

THAT LITTLE HAND ON YOUR FACE

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Based on *The Birthmark* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Characters

Georgiana	his wife
Aylmer	her husband
Aminadab	the assistant to him

Settings

Inside the house.
The Lab and The Room.
It is darker in The Lab than in The Room.

**** THE FOLLOWING IS THE FIRST SCENE,
PLEASE CONTACT ME TO READ THE SCRIPT IN ITS ENTIRETY****

1.

The Room. Aylmer is staring at Georgiana. She is stroking his hand. She kisses it. He looks at her. They hold a strong gaze. It seems they might kiss...

AYLMER

I have an idea.

(Pause.)

Let's fix your face.

GEORGIANA

Fix my face.

AYLMER

You are perfect as is -

(Aylmer is stroking her right cheek.)

You are.

(She smiles.)

It's just that, that I'd love to, well, fix you.

GEORGIANA

Fix.

AYLMER

You. Not just fix something. This isn't a crazy scheme. It's not like the time with that cat and the jar and that chocolate. And I made the promise - and I keep promises - and nothing will ever smell that bad again, I learned my lesson I swear.

It's just that I was sitting here looking at you and realizing that if I can look at you and admire your spectacular beauty and presence and - well - internal and eternal glow -without examination, then I wouldn't be doing my job as husband and hunter and gatherer and, god, why even be a scientist in the first place and why even look at you with no scientific thoughts behind my gaze. Isn't it more interesting - more fascinating - to look at you and scheme up ways to fix you at the same time?

GEORGIANA

Alymer, how long have we been married?

AYLMER

Years. I'd say we've been married years.

GEORGIANA

It's not as if it just appeared one day.

AYLMER
Well, no...

GEORGIANA
As if one day - WHAM - something grew on my face.

AYLMER
I've been thinking about that. The only way I can make sense of my sudden repulsion to your face and the intense - it's so intense Georgiana - intense desire to fix it, is this: for all the years we've been married, I must have been on your good side.

GEORGIANA
Good side?

AYLMER
Think about it. In my memories of you and me, I'm always... I'm always to your right. And, as I'm sure you know - the mark is on your left side.

GEORGIANA
Have you never viewed me straight on?

AYLMER
Not that I remember.

GEORGIANA
Only from the right side?

AYLMER
The good side, yes.

GEORGIANA
Alymer.

AYLMER
I blame myself Georgiana - Gigi- you shouldn't feel bad. My eyes are as much to blame as your face. I know this, and I regret it.

GEORGIANA
Many before you have thought it charming Aylmer.

AYLMER
Ha! Charming.

GEORGIANA

My face has charm, character.

AYLMER

Perhaps on another's face it would have charm. But not yours. Look how perfect you are in every other capacity. Fit, good feet, strong hair, taut hips. The mark clearly mars the perfection Nature bestowed on you. It's, well, it's shocking.

GEORGIANA

Shocking?

AYLMER

Shocking.

GEORGIANA

Then why love me.

AYLMER

Exactly. I've loved you from the right for so many years, I want to love you from the left as well.

GEORGIANA

Love me from the left.

AYLMER

I want to love you from both the right, and the left. Oh - let's do it!

GEORGIANA

Let's fix my face?

AYLMER

There's a reason I'm the scientist that I am.

(Shakes his head and chuckles.)

What bothers me most about your mark isn't the bloody, crimson, deep red of the color - it's the eerie illusion that it looks like a hand. As if you were just walking through a zoo one day and a little monkey with a bald ass reached out from behind the bars of his little cage and slapped your cheek. Like this:

(He pops her on the face.)

Wouldn't that be funny if that's how it happened.

(He laughs and pops her on the face again.)

GEORGIANA

Stop it!

AYLMER

Georgiana! Do you not dream of perfection? Can you not see the possibilities you have because I am your husband?

GEORGIANA

Perfection is not normal.

AYLMER

That's some phrase, that's not real Gigi. Those words are just words, and no one believes in words anymore. Perfection is possible.

GEORGIANA

But it's so small Aylmer -

AYLMER

- to you maybe. You don't have to look at it.

GEORGIANA

It's barely the width of these two fingers together.

(She covers it with her two fingers.)

See?

AYLMER

Wait! Keep your hand there for a moment.

(He stares at her, thinking, scheming. He makes a note on the pad he always keeps in his pocket.)

Remarkable.

(Pause.)

Georgiana - did I ever tell you that my first girlfriend was a midget?

GEORGIANA

I thought she was a dwarf.

AYLMER

She was a dwarf, but I thought she was a midget for so long that she'll always be a midget to me.

GEORGIANA

But there's a difference.

AYLMER

A small one, a small one.

GEORGIANA

Aylmer - you're a scientist - you deal with facts, accuracy - you can't say that just because the difference is small, that just because there is a small difference, you choose to ignore the technical term and go on with your own. It negates everything you believe in.

AYLMER

That's just it actually, I'm redefining definition -

GEORGIANA

Ha!

AYLMER

Bridging the gap between midget and dwarf -

GEORGIANA

Alymer.

AYLMER

Uniting a people.

GEORGIANA

How did it end Aylmer - did you stretch her out -

AYLMER

- I feel bad about what happened -

GEORGIANA

- make her long and tall -

AYLMER

- It wasn't my fault -

GEORGIANA

- strap her to a gurney and tie a rope around her feet and hands -

AYLMER

- I'd tried to end things -

GEORGIANA

- tie her to a team of horses at either end and -

AYLMER

- I was only 9. I...

GEORGIANA
You what?

AYLMER
I applied pi to her.

GEORGIANA
Pi.

AYLMER
3.14. The answer is pi sometimes, this was the first time I'd used it. I applied pi to her and that was that.

(He is tortured by the memory of the Midget.)

Why do you torture me Georgiana -

GEORGIANA
Did pi work?

AYLMER
I've done nothing to deserve your sharp tongue.

GEORGIANA
Come here...
(She gathers him tenderly in her arms.)
After the pi, did she enter a life of debauchery?

AYLMER
Dwarf tossing.

GEORGIANA
Is that what pi does?

AYLMER
It's how you might end up, if we don't fix things. Would you like that?
(He is gently stroking her hair.)
If someone wrapped you in extreme padding and hurled you at a wall or something?

GEORGIANA
No one's going to hurl me at a wall.

AYLMER
That's what she thought.

GEORGIANA

Shhhh....

(She is gently stroking his hair.)

My first boyfriend was an adonis.

AYLMER

What is going through a dwarf's mind as she's mid flight -

GEORGIANA

We were lovers at 10 -

AYLMER

- suspended in air -

GEORGIANA

- ahead of our time.

AYLMER

- moments from impact -

GEORGIANA

He thought a fairy - not a monkey -

(GEORGIANA pops him on the face.)

- had laid its tiny hand on my cheek.

AYLMER

It comes and goes, the mark.

GEORGIANA

Blessing me, empowering me with a way over men.

AYLMER

Who's to say a monkey's not a fairy after all.

GEORGIANA

All sorts of men look at me Aylmer.

AYLMER

God, from certain angles it seems gigantic.

GEORGIANA

Just the other day there was this man.

AYLMER
Was it me?

GEORGIANA
The man?

AYLMER
Was the man me, just now, when I said I'd had an idea and that idea was to fix your face?

GEORGIANA
I'd been walking through the park, dressed a bit prim, but I'd torn the shoulder of fabric at the top of my dress so it barely suggested that I'd recently been thrown behind a barn and ravaged by a stable boy, just the hint of being roughed up. They like this -

AYLMER
The men.

GEORGIANA
The men like this look and there was this one that was leaning against this tree and just as I passed - Aylmer the expression on his face - I can't shake it, it was like he'd been at that tree waiting for this moment, for me to walk past with my pillaged sexuality overflowing, for his entire life.

AYLMER
Was he to your left or your right?
(Silence.)

AYLMER
I'm not proud of the way I feel.

GEORGIANA
The man...

AYLMER
I feel I'm about to burst!

GEORGIANA
The man could barely contain himself...

AYLMER
I can't explain it. I can hear it. Your mark, that little hand on your face, it SCREAMS at me.

GEORGIANA

So what if the man was on my right -

AYLMER

Don't get upset - it makes it darker.

GEORGIANA

Aylmer....

AYLMER

God, I can barely look at you.

(They sit in silence for a minute.)

GEORGIANA

Can we talk of something else?

AYLMER

We can try.

GEORGIANA

How is Aminadab?

AYLMER

Neanderthal-like.

GEORGIANA

But is he happy?

AYLMER

Would you be happy if each day you woke up and you were one more slot down on the evolutionary chart, one step closer to living in a cave?

GEORGIANA

Have you no loyalty -

AYLMER

I'm speaking from a place of extreme loyalty! The man's a disaster. The other day I caught him barking at bird.

GEORGIANA

There are birds in the lab now?

AYLMER

There were two. Now there's one. I believe he ate the other.

GEORGIANA

Maybe he ate the one and the other is still there.

AYLMER

Yes! Georgiana, yes...

(He shifts so he views her solely from the right.)

You are so beautiful.

(She rips her dress near the shoulder a bit, giggles and leans towards him. He kisses her.)