

The Phantom of the Opera

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This article is about the novel. For the musical and other uses, see [The Phantom of the Opera \(disambiguation\)](#).



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The Phantom of the Opera



1920 edition

Author(s)	Gaston Leroux
Original title	<i>Le Fantôme de l'Opéra</i>
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Le Fantôme de l'Opéra (English: *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. Initially, the story sold very poorly upon publication in book form and was even [out of print](#) several times during the twentieth century;^[1] it is overshadowed by the success of its various film and stage adaptations. The most notable of these were the [1925 film depiction](#), Ken Hill's [1976 musical](#) at the Theatre Royal Stratford East followed ten years later by [Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1986 musical](#), and Lloyd Webber and Joel Schumacher's [2004 film](#).

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[\[edit\]](#) Plot

The novel opens with a prologue in which Gaston Leroux claims that Erik, the "Phantom of the Opera", was a real person. We are then introduced to Christine Daaé. She and her father, a famous fiddler, traveled all over [Sweden](#) playing folk and religious music. Her father was known to be the best wedding fiddler in the land. When Christine is six, her mother dies and her father is brought to rural France by a patron, Professor Valerius.

During Christine's childhood, which is described retrospectively in the early chapters of the book, her father tells her many stories featuring an 'Angel of Music', who, like a muse, is the personification of musical inspiration. Christine meets and befriends the young Raoul, [Viscount](#) of Chagny, who also enjoys her father's many stories. One of Christine and Raoul's favorite stories is one of Little Lotte, a girl with golden hair and blue eyes who is visited by the Angel of Music and possesses a heavenly voice.

On his deathbed, Christine's father tells her that from Heaven, he will send the Angel of Music to her. Christine now lives with Mamma Valerius, the elderly widow of her father's benefactor.

Christine is eventually given a position in the chorus at the [Paris](#) Opera House ([Palais Garnier](#)). Not long after she arrives there, she begins hearing a beautiful, unearthly voice which sings to her and speaks to her. She believes this must be the Angel of Music and asks him if he is. The Voice agrees and offers to teach her "a little bit of heaven's music." The Voice, however, belongs to Erik, a deformed genius who was one of the contractors who built the opera and who secretly built a home for himself in the cellars. He is the Opera ghost ("Fantôme" in French can be translated as both "ghost" and "phantom") who has been extorting money from the Opera's management for many years. Unknown to Christine, at least at first, he falls in love with her.

With the help of the Voice, Christine triumphs at the gala on the night of the old managers' retirement. Her old childhood friend Raoul hears her and remembers his love for her. A time

after the gala, the Paris Opera performs *Faust*, with the [prima donna](#) Carlotta playing the lead. In response to a refused surrender of Box Five to the Opera Ghost, Carlotta loses her voice and the chandelier overhead plummets into the audience.

After the chandelier crashes, Erik kidnaps Christine to his home in the cellars and reveals his true identity. He plans to keep her there only a few days, hoping she will come to love him, and Christine begins to find herself attracted to her abductor. But she causes Erik to change his plans when she unmasks him and, to the horror of both, beholds his face, which according to the book, resembles the face of a rotting corpse. Erik goes into a mad frenzy, stating she probably thinks his face is another mask, digging her fingers in to show it was really his face, and shouting, "I am Don Juan Triumphant!" and crawls away, crying. Fearing that she will leave him, he decides to keep her with him forever, but after two weeks, when Christine requests release, he agrees, on condition that she would wear his ring and be faithful to him.

Up on the roof of the Opera, Christine tells Raoul of Erik taking her to the cellars. Raoul promises to take Christine away where Erik can never find her and to take her even if she resists. Raoul tells Christine he shall act on his promise the following day, to which Christine agrees, but she pities Erik and will not go until she has sung for him one last time. Christine then realizes the ring has slipped off her finger and fallen into the streets somewhere, and begins to panic. The two leave. But neither is aware that Erik has been listening to their conversation or that it has driven him to jealous frenzy. During the week and that night Erik has been terrorizing anyone who stood in his way, or in the way of Christine's career, including the managers.

The following night, Erik kidnaps Christine during a production of *Faust*. Back in the cellars, Erik tries to force Christine into marrying him. If she refuses he threatens to destroy the entire Opera using explosives he has planted in the cellars, killing everyone in it, including himself and Christine. Christine continues to refuse, until she realizes that Raoul and an old acquaintance of Erik's known only as "The Persian," in an attempt to rescue her, have been trapped in Erik's torture chamber. To save them and the people above, Christine agrees to marry Erik. At first, Erik tries to drown Raoul and the Persian in the water used to douse the explosives, stating that Christine doesn't need another. But Christine begs and offers to be his "living bride," promising him not to kill herself after becoming his bride, as she had both contemplated and attempted earlier in the novel. Erik rescues the Persian and the young Raoul from his torture chamber thereafter. When Erik is alone with Christine, he lifts his mask a little to kiss her on the forehead, and Christine allows him to do this. Erik, who admits that he has never before in his life received or been allowed to give a kiss — not even from his own mother — is overcome with emotion. He rips off his mask and begins to cry. Christine also cries for him, and even gives him a kiss back. He lets Christine go and tells her "go and marry the boy whenever you wish," explaining, "I know you love him." They cry together, and then she leaves on the condition that when he dies she will come back and bury him. The Persian, being an old acquaintance, is told of all these secrets by Erik himself, and on his express request, the Persian advertises in the newspaper about Erik's death three weeks later. The cause of death is revealed to be a broken heart. As she promised, Christine returns to bury Erik and give his ring back to him.

[\[edit\]](#) Characters

- [Erik](#) — The "Phantom" and "Opera-Ghost",
- [Christine Daaé](#) — A young Swedish soprano.

- [Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny](#) — Christine's childhood friend and love interest.
- [The Persian](#) — A mysterious man from Erik's past.
- [Comte Philippe de Chagny](#) — Raoul's elder brother.
- [Moncharmin and Richard](#) — The managers of the opera house. Also called Armand and Firmin, or Andre and Firmin(in the musical)
- [Madame Giry](#) — The suspicious caretaker for Box Five.
- [Meg Giry](#) — [Madame Giry](#)'s only daughter, a ballet girl. Later becomes Mme. la Baronne de Castelot-Barbezac
- [Debienne and Poligny](#) — The previous managers of the opera house.
- [Joseph Buquet](#) — The chief scene-shifter.
- [Little Jammes](#) — A friend of Meg and also a ballet girl.
- [La Carlotta](#) — A spoiled prima donna; the lead soprano of the Paris opera house.
- [Mercier](#) — The acting-manager.
- [Gabriel](#) — The superstitious chorus-master.
- [Mifroid](#) — The commissary of police called in for Christine's disappearance.
- [Remy](#) — The managers secretary
- [The inspector](#) — An inspector hired to investigate the strange affairs in box five
- [Shah and the sultan](#) — The two kings that tried to kill Erik after he made them a palace
- [La Sorelli](#) - the lead ballerina and woman whom Comte de Chagny spent time with. Also labeled Annie Sorelli, though this is questionable.

[\[edit\]](#) Adaptations

See: [The Phantom of the Opera \(adaptations\)](#)

There have been numerous literary and dramatic works based on *The Phantom of the Opera*, ranging from musicals to films to children's books. The best known stage and screen adaptations of the novel are probably the 1925 [silent film version](#) starring [Lon Chaney](#), the [1962 film version](#) made by [Hammer Film Productions](#) and the 1986 [Andrew Lloyd Webber musical](#), which first opened in London's [West End](#) with [Michael Crawford](#) in the title role, [Sarah Brightman](#) as Christine Daae, and [Steve Barton](#) as Raoul, Vicomte de Chagny. This musical was adapted into a [2004 film](#), directed by Joel Schumacher. It starred [Gerard Butler](#) as [Erik](#), [Emmy Rossum](#) as [Christine Daae](#), and [Patrick Wilson](#) as [Raoul](#). Brian DePalma wrote and directed a 1974 film called [Phantom of the Paradise](#), which was loosely based on *The Phantom of the Opera*.

[\[edit\]](#) References

1. [^] Haining, Peter (1988). "Introduction". *The Phantom of the Opera*. New York: Dorset Press. [ISBN 0880292989](#).
 - [Translations of Gaston Leroux's Original Novel](#).

[\[edit\]](#) External links

- "The Phantom of the Opera: an unsettling and unsettled novel" by Mireille Ribière [\[1\]](#)




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- (French) [The Phantom of the Opera, audio version](#) 
- [Digitized Issues of Le Gaulois from 5 july 1868 to 30 march 1929](#) from [Gallica](#), the digital library of the [Bibliothèque Nationale de France](#)
- *The Return of the Phantom* (2007) by [Etienne de Mendes](#). Book one of a series.
- *The Season of the Witch* (2008) by [Etienne de Mendes](#). Book two of a series.
- *The Tale of the Bloodline* (2010) by [Etienne de Mendes](#). Book three of a series.
- *The Disciples of the Night* (2012) by [Etienne de Mendes](#). Book four of a series.

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Books

- *The Phantom of the Opera*
- [Phantom](#)
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- [The Phantom of the Opera \(1925\)](#)
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- ["The Music of the Night"](#)
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- ["Learn to Be Lonely"](#)

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