



## William Wallace: Brave Heart

*James A. MacKay*

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## **William Wallace: Brave Heart** James A. MacKay

Sir William Wallace of Ellerslie is one of history's greatest heroes, but also one of its greatest enigmas—a shadowy figure whose edges have been blurred by myth and legend. James MacKay uses all his skills as a historical detective to produce this definitive biography, telling the incredible story of a man who, without wealth or noble birth, rose to become Guardian of Scotland. William Wallace, with superb generalship and tactical genius, led a country with no previous warlike tradition to triumph gloriously over the much larger, better-armed, and better-trained English forces. 700 years later, the heroism and betrayal, the valiant deeds and the dark atrocities, and the struggle of a small nation against a brutal and powerful empire, still create a compelling tale.

## **William Wallace: Brave Heart Details**

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Author : James A. MacKay

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## **From Reader Review William Wallace: Brave Heart for online ebook**

### **Michelle says**

This book starts out slow, but has a good overview of the issues of the times, and the narrative really picks up speed and interest once it really gets into Wallace's story. The evidence of his life is sketchy and incomplete, but the author does a great job of being clear about what his sources are, and sharing some of the fun stories from the oral tradition even while he is open that the evidence behind the stories isn't reliable.

In the end, you get a fairly complete picture of William Wallace: the few hard facts, the few mostly certain events and the atmospheric, swashbuckling nature of the reputation he gathered around himself throughout a life of heroism and violence in service of a cause as told through folklore and songs and rumors about him. There were a lot of great stories that I think would have made fantastic scenes in the movie Braveheart- it could have been made even better than it already was- there's a lot of material to work with from Wallace's life.

Wallace was a more influential figure than I had realized, a true political as well as military leader, who spearheaded some very important changes to military tactics and organization that undermined the feudal organization of the army that had existed before. He, for a short time, turned the Scottish into a real army, not just a ragtag bunch of fighters. And despite the English victory at Falkirk, they were never really able to keep Scotland all the way subdued during this period.

A really good read-fun, epic underdog history at its best.

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### **Josh Bradham says**

This book was a good read, and definitely gave me significantly more insight into the life of William Wallace. The only issue I have is my issue with all sorts of books like this, and with books where 95% of the information put out is conjecture. Which ends up giving the reader a different version of the story depending on which version of the book they read. Overall a good biography and a very interesting story.

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### **Ron Wallace says**

What a good read this was. I enjoyed the book immensely and learned more about my Scottish heritage than in any other book I ever read.

The movie is a work of epic myth, and I loved it, but the book is a work of great historical value. It does away with much of the flowery romance and tells the story as best as it can I think.

I may be a Wallace and naturally biased in favor of William, but I think I'm looking at this in a level manner. I'll read it again, and I think that's a mark of an excellent work. I like the writing as well as the story.

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## **Andrew says**

The author attempts to separate fact from fiction in telling the story of the life of Scottish patriot, William Wallace. He relies heavily on the tales told by the Scottish bard, Blind Harry - often where other authors have dismissed Harry's stories as falsehoods. Overall it was interesting to compare the history of Wallace (known and speculated) with the film Braveheart of Mel Gibson fame. In particular it was interesting how some of the events depicted in the movie were based on actual events, but placed in a very different spot in the chronology. It also portrayed the Scottish lords and nobles constantly switching sides depending on the current mood and their own self-interest. Overall, a very interesting read for anyone with an interest in Scotland and its fight for independence.

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## **Rachael Booth says**

I felt like I was reading a history of Scotland rather than the story of William Wallace. The author went overboard describing the political intrigues of the time to such a degree that it was difficult to remember who was for or against whom. Every once in a while the story line would return to William Wallace but then veer off on a tangent about someone else and his/her wife/husband/son/third cousin twice removed - you get the point.

While it's nice to have historical background that is important to set the stage about the main character of the book, too much background muddles the story until you almost forget what the book's about.

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## **Tana says**

Good history, wordy writer.

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## **Sherry Sharpnack says**

This was a very informative biography of Scotland's "Braveheart." But did the author have to make it so dry?! I did not realize how scanty were the available sources re Wallace's life, until I saw the paucity of notes--maybe this is why the book was so dry; there just isn't much to discover, & then write about.

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## **bkwurm says**

It seems that not very much is known about this iconic figure of Scottish nationalism. As a result, this book which seeks to set out only the facts, suffers from having to admit that many years of William Wallace's life are either unknown or padded out with frankly unbelievable myths.

Thus the reasons for Wallace's decision to stand and fight at Falkirk are not considered in any detail for the simple reason that they are not known.

That said, Wallace's rise from unknown landless younger son to Guardian of Scotland and his subsequent fall and gruesome death makes for a compelling read.

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### **Deb says**

I found this book very interesting. I have been to some of the places in this book and one of my ancestors was martyred at the same spot that William Wallace was and I've been there. I could not believe there is a church right by it that was there at the time. If history is correct, William Wallace did more for Scotland than anyone and did it for the right reasons. He was not a politician and he never gave up. I cannot imagine how Scotland and England co-exist with the past history they have had.

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### **Martin Boulter says**

I devoured this book in just 5 days for me that is a big deal. I really enjoyed the information in the book. There are quite a few events that were well documented but others that were not. It was interesting to see how time and pride really effect oral traditions. Some of the twists and turns were frustrating where information was lacking. Sadly also some of the most pertinent information like the content of the letters he was carrying at the time of capture were lost most likely destroyed by Edward. This book is sympathetic to Wallace but not overly so. His behavior in the well documented releases of priests, women and children it really puts the English description at odds with his behavior. I would highly recommend the book to anyone interested in the great patriot of Scotland.

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### **Paul says**

An impressive book on Wallace, with a keen regard to detail and a moving rendition of his fall from grace, ending tragically with his horrible death. Newcomers to the tale would probably be put off by the massive amount of name dropping and sometimes jarring theorizing of certain details, between Blind Harry's epic verse, conjecture and documents of that era. Still this is the tale of William Wallace, a stirring tale if there ever was one. The book becomes stronger as it moves along, the 'Robin Hood' of Scotland a willful testament to the impact one man can have on a nation. It's most impressive when Wallace stands alone at the end, still fighting, when the tide of Scotland has pretty much resigned to English dominance; when even the nobles (including Bruce) were merely satisfied with the scraps Edward handed them. I still approach with apprehension the details of his gory torture and execution: a heartbreaking end to such a brave nationalist.

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### **Sara Mehrjouei says**

wallace the meaning of freedom

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### **Vida says**

Very dry, read like a textbook. Couldn't sustain my interest.

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### **Ender W says**

I read multiple sources on William Wallace and this was the best I came across. The book may be dry at times, but it captures the essence of Wallace best because the author provides both the story of Wallace and the history of the time period. While other sources only provide facts, MacKay includes the myth as well. Excellent chapter on the Battle of Stirling Bridge. Overall, a well-rounded and non-English-biased biography.

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### **Kevin Kierstead says**

Ever the hero...

William Wallace is my favorite male hero of all-time. The movie set the fire, and research since its release has stoked it.

This book, while being slightly confusing regarding language use to an average American reader--one suspects some Scottish language structure was employed--William Wallace: Brave Heart was a wheelbarrow full of facts and side notes that help to define this great figure in every capacity.

While there is an underpinning of favor/sympathy shown for Wallace, just below the surface of the narrative (as one reviewer noted on the back of the cover), the facts are the facts, and the good is presented with the bad. The accusations involving atrocities are included, and appropriate weights are given to each witness's account, from those that described the Battle of Stirling Bridge to those that witnessed the execution, and everything in-between.

I wanted to give it five stars but I found a few minor inconsistencies and the language barrier (or use-of-the-English-language-barrier, rather) sometimes difficult. If you are a Wallace fan, or foe, you need to add this factual account of his deeds and all of the proxy players in his life to your reading repertoire.

--Author Kevin A. Kierstead

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