



0. Braveheart - Story Preface

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Photograph of the statue of William Wallace at Edinburgh Castle, Edinburgh Scotland. Image online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

"Pro libertate"
("FOR FREEDOM")

Wallace Family Motto
Scotland, Late 1200s

"In the month of May (1297) the perfidious race of Scots began to rebel." So says a contemporary English monastic chronicler, Walter of Hemingborough. And so begins our story of William Wallace, brilliantly played by Mel Gibson in the Academy Award-winning movie, "*Braveheart*."

It was a difficult time for the people of Scotland. Edward I (commonly called "Longshanks") was, at 35 years, crowned king of England at Westminster Abbey. This tall, powerful military genius had subjected Wales after fierce fighting. Edward's castles were everywhere. The Welsh were now in Edward's hands, and those hands were beginning to tighten around Scotland's throat.

Always asserting they were a free and independent people, the Scots had been crushed by Edward's military might in 1296. The Scottish "king" (John Balliol) had surrendered to the English.

The Scots were outraged. They believed Longshanks (depicted in the Wriothesley Manuscript, with Llewelyn of Wales on the right and Alexander of Scotland on the left before Wales and Scotland were conquered) would treat them as he was treating the Welsh.

Equally bad, the Scots were unmercifully taxed by Edward's treasurer in Scotland (Earl Cressingham). The Scottish people needed a hero to believe in so they could once again believe in themselves.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Braveheart

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