



The Legend and the Truth

by Christian Lanciai (1987)

Dramatis personae:

A mountain hermit
His temporary visitor (a worker in Glasgow)
Sir William Wallace
Marion, his wife
Sir John Monteith
Halbert, servant with Wallace
Sir Arthur Heselrigge, English governor at Lanark
Grimsby, English soldier
Robert Bruce, later King of Scotland
Count of Gloucester, his friend, son-in-law of King Edward I
An English bishop
Lord Donald of Mar
Lady Mar, his younger wife
Another servant of Wallace
A guard at the Tower of London

A herald
A prison priest
A merchant
King Edward I
An Englishman (the visitor's employer)
Soldiers and bandits, citizens and peasants, two housewives, and others.
The action is Scotland and the Tower of London from 1296.

The two last scenes make an epilogue,
which not necessarily have to be performed at possible stagings.
The drama was written around Christmas 1987, translated 20-22 August 2017.

The Legend and the Truth

Prologue. A cave in the Highlands.

Hermit Young man, what are you doing here?
Visitor I came for you.
Hermit At this late hour?
Visitor I didn't want to be seen.
Hermit So you are afraid. For what?
Visitor For the time and the world.
Hermit What harm can these do to you? Stay out of them!
Visitor That's exactly why I have come to visit you.
Hermit Then perhaps you acted wisely. What do you want from me?
Visitor The truth.
Hermit What part of it?
Visitor All of it!
Hermit Impossible, my lad. You have to be more specific.
Visitor I want to learn the truth about the liberator of our country, the noble Sir William Wallace.
Hermit My son, he died centuries ago.
Visitor I know.
Hermit His tale has been silenced. His truth has been plundered by romantics and buried alive by politicians. What remains is only legends.
Visitor But you know the truth.
Hermit What makes you think so?
Visitor I know who you are. You were a cherished minstrel at the court of Mary Stuart, you were loved for your pathos and liberal speech in your undaunted songs. You were the terror of Queen Elizabeth, and when Mary Stuart was confined in a convent by her royal relative, you foretold that she would be consistent in her persecution and also have the last free monarch of Scotland finally decapitated. And

you were right. It's twenty years since Mary Stuart was publicly executed, and during these twenty years you have been silent.

Hermit No one knows I am living here. How did you hear about me?

Visitor There is still some free Scottish blood breathing freedom.

Hermit And what do you want with the story of William Wallace?

Visitor I want my free Scottish blood to breathe even freer.

Hermit My friend, we live in an age of approaching and constantly increasing oppression. It is true that our sixth King James now is King in London, but thereby Scotland has lost her monarchy and England acquired a tyranny, which – believe me! – will only increase as long as the Stuarts are in London. They were endured with difficulty in Edinburgh and Stirling, but in the dirt and vice of London their conceit will be fattened unto bursting rottenness. The Wallace tale is against all monarchy as a world order. Therefore it is so dangerous and has always been silenced by both English and Scottish kings. Not even Robert Bruce could stand William Wallace being spoken of. We will not be rid of monarchy as a world order for many centuries still, as it is now their power is growing in stability all around the world, they will all turn into autocracies, and not until they are overthrown by violence will they turn noble, then they will unjustly disappear, and then they will be missed. For and against monarchy has always been in the balance. The story of William Wallace is the best of arguments against monarchy, and no one fought more earnestly for his monarch than William Wallace. There's the strange tale for you in its entirety.

Visitor But tell me everything from the beginning!

Hermit My son, you ask of an old minstrel since 20 years buried alive to resume his harp although his songs are dead and forgotten from sorrow and his fingers are grown stiff by the paralysing cold of the world order. But I must not disappoint you.

Act I. Elderslie Castle.

To the left a well and garden with a stone bench where the young married couple are sitting, she with a harp. In the background slightly to the right the castle with a terrace.

William My wife, we are deserted by everybody, our brothers of the nobility fear our isolation as they know what it means: a bottomless feeling of sorrow and shame of the perfidy of our Scottish nobility to our King by the treason against Scotland in abandoning our power and independence into the hands of King Edward. Who is King Edward? A king for certain, but only by birth with rights of power and title, but he is no King of Scotland. He has no right at all to Scotland. He has never been to Scotland and will never willingly put his foot in this formerly so free a country.

Marion My husband, don't get excited. We have been through this before.

William It can never be discussed enough as long as this state of discontent continues!

Marion Don't get angry, my love. I didn't want to upset you.

William Upset me? My beloved, you must not feel hurt! But you know how upset I get by just the thought of the world's political misery. But listen carefully now. My speech had some purpose. What I meant was, that this evil touches only me. Because I am feared for my melancholy and my rebellious sorrow directed against England, you must not feel as lonesome as me. If you tire of the lonely life with me in our desert castle, so feel free to visit our old friends and their pleasures and leisures. My beloved, that I can't share their political indifference must not mean that you should be shut out from all society. If you in their superficial company and flair find the happiness you miss in my sorrow and isolation, you shall be free from the duty of having to live with the burden of my opposition.

Marion My husband, you test me, but by that you only torture me. Your tears for the destiny of Scotland is the blood of my life.

William I was never wiser than when I chose you for a wife. No one in Scotland can cheer me up any longer, but you only need to be faithful to your own intuition to immediately settle the task as if by magic. My beloved, play for me. Now I can stand some music. (*Marion quietly starts singing and playing her harp. William rests his head in her bosom.*) The music of your voice could stop the world from foundering.

Marion (stops) But who is there?

William (raises his head from her lap) It looks like the noble Sir John Monteith, one of the few nobles of Scotland who hasn't buried his conscience alive. (*rises; Sir John enters from the right.*)

Welcome, Sir John, the only one who is faithful enough to Scotland to dare visit me! Are you alone?

Sir John I come utterly alone no matter how well watched I always am nowadays. You are aware that no Scottish lord with men under him may any longer live in his castle unwatched?

William Here you are free.

Sir John Yes, you are the only one, for the English know you hate them, there is no doubt about your attitude, and at the same time they fear your strength as they know they have nothing to fear from you as long as you keep yourself shut up with your wife.

William Is that an insinuation?

Marion My husband, don't get perturbed. Sir John is still a Scotsman.

Sir John Yes, my friend, I am perhaps the last man in Scotland you still can trust, for all the other lords have been bought by the English and betrayed the Scottish crown.

William What news from the outer world?

Sir John Nothing new. The King is still in London captive with his son.

William As long as there is life there is hope.

Sir John But that life must bestir if it wants to stay alive. Now it has bestirred.

William What has happened?

Sir John From the Tower of London King Baliol has managed to smuggle out a secret shrine. If King Edward learns about it, the royal family of Scotland, King Baliol and his son are lost.

William What's about this shrine?

Sir John I have brought it here, and I ask of you to protect it. *(brings out a shrine from his mantle.)*

William So you trust me with the most dangerous secret of the British isles by your own accord?

Sir John Yes, because I know that only you are able to protect it.

William And I may not open it until Scotland is free again?

Sir John That is the condition. If the shrine is opened before the independence of Scotland is secured, Scotland will never more be free. That's the implement of the shrine.

William I see that you are serious.

Sir John Bloody serious. Your wife is my witness.

Marion I understand and will be quiet about it until death.

William But there is a deeper reason behind your confidence than just your trust in me. Is the shrine at peril with you?

Sir John To the highest degree. They already speculate in London that the shrine could have been smuggled all the way to Scotland, and then the suspicions of Edward will first of all fall upon me as one of the mightiest patriots of Scotland. As I said, I am already being spied out.

William Does anyone know that you are here?

Sir John If anyone knows I wouldn't have come. *(takes him around the shoulders)* My friend, trust me as I trust you. You are the last hope of Scotland, and no one doubts you, while all, both Scotsmen and Englishmen, have doubts about me. My position is precarious. If the shrine is found by me, I am lost with Scotland. With you I know they will never find it, if you just continue to live like heretofore: consistently according to your incorruptible nature and therefore in total seclusion. Don't fail yourself, and Scotland will be saved; for some day some Bruce will return.

William (prying) My friend, I see. Even if you fall Scotland will not fall. I shall warrant that. Thanks for your confidence. You can now ride back home and meet your possible searching visitors with your innocence.

Sir John Thanks, brother. Farewell. I will never forget your loyalty. *(withdraws quickly out to the right.)*

Marion (watches her husband's prying looks) Will this bring trouble?

William (hesitant) Maybe for us, but not for Scotland. I just hope that Sir John isn't followed by all the dogs of hell, for in that case they will now leave him in peace to instead come nosing at our door.

Marion What will you do with the shrine?

William Guard its secret with my life. *(enter a servant from the right)*

Servant My lord, a company of English knights demand entrance to our castle.

William English? They never dared to show themselves here before. What do they want?

Servant They demand entrance.

William If that is all they want I must turn them back if they have no pertinent reason. Go and ask them with what right they demand entrance. *(exit servant)*

Marion My husband, you know more than I about what will happen. You haven't told me all.

William My wife, I was just about to tell you the whole width of our trouble when Sir John came and made it worse. Today when I came home I found a Scottish noble surrounded by English bandits who tried to murder him. I interfered and managed to save his life. It was count Donald of Mar.

Marion You saved the backbone of Scotland!

William One of the English that fell for my sword proved to be the nephew of Sir Arthur Heselrigge.

Marion Dear me! The nephew of the English governor!

William My guess is that the English bullies who now argue with my servants outside the drawbridge don't know anything about the shrine but will seek revenge for the young Heselrigge.

Marion Why did you have to kill him?

William I didn't know who he was. Just an Englishman. None of them has any right to draw weapons in Scotland against a Scotsman, and it was my inevitable duty to defend the Scottish minority against the English supremacy.

Marion You did right, even if it might cost us our home.

William The consequences mean nothing, as long as I did right.

Servant (entering) My lord, you must save yourself. They want your head for what they call the murder of an English nobleman.

William How many are they?

Servant Forty.

William Then they want not only my life. They must know about the shrine. But Sir John can't have betrayed me. They must have seen him through. Poor Sir John! I think he might be lost to Scotland.

Marion My husband, you have no one with whom you can defend your home. You are alone against forty. You must hide.

William You are unfortunately right. For the sake of the royal shrine I must cowardly go into hiding. But what about you? What can you do against forty men?

Marion I am a woman. I will speak with them, and they shall believe me. You will see that I as well as you can defend Scotland, even if it's only the female way.

William Pure womanhood can achieve wonders where manly force isn't enough. I believe in you, woman. *(to the servant)* Let me down into the well with the shrine, and go then and let in the berserks, but first tell them that I am not at home but that your mistress opens our home to them anyway. *(climbs into the well and is let down.)*

(From the bottom of the well:) Marion, I am with you!

Marion (quietly) I know. *(to the servant)* Do now as you were told by your master, Halbert, and let in the Englishmen to me. *(takes a seat calmly in an elevated chair on the terrace, preferably a Hamlet chair. After some while the Englishmen break in from the left armed up to their teeth.)*

Lord Heselrigge (leading them) Lousy witch! Where is your husband?

Marion (calmly) He is not here.

Heselrigge Where is he, I asked!

Marion He is out riding. What can I tell him?

Heselrigge When is he coming home?

Marion I don't know.

Heselrigge So he has escaped! Where has he escaped?

Marion He has not escaped. He is out riding but will be back. What can I do for you?

Heselrigge Your devil of a husband has murdered my only nephew in cold blood! Where is he?

Marion I already told you that I don't know. I can't help you in that matter.

Heselrigge So you can't? Are you willing to, then?

Marion My lord, if I *can't* help you with something, then my will is of no consequence.

Heselrigge You infernal witch, you are sleek like an eel.

Marion I beg you to consider, my lord, and to remind you that you are speaking to a woman and the wife of a nobleman.

Heselrigge You don't have to remind me. That doesn't make you less of a witch. Do you know that I could let you burn at the stake for refusing to co-operate?

Marion I don't refuse to co-operate. Your men are my witnesses.

Grimsby (a soldier) My lord, I think you would achieve better results if you don't insult a noble lady in her own house.

Heselrigge Shut up, you louse! Who asked you to open your mouth? I am running the interrogation here! Once more, where is your husband?

Grimsby With respect, Sir, I beg to remind you that you are a nobleman yourself and should behave like a nobleman in the presence of a noble lady. She has the same rank as you.

Heselrigge So you are a preacher also! And impertinent at that! I warn you, Grimsby! You can fall out of grace!

Grimsby I suggest, Sir, that you come to the point.

Heselrigge Well then, to cut a long story short, my lady, your cause is lost. We know that Sir John Monteith has been robbed of a secret shrine from England, and we know that your husband is the thief.

Marion How do you know that?

Heselrigge Sir John Monteith told us himself.

Marion My God! If my husband could hear this!

Heselrigge Yes, by God, the matter would be settled then, and he would be dead on the spot! But unfortunately he doesn't seem to be here. Where is he?

Marion I already told you that I don't know.

Heselrigge You persist in lying. Well then, where is the secret shrine?

Marion I know that even less.

Heselrigge But you know about it?

Marion No, I never heard about it before.

Heselrigge Why then did you say: "O God If my husband could hear this!" when I mentioned it?

Marion Because Sir John Monteith has made himself guilty of slander. My husband has never stolen anything.

Heselrigge Well, I can accept that also. Let's instead presume, that Sir John Monteith brought the shrine here while he feared that we knew it was with him? What say you to that?

Marion I know nothing of any shrine.

Heselrigge You are lying!

Marion You accuse a defenceless woman of not having done anything but her duty.

Heselrigge So you admit that you are lying! So you know both where your husband is and where the shrine is! Out with it! Where is it?

Marion I don't know!

Heselrigge Are they together?

Marion I don't know.

Heselrigge In other words, you refuse to co-operate. Accursed woman! Don't you realize that your man has forfeited his life? You will never see him again! Co-operate with us instead and be rewarded! You will easily get a new gayer and richer man who is Englishman. He will probably love you better as well, since you have no children with that cursed haughty Scotsman, who only thinks of himself and casts a wet blanket over the entire country! Co-operate or die! Where is he?

Marion (calmly) I already told you that I don't know.

Heselrigge Die then, lousy woman! (*cuts her through without warning with his sword.*)

Marion William! (*dies*)

Heselrigge May all haughty Scotswomen be cut down in the same way. Come, my men! We have nothing more to do here! (*starts leaving with his men, but Grimsby doesn't move.*) What is it, Grimsby? Aren't you coming?

Grimsby Never.

Heselrigge Are you rebelling now also? Do you also wish to die in advance?

Grimsby Sir, in cold blood you have murdered a defenceless woman. The King shall know about this. Your policy in Scotland is unilaterally destructive and can never lead to peace.

Heselrigge (laughing brutally) Just listen to him! He is threatening me!

Grimsby No, I try to speak to your conscience that is buried alive, but I fear it's hopeless.

Heselrigge You milksop! You pathetic caretaker! Come with us now or die. Your career is finished anyway. You killed it yourself. (*draws his sword against him*)

Grimsby You can't kill me, since I am not defenceless. (*pulls his sword*)

(The other soldiers mumble among each other.)

Heselrigge What are you whispering behind my back, lousy gossips? This your fellow soldier has forfeited his life. Let him cross over to the Scots if he wants to. They can't defend themselves anymore anyway. Become outlaw like the Scots, Grimsby, since you want it so much. We don't care that you are lost. (*leaves. The other soldiers follow hesitantly with obvious dislike.*)

The last of them You are right, Grimsby. We regret as much as you that we couldn't save the brave woman's life.

Grimsby Go in peace, Benny. We all have our own destiny to follow. I stay here to serve Wallace from now on. (*The last soldier leaves.*)

(*to the servant, who cries desperately over the body of his mistress*) Be comforted, my friend. She won't come alive again. What can we do now for Wallace and what remains of free Scotsmen?

Halbert O my lady! What a heinous outrage! What a shame on England and Scotland!

Grimsby Collect yourself, my friend. We must save the living. Where are they?

Halbert (looking at Grimsby) Can we trust you?

Grimsby I can never again call myself an Englishman.

Halbert (suddenly rising) To the well! (*Halbert hurries to the well, Grimsby follows, and Wallace is slowly and arduously winded up.*)

My lord! My lord! Your lady! (*falls down crying*)

Wallace What is it, Halbert? Have the English left?

Grimsby They are gone every one of them.

Wallace Who are you?

Grimsby A former Englishman, now as true a Scot as yourself.

Wallace Why this sudden change of nationality?

(*Grimsby indicates the desperation of Halbert and the body of Marion on the terrace.*)

My God, can you allow this? (*rushes to the body, embracing it in bitter grief*)

If I could hug some life into these slender limbs I would forget all about the existence of England! But she is dead and gone, and for that, England shall bleed copiously by my hand forever! Never more shall my sword find rest! Never more shall it be wiped clean from English blood! Who did this, Halbert?

Grimsby An Englishman.

Wallace Who?

Grimsby Sir Arthur Heselrigge in person.

Wallace And his forty men just stood by watching?

Grimsby Not without protests, and one of them pulled his sword against the inhuman baron.

Wallace You?

Grimsby Yes.

Wallace You have saved Scotland's honour. Now Scotland will be able to rise again.

Grimsby What is it about that secret shrine which has brought all this tragedy?

Wallace That shrine must be opened only by the King of Scotland when he is crowned.

Grimsby John Baliol is a failure, and his son Robert Bruce is imprisoned in London.

Wallace We shall liberate Scotland in his name! Lady Marion died for this! May my wrath never be appeased, and may it consume and shed English blood for the sake of Scotland until William Wallace himself has lost all his blood! When Scotland rises, nothing shall be able to keep Robert Bruce behind the walls of the Tower. No power in the world can in the long run keep the Scottish blood of freedom confined, for it swells in its wrath more violently than when the tempests of the ocean hammer against the Hebrides in winter time! Your death shall give me power to alone resist all that the villainy and basest tyranny of England can offer!

Grimsby My lord, we must away from here. The English might return.

Wallace You are right, my brother of destiny. Never more shall I find any home.
(*exeunt*)

Halbert (left alone by the well) So has this slumbering idyll changed from sweetest joy of love accompanied by softest music on the harp to villainy and bloodbath without end. For the lovely matrimony which here thrived in happy and constructive isolation has now been annihilated by the sword of ignorance and power and cruel politics, which always only is barbarity and infamy on hopeless wayward course to self-destruction; and if I know anything about Sir William Wallace, that mishandled sword shall bitterly regret that it turned recklessly a harmless harmony into a hell of inextinguishable bloodthirst, and of this unwanted dragon seed an army of wild dragons, which shall drown all England in its blood until all Englishmen and Scotsmen are consumed and drowned in their own blood and by themselves.

Act II. The Tower of London.

Robert Bruce Slowly days pass by with ever heavier melancholy constantly increasing. Even heavier and more slowly are the hours gliding by that never reach an end, but heaviest to endure are those of all lugubrious cogitation constantly aggrandized minutes, which keep dropping like cold water drops on the imprisoned and tormented victim's naked crown, which he in fetters never can move out of the most unendurable and torturous position. That's my life: a constantly accelerating unsound torture which one day I shall no more be able to endure. Then you have to just forget your life, your kingly blood and all the world, and thereby all my enemies will only gleefully rejoice like drunkards. That's the only reason why, to not give to my enemies the joy that I took my own life, I shall endure the unendurability of life, which is most unendurable to a born king to some responsibility which he did not choose for himself but which was importuned on him for his name's sake. And to all this infernal misery is added that I am laid down in chains and hopelessly refused the power and responsibility which my own people for my family's sake demands that I assume. No matter how you turn things over, everything will only be the worse for it.

Gloucester Noble prince, good morning!

Bruce Be noble yourself, but don't look so content about it.

Gloucester Brooding as usual?

Bruce With a strained smile and a false cheer as usual?

Gloucester Only such a loyal friend as I could put up with you at all.

Bruce I dare not be honest with anyone else.

Gloucester I bring news today.

Bruce And what nobleman has now been plundered of his property, who has today been bereft of home and wife, what noble lady has been violated and forced into the bigamy of an English marriage in Scotland now today?

Gloucester For one time's sake, your honour, it is tide today and not just ebb.

Bruce What's happened then?

Gloucester The morose and obnoxious William Wallace has ignited a rebellion in the hearts of every Scottish man. Governor Heselrigge is dead, surprised and murdered in his bed by William Wallace personally when the palace suddenly was stormed in Lanark, and since then some thousands have joined Wallace, and the very latest is that Lord Mar and his wife and daughter now are liberated at a storming of Dunbarton Castle, at which Aymer de Valence, that miserable coward, the most feared and hated tyrant in all Scotland, fled like a pitiable poltroon.

Bruce Who then set such a fire to the slothful William Wallace?

Gloucester That brute Sir Arthur Heselrigge cut down his wife in coldest blood and without reason during an interrogation. She was all alone at home, unarmed and as composed and calm as Heselrigge was angry.

Bruce A noble calm can more certainly than anything else drive a barbarian more than crazy. And why was the noble Marion so brutally interrogated?

Gloucester The brute thought she lied when she explained she didn't know a thing about the shrine which was so recently brought and smuggled home to Scotland.

Bruce One plus one makes two. I now begin to understand. Sir William Wallace was of course entrusted with the shrine as the most trustworthy and stable guardian possible. Sir Arthur Heselrigge saw it at once like everybody else, and noble Marion dares to stand up for her husband and for Scotland to deny it all alone, and stupid Heselrigge cannot control himself when faced with such audacity and takes her life, forgetful of all sense and decency, while the indomitable Wallace like some furious force of nature goes quite wild and spreads his fury everywhere, inspiring total terror in the English. And now it has gone so far that the very heart and backbone of Scotland, Lord Mar, is liberated from his prison and Aymer de Valence fled and gone to earth with all his absolute control and tyranny. Lord Donald Mar is the warmest and most unflinching protector of the Scottish crown. Undoubtedly he has already the debated shrine in his safe hands, which means that all that's missing is the king of Scotland to make the performance worth applauding. But who is the King of Scotland? Is there such a person? What do people think about it? My old father with his leprosy, dementia and inertia is scrapped by both the Normans, English and his Scotsmen and is already forgotten by world history.

Gloucester You are his son.

Bruce And does anyone in Scotland know that I exist?

Gloucester They speak of none but you, and most of all Sir William Wallace leads your cause. He downright asks you to come home to let yourself be crowned. The crown is only yours.

Bruce I am imprisoned in the Tower and have done nothing to deserve it. Let William Wallace have it.

Gloucester He has no children and does not desire it.

Bruce Has he refused it?

Gloucester I don't know.

Bruce Send word to him, that if he wants me for his king, he must come here himself and get me out of London's catacombs and fish me out of the abysmal depths of my melancholy here in the utter darkness of the dirtiest swamps of human misery, dishonour and despair.

Gloucester I thought my news would bring you some relief and joy.

Bruce You don't know me if you think anything could bring me joy. I am a king without deserving it and without ever wanting it myself. The power I inherited has been denied me by the world. I am only fit for suicide, for a powerless king is a paradox and can practically not exist. His function is untenable from the beginning.

Gloucester Wallace has already gone so far that my father-in-law, King Edward himself, intends to lead a crusade against the savage Scotland. This war is an obstacle to his political program. If he is beaten, which is an obvious risk in his conceited hubris against the now invincible and sly Sir William Wallace, nothing can detain you any more in London, which means your escape would be expected.

Bruce Maybe. I don't think, though, that Wallace will be permanent in his success.

Gloucester No one is victorious and conquers permanently. But as long as he is free and constantly victorious it only serves yourself and Scotland.

Bruce We shall bide our time, and if he falls he will at least not have lost wife and home in vain. And if he actually prevails and liberates all Scotland, all the freedom that he salvaged will at least be taken care of and preserved.

Gloucester Just so, my prince, abide your time and follow the development of politics, and don't get bogged down in your broodings and self-pity. After all, there's something happening.

Bruce I shall get up, my friend. But I retain my word, that Wallace must himself come down and drag me out of this black hole of doldrums if it would at all be worth to be a king after my failed and mentally retarded father.

Gloucester He shall have your message.

Act III scene 1. A plain in the highlands of Scotland.

Grimsby (in kilt, speaking to the Scots) He has led us to victory, he has expelled the tyrants, he has never shown any presumption or recklessness, he has never taken any plunder for himself, and we as Scotsmen have never been more spared and better taken care of by a leader than by him. Do we not owe him everything?

The men Hurray! Long live William Wallace!

Grimsby Heselrigge is dead in his bed, justly executed by our Wallace himself, who thereby had his just revenge for his unto death violated wife. Heselrigge and his villains will never be heard of again!

The men Hurray!

Grimsby Our leader wanted to spare Aymer de Valence since this coward begged for mercy, not knowing it was Aymer de Valence in all his lowness, so he was spared. And what did this abject Englishman then do? He cut the very man who spared his life in his back and then ran away! Never more shall any mercy be given any Englishman!

The men Hurray! Down with king Edward!

A voice Never let an English devil ever again across the Tweed!

The men Hurray! Long live Wallace!

Grimsby Or what do you say, my good Wallace?

Wallace Are you standing here again exciting our men to bloodthirst, my brother of destiny?

Grimsby I am only doing my duty and keeping up the spirits of our men.

The men Speak to us, Wallace!

Wallace (loud) It has been cried: "Down with Edward!" But he is already down. His entire government with damned governors, bailiffs, spies and extortionists are kicked in their arse across the Tweed and will never come here again except for their burial. We are rid of them! So let king Edward far away in the bottom of England beyond all our geography live in peace in his aging autumn. We want no harm to come to him as long as he remains in England!

The men Bravo! Hear! Hear! He is right! We only wanted to get rid of the English, and now we are rid of them! Good riddance too!

A voice But we must have a king of our own!

Several Be our king, William Wallace!

Others You are the only candidate! You alone are possible!

A voice Baliol and the young Robert the Bruce has failed us!

Another It's time to open the shrine! Open the shrine now for us today, our dear William Wallace!

Wallace Brothers, beware of presumption! I have no right to the crown of Scotland. It's true that Baliol failed us, but he was trapped and a tragic victim to his own stupidity. Robert the Bruce has never failed us, for he never even got the chance to take a stand for us. He is my only rightful king. My sole ambition was to avenge my Marion, my beloved wife, and to turn this terrible fury of revenge to some

advantage by the total liberation of Scotland. This constructive revenge has now been a complete success, and I would rather now retire piously to grieve alone forever. The last thing I desire is to be a king. If I am given the supreme power of the country I delivered, I fear that I delivered you in vain. I will not hear of it. I am your friend and brother, fellow soldier and servant, but I will never become anyone's master.

The men Hurray!

Wallace I never desired any honour. I only strove with the hearts of others and their honest affection for me and my services to in some way heal my own bitterly broken and ailing heart. So far I am on the right way. Let me keep your hearts, and fail me not in the cause of Scotland, and I will be wholly satisfied.

The men Bravo! Hurray!

Wallace Let the royal crown of Scotland never touch anyone's brow before Robert the Bruce, the only man whom no one can deny the right of our throne and sceptre!

Some Let it be as Wallace wants.

The men Hurray! Hurray! (*A bishop is approaching.*)

Wallace What is your wish, your grace?

Bishop I come with respects from king Edward.

Wallace Then watch your tongue! Say nothing silly, for then king Edward will be the man to rue his own mistakes!

Bishop King Edward is the wisest of all regents. He offers William Wallace these fortunes (*opens a golden shrine full of gold and jewels*) and his peace and in addition an impeccably legal royal crown, if Sir William Wallace allows himself to be crowned in the Durham cathedral.

Wallace My bishop, you are old. Go with all your gaga to king Edward.

Bishop Does not Scotland desire peace? That's the only thing king Edward wants.

Wallace Has he no terms?

Bishop Only for Wallace to bow to Edward as his legal sovereign.

Wallace Go to hell then, potty bishop! (*shows him off and kicks him in the arse.*)

Kick that fool away from here and out from this free country! No one is allowed to come here merely to smear and mock our sacred independence with some double standards, bribes, duplicity and sanctimony! That mitre he can turn to some worn shabby scarecrow who would honour and deserve it so much better than himself!

Bishop When the king will hear your answer he shall with his army utterly extinguish all the towns of Scotland!

Wallace Tell him then to practise first on his own towns, or else he won't come very far. He could just for a start set fire to his Tower.

Bishop The Tower, William Wallace, is where you shall die!

Wallace In that case you should first come over here and get me! As long as I remain in Scotland I can only be as free as Scotland. Only when you have by force bereft our Scotland of its independence and our freedom, the issue of my death could be discussed, for I shall never fall until all Scotland falls, I am the last free man of Scotland, and as long as there are other free men in the country, you shall never manage to get me where I don't want to be.

Bishop We'll meet again, Sir William Wallace!

Wallace No, we certainly will not, your imbecile conceited grace! (*to his own*) If every Englishman is equal to this fool in absolute presumption and conceit, king Edward hasn't got much useful people to apply for his crusade of violence.

(*The men laugh.*)

Scene 2. The Tower in London.

Bruce What news, my only friend in all the world?

Gloucester I was right. King Edward has been forced to retreat from battle for the first time in his life. The noble Wallace seems for certain to be quite invincible.

Bruce Because his cause is just and fair. King Edward has got nothing to defend. He only wants to master others to suppress them.

Gloucester There is now no Englishman left beyond Tweed. King Edward's camp was plundered after the battle by Wallace, and there was no one in king Edward's army who did not miserably flee like cowards, running still and calling for their mothers. The battle wasn't even on Scottish ground. Our Wallace met Edward in Northumberland.

Bruce They say that Wallace only has to make a fire in the night, and there will straight be beacons lighted all over Scotland.

Gloucester It's true. The clans are signalling by beacons. If Sir William Wallace gives a signal there will straight be hundreds more along the horizon and thousands lit all over Scotland all the way from Lindisfarne to Inverness and Stroma. Never before have the clans of Scotland demonstrated such a unity. They are all one together to their chief Sir William Wallace.

Bruce His power is then greater than that of any Scottish king.

Gloucester He is more a king than any king, for no one can call into question his self-evident position as the Scottish leader. But such a position, so unquestionable and unique, is bound to naturally raise some envy.

Bruce I can never in the least be envious of him.

Gloucester No, for he is not a king. But there are ladies who cannot forgive him that he only keeps associating with the memory of his dead wife.

Bruce Is he attractive to the ladies?

Gloucester He is indeed, and he keeps flouting everyone who dares to come too near. He has already mortally insulted several for trying to advance themselves in his good favours disrespecting his consistent grief and faithfulness to his dead wife.

Bruce He has the right to turn them down.

Gloucester But there is no lady offering herself to man who can forgive him if he turns her down. A woman easily allows herself to be beleaguered and made use of with no sound of a complaint, but if she begs herself for love and to be violated, no one can save him who dares to let her down. That woman has herself brought shame on her, which she will never able to forgive that man.

Bruce Is Wallace then applying such a risky policy towards the ladies?

Gloucester Unfortunately he has happened to some cases of that kind who shamed themselves, and they are his first and his only enemies so far and on his own home ground. They could as enemies prove even a more fatal danger to him than king Edward and all powers of the world and all the tricky arts of politics.

Bruce It's time, I think, to start considering how to escape.

Gloucester Yes, my friend, that moment is for certain getting imminent and ripe.

Scene 3. Lochmaben Castle.

Lord Mar Welcome home to the only royal castle of Scotland, my dear friend Wallace! Twice you saved my life, but that is nothing to how you have saved the life of Scotland. However you persist in your refusal to be king of Scotland, never can a king of Scotland root so deeply in the hearts of Scottish men as you have done already for all times. Is that not true, my dearest wife?

Lady Mar Our Wallace has grown into legend stuff enough already for all times and generations of attractive minstrels of the future.

Wallace Lady Mar, I can't stand flattery. And I prefer by far to be more fairly treated with some truth and honesty than to be made to stuff that dreams are made of.

Lady Mar There were never tales that were not only made for the enhancement and embellishment of truth.

Wallace I beg to do without all possible embellishments, enhancement, artifice and fiction.

Lord Mar My wife intends no insult, Wallace.

Wallace Do you still retain the shrine in sacred custody and virgin closure?

Lord Mar Yes. It never shall be opened but by King Robert the Bruce, on your own absolute demand.

Wallace That's all I ask for. I am satisfied if you will see to only that fulfilment and wish only to return now to the Highlands.

Lord Mar Noble Wallace, you can't mean that. It would be a breach to Scottish hospitality. Sleep over night at least.

Wallace I am not worthy sleeping in a royal castle.

Lord Mar Nonsense, my good man! Relax! You are at home here!

Lady Mar Perhaps you never have slept in a bed before and therefore do not know how it is done.

Wallace I actually have never slept in bed since Marion, my wife, was murdered.

Lord Mar Then you have forgotten all about that vital comfort, and my wife must teach you and re-educate you about sheets concerning how to use them. Show our hero our most beautiful and restful chamber, Ethelberta, and let him be buried there in comfort for at least one night.

Wallace I would rather not, if you don't mind.

Lord Mar Nonsense! A warrior must even learn how to get civilized. Take care of our guest, Ethelberta. One protest more, my Wallace, and it is a mortal insult to your hostess.

Wallace (bows) My last wish is to ever hurt the feelings of another, least of all a woman's.

Lord Mar Then I leave you to my wife. Sleep well, my noble Wallace. *(leaves)*

Lady Mar You look yearningly after my husband as if you longed him to get back. You are not surely afraid of a woman?

Wallace Without my soldiers I am like a fish on land, my lady Mar.

Lady Mar Don't you ever feel the lack of ladies in your wars?

Wallace Indeed, I constantly and sorely miss my wife.

Lady Mar But she is dead, isn't she?

Wallace There is no need of reminding me.

Lady Mar What kind of man are you who only loves a woman dead?

Wallace Lady Mar, I ask you humbly to leave Marion's memory in peace.

Lady Mar I only wanted to remind you, that there are other women than the dead ones.

Wallace That you also don't have to remind me of.

Lady Mar In spite of all, then, you can show another woman some respect?

Wallace I show with honesty respect to every woman.

Lady Mar Can you even then show some respect to me?

Wallace Have I not done so?

Lady Mar No, Wallace, you have not. You always only brutally neglected me. Can you not see that I am some twenty years younger than this old man I'm married to whom you so much revere?

Wallace Your age, my lady, never came across my mind.

Lady Mar I was not allowed to choose my husband by myself. I was chosen for a wife to him by a preponderance of overbearing families, my parents and his own, who commonly decided that the party was convenient only for political and economic reasons. I could never really love that old impotent man, Sir William.

Wallace Then you should have found yourself a convent.

Lady Mar Don't you understand, Sir William? Can't you have some empathy with a poor woman? Did you not love your beloved wife? She had no children, it is said. Perhaps she was neglected by you just as I am.

Wallace Lady Mar, you have no right to mix yourself up with my wife.

Lady Mar You loved her then, in other words?

Wallace As highly and as passionately as that moment was too short that destiny allowed us to each other.

Lady Mar Then you must be capable of understanding women. Then you ought to understand how madly I am lost in love with you.

Wallace Love is never madness. It's a fire, though, that never should be spread for other ears to hear it and catch fire, like your husband's, for example.

Lady Mar He can never give me any further children, and he never gives me love. He never did. I cannot care for him. I love but you, and I have done so ever since you came and saved us from the horrid prison of Dumbarton. That mad Aymer de Valence tried to seduce me, but you came just in the nick of time to save me from my second cursed violator. You became the only one I ever loved, Sir William. You are the most beautiful and best man in the world. I never wanted anyone but you.

Wallace My lady, I cannot deceive your husband, never, not in any way, my own most faithful friend and Scotland's.

Lady Mar Politics again! That's what my husband always did deceive me with! Now you are doing it as well! May all men then be cursed and go to hell for their sick preference of politics to women and relationships!

Wallace My lady, you are raving.

Lady Mar And righteously! I loved you, and you turn me down. I never will forget it or forgive you. Die then with my husband for the hands of traitors to your Scotland, Wallace, damned accursed sanctimonious paragon of virtue!

Wallace Lady Mar, I sympathize in sadness with your husband, who with his deep incorruptibility of loyalty to Scotland certainly deserved a better loyalty from his own wife. I must leave off at once. You may yourself explain my reasons to your husband.

Lady Mar But where will you go?

Wallace Straight to the graveyard of my wife. She was a paragon of honour, loyalty and decency at least. Your worst crime is not your proposal but that you have dared to violate my wife by using her name in your mouth in spite of all my protests. I bid you farewell, my lady, hopefully forever. (*leaves*)

Lady Mar (coldly) I did not insult you, Wallace. You insulted me. But I will spare my husband that offence. But one day, William Wallace, it will cost you your own head.

Act IV scene 1. The Tower of London.

Bruce Well, what intolerably happy news have you today, my count?

Gloucester The best of news, no news at all.

Bruce Has Wallace then remarried?

Gloucester No, but he has disappeared.

Bruce Gone missing?

Gloucester He left the royal castle in Scotland at midnight and no one knows why. Since then he never has been seen again.

Bruce Has he abandoned Scotland? That would be improbable and most unlike that hero.

Gloucester There is no one who knows anything.

Bruce And how does Edward take to that?

Gloucester He considers it a clear advantage and has already begun to mobilize a brand new army against Scotland.

Bruce And if there is no more Wallace to be found for the defence of Scotland – who will then defend it?

Gloucester Not king Edward. And he is so sure now of his final victory that he has almost promised to give Robert Bruce his freedom.

Bruce Does he then imagine me to lick his slippers?

Gloucester No, but he explains it by that you were always such an exemplary prisoner. He also seems quite sure that you will not be able to raise any new Scots army when Sir William is completely disappeared and all his men are lost.

Bruce Edward is experienced as a politician of reality. He thinks he now shall have the situation under his control, and logic is for certain on his side. But there is more in life than only logic.

Gloucester Maybe some anonymous and unexpected clandestine manifestation could be helpful in invoking more than only logic?

Bruce What are you up to now?

Gloucester A young Scottish minstrel has of late charmed the court ladies and the princess with enchanting songs of William Wallace. He is obviously an eye-witness, and he has nothing against seeing you.

Bruce Is he a spy or maybe messenger?

Gloucester Who knows?

Bruce Is the king aware of that I will receive a Scottish visitor?

Gloucester That I don't know either. For security I will remain outside, and I shall keep me out of it. I will not hear a word of what you and that Scotsman will have to discuss.

Bruce And also no one else?

Gloucester That is arranged for certain.

Bruce May he come to me?

Gloucester He stands outside already waiting. When I leave you, it's to be replaced by him. I shall stand guard outside without and beyond hearing. (*sets his finger to his lips and leaves*)

Bruce Is it perhaps a message from above that I have to expect? An inner voice tells me that this encounter will determine nothing less than my own destiny and Scotland's.

Minstrel (robed like a black monk, enters) Greetings, king of Scots.

Bruce Here I am only prisoner of state.

Minstrel Do you not recognize me then? (*reveals his face*)

Bruce But it is Wallace!

Wallace (bending knees and neck) At your service only, my true king.

Bruce My friend, you risk your life by showing yourself south of Cheviot, and by coming here you have put your own neck into the running noose!

Wallace For you I will do anything, Robert the Bruce, and I will probably die anyway sooner or later.

Bruce The joy you bring me by appearing at the risk of everything is clouded by the grief and worry which is worse than death that this might mean your all too early death.

Wallace I would not have come here if there were not very valid reasons.

Bruce Tell me.

Wallace There is treason being brewed. King Edward has begun assembling a new army certain of a victory this time. He thinks he this time finally will crush all Scottish freedom, and he would not have believed so if he had not traitors far north of the Cheviots. I don't know yet who these traitors are, but the intrigue is spreading like the plague in certain areas. The only thing that could save Scotland now is your escape from England and that you take the responsibility for Scotland's freedom upon you.

Bruce I am surrounded day and night by spies who watch me closely. I can only think of now, that if you are detected, taken and disposed of probably by gruesome execution, the eternal curse of Scotland's thralldom will then weigh most heavily on me.

Wallace Don't bother. I am safe. Your friend count Gloucester is more than a neutral friend. No one suspects him. He is the king's own son-in-law.

Gloucester (enters) I am sorry, Robert Bruce, the minstrel must depart.

Wallace (kneeling) On behalf of all of Scotland, your own country, and all Scotsmen, I present to you, the King of Scotland, their united earnest prayer and petition, that you will as soon as possible go home to your own people. That is all I had to say. Farewell, my lord of Scotland.

Bruce My friend, I am touched. Give Wallace my sincerest greetings and implore him to endure until Robert the Bruce one day will come.

Wallace (never lifting his head) I think that will be satisfying for an answer. Best of luck, my lord and king!

Bruce I wish the same for William Wallace.

Gloucester We are rather in a hurry. On the highest level there have been raised doubts as to the authenticity of this mysterious minstrel. If he is unmasked his life is probably forfeited. He must get away at once, or else all will be lost.

Minstrel I escape with new hopes for our Scotland.

Bruce Fare well. (*Gloucester leaves with Wallace.*)

Gloucester knows the secret passages, and he is more than loyal to me. Wallace will hold out until I come. There is no man who in an honest battle can defeat a hero who is led on by his purity and virtue like Sir William. He has never once defiled himself after the death of his beloved wife. The legend says he will remain invincible until he is unfaithful to his murdered wife, and he will most probably remain so.

(*Gloucester returns.*) Is Wallace brought to safety?

Gloucester Wallace? My lord, you wander in your mind. I only know a minstrel whom I helped out by the back gate since he was dispersed enough to dare to enter without passport. No one knows who that mysterious stranger was and least of all yourself, I warrant, Robert Bruce.

Bruce The minstrel was brought out to safety then?

Gloucester He rises in this moment from a grave located in the churchyard of our Tower, where the secret tunnel of escape from here ends up, which only is well known to our own royal family.

Bruce Good, noble Gloucester. I will not forget it.

Gloucester And you will soon be free. A dismal prison is no place for any royal heir whatever country he may represent. A king is always nothing but a king if even he is enemy to the very country he is kept a prisoner in. Dangerous people will be only boring if they forcibly are kept too long away from freedom. *(with a friendly clap on his arm.)*

Scene 2. Like the prologue.

The hermit And full of enthusiasm Wallace returned to Scotland and assembled his chiefs and told them the happy news that Robert Bruce soon would come to fill the vacant space of the empty throne of Scotland. And the clans rejoiced but not too long, for soon king Edward brought a monstrous army in a storm to Scotland burning everything where this destruction passed. There were a number of most noble Scottish thanes that fell in battle raging between Grampion mountains and the Cheviot hills, but finally the glorious Wallace managed once again to drive all trespassing, intruding and voracious Englishmen back down to where they came from. Once again king Edward was defeated, once again all Scotland liberated, but the flower and the strength of its nobility was lost. Among the many who had fallen was Lord Mar, the faithful guardian of the Scottish crown and purple, for that was the secret contents of the holy shrine once smuggled out by Baliol from the Tower, never to be opened though until Robert the Bruce came home to finally disclose the secret of the shrine...

Visitor Was his wife also killed?

Hermit Whose wife?

Visitor Lady Mar, who tried to beleaguer Wallace.

Hermit Not at all, unfortunately, since she was a young one as a widow and still beautiful, believing still in her vain dreams of an impossible and egoistic love.

Visitor Did she really dare to try again to make advances and ensnare Sir William?

Hermit Patience, my good friend. Just wait, and you will hear it all in proper and due order.

Scene 3. Inside a tent in the wilderness.

Wallace Where is Robert Bruce? Is he expecting me to die first so that he then will be without competition? In that case I thought he knew his friend Wallace better. Here I am alone in total power, envied certainly by everyone but undisputable. And I get lonelier every day, the mood of opposition grows for every day that Robert Bruce is pleased to keep postponing his homecoming. They are bored and tired of me. They feel all too well my melancholy and moroseness, my invincibility and unattainability. A leader of that kind can never become popular. If only Robert Bruce was here!

A servant (entering) Sir William, a young unknown knight seeks audience.

Wallace Who is he?

Servant He will not say.

Wallace Another upstart who by fawning only wants to reach a rank without deserving it. Let in the young man, then. (*Servant leaves.*) That's my only company in these days: green lads trying to make some impression on me just by flattering and fawning. What decadence! (*enter the knight*)

Knight My lord, you do not know me although I know you.

Wallace I've heard that one before. What can I do for you, young man?

Knight You should know me, though, since we met before.

Wallace How could I know you since you please to even hide your face? Turn up your visor and take off that helmet, and reveal yourself if you are something of a man!

Knight I dare not show myself from fear that you will never want to see me anymore.

Wallace Just tell me then, what do you want?

Knight I only want to die with you.

Wallace I will not die so easily, but nothing hinders you from serving in my army among many thousands others who desire but to die for Scotland.

Knight I have come here to become more close to you than that for now and ever or to die.

Wallace I have no right to give such privileges, since it never would be fair against the others. Besides, it could raise the suspicion that you were a homosexual. Such an awkward inconvenience I would never want to cause you.

Knight (removing his helmet) See then who I am!

Wallace (astounded) Mylady Mar!

Lady Mar Yes, I am your best friend's widow! I am free now and like Scotland independent as yourself, and I have come to you for the last time to tell you that I love you and can never love anyone else.

Wallace Lady Mar, unfortunately my heart has not shifted since we last time saw each other. On the contrary, it has grown only harder and more bitter. Don't remind me of the love I long since have forgotten but for my dead wife, who is more dead than ever.

Lady Mar Cruel general! Are you then not human? Is there something wrong with me? Am I not beautiful?

Wallace No one can deny that you are more than beautiful.

Lady Mar So take me then! My hair is soft and rich like silk, my constitution is as strong as yours, and my female assets are now at the top of their maturity and overwhelming. I could give your life a meaning. I am only forty. Take me then, accept my generous and earnest offer, or I will go down and languish in unanswered love and will not be responsible for what could be the consequences.

Wallace There is only one thing wrong with you, my lady. You are not a man.

Lady Mar And if I were a man, you would not have rejected me?

Wallace On the contrary. If you were man you would not suffer from the feelings that now cause you and myself such inconvenience.

Lady Mar Damned stuck-up dummy!

Wallace Woman, hold your mouth, control yourself and hide your passion, saving it for someone else. If you remain here bickering, I have to kick you out myself.

Lady Mar Then kick me out! Use violence! The slightest touch by you is all that I desire! I would most of all have seen what you conceal under your kilt, just hit me, quarrel with me, hate me, spare me not and least of all my honour, but be not unmoved and cold and heartless! That alone I never could forgive a man whom I in honesty gave all my love!

Wallace Please, woman, leave. I have no more to say to you. I gave up and was finished with my life of love when Marion was murdered, and I never found that love again.

Lady Mar Your pride is beyond decency, and your conceit is hardly human.

Wallace It is only bitter pain and sorrow, never pride.

Lady Mar Then you spoke to me for the last time. Then listen to my answer. I am she who started the conspiracy in Scotland to remove you from your power. I have personally bought each Scotsman of the English party to be the relentless mortal enemy of your conceit and virtue. The all-encompassing treason, spreading like the rings on water, has been organised by the widow of your best friend, Scotland's backbone, only to bring about your fall. And there is no way out for you. When your head is separated from your body on the block in view of all the London English rabble, then remember, that I was the one who put it there. (*leaves*)

Wallace A nightmare vision like no other. Still she was alive. How can a woman in the name of love behave and act so meanly when I gave so earnestly and generously so much passion and true love to my beloved Marion? Woman, you are worse than the most terrible of deaths, for your words could break every virtue in Christianity.

No, I cannot rest this night. That woman has destroyed my peace forever with her godlessness and meanness. (*leaves*)

Scene 4. Like the prologue. The visitor is quiet and observes.

Hermit And he went up into the mountains in the paleness of the awesome moonlight on an endless promenade which brought him far away from all humanity. And there he found in some obscure and inaccessible dark cave far beyond everything an aged and holy hermit, who was waking by the glaring moonlight just like he. And Wallace asked the hermit quietly:

Wallace Old man, will you not sleep this horrid night?

Hermit No, since I was expecting you.

Wallace You knew, then, that I happened to be coming this way?

Hermit I knew that I must on this night declare your destiny to you.

Wallace And how could you know? How do you know who I am? We have never seen each other earlier.

Hermit An alien of destiny immediately recognizes another alien of destiny.

Wallace You seem rather spooky and as old as any Ahasverus. Are you then of flesh and blood?

Hermit I am as thoroughly alive as you, my poor boy.

Wallace Do not pity me, for I am still alive, although most miserable and unblest.

Hermit Do not fear. Your unblest misery will not remain for long.

Wallace And how shall I get cured of it? Just do not tell me that I should find for myself a woman.

Hermit There is never any risk that you should fall in love again. The risk is rather and more serious that you will be betrayed.

Wallace Betrayed?

Hermit My son, your king Robert the Bruce has failed you, for he has not returned to Scotland, as he promised. The nobility of Scotland does not believe in Scotland anymore and not in your Robert the Bruce, and many of them have allowed themselves to be corrupted by king Edward, who has bought them. All those who were faithful to you and who honoured their own country and its freedom are now dead and fallen for the mighty sword and overbearing violence of Edward. The technique of war has on the English side far outgrown the minority of Scottish individual humanity. King Edward's men are many and fight hidden behind masks, impenetrable armour and machines, while you are few and fight with your bare arms. That's how your Scottish noblemen are viewing things who therefore have abandoned you for Edward.

Wallace So what should I do?

Hermit Escape to Norway or to Denmark.

Wallace And if I remain in Scotland, what's to be expected?

Hermit You will get at best a nameless grave, a falsified report, the cowardice of silence and no requiem mass except the wailing of the eagles and the howling of the wolves. You shall be forgotten by all people, since that's in the interest of the progress of politics.

Wallace Have I then fought in the memory of my beloved wife for Scotland's freedom and our liberation all in vain?

Hermit Yes, unfortunately, that is how it is, my friend, for each time, and this will not be the last time, as your country in its freedom pathos rises, all its vainly fought for freedom will be drowned in its own blood by the superior power of the English, for they always will be greater, more and crueller than you, and there will always be those Scotsmen who would never hesitate to sell their country for some money.

Wallace You are worse than any Englishman.

Hermit I am only realistic and have no illusions. I have seen too many wars. I already belonged to those who first sang of the unfair battle over there in Ireland of king Brian.

Wallace Then you are a spirit.

Hermit No, I'm just a minstrel.

Wallace You know all, then, of humanity.

Hermit No, I must always go on with my education and re-education of the grounds and basics of humanity and of the human being, who will never be the same but changes constantly in nature, like Dame Nature does herself.

Wallace Then you are wise, and you at least know something. Then I believe in you, but will hardly be less miserable and unblest for that.

Hermit Even if you die, the minstrel's songs will never die or quieten.

(The hermit and the visitor disappear unnoticeably.)

Wallace Was that a vision, a dream, a hallucination, a spirit or just reality?

He spoke less good than any other, and only therefore I am more inclined to trust my vision and this dream than any other. *(leaves)*

Act V scene 1. A pub in Scotland.

Guest 1 I tell you Wallace is finished!

Guest 2 He is still fighting, though, like any wolf or bear.

Guest 1 In vain! Only for his own prestige! He has no chance against king Edward's superior power, and he knows it! He goes on fighting just because he knows he is about to die and rather dies a martyr than goes hiding in exile without honour.

Guest 3 King Edward's armies are now greater than ever when he assails Scotland for the third time.

Guest 1 Wallace stands no chance! We will never have peace until we accept Edward for our king, and that will Wallace never do!

Guest 4 What about Robert the Bruce, then?

Guest 2 He sits in London moulding in his brooding indecision. He probably will die there finally of personal mortification for his lacks and wants.

Guest 4 We can't abandon Wallace now!

Guest 1 We must abandon Wallace now before all Scotland has been bled to death!

Sir John Monteith (has listened to the conversation) Gentlemen, your talk sounds just like treason. Are you then among the multitude of traitors here in Scotland to the cause of William Wallace?

Guest 1 Wallace has no chance against king Edward in the long run, and he knows it!

Sir John Are you then of Baliol's family's party, who just want to forget Robert Bruce, prosecute William Wallace as a dictator and place themselves on Scotland's throne?

Guest 2 Which party is then yours, Sir John Monteith?

Sir John No party. I am only in for peace.

Guest 2 Then you yourself belong to Scotland's traitors.

Sir John Prove it. Try me and convince me.

Guest 1 Sir John has always belonged to the more thoughtful among the nobility of Scotland. No one has ever had anything to advance against him.

Guest 2 He has though strange connections among the English.

Guest 4 Why did you never fight under Wallace, Sir John?

John Sir William Wallace never asked me. He always respected my quest for peace and left me alone. I assume that he also has more use of me as a diplomat.

Guest 2 Do you think Robert Bruce will accept the crown of Scotland?

Sir John Not as long as Sir William Wallace still is active and alive. Robert Bruce asserts, that as long as William Wallace keeps on fighting, there's no need for Robert Bruce. But if our Wallace falls, Robert Bruce must take over the Scottish helm. He has no choice, and he knows it better than anyone else.

Guest 4 You seem to know all, Sir John. Tell us then what Wallace really thinks.

Sir John He is disturbed by the interior quarrels. He knows all too well that many men envy him and his position and work for his destruction. At the same time he has mighty friends who desire the destruction of all opposition. But Wallace is an honest man. He will not have anything to do with dictatorial power, he wants no division, he only wants to fight and die for Scotland. And that will probably be his destiny. Even if all Scotland fails him and no more wants to fight king Edward, Wallace will continue gathering new men and overcome the invasions from the south. His invincibility is working still: he has never been overgeneraled even by a woman. His power is still growing, and I just had news from the war of yet another victory over Edward.

Guest 4 Hear! Hear!

Guest 3 Hurray! Has Edward then been beaten for the third time?

Sir John Everything indicates that will be the result.

Guest 2 Praise to God.

Sir John At the same time I heard that the council in Stirling, as soon as the victories are secured, intends to summon Wallace for some investigation.

Guest 4 Investigation? Of what?

Sir John To investigate if Sir William Wallace is a traitor striving for the highest power or if he only is intolerable in his invincibility.

Guest 2 Is Wallace aware of such mean and petty, unworthy intrigues?

Sir John He never cared about them. He will not answer to their call until Edward is finally defeated for the third time. And if I know him right he will retire never to show himself again until Scotland once more needs him.

Scene 2. The Elderslie Castle.
(*Like Act I but everything is overgrown.*)

Wallace (slowly entering, holds a small posy in his hand.)

My Marion, I have come here for one last time to cry for you in your own home. The world is rotten, multiplying constantly its evil with itself by ever overdoing it and surpassing itself in low intrigues of greed. Only the pain and sorrow are of good and peaceful nature, and they always persevere when evil momentarily and happily consumes itself by its own nature. Marion, three times now I have succeeded in defeating Edward and his overbearing military power and organisation of suppression, and each time my people have grown angrier with me. Just to avoid a civil war I have resigned my hard position as commander-in-chief. Without country, without people, without friends and completely without power and position I come back to you to only wallow in my missing you in the immortal peaceful introspection of the piety of sorrow. I may go to France to vanish there into a monastery and thus avoid the traitors who still wish me dead, but I would rather die here by your interrupted but eternal presence in the heart of this so tragic Scotland. I still love you. All the living I have lost. The good were murdered if they did not sacrifice themselves by warring in the hottest front line, like Lord Mar, the noblest of them all. Some others wished to govern me, like Lady Mar, and when they simply could not do it they betrayed themselves, their Scotland and their own bewildered lives. The lady Mar has only by herself caused Scotland a far greater damage than all Edward's devastating armies. You alone are left among the faithful ones, your loyalty transcended and defeated even death, and yet you were the first to die for Scotland. Only you I still can love in this afflicted vale of tears of only degradatory and morbid life, and you are death itself.

But there is someone here besides myself. Who has come here to share my sorrow?

Sir John (appearing as if from nowhere) Noble Wallace, don't you recognize me?

Wallace Sir John Monteith, one of my oldest friends!

Sir John Your friend, I hope, no less, although it has been many years since we last saw each other.

Wallace What are you doing here in this forgotten and forsaken desert castle, which in these days only is a mausoleum for my Marion, my wife?

Sir John I have come here many times to meditate, philosophize and honour yours and Marion's memory.

Wallace Last time we saw each other you entrusted me with the state secret number one of Scotland.

Sir John And you guarded it surprisingly efficiently. It is still unopened.

Wallace That gives me pleasure. But what can I do for you?

Sir John I was about to ask you the same question. As we meet again now all that I can say and think of is that I wish to remain your humblest servant.

Wallace Don't you know then that my life remains in constant danger, as it always was? That I here in my Scotland have more enemies than in all England?

Sir John Them I wish in that case to protect you from.

Wallace You are then the last friend that I own in life. Those who call themselves my friends desire only to kill off the opposition. They are therefore no less enemies to me than all my actual enemies.

Sir John Who are then these your actual enemies?

Wallace All the credulous and superficial noblemen who follow that arch traitress, countess Mar, the whore who prostitutes my Scotland to get money for immature cynical opportunists who thereby are transformed to slaves of England.

Sir John History repeats itself. Already Morgan le Fay...

Wallace But tell me, honest friend, what happened to you after you had given me that shrine? Were you disturbed at home in the same way as they destroyed my life?

Sir John You could almost say so.

Wallace But in all these years we never heard from you. Have you been to prison?

Sir John In some way, yes.

Wallace You avoid my questions. I beg you to be completely open with me. I am curious as to where you really stand politically.

Sir John You shall know that once. *(blows suddenly a whistle, and twenty men from all directions rush in attacking Wallace, who defends himself with ardour.)*

Take him alive!

(Wallace finally falls by being bludgeoned from behind.)

Bind him securely and bring him to the coast where the ship is waiting to take him to London. *(Wallace is hogtied hard and then carried away still unconscious.)*

One villain Did he guess that you were about to betray him?

Sir John In his naïve self-glory he didn't understand it until it was too late.

Villain And what was your motive, if you excuse my curiosity?

Sir John Only money and security. What else?

Scene 3. The Tower of London.

Wallace alone in a dark dungeon laid with heavy chains to both hands and feet.

He is silent and apathetic for a while until the guard comes.

Guard Good morning, Sir William Wallace.

Wallace You are welcome, my friend. Besides you my only company here is old rats.

Guard I am sorry it has to be like that, but it really isn't my fault.

Wallace Not mine either.

Guard Still we are both here and can do nothing about it. We have only to find ourselves in what the lords outside these walls please to decide about us inside. However unfair your destiny is, I think it's just as unfair that I should feel as guilty thereof as the lords out there, who don't feel it the same way. We are just like the dirt of flies to them, Sir William Wallace.

Wallace All idealists of freedom are just like irritating dirt of flies to those who have the power. What does the king say about me?

Guard Nothing. He is fully occupied with new war preparations against Scotland. Yes, by the way, he asked me to tell you one thing. Did you know that Robert the Bruce has escaped?

Wallace No.

Guard Do you know where he is hiding?

Wallace No. Was that the king's greeting?

Guard That if you knew where Robert Bruce was hiding you would be a free man with the rank of count.

Wallace The king is not realistic.

Guard So it seems.

Wallace When will it all be over?

Guard What?

Wallace My longed for execution.

Guard As soon as the king returns from Scotland. He would fain have had you and Robert Bruce executed together, for a celebration of the definite subjection of Scotland.

Wallace Robert the Bruce is more clever than I. If he once is free he will not be caught again.

Guard I hope you are right, Sir William Wallace. But as long as he is free you can never be pardoned.

Wallace I don't ask for it either.

Guard What do you ask for?

Wallace Only the freedom of Scotland and Robert the Bruce.

Guard I shall tell that to the king.

Wallace Do so.

Guard So long, Sir William Wallace.

Wallace Good-bye, my friend.

(As the guard leaves, all lights go out from the cell.)

Scene 4. A public place of execution in London's Tower. Much people.

A citizen Who is to be executed?

A woman No one less than Sir William Wallace, the terror of the nation.

Another woman And the king himself will be present at the execution.

Citizen Is it true? Then it will be a real spectacle.

A merchant How will he be executed?

A soldier After being quartered he will have his head cut off with a sword, as befits a nobleman. Then his head will be set up on the gate of the Tower.

Another soldier May he be damned, as much British blood that he has spilt!

Citizen People say though that he was a good man among men.

Soldier 2 If he was good, then Attila was as well.

The merchant He only wanted to avenge his lady's death, who was unfairly murdered by an Englishman.

Citizen Yes, I heard that also, and only from grief over the murder of his wife he stirred all Scotland so that it took fire in hell.

Merchant King Edward has had a hell with Scotland since then, and it is constantly grown worse. And it will not be better with Wallace's death, for now Robert Bruce is in Scotland, and he is even bloodier than Wallace.

First lady We English should never had anything to do with the Scots. Already the Romans had to build protection walls against them across the whole country.

Merchant Yes, and since then the Scots have continued to defend their freedom. And mark well: they never wanted to come further down than Hadrian's wall. They only wanted to be in peace to themselves with their absurd unbridled freedom.

A baker Yes, what the hell would they bring that Wallace down here for? He had it much better in Scotland. There you could hate him, but here you can only pity him.

Citizen They say the king seriously considered pardoning him. It's only Wallace himself who wouldn't hear of it.

First woman Thank heaven for that! If he would be pardoned here in London, no one would go safe anymore in the streets and markets of London!

(Enter soldiers with Wallace.)

Citizen Here they come!

Second woman How beautiful he is!

Citizen You can see that he suffered much. He could have been my son.

A herald Silence! In the name of the King the traitor William Wallace is sentenced to death by decapitation and quartering by sword to have raised rebellion against his lawful lord king Edward the First of England. Sir William Wallace, if you have anything to say for your last words, do it now!

Wallace I have nothing to say.

Priest The prisoner has confessed all his sins and has been absolved with the extreme unction. He has declared himself ready for death and can't be more prepared.

Merchant At least he will admitted straight to paradise.

Herald Soldiers! Bring up the prisoner on the scaffold!

(Wallace is brought up.)

Release his hands!

(His pinioned hands are released.)

Sir William Wallace, come forth to suffer your execution!

A war veteran Where is now Lady Mar, who betrayed him?

Another She appears to have joined a convent.

Veteran All women do who have something to regret.

The other Yes. What I cannot understand is why she didn't do so from the beginning.

Veteran Regretted her treason?

The other No, joined the convent.

Veteran Such people never do what they should have done from the beginning.

(Meanwhile Wallace appears alone on the scaffold. He raises his eyes to an invisible point afar. When he starts speaking all are frozen, and light focuses on him.)

Wallace Give me but one last thought, o God. If you exist, then let me not die like this. That would be the seal on that all my trouble for the freedom of Scotland was in vain. I cannot accept it. I was betrayed by my most trusted friend in the most sacred place existing on our earth, my only sanctum, the very grave of the virginity of my beloved wife. Like she was violated, so was all of Scotland. I cannot accept it. Kill me, God, for all my murders in the wars, but let not that violation of my wife and her grave and Scotland prove that you are godless. – Burst, my heart, and blow your prison, life! - in anger over life's injustice, but allow it not to triumph.

(collapses. Immediately light returns, and all become alive again.)

Priest (hurries forth to examine the body) He is dead.

Merchant There broke a noble heart. His sorrows brought him down and took his life, not the injustice that he suffered.

A man (makes way to the scaffold, speaks with authority) What has happened?

Priest His heart broke before the sword of justice touched his blood.

The man (has come up) So he finally evaded even death. He could not be subjected to the vanity of our mundane concrete base reality.

People (mumbling) Who is he?

(the whisperings increase) It is his majesty the king! *(many uncover their heads.)*

Edward Noble Wallace, I could not arrive in time to halt your execution, but you managed to avoid it anyway. I wanted to give you your freedom only since you well deserved it, I sincerely wished to give you bliss and a retreat for your old age in that French monastery that you dreamt of, but I came too late. If you can hear me, hear what I give you instead. Robert the Bruce has carried through a great decisive victory at Banockburn, and thereby he has finally secured the crown of Scotland with its freedom, peace and independence. He is solemnly now being crowned, as I assume and as you wished indeed and fought for all your later life. I thereby lay down all my enmity and arms. Never again may any Englishman unworthily defile his hands by shedding the free blood of Scotland. We renounce hereby all claims on Scotland and acknowledge Robert Bruce as Scotland's king. You did not struggle, work and die in vain, Sir William Wallace. Find your paradise in peace, and live forever in the unforgettable and pious memories of minstrels, poets, chroniclers and antiquarians. I shall never challenge or disturb you any more, your Scotland or for that part any man who willingly relinquishes all good in life just for the privilege of being free. You hero more outstanding, glorious and wonderful than kings, I humbly beg your Scottish future and yourself for reconciliation and atonement.

Go in peace, you all good people who are here and witnessed how a hero got the better of his death. This sad unnecessary tragedy is now completed.
(steps down from the scaffold and disappears among the others, who all gradually disperse.)

Scene 5. Like the Prologue.

Hermit And as long as the old king lived on, Sir William's memory was held in honour. Gradually it transcended into legends, and king Edward's unexperienced successors found these dangerous. The name of Wallace was then banned, and history was foolishly commanded to forget it. New wars against Scotland were commenced, these wars were constantly repeated, and thus was the grave of the old freedom fighter violated and not only his but also that of others. Robert Bruce was murdered only at the age of fifty-five and at the summit of his power, and all Edward's promises, his magnanimity and wise far-sightedness were trampled and forgotten with the memory of noble Wallace and his freedom pathos, which was sacred in its purity.

Visitor How old was Wallace when he died?

Hermit He was no more than thirty-five, but don't believe those tales that tell how he was cruelly tortured unto death in prison. He escaped his torturers before they managed to bring him to death by violence, just as the young Alexei Romanov of Russia.

Visitor Who is that?

Hermit Another hero for democracy and freedom, but that is another story of a martyr for the good old Russia's ancient holiness who isn't even born yet.

Visitor Thanks for your enlightening story. Now I feel already better oriented.

Hermit That's how knowledge works in life: to drive away the darkness from the minds of men. Continue spreading this light further, be a truthful teacher to humanity, for it will always stand in dire need of such forever.

Visitor I will see what I can do. Farewell, old minstrel.

Hermit Fare thee well, my boy. Thanks for your interest and your visit, and come back whenever you desire to learn more.

Scene 6. A workshop in Glasgow.

The Englishman (employer) Where have you been all these days?

The visitor (his employee) Up in the highlands to visit an old friend.

Englishman Who?

Visitor A hermit.

Englishman Why?

Visitor I wanted to hear the truth about Sir William Wallace.

Englishman It's quite available down here. It's written in black and white in every book of history.

Visitor It doesn't tell the truth.

Englishman It tells all that is known.

Visitor Why then does it say nothing of his wife?

Englishman Because he never had a wife.

Visitor You know nothing about that!

Englishman You shouldn't listen to old hermits. They are only muddled. He must have told you also that he never was defeated but by treason?

Visitor Three times he drove back King Edward and his armies south of Cheviot.

Englishman Lies! King Edward only made two wars on Scotland, and in the second he defeated Wallace so completely that the Scot lost all his reputation and completely disappeared for four years without anyone knowing where he had gone.

Visitor That is a lie! As commander-in-chief he resigned voluntarily because of the division among the clan chiefs.

Englishman What nonsense did he tell you more? What did he say about Wallace's execution?

Visitor There was no execution. Wallace died of heart failure before any sword had touched him.

Englishman Then I must inform you, that Wallace was hanged alive without a trial as a traitor to the King, his body was decapitated afterwards, and his head was set up outside the Tower among other traitors.

Visitor That is not true! The King forgave him after his defeat at Banockburn!

Englishman What king?

Visitor Edward the First.

Englishman He never forgave Wallace, he died two years after the execution, and the battle of Banockburn occurred seven years after his death. You have listened to fairy tales, my boy, and taken them seriously. And Robert Bruce died of leprosy, like his father, did he not?

Visitor No, he was murdered.

Englishman He died in leprosy, alone and deserted by all his own after he finally had secured for himself the royal crown of his own vanity!

Visitor Accursed Englishman, you know nothing about the Scots. You are blind to beauty and poetry, you cannot read what's in the legends between the lines, you deny everything which isn't proved, and thus you miss all that really matters in life. Sir William Wallace was Scotland. The historical truth is of less significance. You English have no part in William Wallace. He was Sir William Wallace only as long he was free, and he was only free in Scotland as a Scotsman, and when you by treason cowardly brought him to England, that is how he died of violation of his freedom. But his death insured forever Scotland of their freedom, and that freedom you materialistic English have no part in, and you never shall have either, while you close your eyes to everything that isn't proved. Conceited English, go to blazes! No poetic minstrels will appear to you down in the south to sing of truth to you when you have

even now pulled down our royal house of Stuart there to be debased in London. You will probably, I guess, in time decapitate them also.

(to the audience)

Our play has not been written for restricted pedantry, authoritarian arbitrariness, political correctness, sterile science or historical exactness going blind by blinders for impossible perfection. We are here for people, we idealists, and then the letter of the truth plays a much smaller part than the most vital human factor. We have here presented legendary stuff of old traditions cultivated through the centuries by love, which first was taken care of and preserved by one blind minstrel's piety, blind Harry a few centuries ago. That love cannot forgo but must survive if even the whole world will be corrupted unto death by undisputable old bitter most unsatisfactory one-sided dull and utterly defective and imperfect facts.

The End.

