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OSCAR WILDE THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Isobel Murray

Spellbound before his own portrait, Dorian Gray utters a fateful wish. In exchange for eternal youth he gives his soul, to be corrupted by the malign influence of his mentor, the aesthete and hedonist Lord Henry Wotton. The novel was met with moral outrage by contemporary critics who, dazzled perhaps by Wilde's brilliant style, may have confused the author with his creation, Lord Henry, to whom even Dorian protests, 'You cut life to pieces with your epigrams.'

“ 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! ”

Encouraged by Lord Henry to substitute pleasure for goodness and art for reality, Dorian tries to watch impassively as he brings misery and death to those who love him, but the picture is watching him, and, made hideous by the marks of sin, it confronts Dorian with the reflection of his fall from grace, the silent bearer of what is in effect a devastating moral judgement.

Oxford Classics
ISBN 0-19-283365-0



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OSCAR WILDE

“ 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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