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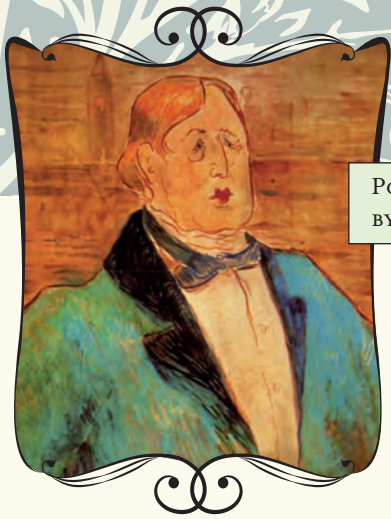
Art for art's sake

THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

Oscar Wilde belonged to the Aesthetic Movement, a group of poets, painters, writers and critics in the late Victorian period that included the painter James McNeill Whistler and the designer William Morris.

The movement believed in the independence of art and put more value in form or appearance than in subject matter. They believed in art as art rather than as a means to some moral, political or social judgement or reflection. This was in sharp contrast to the social realism of Victorian writers and critics such as Charles Dickens and John Ruskin. For the Aesthetic Movement, art should not be concerned with controversial issues; it should simply celebrate beauty with as much elegance as possible.





PORTRAIT OF OSCAR WILDE
BY HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

THE BEAUTY OF ART

'Art for art's sake' was the motto of the Aesthetic Movement and Oscar Wilde was one of the main representatives. In many ways he can be considered as the first **celebrity style guru**. The idea was by no means new, and its motto (*'l'art pour l'art'*) was first coined[•] by the French poet Théophile Gautier. But it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that the concept[•] developed into an explicit rejection of moral issues. This was in part a reaction to the moral earnestness[•] of early Victorian writers and to the materialism of Victorian society.

The Aesthetic Movement, with its insistence on 'art for art's sake', challenged the strict morality and middle-class values that Victorian society held about the nature and function of art. Indeed many aspects of traditional Victorian life were in contrast to the aesthetic concepts of the movement.

CAN YOU THINK OF
A MODERN CELEBRITY
STYLE GURU?

- **aesthetic:** related to the beauty of something
- **coined:** invented (usually of words)
- **concept:** idea; belief
- **controversial:** that causes disagreement between people
- **critics:** people whose job is to give opinions of literary and artistic work
- **earnestness:** seriousness
- **form:** (here) appearance
- **moral:** idea of good or bad behavior
- **realism:** (here) showing life as it really is

The Picture of Dorian Gray



Dorian Gray



Lord Henry Wotton



Sibyl Vane



Alan Campbell



James Vanz



Basil Hallward

BEFORE READING

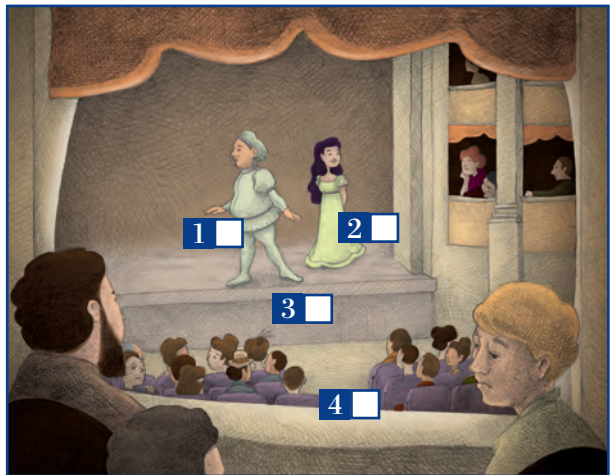
1 Match the words from the novel to the pictures.


a frame b sitter c portrait d artist e brushes f easel



2 Match the theatre words to the picture.

a actor
b stage
c actress
d audience



3  Have you ever been to the theatre? Tell a friend.




4 Match the descriptions to the pictures of the characters.

- a Dorian Gray is a very good-looking young man. He has got blond hair and blue eyes.
- b Basil Hallward is an artist. He paints a portrait of Dorian Gray. He has got black hair and a strong face.
- c Lord Henry Wotton has got brown hair and a pointed beard. He always dresses very well, and he is interested in art. He has a big influence on Dorian Gray.
- d Sibyl Vane is a very beautiful young actress. She has got long dark hair and blue eyes. She is very talented.
- e James Vane is Sibyl's younger brother. He is big and tall and he wears rough clothes. He is not good-looking.
- f Alan Campbell has got dark hair. He is Dorian Gray's friend. He is a scientist.



Chapter 1

 A lovely scent of flowers filled the studio•. The light summer wind blew through the trees in the garden, and in through the open door. Lord Henry Wotton was lying on a divan•.

In the centre of the room, there was a portrait of a very beautiful young man. In front of it, sat the artist, Basil Hallward.

‘It’s your best work, Basil,’ said Lord Henry. ‘You must send it to a gallery.’

‘I won’t send it anywhere,’ Basil answered.

Lord Henry looked at him in surprise. ‘Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow•, why?’

‘I know you’ll laugh at me,’ Basil replied, ‘but I can’t exhibit• it. There is too much of me in it.’

Lord Henry laughed. ‘Too much of you in it! The portrait doesn’t look like you at all. You have a strong face and coal-black• hair. This young man is made out of ivory and rose petals. He never thinks. I’m sure of that. He’s some brainless• beautiful boy. You aren’t like him at all.’

‘You don’t understand me, Henry,’ answered Basil. ‘Of course, I don’t look like Dorian Gray.’

‘Dorian Gray? Is that his name?’ asked Lord Henry.

‘Yes, that’s his name. I didn’t want to tell you.’

‘But why not?’

‘Oh, I can’t explain. When I like people, I never tell their names to anyone. I love secrecy. It’s the one thing that can make modern life mysterious. I suppose you think I’m foolish•.’

- **brainless:** stupid
- **coal-black:** very black, like coal
- **divan:** sofa
- **exhibit:** show to the public

- **foolish:** not sensible; stupid
- **my dear fellow:** my friend
- **studio:** place where an artist works



Lord Henry laughed and pulled out his watch. ‘I must go, Basil,’ he said. ‘But before I go, you must answer my question.’

‘What is that?’ asked Basil.

‘Why won’t you exhibit Dorian Gray’s picture? I want the real reason.’

‘Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter•. I don’t want to exhibit this picture because it shows the secret of my soul•.’

Lord Henry laughed. ‘And what is that?’ he asked.

‘Two months ago, I went to a party at Lady Brandon’s. After about ten minutes, while I was talking to overdressed• ladies and boring academics, I suddenly felt that someone was looking at me. I turned, and I saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I went pale. I felt that there was about to be a terrible crisis in my life.

- **overdressed:** wearing clothes that are too smart or too formal
- **soul:** mind, character, thoughts and feelings
- **sitter:** somebody who sits for an artist to paint his/her portrait



‘I was afraid, and I turned to leave the room. I walked quickly to the door. But, I bumped into• Lady Brandon, who pulled me back into the party and I found myself face to face with the young man. I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him.’

‘And how did Lady Brandon describe this wonderful young man?’ asked Lord Henry.

‘Oh, something like this. “Charming• boy – I forget what he does – maybe he doesn’t do anything – oh, yes, he plays the piano – or is it the violin, dear Mr Gray?” We both laughed, and we became friends at once.’

‘Laughter is a good beginning for a friendship, and it’s the best ending for one,’ said Lord Henry.

• **bumped into:** met by chance

• **charming:** likeable; very attractive

“Tell me more about Mr Dorian Gray, Basil. How often do you see him?” continued Lord Henry.

“Every day. I need to see him every day.”

“But I thought you only cared about your art.”

“He is my art to me now,” said Basil. “The work I’ve done, since I met Dorian Gray, is the best work of my life.”

“Basil, this is extraordinary! I must see Dorian Gray.”

Basil got up from the chair he was sitting on, and he walked up and down the room. He thought for a while and then he said, “Henry, Dorian Gray gives me inspiration. But you might see nothing in him.”

“Then why won’t you exhibit his portrait?” asked Lord Henry.

“I don’t want to show my soul to the world.”

“Poets are not like you. Poets know a broken heart sells many books.”

“I hate them for it,” cried Basil. “An artist should create beautiful things, but he shouldn’t put anything of his own life into them. Nowadays men use art as a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty. That’s why the world will never see my portrait of Dorian Gray.”

ART

What do YOU think?

Should art be autobiographical
or just beautiful?

Can you think of or find any examples
of autobiographical art?

☰ Discuss in groups.

‘I think you’re wrong, Basil,’ said Lord Henry. Then he added, ‘My dear fellow, I’ve just remembered.’

‘Remembered what, Henry?’

‘Where I heard the name, Dorian Gray.’

‘Where was it?’ asked Basil, with a frown•.

‘Don’t look so angry, Basil. It was at my aunt, Lady Agatha’s house. She told me about a wonderful young man. He’s helping her in the East End•, and his name’s Dorian Gray. She said that he was very serious and kind.’

‘I don’t want you to meet him, Henry.’

Just then, the butler• came in.

‘Mr Dorian Gray is in the hall, Sir,’ he said.

‘You must introduce me now,’ cried Lord Henry, laughing.

Basil looked at Lord Henry. ‘Dorian Gray is my dearest friend,’ he said. ‘Your aunt was right about him. Don’t spoil• him. Don’t try to influence him. Your influence will be bad.’

‘Nonsense•!’ said Lord Henry, smiling. ‘Show him in,’ he added to the butler.

BAD INFLUENCE

Do you think people or friends can have a good or bad influence on each other? How?

🗨️ Discuss with a partner.

- **butler**: most important male servant in a big house
- **East End**: poor area of London in Oscar Wilde’s time

- **frown**: angry facial expression
- **nonsense**: that’s not true; that’s silly
- **spoil**: (here) change somebody’s good character

AFTER READING VOCABULARY

1 Use five of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

sitter bump butler stain stable dreary wire frown

- a A road or an area can be , that is, dull and depressing.
- b If you into people, it means you meet them by chance.
- c A is the most important male servant in a big house.
- d An angry facial expression is called a
- e A is a string made of metal.

2  In pairs, create three sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1.

3 For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original one but using the words given in capitals; do not change these words in any way.

- a 'There is only one piece of evidence against me – the portrait.' **OTHER**
.....
- b 'I don't want to show my soul to the world.' **SEE**
.....
- c 'I've never heard such a beautiful voice.' **MOST**
.....
- d 'Tell me the truth. Were you married to my father?' **AND**
.....
- e 'Each of us has heaven and hell in him.' **ARE**
.....
- f 'If you move, I'll shoot you.' **OR**
.....

P B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5

1 Complete the sentences below by choosing the correct answer.

- a 'Stop, James!' she exclaimed. 'You say anything against him. I love him.'
- A** mustn't **B** don't **C** haven't **D** can't
- b 'I wanted to keep the loveliness of my youth. Has my wish fulfilled?'
- A** had **B** been **C** now **D** ever
- c 'My dear boy, I must see you. Let me '
- A** come **B** go **C** out **D** in
- d 'I hate the idea of my soul evil.'
- A** being **B** is **C** been **D** has
- e As Dorian was having breakfast, Basil was into the room.
- A** gone **B** appeared **C** being **D** shown
- f Dorian saw James's face close to the window. 'Maybe I imagined it,' he thought. 'The servants reported a stranger near the house. I just imagined it.'
- A** have **B** are **C** haven't **D** just
- g - 'Let's go to the park,' said Sybil.
- 'Very well,' he said, 'but be a long time dressing.'
- A** will **B** must **C** don't **D** can't
- h 'What's going on in town? I haven't been the club for days.'
- A** to **B** in **C** seen **D** left
- i 'Should I confess Basil's murder? No, that's a stupid idea.'
- A** my **B** for **C** of **D** to
- j 'You smile? When you have lost your youth, you smile.'
- A** don't **B** won't **C** didn't **D** couldn't
- k 'Sybil's death is in all the morning newspapers. will have to be an inquest, of course.'
- A** It **B** There **C** This **D** Everything