

The PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

By Gaston Leroux

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THE MYSTERY OF THE YELLOW ROOM.
and THE PERFUME OF THE LADY IN BLACK.
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SYNOPSIS.

Consternation is caused on the last night of the Opera by a manager by Debrun and Polidor, because of the appearance of a ghost, said to have been in evidence on several previous occasions. Christine Daae, a member of the opera company, is called upon to fill a very important part and scores a great success. Raoul, de Chagny and his brother Raoul are among those who applaud the singer. Raoul tries to see Christine in the dressing room, but is unable to do so and later discovers that some one is making love to her. She emerges alone, and upon entering the room, finds the enemy. While the farewell ceremony for the retiring managers is going on, the Opera Ghost appears and informs the new managers that Box No. 5 is reserved for him. Box No. 5 sold with disastrous results. The managers receive a letter from the Opera Ghost, calling attention to the error. Christine Daae writes Raoul that she has gone to visit the grave of her father. He goes also, and in the night follows her to the church. Wonderful violin music is heard. Raoul visits a graveyard. Raoul is found next morning alone, frozen. Monsieur and M. de Chagny investigate Box No. 5 and decide to let him know. Raoul is received from the manager as an appointment for a masked ball. Raoul meets Christine at the ball. He sees a person in the disguise of Red Death. He hears her conversing with some one whom she calls Erik. Raoul visits Christine and tells her he knows who she is. Raoul is then shown who she calls the Angel of Music. Christine and Raoul become secretly engaged prior to a polar expedition that Raoul is to make. Christine relates a strange adventure with the unseen Erik and promises to go away with Raoul. Raoul announces his intention of marrying Christine, which displeases Philippe. In the midst of a performance the stage is enveloped in darkness and Christine disappears. No trace of her is found. Monsieur and M. de Chagny investigate for the missing singer. The Opera Ghost demands the first installment of his allowance, and when it is left at an appointed place the sum mysteriously disappears. Raoul goes in search of Christine. He meets a mysterious person known as the Persian. The Persian wants to aid Raoul in locating Christine and they gain access to a secret chamber. The two find themselves in a passageway which they expect will lead to where Christine has undoubtedly been carried off by Erik. The Persian knows Erik to have been one of the contractors who built the Opera. Also that while the work was in progress there was a secret torture chamber beneath the structure.

CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

I knew my Erik too well to feel at all comfortable on jumping into his house. I knew what he had made of a certain palace at Mazenderan. From being the most honest building conceivable, he soon turned it into a house of the very devil, where you could not utter a word but it was overheard or repeated by an echo. With his trap-doors the monster was responsible for endless tragedies of all kinds. He hit upon astonishing inventions. Of these, the most curious, horrible and dangerous was the so-called torture-chamber. Except in special cases, when the little sultana amused herself by inflicting suffering upon some unoffending citizen, no one was let into it but wretches condemned to death. And, even then, when these had "had enough," they were always at liberty to put an end to themselves with a Punjab lasso or bow-string, left for their use at the foot of an iron tree.

My alarm, therefore, was great when I saw that the room into which M. le Vicomte de Chagny and I had dropped was an exact copy of the torture-chamber of the rosy hours of Mazenderan. At our feet, I found the Punjab lasso which I had been dreading all the evening. I was convinced that this rope had already done duty for Joseph Buquet, who, like myself, must have caught Erik one evening working the stone in the third cellar. He probably tried it in his turn, fell into the torture-chamber and only left it hanged. I can well imagine Erik dragging the body, in order to get rid of it, to the scene from the Rot de Lahore, and hanging it there as an example, or to increase the superstitious terror that was to help him in guarding the approaches to his lair! Then, upon reflection, Erik went back to fetch the Punjab lasso, which is very curiously made out of catgut, and which might have set an examining magistrate thinking. This explains the disappearance of the rope.

And now I discovered the lasso, at our feet, in the torture-chamber! I am no coward, but a cold sweat covered my forehead as I moved the little red disk of my lantern over the walls.

M. de Chagny noticed it and asked: "What is the matter, sir?"

I made him a violent sign to be silent.

CHAPTER XXII.

In the Torture Chamber.
The Persian's Narrative Continued.

We were in the middle of a little six-cornered room, the sides of which were covered with mirrors from top to bottom. In the corners, we could clearly see the "joins" in the glasses, the segments intended to turn on

"But answer me, Christine! . . . In heaven's name, if you are alone, answer me!"

Then Christine's voice whispered Raoul's name.

"Yes! Yes! It is I! It is not a dream! . . . Christine, trust me! . . . We are here to save you but we're prudent! When you hear the monster, warn us!"

Then Christine gave way to fear.

She trembled lest Erik should discover where Raoul was hidden; she told him in a few hurried words that Erik had gone quite mad with love and that he had decided to kill everybody and himself with everybody if she did not consent to become his wife. He had given her till eleven o'clock the next evening for reflection. It was the last respite. She must choose, as he said, between the wedding-mass and the requiem.

And Erik had then uttered a phrase which Christine did not quite understand:

"Yes or no! If your answer is no, everybody will be dead and buried!"

But I understood the sentence perfectly, for it corresponded in a terrible manner with my own dread thoughts.

"Can you tell us where Erik is?" I asked.

She replied that he must have left the house.

"Could you make sure?"

"No. I am fastened. I cannot stir a limb."

When we heard this, M. de Chagny and I gave a yell of fury. Our safety, the safety of all three of us, depended on the girl's liberty of movement.

"But where are you?" asked Christine.

"There are only two doors in my room, the Louis-Philippe room of which I told you, Raoul; a door through which Erik comes and goes, and another which he has never opened before me and which he has forbidden me ever to go through, because he says it is the most dangerous of the doors, the door of the torture-chamber!"

"Christine, that is where we are!"

"You are in the torture-chamber!"

"Yes, but we cannot see the door."

"Oh, if I could only drag myself so far! I would knock at the door and that would tell you where it is."

"Is it a door with a lock to it?" I asked.

"Yes, with a lock."

"Mademoiselle," I said, "it is absolutely necessary that you should open that door to us!"

"But how?" asked the poor girl tearfully.

We heard her straining, trying to free herself from the bonds that held her.

"I know where the key is," she said,

monster went out last night, after carrying me here fainting and half chloroformed. He was going to his banker, so he said! . . . When he returned he found me with my face covered with blood. . . . I had tried to kill myself by striking my forehead against the walls."

"Christine!" groaned Raoul; and he began to sob.

"Then he bound me. . . . I am not allowed to die until eleven o'clock tomorrow evening."

"Mademoiselle," I declared, "the monster bound you . . . and he shall unbind you. You have only to play the necessary part! Remember that he loves you!"

"Alas!" we heard. "Am I likely to forget it!"

"Remember it and smile to him . . . entreat him . . . tell him that your bonds hurt you."

But Christine Daae said:

"Hush! . . . I hear something in the wall on the lake! . . . It is he! . . . Go away! Go away! Go away!"

"We could not go away, even if we wanted to," I said, as impressively as I could. "We cannot leave this! And we are in the torture-chamber!"

"Hush!" whispered Christine again.

Heavy steps sounded slowly behind the wall, then stopped and made the floor creak once more. Next came a tremendous sigh, followed by a cry of horror from Christine, and we heard Erik's voice:

"Beg your pardon for letting you see a face like this! What a state I am in, am I not? It's the other one's fault! Why did he ring? Do I ask people who pass to tell me the time? He will never ask anybody the time again! It is the siren's fault."

"Hush!" said Christine again.

Another sigh, deeper, more tremendous still, came from the abyssal depths of a soul.

"Why did you cry out, Christine?"

"Because I am in pain, Erik."

"I thought I had frightened you."

"Erik, unloose my bonds. . . . Am I not your prisoner?"

"You will try to kill yourself again."

"You have given me till eleven o'clock tomorrow evening, Erik."

The footsteps dragged along the floor again.

"After all, as we are to die together . . . and I am just as eager as you . . . yes, I have had enough of this life, you know. . . . Wait, don't move, I will release you. . . . You have only one word to say: 'No!' And it will at once be over with everybody! . . . You are right, you are right; why wait till eleven o'clock tomorrow? True, it would have been grander, finer. . . . But that is childish nonsense. . . . We should only think of ourselves in this life,

the man who rang at the siren's door just now—go and look if he's ringing at the bottom of the lake-well, he was rather like. . . . There, turn round . . . are you glad? You're free now. . . . Oh, my poor Christine, look at your wrists; tell me, have I hurt them? . . . That alone deserves death. . . . Talking of death, I must sing his requiem!"

Hearing these terrible remarks, I received an awful presentiment. I too had once rung at the monster's door . . . and, without knowing it, must have set some warning current in motion. . . . And I remembered the two arms that had emerged from the inky waters. . . . What poor wretch had strayed to that shore this time? Who was the other one, the one whose requiem we now heard sung?

Erik sang like the god of thunder, sang a Dies Irae that enveloped us as in a storm. The elements seemed to rage around us. Suddenly, the organ and the voice ceased so suddenly that M. de Chagny sprang back, on the other side of the wall, with emotion. And the voice, changed and transformed, distinctly grated out these metallic syllables:

"What have you done with my bag?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Tortures Begin.

The Persian's Narrative Continued.

The voice repeated angrily: "What have you done with my bag? So it was to take my bag that you asked me to release you!"

We heard hurried steps, Christine running back to the Louis-Philippe room, as though to seek shelter on the other side of our wall.

"What are you running away for?" asked the furious voice, which had followed her. "Give me back my bag, will you? Don't you know that it is the bag of life and death?"

"Listen to me, Erik," sighed the girl. "As it is settled that we are to live together . . . what difference can it make to you?"

"You know there are only two keys in it," said the monster. "What do you want to do?"

"I want to look at this room which I have never seen and which you have always kept from me. . . . It's a woman's curiosity!" she said, in a tone which she tried to render playful.

But the trick was too childish for Erik to be taken in by it.

"I don't like curious women," he retorted, "and you had better remember the story of Blue-Beard and be careful. . . . Come, give me back my bag! . . . Give me back my bag! . . . Leave the key alone, will you, you inquisitive little thing?"

And he chuckled, while Christine gave a cry of pain. Erik had evidently recovered the bag from her.

At that moment, the viscount could not help uttering an exclamation of impotent rage.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Clever Dogs Trained by Smugglers.

The manner in which dogs are trained by smugglers to assist in their operations on the Italian frontier is certainly ingenious. The canine pup is submitted to various torments on Swiss territory, and after being repeatedly shot at by one of the gang, attired in the uniform of an Italian customs official, it is driven across the frontier into Italy. Here it meets with the greatest kindness at the hands of the smugglers, so that it soon learns to know on which side are its friends and on which its enemies. The dog is then taken back to Switzerland, where it is laden with sugar, tobacco and other articles of contraband, and is then allowed to escape back to its friends in Italy.

Some Literary Blunders.

Doctor Smythe-Palmer gave some delightful instances of literary blunders about works in a recent London Institution lecture. The case of "curmudgeon" should be added. Doctor Johnson, dealing with the puzzle of its etymology, recorded it as coming from the French "coeur merchant" (wicked heart), adding "unknown correspondent" to indicate that some anonymous helper had contributed this conjecture. Another lexicographer, Ash, annexing this etymology, explained the word as derived from "coeur, unknown; merchant, a correspondent."

Household Hints.

To cure your husband of swearing around the house is easy, though it may require a little practice. Swear whenever he does—and even more profanely, if possible.

Stair carpets may be made to last indefinitely by using them only when you have company.

There are many cures for warts, but as a rule nothing that has cured anybody else's wart will cure yours.

To keep undesirable visitors away from your house teach the dog to be overly friendly to them.

Valuable Find of Manuscript

A very interesting and remarkable discovery of illuminated manuscripts and early printed books, ranging as far back as 1480, has just been made in the library at Oxton Hall, says the Nottingham (Eng.) Guardian.

It came about in this way: The vicar of the parish, Rev. W. Laycock, obtained permission to go through the books in the library at his leisure. While so doing his curiosity was aroused by a locked and forgotten cupboard therein, which he proceeded to investigate. Its contents proved to be between forty and fifty volumes, which confirmed the impression conveyed by the antiquity of their appearance that they belonged to the very earliest stage of the art of printing, which was introduced into this country in 1487.

The majority of them are folio volumes, and with one exception they are all in their original bindings. The covers are carefully planed boards of solid oak, and the books are bound with stout leather laces, the backing and lining being fragments of illuminated manuscripts of a much earlier date, cut up as waste with a ruthless indifference.

The ONLOOKER

by WILBUR D. NESBIT

In Training



My son, my son, now what have ye done that your optics are blackish brown? And why doth your ear today appear to be put on you upside down?

Hast fallen beneath a trolley car or been in a falling lift? And why are your teeth all out beneath, thus giving your jaw a shift?

My son, my son, didst thou think to have fun by dodging an automobile?

Your head has been whacked and four ribs are cracked, your cheek is beginning to peel.

Did dynamite burst at its mightiest worst and shoot off the finger and thumb? Come, tell me the truth, my pitiful youth—have you been assailed with a bomb?

"Aw, cut it all out! What you talkin' about?" the lad makes a mumbly reply.

"I haven't been hurt; I'll get well with a spurt—but maybe I'll need a glass eye."

They're training us now, and showing us how to grapple and tackle and maim.

Our coach is as mild as an innocent child—but wait till we get in a game!"

Man—Vain Man.

He can explain the wireless telegraph system to his wife—and his letters come back to him for better directions.

He manifests scorn of royalty—and joins the crowd that follows a visiting nobleman.

He pays \$5 to see two cheap prize-fighters maul each other—and whips his son for fighting with another boy at school.

He laughs at the green goods jokes in the papers—and forgets about the time he sent money to Five-Hundred-and-Twenty-Per-Cent Miller.

He explains just how to settle the differences between two great nations—and goes to law with his neighbor over a line fence.

He derides woman for her frequent changes of fashion—and gives his overcoat away because it is not full enough in the back.

He sneers at faith cure—and tries all the hair tonics that are recommended to him.

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