

Excerpt from Splendid Productions' 'Dr Faustus'
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EPISODE 1: WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

Faustus is unsatisfied. He conveys this with a series of operatic sighs.

Faustus *(calling)* Wagner? Wagner!

Wagner rushes on, alarmed

Wagner Master Faustus, what's wrong?

Faustus *(sighs)* I feel unsatisfied.

Wagner You feel what sir?

Faustus Unsatisfied. Do you know what I mean?

Wagner *(considers this)* No.

Throughout the next speech Wagner attempts to anticipate Faustus's needs.

Faustus You don't. Of course you don't you don't understand a thing, do you? How could you? You've never been brilliant, have you Wagner? You've never been given an award, have you? No one has ever lifted you aloft and chanted your name. No one has ever called you 'the greatest thinker of your generation'.

Wagner *(stepping in so Faustus can lean on him)* No sir. That is true.

Faustus Oh, Wagner. *(He throws Wagner out of the way)* I sometimes wish I wasn't as brilliant as I am. *(Wagner provides a handkerchief for him to dry his eyes)* I wish I could just be a 'normal' like you. *(Faustus throws the handkerchief away carelessly. Wagner catches it.)*

Wagner *(craven)* Oh but master, it is we 'normals' who wish we were you. What must it be like to have a brain as big as Dr Faustus? To be so clever and popular and also so humble...

Faustus *(throws Wagner out of the way again)* That's true. I am humble. The humblest!

Wagner You are, sir.

Wagner leaps beyond the rope to become Lucifer. Faustus freezes.

Lucifer It's me! Welcome to the Seven Deadly Sins: Pride, Lechery, Envy, Gluttony, Greed, Wrath and Sloth... Be careful! One of these is likely to be your downfall as they are irresistible to you humans. (*Indicating Faustus*) Deadly Sin Number One, Pride: Dr Faustus thinks he is better than everyone else. Did you spot it? Of course you did!

Lucifer rewinds the scene slightly and steps back in as Wagner.

Faustus I am humble. The humblest!

Wagner You are, sir (*Faustus sighs.*) Shall I fetch you a book, master? Books are full of answers. (*Giving Faustus a book¹*) Philosophy, sir?

Faustus (*reading*) Ah, Aristotle, dear old Aristotle... Nah, read him. (*Throws book away*) Aristotle is knowledge for Dummies!

Wagner (*getting out a massive book*) Medicine, sir?

Faustus Am I not already Doctor Faustus? Famed throughout the land for curing disease and saving lives?

Wagner (*putting the massive book away*) Good point.

Faustus Oooh! Saving lives.... Make a man live forever, now that would be something! Or raise him up from the dead...

Wagner (*shocked*) Sir, only God Himself has power over life and death. (*Proffering another book*) You should read this one, sir.

Faustus (*taking book*) Ah yes, Jerome's Bible! What could be higher than the study of God? (*Leafs through pages*) 'The wages of sin is death'¹! Sin, death, sin, death... Jesus Christ, is that all it is? Religion's so judgy. Bye bye, bible (*throws bible away*).

Faustus Come on, more books! There's got to be a book I haven't read somewhere.

Wagner has uncovered a book but is horrified by it.

Wagner There's only one more, sir...

Faustus Give it here!

Wagner Maybe not this one...

¹ In our production, all of the books were mimed.

Faustus What is it? Hand it over. Bad Wagner!

Wagner No, it's bad sir, it's really really bad... It's abhorrent!

He goes to take it. There is a struggle. Faustus ends up with the book.

Faustus *(extremely interested)* Necromancy?

Wagner *(to audience)* Summoning up evil spirits...

Faustus *(delighted)* Mmmm...

Wagner *(to audience)* ...from the dead!

Faustus These metaphysics of magicians and necromantic books are heavenly! Lines, circles, letters, characters! Oh what a world of profit and delight is promised to the studious artisan!

Thunder. An ominous bell begins to toll.

Faustus The Necromancer's dominion stretches as far as the mind of man can conceive! Truly it is the duty of the greatest mind to fly beyond the mortal realm, to ascend to the level of a God!

Wagner Did you hear that ominous bell?

Faustus *(to Wagner)* You just ruined my dramatic moment with your stupid whiney face. Get out!

Wagner *(rushing out)* I'm sorry sir!

Faustus *(looking at the book, whispering covetously)* Want it... want it.... This is going to make everything better. Isn't it?

Good Angel and Evil Angel appear.

Good Angel O Faustus, lay that damned book aside
And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head:
Read, read the Scriptures; that book is blasphemy.

Evil Angel Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,
Wherein all nature's treasury is contained:
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.

Faustus *(rubbing his hands)* Think of it! Magical spirits under my command! The possibilities are endless! Get ready everyone, this is going to change everything!