

JJ Sandras

THEY CAME FROM JO'BURG

Transvaal
Gauteng

In the 1880's, the discovery of gold on the farm Langlaagte in the Transvaal Republic provoked a gold rush. In 1886, the state sent two men, Johannes Rissik and Christiaan Johannes Joubert to investigate the area and choose a site on which a town could be built. The town was named after their common Christian names. A Health Committee was created and the town which began as a small village with the population growing rapidly became a municipality in 1897.

At the end of the Second Boer War in 1902 the independent Transvaal Republic became the Transvaal Province in the British Empire. It was in 1928 that it became a city making Johannesburg the largest city in South Africa. It was the biggest city in the world not to be built on a river, lake or sea. In 2002 it joined ten other municipalities to form the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. Since 1994, Johannesburg is in Gauteng Province of the Republic of South Africa.

The people described in this novel lived in Johannesburg during the latter part of the twentieth century and/or the first twenty years of the twenty-first century. Their testimony gives the reader an interesting view of their life in that amazing city where the author grew up.

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.

THEY CAME FROM JO'BURG

JJ SANDRAS

They came
from Jo'burg

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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 South African pensioner and a young French psychologist, as crime investigators, help the Paris police.

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

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

episodes 1 & 2, 2016.

episode 3: *Conrad & Alice and the old age murder*.

episode 4: *Conrad & Alice and the human rights murder*.

episodes 3 & 4, 2017.

episode 5: *Conrad & Alice and the ecology murder*.

episode 6: *Conrad & Alice and the space-time bubble murder*.

episodes 5 & 6, 2018.

episode 7: *Conrad & Alice and the globalisation murder*.

episode 8: *Conrad & Alice and the kaleidoscope murder*.

episodes 7&8, 2019.

episode 9: *Conrad & Alice and the anti-racism murder*.

episode 10: *Conrad & Alice and the anti-migrant murder*.

episodes 9&10, 2021.

The Magic Flute, 2017.

Conrad in the making, 2017.

Conrad in the making & Conrad on trial, 2020.

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 du même titre:

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

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

To my fellow Jo'burgers.

*All the characters, names and events in this book
are entirely fictitious. It is wise to say so, just to be safe.*

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CHAPTER 1

BoJo's EXIT

“BoJo.”

“Is that your real name?”

“No.”

“Then why do you call yourself BoJo?”

“Because it's short for Bob of Jo'burg.”

“I don't understand.”

“Bob is short for Robert like Bill is short for William.”

“So your real name is Robert?”

“Yes. And I was always called Bob.”

“I see.”

“I don't think you do.”

“Please, explain.”

“Once during the apartheid period when I was in India I saw a sign in a restaurant saying ‘no dogs and

South Africans allowed' and so I decided to call myself Bob of Jo'burg when I went into that restaurant."

"Did you say that to the people working in that restaurant?"

"Yes."

"Is that true?"

"Yes."

"And what happened?"

"The waiter just laughed and welcomed me. He told me it wasn't him who had put up the sign but an important customer and the boss allowed it."

"That's surprising."

"Yes. Money is more important than racism."

"What were you doing in India?"

"Visiting. It's an interesting subcontinent with various countries."

"You must mean Pakistan, Bangla Desh as well as India?"

"No. I mean the Punjab and the other provinces of India."

Richard leant forward thereby interrupting BoJo and Charles. "This is a radio interview," he said, "concerning South Africans who have interesting things to say about their country. Let's keep to the subject."

Charles nodded in agreement. "Tell us more about yourself in the lovely land of sunny South Africa," he said to BoJo.

BoJo smiled. "My ancestors came from England," he said. "They were part of the 1820 settlers who were sent

to Port Elizabeth in the Cape Province after the Napoleonic wars." He shrugged his shoulders. "The Campanile memorial erected there in 1923 to commemorate their arrival is insignificant compared to the Fransch Hoek memorial created near Cape Town in 1967 to commemorate the Huguenots' arrival." He smirked. "That's the Afrikaners showing off their French ancestry."

"The Huguenots were refugees who fled France in 1688 due to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV," said Charles happy to show off his historical knowledge. He only knew about what had happened in Europe at that time and didn't want BoJo to know that he was ignorant of the fact concerning the French Protestants settling in the Cape. Therefore he didn't know that according to some South African historians that in the year 1700 the white population of the Cape Colony was something like 30% French.

"Those were the ones who fled to Holland," agreed BoJo. "Some went to England, some to Germany and some to Switzerland." He smiled broadly. "The Dutch East India Company had set up their refilling station in Cape Town in 1652 and needed more settlers there."

"Alright," agreed Richard, "that is South African history, but can't we keep to its more recent past?"

"To understand South Africa today one must go back into its past just like for any other country," objected BoJo.

"Then let's go back into your ancestors' history," acquiesced Richard. "They were sent to South Africa in 1820 because of the drastic economic change in England due to the end of the Napoleonic wars. Right?"

BoJo nodded. "As Disraeli, the prime minister of Great Britain, said: politics is the last refuge for scoundrels."

Charles suddenly sat upright. "Disraeli was prime minister many years after 1820," he said. "He could not have been one of your ancestors. Do you mean he was a distant family member?"

BoJo shook his head. "None of my family members were in politics. No prime minister, no nothing. No scoundrels amongst us."

Richard was consulting his smart-phone. "Objection, your honour," he said in a humorous tone, "Disraeli said: patriotism is the last refuge for scoundrels."

Charles shrugged. "Here we go again," he said in a lackadaisical tone. "BoJo, let's keep the British prime minister out of our discussion."

BoJo nodded and all the British prime ministers, past and present, were no longer referred to in the radio interview. Charles and Richard were accustomed to redirecting their interviews when their invitees went off track as was often the case, not only with South Africans.

"So, what do you want me to tell you?" asked BoJo.

"Why did you leave South Africa?"

"Because I had no confidence in the Blacks running the country."

"But surely you agree that Mandela was good?"

"Him, yes. Fortunately he was there to ensure a peaceful takeover but he was too old when he became president." BoJo almost smirked. "It's the ones who came after him who confirmed my distrust."

"Fortunately he was there to put an end to apartheid," retorted Charles.

"He didn't put an end to apartheid," stated BoJo.

"What!" exclaimed Charles. "Do you mean that?"

BoJo nodded. "It was Gorbachev who put an end to apartheid."

"I don't get you," said Charles in a confused voice.

"That's because the French media hid that fact."

"Please explain."

"Apartheid could last as long as there was the Soviet Union." BoJo laughed. It amused him to puzzle his interviewers. "To keep the Russians out of the Southern Hemisphere, France, Great Britain and the USA, as permanent members of the Security Council, always blocked sanctions voted by almost all of the member countries of the United Nations in favour of sanctions against South Africa."

It was clear that Charles and Richard were taken aback.

"And France even supplied Mirages, those famous war planes to my country," added BoJo. "Britain had a naval Base at Simon's Town near Cape Town. Furthermore if De Gaulle managed France to have its own atom bomb it was thanks to South African uranium." BoJo pulled a face. "I'm not saying that the French nation was guilty. It's politics that count."

Charles took in a deep breath. "Then what you are saying is that when Gorbachev dissolved the Soviet Union, France, Great Britain and the USA no longer blocked sanctions against South Africa in the United Nations?"

BoJo nodded. "The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 sounded the knell for apartheid. In any case, France already had enough uranium."

"Alright, then," said Charles in an uncertain tone. "Let's get back to your 1820 ancestors. Didn't they also have something to do with apartheid?"

"No."

"No?"

"At that time there was no apartheid. The Blacks lived mainly north of the Fish River and the Whites south." BoJo breathed in slowly. "It was only when the Boers moved northwards that that problem began."

"The Boers?"

"It's Afrikaans for farmers. That's what the original settlers in the Cape Colony called themselves when they moved north."

"You mean the Dutch with a large French minority?"

"Yes. There were also Germans among the original settlers."

"So let's say the Dutch, French and German settlers called themselves Boers and left the Cape Colony to move northwards."

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because they wanted to be independent of Great Britain."

Charles and Richard both had a puzzled look on their faces.

BoJo smiled warmly to them when continuing with: "it was all Napoleon's fault."

"So many things are Napoleon's fault according to so many people," protested Richard.

"But this time it's true," insisted BoJo and when his two interlocutors remained silent he added: "when in 1800 Surcouff captured one of Britain's best war ships, the HMS Kent, in the Indian Ocean, England took fright and occupied the Cape which was a strategic refilling station."

"Yes," said Richard, "That was one of the few naval battles France won against England."

"Then in 1802 England and France signed a peace treaty at Amiens," continued BoJo. "England agreed to give the Cape settlement back to Holland because France agreed not to attack England."

"Then the Dutch settlers were no longer under British rule," remarked Charles

"Yes," said BoJo, "but the French couldn't be trusted. They invaded Holland in 1805 and captured the Dutch fleet caught in the frozen sea thereby threatening the sea route between Europe and India. So once again Britain occupied the Cape."

"And that's when the settlers moved north?"

"No. It was only in the 1830s that they moved north."

"Why so late?"

"Sometimes important things take time to happen. Britain refused to give the Cape back to Holland even though France was no longer a threat."

Charles pursed his lips. "You mean that the settlers wanted the British to leave the Cape?"

BoJo frowned. "Of course," he said. "And when it was clear the British were there to stay the Boers trekked north. It was known as the Great Trek."

"Trek?"

"It's a Dutch word meaning to pull," explained BoJo. "Now it is an international word meaning a big discovery journey."

Charles and Richard both laughed. "Then holidaymakers going on a trek get that word from the Cape settlers in the 1830s." After their outburst of laughter Charles said: "so what else do you care to say about South Africa?"

"Nothing much, I suppose," replied BoJo. "I'm sorry to have left that beautiful country because I have no faith in its future, but then, that's life."

"What are your plans for the near future?"

"Next week there is an ex-pat meeting for South Africans. I'll go along and see because it might be interesting."

And thus ended the radio interview with BoJo who had exited from South Africa. He was invited to have a drink of his choice at the bar in a corner of the large recording room. He thanked the radio staff for their hospitality and went over to the bar where a pleasant young lady served him the beer he chose.

CHAPTER 2 GERARD PIENAAR

"Gerard Pienaar."

"Is that your real name?"

"Yes."

"It sounds French."

"It's Afrikaans."

"How come?"

"Because of the Huguenots."

"That's when they were sent to the Cape in 1688," said Charles remembering his recent conversation with BoJo.

"Gerard is French for Gerald in English," said Gerard.

Charles smiled broadly. "Pinard is wine in French," he said.

Gerard shook his head and spelt his surname as P-i-e-n-a-a-r.

Charles burst out laughing. "Are you serious?" he asked.