

**Ministry of Higher Education and
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Department of English**



**Dr .Faustus / Drama
Second Stage
Prologue and Characters**

By

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The Characters:

1- Faustus

The protagonist. Faustus is a brilliant sixteenth-century scholar from Wittenberg, Germany, whose ambition for knowledge, wealth, and worldly might makes him willing to pay the ultimate price—his soul—to

Lucifer in exchange for supernatural powers. Faustus's initial tragic grandeur is diminished by the fact that he never seems completely sure of the decision to forfeit his soul and constantly wavers about whether or

not to repent. His ambition is admirable and initially awesome, yet he ultimately lacks a certain inner strength. He is unable to embrace his dark path wholeheartedly but is also unwilling to admit his mistake.

2-Mephistophilis

A devil whom Faustus summons with his initial magical experiments.

Mephistopheles's motivations are ambiguous: on the one hand, his overexpressed goal is to catch Faustus's soul and carry it off to hell; on the other hand, he actively attempts to dissuade Faustus from making a deal with Lucifer by warning him about the horrors of hell. Mephistopheles is ultimately as tragic a figure as Faustus, with his moving, regretful accounts of what the devils have lost in their eternal separation from God and his repeated reflections on the pain that comes with damnation.

3-The Chorus

A character who stands outside the story, providing narration and commentary. The Chorus was customary in Greek tragedy.

4-Good Angel

A spirit that urges Faustus to repent for his pact with Lucifer and return to God. Along with the old man and the bad angel, the good angel represents, in many ways, Faustus's conscience and divided will between good and evil.

5-Bad Angel

A spirit that serves as the counterpart to the good angel and provides Faustus with reasons not to repent for sins against God. The evil angel represents the evil half of Faustus's conscience.

6-Lucifer

The prince of devils, the ruler of hell, and Mephistopheles's master.

7-Wagner

Faustus's servant. Wagner uses his master's books to learn how to summon devils and work magic.

8-Clown

A clown who becomes Wagner's servant. The clown's antics provide comic relief; he is a ridiculous character, and his absurd behavior initially

contrasts with Faustus's grandeur. As the play goes on, though, Faustus's behavior comes to resemble that of the clown.

9-Robin

An ostler, or innkeeper, who, like the clown, provides a comic contrast to Faustus. Robin and his friend Rafe learn some basic conjuring, demonstrating that even the least scholarly can possess skill in magic.

Marlowe includes Robin and Rafe to illustrate Faustus's degradation as he submits to simple trickery such as theirs.

10-Rafe

An ostler, and a friend of Robin. Rafe appears as Dick (Robin's friend and a clown) in B-text editions of Doctor Faustus.

11-Valdes and Cornelius

Two friends of Faustus, both magicians, who teach him the art of black magic.

12-Horse-courser

A horse-trader who buys a horse from Faustus, which vanishes after the horse-courser rides it into the water, leading him to seek revenge.

13-The Scholars

Faustus's colleagues at the University of Wittenberg. Loyal to Faustus, the scholars appear at the beginning and end of the play to express dismay at the turn Faustus's studies have taken, to marvel at his achievements, and then to hear his agonized confession of his pact with Lucifer.

14-The pope

The head of the Roman Catholic Church and a powerful political figure in the Europe of Faustus's day. The pope serves as both a source of amusement for the play's Protestant audience and a symbol of the religious faith that Faustus has rejected.

15-Emperor Charles V

The most powerful monarch in Europe, whose court Faustus visits.

16-Knight

A German nobleman at the emperor's court. The knight is skeptical of Faustus's power, and Faustus makes antlers sprout from his head to teach him a lesson. The knight is further developed and known as Benvolio in B-text versions of Doctor Faustus; Benvolio seeks revenge on Faustus and plans to murder him.

17-Bruno

A candidate for the papacy, supported by the emperor. Bruno is captured by the pope and freed by Faustus. Bruno appears only in B-text versions of Doctor Faustus.

18-Duke of Vanholt

A German nobleman whom Faustus visits.

19-Martino and Frederick

Friends of Benvolio who reluctantly join his attempt to kill Faustus. Martino and Frederick appear only in B-text versions of Doctor Faustus.

Summary: Prologue

The Chorus, a single actor, enters and introduces the plot of the play. It will involve neither love nor war, he tells us, but instead will trace the "form of Faustus' fortunes". The Chorus chronicles how Faustus was born to lowly parents in the small town of Rhode, how he came to the town of Wittenberg to live with his kinsmen, and how he was educated at Wittenberg, a famous German university. After earning the title of doctor of divinity, Faustus became famous for his ability to discuss theological matters. The Chorus adds that Faustus is "swollen with cunning" and has begun to practice

necromancy, or black magic . The Prologue concludes by stating that Faustus is seated in his study.

Analysis: Prologue

The Chorus's introduction to the play links Doctor Faustus to the tradition of Greek tragedy, in which a chorus traditionally comments on the action. Although we tend to think of a chorus as a group of people or singers, it can also be composed of only one character.

Here, the Chorus not only gives us background information about Faustus's life and education but also explicitly tells us that his swelling pride will lead to his downfall. The story that we are about to see is compared to the Greek myth of Icarus, a boy whose father, Daedalus, gave him wings made out of feathers and beeswax. Icarus did not heed his father's warning and flew too close the sun, causing his wings to melt and sending him plunging to his death. In the same way, the Chorus tells us, Faustus will "mount above his reach" and suffer the consequences .

The way that the Chorus introduces Faustus, the play's protagonist, is significant, since it reflects a commitment to Renaissance values. The European Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed a rebirth of interest in classical learning and inaugurated a new emphasis on the individual in painting and literature. In the medieval era that preceded the Renaissance, the focus of scholarship was on God and theology; in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the focus turned toward the study of humankind and the natural world, culminating in the birth of modern science in the work of men like Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton.

The Prologue locates its drama squarely in the Renaissance world, where humanistic values hold sway. Classical and medieval literature typically focuses on the lives of the great and famous—saints or kings or ancient heroes. But this play, the Chorus insists, will focus not on ancient battles between Rome and Carthage, or on the "courts of kings" or the "pomp of proud audacious deeds" .

Instead, we are to witness the life of an ordinary man, born to humble parents. The message is clear: in the new world of the Renaissance, an ordinary man like Faustus, a common born scholar, is as important as any king or warrior, and his story is just as worthy of being told.