The Picture of Dorian Gray

PART I

Dorian Gray has just finished sitting for a portrait by his friend Basil Hallward, who was proud of having captured his beauty on canvas. He is walking in the garden with Lord Henry Wotton.

"You have the most marvellous youth, Mr. Gray, and youth is the one thing worth having."

"I don't feel that, Lord Henry," he replied, snapping off a blossom by the stem.

"No, you don't feel it now. Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so?"

"... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius – is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon... Yes, Mr. Gray, the gods have been good to you. But what the gods give they quickly take away. You have only a few years in which to really live, perfectly, and fully. When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you... Ah! Realize your youth while you have it! Don't squander the gold of your days! [...] Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you! Be always searching for new sensations [...] afraid of nothing! [...] With your personality there is nothing you could not do. The world belongs to you for a season. [...] Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!"

PART II

Dorian’s wish came true. While he kept his youth and beauty, his portrait became progressively older, uglier and more wrinkled. Many years later, lonely and depressed after a life of corruption and debauchery during which he had brought misery and disgrace upon all his companions, Dorian regrets the loss of his soul.

Ah! In what a monstrous moment of pride and passion he had prayed that the portrait should bear the burden of his days, and he keep the unsullied splendour of eternal youth! All his failure had been due to that. [...] It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for. But for those two things, his life might have been free from stain. His beauty had been to him but a mask, his youth but a mockery. What was youth at best? A green, an unripe time, a time of shallow moods, and sickly thoughts. Why had he worn its livery? Youth had spoiled him.

PART III

Finally, in desperation, Dorian stabs the picture. Awakened by a cry and a crash, his servants discover a strange scene...

When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891)
WORDS

1. Find in the text words or expressions that mean:
   
   a) lined with old age
   b) burned the surface
   c) marked
   d) to support the weight
   e) unaffected, not damaged or spoiled
   f) strikes with a knife
   g) dry, small, old-looking
   h) horribly ugly.

2. Put the following words into pairs with opposite meanings:
   
   a) alive
   b) beautiful
   c) dead
   d) hard
   e) old
   f) overweight
   g) rough
   h) slim
   i) smooth
   j) soft
   k) ugly
   l) young.

Use each pair of words in a sentence about Dorian Gray, Lord Henry or the general process of ageing.

ANALYSIS

1. Are the following statements RIGHT or WRONG? Justify by quoting the text:
   
   a) Lord Henry must be old and he regrets it.
   b) Dorian agrees that it is wonderful to be young.
   c) Lord Henry advises Dorian to be as moral as he can in his youth.
   d) Dorian wishes that both he and his portrait could remain young.
   e) If Dorian had grown old normally, his life might not have been a disgrace.
   f) Dorian destroyed his portrait with his hands.
   g) The servants identified the dead man at once.

2. Meaning through grammar:

   Pick out all the markers connected with time for example, "now", "always", "some day"...

   In which part of the text do most of these markers occur? Why?

3. How does Dorian feel at the beginning of his conversation with Lord Henry? Which expression shows this? What are the effects of Lord Henry's speech on Dorian? What marks the turning point?

TRANSLATING

Translate "Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so?" (line 8) and "... When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it [...] " (lines 14).
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When

1) When = at the moment when, once, as soon as: marqueur de temps;
   I will feel old when I look (present) old.
2) When, pronom interrogative.
   I don’t know when I will look (future) old.

Complete these sentences, using the text to help you:

a) Dorian is very good-looking. However, when he ................. old, he .................
b) You smile? When you .................... your beauty, you ....................
c) He has youth and beauty. But when his youth .................his beauty .................
d) Now you triumph. But when you.................old and ugly, you ....................
e) The world belongs to you for a season. When that time .................... over, it ....................
f) Today, I look like my portrait. Alas, when I ................. sixty, I ....................
g) For the time being, he has no worries. And yet, when he ................. his youth, his life ............

Wishing & Regretting

1) Present:
   I wish / If only he looked younger.
2) Future:
   I wish / If only he would look younger.
3) Past:
   I wish / If only he had looked younger.
   I wish / If only he could have looked younger.
   He regrets having looked so old.

Rephrase Dorian's wishes and regrets in lines 21-23 and lines 32-37:

a) At first, Dorian wishes the picture ................. old.
b) He wishes that he ................. always ................. young.
c) Later, he regrets ................. for eternal youth.
d) He wishes he ................. not ................. so proud.
e) He wishes his life ................. free from stain.
f) He regrets ................. spoiled by youth.

Words

Ten of the following words from the text are nouns, ten are adjectives. If the word is a noun, say what adjective(s) can be formed from it and vice versa.
Ex.: beauty: noun → adjective: beautiful.
(a) beauty; (b) corruption; (c) courage; (d) dead; (e) depressed; (f) disgrace; (g) dreadful; (h) exquisite;
(i) horrible; (j) lonely; (k) misery; (l) old; (m) passion; (n) proud; (o) sad; (p) splendour; (q) thought; (r)
ugly; (s) wonder; (t) youth.

Writing

Essay (about 200 words): How do some people try to stay young nowadays?
The following words may help you: exercise, diet, cosmetics, creams, wigs, plastic surgery, blood
transfusions, pills...
VIEWS OF THE FUTURE

1. BE GOING TO & WILL
   - Si l'on veut exprimer une certitude à venir, on peut dans certains contextes utiliser indifféremment BE GOING TO ou WILL:
     
     *Everyone is one day going to stop breathing, turn cold and die.*
     *I will grow old, but this picture will remain always young.*

   a) BE GOING TO indique que depuis quelque temps déjà, on s'achemine vers la réalisation d'un événement.
   b) WILL s'appuie sur les caractéristiques du sujet.

2. Future with "if", "When", "as soon as"...
   Lorsqu'une proposition subordonnée (introduite par if, when, as soon as) pose les conditions dans lesquelles l’événement de la principale se produira, le verbe de cette subordonnée est au présent (ou au present perfect).
     
     *If you stay in the sun, your beauty will be spoiled.*
     *As soon as your youth goes, your beauty will go with it.*
     *When you have lost your beauty, you won't smile.*

3. BE TO + BV (devoir) & BE + V-ING
   Pour présenter une action à accomplir, un événement prévu, programme ou envisagé, on peut employer:
   - soit BE TO + BV (langue soutenue):
     *The president is to visit Dublin next Week.*
     *If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old!*
   - soit BE + V-ING, s'il y a un repère futur explicite dans le contexte:
     *We're having a party tonight.*
     *They are seeing each other next week.*

4. BE ABOUT TO + BV (être sur le point de...)
   BE ABOUT TO + BV indique l’imminence d’un événement:
     *The stuntman is about to jump from the bridge.*
     *The plane is about to land.*

Complete:

a) "How old is he?" – "He's 59. He .................... retire next year".
b) "Why are you buying so much food?" – "Because I .................... cook for ten people".
c) "Are you still going out with Sue?" – "Oh yes. We .................... get married next year".
d) "Samantha went to hospital yesterday". – "Oh, what a pity. I .................... send some flowers".
e) "It's Bob's birthday tomorrow". – "Is it? I can't afford a present, but I .................... him a card".
f) "Oh dear, I can't do this work." – "Don't worry. I .................... do it for you".
g) "This room's very cold". – "You're right. I .................... turn the heater on".

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