

When Swords Heal

A Screenplay by J. P. Johnston

Author: J.P. Johnston,
1227 Highway 24 27 W
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Copyright holder: United
States Copyright Office Genre:
Drama
Predicted rating: PG-13 due to
violence
Estimated budget: \$35 millions



Father is pitted against son and warrior against lover in the most spectacular come-from-behind victory in history, when the peasants of Magdeburg, Germany defeated the Roman Empire for faith and freedom.

With the death of Martin Luther, the conscience of Germany lies upon the edge of a Roman sword. The Emperor Charles the Fifth attempts to stamp out the Reformation through force. The elders of the German city of Magdeburg – Stefan von Adel being one of the most passionate of them – insist that the City Council protect freedom of conscience from tyrannical intrusion. Pastor Stefan is responsible for defending the city's wall in the event of an Imperial siege, which every day seems more inevitable.

The conflict becomes personal for Stefan when his oldest son Martin abandons Magdeburg to pursue a life, as he informs his broken-hearted father, "on the right side of these walls." Martin promises his lovestruck fiancé, Landina, to ask her father for permission to marry sooner than planned.

When he arrives at his fiancé's home outside the city walls, he discovers that mercenaries under the authority of the Emperor have struck at their village. Her brother and parents have been killed, and she has been kidnapped for a soldiers' brothel. Martin joins the military force of Maurice, the Duke of Saxony, who remains loyal to the Emperor, for an opportunity to liberate her from her captors. He frees her but cannot escape his commitment to military service to Maurice. As a gifted marksman and the only soldier in Maurice's army who hails from Magdeburg, Martin rises in prominence in Maurice's council.

The cities of Germany soon face a difficult choice: resist the Emperor and face invasion or submit to the Imperial proposal to compromise their beliefs and traditions and survive. The Emperor's

forces soon convert most of the Protestant cities of Germany into submissive allies. The printing presses of Magdeburg churn out tracts and pamphlets that are dispersed all over Germany, making it difficult for the Emperor's propagandists to recruit soldiers and raise taxes for the siege.

Landina, long bereft of any contact from Martin, assumes he has died in combat or abandoned her love altogether. She develops affection for Martin's brother Wilhelm, who excels as an archer in the Madgeburg militia.

The battle for the soul of Germany inevitably comes to the gates of the last city in Germany to resist – Magdeburg.

To Stefan von Adel's horror, his son Martin is among the warriors charging the city's walls. Must he slay his son for the Gospel?

Must Landina be forced to choose between the man she passionately loves who has become her enemy, or his brother she cherishes who has become her friend?

The siege of Magdeburg is one of the most spectacular come-from-behind victories in history. Starving and outnumbered underdogs defeat the most powerful military might in the world for faith and freedom.

This screenplay “When Swords Heal” has honorably been placed in the historical museum in the city of Magdeburg along with the book that inspired it, *The Magdeburg Confession*.

About the Author

J. P. Johnston is a retired family practice physician in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. He has ten children, has written ten novels, and wrote and produced "The Reliant" which came to theaters in 2019 and garnished 26 First Place film festival awards from secular and faith-based festivals. His screenplay "Oberlin" is in pre-production and has won 30 screenplay awards.

