

## ACT IV, SCENE 2

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. 5LADY 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— 10  
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, 15  
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, 20  
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, 25  
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: 30  
And what will you do now? How will you live?

ORIGINAL

## ACT IV, SCENE 2

Macduff's castle at Fife on Scotland's southeastern coast.

[Enter LADY MACDUFF, her Son, and ROSS]

LADY MACDUFF What did Macduff do that caused him to run from  
Scotland?

ROSS Be patient and you will learn the truth, Madam.

LADY MACDUFF He did nothing wrong; his departure makes no sense.  
Even though he was innocent, his fear caused him to  
betray his country.ROSS You can't know whether he left because it was the wise  
thing to do or because he was afraid.LADY MACDUFF Could it be wise to abandon me and his children, his  
property, and his respected name in Scotland by running  
away? He lacks the devotion to his family that animals  
feel. Even a tiny wren, the smallest bird, will fight an owl  
to protect her babies in the nest. Macduff was more afraid  
than devoted. There is no wisdom in madly running away  
from home.ROSS My dearest cousin, please control yourself. Macduff is  
noble and cautious. He understands Scotland's terrors  
since Macbeth became king. I can't say more. These are  
cruel times. The dangers reveal aspects of our own  
character that cringe at rumors of terror even when  
we don't know whether they are true. Unfounded  
accusations float this way and that. I am leaving, but  
I will return soon. The bad days will end or return to the  
state of the kingdom under Duncan. My pretty cousin,  
Macduff's son, bless you.

LADY MACDUFF He has a father, but his father is not here.

ROSS I am so tender-hearted that, if I stay longer, I will  
embarrass myself and you by weeping. I must go.  
[He goes out]LADY MACDUFF Son, your father's gone. How will you manage? Who will  
protect you?

TRANSLATION