

PEENAMIN MCKENZIE SCHOOL
ELEMENTARY DRAMA GROUP

PRESENTS

HOW PIEN WENT TO SKYLAND: THE ORIGIN OF THE BIG DIPPER

An adaptation of a Cree legend that describes how Tshi Manitu placed the Big Dipper in the sky.

CAST

Paulette Hart	Pien
Jean Paul Penashue	Pun, God
Michael Rich	Squirrel, Skyperson
Audrey Snow	Wolverine
Matthew Andrew	Otter
Pauline Nuna	Lynx, Skyperson
Shirley Hill	Mother
Christopher Andrew	Skyperson
Marcella Rich	Skyperson

SET DESIGN

Michel Gabriel
Junior High and Elementary Art

TEACHERS

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How Pien Went to the Skyland: The Origin of the Big Dipper

Pien was a great hunter. He was not big, but he was known for his determination and was regarded as one with great power. Pien's son Pun wanted to be a great hunter also. One day the son went out to try to catch something. It was not easy, for the snow was very deep and it was cold everywhere. In those days it was always winter on the earth and there was no such thing as warm weather. The son Pieniss hunted a long time with no luck. Finally, he saw a squirrel. As quietly as he could he sneaked up and then pounced catching the squirrel in his hands. Before he could kill it, the squirrel spoke to him.

"Grandson," said the squirrel, "don't kill me. I can give you some good advice."

"Speak then," said Pun.

"I see that you are shivering from the cold. If you do what I tell you, we may all enjoy warm weather. Then it will be easy for all of us to find food and not starve as we do now."

"Tell me what to do Grandfather," Pun said.

"Go home and say nothing. Just sit down in your tent and begin to weep. Your mother will ask you what is wrong, but you must not answer her. If she tries to comfort you or give you food you must refuse it. When your father comes home he will ask you why you are weeping. Then you can speak. Tell him the winds are too cold and the snow is too deep. Tell him that he must bring warm weather back to the earth."

So young Pun went home. He sat in the corner of the tent and cried. His mother asked him what was wrong but he did not answer. She offered him food but he pushed it away. When his father returned and saw his only son weeping he went to his side.

"What is wrong son?" Pien said. Then young Pun said what the squirrel had told him to say.

"I am weeping because the wind is too cold and the snow is too deep. We are all starving because of the winter. I want you to use your powers to bring the warm weather to earth."

"The thing you are asking of me is hard to do," said Pun, "but you are right. I will do all I can to grant your wish."

Then Pien had a great feast. He invited all his friends and told them what he planned to do.

"I am going to go to the place where the skyland is closest to the earth." he said. "There in the skyland the people have all the warm weather. I intend to go there to bring some of that warm weather back. Then the snow will go away and we will have plenty to eat."

All of Pien's friends were pleased and offered to go with him. So when Pien set out he took the strongest of his friends along. Those friends were the otter, the lynx and the wolverine.

The four of them travelled for a long time through the snow. They went towards the mountains, higher and higher each day. Pien had with him a pack filled with dried caribou and they all ate from it. At last after many, many days they came to the highest mountain and climbed to its top. Then Pien took a pipe out of his pouch.

We must offer our smoke to the four directions," Pien said. The four of them smoked and sent their prayers to Tshi she Manitu, asking for success. The sky was very close above them, but they had to find some way to break into the land above. "We must jump up," said Pien. "Who will go first?"

"I will try," said Otter. He leaped up and struck the sky but he did not break through. Instead he fell back and slid on his belly all the way to the bottom of the mountain. To this day all otters slide like that in the snow.

"Now it is my turn," said Lynx. He jumped too, striking hard against the sky and falling back unconscious. Pien tried then but even he did not have enough power.

"Now it is your turn," said Pien to Wolverine. "You are the strongest of us all."

Wolverine leaped. He struck hard against the sky and fell back but he did not give up. He leaped again until he made a crack in the sky. Once more he leaped and finally broke through. Pien jumped through the hole in the sky after him.

The skyland was a beautiful place. It was warm and sunny and there were plants and flowers of all kinds growing. They could here the singing of birds all around them but they could see no people. Pien and Wolverine grew excited. They wanted to bring back the warmth and beauty of skyland to their people.

Wolverine and Pien began to make the hole in the skyland bigger. The warmth of the skyland began to fall through the hole and the land below began to grow warmer.

But the sky people came out when they saw what was happening. They ran towards Pien and Wolverine shouting loudly.

"Thieves," they shouted. "Stop taking our warm weather!"

Wolverine jumped back through the hole to escape but Pien kept making the hole bigger. He knew that if he didn't make it big enough, the sky people would quickly close the hole again and it would be winter again in the land below. He made the whole larger and larger. Finally just when the sky people were very close he stopped.

The hole was big enough for warm weather for half the year to escape through but it was not big enough for enough warm weather to last all the time. That is why the winter still comes back every year. Pien knew that the sky people might try to close the hole in the sky. He had to take their attention away from it so he taunted them.

"I am Pien the great hunter," he said. "You cannot catch me." Then he climbed the tallest tree in skyland. All the sky people ran to grab him but they could not reach him.

At first the sky people did not know what to do. Then they began to shoot arrows at him. But Pien wasn't hurt for he had a special power. There was only one place on his foot where an arrow could kill him. Finally though the sky people guessed where his magic was and shot at that place. An arrow struck the fatal spot. Pien turned over on his back and began to fall.

But Pien never struck the earth. Tshi she Manitu took pity on him. because he had kept his promise and done something to help his people. Tshi she Manitu placed Pien high up in the sky among the

stars.

If you look up into the sky you can still see him even though some people call that pattern of stars the big dipper. Every year he crosses the sky. When the arrow strikes him, he rolls over onto his back in the winter sky. But when the winter is almost ended he faithfully turns to his feet and starts out once more on his long journey to bring the warm weather back to the earth.



The Cast
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