

**Braveheart** is a five time Academy Award winning historical drama American motion picture released in 1995, produced and directed by Mel Gibson, and adapted from a screenplay by Randall Wallace.

The film is loosely based upon the fables and legends surrounding the life of the Scottish national hero William Wallace

**Plot:** In 1280 A.D. King Edward I "*Longshanks*" has annexed Scotland as part of England, and calls for talks of truce [:våbenstilstand], but instead sets a trap for the nobles in attendance. Malcolm Wallace and his two sons, John and William, arrive late, coming upon the bodies of nobles hung from the rafters. This event haunts young William for the rest of his life. The next day his father and brother are killed, and William leaves Scotland, promised that if he first become educated, his uncle, Argyle, will in return train him to fight.

Many years later, the Scots continue to live under the cruel laws of Edward I. Concerned that the French may ally themselves [:gå I forbund med] with the still rebellious Scots, he marries off his son, Prince Edward II, to Princess Isabelle, daughter of the King of France, who is at war with England [*this, however, is not until 1308, eg 3 years after the real Wallace's death*]. Wallace returns to Scotland, intent on living as a farmer and avoiding involvement in the still-simmering Scottish rebellion.

After Wallace attacks some English soldiers attempting to rape Murrin, Wallace's true love, she is executed by the local Sheriff. Wallace returns, presumably to surrender but instead ruthlessly attacks the soldiers. Inspired by his defiance, the other Scots join William and easily overrun the garrison.

News of the rebellion spreads quickly, and hundreds of Scots from the surrounding regions volunteer to join Wallace's militia. Launching successful attacks throughout the Highlands, he draws new recruits with each victory. The Scottish nobles remain divided about participating in the growing rebellion. Among the nobles is Robert the Bruce, (or simply "the Bruce"), considered the rightful heir [:arving] to the Scottish throne (though opposed by other nobles). The Bruce's father is thought to be in France, but in reality is in hiding and suffering from leprosy [:spedalskhed], and continues to counsel [:rådgive] his son on the best way to one day rule Scotland.

Though they win further skirmishes, Wallace and his lieutenants realize it is only a matter of time before the English send a fully-equipped army to confront them. Shortly thereafter, an English army masses near the village of Stirling. News of an impending full-scale war spreads and Scots from the Highlands come to join Wallace by the thousands.

In a meeting between the English and Scots, Wallace ignores the promise of lands and title and deliberately provokes the English envoy [:udsending] who abruptly leaves. The Scottish army is frightened by the disciplined English forces that seemingly outmatch them, but Wallace's speech inspires them. The roused Scottish soldiers taunt and jeer the English army across the battle plain. Insulted by Wallace's behavior, the English commander sends in his full cavalry in attack, but Wallace's schiltrons utterly decimates them. The panicked English commander then sends his full ground forces in after them, but they are destroyed. Following the battle, Wallace is knighted by the nobles, but still refuses to take orders from them. Wallace's army then invades England to remove the English threat once and for all. The nobles, including the Bruce, refuse to support him, but the Scottish army is loyal to Wallace and they capture the northern English city of York, killing the Duke of York.

Returning from France, Longshanks confronts his son over the annihilation of the English northern army and the sacking of York. Fearful of a Scottish attack on lower England, Longshanks decides to stall for time by pressing for a truce. As emissary, he sends Princess Isabelle to a peace conference near York.

Returning to court, Isabelle is horrified to learn that Longshanks has used the truce to set a trap for Wallace and his army, and secretly warns Wallace. As the battle ensues, Wallace's clever tactics again neutralize the English numerical advantage; however, at a critical moment both Lochlan and Mornay abandon Wallace and his men, revealed to have been bribed by the English to betray him. Wallace's army is almost wiped out, and Wallace himself is injured.

Despite his wounds, he pursues and attacks a helmed English knight protecting Longshanks' retiring train. Removing the knight's helmet to cut his throat, Wallace discovers the knight is the Bruce himself. Shattered by this betrayal, Wallace lays down to die or be captured.

Wallace goes into hiding, fighting a guerrilla war against England, personally executing Moray and Lochlan for their betrayals. To break the stalemate, the nobles offer Wallace a chance for them to all unite to fight the English, but Wallace's men suspect a trap, Wallace agrees when the Bruce pledges his personal support and rides out to meet him. Wallace walks into a trap set by the other English lords and the Bruce's father and is roughly taken into custody by the English.

In London, Wallace is tried before the English magistrates and found guilty of treason. He is given the choice of admitting his guilt and being executed quickly or facing horrific torture. Wallace refuses, and is led away.

Wallace is brutally tortured to death in a London square, being alternately hung and racked and finally eviscerated [ : skære op] alive. Despite the agony, he refuses to declare his guilt.

Some time after Wallace's beheading, Robert the Bruce is standing before the remaining Scottish army, facing a ceremonial line of English troops near Bannockburn. He has arrived to pay tribute to the English, as it becomes clear that he has submitted to their rule and that he will be a puppet ruler – but Robert asks that those troops who once bled for Wallace to now bleed with him. Cheering Wallace's name, the Bruce and the Scots charge the surprised English lines. The movie ends with Wallace's voice narrating that the outnumbered Scots defeated the English that day and won their freedom.

### **Cultural effects**

The film is credited by some political commentators as having played a significant role in affecting the Scottish political landscape in the mid to late 1990s.[1]

Despite the film's many historical inaccuracies, its portrayal of the English occupation of Scotland (combined with the unpopularity of Conservative government policy in Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s) contributed to an upsurge in Scottish nationalist sentiment in the years leading up to the [General Election of 1997](#) [*in May, where the Labour Party, led by Tony Blair, defeated the Tories, the Conservative Party; in September the Scots voted for devolution [ :decentralising] and the creation of a Scottish parliament*].

### **Historical inaccuracy**

- *Braveheart's* plot includes an affair between William Wallace and the Princess Isabelle, based upon Isabella of France. The film implies she is pregnant at the time of Wallace's execution, carrying the future Edward III of England. Historically, the real Isabella was a child of nine still living in France at this time, meaning she never met Wallace, and furthermore, was never a Princess of Wales, as she married Edward II after he became king - four years after Wallace's death.
- The opening narration continues "and the King of England... claimed the throne of Scotland for himself". Edward I never claimed the kingship of Scotland: he claimed lordship over it, but after the deposition of John Balliol in 1296 did not recognise its status as a kingdom.
- The film depicts Edward I dying at the same time as Wallace was executed. In fact, Wallace's execution took place in 1305 in Westminster, and King Edward died in 1307, two years later, en route to put down a fresh rebellion of the Scots led by Robert the Bruce.
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