

Braveheart

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Braveheart is a 1995 epic historical drama film directed by and starring Mel Gibson. Gibson portrays William Wallace, a 13th-century Scottish warrior who led the Scots in the First War of Scottish Independence against King Edward I of England. The story was written for the screen and then as a novel by Randall Wallace.

The film won five Academy Awards at the 68th Academy Awards, including the awards for Best Picture and Best Director, and was nominated for an additional five.

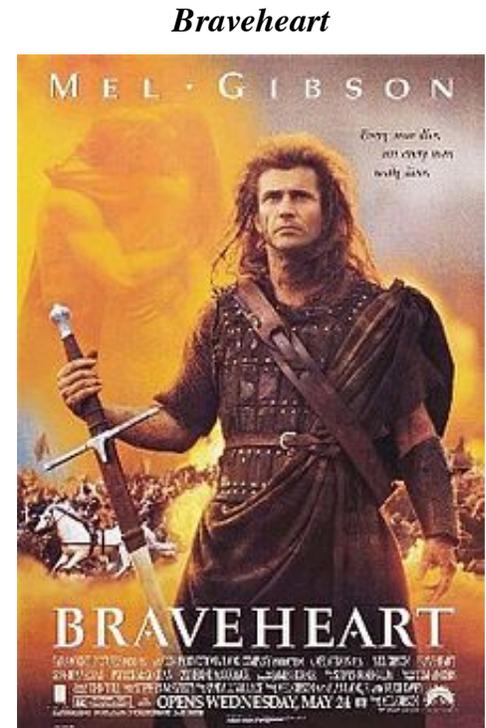
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Plot

In 1280, after several years of political unrest, Scotland is invaded and conquered by King Edward I of England (called "Longshanks" for his height) (Patrick McGoohan).

Young William Wallace



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Mel Gibson
Produced by	Mel Gibson Alan Ladd, Jr. Bruce Davey Stephen McEveety
Written by	Randall Wallace
Narrated by	Angus Macfadyen Mel Gibson
Starring	Mel Gibson Sophie Marceau Patrick McGoohan Angus Macfadyen Brendan Gleeson Catherine McCormack
Music by	James Horner
Cinematography	John Toll
Editing by	Steven Rosenblum
Studio	Icon Productions The Ladd Company

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Wallace) witnesses the treachery of Longshanks, survives the death of his father and brother, and is taken abroad by his uncle where he is educated. Years later, Longshanks grants his noblemen land and privileges in Scotland, including *Primae Noctis*, the right of the lord to take a newly married Scottish woman into his bed for sexual liberties on her wedding night. When he returns home, Wallace (Mel Gibson) falls in love with his childhood sweetheart, Murron MacClannough (Catherine McCormack), and they marry in secret so that she does not have to spend a night in the bed of the English lord.

When an English soldier tries to rape Murron, Wallace fights off several soldiers and the two attempt to flee. But Murron is captured and publicly executed by having her throat slit by the sheriff, who proclaims "an assault on the King's soldiers is the same as an assault on the King himself." In retribution, Wallace and several villagers slaughter the English garrison and execute the sheriff. In addition, he goes to York, allows one of the villagers to avenge his wife's sexual shaming from an English lord, and sends the occupying English garrison back to England. This enrages Longshanks, who confronts his son Edward about this: he then orders his son to stop Wallace by any means necessary. He also knows his son has a bisexual relationship going with his French wife Isabella and another man: momentarily ignoring this, Longshanks tells Edward "One day you will be a king: at least try to act like one."

Wallace rebels against the English, and as his legend spreads, hundreds of Scots from the surrounding clans join him. Wallace leads his army to victory at the Battle of Stirling and then sacks the city of York. All the while, Wallace seeks the assistance of Robert the Bruce (Angus Macfadyen), the son of nobleman Robert the Elder and a contender for the Scottish crown. Despite his growing admiration for Wallace and his cause, Robert is dominated by his father, who wishes to secure the throne for his son by submitting to the English.

Longshanks, worried by the threat of the rebellion, sends the wife of his son Edward, the French princess Isabella (Sophie Marceau), to try to negotiate with Wallace in hopes that Wallace kills her in order to draw the French king to declare war on Wallace in revenge. Wallace refuses the bribe sent with Isabella by Longshanks, but after meeting him in person, Isabella becomes enamored with him. Meanwhile, Longshanks prepares an army to invade Scotland.

Warned of the coming invasion by Isabella, Wallace implores the Scottish nobility, who are more concerned with their own welfare, that immediate action is needed to counter the threat and to take back the country. Leading the English army himself, Longshanks confronts the Scots at the Battle of Falkirk where noblemen Lochlan and Mornay betray Wallace. The Scots lose the battle, Wallace is wounded, and Hamish's father is fatally wounded and dies after the battle. As he charges toward the departing Longshanks on horseback, Wallace is intercepted by one of the king's lancers, who turns out to be Robert the Bruce. Remorseful, Bruce gets Wallace to safety before the English can capture him. Wallace kills Mornay and Lochlan for their betrayal, avoids assassination attempts, and wages a protracted guerrilla war against the English.

Robert the Bruce, intending to join Wallace and commit troops to the war, sets up a meeting with him in Edinburgh where Robert's father has conspired with other nobles to capture and hand over Wallace to the English. Learning of his treachery, Robert the Bruce disowns his father. Following a tryst with Wallace, Isabella exacts revenge on the now terminally ill Longshanks by telling him she is pregnant with Wallace's child, intent on ending Longshank's line and ruling in his son's place.

Distributed by	Paramount Pictures (USA & Canada) 20th Century Fox (International)
Release date(s)	24 May 1995
Running time	177 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$53,000,000
Box office	\$210,409,945

In London, Wallace is brought before an English magistrate, tried for high treason, and condemned to public torture and beheading. Even whilst being hanged, drawn and quartered, Wallace refuses to beg for mercy and submit to the king. As cries for mercy come from the watching crowd, the magistrate offers him one final chance. Wallace instead shouts the word "Freedom!" Just before the axe falls, Wallace sees a vision of Murrin in the crowd smiling at him.

Years after Wallace's death, Robert the Bruce, now Scotland's king, leads a Scottish army before a ceremonial line of English troops on the fields of Bannockburn where he is to formally accept English rule. As he begins to ride toward the English, he stops and turns back to his troops. Invoking Wallace's memory, he implores them to fight with him as they did with Wallace. He then leads his army into battle against the stunned English, winning the Scots their freedom.

Cast

- Mel Gibson as William Wallace
- Patrick McGoohan as King Edward I of England
- Angus Macfadyen as Robert the Bruce
- Brendan Gleeson as Hamish Campbell
- Sophie Marceau as Princess Isabella of France
- Peter Hanly as Prince Edward, Prince of Wales
- Ian Bannen as the elder Robert the Bruce
- James Cosmo as Campbell the Elder
- Catherine McCormack as Murrin MacClannough
- David O'Hara as Stephen
- Brian Cox as Argyle Wallace
- James Robinston as young William Wallace

Production

Gibson's production company, Icon Productions had difficulty raising enough money even if he were to star in the film. Warner Bros. was willing to fund the project on the condition that Gibson sign for another *Lethal Weapon* sequel, which he refused. Paramount Pictures only agreed to American and Canadian distribution of *Braveheart* after 20th Century Fox partnered for international rights.^[1]

While the crew spent six weeks shooting on location in Scotland, the major battle scenes were shot in the Republic of Ireland using members of the Irish Army Reserve as extras. To lower costs, Gibson had the same extras portray both armies. The opposing armies are made up of reservists, up to 1,600 in some scenes, who had been given permission to grow beards and swapped their drab uniforms for medieval garb.^[2]

According to Gibson, he was inspired by the big screen epics he had loved as a child, such as Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* and William Wyler's *The Big Country*.

The film was shot in the anamorphic format with Panavision C- and E-Series lenses.^[3]

Gibson toned down the film's battle scenes to avoid an NC-17 rating from the MPAA, with the final version being rated R for "brutal medieval warfare."^[4]

In addition to English being the film's primary language, French, Latin, and Scottish Gaelic are also spoken.

Release and reception

Box office

On its opening weekend, *Braveheart* grossed \$9,938,276 in the United States and \$75.6 million in its box office run in the U.S. and Canada.^[5] Worldwide, the film grossed \$210,409,945 and was the eighteenth highest-grossing film of 1995.^[5]

Reviews

Braveheart met with generally positive reviews. Review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes gave the film a score of 80% with an average score of 7/10. The film's depiction of the Battle of Stirling Bridge was listed by CNN as one of the best battles in cinema history.^[6]

However, in a 2005 poll by British film magazine *Empire*, *Braveheart* was No. 1 on their list of "The Top 10 Worst Best Pictures".^[7] Scottish actor and comedian Billy Connolly infamously dismissed *Braveheart* as "a piece of pure Australian shite".^[8]

Effect on tourism

In 1996, the year after the film was released, the annual three-day "Braveheart Conference" at Stirling Castle attracted fans of *Braveheart*, increasing the conference's attendance to 167,000 from 66,000 in the previous year.^[9] In the following year, research on visitors to the Stirling area indicated that 55% of the visitors had seen *Braveheart*. Of visitors from outside Scotland, 15% of those who saw *Braveheart* said it influenced their decision to visit the country. Of all visitors who saw *Braveheart*, 39% said the film influenced in part their decision to visit Stirling, and 19% said the film was one of the main reasons for their visit.^[10] In the same year, a tourism report said that the "*Braveheart* effect" earned Scotland £7 million to £15 million in tourist revenue, and the report led to various national organisations encouraging international film productions to take place in Scotland.^[11]

The film generated huge interest in Scotland and in Scottish history, not only around the world, but also in Scotland itself. Fans come from all over the world to see the places in Scotland where William Wallace fought, and also to the places in Scotland and Ireland used as locations in the film. At a *Braveheart* Convention in 1997, held in Stirling the day after the Scottish Devolution vote and attended by 200 delegates from around the world, *Braveheart* author Randall Wallace, Seoras Wallace of the Wallace Clan, Scottish historian David Ross and Bláithín FitzGerald from Ireland gave lectures on various aspects of the film. Several of the actors also attended including James Robinson (Young William), Andrew Weir (Young Hamish), Julie Austin (the young bride) and Mhairi Calvey (Young Murrin).

Awards and honours

The movie was nominated for ten Academy Awards and won five.^[12]

Won

Award	Nominee
	Mel Gibson

Best Picture	Alan Ladd, Jr. Bruce Davey Stephen McEveety
Best Director	Mel Gibson
Best Cinematography	John Toll
Best Makeup	Peter Frampton Paul Pattison Lois Burwell
Best Sound Editing	Lon Bender Per Hallberg

Nominated

Award	Nominee
Best Original Screenplay	Randall Wallace
Best Original Dramatic Score	James Horner
Best Sound Mixing	Andy Nelson Scott Millan Anna Behlmer Brian Simmons
Best Film Editing	Steven Rosenblum
Best Costume Design	Charles Knode

American Film Institute Lists

- AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies – Nominated^[13]
- AFI's 100 Years...100 Thrills – No. 91
- AFI's 100 Years...100 Heroes & Villains:
 - William Wallace – Nominated Hero^[14]
- AFI's 100 Years...100 Movie Quotes:
 - "They may take away our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!" – Nominated^[15]
- AFI's 100 Years of Film Scores – Nominated^[16]
- AFI's 100 Years...100 Cheers – No. 62
- AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies (10th Anniversary Edition) – Nominated^[17]
- AFI's 10 Top 10 – Nominated Epic Film^[18]

Cultural effects

Lin Anderson, author of *Braveheart: From Hollywood To Holyrood*, credits the film with playing a significant role in affecting the Scottish political landscape in the mid to late 1990s.^[19]

Wallace Monument

In 1997, a 12-ton sandstone statue depicting Mel Gibson as William Wallace in *Braveheart* was placed in the car park of the Wallace Monument near Stirling, Scotland. The statue, which was the work of Tom Church, a monumental mason from Brechin,^[20] included the word "Braveheart" on Wallace's shield. The installation

became the cause of much controversy; one local resident stated that it was wrong to "desecrate the main memorial to Wallace with a lump of crap."^[21] In 1998 the face on the statue was vandalised by someone wielding a hammer. After repairs were made, the statue was encased in a cage every night to prevent further vandalism. This only incited more calls for the statue to be removed as it then appeared that the Gibson/Wallace figure was imprisoned. The statue was described as "among the most loathed pieces of public art in Scotland."^[22] In 2008, the statue was returned to its sculptor to make room for a new visitor centre being built at the foot of the Wallace Monument.^[23]

Historical accuracy

Randall Wallace, the writer of the screenplay, has acknowledged Blind Harry's 15th century epic poem *The Acts and Deeds of Sir William Wallace, Knight of Elderslie* as a major inspiration for the film.^[24] In defending his script, Randall Wallace has said, "Is Blind Harry true? I don't know. I know that it spoke to my heart and that's what matters to me, that it spoke to my heart."^[25] Although some incidents which are not historically accurate are taken from Blind Harry (e. g. the hanging of Scots nobles at the start) there are important aspects of the plot which are based neither on history nor Blind Harry (e. g. Wallace's affair with Princess Isabelle, although this may have been inspired by a play *The Wallace* by Sydney Goodsir Smith).

Elizabeth Ewan describes *Braveheart* as a film which "almost totally sacrifices historical accuracy for epic adventure".^[26] The "brave heart" refers in Scottish history to that of Robert the Bruce, and an attribution by William Edmondstone Aytoun, in his poem *Heart of Bruce*, to Sir James the Good: "*Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart, As thou wert wont of yore!*", prior to Douglas's demise at the Battle of Teba in Andalusia.^[27]

Sharon Krossa notes that the film contains numerous historical errors, beginning with the wearing of belted plaid by Wallace and his men. In that period "no Scots ... wore belted plaids (let alone kilts of any kind)."^[28] Moreover, when Highlanders finally did begin wearing the belted plaid, it was not "in the rather bizarre style depicted in the film."^[28] She compares the inaccuracy to "a film about Colonial America showing the colonial men wearing 20th century business suits, but with the jackets worn back-to-front instead of the right way around."^[28] "The events aren't accurate, the dates aren't accurate, the characters aren't accurate, the names aren't accurate, the clothes aren't accurate—in short, just about nothing is accurate."^[29] Peter Traquair has referred to Wallace's "farcical representation as a wild and hairy highlander painted with woad (1,000 years too late) running amok in a tartan kilt (500 years too early)."^[30] The belted plaid (feileadh mór) léine was not introduced until the 16th century.^[31]

In 2009, the film was second on a list of "most historically inaccurate movies" in *The Times*.^[32] In the 2007 humorous non-fictional historiography *An Utterly Impartial History of Britain*, author John O'Farrell notes that *Braveheart* could not have been more historically inaccurate, even if a "Plasticine dog" had been inserted in the film and the title changed to *William Wallace and Gromit*.^[33]

Randall Wallace is very vocal about defending his script from historians who have dismissed the film as a



Tom Church's 'Freedom' statue.

Hollywood perversion of actual events.^[citation needed] In the DVD audio commentary of *Braveheart*, Mel Gibson acknowledges many of the historical inaccuracies^[citation needed] but defends his choices as director, noting that the way events were portrayed in the film were much more "cinematically compelling" than the historical fact or conventional mythos.

Portrayal of William Wallace

As John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett write, "Because [William] Wallace is one of Scotland's most important national heroes and because he lived in the very distant past, much that is believed about him is probably the stuff of legend. But there is a factual strand that historians agree to", summarised from Scots scholar Matt Ewart:

Wallace was born into the gentry of Scotland; his father lived until he was 18, his mother until his 24th year; he killed the sheriff of Lanark when he was 27, apparently after the murder of his wife; he led a group of commoners against the English in a very successful battle at Stirling in 1297, temporarily receiving appointment as guardian; Wallace's reputation as a military leader was ruined in the same year of 1297, leading to his resignation as guardian; he spent several years of exile in France before being captured by the English at Glasgow, this resulting in his trial for treason and his cruel execution.^[34]

A. E. Christa Canitz writes about the historical William Wallace further: "[He] was a younger son of the Scottish gentry, usually accompanied by his own chaplain, well-educated, and eventually, having been appointed Guardian of the Kingdom of Scotland, engaged in diplomatic correspondence with the Hanseatic cities of Lübeck and Hamburg." She finds that in *Braveheart*, "any hint of his descent from the lowland gentry (i.e., the lesser nobility) is erased, and he is presented as an economically and politically marginalized Highlander and 'a farmer'—as one with the common peasant, and with a strong spiritual connection to the land which he is destined to liberate."^[35]

Colin McArthur writes that *Braveheart* "constructs Wallace as a kind of modern, nationalist guerilla leader in a period half a millenium before the appearance of nationalism on the historical stage as a concept under which disparate classes and interests might be mobilized within a nation state." Writing about *Braveheart's* "omissions of verified historical facts", McArthur notes that Wallace made "overtures to Edward I seeking less severe treatment after his defeat at Falkirk", as well as "the well-documented fact of Wallace's having resorted to conscription and his willingness to hang those who refused to serve."^[36] Canitz posits that depicting "such lack of class solidarity" as the conscriptions and related hangings "would contaminate the movie's image of Wallace as the morally irreproachable *primus inter pares* among his peasant fighters."^[35]

Portrayal of Isabella of France

In the film, Isabella was portrayed as being about 18 years old during her wedding to Edward II and around 25 during her affair with Wallace. Prior to the Battle of Falkirk, Wallace is shown having an affair with Isabella of France. She later tells the king that she is pregnant, implying that her son, Edward III, was the product of the affair. In actuality, Isabella was 10 years old at the time of Wallace's death and was still living in France. She wouldn't give birth to her son until seven years later.^{[37][38]}

Portrayal of Robert the Bruce

Robert the Bruce did change sides between the Scots loyalists and the English more than once in the earlier stages of the Wars of Scottish Independence, but he never betrayed Wallace directly, and it is unlikely that he fought on the English side at the Battle of Falkirk. Later, the Battle of Bannockburn was not a spontaneous battle; he had already been fighting a guerrilla campaign against the English for eight years.



Mel Gibson as William Wallace wearing woad.

Portrayal of King and Prince Edward

The actual Edward I was ruthless and temperamental, but the film exaggerates his character for effect. Edward enjoyed poetry and harp music, was a devoted and loving husband to his wife Eleanor of Castile, and as a religious man he gave generously to charity. The movie's scene where he scoffs cynically at Isabella for distributing gold to the poor after Wallace refuses it as a bribe would have been unlikely. Edward died on campaign and not in bed at his home.

The depiction of the Prince of Wales (the future Edward II of England) as an effeminate homosexual drew accusations of homophobia against Gibson. Although the real Edward II did father five children by two different women, he was also rumoured to have had sexual affairs with men, including Piers Gaveston. Gibson replied that "The fact that King Edward throws this character out a window has nothing to do with him being gay ... He's terrible to his son, to everybody."^[39] Gibson defended his depiction of Prince Edward as weak and ineffectual, saying,

I'm just trying to respond to history. You can cite other examples – Alexander the Great, for example, who conquered the entire world, was also a homosexual. But this story isn't about Alexander the Great. It's about Edward II.^[40]

Gibson asserted that the reason that Longshanks kills his son's lover is because the king is a "psychopath".^[41] (This is another inaccuracy, as Piers Gaveston lived on into the reign of Edward II.) Gibson expressed bewilderment that some filmgoers would laugh at this murder:

We cut a scene out, unfortunately. . . where you really got to know that character [Edward II] and to understand his plight and his pain. . . . But it just stopped the film in the first act so much that you thought, 'When's this story going to start?'^[42]

English accusations of anglophobia

The English media accused the film of harbouring Anglophobia. The London-based *The Economist* called it "xenophobic"^[43] and John Sutherland writing in the London-based *The Guardian* stated that: "*Braveheart* gave full rein to a toxic Anglophobia".^{[44][45][46]} According to *The Times*, MacArthur said "the political effects are truly pernicious. It's a xenophobic film."^[45] *The Independent* has noted, "The *Braveheart* phenomenon, a Hollywood-inspired rise in Scottish nationalism, has been linked to a rise in anti-English prejudice".^[47]

Soundtrack

The soundtrack for *Braveheart* was composed and conducted by James Horner, and performed by the London Symphony Orchestra. The soundtrack, comprising 77 minutes of background music taken from significant scenes in the film, was noticeably successful, and album co-producer Simon Rhodes produced a follow-up soundtrack in 1997 titled *More Music from Braveheart*. International and French versions of the soundtrack

have also been released.^[citation needed] Several writers have noted the main theme song's resemblance to an earlier theme song for the 1991 anime series *3x3 Eyes*, composed by Kaoru Wada.^{[48][49][50]}

Irish band Clannad wrote a theme tune for the film, entitled 'Croí Cróga' (meaning 'braveheart'). However, the track was not used in the soundtrack, but was released by Clannad on the album 'Lore'.

Braveheart (1995)

1. "Main Title" – 2:51
2. "A Gift of a Thistle" – 1:37
3. "Wallace Courts Murrin" – 4:25
4. "The Secret Wedding" – 6:33
5. "Attack on Murrin" – 3:00
6. "Revenge" – 6:23
7. "Murrin's Burial" – 2:13
8. "Making Plans/Gathering the Clans" – 1:52
9. "Sons of Scotland" – 6:19
10. "The Battle of Stirling" – 5:57
11. "For the Love of a Princess" – 4:07
12. "Falkirk" – 4:04
13. "Betrayal & Desolation" – 7:48
14. "Mornay's Dream" – 1:15
15. "The Legend Spreads" – 1:09
16. "The Princess Pleads for Wallace's Life" – 3:38
17. "'Freedom'/The Execution/Bannockburn" – 7:24
18. "End Credits" – 7:16

More Music from Braveheart (1997)

1. "Prologue: 'I Shall Tell You of William Wallace'" [Narration: Robert The Bruce]
2. "Outlawed Tunes on Outlawed Pipes"
3. "The Royal Wedding" [Narration: Robert The Bruce]
4. "'The Trouble with Scotland'" [King Edward The Longshanks]
5. "Scottish Wedding Music"
6. "Prima Noctes"
7. "The Proposal" [William Wallace and Murrin]
8. "'Scotland Is Free!'" [William Wallace]
9. "Point of War/Johnny Cope/Up in the Morning Early"
10. "Covering with the Almighty" [Stephen, William Wallace, Hamish, Campbell]
11. "The Road to the Isles/Glendaruel Highlanders/The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill"
12. "'Sons of Scotland!'" [William Wallace]
13. "Vision of Murrin"
14. "'Unite the Clans!'" [William Wallace]
15. "The Legend Spreads" [Scottish Highlanders]
16. "'Why Do You Help Me?'" [William Wallace And Princess Isabelle]
17. "For the Love of a Princess"
18. "'Not Every Man Really Lives'" [William Wallace and Princess Isabelle]
19. "'The Prisoner Wishes to Say a Word'" [The Executioner and William Wallace]
20. "'After the Beheading'" [Robert The Bruce]
21. "'You Have Bled with Wallace!'" [Robert The Bruce]

22. "Warrior Poets" [William Wallace]
23. "Scotland the Brave/The Badge of Scotland/The Meeting of the Waters"
24. "Leaving Glen Urquhart/The Highland Plaid/Jock Wilson's Ball"
25. "Kirkhill/The Argyllshire Gathering/The Braemar Highland Gathering"

Album length: 68:53

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External links

- *Braveheart* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112573/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Braveheart* (<http://www.allrovi.com/movies/movie/v134724>) at AllRovi
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- Roger Ebert's review of *Braveheart* (<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/19950524/REVIEWS/505240301/1023>)

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