

3 The King of Scots

- A.** Read the text, focusing on Robert the Bruce and Laird Niall Campbell's feelings.
B. Pick out the elements related to fright and brutality. What atmosphere is created by the author?
C. Is Robert the Bruce's character a true leader? Justify.

1296, Northern Scotland. Fierce Scottish warrior Robert the Bruce, the rightful heir to the Scottish throne, would do anything to free his country from English rule and claim the throne.

Revolt had its own scent. It was one of burning wood and flesh, fetid wounds and rancid sweat, and it lay heavy in the air. Robert the Bruce, Earl of Carrick, smelled it with every breath he took.

- ⁵ "Rebellion surrounds us," Laird¹ Niall Campbell said, pride ringing in his voice.

Bright-orange flames leaped into the sky from the destroyed guard towers that flanked the raised drawbridge² to Andrew Moray's castle, which Robert had been commanded to invade.

- ¹⁰ Commanded. The word reverberated in his head, making his temples throb³. He glanced to his friend who sat mounted beside him.

"We will be hunted," Robert added.

"Let them try to catch us," Niall said with a smirk. "The devil English king will nae stop until he sits on the throne of Scotland. He will kill all who continue to rebel, and that includes our people. I'd rather be hunted than aligned with King Edward."

"We will be outlaws, enemies of Edward."

- ²⁰ "Shut up, Robbie," Niall growled, using the nickname only those close to him dared use. "Quit trying to dissuade me. Ye need me."

"I do, but yer wife and yer daughter—"

"My wife will dance a jig when she hears we've taken up arms with our countrymen [...]. Tell me what ye want me to do."

- ²⁵ Robert contemplated that very question. He needed to be canny⁴ and proceed in the best way to protect his men. The wind blew from the west, sending billows of white smoke and heat toward them and de Burgh – the king's closest friend and advisor – who was mounted on his steed⁵,



Robert the Bruce statue and William Wallace Monument from Stirling Castle

some thirty paces ahead of them. De Burgh looked away, but Robert faced the wind. He, too, would suffer every hardship he demanded his men to endure, and most of the men who had ridden here on his command were in the path of the smoke. It burned his throat, nose, and eyes, making breathing nearly impossible.

Death by fire would be an awful way to die.

1 Lord • 2 pont-levis • 3 palpiter • 4 clever • 5 war horse

Outlaw King
 (Renegade Scots Book 1),
 Julie Johnstone, 2018



YOUR TURN! 4 You are the writer!

What happens next? Imagine a continuation to the text above (in 100-150 words).

HELP!

Nouns

- (bad) omen = (bad) sign

Adjectives

- discouraged
- strong-willed = determined
- close-at-hand = imminent