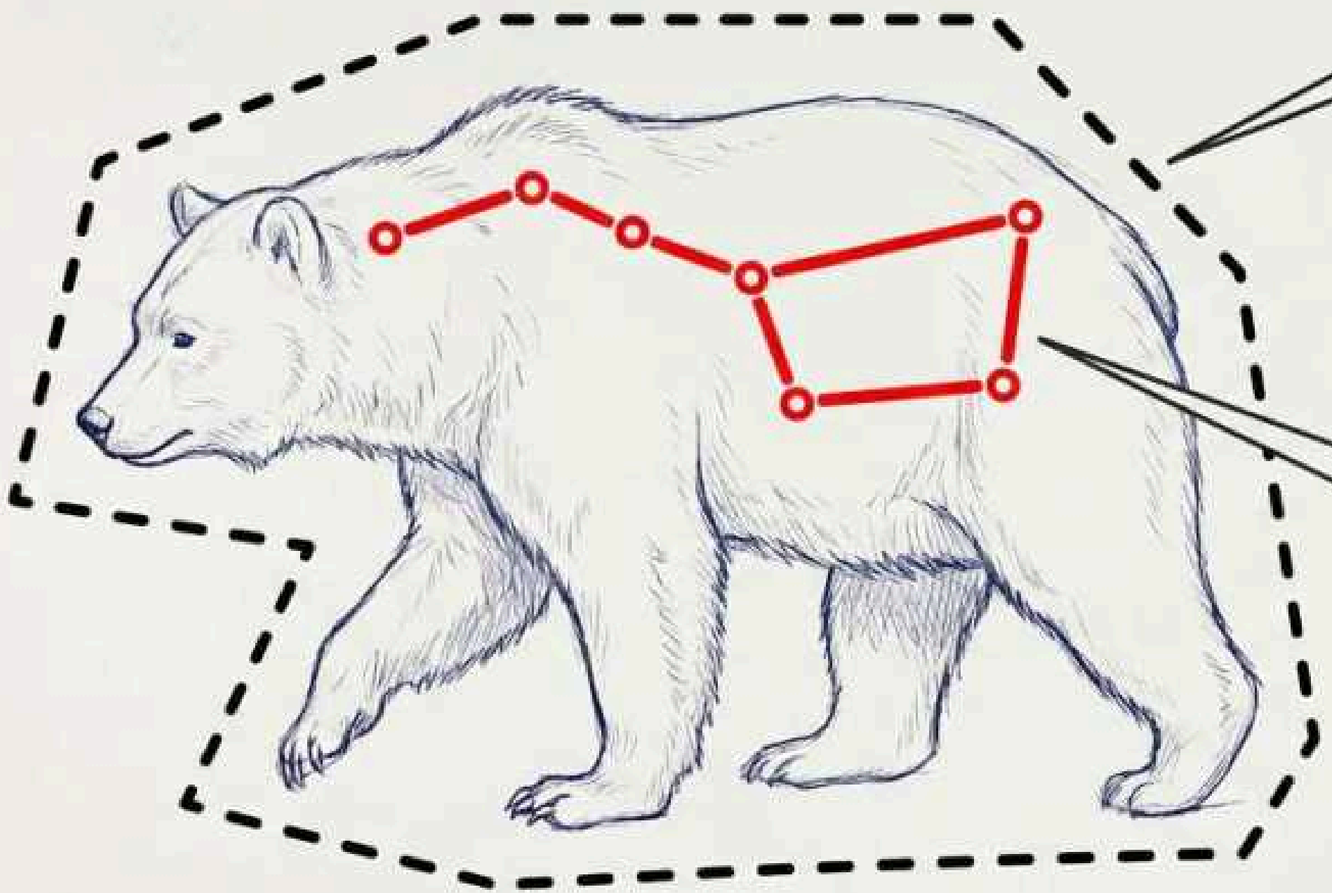
The Spring and Summer Sky: Landmarks

¶ 3.1

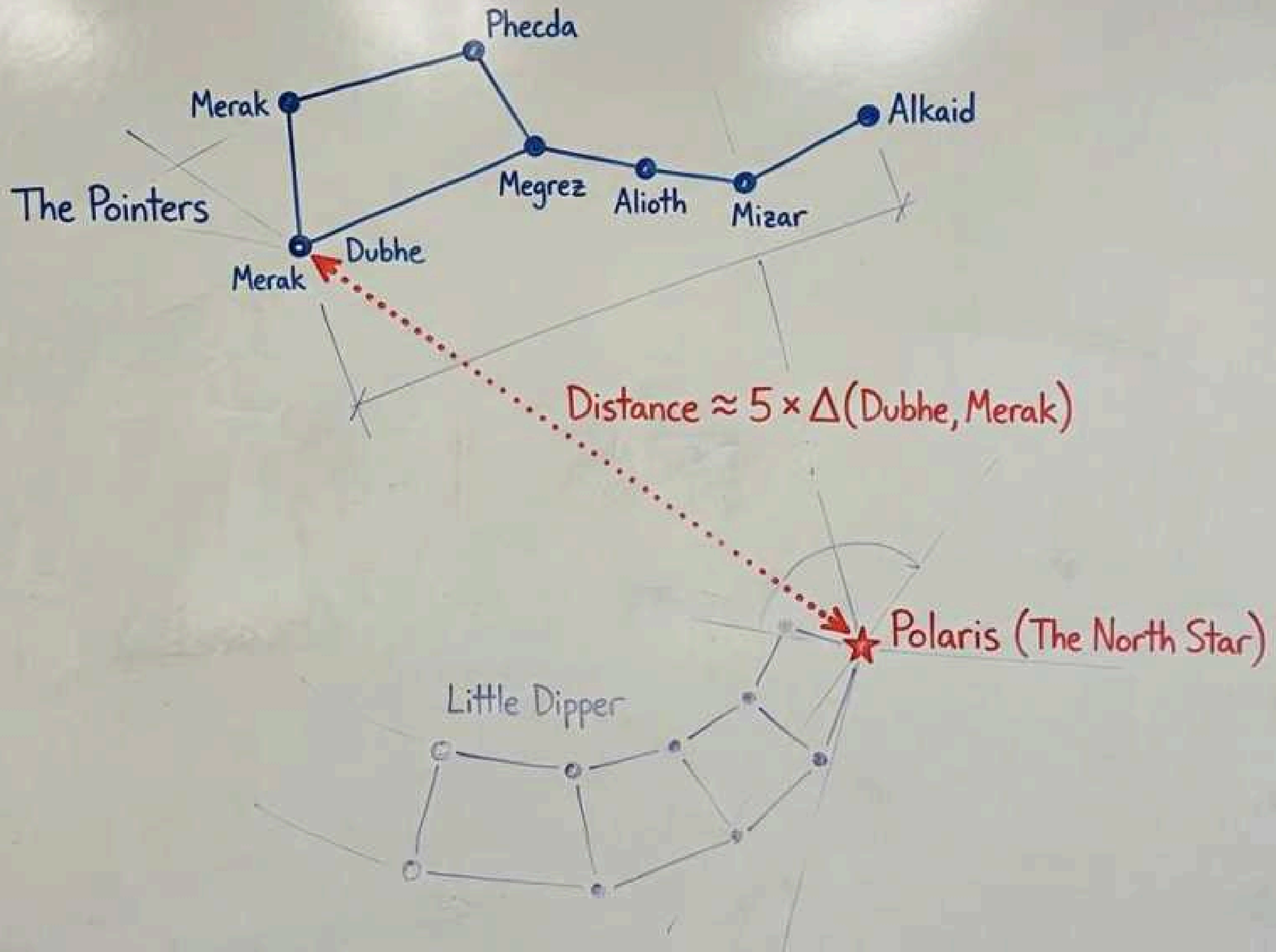


Constellations:

The 88 officially recognized regions of the sky (ancient boundaries).

Asterisms:

Bright, recognizable star patterns within or spanning constellations.


Phecda
Merak
Alkaid
Megrez
Alioth
Mizar
The Pointers
Dubhe
Merak
Distance ≈ 5 × Δ(Dubhe, Merak)
Polaris (The North Star)
Little Dipper

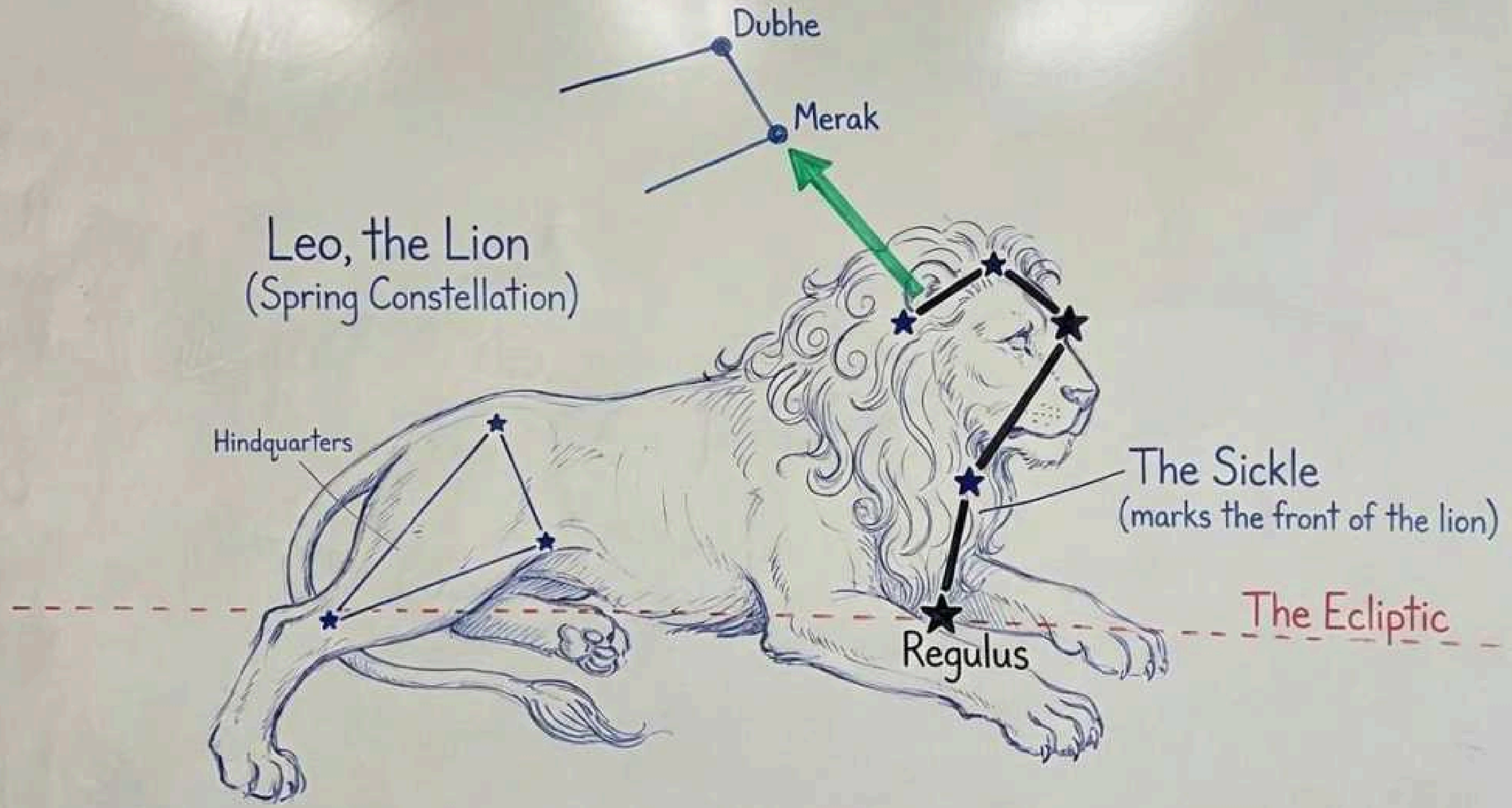


Arc to Arcturus...

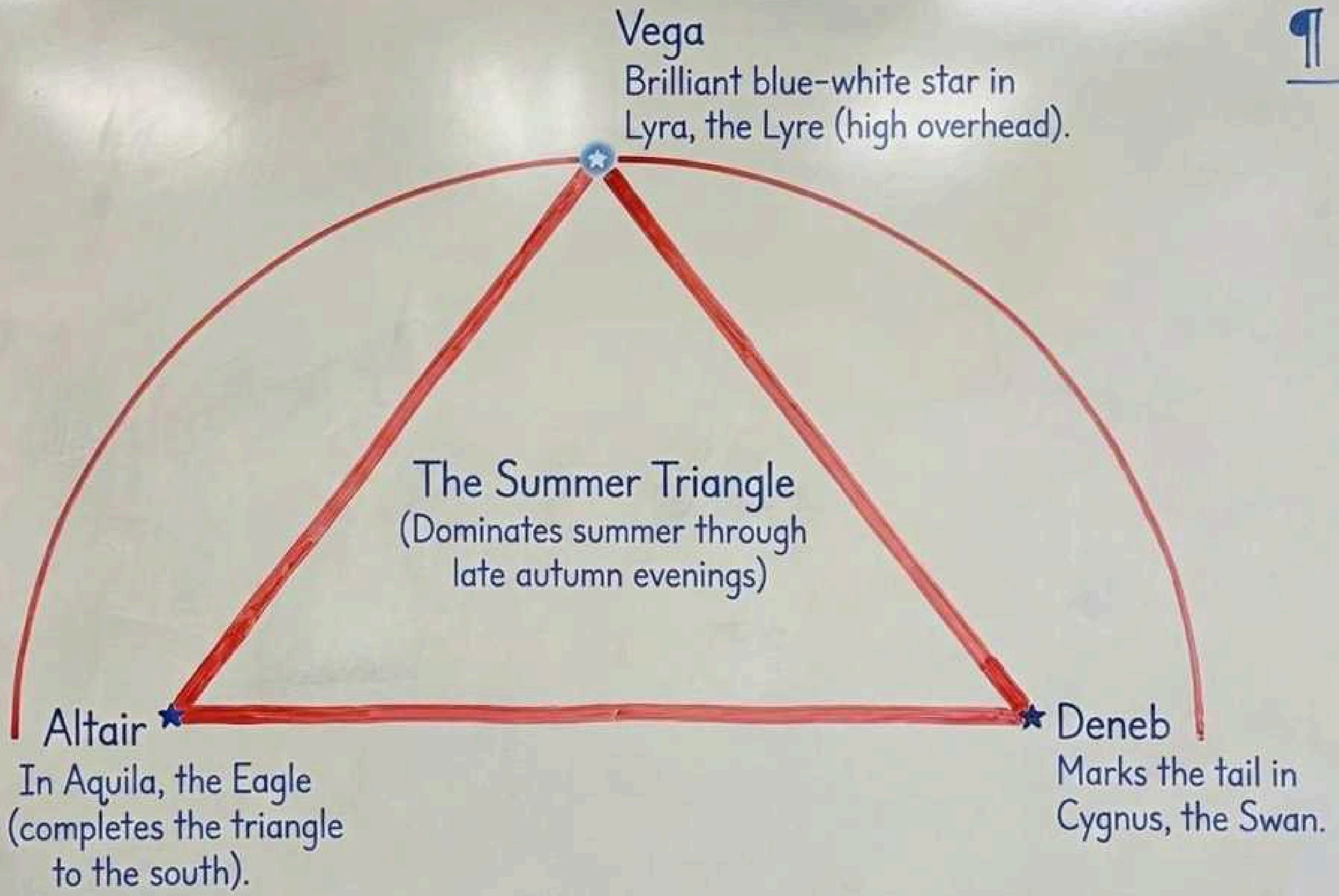
Arcturus (in Boötes, the Herdsman)
The brightest star in the northern half of the sky.

...speed on to Spica

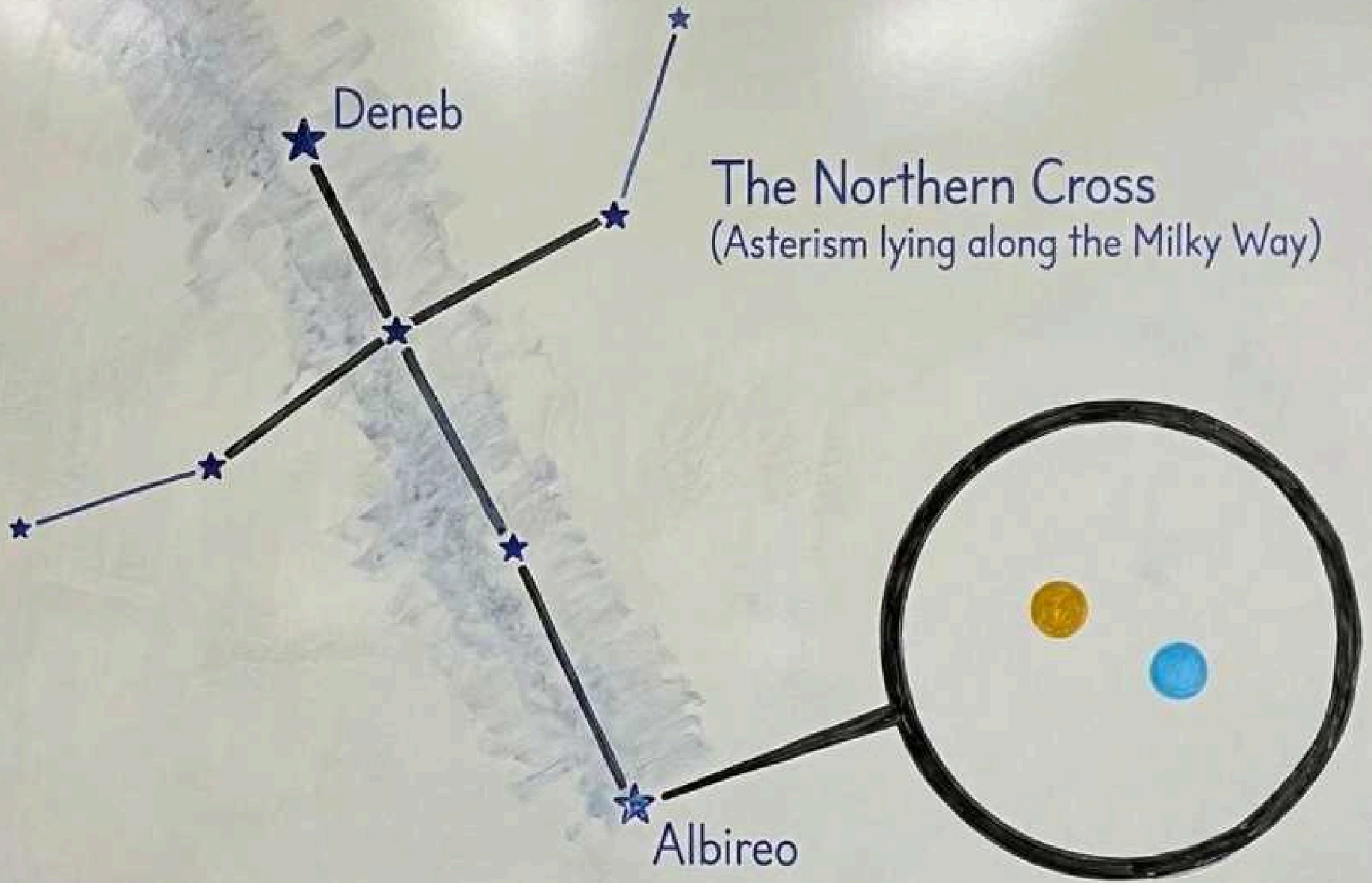
Spica (in Virgo)
Sits low in the south
on spring evenings.


Dubhe
Merak
Leo, the Lion
(Spring Constellation)
Hindquarters
The Sickle
(marks the front of the lion)
The Ecliptic
Regulus

¶ 3.5


Vega
Brilliant blue-white star in
Lyra, the Lyre (high overhead).
The Summer Triangle
(Dominates summer through
late autumn evenings)
Altair
In Aquila, the Eagle
(completes the triangle
to the south).
Deneb
Marks the tail in
Cygnus, the Swan.

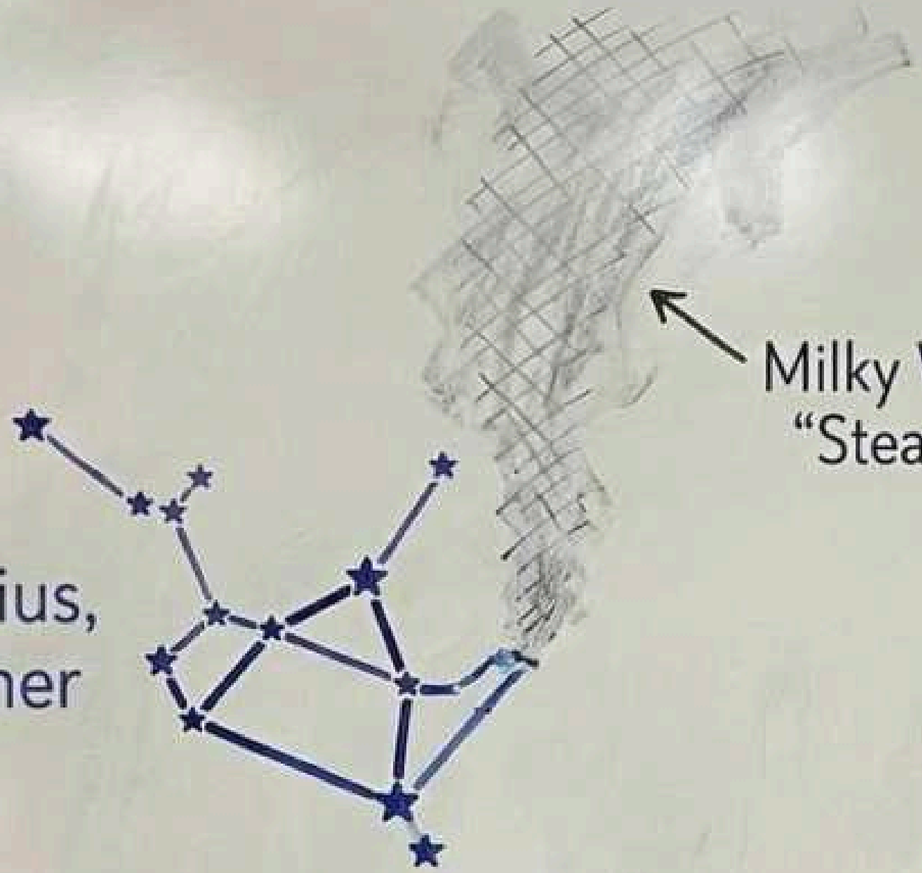
¶ 3.6



The Northern Cross

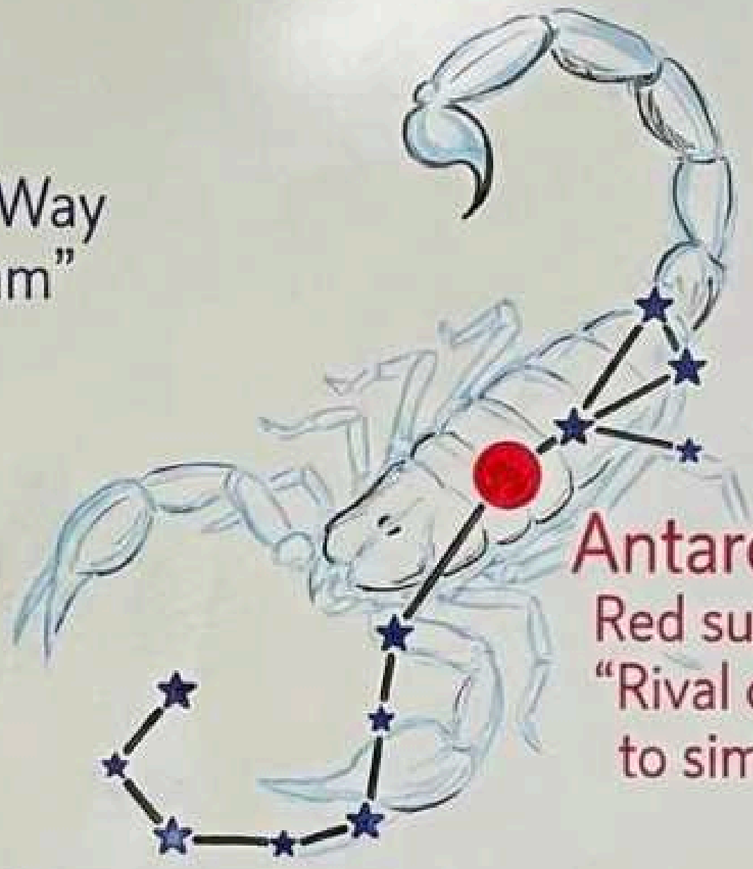
(Asterism lying along the Milky Way)

¶ 3.7



Milky Way
"Steam"

Sagittarius,
the Archer

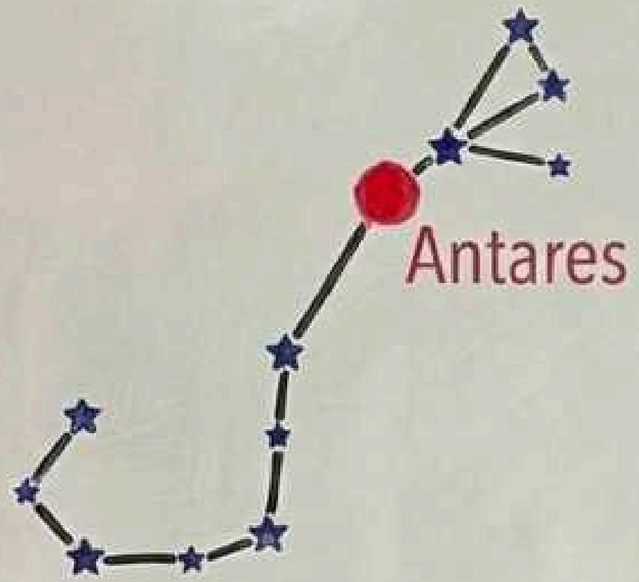


Scorpius

Antares
Red supergiant /
"Rival of Mars" due
to similar color

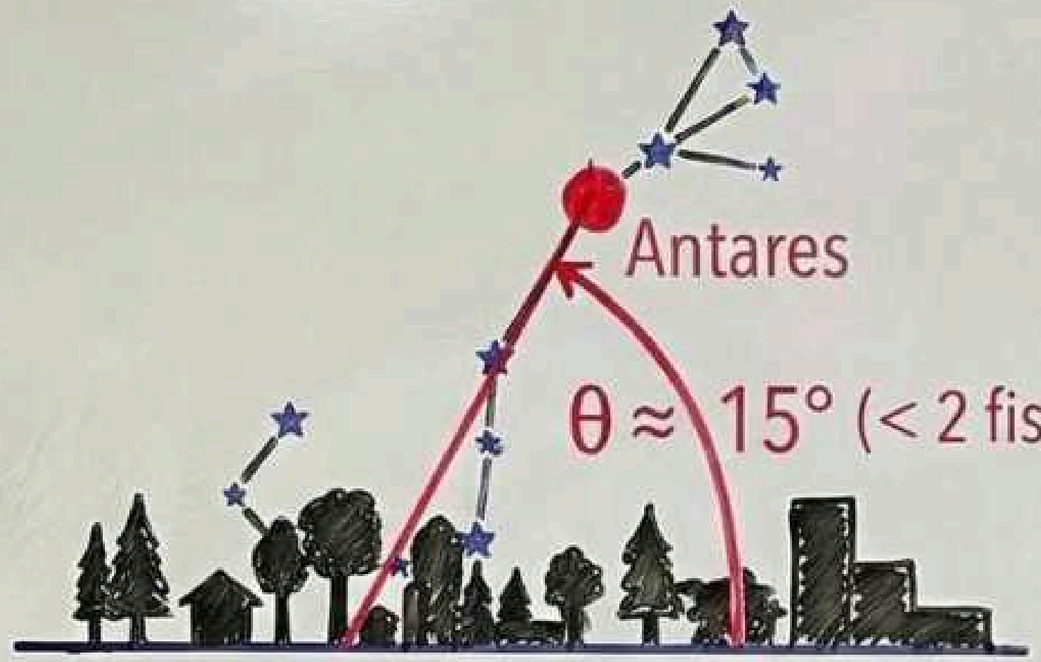
¶ 3.8

Florida



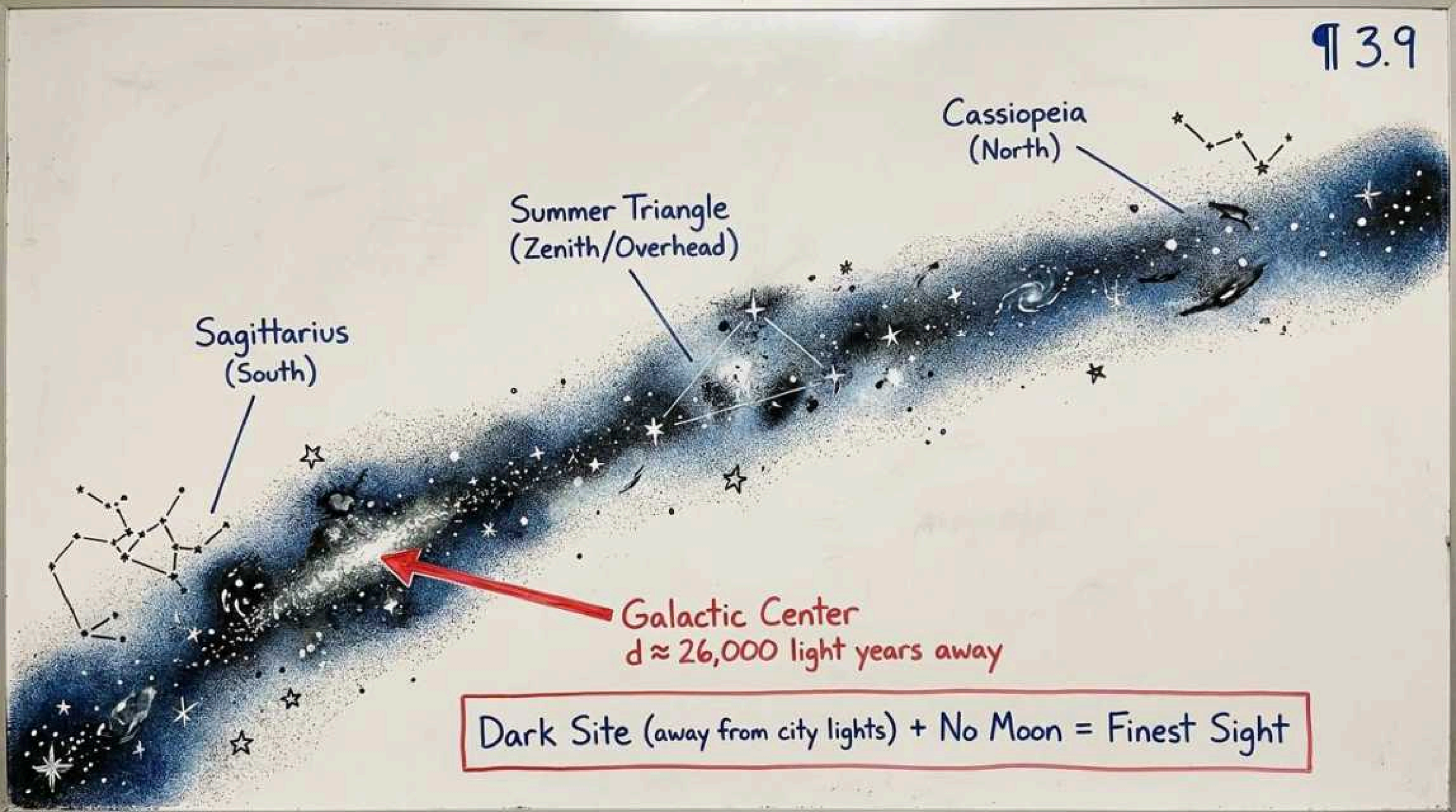
Scorpius rises well clear of the horizon; entire tail/stinger visible.

Seattle



Stinger barely clears horizon, hidden by trees/buildings. Sagittarius sits much lower as well.

¶ 3.9

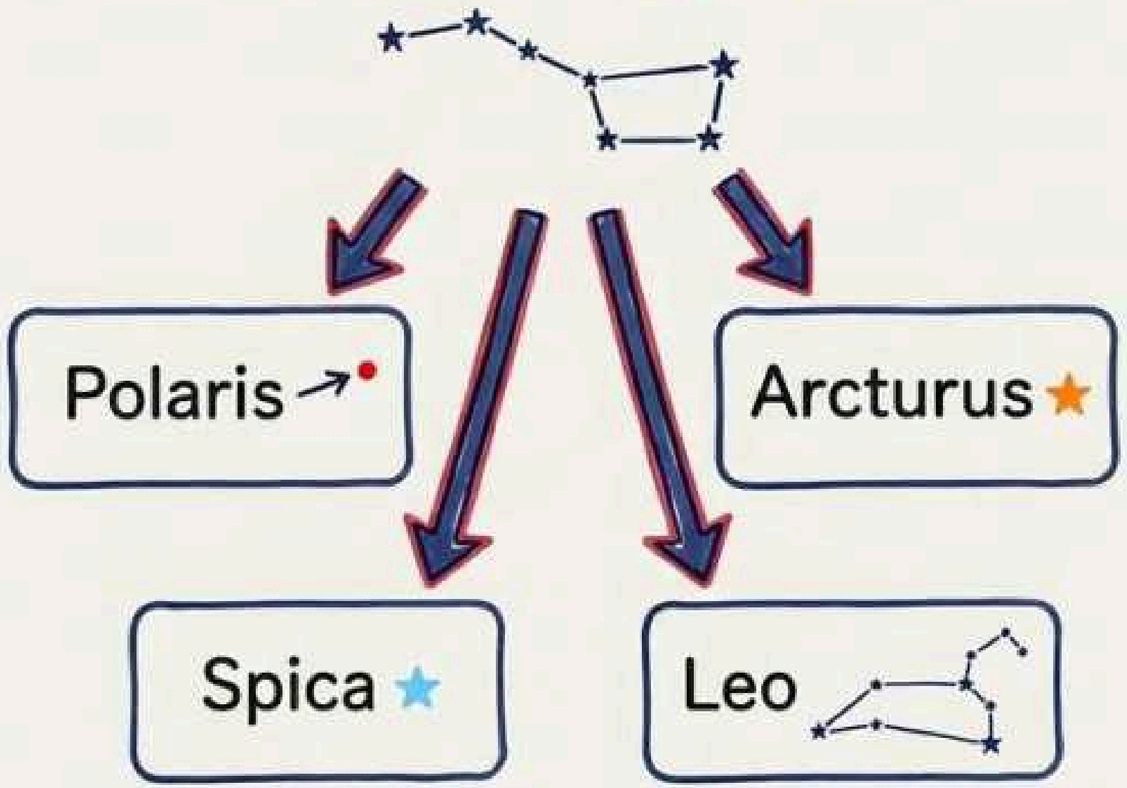


Dark Site (away from city lights) + No Moon = Finest Sight

Mastering the Sky: The Two Keys

Spring Focus

KEY 1: The Big Dipper



Summer Focus

KEY 2: The Summer Triangle



Next: The Autumn and Winter Sky...