

THEMES: Twisted Smile

- 1. The plot: Someone summarize the action:**
Surgeon makes a post-operative visit to a patient. Purpose of the surgery was to remove a malignant tumor, probably a sarcoma, from the patient's cheek. The surgeon notices that, due to cutting a small nerve in the cheek, her face is slightly distorted. The patient asks if she will always look like this, and the physician confirms that she will. The husband kisses his wife.
- 2. The emotions: How does the surgeon feel? How does the patient feel? How does the husband feel?**
- 3. The interactions: What is the patient really asking when she asks about her face? [How can I live with this? Will people stare at me? Will my husband still love me?] What do you think about the doctor's answer? Is it honest, truthful? Does he beat around the bush? Does it hear the question behind the question?**
- 4. The husband's action: Who hears the question behind the question? [The husband] What does he do about it? [The statement of "cuteness" and the kiss] What does the kiss mean?**
- 5. The doctor's reaction: Why does the doctor call the husband a god? Who are sometimes referred to gods in medicine? [Doctors] What does the word "awe" imply? [humility]**
- 6. Lessons to be learned: What can we learn from this brief encounter?**
 - a. What can we learn from its brevity? Importance of paying close attention, of being completely present with patients, because important things can occur in small, seemingly unimportant moments**
 - b. Who is center stage? [the patient and husband, NOT the doctor] Easy to think of the doctor as the main player, the important person; this leads to arrogance. Humility is achieved when the doctor realizes that although he or she has expertise, knowledge, and therefore power, the most important person is always the patient**
 - c. The patient's life was saved. Why is she worrying about her smile?**