



# The Fires of the Gods

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*A Sugawara Akitada Novel - Eleventh-century Japan.* Sugawara Akitada's ailing wife is expecting a child, and when he loses his job and tries to confront the nobleman who is responsible for his dismissal, he ends up suspected of his murder. With no income and a growing family to support, Akitada desperately plunges into the investigation of this crime, aided by his faithful servant Tora, inadvertently placing not only his own life, but also the lives of his wife and child, in grave danger . . .

## The Fires of the Gods Details

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Author : I.J. Parker

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## From Reader Review The Fires of the Gods for online ebook

### Vicky says

In eleventh century Japan, Sugawara Akitada is a senior clerk in the Department of Ministry. One day he is called into his superior's office and informed he is being demoted and replaced by a less able junior clerk, who has better political connections than Akitada. He is furious and says things that he should not and ends up being placed on leave. He heads out to confront his accuser and ends up at the wrong place at the wrong time; Kiyowara Kane is murdered and Akitada is a suspect. His friend, Kobe, has to treat him as a suspect, even when Akitada is hired by the victim's wife to discover the truth of the murder. Meanwhile, Akitada's wife, Tamaka, is pregnant and suffering in the terrible heat of August in Heian-Kyo, the capitol of ancient Japan. Fires are rampant in the city and Akitada believes they are being set by gangs to coerce money from merchants. How can he prove his innocence and find out who is setting the fires? And, can he do it without getting himself fired and his house burned in retaliation? Another excellent entry in this series that never fails to entertain and educate the reader about life in ancient Japan.

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### Toni Osborne says

Book 8, in the Sugawara Akitada series

This 8th installment continues Akitada saga finding our honorable sleuth once more in trouble.

My views:

I have been following Ms. Parker for years and especially fond of the Akitada series. His sagas have remained fresh throughout the years and always had a wonderful and strong theme. This time the mystery looks into the abuse of power and the incompetence of people at the top, the dark side of the underclass and the characters that enrich themselves on others misfortunes. The author is a master in blending action into a lush tapestry of ancient Japanese society and elegantly writes without mixing any melodrama into her drama. Akitada is a colorful protagonist and is joined by a large cast of intriguing characters that are as deeply bound to tradition as he is. Her style is very sophisticated and ideas so prolific it seems to never run out of steam. I still have to catch up on this series and looking forward in doing so.

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### Alex says

Excellent. I cannot stop from reading these stories. I.J. Parker's Akitada detective stories are the best. On par for me with Jason Goodwin's Inspector Yashim. As much as I love the Inspector Yashim stories, the Akitada stories keep me on the edge all throughout the book - even though I know Akitada will prevail again, somehow the way Parker writes makes one think all options are on the table. All my respect for this author and her talent.

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### Vanda says

Hv?zdi?ka navíc za staré Japonsko. Já mám Sugavarovy p?ípady ráda, zaplnily mi prázdnotu po soudci Ti.

Na rozdíl od neblahého Lenormanda však Parkerová celou v?c zaona?ila vkusn? a s citem - zvolila si velmi odlišnou postavu mladého Sugavary Akitady, státního ú?edníka z Japonska doby Heian, vybavila ho odlišnou povahou i životními osudy, nicmén? gró zůstává podivuhodn? Ti-ovské. Jsem jí vd??ná, ob?as ten odpo?inek v japonské zahrad? jejích p?fb?h? skute?n? pot?ebuji.

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## Leslie says

3.5 stars

I am glad that I am reading this series in order (more or less) as the development of the relationships between Akitada and his wife and servitors is a part of the fun in these mysteries. Parker does an excellent job of balancing the case with the personal life. While I generally don't care for hearing about detectives' problems, Akitada's problems are so different (being due to the politics and structure of 11th century Japan) that they don't bug me.

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## Orvokki says

Detektívny príbeh z Japonska 11. storo?ia znie mojím ušiam viac ako lákavo. Ob?úbila som si P?ípady soudce Ti, pravda, ?ína o štyri storo?ia skôr, ale stále je to dostato?ne exotická destinácia a dostato?ne vzdialená doba. Takže ke? nakladate?stvo Garamond za?alo vydáva? P?ípady Sugawary Akitady, neváhala som ani na moment. A kto vie pre?o som si myslela, že si budú knihy podobné.

Ohn? boh?, okrem toho, že sa odohrávajú inde a inokedy, sú aj ove?a obsiahlejšie a komplikovanejšie, než Soudce Ti. Nie je to žiadna jednohubka na dva ve?ery, ale poriadny príbeh, kde som si neustále kládla otázku, pre?o majú tak komplikované mená a ja nie som schopná si ich zapamäta?. Neustále som sa v pamäti vracala spä? a premýš?ala. ?ím vás nechcem od ?ítania odradi?.

Viac na [orvokki.sk](http://orvokki.sk).

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## Greg says

[Warning: Semi-spoilers ahead...]

After a lackluster "Convict's Sword" and the somber "Matsuda Affair," I.J. Parker's eighth Sugawara Akitada mystery "The Fires of the Gods" marks a return to the form that made Parker's "Rashomon Gate," "Black Arrow," "Island of Exiles" and "Hell Screen" such stunning reads. Once again I plunged into an immersive world of cinematic detail - an adventure as palpable as if I were standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the principle characters, smelling the smoke, feeling the muggy summer heat, and hearing the spatter of cloudbursts on dusty alleyways.

Parker weaves an excellent plot out of discrete, seemingly disconnected events - each an irresistible story in itself, fraught with palpable danger, political machinations, shadowy intrigue, and decided on issues of honor and integrity rather than arbitrary chance - then draws them together in a heady, climactic whole. Her thematic commentary on the evils of the Heian-era's feudal caste system is subtle, but all the more powerful for that subtlety.

Just an excellent read that's got me looking forward to number nine (I got seriously behind in my reading thanks to a busy schedule over the last year, but having a backlog of books to read has become a situation I can be enthusiastic about.) If you love historical fiction and have only now discovered Parker's world, you've just hit the jackpot.

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### **Ted says**

The most recent (and my third) in the Akitada series. I admit I've lost my objectivity. I've come to like this character and now recognize him and the cast as friends. This story is similar to the other, but frankly originality is not what I expect from the series about 8th century Japan where everything is about noble rank, legitimate and illegitimate heirs and the crushing weight of honor.

Here, Akitada finally gets over the death of his son through the birth of a new daughter. Along the way he solves the case of a deaf mute criminal gang and rapist of high rank and villainous politicians. His house is set afire and his job is threatened before, righting the ship.

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### **Joe Slavinsky says**

Another very good novel of 11th century Japan, by Ms. Parker. Even though the characters are fictitious, Parker immerses them in the era so well, that you feel you are right there. Her characters are engagingly human, with excellent plotting, and a surprisingly quick pace, for an historical fiction novel. It'll be interesting to see what challenges await Akitada, and family, in the next book, in this series.

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### **Betty says**

Ministry of justice senior secretary Sugawara Akitada is already on edge with the impending birth of his second child, having lost his firstborn to illness, when he receives devastating professional news. As a result of interference by controller Kiyowara Kane, Akitada has been demoted to junior secretary, with his incompetent subordinate promoted to his old position. The outraged Akitada seeks an interview with Kane, only to be left waiting in the antechamber without getting an explanation for the slander campaign against him. To make matters worse, he soon comes under suspicion of murder, and he must disobey his superiors to solve the crime himself and clear his name. Parker masterfully blends action and detection while making the attitudes and customs of the period accessible. (Apr.)

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### **Jean V. Naggar Literary says**

“Parker raises the stakes considerably for her fallible but honorable series sleuth in her excellent eighth mystery...Parker masterfully blends action and detection while making the attitudes and customs of the period accessible.” --Publishers Weekly, starred review

“This is another sharply written, imaginative entry in the Akitada series. Parker...is adept at blending historical fact and fiction and at giving the reader an education in Japanese history and culture without making a big deal about it.” --Booklist

“A brisk and well-plotted mystery with a cast of regulars who become more fully developed with every episode.” --Kirkus Reviews

“An excellent depiction of the actual power and scheming behind the Fujiwara clan...Parker continues to be a master of the multilayered plot...High quality mystery elements...A fine novel guaranteed to satisfy all who love great mysteries and historical fiction about Japan!” --Historical Novels Review

“You couldn't ask for a more gracious introduction to the exotic world of Imperial Japan than the stately historical novels of I.J. Parker.” --New York Times Book Review, on the Sugawara Akitada series

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## Amelia says

Enjoyed this one as much as the other Akitada books I've read. I decided to "ration" the last two that I owned -- this one and *Death on an Autumn River* -- and I'm glad I did. It was lovely to revisit Akitada and the rest of the Sugawara household.

The mystery itself is "typical" Akitada -- there are two interwoven mysteries that are seemingly unrelated, and which involve people (perpetrators and victims) at opposite ends of the social class spectrum in 11th century Japan. I enjoyed the interplay between the two cases and some of the coincidental, and not-so-coincidental, intersections between the two.

Akitada, as usual, is a principled and basically kindly man, but with his faults, ones that he recognizes and tries, with varying degrees of success, to mitigate. His household is composed of a number of distinct characters, though some of them, we got to know better in earlier books, and so are not drawn in as much detail here.

I have read all of the Sugawara Akitada Kindle novels (with the exception of *Death on an Autumn River*, which I'm waiting to enjoy in a few months) that are priced at \$7 or less (I did pick up a few for free, and that got me hooked). Unfortunately, paying \$52 to pick up the four novels I don't own is just out of my Kindle budget. They remain on my wish list! Maybe I'll eventually break down and buy a couple of them, or maybe I'll get them from friends looking to buy me something special. :-)

I'm going to begin the Hollow Reed series soon, and I'm looking forward to it!

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## Chris says

Another page turner from Parker. Lots of action in this one. Tora gets beat up twice as well as Akitada being imprisoned by a gang of thieves in an underground hole/storm drain. Disparate events come together as they always seem to do in this series. Akitada goes through another roller coaster of emotion in this book as his professional reputation is under attack by shady political dealings. His wife is pregnant. He is worried about losing everything that is dear to him. It might be the 11th Century but Akitada is a character who resonates for all times, a man of honor and integrity but also a man who has known hardship, adversity, and tragedy and continually strives to do the best for himself and his family.

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## Lau says

There were a few things that bothered me when reading this book in the series - I have the edition from Parker Press/ Create Space - most of them were typos and evidence of poor proof reading.

The biggest, however, was Akitada being unable to remember the name of his accuser following the confrontation with his Fujiwara superior and discussing his visit to the Kiyowara household with Kobe soon afterward. The transition was jarring and made it difficult for me to settle into the book.

I reread the first section of Fires two or three times, but could not find any mention of Akitada going to confront Kiyowara. Was there a continuity error? Did something get cut by accident? Pagination seemed solidly sequential (will check again) and I doubt the scene would have taken an entire signature that was omitted.

Did anyone else with this edition notice the same problem?

All issues aside, I ultimately found the book engaging and difficult to put down. I have gotten quite fond of all the major characters.

I find the setting well presented. I am especially interested in the fact the Parker includes the Buddhism / Shintoism dichotomy in the novels. Akitada leans toward kami no michi traditions, scoffs at Tora's superstitions and reluctantly acknowledges Buddhist beliefs so perfectly.

Parker's exploration of the human condition, the period class structure and social mores adds depth to the Akitada novels. As a modern reader I am sometimes frustrated by Akitada's inability to communicate sensibly with Tamako (although he may have overcome that!) but I can understand the cultural constraints behind his behavior.

Looking forward to the next novel.

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## Margaret Dilloway says

Basically, Sherlock Holmes set in 11th century Japan. Actually, I like it better than Sherlock Holmes; there's more emotional weight with the characters. Sugawara Akitada is getting ready for the birth of his second child, coming some years after his precious only son died, which nearly destroyed his relationship with his wife.

While this is going on, Akitada suddenly gets fired from his job. When he goes to the Lord's house to ask what happened, the Lord turns up dead and Akitada is blamed.

I didn't know what to expect from the book, but I enjoyed it very much. Somehow I started with the last book in the series instead of the first, and now I'm reading #7 (which is even better!). The characters and plot are unusual; they don't always do what I expect them to do, particularly Akitada's sidekick, Tora.

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