

JJ SANDRAS

CONRAD & ALICE

EPISODE 3 THE OLD AGE HOME MURDER



EPISODE 4 THE HUMAN RIGHTS MURDER

Yvelinedition

Here are the third and fourth 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 third episode, Alice introduces Conrad to one of her patients, Julie, who has a serious problem because her handicapped mother wants to leave the old age home where Julie had placed her. Julie is afraid of losing her boyfriend should her mother come to live with her. Not wanting to jeopardise her love life Julie desperately wants to find a solution. Her boyfriend offers to help solve the problem but the situation gets out of hand. Once again our two investigators find themselves involved in a murder riddle and end up by helping the police solve the case.

In the fourth episode, Alice invites Conrad to meet one her patients, Gerard, who is a South African journalist hiding in Paris from political extremists in South Africa who have executed one of his colleagues in Johannesburg because he had criticised their activities. Later on, another fleeing colleague, Jeremiah, turns up in Paris and things go wrong. Once again, our two investigators find themselves involved in a murder riddle and end up by helping the police solve the case.

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

The Conrad and Alice episodes can be read in any sequence and by old and young alike. There are neither gory nor erotic scenes.

JJ 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.

**CONRAD & ALICE
AND THE OLD AGE HOME MURDER**

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

BOOKS IN ENGLISH:

The Lord Magicians, Solkeo publisher, 2015.

volume 1: *The Knight of the Flower*,

volume 2: *The Lady of Noble Love*,

volume 3: *The Knight of the Boar*,

A philosophical trilogy on mysticism written as a fantasy tale with the background of France in the Middle Ages.

Conrad & Alice

An elderly pensioner and a young psychologist as crime investigators.

episode 1: *Conrad & Alice and the mad murder*.

episode 2: *Conrad & Alice and the anti-speciesism murder*.

episodes 1&2, Yvelinédition, 2016.

The Magic Flute, Yvelinédition, 2017.

Conrad in the making, Yvelinédition, 2017.

BOOKS IN FRENCH:

Le Chevalier à la Fleur, éditions Déjà, 2001.

Roman philosophique et mystique écrit à la manière d'un conte fantastique sur fond de Moyen-Âge en France.

Les Seigneurs Magiciens, éditions Clair de terre, 2005.

Bande dessinée inspirée du roman *Le Chevalier à la Fleur*.

Guy Marais, détective privé

Les mésaventures comiques d'un détective privé sud-africain à Paris.

1 *Les clients mortels*, Yvelinédition, 2010.

2 *L'or de la mort*, Yvelinédition, 2010.

3 *Association mortelle de malfaiteurs*, Yvelinédition, 2011.

4 *Crime fatal en bande désorganisée*, Yvelinédition, 2011.

5 *Homicide volontaire en flagrant délire*, Yvelinédition, 2012.

6 *Non-assistance à personne enragée*, Yvelinédition, 2012.

7 *Entrave stupéfiante à la justice*, Yvelinédition, 2013.

8 *Erreur fatale sur la personne*, Yvelinédition, 2014.

9 *Mystère et cupidité au musée du Louvre*, Yvelinédition, 2015.

10 *La fin du 36, quai des Orfèvres*, Yvelinédition, 2016.

Bandes dessinées tirées des romans éponymes.

1 *L'Or de la mort*, Yvelinédition, 2015.

2 *Mystère et cupidité au musée du Louvre*, Yvelinédition, 2016.

Conrad & Alice
and the human rights
murder

To my niece Kirsten, and my nephews Ingo, Wally and Michael.

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

CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 The Kalahari madman	95
Chapter 2 The Kalahari madmen	101
Chapter 3 The lone ranger	111
Chapter 4 The lone rangers	119
Chapter 5 One more journalist and one less	127
Chapter 6 The tide rushes in	135
Chapter 7 The tide rushes out	143
Chapter 8 The last piece missing in the puzzle	151
Chapter 9 Boat ride on the River Seine	159
Chapter 10 Free hugs in Paris	165
Chapter 11 Outer space issues	171

CHAPTER 1

THE KALAHARI MADMAN

Conrad's cell phone rang. It was Alice, the pretty and slimly built young psychologist, calling. "Conrad," she said in a jovial tone, "You won't believe this but I've just met someone from your side of the Limpopo River as you sometimes say."

"How about that," said the elderly South African gentleman on pension. "What's he like?"

"Most extraordinary," replied Alice, "and very interesting. I'm sure you'll be able understand him easily. I have some difficulties."

"Another mystery to solve?" asked Conrad.

"Yes," said Alice, "and I'm sure you'll like this one."

"The last one was most interesting," said Conrad. "I suppose you don't want to give me the details over the phone. Where and when do we meet?"

"How about this evening at the Café Fusain?"

"Good," approved Conrad. "Close to my apartment. At what time?"

"Let's say half past six," suggested Alice.

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

And he was. Alice joined him shortly thereafter.

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 psychologist 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.

“So what’s the issue this time?” asked Conrad while they were drinking their espressos at one of the tables next to a window giving a large view on the rue Saint-Ambroise.

“This man is a South African journalist and is hiding in

France because some people in South Africa want to kill him,” said Alice.

“Ah,” said Conrad, “is he what they call a committed journalist?”

“I think that that’s what one says in English,” replied Alice. “In French we say an engaged journalist.”

Conrad nodded. “So this fellow has written some articles about current affairs in South Africa that displease some people,” he said.

“More than just displease them,” said Alice. “Some people are so mad at him that they’ve threatened to kill him.”

“Tell me all about him before talking about his job problems,” said Conrad. “Like his age, name, is he married, does he have children and whereabouts in sunny South Africa does he come from?”

Alice chuckled. “You’re just like the police,” she said.

“Fire away,” said Conrad.

“His name is Gerard Pinard, he is 40 years old, divorced and has two teenage children. He comes from Cape Town,” said Alice. “His wife and children now live in London.” She shook her head. “Is that good enough for you?” she asked with a smile.

“Yes,” said Conrad. “Gerard is a typical Afrikaans name as well as Pinard which they spell p-i-e-n-a-a-r in order to respect the Dutch pronunciation. These names come from the French Huguenots who fled France in 1688 after the massacre following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Many of the surviving Protestants fled to England, Switzerland, Germany and Holland. The Dutch who had started a supply station in Cape Town in 1652 for their Dutch East India Company ships sent the Huguenot refugees there as colonials. According to some historians at the beginning of the eighteenth century the population was seventy percent Dutch and thirty percent French.”

“I see,” said Alice.

“And those refugees brought vines with them which explains the French names of the excellent South African wines.”

“Wow!” exclaimed Alice. “I must say I was expecting a history lesson of South Africa from you,” she added.

“Now that I have a reasonable idea of who Mr Pienaar is,” said Conrad, “do tell me why he is your new patient.”

Alice blinked while putting her hands together. “He has difficulty communicating with the French,” she said. “We don’t function like Anglo-Saxons and he wants me to help him communicate with us Latin people.”

Conrad laughed out loud. “That I can understand,” he said. “It took me years to get used to you Latin folk and I still have some difficulties. Fortunately with the world becoming a single village the French, especially the younger ones, are becoming easier to communicate with.”

“But not so for you Anglo-Saxons,” said Alice reproaching Conrad. She smiled to lighten her criticism.

“I agree with you,” said Conrad. “It’s mainly the Americans who have succeeded in imposing their way of life due to their advance in technology especially since the end of the Second World War.”

“But countries in the Far-East are catching them up,” said Alice.

Conrad shrugged. “So where do I come in?” he asked.

“You grew up in South Africa and after listening to Gerard I think you can give him useful advice.”

Conrad shook his head. “But you know that I refrain from telling people what to do,” he said. “That’s your job.”

“Oh, no,” objected Alice. “Psychologists don’t give advice. They help their patients to discover the solution to their problems. It is the patient who decides.” She raised her hands, palms forward, in mock surrender. “Where I think you can

help Gerard,” she said, “is by talking to him. Your views on life, and especially the way you express yourself, often helps. You know that.”

“Flattery,” said Conrad in a mocking tone.

“No,” said Alice. “It is the main reason I like spending time with you.” She smiled. “You know that,” she said again.

Conrad smiled back. “Alright,” he said. “Have you already told him about me?” he asked.

“No, of course not,” said Alice. “I wanted your approval first.”

Conrad nodded. “I shall be happy to chat to a fellow expat. He must be afraid of his enemies sending a hired killer to find him in France.”

“Not really,” said Alice. “You see, as a journalist he called himself the Kalahari madman. His real names he kept secret.” She smiled. “Glad that you’ll meet him. Where and when would suit you best?”

“Some café in central Paris,” answered Conrad. “Let’s say the Café Livres near the Hotel de Ville metro station sometime in the afternoon.”

CHAPTER 2 THE KALAHARI MADMEN

And thus it happened that three days later Conrad and Alice met the Kalahari madman in the Café Livres near the Hotel de Ville metro station. Gerard Pienaar was tall and slimly built with dark brown curly hair falling onto his shoulders. His hair was brushed back giving a clear view of his high forehead. He had full cheeks, a big nose, a large mouth and a square chin. His black rimmed glasses with thick lens made it difficult to see his small eyes. To Conrad he looked like a university professor about to give a discourse on philosophy.

After the usual introductions Conrad asked his fellow South African why he chose the Kalahari madman for his alias. Gerard laughed before replying: “I enjoyed my frequent visits to Namibia and Botswana, and even Zimbabwe.”

“I’ve been to those countries several times, as well,” said Conrad. “I was in Rhodesia in the late sixties to see the Victoria Falls and enjoyed my stay. Then when I was back there in the late nineties the country was called Zimbabwe.

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