To my grandsons Edward and Robert,

It is dark times that we live in. With the death of the young princess Margaret our land is in turmoil. It requires a steady hand that only the de Brus family can provide. It is time for Scotland to become its own land and those British fools who think they’ve tamed us to see the err in their ways. However, there are those who doubt us and seek to be king as well. There are many challenges that we shall face on the path to throne and God-willing I hope to rule with you both at my side.

Firstly we need to ensure that we are the uncontested ruler of Scotland instead of that Toom Tabard, John Balliol who also seeks the throne. As we all know though, as regent to the young princess I clearly have the advantage. Furthermore both of you two lads have done a tremendous job creating friendships. Friendships that can easily turn quite advantageous to us later down the road. Robert, I must encourage you to stay close friends with Sir James Douglas as his connection with the new bishop of St. Andrews could prove to be quite advantageous to our cause. Lamberton’s own connections of the bishop of Glasgow and William Wallace could then also be swayed to our cause. Furthermore Douglas’s father is quite a powerful man and we would do well to keep him in our favour. We must exploit any weakness that cur shows and not allow any of our own to see the light of day.

I predict that the brutish British will not see us crowned peacefully and we must prepare for that eventuality immediately. In terms of sheer numbers they dominate us, however there are many things we can do to tip the balance. Encouraging our brothers in Ireland and Wales to rise up against their oppressors would go a long way to diminishing the British fleet. We must also encourage their external enemies the French and perhaps gain protection from them. We must also send missives to the Vatican and get God on our side, as with God on our side we must surely beat the British.

As a veteran of the Crusades that were needlessly fought I know how the king fights. And the land in which we live, the land we call home is not easy to capture. It is imperative if we need to fight the british that we do so on our terms. We must use our knowledge of their land to choose when to engage and make quick and targeted attacks, focusing on supplies. The British, known for their overconfidence will probably not pack enough supplies and we can take advantage of this quite easily.

Furthermore we must spread distrust throughout the King’s cabinet. Send letters, have attacks in their livery, whatever necessary to create suspicion and prevent the British from concentrating on our rebellion. For if the British cannot work together, divided they shall fall. Our people have endured centuries under their rule, now is the time for us to reclaim what is our god-given right.

Let us talk more about the bishops. As you indubitably know the blessings of these men is crucial to our success. Not only do they act as heavenly messengers from above their blessings adds substance to our claims to the throne and assures the common people that it is right and just to fight for us. Furthermore monks are great fighters and with the blessings of the bishops we will lose less fathers and they will die for a just cause, our cause.

Now you both might be wondering what we should do with those who want peace with the piddly english. Once again the support of the bishops is crucial as with divine intervention they surely can’t slight our plight and back that fool John Balliol. I too, have experienced the horrors of war, but here we are not looting and raping and slaughtering innocent people. Rather we are protecting our homeland form invaders who seek to humiliate us and treat us little better than slaves.

A little incentive to motivate you both: I am old and will not live much longer. My possessions become your possessions and you shall become the greatest king Scotland and the world has ever seen. My grandsons, the world is ours for the taking if only we have the courage to do so. Continue with your plans as you will, but remember, the throne is the ultimate prize.

I surely don’t have to remind you to burn this letter when you receive it and ensure all communication is kept secret from those who would do us wrong. If God shall be with us Scotland will be free once more.

Sincerely,

Robert de Brus, 5th Lord of Annandale