



The Picture of Dorian Gray

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Oscar Wilde's only novel, a classic instance of the aestheticism of the 19th century English literature. Dorian is what I would like to be – in other ages, perhaps, said Oscar Wilde describing this novel. Basil Hallward is what I think I am. Lord Henry is what the world thinks I am.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

How sad it is! murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. 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!

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Prizes

The Picture of Dorian Gray was chosen as the book of 2010 for Dublin City's One City, One Book Festival.

About The Author

Oscar Wilde 1854 - 1900, one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. At university he proved himself to be an outstanding classicist, first at Dublin, then at Oxford. He became known for his involvement in the rising philosophy of aestheticism, led by two of his tutors, Walter Pater and John Ruskin. As a spokesman for aestheticism, he tried his hand at various literary activities: he published a book of poems, lectured in the United States of America and Canada on the new English Renaissance in Art, and then returned to London where he worked prolifically as a journalist. Known for his biting wit, flamboyant dress, and glittering conversation, Wilde had become one of the most well-known personalities of his day.

Reviews

“poisonous book” - The Daily Chronicle of June 30, 1890

“wonderful book” - W. B. Yeats, United Ireland of September 26, 1891

Where to Order

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