



Faust (Bantam Classics) (Part I) (English and German Edition)

By Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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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.

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

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From the Inside Flap

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About the Author

Before he was thirty, Goethe had proven himself a master of the novel, the drama, and lyric poetry. But even more impressive than his versatility was his unwillingness ever to settle into a single style or approach; whenever he used a literary form, he made of it something new.

Born in 1749 to a well-to-do family in Frankfurt, he was sent to Strasbourg to earn a law degree. There, he met the poet-philosopher Herder, discovered Shakespeare, and began to write poetry. His play *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) made him famous throughout Germany. He was invited to the court of the duke of Sachsen-Weimar, where he quickly became a cabinet minister. In 1774 his novel of Romantic melancholy, *The Sorrows of a Young Werther*, electrified all of Europe. Soon as he was at work on the first version of his *Faust*, which would finally appear as a fragment in 1790.

In the 1780s Goethe visited England and immersed himself in classical poetry. The next decade saw the appearance of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, his novel of a young artist education, and a wealth of poetry and criticism. He returned to the *Faust* material around the turn of the century and completed Part 1 in 1808.

The later years of his life were devoted to a bewildering array of pursuits: research in botany and in a theory of colors, a novel (*Elective Affinities*), the evocative poems of the *West-Easters Divan*, and his great autobiography, *Poetry and Truth*. In his eighties he prepared a forty-volume edition of his works; the forty-first volume, published after his death in 1832, was the send part of Faust.

Goethe's wide-ranging mind could never be confined to one form or one philosophy. When asked for the theme of his masterwork, **Faust**, he could only say. "From heaven through all the world to hell"; his subject was nothing smaller.

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