Before

Tip:
 Adding a beam of light

Reason we do it:
 A great way to set the mood in a photo or to direct the readers attention to a particular place in the photo.

Method:
Step 1:   Open the photo you want to use.
Step 2:   Duplicate the background layer by pressing Control (Command-Mac) J
Step 3:   Press Shift L until the Polygon Lasso tool is selected.
Step 4:   With the Polygon Lasso tool, draw a "beam of light" shape similar to a cone. Make sure that it is smaller on the source end and that the subject you want to highlight is totally inside it as it is here. (Figure A)
Step 5:   Once you have selection, click the Save Selection as Channel icon at the bottom of the Channels palette. (Figure B)
Step 6:   Press Control (Command-Mac) D to deselect.
Step 7:   Click on the Alpa 1 Channel in the Channels palette.
Step 8:   Choose Filters>Blur>Gausian Blur and type in 30.
Step 9:   Click the Load the Channel as Selection at the bottom of the Channels palette. (Figure C)
Step 10:   Press Control (Command-Mac) ~ to make the image visible again. Now we are going to darken the area outside the light beam so choose Select>Inverse.
Step 11:   Press Control (Command-Mac) L to bring up the Levels dialog box and drag the bottom right Output Levels slider to the left to darken the surrounding area then click OK. (Figure D)
Step 12:   Now we are going to lighten the area inside the light beam so again choose Select>Inverse.
Step 13:   Press Control (Command-Mac) L to bring up the Levels dialog box and drag the bottom left Output Levels slider to the right to lighten the enclosed area then click OK. (Figure E)
Step 14:   Press Control (Command-Mac) D to deselect.
Step 15:   We now have our beam all set but our subject's face is a little light don't you think. (Figure F) So we need to get the detail back. Do this by clicking on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. (Figure G)
Step 16:   Press B to select your Brush tool and then X to make sure that the foreground color is black and paint black on your subject's face. This will mask out the beam of light layer allowing the bottom layer (the original photo) to show through in those areas. And there you have it.

B

C

A

E   **D**

F

G

After