

The Phantom of the Mind

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ANNA was excited. It was the last day of school, and the summer vacations were about to begin. She looked forward to spending the last summer before college with her friends and having the time of her life. She would go to the movies, shop, and there was too much to do, and she was short on time. 'Hey, Anna! Excited for the vacation?' asked Kelsea, her best friend. 'You know I am!' replied Anna. 'Well, we better get going; otherwise, we'll be late for the launch party!' Kelsea chimed in. It was the global launch day for a new technology that Anna's father's company had been working on. When she'd asked her Dad about what they were working on, he'd said, 'Just wait and watch Anna, it's going to change the world' in a cryptic way. Since that day, Anna has been curious about what her father and his colleagues are developing. But she left that topic well enough alone and decided to be patient. Today, all her questions were going to be answered!

Anna and Kelsea got ready for the launch and headed towards TechnoCorp, her father's company headquarters. They noticed a crowd swarming the office as they entered the sky-high glass building. Anyone who's anyone was there. This included employees, investors, VIPs and the Press. Just as she was about to get lost in the crowd, a familiar voice called her, 'Anna, come here quickly, I want to show you something,' urged her Dad. She rushed across the room, and they headed to his office. She had been there once before, and she loved it. It was spacious, and one could see a city view from there. 'Here, open this box, I wanted to show you what we've been working on before the rest of the world sees it', he said. Opening the box, she saw a delicate transparent chip with blue lines across it.

'What is this? It looks so cool!' she remarked excitedly. 'I present to you the MindHive. He explained that it allows its users to communicate telepathically, to the extent that we can even share our dreams. 'Holy smokes! You were right, this will change the world,' exclaimed Anna. 'Are these safe to use? Do they have any side effects?' she asked. 'Now, we have conducted extensive trials and are finally launching this worldwide after a great ordeal. So yes, it is safe to use,' her father explained. 'Let's get going now, we're getting late for the launch', he continued.

They rushed to the main office space where the launch would take place and be telecasted worldwide. Anna met up with Kelsea and told her about the extremely cool invention her Dad had just told her about. Just then, all eyes were on Anna's Dad, Richard and his business partner, Mike, who stood on stage. They started with their presentation of the MindHive and dazzled everyone with their invention. They demonstrated how to fit the product at the side of the head and told the users that it would be integrated with their brains and thus can't be removed. 'MindHive will be launched worldwide, and we hope to reach every person by this month's end,' announced Mike. 'To make this dream come true, we will provide this service at a subsidised cost so that each person on this earth can avail this', he added. Everyone cheered in unison and was totally enamoured by the product, and the event was a total success.

One month later...

Anna was in a crowded space, looking for her parents. 'Dad! Mom! Where are you guys?' she yelled, panic starting to set in. Just then, in the distance, she saw Mike, who was looking directly at her, saying, 'I will have my revenge for