

*Author's Note: This vignette takes place after the U.S.S. *Monarch* returns to Earth during *To Boldly Go: Consequences of Conscience*.

To Boldly Go: Growing Up

A Personal Log

By Cleve Johnson

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Commander Marcus Grey walked with his son through the corridor toward the transporter room. Even though Ian had not left the ship yet, Marcus already missed him. “So, are you looking forward to spending some time with your grandparents?”

“I always have a good time with them, Dad, but I will miss being on this ship. I’ve become used to it.”

“Are you going to miss the ship, or someone who is on the ship?”

“I’ll miss you, too, Dad.”

“I will join you at Dover for a couple of days next week, but I wasn’t asking if you would miss *me*.” Marcus put his arm around his son’s shoulder as they drew near to the transporter room. “Don’t you have a friend or two that you will miss?”

Ian started to blush when he realized that his dad was talking about Carrie Nelson. He had developed a close friendship with the girl, even liked her more than just a friend. He hoped that she felt the same way about him, but he had never expressed his true feelings to her. And he never asked Carrie how she felt about him. “Dad, I was wondering about something.”

“And what would that be, Ian?”

“How old were you when you first noticed girls?”

Marcus had known for some time that Ian had a crush on Carrie Nelson, but he was still unprepared, like most fathers of teenagers, when his son asked. It was even more difficult for Marcus since he was a single father without Ian’s mother to talk to about their son growing up. “Are you talking about physical attraction to girls in general or about an emotional attachment to one particular girl?”

“One particular girl.” Ian knew that he had answered too quickly when he saw the way his father smiled at him.

Marcus stopped before the sensor opened the transporter room door. He turned to face his son. “I think I was twelve, not much younger than you are now. Her name was Janine MacDonald.” Marcus smiled at Ian. “I told her that I liked her, but she made it clear that I was too immature and she didn’t want to talk to me...ever.”

Ian frowned as he thought that Carrie might react similarly.

Marcus was not a telepath, but he thought he knew what his son was thinking. “Don’t worry, Ian. I’m sure that Carrie isn’t like that.”



Ian's mouth dropped open, but he did not say anything for a moment. After a few seconds, he recovered. He should have known that his father would know that the conversation was about Carrie. Not many kids were currently on the ship, and of those, she was the only girl on the ship near his age. "So what did you do when she dumped you?"

"She didn't really dump me since there never was a mutual relationship. I eventually got over her. It only took me a week to stop thinking about her, so I guess it was just a simple crush precipitated by male hormones." Marcus rubbed his son's head, messing up his hair. He loved doing that to Ian just to see how fast the boy would try to put his hair back to normal. "I was fourteen when I met the next girl that I really liked. I became close friends with her. After about a year, I told her that I thought of her as more than just a friend."

"And what did she say?"

"She said that she felt the same way. She actually told me that she had loved me from the day that we met." Marcus wanted Ian to know the possible consequences of getting emotionally attached too soon or at a young age. "We took things at a slow pace, but our love for each other grew and I started thinking about her all the time. My grades began to fall because I didn't concentrate on my schoolwork. That almost kept me out of the Academy a couple years later."

"Did you break it off because of your grades?"

"No, Ian. I did realize that I had to stop thinking of her *all* the time, balance my feelings with my thoughts and educational goals. But I never stopped loving her."

"Dad, was this girl... was she my mum?"

"Yes." Marcus felt a tinge of sadness well up inside, but immediately it was replaced with joy as he watched his son's face light up. He had lost his wife during the Dominion War, but Marcus still had his son—*their* son. "We married during my fourth year at the Academy, and you were born two years later."

Ian just looked at his father, remembering how happy the three of them had been. Ian missed his mother, but he cherished the good memories he had of her. "Do you miss her as much as I do, Dad?"

Marcus patted his son's shoulder. "Very much."

"Do you think you will ever marry again?"

Marcus had not even considered the possibility of another wife. He felt that to remarry would be a betrayal to his wife, although she had died almost four years before. On the other hand, he was only thirty-seven and should have another hundred or so years to live, barring any accidents or any more hostile aliens. "I don't know, Ian. I never considered it."

Ian smiled at his dad. "It would be okay with me if you did."

"Thank you for giving me permission." Marcus turned at the sound of approaching footsteps. He saw young Carrie Nelson coming toward him and Ian. "But chances are that you may end up tying the knot before I do again."



Ian blushed again when he saw Carrie approaching. “I’m too young for that, Commander.” Ian loved to tease his father by calling him by his rank, especially when his father teased him.

“Just remember that,” Marcus said. “I’ll wait for you inside.” Marcus rubbed his son’s hair again before entering the transporter room.

Ian tried to put his hair back in order as he turned toward the girl who had come within a few meters of him. His eyes sparkled as he smiled at her. “Hi, Carrie.”

Carrie Nelson stopped and smiled back. She was a few months older than Ian, but those few months made little difference to her. She saw Ian as a close friend, and maybe a little more. She thought he was cute, and her parents liked him, especially since he was always well mannered and chivalrous. Not many boys his age could meet the Nelsons’ requirements for their daughter, but Ian had surpassed their expectations. “I wanted to see you before you left.”

“I’m looking forward to seeing my grandparents, but I wish I could stay on board with you. I think I will miss our walks in the arboretum most of all.”

Carrie thought about the last time they walked in the ship’s arboretum. They both stopped and bent down to touch one of the red roses and their hands briefly touched as they reached for the flowers at the same moment. She wanted Ian to hold her hand, but he was too much of a gentleman to assume it was okay to do so. As she thought about that memory, Carrie decided right then to let Ian know that she liked him. She leaned close and kissed him on the cheek. “I’m going to miss you, too.” She turned and quickly went back the direction from where she came, almost skipping as she giggled.

Ian’s face felt warm and he knew that his trip home, even though he looked forward to visiting his grandparents, would be too long. Although he had not even left the ship yet, he already looked forward to coming back.

