

# DORIAN

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By Lisa Hall  
From Oscar Wilde

*"The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.  
All art is quite useless." - Oscar Wilde*

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## SETTING & CHARACTERS (9 women, 3 men)

This play is faithful to its source material in many ways, but the primary concept is the flipping of gender throughout the narrative, as well as translating the grand, florid sensations of the novel through movement, smell, touch, and sound. It should feel like a world that is blooming and lush, a tour-de-force vehicle for the performer playing Dorian, and an homage to the joy and sadness of queer longing.

In casting, all roles can be any race or physical ability. What is important is their age, or, how old they appear to be relative to one another.

WOMAN 1/20s  
DORIAN GRAY

WOMAN 2/20s  
DAME THOMASINA BURDEN  
JOSEPHINE VANE (IN ACT I)  
FRANCES  
LADY ALICE CHAPMAN

WOMAN 3/30s  
BLYTHE HALLWARD (IN ACT I)  
DUCHESS OF MONMOUTH

WOMAN 4/30s  
LADY HENRIETTA WOTTON (IN ACT I)  
ADA CAMPBELL  
ADRIENNE SINGLETON

WOMAN 5/40s  
DUCHESS OF HARLEY  
MRS. VANE  
VICTORIA  
LADY RUXTON  
JOSEPHINE VANE (IN ACT II)

WOMAN 6/50s  
BLYTHE'S MAID  
MRS. VANDELEUR  
BLYTHE HALLWARD (IN ACT II)  
DRINKING WOMAN 2

WOMAN 7/60s  
AUNT AGATHA  
MS. ISAACS  
LADY HENRIETTA WOTTON (IN ACT II)

WOMAN 8/70s  
LADY BRANDON  
AUNT GWENDOLYN  
MRS. LEAF (IN ACT I)

WOMAN 9/80s  
MRS. ERSKINE  
LADY HENRIETTA'S MAID  
MRS. ERLYNNE  
DRINKING WOMAN 1  
MRS. LEAF (IN ACT II)

MAN 1/20s  
DUCHESS' SERVANT  
SAMUEL VANE  
MR. HUBBARD'S ASSISTANT  
MR. CHAPMAN  
SIR GEOFFREY CLOUSTON

MAN 2/40s  
LORD VICTOR WOTTON  
MR. HUBBARD  
LORD NARBOROUGH'S SERVANT  
DUKE OF MONMOUTH  
GAMEKEEPER THORNTON

MAN 3/60s  
WAITER  
LORD NARBOROUGH



ACT ISCENE 1

LONDON. THE BALLROOM OF A STATELY HOME. SUMMER, 1890.

Everyone is swirling through a richly decorated ballroom. It is all satin and flowers and laughter. Blythe is a little less confident than the rest, hugging the edges of the room. She's beautiful but looks plain compared to the others. The room shifts, and Blythe sees Dorian, who is captivating, a jewel. Their eyes meet. Dorian smiles, and in a thunderstruck moment, Blythe turns to flee. Lady Brandon rushes forward laughing and chattering (unheard underneath the music). She bumps into Dorian and forces a meeting, then flits off. Dorian and Blythe are left, perhaps one holding the hand of the other, in an interrupted greeting. They burst into laughter as the lights fade.

SCENE 2

BLYTHE HALLWARD'S STUDIO & GARDEN. TWO MONTHS LATER.

Lady Henrietta and Blythe stare at a painted portrait.

LADY HENRIETTA

My darling, it is the best thing you have ever done. You shall send it to the Grosvenor.

BLYTHE

Not the Academy?

LADY HENRIETTA

Too large. And too vulgar. At the Academy, there are either so many people I can't see the pictures, which is dreadful, or so many pictures I can't see the people, which is worse.

BLYTHE

I don't think I will send it anywhere.

LADY HENRIETTA

Why on earth - you painters are such odd ducks. You go to the ends of the earth for a reputation, and as soon as you have one, you want to throw it away. A portrait like this would make you the best young painter in England.

BLYTHE

I know you think I'm stupid. But I really can't exhibit it, anywhere. I've put too much of myself in it.

LADY HENRIETTA

Don't be vain. There's no resemblance between you and this...Diana. This Helen.

BLYTHE

I know I am not Helen of Troy.

LADY HENRIETTA

You are an intellectual, which is its own gift. But beauty, real, breathtaking beauty, ends when the intellect exerts itself. Because the intellect is an exaggeration bursting forth, and it destroys the simple harmony of the face.

BLYTHE

Is a face ever simple? Or harmonious?

LADY HENRIETTA

It can be, until you sit down to think, and then that lovely balance becomes all forehead or all frown, or something else hideous.

BLYTHE

It sounds like a fate only the simple-minded can escape.

LADY HENRIETTA

Mmmmm, or the clergy. Because men in the Church never think. They say the same things at eighty that they were taught to say at eighteen, and as a consequence they stay looking perfectly delightful.

BLYTHE

(Looking at the portrait)

She is not a woman of God. In that sense.

LADY HENRIETTA

But still, your mysterious young friend, whose name you will not tell, but whose picture entrances me, never, ever thinks. I feel quite sure of that.

BLYTHE

Perhaps.

LADY HENRIETTA

She is a beautiful creature unblemished by the wrenching work of the brain. You are not in the least like her.

BLYTHE

I don't want to look like her - I'm serious - there's something fatal about being distinctive. I think it's better to blend in with everyone else, to be a comfortable, gaping audience member. You know no victory and also no defeat, you ruin no one and are not ruined. But your wealth, my art, Dorian Gray's good looks - we will all suffer for these distinctions. We will suffer terribly.

LADY HENRIETTA

So her name is Dorian Gray!?

BLYTHE

(Beat)

I didn't intend to tell you.

LADY HENRIETTA

Why not?

BLYTHE

When I really like someone, I never tell anyone their name. Because if I do, I'm giving away a part of them when I don't want to. Even something common can be romantic if you hide it. Do you think I'm foolish?

LADY HENRIETTA

Only a little, darling. Don't forget that as a married woman I flourish off the charm of deception - both my husband and I do. We're very good at it - even when we catch each other in a lie, we just laugh.

BLYTHE

I hate the way you talk about marriage, Henrietta. Your immorality is a pose.

LADY HENRIETTA

Your being natural is a pose, and it's irritating.

(She looks at her watch)

I'm afraid I have to leave soon, but you have to answer my question before I go.

BLYTHE

What question?

LADY HENRIETTA

You know.

BLYTHE

I do not.

LADY HENRIETTA

I want the real reason you won't exhibit Dorian Gray's picture.

BLYTHE

I told you the real reason.

LADY HENRIETTA

Because there's too much of yourself in it? That's ridiculous -

BLYTHE

Every portrait that is done with emotion is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. I will not exhibit this because I'm scared that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul.

LADY HENRIETTA

Tell me the secret.

BLYTHE

You won't believe it.

LADY HENRIETTA

I can believe anything, provided it is quite incredible.

In the silence, she pulls a bloom from a vine that grows near the window. She regards it, waiting.

BLYTHE

Two months ago I went to a crush at Lady Brandon's. Us poor artists have to show ourselves in society from time to time, to remind everyone that we can be civilized. After a few minutes of chatting with overdressed dowagers and tedious academics, I felt it...I could feel that someone was looking at me. I turned my head and I saw Dorian Gray for the first time. Our eyes met. My whole body went numb, with terror. I knew at that moment that I was looking into the eyes of someone who was so fascinating that, if I allowed them, would absorb my whole mind, my whole soul, my art. I didn't want that kind of influence on my life. You know how independent I am, by nature. I am my own master. Or I had been. Then I met Dorian, and, I don't know how to explain it - at that moment I knew I was on the verge of a terrible crisis. I knew that fate was preparing exquisite joys for me, and exquisite sorrows. I was so afraid...I left the room. Out of pure cowardice.

LADY HENRIETTA

What did -

Splendid -

Oh Blythe, or Oh my darling -

You were overcome -

LADY HENRIETTA

(She takes Blythe's hand in hers)

Well, what is cowardice but conscience by another name!

BLYTHE

I don't believe that, and neither do you. I hardly got to the door when I ran into Lady Brandon - you know her voice, her shrill voice -

LADY HENRIETTA

(tearing the flower apart)

She is a peacock in everything but beauty.



BLYTHE

She clung to me, screeching in my ear as if we were dearest friends, she dragged me back into the fray when we bumped into a familiar face, the young woman whose presence had scared me off to begin with. She and I were suddenly nose to nose, and eye to eye. We were introduced properly and it was, well it felt inevitable. Proper introduction or no - we were going to meet. I'm sure of it. Dorian said the same thing later, that we were destined to know each other. We laughed over Lady Brandon's ridiculous introductions, we couldn't stop laughing.

LADY HENRIETTA

Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and it is by far the best for ending one.

BLYTHE

You don't understand friendship, or enmity. You are indifferent to every one.

LADY HENRIETTA

Now that's not fair. I'm not indifferent to people. I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects. Is that very vain of me?

BLYTHE

A little. According to your categories I must be merely an acquaintance.

LADY HENRIETTA

Darling, no, you are much more than that.

BLYTHE

But less than a friend. Maybe a sister?

LADY HENRIETTA

No, no. I detest my relations. I suppose we can't stand people who have the same faults as us. So tell me about Ms. Dorian Gray. How often do you see her?

BLYTHE

Every day. It's my only happiness, and an absolute necessity.

LADY HENRIETTA

Extraordinary! I never dreamed you'd care for anything but your art.

BLYTHE

She *is* my art. She is more than a model. Her beauty is such that I am doing the best work of my life. I don't know if you will understand...but Dorian's existence has created an entirely new manner and style of art. I see differently, I think differently, I can recreate what is before me in a way that I couldn't before. Just her presence can do this, and she's hardly more than twenty years old. She has defined for me a fresh school of art totally unconsciously to her own effect -

LADY HENRIETTA

You are so passionate -

BLYTHE

Do you remember that landscape I painted, that magnificent one -

LADY HENRIETTA

It must have been for the price Agnew offered you for it -

BLYTHE

But I didn't sell it. It was some of my most magnificent work. And it was magnificent because Dorian sat beside me while I painted. Some subtle influence passed from her to me, and for the first time I saw that plain vista with wonder.

LADY HENRIETTA

I must meet her.

BLYTHE

(Disturbed, she smokes and tears a petal  
from the vine)

I see everything in her - but you may see nothing. She is an influence on my art, like a spirit. That is all.

LADY HENRIETTA

Then why won't you exhibit her portrait?

BLYTHE

(Passionate, overheated)

Because I have accidentally painted into it all of this idolatry, which I have kept a secret from her. I will never tell her - but if they see it, the world might guess how I feel - and I will not bare my soul to their shallow, prying eyes.

LADY HENRIETTA

But a broken heart is so useful nowadays to sell paintings -

BLYTHE

I will not put my broken heart under their microscope.

LADY HENRIETTA

You are being stingy. They *want* to see you in your art!

BLYTHE

I hate them for it. Beauty should be abstract, not autobiographical.

LADY HENRIETTA

I'm tired of arguing with you - but I still think you're wrong. Is Dorian Gray fond of you as well?

BLYTHE

She likes me, but of course I flatter her dreadfully.

LADY HENRIETTA

Maybe you will be the one to tire of her. After all, genius lasts longer than beauty, no? It will have been a kind of romance, and romance always leaves one feeling cold in the end.

BLYTHE

No. As long as I live, Dorian will dominate me. You can't understand, you have never been faithful.

LADY HENRIETTA

That's exactly why I do understand. Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love: it is the faithless who know love's tragedies.

Shadows cross the space as clouds cross the  
sunlight. They sit and think. It seems like  
flowers bloom more quickly in that moment,  
and the scent on the air is sweet.

LADY HENRIETTA

Ah! I've just remembered where I have heard the name Dorian Gray before!

BLYTHE

Where?

LADY HENRIETTA

I was with my aunt, Lady Agatha. She told me about a wonderful young woman who was going to help her in the East End, named Dorian Gray. Although she never said the woman was beautiful. What a dreadful omission. I wish I had known she was speaking of your muse.

BLYTHE

I'm glad you didn't.

LADY HENRIETTA

Why?

BLYTHE

Because I never want you to meet her.

Blythe's maid enters from the garden.

BLYTHE'S MAID

Ms. Dorian Gray has arrived, m'am.

LADY HENRIETTA

(Laughing)

Now you'll have to introduce me.

BLYTHE

Ask her to wait a moment, please.

(She exits)

Dorian is my dearest friend. She has a simple and beautiful nature, your aunt was right about that.

(Beat)

Don't ruin her. Don't try to influence her in your way. The world has so many people in it - don't take the one person from me who gives my art whatever charm it possesses. My life as an artist depends on her. Be careful, Lady Wotton.

LADY HENRIETTA

Nonsense! Ms. Parker! You can bring her in!

Ms. Parker reenters with Dorian trailing behind.  
Dorian is holding several pages of sheet music.

DORIAN

Will you let me borrow these, Blythe? I want to learn them - they're perfectly charming.

BLYTHE

If you sit well today, then yes.

DORIAN

I'm tired of sitting, and I don't need a life-sized portrait of myself.

(seeing Lady Henrietta)

I beg your pardon, I didn't know you had company.

BLYTHE

This is Lady Henrietta Wotton, an old friend from Oxford. I've been telling her what a good sitter you are, and now you've spoiled that compliment.

LADY HENRIETTA

The pleasure of meeting you is in no way spoiled, Ms. Gray. My aunt has told me all about you, you're one of her favorites.

DORIAN

I'm afraid I'm on her bad side at the moment. I promised to go to a club with her last week, and then forgot all about it.

LADY HENRIETTA

I will fix it, dear, she is quite devoted to you.

(a kind of breathless moment when  
Dorian laughs, she is lovely, and Lady  
Henrietta and Blythe watch her closely)

You are too charming for philanthropy, Ms. Gray.

(She flings herself dramatically on the  
divan and smokes)

BLYTHE

(she has been preparing her paints)

Hen, I need to finish this portrait today. I don't mean to be rude, but would you go?

LADY HENRIETTA

(smiling)

Ms. Gray, should I go?

DORIAN

Please don't! Blythe is in one of her sulky moods, it's unbearable. Besides, I want you to tell me why I am not fit for philanthropy.

LADY HENRIETTA

I don't know, it's a tedious subject. But I won't run away now that you've asked me not to.  
(to Blythe)

You don't really mind, do you? You always say you like your subjects to have someone to chat to.

BLYTHE

If Dorian wants you to stay, of course you must. Her whims are laws to everyone except herself. And, Dorian, please don't pay too much attention to what Lady Henrietta says. She's a very bad influence over all her friends.

Dorian steps on the dais with a little sulky face directed at Lady Henrietta, followed by another radiant smile.

DORIAN

Are you really a bad influence, Lady Henrietta?

LADY HENRIETTA

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

DORIAN

Why?

During Lady Henrietta's reverie, she seems to grow and brighten in Dorian's view, overwhelming the girl.

LADY HENRIETTA

Because to influence someone is to give them your soul. An influenced person becomes the echo of someone else's music, a performer in a part that wasn't written for them. But this only matters because the point of life is to develop one's own, individual nature. It's more dire than that, because people are terrified of themselves nowadays. They forget their duty to their own self - of course they feed the hungry and clothe the poor - but their own souls are starving and naked. We are governed by a fear of society, which we call morals, and a fear of God, which we call religion. We lack courage. If only one person were to live out their life fully and completely, and give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream - I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy we would forget medievalism for the finer, richer, Hellenic ideal. But we kill the savage impulse within ourselves, and that self-denial mars our lives. We are punished for refusing our instincts, every impulse we strangle poisons us. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for what you have made forbidden to yourself, it grows sick with desire for what its own monstrous laws have made unlawful. When the body sins it is quickly done with it, then purified of the impulse. Nothing left but to recall the pleasure with either fondness or regret. It is in the brain only that sin exists. Now as for you -

BLYTHE

Tip your shoulder forward.

Try to relax your face.

Turn your head a little more to the right. Good girl.

Don't drop your chin.

Chin up.

DORIAN

Me?

BLYTHE

Stay still!

LADY HENRIETTA

You, Dorian, with your rose-red youth and lily white girlhood, I know without a doubt that you have passions that scare you, thoughts that terrify you, daydreams and sleeping dreams that make you blush with shame -

BLYTHE

Stay still!

DORIAN

Please stop! I don't know what to say. I know you want an answer but I cannot find it. Both of you, please be quiet - I need to think, or rather, not to think.

(A silent reverie as Lady Henrietta deflates and lowers to her position in reality. The lights are fixed on Dorian, bright, breathing heavily, feeling incredible forces within her body and mind. She vibrates with energy. She talks but Blythe paints and Lady Henrietta smokes. They don't acknowledge her.)

I feel as if I'm walking into fire, and things I never understood have become clear. Music has stirred me like this. But music is not articulate. It is not a new world, just another chaos. Words, just words! How terrible they are, how clear, and vivid, and cruel. I can't escape them, or their subtle magic that seems to give life to formless things -

(to Blythe)

I can't stand any more, I need fresh air, I need -

BLYTHE

Ah! I'm sorry, when I'm painting I don't think of anything else, but you sat beautifully. And I captured the effect I wanted. I don't know what Lady Wotton has been saying to you, but it's given you the most enchanting expression.

(to Lady Henrietta)

Have you been playing her compliments?

(To Dorian)

Don't you listen to a word she says.

DORIAN

Not compliments. And no, I don't believe a word she has said.

LADY HENRIETTA

Of course you believe me!

(to Blythe)

And Dorian is right, we need air.

Dorian exits to the patio just off the studio.

BLYTHE

Just ring for Ms. Parker if you want anything. I want to work up this background.

(Dorian and Lady Henrietta exit the french doors, as the outside and the inside bleed together, smoke and blossoms)

Don't keep Dorian too long. I have never painted better than today. This is going to be my masterpiece. It is my masterpiece as it stands.

Dorian and Lady Henrietta sink into lilacs, they perfume the air. Lady Henrietta takes Dorian's hand.

LADY HENRIETTA

Don't they smell divine? Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.

(a breeze stirs their hair, Dorian is wide-eyed, nervous. Lady Henrietta speaks in a low, snaking tone)

You are a wonderful creation. Full of life, you know more than you think you know, and you know less than you want to know. Isn't that right?

DORIAN

I don't know -

LADY HENRIETTA

Are you afraid of me? A friend?

DORIAN

I've known Ms. Hallward for months, but as a friend she has never changed me. You are changing me.

LADY HENRIETTA

Perhaps.

DORIAN

Is it absurd to be frightened?



LADY HENRIETTA

Certainly. Let's sit in the shade, we mustn't let the glare spoil you or Blythe will never paint you again. A sunburn is so unbecoming.

DORIAN

Why should that matter?

LADY HENRIETTA

It should matter very much to you, Ms. Gray.

DORIAN

But why?

LADY HENRIETTA

Because you have the most marvelous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having.

DORIAN

I don't believe that.

LADY HENRIETTA

Not now, no. But some day when your face is creased from thought and your lips branded with the hideous fires of passion...you will believe it. Right now you charm the world, wherever you go, but that will change. Don't frown, darling - beauty is a fact of the world, like sunlight or springtime. It cannot be questioned, it makes royalty of those who have it. But what the gods give generously they so quickly yank back.

(the smell of the blossoms grows rank)

You really only have a few years to live perfectly and fully. Then your youth and your beauty will go - and you will discover there are no triumphs left for you. Every month that passes brings you closer to something dreadful - time is jealous, and she will wage war against your lilies and your roses.

(Lady Henrietta draws close, stroking  
Dorian's face)

You will become hollow and dull, you will suffer horribly.

(as if to kiss her, then laughing and  
moving away)

Realize your youth while you have it - don't squander the gold of your days.

(Dorian is held in her terrible thrall)

Live - live the wonderful life that is in you - let nothing be lost upon you - be always searching for new sensations - be afraid of nothing - be the symbol of our century - a new Hedonism. The world belongs to you...for a season.

DORIAN

One season?

LADY HENRIETTA

The moment I met you I saw that you were quite unconscious of what you really are, or what you really might be.

DORIAN

And?

LADY HENRIETTA

I want to keep you from wasting a moment of what you have. Common flowers wither, but blossom again. Petals will regenerate the same color now as they will next June...year after year the green nights of leaves will hold the bright stars that blossom.

DORIAN

Beautiful.

LADY HENRIETTA

But we never get back our youth. The pulse of joy that beats in us at twenty becomes sluggish. Our limbs fail, our senses rot. We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to.

Dorian drops a spray of lilac that explodes into powder, the buzz of insects is unbearable. Every blossom bows under the weight of a bee.

BLYTHE

(from the studio, yelling)

I'm waiting! Come in now - the light is perfect!

A bird sings from the trees, and a pair of butterflies passes. Dorian and Lady Henrietta return to the studio where Blythe is still enraptured by the canvas.

LADY HENRIETTA

You are happy you met me, Ms. Gray?

DORIAN

I am happy now, but I wonder if I always will be.

LADY HENRIETTA

Always is such a dreadful word. A meaningless word, the only difference between a caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer.

DORIAN

In that case, let our friendship be a caprice.

She resumes her pose on the platform. Lady Henrietta flops on a divan.

The rasp of the brush on canvas fills the space loudly, blooming and swelling. Light slants in, a dreamy, golden hour light. The scent of roses is heavy.

BLYTHE

I am finished.

(then, louder)

I have finished!

She signs the bottom. Lady Henrietta joins Blythe to look, and they are both amazed. Dorian has not moved yet.

LADY HENRIETTA

It is the finest portrait of modern times. Dorian, come and see.

Dorian starts, waking from a kind of trance. She stumbles down to join the others and look at the portrait.

BLYTHE

You sat very well.

LADY HENRIETTA

Thanks to me, isn't that right?

Dorian is struck dumb in front of the painting. Joy crosses her face, then amazement.

DORIAN

I will never be this person again. I will never be quite this lovely again.

Tears stream down her face.

BLYTHE

Don't you like it?

LADY HENRIETTA

Of course she likes it! It's brilliant. I have to have it - I'll give you any amount you ask.

BLYTHE

It doesn't belong to me.

LADY HENRIETTA

Oh? Who does it belong to?

(Blythe gestures towards Dorian)

What a lucky young lady.

DORIAN

(without tearing her eyes away from the image, which rotates on its axis, Dorian trailing along)

It's so sad - I will become old and dreadful - but this picture will remain forever young, it will never be older than this particular day in June. If only I were the one to remain young, and the picture would grow old. I would give anything - anything in the whole world. I would give my soul.

LADY HENRIETTA

Ah! But Blythe would never allow such a harsh image in her artwork!

BLYTHE

Indeed.

DORIAN

You would not let your portrait age? Well, then you must like your art better than your friends. I'm hardly more than a bronze statue to you. Barely even that.

(Blythe is shocked by Dorian's angry flush. The smell of turpentine)

I am less to you than your little treasures - how long will you love me? Until I have my first wrinkle? I understand now that I will lose everything...your portrait, and Lady Wotton, have taught me that.

BLYTHE

Oh Dorian!

(reaching for her)

Don't say that. You're the most extraordinary friend I've ever had, how can you be so jealous of youth - your soul is finer than youth.

DORIAN

I'm jealous of this portrait - every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. If only the picture could change, then I could always be as I am now! It will mock me some day.

She throws herself on the divan, crying.

BLYTHE

(to Lady Henrietta)

This is your doing.

LADY HENRIETTA

That portrait is the real Dorian Gray.

BLYTHE

It is not.

LADY HENRIETTA

If it is not, then what does it have to do with me?

BLYTHE

You should have left when I asked.

LADY HENRIETTA

I stayed when you asked.

BLYTHE

I don't want to fight with both of you at once, but between the two of you you've made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done. I'm going to destroy it. It's nothing more than pigment and canvas. I'm not going to let it ruin three lives.

Blythe finds a palette knife.

DORIAN

(Still crying, she rips the knife from  
Blythe's hands)

No, don't! That would be as bad as murder.

BLYTHE

So you appreciate my work at last.

DORIAN

Appreciate it? I am in love with it. It's a part of me, I can feel it.

BLYTHE

Well. As soon as you are dry, you will be varnished, and framed, and sent home. Then you can do whatever you want with yourself.

LADY HENRIETTA

You are both absurd. I don't like scenes when they aren't on stage. Whoever defined man as a rational creature was premature in that definition. Don't squabble over the picture. You better let me have it. This silly little girl doesn't want it and I really do.

DORIAN

(to Blythe)

If you give it to anyone but me I'll never forgive you!

(to Lady Henrietta)

And don't call me a silly young girl!

BLYTHE

You know it is yours. I gave it to you before it existed.

LADY HENRIETTA

You know you've been silly, Ms. Gray, and I know you don't actually object to being called young.

DORIAN

This morning I would have objected to it.

LADY HENRIETTA

But you have lived since then.

(A pause as Blythe's maid brings in the hissing hot tea)

Let's go to the theater tonight! There must be something on.

BLYTHE

It's such a bore to put on evening gowns...and then when you have them on, they go from boring to torture.

LADY HENRIETTA

Yes, fashion can be so restrictive. Sin is the only freedom left in modern life.

BLYTHE

You shouldn't say things like that in front of Dorian.

LADY HENRIETTA

In front of which Dorian? The one drinking tea, or the one in the picture?

BLYTHE

Either. Both.

DORIAN

I would like very much to go to the theatre with you tonight, Lady Henrietta.

LADY HENRIETTA

Then you shall, and you too!

BLYTHE

I would rather not - I have a lot of work to do.

LADY HENRIETTA

Well, then, you and I will go alone.

DORIAN

I would like that.

BLYTHE

I will stay here, with the real Dorian.

DORIAN

Is it the real Dorian? Truly?

BLYTHE

At least in appearance, and it will never change. Don't go to the theater tonight - stay here with me!

DORIAN

I can't.

BLYTHE

Why?

DORIAN

Because I've promised -

BLYTHE

She won't like you any more for keeping promises, she always breaks her own - I beg you.

DORIAN

I should go.

BLYTHE

It's getting late, you'll need to go dress. Good bye, Henrietta. Dorian. Come and see me tomorrow?

DORIAN

Certainly.

BLYTHE

You won't forget?

DORIAN

Of course not.

BLYTHE

(to Lady Henrietta)

Do you remember what I asked you this morning?

LADY HENRIETTA

No -

BLYTHE

I trust you -

## LADY HENRIETTA

I don't even trust myself.

(laughing)

Come, Dorian, I can drop you at your place. Good bye, Blythe, it has been a most interesting afternoon.

Lady Henrietta and Dorian exit, Blythe collapses, as if in pain.