

FAUST

*Twenty-Nine Years:
What Price, Your Soul?*

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1. FICTION

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Dedicated To Shoshi, Maria, Lucky and my parents

Thank You

ALSO BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Revelation to Baron A. Deschauer

Art of Wealth—Barriers to Entry

BY INVOCATION

*To the gods that historians say are dead, heed my cry.
To the gods that live, pray inspire my pen and convey
the purpose so others may learn and need not waste
what little thread the fates provide.*

PREFACE

*For the punishment of fire's gift
A liver pecked perpetually
Man with woman now embrace
Warmed, enriched and well fed.*

Faust is a timeless story of mortals seeking the knowledge of the immortals. Perversely, Faust knowingly exchanges immortality for mortality; uncertainty and unknowability for certainty. But if death is already a certainty, why gamble away one's remaining chip? Yet this we do, and this Faust does.

Originally of northern Germanic origin, the story focused on a scholar dissatisfied with his life and the level of learning available to him. To aid his discovery of all things knowable, he sells his soul to the devil. It

is a myth with the devil servant being from a hell run by Satan.

If we look back further in time, we come across the ancient gods called Titans, one of whom was called Prometheus. Prometheus stole fire from the gods for humankind (which he created) only to be punished by being bound to a rock and having his liver pecked perpetually by an eagle (as he was immortal, the liver grew back to endure the punishment each day). This punishment was for his causing displeasure to the gods (especially the most powerful god, Zeus). But it was also a warning to other immortals to avoid elevating mortals into gods.

The ancient poets such as Hesiod, Homer, Ovid and Virgil set out the relationships formed between the gods and mortals (the first two for the Greeks, the latter for Romans). The origin of the gods and their exploits were described with care. These works continue to be studied to this day and provide insight to the timeless truths of humanity and human nature. The immortal gods embodied many human characteristics and were further flawed with imperfect knowledge and unpleasant vanity or jealousy. Mortals, a distraction for the immortals, were to be toyed with and tormented as each god saw fit.

This polytheistic view of existence was superseded by (or absorbed by, depending on your viewpoint)

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Christianity around 1,700 years ago (it took a few centuries after Christ's appearance plus an empire to adopt this new religion before its roots really took hold—around 313 the Romans declared the Edict of Milan which gave Christianity legal status and all within the Roman Empire were to treat Christians well). Islam, another monotheistic religion, became a force in the world relatively quickly after the word of Allah was revealed to Mohammed. In these monotheistic realities, supplicants could pray to just one Almighty God instead of dealing with a host of squabbling sibling gods. Even our reference to time in years, using AD or *anno Domini* (meaning in the year of *the* Lord—not 'in the year of our Lord' as most people assume) refers to one god; BC means 'before Christ'. We live in an age of Christianity despite scholars and non-Christians referring to Common Era (CE) and Before Common Era (BCE). And yet, Jews and Muslims count their years from the date of creation and the birth of Mohammed respectively. Other cultures use other reference points for their system of counting years. It would seem that we live in a world of multiple Almighty Gods; perhaps there is a common thread, a link that ties them all together.

England's Marlowe, in his play *Doctor Faustus* (1604), has a Faust who eagerly makes a deal with the

devil for earthly knowledge and pleasure. The price: eternal damnation with no chance of redemption.

Germany's Goethe writes an epic poem two hundred years later on the same subject and with effectively the same name. His work is a literary classic to the point where one can't mention Faust without mentioning Goethe. His influence on the German language and thinking has been enormous. My primary interest, influenced by Goethe, is the ability of men and women to function outside of God's control, and redemption in a godless existence. Goethe was a springboard for me to explore Faust within the realities of a greater consciousness.

There are numerous authors who have tackled this subject either directly or in passing. Movies make passing reference to this tale, and even our language includes the phrase "to sell one's soul", inferring the deal one makes with the devil to get what one wants the most. The origins of this phrase rest with Goethe and Marlowe and the ancient German myth they drew on.

My Faust is premised on a different perception of existence. I endeavoured to implement a Faust story consistent with an existence as set out in my earlier work *Revelation*. I believe it is a Faust consistent with all beliefs. For me, free will and our ability to think

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without fear or censure (from one's self or otherwise) is what defines us and affirms our existence.

While I nod to Milton, Marlowe and Goethe, I wanted to write a story that could be read, enjoyed and remembered on its own merits. If the reader wishes to see, they will notice the interlacing of my existential philosophy. It is meant to entertain and perhaps encourage reflection; in no way is it meant to offend.

I hope you enjoy the story.

Baron A. Deschauer
St. Helier, Jersey, C.I. 2016

CHAPTER 1

Brian Muldrox felt his shoulders tense as the muscles across his chest tightened. His whole frame bulked up with the increase of blood as it coursed through his veins. He couldn't take it any longer. Tom had just insulted him again.

"I don't need to take this crap anymore," Brian said to his friends. Propelled by a hot rush of adrenaline, he started walking towards Tom. As his entire field of vision closed in on him, he no longer saw the other kids playing football just beyond Tom; even the teachers watching over everyone ceased to exist. All he could see was Tom, and soon he stood only inches away.

"Hi Tom," Brian said menacingly.

Tom didn't move. He just stared at Brian, saying nothing. He wasn't particularly big for his age—average to small, in fact. His left-hand pinky finger was slightly straight, but that was because it had been broken only three months earlier.

Brian was a good four inches taller than Tom and quite a bit heavier. The last time they met, Tom had made a joke about Brian's bicycle. The result of that outburst was Tom on the ground surrounded by Brian and his friends. Brian had first hit Tom in the face and then in the stomach. When Tom fell down and curled himself into a ball, each of the other boys kicked Tom at least once. Some kicked him many more times. It was one of those kicks that had broken Tom's pinky.

After that episode, Tom would make sure he was nowhere near Brian or Brian's friends. Brian liked that; he enjoyed the respect. He let Tom know via 'playground rules' that Tom would 'get it' the next time he saw him. So Tom made sure that Brian never saw him.

And then, today, Tom was there, standing right in front of him.

"Hi Brian," Tom said evenly.

"Oooo. Hiiiiii Briiiiiiaannn," Brian and his friends drawled, mocking Tom in high, girly voices. It was a classic schoolyard tactic—mocking anything and everything that was said, regardless of whether it made sense for it to be mocked.

Tom turned and started walking away.

"Wait," Brian snapped. "Who said you could go?"

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Tom stopped. He turned, squared his shoulders, and looked Brian straight in the eyes. He said nothing.

“I *said*,” Brian continued, with more aggression in his voice, “who said you could go?” For emphasis, he pushed his fingers against Tom’s chest as though he was walking through a heavy door. Tom stumbled backwards a couple of steps before he caught himself. This time, his body was not square with Brian. This time, he stopped with his left foot slightly forward and his body slightly turned away. He continued to stare at Brian.

Brian started forward, his big meaty arm moving backwards as he readied himself to flatten Tom in one blow. But instead of landing his deadly punch on Tom, he found himself bent over with his big meaty arms clutching his belly.

Tom may not have been big, but he was fast. When he saw Brian prepare he didn’t flinch. Instead of running away he ran towards Brian using his speed and surprise to put all of his strength into the punch that doubled Brian over. None of Brian’s friends moved. They were all stunned. They were also doubly stunned when Tom took a step back and kicked the doubled-over Brian in the face. It was like someone kicking the opening ball in football; all of his strength went into it. Brian’s nose broke and blood poured

everywhere. The fight with Brian was over. Tom backed up and turned to the other boys.

“Do you want some of this?” he hollered at them. His body was coursing with adrenaline and his shoe had blood on it from Brian’s face. He danced left to right, forward and back, like a boxer. Tom was ready to unleash whatever hell he had inside him onto the boys.

The boys ran away, leaving Brian on the ground, curled up and crying. Soon Tom walked away too.

In the shadows, away from the greenery and sunlight of day, stood a figure who watched with intent. He nodded to himself and then was gone.

Later, after the adults gave talks on the evils of violence and fighting, and after Tom endured the necessary punishments meted out by the school, he smiled inside. Tom wouldn’t need to kick or punch Brian or any of the other boys again. And, as it turned out, no one kicked or punched him again either. His goal was to end the battle and the war against him. The first punch ended the battle. The kick ended the war.



Years later, Tom smiled to himself as he remembered Brian. His encounter with Muldrox shaped his personality more than any teacher or lesson. He learned

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early in life to stand up to bullies. He learned that he alone could resolve issues that affected him personally. He realised he didn't need to submit to another's will unless he truly wanted to.

Both Brian and Tom were men now, and Tom was in an army recruiting office contemplating the most important action in his life thus far: to join or not to join. Since that day in the playground, Tom had grown to manhood without fear. He met a girl in school whom he thought he loved, but she had a greater destiny ahead of her. In a fit of self-pity over the loss of his parents, who died in a freak ice-fishing accident when he was sixteen, he allowed her to drift away. She was too cool and too tough to do anything other than accept his actions and continue her destined path to greatness. He took this as another confirmation of why he should join the army. Everything prior to Jessie was ordinary for Tom; when she ceased to be part of his life, that sense of the ordinary returned, though it felt emptier now. With his parents gone, he turned to the army to provide the sense of family and structure he needed.

The army was something he could belong to. There, he would have little to no will of his own, but at least it would have been his choice. He determined that if he joined, he would only do what he wanted to do when he left.

And with that realisation, he signed up and surrendered his body and soul to the army. He knew that if he wanted to get it back someday, he would need as much luck as guts.

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That someday arrived roughly seventeen years later and, yes, he had his share of luck along the way. The army kept its word: apart from some bangs and bruises, he did receive his body and soul back after putting in the time.

To top things off, he received an intriguing call from that girl back in high school. She had moved to the countryside and wanted to see him about something or other. He didn't think twice. He hopped on the next bus and made his way to her. Those few hours' on the bus transported him into a different world, one of cowboys and big sky.

Until that phone call, Tom's life was as ordinary as that of the next guy. But that was all about to change.