



## **Freedom's Sword**

*J.R. Tomlin*

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Before William Wallace... before Robert the Bruce... there was another Scottish hero... In 1296, newly knighted by the King of the Scots, Andrew de Moray fights to defend his country against the forces of the ruthless invader, King Edward Longshanks of England. After a bloody defeat in battle, he is dragged in chains to an English dungeon. Soon the young knight escapes. He returns to find Scotland under the heel of a conqueror and his betrothed sheltering in the hills of the Black Isle. Seizing his own castle, he raises the banner of Scottish freedom. Now he must lead the north of Scotland to rebellion in hope of defeating the English army sent to crush them.

## **Freedom's Sword Details**

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Author : J.R. Tomlin

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## From Reader Review Freedom's Sword for online ebook

### David King says

This book follows the life of Sir Andrew de Moray, who was one the Scottish leaders at the battle of Stirling Bridge alongside the more famous William Wallace. The story takes us from the initial English invasion of Scotland, through Andrew's incarceration in an English cell, before he returns and helps to build an army to re-take Scotland and defeat the English at Stirling. If you have seen the movie Braveheart or know your Scottish History then you should already know the basic premise to be honest.

It mixes historical fact and fiction well and is quite simply, a very enjoyable and entertaining read. It captures the feeling of the age and the location well, with the use of Scottish dialect throughout the novel being a nice touch. Andrew and the supporting characters are also all developed enough to make them feel real and believable.

Overall, the story is a great piece of historical fiction, it is entertaining and I don't think anyone who reads it will be disappointed.

A full review can be found at my blog : Books & Things - <http://killie-booktalk.blogspot.com/>

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### Maurice Alvarez says

Reading this book was a very unique experience. On the one hand, I really enjoyed the story. The characters are interesting. The setting is rich with such detail that I had no doubt Ms. Tomlin had not just done her research but had thoroughly enjoyed it. It's very obvious when an author has done research simply for the sake of showing it off to the reader versus when an author take the time to weave their knowledge delicately into the fabric of their tale. Ms. Tomlin definitely falls into the latter category with Freedom's Sword.

[\*\* Ammended below \*\* It was therefore very surprising to find a phenomenal number of typographical if not orthographical errors. Chapter breaks were occasionally abrupt leaving me thinking that perhaps I had a bad copy of the book in which pages were dropped. I contacted Ms. Tomlin about this and she was kind enough to reply that the abrupt breaks were intentional, although she has received similar feedback from others. While she did not comment on the other errors, I read an interview where Ms. Tomlin says that she had professional editing done as well as beta reader critiquing. This continues to make me believe that I must have an early purchase and that perhaps if I re-download the ebook, all the errors will be gone.

I found the story compelling enough to overlook the errors and finish reading it. I just couldn't get immersed in it, and so it took me longer than usual to read it. While I would like to give the book 4/5 stars, I would have to be sure that there are newer versions with the plethora of errors fixed. As it is, I can only give it 3 or 3.5 at best. If I hear from others that the errors are fixed, I will gladly raise my rating.]

\*\*\* 10-1-11 – I was pleased to find out that I indeed had the first release version of the ebook and that there have been several revisions afterward that have corrected the errors I first found. I have therefore raised my rating to 4 stars.

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## **Sheila says**

Four thousand mounted horsemen in the English army in the 13th century? It sounds a lot, and while J.R. Tomlin's novel, *Freedom's Sword*, rang true to the individuals, I found myself fact-checking and wondering at the events. To the author's credit, her novel is very well researched. I might choose to doubt the initial size of the army, and the love-making technique of the lord, but the art of war, of raising a rebellion, of dungeon, pike and sword, is very well-told. And the history of Scotland's fight against Edward Longshanks is filled with excitement, well-drawn characters, and plausible planning.

The story begins with King John Balliol's defeat at Dunbar. Young Andrew de Moray is knighted just before the battle and struggles to determine his allegiance afterwards. English brutality at Berwick and Andrew's cruel imprisonment result in a fierce determination to bow to no foreign ruler. The story, and the character, really come to life as Andrew patiently works towards his escape and begins to raise a Scottish army, taking, but never quite claiming his father's place.

The story is told in a mix of old language and names with occasional twists of the new. References to bodily functions switch from "making water" to "piss," and names sometimes retain, sometimes ignore the prefix "de," while cavalry is consistently referred to as "chivalry." The reminders of French influence on nation and title are certainly intriguing, and of mercenaries introducing new types of warfare to counter the old. For me, this story is at its strongest in descriptions of scenery and in well-orchestrated fight scenes. The author weaves convincing sensory detail into fast action without slowing anything down and catches the horror and desperation of warfare wonderfully. Andrew's character is filled with conflicting emotions, intelligence, honor and strength, and compels the sympathy of readers as well as the loyalty of followers.

Two other stories weave through the tale; that of Caitrina, a second daughter expecting to be sent to a convent while her sister marries; and that of Donnchadh, the young friend who aids her, and later fights at Andrew's side. Caitrina's skills in the household are well-told, though her love for Andrew seems overly quickly declared and consummated, justified, perhaps, by the times but still abrupt.

An exciting tale that would make a good movie, *Freedom's Sword* is a good read about a period in history that's often ignored, but filled with interest and intrigue.

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Disclosure: I was given an ecopy of this book by the author in exchange for an honest review.

## **George says**

Excellent read! Quite a story.

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## **William Chilton says**

### **Grabbed My Attention**

Enjoyed the read from start to finish. It peaked my interest in the history of Scotland's struggle for freedom

from a tyrant.

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### **Matt Kelland says**

I liked the first in the series (A Kingdom's Cost), and the day after I finished it, the second was a freebie on Amazon, so I grabbed it. Sadly, this one's nowhere near as good. The characters seems to be wandering round aimlessly, and I couldn't make myself care about them enough to finish.

The quality of the editing is, as before, dreadful. It's as if the book was dictated to a computer which regularly confuses oak and oat, to and too, their, they're and there, horse and house, and so on. I struggled with the previous one because I was enjoying the story. This one, however, was just plain unreadable.

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### **Barry says**

Excellent historical fiction. Battle scenes remind me of Bernard Cornwell's descriptive, colorful, and graphic writing.

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### **Rick Davis says**

This is a historical fiction book about Andrew de Moray, a fighter for Scottish independence who is less popularly well known than his contemporary William Wallace. As I started this book, I was thinking that it would be about a 4 star book. The author writes battle scenes very well, and the book starts off briskly. However as it goes on, especially after the halfway mark, the pacing becomes erratic, and the grammar and spelling starts to get sloppy. There really needed to be a couple more proofreaders here. Also the characters seem to become less defined and more blurry as the book goes along and the romance seems forced and awkward. It was as if the author started with a good idea, but got tired of writing it and rushed to the end.

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### **Elizabeth says**

#### **Interesting and Captivating Story**

I read the books about Robert The Bruce that this book is a prequel to, and I loved reading those as well as this one. I think to be brave back in those times was putting your life and everything you had in the line. I'm fascinated by what life must have been like for these people who were at constant battle for their land and their rights and I love reading about it in a novel type setting. The only bad part about this book was there were a bunch typos and errors. That aside, I don't know anyone who would be as fierce and brave as these people were, especially nowadays - I would love to see 45 try on armor! Haha!

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### **Peggy says**

Fans of historical fiction will love this accurately researched, well written novel.

I really enjoyed the entire story line, repeatedly racing ahead to see what happens next. Filled with heroic heroes and villainous villains, Tomlin paints a picture of rugged Scotland at one of its momentous turning points in history.

I'm already looking forward to the next book.

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### **Farzana says**

Every scot should know the name of Andrew De Moray, the unsung hero who begun the fight for our independence!

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### **Linda says**

FREEDOM'S SWORD, free ebook, was a wonderful read! This part of history I've not read much. The book is a prequel to the BLACK DOUGLAS TRILOGY regarding Scotland's wars for independence from England. The mechanics of good writing were good taking into account that ereaders seem prone to a glitch or two. Any such errors did not affect my enjoyment of this book.

From this book I felt the heart of Scotland's people. Good books make readers feel the books' subjects regardless of what those feelings may be. Andrew of Moray, a fighter for Scotland's independence, died as a result of injuries at the Battle of Stirling Bridge. The author wrote that Andrew knew the Scots won the battle, and I hope that is true. He fought along side Robert the Bruce and William Wallace, but Andrew created the remarkable strategy of the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

The author created the love interest between Andrew and a red headed girl. Andrew died before the birth of their child and his heir.

When the book opens, Andrew has been thrown into a dungeon by the English. How he kept his sanity in the eternal dark of the dungeon drew me in and had me hooked before I knew it. He counted the days by beans from his suppers. He counted daylight and dark by the number of meals he was given each day. He learned what he could not see through the sense of touch. He felt every square space of the dungeon, he had nothing else to do. Through these perceptions, he kept his sanity and made his escape. Again, I felt as if I were in the dungeon. Had I been, I would have given way to madness.

Dear Author, it is obvious that I hold your work in high esteem. You gave just the right amount of attention to everything that had to be said. Well done, Ms. Tomlin.

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### **Jill says**

The price of Scotland's freedom from the King of England is paid for with blood, sweat and tears of those willing to sacrifice everything for love of country.

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This is a fast paced adventure story that tells the struggle of those willing to fight to free Scotland from the rule of the King of England in the 13th century. Andrew de Moray is forced to fight for his life and country after he and other key players in the Scottish royalty and military are killed or taken prisoner fighting the English army. Caitrina, who ends up marrying Moray, provides a tender and humanizing balance to the violence of war. This fast paced tale includes descriptions and depth of character that make the readers believe that they are witnessing history as it is happening.

Author J.R. Tomlin researched culture, locations, language and participants to accurately portray events in this well written historical docudrama. The inclusion of strong male and female characters allowed the author to present the struggle for freedom and the personal toll that war in the middle ages had on Scotland's population.

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### **Maria says**

Did you like Braveheart? Are you a fan of history? Love everything Scottish? Then this is the book for you. Freedom's Sword is a fictionalized account of the real life events of the Scottish fight against the British invaders under King Edward Longshanks in the 13th century.

Andrew de Moray is knighted by King John Balliol just before their defeat at Dunbar in 1296. De Moray is dragged in chains to an English dungeon, which he manages to escape. He returns to Scotland to find it under British control. De Moray musters support and leads northern Scotland in rebellion.

I always enjoy good historical fiction, but I was a little worried this book would be too full of battles and blood and guts. Not so! J.R. Tomlin manages to balance all the fighting and political drama with glimpses of personality and even a romance for Moray. She gives life to historical figures that normally lie flat on the textbook page.

It's obvious that J.R. Tomlin does extensive research for her novels. However, I never felt like I was reading a history book. The novel flows well and the action keeps you turning the pages. This is definitely a book you should give a try!

\*Disclaimer: I received this book for free from the author through LibraryThing. I was not required to write a positive review.

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### **J. Ewbank says**

This book by Tomlin is an enjoyable one. It is a piece of Scottish history. The characters are well developed and you feel for and with them. The plot naturally has to do with history but it is well done so you feel a part of it. Enjoyable and a good read.

J. Robert Ewbank author "John Wesley, Natural Man, and the 'Isms'"

