

# QUIVER

A Play

By Kevin Kautzman



[info@kevinkautzman.com](mailto:info@kevinkautzman.com)  
[www.kevinkautzman.com](http://www.kevinkautzman.com)

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## CHARACTERS

FAITH	F30s	Mother of Seven
HOPE	F30s	Mother of Five
JOY	F17	Affianced
JEFFRIES	M50s	Their Pastor

## DOUBLED ROLES

FAITH'S BODY	
YOUNG FAITH	
SATAN	Prince of the World
AMBER	Faith's Daughter
HUNTER GIRL	A Girl with a Bow

## ON DOUBLING

FAITH'S BODY, YOUNG FAITH, SATAN, AMBER, and HUNTER GIRL are doubled by HOPE, JOY and JEFFRIES as indicated.

## SETTING

Faith's body.

Also, Iowa.

## SCENES

- SCENE 1: The Warriors
- SCENE 2: The King James Version
- SCENE 3: Christian Ladies' Bible Circle
- SCENE 4: In My Beginning
- SCENE 5: Mighty Christian Mothers for America
- SCENE 6: Zeno's Arrow
- SCENE 7: The Black & White Target
- SCENE 8: Six Wishes
- SCENE 9: Good Intentions
- SCENE 10: The Samaritan
- SCENE 11: Testify
- SCENE 12: The Archer

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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SCENE 1  
The Warriors

FAITH, HOPE, JOY and JEFFRIES together.

JEFFRIES

You don't think this is a war, ladies? This is a very real war we're living right now. Right here in America. Right here in Iowa. Right here we're in a war for our immortal souls, every day. I know this is extraordinary. I know we don't do this often, ladies, and that your place is at home with your children, raising them, caring to them, tending to their growth and their budding righteousness, and you Joy... you have a wedding you ought to be preparing for. I know all that, and yet I have gathered you here because I know there's been some real concern voiced at your Christian Ladies' Bible study group about what's going on over there in the City. It's a real crisis. I asked you here tonight because I know how zealous the three of you are, and I know your men, God bless them, aren't able to do anything about it themselves. Joy, your young man's off fighting the good fight, praise Jesus. Hope... dear Hope... Tom wants you here in his stead. He's just too well known in the City. And Faith: well you know Robert's condition doesn't allow him to consider this kind of direct action, does it?

HOPE

"I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them, I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, I will not forsake them." Isaiah.

JEFFRIES

Oh, the man's blind but he does walk with the Lord, doesn't he?

FAITH

He does.

HOPE

Robert is a very Godly man.

JEFFRIES

Ahh, but he doesn't do it alone, does he?

"A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life."

Amen. JOY

Praise God. HOPE

Thank you. FAITH

JEFFRIES  
 So I asked you here because I know you know what's going on. Just a quick drive down the road. Just a quick drive over to Hell itself. To Hell's very maw, like in a story. Except it is real. It's not any story. Hell's out there, and it is real.

This is a war we're living right now.

Yes. HOPE

Amen it is. JOY

JEFFRIES  
 And war is troubling. And I'm old fashioned. I believe in going to God with my troubles. So we're going to go to God now. Right now together, and I am not ashamed. No. I live in the light, and I am not ashamed.

Lord I'm sitting with these three Christian women. Ladies who shouldn't be worried about some woman, some lesbian... let's call it like it is... some so-called doctor over there in the City... some misguided woman from California come to do the Enemy's work. Lord I've got two great Christian mothers here, and one young daughter, unwed but marrying soon. She's going to lay down her body for your cause, Lord. She's going to follow the example of these two Christian mothers who've gone before her, who walk as the Book teaches them. We are people who take your Word seriously, Lord. And look at her there, your daughter. She's a sight.

It's a beautiful thing you're doing, Joy. HOPE

Thank you. JOY

I wish I could be so young again. FAITH

HOPE

Oh yes, me too.

JOY

Stop. I'm blushing. Please go on, Pastor...

JEFFRIES

So when I say we're going to ask you, Lord, for guidance here, I mean that. I want you, Jesus, to come down upon us right now and give us guidance. We are troubled, yes, Lord, but we are going to make ourselves calm... as calm as the Sea of Galilee... and we're going to lay ourselves down for you to walk over us. Here, ladies. Hold hands. Become calm.

Lord Jesus, we are four believers gathered here in your name, and even though we know violence was not the way of your Son, we know too He said that He came not to bring peace but to bring a sword, that He came to set man against his father, daughter against mother, and tear apart households – one against the other. We are all one body in you, Lord, but there are those who stray. Lord we are hurting here in your country today. Yes, we are hurting. Your flock suffers, Lord. We need release. We want to do your will, Lord. We want to serve as instruments of your will. Thy will be done, not mine. Speak to us. Hear us.

Praise God, I hear a sound. Do you hear that sound, ladies?

HOPE

I hear it. I hear a sound.

JEFFRIES

What do you hear, Hope?

HOPE

Oh it's a great sound. It's the sound of water rushing, and air moving, and fire burning, and the very earth shaking. Oh yes. That's the sound I hear right now.

HOPE raises her hands above her head.

JOY

Glory be!

JEFFRIES

What is it, dear Hope?

HOPE

Oh sweet Lord, I have seen an angel, yea. This night I have seen an angel. A great winged angel, red with fire, holding a sword. It was Michael. I'm sure of it. He's here now in the room. Praise God.

It is a sign!

JOY

A sign, yes/

FAITH

JEFFRIES takes HOPE into his arms as SHE collapses.

JEFFRIES

Glory be to Jesus. Our path is becoming clear. We are called to take action by the Lord's avenging angel! A vision. A vision and a path have been given this night to us believers.

The deaf shall hear and the blind shall see, and we shall be the living instruments of the Lord's will!

Glory be.

HOPE

Glory be!

FAITH

End Scene

SCENE 2  
The King James Version

FAITH'S BODY lies obscured in a sleeping bag in a ditch. Snow falls lightly over her, and the wind blows in the distance. FAITH addresses the audience from another place, where snow does not fall and the wind does not blow.

FAITH

My name's Faith.

I'm an atheist.

That wasn't a joke.

Sorry. I should explain.

I should begin at the beginning, shouldn't I?

Well... I wasn't always an atheist. I used to be rather... rather fanatical.

It's hard for me to use that word now. But it's the only word that applies.

Let me see. Where do I begin? Gosh.

A pregnancy. For years everything was pregnancy. First the act. Then the swelling. Then the weight. Then the delivery. Then the act again, in a ceaseless round. Cesareans. I have had four c-sections. My children, blessings all, and my husband – they were slowly, lovingly killing me.

But that's not the beginning, I'm afraid. That's more like the middle.

This is my body.

And that is my body, too. That is literally my body, right there. See me? I'm shaking. Inside the sleeping bag. I'm in a ditch right now. A ditch in Iowa.

FAITH'S BODY shakes to keep warm. Hidden by the sleeping bag, it is just a lump of flesh shaking on the ground.

It's very cold in a ditch in Iowa in December. That's why I'm shaking.

Right now, lying there in that ditch, I'm thinking about my seven children, and where they are and where I am. Right now I'm thinking about the future and how I can escape. Escape from what? Escape from myself, really. Escape from what I've become.

FAITH  
(cont.)

Escape from God. Or the idea of God.

Over there in the ditch, I'm not an atheist yet, or an agnostic, or whatever I am now telling you this. Over there I am still a Christian woman, dying slowly in that ditch from the cold and my low blood pressure and lack of stress response and exhaustion. It's the dark night of my soul over there, where I lay, not alive really and really not dead, and these words run through my mind:

“An atheist has both feet firmly planted in midair.”

Maybe now you're wondering how did this nice woman end up in a sleeping bag in a ditch in Iowa?

It has to do with an old Hebrew book. Psalms, actually. Psalms one-twenty-seven, verses three through five:

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord:  
and the fruit of the womb is his reward.  
As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man;  
so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:  
they shall not be ashamed,  
but they shall speak with the enemies at the gate.”

That's the King James Version.

Of the Bible.

That's King James the First of England. King James the Sixth of Scotland. Same guy. Very powerful in his day. So powerful he got his own bible. Lucky duck.

That's the last time I'm going to mention him. This isn't his story. This is my story. Of how I ended up in a ditch in Iowa. Over there. Of how a girl named Faith from New Hampshire became an atheist, or whatever this is I am.

I suppose you'll be wanting the rest of the story now, then.

I suppose I'd better start at the beginning...

End Scene

SCENE 3  
Christian Ladies' Bible Circle

HOPE and JOY together in FAITH's kitchen. THEY sip coffee at the table.

HOPE  
That was a good session.

JOY  
It was.

HOPE  
I always enjoy talking about scripture.

JOY  
Me too.

HOPE  
Well, not always.

JOY  
No, I suppose not.

HOPE  
But with you two I really enjoy it.

JOY  
Yes.

HOPE  
I think it's good we can do this at Faith's. It's good for her family. They have such challenges.

JOY  
Oh I know. I can't imagine being blind. It must be such a struggle. I really admire them. Faith and Robert.

HOPE  
He's blind but he's been saved. So in a way he sees. Do you know what I mean?

JOY  
Yes. Yes I do.

HOPE  
We really shouldn't talk about Robert like this in his home. He's right in the other room.

THEY listen to the hum of some unheard conversation in the next room.

HOPE  
(cont.)

Men.

JOY

Oh I know.

HOPE

I love a man's hands.

JOY

Oh yes.

HOPE

And arms. Upper arms. I sometimes think that's why I married Tom. Which is crazy, but maybe a little true. I love a good pair of arms.

When's your fiancé returning, again?

JOY

This June.

HOPE

Well God bless him. So brave. And so young. You know we're all praying for him.

JOY

Of course.

HOPE

He'll come home safe.

JOY

Yes. I'm sure of it.

HOPE

And when's the wedding, remind me?

JOY

Right in July.

HOPE

Oh I'm so excited.

Me too. JOY

I love weddings. HOPE

I know! JOY

And there's nothing like your own wedding day for a girl. HOPE

I can't wait. JOY

And you're going to stay here? HOPE

How do you mean? JOY

I mean with us. In our circle. HOPE

Oh I think so. JOY

That's so admirable. HOPE

Thank you. JOY

I just love to see young people come from the outside, get saved, and really come to this lifestyle with their eyes wide open. It's so reaffirming. You're going to be an example yourself one day. I just know it. HOPE

You and Faith are such inspirations to me. Before I was just lost. Now everything is clear. It's the only way I can think to live. JOY

Absolutely. HOPE

JOY

So many people are just miserable. They have no guidance. They don't believe in anything! I mean, if we don't take the Bible seriously, what is there?

HOPE

I know! You are preaching the choir, dear. Hallelujah.

FAITH enters, harried.

FAITH

All the kids are down. Amber... God. She's just impossible.

HOPE

Oh Faith, you look a mess.

FAITH

I'm fine. It's all right. It's/

SHE begins to sob.

HOPE

Oh shhh. Shhh, dear.

JOY

Oh Gosh. Faith, what's wrong?

HOPE

Put on some hot water. We're going to make some tea.

JOY busies herself with tea. HOPE brings  
FAITH some tissues.

FAITH

I don't want any tea.

HOPE

Well you're going to have some tea. Tea always helps. Enough of this coffee. Coffee stresses the nerves.

FAITH

Stress. That's the word.

JOY

What is it?