

Lovereading Reader reviews of Flood of Fire by Amitav Ghosh Part of the Ibis Trilogy

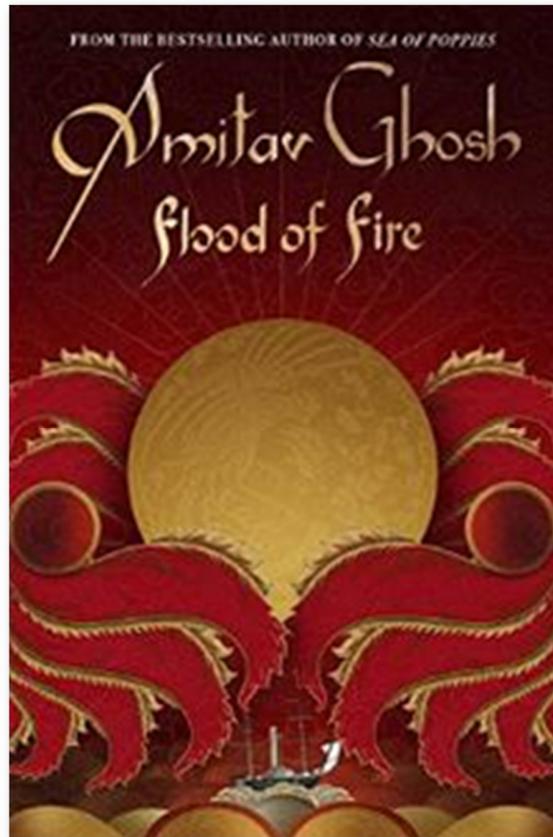
Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Alan Brown

***A Dickens like classic.
Deserves to be read by as
many people as possible for
years to come. The three books
bring out the Opium Wars
from the dusty shelves of
history. Beautiful language.***

*Lucky to read three books one after
the other.*

*When at school I read classic books
by authors such as Dickens. I had to
put in extra effort to stay with the
story as the quality of writing was
rare and language used was
strange. The same applies to this
trilogy epic. Effort and
perseverance is needed but it is well
rewarded.*



Although an historical fiction concerned with the high seas, India, China and the ruling powers the first book, 'Sea of Poppies' is a development of characters and their interactions. The author is brilliant at the control of the ramifications.

The change from the first book to the second, 'River of Smoke', is difficult as the knowledge that there is so much still to go weakens the plot lines here.

This second book is better controlled so that the book is an entity in itself and at the beginning of 'Flood of Fire' the reader is familiar with personalities. Thus the plot lines become stronger and more adventurous so that the story is brought to

a strong ending with fantastic style.

The early struggle is rewarded with a beautifully written epic that left this reader breathless

Angie Rhodes

The last book in the amazing heart stopping 'Ibis' Trilogy.

The year is now 1839 and all is not well, British India and China are at logger heads over Opium smuggling. This sets the background for our set of colourful characters to end their journey. Along the way we have lost some and gained some, but one thing is certain, as we close the book we will remember all of them with fondness.

Janet Gilliard

*This is a sweeping trilogy starting with 'Sea of Poppies' and finishing with 'Flood of Fire'. This is not my usual choice of novel but **was gripped from the start and really became immersed in the story and the characters. I learnt a lot about the colonial history of the East and was sad when I finished the last book. Highly recommended.***

Barbara Goldie

The final part of a great trilogy, absorbing read with great impact, stays with you long after the book is closed!

The final part of the 'Ibis trilogy' was definitely worth waiting for. I think I did benefit greatly from reading the first two parts of the trilogy but this was such great storytelling it would also work well as a standalone novel. I read the books one after the other and can totally recommend this. There is a varied cast of strong powerful characters who all have individual personalities. The vivid descriptions transport the reader along with the story from India to China through the outbreak of the first opium war. The language is beautiful and artistic and the minute detail show excellent research. The slow meandering style travels through a turbulent voyage. It is great fiction that is not light but very easy to read. It engaged me throughout and having read all three books I will be looking out for more books by Amitav Ghosh.

Magdalena Vidgen

It took me 3 weeks to finish this book!

And on reading the last page I said to myself: "Is this all?! What happens next?"...

Throughout the book I felt the author spent too much time on describing details of battles and small incidents instead of concentrating on concluding the story.

I didn't like the way Zachary 'sold his soul' to commerce and I was disappointed by the fact that the story ended without conclusion, without showing how the fates of the passengers from Ibis interlinked and how they all fared after the end of the story in "Flood of Fire".

Although it was interesting from the historical point of view, I think it was the weakest part of the trilogy.

Neil Beattie

'Flood of Fire' is a wonderful installment to the already thrilling 'Ibis' saga. Full of historical detail and the colour of the different countries and cultures.

The sad thing about 'Flood Of Fire' is that Amitrav Ghosh has decided rather than tell the story in a hurried manner, he won't tell the tale at all. I personally feel this is a bad idea. I loved this book and implore the author to write more. The author has said there is more to be told, so I say tell it. The author writes with such passion you feel you are in the middle of the First Opium war, and travelling from India to China and Hong Kong. Remember the customer is always right and this customer wants more please.

Jan Kirkcaldy

*It's with a great sense of achievement that I've finally finished the last in this interesting and informative trilogy – 'Flood of Fire'. Having learned a great deal about a period in history and in depth characterisation of people of the time, my only disappointment is the comparatively short number of years it encompassed. Maybe a little too concentrated to me I felt it needed to expand to hold my interest. Nevertheless **it certainly brought life into a largely forgotten era. Not an easy read but definitely an education.***

Edel Waugh

This is the final book in the 'Ibis' trilogy. In this book the story is mostly told through the eyes of Kesri, Zachary and Shirleen.

***This is probably one of my favourite books in this trilogy** and the parts of the story between Mrs Burnham and Zachary were amongst my favorites, often humourous **with laugh out loud moments these characters were impossible not to like.** Some of the characters from book two were back and it was great to catch up with what they were up to since the last book. Then we met Shirleen who's entire life changes when she gets horrifying news of her husband, she then begins a journey both emotionally and physical. Kesri is Deeti's sister who we got to know well in the first book, his work life is primarily what drives him and he is a very sensible noble character. As this was the last book it did feel very final and it was sad leaving these characters and the opium wars and the ships that a lot of the story was based around and on. If you enjoy books about the sea and glimpses into history then this is the story/ trilogy for you.*

<http://www.edelwaugh.blogspot.com>

Anita Wallas

*A truly mesmerising conclusion to the Ibis trilogy. **I was enthralled from start to finish.***

***'Flood of Fire' is a giant of a book and a fitting conclusion to the truly astonishing Ibis trilogy.** It's an enthralling and exciting read, set against the backdrop of the standoff between East and West which led to the Opium Wars and the British acquisition of Hong Kong. The events resulted in China's capitulation and humiliation as it tried to prevent greedy, opportunistic foreigners from plying their cargoes of opium.*

The narrative meanders with ease across the years, drawing together historic events, the main and various subplots and a vast array of colourful and compelling characters. The subject matter is sensitive. Colonialism is raging and Europeans are happy to exploit people for profit. Amitav Ghosh explores this and other difficult themes with compassion and without judgement. The reader is able to view events from the standpoint of various characters and form their own conclusion about the integrity or otherwise of some attitudes and actions.

Ghosh brings an incredible energy to his writing. There are so many stories and people to follow and every voice is different. Although much of the dialogue uses unfamiliar language and sentence structure, it's easy to follow and has a cadence that sweeps the reader along. I'm left feeling that I actually knew some of the people; Zachary, for example, a mixed race American is memorable. His dalliance with Mrs Burnham provides some of the best comic writing I've ever read. Ghosh also captures custom, conflict and intrigue. It's easy to relate to Kesri Singh, an incidental character in earlier volumes comes to the fore so that we can understand how and why he joined the Army, but at what cost?