

Jack was living his life one day at a time. He was unemployed and practically a NEET, rarely leaving the house. Most days, he played video games, speaking only to his parents and his online friends. Beyond that, he had little contact with the outside world, venturing out only for food. Then one day, he received a call from his father.

In the midst of an intense gaming session, Jack's phone rang. Without taking his eyes off the screen, he answered, "Hello?"

His father asked, "How's the job hunt going? Do you have any interviews lined up?"

Jack replied, "No, none of the places I've applied to have called back yet. But I won't stop looking." This was a lie; Jack hadn't been actively searching and had grown comfortable living off the generous allowance from his parents.

His father sighed, "Your mother and I didn't want to do this, but we're cutting you off. You need to

live your life, and we can't keep funding your inactivity."

Before Jack could reply, his father hung up. Dropping his controller in shock, Jack realized the gravity of his situation and the urgent need to find a means of support.

Feeling defeated and not in the mood to game, Jack decided to visit the convenience store for a bite. He grabbed some snacks - not quite a balanced meal, but enough for the evening. On his way home, a stranger approached and introduced himself.

"Hello, Jack," the stranger began, "I'm Steven. I work for a company seeking someone like you. We aim to transform individuals into functioning members of society. We'd like you to join our program, and you'll be compensated generously for your cooperation."

Jack eyed the well-dressed man warily. "What kind of program are you referring to?"

Steven explained, "It's a program where we help individuals start their lives over, essentially from scratch. They retain their memories, giving them the knowledge of past mistakes. And it's all possible with this." He flashed a pill.

Raising an eyebrow, Jack inquired, "What will happen if I take that pill?"

Steven smirked, "You'll regress in age, becoming around two or three years old, and you'll get a chance to grow up again."

"Why would anyone want to start life from such a young age?" Jack questioned, clearly skeptical.

Steven was prepared for this. "Well, if you sign up and take the pill, you'll receive 500 grand just for participating."

The offer took Jack aback. Still, he pressed on, "What's the catch? What does your company gain from this?"

Steven grinned, sensing Jack's interest, "We'll study and observe your growth. You'll be assigned two company guardians, and I'll be your company rep, handling any issues or concerns you might have."

Pausing to process, Jack posed another query, "If I revert to childhood, what becomes of my belongings, family, and former life?"

Steven responded, "Your possessions will be stored since they're still yours. As for your family, you'll seemingly go missing, and no one will know of your whereabouts."

After some contemplation, Jack agreed. Steven, pleased, suggested, "Let's head to your apartment to finalize the contract," and Jack concurred.

After reading and signing the contract, Jack was poised to swallow the pill when Steven intervened. "We should head to the company

before you take that," Steven suggested, "You'll need new clothes afterwards." Jack readily agreed, seeing the logic in the suggestion.

The company was about 20 minutes away. By the time they arrived, it was late evening, and the premises weren't too busy. Upon entering, Jack's eyes were drawn to a prominently displayed daycare sign, a hint of his potential future. But he brushed the thought aside, following Steven to an elevator. As they ascended to the third floor, Steven shared some insights.

"When you take the pill, the age you revert to isn't random, but can vary by a year or two.

Occasionally, participants end up younger than anticipated," Steven explained.

Jack recalled, "Yes, I remember that clause in the contract."

Steven smiled, "Of course. But if you do end up younger than expected, I hope you won't hold it against us. There's no extra compensation in

that scenario."

As the elevator doors opened, Jack could discern the faint cries of babies. Looking around, he asked, "Why do I hear crying?"

Steven elucidated, "That's an occasional outcome of the pill. Some revert to an age where they lose their ability to speak and walk. The sudden change can be jarring, causing them to cry. But it's a temporary phase. Within a year or two, they regain their communication skills. It's not a significant concern."

Reflecting, Jack realized that a short period of helplessness might actually be a respite for someone like him who cherished solitude and inactivity. Led to a designated room, Jack was excited to begin the transformative process, enticed by the promise of half a million dollars and a break from adult responsibilities.

Without hesitation, Jack took the pill and swallowed it. After waiting briefly, he began to

ask, "How long until..." but couldn't finish the sentence. A sensation unfamiliar to him swept over his body, presumably the feeling of getting younger. When his shirt began to engulf his hand, he knew it was working. As he continued to shrink, soon only his head peeked out from the oversized t-shirt, with the rest of his clothes pooling around him on the floor. Extracting his hand from the collar, he saw the pudgy hand of a toddler, or perhaps even younger. Unsure, he attempted to ask, "How old am I now?" but it came out garbled, sounding more like, "How little am me?"

Steven smiled, presenting a hand mirror to Jack. The reflection showed Jack the baby face he now wore. Struggling with his newfound articulation, Jack tried again: "How old me is?"

Chuckling at the infantile speech, Steven replied, "Well, you appear to be just over a year old. You're beginning to talk, and while walking is possible, crawling might feel more natural right now. We'll get you dressed and placed with other

babies for observation. You'll be under the care of my colleagues. Typically, observations last around 24 hours to monitor for any immediate side effects of the drug."

Grasping the situation, Jack felt everything was above board and didn't protest. Steven handed baby Jack to a woman in a lab coat who oversaw the 'regression ward' – a place resembling a hospital nursery but catering to various age regressions. Some were aged back too far, others not enough, resulting in kids as old as five or six. Jack, however, was grouped with the babies.

The woman laid Jack on a table and fastened him in place. Attempting to ask her intentions, Jack's words came out as, "Wha do?"

She comforted him, "Don't worry, sweetie. I'm just getting you dressed. Relax."

However, Jack's relaxation was short-lived when he spotted a genuine baby diaper, perhaps a



known brand like Huggies or Pampers. He wriggled, protesting with a repeated, "No diadie."

She looked down at him and chuckled, "Did you really think you'd be regressed to a baby and not wear diapers?" Continuing her work, she added, "If I don't put this on, you'll end up with a wet bed. Plus, you're in observation all night. Trust me, you'll need this."

Considering her rationale, Jack realized his initial assumptions were naive given his current age. He ceased his resistance, letting events unfold as they would.

Jack was placed into a bassinet-like bed, where he took a moment to reflect on his situation. He pondered whether he had made the right decision. The allure of the money was undeniable, but he wondered if it was worth leaving his family without even saying goodbye. Engulfed in these thoughts, he began to drift off to sleep.

In his dream, he found himself in a playpen surrounded by baby toys. Suddenly, he felt a warmth spreading from his bottom. In the dream, he watched as his diaper swelled larger and larger, eventually encompassing him. This startling dream jolted him awake. He was still in the bassinet, surrounded by others who had also undergone regression, all of them in deep slumber.

A strange feeling gnawed at Jack. Recalling his dream, he inspected his diaper and realized it was saturated, although it thankfully hadn't leaked. He poked at the squishy padding, the sensation entirely new to him. Sitting there, prodding at his soaked diaper, he wondered if this was now his reality. How long, he pondered, would he need to wear these?