



**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED

*The  
Picture  
of  
Dorian  
Gray*

**Oscar Wilde**  
Read by **Greg Wise**

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## CD 1

1	The Preface	3:34
2	Chapter 1	7:35
3	'Dorian Gray? Is that his name?' asked Lord Henry...	5:22
4	'The story is simply this,' said the painter after some time.	8:03
5	Lord Henry stroked his pointed brown beard...	7:10
6	The painter considered for a few moments.	6:50
7	Chapter 2	5:09
8	Dorian Gray stepped upon the dais...	7:15
9	Hallward painted away with that marvellous bold touch...	4:48
10	'No, you don't feel it now.'	7:11
11	After about a quarter of an hour...	7:17
12	Dorian Gray lifted his golden head from the pillow...	6:56
13	Chapter 3	2:14

**Total time on CD 1: 79:32**

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## CD 2

1	When Lord Henry entered the room...	8:38
2	So that was the story of Dorian Gray's parentage...	6:28
3	'We are talking about poor Dartmoor, Lord Henry...'	8:12
4	He played with the idea and grew wilful...	6:12
5	Chapter 4	5:49
6	'Never marry a woman with straw-coloured hair...'	6:59
7	'Well, I found myself seated in a horrid little private box...'	6:17
8	Dorian Gray leaped to his feet...	7:06
9	Lord Henry watched him with a subtle sense of pleasure.	4:23
10	As he left the room...	8:11
11	Chapter 5	5:10
12	Mrs Vane glanced at her...	6:01

**Total time on CD 2: 79:34**

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### CD 3

1	The lad muttered something to himself...	5:49
2	'You have a new friend, I hear...'	6:27
3	At the Marble Arch they hailed an omnibus...	5:34
4	Chapter 6	5:51
5	'My dear Harry, my dear Basil...'	6:57
6	'Pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about...'	6:39
7	Chapter 7	5:37
8	Dorian Gray grew pale as he watched her...	5:07
9	As soon as it was over...	4:32
10	She looked at him in wonder and laughed...	6:43
11	After a little while, he hailed a hansom...	8:45
12	Chapter 8	6:00
13	As he often remembered afterwards...	5:23

**Total time on CD 3: 79:33**

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## CD 4

1	'Marrying Sybil Vane!' cried Lord Henry...	6:13
2	'My dear Dorian,' answered Lord Henry...	6:03
3	'Well, would you believe it. A week ago...'	7:56
4	As he closed the door behind him...	7:00
5	Chapter 9	5:10
6	'No,' said Dorian Gray, 'there is nothing fearful about it...'	6:00
7	'I will try and do something, Dorian, if it would please you...'	5:31
8	'Let us sit down, Dorian,' said the painter...	4:59
9	Dorian Gray drew a long breath...	4:50
10	Chapter 10	6:20
11	In two or three minutes there was another knock...	7:41
12	When the sound of their footsteps had died away...	7:20
13	Chapter 11	4:23

**Total time on CD 4: 79:34**

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## CD 5

1	There were moments, indeed, at night...	6:52
2	There are few of us who have not sometimes wakened...	7:01
3	And so he would now study perfume...	5:53
4	He discovered wonderful stories, also, about jewels...	8:34
5	And so, for a whole year, he sought to accumulate...	6:24
6	For, while he fascinated many, there were not a few...	7:53
7	Yet one had ancestors in literature as well...	6:31
8	Chapter 12	5:33
9	'They must interest you, Dorian...'	5:42
10	'I must speak and you must listen...'	6:25
11	Chapter 13	7:54
12	His hand shook and the candle fell...	4:38

**Total time on CD 5: 79:29**

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## CD 6

1	How quickly it had all been done!	6:00
2	Chapter 14	7:16
3	He sighed, and took up the volume again...	5:46
4	At last the door opened and his servant entered.	6:03
5	'You must have something to do with it...'	6:55
6	As the chime struck one, Campbell turned round...	6:18
7	Chapter 15	5:19
8	But at dinner he could not eat anything...	8:15
9	The men laughed, and Mr. Chapman got up solemnly...	8:10
10	Chapter 16	5:39
11	Suddenly the man drew up with a jerk...	6:46
12	Dorian walked to the door with a look of pain in his face...	7:01

**Total time on CD 6: 79:34**

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## CD 7

1	James Vane stood on the pavement in horror.	2:45
2	Chapter 17	6:05
3	'You bewilder me. Let us talk of someone else.'	8:02
4	Chapter 18	6:01
5	Suddenly from a lumpy tussock of old grass...	5:20
6	Dorian heaved a sigh of relief...	5:41
7	Upstairs, in his own room, Dorian Gray was lying on a sofa...	5:36
8	Chapter 19	7:52
9	Dorian said nothing, but rose from the table...	6:20
10	The elder man lay back and looked at him...	5:04
11	'I am not the same, Harry.'	6:21
12	Chapter 20	6:18
13	He took the lamp from the table...	7:35

**Total time on CD 7: 79:09**

**Total time on CDs 1–7: 9:16:25**



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Oscar Wilde  
(1854–1900)

# The Picture of Dorian Gray

Murder, intrigue, decay of the body and soul – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is far removed from the popular view of Oscar Wilde as a writer of delicate social comedy. It is also difficult to avoid the view that *Dorian Gray*, Wilde's only novel, is heavily autobiographical, in a metaphorical, if not literal, sense. While none of its male characters can be said to be Wilde himself, each occasionally reveals a mood, or expresses a thought, which feels quintessentially to be of the man himself.

The main idea for the story came from an actual episode. In 1884, Wilde often used to drop in at the studio of a painter, Basil Ward, one of whose sitters was a young man of exceptional beauty. Incidentally, Wilde must have been a godsend to many painters of the time, as his conversation kept their sitters perpetually entertained. When the portrait was done and the youth had gone, Wilde

happened to say 'What a pity that such a glorious creature should ever grow old!' The artist agreed, adding 'How delightful it would be if he could remain exactly as he is, while the portrait aged and withered in his stead!' Wilde expressed his obligation by naming the painter in his story 'Basil Hallward'.

First published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890, then revised and expanded when published in book form in 1890, *Dorian Gray* mixes elements of *Grand Guignol* with dastardly deeds in the mode of supposedly decadent, late 19th-century French fiction. Handfuls of epigrams are tossed in, like diamonds scattered in a coal cellar.

This tale of moral decay and social opprobrium, laced with macabre supernatural touches, is chillingly distinct from Wilde's plays, where witty glitter holds together unlikely plots. *Dorian Gray*

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still has the power to disturb, even though today's *bourgeoisie* is much less shockable than in Wilde's day.

Oscar Fingall O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Dublin on October 16th, 1854. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize for poetry in 1878. His espousal of the *fin de siècle* Aesthetic Movement, which preached devotion to art above all else, resulted in acclaim from some, and deep hostility from others. In 1882 Wilde arrived in North America to give a lecture tour, announcing as he landed that he had 'nothing to declare but my genius'.

Wilde insisted that art had nothing to do with morality, though paradoxically the central plot of *Dorian Gray* can be interpreted as establishing precisely the opposite – a conundrum Wilde himself would undoubtedly have relished. The comedies *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) established his reputation as a major writer for the stage.

But in May 1895 he was sentenced to two years' hard labour, serving the bulk

of that at Reading gaol. Wilde had been found guilty of homosexual conduct, of which he had been publicly accused by the Marquess of Queensberry, father of Lord Alfred Douglas, one of Wilde's closest friends. Wilde sued the Marquess for libel, but his action collapsed when the evidence went against him.

He served the full term of his sentence and on release in May 1897 went to France. By now bankrupt, he was joined in France by Douglas, dying in Paris on November 1900 of inflammation of the brain brought on by an ear infection. Before he died, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

Wilde's reputation today rests on his two theatrical masterpieces, but *The Picture of Dorian Gray* stands as a major contribution to the English novel, its brooding, dissolute central figure almost a perfect caricature of Wilde himself.

### **Notes by Gary Mead**

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## THE PREFACE

The artist is the creator of beautiful things.

To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things.

The highest, as the lowest, form of criticism is a mode of autobiography.

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope.

They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty. There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book.

Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.

The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass.

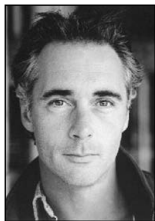
The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass.

The moral life of man forms part of the subject-matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium. No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.

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No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in  
an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.  
No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything.  
Thought and language are to the artist instruments of an art.  
Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.  
From the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is  
the art of the musician. From the point of view of feeling,  
the actor's craft is the type.  
All art is at once surface and symbol.  
Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril.  
Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.  
It is the spectator and not life, that art really mirrors.  
Diversity of opinion of a work of art shows that the  
work is new, complex, and vital.  
When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself.  
We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as  
he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useful  
thing is that one admires it intensely.  
All art is quite useless.

OSCAR WILDE



**Greg Wise** studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He has appeared in feature films such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), in which he played John Willoughby, and many films for television, including *Place of Execution* (2008) and *Trial & Retribution X: Sins of the Father* (2006). He has also featured in BBC period dramas *Cranford* (2007), *Madame Bovary* (2000) and *The Moonstone* (1996). His stage credits include *Richard II* and *The Recruiting Officer*. This is his first reading for Naxos AudioBooks.

## Credits

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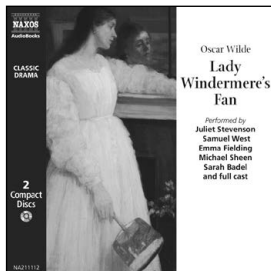
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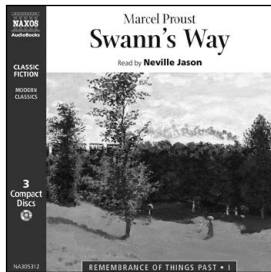
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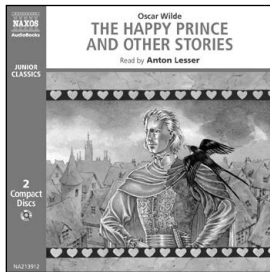
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