The Picture of Dorian Gray Study Guide Questions

Please answer in complete sentences.

**Chapter 1**

1. Why does the Preface suggest that “all art is useless”?

2. What does Lord Henry reveal about his selection of friends. Why is his means of selecting his enemies ironic?

3. How has Basil become obsessed with Dorian Gray? What evidence shows he is Basil’s idol?

4. Why is Basil concerned that Lord Henry will “spoil” Dorian? What does he try to make him promise?

**Chapter 2**

1. What causes people to instantly like and trust Dorian Gray. Do you quality is still beneficial in society today?

2. What wish does Dorian make when he sees the finished painting? What is Dorian willing to give in return for the wish?

3. Why does Basil want to destroy the paining?

4. According to Lord Henry, what is the “aim of life”? What does he say is the only way to “get rid of a temptation”?

5. How does the end of this chapter represent the death of Dorian Gray in Basil’s eyes?

**Chapter 3**

1. Describe the sad situation regarding the deaths of Dorian’s mother and father.

2. What happens to the relationship between Basil and Dorian?

3. How are Dorian’s relationships similar to “addictions”? How are the ways people treat Dorian bad for his character?

**Chapter 4**

1. Describe how Dorian falls in love with Sibyl Vane.

2. What is the basis of Dorian’s “love” for Sibyl? Do Sibyl and Dorian really know one another?

3. What do you believe are solid reasons for loving a person? What do you believe is the proof one person loves another?

**Chapter 5**

1. What is beautiful and sweet about the love between Sibyl and Dorian?

2. Why does Sibyl’s brother James instantly hate Dorian? What three threats does James make?

3. Why does Sibyl’s mother feel like she only has one child?

4. Where does James hope to go? What does he hope to do?

5. What are Sibyl’s mother’s hopes regarding Prince Charming?

**Chapter 6**

1. What does Lord Henry say is the source of “true happiness”? Do you agree?
2. Describe Dorian’s “engagement” to Sibyl.
3. According to Lord Henry, what does it mean to be “good”? Do you believe this definition is true?
4. What does Lord Henry tell Dorian that he represents to the young man?

**Chapter 7**

1. What happens to Sibyl when she realizes that her love for Dorian is her only source of happiness and meaning?

2. What happens to Dorian’s love for Sibyl when he realizes she has “given up the world” for him?

3. What is ironic about the way Dorian stops loving Sibyl?

4. What is the first “mean” think Dorian has ever done?

5. What magical thing has happened to the painting? What does Dorian realize?

6. What is obvious on the face of the painting?

7. When Dorian sees the result of his cruelty, what does he decide to do?

8. What are the dangers of loving another person out of obligation or a sense of duty?

**Chapter 8**

1. What happens to Sibyl Vane?

2. What advice does Lord Henry give Dorian? Do you believe this is wise advice?

3. What is ironic about the birds and flowers that makes the news about Sibyl difficult for Dorian?

4. Lord Henry says women “cannot leave the past in the past”. How does his treatment of a woman from his past show his

character to be shallow and inconsiderate?

5. Is Lord Henry truly a “best friend” to Dorian?

6. How is Sibyl’s life and Dorian’s love like a Greek tragedy?

7. The tragedy of Sibyl causes Dorian to determine how he will live the rest of his life. What decision does he make? If Sibyl

had lived, how might Dorian’s life have been different?

**Chapter 9**

1. Basil mourns for Sibyl and Dorian’s grief – what does Basil fear Dorian will do?

2. Why is Basil shocked to discover that Dorian went to the opera?

3. What is ironic about Dorian’s beautiful face?

4. Why is Dorian angry at Basil?

5. Why is Dorian afraid to let Basil see the painting? How does he threaten Basil?

6. How does Basil’s response show true love, affection, concern and friendship toward Dorian?

**Chapter 10**

1. Where does Dorian decide to “hide” the painting?
2. What does the coroner give as the official cause of death for Sibyl? How does she really die?

**Chapter 11**

1. What actions show Dorian’s obsession with the book Lord Henry gave him?

2. What is ironic about the way people view “beautiful people”?

3. Why does Dorian like to study the paining?

4. Which is more horrible in your opinion, signs of sin on the face or signs of age?

5. What hobbies take up most of Dorian’s time?

6. What do Dorian’s treasures help him to do? What is he trying to escape from?

7. What are signs that Dorian has become obsessed and paranoid about the painting?

8. What horrible rumors are starting to be said about Dorian? Why would it be dangerous for the painting to be stolen?

9. Why doesn’t anyone believe the horrible rumors about Dorian?

10. Describe what Dorian received from his ancestors? What do you think his ancestors failed to give him?

11. Describe some fascinating characters from Lord Henry’s book.

12. How is Gian Visconti like General Zaroff from “The Most Dangerous Game”?

13. How did Lord Henry’s book “poison” Dorian? What does Wilde suggest evil allows humans to do?

**Chapter 12**

1. What happens the night before Dorian’s 38th birthday on November 9th at 11pm? Why do you think the author gives such

specific detail about that evening?

2. Why does Dorian pretend not to see Basil and lie about his actions?

3. What is ironic about Basil’s declaration, “Every gentleman is interested in a good name?”

4. As an artist, what does Basil say about sin and its impact on the human body?

5. Describe what happens to 5 of Dorian’s closest friends.

6. Why does Dorian say people leave the room when he enters?

7. Do you agree with Basil’s statement, “You can judge a person by the effect he or she has on his or her friends?”

8. Why is Basil trying to “preach” to Dorian? What is he trying to do? Why is Basil suffering?

**Chapter 13**

1. When the curtain is torn, how old does the character in the paining appear to be?

2. What 3 things does Dorian blame Basil and Lord Henry for?

3. Why does Basil call out to God? What does he realize about his idolatry for Dorian?

4. Dorian cries and states that all humans have “hell and heaven inside of them” – do you agree?

5. Why can’t Dorian repent? Why does he hate Basil?

6. What happens at 1:40 am?

7. How does Dorian create an alibi for himself?

**Chapter 14**

1. Dorian contemplates how Basil caused him to suffer and believes his death was just. What images in the morning are ironic?

2. When Alan Campbell meets with Dorian, what are 5 ways Campbell shows his disgust?

3. Why is Campbell’s knowledge of chemistry useful to Dorian?

4. What forces Campbell to help Dorian?

5. Do you believe Basil is responsible for Dorian’s corruption?

6. Why is it ironic that Dorian cannot look at the body?

7. What change occurs to the painting?

**Chapter 15**

1. How is the dinner at 8pm the same evening evidence of Dorian’s “double life”?

2. Why is Lady Narborough bored with her daughter? Why is this ironic?

3. Why does Lord Henry say women love men?

**Chapter 16**

1. What does Lord Henry suggest is the only way to “cure the soul”?

2. Why does Adrian say he does not need friends?

3. Why is Dorian called, “The Devil’s Bargain”?

4. What is the danger of addiction? What does it cause people to do?

5. How does James Vane find Dorian? What saves Dorian’s life?

6. James has been cheated of the chance for justice. Who tells him that Dorian is truly “Prince Charming”?

**Chapter 17**

1. Lord Henry says, “It is better to be beautiful than good and better to be good that ugly”. Do you agree?

2. What are the 7 Deadly Sins? What are the 7 Virtues? (Lord Henry calls them the “deadly” virtues, using sarcasm.)

3. What is Lord Henry’s philosophy about art, love and religion?

4. Why does the Duchess respect the Greeks at the time of the Trojan War?

5. What causes Dorian to faint when he goes to get orchids for the Duchess?

**Chapter 18**

1. What actions show that Dorian is a coward? What is he afraid of?

2. Finally, Dorian shows some remorse. What is he really sorry for?

3. What is Dorian’s reaction when Geoffrey sees the hare? Why is this ironic?

4. What accident is caused by Geoffrey’s gunshot?

5. What does Wilde say is the worst sin? Why?

6. Why does Lord Henry say Dorian has “everything a man could want”? What does Dorian have? What does Dorian not have?

7. Why can’t Dorian fall in love?

8. Why does Lord Henry want to meet a man who “committed murder”? Why can he not believe Dorian has murdered?

9. What is Dorian willing to do for the family of the dead man? What is his motivation?

10. Who is the dead man? Why is this ironic?

11.When Dorian cries, who or what does he cry for? How does this continue to show his selfishness?

**Chapter 19**

1. What is Dorian’s “first” act of goodness?

2. Why does Lord Henry state that Dorian’s act of goodness is actually bad?

3. Why does Lord Henry believe that Dorian is incapable of murder?

4. What does Dorian know about “the soul”?  
5. Dorian states that Lord Henry “poisoned” him. Do you agree that Dorian’s corruption is Lord Henry’s fault?

6. Do you believe that “art has no influence on action”?

7. Dorian used to be pleased when he was noticed and talked about, what has changed?

**Chapter 20**

1. Why does Dorian wish the sins he committed showed on his face? What does he believe about punishment?

2. What does Dorian say, “ruined his soul”?

3. Do you believe Dorian has repented, or is there proof that he is still only concerned about himself?

4. What is ironic about what would happen if Dorian confessed to the murder?

5. What does Dorian hope his shame and humility will produce?

6. How will Dorian use the knife that killed Basil to set himself free?

7. What is the only piece of identification the servants recognize on Dorian’s body?

8. What is ironic about the painting?

9. Would you want to have a magical painting like Dorian’s?