



We should be woo'd and were not made to woo

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Helena:

"We should be woo'd and were not made to woo."

A Midsummer Night's Dream (II. i. 242)

Helena has been cast into the role of pursuer, with Demetrius as the object of her desire, a reversal of roles which she finds scandalous. In this comedy of love and enchantment, Helena follows Demetrius into the woods where he has gone to find the woman he loves, Hermia, who incidentally has run off with the man whom she loves, Lysander. In any case, Helena will not be deterred; and no matter how much Demetrius insults, demeans, and threatens her, she remains steadfast in her devotion. He tells her that it makes him sick just to look at her; she responds that it makes her sick NOT to look at him. He threatens to abandon her in the woods, where she would be at the mercy of wild animals; she responds that they could do no worse than he has already done to her. Demetrius finally exits when Helena speaks this line, mocking him for his abdication of the traditional male role in courting.

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