

His Majesty: A Response to "The Orange"
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I bought the orange on a Thursday. I spent just thirty-nine cents on the piece of fruit, which joined the others in my bag, and as I paid for them, I thought about what I could do with the orange. Maybe I would make a smoothie, or just eat it on a warm afternoon. Hell, if I picked up a half-dozen more, I could have a pitcher of freshly squeezed orange juice if I so desired. I thought of these things as I ventured back to my apartment, giving some change to the homeless man next to the stoop, as I made my way up the short steps and entered the building. I fumbled silently for my keys, the bag of fruit resting on the floor by my feet, as I proceeded to open the door to my spacious apartment. It was large in size, and full of clutter. I'd recently let things go around here and I made a mental note to try and organize the place next Tuesday, when I would have some free time.

The orange, his majesty, so to speak, sat silently at the bottom of my bag of fruit. He did not say a word to me since I picked him out of the pile of his relatives. This particular orange had no special appeal, nothing that called out to me; it was just the third or fourth orange I'd sampled from the pile. Not even my first pick, as I sifted through the citrus fruit. Oranges were delicious, and easier on the mouth when eaten. The juice full of vitamins, and if kept in the fridge for a while, thirst quenching on a hot day. No, his majesty had never spoken a word to me in the time since I'd made his purchase for thirty-nine cents.

I'd heard the rumors, about the man from Chicago who just went to the tree and picked the orange. Something that upset so many people, something that seemed so insignificant in the world. This was an event I personally felt didn't deserve the air time. There are more important things than worrying about some orange, whether or not it 'ruled the world'. "Fuck his majesty," I thought as I dropped the fruit into the bowl on the table in the kitchen. I went about my business for the next day or two, and by Saturday, I'd already eaten the pear and the bananas. The only fruit left in the bowl were two or three kiwis and the orange. I opted to eat the kiwis.

In a way, the orange taught me about the world, as it sat there in its uninterrupted silence. Was the orange slowly dying? Or was it trying to be silent under the ears of one who wasn't inclined to listen? Somebody like me, who never found the logic in talking to air. Somebody like me, who resisted the trappings of such fairy tales. The orange sat there for three days in silence. Silence. Just what I had come to enjoy in my lifetime, that peace and complete silence that I had maintained. Then his majesty, this citrus infused bastard, had to bring his noise. He spoke to me on the third day. His voice soft, that of a whisper. He was not bitter, but he was demanding. "It is time," he said in his soft tone. For three days he was silent, and I loved him for it.

For three days. We had silence, and for three days I held the orange. His majesty was at my whim, I had eaten his relatives time and time again. I wondered if that was why he chose to stay silent, but then it could also be the reason he chose to speak to me. On the afternoon of the third day, after all was said and he spoke to me I told him I'd heard enough. I was tired of talking, I didn't want to listen to his majesty and his fairy tales. I decided to peel the orange, the king of men. I peeled him agonizingly slow, standing on my balcony so the world could see my act of rebellion. I peeled his majesty and he was silent. "You don't do this for them. I do this for them. They need to see the world for what it is, without your influence." I said to the orange as I pulled away the rind. He said nothing. I remember thinking to myself as I continued to peel the orange, I thought of all the people in the world who had found so much joy in thinking of this orange citrus bastard. The people who turned to happy thoughts and thinking of those in need,

rather than putting forth the physical effort to help them.

In a way, I was trying to free the world, but this was also done for myself. I bought the orange for thirty-nine cents. I didn't know this was *that* particular orange, but he'd interrupted my silence. The silence that I'd loved. By the time I finished peeling back his majesty's skin, a small crowd had gathered below my balcony. I addressed the crowd and held the orange over them. Some stood in silence; others begged for the return of their king. Alone in my endeavor, pulling apart the slices of their king, I showed them each piece as I ate it.

The terrible part about the whole thing was that after I ate the orange of men, they just found a new subject of worship. I heard rumor of a glorified rutabaga somewhere in Louisiana. I'd decided that I would leave that one to the winds, maybe somebody else would be stuck with the vegetable. I hoped they would have their silence interrupted, just as mine was. I continued my life, never to gain my lost silence. The world had seen a god, a king, but I saw him for what he was; *Citrus sinensis*.