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**SAVAGE
LOVE**



THREE PETERS
BY DAN SAVAGE

I'm sorry if my English is wrong. I'm writing from Germany, where I am being heartbroken and not knowing how to go on. I've been seeing a guy for a couple of months and slowly falling in love with him. "Peter" has always been very open to me about himself, his failed relationships, and his commitment issues. He talks frequently about his ex-boyfriend from five years ago and how being left created a deep fear of being left once again. He also had a relationship that ended a year ago. Yesterday he told me he's still in love with the guy from one year ago but that his love is unrequited. He also told me that he values what we have but he can't stop loving this other guy. And he can't promise me that this will change. I am in love and heartbroken at the same time, hopeful and fearful, and unable to get up for the last couple of days. Deep down, I fear I will get hurt. I already am hurt. I'm falling for someone who's not able to love me back, who's stuck in the past, but who wishes to change that in order to let me into his life. Should I stay and wait for Peter to get better even if it hurts to know he's in love with someone other than me? Or should I leave him as so many others have and hurt him?

Healing Erotic Love Problem Means Everything

Peter could be lying to you.

That's probably not what you wanted or expected to hear, HELPME, and you'll find some more hopeful/less cynical advice further down, I promise. But when a guy with "commitment issues" tells you he's struggling with the emotional fallout of a relationship that ended five years ago and still hopelessly in love with someone he hasn't seen for a year... you have to entertain the possibility that he could be lying to you.

You always have to entertain that possibility—with new loves, old loves, blue loves.

When someone tells us they have "commitment issues," we're primed to hear this: "This boy is incapable of committing until healed (by a therapist, by a new love, by the passage of time)." But sometimes what they mean is this: "I have no interest in committing—not to you, not to anyone, not now, not ever." But instead of owning up to that (because people who want to remain single are viewed as damaged?) or telling you he's not seeking anything serious (because you might leave him, and he's not done with your ass?), Peter invents/inflates a pair of past loves that render him incapable of loving you the way you deserve to be loved and blah blah blah and off the hook. Not a child-man who won't commit, but a victim who would commit if he could commit but—sob!—he can't commit.

But, hey, maybe he's telling you the truth. Maybe he's in love with Mr. One Year Ago. So tell him he can love you and love the other guy at the same time. Established gay throuples, stable straight poly quads, bi men with GFs and BF's, married lesbians who U-Hauled an adorable baby dyke—there are examples everywhere you look these days of people in love with more than one romantic partner. I don't see why a person can't be in love with someone and still in love with an ex—think of it as a sort of semi-posthumous/semi-poly relationship. You'll be pioneers.

Give Peter permission to love his ex (pathetically and abstractly) while loving you too (intimately and tactilely), HELPME, and you might be able to love a commitment out of him.

I'm a gay male in my late 20s. My little sister's husband, "Peter," is my age and bisexual. I'm not one of those gay men who think bi guys don't exist. And I know bi guys are just as capable of being monogamous as other guys—which isn't that comforting when you think about it—and I don't have a problem with my bi brother-in-law being bi. More importantly, my sister doesn't have a problem with it. But whenever I'm alone with Peter, however briefly, he starts telling me how much he misses dick. He wants to hear about the last "really great dick" I sucked and tells me he misses sucking dick. I smile and say dick is great for sure and make a halfhearted attempt to change the subject. The last time it happened was after my grandfather's funeral. I'm pretty sure Peter wants to suck my dick, and I'm tempted to let him. I know it's a bad idea, but Peter is hot. This is torture. What should I do?

Boy Is Lost

Stop smiling, work harder to change the subject, avoid being alone in a room with Peter, and repeat after me: "My sister might be able to forgive her husband for sucking a dick, but she'll never forgive him—or me—if that dick is mine."

I'm a gay guy in an open relationship and I'm on Recon, a gay hookup/dating site for guys into leather/fetish/BDSM. My partner, who isn't kinky, knows I have a profile there and it's not a problem. Today I got a message from a new guy, and when we exchanged face pics, I saw that he looks exactly like "Peter," my boyfriend's best friend's fiancé! I asked him if that was him, and he stopped responding. What should I do? My BF doesn't want to know much about my extracurricular activities, but this could make our next double date extremely awkward. We see this other couple a fair amount, and even though I think this guy is good-looking, I would never sleep with him because of the social situation. On the other hand, if I'm wrong and they're not the same person, bringing it up with them could make things awkward, especially since I'm pretty secretive about my kinks and have zero desire to discuss them with my BF's friends.

Requires Educated Consultation On Next Step

P.S. Additional information that might be relevant: Our engaged friends aren't having sex, we've been told, and they're making no moves toward actually planning a wedding.

Going silent after you asked, "Is that you, Peter!?" is a pretty good indication that it was indeed Peter you were talking to. But while you know Peter was on Recon, RECONS, you don't know exactly what he was doing there. Maybe he goes online to fantasize, swap pics, and jack off. Maybe Peter is on Recon with his fiancé's blessing, just as you're on Recon with your partner's blessing (but, like you, he's not comfortable discussing his kinks with friends). Maybe their relationship/engagement is on the verge of collapse and your partner's best friend's fiancé is trying to line up a new relationship before pulling the plug on the one he's in now.

Since you don't know what's going on in their relationship, RECONS, keep your mouth shut and refrain from making assumptions or judgments. And the next time you have to interact with Peter and his fiancé socially, slap a smile on your face and talk about the weather, the election, the estrogen-enhanced, better-than-the-original Ghostbusters reboot, the new season of Difficult People, Zika, the Olympics—basically anything other than Recon, kinks, and wedding plans.

On the Lovecast, Dan chats with Wonkette's Rebecca Schoenkopf about Bernie and Hillary and love and hate: savagelovecast.com.