



# The Winter Palace: A Novel of Catherine the Great

*Eva Stachniak*

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**The Winter Palace: A Novel of Catherine the Great** Eva Stachniak

**From award-winning author Eva Stachniak comes this passionate novel that tells the epic story of Catherine the Great's improbable rise to power—as seen through the ever-watchful eyes of an all-but-invisible servant close to the throne.**

Her name is Barbara—in Russian, Varvara. Nimble-witted and attentive, she's allowed into the employ of the Empress Elizabeth, amid the glitter and cruelty of the world's most eminent court. Under the tutelage of Count Bestuzhev, Chancellor and spymaster, Varvara will be educated in skills from lock picking to lovemaking, learning above all else to listen—and to wait for opportunity. That opportunity arrives in a slender young princess from Zerbst named Sophie, a playful teenager destined to become the indomitable Catherine the Great. Sophie's destiny at court is to marry the Empress's nephew, but she has loftier, more dangerous ambitions. What Sophie needs is an insider at court, a loyal pair of eyes and ears who knows the traps, the conspiracies, and the treacheries that surround her. Varvara will become Sophie's confidante—and together the two young women will rise to the pinnacle of absolute power.

**“A majestic and splendidly written tale of pride, passion, intrigue, and deceit that is brought alive from the first page to the last.”—Rosalind Laker**

**“At the same time baroque and intimate, worldly and domestic, wildly strange and soulfully familiar, *The Winter Palace* offers a flickering glimpse of history through the gauze of deft entertainment.”—*The Washington Post***

**“A thrilling point of view . . . Readers are treated to a firsthand account of the young princess's slow ascent to the throne, a path deliciously strewn with discarded lovers and sanguine court intrigues.”—*Minneapolis Star-Tribune***

**“[A] brilliant, bold historical novel . . . This superb biographical epic proves the Tudors don't have a monopoly on marital scandal, royal intrigue, or feminine triumph.”—*Booklist* (starred review)**

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