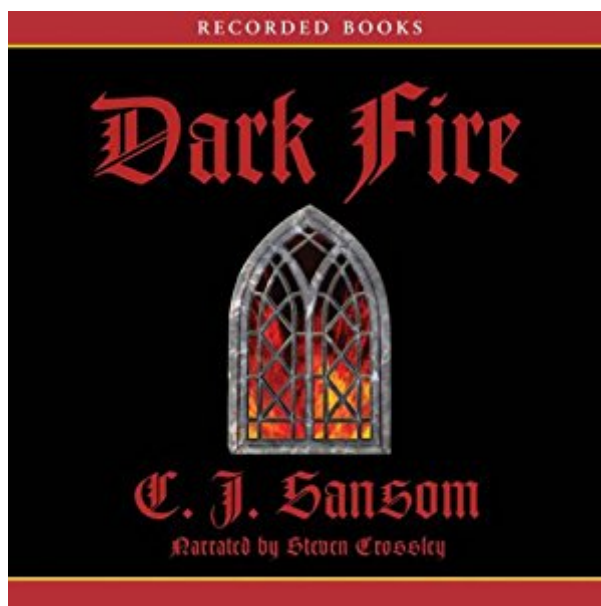


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# Dark Fire: A Matthew Shardlake Mystery



## Synopsis

It is 1540 and the hottest summer of the sixteenth century. Matthew Shardlake, believing himself out of favour with Thomas Cromwell, is busy trying to maintain his legal practice and keep a low profile. But, his involvement with a murder case, defending a girl accused of brutally murdering her young cousin, brings him once again into contact with the king's chief minister - and a new assignment ...The secret of Greek Fire, the legendary substance with which the Byzantines destroyed the Arab navies, has been lost for centuries. Now, an official of the Court of Augmentations has discovered the formula in the library of a dissolved London monastery. When Shardlake is sent to recover it, he finds the official and his alchemist brother brutally murdered - the formula has disappeared. Now, Shardlake must follow the trail of Greek Fire across Tudor London, while trying at the same time to prove his young client's innocence. But, very soon he discovers nothing is as it seems ... --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 18 hours 57 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Recorded Books

Audible.com Release Date: December 18, 2008

Language: English

ASIN: B001O6MPBG

Best Sellers Rank: #78 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > Legal Thrillers

#686 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Legal #1362

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## Customer Reviews

This is a review of the kindle edition. The book is very good, characters are well developed and stay true to themselves. They grow, change and develop in believable ways. The plot is a historical fiction mystery that stays true enough to history to be interesting and believable, but many characters may be made up. I'm ok with this and enjoyed the book. I bought and read the first in the series and this one. I would really like to read the series and will continue. I, however, will be checking the third book from the library and this is why: this book, Dark Fire was fine for the first 26%. Then it started having a lot, and I mean a lot, of annoying typos. Normally I can overlook most

but these were enough to pause my reading. Such things as commas in middle of compound words, example: hope,fully. Periods in the middle of sentences. And most annoying to me misspelling of several primary characters names. I did the highlight, notify of content error for many but it got to be so frequent I soon tired of it. As I said I will read the others, for free from the library because the description for the third, which is selling for \$13.99 had a typo in it at the time I was looking to purchase the book. I consider that a bad sign. The series is worth reading, and I found nothing else besides those to be negatives, but since I find them, at this frequency, highly annoying I will wait to read the others from the library as opposed to paying paperback prices.

I bought the book in the UK last year and didn't really know anything about the author or the series. It's really a fascinating look at medieval life in a mystery context. It takes place during the Reformation in London. The main character, Shardlake, is a hunchback lawyer who is reluctantly drawn into solving the case. I found the descriptions of the various legal proceedings and courts remarkable. Shardlake is a medieval version of Morse. Since I finished this book, I have bought the other books in the series and loved them all. The plots are unusual and the historical research quite remarkable. If you like 16th century historical fiction and mysteries this is a wonderful read.

After *Dissolution*, the first Matthew Shardlake mystery, I was looking forward to this one, but the pace dragged in spots until there was some excitement at the end. In this one, a minion of Lord Cromwell, Henry VIII's right-hand man, commands Matthew, a lawyer skilled at mystery solving, to find a barrel of "dark fire," otherwise known as Greek fire. Cromwell, who is on shaky political ground, believes he can curry favor with the king by providing the substance, which can burn even on water and would be invaluable in battle. While the substance hadn't been used since ancient times, a barrel of it is believed to be floating around London somewhere, and Matthew is told to find it. At the same time, a client asks him to exonerate his niece, who is accused of pushing her young cousin into a well, resulting in his death. The teenager faces a horrific death if she is convicted, but she refuses to speak in her own defense. Why? Matthew moves through London, talking to those who may be able to help him solve one or both mysteries. He is often frustrated in his quest but doesn't give up. This book isn't bad, but it moves a little more slowly than *Dissolution*, the first book, and *Lamentation*, the most recent book, which are the two I have read so far. But for those willing to invest the time, it's a good story with lots of attention to historical detail. Reading Sansom's books makes me very happy I did not live in those days!

I wouldn't have known this was the author's first book, it was that well written. He managed to convey the feeling of being in Tudor times, with the darkness & dankness. It is not an "exciting" fast paced book, but a very pleasant read with some development of characters, excellent description, & a steadily moving forward story line. I am not a critic, & I think book reviews are often subjective, but I don't think I'm alone in saying this author has a gift, as evidenced by so many best selling books. I have the 2nd in the series now, & look forward to it.

A Shardlake mystery worth its salt. Moody, dark, mysterious - against his will Matthew is drawn back into the services of the very powerful, and dangerous, Thomas Cromwell on a matter of the highest urgency. Someone, it seems, has discovered the ancient secret of Greek Fire, and how to make it work. Whoever controls it would be able to easily destroy any enemy fleet - since ships were then made of wood. At the same time, Matthew is charged with the defense of a girl accused of murder, who refuses to speak at all - not even to defend herself. Fun and atmospheric. A good read.

This is a wonderful mystery story. The detective Matthew Shardlake is thoughtful and clever. He now has a sidekick who is a foil to his seriousness. The historical details are fascinating. If you think times are hard now, read these books. We have made so many advances in civil rights since the Tudor times. I enjoy reading the story as well as learning about England in the early 1500's.

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