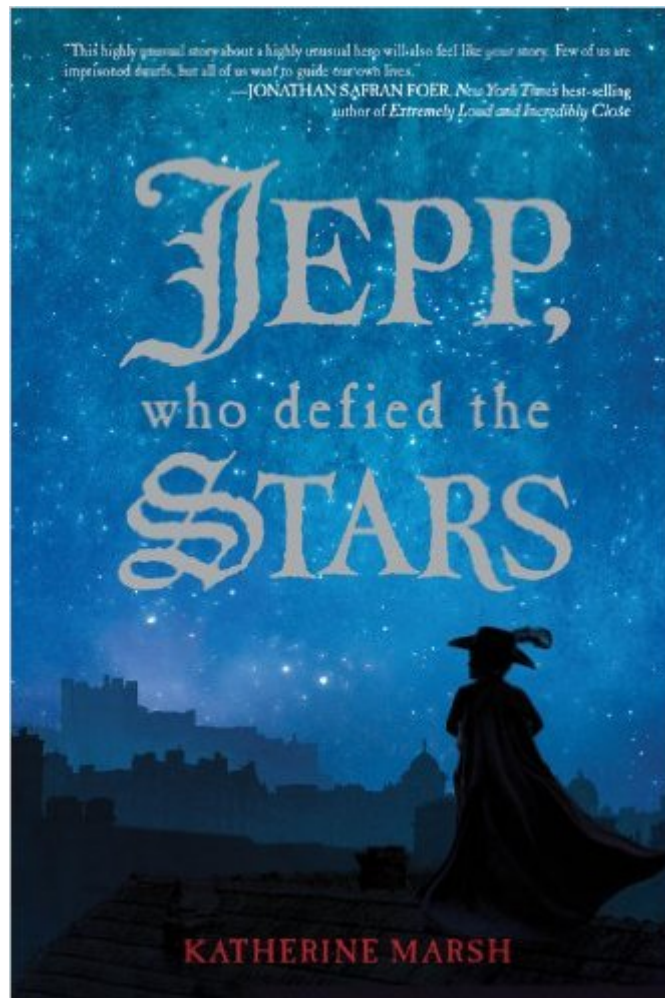


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# Jepp, Who Defied The Stars



## Synopsis

New York Times Notable Children's Books of 2012  
The Wall Street Journal Best Children's Books of 2012  
"This highly unusual story about a highly unusual hero will also feel like your story. Few of us are imprisoned dwarfs, but all of us want to guide our own lives."  
Jonathan Safran Foer, New York Times best-selling author of *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*  
"Rich, absorbing storytelling; a terrific read in every way."  
Nancy Werlin, National Book Award Finalist and author of *Impossible*  
"Delightful characters, unique setting, and lovely prose. This is historical fiction at its best!"  
Ruta Sepetys, New York Times best-selling author of *Between Shades of Gray*  
"Fate: Is it written in the stars from the moment we are born? Or is it a bendable thing that we can shape with our own hands?"  
Jepp of Astraveld needs to know. He left his countryside home on the empty promise of a stranger, only to become a captive in a luxurious prison: Coudenberg Palace, the royal court of the Spanish Infanta. Nobody warned Jepp that as a court dwarf, daily injustices would become his seemingly unshakable fate. If the humiliations were his alone, perhaps he could endure them; but it breaks Jepp's heart to see his friend Lia suffer. After Jepp and Lia attempt a daring escape from the palace, Jepp is imprisoned again, alone in a cage. Now, spirited across Europe in a kidnapper's carriage, Jepp fears where his unfortunate stars may lead him. But he can't even begin to imagine the brilliant and eccentric new master; a man devoted to uncovering the secrets of the stars; who awaits him. Or the girl who will help him mend his heart and unearth the long-buried secrets of his past. Masterfully written, grippingly paced, and inspired by real historical characters, Jepp, Who Defied the Stars is the tale of an extraordinary hero and his inspiring quest to become the master of his own destiny.

## Book Information

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Hardcover: 400 pages

Publisher: Hyperion Book CH (October 9, 2012)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (27 customer reviews)

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Historical Fiction > Renaissance #243 in [Books](#) > [Teens](#) > [Literature & Fiction](#) > [Social & Family Issues](#) > [Special Needs](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Rarely do I read a book that is written with such advanced skill as to evoke images of great poetry, while at the same time possessing a level of ease allowing even the most reluctant of reader to be swept into the story. All of this leaves only one word to describe Jepp, *Who Defied the Stars*. Magical. Now because you probably want more from a review than just one word I'll say a bit more about the book. *Jepp, Who Defied the Stars* is one of the best written books I've read in a long while. It is full of beautiful written scenery and descriptions, yet gripping. It is filled with three dimensional characters that you see the faults in, yet still understand their decisions, as they've been built as humans not stick figured characters. And it moves at a startlingly quick pace for a book that spends so much time describing the surrounding world and characters in such in-depth detail. Jepp is a fantastic character. He is smart, likable, and fallible. Of course this ability to make mistakes and be swayed by emotion is one of the reasons readers will love Jepp, as they will commiserate with his journey and growth, getting chocked up at the low points and feeling elated at the high. He is a well crafted character who is just a kid learning as he's forced into impossible situations away from home. Of course, besides making Jepp a wonderful character, Marsh also does a fantastic job recreating the world and situations of the 15 and 1600s. My personal favorite fact based location/character was Tycho and Uraniborg, which I found fascinating, reading as Tycho mapped the stars with nothing more than math they discovered and rudimentary materials. Absolutely fascinating. As you can probably tell I very much enjoyed *Jepp, Who Defied the Stars*.

I think I would read more historical fiction if more of it was like *JEPP, WHO DEFIED THE STARS*. But part of *JEPP, WHO DEFIED THE STARS* charm is that it is an unusual story, charming in its lack of concern with the commercial. Katherine Marsh has written an appealing bildungsroman that will stand out. Jepp is a dwarf living happily in his mother's inn, when a nobleman comes through and entices him to go and become a court dwarf for the Infanta. (Yes, I did have *The Decemberists'* "The Infanta" stuck in my head for the entire first half of the book.) At first I had trouble getting into the court scenes - they seemed like something from a bawdy farce without any bawdiness. Then I

realized there was plenty of sex going on but it wasn't outright stated because the book is in young and sheltered Jepp's point of view. The second half of the book brings in the astrology (and astronomy) mentioned in the title as Jepp moves on to the court of Tycho Brahe. In this half of the novel Jepp is more worldly, but still not the best at reading people. The historical detail of JEPP, WHO DEFIED THE STARS is fascinating. The novel moves from late-sixteenth century Holland to Spain to Denmark and features a wide range of real people. As the historical note at the end reveals, even Jepp was a real person. (Although very little is known about the real Jepp and Marsh's novel is obviously entirely fictional.) It's definitely a setting less explored than Elizabethan England or the Wild West. The novel rests on Jepp's shoulders and they are able to handle the burden. He suffers various indignities - less than many dwarves of the time - but he always knows that he deserves to be treated as an equal.

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