



Doctor Faustus

Christopher Marlowe





R A I N B O W S

Christopher Marlowe

Doctor Faustus

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Doctor Faustus

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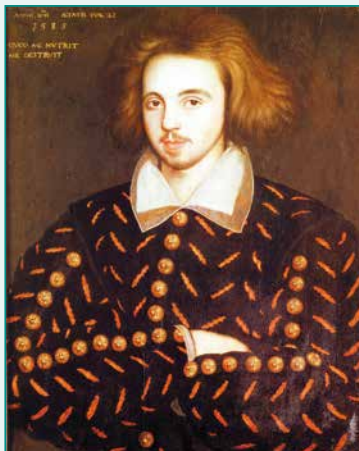
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The Author

Christopher Marlowe



Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury to the shoemaker John Marlowe and his wife Catherine. His date of birth is not known, but he was baptised on 26th February 1564, only two months after William Shakespeare. Marlowe's career was brilliant, spectacular and short-lasting¹ and he enjoyed early literary success.

He first went to King's School in Canterbury, but he then won a scholarship at Cambridge University which he attended from 1580 to 1587. He soon joined a group of literary experimenters called "the University Wits"². He shared their dissolute³ habits and was famous for his wild behaviour. He protested against all authority, in particular religious authorities.

After he finished university, he went to London. Though little is known about his life, it is believed that he was a government agent who travelled abroad as a spy. Apparently, he had several long absences from the university and he spent large amounts of money on food and drink, more than his scholarship money probably allowed him to. However, the mystery surrounding Marlowe's service to Queen Elizabeth I hasn't been solved yet.

In London, Marlowe started writing full-time and lived in two worlds: that of literary intellectuals and theatre people and that of the dark world of spies and criminals. He had a wild and violent behaviour which led him into trouble, and there are also many legends and anecdotes about his interest in black magic. There are also different stories about his death, but the most probable is that he was stabbed⁴ to death in a tavern brawl⁵ when he was only 29 years old.

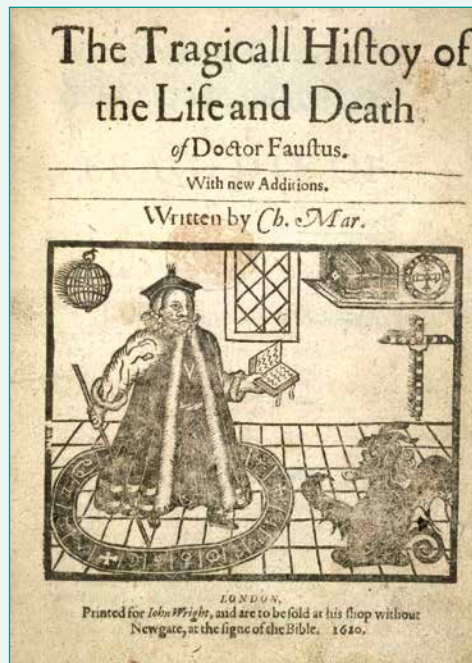
1. *short-lasting*: which continues only for a short time.
2. *wit*: ability to say something that is both intelligent and amusing.

3. *dissolute*: immoral, corrupt.
4. *stabbed*: killed with a knife.
5. *brawl*: a noisy fight in a public place.

In his short life, Marlowe wrote some beautiful lyrical poetry, a short play, *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, and four major tragic dramas, *Tamburlaine the Great*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward*, and *Dr Faustus* (or *The Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*) in 1594. These dramas are often referred to as ‘one-man tragedies’, because they each centre on one main personality who is dominated by a great passion.

Three of his heroes are destroyed by their desire for power: Tamburlaine for the power over people, the Jew of Malta for the power coming from wealth⁶, and Faustus for the power of infinite knowledge.

Marlowe’s plays are different from previous theatrical plays because they all have a central unity and deeply analyse and develop their main themes. The majesty of Marlowe’s blank verse⁷, which he made capable of expressing the spiritual struggle of his heroes, adds a lot to their greatness.



6. *wealth*: large amount of money or property that a person has.

7. *blank verse*: regular verse of a poem which doesn't rhyme.

Characters

- Dr Faustus, a famous German scholar
- Wagner, Faustus's servant
- Valdes and Cornelius, Faustus's friends and students of magic
- An old man
- Pope Adrian
- Bruno, the rival Pope
- The Cardinals of France and Padua
- Charles V, Emperor of Germany
- Martino, Frederick and Benvolio, the Emperor's knights
- Raymond, King of Hungary
- The Duke and the Duchess of Vanholt
- Good Angel
- Bad Angel
- Mephistopheles
- Lucifer
- Belzebub
- Devils
- Avarice, Envy, Gluttony, Lechery, Pride, Sloth and Wrath, the Seven Deadly Sins
- Alexander the Great and his mistress, spirits
- Darius and Helen of Troy, spirits





BEFORE READING

1 Answer these questions.

- What do you think the expression “selling one’s soul to the devil” means?
- Can you mention any popular films and/or books based on this idea?
- Have you ever been tempted into making dangerous decisions? What were they?

2 Find out which words refer to the world of magic and which to the world of education and write them in the appropriate column.

Necromancy • Logic • spell • Philosophy • scholar • sorcery •
Law • Theology • incantation • charm

MAGIC	EDUCATION
<i>Necromancy</i>	

3 Match each word to its opposite. Look up in the dictionary any words you don’t know.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| a. good | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. slow |
| b. quick | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. thin |
| c. sharp | <input type="checkbox"/> 3. humbly |
| d. refuse | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. calmness |
| e. fury | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. beautiful |
| f. proudly | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. accept |
| g. ugly | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7. evil |
| h. thick | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. dull |



Dr. Faustus

The thirst for knowledge

Chapter 1

Dear readers, the story you are going to hear needs your patience and intelligence... it will take you into the complicated and tragic existence of a cultured scholar¹, Faustus, whose fortunes went through good and evil. Please, don't rush to judge him, be concentrated and objective till the end.

Faustus was born in the town of Rhode in Germany to a humble and poor family and, since he was so talented and witty², he was sent to study Theology at Wittemberg University. Faustus was clever and quick in learning and he was soon admired by intellectuals and scientists from all over Europe... he was called "Doctor Faustus".

However, his high opinion of himself and ambition couldn't accept his human limits and he did just like Icarus³ had done... He went beyond his limits: he turned to necromancy⁴ to obtain excitement, glory and divine power.

Look at him, there he is, in his study, surrounded by his books...

"Make up your mind⁵ Faustus! Make up your mind!" he kept repeating to himself, "What have you discovered so far? How deeply has your knowledge gone? What else should you do?"

He was walking around his desk looking at the pile of dusty⁶ books on it; his expression was worried and upset and, when he picked up a text by Aristotle⁷, he exclaimed,

"Logic, you seduced me when I was young but... if your purpose is only to give your reasons and convince with words... Well, I've

1. *scholar*: a very intellectual person.

2. *witty*: very clever.

3. *Icarus*: Greek mythological figure who flew too close to the sun on wax wings. The wax melted and he drowned into the sea.

4. *necromancy*: black magic.

5. *make up your mind*: to make a decision.

6. *dusty*: covered with a small powder that comes from dirt.

7. *Aristotle*: one of the greatest Greek philosophers (384-322 BC).

already reached my goal! I'm a master at it!" and he threw the book onto the floor with disdain⁸.

He took a second book, he looked at its cover, and,

"Medicine!" he shouted, "Your aim is health and healing people; I've already created remedies to save cities from the worst epidemics! You're useless! What's the point of losing my time on you?" he added scornfully⁹.

"There's only one reason I'd choose you as my profession," he said with a light in his eyes, "if your secrets could make us eternal and bring us back to life!" he concluded with a sharp tone of the voice.

Then, he picked up a third book – it was a thick legal volume – and he turned it in his hands reflecting,

"What is Law," he said, "but an insignificant case of inheritance? Law is the profession of boring people doing an uninteresting job only for money! It's not good for my genius!"

He was silent for a while, then he took the Holy Bible from the pile of books. This was the only text he had considered attractive for a long time, and he read aloud,

"The reward¹⁰ of sin¹¹ is death: that's hard.

If we say that we have no sins,

We deceive¹² ourselves, and there is no truth in us."

"None of us is a saint, we are all sinners... sinners!" he sighed. "There's no way out... we are all destined to an eternal death!" he concluded with bitterness¹³. "Can this be called a teaching? We are all predestined! Goodbye Theology!"

Faustus pushed the Bible away with anger and he caught sight of a few other books he hadn't seen before. He was surprised,

"What! A volume of magic and spells¹⁴!" he exclaimed excitedly, "Mysterious, strange and obscure lines, circles, letters, characters..."

8. *disdain*: feeling that someone or something is not good enough to deserve your respect. The adverb is *disdainfully*.

9. *scornfully*: without respect.

10. *reward*: what you get because you've done something good.

11. *sin*: act against God's will committed by sinners.

12. *deceive*: to be dishonest with someone.

13. *bitterness*: feeling which mixes anger, seriousness, hatred and sadness.

14. *spells*: magical incantations.

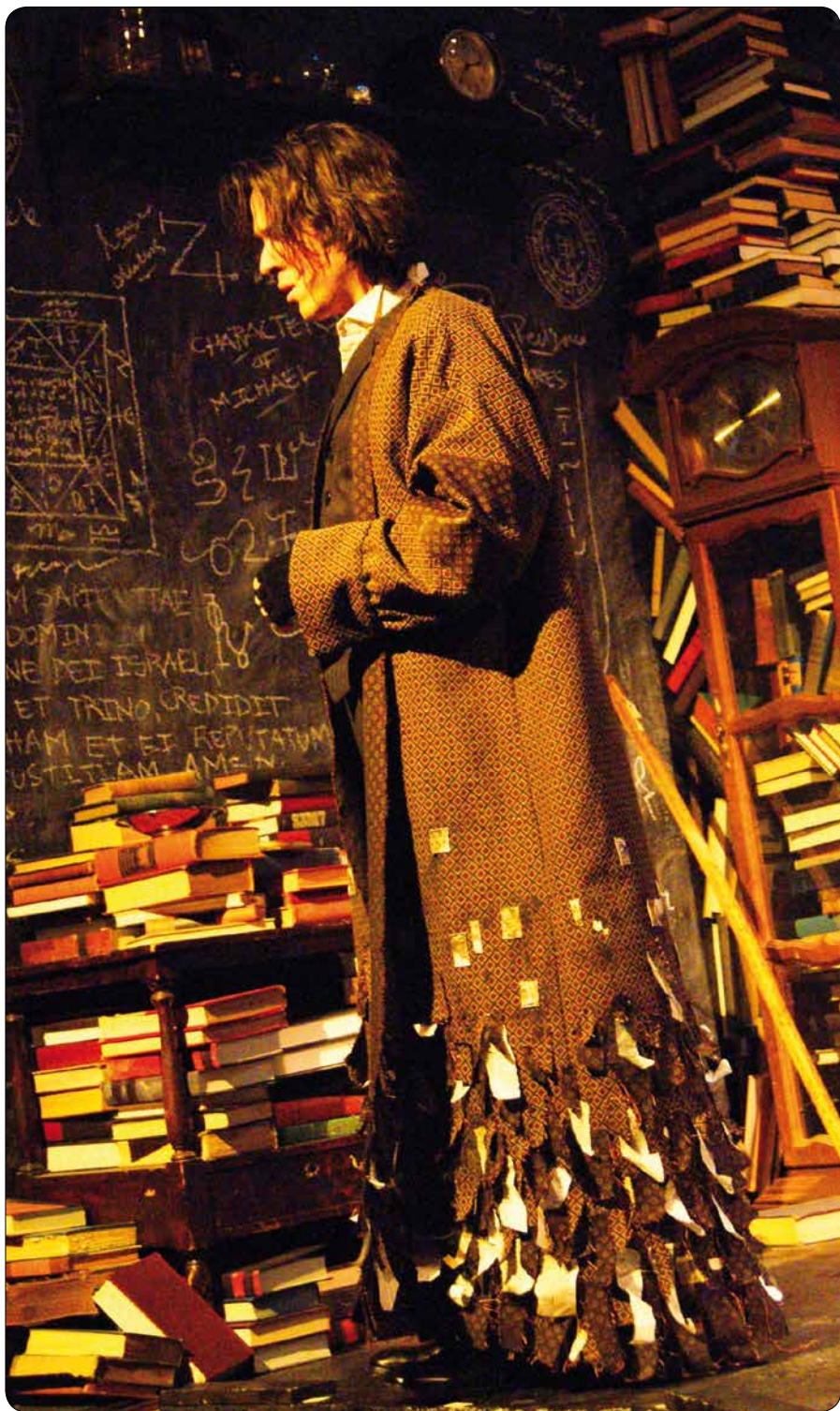


Photo of Fault Line theatre's production of C. Marlowe's 'Doctor Faustus', March 2011.
Graig Wesley Divino as Doctor Faustus.

This is what I've been looking for, this is what could light the flame of my curiosity and ambition!" he shouted.

"If I were a master in black arts," he was thrilled at the idea, "I could have the world at my command... I could control nature, kings, emperors... I would share God's power!"

Doctor Faustus made up his mind,

"From now on, nothing else will distract me from necromancy!" he said with decision. "Oh, I knew I had to follow my dear friends' advice!" he added in a sad tone. "Cornelius and Valdes have always warned me not to waste my time on useless studies... they've tried to convince me... they are masters at black magic and I need their powerful knowledge right now! Wagner!" he shouted.

His servant Wagner was just entering the study when he heard his master calling him aloud. He looked a little surprised at Faustus's wild expression and tone.

"Go find Valdes and Cornelius," Faustus commanded, "I need them right now!"

Wagner nodded¹⁵ and left the room in silence.

While Faustus was daydreaming¹⁶ about his future glory and power, two angels suddenly appeared – a good angel and a bad angel.

"Don't be seduced by those damned books, Faustus!" cried the good angel in a desperate attempt to save his soul from temptation, "God's anger will fall on your head! Read the Scriptures... throw that blasphemy¹⁷ away!"

"No!" shouted the bad angel looking at him in an inviting tone, "Go on and be on earth what God is in the sky!" the bad angel said smiling, and they both disappeared.

Faustus wasn't worried neither by their appearance nor by the good angel's words... he was now determined in his decision.

"Will I be able to order spirits to do what I please? Will they answer all my questions? If I ask for luxuries like those of a king, will they travel to all the corners of the world to get them? Will

15. *nodded*: moved his head up and down to show agreement.

16. *daydreaming*: dreaming with his eyes open, during the day.

17. *blasphemy*: something you say or do that is insulting to God or people's religious beliefs.



'What! A volume of magic spells! ... Mysterious, strange, obscure lines...'

they discuss about philosophy? Will they tell me all the secrets of creation and will they obey my orders?" he was repeating to himself as if under a spell.

Meanwhile, Valdes and Cornelius had just arrived at Faustus's place and Wagner announced to his master their presence.

"Come in, dear friends!" Faustus welcomed them with a warm smile. "Once I refused your offer to teach me something forbidden... but your words have convinced me at last!" he said with excitement in his eyes.

"My mind has been thinking about magic since I realized how disgusting philosophy is... Oh, foolish me... how much time I've wasted on Law and Medicine! They are for insignificant minds only!" he sighed. "And theology? It's the worst of all!" he concluded.

"Magic, magic, magic! You've conquered me!" he then said as if he was hypnotised, "I need you, my friends! I need your secret knowledge and your intelligent teachings to master this forbidden art!"

Valdes was really pleased with his friend's decision and answered proudly,

"Faustus, our experience, these sacred books and your wit will open to us the doors of the universe! We'll be able to do whatever we want... the spirits will follow our orders, they'll watch over us when we please and will become any shape we want!"

WORKING ON THE TEXT

1 Scan the text and say:

- a. where the events of Chapter 1 take place: *In Dr Faustus's study.*
- b. why Dr Faustus finds Medicine useless:
- c. why he finds Law "not up to his genius":
- d. who Cornelius and Valdes are:
- e. what they study at university:
- f. who Wagner is:
- g. who stops Wagner while the three scholars are having dinner together:
- h. whose servant Mephistopheles is:

2 Answer these questions.

- a. Where was Faustus born?
- b. Was his family rich?
- c. Which subject was he sent to study at Wittenberg University?
- d. Which text had he considered worthy of his attention for a long time?
- e. Why did he get excited when he came across a volume of magic and spells?
- f. Why did he want to see Valdes and Cornelius then?

3 Fill in the blanks with appropriate words from Chapter 1.

Suddenly an ugly **a. devil** entered the room where Faustus was standing. Faustus greatly disliked his look and ordered him to come back in the shape of a **b.** friar.

The devil **c.** and then asked Faustus what he would **d.** him to do next.

Faustus answered, he wanted him to **e.** all his orders, but the devil looked at him in **f.** and explained he could only obey **g.** orders.

WORKING ON VOCABULARY

4 Match these idiomatic expressions to their meanings.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. To have the devil of a time | 1. To talk about a certain person, and that person appears. |
| b. Go to the devil | 2. With a fury, in a great hurry. |
| c. To play devil's advocate | 3. A person is not as bad as people say he is. |
| d. Like the devil | 4. Stop annoying me, I do not want to deal with you anymore. |
| e. To speak of the devil | 5. To pretend to be against an idea which a lot of people support in order to make people discuss it in more detail. |
| f. The devil is not as bad as he is painted | 6. To have a very difficult time. |

5 Name these shapes using these words.

circle • triangle • square • rhombus • heart • star • cross • crescent • oval • rectangle



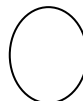
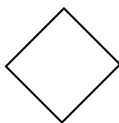
a.

b.

c.

d.

e.



f.

g.

h.

i.

j.

WORKING ON GRAMMAR

6 Past Tenses. Complete the summary of the chapter with the Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect or Past Perfect tense.

While he a. *was studying* (study) at Wittemberg University, Faustus b. (become) famous for his wit and cleverness. One night, while he c. (stand) alone in his study, he d. (realise) he e. (master) all the most important subjects. He f. (grow) impatient and g. (decide) to

explore other fields of knowledge. He **h.** (have) two friends whom he **i.** (not see) for a long time so he **j.** (decide) the moment **k.** (come) to meet them. His friends **l.** (be) good at magic and **m.** (already, offer) to teach Faustus what they **n.** (know). His friends **o.** (come) and **p.** (teach) Faustus what they **q.** (learn) about necromancy.

WORKING ON SKILLS

Listening



Listen to the dialogue between the Bad Angel and the Good Angel and answer these questions.

- Which news is Baddy referring to?
- According to Goody, why shouldn't Baddy feel so confident yet?
- What animals are mentioned in the old saying Goody says, and what animal does Baddy compare Faustus to?
- What are the stupid tricks Goody thinks Baddy has in mind?
- What things will Faustus be offered to make him give up his soul to the Devil?
- What food and drink does Goody want to bet?

Writing

- You have found out that your best friend is going to put him/herself into trouble. Write to him/her a letter talking about all the bad consequences his/her action might cause. You can use some of these ideas.

drive your parents' car without permission, you want to spend the night out and tell a lie to parents, you want to make copies of the Maths class test by stealing it from the teacher's locker...

Speaking

- Pair work. Imagine you are Valdes and Cornelius. While going to Faustus's house, talk about what he might want from you. If you need them, you can use some of the following ideas.

learn about necromancy, help with his studies, help to organize a birthday party, introduce his new girlfriend to them, show them his latest purchases...

PROGRESS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE RENAISSANCE



Faustus's scepticism¹, unlimited thirst for knowledge, passion for the classics, interest in sorcery and magic and strong desire to understand the mysteries of the universe, made him a true man of the Renaissance, which, in England, culminated in Queen Elizabeth's (1558-1603) Golden Age.

Knowledge was considered as a key to power and therefore led scholars to rebel against the rules of society and the traditional views of the cosmic order based on the concept of the *Primum Mobile*. In the Ptolemaic² system, this was believed to be the most external moving sphere which turned around the Earth carrying with it the spheres of the other celestial bodies (the planets, the Sun, and the Moon).

In the Renaissance, this order was completely revolutionised by the Polish scientist Nicolaus Copernicus, who proposed a model of the universe that placed the Sun rather than the Earth at its centre. The publication of this model in his book *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* in 1543 was a major event and gave birth to the Copernican Revolution.

1. *scepticism*: disbelief, uncertainty, doubt.
2. *Ptolemaic*: of Claudius Ptolemaeus, Greco-

Egyptian 2nd-century AD geographer, astronomer, and astrologer.

Many other important inventions and discoveries were made thanks to a change in the way of thinking: people decided they wanted to understand the world around them, and therefore tried to experience things, rather than simply believing what the ancient authors had said about nature and its phenomena.

Great artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, for example, studied anatomy to better understand the body and to create more realistic paintings and sculptures, and architects such as Brunelleschi made advances in maths in order to design perfectly balanced³ buildings.

However, one of the most important inventions of the Renaissance was the printing press (around 1440), thanks to Johannes Gutenberg. The fact that now information could reach a large audience helped the circulation of the new scientific discoveries and allowed scientists to share their works and learn from each other.

Both the microscope and the telescope were invented in this period, as well as the first mechanical clock and the pocket watch, but there were also inventions that advanced warfare⁴, and other more practical inventions which improved the quality of daily life, such as the flushing⁵ toilet, the screwdriver⁶, wallpaper, and the pencil.

Also, progress in naval engineering made England one of the most powerful nations in Europe and allowed it to spread its power all over the world, from the New World to the Far East. This expansion overseas gave England the opportunity to trade with far away countries, to form the basis for the British Empire, and, what's more, to enlarge its cultural horizons.

Christopher Marlowe lived and worked in that time of progress, when England fully developed into a Protestant country, and that glorious period influenced his works and genius. He also contributed to the development of the theatre: he adopted the blank verse, and he brought the language of drama to heights never known before. Faustus became the perfect symbol of the Renaissance scholar who tried to gain knowledge by doubting everything, refusing all authority, and going straight to nature, but sometimes also magic, for answers.



3. *balanced*: keeping a balance so that different parts of something exist in equal or correct amounts.

4. *warfare*: military and war activity.

5. *flushing*: with water that passes through it to clean it.

6. *screwdriver*:





Doctor Faustus

Boredom, ambition and the usual man's willingness to overcome his limits push famous scientist Faustus to reject traditional disciplines and even God in favour of necromancy.

Seduced by dreams of glory and omnipotence, Faustus gives in to Mephistopheles's temptations and signs a contract with no less than Satan himself: 24 years of knowledge in exchange for his soul.

Distracted by devilish performances, travels around the world, beautiful past queens and pleasurable tricks, will Faustus succeed in saving himself? An old but modern story on Man's thirst for power and knowledge topped with five rich extensions to contextualize the work and its author.

beginner

• **A1** (*Breakthrough*)

elementary

• **A2** (*Waystage*)



pre-intermediate

• **B1** (*Threshold*)

intermediate

• **B2** (*Vantage*)

post-intermediate

• **C1** (*Effectiveness*)

Levels of accredited examination boards:

Cambridge English:	<i>Preliminary (PET)</i>
Trinity:	<i>Grade 5, 6 / ISE I</i>
City & Guilds (Pitman):	<i>Intermediate</i>
ESB:	<i>Intermediate 1, 2</i>
Edexcel:	<i>Elementary</i>



Teacher's Resources available on line:
Answer Key, Audioscripts, Summing-up Activities.