Age Versus Maturity

by Aurorealis

Summary

George wonders why Connor been acting off today. He supposes Connor could be stressed- after all, he has a lot of responsibilities. Sure, he looks at least 25 and probably should have known and respected his own limits, but not every man is perfect. George decides to follow him, and discovers one very important, missed fact. Connor looks older than he is. Much older.

Notes

Full prompt:
Connor looks pretty old for his age. Not realising how young he is, his Revolutionary allies and his recruits/contacts pile lots of adult responsibilities and pressure on him and even though Connor is very mature, he’s not entirely ready for this sort of thing and he finds it kind of hard to cope, and gets pretty stressed about it all.

Because jfc Ubisoft, Connor doesn’t look four when we first meet him, and no way does he look seventeen during the Tea Party. That isn’t the face or build of a teenager, dudes.

Bonus that I actually fulfilled:
- The people treating him as very old are genuinely mistaken and a little upset they’ve put so much pressure on someone so young.

Connor had been looking fidgety the entire meeting. Everyone was noticing it, but no one chose to mention it. To be fair, it was a little stressful, going over reports of skirmishes and supplies. He
hadn't even spoke the entire time, busy as he was looking at the floor and shifting his knees in the small chair he was seated in.

George almost hesitated, but he had to address the last point on the agenda. “Connor, may we have your report on trade and supplies from the Davenport homestead?” The deadly assassin actually flinched, and everyone was taken aback.

“Commander, I apologize. I was unable to finish my report. There were many things to be done, and I have neglected by book keeping as of late.” George thought that to be strange, and judging by the shuffle next to him, Sam Adams was in agreement. This was probably the first time Connor hadn't come through for them.

“I suppose that is understandable. Still, you must know Connor, that these matters are extremely important, as much as the battles you participate in.” Connor glanced up, and George caught a glimpse of exhausted, sleep deprived eyes. “I am aware, Commander. It will not happen again. We have been busy at the homestead, with Prudence giving birth and getting Dr. Lyle set up. I am also working on personal matters of my own.”

“Well then, could you gather the necessary paperwork and drop it off in a weeks time?” George suggested. He didn't want to be too demanding, but this is something Connor had agreed to do, knowing the responsibilities involved. He would just have to work through it, or enlist one of his recruits that George had seen on occasion.

“I am not certain that is possible. After this meeting, I am set to depart on the Aquila to clear out some loyalist privateers. All of my recruits are out on missions, and I still have yet to sort through the resulting correspondence and additional aid requests.” George thought he heard a slight waver in Connor's voice. The kind you hear from someone on the verge of panic.

“Hah, can't handle civilized life?” Came a rude yet loud voice from the opposite corner of the tent. George scowled. He understood that most people disliked the natives of the land, but he also wished they could just shut up long enough to realize that Connor is too valuable an ally to alienate with generalizations. “Even a half breed should realize they aren't smart enough for the intricacies of management.”

George was about ready to strangle the man. Or at the very least, kick him out of the tent before Connor sent his Tomahawk flying into the man's head. Instead though, before any could react, Connor stood abruptly. “I apologize again, Commander, but I must excuse myself.” He was off as fast as one could without running. George kneaded his brow. Something was wrong with Connor, and comments like that were only making it worse.

“This meeting is dismissed. And for future record, I will not tolerate insults aimed at any man who helps our cause as much as Connor does.” The man who had spewed said insults rolled his eyes dramatically. “He's probably just run off to the forest. No doubt to prey to his savage spirits for revenge.” Still, the man was the next to leave, which meant that George had to deal with him not a moment longer. He met the eyes of several of his closer people. These men had met Connor, and seen him help their cause. They knew something was wrong with the half native. Without talking, they seemed to come to an agreement.

“I must go check on Connor. He looked awfully stressed about more than just supplies.” George turned his thoughts into words. The others nodded meaningfully before they took their leaves as well. He cautiously stepped out of the tent. Hopefully Connor would not have left the camp already.

Luckily, after a moment of picking his way through campfires and scores of idling men, George
spotted Connor balanced in the edge of one of the few stone buildings in the camp. He was staring at a group of three new recruits to the patriots. They were children almost, no older than 18. Their uniforms were fresh and new, and they handled their muskets with the fear and reverence of the un-experienced. George fought a pang of guilt, knowing they would soon either become very experienced, or dead. Maybe that was why Connor watched them with a strange expression on his face.

George was lucky, there was a ladder against the side of the building for him to climb. Connor's eyes focused on him the second his hand touched the rung, but did nothing to stop his ascent. He did not even speak up as George pulled himself over the roof and sat beside him, legs dangling over the edge. In the end, George broke the silence himself.

“I hope you know that the opinions of one man does not reflect the opinions of the entire group.” He started carefully, wanting to make it clear that Connor was valued and not reviled.

“I understand that, Commander. I am more frustrated at myself to be perfectly honest.” George was relieved by the answer. “Could you perhaps tell me what it is that frustrates you, exactly?”

Connor tilted his head to the side in consideration before answering, “I find myself under far more stress than I can imagine. With the many jobs and people that require my attention at the same time, I find it hard to cope. Equally however, I do not wish to prove certain men right. I feel like I am being torn in many different directions.” He sighed and looked back to the trio of new recruits. George didn't dare to interrupt, as Connor had never been so open to him before. He didn't see Connor as the type to open up to many people, that is if he opened up to anyone at all.

“I do not regret what it is I am doing... however on occasion I find myself wishing to simply have no worries at all.” He nodded towards the teenagers, who were now excitedly chatting to each other. George put a hand on Connor's shoulder in comfort, nearly forgetting about the man's aversion to touch. Surprisingly though, he seemed to allow it this time and even leaned in slightly. George was almost in awe- this was a vulnerable part of Connor being shown right now. He had to be careful not to scare him off.

“I understand your feelings. Sometimes I feel much the same way, like I would kill for the chance to rewind time again, to the age of those lads over there.” George offered, gesturing to the young recruits. Connor paused for a moment.

“I do not need to rewind time for that. But I do envy their relative innocence, as quickly as it is to being taken. I know that if I stop my current responsibilities, no one else will be picking them up. I just wish to experience life like most of my age group.”

George started. “What do you mean, Connor?”

He scratched his head. “Is it not common for most people of my years to be just coming of age? Having but a few responsibilities as they leave their parents to enter the world?”

“Ah, I'm not familiar with your tribe's customs, especially involving adulthood. We consider people to be just coming of age when they are as old as those new recruits. We wouldn't hire on children, although those boys are just pushing it.” Connor bobbed his head in agreement, although he appeared slightly confused. “Yes, that was what I was referring to.”

George was now very confused. Connor looked to be at least 25, if not older. There was no way he was implying what George thought he was implying. But he had to know for sure.

“I apologize for not asking earlier, Connor. How old are you?” Connor did not seem to take
offense, and easily replied, “I am seventeen.” George's back flew up in shock. Unfortunately, he forgot that he was on a roof ledge and lost his balance, limbs pin wheeling lest he fall. Connor gripped the back of his coat and yanked back, sparing George from slipping off the roof. “What is wrong, Commander?” He asked with concern in his voice.

“Connor, are you seriously telling me that you are the same age as those boys over there?” George demanded, eyes wide with surprise. There was just no way.

“Actually, Commander, since your army only accepts those who are 18 and up, I suspect they are one year older than me. Why do you act so surprised?”

George felt like he was going to be sick. Connor was just a boy? How could he be only 17? He had fought so much, killed so many, and helped them so much... suddenly, Connor's actions today made a horrifying amount of sense.

“God, Connor, I had no idea you were so young. You look easily seven years older than that. And we've been putting so much pressure on you.” Connor looked uncomfortable. Now that George was looking, he could see glimpses of someone younger in his face. The thought that they had piled so much stress and work on a teenager made George feel even guiltier than he had about those young soldiers.

“Please, don't worry yourself. My age does not hinder my ability to work. I am capable of handling matters, only these past few weeks everything has piled up.”

George knew he needed to do something. He already knew that Connor had more on his plate than many men could handle, and that was when he was mistaken about his age. The boy needed to unwind, if only for a moment.

“I couldn't let you run yourself ragged. I can get someone responsible to help with the reports. Only, I must know: How did you write up those reports earlier? They are more clear, proper, and precise than reports I get from men twice your age.” Connor shrugged. “Achilles has taught me many things, including accounting. Because I run the homestead and all its records, I quickly learned how to do it efficiently and with few mistakes that I would have to double back and waste time to fix.

He ran the entire Davenport homestead's trading business alone? George knew immediately that he would be sending some good men over to help record keeping, with Connor's approval of course. He almost wanted to confront Connor's mentor now, and demand why so much had been put on the boy's shoulders. Then again, George was equally guilty of that. There wasn't much he could really do.

“Say Connor, have you heard of the game Bocce? I rather like it, and it is a good way to unwind stress without resorting to drink.” Connor looked like he might want to, but shook his head. “I really must depart for the homestead soon. The crew of the Aquila are waiting on me.” He made to jump off the house, but George patted Connor's arm to catch his attention.

“Please Connor, just play one game with me? I promise I am not much of a challenge, for all that I enjoy the game. It is not complicated either, I can teach you how to play.” He looked back to George for a moment, in conflict.

“I know how to play Bocce. The lumberers at the homestead taught me not long ago.”

“Good then, surely you could spare the time for one round?” George silently begged for Connor to take the offer. He was rewarded with a tired agreement. “For one round, I suppose.” he smiled
slightly, like he had been in this position before with another person. George wouldn't be surprised. Whoever the other person was, they probably realized for all that they wished Connor could have his youth back, he was doing far too many good things. George couldn't turn away all that help, no matter how much he wanted to.

All he could do was try and alleviate some of the stress. Connor should at least remember some of the time that he was only 17. If that meant indulging in the occasional game, it was the least George could do.

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