

Introductory Lesson

Before Reading

- ① *What do you think a phantom is? If you could be a phantom, what things would you do that you cannot do as a normal person? Discuss with the class.*
- ② *The story takes place in the 1880s. What do you think would be some advantages of living at that time? What would some disadvantages be? What do you think you would like most / least about living then? Why?*
- ③ *Do you know what an opera is? Now listen to the recording in the beginning of the cassette/CD. What feelings does this kind of music awake?*
- ④ *Have you ever been inside an opera house or seen photographs of one? If yes, can you describe it? Can you name any of its parts?*

Gaston Leroux

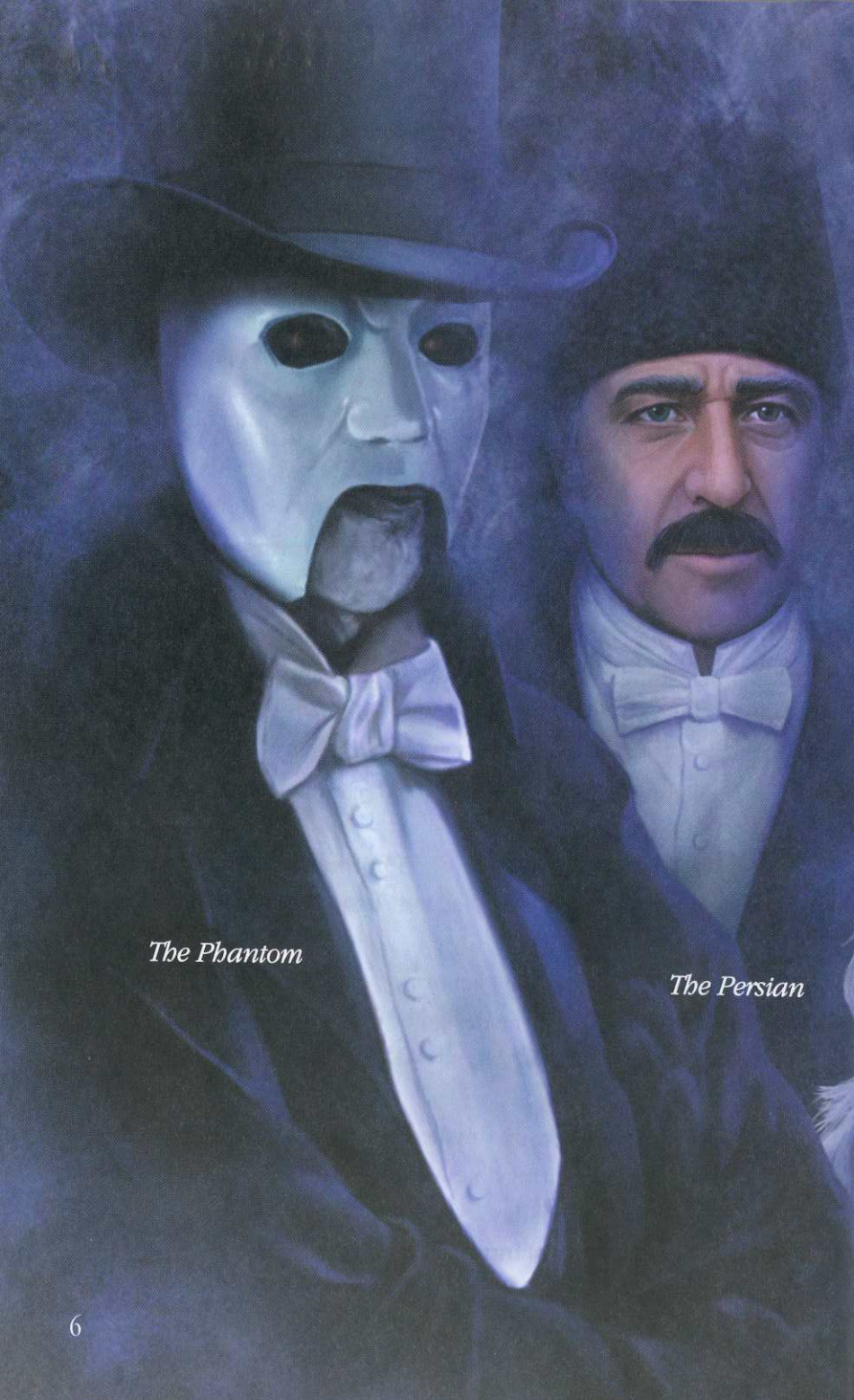


Gaston Leroux was born in Paris, France in 1868 to a wealthy family. He studied law to please his father and,

after losing all the money he had inherited, worked as a theatre critic and reporter. Years later he devoted himself entirely to writing plays and popular mystery novels and was influenced by Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo, as well as Jules Verne and Edgar Allen Poe. He had the habit of firing a pistol into the air every time he completed one of his books. 'The Phantom of the Opera' was inspired by his fascination with the Paris Opera House. It is his most popular novel and has been made into many stage plays and films. Leroux died in Nice, France in 1927.

⑤ Read about Gaston Leroux and circle the correct answers.

- a Gaston Leroux was born in Nice, France in 1927.
1 True 2 False
- b Before writing *The Phantom of the Opera* and other works, Leroux was ...
1 an opera singer. 3 a theatre critic and reporter.
2 a lawyer. 4 an actor.
- c Leroux wrote *The Phantom of the Opera* after becoming fascinated with the design of the Paris Opera House.
1 True 2 False
- d Every time Leroux finished writing a book, he ...
1 started writing a new one.
2 went on holiday.
3 fired a pistol into the air.
4 had a party.



The Phantom

The Persian



Mme Giry



Mme Valerius



M Moncharmin



M Richard



Christine



Raoul

The Voice

It had taken more than a decade to complete the Paris Opera House, with its seventeen floors of grand architecture, making it the largest theatre in the world. Here, wealthy and noble Parisians enjoyed great musical performances, either from the magnificent auditorium or from their elegant, private boxes. Intervals provided the opportunity to walk about the imposing Grand Foyer and Grand Staircase, decorated with precious marbles and onyx, and to socialise amongst statues of the world's greatest composers. Here the most elegant members of Parisian society could display themselves in their finest clothing and jewels. This was just as important as watching the performance itself. The Paris Opera House was an architectural jewel, but while its patrons applauded the great performances, they were quite unaware of another, strange world hidden beneath the stage. Here, in its many dark cellars and web of passageways lay the secrets of another world, a world where no ray of light ever shone, where a ghostly creature living in the furthest depths would rise to terrorise the patrons and performers of the Paris Opera. This is where our story of darkness and intrigue unfolds: the story of the Phantom of the Opera.

Dawn had not broken one Paris morning, when a voice could be heard in a small flat in the Rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires, a voice so perfect and pure, one would believe only an angel could possess it. Christine Daaé, a singer at the Opera, awoke to the heavenly singing, experiencing the joy of a young child on its first Christmas. She thought she was still dreaming to hear a sound

so perfect. When she was fully awake, the voice began to fade, and then disappeared with the light of day, leaving her to wonder what being could have produced such a beautiful sound. She was unable to sleep again and thought only of the melodic voice the whole day.

Even though she had witnessed so many exceptional performances at the Paris Opera, Christine had never heard such musical perfection and she longed to experience again the thrill it had brought her – and she was not to be disappointed. The voice returned to her again and again in her room each morning before dawn; then one day it vanished as suddenly as it had come.

She prayed with all her heart each night that the angelic voice would return, but she waited alone in a silence broken only by the occasional rumble of a carriage on the cobblestone street below.

A few weeks later in her dressing room, as she was preparing for the evening's performance, she became aware of a faint sound, gradually gaining strength and coming near her. It was the voice! Its song filled her with a sensation she could not describe as its beauty flowed through the walls. She did not know where it had come from, and yet it seemed to be all around her. She was attracted to the voice like a magnet. Then the singing stopped, and the voice spoke to her.

"I've come to offer you a gift, Christine – to make your greatest dream come true. I ask only one thing in return ..."

At that very moment, a bond was created between Christine Daaé and the voice that would change her life forever.

