

## **“The Ultimate Gift” Preview Sample Pages #1**

**Actions during the next paragraph:** *Alan McIntyre and Helen Sawyer, along with a couple others, come in and chat with each other as they sit down at the table in the center of the stage. The first inventor brings in his device on a wheeled cart, putting on one side of the stage in plain view of the people sitting at the table. He then sits down at the the table also as the CEO rises and speaks. After he tells why they are here, he indicated Helen, who introduces the inventor. When she is done, she indicates him with her hand, and he moves over beside the cart. As he is telling about the device, pointing out various controls and features, the Cleaning Lady comes in the room, pulling a vacuum cleaner. She backs in, moving to the music on her headphones, and does not see the people who have stopped to look at her interruption. She plugs in the vacuum cleaner and begins to move it back and forth, never seeing them as they try to get her attention.*

**Narrator:** It was an overcast and cold December afternoon, only days before Christmas, as a meeting was convened at the McIntyre Corporation. CEO Alan McIntyre, followed by Chief of Research and Development Helen Sawyer and several employees, are discussing the state of the economy as they come into the room and take their places at the table. The general outlook was gloomy, as fewer people were spending their money on the company's costly electronic products. The company slogan was "Empowering You To Change Your World" and each product was intended to give one control over some aspect of life. The CEO began the meeting by informing everyone of the lower-than-projected sales for this past December. They don't have much time, he reminded them, as it is already the 22nd of December, and it will take working around the clock to have anything ready by the next fall. The challenge was to create the Ultimate Gift, and to that end, Helen Sawyer has commisioned some inventors to build prototypes of their inventions. She introduced the first, and he moved to stand beside his invention as he began to explain it. However, he didn't get far into his pitch when he was interrupted by the office cleaning lady, who, listening to her headphones, was oblivious to the meeting.

**Actions during the next paragraph:** *As she vacuums, the inventor tries to get her attention, but she can't hear him, as she works with her back to him. After a second try, he moves behind her and impatiently taps her on the shoulder. With a spin, she karate chops him on the neck, dropping him instantly. She pulls the headphones off her ears and shuts off the vacuum cleaner, looking around in surprise at everyone. Another assistant rushes over to her to try and get her out of the room after seeing her "attack" of the first man. As he reaches for her arm, she grabs his hand and spins him around, flipping him in the process and down onto the carpet. Alert for other attacks, she goes through some kung fu motions and ends with a stance of readiness, and, extending one hand toward the people watching, motions with her fingers to "come on." (Think of the scenes in "The Matrix" when Neo does this to his opponents.) Helen Sawyer then hurries over to the cleaning lady, motioning for her to to relax and calm down, no-one is going to hurt her. Jane drops her fighting stance, then puts her hand on her hips as Helen explains that they are using the room. As the two men get up from the floor, the first rubbing his neck and the other his arm, the inventor points to the door as he demands to the CEO that she be made to leave. The CEO, rubbing his chin in thought, stands and goes to the cleaning lady and asks her to stay. Sticking her tongue out at the inventor as she passes the inventor, she takes a seat as the CDO and Helen also sit down again. The man's face shows his disbelief, but goes back over to the cart and begins to explain it again.*

**Narrator:** Now, in her defense, Jane the cleaning woman wasn't used to anyone being in the offices this late in the evening, and she always enjoyed her music as she worked. Being in her own little world, she didn't hear the protests of the irate inventor, who asked for her to leave. He then made the mistake of tapping her on the shoulder. You don't startle someone whose son trained her in self-defense techniques. Helen Sawyer finally called a halt to the escalating violence, saying that she recognized her as part of the janitorial staff. Apologizing for the actions of the two men, she explains to the cleaning lady that they were using the room this evening. The recovering inventor, looking to the CEO, demanded that she be made to leave... but Alan McIntyre's mind was working. As he walked over to Jane, he asked her if she would be willing to stay and observe the presentations, giving them her unbiased opinion as a consumer. She agreed to take part as a consultant, amused over the inventor's disbelieving stare as she took her seat. As the CEO and Helen sat down, the disgruntled inventor went back to his device and started his pitch again.

**Actions during the next paragraph and music scenes:** *As he turns on the device, he explains what it does. He sets it to "Pleasant Weather" and smiles, but nothing changes. The people at the table look around expectantly, then are puzzled. The inventor quickly changes the setting to "Cold," and everyone starts reacting to the lower temperatures. But when he is challenged, the inventor turns up the power, and everyone is suddenly freezing! They are holding themselves and shivering, blowing in their cupped hands, etc. He changes it quickly to "Heat." It begins to get hot, then hotter, as everyone is wiping their foreheads, fanning themselves, then about to pass out from heat exhaustion. Seeing the results, the inventor hurriedly switches it to "Tropical Wind," which is nice at first, but but once again it is on too high and they react to a high wind. People are shielding their eyes, squinting, and trying to stay in place. The wind increases to a hurricane, and they begin to get blown away in the same direction. They are holding on to the table, to each other, fighting the wind. It begins to rain, and they are trying to cover their heads now. Some are crawling under the table and holding onto the legs. A lightning strike shocks several of them. A tornado begins to blow them all around the room in a circle as they tumble and fall about.*

**Narrator:** Indicating his machine, which he called the Personal Atmospheric Controller, he explained that it allowed the user to control the weather conditions on a very small scale. For those that have the need for control in their lives, said the fellow, this device will give them that power. Setting the controls for "Pleasant Weather," and dialing up the power a little, he stood back with a flourish and a smile. But the puzzled looks of those around the table, and the lack of any discernable effect, caused him to hurriedly explain that since the weather conditions in the room were already pleasant, there was little to change. To cover his misstep, he decided to demonstrate the more visible effects and quickly changed the setting to cooler weather. As the temperature rapidly dropped in the room, the CEO looked impressed, but commented that this was nothing that a good air conditioner couldn't do. The inventor responded by increasing the power, and the room suddenly became the middle of the Arctic ice mass, in the center of an ice storm! Seeing the frostbite starting to nibble the fingers of the viewers, and the obvious displeasure on their faces, he quickly reversed the setting to simulate warmer climates. But flustered by his first misstep, he neglected to change the power level which was still set at high... and the intense heat of the Saharah desert in summer began to make everyone hot under the collar. The inventor was sweating profusely also, but not so much from the heat as the pressure, now on him to recover. As everyone wilted from the heat and begged him to change the setting, he switched it to generate a tropical breeze. (Pause.) But once again the higher setting... *(continued)*