

BY A FLICKERING LIGHT

By R. Len Cuthbert

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PUBLISHED BY

Eldridge Publishing Company
PO Box 14367
Tallahassee, FL 32317
95church.com

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Steve has a major decision to make. He quit school and left home during his senior year in high school. His father gave him a check of the money from Steve's college fund to use if he chose to leave. Steve finds he has friends until his money runs out. Now Steve is sleeping in barns and on the street while he tries to find a job. He is upset with the direction his life has gone. He not only lacks shelter, security, clothing and food, but the people and the situations with which he has become involved have led him on a destructive course. Steve also doesn't feel he can return home. While he thinks he can tolerate the restrictions his parents impose, he doesn't know if his father will allow him to return.

Then he meets Gabby, a special street lady who shows him the importance of God and family, especially at Christmas. Speaking with Gabby helps Steve overcome his fear of his father's rejection. Steve writes a letter to his parents asking for a sign of their forgiveness. If he sees a flickering bulb on the Christmas lights his father hangs out each year, he will know he is welcome to return.

A heart-warming ending makes this modern day "prodigal son" play very special.

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-3-

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 M, 5 W, 2 Girls, 3 Flex)

FATHER	A man with certain expectations for his son.
MOTHER	Understanding and spiritually mature.
STEVE	17-year-old son unsure of his Christianity.
CINDI	10-years-old, a well-disciplined daughter.
CHRIS	Friend and classmate of Cindi's.
MARY	Neighbor and friend of the Mother. Talkative.
GABBY	About the same age as Steve. From the rough side of town, yet street-wise.
STAN	Street gang member.
LUCI	Another.
REENA	Another.
CAROLERS	At least three needed. Two speak

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Scene 1: Friday morning in early October, current day.
- Scene 2: Late Sunday evening.
- Scene 3: Monday evening, dinner time.
- Scene 4: Later that evening.
- Scene 5: Several weeks later.
- Scene 6: Mid-November.
- Scene 7: That same evening.
- Scene 8: Two weeks later.
- Scene 9: Christmas Eve.

SONG LIST

Use of the songs suggested by the author are optional. Organizations wishing to perform these songs should contact the individual publishers regarding performance rights at least 4 weeks prior to the first performance.

"Never Be Another." As sung by Paul Smith.
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"The Prodigal (I'll Be Waiting)." As sung by Amy Grant
Copyright 1985 Fred & Ethel Music Co., Inc./Nanacu, Music/Bug & Bear Music, adm. by LCS Music Group, P.O. Box 202406, Dallas, TX 75220.

"He's All You Need." As sung by Steve Camp
Copyright 1986 Birdwing Music/Cherry Lane Music Publishing Co., Inc. (ASCAP)/Libris Music (BMI)

"When God Ran." As sung by Benny Hester
Copyright 1986 WORD MUSIC

"Light at the End of the Darkness," by Chris Christian,
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SCENERY NOTES

The main set is the kitchen with a table and chairs to one side and a small desk with a lamp under a window UPS. SR is the main entrance to the room. The kitchen may be elevated so the front of the house with the Christmas light can be DSR or the kitchen may be on a moveable turntable with the front of the house on the other side. The street scenes can be played extreme DSR and DSL or on the apron in front of the set, while the church scene can be played in the first aisle of your theatre. Steve's bedroom can be represented by a chair and small chest of drawers DSR. Lighting is more important to the scene changes than the actual moving of scenery. The scene changes should flow smoothly and quickly.

The steady and blinking Christmas light effect can be accomplished using a the same strand of lights by using a control box especially designed to make Christmas lights blink in a set pattern. These boxes may be purchased at electronics stores (i.e. Radio Shack) and are widely available in many stores during the Christmas season.

PROPS

Father - Stool, newspaper, briefcase, check, notebook
paper, pen Bible, watch
Mother - Things to put away (from kitchen table), bag of
groceries
Steve - Coat, books, wallet
Cindi - Books, mail
Chris - Books
Mary - Watch, bag of groceries
Set props - kitchen: bowl of fruit with apples and oranges,
glass and milk carton, mail on counter; desk & pews: pen
and paper; Steve's room: small family picture, duffel bag
and clothes; house: Christmas lights

Scene 1

(BEFORE CURTAIN: SPOTLIGHT on FATHER who enters and speaks to AUDIENCE.)

FATHER: It was that time of year again...tearing around, cramming your schedule, fighting the crowds and traffic. You know... Christmas. Seems we start preparing for it earlier every year. Well, that year it seemed like just a normal crazy season approaching again. I discovered otherwise later that year. Little did I know, it was going to be a different Christmas...and it had all started heading that way long before I knew it.

(SPOTLIGHT off, CURTAIN opens on kitchen scene on a Friday morning in late October. FATHER enters the kitchen with newspaper and after greeting MOTHER, sits down at the table across from her. STEVE enters after a brief pause. He is in a hurry and dressed like a typical teenage boy [baggy, wrinkled, torn, non-color coordinated clothes]. He's grabbing his coat, books, etc.)

MOTHER: Good morning, Steve.

STEVE: *(With little effort, sort of a "hi")* Huh...

FATHER: I know how you feel, son. Sometimes I have weeks where all I can do is grunt by the time Friday rolls around.

MOTHER: *(Begins to get up)* Would you like toast or cereal this morning?

STEVE: Nah. Gotta go. I'm meetin' some friends.

FATHER: They aren't those clowns that chased Mr. Martin's pig through the streets at two in the morning last week, are they?

STEVE: Those clowns are my friends. They were just celebrating the football championship.

MOTHER: Will you be home for supper?

FATHER: Martin wasn't exactly what you'd describe as being excited.

End of Freeview

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