

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Screenplay by
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Based on the Novel by
GASTON LEROUX

In the Public Domain

Based on a true story...

WGA Draft
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FADE IN:

INT. GASTON'S ROOM - MORNING (1909)

Through the window pane, the Parisian skyline sparkles.

Scribbling heard.

An open pocket watch on a desk, ticking away.

Glimpses of notes, newspaper articles, diagrams and blueprints of the Palais Garnier litter the room. **"News of a ghost haunt the Paris Opera."**

A faceless MAN (GASTON) at his desk, handwriting his manuscript.

His eyes look at the watch, realizing the time.

Quickly shuffles his papers, a small note pad into a bag, and is soon out the door.

INT./EXT. GASTON'S CARRIAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Gaston's carriage ride is bumpy, but the destination before him takes his breath away.

The imposing PALAIS GARNIER.

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

MERCIER, the Opera manager, early 50's, stops his pacing when he sees Gaston hastily approaching. They shake hands.

MERCIER

Ah. Monsieur Leroux. Today's the day...

GASTON

My apologies...

MERCIER

The Fire Marshall finally signed off on your permission to go below.

GASTON

Splendid. It will be worthwhile.

INT. HALLWAY - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

As they walk, Gaston's head is arched up, taking in the beauty.

GASTON
The size of this place still
astounds me. Like an island to
itself.

MERCIER
I've seen many opera houses. Never
found it's equal.

Pulls a key from his pocket--

MERCIER (CONT'D)
Ah...

They stop at an anonymous door, unlock it. Inside, a staircase leads down into the darkness.

Mercier picks a gas lantern off the ground, leads Gaston down.

INT. LOWER CELLARS - MOMENTS LATER

A match is lit, the lantern glows.

Gaston, lantern in hand, squints his eyes to see ahead. Mercier is reluctant--

MERCIER
Are you quite sure you want to
venture down further?

GASTON
I'm here to see the lake.

MERCIER
We've seen the lake. Nothing has
ever been found.

A beat.

GASTON
Does the darkness frighten you?

MERCIER
Only the rumors, Monsieur...

GASTON
This ended quite some time ago.
I'm merely here to report it.

MERCIER
Regardless. I dare not take another
step. Come find me when you are
finished.

Gaston turns his head back--

GASTON
Where shall I--

Mercier is already running up the steps.

Gaston turns, descending deeper below.

INT. FIFTH CELLAR - LATER

Lantern light bounces off ancient, wet debris that scatter
the stone floor. No one has been down here in ages.

From his coat pocket, Gaston pulls out a map, detailing the
underground cellars.

Doesn't know where he is. Keeps moving forward--

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - LATER

Gaston coughs out dust, waving the lantern in all directions.

And stops--

His mouth agape at what he sees...

Somewhere, an angelic voice rises. A woman's--

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - NIGHT (1890)

The woman's heavenly voice washes over the awed faces of the
audience. A sense of newness in the air...

The theatre itself is breathtaking. Four tiers of boxes
create a u-shape that surrounds the ground floor. High above
them, a beautiful chandelier hangs.

The unseen voice is singing the final trio of Faust.

A few whisper words of admiration to their seat mates.
Blushing smiles of amazement--

AUDIENCE MEMBER
(to her partner)
Unfortunate for Miss Carlotta that
she took ill. Thankful for us...

They share a giggle.

The orchestra comes crashing in--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CELLAR HALLWAY - SAME

CRASH! A haggard man trips over his feet in the dark, stands, desperately running for his life as something follows him.

JOSEPH BUQUET (V.O.)
...by the footlights, he was
there...

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - SAME

Young MEG GIRY leads a group of running ballerina's.
Giggling, looking over their shoulders--

INT. FOOTLIGHTS - UNDER THE STAGE - FLASHBACK

The running man, JOSEPH BUQUET points, as the same group of frightened young ballerina's gather around. Speaking in a quiet, steady voice--

JOSEPH BUQUET
He has a death's head for a face.
He's extraordinarily thin, his
dress-coat hangs on a skeleton
frame. His eyes, two black holes,
rest in a dead man's skull. His
skin...

BACK TO:

INT. CELLAR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Buquet stops at a corner, breathing hard. Looks behind him.

JOSEPH BUQUET (V.O.)
 ...which is stretched across his
 bones like a drumhead, is not
 white, but a dirty yellow...

There's no one there. Knows he needs to move. Gasps in air,
 keeps running--

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - SAME

MEG
 It's the ghost! He's here!

They push themselves into a dressing room to hide--

INT. LA SORELLI'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--pushing past SORRELLI, the lead ballet dancer -- going over
 some hand-written notes -- and huddling themselves to the
 nearest corner, Meg at the lead.

SORRELLI
 I'm trying to go over notes for the
 departing mana--! You've seem him?
 Tell me!

The ballerina's speak all at once. JAMMES, the gossip, speaks
 the loudest.

JAMMES
 As plainly as I see you now!

MEG
 Hush! Ma says the ghost doesn't
 like being talked about.

INT. RAOUL'S BOX - AUDITORIUM - SAME

PHILIPPE GEORGES COMTE DE CHANGY, 41 looks over the audience
 with mild interest, turns to his brother beside him.

RAOUL doesn't notice his brother's eyes. His attention is
 focused only on the woman singing.

At 21, Raoul has boyish good looks, and carries a strong, yet
 shy and kind demeanor.

He's mentally trying to place the young woman on the stage...

Finally--

RAOUL
 (under his breath)
 Christine...

INT. STAGE - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS

--reveal, alone on the stage, CHRISTINE DAAE, 20.

She's breathtaking in every aspect. Blonde, beautiful Scandinavian features. A fragility that can't be placed...

INT. LA SORELLI'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Little Meg pushes Jaames away, to Sorrelli--

MEG
 Joseph Buquet told us...he'd do
 better to hold his tongue. That's
 Ma's opinion.

SORRELLI
 Why would she say so?

Meg tenses...

MEG
 Because...because...nothing...

Sorrelli and the ballerina's surround Meg, anticipating--

MEG
 (blurting it out)
 Because of the private box! Happy?

They swoon with excitement.

BALLERINAS (OVERLAP)
 The ghost has a box? Which?! Tell
 us!!

MEG
 Not so loud! It's Box 5...

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Past the unknowing audience, we fly toward the darkened box on the grand tier. Nothing suggests an occupant or movement.

MEG (V.O.)
 ...the one on the grand tier. Next
 to the stage-box, on the left.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BOX 5 - SAME

Meg's Mother, the box keeper MADAME GIRY stands watch outside
 the box. A calm, knowing look in her eye.

MEG (V.O.)
 Ma has charge of it. There are
 orders to never sell it. No one
 occupies it except the ghost.

INT. LA SORELLI'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BALLERINA
 What does your mother say he looks
 like? The death's head?

A cryptic shake of the head--

MEG
 That's just it. All this talk of a
 death's head and his head of fire
 is nonsense. Ma has never seen him,
 she's heard him only.

INT. BOX 5 - SAME

Possibly empty, looking down on the stage...

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Christine's reaching her crescendo. The life being lifted out
 of her--

The audience holds their breath with anticipation.

Raoul in his box...

Her final note explodes. It's magnificent. The entire opera
 feels the sea change.

Then, it's over.

In slow motion, the giddy audience rises to their feet, ready
 to applaud.

Raoul stands...

Then, the applause explodes toward her. Deafening cheering, clapping.

Christine blinks slowly, taking it all in. A tear runs down her cheek, a line in her blush.

From the wings of the stage, the cast gather to share their admiration. Smiles all around.

Christine feels the attention with conflicted eyes.

A dream coming true...

...yet...

Subtly glances up to the boxes. Raoul is there.

They make eye contact.

Her footing fails her.

Like a rag doll, her body falls out from under her--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BETWEEN SETS - CONTINUOUS

A set piece and a discarded scene from "Roi de Lahore".

The applause echoes maniacally from here.

Joseph Buquet stops to gasp a breath, squeezes his eyes shut with exhaustion. Not as young as he used to--

A CORD-LIKE NOOSE SUDDENLY RIPS ROUND HIS NECK.

HE'S VIOLENTLY JERKED OFF HIS FEET.

Joseph's eyes bulge out in utter horror--

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Christine lands into the arms of her surrounding singers, exhaustion and perspiration etched across her face.

A commotion gathers around her.

INT. RAOUL'S BOX - SAME

Raoul stops clapping, goes pale. Phillipe is chatting with others when he sees his brother.

PHILLIPE
What's the matter?

RAOUL
Don't you see she's fainting? Let's go.

Out of the box, Raoul leads.

INT. LA SORELLI'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A BANG on the door. The girls shriek with horror! A disheartened little voice on other side.

JAMMES MOTHER (O.S.)
Cecile! Cecile! Are you there?

JAMMES
It's Ma's voice.

Jammes runs to the door. Her MOTHER bursts in, sobbing. In the hallway, echoing voices.

JAMMES MOTHER
It's awful...Joseph...Buquet...

MEG
What about him?

INT. BETWEEN SETS - SAME

Joseph Buquet dangles lifelessly by the neck.

A shadow moves about.

Suddenly, an invisible force cuts the noose and his body flops to the ground with an ugly thud.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul pushes through the wall of scene-shifters, chorus girls and other well-wishers. A smiling Phillipe is close on his heels. All are screaming "Daae! Daae!"

A STAGEHAND holds them back outside Christine's dressing room.

Raoul peers in the doorway. Christine is laid on the couch in the center, a THEATRE DOCTOR and MAID watching over her. Also crowded around are concerned singers and opera personnel.

PHILLIPE
What are you doing?

Ignoring his brother, Raoul turns to the Stagehand.

RAOUL
I'm the Vicomte de Chagny. I know
Ms. Daae.

The Stagehand sees his nobility, gives him a wave.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Raoul takes in the moment. The Theatre Doctor acknowledges him.

RAOUL
Don't you think these gentlemen had
better clear the room? There's no
breathing room here.

THEATER DOCTOR
Gentleman, would you please excuse
us?

The room empties, save for the Doctor and the Maid. She looks at Raoul with a wide-eyed astonishment.

At the door, Philippe watches, smiles, and walks away.

Christine sighs, then lets out a small groan. Open her eyes, turns to a smiling Raoul, and stops. Blinks absentmindedly, whispering...

CHRISTINE
Monsieur, who are you?

On bent knee, he takes her limp hand, and kisses it.

RAOUL
Mademoiselle, I am the little boy
who went into the sea to rescue
your scarf.

Christine, the Maid and the Doctor laugh. Raoul knows it's at his expense. Stands...

RAOUL

Since you are pleased not to recognize me, I should like to say something to you in private. Something very important.

CHRISTINE

When I'm better, do you mind? You've been very kind.

The Doctor steps in.

THEATER DOCTOR

Yes, you must go. Leave me to attend the mademoiselle.

Christine stands suddenly with unexpected energy, rubbing her eyes.

CHRISTINE

Thank you, doctor. I should like to be alone now. Please, all of you, leave me.

Quickly glances at Raoul. He's baffled. Nods and bows before leaving.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway now sits empty. The crowd has moved on.

The door opens and the Maid comes out, carrying bundles, followed by the Doctor.

Raoul pulls him aside.

RAOUL

How is she?

THEATER DOCTOR

She's not herself tonight. She is usually so gentle.

RAOUL

Thank you, Doctor. Good evening.

Shakes The Doctor's hand, leaving Raoul alone in the hallway.

The hallway is silent, save for the soothing hum of the gas lamps.

Raoul has an idea. Takes a step, holds his knuckle to knock, when--

VOICE (O.S.)
Christine, you must love me!

The voice booms, startling Raoul.

He looks around for its source. Feels the wood of the door.

A long silence. A trembling Christine answers inside.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
How can you say that when I sing
only for you?

A beat. Raoul is paralyzed with dread--

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME

VOICE (O.S.)
Are you very tired?

Christine stands in the center of the room, feeling the voice all around her. Almost pleading--

CHRISTINE
Tonight. I gave you my soul.

VOICE (O.S.)
Your soul is a beautiful thing, my
child. No emperor ever received
such a gift. The angels wept
tonight.

CHRISTINE
It's been too long. Show yourself
at last.

VOICE
I am always with you. Soon...

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - SAME

Raoul steps away into the shadow of a dark corner, his emotions mixed.

A beat. He's about to leave in defeat when--

The door opens. Christine appears, dressed for the evening's party. Closes the door behind her, and passes him.

Hidden in the shadows, his eyes don't follow her, only stay fixated on the door.

A long beat. Raoul steps out of the shadow and cautiously opens the door.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Closing the door behind him, Raoul is alone in the dark.

RAOUL
Why do you hide?

Nothing. Reaches in his pocket, finds a match. Strikes it. The flame illuminates the darkness. Swings it back and forth. His own breath is deafening.

Goes to work--

Crosses to the door, locks it. Lights the gas lamp. Opens the closet, rummages through the cupboards, feels the walls, looks under the couch.

Gets to his feet. Again, nothing.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul closes the door, proceeds down the hallway, pocketing his trembling hands the best he can.

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

The farewell party for the departing managers. The company is dressed to the nine's, mingling about.

The triumph of Christine's gala performance is still felt in the air like a beautiful perfume.

Meg and the ballerinas run about, gossiping inconspicuously about what they've heard and seen, still carrying on about Joseph Buquet's death.

Standing away, nervously preparing her speech, is Sorrelli, champagne glass in hand. Her attention is across the room to--

The retiring managers M. DEBINNE and M. POLIGNY smile cheerfully, almost relieved, as they make small talk with the new managers ARMAND MONCHARMIN and FIRMIN RICHARD.

All four men's attention turns to the center of the room -- Christine, being showered with attention and congratulations.

RICHARD

You were saving Ms. Daae's performance for tonight? She's exquisite.

M. POLIGNY

The opposite, monsieur. She sounded like a rusted hinge when she arrived. Whomever trains her has accomplished quite a feat.

On the edge of the crowd, a confused Raoul stands alone, observing Christine.

Feels someone watching him. Their eyes meet. A tall man in a black felt hat with dark eyes.

This is THE PERSIAN. He nods a silent greeting.

Raoul looks away.

M. DEBINNE

Be mindful, though. La Carlotta will not take to such news. No doubt she's already heard the notices from her sick bed.

Richard and Moncharmin share a look. The retiring managers see that, smile sarcastically.

M. POLIGNY

Be humble, gentlemen. Welcome to the opera world.

MONCHARMIN

We know. Drama amongst the company is never anything new.

Now it's M. Debinne and M. Poligny to share their own look. The new managers sense this...

M. DEBINNE

Well, the ink's dry so it's no longer our problem, but--

M. POLIGNY
Do you think--?

M. DEBINNE
Gentlemen, if you'll accompany us
back to the office. We'll explain
further...

Moncharmin and Richard share a look, but follow anyway.

As they walk away, an echoed scream above the conversation--

JAMMES (O.S.)
The Opera Ghost!

Only Moncharmin turns, catching a glimpse through the sea of
people--

A shadowy figure wearing a death's head mask is being
surrounded by drunken well-wishers.

Raoul sees this figure too.

Christine doesn't react, only continues to socialize.

Moncharmin tries to see through the commotion. Someone
passes, before long--

The figure is gone.

Moncharmin blinks in surprise, continues on.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The retiring managers pour a drink for Moncharmin and
Richard.

M. POLIGNY
There is a ghost that haunts this
opera.

Moncharmin and Richard hold their drinks in mid-air, look at
each other.

M. DEBINNE
He's quite serious.

Richard and Moncharmin start laughing, down their drinks.

M. Poligny reaches into the desk drawer, pulls out and hands
over a document.

M. POLIGNY

The lease.

Richard and Moncharmin begin flipping through.

M. POLIGNY

To paraphrase Clause 98, which says the privilege can be withdrawn if the manager infringes the conditions stipulated in the lease.

Confused, they read. The clause is written in black ink. At the bottom, written in red ink in a childish hand. Richard reads--

RICHARD

"5. Or if the manager, in any month, delay for more than a fortnight the payment of allowance which he shall me to the...Opera ghost, an allowance of 20,000 francs a month, say, 240,000 francs a year."

A beat. No one speaks. Richard's face cracks into a smile.

RICHARD

Is that all?

M. DEBINNE

Also...Box 5 on the grand tier shall be placed at the disposal of the Opera ghost for every performance.

Richard walks away laughing in disgust, helping himself to another drink.

Moncharmin, however, feels the weight of this threat--

INT. BETWEEN SETS - SAME

A medic covers the dead face of Joseph Buquet as he's lifted on a stretcher by others.

MONCHARMIN (V.O.)

What happens if the box is sold?

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - SAME

The medics slowly carry the stretcher through.

M. DEBINNE (V.O.)
 This ghost has rules, you must
 learn to live in harmony with him.

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - SAME

At the entrance, the commissary of police and other
 constables wait for the stretcher to arrive.

A funereal hush has fallen over the party.

M. DEBINNE (V.O.)
 This is his domain. The faster you
 accept that--

The crowd parts as the stretcher is carried through. The
 company and other guests look on in confused horror.

Raoul watches...

M. DEBINNE (V.O.)
 --the better it will be for all...

The stretcher is carried out the front entrance, into the
 night air...

EXT. DE CHAGNY ESTATE - MORNING

Phillipe and Raoul take breakfast overlooking their vast
 estate. Raoul sits in frustration.

PHILLIPE
 Still?

RAOUL
 I've written to her. Sent her
 notices to see me. She refuses.

INT. RAOUL'S BEDROOM - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - DAY

Phillipe is helping Raoul into his uniform.

RAOUL
 She hasn't sung since her gala
 performance.

PHILLIPE
 Remember your obligation to the
 expedition--

RAOUL

Yes, yes--

PHILLIPE

It's curious, though. In my circles, word is she's refused every invitation.

RAOUL

Your gossiping friends...

PHILLIPE

Maybe. Her refusal is her answer, brother.

A sober beat.

RAOUL

She didn't recognize me that night, Phillipe. What has happened?

INT. MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - DAY

Christine sits in thought. Her adopted bed-ridden mother, MAMMA VALERIUS, an overweight joy of a person, is close by.

INT. FOYER - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - MORNING

Raoul crosses when a SERVANT approaches with an envelope.

SERVANT

This just arrived.

Raoul takes it, moves to the large window for privacy, tearing open the envelope.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)

"Monsieur, I have not forgotten the little boy who went into the sea to rescue my scarf. I felt I must write to you today, when I am going to Perros..."

INT. BRITTANY EXPRESS - DAY

Raoul sits in his compartment, looking over the French countryside.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)

"Tomorrow is the anniversary of the death of my poor father, whom you knew and who was very fond of you. He is buried there, with his violin..."

EXT. SETTING SUN INN - PERROS-GUIREC - DAY

Bags in hand, Raoul is escorted into the small inn. The coast is in the background. A flurry of snow in the sky.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)

"...in the graveyard of the little church, at the bottom of the slope where we used to play as children..."

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PERROS-GUIREC BEACH - DAY

CRASH! A wave smooths over the sand, creating that sizzling sound. Raoul looks out over the water.

Sees two ghostly figures amongst the waves.

A YOUNG RAOUL running after the scarf in the water, while a YOUNG CHRISTINE watches, nervous, yet thrilled...

Behind him, a voice from behind breaks the spell--

CHRISTINE (O.S.)

So you have come. He told me I should find you here.

Christine is there. He smiles as he approaches, yet keeping a distance.

RAOUL

Who?

CHRISTINE

My poor father, of course.

He smiles sadly.

RAOUL

Did your father tell you that I love you and that--?

She bursts out laughing, not knowing how else to react.

CHRISTINE

Apologies. Me? You are dreaming, my friend!

Coming off as too eager, Raoul turns away in embarrassment.

CHRISTINE

I did not send for you to tell me such things.

(beat, comforting)

Come now. I thought you would remember our games here...I--maybe I was wrong to write you.

(beat)

This anniversary and your sudden appearance in my dressing room the other night, reminded me of the time long past and made me write you as the little girl I was then.

Faces her, his expression hardened.

RAOUL

When you saw me in your dressing room, was that the first time you noticed me?

She shakes her head.

CHRISTINE

I had often seen you in your brother's box and on the stage.

RAOUL

So, why then...when you saw me in your room, reminding you of your retrieved scarf, did you answer me as if you didn't know me?

The conversation suddenly shifts--

CHRISTINE

What are you implyin--?

RAOUL

Tell me about this man to whom you said 'I sing only for you'?

CHRISTINE

You were spying behind the door--?

RAOUL
Who is he?!

His tone is too blunt. Distraught, she runs from him, down the coast.

Raoul watches, immediately regretful.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - PERROS - LATER THAT DAY

Raoul wipes a fresh powder of snow away from Daae's tombstone. Speaks a silent prayer.

Breathing in the air, he looks about. Periodically, red roses bloom out of the fresh powder. An ethereal beauty...

There's something else there--

Discarded skeletons and skulls by the hundred lay in a heap against the wall of the church.

His haunted eyes don't turn away, even as he fails to notice Christine suddenly next to him, gazing at her father's tombstone.

As he reacts, she quickly places a gloved hand to his mouth.

CHRISTINE
Just listen-- I've decided to tell you something very serious. Do you remember the legend of the Angel of Music?

She removes her hand. He nods.

RAOUL
The fairy tale your father told us. He said 'when I'm in heaven--'

CHRISTINE
'--I will send him to you.'
(beat)
My father's in heaven and I have been visited by the Angel of Music.

RAOUL
I have no doubt. Christine, no human being can sing as you did the other evening.

CHRISTINE

He comes in my dressing room. This is who you heard. Imagine my astonishment when you told me that you could hear him too.

RAOUL

But there was no one there. After you left, I found no one--

CHRISTINE

So you see! Well...

RAOUL

Christine, listen. I-I think somebody is making game of you--

CHRISTINE

You're wrong. He was there-- you don't understand-- leave me be!

INT. RAOUL'S ROOM - SETTING SUN INN - PERROS - NIGHT

Lost in thought, a bitter, sleepless Raoul stares out the open window.

Below, a door closing catches his attention. Trudging through the snow, a hooded figure cloaked in white runs away.

EXT. SETTING SUN INN - PERROS - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul pulls on his coat as he exits the inn, in pursuit.

EXT. ROAD - PERROS - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul's boots crunch loudly in the hard snow. He makes no effort to deafen them, as he tries to get the attention of the hooded figure. The figure doesn't notice.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - PERROS - MOMENTS LATER

The church steeple looms large over the graveyard.

The hooded figure pushes the gates open and proceeds inside. A beat later, Raoul jogs in after, short of breath. He keeps a distance to observe his surroundings.

The crosses of the tombstones cast long shadows on such a clear night. The heap of bones by the church wall keep watch.

The hooded figure kneels down at a tombstone, removes the hood. It's Christine. Makes the sign of the cross, and prays.

From the church, the clock strikes midnight. Raoul looks up as the strokes count. Waiting in anticipation.

The last stroke, then silence again.

Christine lifts her eyes to the sky, outstretching her arms in ecstasy.

Raoul watches confused.

A skull among the bone heap watches, also.

Then--

Music is heard. Beautiful, awe-inspiring music.

"The Resurrection of Lazarus."

Both hear it. Raoul is dumbfounded--

RAOUL
...could it be true?

The music stops as suddenly as it began. The cool wind of night cracks.

A chuckle, somewhere...

Raoul's eyes dart to the heap with a shudder.

In the background, Christine has risen to her feet and is walking toward the gate in a haze. She doesn't notice Raoul.

He sees her leave, but is stopped when--

Crack, crack...

SOMETHING rolls to his feet. He almost jumps in fright.

A skull.

Raoul's breath deepens. Another skull, then another...

THEN--

A long shadow forms from the heap, gliding along the wall.

Are his eyes deceiving him? His feet are planted in terror.

The shadow approaches the church doors. Disappears...

Raoul's heart stops.

Invisible hands push the doors open! The shadow reappears, entering the church.

Raoul gives chase.

INT. CHURCH - PERROS - CONTINUOUS

Moonbeams shoot through the stain glass windows.

The shadow glides with Raoul in pursuit. At the altar, he catches up and takes hold of the shadow.

Raoul looks down. He's holding a portion of a cloak.

RAOUL

Face me!

Looks to the face...

The shadow turns.

A death's head looks at him with scorching eyes!

Raoul screams in terror!

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

Distant voices.

AN IMAGE FLASHES

The church floor. Snow flows in through the open doors.

MAN (O.S.)

He's here! Mademoiselle, come quick!

BLACK

Footsteps crack under a stone surface.

AN IMAGE FLASHES

On the steps of the altar, a bloodied, bruised Raoul lays, eyes half-lidded as he's discovered.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
Raoul--!

CUT TO BLACK:

Christine's screams echo in the darkness--

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BOX 5 - DAY

Moncharmin and Richard approach Box 5, push the door open and step inside.

INT. BOX 5 - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

They turn over the furniture, lift seat covers. Nothing.

MONCHARMIN
It's only a box. Nothing
distinguishes it from any other.
Nothing that suggests a ghost.

RICHARD (V.O.)
"So, it is to be war between us?!"

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON a letter in Richard's hand, written in red ink, in a clumsy hand.

RICHARD (O.S.)
(reading)
"If you still care for peace, here
is my ultimatum...leave Box 5 be."

Richard furiously paces as Moncharmin nervously shakes his head.

RICHARD
"The part of Margarita shall be
sung tonight by Christine Daae.
Never mind about Carlotta, she will
be ill.
(beat)
"My loyal box-keeper Madame Giry
will continue her functions and see
that you deliver a letter of reply
to me at once.
(beat)
(MORE)

RICHARD(cont'd)

"Send a letter of reply that you accept, as did your predecessors, the terms of lease relating to my monthly allowance."

Reveal -- M. Giry standing at attention before Moncharmin and Richard. Richard shakes his head at her in disbelief. Finishes...

RICHARD

"If you refuse, you will give 'Faust' tonight in a house with a curse upon it. Take my advice, and be warned in time. O.G.."

Richard balls the letter up.

MONCHARMIN

How do you explain this, Madame Giry?

MADAME GIRY

These are my duties, monsieur.

RICHARD

Your duties are to your employers, Madame!

Just then a knock. MERCIER, the acting manager, whom we met at the beginning with Leroux, enters.

RICHARD
Leave us!

MONCHARMIN
Yes?

MERCIER

Lachenel would like to see one of you gentlemen.

MONCHARMIN

Who is Lachenel?

MERCIER

He is your stud-groom. Apparently one of our horses has been stolen and--

RICHARD

This is nonsense--!

MADAME GIRY

Monsieur, I'm afraid this may be the work of the Opera Gh--

Richard looks ready to burst. Madame Giry lets out a small cry as Richard seizes her arm, sending her out the door. The door slams on her face--

LATER

--Richard slams a shot glass down, letting out a stressed breath. Moncharmin merely watches.

RICHARD

Those people are all making fools of us, Armand! It'll be "Faust" tonight.

Richard pauses a beat, swallowing hard.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Let us watch the performance from Box 5 on the grand tier. It's the only way we'll know.

MONCHARMIN

What of Carlotta?

A bell furiously rings--

INT. CARLOTTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Surrounded in poor taste "opulence", Carlotta takes breakfast in bed. Mid-bite, she is ringing her bell, screaming--

CARLOTTA

Bring me my post! Bring me my post!

Her MAID enters, carrying a pile. Carlotta snatches, happily flipping through--

CARLOTTA

Fan...fan...fa--

She stops, holds up an anonymous envelope written with red ink in a clumsy hand. It reads, "**Carlotta**".

Carlotta opens the envelope, unfolds the letter. It reads--

"If you appear tonight, you must be prepared for a great misfortune at the moment you open your mouth to sing...a misfortune worse than death..."

The letter in hand, she thrusts herself out of bed, and begins pacing. The Maid doesn't know what to do. Walking toward the window, Carlotta re-reads the letter.

MAID

Madame, may I be of assist--?

Carlotta screams in Spanish.

CARLOTTA

Stop speaking, you cow!

The Maid shrinks from the room.

Carlotta looks out the window, fear overwhelming her.

Across the street, there's a parked hearse. Pointing out the window, she falls to the floor, crying dramatic, inconsolable tears--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CARLOTTA'S DRESSING ROOM - PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

The opposite of the last scene now.

Surrounded by her entourage of makeup artists, wardrobe, and gaudy friends, Carlotta sings two or three notes, her warm-up exercises.

Wiping away a thin layer of misplaced lipstick, she arrogantly speaks loudly to whomever will listen--

CARLOTTA

It's Christine, she's done this!
She's plotting against me! She
wants to take what I've worked my
entire life to achieve in one
masterstroke, no!

MAKEUP ARTIST

No, she mustn't!

CARLOTTA FRIEND

We'll be out there! You will have
the biggest applause!

A door knock.

CARLOTTA

Enter!

Mercier pops his head in.

MERCIER

Madame, the managers wished me to
check on you. Are you well?

Carlotta sharply turns to him, insulted.

CARLOTTA

I am perfectly well! If I were
dying, I would still sing
Margarita!

Shaking his head, Mercier leaves. An anxiety builds in
Carlotta as she crosses to the vanity mirror.

CARLOTTA

What has this world come to?

There, front and center, is another anonymous envelope
written with red ink in a clumsy hand.

It reads **"Carlotta"**.

She stops frozen. Turns coyly to avoid attention and rips
open the envelope. The letter reads--

**"You have a bad cold. If you are wise, you will see it is
madness to try to sing tonight."**

Carlotta takes a deep breath. Somewhere, deep inside, she
finds her courage. Nothing will stop her.

EXT. PARIS OPERA - THAT NIGHT

The finely-dressed crowds step out of luxurious carriages, an
excitement in the air.

The displayed poster is for tonight's performance of "Faust".

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - SAME

The theater is filling up. Carlotta's friends are in the
audience.

INT. BOX 5 - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Richard and Moncharmin sit uncomfortably in the box, waiting
for any mishap to occur.

The chandelier lights come out, everything--

FADES TO BLACK:

INT. STAGE - SAME

Facing the red velvet curtain. The curtains parts, the orchestra plays. Past the footlights, the audience claps.

Faust begins...

INT. STAGE - LATER IN THE PERFORMANCE

Tenor CAROLUS FONTA sings his first appeal to the actor portraying Dr. Faust.

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - SAME

A determined Raoul moves through the flood of crew and cast, searching. He looks bruised and somewhat ill, catching some double-takes from passerby's.

At the wings, Christine is there, wearing her boy's wardrobe for the performance. He stands beside her, unsure of his feelings or what to say. She senses him, but doesn't turn, whispering--

CHRISTINE

Please leave, I'm begging you...

RAOUL

You fled Perros like a thief in the night before I was even conscious.

She shakes her head, feeling another set of eyes on her--

CHRISTINE

You mustn't speak to me, Raoul. If you love me just a little, do this for me. My life depends upon it...

Raoul doesn't speak, only dumbstruck.

Out of the corner of her eye, she speaks low...

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

I will never forget you.

RAOUL

What are you--?

Carlotta approaches, followed by her entourage, performing last minute touches. See's Christine--

CARLOTTA

You! This is a night you won't soon forget.

Christine doesn't answer, wanting to say something, but instead holding her tongue. Carlotta turns to Raoul, smiles romantically, holding out her hand for him to kiss it.

CARLOTTA

Ahh, the Comte de Chagny. What a pleasure...

He takes her hand, gives it a small shake and walks away without a word. She turns back to Christine.

CARLOTTA

The audience gave you a quiet reception in the first act.

CHRISTINE

Only from your friends out there...

Carlotta ignores her, looking back toward Raoul--

CARLOTTA

He needs a woman like me to show him the pleasures of life.

(re: Christine's costume)

Not you, boy.

Carolus Fonta finishes, the audience applauds, steps into the wings, breathing deep. Greets the ladies as he passes.

The STAGE MANAGER runs to Carlotta.

STAGE MANAGER

You're ready?

In a low tone to herself, her mantra...

CARLOTTA

Be fearless...

...poses a diva stance and walks on-stage.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The audience applauds enthusiastically as Carlotta makes her entrance. She faux smiles like the star she is.

INT. RAOUL'S BOX - SAME

Raoul takes a seat, disheartened.

INT. BOX 5 - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Richard and Moncharmin stand and applaud Carlotta's entrance, share a nervous glance.

RICHARD
Our ghost is late.

MONCHARMIN
Yes. It's not a bad house for a
house with a curse upon it.

INT. STAGE - SAME

Carlotta basks in the applause, looks to her friends in the audience.

MOMENTS LATER

In the middle of the act, Carlotta sings before a kneeling Faust. The moment is one of beauty. Her Margarita is magnificent, that much is certain.

INT. BOX 5 - SAME

Moncharmin and Richard's attention is rapt on Carlotta--

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - SAME

--even Christine is impressed.

INT. UNDER THE STAGE - SAME

A movement of shadow approaches the footlights.

INT. STAGE - SAME

The actor playing Faust, on bended knee...

ACTOR PLAYING FAUST
(singing)
"Let me gaze on the form before me.
(MORE)

ACTOR PLAYING FAUST(cont'd)

While from yonder ether blue. Look
how the star of eve, bright and
tender, lingers o'er me. To love
thy beauty too!"

CARLOTTA AS MARGARITA

(singing)

"Oh how strange! Like a spell does
the evening bind me! And a deep
languid charm, I feel without
alarm. With it's melody entwind me
and all my heart subdue-- C-OACK!!!

Everything stops. The audience look to each other in confused
horror, exchanging glances.

Carlotta's face falls. It sounded like a toad.

A pin drop could be heard.

Backstage, everyone has stopped. Christine looks on in shock.

INT. BOX 5 - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Richard and Moncharmin have gone pale, waiting for something
terrible to happen. In the silence, they hear--

Breathing from behind. The ghost is near.

They dare not turn around, only stare ahead. Under his
breath, toward Carlotta--

RICHARD

Well, go on...

INT. STAGE - SAME

Confidence has drained from Carlotta. Bravely, she tries a
second time, enveloping the silence of the house.

CARLOTTA AS MARGARITA

(singing)

"I feel without alarm. I feel
without alarm--CO-ACK!!!

(beat)

"With its melody entwind me--CO-
ACK!

(finally)

"And all my heart -- CO-ACK!

She bursts into tears, terrified, humiliated. The audience bursts into a tumultuous chorus of voices, then, even worse--laughter.

INT. BOX 5 - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Moncharmin and Richard look on in horror. Behind them, a cackling.

A shadow slowly moves between them. Whispers...

THE GHOST

She is singing tonight to bring the chandelier down...

In unison the manager's eyes raise to the ceiling.

The grand chandelier sways--

--slow at first, then faster and faster.

--the lights dim on and off--

Everyone looks up. Hearts stop--

Christine. Raoul. Carlotta. Madame Giry. Richard and Moncharmin.

--audience members slowly stand from their seats--

--a mounting laughter begins echoing--

--mouths agape, eyes heavenward--

--backstage, the giant donkey wheel holding the rope begins to buckle, then shift suddenly--

--all feel the impending disaster--

THEN--

--a woman opens her mouth to scream--

Too late--

--the donkey wheel holding the pressure GIVES--

--SPINNING out of control--

THE CHANDELIER COMES DOWN ON THE AUDIENCE!

A split-second thought crosses the minds of those below.

Glass and debris explode into the audience of the Opera.

Everywhere, people scatter, running for the exits. Some trample over each other -- it's every man for himself.

Horrific pandemonium.

Raoul can't take his eyes off the disaster below. Sees Christine lock eyes with them, then vanish suddenly--

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul pushes people aside to catch up to Christine. Down the corridor, a fleeting glimpse of Christine turning the corner.

Her dressing room closes just as he turns the corner. Runs to the door, flies in--

RAOUL
Christine--!

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--to find the room empty. Just out of his peripheral, the reflection of the room vibrates in the mirror, then slow.

He doesn't see.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul steps out of the dressing room, baffled and utterly alone among the fleeing crowd--

INT. AUDITORIUM - THAT NIGHT

Silent, contemplative. Firefighters, medics and volunteers work under the chandelier to save any survivors.

Both shell-shocked, Moncharmin and Richard are among the volunteers.

The auditorium is empty save for Opera personnel.

The Persian observes with horror as he takes in the view from afar. Tilts his head to the Grand Tier -- Box 5.

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY

A wet newspaper lays in the street, the headline reading--

**"OPERA NIGHT DISASTER. NUMBERS WOUNDED, 1 DEAD.
CARLOTTA TAKES ILL. DAAE MISSING"**

A boot steps on the newspaper, crossing the street.

INT. MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - ANOTHER DAY

Portraits adorn the walls. Professor Valerius, Old Papa Daae. Young Christine.

RAOUL (V.O.)
It's been two weeks, and still no
word.

INT. MAMMA VALERIUS SITTING ROOM - SAME

The curtains pulled tight, the light allowed in cuts a line
across the room.

A sleepless Raoul stands by a seated Mamma Valerius. With her
nightgown and braided hair, she is not dressed to receive
visitors, but judging by the sympathetic look on her face,
Raoul's an exception.

RAOUL
I want only to know that she's
safe.

Surprisingly, she smiles brightly. Reaches out with both
hands and guides him to the chair facing her.

MAMMA VALERIUS
She is with her good genius!

RAOUL
What?

MAMMA VALERIUS
Why, the Angel of Music!
(a finger to her lips)
But you must not tell anybody.

Blankly nodding his head--

RAOUL
You can rely on me.

MAMMA VALERIUS

I know I can. Give me your hands,
as when you brought me the story of
little Lotte, that Daddy Daae used
to tell you. I am very fond of you.
Christine is very fond of you.

Raoul's having trouble putting his thoughts together.

MAMMA VALERIUS (CONT'D)

She spoke of you every day. She
told me you made her a proposal!

She laughs wholeheartedly. Raoul stands, flushed, pacing.

MAMMA VALERIUS

Come now. If you're angry with me
for laughing, I beg your pardon.
After all, it's not your fault.
(off his expression)
Did you think that Christine was
free?

He stops mid-step--

RAOUL

She's engaged to be married?

MAMMA VALERIUS

Why, no! You know as well as I do
that Christine couldn't marry even
if she wanted to.

RAOUL

I don't know anything--why?

MAMMA VALERIUS

The Angel of Music, of course!

This is becoming all too strange for him.

RAOUL

I don't follow...

MAMMA VALERIUS

He forbids her. Please sit--he
forbids it without forbidding her.
(beat)
He tells her, if she got married,
she would never hear him again. He
would go away forever.

Raoul doesn't know what to say.

MAMMA VALERIUS

So you understand, she can't let her Angel of Music go. It's quite natural.

Off his confused expression--

MAMMA VALERIUS

She didn't mention this when she met you at Perros? She went with her good genius.

RAOUL

What...?

MAMMA VALERIUS

He arranged to meet her down there in the Churchyard at Perros, by Daae's grave. He promised to play the "Resurrection of Lazarus" on her father's violin--

RAOUL

Where does he live?

As if it were the most obvious answer--

MAMMA VALERIUS

In Heaven. Honestly, I don't understand your doubt, monsieur.

RAOUL

How long has she known this "genius"?

MAMMA VALERIUS

It's been three months since he began to give her lessons.

RAOUL

And where, pray?

MAMMA VALERIUS

Not here. It would be impossible in this little flat. The whole house would hear them. No! Her dressing room whereas--

Raoul's mind is processing too much information.

RAOUL

At the Opera...

MAMMA VALERIUS
 --at the eight o'clock in the
 morning, when there's no one about,
 you see!

He's already out the door before Mamma Valerius can notice.

MAMMA VALERIUS
 Monsieur, are you not a little off
 your head?

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Hands tucked in his pockets, Raoul walks with confused thoughts. The night is freezing cold, and nearly quite deserted. He's not aware of his path until--

A WHIP CRACKS! A carriage nearly collides with Raoul's face.

He jolts from his stupor, looks about, alarmed. His brush with death makes him aware now of his surroundings.

The carriage disappears in the night air.

He's alone again. The cold rushes back to him. He stamps his feet to stay warm.

Click, clack, click, clack...

Raoul turns, a carriage is rounding the corner at a walking pace.

As it approaches, Raoul glimpses a woman inside leaning her head out the open window. Could it--?

RAOUL
 Christine!!

He frantically gives chase.

The woman doesn't reply. Her companion is nothing more than a shadowed outline.

The carriage picks up pace. The window is pulled up.

RAOUL
 Christine...!

The cold slows him up. He trips and falls face first onto the cobbled pavement. Doesn't matter, he gets up to pursue, when--

The carriage has disappeared without a trace.

He stares down the desolate road, his heart as cold as the night.

INT. RAOUL'S ROOM - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - MORNING

Raoul's Servant finds him in bed, staring out the window in exhaustion, wearing the same clothes from the previous night. He holds a thin envelope.

SERVANT
Monsieur, this just arri--

Raoul snatches the envelope. It's covered in mud, un-stamped, and written in a pencil yet elegant handwriting, "**To be handed to M le Victome Raoul de Chagny.**" followed by the address...

He tears it open.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)
"Dear. Go to the masked ball at the Opera on the night after tomorrow. At twelve o'clock, be in the little room..."

LATER

He stares out the window, the letter left on the bed.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)
"...behind the chimney of the big crush room."

INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Raoul stands before a mirror with a TAILOR as he tries on his costume -- a white domino.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)
"Don't mention this appointment to a living soul. Wear a white domino and see that you are well masked..."

The tailor places the mask on his face, with thick, long lace hanging down.

CHRISTINE'S LETTER (V.O.)
"As you love me, do not let
yourself be recognized. Christine."

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

AN EXPLOSION OF COLOR, MUSIC, AND ODDITY.

The Masquerade is more bohemian than the ordinary ball. Everywhere, masked faces are seen, dancing, drinking, random debauchery. Each costume more extreme than the next.

Hastily climbing the crowded staircase, is a masked Raoul dressed in his domino costume. Looks at the enormous clock-- 11:55 PM.

INT. CRUSH ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul maneuvers through the festive crowd, who offer him food, drink and a dance as he passes. He ignores them all. Unlike the party guests, he moves with purpose.

On the far end of the room, he leans against the door post, waiting. His mask hides any emotion he could be feeling.

Through the crowd, a black domino emerges cautiously, short in stature and masked, toward him. He looks ready to ignore yet another guest when the domino's fingertips squeeze his.

RAOUL
Is that you, Christi--?

The domino raises a finger to her lips and turns to walk away, right into the center of the crowd. Raoul follows at a distance, maintaining his pace.

As they walk, the faceless Raoul watches the faceless Christine with love in his eyes.

A scream erupts--

PARTY-GOERS (O.S.)
--red death...touch me not!

A blur of faces emerge, separating Raoul from Christine, walking backward in horror. Raoul curiously turns.

A surrounding crowd of curious party-goers part, making way...

A figure dressed all in scarlet stands before them.

A huge hat with large feathers sits atop a death's head. An immense red cloak trails along the floor like a king's.

Embroidered on his cloak, in gold letters --

"Touch me not! I am Red Death stalking abroad!"

Raoul stops in his tracks. Has forgotten of Christine.

Red Death stalks forward, when an DRUNKEN GUEST steps out and touches it's arm. A skeletal hand violently seizes the drunken man's wrist, twisting it with superhuman strength.

Red Death releases the wrist, leaving the Drunken Guest withering on the floor.

Raoul doesn't budge, his eyes only focused on Red Death approaching. Once he gets a closer view--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - PERROS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Death's Head staring down at a terrified Raoul.

BACK TO:

INT. CRUSH ROOM - CONTINUE SCENE

Raoul nearly screams. The Red Death stares curiously at him as they cross paths. Confidence finds Raoul, as he makes ready to lunge after him, when--

A hand grabs him, pulling him back.

He turns.

It's Christine, beckoning him away, one eye on the receding Red Death. Raoul glances over his shoulder as they hasten toward the door.

Christine turns back, sees--

Amongst the crowd, the Red Death has stopped to observe the fleeing dominoes. A party-goer blurs her view.

When he's gone, Red Death has disappeared.

Her pace quickens--

INT. STAIRWAY - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Christine and Raoul climb the stairs. This area is deserted.

INT. PRIVATE BOX CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Comes to a landing. She looks at the row of identical doors, chooses one, pulls Raoul in.

INT. BOX - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS

They pull the door closed, and hold their breath. Christine turns, in a whisper--

CHRISTINE

On no account are you to show
yourself.

Raoul pulls his mask off. Christine doesn't remove hers.

RAOUL

Take yours off--

Christine bolts to the partition and listens. He doesn't hear anything.

Beat.

Christine turns the knob and opens the door ajar, looking out. The corridor is empty, as well as the staircase.

Raoul steps behind her.

RAOUL

I don't see a thi--

He stops dead.

On the top step, a red foot appears, then another. Soon the whole scarlet dress of Red Death appears, descending the staircase.

Raoul's not thinking, almost pushing Christine aside to rush past--

RAOUL

He won't escape me again!

She quietly closes the door.

CHRISTINE

Who shall not escape you?

RAOUL

The man who hides behind that hideous mask of death. He was there, in Perros...Red Death.

He tries to pass once more. Christine holds him back.

RAOUL

Your Angel of Death.

CHRISTINE

You musn't. In the name of our love, no.

Raoul stops, pulls her hand away.

RAOUL

You lie, madam. What a poor fellow I must be to let you mock and flout me as you have. You gave me every reason for hope in Perros, when all you've done is deceive me.

Her eyes narrow, insulted--

CHRISTINE

You'll beg my pardon one day for those ugly words, and I shall forgive you.

(beat)

I came to tell you tonight but you would not believe me now. You've lost faith in me.

Raoul realizes he's gone too far, but his patience is waning.

RAOUL

You can tell me. You're free. Free to go about Paris. Come here to the ball.

(beat)

What have you been doing this past fortnight? What is this tale of the Angel of Music that you've been telling Mamma Valerius? Someone's been playing on your innocence, Christine. I was an eyewitness to it at Perros. You're sensible. What is this farce?

Christine slowly pulls her mask away, revealing a tear-stained face. The joyous Christine isn't there, only a hardened, tired one.

CHRISTINE
It's a tragedy.

RAOUL
(gentle)
What has happened?

She wipes a tear away, composing herself. Puts her mask on again, hiding her face from the world, heads to the door.

CHRISTINE
Some day perhaps...

He makes to follow, she gestures him to stay.

CHRISTINE
No...

Steps out, leaving Raoul.

INT. PRIVATE BOX CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, a masked Raoul looks out. By now, the festivities have made their way up here. Christine is at the edge of the crowd, disappearing among the blur of faces.

Raoul walks, not sure where he's headed. Keeps a cautious eye as he crosses toward the stairs.

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Masked faces parading everywhere. Raoul descends the grand staircase, passing a passed-out Richard and Moncharmin.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

He makes his way to Christine's dressing room door. Thinks a beat, then decides. Knocks. No answer.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He steps in. It's empty, darkened, save for the low burning gas jet. Takes in the space, listening.

Out of the corner of his eye, a shape--

He gasps! His own reflection in the mirror, stares back at him.

Echoed footsteps. Approaching--

He quickly ducks to the inner room, separated by a curtain for concealment. Holds his breath.

Christine enters. With a sigh, she flings the mask on the desk. She murmurs--

CHRISTINE
...poor Erik.

Raoul's heart stops. For the first time, he processes that name. He's about to react--

Distant singing.

At almost the same time, they both raise their heads to the heavens, listening.

The voice sings the Wedding night song from 'Romeo and Juliet'. Raoul can't deny it's beautiful, looks to Christine.

She's smiling through her dark, haunted features.

CHRISTINE
I am here, Erik. But you are late.

The voice bounces off the walls of the room, but sounds to be moving throughout, centering itself before Christine.

She stretches her arms out, as she had at the churchyard in Perros.

VOICE (O.S.)
(singing)
"Fate links thee to me forever and
a day..."

The voice moves again, toward the back of the room.

Christine moves with it. Possessed.

Raoul is transfixed. Tries to speak. His mouth is dry.

With a remaining ounce of bravery, pulls the curtain back and steps into the room proper.

RAOUL
Christine, stop!

Christine doesn't take notice as she steps toward the mirror, the voice leading her.

Reaching out, her reflected finger touches the real Christine. She makes eye contact with herself, smiles.

The finger disappears into the mirror, then her arm--

Raoul reaches to grab the disappearing Christine but--

A growl.

Suddenly he's flung across the room by an icy blast across his face. Recovers, looks back.

Christine is gone, not a trace.

RAOUL

No, no, no, no!!!

Raoul rushes to the mirror, smashes at it with all his strength. Bangs at the walls. Nothing.

Overexerts himself, and falls against the mirror, his face pressed into the glass.

RAOUL

No, no...Christine...

The voice fades into the ethers, still singing--

VOICE (O.S.)

"Fate links thee to me forever and a day..."

INT. MAMMA VALERIUS SITTING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

An exhausted Raoul sits in last night's clothes. A SERVANT approaches, hands him a cup of tea. Ignores it.

His traumatized gaze is set on Christine, tending to Mamma Valerius in bed, knitting with her pillows propped up.

The color has returned to Christine's cheeks and looks no worse for wear. Christine meets his eyes, and approaches him.

MAMMA VALERIUS

Well, Monsieur de Chagny, don't you know our Christine? Her good genius has sent her back to us. Her Angel of Music.

Christine offers her hand. He doesn't move.

CHRISTINE

Mamma, you promised me! You know there is no such thing as the Angel of Music.

MAMMA VALERIUS

Pray then child, who gave you lessons for three months?

CHRISTINE

This possibly couldn't interest, Monsieur de Chagny--

Raoul's gaze doesn't leave hers.

RAOUL

On the contrary, anything that concerns you interests me to an extent which you will one day understand. I do not deny that my surprise equals my pleasure at finding you with your adopted mother after what happened yesterday.

Christine doesn't know what to say.

RAOUL

I have been your friend for far too long not to be alarmed with the deeds that will certainly end by making you its victim, Christine.

Mamma Valerius is taken aback as she climbs out of bed, runs to Christine's side.

MAMMA VALERIUS

Is Christine in danger?

RAOUL

Yes, madame.

MAMMA VALERIUS

Tell me everything!

RAOUL

Her Angel of Music is abusing her good faith. Raoul--!

CHRISTINE

MAMMA VALERIUS
 She said herself there was no Angel
 of Music--

Christine grabs hold of Mamma Valerius, tears flowing.

<p>CHRISTINE Don't believe him, Mummy!</p>	<p>MAMMA VALERIUS Then tell me you'll never leave me again!</p>
---	---

RAOUL
 That's what you must promise,
 Christine! That is the only thing
 you can do to reassure us.

This stops Christine.

RAOUL
 We won't ask a single question of
 the past, if you promise us to
 remain under our protection in the
 future.

Christine shakes her head, disbelieving--

CHRISTINE
 I am the mistress of my own
 actions! You have no right to
 control them! As to what I have
 done the last fortnight, there is
 only one man in the world who has
 the right to demand an account of
 me -- my husband!

Raoul notices something on her finger...

CHRISTINE
 Well, I have no husband and I never
 mean to marry!

He reaches out to seize her hand, but she snaps it back sharply. A glint of dull gold catches Mamma Valerius' attention.

RAOUL
 You have no husband, yet you wear a
 wedding ring!

CHRISTINE
 It's a gift. Nothing more.

RAOUL

As you have no husband, the ring
can only have been given by one who
hopes to make you his wife.

(re: the ring)

That is a promise, one that has
been accepted.

MAMMA VALERIUS

That's what I said!

RAOUL

And what did she answer?

MAMMA VALERIUS

Well--

CHRISTINE

What I chose!

Raoul stops, lets all this sink in. Sits.

RAOUL

I saw your ecstasy at the
sound of the voice,
Christine. Your ecstasy!

CHRISTINE

This is the second time you
have listened--

RAOUL

You're under a very dangerous spell
and it seems you're aware of the
imposter. You said yourself, there
is no Angel of Music! If that's so,
why did you follow him?! "Poor
Erik". Those are your words! Who is
he?

Christine answers, coldly--

CHRISTINE

Monsieur de Chagny, you shall never
know. Do not ask. Do you want to be
killed?

RAOUL

Perhaps...

Christine falls to her knees at his lap, clasping his hands.

CHRISTINE

Forget the man's voice. Swear to
me. Swear that you will make no
attempt to find out.

He stares at her with pity. She kisses his hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - DAY

Raoul and Christine walk side by side through the cramped activity of the Opera by day. Sewing costumes, building sets, dancers rehearsing. All stop and curtesy or bow to Christine, the reigning star.

RAOUL

Since Carlotta's incident, you're a queen to these people.

Christine smiles sadly.

CHRISTINE

She hasn't been seen in public since. Carlotta didn't deserve such treatment.

They walk in silence...

RAOUL

I have some news for you...the Polar expedition has been pushed three weeks. I shan't be going.

Christine stops, bows her head and fidgets with the plain ring around her finger.

CHRISTINE

That is a folly. For us both.

She keeps walking, he follows. They pass the enormous painted backdrop of a garden at night. Raoul takes pause, looks about at the reality of the facade, wishing...

RAOUL

I only wish to see you out of harm's way.

INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

They step into the magnificence of the open auditorium. Cleaners and other staff maintain the seats and dust the velvet curtains. Raoul tilts his head to the ceiling. The new chandelier hangs in all its grandeur.

RAOUL

If only marriage were an option--

CHRISTINE

Be happy I sing for you, but--
 (a thought)
 A secret engagement will do!

She smiles and clasps his hands with her's, dancing merrily. He allows himself to feel joy for the first time in a while. Two children playing at love.

Out of the corner of his eye, Raoul spies something in their path -- an open trap door.

They're approaching close, when Raoul pulls her away. She lets out a short cry.

They both fall to the ground, out of breath, looking into the darkness below.

Raoul pauses a moment, hypnotized by the darkness.

RAOUL

You've shown me the upper part of
 your empire...but what of the lower
 part?

CHRISTINE

It's not mine to show...

RAOUL

He lives down there--

Suddenly, the trap-door shuts itself with an echoing thud. They jump in surprise. He looks to her.

RAOUL

Perhaps it was he.

Getting to her feet--

CHRISTINE

It's the trap-door shutters. They must spend their time somehow-- he can't open and shut the trap-doors and work at the same time.

RAOUL

Or not. Just suppose-- What is he working at?

He gets to his feet also.

RAOUL

Are you afraid of him?

She backs away from the trap-door, holding her arms around her waist.

CHRISTINE

No, of course not...

Raoul stands tall, sure of himself.

RAOUL

I will remove you from his power,
Christine, I swear it. I shall hide
you in the darkest corner of the
world, where he cannot find you.

Like a lost child, she falls into his arms. Allows herself to be vulnerable.

CHRISTINE

You swear it?

(a whisper)

We need to speak...elsewhere.

Takes his hand, leading him away...

INT. BACKSTAGE STAIRWAY - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Ascending the steps, they climb, higher into the enormous rafters of the Paris opera. Christine periodically looks over her shoulder, but sees nothing but Raoul smiling back at her. They disappear higher.

Beat.

A shadow appears on the wall, following...

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARIS OPERA - EVENING

Raoul and Christine step onto the expansive lead roof. The view of Paris in the evening at their feet is breathtaking.

As they take a seat under the gigantic statue of Apollo's Lyre, Christine watches as a wisp of white cloud lifts weightlessly into the sky.

CHRISTINE

I'm afraid...if I refuse to go with
you, you must carry me off by
force.

RAOUL

Are you afraid you'll change your
mind? He's only a spectre--

Christine shakes her head, a whisper--

CHRISTINE

He's no ghost. He's a demon...I am afraid of going back to live with him in the ground.

RAOUL

What compels you?

CHRISTINE

If I don't...terrible misfortunes may happen. I have a day left, Raoul. If I don't go, he'll drag me with him underground. Throw himself on his knees, with his death's head, and tell me he loves me through his tears...I-I can't see those tears flow.

Raoul pulls her close.

RAOUL

Let us leave tonight! I can--

CHRISTINE

No, no! It would be too cruel. Tomorrow evening, he shall hear me sing one last time. Fetch me in my dressing room after the performance. If I go back this time, I may never return.

Someone watches the couple from afar, as still as a statue. A long, grotesque sigh stretches--

BACK TO RAOUL AND CHRISTINE

Christine stands in alarm. A tense, questioning look in her eyes. Raoul follows her gaze.

RAOUL

I heard nothing.

CHRISTINE

We're in no danger here. We're at home here in the sky. Like a bird.

RAOUL

Christine--

CHRISTINE

The first time I saw him, I thought he was going to die. I've seen him.

Raoul lets this sink in.

RAOUL
How have you seen him?

Christine stares ahead--

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - FLASHBACK

--Christine brushing her hair at the vanity when--

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
...I had heard him speak at first,
for three months, without seeing
him. His voice was beautiful, other-
worldly...

--a distant voice speaks. She stops in surprise, looks about.
She's curious, but not afraid.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - FLASHBACK

Steps out, expecting someone to be there. The hallway is
deserted.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
Mamma Valerius said it must have
been the Angel of Music, whom my
father had promised to send me.

The voice returns in her dressing room. Christine steps back.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
The voice assured me...

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - FLASHBACK - ANOTHER DAY

Christine sings to her own reflection in the mirror.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
He agreed to give me lessons in my
dressing room, I never failed to
keep the appointments.

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Christine awakens, staring into the darkness.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
I feared a sort of witchcraft
behind all of this. But Mamma
Valerius reassured me to the
contrary. Only she, myself and the
voice knew of this. By his order.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - FLASHBACK - RESUME PREVIOUS SCENE

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
No one knew my progress. Even I
would doubt myself. The voice did
not. He knew.

Like a breath, the invisible voice whispers in her ear.

VOICE
Wait and see, my dear. We shall
astonish Paris before long.

Christine continues, works up to a high note, higher and higher until--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - PARIS OPERA - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

--her final note explodes.

Christine's gala performance. The night we met her.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
The voice was right.

Next to Phillipe, Raoul is astonished. The audience below are taken away by her ethereal voice.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
I don't know why Carlotta was not
at the theatre that night, nor why
I was chosen to sing in her stead.
But I sang with a rapture.

Raoul and the audience are on their feet, a thundering applause.

Box 5 is a dark, empty void.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
I felt...for a moment as if my soul
were leaving my body.

Christine feels the admiration with conflicted eyes.

A dream coming true...

...yet...

Subtly glances up to the boxes. Raoul is there.

Her footing fails her.

Like a rag doll, her body falls out from under her--

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

A passed out Christine is carried by a handful of men to her dressing room.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

Christine sighs, then let out a small groan. Opens her eyes, turns to a smiling Raoul, and stops.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
I learned the voice had another
attribute. Jealousy.

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARIS OPERA - PRESENT

CHRISTINE
He had told me if I must bestow my
heart on Earth, he shall return to
heaven.

Raoul looks at her in disbelief.

CHRISTINE
It was said in such an accent of
human sorrow, I should have known I
was the victim of my deluded senses-

-

RAOUL
Christine--

CHRISTINE
The faith...the faith in the voice,
with the memory of my father, was
so closely mingled, remained
undisturbed. I feared I would never
hear it again.

BACK TO:

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - RESUME PREVIOUS SCENE -
FLASHBACK

Christine blinks absentmindedly at Raoul, whispering...

CHRISTINE
Monsieur, who are you?

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
You were there. He was there also.

He bends his knee, takes her limp hand, and kisses it.

RAOUL
Mademoiselle, I am the little boy
who went into the sea to rescue
your scarf.

VOICE (O.S.)
You love him, that boy!

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAYS LATER - FLASHBACK

Christine circles the room, falls to her knees, tears
streaming down her cheeks. The booming voice all around her.

VOICE (O.S.)
I have given you everything! You
are unworthy of me!

CHRISTINE
Yes, yes you have...I am worthy. I
am! I need to see my father in
Perros. I shall ask Raoul de Chagny
to go with me. Please...trust
me...please...

A beat.

VOICE (O.S.)
Do as you please. I shall be at
Perros too.

EXT. CHURCHYARD - PERROS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

An enchanted Christine walks toward her father's grave. A shadow moving with her. 'The Resurrection of Lazarus' plays somewhere on a violin.

VOICE (V.O.)
If you are still worthy of me, if
you have not lied to me, I will
play on your father's violin...

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Christine walks alone, feeling like she's being watched.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
I was no longer mistress of myself.
I had become his thing.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Seconds after the chandelier disaster. Some of the audience flee for the exits, others help whatever survivors there might be. The stage is a mess of on-lookers, horror written on their face.

Christine bolts through the crowd, looks at Raoul's box. He's numb, but safe. Finds her among the crowd, rushes to her.

Something comes over Christine, rushes away.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

Christine pushes the door open, steps inside, calling--

CHRISTINE
Manifest yourself, please! Are you
safe?

Silence.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

In slow motion, Raoul pushes through the fleeing crowd, catching a glimpse of Christine turning a corner. Not able to catch up to her.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME - FLASHBACK

CHRISTINE
Please, I'm begging--

A magnificent wail is felt throughout the room. A violin accompanies, then singing...

VOICE (O.S.)
Come! And believe in me! Whoso hath
believed in me shall never die!

A spell casts over Christine.

She glances down, her feet levitate mere inches off the ground. Looks to the mirror, moving toward...

CHRISTINE POV

As she glides toward her reflection in the mirror, the entirety of the room stretches at length.

She truly looks like an angel, submitting to heaven.

Christine is calm, in a state of nirvana. Her eyes close, allowing to be taken away.

As she comes close to touching her own reflection, something unusual happens...

She passes through the reflection, and into the--

DARKNESS

Christine is in the final throws of ecstacy. The violin has faded. Her senses return. She opens her eyes, and gasps.

INT. PASSAGEWAY BEHIND THE MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

Darkness surrounds her. Cobwebbed, ancient steps descend further down into the earth.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME - FLASHBACK

Raoul bolts in, finding the room empty. Doesn't notice the reflection of the room vibrating in the mirror, then slow.

INT. PASSAGEWAY BEHIND THE MIRROR - SAME - FLASHBACK

Christine looks about, finds nothing to decipher.

Except...

A faint red glimmer in a distant angle of the wall.

Not knowing what to make of this, steps forward cautiously--

--all the time not realizing a dark figure standing silently against the wall behind her.

She reaches out to the red light, hypnotized--

--when a hand reaches out and slightly grazes Christine's other wrist.

She screams, twisting her body around.

The scream echoes.

The dark figure stands before her, not letting go. She doesn't fight, too frightened to move.

A second hand reaches and wraps its arm around her waist--

Leading her away...

INT. PASSAGEWAY - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

Further down the passage, the red glimmer grows -- revealed to be a lantern, laid on the stony ground.

Dreamlike darkness.

CHRISTINE'S POV

The swing of the lantern plays ghastly shapes along the walls. Glimpses of the figure leading her...

A large cloak.

A hat.

A black gloved hand, not letting go.

The figure turns to her. He has no face, only blackness with piercing eyes...

INT. CELLARS - MOMENTS LATER

Christine is lifted onto the back of a white shape. Her eyes are adjusting, runs her fingers through the hair. It's a horse.

CHRISTINE
(sleepy)
Where is the voice...?

The figure pulls the horse, leading them further into the depths.

As they travel, glimpses of the cellars are seen. Ancient catacombs, lost to history...

INT. CIRCULAR STAIRWAY - CELLARS - MOMENTS LATER

All of this is taken very peacefully by Christine.

The figure turns to her, the blackness of his face intriguing her.

A blue light slowly surrounds the moment as they walk. Christine lifts her head over the horse's back and sees--

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - CONTINUOUS

--the lake stretches into the distance. The blue light comes from the bank, where a small boat is fastened to an iron on the wharf.

The figure pulls Christine down from the horse. As he does, he senses something in a dark corner.

At first, it appears to be nothing, but the figure knows someone is there -- a man, watching vigilantly.

Ignoring the man, the figure places Christine delicately into the boat.

CLOP, CLOP, CLOP, the horse disappears up a stairwell, descending into the night.

She looks up and sees standing over her the figure raising the large oar, pushing the boat away from shore.

His eyes never leave hers.

They glide silently across the blue lake, toward an unknown destination.

DISSOLVE TO:

Christine's half-lidded eyes see something curious above. In a hole in the low ceiling above, moonlight and a glimpse of stars. There is still a world outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

The boat glides to a stop on a new shore.

Christine opens her eyes. At that moment, she is lifted in the air and spun around, the feeling overtaking her--

FLASH TO WHITE:

Christine is laid gently on a beautiful velvet couch. As she feels the dream coming to an end, she bolts up--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - FLASHBACK

She's in the middle of an elegant drawing room, decorated in furniture, flowers and candles. It's all so beautiful, normal, and yet slightly odd.

She gasps, taking in--

The figure watching over her. In the candlelight, he's not a faceless man, only one obscured entirely by the black mask he wears.

Neither speak, only share a long, wordless look.

When he finally does speak, it's gentle, reassuring and immediately apparent to her--

VOICE

Don't be afraid, Christine. There is no danger here...

Her breath leaves her. Her eyes well in confusion.

CHRISTINE

The voice...

In one fell swoop, she is on her feet, rushing to him and trying to grab at his mask. His hands gently seize her wrists, face to face.

VOICE

...as long as you do not touch the mask. Please...

He returns her to the couch, holding her glance. His eyes are full of pain, mixed emotions.

He falls to his knees, kissing the hem of her dress.

A beat passes between them.

Christine's tears stream now. Not understanding...

VOICE

It's true. I'm not an angel, nor a genius. Nor even a ghost. I beg your forgiveness...

(beat)

I am only Erik...

Christine pushes past him, searching for the door.

CHRISTINE

I don't want to know this any longer. Give me my liberty, I beg you!

Erik takes his hand to stop her, holding her close.

ERIK

I love you! I've loved you this many months. You have given me life...

He holds his hands to his chest in frustration, the words escaping him. From the black void, he begins to sing. Small and warm. Like her angel.

Christine can't resist, falls into a submissive sleep-like stupor, drops into his arms.

He carries her toward a nearby door.

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS -
FLASHBACK

A simply decorated bedroom. Erik brings her down on the bed, singing. His voice descends away as she falls into a deep sleep.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - FLASHBACK

Christine's eyes open with a start. The passage of time is unclear to her.

She's alone, but doesn't feel free.

Steps off the bed, taking in her surroundings. A door leads to a bathroom, where items have been brought for her to refresh herself.

On the Louis-Phillipe chest, a note, written in red ink. Christine picks it up to read--

"My dear Christine, you need have no concern as to your fate. You have no better nor more respectful friend in the world than myself."

What has she done? Turns her head in alarm, a decision made.

Rounds the room, anxiously feeling at the walls. There is no escape. Keeps feeling, not noticing--

Erik standing in an obscured open door.

Christine is face to face with him, her expression a mixture of tears and laughter.

CHRISTINE
Take off the mask.

ERIK
You know that's not possible.

He steps toward the open door, gesturing toward the dining room.

ERIK
I've prepared lunch. Come.

And walks out, leaving her.

INT. DINING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - FLASHBACK

From the drawing room, Christine comes to a small table with a lovely spread. Erik gestures toward a chair, she sits. He pushes it in for her, begins to serve her.

Christine notice a glass full of Tokay.

ERIK
 (re: the Tokay)
 I brought that from the Konigsberg
 cellars.

She doesn't answer, takes a sip. It's good. She awkwardly begins eating, notices he's not partaking.

CHRISTINE
 You don't eat?

He doesn't answer.

CHRISTINE
 What is your nationality? Erik is a
 Scandinavian name, yes?

ERIK
 (sadly)
 I have no name, nor a country. The
 name I had was taken by accident.

INT. DINING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - LATER - FLASHBACK

The meal completed, Erik offers her his hand, to help her stand. She pulls away with a cry. It is frail and bony.

Pained, Erik hides his hands away--

ERIK
 Forgive me!

Moving on, Erik steps forward and opens a door, making way for Christine to enter.

ERIK
 This is my room, if you care to see
 it.

Christine steps inside without hesitation.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

Like a mortuary chamber. The walls are hung with black curtains, the furniture upholstered in black.

Christine doesn't notice all this at first -- her attention is on the open black coffin in the middle of the room. She's wordlessly stunned.

ERIK

That is where I sleep. One has to get used to everything in life, even to eternity.

Not able to bare it any longer, she turns away.

On the back wall, an enormous organ. She approaches. At the display, an open music book covered in red notes.

With a glance toward the observing Erik, Christine reaches and flips to the front page, **"Don Juan Triumphant."**

Erik steps forward.

ERIK

I compose sometimes. I began this twenty years ago. When I have finished, I shall take it away with me in that coffin and never wake again.

CHRISTINE

You must work at it as seldom as you can.

His eyes twinkle through the mask. A smile, perhaps?

CHRISTINE

Will you play something out of your "Don Juan Triumphant"?

ERIK

I can play Mozart, if you like, but my Don Juan burns and yet, it is not struck by fire from heaven.

He takes the music book from her hand.

ERIK

(a subtle threat)

You must never ask me, my dear.

She doesn't know what to say. Her mind is spinning -- so many questions, so much doubt, but why -- ?

Erik returns the music book to the organ display.

As he does, something comes over her -- a sense of needing to know. A desperate need--

A need to know the face of the voice.

In one fell swoop, Christine swiftly tears the mask away from Erik's face--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

With frightened tears, Christine jumps at the vision in her memory. She can't speak. Raoul comforts her.

A distant wail is heard somewhere. A superhuman cry of grief and rage. Just as they turn in the direction--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUE FLASHBACK

The wailing cries of grief and rage echo off the walls.

Blurred, frantic movement, tearing curtains, an organ seat is thrown to the side, a lovely figure falls to the ground, the black mask in her hand.

Everything comes into focus as the unmasked Eric approaches Christine.

CHRISTINE POV

His face is visible and exposed for the first time.

A death's head can't begin to describe it.

It's a living skull. Four black holes are where his eyes, nose and mouth reside.

His blazing eyes burn only as he comes and goes through the shadows.

He pushes her against the wall, shoving his ugliness mere inches from her face. Grabbing at her hair.

There's more than rage in his voice...there's sadness.

ERIK
 You want to see?! Feast your eyes, glut your soul on my cursed ugliness! You were not content to hear the voice, eh?

CHRISTINE
 No, no...stop...

She sinks to her knees. He stands over her.

CHRISTINE
 Please...

ERIK
 From what? I am Don Juan Triumphant! No--!

Christine turns away, Erik twists her face back to his, twisting his fingers through her hair.

ERIK
 You think there's another mask under this one?!
 (grabbing her fingers, tearing at his face)
 Your hands! Give me your hands!!
 Tear it off as you did the other!

Her fingernails leave bloody streaks in his face. He soon realizes his own madness, flings her away from him, and collapses by her side in agony.

Christine remains motionless, not knowing what to do.

He stares in a daze at the stone ceiling, lost in thought. His voices lowers to a whisper--

ERIK
 Christine. As long as you thought me handsome, you would come back. But now that you know...I shall have to keep you here...

Turns on his side, sobbing hard. Slowly pulls himself off the ground, toward the organ seat. Tips it upright, drags it to the organ, slumps down.

Staring at his "Don Juan Triumphant", Erik is devastated. Touches the organ keys, and begins to play.

The music is like a long, magnificent sob.

Christine rises, hearing the music, feeling every ounce of his pain. Picks the black mask off the ground, studies it.

She makes a decision, for herself.

CHRISTINE

Erik. You are the most unhappy and sublime of men.

He stops playing, his back to her, the organ fading...

CHRISTINE

If I ever again shiver when I look at you, it will be because I am thinking of the splendor of your genius.

Erik turns slightly, still wanting to hide his face.

CHRISTINE

I will come back. When you mean for me to leave.

Christine holds his mask out, he takes it and puts it back on.

The masked face returns, his piercing eyes are there, looking at her. He kisses the hem of her dress. Out of his eyesight, she closes her eyes.

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

Night has fallen. Christine is exhausted from her recounting. Raoul can't speak, only look at her.

CHRISTINE

It went on for a fortnight. A fortnight during which I lied to him. They were as hideous as the monster who inspired them, but they were the price of my liberty.

Raoul breathes hard.

Elsewhere, a masked Erik listens, breathing hard also. Hangs his head.

Raoul senses him, doesn't move to investigate.

CHRISTINE

Gradually, I gave him such confidence that he ventured to take me walking on the banks of the lake, row me in the boat on those leaden waters.

(beat)

Toward the end of my captivity, he took me to the surface, through the gates that lead to the Rue Scribe. A carriage waited...

EXT. RUE SCRIBE STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Christine and Erik approach a waiting carriage, he offers his hand and she steps in.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Silent. Raoul sees Christine and the shadowed figure in the carriage. He gives chase, the carriage doesn't stop.

EXT. ROOFTOP - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

Raoul takes her hand, guiltily.

RAOUL

Forgive me. I doubted your love.

CHRISTINE

Do you doubt it still? Each of my visits to Erik increased my horror of him. I had hoped they would calm him, instead they made him mad with love.

Raoul can only look in her terrified eyes.

CHRISTINE

I'm frightened...I'm so frightened...

He kisses her passionately, she holds him tight. Pulls him up, looking about.

CHRISTINE

Please let us away. I've been away too long.

They run to the door, and disappear.

Erik steps out of the shadow of Apollo's Lyre, stands over the roof's edge, looking down over the beauty of Paris.

He's no longer a ghost, but a man, feeling every painful ache a heartbroken man would feel.

INT. STAIRWAY - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Christine pulls Raoul further and further down, always keeping an eye over their shoulders.

They come to a landing, leading down a deserted passageway.

A figure suddenly blocks their path, Christine cries.

It's The Persian, looking behind them. Points--

THE PERSIAN

No, not this way.

They're both stunned, unsure.

THE PERSIAN

Quick! Go away quickly.

Christine pulls Raoul away, toward the other direction. The Persian watches them descend, then steps forward, keeping a wary eye.

INT. VARIOUS HALLWAYS - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS

Raoul looks over his shoulder as they maneuver past stagehands.

RAOUL

Who is that man?

CHRISTINE

He's the Persian.

RAOUL

What's he doing here?

CHRISTINE

I don't know. He's always here.

RAOUL

You're making me run away for the first time in my life. He was up there, I know it.

CHRISTINE
Now you're sounding like me--

RAOUL
You've made your mind to go. We
need to leave at once. He may have
heard us--

CHRISTINE
He's working on his Don Juan
Triumphant. He's not thinking of
us.

He stops her.

RAOUL
Yet you keep looking behind you.

Christine ignores him, realizing they've ended up in front of
her dressing room.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They step in. She falls into a chair, he crosses to the
mirror to investigate its magic.

CHRISTINE
We're safer here than anywhere.

RAOUL
You heard him through the walls.
Can't he therefore hear us?
Suppose we try to repeat your
movements?

CHRISTINE
It's too dangerous. He's not simply
a man, he's a genius. He knows
things which nobody in the world
knows.

RAOUL
You're making a ghost of him again.

CHRISTINE
He's flesh and blood--

Raoul bends a knee before her.

RAOUL
He is. Nothing more. Are you still
resolved to run away from him?

A beat, then--

CHRISTINE

Tomorrow.

His smile brightens.

RAOUL

Yes. Twelve tomorrow night. I shall
keep my promise, whatever happens.

Christine smiles back, feels safe. Wipes a tear away, but
notices--

CHRISTINE

Where is it...where is--

Bolts from the chair, knocking it over, starts frantically
searching the floor, shocking Raoul.

RAOUL

What is it?!

Holds up her hand. The ring is missing.

CHRISTINE

We have to find it! We have to!
It was the price of my liberty.

She tosses clothes to the side, searches under her makeup
desk. Stops and realizes--

CHRISTINE

On the roof. It must have slipped
from my finger.
(bolts for the door)
We need to go back!

He stops her, holding her shoulders.

RAOUL

Let us leave now!

CHRISTINE

No, no! Tomorrow! Please!

Raoul is pained. There is no consoling her--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RAOUL'S ROOM - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - LATER THAT NIGHT

In the dark, a perturbed Raoul throws his coat on a chair, then lays on the bed, flush with all that he's heard.

A long, silent beat.

He turns his head slightly -- bolts onto his elbow to see--

Two eyes, like blazing coals, stare at him from the foot of his bed.

A cold sweat pours from his temples. His trembling hand reaches for the bedside table. Grabs at the matches and lights a candle.

Once the match lights the flint, the eyes are gone.

His eyes dart everywhere, hunting. Stands, throws open his closet, flings the curtains back. Nothing.

Sits on the bed again, studying the room. Slowly reaches down and blows the candle out.

The smoke of the candle reveal the reappearing eyes at the foot of his bed.

Raoul jolts back. Reaches into the bedside table drawer, groping--

RAOUL
Erik, is that you?!

From Raoul's viewpoint, the eyes line up perfectly with the French doors leading to the balcony.

Translucently behind the red eyes, a shadowy figure is on the balcony.

Not deterring, slowly pulls a revolver from the drawer.

Takes aim--

--between the two eyes.

His hand grips the trigger, ready to fire.

BLAST!!! CRASH!

The flash emits a light off Raoul's fierce eyes.

The noise deafens the silence of the house.

The two eyes disappear.

Wild footsteps thunder along the hallways outside the room.

Raoul doesn't know how to react, holds the revolver to fire a second time.

The bedroom door flies open, servants carrying gas lamps pour in, Philippe behind them.

PHILLIPE

What is it?!

Looking dazed, Raoul doesn't immediately acknowledge what's happened. The revolver still aimed at the balcony window.

RAOUL

I think I have been dreaming. I fired at two stars that kept me from dream--

Philippe reaches over, seizes the revolver. Pulls his brother's face to him.

PHILLIPE

What are you raving about?! Are you ill? For God's sake, what happened?

Raoul recognizes his brother's face. The light of sanity returning.

RAOUL

I'm not raving. Let go of me!

Pushes Philippe off him, takes a lamp from a servant's hand, throws open the window, and steps onto the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Empty. Pulls at the door, the window has been pierced by a bullet at a man's height.

Waves the lamp to investigate the ground.

A puddle of blood. Then a trail leaving the sight.

RAOUL

That's good! A ghost who bleeds is less dangerous.

Philippe stands at his side, confused--

PHILLIPE

What are you--?!

RAOUL

You see the blood! I thought I had been dreaming and fired at two stars--Erik's eyes!

PHILLIPE

Have you gone mad?

RAOUL

What? You would do better to help me find Erik! I'm not mad!

INT. RAOUL'S ROOM - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Philippe steps into the room, dismisses the servants with a wave of the hand. The brother's are left alone.

PHILLIPE

Who is this Erik?

RAOUL

My rival. And if he's not dead, it's a pity.

PHILLIPE

What has become of you? You're not departing for the Arctic--this Christine Daae has tainted your--

RAOUL

Leave her out of this!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

As the argument penetrates the wall outside Raoul's bedroom, the servants gather outside the door, shushing each other to listen. Glimpses of the argument are caught--

RAOUL (O.S.)

I love her! I shall carry Christine Daae off tonight--!

EXT. DE CHAGNY ESTATE - THE NEXT MORNING

Philippe reads the daily "Epoque" over his breakfast. Raoul comes and sits gloomily.

PHILLIPE
 (handing the paper over)
 Ah. Read that.

Raoul flips to the front, reads aloud--

RAOUL
 "The latest news in Faubourng is that there is a promise of marriage between Mademoiselle Christine Daae and Monsieur le Vicomte Raoul de Chagny. If the gossips are to be believed, Count Philippe has sworn that, for the first time on record, the Chagnys should not keep their promise. The two brothers are said to adore each other, but the count is curiously mistaken if he imagines brotherly love will triumph over love pure--"

He slams the newspaper down on the table, shaking the dishes.

PHILLIPE
 You are making this family look ridiculous. She is beneath you. This little girl has turned your head with her ghost stories.

Raoul stands, quietly--

RAOUL
 Goodbye, Philippe.

PHILLIPE
 Your mind is quite clear? You are going tonight? With her?
 (no answer)
 Surely you will not do anything so foolish? Mind you, I shall know how to prevent you.

Raoul steps toward the house, leaving his brother alone.

A curtain of darkness fades over the moment.

CUT FROM BLACK:

INT. RAOUL'S ROOM - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - LATER THAT DAY

Raoul frantically packs his luggage. Looks to the bullet hole left in the window.

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - SAME

Christine reaches for her belongings, packing also.

EXT. CARRIAGE STATION - AFTERNOON

Raoul speaks with a COACHMEN before an elegant barouche.

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - SUNSET

Christine picks up a photo of Papa Daae, looks out the window, watching the sunset over the Parisian skyline. Contemplating--

MATCH DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

A masked Erik at his organ, turns, senses -- Christine?

Returns to the music book. "Don Juan Triumphant". Takes a pen to the sheet, completes the final page.

Takes a deep breath, closes the book.

"Don Juan Triumphant" is finished.

INT. CARRIAGE - EVENING

Christine looks out over the Parisian streets, watching the everyday world pass her by. Leans forward to see--

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

--in all its splendor, a row of parked carriages at the curb, being led away by their coachmen.

Near the front entrance, a poster is displayed regarding tonight's performance of "Faust".

There, a line is forming. Shaking hands and greeting the guests are Richard and Moncharmin.

EXT. ROTUNDA SIDE OF THE OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

The coachmen drive their horses to a stop, and wait. Among them, the very barouche seen earlier. Atop the box, the Coachmen's face is concealed behind the long folds of a muffler, trying to stay warm.

From the shadows, a figure dressed in a long black cloak and soft black felt hat passes and examines the barouche.

Without a word, moves away.

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE, PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Slipping through the eager, excited crowd is Raoul, wearing a top hat and tails.

Partially seen through the sea of faces, watching Raoul -- the Persian.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Seats are filling. Several eyes turn to the box where Philippe stands.

INT. PHILIPPE'S BOX - SAME

Keeping a wary eye out, Philippe is indifferent to the attention from the crowd.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Concealed behind a dressing wall, a small stack of luggage.

Dressed for the performance, Christine studies her reflection in the vanity mirror. Her expression is hard to read.

All around her, the lights fade to black.

OVER BLACK

Christine's voice, mid-performance, thunders--

CUT FROM BLACK:

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Christine faces the audience, singing. There's a sense of pain in her voice.

INT. RAOUL'S BOX - PARIS OPERA - SAME

Raoul hears it. Looks away to the audience, focusing on faces in the crowd, or an anonymous door man in the back -- anyone suspicious.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

Various members of the audience sense something amiss about Christine's performance. They turn to each other, curiously.

INT. STAGE - SAME

Christine senses the crowd, the self-assurance leaving her. While still in character, holds her hands tight. Her eyes well in fear, a breakdown--

SLAM!

All eyes dart to the box closest to the stage where suddenly Carlotta stands, a sensational entrance.

Christine stops singing, looks up to her rival.

A silence, save for hushed gossip among the crowd.

Moncharmin and Richard exchange an awkward glance.

Christine and Carlotta's eyes meet.

Carlotta's sneers slightly. Christine sees it.

Something changes in Christine. A light burns inside her, and she opens her mouth once more--

--and the heavenly voice returns.

Her heart and soul return.

The audience sits up in their seats.

INT. UNDER THE STAGE - SAME

MAUCLAIR, the gas-man in charge of the footlights above, takes no notice of a shadow moving silently about.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

The last act. Christine sings to the angels on stage, her voice lifts anyone who is privileged to hear it.

Her voice is on another level, one even she couldn't realize.

INT. UNDER THE STAGE - SAME

Erik stops, and listens. His piercing eyes shine in awe behind his mask.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

She is triumphant!

Even Carlotta, in her box, senses it. A regretful tear rolls down her cheek

Christine has done it. She has reached the epitome of the angels.

Moved, Raoul stands in his box, facing Christine. The audience takes notice.

CHRISTINE
(singing)
"Holy angel, in Heaven blessed..."

Christine reaches out to him, delivering the divine cry--

CHRISTINE
(singing)
"My spirit longs with thee to rest--
!"

BLACK

The stage suddenly plunges into darkness.

Screams and confused cries--

Flashes of chaos. Various stagehands rush to the footlights. Faces looking in all directions. Raoul stunned--

The gas lights return to reveal--

An empty stage--

Christine is gone.

Gasps of shock, dismay. Everyone shouting at once.

Raoul is already on his feet, running--

Philippe sees his brother, springs to his feet.

Moncharmin and Richard are dumbfounded, shouting orders as they leave their box.

MONCHARMIN
Lower the curtain, get the
magistrate here now!

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul pushes through the chaotic crowd. A DANCER and STAGEHAND see Raoul, laugh at him.

DANCER
It's the lover!

RAOUL
Get out of my way, please!

DANCER
Read the papers, eh? The poor
lover's brain has gone!

STAGEHAND
No, it was the ghost!

Shoving them aside, Raoul rushes the stage as the curtain is lowered--

INT. STAGE - PARIS OPERA - CONTINUOUS

--looking for any way she could have gone missing. Someone running past knocks his shoulder enough to spin him in the direction of the trap door he and Christine almost plunged into.

He knows.

Bolts out--

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul passes Moncharmin, Richard, Mercier the acting-manager, and REMY, their secretary, as they rush toward the manager's office.

RICHARD
Where the hell is she?! This is a disaster!

MONCHARMIN
Keep your voice down!

They push their way into--

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

--and grab at drinks vigorously. Richard motions with a glass to Remy.

RICHARD	MONCHARMIN
Lock that door! No one comes in!	How were the lights darkened?!

MERCIER
More bad news. Mauclair is missing.

MONCHARMIN
Oh, god. Give me that bottle--

RICHARD
What about his assistants?

MERCIER
They've gone missing too.

RICHARD
(taking a drink)
What the hell is happening here?!

Moncharmin turns to Richard, dumbfounded--

MONCHARMIN
What do you think? We're not blind.

INT. DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Through the crowd, Raoul reaches Christine's dressing room.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Makes immediately for the mirror, violently shoves at it. Again and again. It doesn't give, nor break.

He knows -- it's not going to.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul approaches the manager's office. Feels someone blow past him, M. MIFROID, the commissary of police, beats on the locked manager's office door.

M. MIFROID

Open in the name of the law!

The door opens enough for M. Mifroid to maneuver past Remy. Raoul rushes the door, screaming--

RAOUL

Monsieur's, please, do you know what's become of Christine Da--?

The door is shut on his face. Raoul leans against the door frame, slowly collecting his thoughts.

THE PERSIAN (O.S.)

Erik's secrets concern no one but himself.

Raoul turns, the Persian stands before him, carrying his cloak over his arm.

RAOUL

You--

THE PERSIAN

(re: Erik's)

I hope you haven't betrayed his secret.

RAOUL

Why should I hesitate to betray a monster, monsieur? Is he your friend?

THE PERSIAN

Erik's secret is also Christine's.

Pushing past The Persian--

RAOUL
I have no time for this.

THE PERSIAN
Where are you going?

RAOUL
To find Christine, monsieur!

THE PERSIAN
Then stay here. She's here. With Erik.

Raoul stops, looks about to see if they're not being overheard.

RAOUL
How do you know?

THE PERSIAN
I was at the performance. No one in the world but Erik could contrive such an abduction.

A beat. Raoul breathes.

RAOUL
I don't know your intentions, but can you help me?

THE PERSIAN
Yes. I can take you to her...and to him. Come.

The Persian leads Raoul away.

Unknown to Raoul, in the background, Philippe is pushing through the crowds, calling for him.

INT. SECRET PASSAGES - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

Raoul has never visited these passages, up and down various staircases. The spaces they travel through are dead silent.

As they approach a door, the Persian reaches in his pocket and pulls a key.

THE PERSIAN
Your tall hat will be in your way. You would do well to leave it in the dressing room.

RAOUL

Which?

The Persian unlocks the door, opens it to reveal a hallway. Christine's dressing room is opposite.

THE PERSIAN

Miss Daae's.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They step in. The Persian surveys the room, taking it in. Feels at the mirror.

RAOUL

That won't do. I already tried it--

The Persian reaches into the cloak that he's carrying, produces a richly-carved case, puts it on the dressing table.

Opens the case. Raoul is curious. A pair of long pistols. The Persian takes one, hands the other to Raoul.

RAOUL

Do you mean to fight a duel?

THE PERSIAN

We must be prepared for everything, for we are to fight the most terrible adversary that you can imagine.

RAOUL

You must hate Erik.

The Persian looks sadly at Raoul, pocketing the pistol.

THE PERSIAN

I don't hate him. If I did, he would long ago have ceased to do harm.

Reaches for a stool, setting it against the wall facing the mirror. Jumps up.

RAOUL

But why do you betray him?

On the stool, The Persian feels along the wallpaper, begins searching. Stops a moment--

THE PERSIAN

Because I can no longer stand the
injury he is causing...

(finds something)

--ah.

Raising his finger above his head, he presses against a
corner of the paper. Then jumps down.

Nothing happens.

RAOUL

So? What's happen--?

The Persian takes Raoul's top hat off his head, instructing
him--

THE PERSIAN

Cover your shirt-front as well as
you can with your coat...

(doing so also)

Turn up the collar. We must make
ourselves as invisible as possible.

Raoul follows suit. The Persian pushes his palms against the
mirror, struggling.

THE PERSIAN

It takes a moment to release the
counter-balance when you press on
the spring from inside the room.
Much different when you are behind
and act directly on the counter-
balance. Erik commands the walls,
the doors, and the trap doors.

RAOUL

(dumbfounded)

How? Why do these walls obey him
alone? He didn't build them!

The Persian stops, locks eyes with Raoul.

THE PERSIAN

Yes, he did.

He suddenly silence's Raoul. Reaches for his pistol, Raoul
does the same.

The reflection shivers, a ripple moving across the glass.
The mirror turns like a revolving door.

The Persian's breath deepens, almost psyching himself up for what's to come--

THE PERSIAN

Do you know of the Punjab Lasso,
monsieur?

RAOUL

Only rumors--

THE PERSIAN

It's his weapon. Keep your hand at
the level of your head. Make ready
to fire.

They step forward into the darkness with all caution.

DARKNESS

Movement is heard. A shift of movement, a rustle of clothing,
then--

A match is struck, illuminating their faces. The Persian is
on his knees, feeling for something. Raoul looks about,
fearful, but trying to contain it. They're in the--

INT. PASSAGEWAY BEHIND THE MIRROR - CONTINUOUS

--that Erik first brought Christine.

A lantern is lit. The Persian swings the light to Raoul
quickly, throwing sinister shadows against the walls.

Puts the lantern on the ground to investigate further.

THE PERSIAN

Where is i--ah.

The lantern is suddenly put out. A faint click is heard,
Raoul feels a whoosh of air against his face.

The Persian suddenly moves, Raoul turns--

--and sees a pale luminous square in the floor. A trap door
opening.

THE PERSIAN

(shimmying down the trap
door)

Follow me and do all that I do.

The Persian holds his fingers by the rim of the opening, then disappears out of sight.

Trusting him, Raoul drops the lantern down, then follows suit. Shimmies his body through the door, holding on only by his hands, afraid to let go. From below, whispered--

THE PERSIAN (O.S.)

Let go.

Raoul's fingers release--

INT. CELLAR BELOW TRAP DOOR - CONTINUOUS

He lands in The Persian's arms. The Persian reaches up, pulls the trap door shut, and yanks Raoul to the ground, flat on their stomach's.

Approaching voices and a faint light are seen.

Raoul makes to speak, but The Persian covers his mouth.

The Persian pulls himself to a wooden partition. Through the small opening, they see a narrow staircase with a door at the top landing, descending further into the depths of the cellars. Past the landing, a small room.

Into view come M. Mifroid and the Stage Manager, mid-conversation from that small room.

M. MIFROID

Tell me about the lighting system.

STAGE MANAGER

Everything's lit by hydrogen gas. A box is always reserved beside the prompter's box for the gas-man. Mauclair is there for every performance.

M. MIFROID

He wasn't tonight.

STAGE MANAGER

(calling)

Mauclair! Where are you?!

His booming voice echoes throughout the cellars.

Raoul sees three scattered shapes by the staircase, mere feet from M. Mifroid and the Stage Manager's feet. One on the landing, the other two at the bottom of the stairs.

Within a few seconds, Raoul makes the shapes out, uttering a muffled cry -- three corpses lay there.

Motioning to the corpses, a whisper--

THE PERSIAN

He.

M. MIFROID

(to the Stage Manager)

Come here!

The Stage Manager rushes beside the kneeling M. Mifroid, looking over the corpse on the staircase landing.

STAGE MANAGER

Mauclair, he's dead!

M. Mifroid is calm, examining.

M. MIFROID

No. Dead-drunk, which is not quite the same thing.

STAGE MANAGER

Impossible, this would be a first.

M. MIFROID

Someone has given him a narcotic, then.

(nodding, rising)

There are his assistants.

Walks to them.

STAGE MANAGER

They're asleep!

M. MIFROID

Very curious business. To interfere with the gas-man...and that person unknown must have been working on behalf of the kidnapper.

(beat)

Send for the theater doctor, please.

The Persian looks to Raoul, gesturing him to back away from the moment.

INT. FOURTH CELLAR - SAME

Rough glimpses through the darkness. A flutter of hair. A gloved grip on an arm. Piercing eyes--

Erik pulls Christine roughly by the arm, almost dragging her. His deep voice echoes, the kind tone gone from his voice--

ERIK

You betrayed me! I gave you everything! I made you the toast of Paris. I'm the only one that saw your potential!

CHRISTINE

Let me return! Please--

Turns and pins her against a wall.

ERIK

Who? To him?! He doesn't know your heart like I do.

Stops himself, feels her fear. Releases his grip on her shoulders. She senses his feelings, embraces him in her arms...

CHRISTINE

I'm sorry...

Erik doesn't know how to feel exactly. Hears distant voices. Movement throughout the cellars. His eyes close somberly...

ERIK

They'll come down to find you now. What has happened?

Pulls her onward.

INT. THIRD CELLAR - SAME

Looking at the ceiling of the passage, Raoul and The Persian hear shouting orders echo to one another, door slamming, movement all around, like inside of a giant ship--

VOICES (O.S.)

Close the doors...close the doors...the trap doors are to be shut!!

Raoul looks to the Persian for an explanation.

THE PERSIAN
The firemen making their rounds.

INT. SECOND CELLAR - SAME

The FIREMEN checking every passage.

FIREMAN
Clear! Next one!
(notices someone)
Monsieur, you can't be down here!

It's Philippe, searching for Raoul. The Fireman tries to hold him back. Philippe pushes him off.

PHILLIPE
Get out of my way! Raoul! Raoul!

INT. LOWER CELLARS - MOMENTS LATER

Philippe's cries are lost down this deep.

Coming to the bottom of a staircase, The Persian, his hand raised, looks to Raoul and stops suddenly, shoving his hand up also.

THE PERSIAN
Your hand up! He is quick with his
Punjab lasso! Please monsieur!

The Persian keeps moving. Looking ahead--

Raoul holds his hand up, wanting to apologize for his ignorance when--

The Persian doesn't move, can only stare ahead. Raoul turns also.

Before them, at the end of the hallway--

A head made of fire, shaped like a man's face, approaches slowly.

A screeching sound grows from the silence, echoing--

Both men are too stunned to move. Through gritted teeth--

THE PERSIAN
I have never seen this before.
It's not he, but he may have sent
it.

The fiery head floats closer toward them--

THE PERSIAN

We need to flee...back the way we
came...down the stairs to the fifth
cellar...

The Persian's eyes leave the flaming face, look to Raoul.

THE PERSIAN

NOW!

They make their escape, frantically running through the dark.

The screeching grows louder, like a demonic scream...

Raoul finds the stairs, almost falls down face first, but
catches himself on the stone steps. Jumps to the landing.

The Persian turns over his shoulder, sees the floating face
within feet of their pursuit. Follows Raoul down.

The screeching sound moving with the face--

INT. FIFTH CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Pitch black. Empty ancient spaces. Echoing footsteps.

Around the corner, both men have stopped, gasping for breath.
The Persian looks behind. Nothing is there.

It's quiet...

The Persian looks to Raoul, offering a supportive pat as they
gain their courage to continue.

Turns to look behind again--

THE PERSIAN

Take care to--

--THE FIERY FACE IS SUDDENLY THERE, staring at them, the
screeching sound deafening.

Raoul falls in shock, sees thousands of tiny figures among
the screeching.

Screams in horror--

The Persian stares into the fiery face. The eyes are round
and staring, the nose crooked and the mouth large. The face
bright like a red moon.

The fiery face disappears...terrifying darkness...screeching movement below...a light bounces onto the ground...

RATS!!!! THOUSANDS OF RATS!

Climbing...scratching...running...staring...

Through the light, Raoul tears at the Persian.

The Persian looks ready to faint.

The light moves again, back to the floating head. It's not on fire, only a trick of the light. The lantern is pointed up, giving the illusion.

THE FIERY FACE

Don't move! Whatever you do, don't come after me. I am the rat catcher. Let me pass with my rats!

Raoul can't take his eyes off the rats.

The fiery face strides on into the darkness, the sound of high-pitched terror accompanying.

Raoul and The Persian look on in horror.

Soon...

Silence.

The two men are alone again.

Raoul is traumatized. He can't lift himself off the ground.

The Persian's hands shake. Suddenly, he clenches them together, they stop. He takes a few deep breaths, collecting himself again.

Pulls Raoul off the ground.

THE PERSIAN

Are you okay?

He doesn't answer, dusts himself off.

RAOUL

Is the lake close?

THE PERSIAN

We're never going to enter the house by the lake. A siren watches over those black waters.

RAOUL

But you--!

THE PERSIAN

There's another road. The third
cellar. I shall show you. Come.

They walk back the way they came.

ERIK (O.S.)

Christine, stop!!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine's head abruptly smashes against the stone wall, a
cut of blood rushing in her eye.

Erik pulls her back, both fall to the ground. He doesn't let
go. Her face is bloodied, but determined. Through her
determination, though, confused tears flow.

CHRISTINE

I-I cant...this is all too much...

Erik stands over Christine, determined--

ERIK

You need to choose...

INT. BETWEEN SETS - SAME

Raoul senses Christine...

Between a set piece and a discarded scene from "Roi de
Lahore", where Joseph Buquet was killed, The Persian silently
slips through, then disappears through the crack.

Holding the lantern, Raoul watches through the crack, still
shaken.

The space behind is a hidden room, claustrophobic, just wide
enough for a body. The Persian feels at the stone wall. Then
pushes with his weight.

A hole opens in the wall.

Raoul watches, moves to push past the Persian. He stops
Raoul, examining something beneath him.

THE PERSIAN

This is it.

Raoul feels the weight of those words. Stiffens up, makes himself ready.

THE PERSIAN

(pulling his boots off)

We have to drop a few yards without making a noise.

(hands his to Raoul)

Take yours off also.

Raoul does as he's told. The Persian steps to the edge of the wall. There's another trap door in the floor.

The Persian takes a few deep, nervous breaths. Like getting ready to submerge in water.

Gets on his knees to move through the trap door, looks to Raoul.

THE PERSIAN

I am going to drop myself into his house. You must do exactly the same as I.

(beat)

Don't be afraid. I'll be there also.

He disappears through the trap door. A dull sound of a landing below.

Raoul makes ready, does the same, drops below--

INT. DARKNESS - CONTINUOUS

--into The Persian's arms. Getting to his feet, the Persian hushes Raoul at once.

The darkness is thick, the silence heavy and terrible.

Where are they?

The Persian lights the lantern, reaches up for the trap door opening. Feels at air.

It's closed.

He looks to Raoul with concern.

INT. CIRCULAR STAIRWAY - CELLARS - SAME

Philippe holds a lantern as he travels, growing concern in his eyes--

INT. DARKNESS - SAME

The Persian moves the lantern along the stone wall, to the floor and stops--

Sees something there.

Kneels down and picks up something, examining, a cord of some sort--

Flings it away in horror, realization in his eyes.

RAOUL
What is it?

The Persian doesn't answer, only swings the lantern about their surroundings, needing to know where they are.

RAOUL
Monsieur?

THE PERSIAN
(under his breath)
The Punjab lasso...

RAOUL
What?

Anxiety is beginning to drench The Persian's face.

Through lantern light, only sees close walls in every direction.

Until--

A tree trunk is illuminated.

He steps forward, tilting the lantern.

The trunk looks very much alive, with branches and leaves protruding outward. The top disappears into the ceiling.

Raoul can't believe his eyes. Using the light from the lantern, examines it also.

Touches it. Curiously--

RAOUL
It's not wood.

Past the trunk, he sees something. A ray of light bounces off the wall--

--a hand reaches out--

He gasps.

It's reflected. Steps back. The wall is a a giant mirror.

RAOUL
It's a looking glass.

His back to Raoul, contemplative, The Persian is quiet. He knows what this means.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BETWEEN SETS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Joseph Buquet running for his life, darkness surrounding him.

Stops to catch his breath, desperate, near the set for "Roi de Lahore".

A wisp of movement behind him...

The lasso is suddenly around Joseph's throat, his eyes bulging out. Knows.

Violent images-- kicking feet, fighting hands, gloved hands -- holding on tight.

Erik's eyes behind his black mask.

Unfeeling.

Joseph tries to emit a scream, his tongue hanging out. Taking his final, terrified gasp--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS OF PRESENT

The Persian shakes the vision, looks about--

THE PERSIAN
This is Mazenderan all over again.
(to Raoul, a whisper)
We've dropped into the torture chamber.

Raoul's face drops and realizes. Looks about. All of the walls are mirrored, joined at the corners of the glass.

Somewhere, distant, a door is closed...

Raoul runs toward the sound--

RAOUL
Listen...Christi--

The Persian seizes his hand to Raoul's mouth, cutting him short--

A moan is heard.

ERIK (O.S.)
...the wedding mass or the requiem
mass. There's nothing else...

They share a look. Holding their breath...

Through the mirrored wall, we travel to--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

The once-beautiful drawing room is now a shambles of debris.

An unmasked Erik finishes binding a weeping Christine to a chair, her arms bound to the armrest.

CHRISTINE
I can't choose...please--

ERIK
My love...we can have a life
together...I can give you
everything you've ever wanted...the
requiem mass is the alternate.

He grabs at her, holding her tight. Still trying to please.

ERIK
I can't go on living like this,
like a mole in a burrow.

Looks to the spilled music-book on the floor. His life's work.

ERIK
It is finished.
(beat)
(MORE)

ERIK(cont'd)

I want to live now, like everybody else. Have a wife...I've invented a mask that makes me look like anybody else. No one will stare at me. Not ever again.

The silence is heavy. He's lost in his own thoughts. Looks to Christine.

ERIK

I've only ever wanted to be loved for me. To be--

An electric bell rings, blaring throughout the house.

Christine jolts, Erik moves toward the front door--

ERIK

Who has come to bother us now? Wait here...I am going to tell the siren to open the door.

He slinks out the front door. The door closes, leaving Christine alone.

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - SAME

Philippe is on the edge of the far shore, looking over the dark waters.

On the other shore, outside his house, Erik watches the intruder.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul and The Persian wait a beat, then--

RAOUL

Christine! Answer me!

INTERCUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

She almost jumps out of her skin, looks for one of Erik's tricks to manifest.

CHRISTINE

Raoul?

Tries to rise from the chair, but her bindings won't let her.

RAOUL

We're here to save you. If you hear him again, warn us.

CHRISTINE

He's mad! He's decided to kill everybody and himself if I don't concede...

Raoul almost doesn't want to ask.

RAOUL

To what?

CHRISTINE

Be his wife. He's given me until eleven tonight to decide.

THE PERSIAN

Where is Erik?

CHRISTINE

He must have left the house.

THE PERSIAN

Can you be sure?

CHRISTINE

I can't move...where are you?
Please come!

THE PERSIAN

Do you see a door?

CHRISTINE

The only one's I know are the one to my room, the front door and the torture chamber.

RAOUL

We're here. There's no way out--

Raoul gives out a cry of fury in frustration.

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - SAME

Philippe drifts the boat across the lake, uncertainly rowing it.

Hears something over the calming waters.

A woman's singing...calming...

He looks ahead to the other shore. No one is there.

Continues to hear the singing. Philippe is calm now, stops rowing, letting the boat drift.

Leans over, enchanted, realizes the singing is coming from the water itself...

When his face is close enough to the water...

TWO MONSTROUS ARMS LEAP OUT FROM THE WATER, WRAP AROUND PHILIPPE'S NECK AND PULL HIM DOWN WITH IRRESISTIBLE FORCE.

There is no struggle...the waters calm again...the boat rocks slightly...

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

The Persian is as calm as he can be.

THE PERSIAN

Mademoiselle, it is absolutely necessary that you should open that door for us. Is there a key?

Christine looks about, desperate.

CHRISTINE

In a bag, near the organ. He's forbidden me to touch them. There's nothing that can be done. He'll be back soon...

The Persian is weighing his options.

THE PERSIAN

Why did he bind you?

CHRISTINE

Because I tried to commit suicide.

Raoul lets out a sob. The Persian tries to sustain his calm--

THE PERSIAN

If he bound you, you can be unbound. You just have to play the part. He loves you, remember that--

A rustling of the front door--

CHRISTINE
(a harsh whisper)
He's coming--!

The door opens just as she's completing her sentence.

Erik stands in the door frame, drenched from head to toe.

Her tenseness is evident across her bruised face. Erik senses it.

ERIK
Why did you cry out, Christine?

CHRISTINE
Because I'm in pain, Erik. Unloosen
my bonds...

ERIK
You'll try to kill yourself again.
No--

He walks away, but Christine stops him.

CHRISTINE
No! You've given me until eleven
o'clock, Erik.

His eyes suggest he can go either way with this. He steps forward, loosening her bounds.

ERIK
I'm so sorry I doubted you. Our
visitor has departed. The one
ringing the siren's bell. I wonder
if he's ringing at the bottom of
the lake.

She rubs her wrists, looks up at him.

ERIK
I must play his requiem.

And disappears into his room.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Erik takes a seat at the organ, playing and singing like a
god of thunder.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul and The Persian feel it on another side of the wall.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine steps in, sheepishly moving toward the organ. The keys are hung nearby. Erik doesn't sense her intentions.

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul presses an ear to the mirrored wall.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine motions herself close to Erik, pretending to observe his playing. Behind her back, her fingers slowly lift the bag off its hook.

Then step away...

Erik's eyes see something immediately--

Stop playing.

ERIK
Where is my bag?

She's caught, makes to dash out of the room, but a furious Erik stops her, holds her down--

ERIK
That is why you asked me to release
you. What did you want to do with
them?!

Grabs at the bag from behind her back. She cries out--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul bursts with rage, banging his palms against the mirrored wall.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

As Erik pulls the bag from her, his head turns slightly.

ERIK
Did you hear, Christine?

The tenseness written across her face--

CHRISTINE
--I heard nothing--

ERIK
I don't like the way you said that.
You're lying! Come with me!

Grabs her wrist, he yanks her--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul's eyes are tense with fear, with rage.

RAOUL
(to The Persian)
What are we going to do?

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Christine is thrown on the bed, as Erik pulls at the
curtained wall.

ERIK
You inquisitive little soul, there
is someone in the torture chamber,
isn't there? See for yourself!

Behind the curtain, through a small slit in the wall -- the
faint outline of a door is seen. At the eye line, a
rectangular window to see in.

Erik beckons her closer.

ERIK
See for yourself, my love. I said
SEE!

Rips her off the bed, forcing her against the wall to peer
through the window.

CHRISTINE'S POV sees blackness, but can just make out Raoul
and The Persian inside.

Through blinding tears, she tries to tear from his arms.

CHRISTINE
There's no one there, leave me be!

ERIK
Ah, you just need some
illumination...

Reaches for the black rope beside, gives it a yank--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

BLINDING LIGHT BLASTS THE ROOM.

The mirrors bounce intense heat off Raoul and The Persian.

The Persian knows about this, but is still calm.

Raoul shuts his eyes, rips at his clothes, struggling to breathe.

Bangs on the walls like a mad man.

The Persian grabs a hold of him. Raoul shoves him off.

	RAOUL	
	Get off me! Christine!	
THE PERSIAN		RAOUL
She cannot save you! You need	Christine, please!!	
to stay calm. There's a way		
out of here!		

Ignoring Raoul, he rushes to the mirrors to figure out the "trick".

Looks up to the ceiling--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Erik pulls Christine toward the mantle.

CHRISTINE
What are you to do?! Let them out!

ERIK
I've had enough of this! Yes or no!
If your answer is no, everybody
will be dead and buried!

Flings her away. Grabs two boxes from the mantle, puts them on a table.

CHRISTINE
What is this?

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

The Persian clambers at the mirrors, finds small portions of the glass panels scratched and broken -- past victims.

Raoul paces, holding his pistol, slaps it against his palm. The torture chamber is working its spell.

As the Persian searches, fingering along the mirrors once inch at a time--

THE PERSIAN
There's a button here.
Microscopic. Once I find that, a
spring will release. We'll be free.

The heat is starting to roast him, blinks sweat from his eyes, struggling to stay calm.

THE PERSIAN
It's here...

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

The two boxes are opened.

ERIK
Your choice lies here.

She looks inside--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Raoul taps the pistol against the glass, staring past his own reflection.

As he's searching, The Persian sees his companion, shouts--

THE PERSIAN
It's not real! None of this. We're
in a room! We're--

Resolved, Raoul puts the pistol to his head--

The Persian seizes his arm, smashing him violently to the ground, the pistol released from his grip.

Standing over him--

THE PERSIAN

No!

RAOUL

I...don't...

The Persian reaches for the pistol, shoves it in his waistband.

Raoul lays on the ground, motionless.

The Persian realizes he's lost his spot in the mirror search.

Despair finally takes him. Calls--

THE PERSIAN

Erik! Erik!

Falls to his knees, collapses on his side.

Lands before the iron tree, where the Punjab lasso lays at the foot.

Waiting for him--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

In one box, a mechanism shaped like a large scorpion. The other, a second mechanism shaped like a large grasshopper.

Christine looks longingly at them, her death sentence...

Erik smiles sadly...

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

The Persian reaches out, grabs at the lasso, feels it.

But--

Something is on the ground under. A groove.

Flings the lasso aside, pulls himself closer.

In the groove, a black-headed nail.

He blinks twice.

Raoul lifts his head to see.

The Persian pulls the nail slightly...

A cellar-flap door springs up from the floor.

Both men are on their knees, rushing to feel the cool darkness below.

They look at one another, anxious but wary.

Grabbing the lantern, The Persian jumps down first, then Raoul.

INT. BELOW THE TORTURE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The Persian thrust his arms in the dark. Feels a stone. Then another.

A staircase.

Raoul makes to rush past him, but The Persian holds him back.

THE PERSIAN

I don't know this room. Allow me...

Turns the lantern on and descends further, Raoul follows.

Darkness...steps on the stone staircase.

Shapes slowly come into view.

Circular shapes. Many.

THE PERSIAN

Barrels!

All around them, in two symmetrical rows, barrels fill the small room.

Raoul reaches for one, cracks the bung off...

Something spills out, filling his hand...

Sadly--

RAOUL

It's not water...

The Persian moves the lantern closer to inspect, then tosses it suddenly across the room, shattering.

The room plunges into darkness.

THE PERSIAN
Gunpowder...

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

ERIK
If you turn the scorpion, you will
be my bride. The grasshopper will
mean otherwise.

Christine locks eyes with him. A small crooked smile forms in
the corner of his grotesque mouth.

ERIK
Careful with the grasshopper. It
not only turns, it hops...

INT. BELOW THE TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

RAOUL
He means to blow the Opera up! He
gave her til eleven!

Raoul kicks aside the glass from the shattered lamp as he and
The Persian dash up the stair to the--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

As they run in, it's now dark. Raoul pushes at the mirror,
hoping for an escape. The Persian fumbles in his coat pocket.

THE PERSIAN
Is it eleven?! I can't find my
pocket watch.

Raoul searches his own pocket. Pulls out the chain and the
watch. In the darkness, they can't decipher the time.

Raoul crunches the watch face against a mirror, feels at the
naked face.

RAOUL
I-I don't know...
(screams)
Christine, hear us! Please!

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine hears Raoul's shouts, as does Erik, tensing his body slightly.

CHRISTINE
He wishes to blow up the opera!

ERIK
(in her face)
Choose! The scorpion or the
grasshopper! The grasshopper shall
jump!

CHRISTINE
No, I can't--!

ERIK
The scorpion or the
grasshopper!

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

RAOUL
What does that mean? Turn the--?

Realization fills The Persian's eyes.

THE PERSIAN
He means to--
(shouting to Christine)
Don't turn either! Erik, listen!

INTERCUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Erik knows that voice, a smile pressed against his lips.

Christine's face is frozen with fear, staring at the two objects.

ERIK
So you are not dead in there? Well
then, keep quiet.

THE PERSIAN
You don't want to do this--don't
turn the scorpion!

ERIK
Not a word, daroga, or I shall blow
everything up!
(MORE)

ERIK(cont'd)

The honor rests with Mademoiselle,
she has not touched the scorpion!
Nearly eleven--!

RAOUL
The Persian is right, don't
turn it!

CHRISTINE
(faint, a decision made)
I'm going to turn the
scorpion. It's the only
way...

THE PERSIAN

It's a trick, don't touch it! He's
deceiving you!

Erik knocks Christine to the ground, standing over the boxes.

ERIK

Your time has come! I shall turn it
for you!

She stands, trying to push him aside.

CHRISTINE
Erik, no!

ERIK
Enough!

Raoul and The Persian are powerless to intervene--

CLOSE ON THE BOXES

Both hands fighting for control--

Raoul and The Persian banging their hands against the
mirrors.

RAOUL

Christine!

Erik is suddenly shoved to the ground.

Christine turns one--

CHRISTINE

(with finality)
I have turned the scorpion!

Time stops--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

A deathly silence. Both men hold their breath, waiting.

Something cracks beneath their feet...

...a hissing sound...

They turn to the trap door.

Into the blackness.

It grows in volume, until it's overpowering--

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - SAME

The water slowly lowers.

On the far shore, the dead Philippe is laid out--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Neither know what to make of it, when suddenly--

Water bubbles up from the trap door, spilling over and spreading onto the torture chamber floor.

Their eyes widen in fear, The Persian bangs on the mirrors to get Erik's attention--

THE PERSIAN

Erik, turn it off! Turn the scorpion!

The water continuously rises--

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Erik stands back, solemnly. Christine hears the deafening noise, pleads to the walls, rushes to Erik's knees...

CHRISTINE

You can't do this! Erik, please!

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

The volume of water trips both men off their feet, plunging into a whirl. The mirrored walls crack when the water shoves against them.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine grabs at him, pleadingly into his eyes--

CHRISTINE

This isn't you. This isn't your
heart! You love me...as you say you
do...

He doesn't reply, his intense eyes narrow, fighting to stay
the course...

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

Kicking their feet in the liquid blackness, they're floating
now, while desperately trying to catch hold of the iron tree.

RAOUL

Reach it!

They catch a branch, and hold on!

Raoul pulls The Persian close, huddling him closer to the
trunk. Raoul looks to the ceiling, knows there's no way out.

The Persian, eyes shut, clings to the trunk, lost in
memory...

INT. MAZENDERAN PALACE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A younger masked Erik shows the Child SULTAN his newest
invention -- the Torture Chamber. An exact replica to Erik's
underneath the Paris Opera.

Smiles and congratulations all around, centered around Erik.

MOMENTS LATER

In private, the Sultan confers a word to his ADVISOR, looking
in Erik's direction.

SULTAN

No one can know where this came
from. Get rid of him.

Standing next to the nodding Advisor -- The Persian.

INT. ERIK'S ROOM - MAZENDERAN PALACE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Erik sleeps soundly, when the room is suddenly filled with
palace guards, ripping him out of bed, beating him to the
ground--

INT. MAZENDERAN PRISON CELL BLOCK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The Persian skulks the hall, toward a sleeping GUARD. Across from the Guard, a man sits on the floor of a cell, his back to the Persian.

POP! A thud!

The man in the cell turns slightly, locks eyes with The Persian. Erik.

Blood from the Guard's head spills onto the stone floor. The Persian holds a smoking pistol.

THE PERSIAN
You need to come with me...

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

THE PERSIAN
I saved your life!! You were
sentenced to death! Erik! You would
be dead now!

The water is rising. Raoul can now reach out and touch the ceiling, barely keeping his face above the surface--

THE PERSIAN
Erik!

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - SAME

Christine clutches him, staring into his eyes, the screams from the next room deafening. Finally her decision is made--

CHRISTINE
I promise! I promise to be your
wife!!

A tear runs down Erik's cheek, looks to Christine--

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - SAME

THE PERSIAN
Eri--!

The Persian's mouth falls below the surface. Clutching the branch, Raoul tries to pull the Persian up, but it's no good.

The Persian begins to sink, desperate to hold onto anything. There is nothing left.

Raoul's strength is leaving him. With one desperate plea, he screams--

RAOUL
Christine! Christi--

He goes down also.

Violent liquid blackness, tossed limbs, an explosion of water hitting the ceiling...deafening...

When suddenly--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dead silence.

Water drips off the edges of the soaked furniture. Puddles form along the stone floors. Debris of the once magnificent house on the lake is a shambles now. Like the bobbing remains of a sunken ship.

Raoul opens his eyes, takes a moment to come to.

He perches an elbow up on the couch, a blanket wrapped around him. His hair and clothes are still soaked.

At his side, tenderly holding his hand, is Christine. He smiles weakly.

Something out of the corner of his eye--

A masked Erik watches silently, gripping "Don Juan Triumphant" in his arms.

Raoul is taken aback, looking for The Persian--

RAOUL
Where...is he?

Erik places the music down carefully, handing Raoul a cup of tea.

ERIK
He came to himself long before you.
You are now saved, both of you.
(MORE)

ERIK(cont'd)

He's been taken back to the surface
of the earth...
(standing away)
...to please my wife...

Raoul looks at Christine, who stares at his eyes with an apologetic sadness.

He can't believe what he's heard.

RAOUL

No...

CHRISTINE

...I'm sorry...

Rises to her feet, Raoul tries to stand--

RAOUL

Wait...

Weakness overcomes him, collapses back on his pillow.

Christine stands and faces Erik, only love in his eyes.

She approaches him, not out of fear, or obligation...

...but of love.

Holds out her hand for him to take it...

CHRISTINE

My angel...

She takes him in her arms, gently rubbing his back, his arms, slowly raising her fingertips to his mask...

He flinches a moment...her eyes tell her it's okay...

Slowly, her fingers lift the mask, revealing the face underneath...the tear-stained unusual beauty that is Erik.

Touches her hand to his cheek. He closes his eyes, feeling the soothing touch...

Erik doesn't know what to do...but...

Kiss her...

Christine doesn't pull back, doesn't flinch in horror, but...kisses Erik back...

It's the most beautiful kiss...

Christine is crying, tears running down her porcelain skin, rubs her cheek against his...

Their tears merge into one...

Their lips part, hanging their foreheads close, looking deeply into each other's eyes.

She feels something in her hand...looks down...

The plain gold ring Erik gave her...thought to have been lost.

Her eyes search his...they're ready to say goodbye.

ERIK
Take it...for you...
(re: Raoul)
...and him...

Christine doesn't know how what to say.

ERIK
My angel cried with me...you've
given me more than anyone ever has.

He pulls away, letting her go...

ERIK
That is enough for one lifetime.

He steps away from her to help Raoul stand.

With her back to them, Christine looks down at the ring in her hand. Feels its weight...it's importance...

...slips the ring on her finger, turns to Erik...

...and utters a firm--

CHRISTINE
No.

Both men turn to her...

CHRISTINE
This isn't the end for you and I.

Erik stands before her, his eyes searching hers for an explanation. It becomes clear.

CHRISTINE

I've been searching my whole life...for something. I-I never knew what it was. I never knew what it looked like. Something that wasn't expected from me. From my Father, then the crowds, then from my lover...

A tear rolls down her cheek. A beautiful smile emerges. We've never seen this happiness--

CHRISTINE

It was you, Erik...

Erik can't believe what he's hearing. Words can't form...

RAOUL (O.S.)

Christine...no...

Christine turns to Raoul, raising himself off the couch, in disbelief--

RAOUL

He is a villain...

Erik doesn't sense Raoul, he can only stare at his love before him.

RAOUL

His treachery will never cease...

Raoul's face contorts suddenly into rage, then shoves Erik off his feet.

RAOUL

NO! NOT THIS!

Raoul is on top, beating Erik with his fists, a primal rage coming from within. Erik doesn't fight back, only taking the blows.

Christine pulls Raoul off--

CHRISTINE

No, Raoul! This is my decision!
This is my only wish!

Raoul lays on the ground, simply looking at her. She helps Erik up, coughing up blood...

Leans over to a heartbroken Raoul, compassion in her eyes...

CHRISTINE

You'll always be that little boy
who rescued my scarf from the
waters...always...I will never
forget him...

Raoul is suddenly unsure of everything...nothing makes sense
now...

...did anything ever?...

Locks eyes with Christine, a new sense of understanding...

...life can go on...it's heartbreaking, but it's also the way
it is...

A long beat...finally...

The Victome De Chagny stands himself up with a great
nobility, takes Christine's hand...

...reaches out for Erik's...

...joining them together...

Christine's eyes well.

As he turns toward the front door, with a satisfied smile,
Raoul looks over his shoulder--

RAOUL

Goodbye...

EXT. RUE SCRIBE STREET - EARLY MORNING

Raoul steps out through the gated door and into the morning
air. His eyes shutter in the light.

Closes his eyes, takes a deep breath of the morning air...

Turns to the open door--

Empty darkness...is someone there?

Fixes his coat as he heads down the deserted morning street
alone....

We linger on the empty door way, the gate slowly closes with
a small clank...

INT. THE PERSIAN'S ROOM - FLAT - NIGHT

BANG! BANG!

Coming from the front door.

The Persian's eyes open wide, looking about his surroundings.

He's flat on his bed, dressed in his clothes from the previous night.

A door opens. DARIUS his servant steps in, politely--

DARIUS

Monsieur, there is a visitor to see you.

Out of sorts still, The Persian shakes the cobwebs--

THE PERSIAN

Who?

DARIUS

He refused his name. He only wish to speak to the daroga. He would not show his face.

The Persian rises, walking past Darius.

INT. SITTING ROOM - FLAT - CONTINUOUS

The Persian walks in. Standing firm and center is a masked Erik. Pulls off his hat...

ERIK

Forgive me...

THE PERSIAN

Where are they?! What have you done!

Erik calmly sits in a chair. The Persian tensely sits also--

THE PERSIAN

Are they alive?!

ERIK

(a slow nod)

Yes. It was amazing...she loves me. How?

THE PERSIAN

What has happened?

ERIK

Something extraordinary...on all my travels, on all my adventures...her voice was guiding me. All this time...we were searching for each other...

THE PERSIAN

Is this true, Erik?

ERIK

(beat)

I need your help. I can lay claim to the misery I've inflicted...that is my cross to bear...but my time for happiness...what time I have left...has come also...

The Persian locks eyes...

ERIK

I need you to lie for me. To everyone...

(pleading)

Do this for me, daroga...

The Persian lowers his head, unsure--

EXT. THE PERSIAN'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

The Persian helps Erik into the back of a waiting cab. Erik leans his head close...

ERIK

Lastly...advertise my demise in the "Epogue". That's enough...

The Persian tries to hold his emotions back, simply smiles and nods.

Erik nods, satisfied...

ERIK

It's a better day tomorrow...

Turns to the driver--

ERIK

Go to the opera.

The cab drives off into the night, leaving the Persian watching its descent...

INT. DRAWING ROOM - HOUSE ON THE LAKE - NIGHT

Christine flips the upturned furniture, her beautiful voice echoing throughout the house...

Erik emerges. Sensing him, she turns...continues singing...just for him...they embrace together...

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE, DEEP IN THE PAGES OF THE "EPOQUE":

"THE OPERA GHOST IS DEAD"

Hold for a moment, the long silence seeping in...

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE - PARIS OPERA - MORNING

Empty, save for the occasional cleaning woman.

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - DAY

An empty auditorium.

INT. CHRISTINE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Empty, untouched. Wardrobe, wigs, makeup accessories scatter the floor.

INT. CHRISTINE'S ROOM - MAMMA VALERIUS HOME - DAY

Empty closets, an unmade bed.

EXT. FAMILY CEMATARY - DE CHAGNY ESTATE - DAY

The wind picks up, kicking leaves against funeral for the Count Philippe de Chagny. Raoul stands front and center amongst the family, mourning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARIS GARDEN - DAY (1900)

Beautiful, lush. Couples walk arm in arm on their afternoon strolls.

Among them, a slightly aged Raoul, now 31, walks alongside his beautiful young WIFE. Together, they push a stroller...

He looks happy, vibrant, when out of the corner of his eye--

A couple cross their path. It's Christine, and a man with a normal face.

They meet his gaze.

Raoul twists his head as they pass. The man's face is perfectly constructed, but those piercing eyes will continue to haunt him...

A nod of the head and they move on.

EXT. PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

Crowds make their way inside for the performance of "The Marriage of Figaro".

INT. BACKSTAGE - PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

A matured Meg Girya leads the ballet girls, preparing the final touches for the night's performance.

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

The seats are filling, awaiting...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BOX 5 - MOMENTS LATER

An aged Madame Girya ushers the crowd through, stopping one such couple making for Box 5--

MADAME GIRYA

No!

The couple jump back in disbelief. Over their shoulder, Madame Girya sees Richard and Firmin shaking hands with other guests.

They make eye contact. An understanding. She turns to the couple...

MADAME GIRY
This box is reserved...

INT. AUDITORIUM - PARIS OPERA - MOMENTS LATER

The lights dim, the audience shifts in their seats in anticipation, the music begins, a new woman's voice soars over the crowd. The red velvet curtain rises--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - PRESENT (1909)

The ghosts of a long-distant night still echo down here.

The beginning of our story...

Gaston is there, staring at something unseen...

At the shore of the lake...

Christine, aged a further 10 years, stands, holding a burning candle over a simple plot of dirt in the dark. A wooden cross marks the plot.

Though she has aged, her beauty and grace have never wavered.

Sensing a presence, turns and gasps.

Gaston holds a friendly hand out in greeting...

GASTON
Madame, I meant not to disturb you.
I didn't know you would be here.

She doesn't answer. Gaston approaches slowly.

GASTON
I'm not sure you know of me, I'm--

CHRISTINE
You're the writer...I know you,
monsieur.

Gaston is beside her now, standing before the cross.

CHRISTINE
 Have you found the answers you
 seek? Which version of our tale
 shall you tell?

Gaston looks to the grave, she follows his gaze, sadly--

GASTON
 I'm a reporter--

CHRISTINE
 We had so many good years...so much
 happiness...I sang for him every
 day. Still...I promised him...I
 promised to bring him here when it
 was all over...

INT. GASTON'S ROOM - DAY

Back at his desk, writing the novel. Stops, and thinks--

BACK TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Approaching steps are heard, a light bounces off the walls
 all around them. A startled Gaston turns...

Christine doesn't notice...

Coming around the corner, the ghostly figures of a masked
 Erik and a mounted Christine on the back of the horse
 approach the edge of the lake on that first night so many
 years ago...

Before he knows it, the spectral figures have vanished.

CHRISTINE
 Sometimes, I like to think...

INT. GASTON'S ROOM - DAY

Gaston writes the first words of the published Introduction--

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
 ...his music, his genius...his love
 will outlast us all...

"The Opera Ghost really existed..."

INT. UNDERGROUND LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Christine smiles, sadly, places the candle on the simple grave...

...we follow down..

...into the depths of the dirt...

...through all that blackness...

...revealing the skeleton of Erik, no more beautiful, nor ugly, than any other man...

...arms folded across his chest, the plain gold ring around his finger...

...clutching the music of his eternal "Don Juan Triumphant".

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END