



The Purple Shroud: A Novel of Empress Theodora

Stella Duffy

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Theodora: Actress, Empress, Whore, Stella Duffy's chronicle of this amazing woman's early years, delighted readers with its exquisite blend of historical detail and vivid storytelling. Now, *The Purple Shroud* chronicles Theodora at the height of her power, bringing the ancient world alive in another unforgettable, epic saga.

Theodora and Justinian have been crowned Emperor and Empress, but ruling an empire is no easy task. The two factions of Christianity are still battling for dogmatic supremacy, the Empire's borders are not secure, and Theodora worries about the ambitions of Justinian's two best generals. But the most pressing concern is close to home: Constantinople's two factions, the Blues and the Greens, are beginning to unite in their unhappiness with rising taxes. When that unhappiness spills over into all-out violence, thousands are killed (including someone very close to Theodora) and many of the City's landmarks are destroyed, including Theodora's beloved Hagia Sophia. In the aftermath of the riots, Theodora guides Justinian in gaining back the love and trust of the people, her unerring instinct for what the people want proving invaluable. Justinian promises to rebuild the Hagia Sophia to be even more spectacular than before. Theodora comes to realize that being the Augusta is simply another role she must play, though the stakes are much higher and there is no offstage. It's a role she was born to play.

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