

This is the story of *Faust*, based on the dramatic poem by Goethe and adapted for the screen - in 1926 - by F.W. Murnau and his team.

Although faithful to the original in many ways, Murnau's version does not exactly follow Goethe's story. It actually combines Goethe's work with Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (the "earliest dramatic version of the Faust legend") and Gounod's operatic *Faust*.

We learn more about this version of *Faust* - one of the most highly respected movies of all time, especially for its pioneering special effects - by Celtoslavica (a German-language website):

The devil [called Mephistopheles in Goethe's poem] claims the earth as his own. A dazzling archangel declares it is not and never will be so.

The devil proposes a wager for possession of Earth. If he can corrupt but one man, Faust, all the earth will be his. If he loses, he must go back to Hell.

The devil hovers over Faust's village. Plague, death, panic, frustration, resignation. Faust is pious, but cannot call upon God successfully to lift the veil of death.

In a moment of false revelation, Faust is tempted to call upon the devil. The wry devil maneuvers Faust into accepting dark powers for a day. Faust cures some of the plague, but is outcast when he cannot bring himself to touch a crucifix.

Not realizing his new powers have already failed the test, he accepts the devil's temptation of youth. The devil has his way. Slowly, all Hell breaks loose (so to speak).

In fact, the devil really is [evil, and not to be trusted]. Faust falls for the pure Gretchen, but under the guidance of the devil Faust corrupts Gretchen. She struggles through the birth of their child and its death. But amidst all this suffering, which the devil is really enjoying, something happens to redeem the tragic situation [which varies, significantly, from the literary versions on which the film is otherwise based].

The film is now in the public domain and has been placed online by Archive.org. The inter-titles have been translated from German into English.

Credits:

"Faust," a 1926 silent film by F.W. Murnau, based on the play by Goethe.

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Director:

F.W. Murnau

Producer:

Erich Pommer

Screenplay:

Hans Kyser

Starring:

Gösta Ekman - Faust

Emil Jannings - Mephisto

Camilla Horn - Gretchen

Frida Richard - Gretchen's mother
William Dieterle - Valentin
Yvette Guilbert - Marthe Schwerdtlein
Eric Barclay - Duke of Parma
Hanna Ralph - Duchess of Parma
Werner Fuetterer - Archangel
Anderhusan von Arteblach - Gretchen's aunt

Music:

William Axt (US, uncredited)

Cinematography:

Carl Hoffman

Distributor:

UFA

Release dates:

September 14, 1926 - Austria

December 5, 1926 - U.S.

Running Time:

106 minutes

Country:

Germany

Language:

Silent film

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Faust0)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Faust0>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Faust0)

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