Basil Hallward and his friend Lord Henry Wotton are enjoying a fine summer day in the garden of Basil's home. Lord Henry is admiring Basil's portrait of a young man. He tells Basil he must exhibit the picture at the Grosvenor, because in his estimation it is the best work Basil has ever done. But, Basil is adamant in his refusal to display the picture in public. Lord Henry is dismayed by his friend's reluctance, as it is the only way for an artist to become recognized in the art world. He feels if others see the painting, then Basil's reputation as a great artist will be forever set in the minds of his contemporaries. Basil has his own reasons for keeping the painting to himself and he is also unwilling to tell Lord Henry who the young man in the picture is.

Lord Henry is insistent in trying to find out why Basil will not show the painting. Basil, in the end, capitulates to Lord Henry's request to satisfy his curiosity. He tells Lord Henry the portrait reveals too much of himself to the viewer. This explanation only serves to intensify Lord Henry's curiosity. He now is insistent to hear the real reason Basil will not display his art for public viewing.

Basil, in his desire to change the topic, tells Lord Henry the picture does not reflect his own physical self, but that of his friend Dorian Gray. He regrets saying Dorian's name the minute it slips past his lips. He is a man who likes to keep all aspects of his life secret. Lord Henry is now totally caught up in finding out more about this Dorian Gray, and the real reason Basil refuses to show the painting.

Basil tries to answer his questions, by telling the story of how he and Dorian met. They were both at a party given by Lady Brandon. Basil saw Dorian and their eyes locked on each other; he knew from the start this man could cause him great sorrow and also engulf his whole being. He tried to leave the party to get away from Dorian as quickly as possible but, Lady Brandon stopped him and he was introduced to Dorian. The two of them have become inseparable, as Dorian has become Basil's muse. He feels everything he paints is enhanced by the mere presence of Dorian. He tells Lord Henry he is doing the best work of his life, because Dorian has allowed him to see things differently. He feels he is painting in an entirely new style and that his life as an artist depends on Dorian Gray.

While the two men are talking, Dorian is announced by the butler. Lord Henry insists on being introduced to this extraordinary young man. Basil entreats him not to do or say anything which might spoil Dorian's beautiful way of looking at the world. Dorian is introduced to Lord Henry, who tells him of their connection though Lord Henry's Aunt Agatha. It seems Dorian and Aunt Agatha are friends, who also, periodically perform piano duets together.

Basil is ready to continue his painting of Dorian, so he asks Lord Henry to leave, to allow him to concentrate on his work. But, Dorian protests, because Basil does not speak while he is painting and it becomes boring for Dorian to stand posing, with no one to talk to. Basil allows Lord Henry to stay to keep Dorian company, little does he know how this decision will affect his friend. Lord Henry forgets his promise to not upset or fill Dorian's mind with new ideas, so he begins to expound on the idea of influence being immoral, even so called good influence. His reasoning is that influence takes a person's natural thoughts and ideas, and shapes them to conform to the thoughts and ideas of another person. This keeps a person from living out the thoughts and desires of his own life. This new thought process is too much for the naïve Dorian and he tells Lord Henry to stop talking.

The two men retire to the garden to give Dorian a break from posing, which gives Lord Henry the opportunity to expound about beauty. He explains to Dorian, his beauty is only a temporary part of his life and one day he will be a wrinkled haggard old man, who looks back at his handsome self with sadness. Dorian had never contemplated the possibility his looks might one day fade. He is taken aback by this sudden revelation and he is shocked by the thought of losing his looks.

Basil calls the men back into his studio and finishes the painting. He is proud of his work, calling it the finest painting he has ever done. He is waiting for Dorian to tell him how much he loves the portrait, but instead the young man can only see it as the reminder of lost beauty it will be to him as he ages. He wishes he could allow the painting to age, while he remains his handsome youthful self.

He hurts Basil's feelings with his reaction to the painting, so much so that Basil is prepared to destroy it. Dorian stops him, telling him he loves the painting. Later Dorian and Lord Henry make plans to go the theater together. Basil strongly disapproves of this arrangement, but he is not able to dissuade Dorian from his plans.

Lord Henry takes Basil's friend and muse, Dorian, from a young and innocent man to a man who is frightened of aging. He, through his words, makes Dorian aware the world is not the bright and wonderful place he thinks it is. He, instead, lets him know how much influence and the ravages of time can change a person. Meanwhile, Basil will do anything to keep Dorian the way he is, so he can continue being his muse.

Lord Henry, the next day, visits his uncle, Lord Fermor to gain information about Dorian's background. He learns that Dorian is the son of a low level officer, in a foot regiment and his mother is Lady Margaret Devereux. His mother's father is Lord Kelso, who had Dorian's father killed and a year after his father's death, his mother died. This left Dorian to be raised by his heartless grandfather, Lord Kelso. Dorian inherited his beauty from his mother and his grandfather kept him isolated, which explains his innocence to the ways of the world.

Lord Henry, after gleaning this information from his uncle, proceeds to a lunch engagement with his aunt and her friends. Also at the lunch is Dorian, which is the real reason Lord Henry has accepted the invitation. There is an eclectic mix of people at the party, ranging from an author to a member of parliament. They have a fine time exploring the topic of American women who have traveled to England to find husbands. The women at the lunch find this practice unsettling, because how are the English women supposed to find husbands, if the American women are snatching up the respectable English men. They also find Americans rather common, which is to say they do not live up to the social standards of English society.

Lord Henry is in a philosophical mood and tells one of the ladies the way to stay young is to repeat the mistakes she made in her youth. He feels that using common sense is the kiss of death, but a person seldom regrets the mistakes they make.

All during the lunch, Dorian is sitting at the table looking at Lord Henry with a look of fascination. He wants to spend the rest of the day with him, just to hear him speak. He wants to hear the ideas Lord Henry has and is willing to give up his day with Basil, to spend time with him.

A month later Dorian visits Lord Henry at his home. He meets Lord Henry's wife, Victoria, who is charming and also interested in Dorian, because he has become so important to her husband. Lord Henry is using Dorian as a subject to study how a human, who has been sheltered most of his life, reacts to being suddenly exposed to new thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Dorian is excited to tell Lord Henry of his new love, an actress named Sibyl Vane. She acts in a little theater that is in one of the poorer sections of London. Every night she performs a different role in a different play, but the role which won Dorian's heart was Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. He fell in love with her fair looks and her acting talent. He has been back to see her perform every night since he saw her as Juliet. He is enthralled with the young lady, who lives with her mother and he is convinced is quite innocent.

Lord Henry tries to tell Dorian that all actresses are alike, they are all dyed hair and painted faces. To Dorian, Sibyl can do no wrong, she is the total embodiment of what a woman should be. He feels he knows her well, because he has met her and seen her talent as an actress. Dorian no longer goes to visit Basil and has even stopped eating dinner with Lord Henry, due to his need to see Sibyl every night.

Dorian has convinced Lord Henry to come and see his beloved Sibyl perform. He asks Lord Henry to write to Basil, because he is afraid Basil is upset with him. He has not spoken to him in a long time, not even to thank him for the portrait.

Lord Henry sees that Dorian is not only in love with Sibyl, but he is also in love with new experiences. This love of new experiences is directly related to the effect Lord Henry is having on Dorian. He is exposing Dorian to new ways of looking at the world and this inspires Dorian to take it upon himself to go out and explore the world. Lord Henry is sure the passion Dorian feels for Sibyl will pass and he wonders how it will end.

Lord Henry goes out for the evening to dine and that evening, he sees in the sunset the colors of the new life bursting in Dorian. Upon his return he is surprised to find a telegram from Dorian for him. The telegram announces Dorian's engagement to Sibyl Vane.

Dorian has become totally under the influence of Lord Henry. He takes everything Lord Henry tells him to heart. It should, then not surprise Lord Henry when Dorian begins to explore London on his own. Lord Henry is surprised at Dorian's announcement of his love for an actress, named Sibyl Vane. Dorian is beginning to lead life a bit more on his own terms, which Lord Henry tries to temper so Dorian does not make any major mistakes. Unfortunately, Lord Henry is not quick enough to stop Dorian from becoming engaged to the actress.

Sibyl Vane has told her mother of her love for Dorian Gray, but her mother's reaction is not one she had hoped for. She wanted her mother to be happy for her, instead her mother is more concerned with the money they owe Mr. Isaacs. One reason she is dubious about Sibyl's new love, is Sibyl does not know Dorian's name, she refers to him as Prince Charming.

Sibyl is bursting with joy and confidence her love will never leave her or cause her distress. Her mother is not so sure, but if this Prince Charming has some money then maybe she will encourage the relationship.

Sibyl's brother, James, who is sixteen, is sailing to Australia that day to seek his fortune. This is the plan Sibyl's mother has made for her son, and he seems willing to leave her household. Sibyl is unhappy about the separation from her brother, so she begs him to go on one last walk to the park with her before he boards his ship.

There in the park the two discuss Sibyl's relationship with Dorian. James is not at all pleased with this man, who is suddenly the source of all happiness for his sister. James is jealous and distrustful of Dorian. He warns her that if Dorian causes her any pain, he will come back and kill Dorian. Sibyl does not take her brother's threats to heart, as she thinks he is just venting his anger about her love of Dorian.

Back at the house just before James leaves to board his ship, he asks his mother the question she has been dreading for years. He asks her if she was ever married to his father. The answer is no, James father was a married man, but his mother swears he was a good man. He reminds her to never tell Sibyl and he repeats his threat towards Dorian, before he finally leaves for Australia.

That evening Lord Henry and Basil Hallward meet at a restaurant to dine with Dorian. Basil has not yet heard about Dorian's engagement to Sibyl. He is shocked at this sudden turn in events and he chides Dorian for not telling him of it himself. Dorian, who has arrived late for dinner, is not ashamed of his actions, instead he is brimming with the joy which love has infused him.

Lord Henry is still playing his little social experiment at Dorian's expense. He would like to see him marry Sibyl to observe how Dorian reacts, when he falls in love with someone else. Dorian does not know of Lord Henry's scheme, instead he tells him he is no longer under his influence regarding life and how to live it.

Basil is again taken aback after being told he would accompany Lord Henry and Dorian to the theater, to see Sibyl in a play. He is not in the mood to see this interloper to his life, but he goes along anyway. As the three men ready to leave, Basil is informed he must ride in a hansom by himself, because there is not enough room in Lord Henry's brougham. As he follows the two men to the theater, Basil realizes the relationship he once had with Dorian is past. Lord Henry and Sibyl Vane have taken his place in Dorian Gray's world.

At the theater Dorian is anxious to have his friends see Sibyl as he does. They agree she is very beautiful, but her performance that night is wooden. The exquisite actress who Dorian has fallen in love with is gone and in her place is the most inept actress to stand on stage. Dorian is embarrassed to see her this way, but he is even more embarrassed to have his friends see her poor acting. It is so bad that Basil and Lord Henry leave before the intermission is over.

After the play ends, Dorian goes backstage to see Sibyl to find out what is wrong with her. She is ecstatic about her performance. She explains to Dorian that before she and he kissed, she thought the world was the characters she played, but now she recognizes them to be the false world they truly are. She tells him she no longer wants to act, all she wants is to become his wife.

Dorian cannot believe what he is hearing. The reason he fell in love with her was due to her talent and her beauty, but without the talent he no longer loves her. Despite her tears and begging, Dorian leaves her and tells her he never wants to see her again.

The rest of the night he wanders the streets of London watching the people as they go about their lives, with no real purpose to his wanderings. As morning comes he returns back to his home and in his bedroom sees the picture Basil has painted of him. But, the picture has changed. The expression on the face has changed, the mouth has a cruel smile on its lips. He is stunned and then he remembers the wish he had made at Basil's, which is the picture would age and take on it his sins, while he remained young and beautiful forever. He now wonders if this wish has come true. In a turn of emotions he decides he has been cruel to Sibyl and now he wants to marry her and live with her forever.

Dorian feels the joys of love and the cruelty of hatred in these chapters. He also notices for the first time the changes in the painting, which correlate to his own behavior. Meanwhile, Sibyl is left distraught after Dorian breaks off their engagement.

After his horrible night of wandering the streets of London, after his breakup with Sibyl Vane, Dorian awakes the next day and wonders if the previous night was just a dream or reality.

As he tries to make sense of the previous evening, he sees the screen and remembers the changes to the picture, which is hidden behind it. He tries to decide if the changes to the picture are real or just his imagination. He is afraid to confirm his suspicion about the picture and at the same time afraid not to. Finally, he gathers up his courage and looks at the picture, which confirms his worst fear. The picture is different, it shows his mouth with a cruel smile upon its lips. He is full of remorse over the way he treated Sibyl, he decides he truly does want to marry her and he writes her a letter confessing his true feelings to her, asking for her forgiveness.

Before he can have the letter delivered to Sibyl, Lord Henry visits Dorian to check on how he is doing. This leaves Dorian confused, because while he was embarrassed by Sibyl's performance, Lord Henry does not know he broke off the engagement. Lord Henry has the sad duty to tell Dorian of Sibyl's death. She had ingested some poison in her dressing room and died instantly. While Dorian is stunned, he does not feel the utter grief normally associated with this type of tragedy. Lord Henry is more concerned with Dorian's reputation, because an inquest is being held to determine the circumstances of Sibyl's death.

Dorian does not think he can be tied to Sibyl by any of her acquaintances and so he would not be stained by the scandal of her suicide. Dorian does feel responsible for Sibyl's death. If he had not broken off with her, in such a cruel manner, than she would probably still be alive.

Dorian is now convinced the portrait will take on the physical attributes of every sin he commits. He feels this is somehow just and he is deserving of this miracle.

Basil Hallward visits Dorian the next morning to express his sympathy over the death of Sibyl Vane. He is astonished to find out Dorian had spent the previous evening at the opera with Lord Henry. He is even more outraged, to find Dorian has moved on from his feelings of sorrow over the loss of Sibyl. He promises to speak no more of Sibyl's death, but instead he changes the subject to the picture he painted of Dorian.

He wishes to see the picture, after he observes Dorian has hidden it behind a screen. Dorian is adamant that Basil should not see the painting. He tells Basil if he looks at the painting then he will never speak to Basil again. Basil is taken aback by his friend's vehement statement, but promises to abide by his wishes. He does tell Dorian he intends to use the piece as the main exhibit at an art show of his work, in Paris. Dorian is equally vehement the picture is never to be put on public display.

Basil is confused by his friend's actions and asks him why he is behaving in such a manner. Instead, Dorian turns the tables on Basil and gets him to confess his own feelings for Dorian. He tells him of his deep fondness and even possessiveness of Dorian. Dorian tells him what he has said does not even constitute a compliment and he will never sit for Basil again. He does want to keep him for a friend, though. Dorian in the end decides he must forever hide the picture.

Dorian calls for his servant and has him send for the frame-maker and summon the housekeeper. He also sends his servant on an errand to deliver a note to Lord Henry, this is a ruse to get the man out of the house, while Dorian has the picture moved. He has convinced himself his servant is trying to sneak a peek at the picture, but he realizes he is only imagining it.

The housekeeper is surprised by Dorian's request for the key to his old school-room. She wants to clean it up before Dorian enters the room, but he is insistent she turn over the key to him immediately. She does so reluctantly and she is curious as to why Dorian would want to enter the room now, after leaving the room untouched for five years.

Once the frame-maker and his helper arrive, they move the wrapped picture up into the school-room for Dorian. Once it is behind locked doors, Dorian begins to feel more at ease about the security of the picture. He alone holds the key to the room, so he knows no one else will be able to see the ravages of time and sin on the painting.

Lord Henry sends Dorian a book and the latest edition of the newspaper which has an article concerning the inquest into the death of Sibyl Vane. The death has been ruled a "death by misadventure". Dorian is in the clear, no one knows of his association with Sibyl. The book Lord Henry has sent, catches Dorian's interest, which causes him to be late for his dinner appointment with Lord Henry.

Dorian discovers Sibyl has taken her own life, because of her despair about their broken engagement. He is sad to hear of her death and he does feel some sense of responsibility, but he is not as distraught as he thought he would be. He is, however, very worried someone will see the painting and notice how it ages, while he does not.

The book which Lord Henry has given to Dorian, has taken him in a new direction. He buys nine editions of the book and he is continually reading and rereading the book. It is a story about a young man from Paris, who spends his life trying to explore all the passions and methods of thought from every century, except from the century in which the he exists. The book is full of references to mythological beings, historical figures, and symbolism, the book to Dorian represents his life before he has lived it.

He is also dogged by the nagging worry that someone might see the painting and discover his secret. He has had special bars put on the door to the room in which it is stored, but he finds himself more and more drawn to the room. He leaves parties and doesn't travel as much as he used to, to be close to the picture. The picture is showing his aging body and the stain of his sins on his face. He is happy to see the effects of living on the picture and not on his body. He lives life without caring very much about the social implications of his actions. He does fulfill his social obligations by having parties and also attending parties of his friends and social acquaintances. He is seen by some as the standard by which all others should strive to attain, in fashion and beauty.

He is fascinated by the need to have sensual experiences. He tries to do this through the study of perfumes, music, needlework, and gems. He also uses these times to push away the fear of being discovered for who he really is, a person who is actually aging and whose face shows the results of his sins. He is terrified someone will see the painting.

He becomes enamored of the Catholic Church because of the rituals of the church, but he does not join the Catholic Church. Dorian is enamored of anything which causes him to experience life in a way which he has not ever experienced it before.

He looks at the portraits of his ancestors lined up in the picture gallery of his home. He wonders, as he examines each ancestor's picture, if some of their blood and desire to remain young and beautiful caused him to be the person he is. He wonders if the wish, he made, was possible by some trait passed down to him through the generations.

He does feel some remorse for the way he has lived his life. It is part of the terror that goes along with the joy of the picture. He is afraid at times to look at the portrait, because it does reflect every act of evil and cruelty he has committed.

His life has changed, because of the book Lord Henry gave him. He has taken the book to heart and the book is tainting his view of life and those who he comes into contact.

On the night of his thirty-eighth birthday, Dorian and Basil meet on the sidewalk as Dorian is walking home Lord Henry's. Basil has just left Dorian's house after waiting for him for two hours, because he has something important to talk to Dorian about.

Basil explains to Dorian he is leaving to live in Paris for six months. He has a painting he wants to work on and Paris is the best place for him to work. Before leaving that evening, he has a few things he wants to tell Dorian.

It seems Basil has heard rumors about Dorian, which reflect very badly on him. He is told that Dorian is responsible, through influence and association, for the suicide of a young man, the ruined reputations of several young men and women, and other men will not stay in the same room as Dorian. Basil does not want to believe a word of these accusations, but he needs to hear from his friend the truth.

Dorian claims people leave the room, because he knows the secrets of their lives and they are frightened of him. He is not responsible for the actions of those whom he is acquainted with. He also thinks people of the middle class find joy in gossiping about the lives of the upper classes.

Basil is still not convinced, as he has seen how Dorian has based his life on filling it with only pleasure. He also points out the effect Dorian has had on Lord Henry's sister, Lady Gwendolen. She had a spotless reputation, until Dorian came into her life and now she is shunned by the ladies of her same social standing. Basil tells Dorian he wishes he could see his soul, but only God can see a man's soul.

With this statement Dorian makes a decision, he is going to show Basil the picture. Basil is reluctant to go with Dorian to the room, in which the picture is stored. He tells Basil he has kept a diary of his life, which will show Basil who he really is. Basil, thinking it would take hours to read the diaries, is reluctant to go with Dorian. All he wants is an answer to the charges which have been leveled at Dorian. Instead Dorian is insistent that Basil accompany him to the school-room.

Dorian has been influenced by a book Lord Henry loaned him. He has let its contents permeate every crevice of his life. This has led to having his reputation tarnished and Dorian's fear of the picture being discovered. Basil wants to know the truth about Dorian's life, but is reluctant to be faced with the bold facts of how Dorian lives. Dorian has decided to share the secret of the picture with Basil.

Dorian leads Basil to the school-room, which contains the picture, and instructs him to look behind the curtain covering the painting. Basil is reluctant to move the curtain, so Dorian does it for him. Basil is horrified by what he sees, at first not recognize the painting as his own work. Dorian's picture is of a horrible old man and only by finding his own signature on the painting, does Basil finally admit the painting is his own.

He still is not sure what the picture represents, so Dorian explains to him how the wish he made the day the painting was finished, has come to fruition. Basil realizes all the rumors he has heard about Dorian are true. He tells Dorian, he and Dorian must pray for forgiveness of their sins to purge them of this curse. Dorian is not willing to do as he says, instead he feels it is too late for forgiveness. He is filled with hatred for Basil and cannot stand to be around him any longer.

In a moment of rage, Dorian finds a knife, he had left in the room, and he plunges it into Basil. He repeatedly stabs him until he is sure Basil is dead and then he goes about the business of covering up his deed. He locks Basil's body in the room, stores his coat and bag in a hidden cupboard, replaces the lamp he brought upstairs with him, and goes outside to be let in by his servant. This is done in an effort to establish an alibi for himself. The valet had let Basil into the house earlier in the evening and saw him out of the house at eleven. He does not know Dorian and Basil returned to the house, so when he lets Dorian back into the house at 2:10 in the morning, he is able to give Dorian an alibi. Since Basil is supposed to be in Paris for six months, Dorian hopes no one will notice he is missing.

Dorian awakes the next morning, after having slept well, to slowly remember the events of the preceding night. He is still filled with hatred towards Basil and now he is trying to decide how to dispose of the body.

He remembers his former close friend, Alan Campbell, is a chemist. Even though he and Alan had at one time been inseparable, now they do not speak to one another. Dorian writes two letters, one is taken to Alan by Dorian's servant, the other Dorian keeps in his pocket. He is in agony waiting to see if Alan will come and help him with his problem.

Finally, Alan arrives and Dorian tells him of the body in the room upstairs. He tells Alan, Basil has committed suicide. He explains he wants Alan to make the body disappear, it seems Alan has worked on cadavers and he knows how to accomplish this task. Alan insists he will not help Dorian, because his work is for scientific discovery and not to help dispose of unwanted bodies. Dorian lets Alan know he has a letter in his pocket which could cause great him great harm, if mailed. He confesses to Alan he murdered Basil. Alan reluctantly agrees to help Dorian.

After acquiring the necessary items from his lab needed to dispose of the body, Alan and Dorian enter the room containing Basil's body. Dorian is agitated to see blood on the hands of the portrait of himself. He had forgotten the night before to hide the picture. He covers the picture and returns downstairs to wait for Alan to finish the job of disposing of the body. After he is done, Alan severs all ties to Dorian telling him he never wants to see him again.

That same evening Dorian attends a dinner at Lady Narborough's home. He does not want to be there, but feels it is necessary to continue his life as if nothing has happened. He is glad to see Lord Henry at the party and Lady Narborough is a good hostess. He is out of sorts throughout the meal and he hardly eats any food. This brings unwanted attention to himself from Lady Narborough and Lord Henry, they want to know what is bothering him. He tells them he is tired.

Lord Henry asks Dorian what he did the night before, after he had left him at eleven. Dorian is nervous and is not able to come up with a very convincing lie. First he tells him he went to the club, then he says he went for a walk, finally he settles on saying he has forgotten what he did. He goes overboard in giving Lord Henry a detailed description of when he arrived home. He goes so far as to tell Lord Henry he can ask his valet what time he returned home.

Dorian decides to leave the party early and returns home. At home, he takes Basil's coat and bag to the fireplace and burns them. He notices in his Florentine cabinet a box with a green paste wax. This fills him with a desire to go to the downtrodden side of London. He finds a driver to take him there.

Dorian has committed murder. He kills Basil, after showing him the effects his lifestyle has had on the painting. He, instead of being filled with remorse, is filled with terror over the prospect of being caught and tried for his crime. He blackmails a former friend and then indulges himself in a trip to the poor side of London.

Dorian takes a hansom to his favorite opium den. It is there he is going "to cure the souls by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul." This is the advice given to him long ago by Lord Henry, on how to deal with uncomfortable circumstances.

In the den he finds Adrian Singleton, a young man of his acquaintance, who Dorian had a hand in ruining his life. Dorian decides to leave this den in search of another, so he can rid himself of the memory and guilt of Basil's murder. First he and Adrian get a drink, which leads to an encounter, with one of the many women who make a living off the men in the opium den. She approaches Dorian, who in an effort to be rid of her, gives her some money. As he is leaving the den the woman calls Dorian, Prince Charming, this is because he is responsible for her downfall also.

A man hears her words and follows Dorian outside to the alley way. It is James Vane and he wants to avenge his sister's death. The only way he has of identifying the man responsible for Sibyl's suicide is the name Prince Charming. He grabs Dorian and puts a gun to his head. He tells Dorian he needs to repent his sins, because he is going to kill Dorian. Dorian escapes death by asking how long ago Sibyl died. After finding out it is eighteen years ago, he has the man look at his face under a street light. Dorian still looks like a young man of twenty, so James apologies and lets him go. It is only after the woman from the bar tells James the truth of Dorian's youthful looks, does James realize he should have followed through on his threat.

Dorian, a week later, is having a house party with about a dozen guests at his home. He, Lord Henry, and the Duchess of Monmouth are having a conversation touching on a variety of topics. Lord Henry has decided to rename flowers, because he feels the names they have been given do not reflect their beauty. Lord Henry again reasserts his opinion it is better to be beautiful than to be good, conversely he feels it is better to be good than ugly. This leads to a discussion of the seven deadly virtues, which Lord Henry believes is one of the tenets English society is built on. Duchess Monmouth takes from this line of reasoning, that Lord Henry doesn't like England.

From there the conversation changes to a discussion about love and romanticism. At last Dorian decides to go out to his conservatory, to pick an orchid for Duchess Monmouth to wear to dinner that evening. A little while later, a groan followed by a thud comes from the conservatory, which causes Lord Henry to rush to see what has happened. They find Dorian passed out in the conservatory, where he is put on a sofa and there he regains consciousness. The cause of his fainting is the sight of James Vane's face pressed against the window of the conservatory.

After seeing James Vane's face at the window of the conservatory, Dorian has gone to be alone for three days. He is terrified of what fate awaits him and when his death will come. He is also vexed by the thoughts of Basil and the murder of Basil. He does not know how to deal with his emotions, so he decides the sight of James Vane was a trick of his imagination.

On the third day he joins his guests as they are hunting and he sees Sir Geoffrey Clouston, who is Duchess Monmouth's brother, as he has just finished shooting at some birds. While they are talking, a rabbit runs into view, because Dorian is taken by the beauty of the animal, he asks Sir Geoffrey not to shoot it. But, Sir Geoffrey disregards Dorian's request and fires at the animal. They are surprised to hear not only the cry of the rabbit, but also a human cry of pain. One of the beaters, these are men whose job it is to move the animals into view, has been shot and killed.

Dorian sees this incident as a bad omen for him and he tells Lord Henry of his feelings. Lord Henry tells Dorian he is being foolish, it was just an accident. They decide not to talk of the accident anymore, so as to not upset anyone at dinner.

Dorian is very upset by the death of the beater and he decides to go back to town. He is in a hurry to get away from his country home and the fear it incites in him. He is preparing to leave as the head-keeper comes to see him, Dorian thinks the man wants money for the dead man's family. The head-keeper, instead, has surprising news for Dorian, it seems the man is not a beater. He, in fact, is not known by anyone at the hunt, instead they think he is a sailor. This news gives Dorian hope, because he thinks it might be James Vane.

He has the head-keeper meet him at the farm, where the body is being kept. After seeing the body, Dorian is relieved to see it is James Vane. Dorian for the first time in a long time feels safe.

Dorian Gray is approached by James Vane, who wants to kill him to avenge the death of his sister. By tricking the young man, Dorian escapes, only to be hunted by James Vane at Dorian's country home. Dorian's past actions come to haunt him in his imagination and in person. He, while not showing the consequences of his actions, is beginning to feel the weight of his sins.

Dorian, since the demise of James Vane, has decided to live his life differently than he has been. He has decided to be good. In order to achieve this goal, he has taken the first step by breaking off his romance with a country girl. He had been set to run away with the young innocent girl, but instead he tells her he cannot see her anymore.

His friend, Lord Henry, thinks this action will bring about more harm than good for the girl. He feels she will either compare all other men to Dorian or she will kill herself, either way, the young girl's life will lie in ruin, because of Dorian. Dorian does not want to hear such talk and so he changes the subject to the latest gossip in London.

This proves to be an ill choice for Dorian, for now Lord Henry talks of Basil's disappearance, which has been the talk of the town for six weeks. The London police insist Basil boarded the train to Paris, while the Paris police insist he never arrived in Paris. Lord Henry has no idea as to what has happened to Basil, he only hopes he is still alive.

Lord Henry also talks about his divorce and the suicide of Alan Campbell. Alan Campbell, is the man who disposed of Basil's body, under the threat of blackmail from Dorian. Dorian wonders if Lord Henry has considered the fact that Basil might have been murdered. Lord Henry dismisses the notion, because Basil was popular and not smart enough to make enemies. Dorian then takes the supposition one step further, by suggesting he might have been the one to murder Basil. Lord Henry does not believe Dorian for a minute, because, as he explains to Dorian, he does not have the temperament to commit murder.

Lord Henry directs the conversation to the painting Basil did of Dorian. Dorian told him the painting has been missing since he sent it to his country house. Lord Henry is saddened by the news as he had wanted to buy the painting. He feels all of Basil's work, after that painting was of a lessor quality.

Dorian is upset after Lord Henry asks him "what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul". Dorian thinks Lord Henry might know his secret, but in fact it is just a question he heard a street preacher pose.

Dorian's nerves are even more frayed, after Lord Henry asks him the secret to his youthful looks. He tells Dorian he must have a wonderful life, because he has had all that life can offer and never has it show on his face. Dorian disputes Lord Henry's claims, telling him he does not know the real Dorian Gray.

They end their day with the promise of seeing each other the next day for a ride and to visit a friend.

That night Dorian thought about what he and Lord Henry had talked about earlier in the evening. He wonders if it is truly possible for him to change. He thinks of all the lives he has ruined through his actions and how he does not suffer physically from his sins. He wants the chance to start his life over again, to become a good person.

He wonders if his one good deed, saying good bye to the innocent country girl, has changed the picture. He feels good as he walks up the stairs to the room in which the painting is stored. He is sure it has changed, because of his one good act. When he lifts the cover, he sees not improvement, but instead the picture is more horrible than ever. The blood which used to cover his hand, now is on his feet and the smile is the smile of a hypocrite. He wonders if it means he should confess to the murder of Basil, but he reasons himself out of this idea. He feels since there is no physical evidence linking him to Basil's death, than the authorities will feel he has gone mad.

He feels the only course of action for him is to destroy the painting. This way he will be rid of it for once and for all. He will no longer have the worry of its discovery hanging over his every waking moment. He has kept the knife he used to kill Basil in the same room as the painting, so he takes up the knife and plunges it into the painting; a great cry and a crash is heard not only in the house, but in the street also. After a while, Dorian's servants make their way into the room, where they find the painting, looking as it did on the day it was painted. They also find a withered, dead old man lying on the floor who they identify, by his rings, as Dorian Gray.

Dorian is plagued by Basil Hallward's murder and the ruination of others whose lives he touched. He decides to become a good person in hopes of changing the picture. When this effort to change does not have the effect he hopes, he instead attempts to destroy the picture, but instead, only destroys himself.