

One Small Step for Baby...

The weather outside may have been frightful, but the fire was definitely delightful on the Yuletide night when the baby boy decided to take his first steps. In his grandmother's living room, the nine-month-old surveyed the scene before him. The brown carpet stretched out before him like a barren wasteland, the monochromatic palette even rising up the walls; the wood paneling there was the only evidence of trees ever existing on that giant plain. Fortunately, the little boy was not alone; all around him fans sat on chairs and sofas that stood over the baby's head, emblazoned with patterns that had, on other days, mesmerized the youngster for hours. But this day, this hour, this very moment; this was the little boy's time to shine.

Far away, across the vast desert of carpet, the child saw a beaming face shining on him like the sun, beckoning in a language he could not understand but could nonetheless comprehend: "Come here, little one. Come to Grandma!"

The baby boy smiled and giggled. He didn't need to be told twice. That boundless adrenaline called love coursed through his tiny veins, and he stood up, wobbling, grasping frantically for a handhold. Suddenly he was steadied by a gentle hand, the hand of his mother. She, too, was beaming at the boy.

His eyes turned back to his destination. Determination sparkled in his blue eyes, and the light from tall lamps played off his shockingly blonde hair like a halo. Then, with all the might the little one could muster, he took one huge step...

As his little shoes thumped on the floor for the first time, unassisted, a shockwave of that magic called joy ripped through the assembled crowd like an earthquake: 10.0 on the Richter scale. It shook everyone in attendance with pride and happiness. No one was more affected than the boy's mother.

Then another... and another like ripples in a pond, aftershocks on the heels of a quake, his subsequent steps left depressions not in the earth, but in the family's memories.

The young boy could see her now, eyes wide with joy and glee, arms wide open. Just a few steps more, and an unbelievably huge hug awaited the new walker. Gravity, for just those few moments as the toddler tottered over the carpeted plain, seemed to relax her hold on the world. And then, with one last, final, huge step, the baby came to a standing halt in Grandma's arms. Not for long, though; soon he was walking on air, flying around in a great big, ginormous Grandma hug. And the little boy couldn't have felt more important, more giant.

Then he was on the ground again, and walking this way, and that way, and every which way on the carpet that crinkled underfoot of such a young giant. Finally, eyes wide, he stopped in front of a woman whose face he had known since the first day of his lifetime. She leaned over, smiled, and said "Austin... I'm so happy!" And, though the little giant couldn't comprehend it in his little mind, he was happy, too.