



Jean-Jacques SANDRAS

CONRAD & ALICE
EPISODE 1 THE MAD MURDER
EPISODE 2 THE ANTI-SPECIESISM MURDER

Here are the first two episodes concerning criminal investigations in Paris by Alice, a twenty six year old French psychologist, and Conrad, a South African pensioner in his late sixties.

In the first episode Marie, a young art student, is murdered in her apartment. Her art teacher's wife, Linda, is the prime suspect because Marie was her husband's mistress. Alice calls upon Conrad to help her prove that Linda, who is one of her patients, is innocent. The two investigators set off on what is initially a wild goose chase that ends up by bringing the guilty party to justice.

In the second episode Rita, a fervent vegan activist, is suspected of murdering Sylvie, a journalist who frequently published articles deriding veganism. Alice calls upon Conrad to help prove that Rita, who is one of her patients, is innocent. Once again the two investigators set off on what is initially a wild goose chase that ends up by exposing the guilty party to justice.

What makes these two episodes interesting are the psychological and philosophical interactions between our two investigators and the various people concerned.

This book can be read by old and young alike. There are neither gory nor erotic scenes.

Jean-Jacques Sandras was born in 1947. He grew up in South Africa. He began to travel widely at the age of 19 and has lived on several continents. He draws upon his experiences in foreign lands when describing the why and wherefore of our passage on this earth.

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CONRAD & ALICE, CRIME INVESTIGATORS EPISODES 1 & 2

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EPISODE 1
THE MAD MURDER

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Yvelinedition

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CONRAD, ALICE
**AND THE ANTI-
SPECIESISM MURDER**



Yvelinedition

*To my late brother, Guy, my sister-in-law, Margaret,
and their two sons, Bevin and Darren.*

*Not all of the characters, names and events
in this book are entirely fictitious.*

CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 Common to all species	123
Chapter 2 Lovely Rita, vegan maid	131
Chapter 3 The first and last generation	139
Chapter 4 Jeremy's restaurant-conference	145
Chapter 5 The end of the world for the third time	151
Chapter 6 The end of the world for someone	159
Chapter 7 Population matters	167
Chapter 8 Mercy killing and speciesism	175
Chapter 9 The climate is on your plate	181
Chapter 10 Wasp is Wesp	189
Chapter 11 One man's meat is another man's poison	193

CHAPTER 1

COMMON TO ALL SPECIES

“Conrad,” said Alice, the pretty and slimly built young psychologist, on her cell phone, “I need your help again.”

“Glad to hear that,” said the elderly gentleman on pension. “Another crime to solve?” He chuckled. “The last one was most interesting. I suppose you don’t want to give me the details over the phone. Where and when do you want us to meet?”

“How about this evening at the Café Fusain near your place?”

“Good,” approved Conrad. “At what time?”

“Let’s say half past six,” suggested Alice.

“The French would say eighteen hours thirty,” said Conrad. “I’ll be there.”

Readers having already read an episode of the Conrad and Alice series can skip the next two paragraphs.

Conrad was well into his sixties and had spent most of his adult life in the computer world before it changed dramatically in the early years of the third millennium with internet.

He was neither fat nor thin and his face was rather square. His hair was closely cropped as well as his beard and moustache. With good eyesight for his age he didn't wear glasses. He had earned a good living by working in various countries, mainly in Western Europe, as a software engineer in main line systems. Having grown up in sunny South Africa he started his computer career with IBM in Johannesburg in the late nineteen-sixties before moving to France six years later because of a serious emotional attack. He had fallen in love with a young French girl on holiday south of the Limpopo River who had responded favourably to his amorous advances but who insisted on going back to her country. If he wanted to carry on their lovely relationship he had to follow her. He wanted to and thereafter they spent ten years together in France before the young lady complained of his being a workaholic. The truth is his job took so much of his time and energy that she said she was living with a phantom who was often away for several days at a time and when at home too tired to pay her the attention a woman expects of her man. The flame of passion had diminished with time and after their separation Conrad lived mainly for his job which he continued to find most interesting and his interest with the Dalai Lama's version of Buddhism. Although he was vegetarian and a teetotaler he was no ascetic. He continued to frequent friendly females. Being good looking and kindly disposed to women, he obtained what he desired while giving as much, if not more, than he took. Now that he was on pension he remained in Paris, a city he loved, and spent most of his time as a tourist in that famous world capital. His desire for intimate relationships with women had dwindled to the point of his being content to only spend time with them as friends.

Alice was tall, slim with long silky light brown hair falling gently on her shoulders. With an oval face she was an attractive woman of twenty-six who loved her job as psycholo-

gist to the point of being a workaholic which perturbed her love life. Her boyfriend put up with her because he knew she didn't sleep around and that her relationship with Conrad was purely platonic; two workaholics. The young lady had met Conrad recently at the annual Paris Book Festival when they bumped into each other accidentally. When moving in a dense crowd one inevitably bumps into people and their encounter was truly unintended by either of them unless one wants to believe it was their karma. After apologising to each other in French at the same time they both burst out laughing and ended up having a cup of coffee together. She liked Conrad's English accent and virtually begged him to always speak English with her to allow her to improve her command of that language which she loved so much. As we already know Conrad was always happy to have an attractive young lady for company and he gladly accepted. They discovered that they had many interests in common and where they differed they were happy to learn the other one's point of view. Conrad being old enough to be Alice's grandfather he had the advantage of having more experience in life and she often asked him for his advice, just as she was doing now.

Conrad said he would be in the Café Fusain for six thirty p.m. and he was. Alice joined him shortly thereafter. "So what's the problem this time?" asked Conrad while they were drinking their espressos at a table next to one of the windows giving a large view on the rue Saint-Ambroise.

"One of my patients suffering from post voluntary work trauma concerning anti-speciesism," said Alice.

"Sorry," said Conrad, "but I can't help you there. I don't even know what you're talking about." He smiled while extending his arms in mild protest. "What is anti-speciesism?"

"You don't know?" asked Alice in a teasing voice. "I thought English was your native language."

"I learnt the Queen's English in the good old English

school in Johannesburg at the time of the British Empire. Are you sure you are speaking English?” he chuckled in response.

“I must admit,” said Alice, “I only discovered this word thanks to my patient. The word was invented by Richard Ryder in 1970 and taken up the utilitarian philosopher, Peter Singer, in 1975.”

“Wow!” exclaimed Conrad in mock surprise. “Am I getting too old to keep up with linguistic evolution?”

“But you are vegetarian,” insisted Alice, “and the anti-speciesism philosophy goes along with it.”

“And what is that philosophy, pray tell?”

“Those people claim that even if animals are of a different species from us that is no reason for treating them badly.”

“Fair enough,” agreed Conrad. “So where’s the problem with your animal lover patient?”

Alice sighed. “She’s worse than you,” she said.

“It’s comforting to know that I’m not the worst person on Earth,” said Conrad with a broad smile.

“Oh, no!” exclaimed Alice, “I mean she’s vegan.”

“Ultra vegan?”

“Vegans are ultras.”

“She doesn’t wear leather and the like?”

“Not even wool.”

Conrad nodded slowly. “Yes,” he said. “They say that on the big sheep farms with thousands of sheep when some of them start losing their wool in the spring, the farmers begin to shear them all in order not to lose wool. And then some of the sheep die of the cold.”

“Well,” said Alice, “let’s not get side-tracked by all that.” She smiled. “She lent me this book written by a journalist and writer. This page made me think of you. Look.” She opened a rather big book and gave it to Conrad. “I’m sure you’ll have something to say about this,” she added.

Conrad took the book and read the sentences where Alice

had placed her fingers. The author claimed that reincarnation spoken of by Buddhists is only a romantic transcription of a natural law confirmed by science which specifies that plants, insects, reptiles, birds, fish and all mammals including mankind are linked together by the same interactive constituents. All elements live on each other. But that is no reason for man to despise any other form of life and abuse it.

“For this author,” said Conrad, “reincarnation is merely a case of different physical elements going from one body upon death to constitute a new body.” He shook his head slowly. “That is not at all what the Buddhists call reincarnation. According to my understanding reincarnation means a living being giving up one body to take on another. And living beings are primarily made up of energy and mind. Soul is another word for energy and mind is the ego. Of course the physical aspect is quite true and I fully agree with him about not abusing other forms of life. I suspect this author is an atheist. After all, why not?”

He closed the book and gave it back to Alice. “Even if this author and I disagree on the Buddhist philosophy, we certainly do agree on respecting all forms of life. So where’s the problem?”

Alice smiled. “The problem is my patient’s trauma. She has just come back from Australia and was horrified by the fact that they load live sheep onto ships under horrible conditions to send them to Saudi Arabia. Many of the sheep even die at sea.”

“Does she want better travelling conditions for the sheep?” asked Conrad.

“Yes,” said Alice, “or at least slaughter them before putting them on the ships.”

“She seems reasonable for a vegan,” said Conrad. “Instead of demanding that everyone be vegan, she’ll accept limiting the sheep’s suffering. And why don’t the Aussies slaughter the

sheep and send the carcasses in refrigerated containers? Is it too expensive?"

"It's because the sheep for Saudi Arabia must be halal."

"Oh, yes," said Conrad. "I know about that. The sheep must be slaughtered according to Muslim law. So why don't they slaughter the sheep according to Muslim law in Australia? Is refrigerated transportation too expensive or the Muslims don't trust the Aussies?"

"I don't know," said Alice.

"And your patient wants to oblige the Aussies to slay the sheep before putting them on ships? Is that the problem? Because if it is, she's got a long, long fight ahead of her."

"And that is the problem."

"The long, long fight," repeated Conrad with a nod.

"Do you remember the film called 'the silence of the lambs'?" asked Alice.

"Sure do," said Conrad. "That's when a young girl had recurrent nightmares with lambs screaming in agony because she was unable to save a lamb from being slaughtered on her cousin's farm."

"Right," said Alice. "And later in life when she was a police woman, by saving a woman from being killed by a mad man, she no longer had nightmares."

"Yes," said Conrad. "The film ends with the psychiatrist asking her 'are the lambs silent now?' and she says 'yes.' hence the title of the film. He had helped her save that woman in spite of the fact that he was a murderous cannibal. A truly frightening story." Conrad raised his eyebrows. "Saving that woman was like forgiving herself for not having saved the lamb on her cousin's farm," he added. "So now your patient has nightmares for similar reasons. Only it's not one lamb but sheep, and it's not only one sheep but thousands of them every year."

"Exactly."

“So give her a CD of ‘the silence of the lambs’.”

“No need to,” said Alice. “She already has one and lent it to me. That’s how I got to see that film.”

Conrad swayed slowly in his chair. “Of course, that film came out before you were born so that’s why she lent you the CD.” He smiled. “Now she insists on doing something about the problem. Is that it?”

“Yes and I’m afraid that she just might do something really violent.”

“Even though as a vegan she is supposed to avoid violence?”

“I don’t know if vegans are supposed to avoid violence. Are you as a vegetarian also a pacifist?”

“No,” answered Conrad. “I prefer to use peaceful methods to solve a problem but if it’s too serious like self defence and cannot be solved without violence, I could be violent.”

“Well,” sighed Alice, “I suppose it’s the same for many vegans.”

“We’re talking in circles,” said Conrad. “So how do you expect me to help you?”

“By talking to my patient.”

“You’re the shrink, not me. She’ll refuse.”

“No.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“Because I’ve already asked her.” A smile beamed on Alice’s face. “I told her about your being vegetarian for more than forty years and that you were Buddhist. That helped.”

“I’m not Buddhist,” objected Conrad. “I’m only trying to follow the Path of the Buddha according to the Dalai Lama’s teachings. Is she Buddhist?”

“Yes and yet she doesn’t want to leave an impact. Therefore she’ll listen to someone like you.”

“But isn’t she going to leave an impact by opposing animal suffering? That’s contradictory.”

“Let’s say paradoxical,” suggested Alice.

Conrad nodded with a smile. “And what am I suppose to tell her?”

“I don’t know. You’ll see.” Alice gently took hold of Conrad’s wrist. “I shall share her fees with you.”

“But I don’t want money.”

“Then do it as an anti-speciesism freak,” said Alice raising her eyebrows. “If you refuse, I won’t hold it against you. Please, just give it a thought.”

Conrad smiled. “Alright then,” he said, “I’ll do it for fun. What’s her name?”

“Thank you!” exclaimed Alice and got up from her chair to give Conrad a kiss on his cheek. “Her name is Rita.”