

# Big asteroid will eclipse bright star Thursday

March 18 2014, by Marcia Dunn

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Skywatchers, get ready to see a rare vanishing act—and don't blink.

In the wee hours of Thursday, a 45-mile-wide asteroid will eclipse the brightest star in the Constellation Leo. The asteroid is 163 Erigone in the [asteroid belt](#) between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. The star briefly disappearing will be Regulus.

This so-called occultation will last no more than 14 seconds, around 2 a.m. EDT. It could be as short as a fraction of a second.

What makes this unusual is the brightness of Regulus and the potential viewing audience. Weather permitting, the eclipse should be visible with the naked eye from New York City and elsewhere along a populated swath in the U.S. Northeast and eastern Canada.

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