TONIGHT'S SKY

December 2017

1
00:00:06,400 --> 00:00:10,280
Your guide to constellations, deep-sky objects,

2
00:00:10,280 --> 00:00:14,660
planets, and events,

3
00:00:14,660 --> 00:00:35,440
Tonight's Sky, highlights of the December Sky

4
00:00:35,440 --> 00:00:38,940
Two prominent constellations in the December night sky

5
00:00:38,940 --> 00:00:41,820
represent notable individuals of

6
00:00:41,820 --> 00:00:49,120
ancient Greek mythology.

7
00:00:49,120 --> 00:00:53,540
The great hero Perseus holds the head of Medusa

8
00:00:53,540 --> 00:00:55,760
the Gorgon.

9
00:00:55,760 --> 00:01:01,340
Located in Perseus is M34, an open star cluster

10
00:01:01,340 --> 00:01:11,160
about 1,400 light-years away from us.

11
00:01:11,160 --> 00:01:14,780
Open star clusters are groups of young stars

12
00:01:14,780 --> 00:01:17,240
that all formed at the same time

13
00:01:17,240 --> 00:01:21,680

within a large cloud of dust and gas.

14
00:01:21,680 --> 00:01:23,740
Look for it with the naked eye

15
00:01:23,740 --> 00:01:31,280
or with binoculars in a dark sky.

16
00:01:41,360 --> 00:01:45,000
Queen Cassiopeia was punished for her conceit

17
00:01:45,000 --> 00:01:54,020
and vanity by being tied to her throne.

18
00:01:54,020 --> 00:01:57,060
Cassiopeia’s “M” or “W” shape

19
00:01:57,060 --> 00:02:02,600
makes this constellation easy to identify.

20
00:02:02,600 --> 00:02:06,500
Eta Cassiopeiae is a wonderful and colorful

21
00:02:06,500 --> 00:02:10,440
double star. Use binoculars or a small telescope

22
00:02:10,440 --> 00:02:16,460
to discern its gold and blue hues.

23
00:02:16,460 --> 00:02:22,000
M103 in Cassiopeia is a fine open star cluster

24
00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:29,760
with a prominent red star near the center.

25
00:02:31,520 --> 00:02:38,260
Its fan shape is evident in binoculars.

26
00:02:38,260 --> 00:02:41,720
Lying between Cassiopeia and Perseus

27
00:02:41,720 --> 00:02:44,440
is the lovely Double Cluster.

28
00:02:44,440 --> 00:02:47,920
This pair of open star clusters is easy to see

29
00:02:47,920 --> 00:02:49,780
with binoculars.

30
00:02:49,780 --> 00:02:54,120
The Double Cluster resembles a handful of diamonds

31
00:02:54,120 --> 00:03:02,360
scattered on black velvet, with a ruby in between.

32
00:03:11,420 --> 00:03:15,760
Mars and Jupiter ascend into the southeastern sky

33
00:03:15,760 --> 00:03:21,220
well before the Sun appears.

34
00:03:26,840 --> 00:03:30,160
Aim a telescope at the planets to get a better look

35
00:03:30,160 --> 00:03:37,160
at their features.

36
00:03:40,440 --> 00:03:43,740
Late in the month, dim Mercury peeks above

37
00:03:43,740 --> 00:03:51,960
the horizon just before dawn.

38
00:03:56,880 --> 00:04:00,080

If you have a telescope that’s powerful enough,

39
00:04:00,080 --> 00:04:09,120
you might be able to identify the small planet’s phase.

40
00:04:16,280 --> 00:04:20,060
The mid-December night sky hosts the lovely

41
00:04:20,060 --> 00:04:22,920
Geminid meteor shower.

42
00:04:22,920 --> 00:04:26,520
The shower peaks on the night of December 13th

43
00:04:26,520 --> 00:04:29,600
to the 14th.

44
00:04:29,600 --> 00:04:34,000
Under a dark sky, you could see as many as 60

45
00:04:34,000 --> 00:04:37,780
colorful meteors per hour.