

THE PHANTOM

of the Opera



Tracy Wells

Adapted from the novel by Gaston Leroux

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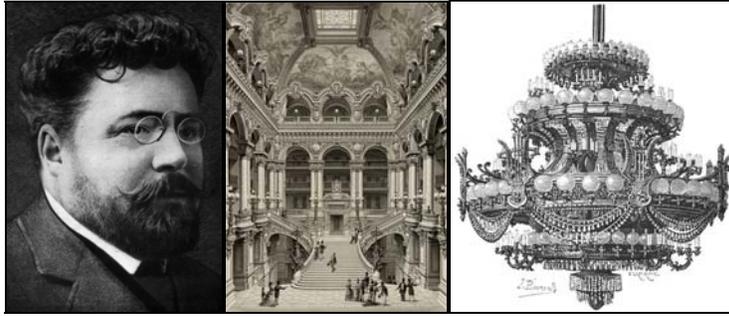
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*For my Eric,
the inspiration and muse
for everything I write,
and the love of my life.*

The Phantom of the Opera

CLASSIC HORROR. Adapted from the novel by Gaston Leroux. Christine Daaè, an opera singer at the Paris Opera House, attracts the attention of the Phantom of the Opera, who falls madly in love with her. The Phantom is a violent, mad musical genius who secretly lurks about in the hidden catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House. The Phantom, who must hide his disfigured face behind a mask, kidnaps Christine and takes her to his lair in the Opera's cellars. There, he reveals his true identity to Christine and attempts to force her to marry him by threatening to blow up the opera house, killing all those within including Christine's true love, Raoul. The suspense never ends in this masterful, spellbinding tale of obsession. A tour de force!

Performance Time: Approximately 100-120 minutes.



From left to right: Gaston Leroux, Palais Garnier's grand staircase (1880) and auditorium chandelier (1875)

About the Story

French journalist and author Gaston Leroux (1868-1927) first published *The Phantom of the Opera* as a serial in 1901 and then as a novel in 1911. *The Phantom of the Opera* has been adapted into several movies and is the source of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical. Leroux based the setting of his novel on the Palais Garnier, home of the Paris Opera. The building features a large marble staircase that divides into two flights of stairs that lead to the grand foyer. An iconic 7-ton bronze chandelier hangs inside the Palais Garnier's auditorium. On May 20, 1896, the chandelier fell and killed an audience member. This incident inspired Leroux to write one of the most famous scenes in *The Phantom of the Opera* in which the chandelier falls during a performance of *Faust*. Though Leroux is best known for *The Phantom of the Opera*, he is considered the master of French mystery novels, most notably *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*.

Characters

(13 M, 16 F, 1 flexible, extras)
(Doubling possible.)

ERIK: Aka “The Phantom of the Opera,” “The Angel of Music,” and “The Opera Ghost”; violent, mad musical genius who secretly lurks about in the hidden catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House and is obsessed with Christine Daaë; has a mangled face the is covered with a mask; wears a black cape; male.

CHRISTINE DAAË: Opera singer at the Paris Opera House who believes in the Angel of Music; female.

MONSIEUR DAAË: Christine’s father, who plays the fiddle; male.

MAMMA VALERIUS: Christine’s guardian; female.

RAOUL DE CHAGNY: Christine’s childhood friend who is in love with her; male.

PHILLIPE DE CHAGNY: Raoul’s older brother; male.

LA CARLOTTA: The most famous opera singer in Paris; spoiled prima donna and lead soprano of the Paris Opera House; female.

CARLOUS FONT: Opera singer; male.

LA SORELLI: Lead ballerina at the Paris Opera House; female.

MEG GIRY: Christine’s friend and a ballerina; female.

MADAME GIRY: Meg’s mother and box keeper who warns everyone of the Opera Ghost; clothing should be ragged and worn; female.

CECILE JAMMES: Meg’s friend and a ballerina; female.

MADAME JAMMES: Cecile’s mother; female.

ADELE: Ballerina; female.

BRIGITTE: Ballerina; female.

MONIQUE: Ballerina; female.

ZOE: Ballerina; female.

DEBIENNE: Outgoing manager of the Paris Opera House; male.

POLIGNY: Outgoing manager of the Paris Opera House; male.

ARMAND MONCHARMIN: Incoming manager of the Paris Opera House; male.

FIRMIN RICHARD: Incoming manager of the Paris Opera House; male.

LISETTE: Firmin Richard’s assistant; female.

GABRIELLA: Superstitious chorus mistress; female.

MERCIER: Administrator/manager of the Paris Opera House; male.

REMY: Mercier's secretary; female.

MIFROID: Police detective; wears a police uniform; male.

PERSIAN: Mysterious man from Erik's past; wears a foreign hat; male.

RAT CATCHER: Catches rats in the cellar of the Paris Opera House; wears all black clothing with bright orange hair in a flame-like shape; flexible.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Christine as a young teenager; female.

YOUNG RAOUL: Raoul as a young teenager; male.

EXTRAS: 4-5 people dressed in all-black.

Costumes

Costumes should reflect 18th-century France. More ornate costumes can be worn onstage for the performances of *Faust*. In her role as a page boy, Christine should appear wearing page boy's clothing with her hair tied back. The Ballerinas would wear tutus, leotards and ballet slippers for Scene 1 and any scenes where they perform onstage.

Setting

Late 19th century, Paris Opera House, Paris, France.

Sets

The sets can be as simple or elaborate as your budget allows. Below are suggested sets.

Graveyard in Perros/Paris. The graveyard in Perros has a large tombstone or monument CS with one or two smaller gravestones near it. A small amount of smoke covers the ground, optional. The graveyard in Paris has the same tombstones and one additional tombstone that has glowing red eyes. See Special Effects for red glowing eyes special effect.

Dressing room of La Sorelli. The door can open and close. On one side of the door is the name "La Sorelli" and a star. Inside is a dressing table and stool. Hair and makeup items are on the table and costumes and ballet shoes are strewn about.

Grand staircase. A large staircase in the grand lobby of a theater at CS. This can be achieved using a backdrop or constructing a set piece. Theater furniture and décor should be painted in rich tones of gold or red and exude opulence.

Christine's dressing room. The door can open and close. Flowers and costumes are strewn about. A lounging sofa/settee is present. There is a table next to the settee with a lamp on top. A large mirror is SR and is large enough for an actor to walk through the frame. There is a dressing table and stool. See Special Effects for mirror special effect.

Set for *Faust*. There is nothing that is specific to the *Faust* opera, just something that will let the audience know that there is a staged opera going on within the play. This can be done simply with two to four Roman columns placed along the back of the scene. On either side of the stage are ornate theater boxes with two seats inside and decorated in gold. A large chandelier hangs CS and is controlled offstage by a pulley system.

Phantom's underground lair. It is dark and dingy. Two or three dark archways suggesting tunnels are at the rear of the stage and have shackles (ropes/chains) attached to them. Candelabras and wall sconces produce an eerie, flickering light. A bed or lounging sofa/settee is present as well as a small table with two chairs. There are two sculptures at the center of the table depicting a scorpion and a grasshopper.

Pathway to the cellars. Scene is primarily dark with swirling fog and flickering sconces or candles placed along the back of the scene.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Graveyard in Perros.

Scene 2: La Sorelli's dressing room.

Scene 3: Grand staircase.

Scene 4: Christine's dressing room.

Scene 5: Stage set for *Faust*.

Scene 6: Christine's dressing room.

Scene 7: Cellars/underground lair.

Intermission

ACT II

Scene 1: Grand staircase.

Scene 2: Christine's dressing room.

Scene 3: Grand staircase.

Scene 4: Onstage.

Scene 5: Pathway to the cellars.

Scene 6: Cellars/underground lair.

Scene 7: Graveyard in Perros.

Props

Woman's scarf	Cup
Hair and makeup items for dressing rooms	15 Masquerade ball masks
Wheelchair, for Mamma Valerius	Red dress, for Brigitte
Ballet shoes, costumes, misc. accessories	Black mask and cloak, for Christine
White wig, for Mamma Valerius	Large red feathered hat, for Phantom
Coat and hat, for Debienne	Red clothing, for Phantom
Coat and hat, for Poligny	Skeleton mask, for Phantom
Keys	Travel bag
Large memorandum book	Misc. clothes for Christine
Letter	2 Envelopes with gold wax seal
Flowers	Brightly colored paper
Bowl of water	2 Lanterns
Towel	Fiddle or violin
Police report	Dinnerware
2 Letters with red wax seals	Chains
4 Theater programs	Ropes
Pitcher	Candle or torch
	Scorpion statue
	Grasshopper statue

Special Effects

Fog or smoke

Phantom's eerie laughter

Applause

Sound of someone running

Squeaking

Rustling

Beautiful, hypnotic music

Mirror in Christine's dressing room. (A large stand mirror with removable mirror glass can be used, or a large rectangular mirror can be moved out of place by stagehands in order to allow Christine and the Phantom to pass through.)

2 Glowing red eyes emanating from the mirror in Christine's dressing room and in the graveyard (use small red LED lights to achieve effect)

Boat with long pole to propel it (the boat is on wheels so stagehands can pull it onstage and offstage with a clear string or a rope; boat is large enough for 3 actors to "enter")

Flashlight that casts a red light (Red or orange light bulb or covered with red cellophane. Paper strips can be added to the flashlight to make it have the appearance of flames.)

Torches, lanterns, and candles are required throughout the play, but as the story takes place before electricity was widely used, all should have a flickering light.

Chandelier falling (Chandelier can be rigged up with a pulley system controlled from offstage, and can be lowered in a controlled way by a stagehand.)

Gravestones (Stagehands can pull them onstage and offstage with a clear string or a rope.)

Music

Note: Characters can sing live, or pre-recorded opera tracks can be used.

Haunting violin melody
Opera music for Christine's song
Music for *Faust* ballet

**“If I am the Phantom,
it is because man's hatred
has made me so.
If I am to be saved
it is because your love
redeems me.”**

—Phantom

ACT I

Scene 1

(BEFORE RISE: Graveyard in Perros. A large tombstone or monument is CS with one or two smaller gravestones near it. A small amount of smoke covers the ground, optional. Monsieur Daaè enters SL, playing a haunting melody on his fiddle. He is followed by Young Christine.)

DAAÈ: Come, Christine. Let us frolic amongst those who have come before us while we listen to the music of my homeland.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Can they hear us, Papa?

DAAÈ: Can who hear us?

YOUNG CHRISTINE: The people who are buried here. Can they hear us even though they are in heaven?

DAAÈ: A soul can always hear the voice of his loved ones. And a soul can always be stirred by powerful music. So I would like to think that we have an entire audience listening to me play my fiddle. *(Coughs. Plays fiddle.)* It would be the largest audience I have ever played in front of. It is my greatest regret that I have never heard the Angel of Music, and, thus, have never known the success of a truly famous concert musician.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Who is the Angel of Music, Papa?

DAAÈ: Every great musician or singer receives a visit from the Angel at least once in their lifetime. Sometimes the Angel leans over their cradle, as with prodigies who can play a fiddle at age six better than other men can at 50. Sometimes the Angel comes later, and a musician is suddenly thrust into greatness from the depths of obscurity. Sometimes the Angel doesn't come at all.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: I hope the Angel comes to visit me, for I wish to be the greatest singer that Paris has ever known.

DAAÈ: *(Coughs.)* You will hear him one day, my child. When I am in heaven, I will send him to you.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: But you won't be going to heaven for a long time, right, Papa?

DAAÈ: *(Coughs.)* I will stay with you as long as I can, my beautiful Christine.

(Daaè embraces Young Christine and her scarf falls and flies toward offstage.)

YOUNG CHRISTINE: My scarf!

(Young Raoul enters SR and picks up the scarf.)

YOUNG RAOUL: It's all right. I've got your scarf right here.

(Young Christine rushes to Young Raoul.)

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Thank you.

(Young Christine reaches to take the scarf and their hands touch. They do not move for a moment and look into each other's eyes.)

DAAÈ: What is your name, young man?

YOUNG RAOUL: *(Letting go of scarf.)* Raoul. Raoul de Chagny.

DAAÈ: Ah, the young Viscount. Well, what would you say, Viscount Raoul, to a little story? It would be my way of repaying you for retrieving my daughter's scarf.

YOUNG RAOUL: *(Looking at Young Christine.)* I would like that.

(Young Raoul crosses with Young Christine to sit at the foot of Daaè.)

DAAÈ: This is a story from my homeland of Scandinavia. All of the best music and stories come from one's homeland, I believe.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: *(To Young Raoul.)* My papa only tells stories from his homeland.

DAAÈ: True enough.

(Daaè chuckles, which turns into violent coughing. Young Raoul starts to get up.)

YOUNG RAOUL: Are you all right, monsieur?

DAAÈ: *(Waving him off.)* I'm fine, I'm fine. Now let me get on with that story I owe you. *(Grandly.)* There once was a little girl named Lotte. Little Lotte thought of everything and nothing. Her hair was golden as the sun's rays, and her soul was as clear and blue as her eyes. She minded her mother, was kind to her doll, and took great care of her dress and her little red shoes and her fiddle. But most of all, when she went to sleep, she loved to hear the Angel of Music.

YOUNG RAOUL: The Angel of Music? Who is the Angel of—?

(Mamma Valerius enters SL.)

MAMMA VALERIUS: *(Calls loudly.)* Monsieur Daaè! Christine!
Come now, it's time for supper!

DAAÈ: *(To Young Christine.)* We must go. Mamma Valerius will be
angry if we miss supper.

(Daaè starts to exit SL.)

YOUNG RAOUL: *(Taking Young Christine's hand.)* Will I see you
again?

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Oh, I hope so!

YOUNG RAOUL: Where? When?

YOUNG CHRISTINE: If you can't find me here, then look for me
where I am happiest...on the stage!

(Daaè turns back.)

DAAÈ: Come along, Christine.

YOUNG CHRISTINE: Goodbye, Raoul.

*(Young Christine rushes offstage after Daaè, dropping her scarf as she exits.
Young Raoul rushes to pick up the scarf.)*

YOUNG RAOUL: *(Calls.)* Wait! Your scarf! *(Looks down at scarf,
smiles, turns, and exits SL. Blackout.)*

Scene 2

(AT RISE: The dressing room of La Sorelli, years later. On one side of the stage is a door with the name "La Sorelli" on it and a star. Inside is a dressing table and stool. Hair and makeup items are on the table and costumes and ballet shoes are strewn about. La Sorelli is sitting at a dressing table, touching up her makeup. After a moment, Meg Giry, Cecile Jammes, Adele, Brigitte, Monique, and Zoe enter, excitedly chattering and shushing one another.)

SORELLI: What is the reason for all of this noise?! Don't you little urchins know I have a speech to prepare for?

MEG: I'm sorry for the interruption, La Sorelli, but I assure you it is for an important reason.

SORELLI: Important? How could a mere child understand what is really important? My speech is important! This evening's gala celebration is important! Monsieurs Debiegne and Poligny are retiring as the outgoing managers of this opera house, and it is my job to honor them with a flawless speech. Now get out of here, every one of you, and leave me in peace!

MEG: But, La Sorelli—

SORELLI: *(Pointing offstage, shouts.)* Out!

CECILE: *(Terrified.)* But we can't!

SORELLI: And why not?

CECILE: It's the ghost!

(Ballerinas scream, look around, and some cling to each other in terror. La Sorelli stands and slams the door.)

SORELLI: *(Angrily.)* You silly little fool! *(Crosses to Cecile and grabs her arms.)* Don't you know it is bad luck to speak of the infamous Opera Ghost?

CECILE: I-I'm sorry!

SORELLI: You could bring his wrath down upon us simply by uttering his name, Cecile.

ADELE: Oh, no!

(Sorelli crosses to the stool, sits down, and gestures for the Ballerinas to gather around her.)

SORELLI: Oh, yes, Adele! Now, tell me...have you seen him?

BRIGITTE: *(Clueless.)* Seen who?

SORELLI: The Opera Ghost, you fool!

MONIQUE: I thought you said we weren't supposed to say his name?

SORELLI: *(Throws up her hands.)* For goodness sake, will someone just tell me what has happened to bring all of you into my dressing room in such a fright?

CECILE: We've seen the ghost!

SORELLI: Impossible! The ghost doesn't reveal himself to just anyone.

CECILE: I saw him as plainly as I see you now.

SORELLI: Is that so? And what does he look like?

MEG: If it was the ghost that we saw, he's very ugly.

ZOE: *(To Sorelli.)* Hideous!

ADELE: *(To Sorelli.)* He was dressed as a gentleman.

MONIQUE: *(To Sorelli.)* He was wearing fancy dress clothes.

SORELLI: That doesn't sound like an ugly ghost to me.

BRIGITTE: Me, either! He actually sounds like a man I might want to meet.

CECILE: Is that so, Brigitte?

BRIGITTE: Oh, yes!

MEG: Then why did you scream louder than anyone else when we saw him?

BRIGITTE: Wait...I'm confused.

ZOE: You're always confused, Brigitte.

BRIGITTE: That's true.

SORELLI: Will someone tell me what makes this ghost so frightening? Because if he is simply a man dressed and ready for the opera, then I am going to get back to working on my speech. *(Starts to turn back to her dressing table.)*

MEG: We were walking down the passageway backstage when suddenly he appeared out of nowhere.

SORELLI: *(Interested, leans in.)* That's more like it. I can always trust little Meg Giry to give me answers. Tell me more.

ZOE: He seemed to have come straight from the wall!

ADELE: Oh, pooh! You see the ghost everywhere, Zoe.

MEG: *(To Sorelli.)* His clothes were baggy and his skin was a nasty yellow color...like it was covering a skeleton.

CECILE: *(To Sorelli, swooning.)* I can hardly stand to think of it.

(Cecile starts to faint. Monique catches her.)

MONIQUE: You can hardly stand at all. Have a seat.

CECILE: Thank you, Monique.

SORELLI: A skeleton, you say?

MEG: Yes. And he had a death's head.

ADELE: *(To Sorelli.)* His eyes are so deep that you can't see them.
They look like two black holes...like a skull.

MEG: *(To Sorelli.)* His nose is so little that you can't see it when he
turns to the side. It's a horrible sight to see.

MONIQUE: *(To Sorelli.)* And he only has three or four locks of dark
hair on his entire head.

SORELLI: That does match the description of the ghost that Joseph
Buquet gave everyone after he ran up against the ghost on the
staircase leading down into the catacombs under the theater.

BRIGITTE: Well, if Joseph Buquet said that he saw him too, then you
know it must be true.

SORELLI: Joseph is so serious when setting the scenery. He
wouldn't make something like that up.

CECILE: My own mother told me of a day when the fire inspector
came to inspect the catacombs and fainted right into her arms after
seeing a blazing head of fire coming right at him! *(Phantom's
laughter is heard. Terrified.)* It's the ghost!

[END OF FREEVIEW]