

DORIAN AND BASIL ~ SIDE 1

DORIAN: Basil, what do you want?

BASIL: (*sadly*) I want the Dorian Gray I used to paint.

DORIAN: Basil, you have come too late. Yesterday, when I heard that Sibyl Vane had hung herself in the theater—

BASIL: (*horrified*) She hung herself! Good heavens! Is there no doubt about that?

DORIAN: Surely you don't think it was a vulgar accident? Of course she killed herself. She plummeted 15 feet off the balcony. Shattered her little spine.

BASIL: (*shuddering*) Poor thing! How fearful!

DORIAN: There is nothing fearful about it. (*excitedly*) It is one of the great romantic tragedies of the age. Sibyl lived her finest tragedy. She was always a heroine. The last night she played — the night you saw her — she acted badly because she had known the reality of love. When she knew its unreality, she died, as Juliet might have died.

BASIL: Dorian... how can you say such things? She was a lovely young girl. Foolish, maybe, yes, but you talk as if a young girl leaping off a balcony in a noose in the name of love is nothing.

DORIAN: Basil, she passed into the sphere of art. Her death has all the pathetic uselessness of martyrdom, all its wasted beauty. I know you are surprised at my talking to you like this. You have not realized how I have developed. I was a schoolboy when you knew me. I am a man now. I have new passions, new thoughts, new ideas. I am different, but you must not like me less.

BASIL: Where's your compassion?

DORIAN: It's life imitating art.

BASIL: It's a young girl's life!

DORIAN: Don't quarrel with me, Basil! There is nothing more to be said.

BASIL: Well, Dorian, I won't speak to you again about this horrible thing, after today. I only trust your name won't be mentioned in connection with it. The inquest is to take place this afternoon. Did they summon you?

DORIAN: They don't know my name.

BASIL: But surely she did?

DORIAN: She only knew me as her prince charming. She told me once that they were all rather curious to learn who I was. She invariably told them my name was Prince Charming, and was quite content to keep my identity a mystery until the time was right. (*sniffs*)