

## Dr. Faustus Summary and Analysis Scene 2

**Summary:** Two scholars come to Wagner to inquire about Faustus. Instead of giving a direct answer, Wagner uses superficial scholastic logic in order to prove to the two scholars that they should not have asked the question. After he displays a ridiculous knowledge of disputation, he finally reveals that Faustus is inside with Valdes and Cornelius. The two scholars then fear that Faustus has fallen into the practice of magic. They plan to see the Rector to "see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim" Faustus.

**Analysis:** Essentially, this scene functions as a comic interlude. This type of scene is often called an "echo scene" because Wagner's actions parody those of Faustus in the previous scene. The scene also functions as a contrast to the earlier scene in that the same subject is being presented — the use and misuse of knowledge. Earlier we had seen Faustus alone in his study displaying his knowledge of logic in order to justify his resorting to black magic. Now we have a contrast in which Wagner tries to use logic for no other purpose than to try to tell two scholars where Faustus is at the time.

Not only is the scene a comic interlude, but it is also a comment on the actions performed by Faustus. By the end of the second scene, we realize that Faustus' choice affects more people than just himself. First, Faustus has had a direct influence upon Wagner, who tries in his silly ways to imitate his master. Furthermore, in the end of the scene, we see that many more people are concerned over Faustus' choice than just Faustus alone. The two scholars indicate their desire to reclaim Faustus. The use of the word "reclaim" keeps in view the idea that Faustus' choice to use magic has already damned him. Essentially, the concern of the scholars heightens Faustus' error. Finally, this scene functions technically to allow a certain amount of time to pass.

It is characteristic of Elizabethan dramatists to have the dramatic persona speak in a language that is appropriate to their characters. The higher or nobler characters speak in an elevated and formal language. The lower characters usually speak in prose. Faustus speaks in "Marlowe's Mighty Line," while Wagner speaks in a simple prose. Shakespeare also uses this same technique in many of his comedies. For instance, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the noble characters speak in dignified language and the rustic characters use a more common idiom and speech.