Crazy=Genius

by xSeshatx

Summary

Peter and Tony did have a relationship outside of the Avengers and outside of the sad moments of Peter’s life. Sometimes, their relationship included dancing. And Peter finally calls Pepper ‘mom’.

Notes

Crazy=Genius - Panic! At The Disco

See the end of the work for more notes.

There was more to their relationship than just hurt and comfort. Tony and Peter interacted beyond superhero suits, parental rules, and dinner. They talked about more than the Avengers, school, and science. Sometimes, they danced.

It sounded stupid on paper, but they really did. They’d be in the lab with music playing and one of them would start moving and the other would follow. Truthfully, it was usually Peter who
started the dancing. He always had high energy. After the spider bite, he only had more, as long as he took care of himself, of course. If he didn’t sleep as much as he should and he ate less, his energy would drain. But that’s not what was going on. What was going on was dancing.

He blamed the music for the way it made his body started moving to the beat. It was obviously the music’s fault. The way he started tapping his foot or fingers, then shaking his hips a little bit, to moving his shoulders, to full-on moving around the lab, avoiding Tony and lab equipment as he had fun. Because music was fun.

Peter also sang. That didn’t mean he was good at it because he wasn’t, but he would sing, and he would dance, and he would have a good time.

Musicals were a fun choice when he was in a fun mood. Sometimes it would be old throwback Disney movies like High School Musical. Then there would be the newer Disney movies like Moana (he wasn’t ashamed in loving Moana. He didn’t have a problem with toxic masculinity where he couldn’t enjoy a movie with a strong female lead. Moana was a QUEEN). Hairspray was almost always a definite when he wanted to have fun. There were newer ones, too, like The Greatest Showman. When regular musicals weren’t enough for him, he would switch over to Hamilton. He had to give himself credit for his rapping abilities. He didn’t wanna brag, but he could put on a one-man show of Hamilton without missing a line (he tested that).

Sometimes he would put on early 2000’s pop and rap music. He would have a blast singing those songs. If Pocketful of Sunshine by Natasha Bedingfield came on, no matter what mood he was in, he had to sing along. It was almost a crime not to in his eyes. 2000’s rock was always a must. Mr. Brightside by The Killers? If that song came on, no work would be done.

His indie and soft rock collection didn’t really generate the moves that he would pull out from time to time, but he would be humming along. Tony’s collection, however, would constantly get him going. He would bob his head, tap his foot, and pretend to air guitar when the moment was right. Drum solo? He was rocking that.

At first, Tony would laugh at him. He would roll his eyes. He’d watch him with amusement in his eyes for a few minutes before turning back to his work and pretending as if he was better than that. Better than the singing and the dancing and the moving. But Peter would catch him nodding his head along to the music after Peter set the dancing mood. Tony would actually wiggle his hips. When he gave up on the ‘I don’t dance’ act, he would put his hands in the air (literally) and move to the music.

After over a year of occasional dance sessions in the lab, Peter felt it was time to teach him the real dance moves. They weren’t even dancing, but Peter wanted to move. He wasn’t necessarily bored with the science he was doing, but he wasn’t focused enough on it yet. He had too much energy in him. It was a Saturday and he hadn’t gone out as Spider-Man yet, instead wanting a small break from it all. He had no homework to force attention on. He hadn’t talked to Ned or MJ since school. He had mostly been sleeping in his room, eating with just Tony and/or Pepper, and in the lab. He needed some excitement, at least for the time being.

“Have you ever learned how to do the Soulja Boy?” Peter asked, unprompted, while Tony was doing something that probably required his full attention rather than the split attention he was now using thanks to Peter talking.

“What’s that?” Tony asked, sounding uninterested. Peter knew he wasn’t. Tony was just focused, but he was probably going to listen intently to whatever Peter said. Tony was cool like that.

“It’s a dance from, like, ten years ago. Well, a song, a person, and a dance. Hold on.” Peter
picked his phone up so fast he almost dropped it and typed the song on YouTube. He played it and Tony stopped what he was doing when he heard the opening ‘you.’ His eyebrows shot up in amusement, his full attention now on Peter and only Peter. When the first chorus hit, Peter did not hold back in his over-the-top rendition of the dance, and Tony laughed so hard that he had to hold on to the counter he was at to keep from falling to the floor.

Peter stopped dancing after the chorus and smiled at Tony before pausing the music. “You ready to learn?”

“Oh, so you’re gonna teach me?”

“Only if you’re willing to learn, old man.”

So, Peter spent the next fifteen minutes going through each of the steps to teach Tony how to do the Soulja Boy. He wasn’t sure if he was impressed that Tony caught on so quickly or disappointed that it took so long. “I think I got the hang of it,” Tony said after Peter rigorously drilled the steps into his head one last time, almost demanding that he run through it again. “Play the damn song.”

Peter obliged, of course, and Peter sang along with the song until they got back to the chorus. He gave Tony a small count down and then the two went off dancing. Tony got a little off when it came to the ‘superman’ part, but he fixed himself enough to finish the chorus. It was Peter’s turn to have a laughing break once they finished, except he actually went to the floor. “Oh my god,” he kept repeating. Somewhere in between his laughter, he was asking Friday to send him footage of that encounter to his phone later so he could have it forever.

“You have no room to be making fun of me,” Tony said. “You didn’t see how funny you looked when you were doing it. Do you know the Electric Slide? That’s a dance craze from my time.”

“That’s hardly a dance craze, dad,” Peter laughed. “It’s kind of a dance, but not a dance craze. And it’s easy and not at all embarrassing to do. I got more, don’t worry. I’m gonna teach you all the dances. We’ll hit them all at once.” Peter played Watch Me. And he taught Tony them all. He taught him how to Stanky Leg and Bop and Break Your Legs. Tony was familiar with the Whip and Nae Nae somehow, but Peter had to teach him how to do them properly.

Things kind of went back to normal for a little while after Tony mastered Watch Me. Peter’s music was back on shuffle and they were both working on their respective projects. Peter was working on robotics. He was better with the science stuff than he was with the robotics and the engineering and the mechanics, but that’s why he was working on building a robot. He wanted to improve.

“I love you, kid,” Tony said a while later, with no real reason for his words.

“Love you, too,” Peter said. He stopped what he was doing to look over at Tony, who was looking down at his own work. “I know we don’t really have moments like this much anymore. I’m sorry that we can’t.”

“It just makes these more special.” When Peter didn’t say anything, Tony put his own work down and walked over to Peter, putting his hands on Peter’s shoulders. “Pete. We have good times. Yes, bad things happen, but don’t let that take over the good times we have. We don’t have fun in the lab every day, but we have fun together every day. We’re a family, and I’m happy every day that we are.”
The only real response to that was a hug. Of course.

It was probably the best day Peter had in a long, long time.

That night? He was kind of sad that night. He was in his room kind of just walking around. He was restless, but not in the anxious way. More of in the ‘My brain is under stimulated right now’ way. When his brain felt like that, he thought a lot more, and when he thought a lot more, he got a little bit sad. Sometimes, it was hard not to feel guilty for having such a good time with Tony. He loved Tony more than anything, but sometimes, he’d feel like a bad person for enjoying his time with the man who adopted him after he lost aunt. He felt bad for being happy with the position he was in.

When his brain wasn’t stimulated enough and he began to think and he began to get sad, he would pull out his phone and find photos and videos of his aunt to torture himself. He sat on the floor in front of his bed and scrolled way down in his gallery until he got to before the adoption. He had a video of May absent-minded singing to herself while she made dinner that he watched with a sad smile. He found pictures of her with silly Snapchat filters on and pictures of her making funny faces when she realized Peter was trying to take pictures of her. It had been almost a year since he lost her. Like, the anniversary was a few weeks away now. How could he be so happy dancing in the lab with Tony? That should have stopped being fun the moment she died. He should see Tony and remember what he lost. He shouldn’t enjoy himself, knowing that he was enjoying himself in the situation that was created because of her death.

Going to sleep was his solution for dealing with these thoughts and emotions. He didn’t want to deal with it just yet. He slept through the night, through the morning, and didn’t wake up until after lunch when Pepper came to check on him. “You feeling okay?” she asked, rubbing his back after shaking him awake. She had slid under the covers with him.

Everything he thought about the night before about Tony? The same thoughts applied to Pepper. She was so good at this mom thing in a way he didn’t exactly anticipate when he moved in. The amount of time Peter and Pepper spent together, just the two of them, was only growing. Sometimes they’d have a little movie night with just the two of them, or sometimes they’d sneak away to a restaurant alone, or sometimes, Peter would just join her in her and Tony’s room while Tony was in the lab or doing something of importance. She had this presence about her that just felt like a mom, and she reminded him too much of May. May had a mom presence. She was a very good aunt, but she was his mom. May made it easy to gravitate towards her when you need encouragement, support, excitement, love, and everything else. May and Pepper would have gotten along so well if they had been around each other more.

“Peter?”

He blinked the tears away before they fell and nodded. “May would have loved you,” he said.

Pepper hummed and did nothing for a moment. “We’re getting close to the anniversary,” she said after a while. “Is it hitting early?”

“I guess,” Peter said after clearing his voice to avoid sounding like there were more tears in his eyes. “Sometimes I just feel…bad I guess, for being happy.”

“Why do you feel bad for being happy?”

“Because I could be happy without her.”

“Ah,” Pepper said. Of course, she understood. Peter expected her to. “If you want my two
cents on the matter, I think it’s a good thing that you’re able to be happy without her. That’s not me saying being happy because you’re without her is a good thing, but I don’t think that is what’s happening. What I think is happening is you’re being happy despite being without her. That takes strength, Pete. You went through a lot in your life. You’ve been through a lot in this past year. You had to learn to live without her. It was tough, but you did it. Don’t feel guilty for succeeding.”

He needed to learn to start talking to Pepper before he made himself sad with his thoughts. “I’m lucky to have you, mom,” Peter said, not really thinking about letting that word slip, yet not minding that it came out. He rolled over to see Pepper, who had still been rubbing his back, and she looked more caught off guard than he had ever seen her. No matter what situation she was in, she always looked collected. She took everything in stride. Not this time. This time she looked like she wasn’t sure what to do, so he jumped to apologizing. “I’m sorry, was that okay?”

Her eyes were watering. Which was definitely new. “That was okay, honey,” she said. It was her turn to have her voice mask her tears. He sat up, ready to comfort her, but she pulled him into a hug. “I’m sorry for getting all emotional.”

Did he wait too long to say it? Maybe she was thinking that he’d never see her that way, when in reality, he had thought of her like a mom for a very long time. It just never felt right to call her as such. He probably wouldn’t have started calling Tony ‘dad’ yet if it wasn’t for the fact that he let it slip in a panic. She wouldn’t be crying because she didn’t want him to call her that. There was absolutely no way. Yet it still made him nervous.

“You’re thinking too loud,” Pepper said, holding him tighter. “I’m honored.”

They spent the morning (Peter’s morning – it was afternoon) laying in bed and watching TV, but eventually, they had to get it. They had to get up because Peter’s stomach growled, and Pepper demanded him to eat. She marched him to the kitchen and put together a bowl of fruit for him to snack on while she made a sandwich for him. “You know, I could get my own lunches from time to time,” he said as he grabbed a grape.

“You’re our kid,” was her only answer.

Either Tony had good timing or Friday let him know where they were because Tony came into the kitchen before Pepper even finished with making his lunch. “You slept in today,” Tony pointed out, taking a seat beside Peter at the counter. “You feeling okay?”

“I need to sleep in more so you guys stop thinking I’m not feeling okay when I don’t get up at the crack of dawn.”

“Peter was sad. He’s better now,” Pepper said, giving him a look for deflecting.

“All better?” Tony asked, eyeing him.

“All better,” Peter confirmed. “We talked and we watched TV and now I have fruit. Ten out of ten, would recommend.”

“The way you talk sometimes is almost enough to make me forget you have a genius level intelligence,” Tony said. Pepper left at that, placing the plate in front of Peter and leaning against the counter. “So, what’s on the agenda for the remaining twenty minutes in the day?”

“It’s barely three,” Peter said in a defensive tone. “I wasn’t in bed all day. I might get on my PlayStation. Haven’t played anything in a while.”

Tony looked confused for a moment before nodding. “I forgot you had one of those. You
never act like a normal teenager.”

“No, but I’m better than a normal teenager.”

“Was I complaining about it?”

“Hey, Pepper, did Tony tell you what we did yesterday?”

“Please don’t.”

Pepper raised her eyebrows and smirked. “He did not. What did you do yesterday?”

“I taught him some dances. Do you want to see them?”

Tony shook his head. “Absolutely not.”

“I would love to, Peter. Thank you so much for offering.”

“You can’t let her down,” Peter said, already scrolling for Soulja Boy on his phone.

“You’re not going to make me do it alone. I refuse.”

“Of course not. You’re embarrassed of this, but I am proud of my moves.”

Pepper took a seat at the counter as Peter excitedly got up and waited patiently for Tony to get up. When he did, Peter pressed play on the song. And Pepper laughed so hard she almost fell off of her chair. And Tony groaned, but he smiled the whole time. Peter did, too. He loved his family.

End Notes

We all needed this, but you know I had to make it lowkey sad

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