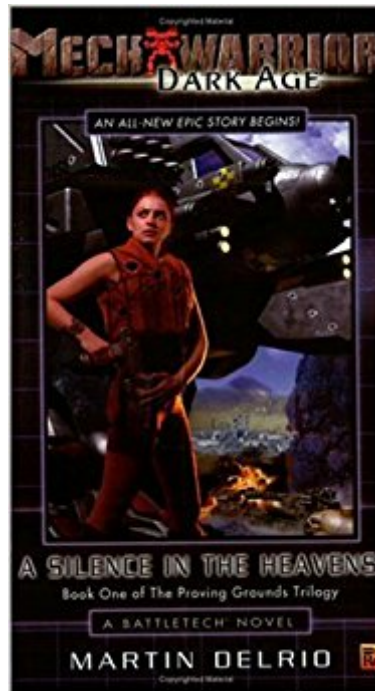




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# A Silence In The Heavens (Proving Grounds)



## Synopsis

Since the fall of the interstellar communications grid, Countess Tara Campbell has been leading the Republic-loyal Highlanders and protecting the world of Northwind as best she can. Paladin Ezekiel Crow's arrival in anticipation of harder times ahead is a mixed blessing for Campbell. But when the Steel Wolves arrive with a bold new leader and an ambitious plan for conquest, Campbell's happy for any help Crow may offer... no matter what secrets he may carry. Book one in The Proving Grounds trilogy, *A Silence in the Heavens* by Martin Delrio is the fourth novel based on the MechWarrior: Dark Age collectable miniatures game and is published by Roc, an imprint of Penguin Putnam, Inc. Delrio has also written novels set in the Spider-Man, Prince Valiant, and Mortal Kombat universes; this is his first MechWarrior: Dark Age novel.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Any book line with such a long history and a fanatical following of readers will have problems involving new writers who continue to fail to read and recognize the origins of their new stories. *A Silence in The Heavens* is far better than the previous book *Ruins of Power*, however, this book seems to be more of a stand alone novel than the first of a trilogy. While the Mech battles are fast and furious, the storyline gets bogged down in the repetition of character description (Ok, we know Tara Campbell was a media darling as a child... must it be mentioned EVERY time someone meets her?) and political powerplays. The book also lacked the true feel of a story arc within the Clans (As

if no mechwarrior has a nickname for their mech, everything was Ryoken II and Blade Mech and Hatchetman, etc. Extremely alienating). It lacked the amount of respect owed these great warriors, and made one of the most pivotal and defining moments thus far in this new galaxy into a mere four page side note. On the plus side, this book provided the first glimpses of bigger things to come, foreshadowing Liao involvement in the universe through the jaded memories of Paladin Ezekiel Crow. The description and character development of the Paladin provided more of a glimpse into the Republic of the Sphere, while also creating a sublime and secondary story-arc that can be continued in the future novels. While this book is a far cry from the horrors of Ruins of Power... it remains below Ghost War and A Call To Arms in the Mechwarrior Universe... but the trilogy still has the potential to be a stellar success.

Being a fan of BattleTech for over 10 years, I must say I've seen my share of good and bad novels, source books, games, etc... I was not very happy with the new Dark Age setting, as some things just don't make too much sense (I am still struggling with the fact that some Clans - or maybe all - actually GAVE UP their mechs). I think there is a lack of consistency in this series - and this book. If A. Kerensky is such a good MW, she should have ripped the Paladin apart. Second, the Clans are depicted as rather naive - being tricked very easily. This may have been the case when they first invaded, but even in Classical Btech they learned lessons!! Did they actually FORGET everything? After living in the IS for decades, one would think they'd learn something about the people they live with. The story itself is not bad, but the action is little ridiculous.

I'm excited for a trilogy as I began reading BT with the Grey Death Trilogy (Decision at Thunderrift, Mercenary's Star, & Price of Glory) and hundreds of dollars later I'm still hooked. By the way, I noticed someone asked what happened to the Grey Death (as well as other groups and people) and you should read 'Mechwarrior: The Dying Time.' You can also catch what happened to them when you play MW: Mercenaries. If you choose the Grey Death as your sponsor and follow a path that lands you in Katrina's camp, you'll hear something very interesting at the beginning of one of the missions on Hesperus II that is a direct reference to the events in 'The Dying Time.' Any way, .com would like me to review 'Silence in the Heavens.' Delrio does an excellent job unraveling some of what the "Dark Age universe" is all about. He explains the HPG breakdown, the role of prefects & prefectures, role of paladins (no Knights though), etc. We are also introduced to characters with a lot more depth (i.e. Tara Campbell, Paladin Crow, Will Elliot, Colonel Griffin, Anastasia Kerensky, etc). The book begins with a look at the life of Will Elliot; a knowledgeable wilderness guide put out of

work due to cutbacks (the HPG network has slowed business down as less offworlders are likely to visit). He finds work in the military where he becomes a scout and befriends Jock & Lexa making for an unlikely but entertaining trio. I hope all 3 survive the trilogy. The only thing I don't like about Will's character is his vocal assurance to his friends that he knows the surrounding forest like the back of his hand. I found myself saying, "I think Jock & Lexa know by now that you know where you are going even when it is dark, you don't have to keep telling them." Duchess Tara Campbell is Prefect of Prefecture III after the previous Prefect decides to take off and start her own faction (the Dragon's Fury). Delrio explains through the voices of the clan characters that Tara Campbell is a formidable warrior and such but I am still unclear as to the politics involved in electing one to the rank of Prefect. I don't mind that kind of explanation, it's what made the original BT series so interesting; a balance of action & politics. Without spending too much more time on this book, go pick it up. The end battle is written in an interesting manner. When one side does something, you are immediately in the opposite camp reading how they react to it and what their next move is and it goes on like this back and forth. It could be annoying by not leaving anything to our imaginations but the battles are so small (relatively speaking; it's not like full RCT's fighting) that the story would be much, much shorter if you told it from one side only. But I do see that that could give you the opportunity to go into greater detail. Bottom line, I look forward to the other two books in this trilogy. Maybe the title will make more sense to me (Proving Grounds? Silence in the Heavens?).

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