



## **THE PLOT**

Thomas Alva Edison was born in 1847 in Milan, Ohio of the United States of America. Ever since he was a child, he had a curious mind and he wanted proper answers to his questions. He was eight years old when a teacher talked about birds among a class of school boys.

Edison was eager to know why human beings could not fly like birds. The teacher informed him that human beings had no wings and so, they could not fly.

Edison had an imaginative and active mind and he remembered that kites could fly without wings. The boys in the class laughed when Edison made this observation in front of the teacher. His teacher misjudged Edison, thinking he was being naughty and disturbing the class. She doubted his intelligence and thought Edison would never be able to succeed in his studies. It would be better if he used his mind and energy in other activities. She asked Edison's parents to take him out of school. Edison's



parents were patient and understanding and supported their son. Edison was self-educated and was lucky to get the guidance of his mother. She patiently answered Edison's questions and encouraged him to conduct experiments.

Edison failed at many of his experiments but he learned a lot even from the failed experiments.

Edison once got the wrong idea that birds were able to fly because they fed on worms.

Edison conducted an experiment on a servant girl to test this idea. He crushed some worms into a pulp and offered them to a servant girl. The girl excitedly drank the mixture and fell ill. Edison's mother asked him not to try such foolish experiments in the future.

Another hilarious incident in Edison's life happened at a poultry farm. Edison was curious about a hen which was sitting on its eggs. His mother told him that chickens would hatch from the eggs. Edison sat on a dozen eggs



himself but could not hatch them. The eggs broke and Edison spoiled his shirt with egg yolk. His mother beat him up after this incident to teach him a lesson. She did not discourage his experiments and only wanted him to conduct them sensibly.

Edison's father gave him twenty-five cents for every book he read and his mother helped him in his experiments. At the age of twelve, Edison understood that he needed more money to continue with his experiments. He became a newspaper boy and travelled on the train to Detroit every day. On the train, he sold newspapers, sweets and fruits.

On the very first day, he earned two dollars and promised his mother that he would give her one dollar from his earnings, every day. Edison was a responsible boy who kept his promises. Within two years, Edison began to print his own newspapers on his printing press. He edited, printed and sold many copies of his paper.



He earned enough money from this enterprise to build a small laboratory in his railway carriage. He used to travel on this carriage to Detroit to sell his wares every day.

Edison faced an accident on the train when he was fifteen. One day, he was experimenting in his laboratory on the train. Suddenly, there was a sudden jerk and some phosphorus fell on the floor of the carriage. The carriage and the newspapers caught fire and the fire started spreading quickly.

The guard and Edison managed to blow out the fire. However, Edison was no longer allowed to travel by that train. Edison lost his source of earning by selling wares on the train. He also lost his laboratory built in the carriage. Edison was forced to take up jobs in different cities for the next five years. He visited new libraries, met experts in factories and workshops and learnt from them. For some time, Edison was unemployed and was later employed by the the manager of his friend's company. Edison could pay off his debts and make his laboratory better with his salary.