**Scene VI ( A room in Faustus' House)**

**Summary**

Once again, Faustus is wavering in his decision to follow magic, fearing damnation.  [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/%22%20%5Cl%20%22Mephastophilis) declares that the heaven the doctor imagines is not as glorious as man, for whom it was made. Contrary to the effect the devil intended, Faustus turns this statement into a reason to renounce magic and repent.

At the mention of repentance, the Good Angel and Evil Angel appear. The Good Angel assures Faustus that God will still pity him if he repents, while the Evil Angel claims that God cannot. Faustus asserts that God will pity him if he repents, to which the Evil Angel replies, "Ay, but Faustus never shall repent."

The angels depart, and Faustus admits that repentance feels impossible because "[his] heart's so hardened." He bemoans the fact that whenever he mentions salvation, faith, or heaven, the refrain "Faustus, thou art damned" echoes in his ears like thunder. He feels he might have committed suicide by now, except for the fact that the "sweet pleasure" that magic offers has "conquered [his] deep despair." So thinking, Faustus resolves yet again to never repent and calls upon Mephastophilis to discuss the nature of the cosmos. The discussion goes well until Faustus asks who made the world. Mephastophilis refuses to answer. He reminds Faustus that, in his fallen state, he should think more about hell, which he calls "our kingdom," and he can't tell Faustus anything that goes against it.

Faustus is shaken into wondering if it's too late for his soul. The Evil Angel appears and states firmly that it is. The Good Angel follows with assurances that it's never too late. The Evil Angel promises that devils will tear Faustus to pieces if he repents, while the Good Angel vows they will never cut his skin. Confused and terrified, Faustus cries out for Christ the Savior to save his wretched soul.

Hearing Faustus's appeal to Christ, [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer), Belzebub, and Mephastophilis appear. Lucifer bluntly tells Faustus that he is beyond salvation through Christ's intervention. He then warns Faustus to never again invoke Christ's name or think of God. To do so is against the pact Faustus made with him. Faustus asks Lucifer's pardon and vows to obey. To reinforce the doctor's resolve, Lucifer parades before him personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins: Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery. The display appeals to Faustus's baser appetites, prompting him to exclaim, "Oh, this feeds my soul!" Lucifer promises that hell holds all such manner of delights. He then gives Faustus a new book of spells to peruse, which the doctor gratefully accepts, and reminds him to "think on the devil."

 The chorus explain that Faustus has dedicated himself to the pursuit of limitless knowledge. He has mastered astronomy, gained power to match that of the Olympian gods, and is now out gathering knowledge of geography. He next stops in Rome with the aim of seeing the pope and taking part in the day's holy Feast of Saint Peter.

**Analysis**

Faustus is struggling to rekindle his faith; to find reasons to renounce magic and repent. The mere sight of the physical heavens suggests to him that a real heaven exists and must be too wonderful to forego. Yet the doctor wants to be convinced otherwise. He does not turn to the Bible or a priest for wisdom and encouragement. He complains to [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/%22%20%5Cl%20%22Mephastophilis) and then allows himself to be persuaded to continue in his evil ways, justifying them with the idea that he may repent at the last minute and be saved. "Be I a devil," he says, "yet God may pity me ... if I repent." The Evil Angel knows Faustus better than he knows himself and observes, "Ay, but Faustus never shall repent."

Faustus proves the Evil Angel right. Hardening his heart once more, he resolves never to repent, but to pursue the "sweet pleasures" and refrain from despair. He turns his thoughts to astronomy, though he calls it "divine astrology." In the 16th century the term could apply to both fields of study; little differentiation was made between the two. His first question to Mephastophilis on the topic receives a disappointing answer. The devil recites the traditional view held by academia—a very old, Earth-centered description of the "heavens [planets] above the moon," based on ideas developed by the Greek astronomer and mathematician Ptolemy in the 2nd century. This view had been challenged by 16th-century Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus. He theorized that the sun, not Earth, was the center of our system of planets. During [Marlowe](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/author/)'s time, the idea that Copernicus could be right was still being debated. Faustus scolds Mephastophilis for providing an answer Wagner could have thought up.

His next question seeks answers concerning the erratic motion of certain spheres, or planets—another unresolved question during Marlowe's lifetime. Mephastophilis offers a vague response: variation in phenomena related to movement among spheres is "because of their unequal motion with respect to the whole." Faustus seems to give up this line inquiry in frustration, stating, "Well, I am answered." In other words, it's an answer—not a good one, but an answer. His disappointment is clear. Thinkers of Marlowe's day could not provide a definitive answer. Therefore, Marlowe uses the devil's unwillingness or inability to answer to signal that the deal Faustus has made for unlimited knowledge may fall short on its promises. This raises the possibility that Faustus has been duped into selling his soul for very little in return.

By refusing to answer the doctor's final question, "Who made the world," Mephastophilis all but admits the supremacy of God over [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer). Lucifer dared to challenge this supremacy and was cast from heaven for it. Mephastophilis, as Lucifer's ally, was cast out as well. His pride will not let him admit, even by inference, that he was mistaken. If only God could make the world, then Lucifer, logically, must be an inferior entity.

Faustus's next twinge of conscience brings him closer than ever to the brink of repentance. This time Lucifer shows up to frighten Faustus into honoring the pact. He then rewards the doctor with personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins. More than entertainment for Faustus, they represent the sins he will indulge in over the course of 24 years. Pride is the first and most glaring of these. In pride of ambition, Faustus and Lucifer are alike. Their desire for godlike power leads to defiance of divine power and is the most important step in their damnation. Envy plays into this high-flying ambition. Faustus envies those who possess knowledge and power that is hidden from him and will do whatever he must to acquire it. The doctor will also participate in lechery with "the fairest courtesans" and Helen of Troy; in wrath to punish enemies; and in avarice (i.e., covetousness), gluttony, and sloth as he acquires vast, useless wealth and overindulges in the forbidden arts and sensual pleasures.

In the true spirit of the Renaissance, Faustus has flung himself headlong into acquiring the knowledge he seeks. Faustus now travels in a dragon-drawn chariot. As described in the prologue, he is soaring to dangerous heights like mythic Icarus. The dragon is a Christian symbol of evil, paganism, and Satan. Faustus's ambition is unrestrained.

The day he chooses to visit Rome and the pope is significant. The Feast of Saint Peter (also known as the Feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul) is an annual public holiday in the Holy City. It honors two of the original disciples of Christ credited with establishing the Christian church and its teachings. Peter is considered the first pope. This feast day would have deep significance for the current pope.

**Scene VII (In Rome: the Pope's Privy Chamber)**

**Summary**

[Doctor Faustus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Doctor_Faustus) recounts the course of his recent travels with [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/%22%20%5Cl%20%22Mephastophilis). He highlights memorable places of beauty or significance: Trier, Germany; Paris and the coast of France; the path of the Rhine River; Naples and Campania, Italy; the poet Virgil's tomb; Venice and Padua, Italy. He then asks if Mephastophilis has brought him to Rome, as commanded. The devil assures Faustus this is so and they are in the pope's private chamber. He then describes the high points of the surrounding city, such as the Tiber River, the four main bridges, the castle, and so on. Intrigued, Faustus eagerly suggests they go off and explore Rome. But Mephastophilis bids him to stay until he sees the pope, promising they'll have some fun. Faustus agrees and, in preparation, asks the devil to make him invisible.

The pope enters accompanied by the cardinal of Lorraine and attendant friars. A banquet is waiting. To the embarrassment of the pope and confusion of all, their conversation is interrupted with snide comments by a disembodied voice. Dishes of food and cups are snatched by invisible hands. The cardinal suggests this is a soul escaped from purgatory, to which the pope agrees. He then makes the sign of the cross, only to have his ears boxed by unseen hands. At the pope's direction, the friars begin a dirge to curse the evil spirit. In response Faustus and Mephastophilis beat them and throw fireworks among them before leaving.

The chorus explains that Faustus has enjoyed all he cares to see of the world and has returned to Germany. His friends have welcomed him home and have been amazed by the wide-ranging knowledge of astrology, the world, and magic the doctor has acquired. Faustus's intellectual prowess has made him famous "in every land." Emperor Carolus the Fifth has invited the doctor to visit his palace and demonstrate his art.

**Analysis**

In the true spirit of the Renaissance, Faustus has been on a learning spree, realizing his ambition to gather knowledge of the universe. It has been an exhilarating experience, and Faustus is filled with a heady sense there is more out there, waiting for him to discover. Though he has asked [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/%22%20%5Cl%20%22Mephastophilis) to bring him to see the pope, the devil's descriptions of Rome make Faustus eager to explore. However, the devil turns the doctor's thoughts from this intellectual pursuit by tempting him with the chance for some wicked fun, specifically the childish torment of the pope. The ease with which Mephastophilis draws Faustus into the scheme highlights a weakness in the doctor's character that will undermine all his lofty dreams. In spite of his intellect and high-minded scholarship, Faustus has a streak of pettiness and love for sensual pleasure that Mephastophilis will exploit to keep him bound to [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer) and doomed to hell. In this scene Faustus uses the marvels of magical powers to pull mean-spirited pranks. The brightness of his noble aspirations is beginning to darken, and the corrupting influence of unbridled power is beginning to show.

Faustus's attack on the pope is overtly anti-Catholic, which would have delighted playgoers in Protestant England during the Renaissance. The pope is humiliated by Faustus's high jinks, which include grabbing his food and drink and striking him. The monks are portrayed as chanting nonsense that does nothing to stop Faustus's antics: he and Mephastophilis "beat the Friars and fling fireworks among them." Beliefs specific to Catholicism are mocked. These include the existence of purgatory from which a soul might escape. In Catholicism purgatory is a place or state of being in which souls are made pure through suffering before going to heaven. Protestants reject the idea of purgatory, so the cardinal of Lorraine's explanation that there must be a runaway ghost from purgatory in the room would have been amusing to them. They also reject the sign of the cross, such as the pope makes to invoke God's protection from the evil pestering him. This practice involves tracing a cross from forehead to chest and shoulder to shoulder. Protestants of the time viewed the practice as superstitious.

A third ritual, which Faustus refers to as "bell, book, and candle," is the Catholic ritual of excommunication, in which a person may be excluded permanently from the Christian Church. In this ceremony a death bell is rung, sounding the death of the person's soul. Then, the Holy Bible is shut, cutting the person off from the word of God. Lastly, a candle is snuffed out, banishing the person's soul to eternal darkness. [Marlowe](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/author/) has made a mistake here by confusing excommunication with exorcism. The correct process for getting rid of evil spirits or devils is exorcism.

Faustus's pursuit of knowledge seems at an end. He has achieved the power and acclaim he desires. His friends and nearest companions take delight in the stories of his travels "through the world and air." He is admired and sought after. However, this is only for his cleverness. He dines with royalty, but only to entertain them with demonstrations of magic. The chorus tells no stories that reflect the grand and noble aspirations that Faustus once held of becoming emperor of the world.

The chorus announces that Faustus is now at the palace of Emperor Carolus the Fifth. The name Carolus is the Latin form of the name Charles. Carolus the Fifth is Charles V, king of Spain and Holy Roman emperor. The Holy Roman Empire was a group of smaller kingdoms in western and central Europe collectively ruled by an emperor from 800 to 1806