**The Picture of Dorian Gray - Act III**

**by Oscar Wilde, Adapted by Mark Nixon**

[[*MUSIC: SOFT NOTES FROM A RHODES ELECTRIC PIANO.*]]

**DAVID AULT:** Hello, everyone! I know that you’re dying to get to The Picture of Dorian Gray, but first, before we start all of that, I just want to let you know about our sponsor for this mini season.

Hemlock Creek Productions is a post-production audio studio based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded by audio editor and sound designer Marisa Ewing, Hemlock Creek Productions is Marisa’s response to a growing need for remote audio editing services. While based in the United States, Hemlock Creek Productions has worked with clients and vocal talents across multiple countries and languages. They’ve provided their expert editing services on a variety of projects, including podcasts, films, and video games.

In addition to providing editing services, Hemlock Creek Productions also strives to work on projects that highlight diversity, both in the stories being told and the people that tell them. As a queer and black owned business, they believe diversity is a strength and look forward to working on projects that reflect the same values.

Hemlock Creek Productions will also be releasing its first original podcast, “Liars & Leeches” in 2023. Follow the story of Tonya in this supernatural horror podcast, as she grieves a sudden familial loss. But soon, her grief will bring someone–or some*thing*–into her life in ways she could have never anticipated. That’s “Liars & Leeches,” available on all good podcast apps in 2023.

But to learn more about Hemlock Creek Productions, please visit [hemlockcreekprod.com](http://www.hemlockcreekprod.com), or follow them on social media on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/hemcreekprod) and [instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hemcreekprod/) at @hemcreekprod.

So, there we go! And now, it is time for Dorian Gray.

[[*MUSIC: ENDS.*]]

**MARK NIXON:** Shadows at the Door is a podcast designed to scare and delight you. We are, at times, explicit and produced for an adult audience. To see if this episode is for you, consult our show notes for a list of content warnings.

[[*MUSIC: SHADOWS AT THE DOOR THEME, DORIAN GRAY EDITION: SHORT, CHOPPY STRING NOTES AND A RUNNING PLUCKED BASS NOTES. IT ENDS AS DAVID BEGINS SPEAKING.*]]

[Timestamp: 2:46]

**DAVID AULT:** Previously, on “The Picture of Dorian Gray”:

[[*MUSIC: SHORT, CHOPPY STRINGS WITH LONGER INDIVIDUAL NOTES OVER THEM.*]]

[SFX: RAIN IS FALLING IN THE BACKGROUND.]

**DORIAN:** [RAISED, ANGRY VOICE.] Victor! Answer me! Or I shall—

**DORIAN’S PORTRAIT:** [A LOW, CRUEL, MOCKING LAUGH. IT IS UNMISTAKABLY DORIAN. IT IS BREATHY, AS IF NOT QUITE ABLE TO MAKE FULL USE OF VOCAL CORDS.]

[SFX: DORIAN TAKES A STEP BACK AND KNOCKS SOMETHING OVER WITH A LOUD CLANG.]

**DORIAN:** [FRANTIC.] What? [AFTER THE LAUGH STOPS, HE TAKES A MOMENT TO LOUDLY CATCH HIS BREATH.] Surely my wish has not been fulfilled? Such things are impossible…. And… And yet…

[[*MUSIC: DIES OUT THEN RETURNS.*]]

**SIBYL:** Prince Charming, my wonderful lover, my god of graces.

**JAMES:** Well, he had better be so wonderful. If he harms you in any way…I shall kill him.

**HENRY:** In the present case, what is it that has really happened? Someone has killed herself for love of you.

**BASIL:** You went to the A Club before Sibyl Vane has even the quiet of a grave to sleep in? You talk as if you had no heart, no pity in you. [ANNOYED INHALE.] It is all Harry’s influence. I see that.

[[*MUSIC: ADDS AN OMINOUS DEEP ROLL.*]]

**BASIL:** I should have to see your soul.

**DORIAN:** [ALARMED.] To see my soul?

**BASIL:** [SIGH.] Yes.

[SFX: DORIAN QUICKLY WALKS TO THE CURTAINS AND OPENS THEM.]

**BASIL:** [A EXCLAMATION OF SUDDEN SHOCK AND DISGUST.] Christ! [FEARFUL.] I… I don’t believe it’s my picture.

**DORIAN:** Oh, it is…

**BASIL:** If it is true… *This* is what you’ve done with your life? Why, you must be worse even than those who talk against you say!

**THE PAINTING:** [REPEATING, ECHOING, REVERBERATING QUICKLY IN AN OVERWHELMING ONSLAUGHT.] Do it…

[SFX: AFTER A COUPLE OF FOOTSTEPS, DORIAN PICKS UP A PIECE OF A BROKEN MIRROR AND STABS BASIL IN THE NECK ABRUPTLY. HE CHOKES FOR A MINUTE. BASIL SUDDENLY COLLAPSES TO THE FLOOR WITH A THUD. EVERYTHING IS SILENT EXCEPT DRIPPING BLOOD. DORIAN LAUGHS SLIGHTLY.]

[[*MUSIC: STOPS WITH DAVID’S WORDS.*]]

**DAVID AULT:** And now, the finale.

[Timestamp: 4:32]

[[*MUSIC: FAST, SHARP, BOWED STRINGS THAT END AS THE SCENE BEGINS.*]]

INT: DORIAN’S LOUNGE.

[SFX: A CLOCK TICKS IN THE BACKGROUND AND OCCASIONAL BIRDS CAN BE HEARD THROUGH THE WINDOWS. FAST FOOTSTEPS ECHO AS ALAN ENTERS THE LOUNGE.]

**DORIAN:** Alan, I thank you for coming, very kind.

**ALAN:** [IRRITATED, COLD.] I had intended never to enter your house again, Gray. But your telegram said it was a matter of life and death. Speaking of which, you look like you’ve seen a ghost.

**DORIAN:** [QUIET.] I wish it were that simple. [NORMAL.] Yes: it is a matter of life and death, Alan, and to more than one person. Sit down.

**ALAN:** [ANNOYED SIGH.] Very well…

[SFX: THEY SIT WITH A RUSTLE OF THE CUSHIONS. THERE IS A LONG PAUSE WHILE THE CLOCK TICKS.]

**ALAN:** Well?

**DORIAN:** [SPEAKING QUICKLY.] Alan, in a locked room at the top of this house, a room to which nobody but myself has access, a dead man is lying on the floor. He has been dead ten hours now.

**ALAN:** What?

**DORIAN:** [CONTINUING.] Don’t stir, and don’t look at me like that. Who the man is, why he died, how he died, are matters that do not concern you. What you have to do is this: I need you—

**ALAN:** [INTERRUPTING. NOT UPSET OR DISTURBED, BUT RATHER ENTIRELY DONE WITH DORIAN.] Stop, Gray. I don’t want to know anything further. Whether what you have told me is true or not true doesn’t concern me. I *entirely* decline to be mixed up in your life. Keep your horrible secrets to yourself. They don’t concern me any more.

**DORIAN:** [NORMAL VOLUME.] Alan, this one will have to interest you. I am forced to bring you into the matter. I have no option. Alan, you are scientific. You know about chemistry and things of that kind. What you have got to do is to destroy the thing that is upstairs—To destroy it so that not a vestige of it will be left. Nobody saw this person come into the house. Indeed, at the present moment he is supposed to be in Paris. He will not be missed for months. When he *is* missed, there must be no trace of him found here. You, Alan, you must change him, and everything that belongs to him, into a handful of ashes that I may scatter in the air.

**ALAN:** …You are *mad*, Dorian.

**DORIAN:** [PLEASED AND SATISFIED.] Hm! I was waiting for you to call me Dorian.

**ALAN:** [BECOMING HEATED.] You *are* mad—Mad to imagine that I would raise a finger to help you, mad to make this monstrous confession! I will have nothing to do with this matter, whatever it is. Do you think that I am going to peril my reputation for you? What is it to me what devil’s work you are up to?

**DORIAN:** Do you refuse?

**ALAN:** [NEUTRAL AGAIN; ALL OF THIS SHOULD BE OBVIOUS.] Of course I refuse. I will have absolutely nothing to do with it. I don’t care what shame comes to you. You deserve it all. I should not be sorry to see you publicly disgraced. How dare you ask me, of all men in the world, to mix myself up in this horror? Nothing will induce me to stir a step to help you. You have come to the wrong man. Go to some of your friends. Don’t come to me.

**DORIAN:** We were friends once, Alan.

**ALAN:** Don’t speak about those days, Dorian—they are dead.

**DORIAN:** [DESPERATE, HIS SENTENCES RUNNING TOGETHER.] Alan, I entreat you. Think of the position I am in. The body upstairs will not go away, it is the only piece of evidence against me. If it is discovered, I am lost; and it is sure to be discovered unless you help me. Alan! If you don’t come to my assistance, I am ruined. Wh-why-why, they will hang me, Alan! [SLOWING.] Don’t you understand? They will hang me for what I have done.

**ALAN:** Good God, Dorian, is this what you have come to? Yes, without my stirring in the matter, you are certain to be arrested. [SIGH.] There is no good in prolonging this scene. I absolutely refuse to do anything in the matter. It is insane of you to ask me.

[SFX: ALAN GETS UP AND STARTS WALKING TOWARDS THE DOOR.]

**DORIAN:** [FIRM.] Alan. I have told you too much as it is. I beg of you to do this.

[SFX: DORIAN STANDS TO FOLLOW.]

**ALAN:** [NOT BUDGING.] No, Dorian.

[[*MUSIC: A LOW, ALMOST UNHEARD DRONE BEGINS BELOW DORIAN’S WORDS. IT GRADUALLY GAINS EERIE LAYERS OVER IT.*]]

**DORIAN:** Wait, [ANGRY.] wait! [HE COMPOSES HIMSELF.] I am sorry, Alan but you leave me no alternative.

[SFX: DORIAN TAKES A LETTER FROM HIS POCKET AND WALKS OVER TO HAND IT TO ALAN.]

**DORIAN:** I think you should read this.

**ALAN:** [ANNOYED SIGH.]

[SFX: ALAN TAKES THE LETTER AND UNFOLDS IT.]

**ALAN:** [SOTTO.] Very well… Mm-hm-hm… Wha– [A GASP.]

**DORIAN:** You can keep that. I have another copy written. Do you see the address, also? If you don’t help me, I will send it. You know what the result of that will be, so you *are* going to help me. It is impossible for you to refuse now. I tried to spare you. You will do me the justice to admit that. You were stern, harsh, offensive. You treated me as no man has ever dared to treat me—no living man, at any rate. I bore it all. Now it is for *me* to dictate terms.

**ALAN:** [RUBS HIS FACE INTO HIS HAND.] Oh… Oh god…

**DORIAN:** [NOW VERY MATTER OF FACT.] Come, don’t work yourself into this fever. The thing has to be done. Face it, and do it.

**ALAN:** I… I cannot do it.

**DORIAN:** You have no choice.

**ALAN:** [SIGH.] Is there a fire in the room upstairs?

**DORIAN:** Yes, there is a gas-fire with asbestos.

**ALAN:** I shall have to go home and get some things from the laboratory.

**DORIAN:** No, Alan, you must not leave the house. Write out on a sheet of notepaper what you want and my servant will take a cab and bring the things back to you.

**ALAN:** [ANGRY AND DEFEATED SIGH.] Fine.

**DORIAN:** [TRYING TO CHEER.] You have saved my life, Alan.

**ALAN:** [HUMOURLESS LAUGH.] Good heavens! What a life it is… You have gone from corruption to corruption, and now you have cumulated in crime. In doing what I am going to do—what you force me to do—it is not your life of that I am thinking.

**DORIAN:** [SOFTLY.] Ah Alan, I wish you had a thousandth part of the pity for me that I have for you. [COLDER.] Fine… How long will it take?

**ALAN:** Around five hours, I think. Once the materials arrive.

**DORIAN:** Excellent, then I shall still make it to Lady Narborough’s party.

**ALAN:** [SOTTO.] Good God…

**DORIAN:** Right then, I’ll call for my servant to gather your supplies, then I shall take you upstairs. [WITHOUT CONFIDENCE.] But, uh, I do not think I can follow you in.

**ALAN:** [COLD.] It is nothing to me. I don’t require you.

[[*MUSIC: FAST, SHARP, BOWED STRINGS AGAIN WITH LONG NOTES WRAPPING AROUND THEM.*]]

INT: DORIAN’S ATTIC.

[SFX: THE DOOR IS UNLOCKED AND OPENED WITH A LOUD CREAK. DORIAN SLOWLY ENTERS. AN OWL HOOTS IN THE BACKGROUND.]

**DORIAN:** [SLOW, DELIBERATE BREATH IN THROUGH THE NOSE, THEN SOTTO.] Still smells of nitric acid up here…

[SFX: THE DOOR CLOSES WITH A CREAK AND THEN THE CLICK OF THE LATCH. AS DORIAN BEGINS TO TAKE A FEW STEPS TOWARD THE PAINTING, THERE IS A DEEP, LOW GROWL.]

[[*MUSIC: VERY QUIET STRINGS THAT GROW LOUDER. IT IS AN EERIE, SUSTAINED SOUND, WITH DISSONANCE COMING AND GOING.*]]

**DORIAN:** [TO PAINTING] And you…

**THE PAINTING:** [WHISPERING.] Closer. [A FOOTSTEP.] Closer.

[SFX: A COUPLE MORE FOOTSTEPS.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

[SFX: ANOTHER FOOTSTEP.]

**THE PAINTING:** [ECHOING.] Closer, closer.

[SFX: ANOTHER FOOTSTEP.]

**THE PAINTING:** Look! [THEN ECHOING.] Look. Closer. Look.

**DORIAN:** [LOW.] It is so dark, is that for the best? Dare I look? [ANOTHER GROWL IN THE BACKGROUND.] Dare I witness what fresh horrors are etched upon your face? *My* face?

**THE PAINTING:** Closer. Come. Come!

**DORIAN:** Can you even contort and degrade any further?

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

**DORIAN:** [ALMOST PAINED.] It’s been so long, but now… [AN ECHO OF “DORIAN” IN THE BACKGROUND.] After Basil… [ECHOES OF “CLOSER DORIAN!” DORIAN TAKES A SHAKY BREATH THEN RESUMES SPEAKING EVEN QUIETER.] What will you show me?

**THE PAINTING:** Come!

**DORIAN:** [LOW.] One raise of this candle [“LOOK!”] and we shall see… [UPON RAISING THE CANDLE, DORIAN REACTS IN HORROR, CHOKING ON HIS OWN WORDS AND CATCHING HIS BREATH AS THE PAINTING TAUNTS HIM].

[SFX: THE PAINTING SPEAKS IN WHISPERS, LAYERED, VARYING IN SPEED, AND IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THE MOST AUDIBLE ARE CAPTURED HERE.]

**THE PAINTING:** Foul! Wretched. Fucker!

**DORIAN:** Oh my…

**THE PAINTING:** Addict! Devil! Pervert!

**DORIAN:** [GASPING.] No…

**THE PAINTING:** Wretched! Fucker! Invert! Coward! Fucker! Murderer.

**DORIAN:** [DESPERATE.] No… No…

**THE PAINTING:** Murderer! Wretched. Devil! Murderer. Dorian!

**DORIAN:** [COMPOSING HIMSELF.] No. [AGAIN, FIRMER.] No. You will not mock me. [“MURDERER.”] I will not stand for this.

[SFX: DORIAN BEGINS TO STORM OUT OF THE ATTIC.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian… [THEN ECHOING.] Dorian…

[SFX: HE SLAMS THE DOOR.]

[[*MUSIC: AT LEAST, THE DISCORDANT NOTES FADE.*]]

EXT. DORIAN’S HOME.

[SFX: A GENTLE BREEZE BLOWS AS FROGS CROAK IN THE DISTANCE. DORIAN OPENS HIS FRONT DOOR AND WALKS OUTSIDE.]

**DORIAN:** [SOTTO.] Peace at last. [DEEP BREATH.] Now, to clear my head of such noise… [ANOTHER DEEP BREATH, WITH A HINT OF SATISFACTION.

[SFX: A FOX SCREAMS IN THE DISTANCE. DORIAN BEGINS WALKING, TAKING ANOTHER DEEP BREATH. BIG BEN CAN BE HEARD CHIMING MIDNIGHT AS DORIAN WALKS.]

**DORIAN:** Yes, chime all you like good sir, but the night is still young for myself. [A HORSE SNORTS.] In fact…

[SFX: DORIAN PAUSES FOR A SECOND TO CHANGE DIRECTION, HEADING TOWARD THE HANSOM PULLED BY THE HORSE. IT NICKERS AND SNORTS AGAIN.]

**DORIAN:** [KEEPING A LOW, DISCREET VOICE.] Excuse me, sir.

**DRIVER:** [SOUNDING LIKE DORIAN JUST WOKE HIM UP.] Guh-good evening, sir.

**DORIAN:** Yes, good evening. I need you to take me to this address.

[SFX: DORIAN PASSES HIM A PIECE OF PAPER.]

**DRIVER:** Let’s see here. [SOME SURPRISE.] By the docks?

**DORIAN:** Yes.

**DRIVER:** That’s too far for me.

**DORIAN:** [ANNOYED SIGH, THEN STILL LOW.] Here is a sovereign for you. You shall have another if you drive fast.

**DRIVER:** [EAGER NOW.] You best climb in then, sir! You’ll be there in an hour.

**DORIAN:** Make sure I am.

[SFX: DORIAN CLIMBS INTO THE HANSOM WITH A GRUNT AND A CREAK OF THE VEHICLE. THE HANSOM SETS OFF WITH A FEW MORE SOUNDS FROM THE HORSE, THE SOUND OF THE REINS, AND THE CLATTER OF THE WHEELS. AFTER A MOMENT, THE SOUND FADES OUT.]

EXT. THE DOCKS.

[SFX: WATER LAPS GENTLY IN THE BACKGROUND. GULLS CALL AMIDST THE LOW SOUNDS OF SHIP HORNS. THE HANSOM COMES TO A STOP WITH A NICKER FROM THE HORSE. A BUOY BELL RINGS IN THE DISTANCE.]

**DRIVER:** Somewhere about here, sir, ain’t it?

**DORIAN:** [WITH A HUFF.] At long last. [TO THE DRIVER, STILL LOW.] Yes.

**DRIVER:** You’ll excuse me sir, I don’t come down these parts much. And, uh, I shan’t be staying, that’s for sure.

**DORIAN:** [IRRITATED.] Here, take the rest.

**DRIVER:** Thank you, though do be careful ‘round here, they don’t get many gentlemen such as yourself visiting. I dare say you’ll stand out.

**DORIAN:** [IRRITATED] I’ll be fine. Now, be off with you.

[SFX: THE HORSE NICKERS.]

**DRIVER:** Very well, sir. Goodnight.

[SFX: THE HANDSOME LEAVES WITH A COUPLE FLICKS OF THE REINS AND A CLATTER OF THE WHEELS.]

**DORIAN:** [TO HIMSELF.] Now then… It is down here, I’m sure…

[SFX: DORIAN WALKS ACROSS FOR A TIME, WITH THE SOUNDS OF SHIP HORNS, BUOYS, THUNDER, AND OTHER CARRIAGES IN THE BACKGROUND.]

**SEX WORKER:** Good evening, mister. Looking for some company tonight? [AFTER A LONG PAUSE WHILE DORIAN’S FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE.] Pfft… Suit yourself, then.

INT. OPIUM DEN.

[[*MUSIC: SOFT, RESONANT GUITAR LINE WITH A MEDLEY BEHIND IT OF STRINGS, WINDS, AND TUNED METAL PERCUSSION. THE MELODY GETS PICKED UP BY A SINGLE STRINGED INSTRUMENT.*]]

[SFX: IN THE BACKGROUND, PEOPLE COUGH. LAZY GROANS OF BARELY CONSCIOUS PLEASURE ARE ALSO HEARD. THE DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS, LETTING IN DORIAN.]

**LANDLADY:** [TEASING IN A CHARMING WAY.] Ooooh! We’re looking very proud tonight, sir!

**DORIAN:** [LOW, ALMOST HISSING.] For God’s sake don’t talk to me! What do you want? Money? Hm? Here it is. Don’t *ever* talk to me again. Just give me a pipe and be done with it.

**LANDLADY:** [NOISE THAT IMPLIES HE IS BEING DRAMATIC.] I meant no ‘arm in it, Prince Charming.

**DORIAN:** Curse you, you old hag! Don’t call me that!

**LANDLADY:** What? Prince Charming is what you like to be called, ain’t it? [LAUGH]

**JAMES:** [COMING OUT OF A DAZE.] What!

**DORIAN:** [NOISE OF COMPLETE IRRITATION.] If you cannot keep your mouth shut and serve me a pipe then I’ll simply go to the other den!

[SFX: DORIAN STORMS OFF.]

**LANDLADY:** [SCOFF] There goes the devil’s bargain!

**DORIAN:** [FURIOUS.] Shut your mouth! And tell your man to open the door!

**LANDLADY:** Let Prince Charming, out, George! He’s wasting our time tonight, anyway.

[SFX: THE DOOR OPENS AND DORIAN STORMS OUT WITH A HUFF INTO THE RAIN.]

**JAMES:** What?

[SFX: SLOW FOOTSTEPS AS JAMES GETS UP TO FOLLOW. THE BACKGROUND FADES AWAY.]

[[*MUSIC: FADES.*]]

EXT: DOCKS.

[SFX: WIND BLOWS HEAVY RAIN AS THUNDER CLAPS NEARBY. LOW SHIP’S HORNS CAN BE HEARD.]

**DORIAN:** [ANGRY NOISE AS HE REACTS TO THE RAIN.] Bah! Blasted rain!

[SFX: DORIAN STORMS OFF WITH SLOSHING FOOTSTEPS. A BUOY CLANGS NEARBY.]

**DORIAN:** [HISSES IN ANNOYANCE.]

[SFX: DORIAN CONTINUES WALKING.]

**DORIAN:** It cannot be far, surely?

[SFX: DORIAN CONTINUES INTO EVEN DEEPER WATER AND ANOTHER SET OF FOOTSTEPS CAN HE HEARD.]

**DORIAN:** [SOTTO.] Hm? Someone behind me?

[SFX: HE STOPS TO CHECK AND THE OTHER FOOTSTEPS STOP AS WELL.]

**DORIAN:** No. Nothing…

[SFX: DORIAN CONTINUES WALKING.]

**DORIAN:** [ANGRY. TO SELF.] If only the old bat had just given me a pipe, I’d have a clear head–

[SFX: A GUN COCKS, CUTTING HIM OFF. DORIAN MAKES A HIGH-PITCHED NOISE OF STARTLED ALARM.]

**JAMES:** [LOW. ANGRY.] Keep quiet. Don’t turn around. If you stir, I shoot you.

**DORIAN:** [SOME PANIC.] What? You’re mad. What have I done to you? Is this a robbery? [BEHIND JAMES’ NEXT WORDS, HE AUDIBLY TRIES TO CATCH HIS BREATH.]

**JAMES:** You wrecked the life of Sibyl Vane. [FIGHTS BACK TEARS THEN FIRM.] and Sibyl Vane was my sister. She killed herself. I know it. Her death is at your door. I swore I would kill you in return. For years I have sought you. I had no clue, no trace. The two people who could have described you were dead. I knew nothing of you but the pet name she used to call you. [ALMOST MOCKING.] I heard it tonight just now. [ANGRY, FIGHTING EMOTION.] Make your peace with God, for tonight you are going to die.

[[*MUSIC: A LOW DRONE COMES IN BEHIND JAMES’ WORDS AS HE TELLS DORIAN TO MAKE HIS PEACE. HIGHER NOTES BEGIN TO LAYER OVER THAT SOUND ALMOST LIKE A CHOIR OF SCREAMS.*]]

**DORIAN:** [SCARED.] I never knew her. I have never heard of her.

**JAMES:** You had better confess your sin, for as sure as I am James Vane, you are going to die.

**DORIAN:** [STAMMERING.] No, I-I… Please!

**JAMES:** [INTERRUPTING WITH A SHOUT.] Down on your knees! I give you one minute to make your peace—no more. I go on board tonight for India, and I must do my job first. One minute. That’s all.

**DORIAN:** [DESPERATE.] Wait! Uh, stop! How long ago is it since your sister died? Quick-quick, tell me!

**JAMES:** [FIGHTING TEARS.] Fifteen years. Why do you ask me? What do years matter?

**DORIAN:** Fifteen years! Allow me to face you. Set me under the lamp and look at my face!

**JAMES:** What?

**DORIAN:** Just do it! L-look at my face! Look at it!

[SFX: JAMES GRUNTS AS HE PULLS DORIAN TO HIS FEET. DORIAN MAKES ANOTHER HIGH-PITCHED NOISE OF PANIC. THERE ARE SPLASHES AS HE STAGGERS A BIT.]

**JAMES:** Under the light!

[SFX: THEIR FOOTSTEPS SPLASH AS JAMES PULLS DORIAN UNDER A GASLIGHT.]

**DORIAN:** [SOUNDING DESPERATE.] You see, hm? Fifteen years since, you said? I-I’m but a lad of t-t-twenty summers! How could I possibly have known your sister?

**JAMES:** I… But the name… You match her descriptions…

**DORIAN:** You had better go home and put that pistol away, or you may get into trouble.

**JAMES:** [CONFUSED.] But…

**DORIAN:** You have been on the brink of committing a terrible crime, my man…

**JAMES:** [MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL.] The Landlady… After you left, she said it has been at least ten years since you first darkened her doorstep.

**DORIAN:** [CORRECTING HIM.] No… The old bat is mistaken. Now give me the pistol.

**JAMES:** Yes, it is you! [HIS RESOLVES STRENGTHENS.] Your pretty face has aged well, it seems, that is all! And now, you will die!

**DORIAN:** No, man! [GRASPS THE PISTOL.] Give that to me!

**JAMES:** Get off!

**DORIAN:** Give me…

[SFX: THEY STRUGGLE FOR THE GUN, SPLASHING.]

**DORIAN:** Give me it…

[SFX: THEY STRUGGLE SOME MORE.]

**DORIAN:** No!

[SFX: THE GUN FIRES. BOTH MEN ARE SILENT AND UNMOVING FOR A MOMENT.]

[[*MUSIC: ENDS WITH THE GUNSHOT.*]]

**JAMES:** [SUDDEN, DESPERATE PANTING. HE GRASPS AT A WOUND IN HIS STOMACH AND BEGINS TO REACT TO THE PAIN AND PANIC. IT LASTS 5 SECONDS THEN HE SAYS WEAKLY.] You… You shot me. [HE STUMBLES BACKWARD MAKING A FEW MORE SOUNDS AS DORIAN CATCHES HIS BREATH.] My-my sis– Sybill…

[SFX: WITH A FEW FOOTSTEPS, AND A CRY OF PAIN, JAMES STUMBLES BACK OFF THE DOCK AND INTO THE WATER. STILL PANTING A BIT, DORIAN APPROACHES THE EDGE. A FEW BUBBLES COME TO THE SURFACE, BUT NO JAMES.]

**DORIAN:** [WITH MILD SURPRISE.] Well now…

[SFX: THE BACKGROUND FADES AWAY.

[[*MUSIC: SOFT PIANO NOTES BRING US FORWARD IN TIME.*]]

INT: HENRY’S HOME.

[SFX: DOGS BARK IN THE BACKGROUND. DORIAN APPROACHES, WALKING ON GRAVEL. HE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR.]

**DORIAN:** [SIGHS.]

[SFX: THE DOOR OPENS.]

**HENRY:** [PLEASED SURPRISE. NOW SOUNDING SLIGHTLY OLDER.] Oh! Dorian Gray…

**DORIAN:** Hello Harry. [ALMOST AWKWARD.] It’s been a while, hasn’t it? [SUDDENLY WONDERS WHY HARRY HIMSELF GREETED HIM.] Where are your servants?

**HENRY:** [DISINTERESTED.] Otherwise preoccupied, their numbers slowly dwindle at the same pace as my fortune. Come in, Dorian, come in.

**DORIAN:** Thank you.

[SFX: THEY ENTER. THE DOOR CLOSES.]

**HENRY:** Come Let us have our coffee in the music-room. You must play Chopin to me. The man with whom my wife ran away played Chopin exquisitely. [HE LAUGHS ONCE AS THEY BEGIN WALKING.] Poor Victoria! I *was* very fond of her. The house is rather lonely without her. Of course, married life is merely a habit, a bad habit. But then, one regrets the loss even of one’s worst habits. Perhaps one regrets them the most. [HE OPENS THE DOOR TO ANOTHER ROOM, WHERE A PET BIRD IS SINGING TO ITSELF.] They are such an essential part of one’s personality. [HENRY CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND THEM. AFTER A FEW MORE STEPS, THEY STOP WALKING..]

**DORIAN:** [SIGH.] I am tired, Harry.

**HENRY:** Hm… Is that so? [THIS IS NOT A COMPLIMENT.] Your face tells me otherwise.

**DORIAN:** Tired in my heart. I have done too many dreadful things in my life. I am not going to do any more. I began my good actions yesterday.

**HENRY:** Oh yes? Where were you yesterday?

**DORIAN:** In the country, Harry. I was staying at a little inn by myself.

**HENRY:** Anybody can be good in the country. There are no temptations there. That is the reason why people who live out of town are so absolutely uncivilised. Civilisation is not by any means an easy thing to attain to. There are only two ways by which man can reach it. One is by being cultured, the other by being corrupt. Country people have no opportunity of being either, so they stagnate.

**DORIAN:** [SAD.] Culture and corruption. I have known something of both. It seems terrible to me now that they should ever be found together. For I have a new ideal, Harry. I am going to alter. I think I *have* altered.

[SFX: DORIAN WALKS OVER TO THE PIANO AND OPENS IT. HE CHECKS TO SEE IF IT IS IN TUNE.]

**DORIAN:** Seems to be in tune.

**HENRY:** I should hope so! Now please, Dorian, it has been so long since you last played for me.

[SFX: HE SITS DOWN WITH A SCRAPE OF PIANO BENCH LEGS ON THE FLOOR AND BEGINS TO PLAY SOME CHOPIN.]

**HENRY:** [SUBTLE NOISE OF APPRECIATION AS HE LISTENS. AFTER A MOMENT.] So, you have not yet told me what your good action was. Or did you say you had done more than one?

**DORIAN:** [CONTINUING TO PLAY.] I can tell *you*, Harry. It is not a story I could tell to anyone else. I spared somebody. It sounds vain, but you understand what I mean. She was quite beautiful and wonderfully like Sibyl Vane. I think it was that which first attracted me to her. You remember Sibyl, don’t you? How long ago that seems! Well, Hetty was not one of our own class, of course. She was simply a girl in a village. But I-I really loved her. I am quite sure that I loved her. All during this wonderful May that we have been having, I used to run down and see her two or three times a week. Yesterday, she met me in a little orchard. The apple-blossoms kept tumbling down on her hair. She was laughing. We were to have gone away together this morning at dawn. Suddenly, I determined to leave her as flowerlike as I had found her.

**HENRY:** I should think the novelty of the emotion must have given you a thrill of real pleasure, Dorian. But I can finish your idyll for you. You gave her good advice and broke her heart. That was the beginning of your supposed reformation.

**DORIAN:** [GENUINE AFFECTION.] Hetty’s heart is not broken. Of course, she cried and all that. But there is no disgrace upon her. She can live, like Perdita, in her garden of mint and marigold…

**HENRY:** My dear Dorian, you have the most curiously boyish moods. Do you think this girl will ever be really content now with any one of her own rank? I suppose she will be married some day to a rough carter or a grinning ploughman. Well, the fact of having met you, and loved you, will teach her to despise her husband and she will be wretched. From a moral point of view, I cannot say that I think much of your great renunciation. Even as a beginning, it is poor. Besides, how do you know that Hetty isn’t floating at the present moment in some starlit mill-pond, with lovely water-lilies round her, like Ophelia?

[SFX: DORIAN SUDDENLY STOPS PLAYING. THE BIRD CONTINUES CHIRPING AND FLUTTERS AT THE CAGE.]

**DORIAN:** Harry! I can’t bear this! You mock at everything, and then suggest the most serious tragedies. I am sorry I told you now. I don’t care what you say to me. I know I was right in acting as I did. Don’t let us talk about it any more. And *don’t* try to persuade me that the first good action I have done for years, the first little bit of self-sacrifice I have ever known, is really a sort of sin. I want to be better. I-I’m *going* to be better. Tell me something about yourself. What is going on in town? I have not been to the club for weeks.

**HENRY:** The people are still discussing poor Basil’s disappearance...

**DORIAN:** I should have thought they’d got tired of that by this time.

**HENRY:** My dear boy, they have only been talking about it for six weeks, and the British public are really not equal to the mental strain of having more than one topic every three months. They have been very fortunate lately, however. They have had my own divorce case and Alan Campbell’s suicide. Now they have got the mysterious disappearance of an artist. Scotland Yard still insists that the man in the grey ulster who left for Paris by the midnight train on the ninth of November *was* poor Basil, and the French police declare that Basil never arrived in Paris at all. I suppose in about a fortnight we shall be told that he has been seen in San Francisco. It is an odd thing, but everyone who disappears is said to be seen at San Francisco. It must be a delightful city and possess all the attractions of the next world.

**DORIAN:** What do *you* think has happened to Basil?

[SFX: HENRY LIGHTS A CIGARETTE AND EXHALES ONCE BEFORE SPEAKING.]

[[*MUSIC: GENTLE PIANO. AS THEY SPEAK, STRINGS COME IN UNDER THE MELODY.*]]

**HENRY:** [ANSWERING CAREFULLY.] I have not the slightest idea. If Basil chooses to hide himself, it is no business of mine. If he is dead, I don’t want to think about him. [FOR ONCE IN HIS LIFE, HE IS BEING VULNERABLE.] Death is the only thing that ever terrifies me. I hate it.

**DORIAN:** Oh? And why’s that?

**HENRY:** Because one can survive everything nowadays except that. Death and vulgarity are the only two facts in the nineteenth century that one cannot explain away.

**DORIAN:** Harry… [PAUSE.] Did it ever occur to you that Basil was murdered?

**HENRY:** Oh, some of the papers think so… As for me, I remember that Basil was very popular. Why should he have been murdered? He was not clever enough to have enemies. Basil was really rather dull, in fact. He only interested me once and that was when he told me, all those years ago, that he had a wild adoration for you…

**DORIAN:** [HESITANT.] What-what would you say, Harry, if I told you that *I* had murdered Basil?

**HENRY:** [DISMISSIVELY, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE HE DOESN’T BELIEVE. HE DOESN’T *WANT* TO BELIEVE.] I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn’t suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder. I am sure you agree.

**DORIAN:** Harry–

**HENRY:** [CUTTING HIM OFF TO ASSERT HIS OWN REALITY.] I wish I could believe that he had come to such a really romantic end as you suggest, but I can’t. I dare say he fell into the Seine off an omnibus and that the conductor hushed up the scandal. Yes, yes. I should fancy that was his end. I see him lying now on his back under those dull-green waters, with the heavy barges floating over him and long weeds catching in his hair. [HEAVY SIGH.] Do you know, I don’t think he would have done much more good work. During the last ten years his painting had gone off very much.

**DORIAN:** [DISAPPOINTED SIGH.]

**HENRY:** Yes, his painting had quite gone off. It seemed to me to have lost something. It had lost an ideal. When you and he ceased to be great friends, he ceased to be a great artist. [PAUSE.] By the way, what *has* become of that wonderful portrait he did of you? I don’t think I’ve ever seen it since he finished it.

**DORIAN:** I never really liked it. I am sorry I sat for it. The memory of the thing is hateful to me. Why do you talk of it?

**HENRY:** I asked you because I thought you might be able to give me an answer. That is all.

**DORIAN:** Very well…

[[*MUSIC: FADES AWAY.*]]

**HENRY:** Play me something else, Dorian. And, as you play, tell me, in a low voice, how you have kept your youth. You must have some secret. I am only eighteen years older than you are, and I am wrinkled and worn and yellow.

[SFX: DORIAN SHIFTS ON THE PIANO BENCH WITH A CREAK OF WOOD, THEN BEGINS PLAYING AGAIN.]

**HENRY:** You are really wonderful, Dorian. You have never looked more charming than you do tonight. You remind me of the day I saw you first. You were rather cheeky, very shy, and absolutely extraordinary. You have changed, of course, but not in appearance. I wish you would tell me your secret. To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable. Youth! [A DRY COUGH.] There is nothing like it. [ALMOST FRANTIC.] Don’t stop, Dorian! I want music tonight! It seems to me that you are the young Apollo and that I am Marsyas listening to you. I have sorrows, Dorian, of my own, that even you know nothing of. The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young. I am amazed sometimes at my own sincerity. Ah, Dorian, what an exquisite life you have had! You have drunk deeply of everything. You have crushed the grapes against your palate. Nothing has been hidden from you. And it has all been to you no more than the sound of music. It has not marred you. You are still the same.

**DORIAN:** I am *not* the same, Harry…

**HENRY:** [ALMOST ANGRY.] Yes, you *are* the same! Flawless, in fact! You need not shake your head, you know you are. I wish I could change places with you, Dorian! The world has cried out against us both, but it has always worshipped you. It always will worship you. You are the type of what the age is searching for and what it is afraid it has found. I am so glad that you have never done anything, never carved a statue, or painted a picture, or produced anything outside of yourself! *Life* has been your art! You have set yourself to music. Your days are your sonnets.

[SFX: DORIAN STOPS PLAYING ABRUPTLY AND STANDS. HE PACES A BIT.]

**DORIAN:** [MELANCHOLY.] I am not going to have the same life, Harry. And you must not say these extravagant things to me. You don’t know everything about me. I think that if you did, even you would turn from me.

**HENRY:** [GROANS.] Why have you stopped playing, Dorian? Go back and play. Look at that great, honey coloured moon that hangs in the dusky air. She is waiting for you to charm her and if you play she will come closer to the earth. You won’t? [SIGH.] Let us go to the club, then. It has been a charming evening, and we must end it charmingly. There is someone at White’s who wants immensely to know you—young Lord Poole, Bournemouth’s eldest son. He has already copied your neckties and has begged me to introduce him to you. He is quite delightful and rather reminds me of you.

**DORIAN:** No Harry. It is already late. In fact I wish for an early night. [SIGH.] Goodnight, Harry.

**HENRY:** [SOFTER.] Do stay. You have never played so well as tonight. There was something in your touch that was wonderful. It had more expression than I had ever heard from it before.

**DORIAN:** [SAD.] It is because I am going to be good. I am a little changed already. And yes, the moon is quite lovely. I think I shall walk home. It is such a lovely night.

**HENRY:** You cannot change to me, Dorian. You and I will always be friends.

**DORIAN:** [SAD] Yes, I think that is so, Harry. Goodnight.

[SFX: DORIAN WALKS AWAY.]

INT. DORIAN’S ATTIC.

[SFX: DORIAN SLOWLY WALKS UP THE STAIRS.]

**DORIAN:** [TO HIMSELF, SLIGHTLY OUT OF BREATH AS HE CLIMBS THE STAIRS.] I have spared, Hatty. I have resisted Harry. I have been good! Surely the thing will not be so horrible as it had been? Perhaps if my life becomes pure, truly pure, I will be able to expel every sign of evil passion from the face. Perhaps the signs of evil have already gone away… [CATCHES HIS BREATH AS HE REACHES THE TOP OF THE STAIRS.] Yes, I’m sure of it. One action can counteract another.

[SFX: HE UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT WITH A HEAVY GROAN, THEN CLOSES IT BEHIND HIM, LOCKING IT AGAIN.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

[SFX: DORIAN TAKES A COUPLE OF STEPS.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

[SFX: A COUPLE MORE STEPS.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

[SFX: DORIAN KEEPS WALKING AND THE PAINTING STARTS COUGHING AS IF DISEASED.]

**THE PAINTING:** Dorian.

[SFX: HE ABRUPTLY PULLS AWAY THE CURTAIN, THEN CRIES OUT IN TERROR AND DESPAIR. AS DORIAN WAILS, THE PAINTING’S WORDS BEGIN TO ECHO AND LAYER AROUND HIM AS BEFORE, THOUGH SOME OF ITS ACCUSATIONS ARE NEW. THE MOST AUDIBLE ARE CAPTURED HERE.]

**THE PAINTING:** [WHISPERING QUICKLY] Disgusting! Killer. Rapist. Diseased.

[[*MUSIC: A SINGLE NOTE SLIPS IN, AN EERIE, MODERATELY HIGH PITCHED BENDING WAIL. MORE COME IN AND OUT, DISSONANT.*]]

**DORIAN:** [SHOUTING HOARSELY.] No! No sign of change!

**THE PAINTING:** Waste! [COUGHS.]

**DORIAN:** [HOARSE] Save for that look in your eyes, [STAMMERING.] a-a-a-a-l… a look-a look of cunning and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite! You are still loathsome—somewhere *more* loathsome, if possible, than before!

**THE PAINTING:** Diseased. Criminal. Killer. Vile. Criminal! [COUGHING.] Invert. Rotten!

**DORIAN:** What even is this that grows and rots, so?! [HYSTERICAL, TRYING TO CATCH HIS BREATH.] The blood! The hands seem brighter, more like blood newly spilled! How?! *HOW!?*

**THE PAINTING:** Waste! Rapist. Fucker. Confess… Killer. Disgusting. [COUGHING.]

[[*MUSIC: A LOW DRONE BEGINS TO CREEP IN AS DORIAN SPEAKS. THE MUSIC IS SIMULTANEOUSLY BEHIND EVERYTHING AND CREATING AN ALMOST OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DREAD.*]]

**DORIAN:** [RECOVERS HIS BREATH.] Are these things to dog me my whole life? What-what *must* I do?? [ANGRY.] It’s *you*! You vile thing, bearing the burden of my days… Leaving me with *this* [DISGUSTED.] *mask* of beauty, of youth! I will live a good, and pure life! You will not remind me of what has transgressed, of my sins! I will be good, I will be clean! I will be for*given*! Whether you deem it or so or not!

**THE PAINTING:** Rapist. Criminal. Invert. Killer. Devil. Fucker. Addict.

[SFX: DORIAN STORMS OVER TO THE FIREPLACE AND PICKS UP A POKER, BREATHING FURIOUSLY.]

**DORIAN:** With this poker, I shall end you!

**THE PAINTING:** [QUIETLY.] No…

**DORIAN:** And when you are dead, I shall be free!

**THE PAINTING:** No. No. Stop. Stop. No. Put it down! Leave. No! No!

[SFX: HE CRIES OUT BRIEFLY IN ANGER AS HE STABS THE PAINTING. IT TEARS AND DORIAN IMMEDIATELY CRIES OUT IN SEVERE PAIN. HE IS OVERWHELMED AND HIS CRY OF AGONY LASTS ABOUT SIX SECONDS BEFORE HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR WITH HIS FINAL BREATH, KNOCKING OVER THINGS WITH A CLATTER. THE PAINTING IS SILENT.]

[[*MUSIC: FADES AWAY INTO THE NEXT SCENE.*]]

INT: A PARTY AT LORD HENRY’S HOME.

[SFX: A PIANO PLAYS BEHIND THE DIN OF CONVERSATIONS.]

**HENRY:** [LIGHTING A CIGARETTE AND SPEAKING WITH IT IN HIS MOUTH.] No you see, it was the most uncanny thing. [TAKES OUT CIGARETTE AND PUFFS.] There was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry was so *horrible* in its agony that the frightened servants woke and crept out of their rooms. They sent for me–evidently Dorian has made them quite terrified to even consider entering the attic… [TAKES ANOTHER DRAG OF THE CIGARETTE.] So half an hour later, myself and one of the staff entered the room. I knocked and naturally there was no reply. Eventually the doorman was able to force his way into the room… [ANOTHER DRAG OF THE CIGARETTE. THEN HE SPEAKS A LITTLE SLOWER, SOME INTIMACY AND MYSTERY TO HIS VOICE.] When we entered, we saw upon the wall Basil’s most splendid portrait of Dorian Gray, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor, however, was a dead man, in evening dress, with the deepest gash across his heart. [NO LONGER REALLY SPEAKING TO HIS PARTY GUESTS, MORE INTROSPECTIVE.] He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. A ghastly thing to look upon. [HE SWALLOWS.] It was not until I examined the rings on his fingers that I recognised who it was…

AFTERWARD

[[*MUSIC: SOFT GUITAR NOTES WITH LOW, SUSTAINED STRINGS.*]]

**DAVID AULT:** You've been listening to a Shadows at the Door production. Dorian Gray was played by Jake Benson. Lord Henry Watton was played by David Ault. James Vayne was played by Andy Cresswell. Alan Campbell was played by Mark Nixon. The Landlady was played by Erika Sanderson. The Driver was played by Dean J. Smith. And the Sex Worker was played by Nico Vitessee. The story was written by Oscar Wilde and adapted by Mark Nixon. The original score was composed and performed by Nico Vetessee. The production was by Mark Nixon. Copyright held by Shadows at the Door Publishing.

Join us next week for “The Discussion of Dorian Gray.”

[[*MUSIC: ENDS.*]]

**HENRY:** It was not until I examined the rings on his fingers that I recognized who it was… It was [EXTRA DRAMATIC.] *Mark Nixon*.

CAST

Dorian Gray Jake Benson

*A handsome, narcissistic young man in his early 20s. Softly spoken, enunciates well with a soft, masculine voice. Clearly of good upbringing. RP[[1]](#footnote-0) accent.*

The Painting Jake Benson

Lord Henry Watton David Ault

*An imperious aristocrat and a decadent dandy who espouses a philosophy of self-indulgent hedonism. He believes every word he says is witty and intelligent–the problem is that he is right. He is impeccably well spoken, speaking with a low and forever confident voice. Every word is deliberate and cuts like a knife. RP accent.*

James Vane Andy Cresswell

*A young, working class sailor. Being vulnerable does not come easy to him and it is easier to show his care for Sibyl with aggression than with tenderness. Southern, working class English accent.*

Alan Campbell Mark Nixon

*A scientist and former friend of Dorian. Well spoken, carries disdain for Dorian.*

Driver Dean J. Smith

*A young local man working long hours as a driver, trying to make ends meet.*

Sex Worker Nico Vetessee

*A young male sex worder who has been doing this for longer than he should.*

Landlady Erika Sanderson

*A boisterous southern woman who has been running an opium den for years.*

TRANSCRIPT BY: [EMORY COLVIN](https://twitter.com/nuclearalchemy) (TIPS: [ko-fi.com/emoryc](https://ko-fi.com/emoryc))

1. “Received Pronunciation,” also known as the “Queen’s English,” “BBC English,” or “Oxford English.” [See the British Library for more explanation.](https://www.bl.uk/british-accents-and-dialects/articles/received-pronunciation) [↑](#footnote-ref-0)