On the surface Kate Chopin’s “The Storm” explores the dynamics of attraction, love and the meaning of marriage. The text indirectly challenges the classic portrayal of infidelity in a negative light by simply allowing the affair between Calixta and Alce to be. With no commentary on the morality of the characters actions the reader is free to evaluate the actions of the characters for themselves. In granting reader’s this freedom the burden of distinguishing between a “good” or normal, healthy relationship and a “bad” immoral, shallow relationship. In a text that leads many readers to debate the morality of a casual affair versus a stable marriage further examination leads to a collapsing of the two. Rather than point out the distinct differences between these two romances, the text suggests that Calixta’s connection to each of her partners are two points on the same continuum.

We first encounter Calixta in the second section of the story sweating and fully engaged in acts of domesticity, attending to clothing. It’s in the act of attending to her husband’s clothing that she first encounters Alce the combination of her voice and his wakes her up from “a trance” of her routine and Alce is invited in, even so Calixta brings her husband’s clothing in alongside him. The text itself becomes more sensual as the storm begins to ravage the area. Together they “thrust” something underneath the door and Alce begins to notice the kinks in her hair as Calixta’s panic begins to blossom. As her beauty overwhelms him she seems to transform and suddenly cave in to an unspoken desire to finish what they started so long ago. In their passion they both reach levels of ecstasy the author describes as a physical birthright. As the experience comes to a close they fall into the post-coital twilight in which sleep seems so enticing, but that experience is unavailable to them. Succumbing to the comfort and rest of sleep after sex is something they wouldn't dare to pursue, there is no security when striving for secrecy.

As the storm recedes, Calixta resumes the domestic tasks of preparing dinner for her husband. When her family returns from the store they were hiding out in the family has what is implied to be an especially lovely and lighthearted night. The fiery emotion found in the section of the affair recedes into the warm glow exclusive to stabilized love. The text doesn’t dwell on the affair at all or even mention Calixta’s thoughts about it, she seems to return to the trance of domesticity with great ease. The night’s laughter fills her home, the comfort and ease described in the passage is the continuance or afterglow of the days earlier passion. Many readers have felt the cycle of passion in a long term relationship, our lived experience has shown us time and time again that the fiery encounter with Alce if routinized becomes, if we’re lucky, the humble love of Bobint. Alce also longs for some connection to his wife at the end of the day, but both enjoy the break from the “intimate conjugal life” to which those of us in long term partnerships grow accustomed to, breaking out of routine is always fetishized but in reality only replaced by
another routine. The “pleasant liberty” of our independence becomes if routinized a boring loneliness. The life events in which we shift between together and separate, single and married do not place us in an entirely new arena, rather they relocate us to another place on the timeline of intimacy. To be alone is to await the spark of passion, that inevitably leads to a routinized experience. Everything is exciting for a while, but all roads lead to hedonic adaptation, there’s no way out of normal. The lust won’t last.