

“The Picture of Dorian Gray”.

This is Wilde’s most important work: in it he conveys his main views on life.

Dorian Gray, a beautiful young boy, dreams of preserving forever his youth and beauty. Basil Hallward, a fine artist, creates a portrait of the boy. The portrait has an extraordinary quality. It reflects all the changes in the appearance of the young man brought about by time. At the same time the appearance of Dorian Gray himself remains untouched.

Basil Hallward, defending Dorian, whom he loves dearly, struggles with all his might against the destructive influence of Lord Henry, who has found the way to the boy’s soul. Lord Henry considers that life must be lived in such a way as to bring a person all the pleasure he desires. These two men, who represent Good and Evil, struggle for Dorian and finally Lord Henry wins him over. Dorian begins to live a life entirely outside the line of morals, commits a number of crimes.

The picture, hidden away by Dorian in a small room that he keeps locked, reflects the terrible degradation of a man who stops at nothing in pursuit of pleasure. However there comes a moment when this terrible picture causes misgivings in Dorian’s soul. He wants it also to regain its initial youth and beauty; he wants to efface all the signs of degradation from the portrait that has turned out to be his soul. Finally, he attacks the portrait with a knife.

When people enter the room they see the portrait of a lovely youth and a horrible old man, wrinkled and disgusting in appearance, lying dead on the floor with a knife in his heart.

Thus Wilde discloses his idea of Art being superior to life; it was in the work of art that the repulsive nature of the man was seen while those who saw him alive noticed no change in his appearance.

To win over	завоевать
Pursuit	преследование, погоня;
daily pursuits	повседневные дела
misgiving	дурное предчувствие, опасение
repulsive	отталкивающий
to efface	стереть
repulsive	отталкивающий

Answer the questions.

1. Why is “The Picture of Dorian Gray” considered Wilde’s most important work?
2. What extraordinary quality did the portrait have?
3. What did Basil Hallward and Dorian represent in the novel?
4. What does Wilde point out in his novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray”?