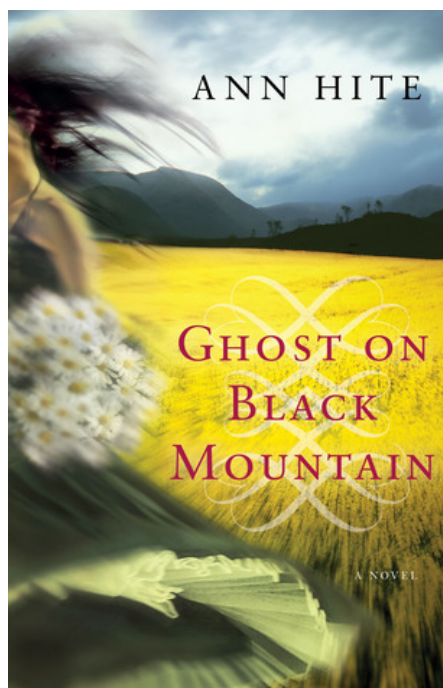




Ghost on Black Mountain

Ann Hite

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ONCE A PERSON LEAVES THE MOUNTAIN, THEY NEVER COME BACK, NOT REALLY. THEY'RE LOST FOREVER.

Nellie Clay married Hobbs Pritchard without even noticing he was a spell conjured into a man, a walking, talking ghost story. But her mama knew. She saw it in her tea leaves: death. Folks told Nellie to get off the mountain while she could, to go back home before it was too late. Hobbs wasn't nothing but trouble. He'd even killed a man. No telling what else. That mountain was haunted, and soon enough, Nellie would feel it too. One way or another, Hobbs would get what was coming to him. The ghosts would see to that. . . .

Told in the stunning voices of five women whose lives are inextricably bound when a murder takes place in rural Depression-era North Carolina, Ann Hite's unforgettable debut spans generations and conjures the best of Southern folk-lore—mystery, spirits, hoodoo, and the incomparable beauty of the Appalachian landscape.

Ghost on Black Mountain Details

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From Reader Review Ghost on Black Mountain for online ebook

Paula says

This was the perfect October read! Ghost on Black Mountain by author Ann Hite is everything the cover says it is; haunting, eerie, dark and unnerving. Told in the voices of five different women who all have different portions of the story to tell, the author did an excellent job of binding the story together in those separate voices. The story is set in rural depression-era North Carolina, we first meet Nellie, a young girl who, while serving meals in a soup kitchen, meets and falls head over heels for Hobbs Pritchard, a man eight years her senior. Nellie's mama immediately sees that Hobbs is a bad man and what she sees in her tea leaves confirms this fear. Ignoring her mama's warnings, Nellie runs off and marries Hobbs anyway. He immediately moves her to his empty, (or is it?) family home on Black Mountain.

One of my favorite quotes from this early time in the story:

'In the first days of sweet romance, if Hobbs had asked me to jump off a cliff, I would have with a smile on my face. Mama always said, "Nellie, don't love a man too much. A woman should save some feelings back to care for herself."

Nellie soon finds that the people of the mountain both hate and fear Hobbs Pritchard, but she still thinks that her husband must be mis-understood. Soon into the marriage, Hobbs' cruel side starts showing itself to Nellie. According to Hobbs, his young wife is dumb, lazy and a horrible cook when in reality, Nellie is none of those things. Right away Nellie starts to see a few of Black Mountain's ghosts. There is the woman who seems to live right in Nellie and Hobbs' home and the man in the round glasses that is summoning her from outside. Shelley, the young girl who is hired to help Nellie clean the long neglected house, is scared but likes Nellie and slowly starts to give her some hints of Hobbs' bad reputation. They say he killed a man here on the mountain and there are stories of the untimely death of his stepmother, along with a few other very disconcerting stories. As Hobbs' cruelty to Nellie increases, she tries to find ways to leave, but Hobbs will never let her go. Will the ghosts of Black Mountain aid her? You'll have to read to find out.

I loved this book. It is the author's debut and I will definitely be waiting for her next one to be released!

Nancy says

This is absolutely the best book I read this year. I could not put it down! It's the story of Nellie Pritchard and 4 other women whose lives are all connected by one man. They each take a turn telling their story as it relates to Hobbs Pritchard. It's a different kind of ghost story and I am happy to learn that the author is working on more books involving some of the same characters. Combine Alice Hoffman with Sue Monk Kidd and you've got Ghost on Black Mountain. I LOVED THIS!

FROM AMAZON:

Told in the stunning voices of five women whose lives are inextricably bound when a murder takes place in rural Depression-era North Carolina, Ann Hite's unforgettable debut spans generations and conjures the best of Southern folk-lore—mystery, spirits, hoodoo, and the incomparable beauty of the Appalachian landscape.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Lovely southern story of several women and dang ole hateful Hobbs. I really enjoy the way this author weaves a story.

She mixes in southern folklore, ghosts and life lessons in a way that sweeps you into the story and you don't want it to end.

Beth says

loved it! can't wait to read more from her about these characters!

Diane S ? says

Nellie was 17 when she met Hobbs Pritchard and despite that her mamma (who reads tea leaves) said no good would come of it, she marries him and sets off to live on Black Mountain. Despite the beautiful trees, flowers and waterfall, things are not as they appear on the mountain. There are haints, secrets and a lot of hate, especially for her husband. After a terror filled night and a horrible act, Nellie leaves the mountain and is not seen again for a long time. This is a very dark, haunting story told by 5 different women who all either lived on the mountain or had something to do with Hobbs Pritchard. After many years have passed and an accident with a fatality occurs Nellie has no choice but to go back to the mountain and with that the book comes full circle. Really a good read.

Brittany Rehage says

This is a book I will be thinking about for a long time. It's the kind of book that makes you stay up until 2am reading it because you just have to know what happens on the next page. There wasn't a place where I could stop reading and *not* think about it.

The web that surrounds Hobbs Pritchard draws you in slowly and before you know it, he's managed to ensnare you, just like he does his ladies in the book. The different perspectives each woman gives of the same man shows just how complicated a person can be. There isn't one true Hobbs, in my opinion. Each woman sees a different version of him, and they're all right and wrong at the same time. As much as I disliked him as a person, his character is one of the best I've read.

As for each of the women, my heart went out to each and every one. They all had secrets that eventually came back to bite them, some worse than others. It didn't matter what the reasoning was behind keeping the secrets, be it good or bad, the secrets ate at each woman and her life.

Something else I found wonderful was how strong the females are in this book. They might make bad choices, but who doesn't in life? However, these women overcome these weaknesses and stand up for themselves, taking charge of their situation and doing what they need to do to make their lives better. I know I say it a lot, but I love real characters, and these women fit the bill. They found strength in their weaknesses, and transformed from characters in a book to real people in my mind.

This was not the simple read I thought it was going to be. It deals with the dark side of human nature, how keeping secrets can destroy good things and many women's issues. This was a fantastic novel and Hite's next book cannot be released soon enough.

Carol Kean says

Ann Hite's debut novel "Ghost on Black Mountain" has enough Gothic horror and suspense to keep us reading until the candle burns out in the dark of night, and enough meaning to keep scholars arguing for years to come. Hite's seamless and economical prose may make for easy reading, but look again. This novel is loaded. Bold, brilliant and beautiful, it has all the richness and depth of 19th C literature without the tedious, wordy prose.

The story sounds deceptively simple--a charismatic stranger comes to town and sweeps innocent young Nellie off her feet, but instead of happily ever-after, Mama sees death in the tea leaves. Nellie, like all young girls who know their own heart, blows off the warning. "Mama was just desperate to keep me home. There wasn't nothing bad going to happen. I didn't much believe in tea leaves anyway."

I marvel at Ann Hite's confidence and authority in establishing Nellie's voice. Could she pull it off in all six sections of the novel with their various points of view? Yes. Yes, yes yes! All the women of Black Mountain are so convincing, you can't help but nod an "amen" even if they're telling you ghost stories. Mostly, they're busy telling Nellie the same thing her Mama did: anyone who'd marry Hobbes Pritchard is either crazy in the head or so young she has no sense.

"If you want to know how Nellie Pritchard got herself into the mess she did," Mama tells us in Part Two, "you got to know parts of my story." Mothers will shake their heads in sympathy every time Josie Clay talks about parenting. "The good Lord knew I did my best to send (Nellie) in the right direction just like my mama did me and her mama did her. It's a weakness trying to keep our daughters from making the same mistakes." In section six Annie Harbor, both a mother and a daughter, reminds us: "Mamas can't protect their daughters. Not really. They're helpless to watch and wait."

Josie Clay knows the story by heart because it's universal. She didn't need a college degree to gain Goethe's insight that "Love is an ideal thing, marriage a real thing; a confusion of the real with the ideal never goes unpunished." Josie's own mama warned her that "if I married, I wasn't going to see anything but struggles. Did I listen? Shoot, no." One look at Owen Clay and "I fell in love with him. As if I knew what love was. In front of me stood what I wanted more than anything, and I figured if he had any wrongs, I could iron them right out like a wrinkled shirt dress. Lord, that's the worst thing a woman can do, love a man so much she can't see reason." And so her daughter Nellie's story opens doors that women like Josie have held tightly shut for hundreds of years.

While women's issues are a strong part of this novel, the American Gothic elements will rivet a wider audience. An atmosphere of mystery and suspense pervade Nellie's world. Hobbes isolates her in a large, dusty old house that's been in his family for years. Instead of welcoming young Mrs. Pritchard, locals shun her or warn her to run for her life. Hobbes Pritchard is evil, and they have no qualms about saying so to his well-meaning wife. Everyone on the mountain, living or dead, warns Nellie to leave, but young love is so stubborn, it can take a gradual series of escalating abuse before a bride moves out of denial into awareness, then horror and remorse. Certain locals who talk to Nellie look and sound human but turn out to be ghosts. And all of them have an axe to grind with Hobbes. Hurry, they whisper, but before Nellie will dare to leave Hobbes, she has to uncover his secrets. Local legends, spooky voices and artifacts in the attic charge Nellie's

world with supernatural terror and real-life danger.

Hite's strong, enigmatic women characters make us want more, and she delivers. Her next novel shines the spotlight on Shelly Parker, the ghost-whisperer of Black Mountain who downplays her own intelligence and talent because a good black servant girl knows her place. If there's one flaw in this novel, it's that Shelly's section is far too short. More Shelly! We want more of her stoic wisdom mixed with fearlessness and compassion. She is a survivor. "Nellie Pritchard was the first white person to treat me like a regular girl," she tells us. On hearing "Nellie, call me Nellie," not Mrs. Pritchard, Shelly with a hand on her hip says, "No, ma'am, it ain't proper." At 14 she is far more savvy and mature than her 18-year-old employer. Their dialogue is piercingly funny, especially when Nellie earns her trust and Shelly has the audacity to tell it like it is.

The relationship between Nelly and the servant girl brings to mind Kathryn Stockett's best selling novel *The Help*. Both Hite and Stockett expose the hypocrisy of an era, deftly weaving history and social issues into the fascinating and complex relationships of maids and mistresses, husbands and wives, neighbors and members of the community.

Ann Hite is such a keen observer of human nature, even her ghosts are believable. While science has yet to prove the spirit outlives the body, documented testimonials from people across time and continents bear witness to the same type of ghost sitings Hite describes. The ghost may look and act like a living human. Frequently, the living will describe a personage they've never seen or heard of before, and the description matches an actual person who died. Science has no explanation for that, but the good folk on Black Mountain do. Death is not the end. And the sins of our fathers can have repercussions that last and last across the generations.

With beautiful prose, memorable characters and haunting themes, Ann Hite is as certain to impress scholars with her multi-layered exploration of women's issues and the dark side of human nature as she is to win the hearts of the reading public for generations to come.

Jan W. Mc says

I'm rating this book five stars because I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Not all books are noble. *Ghost on Black Mountain* isn't great literature; it will not be taught in classrooms 400 years from now. Big deal. I was totally entertained, and there isn't one thing wrong with entertaining people and enhancing lives.

If we're honest, we all have pasts, skeletons in the closet, secret sins. Young Nellie married out of childish infatuation, ushering in an evil force that affected lives for generations. Told between the years of 1938 and the late 1950s by the women touched by the evil that was Hobbs Pritchard, Nellie's husband, they explain their loves, losses, mistakes, and their roles in the ways that their lives intertwined. In the end, we see the healing power and the freedom of truth.

Picked as a Boo Read since it is October, this will stay on my shelf! Ghosts and violent deaths run throughout, but it's a book for anytime of year.

Charlotte says

<http://charlotteswebofbooks.blogspot....>

Ghost on Black Mountain is a tale told by five women over many years. Five women bound by one common thread. Hobbs Pritchard and a dark murder that took place on Black Mountain. Ghost on Black Mountain is a Gothic tale if ever there was one. It is a suspenseful, dark glimpse of what life was like in the mountains of North Carolina not all that long ago. I am really surprised at how much I enjoyed Ghost on Black Mountain, but Nellie's story, and her strength, captivated me in ways I did not expect. If you are a fan of Gothic Ghost stories, you will not be disappointed by Ann Hite's debut novel, her haunting tale of Black Mountain will stick with you for quite a while!

Book of Secrets says

GHOST ON BLACK MOUNTAIN is a spellbinding Southern Gothic about dark secrets, murder, ghosts and revenge. The story is told from the points of view of five women, each one connected in some way to Hobbs Pritchard and Black Mountain, North Carolina. Hobbs was an evil man. A criminal. An abuser. A murderer. But he was also deceptively charming and handsome, and easily won young Nellie's heart. It was during the Great Depression that he married Nellie and brought her to live on the mountain. It only takes a short time for her to see the real Hobbs and to realize her life is in danger, and there's only one way for her to get off that mountain. Unfortunately for Nellie, her secrets won't stay buried forever.

This was an amazing book, one that I will think about long after finishing. I love how the book was constructed with each narrators' point of view in a separate section, and each part added more depth to the story as a whole. All five of these women were strong yet flawed, and I connected to each one. Even the ghosts and the mountain itself were compelling characters in this eerie tale.

GHOST ON BLACK MOUNTAIN had me captivated from the first page. The tone of the story was dark and unnerving, and there were many surprising twists and chilling moments throughout the story. This was more than a ghost story. It was also a testament to the powerful bond between a mother and child that nothing, not even death, can break. GHOST ON BLACK MOUNTAIN has a place on my keeper shelf. I give it 5 out of 5 stars!

I received my copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Kathleen Rodgers says

I'd Give It Six Stars If I Could!

From the moment I started reading "Ghost On Black Mountain," Nellie Pritchard walked into my heart and took up residence. And she didn't come alone. Others followed.

Along with four other women who narrate this page-turning tale, young Nellie must learn the hard way that sometimes our choices in life will haunt us forever. All five women are intricately connected to one man,

Hobbs Pritchard, the menace of Black Mountain. A mean-spirited moonshiner who runs this Depression era mountain village like a crime boss, Hobbs first woos young Nellie Clay from a church soup line in Ashville where she and her mama are serving folks worse off than themselves. Hobbs cast his spell over this naïve seventeen-year-old with his smooth talking ways and blue eyes that made Nellie “see life his way in an instant.”

Despite her mama’s warnings – she saw death in the tea leaves - Nellie marries Hobbs Pritchard and they head back up the mountain to a big drafty house with a gigantic fireplace and a window that overlooks the nearby woods and tumbling river. It’s the view from this window where Nellie gets her first warning that her life with Hobbs, who she barely knows anything about, has put her in danger.

In this beautifully crafted story, so rich and vivid in character and voice, warnings appear to Nellie in many forms. First there’s the man standing at the edge of the woods, then a young black girl who can see things beyond her years, and a gentle woman standing at the bottom of the stairs. But will Nellie heed their advice and go home to her mama, or ignore their warnings and keep suffering under the cruel hands of her husband?

Sightings of ghosts, missing persons, and tightlipped neighbors all play a part in this drama where people are hesitant to talk for fear of their lives or reputations. Even when I wasn’t reading, I was conjuring up these characters in my head. I found myself thinking in their voices. Wondering what was going to happen next. Nellie, Josie, Shelly, Rose, and Iona were pulling me back to Black Mountain. To unfinished business. These women had stories to tell and I was their captive audience.

There are so many good lines in this novel, too many to mention in a brief review.

But the two lines that stopped me in my tracks and seem to embody everything good about Ann Hite’s novel, come at the end of a scene when Nellie’s mama, Josie Clay, is reflecting on a comforting visit from her own mother shortly after her mother’s death: “Mama loved me enough to come see me before she left the world. She wasn’t no ghost, just a spirit on its way to heaven. Amen.”

Like the mountain itself – populated with strong women, restless spirits, and unspeakable secrets – once this story gets in your blood, you can never leave it.

I highly recommend this book. I’d give it six stars if I could!

Kathleen M. Rodgers ~ author of the award-winning novel “The Final Salute”

A note of disclosure: I read an advanced copy from the publisher.

Cher says

3.5 stars - It was really good.

In the last few days of October, I finally found a book to satisfy the Halloween read craving. This had the perfect mix of the supernatural and southern goth to form a really enjoyable ghost story. The next time I find myself in the Appalachian mountains, I know I will think of Nellie and Hobbs...always a sign of great storytelling.

Favorite Quote: All our actions travel a road that comes home to us at some point.

First Sentence: Mama warned me against marrying Hobbs Pritchard.

SenoraG says

Have you ever read a book that stays in your mind even after you close the cover and move on to your next read? Ghost on Black Mountain is that kind of book. The story is told in the voices of five very different women who all have a connection to the same man, Hobbs Pritchard. Some love him, most hate him. He is a monster of a man and one of these women killed him. His ghost haunts Black Mountain and stories about him are told to children to scare them and get them to behave.

This was an absolutely wonderful book. I loved how each women tells her own story about how she is tied to Hobbs. We get very different perspectives on this man through the eyes and voice of these women. I enjoyed exploring the depths that a mother would go to to protect her child or try to. Seeing how secrets can do so much harm. I found myself asking myself numerous times what I would have done if I were in the shoes of any of these women.

I cared about every single character and my heart broke for Iona and what she went through because of lies and secrets. The one person I would have loved to see more of is Jack, the brother of Hobbs. I felt that he has a story of his own to tell that was touched on but never truly explored. I would be very interested to hear his side of things.

Family relationships, spirits, secrets, love, this book has it all and I was up very late finishing it. Highly recommended.

Sonja Arlow says

I always find the idea of ghost stories appealing but am disappointed more often than not. So this story was a rare treat.

Newly married 17-year-old Nellie Pritchard moves to Black Mountain to start a life with her charming husband Hobbs Pritchard.

Life is not easy on the mountain but Nellie wants to give it her best shot. But every time she reaches out to the community she gets rejected, her husband leaves her alone for days at a time and she becomes nothing more than a prisoner in the big old house.

Slowly she discovers that her handsome, amiable husband is really a vicious, murderous bootlegger feared by the entire community, but the worst is yet to come.

When Hobbs starts beating her knowing full well that his family will turn a blind eye soft spoken Nellie is driven to breaking point and something must give.

And then Hobbs and Nellie both disappear off the mountain. No one knows what happened to either of them but some have their suspicions.

The story takes you deeply into the lives, loves, and losses of the characters, living and dead, making you care about their stories. Each narrator added a layer of depth to the story with all five of these women showing strong yet flawed character. I liked all of them but think Shelly and Nellie were my favourites.

This was a wonderfully atmospheric, at times dark southern tale and if you enjoyed this you may want to look at *The Storycatcher* as well.

Tania says

4.5 stars. I read *The Storycatcher* by same author a year or so ago and loved it. I don't know why it took me so long to read the second one, but it's definitely a mistake I won't be repeating. I loved the characters - they were real, and did not feel like the normal Southern stereotypes. Even Hobbs, which is probably one of the most evil characters I've met before, shows his softer side at times. Although all five voices are the voices of strong but damaged women, they all sounded very different from each other. I really enjoyed the fact that the stories are not told in chronological order, and each story reveals more layers. I highly recommend this authors books if you enjoy beautifully written Southern literature.

The Story: Seduced into marriage by the charismatic Hobbs Pritchard, 17-year-old Nellie Pritchard moves with him to Black Mountain, where she discovers her handsome, amiable husband is really a vicious, murderous bootlegger feared by the entire community. Worse still, Hobbs is haunted by the spirits of his victims, who soon begin to haunt Nellie, too.

Pam says

I loved every minute of this southern (mainly depression-era) ghost story! This is not a long descriptive tale, but simply a story, albeit creepy, told from the point of view of five women. I really appreciated how the author ended the book - it was a good solid ending. Good stuff!

Darcus Murray says

Ghost On Black Mountain was definitely one of the best books that I have read this year. I couldn't get enough of it and when I wasn't reading it, I wanted to be.

From the very beginning, the story draws you in and doesn't let go even long after you've turned the last page. I don't know what I expected this book to be, but it was a million times better. I felt for this book in a way only few books can manage. Anne Hite is an absolutely beautiful, brilliant, seductive writer and she bring the Appalachia's and Nellie's ghost story to life.

I felt like crying at the end of the book, but not because the book was sad. I felt like crying because I didn't want it to end. I will never, never forget this book. I will definitely be re-reading it in the future.

Debra says

Stayed up way too late to finish the book Sunday night, It's quite good. The ghosts in the book don't drive the book so much as choices that are made by the women and how they put their lives back together after those choices. Looking forward to the next book.

Linda says

Prepare to be swept up in this wonderfully written tale of hard-times mountain living. It is a most enjoyable ride that quickly and quietly unfolds transporting you to a rare and unique place of magic. I was left most satisfied having spent the time to know this story. Romance, broken dreams, everyday spirits, characters that grow into themselves, secrets that refuse to stay hidden all come so vividly alive in the cool clean air of Black Mountain. From beginning to end I wouldn't change a thing. Ann Hite truly has an amazing gift for storytelling.

Laura says

I was up reading this well after midnight when I heard strange noises in the house. This being a Carolina mountain ghost story, I shouldn't have been surprised when my closet rod gave way and all my clothes heaved themselves to the floor...but boy did I jump!

Part One, Nellie's story, is the longest section and by far the most engaging and would have suited me fine as a novella. Based on those first 100 or so pages alone this book would garner a high four stars, but (spoiler alert) the voices that follow aren't as strong and the twist of Nellie's (Annie's) daughter Iona meeting her half-brother Lonnie and falling in love was at once too predictable and too improbable.

A few favorite lines (p. 74) "January closed in around me like a pack of hungry wolves cornering a lost traveler."

The scene on page 127 where she prepares the body for burial is beautifully written.
