

## Fairy Valley Beneath the Big Rock Candy Mountain

A script for radio play by Matt Morris

In Order of Appearance:

Martha Witch-nipple

Cum Squat

Seventh Sylph Upward

Surge Lutens

Sprite Boy

Talon Softscratch

Spalding

Starry

*Under cover of night at the height of summer, down in a valley smothered in glittering, viscous fog, gathered a conference of fae folk and their winged, feathered friends between revolutions for a friends' meeting. To the east, glimmering dewy mountains cut through forested lands, and to the west, a saw-toothed mountain range climbed so high that the silken condensation in the valley doubled a thick mist held aloft around the uppermost peaks of the rock formations. Like deep blue velvet trays upon which an array of jewels are offered for inspection, the sky on this night hung low, softly furled, and illumined by twinkling ornaments.*

*An overturned jewelry display counter lodged into the land serves as pulpit, smorgasbord, salon for this nocturnal assembly. As darkness draws near, Martha Witch-nipple fusses in hushed tones as she arranges spreads of food and drink.*

**Martha Witch-nipple:** It's impossible to remain bitter at the scale of the interpersonal when one accounts for arch, systemic regulative forces that more or less produce the power relations and effects in which we find ourselves. What else is a dinner party but an exercise in control and submission? More suggestive than efficacious, arrangement serves as an exercise and an outlet for the ice cold burning outrage and sense of injustice and impulse to decorate that disempowerment incites. Therefore, an amuse-bouche of kumquat is in order.

**Cum Squat:** Agony Aunt Martha, I'm tempted to invite my furry friends to enjoy this golden[green] shower whose smooth urination keeps this area even more moist than the surrounding summertime dew. But is this suggestion of pissplay intentional? Of all the sodas,

I've most preferred to guzzle Squirt. But is this site of systemic intervention given over to a sense of play, piss or otherwise?

**Martha Witch-nipple:** Order doesn't presuppose restriction necessarily; in fact while a [symbolic] order might govern the creation of this gathering this meal this installation art piece this interactive art piece this lawn ornament this conjuring, what happens with it next is undefined, given over to an experimental discovery of use value and development of meaning wherein arrangement and derangement are entangled or even coextensive. It's best to clear one's mind and center down in pursuit of an ethics that is non-judgemental, and within the time/space occupation of the meeting, a radical alternative measurement resists good/bad binaries in pursuit of continuums of potential. Mrs Dalloway bought the flowers herself; everything has been readied; that pitchy bit of waiting before all of the guests arrive.

*[Cum Squat sits in the puddle made from a constant drip; it draws a yellow handkerchief from its pocket, opens it flat on the ground, and appears to be arranging slices of various citrus fruits in the order of its favorite to the least interesting one.]*

*[Seventh Sylph Upward and Surge Lutens emerge from the darkened night. Both are tall, willowy, chic.]*

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** There may not be any rules per se once we begin, but a portion of our provisions should be reserved in honor of and sacrifice to our fallen friend, Sierra Mist.

**Cum Squat:** Wait, is this gathering a wake?

**Surge Lutens:** Show me a time/space where someone present is not in mourning, has not lost something, is not in some stage of grief. It's a statistical impossibility that there isn't at least one. More often, several of us are actively grieving at whatever social gathering, just in different, seemingly incompatible phases of that process of loss.

**Cum Squat:** But who takes on the emotional labor of those simultaneities? Is it at least fun for them? I can understand both decoration and death as fetishes.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** You seek a friendly ear. For this we might put our heads and other orbs together in aggregated proximity, scatter art.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** Cum, it sounds like you are hoping for a resolved politics at the scale of justice for all. I want that too, but sometimes the most protean gestures toward a new world begin at the aesthetic, even the ephemeral and aesthetic—less an ethics and more a sensibility.

**Surge Lutens:** Agreed. This meeting is orange. Saffron robes and fire. Summer heat. Turmeric to indicate class sensitivity. Spices orange. Construction zone orange, because here tonight we start to build a new world. Copper orange. Orange is the new orange—alarming, carceral. Basketball orange, marmalade orange, orange orange, grapefruit orange, clementine orange,

kumquat orange. The 2008 special edition limited release Sierra Mist Undercover Orange. Orange ohm. Orange home.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** Shall we begin? We shouldn't let anything get too cold.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** Fat chance in this weather. We're only half gathered. Even if the circle becomes irregular, danced into eccentric formations, we should nonetheless draw it together. Here, drink water.

*[Sprite Boy enters, more or less appearing from nowhere—sneaky? magic?—mostly disembodied, cherubic face and hands, wispy white tresses, sparkles where the rest of it might have been.]*

**Sprite Boy:** One less to wait upon! I always think that what makes a soda jerk a jerk is tardiness.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** It's an eventuality though that a moment arrives where the soda jerk doesn't. We all face this loss. You may have spread before you in ritual discipline the malt, egg cream, cyclamate, whiskey, acid phosphate, the lithium citrate, but your soda jerk does not appear. The birds go quiet. The swinging doors do not part. The orange goes dreamsicle. In place of jerk, failure. In place of jerk, disappointment, betrayal, loss, melancholy. The real jerk of soda is death, and the dying that precedes death: growing apart.

**Sprite Boy:** *[after a long quiet]* Um.  
*[another protracted pause]* Did I walk in at a bad moment?

**Martha Witch-nipple:** If I've ever seen you walk, I'll eat that silver fascinator off your head. And we're not doing bad or good here tonight. We're centering down on continuums. But otherwise, welcome, dear. It's been too long. What kept you so late? It's almost dark.

**Sprite Boy:** I were planting far out to the forest edge. Pray now for a fair summer.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** The boys asleep?

**Sprite Boy:** They will be soon. Waking or sleeping, I've lingered here longest, before all of you. I am mostly made of memory of late, and more than that the forgotten materials that would have been memory were they remembered. I uphold this youthful visage out of beleaguered hope.

**Surge Lutens:** Seventh, you're sounding like Talon. Where has Talon gotten to?

*[As if in answer, Talon Softscratch enters with Spalding and the sounds of rustling taffeta and breeze exciting leaves overhead.]*

**Talon Softscratch:** Ironically, we are here tonight to gather in the Light, in recognition and remembrance of Sierra Mist. For my tastes, I think there is already too much talking.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** Speaking of taste, Talon Softscratch, there is a buffet component to our meeting. Eat this in remembrance of it.

**Surge Lutens:** And read these, the strange books. Conjure this. Make this charm. Kiss hands. Dance devilishly. Send your spirit out upon this hot, wet evening. A mouse, perhaps, a spider, a frog... This will make you free! You will have pretty dress to wear, and be put way high up in the air to fly.

**Spalding:** I see what you mean. I smell it too. The passage from orb to petal, languid collapse, sweet rot. Wafting beef fat. Wafting *Fleur d'oranger*.

*[Picking up dried fruits]*

My babies always shriveled in the hand.

**Sprite Boy:** Spalding, come this way. Wash under this dribble.

**Cum Squat:** Dribble! Squirt! (Fresca.) With this spike we water the gardens of our unsteady resolve for a bread and roses world, rhizomatically organized, efficiently distributed, systems of sharing. Within us gathered there is the potential for the growth of pleasure gardens tangling down across flushed faces, slick chests, darker nethers.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** Pray now for a fair dribble that runs clear.

**Talon Softscratch:** Sierra used to pray thus, of absolute conviction that no clear impressions, either from above or from without, can be received by a mind turbid with excitement and agitated by a crowd of distractions. The stillness needed for the clear shining of light within is incompatible with hurry.

**Spalding:** That is, of course, the spirit of the season seasoning, but how compatible is that shining stillness with the oily marks appearing on walls where pleasure moments hung before? Issuing from a total takeover just weeks prior, I more than the rest of you perhaps, feel awfully complicit in this ruddy tableau, the sweeping insensitivity of this still life.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** Does your concern lie with the meat?

**Spalding:** Not only the meat, but, yes, that and other violences. Mother Martha Dust Nipple, don't you find our décor the most exquisitely refined forms of sadism? Pleasure and its accompanying apparatus, necklaces and nooses, hoop dreams behind the candelabra, a pound of flesh, a piece of cake, a peace hitherto unknown in these parts. This fallow expanse extending beneath the shadows of Big Rock Candy Mountains. That even the sparrows among us feed on a carcass, find unctuous meaty remainders caught in their teeth bared pearly and

fatty. We've vertiginous appetites, and I suppose it is suspense I feel toward their imminent manifestation as we feel the loss of Sierra Mist.

**Sprite Boy:** Your concern lies with orientation outright, in this case negotiated between meat and mouth, but always already everywhere elsewhere inspecting the ways orientations grow apart from one another, and in so doing, find themselves installed as dominant, alternative, and dis-. You are concerned with whether or not our afterdark yet sunset tinged proceedings could be called queer or even resistant.

**Spalding:** I know not what a witch is.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** I know not what a witch is.

**Surge Lutens:** I know not what a witch is.

**Sprite Boy:** I know not what a witch is.

**Talon Softscratch:** Do I?

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** Do I?

**Cum Squat:** Do I?

**Surge Lutens:** I never knew it before. I never knew anything before.

**Talon Softscratch:** These are what we have known as internal disagreements voiced disagreements. We have found that it is very difficult to organize around a succinct, coherent knowledge of how queer acts in and upon societal vectors. The fae often talk about their feelings of craziness before becoming conscious of the concepts of sexual politics, patriarchal rule, and most importantly, feminism, the political analysis and practice that we use to struggle against oppression.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** That's a lot of pressure to put on eating a dinner together, even if these dishes are enchanted, spells having been cast, the supports of wards summoned, the eventuality of transfiguration invoked.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** I approach with an open mouth, quiet and expectant.

**Spalding:** My brown flower blossoms, spreads open, falters.

**Cum Squat:** My pink flower blossoms!

**Surge Lutens:** Serve hot, lithium radiant, fulsome tallow.

**Talon Softscratch:** I approach with an open hand.

**Sprite Boy:** Her claws, she's stretching her claws!

*[All at once, the conference of fairies descend upon the altar piled with fruits—fresh and dried—meats, seeds, confections, libations. Each issues a private signal to their fallen friend Sierra. There is no organized prayer or leadership or practiced ritual. Each participant dines and within their own compartment locates a symbolic gesture with which to hold their sense of loss.]*

**Surge Lutens:** My eyelashes are slick with beef fat. My victuals glow orange like embers and I am blackened by association. Noir with all of the mystery it connotes.

**Martha Witch-nipple:** At night, the light resides within us. I am greasy with gratification. I look up at the Starry sky.

**Cum Squat:** If I am to be greased, so too should this place, settled beneath mist and dew. I want my food to be as much outside of me as inside, spread over this array, smeared into embeddedness.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** Cum, act downward as well as inward as the light leads you, but don't forsake the chance to peer up into the Starry sky.

**Talon Softscratch:** I miss Sierra Mist.

**Sprite Boy:** Look up! The wings! Her wings are spreading! Mary, please, don't, don't!

**Martha Witch-nipple:** *[Embracing Sprite Boy as it weeps and shakes, mumbling]* Be now suet and agony. Be bergamot in sour wedge, and welcome the twist. Come twst. Come slice. Come Sun Crest. Come Storm. Come limoncello and cloisonné. Come fruit leather reliquary. Come crab. Come claws and wings, come hunters and gatherers. C'mon, look up at the sky. Look how Starry it's become.

**Cum Squat:** I can almost make it out.

**Seventh Sylph Upward:** I hope we do before the stars fall from the sky and the earth expires permanently. I fear we will rot in a belly as this sacrificial memorial meal will do in ours.

**Surge Lutens:** In observance of this, I shall continue wearing black only.

**Sprite Boy:** We must all love each other now.

Endnote.

This text is, in part, an experimental collage of source material ranging from Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, 1953; the Combahee River Collective "Statement," 1977; Larry Mitchell's *The Faggots & Their Friends Between Revolutions*, 1977; Virginia Woolf; Woolf's aunt, the Quaker theologian Caroline "Milly" Stephen; singer/songwriter Imogen Heap; history, brand, and advertising copy for various sodas; and other references drawn from popular culture and art history. Of note: TWST (twist) minus the 'i' was an alternate name for Sierra Mist for a limited time in the 2000s. My thanks to alternative gallery space Bird Show, director Erin Toale, and artist Gabriel Chalfin-Piney for their support and openness in the development of this text that accompanies *The Sierra Mist Memorial Bird Bath* which was presented from July 16–30, 2023.