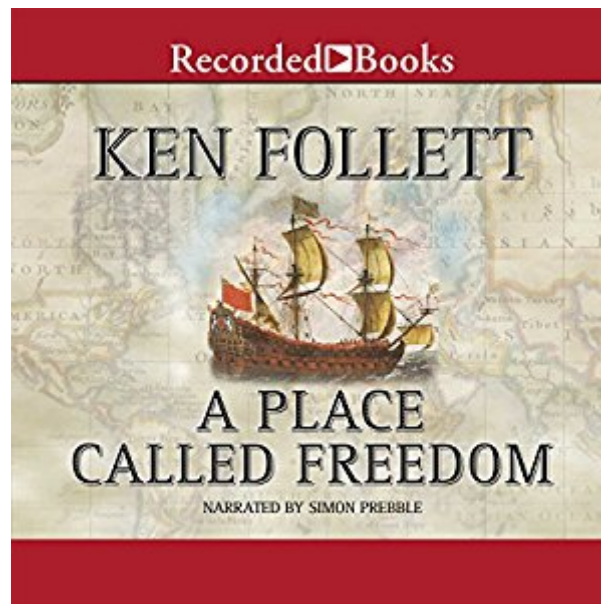


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# A Place Called Freedom



## Synopsis

Larger-than-life characters and an epic plot brimming with the energy of his internationally acclaimed thrillers make Ken Follett's *A Place Called Freedom* an experience not to be missed. This lush novel, set in 1766 England and America, evokes an era ripe with riot and revolution, from the teeming streets of London to the sprawling grounds of a Virginia plantation. Mack McAsh burns with the desire to escape his life of slavery in Scottish coal mines while Lizzie Hallim is desperate to shed a life of sheltered subjugation to her spineless husband. United in America, their only chance for freedom lies beyond the Western frontier - if they're brave enough to take it. Spanning two continents and bringing together an unforgettable cast of heroes, villains, and rebels, *A Place Called Freedom* is a magnificent epic of love, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Narrator Simon Prebble's masterful use of voice and pacing captures a vivid cast of characters and the powerful destiny that shapes their lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What a very fine writer Ken Follett is! Having read "The eye of the needle" many years ago, and more recently, "Pillars of the earth" and enjoyed them both very much, I just finished reading "A place called freedom". It took only 2 days as I couldn't put it down and for 2 nights, read into the small hours. An indentured Scottish coal miner, Mack McAsh, tries to force the hand of the mine owner into treating the down trodden miners with compassion and fairness. He is railroaded by the system and transported as a convict to Virginia. This is a tale of a man's inhuman treatment and his

fight for freedom in the New World. It's a great read, well written, exciting and unputdownable. It could well have been made into an actioner movie

This book was a change of pace for Ken Follett who has carried out some outstanding research into conditions in late 18th century Scotland, England, and the American colonies. The main character, who's ambition is the freedom to go his own way, comes up against the class structure of the times and the limited rights of the working man. This develops into a superb tale as the hero encounters first the conditions of servitude and slavery in Scotland, then the conditions of repression in England, and finally the conditions of bondage in Virginia. While it is historical fiction, the book is especially recommended for readers delving into conditions that brought people to the American colonies. Readers should be forewarned that the book has significant sexual content and some violence that would give it at best a PG-13 rating.

I am a bit disappointed in the author after reading this book. I think he was trying to build on the success that he had with *Pillars of the Earth* but this book falls far short of that classic. This book is more like a [\$\$\$] mass-market teen-age Romance novel. There is nothing new here except maybe the name, the plot is so predictable it is sad coming from such a good author. I knew how this book was going to end before it even started. He has written much better books, I would stay away from this book unless you are looking for a long love story.

I'll tell you upfront that this is one of my favorite books. You can tell from the reviews that *A Place Called Freedom* results in either love or hate, so let me tell you why I love it. First, the story is like something from a Thomas Hardy or Charles Dickens novel. Some reviewers have called it formulaic, corny, or contrived. Sure, like a "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*" or "*A Tale of Two Cities*" it jerks the characters through quite a life of suffering and disappointments, but you will care about these characters and cheer them on in their epic journey to find freedom and each other. There is a romantic element to the story, for sure, but it's not Harlequin in nature and it's not as sappy as much of the historical fiction out there. Second, the writing is easy and enjoyable to read, even though it uses dialect for the Scottish characters. Unlike Hardy and Dickens, Follett is neither laborious in his detail nor overly wordy. This book is a quick read and full of memorable imagery. Third, and I'm sure somebody will ding me for saying this, you really get a feeling for the American experience—for why people came to this country, for how unprepared they were for the reality of being here back when people were trying to impose the old-world class system on an untamed country full of possibilities,

for how determination, hard work, and devotion were the true mark of class. *A Place Called Freedom* is more period like *A Dangerous Fortune*, although not quite as dark as that book. If your first Ken Follett books were about the war and espionage, then you might not like *A Place Called Freedom* because it is a different type of book for Follett. For those people, I'd recommend *Jackdaws* or *The Key to Rebecca*. But, if you like historical fiction, the stories of Hardy and Dickens, or the romantic feeling of adventure in Follett's *Hornet Flight*, you should give *A Place Called Freedom* a try.

This is the second Follett book I've read, the first being *Pillars of the Earth*. Actually, this is only the third review I've written out of the 60 to 70 books I've read over the past couple years but I find myself wanting to express my opinions more and more when I get done with a great read and maybe helping people get exposed to great books they otherwise wouldn't have tried or known about. While not as wonderful as *Pillars of the Earth* (I still can't get that book out of my head...definitely one of the best if not THE best I've ever read), this is still a great book. The book has rapid fire pacing but doesn't sacrifice on the details and characterization that suck you into the book. And that's what the focal point of the book is, the characters. You feel their pain, their joy, every emotion that they're going through. From Scotland, to London, to Virginia, the reader is taken on a journey of treachery, deceit, love, loss and triumph. You feel as if you can reach out and touch the characters. Follett is fast becoming one of my favorite authors and he's edging his way to the top of the list. You won't want to stop reading this book. I could have easily read it in a day but I decided to stretch it out over a couple days and let each section I read sink in. I don't think I've encountered another author who can weave romance, violence, humor, action and great research as effectively as Ken Follett and this book does all that.

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