

47 Ronin (2013)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 58 min.

Our content advisories (1-10): Violence 5-; Language 1;
Sex/Nudity 2.

Our star rating: (1-5): 2

But if you will not obey the Lord your God by diligently observing all his commandments and decrees, which I am commanding you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you

Deuteronomy 28:15

Japanese filmmaker Akira Kurosawa gave us *Seven Samurai*, and now American director Carl Rinsch offers us *47 Ronin*, ronins being samurais who have been disgraced. He has transformed a Japanese historical legend into a martial arts fantasy, complete with special effects (the dragon is spectacular) and 3-D. The story of the 47 ronins is a national treasure in Japan, and has been made into a number of films, but never with a Caucasian as the central character.

In this version made for an American audience Keenu Reeves is Kai, a half-breed (half human and half demon) who is recruited to lead 46 ronin in avenging the death of their master Lord Asano (Min Tanaka) and to restore their dead lord's honor. There is lots of swordplay plus an evil witch whose snake-like hair can be deadly. The ending, true to the Japanese bushido code that strictly enforces the command of obedience even if you are victorious in a just cause, will be very hard for Americans to accept, so don't be surprised if this soon leaves the theaters and moves to DVD for martial arts fans to discover. With its disappointing box office receipts, it will take a long, long time for it to recover its reportedly \$175

million cost. (Indeed, since writing the review a couple of days ago I've noticed that the film has already been moved to a cheap seats theater. If you want to see it on a big screen, you will have to move fast.)