

**THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY**

By Oscar Wilde

Condensed by Chris Moore

Dorian Gray was the child of English nobility. His parents died when he was young, leaving him a fortune to provide him with a life of luxury for the rest of his life. He was an extremely handsome man and had a personality that everyone enjoyed.

He met a portrait painter by the name of Basil Hallward. Basil loved to look at beautiful things and upon looking at Dorian Gray, he knew that he had to capture his looks on canvas. He became so absorbed in this painting that his very soul seemed to paint not only the masterpiece of his life, but it paid homage to Dorian Gray. Dorian was also caught up in this tribute and felt that he was more important than any man. Gray felt that he was one of life's masterpieces and he became caught up with the feeling of his own importance.

**(Overhead No. 1: I-A-74)**

The painter gave Dorian the portrait as a gift. Gray hung it in his home where he could worship it. He was overcome by the thought that he would grow old, but the painting would remain the same. "Oh, if it could only be the other way! If only I could remain young and the picture grow old. I would give anything and everything that I have if the picture could change, and let me remain as I am now. For that I would give my soul!"

Dorian had fallen in love with a girl by the name of Sybil Vane. She was an actress who worshipped Dorian. One night Dorian took two friends to the theater to show them what a great actress Sybil was. She was so nervous because she wanted to impress him that she did horribly. After the play Dorian went to the dressing room and told her she was so bad that he never wanted to see her again! She was so hurt and broken hearted that she could no longer live and ended her life by drinking poison.

**(Overhead No. 2: I-A-75)**

Upon arriving home, Dorian went to sit and admire his portrait for awhile. To his astonishment, the portrait was different. There was a different look on the face. He noticed a touch of cruelty in the mouth which he never noticed before. It was as if he was looking at himself in a mirror. The picture seemed to be filled with brutality. He turned on the light to get a better view. The picture had changed. The prayer that he had uttered on the night he received the portrait came flashing through his mind. It was crazy to even think of, but there was the picture before him. There was no room for doubt!

The portrait had received the news of Sybil's death before he did. From now on, he would be conscious of all the events of his life as they occurred. His own soul was looking at him from the canvas, revealing all of his weaknesses and sins. The portrait was calling him to judgment. Instead of facing the portrait, he took it to an attic room and

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locked it where no one could see it. He had his youth and good looks. Why should he watch this hideous corruption of his soul?

Sometimes after he committed some of his worst sins, he would creep upstairs and look at the painting. The portrait looked evil and aged. He would laugh back at the portrait. **(Overhead No. 3: I-A-76)**

One day Basil Hallward approached Dorian relating the rumors about him. Basil told him that everyone who had come into contact with him was either humiliated or had something terrible happen to them. Dorian asked the artist for his opinion about the rumors. Basil replied that he would have to see his soul and he could not do that.

Dorian told Basil that he would show the artist his soul. He took him to the attic room and showed him the portrait. Horror arose from the artist's face as he saw in the dim light the hideous face grinning from the canvas before him. The idea was monstrous; however, he knew it was the picture he painted long years before. The eyes in the portrait were the eyes of the devil. It seemed that from its inside came foulness and horror. Through some quickening of inner life, the leprosy of sin was slowly eating away his soul. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave would not be more dreadful.

Dorian Gray had a feeling of uncontrollable hate. He loathed the man who had painted the portrait. Dorian rushed upon Hallward and killed him with a knife.

**(Overhead No. 4: I-A-77)**

When he looked up at the picture, there was a loathsome red hue that now gleamed wet and glistening on the hands in the portrait. Dorian decided that he would destroy the portrait. He had killed the painter, so he would kill the painter's work and all that it represented. He would kill the past and move on to a future that would be free. He took a knife and started stabbing the painting. There was a crash, a thud, a cry. The cry was so awful that it woke the servants from their sleep. They knocked upon the door of the room from which they had heard the cry. There was no reply. They called out, but everything was still.

When they entered the room, they found the splendid portrait of their master, **(Overhead No. 1: I-A-74)** as they had last seen him in all the wonder of his youth and handsomeness. Lying on the floor before the portrait, dressed in their master's evening clothes, they found a withered, wrinkled old man of loathsome visage. It was not until they had examined his rings and other effects that they learned who he was. When Dorian Gray thrust the knife into the painting he had killed himself, and in his death, the great burden of his sins had been transferred back from the portrait to his own soul.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Why do you think Dorian Gray wanted to remain young?  
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2. What did his picture represent?  
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3. Are there some things in your life that you would want expressed on canvas? What would they be?  
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4. Without becoming too personal, what areas would you not want revealed?  
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5. How could you change things in your life that you did not like?  
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6. Can you feel good about yourself on the outside if you don't feel good about yourself on the inside? Why? or Why not?  
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7. Do you think that Dorian felt good about himself? Why? or Why not?  
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8. What do you think the moral of the Dorian Gray story would be?  
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