Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*Faust, Part 1*

Reading 2 of 3

(A student enters.)

**Student**
I'm only here momentarily,
I've come, filled with humility,
To speak to, and to stand before [1870]
One who's spoken of with awe.

**Mephistopheles**
Your courtesy delights me greatly!
A man like other men you see.
Have you studied then, elsewhere?

**Student**
I beg you, please enrol me, here! [1875]
I come to you strong of courage,
Lined in pocket, healthy for my age:
My mother didn't want to lose me: though,
I'd like to learn what it's right for me to know.

**Mephistopheles**
Then you've come to the right place, exactly. [1880]

**Student**
To be honest, I'd like to go already:
There's little pleasure for me at all,
In these walls, and all these halls.
It's such a narrow space I find,
You see no trees, no leaves of any kind, [1885]
And in the lectures, on the benches,
All thought deserts me, and my senses.

**Mephistopheles**
It will only come to you with habit.
So the child takes its mother's breast
Quite unwillingly at first, and yet it [1890]
Soon sucks away at her with zest.
So will you at Wisdom's breast, here,
Feel every day a little zestier.

**Student**
I'll cling to her neck with pleasure:
But only tell me how to find her. [1895]

**Mephistopheles**
Then you've come to the right place, exactly. [1880]

**Student**
I want to be a true scholar,
I want to grasp, by the collar,
What's on earth, in heaven above, [1900]
In Science, and in Nature too.

**Mephistopheles**
Then here’s the very path for you,
But don’t allow yourself to wander off.

**Student**
I’ll be present heart and soul:
Of course I’ll want to play, [1905]
Have some fun and freedom, though,
On each sweet summer holiday.

**Mephistopheles**
Use your time well: it slips away so fast, yet
Discipline will teach you how to win it.
My dear friend, I’d advise, in sum, [1910]
First, the *Collegium Logicum*.
There your mind will be trained,
As if in Spanish boots, constrained,
So that painfully, as it ought,
It creeps along the way of thought, [1915]
Not flitting about all over,
Wandering here and there.
So you’ll learn, in many days,
What you used to do, untaught, as in a haze,
Like eating now, and drinking, you’ll see [1920]
The necessity of One! Two! Three!
Truly the intricacy of logic
Is like a master-weaver's fabric,
Where the loom holds a thousand threads,
Here and there the shuttles go [1925]
And the threads, invisibly, flow,
One pass serves for a thousand instead.
Then the philosopher steps in: he'll show
That it certainly *had* to be so:
The first was—so, the second—so, [1930]
And so, the third and fourth were—so:
If first and second had never been,
Third and fourth would not be seen.
All praise the scholars, beyond believing,
But few of them ever turn to weaving. [1935]
To know and note the living, you'll find it
Best to first dispense with the spirit:
Then with the pieces in your hand,
Ah! You've only lost the spiritual bond.
‘Natural treatment’, Chemistry calls it [1940]
Mocks at herself, and doesn't know it.

**Student**
I'm not sure that I quite understand.

**Mephistopheles**
You'll soon know it all, as planned,
When you've learnt the science of reduction,
And everything's proper classification. [1945]

**Student**
After all that, I feel as stupid
As if I’d a mill wheel in my head.

**Mephistopheles**

Next, before all else, you’ll fix
Your mind on Metaphysics!
See that you’re profoundly trained
In what never stirs in a human brain:
You’ll learn a splendid word
For what’s occurred or not occurred.
But for the present take six months
To get yourself in order: start at once.
Five hours every day, lock
Yourself in, with a ticking clock!
Make sure you’re well prepared,
Study each paragraph with care,
So afterwards you’ll be certain
Only what’s in the book, was written:
Then be as diligent when you pen it,
As if the Holy Ghost had said it!

**Student**

You won’t need to tell me twice!
I think, myself, it’s very helpful, too
That one can take back home, and use,
What someone’s penned in black and white.

**Mephistopheles**

But choose a faculty, any one!

**Student**

I wouldn’t be comfortable with Law.

**Mephistopheles**

I couldn’t name you anything more
Vile, I know how dogmatic it’s become.
Laws and rights are handed down
It’s an eternal disgrace:
They’re moved round from town to town
Dragged around from place to place.
Reason is nonsense, kindness a disease,
If you’re a grandchild it’s a curse!
The rights we are born with,
To those, alas, no one refers!

**Student**

That just strengthens my disgust.
Happy the student that you instruct!
I’ve nearly settled on Theology.

**Mephistopheles**

I wouldn’t wish to guide you erroneously.
In that that branch of knowledge concerns
It’s so difficult to avoid a fallacious route,
There’s so much poison hidden in what you learn,
And it’s barely distinguishable from the antidote.
The best thing here’s to make a single choice,
Then simply swear by your master’s voice.

On the whole, to words stick fast!
Through the safest gate you’ll pass
To the Temple of Certainty.

**Student**

Yet surely words must have a sense.

**Mephistopheles**

Why, yes! But don’t torment yourself with worry,
Where sense fails it’s only necessary
To supply a word, and change the tense.
With words fine arguments can be weighted,
With words whole Systems can be created,
With words, the mind does its conceiving,
No word suffers a jot from thieving.

**Student**

Forgive me, I delay you with my questions,
But I must trouble you again,
On the subject of Medicine,
Have you no helpful word to say?
Three years, so little time applied,
And, God, the field is rather wide!
If only you had some kind of pointer,
You would feel so much further on.

**Mephistopheles**

(Aside.)
I’m tired of this desiccated banter
I really must play the devil, at once.

(Aloud.)
To grasp the spirit of Medicine’s easily done:
You study the great and little world, until,
In the end you let it carry on
Just as God wills.
Useless to roam round, scientifically:
Everyone learns only what he can:
The one who grasps the Moment fully,
He’s the proper man.
You’re quite a well-made fellow,
You’re not short of courage too,
And when you’re easy with yourself,
Others will be easy with you.
Study, especially, female behaviour:
Their eternal aches and woes,
All of the thousand-fold,
Rise from one point, and have one cure.
And if you’re half honourable about it
You shall have them in your pocket.
A title first: to give them comfort you
Have skills that far exceed the others,
Then you’re free to touch the goods, and view
What someone else has prowled around for years.
Take the pulse firmly, you understand,
And then, with sidelong fiery glance,
Grasp the slender hips, in haste, (2035)
To find out whether she's tight-laced.

**Student**
That sounds much better! The Where and How, I see.

**Mephistopheles**
Grey, dear friend, is all theory,
And green the golden tree of life.

**Student**
I swear it's like a dream to me: may I (2040)
Trouble you, at some further time,
To expound your wisdom, so sublime?

**Mephistopheles**
As much as I can, I'll gladly explain.

**Student**
I can't tear myself away,
I must just pass you my album, sir, (2045)
Grant me the favour of your signature!

**Mephistopheles**
Very well.

(He writes and gives the book back.)

**Student**
(Reading Mephistopheles' Latin inscription which means: 'You'll be like God, acquainted with good and evil'.)
Eritis sicut Deus, scientes bonum et malum.

(He makes his bows, and takes his leave.)

**Mephistopheles**
Just follow the ancient text, and my mother
the snake, too:
And then your likeness to God will surely
frighten you! (2050)

(Faust enters.)

**Faust**
Where will we go, then?

**Mephistopheles**
Where you please.
The little world, and then the great, we'll see.
With what profit and delight,
This term, you'll be a parasite!

**Faust**
Yet with my long beard, I'll (2055)
Lack life's superficial style.
My attempt will come to nothing:
I know, in this world, I don't fit in.
I feel so small next to other men,
It only means embarrassment. (2060)

**Mephistopheles**
My friend, just give yourself completely to it:
When you find yourself, you'll soon know
how to live it.

**Faust**
How shall we depart from here, then?
I see not one servant, coach, or horse.

**Mephistopheles**
We'll just spread this cloak wide open, (2065)
Then through the air we'll take our course.
For a daring trip like this we're on,
Better not take much baggage along.
A little hot air I'll ready, first,
To lift us nimbly above the Earth, (2070)
And as we're light we'll soon get clear:
Congratulations on your new career!

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Scene 5: Auerbach’s Cellar in Leipzig

(Friends happily drinking.)

**Frosch**
Will none of you laugh? Nobody drink?
I'll have to teach you to smile, I think!
You're all of you like wet straw today, (2075)
And usually you're well away.

**Brander**
That's up to you, you bring us nothing.
Nothing dumb, or dirty, nothing.

**Frosch**
(Pouring a glass of wine over Brander's head.)
You can have both!

**Brander**
Rotten swine!

**Frosch**
You wanted them both, so you got mine! (2080)

**Siebel**
Out the door, whoever fights! Get out!
Let's sing a heart-felt chorus, drink and shout!
Up! Hurray! Ha!
Altmayer

Ah! I'm in agony!
Earplugs, here! This fellow's deafened me.

Siebel

It's only when it echoes in the tower, [2085]
You hear a bass voice's real power.

Frosch

Right, out with him who takes offence!
Ah! Do, re, me!

Altmayer

Ah! Do, re, me!

Frosch

Our throats are tuned: commence.

(He sings.)

'Dear Holy Roman Empire, [2090]
How do you hold together?''

Brander

A lousy song! Bah! A political song -
A tiresome song! Thank God, every morning,
It isn't you who must sit there worrying
About the Empire! At least I'm better for [2095]
Not being a King or a Chancellor.
But we should have a leader, so
We'll choose a Pope of our own.
You know the qualities that can
Swing the vote, and elevate the man. [2100]

Frosch

(Sings.)

'Sing away, sweet Nightingale,
Greet my girl, and never fail.'

Siebel

Don't greet my girl! I'll not allow it!

Frosch

Greet and kiss her! You'll not stop it!

(He sings.)

'Slip the bolt in deepest night! [2105]
Slip it! Wake, the lover bright.
Slip it to! At break of dawn.'

Siebel

Yes, sing in praise of her, and boast: sing on!
I'll laugh later when it suits:
She leads me a dance, she'll lead you too. [2110]
She should have a dwarf for a lover!
At the crossroads, let him woo her:
An old goat from Bloxberg, galloping over,
Can bleat goodnight, as it passes by her.
An honest man, of flesh and blood, [2115]
For a girl like that's far too good.

I'm not bothered even to say hello
Except perhaps to break her window.

Brander

(Pounding on the table.)
Quiet! Quiet! Or you won't hear!
I know about life, you lot, confess. [2120]
Besotted persons sit among us,
As fits their status, then, I must
Give them, tonight, of my very best.
Listen! A song in the newest strain!
And you can shout out the refrain! [2125]

(He sings.)

'Once there was a cellar rat,
Who lived on grease, and butter:
He had a belly, round and fat,
Just like Doctor Luther.
The cook set poison round about: [2130]
It brought on such a violent bout,
As if he'd love inside him.'

Chorus

(Shouting.)

'As if he'd love inside him!'

Brander

'He ran here, and he ran there,
And drank from all the puddles, [2135]
Gnawing, scratching, everywhere,
But nothing cured his shudders.
In torment, he leapt to the roof,
Poor beast, soon he'd had enough,
As if he'd love inside him.' [2140]

Chorus

'As if he'd love inside him!'

Brander

'Fear drove him to the light of day,
Into the kitchen then he ran,
Fell on the hearth and twitched away,
Pitifully weak, and wan. (2145)
Then the murderess laughed with glee:
He's on his last legs, I see,
As if he'd love inside him.'

Chorus

'As if he'd love inside him!'

Siebel

How pleased they are, the tiresome fools! (2150)
Spreading poison for wretched rats,
To me, that's the right thing to do!

Brander

You're in sympathy with them, perhaps?
Altmayer
That fat belly with a balding head!
Bad luck makes him meek and mild: [2155]
From a swollen rat, he sees, with dread,
His own natural likeness is compiled.

( Faust and Mephistopheles appear. )

First of all, I had to bring you here,
Where cheerful friends sup together,
To see how happily life slips away. [2160]
For these folk every day's a holiday.
With lots of leisure, and little sense,
They revolve in their round-dance,
Chasing their tails as kittens prance,
If the hangovers aren't too intense, [2165]
If the landlord gives them credit,
They're cheerful, and unworried by it.

Brander
They're fresh from their travelling days,
You can tell by their foreign ways:
They've not been back an hour: you see. [2170]

Frosch
True, you're right! My Leipzig's dear to me!
It's a little Paris, and educates its people.

Siebel
Who do you think the strangers are?

Frosch
Let me find out! I'll draw the truth,
From those two, with a brimming glass, [2175]
As easily as you'd pull a child's tooth.
It seems to me they're of some noble house,
They look so discontented and so proud.

Brander
They're surely strolling players, I'd guess!

Altmayer
Perhaps.

Frosch
Watch me screw it out of them, then! [2180]

Mephistopheles
( To Faust. )
These folk wouldn't feel the devil, even
If he'd got them dangling by the neck.

Faust
Greetings, sirs!

Siebel
Thank you, and greetings.

( He mutters away, inspecting Mephistopheles side-on. )
What's wrong with his foot: why's he limping?

Mephistopheles
Allow us to sit with you, if you please. [2185]
Instead of fine ale that can't be had,
We can still have good company.

Altmayer
You seem a choosy sort of lad.

Frosch
Was it late when you started out from Rippach?
Perhaps you dined with Hans there, first? [2190]

Mephistopheles
We passed straight by, today, without a rest!
We spoke to him last some time back,
When he talked a lot about his cousins,
And he sent to each his kind greetings.

( He bows to Frosch. )

Altmayer
(Aside.)
He did you, there! He's smart!

Siebel
A shrewd customer! [2195]

Frosch
Wait, I'll have him soon, I'm sure!

Mephistopheles
If I'm not wrong, we heard
A tuneful choir singing?
I'm sure, with this vault, the words
Must really set it ringing! [2200]

Frosch
Are you by any chance a virtuoso?

Mephistopheles
No! Though my desire is great, my skill is only so-so.

Altmayer
Give us a song!

Mephistopheles
If you wish it, a few.

Siebel
So long as it's a brand-new one!

Mephistopheles
Well, it's from Spain that we've just come, [2205]
The lovely land of wine, and singing too.

( He sings. )

'SThere was once a king, who
Had a giant flea'—

Frosch
Listen! Did you get that? A flea.
A flea's an honest guest to me. [2210]
Mephistopheles
(Sings.)
'There was once a king, who
Had a giant flea,
He loved him very much, oh,
He was like a son, you see.
The king called for his tailor, [2215]
He came right away:
Now, measure up the lad for
A suit of clothes, I say!

Brander
Make sure the tailor’s sharp,
And cuts them out precisely, [2220]
And, since his son’s dear to his heart,
Make sure there’s never a crease to see.

Mephistopheles
'All in silk and velvet,
He was smartly dressed,
With ribbons on his coat, [2225]
A cross upon his chest.
He was the First Minister,
And so he wore a star:
His brothers and his sisters,
He made noblest by far. [2230]
The lords and the ladies,
They were badly smitten,
The Queen and her maids,
They were stung and bitten.
They didn’t dare to crush them, [2235]
Or scratch away, all night.
We smother them, and crush them,
The moment that they bite.'

Chorus
(Shouted.)
'We smother them, and crush them,
The moment that they bite.' [2240]

Frosch
Bravo! Bravo! That went sweetly!

Siebel
So shall it be with every flea!

Brander
Sharpen your nails, and crush them fine!

Altmayer
Long live freedom, and long live wine!

Mephistopheles
I’d love to drink a glass, in freedom’s honour, [2245]
If only the wine were a little better.

Siebel
Not again, we don’t want to hear!

Mephistopheles
I fear the landlord might complain
Or I’d give these worthy guests,
One of my cellar’s very best. [2250]

Siebel
Just bring it on! He’ll accept it: I’ll explain.

Frosch
Make it a good glass and we’ll praise it.
But don’t make it so small we can’t taste it.
Because if I’m truly going to decide,
I need a really big mouthful inside. [2255]

Altmayer
(Aide.)
They’re from the Rhine, as I guessed.

Mephistopheles
Bring me a corkscrew!

Brander
What for?
Is it outside already, this cask?

Altmayer
There’s one in the landlord’s toolbox, for sure.

Mephistopheles
(Takes the corkscrew. To Frosch.)
Now, what would you like to try? [2260]

Frosch
What? Is there a selection, too?

Mephistopheles
There’s a choice for every one of you.

Altmayer
(To Frosch.)
Ah! You soon catch on: your lips are dry?

Frosch
Good! When I’ve a choice, I drink Rhenish.
The Fatherland grants those best gifts to us. [2265]

Mephistopheles
(Boring a hole in the table-edge where Frosch is sitting.)
Bring me a little wax, to make the seals, as well!

Altmayer
Ah, that’s for the conjuring trick, I can tell.

Mephistopheles
(To Brander.)
And yours?

Brander
Champagne for me is fine:
Make it a truly sparkling wine!
(Mephistopheles bores the holes: one of the others makes the wax stoppers and stops the holes with them.)

We can’t always shun what’s foreign, (2270)
Things from far away are often fine.
Real Germans can’t abide a Frenchman,
And yet they gladly drink his wine.

Siebel
(As Mephistopheles approaches his seat.)
I must confess I do dislike the dry,
Give me a glass of the very sweetest! (2275)

Mephistopheles
(Boring a hole.)
I’ll pour an instant Tokay for you, yes?

Altmayer
Now, gentlemen, look me in the eye!
I see you’ve had the better of us there.

Mephistopheles
Now! Now! With guests so rare,
That would be far too much for me to dare. (2280)
Quick! Time for you to declare!
Which wine can I serve you with?

Altmayer
Any at all! Don’t make us ask forever.
(Now all the holes have been stopped and sealed.)

Mephistopheles
(With a strange gesture.)
Grapes, they are the vine’s load!
Horns, they are the he-goat’s: (2285)
Wine is juice: wood makes vines,
The wooden board shall give us wine.
Look deeper into Nature!
Have faith, and here’s a wonder!
Now draw the stoppers, and drink up! (2290)

All
(Draw the stoppers, and the wine they chose flows into each glass.)
O lovely fount, that flows for us!

Mephistopheles
But careful, don’t lose a drop!
(They drink repeatedly.)

All
(Singing.)
‘We’re all of us cannibals now,
We’re like five hundred sows.’

Mephistopheles
The folk are free, and we can go, you see! (2295)

Faust
I’d like to leave here now.

Mephistopheles
Watch first: their bestiality
Will make a splendid show.

Siebel
(He drinks carelessly, wine pours on the ground and bursts into flame.)
Help! Fire! Hell burns bright!

Mephistopheles
(Charming away the flame.)
Friendly element, be quiet! (2300)
(To the drinkers.)
For this time, just a drop of Purgatory.

Siebel
What’s that? You wait! You’ll pay dearly!
It seems you don’t quite see us right.

Frosch
Try playing that trick a second time, on us!

Altmayer
I think we should quietly send him packing. (2305)

Siebel
What, sir? You think you’re daring,
Tricking us with your hocus-pocus?

Mephistopheles
Be quiet, old wine-barrel!

Siebel
You broomstick! You’ll show us you’re ill bred?

Brander
Just wait, it’ll rain blows, on your head! (2310)

Altmayer
(Draws a stopper and fire blazes in his face.)
I’m burning! Burning!

Siebel
It’s magic, strike!
The man’s a rascal! Kick him as you like!
(They draw knives and rush at Mephistopheles.)

Mephistopheles
(With solemn gestures.)
Word and Image, ensnare!
Alter, senses and air!
Be here, and there! (2315)
(They look at each other, amazed.)

Altmayer
Where am I? What a lovely land!

Frosch
Vineyards? Am I seeing straight?

**Siebel**
And, likewise, grapes to hand!

**Brander**
Deep in this green arbour, here,
See, the vines! What grapes appear!

*(He grasps Siebel by the nose: the others do the same reciprocally, and raise their knives.)*

**Mephistopheles**
From their eyes, Error, take the iron band, *(2320)*
And let them see how the Devil plays a joke.

*(He vanishes with Faust: the revellers separate.)*

**Siebel**
What's happening?

**Altmayer**
And how?

**Frosch**
Was that your nose?

**Brander** *(To Siebel.)*
And I've still got your nose in my hand!

**Altmayer**
It was a tremor, that passed through every limb!
Pass me a stool: I'm sinking in! *(2325)*

**Frosch**
Tell me: what happened there, my friend?

**Siebel**
Where is he? When I catch that fellow,
He won't leave *here* alive again!

**Altmayer**
I saw him myself fly out of the cellar
Riding on a barrel—and then—*(2330)*
I feel there's lead still in my feet.

*(He turns towards the table.)*

Ah! Does the wine still flow as sweet?

**Siebel**
It was deception, cheating, lying.

**Frosch**
Still, it seemed that I drank wine.

**Brander**
And what about all those grapes
that hung there? *(2335)*

**Altmayer**
Tell me, *now*, we shouldn't believe in wonders!

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(A giant cauldron stands on a low hearth, with a fire under it. Various shapes appear in the fumes from the cauldron. A She-Ape sits next to it, skimming it, watching to see it doesn’t boil over. The He-Ape, with young ones, sits nearby warming himself. The ceiling and walls are covered with the Witches’ grotesque instruments.)

**Faust**
These magical wild beasts repel me, too!
Are you telling me I can be renewed,
Wandering around in this mad maze,
Demanding help from some old hag: *(2340)*
That her foul cookery will spirit away
Thirty years from my age, just like that?
It's sad, if you know of nothing better!
The star of hope has quickly set.
Hasn't some noble mind, or Nature, *(2345)*
Found some wondrous potion yet?

**Mephistopheles**
My friend, what you say, again, is intelligent!
There’s a natural means to make you younger:
But it's written, in a book quite different,
And in an odd chapter. *(2350)*

**Faust**
I'll know it, then.

**Mephistopheles**
Fine! You've a method here that needs
No gold, no doctor, no magician:
Take yourself off to the nearest field,
To scratch around, and hoe, and dig in,
Maintain yourself, and constrain *(2355)*
Your senses in a narrow sphere:
Feed yourself on the purest fare,
Be a beast among beasts: think it no robbery,
To manure the fields you harvest, there:
Since that’s the best of ways, believe me, *(2360)*
To keep your youth for eighty years!

**Faust**
I'm not used to it, can't condescend,
To take a spade in hand, and bend:
That narrow life wouldn't suit me at all.

**Mephistopheles**
So you must call the witch then, after all. *(2365)*

**Faust**
Why is that old witch necessary!
Why can't you, yourself, make the brew?

**Mephistopheles**
What a lovely occupation for me!
And build a thousand bridges, meanwhile, too.
It's not just art and science that tell, *(2370)*
Patience is needed in the work as well.  
A calm mind's busy years in its creation,  
Only time strengthens the fermentation.  
And everything about it  
Is quite a peculiar show!  
It's true the Devil taught it:  
The Devil can't make it though.

(Seeing the creatures.)  
See what a dainty race I hail!  
This is the female: this is the male!

(To the creatures.)  
The mistress isn't home, I say?  
The Creatures  
Feasting away,  
Gone today,  
The Chimney way!  

Mephistopheles  
How long will she be swarming?

The Creatures  
As long as our paws are warming.  

Mephistopheles  
(To Faust.)  
What do you think of these tender creatures?

Faust  
As rude as any I ever saw!  

Mephistopheles  
Ah, but to me this kind of discourse  
Shows the most delightful features!

(To the creatures.)  
Accursed puppets, tell me true,  
What are you stirring in that brew?

The Creatures  
We're cooking up thick beggars' soup.  

Mephistopheles  
Then there'll be thousands in the queue.  

The He-Ape  
(Approaches and fawns on Mephistopheles.)  
0, throw the dice quick,  
And let me be rich!  
I'll be the winner!  
It's all arranged badly,  
And if I had money,  
I'd be a thinker.

Mephistopheles  
Why does the ape think he'd be lucky,  
If he'd only a chance to try the lottery!

(Meanwhile the young apes have been playing with a large ball, and they roll it forward.)  

The He-Ape  
The world's a ball  
It lifts to fall,  
Rolls without rest:  
Rings like glass,  
And breaks as fast!  
It's hollow at best.  
It's shining here,  
Here, what's more:  
'I am living!'  
A place dear son,  
To keep far from!  
You must die!  
Its clay will soon  
In pieces, lie.

Mephistopheles  
Why the sieve?

The He-Ape  
(Lifting it down.)  
If you were a thief  
I'd know you this minute.  

(He runs to the She-Ape, and lets her look through the sieve.)  
Look through the sieve!  
Can you see the thief,  
But daren't name him?

Mephistopheles  
(Approaching the fire.)  
And this pot?

The He-Ape and She-Ape  
What a silly lot!  
Not to know a pot,  
Not to know a kettle!  

Mephistopheles  
Rude creature!

The He-Ape  
Take this brush here,  
And sit on the settle.  

(He invites Mephistopheles to sit down.)

Faust  
(Who all this time has been standing in front of a mirror, alternately approaching it and distancing himself from it.)  
What do I see? What heavenly form  
Is this that the magic mirror brings!  

Love, lend me your swiftest wings,  
Then bear me to fields she adorns!
Ah, if I do not stand still here,
If I dare to venture nearer,
I see as if through a mist, no clearer—

The loveliest form of Woman, there!
Is it possible: can Woman be so lovely?
Must I, in her outspread body, declare
The incarnation of all that's heavenly?
Can any such this earth deliver?

**Mephistopheles**

Naturally, if a God torments himself six days,
And says to himself, *Bravo*, at last, in praise,
He must have made *something* clever.

See, this time, what will satisfy you, forever:
I'll know how to fish that treasure out for you,
Happy, the one who finds good fortune in her,
And carries her home again, as his bride, too.

*(Faust gazes endlessly in the mirror. Mephistopheles stretches himself on the settle, plays with the brush, and continues to speak.)*

Here I sit like a king on his throne,
The sceptre's here, but where's the crown?
The Creatures *(Who up till now have been making all kinds of grotesque movements together, bring Mephistopheles a crown, with great outcry.)*

Oh, with sweat and with blood,
If you'll be so good,
Glue on this crown, sublime!

*(They are awkward with the crown, and snap it in two pieces, with which they leap about.)*

Now that's out of the way!
We see, and we say,
We hear, and we rhyme—

**Faust** *(In front of the mirror.)*

Ah! I'll go completely mad.

**Mephistopheles** *(Pointing to the creatures.)*

Now *my* head's almost spinning.

**The Creatures**

If our luck's not bad,
If there's sense to be had,
We must be thinking!

**Faust** *(As before.)*

My heart pains me with its burning! Quick,
Let's leave this place, forego it!
It even sticks to the Devil:
That Northern demon is no more:
Who sees horns now, or tail or claw?
As for the feet, which I can’t spare,
That would harm me with the people. (2500)
So like many a youth, now, I wear,
False calves and false in-steps, as well.

**The Witch**

*Dancing.*

Sense and reason flee my brain,
I see young Satan here again!

**Mephistopheles**

Woman, I forbid that name! (2505)

**The Witch**

Why? What harm is caused so?

**Mephistopheles**

It’s written in story books, always:
Men are no better for it, though:
The Evil One’s gone: the evil stays.
Call me the Baron: that sounds good: (2510)
I’m a gentleman, like the other gentlemen.
Perhaps you doubt my noble blood:
See, here’s the crest I carry, then!

*(He makes an indecent gesture.)*

**The Witch**

*Laughing immoderately.*

Ha! Ha! That’s your way, as ever.
You’re the same rogue forever! (2515)

**Mephistopheles**

*(To Faust.)*

My friend, take note: learn that this is
The proper way to handle witches.

**The Witch**

Now, gentlemen, say how I can be of use.

**Mephistopheles**

A good glass of your well-known juice!
But I must insist on the oldest: (2520)
The years double what it can do.

**The Witch**

Gladly! Here’s a flask, on the shelf:
I sometimes drink from it myself,
And it doesn’t really stink at all:
I’ll gladly give him a glass or so. (2525)

*(Whispering.)*

If he drinks it unprepared, recall,
He won’t live a single hour, though.

**Mephistopheles**

He’s my good friend: it’ll go down well:

Don’t begrudge the best of your kitchen.
Draw the circle: speak the speech, then (2530)
Offer him a glass full!

*(The Witch draws a circle with fantastic gestures, and places mysterious articles inside it: meanwhile the glasses start to ring, and the cauldron to echo, and make music. Finally she brings a large book, sits the Apes in a ring, who serve as a reading desk and hold torches. She beckons Faust to approach.)*

**Faust**

*(To Mephistopheles.)*

Tell me, now, what’s happening?
These wild gestures, crazy things,
All of this tasteless trickery,
Is known, and hateful enough to me. (2535)

**Mephistopheles**

A farce! You should be laughing:
Don’t be such a serious fellow!
This hocus-pocus she, the doctor’s, making,
So you’ll be aided by the juice to follow.

*(He persuades Faust to enter the circle.)*

**The Witch**

*(Begins to declaim from the book, with much emphasis.)*

You shall see, then! (2540)
From one make ten!
Let two go again,
Make three even,
You’re rich again.

From five and six,
So says the Witch,
Make seven and eight,
So it’s full weight:
And nine is one, (2550)
And ten is none.

This is the Witch’s one-times-one!

**Faust**

I’m in the dark, the hag babbles with fever.

**Mephistopheles**

There’s still more she’s not gone over,
I know it well, the whole book’s like this: (2555)
I’ve wasted time on it before, though,
A perfect contradiction in terms is
Ever a mystery to the wise: fools more so.
My friend, the art’s both old and new,
It’s like this in every age, with two (2560)
And one, and one and two,
Scattering error instead of truth.
Men prattle, and teach it undisturbed:
Who wants to be counted with the fools?
Men always believe, when they hear words, There must be thought behind them, too.

**The Witch**

(Continuing.)
The highest skill, The science, still
Is hidden from the rabble!
One who never thought, To him it’s brought,
He owns it without trouble.

**Faust**

Why talk this nonsense to us?
My head’s near split in two.
It seems I hear the chorus, Of a hundred thousand fools.

**Mephistopheles**

Enough, enough, O excellent Sibyl!
Bring the drink along: and fill
The cup, quick, to the very brim:
The drink will bring my friend no harm:
He’s a man of many parts, and him
Many a noble draught has charmed.

(Aside.)

With that drink in your body, well then, All women will look to you like Helen.

**Scene 7: A Street**

(Faust. Margaret, passing by.)

**Faust**

Lovely lady, may I offer you My arm, and my protection, too?

**Margaret**

Not lovely, nor the lady you detected, I can go home, unprotected.

(She releases herself and exits.)

**Faust**

By Heavens, the child is lovely! I’ve never seen anything more so. She’s virtuous, yet innocently Pert, and quick-tongued though. Her rosy lips, her clear cheeks, I’ll not forget them in many a week! The way she cast down her eyes, Deep in my heart, imprinted, lies: How curt in her speech she was, Well that was quite charming, of course!

(Mephistopheles enters.)

Listen, you must get that girl for me!

**Mephistopheles**

Which one?

**Faust**

The girl who just went by.

**Mephistopheles**

That one, there? She’s come from the priest, Absolved of all her sins, while I Crept into a stall nearby: She is such an innocent thing, She’s no need to sit confessing: I’ve no power with such as those, I mean!

**Faust**

Yet, she’s older than fourteen.

**Mephistopheles**

Now you’re speaking like some Don Juan Who wants every flower for himself alone,
Conceited enough to think there's no honour, [2630]
To be plucked except by him, nor favour:
But that's never the case, you know.

**Faust**
Master Moraliser is that so?
With me, best leave morality alone!
I'm telling you, short and sweet, [2635]
If that young heart doesn't beat
Within my arms, tonight—so be it,
At midnight, then our pact is done.

**Mephistopheles**
Think, what a to and fro it will take!
I need at least fourteen days, to make [2640]
Some kind of opportunity to meet her.

**Faust**
If I'd seven hours at my call,
I'd not need the Devil at all,
To seduce such a creature.

**Mephistopheles**
You're almost talking like a Frenchman: [2645]
But don't let yourself get all annoyed:
What's the use if she's only part enjoyed?
Your happiness won't be as prolonged,
As if you were to knead and fashion
That little doll, with every passion, [2650]
Up and down, as yearning preaches,
And many a cunning rascal teaches.

**Faust**
I've enough appetite without all that.

**Mephistopheles**
Now, without complaint or jesting, what
I'm telling you is, with this lovely child, [2655]
Once and for all, you mustn't be wild.
She won't be taken by storm, I said:
We'll need to use cunning instead.

**Faust**
Get me a part of the angels' treasure!
Lead me to where she lies at leisure! [2660]
Get me a scarf from her neck: aspire
To a garter, that's my heart's desire.

**Mephistopheles**
So you can see how I will strain
To help you, and ease your pain,
We'll not let an instant slip away, [2665]
I'll lead you to her room today.

**Faust**
And shall I see her? And have her?

**Mephistopheles**
No! She has to visit a neighbour.

Meanwhile, you can be alone there,
With every hope of future pleasure, [2670]
Enjoy her breathing space, at leisure.

**Faust**
Can we go?

**Mephistopheles**
Her room's not yet free.

**Faust**
Look for a gift for her, from me!

(*He exits.*)

**Mephistopheles**
A present? Good! He's sure to work it!
I know many a lovely place, up here, [2675]
And many an ancient buried treasure:
I must have a look around for a bit.

(*He exits.*)

**Scene 8: Evening; A Small Well-kept Room**

(Margaret, plaiting and fastening the braids of her hair.)

**Margaret**
I'd give anything if I could say
Who that gentleman was, today!
He's brave for certain, I could see,
That his face readily told—
Or he wouldn't have been so bold.

(*She exits.*)

(*Mephistopheles and Faust appear.*)

**Mephistopheles**
Come in: but quietly, I mean!

**Faust**
(*After a moment's silence.*)
I'd ask you, now, to leave me be! [2685]

**Mephistopheles**
(Poking about.)
Not every girl keeps thing so clean.

(*Mephistopheles exits.*)

**Faust**
Welcome, sweet twilight glow,
That weaves throughout this shrine!
Sweet love-pangs grip my heart so,
That on hope's dew must live, and pine! [2690]
How a breath of peace breathes around,
Its order, and contentment!
In this poverty, what wealth is found!
In this prison, what enchantment!
(He throws himself into a leather armchair near the bed.)

Accept me now, you, who with open arms Gathered joy and pain, in past days, where, How often, ah, with all their childish charms The little flock hung round their father’s chair! There my beloved, perhaps, cheeks full, stands, Grateful for all the gifts of Christmas fare, Kissing her grandfather’s withered hands. Sweet girl, I feel your spirit, softly stray, Through the wealth of order, all around me, That with motherliness instructs, each day, The tablecloth to lie smooth, at your say, And even the wrinkled sand beneath your feet. O beloved hand, so goddess-like!

(He lifts one of the bed curtains.)

What grips me with its bliss! Here I could stand, slowly lingering. Here, Nature, in its gentlest dreaming, Formed an earthly angel within this. Here the child lay! Life, warm, Filled her delicate breast, And here, in pure and holy form, A heavenly image was expressed! And I! What leads me here? Why do I feel so deeply stirred?

(Mephistopheles)

Quick! I see her coming, there.

(Faust)

Away! Away! I’ll not return again.

(Mephistopheles)

Here’s a casket fairly loaded, then, I’ve taken it from elsewhere. Put it just here on the chest, I swear it’ll dazzle her, when she sees: I’ve put in some trinkets, and the rest, For you to win another, if you please. Truly, a child’s a child, and play is play.

(Mephistopheles)

Are you asking, pray?

(Faust)

I don’t know, shall I?

(Mephistopheles)

Perhaps you’d like to keep the treasure, too?

(Faust)

Then I’d advise your Lustfulness, To spare the sweet hours of brightness, And spare me a heap of trouble over you. I hope that you’re not full of meanness! I scratch my head: I rub my hands—

(He places the casket in the chest, and shuts it again.)

Now off we go, and go quickly! Through this you’ll bend the child, you see, To your wish and will: as any fool understands: Yet now you seem to me As if you were heading for the lecture hall, and see Standing there grey-faced, in front of you, Physics, and Metaphysics too! Now, away!

(They exit.)

(Margaret with a lamp.)

It’s so close and sultry, here, (She opens the window.)

And yet it’s not warm outside. It troubles me so, I don’t know why— I wish that Mother were near. A shudder ran through my whole body— I’m such a foolish girl, so timid! (She begins to sing, while undressing.)

'There was a king in Thule, he Was faithful, to the grave, To whom his dying lady A golden goblet gave.

He valued nothing greater: At every feast it shone: His tears were brimming over, When he drank there-from.

When he himself was dying No towns did he with-hold, No wealth his heir denying, Except the cup of gold. He gave a royal banquet, His knights around him, all, In his sea-girt turret, In his ancestral hall.

There the old king stood, yet, Drinking life's last glow:
Then threw the golden goblet
Into the waves below.  
He saw it falling, drowning,
Sinking in the sea.  
Then, his eyelids closing,
Never again drank he.

(She opens the chest in order to arrange her clothes, and sees the casket.)

How can this lovely casket be here? I'm sure
I locked the chest when I was here before.
It's quite miraculous! What can it
hold in store?  
Perhaps someone brought it as security,
And my mother's granted a loan on it?
There's a ribbon hanging from it, there's a key,
I'm quite determined to open it.
What's here? Heavens! What a show,  
More than I've ever seen in all my days!
A jewel box! A noble lady might glow
With all of these on high holidays!
How would this chain look? This display
Of splendour: who owns it, it's so fine?

(She puts the jewellery on and stands in front of the mirror.)

If only the earrings were mine!
At once one looks so different.
What makes us beautiful, young blood?
All that's fine and good,
But it's discounted, in the end.
They praise us half in pity.
To gold they tend,
On gold depend,
All things! Oh, poverty!

(Scene 9: Promenade)

(Faust walking about pensively.  Mephistopheles appears.)

Mephistopheles
Scorned by all love! And by hellfire!  
What's worse?  
I wish I knew: I could use it in a curse!

Faust
What's wrong? What's pinching you so badly?
I never, in all my life, saw such a face!

Mephistopheles
I'd pack myself off to the Devil, in disgrace,
If I weren't a Devil myself already!

Faust
Is something troubling your brain?
It's fitting that you've a raging pain.

Mephistopheles
To think, the priest should get his hands on
Jewellery that was meant for Gretchen!
Her mother snatched it up, to see,
And was gripped by secret anxiety.
That woman's a marvellous sense of smell,
From nosing round in her prayer-book too well,
And sniffs things, ever and again,
To see if they're holy or profane:
She'll repay us with manna from Heaven!
Margaret, grimacing wryly, was quite put out:
Thinking: 'Don't look a gift horse in the mouth,
He's not a godless man, nor one to fear,
He who left these fine things here.'
Her mother let the parson in:
He'd scarcely let the game begin
Before his eyes filled with enjoyment.
He said: 'So we see aright, we sinners,
Who overcome themselves are winners.
The Church has a healthy stomach, when,
It gobbles up lands, and don't forget,
It's never over-eaten yet.
The Church alone, dear lady, could
Always digest ill-gotten goods.'

Faust
That's a universal custom, too, my friend,
With all those who rule, and those who lend.

Mephistopheles
Then he took the bangles, chains and rings,
As if they were merely trifling things,
Than if it were a sack of nuts one wore.
Promised them their reward when they died,
And left them suitably edified.

Faust
And Gretchen?

Mephistopheles
Sits there, restlessly, still
Not knowing what she should do, or will,
Thinks of the jewels night and day,
But more of him who placed them in her way.

Faust
The dear girl's sadness brings me pain.
Find some jewels for her, again!
Those first were not so fine, I'd say.
Mephistopheles
Oh yes, to gentlemen it's child's play!

Faust
Fix it: arrange it, as I want you to,
Attach yourself to her neighbour, too!
Don't be a devil made of clay,
Get her fresh jewels straight away!  

Mephistopheles
Yes, gracious sir, gladly, with all my heart.

( Faust exits.)

Such a lovesick fool would blow up the Sun,
High up in the air, with the Moon and Stars,
To provide his sweetheart with some diversion.

(He exits.)

Scene 10: The Neighbour's House

Martha
(Alone.)
God forgive that man I love so well,  
He hasn't done right by me at all!
Off into the world he's gone,
And left me here, in the dust, alone.
Truly I did nothing to grieve him,
I gave him, God knows, fine loving.

( She weeps.)
Perhaps, he's even dead!—Yet, oh!
If I'd only his death certificate to show!

(Margaret enters.)

Margaret
Martha!

Martha
My little Gretchen, what's happened?

Margaret
My legs are giving way beneath me!
I've found another box of jewellery
In the chest: it's of ebony, fashioned,
Full of quite splendid things,
And richer than the first, I think.

(Margearet enters.)

Martha
You'd better not tell your mother:
She'll give it to the Church, like the other.

Margaret
Ah, See now! See what a show!

Martha
( Dressing her with jewels.)
O you're a lucky creature, though!

Margaret
I can't wear them in the street, alas,
Nor be seen like this, at Mass.

Martha
Come often then, to me, as before:  
You can put them on, here, secretly:
Stand, for an hour, in front of the mirror,
We'll take delight in them privately.
Then give us a holiday, an occasion,
When people can see a fraction of them.
A chain first, then a pearl in the ear: your
Mother won't know, say you'd them before.

Margaret
Who could have left the second casket?
There's something not proper about it!

(A knock.)

Good God! Is it my mother, then?

(Martha enters.)

Martha
( Looking through the shutter.)
It's a stranger, a gentleman—Come in!

(Mephistopheles enters.)

Mephistopheles
In introducing myself so freely,
I ask you ladies to excuse me.
I'm pleased that I'm allowed to stay.

Martha
What brings you here? I wish that you—
Mephistopheles
I wish I brought you happier news!—
This news I hope you’ll forgive me repeating: Your husband's dead, but sends a greeting.

Martha
He's dead? That true heart! Oh!
My man is dead! I'll die, also!

Margaret
Ah! Dear lady, don't despair!

Mephistopheles
Hear the mournful tale I bear! (2920)

Margaret
That's why I'll never love while I've breath,
Such a loss would grieve me to death.

Mephistopheles
Joy must have sorrows: sorrow its joys, too.

Martha
Tell me of his last hours: ah tell me!

Mephistopheles
He's buried in Padua, close to The blessed Saint Anthony,
In a consecrated space,
A cool eternal resting place.

Martha
Have you brought nothing else, from him?

Mephistopheles
Yes a request, it's large and heavy: For you to sing a hundred masses for him!
Otherwise, no, my pocket's empty.

Martha
What? No piece of show? No jewellery?
What every workman has in his purse,
And keeps with him as his reserve, (2935)
Rather than having to starve or beg!

Mephistopheles
Madam, it's a heavy grief to me:
But truly his money wasn't wasted.
And then, he felt his errors greatly,
Yes, and bemoaned his bad luck lately. (2940)

Margaret
Ah! How unlucky all men are! I'll
Be sure to offer many a prayer for him.

Mephistopheles
You're worthy of soon marrying:
You're such a kindly child.

Margaret
Oh, no! That wouldn't do as yet. (2945)

Mephistopheles
If not a husband, a lover, while you wait.
It's heaven's greatest charm,
To have a dear one on one's arm.

Margaret
That's not the custom of the country.

Mephistopheles
Custom or not! It seems to be. (2950)

Martha
Go on with your tale!

Mephistopheles
I stood beside his death-bed,
Hardly better than a rubbish-tip, poor man,
Of half-rotten straw: yet he died a Christian,
And found that he was even further in debt.
'Alas,' he cried, 'I hate myself,
with good reason, (2955)
For leaving, as I did, my wife and my occupation!
Ah the memory of that is killing me,
Would in this life I might be forgiven, though!' (2960)

Martha
(Weeping.)
The dear man! I forgave him long ago.

Mephistopheles
'Although, God knows, she was more to blame
than me.'

Martha
The liar! What! At death's door, lies he was telling!

Mephistopheles
In his last wanderings, he was rambling,
If I'm any judge myself of the thing.
'I had,' he said, 'no time to gaze in play:
First children, then bread for them each day, (2965)
And I mean bread in the wider sense:
And couldn't even eat my share in silence.'

Martha
Did he forget the love, the loyalty,
My drudgery, night and day!

Mephistopheles
Not at all, he thought of it deeply, in his way. (2970)
He said: 'As I was leaving Malta
I prayed hard for my wife and children:
And favour came to me from heaven,
Since our ship took a Turkish cutter,
Carrying the great Sultan's treasure. (2975)
There was a reward for bravery,
And I received, in due measure,
The generous share that fell to me.'
Martha
What? And where? Has he buried it by chance?

Mephisto
Who can tell: the four winds know
the circumstance. (2980)
A lovely girl there took him on,
As he, a stranger, roamed round Naples:
She gave him loyalty, and loved the man,
And he felt it so, till his last hour fell.

Martha
He stole from his children, and his wife! (2985)
The rogue! All the pain and misery he met,
Couldn't keep him from that shameful life!

Mephisto
Ah, but: now he's died of it!
If I were truly in your place,
I'd mourn him quietly for a year, (2990)
And look, meanwhile, for a dear new face.

Martha
Ah, sweet God! I'll not easily find another,
In all the world, such as my first one was!
There never was a dearer fool than mine.
Only he loved roaming too much, at last, (2995)
And foreign women, and foreign wine,
And the rolling of those cursed dice.

Mephisto
Well, that would have still been fine,
If, with you, he'd followed that line,
And noticed nothing, on your side. (3000)
I swear that, with that same condition,
I'd swap rings with you, no question!

Martha
O, the gentleman's pleased to jest!

Mephisto
(To himself.)
I must fly from here, swift as a bird!
She might hold the Devil to his word. (3005)

(To Gretchen.)
How does your heart feel? At rest?

Margaret
What does the gentleman mean?

Mephisto
(To himself.)
Sweet, innocent child!
(Aloud.)
Farewell, ladies!

Margaret
Farewell!

Martha
Oh, speak to me yet, a while!
I'd like a witness, as to where, how, and when
My darling man died and was buried: then, (3010)
As I've always been a friend of tradition,
Put his death in the paper, the weekly edition.

Mephisto
Yes, dear lady, two witnesses you need
To verify the truth, or so all agree:
I've a rather fine companion, (3015)
He can be your second man.
I'll bring him here.

Martha
Oh yes, please do!

Mephisto
That young lady will be here, too?
He's a brave youth! Travelled, yes,
And with ladies he's all politeness. (3020)

Margaret
I'd be shamed before the gentleman.

Mephisto
Not before any king on earth, madam.

Martha
Behind the house, then, in my garden,
Tonight: we'll expect you gentlemen.

Scene 11: The Street

(Faust. Mephisto.)

Faust
How goes it? Will it be? Will it soon be done? [3025]

Mephisto
Ah, bravo! Do I find you all on fire?
In double-quick time you'll have your desire.
You'll meet tonight, at her neighbour Martha's home:
There's a woman, who's the thing,
For procuring and for gipsying (3030)

Faust
All right!

Mephisto
But, she needs something from us, too.

Faust
One good turn deserves another, true.

Mephisto
We only have to bear a valid witness,
That her husband's outstretched members bless
A consecrated place in Padua. (3035)

Faust
Brilliant! We must first make the journey there!
Mephistopheles
Sacred Simplicity! There's no need to do that. Just testify, without saying too much to her.

Faust
If you can't do better than that, your pact I'll tear.

Mephistopheles
O holy man! Now I see you there! [3040]
Is it the first time in your life, come swear, That you've ever born false witness?
Haven't you shown skill in definition Of God, the World, what's in it, Men, What moves them, in mind and breast? [3045]
With impudent brow, and swollen chest? And if you look at it more deeply, oh yes, Did you know as much now—confess, As you do about Herr Schwerdtlein's death?

Faust
You are, and you'll remain, a Liar and a Sophist. [3050]

Mephistopheles
Yes when no one's the wiser for it. This coming morn, in all honour though, Won't you beguile poor Gretchen so: And swear you love her with all your soul?

Faust
From my heart.

Mephistopheles
Well, and good! [3055]
And will your eternal Truth and Love, Your one all-powerful Force, above— Flow from your heart, too, as it should?

Faust
Stop! Stop! It will! If I but feel, For that emotion, for that throng. [3060]
Seek the name, that none reveal, Roam, with senses, through the world. Seize on every highest word, And call the fire, that I'm tasting, Endless, eternal, everlasting— Does that to some devil's game of lies belong?

Mephistopheles
Yet, I'm still right!

Faust
Hear one thing more, I beg you, and spare my breath—the one Who wants to hold fast, and has a tongue, He'll hold for sure. [3070]
Come, chattering fills me with disgust, And then you're right, especially since I must.

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Scene 12: The Garden

(Margaret on Faust's arm, Martha and Mephistopheles walking up and down.)

I know the gentleman flatters me, Lowers himself, and shames me, too. A traveller is used to being [3075]
Content, out of courtesy, with any food. I know too well, so learned a man, Can't feed himself on my poor bran.

Faust
A glance, a word from you, feeds me more, Than all the world's wisest lore. [3080]

(He kisses her hand.)

Margaret
Don't trouble yourself! How could you kiss it? It's such a nasty, rough thing! What work haven't I done with it! My mother's so exacting.

(They move on.)

Martha
And you, sir, you're always travelling? [3085]

Mephistopheles
Ah, work and duty are such a bother! There's many a place one's sad at leaving, And daren't stay a moment longer!

Martha
In youth it's fine, up and down, Flitting about, the whole world over: [3090]
Then harsher days come round, And lonely bachelors small joy discover, In sliding towards their hole in the ground.

Mephistopheles
I view the prospect with horror.

Martha
Then take advice in time, dear sir. [3095]

(They move on.)

Margaret
Yes, out of sight is out of mind! Politeness comes naturally to you: But you'll meet friends, often, who, Are more sensible than me, you'll find.

Faust
Dearest, believe me, what men call sense, [3100]
Is often just vanity and short-sightedness.

Margaret
How so?
Faust
Ah, that simplicity and innocence never know
Themselves, or their heavenly worth!
That humble meekness, the highest grace
That Nature bestows so lovingly—

Margaret
It's only for a moment that you think of me,
I've plenty of time to dream about your face.

Faust
You're often alone, then?

Margaret
Yes, our household's a little one,
Yet it has to be cared for by someone.
We have no servant: I sweep, knit, sew,
And cook, I'm working early and late:
And in everything my mother is so
Strict, and straight.
Not that she has to be quite so economical:
We could be more generous than others:
My father left a little fortune for us:
A house and garden by the town-wall.
But now my days are spent quietly:
My brother is a soldier: I'd
A younger sister who died.
The trouble I had with that child:
Yet I'd take it on again, the worry,
She was so dear to me.

Faust
An angel, if like you.

Margaret
I raised her, and she loved me too.
After my father died, she was born,
We gave mother up for lost, so worn
And wretchedly she lay there then,
And slowly, day by day, grew well again.
She couldn't think of feeding
It herself: that poor little thing,
And so I nursed it all alone,
On milk and water, as if it were my own,
In my arms, in my lap,
It charmed me, tumbling, and grew fat.

Faust
You found your greatest happiness there, for sure.

Margaret
But also truly many a weary hour.
The baby's cradle stood at night
Beside my bed: and if it hardly stirred
I woke outright:
Now I nursed it, now laid it beside me: heard
When it cried, and left my bed, and often
Danced it back and forth, in the room: and then,
At break of dawn stood at the washtub, again:
Then the market and the kitchen, oh,
And every day just like tomorrow.
One sometimes lacks the courage, sir, and yet
One appreciates one's food and rest.

(They move on.)

Martha
Women have the worst of it: it's true:
A bachelor is hard to change, you see.

Mephistopheles
That just depends on the likes of you,
The right teacher might improve me.

Martha
Say, have you never found anyone, dear sir?
Has your heart never been captured, anywhere?

Mephistopheles
The proverb says: A hearth of your own,
And a good wife, are worth pearls and gold.

Martha
I mean: have you never felt desire, even lightly?

Mephistopheles
I've everywhere been treated most politely.

Martha
I meant to say: were you never seriously smitten?

Mephistopheles
With ladies, one should never dare
be flippant.

Martha
Ah, you won't understand me!

Mephistopheles
I am sorry! Yet you'll find
I understand—that you are very kind.

(They move on.)

Faust
And, Angel, did you recognise me again,
As soon as I appeared in the garden?

Margaret
Didn't you see my gaze drop then?

Faust
And you forgive the liberty I've taken,
The impertinence of it all,
Just as you were leaving the Cathedral?

Margaret
I was flustered, such a thing's never happened to me:
'Ah', I thought, 'has he seen, in
your behaviour,
Something that’s impertinent or improper?
No one could ever say anything bad about me.
He seems to be walking suddenly, with you,
As though he dealt with a girl of easy virtue’. I confess, I didn’t know what it was, though, (3175) That I began to feel, and to your advantage too, But certainly I was angry with myself, oh, That I could not be angrier with you.

Faust
Sweet darling!

Margaret
Wait a moment!

(She picks a Marguerite and pulls the petals off one by one.)

Faust
What’s that for, a bouquet?

Margaret
No, it's a game.

Faust
What?

Margaret
No, you'll laugh if I say! (3180)

(She pulls off the petals, murmuring to herself.)

Faust
What are you whispering?

Margaret
(Half aloud.)
He loves me—he loves me not.

Faust
You sweet face that Heaven forgot!

Margaret
(Continuing.)
Loves me—Not—Loves me—Not

(She plucks the last petal with delight.)
He loves me!

Faust
Yes, my child! Let this flower-speech
Be heaven’s speech to you. He loves you! (3185)
Do you know what that means? He loves you!

(He grasps her hands.)

Margaret
I'm trembling!

Faust
Don't tremble, let this look,
Let this clasping of hands tell you
What's inexpressible: (3190)

To give oneself wholly, and feel
A joy that must be eternal!
Eternal!—Its end would bring despair.
No, no end! No end!

(Margaret presses his hand, frees herself, and runs away. He stands a moment in thought: then follows her.)

Martha
(Coming forward.)
Night is falling.

Mephistopheles
Yes, and we must away. (3195)

Martha
I'd ask you to remain here longer,
But this is quite a wicked place.
It's as if they had nothing to do yonder,
And no work they should be doing
But watching their neighbours' to-ing
and fro-ing, (3200)
And whatever one does, insults are hurled.
And our couple, now?

Mephistopheles
Flown up the passage, there.
Wilful little birds!

Martha
He seems keen on her.

Mephistopheles
And she on him. It's the way of the world.

END OF READING
SECOND OF THREE SECTIONS