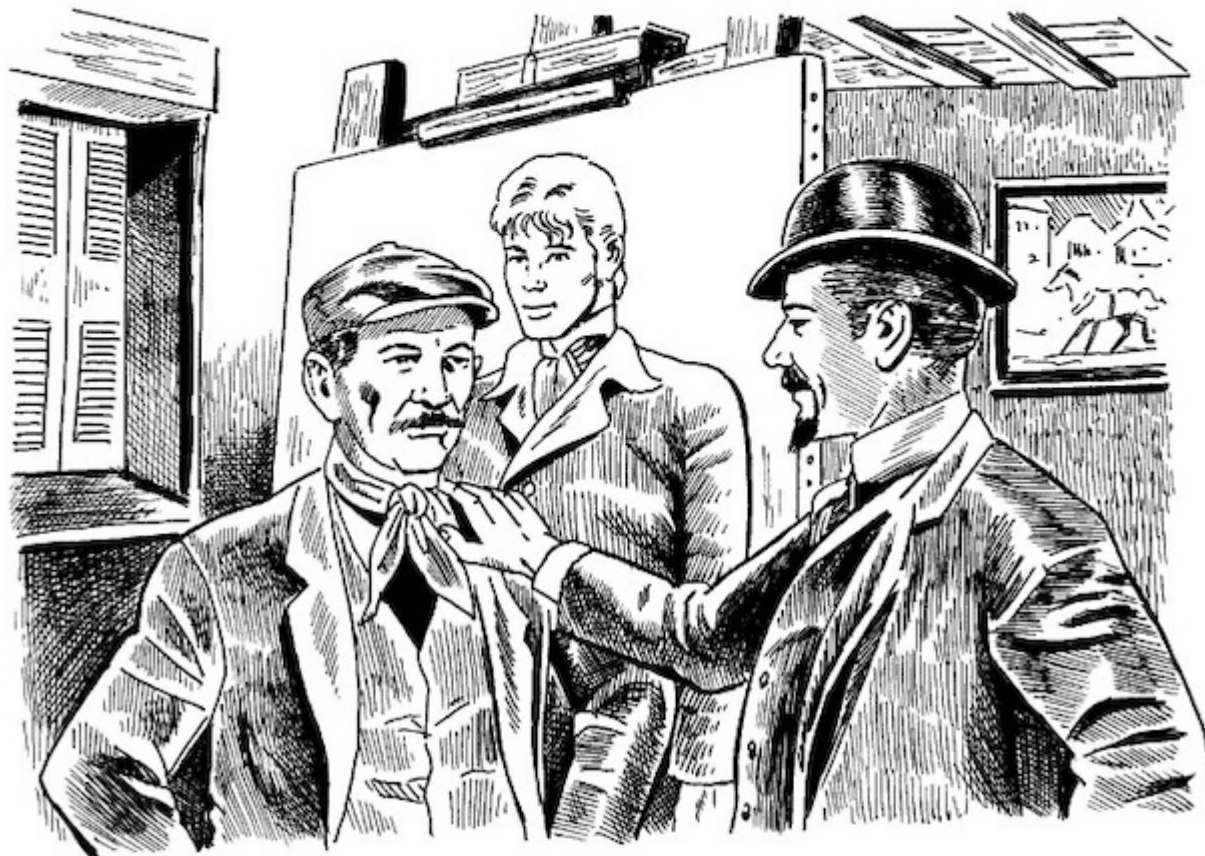


Two Very Different Friends



Basil doesn't want people to see the painting he is finishing.

Preview

1. Read the name of the story.
2. Look at the picture.
3. Read the sentence under the picture.
4. Read the first five paragraphs of the story.
5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that the artist of the painting

- a. is Lord Henry.
- b. has forgotten who the man in the painting is.
- c. grows happier as he looks at his work.
- d. does not really like Lord Henry.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 10 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read to learn more about the young man in the painting.

Two Very Different Friends

The artist gazed at the painting before him. The young man in the painting had pink cheeks and golden hair curling over his blue eyes. The longer the artist stared at the painting, the happier he became. Suddenly, he frowned. He put his hand over his eyes as if he had had a good dream he was afraid he might forget.

"That is the best work you have ever done, Basil," Lord Henry said to the artist.

"It isn't finished yet, Henry."

"Where will you show it first?" asked Lord Henry.

"I'm not showing it anywhere," said Basil.

"Artists are very strange," Lord Henry said as he smoothed his pointed beard. "You work for years hoping people will notice your art. Then when you finally paint something they will talk about, you want to hide it!"

"I've put too much of myself into it," said Basil.

Lord Henry laughed. "You don't look anything like the young man in the painting. You're ten years older, your hair is black, and you think too much! Thinking chases the beauty out of anyone's face! I'm sure the young man in your painting doesn't think at all!"

"Just because Dorian Gray is handsome doesn't mean he will have an easy life."

"Dorian Gray?" asked Lord Henry. "Is that the young man's name?"

"I wasn't planning to tell you his name," said Basil. "The older I get, the more I keep secrets. When I travel, I never tell my butler exactly where I'm going. It is much more exciting if no one knows where I'll be. Does that sound strange to you?"

"You forget that I'm married," said Lord Henry. "If you weren't so independent, you'd marry too. Then you'd see how important it is to keep secrets! I never know where my wife truly is, and she never knows what I am truly doing. When we do meet by mistake, we laugh at each other's lies!"

The breeze shook the spring blossoms as they stepped into the garden. "I hate it when you put down married life," said Basil. "You've never done a single thing to be ashamed of. You only pretend that you have a bad character so that you can surprise people with the amusing things you say."

Lord Henry smiled. "Tell me how you met Dorian Gray."

"I was at a party when I felt someone watching me. I turned and saw Dorian. My whole body went cold with fear! Something told me he would influence the character of my work and have a terrible power over my life. You know how independent I am, Henry. I turned to leave. But the woman holding the party grabbed my arm. She told me she wanted to introduce me to a handsome young man she thought I should paint. That young man was Dorian Gray, of course. The strange feeling that he was a danger to me passed. We became friends. Now I see him every day."

"I thought art was the only thing you could ever care about!" said Lord Henry.

"Dorian is my art now. Something about him seems to influence my painting. He has brought a new kind of art into my mind. If I let people see my picture of Dorian, they wouldn't understand this new kind of art.

They might only see how important he is to me. If I showed his picture, I would feel ashamed, as if I had hung up my soul for people to look and laugh at."

"You imagine that you need Dorian to inspire you. You are wrong," said Lord Henry. "As his face ages, you'll feel as if he somehow wronged you. Then you'll find a new sitter to inspire your art."

"You don't understand how important Dorian is," said Basil. Lord Henry smiled to himself. People's feelings were so amusing! He thought their feelings were much more interesting than their ideas.

"I just remembered!" said Lord Henry, "My aunt told me she had met a young man named Dorian Gray. He offered to help her with her work in the poorest part of London. She said he had a very good character, which I thought meant he must be some ugly fellow with nothing better to do than help the poor. I didn't know he was your friend! I'll ask my aunt to introduce me to him!"

"I'd rather you didn't meet him!" said Basil.

Just then, Basil's butler came down the path. "Mr. Gray is waiting for you inside, sir," he said.

Lord Henry laughed. "Now you have to introduce me!"

"Dorian has a simple and kind soul," Basil said. "Don't try to influence him. Your influence will hurt him. Don't go after someone who matters so much to my art!"

"What a silly thing to say!" Lord Henry said as he hurried to the house.

Two Very Different Friends

COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

Preview Answer:
c. grows happier as he looks
at his work.

1. Basil says he's put too much of himself in the picture, but Henry says
 - a. that's why Basil shouldn't show the painting.
 - b. people are already talking about the painting.
 - c. Basil thinks too much to be as handsome as the painting.
 - d. he is more handsome than Basil.
2. Whenever Basil travels, he
 - a. doesn't tell anyone his exact plans.
 - b. writes to Lord Henry.
 - c. visits his family.
 - d. tells everyone he meets that he's a famous artist.
3. Henry jokes about lying to his wife, but Basil
 - a. still believes that Henry is a good man.
 - b. knows Henry must not love his wife.
 - c. worries that Henry's wife will lie to Dorian Gray.
 - d. is glad that he never married.
4. The first time Basil saw Dorian Gray, he
 - a. asked if he could paint him.
 - b. was at a party at Lord Henry's house.
 - c. told Dorian that he was a danger to his art.
 - d. was afraid of Dorian.
5. Basil says Dorian is important to him, but Lord Henry
 - a. says his wife would be better to paint.
 - b. tells Basil he should travel until he forgets Dorian.
 - c. knows Dorian is older than they are.
 - d. believes Basil only cares about his art.
6. Lord Henry believes that Dorian Gray
 - a. already looks very old.
 - b. will only inspire Basil as long as he is young.
 - c. has very amusing ideas.
 - d. has made Basil paint terribly.
7. Because Dorian wanted to help the poor, Henry thought Dorian was
 - a. good-hearted and kind.
 - b. an old friend of their family.
 - c. someone who had once been poor himself.
 - d. ugly, because he thinks pretty people don't bother being good.
8. Basil doesn't want Lord Henry to meet Dorian
 - a. unless Dorian asks to be introduced.
 - b. because he worries Henry may influence Dorian in a bad way.
 - c. until after the painting is finished.
 - d. because he's sure Henry won't like Dorian.
9. Another name for this story could be
 - a. "The Ugly Fellow in the Painting."
 - b. "Basil's Secret Trip."
 - c. "A Good and Kind Young Man."
 - d. "Dorian's Amusing Life."
10. This story is mainly about how
 - a. Henry's aunt is silly to help the poor.
 - b. Henry doesn't like Basil's new painting.
 - c. the artist has been influenced by Dorian Gray.
 - d. Basil looks forward to introducing his two friends.

Check your answers with the keys on page 67.

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