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The Picture of Dorian Gray

Von Oscar Wilde

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Von Oscar Wilde : The Picture of Dorian Gray before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be

worth my time, and all praised The Picture of Dorian Gray:

Kurzbeschreibung Oscar Wilde's story of a fashionable young man who sells his soul for eternal youth and beauty is one of his most popular works. Written in Wilde's characteristically dazzling manner, full of stinging epigrams and shrewd observations, the tale of Dorian Gray's moral disintegration caused something of a scandal when it first appeared in 1890. Wilde was attacked for his decadence and corrupting influence, and a few years later the book and the aesthetic/moral dilemma it presented became issues in the trials occasioned by Wilde's homosexual liaisons, trials that resulted in his imprisonment. Of the book's value as autobiography, Wilde noted in a letter, "Basil Hallward is what I think I am: Lord Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be--in other ages, perhaps." A lush, cautionary tale of a life of vileness and deception or a loving portrait of the aesthetic impulse run rampant? Why not both? After Basil Hallward paints a beautiful, young man's portrait, his subject's frivolous wish that the picture change and he remain the same comes true. Dorian Gray's picture grows aged and corrupt while he continues to appear fresh and innocent. After he kills a young woman, "as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife", Dorian Gray is surprised to find no difference in his vision or surroundings. "The roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden." As Hallward tries to make sense of his creation, his epigram-happy friend Lord Henry Wotton encourages Dorian in his sensual quest with any number of Wildean paradoxes, including the delightful "When we are happy we are always good, but when we are good we are not always happy." But despite its many languorous pleasures, The Picture of Dorian Gray is an imperfect work. Compared to the two (voyeuristic) older men, Dorian is a bore, and his search for ever new sensations far less fun than the novel's drawing-room discussions. Even more oddly, the moral message of the novel contradicts many of Wilde's supposed aims, not least "no artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style." Nonetheless, the glamour boy gets his just deserts. And Wilde, defending Dorian Gray, had it both ways: "All excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment." From .co.uk A lush, cautionary tale of a life of vileness and deception or a loving portrait of the aesthetic impulse run rampant? Why not both? After Basil Hallward paints a beautiful, young man's portrait, his subject's frivolous wish that the picture change and he remain the same comes true. Dorian Gray's picture grows aged and corrupt while he continues to appear fresh and innocent. After he kills a young woman, "as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife", Dorian Gray is surprised to find no difference in his vision or surroundings. "The roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden." As Hallward tries to make sense of his creation, his epigram-happy friend Lord Henry Wotton encourages Dorian in his sensual quest with any number of Wildean paradoxes, including the delightful "When we are happy we are always good, but when we are good we are not always happy." But despite its many languorous pleasures, The Picture of Dorian Gray is an imperfect work. Compared to the two (voyeuristic) older men, Dorian is a bore, and his search for ever new sensations far less fun than the novel's drawing-room discussions. Even more oddly, the moral message of the novel contradicts many of Wilde's supposed aims, not least "no artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style." Nonetheless, the glamour boy gets his just deserts. And Wilde, defending Dorian Gray, had it both ways: "All excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment."