

# Picture of Dorian Grey

## Response paper

The plot revolves around a picture made by the artist Basil Hallward, of a young man he admired and probably even loved, Dorian Grey. In a very emotional moment when the picture is presented to object of the picture and to a friend of the author, Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian, scared of losing his exceptional beauty, makes a wish that his picture version gets old instead of him. Little does he know that his wish has been granted and from that moment on his picture will bear the traces of passage of the time and not him, in exchange for his soul.

The book deals with several topics, e.g. innocence, love, youth, beauty, and with their loss, seduction, responsibility, repentance, vengeance, idleness and moral decay of upper classes. I would like to focus on how Lord Henry manipulates and in a way seduces Dorian.

From the very first moment they meet, Lord Henry flatters Dorian. *"You have not spoilt my pleasure in meeting you."* Dorian is captivated by Lord Henry and his worldview and becomes aware of a change within him *"... entirely fresh influences were at work within him... had touched some secret chord that had never been touched before ... Life suddenly became fiery-coloured to him.... He could help liking the tall, graceful young man..."* Lord Henry finds Dorian fascinating and is surprised by the effect he has on Dorian. *"Had the arrow hit the mark?"* He praises his exceptional beauty, yet at the same time adds that it is not going to last forever. He claims that beauty and youth are the only things worth having. *" You have only a few years in which to live really, perfectly and fully."* So when the picture is presented to Dorian, he for the first time realizes, how beautiful he is but he is reminded of the inevitability of old age. *" He felt as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart."* What was until this moment just a whim for Lord Henry, is becoming a deliberate manipulation, for Dorian has proven to be susceptible. *"Talking to him was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He would make that wonderful spirit his own."* After the death of Sybil Vane, Lord Henry presents Dorian with a book that seals Dorian's downfall. *" For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book."*