PRESS KIT



The land does not ask.

A novel of South Africa, 1827–1888 · Book One of four

Press, review copies and interviews: grant@grantapoulton.com · WhatsApp 082 411 4444

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1. At a glance

Title	The Leopard’s Bloody Veil: The Forging of the Veldtsman
Series	The Leopard’s Bloody Veil, Book One of four
Author	Grant A. Poulton
Publisher	Wardenclyffe Press, Cape Town
Published	July 2026
ISBN	978-1-0492-6975-7 (paperback)
Format	Paperback, 152 × 228 mm (6 × 9 in), 602 pages, 121,600 words. Kindle and EPUB editions
Price	R495 (RRP). Ebook R199 direct from the author
Genre	Historical fiction
Setting	South Africa, 1827–1888: the Winterberg, the Karoo, De Kaap, Kimberley, Knysna and the Cape
Extras	Footnotes and a glossary for the Taal, Dutch, Xhosa and Khoi and San words; a map of the book’s road
Where to buy	Signed copies at grantapoulton.com; Clarke’s Bookshop and Exclusive Books in Cape Town; Amazon, Takealot, Makro and Clowder
Book Two	*War and the Wire*, in progress

2. News release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE · CAPE TOWN, 20 OCTOBER 2026

Milnerton author sets down the frontier his family came from

Grant A. Poulton's father's line runs back to John Poulton, a shoemaker from Wendover who landed at Algoa Bay in April 1820 and was settled at Salem Hills on the Eastern Cape frontier. Both of his grandmothers were Cape Dutch.

His first novel, *The Leopard's Bloody Veil: The Forging of the Veldtsman*, is set on the ground where those families met. A boy on the Winterberg survives a leopard mauling and carries its mark for the rest of his life. The road takes him across the Karoo, into the gold rush at De Kaap and the diamond fields at Kimberley, and down through Knysna to the Cape. The book runs from 1827 to 1888 and is the first of four books that follow one family into the twentieth century.

"Our history folds into the sands of time as the older generation leaves us, and the stories go with them," Poulton writes. "Lost, unless someone sets them down somewhere. That is what I am trying to do here."

Poulton grew up in George, in the Southern Cape, and lives in Milnerton, Cape Town. Much of the novel began as stories told by uncles, aunts and grandparents. A school history teacher gave him the ambition behind it: to describe South Africa to a stranger who had never smelled it or felt the heat come off the ground. He has spent his working life in IT, and publishes under his own imprint, Wardenclyffe Press.

The novel is stocked by Clarke's Bookshop and Exclusive Books in Cape Town, and sold on Amazon, Takealot, Makro and Clowder. Signed copies, inscribed to any name the buyer gives, cost R495 collected in Cape Town or R575 posted anywhere in South Africa, from grantapoulton.com. Book Two is being written.

Media contact: Grant A. Poulton · grant@grantapoulton.com · WhatsApp 082 411 4444 · grantapoulton.com/press

Review copies (print or PDF), interviews and high-resolution images are available on request.

3. About the book

In one line. A boy marked by a leopard on the Winterberg grows into a man who crosses the whole of 1880s South Africa, in the first book of a four-book frontier saga.

Short description (50 words). A boy on the Winterberg survives a leopard mauling and carries its mark for life. His road runs across the Karoo, through the De Kaap gold rush and the Kimberley diamond fields, to the Cape. *The Forging of the Veldtsman* is Book One of a four-book series set on the South African frontier, 1827–1888.

Full description (as on the cover page of the website).

A boy on the Winterberg survives a leopard mauling and carries its signature down his body for the rest of his life. By the time the farm is ash, the scar has company, and the man who wears it has one eye left, and a country to cross.

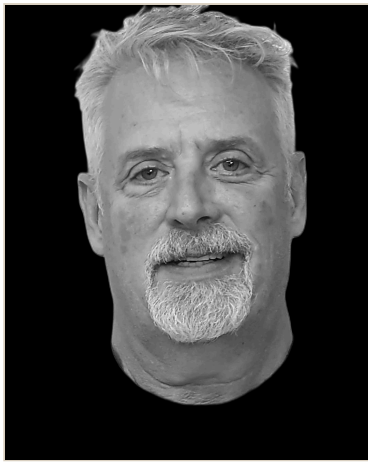
Between those two mornings: a forge in the Winterberg, the trekbokke crossing the Karoo, the gold at De Kaap, the Kimberley diamond fields, a false name carried the length of the country, and a woman out of the Welsh Marches who reads a horse before she reads the man riding it.

It is a novel about land: who works it, who is buried in it, and who holds the pen that says whose it is. It is the first book of four that follow one family across South Africa from the 1820 Settlers into the twentieth century.

4. The series

Book	Years	Status
Book One: The Forging of the Veldtsman. The leopard, the forge, the road north, the diamond field, and a trap closing on two people who do not yet know they are in it.	1827–1888	Published, available now
Book Two: War and the Wire. Eleven years of peace on a mountain, and then a delegation of six men rides up the road with a question that cannot be answered safely either way. The Empire answers the commandos by burning the farms and fencing the veld, and the women and children go behind the fence.	1888–1902	In progress
Book Three: What the Ground Keeps.	1902–1914	Planned
Book Four: Bloodlines.	1914–1920s	Planned

5. About the author



Short bio (52 words). Grant A. Poulton grew up in George, in the Southern Cape, and descends from the 1820 Settlers and the Cape Dutch. *The Leopard's Bloody Veil*, a four-book series that follows one family across the South African frontier, grew from family histories handed down by word of mouth. He lives in Cape Town.

Long bio. Grant A. Poulton grew up in George, in the Southern Cape, in a rural childhood spent outdoors. A school history teacher gave him the ambition that became his fiction: to describe South Africa to a stranger who had never smelled it, never felt the heat come off the ground, never heard the silence of the veld.

His father's line runs back to John Poulton, a shoemaker from Wendover who landed at Algoa Bay in April 1820 and was settled at Salem Hills on the Eastern Cape frontier. Both his grandmothers were Cape Dutch, so both sides of his novels are, somewhere back, his own. Much of what he writes began as stories told by uncles, aunts and grandparents.

The Forging of the Veldtsman is Book One of *The Leopard's Bloody Veil*. Book Two, *War and the Wire*, is in progress. He lives in Cape Town and publishes under his own imprint, Wardenclyffe Press.

The family line.

	English line	Cape Dutch
Father's parents	Poulton (1820 Settlers)	Wagner
Mother's parents	Raper (Yorkshire, about 1880)	Louw

"The same marriage, twice, a generation apart. Both sides of this book are, somewhere back, my own. Baltazar Malan's mother is a Wagenaar of Oudtshoorn. That was not an accident." (Grant A. Poulton)

6. Story angles

Angle	Best for	The story
The Settler and the Cape Dutch	Eastern Cape press, heritage and genealogy titles	A Settler family, two Cape Dutch grandmothers, and a novel set where those families met. John Poulton landed at Algoa Bay in 1820.
Local author	Milnerton, Table View and Cape Town papers and radio	A Milnerton man publishes a 602-page frontier novel under his own imprint; signed copies collected in Cape Town.
A George childhood	George and Garden Route media	Grew up in George; a school history teacher set him on the road to the book.

Angle	Best for	The story
The places	Setting-town papers and travel titles	The book's road runs through the Winterberg, Graaff-Reinet, the Karoo, De Kaap (Barberton), Kimberley, Kuruman, Augrabies, Meiringspoort, Oudtshoorn, Knysna and Cape Town. Section 8 gives the line from the book for each.
The invented parts are the people	History and books pages	The trekbokke, the |xam, Devil's Kantoor, the Big Hole and the horses of the war are real; the characters walk through them. Section 7.
A piano in Riebeeck Kasteel	Features, Swartland and Winelands media	An 1850s Rönisch upright on the verandah of the Royal Hotel became the saloon piano in the book. Photos in section 14.
From IT to the frontier	Business and lifestyle pages	A lifelong IT entrepreneur writes a four-book historical saga and publishes it himself.
Family stories that would be lost	Features, radio, seniors' and heritage groups	Stories told by uncles, aunts and grandparents, set down before they go.

7. What is true in it

The invented parts are the people. Everything they walk through happened. (From the book's website.)

The trekbokke. Springbok migrations crossed the Karoo in numbers that took days to pass a single farm and stopped trains on the line. Within a generation they were gone. Almost nobody now alive has seen one.

The |xam. The San of the northern Cape, and a language recorded in the 1870s from a handful of speakers held in a Cape Town prison yard. The archive survives. The people who spoke it did not.

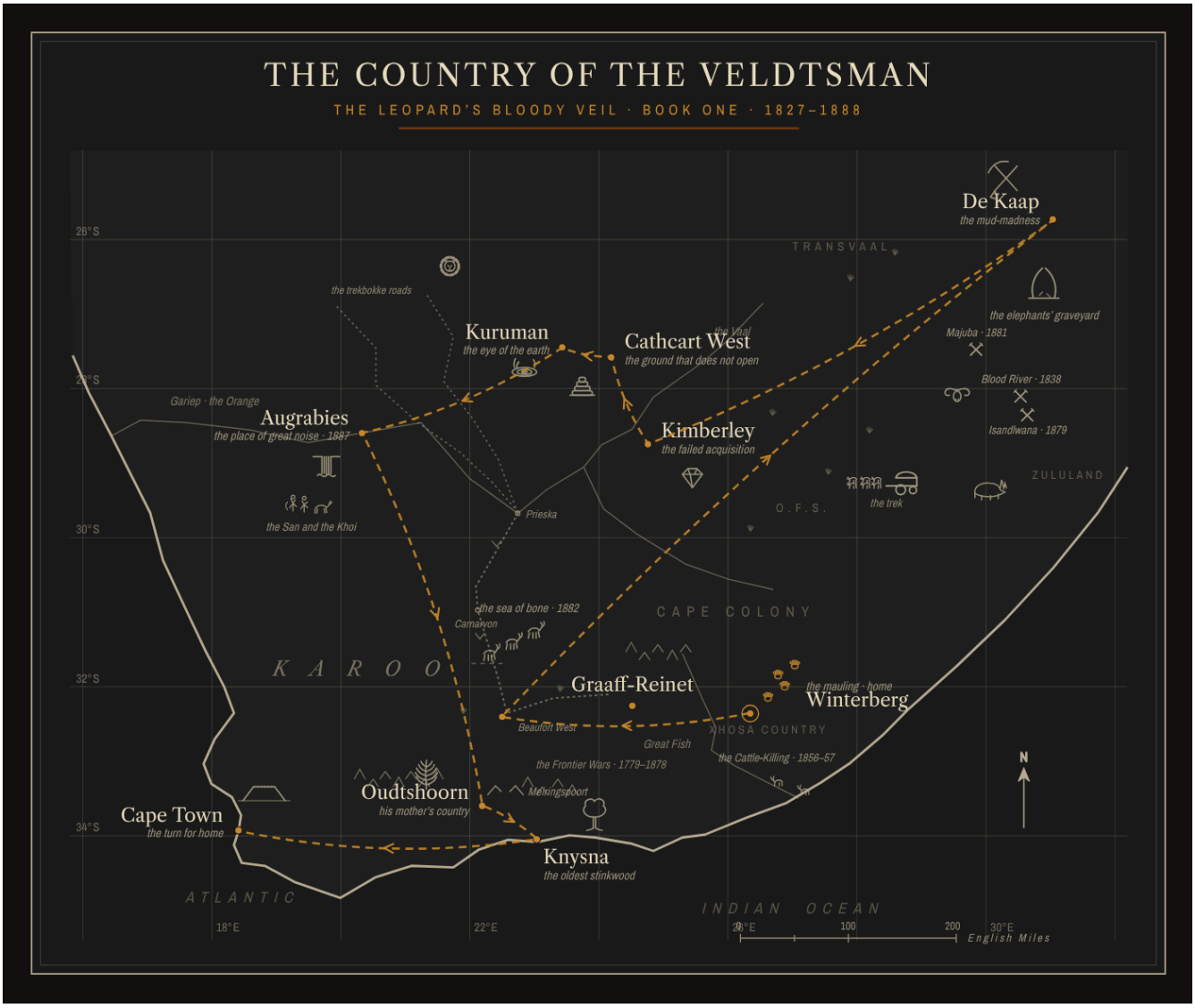
Devil's Kantoor. The De Kaap rush of the 1880s ran through a camp the diggers named Devil's Kantoor, the Devil's Office, on the escarpment above the valley. The gold was real and the name was earned. The Broken Spoke is invented; the mud it stood in is not.

The register. Land on the frontier changed hands by a clerk's entry in a book kept in a language most of the people standing on that land could not read. The book decided. It usually still does.

The Big Hole. Kimberley's mine was dug by hand. Fifty thousand men with picks and buckets, the deepest hole men ever made without machines. Diamonds came out of it in tons. The hole is still there. Most of the names that dug it are not.

The horses. The war that closes this saga used up horses faster than men: more than three hundred thousand dead in three years. Port Elizabeth's memorial from that war is to the horses. A woman in this book would have understood why.

8. The map: fourteen places in the book



Every road in the book is a real one. Each place below carries one line from the novel, as printed. The interactive map is at grantapoulton.com/tlbv-book-one/map/.

Year	Place	The line from the book	Chapter
1861	The Winterberg	“The Winterberg holds everything it has ever held.”	Prologue
1882	Graaff-Reinet	“They came down from the high passes into the Camdeboo, where the thornveld opened into silvered pasture and the mountains stood like stern, unblinking sentinels.”	The Stones and the Spirit
1882	The Karoo	“The springbok had passed in their millions and were gone.”	The Word at Graaff-Reinet

Year	Place	The line from the book	Chapter
1882–1883	The elephants' graveyard, the Lowveld	"The troop had been cut down for the ivory in their heads, and the rest left to the sky."	The Word at Graaff-Reinet
1884	De Kaap	"De Kaap was greed with the skin off it."	The Mud-Madness of De Kaap
1885	The hidden gold, De Kaap	"The rest of it lay where the land had put it, for a day that might come."	What the River Brought Down
1886	Kimberley	"The town when it showed itself did not sit on the plain. It fed on it."	The Graveyard of Light
1887	Cathcart West, the Ghaap	"The Ghaap is a high country of white stone, and the white stone drinks."	The Ground That Does Not Open
1887	Kuruman	"Then the road bent past a low reef of ironstone and the ground gave way to water."	The Eye of the Earth
1887	Augrabies	"In the night the sound of the falls stood in the place a heartbeat should have stood."	The Place of Great Noise
1887	Meiringspoort	"The Groot River had cut the gap an age before any of them and left the road in the bottom of its own wound."	The Limestone Country
1887	Oudtshoorn	"He had stood the once across the street from Wagenaar & Seun and read the gold board over the door."	The Blood and the Feathers
1887	Knysna	"They came to Knysna along the edge of the lagoon, the two great heads of stone standing open to the sea on the one hand and the forest going up dark on the other."	The Oldest Wood
1887	Cape Town	"It sat above the flat sand country like something set down rather than grown."	The Mountain at the End of the World

Lines quoted from *The Leopard's Bloody Veil*, Book One © Grant A. Poulton, Wardenclyffe Press. Map drawn by the author.

9. From the opening pages

The Winterberg. May 1902.

The land does not ask. It waits. It takes. It keeps.

On the Winterberg ridge at first light, a man stands alone. He has one eye.

A scar runs from his left collarbone to his left hip—silver-violet, roped and ridged. It rises and falls with his breathing. On the coldest nights it is the warmest thing about him. He will carry it for forty years: *The Bloedspoor*, Blood-trail. The land's signature on a boy who should have died.

He has seen the *trekbokke* cover the Karoo from horizon to horizon. He has seen the Augrabies drop off the edge of the world. He has seen the Sight open in him like a wound that does not close.

All of it with two eyes once.

One eye now.

Below him the Winterberg lies in ruins.

The British are thorough.

The milkwood at the *werf's* edge is standing. It is always standing. His mother's grave beneath it, the grass long closed over. Beyond it, eight new mounds, the earth still raw. His father among them.

Then on the right, a woman comes up the ridge.

She has the long, unhurried stride that mud and war and a concentration camp could not break. He watches her. Her hair is ash-blonde in the morning light.

All the England burned away.

She reaches him without speaking. She puts her hand on his chest, finding the scar without looking.

(Prologue, *The Leopard's Bloody Veil: The Forging of the Veldtsman* © Grant A. Poulton. Publications may quote this passage in coverage of the book.)

10. What readers say

> *"The writing is so vivid that I could picture every scene as if I were standing right there." Lynn Munch, ★★★★★ on Goodreads*

> *"I recommend it wholeheartedly to anyone who has ever been to Africa, dreamt of going, or was born there." CSKC, ★★★★★ on Amazon*

> *"I started your book this morning and was immediately transported into the veld." Cheryl, ★★★★★ on Goodreads*

11. Questions readers ask

Do I need to know South African history? No. The book walks you in through one family's life, and the footnotes and glossary carry the words you won't know.

Is it a fantasy novel? No. It's historical fiction, steeped in the old beliefs of the frontier. The Boer, the English, the Xhosa and the San each had their own way with the unseen, and in the book those beliefs meet at a child born in the caul.

How many books are there? Three. Book One is out now and Book Two is being written. Book One is the first part of one long story: start here, and Book Two picks up where it ends.

Is it violent? It's a frontier, and later a war, so there is violence in it. The leopard attack that marks the boy is on the page. Most of the rest happens off it: the book shows what violence leaves behind rather than dwelling on the act.

Why the footnotes? The frontier spoke Dutch, the Taal, Xhosa and the Khoi and San languages. The footnotes let you hear it as it was spoken without stopping to guess.

12. Suggested interview questions

1. Your family came out with the 1820 Settlers, and both your grandmothers were Cape Dutch. How did that shape the book?
2. Who was John Poulton, and how much of him is in the novel?
3. Much of the book began as family stories. What do stories told across a kitchen table keep, and what do they lose?
4. Your website says the invented parts are the people and everything they walk through happened. How did you research the trekbokke, De Kaap and the Big Hole?
5. Why does the story start on the Winterberg?
6. The frontier spoke Dutch, the Taal, Xhosa and the Khoi and San languages. Why footnotes rather than translation?
7. The book draws on the beliefs of the Boer, English, Xhosa and San. How did you write the unseen without writing fantasy?
8. A school history teacher set you on this road. What did he do that stayed with you?
9. You've spent your working life in IT. Why a four-book historical saga?
10. Why publish it yourself, under your own imprint?

1. An old Rönisch piano in Riebeeck Kasteel went into the book. What other ordinary afternoons did?
2. Book Two runs from 1888 to 1902. What can you say about where the story goes?

13. Talks, events and book clubs

Talks. Grant A. Poulton speaks to clubs, societies, libraries and festivals: 30 to 40 minutes with questions, in person in the Western Cape and by video call elsewhere. Talks he offers:

- *Settler and Cape Dutch on one frontier:* two families, one country, and the novel set where they met.
- *What family stories keep:* how stories told by uncles, aunts and grandparents became a four-book saga.
- *The invented parts are the people:* the real history under the novel, from the trekbokke to the Big Hole.

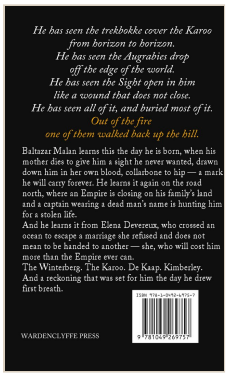
Signed copies are available at every talk, by arrangement with the host.

Book clubs. For South African book clubs: signed copies at a club rate, a free reading guide (23 questions that follow the book's road, at grantapoulton.com/tlbv-book-one/reading-guide.pdf), and the author at your discussion, in person in the Western Cape or by video call anywhere. Write to grant@grantapoulton.com with the club's name, number of readers and city.

14. Images

All images in this kit may be used freely in coverage of the book. Please credit photographs of the author and the map as below.

File	Pixels	What it is	Credit
cover.jpg	640 × 1024	Front cover (web size; print-resolution file on request)	Wardenclyffe Press
back-cover.jpg	640 × 1065	Back cover	Wardenclyffe Press
author-press.jpg	1065 × 1331	Author portrait	Courtesy of the author
author-cutout.png	500 × 624	Author portrait, transparent background	Courtesy of the author
banner-1200x630.jpg	1200 × 630	Web and social banner	Wardenclyffe Press
map-country-of-the-veldtsman.png	1404 × 1178	The map of Book One	Map drawn by the author
ronisch-hero.jpg, ronisch-angle.jpg, ronisch-keys.jpg, ronisch-detail.jpg	1400 × 1400	The Rönisch piano, Royal Hotel, Riebeeck Kasteel	Courtesy of the author







15. Contact, review copies and trade orders

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