

A novel of father figures, bullshit and belonging.

# THE LAST LETTER OF GODFREY CHEATHAM

—  
LUKE ELWORTHY  
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**twd**

THE  
WAIRAU  
DIVERSION

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## The Last Letter of Godfrey Cheatham

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*A novel of father figures, bullshit and belonging.*

As Vladimir Nabokov expert Professor Brian Bode writes in his foreword to Godfrey Cheatham's last letter:

"... I was able to play a prominent role in bringing his remarkable novel *Chasing the Fading Light* to worldwide attention. As was shown in my biography of Godfrey Cheatham (a New York Times #1 bestseller for 28 weeks), this was despite my doubts that a New Zealander — or, more particularly, *this* son of New Zealand — could have penned what is now recognised as not only a supreme Antipodean novel, but also as the novel that may yet prove to be one of the greatest of this new Oceanic century".

Traumatised by his failure to match the creative successes of his precocious younger siblings — early over-achievers in theatre, music and fine arts — Godfrey Cheatham never expects that his baffling experimental pottery will one day lead him to the unlikely heights of international book publishing. There he meets a mysterious artist, a pivotal encounter on a journey of self discovery that points up some of the many absurdities of New Zealand life and culture, and culminates in Godfrey's comic yet anguished unravelling at a grand reunion at the Cheatham tūrangawaewae, the farm that has been in his wider family for generations.

Godfrey Cheatham died not long after completing his last letter in his cell in Paparua prison, never living to see the publication of his great novel. Cheatham's letter is written to his sister, and tries to explain the events that led to his imprisonment.



## Endorsements

“The novel of the year ... patently world-class. It’s brilliant and assured ... any publisher – a Knopf, a Granta, a Bloomsbury; note the international names, because like I say this is world-class – would be thrilled to put their name on *The Last Letter of Godfrey Cheatham*. I was forever laughing out loud ... and totally believed in the story. A 100 percent delight, and 100 percent recommended as a summer read.” **Steve Braunias, Reading Room**

“Comedic romp skewers fads and pretensions of some of our literary heroes ... it’s energetic, it’s packed, it’s inventive.” **David Hill, NZ Listener**

“I thoroughly enjoyed it, laughed along with it and admired the author’s slow-burn narrative ... there is much pungent naughtiness.” **Nicholas Reid, Reid’s Reader**

## About the author

Luke Elworthy was born in India and comes from a family of publishers and farmers. Growing up in Wellington, he was educated at Church of England boarding school Christ’s College, in Christchurch, and spent much of his school holidays at controversial Auckland cult, Centrepont. He has worked in marketing, publicity and editorial roles with book publishers in New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the Netherlands, and he has an MA in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University in Wellington. He lives with his family just outside Blenheim.

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## *The Wairau Diversion*

*Idiosyncratic books made in a big valley near a crooked river.*

The aspirations of The Wairau Diversion are modest, not extending beyond passion projects that reflect the particular tastes of its principal, Luke Elworthy. Based in sunny Marlborough, Luke hopes that one day TWD will publish something written by someone else.