



# Queen of Always

*Sherry D. Ficklin*

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**Queen of Always** Sherry D. Ficklin

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN

If her time at court has taught Catherine anything, it's that there is no room for weakness in Imperial Russia. With the Empress' health failing and rumors of a change in the line of succession, her place in the royal line is once more in jeopardy. Tormented by her sadistic husband and his venomous mistress, Catherine must once more walk the fine line between pleasure and politics—between scandal and survival.

When her young son becomes the target of those rebelling against Peter's reign, Catherine will have to rise up to protect herself, her child, and her nation from his unstable and potentially catastrophic rule. This means putting herself at odds with the most dangerous man she's ever known, trusting those who once proved to be her enemies, and turning a nation against its sovereign. In the ultimate battle for the crown, new alliances will be forged, loyalties will be tested, and blood will be shed.

Don't miss this breathtaking conclusion to the Stolen Empire series!

Queen of Tomorrow is a YA historical fiction based on the life of young Catherine the Great. Fans of the hit TV show REIGN will devour this scandalous glimpse into the life of one of the most dynamic women in history.

## Queen of Always Details

Date : Published November 23rd 2015 by Clean Teen Publishing (first published September 15th 2015)

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Author : Sherry D. Ficklin

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# From Reader Review Queen of Always for online ebook

## Jood Hooligan says

<http://www.platypire.com/j-hooligan/q...>

I was given a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

I was so excited when I had this on my kindle. Am I the only person who gets so excited about a book that they're afraid to read it? Because that's how I was with this one. I adored the last two, and I was worried I had hyped myself up too much.

Then I started it. I couldn't put it down, and it was finished that same day.

I know the story of Catherine the Great, so it wasn't even as if I shouldn't have been expecting certain things... but I found myself so immersed in this world that Ficklin created that there were many times what I knew of her story was far from my mind. I let the story captivate me, and it did a fantastic job.

Much like the last two books in this series, there is a lot going on. The protagonist is trying to stay alive and keep as much of herself as she can, despite the overwhelming amount of hardships she struggles with. There is really not a dull moment.

I felt this to be a wonderful retelling of Catherine the Great, and I highly recommend it to lovers of historical fiction.

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## Sara says

With Queen of Someday, Sherry Ficklin began a trilogy of books about a very young Catherine the Great and her rise to becoming the Empress of Russia. Born with the name Sophie, she soon found herself embroiled in the political machinations and scheming of court life, dealing with Empress Elizabeth and Peter. With each book, I was drawn further in to the tale, and I think I even remarked on the fact I thought the character development was great in my review for Queen of Tomorrow. This book continues that trend, and with this book, it comes to its full maturity, as does Catherine.

In Queen of Always, Catherine knows exactly what she wants, what her goals are, and what must be done to get there. Something she doesn't shy away from at all, and I don't recall her ever questioning herself, so she has a tremendous amount of mental fortitude and courage. She sees the path that Russia is on with Peter as the emperor, and knows something must be done. Building up a network of supporters, she finally takes the steps needed, not only for herself but for Russia as well.

Of course, she still has romantic ties to both Sergei and Alexander, and she's faced with some difficult decisions when it comes to them. Then there's Peter. From the very first book it seemed like he was on a downward spiral, and that is fully on display in this book, along with his mistress Elizavetta. I think that's all I really need to say about that aspect. Overall though, I had a smile on my face when I came to the conclusion of this series.

This book was relatively short, so it was a fast read, but one I enjoyed tremendously. Queen of Always is on my list of favorite books read in 2015. In addition, I'd rank the Stolen Empire series as being among my favorite trilogies. My rating is 5/5 platypiros.

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## **?LEAH? says**

**She's ruthless, because she has to be...she's loved because she's fair. She's the queen because she took it.**

**OVERALL RATING: 4.3/5 STARS (GRADE=A-)**

## **??My Pick For Book Theme Song??**

*Leader of the Broken Hearts* by Papa Roach --Catherine is tasked with some difficult decisions that leave her not so lucky in love. Ultimately, she did it all for Russia...

And now I finally know what it feels like  
To risk everything and still survive  
When you're standing on the battlefield  
And all the pain is real  
That's when you realize  
That you must've done something right  
'Cause you've never felt so alive?

\*note: all the lyric video's for this song were not right, this ones the best...but some of the lyrics are wrong.

## **?My Thoughts?**

A stunning conclusion to the Stolen Empire Series...a sometimes poignant, sometimes encouraging, with some serious OMG moments leading up to her stealing the crown from her asinine (and that word doesn't even cover it) husband, Peter. For such a short book it really packs a punch.

**?Sex Factor?** This is older ya for sure because of the graphic content and the sex. Especially, one scene in particular...wow (maybe a little TMI).

## **?Ratings Breakdown?**

Plot: 4/5

Main Characters: 4.3/5

Secondary Characters: 4.5/5

The Feels: 4.3/5

Addictiveness: 4.2/5

Theme or Tone: 4/5

Flow (Writing Style): 4.5/5

Backdrop (World Building): 4/5

Originality: 4/5

Book Cover: 5/5

Ending: 4/5 Cliffhanger: No

Will I read more from this Author? Yes, I would

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## **Kelly Gunderman says**

Check out this and other reviews on my blog, [Here to Happy Endings!](#)

If you haven't read the first two books in this series, go read them now. Really, go read them. I'll be here when you get back.

All finished? Great! Now, weren't they absolutely fantastic?!

I mean, that beautiful cover alone is enough to make me want to pick up the whole series and just sit down and binge read them in one weekend. And now that the trilogy is complete, you can!

I fell in love with this series a while back when I got an ARC of the first book, *Queen of Someday*. As soon as I had finished the first one, I got the second book, *Queen of Tomorrow*, from NetGalley, and I read that one in less than a day. So I was obviously over-excited for the third and final book in the series, *Queen of Always*.

I definitely wasn't disappointed.

Writing a review for this book will be difficult because I don't want to give away any spoilers for those of you that haven't read the first two books (didn't I tell you to go read them?), so this won't be long and detailed.

*Queen of Always* picks up one year after *Queen of Tomorrow* left off. It doesn't begin on a light note, and I'm not going to lie, I needed some tissues by the end of the first chapter. We still have Catherine, who is busy dealing with Peter (who is immature and annoying as ever, of course), his mistress (who is one of those characters you want to reach right through the page and slap), and her own lover, Sergei. Things are complicated for Catherine, especially while the empress is still alive and making her life a living nightmare.

While dealing with the many issues she faces in her life, some new twists come to light that cause her life to be, well, even a tad bit more complicated (as if the poor girl hasn't been through enough already), and it's interesting to see where things go.

This book has the same powerful heroine, Catherine, and the other characters that made the previous books so addicting. Ms. Ficklin did a marvelous job of wrapping up the story, and didn't really leave any loose ends or problems (the only real problem was the fact that this series is just a trilogy...why did it have to be over so fast?).

Note: I received an ARC copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Laura says**

Wow i loved the way the Author did the finally to the Stolen empire books, and the ending was devastating and unexpected. We journey with Catherine/Sophie while she tries to cope with her sadistic husband while thinking of her country, people and her personnel life, i loved all the books thank you so much for giving such an amazing read!!!!

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## **Constance Roberts says**

I was so happy to get the third paperback for my birthday. I needed to finish up this series because after my Bestie finished all three books in a week, she's been badgering to talk to me about the third one.

Stuff gets real in the third installment of the Stolen Empire series. This is definitely not one for more sensitive readers. The steamy romance is taken to a level I never expected and is also shadowed by domestic abuse - something I can only tolerate because of the culture of the time period and setting, and because our heroine eventually comes out on top. Bestie and I both felt like the heightened sensuality was unnecessary and took away a bit from what we loved about this series in the first place; the spectacular story and writing.

I can't say I agree with everything Catherine does, or the choices she's forced to make. But it's through those choices that she becomes the strong heroine that she is. Because she's hardened so much, I don't feel a kinship to her that I did in the last two books, or that I've found with other characters. I don't feel like I would be her best friend in real life, but I definitely would be one of her trusted ladies that keeps all of her scandalous secrets.

Queen of Always wasn't my favorite in the series, but I wouldn't have missed it for the world. I'm glad I got to get up close and personal with all the drama that is Catherine's train wreck of a life. The ending was tragically beautiful. More bitter than sweet, but complete and leaving me sad that it was all over. I especially liked the letter to her children slipped into the epilogue. Overall, the Stolen Empire series is rich and elegant, and I highly recommend it if you want to really connect with a story.

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## **Stephanie (Bookfever) says**

On the one hand Queen of Always is the best book in this trilogy so far, but on the other hand my heart is broken into a thousand little pieces due to some events towards the end of the story, which I won't reveal for the sake of spoilers.

I'm not even sure where to begin with this review. I don't want to give too much away of the story but again so much happened in such a short time. The book read super fast, I couldn't stop reading so that's definitely the prove of some damn good writing on the author's part.

A lot of crazy things happened in the story like people getting set on fire and even freaking threesomes. I'm

not sure how I felt about that but at least it was entertaining. That's for sure.

I can't say I've ever really liked Catherine but I thought it was great that in this book she finally made some tough choices and stuck by them. Especially towards the end. Her journey from book one to book three has been such a huge one and you can definitely tell she changed and developed.

So yeah, this book was good and in some ways definitely exceeded the other two but still I can't give it four stars. Just like the previous books it's a solid three stars for me.

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## **Courtney Whittamore- The Moral of our Stories says**

Stakes are truly high in the enthralling conclusion to The Stolen Empire Series. Boundaries are no longer being tested, but are being run through with an all-consuming power, motivated by self-preservation, greed, and the desire for stability.

In Queen of Always, we find each character stretched beyond their limits. No longer do they have the luxury of redemption. All that is left, is to press further into the destruction and devastation of their own making, with only their hope and faith that someday, they can once again find their way back to their humanity. To say that in their own way that the characters lost touch with their sanity would be a vast understatement. The Empress' condition has remained the same, if not steadily declined, out of sheer spite towards Catherine, refusing to relinquish her power. Because of the miscalculated expiration of the Empress, Catherine is now left to endure Peter's antics singularly. Since Peter's desire for the throne has gone unquenched, his tantrums have only begun to metastasize, infecting the whole of the court with his ill-conceived policies. It quickly becomes apparent to Catherine that she can no longer devote her passions to simply ensuring her happiness with Serguei and Alexander. It has now fallen upon her to save herself, her lovers, her son, and the whole of Russia.

Sherry Ficklin has done an impeccable job concluding this series. In Queen of Tomorrow, we were taken on a journey in which the characters were presented with several options, yet chose the more difficult options more often than not. In Queen of Always, she cemented the decisions by showing that they had each backed themselves up against a wall of their own making, their only hope for survival being to simply bear the unbearable. In one way or another, the weight of such a life broke each one of them, yet Catherine was able to thrive in the one way that mattered. Even through her misdeeds, she left the crucible stronger than when she entered.

Ficklin's ability to take historical events and wrap them into a captivating tale is remarkable. She took the lives of those we now find ourselves so removed from and made them relatable. Even though I am separated by centuries and nobility from Catherine, I feel that I have learned something from her, specifically in this portrayal. It matters not whether her character in this work is more fictional than accurate. What does matter is that she illustrates a strong woman, who when faced with the unthinkable, still perseveres.

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## **? Kimberly says**

Our Catherine is a clever, clever girl. She is also ruthless, passionate and at times calculating. Forced into marriage and ripped from the arms of her lover; she has suffered loss, is tormented and yet she is forever a lady. Never showing weakness beyond the walls of her quarters.

“I have done dreadful things, Dash. I have made mistakes that I will never be able to atone for, and I have allowed myself to be selfish in ways you might never understand.” The bitter memory of sprinkling the poison in the Empress’ tea floats into my mind. I think of every lie I’ve told, of every misstep I’ve made. “I’m not proud of my choices, but neither would I retract a single one,” I say finally.” -Catherine, Queen of Always

Catherine quickly finds her position in jeopardy as Peter’s mistress sinks her teeth further into him. His radical ideals threaten the court, the church and Russia. As she builds alliances, she also must face the two men she loves. The romance was rather interesting, and young Catherine is quite bold. Can she choose between them?

Ficklin weaved a suspenseful tale as Catherine makes moves to secure life for her and those of her son. Queen of Always is darker than its predecessors as tension rises and danger lurks. Politics, religion, betrayals, and threats made for a page-turning read. The author managed to have me holding my breath, dropping my chin in shock and even shedding a tear.

A mention of coffee..had me smiling!

“.....There’s a cup of what looks like pitch black tea. I pick it up, examining the contents. It smells burnt somehow. “What on earth is this?”

She nods to it, “That’s a new drink the cook thought you might enjoy. It’s called coffee. It can be bitter so there is cream you can add to it. She says it’s all the rage at French Court.”

“Coffee? Odd.” I take a sip and nearly gag. It’s strong, so much more bitter and heavy than tea, but, still...

I take another sip.

“It’s quite good, I think.” I say, admiring the warmth of the cup in my hand.

Dashka beams. “I thought you’d enjoy it.”

As we begin the tedious process of dressing and grooming, I sip on the beverage, asking for a second cup soon after the first. Soon I feel my heart speed up, my face flushes, and I feel more awake and alive than I’ve felt in weeks.

At times, Catherine is ruthless and her hands have blood on them, yet she is equally compassionate. Even though it causes her to suffer she does not bend in her convictions. Even as she works to secure her place in Russia, she looks to the people and their needs. The balance between her ruthlessness and compassion never ceased to amaze me. Ficklin’s interpretation of Catherine provides a strong heroine that readers will connect with. For all that she endures, she holds her head high and presents a strong reassuring presence. She is someone whom you respect, even as you guard your back.

Copy provided by publisher. This review was originally posted on Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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**Hannah ?Reader in the Rough? says**



*Pain changes you. You can choose to release it and let it leave its scars, or you can wind it up inside yourself and let it become your weapon.*

3.5 Stars. Twas a rushed ending, but a solid and conclusive one. I appreciated the epilogue.

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### **Ari Reavis says**

Catherine, my girl, you are fierce. She was put through so much by so many people and I'm so glad she literally came out on top in the end. Peter is a freaking monster and I had a much more gruesome death in mind for him, but hey, a dead Peter is good enough for me. Catherine had to make choices that would darken anyone's soul, but heavy is the head that wears the crown right? The only thing I didn't like was the subtle love triangle. But great book and great ending.

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### **L.R.W. Lee says**

This is a YA historical fiction based on the life of young Catherine the Great, one of the most dynamic women in history.

In this third and final installment, Catherine approaches the world realistically, no longer the naive pawn Peter would hope her to be. In this book, I found Catherine stronger than most women, forced to be that way because of her situation as the despised wife of the most powerful man in Russia who openly flaunts his mistress before the royal court. But Catherine does not allow the pity that so many must have viewed her with to undermine her confidence. See the rest of my review on my blog at <http://blog.lrwlee.com/2015/09/23/rev...>

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### **Jaden says**

I can't even tell you how much I am in love with this series!! Review will be up soon!

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### **Green.T. says**

### **Sherry Ficklin says**

This is my book, so of course I ADORE it. It is, unapologetically, mature in nature. Much more so than the first book, Queen of Someday. Our little Sophie is all grown up, and she is making some tough choices. Hope you will all love this finale as much as I do.  
Happy Reading!  
~S

