

STRING OF LIGHTS

By Terry Earp

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co. Inc. Call the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information. The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing."

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING
www.95church.com

© 1996 by *Terry Earp*

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
<http://www.histage.com/playdetails.asp?PID=1835>

String of Lights

- 2 -

STORY OF THE PLAY

This is the story of two displaced people; Esther, an escapee from a nursing home, and Nathan, a young runaway who is fresh to the streets. Esther breaks into an apartment and feeds Nathan a meal he will never forget. Together they create memories that will take Esther into eternity and Nathan back home. About 30 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 w, 1 f)

ESTHER PINSKY: An elderly woman.

NATHAN: A young boy about twelve. *(Although written for a boy, the role can be played by a girl.)*

SCENES

An alley.

A studio apartment.

TIME

The present. Late afternoon in winter.

SETTING

The setting for Scene 1 is an alley with a large garbage can. Scene 2 takes place in a studio apartment. It is simply furnished with the exception of a large number of photographs of people.

**STRING OF LIGHTS
SCENE 1**

(AT RISE: NATHAN is rummaging through a garbage can for food. HE occasionally finds something and takes a bite. ESTHER, an elderly woman holding two grocery bags, is watching him.)

ESTHER: Dining out?

(Startled, NATHAN jumps and makes a sound which in turn startles ESTHER causing her to drop groceries.)

NATHAN: Geez, lady! Do you always go around sneaking up on people?

ESTHER: Honey, at my age I don't sneak ... I only squeak. I'm surprised you didn't hear me. Guess it's hard to hear things when your head's caught up in garbage.

NATHAN: I dropped some money in here.

ESTHER: Really? Well, while you're at it, see if you can find my American Express card in there.

NATHAN: Leave me alone.

ESTHER: You're new around here.

NATHAN: What makes you think that?

ESTHER: Your choice of garbage cans. There's a much better restaurant down the street.

NATHAN: I'm not eating this junk. I'm getting my money out.

ESTHER: *(Kicking it.)* That sure is a strange looking automatic teller machine. *(Picking up groceries.)* How about some help with these groceries since you're the one who scared me and made me spill them?

NATHAN: I'm the one who scared you?

ESTHER: You're real jumpy for a kid. Who's after you?

NATHAN: No one's after me.

(NATHAN picks up cans of food though it's been a long while since he had any. He tries to stick a package in his jacket and ESTHER sees him.)

String of Lights

- 4 -

ESTHER: You don't need to steal food from me, son. If you'll help me carry these bags home, I'll fix you a nice dinner.

NATHAN: Thanks lady, but ... I've got plans.

ESTHER: Don't worry; I'm not going to turn you in.

NATHAN: I bet.

ESTHER: No, I mean it. I won't turn you in, if you won't turn me in.

NATHAN: Turn you in? What did you do?

ESTHER: I escaped. Busted out. Flew the coop.

NATHAN: From jail?

ESTHER: Worse. I was in a nursing home.

NATHAN: Nursing home? Are you sick?

ESTHER: Only if you consider old age a disease.

NATHAN: You look fine to me.

ESTHER: I am fine, very fine. But there's only one thing that keeps me from feeling great.

NATHAN: What's that?

ESTHER: Someone to have dinner with me. How about it?

NATHAN: (*Suspiciously.*) I don't know. Why would you want to feed me?

ESTHER: Because I don't want to eat alone tonight. Besides it sounds like your stomach is 6.1 on the Richter scale.

NATHAN: But ... you're a stranger.

ESTHER: True, and it's smart of you to be suspicious. I don't blame you one bit for being scared. I could be dangerous.

NATHAN: Yeah, well maybe I could be the one who's dangerous.

ESTHER: That's true. Are you planning to rob me and beat me up?

NATHAN: Of course not.

ESTHER: Have you posed for any of those "most wanted" pictures down at the post office?

NATHAN: No, I'm definitely not on any "most wanted" list.

ESTHER: Well, then I think we can both breathe easier. But if you don't want to join me for dinner, I understand.

String of Lights

- 5 -

(Starts to take her bag from NATHAN. He looks her up and down, looks inside the grocery bag he's holding and then looks at the garbage can.)

ESTHER: Lesson number one. Take what you need when it's offered.

NATHAN: This sack does seem kind of heavy for you to be carrying around, lady.

ESTHER: Yes, it is, just a bit. If you want to help me, I'll be happy to feed you up a meal you won't soon forget. What do you say?

NATHAN: I say ... okay. Let's go, lady.

ESTHER: Young man, do me a favor.

NATHAN: What's that, lady?

ESTHER: Don't call me lady. It makes me nervous.

NATHAN: Anything you say ... ma'am. What should I call you?

ESTHER: Esther, Esther Pinsky. And, what's your name, young man?

(Pause.)

NATHAN: Just call me ... Jack.

ESTHER: Very well, Jack. Let's get a move on it. I'm hungry.

NATHAN: Me too.

ESTHER: Lesson number two, Jack. If you're going to be dining ala carte, try reading the restaurant reviews. They come out on Wednesdays.

(NATHAN and ESTHER walk offstage together carrying groceries. BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene 1

SCENE 2

(ESTHER and NATHAN are walking in the door of a small apartment. It's a combination living room and kitchen and it is furnished comfortably. There are many photographs scattered throughout.)

ESTHER: Thank you so much for the help, Jack.

NATHAN: You're welcome, ma'am. Where did you learn to pick locks like that?

ESTHER: It was one of my unscheduled activities at the nursing home. I used to go into people's rooms and look at their things.

NATHAN: Why?

ESTHER: To see what made them tick.

NATHAN: Why didn't you just ask them?

ESTHER: Because most of them can't remember their lives.

NATHAN: Whose apartment is this?

ESTHER: I don't know. I saw a lady with a suitcase leave here yesterday. So ... here we are.

NATHAN: *(Worried.)* What if she comes back?

ESTHER: Don't worry; she had a very large suitcase.

NATHAN: Where should I put these groceries?

ESTHER: On the counter.

(NATHAN puts them on the counter as ESTHER takes off her coat.)

ESTHER: *(Cont'd.)* Take off your coat and stay a while.

NATHAN: *(Removing his coat and laying it down.)* I hope she doesn't come back!

ESTHER: Would you care for some cookies before I start dinner?

NATHAN: Cookies? Yeah, that would be great!

ESTHER: How about some milk to go with them?

(Takes milk carton and looks at it, comparing it to NATHAN's face as she crosses to him with milk in a glass.)

String of Lights

- 7 -

NATHAN: (*Apprehensive.*) What's the matter?

ESTHER: Don't worry; you haven't made the milk carton circuit, yet.

NATHAN: You've got a good sense of humor for an old ...

ESTHER: ... Lady? I told you not to call me a lady. I hope I'm more interesting than that.

NATHAN: You are.

ESTHER: Are you from around these parts ... Jack?

NATHAN: Not really.

(*NATHAN wanders around the apartment looking at things while ESTHER checks out the kitchen.*)

NATHAN: (*Cont'd.*) Could I please have some more cookies?

ESTHER: Sure, but don't spoil your appetite. We're going to be having a big meal soon.

NATHAN: Great, I'm starving.

ESTHER: (*Looking at photographs and walking around the apartment.*) There's a lot of ghosts in here. I like that.

NATHAN: Ghosts? There's no such thing as ghosts.

ESTHER: Oh, yes there are, Jack. Look at these photographs. They're all at least thirty or forty years old. Not a new one in the bunch.

NATHAN: So?

ESTHER: People don't go that many years between snapshots unless they're dead.

NATHAN: Okay, so they're dead. I still don't believe in ghosts. Once you're dead, you're dead.

ESTHER: Not necessarily. This room is very alive with the sound of memories.

NATHAN: If you say so.

ESTHER: As long as there's someone alive who remembers you, you keep on living.

NATHAN: I don't know ... maybe.

ESTHER: I'm sure. I'm sure that's the way it works.

NATHAN: (*Picking up photographs and looking at them.*) Do you have a family?

ESTHER: Not any more.

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
<http://www.histage.com/playdetails.asp?PID=1835>

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!