

**Stirling Field (daytime).**

*Stirling Castle perches on a hill high above a grassy field, cut in half by a river, spanned by an old wooden bridge.*

*SCOTTISH NOBLES have gathered on a smaller hill overlooking the field; they wear gleaming armour, with plumes, sashes and banners, and are attended by squires and grooms.*

*The mists of morning shroud most of the field. But from the opposite side of the bridge they hear the CLATTERING of a huge army moving forward. LOCHLAN, a noble, gallops to Mornay.*

Lochlan

It sounds like twenty thousand!

Mornay

The scouts say it is ten.

Lochlan

And we have but two!

*THE COMMON SCOTTISH SOLDIERS are wearing padded leather shirts, and carry pikes and daggers. As through the mists they see the numbers arrayed against them, a YOUNG SOLDIER tugs at a grizzled VETERAN.*

Young Soldier

So many!

Scottish Veteran

The nobles will negotiate. If they deal, they send us home. If not, we charge. When we are all dead and they can call themselves brave, they withdraw.

Young Soldier

I didn't come to fight so they could own more lands that I could work for them!

Veteran

Nor did I. Not against these odds!

*He lowers his pike and starts to desert. At first one-by-one and then in clumps, more highlanders follow.*

*THE NOBLES see the desertion.*

Lochlan

Stop! Men! Do not flee! Not now! Wait until we have negotiated!

Mornay

They won't stop--and how could blame them?

*Then, riding into the mob of men, comes Wallace, followed by his friends. He's striking, charismatic, his powerful arms bare, his chest covered not in armour but a commoner's leather shirt, and unlike the heavy knights on their armoured horses, Wallace rides a swift horse, like he was born on it.*

*The entire Scottish army watches in fascination as Wallace and his men ride through them, toward the command hill. The soldiers whisper among themselves...*

Young Soldier

William Wallace?

Veteran

Couldn't be.

*The common soldiers, already having broken ranks, cluster up the hill to see the confrontation. As Wallace and his captains reach the nobles, Stephen laughs.*

Stephen

The Almighty says this must be a fashionable fight, it's drawn the finest people.

Lochlan

Where is thy salute?

Wallace

For presenting yourselves on this battlefield, I give you thanks.

Lochlan

This is our army. To join it, you give homage.

Wallace

I give homage to Scotland. And if this is your army, why does it go?

*Wallace reins his horse around to face the mob of sullen men, now frightened, ready to desert. We play this picture, Wallace sitting his horse, looking down in awe at this thing that has grown beyond anyone's imagination.*

*He glances at his friends: Campbell, Hamish, Stephen. They've got no suggestions, they're just as awed as he is.*

Scottish Veteran

We didn't come to fight for them!

Shouts from Mob

Home! The English are too many!

*Wallace raises his hand, and the army falls silent.*

Wallace

Sons of Scotland! I am William Wallace!

Soldier

William Wallace is seven feet tall!

Wallace

Yes, I have heard! He kills men by the hundreds! And if he were here, he would consume the English with fireballs from his eyes, and bolts of lightning from his arse!

*Many laugh--all get the point.*

Wallace

I am William Wallace. And my enemies do not go away. I saw our good nobles hanged. I am William Wallace. And I see a whole army of my countrymen, here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men. And free men you are! What will you do with freedom? Will you fight?

Veteran

Two thousand, against ten? We will run--and live!

Wallace

Yes. Fight and you may die. Run and you will live, at least awhile. And dying in your bed many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that, for one chance to come back here as young men, and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they will never take our freedom?

*Down on the plain, English emissaries in all their regal finery gallop over the bridge, under a banner of truce.*

Veteran

Look! The English come to barter with our nobles for castles and titles. And our nobles will not be in the front of the battle!

Wallace

No! They will not!

*He dismounts, and draws his sword.*

Wallace

And I will.

*Slowly, the chant begins, and builds...*

Scots

Wal-lace! Wal-lace! WAL-LACE!

*BAGPIPERS play, pulling the mob back into companies. But through the lifting mists they see the overwhelming enemy army. Hamish, Campbell and Stephen move up beside William.*

Stephen

Fine speech. Now what do we do?