

# The Birthmark

## by Nathaniel Hawthorne

A story about Science, the force of Nature, and the failure pursuit of perfection.

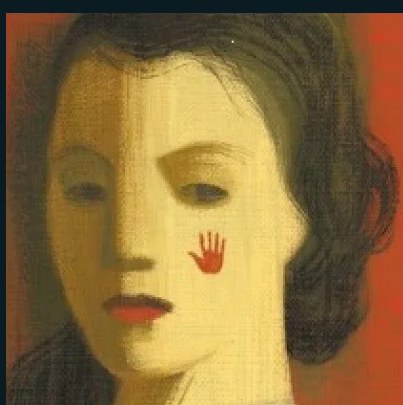
Published in 1843.

### Plot

1

The exposition enters the story as a line of questioning from Aylmer to his wife Georgina.

*"Georgina, said he, has it never occurred to you that the mark upon your cheek might be removed" (Pg. 367)*



Exposition: A scene in the story that establishes the situation typically at the beginning of the story.

2

### POV

Third person omniscient narration is done by the narrator telling the story to an unknown listener and from the POV of knowing the characters thoughts.

The story is being narrated for a third omniscient point of view particularly focusing on the emotions of Aylmer.

*"Now stealing forth again and glimmering to and fro with every pulse of emotion that throbbd within her heart; but, seeing her otherwise so perfect, he found this one defect grow more and more intolerable with every moment of their lives." (Pg. 367)*

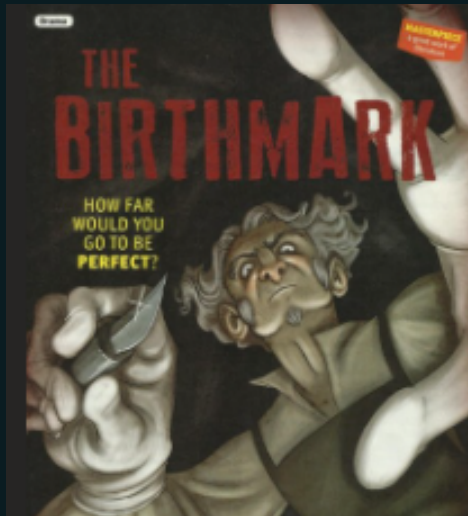
### Characterization

3

Villain: Character that is evil or bad.

Aylmer is a misguided brilliant scientist who 's character vividly describes how he feels about his wife's birthmark.

*"Not the minutest symptom escaped him. -as the moments passed, he wrote down in his folio volume. (Pg. 376)*



4

### Symbolism

Imagery: detail in the work that evokes a feeling or an idea on the reader.

Aylmer's obsession with his wife's birthmark blinds his ability to see that science is not able to control the forces of nature.

*"No, Dearest Georgina, you came nearly perfect from the hand of nature, that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the visible mark of earthly imperfections. (Pg. 367)"*



### Theme

5

The overall idea or the message in the story.

*"It was the fatal flaw of humanity which nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions either to imply that they are temporary or infinite or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain." (Pg. 368)*

The author Hawthorne I believe wants to convey the message of the dangers of seeking perfection through science and the disastrous consequences that it can lead to.

### Conclusion

The pursuit for perfection through science is not always attainable under the laws of nature.

