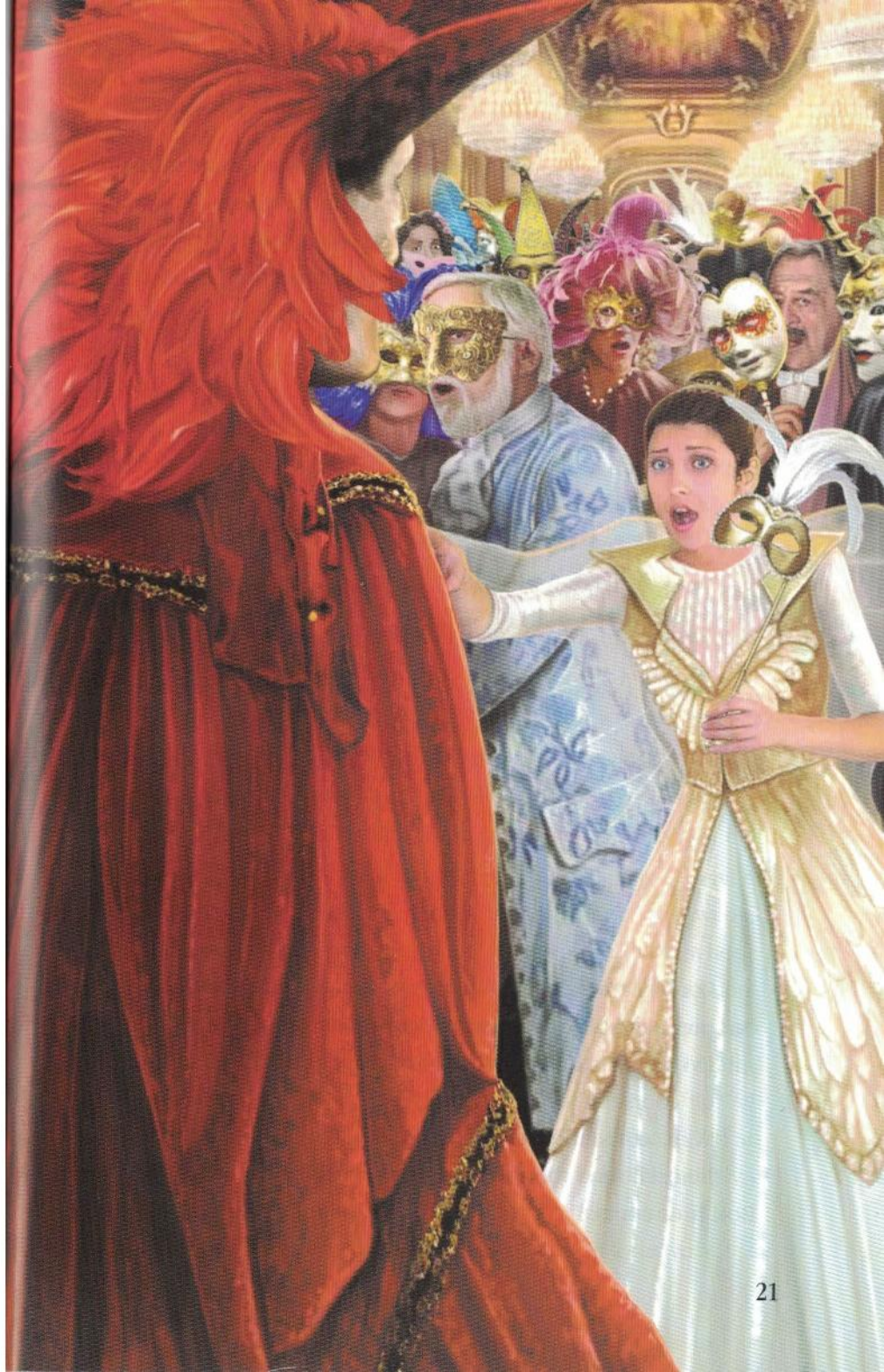
The Phantom's Box

That night, despite the tragedy that had been discovered earlier, a costume party was being held in the Grand Foyer to welcome the new managers of the Opera, Monsieur Moncharmin and Monsieur Richard. All the guests were wearing elaborate costumes and masks for the occasion and enjoying the party, not concerning themselves with other matters. Suddenly, Meg Giry cried out, "Look – the Phantom! That's him!"

All eyes in the room turned to a tall thin shadow of a figure wearing a long red velvet cloak and a large feathered hat. As he turned and faced the other guests, everyone gasped in horror at his terrible face, more horrifying than any mask. It was such an awful sight that everyone present wondered the same thing: was this a costumed guest, or did the so-called Phantom have the nerve to appear before them? Before anyone could speak, the cloaked figure slipped silently out of the room.

The next day, Moncharmin and Richard were discussing their new responsibilities, as outlined in a memorandum from the previous managers.

"Our predecessors must be mad! Either they think we're stupid or they've got a very strange sense of humour."

Richard was half-smiling as Moncharmin responded,

"I don't believe all this nonsense about a Phantom! Box 5 belongs to the **Phantom** and must remain vacant at all times? And we mustn't forget to pay him – or **it** – 20,000 francs a month or we'll be sorry!"