



Beulah Hill

William Heffernan

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A novel of rare literary distinction, an erotic thriller combined with a true mystery, and a look back at a little-known part of the American societal patchwork -- *Beulah Hill*, by bestselling author William Heffernan, is a brilliant and deeply original work of fiction.

Set in the 1930s, the story follows the investigation of a racially motivated murder in a rural Vermont town and the shocking ramifications it has on that backwoods community, which had once served as a stopping place for runaway slaves. Having made new lives for themselves there, many of these former slaves had married interracially. As a result, over several generations, the progeny of what were originally black families became what was known as "bleached" and were absorbed by the white community. Still, they were not accepted by all, and not all the blacks joined in interracial unions.

The result was an atmosphere of tension and distrust that -- as so vividly rendered in this novel -- occasionally exploded in acts of violence...and even murder.

Played out against this vivid backdrop, at a time when the Great Depression had created an atmosphere of fear and Adolf Hitler was just beginning his reign in Germany, *Beulah Hill* tells the story of a white man who was murdered in an almost ritualistic manner on land owned by the only remaining black family in that small town. Heading the investigation is a young constable who is himself a deeply conflicted member of the "bleached" underclass and who is intimately involved with the proud and headstrong black woman at the center of the killing.

Depicting larger-than-life characters, including a black patriarch who rules his farm on Beulah Hill with an iron fist, Heffernan paints a startlingly authentic portrait of a town caught in the grip of seething prejudice, forbidden eroticism, and hard times.

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