In the Wilds There is a Dead Doe

In the wilds there is a dead doe;
With white rushes we cover her.
There was a lady longing for the spring;
A fair knight seduced her.

In the wood there is a clump of oaks,
And in the wilds a dead deer
With white rushes well bound;
There was a lady fair as jade.

“Heigh, not so hasty, not so rough;
Heigh, do not touch my handkerchief.
Take care, or the dog will bark.”

[Translated by Arthur Waley]
The poem read in Mandarin by Zhao Wenxuan
II. Episode Notes

1. The First Layer of Commentary by the author of the “Prefaces to the Book of Poetry”: “In the Wilds There is a Dead Doe’ expresses abhorrence at impropriety. As the world was in turmoil, acts of violence were inflicted on people and licentious conduct became rampant. But thanks to the transforming influence of King Wen, people still abhor impropriety even in this time of chaos.”

2. The Second Layer of Commentary by a Famous Exegete Named “Mao”: “The impropriety at issue refers to doing away with match-making, not sending [engagement gifts of] wild geese and silk, and kidnapping and coercing women into marriage. It was the time of Zhou [the last Shang dynasty king]. In times of calamity and famine, engagement gifts were reduced but still made. The dead doe in the wild was the spoil of hunting, and could be carved up and its meat shared. The white rushes were used to wrap its meat to keep it clean and pure.”

3. The Third Layer of Commentary by Zheng Xuan
   • The deployment of “interiorization”

4. Dull Moral Allegorization and Artistic Creativity

III. Textual Source