

“Faust Conjures up the Spirits” (c. 1840)

Abstract

The story of Faust, a scholar so hungry for the power of universal knowledge that he makes a pact with the devil, has fascinated writers and their audiences for centuries – almost since the life of the actual Johann (actually, Georg) Faust (c. 1480-c. 1540), a German physician, alchemist, and magician. Numerous treatments of the Faust story have appeared the centuries, including Christopher Marlowe's drama, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (premiered c. 1592). The theme preoccupied Goethe throughout his literary career. This image is an illustration from an 1840 edition of his central drama, *Faust Part One* (first published in 1808). It shows Faust conjuring up the spirits, the first step toward his later “Faustian pact.” Detail of a painting by Carl Christian Vogel von Vogelstein (1788-1868), c. 1840.

Source



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