

Five Frickin Winters

A Play

by Kim E. Ruyle

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## Five Frickin Winters

### Cast of Characters

<u>ROGER QUILL</u>	Male; 60-ish, intelligent but some rough edges; in reasonably good shape. A writer and next-door neighbor to Kev and Kat.
<u>CARM RUIZ</u>	Female; 50s, bouncy, brainy, and brash. Employed as a golf pro.
<u>KAT ROBINS</u>	Female; 50s, a simmering, volatile brew of intensity. Employed as a nurse. Kev's wife.
<u>KEV ROBINS</u>	Male; 60s, retired, simple, and amiably tottering through life. Kat's husband.
<u>COURIER (DOUBLING)</u>	Female; off-stage voice provided by Carm's character.
TIME:	Summer, 2017.
SETTING:	The adjacent condos of Roger and Kev/Kat somewhere in Florida.
SET:	Condo living area consisting of kitchen/dining area with dining table, four chairs; a living area with settee, a couple of armchairs, and one or more end tables and lamps; door to exterior; door to bedroom; door to bathroom. The set is rapidly modified between scenes to reflect differences in the living areas in adjacent condos. There's a large, prominent painting on the wall in Roger's condo of a fierce, sword-wielding Celtic warrior. At a minimum, the condo of Kev and Kat is distinguished by slightly repositioning the furniture, changing or adding a tablecloth, adding a throw to the settee, and changing the painting on the wall to a prominent surrealistic print that suggests absurdity, perhaps a work by Picasso, Dali, or Magritte.
SYNOPSIS:	Roger, a struggling writer, finds his life in a tailspin. He's dead broke. His best friend's wife has an out-of-control libido and keeps attempting to seduce him. His friend, oblivious to his wife's flirting, tries to set Roger up with an inconceivable companion. And worst of all, he's got no inspiration to write. Will Roger stave off his love-starved neighbor? Will he fall head-over-heels for an unlikely paramour? Will he leave his beloved Florida to endure five frickin winters in Minnesota? Or maybe, just maybe, this wild and wacky scenario will provide Roger with the very inspiration he craves.
RUNNING TIME:	~110 minutes.

## SCENE 1

Early Saturday afternoon in Roger's condo. An unopened bottle of scotch in the middle of the dining table. A t-shirt thrown over a chair. A pair of men's tennis shoes and pair of women's sandals on the floor near the table. Roger lies face down on the settee wearing only jeans. Kat, wearing just a sun dress, straddles him, massages him, and sweetly spins her story.

KAT

And then the old gal said in this feeble, shaky voice: *Thank you, Alice. I looove you.*

ROGER

*Alice?*

KAT

She thought I was her daughter.

ROGER

Oh.

KAT

Her mind's going. You know... But I didn't correct her. Just kept massaging her legs. Her calves and feet... And she just laid there with her eyes closed, humming. Every once in a while, she'd murmur. *Alice... Alice... I looove you, Alice.*

ROGER

You've got a tender way, Kat.

KAT

Yep... Funny thing. Well, not really funny. She can be so damn sweet, but then when her daughter – when Alice – does come to visit, the old gal can suddenly turn real nasty. You wouldn't believe the words fly out of her mouth. She calls her the C word, you know, cunt this, fucking cunt that.

ROGER

*Jesus.*

KAT

Yep. One minute, a sweet old lady. The next, she's a witch just... Just projectile vomiting awful, poisonous words.

ROGER

Well, the clinic's lucky to have you to –

Kat grabs and jerks Roger's waistband.

ROGER  
Hey!

KAT  
Loosen your pants.

What for?

ROGER

Easier to get your lower back.

KAT

It's just my shoulder.

ROGER

I know. Do it. Loosen your pants.

KAT

Roger turns, gives a skeptical look. Kat gives a commanding nod to: Do it! Roger reluctantly unbuttons and unzips his jeans and lies back on his belly. Kat rubs his lower back. Moves up and down the back, gradually becoming slow, sensual.

ROGER  
What the hell are you doing? Use some pressure.

Kat yanks his jeans halfway down his butt. Roger jerks and turns which throws Kat to the floor. Roger sits, hikes up, and buttons his jeans as Kat stands and throws her arms in the air.

What the hell?! You trying to kill me!

KAT

The hell is right!

ROGER

A doorbell rings. Kat dashes to the bedroom closing the door.

WHO'S THERE?

ROGER (CONT.)

Package for Roger Quill.

COURIER  
*Off, raised voice from outside.*

A MINUTE!

ROGER

Roger rises, grabs the t-shirt, and pulls it on as he crosses, barefooted, to open the door. He steps partly through open door. A beat, then he steps back in holding a thick overnight envelope. The unseen courier giggles as Roger closes the door, throws the package on the table, then notices he's unzipped.

Shit.

ROGER

Roger zips up, falls into chair, looks toward bedroom, then cradles his head in his hands. Kat peeks out from bedroom.

KAT

Why don't you come to the bedroom? We'll finish the massage.

ROGER

No way.

*Aside.*

No fucking way.

Roger shifts his gaze to the bottle of scotch and pulls it near. He picks up the package, studies it. Kat enters, hair a bit mussed, barefooted. Roger sits and stares at the package as Kat comes behind, wraps her arms around his neck and kisses his ear.

ROGER

Christ! What the hell are you doing?! A wet willy?!

Kat smiles, leaves her hands on his shoulders. She looks to the bottle of scotch and grin turns pensive.

KAT

You didn't open it.

Roger slaps the package down, turns to Kat.

ROGER

Come on, Kat. You've got to tell me. What were you doing there? You just said a massage. And then you go and... And... I think you should leave now.

Kat just sits wearing a smirk. No response.

ROGER (CONT.)

You're just going to ignore –

KAT

I meant the scotch. You didn't open it.

Roger gives exasperated sigh, grabs scotch bottle.

KAT (CONT.)

Fifteen years. You can't backslide now.

ROGER

Hell, I can't. And stop changing the subject. What the hell?

KAT

But you won't. Backslide, I mean. Let me take it home, give it to Kev.

*A beat, then indicating the package.*

Is that...?

ROGER

Yeah. And you're still avoiding –

KAT

Open it.

Roger just stares, no response.

KAT (CONT.)

Still have some time. We can finish the massage.

ROGER

He drives the golf cart slowly as he drives his car, yeah, probably lots of time. But that's not the issue. There's no way we're... God! What were you thinking?

*Pause.*

Are you going to leave? Go home?

KAT

You never go out with him. Golfing. You really should. He'd love it. You know he adores you.

ROGER

*Sighs, dismissively wagging head.*

I need to think.

KAT

Think about golf or the package? Or the scotch? Or maybe you're thinking about me.

ROGER

Yeah. Wondering what the hell's going on with you.

*Turning attention from Kat to the package.*

And asking myself if I can endure five fucking winters in Minnesota.

KAT

But why five?

ROGER

At least five. What I need to sock something away.

KAT

Thirty years you've worked. Already. Thirty years!

ROGER

So, what's another five? But for those fucking winters.

KAT

You're doing okay. Stay.

*Kat rises, hugs Roger's neck and kisses his cheek in spite of his attempt to shrug her off.*

ROGER

Damn it, Kat. Stop it! Just stop it!

*Roger stands, crosses room, turns back.*

What's wrong with you?!

*Kat approaches, but Roger avoids her and returns to the table. Kat takes a moment, thoughtfully studies the fierce Celtic warrior in the painting, then turns.*

KAT

Please stay. Things are dead in the winter. Here, we're alive! You've got a good life here, Rog.

ROGER

I've got shit.

KAT

No interest in Judy?

ROGER

I'm talking about assets. I've got no bank. No capital. Worst of all, no goddamn inspiration.

KAT

I was afraid you might like her.

ROGER

A woman isn't an asset. And she's no inspiration, either. Bored hell out of me.

KAT

Good. I don't like to share.

ROGER

Share?! Christ, what do you think's happening here?

KAT

I can be your inspiration. Or maybe you find me boring, too.

ROGER

Didn't say that. But *sharing*?! Shit. You can't... This... This is not a thing. We are not a thing! You understand that, right? We're not doing this. God, what's going on with you? You okay?

KAT

More than okay. Simply adjusting my priorities. About time I did, too. And what *thing*? I'm not making any demands, and don't tell me you wouldn't enjoy it. Damn it, Rog! You're so uptight. Relax. Get comfortable.

ROGER

*Comfortable?!*

KAT

Don't tell me you're conflicted.

ROGER

Fucking A. Exactly what I am.

KAT

God! Get over it!

Tapping on the door. Kat gasps, grabs sandals, and rushes to exit to bedroom. Roger hesitates, then crosses to open the front door. Kev enters.

KEV

Hot out there.

ROGER

Yeah. Get you something to drink?

Uh, sure.

KEV

I've got water... Or scotch.

ROGER

Kev shrugs, takes a seat at table, looks around. He studies scotch bottle as Roger retrieves water.

Thought Kat might be here. Car's in our drive, but she ain't home.

KEV

ROGER

*Taking a seat.*

Uh, yeah. She's in the bathroom. You've got a good wife, Kev. Just gave me a hell of a shoulder massage.

KEV

*Noticing bathroom door ajar, confusion clouds face.*

She in the bathroom?

ROGER

Uh, yeah. The second bath. Guess she wanted some privacy.

KEV

Oh.

*Beat.*

Hey! Ya think ya could handle nine holes? With the shoulder?

ROGER

*Rubbing shoulder, wincing.*

Maybe one of these days.

Kat enters, flushed but otherwise put together.

KAT

You're back early.

Kat gives Kev a pat on the shoulder, steals a glance at Roger, then takes a seat.

KEV

Too hot. Just played nine.

KAT

Did Roger tell you? He just received his package. We were about to open it.

KEV

And... You were... You were –

ROGER

Yeah. That, too.

*Rubbing shoulder and looking to Kat.*

I admitted to getting a massage.

Kat rises to clinically massage Roger's shoulder.

KAT

And you're still stiff.

KEV

Still? I was hoping he could –

ROGER

Keep on nagging, Kev. Maybe one of these days.

*Twisting around to address Kat.*

Wants me to go golfing.

KAT

What I told you.

KEV

What's with the scotch? You don't –

Kat reaches over and slides the bottle toward Kev.

KAT

Rog got it for you. Isn't that sweet?

Roger intercepts the bottle, chides Kat with a look, then slides it to Kev.

ROGER

Yeah. I'm a sweet guy. Here you go, Kev.

KEV

For what?

ROGER

Uh... Reciprocity.

Kev gives a puzzled look.

For sharing.

ROGER (CONT.

Sharing?

KEV

What he means –

KAT

Your stories.

ROGER

What stories?

KEV

What he means –

KAT

You're a storyteller, man.

ROGER

Whatcha talkin' 'bout? You're the writer.

KEV

Yeah, but where do my best ideas come from?

ROGER

Uh...

KEV

Think I'm not paying attention when you're describing your riveting adventures on the golf course?

ROGER

Thought you didn't like golf.

KEV

I think Roger –

KAT

ROGER

I don't like it! Tell the truth, I hate it. The pointless activity, I mean. But, the stories, Kev! The stories! Thanks to you, I vicariously get all the pleasure and none of the aggravation of chasing a little white ball for hours in the sweltering sun.

KEV

Aggravatin', but tain't pointless.

ROGER

Yeah. And a beetle's making a point when it rolls a little ball of shit through the dirt.

KAT

Roger's got that job in Minnesota. If he wants it. But don't you think he should stay here?

KEV

Tell me 'gain. What's it for?

ROGER

Account manager. A goddamn account manager.

KEV

And this the contract?

ROGER

It's not a contract.

KAT

Let's open it.

KEV

Yeah but, ya know. The offer?

ROGER

Not a contract.

KEV

Well, okay, but it's 'fficial, right? Got your salary and bennies. An account manager. That's sumpin.

ROGER

A glorified salesman.

KAT

I thought it was consulting. Managing consulting accounts.

ROGER

They don't want my consulting skills. It's all about selling. Business development. Damn consultants. You eat what you kill.

KEV

Why you should golf! That's the point of it. Best place to develop business, on the golf course.

KAT

Maybe when it cools off. And when your shoulder loosens up.

Kat gives the shoulder a final rub and takes a seat.

KEV

Golf is relaxing. Whatcha need. Lately, you been wound tighter than –

KAT

Yep! Wouldn't hurt to slow down. Relax a little.

KEV

Teaches patience, golf does.

ROGER

Patience is for pussies. And what do you mean slow down? Been coasting the past two months.

KEV

Ya think Jack Nicklaus is a pussy? Arnold Palmer? *Tiger Woods?*

KAT

Not coasting. You've been writing.

ROGER

Yeah, couple pages on a / good day.

KEV

/The Golden Bear ain't no pussy.

KAT

The problem is, you stew.

KEV

Your mood, what she means. Last coupla days ya been kinda –

KAT

You imagine problems that aren't even there.

ROGER

God.

KEV

Hey! Whadja think 'bout Judy?

KAT

He found her boring.

KEV

What I figgered.

ROGER

I'm not really looking.

KEV

Remember Carmen? Carm? Ya know, the one –

KAT

From the club?! The golf pro?

KEV

Yeah! She's separated from her husband and –

KAT

She's not his type!

ROGER

How old?

KEV

She's nice lookin'. What's his type? Dontcha think she looks good?

KAT

I guess. But –

ROGER

How old?

KEV

Younger 'n you, that's for sure.

KAT

How old? That's your first question? Jesus.

ROGER

Just the first. First of many.

KAT

You can be an ass, you know. Thought you weren't looking.

KEV

Take it easy. I 'vited her over for drinks later.

KAT

You what?!

KEV

I knew Judy wasn't goin' to hold his interest. Jes knew it.

KAT

When? Tonight?!

KEV

Judy. She was too –

ROGER

Please! Kev. You can stop playing the pimp.

KAT

Tonight?! What time?

KEV

'Bout six. When she's off. And just so ya know, I tol' her all 'boutcha.

ROGER

Told her what? Oh, God. You told her I'd be there tonight?

KAT

For drinks or dinner?

Kat puts fingers to her temples. Turns to Roger.

KAT (CONT.)

Damn. You got any aspirin?

Roger points, and Kat exits to bathroom.

ROGER

You can't convince me to golf, but figure she can? That it?

KEV

She's interestin', Rog. And she's funny.

KAT

*Off, projecting from bathroom.*

Oh, yeah. Hilarious.

ROGER

But she golfs?

KEV

Club pro. And she's smart, too.

KAT

*On entering from bathroom.*

Six o'clock. That means dinner.

ROGER

Kev, you must think my balls are bluer than a peacock's.

KEV

You're my best friend. Just wantcha be happy.

KAT

Well, come on then. I've got to get some steaks out of the freezer. Thanks for the notice.

KEV

She's smart, Rog. You'll see. A reader.

ROGER

Really? She can read?

KEV

You know. Like, she's super literal.

ROGER

You mean literary?

KEV

Smart. Real smart.

KAT

A literary bimbo.

ROGER

Literary bimbo. High price to pay for a slab of steak. Six o'clock?

KAT

Let's go then. Six o'clock! What were you thinking?!

KEV

Go on ahead. I'll be over in a minute. I wanna see Rog's contract.

ROGER

It's an offer is all. Not a contract.

KEV

And she ain't no bimbo.

ROGER

You really grilling steaks? Remember, I like mine rare.

Kat gives icy stare, exits abruptly without a word.

ROGER (CONT.)

Oh, oh. She's pissed.

KEV

Naw. Not really. She likes t' entertain.

*A pause. Studies the package. Appears very troubled.*

Rog, lemme ask ya sumpin'.

ROGER

What's wrong? You okay?

KEV

Lemme ask ya, what's longest ya ever hadda pair a shoes?

ROGER

Shoes? I don't know. There's a pair of cowboy boots in my closet I've had, must be at least twenty years? What? Are you collecting shoes for the needy?

KEV

They still fitcha?

ROGER

The boots? Well, sure. What are getting at, Kev?

KEV

But if'n they dint fit, who d'ya blame? Not the boot's fault, is it?

ROGER

You want a pair of old cowboy boots, you can have them.

KEV

We're married thirty years. She always tol' me I was like an ol' pair a shoes ya never gonna throw way cause ya got used to 'em. Got sentmental value. Might look like crap and stink, but they're comfortable, ya know? Ya jes never gonna throw 'em way.

ROGER

I'm sure she doesn't –

KEV

A joke! She always said it like a joke. Ya know, like she was teasin' and dint really think I stink or look like crap.

ROGER

Oh... Good.

KEV

Last coupla weeks, she skipped church. And you noticed she's gettin' a real potty mouth?

ROGER

Now you mention it.

KEV

Use t' be, she made sweet tea ever day. Always got me a glass, I come in from golfin'. She thinks I drink more tea, I won't drink so dang much beer. Ya know? Nuther joke tween us.

ROGER

Sure.

KEV

And her books.

ROGER

Huh?

KEV

You know how she's always readin'? I'd come in and start talkin' 'bout my golfin', and she'd listen a bit then tell me if'n I was gonna talk golf, she's gonna talk 'bout her dang novels. It was kinda a joke. Ya know, like jokin' 'bout the tea keepin' me t' not drink so dang much beer... Last coupla weeks, she ain't been readin'. Says maybe she needs new glasses. But, Rog, she ain't makin' sweet tea neither. We ain't been jokin'.

ROGER

Yeah. You've got a sense there's something –

KEV

And then... It seems you been kinda... Is sumpin' wrong?

ROGER

With me? No. I mean, well, I've got a lot on my mind.

KEV

I's jes wonderin' if'n it's me that's changed. Ya know, maybe now the shoes don't fit so good no more. For Kat. Maybe for you, too.

ROGER

Oh, God, Kev. No. Don't get down on yourself. It's not you. I haven't been myself lately, and look, I was just being a jackass giving you a hard time about the golf. Sorry, but you know I didn't mean it. Sometimes I can be a real jackass.

KEV

It's okay, man. I know my stories ain't gonna grab ya by the throat and shake ya. Kat says I'm so danged boring, could put me in a room with a Tasmanian devil hopped up on caffeine. Inside a five minutes, the critter'd be in a coma.

ROGER

Predictable's a better word. I'd say you're predictable. Most predictable guy I know.

KEV

That don't sound so –

ROGER

No! It's good. Predictable suits you. You're always upbeat. I count on that. Most people pay too much attention to all the shit going on around them. It affects them. But Kev, you're steady. That's what you are. Steady. And you see the good in people. You ever notice that most of the time when you come to visit, how it puts me in a good mood? We have some laughs, don't we?

KEV

Not so much lately. So, I's thinkin' maybe I'm wearin' on ya. Wearin' on Kat.

ROGER

Wearing on me? No way. You're not just predictable. You're a nice guy. I guess the nicest guy I know. Tell the truth, Kev, I think about that. I wish I was more like you.

KEV

Like me?! Daaang!

*Overwhelmed by this, nearly choking up, wags head in disbelief.*

Ya really wanna be like me?

ROGER

More like you, for sure. Nicer.

KEV

Kat always tole me she kep' me 'roun cause I's a nice guy. But now... I don't know.

*Uncomfortable pause, getting very serious.*

Sumpin's off. With Kat. I mean weird off.

ROGER

I see it, too. Something's going on. Different.

KEV

Ya know, my birthday's a coupla days ago, and –

ROGER

Oh, man! I missed it!

KEV

Naw. No big deal. But Kat...

ROGER

Yeah?

KEV

You're my friend. I can tell ya stuff... My birthday. I come in from golfin'... And Kat... Uh... She's on the bed... On her knees... Hind end in up in the air like a dang chimpanzee.

ROGER

Oh.

KEV

Butt nekked on her knees jes waitin' for me.

ROGER

God, Kev, you paint a picture. I guess you got your birthday present.

KEV

Tol' me I could... Take. My. Pick.

ROGER

Huh?

KEV

I tell ya, Rog, I never, never, *never* tol' her I's lookin' for a rectum as a birthday present.

ROGER

Wow. I really don't know what to say here.

KEV

Thing is, one minute she's bein' all nice and tryin' t' be sexy, and then, I guess cuz I wasn't jumpin' at the chance, next minute she's freakin' out. Yellin'. Cussin'. Dang! She can be downright mean, I tell ya.

ROGER

Look. I'm going to be straight with you. I do think somethings off. With Kat. Would it be okay if I try to find a therapist for you? I mean, would be for Kat.

KEV

You mean like a shrink?!

ROGER

Someone for her to talk to.

KEV

Oh, man. She's never gonna go for that.

ROGER

Maybe you can go first. On your own. Don't even have to tell Kat about it. Talk to someone other than your next-door neighbor. You might get some ideas to convince her to go, too.

KEV

You're a good friend, Rog. Jes glad I can talk with you but don't know 'bout no therapist.

ROGER

You don't have to decide anything right now. But we have to do something.

*Stands, crosses room, turns, determined.*

I have to do something. Let me do some investigation, let you know what I find. No pressure.

KEV

Thanks.

*Nods, bucks up, and after a moment, picks up, studies package.*

Gonna open it?

ROGER

Go ahead.

KEV

Yeah?

ROGER

Sure.

KEV

*Opens and peruses cover letter. Gives a low whistle.*

You'll be rollin' in chalupas. I know Kat wants ya should stick 'round so she can find ya a lady.

ROGER

You think?

KEV

But this ain't bad. Chalupas like this might 'tract lotsa ladies.

ROGER

You're the one always trying to set me up. Besides, those are commission-based chalupas. Nothing's guaranteed.

KEV

But a dang good offer. Ya gonna take it?

Roger returns to table and takes a seat.

ROGER

I don't know, Key. I don't know.

*Pulling the scotch back over and studying the label.*

It means. Five. Fucking. Winters.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)