

# Mephistopheles

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Literature offers a great beginning to anything. From literature come so many ideas and characters that can fill up one's imagination and carry on a certain tradition for ages. Many supernatural characters, like demons, have eventually been carried over from old literature. An example of one would be Mephistopheles. Mephistopheles is one of the seven chief demons from hell (Faust). He was originally featured in European literary traditions, German to be exact (Wikipedia). He starts as a cruel and cold-hearted fictional character, in the Legend of Faust, and carries on making appearances in other novels, plays, and songs.

The name Mephistopheles came from Hebrew, where Mephitz means "destroyer" and topheh means "liar" (Etymonline). Others believe Mephistopheles may also mean "he who shuns the light" (White Roses Garden). The Legend of Faust by Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, written in 1773, introduces the character of Mephistopheles (Donald Tyson). Mephistopheles is a shape shifter who can shape into many forms, and his main purpose in the legend is to destroy and tempt Faust (White Roses Garden).

Basically, he tries to trick Faust into selling his soul (Faust). Through Goethe's book, he is known as a "fallen angel" as he clearly states to Faust (Faust). "A late comer in the infernal hierarchy, Mephistopheles never became an integral part of the tradition of magic and demonology that predated by him for thousands of years. Mephistopheles achieves tragic grandeur as he is torn between satanic pride and dark despair" (Encyclopedia Britannica). Other than the Faust legend, the name Mephistopheles is mentioned in various forms of modern culture. He takes

place as “ Mephistophilus” in Shakespeare’s Merry Wives of Windsor (Act 1, Sc 1, line 128) and in a book by John Banville (1911 Encyclopedia).

The name Mephistopheles has been mentioned in songs by Radiohead, Watain, the Police, and much more. He is all too familiar in television and movies like: SNL, FamilyGuy, South Park, Batman Begins, The Dark Knight, and Ghost Rider. Mephistopheles also occurs in video games, board games, operas, comics, stage plays, and other literature (Wikipedia). “ Mephistopheles is one of the demons of hell according to Christian literature and legend. He is mentioned in virtually every version of the Faust story as the infernal agent who entices the scholar to sell his soul to the devil” (White Roses Garden).

This name has become well known and been mentioned in several forms of modern and pop culture (Faust). “ The host of hell has also inspired numerous plays, paintings, and works of music” (White Roses Garden). Mephistopheles is a character who can be used in many forms of culture and has been created from the Legend of Faust. His dark and brooding personality makes him stand out, and it is likely that he will be remembered for generations to come.

## Works Cited

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