



The Storm

Kate Chopin

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"The Storm" is a short story by the American writer Kate Chopin, written in 1898. It did not appear in print in Chopin's lifetime; it was published in 1969. This story is the sequel to Chopin's *At the Cadian Ball*.

The Storm Details

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Dark Slayer says

The story begins with two characters, Bobinot along with his four-year-old son Bibi. Only after they arrive at a store called Friedheimer for shopping does an unexpected storm begin, and hence they decide to remain inside till it fades away. Meanwhile, as the storm howls, Bobinot's wife, Calixta, being at home, is anxious for their well-being. Riding a horse along her house, a man called Alcée, Calixta's ex-lover, comes across her as it starts raining, so he is compelled to have her house as a shelter. While the storm gets stronger, Calixta tries to collect the laundry, and Alcée helps her. Both then go inside the house. Observing how violent the storm is, the wife becomes more and more uneasy, and Alcée attempts to alleviate her worries. Thereupon, they find themselves involved into a sexual intercourse in the absence of her husband Bobinot. The storm which starts withering away makes them interrupt what they have been doing, and thus Alcée has to abandon the place. Later on, Alcée sends his wife a lovely letter. When Bobinot and Bibi get home, everything seems ordinary, and the story ends with everybody being happy.

Kate Chopin's title, I believe, has not been selected at random, for it connotes the emergence of chaos with which the story is fraught from the storm's beginning to its end. Unlike Dorothy Parker's "The Last Tea" which does not contain the protagonists' names, the characters of "The Storm" are French and amazingly symbolic. Bibi, being the four-year-old kid, undoubtedly refers to the word baby that symbolizes innocence and curiosity to discover the world. On the other hand, Bobinot literally means the reel but figuratively is when the former spins; that is, the process of leaving the house and going shopping is a turn he has made, and hence he on no account can see what is happening in his house while he is absent. If we direct our vision towards the name of the wife, Calixta, we should consider that its Greek origin is Kallistos, the most beautiful person. She is indeed irresistible; that is why there are many erotic descriptions of her, which make her ex-lover, Alcée, resurrect their sexual relationship they once have had. Last but not least, Alcée, as a name, actually refers to a type of flower named hollyhock which has the ability to produce large seeds and which can resist the heat of the sun that makes other plants dry and ultimately die. In conformity with the short story's events, Alcée succeeds in seducing Calixta, ending up having sexual intercourse with her. In other words, similarly to the fruitful flower, if he had not had the required qualities, such as manhood and fertility, she would have resisted his charm, let alone the sexual intercourse.

The storm and male-female relationship are extremely prominent elements in the story. It is evident that there are three ordered phases: pre-storm, mid-storm and post-storm. And each period constructs the plot. The quote "the leaves were so still" indicates that things at first are serene; however, when the storm begins, the family's steady life changes. Bobinot and his son are away from house and can under no circumstances go back, for the storm howls and strengthens. The former seems to love his wife Calixta to whom he buys a can of prawns to which she is amazingly addicted. "Calixta, at home, felt no uneasiness for their safety. She sat at a side window sewing furiously on a sewing machine." From the previous quote, it is obvious that all her behavior unquestionably shows that never would she have got involved in an adulterous relationship. Nevertheless, Alcée's coming is going to change her situation from loyalty to disloyalty. Calixta and her ex-boyfriend have lost sight of each other since she has got married, that is, five years, which might have been futile for her to forget Alcée. The fact that he is not erased from her memory, let alone her heart, is at first seen from her startled voice, which elaborates she has had a questionable relationship with him. Apparently, as it heavily rains, Alcée does not want to seem insolent, and hence remains outside the house. But due to the perpetual rain, he has no choice but to go inside. Entering the house, therefore, signifies the intrusion into a family's private life. Even the bedroom door which provokes sexual intercourse has been open.

"Alcée flung himself in a rocker and Calixta nervously began to gather up from the floor the lengths of a cotton sheet which she had been sewing." It seems that Calixta is captured by anxiety which makes the

reader wonder why she is nervous in the presence of Alcée if she already loves her husband Bobinot. It is amazingly plain that there can be some remnants of love that are still kept in her heart as well as Alcée's. Accordingly, Alcée's presence and Bobinot's absence make a decisive step which probably might blight her marriage life. As the first drops of rain fall, Calixta is carrying Bobinot's coat which is about to get wet. The rain will then set aside Calixta and Bobinot, whom the coat represents, and the new arriver, Alcée, controls the situation instead of her real husband; tossing away the coat signifies abandoning her husband and breaking the norms. Of course, when she goes to "the window with a greatly disturbed look on her face," Alcée follows her and starts gazing provocatively at her shoulders, which are to resurrect the love or the sexual story of their past. Little do we, as readers, realize that Calixta, too, desires the deviant sexuality with her ex-lover. Nevertheless, she unleashes an unexpected cry as she staggers backward where Alcée is standing, and thus he has now the opportunity to hug her. Her behavior that suddenly eases for Alcée to do what he has in mind is very uncanny, and it is somehow baffling to believe her tears, let alone her backward step, which might be intended. "The contact of her warm palpitating body when he had unthinkingly drawn her into his arms had aroused all the old-time infatuation and desire of flesh." The flesh? being entirely the human body when considering its physical and sexual needs, rather than the soul? matters more than love that is supposedly shared between Calixta and Bobinot. The accumulation of her apprehension becomes acute, whereupon she needs to be relaxed, and alleviating her pain might lead to sexual activity. Calixta and Alcée unconsciously go through mere looking and slight touching, whereupon sexual interaction. At this moment of time, passion for each other makes them blind to everything else, and hence we are invited by Kate Chopin to witness a whole scene of fleshly pleasure, which Bobinot probably could not have guaranteed his wife.

When the sexual intercourse and the storm end, the sun shines, and the grass glistens wet after the rain. Calixta feels neither shame nor remorse, but absolute gladness. "He turned and smiled at her with a beaming face; she lifted her pretty chin in the air and laughed loud". This expresses her enjoyment from the momentary experience against which she bumps up. Both are satisfied because they have revived an inner feeling which has just come out of a five-year hibernation. And this evidently explains that Alcée offers irreplaceable pleasure which Bobinot apparently is unable to guarantee. When the sun appears again, everything is back to normal. We can, therefore, deduce that the storm and sun are widely significant; the first connotes "violent sexual encounter" while the second refers to "ordinary, happy life".

"Bobinot's explanations and apologies which he had been composing all along the way died on his lips as Calixta felt him to see if he were dry." Bobinot seems to be fearful of his wife whom he considers overscrupulous. Perhaps the former, due to his excessive love for Calixta, lacks manhood which commonly most women are fond of. Alcée that night sends a flattering letter to his wife, Clarisse, suggesting that she, along with the babies, may remain as long as she desires in Biloxi; "and though he missed them, he was willing to bear the separation a while longer? realizing that their health and pleasure were the first things to be considered." His letter is somehow questionable; he is perhaps planning to get again a glimpse at Calixta while his wife and children are away. There are abundant proofs, such as Alcée's smile and Calixta's loud laugh, which can indicate that both are willing to meet several times. The kernel of the story is seen in this sentence: "So the storm passed and everyone was happy." Happiness emerges at the end of storm, which represents the end of problems, too. Indeed, everyone—Calixta, Alcée, or Bobinot— seems happy. In other words, the sexual intercourse gives both Calixta and Alcée a pleasure that is irreplaceable, whereas Bobinot is satisfied since his wife does not rebuke him as he has expected for making his clothes, as well as Bibi's, dirty.

Apparently, in this short story, one can notice that Kate Chopin shows Calixta as a disloyal wife. However, it is evident that her inevitably sexual desire, which intertwines with the storm, eventually cannot be stopped or precluded.

?Karen says

"Her firm, elastic flesh that was knowing for the first time its birthright, was like a creamy lily that the sun invites to contribute its breath and perfume to the undying life of the world."

No mistaking what is taking place during the storm, and that sometimes folks marry the wrong partners.

Latanya (CraftyScribbles) says

Marriage and unfulfilled desires cost. Freedom, class, and oppression brews weathered forces until an unearthed storm approaches.

Alce and Calixta are former lovers from different classes. They separate because of the narrow structure of their community. Both marry more "suitable" partners. Fate crashes their suitability when the two meet again. During a storm, he helps her complete her chores.

Yet, when the storm hovers and strengthens...

The natural force (i.e. sexuality) cannot be withstood despite our best intentions to make ourselves whole. While their partners are away, the ex-lovers play. Calixta gives her heart and body to her former lover for the storm's duration, as Alce does to her. She reconnects with the being she surrendered while marrying her husband, Bobint and birthing her child.

When Alce leaves and her husband returns, Calixta's spirit brightens and she returns to the life she had prior to the storm as a reborn soul.

Alce writes his wife a letter, asking her about her time away in Biloxi. He tells her not to rush back. Perhaps, he'll scurry to have more fun. Who knows?

Meanwhile, his wife, Clarisse feels joy upon reading her husband's letter. For she feels whole again after re-living her maiden days before she married her husband.

"So the storm passed and everyone was happy."

Chopin's not advocating adultery. But, she discusses the for fulfillment within marriage as the institution's known to harbor distress and repetition after a while. As food for thought, she details a need for women to gain and protect a sense of self without losing whom they are for their husband and children.

As she writes, all one needs is a storm to brew to behave otherwise...

Ij says

Der Sturm

Written by: Kate Chopin

Der Sturm

Characters:

Bibi
Bobinot
Calixta
Alcee

Bibi und Bobinot erwischt in einen Sturm und entscheiden, in ein Geschäft zu bleiben, anstatt zu versuchen, nach Hause gehen.

Calixta war allein zu Hause. Alcee ein alter Liebhaber kamen in für Schutz vor dem Sturm. Alcee und Calixta beschlossen, Vorteil aus der Situation zu nehmen und hatten Sex.

Nach dem Sturm endet Alcee geht nach Hause. Er schreibt seiner Frau einen Brief, ihr zu sagen, gibt es keine Notwendigkeit, nach Hause zu eilen, alles wird in Ordnung sein.

Bibi und Bobinot nach Hause gekommen. Sie ist froh, sie zu sehen. Calixta hat das Abendessen vorbereitet, und sie essen, wie normal.

Vahid says

Having read this short and contentious short story of Chopin once again to reinforce my understanding of the basics of the literature, I have officially molded my irrevocable view towards this writer. Even though I deeply respect her, I believe, simply put, she has a lopsided view of freedom and the correlation between liberality and sexuality. Allow me to elaborate, in this story we read about a fortuitous lady who is leading a happy life. Through a storm and absence of her husband and child, she ends up making out with a previous lover. The story contains obscene language and imagery, and seems to convey that a storm hit her life with delectable outcome of brining a past lover along, and ended with everything being safe and sound, since the lady seems to project enough passion and warmth towards her family, and the previous lover sends a letter to his wife, who is on a vacation, to indulge herself longer, implying that this affair is likely to go on. To my mind, Chopin is divulging a new tradition where there is a need for this kind of relationship, since she wraps up by saying 'everybody was happy'.

It is often mentioned that this prose wasn't published until 70 years after it's initial emergence. Many often believe we shouldn't write our own subjective views and call them art; We clearly see what pernicious effects they might exert on lets say one that might not be equipped with enough prudence. Since this story touches on matters of illicit affair and morality and virtue, it would be intriguing to know what really this writer wanted to impart.

sabisteb aka callisto says

Calixta, Ehefrau, Mutter und irgendwie leicht (sexuell) frustriert sitzt daheim und wartet einen Sturm ab, während ihr Mann und er gemeinsame Sohn irgendwo unterwegs sind. Wie es der Zufall will sucht ihr Ex-Lover/Freund Alcée Schutz vor dem Regen in ihrem Haus. Die beiden haben sich seit Jahren nicht mehr

gesehen, er ist mittlerweile auch verheiratet und seine Frau hat gerade ein Kind bekommen. Während Calixa sich sorgen um Mann und Kind macht, wärmt Alcée alte Erinnerungen auf und kurz darauf ist die Erinnerung mehr als nur aufgewärmt. Man liebt sich wild während wilden des Sturms.

Ja, es ist so offensichtlich, Sex und die damit einhergehende Körperliche „Gewalt“ als Spiegel der Naturgewalten, platt, direkt, offensichtlich. Und ja, so schnell wie der Sturm vorbei ist, geht Alcée auch und alles ist beim alten. Nur Calixa ist fröhlicher und ausgeglichener, weil es ihr endlich jemand mal wieder ordentlich besorgt hat. So kann sie sich Mann und Kind wieder voll widmen. Alcée ist auch ordentlich befriedigt, denn weil seine Frau gerade ein Kind bekommen hat, gab es bei ihm wohl auch gerade extremen sexuellen Notstand. So helfen sich beide mal schnell bei der Befriedigung ihrer Bedürfnisse, damit sie weitermachen können wie gehabt.

Klingt nach ziemlich plattem kurzen Quickie im Sturm. Sex um der Lust willen. Das ganze schön verpackt und ästhetisch Formuliert mit nature scenery. Liest man in vielen Fanfiction Formen. Heutzutage eher *gähn*.

Das Hacken an der Geschichte, die sie so besonders macht. Diese Geschichte wurde 1898 geschrieben und auch heute würden so einige wohl noch schlucken, wenn sie diese Geschichte lesen, ob ihrer Direktheit.

Da sie aber kurz ist, ein Klassiker ist, sprachlich ansprechend aber nicht zu schwer, ist das sicherlich eine Geschichte, die man in Klasse 12/13 mal vor den Ferien lesen könnte und die Kids diskutieren lassen kann und dann irgendwann zwischendurch mal das Datum erwähnt, wann sie geschrieben wurde.

Zurücklehnen und das Staunen genießen. Ja, damals hatten sie auch Sex, auch Sex for convenience mit dem Ex, so im Vorbeigehen, während der Mann mit dem Kind einkaufen war.

Es wundert wahrscheinlich nicht, dass die Geschichte erst in den späten 1960er Jahre veröffentlicht wurde, als die Autorin schon tot war.

Danielle says

Was not expecting this... wow.

Aida Ghazar says

A good read,so short a story and so realistic.

Sheila says

sultry moment of bodice ripping passion written in an era we don't associated with black lace erotica. today it passes with little surprise in a reading instance

Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly says

Calixta, a young wife, is alone at home working with her sewing machine. Her husband and young son are away and decided not to come home yet to let the approaching storm pass. A former admirer Alcee passes by the house as the wind and rain begin to grow strong. He asks, and is allowed, inside.

They both recall one Christian Feast Day, the Assumption, when they were still both single and had kissed and kissed passionately. This remembrance after the storm has led them to another kiss, and more--

"The generous abundance of her passion, without guile or trickery, was like a white flame which penetrated and found response in depths of his own sensuous nature that had never yet been reached.

"When he touched her breasts they gave themselves up in quivering ecstasy, inviting his lips. Her mouth was a fountain of delight. And when he possessed her, they seemed to swoon together at the very borderland of life's mystery."

Written in 1898. Kate Chopin only wanted to say that women also like to fuck, same as men. But this, so obvious and is taken for granted now, sounded like a heresy then and got her into a storm of troubles.

Stefania says

A witty little short story by Kate Chopin that shows how women do not differ that much from men and vice versa. Something that may be quite granted for us in this day and age but quite provocative for Chopin's own time.

As men are allowed to have a roving eye and enjoy themselves away from their marital life, so do women. Equally, as wives often become victims to their husbands' infidelities, so do husbands to their wives' (poor Bobinôt)!

I really enjoyed this short story! Playfully and ahead-of-its-time!

Julia Gorning says

Having already read this piece, imagine my discomfort at having my literature teacher read this aloud as an example of how to do a close reading.... She was practically winking and elbow nudging at all the "Freudian symbols", particularly when she insinuated that the big drops of rain is a symbol of Calixa's female secretions.... ew. And then pelvic thrusting in front of the class when the French guy throws himself into a rocking chair....

Carol says

2.5 Stars

Well....Well....Well....Lucky storm it appears for Alce and his wife Clarisse, but not so Calixta's husband Bobint.....I don't think???

Kate Chopin sure wrote some strange short stories!

Fran says

"The Storm" by Kate Chopin is a sequel to "At the 'Cadian Ball". We encounter married couples Bobint and Calixta, with four year old son Bibi in tow, and Alcee and Clarisse, five years after the ball. A torrential rain. Bobint and Bibi wait out the storm. They worry about Calixta at home alone. They need not worry. Alcee, passing Calixta's house asks to seek shelter, on her porch, from the driving sheets of rain. Calixta, unnerved by resultant vibrations from a nearby lightning strike, ends up cradled in Alcee's arms.

Although written in 1898, a rainy day tryst was too racy for its time. The story was published in 1969 as part of Kate Chopin's Collected Works.

Nora says

This is the first piece of literature I sunk my teeth into, and of course I hated it. Then after I read, and reread, and reread it. I love it! Especailly when you stop to look at as an art. They way Chopin is crafting words is simply amazing!
