



The 47th Samurai (Bob Lee Swagger Novels)

By Stephen Hunter

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In *The 47th Samurai*, Bob Lee Swagger, the gritty hero of Stephen Hunter's bestselling novels *Point of Impact* and *Time to Hunt*, returns in Hunter's most intense and exotic thriller to date.

Bob Lee Swagger and Philip Yano are bound together by a single moment at Iwo Jima, 1945, when their fathers, two brave fighters on opposite sides, met in the bloody and chaotic battle for the island. Only Earl Swagger survived.

More than sixty years later, Yano comes to America to honor the legacy of his heroic father by recovering the sword he used in the battle. His search has led him to Crazy Horse, Idaho, where Bob Lee, ex-marine and Vietnam veteran, has settled into a restless retirement and immediately pledges himself to Yano's quest.

Bob Lee finds the sword and delivers it to Yano in Tokyo. On inspection, they discover that it is not a standard WWII blade, but a legendary shin-shinto katana, an artifact of the nation. It is priceless but worth killing for. Suddenly Bob is at the center of a series of terrible crimes he barely understands but vows to avenge. And to do so, he throws himself into the world of the samurai, Tokyo's dark, criminal yakuza underworld, and the unwritten rules of Japanese culture.

Swagger's allies, hard-as-nails, American-born Susan Okada and the brave, cocaine-dealing tabloid journalist Nick Yamamoto, help him move through this strange, glittering, and ominous world from the shady bosses of the seamy Kabukicho district to officials in the highest echelons of the Japanese government, but in the end, he is on his own and will succeed only if he can learn that to survive samurai, you must become samurai.

As the plot races and the violence escalates, it becomes clear that a ruthless conspiracy is in place, and the only thing that can be taken for granted is that money, power, and sex can drive men of all nationalities to gruesome extremes. If Swagger hopes to stop them, he must be willing not only to die but also to kill.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Bob Lee Swagger, retired marine master sniper and hero of bestseller Hunter's 1993 thriller, *Point of Impact* (forthcoming as the film *Shooter*), returns in this riveting homage to the myth of the samurai. Philip Yano, the son of the Japanese officer who commanded the bunker on Iwo Jima where Swagger's marine father won the Medal of Honor in 1945, approaches Swagger about a missing sword wielded by his father, Hideki, during the battle for the island. The sword turns out to be not just a family heirloom but a national treasure that evokes echoes from the most sacrosanct corners of Japanese history. Yano's search reveals there are those who will gladly kill for the honor it bestows upon the possessor. Plunged into a Japan where honor and loyalty outweigh even one's own life, Swagger finds that an old warrior like himself still has much to understand. While the action builds to the inevitable climax, the joy of the journey will keep readers turning the pages. (Sept.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review This is the novel Hunter's fans have been waiting for, the book that brings together his father-and-son protagonists: Earl Swagger, World War II hero and hard-nosed cop, and Bob Lee Swagger, Vietnam sniper and, like his father, the kind of guy who can't say no to righteous violence. Until now, Earl and Bob have each starred in their own books, but this time, ingeniously, Hunter brings them together when Bob is contacted by a retired Japanese soldier, Philip Yano, who believes that his father's samurai sword may have wound up in Earl's hands after the war. Bob tracks down the sword, travels to Japan, and presents it to Yano—after which the Yano family is slaughtered. Bob could walk away, but, of course, he doesn't.

Throwing himself into samurai culture, he learns swordsmanship from a master and sets off to avenge the Yanos—and, in a sense, his father. Sure, this sounds clichéd, but much of Hunter's genius comes from his ability to manipulate archetypes—especially the classic western scenario of the lone avenger—drawing on the almost subconscious pull these themes exert on the reader but always infusing them with multiple layers of complexity. As Bob is drawn into the samurai world, and tension builds to the inevitable confrontation with his adversary—a modern samurai seduced by the dark side—Hunter simultaneously fuels our need for bloody resolution and reveals the horrors wrought by devotion to honor and duty. But this time he does it with parallel narratives—juxtaposing the story of Earl Swagger and Philip Yano's father against the contemporary drama and playing off the same themes across generations. This is probably Hunter's most violent novel—and that's saying something—but violence may have never been more integral to story than it is here. Hunter celebrates the samurai soldier while showing the appalling underside of the samurai way of life and the ideals that drive it. Ott, Bill

Review

"This is the novel Hunter's fans have been waiting for...genius." Booklist "Compelling, exciting, and satisfying" Library Journal "Hunter is a great entertainer, one of our finest practitioners of the classic blood-soaked and propulsive American thriller. With fluid, confident prose he writes big stories of a man, mostly alone, who must go forth for us all and slay the dragon." Daniel Woodrell, The Washington Post "Mr. Hunter writes [fight scenes] as well as, or better, than anyone in the business...I have only one major problem with Mr. Hunter: He doesn't write often enough." Otto Penzler, The New York Sun "Bob Lee Swagger, retired marine master sniper and hero of bestseller Hunter's 1993 thriller, *Point of Impact*...returns in this riveting homage to the myth of the samurai...While the action builds to the inevitable climax, the joy of the journey will keep readers turning the pages." Publishers Weekly

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kenneth Harrell:

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