**Scene VIII (An Inn –Yard)& IX (The Inn Yard)**

**Summary**

Robin, an ostler (a person who works with horses), has stolen one of [Doctor Faustus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Doctor_Faustus)'s books of spells and intends to try his hand at conjuring. A fellow ostler named Rafe comes to inform him that a gentleman requires their services, but Robin shoos him away with a warning that he is about to do something risky. Seeing the book, Rafe remarks that Robin cannot read. Robin replies that, with luck, he can read well enough to seduce his mistress. Rafe learns that Robin is using a powerful book of spells and has been practicing some minor magic. Robin promises him a spell for beguiling the kitchen maid, Nan Spit, anytime he wishes. Thrilled at the prospect, Rafe agrees to assist Robin in his conjuring.

**Analysis**

Comic relief again contrasts with the seriousness of the preceding scene in which Faustus deeds his soul to [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer) in exchange for power and knowledge. Robin is as uneducated as Faustus is scholarly in matters of magic. He has not studied it, but stolen a book about it from Faustus. He cannot read but intends to try conjuring anyway. His ambitions are not lofty, as are Faustus's, but boorish and vulgar. Magic as an exalted subject to be seriously pursued is reduced by a lout to something trivial and low. Once more, the actions of a minor character seem to point out that anyone with the right book can perform magic of some kind without limitless knowledge or loss of his soul.

Variations of the A-Text and B-Text identify Robin as an ostler (A-Text) or as the clown (B-Text). In addition the B-Text lists the second character as Dick instead of Rafe. There are variations as well in the placement of this scene within the play. Some A-Texts place it later, after [Act 3, Scene 1](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/act-3-scene-1-summary/), displacing the chorus. Some B-Texts place this scene after Faustus views the Seven Deadly Sins. Nevertheless, several authorities have agreed that a scene was missing at this point in both versions of the text and [Marlowe](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/author/) likely intended this scene to fill that gap.

**Scene X (The Emperor's Palace At Innsbruck)**

**Summary**

At the court of Carolus the Fifth, the emperor challenges Faustus to prove his celebrated knowledge of conjuring. He promises Faustus will not be harmed in any way for performing magic. Faustus agrees, and the emperor requests that the doctor raise Alexander the Great and his paramour from their tombs. Faustus explains that he cannot raise their physical bodies, which have long since turned to dust, but will make them appear as spirits. Throughout this exchange between Faustus and the emperor, a knight has interjected snide, skeptical comments. Now he mocks Faustus openly and leaves, having no desire to witness Faustus's conjuring. The doctor promises to get even with him soon.

[Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Mephastophilis) ushers in Alexander the Great and his paramour. To the emperor, the two beings appear alive and tangible. Once they leave, Faustus asks that the unpleasant knight be called back. The man returns, unaware that a pair of horns has sprouted from his head. The emperor points them out, saying they are a sure sign the man is married and has been cheated on by his wife. Furious, the knight demands Faustus undo this magic. After savoring his revenge, Faustus does so and leaves the court.

**Analysis**

The emperor promises Faustus that he will not be harmed in any way if he demonstrates his "knowledge of the black art." His protection is necessary during this time in Europe where people believed in and feared witches and burned them at the stake. Any suggestion of being in a league with the devil invited punishment. Emperor Carolus the Fifth is a man of enormous power and authority. Yet Faustus has been invited to his court to perform parlor tricks. This is the reputation the doctor has earned—far from the exalted status he once imagined.

The emperor expects nothing less, and Faustus meets his expectations. The emperor's request to see Alexander the Great serves no purpose but to feed his royal vanity. Nevertheless, Faustus, with the help of [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/" \l "Mephastophilis), proudly conjures the conqueror and his paramour and basks in the emperor's praise.

However, suggestions by a knight that Faustus is little more than a fraud touch a nerve. Faustus has acquired wealth and fame, but he has wasted his power and sold out his lofty goals for pleasure and self-aggrandizement. His great ambition has withered. The doctor's petty revenge on the knight—making horns spring from the man's head—reveals that, on some level, Faustus recognizes this truth and resents having it pointed out.

**Scene XI (A green) & XII (Faustus' House)**

Faustus returns to Wertenberg, Germany. Once home, he is approached by a horse-courser (horse trader) who asks to buy his horse. With a little persuasion, Faustus finally agrees but adds slyly that the horse-courser must not ride the horse into water. After the man departs, Faustus frets over the waning days of his life and the doom that is pending. He draws some comfort from the New Testament story of a thief's last-minute redemption as he hung on a cross next to the crucified Jesus Christ. So thinking, the doctor falls asleep in his chair.

Some while later, the horse-courser returns, wet and crying, to Faustus's home. He tells Mephastophilis that he wants back his 40 dollars. Thinking Faustus's horse had magical qualities that water would reveal, the man had defied the doctor's warning and ridden the animal into a pond. The horse had promptly disappeared. Mephastophilis shows the man where Faustus lies fast asleep. When the man's shouts do not rouse the doctor, the horse-courser grabs Faustus's leg and pulls. To his horror, the leg comes off, and the terrified man runs away. Faustus and Mephastophilis are enjoying the results of this latest prank when Wagner enters. He announces that the duke of Vanholt wishes Faustus to visit. The doctor and devil immediately depart.

**Analysis**

Faustus next strikes a devious bargain with the horse-courser. Like other comic scenes, this parodies more serious action in the play. Faustus tells the horse trader honestly and clearly that he must not ride the horse into water. But in doing so, he deliberately sets an irresistible trap. Faustus understands human nature and knows that the man will ignore his warning simply because he *has* been warned. Faustus again abuses his power with the "fake leg" joke he plays on the horse-courser. The doctor has much more power and intelligence than the man he deceives, and as a result, the practical joke feels like a cheap trick—more pathetic than clever.

Despite the price he is paying for access to dark knowledge, the forbidden study of black magic, he seems unwilling or unable to put it to any good use. What Faustus fails to understand is that he has similarly fallen into a trap set by Mephastophilis. Early on, the devil just as honestly and clearly explains the truth about hell and the horror of eternal torment. Faustus, enraptured by his own outsized ambitions, ignores the advice. This allows Mephastophilis to help Faustus make his deal with [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer). The demon entraps the doctor's soul and works very hard to keep Faustus ensnared.

At this point in the play, the A- and B-Texts begin to differ. The B-Text expands its account of Faustus's practical joking into four additional scenes. The story lines converge once more with events in the A-Text's next scene (in the B-Text, Act 4, Scene 6). The B-Text's additional scenes were most likely authored by playwrights other than [Marlowe](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/author/)