

Game of Depths

LIKE ANYBODY both adult and sane, I had no intention of watching *Game of Thrones*, even when the whole world was already talking about it. For one thing, it had swords; and I had already seen enough swords being wielded by Conan and Red Sonya. Swords don't have to be magic to bore you. Excalibur, after all, though it appears and disappears magically, is not a supernaturally endowed sword: Arthur still has to do the fighting. Excalibur doesn't do it for him. Nevertheless even a nonparanormal sword is a formula for tedium, because the loser rarely shows the appropriate reaction: sometimes he is transfixed, and stares pointedly ahead as if reading a bad script; but hardly ever does he fall in half. In Kurosawa's *Sanjuro* he gushes blood after coming second in a quick-draw competition, but such realism is rare.

Though I share the movie heritage of my generation