

Reading and speaking

The Picture of Dorian Gray – by Oscar Wilde



1 Read about Oscar Wilde. Answer the questions.

- How many novels did he write?
- What else did he write?
- What is the theme of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
- Was it an immediate success?

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was an Irish writer who became one of London's most popular playwrights in the late 19th century. He wrote just one novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. At first, this was very badly received, but years later, after Wilde's death, it was finally recognized as a great classic. Wilde always defended Dorian Gray, saying that 'the idea of a young man selling his soul in exchange for eternal youth' was 'old in the history of literature'. Over the years, there have been many adaptations for stage and film.

2 Look at the list of characters. The setting is late 19th century London. Guess what happens in the story.

3 4.9 Read and listen to the story for pictures 1–6. Answer the questions.

- 1 Why did Lord Henry want to meet Dorian?
- 2 Why do you think Basil didn't want this?
- 3 How did Lord Henry's words influence Dorian's reaction to the portrait?
- 4 What did Dorian confide to Henry?
- 5 What caused James to be so worried about his sister?
- 6 Why was Dorian so embarrassed?

4 What is your opinion of each of the characters so far?

5 4.10 Read and listen to 7–12. Answer the questions.

- 7 What made Dorian so afraid?
- 8 Why was Henry so shocked at Dorian's words?
- 9 What happened when Basil came to see Dorian?
- 10 How and why did Alan Campbell help Dorian?
- 11 Why didn't James Vane kill Dorian?
- 12 What was the portrait like at the end of the story? Why?

What do you think?

- Which characters were most to blame for the tragedy?
- How can people stay young-looking today? Would you do it?

In your own words

Work with a partner. Use the pictures to retell the story.

Watch a video about how to tell a good story.



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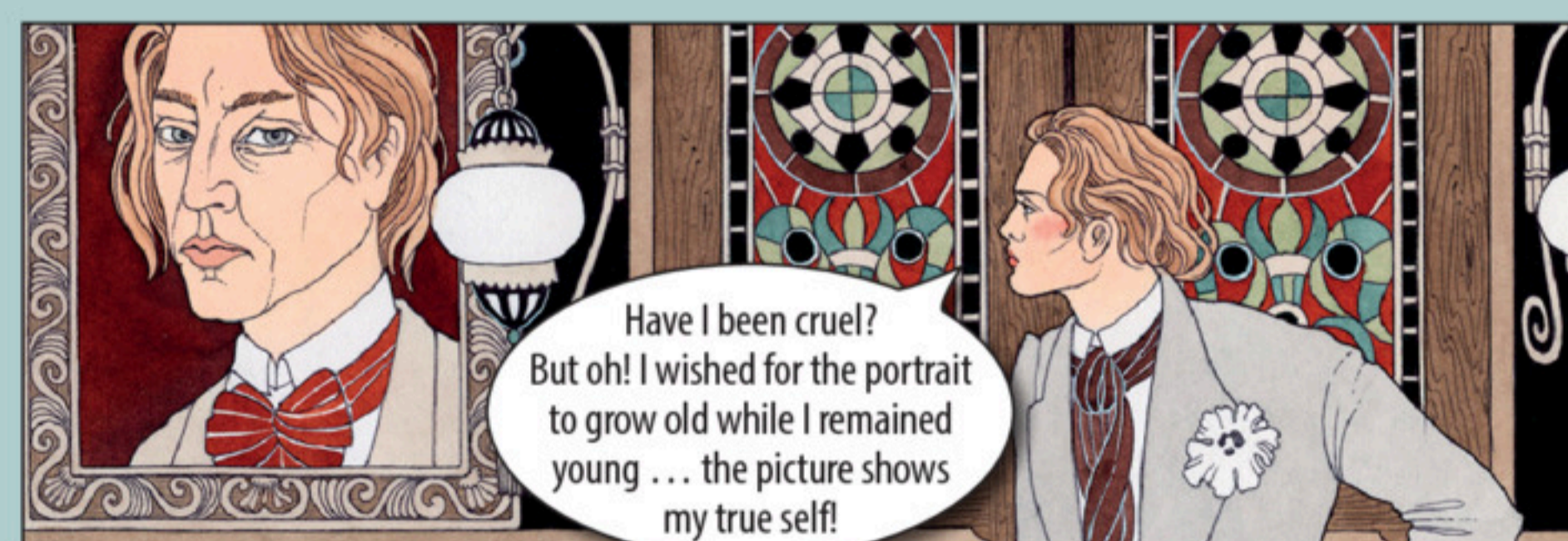
London, late 19th century



1 Basil Hallward was working in his studio on a portrait of a beautiful young man, when he was visited by his pleasure-loving friend, Lord Henry Wotton. Henry was very impressed by the portrait and wanted to meet this charming youth, Dorian Gray. This worried Basil.



4 Dorian and Henry soon became great friends and Dorian began to seek new pleasures around London. One day, he confided to Henry that he had been to an old Shakespearian theatre in the East End, and fallen in love with 'Juliet', a beautiful young actress called Sibyl Vane.



7 Dorian left Sibyl and walked the streets. Arriving home at dawn, his eye caught the portrait and he jumped back in horror. The face had changed – his soft expression had become hard and cruel. Suddenly he recalled what he'd said in Basil's studio. Dorian was afraid!



10 Basil's body lay beneath the portrait, which was now sweating blood. A cruel and desperate Dorian contacted a former doctor friend, Alan Campbell, and managed to blackmail the horrified man into helping him get rid of Basil's body.