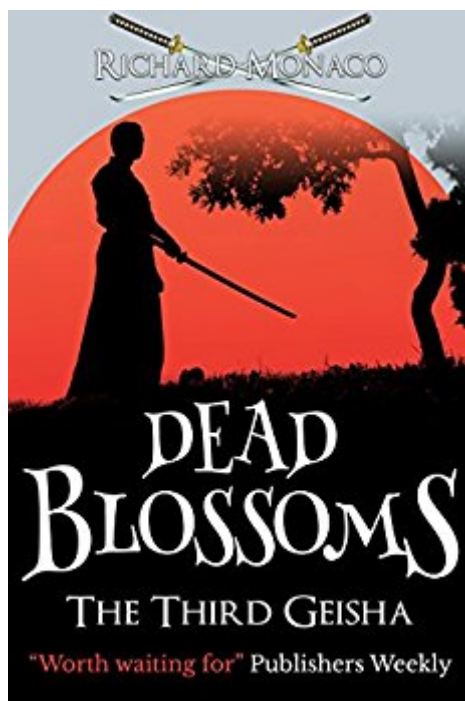


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# Dead Blossoms: The Third Geisha



## Synopsis

16th Century Japan A civil war has left the nation in tatters | Jiro Tazeko is a ronin samurai | tied to no clan and scorned by many. A hard-drinking mercenary and master swordsman, he is looked down upon by his fellow samurai, thinking him without honor. Tazeko also claims to be trained as a ninja, shadowy fighters with no pedigree and no honor, lowering him even further in the eyes of his peers. Now, Tazeko is hired by a lord to investigate the disappearance of a noblewoman, another lord's daughter. What follows is a gripping mystery, steeped in blood and tense drama as Tazeko journeys throughout Japan to uncover the dark and terrible truth behind this woman's disappearance. Soon, this samurai finds himself in the midst of a never-ending political plot as many lords manoeuvre for power throughout feudal Japan. Master of the sword and relentless detective, Tazeko must pursue the truth at great cost | not only to himself, but to all players in the game who will suffer as truth comes to light and deadly games are played. Dead Blossoms is an enchanting tale of mystery and honor set in feudal Japan. Praise for Richard Monaco: | "Captivating" | "Associated Press | "Epic scope" | "Los Angeles Sunday Times | "Monaco's dialogue and meditations are often salty and fresh | a restless, strenuous rumination on civilization's death and resurrection" | "Kirkus Reviews | "Worth waiting for." | "Publishers Weekly | "Monaco presents dark, tormented tales | not for the weak-hearted." | "Fantasy Newsletter | "Monaco recreates the taste, touch, smell and sound of the knightly world in reality, not romance | he succeeds brilliantly" | "Library Journal | "unbelievably talented | a literary miracle" | "Drogin Book Column | "Richard Monaco has created an unusual slant on the Arthurian Legend. Horror and bloodshed mingle with a soft, imaginative romanticism making an instant classic." | "Salisbury Times | "offers a worthy inclusion in the enduring and ever-expanding Arthurian literature." | "King Features Syndicate Richard Monaco wrote the best-selling Parsival novels, 1977-2012, two of which were Pulitzer finalists. In addition he wrote over a dozen other books, plays, and screenplays. Monaco studied musical composition at Columbia, edited a national student newspaper and a poetry magazine, and had a radio talk show based on his textbook The Logic of Poetry. In 1979 he co-founded a NYC literary agency and the online journal, Grand Central Review, in 2015.

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## Customer Reviews

At a critical point in this masterpiece I'd grown so angry at the author that I'd have thrown the book against a wall--if it hadn't been on my Kindle. Richard Monaco had just done something so shocking and appalling to a character I loved that I stopped reading the book...for a month. I'm glad that I came back around. I came back because I realized that I'd misjudged the book as failing because it fell short of the book in my head. I'd been led to believe at the start of the tale that this was a spin-off of Shogun with a hard-boiled edge. And we do indeed begin with a charismatic Scot, trapped in a storm and then beached in Japan. But then the Scot disappears for nearly the entire novel, the focus shifting to a Toshiro Mifune-like warrior with a very well-honed wit. I'm sold again. But not so fast. Tragedies begin to rain and the Japanese ronin-shamus seems to be starting to crumble. The central mystery is first-rate. The action scenes are sensational. The prose is breathtakingly gorgeous at times. And Richard Monaco, once again, works wonders in blending the hard-boiled style with olden times. I'm not sure I'll ever forgive him for some of the horrors inflicted...but I salute him for not selling out.

Richard Monaco has a large collection of great books under his belt. He mostly writes in the fantasy genre, but has written books in other areas like non-fiction crime and poetry. What blows me away most when I read Monaco is his confidence. I think this comes from years of writing well. His talent is something that he was born with, but clearly developed through hard work over the years. This

book is a fine example of the confidence I mentioned above. I've read more books than I can count, but I've read few that are so unique. Monaco has his own writing style and does what is needed to make the story work, and it does. I loved Ninja and samurai movies and books as a kid and this novel brought me back. Where this book is different is that it's written for adults so the grown up part of me enjoyed this book too.

So far my favorite mystery novel of the 2000s has been *Inherent Vice* by Thomas Pynchon... That was about a psychedelic detective trying to find a LSD Real estate Mogul through his hoards of Aryan Brotherhood biker goons while solving the riddle of Golden Fang the heroin smuggling Chinese pirate-ship....Hopefully Monaco's Gritty new Ninja thriller shall hold up nicely. After reading his recently released *Quest for Avalon*, a hard hitting tale of Canibalism, black magic, Arthurian raunch, and apocalyptic chaos, I suspect it will be masterful...

It has been a while since I finished reading this engrossing book. But, as with all the best works of fiction, the story and the characters make a lasting impression, something anyone, who has read the other works of Richard Monaco, comes to expect.. Takezo, the leading and lovable main character, living in ancient Japan, long, long before atom bombs and other madness, wields his sword with great precision. He is confident, clever, clumsy, and comical all in one package. The thoroughness of Monaco's research gives us a deep look at an ancient culture's brutal treatment of it's people, still reflected in some cultures of our own time. For example, Oran, Takezo's great love, says in Chapter 43, "The words of Buddha can enlighten; the words of a fool can bathe the world in blood." And don't we know that today. Thanks, Mr Monaco, for another great read.

*Dead Blossoms* was an engaging read, it invokes Phillip Marlow, and *Shogun*, without being derivative of either story. The action is at times quite violent, but it was a violent time in Japan. There are a number of characters, all of whom develop well during the story in flashbacks and within the story itself. I have long enjoyed detective stories in other settings, from Ireland, to Rome. I look forward to reading this book again in the coming years!

I find historical novels interesting, especially the past ages of Japan with the samurais, geishas, ronins, etc. I felt the violence and sexual content were necessary to truly depict the way of life during that period in Japan's history. My only issue was a minor one. Trying to remember the names of the many characters; their "roles"; and whether they were friend or foe. I highly recommend this book to

anyone who enjoys historical based fiction and will definitely read it again myself.

A great, great read from a fabulous author. If you never read anything before of Mr. Monaco's you are in for wonderful treat on discovering this man's wonderful work....loved, loved it!

This book is full of exciting adventures, startling and fresh metaphors and terrifically drawn characters. I definitely think that it is a book worth reading

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