

Acting Edition

Merry Me

by Hansol Jung

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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MERRY ME had its world premiere at New York Theatre Workshop (Patricia McGregor, Artistic Director) in New York City on October 11th, 2023. The performance was directed by Leigh Silverman, with sets by Rachel Hauck, costume design by Alejo Vietti, lighting design by Barbara Samuels, and sound design by Kate Marvin and Caroline Eng. The cast was as follows:

LT. SHANE HORNE		Esco Jouléy
DR. JESS O'NOPE		Marinda Anderson
MRS. SAPPH MEMNON		Nicole Villamil
PVT. WILLY MEMNON		Ryan Spahn
GENERAL MEMNON		David Ryan Smith
GENERAL'S WIFE		Cindy Cheung
THE ANGEL		Shaunette Renée Wilson

CHARACTERS

LT. SHANE HORNE – God's gift to lady parts of all shapes, colors and vintages.

DR. JESS O'NOPE – An unwilling Prophet.

MRS. SAPPH MEMNON – An unwilling wife.

PVT. WILLY MEMNON – A very woke male partner to Sapph.

GENERAL MEMNON – A war-starved General.

GENERAL'S WIFE – A sex-starved wife.

THE ANGEL – From Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.

SOME OTHERS – Doubled by principal cast.

SETTING

Naval Basecamp of a Nation's Most Prestigious Navy on an Island Not Far from Another Nation's Most Vulnerable Coast Cities.

TIME

The year of an Ongoing War.

For Leigh

Pre-Show

(A Very Gay Playlist bops the audience into the lobby and house.¹)

(When the time is right:)

ANGEL. Welcome to our play *Merry Me*. Written by Hansol; directed by Leigh.² David³ is Aga Memnon, Cindy⁴ is Mrs. Memnon, Nicole⁵ plays Mrs. Sappho Memnon with Ryan⁶ as Private Willy Memnon, her very woke male partner. Those are our Memnons. Marinda⁷ is our prophet; and Esco⁸ is God's gift to lady parts of all shapes, colors and vintages, as usual. And I play me, the Angel. You're welcome. The name of the town is Classified for government purposes, latitude redacted degrees redacted minutes; longitude redacted degrees redacted minutes, at the Naval Basecamp of a Nation's Most Prestigious Navy on an Island Not Far from Another Nation's Most Vulnerable Coast Cities. The Day is a crisp spring day in the Year of an Ongoing War. The time is just before dawn.

*(A rooster crows. It's the **ANGEL**. She crows.)*

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2. Name of director

3. Name of performer playing **GENERAL**

4. Name of performer playing **WIFE**

5. Name of performer playing **SAPPHO**

6. Name of performer playing **WILLY**

7. Name of performer playing **O'NOPE**

8. Name of performer playing **HORNE**

ANGEL. The sky is beginning to show some streaks of light over in the East there, where the sea meets the sky. The Morning Star always gets wonderful bright the minute before it has to go, doesn't it?

(ANGEL stares at it for a moment.)

It takes a great deal of focus to imagine a disappearing bright Morning Star while staring at a blinding spotlight but that, is the job of the actor. Which you have come to see today. So here it is again:

*(ANGEL stares at the Morning Star again.
A moment of great acting.)*

Pretty good, huh?

Well, I better show you how our camp lies. Miles and miles of sandy beach lies dotted by Naval tents filled with men and women of the great nation, waiting for the order to launch their little lives into a fight to the death.

It takes a great deal of focus to imagine miles and miles of sandy beach dotted by Naval tents while trapped inside a dark room with a small patch of stage space that indicates as much but that, is the job of the audience. Which you have come to do today. So give it a go.

(ANGEL gestures the beach to life for the audience.)

(They do their job of imagination.)

Very good. Now with that in mind, please take a moment to turn off your phones, mind the exits, and the other things good theatergoers know to do once the houselights go down. Because, here they go. Down.

The Great Plan

ANGEL. And now we're in the Doctor's office.

O'NOPE. You can't be serious.

HORNE. I am.

O'NOPE. People will be upset.

HORNE. I know.

O'NOPE. It will ruin your reputation.

HORNE. That's the point.

O'NOPE. You will destroy your legacy. And likely, mine as well –

HORNE. My mind is made up Doctor Jess O'Nope. I came to you with the proposal, my most able surgeon, most treasured friend, my first and best fuck,

O'NOPE. I am not –

HORNE. Fine, not first but okay fuck, but to be fair you still thought you were straight –

O'NOPE. No, I was saying I am not a surgeon. I am a psychiatrist.

HORNE. Really?

O'NOPE. What do you think you and I have been doing all these months in my office?

HORNE. I thought you do both.

O'NOPE. Both? You really want your shrink to do your open heart surgeries?

HORNE. It's war. Everyone is multitasking.

O'NOPE. If you are questioning the value I bring to –

HORNE. I am not questioning, I am asking a question and the question I am asking, you already have been asked.

This is a rare moment of need from me to you. Doctor Jess O'Nope, or rather, Just Jess O'Nope,

O'NOPE. I'm still a doctor.

HORNE. Jess. Is it a Jes? Or is it a No.

O'NOPE. It is a No. I'm not going to get caught up in another of your bonkers schemes based off a baseless theory –

HORNE. Maybe bonkers but Not baseless! While I was in solitary confinement, I read up on this –

O'NOPE. How did you get reading material in solitary confinement?

HORNE. Slept with Ethel.

O'NOPE. The guard?

HORNE. She feels unseen and underappreciated and appreciated my interest in her.

And my finger, in her also.

O'NOPE. Weren't you put in for having sexed up the general's wife?

HORNE. Yes I was.

O'NOPE. Why are you like this?

HORNE. It is a gift and a curse. Are you too in need of the Merries, Doctor? You look like you are in need. You know I am always at the ready to provide for those in need.

O'NOPE. Don't even start that shit with me.

HORNE. I am impressed, Doctor Jess O'Nope. For I sense it has been a while for you.

O'NOPE. Shane, I am tired, I've had a long day, and as much as I would love to help you, what you are proposing, is just Not how one reaches an orgasm.

HORNE. Yes it is! It is for me! In the reading material that Emily got me.

O'NOPE. Ethel.

HORNE. Ethel's the night guard, Emily's the day shift. Ethel told Emily about, and then Emily wanted, and after I gave them what they wanted –

O'NOPE. Together?

HORNE. Separately and then together.

O'NOPE. Of course.

HORNE. After twice together and once more separately, they together got me what I wanted.

O'NOPE. I love that for you.

HORNE. Doc. I've long confessed to you my failure to give myself the Merries.

O'NOPE. Can we not call it that?

HORNE. All my life, I've been fretting and sweating to fulfill my God-given mission, the mission to provide Merries to ladyparts of all shapes, colors, and vintages – and in that endeavor have allowed my own ladyparts to succumb to the numbness.

O'NOPE. So you were what, rubbing up on prison books hoping to come?

HORNE. Of course not! I mean, yes *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* is great for those discovery years between the ages of seven and eleven: my *William* was rubbed practically spineless,

O'NOPE. Oh for me it was *The Complete Illustrated Bible for Adults*.

HORNE. Bible?

O'NOPE. That is what was available to me.

O'NOPE. Please continue your story of raping government literature for your orgasm.

HORNE. Not raping, Reading. In a desperate search I was perusing the ancient texts of *Kama Sutra*, Archives from Priestesses of the Assyrian Temple, research material from the writers' room of *L Word* –

O'NOPE. *Generation Q?*

HORNE. What? Ew! No the original.

O'NOPE. You haters are why all our shows are getting cancelled. I thought it was fine.

HORNE. It was not fine. Also not fine was my research, which is the point of this scene, will you please stay focused.

O'NOPE. Sorry.

HORNE. Nothing worked. I was exhausted, frustrated, coming up dry for days until, enter, Mister Harry Horner.

O'NOPE. That was your inspo? He sounds like a straight white male person.

HORNE. A straight white male restoration comedy person. Harry Horner gets his straight white male restoration comedy penis all up in all the women in town. Their husbands find out, locks it down and so Harry is having trouble getting any. Enter his genius friend The Doctor.

(Despite herself, O'NOPE kinda likes this.)

O'NOPE. There's a doctor in the story.

HORNE. Genius Doctor. He tells everyone that Harry's dick is broken! The guys are disarmed, the girls are concerned, Harry gets so much sex, because when the ladies come to see if it is really broken, surprise! It is not! Sexytime.

And this sex is better than any other sex because it took five acts to get there.

O'NOPE. I don't understand how this relates to you getting an orgasm.

HORNE. What do you mean you don't understand, it's so clear. I need my five acts of my fake broken penis to get to my merry. I need my Act One we have sad broken pussy, I cannot do the sex, Act Two, cannot do the sex even more, Act Three, so much no sex it hurts, more of that in Act Four to Act Five what had been lost has been recovered by a caring, inquisitive vagina-lover. Merries for Me! End of Play.

O'NOPE. Why can't your pussy break to something less complicated? Yeast infection? Gonorrhea? Just a mysterious, bicycle-ish, accident?

HORNE. I need a problem of the mind, not the machine. This is how it must be. You must tell all the World! Lieutenant Shane Horne has been zapped, nuked and lobotomized and returned to the world as Straight as a Road through Nevada!

(Thunder and lightning!)

(O'NOPE waits for it to pass.)

(It does.)

O'NOPE. Shane, gay conversion therapy is not a real thing. It's a dangerous, dishonest, and violent practice discredited by modern medicine,

HORNE. You don't actually have to do it. You're just Saying that you've done it.

O'NOPE. I could lose my medical license.

HORNE. We do not live in a world where people lose licenses for traumatizing a gay person's psyche and even if you do lose your job, you hate it. You'd love to finally quit and find out what you really wanted to do with your life before you caved to your father's wishes and went to medical school for his approval that you never got.

O'NOPE. I love my job.

HORNE. Jess. Don't be the female past her prime who has been single for a decade,

O'NOPE. I have not been single for a –

HORNE. making out with a drunk bachelor at his bachelor party at two a.m. does not count as a date.

O'NOPE. Yes it does because I have since developed a, actually pretty deep level of affection for –

HORNE. Willy Memnon?

O'NOPE. Yes.

HORNE. Wow, you really do love a project.

O'NOPE. People get off on different things.

HORNE. Jess. Don't be this person. Be the person who grabs her prime back. Grab it by the pussy! Take the risk! Join me on this quest! Be the Prophet to pave the way for my Merries! Okay fine say yes and I'll go to hot yoga with you.

O'NOPE. No way.

HORNE. Yes way. Yes. Way. That will be the price of my Merries and it will be worth every sweaty, pointlessly suffocating, terribly humiliating minute of those...two sessions.

O'NOPE. Five.

HORNE. Fine. Four.

O'NOPE. Fine. Ten.

HORNE. Okay Okay Okay Jesus. Ten. You'll do it for Ten?

O'NOPE. I'll do it for ten.

HORNE. She'll do it for ten!!!!!!

(HORNE does the "she will do it for ten hot yoga sessions" dance.)

Jessica. Thank you.

(HORNE kisses her, a deep, in-the-throat, hot, beautiful, a could-this-feeling-please-go-on-forever-but-also-I-feel-I-need-to-pee-most-immediately kind of kiss...)

(HORNE pulls away and beams with gratitude.)

(O'NOPE quietly holds herself from wanting more.)

O'NOPE. You're welcome.

(HORNE leaves.)

(O'NOPE takes a deep breath of a levitated woman coming back to earth -)

(She pulls out a cheerfully-colored vibrating rabbit.)

(With a slight nod to the audience, leaves the stage to be with her rabbit.)

ANGEL. Want to tell you something about our girl Jessica there. Awful bright, top of her class, captain of the Dungeons and Dragons league. Loves to say she tops from the bottom but her bottom's been untopped for some time now. Little does she know, her prime is yet to come. We've got -

(To CREW MEMBER who has begun to change the set.)
Hey (Crew Member).

(To audience.) Please join me in the corner of the stage so they can set up the next scene while I distract you with my acting.

Now, as I was saying -

(And we hear female sex sounds.)

ANGEL. We've got some straight people on base too, hear it?

(And we hear some male sex sounds...)

Familiar to some, to some others less so.

To get us all on the same page, how about I give us a bird's eye view of the situation?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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