

Introduction: Running The Adventure

Content Warning: Themes of mind control, kidnapping, optional themes of hanging

This is primarily an adventure of mystery and discovery, inspired by the classic book *Phantom of the Opera*. Players will have to use and observe the environment around them, interrogate witnesses, and solve puzzles in order to progress with the story. There will also be combat encounters once they enter the catacombs, but before that, the encounters will be more survival based. Pay special attention to describing the atmosphere: You may take the time to highlight the sweeping marble that adorns the atrium or the way the adventurers' footsteps echo in an empty room. Since this is a question of recognizing clues, it's wise to start by describing the entire area they are in without highlighting any specific thing as more important than the other (unless they investigate well and roll high). This is also a spooky adventure, so you can note the change from the light of the opera house to the dank underbelly or create tension in a moment before the "specter" attacks.

NPC and BBEG descriptions and stats are listed at the end of the adventure!

Background Information for the DM

The Voix Montante opera house has been a monument of the city for over 150 years, entertaining the most impressive audiences from the moment it opened its doors. It has held audience with kings, nobles, and foreign emissaries alike, and is internationally renowned for its status. But, following a recent change in ownership, problems at the opera have resulted in a rapid decline of the house's pristine reputation. The new owners refuse to answer the demands that have been anonymously sent to them, and the "specter" who lives in the catacombs of the opera has acted in revenge.

The owners, despite all the strange and dangerous occurrences, staunchly believe the connection to the letters and the events are nonexistent and hire the adventurers to investigate and prove that the fears of the employees are unfounded. Of course, the adventurers are in for more than they were hired for: a powerful siren lurks in the depths of the opera house, driven from society as a "dangerous demon" and forced to take cover in the winding mazes of the catacombs. He designs puzzles and traps to make infiltration nearly impossible and uses them to his advantage. His tactic, even before his tenancy at the opera, was seducing impressionable people in with his song before draining the life force from them-- but he's found this tactic works especially well at the opera house, and has therefore become comfortable and confident there.

The previous owners struck up a deal with him to only drain—but not kill—the singers and patrons, which he obeyed for monetary gain and a permanent seat in box 5 of the opera house.

Unfortunately, the new owners haven't been as generous, opting to believe that the “specter” is merely a wives' tale. They have paid the price dearly, but will not tell the adventurers in the beginning that the specter is real, as they still do not believe it.

About the Terrain

The terrain is the Opera house itself. The primary map should be available for the players if the DM would like, but the catacombs should remain a secret in all circumstances. The pathways to reach the catacombs are as follows: A secret passageway in the catwalks, accessed by pressing a nearly invisible panel in the wall; a double-sided mirror at Adelaide's dressing station; and in the ceiling of box 5, accessed by using a key found in a statue.

The Adventure Begins: A Suspicious Sonata

Our adventurers find themselves on the steps of the Voix Montante: a huge building of marble and masonry that stretches towards the sky. Strong pillars support the delicate artwork carved into the stone, and a yawning stretch of steps leads up to the ornate entrance. Armond and Lucien will meet the adventurers and lead them inside to the atrium, explaining the issue. (Take a moment to describe the atrium: a huge room where the voices echo off the marble that covers the floors and walls. A huge staircase in the middle of the room leads to the orchestra, and at the foot of the stairs stands a statue of a beautiful woman, wings outstretched, mouth opened in song.) Unrest has become the constant attitude of everyone in the opera house due to the recent death of the stagehand Ernest Barbier. They are insistent that it was a tragic accident, telling the adventurers that other things have gone wrong that lead them to believe an employee of the theatre is blackmailing them for money. They reference notes they've been receiving demanding money and will show them if asked. The notes read as follows in scrawling script:

“Welcome to my theatre. Please be advised that I will expect a salary of 1,000 gold per month, to be left in box five on the first of each. Box five shall be left empty at all times.

-O.D.”

“You have missed the date of your first payment. Failure to obey once more will result in consequences. I have also noticed the occupation of box five for the past three performances. Please rectify this error if you wish to operate the theatre smoothly.

-O.D.”

“I have provided you with two courteous warnings, and still you have not complied. This disrespect will not go unnoticed, nor unpunished.

-O.D.”

Armond and Lucien will not provide any information on OD past these letters, staunchly insisting that it is nothing but blackmail from an employee. They promise the adventurers 300 gold to discover the guilty employee and give them full run of the theatre. While they insist the nonexistence of the opera ghost, behind them, the statue of the woman will start to look strange. Her eyes and the area around her mouth will darken, then begin to trickle with a black substance, then overflow so that it coats the statue, running down in dark streams onto the marble. A successful check will show it's ink, but hey: spooooky!

Part Two: Investigation Start!

After the unsettling occurrence, the owners will give adventurers free reign of the theatre. They can explore all the rooms and encounter important NPCs at your discretion: Since it's a bit of a mystery, I'm leaving a bit more open ended in terms of encounter in the beginning to let them explore their surroundings! (I've included names for important NPCs, and a basic build for stagehands they may encounter along with a few names to use.) Try to lead the players in a way that keeps them from finding the entrances to the catacombs until later: For instance, the mirror won't work for them until the demon kidnaps Marguerite. The entrance in the catwalks leads straight to the room of mirrors, and escape will bring them back out to the catwalks, as the only way to escape to his lair from the mirrors is by a musical melody (if they're not careful, falling into the room of mirrors will cause 1d10 falling damage). The entrance in the theatre box is accessed by a key found in the statue in the atrium, which is only accessed by solving a riddle, detailed in its own section.

Once the adventurers find out enough truth about the demon (up to your discretion/how long the adventure takes), a series of events will trigger:

They'll hear a scream. It's one of the dancers in the atrium. Where the statue once was seeping ink, it's seeping blood, trickling down the statue onto the floor. Adelaide will meet the adventurers there and tell them she can't find Marguerite. The opera demon came to her and tried to entice her, but she refused, and now Marguerite is missing. The mission becomes: Find Marguerite. Adelaide will insist on coming. The adventurers can refuse her help, but her help will be invaluable, as her voice is the key to escaping the room of mirrors into the actual passageway.

The Statue

If the adventurers investigate the statue, at this point or any point before, a good check will find words inscribed in the back of the statue, at the base:

*Cherished one: the
Entrance home, should you
Desire, lies in the
First of each of these.
Bare your voice,
Angel, as the heavenliest
Choir, and enter.*

Only Adelaide's voice will open the statue. If she sings the notes CEDFBAC (soundbite attached), the hand of the statue will open up, and a key will be resting in it. This is the key to the opera box entrance. It will be very difficult to get Adelaide to sing this until Marguerite is taken, since she has no desire to see the Opera Demon and would know this to be his work.

Note: This melody is also the one used to escape the room of mirrors.

Entering the Catacombs

The adventurers have a few options to enter the catacombs. First, if they ask Adelaide how the Demon came to her, she will answer the mirror. If they break the mirror, they'll be able to enter through it. There's a possibility of ending up in the room of mirrors, which they can only escape by the melody sung by Adelaide or through the entrance in the ceiling, which takes them to the catwalk. (Note: if you

want to make your mirrors adventurer proof by making them unbreakable, that is an option available to you.)

Walking through the catacombs is a dreary, disgusting venture. Putrid water covers the floor and rats scurry along the edges, occasionally running over a foot. There is no light until the adventurers see a pair of eyes, burning in the darkness... Then two...

ENCOUNTER: two flameskulls. Detailed in pg 134 of the *Monster Manual*.

After taking care of the flame skulls and navigating the catacombs, the adventurers will find a lake. They can choose to swim or take the boat tied near them. If they take the boat, choose one adventurer to make a DC 15 Wisdom save. On a failed save, they will hear an enchanting melody seemingly coming from the water and will be compelled to lean over and investigate. On their investigation, the demon's hand will jut out of the water, and they will also be kidnapped by the specter. If they swim, simply choose an adventurer to make an opposed strength check against. After the adventurers cross the lake, they will reach: The Opera Demon's lair.

Inside the Lair

The lair is much like the one seen and described in the famous story we know so well. A portcullis lurks above the entrance and candles rise from the water, casting an eerie glow on the otherwise dank chamber. Marguerite lies on a bed surrounded by papers and trinkets and looks to be unconscious. If a player was kidnapped, they will be grappled by a rope that loops to tie to the portcullis (you can choose to have it be a simple grapple or tied around the neck, depending on your players and their sensitivity to certain themes). They will not be immediately visible but will be revealed when the demon appears. He'll emerge from the water, strangely totally dry, and attack. (this can be a perception check with an opportunity for a surprise round, if you'd like, or just a "villain monologue" moment).

Wrapping Up

After defeating the demon, the adventurers will get whatever gold is in the lair, as well as a gift from Adelaide: The Amulet of Proof Against Detection and Location (DMG 150). It's what has been protecting her from the opera demon, but now that he is defeated, she feels no need for it. Marguerite is unconscious but stable at 0 and can be revived with a heal or taken with them unconscious. The baffled owners are

clearly embarrassed to be wrong but tell the adventurers they always have a place to stay and free access to performances should they ever return.

NPCs

Armond Boudon + Lucien Carrel

Human, Neutral

ROLEPLAYING INFORMATION

The new owners of the Voix Montante. They're foolish and stubborn. They have a backlog of letters from the specter that they've ignored, but can give to the adventurers if they ask. They will be of little help past providing very biased information on the situation, as they believe it all to be a hoax from one of the employees to swindle money out of them. They operate as a unit, often finishing each other's sentences.

Ideal: "Profit! It all comes down to the bottom line."

Bond: "The opera house is our lifeblood and livelihood. Success is absolutely necessary."

Flaw: Skepticism. "Whatever this 'specter' is, it's made up by some greedy employee! Find them at once!"

Adelaide Laurent

Human, Chaotic/Neutral Good

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 25

Speed 25 ft.

STR
8 (-1)

DEX
12 (+1)

CON
10 (+0)

INT
13 (+1)

WIS
15 (+2)

CHA
16 (+3)

ROLEPLAYING INFORMATION

Attack. Adelaide has a dagger. +3 to hit, deals 1d8+3 damage.

Casting. Adelaide can use her voice to cast Healing Word twice at a second level. She can give three bouts of bardic inspiration. She is not a bard per se, but more a commoner who could become a bard if she let loose her potential.

The sweet ingenue of the theater. She claims to see the specter in her dressing room mirror after performances and has “dreamed” that she visited his home once. She seems at first quiet and unassuming, but this masks a maturity that only comes with experience of the world. She possesses a unique compassion that makes her hesitate to cause harm to anything, even, at first, the specter. But after the “accidental death” of the stage hand, she is fearful of the specter and knows it must be destroyed. She also has a quiet bravery that often leads her into dangerous situations. She is best friends with Marguerite, a dancer who is the daughter of Armond.

Ideal: “Every living thing deserves respect.”

Bond: “Marguerite. She and I are like sisters.”

Flaw: Careless, surprisingly headstrong. “I will go and protect the people I care about.”

Marguerite Boudon

Neutral Good

ROLEPLAYING INFORMATION

A dancer at the opera house and daughter of Armond. She was a dancer at the Voix Montante before her father bought the opera house, and is a believer in the specter, as she believes Adelaide in all things. She is sweet and innocent, with a boisterous personality that endears her to everyone she meets. She will be kidnapped by the specter after Adelaide’s refusal to join the specter in his home.

Ideal: “Everyone deserves a little kindness! That’s why I’m friends with everyone here.”

Bond: “Adelaide. I don’t know what I’d do without her.”

Flaw: Naive. “The specter is real, but father says we’re safe, and I trust him!”

Stagehand

Neutral

ROLEPLAYING INFORMATION

Stagehands populate the theatre and are constantly moving around and working. They can give our adventurers scraps of information in the way stage crew does— weird gossip that doesn’t totally line up or has become exaggerated as they trade it amongst each other. They can offer up information like this:

The Opera Demon can haunt any reflection. Once, a stagehand saw his face in a puddle outside the theatre after a bad storm (truth: the OD has a two-way mirror in the dressing room)

The Opera Demon has a secret room where he controls all the ropes and lights in the theatre (truth: The OD has access to the catwalks and will walk around them, messing with the ropes that pull the curtains and backdrops during performances).

The Opera Demon has a voice that makes you forget where you are and can kill you just by singing to you. (Truth: Actually, almost totally true. The voice bewitches you, and then he can touch you and suck out your essence.)

Dominique Jamond

Neutral Evil

ROLEPLAYING INFORMATION

Another “ingenué” of the theatre, and the prima donna. That is, she was— now, Adelaide’s talent threatens her position. She doesn’t believe in the specter because she sees it as leverage to endear herself to the owners: As Adelaide believes in the opera demon, she positions herself as rational and the best choice for the theatre, and Adelaide as the foolish girl who believes in ghosts and ghouls. She will provide no useful information but will try to stall the adventurers for as long as possible.

Ideal: “Performance is the greatest calling of all: A good performance is the highest one can reach.”

Bond: “Fame, darling. Nothing is more important than that.”

Flaw: Power hungry. “There’s only room for one lead in this theatre, and I will do what I must to make the managers see that.”

The Opera Demon

Medium Humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 150 (16d10 + 62)

Speed 30 ft., swim speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14(+2)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)

Skills Casting Modifier: Charisma

Saving Throws Adds proficiency (+2) to Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws.

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Resistances Bludgeoning, Piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Languages Common, Elven, Abyssal, Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Keen Hearing. The creature has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Roleplaying Info. The Opera Demon is the rare product of a human and a succubus, and enjoys the benefits of both. When he speaks, it's in a haunting voice that holds a soft musicality, rising and lilting in a way that could lull someone to sleep. His compulsion to drain and kill drives him into obscurity, but he's found a situation that is beneficial to him in the opera house and is keen to keep it. He is obsessed with Adelaide because of her voice and wants to keep her as his own, teaching her to harness its power and use it to further prey on the unsuspecting populace. He is hauntingly beautiful, with red eyes that glow in the darkness.

Actions

Attack. Rapier, +5 to hit. 1d8+3 damage.

Legendary Actions. The demon can take one legendary action per turn to perform Siren.

Siren. The demon performs Siren as a legendary action. A humanoid the demon can see within 30 feet of it must succeed a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by the song of the demon for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the demon's commands until it takes damage or is commanded to do something harmful to itself. The charmed creature may repeat their saving throw at the end of each turn. A creature who has been charmed and saved cannot be charmed again.

Drain Essence. If a creature is charmed by the demon, he can summon the creature and use his voice as a bonus action to drain their essence. The creature will make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature will take 2d6 psychic damage. The Demon will heal the amount taken. On a successful save, the damage is halved. For both outcomes, half of the overall damage is subtracted from their max HP until they complete a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Casting

The Demon uses Charisma (attack +8, save DC 16) as his casting modifier. He is a fifth level spellcaster. His known spells are as follows:

Cantrips: Vicious Mockery, Blade Ward, True Strike

1st level: Dissonant Whispers(can be cast at a higher level slot), Tasha's Hideous Laughter, Disguise Self, Thunderwave(can be cast at higher levels)

2nd level: Hold Person, Cloud of Daggers(can be cast at higher levels)

3rd level: Fear, Bestow Curse