

Exercise Episode 028

The First Kiss Scene

inspired by the song:

“Shut Up and Kiss Me” by Mary Chapin Carpenter

TASK:

I want you to rewrite the lyrics of “Shut Up and Kiss Me” by Mary Chapin Carpenter by changing as little as possible but as much as you need to meet the following criteria:

1. Keep the point of view of **direct address**.
2. Include the answers to the questions of:
 - a. Where is the scene taking place?
 - b. When is it happening?
 - c. What are the characters literally doing?
3. Avoid the contradiction of wanting to kiss someone but then just talking about it while the other one is already ready to kiss.
4. Include a turning point moment that changes the situation and/or the character’s worldview for better or worse
5. Keep the refrain of “Shut up and Kiss Me”
6. Try to avoid the repetition of certain words or word meanings within the different sections
7. Be more specific.

If you do this exercise and compare the two kinds of lyrics, let me know what you think about both versions. Do you think the changes you made improved the lyrics? What was better before? But what’s better now?

Remember: This is just an exercise.

The copyright for the song “Shut Up and Kiss Me” belongs to Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Universal Music Publishing Group



EPISODE 028: “Shut Up and Kiss Me” by Mary Chapin Carpenter – Avoiding Contradictions in Lyrics

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YOUR TURN

Rewrite the lyrics.



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Suggestion:

Changes are marked in green.

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*Don't mean to get ahead of where we are
but it's late and some things shouldn't wait
So let's just stay another minute in your car
I'm just a little nervous about my heart 'cause*

*It's been awhile since I felt this struggle
To keep my attention on your words
before I can control it I've already whispered
Shut up and kiss me*

*Didn't expect to be in this position
Didn't expect to have to rise above
My reputation for cynicism
I've been a jaded lady when it comes to love, and*

*It's been awhile since I felt this struggle
To keep my attention on your words
before I can control it I've already whispered
Shut up and kiss me*

*Never thought I'd lose my guard without a drink for courage
But as you stepped into the office
I needed to take this foolish risk*

*Come closer, baby, I can't hear you
Just another whisper, if you please
Don't worry 'bout the details, handsome
You've got the kind of mind I love to read*

*Talk is cheap and we know time's expensive
So why waste another minute more?
Life's too short to be so apprehensive
Love's as much the symptom, darlin', as the cure*

*It's been awhile since I felt this struggle
To keep my attention on your words
before I can control it I've already whispered*



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*It's been awhile since I felt this struggle
To keep my attention on your words
before I can control it I've already whispered
Shut up and kiss me
Shut up and kiss me*

Can you see the difference?

Can you feel it?

Now, what have we achieved by changing some parts of the lyrics?

- We have included the answers to the questions of Where is the scene taking place? When is it happening? What are the characters literally doing?
 - That means we know it's late at night, and the characters are sitting in a car.
- We've also avoided the contradiction of what is said and how the character acts. We've accomplished that by letting her be the one who says, "Shut up and Kiss Me."
- We've also followed the five commandments of storytelling:
 - The inciting incident was meeting that guy at her office.
 - The Turning Point moment – the moment that changed the value at stake – was her internal revelation that she has to be the one to rise above. She didn't expect to be in the position to be the one who had to make the first move. But she knows she's gotta do it.
 - So her crisis was making the first move on him and taking the risk OR not making the first move and missing out on her chance?
 - Her decision kinda came intuitively as she whispered: "Shut up and Kiss Me."
 - I have left out the resolution because in all her talking, she's already said enough about how short time is and that you better live your life. So the resolution is already implicated and her actions also underline what she says. This way, we also have a truly sophisticated character because they act on their words. Remember, in the original version, we had a main character whose naivete was masked by sophistication – sounding smart but not acting like it.

Of course, that's just one quick possibility of the changes you could make in those lyrics. But the goal was to change as little as possible but as much as necessary to see how we could implement the given constraints of revision.



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