

# **Student Essay on James Vane as Dorian's Conscience**

**James Vane as Dorian's Conscience by Oscar Wilde**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Student Essay on James Vane as Dorian's Conscience.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Essay.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>

# Essay

At the end of chapter sixteen in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian stumbles upon James Vane. James symbolically functions as Dorian's conscience, which is marred with the guilt of all his crimes. Oscar Wilde's use of details, diction, and images is essential to setting the mood necessary for the introduction of this character.

At the beginning of the excerpt, Dorian seems to be in some way disturbed: " His meeting with Adrian Singleton had strangely moved him..." Following his encounter Dorian begins to contemplate if Basil was in fact correct and the ruin of Adrian Singleton "was to be laid at his door..." This uncertainty throws Dorian into a state turmoil. His inner conflict and confusion leaves him vulnerable to an attack from his conscience, which is exactly what Wilde is aiming for.

Wilde's choice of words and the images they create, produce the gloomy, suspenseful mood intended for Dorian's "conscience's" arrival. Phrases such as "hastened on" and "darted aside into a dim archway" give the reader the impression that Dorian is rushing, as if he were in pursuit. Wilde's diction creates images that are essential in portraying the desired mood. "Drizzling rain" and "dim archway" are examples of these images, which produce a dreary atmosphere. The mood corresponds to the subject at hand; in this case, Dorian's tainted conscience.

The dismal mood Wilde creates is the precise one necessary to merge James Vane as Dorian's conscience into the passage. He is able to thoroughly complete this through the use of colorful details, vivid images, and descriptive diction.