**Scene II (Before Faustus' House)**

Two Scholars are feeling worried as to the whereabouts of Faustus whom they have not seen for some time at the university. Meeting Wagner (who is Faustus' servant), they ask him where Faustus is. Wagner is a fun-loving person and he indulges in a bit of light-hearted talk with the Scholars. Wagner argues with them in the learned manner which he has picked up from Faustus's discussions with fellow-scholars. Wagner plays upon words and tries to baffle the two Scholars who have asked him a simple question. Eventually the Scholars learn that Faustus is at dinner in the company of Valdes and Cornelius who are notorious because of their active interest in the study of the black art. The Scholars, feeling solicitous about Faustus's welfare, decide to inform the president of the university about the matter in an effort to wean away Faustus from his plans to practice magic.

**Critical Comments**

This short scene introduces the element of comedy in the play. We have here a comic interlude between the preceding scene in which Faustus has made up his mind to practise magic and the following scene in which he conjures to summon Mephistophilis. Wagner is an example of a witty servant who has picked up the jargon and the manner of talk of his master and other Scholars. Wagner is here seen parodying the scholarly manner of talk. On being asked where his master is, he says that it is a foolish question because, even if he were to tell the Scholars where he saw his master last, his master, being corpus naturale (a natural body), might have moved away from that place by now. It is amusing to hear him say that but for his lenient nature, he would have severely dealt with the two Scholars who have come so close to "the place of execution". There is a pun upon the phrase the "place of execution", which, besides its literal meaning, also refers to a dining-hall where people do "execution" upon meat. Wagner then claims to have won a victory in his verbal debate with the Scholars and condescends to inform them that his master is inside the house at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius and goes on to support his statement with the evidence which the wine (which he is carrying) would have given if the wine could speak. And he concludes his speech with the words "and so, the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren." This comic scene is not really essential for the plot, and it does not serve any dramatic purpose We cannot say that it relieves the tension because not much tension has yet been built up in the play, especially when the preceding scene ends with an eloquent description by Faustus and both his friends of the glorious future which lies before them in any case they pursue their magic studies and practise necromancy. A reference is made by the two Scholars to Faustus's excellent reputation as a teacher and logician. The First Scholar speaks of Faustus as a man who used to "make our schools ring with sic Probo\*." We also note the solicitude of the two Scholars about the spiritual welfare of Faustus. The Scholars are indeed, attached to their teacher. The First Scholar is nearer the truth in his conjecture that nothing can now "reclaim" Faustus.

**Scene III (In a Grove)**

**Summary**

Faustus has sufficiently mastered the art of conjuring to call up a devil one winter's evening. Consulting a book of spells, he draws circles, signs, and symbols. He writes Jehovah's name backward and forward and then rearranges it to form different words. He shortens the names of the saints. Then chanting in Latin, he invokes the powers of heaven and hell, calling upon the devils of Hades, the Holy Trinity, the spirits of fire, air, water, and Earth, Belzebub, and Demogorgon (a demon). He commands that [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/" \l "Mephastophilis) appear.

When a devil shows up, Faustus judges him "too ugly to attend on me" and sends him off to change his shape into something more pleasing. He sarcastically suggests that the guise of an old Franciscan friar would be appropriate. He's delighted when the devil immediately departs, and he anticipates that "this Mephastophilis" will be an obedient, humble servant.

Mephastophilis appears and asks Faustus what he wants of him. When Faustus demands that the devil serve him, Mephastophilis explains that he cannot without permission from his master, [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer). He has not come in response to Faustus's summons but on his own. He is intrigued to assess the condition of Faustus's soul, which he hopes to obtain. The doctor's conjuring is a sure sign of a man in danger of being damned.

In answer to Faustus's questions, Mephastophilis describes the nature of Lucifer as a fallen angel, his status as prince of devils, and how God threw him out of heaven for pride and insolence. Mephastophilis explains that he, being one of Lucifer's followers, was damned with him. Reflecting on the everlasting torment he endures being separated from God, Mephastophilis warns Faustus to turn back from the course he has chosen. Dismissively, Faustus tells him to return to his master, Lucifer, and offer his (Faustus's) soul in exchange for 24 years of service from Mephastophilis, who must do whatever he asks. Faustus also notes that during this time he wishes to live a life of "voluptuousness," one filled with pleasure and luxury. He wants an answer by midnight. Once the devil departs, Faustus contemplates all that he will do with his anticipated power. He will be emperor of the world, capable of great feats, such as joining the continental coastline of Africa to that of Spain.

**Analysis**

Some time has passed, and Faustus has been diligently studying the art of conjuring. The spell he cites in Latin begins by calling on the gods of Acheron (Hades) and the threefold spirit of Jehovah (the Holy Trinity) to aid him. This blasphemy is all the more shocking coming from a theologian. Once again, Faustus's bold use of it calls into question the depth of his former religious convictions. The doctor ends his incantation with more blasphemy by sprinkling around holy water ("consecratam aquam") and making the sign of the cross. Holy water, which has been blessed by a priest, is used in Catholic religious ceremonies, such as baptism and last rites, and is considered a powerful spiritual weapon.

In response to the incantation, [Mephastophilis](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/" \l "Mephastophilis) materializes, and his shocking appearance leaves no doubt that he is a devil and a product of hell. As such, he establishes for the audience that hell is real and a terrible place. When Faustus sends Mephastophilis off to assume a more pleasing form, he takes a cheap shot at Catholicism, suggesting that the devil return as an old Franciscan friar—a shape that suits a devil best. Franciscans are a Catholic Christian religious order founded by St. Francis of Assisi. They advocate a life of preaching, penance, and poverty. The unpopularity of all things Catholic made this mockery of the Franciscans delightful to English audiences of the Renaissance. It also reveals Faustus's low opinion of a religious order whose values and practices are in opposition to his own. While members of the order share knowledge with others, Faustus gathers it for himself. While they seek to redeem their souls through penance, Faustus seeks to damn his soul through sinfulness. While they are content to live in poverty, Faustus desires to acquire vast wealth.

Mephastophilis quickly clarifies that he answered Faustus's summons not as a servant, but as a collector of souls. This establishes Mephastophilis as powerful in his own right, though he is also in service to [Lucifer](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Doctor-Faustus/character-analysis/#Lucifer). As a collector of souls, Mephastophilis fits the traditional religious idea of devils and demons employed in corrupting goodness and luring souls into hell. However, this traditional perception is given a twist when Mephastophilis describes himself as one of the "unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer." He declares that he is tormented by his separation from God. This capacity for suffering is unexpected. So terrible is his hellish existence that he warns Faustus to give up pursuit of magic. This impulse to do a damned soul a good turn is equally surprising in a devil. The result is a complex character, both powerful and tortured, full of evil intentions yet capable of fleeting compassion.

Blinded by pride and ambition, Faustus cannot or will not accept that he is in danger. Until Mephastophilis corrects him, he mistakenly believes that his abilities as a conjurer were so powerful they brought the demon to him. It is not Faustus's power but the vulnerability of his soul that has caused Mephastophilis to appear. Faustus accepts the idea of demons and hell, but only in a most objective, detached way. Once he sends off Mephastophilis with his message for Lucifer, Faustus claims that he would sacrifice "as many souls as there are stars" to get the knowledge and power he desires. He continues to indulge his fantasy of being a "great emperor of the world," so powerful he can shift Earth's geography as he wishes.