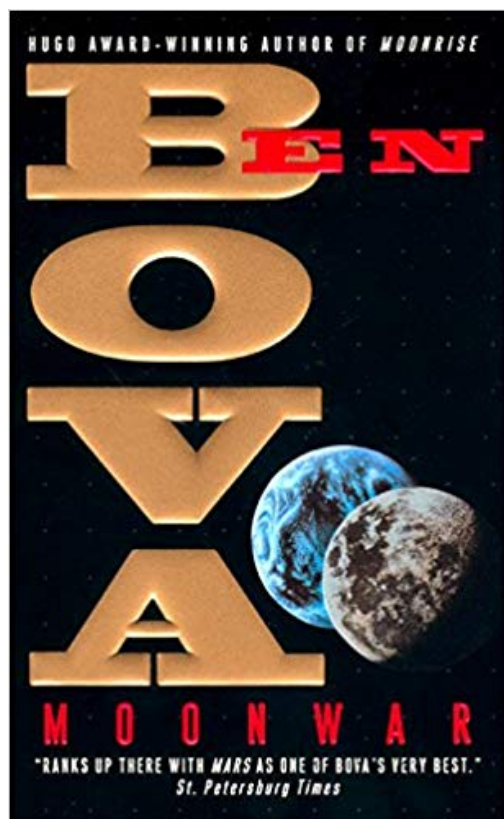


## Moonwar by Ben Bova



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**Author:** Ben Bova

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Ben Bova's extraordinary Moonbase Saga continues with a breathtaking near-future adventure rich in character and incident. The action begins seven years after the indomitable Stavenger family has realized its cherished dream of establishing a colony on the inhospitable lunar surface. Moonbase is now a thriving community under the leadership of Doug Stavenger, a marvel of scientific achievement created and supported by nanotechnology: virus-size machines that can build, cure, and destroy. But nanotechnology has been declared illegal by the home planet's leaders. And a powerful despot is determined to lay claim to Stavenger's peaceful city...or obliterate it, if necessary. The people of Moonbase--a colony with no arms or military--must now defend themselves from earth-born aggression with the only weapon at their disposal: the astonishing technology that sustains their endangered home.



## Reviews of the Moonwar by Ben Bova

Wiliniett

As a disclaimer for my review, I'll mention that I'm trying to read all of the Grand Tour (17ish) books in their chronological order - which is not the order they were written in. Moonwar is the seventh book in the chronological order and the 2nd book of the mini "Moon" series, preceded by Moonbase.

Taking place eight years after the end of Moonbase, Moonwar follows the ongoing exploits of an industrial and research base on the moon as it strives for independence from increasingly hostile Earth governments. Georges Faure has come to power as the director general of the UN and beneath his charismatic exterior, Faure hides his megalomaniac side which is intent on consolidating power within the hands of the UN and turning it into a global dictatorship under his control. Faure plans to use other mega-corporations and the fears of a growing fundamentalist religious movement, The New Morality, to force Moonbase to surrender to the UN and give up their nanomachines, which are vital to life on the moon. Faced with both political maneuvering and an outright invasion, the leaders of Moonbase will face an uphill battle for independence, or even survival.

Moonwar brings out some of Bova's best and worst characteristics. In the area of best is his ability to write good sci-fi thrillers. Frankly, the last 70 pages of Moonwar fell into the category of "can't put it down" for me and I found myself staying up way too late on a week night trying to finish the last few chapters. The book as a whole is well paced and seldom hits slow spots and descriptions of the moon, Moonbase and other technical aspects are usually well done. The use of the moon's harsh atmospheric condition is also used well throughout the book. In Moonwar, I also found the protagonists (primarily Doug Stravenger and his family and friends) more likable than in many of the other Grand Tour novels that I've read so far. Having more sympathetic protagonists helped build tension and add a human element to a pretty straight forward "good guys vs bad guys" novel.

On the other hand, Bova falls into his usual list of low points here. Faure as the antagonist is so over the top as to be unbelievable. While the written description of Faure refers to him as brilliant, he seems anything but. As other reviews have pointed out, Faure is quite transparent and there's no way he could have obtained the political power he has. Without trying to call down Godwin's Law, Faure could be a mirror image of Hitler (with an equally silly moustache). We're also hit with the usual Bova bludgeon of cardboard romance and stereotypical female characters. Edith, a TV news reporter, is allowed to go with the UN forces on the first invasion of Moonbase after sleeping with Faure. Edith even talks about the Body Tax...she has to give some head to get ahead. She ends up gaining access to Moonbase and, after spending one night in Doug's bed, they fall in love. In another section of the book, the head of state of the Kiribati Islands, one of Moonbase's few Earth-bound allies, sleeps with a political enemy to gain access to his pillow talk (because we all know that after sex men who have set about decades of delicate political manipulation and planning will reveal all their secrets to a woman who's motives they suspect). This stuff just left me shaking my head and wondering if Bova really sees the world this way, or if he's just writing for what he thinks of as the stereotypical sci-fi male geek.

My other gripe is the use of nanomachines as a plot device. Faure's basis for the attack on Moonbase is that Moonbase is using nanomachines in spite of a UN resolution (signed under pressure from the New Morality by all nations on Earth) banning their use. We know that there are two types of nanomachines; Gobblers, which break things down on an atomic level, and Builders, which, well, build things. Beyond that though, we really have no idea what nanomachines can and can't do. We know from the Moonwar and Moonbase that they can be used to heal (Doug is saved from fatal situations in both books by nanomachines) and can be used to fight disease and aging, but that's it. In the end, the nanomachines felt like an application of Dues Ex Machina - being used whenever Bova needed a reason to move the plot along in one way or another. Need a device to disable UN troopers? Nanomachines! Need a device to turn a mass driver being used to catapult payloads around close Earth orbit into a beam weapon capable of disarming a nuclear missile? Nanomachines!

In the end, the thriller elements of Moonbase are great and the pacing is strong. However, there are enough eye-rolling moments of "romanticism" and moustache-twisting cartoon villainy that I kept getting knocked out of the flow of the book.

Clodebd

The Story was riveting and a great conclusion to the first book - "Moon Rising", but the science in the story needed further explanation (because it was so interesting) and it would have even been better. Fortunately, it didn't effect the storyline at all and it's years ahead of its time compared to other Moon based storylines. I see the picture that Ben Bova painted in this series as the most accurate possible scenario for the development of the Moon!

Huston

Mr. Bova is a prolific writer of what I find to be very entertaining stories.

Ynneig

Bought it as a gift

snowball

Bova knows how to tell a good space opera. Good mulitlayered characters and challenging situations make for a good read

Blackbrand

I really enjoyed the series Moonrise and Moonwar. Both are fast paced good science fiction. Moonwar satisfactorily concludes the story line.

Simple fellow

Just dreadful. The dialogue was stilted, and sounded like it was lifted from a 50's gangster movie. With most of the gender and race characterizations sounding like they originated from the same era.

Superbly written, as always from Ben Bova.

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