



THE THIRD GENERATION

Joan Zawatzky

Praise for *The Scent of Oranges*

"The elegance of Joan Zawatzky's writing is a big part of what makes this story so memorable and delightful. Her words flowed right through me and led me into a story so full of life, nature and relationships. I never wanted it to end."

Ashley Merril, Front Street Review

"The Scent of Oranges by Joan Zawatzky is the first book I've read by this author but hope to read more. Right away I was transported to South Africa. I could picture everything that Linda saw as if I was her. Joan captures the essence of South Africa with the mystery and intrigue of murder."

Cheryl's Book Nook

"I think this novel will really appeal to people who like to sit and savour the writing and ...a mystery unfolding."

Peeking Between the Pages

Praise for *The Elephant's Footprint*

"Joan Zawatzky has a very smooth writing style. I enjoy reading her books as they take you through the story with just the right amount of detail. The romance is an added bonus for the romantics out there. This was a very enjoyable read."

Ashley Denis, Front Street Review

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About the Author

Joan Zawatzky was born in South Africa. After completing her studies, first in art and then in psychology, she moved to Australia, where she worked for many years as a counselling psychologist. Though painting remained a hobby, she decided to try her hand at writing. She wrote *There's a Light at the End of the Tunnel*, to help her clients overcome depression. *The Scent of Oranges*, her first novel, is set in South Africa and was shortlisted for the Australian Books Alive Programme in 2007. In 2011 she added *The Elephant's Footprint* to her South African series. *The Third Generation* is her latest novel. Joan lives in Melbourne with her husband.

Other books by the author

There's a Light at the End of the Tunnel:

*Self -Help and Hope for Suffers of Depression. Stories, Solutions
and Strategies.*

Publisher: Hybrid 2002

The Scent of Oranges

Publisher Australia: JoJo publishing 2006

Publisher UK and USA: Garev Publishing International 2008

The Elephant's Footprint

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For my husband, Hymie.

One

The day I boarded the plane for Australia was one of the worst days I can remember. I was leaving Vienna, the city of my birth and was about to embark on a new life. I reminded myself to think positively, to look at it as an adventure, but my attempt at optimism was a waste of time. I loathed the thought of hurtling into the unknown.

Leaving for a country so far from Europe was the last thing I wanted but how could I hold Richard back? As one of his company's top engineers, he was offered a promotion to head up the Australian division, a crucial step in his career. How many times does an opportunity like that fall into one's lap? Our eighteen year old son Anton, was thrilled about the move, and could hardly wait to enrol in an Australian university, unlike his elder brother Gabe, who happily remained in Vienna.

At least the interminable packing was over and all our possessions were in boxes, ready to follow us across the sea. Crazy, I bought things that I imagined were unavailable in the backwaters of Australia – Richard's cotton underwear and my perfectly fitting bras, fine bed linen, easy wash table cloths, our medicines and much more. From countless pamphlets I'd read, I expected to arrive in a hot country with endless surfing beaches, where people ate barbecued food and sport dominated their lives.

In the packed plane with its narrow seats, the sleep I craved came in short bursts. Towards the end of the long journey, I dreamed we were back at the airport, our friends clustered around us, saying their final goodbyes. Somehow I smiled and

managed to appear animated. Flowers and chocolates were pressed into my hands, kind words uttered. 'Leaving Vienna won't be that bad. You'll be back soon, you'll see.'

Ernst Weingarten, an elderly friend of my dead mother, handed me a small package. 'It belonged to my father. I have no family and I want you to have it.'

I kissed his cheek and slipped the gift into my handbag. I scanned the group. Where was he? Then I spotted Luke running towards us. When Richard joined his business colleagues, Luke took my hand. With an eye on Richard, his kiss brushed my lips.

'Auf Wiedersehen Liebchen.'

'Auf Wiedersehen' I whispered.

The captain's voice crackling on the microphone woke me. 'This is your captain speaking. We're about thirty minutes from Melbourne. '

'Look, look...now you can see the land clearly,' Anton said excitedly.

From the tiny window the flatness was endless, unlike the cultivated green I was used to when flying over Europe. Richard leaned across me to peer out.

'Acres of land out there, with that beautiful crystal sky. Isn't it marvellous?'

During the journey, whenever I opened my eyes, he was glued to his laptop, oblivious of everyone on the plane. If he talked at all, it was to enthuse about the revolutionary new engineering plant and its huge staff he was due to head up. We eased back into our seats. The *fasten seatbelts* sign flickered and the captain announced that we were about to land in Melbourne.

'Where are all the kangaroos?' Anton asked flippantly.

'They're not running around everywhere,' his father grunted.

I groped for my handbag under the seat. Lipstick and a comb through my hair would help to at least create a good impression. Apart from receiving a stamp on my passport with a welcoming smile, my memory of our arrival and our passage through the customs and immigration was hazy. During the drive from the airport with Martin Keene, one of the company executives, Richard sat in the front discussing business, while Anton and I were in the back. My head spun. Concrete, glass, blobs of green

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and the silhouette of the city zoomed past. Only occasionally, Anton glanced up from his Iphone to check his surroundings.

The car jerked and we pulled up in front of the company owned house. The white two-storey with its circular façade, was one of the ugliest I had ever seen. We followed Martin down the steps and through the front door. Our suitcases were deposited, the workings of the major appliances explained and we were handed a folder of instructions. An unusual jingle at the front door startled me. Two men stood there. One had car keys in his hand.

‘They’ve brought your company car, Richard. It’s outside,’ Martin said. ‘Let’s have a look at it.’

Richard was grinning when he returned. After Martin pushed a bunch of brochures into Richard’s hand, together with numbers to phone in emergency, he left. At last we were alone in the house.

A musty smell enveloped the house and I battled with stiff windows to let in fresh air. The kitchen was shiny and white. The appliances were still in their boxes and most of the crockery had not been unpacked. The surfaces would need a good scrub to remove the film of dust. I tried to stop thinking of my cosy, wooden kitchen in Vienna and moved on to view the rest of the house. In the sitting room, I noticed a sparkling cobalt glass vase. I lifted it, felt its ridges and turned it upside down. Made in China, the label said. It was identical to the one I had bought in Vienna for the first Spring daffodils only months earlier.

The pale blandness, the white walls, cream furniture, cushions, curtains and uncarpeted floors dismayed me. The house contained all we needed, but nothing familiar, none of the wooden beams, Persian rugs or paintings I was accustomed to and liked. I reminded myself of our luck at being offered a furnished home during our settling in period, and at such a low rental.

From the sitting room I could see the garden. As I slid the glass doors open, unusual but pleasant fragrances enveloped me. A rambling blaze of colour hugged the walls, tall trees and foreign shrubs flanked the fence. Immediately I loved the garden. As I walked across the lawn, tears that I had held back

until then, wet my face. Sobs overcame me and I sat, on the lawn, in front of the rosebushes. I picked a dusty pink rose in full bloom and buried my face in its fragrant, velvety petals.

Once I had unpacked my clothes and hung them in the closet, I opened Ernst's gift, a prayer book. I ran my hand over the worn, leather cover and faded Hebrew letters. It was the first time I had held a Jewish prayer book. Opposite each page of the Hebrew writing was a translation in old German script. I read the first lines of the Morning Prayer for the Sabbath slowly and then closed it. The words spoke of a belief that was mine, but one I knew nothing about. I placed the book on the table next to my bed. In hotels bibles were kept in drawers near the bed.



Vienna dominated my thoughts, while the days formed a cycle of eating and sleeping. I floated through the house and garden, no longer combed my hair or cooked and cleaned. As crumbs and papers fell to the floor, I left them there. I did not turn on the television or the radio, ignored the ringing phone and the strange voices leaving messages on the answering machine.

My piano, the one thing that would've connected me to this new place, was swathed in plastic bubble wrap, bolted into a crate and on the water to Australia. Though the movers had given me an approximate date of five to eight weeks for the arrival of our possessions at the Melbourne docks, they made no commitment on how long clearance by customs and delivery might take. The wait felt endless.

While I waited, I played classical CD's over and over on the portable player I had brought along with me, and the familiar music reverberated throughout the large, empty house.

Anton remained in his room and came downstairs only to raid the fridge or snoop in the pantry for snacks. Occasionally he hovered around me wordlessly, sipping coffee, but any attempt of mine at conversation and he was gone. His dull eyes and tight mouth told me that his earlier enthusiasm about the move had disappeared. I guessed that it was not just the

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different environment bothering him, but that he was missing his brother. Anton was due to start his university course in a few weeks and I hoped that the university environment would bring him friends and a means of adjusting.

My boys were close friends but as different as any brothers could be. They shared most interests, celebrated each other's joys and unstintingly defended each other in down times. Though they had not been separated before, this time they made the decision to part, for a while. It was a difficult but practical decision. Gabe was almost twenty-one and in his second year of post graduate study. In order to complete his thesis, he had to stay on at the university in Vienna. I hated leaving him behind. Though he was an adult and independent, I was certain he still needed his family's support.

If I had been given the opportunity to think more clearly before we left, I would've refused to accompany Richard to Australia and stayed in Vienna with Anton and his brother. We would've been together, and Gabe wouldn't have been left alone. But Richard's enthusiasm about his promotion in Australia carried me along and I fell in with him.

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This novel takes the reader from contemporary Vienna to Melbourne, from the survivors of the Holocaust to the generations that follow. It is the story of a woman's self-discovery, her growing inner strength, and her understanding of her past.

Ella is Jewish, born in the 1960's in Leopoldstadt, once a ghetto in Vienna, but has no sense of her background. Her undemonstrative mother is unwilling to talk about the past and her father, a survivor of the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp, died shortly after her birth. Locked in an unsatisfying marriage to Richard, and with few ties to the wider society, she finds comfort in Vienna's welcoming cafés and in a long-term love affair with her childhood non-Jewish sweetheart, geologist Luke.

When Richard is offered a promotion in Australia, she reluctantly joins him with their youngest son. In the outer suburbs of Melbourne, she struggles to find her footing in the dissimilar culture. To cope with her turmoil, she drifts back to her scattered memories and attempts to weave them together. She decides to sell her mother's old home in Leopoldstadt to developers and when demolishers find a portfolio of her father's paintings in the study, one painting is thought to be valuable. This discovery will shape her future.

Meanwhile, on the death of his mother, a horrified Luke discovers documents revealing his grandparents' roles as guards in a concentration camp. His guilt leads him to immerse himself in the study of Judaism and later, to even considers conversion. During a visit to an Australian university to present a paper on geoscience, Ella and Luke meet and he tells her of his guilt.

The Third Generation is a gripping story of one woman's heritage; a discovery to pass onto her children what she believes is rightfully theirs.

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