

**Macbeth ACT 4, SCENE II. Fife. Macduff's castle.**

*Enter LADY MACDUFF, her Son, and ROSS*

**LADY MACDUFF**

What had he done, to make him fly the land?

**ROSS**

You must have patience, madam.

**LADY MACDUFF**

He had none:

His flight was madness: when our actions do not,  
Our fears do make us traitors.

**ROSS**

You know not

Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,  
His mansion and his titles in a place  
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;  
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,  
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,  
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.  
All is the fear and nothing is the love;  
As little is the wisdom, where the flight  
So runs against all reason.

**ROSS**

My dearest coz,

I pray you, school yourself: but for your husband,  
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows  
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak  
much further;

But cruel are the times, when we are traitors  
And do not know ourselves, when we hold  
rumour

From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,  
But float upon a wild and violent sea  
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:  
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:  
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb  
upward

To what they were before. My pretty cousin,  
Blessing upon you!

**LADY MACDUFF**

Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

**ROSS**

I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,  
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:  
I take my leave at once.

*Exit*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Sirrah, your father's dead;

And what will you do now? How will you live?

**Son**

As birds do, mother.

**LADY MACDUFF**

What, with worms and flies?

**Son**

With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,  
The pitfall nor the gin.

**Son**

Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not  
set for.

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Yes, he is dead; how wilt thou do for a father?

**Son**

Nay, how will you do for a husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

**Son**

Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Thou speak'st with all thy wit: and yet, i' faith,  
With wit enough for thee.

**Son**

Was my father a traitor, mother?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Ay, that he was.

**Son**

What is a traitor?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, one that swears and lies.

**Son**

And be all traitors that do so?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be  
hanged.

**Son**

And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Every one.

**Son**

Who must hang them?

**LADY MACDUFF**

Why, the honest men.

**Son**

Then the liars and swearers are fools,  
for there are liars and swearers enow to beat  
the honest men and hang up them.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Now, God help thee, poor monkey!

But how wilt thou do for a father?

**Son**

If he were dead, you'd weep for  
him: if you would not, it were a good sign  
that I should quickly have a new father.

**LADY MACDUFF**

Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

*Enter a Messenger*

**Messenger**

Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,  
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.  
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:  
If you will take a homely man's advice,  
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.  
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage;  
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,  
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve  
you!

I dare abide no longer.

*Exit*

**LADY MACDUFF**

Whither should I fly?

I have done no harm. But I remember now  
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm  
Is often laudable, to do good sometime  
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,  
Do I put up that womanly defence,  
To say I have done no harm?

*Enter Murderers*

What are these faces?

**First Murderer**

Where is your husband?

**LADY MACDUFF**

I hope, in no place so unsanctified  
Where such as thou mayst find him.

**First Murderer**

He's a traitor.

**Son**

Thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain!

**First Murderer**

What, you egg!

*Stabbing him*

Young fry of treachery!

**Son**

He has kill'd me, mother:

Run away, I pray you!

*Dies*

*Exit LADY MACDUFF, crying 'Murder!' Exeunt  
Murderers, following her*