

Creation

The lightbulb flickered to life. The crowd gasped and Thomas Edison smiled.
"We will make electricity so cheap, only the rich will burn candles!"
The crowd erupted into applause and Edison stepped away from the lightbulb. He had worked so hard for this day.....

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Two months earlier.

He was back to carbon filaments. All that work with platinum and metals like it, and he was back where he had started. He stomped his foot, and immediately felt like a little kid again, stomping his foot when he didn't get his way.  
"I haven't failed," he reminded himself and went back to his work. He attached a couple of wires and jumped back at the bang. Another two wires, another two ways. This could go on forever!  
He put his work down and went for his coat. This was it, he was done! He went to blow out his current light source, then stopped remembering how hard it was to light it again. This was why he was working on his light. He took off his coat and went back to his work.

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It was already cold, and it was barely October. Edison walked over to the woodstove with a bundle of wood in his arms. He shoved the wood in and lit his match. He started to shove that in too but stopped, staring at it. If only he could make his light like this. So bright, so natural, this light fit in. The flame touched his fingertips and he dropped the match. The paper under it caught fire, and in a moment of panic Edison poured the teapot full of water over it. A little excessive maybe, but it did put out the fire. He put the pot back on the stove. He lit another match and tried not to be distracted by it, but this too proved unsuccessful, because not being distracted by it involved not looking at it, and he burned his fingers again. This time though he just dipped his fingers into the teapot and wondered how his tea would taste. He lit another match and quickly threw it in and slammed the door hoping nothing else would happen. The wood caught and Edison went back to his carbon filaments.

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"What is genius?"  
Edison stopped smiling. The other questions the reporters had asked had been easy, but this one..... well, this one was not. He looked down at the young man who had asked the question.  
"What is genius?"  
The question rang in his ears and he wondered how long he had been standing there staring stupidly off into space well the people around him started to wonder if he was quite as smart as they had been led to believe. Genius was hard to describe. How did these people come up with these questions anyhow? It wasn't fair to the poor man who was stuck up there with all those people with their pens and paper around him.  
"What is genius?"

You can't describe genius, not on the spot like this. You needed time to think these things through. Time to think up genius answers to genius questions.

Then bang. An answer. A soon-to-be lightbulb.

"Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration" he replied truthfully.

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It was now mid-November ,though a lot had happened in a month and a half . The carbon was doing a lot better this time. He was actually getting somewhere, not just sitting there killing time and having the occasional temper tantrum.

He put in the carbon, screwed a couple things up, and flicked the switch. There was a huge bang as the glass around the wiring shattered into hundreds of pieces.

Edison put his hands up in front of his face, and for dignity's sake tried to keep back the cuss words. After the chorus of breaking glass was over, he put down his hands and walked over to the thing that had just exploded. None of the wiring had been damaged, but the carbon had been shaken up, and the glass, of course, was all over the place. He put on his coat and hat and started home for the broom.

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" Mr. Edison! Mr. Edison!" The reporter looked about ready to jump out of his pants he was jumping so high. "To what do you owe your success?"

There were several different answers to that one. Should he go the standard route?

" I owe it all to my parents who worked long and hard to get me where I am now."

Or should he go for more of a wisecrack epic scientist answer?

"I owe it all to the scientists before me. They made science what it is today."

No, he needed something different and more exciting. Something no one had ever thought of before. In his mind he went through his rooms looking for something new, different, and exciting that no scientist in history had ever said. He yawned and had it.

"I owe my success to the fact that I never had a clock in my workroom."

The reporters all scribbled it down.

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Edison slowly poured in the carbon filaments. He thought he had it this time, the first practical incandescent lightbulb. His lightbulb. He held his breath and flipped the switch. The bulb flickered and died. Something was still wrong. He sighed and was stepping forward to turn it off when it started to flicker again. He stopped moving forward. The light flickered brighter and brighter until it was glowing strong. Edison went to light a match. There was only one problem. He couldn't find them. Still smiling, he turned over his entire workroom, carefully of course. Finally he found them on the shelf next to the door, right where they were supposed to be. He lit one and held it up next to his lightbulb. A perfect fit. In December 1879 he would show it to the world.