



# The Picture of Dorian Gray: Original and Unabridged (Translate House Classics)

*Oscar Wilde*

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**The Picture of Dorian Gray**, is the only novel written by the playwright *Oscar Wilde*.

Dorian Gray is the subject of a full-length portrait in oil by Basil Hallward, an artist who is impressed and infatuated by Dorian's beauty; he believes that Dorian's beauty is responsible for the new mode in his art as a painter. Through Basil, Dorian meets Lord Henry Wotton, and he soon is enthralled by the aristocrat's hedonistic worldview: that beauty and sensual fulfilment are the only things worth pursuing in life.

Understanding that his beauty will fade, Dorian expresses the desire to sell his soul, to ensure that the picture, rather than he, will age and fade. The wish is granted, and Dorian pursues a libertine life of varied and amoral experiences; all the while his portrait ages and records every soul-corrupting sin. First published as a serial story, the editors feared the story was indecent, and deleted five hundred words before publication — without Wilde's knowledge. Despite that censorship, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* offended the moral sensibilities of British book reviewers, some of whom said that Oscar Wilde merited prosecution for violating the laws guarding the public morality. In response, Wilde aggressively defended his novel and art in correspondence with the British press.

Wilde revised and expanded the magazine edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) for publication as a novel; the book edition (1891) featured an aphoristic preface — an apology about the art of the novel and the reader. The content, style, and presentation of the preface made it famous in its own literary right, as social and cultural criticism.

As literature of the 19th century, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is an example of Gothic fiction with strong themes interpreted from the legendary Faust.

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