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Mooin, the Bear, the Micmacs call the four stars of the Big Dipper, or the Great Bear, Ursa Major. The three stars of the handle of the dipper, or the tail of the Bear, they say are the first three of seven hunters who pursue the Bear across the northern sky during the warm summer months: Robin (because it is a reddish star). Chickadee (because it is small like a chickadee), and Moose Bird (Gray Jay). In the constellation Bootes are the four other hunters: Pigeon, Blue Jay (because it is a blue star). Owl (Koo-koo-gwespo), and Saw-whet • the four that lose the chase as they drop from sight below the northern horizon in the late summer. Above the hunt? ers is Mooin's den, the group of stars of Corona Borealis plus two from the constel? lation Bootes. The tiny star beside Chickadee is his cooking pot (Wo, Alcor) which he carries along to cook the meat when Mooin is killed. The tale of Mooin and the seven hunters is a very old myth of the Micmacs and one which they told and still tell in the present tense because it is always happening. In the spring Mooin in the sky awakes from her long winter sleep, leaves her den and comes down the steep hills to look for food. Chickadee sees her, but being lit? tle he cannot follow the trail alone and he calls for the other hunters. Together they start off with Chickadee and his cooking pot between Robin and Moose Bird. He is so little he -FZ/a" Wo ' rV'N'tS" '-.-"ffARA *J'e g""at sky if Ro- Trte > • H ' ' • -cV" wIST'i 1> "" and Moose Bird ' RoiJiN, T*""jj>"" were not there to rv oo56 6lR0/? QaiPCHOWwffcH"""""" oci)s, after him. fWmCHA&OG-voeCH All summer Mooin runs across the northern sky and the hunters follow. But as autumn i?? Seoif far behind the others, grow weary, and one by one they lose the trail. First Owl and Saw-whet drop by the way. But you must not laugh when you hear that Saw-whet 8IU(r TAY UioLSweCH fails to share in the meat, and you must not mock his * rasping cry, for if you do, wherever you are, he will come in the night with his flaming torch of bark and burn the clothes that cover you. Then, Blue Jay and Pigeon lose the way, and in the crisp nights of autumn only , ,v 1/ r'r i?- Moose Bird and Chickadee and Robin, the hunters that are OVA'L'KOOKOO'U)e' always hunting, are on the trail. At last Mooin grows weary of the long chase and is overtaken by Robin. c # a4rTivXoiji' I? Brought to bay, Mooin rears to defend herself ;Robin 5Au;-U3HeiyKOPKecW pierces her with his arrow, and she falls dead upon her back. Hungry from the long chase, and always thin in the autumn, Robin is eager for Mooin's fat. He leaps on her bleeding body and is covered with blood. Flying to the nearest maple in sky-land he shakes off the blood • all except from his breast."That', ' Chickadee tells him, "you will have as long as your name is Robin." The blood that Robin shakes from his back spatters far and wide over the trees on the earth below. Thus, every year, comes the red on the leaves, reddest on the maples because the ma? ple in the sky receives the most blood. The sky, as you know, is just the same as the earth, only up above and older. After Robin kills Mooin, Chickadee arrives, and together they cut the meat and cook it in Chickadee's pot. As they begin to eat Moose Bird arrives. He had almost lost the trail, but when he found it again he did not hurry. He knew it would take some time for the others



to cut the meat and cook it, and he did not mind missing the work. Indeed he was so well pleased with lagging behind and arriving just as the food was ready that he has ever since ceased to hunt and follows the hunters sharing with them the spoils of the hunt. "He-who-comes-in-at-the-last-moment," Mik-chagogwech he is called. Robin and Chickadee being generous share their meat with Moose Bird, and together Robin and Moose Bird dance around the pot as Chickadee stirs the meat. And so did the Micmacs in the old days when the Indians were brothers and shared their food. All winter Mooin's skeleton lies on its back in the sky. But her life-spirit has entered another Mooin that lies on her back, invisible in the den, and sleeping the long sleep of winter. When spring touches the sky she will awake and come from her den, and will descend the steep slopes of the sky, and

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