

The World's Strangest  
Mystery Story!

# The PHANTOM of the OPERA

by  
GASTON LEROUX

(Published by Arrangement with Universal Pictures)

This story is published by arrangement with Universal Pictures, who have produced it as a tremendous spectacle. Raoul (Norman Kerry) and the Persian (Arthur Edmund Carewe) descend into the cellars below the Paris Opera in search of Christine (Mary Philbin), who has been kidnapped by Erik (Lon Chaney), a supposed Phantom.

(Continued.)

When they were below the Persian made a sign to Raoul to stand up. Raoul did so; but, as he did not lift his hand in front of his eyes, ready to fire, the Persian told him to resume that attitude and to continue it, whatever happened.

"But it tires the hand necessarily," whispered Raoul. "If I do fire, I shan't be sure of my aim."

"Then shift your pistol to the other hand," said the Persian.

"I can't shoot with my left hand."

Thereupon, the Persian made this queer reply, which was certainly not calculated to throw light into the young man's flurried brain:

"It's not a question of shooting with the right hand or the left; it's a question of holding one of your hands as though you were going to pull the trigger of a pistol with your arm bent. As for the pistol itself, when all is said, you can put that in your pocket!" And he added, "Let this be clearly understood, or I will answer for nothing. It is a matter of life and death. And now, silence and follow me!"

The cellars of the Opera are enormous and they are five in number. Raoul followed the Persian and wondered what he would have done without his companion in that extraordinary labyrinth. They went down to the third cellar; and their progress was still lit by some distant lamp.

The lower they went, the more precautions the Persian seemed to take. He kept on turning to Raoul to see if he was holding his arm properly, showing him how he himself carried his hand as if always ready to fire, though the pistol was in his pocket.

Suddenly, a loud voice made them stop. Some one above them shouted:

"All the door-shutters on the stage! The commissary of police wants them!"

The Persian and Raoul welcomed this incident, which relieved them of inconvenient witnesses, for some of those door-shutters, having nothing else to do or nowhere to lay their heads, stayed at the Opera, from idleness or necessity, and spent the night there.

But they were not left to enjoy their solitude for long. Other shades now came down by the same way by which the door-shutters had gone up. Each of these shades carried a little lantern and moved it about, below and all around, as though looking for something or somebody.

"Hang it!" muttered the Persian. "I don't know what they are looking for, but they might easily find us."

Let us get away, quick! . . . Your hand up, sir, ready to fire! . . . Bend your arm more . . . that's it!

Hand at the level of your eye, is though you were fighting a duel and waiting for the word to fire!

Oh, leave your pistol in your pocket. Quick, come along, down-stairs. Level of your eye! Question of life or death! . . . Here, this way, those stairs! They reached the fifth cellar. "Oh, what a duel, sir, what a duel!"

Once in the fifth cellar, the Persian drew breath. He seemed to enjoy a rather greater sense of security than he had displayed when they both stepped in the third; but he never altered the attitude of his hand.

But the Persian left him no time for reflection. Telling Raoul to stay where he was, he ran up a few steps of the staircase which they had just left and then returned.

"How stupid of us!" he whispered. "We shall soon have seen the end of those men with their lanterns. It is the firemen going their rounds."

The two men waited five minutes longer. Then the Persian took Raoul up the stairs again; but suddenly he stopped him with a gesture. Something moved in the darkness before them.

"Flat on your stomach!" whispered the Persian.

The two men lay flat on the floor. They were only just in time. A shade, this time carrying no light just a shade in the shade, passed. It passed close to them, near enough to touch them.

They felt the warmth of its cloak upon them. For they could distinguish the shade sufficiently to see that it wore a cloak which shrouded it from head to foot. On its head it had a soft felt hat.

It moved away, drawing its feet against the walls and sometimes giving a kick into a corner.

"Whew!" said the Persian. "We've had a narrow escape; that shade knows me and has twice taken me to the manager's office."

"Is it some one belonging to the theatre police?" asked Raoul.

"It's some one much worse than that!" replied the Persian, without giving any further explanation.

"It's not . . . he?"

"He? . . . If he does not come from behind, stealing up; and we are dead men if we do not keep our hands as though about to fire, at the level of our eyes, in front!"

The Persian had hardly finished speaking, when a fantastic face came in sight . . . a whole fiery face, not only two yellow eyes!

Yes, a head of fire came toward them, at a man's height, but with no body attached to it. The face shed fire, looked in the darkness like a flame shaped as a man's face.

"Oh," said the Persian, between his teeth. "I have never seen this before!"

Pampin was not mad, after all; he had seen it! . . . What can that flame be? It is not he, but he may have sent it! . . . Take care! . . . Take care! . . . Your hand at the level of your eyes, in Heaven's name, at the level of your eyes! . . . I know most of his tricks . . . but not this one. . . . Come, let us run.

It is safer. Hand at the level of your eyes!"

And they fled down the long passage that opened before them.

After a few seconds that seemed to them life long minutes, they stopped.

"He doesn't often come this way," said the Persian. "This side has nothing to do with him. This side does not lead to the lake nor to the house on the lake. . . . But perhaps he knows that we are at his heels . . . although I promised him to leave him alone and never to meddle in his business again!"

So saying, he turned his head and Raoul also turned his head; and they again saw the head of fire behind their two heads. It had followed them. And it must have run also, and perhaps faster than they, for it seemed to be nearer to them.

At the same time, they began to perceive a certain noise of which they could not guess the nature. They simply noticed that the sound seemed to move and to approach with the fiery face. It was a noise as though thousands of nails had been scraped against a blackboard, the perfectly unendurable noise that is sometimes made by a little stone inside the chalk that grates on the blackboard.

They continued to retreat, but the fiery face came on, came on, gaining on them. They could see its features clearly now. The eyes were round and staring, the nose a little crooked and the mouth large, with a hanging lower lip, very like the eyes, nose and lip of the moon, when the moon is quite red, bright red.

How did that red moon manage to glide through the darkness, at a man's height, with nothing to support it, at least apparently? And how did it go so fast, so straight ahead, with such staring, staring eyes? And what was that scratching, scraping, grating sound which it brought with it?

The Persian and Raoul could retreat no farther and flattened themselves against the wall, not knowing what was going to happen because of that incomprehensible head of fire, and especially now, because of the more intense, swarming, living, "numerosous" sound, for the sound was certainly made up of hundreds of little sounds that moved in the darkness, under the fiery face.

And the fiery face came on . . . with its noise . . . came level with them! . . .

And the two companions, flat against their wall, felt their hair stand on end with horror, for they now knew what the thousand noises meant. They came in a troop, hustled along in the shadow by innumerable little hurried waves, than the waves that rush over the waves foaming under the moon, under the fiery head that was like a moon. And the little waves passed between their legs, climbing up their legs, irresistibly, and Raoul and the Persian could no longer restrain their cries of horror, dismay and pain. Nor could they continue to hold their hands at the level of their eyes: their hands went down to their legs to push back the waves, which were full of little legs and nails and claws and teeth.

Yes, Raoul and the Persian were ready to faint, like Pampin the fireman. But the head of fire turned round in answer to their cries, and spoke to them:

"Don't move! Don't move . . . Whatever you do, don't come after me! . . . I am the rat-catcher!"

Let me pass, with my rats! . . . And the head of fire disappeared, vanished in the darkness, while his passage in front of it lit up, as the result of the change which the rat-catcher had made in his dark lantern. Before, so as not to scare the rats in front of him, he had turned his dark lantern on himself, lighting up his own head; now, to hasten their flight, he lit the dark space in front of him. And he jumped along, dragging with him the waves of scratching rats, all the thousand sounds.

"I ought to have remembered that Erik talked to me about the rat-catcher," said the Persian. "But he never told me that he looked like that . . . and it's funny that I should never have met him before. . . . Of course, Erik never comes to this part!"

"Are we very far from the lake, sir?" asked Raoul. "When shall we get there? . . . Take me to the lake, oh, take me to the lake! . . . When we are at the lake, we will call out! . . . Christine will hear us! . . . And he will hear us, too! . . . And, as you know him, we shall talk to him!"

"Baby!" said the Persian. "We shall never enter the house on the lake! . . . I myself, have never landed on the other bank . . . the bank on which the house stands . . . You have to cross the lake first . . . and it is well guarded! . . . I fear that more than one of those men—old scene-shifters, old door-shutters—who have never been seen again were simply tempted to cross the lake. . . . It is terrible. . . . I myself would have been nearly killed there . . . if the monster had not recognized me in time! One piece of advice, sir; never go near the lake. . . . And, above all, shut your ears if you hear the voice singing under the water, the siren's voice!"

"But then, what are we here for?" asked Raoul, in a transport of fever, impatience and rage. "If you can do nothing for Christine, at least let me die for her!"

The Persian tried to calm the young man.

"We have only one means of saving Christine Daae, believe me, which is to enter the house unperceived by the master."

"And is there any hope of that, sir?"

"Ah, if I had not that hope, I would not have come to fetch you!"

In this way, they gradually arrived beneath the huge cellars below the stage. They must at this time have been at the very bottom of the "tub" and at an extremely great depth, when we remember that the earth was dug out at fifty feet below the water that lay under the whole of that part of Paris.

The Persian touched a partition-wall and said:

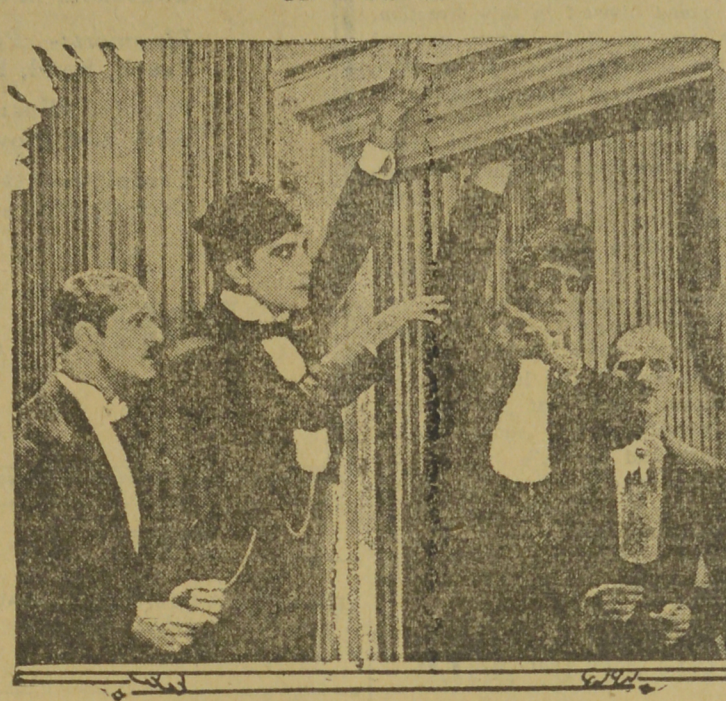
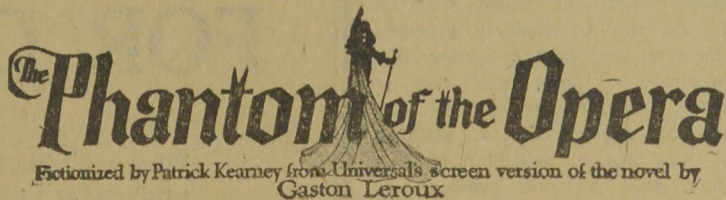
"If I am not mistaken, this is a wall that might easily belong to the house on the lake."

At the Persian's words, Raoul flung himself against the wall and listened eagerly. But he heard nothing . . . nothing . . . except distant steps sounding on the floor of the upper portions of the theatre.

The Persian darkened his lantern again.

"Look out!" he said. "Keep your hand up! And silence! For we shall try another way of getting in."

And he led him to the little stair-



Fictionized by Patrick Kearney from Universal's screen version of the novel by Gaston Leroux

Let me pass, with my rats! . . . And the head of fire disappeared, vanished in the darkness, while his passage in front of it lit up, as the result of the change which the rat-catcher had made in his dark lantern. Before, so as not to scare the rats in front of him, he had turned his dark lantern on himself, lighting up his own head; now, to hasten their flight, he lit the dark space in front of him. And he jumped along, dragging with him the waves of scratching rats, all the thousand sounds.

"I ought to have remembered that Erik talked to me about the rat-catcher," said the Persian. "But he never told me that he looked like that . . . and it's funny that I should never have met him before. . . . Of course, Erik never comes to this part!"

"Are we very far from the lake, sir?" asked Raoul. "When shall we get there? . . . Take me to the lake, oh, take me to the lake! . . . When we are at the lake, we will call out! . . . Christine will hear us! . . . And he will hear us, too! . . . And, as you know him, we shall talk to him!"

"Baby!" said the Persian. "We shall never enter the house on the lake! . . . I myself, have never landed on the other bank . . . the bank on which the house stands . . . You have to cross the lake first . . . and it is well guarded! . . . I fear that more than one of those men—old scene-shifters, old door-shutters—who have never been seen again were simply tempted to cross the lake. . . . It is terrible. . . . I myself would have been nearly killed there . . . if the monster had not recognized me in time! One piece of advice, sir; never go near the lake. . . . And, above all, shut your ears if you hear the voice singing under the water, the siren's voice!"

"But then, what are we here for?" asked Raoul, in a transport of fever, impatience and rage. "If you can do nothing for Christine, at least let me die for her!"

The Persian tried to calm the young man.

"We have only one means of saving Christine Daae, believe me, which is to enter the house unperceived by the master."

"And is there any hope of that, sir?"

"Ah, if I had not that hope, I would not have come to fetch you!"

In this way, they gradually arrived beneath the huge cellars below the stage. They must at this time have been at the very bottom of the "tub" and at an extremely great depth, when we remember that the earth was dug out at fifty feet below the water that lay under the whole of that part of Paris.

The Persian touched a partition-wall and said:

"If I am not mistaken, this is a wall that might easily belong to the house on the lake."

At the Persian's words, Raoul flung himself against the wall and listened eagerly. But he heard nothing . . . nothing . . . except distant steps sounding on the floor of the upper portions of the theatre.

The Persian darkened his lantern again.

"Look out!" he said. "Keep your hand up! And silence! For we shall try another way of getting in."

And he led him to the little stair-

## The Truly Tea of High Degree

# "SALADA"

TEA

H749

ORANGE PEKOE BLEND

Every Infusion a daily Treat.

Sealed Aluminum Packets Only.

hanging there. The body of Joseph Buquet.

The Persian, still kneeling, stopped and listened. For a moment, he seemed to hesitate and looked at Raoul; then he turned his eyes upward, toward the second cellar, which sent down the faint glimmer of a lantern, through a cranny between two boards. This glimmer seemed to trouble the Persian.

At last, he tossed his head and made up his mind to act. He slipped between the set piece and the scene from the Roi de Lahore, with Raoul close upon his heels. With his free hand, the Persian felt the wall. Raoul saw him bear heavily upon the wall, just as he had pressed against the wall in Christine's dressing-room. Then a stone gave way, leaving a hole in the wall.

This time, the Persian, took his pistol from his pocket, and made a sign to Raoul to do as he did. He cocked the pistol.

And, resolutely, still on his knees, he wiggled through the hole in the wall. Raoul, who had wished to pass first, had to be content to follow him.

The hole was very narrow. The Persian stopped almost at once. Raoul heard him feeling the stones around him. Then the Persian took out his dark lantern again, stooped forward

examined something beneath him and immediately extinguished his lantern. Raoul heard him say, in a whisper:

"We shall have to drop a few yards, without making a noise; take off your boots."

The Persian handed his own shoes to Raoul.

He crawled a little farther on his knees, then turned right around and said:

"I am going to hang by my hands from the edge of the stone and let myself drop into his house. You must do exactly the same. Do not be afraid. I will catch you in my arms."

Raoul soon heard a dull sound, evidently produced by the fall of the Persian, and then dropped down.

(To be Continued.)

## Your Head Colds

Are quickly relieved by melting Vicks in a spoon or tin cup and inhaling the vapors. They clear the head immediately.

**VICKS**  
VAPORUB



# About That Printing Job?

**W**HEN you want something done in the Printing line don't forget that **THE MAIL IS READY TO SERVE YOU.** We carry a large stock and **OUR PRICES WILL BE FOUND REASONABLE, consistent with First Class Work.**

We are in a position to promptly fill orders for **COUNTER CHECK BOOKS** in one or two colors. Don't wait for some travelling salesman to come along, **GIVE US YOUR ORDER NOW.**

We have, by far, the **LARGEST** and **BEST EQUIPPED** **JOB PRINTING PLANT IN THE CITY,** and can turn out all kinds of work promptly and efficiently. When in need of anything in our line call No. 67 on the telephone —**WE WILL DO THE REST.**

Call at 329 Queen Street or Phone 67

# The Mail Printing Company

327-29 Queen Street.