

Christine stopped and put her head on Raoul's shoulder. They sat for a moment in silence. They did not see the movement of a shadow on the roof.

"The next day," Christine continued, "the voice waited for me in my room. It told me very sadly, 'I must return to Heaven because you love someone on earth.' I did not want the voice to leave me. I told it that you were like a brother to me.

"Finally, the voice wanted me to sing at the Opera House. I sang very well, but afterwards I was very tired. I went to my room and closed my eyes. When I opened them, you were there. But the voice was also there, Raoul! I was frightened for you, and that is why I said I didn't know you. Then I told the voice about my plans to visit my father's grave. The voice said, 'I will be there too.'"

"But," cried Raoul, "why didn't you try to escape from it?"

"Impossible!" replied Christine. "Do you remember the terrible evening when Carlotta couldn't sing and the chandelier fell down? I knew the voice was at the Opera House that night. I ran to my dressing-room. The voice wasn't there. Suddenly, I heard beautiful singing and I started to follow it. Then something **extraordinary** happened – I was outside the room. I didn't understand what had happened to me.

"It was dark and I was frightened. Suddenly, I felt a cold, **bony** hand on mine and then I saw a man with a mask – the Opera Ghost! He took me to the lake under the Opera House. There was a little boat there. I **fainted**, and when I opened my eyes again, I was in a room full of flowers. The man in the mask was there. 'Don't be afraid, Christine,' he said. 'You are not in danger.' It was the voice! The Angel of Music and the Opera Ghost were the same person!

"I was very surprised and angry. I tried to pull off his mask, but the man said, 'You must not see my face. Do not touch the mask.' I started to cry. The voice was the voice of a man.

'Christine!' he said, 'I am not the Angel of Music and I am not the Opera Ghost – my name is Erik!'

"That night, Erik sang me to sleep. When I woke up, I was alone in a little bedroom. There was a note in red ink on the table. It said, 'Christine, I love you. You are alone in my home. I am going to buy everything you need.' I thought I was the prisoner of a **madman**. I couldn't escape.

"Later, Erik returned. He showed me his bedroom; it was like a dead person's room. The walls were black. In the middle of the room, there was an open **coffin**. 'That is where I sleep,' said Erik.



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