## Of Drowning Books and Burning Souls: Magic, Minions, Relationships, and Crisis in *The Tempest* and *Dr. Faustus*

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The central figures of Marlowe's *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* bear intriguing similarities. Their use of magic and means of acquiring it, along with their interactions with their servants, highlight their relationship to reality. Both men are faced with a similar crisis at the end of their respective play as well. After having magical powers throughout the majority of the story, each man is asked, subtly or directly, to relinquish his hold on the supernatural. Yet, despite having so many characteristics in common, the two plays reach dramatically different conclusions.

While later acknowledging the melancholy nature of returning to life sans powers, Prospero gives up his books and breaks his staff (Shakespeare 5.1.54-57). He also frees Ariel and Caliban, his two companions. Although entreated several times by an Old Man and various angels to repent of his ways, Faustus is dragged to Hell (Marlowe 13.11). An in-depth examination of Prospero's and Faustus's powers, the ways they use them, the acquisition of and relationships to their minions, and their ultimate relationships to non-magical reality provides insight into their differing destinies. These aspects of their characters also indicate that viewing Prospero as a good magician and Faustus as a bad one is reductionist, and that such a perspective is not helpful in understanding their fates.

One of the most prominent similarities between Prospero and Faustus is their possession of magical powers. It is possible to conclude upon a simple reading of the texts that the magic they use is, if not exactly the same, then very close in nature. Both have assumed control of servants and perform supernatural feats involving invisibility and deception. Yet one may be hesitant to draw parallels between the two men's magic because Faustus's powers are emphatically grounded in the Judeo-Christian tradition while the cultural origins of Prospero's art are nebulous. Despite this difference, the two men have many magical characteristics in common.

While research into Renaissance magic concludes that there were no truly unifying traditions (Henry 7), there are somewhat substantive connections between the Renaissance and the medieval era. Scholars examining Albert Magnus's medieval work

Speculum astronomiae found that magic was roughly divided into two separate categories—Hermetic and Solomonic (Klaasen 168). Hermetic magic was used to focus the powers of celestial bodies at certain times of the year, and often had a ritualistic component involving chanting or animal sacrifice. This type of magic was very concerned with talismans and artifacts. Conversely, Solomonic magic concerned itself with "binding and deploying demons and angels through ritual acts of violence" (Klaasen 173). Klaasen hints that the Solomonic practices present in texts other than Speculum astronomiae did not use ritual violence but liturgical rituals.

Broadly, Faustus's and Prospero's magic powers fall into the Solomonic category. Their two uses of magic rely far more on the employment of spirit-based servants than upon rituals; in fact, even when Prospero does perform magical feats, they are based on his desires, are devoid of chanting, and have nothing to do with times of the year, as seen in the storm at the beginning of the play. While Faustus relies on a chant to summon Mephostophilis (Marlowe 3.15–23), his magical feats thereafter rely on the powers of his minion. Similarly, though Miranda suspects that the storm itself is attributed to her father, Prospero uses Ariel to save the people aboard the duke's ship (Shakespeare 1.2.1–5).

The ways the men acquire their powers are also similar. Both use books and remove themselves, either socially or physically, willingly or not, from the non-magical world. The use of books is unsurprising; another aspect of Renaissance magic is that scholarship and magical abilities were often intertwined. Henry writes, "The truly learned magus was held to be a man with a vast knowledge of 'how to effect things worthy of the highest admiration....by the mutual application of natural actives and passives" (8). Therefore, the idea of a sorcerer as a learned man was very prominent in Renaissance literature. Such an overlapping between magic and academia becomes even more understandable when one considers the diaphanous boundary between science and magic prior to the Enlightenment.

Further evidence that the magicians exist in a similar magical framework can be found in the magical deeds present in each play—namely, invisibility. While these deeds are not always performed by the magicians themselves, their similarities reinforce the idea that Prospero and Faustus are comparable magically. The feats' occurrence in conjunction with their use and goals highlights the magicians' inner natures.

Invisibility is the first power that demonstrates interaction with the external, non-magical world. The feat also allows one to see how the spirits interact with an unprepared public, strengthening the notion of Faustus's and Prospero's otherworldliness. The power of invisibility is interestingly shared between master and servant, and allows for a moment of companionship between the sorcerers and their companions. When both beings are invisible, the gap between magicians and the external world seems widened, particularly because the use of invisibility gives the magicians partial dominion over the people they are interacting with.

Prospero employs invisibility, both his own and Ariel's, for benign purposes. Ariel uses this power, along with his musical ability, to lead Ferdinand to Miranda. While distancing Ferdinand from his father worries the father, this temporary discomfort ultimately ends in happiness, as it leads to Ferdinand's union with Miranda. The air-spirit also uses his power to save Gonzalo from being murdered. When Prospero and Ariel are invisible together later in the play, their intention is to acquire information.

Because the invisibility is used to avoid danger as well as foster ultimate goodness, these acts indicate that Prospero uses Ariel responsibly, and generally for non-selfish reasons, even if his actions seem questionable at first. Contrastingly, Faustus and Mephostophilis's use of invisibility accentuates Faustus's childish, selfish nature. Despite the demon's supposed near omnipotence, Faustus's demands of Mephostophilis rarely transcend the banal and irritating. For instance, Mephostophilis is used to terrorize the pope during a feast. This act accomplishes nothing substantial; its triviality makes Faustus's decision to barter his soul seem questionable. These actions serve solely as an exercise of power over others. The natural people understandably lack total comprehension of the events, thus causing Faustus to feel wise.

This tendency toward childishness and mild sadism may play a role in Faustus's ultimate decision. His taste of power and superiority is simply too tantalizing for him to give up. Prospero, however, always remains grounded in the affairs of the non-magical world, perhaps because of his negative experience after descending too deeply into sorcery (Shakespeare 1.2.139–150). His stronger relationship to society makes the reassumption of powerlessness possible.

The character of Faustus approaches that of sorcerer (as understood by playgoers of that era) even before he summons Mephostophilis. The beginning of the play demonstrates how much he understands about the natural world. It is this understanding of the natural world that leads him to become disenchanted with his limited power as a mortal. He says, "Are not [my] bills hung up as monuments, / whereby whole cities have escaped the plague?...Yet art thou still but Faustus, and a man" (Marlowe 1.20-24). Faustus's knowledge has led to fame and repute. Yet, because he cannot raise people from the dead—and thus possesses no dominion over the impossible—Faustus sees no good in his studies. The contrast between having knowledge and having mastery over the natural world creates friction for Faustus, which leads to frustration. It is this frustration that eventually leads him to summon Mephostophilis.

In some ways, Faustus's descent into the dark arts seems a natural outgrowth of his scholarly pursuits. He says, "Lines, circles, schemes, letters, and characters! / Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires" (Marlowe 1.51–52). Though alluding to the technical illustrations present in books such as *Speculum astronomiae*, this nearly-mundane description of forbidden knowledge reinforces the idea of magician as scholar. This idea is further underpinned by Faustus's questioning Mephostophilis about the cosmos (5.210–215). Furthermore, Mephostophilis confers knowledge upon Faustus by giving him three books—one containing "all spells and incantations" (5.164), another relating "all characters and planets of the heavens" (5.169), and a third describing "all plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon the earth" (5.173). It is interesting that Faustus requests this knowledge following the long introductory soliloquy decrying scholarly pursuits as a waste of time; it provides insight into his character, which is riddled with contradictions.

Faustus's character is already comprised of pride and thirst for knowledge. Unlike Prospero, Faustus's references to fame and his own intelligence indicate his self-centeredness. This quality—hubris—is part of why he rejects the repeated angelic attempts to save him.

The Tempest, unlike Doctor Faustus, begins in medias res. Prospero has already assumed control of Ariel and Caliban at the start of the play. The exercise of his art is at

least twelve years old (Shakespeare 1.2.54). He too alludes to books as the source of his arcane knowledge and power, seen in part when Caliban exhorts his companions to destroy Prospero's books (Shakespeare 3.2.91–92). Prospero also attributes the loss of his kingdom to being too occupied by his studies (Shakespeare 1.2.71–76). Perhaps the less emphasized idea of scholarship can be attributed to the setting of *The Tempest*, as well as to the nature of Prospero's underlings. Unlike Faustus's Mephostophilis, who is born of the wordy Judeo-Christian tradition and commanded by a contract, Ariel and Caliban are bound to Prospero much more informally. The boundaries of Ariel's agreement are mentioned, but the extent of the pact is never emphasized as much as the contract in *Doctor Faustus*, where the sorcerer accentuates the importance by writing his consent in blood. In *The Tempest's* wild setting, with more nature-based spirits, having such formal scholarship would seem incongruous. Still, Prospero's books are retained as relics and as symbols of his power.

As is apparent from the preceding paragraphs, the magicians' minions are of utmost importance to the plays. Upon reflection, the minions can even be used to further understand the character of the magicians themselves. Though Prospero's and Faustus's magic powers both fall under the Solomonic category, their acquisition and education of their minions are very different.

Like many other aspects of his magical powers, Prospero's acquisition of Ariel and Caliban happens prior to the play. While related to his power, the procurement of Prospero's servants seems equally related to chance—that is, his landing on the island. Both Ariel and Caliban inhabited the island prior to Prospero's landing there. Prospero uses his arts to assume control of them. Ariel greets this interference ambivalently; eager to be out of his contract, he occasionally urges Prospero to release him but is never openly hostile. The air-spirit's approach is drastically divergent from Caliban's outright animosity, seen in his cursing and the criticism of Prospero's rule:

For I am all the subjects that you have, Which first was mine own king: and here you sty me In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me The rest o' the island (Shakespeare 1.2.348–494).

The acquisition of Mephostophilis is much more emphasized in *Doctor Faustus*. The long Latin incantation reinforces the sacrilegious nature of Faustus's spells. Furthermore, the conjuring allows Faustus a chance to congratulate himself, calling himself a "conjurer laureate" (Marlowe 3.33). Yet, Mephostophilis downplays Faustus's powers, remarking that the devils appear to anyone who blasphemes (3.47–49). He even denies Faustus the satisfaction of thinking Satan sent Mephostophilis to see him. These facts are contrasted oddly with Faustus's enormous ego and education. It is evident that asserting his individuality is part of his desire to master the dark arts, but Mephostophilis denies this desire. Perhaps this is why Faustus says, somewhat dramatically, "This word damnation terrifies not [me] / For [I confound] hell in Elysium: / [My] ghost be with the old philosophers" (3.57–59). Having his individuality stolen, he attempts to place himself in a group of the intellectual elite—consolation for not being fully extraordinary. Though Mephostophilis serves Faustus according to the confines of their contract, Mephostophilis makes it repeatedly clear that he serves Satan ultimately and not Faustus.

It is this dedication to a greater master, along with his spiritually powerful nature, that allows Mephostophilis to downplay Faustus's individuality.

Therefore, Faustus's and Prospero's intentions in acquiring their servants are vastly different. Faustus explicitly summons Mephostophilis to provide him with power (Marlowe 3.104). There also seems to be a deep desire to assert his individuality. This desire also leads to his rejection of the salvation repeatedly offered to him. He says repeatedly that he is too far damned to be saved, a proclamation that is untrue based on the comments of the angels. Prospero gains his minions by helping them, though his motive for doing so is unclear. His later relationship to Caliban makes his motives even harder to guess. Ariel and Caliban's acquisition still seems less selfish compared to Faustus's acquisition of Mephostophilis, as it is more incidental but cannot necessarily be called benevolent with complete confidence.

Control, like acquisition, is an important component of the relationship between master and servant. In this case, control can be defined as the actions the servants take with respect to their master's wishes and further explored by examining the means of control.

As stated above, Faustus's control of Mephostophilis stems from the contract he makes with Lucifer. The contract with the devil is a conceit that spans centuries, and some even suggest that the importance of a literal contract to plays like *Doctor Faustus* grows in proportion to the importance of the written word in society. One of the earliest occurrences of the contract with the devil occurs in the tale of Theophilus of Adana, generally dated to 538 CE (Lazar 31). In this iteration, the contract is a brief declaration of fealty to the Dark One. Keeping with Faustus's wordy nature, his contract occupies fifteen lines and includes legally binding language. One of the lines even references his scholastic occupation, beginning, "I, John Faustus of Wittenberg, doctor..." (Marlowe 5.104). The contract, written in blood, gives Faustus essentially perfect control over Mephostophilis's actions but not his personality. The demon is a servant but not a slave, seen when he dismisses Faustus's claims of individuality (3.44) and when he playfully sets firecrackers off behind Robin, Rafe, and Vintner (8.26).

Because there is no fully written-out contract, Prospero's mastery over Ariel and Caliban is a bit more ambiguous. He reminds Ariel (and informs the reader) that he saved the spirit by rending an oak tree with his magic. His powers matched those of the witch Sycorax, a being whose power is implied by her ability to confine Ariel. The play implies that Ariel is bound to Prospero for a period of service because he saved him. However, the boundaries of this mastery are difficult to define. One cannot be sure if Prospero has bound Ariel to him with his powers, outside of freeing him from Sycorax, or if the service is due to Ariel's gratitude. While Ariel's pleas to be freed seem to preclude the latter, that is not necessarily true, as Ariel is obviously grateful to have been rescued from his plight (Shakespeare 1.2.295). Furthermore, Prospero threatens to confine Ariel again if he continues to be impertinent (Shakespeare 1.2.296–298). When one considers the generally good relationship between the two of them, this threat does not seem to carry much weight, making it unlikely that Ariel remains by Prospero's side entirely because of fear. Prospero's later actions—all taken to further goodness—make it equally unlikely that he would torment Ariel. Though it is not possible to conclude with utter certainty that Ariel serves Prospero of his own volition without interference from binding Solomonic magic, it is a possibility that can be entertained. It is supported by the good terms the servant and master are on, evinced by the use of pet names (Shakespeare 5.1.320) and friendly conversations.

Prospero's mastery over Caliban proves problematic, as it is incomplete. Because *The Tempest* begins *in medias res*, it is impossible to consider the entirety of Prospero's complicated relationship with the son of Sycorax. Though Caliban speaks of a past when he and Prospero were on good terms, one only sees the bad portion of their relationship on stage. Prospero treats Caliban much more harshly than Ariel, and this harshness is returned in equal measure, as Caliban repeatedly curses Prospero. The magician addresses him as a son of a hag and "earth" (Shakespeare 1.2.42); Ariel, fully subservient in action, never earns these epithets. The means of controlling Caliban are much rougher in origin, partly comprised of sheer physical brutality, partly by magically inflicted curses (Shakespeare 1.2.328–330). Caliban worries aloud about beatings and cramps, and serves Prospero mainly out of fear.

The extent of the abuse in their relationship is troubling and at first seems at odds with Prospero's intrinsic goodness. Yet, in light of Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda, Prospero's harshness seems understandable. It is unknown whether or not Prospero became harsh only after the assault, but it seems likely, given Prospero and Caliban's past benign relationship. In this case, Prospero's protection of his daughter overrides compassion and mercy. As for Caliban, his anger stems primarily from Prospero's seizing his island. Though Prospero's rule over the island does not seem to change the setting in any substantial way, Caliban is highly disturbed by the magician's dominion over him. Both parties involved seem a bit nostalgic for the earlier days when the two of them were on better terms—Caliban, in part, because of his naivety and Prospero because his daughter had not been threatened. The harsh feelings on both sides harm the integrity of the master/servant relationship; of the three servants, Caliban serves his master the least willingly and through the use of the most force.

Prospero's relationship with Caliban makes it difficult to argue that the plays' endings are due to the magicians' intrinsic goodness or badness. Even if one believes Prospero's abuse of Caliban is appropriate, it is still abuse, and assuming unlawful control of the island is difficult to see as a morally righteous act. Therefore, it is reductionist to claim that Prospero is good while Faustus is bad, as Prospero's relationship with Caliban is flawed.

As Faustus and Prospero both fit the archetype of the scholarly magician, their attempts to educate their servants are unsurprising. Education, in this case, can be likened to attempts at naturalization, a conclusion emphasized by the repeated interpretations of *The Tempest* as a postcolonial text (Skura 229). Besides their scholarly pursuits, it is unclear why the two magicians try to ground their minions in the human paradigm, particularly when they themselves are isolated—emotionally in Faustus's case and physically in Prospero's. Regardless, both of them directly or indirectly encourage the spirits to pursue human behavior and relate to human concerns.

Despite being the more scholarly of the two, Faustus's education of Mephostophilis is less emphasized in the play. His bold declaration that Mephostophilis should "Learn...of Faustus manly fortitude, / and scorn those joys [Mephostophilis] never shalt possess" (Marlowe 3.85–86) is never entirely supported by Faustus's actions. In fact, Faustus possesses little manly fortitude. He is the one who shies away from

tricking the pope and never performs any particularly astounding feats even with his dominion over his servant.

It is possible that Mephostophilis's lack of education is due, in part, to the fact that he already knows a great deal about the human world. In the Judeo-Christian worldview, the devil and his demons are spirits representing the earth's sinful pleasures in addition to evil itself. This idea would explain why Mephostophilis and Lucifer are familiar with human constructs as disparate as pageants and the tale of the Iliad. Faustus learns more from Mephostophilis than he teaches the demon, and there is little evidence that Mephostophilis is changed by Faustus at all. The demon's final words (assuming Mephostophilis is not the Chorus) are neutral, telling Faustus that anything he desires will be done (Marlowe 12.79–80). Thus, like many of Faustus's promises, the pledge to educate Mephostophilis too is broken.

Prospero's attempted education of Caliban is emphasized. Aided by Miranda, he endeavors to teach Caliban to speak their native language. Though Caliban amply grasps the English language, this attempt to humanize him seems to fail at first. It is at this point in the play that the origins of Prospero and Caliban's sour relationship grow muddied. Does Caliban attempt to rape Miranda following her education of him? Is the rape merely attributed to his brutish nature, or did Prospero assume control of the island and prompt the assault? There are many unanswered questions, echoing the mysterious setting and characters themselves. Regardless, Caliban's infamous line "You taught me language; and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse" (Shakespeare 1.2.366–367) and his foul curses indicate that Prospero's education of Caliban initially fails to fully ground him in the human paradigm and certainly fails to ground him in any positive way.

The naturalization of Ariel is not fully discussed by *The Tempest*. More magically powerful and ethereal than the earthy Caliban, Ariel intrinsically resists naturalization. This resistance may not be fully conscious and is most likely attributable to his emphatically non-human nature. Though Caliban is likewise non-human in appearance, his childish desires and anger are relatable to human characteristics, whereas very little of Ariel's character can be associated with humanity. Ariel never conscientiously objects to Prospero's demands; he merely longs to be free. Prospero also never directly attempts to naturalize him. If Ariel acquires human characteristics, it is the result of associating with Prospero and not the conscious, direct work of Prospero himself. Following the post-colonial interpretation of the play, Ariel may symbolize the benefits of living in nearly peaceful reality with the natives, as opposed to trying to force culture upon them, though Prospero's dominion over Ariel is, of course, problematic (Skura 152).

The conclusion of *The Tempest* approaches the success of the naturalizations with ambiguity. Prospero's humanization of Caliban may have proven to be a partial success, based on Caliban's final lines. He says,

...I'll be wise hereafter And seek for grace. What a thrice-double ass Was I, to take this drunkard for a god And worship this dull fool! (Shakespeare 5.1.298 –302)

His promise to "seek for grace" is at best enigmatic and at worst nonsensical. The reader has no idea what type of "grace" Caliban seeks. Vaughan writes, "Though

Caliban remains 'natural' man in contrast to 'civilized' Antonio, the monster's desire for 'grace' underlies the civilized world's debasement and, once again, emphasizes Caliban's ultimate humanity" (19). Vaughan goes on to imply that Caliban is so captivating because the definitions of "grace" he seeks are so widely varied. Some readers believe that his wish is to become like the "civilized" travelers that inhabited his island while others think the concept is less defined. Regardless of the interpretation, the ending of *The Tempest* is unclear on the result of Caliban's naturalization. As Vaughan writes, "Perhaps [the undefined nature of 'grace'] is why so many sequels to *The Tempest* have been written....Caliban is a loose end; for centuries, readers and playgoers have wanted to tie him up."

Ariel's words near the end of the play are equally ambiguous. After describing the plight of the "king, his brother and [Prospero]," he remarks that his affections would grow tender if he were a human (Shakespeare 5.1.19). His remark that his concern would only be aroused if he were human contrasts oddly with the heartrending account of their suffering. The reader or playgoer is left to wonder if Ariel's sympathies were truly aroused. However, the spirit's comments on the human condition indicate that Prospero has taught him something of human emotions. Perhaps Ariel's remarks are borne of an intellectual understanding; perhaps he is capable of human emotion.

The outcomes of the magicians' naturalization efforts provide further evidence that the divide between Prospero and Faustus is not Manichaean. Depending on one's ethical framework, one could argue that Faustus's failure to change Mephostophilis is more humane than Prospero's thrusting language upon Caliban. Faustus's failure may indicate his weak nature; that personality flaw is not necessarily indicative of evil, but Faustus's wavering resolve is part of why he is damned. It is also possible that Prospero's negative relationship with Caliban makes leaving the island easier, supporting his relinquishment of magic.

A look at the magicians' affections for the beings around them is in order. These feelings may be linked to but not indicative of the magicians' relationships with their servants. Bizarrely enough, the most affectionate master, at least in spoken terms, is Faustus. From the outset, he seems absolutely enchanted with Mephostophilis both as a being and an idea. At first, this affection is entirely conflated with his thirst for power. He says,

Had I as many souls as there be stars, I'd give them all for Mephostophilis. By him I'll be a great emperor of the world, And make a bridge through the moving air... (3.102-106)

He goes on to refer to the demon as "Sweet Mephostophilis" four more times over the course of the play and even calls the devil "My Mephostophilis" (5.206) in a possessive way rather than in an address. Based on Faustus's other relationships (they are bitter and few in number), it is highly likely that the affection for Mephostophilis is borne of either Faustus's control over him, Mephostophilis's power, or both.

The bulk of Prospero's affection, on the other hand, is placed on his daughter Miranda. He says to Ferdinand,

...I have given you here a third of mine own life, Or that for which I live; who once again I tender to thy hand: all thy vexations Were but my trials of thy love and thou Hast strangely stood the test here, afore Heaven, I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand, Do not smile at me that I boast her off, For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise And make it halt behind her. (Shakespeare 4.1.2–11)

While he is affectionate towards Ariel, Miranda is the more important being in his life. His protective nature is weighted against the responsibility he has to her to let her marry and be with other people at last. In her own way, she is just as naturalized as Caliban, but by the visitors to the island. Given her marriage to Ferdinand, her naturalization is ultimately successful, thanks in part to the supervision of her father.

The magicians' affections provide the greatest insights into their endings. Though he frees Ariel and Caliban, Prospero has something to return to—his rightful kingdom. He also has Miranda's joyous union with Ferdinand to look forward to. While Prospero laments being old (Shakespeare 5.1.3), his final speech is more focused on being freed from the stage—similar to the freeing of Ariel. Prospero's connections to nonmagical reality lead him to "drown his book...break his staff" (5.1.54–57), and return home.

The graphic ending of *Doctor Faustus* could not be farther from the ending of *The Tempest*. In the hours before his damnation, Faustus's only human company is two unnamed scholars. One of them makes a tentative suggestion that they stay and pray with Faustus, but the pair ultimately abandons him. Faustus's long parting soliloquy appeals to the powers of his intellect and his knowledge of the world. As he nears damnation, he offers to burn his books, but it is clear that this release of magic powers is not wholehearted, or enough to save him. His final word is the name of the one being he was closest to—"Mephostophilis!" Faustus dies in social isolation, friendless.

Thus, Prospero maintains connections to beings other than his servants. His emotionally beneficial relationships with Miranda and Ariel provide him enough stability to make the transition to the realm of mortal men. Faustus, adrift, has no mortals to turn to. His continual self-gratification leaves him with no easy way to give up his power, as do his pride and desperate need for individuality. It is his self-centered psyche that led him to blaspheme in the first place. Furthermore, Faustus fooled himself into believing Mephostophilis was his to keep. Prospero's understanding with Ariel reminded him continually that their relationship was temporary; these reminders may also have led to his decision.

It is reductionist to say that Prospero was good and Faustus was bad. The two plays reveal that the men's relationships to their power and the world around them were very complex. Their attempts at naturalizing their servants are treated ambiguously and, while Faustus evinces more character flaws than Prospero, his damnation may not entirely be attributed to them. Due to their inner natures and relationships, both men reach separate ends. Prospero drowns his books and forswears sorcery, and Doctor Faustus burns.

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