Supergiant stars show their colors. On cold winter nights hot stars twinkle overhead, but some are hotter than others! At only 3600 degrees, Betelgeuse [ BEE – tell – juice ] twinkles pale orange at Orion’s shoulder, about a hands-width at arm’s-length above Orion’s belt, while at his knee Rigel [ RYE – jel ] glitters like a blue diamond at over 12,000 degrees. Both of these supergiant stars are less than 10 million years old, and within 100,000 years both will end their short stellar lives in supernova explosions, briefly becoming bright enough to be visible in the daytime.

Fun Facts

Betelgeuse
- temperature 3600 K;
- 10th brightest star in the sky
- mass 17 X sun
- size 760 X sun
- luminosity 126,000 X sun
- age ~8 million years

Rigel
- temperature 12,100 K
- 7th brightest star in the sky
- mass 20 X sun
- size 80 X sun
- luminosity 120,000 X sun
- age ~8 million years

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