



The Silent War

Ben Bova

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When corporations go to war, standard business practice goes out the window. Astro Corporation is led by indomitable Texan Pancho Lane, Humphries Space Systems by the rich and ruthless Martin Humphries, and their fight is over nothing less than resources of the Asteroid Belt itself. As fighting escalates, the lines between commerce and politics, boardroom and bedroom, blur--and the keys to victory will include physics, nanotechnology, and cold hard cash.

As they fight it out, the lives of thousands of innocents hang in the balance, including the rock rats who make their living off the asteroids, and the inhabitants of Selene City on Earth's moon. As if matters weren't complicated enough, the shadowy Yamagata corporation sets its sights on taking advantage of other people's quarrels, and space pirate Lars Fuchs decides it's time to make good on his own personal vendetta.

It's a breakneck finale that can end only in earth's salvation--or the annihilation of all that humankind has ever accomplished in space.

The Silent War Details

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Andy says

Pretty much continues from where The Rock Rats left off....the characters that Bova developed so well in the first two asteroid war books continue to battle for the riches of the asteroid belt, as well as resolve their personality differences in various ways. Humphries, Astro Corporation, and Yamagata Corporation fall into a deadly battle for control of this vast area of treasures. Bova ends this one with mention of an alien artifact which casts an air of morality over the entire story. Another good read in the Grand Tour.

Daniel Kukwa says

I nearly knocked it down to three stars, as the on-going war combined with multiple plot lines to drive me to distraction in this novel's middle section. Luckily, the emotional stakes were considerably raised in the third act, and Martin Humphries remains one of the most deliciously vile & despicable characters in science fiction. This is as grand & expansive as space opera gets.

Timothy Miller says

I didn't like the wrap up. It was like another book started.
The first in the series was the best.

AndrewP says

Book three in the Asteroid Wars sub series and tenth overall in the Grand Tour series.

Following on from the events told in The Rock Rats, the two mega corporations continue vying for control of the asteroid belts resources. Because the corporations control a lot of the media, little information about the escalating violence gets out to the general population, hence the title The Silent War. Things really get out of hand at the end and flew through the last 100 pages in one sitting. Exciting stuff.

I enjoyed this one a little more than the previous one. It had most of the same characters, so less back story. Some action, but at times a bit predictable knowing that this mini series had another book to go. There were a couple of references to something I have not read yet, so now I need to go back and read Jupiter before the last book in this sequence 'The Aftermath'.

3.5 stars overall.

Chris Jackson says

Rather disappointing in the characterization department, and the story seems to be stilted. Bova writes clean, crisp, hard SF, but when the characters aren't right, that's not enough. A lot of incoherent thought and action. I also find it difficult to buy that a raving maniac could ever reach the position of CEO of the biggest corporation and, and richest man in the solar system.

One thing he nailed, however, is the idea that if and when corporations reach an environment (the asteroid belt, in this instance) that they can exploit without any governmental intervention, disaster will be, and has been in the past, the inevitable result. I don't really see the CEOs of big corporations making decisions that will make or break the corporations based on personal desires really working, however. That's what boards of directors are for. They also, if they have any savvy at all, do not hire drug-addicted, psychotic, mass murderers as their heads of their quasi-military space fleets.

Sorry, Ben, but you lost me...

Jim says

This was the best of the first three books. Ben Bova moves the plot quickly, making the action exciting and knuckle-biting. One of the things I loved was the technical detail Ben Bova gives to the science of space and physics. His space battles aren't like Star Wars. There's no sound in space. I also liked how the author developed the political personalities of his characters. Each major character in the story has a strong political view of the World. The author defines each character's views and keeps them consistent throughout the books.

Chris Dietzel says

This was the first Space Opera I've ever read and also the first Ben Bova book. There was a lot to like and also a lot that left me scratching my head. On the downside, the characters were extremely two-dimensional and the writing relied heavily on devices that are typically frowned upon (i.e., constant use of adverbs and varying speech tags). But on the upside, the pace was nonstop and the author did an excellent job of managing a huge cast of characters. For me, the book's biggest strength was how well it incorporated the idea of two of the world's wealthiest people going to war against each other. I could easily see one of Cornelius Vanderbilt's famous historical feud's being placed into outer space and having it carried out there.

Kevin Black says

Remarkable book. It helps greatly to have read the 2-3 books that introduce the main characters. The book animates the people, conditions and factors that lead gradually but inexorably to a war. The characters are bigger than life but quite believable.

Derek says

Ben Bova knows how to create some interesting characters and stories. In particular, I liked how many of the characters would develop and change over the course of these books (this is the third book in the Asteroid Wars series). Lars, Amanda, Pancho, Big George and others take interesting but believable turns throughout the story.

Another strong point of this book was its portrayal of the "fog of war". In the final 1/3 of the book, everyone's plans begin breaking down and it seems like absolutely NOTHING turns out as expected. That alone kept me up until 12:00 one night finishing it!

So why only 3 stars and not 4 or 5. In short, it was the ending. The war ended way too abruptly. (I think there is another half to this book sitting as a manuscript somewhere.) Also, what's up with the alien artifact that begins and ends the book? Is it the lead-in to another story somewhere?

I liked this book (and the entire series) but you can't just end it like that. I feel like I was on a (fusion) rocket headed for Mars and, for whatever reason, it dropped me off on the moon!

Devon says

Silent War is a repeat of Rock Rats (book #2 in trilogy). All the same characters fighting over all the same things. The battles and settings have a fresh coat of paint, but Bova has already told this story before. The only difference is the relative LACK of character development compared to the previous book. The action picks up in the second half of this book as it did in Rock Rats, but it's not enough to drag this book up to two stars.

On top of that there are the usual issues that keep Bova books stuck in the 1 or 2-star category:

- Viewpoint is sloppy
- Too many unimportant characters, each with a corny half-page biography
- Too much telling, not enough showing
- Too many morons
- Main characters are shallow, difficult to sympathize with them
- Frequent bad science & contradictions
- Frequent gaping holes of logic
- Too much melodrama

Crusader says

A good read. Much more action packed than the first couple of novels in the series. The ending is a bit disappointing, leaving quite a few questions to be answered. However since there is now a fourth book in the series I think some of those will be addressed there.

Christian says

The Silent War by Ben Bova is the final book in the Asteroid Wars series, following The Precipice and The Rock Rats. This book is action-packed, with the novel chronicling the Second Asteroid War between Humphries Space Systems and Astro Corporation. However, the book actually dedicates little time on the actual battles of the war, instead mentioning it multiple times and occasionally showing a battle between ships. I was disappointed by this, but there was still plenty of other action to go around, much of it involving Pancho Lane, Lars Fuchs, and Dorik Harbin. I won't spoil anything, but the two large action sequences towards the end of the book were VERY intense and kept the pages turning. The book's prologue, while intriguing, also requires a follow-up epilogue that doesn't make sense. The prologue should have been more directly tied to the events of the novel, as should the epilogue. Bova also continues to struggle with romance, for in my entire time reading the Asteroid Wars series I never truly believed that Fuchs loved Amanda Cunningham or that Humphries did either. Fuchs' feelings towards Amanda by this book finally become somewhat believable, but I honestly never REALLY felt that there was any sort of love from Humphries to Amanda. Bova also seems to struggle slightly with including out-of-date themes in this book, such as the somewhat macho sexism, mainly in The Rock Rats. The pet names, such as "darling" and "dearest", also seemed out of place and annoying. All in all, The Silent War, like many of Bova's other books, offers a wild, if flawed ride, but doesn't ever really appeal to be read a second time. For those of you who have read the first three books in the Asteroid Wars series and are considering Book 4, The Aftermath, my advice is don't. While I haven't read The Aftermath personally, I have read of the plot, which doesn't involve any of the best characters from the first three books and just seems like something tacked on last minute. Finishing The Silent War is a good way to wrap up the other two books of the series. All in all, Bova is a decent but flawed writer, and I recommend this and other books for one-time adventures.

Tim says

I hadn't read any Ben Bova previously and this was maybe not the best place to begin. This was the third of a trilogy 'The Asteroid Wars' and part of a much bigger 'grand tour' series and was concerned with a war over raw materials in the asteroid belt in the future. I don't read much pure space opera but will read more Bova in the future, I shall read the first two in the trilogy at some point.

Sean Crandall says

I'd probably give this more of a two and half stars rating - the beginning and end of this book were odd and even awkward to the story in this book and the series as a whole. The rest of the book was decent, but I wish some things were resolved. I felt disappointed after finishing this book.

Dark-Draco says

It's been a while since I read the first two books in the series, so it took me a while to get back into the swing

of things. Lars Fuchs is still acting the pirate out in the asteroid belt, punishing Humphries business because he stole his wife. But Humphries has other things on his mind - he wants another son and he wants Amanda to give it to him. She in turn plots her own revenge. Meanwhile Pancho Lane chaffs at being the CEO of Astro Corporation, but when an assination attempt nearly works, she only has Humphries to blame. Soon, both Corporations are at war, blaming each other for losses of life and money, unaware that a third party is pulling all the strings.

Like the other books, this jumps around quite a lot and whereas the short chapters add urgency to the later action packed storylines, they are a bit annoying at the slower beginning of the book. I'm not sure that I get the very beginning and ending of the book - maybe that will all come clear in the final installment of the series.
