

卡斯頓 · 勒胡

Gaston
Leroux
(1868–1927)



In 1868, Gaston Leroux, a French novelist, was born in Paris, as the son of a wealthy family. After Leroux received his law degree from university, he squandered a considerable inheritance on drinking and gambling. As he ran through his fortune, Leroux began to work as a newspaper correspondent. In the 1890's, as a correspondent, he traveled worldwide. He reported for French papers on the events and exciting adventures across the globe, including the 1905 Russian Revolution.

From the early 1900's, Leroux began to devote himself entirely to writing. He mostly wrote detective novels. After his first success with *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, starring an amateur detective, Leroux began to gain fame as a writer.

Using his inimitable journalistic writing style, Gaston Leroux wrote many novels that were based on his experiences as a reporter. His novels worked out with such an impeccable sense of logic that readers could feel as if they were part of the actual action and were solving puzzling mysteries themselves. *The Phantom of the Opera* is one of the best-known examples. It earned for Gaston Leroux the reputation of being the greatest French detective novelist of his time. After his death, it was adapted in many stage productions and films. *The Phantom of the Opera* has become an international success.

The Phantom of the Opera is set in the Paris Opera House, where rumors are rampant that there is a ghost causing a series of terrifying incidents. The phantom, Erik, has a scarred face that is hidden behind a mask. He lives in his lair within the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House. Erik falls in love with a beautiful opera singer, Christine, and he teaches her to sing.

Then one day, Raoul, Christine's childhood sweetheart appears. Erik becomes terribly jealous. During the opening night of an opera, he kidnaps Christine and takes her through the catacombs to an underground lake. At the risk of his life, Raoul enters the cellars to come to her rescue. Despite her love for Raoul, Christine still shows compassion toward the phantom, even after she discovered his horrifically disfigured face. The Phantom of the Opera becomes redeemed by a kiss from Christine.

Finally, the phantom lets Christine and Raoul go free, and then he disappears because he knows his love for Christine cannot be realized.

As seen in *The Beauty and the Beast*, *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *King Kong*, the story of heart-rending love between a beautiful female character and a hideous male is a well-known theme in western literature. In the Phantom's love story, the author's accurate, realistic, suspenseful description has all the elements of a successful detective novel and has won the hearts and minds of the readers. In the 21st Century, *The Phantom of the Opera* has become loved all around the world and has had a diversity of creative adaptations in the various artistic media.



Before You Read

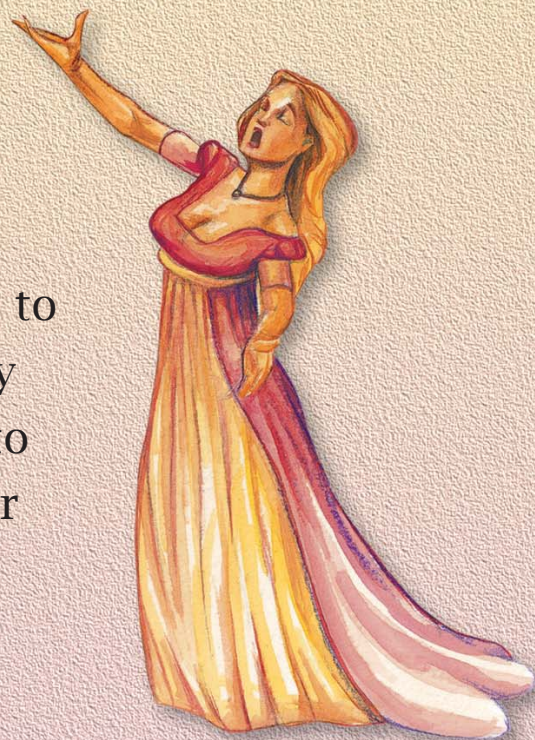


Erik (the Ghost)

I was born with a very ugly face. No one can look at me with love, not even my own mother. Even though my face is very ugly, I have a beautiful voice and I am very smart. I built the Opera House, with its many secret doors and passageways. Most people at the Opera House think I am a ghost.

Christine

I am a singer at the Opera House. My voice was not great, so I was an average singer. One night, Erik came to me and has helped me to improve my own voice. However, Erik wants me to love him, and I cannot. I love another man.





Raoul

I am a young man who is about to join the French Navy. When I was young, I was in love with Christine. However, I lost contact with her. One night in Paris, I saw her again as she sang at the Opera House. During this story I find out what happened to her and that she really does still love me!



The Persian

I used to be a policeman in Persia. I have known Erik for a long time. I feel sorry for him, but I know he can be very dangerous. So I live in Paris and keep an eye on Erik.

Chapter One



The Opera Ghost¹

Sorelli, one of the most important dancers at the Opera, sat in her dressing room². She was getting ready for³ the gala⁴ performance⁵

for the two retiring⁶ managers⁷ of the Opera. She was enjoying the peace and quiet, but was suddenly interrupted⁸ when a group of young girls came running into her room.

The girls were talking excitedly⁹.

1. **ghost** [goust] (n.)

鬼魂；幽靈

2. **dressing room**

化妝室；更衣室

3. **get ready for** 準備好……

4. **gala** [ˈgeɪlə] (n.)

慶祝；盛典

5. **performance**

[pərˈfɔːrməns]

(n.) 演出；表演

6. **retiring** [rɪˈtaɪərɪŋ]

(a.) 退休的

7. **manager** [ˈmænɪdʒər]

(n.) 經理

8. **interrupt** [ˌɪntəˈrʌpt]

(v.) 打斷；阻礙

9. **excitedly** [ɪkˈsaɪtɪd]

(adv.) 興奮地；激動地

“The Ghost! We’ve seen him!” one of them cried out. “We’ve seen the ghost!”

Sorelli was very superstitious¹⁰.

She was easily frightened¹¹ by stories of the ghost, but she tried to be brave.

“That’s ridiculous¹²!” she told the girls. “You are just being foolish.”

“No, no! It’s true. We really all saw him,” the girls cried out. The chorus¹³ girls all claimed¹⁴ to have seen him. In fact¹⁵, whenever anything unfortunate¹⁶ happened in the building, the girls always said, “It was the ghost!”



10. superstitious

[ˌsuːpərˈstiʃəs]

(a.) 迷信的

11. frightened [ˈfraɪnd]

(a.) 驚恐的

12. ridiculous [rɪˈdɪkjələs]

(a.) 荒謬的；可笑的

13. chorus [ˈkɔːrəs] (n.) 合唱團

14. claim [kleɪm] (v.)

聲稱；斷言

15. in fact 實際上；的確

16. unfortunate [ʌnˈfɔːrtʃənət]

(a.) 不幸的



For a while¹, many didn't believe the girls. Some thought it was just their crazy imaginations².

However, this changed when Joseph Buquet, one of the scene-shifters³, said, "I saw the most terrible thing in the corridor⁴. It was a figure⁵ wearing a dress-suit⁶. At first, I thought he was from the audience⁷. Then, I looked at him more closely⁸. It had no face — it was a skull⁹! The skin was yellow, the eyes were black holes, and the whole figure was terribly thin."

Joseph was a very reliable¹⁰ man, so no one doubted¹¹ him.

1. **for a while**

一會兒；一段時間

2. **imagination**

[ɪ,mædʒəˈneɪʃn] (n.) 想像力

3. **scene-shifter** 換布景的人

4. **corridor** [ˈkɔːrədər] (n.)

走廊；通道

5. **figure** [ˈfɪɡjər] (n.)

人影；人形

6. **dress-suit** 大禮服

7. **audience** [ˈɔːdiəns] (n.)

觀眾

8. **closely** [kləʊsli] (adv.)

接近地；仔細地

9. **skull** [skʌl] (n.) 頭顱

10. **reliable** [rɪˈlaɪəbl] (a.)

可信賴的；可靠的

11. **doubt** [daʊt] (v.) 懷疑

12. **fireman** [ˈfaɪərmən] (n.)

火夫；救火者

13. **cellar** [ˈselə(r)] (n.) 地窖

14. **horrifying** [ˈhɒrəfaɪɪŋ] (a.)

令人恐懼的

15. **clear** [klɪr] (a.)

清晰的；明顯的

16. **distinctly** [dɪˈstɪŋktɪvli]

(adv.) 清楚地；確實地

Soon everyone at the Opera began to see strange things. One of the firemen¹², Pampin, said, “I went down into the cellars¹³ yesterday morning. When I was down there, I saw the most horrifying¹⁴ thing. I saw a head of fire coming toward me! It was so clear¹⁵. I remember it very distinctly¹⁶. It had a head of fire, but the head had no body at all!”





In Sorelli's dressing room, the girls continued their story. "We really saw him!" one of the girls insisted¹. "It was the ghost!"

Sorelli's dressing room became deathly² quiet. All that could be heard was the breathing³ of the frightened girls. One of the girls put her ear to the wall to try to hear any noise from outside. Her face turned white.

1. **insist** [ɪnˈsɪst]

(v.) 堅持；堅決認為

2. **deathly** [ˈdeθli]

(adv.) 很；似死地

3. **breathing** [ˈbriːðɪŋ]

(n.) 呼吸

4. **whisper** [ˈwɪspə(r)]

(v.) 低語；耳語

5. **rustling** [ˈrʌslɪŋ]

(a.) 沙沙作響的

6. **keep** [ki:p] (v.) 擁有；保留

“Listen!” she whispered⁴ in a terrified voice. There was a rustling⁵ sound outside the door. Then, suddenly, it stopped.

Sorelli slowly walked to the door and called out, “Who . . . who . . . is there?” There was no answer. “Is there anyone at my door?”

“There is. There is,” said Meg, one of the girls. “We all heard the noise. But don’t open the door. He can come in if you open the door.”

Sorelli did not listen to her.

Sorelli always kept⁶ a knife with her and she now took this out from her ankle⁷ sheath⁸. She held it in one hand while she cautiously⁹ opened the door. All of the chorus girls had gathered¹⁰ into a corner of the room. Sorelli looked in the corridor, but she saw nothing. “There is nothing there,” she told the girls.

7. **ankle** [ˈæŋkl] (n.) 足踝

8. **sheath** [ʃi:θ] (n.) (刀劍的) 鞘

9. **cautiously** [ˈkɔːʃəsli]

(adv.) 小心地；謹慎地

10. **gather** [ˈgæðə(r)] (v.) 聚集



Sorelli, trying to be brave, said, “Calm down¹ girls. No one has seen a ghost.”

“But we did see him. And Gabriel saw him, too,” another girl added².

“Gabriel, the chorus-master³?” asked Sorelli. “What did he say?”

“He was in the stage manager’s⁴ office when that strange Persian⁵ man . . . you know the one, came into the room . . .”

“Yes,” said Sorelli, “I know the Persian.” Everyone at the Opera House knew the Persian. The girls were afraid of him.

1. **calm down**

冷靜；鎮定下來

2. **add** [æd] (v.) 補充說道

3. **chorus-master** 合唱團長

4. **stage manager** 舞台監督

5. **Persian** [ˈpɜːʃən] (n.)

波斯人

6. **rush** [rʌʃ] (v.) 衝；奔

7. **slip** [slɪp] (v.) 滑跤；失足

8. **stairwell** [ˈsterwel] (n.)
樓梯間

9. **bruise** [bruːz] (n.)
淤傷；傷痕

10. **describe** [dɪˈskraɪb] (v.)
描繪；敘述

A True or False.

- T F** ① Joseph Buquet insisted he saw the opera ghost in the corridor.
- T F** ② Sorelli could find the ghost out of her dressing room.
- T F** ③ Everyone believed Joseph Buquet committed suicide.

**B** Combine the given sentences with proper relative pronouns.

Sorelli was a dancer. She danced at the Opera.

⇒ Sorelli was a dancer **who** danced at the Opera.

- ① Meg's mother is the woman. She is in charge of Box 5.

⇒ _____

- ② Joseph Buquet was the man. His body was found in the cellar.

⇒ _____

- ③ He saw a head of fire. It had no body.

⇒ _____

C Choose the correct answer.

- 1 What did Sorelli believe about ghosts?
- (a) She believed that they didn't exist at all.
 - (b) She was very superstitious and was scared of ghost stories.
 - (c) She thought ghosts were not frightening.
- 2 What does Meg's mother do for the ghost?
- (a) She makes him a cup of tea.
 - (b) She gives him his brochure.
 - (c) All of the above.

D Fill in the blanks with the given words.
Remember to change the form of the verbs.

rush be covered frightened find fall slip

"As soon as he saw the Persian, Gabriel became crazy and he _____ out of the office. Unfortunately, he _____ in the stairwell and _____ all the way down the stairs. Mother and I _____ him at the bottom of the stairs. He _____ with blood and bruises. He finally told us why he was so _____. You see, he had looked over the Persian's shoulder, and he saw the ghost standing behind him!

Understanding the Story

The Paris Opera House

Gaston Leroux's story is set in the world-famous Paris Opera House. Many of Leroux's readers thought that such a building with its huge stage, famous chandelier, secret underground passages, and even an underground lake could not exist. However, the Paris Opera House actually has all these features!



There are seats for more than 2,000 people. In the back wall of the theater there are “boxes” on each floor. Leroux chose Box 5, which really does exist, as the Phantom's private seat because it is near the exit.

A massive chandelier does hang over the theater, and in 1896, it fell during a performance. It killed the person sitting in seat 13, and many people think this event inspired Leroux to write his novel.

There is also a lake under the House, which is used as “ballast” for the weight of the stage. However, this lake is not very large, and there is no island in the middle where the Phantom has his house! Perhaps this is the only feature of Leroux’s story that does not correspond to the actual Opera House in Paris.

