

By the end of studying Act 4, Scene 2 I need to know;

Plot: Lady Macduff and her son are killed by the murderers sent by Macbeth.

Ideas: Lady Macduff questions Ross about her husband's flight, and then tries to explain the situation to her son. She feels betrayed by Macduff. A messenger warns her to make escape.

Vocabulary	<p>coz cousin lime bird lime (a sticky substance for trapping birds) gin trap enow enough I doubt I am concerned savage bold fell terrible egg youngster fry offspring</p>
Context	<p>In the 1600's people believed that authority was derived from God in a great chain of being. God was at the top then came angels, mankind, animals, birds, fish etc. In the human order the king was supreme. Therefore, if the king is killed then this breaks the chain of being and the natural order is broken. Macduff left his family to help make Malcolm king as he is the rightful heir and to remove the tyranny caused in Scotland by Macbeth.</p> <p>Women were seen to be inferior, maternal and powerless to men. This could be demonstrated through Lady Macbeth as she challenges traditional views of women as she demonstrates more masculine qualities than feminine which contrasts to Lady Macduff who is maternal and caring towards her son.</p>
Themes	<p>Masculinity: Men were seen to be strong and brave and are supposed to hide their emotions. Ross leaves before he breaks down and cry in front of Lady Macduff as he does not want to be weak.</p> <p>Loyalty and betrayal: Macduff is loyal to Scotland. He chooses to go to England to ask Malcolm to defend his country instead of protecting his family therefore he betrays his family as he leaves them unprotected.</p> <p>Good and evil: Lady Macduff's goodness and caring behaviour towards her son contrast with Lady Macbeth's unnatural, evil desires- she says she would kill her baby to get what she wants.</p>
Deeper understanding	<p>Lady Macduff is angry and scared because her husband has run off and left her to protect their castle and children. Her fear shows how afraid people are under Macbeth's rule. Her comment, "to do harm/is often laudable", shows how the morals of Scotland have been turned upside down by Macbeth's tyranny. Lady Macduff talks with her son- their witty dialogue shows their maternal bond. The caring character of Lady Macduff contrasts with Lady Macbeth, who would have "dashed the brains out" of her own child. Next, the murderer enters and stabs Lady Macduff's son- it is made even more brutal by the murderer calling him "egg" and "fry", which highlights how young he is and shows Macbeth is willing to kill defenceless children. It also shows that he is too cowardly to commit the murders himself. The murder of Lady Macduff's son happens on stage- this symbolises the fact that Macbeth no longer cares if people see his terrible crimes.</p> <p>Symbolism: Lady Macduff compares herself to a wren, a tiny, powerless bird, protecting her nest from an owl (Macbeth). This reminds the audience of the imagery of the owl killing the falcon in Act 2, Scene 4 and shows that Macbeth is now killing defenceless 'prey'. She also uses this as a way of mocking Macduff- she exclaims how a female wren will protect her family whereas Macduff has abandoned them to gather Malcolm's army.</p> <p>The Anti-Lady Macbeth-It's interesting here to compare Lady Macduff with Lady Macbeth. Whereas Lady Macduff appears to adhere to stereotypical expectations of women at the start of the scene, by the end she demonstrates strength beyond those expectations. She opens the scene angry at Macduff and her speech is typical of irrationality- 'he had none', 'your father is dead'. Her son, acknowledging this irrationality merely remarks his awareness that Macduff is not dead- for she does not cry, and if he is dead then it means she didn't love him (as she isn't crying) and therefore will get a new father soon. Despite his joke, there is a clear reflection of attitudes towards women and marriage. Even a child has these indoctrinated values that a female is only considered in relation to men- in this case, Lady Macduff must have a husband. The son even quips 'nay, what will you do for a husband?' when Lady Macduff asks 'what will you do for a father?'- in this exchange, the grown Lady Macduff is in greater need of a husband than the young son is of a father. When she finds out that the castle is in danger she merely laments how she can only 'put up a womanly defence to say [she has] done no</p>

Reading:

Shakespeare starts this scene in mid-dialogue. This highlights the confusion that Lady Macduff feels about her husband leaving.

Read up to the punctuation.

Links across the text:

Lady Macduff uses animal imagery to compare herself to a wren. This can be linked to the owl killing the falcon in Act 2, Scene 4.

Son's final words "thou liest, thou shag-hair'd villain" foreshadows Young Siward's final words in Act 5. Scene 7.

Ross tries to hide his emotions. This can be linked to Act 4, Scene 3 where Macduff says he will "feel" his grief "as a man". This shows that he sees the ability to show emotion as an important part of his masculinity.

	<p>harm'- thus constructing the idea of a weak and vulnerable woman. However, when faced with the murderer who questions Macduff's whereabouts she demonstrates a, surprising, amount of strength- casting of the typical expectation of a meek and frightened victim. She responds with his question stating: 'in a place... not so unsanctified as thou will ever find him'. She is taunting the murderers that they won't be able to find Macduff; she is also saying that he will never be in so 'unsanctified' or 'unholy' place as they inhabit- the implication being that they are going to Hell and Macduff is not. Her love for her husband gives her strength. Its interesting to contrast this to Lady Macbeth, who loses power, control (and her mind) as the play progresses.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p>"His flight was madness. When our actions do not, our fears do make us traitors" Lady Macduff suggests even when we have done nothing, we are still traitors for running away in fear.</p> <p>"To leave his wife, to leave his babes, his mansion, and his titles in a place from whence does fly? He loves us not." Lady Macduff feels betrayed that Macduff has abandoned his family to go to England. This suggests that he may be more loyal to his country than to his wife.</p> <p>"All is the fear, and nothing is the love; as little is the wisdom, where the flight so runs against all reason" Lady Macduff implies it is so unreasonable to run away, it shows neither concern for his family nor wisdom, but only selfish fear.</p> <p>"I am so much a fool, should I stay longer it would by my disgrace and your discomfort" Ross is afraid he will be moved to tears, embarrassing himself and Lady Macduff.</p> <p>"I doubt some danger does approach you nearly" the messenger tells Lady Macduff that she is in danger. This increases the urgency of the scene.</p> <p>"egg" and "fry" shows how young the son is. It makes Macbeth's decision to have Macduff's family killed more shocking.</p>
<p>Terminology</p>	<p>"To leave his wife, to leave his babes, his mansion, and his titles in a place" Asyndetic listing is used to show all the important things that Macduff has left behind.</p> <p>"He loves us not" the simple sentence shows Lady Macduff's feelings as she believes that Macduff does not love his family.</p> <p>"my disgrace your discomfort" the use of pronouns highlights Ross's feelings as he does not want to disgrace himself in front of Lady Macduff and to make her feel uncomfortable. It shows the respect he has for Lady Macduff.</p>