The main idea

Lady Macduff gives political violence a domestic setting. Her criticism reveals the cost of resistance for people left vulnerable.

Character development

Questions departure

Protects her son

Faces danger at home

Exposes tyranny's human cost

Protection and abandonment

"He loves us not" — Lady Macduff, 4.2

"the poor wren" — Lady Macduff, 4.2

Her accusation measures duty through care for a family. The small protective bird makes Macduff's departure look troubling from inside the home, even though the audience knows his political purpose.

Innocence offers no security

"I have done no harm" — Lady Macduff, 4.2

"All my pretty ones?" — Macduff, 4.3

Her plain assertion cannot protect her in a violent state. Macduff's later question carries the offstage family loss into the resistance plot; the shift of speaker extends the consequences beyond the scene.

Develop the interpretation

She does not know everything the audience knows about Macduff's mission. Treat her judgement as a meaningful perspective, rather than the play's only verdict on him.

Recall question

Why place a conversation between mother and child before an attack?

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