

Dr. Faustus
Summary and Analysis Scene 7

Summary: Faustus describes the trip over the Alps and the various cities on the way to Rome. After Mephistophilis tells Faustus that he has arranged to enter the pope's private chamber, he describes the city of Rome. They prepare to go into the pope's chambers and Mephistophilis makes Faustus invisible. When the pope and a group of friars enter, Faustus plays tricks on them by snatching plates and cups from them. Finally, he boxes the pope on the ear. When the friars who are accompanying the pope begin to sing a dirge to re-move the evil spirit that seems to be present, Mephistophilis and Faustus begin to beat the friars and fling some fireworks among them.

Analysis: The opening of this scene shows the excellent use of Marlowe's mighty blank verse. The first speech does not make any significant thematic statements, but it resounds with the beautiful poetry. The passage establishes the feeling that Faustus has seen the world and has traveled over mighty expanses of land. We feel then the scope of his travels into the mysterious lands of the known world.

By the time the reader reaches this scene, he should be aware that Marlowe is not adhering to the classical unities of time and place. The scenes now move quickly about the world and there is little indication of the exact place where each scene occurs. Even in some of the earlier scenes, the exact setting was not important. In these short scenes, Marlowe is concerned with sketching in some of the activities of the twenty-four years of Faustus' life and trying to indicate both the passage of time and the manner in which Faustus uses his power.

We must constantly keep in mind that originally Faustus had made his contract with the devil in order to learn more about the essential nature of the universe. In this scene, we must constantly observe how Faustus uses his power. Instead of discussing and learning more about the intelligence behind the universe, Faustus is now misusing his power in order to perform cheap tricks, which indicates that Faustus or any person who begins to make deals with the devil cannot keep a nobility of purpose in mind. Any bargain with the devil will automatically degrade the individual.

The setting of this scene in Rome reminds us again that Faustus is anxious to see the places of great antiquity. He becomes excited about the splendor that was Rome, which is another part of the classical tradition that intrigues him.

I do long to see monuments And situation of bright-splendent Rome.

The scene with the pope must be viewed as "slapstick" comedy which would appeal to the lowly element in the audience in Marlowe's day. As Faustus snatches cups away and boxes the pope on the ear, the audience in Marlowe's day would be delighted by this satire against the pope and the friars. The dirge that the friars sing is also ridiculous and parodies a Roman Catholic chant.