

Picture Of Dorian Gray (the musical) by: Stephen DeCesare Copyright 2005

Overture. (The opening preface scrolls so that the audience can read it). When curtain opens, you see Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton. In the center of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stands 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. As the painter looks at the picture, he smiles which lingers there for a while. But he suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, places his fingers upon the lids.

Lord Henry:

It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done. You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor.

Basil:

I don't think I shall send it anywhere. (**He tosses his head back in an odd way**) No, I won't send it anywhere.

Lord Henry:

Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion.

Basil:

I know you will laugh at me, but I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it. (**Lord Henry stretches himself out on the divan and laughs**) Yes, I knew you would; but it is quite true, all the same.

Lord Henry:

Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, I didn't know you were so vain; and I really can't see any resemblance between you and this young Adonis whose name you have never told me who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves. He is a Narcissus, and you-- well, of course you have an intellectual expression and all that. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him.

Basil:

You don't understand me, Harry. Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. We suffer for what the gods have given us and I am afraid Dorian Gray will pay for his good looks.

Lord Henry:

Dorian Gray? Is that his name?

Lord Henry, walks across the studio towards Basil Hallward

Basil:

Yes. I didn't intend to tell it to you.

Lord Henry:

But why not?

Basil: I CAN'T EXPLAIN. WHEN I LIKE PEOPLE, I NEVER TELL THEIR NAMES.
IT'S A SILLY HABIT, I DARE SAY,
BUT IT SEEMS TO BRING A GREAT DEAL OF ROMANCE INTO ONE'S LIFE.
I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?

Lord Henry:

Not at all. You seem to forget that I am married, and the one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties.

Basil (strolling toward door that leads to garden):

I believe that you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose.

Lord Henry (laughing):

Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know. (they exit out into the garden and ensconce themselves on a long bamboo seat that stands in the shade of a tall laurel bush)

AND DON'T TRY CHANGING THE SUBJECT;

I WANT THE REAL REASON WHY YOU WON'T EXHIBIT DORIAN GRAY'S PICTURE.

Basil:

I told you the real reason.

Lord Henry:

No, you did not. You said it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish.

Basil (looking at him straight in the face):

THE REASON IS THAT I HAVE SHOWN IN IT THE SECRET OF MY OWN SOUL.

Lord Henry (laughing): AND WHAT IS THAT?

Basil: OH, THERE IS VERY LITTLE TO TELL, AND I'M AFRAID YOU WILL HARDLY UNDERSTAND.

Lord Henry smiles, and leaning down, plucks daisy from the grass and examines it.

Lord Henry (gazing intently at the little golden, white-feathered disk):

I am quite sure I shall understand it, and as for believing things, I can believe anything, provided that it is quite incredible.

Basil: TWO MONTHS AGO I WENT TO A CRUSH AT LADY BRANDON'S.

WE ARTISTS HAVE TO SHOW OURSELVES IN SOCIETY

TO REMIND THE PUBLIC THAT WE ARE NOT SAVAGES.

WHEN I ENTERED THE ROOM, I BECAME AWARE OF SOMEONE LOOKING AT ME.

I TURNED HALF-WAY ROUND AND SAW DORIAN GRAY.

AND WHEN OUR EYES MET I FELT THAT I WAS GROWING PALE.

A FEELING OF TERROR CAME OVER ME. I KNEW THAT I HAD COME FACE TO FACE

WITH SOMEONE WHOSE MERE PERSONALITY WAS SO APPEALING

THAT IF I ALLOWED IT TO DO SO, IT WOULD ABSORB MY WHOLE NATURE,

MY SOUL, MY VERY ART ITSELF. I GREW AFRAID.

BUT WHEN HE SPOKE, ALL MY FEARS MELTED AWAY

AND THEN I KNEW DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART

THAT THIS MAN WOULD NOT ONLY BE A FRIEND

BUT THE MOTIVE THAT'S NEEDED FOR MY ART.

AND NOW I SEE HIM EVERY DAY; I COULD NOT BEAR IT ANY OTHER WAY.

IT MAY BE A FORM OF SOME IDOLATRY, BUT HE IS SO NECESSARY TO ME.

Lord Henry: HOW EXTRAORDINARY!

I THOUGHT YOU WOULD NEVER CARE FOR ANYTHING BUT YOUR ART.

Basil gets up from the seat and walks up and down the garden. After some time he comes back.

Basil:

I don't want you to meet him.

Lord Henry:

You don't want me to meet him?

Basil:

No.

Butler comes into the garden

Butler:

Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir.

Lord Henry (laughing):

You must introduce me now.

The painter turns to his servant.

Basil:

Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker: I shall be a few moments.

The man bows and goes up the walk.

Basil (to Lord Henry speaking very slowly):

Dorian Gray is my dearest friend. He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. Don't take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses: my life as an artist depends on him. Mind, Harry, I trust you.

Lord Henry (smiling and taking Basil by the arm):

What nonsense you talk!

As they enter they see Dorian Gray. He is seated at the piano, with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann's "Forest Scenes."

Dorian:

You must lend me these, Basil. I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming.

Basil:

That entirely depends on how you sit today, Dorian.

Dorian (swinging round on the music-stool in a wilful, petulant manner) :

Oh, I am tired of sitting, and I don't want a life-sized portrait of myself. **(He catches sight of Lord Henry, a faint blush colors his cheeks for a moment, and he starts up).** I beg your pardon, Basil, but I didn't know you had any one with you.

Basil:

This is Lord Henry Wotton, an old Oxford friend of mine. I have just been telling him what a capital sitter you were, and now you have spoiled everything.

Lord Henry (stepping forward and extending his hand):

You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray. Basil has told me so much about you; I felt I had to meet you.

Dorian:

Why do you say that?

Lord Henry:

Because you have the most marvelous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having.

Dorian:

I don't feel that, Lord Henry.

Lord Henry:

NO, YOU DON'T FEEL IT NOW. SOME DAY, WHEN YOU'RE OLD AND UGLY;
WHEN WRINKLES APPEAR ON YOUR FACE: IT'S THEN YOU'LL FEEL IT TERRIBLY.
YES, THE GODS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO YOU.
WHAT THEY GIVE, THEY SOON TAKE AWAY.
YOU HAVE JUST A SHORT TIME TO LIVE FULLY
AND YOU WILL, IF YOU HEED WHAT I SAY:

LIVE! LIVE! LIVE FOR TODAY 'CAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S A TOMORROW.
FEEL! FEEL, ALL YOU CAN FEEL 'CAUSE YOUR FUTURE IS NOTHING BUT SORROW.
BE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR NEW SENSATIONS; THIS IS THE NEW HEDONISM.
LIVE! LIVE MY DEAR BOY. JUST LIVE!

TIME IS JEALOUS OF YOU, AND WARS 'GAINST YOUR ROSES AND LILIES.
YOU'LL BECOME HALLOW-CHEEKED AND DULL-EYED;
YOU WILL SUFFER HORRIBLY. REALIZE YOUR YOUTH WHILE YOU HAVE IT.
DON'T SQUANDER THE GOLD OF YOUR DAYS
GIVING YOUR LIFE TO THE COMMON AND VULGAR.
THIS IS THE FALSE IDEAL OF OUR AGE.

LIVE! LIVE! LIVE ALL YOU CAN. LIVE THE WONDERFUL LIFE THAT IS IN YOU!
FEEL! FEEL! BE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR PASSIONS WILD AND NEW.
THERE IS SUCH LITTLE TIME YOUR YOUTH WILL LAST
AND YOU'LL NEVER GET IT BACK.
LIVE! LIVE, MISTER GRAY! JUST LIVE!

THE JOY THAT BEATS IN US AT TWENTY GETS SLUGGISH AND LAZY.
OUR LIMBS FAIL, OUR SENSES ROT; OUR MINDS START TO FAIL.
WE DEGENERATE INTO HIDEOUS PUPPETS,
HAUNTED BY MEM'RIES OF PASSIONS UNTRIED,
AND THE EXQUISITE TEMPTATIONS
THAT WE HAD NOT THE HEART TO ALLOW.
YOUTH! YOUTH! THERE'S NOTHING IN THE WORLD BUT YOUTH!

LIVE! LIVE! LIVE FOR TODAY
'CAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S A TOMORROW.
FEEL! FEEL, ALL YOU CAN FEEL
'CAUSE YOUR FUTURE IS NOTHING BUT SORROW.
BE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR NEW SENSATIONS; THIS IS THE NEW HEDONISM.
LIVE! LIVE MY DEAR BOY. JUST LIVE!

Dorian (lost in his own thoughts):

I'VE NEVER HEARD THE PRAISE OF FOLLY SO ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED.
I AM AFRAID OF LORD HENRY'S IDEAS
AND ASHAMED OF THESE FEELINGS I NOW POSSESS.
A STRANGER HAS REVEALED MY OWN SECRET THOUGHTS TO ME.
AND NOW I FEAR THE DAY WHEN I'LL EVENTUALLY LOSE MY YOUTH!
MY YOUTH! MY YOUTH! MY YOUTH!

Lord Henry (looking at Dorian):

You are glad you have met me, Mr. Gray?

Dorian:

Yes, I am glad now. I wonder shall I always be glad?

Lord Henry:

Always! That is a dreadful word. It makes me shudder when I hear it. Women are so fond of using it. They spoil every romance by trying to make it last for ever. The only difference between a caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer.

Dorian:

In that case, let our friendship be a caprice.

He flushes at his own boldness

Basil:

It is quite finished.

He stoops down and writes his name in long vermilion letters on the left-hand corner of the canvas. Lord Henry comes over and examines the picture.

Lord Henry:

My dear fellow, I congratulate you most warmly. It is the finest portrait of modern times. Mr. Gray, come over and look at yourself.

The lad started, as if awakened from some dream.

Dorian (stepping down from platform):

Is it really finished?

Basil:

Quite finished. And you have sat splendidly today. I am awfully obliged to you.

Lord Henry:

That is entirely due to me. Isn't it, Mr. Gray?

Dorian makes no answer, but passes listlessly in front of his picture and turns towards it. When he sees it he draws back, and his cheeks flush for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy comes into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. But then he remembers Lord Henry's words and a then comes a mist of tears.

Basil (stung a little by Dorian's silence):

Don't you like it?

Lord Henry:

Of course he likes it. Who wouldn't like it? It is one of the greatest things in modern art. I will give you anything you like to ask for it. I must have it.

Basil:

It is not my property, Harry.

Lord Henry:

Whose property is it?

Basil:

Dorian's, of course.

Lord Henry:

He is a very lucky fellow.

Dorian (his eyes still fixed on potrait):

HOW SAD IT IS! I SHALL GROW OLD AND HORRIBLE.
BUT THIS PICTURE WILL REMAIN ALWAYS YOUNG. IF IT WERE THE OTHER WAY!
IF I COULD BE FOREVER YOUNG, AND THE PICTURE WAS TO GROW OLD!
FOR THAT, I WOULD GIVE EVERYTHING! THERE IS NOTHING THAT I WOULD NOT GIVE!
I WOULD GIVE MY SOUL FOR THAT!

Lord Henry (laughing):

You would hardly care for such an arrangement, Basil. It would be rather hard lines on your work.

Basil:

I should object very strongly.

Dorian (to Basil):

I believe you would. You like your art better than your friends. Hardly as much, I dare say. (**Basil stares in amazement**) How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself.

Basil turns pale and catches his hand.

Basil:

Dorian! Don't talk like that. I have never had such a friend as you, and I shall never have such another. You are not jealous of material things, are you?

Dorian:

I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day--mock me horribly!

The hot tears well into his eyes; he tears his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buries his face in the cushions, as though he is praying.

Basil (bitterly):

This is your doing, Harry.

Lord Henry (shrugging his shoulders):

It is the real Dorian Gray-- that is all.

Basil:

It is not.

Lord Henry:

If it is not, what have I to do with it?

Basil:

You should have gone away when I asked you.

Lord Henry:

I stayed when you asked me.

Basil:

Harry, I can't quarrel with my two best friends at once, but between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it. I will not let it come across our three lives and mar them.

Dorian Gray lifts his head from the pillow, and with pallid face and tear-stained eyes, looks at him as he walks over to the deal painting-table that is set beneath the high curtained window. Basil finds a knife and approaches the painting. With a stifled sob the lad leaps from the couch, and, rushes over to Basil, tears the knife out of his hand, and flings it to the end of the studio.

Dorian:

Don't, Basil, don't! It would be murder!

Basil (coldly):

I am glad you appreciate my work at last, Dorian. I never thought you would.

Dorian:

Appreciate it? I am in love with it. It is part of myself. I feel that.

Lord Henry:

You had much better let me have it, Basil. This silly boy doesn't really want it, and I really do.

Dorian:

If you let any one have it but me, I shall never forgive you! And I don't allow people to call me a silly boy.

Basil:

You know the picture is yours, Dorian. I gave it to you before it existed.

Lord Henry:

And you know you have been a little silly, Mr. Gray, and that you don't really object to being reminded that you are extremely young.

Dorian:

I should have objected very strongly this morning, Lord Henry.

Lord Henry:

Ah! this morning! You have lived since then. (**slight pause**) Why don't we go to the theatre tonight. There is sure to be something on, somewhere.

Dorian:

I should like to come with you, Lord Henry. I feel I must go with you. And you will promise to talk to me all the time? No one talks so wonderfully as you do.

Lord Henry:

Then you shall; and you will come, too, Basil, won't you?

Basil:

I can't, really. I would sooner not. I have a lot of work to do.

Lord Henry:

Well, then, you and I will go alone, Mr. Gray.

Dorian:

I should like that awfully.

The painter bits his lip and walks over to the picture.

Basil (sadly):

I shall stay with the real Dorian.

Dorian (strolling across to Basil):

Is it the real Dorian? Am I really like that?

Basil:

Yes; you are just like that.

Dorian:

How wonderful!

Basil:

Don't go to the theatre tonight, Dorian. Stop and dine with me.

Dorian:

I can't.

Basil:

Why?

Dorian:

Because I have promised Lord Henry I would go with him.

Basil:

He won't like you the better for keeping your promises. He always breaks his own. I beg you not to go. **(Dorian laughs and shakes his head)** I entreat you.

The lad hesitates, and looks over at Lord Henry, who is watching them from the tea-table with an amused smile.

Dorian:

I must go.

Basil:

Very well. It is rather late, and, as you have to dress, you had better lose no time. Good-bye, Harry. Good-bye, Dorian. Come and see me soon. Come tomorrow.

Dorian:

Certainly.

Basil:

You won't forget?

Dorian:

No, of course not.

Basil:

AND...HARRY!

Lord Henry:

Yes?

Basil:

REMEMBER WHAT I ASKED YOU IN THE GARDEN THIS MORNING.

Lord Henry:

I have forgotten it.

Basil:

I trust you.

Lord Henry (laughing):

I wish I could trust myself. Come, Mr. Gray, my hansom is outside, and I can drop you at your own place. Good-bye, Basil. It has been a most interesting afternoon.

As the door closes behind them, the painter flings himself down on a sofa, and a look of pain comes into his face.

Basil:

HE IS ALL ART TO ME NOW AND ALL MY FEARS ABOUT HENRY
HAVE NOW BEEN CONFIRMED.

I KNOW ONCE HE SINKS HIS CLAWS IN HIM, SPOILS HIM, RUINS HIM,
THE INNOCENCE THAT DORIAN HAS WILL DISAPPEAR;
THE MUSE FOR MY ART WILL BE GONE.

I fear for him.

Scene 2

At half-past twelve next day - Lord Fermor's house. When Lord Henry enters the room, he finds his uncle sitting in a rough shooting-coat, smoking a cheroot and grumbling over The Times. All this action takes place Up SR

Lord Fermor:

Well, Harry, what brings you out so early? I thought you dandies never got up till two, and were not visible till five.

Lord Henry:

Pure family affection, I assure you, Uncle George. I want to get something out of you.

Lord Fermor (making a wry face):

Money, I suppose. Well, sit down and tell me all about it. Young people, nowadays, imagine that money is everything.

Lord Henry (settling his button-hole in his coat):

Yes, and when they grow older they know it. But I don't want money. It is only people who pay their bills who want that, and I never pay mine. What I want is information.

Lord Fermor:

Well, I can tell you anything that is in an English Blue Book.

Lord Henry (languidly):

Mr. Dorian Gray does not belong to Blue Books, Uncle George.

Lord Fermor (knitting his bushy white eyebrows):

Mr. Dorian Gray? Who is he?

Lord Henry:

That is what I have come to learn. Or rather, I know who he is. He is the late Lord Kelso's grandson. His mother was a Devereux, Lady Margaret Devereaux. I want you to tell me about his mother. What was she like? Whom did she marry? You have known nearly everybody in your time, so you might have known her. I am very much interested in Mr. Gray at present. I have only just met him.

Lord Fermor:

Kelso's grandson! Kelso's grandson! ... Of course.... I knew his mother intimately.

(All this is acted out in dance pantomime on SL)

SHE WAS A REMARKABLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

A PEARL AMIDST ALL THE SWINE THAT THERE WAS IN THE WORLD.

HOW THE MEN DID ADORE HER AND WOULD THROW THEMSELVES AT HER FEET.

NO ONE COULD CATCH HER EYE. HOW THEY TRIED, BUT THEY ALL MET DEFEAT.

'TIL ONE DAY SHE MET THIS PENNILESS FELLOW,

A SUBALTERN WHO WOULD BRING HER NOTHING BUT SORROW.

HE AMUSED HER, HE SEDUCED HER, THEN GOT HER IN THE FAMILY WAY

AND BEFORE KELSO FOUND OUT, THEY WED, AND LEFT STRAIGHT-AWAY.

KELSO WAS FURIOUS; HIS HEART WAS BROKEN IN TWO.

"HOW COULD SHE DO THIS?!" HE CRIED. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT HE SHOULD DO.

HE THEN DEVISED A CRUEL SCHEME THAT WOULD PLEASE THE DEMONS INSIDE:

HE HIRED A BELGIAN TO SLIT HIS NEW SON-IN-LAW'S HIDE.

(People enter from SL & SR)

WHEN THE RASCAL FOUND THEM THEY WERE BOTH AT A SPA
AND IN FRONT OF EVERYONE THERE
PROCLAIMED THE WIFE WAS KEEPING A TAWDRY AFFAIR.
THE YOUNG MAN WAS INSULTED, HE DARED HIM TO DUEL,
WHICH WAS JUST WHAT THE FIEND HAD IN MIND.

(Fight ensues between Belgian and subaltern. Belgian wins the fight by slitting the throat of the subaltern. Extra people from spa are horrified and quickly leave.)

AND NOW THAT KELSO'S VENGEANCE WAS COMPLETE,
THE BELGIAN WREAKED ONE MORE ATROCITY.

(The Belgian, with lust in his eyes, slowly approaches Margaret, who backs away as he advances – he then rushes upon her and forces her off-stage)

(Enter Kelso with a be-draggled Margaret)

KELSO BROUGHT HIS DAUGHTER BACK WITH HIM,
AND SHE NEVER SPOKE TO ANYONE AGAIN.

(Kelso exits and a nurse brings her a baby wrapped in a blanket)

I HAD HEARD SHE BORE A SON, THEN SHUT HERSELF OUT FROM THE LIGHT OF DAY.
SHE WAS SO FULL OF FEAR, THAT SOON SHE WITHERED AWAY.

(Margaret is alone on stage, singing to her child, almost in a dazed, dreamy state)

Margaret:

GOLDEN SLUMBER KISS YOUR EYES, SMILES AWAIT YOU WHEN YOU RISE.
SLEEP, PRETTY BABY, DO NOT CRY AND I WILL SING A LULLABY.

CARE YOU KNOW NOT, THEREFORE SLEEP, WHILE I O'ER YOU WATCH DO KEEP.
SLEEP, PRETTY DARLING, DO NOT CRY, AND I WILL SING A LULLABY.

(She exits SL)

Lord Fermor:

She could have married anybody she chose. What on earth induced her to behave as she did, I never could understand.

Lord Henry:

Good-bye, Uncle George. Thanks for giving me the information I wanted. I always like to know everything about my new friends, and nothing about my old ones.

Lord Fermor:

Harry, if you happen to see your Aunt Agatha in your travels, tell her not to bother me any more with her charity appeals. I am sick of them. Why, the good woman thinks that I have nothing to do but to write checks for her silly fads.

Lord Henry:

All right, I'll tell her, but it won't have any effect. Philanthropic people lose all sense of humanity. It is their distinguishing characteristic.

Lord Henry steps off a few paces and Lord Fermor's "set" is wheeled off. Lord Henry is now alone on the stage

Lord Henry:

HOW INTRIGUING. HOW ENTHRALLING.
I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH A STORY BEFORE IN MY LIFE.
IT HAS STIRRED ME, THIS MODERN ROMANCE;
A STORY OF HAPPINESS CUT SHORT BY PAIN AND STRIFE.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A PERSON LIKE ME KNOWING THIS
WERE TO EXERT THEIR POW'R ON HIS SOUL?
IT'S A PROSPECT THAT EXCITES ME;
A PERSON LIKE DORIAN FOR ME TO HAVE UNDER CONTROL.

THERE IS SOMETHING MOST ENGAGING IN THE INFLUENCE OVER HIS SPIRIT;
TO PROJECT MY SOUL TO HIS, WOULD MAKE DORIAN GRAY MY PERSONAL PORTRAIT;
JUST TO HEAR MY WORDS ECHOED BACK WITH ALL THE MUSIC AND PASSION OF YOUTH
IS FOR ME MY GREATEST DESIRE.
THE TRUTH, THE PROSPECT SETS MY SOUL AFIRE.

I'LL DOMINATE HIM. CAPTIVATE HIM. I WILL MAKE HIS WONDERFUL SPIRIT MY OWN.
I WILL CHANGE HIM.
REARRANGE HIM TO WORK OF ART THAT THE WORLD'S NEVER KNOWN.
I WILL BE THE POTTER, HE WILL BE THE CLAY.
I WILL MOLD AND REFINE HIM OUT OF THE VULGAR AGE THAT WE ENDURE TODAY;
AN AGE THAT'S CARNAL IN IT'S PLEASURES AND GROSSLY COMMON IN ITS AIMS.
HE WILL BE ITS INSPIRATION AND WILL BRING TO ME ETERNAL FAME.

GRACE AND PURITY ARE HIS. THERE IS NOTHING THAT ONE COULD NOT DO WITH HIM.
HE COULD BE A TITAN OR TOY. WHATEVER I CHOOSE WILL AGREE WITH MY WHIMS.
WHAT A PITY THAT SUCH BEAUTY SUCH AS HIS IS DESTINED TO FADE.
AND POOR BASIL.
WHAT WILL HE DO WHEN THE THEME OF HIS ART SOON WITHERS AND DECAYS?

BUT AS FOR ME, DORIAN GRAY IS NOTHING MORE THAN MATERIALS FOR ART.
HE WILL BE A TRUE CREATION; ONE OF INTELLECT AND NOT FROM THE HEART.
I'LL AWAKEN HIS SOUL; NEW PASSIONS TO HIM, I'LL REVEAL;
ONE'S TO REVEL AND THRIVE IN.
HE'LL KNOW JUST WHAT IT MEANS TO REALLY FEEL.
I'LL BE HIS INSPIRATION, MOTIVATION FOR LIVING LIFE THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.
I WILL TEACH HIM. I'LL INSTRUCT HIM AND HE'LL FOLLOW ME ALL TOO WILLINGLY.

WHAT A JOY ALL THIS WILL BE; IT WILL MAKE ME FEEL JUST LIKE A GOD.
I KNOW NO ONE WILL SUSPECT ME. I KNOW NO ONE WILL SEE THROUGH MY FAÇADE.
I'LL BE EVER SO CHARMING; OFFER MY SOUND ADVICE.
BUT THE TRUE REALIZATION IS TO HAVE MISTER GRAY INDULGE IN EVERY VICE.
I'LL DOMINATE HIM. I'LL CONTROL HIM; HE'LL BE A PRODUCT OF HEDONISTIC DESIGN.
THIS DIVINE SON OF LOVE AND DEATH, I WILL MAKE HIS WONDERFUL SPIRIT MINE.
I WILL MAKE HIS SPIRIT MINE!

After song, he leaves.

Scene 3

One afternoon, a month later, Dorian Gray is reclining in a luxurious armchair, in the little library of Lord Henry's house. It is a very charming room, with its high paneled wainscoting of olive-stained oak, its cream-colored frieze and ceiling of raised plasterwork, and its brickdust felt carpet strewn with silk, long-fringed Persian rugs. On a tiny satinwood table stood a statuette by Clodion. Some large blue china jars and parrot-tulips are ranged on the mantelshelf, and through the small leaded panes of the window stream the apricot-colored light of a summer day in London. Dorian looks rather sulky, as with listless fingers he turns over the pages of an elaborately illustrated edition of Manon Lescaut that he has found in one of the bookcases. The formal monotonous ticking of the Louis Quatorze clock annoys him. At last he hears a step outside, and the door opens.

Dorian:

How late you are, Harry!

Lady Victoria (in a shrill voice):

I am afraid it is not Harry, Mr. Gray.

He glances quickly round and rises to his feet.

Dorian:

I beg your pardon. I thought--

Lady Victoria:

You thought it was my husband. It is only his wife. You must let me introduce myself. I know you quite well by your photographs. I think my husband has got seventeen of them.

Dorian:

Not seventeen, Lady Henry?

Lady Victoria (laughing nervously as she speaks):

Well, eighteen, then. And I saw you with him the other night at the opera.

Dorian:

That was at Lohengrin, I think?

Lady Victoria:

Yes; it was at dear Lohengrin. I like Wagner's music better than anybody's. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without other people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage, don't you think so, Mr. Gray?

The same nervous staccato laugh breaks from her thin lips, and her fingers begin to play with a long tortoise-shell paper-knife. Dorian smiles and shakes his head

Dorian:

I am afraid I don't think so, Lady Henry. I never talk during music--at least, during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it in conversation.

Lady Victoria:

Ah! that is one of Harry's views, isn't it? I always hear Harry's views from his friends. It is the only way I get to know of them. But you must not think I don't like good music. I adore it, but I am afraid of it. It makes me too romantic. **(Enter Lord Henry)** But here is Harry! Harry, I came in to look for you, to ask you something-- I forget what it was--and I found Mr. Gray here. We have had such a pleasant chat about music. We have quite the same ideas. No; I think our ideas are quite different. But he has been most pleasant. I am so glad I've seen him.

Lord Henry (elevating his eyebrows and looking at them with an amused smile):

I am charmed, my love, quite charmed. So sorry I am late, Dorian. I went to look after a piece of old brocade in Wardour Street and had to bargain for hours for it. Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Lady Victoria (breaking silence with her silly laugh):

I am afraid I must be going. I have promised to drive with the duchess. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Good-bye, Harry. You are dining out, I suppose? So am I. Perhaps I shall see you at Lady Thornbury's.

Lord Henry (shutting door behind her):

I dare say, my dear. **(he lights a cigarette and flings himself down on the sofa)** Never marry a woman with straw-colored hair, Dorian.

Dorian:

Why?

Lord Henry:

Because they are so sentimental.

Dorian:

But I like sentimental people.

Lord Henry:

Never marry at all, Dorian. Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious: both are disappointed.

Dorian:

Well then, Harry, you will think me the greatest fool of them all, and do you know what, I don't even care because I am too much in love. That is one of your aphorisms. I am putting it into practice, as I do everything that you say.

Lord Henry (after a pause):

Who are you in love with?

Dorian (blushing):

With an actress.

Lord Henry (shrugging his shoulders):

That is a rather commonplace d but.

Dorian:

You would not say so if you saw her.

Lord Henry:

Who is she?

Dorian:

Her name is Sibyl Vane.

Lord Henry:

Never heard of her.

Dorian:

No one has. People will some day, however. She is a genius.

Lord Henry:

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.

Dorian:

Ah! Harry, your views terrify me.

Lord Henry:

Never mind that. How long have you known her?

Dorian:

About three weeks.

Lord Henry:

And where did you come across her?

Dorian:

I will tell you, Harry, but you mustn't be unsympathetic about it. After all, it never would have happened if I had not met you. You filled me with a wild desire to know everything about life. Well, one evening about seven o'clock, I determined to go out in search of some adventure. I don't know what I expected, but I passed by an absurd little theatre, with great flaring gas-jets and gaudy play-bills and decided to go in.

Set for Theatre scene comes onto stage and Dorian steps out of scene with Lord Henry and “re-enacts” his adventure. A grimy-looking manager offers makes a low bow and offers to take his cloak and hat and seats him at one of the empty tables. As soon as the manager seats Dorian, he goes close to the stage and waits for the bedroom farce to end. (The farce should be the classic a man and woman would be in bed. There's a loud knocking. "By gracious Vesta, it's my husband!" the woman screams. The man dives under the bed but the new arrival is only another of the woman's lovers. They get in bed and there's another knock. That man also dives under the bed and so on until the husband really does arrive. Then after some byplay, one of the lovers crowns him with a chamber pot and everyone runs out of the arena.) The stage laughs and applauds and as soon as it's over, the manager introduces the next act.

Manager (trying to act sophisticated):

Ladies and Gentlemen: we, at the establishment known as the “Dirty Duck” café...(the other patrons start to laugh) (in his usual crude manner) Shut yer gobs you filthy buggers! (they quiet down) Now, as I was saying, we at the “Dirty Duck” café are pleased to announce our next act: A blooming flower amidst the rubble, a rose among the thorns, a...

Patron:

Get on with it you bloody piss-artist.

Manager (to Patron):

Wait 'till I get down there ya blooming wanker cause I'm gonna bat ya round ya ear hole! (to Dorian) Excuse me, my Lord. The “Dirty Duck” is proud to present, the one, the only, Miss Sibyl Vane.

Sibyl enters. She is dressed like a peasant girl from out of a fairy tale book. During her song, she notices Dorian who is enraptured by her.

Sibyl: SWEET BIRD, THY EARLY NOTE IS GAY, IN WOODLAND OR GLADE;
IT TELLS OF FLOW'RS THAT NE'ER DECAY, JOYS THAT NEVER FADE;
THY SONG, SO SWEETLY IT DOTHS FLOAT O'ER LEAFY BANK AND DELL,
IT SEEMS SOME SPIRIT'S MOCKING NOTE FROM ECHO'S SILVER DELL.
OH, BLUEBIRD, HEAR MY PLEA.
WON'T YOU SING YOUR SWEET MELODY THAT STIRS
THE HEART WITHIN ME. AHHHH!

Sibyl goes into the audience but is obviously attracted to Dorian. Dorian sees a girl with a basket full of violets. He pays for a bunch and waits for an opportunity to give them to Sibyl.

Sibyl: SWEET BIRD, I HEAR THY WELCOME CALL, ON YOUR GENTLE WING;
NOW JOYOUS SWELL, NOW GENTLY FALL, SWEET WARBLER OF SPRING!
HOW MANY HOURS I SAT AND HEARD THY TENDER, LOVING LAY,
OH! THOU DIDST SEEM SOME SPIRIT BIRD FROM EDEN LANDS AWAY.
OH, BLUEBIRD, HEAR MY PLEA
WON'T YOU SING YOUR SWEET MELODY THAT STIRS THE HEART WITHIN ME.
AHHHH!

The audience is enraptured and applauds thunderously. When she looks at Dorian, he tosses over the bouquet of violets. She picks them up, smells them and smiles. They look lovingly in each other's eyes. The crowd disperses and the manager notices them looking at each other. He brings Sibyl over to him.

Manager (still trying to act "dignified"):
My Lord, may I present, Miss Sibyl Vane.

Dorian (takes her hand and kisses the back of it):
Miss Vane.

Manager exits

Sibyl (shy and gentle):
Thank you for the flowers. They're lovely.

Dorian:
Not anywhere near as lovely as you.

Sibyl:
Thank you, my Lord.

Dorian:
I assure you, I am nothing of the kind.

Sibyl (simply):
You look more like a prince. I must call you Prince Charming.

Dorian:
I thoroughly enjoyed your performance, Miss Vane. Do you perform here often?

Sibyl:
Every night, my Prince.

Dorian:

Then I will make every effort to make sure I do not miss one note you sing.

Sibyl:

I think I should like that.

Dorian:

Miss Vane, if I may be so bold, when I came here tonight I didn't know what to expect. I never guessed I would be walking into a "stranger's paradise".

Sibyl:

I would hardly call this place a "paradise".

Dorian:

What else could it be?

Sibyl:

For you, my sweet Prince, your castle; And I, your humble handmaiden.

Dorian:

WHEN I FIRST LAID MY EYES ON YOU, I FELT MY HEART SKIP A BEAT.
I KNEW AT ONCE TRUE LOVE WAS REAL. YOU MAKE ME FEEL ALIVE AND COMPLETE.

Sibyl:

THE MOMENT THAT I SAW YOUR FACE, I KNEW THAT YOU WOULD BE THE ONE
TO SHOWER ME IN LOVE'S EMBRACE; MY CHARMING PRINCE, MY LIFE,
MY HEART'S SALVATION.

Dorian:

SAY YOU'LL LOVE ME NOW AND ALWAYS. SAY YOUR HEART IS TRULY MINE.
I WILL LOVE YOU NOW AND ALWAYS. NOW AND 'TILL THE END OF TIME.

Sibyl:

I WILL LOVE YOU NOW AND ALWAYS; EVERYTHING I AM IS YOURS.
THOUGH MY HEART'S ABLAZE, THERE'S ONE THING I KNOW:
EACH DAY I'LL LOVE YOU EVEN MORE.

Dorian:

WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES, I'M LOST IN TIME AND SPACE;
YOUR FACE IS THE ONLY THING I SEE.

Sibyl:

WHEN I'M IN YOUR ARMS, THE WORLD'S A PARADISE;

Both:

THERE'S NO ONE IN THE WORLD BUT YOU AND ME.

Dorian:

SO SAY YOU'LL LOVE ME NOW AND ALWAYS.
SAY THIS DREAM WE'RE IN IS TRUE.

Sibyl:

I WILL LOVE YOU 'TIL THE END OF MY DAYS.

Both:

MY HEART KNOWS NO ONE BUT YOU.

Sibyl turns slightly away (in a "bad acting" kind of manner) and moves a bit away from him.

Dorian:

What's wrong?

Sibyl:

I'm not sure. You may think me silly for saying this, but I'm just a little scared.

Dorian:

Scared? Of what?

Sibyl:

I'm afraid that all of this isn't real? Can you be real? How could someone like you love someone like me? It all seems like something out of a fairy tale.

Dorian:

I'm here. This is no fairy tale. All I know is that you're beauty, your love, your entire being has been etched upon my heart and if someday, someone writes about us, we will be the inspiration for many years to come.

Dorian: LET ME KISS YOUR LIPS. LET ME KISS YOUR EYES.
LET ME LOSE MYSELF WITHIN YOUR LOVE.

Sibyl: WHEN OUR HEARTS DO TOUCH, I FEEL THAT WE CAN FLY

Both: RIGHT THROUGH THE CLOUDS INTO THE SKIES ABOVE.
I WILL LOVE YOU NOW AND ALWAYS. YOU'RE THE ONLY THING I SEE.
LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE A LOVE SONG, NOW THAT I KNOW YOU LOVE ME.
NOW THAT I KNOW YOU LOVE ME.

They kiss. Fade out. Lights fade up on Lord Henry and Dorian is there continuing his conversation.

Dorian:

Sibyl is the only thing I care about. From her little head to her little feet, she is absolutely and entirely divine. Every night of my life I go to see her act, and every night she is more marvelous. Tonight she is Imogen, and tomorrow night she will be Juliet.

Lord Henry:

When is she Sibyl Vane?

Dorian:

Never.

Lord Henry:

I congratulate you.

Dorian:

How horrid you are! She is all the great heroines of the world in one. I tell you she has genius. I love her, and she loves me. 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!

He is walking up and down the room as he speaks. He is terribly excited. Lord Henry watches him with a subtle sense of pleasure.

Lord Henry:

And what do you propose to do?