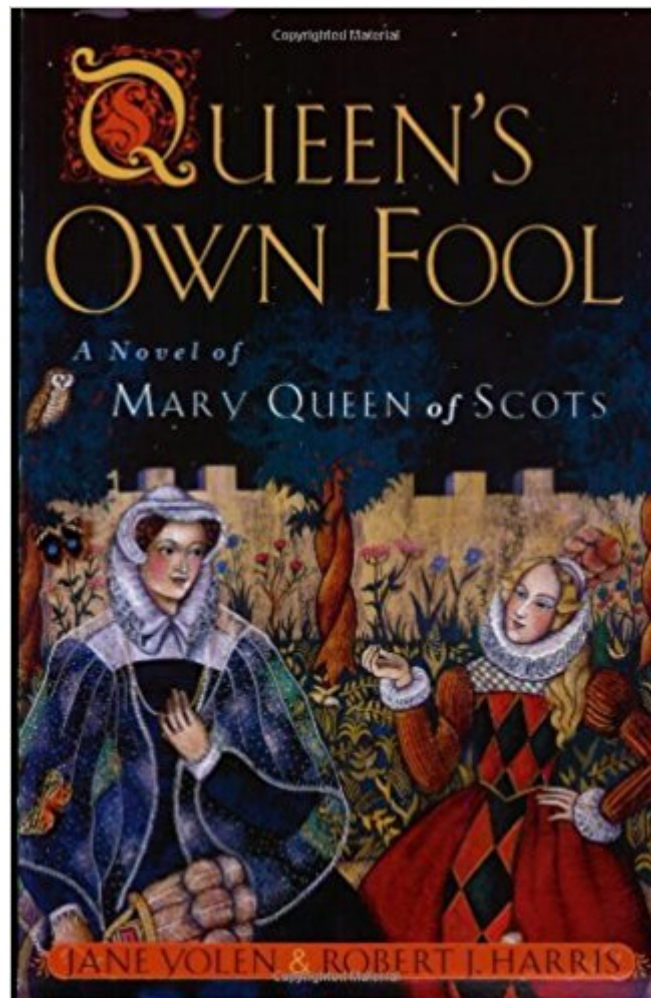


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# Queen's Own Fool (Stuart Quartet)



## Synopsis

Nicola is a resourceful jester to the court of Mary, Queen of Scots, and a most unlikely friend to the queen. As fate takes Mary from France to Scotland and into confrontations with rebellious lords and devious advisors, Nicola remains deep in the queen's circle, and later struggles to save her friend.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is FASCINATING. Literally from the very first page you realise that what you are looking at is not a painting but a tapestry, with depth and texture to fill up the world it depicts. The enigmatic character of Nicola Ambruzzi, La Jardiniere, one of Mary Queen of Scots' female jesters (this is historical fact), is beautifully and quite believably depicted from the opening page through all the wild swings of Mary's fate and the poignant ending. All of the main characters are rounded and complex - few writers have the ability to make characters so flawed, so interesting, and so very human. Poor doomed Queen Mary is made understandable and, indeed, irresistible, as seen through the eyes of one who loved her as her guiding light. Even Mary's disastrous marital decisions make a kind of sense in view of the character as seen by the eminently witty and very clever narrator Nicola, whom we grow to care a great deal for through the course of the novel, from meeting her first as a precocious child of eleven through the course of her life in the service of the Queen. I found the use of poetry written by Mary herself to introduce each new section very effective, and a fine tie with real history. This NOVEL is wonderfully evocative and well-researched, and as I live near Edinburgh I know many of the landmarks the authors refer to, which added a fun dimension to that section of the

book. Jane Yolen and her new partner-in-crime Robert Harris write together seamlessly, producing a new voice between them of great power and depth. There are scenes in this book - of Nicola hanging by a rope in Kirk O'Field while death waits before and behind - that will stay with me for a very long time, and that is one of the hallmarks of really fine writing. I can only hope that Yolen and Harris will continue this partnership, for if this is only their first outing, I cannot wait to read what the future holds!

Queen's Own Fool by Jane Yolen and Robert J. Harris Yolen, America's Hans Christian Andersen, with co-author Harris weave magic, mystery, and just the right amount of mayhem into this grand historical novel for young adults. This is the story of Mary Queen of Scots as seen through the eyes of her jester, or fool, an Italian orphan named Nicola. The young ladies have numerous adventures and escapades as they move from the sophisticated decadence of the French court to the coarse and rugged life of the royals and nobility in Scotland. The novel is based loosely on fact; Mary Stuart did indeed have a female fool. This rollicking read in the entirely engaging Yolen style, while not exactly like the Royal Diaries series, has all of fun and eloquent features of those novels. Jane Yolen's talent is simply immense.

I got this book and could hardly put it down for the next three days. "Queen's Own Fool" is about a young girl, Nicola, who just happens to meet Mary Stuart. Nicola is a traveling performer and then becomes Queen Mary's fool. Nicola follows the Queen everywhere, including into imprisonment. She is there when Francis, Mary's husband and good friend, dies to comfort her. She travels to Scotland and reminds the Queen that she is only mortal. Nicola befriends few people, but the ones she does meet prove to be more than true friends. This book had me laughing at nine-thirty at night and practically crying an hour later. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who is the least bit interested in Tudor England or Mary, Queen of Scots. I would also recommend "Mary, Queen of Scots, Queen Without A Country" too. This book may seem a bit large for some younger readers, but don't stress, it will end when it ends. When I finished, I practically started to cry because I thought of what happens to Nicola and the Queen. Knowing the end of Mary's life didn't help at all either. Read this book if you want to be touched deeply. Some might not like it, but I was searching for a good book about Mary, Queen of Scots, and this was just what I was looking for. This could be read by a reader as young as eight and up. I am not sure if younger readers would be able to understand some of the words or be able to read such a long book, but if you might read it to a young person, but explanation might be needed. I WILL NEVER BOOK THIS BOOK IN A BOX AND

THROW IT INTO THE BASEMENT, GARAGE, OR SHED. A MAGNIFICENT READ!!!!!!!!!!!!1

I've read historical fictions before, and Queen's Own Fool ranks on the top of the list. However biased or twisted some of the points in the novel are (Darnley's actions might be questionable), Ms. Yolen is able to create a great novel with these ingredients- a fascinating plot, vivid characterization, and a talent for creating atmosphere and foreshadowing. Nicola Ambruzzi, the narrator in the story, is an orphan who's been part of her abusing uncle's Troupe Brufort (a traveling circus). When Troupe Brufort was summoned to the French court, Nicola was discovered by Queen Mary (Queen of France) with her wit, truthfulness, and bold humor. Suddenly, Nicola is Queen Mary's personal fool- someone to open her eyes among lies and brighten her life. Nicola is also the Queen's advisor-guiding her through her first husband's death, Mary's decision in ruling Scotland, etc. Even when events take a very wrong turn, Nicola was always beside her Queen. Though I thought the ending rather left everything hanging, the rest of the story was well-written enough to keep me reading day in and day out.

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