

Scene 5

Setting: Dorian's living room, later that evening

LIGHTS UP: Dorian arrives home, and he is agitated and pacing as he removes his evening clothes and throws on a robe. The painting is on an easel and clearly visible. Lights are somewhat dimmed.

Dorian: I can't believe I thought I was in love with that woman. I now she is a just a shallow girl, unworthy of the characters she has played. She tricked me into loving her. Henry will surely have a good laugh about all of this!

(Dorian looks at the painting briefly and then does a double take. He moves closer and starts at the face of the painting.)

Dorian: This cannot be! The portrait has changed. The eyes have no warmth, and there are lines of cruelty around the mouth! No...surely I'm mistaken.

(He sits down on the couch, and continues to stare at the painting, and finally falls asleep. Lights dim. Shortly after, lights slowly come up to full. Dorian awakes with a start.)

Dorian: What the devil...the painting. I must look at it again. *(He jumps back, rubs his eyes and looks again.)* Nooo, this can't be. The face looks even more cruel than last night. The eyes are full of anger, and there are deep lines of cruelty around the mouth.

(He looks around and holds the mirror up to his face, using his hand to feel around his mouth.)

Dorian: My eyes have not changed, and there are no lines around my mouth. What does this mean?

(Ponders briefly, and then looks excited as his face lights up.)

Dorian: Could it be that my wish to remain young has been granted, and the

painting shows aging and cruelty in my place? This cannot be, can it? The picture holds the secret of my life. It taught me to love my own beauty...Will it teach me to loath my own soul? I cannot bear to look at it again...

(He throws a blanket over the painting)

Dorian: I must amend my life—remove myself from Henry, listen to my conscience...I will apologize to Sybil, and try to love her again.

(There is a loud knock on the door.)

Dorian: I don't want to receive visitors at the moment.

(Louder and continuous knocking.)

Dorian: Oh, all right, *(opening the door)* What do you want! ...Henry, it's you. Why are you so persistent?

Henry: Dorian, I came as soon as I heard. I am so sorry for it all, but you must not think too much about it.

Dorian: Do you mean about Sybil. I was very upset last night, but the morning has cleared my eyes and reason. I am quite well, thank you. I now know what conscience is. Don't sneer at me, Henry. I want to be good. I can't bear the thought of my soul being hideous.

Henry: I see—an artistic approach to ethics. How will you begin?

Dorian: First, I shall apologize and marry Sybil Vane!

Henry: Marry her? Dorian, didn't you get the telegram I sent? Sybil Vane is dead. She killed herself in her dressing room late last night.

Dorian: No! Harry, this is terrible.

Henry: Yes, it is tragic. I'm sure there will be an inquest, but you must not be mixed up in it. You do not want your name associated with any of this. Parisians love this type of fame, but Londoners are more prejudiced against a gentleman associated with scandal.

Dorian: So, I have murdered Sybil Vane...I said such horrible things to her. And because of my cruelty, she has killed her. I should feel the tragedy deeply...but I don't. Am I a heartless person?

Henry: I certainly do not believe you are. If you must mourn, mourn the tragic women she played—mourn Ophelia who took her life, or Cordelia who was strangled. They are more real than Sybil Vane ever was... Now, come to dinner and the opera with me tonight. You will feel better getting out and not thinking about this.

Dorian: Henry, you explain me better than I do myself. I will not dwell on the tragedy but look at this as a life experience...I will join you this evening. It is just what I need.

Henry: Excellent, Dorian, I'm glad you are coming to your senses. I must leave now. I will see you this evening.

(Henry leaves, and Dorian immediately takes the blanket off the painting to look at it. He startles.)

Dorian: It has changed again...subtle changes, but the cruelty and lines are more prominent...Thankfully, it will change, and I will stay young. It will alter, but I will look the same. I can live life as I desire, and the painting will feel the effects, not me. I will be safe. That is everything...