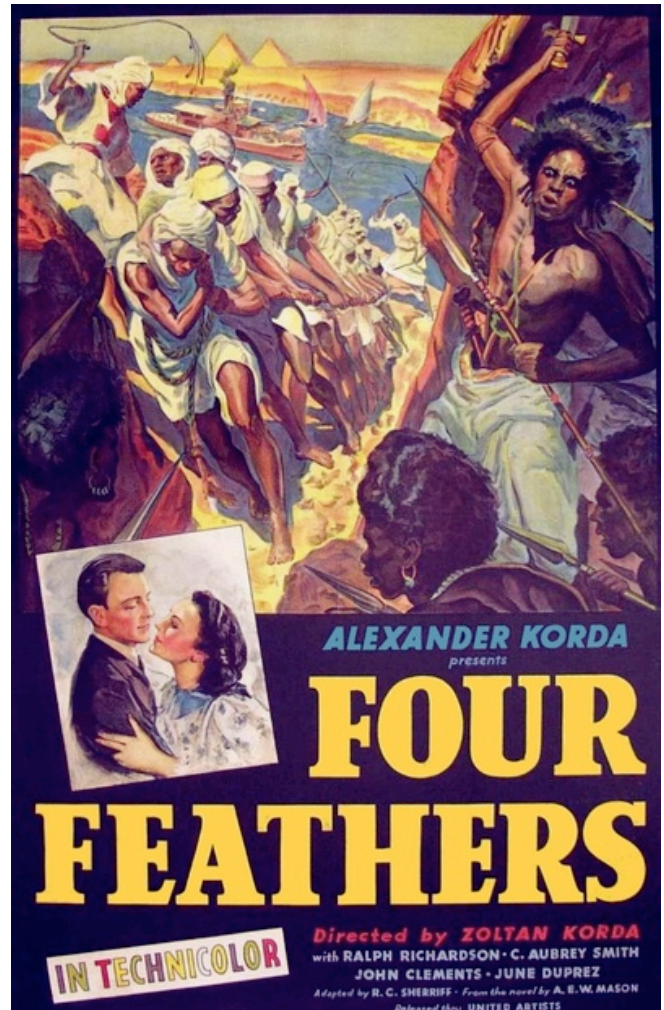


Directed by Zoltán Korda
Based on the novel by A.E.W. Mason
Screenplay by R.C. Sherriff
Produced by Alexander Korda
Original Music by Miklós Rózsa
Cinematography by Osmond Borradaile and Georges Périnal
Edited by Henry Cornelius
Production and Set Design by Vincent Korda
Assistant camera... Geoffrey Unsworth
Costumes by Godfrey Brennan, René Hubert
Costume Jeweller... Eugene Joseff
Donald Anderson... **technical and military adviser**
Natalie Kalmus... **Technicolor color director**
Lt. Col. Stirling... **technical and military adviser**

John Clements...Harry Faversham
Ralph Richardson...Captain John Durrance
C. Aubrey Smith...General Burroughs (as C.Aubrey Smith also)
June Duprez...Ethne Burroughs
Allan Jeayes...General Faversham
Jack Allen...Lieutenant Willoughby
Donald Gray...Peter Burroughs
Frederick Culley...Dr. Sutton
Clive Baxter...Young Harry Faversham
Robert Rendel...Colonel
Archibald Batty...Adjutant
Derek Elphinstone...Lieutenant Parker
Hal Walters...Joe
Norman Pierce...Sergeant Brown
Henry Oscar...Dr. Harraz
John Laurie...The Khalifa
Amid Taftazani...Karaga Pasha

ZOLTÁN KORDA (b. Zoltan Kellner, June 3, 1895, Pusztaturpaszto, Túrkeve, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary) – October 13, 1961, Hollywood, California) directed 20 films: 1955 *Storm Over the Nile*, 1951 *Cry, the Beloved Country*, 1948 *A Woman's Vengeance*, 1947 *The Macomber Affair*, 1945 *Counter-Attack*, 1943/1 *Sahara*, 1942 *Jungle Book*, 1940 *The Thief of Bagdad* (uncredited), 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *Drums*, 1937 *Elephant Boy*, 1937 *Revolt in the Desert*, 1936 *Conquest of the Air*, 1936 *Forever Yours*, 1935 *Sanders of the River*, 1933 *For Love or Money*, 1932 *Men of Tomorrow*



(uncredited), 1927 *Die elf Teufel*, 1920 *A Csodagyerek*, and 1918 *Károly bakák*.

R.C. SHERRIFF (b. Robert Cedric Sherriff, June 6, 1896, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, England – November 13, 1975, Esher, Surrey, England) has 46 tv and screenwriting credits, some of which are 1963 “Verräterische Spuren”, 1961 “Bridge mit Onkel Tom”, 1960 “BBC Sunday-Night Play”, 1959 “Cards with Uncle Tom”, 1957 “Home at Seven”, 1956 “Lux Video Theatre”, 1955 *Storm Over the Nile*, 1955 *The Dam Busters*, 1955 *The Night My Number Came Up*, 1952 *Murder on Monday*, 1951 *No Highway in the Sky*, 1950 *Trio*, 1949 “The Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse”, 1948 *Quartet*, 1947 *Odd Man Out*, 1943 *Forever and a Day*, 1942 *Stand by for Action*, 1942 *This Above All*, 1941 *That Hamilton Woman*, 1939 *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 “Badger's Green”, 1937 “Journey's End”, 1937 *The Road Back*, 1935 *Windfall*, 1935 *Bride of Frankenstein* (adaptation - uncredited), 1934 *Badger's Green*, 1934 *One More River*, 1933 *The Invisible Man*, 1932 *The Old Dark House*, 1930 *Journey's End*, and 1919 *The Toilers*.

ALEXANDER KORDA (b. Sándor László Kellner, September 16, 1893, Pusztatúrpásztó, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary) – January 23, 1956, London, England) produced 63 films and directed 67. Some of those he directed are 1948 *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, 1941 *That Hamilton Woman*, 1940 *The Thief of Bagdad*,

1939 *The Lion Has Wings*, 1936 *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*, 1936 *Rembrandt*, 1934 *The Private Life of Don Juan*, 1934 *The Rise of Catherine the Great*, 1933 *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, 1932 *Reserved for Ladies*, 1931 *Rive gauche*, 1930 *Princess and the Plumber*, 1930 *Women Everywhere*, 1930 *Lilies of the Field*, 1929 *Her Private Life*, 1929 *Love and the Devil*, 1928 *Night Watch*, 1927 *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, 1927 *The Stolen Bride*, 1926 *Madame Doesn't Want Children*, 1922 *Samson und Delila*, 1920 *The Prince and the Pauper*, 1919 *White Rose*, 1917 *St. Peter's Umbrella*, 1916 *Mesék az írógépről*, 1916 *Ciklámen*, 1915 *Lyon Lea*, and 1914 *Örház a Kárpátokban*.

MIKLÓS RÓZSA (April 18, 1907, Budapest, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary) – July 27, 1995, Los Angeles, California) won three best music Oscars: *Spellbound* (1945), *A Double Life* (1947) and *Ben-Hur* (1959). Some of his other 94 film music credits are 1982 *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*, 1981 *Eye of the Needle*, 1979 *Time After Time*, 1979 *Last Embrace*, 1978 *Fedora*, 1977 *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover*, 1977 *Providence*, 1970 *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, 1968 *The Green Berets*, 1963 *The V.I.P.s*, 1962 *Sodom and Gomorrah*, 1961 *El Cid*, 1961 *King of Kings*, 1959 *The World, the Flesh and the Devil*, 1958 *A Time to Love and a Time to Die*, 1957 *The Seventh Sin*, 1957 *Something of Value*, 1956 *Lust for Life*, 1956 *Bhowani Junction*, 1954 *Green Fire*, 1954 *Valley of the Kings*, 1954 *Men of the Fighting Lady*, 1953 *Knights of the Round Table*, 1953 *Julius Caesar*, 1953 *Young Bess*, 1952 *Ivanhoe*, 1951 *Quo Vadis*, 1950 *The Miniver Story*, 1950 *The Asphalt Jungle*, 1949 *Adam's Rib*, 1949 *Madame Bovary*, 1948 *Command Decision*, 1948 *The Naked City*, 1947 *Brute Force*, 1947 *The Macomber Affair*, 1947 *Song of Scheherazade*, 1946 *The Killers*, 1946 *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*, 1945 *The Lost Weekend*, 1945 *Lady on a Train*, 1945 *The Man in Half Moon Street*, 1944 *Double Indemnity*, 1943 *So Proudly We Hail!*, 1943 *I Sahara*, 1942 *Jungle Book*, 1941 *That Hamilton Woman*, 1940 *The Thief of Bagdad*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *The Divorce of Lady X*, 1937 *Murder on Diamond Row*, 1937 *Knight Without Armor*, and 1937 *Thunder in the City*.

OSMOND BORRADAILE (cinematographer) (b. Osmond Hudson Borradaile, July 17, 1898, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada – March 23, 1999, Canada) has 27 cinematographer credits, most of them shorts. Some of the others are 1971 *Travelin' Light*, 1954 *L'esprit du mal*, 1952 *Royal Journey*, 1949 *I Was a Male War Bride*, 1949 *Saints and Sinners*, 1948 *Scott of the Antarctic*, 1946 *The Overlanders*, 1943 *Action Stations*, 1939 *The Lion Has Wings*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *Drums*, 1937 *Elephant Boy*, 1935 *Sanders of the River*, 1934 *The Private Life of the Gannets*, 1932 *Say It with Music*.

GEORGES PÉRINAL (cinematographer) (1897, Paris, France – April 23, 1965, London, England) has 71 cinematographer credits, among them 1960 *Oscar Wilde*, 1960 *The Day They*

Robbed the Bank of England, 1960 *Once More, with Feeling!*, 1958 *tom thumb*, 1958 *Bonjour tristesse*, 1957 *A King in New York*, 1957 *Saint Joan*, 1956 *Loser Takes All*, 1955 *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, 1955 *The Man Who Loved Redheads*, 1951 *I'll Never Forget You*, 1951 *No Highway in the Sky*, 1950 *Operation X*, 1949 *If This Be Sin*, 1949 *The Forbidden Street*, 1947 *An Ideal Husband*, 1947 *A Man About the House*, 1943 *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, 1941 *Suicide Squadron*, 1941 *Old Bill and Son*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *Prison Without Bars*, 1938 *The Challenge*, 1938 *Drums*, 1937 *Murder on Diamond Row*, 1937 *Dark Journey*, 1937 *I, Claudius*, 1936 *Rembrandt*, 1936 *Things to Come*, 1935 *Sanders of the River*, 1934 *The Private Life of Don Juan*, 1934 *The Rise of Catherine the Great*, 1933 *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, 1932 *Student's Hotel*, 1932 *The Chocolate Girl*, 1932 *The Blood of a Poet*, 1931 *À Nous la Liberté*, 1931 *Le parfum de la dame en noir*, 1931 *Jean de la Lune*, 1931 *Le Million*, 1931 *David Golder*, 1930 *Under the Roofs of Paris*, 1929 *The New Gentlemen*, 1928 *Misdeal*, 1927 *Six et demi onze*, and 1926 *La justicière*.



VINCENT KORDA (production design) (b. Vincent Kellner, June 22, 1897, Túrkeve, Hungary – January 4, 1979, London, England) won a best art direction Oscar for *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940). Some of his other 18 films are 1964 *The Yellow Rolls-Royce*, 1952 *Breaking the Sound Barrier*, 1952 *Murder on Monday*, 1949 *The Third Man*, 1948 *The Fallen Idol*, 1947 *An Ideal Husband*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1939 *The Spy in Black*, 1939 *Over the Moon*, 1938 *Prison Without Bars*, 1938 *Drums*, 1937 *Murder on Diamond Row*, 1936

The Man Who Could Work Miracles, 1936 *Rembrandt*, 1936 *Things to Come*, 1935 *The Ghost Goes West*, 1933 *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, and 1932 *Men of Tomorrow*.

JOHN CLEMENTS...Harry Faversham (April 25, 1910, Hendon, London, England – April 6, 1988, Brighton, East Sussex, England) appeared in 28 tv and feature films, among them 1982 *Gandhi*, 1982 "I Remember Nelson", 1969 *Oh! What a Lovely War*, 1963 *The Mind Benders*, 1963 "The Affair", 1961 "ITV Television Playhouse", 1961 "ITV Play of the Week", 1958 *The Silent Enemy*, 1953 "Henry V", 1949 *Call of the Blood*, 1949 *Train of Events*, 1944 *They Came to a City*, 1943 *Underground Guerrillas*, 1943 *At Dawn We Die*, 1941 *Ships with Wings*, 1941 *This England*, 1940 *Convoy*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *The Hidden Menace*, 1938 *Housemaster*, 1938 *South Riding*, 1937 *Knight Without Armor*, 1937 *I, Claudius*, 1936 *Rembrandt*, 1936 *Things to Come*, 1936 *Ticket of Leave*, 1935 *The Divine Spark*, and 1935 *Once in a New Moon*.

RALPH RICHARDSON...Captain John Durrance (December 19, 1902, Tivoli Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England – October 10, 1983, Marylebone, London, England) appeared in 82 films, including 1984 *Give My Regards to Broad Street*, 1984 *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*, 1983 *Invitation to the Wedding*, 1982 "Witness for the Prosecution",

1981 *Time Bandits*, 1981 *Dragonslayer*, 1978 “No Man's Land”, 1977 “The Man in the Iron Mask”, 1975 *Rollerball*, 1973 “Frankenstein: The True Story”, 1973 *O Lucky Man!*, 1973/*I A Doll's House*, 1973 *Lady Caroline Lamb*, 1972 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1972 *Tales from the Crypt*, 1969 “David Copperfield”, 1969 *The Looking Glass War*, 1969 *Midas Run*, 1969 *Oh! What a Lovely War*, 1967 *Blandings Castle* (6 episodes), 1966 *Khartoum*, 1966 *The Wrong Box*, 1965 *Doctor Zhivago*, 1965 *Chimes at Midnight*, 1963 “Hedda Gabler”, 1962 *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, 1960 *Exodus*, 1959 *Our Man in Havana*, 1956 *Smiley*, 1955 *Richard III*, 1952 *Murder on Monday*, 1951 *Outcast of the Islands*, 1949 *The Heiress*, 1948 *The Fallen Idol*, 1948 *Anna Karenina*, 1946 *Secret Flight*, 1943 *The Silver Fleet*, 1942 *The Avengers*, 1939 *The Lion Has Wings*, 1939 *The Fugitive*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1939 *Clouds Over Europe*, 1938 *The Citadel*, 1938 *The Divorce of Lady X*, 1936 *The Man Who Could Work Miracles*, 1936 *Things to Come*, 1935 *Alias Bulldog Drummond*, 1934 *The Return of Bulldog Drummond*, 1934 *The King of Paris*, 1933 *Friday the Thirteenth*, and 1933 *The Ghoul*.

C. AUBREY SMITH...General Burroughs (b. Charles Aubrey Smith, July 21, 1863 – London, England – December 20, 1948, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, California) appeared in 111 films, some of which were 1949 *Little Women*, 1947 *Unconquered*, 1946 *Cluny Brown*, 1945 *And Then There Were None*, 1944 *Secrets of Scotland Yard*, 1944 *The White Cliffs of Dover*, 1944 *The Adventures of Mark Twain*, 1943 *Madame Curie*, 1941 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1941 *Maisie Was a Lady*, 1940 *A Bill of Divorcement*, 1940 *Waterloo Bridge*, 1940 *Rebecca*, 1939 *Another Thin Man*, 1939 *Five Came Back*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *Kidnapped*, 1937 *Thoroughbreds Don't Cry*, 1937 *The Prisoner of Zenda*, 1937 *Wee Willie Winkie*, 1936 *Lloyd's of London*, 1936 *The Garden of Allah*, 1936 *Romeo and Juliet*, 1936 *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, 1935 *The Florentine Dagger*, 1935 *The Gilded Lily*, 1935 *Clive of India*, 1935 *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, 1934 *Cleopatra*, 1934 *Bulldog Drummond Strikes Back*, 1934 *One More River*, 1934 *The Scarlet Empress*, 1934 *The House of Rothschild*, 1933 *Queen Christina*, 1933 *Adorable*, 1933 *The Barbarian*, 1933 *Secrets*, 1933 *The Monkey's Paw*, 1932 *Trouble in Paradise*, 1932 *Tarzan the Ape Man*, 1931 *The Phantom of Paris*, 1931 *Just a Gigolo*, 1931 *Daybreak*, 1931 *Trader Horn*, 1930 *The Perfect Alibi*, 1922 *Flames of Passion*, 1920 *Castles in Spain*, 1920 *The Face at the Window*, 1918 *Red Pottage*, 1915 *John Glayde's Honor*, and 1915 *The Builder of Bridges*.

JUNE DUPREZ...Ethne Burroughs (May 14, 1918, Teddington, Middlesex, England – October 30, 1984, London, England) appeared in 19 films: 1961 *One Plus One*, 1951 “Robert Montgomery Presents”, 1947 *Calcutta*, 1946 *That Brennan Girl*, 1945 *And Then There Were None*, 1945 *The Brighton Strangler*, 1944 *None But the Lonely Heart*, 1943 *Tiger Fangs*, 1943 *Don Winslow of the Coast Guard*, 1943 *Forever and a Day*, 1942 *Little Tokyo, U.S.A.*, 1942 *They Raid by Night*, 1940 *The Thief of Bagdad*, 1940 *The Crimson Circle*, 1939 *The Lion Has Wings*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1939 *The Spy in Black*, 1936 *The Cardinal*, and 1936 *The Amateur Gentleman*.

ALLAN JEAYES...General Faversham (January 19, 1885 in London, England – September 20, 1963, London, England) appeared in 93 films and tv dramas, among them 1963 *Reach for Glory*, 1957 “Busman's Honeymoon”, 1950-1956 “BBC Sunday-Night Theatre”, 1956 “The Scarlet Pimpernel”, 1950 *Waterfront Women*, 1950 *The Inheritance*, 1948 *Blanche Fury*, 1945 *Dead of Night*, 1943 *At Dawn We Die*, 1941 “Pimpernel” Smith, 1940 *The Thief of Bagdad*, 1940 *The Flying Squad*, 1940 *Convoy*, 1940 *Night Train to Munich*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 *They Drive by Night*, 1938 “Libel!”, 1938 *13 Men and a Gun*, 1938 “Pride and Prejudice”, 1937 *Murder on Diamond Row*, 1937 *Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*, 1937 *Knight Without Armor*, 1937 *Elephant Boy*, 1937 *I, Claudius*, 1936 *Man of Affairs*, 1936 *Rembrandt*, 1936 *Things to Come*, 1935 *Transatlantic Tunnel*, 1935 *Sanders of the River*, 1934 *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, 1934 *The Rise of Catherine the Great*, 1933 *Paris Plane*, 1932 *Woman in Bondage*, 1931 *The Ghost Train*, 1929 *The Hate Ship*, 1925 *Bulldog Drummond's Third Round*, 1922 *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, 1921 *A Gentleman of France*, and 1918 *Nelson*.

CLIVE BAXTER...Young Harry Faversham (1922, London, England – August 22, 1978) appeared in 24 films and tv dramas, among them 1962 “The Avengers”, 1962 “City Beneath the Sea”, 1959 “Ask for King Billy”, 1959 “The Four Just Men”, 1959 “The Invisible Man”, 1955 *Navy Heroes*, 1954 “Rheingold Theatre”, 1951 *Bikini Baby*, 1948 *The Outsider*, 1940 *The Stars Look Down*, 1939 *The Four Feathers*, 1938 “Badger's Green”, 1938 “Ah, Wilderness!”, 1938 *John Halifax*, 1937 *The Girl Was Young*, and 1937 *School for Husbands*.



From *World Film Directors, Volume I*. Ed. John Wakeman. The H. W. Wilson Co. NY, 1987. Entry by Lenny Rubenstein.

Zoltán Korda (Zoltán Kellner) ((May 3, 1895-October 13, 1961), British director, editor, and scenarist, was born near Túreve, Hungary, the second of three lavishly talented sons of assimilated Jews, Henrik and Ernesztina (Weiss) Kellner. His father was estate manager for the Salgo family in Pusztá

Turpászto, on the edge of the Hungarian plain. Like his elder brother Sándor [Alexander Korda], Zoltán was enthralled as a boy by the writings of Jules Verne and other tales of adventure in exotic locales, a predilection reflected in all of his most successful films.

Like his father, formerly a noncommissioned officer in the Hussars, Zoltán Kellner had in his youth a fiery temper that often got him into fights. Sándor frequently had to intercede or join the fray, and the two brothers became very close. Their father's early death from a misdiagnosed case of appendicitis increased the family's cohesion, especially when the widow and her three sons were forced to move in with unsympathetic in-laws. Sándor soon moved to Budapest, where he began to earn a little money as a journalist and tutor while continuing his education. It was at this time that he adopted the name Korda, originally using it as his byline.

In 1908 the rest of the family joined Sándor in Budapest. Despite Zoltán's desire to become a writer, practical considerations obliged him to enroll in a commercial high school. Upon graduation he worked as a clerk for a coal merchant until the summer of 1914, when he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army.

Commissioned as a lieutenant, he fought on the Galician front, where his lungs were seriously damaged in a gas attack. He never fully recovered, for the rest of his life suffering periodic bouts of disabling illness.

Meanwhile, in 1912, Sándor Korda had entered the developing Hungarian film industry, where he moved rapidly from success to success. By the time the war ended in 1918 he had built his own film studio on the outskirts of Budapest and was established as Hungary's top producer, as well as an important director and editor of the country's most influential film magazine. Zoltán joined his brother's Corvin studio in 1918, adopting the new family name of Korda. Beginning as an editor, he made his first film, *Karoly-Bakak*, later the same year, codirecting with Sándor's partner Miklós Pásztor.

Though not himself a communist, Sándor played an important role in the nationalization of the Hungarian film industry under a communist government early in 1919. A few months later the communists were replaced by Horthy's vengeful right-wing regime, and the "White Terror" followed—the murderous persecution of communists, Jews, and liberal artists. Obviously a prime target, Sándor was arrested but gained his freedom thanks to the efforts and influence of his wife and of Zoltán, a wounded veteran and former officer.

Like many other Hungarian filmmakers, Sándor went to Vienna, where he anglicized his first name to Alexander and joined the Sascha film company. The rest of the family followed—Zoltán, the younger brother Vincent, then an art student, and their mother. Zoltán became a cameraman and editor for Sascha, and probably also edited *Samson und Delila*, a sub-Griffith epic made by Alexander as an independent production. This was the Kordas' last film in Austria. They moved on again to Berlin, where Alexander launched a new production company and made

half a dozen movies Zoltán worked once more as his editor and in 1927 directed his own first solo feature, *Die Elf Teufel* (*The Eleven Devils*).

The same year Alexander Korda and his first wife Maria went to Hollywood, where neither had much success and where their marriage ended. Alexander returned to Europe and made one notable film in Paris, *Marius* (1931). The excellent sets were the work of Vincent Korda, who thus began his distinguished career as an art director. In November 1931, Alexander went to England. Zoltán had belatedly followed Alexander to Hollywood, where he worked as an editor and coscripted his brother's movie *Women Everywhere* (1930). Again delayed by ill health, he rejoined Alexander in 1933 in England.

By this time Alexander had established yet another new production company, London Film Production, with Vincent in charge of the art department and Lajos Biro—another of "Korda's Magyars"—heading the script department. London Films began as a manufacturer of "quota quickies"—low-budget programmers designed to meet the quota of British-made films demanded by the 1927 Cinematograph Act to combat Hollywood's domination of the British market. As Karol Kulik says, the results were often "an affront to both British filmmakers and the British public, and gave British films a bad reputation." On the other hand, these programmers did provide opportunities for young directors,



writers, and performers to practice their crafts with a minimum of financial risk. In 1933 Zoltán Korda directed one such item *Men of Tomorrow*, in collaboration with Leontine Sagan. Later the same year came his first British solo feature, a "quota quickie" called *Cash (For Love and Money in the United States)*. Alexander Korda was not content to churn out such modest entertainments. Still smarting at his failure in Hollywood, he was determined to beat the dream factory at its own game. Before the end of 1933 he scored his first great success with *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. It was the first British film for many years to capture and international market, and it established Korda as the "savior" of the British film industry (as he had been fifteen years earlier of the Hungarian industry). Another enormous success for London Films followed with *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934), directed like *Henry VIII* by Alexander himself.

In 1935 Zoltán matched his brother's triumphs with his second feature *Sanders of the River* (U.S., *Bosambo*). Based on Edgar Wallace's stories about a British district commissioner in darkest Africa, the film was scripted by Lajos Biro and Jeffrey Dell and photographed by Georges Périnal, Osmond Borradaile, and Louis Page. Zoltán Korda and a crew of twelve spent four months in West Africa filming the dances of half-a-dozen different tribes and recording their songs. Many of the songs are used in the film, either as they were recorded or—like the hit "Canoe Song"—in arrangements by the composer Mischa Spoliansky and the picture's musical director Muir Matheson. According to Zoltán Korda, the movie used 3,000 feet of film shot on location. London's publicity department reported that "the 20,000 African Negroes who take part in this picture

received most of their wages in the form of cartons of cigarettes.” Produced by Alexander Korda, this was the first film on which all three Korda brothers worked together.

Leslie Banks plays the wise administrator who maintains the king’s peace more by his moral strength than by force of arms. Paul Robeson was recruited to play the chieftain Bosambo, who learns the truth of Sanders’ dictum “the job of a ruler is not to be feared, but to be loved.” However, as Raymond Durnat remarked, the movie “wobbles deliciously” between this thesis “and a plot which proves the exact opposite. Indeed the natives with childlike wisdom, observe ‘We realize that we must live in peace and love one another for if we do not O white master you will punish us most cruelly.’”

Sanders of the River was an international hit. *Kinematograph Weekly* called it “spectacular adventure drama, a fine tribute to British rule in Africa. Although spectacle predominates, it is not allowed to impose upon the author’s narrative skill, for the story comes first all the time, and it carries with it an immense amount of general entertainment. The locale is new to screen drama and the virgin territory has been explored with real showmanship....The casting of Paul Robeson as Bosambo is a clever move. He not only acts well, but has a commanding screen presence and a fine voice which is shrewdly utilized.”

In fact, Robeson disowned the picture for its condescending racism, and in 1957, when *Sanders* was revived on British television, it drew a protest from the Nigerian Commissioner, who said it “brought Disgrace and disrepute to Nigerians.” There have been suggestions that the film’s Anglophilia was imposed by Alexander Korda,

Zoltán being responsible for the more or less respectful (and often valuable) ethnographic content of this and other Korda epics of empire. On the other hand, in his accounts of the filming, Zoltán reported almost reverently on the British administrators he met in Africa, while describing tribal ways with something closer to amiable contempt. In any case, David Thomson, discussing *Sanders* in his *Biographical Dictionary of the Cinema* (1980), wrote that “in retrospect...the imperial offensiveness seems peripheral to an engaging taste for adventurous nonsense. It was the feeling for romance that inspired the Korda empire.”

Whether or not Zoltán and Alexander clashed over this aspect of *Sanders of the River*, there was certainly no shortage of fraternal conflict between them. Zoltán, who was inclined to feel that the poor were morally superior to the rich, criticized his big brother for his legendary extravagance and called his lavish dinner parties a “waste of bloody time.” Their disputes often spilled over onto the set, where they would quarrel violently, to the bewilderment of their British employees, in a mixture of Hungarian, German, and heavily accented English. In times of trouble, however, the brothers’ loyalty to each other was absolute. Zoltán played an important role in foiling a bid by disgruntled stockholders to wrest London Films from

Alexander’s control, and he cared for his brother devotedly when his health began to fail.

In the mid-30s. Zoltán was one of several Korda directors involved (uncredited) in the piecemeal creation of *Conquest of the Air*, a feature-length semi-documentary about the history of aviation finally completed by Charles Frend in 1940. After *Forget Me Not* (1936; U.S. *Forever Yours*), an inconsequential romance, came *Elephant Boy* (1937). The film was originally assigned to Robert Flaherty, who disappeared with his crew into the Indian jungles and spent a year shooting fifty-five hours of “background.” Zoltán Korda was given the unenviable task of adding studio material that would turn this mass of mostly documentary footage into an economically viable feature. Korda had a considerable asset in Sabu, a twelve-year-old charmer who had been working as a stable boy at the court of an Indian maharajah when Flaherty discovered him and cast him in the film’s lead role. Based loosely on Kipling’s story of “Toomai of the Elephants,” the film is about a boy with a hereditary genius for handling elephants, his friendship with the great bull elephant Kala Nag and his involvement with Peterson (Walter Hudd), a white hunter who uses Kala Nag and Toomai in an expedition to capture wild elephants.



Elephant Boy was attacked both by lovers of Kipling and admirers of Flaherty. Graham Greene, for example, complained of “the bad cutting, the dreadful studio work, the pedestrian adaptation so unfair to Kipling’s story” and especially its climax, the secret dance of the elephants witnessed—alone among humans—by Toomai. Greene wrote that “to use the gathering of the wild elephants at their

jungle dance-floor merely to resolve the problem of Petersen Sahib who has got to trap a certain number of elephants for labour if he is to retain his job—that is to throw away the whole poetic value of the original.”

Sabu starred again in *Drum* (1938; U.S. *Drums*), adapted by Lajos Biro and others from the novel by A.E.W. Mason. This time he plays the young heir to a mountain kingdom on the Northwest Frontier of India. He is threatened by the evil machinations of his anti-imperialist uncle but ultimately triumphs, thanks to his own resourcefulness and the heroism of the British troops who befriend him. The film was much admired for its splendid location photography in Technicolor and for Korda’s characteristic use of authentic Indian music and dances. However, even in 1938 some critics resented its jingoism: Otis Ferguson called it “a bang-up adventure job though particularly anachronistic for this time and pregnant with Raymond Massey and other bad jokes in black face.”

Another A.E.W. Mason novel of imperialist adventure, *The Four Feathers*, had already been filmed two or three times before Korda made what is generally regarded as the definitive version of the story, and his masterpiece. John Clements plays Harry Faversham, sensitive son of an army family who as a boy lad listened terrified to the bloodthirsty dinner-table recollections of his father, the general (C. Aubrey Smith). Being a Faversham,

Harry takes a commission, but he loses his nerve and resigns when his regiment sails for the Sudan to put down the Khalifa's uprising. He receives white feathers—the symbol of cowardice—from three of his brother officers and from his beloved Ethna (June Duprez).

Ostracized by family, friends, and fiancée, Faversham goes alone to Egypt, disguises himself as a mute tribesman, and joins the Khalifa's army as a spy. After a desert engagement, he finds his former friend John Durrance alone and blinded by the sun.

Without revealing his identity, he leads him back to the British lines. As he hands him over, he slips Durrance's white feather into his pocket and returns to the Khalifa's camp. Here he joins his other two friends in prison and, during the Battle of

Omdurman, frees them and helps win victory for the British. Back in England, he is reinstated and marries Ethna.

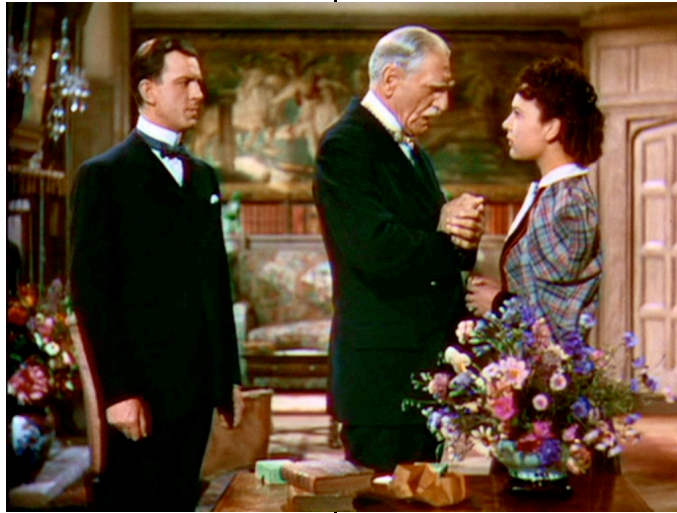
"What is new is the drive—and in the Sudanese sequences the conviction—of this new version," wrote Graham Greene.

"Even the thickest of the ham—the old veterans discussing the Crimea in the Faversham home, among the portraits of military ancestors—goes smoothly down, savoured with humour and satire.... So in *The Four Feathers* the plot hardly matters: what is important is the colour, which is almost invariably pleasant and

sometimes gives a shock of pleasure.... What is important is nocturnal London smoking up through Faversham's grey windows; the close-up of mulberry bodies straining at the ropes along the Nile; the cracked amber waste round the dried-up wells; the vultures...dropping like weighted parachutes. It is impossible to divide the credit between Mr. Zoltán Korda, the director, who has wiped out the disgrace of *Sanders of the River* and Mr R.C. Sheriff, author of the film play."

There was universal praise also for the scope and excitement of the battle scenes, some of which have been re-used in at least four other films, and for the quality of the acting. Ralph Richardson, who played the blinded Durrance, growing from panic to serene acceptance, created in about fifteen minutes of screen time a performance that, as C.A. Lejeune wrote, "is deliberately scaled to heroic size. This is real acting in an industry that barely knows the meaning of the word."

London Films' *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), like *Conquest of the Air*, was a much-delayed project in which number of Korda directors had a hand, Zoltán Korda among them. By the time it appeared, the Kordas were in Hollywood, where Zoltán directed the last of his films with Alexander as his producer, *Jungle Book* (1942), a commercial if not a critical success. Sabu was cast as Mowgli, the boy raised by wolves, and the scenarist Laurence Stallings tacked a plodding story about wicked treasure-hunters onto Kipling's original fable. Dilys Powell wrote that the movie had "a great deal of jungle and very little Book," and Bosley Crowther found in it "a semblance of a super-Tarzan film in Technicolor."



When Alexander Korda returned to Britain in 1943, Zoltán remained in Hollywood, where he next made *Sahara* (Columbia, 1943). The picture was suggested by a notable Soviet film, *The Thirteen*, and scripted by Jon Howard Lawson and the director. Humphrey Bogart starred as Sergeant Joe Gunn, commanding an American tank in the Libyan desert. He picks up an assortment of stranded Allied soldiers after the fall of Tobruck, as well as a repentant Italian and an arrogant German pilot. In the end, the goodies decide to make a stand at a desert waterhole against five hundred thirsty German troops. Filmed with army cooperation in the American southwest, the movie was praised for its originality and realism and described by Alton Cook as "the most exciting movie of desert warfare we have had from this war."

Counter-Attack (Columbia, 1945) was also scripted by John Howard Lawson from a Soviet original, in this case a stage play that had already been seen on Broadway. A Russian commando (Paul Muni) is trapped in a cellar with a group of German prisoners and one Soviet partisan (Marguerite Chapman). For three days and nights, while the Germans maneuver to turn the tables on their exhausted captors, Muni uses an assortment of psychological tricks and tactics to wring vital military information from them. His

performance as the ill-educated but shrewd interrogator was generally admired, but most reviewers found the picture wordy and static.

Korda returned to Africa for *The Macomber Affair* (1947), from Hemingway's story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Robert Preston plays the rich, blustering, but fundamentally likable Macomber who, on safari in Kenya, is shot dead by his destructive wife (Joan Bennett). Gregory Peck is the professional hunter attracted to this dangerous lady. Beginning with the husband dead, the film tells its story in flashback. It was on the whole respectfully received, though critics objected more or less vehemently to its modifying Hemingway's harsh story—its suggestion that Macomber's murder might after all have been an accident.

Another literary adaptation followed, *A Woman's Vengeance* (1948), adapted by Aldous Huxley and others from his own short story and play *The Giaconda Smile*. Wearer of the mysterious smile is Jessica Tandy—a jealous woman who, spurned by philandering Charles Boyer, poisons his wife and lets him face the gallows for the murder. Cedric Hardwicke gave one of his best performances as the doctor who worms out the truth in the nick of time. A reviewer in the *London Times* wrote that "much of the astringency and intellectual satire of the story had been lost" in the adaptation, but found it "a relief to hear in the cinema conversation with an interest in ideas."

It was, wrote David Thomson, "as if to make amends for *Sanders of the River*" that Korda next filmed Alan Paton's novel about the racial tragedy in South Africa, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Its hero is a black clergyman (Canada Lee), a simple, inarticulate

man who leaves the back country around Natal and sets out for Johannesburg in search of his sister and son. His sister has become a shanty-town prostitute; the son has murdered in a hold-up a man who turns out to have been a white liberal activist for racial equality. The Job-like sufferings of the hero are alleviated when the murdered man's father (Charles Carson) is won over to the side of racial justice. "Although its contents are explosively melodramatic," wrote John McCarten, "it is never shrill, and when it points up man's inhumanity to man, it does so with a compassionate rather than a fanatical air." The film won the David Selznick award for its contribution to world brotherhood. Korda's failing health limited his output thereafter, but in 1955 he codirected with Terence Young a Cinemascope remake of *The Four Feathers* called *Storm Over the Nile*. It was enjoyed for its visual splendors, though most reviewers found Anthony Steel and Laurence Harvey poor substitutes for Clements and Ralph Richardson.

A quiet and self-effacing man, always overshadowed by his larger-than-life brother Alexander, Zoltán Korda survived that titan by five years, dying of a heart attack in Los Angeles in 1961. He was himself survived by his English wife, the former actress Joan Gardner, and two sons.



Michael Sragow, "The Four Feathers: Breaking the British Square," Criterion Notes

A. E. W. Mason's sweeping action novel *The Four Feathers* (1902) had already inspired three films by the time producer Alexander Korda got to it in 1939. It would be filmed three more times afterward. But you really haven't seen it unless you've watched the Korda production, directed by Alexander's younger brother, Zoltán, and designed by his youngest brother, Vincent. No version before or since has been able to match this film's gritty magic (not even Zoltán's 1955 remake, *Storm over the Nile*, using the same script and stretching the old location footage into CinemaScope). This *Four Feathers* shows how sophisticated and seductive a Boy's Own adventure could be. Set during the British reconquest of the Sudan and retaking of *Khartoum* (1896–98), it's a spine-tingling tale of heroic redemption. It's also, next to *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), the most harrowingly beautiful of all desert spectacles. The sand is never merely yellow, amber, or gold—it's multihued and speckled with dirt and rock. The mudflats are a vile, volcanic taupe. White-sailed

boats struggle up and down a Nile that glitters in chameleonic shades of brown or olive or blue.

The grandeur of the imagery makes you feel, viscerally and simultaneously, the headiness and the hubris of imperial conquest. Director Zoltán—always an undervalued filmmaker, despite superb accomplishments like *Sahara* (1943) and *The Macomber Affair* (1947)—intuits his way toward his own visual theme: the act of will it takes to conquer a landscape that can swallow up homegrown warlords and imperialists alike. In one haunting postbattle scene, the camera sees beyond the broken bodies and flocks of carrion birds to a mauve haze surrounding distant mountains.

Alexander's nephew Michael Korda (son of Vincent) memorably wrote in *Charmed Lives*, his insightful family memoir, that his mogul uncle was "a Hungarian who became more British than the British themselves." Michael's other uncle, Zoltán, "was drawn to the 'natives' of British Africa and India with fierce intensity and humanity." Michael saw their collaborations as "compromises between Zoli's love of the natives and their way of life and Alex's desire to produce pro-Empire pictures in praise of the white man's burden."

Thanks to Zoltán's strength as a director and Alexander's savvy as a producer, their sympathies don't conflict in *The Four Feathers*. Together, they portray the moral complexity behind imperialistic ideals. Rudyard Kipling coined the phrase "white man's burden" as a call to sacrifice and service: "Take up the White Man's burden— / Send for the best you breed— / Go bind your sons to exile / To serve your captives' need." *The Four Feathers* captures that idealism and also the arrogance behind it. Although the film streamlines the plot and rejiggers several characters (even altering the spelling of the hero's name), and shifts the time frame forward, to when the British were about to regain their lost ground in the Sudan, it remains true to Mason's picture of an empire streaked with sadness and rue. But Kipling is all over this movie too. "See . . . the dreaded Dervishes! Kipling's Famous FUZZY-WUZZIES," declared the ads, referring to the Arab and African followers of the Islamic zealot known as the Mahdi. They kill General "Chinese" Gordon at Khartoum in the prologue and then pledge their allegiance to his successor, the khalifa, who lords it over the Sudan until General Kitchener avenges Gordon's death a decade later (when the main action is set). Kipling wrote his poem "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" as a soldier's toast to an admirable adversary: "An' 'ere's to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air— / You big black boundin' beggar—for you broke a British square!"

The "British square" was the rectangular formation of infantrymen—with two or more lines of riflemen on each side—that the Queen's troops employed to withstand huge numbers of attackers during the empire's African adventures. This film of *The Four Feathers* (unlike the novel) vividly details how the Dervishes and Fuzzy-Wuzzies break a British square. Indeed, breaking the British square can be seen as the ruling metaphor of the movie. In his masterly adaptation of Mason's book, screenwriter R. C. Sherriff focuses ruthlessly on British traditions that box in the hero, shatter his confidence, and compel him to resign his commission. When that happens, the friends of Harry Faversham (John Clements) see him as a coward. But the audience soon learns that he's not afraid of the fight. Faversham genuinely abhors what he calls his country's "idiotic Egyptian adventure." He views the British pursuit of glory in

India, Africa, and China as a way for imperialists to escape domestic responsibilities. And he explains his resignation to his betrothed, Ethne Burroughs (June Duprez), in terms of this disdain for the vanity and excesses of the empire. She agrees with him politically, but cannot support him. Harry feels that his traditional obligations ended with the death of his severe military father; Ethne, also the child of a retired general (played by C. Aubrey Smith, who is magnificently blustery—and charming), will not break the square for her marriage.

By the end, Faversham becomes the bravest and most resourceful of all British soldiers in North Africa. He does so by devising his own odyssey. The movie counterpoints his fate with that of his totally square friend, Captain John Durrance (Ralph Richardson), who has vied with Harry for Ethne's hand. Durrance exemplifies military virtue: he is smart, gallant, and commanding. But Durrance ends up blind and bereft,

with only his honor to comfort him. It's the man of imagination, Faversham, who pushes tradition forward—and finally gets the girl. Generations of critics have praised the film for its stirring portrayal of the British military ethos. But what gives *The Four Feathers* its ceaseless vitality is the way its images portray army discipline and pomp as hard-won feats. The British units either fill the square old movie frame—and, as they loop around in tight formation, threaten to smash against its edges—or bisect it on the march, cutting exotic climes in two with indomitable precision.

The movie's title refers to the shriveling response of Faversham's army mates to what they view as his ignoble fear. The timing of his resignation couldn't be more suspect: he leaves the army on the eve of his company's departure to fight the khalifa. His three best soldier friends—his fiancée's brother Peter, an amiable henchman named Thomas "Fat Face" Willoughby, and the redoubtable Durrance—each send Faversham a contemptuous symbol of cowardice: a white feather.

Receiving the feathers at Ethne's house, Faversham realizes in an instant that his motives for resigning were not, in fact, pure. He feels that he has indeed been a coward. (We see that he's really *afraid of being a coward*—of freezing up in a crisis and letting his comrades down.) He plucks the fourth white feather from the disenchanted Ethne's plume as they break off their engagement. To test his mettle, avenge his friends' insult—and, most nobly, to protect them—Faversham goes off to the Sudan on his own. He aims to redeem himself in his friends' eyes and return their feathers, one by one, to certify his rehabilitation. In Egypt, he adopts the disguise of a Sangali tribesman. The khalifa's men have ripped out the Sangalis' tongues and branded their foreheads to punish them for disobedience; this way, Faversham's inability to speak Arabic won't be an issue. The scene in which he submits to the branding is both surgically sure and startling. An Egyptian doctor applies the hot iron, smoke rises from the searing of the flesh, and what looks like a split

pink sausage emerges in the middle of Faversham's forehead. When the medic proclaims him a brave man, Faversham faintly smiles. His dazed expression suggests an emotion deeper and more complicated than pride; Faversham experiences release. As Kipling writes in "Hymn to Physical Pain," this pain has briefly wiped away "the soul's distress / And memory of her sins."

The movie is partly about the traumatic and healing powers of memory. The opening sequence—which resonates throughout the film and, indeed, movie history—proves that one man's proud memories are another man's nightmares. On Harry's fifteenth birthday, General Faversham hosts a dinner for Crimean War pals, including General Burroughs. They swap war stories—most famously, Burroughs's comical reenactment of the Battle of Balaclava. (He depicts the Russian guns with nuts, the "thin red line" of British soldiers with a ribbon of wine, his commander

with an apple—and himself with a mighty pineapple.) Several of these nostalgic tales dramatize the humiliation (and even, in one case, the suicide) of men who fail or shirk their duty under fire. General Faversham wants these tales to toughen up his son. Instead, they scar him for life. At 11 p.m., he leaves the table and ascends the staircase to his room. The portraits of his family's war heroes, lit by a candle, are as terrifying to him as any bloody rogues' gallery. Ten years later, at Ethne's coming-of-age ball, her father announces her engagement to



Harry, and she tells her fiancé that they're creating a precious memory and that memories offer a sure, joyous view of life, free of shadows. Harry doesn't tell her, "Only the happy ones." But that's what the audience is thinking.

The Four Feathers never veers from its strong, clear line of action. Yet its perfectly judged scenes contain heart-piercing nuances. The Kordas' British version of the Tradition of Quality never reaped greater artistic rewards than it does here. It's a Zoltán Korda film, but he worked with an all-star team of collaborators, including Alexander (who could be a first-rate director himself), Sherriff (whose other credits include the scripts for *The Invisible Man* and, later, *Odd Man Out*), and second-unit director André De Toth (who went on to cowrite the story for *The Gunfighter*, direct film noir and 3-D classics, and do second unit for David Lean on *Lawrence of Arabia*). Editor Henry Cornelius was a cutting-room wunderkind who gained renown as the director of *Genevieve* and *I Am a Camera*, before dying at the age of forty-four. Chief cinematographer Georges Périnal had shot René Clair's breakthrough films and Jean Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet*, and would go on to shoot the Carol Reed–Graham Greene classic *The Fallen Idol*. Périnal is the one responsible for—in the words of novelist–movie critic–screenwriter Greene—"nocturnal London smoking up through Faversham's grey windows." But Osmond Borradaile photographed the location footage, and the camera operators included several great cinema-tographers of the future: Robert Krasker (*The Third Man*), Jack Cardiff (*The African Queen*), and Geoffrey Unsworth (2001: *A Space Odyssey*).

They and the cast all do their jobs so well that the action becomes poetic. You don't just feel the heat on Durrance's head when he loses his helmet and the sun beats into him until he's blind. You share his spiraling vertigo as he stands on a craggy hill, watches the helmet tumble down among the rocks, scrambles after it, and collapses. He sees that he has succeeded at drawing out the khalifa's men and diverting them from the main force of the British Army. But he drops to the sand senseless just when that mission is accomplished. Soon after his soldiers bring him back to his tent and then to his endangered base camp, the Dervishes and Fuzzy-Wuzzies break his British square in a night battle lit by flames. In his Sangali disguise, Faversham reaches the British camp with the Fuzzy-Wuzzies and saves Durrance, twice. When Durrance, half-mad, calls for help after the battle, Faversham, still in character, can't answer him—he rouses only buzzards with each cry. Greene described the birds' "grimy serrated Lisle-street wings dropping like weighted parachutes." The brilliant filmmaking brings psychological depth to nearly every moment. You remember that General Burroughs has asked Durrance to keep an eye on his son, Peter—and now Durrance is blind. He can't see that the Dervishes and Fuzzy-Wuzzies are dragging Peter and Willoughby through the sand.

The Four Feathers develops tragic heft and esprit de corps as a sort of buddy-buddy-buddy film. Durrance, Peter, and Willoughby share the valor and horror of warfare in an exotic clime. And so does the outsider, Faversham, who feels these friends have goaded him out of fearfulness. He's anxious to measure up to them—and they are worthy yardsticks. Richardson's glory-bound Captain Durrance is as devoid of sentimentality as a brick; he strives to make his torment seem as light to others as his damnable feather. When this supersane man, stricken blind, drifts into dementia, shouting "Load, aim, fire!" to his murdered men, he's as heartbreaking as Lear on the heath. At the same time, we see Faversham's growth in Clements's surprisingly robust performance. Sickly as the prewar Faversham, he's vigorous and unfettered in his Sangali rags, like Lawrence in his Bedouin robes. He hears his former rival Durrance call for Ethne—and Clements's eyes tell you that his heart sinks for all three of them. The doctor who brands Faversham in Egypt can't understand his pursuit of courage; his advice is to be a coward and be happy. But Faversham answers that he was a coward and wasn't happy. The actor switches on a spiritual pilot light while his character weathers isolation and torture. The Kordas wanted to make *Lawrence of Arabia* with Clements back in the 1930s. Like Peter O'Toole, he could pull off Conradian combinations of antihero and superhero. The Sangali disguise allows Zoltán Korda to depict the unjust treatment of natives at the hands of the British and their own chieftains—especially when Faversham attempts to free Burroughs and Willoughby from the khalifa's fear-some prison at Omdurman. The third Korda, Vincent, gets to show *his* genius in the design of the khalifa's capital. He creates a menacing cityscape, anarchic in its look and structure—a capital that could



work only with slave labor.

The film runs a brisk 115 minutes. It cannot encompass all of the book's subtleties—particularly Durrance's intricate courtship of Ethne after he returns to England blind, and his exacting code of friendship. But its superb double climax balances tragedy and comedy and gives Durrance his due. Richardson is at his uncanny best as Durrance paces his London rooms in the dark, while news of Kitchener's victory rumbles up from the street. Dr. Sutton (Frederick Culley), a friend to all of the film's major characters, arrives bearing the diagnosis that Durrance's

blindness is incurable—and carrying a newspaper that reports the heroism of Harry Faversham. When Durrance learns both these things, Richardson embodies stoic valor as nobly as a classical sculpture. With swift efficiency and dignity, he moves to free Ethne of any promises she has made to him. But the most exalting passage in this scene comes when Durrance reads poetry in braille. He chooses not Kipling but Shakespeare, and not *Henry V* but *The Tempest*, and not Prospero but Caliban: "Sometimes a thousand

twangling instruments / Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices / That, if I then had waked after long sleep / Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming / The clouds methought would open, and show riches / Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked / I cried to dream again." Durrance, the ultimate soldier, has found solace in Caliban, the eruptive id.

Faversham has the movie's final words. At a Burroughs family-and-friends reunion, attended by all the main characters except Durrance, he finds a way to return the fourth feather to Ethne: he explodes her father's boast that he began the charge at the Battle of Balaclava. (His horse did.) *The Four Feathers* celebrates patriotism and military pride, but it also subverts them—it's the rare epic that gives the white-haired elders their comeuppance. Faversham wins Ethne on his own terms. Right up to the end, he breaks the British square.

From Wikipedia:

A white feather has been a traditional symbol of cowardice, used and recognised especially within the British Army and in countries associated with the British Empire since the 18th century. It also carries opposite meanings, however: in some cases of pacifism, and in the United States, of extraordinary bravery and excellence in combat marksmanship.

The white feather as a symbol of cowardice supposedly comes from cockfighting and the belief that a cockerel sporting a white feather in its tail is likely to be a poor fighter. Pure-breed gamecocks do not show white feathers, so its presence indicates that the cockerel is an inferior cross-breed.

In August 1914, at the start of the First World War, Admiral Charles Fitzgerald founded the Order of the White Feather with support from the prominent author Mrs Humphrey Ward. The organization aimed to shame men into enlisting in the British Army by persuading women to present them with a white feather if they were not wearing a uniform.

The campaign was very effective, and spread throughout several other nations in the Empire, so much so that it started to cause problems for the government when public servants came under pressure to enlist. This prompted the Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna, to issue employees in state industries with lapel badges reading "King and Country" to indicate that they too were serving the war effort. Likewise, the Silver War Badge, given to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness, was first issued in September 1916 to prevent veterans from being challenged for not wearing uniform. The poetry from the period indicates that the campaign was not popular amongst soldiers (e.g. Wilfred Owen's *Dulce et Decorum Est*) - not least because soldiers who were home on leave could find themselves presented with the feathers.

Roland Gwynne, later mayor of Eastbourne (1929–1931) and lover of suspected serial killer John Bodkin Adams, received a feather from a relative. This prompted him to enlist, and he subsequently received the Distinguished Service Order for bravery. The writer Compton Mackenzie, then a serving soldier, complained about the activities of the Order of the White Feather. He argued that these "idiotic young women were using white feathers to get rid of boyfriends of whom they were tired". The pacifist Fenner Brockway claimed that he received so many white feathers he had enough to make a fan.

The white feather campaign was briefly renewed during World War II....

...The adventure novel *The Four Feathers* (1902) by A. E. W. Mason tells the story of Harry Faversham, an officer in the British Army, who decides to resign his commission the day before his regiment is dispatched to fight in Sudan (the 1882 First War of Sudan, leading to the fall of Khartoum). Harry's three fellow officers and his fiancée conclude that he is resigning

in order to avoid fighting in the conflict, and each send him a white feather. Stung by the criticism, Harry sails to Sudan, disguises himself as an Arab, and looks for the opportunity to redeem his honour. He manages this by fighting a covert war on behalf of the British, saving the life of one of his colleagues in the process. On returning to England he asks each of his accusers to take back one of the feathers.

The romantic idealism of the novel has been popular for over a century and it has been the basis of at least seven feature films, the most recent being *The Four Feathers* (2002), starring Heath Ledger....

...In contrast, the white feather has been used by some pacifist organisations as a sign of harmlessness.

In the 1870s, the Māori prophet of passive resistance Te Whiti o Rongomai promoted the wearing of white feathers by his followers at Parihaka. They are still worn by the iwi associated with that area, and by Te Ati Awa in Wellington. They are known as *te raukura*, which literally means the red feather, but metaphorically, the chiefly feather. They are usually three in number, interpreted as standing for "glory to God, peace on earth, goodwill toward people" (Luke 2:14). Albatross feathers are preferred but any white feathers will do. They are usually worn in the hair or on the lapel (but not from the ear).

Some time after the war, pacifists found an alternative interpretation of the white feather as a symbol of peace. The apocryphal story goes that in 1775, Quakers in a Friends meeting house in Easton, New York were faced by a tribe of Indians on the war path. Rather than flee, the Quakers fell silent and waited. The Indian chief came into the meeting house and finding no weapons he declared the Quakers as friends. On leaving he took a white feather from his quiver and attached it to the door as a sign to leave the building unharmed.....

COMING UP IN THE FALL 2012 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XXV:

Sept 18 **CHILDREN OF PARADISE** Marcel Carné 1945

Oct 2 **KISS ME DEADLY** Robert Aldrich 1955

Oct 9 **LONELY ARE THE BRAVE** David Miller 1962

Oct 16 **FAIL-SAFE** Sidney Lumet 1964

Oct 23 **THE STUNT MAN** Richard Rush 1980

Oct 30 **COME AND SEE** Elem Klimov 1985

Nov 6 **GRAVE OF THE FIREFLIES** Isao Takahata 1988

Nov 13 **MAGNOLIA** Paul Thomas Anderson 1999

Nov 20 **RUSSIAN ARK** Alexander Sokurov 2002

Nov 27 **WHITE MATERIAL** Claire Denis 2009

Dec 4 **A SEPARATION** Asghar Farhadi 2011

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