What happened when Africa’s biggest country split in two? When South Sudan ran up its flag as an independent nation in July 2011, it was one of the least developed places on earth. Three years on, it is being torn apart by a devastating civil war. Sudan, the ‘rump state’ diminished by South Sudan’s secession, struggles with its own internal conflicts, including the decade-long war in Darfur. In the years after the split, the two Sudans dealt with crippling economic challenges, struggled with new and old rebellions, and fought each other along their disputed border. Benefiting from unsurpassed access to the politicians, rebels, thinkers and events that are shaping the Sudans, Copnall draws a compelling portrait of two misunderstood countries. The critically acclaimed A Poisonous Thorn in Our Hearts argues that Sudan and South Sudan remain deeply interdependent, despite their separation. It also diagnoses the political failings that threaten the future of both countries, and critiques the international responses to the crises in the two Sudans. The author puts the turmoil of the years after separation into a broader context, reflecting the voices, hopes and experiences of Sudanese and South Sudanese from all walks of life.