

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Oscar Wilde

Why does destroying the portrait destroy Dorian instead of freeing him?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Dorian tries to destroy the evidence
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter XX
START	There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself—that was evidence.
END	It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.
PASSAGE ID	sec-dg-04

THE MOVE

Read physical action as failed moral escape

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Dorian attacks the portrait as though destroying the evidence could destroy the moral history it contains. The reversal exposes the mistake: the portrait is not merely an external object holding guilt that can be removed without consequence.

MARK

Underline what Dorian believes destroying the portrait will accomplish. Circle the physical action he takes against it. Star the reversal in which the attempt to erase evidence produces the opposite result.

NOTICE

- What does Dorian treat the portrait as if it were storing separately from himself?
- Why does attacking the object seem like an escape to him?
- How does the outcome reveal that the moral problem was never safely contained inside the canvas?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does destroying the portrait destroy Dorian instead of freeing him? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does destroying the portrait destroy Dorian instead of freeing him? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	Dorian treats the portrait as if guilt and history were stored outside himself and could be destroyed like evidence. The reversal shows that the moral damage is inseparable from him; attacking the record does not erase what it represents.
EVIDENCE	Use Dorian's motive for destroying the portrait, the physical act, and the outcome that reverses his intended escape.
WATCH FOR	Do not explain the ending only as supernatural punishment. Connect the failed action to Dorian's mistaken belief that moral responsibility can be externalized.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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START ANCHOR	There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself—that was evidence.
END ANCHOR	It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was.

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** - Underline what Dorian believes destroying the portrait will accomplish. Circle the physical action he takes against it. Star the reversal in which the attempt to erase evidence produces the opposite result.
2. **NOTICE** - What does Dorian treat the portrait as if it were storing separately from himself? Why does attacking the object seem like an escape to him? How does the outcome reveal that the moral problem was never safely contained inside the canvas?
3. **THINK** - Answer provisionally: Why does destroying the portrait destroy Dorian instead of freeing him?
4. **WRITE** - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.