



# The Phantom of the Opera

*Gaston Leroux*

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## **The Phantom of the Opera**

by Gaston Leroux

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The Phantom of the Opera is a novel by French writer Gaston Leroux. It was first published as a serialisation in *Le Gaulois* from September 23, 1909, to January 8, 1910. It was published in volume form in April 1910 by Pierre Lafitte. The novel is partly inspired by historical events at the Paris Opera during the nineteenth century and an apocryphal tale concerning the use of a former ballet pupil's skeleton in Carl Maria von Weber's 1841 production of *Der Freischütz*.

Opera singer Christine triumphs at the gala on the night of the old managers' retirement. Her old childhood friend, Raoul, hears her sing and recalls his love for Christine. At this time, there are rumors of a phantom living at the Opera and he makes himself known to the managers through letters and malevolent acts. Some time after the gala, the Paris Opera performs *Faust*, with the prima donna Carlotta playing the lead, against the Phantom's wishes. During the performance, Carlotta loses her voice and the grand chandelier plummets into the audience.

Christine is kidnapped by the phantom and is taken to his home in the cellars of the Opera where he reveals his true identity to her simply as Erik, though not his real name. He plans to keep her there for a few days, hoping she will come to love him. But she causes Erik to change his plans when she unmasks him and, to the horror of both, beholds his noseless, lipless, sunken-eyed face which resembles a skull dried up by the centuries, covered in yellowed dead flesh. Fearing that she will leave him, he decides to keep her with him forever, but when Christine requests release after two weeks, he agrees on condition that she wear his ring and be faithful to him.

On the roof of the opera house, Christine tells Raoul that Erik abducted her. Raoul promises to take Christine away to a place where Erik can never find her. Raoul tells Christine he shall act on his promise the next day, to which Christine agrees. She, however, has pity for Erik and will not go until she has sung a song for him one last time. Neither is aware that Erik has been listening to their conversation and that he has become extremely jealous.

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