

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest. The fairyland buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress* of my order,
 and in the spiced Indian air, by night, full often hath she gossiped by my side,
 and sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands, marking the embarked traders on the flood.*
 When we have laughed to see the sails conceive and grow big-bellied with the wanton* wind;
 which she, with pretty and with swimming gait* following (her womb then rich with my young squire)
 would imitate, and sail upon the land to fetch me trifles, and return again,
 as from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die,
 and for her sake do I rear up her boy,
 and for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA

Perhaps till after Theseus' wedding-day.
 If you will patiently dance in our round and see our moonlight revels, go with us.
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
 We shall chide downright* if I longer stay.

(Exeunt TITANIA with her train.)

OBERON

Well, go thy way. Thou shalt not from this grove till I torment thee for this injury.
 My gentle Puck, come hither.
 Thou remember once I sat upon a promontory, and heard a mermaid singing on a dolphin's back?

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not, flying between the cold moon and the earth Cupid, all armed.
 A certain aim he took at a fair vestal,* throned by the west,
 and loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow, as it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
 and the imperial votaress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free.
 Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell.

votaress - woman who had taken a vow to serve Titania, *traders on the flood* - trading ships sailing with the tide,
wanton - undisciplined; unchaste, *gait* - walk, *chide downright* - have a really good fight,
fair vestal - virgin priestess (an allusion to Queen Elizabeth I)