure was the fact that Darius could ride him around on his flagship and see things that were far away. However, I digress. After the naval battle, the Greeks were surprised to find this giraffe washed ashore. Lo and behold if this giraffe survived, so the Greeks brought him back to Athens. There, Leonard lived out the rest of his life surrounded by Athenian scholars, who also loved the spectacle of a winking giraffe. Priceless. Zeus, who at the time seemed to look for any excuse to fling something into the night sky, thought that people throughout eternity would love to look up and see a winking giraffe. Thus he tossed

Leonard the giraffe up into the heavens at the end of his natural life, making him the patron constellation of the downright-silly and randomly-awesome. 4

This constellation was said to have been put in the sky by the Norse god Gamdar who at a time of great drought when no plants would survive came down and brought water to the crops saving the people with his watering can. 3

This is the great constellation "Lynx" which represents the old lynx named Stella that lived in ancient times. Stella was the pet of the Greek god Zeus and was his favorite of all his pets. When Stella died, Zeus was so sad that he cried for months and months, flooding the world with his tears. It wasn't until his wife, Hera, immortalized Stella in the night sky that Zeus was able to control himself and stopped weeping. This way Zeus could remember Stella forever. 4

I did my short story on the Barracuda. The Barracuda is one of the deadliest constellations to find in the night sky. You can see its mouth is pointed towards the swan constellation, trying ever so hard to catch and eat it. He is a lonely constellation however, with no friends around and being burdened by the constant swimming he does without any progress for billions of years. 4

Penguin Constellation- A penguin was waddling around when it saw a daughter of Zeus drowning in the freezing ocean. The penguin called to his penguin friends and managed to save the daughter. Zeus decided to immortalize the penguin's bravery by placing him in the sky for all to see. Or, a penguin wanted to get a gift for its mate. The best gift it could find was a star, and it reached and reached and reached up into the sky to grab one, but it got stuck in the sky! 4

Story: Once upon a time there were two of the swingest Czech brothers in all of New York City. Every night they would go out and hit on foxes because they were two wild and crazy guys!!! One night they went to a club to swing with foxes in their tight polyester pants. At this club there two swining foxes who the brother fell in love with. To win there affection they enter a disco dancing competition in the club, there were many good dance contestants and the brother got scared and went home to figure how they were going to win and attract the foxes. They went into their closet and pulled out a Czech dancing robot reserved for only the highest ranking official in the communist party. They turned on the robot and began to practice with it, hours and hours they swang. Finally they returned to the club for the contest, they were the last to go. They stepped out on to the multi-color floor light up with all the light changing color. Under the disco ball the bang to groove and boogie, the two swinging foxes saw them and were very impressed, the brother danced harder and harder emboldened by their success. They danced so hard that the floor could not take it any more and exploded under their sheer swinging groovey booginess. The two swing Czech brothers were thrown into the sky by the dance related explosion. To this day we can still see the two swingiest Czech brother dancing for all foxes to see because they are two wild and crazy guys!!!! 4