

# BY A FLICKERING LIGHT

By R. Len Cuthbert

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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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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

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

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

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STEVE: His pig was. *(Grabs an apple from the table)* No, Mom, we're takin' off on a camp-out this weekend.

MOTHER: I thought you were going to take your sister and Chris to the carnival.

FATHER: And don't forget about helping me work around the house this weekend. *(Still looking at the paper as HE talks)*

STEVE: Forgot. Gotta go.

FATHER: *(Dropping top of paper and looking at STEVE)* Forgot?!! How could you forget? You've never said anything to us about camping...and with who?

STEVE: Jus' some friends. I'm gonna be late. *(Leaves pulling door shut behind HIM)*

FATHER: *(Begins to stand up)* What about church Sunday ...and...and...you can't go to school dressed like...*(Sits down again)* Seventeen, and lost in space. *(Looks at MOTHER)* Why does he dress like that when we've given him lots of decent clothes? *(MOTHER starts putting things away while listening.)* Heh, heh. Listen to me, I probably sound like my father.

MOTHER: You do, dear. *(Calls off SR)* Cindi, are you up?

CINDI: *(From offstage)* Yes, Mom. Be there in a minute.

FATHER: I'll be home from work early today. I want to get started on putting the Christmas program together...and we'll have a longer weekend together, too.

CINDI: *(Entering)* Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad. *(Sits down at table)*

FATHER: There's my little lady.

MOTHER: Is Chris coming by this morning?

CINDI: Yeah. We're doing our Christmas presentation today, and we're practicing on the way to school.

FATHER: Would you girls like a ride to school?

CINDI: No, thanks. We need all the time we can get to practice.

MOTHER: Oh, bad news about the carnival. I don't think Steve can-

CINDI: Yeah, I heard. But that's OK. Chris and I will do something else.

MOTHER: Sorry dear...*(CHRIS knocks at door.)*

CINDI: Oh, that's Chris. *(Yells)* Come on in, Chris!!

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