

0. THE MAKINGS OF A HERO - Story Preface

**1. THE MAKINGS OF A HERO**

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At first blush, William Wallace would have been an unlikely candidate for "hero."

Born in Elderslie, in approximately 1272, the second son of a minor Scottish laird (lord), William was bound for the church. That's the path most second sons took in 13th century Scotland. Family wealth, titles and land were always inherited by first-born sons. William's brother Malcolm, named for their father, would inherit what little wealth the Wallace family had. William would be a priest.

On closer examination, though, William Wallace *had* the early makings of a hero. At a time when most men stood 5 feet, Wallace was 6'7". By the time he was 20, English invaders had already killed the father and older brother he adored. While at Cambuskenneth Abbey, studying with his uncle, William learned about the "idea" of freedom in a poem that today is part of the Wallace monument in Stirling, Scotland:

*Freedom is best I tell thee  
Of all things to be won  
Then never live within the bond  
Of slavery my son*

English efforts to forever control the region would not go unchecked in Scotland as rage built within the young Wallace. Longshanks had required a mere six years to crush Wales. Wallace would see to it that his Scotland would not be completely subjected as Wales had been. But his efforts would result in a trial that was a gross judicial sham. And in his efforts to "legally" crush Wallace, Edward I created a Scottish martyr whose heroism is still honored 700 years later.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-MAKINGS-OF-A-HERO-Braveheart)

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## Map of Wales

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