

The Secret Garden

by

Frances Hodgson Burnett

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Chapter One: The Opera Ghost

Strange things were happening at the Paris Opera House that season. There were rumours^① about a ghost in the building. No one knew when the rumours had started. Some people said it was Joseph Buquet who began it all.

Joseph Buquet was one of the scene-shifters^②, a quiet, reliable^③ man. He said that he had seen a frightening figure in the corridors of the building. He said the figure was wearing a dress-suit. At first he thought the man was just one of the audiences. Then he looked again. He saw that the figure had no face — it was a skull^④! The skin was yellow, the eyes were black holes, and the whole figure was terribly thin.

Soon everyone at the Opera began to see strange things. One of the firemen, Pampin, said that he had gone down into the cellars^⑤ of the building. When he was down there, he had seen a head of fire coming towards him! He was very clear about it. He had seen a head of fire, but the head had no body at all.

The people who worked at the Opera House were disturbed and excited by all these stories. The young girls in the corps de ballet^⑥ were particularly thrilled^⑦ by the stories. They said the ghost was responsible for all the little accidents that happened at the Opera House.

One evening one of the Opera's principal dancers, La Sorelli, was sitting in

① rumours: 谣言。

② scene-shifters: 布景工。

③ reliable: 可靠的。

④ skull: 头骨。

⑤ cellars: 地窖。

⑥ corps de ballet: 芭蕾舞团。

⑦ thrilled: 被吓坏。

her dressing room^①. It was an important evening for her. She was going to perform at a special gala^② performance for the two managers who were retiring^③.

The peace and quiet of the dressing room was suddenly disturbed by the entry of a group of young girls from the corps de ballet. The girls were talking excitedly.

'We've seen him, we've seen him!' one of them announced.

'We've seen the ghost!'

Sorelli did not really believe the girls, but she was very superstitious^④. She was easily frightened by stories of the ghost, but she tried to be brave.

'Pull yourselves together^⑤,' she told the girls.

'But we've seen him — we've really seen him!' one of the girls insisted.

'And Gabriel's seen him, too,' the girl added.

'Gabriel, the chorus-master?' asked Sorelli. 'What did he say?'

'He said he was talking to that strange Persian man ... you know the one?'

'Yes,' said Sorelli, 'I know the Persian.'

Everyone at the Opera House knew the Persian. The girls were convinced that he had the evil eye^⑥. They were frightened of him.

'So what happened?' Sorelli asked.

'Gabriel was talking to the Persian. He looked over the Persian's shoulder, and he saw the ghost standing behind him! Gabriel was terrified!'

'What did the ghost look like?' Sorelli wanted to know.

① dressing room: 更衣室。

② gala: 欢庆。

③ retiring: 即将退休。

④ superstitious: 迷信。

⑤ pull yourselves together: 保持镇定。

⑥ he had the evil eye: 他又一双邪恶的眼睛，看别人的一眼，就会给他们带来噩运。

'He was wearing a dress-suit, just as Joseph Buquet described him. And his head was like a skull!' one of the girls said.

'My mother says Joseph Buquet shouldn't talk so much,' one of the girls said quietly. It was Meg, whose mother Madame Giry also worked at the Opera. She was a box-keeper^①.

'What did your mother tell you?' the girls asked Meg.

'She said the ghost doesn't like people to talk about him,' Meg replied slowly. 'She says it's because of Box 5. Mum's in charge of Box 5, you see. Box 5 is the ghost's box,' she told them. 'That's where he goes during performances. No one else can go there.'

'Has your mother seen him, then?' the girls asked.

'No,' Meg explained, 'you can't see him. All that talk about his dress-suit, and the skeleton^②, and the head of fire, is all just nonsense.^③ Mother's never seen him. She just hears him when he's in the box.'

The girls looked at each other. They could not make sense of^④ Meg's story at all.

'That's what I meant about Joseph Buquet,' Meg told them. 'He shouldn't tell all those stories. The ghost won't like it at all. He might ...'

Suddenly the dressing-room door opened, and a woman came in.

Her eyes were wide open, and she looked really frightened.

'Joseph Buquet!' she gasped^⑤. 'He's dead. Someone found his body in the cellar. He was hanged!'

① box-keeper: 戏剧包厢服务员。

② skeleton: 骷髅。

③ nonsense: 胡说。

④ make sense of: 理解。

⑤ gasped: 喘着气说。

Chapter Two: A Gala Performance

The gala performance for the two managers continued. Everyone in the audience was pleased with the music and the singing.

One of the singers in particular gave great pleasure. This was Christine Daae. She was new to the Opera, and she had not sung many important roles before. She was not one of the best singers at the Opera House. That night, however, she sang some short pieces from the famous operas *Romeo and Juliet* and *Faust*. Her voice was strong and pure. No one had heard anything like it before. They were astonished^① by the beauty of her voice.

There was one man in the audience who listened to Christine Daae with special intensity^②. This was the young Vicomte^③ de Chagny, Raoul. He had come to the performance with his older brother the Comte de Chagny, Philippe.

'She never sang like that before,' Raoul said quietly to his brother. 'But she looks so ill!'

Raoul went backstage^④ after the performance. He made his way to Christine Daae's dressing room. He knocked and entered the room. The singer looked at him with a strange expression on her face. She did not look well.

'Monsieur^⑤,' she said very quietly, 'who are you?'

Raoul went over to the singer's sofa and kissed her hand.

① astonished: 震惊。

② intensity: 深情。

③ vicomte: 子爵。

④ backstage: 后台。

⑤ Monsieur: 先生。

'I am the little boy who went into the sea for your scarf^①,' he said softly^②.
Christine began to laugh at his words. Raoul became red with anger and stood up.

'I can see that you do not want to remember me,' he said coldly. 'But I have something important to tell you — very important.'

'Please come back when I am better,' Christine said.

Raoul walked out of the dressing room. He stood for a few moments in the corridor outside. He was in love, and he did not know what to do. He approached the door once again. He was about to knock on it when he heard a man's voice in the room.

'You must love me, Christine!' the voice said.

'How can you say that?' Christine's voice replied. 'I only sing for you, you know that!'

'Are you tired?' the man asked her tenderly^③.

'I gave you my soul tonight,' Christine said. 'I'm very tired now.'

'It was beautiful,' the man's voice said. 'The angels wept^④ to hear you sing this evening.'

Raoul moved away from the door. He was suffering very badly.

Suddenly he decided that he wanted to see the man that Christine loved. He waited in the corridor.

After a few minutes the singer came out of the dressing room.

The corridor was dark, and she did not see him. Raoul pushed open the door and looked inside. The room was empty!

① scarf: 领巾。

② softly: 轻声的。

③ tenderly: 柔情的。

④ wept: 哭泣。

Monsieur Debienne and Monsieur Poligny were the two managers who were retiring from the Opera. They had attended the gala performance, and they were now having dinner with some of the staff. The room was a large one, and there were many people around the table. The conversation was lively and joyful.

Suddenly people at the table began to whisper^① excitedly to each other, and to point at a strange figure who was standing at one end of the table. He was wearing a dress-suit, and his face was yellow and thin. It looked like a skull.

'The Opera ghost!' people were whispering to each other. 'It's the Phantom of the Opera!'

The strange figure took no notice of the remarks that people were making. After a few minutes, he looked up.

'The ballet girls are right,' he announced loudly. 'The death of poor Buquet was not suicide^②.'

Debienne and Poligny were shocked. They had not heard of the scene-shifter's death. They looked at the strange man, and then they stood up hurriedly^③. They made a quick sign to the two new managers to join them, and then they left the room.

Soon Debienne and Poligny were sitting in their office talking to the new managers, Monsieur Richard and Monsieur Moncharmin.

'We've given you all the help we can, gentlemen,' Monsieur Debienne said to the new managers. 'There is just one final thing you need to know about the Opera. It's the question of the ghost.'

① whisper: 低声说话。

② suicide: 自杀。

③ hurriedly: 迅速的。

Monsieur Richard smiled. He did not believe in the stories about the ghost, and he thought Monsieur Debienne was joking^①.

'What does the ghost want?' he joked.

'It's simple really,' Monsieur Poligny replied. He showed the two new managers a document. 'It's all written down here.'

Monsieur Richard looked at the document. It was the lease^② for the Opera House. He passed it to Monsieur Moncharmin and they read it together.

The Managers of the opera must pay the opera ghost 20000 francs a month —240000 francs a year.

They must also keep box 5 available for him for every performance.

'That's why we're leaving,' Monsieur Debienne explained. 'We can't bear^③ the ghost.'

'That's right,' Monsieur Poligny agreed. 'It's hard enough managing the Opera — but it's impossible with the ghost here!'

The new managers were convinced that all the talk of the ghost was simply a joke. They smiled politely. They were soon very busy with their new responsibilities, and they forgot about the ghost. A few days later they received a very surprising letter in the post. The handwriting was childlike, and the letter was written in red ink.

You have not kept box 5 for me as we agreed . If you want to live in peace. You must give me back my box.

'Opera Ghost'

① joking: 开玩笑。

② lease: 租约。

③ bear: 忍受。

The next day the managers received another letter from the ghost. There was the same childlike handwriting and the same red ink. This time he demanded his monthly payment of 20,000 francs.

'It's just Debienne and Poligny,' Monsieur Richard told his colleague. 'They've started this stupid joke about the ghost, and they're continuing with it. We'll ignore^① it, that's all.'

The two managers decided to sell Box 5.

^① ignore: 不理睬。

Chapter Three: The Mystery of Box 5

The next event occurred^① a few days after the new managers received the ghost's second letter. The members of the audience sitting in Box 5 began laughing and shouting during the performance. The managers sent a guard to find out what was happening. He went to Box 5, and asked the people to be quiet.

The guard then went away, but the people began to make a noise again. The guard returned, and told them to leave the box.

Monsieur Moncharmin and Monsieur Richard decided to investigate. They called the guard into their office.

'What happened last night in Box 5?' they asked.

'It was nothing,' the guard said. 'The people there behaved^② badly from the start. They went into the box, and then they came out again. They said that they had heard a voice saying, "The box is taken". We looked inside, but there was no one there. Then they went back in, and they started making a noise.'

'What did the box-keeper say?' the managers asked.

The guard smiled.

'She said it was the Opera ghost.'

'Bring the box-keeper here immediately!' Monsieur Richard ordered. 'This joke about the ghost is beginning to irritate^③ me.'

A few minutes later the box-keeper came in. This was Meg's mother. She smiled in a friendly way when she entered the managers' office.

① occurred: 发生。

② behaved: 表现。

③ irritate: 激怒。

'I'm happy you asked to see me, gentlemen,' she said. 'I can explain everything about the ghost.'

'Never mind the ghost^①!' Monsieur Richard said impatiently. 'We want to talk to you about what happened last night in Box 5.'

'It was the ghost, sir,' the box-keeper said quietly. 'He was angry again, you see.'

Monsieur Moncharmin now interrupted the conversation. 'Have you ever talked to the ghost?' he asked with a smile.

'Of course I have, sir,' the box-keeper replied.

'When he speaks to you, what does he say?' Monsieur Moncharmin asked.

'He asks for a footstool^②.' the woman said quietly.

The managers laughed loudly. The idea of a ghost who wanted a footstool was ridiculous.

'Then, you see, he always leaves me some money when he goes. Sometimes two francs, sometimes five or even ten francs. Sometimes he leaves me chocolates, too,' the box—keeper said with a smile. 'He's very kind, really.'

The managers listened to the box-keeper for a little longer. When they were alone again, they made two decisions. First they decided to sack the box-keeper who was obviously mad. Second, they decided to investigate Box 5 for themselves.

① never mind the ghost: 别管这个鬼。

② footstool: 脚凳。

Chapter Four: A Love Story

Christine Daae did not appear in public for some time after the gala performance. She seemed to disappear completely.

The young Vicomte de Chagny wrote to her, asking if he could come to see her. He received no reply to his letter, and then one day a letter came to his house.

Monsieur,

I have not forgotten the little boy who went into the sea for my scarf. I am going to the country tomorrow, to see my father's grave. He is buried where we played when we were children.

Raoul decided to follow Christine to her father's grave. It was a long train journey into the country, and he passed the time remembering his childhood^①.

He remembered Mr Daae and Christine. Mr Daae, who came from Sweden, had been a very good musician, a violinist. He lived for his music, and he taught Christine to sing. The father and daughter went from village to village, playing for people. One day Raoul heard them play. He saw Christine and fell in love with her immediately. He followed them, and Christine stopped near the sea. The wind blew^② suddenly, and her scarf was carried away by the waves. Raoul went into the water and brought it back to her. They had been friends from that day onwards^③.

① childhood: 童年。

② the wind blew: 刮风。

③ onwards: 从那以后。

Mr Daae liked Raoul, and he taught him to play the violin.

The old man told them stories and legends. Many of the stories he told them were about ghosts. One of them was about the Angel of Music. No one can play or sing well, Mr Daae told them, unless they hear the Angel of Music. No one had ever seen the Angel, he explained. It is only possible to hear him.

'Have you ever heard the Angel of Music, father?' Christine asked.

The old man smiled sadly and shook his head. Then he looked at his daughter.

'But you will hear him,' he promised her. 'I'll send him to you when I'm in heaven.'

The years went by. When Mr Daae died, Christine's lovely singing voice disappeared. Raoul became a man. He never forgot Christine, but he knew that he could never marry her. He was an aristocrat^①, and she was a singer. Then one day he had seen her at the Opera, and all his old love for her returned. After this he started going to the opera more often.

It was dark when Raoul arrived at the little village in the country. He went to the inn immediately. Christine was waiting for him.

'I'm happy you've come,' she said.

'Why did you pretend^② that you didn't know me when I came to your dressing room?' Raoul asked. 'Why did you laugh when I mentioned your scarf?'

Christine was silent.

'I know why!' Raoul cried angrily. 'There was someone else in the room that evening, wasn't there? There was a man—I heard his voice.'

① aristocrat: 贵族。

② pretend: 假装。

Christine gave Raoul a strange look. She seemed to be afraid.

Then she took hold of his arm excitedly.

'What do you mean?' she asked.

'I heard you talking,' Raoul replied. 'I heard you tell him, "I only sing for you, you know that!" Then you told him, "I gave you my soul tonight."'

'What else did you hear?' Christine asked urgently^①.

'He told you, "You must love me". Who is he, Christine? Who is this man that you love so much?'

'Go on, go on!' Christine cried. 'What else did he say? Tell me everything!'

'He said, "The angels wept to hear you sing this evening". I heard him say that. Tell me who he is!'

Suddenly Christine's eyes filled with tears. She held tightly onto Raoul for a moment, then she turned to him very seriously.

'It's the Angel of Music,' she said solemnly^②. 'That's the voice you heard in my dressing room.'

Raoul did not know what to say. Then Christine continued. 'He has come to me for three months now. He gives me singing lessons. He's a wonderful teacher!'

'It's true that Christine sings much better now,' Raoul thought. 'She sings wonderfully, and she never did before. But I don't believe in the Angel of Music— it's too incredible^③!'

Late that night Raoul saw Christine leave the little village inn. He followed her in the darkness. She walked to the churchyard where her

① urgently: 急切的。

② solemnly: 严肃的。

③ incredible: 难以置信的。

father's grave was. She knelt^① by the grave and began to pray.

Raoul could hear music playing. It seemed to be coming from the sky. The music was from The Resurrection of Lazarus. It had been Mr Daae's favourite piece of music. Raoul listened in amazement^② to the beautiful music.

He moved forward to see who was playing. Suddenly there was a noise, and some skulls came rolling^③ across the ground towards him. He looked up, and saw a figure in front of him in the darkness - a figure wearing a long cloak^④. Raoul took hold of the cloak, and the figure turned to face him. Raoul stared in horror —he was looking at a skull with terrible eyes. He fainted^⑤ and fell to the ground. He woke up in the churchyard the next morning.

① knelt: 跪下来。

② amazement: 惊讶。

③ rolling: 滚动。

④ cloak: 斗篷。

⑤ fainted: 晕倒。

Chapter Five: The New Managers and The Ghost

Monsieur Richard and Monsieur Moncharmin continued to manage the Opera House. They investigated Box 5, but there was nothing unusual in it. They began to think the story of the ghost was finished. Then, one day they received another letter in the same handwriting.

Gentlemen,

Do you want a war between us? If you want peace, you must meet the following conditions:

- 1. Give back box 5*
- 2. Christine Daae must sing the role of Margherita tonight*
- 3. My box-keeper must return to work*
- 4. You must pay me my money every month*

If you do not do these things, I will put a curse^① on tonight performance of Faust!

'I'm sick of^② this ghost!' exclaimed Monsieur Richard impatiently.

There were other problems as well. The head groom^③ of the Opera came to make a report.

'Someone has stolen one of the horses,' he said. 'I think it was the ghost.'

'Ghost!' cried Monsieur Richard. 'Why do you think the ghost took the horse?'

'I saw a dark figure riding the horse away in the darkness.'

① I will put a curse on: 我要诅咒。

② I'm sick of: 我已经受够了。

③ groom: 马车夫。

I'm sure it was the ghost.'

While the managers were considering the mystery of the stolen horse, one of the Opera's singers was reading a strange letter written in red ink.

Dear Carlotta,

If you sing at tonight's performance of Faust, there will be a tragedy. It will be worse than death.

Carlotta read the letter thoughtfully^①. She knew that if she did not sing that night, Christine would sing in her place—and she was jealous of Christine. The letter made her nervous, but she was determined^② to sing at the performance of *Faust*.

The Opera House was crowded for the performance. The two managers waited for the performance to begin. They were sitting comfortably in Box 5.

Carlotta was still a little nervous, but she began to sing as usual. She received a lot of applause^③. Soon she forgot the mysterious letter. She gave all her thought to her singing.

Suddenly, in the middle of a difficult passage^④, Carlotta's voice changed. 'Croak^⑤!'

She sounded exactly like a frog^⑥ croaking. She was astonished at the noise she had made, and she stood in horror on the stage. The audience, too,

① thoughtfully: 仔细的。

② determined: 坚决。

③ applause: 鼓掌喝彩。

④ passage: 乐章立的一小段。

⑤ croak: 青蛙的叫声。

⑥ frog: 青蛙。

was shocked. There was a terrible, stunned^① silence in the huge auditorium^②. Everyone felt that some kind of terrible magic was responsible for the incident. There was fear in the Opera House audience.

The two managers in Box 5 sat perfectly still^③. They were very pale and they looked terrified. They could hear the ghost breathing behind their chairs, and they did not dare to move.

Then Monsieur Richard recovered his courage.

'Go on,' he cried to the unfortunate Carlotta. 'Go on, try again!'

The poor singer took a deep breath, and tried to sing again.

She sang half a line, but then the terrible noise came from her again.

'Croak!'

The managers were in despair^④. Then the breathing behind them changed, and they heard a voice whisper:

'She will make the chandelier^⑤ fall down with her singing.'

Monsieur Richard and Monsieur Moncharmin looked up at the great chandelier in horror. The huge chandelier began to fall, slowly at first. Then it crashed into the audience. There were screams of terror, and the crowd ran away from the Opera House.

A woman was killed that night.

① stunned: 震惊的。

② auditorium: 观众席。

③ still: 不动。

④ in despair: 绝望。

⑤ chandelier: 吊灯。

Chapter Six: A Masked Ball

After the disaster^① at the Opera House, Christine disappeared once again. She no longer performed, and Raoul did not know where she was. Then, late one evening, he was walking home when he heard a carriage coming towards him in the darkness.

He turned to look, and he saw Christine inside. She was sitting with her head against the window. Raoul rushed forward and shouted her name.

'Christine!'

Suddenly he heard a man's voice inside the carriage. The man gave a quick command, and the carriage moved away quickly.

Raoul looked sadly at the carriage as it moved down the street. He was now convinced that Christine was in love with another man. He went home in despair.

The next morning Raoul's valet^② came to him with a letter.

Dear,

The day after tomorrow there is a masked ball at the Opera. Go there, and wear a white domino^③. I will meet you at midnight.

Christine

All at once Raoul's hope came back to him. He read the letter excitedly, and he made his decision while he was reading.

'I'll go,' he thought. 'I'll go to the ball!'

① disaster: 灾难。

② valet: 贴身男仆。

③ white domino: 连帽斗篷。

Raoul tried to think clearly before the ball. Who was this mysterious Angel of Music? Was Christine in love with him? Or was she his prisoner? He could not be sure what to believe, and he suffered terribly^① because he doubted^② Christine.

The masked ball at the Opera was a grand affair. The whole of Paris society^③ was there. Raoul arrived just before midnight.

Almost as soon as he entered the building a masked figure in black came up to him. The figure touched his hand and made a signal^④ with its head. It was Christine! Then the figure moved away quickly through the crowd. Raoul followed.

His doubts had gone now. He was happy to be with Christine again, and he was in love. He believed in her completely.

As they moved through the crowded rooms, Raoul noticed a group of people standing around a large man. The man was dressed in red. He was wearing an enormous hat, and his mask was a skull.

He wore a large red cloak with some words written on it: 'Do not touch me! I am Red Death!' The people around him were admiring his costume^⑤. Somebody in the crowd around the man stepped forward and tried to touch him. A skeleton hand jumped out of the cloak and took hold of the woman's hand. The woman screamed in terror, and ran away from Red Death.

Christine came to the end of the hall, and started to go up the stairs. Raoul followed her into one of the boxes.

① terribly: 极度地。

② doubted: 怀疑。

③ society: 上流社会。

④ signal: 信号。

⑤ costume: 装束。

Christine put her ear to the wall and began to listen intently^①.

'It's all right,' she said quickly. 'He doesn't know where we are.'

The door of the box was open, and Raoul looked over Christine's shoulder into the corridor. He could see a man in a red cloak coming down the corridor. It was Red Death.

'He's out there!' Raoul cried, and he moved towards the door.

Christine threw herself in front of him and blocked the way.

'Who?' she asked him.

'Red Death,' Raoul answered. 'Your friend, your Angel of Music. I'm going out there. I'm going to take off his mask. I want to see his face!'

'No!' Christine cried in horror. 'If you love me, don't do it.'

Raoul stood still. All his doubts came rushing back to him.

She wanted to help the mysterious man to escape. Suddenly he was angry with her, angrier than he had ever been in his whole life.

'You love him, don't you?' he cried. 'Go to him, then, I won't stop you. But you have treated me badly, Christine. I hate you.'

Christine looked sadly at him.

'One day you'll understand,' she said softly. 'I have to go now. Please don't follow me.'

Christine walked out of the box and went down the corridor.

Raoul left the box a few minutes later, and walked downstairs to the hall. The ball was still in progress, but he did not want to take part in the fun.

He walked miserably around the Opera House for a while, then he went to Christine's dressing room. He knocked softly on the door, but there was no reply. He pushed the door open and went in. Suddenly he heard a noise in

① intently: 专心地。

the corridor outside. He went into the inner room and hid himself.

The door of the outer room opened and Christine came in.

She took off her black gloves. Raoul noticed that she was wearing a gold ring on one of her fingers.

'A wedding-ring,' he said to himself. 'What does that mean? Who gave it to her?'

Now Christine took off her mask and sat at the table. She put her head in her hands and sighed^① deeply.

'Poor Erik,' she said. 'Poor Erik!'

'Erik,' Raoul thought. 'Who is this Erik? And why is Christine sorry for him?'

Christine sat very still. She seemed to be listening. Raoul listened as well. Then he heard something faintly^② ... the sound of singing. It was coming from the walls. The singing grew stronger. He could hear a voice, a man's voice. Now the voice was very clear. It seemed to be inside the room where Christine was. Raoul looked, but there was no one except the girl in the room.

Christine stood up. She was smiling happily now. 'Erik!' she cried softly. 'You're late.'

The voice continued singing. Raoul had never heard such beautiful singing before. It was singing 'The Wedding-night Song' from *Romeo and Juliet*. The voice sang passionately^③.

Raoul began to understand how Christine had made such progress in her own singing — the voice he was listening to was very beautiful.

① sighed: 叹气。

② faintly: 隐隐约约。

③ passionately: 充满激情的。

Christine walked to the back of the room. There was a large mirror on the wall, and she walked towards it.

Raoul followed her. Suddenly he felt a cold wind, and the room began to spin^① round. He saw two, four, eight images of Christine flying around in front of him. He tried to touch one of them, but there was nothing there. Then Christine disappeared — and he stood alone in the dressing room.

① spin: 旋转。

Chapter Seven: Love and Terror

Raoul next saw Christine at the Opera House. She seemed happier and pleased that he had come. They talked about Raoul's plans for the future. He told her that he would leave Paris in a month. Suddenly Christine looked thoughtful.

'What's the matter?' he asked her.

'We'll say goodbye in a month's time,' she said sadly, 'and we'll never see each other again.'

'We could be true to each other,' Raoul said. 'We could promise to be loyal to each other, Christine!'

'I can never marry you, Raoul,' she told him suddenly.

There were tears in her eyes when she spoke. She thought for a moment, and then she clapped^① her hands together happily. 'But we can be engaged!' she cried. 'That wouldn't harm anybody. No one would know except us, Raoul! Let's be engaged^② for this month.'

Raoul smiled now. He agreed to play Christine's game for a month.

There now followed a time of great happiness for Raoul. He and Christine spent every day together at the Opera House. They talked and they were happy at last.

There were many exciting places to see inside the building. Christine knew all of them. One day they were walking over the main stage near a trap-door^③. Raoul stopped and looked down at the open trap-door.

'You've shown me some wonderful places,' Raoul told her one day. 'But

① clapped: 拍掌。

② engaged: 订婚。

③ trap-door: 活板门。

we've never explored the underground places. Why don't we go there one day?'

Christine looked horrified^①.

'We can't go down there,' she said. 'Everything down there belongs to him.'

'So Erik lives down there, does he?' Raoul asked her. 'Don't talk about it,' Christine said. 'Let's enjoy our time together!'

She led him away from the trap-door. As they walked away, Raoul heard a noise on the stage. He turned back, and saw that the trap-door was now closed.

'Do you think that was him?' he asked Christine.

Christine walked on without answering him. Raoul took hold of Christine.

'Listen to me,' he said quickly. 'I know you're afraid of him.'

I can help you if you tell me everything. I can take you away from here, Christine. He'll never find you. Let me help you!'

Christine looked at Raoul with great hope.

'Do you think it's really possible?' she asked him softly.

Then she led him quickly up through the great building to the roof. They were above the whole of Paris, and they could see the whole city below them.

'We can talk safely here,' she said. 'I'll tell you everything, Raoul. I want you to understand.'

She paused for a moment, and then she went on.

'It began with the voice,' she told him. 'You know that I never had a really good voice, Raoul. It was impossible for me to be really successful as a singer — I just didn't have the voice. Then one night I heard that wonderful voice through the walls. I thought it was the Angel of Music that my father

^① horrified: 惧怕的。

had told me about. One night I was listening to the voice, and I asked if he was the Angel of Music. "I am," he told me. We became great friends from then on. He began to teach me singing — he was a wonderful teacher, and my voice became wonderful too. I never saw him. And then, one evening, was singing on stage and I saw you in the audience, Raoul. I knew immediately that I was in love with you. When I told the voice about you, he was jealous. He said I had to choose between him and you. That's why I pretended not to know you when you came to me the first time. I was frightened of losing the Angel of Music, do you understand?'

Raoul nodded his head^①.

'Go on,' he encouraged her. 'Tell me what happened next.'

Christine looked around quickly. She seemed to be afraid that someone was following them. Then she turned back to Raoul.

'You remember the terrible night that the chandelier fell onto the audience?' Christine asked. 'I was frightened like everyone else. I went to my dressing room, and a strange thing happened. The room seemed different somehow. I moved towards the mirror, and suddenly the mirror disappeared and I was in a strange place. I didn't know where I was! It was dark.'

Raoul remembered the evening he had seen Christine disappear in front of his eyes in the dressing room. He nodded again.

'A dark figure wearing a mask came out of the darkness and picked me up. I was terrified but I could not scream. The man lifted me onto a horse. I recognised Cesar who had disappeared from the Opera stables. The man climbed up behind me, and we rode through the darkness. We went down and down through the Opera cellars, and then we came to a lake. There was

^① nodded his head: 点头表示同意!

a boat on the edge^① of the lake. The man put me into the boat. He took the boat into the middle of the lake, where there was a house.

'Then he picked me up and carried me into the house. I could see him now, but I could not see his face because of his mask. He put me down on a sofa, then he told me not to be afraid.

'He knelt on the floor in front of me and spoke very quietly.

His voice sounded very strange behind the mask.

"I lied to you before. I'm not the Angel of Music. I'm not a genius^②; I'm not a ghost. I'm just Erik, and I love you. Stay with me, Christine; stay here with me for five days. Then I'll let you go, I promise — but you must never see my real face. Everything will be alright if you don't see my face!"

Christine paused in her story.

'Then I did something stupid, Raoul,' she said. 'I took away his mask. He screamed in anger and tried to turn away from me — but I had seen his face. It was terrible — it's not a human face at all. It's a skull with terrible, burning eyes! He screamed, and then he shouted at me.

"Look at me, Christine! I'm ugly, ugly, and you wanted to see me. Now I'll never let you leave this house. I know you'll never come back because you've seen my face now. No one can bear to look at me, I know that."

'What happened then?' Raoul asked.

'I was terrified of him,' Christine said, 'but at the same time I was sorry for him. He loves me so much, you see, and he's so sad. I decided to show him that I wasn't afraid of his face. I wanted my freedom. It was difficult, Raoul, but I succeeded. At last he trusted me. He let me go.'

'But you still went back to him, again,' Raoul said. 'Why did you go back?'

① edge: 边缘。

② genius: 天才。

'I feel sorry for him,' the girl said simply.

Suddenly Raoul and Christine heard a noise on the roof. It was dark now, and they looked up to see a hideous^① shape coming towards them. They ran in terror.

① hideous: 极丑陋的。

Chapter Eight: The Mysterious Persian

Christine and Raoul ran down through the Opera House. Suddenly they saw a man standing in their way. The man had dark skin and green eyes. He was wearing an Astrakhan hat^① that covered most of his face.

'Go that way!' the man said, and he pointed to another corridor. Christine pulled Raoul in the direction that the man had indicated.

'Who was that?' Raoul asked her as they ran along.

'That was the Persian,' Christine told him. 'He's always here at the Opera.' At last they arrived at Christine's dressing room.

'We'll be safe here,' Christine told him. 'Erik has promised that he will never come here, and that he will never listen to my conversations here. I believe him.'

'Come away with me now, today,' Raoul said.

'No,' she replied. 'I promised to sing for Erik at tomorrow's performance. It would be cruel not to sing for him. It'll be the last time. Then I'll come to you here and we'll go away together.'

Suddenly the girl began to look around her in fright^② and panic^③.

'What is it?' Raoul asked.

'Erik's ring, I've lost it!' Christine cried. 'He gave it to me as a sign of his love. He said I would always be safe while I wore it — and now I don't know where it is!'

Raoul tried to comfort^④ her, but Christine was very worried.

She was sure that Erik would become her enemy now, and she was

① astrakhan hat: 俄国羔皮帽。

② fright: 惊恐。

③ panic: 慌乱。

④ comfort: 安慰。

frightened.

They discussed their plans to run away after the performance the next evening.

At last Raoul went home to bed. In the middle of the night he woke up and looked around him. There were two red eyes staring at him in the darkness. He picked up his gun and fired it into the darkness. His brother and some servants rushed into the room. They looked on the balcony and saw blood there.

'I hit him!' Raoul said proudly. 'Ghosts don't bleed!' Raoul's brother looked at him strangely.

'You've shot a cat,' he said quietly.

All of the next day Raoul made his preparations for the evening. He ordered a carriage to be ready outside the Opera at the end of the performance, and he made sure that he had a lot of money with him.

Christine was singing in *Faust* that evening. The Opera was crowded^① to hear her. She sang nervously at first, and it was obvious that she was worried and anxious^②. Then, in the second half of the opera, her courage came back to her. She sang better than ever before. The audiences were very pleased with the performance.

Suddenly all the stage lights went out^③. There was complete darkness on the stage. The managers acted quickly, and in a few seconds the lights were turned on again — but Christine had disappeared! There was chaos^④ in the auditorium when the audience realised what had happened. People stood up

① crowded: 挤满人的。

② anxious: 忧虑的。

③ went out: 熄灭。

④ chaos: 混乱。

and left their seats. They walked around discussing what had happened.

Raoul hurried backstage where there was a crowd of excited people. Everyone was talking about the disappearance of the singer. Raoul was sure that Erik had taken her.

He joined a group of men who were going towards the managers' office. He was the last to enter the office. As he walked in, he felt a hand on his shoulder. A voice said quietly:

'Don't discuss Erik's secrets with anyone!'

Raoul turned round quickly to see the Persian standing behind him. The Persian put his fingers on his lips and moved silently away.

Raoul hurried into the office. The two managers were there, as well as a detective. The detective looked suspiciously^① at Raoul. Then he asked him some questions.

'Were you going to run away with Mademoiselle^② Daae after the performance tonight?'

'Yes, that's true,' Raoul replied.

'Is your carriage waiting outside the Opera?' the detective went on.

'Yes.'

'Did you know that your brother's carriage was also outside the Opera tonight?' the detective asked.

Raoul did not see the importance of this question.

'Was your brother happy about your friendship with Mademoiselle Daae?' the detective asked.

'That's none of your business^③,' Raoul replied angrily. The detective

① suspiciously: 怀疑。

② Mademoiselle: 小姐 (法语)。

③ That's none of your business: 那不关你的事。

smiled.

'On the contrary, it is very much my business, Monsieur,' he said with a smile. 'You see, your brother's carriage is not outside the building any more. It is he who has taken Mademoiselle Daae away tonight!'

Raoul jumped up.

'I'll catch them!' he cried furiously^①. Raoul ran out of the room.

The detective turned to the managers with a smile.

'That's police work for you^②,' he said proudly. 'I don't know whether the count has really taken Christine Daae with him or not. But I'm sure that his brother is going to find out for us!'

① furiously: 粗暴的。

② That's police work for you: 这就是警方做事的方式!

Chapter Nine: The Hunt for Christine

The first person that Raoul saw outside the managers' office was the Persian. Once again the Persian blocked the way.

'Where are you going?' he asked Raoul.

'I'm going to find Christine Daae,' the young man replied.

'Then stay here,' the Persian said quietly. 'She's still here, inside the Opera.'

'Why do you know so much?' Raoul asked. 'You know a lot about Erik's secrets, and I think you know where Christine is.'

'Erik has taken her to the house on the lake,' the Persian said quietly.

'So you know about that, as well,' Raoul said thoughtfully.

'What else do you know about Erik?'

'He's terribly dangerous!' the Persian said.

'Has he hurt you?' Raoul asked.

'I have forgiven him for all that,' the Persian replied gently.

'You talk about him the same way that Christine does,' Raoul said thoughtfully. 'You think he's a monster, but you're sorry for him too. I don't understand it.'

'Be quiet now!' the Persian ordered him. 'He may hear us. He could be anywhere, you know—in the walls, in the floor, in the ceiling^①!'

The Persian took Raoul to Christine's dressing room. He walked straight to the mirror, and began knocking on the wall. Suddenly the mirror began to revolve^② like a glass door. Raoul watched, remembering the time that Christine had disappeared from this room. The Persian took hold of him suddenly.

① ceiling: 天花板。

② revolve: 旋转。

'Hurry!' he shouted.

They went through the revolving mirror and into a dark passage on the other side.

'Follow me.' the Persian ordered . 'And do what I tell you to do. We're going into the cellars.'

In front of them in the darkness Raoul saw a yellow light .The yellow light approached —it was a head of fire, and it was coming straight towards them!

'Is that him?' Raoul asked .

'I don't know,' the Persian said . 'I've never seen this before. '

The Persian and Raoul stepped backwards, away from the head of fire. Then they heard the sound of rats in the darkness. The rats were running towards them .Thousands of the horrible little creatures began to climb over the two men .There was nothing Raoul and the Persian could do to get away from them. The head of fire walked slowly towards them .

'Don't move!' a voice cried . 'I'm the rat-catcher^①. Stay where you are, and I'll send the rats away.'

The head of fire disappeared .The rat-catcher had turned his lamp onto his face, so he didn't frighten the rats he was sending down the passage.

'So Pampin the fireman was right,' the Persian said. 'He told everyone about the head of fire, but I didn't believe him. '

'Are we going to the house on the lake?' Raoul asked. 'Is that where Christine is?'

The Persian nodded. They continued to travel into the depths^② of the massive^③ building. Soon they came to a wall.

① rat-catcher: 捕鼠人。

② depths: 深处。

③ massive: 庞大的。

'This is Erik's house, ' the Persian said . 'Poor Buquet died here. Erik found him and killed him .Erik doesn't like people to come near his house, you see.'

He directed his lamp onto the wall.

'There's a mechanism^① here in the wall somewhere .We push it, and the wall opens, just like the mirror in Christine's dressing room.'

He put his hands on the wall ,and tried to find the switch .

'Ah!' he cried softly.

The wall opened, and the Persian and Raoul went in .The hole in the wall closed after them.

They looked around them .They were in an empty room. Raoul touched the wall. It was made of glass.

'It's a mirror!' he cried in astonishment^②.

'We're in Erik's room of mirrors,' the Persian whispered. 'It's his torture chamber^③, and we're trapped^④!'

① mechanism: 机械装置。

② astonishment: 惊愕。

③ torture chamber: 刑讯室。

④ trapped: 圈套。

Chapter Ten: Erik And The Persian

The Persian knew Erik better than anyone else. He knew the whole story of the monster's sad life. He knew that Erik was not just a monster who frightened people because he was so ugly. He was also a very clever and sensitive man who suffered deeply.

One of the things that the Persian knew about Erik was the power of his voice. Erik was a great singer. He had a passionate love for music. He was also a talented architect.

Years before, the Persian had been a policeman in his own country. Erik had worked for the sultan there. He designed special buildings for the sultan—buildings with secret passages where the sultan could hide when he was afraid of his people. Erik also designed torture chambers for the sultan's wife. She was a cruel woman, and Erik's intelligent work amused^① her. The Persian did not like the kind of work that Erik did for the royal family, but he admired him and was sorry for him because he was so ugly. The sultan decided to kill Erik to stop him working for anyone else—and the Persian saved his life.

The Persian knew what happened to Erik when he left the sultan. Erik came to Paris. He used his skill as an architect to work on the Paris Opera House. It was easy for him to plan secret tunnels and passages all over the building and his own, very secret, house on the lake. The Persian watched the Opera House because he knew that Erik was dangerous.

When Erik first became involved with the young singer, the Persian was suspicious. He knew that Erik had taken the girl to his house. One day he

^① amused: 逗 (某人) 高兴。

waited for the monster near the lake.

'You're keeping Christine Daae a prisoner in your house, ' he had said .

'Free her, Erik! '

'A prisoner? 'Erik replied.

He laughed.

'She's not my prisoner. She comes to my house when she wants –and she leaves when she wants. She loves me, don't you understand ? She loves me! '

The Persian did not believe this.

'I'll show you,' Erik told him proudly. 'Wait here, my friend, and Christine will leave my house. Stay here, and she will come back alone. She'll come back because she wants to. I tell you, she loves me!'"

The Persian agreed to wait and see what happened. Christine came out of the house. He waited a long time, and then she came back to the house. He was astonished. Erik was telling the truth!

Chapter Eleven: Love and Death

Suddenly Raoul and the Persian heard noises on the other side of the wall. It was Erik's voice. 'Decide!' he shouted. 'The wedding-mass or the requiem-mass^①. The choice is yours, Christine!'

They heard Christine's voice. She was making a noise of pain.

'You're frightened of me,' Erik said softly. 'You think I'm evil^② and dangerous, but I'm not. I just need love, Christine. Love me and I'll be gentle and good. I promise you it's the truth.'

Christine did not reply to Erik. There was silence in the next room. Then a bell began to ring.

'We have a visitor!' Erik cried angrily. 'Who has the courage to come near my house? Wait for me here, Christine.' He walked out of the room.

'Now is our chance!' Raoul said to the Persian. 'Maybe Christine will be able to free us if we call out to her.'

Raoul called her name softly, two or three times.

'Raoul!' she called back. 'Is it really you? Where are you?'

'We're trapped in the room next to you,' Raoul called.

'Can you let us out?'

'I can't move,' Christine told him. 'He has tied me up^③.'

Then she told them what Erik was planning to do.

'He says he'll kill everybody if I won't marry him. He says everybody will be dead if I don't agree. He says he'll kill himself, too. He's mad, Raoul — mad with love.'

① requiem-mass: 安魂弥散。

② evil: 邪恶。

③ tied me up: 把我捆起来。

Raoul and the Persian were desperate now. They had to escape from the room they were in, and Christine couldn't help them.

Then the Persian found the mechanism to open a trap-door in the room. He pushed it, and the two men escaped. They walked down some stairs, and then found themselves in a cellar. There were a lot of barrels^① in the cellar.

'This is Erik's wine cellar,' Raoul said.

'Wine,' said the Persian thoughtfully. 'I wonder if it's really wine in those barrels.'

He broke open one of the barrels and looked inside. The barrel was full of gunpowder^②!

'Now I understand!' the Persian cried. 'Erik told Christine that everybody would be dead if she didn't agree to marry him.

He's going to blow up^③ the Opera House — we've got to warn her^④!'

They ran back up the stairs into the torture chamber.

'Christine! Christine!' Raoul shouted.

'I'm still here,' Christine called back. 'Erik came in a few minutes ago. He said the visitor was dead. I think ... I think he killed him, Raoul! I'm frightened.'

'Listen to me,' Raoul said. 'The cellar is full of gunpowder. Erik will blow up the Opera House if you don't marry him.'

Just then they all heard Erik's footsteps. He came into the room where Christine was.

'Who are you talking to, my love?' he asked her.

① barrels: 酒桶。

② gunpowder: 火药。

③ blow up: 炸毁。

④ warn her: 提前警告她。

He crossed the room and knocked on the wall of the torture chamber. Then he smiled at her.

'Ah,' he said, 'it's the little viscount, is it?'

'Let Raoul go,' Christine begged^① him.

'You must decide what you're going to do,' Erik told her. 'There are two boxes in this room. One contains the figure of a grasshopper^②, and the other a scorpion. You must turn one of them to show what you've decided. If you turn the scorpion, then you agree to marry me. If you turn the grasshopper, then you refuse to marry me. I'll leave you alone while you think about it. Decide, Christine, decide!' Erik walked out of the room.

'What an evil plan!' the Persian said. 'If she turns the grasshopper, she'll make the gunpowder in the cellar explode. We'll all die, and so will everyone in the Opera House.'

'I don't know what to do!' Christine cried in despair.

A few minutes passed, and then Erik returned to Christine.

'Well, my love,' he asked, 'what are you going to do? Will it be the grasshopper or the scorpion?'

Christine hesitated, and then she turned the figure of the scorpion^③.

Raoul and the Persian waited to see what would happen.

They heard a strange noise far below them.

'Water!' the Persian cried. 'He's flooding^④ the cellar!'

The sound of the water was clear now. The cellar below the torture chamber was soon full, and the gunpowder was wet.

① begged: 乞求。

② grasshopper: 草蜢。

③ scorpion: 蝎子。

④ flooding: 使……灌满水。

But the water did not stop, and soon it arrived at the torture chamber. Raoul and the Persian began to swim. They swam to the top of the chamber, but there was no way out. They were going to drown^①! Both men fought against the water, but they began to lose consciousness^②.

The Persian woke up and looked around him. He was lying on a sofa in Erik's house. Erik was standing over him. He could see Christine in the room, too.

'I saved your lives,' Erik told him. 'I did it to please my wife.' He handed the Persian a glass. 'Drink this,' he commanded. The Persian drank from the glass and fell asleep.

* * * *

A few days later the Persian was resting in his apartment.

He had read the Paris newspapers. He knew that Raoul's brother was dead. Someone had found his body near the underground lake. 'Erik's last visitor,' the Persian thought sadly. He also knew that Christine and Raoul had disappeared. The newspapers had long articles about the missing couple.

The Persian's servant came into the room to say that there was a visitor. A few minutes later he showed Erik into the room.

'Murderer!' the Persian cried. 'Why did you kill Raoul's brother? And what have you done with Christine and Raoul?'

Erik put his hand on his head. He looked ill and tired.

'I am dying,' he said. 'I came here to see you for the last time, my old friend. I want to tell you what happened.'

① drown: 淹死。

② consciousness: 意识。

He sat down in a chair.

'I didn't kill Raoul's brother. He was dead when I arrived at the lake. He fell into the water and he drowned.'

He stopped talking for a moment and looked unhappily at the Persian.

'This is the end for me. I love her. She allowed me to kiss her. It was so... beautiful!'

'Where are they?' the Persian demanded. 'What have you done with them, you monster?'

'Christine and Raoul are safe,' Erik replied. 'She saved you both, you know. She turned the scorpion because she wanted you both to live. It was so brave of her. She promised to be my wife if I let you both live. And then I kissed her. I was happy and I wept. It was the first kiss of my life. Even my own mother never kissed me! She just gave me a mask to put over my face. Then she ran away from me.'

There were tears in Erik's eyes as he told the story.

'Then I knew what I had to do. I gave her a wedding-ring, and I said to her: "'Take this ... it's for you and Raoul. I know you love each other.'" Then they went away together to a secret place. I'll die soon. But that kiss, it was all my happiness!'

The Persian looked at his old enemy sadly. He believed everything that Erik had told him. There were tears in the Persian's eyes after his visitor left him.