

SPACE SCOOP
NEWS FROM ACROSS THE UNIVERSE



It's My Turn to Shine!
April 25, 2012

Look at this gorgeous star-filled photo. Where is your eye drawn to in the picture? Is it the bright collection of blue and white stars that is just to the left of centre? This is a young star cluster, which contains lots of very hot stars.

Now, click on the photo to see the full picture. The sparkling star cluster is still there (in the top-left of the photo), but now there are lots of other things fighting for your attention. In particular, the red cloud of gas in the bottom part of the picture is stealing a lot of the spotlight.

The star cluster is also very close to a much larger cloud of gas in the night sky, called the Eagle Nebula, which isn't shown in this picture. In photos that show the huge Eagle Nebula, the star cluster fades into insignificance. What a horrible fall from fame!

Astronomers often photograph small regions of the night sky so that objects that are normally overlooked, like this star cluster, can have their moment in the spotlight. You can try it for yourself: Use your hands to cover up parts of this photo to create a completely different picture. Does it help you to spot something that you hadn't noticed before?

▲ COOL FACT!

This is the newest photo released by the European Southern Observatory, but they have thousands of pictures! You can find their top 100 pictures here: www.eso.org/public/images/archive/top100