Name: Mark Polyakov
Grade: 8
Title: Rematerialize

"Catch!"

 I threw the ball towards him, and he caught it. Then he threw it back. Wayyyyy off. Brandon's horrible at this, but it was fun to play anyways. He threw it about 7 feet to my left, and although I tried my best to get it, I didn't. I ran to pick it up, then threw it back to him. He didn't catch it. I have to admit, my aim was quite a bit off there as well. He ran for it, kept running. It really was quite a view from up there, on the roof of the building. You could see for a long distance around, but not out of the city. But that wasn't because of bad visibility, it was just a truly huge city. Especially with none of the "safety" fences that you see on some of the older buildings to prevent people from falling off, from the mid 2000s mostly. I see a particularly famous one, the Empire State Building. I heard that it was a pretty tall tower for its time, but now it's a runt. I'd say we were at least five times higher than it. Yeah, the old towers, "skyscrapers" I think they were called, stood on their own, so it was harder to make tall ones, but that's not a good excuse for them being so short. The people back then had just as much ability to make a scraper web as we did, all they had to do was connect the towers together with lots of metal in the right spots, but no. Well, I guess I shouldn''t complain, since it doesn't matter. We have them now, and that's the important part.

Anyways, so Brandon was running for the ball that I threw not very well at him. He kept running towards it, getting pretty close to the edge of the building, probably within a foot or two, but, of course, he didn't really care that much. He caught it, then threw it back at me. This one was the worst throw I'd seen this whole time, missing me by at least a good 15 feet. I ran towards it, back towards the edge of the building on my side. It kept rolling away, further and further to the side. I finally caught it when I was right near the edge of the building. As soon as I had it in my hands I attempted to stop moving completely, but I couldn't slow down nearly fast enough. My feet skidded along the roof, before I slipped clear off the edge.

The air was smooth, as I fell down, miles and miles, towards the surface. Closer, closer, closer...

But, if I kept falling, I'd hit something below. And easily damage it. So, before I hit the ground, the TempSuit self destructed, and everything went black.

There was a considerable delay, about 30-45 seconds, and then, there was a flicker. Then, the TempSuit logo appeared in my vision, along with their classic loading icon. On the very bottom, there was a copyright notice: "TempSuit Corporation, (C) 2172". Every time I saw that copyright notice, I was amazed. It was 2342, and for over 250 years their software had been working just fine, so well it hadn't even been updated. It was like that with a lot of things, it seemed like. That candy which I can never remember the name of, the label says 2134. The Airbus A490, the huge, 2 mile long jetliner, the safety card says 2093. So old.

As the loading symbol continued to spin, some techy words describing exactly what was happening appeared. "enabling mass recovery systems"..."starting redistribution engines"..."establishing public key authenticity"..."decrypting entry point data"..."running timepass simulations"...

I was bored, so I continued thinking of copyright dates on things...Call Of Duty, Future Assault? 2033. The Apple iHolo 2? 2136. The Lamborghini Vehendor? 2103. I kept thinking for, maybe the next 10 minutes. 2099. 2013. 2133. So many dates. All so old.

Shortly afterwards, I saw the words in my vision: Rematerializing in 5...4...3...2...1...

I fell forwards, out of the rematerialization cell, into the maglev rushing towards the city. I established a Q-Link chat with Brandon.

"Really? Really? That was a horrible throw!"

"Hey, you weren't much better"

"At least I didn't throw it so far you fell off the roof!"

"Hey, do you really care?"

"No, I guess not, not really"

"Ever heard of a 'paradox?'"

"No. What is it?"

"Like, when if something goes a certain way, it wouldn't work, and it must go a different way. But if it goes that other way, it doesn't work, and it must go the first way"

"I don't get it"

"I'll give you an example. So, let's pretend that time machines are real. Then, lets say you went back in time, and accidentally kill your grandma. What would happen? Think it through"

I did. So, I'd kill my grandma. Then what'd happen? Well...she would never have had a baby...so my mom never would've existed...and if my mom never existed...then I never would've existed. There.

"I wouldn't exist. I would never have been born. Simple enough"

"But, if you never existed, how did you kill her? You couldn't have. In that case, you never would've killed her. So, you would be alive. But, if you were alive, you would've killed her. But if you killed her...you get it now?"

"Yeah. Pretty interesting"

I thought through the loop a couple times then, as soon as I felt I understood, I blacked out.

A few seconds after that, I was...awoken. I was in a cell somewhere. There were hundreds of electrodes attached to my head, and other parts of my body. I instantly noticed something was wrong with me. I couldn't open a Q-Link chat with anybody. I couldn't access the news. I tried to get out from wherever I was, but I noticed something else was also wrong: I was paralyzed. After freaking out for a few minutes, somebody with a TempSuit corporation badge appeared above me, and pressed a few buttons on a panel next to me. Then, I could move again. "Don't move", he said. "Just wait for a minute or two while I get you detached from all this". He removed all the electrodes from everywhere, then I got up.

"What happened? Why am I here? Am I ok? Why can't I chat anyone?"

"Calm down, first. I'll explain everything"

"Ok"

"Ok. I'll make this quick, since I don't have time to explain everything. We've looked at your memories, and so I won't tell you anything you already know. This is pretty bad news. Your rematerialization has failed. Permanently. There's no way, currently, to fix this. This is not a TempSuit you're in right now. This is your original body. It's very complicated, why you aren't able to rematerialize, but it has to do with that paradox your friend told you about. First, the basics of how a TempSuit works. When you're born, your brain is copied into an artificial brain, which is put into your first TempSuit. Any memories, thoughts, skills, etc that you acquire while in the TempSuit are mirrored into your real brain. When the TempSuit is destroyed, your real brain is mirrored into a brand-new artificial brain, which is put into a brand new TempSuit. And when it's destroyed again, the same thing...forever. However, the artificial brains that are in the TempSuits are rooted in computers, not biology.

"That infinite loop that a paradox has overloads the artificial brains that are in each TempSuit, causing them to cut out. Computers hate infinite loops. The artificial brains are computers. So, that's what's wrong. We can't just rematerialize you without the paradox in the brain because we can't cherry-pick specific parts of your brain to be copied to the new artificial one, we have to copy the whole thing, otherwise the artificial brain won't link up with your conscience. So, long story made short, you'll just have to live in your original body.

"You'll figure out the rest yourself, quite quickly. Sorry"

Then, the floor under me slid away, through the building, carrying me on it. I tried to run, get back, ask the guy more questions. But there were glass walls all around me, so I couldn't really go anywhere that the sliding floor under me didn't want me to go.

Eventually, the sliding floor deposited me outside the building. I looked around, and recognized where I was. I was at Munchvlont Central pressure train station. Then, I just went and got on to the train that went to my house, just like I would any other day. Everything went normally. I got home. I decided not to tell anyone what had happened.

After a few hours, I noticed something strange. A strange feeling. I just wanted to...do nothing. It's hard to explain. A word popped into my head when I felt it: "tired". I kept going for another few hours, doing things. Then, I blacked out.

I came to a few hours afterwards, exactly at the same where I blacked out. I didn't feel "tired" anymore. I felt refreshed. What had happened? I had no idea. But another word popped into my head then: "sleep"

And while I was out, strange things happened. I had visions. The word that came to me for these were "dreams". And, everything was very muddy in it, but, in the dream, somebody said, "Your days are numbered...80 years...give or take". It was ominous. I had no idea what it meant.

I went to play catch with Brandon again the next day. But, another strange feeling came to me. As I ran to catch one of his off-throws, ran close to the edge, I felt very strange; scared. I didn't want to fall off the edge. I felt that something bad would happen...that I would..."die". I didn't catch it. After we were

done playing, I went up to the edge. As I approached it, I felt that same feeling again. Then, I got close enough to look over the edge, down to the ground.

I completely freaked out. I ran back, as far as I could, down to the surface again. Then something clicked, the thing about 80 years. I would die. After 80 years. It seemed absurd, but I felt 100% sure that's what it meant. That I would die at the end of those 80 years. I couldn't say why either.

I kept thinking about that. That I wouldn't be here forever. That's what I thought was promised to me. Life forever. But it wasn't. Then, I decided, that, in the time I had, I wanted to at least do something big. I wanted people to remember me forever, even if I couldn't be here forever. I wanted to make something. A revolution. Not like everyone else, just doing their normal thing. I would make an impact. Change things up.

Then, I remembered the copyright dates. And realized something about them: All of them were from before 2172, when TempSuits were invented. Before immortality. And I realized why: People didn't care about making an impact. They didn't need to. They'd be here forever. They'll "always have time to do that if they want to". But they never will. I had a reason to make a change, an impact. So did everyone, before they were guaranteed life forever. And I would make a difference. I wouldn't be here forever, so I'd make a legacy that would.

For the first time in hundreds of years, somebody would make progress.

Immortality had ruined us.