



## Faust: First Part

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe , Peter Salm (Translator)*

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# **Faust: First Part**

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## **Faust: First Part** Johann Wolfgang von Goethe , Peter Salm (Translator)

Goethe's masterpiece and perhaps the greatest work in German literature, Faust has made the legendary German alchemist one of the central myths of the Western world. Here indeed is a monumental Faust, an audacious man boldly wagering with the devil, Mephistopheles, that no magic, sensuality, experience, or knowledge can lead him to a moment he would wish to last forever. Here, in Faust, Part I, the tremendous versatility of Goethe's genius creates some of the most beautiful passages in literature. Here too we experience Goethe's characteristic humor, the excitement and eroticism of the witches' Walpurgis Night, and the moving emotion of Gretchen's tragic fate.

This authoritative edition, which offers Peter Salm's wonderfully readable translation as well as the original German on facing pages, brings us Faust in a vital, rhythmic American idiom that carefully preserves the grandeur, integrity, and poetic immediacy of Goethe's words.

## **Faust: First Part Details**

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## From Reader Review Faust: First Part for online ebook

### Chris says

What a tragedy! How beautifully, subtly crafted. This was one of the most heart wrenching books I've read in a long time.

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### Jimmy says

There's something discomforting about the vague moral convictions of Goethe's Faust character. One would assume, that even a scholar living in Goethe's time would find the typical preoccupations of Christian morality somewhat boring, if not basically delusional and overzealous. After all, the cacophony of self-doubt racing through his mind is not initially brought on by anything that resembles religious guilt. He's a man plagued by the hermetic stuffiness of a lifestyle of perpetual deep thought. All of his forced questions about the complexity of the universe have not been adequately revealed to him in the immense amount of reading and study that he has undertaken throughout the course of his life. Something is missing. In the opening soliloquy he desperately gropes out loud in an attempt to locate the source of his emptiness. He intones ...

"What theatre! Oh, but nothing more.  
Where can I grasp you, never-ending Nature?  
Breasts, where? You founts of all of life,  
That earth and heaven hang upon love  
And where the parched soul craves to be,  
You flow, you give to drink, but not to me."

Of course, much of this monologue does hint at the power that God might potentially have to grant this wish, but Goethe is ambiguous at best. In the beginning it's difficult to tell whether Faust harbors any faith in God. The question of God's abilities and/or existence is a concern of Faust's, but his frustrations and lamentations seem more bestial and secular in tone. Faust desires some sort of ineffable experience; he desires a base inflammation of the senses, most importantly of his own passion for life. It could be argued that Mephistopheles appears essentially because Faust desires to lose himself in sublime sinfulness. God might only show up to suggest that his mortal frustrations and complex questions can in fact be answered, but only by one book. More importantly, if it were for the grace of God's true presence in Faust's existence, his questions would abate under the reverent awe of his own faith. It's obviously not there.

It's at this point that Mephistopheles appears, offering what any average mortal would desire in the throes of their own suffering, brought on by an overwhelming abundance of probing, difficult questions; namely the earthly pleasures of amorous love. To be clear, Gretchen's character is offered to Faust to appease the longings of his heart more than that of his loins. Having the position and immortal power that Mephistopheles does, he understands that Faust will be more than willing to accept his wager. But, as most critics suggest, Mephistopheles also knows that a character such as Faust, despite not really being a man of faith, will ruin such an immediate route to happiness. Naturally, Gretchen detects the way in which this internal struggle of Faust's causes him to be so distant. Not only that, but she distrusts Mephistopheles, and is committed to God.

There is a clunky and somewhat fragmented quality to the way that Goethe presents many of the difficult

concerns of Faust and his wager with Mephistopheles. Initially, he is so troubled, merely by the thought that all of his worldly academic efforts are made in vain. His frustration with the futility of his effort to enlighten himself and to better understand the beautiful complexity of the world, reaches a sort of peak, at which point he loses faith in virtually everything. At first amused by the idea of the very appearance of Mephistopheles, he's eventually perplexed by how effortlessly he can access the very happiness which he could hardly even give a name to. Is he, in this sense, troubled once again by the knowledge that he possesses, the knowledge of the disappointing outcome of his temporary pleasures? One could almost draw a parallel to Nietzsche's description of the existential frustration that cripples Shakespeare's Hamlet from acting on his anger due to the knowledge that he has of the awful situation occurring around him.

To an atheist, especially an academic one, virtually all of this might sound a little silly. The reality of the situation is that Mephistopheles is actually quite fun. As he says in response to Faust's question of who Mephistopheles is, "A part of the power who wills evil always but always works the good." He perplexes Faust by presenting himself as a merely a part of a duality that constitutes peoples paradoxical understanding of the wholeness of God. This might sound confusing to some, but what he's doing is mockingly suggesting to Faust that his attachment to traditional notions of sin and goodness is ridiculous. Toward the end, Faust ignorantly insists that the wager is destined to end in despair and disappointment. Mephistopheles, already aware of how seemingly full of disappointment most mortal situations might appeal to human beings, basically has a little fun with Faust's misguided convictions of goodness. So then is this a tragedy? Toward the end of the first part of Goethe's morally confusing masterpiece, it becomes increasingly difficult to believe that there is anything tragic about the fate of Faust.

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### **Sophia says**

Goethe's Faust is a novel rich in metaphor, elaborate verse, imagery, depth, and meaning that not only employs symbolic characters and scenes, but also through such literary techniques weaves its main philosophy of striving and experience as mankind's rightful path.

Ironically, Faust reveals his disapproval for books as a true source of knowledge in understanding the world; we must turn to life and living, and experience instead. I call this ironic because while he denounces books, Faust is a book. The text itself seems to imply that although it's imbued with intense profundity, one must "live" it in order to truly understand it. That is to say, reading doesn't do its inherent meaning justice.

This does not, however, mean that Goethe's Faust is inaccessible and as useless as the moth and cobweb infested library of Faust's room, instead, Goethe breaks this obstacle to grant the reader a qualitative experience of his philosophy that sidesteps the barriers of denotation. since Goethe presents us a Play as opposed to a documentation of thought on his philosophies, he doesn't tell us about striving and experience, he shows us.

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### **James says**

I read Johann Goethe's Faust in English and partially in German during a college course many years ago. It had a huge impact on me as a person and me as a writer. Due to it being somewhat "out there," I held back a full 5 rating; however, I cannot stress how much this book makes you think. Beware, it's a little heavy on the literary side, but it's still worth a read, even if you just read the first portion. That said, 4 out of 5 stars...

#### **Detailed Review**(about 1/3 of a paper I wrote about it a few years ago)

When I first picked up Goethe's famous masterpiece Faust, I was hesitant about reading it. I read Goethe's work while lying on my bed a few hours before I went to sleep. My room was quiet because everyone else was already asleep. I was able to read and consciously take in the contents of the work. I generally don't like to be told what literature to read; however, after reading through the Prologue in Heaven, I was intrigued by the plot of Faust. As I began reading the first part, I was a bit disturbed by the fact that it was not in prose, but that it was in poetical verse. I have never been a great fan of poetry as a genre of literature. Thus I had mixed feelings when it came to reading Goethe's famous literary work Faust from the beginning.

I wanted to learn something from the story, as I do from all literature. Authors don't just write for 'no' reason; they wish to accomplish something. I then strove to understand the reasons for the literary work's existence. When I skimmed Faust for the first time, I tried to read it for pleasure, but it was a little too hard. I needed to stop and understand what was going on in each scene. However, I soon realized that I was able to place myself inside the text in several different ways. It was at this point that Faust actually appealed to me; I saw myself in the novel as the character of Faust, fighting against the devilish Mephistopheles. I have always struggled with wanting everything from material things to the admiration of others. As a man of flesh and blood, I naturally want great intelligence, power and love. I have always wanted to be number one - a perfectionist - just like Faust.

So, while I was reading Faust, I was truly reading a biography of my own life, albeit on a much larger scale. I too have lost some faith in my religion, and I wonder if I will be saved; however, unlike Faust, at the time I read it, I had yet to want someone as much as he wanted Margaret (Gretchen). Maybe if I were under the devil's spells like Faust was, I would have fallen just as hard for the woman. I do have the addictive personality that would lead me in the same direction as Faust. With all of this in mind, I read through the novel as though I were Faust. I took on his persona, argued with Mephistopheles, and wished that I had never been born in the end of the work. It is not easy to live a life completely free from the clutches of evil. When you are hopeless and in despair, you need help. Often, humans are not strong enough to recognize from whom they are getting help. Faust enabled me to foresee what would happen to me if I were subject to the devil's influence.

Faust is a man worthy of my admiration. All throughout the book, both Faust and the actions he sought fascinated me. Like I said before, I felt as though I was reading or watching a movie of my own life. It was as though a dream had come true where I was able to align myself with the devil. The fears that I have in reality weren't present enough in my dreams to stop myself from associating with some Mephistophelean devil. I was able to see what would happen if I took on the persona of evil incarnate turned into man. Faust enabled me to have an out of body experience where I could see what would happen to me if I became what I have always been curious about becoming: A devil-influenced man.

Throughout the work of Faust by Goethe, I was able to live experiences vicariously. Faust enabled me to try things that I only dreamed about trying. I really felt as though I were reading a novel about myself. I think that this is why the Faustian theme has persisted throughout time; men (and women) everywhere have struggled within themselves fighting between good and evil to achieve their goals and desires. I am no different.

### About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

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### **Bine says**

4,5 Sterne.

Sehr kurzweilige Faustadaption. Habe wirklich viel gelacht und es auch in einem Schwung verschlungen. Mit den typischen Comicelementen wurde hervorragend herumgespielt und sprachlich wurde Goethe ziemlich geschickt eingebunden.

Trotzdem bleibt bei mir der Eindruck haften, dass man doch etwas mehr aus Goethes Vorlage hätte machen können. Also keine volle Punktzahl, aber sehr dicht dran.

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### **Michael Finocchiaro says**

Goethe's Faust, particularly the first part is one of the monuments of western literature. The characters of Mephisto, Faust and Margarite are unforgettable. It has, of course inspired operas from Berlioz to Busoni and books writers such as Thomas Mann. It was actually adapted from an earlier version by Christopher Marlowe but Goethe's version is even more sinister and lifelike. a Must!

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### **Jonfaith says**

#### **Dear friend, all theory is gray, and green the golden tree of life.**

What else to say? Towering as an archetype, akin to Hamlet, the Inferno and White Whale -- this tale of pact has been absorbed into our cultural bones, like an isotope. It is more telling to consider that I listened to Tavener while reading this. I recently gave Pandora a spin but found that I owned more Schnittke than was afforded by my "station" but if I leave such, will I miss those Penn Station ads?

I will say that I should've read my Norton critical edition, well actually, my wife's copy -- the one I bought for her in Columbus, Ohio ten years ago. I went with a standard Penguin copy and I'm sure many of the historic references were lost for me.

No one should consider that I regard Faust as emblematic of power politics in the US or a possible Brexit across the water. I'm too feeble for such extrapolation.

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## p. says

*Faust* by Goethe was the very first book (apart from textbooks, of course) I ever put my hands on. It was assigned to me when I was in middle school for my Spanish class. I know it's a German play, but the teacher was encouraging us to read by asking the whole classroom to donate a book for the course, put it in a box with the others and then randomly pick up one of them each month — now that I think of it, the teacher should have payed more attention to the books we brought, since I don't think *Faust* was appropriate for a twelve-year-old. I chose, however, this play by Goethe, having no idea what it was about. And, well, I remained so for twelve years more, since I never read more than ten pages perhaps, until four days ago that I finally got a copy of it. Unlike many readers I know, I didn't acquire my taste for literature and reading from an early age; I didn't grow up reading stories and I didn't ever feel like I was immersed in a magic world of fantastic creatures and rainbows — what some people claim literature is about. Instead, I got interested in such delightful activities for two main reasons. One of them was that I was a Radiohead fan in high school and there's this song based on Orwell's *1984*, but I was told that it was based on *Animal Farm* (false), so I thought it would be a good idea to read it. The other reason is that by this same time I took a philosophy course and I remember I was so amazed by Plato's allegory of the cave that I finally decided I wanted to know more about life, and I thought books had the answers of the many questions I asked myself and everything I wanted to know; that within their pages I was going to find *the answer*. Now that I've read a little bit more, I've come to realize that literature is such a passionate and sublime art indeed, but it hardly provides answers and it actually makes you question more and more — which is great, don't get me wrong, for it makes *you* try harder to think for yourself — but I'd say one answer makes two more questions. In this everlasting search for meaning I found myself in Dr. Heinrich Faust, the main character in this poetic play. Even though, unlike him, I haven't studied *philosophy, medicine and theology with ardent zeal*, I do feel like a *wretched fool*. I think Goethe's point was to make an emphasis in this lack of something in human understanding and that no matter how hard we try there'll be always something greater than us that we won't be able to understand with our minds designed for only three dimensions, like Ivan Karamazov said. It's important to take into consideration the fact that Goethe did believe in God, that for him, God was this higher being that begot mankind; but he was not in favor of the way the Church was organized; and both, believes and disbelieves are brought up to discussion throughout the whole play. He believed, for instance, that God made the Universe perfect and so did the Angels believed; but that's when Mephistopheles, the fallen angel, enters the scene, asking for permission to say a word. He says the Universe isn't perfect since Man still feels miserable. Then he makes a wager with God upon Faust's soul, with arguments based on the book of Job, that is, that if Faust's life is changed by blow after blow of tragedy, he would stop being God's faithful son, though unlike the Biblical character, who at the end realises about God's highness, in this play Faust seems to be more and more miserable. Also, there's the fact that in *Job* the fallen angel didn't exactly hang out with him, like Mephisto did with Faust. Thus, when the man's life comes to an end, he on whose side Faust is, will keep his soul. Therefore, there are many converging points in both books, but they differ from each other.

So Faust is a very learned man who has studied everything that ever existed, and yet he still feels he's missing something about existence, something that isn't written down in those books and that perhaps cannot be put to words. He even struggles while trying to translate the word *logos* in the Gospel of Luke: "*In the beginning was the Word*". He wonders whether it was the deed instead of the word, because he feels that words, literacy, do not lit his soul the way perhaps a passionate deed would. He then expresses the words that have become famous because of their depth and their importance in this work: '*Two souls, alas, dwell in my breast, each seeks to rule without the other.*' Thus, he begins to look beyond theories and tries something new: magic and alchemy. I don't want to get into specific details about the plot, but there's a point when he

summons the Earth Spirit, something that according to some sources, was Goethe's own contribution to his supernatural play, being no former record of such a spirit either in Christianity or in pagan mythology — I think for Goethe, the Earth Spirit represented an instance of God, like when Moses saw the brush burned in fire. And it's the Spirit who lowers this learned man to his human condition, making him aware of his delimited understanding. Faust, however, persists and trying to prove his godliness, he tries to commit suicide, when suddenly the church bells ring and an angelic choir from above is heard, announcing Christ's resurrection. Later in the play, Faust finds a lost poodle and takes it home, when suddenly the animal reshapes into Mephistopheles, who unlike the Earth Spirit, makes the doctor believe he can achieve anything if he stays with him and serves him when his soul leaves his body; to which Faust answers that little does he care for the afterlife when all he wants is to actually *feel* he's living *this* life. The agreement is settled with blood.

*"Gray, my friend, is every theory,  
and green alone life's golden tree."*

Then at a witch's place, Faust sees a beautiful woman in the mirror and he asks Mephisto to grant him the wish of possessing so beautiful a woman and after some mumbo-jumbo by the witch, he takes a potion of sorts to achieve his passionate goals. Then he meets Gretchen, also known as Margaret, and that's what Faust's misery gets worse — and even worse for Gretchen, who before meeting Faust and his horrid companion was such a pure creature that at first Mephisto does not think he can get her. Eventually Gretchen is persuaded by Faust enchantments — of course, gotten by such a supernatural aid — but as her passion towards Faust increases, misfortune falls upon her family, until the final disgrace comes, before which Faust is ushered by Mephisto to the Walpurus Night: an exotic event hosted by witches and having paganism as entertainment — I guess it's like the Super Bowl for witches. Later, we find out that during this exotic and frightful evening, Gretchen lost her mind after his brother, murder by Faust's evil companion, called her a whore in his last adieu, so she drowns her baby, is taken to prison and given a death sentence. Faust blames Mephistopheles for distracting him at the Walpurus Night instead of taking him to save Gretchen. This is when I realised Goethe used Mephisto to point out the flaws of our minds, sometimes in earnest, sometimes in jest, like people's tendency to blame external, sometimes supernatural causes for their mistakes. Gretchen's given the chance to scape prison helped by her lover and his friend, but instead of going evil ways, she chooses what would seem as tragedy and condemnation to some, like Mephistopheles, but under the gaze of the Heavenly, she's saved, leaving an open door for Faust to go the same way and make the right decision. I'm afraid Goethe wrote the second part until the last year of his life. The redirection of Margarete's path was perhaps inevitable once she entered Faust's toxic influence, but in the end she had the chance to choose either condemnation or salvation, and perhaps that's Goethe's main point: to remark virtue through iniquity. It works similarly, perhaps, as Milton did in his *Paradise Lost*. As a matter of fact, like the latter took the epic poems as notary influence, Shakespeare had the same kind of impact with the author of *Faust* — nonetheless, his gift and his technique stand on their own.

This is a must-read classic and it is one of those books I call a *literary delight*. But all the subjects I've tried (perhaps unsuccessfully) to expose in this review are precisely the reasons why I don't think *Faust* is a good choice for a twelve-year-old beginner. Not because of its difficulty, but I think as one grows older one has a better chance of appreciating Goethe's perfectly constructed verses, of having a different perspective upon all the sorrowful, theological, obscure and erotic points by him exposed. It's frightening yet beautiful; it's heavenly yet humane; it's a play and a poem. I'm not as learned as Doctor Faust, but I think I found in reading this book the kind of fervor he was looking for.

*"I awake with horror in the morning,  
and bitter tears well up in me  
when I must face each day that in its course  
cannot fulfill a single wish, not one!"*

[*Faust and the Earth Spirit*. Illustrated by Goethe himself.]

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## Stephen says

**First impression:** Goethe could write his **tuckus** off. Rarely have I encountered prose that **commingles** in such bounty the **trifecta** of being, at once, **gorgeous** to the eye, imbued with **passion** and saturated with depth and **meaning**. Faust has all three and I was pulled into the seductive narrative from the momentous opening (wonderfully titled “Prologue from Heaven”) through the final dramatic climax.

*I must briefly pause here to add a qualifier to my comments which relate to the version I experienced and not to my enjoyment of it.*

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Audible.com, usually a professional, high quality purveyor pulled a bit of a bamboozle on me in this case. I acquired the “unabridged” reading (by full cast) which came in at 4 hours in length. Now, that is just about right for Part 1 of Faust and so I thought I was in for a treat as I listened along with my own copy of the novel. Turns out, much to my chagrin, that the 4 hours was an “adaptation” of both Parts 1 and 2. Thus, as wonderful as the experience was, I did not get a chance to absorb all of the detail and nuances of the story. I plan to read the complete Faust (Parts 1 and 2) in the future and will share my thoughts on the work as a whole at that time.

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*End sad story pause*

So God, like a lonely parent maybe in need of a hug, allows Satan to throw a temptation Faust’s way to prove that the man is still “of the flock” in a scaled down, **boil-free**, version of the Book of Job. As my introductory quote illustrates, Faust is a brilliant scholar who has completed a study of all the world’s knowledge (and I thought I read a lot) and yet feels no wiser for the accomplishment. Feeling that there is more to existence than rote knowledge of the past (which echoes Goethe’s own belief in the primacy of emotion over reason) Faust longs for deeper meaning and understanding that is hidden from him. He becomes depressed and contemplating suicide (Goethe’s non-subtle hint that Faust’s faith is more than a tad shaky allow the Devil “access” to him).

Faust is visited by Mephistopheles and offered a life of hedonistic excess and earthly pleasures as a means of gaining greater understanding of the universe.

Faust, who apparently had never watched any episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, foolishly agrees and bargains away his soul. Faust will die and the Devil will win if Faust can ever be made to be “content” with a moment in his life.

*If ever I lie down in sloth and base inaction, / Then let that moment be my end! / If by your  
false cajolery / You lull me into self-sufficiency, / If any pleasure you can give / Deludes me, let*

*me cease to live! / I offer you this wager!"*

From here the two take flight (literary) on a world-wind tour of debauchery and more debauchery. *"Let's plunge ourselves into the roar of time, the whirl of accident; may pain and pleasure, success and failure, shift as they will -- it's only action that can make a man."*

Soon after this, we are introduced to Gretchen, the other main player in this tragedy, whose relationship with Faust will explore key issues of faith and redemption. It was this relationship that I thought received the shortest shrift in the adaptation that I listened to so I will leave further thoughts on this until I have experienced the complete work.

The language is gorgeous and drips emotion on almost every line. Some might think this falls too far into the realm of melodrama, but I loved it and found it vigorous and passionate. The end is wonderful with the necessary questions answered but certain larger queries left for us to contemplate.

A wonderful experience (abridged though it may have been) and one that I strongly encourage everyone to read.

4.0 stars. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!

P.S. I didn't have a place to slide this into my review, but I wanted to share one last quote from the story, this one from the devil. He and Faust have begun their tour of vice and come across a coven of witches who don't recognize the Prince of Lies.

*"Do you know me now? Skinny, cadaverous bitch, / do you know your lord and master? Why don't I / Smash you to pieces, tell me why, / You and your ape-familiars? Must I teach / You some respect for my red doublet? What / Is this cock's feather, eh? My face / have I been hiding it? You learn your place, / Old hag! Am I to name myself or not?"*

Good, good stuff.

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### **Darwin8u says**

Sitting on the shelf with the children of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Coleridge, Goethe's Faust is amazing in its poetry and depth. There are parts of this play/poem which seem to capture the whole drama of Man's fall and redemption within a single rhyming couplet. David Constantine's translation modernizes this amazing piece of High German lit, but George Madison Priest's translation seems, at least to me, to have a more seductive flow and more tempting poetry.

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### **Christopher says**

Not since watching Breaking Bad have I been so enthralled by a man's descent into depravity.

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## **Lisa says**

This is not a review.

I cannot attempt to write a review of Goethe's Faust. It is a much too personal experience, growing with each time I reread it. Since high school, I have been thinking at least five times:

"This is the perfect Goethe moment, his work is written for ME, NOW, it can't get any better, deeper, or any more satisfying."

Well, apparently it can. After maybe three or four years, I picked up Faust again, and found that I had finally grown up enough to identify with his most famous quote, the one I had reverently learned by heart as a student.

Banging my head against the wall today while marking papers, trying to figure out how to explain the developments in the world to my own children and the adolescents I am in charge of, I looked up and literally felt Mephisto's presence in the room. Unable to get rid of the feeling, I looked at my shelf with my all time favourites, picked up my Faust, with its almost broken spine, and opened it to read ...

... my own life ...

...the struggle to find answers, the longing for knowledge and understanding, the futile hope that my teaching will make a difference, and the creepy, scary thought that it might all be meaningless, because the majority of our planet is sold, body and soul, to devilish shallowness and indifference.

... It almost sets my heart burning ...

"Now here I am, a fool for sure!  
No wiser than I was before:  
Master, Doctor's what they call me,  
And I've been ten years, already,  
Crosswise, arcing, to and fro,  
Leading my students by the nose,  
And see that we can know - nothing!  
It almost sets my heart burning."

"Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor!  
Und bin so klug als wie zuvor;  
Heiße Magister, heiße Doktor gar  
Und ziehe schon an die zehn Jahr  
Herauf, herab und quer und krumm  
Meine Schüler an der Nase herum –  
Und sehe, daß wir nichts wissen können!  
Das will mir schier das Herz verbrennen."

As hopeless as the message and the rest of the Faust plot is, it gave me solace to share this moment, yet again, with the master of masters, Goethe.

Now here I am, a fool for sure!

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### **Najla Hammad says**

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### **Duffy Pratt says**

Who knew that this book, one of the most famous in literature, was actually two separate works that seem only slightly related? I certainly didn't. The first part is a fairly ordinary play that gets dunked in profundity through the inclusion of Mephistopheles. There are only a few main characters here, and there wasn't much depth to any of them. I've heard that the German is tremendously good, but it's impossible for me to judge. I switched back and forth in this part between two different translations. I liked the free kindle version better than my Oxford edition, but I wasn't really taken in with the language of either, except in some small parts. On its own, I have to say that I enjoyed the first part.

The second part is unlike anything I've ever read. If I didn't know that it had been invented in my lifetime, I'd swear that Goethe got himself into some very, very fine LSD. It's very weird, jumps all over the place, and gives the impression that anything, no matter how fantastical, could be made to occur. It feels like it could never be produced as a play. There are way too many speakers -- I hesitate to call any of them characters. In this second part, a mood might start talking, or a mythological creature, or an inanimate object, or anything at all for that matter. And I have no idea how, if staged, anyone would know which "character" was speaking at any time. (Unless, like in a childrens play, Thales or Speed-Booty, wore a placard saying who he was.)

The stage directions can be just as dumbfounding. At one point, one direction says: "To the younger members of the audience who did not applaud." Now how exactly is one supposed to pull that direction off in a manner that is at all intelligible? What if the entire audience applauded? It is one of the stranger directions I've ever seen in a play, and it made me think that Goethe may have been over a hundred years ahead of his time. Or maybe he just realized that this was a "play" that would only ever be read, and he was just having some fun with the directions.

Ultimately, this work is a long piece of lyric poetry, and I'm willing to accept that in German it is remarkably great poetry. I suppose that people who don't speak English might have just as hard a time figuring out what's so great about Shakespeare, and that makes me sad. But, reading Proust made me decide to learn French. I never felt anything like that tug towards German while reading Faust.

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## Ahmad Sharabiani says

Faust: First Part (Goethe's Faust #1), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Peter Salm (Translator)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's Faust is a tragic play in two parts usually known in English as Faust, Part One and Faust, Part Two. Although rarely staged in its entirety, it is the play with the largest audience numbers on German-language stages. Faust is considered by many to be Goethe's magnum opus and the greatest work of German literature.

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## Edward says

*Preface & Notes*

*Chronology*

*Introduction*

*Translator's Note*

*The Writing of 'Faust'*

*Further Reading*

--Faust, Part I

*Notes*

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## Norah Una Sumner says

A summary:

**Faust: I WANT TO EXPERIENCE EVERY HUMAN EMOTION, I WANT TO GAIN THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL FOUR ELEMENTS, I WANT TO FEEL THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD!**

**Mephistopheles:** Yeah, sure thing bro, but before you do that I want to take you to this weird pub, hook you up with a minor whom you'll knock up & make you attend a completely pointless annual witch ball. Sounds good?

**Faust:** You had me at "hook up with a minor", bro.

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## **Christina says**

„Was glänzt ist für den Augenblick geboren; Das Echte bleibt der Nachwelt unverloren.“

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## **Lyoness ? says**

Hat mir besser gefallen als erwartet, obwohl manche Stellen wirklich unnötig in die Länge gezogen wurden. Dass sich fast alles gereimt hat, ist schon beeindruckend.

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## **Olivia-Savannah Roach says**

This was assigned reading for university.

I was quite confused and disconnected from the play as I read it. Although I did understand and could follow what was happening, I was lost as to the relevance of the play. I did not enjoy reading it.

But then I continued on to analysing the play and studying it - and there was where I discovered its worth, the themes it discusses and could appreciate the wit and aim of the play more. But it still couldn't be counted as an enjoyable or very enlightening read for me personally.

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