



Chapter 1

The studio was filled with the rich smell of roses. Lord Henry Wotton¹ was sitting on the divan and smoking innumerable cigarettes. Through the open door came the distant sounds of the London streets.

In the centre of the room stood the full-length portrait² of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away³, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward⁴.

As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in

¹ Lord Henry Wotton — лорд Генри Уоттон

² full-length portrait — портрет в полный рост

³ some little distance away — на небольшом расстоянии

⁴ Basil Hallward — Бэзил Холлуорд

his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face. He suddenly started up, and closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids.

“It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done,” said Lord Henry. “You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor¹. The Academy is too large and too vulgar.

The Grosvenor is really the only place to exhibit a painting like that.”

“I don’t think I shall send it anywhere,” the painter answered, moving his head in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford. “No, I won’t send it anywhere.”

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke². “Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? What odd people you painters are! A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England³.”

“I know you will laugh at me,” Basil replied, “but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it⁴.”

¹ **Grosvenor** — Гросвенор

² **wreaths of smoke** — кольца дыма

³ **A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England.** — Этот портрет вознёс бы тебя много выше всех молодых художников Англии.

⁴ **I have put too much of myself into it.** — Я вложил в него слишком много самого себя.

Lord Henry stretched himself out on the divan and laughed. "Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, this man is truly beautiful. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him¹."

"You don't understand me, Harry," answered the artist. "I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. I am telling you the truth. It is better not to be different from other people. The stupid and ugly have the best of this world. Dorian Gray² —"

"Dorian Gray? Is that his name?" asked Lord Henry walking across the room towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes, that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely, I never tell their names to any one. When I leave town now I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say. I suppose you think that's very foolish?"

"Not at all," answered Lord Henry, "not at all, my dear Basil. You seem to forget that

¹ you are not in the least like him — ты ничуть на него не похож

² Dorian Gray — Дориан Грей

I am married, so my life is full of secrets, I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing. When we meet we tell each other the most absurd stories with the most serious faces.”

“I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry,” said Basil Hallward, walking towards the door that led into the garden. “I believe you are really a very good husband, but that you are ashamed of it. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a good thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose.”

“Being natural is simply a pose,” cried Lord Henry, laughing; and the two young men went out into the garden together. After a pause, Lord Henry pulled out his watch.

“I am afraid I have to go, Basil,” he said in a quiet voice. “But before I go I want you to explain to me why you won’t exhibit Dorian Gray’s picture. I want the real reason.”

“I told you the real reason.”

“No, you did not. You said that it was because there was too much of yourself in it. Now, that is childish.”

“Harry,” said Basil Hallward, looking him straight in the face, “every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that

I have shown in it the secret of my own soul.”

Lord Henry laughed. “And what is that?” he asked.

“Oh, there is really very little to tell, Harry,” answered the painter, “and I am afraid you will hardly understand it. Perhaps you will hardly believe it.”

Lord Henry smiled and picked a flower from the grass. “I am quite sure I’ll understand it,” he replied, staring at the flower, “and I can believe anything.”

“The story is simply this,” said the painter. “Two months ago I went to a party at Lady Brandon’s. After I had been in the room for about ten minutes, I suddenly realized that someone was looking at me. I turned around and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt the blood leaving my face. I knew that this boy would become my whole soul, my whole art itself. I grew afraid and turned to quit the room.”

“What did you do?”

“We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. I asked Lady Brandon to introduce me to him. It was simply inevitable.”

“What did Lady Brandon say about Mr. Dorian Gray?”

“Oh, something like ‘Charming boy. I don’t know what he does — I think he doesn’t do

anything. Oh, yes, he plays the piano — or is it the violin, dear Mr. Gray?’ Dorian and I both laughed and we became friends at once.”

“Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship,” said the young lord, picking another flower, “and it is the best ending for one.”

Hallward shook his head. “You don’t understand what friendship is, Harry. Everyone is the same to you.”

“That’s not true!” cried Lord Henry, pushing his hat back, and looking at the summer sky. “I make a great difference between people. I choose my friends for their beauty, my acquaintances for their good characters and my enemies for their intelligence. A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies. Of course, I hate my relations. And I hate poor people because they are ugly, stupid and drunk —”

“I don’t agree with a single word you have said. And I feel sure that you don’t agree either.”

Lord Henry touched his pointed brown beard with his finger, and the toe of his boot with his stick. “How English you are, Basil! An Englishman is only interested in whether he agrees with an idea, not whether it is right or wrong. I like persons better than princi-

ples, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world. But tell me more about Mr Dorian Gray. How often do you see him?"

"Every day. I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him every day."

"How extraordinary! I thought you only cared about your art."

"He is all my art to me now," said the painter. "I know that the work I have done since I met Dorian Gray, is the best work of my life. He is much more to me than a model or a sitter. In some strange way his personality has shown me a new kind of art. He seems like a little boy — though he is really more than twenty — and when he is with me I see the world differently."

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

Hallward got up from his seat and walked up and down the garden. After some time he came back. "Harry," he said, "Dorian Gray is the reason for my art. You might see nothing in him. I see everything in him."

"Then why won't you exhibit his portrait?" asked Lord Henry.

"An artist should paint beautiful things, but he should put nothing of his own life into them. There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry — too much of myself! Some

day I will show the world what that beauty is. For that reason the world will never see my portrait of Dorian Gray.”

“I think you are wrong, Basil, but I won’t argue with you. Tell me, is Dorian Gray very fond of you?”

The painter thought for a few moments. “He likes me,” he answered, after a pause. “I know he likes me. Of course I flatter him dreadfully and tell him things that I should not. He is usually very charming to me, and we spend thousands of wonderful hours together. But sometimes he can be horribly thoughtless and seems to enjoy causing me pain. Then I feel, Harry, that I have given my whole soul to someone who uses it like a flower to put in his coat on a summer’s day.”

“Summer days are long, Basil,” said Lord Henry in a quiet voice. “Perhaps you will get bored before he will. Intelligence lives longer than beauty. One day you will look at your friend and you won’t like his colour or something. And then you will begin to think that he has behaved badly towards you —”

“Harry, don’t talk like that. As long as I live, Dorian Gray will be everything to me. You can’t feel what I feel. You change too often.”

“My dear Basil, that is exactly why I can feel it.” Lord Henry took a cigarette from his

pretty silver box and lit it. Then he turned to Hallward and said, "I have just remembered."

"Remembered what, Harry?"

"Where I heard the name of Dorian Gray."

"Where was it?" asked Hallward with a slight frown.

"Don't look so angry, Basil. It was at my aunt's, Lady Agatha's. She told me that she had discovered this wonderful young man. He was going to help her work with the poor people in the East End of London, and his name was Dorian Gray. Of course I didn't know it was your friend."

"I am very glad you didn't, Harry."

"Why?"

"I don't want you to meet him."

"Mr. Dorian Gray is in the studio, sir," said the butler, coming into the garden.

"You must introduce me now," cried Lord Henry, laughing.

The painter turned to his servant. "Ask Mr. Gray to wait, Parker. I will come in in a few moments."

Then he looked at Lord Henry. "Dorian Gray is my dearest friend," he said. "He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Don't spoil him. Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. Don't take away from me the one person who makes me a true artist. Mind, Harry, I trust you."

“What nonsense you talk!” said Lord Henry, smiling, and taking Hallward by the arm, he almost led him into the house.

Chapter 2

As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was sitting at the piano, with his back to them, and he was turning the pages of some music by Schumann. “You must lend me these, Basil,” he cried. “I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming.”

“That entirely depends on how you sit today¹, Dorian.”

“Oh, I am bored with sitting, and I don’t want a portrait of myself,” answered the boy, turning quickly. When he caught sight of Lord Henry, his face went red for a moment. “I am sorry, Basil, I didn’t know that you had anyone with you.”

“This is Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian, an old Oxford friend of mine². I have just been telling him what a good sitter you were³, and now you have spoiled everything.”

¹ **That entirely depends on how you sit today.** — Это зависит от того, как вы сегодня будете позировать.

² **an old Oxford friend of mine** — мой старый товарищ по Оксфордскому университету

³ **I have just been telling him what a good sitter you were.** — Я только что говорил ему, что вы превосходно позируете.

“You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray,” said Lord Henry, stepping forward and offering his hand. “My aunt has often spoken to me about you. You are one of her favourites, and, I am afraid, one of her victims also.”

“I am in Lady Agatha’s black books at present¹,” answered Dorian. “I promised to go to a club in Whitechapel² with her last Tuesday, and I forgot all about it. I don’t know what she will say to me. I am far too frightened to call.”

Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his curved red lips, honest blue eyes and gold hair. “Oh, don’t worry about my aunt. You are one of her favourite people. And you are too charming to waste time working for poor people.”

Lord Henry sat down on the sofa and opened his cigarette box. The painter was busy mixing colours and getting his brushes ready. Suddenly, he looked at Lord Henry and said, “Harry, I want to finish this picture today. Would you think it very rude of me if I asked you to go away?”

Lord Henry smiled, and looked at Dorian Gray. “Shall I go, Mr. Gray?” he asked.

¹ I am in Lady Agatha’s black books at present. — Теперь я у леди Агаты на плохом счету.

² Whitechapel — Уайтчепел

“Oh, please don’t, Lord Henry. I see that Basil is in one of his difficult moods, and I hate it when he is difficult. And I want you to tell me why I should not help the poor people.”

“That would be very boring, Mr. Gray. But I certainly will not run away if you do not want me to. You don’t really mind, Basil, do you? You have often told me that you liked your sitters to have some one to chat to.”

Hallward bit his lip. “If Dorian wishes it, of course you must stay.”

Lord Henry took up his hat and gloves. “No, I am afraid I must go. Good-bye, Mr. Gray. Come and see me some afternoon in Curzon Street¹. I am nearly always at home at five o’clock. Write to me when you are coming. I should be sorry to miss you.”

“Basil,” cried Dorian Gray, “if Lord Henry Wotton goes, I will go too. You never open your lips while you are painting, and it is horribly boring just standing here. Ask him to stay. I insist upon it.”

“All right, please stay, Harry. For Dorian and for me,” said Hallward, staring at his picture. “It is true that I never talk when I am working, and never listen either. It must be very boring for my sitters. Sit down

¹ Curzon Street — Керзон стрит

again, Harry. And Dorian don't move about too much, or listen to what Lord Henry says. He has a very bad influence over all his friends, with the single exception of myself."

Dorian Gray stood while Hallward finished his portrait. He liked what he had seen of Lord Henry. He was so unlike Basil. And he had such a beautiful voice. After a few moments he said to him, "Have you really a very bad influence, Lord Henry? As bad as Basil says?"

"There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral."

"Why?"

"Because to influence someone is to give them your soul. Each person must have his own personality."

"Just turn your head a little more to the right, Dorian, like a good boy," said the painter. He was not listening to the conversation and only knew that there was a new look on the boy's face.

"And yet," continued Lord Henry, in his low musical voice, "I believe that if one man lived his life fully and completely he could change the world. He would be a work of art greater than anything we have ever imagined. But the bravest man among us is afraid of himself. You, Mr. Gray, are very young

but you have had passions that have made you afraid, dreams —”

“Stop!” cried Dorian Gray, “I don’t know what to say. There is some answer to you, but I cannot find it. Don’t speak. Let me think. Or, rather, let me try not to think.”

For nearly ten minutes he stood there with his lips open and his eyes strangely bright. The words that Basil’s friend had spoken had touched his soul. Yes, there had been things in his boyhood that he had not understood. He understood them now.

With his smile, Lord Henry watched him. He knew the exact moment when to say nothing. He was surprised at the sudden effect of his words on the boy. How fascinating the boy was!

Hallward continued painting and did not notice that the others were silent.

“Basil, I am tired of standing,” cried Dorian Gray suddenly. “I must go out and sit in the garden. The air is stifling here.”

“My dear fellow, I am so sorry. When I am painting, I can’t think of anything else. But you never sat better. You were perfectly still. And I have caught the effect I wanted. I don’t know what Harry has been saying to you, but there is a wonderful bright look in your eyes. I suppose he has been flattering you. You mustn’t believe a word that he says.”

“He has certainly not been flattering me. Perhaps that is the reason that I don’t believe anything he has told me.”

“You know you believe it all,” said Lord Henry, looking at him with his dreamy eyes. “I will go out to the garden with you. It is horribly hot in the studio. Basil, let us have something iced to drink, something with strawberries in it.”

“Don’t keep Dorian too long,” said the painter. “This is going to be my masterpiece.”

Lord Henry went out to the garden, and found Dorian Gray holding a flower to his face. He came close to him, and put his hand on his shoulder.

Dorian Gray frowned and turned his head away. He liked the tall young man who was standing by him. His dark, romantic face interested him. There was something in his low, musical voice that was fascinating. But he felt a little afraid. Why was this stranger having a strong influence on him like this? He had known Basil Hallward for months, but the friendship between them had not changed him. Suddenly someone had come into his life and turned it upside down¹. Someone who seemed to have the key to the mystery of life itself.

¹ **upside down** — вверх ногами