

# **The Picture of Dorian Gray Book Notes**

## **The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde**

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# Contents

<a href="#">The Picture of Dorian Gray Book Notes.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Author/Context.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Major Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Topic Tracking: Beauty.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Topic Tracking: Hedonism.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Topic Tracking: Influence.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 1.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 5.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 8.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 10.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 11.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 12.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 13.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 14.....</a>	<a href="#">38</a>

<a href="#">Chapter 15.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 16.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 17.....</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 18.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 19.....</a>	<a href="#">43</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 20.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>

## Author/Context

Oscar Wilde was born in 1854 to William Ralph Willis, a surgeon, and Jane Francesca Elgee Wilde, who supported the movement for Irish independence. Educated at the Portora Royal School, Trinity College in Dublin, and Oxford University, he married Constance Lloyd in 1884 and had two children, Cyril and Vyvyan. A prolific writer whose work included short stories, poetry, fairy tales, plays, essays, and criticism, in addition to his one novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Several of his well known plays are *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Salome*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *A Woman of No Importance*. Most of his works had to do with the Aesthetic movement, of which he was one of the most public supporters; he believed that art is useless, and it should be done simply for its own sake. Writes Karl Beckson in *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 10: Modern British Dramatists, 1900-1945*, "Wilde absorbed the idea that art was superior to life and that the one obligation was to transform life into art-to be as 'artificial' as possible." He had a habit of using clever epigrams in his writing, so much so that he re-used some of these epigrams in later works.

The *Picture of Dorian Gray* was commissioned by *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* and appeared in the July, 1890 issue. Reviews showed that the public was shocked and disgusted by the book and its implicit homosexuality; Wilde added six more chapters and a subplot that would be more to the public's taste before publishing the book. The published book was given a good review and said to promote the idea that excess was evil and would make a person ugly; Wilde denied that this was his intention, however he did say that the book shows that certain excesses have their own punishments.

Moving away from his family, Wilde began an affair with a young Lord Alfred Douglas, which eventually resulted in his arrest and imprisonment for homosexuality in 1896. His punishment was hard labor at Wandsworth Prison and Reading Gaol, about which he wrote the poem "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." He was released in 1897, and died three years later, in November 1900.

### Bibliography

Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. New York: The Modern Library, 1998.

*Contemporary Authors Online*: The Gale Group, 2001.

# Plot Summary

A painter, Basil Hallward, paints a most exquisite portrait of his muse, the handsome young man named Dorian Gray. During the last session of painting, Dorian, who has until this point been completely innocent both of his beauty and of the world, meets Basil's friend Lord Henry Wotton, who opens his eyes to the ephemeral nature of his own beauty and tells him that he should experience life to the fullest. Upon the completion of the portrait, Dorian wishes out loud that the painting would grow old, and not he. Due to Lord Henry's influence, Dorian goes out looking for passion and falls in love with a young actress of considerable talent, Sibyl Vane. When she falls in love with him, however, she realizes the falseness of her stage life and performs very poorly in front of Basil and Lord Henry when they come to meet her; Dorian is thoroughly disappointed, loses all respect and love for her, and breaks the engagement. He goes home to find that the painting has become slightly more cruel-looking, and the next morning, just after resolving to go back and marry her regardless, finds out that Sibyl has killed herself. The painting fills him with fear and he has it locked up in an old schoolroom in his house.

Dorian finds a certain joy, over the next years, in committing sinful or pleasurable deeds and watching the painting change; he loses none of his beauty or youth, but the painting grows old and ugly. He is constantly in touch with Lord Henry, who feeds his beliefs about a new Hedonism-the search for pleasure, not morality-which should take over the world. When Dorian is thirty-eight, he runs into Basil, having not seen him for a long time, and finally shows him what has happened to his portrait. Basil is horrified and tries to make Dorian repent, but Dorian kills him, and has an old friend of his burn the body and get rid of the evidence.

Dorian becomes increasingly anxious and fearful that someone might discover his secret, and goes to an opium den to try to erase his bad feelings. Sibyl's brother, James, who has been searching for him for eighteen years, knowing only that his sister called him Prince Charming, finds Dorian and threatens his life. He lets him go when Dorian tells him to look closely at his face; he could not have been more than twenty years old. While at a hunting party a few days later, a man is accidentally shot and killed, and Dorian finds out that this man was James. He decides that from this time on, he will be good; and to do this, he must get rid of the constant anxiety and fear he has been feeling-he must destroy the portrait. He stabs it, with the same knife he used to kill Basil, and when the servants enter they see the portrait as it was when it was new, and a horrible, old, ugly man lying dead on the floor.

# Major Characters

**Basil Hallward:** The artist who wants Dorian to stay youthful and beautiful and act as his muse. His painting sets the story into motion, because it is such a true interpretation, not only of Dorian's appearance but of his soul: flawless and youthful at the beginning, it becomes increasingly ugly and ancient. Basil truly cares for Dorian and considers him a great friend, but while Dorian grows more corrupt and commits evil deeds, they lose touch with each other. When Basil and Dorian run into each other again many years later, Dorian reveals Basil's painting to him; Basil, shocked by the ugliness of the portrait, tries to make Dorian repent, to no avail, and he is killed by his muse.

**Lord Henry Wotton:** The high-society intellectual who corrupts Dorian. Though he promises Basil he will not influence Dorian, he is fascinated with Dorian's innocence and wants to have a hand in molding it; he has long talks with him during which he exposes him to his own ideas and opinions, all the while convincing Dorian that these new feelings were inside him the whole time. He gives Dorian a book which becomes a sort of manual for how he is to live his life, leading him down a path of corruption, sin, and evil, and finds it remarkable that Dorian does not appear to age at all.

**Dorian Gray:** The handsome youth whom the world worships, even as it gossips about him. He cares for Basil but is more drawn toward Henry, and therein lies his downfall. Upon seeing the newly painted portrait, Dorian curses it and claims that it will mock him, once he grows old and ugly and the painting still appears youthful and beautiful, and makes a fateful wish that it could be the other way around. After falling in love with a young actress, then leaving her when she decides to abandon her talent, causing her to commit suicide, Dorian starts to see that his wish has come true. Though upset at first, Dorian becomes fascinated by his ability to commit evil deeds without having any of it show on him, for the painting is absorbing all of his sin. For years, he vainly pursues physical pleasure and sin, helped along the way by Lord Henry, until he has finally had enough and tries to destroy the portrait, killing himself instead.

**Sybil Vane:** The beautiful and talented actress with whom Dorian falls in love. The world of the theatre is all she has known, and when she falls in real love, she realizes the falsity of the stage, acting very poorly on the night that Dorian brings Basil and Henry to watch her. Dorian is crestfallen, and leaves her, telling her that he loved her for her beautiful talent. She kills herself the night he leaves, knowing that she can no longer live a false life when she has had real love.

## Minor Characters

**Lady Brandon:** A woman of high society who hosted the party where Basil met Dorian. According to Lord Henry, she likes to introduce people with either every detail about their personal life or every detail except the one that you want to know.

**Aunt Agatha:** Lord Henry's high society aunt, who knows and lavishes praise on Dorian Gray.



**Lord Fermor:** Lord Henry's uncle, a rich old gentleman who knows everyone in society and is considered generous because he likes to entertain guests.

**Lord Kelso:** Dorian's maternal grandfather, who paid a man to kill Dorian's penniless father in a duel.

**Lady Margaret Devereux:** Dorian's mother, a beautiful woman who married a poor man and died shortly after he was killed.

**Dartmoor:** The man about whom society gossips because he is engaged to a girl from America.

**Duchess of Harley:** Guest of Aunt Agatha; pleasant, well-liked, and of ample proportions.

**Sir Thomas Burdon:** Guest of Aunt Agatha; a Radical member of Parliament.

**Mr. Erskine of Treadley:** An old man who doesn't speak very much since he believes he said everything worthwhile before he turned thirty.

**Mrs. Vandeleur:** A very moral, but very dowdy, old friend of Aunt Agatha.

**Lord Faudel:** A middle-aged friend of Aunt Agatha.

**Victoria (Lady Henry):** Lord Henry's wife; a blonde, romantic woman.

**Mrs. Vane:** Sibyl's mother, a woman who is in heavy debt to Mr. Isaacs and must, along with her daughter, act in his company to repay him.

**Mr. Isaacs:** The owner of the theatre where Sibyl Vane acts.

**James:** Sibyl's sixteen year old brother. Cares very much for his sister, and before leaving for Australia, vows to kill her mystery gentleman if he does her any wrong.

**Victor:** Dorian's valet, who, Dorian believes, is snooping around to find out his secret.

**Mrs. Leaf:** Dorian's fussy housekeeper.

**Mr. Hubbard:** The frame-shop owner, who likes Dorian so much that he is willing to do any favor for him.

**Francis:** Dorian's new valet, after Victor leaves.

**Alan Campbell:** A scientist and old friend of Dorian's who has vowed never to associate with him again.

**Lady Narborough:** A widowed lady who has an affection for Dorian.



**Adrian Singleton:** A man whom Dorian is said to have ruined and led into a life of despair.

**The Duchess of Monmouth (Gladys) :** A guest of Dorian's at the Selby Royal; a beautiful woman married to a sixty year old man.

**Geoffrey Clouston:** Gladys' brother who shoots not only a hare, but a man as well.

**Hetty:** The girl that Dorian spares when he decides to be good.



## Objects/Places

**The Painting:** Basil's masterpiece depicting Dorian; at Dorian's wish, it becomes a mirror into his soul, and eventually his soul himself.

**The book:** A gift from Lord Henry to Dorian containing a psychological study of a young Parisian who follows a Hedonistic life; greatly influences Dorian over the years, though Lord Henry will deny that a book can have influence.

**The knife:** Dorian uses this knife to kill both Basil and his portrait.

# Quotes

Quote 1: "But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face." Chapter 1, pg. 3

Quote 2: "The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play." Chapter 1, pg. 4

Quote 3: "The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul." Chapter 1, pg. 6

Quote 4: "I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself." Chapter 1, pg. 7

Quote 5: "An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them." Chapter 1, pg. 12

Quote 6: "Some day you will look at your friend, and he will seem to you to be a little out of drawing, or you won't like his tone of colour, or something." Chapter 1, pg. 13

Quote 7: "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful." Chapter 2, pg. 21

Quote 8: "You are a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know, just as you know less than you want to know." Chapter 2, pg. 23

Quote 9: "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. . . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that-for that-I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" Chapter 2, pg. 29

Quote 10: "Yes; he would try to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait. He would seek to dominate him-had already, indeed, half done so. He would make that wonderful spirit his own. There was something fascinating in this son of Love and Death." Chapter 3, pg. 41

Quote 11: "Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin. If the cave-man had known how to laugh, History would have been different." Chapter 3, pg. 46

Quote 12: "My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals." Chapter 4, pg. 53



Quote 13: "You know how a voice can stir one. Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget." Chapter 4, pg. 57

Quote 14: "You, who know all the secrets of life, tell me how to charm Sibyl Vane to love me! I want to make Romeo jealous, I want the dead lovers of the world to hear our laughter, and grow sad. I want a breath of our passion to stir their dust into consciousness, to wake their ashes into pain. My God, Harry, how I worship her!" Chapter 4, pp. 61-62

Quote 15: "His sudden mad love for Sibyl Vane was a psychological phenomenon of no small interest. There was no doubt that curiosity had much to do with it, curiosity and the desire for new experiences; yet it was not a simple but rather a very complex passion." Chapter 4, pg. 66

Quote 16: "Thin-lipped Wisdom spoke at her from the worn chair, hinted at prudence, quoted from that book of cowardice whose author apes the name of common sense. She did not listen. She was free in her prison of passion. Her prince, Prince Charming, was with her. She had called on Memory to remake him. She had sent her soul to search for him, and it had brought him back. His kiss burned again upon her mouth. Her eyelids were warm with his breath." Chapter 5, pg. 69

Quote 17: "Oh! How I shall play it! Fancy, Jim, to be in love and play Juliet! To have him sitting there! To play for his delight I am afraid I may frighten the company, frighten or enthrall them. To be in love is to surpass oneself." Chapter 5, pg. 76

Quote 18: "I wish I had, for as sure as there is a God in heaven, if he ever does you any wrong, I shall kill him." Chapter 5, pg. 78

Quote 19: "I hope that Dorian Gray will make this woman his wife, passionately adore her for six months, and then suddenly become fascinated by someone else. He would be a wonderful study." Chapter 6, pg. 84

Quote 20: "I love Sibyl Vane. I want to place her on a pedestal of gold, and to see the world worship the woman who is mine. What is marriage? An irrevocable vow. You mock at it for that. Ah! Don't mock. It is an irrevocable vow that I want to take." Chapter 6, pg. 87

Quote 21: "She spiritualizes them, and one feels that they are of the same flesh and blood as one's self." Chapter 7, pg. 92

Quote 22: "If this girl can give a soul to those who have lived without one, if she can create the sense of beauty in people whose lives have been sordid and ugly, if she can strip them of their selfishness and lend them tears for sorrows that are not their own, she is worthy of all your adoration, worthy of the adoration of the world. This marriage is quite right. I did not think so at first, but I admit it now. The gods made Sibyl Vane for you. Without her you are incomplete." Chapter 7, pg. 92

Quote 23: "It is not good for one's morals to see bad acting. Besides, I don't suppose you will want your wife to act. So what does it matter if she plays Juliet like a wooden doll? She is very lovely, and if she knows as little about life as she does about acting, she will be a delightful experience." Chapter 7, pg. 95

Quote 24: "You have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect. I loved you because you were marvellous, because you had genius and intellect, because you realised the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid." Chapter 7, pg. 98

Quote 25: "The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing." Chapter 7, pg. 102

Quote 26: "His unreal and selfish love would yield to some higher influence, would be transformed into some nobler passion, and the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him would be a guide to him through life, would be to him what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all. There were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep. But here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls." Chapter 8, pg. 108

Quote 27: "I know what conscience is, to begin with. It is not what you told me it was. It is the divinest thing in us. Don't sneer at it, Harry, any more-at least not before me. I want to be good. I can't bear the idea of my soul being hideous." Chapter 8, pg. 109

Quote 28: "But you must think of that lonely death in the tawdry dressing-room simply as a strange lurid fragment from some Jacobean tragedy, as a wonderful scene from Webster, or Ford, or Cyril Tourneur. The girl ever really lived, and so she has never really died." Chapter 8, pg. 116

Quote 29: "For there would be a real pleasure in watching it. He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul." Chapter 8, pg. 120

Quote 30: "You look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and affectionate then. You were the most unspoiled creature in the whole world. Now, I don't know what had come over you. You talk as if you had no heart, no pity in you. It is all Harry's influence, I see that." Chapter 9, pg. 122

Quote 31: "Yes, there was to be, as Lord Henry had prophesied, a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save from that harsh, uncomely puritanism that is having, in our own day, its curious revival." Chapter 11, pg. 147

Quote 32: "There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realise his conception of the beautiful." Chapter 11, pg. 165

Quote 33: "I keep a diary of my life from day to day, and it never leaves the room in which it is written. I shall show it to you if you come with me." Chapter 12, pg. 174

Quote 34: "What is it that one was taught to say in one's boyhood? 'Lead us not into temptation. Forgive us our sins. Wash away our iniquities.' Let us say that together. The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also. I worshipped you too much. I am punished for it. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished." Chapter 13, pg. 178

Quote 35: "Innocent blood had been split. What could atone for that? Ah! for that there was no atonement; but though forgiveness was impossible, forgetfulness was possible still, and he was determined to forget, to stamp the thing out, to crush it as one would crush the adder that had stung one." Chapter 16, pg. 210

Quote 36: "Difference of object does not alter singleness of passion. It merely intensifies it. We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible." Chapter 17, pg. 223

Quote 37: "Now if Geoffrey had done the thing on purpose, how interesting he would be! I should like to know someone who had committed a real murder." Chapter 18, pg. 233

Quote 38: "'what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose'-how does the quotation run?-'his own soul'?" Chapter 19, pg. 244

Quote 39: "There was purification in punishment. Not 'Forgive us our sins,' but 'Smite us for our iniquities' should be the prayer of a man to a most just God." Chapter 20, pg. 250

Quote 40: "It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it." Chapter 20, pg. 253

# Topic Tracking: Beauty

## Chapter 1

Beauty 1: Basil and Lord Henry's discussion reveals their beliefs about beauty: Lord Henry finds that it is the most important thing, whereas Basil, although he appreciates Dorian's beauty, finds that he would not want to be beautiful himself. One has to pay for being beautiful, or even intelligent; he says that the ugly and stupid people have it the best in the world.

## Chapter 2

Beauty 2: The first time we hear of someone being forgiven for acting badly because they are beautiful is when Lord Henry assures Dorian that his Aunt Agatha could not possibly stay mad at him, because she is so enamored with his beauty. It is impossible to see evil in a beautiful face. Lord Henry's first impression of him is that he looks so good, and so pure, that he isn't surprised that Basil has such an affection for Dorian.

Beauty 3: Lord Henry is the first to impress upon Dorian the idea that his beauty is what will get him things in life, and the idea that his beauty will also fade with age. He issues a warning to Dorian that he had better live out his dreams now, when he is young, beautiful, and can do no wrong in the eyes of the world. Dorian is not quite aware of the effect his looks have on the people around him, but Lord Henry tells him that someday he will be ugly, and he will understand what Lord Henry is talking about.

Beauty 4: Dorian awakens to the reality of his own beauty for the first time when he sees Basil's portrait of him, and at the same instant is struck by what Lord Henry has told him. He is beautiful now, but when he ages he will no longer be beautiful. He realizes how important beauty is, and that he would be willing to give anything to keep it. Though he had previously been unaware of his beauty, he realizes it now as the most important thing he possesses. Beauty is more important, in fact, than his soul.

## Chapter 7

Beauty 5: Beauty and character are directly connected for the first time when Dorian sees the changes in the portrait; previously the effects of age on a beautiful face have been discussed, as has the effect that beauty has on one's perceived character, but here we see that Dorian's actions have made the portrait appear a little cruel, and a little less beautiful. Wilde refers to the painting as a mirror, for it shows Dorian's face as it has been affected by his character.

## Chapter 8

Beauty 6: We see a bit more into Dorian's vanity here: his chief motivation for becoming good, for doing the right thing, is his beauty. The choice of words is important; he



doesn't say that he doesn't want his soul to be evil, or corrupt, he says he does not want it to be *hideous*. The thing he is most afraid of is that people will see that he is evil.

## Chapter 10

Beauty 7: Dorian decides to hide the portrait so no one will see that it has changed; he is clearly subscribing to Lord Henry's view that beauty and youth are the most important things, because even though he has resolved not to commit any more sins, he knows that the portrait will be ruined by age anyway. A good character cannot make a beautiful face; only youth can, and he has made his choice to keep his youth no matter what.

## Chapter 11

Beauty 8: The way that society judges Dorian is not based on his character but on his looks; good looks can create a perceived good character, and that is as far as most people think to look. In spite of the rumors being passed about, whenever Dorian meets someone face to face, they cannot help but love him.

Beauty 9: We discover that goodness and beauty are not necessarily linked; quite the opposite. Dorian comes to think of evil in terms of how beautiful it is, and over the years commits evil simply for the poetic beauty of doing so. He believes, and this is mainly due to Lord Henry's preaching about hedonism, that doing things simply for the sake of adding pleasure to his life also adds an element of beauty.

## Chapter 16

Beauty 10: Beauty has let Dorian down. He needs to escape from it and acquire something that no expensive jewel or piece of art can give him, which is reality. This is one reason why he goes to the opium den; there is an ugliness there that far surpasses anything he might find in high society; the beauty in high society is false, whereas the ugliness that takes place in the opium dens, where people are desperate and their lives have been ruined, is completely real.

## Chapter 20

Beauty 11: Looking back on his life, Dorian sees that Lord Henry was wrong about beauty; it is not the most important thing, and had he not awakened to his beauty that one afternoon in Basil's studio, he might not have gone down the path of ruin that he did. Youth and beauty are overrated, and he wishes that he could have had a good life rather than one filled with artificial art and beauty. He acknowledges that it was due to his own vain prayer that the portrait bear the burden of age and sin, and deeply regrets having made such a wish. There is no way to undo the effects of age on a beautiful face, just as there is no way to undo the effects of sin on a soul, and Dorian now realizes that the latter is the more important.



# Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul

## Chapter 1

Conscience/Soul 1: Basil believes that the way people could see his soul would not be to look at him, but rather to look at his best work, the painting of Dorian. He put all of himself into it, and fears that a person could look at the painting and know everything about him.

## Chapter 7

Conscience/Soul 2: Dorian, as well as Basil, believes that this painting holds the secret to their respective souls, and neither wants the picture to be seen. Dorian is afraid even to look at it himself, for he does not like what he sees; he has made a mistake, and as a result his "soul" has gotten uglier. He can look at the painting to judge what kind of person he is, and he does not want to see that much.

## Chapter 8

Conscience/Soul 3: Dorian decides to use the painting as his conscience; since it tells him how good or bad his soul is, he will be able to look at it as a reminder that he should be good. Without the painting as a reminder that he has done wrong, he might not have decided to go back to Sibyl. Seeing a reflection of his soul, however, has prompted him to do the right thing and marry Sibyl regardless of the pain she has put him through; he cannot bear the idea that his soul is ugly.

Conscience/Soul 4: Dorian's plans to be good have been ruined; he cannot marry Sibyl, and it is apparent that the painting knew this before he did. He has an opportunity to take this as a blessing in his life, and relish the youth and beauty that he has been given indefinitely. He realizes that he can do whatever he wants and he will still be beautiful; he can ignore the conscience and watch the corruption of his soul as it happens. This will afford him a sort of pleasure, knowing that everyone around him will grow old and he will not; his soul may suffer, but his outward appearance will not.

## Chapter 12

Conscience/Soul 5: Basil is under the impression that evil is always evident on a person's face, and thus cannot believe that Dorian is evil. He is too innocent-looking to be evil. He is right, in a way, that evil always shows; in this case, however, Dorian's soul has been transferred to the painting. Looking at the painting, one would know instantly that the subject is evil.

Conscience/Soul 6: Basil has seen Dorian's soul in the painting, and begs Dorian to turn back and be good again. Dorian does not know where his hatred for Basil comes from in the next instant. We can see that Basil is acting as Dorian's conscience in this scene; Dorian is used to being able to cover his conscience with a curtain and hide it, and



when it suddenly has a voice, the urge to silence it, just as he has been able to silence the portrait, takes over.

## **Chapter 19**

Conscience/Soul 7: Lord Henry's offhand comment about losing one's soul affects Dorian deeply; at the outset of this adventure, Dorian had previously thought that the soul does not matter, as long as one has pleasure. But now he realizes that it has profited him very little to gain all of the material wealth and hedonistic pleasure of the world, at the expense of having an ugly and evil soul. He feels very strongly about this and tells Lord Henry that the soul is not something to be taken lightly. He wishes he had treated it with more reverence when he was truly young and when his soul was still pure.

Conscience/Soul 8: Just as he destroyed Basil when he was acting as his conscience, Dorian is filled with rage at the painting for ruining his life. There is a strong parallel between Dorian's murder of Basil and his murder of the portrait; he kills the art and the artist, and in doing so kills himself. Basil put his soul into the painting, as he told Lord Henry in the first scene, and because the painting became Dorian's soul, Basil, the painting and Dorian were inextricably linked. There is no way to destroy the painting without destroying Dorian as well.



# Topic Tracking: Hedonism

## Chapter 2

Hedonism 1: Lord Henry stirs the first seeds of Dorian's awakening by telling him about the philosophy of Hedonism; he opens Dorian's eyes to a world where the only good thing to do is seek out pleasure, not morality, and do whatever feels good. He tells Dorian that this is what the world needs. He believes that if everyone were to follow pleasure instead of what society tells him is moral, then the world would be happier, richer, and more ideal.

Hedonism 2: Speaking about Dorian's beauty and youth, Lord Henry cautions him not to take it for granted and to use it to live life to the fullest, because one day it will be gone and he will not be able to have the same pleasures that he can have today.

## Chapter 6

Hedonism 3: Lord Henry is following his own Hedonistic beliefs when he tells Basil that he hopes Dorian will marry Sibyl and six months later find someone else. He finds studying Dorian immensely pleasurable, and though it is not the moral thing to do to lead a young person down a path of passion and destruction, it amuses him, and therefore, by his philosophy, it is good. He assures Basil that Dorian's life will not be spoiled by following Lord Henry's advice; the only way his life could be spoiled would be to listen to Basil's advice and remain sheltered all his life.

## Chapter 8

Hedonism 4: Upon the realization that he cannot do what is socially thought of as good, Dorian becomes fascinated with all that he could do that could be pleasurable. Now that he does not have to worry about growing old, he can have the pleasures of the flesh for as long as he wants; and it will be an added Hedonistic pleasure to watch his soul grow ugly because of all that he can do, knowing that the world will never see him as ugly.

## Chapter 11

Hedonism 5: Dorian begins to take on Lord Henry's mannerisms and believe in his philosophies on life, speaking on the importance of a new Hedonism in society. Puritanism has taken over, and the world needs people who go in search of pleasure. He is spurred on by this idea to search out the finest of the pleasures, material objects, and experiences he can find.



# Topic Tracking: Influence

## Chapter 1

Influence 1: Basil knew instinctively, at first glance, that Dorian would have a profound influence on his life; he could not have possibly known the extent of this influence. Not only does Dorian's soul affect all of the works of art he paints after meeting him, he also will eventually "absorb" all of Basil himself—quite literally, in fact, as he has Basil's body burnt completely after killing him to leave no trace behind.

Influence 2: Basil knows Lord Henry well enough to know that he tells people things that can give them bad ideas; he warns Lord Henry not to influence Dorian because he knows that were Lord Henry to try, Dorian would be ruined. Basil, it seems, has the most foresight of the characters in this book; without knowing it, he has predicted what is to happen to both himself and to Dorian.

## Chapter 2

Influence 3: Dorian compares his friendship with Basil with his new friendship with Lord Henry. Basil has never influenced him in a noticeable way; he is the same person with or without Basil's friendship. Lord Henry, on the other hand, has already begun to give him new ideas and feelings; he knows that Lord Henry's influence on him will be profound. He also acknowledges, however, that Lord Henry is merely stirring thoughts that were already somewhere inside him.

## Chapter 3

Influence 4: Despite Basil's plea not to change Dorian, Lord Henry makes it his new goal to have a great influence over Dorian's life. He sees him as a psychological case, as a puppet whom he can control.

## Chapter 4

Influence 5: Dorian feels indebted to Lord Henry; he caused him to go in search of pleasure and new sensations, which brought him to Sibyl, so Dorian feels like he owes Lord Henry at least the assurance that he will always tell him everything. The two have a master-puppet relationship; Dorian would not have had the desire to search out pleasure if it were not for Lord Henry; and with Lord Henry controlling the strings, Dorian feels like there is nothing he can hide from him.

## Chapter 9

Influence 6: Just as he knew at the very beginning, Basil knows that whatever evil is at work inside Dorian is due in no small part to Lord Henry's influence. Basil is correct to be confused by Dorian's looks; they betray no hint of evil, and yet he seems to be completely over the fact that his fiancée took her own life the night before. These two things do not go together, and Basil recognizes that Dorian is looking at the tragedy with

the same emotional passivity with which Lord Henry carries out his own life. Basil refuses to believe that these ideas were in Dorian before Lord Henry came along, because that would spoil his vision of Dorian as the beautiful innocent.

# Chapter 1

In Basil Hallward's studio in London, Lord Henry Wotton admires the artist's nearly finished new painting, the subject of which is an extremely beautiful young man, and urges Basil to exhibit it at the Grovesnor. (The Grovesnor is smaller and less vulgar than the other commonly used gallery, the Academy.) Basil, however, does not want to exhibit the portrait because he has put too much of himself in it. Lord Henry thinks this idea is preposterous, considering Basil has very little beauty about him: "But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face." Chapter 1, pg. 3 Basil maintains that he does not mean that he himself is beautiful, and furthermore would not want to be so: "The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit at their ease and gape at the play." Chapter 1, pg. 4 Basil inadvertently tells Lord Henry the subject's name--Dorian Gray--and then explains that he wanted to keep his name a secret, because things are more wonderful when they are kept secret. Lord Henry agrees; he keeps everything secret from his wife.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 1

Lord Henry asks again Basil's reason for not exhibiting the painting, and Basil tells him: "The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul." Chapter 1, pg. 6

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 1

He tells Lord Henry the story of how he met Dorian. He was at a party hosted by Lady Brandon, and he noticed Dorian and had this impression: "I knew that I had come face to face with someone whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. Chapter 1, pg. 7

Topic Tracking: Influence 1

Being independent by nature, Basil tried to escape the party but Lady Brandon captured him and introduced him to several people, and then Basil asked to be introduced to Dorian, and introduction which Basil now considers inevitable. Basil explains that seeing Dorian Gray every day makes him extremely happy, and that Dorian's presence has taken Basil's art to an entirely new level. Lord Henry insists that he must meet this young man, but Basil explains that Dorian does not know of this influence he has, the fact that his presence has so dramatically influenced Basil's soul, and he does not want him to know. Lord Henry maintains that poets show the deepest parts of their souls all the time in their art, but Basil considers this to be poor taste. "An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them." Chapter 1, pg. 12 Lord Henry asks Basil how Dorian feels about him, and Basil replies that although Dorian can be thoughtless sometimes, he clearly likes Basil; Lord Henry tells Basil that eventually, the romance in their relationship will fade: "Someday you will look at your friend, and he

will seem to you to be a little out of drawing, or you won't like his tone of colour, or something. Chapter 1, pg. 13 Basil says that this will never happen.

Lord Henry thinks how glad he is that he stayed longer and didn't get to his aunt's place on time, where he would have had to sit through endless hypocritical conversations about how good it is to work, and to be thrifty, spoken by rich people who do not work and have no need of thrift. He suddenly remembers and tells Basil that the first time he heard Dorian's name mentioned was in the company of his Aunt Agatha, who was very fond of the young man. Basil expresses that he is glad Lord Henry did not meet Dorian at his aunt's house; he does not want them to meet at all. The butler announces that Dorian Gray is in the parlor, and Lord Henry demands that they be introduced. Basil makes Lord Henry promise not to be a bad influence on Dorian.

Topic Tracking: Influence 2

## Chapter 2

Basil and Lord Henry enter the studio and find Dorian Gray. He tells Basil he does not want to sit for the painting today, but then he notices Lord Henry, Basil introduces them, and they talk about Aunt Agatha. Dorian forgot to meet her when he was supposed to last week, and is afraid that she is upset with him, but Lord Henry promises that she couldn't be mad at him.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 2

Basil asks Lord Henry to go away so that he can paint, but at Dorian's insistence, he allows him to stay. Although he has another engagement this afternoon, Lord Henry consents to stay. Basil warns Dorian that Lord Henry is a bad influence, and starts to paint, completely tuning out the conversation. Lord Henry says that all influence is bad because one's duty is to oneself, not to the ideas and beliefs of someone else. Dorian listens while Henry talks about his philosophies on life: "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful." Chapter 2, pg. 21

Topic Tracking: Hedonism 1

All at once, Dorian tells him to be quiet for a while so he can process what he has been hearing. He thinks about how clear things have become; he knows much more now than he did earlier, but is curious about so many things. He tells Basil, after ten minutes or so, that he wants to go out in the garden. Lord Henry goes with him; Basil, oblivious to what Lord Henry has been saying and very pleased with his painting, stays to paint the background.

In the garden, Dorian stops to smell some of the flowers, and Lord Henry comments that "You are a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know, just as you know less than you want to know." Chapter 2, pg. 23 One reason Dorian thinks he likes Lord Henry so much is that their conversation has produced a change in him; his friendship with Basil had never changed him this way.

Topic Tracking: Influence 3

They begin to speak about beauty; Lord Henry says that Dorian should take full advantage of his beauty now, because later in life he will have lost it. Youth is the most important thing in the world.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 3

Topic Tracking: Hedonism 2

Basil comes out and tells them to come inside the studio again. On the way in, Lord Henry says that Dorian is glad to have met him; Dorian says he is, for now, though he

cannot say that he will always be so. Basil finishes the portrait in fifteen minutes and Lord Henry and Dorian look at it; Lord Henry exclaims how wonderful it is, and Dorian seems, upon the sight of the painting, to fully realize his beauty for the first time. He thinks about the truth of Lord Henry's words. After quite a while, he says: "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June. . . . If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that--for that--I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" Chapter 2, pg. 29 He turns on Basil and says that when he loses his beauty, Basil will forget about him. He asks Basil why he had to paint it, this beautiful painting that will mock him someday.

#### Topic Tracking: Beauty 4

Basil says that this outrage is Lord Henry's fault, for staying, but Lord Henry says that can't possibly be true. In order to prove that he cares for Dorian more than the painting, Basil goes to get a knife to tear it up, but Dorian stops him and says that he must have the painting. Lord Henry says that Basil should give it to him instead, but Basil says that it always belonged to Dorian. Henry proposes going to the theatre tonight, and Dorian says he would love to go, but Basil says he will stay with the "real" Dorian, referring to the painting. On their way out, Basil tells Lord Henry again that he trusts him.



## Chapter 3

Henry goes to see his uncle, Lord Fermor, a rich old gentleman whose father was an ambassador to Madrid, with the intention of finding out information about Dorian, since Lord Fermor knows everyone. Dorian is the grandson of Lord Kelso and the son of Lady Margaret Devereux; Lord Fermor tells Henry that although Margaret was extraordinarily beautiful and had money, she married a poor man. Lord Kelso then paid a man to get into a fight with her new husband, who lost the duel and died. Margaret never spoke to her father again, and died shortly thereafter.

Lord Fermor then asks about Dartmoor marrying an American girl; Lord Henry says that this is fashionable right now, but his uncle thinks that men should stick to English girls. Henry tells Lord Fermor that he must go to Aunt Agatha's for lunch with Dorian, and says goodbye.

Leaving his uncle's house, Lord Henry thinks about how Dorian is even more beautiful because of the tragedy surrounding his life. He articulates his plan in his mind: "Yes; he would try to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait. He would seek to dominate him--had already, indeed, half done so. He would make that wonderful spirit his own. There was something fascinating in this son of Love and Death." Chapter 3, pg. 41

### Topic Tracking: Influence 4

Entering his aunt's dining room and greeting his aunt, Henry sees Dorian, the Duchess of Harley, Sir Thomas Burdon, Mr. Erskine of Treadley, Mrs. Vandeleur, and Lord Faudel. They are in the middle of a conversation about Dartmoor; Aunt Agatha is expressing her indignation that such a marriage would occur, Sir Burdon tries to defend America, and Lord Henry makes fun of the situation by insulting America. Lady Agatha, confused by the conversation, changes the subject to Dorian; she wants him to play to the unhappy poor people in the East End, but Lord Henry would rather he play to him. He says that although the East End is a problem, he does not desire to change anything. He says, "Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world's original sin. If the cave-man had known how to laugh, History would have been different." Chapter 3, pp. 45-46 The subject is again changed to youth; the Duchess remarks that she would like to go back to her youth, and Lord Henry assures her that all she needs to do is commit the mistakes of her youth again. He goes on for quite some time about this subject, delighting and fascinating his listeners, after which the Duchess leaves, asking him to come visit her, as does Mr. Erskine. As Lord Henry is leaving, Dorian asks to go with him, even though he has already promised the evening to Basil. Lord Henry consents.

## Chapter 4

It is one month later. Dorian waits for Lord Henry, who is late; his wife, Victoria, comes in before Lord Henry and introduces herself to Dorian. They talk about music; she likes loud music, so she can talk without anyone hearing her, and he only talks when the music is bad. Lord Henry enters, and Victoria excuses herself. He tells Dorian never to marry a woman with straw-colored hair, because they are too romantic. Dorian tells him his news: he is in love with an actress named Sibyl Vane, and calls her a genius. Lord Henry says, "My dear boy, no woman is a genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals." Chapter 4, pg. 53 Lord Henry says that he has a right to say this because he has been studying women. Dorian regrets telling him about Sibyl, but says that he felt compelled to tell him, since it was due to him that he met her.

Topic Tracking: Influence 5

He explains what happened; he was walking in London one evening and found a dirty little theatre which he decided to enter. Lord Henry laughs at Dorian's calling Sibyl the greatest romance of his life, insisting that there will be more to come. Dorian goes on with the story; he was in a box in a horrible theatre, and found out that they were performing Romeo and Juliet. When Juliet came on stage, he fell in love with her; she is an exquisite and captivating beauty, with a voice that is as mesmerizing as Lord Henry's but in a different way: "You know how a voice can stir one. Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget." Chapter 4, pg. 57

Lord Henry asks about Dorian's relations with Sibyl, and at Dorian's horror (Sibyl is sacred), asks if he even has met her. Dorian tells him that after attending many performances, he went backstage and lavished compliments on her, and she called him her Prince Charming. She comes from a tragic family--her mother is also an actress, playing Lady Capulet, and she lives in a dream world--but Dorian does not want to know her story; he only needs to know *her*. He pleads Lord Henry: "You, who know all the secrets of life, tell me how to charm Sibyl Vane to love me! I want to make Romeo jealous, I want the dead lovers of the world to hear our laughter, and grow sad. I want a breath of our passion to stir their dust into consciousness, to wake their ashes into pain. My God, Harry, how I worship her!" Chapter 4, pg. 61

Dorian proposes that he go to the theatre with Basil and Lord Henry and that they help him to get her away from this theatre and bring her to a proper West End theatre, where she can become successful. Dorian has not seen Basil in a week, because he sometimes says things that are annoying, but Lord Henry says this is Basil's nature; he is an artist who puts everything into his work, so he cannot be very interesting to be around in real life.

Dorian leaves, and Lord Henry thinks to himself what an interesting study Dorian is. Even more so, now that he is in love with Sibyl: "His sudden mad love for Sibyl Vane

was a psychological phenomenon of no small interest. There was no doubt that curiosity had much to do with it, curiosity and the desire for new experiences; yet it was not a simple but rather a very complex passion." Chapter 4, pg. 66 Lord Henry realizes he has been daydreaming when his valet wakes him up for dinner; he goes to dinner, and when he comes back, he finds a telegram from Dorian saying that he is engaged to Sibyl.

## Chapter 5

Sibyl Vane tells her mother, Mrs. Vane, how happy she is now that she has found her Prince Charming. Mrs. Vane says that Sibyl must only think of her acting, since they are still so in debt to Mr. Isaacs, who owns the theatre; Sibyl, carried away with the idea of love, thinks: "She was free in her prison of passion. Her prince, Prince Charming, was with her. She had called on Memory to remake him. She had sent her soul to search for him, and it had brought him back. His kiss burned again upon her mouth. Her eyelids were warm with his breath." Chapter 5, pg. 69 Surely Mrs. Vane must have loved Sibyl's father like this; Mrs. Vane thinks that if this young man is rich, then things might work out, and embraces her daughter. Sibyl's younger brother, James, who is about to leave for Australia, enters. He asks Sibyl to go on a walk with him, since he will not see her for a long time. His mother tells him that he is to make a fortune and then come back to London, but he does not want to see London ever again. Sibyl goes to get ready for the walk. While she is gone, James asks his mother to take care of Sibyl; he has heard that a young man has been visiting her. Mrs. Vane assures him that the man might be rich, but she will watch over Sibyl anyway.

Outside, the passers-by stare at James and Sibyl because he is so clumsy and heavy, and she so refined and beautiful. She talks through her fantasies of what James will find in Australia: love, adventure, treasure. He does not listen to her; instead he thinks about the rumors he has heard about this new man. He tells her this, and she goes on about how wonderful he is, and that he is coming to the theatre tonight: "Oh! How I shall play it! Fancy, Jim, to be in love and play Juliet! To have him sitting there! To play for his delight I am afraid I may frighten the company, frighten or enthrall them. To be in love is to surpass oneself." Chapter 5, pg. 76

He tells her that the man's intentions must be bad, and she tells him that he needs to fall in love so he can understand. While they are sitting down, Dorian Gray passes in a carriage, but she points him out too late for James to see him. He says, "I wish I had [seen him], for as sure as there is a God in heaven, if he ever does you any wrong, I shall kill him." Chapter 5, pg. 78 Sibyl gets mad at him for saying this, and assures him that her Prince Charming will love her forever. James, still filled with jealousy and rage, walks her home, and they say a tearful goodbye. He has dinner with Mrs. Vane, and asks her about his father; she tells him they were not married, and that he was a gentleman who was not free. He tells her he worries about Sibyl's gentleman too. He repeats his vow to kill him if he does her any wrong, which Mrs. Vane understands because of the melodrama of the statement, and he drives away.

## Chapter 6

Basil and Lord Henry meet, and Lord Henry tells Basil about Dorian's engagement. Basil thinks it is awful that Dorian would marry beneath him, but Lord Henry says that it will make Dorian a more interesting study: "I hope that Dorian Gray will make this girl his wife, passionately adore her for six months, and then suddenly become fascinated by someone else. He would be a wonderful study." Chapter 6, pg. 84 Basil doesn't believe that Lord Henry means this, but Lord Henry insists that he does.

Topic Tracking: Hedonism 3

Dorian enters, they sit down for dinner, and he tells them how the engagement came about. He saw Sibyl play Rosalind one night, and afterward he saw her and they suddenly kissed; he told her he loved her, and she said she was unworthy to be his wife. Lord Henry says that the women are usually the ones to bring up marriage, but Dorian says: "I want to place her on a pedestal of gold, and to see the world worship the woman who is mine. What is marriage? An irrevocable vow. You mock at it for that. Ah! don't mock. It is an irrevocable vow that I want to take." Chapter 6, pg. 87

He says that being in love with Sibyl makes him forget all of Lord Henry's theories. Lord Henry philosophizes a bit more: he says that good is following one's own nature, rather than the nature of other people. Being moral has nothing to do with it; pleasure is the highest aim, not morality. Basil says that if one is immoral, one will suffer and be unhappy, but Lord Henry thinks that this is out of date. Dorian says that the greatest pleasure is to love someone. Even though Lord Henry is cynical in his views about women, Dorian likes him very much, and Lord Henry says that Dorian will always like him. The three of them leave for the theatre, and Basil thinks on the way that things have changed forever, that Dorian will never be what he once was to him. He feels much older as he gets to the theatre.

## Chapter 7

The three men arrive at the theatre and take their seats; the house is packed with the lower classes, and Dorian says that Sibyl is such a genius that "She spiritualizes them, and one feels that they are of the same flesh and blood as one's self." Chapter 7, pg. 92 Lord Henry laughs at this, but Basil says he understands. "This marriage is quite right. I did not think so at first, but I admit it now. The gods made Sibyl Vane for you. Without her you are incomplete." Chapter 7, pg. 92 The play starts, and when Sibyl comes out onstage, the others admit how beautiful she is. When she starts to speak, however, she is terrible; her voice is pretty, but she gives no indication of any emotion and she is altogether uninteresting to watch. After the second act, Basil and Lord Henry tell Dorian that they must leave, because the play is so bad. Dorian agrees that she is awful, but Basil tells him not to insult her; his love is more important than her talent. Lord Henry tells him, "It is not good for one's morals to see bad acting. Besides, I don't suppose you will want your wife to act. So what does it matter if she plays Juliet like a wooden doll? She is very lovely, and if she knows as little about life as she does about acting, she will be a delightful experience." Chapter 7, pg. 95

Dorian insists that he must be alone, and the other two leave. After the play, Dorian goes to Sibyl backstage. She is pleased with herself, because she has realized that now that she is truly in love, she has no need of pretending to be in love onstage, and cannot even try to make it real. He is devastated, and tells her that it is over. "I loved you because you were marvelous, because you had genius and intellect, because you realised the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid." Chapter 7, pg. 98 She begs him to reconsider, to stay with her, and promises to try to act again, but he leaves her and goes out into the night, wandering around for a long time.

He returns home at dawn, and glances at the portrait; in the dim light, it seems to have changed. He opens the blinds to get a closer look: "The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing." Chapter 7, pg. 102

Topic Tracking: Beauty 5

He thinks about why this could be, and remembers that day at Basil's studio when he wished that the portrait would age instead of him. Perhaps it has now become his conscience. He feels pity for the painting, for it will become ugly with every sin that he commits.

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 2

He resolves not to sin: he will go back to Sibyl, ask her forgiveness, and have a wonderful moral life with her. He draws a screen over the portrait and makes himself think about her in a loving way again.

## Chapter 8

Dorian's valet, Victor, wakes him up after one in the afternoon. He has some mail, including a letter from Lord Henry which he puts aside and does not read. He notices the portrait covered by a screen and remembers seeing the change in it in the early morning light; he wonders if he was imagining everything. He dreads sending the valet away, knowing he will feel compelled to look at the portrait, but does so. When he sees it, the cruelty in the face is as apparent as it was before; he thinks: "There were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep. But here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls." Chapter 8, pg. 108

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 3

He thinks for a long time, then writes Sibyl a long letter asking for forgiveness. When he finishes, he hears Lord Henry knocking on his door. He decides to let him in.

Lord Henry tells Dorian not to think about what has happened, that it was not his fault. Dorian quite agrees, and tells Lord Henry that he plans to be good from now on: "I know what conscience is, to begin with. It is not what you told me it was. It is the divinest thing in us. Don't sneer at it, Harry, any more--at least not before me. I want to be good. I can't bear the idea of my soul being hideous." Chapter 8, pg. 109 He says that he is going to marry Sibyl.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 6

Lord Henry is surprised; he says that he thought Dorian read his letter--Sibyl is dead. Lord Henry cautions Dorian not to do anything that would connect him to it and asks if anyone knows his name at the theatre. Dorian is stunned and asks for details; Sibyl took poison at the theatre. Lord Henry says that Dorian should not think about it too much, and that he should come with him to the opera that night. Dorian sees that this is quite a dramatic, tragic occurrence, and finds it interesting that tonight he will be going out, and it will be as if none of this happened. He thinks he should feel it more, and asks if Lord Henry thinks he is heartless. Lord Henry says he has done too many foolish things to be heartless. He says the reason that Dorian doesn't feel the tragedy very much is that it happened so artistically that one can only look at it and feel like the spectator at a play; most women drag things out way too long, but Sibyl must have been different to end things so poetically. "But you must think of that lonely death in the tawdry dressing-room simply as a strange lurid fragment from some Jacobean tragedy, as a wonderful scene from Webster, or Ford, or Cyril Tourneur. The girl never really lived, and so she has never really died." Chapter 8, pg. 116 Dorian feels that Lord Henry has explained something he already knew but could not articulate. He says that he will meet Lord Henry at the opera later, and Lord Henry leaves, telling him that this is only the beginning of their friendship.

Alone with the painting, Dorian checks to see if it has changed any more since hearing the news; it has not. It must have known as it happened. He realizes what this means, and thinks briefly about praying again that the picture not change any more; but he decides that he would be foolish to give up eternal youth. "For there would be a real pleasure in watching it. He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul." Chapter 8, pg. 120 Dorian gets ready and goes to the opera.

Topic Tracking: Hedonism 4

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 4



## Chapter 9

Basil comes to visit Dorian and see how he is doing after the tragedy; he heard he went to the opera, which of course could not be true, and has been very worried. Dorian tells him that he did, in fact, go to the opera last night, and had a good time. Basil is horrified that Dorian is not more upset, but Dorian assures him that he was upset for a time but just got over it quickly. Basil tells him, "You look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and affectionate then. You were the most unspoiled creature in the whole world. Now, I don't know what has come over you. You talk as if you have no heart, no pity in you. It is all Harry's influence, I see that." Chapter 9, pg. 122

Topic Tracking: Influence 6

Dorian, speaking a long tirade similar to the ones Lord Henry has spoken to him, tells Basil about Sibyl's death being one of the great tragedies, and scolding him for not being happy when he saw that Dorian is getting on with his life. Basil agrees not to speak about it any more, but asks if anyone around the theatre knew Dorian's name, which he assured him they did not. Basil notices the portrait covered by a screen and goes to take a look at it; Dorian, horrified, stops him and tells him he must not. Basil was hoping to exhibit it in the fall, and Dorian, incredibly fearful and remembering Lord Henry telling him that Basil had a secret about why he had not wanted to exhibit it before, tells Basil that they can exchange their secrets about the painting. Basil goes on in detail about why he had not wanted to exhibit the portrait; he tells Dorian about his influence, that he had come to worship him, but that he sees now it was silly to presume that other people could see that in the painting. Dorian tells him that his confession was not a big deal, and says he did not really have a secret to tell. Basil agrees not to show the portrait, if that is what Dorian wants. He asks Dorian to sit for him again, but Dorian refuses. Basil leaves, and Dorian decides that he must hide the portrait.

## Chapter 10

Dorian asks Victor--after wondering if Victor has ever wanted to take a peek at the painting--to call in the housekeeper, Mrs. Leaf, and to call two men from the frame shop as well. He tells Mrs. Leaf to get him the key for the old schoolroom, which has not been opened in five years since his grandfather was alive; she tells him how dirty it is, but he says he just wants to see it. She gives him the key. Alone with the portrait, he thinks about how ugly the portrait will become. Maybe he should have told Basil so he could have saved him, but it is too late. It is inevitable the evil that will happen.

Victor comes in, saying that the framers are here. Dorian scribbles a note to Lord Henry asking for something to read so as to occupy Victor so he doesn't see where the portrait is going, and Mr. Hubbard, the framer, comes in with his assistant. He asks them to move the heavy portrait to the schoolroom, and as they are doing so, he remembers his childhood in the old schoolroom, where his grandfather had kept him to get rid of him. For a moment he thinks that maybe, if he lives a good life, the portrait will be able to be seen again; but realizes that even if it is not ruined by sin, it will be ruined by age. He thanks the men for their work, leaves the room, and locks it.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 7

He finds that he has a note from Lord Henry, with a book to read and the newspaper as well, and thinks about Victor. He has heard stories about men being blackmailed by servants. He opens the paper and reads the notice of Sibyl's death, marked in red pen. He thinks how ugly this was for Lord Henry to mark the passage. He begins to read the book, a psychological study of a young man in Paris, and becomes so enthralled that he is late for his dinner with Lord Henry. He tells Lord Henry it is his fault for sending the book.

## Chapter 11

Years pass, and Dorian Gray does not lose any of his youth or physical beauty. Rumors circulate about him doing evil things, but when people actually meet him they find it hard to believe that he is anything but a wonderful person.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 8

He periodically looks at the painting, aging and becoming hideous, with a sense of satisfaction that it is aging, and not he. He entertains guests several times each month and becomes quite a large figure in society. He thinks that what Lord Henry told him about a new Hedonism is right: "Yes: there was to be, as Lord Henry had prophesied, a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save it from that harsh, uncomely puritanism that is having, in our own day, its curious revival." Chapter 11, pg. 147

Topic Tracking: Hedonism 5

In keeping with this, Dorian sets about to find new experiences, whole new worlds where freedom of expression and pleasure are all around: he studies perfumes, jewels, music, embroideries, and seeks to collect the most rare and exquisite specimens of all of these. He does this to forget his secret, and spends weeks away from home only to return and stare at the portrait for days on end. He eventually cannot bear to be away from it for too long--for fear someone might see it and find out his secret--and sells the other estates he has in other countries.

He wanders about his house and sees the portraits of his ancestors, and wonders if he got some of his sin and shame from them. He has not forgotten about the book that Lord Henry lent him so long ago; he reads and rereads passages of the book, studying the wonderful evil things contained in it. "There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful." Chapter 11, pg. 165

Topic Tracking: Beauty 9

## Chapter 12

Many years later, when Dorian is thirty-eight years old, he runs into Basil on the street after having not seen him for ages. He is filled with fear and pretends not to recognize Basil, but Basil sees him and catches up with him, saying there is something important he needs to ask. He has been on his way to catch a train to Paris for six months or so, but wanted to find Dorian first, before he left. They go inside Dorian's house, and Basil asks about all of the rumors that have been going around about Dorian's character. There are many people who will not be in the same room as him, and many people who have been apparently corrupted by him and led into a life of sin and shame. Basil doesn't want to believe the rumors, but has to ask Dorian.

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 5

Dorian becomes upset with Basil and asks him how he is to blame for these other people's descent, but Basil goes on. He just wants Dorian to deny everything, because then he would believe him and be quieted. He says that the only way for sure is to see Dorian's soul, which is something only God can do.

Dorian laughs and says that Basil can see his soul tonight. Basil says this is impossible, but Dorian tells him this: "I keep a diary of my life from day to day, and it never leaves the room in which it is written. I shall show it to you if you come with me." Chapter 12, pg. 174 Basil follows him.

## Chapter 13

Dorian and Basil go up into the schoolroom. Basil notices how old and poorly kept the room is. Dorian tells him to pull aside the big curtain covering the painting and to take a look at his soul; Basil is shocked at this, so Dorian opens the curtain himself. Horrified at what has become of the painting, Basil can hardly believe that it is the same one. There is only a trace of Dorian's beauty in it; it is hideous, evil-looking, and old. Dorian reminds Basil of his wish to trade places with the painting. Basil, upon realizing that somehow this has truly happened, begs Dorian to pray for forgiveness, to reform and not to sin again: "The prayer of your pride has been answered. The prayer of your repentance will be answered also. I worshipped you too much. I am punished. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished." Chapter 13, pg. 178 Dorian refuses, and looks at Basil with a new hatred; he finds a knife, walks over to Basil, and stabs him repeatedly, killing him. It happens quickly, and when it is over he listens to several people on the street below. He exits the room, locking it behind him, and sets to find Basil's things so he can burn them. He reasons that there is no cause for alarm; everyone will think Basil is in Paris, and no one will think to question him.

Dorian rings for his new valet, Francis (Victor has gone away to France), and tells him to wake him at nine the next morning. He asks if anyone called while he was away, and Francis tells him that Mr. Hallward was there earlier, but left, saying he would try to find him at the club. Dorian thanks Francis, sends him away, and looks up Alan Campbell in the blue book.

## Chapter 14

Dorian is awakened by Francis after a peaceful dreamless sleep. After a while he remembers what happened last night, and is disgusted by it, feeling almost the same hatred for Basil as he did the moment that he killed him. He has his breakfast as usual, then asks Francis to take a letter to Alan Campbell. Left alone, he reads a book of poetry written in French, but his mind slowly begins to wander back to Alan. They had been good friends for over a year about five years ago; Alan was a scientist. Suddenly, he started seeing less of him, until people were talking about how any time Dorian entered a room, Alan left. Dorian becomes worried: what if he is out of town? What if he does not come?

Dorian's thoughts are interrupted when Francis comes in and announces Alan Campbell. When they are alone, Dorian explains the situation: there is a dead man upstairs, and he needs Alan to get rid of it, burn it, take away all the evidence. At first he says it was suicide, but then confesses it was murder. Alan refuses to do anything to help Dorian, and says that Dorian is mad to think he would do otherwise. Dorian tries everything to appeal to his pity for him, or to the friendship that they once shared, but Alan will not agree. Finally, Dorian passes Alan a piece of paper on it, and once Alan reads it he becomes very pale. He agrees to do what Dorian asks, and sends Francis to gather the proper equipment from Alan's house. When he returns with a big chest of supplies, they take it up to the schoolroom. Dorian goes in first, and sees that the image of him in the painting now has fresh blood dripping from his hands; he covers it quickly with the curtain (this was the first time he had ever forgotten to do so) and leaves the room at Alan's request. Several hours later, Alan comes down, says it is finished, and leaves. Dorian goes to the room; there is no trace of the body left.

## Chapter 15

The same night, Dorian goes to a dinner at Lady Narborough's house. Her guests are boring, and he starts to wish he had not come, when Lord Henry arrives. Dorian still does not have much of an appetite, but participates in the conversation, flirting with Lady Narborough. She asks him about his love life, and they talk about several society women and how many husbands they have had. Lady Narborough tells Dorian, and Lord Henry agrees, that he should get married. They decide to find him an eligible young woman. Aside, Lord Henry asks Dorian how he is; he has seemed out of sorts tonight, although he was perfectly charming last night. He asks Dorian what he did last night, and Dorian says he went walking for a while and got home about half past two. He is defensive about it, and feels fear again because Lord Henry asked the question.

Upon returning home, Dorian takes out Basil's things and burns them, which takes almost an hour. He notices an ebony cabinet, and stares at it for a while before opening it and finding a small Chinese box with a green waxy perfumed paste in it. He smiles, puts the box back when he notices the hour, and gets dressed. He goes to Bond Street and hails a hansom, tells the driver an address, and gives him some extra money when the driver tells him it is too far. The driver agrees, and begins to drive.

## Chapter 16

Dorian rides in the hansom and thinks about where he is going: an opium den. It takes a long time, and he recalls what Lord Henry had said to him so long ago, that the only way to cure the soul was through the senses. "Innocent blood had been split. What could atone for that? Ah! for that there was no atonement; but though forgiveness was impossible, forgetfulness was possible still, and he was determined to forget, to stamp the thing out, to crush it as one would crush the adder that had stung one." Chapter 16, pg. 210

Topic Tracking: Beauty 10

Dorian exits onto the dark street, finds a broken down house, and enters. There are people in various drug-induced states all around him. He finds Adrian Singleton, whom he is said to have ruined, and briefly wishes Adrian weren't here, so he could be anonymous. A woman comes up and tries to talk to him, and he brushes her aside and gives her money. He tells Adrian that he is going to a different place, where the opium is better, and tells Adrian to let him know if he needs anything. As he is leaving, the woman calls him "Prince Charming." A sailor hears this, gets up, and follows him out.

Dorian walks along thinking of his sins and of the life that Adrian now has. As he is about to enter the other opium den, James grabs him. He has been looking to revenge Sibyl's death, trying to find a man by the one thing he knows, that he was called "Prince Charming." He gets out a gun and tells Dorian that he has one minute to atone for what he has done. Thinking quickly, Dorian asks him how long ago his sister was killed; when James says eighteen years, Dorian shows him his face. James sees that Dorian could not be more than twenty years old, apologizes for the mistake, and walks away. The woman from the first place comes up to James in the street and asks why he didn't kill him; James tells her about the mistake, and she tells him that Dorian first came here almost twenty years ago, and that he made a deal with the devil to keep his youth. At these words, James runs back to find Dorian, but he is gone.



## Chapter 17

A week later, at a house party, Dorian is talking to Lord Henry and Gladys, the Duchess of Monmouth. Lord Henry has decided to rename anything with an awful name, and they get onto the subject of what names mean. Lord Henry reminds Dorian that he used to be called Prince Charming, and Dorian quickly tells him not to remind him of that. They talk about love; When Gladys expresses mock sadness when Dorian says he feels like he is always in love with someone else, Lord Henry says, "Difference of object does not alter singleness of passion. It merely intensifies it. We can have in life but one great experience at best, and the secret of life is to reproduce that experience as often as possible." Chapter 17, pg. 223 Dorian says that Lord Henry is right; when prompted to answer whether it makes him happy, he says that he is not looking for happiness, he is looking for pleasure. He leaves to get Gladys a flower, and Lord Henry and Gladys chat some more about her flirtation with Dorian.

They are interrupted by the sound of a fall, and see that Dorian has fainted. He insists that he is alright but would rather not be alone, so he goes down to dinner with everyone. He recalls what made him faint: he saw James looking at him through the window.

## Chapter 18

Dorian stays in the next day, worrying about James coming to kill him. After a while, however, he begins to think it was merely his imagination. He feels a bit better knowing that someone would have seen James, if he had truly been there. He is thrust into another fit of anxiety when he thinks about his imagination having the power to create such awful images. After several days, he finally leaves his house and goes to a shooting party, where he walks along with Geoffrey Clouston, Gladys' brother. They see a hare crossing the path and at the last moment Dorian tells Geoffrey not to shoot it, however it is too late; as the hare runs into a bush, Geoffrey shoots it and hits it, along with a man who had been in the bushes. The man has died, and when Dorian talks with Lord Henry, Lord Henry tells him how awful it was that the beater was there, for now the topic of conversation will be quite tiring. Dorian is convinced that it is an omen, but Lord Henry tells him that there is no such thing. Dorian has a worried look on his face and Lord Henry asks him if he is in trouble, which he says he is not. Gladys comes up, and mentions that she heard that Dorian tried to stop Geoffrey from shooting the hare. He replies that he did, and he is not sure why. Lord Henry says, "Now if Geoffrey had done the thing on purpose, how interesting he would be! I should like to know someone who had committed a real murder." Chapter 18, pg. 233 At this, Dorian becomes faint again, but pretends he has not heard what Lord Henry said. He leaves, and Lord Henry asks Gladys if she is in love with Dorian. She cannot give him a straight answer.

In his room, Dorian cannot shake the feeling he has been having, and decides to pack and go to town. As he is about to leave, his gamekeeper comes to see him; they cannot identify the body of the man who has been shot. Dorian asks the gamekeeper if he is sure the man was not one of his men; he was not. Dorian asks where the body is, and quickly goes to the stable to see the body for himself. When he gets there, the face is covered with a handkerchief. He asks a servant to remove it, and is filled with joy when he sees that it is the body of Sibyl's brother, James.

## Chapter 19

Dorian has just told Lord Henry that from now on, he is going to be good. His first good deed has been to spare a young girl named Hetty; he left her in the country yesterday, without taking her purity. Lord Henry makes fun of this; now the girl will be unsatisfied with any other man, and will be unhappy. Dorian gets mad at Lord Henry for saying this, and ends the subject. Lord Henry brings up Basil; people are talking about his disappearance. Dorian asks what Lord Henry thinks, and Lord Henry doesn't care. If Basil is dead, he does not want to know, and if he's just gone off somewhere, that's his business. Lord Henry mentions his recent divorce from Victoria--she ran off with a man who played the piano. Dorian asks what Lord Henry would say if he said *he* killed Basil. Lord Henry says that he is not capable of murder, that murder is for the lower classes. Lord Henry asks whatever happened to the portrait, and then remembers Dorian telling him it was lost, or stolen. Dorian says it was no great loss; he regretted it being painted in the first place.

Lord Henry asks Dorian, "'what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose'--how does the quotation run?--'his own soul?'" Chapter 19, pg. 244 He heard a street-preacher asking that the other day. Dorian tells him that a soul is a serious thing, that everyone has a soul, and that he is quite sure of that. Lord Henry explains that if he is quite sure, it must be untrue. Lord Henry waxes eloquent about how happy Dorian must be, that he has had the world and is still quite perfect. Dorian tells Lord Henry he is not going to go to the club tonight: he is tired. He also reminds Lord Henry that he poisoned him with a book once, and Lord Henry replies that art cannot influence life. He asks Dorian to go to the park the next day, and Dorian reluctantly agrees.

Topic Tracking: Conscience/Soul 7

## Chapter 20

Dorian walks home, becoming annoyed when a few people on the street whisper his name as he goes by. He thinks about the girl, Hetty, telling him that he could not possibly be wicked because the wicked are old and ugly. He wonders if it is truly possible to change, and longs for his real youth, when he was unstained by sin. He thinks how foolish he was to ask for the portrait to bear his sins: "There was purification in punishment. Not 'Forgive us our sins,' but 'Smite us for our iniquities' should be the prayer of a man to a most just God." Chapter 20, pg. 250 He wishes he had been punished along the way for his sins, because then he would have stopped sinning.

Topic Tracking: Beauty 11

He gets home and looks into the mirror that Lord Henry gave him so long ago; hating his beauty and what it stood for, he smashes the mirror. He thinks about Basil Hallward, and Alan Campbell, who had committed suicide, and James Vane, and is not terribly affected by them; he is good now. Perhaps, he thinks, the portrait has started to go back to the way it was. He takes the lamp and goes upstairs to look at it, expecting to see some of the traces of evil gone.

The portrait has gotten even more ugly and sinful. There is a wicked vain smile on the face, and the hand which started to drip blood after the murder is covered with even more blood. Dorian is shocked at this: has his attempt at being good just been vanity? He realizes that Lord Henry was right: he did this good deed, sparing Hetty, out of vanity, and curiosity. He decides that the painting "had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it." Chapter 20, pg. 253 He takes the knife that he had used to kill Basil, and stabs the picture.

Conscience/Soul 8

Outside a cry is heard, and people passing by whisper about whose house it is. When Francis, the coachman and the footman go upstairs to investigate, having to go through the roof to get into the locked room, they find the portrait of Dorian as it was when it was first painted, showing him in all his youth and beauty, and a man on the floor, stabbed to death. The man is so old, hideous and evil-looking, he is almost unrecognizable as Dorian Gray.