



Brenda K. Marshall grew up on a farm in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. She is the author of *Mavis* (a novel, Fawcett-Columbine, 1996) and *Teaching the Postmodern: Fiction and Theory* (scholarship, Routledge, 1992). She teaches in the English Department at the University of Michigan.

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Dakota, Or What's a Heaven For

Brenda K. Marshall

Publication Date: November 2010

"Imagine a Midwestern *Middlemarch*, if you will, that conjures the Gilded Age in a succession of sweeping panoramas and intimate portraits. Brenda K. Marshall puts me in the mind of an American Sarah Waters a writer in persuasive command of history and simultaneously able to slip beneath its skin to the story beneath. This is a vibrant, teeming work, filled with feeling, intelligence and, ultimately, grace."

Peter Ho Davies, author of *The Welsh Girl*

In this brave and moving epic, set in late nineteenth-century Dakota Territory, Brenda K. Marshall opens a window onto the history of a place little known and often misunderstood, to tell an original tale of desire and ambition. The lives and schemes of frontier politicians, Northern Pacific Railroad executives, bonanza farmers and homesteaders, converge in the story of Frances Houghton Bingham. Emotionally complex, willful and resourceful, Frances is educed by the myths of opportunity driving the settlement of Dakota Territory, and dares to dream of a new world in which to realize her unconventional desires. "Providing a counterpoint to the dramatic risks taken by Frances is the generous voice of Kirsten Knudson, the daughter of Norwegian homesteaders. As Kirsten grows from a voluble girl to a formidable woman, her observations (equal parts absurdity and insight) reveal the heart of the novel."