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A Very Special Moon Tonight

AUGUST 20TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

A Very Special Moon Tonight

*Written by
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Dexter, Missouri - *"Blue Moon, you saw me standing alone, without a dream in my heart, without a love of my own!"*

Some of us might just remember those lyrics, a song sung by many including Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and even Elvis Presley.

If you were out late Monday evening then you would have viewed an almost perfectly round moon in the night sky. You couldn't help but sing those lyrics!

Tonight it will be a Blue Moon that lights up the night sky! But it won't be a Blue Moon by the most popular definition of the term – the second of two full moons to occur in the same calendar month. Nor is the moon likely to be blue in color, as that's caused by exceedingly rare atmospheric conditions.

Rather, the August 2013 full moon will present the third of four full moons to fall in the same season. A season is defined as the period of time in between a solstice and an equinox – or vice versa. This full moon is the third of four full moons to take place between the June 2013 solstice and the September 2013 equinox. That makes the August 2013 full moon a Blue Moon!

Although the full moon happens at the same moment worldwide, the clock reads differently by time zone. The moon turns full in Missouri on Tuesday, August 20, at 8:45 p.m. ***Astronomically speaking, the moon is full when it's most directly opposite the sun for the month.***

Many of you may not be familiar with the definition of Blue Moon as the third of four full moons in one season. But this definition actually preceded the more modern definition of a Blue Moon as being the second of two full moons to occur in one calendar month.

In both instances, the Blue Moon is a calendar oddity caused by the 19-year Metonic cycle. There are 235 full moons in 19 calendar years, but only 228 calendar months (or 76 three-month seasons). Therefore, it's inevitable that 7 out of 19 years will feature two full moons in one calendar month. And it's also inevitable that 7 out of 19 years will have four full moons in one season.

Now that's a lot of full moons! However they occur we are sure that tonight's moon will be big, bold and beautiful! Let's celebrate the August 2013 Blue Moon – the third of four full moons to take place between the June solstice and the September equinox!

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