

Quick vs. Quickly

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Summary: A grammar lesson turns into an active demonstration.

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Author's Note: This story is in response to HappyGirl's "First Lines" challenge, and is dedicated to my husband, who regularly bemoans the demise of adverbs. Thanks, as always, to my fabulous beta readers, Laura and Sue.

"Kiss me, quick." Wanda quivered in anticipation as Kent reached for her.

"Quickly," Clark Kent said with barely disguised amusement.

Lois Lane was startled by her partner's voice. She stood up from her chair and turned around, hiding her computer screen with her body. Her hands grasped the edge of her desk. "Geez, Clark, you scared me."

Clark's eyebrows lifted above the frame of his glasses as he leaned, attempting to catch another look at the screen. Lois blocked and shifted, preventing him from reading any more. "Quickly," he said again.

"Excuse me?" Lois swallowed against her dry throat. She felt flushed – an increasingly familiar feeling brought on by her partner's close presence. Oh, she had denied it to herself for so long, but there was an instinctive connection between them, a charge in the atmosphere that never seemed to dissipate.

"Kiss me, quickly. You need to use an adverb." The tease in his voice and sparkle in his eyes were endearingly frustrating.

Lois turned halfway towards her screen, feeling slightly indignant. "What?" She reread the line of dialogue from her secret romance novel. "Who cares?"

"It makes a difference." Clark's breath brushed past her cheek. Lois looked back at him, and her body noticed with a rush of heat that Clark had moved an inch closer. "Who's Kent?" Clark asked with a smug smile.

Lois felt a flash of embarrassment. Her romance novel was a tightly held secret. It was bad enough that she had told Clark of its existence less than two weeks after meeting him – Lord knows why she had done that! She'd have liked to have blamed it on the intense fear that had come with the thought of Trask throwing her out of that plane, but, no, there was something more, something about Clark that made her want to reveal all of her secrets to him. Still, that he would notice his own name as her romantic lead was beyond humiliating. "Don't worry about it," she said in a clipped manner, hoping he'd drop the subject.

"I'm just curious. What are you writing?" The mirth in his tone of voice signaled that he had no intention of dropping the subject.

"Nothing," Lois snipped.

Clark tilted his head. "You seem pretty determined to stop me from seeing nothing."

"It's..." Lois searched for an easy lie, a way to distract him, but her mind was reeling. She inhaled – God, he smelled good. "My novel," she whispered. Lois waited for the inevitable mocking to begin.

Clark's eyes lit in surprise. "Really?" Then a corner of his lip upturned. "Your romance novel?"

Lois turned to face him fully, again attempting to shield her

screen. "It's none of your business."

Clark's lips frowned momentarily before resuming his tease. "So, who's Kent?"

"It's just a name," Lois said, though she could tell that Clark didn't entirely believe her. She, in no way, felt compelled to reveal the fact that she had changed the character's name from Alexander a month ago.

Clark's tongue darted over his lower lip. "Would you let me read it?" he asked in a low hush.

"No!" Lois' hands reflexively gripped the edge of her desk harder. It was bad enough that Clark knew about her novel. The thought of him reading what she had written about her thinly veiled main characters – no, never! A scene involving Wanda spying on a towel-clad Kent came to mind, and Lois couldn't help but recall her inspiration. Her heartbeat fluttered.

"Spell check doesn't catch everything. I'd be happy to look it over for you."

Lois grimaced. "You always edit my copy!"

Clark smiled. "That's what partners are for. I'm sure your content is wonderful. I could just offer some advice on the details." He shifted his weight to his other foot, which caused him to draw an inch closer. "Quickly, for example."

Lois' eyes lowered to Clark's lips. They were full and moist and tantalizing. "Quick, quickly – same difference."

Clark shook his head lightly. "Quick is an adjective. It should modify a noun. So you could say, for example, 'Give me a quick kiss.' But I think you meant, 'Kiss me, quickly.'"

She watched as Clark's eyes lowered to her mouth, and she licked out her own tongue, spreading the moisture with a slide over her lips. "Sort of the same," she said.

"I could show you the difference," he said. Then Clark suddenly stood straighter and retreated slightly, as if he wanted to take back the words.

Lois looked around the bullpen. It was fairly empty for a Thursday night. Their conversation certainly didn't seem to be drawing any attention. It couldn't hurt to indulge in a short grammar lesson. Part of her, though, hoped he meant more than that. "Okay," she said, hardly believing she had said it.

Clark took a deep breath, and a look of astonishment colored his face – he clearly hadn't expected her to accept his challenge. They stood, silent and still, and the space between them filled with breathless anticipation. He looked into her eyes, searching for confirmation.

That wasn't surprising – he usually deferred to her, and she had never before indicated that she'd be open to exploring the undercurrent of desire that had bubbled between them ever since that kiss on the plane. They were partners and best friends, and she hadn't been willing to risk that on the chance that they could have more. But part of her wanted it, wanted him. "Show me," she said with a confidence that hid her nerves.

An emotion shone through his eyes. Lois wished she was better at defining it, but was reluctant to name what she thought it could be. She knew what she was feeling, though, and could admit to herself that she had been feeling it for months.

Clark cleared his throat. "Quick is an adjective. It modifies the noun 'kiss.' So a quick kiss would look like this." Clark leaned forward, hesitating a fraction of an inch away from her, before dipping towards her and leaving a light peck on her lips.

He moved away and watched her, waiting for the fallout from his action. Lois stared at him, hoping to understand herself. It was unacceptable – they shouldn't be kissing in the middle of the bullpen. It was unacceptable – she shouldn't be so drawn to her partner. The kiss was unacceptable – unacceptably brief.

Lois shook her head slowly. "That's not what I meant. In the story, I mean." She unconsciously licked her lips.

"I didn't think so," Clark whispered in a tone so low, so rich, so undeniably sexy that it spiraled through her body. "Quickly is

an adverb. It describes an action.”

Clark swayed forward, and Lois shied back, leaning her butt against the edge of her desk, caged between the hard wood and his hard body. Desire glimmered through her. Lois’ right hand reached out, and she almost touched Clark’s waist, but she clenched her hand and let it drop.

Clark’s gaze shifted between her hand and her eyes. He breathed in, then exhaled slowly. His eyes traversed the bullpen, though he didn’t seem concerned by anything he may have seen. Lois didn’t take a glance at her colleagues; she couldn’t tear her eyes away from her partner.

“So, in the story, Wanda wants Kent to kiss her, quickly.” Clark couldn’t hide his smile as he said his own name. “Here’s what that might look like.” Clark snatched his hands around her waist and pulled her to him. Lois gasped, and her arms defensively flew up between their bodies, her palms braced against his pecs. In the space of less than a second, Clark left a brief whisper of a kiss against her lips, and then pulled away.

Lois blinked twice as her mind rebelled. That kiss was completely unacceptable! Her jaw fell open and she took a breath, ready to complain. Her hands began to glide down his chest in a manner far more intimate than she had any right to indulge in.

Clark stopped her with the gentle touch of his hand on her cheek. “I don’t think you meant that, either.” His palm drifted to the back of her head. “Quickly refers to the immediate urgency of the kiss, but says nothing about the length of the kiss itself.”

Lois smoothed her hands over his torso, mesmerized by the sensuous contours of his body. She squeezed her hands against Clark’s waist. A delightful thrill shivered up her spine. She shouldn’t want this; she had forbidden herself from wanting this, had worked so hard to deny this. Standing here with him, though, in the middle of their workplace, but feeling like no one else in the world existed – resisting him any longer was impossible.

“What does Wanda want?” Clark asked. His arms pressed firmly across her back.

Lois let the thumb of her left hand slide along the edge of Clark’s belt. She found a gap where his shirt had come untucked. She slipped her thumb under the hem and lightly stroked his bare skin. She saw Clark swallow, then hold his breath. Then she whispered honestly, “She wants Kent to kiss her passionately.”

“Like this?” Clark pulled Lois into his embrace and kissed her. His lips were soft and pliant, but his tongue was demanding, dipping past her teeth. His head tipped back and forth as his body settled against hers. Lois arched her back, and Clark’s arm tightened securely around her, holding her close. Their kiss broke long enough only to take a breath before they continued diving and swirling together. Lois luxuriated in the bliss of Clark’s bold embrace.

God, what a man! Lois worked her hand under Clark’s shirt until she was able to flatten her palm against the base of his spine. His endless kiss enflamed and consumed her, stoking a wanton desire for more. Her left knee pressed against his leg, then started to slide north.

Clark broke the kiss and put a foot of space between them. “Kiss me, quickly. Is that what you meant?” His words came out as a breathless whisper, which sounded so much sexier than when they were just words on her page.

Lois nodded. She made no move to escape him, enthralled by being the center of his attention. She gazed into his expressive brown eyes, which seemed to be silently speaking directly to her soul. Why had she been denying her feelings for so long?

“So, what comes next?” Clark’s words were accompanied by a lean that brought his body inches away from hers.

The fingertips of her right hand stroked across his shirt. She removed her left hand from the bare skin of his back, but impulsively grabbed the hem of his shirt and untucked a few

more inches. She surprised herself with her actions, and she let go of him completely, grabbing hold of her desk’s edge once again, as if it was the only thing preventing her from launching herself at him.

Clark’s pupils dilated as he drew in a sharp breath. Then he squeezed his eyes shut, took a step backwards, and tucked in his shirt. He tugged at the front of his pant leg. Lois was amused by what she thought that action meant.

Clark fidgeted as he opened his eyes, clearly nervous. He asked, “Are Wanda and Kent dating?”

Lois shook her head. “It’s complicated. They probably should be, though, especially after that kiss.” She released her desk and stood straight, hoping to project a willingness to take a risk.

Clark mirrored her actions, straightening his spine and squaring his jaw. “Have dinner with me.”

Lois glanced at the clock. It was definitely quitting time. “Tomorrow? Friday’s traditionally date night.”

“Tonight,” Clark said assertively. “We’ve waited long enough.”

“We sure have,” Lois murmured. She let a slow smile creep over her face. “And if it goes well, will you show me what a good night kiss looks like?”

Clark’s face lit up. “I’d be happy to.”

Lois arched an amused eyebrow. “Maybe you should show me now.”

Clark snickered as he shook his head and retreated to his desk. He indicated her computer screen with a nudge of his head. “Every good writer knows you should leave ’em wanting more.”

THE END