



**THE  
ORANGE  
MENACE**

**POEMS BY  
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# The Orange Menace

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## Origin Story

Panel 1: [November 10, 2016, in one of the three bomb shelters at Mar-a-Lago, his paradise] (Large silhouette seated at granite table covered in fast-food wrappers): This is quite the after-party.

Panel 6: [August 4, 1957, alley in Queens] (Young Donald, in shirt and tie, spots \$20 bill in foot of liquid at bottom of metal barrel. He reaches in to grab it but feels constricting pain in his hands—the most intense agony): YAAGHHH!

Panel 15: [January 1, 1977, Times Square] (Donald shares a New Year's kiss with his bride-to-be. With hands in South American peccary gloves—rare, luxurious leather—he touches her face. He remembers never to use bare hands to touch anyone he loves.)

Panel 32: [April 5, 1987, Staten Island Ferry] (Donald combs his hair after it has blown in the wind for several minutes. This is the latest replacement for his real hair, which he ran his hands through as a boy. He hates this hair. He can touch it whenever he wants.)

Panel 37: [mid-December 1988, Trump Tower] (Irate at Soviet leader who canceled personal visit) {Pounding fist}: He won't come because he is weak! Everything will collapse around him. Everything! Someday they will be strong again, and I will be ready for them! Ready! {His complexion begins to change color, the yellowness of fear mixing with his prophecy of red.}

Panel 74: [December 1, 2016, Cincinnati] (The Orange Menace holds victory rally. His supporters weep in celebration. He safely shakes as many hands as possible.)

“The Incredible Hulk Is Actually a Disaster”

The Orange Menace hates the Hulk most of all. “Loser,” he tells the cyber. “His lunchboxes don’t sell. Sad. I bought my son an action figure—broke in minutes. And my son is no tough guy.”

The Orange Menace says he can out-Hulk the Hulk. He wants to go from calm to livid in under 6 seconds, no need for pussified nostalgia to be a mortal again. The color green can piss off—orange or gold only.

The Orange Menace flies to China for conversion therapy. A doctor there can implant a chip in his brain that inhibits all the shitty intimacy: smiles, handshakes, tender sex acts. This doctor promises unlimited rage at the lowest of prices.

The Orange Menace wakes from surgery feeling peppy. With thumbs the size of bread loaves, he begins to tweet but presses 14 buttons at a time. He smashes his phone, which only angers him more. He begins to cry violently.

The Orange Menace has not become a Hulk. Even the bigly wears off, but not before he easily strangles his doctor for using “a bitch chip instead of a manly chip.” He returns to normal size, buys a new phone, tweets: “@Hulk is weak.”

“The Bigger the Crowd, the Bigger the Man”

The Orange Menace is not always tall.  
He is listed as 6-foot-3, but that’s his height  
at full follower strength. During a dry spell—  
nary a retweet—he can stay 3-foot-6 for days.

The Orange Menace lives in a gilded tower.  
No one else knows about the 36<sup>th</sup> floor,  
stocked with small suits and juice boxes.  
When love stays grown, he won’t need this.

The Orange Menace knows it’s not the size  
of a crowd that matters. Evil is a bankroll:  
It’s gigantic when people think it’s gigantic.  
The biggest, best safe can hide its emptiness.

The Orange Menace loves to hold rallies.  
Today, he debuts The Duplicator, a gadget  
that creates the illusion of twice as many.  
He aims it at the crowd, feels taller than ever.

“Wonder Woman Is Maybe a 5 at Best”

The Orange Menace offers \$10 million to “the man who invents the best device— THE best device—for grabbing a woman and making her keep quiet about it. GO!”

The Orange Menace ends up hiring his sons, who repurpose a glove designed to conceal offshore funds. They buy silencing technology from a mastermind for steaks and shirts.

The Orange Menace enjoys setting traps. He tweets, “@realAmazonWW can’t fight. She’s nothing without bracelets and tiara. Knows where I live. Do her hips look bigger?”

The Orange Menace hears a bump on the roof, an invisible jet he refers to as “a rip-off. Disaster.” He puts on the glove. Wonder Woman walks through an unlocked door.

The Orange Menace lunges at her. She feels nothing. The glove has malfunctioned because his sons made it too large. Wonder Woman slips her lasso around The Orange Menace for his truth.

“What do you want in life?” Wonder Woman asks. “All I want is to be loved,” The Orange Menace says. She records the confession, which goes viral. “Fake news. I have it all!” he tweets.

## The Secret Ingredients of a Supervillain

The Orange Menace is bored again.  
He tires of watching himself on TV  
when he can't hear whoops, can't see  
throngs revel in what they want him to be.

The Orange Menace leaves the penthouse  
in his robe and slippers, selects a fast car,  
ignores traffic lights en route to the drive-thru.  
He owns this chain, knows no one by name.

The Orange Menace orders a Billion \$ Burger.  
So few know how his most delicious food is made.  
The recipe handed down from his father slipped  
through death-bed lips, such a cherished inheritance.

The Orange Menace makes food from what he lacks.  
Every burger from the Thousand \$ Slider up the ladder  
contains the stolen spines and thick skins of his enemies.  
He scarfs down the meal, U-turns illegally into pre-dawn.



“Spider-Man Has Sticky Coming out of Wherever”

The Orange Menace always has it up to here.  
He promises unmaskings but has yet to unmask.  
“@Spidey4real jumps around in pajamas. Stupid,”  
he writes. “And disgusting. I’m a germaphobe.”

The Orange Menace soaks Mydas flies in wine  
from his vineyard. He places the flies—largest  
in the world—from block to block, leading  
to an alley patrolled by only the finest goons.

The Orange Menace expects to succeed quickly.  
Heroes weaken when exposed to a name brand,  
even when they need luxury explained to them.  
Their fingers-crossed yeses clink like glasses.

The Orange Menace can be less than patient.  
He has his driver bring the car around, stops  
in the alley to find the finest goons in goo,  
plus a note: “I would’ve preferred plain flies.”

The Orange Menace has lost the power to shriek.  
He believes in the punch of words, a vocabulary  
tiny enough to fit in his fist. He strings the same  
adjectives, nouns, verbs, each tweet a porous web.

## The Orange Menace on Vacation

I used to love the beach when I thought it was beautiful. I tore up my feet on the rocks but loved it. The water had oil in it, waste from stinky factories. I loved the oily, stinky water. Loved it! Then we drove to Miami Beach, just before the accident. I realized what I had thought was beautiful was really disgusting. It was the worst thing ever. A disaster. Sad. And Miami Beach was like a supermodel: too beautiful to touch. All I wanted to do was walk into that gorgeous, untouchable water and take a piss. Then and there, I promised myself I would turn all the beautiful beaches into my beaches. I own several, and I've touched them all.

The Orange Menace and The White Truth Shop for Ties

The Orange Menace is working on something dangerous:  
He is developing a friendship based on sharing and trust.

The Orange Menace invites The White Truth over to shop.  
No need to go out: Their guy brings fabrics and prints.

The Orange Menace chooses solid blue silk. He imagines  
a good-guy cape of that color. He wears his ties with irony.

The White Truth squeals with delight at the tailor's choice:  
blond—the perfect blond—topped with subtle dog whistles.

The White Truth always has The Orange Menace's ear.  
“Make sure it can't chafe your hands when you need it,”

The White Truth says calmly to The Orange Menace.  
“Make sure it's resistant to stains, the usual evidence.”

“Dr. Manhattan? More Like Dr. Staten Island!”

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he can teleport but cannot risk  
not being seen for a split second.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he can manipulate atoms but splits  
only large bills into strip-club ones.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he has super-genius intelligence  
but tries to whisper in all caps.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he has superhuman strength but needs  
someone to lift his golden spoon.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he can d i s i n t e g r a t e.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he has a perfect memory but forgets  
the last time his wife said “love.”

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he has precognition but will never  
be able to dodge the slaps of women.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he can self-duplicate but can't  
keep his other version from crying.

The Orange Menace tells everyone  
he is unable to fight Dr. Manhattan  
because of bone spurs. He has no bones.

## Romancing a Superhero

The Orange Menace was a pre-supervillain businessman when he saw The Mogul on the slopes shooting stun lasers at bad guys. This was before he thought of women as acquisitions. A mere mortal, he knew his chances of wooing a superhero were slight. Superheroes seemed to have no use for his strengths, no use for money or exaggeration. He would have only himself to offer, walks along lakes, other romantic behavior he genuinely enjoyed. He would learn to ski better, to acknowledge his own shortcomings. Six weeks in, he became emotional, worried what to do with his hands. He feared what they might do to her. Realizing he truly loved The Mogul, he told her about his accident, how he couldn't help but harm everyone and everything he touched when he cared about them. The Mogul held back a laugh. "You would be amazed by the thickness of my skin," she said, extending a ski pole, stabbing herself with it repeatedly, showing no marks. He began to cry, took off his gloves, stroked her face. Becoming his partner in life and business, she used her super-G quickness to make the deals he wasn't sharp enough to attempt. As she drew attention for crime-fighting and real estate acumen, he felt himself disappearing. Late at night, he watched a tape of her on the news, rewind and watched it over and over. He kicked over the TV. "No one will ever beat me at my own game again," he shouted, pondering how to build up the danger in his hands, grappling for ways to penetrate her skin. Finally, realizing he couldn't beat her, he went to his favorite bar, threw around stacks of money and just enough charm to find a woman he could put his hands on, knowing his utter disdain for her would keep her safe.

“The Suit Does All the Work. I Don’t Get It!”

The Orange Menace and Iron Man are feuding.  
“@HasHeLostHisMind is the worst kind of person,”  
he tweets. “Took his father’s money, flushed it all.  
And his heart’s a disgrace. Get that think fixed!”

Iron Man refuses to fight The Orange Menace  
because Iron Man believes there’s only one way  
to win the battle: by ignoring The Orange Menace.  
Starve him in the media, both social and real.

The Orange Menace turns bullying up a notch.  
“@HasHeLostHisMind’s parents had a choice:  
Listen to his whining all the time, or be murdered.  
Of course they made the right choice! Am I right?”

Iron Man follows The Orange Menace on Twitter.  
He has feelings and can afford many walls,  
so he punches a hole in one. Iron Man tweets  
about a fund-raiser to support cancer research.

The Orange Menace refuses to settle down.  
“Where is @HasHeLostHisMind? Probably  
he got cancer and he’s in debt, so he’s making  
a bunch of losers foot the bill. Pathetic slob!”

Iron Man tweets photos of people holding signs  
that say, “I donated \$50 to save lives,” etc.  
He floods the Internet with people’s generosity.  
Thousands of fans and philanthropists retweet him.

The Orange Menace takes action when livid.  
“Whoop-de-doo, @HasHeLostHisMind,”  
he tweets, along with a photo of himself  
holding a check: “To cancer for \$1,000,000!”

## The Orange Menace on Vacation, Part II: The Parthenon

One of my guys told me people used to get together here, a cult drawn to huge spectacle. Such a temple. Can you imagine? And the statue of that broad, Athena—a god, really. Or goddess. Whatever. And it had gold inside. If a real broad could be like that, right? Such a historical place. Really, really historical. Or historic; it doesn't matter. We were going to do a casino just like this. It's true! But then I thought it would look really, really bad. This place is like, it's in disarray. Disgusting in a lot of ways. So much of it got smashed by a bunch of Italians—greedy, greedy Italians before there was an Italy, right. But you have to respect that—going in and just destroying someplace because you want to, saying goodbye to sculptures that would be worth a fortune. Why the hell not? They just came in and blew it up. Kablooney! No insurance. But it's still really, really historical. So it means a lot to be here. I mean, I've been to nicer places that are in one piece, but this is neat!

## “Captain America Is Old and Overrated”

The Orange Menace worries about his ratings.  
He knows a battle would give him a bump,  
the most miserable loss a Sweeps Week win.

The Orange Menace can't stand Steve Rogers,  
can't stand living beings who make America great:  
“@CaptUSA is just sad. Should've stayed iced!”

The Orange Menace attracts Captain America  
by dissolving copies of the Constitution in acid.  
He screams as a shield breaks his tiny hand bones.

The Orange Menace captures the battle on FB Live.  
“AGGH! UGGGH!” he exaggerates for the camera.  
Smiley and laughy emojis float across the film online.

The Orange Menace puts Band-Aids on his thumbs,  
allows less essential body parts to continue to bleed.  
“Millions watched,” he tweets. “Millions. I love you.”



## Romancing a Superhero: Alternative Facts Version

The Golden Boy was a pre-superhero businessman when he saw The Mogul on the slopes shooting stun lasers at bad guys. This was before he thought of mountains as movable. A mere mortal, he knew his chances of wooing a superhero were slight, even though superheroes could value some of his strengths—philanthropy, bulletproof hands, empathy for all people, convincing hair. He would need to expand his vocabulary, learn to stop confessing his shortcomings in public. Six weeks in, he became emotional, fantasized about holding hands with her. Realizing he truly loved The Mogul, he told her about his accident, how it forced him to love everyone and everything he touched. The Mogul held back a laugh. “No one—nothing—can force someone to love another person,” she said, grabbing onto his hands. “Do you love me now?” she asked, as she extended a ski pole, stabbing him with it repeatedly. He began to cry, took off his shirt, surveyed the damage. Sealing his wounds, she used her super-G quickness to make him a deal. “You’re almost a superhero,” she said. “In this not-yet-ready world, I need a man by my side. Do this, and the world will believe you’re strong. Just keep your cool, and never use your hands for violence.” As she drew attention for crime-fighting and real estate acumen, he felt himself growing inside. Late at night, he watched a tape of himself on the news, rewind and watched it over and over. He slapped a hole in the TV. “I will never be as good as she is,” he cried. “I’m no hero.” Realizing The Golden Boy had violated their agreement, The Mogul placed him in his favorite bar to throw around stacks of money and his abundant charm to find a replacement for her. All he could do was sit there, weeping into his big, empty hands, which he had pressed together in prayer.

“Scarlet WITCH with a W? Mispelled!”

The Orange Menace hates so many people,  
especially superheroes like Scarlet Witch.

“Never let a piece of ass kick yours,” he tweets.

The Orange Menace crushes on Scarlet Witch.  
This is not a secret; Mrs. Orange Menace knows.  
She disapproves but nonetheless denies the crush.

The Orange Menace tries to draw out Scarlet Witch  
by sending her uniforms that are far too revealing.  
He thinks all angry feminists eventually appear in public.

The Orange Menace wishes he were able to turn her,  
to grab her most prized skill, the skill to alter reality.  
With this power, he would no longer need to gaslight.

The Orange Menace doesn't see Scarlet Witch coming.  
She arrives in a red wimple without a trace of sexiness,  
begins to explain chaos magic to The Orange Menace.

The Orange Menace immediately becomes flustered.  
He forgets to turn on FB Live, forgets about ratings.  
His followers hope he hasn't died or lost his phone.

The Orange Menace emerges several days later.  
He has no idea how he got in his bed, in pajamas.  
“Scarlet Witch never showed,” he tweets. “Cowardess!”

## The Molten Mirror Shows Himself

The Orange Menace admires The Molten Mirror.  
“@FollowMMorElse shows you all your weaknesses before melting you into a heap of slop,” he writes.  
“Effective leader. Would work with him anytime!”

The Molten Mirror used to be a police officer, became too curious about science, stood too close to chemical reactions, where opposing cultures crash. He discovered how to police as more than one man.

The Orange Menace asks The Molten Mirror to visit. He arranges a summit of golf at Citrus Palisades. The Molten Mirror has manipulated his form to accommodate pub cap, argyle sweater, spikes.

The Molten Mirror says there's no need to look away. The Orange Menace tries to find eyes but sees only fast food, women, dotted lines to sign, incarnations of himself losing control, so many incarnations.

The Orange Menace seeps into the green on Hole 17. The Molten Mirror taps in an easy putt for birdie, calls a groundskeeper to hose things down, tweets, “I'm so pleased to be your Mulligan, America. ☺”

## Elegy for The Orange Menace

The White Truth has been thinking about all the times his whiteness has been tainted. He remembers duels with Black Panther, The Falcon, El Gato Negro, how their blood trickled onto his crisp uniform to untuck a sheet. The White Truth channels all his pain into healing drops. He recites a poem:

*The triumph of will may bring  
the fallen back to our earth,  
this world of eternal struggle.  
It is not truth that matters,  
but victory, reason reserved  
only for the few. May our lies  
remain big, our terror a bridge.*

The White Truth cries enough tears to deny newsprint its ink. The climate around him changes. Orange liquid lifts from the ground to mix with clouds. It begins to rain. The White Truth feels his eyes burning away. He can't imagine a world in which he can't judge what he sees. At the hospital, the press calls. "Don't worry," he says. "It was a freak accident, an isolated incident."

## Epilogue: The Orange Menace Adjusts to His Newest Shape

So this is it, OK? Gotta hand it to the other guy: He is some competitor. I've made bad deals before—bad, bad deals—but now I'm done with deals. Done. You have to know when to quit, when to let the next generation run things. From now on, I'll be a watcher. I love to watch. I'm not going anywhere. I just let a little bit of myself go every now and then—just a little bit—and I'm water. Cool, cool water to drink, to get baptized in. Water for swimming on the Fourth of July, right? And no one will kick me around when I'm water. Everybody loves water.

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*REAL: Regarding Arts & Letters*: “Dr. Manhattan?  
More Like Dr. Staten Island!,” “Spider-Man Has Sticky  
Coming out of Wherever”  
*Winedrunk Sidewalk*: “Captain America Is Old and  
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The poem *The White Truth* reads in “Elegy for The Orange Menace” is primarily composed of quotes from Adolf Hitler and includes a reference to a Leni Riefenstahl film used for Nazi propaganda.

Daniel M. Shapiro is the author of *Heavy Metal Fairy Tales* (Throwback Books, 2016), *How the Potato Chip Was Invented* (sunnyoutside press, 2013), and *The 44<sup>th</sup>-Worst Album Ever* (NAP Books, 2012). He is the senior poetry editor and reviews editor for *Pittsburgh Poetry Review*.

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