

Hidden Voices
Part 2
The Dawn of a New Day
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My new “life” begins

Although you might think the story ended with my death it did not, in fact it was just the beginning. Forget everything you think happened at the Paris Opera House the evening of the 30th of January in 1880. Here is what really happened and where my voyage began. Since my mortal life ended and my new life began I continue my journal in another source, letting die with me the legend Erik was about to create.

Over those next few evenings Erik explained to me what my body was going through, what had happened to me and who I now was. Frankly I hated what he made me. I cannot express the horror of being made a vampire. The fear, confusion, revulsion and terror, let alone the pain. Nothing has dull the memory of my own death. It was these first few nights that I learned what beast resided in me and for the first time I truly realized this was not a blessing but a curse. I was a slave to the passion of my hunger. It ruled me. I experienced starvation that never seemed sated. I became so distraught that I tried to kill myself by repeatedly smashing my head into a stone wall. Erik had to keep me restrained and I fed off of him to survive. He weaned me like a child and brought a horse for me when my hunger grew too great for him to quench. As I lay restrained he bath me, clothed me, fed me, sang to me and taught me. One night he came and said he knew a way to make things right for us. I halfway listened but no matter how I tried to hate him I could not. Although I was killed in anger I was embraced in love.

He untied me and made me promise not to hurt myself again. He smiled and touched my face gently. In that moment I realized that man or beast Erik’s one true desire more than fame or notoriety had been and shall be to be loved.

Erik had thought up the most delicious plan to make me an legend. Erik did nothing with normal style. He was egocentric and loved drama. He had a flare for the taking the simplest task and turned it into a production. I wanted more than anything to be a legend and not only did he know this but he identified with it and found a way to make it come true for me. Erik proposed that I return to the Paris Opera house one last time. He promised that at the precise moment something amazing would occur. Something so astonishing it would leave them drooling in the isles and writing about me for years to come. How could I turn down such an offer of infamy and notoriety that I would never have known without him? With that agreement he insisted that after this performance we could no longer stay in Paris. I agreed and we decided to travel to London where the fashion was acceptable (no place held fashion as grandly as in Paris) but the aristocrats were plenty and they would clamor for a performer of my caliber.

His plan was brilliant and his only request of me was that I leave one item behind – carefully edited in a disclosed location for the right time to be found. Erik wanted my journal. Erik was extremely methodical in his thinking and his plan had been orchestrated in the greatest of detail right down to the very last note. He spent a few days reading it, blotting out some items, and tearing out other pages altogether. When he completed the editing of the journal I went into the city and placed it in the floorboards of an up and coming writer that Erik had been following, Gaston Leroux. On completing this task I returned to the Opera house. There, I explained how I took ill but was much better now, and as I stepped into my costume and took my mark on the stage I looked around one last time, through the crowd in a sold out house, and as I did this I felt the music rise through me as I sang for Erik. I could feel him there as I had before and it made me feel safe.

First the low humming of the flute, than a violin joined, followed by a trumpet and on and on until the entire orchestra played in harmony. As my aria started I began to sing with my newly trained voice. With outstretched arms and a voice fill with music I uttered a divine cry, “Take my soul where it longs to be, only than can you belong to me!”¹

¹ Quoted from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Musical

To live as a vampire is to live in debt of hunger. Always does it approach. Sometimes slowly and others times with great haste but always ravenous. We are trapped by our hunger. The beast we've become can only be kept subdued by the greatest effort of our will. To deny the hunger enrages us until nothing may keep it in check. Thus I must commit monstrous acts to stop myself from becoming a monster.... That is the parable of vampirism. Monsters we are, lest monsters we become. That is the paradox of this life. It is what curses my very soul.

May 1881

The travel to London has not been pleasant. It is long and I miss the shores of Paris.

I miss my life. I miss my home. I miss the smell of grounds brewing in the morning air and the sun peaking out through the clouds.

Erik says – Erik says – Erik says..... Please do not let this be what eternity is.

June 1881

We finally have arrived in London. Erik is looking into acquiring a home for us in the mean time we are housing with some “friends” of his. I miss being human. Erik assures me this feeling will pass. Somehow this does not comfort me. He says I will retain the energy and vision I carried in life, only now I will have all the time I need to achieve my goals. It's ironic because I still feel human, even though it is apparent that I am not. It is funny to call “them” mortals when I feel like one. He tells me I will become adept at interacting with them, moving freely in their world. I am happy for that.

I asked Erik why he chose to love me. He said “Mortals are beautiful creatures” and through my humanity I restored him, cured his insanity and he has gained a zest for life once again. We retained the ability to love and with this love he was cured and it gave him renewed life, a new connection to this world. I feel happy for Erik for he is like I've never known him to be, but for his happiness I suffer. I prey on people not so very different than myself. I am a distortion of humanity, a perverse and sick addition to the world. If we are the most human of the beast that stalk the night, it frightens me to think what else inhabits this world.

July 1881

The house Erik acquired is magnificent. It is my sanctuary. I never leave except to feed. It reminds me of Paris so I do not feel so home sick. He is having retailers come to the house so I may decorate it anyway I see fit. Tailors and seamstress come over to fit us for the latest London fashions.

London is quaint but it is not home.

August 1881

The house has finally been completed. Feeding has not become easier as Erik told me it would and he laughs at me when I refer to feeding as “dinner time”. I do not care if he thinks I am silly, its how I am learning to get through it. I try never to leave the house only to feed. I read endlessly all the books in our home, anything to keep my mind off of the hunger.

November 1881

Erik implores me to continue with my study of music. It is all I've heard about for months now. Music holds no pleasure for me now and I have no desire to continue singing.

December 1881

Time passes much differently for me now. There isn't the same realization of it. Has it been 1 month or 10 since we left Paris? I keep the journal in an attempt to keep myself focused. In fact, I find myself doing a number of things out of habit. Things I am no longer required to do I still find pleasure in - mortal things, human things. I am 1 year old today. Erik bought me a lovely diamond necklace. It's almost as if I am still human. I pretend I am. Feeding is the only time I cannot escape my vampirism.

All vampires spend the rest of their immortality mimicking mortals and desperately seeking to fit in among them and I am no different. How sad is it to be taken from human life only to be doomed to try to repeat it for all eternity.

I have yet to pick a new name. As I was agonizing over this change Erik laughs he said that many of us go to great lengths to set up mortal identities, complete with friends, lovers, pets, a home, a job and anything else a mortal would accomplish. He predicted that I would do this over and over when I have to disappear and move to re-identify myself with a new life.

January 1882

I have desires that conflict between both worlds and find it difficult to entwine them. There is no peace within me. I am a baby as Erik lovingly reminds me that I must learn to walk before I can run. He has helped me stay sane when I felt myself drift. You would think immortality would be a blessing. Infinite time to be and do anything one might want but it is far from that. On the surface you can't understand the torment and torture you feel and how enslaved you are. I am trying to find balance and I hope I will find who I am to be and smile and know myself as I once did.

April 1882

Spring arrives and I am feeling the call of life although I am not sure what life it is to be. London is growing on me.

May thru September 1882

Erik came to me today extremely excited, he could barely contain himself. Apparently we had been invited to a party, which according to Erik "was a major honor." He hired a speech coach and teachers for us. We concentrated on our interaction and it seemed odd at the time to work so hard for a party. He assured me that this was no ordinary party. I already knew French and English. I was able to sing in Italian and German but I was taught the language in their entirety. In September a famous British designer came to our home to fit us for black tie attire. Erik spared no expense to make this a night we would never forget and in his excitement I too was caught up in it.

This party would be my first meeting with other vampires. Erik loved the prestige of being a vampire but rarely was he among them.

October 31, 1882

The party was being held at the home of Bella Derigan. I was told this was just one of her many extravagant mansions. I marveled at her home and its décor.

We were greeted immediately upon entering the house by one of Derigan's ghouls who took my wrap and Erik's cloak. There were many ghoul servants who cared for the mansion. We passed through the front parlor into a large receiving room which was filled with important vampires. I rarely cared for politics but did care to be noticed. I made some eye contact and smiled politely as I walked through hoping one of them would take notice of me. By the end of the night this turned out to be of little importance. Walking through a long hallway filled with sculptures where many stood discussing the various pieces of art. I overheard some talking, and I listened for a long time fascinated as they spoke but then I realized how insincere they were.

"The texture is amazing" one said, to which another replied, "It conveys such an image. It evades direct symbolism." Their praise meant nothing; they did not care about the art or the artist who created it, just speaking to hear themselves talk, to appear sophisticated and well educated. I was equally as educated and did not see what they claimed, what I saw was a tormented figure, pitiful and looming. It was a frightening figure in its hopelessness. It was the true soul of the sculptor and it made me cry.

The mansion was huge and had an enormous gallery for which Derigan displayed the works of her favorite artists. I recognized works of Rembrandt, Juan Miro, Albert Van Beest, Warren Sheppard and William Hart among many.

More than 200 hundred of our kind attended this party. Each dressed in the finest fashions of evening gowns, ball dresses, and tuxedos. Most were accompanied by their ghoul consorts. We did not have any ghouls and when I asked Erik why he said that he, in the past had no need for them. He also thought that keeping ghoul's were insulting to humans, I on the other hand thought that ghouls were the luckiest of all beings. They remained human but gained the powers that their "owner" possessed. They still could walk in daylight and eat and drink. Yes it was true that they were bound to their donor, but that was a small price, in my opinion for the gifts that went along with their new found life.

I spent the rest of the evening studying some of the others. I found their conversations empty and their sincerity hardly sincere at all. I found most of them to be frauds or phony and as the refined damned gathered to speak providing witty and provocative conversations I had the urge to laugh at them. I hated insincerity in mortal life – I hated it more as in immortal.

I listened to stories of the fall of the Roman Empire, the Renaissance and the Dark Ages. Everyone had a story much more elaborate than the storyteller before and I wondered who was telling the truth. I said little but observed as much as possible and I had the distinct feeling that Erik was right. I was not prepared for this.

There was dancing and as Gustav Holst's symphony played Erik and I were summoned. At the time I assumed that my eye contact at the beginning of the night had been noticed because the ghoul of the London's oldest and most prestigious vampire summoned us. He whispered that we had been requested to follow him. I was immediately nervous and looking at Erik I marveled at his ability to keep himself composed.

We walked through a continuation of rooms until finally at the end of a never ending hallway a door swung open and the ghoul announced us. I did not know what to do or expect. I just stood watching and wondering what was going on. I followed Erik's lead but there wasn't any way to prepare for something so unexpected. The elder vampire was dressed in the loveliest of gowns and her jewelry was the most expensive I've ever seen. She did not look at me but summoned Erik to speak with her. This made me uncomfortable. I immediately wondered if I had done something wrong or if we were in some sort of trouble. I believe I was shaking and tried with all my will to compose myself and not allow this growing fear to get the better of me. It was at this precise moment that she spoke to me from across the room. In the coolest of tones she said, "So it is true, you are Christine Daaé." I did not know how to respond but thinking quickly I curtsied and replied "Yes I am Christine Daaé" and as I spoke I could almost swear I felt my heart beat once again, pounding in my chest as my voice echoed throughout the large room. She smiled and again spoke, "You will entertain us shortly, go prepare something child." She did not ask, nor request, she simply demanded in the sweetest of tones. I looked

at Erik who stood smiling proudly and I could not bare to break his heart and say to her what I truly wished. I simply smiled and said, "It will be my humble honor to sing for you this evening." Erik smiled and she turned once again to him and commented on how well behaved I was. I was not some trained puppy at the heel of my master, but for Erik I did nothing but smile as phony as the rest of them. It was now I truly understood why Erik distanced himself from them; his minor imperfection caused scorn among the very beautiful, yet very superficial vampires. Then and there I had made myself a promise that I would never become as they were now. I would go along with this for I had no other choice but will never be consumed by it.

We were dismissed from her chamber and once outside I looked to Erik and said, "She must be joking." and he grabbed my shoulders and whispered, "You do not realize what an extreme honor this is." and it was true I did not. I was no lap dog made to do tricks at the master's command, but as I was to find out – indeed I was. I could not believe I was to sing in front of the very hypocrites I heard discussing the art. They did not care for the passion I put into my music. It was a farce as far as I was concerned. Erik told me that regardless of what I thought, I would perform and well at that. I could not understand why this was so important to him and I was too angry to even ask.

When I performed at the Opera house I knew the people were there in appreciation of the art and the performance. Here I was simply a commodity and my voice was mine and I didn't feel the need to share it at this party. Unfortunately it was not my decision to make. It had been made and it was than I explained to Erik that I would play this game, for him and for my future but he need not forget that no matter what small amount of acceptance he received, we were outcasts among them. Deep down I could see in his eyes that he knew that already and perhaps I should have just given him this night without pointing that out to him.

When the symphony broke, Gustav approached me to inquire what music would accompany my performance. I wanted to take what I had said to Erik back. The only thing I could do now was to sing beautifully for him. I remembered his favorite piece and turning to Gustave I told him I would be singing *Donde lieta uscì*, from Puccini's *La bohème*. He smiled kindly and walked away. I ran the aria over in my head making sure I remembered the piece in its entirety.

When Gustav and the musicians took the stage again I stood off to the side silently running through scales. It had been a long time since I sang. Derigan walked onto the platform and announced, "Tonight we have a special guest who will be performing for us. Paris has come to England and in her first performance in over a year, it is my pleasure to present Mademoiselle Christine Daaé." The room clapped and I wondered if they even knew who I was. I smiled as I stepped out onto the platform where the symphony was arranged. The music began to play and it felt as if no time had passed since I stood on the stage of the Paris Opera house. It all came flooding back to me and I felt alive again. I forgot whom I stood in front of and I sang as if I never stopped. There was passion in my voice and when my aria ended I looked through the crowd there was a sea of blood tears. I wondered if for those few brief moments when I sang if I truly moved them, and it was than that I knew I must return to my true vocation.

Erik and I stayed at the party for quite a while dancing, meeting people and enjoying the night. When he decided it was time we headed out but not before making our rounds to say good evening to everyone and thanking our hostess for a wonderful time. When our carriage arrived Erik helped me in and I sat with my head on his shoulder. The entire ride home I spent telling him how much I wanted to go back to performing. He caressed my face and assured me that it would be possible, though not right now. He promised he would start investigating tomorrow. Erik did correct my behavior. He said that I acted like a spoiled child and that we all answered to someone. He suggested I get used to it if I wanted to survive as a vampire. I felt like I was scolded by my parent and there was so many words I could have said to hurt him but I chose to think about what I wanted and found it was in my best interest to keep my thoughts to myself. I apologized to Erik and assured him I would behave better when we were invited to any future events.

That evening as I began to drift off I wondered what was in store for me and why Erik sought their approval. I was sure some were sincere in their love of art, music, beauty and life, those were the ones I'd care to know, not the ones who were so lost in the act of being so surreal that they no longer understood what beauty was. I drifted to sleep and woke again the next evening with the same song in my head.

1883 – 1884

The time has come at Erik's insistence to pick a new name. I've chosen Clotilda Fonseca, and I will allow my close friends to call me Cladui. Erik laughed and said his good taste has finally rubbing off on me. I laughed but he was right.

Erik has spent the last two-years reinventing me. It has been quite the task. New names, travel ports, birth records, fake life, fake history, singing classes, small private shows. He tells me that I will have to do this many times through out our life. I do not mind, immortality is endless and so with time it will come to pass with many lives. I have patience which makes me formidable. I have a responsibility given the time I am offered to grow into my full potential. Anything less would be a waste of this gift.

Erik has been very good to me and I have no other way to repay him but make him proud and do what he can no longer do – perform. I am hoping to début some time this year or early next.

1885 - Present

It is the fall of 1885, hard to believe that 4 years have passed. Erick has arranged for me to join the Royal Opera house on Covent Garden in London. I have been chosen for the part of Mimi in Puccini's La Bohem. I am very excited for it is Erik's favorite opera.

I've been performing locally in London and although it is not Paris I've found comfort, even joy here.

New inventions come and old ones become obsolete. I've seen the world change in a blink of the eye but as much as life changes, it stays the same.