

Kiss My Axe: The Norwegian Games

A short play

By

Mona Deutsch Miller

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1916 Roscomare Road
Los Angeles, CA 90077
(310) 476-0789
Monadeutschmiller@gmail.
com]

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

<u>May</u>	Attractive feminist, desperate for her husband's attention, 30s- 50s
<u>Raz</u>	Married to MAY, of Norwegian extraction, a workaholic who is always buried in his cell phone or other current device [*alter device name on pp. 2,6 as appropriate], 30s-50s
<u>Sigismund</u>	Huge 11th Century Viking, with horned helmet and traditional battle dress, very handy with an axe. Like "Lurch" from the Addams Family, or "Jaws" from the Bond movies
<u>Other Guests (O.S.)</u>	Male and female VOICES of other guests at the hotel

Scene

A hotel bar and lounge, decorated by a Viking axe, and a shield and spear.

Time

The Present and 11th Century Norway

SETTING: Bar and lounge of a Norwegian hotel.

AT RISE: May walks around, bedazzled by the surroundings. SHE carries a brochure. Raz concentrates on his cell phone or tablet.

MAY

This place is even better than the brochure made it sound! Did you see that view of the fjords? And all the little things they have, to make you feel like you're in another world - like that axe! It's just amazing!

RAZ

Um hmm.

MAY

And those gorgeous woods outside. The snow looks so clean.

RAZ

Um hmmm.

MAY

(Referring to brochure)

Oh, they have some kind of competition! Traditional Norwegian games or sports.

RAZ

Hmmmm.

MAY

Raz? Raz, are you even listening to me?

RAZ

(still buried in the device)

I am. Amazing. Extraordinary. Wow.

MAY

What did you think of the axe? Axe-throwing is part of the competition.

RAZ

Ten to one.

MAY

What do you mean, ten to one? Are you listening? Rasmussen!

RAZ

What?

MAY

What are you doing? Are you doing work? The whole point of this vacation was to get you away from - from everything!

RAZ

It's not work.

MAY

You are just addicted to your devices.

RAZ

I am not addicted to anything. It's that good, Norwegian-American blood.

MAY

Prove it. I bet you couldn't go a day without being consumed by that, that

RAZ

It's an I-phone. May, you got to get into the present.

MAY

I don't know why you find that machine so warm and fuzzy - I'm sick of email - I'm telling you, the spam I get! It's enough to make you throw up! They want to "enlarge my member," show me "sexy Asian girls," -- and someone named Jessica asks me every damn day if I'm really May Sigridsson...

RAZ

You must have filled out some survey and said you were male. As if. I never get the sexy Asian girls.

MAY

You don't have to sound so disappointed. We're supposed to be on vacation. In the land of your ancestors. Rediscovering your roots.

RAZ

And so we are. I just want to check a few things. Why don't you go have a beer? Eat some cheese. Try gravlax.

MAY

I hate beer! You should know that by... Look, let's sign up for the Norwegian Games. Maybe they'll have cross-country skiing. You could wear your new Christmas sweater.

RAZ

That monstrosity your mother gave me? I can't be seen in that! You didn't pack it, did you? Oh May!

MAY

Mom worked very hard on that sweater. I packed some other things, too. You'll like them. Maybe you can...

RAZ

I'm sorry, May. I just have to finish a few things, and then I'll be ready to start our vacation. I'm still jet lagged. Anyway, I just want to vege out - I'm too tired to throw an axe.

MAY

(Suggestively)
How about a spear?

RAZ

These games must just be for the locals. I guess they let the hotel guests watch.

(MAY, disappointed, studies the brochure)

MAY

It's not clear. They do say not to touch the axe - or you might go back to the 11th century. It's haunted or something. Very funny.

(MAY touches the axe, then laughs)

RAZ

I'm so exhausted, I feel like I already won the grog-drinking competition. Let me just finish up a few more messages...

MAY

Oh, I wish - I wish none of these electronic things even existed! All this modern crap - it just means we never really go on holiday. We're all permanently tethered to the office.

(Strange LIGHTS and SOUNDS. MAY seems dizzy and moves oddly. Gradually this state takes over RAZ)

(During the lights transition, Raz's cell phone is hidden. SIGISMUND, a huge Viking in traditional battle dress, carrying the axe, arrives on stage during darkness.)

BRIGHT LIGHTS.

(MAY, wobbly, holds her head. Raz tries to find his phone. He is also wobbly as he crawls along the floor)

(SIGISMUND watches them, fearful at first, then more confident. He holds the axe menacingly)

SIGISMUND

(Becoming accustomed to himself as HE speaks)
You strangers in the odd garments! What tribe are you? What tongue comes from my mouth? How can it be so warm in here?

MAY

Oh, uh, I don't feel right, Rasmussen, you tell him...

RAZ

I'm not sure what happened, maybe... oh there's that beautiful axe you were talking about, and it's attached to...

MAY

A Viking! Oh my God! They really go all out in the entertainment department, don't they? He must be part of the Norwegian Games! Wait - I don't remember signing up. Did you sign us up?

SIGISMUND

I have asked you strangers to state your business here.
(brandishing the axe)
Well?

RAZ

We're staying at your hotel. Obviously. Ready to participate - almost. Are there prizes?

MAY

Do you think this is how they cut hair? I suppose they could do a hell of a shag with that thing.

RAZ

Don't tell me you've already made a salon appointment? We've hardly arrived. And you say *I* disappear!

MAY

I'm entitled to a little girl time for myself, when we're on vacation.

SIGISMUND

(Examining MAY as a potential conquest)
Girl time? Cut hair? Mmmmmmm - shag.

(MAY feels his muscles, as if he were a prop, arousing him further)

SIGISMUND

You look different from the females I have known.

MAY

Well, I'll take that as a compliment.

SIGISMUND

You will take it, period.

MAY

Maybe he's using 11th century manners. I thought Norway was supposed to be the Happy Country. Or is that the Danes?

SIGISMUND

(Makes a GROWLING SOUND, reacting to "Danes")

MAY

How can you be happy if you're rude?

SIGISMUND

Why are you even speaking? You are a woman.

(to RAZ)

Can't you control your woman?

RAZ

Control her? Of course not. What an amusing thought. I wonder if putting women down is part of the Norwegian Games.

SIGISMUND

This is matter of life with honor, not amusement. Where are your ideals?

MAY

I think one's ideals should include treating women as equals. The Scandinavians are supposed to be all over that. Or is that just the Swedes?

(SIGISMUND GROWLS again)

MAY (CON'T)

They influenced the Notorious RBG, you know. Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She spent time in Sweden just when they were gaga over equality in child care...

(SIGISMUND considers this)

SIGISMUND

Some women do fight very well. And, the bearing of children is hard.

RAZ

Oh, May was calling for drugs by her seventh month. I don't think she felt a thing during the actual birth.

MAY

That's not fair, Raz. I wouldn't complain about current medical care, although God knows, they'll probably take away anesthesia during delivery as part of a Family Values campaign any day now. I did give you a son and a daughter.

RAZ

And I'm so glad they're with my mother. We can finally get away. If only I could find my I-phone.

MAY

You say get away, but you're still tied to that blasted thing!

(To Sigismund)

Alright, I'm ready for the competition, you chauvinist pig!

(SIGISMUND brightens up at this name)

(From offstage, we HEAR the SOUND of a BLADE striking a target, followed by a WHOOP of excitement)

MAY

What are they doing? Axe-throwing? Sword fighting?

OFFSTAGE VOICE #1

Got it! Great shot, Nils!

(MAY approaches SIGISMUND, hoping to interest RAZ)

MAY

Are you going to show me where your forebears raped and pillaged?

SIGISMUND

You talk a great deal.

MAY

Now look, I know Norwegians have a reputation for being a taciturn bunch, but there's nothing wrong with conversation. Where are these games? Out there, where the voices are coming from?

MULTIPLE OFFSTAGE VOICES

[CHEERING SOUNDS]

MAY

Do I need to put on boots?

SIGISMUND

(Surveying MAY, looking around and checking himself, including his crotch)
No need to put on anything. I have axe, helmet, money belt.

MULTIPLE OFFSTAGE VOICES

[WAR WHOOPING SOUNDS]

SIGISMUND

(Doing a few swings with the axe)
Sounds like good battle. I wonder if my cave still there.
(MAY plays around with a pretend sword. We HEAR
WHOOPS and YELLS from offstage)

MAY

Oh, Raz, he even gets into character! You're going to come, right? Forget the damn phone.

RAZ

Do you know what that phone costs? How can I forget it? I just had it, and then this guy shows up...

MAY

Well he didn't take it. Look at what he's wearing - it wouldn't go at all with that ensemble.

SIGISMUND

(To MAY)
You will come with me to my cave.

MAY

Is that where the Norwegian Games are? Sounds like they're having a blast out there. Just give me a sword - I'm ready.

SIGISMUND

(Brandishing the axe)
I take you to my cave! Use different sword there. You like.

OFFSTAGE VOICES

[SOUNDS of BATTLE CRIES, SHRIEKS and people WEEPING]

SIGISMUND

Ah, lamentation of women has begun. Battle has turned.

MAY

Just a minute there, bud, I'm not sure I like the sound of that.

RAZ

You said he was so authentic, so handsome...

MAY

Now sweetheart, I didn't say he was handsome...

MULTIPLE OFFSTAGE VOICES
[CRIES of TERROR - "God Help Us!" "Please" "Don't Kill Us"]

SIGISMUND
You say I am not handsome? You puny foreigners!

MAY RAZ
No! You're very handsome. No! You're very handsome.

SIGISMUND
You want hair cut?

(SIGISMUND arranges a terrified MAY
so she is lying down on a bench.
HE raises the axe high above her
head)

MAY
Not with an axe! Raz, for God's sakes, do something!

(RAZ pulls a device out of his
pocket and sprays it at SIGISMUND)

(SIGISMUND, surprised, drops the
axe, holds both hands over his face
and sobs)

(MAY retrieves the axe, puts it
back, then rushes over to RAZ,
relieved. THEY hug)

STRANGE SOUNDS
AND LIGHTS
INDICATE A
RETURN TO THE
PRESENT

(During this transition RAZ gets
his phone back)

MAY
Oh! Are we back? Are the games over? You brought my Mace? Oh
sweetheart!

RAZ

That guy must have lost, the way he's bawling. I guess we didn't win anything.

MAY

And here's your phone.

RAZ

You see, modern times are good! Technology is good.

MAY

You're right.

RAZ

(To Sigismund)

And you, you Viking, you can kiss my axe. Don't even try to cut my wife's hair. She'll go to the salon, and that's that.

END OF PLAY