

《The Picture of Dorian Gray 道林格雷的肖像 Barnes
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内容简介

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在线试读部分章节

From Camille Cauti's Introduction to The Picture of Dorian Gray

Perhaps the most salient episode of Wilde's life involved his three infamous court trials in spring 1895. They captivated the London press, much of which was only too happy to see Wilde, of whom it had long been jealously suspicious, debased and finally punished for his alleged crimes and for

daring to live outside Victorian social convention. The first trial, in early April 1895, involved the author's libel suit against his lover Douglas's father, the Marquess of Queensbury (before the trials, he was most famous for formulating the Queensbury rules of boxing). Angry over Wilde's alleged influence upon his son, Queensbury accused Wilde in a note of being a "posing sodomite" (sic). Queensbury's defense attorney even presented *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an immoral, perverted book and as one of the fifteen pleas for justification of his client's claim (although the justice at Wilde's next trial chose not to rule *Dorian Gray* as evidence of Wilde's crimes). Thus the novel took on yet another role: involuntary accomplice to Wilde's accuser. The libel suit was not resolved in Wilde's favor, and during the proceedings Queensbury's defense provided enough potential evidence of homosexuality to have Wilde tried under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Friends and associates urged Wilde to flee the country, as other homosexuals on the verge of being outed had done, but whether from stubbornness of his position or denial of his vulnerability, he remained in London and was arrested on April 5, 1895.

After two trials on charges of "committing acts of gross indecency with male persons," Wilde ultimately was found guilty and sentenced to the maximum penalty of two years in prison with hard labor. He gave eloquent testimony on the stand to the legitimacy of, as he called it, "the love that dare not speak its name," which in large part drives *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Among many other definitions, Wilde declared it "that deep spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michaelangelo. . . . It is the noblest form of affection." His words were rewarded, really too late, with spontaneous courtroom applause. Yet the press exulted in Wilde's demise: "The aesthetic cult," the *News of the World* proclaimed, "in its nasty form, is over."

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