

# Indulging Dorian Gray

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When you indulge in everything, you indulge in nothing. Oscar Wilde paints a picture for the reader much like Basil Hallward, the painter in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the story of a young man's soul that he trades for the eternal youth and beauty of a portrait. Dorian's sins are painted onto the canvas while his own face is left unmarred by the horrible acts he commits. Dorian is a young, naïve, innocent boy; with an impressionable nature that allows him to become seduced by Lord Henry's fantastical views on life, love, and beauty. Dorian soon realizes the power his own beauty possesses, and hastily declares his wish to trade places with the portrait so he can be young and beautiful forever. In *Dorian Gray and the Moral Imagination*, Kristian Williams claims that in Dorian's quest for beauty he "loses site of a larger aim—a beautiful life." (29). Williams is claiming that as Dorian concedes to every indulgence and pursues new experiences and excesses his sensations become deadened and taken for granted. If you fill a room with roses, eventually you will no longer smell their perfume. Dorian, indulging in his every whim, and his wishing to live a beautiful life, kept himself from experiencing life at all, he becomes paranoid, he destroys his relationships, reputations, and himself.

Dorian becomes obsessed with the idea that someone could find out what he is hiding away. His paranoia consumes him, and his obsession keeps him from enjoying life.

He goes to great lengths to hide the portrait, himself, away and keep it from prying eyes, giving up his country home, and leaving parties early to make sure it was where he left it, undisturbed. He was so crazed with the possibility that someone would find the picture and find out his sec...

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...ty. His face remained young, but as his age increased, his youthful appearance created controversy. He remained beautiful, but was still only able to find superficial beauty. He wanted love, but only the idea of love, to experience the real thing would certainly diminish the romance of it. In Dorian's last moment of hope for self-preservation, he tries to kill the hideous monster he had created, but that backfired on him, instead of freeing him from his indulgence of sins, it kills him and the portraits original beauty returned.

#### Works Cited

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