



Doctor Faustus

Author
Christopher Marlowe

Year Published
1604

Original Language
English

THEMES

Soaring Ambition and a Hellish Fall

Reflecting the Renaissance spirit of inquiry, *Doctor Faustus* is the tale of an ambitious man whose thirst for knowledge goes too far. John Faustus sells his soul to Lucifer to acquire all the power and knowledge he desires. Too late he realizes the truly hellish price he must pay.

Damnation vs. Salvation

The cost of sin is eternal death, but the reward of salvation is eternal life.

Good vs. Evil

Faustus's desire for unholy knowledge conflicts with his desire for salvation.

Pride & Ambition

When his ambitions soar too high, Faustus's insolent pride damns him to hell.

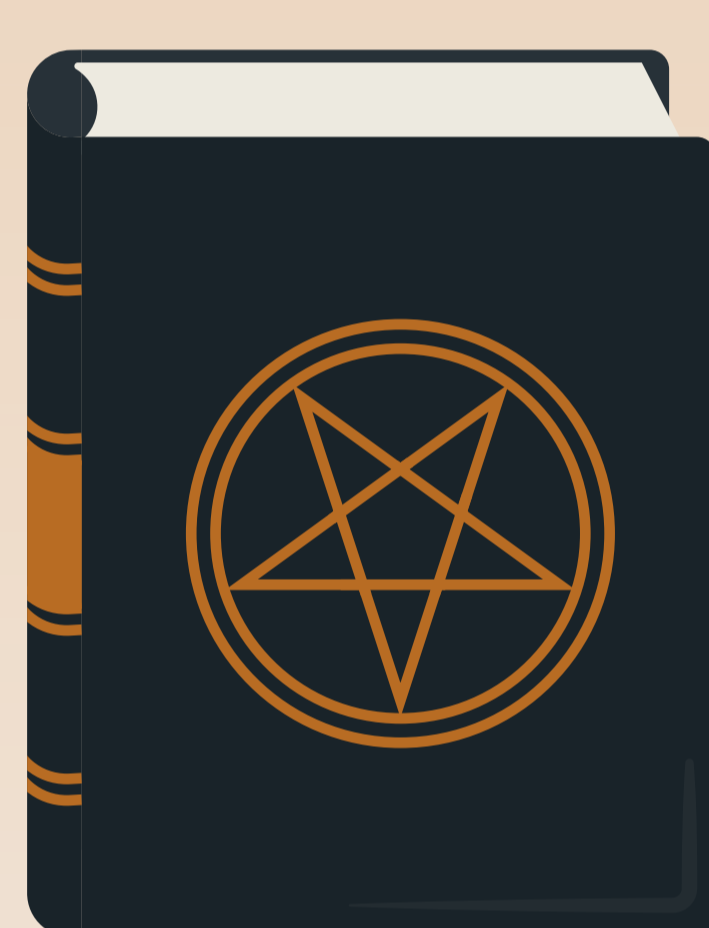
Author



CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE
1564–93

In a literary career spanning less than six years, Marlowe changed English drama forever. His skillful use of blank verse transformed English poetry and brought a new level of maturity to Elizabethan theater. As a contest between desire and conscience, rebellion and remorse, *Doctor Faustus* remains relevant today.

Main Characters



Doctor Faustus

Ambitious but petty Renaissance scholar; gets unlimited power and knowledge for 24 years at the cost of his soul when he makes a deal with Lucifer



Lucifer

Fallen angel and the prince of devils; searches for human souls to populate hell; provides Faustus with knowledge and power in exchange for his soul



Mephistophilis

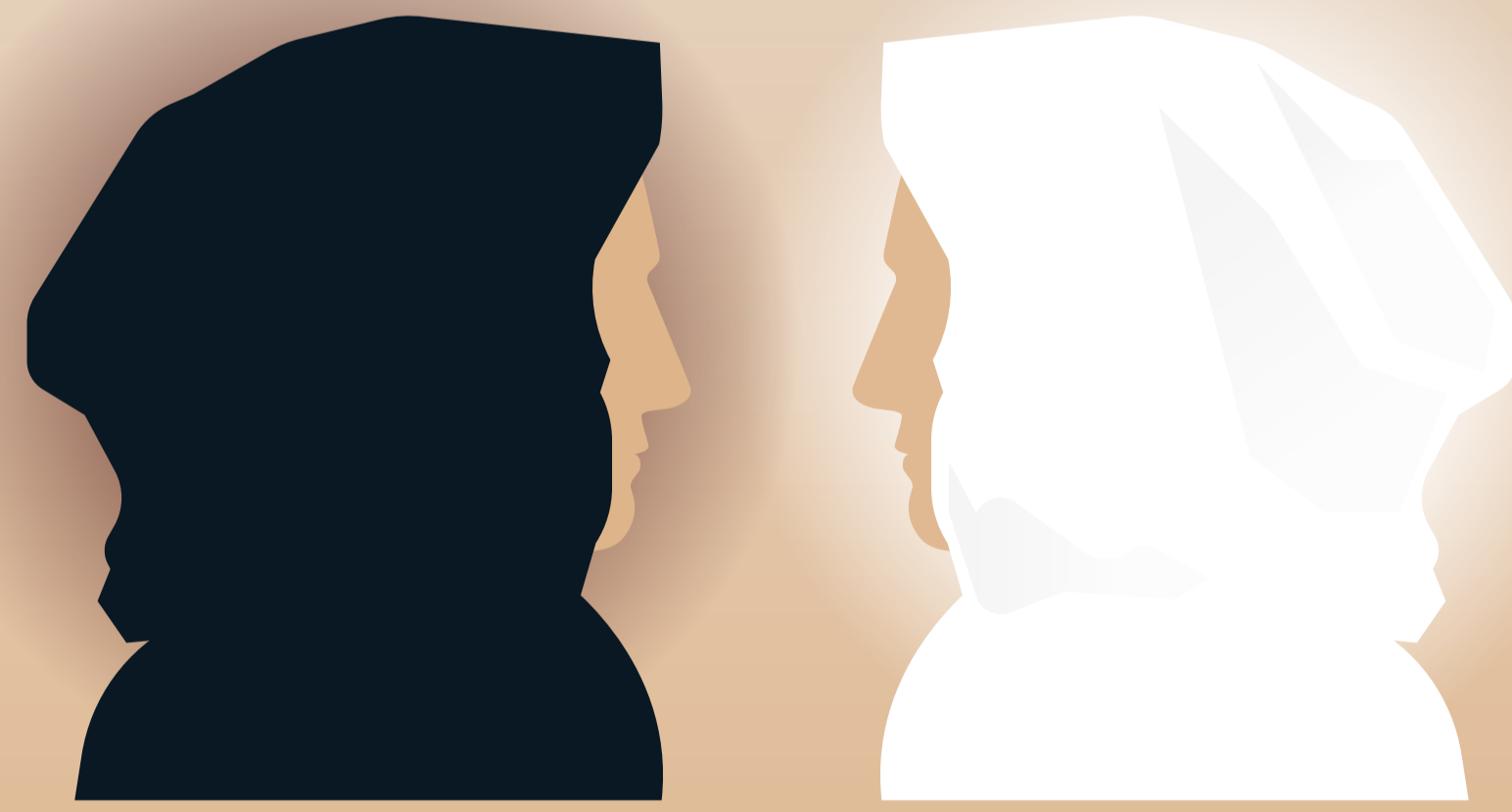
Tormented devil and collector of souls for Lucifer; mediates deal between Lucifer and Faustus to gain Faustus's soul; must obey Faustus for 24 years

Symbols



Books

Represent the hidden knowledge Faustus seeks



Angels

Symbolize the battle for Faustus's soul between heaven and hell



Blood

Signifies the soul and seals Faustus's pact with Lucifer

Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears:
"Faustus, thou art damned!"

Faustus, Act 2, Scene 3