

The Virgin of Small Plains: Read it! You'll Like it!

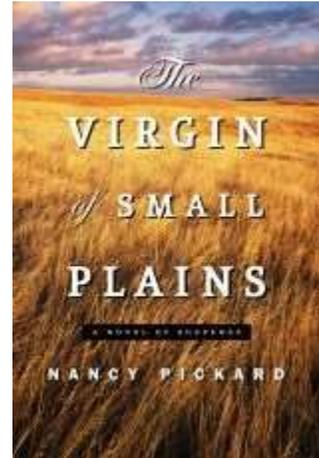
The Virgin of Small Plains

by Nancy Pickard

Review by Roy Bird, Director, Kansas Center for the Book

In 2009, book discussion groups in schools, bookstores and libraries will take part in *Kansas Reads...The Virgin of Small Plains*. Comments are already being made, like "I don't like mysteries," or "It's another murder story, isn't it?" Well, *The Virgin of Small Plains* isn't focused on murder, and it isn't your run-of-the-mill mystery.

It's the best book author Nancy Pickard has written. The *Denver Post* said: "Equal parts coming-of-age tale, suspenseful thriller and mainstream evocation of small-town Kansas, *The Virgin of Small Plains* defies categorization—especially when a bit of magic realism is thrown into the mix..."



Set in the Flint Hills, Nancy herself wrote: "With this novel, I have finally come home to Kansas, where Truman Capote proved in *In Cold Blood* that small Midwestern towns can be the most deadly of all, and where Dorothy proved in *The Wizard of Oz* that there's no place like home." And readers will easily recognize the small towns with the people in them that she describes.

Fellow Kansas novelist Julie Garwood, of Leawood, wrote: "*The Virgin of Small Plains* will keep you up all night. Nancy Pickard's intelligent, suspenseful storytelling never disappoints." The nonstop surprises keep readers from 18 to 80, male and female, on the edge of their seats.

"Pickard probes the truth behind miracles," said *Publishers Weekly*, "and the tragedies behind lies in this mesmerizing suspense novel set in Kansas...a memorable read." After the town provided a decent burial for an unidentified young woman's body, strange miracles visit those who tend her grave—some even believe that her spirit can cure sickness—and thus the legend of the "Virgin" of the town called Small Plains arose.



Library Journal calls it "An absorbing tale of love and deceit." A rekindled romance, unrequited love, and the interactions of men and women in rural Kansas are deeply interwoven throughout the book.

Suspense and supernatural, romance and thrills, all framed beautifully in the communities and on the prairies of the Flint Hills, make Nancy Pickard's book a great read for all Kansans. It is a Reader's Choice Award Winner, an Agatha Award Winner, an Edgar Award Finalist, a Dilys Award Finalist, a Macavity Award Finalist and ...Nancy Pickard's *The Virgin of Small Plains* was selected for the 2007 Kansas Notable Books List!

Now it is the subject for the 2009 *Kansas Reads...The Virgin of Small Plains!*