

PRESTWICK HOUSE LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS

THE TRAGICAL HISTORY OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

by Christopher Marlowe



UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES



The Tragical
History of
Doctor Faustus

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE



Prestwick House

LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS™

P.O. Box 658 Clayton, Delaware 19938 • www.prestwickhouse.com



SENIOR EDITOR: Paul Moliken

EDITOR: Darlene Gilmore

COVER DESIGN: Maria J. Mendoza

PRODUCTION: Jerry Clark

 **Prestwick House**
LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS™

P.O. BOX 658 • CLAYTON, DELAWARE 19938

TEL: 1.800.932.4593

FAX: 1.888.718.9333

WEB: www.prestwickhouse.com

Prestwick House Teaching Units™, Activity Packs™, and Response Journals™ are the perfect complement for these editions. To purchase teaching resources for this book, visit www.prestwickhouse.com/material.

This Prestwick House edition is an unabridged republication with slight emendations of *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, published in 1909 by Sturgis & Walton Co., New York.

©2007. Copyrighted by Prestwick House, Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion may be reproduced without permission in writing from the publisher. Printed in the United States of America. *Revised, 2010*

ISBN 978-1-58049-798-5

Contents

C O N T E N T S

NOTES	6
READING POINTERS FOR SHARPER INSIGHTS	8
DRAMATIS PERSONAE	11
CHORUS	13
SCENE I	15
SCENE II	21
SCENE III	23
SCENE IV	27
SCENE V	31
SCENE VI	39
CHORUS	47
SCENE VII	49
CHORUS	53
SCENE VIII	55
SCENE IX	57
SCENE X	61
SCENE XI	65
SCENE XII	69
SCENE XIII	71
SCENE XIV	73
SCENE XV	77
SCENE XVI	79
GLOSSARY	84
LATIN GLOSSARY	87
VOCABULARY	89

Notes

What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury, England, on February 6, 1564, the son of a shoemaker. He was educated at King's College and Corpus Christi College and received a Master's degree in 1587. This award was not based solely on scholarship, however, and Marlowe's life of political machinations and possible spying for the English government began around the same time that he received it. Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council awarded the degree, stating that "he had done Her Majesty good service, & deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing in matters touching the benefit of the country." Much of what Marlowe did politically in his life remains unknown, another fact that leads many to conclude that he played a part in secretive government activities.

He became friendly with both Sir Phillip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh. Influenced by them and determined to become one of the English literati, Marlowe wrote his first play, *Tamburlaine the Great*, which was performed as early as 1587, but not published until 1590. The play is one of the first ever written in blank verse, and it elevated that poetic form to high art. He continued his writing career, producing such works as *The Jew of Malta* (1589-1590), *Edward II* (1593) and *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (1604).

However, just two years after the publication of *Tamburlaine the Great*, Marlowe was imprisoned for participating in a fatal swordfight that took the life of an innkeeper's son; Marlowe spent just two weeks in jail, and was found not guilty of murder.

READING POINTERS

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

There are many versions and interpretations of the play, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, written by Christopher Marlowe in the late 1500s. The basic story, however, remains consistent throughout all the versions. The play is based on an old legend regarding Dr. Faustus, a man of knowledge and excessive pride, who sells his soul to the devil to gain power and knowledge of the universe.

Dr. Faustus is a drama, meaning that it was meant to be performed, rather than read as a novel. The following information will assist you in reading the play:

- Marlowe was an English playwright, so the dialect is Elizabethan, which can be a challenge to read and comprehend. Sidebar notes and the glossary will be helpful in deciphering the text.
- Latin words and phrases are used liberally, as was common during that time. Aside from the passages that seem to require the use of Latin (e.g., Catholic prayer), Marlowe seems to use Latin to emphasize a point. We have provided translations.
- The play incorporates elements of comedy. While you are reading, take note of the comical scenes. Sometimes a comedic scene can provide a break from the intensity of the serious scene that precedes it, a technique known as comic relief. Other times comedy is used to mask a serious or sensitive issue. Comedy is also used at face value, purely for entertainment purposes.
- Aside from Faustus and Mephistophilis, the characters in the play are flat—undeveloped, one-dimensional. It's possible that Marlowe did this to ensure that the focus stays on the main characters and to use the other characters as symbols (e.g., good, evil, politics, compassion, beauty, ignorance, etc.).

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

THE POPE.

CARDINAL OF LORRAIN.

EMPEROR OF GERMANY.

DUKE OF VANHOLT.

FAUSTUS.

VALDES,
CORNELIUS, } Friends to FAUSTUS.

WAGNER, Servant to FAUSTUS.

Clown.

ROBIN.

RALPH.

Vintner, Horse-Courser, Knight, Old Man, Scholars, Friars, and
Attendants.

DUCHESS OF VANHOLT.

LUCIFER.

BELZEBUB.

MEPHISTOPHILIS.

Good Angel.

Evil Angel.

The Seven Deadly Sins.

Devils.

Spirits in the shape of ALEXANDER THE GREAT, of his Paramour, and
of HELEN OF TROY.

CHORUS.

CHORUS

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

CHORUS.

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS. Not marching now in fields of Thrasimene,
Where Mars did mate¹ the Carthaginians;†
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is overturned;
5 Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds,
Intends our Muse to vaunt her heavenly verse:
Only this, gentlemen,—we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad:
To patient judgments we appeal our plaud,²
10 And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town called Rhodes:
Of riper years, to Wertenberg he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
15 So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,³
That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology;
20 Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings† did mount above his reach,
And, melting, Heavens conspired his overthrow;
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
25 He surfeits⁴ upon cursed necromancy;⁵
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:
And this the man that in his study sits! [Exit.]

¹defeat

²applause

³academic learning

⁴fills to excess

⁵magic; the dark arts

†Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

SCENE I

DOCTOR FAUSTUS

SCENE I.

FAUSTUS *in his Study.*

- FAUSTUS. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess;¹
Having commenced, be a divine in show,
Yet level² at the end of every art,
5 And live and die in Aristotle's works.
Sweet Analytics,³ 'tis thou hast ravished me! [Reads.]
Bene disserere est finis logices.[‡]
Is, to dispute well, logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
10 Then read no more; thou hast attained that end;
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:
Bid *Oncaymaeon*[‡] farewell, Galen[‡] come,
Seeing, *Ubi desinit Philosophus, ibi incipit Medicus*:[‡]
Be a physician, Faustus; heap up gold,
15 And be eternised⁴ for some wondrous cure. [Reads.]
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,[‡]
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
Is not thy common talk sound aphorisms?
20 Are not thy bills⁵ hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been eased?
Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man.
Wouldst thou make men to live eternally,
25 Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed.
Physic, farewell!—Where is Justinian?[‡] [Reads.]
*Si una eademque res legatur duobus, alter rem,
alter valorem rei, &c.*[‡]

¹teach

²aim

³the science of
logical analysis

⁴made eternally
famous

⁵announcements

[‡]Terms marked in the text with (‡) can be looked up in the Latin Glossary for additional information.

30 A pretty case of paltry legacies! [Reads.]
Exhaereditare filium non potest pater, nisi, &c.†
 Such is the subject of the institute,
 And universal body of the law:
 This study fits a mercenary drudge,
 35 Who aims at nothing but external trash;
 Too servile and illiberal for me.
 When all is done, divinity is best:
 Jerome's Bible,† Faustus; view it well. [Reads.]
Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! Stipendium, &c.‡
 40 The reward of sin is death. That's hard. [Reads.]
Si peccasse negamus fallimur et nulla est in nobis
veritas†
 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
 and there's no truth in us. Why then, belike we
 45 must sin, and so consequently die.
 Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
 What doctrine call you this, *Che sera, sera*,‡
 What will be shall be? Divinity, adieu!
 These metaphysics of magicians
 50 And necromantic books are heavenly:
 Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters:
 Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
 O, what a world of profit and delight,
 Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
 55 Is promised to the studious artisan!
 All things that move between the quiet poles
 Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
 Are but obeyed in their several provinces,
 Nor can they raise the wind, or rend the clouds;
 60 But his dominion that exceeds⁶ in this,
 Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man;
 A sound magician is a mighty god:
 Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to gain a deity.
 Wagner!

Enter WAGNER.

65 Wagner, commend me to my dearest friends,
 The German Valdes† and Cornelius;‡
 Request them earnestly to visit me.

⁶surpasses

WAGNER. I will, sir.

[Exit.]

70 FAUSTUS. Their conference will be a greater help to me
Than all my labours, plod I ne'er so fast.

Enter Good Angel and Evil Angel.

GOOD ANGEL. O, Faustus! lay that damned book aside,
And gaze not upon it, lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head!
Read, read the Scriptures:—that is blasphemy.

75 EVIL ANGEL. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,
Wherein all Nature's treasure is contained:
Be thou on earth as Jove[†] is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.

[Excunt Angels.]

FAUSTUS. How am I glutted with conceit⁷ of this!
80 Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
85 And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy,
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
90 And make the swift Rhine circle fair Wertenberg;
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma[†] from our land,
95 And reign sole king of all the provinces;
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,[†]
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

⁷ideas



Glossary

Enter CHORUS.

Mars – the Roman god of war

Carthaginians – Although the word “mate” means “defeat,” in 217 B.C., during the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians (lead by Hannibal) defeated the Romans (lead by Flaminius) at Lake Trasimeno.

waxen wings – Faust is compared to Icarus. In Greek mythology, Daedalus’s son, Icarus, flew too close to the sun, which melted the wings his father had made for him, causing Icarus to fall into the sea.

SCENE I.

Galen – (129-ca.200 A.D.) an important physician in ancient Greece

Justinian – Justinian I (ca.482-565) was the Byzantine Emperor who was famous for the complete revision of Roman law, known as the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, which is the basis for modern day civil law.

German Valdes – possibly Paracelsus (1493-1541), a prominent physician and alchemist

Cornelius – the famous mystic and alchemist, Cornelius Agrippa (63-12B.C.)

Jove – the Roman god Jupiter, who is the god of the sky and the supreme Roman deity

Jerome’s Bible – called The Vulgate; this is the Latin translation of the Bible by St. Jerome in the 4th century A.D.

Prince of Parma – a reference to the “Duke of Parma” (Alexander Farnese: 1545-1592), who reestablished Spanish rule in the Netherlands

Antwerp’s Bridge – In 1585, during the Eighty Years’ War, Farnese’s forces built a bridge over the river Scheldt as a blockade during the Siege at Antwerp. It was later blown up by a ship filled with explosives.

Indian Moors – refers to Spain’s enslavement of American Indians

Lapland giants – an error by the author; the people of Lapland were not known to be giants, but they were said to practice magic.

Golden Fleece – refers to the gold in Prince Philip of Spain’s treasury, some of it coming from America; it is also an allusion to the Greek myth of Jason and his search for the mystical golden fleece.

Delphian Oracle – in Greek mythology, the prophetic stone dedicated to Apollo, the god of prophecy

Bacon – Roger Bacon (1214-1294), an English philosopher; his studies are considered by many to be the prelude to modern science.

Albanus – perhaps Pietro d’Albano, a medieval, Italian alchemist; perhaps it is a misprint for Albertus Magnus (about 1200-1280).

Vocabulary

CHORUS.

audacious – recklessly bold
conspired – plotted
cunning – skillful; expert
dalliance – wasting time
divinity – a study of a God-like quality or being
glutted – filled to excess
muse – the source of an artist's inspiration
pomp – a magnificent display
riper – fully mature or advanced
self-conceit – having too high an opinion of oneself
surfeits – overindulges
theology – the study of religion

SCENE I.

ambiguities – unclear or uncertain meanings or intentions
aphorisms – short statements of opinions or truths
argosies – large, cargo-laden merchant ships
artisan – a skilled craftsman
blasphemy – expressing disrespect for something sacred
canonize – to glorify; treat as sacred; in Catholicism, to be made a saint
canvas – to analyze
concise – short and to the point
conjure – to practice magic to bring forth something
doctrine – a teaching; philosophy, belief
dominion – a territory ruled by one person or entity
enterprise – a difficult or complicated project
illiberal – without culture or refinement
legacies – things that are handed down from the past
maladies – illnesses or unpleasant conditions
mercenary – someone who does something purely for reward or money
necromantic – relating to magic
obscure – unclear; difficult to understand
odious – hateful; detestable
omnipotence – the quality of having unlimited power
ravished – held one's attention; captivated
requisite – necessary for a particular purpose
rudiments – the fundamental elements; basics
scriptures – sacred writings from the Bible
servile – suitable for or like a servant
solitary – secluded