



Moonrise

Ben Bova

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There is a dream called Moonbase, nurtured by ex-astronaut Paul Stavenger and his wife, Joanna Masterson Stavenger, head of the powerful Masterson Corporation.

There is a future of astonishing possibilities and vital technological development waiting on a lifeless world of astonishing contrasts, where sub-frigid darkness abuts the blood-boiling light -- a future threatened by greed and jealousy, insanity and murder.

The Moon and its mysteries have captivated the Stavenger family, and it will continue to exert its pull upon subsequent generations. For all those who experience its magnificent desolation are haunted by it eternally. Some will be doomed by its pitiless aversion to human life.

And some can never leave.

Moonrise Details

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Author : Ben Bova

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From Reader Review *Moonrise* for online ebook

Steven Brandt (Audiobook-Heaven) says

I love how *Moonrise* starts out. Paul Stavenger is stranded on the moon with nothing but the spacesuit he's wearing. He's miles from the nearest base and has only his own two feet to get him there. His strength, not to mention his air supply, is limited. How did he get into this terrifying predicament? Paul's internal dialogue tells us that he was a victim of sabotage, deceit, and attempted murder. And then the flashbacks begin.

And the entire story is told in this fashion. Through Paul's flashbacks we learn how he became the president of a major aerospace corporation on Earth, how he married the previous owner's widow, and how her son despised Paul for taking the job that should have been his. Through memories we learn how office politics suddenly turned deadly. In between the flashback scenes we interlude back to the moon for updates on Stavenger's progress as he slowly, and after a while painfully, crosses the Moon's surface.

Well, most sci-fi readers will tell you that Ben Bova is one of the best in the genre, and *Moonrise* is just one example of his natural story-telling talent. Bova's books are typically character driven like this one, focusing more on the people than on the hard science. He is also very convincing; Bova is one man who can really make you believe in moon bases and microscopic robots that can build things on the molecular level. I guess that's what draws me to Bova's novels. I want all those things to be true and, at least while I'm reading one of his books, they really are.

Ben Bova has written more than 115 books, has served as the editor of *Analog Science Fiction* and *Omni* magazine, was formerly the president of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, and is currently President Emeritus of the National Space Society.

I hardly feel that I need to say anything about Stefan Rudnicki's narration. If you've been listening to audiobooks for a while then you have most likely already heard him and already know that he's great. If you're relatively new to audiobooks then just let me say that Rudnicki has recorded more than 300 of them, has won more Audie and Earphones awards than you can shake a stick at and even has a couple of Grammy's to his name. In other words this guy has been around the block a few times, he knows what he's doing, and he's good at it.

If you're not really sure if you like science fiction but are willing to give it a try, I recommend Ben Bova. He doesn't go into a lot of technical detail about the hard science, but rather focuses more on the people and the situations. Bova's works are a good place to start if you're new to the genre.

Steven Brandt @ Audiobook-Heaven

Charles says

The story of a family's fascination with the moon and inhabiting it. Set in the near future, the first part details one man's fight to get the corporation he's suddenly leading to keep its moonbase project alive so it can finally realise the dream he has of it (and incidentally become profitable along the way). The second part details his son's and his wife's battle to do the same, only in a world now violently opposed to the nanotechnology that is the only thing letting the moonbase expand and begin to make itself useful.

This is very definitely a Ben Bova novel - all the usual suspects are there: great story, polarized protagonists and antagonists, setting and technology that's plausibly near future but not quite yet realised. Along with that come the larger-than-life characters that stretch credulity at times and the idea of the corporation as a state (or even character) unto itself which just doesn't quite sit right. If you enjoyed previous Bova books, this will be as much fun to read; if you weren't a fan, this book won't win you over. On its own, it's a fun corporate space-frontier type book: not much depth, but an engaging story.

Theo says

Interesting take on the future of the moon with slightly prescient political overtones - just the other side is suppressing freedoms than what is predicted.

Kris says

I would have already liked this book for all the reasons Ben Bova books generally appeal to me. The science fiction was convincing in such a way that inspires a person to think about the future, not merely get lost in the fantastic. However I love this book because the structure of this book was fascinating. The way the first part of the book starts at a climax with Paul Stavenger trekking across the moon trying to get to shelter before he dies of lack of oxygen or dehydration, while flashing back to events that brought him to this situation was extremely well plotted. Then the whole narrative shifts gears to focus on a completely different character a quarter to a third of the way through the book, but still manages to hold my attention, anyway... a very good book, great characters, great plot. Possibly my favorite of Ben Bova's, though probably tied with Moonwar...

Andy says

This is an early entry in Bova's Grand Tour, and one of the better ones at that. Paul and Joanna Stavenger are desperately trying to keep their vision of colonizing the moon alive while many on Earth (as well as members of their own family) are doing their best to sabotage this mission. Bova again mixes drama with hardcore science fiction to create a suspenseful story about the future of mankind's exploration of the moon as well as the solar system. I really enjoyed this one.

John says

Excellent science fiction. Bova never disappoints.

Hollowman says

EDIT: Finished 2012-04-19. Went between Kindle and iPod (mp3 audiobook) to fit this book into my schedule. I have older-version audiobook -- Dick Hill is an EXCELLENT performer, as noted below -- so this version of Moonrise works best. I just began the sequel, Moonwar, and the narrator (performer) is not as good (the extra engineering -- voice effects, see below -- is also absent).

Bova, because of his background, is noted to incorporate substantial real science into his stories and plots. I wish he had incorporated some info-graphics. E.g., KSR's sci-fi novels add geographical maps (Mars, Antarctica). Also, Crichton throws adds statistical charts and graphs (Jurassic Park, Andromeda Strain, etc.). Hopefully, authors -- especially hard-science writers -- will take advantage of new e-pub and multimedia formats to enhance their storytelling.

(reading in-progress...)

Really enjoying Bova's novel. Not entirely orig. (standing on shoulders of Clarke, Heinlein, et. al.) ... and ... too much booze and sex (seems to be added after the fact low-effort attempt to appeal to 'mature' audience??). The inclusion of sub-plot of evil-son-willing-to-do-anything-to-control family-fortune is so surprising, methinks Bova must be going for some sort of retro/atavistic plot-device trick (everything super old/cliche is new again!).**

All that said ... decent story + well-paced, well-structured/edited plot. Good/credulous sci./technology and corporate politics. The audiobook narrator, Dick Hill (also did Clarke's 2001), PERFORMS various roles v. effectively (& uses electronic processing for simulating intercom/radio chat).

FYI/Notes:

Format; reading method/"strategy": ebook (Kindle) + audiobook (iPod mp3); on at-home recumbent cycle, I use both ebook and follow along on ipod (earphone) ... switch to ipod only when doing chores.

** Some other reviewers have noted unbelievable or unrealistic elements in this novel. Generally speaking, fiction authors may consciously and deliberately choose to go this route because REALISTIC scenarios (real-life events) are usually not so interesting. E.g., examine your own life -- how many really "memorable" days/weeks do you have? If you want drama and entertainment (and SELL books, of course), you may have to sprinkle on sensationalistic distortions. Sugar-coat the pill, like children's vitamins, and hope you swallow SOME good stuff (like the hard science Bova incorporates).

Rob Roy says

This is the story of the early development of the new frontier on the moon, bound up by the lives of a far knit family. Tedious in places, but worth the read. Along with the story of development on the lunar surface, is the story of the triumph of fanaticism in the world. On the moon there is hope, on the earth despair. The truth of religion trumps liberty worldwide.

Patrick says

I picked this up in a used bin hoping for a bit of summer fluff, so I did not bring very high expectations, but this was pretty bad. The action moved along well enough, but the characters were all 1-dimensional, and

Bova reveals an embarrassing sexism as he tries (unsuccessfully) to paint strong women characters. As if that were not enough, the science is a little patchwork; I found myself checking and rechecking the publication date, trying to figure out why, writing in the late 90s, he seems stuck in mid-century physics (perhaps to be consistent with his gender politics?).

Julie Capell says

For those of us who were just the right age when the first astronauts stepped onto the moon, who have never stopped being spellbound by the thought of setting foot on other worlds, who still believe humanity will make it to the stars . . . this book is for us.

Bova is at his best when describing the scientific and technological aspects of a lunar colony, such as nanotechnology and the very real dangers of living on an atmosphereless rock. But he can also wax poetic when describing the lunar landscape, the hard-edged horizon, the Earth hanging overhead, the scoured rock below.

The characters and plot lines were a bit thin, and if you want a really compelling take on lunar survival, I would recommend “The Martian” by Andy Weir, but hard-core sci-fi readers will want to add Moonrise to their reading list.

[I listened to this as an audio book read by Stefan Rudnicki. I love Rudnicki’s voice, but I am glad I followed the advice of other listeners—I listened at 1.5 speed and that felt perfect.]

Craig Broadbent says

Whilst I quite enjoyed the story I found the writing a little too simplistic a lot of the time. Too many inconsistencies that bugged me as I read through this novel. I'd recommend it though, as long as you are someone that can get over some annoying aspects of the story telling.

Geoff Battle says

Another hefty sci-fi tome from Bova which details an epic struggle to maintain a base upon the Moon. The usual Bova mechanics are in place; a brave hero, carefully thought out companions, company power struggles and family feuds. Of course the future technology is well detailed and explained, Bova is brilliant at creating believable science fiction scenarios. The action and suspense is well crafted with interesting characters and plot components. Moonrise is no short tale, at six hundred pages it uses long term relationships, in both personal and business terms, to propel a non-stop page turner. The finale doesn't ring true to the rest of the story before it, however Moonrise, as any entry in the Grand Tour series before it, is a standalone novel definitely worth reading.

Nick says

Moonrise, by Ben Bova, is a favorite of mine because it was the novel that finally convinced me that Hard Science-Fiction could be just as entertaining as the action-packed space opera and military science fiction that I have always loved.

In Ben Bova's Grand Tour series, of which this is an early example, the action is confined only to technology that is theoretically within our reach now, the colonisation of the solar system and the actions of the human race as a whole. There are no aliens to fight or magic FTL drives (or FTL communication for that matter) and the drama comes primarily from the conflict between powerful individuals and groups of individuals.

Moonrise in particular depicts a very plausible Earth coming slowly under the grip of politically powerful anti-science morality groups made up of a frightening alliance of religious interests and the actions of a few individuals devoted to be science and the ideal of the "frontier". I am led to understand that as the series progresses, this morality movement gradually gets more and more power even as humanity spreads out across the solar system, but here we get to see its birth amidst violent repression and fear.

What makes Moonrise such a fantastic novel however isn't just this grand scale political story, but the way this canvas is shown to us through the eyes of very believable, understandable characters, and how the events of the novel drive these people to stand at the turning points of human history.

Believable, well written and at times brutal, Bova does not hold back as he piles problems on to his characters to see which will stand the strain and which ones, eventually, will break. It's a fascinating journey that I cannot recommend enough.

Artur Coelho says

Um bom livro de Hard SF, bem construído nas suas premissas, que não mostra os sinais de envelhecimento da FC clássica. Não é por acaso, Bova foi um dos mais ardentes defensores da Hard SF pura, como romancista e editor da Analog.

Alvorada Lunar é o primeiro livro da sua saga Moonbase, sobre o estabelecimento de uma colónia lunar privada, que eventualmente se tornará o primeiro passo do homem na expansão pelas estrelas. Mas para isso, é preciso que a colónia vingue, tarefa só tornada possível pela vontade indomável de alguns que são capazes de ver o futuro a longo prazo. Parte do livro são intrigas familiares e empresariais, no processo de convencer uma empresa a manter um investimento que dá prejuízo na manutenção e expansão de uma base lunar. O mais interessante, em linha com a hard SF de Bova, é a plausibilidade da sua visão de colonização lunar, em abrigos subterrâneos cheios de condicionantes, à vida na lua inóspita, e à nanotecnologia como forma de, usando nanomáquinas, revolucionar processos de fabricou ou medicina. Parte do livro passa-se num cenário anti-científico, com a sociedade global dominada por religiosos e moralistas que procuram ativamente impedir investigações promissoras.

Sherm Davis says

I came across this book after reading Km Stanley Robinson's Mars Trilogy, and I was hungry for more great

sci-fi. Unfortunately (for Bova and for me), this book was transparently thin. Light on the science, short on the fiction. The story took far too long to develop. The book could have been 350 pages instead of 550. The characters were one-dimensional and their motivations were far too obvious. The conflict was contrived, and the story itself could have gone deeper on many levels. There were passages in the minds of male characters that bordered on what today we would call sexual assault, and an Asian character was actually called a gook! This book was written in 1996, so I've got to cut the author some slack, but as modern science fiction, I would pass on this and read Philip K. Dick or Kim Stanley Robinson instead.
