

The Devil's Library Episode 12.6 – “Grimscribe” & “Songs Of A Dead Dreamer - Part I”

This is an old episode recovered from before The Devil's Library existed.

[Intro Music]

Ligeia [00:00:00]

Hello everybody. This is Ligeia. Hail Satan. I am here tonight with my sibling and friend, Leraje.

Leraje [00:00:11]

Hello. Hail Satan.

Ligeia [00:00:12]

It's just the two of us. Um, welcome to our new minisode. Uh, we didn't tell you what we are gonna do. Which book. So. Drum rolls. We've chosen a new author. Well, new for us. Like we didn't talk about this author before here, but I think many people would. Would know him because he's, he's very famous in the horror world.

[00:00:44]

Uh, so it's Thomas Ligotti. We know that he wrote many books and, and usually he writes like stories. So it's a lot of things. It's. It's not just one book that you, you know, with one plot and it's one story. It's many, many, many stories. So we had to narrow it down so we chose three from a book.

[00:01:07]

Uh, Grim Scribe. And maybe in the future, if you like this episode, if you like what we are gonna talk about, if you're interested, we can choose more stories or like go into other books by this author. Let us know. Let us know. So Leraj, would you like to introduce the. Like just the names of the stories maybe for the beginning.

Leraje [00:01:29]

Yes, we from Grimscribe. Mainly because I had a really busy week and I could only commit to reading, uh, three. Um, so we chose the uh, Last feast of Harlequin, Nether Surriel and Library of Byzantium.

Ligeia [00:01:46]

Yes. And as you're saying you had a busy week. Um, it might sound, you know, like it's just short stories, but anybody who, who read anything by Legotti knows that it's not an easy.

Leraje [00:02:02]

No.

Ligeia [00:02:03]

Easy read. You actually really need to take your time.

Leraje [00:02:07]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:02:08]

I think if you want to enjoy it, if you want to understand it.

Leraje [00:02:11]

And I think um, I mean he's uh. We'll get onto this a bit more in a bit. But he's been compared to uh, Lovecraft and I can see why. But.

Ligeia [00:02:21]

Oh yeah.

Leraje [00:02:22]

In terms of what you were just saying about uh, you know, the having to really concentrate. I also think I found with him that you need to sort of like read them in one go each story. They're not things you can kind of like read half of one story, then put it aside and then pick it up a bit later because.

Ligeia [00:02:41] Yes, I agree. I did try at the beginning. I read I have a book where you can.

They combined the book. Um, what is it called? Uh, Songs of a Dead Dreamer.

Leraje [00:02:54]

Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia [00:02:56]

Which was uh, written I think like 1986 or something. And then the grim scribe was 1991, I think. So I have it in one book and I usually just start at the beginning of the book and I continue. And I thought, okay, let's just read a few pages and then go back to the story.

[00:03:16]

But as you're saying, it's not like that. It's not like that. So please don't do that. You will not get the, you know, the experience that it deserves.

Leraje [00:03:27]

Yeah, I mean, he's.

Ligeia [00:03:28]

If you do that.

Leraje [00:03:29]

Much of it, I found was about him invoking a mood and a sort of a feeling and an emotion. Um, and I did find. Because I started off, the first one I read was the, uh, Harlequin one, um, which I thought was absolutely fantastic, but I really, really enjoyed it. M. But, yeah.

[00:03:49]

And I think it's the longest out of the, uh, the collection.

Ligeia [00:03:53]

I think so. Um, and that story. For me, that story was the reason why I actually bought the book and went to, like, deep dive into this author. Because I have read and seen so many reviews, great reviews about this story. I needed to know. I needed to read it. So. So I don't know if it's the most famous one.

[00:04:18]

Maybe.

Leraje [00:04:20]

Um. Somehow, I don't know.

Ligeia [00:04:21]

I mean, many people talk about it. I don't know.

Leraje [00:04:23]

When you suggested that we do Ligotti. M. I think I said to you at the time that I had a vague. I didn't know him that well. I had a vague recollection of reading a story of his in a collection of short stories by other writers who had been influenced by Lovecraft. Um, and I remember enjoying it, but I can't.

[00:04:50]

I can't remember that much about it. And it was the one. And that was a very long time ago. I mean, that was Dec. God. Sometime in the mid late 90s, I think. Um, it certainly wasn't any of the three that I read. We've read this week. Um. But yeah, it wasn't. I didn't not read anymore because I didn't enjoy it.

[00:05:12]

Um, I can't remember why I didn't. But, uh, it was certainly not through lack of enjoyment.

Ligeia [00:05:17] Yeah. Why I think you need to be. I don't like putting people in boxes, but I'm trying to. I think for Ligotti, you need to be a little bit more mature.

Leraje [00:05:35]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:05:36]

A mature reader. And you need to be a certain kind of person that enjoys. He's very specific. His. His style, the world he creates is very specific. It's. It's really not for everybody. It's not your conventional horror story.

Leraje [00:05:58]

No.

Ligeia [00:05:58]

With like uh, straightforward plot going on. It's not.

Leraje [00:06:04]

No, they're very much more uh. No, I agree. I mean they seem to me to be very much more internal. I mean they do have some of the kind of like Lovecraftian, um. I don't want to use the word tropes but they have the kind of like Lovecraftian characteristics of um. It's a solitary first person narrator.

[00:06:26]

Um.

Ligeia [00:06:27]

Oh yeah.

Leraje [00:06:28]

And I understand that the Gotti is quite influenced by um. Uh. What's the name of the guy who wrote Lolita? Uh, Nabokov, was it? Uh, I think he was inspired by him. Um, and he write. He writes a lot in the first person and certainly Lovecraft did, uh. And people like Algernon Blackwood, Ramsay Campbell, Mr.

[00:06:51]

James, people like that. Um. But his was. Yeah. And so yes, he did kind of like follow that. Those kind of like Lovecraftian things. But it's less kind of in your face. It's less kind of um. He's not trying to be kind of. I mean Lovecraft is very kind of like uh, you know, these things are out to get you.

[00:07:15]

These. These creatures from another dimension and all this. And um, for fiddly Gotti, it seems to be much more of an internal thing.

Ligeia [00:07:28]

Mhm. And in many, many, many stories it's not like an actual monster. M. It's. It's possible that there isn't actually nothing other people can see. It's. It's only happening in this narrator's mind. It's always. It leaves you like confused.

Leraje [00:07:49]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:07:50]

And I love that. No, absolutely, absolutely love that.

Leraje [00:07:52]

That was something I was going to ask you about actually. Uh, because I thought oh, maybe it's me misunderstanding but said rings very true. It's. You do kind of. Or I got the feeling that. Were these things really happening or was he going. Was the narrator, uh, in each of the stories going a bit off the rails?

Ligeia [00:08:11] Yeah. Or is. Is it like a ah, response to some trauma? Is, is he triggered by

something? Is this false memories? Is this a dream? Is it a nightmare? Is he gonna wake up? But it doesn't end up in like. There is no solution to many of them. You can read it as you, as you like.

[00:08:31]

I think.

Leraje [00:08:32]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:08:32]

It's. It is the art of, of his writing. I don't think it's easy to write like that because it still makes sense and it gives you a lot of. It's deep and it gives you a lot of um, really interesting roads that you can explore. Like if you choose to Reread the story with the mindset of, I don't know, is this a nightmare?

[00:08:57]

I'm gonna read it with this mindset. You can try. It gives you a different experience when you do that. I. I find it very refreshing and interesting and actually addictive, you know.

Leraje [00:09:13]

Yeah, no, no, I completely understand. I mean, it's certainly reading those three has left me wanting to read the rest of the collection and then read the rest of his stuff as well. Um.

Ligeia [00:09:23]

Yeah, we might be coming back to more stories.

Leraje [00:09:25]

Yeah, Mori gotti. But it's funny what you said about dreams there. Um, because in each of the three stories that we read there is a dream sequence. And um, it's in those dream sequences that the kind of decisive action takes place. So like in Harley Quinn, um, without wanting to sort of like have too many spoilers, when he goes into the kind of underworld area, you know, I'm trying not to use the definite words.

[00:10:02]

Uh, you're doing well. He kind of has a, uh. Uh, waking dream kind of thing. And I think you're meant to question whether it actually happened or not. Um, yeah, and I think that's. And again, um. Uh, the Byzantium one, what's it? The Library of Byzantium. Is that what it's called?

Ligeia [00:10:27]

Yes, Byzantium.

Leraje [00:10:28]

Library of Byzantium. Yeah. Again, uh, there's a dream sequence sort of like halfway through that story that you think to yourself, did that actually.

Ligeia [00:10:40]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:10:41]

You know, it's very, very good at evoking that kind of sense. Uh, of. I'm, um. Not quite sure what's going on. Um, uh. But in. In a good way. Not in a kind of like annoying way.

Ligeia [00:10:53]

It was not annoying to me. I imagine for some people. This is not for everybody, as I said. So. But if you enjoy surreal, almost like hypnotic, confusing atmosphere. I think Ligotti is a, uh. Is a genius in creating the atmospherichorror. So he, He. Especially when I, I read the first. Not the first, but for me the first book was the Songs of a Dead Dreamer.

[00:11:26]

And that book was before the Grim Scribe. And you can. You can see that he. His writing style was not as established. So there were stories that had more, uh, plot, if I have to say, like it was more. More plot than in Grim Scrap. So he. He's not really focusing on the plot itself.

[00:11:52]

It's not like, uh. You know, the. The horror of the story is not that much around that. It's the. It's the atmosphere he creates and he is absolutely genius.

Leraje [00:12:04]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:12:04]

Edit, I think.

Leraje [00:12:06]

No, uh, I think you're absolutely right. I think, uh, the Harlequin story, the. The first story in the. In Grim Dark is probably the most tightly plotted, certainly out of the three that I read.

Ligeia [00:12:16]

Yes.

Leraje [00:12:17]

Um, and again, I think might be. I think that was done deliberately. I mean, I noticed at the end of it he did actually dedicate that to, uh, Lovecraft. Um, yes. Um, and Lovecraft's stories are pretty tightly plotted, so I think he did that. He made that as a deliberate choice to sort of, like, pay homage to, uh, one of his inspirations.

[00:12:41]

But.

Ligeia [00:12:42]

Yeah, yeah, I think. I think so too.

Leraje [00:12:45]

But the rest of the rest of them are very kind of. They're not. They're not surreal in the kind of, like, Lynchian sense of that word, but they're more kind of m. They're very evocative of a mood and a feeling and an emotion. Um, it just so happens that the emotion it's trying to evoke is dread and horror rather than anything else.

Ligeia [00:13:07]

Yes. It's the. Yeah. Like you're suspecting something to be just about to happen.

Leraje [00:13:15]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:13:15]

And you're not sure if it. If it. If it's actually going to happen. And what is the it that's gonna happen? And it keeps you waiting and questioning your. Your sense of, like, I'm sure something's gonna happen, but maybe not. And what. What is it? Oh, I love it so much.

Leraje [00:13:38]

I think, um, out of the three, Necessarial is probably the one that. That. That best fits that criteria. That kind of very loose because it's. Ligeia [00:13:47] Hardly my favourite also, is it?

Leraje [00:13:49]

Yeah. I'm not surprised. Yeah, it's very good.

Ligeia [00:13:52]

Out of these three. Out of these three.

Leraje [00:13:54]

Oh, yeah. I mean, there's hardly any plot in that at all. It's, uh. It's, um. You know.

Ligeia [00:14:02]

Exactly.

Leraje [00:14:03]

A guy goes to an island.

Ligeia [00:14:05]

Like, just imagine writing it, creating it. Like, what. Just what did I just read? Hi. Hello.

Leraje [00:14:13]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:14:16]

Oh, uh, and the questions I would.

Leraje [00:14:18]

Love to ask him, where do you get your ideas? Because I think if you asked most authors, I mean, I remember reading in an interview with Stephen King and somebody asked him, how did you get your idea for Misery? Uh, and he said, oh, I had a nightmare or something like that about, you know, a fan sort of like taking it too far.

[00:14:36]

And that's quite a concrete idea. And you can sort of like, see how the book Misery came about from that point. But for, uh, Ligotti and, um, Netassuriel in particular, what. How did you get. How did you come up with that idea? What we, what was the thought process that led to that?

Ligeia [00:14:52]

Exactly. But just saying that um, it doesn't mean the story doesn't have any depth.

Leraje [00:14:58]

Oh no, absolutely the opposite.

Ligeia [00:15:00]

It, it, it is, he is bringing so many like new questions. He doesn't bring many answers. Maybe uh, I'm confusing now everybody who is listening and never read the story. So uh, I would like to still go back and just say what I found. Who, like which authors or philosophers are considered being his.

[00:15:29]

Um, what is it called? Help me.

Leraje [00:15:32]

Inspiration.

Ligeia [00:15:32] Um, inspiration. Thank you. And maybe we can then go story by story. So it

actually makes sort of sense. Yeah. You see how my mind works. Like there is no plot, there's nothing. It's just like I'm going, I'm going, hi, I'm here. So from uh, what I found and I, I thought these people are interesting because I'm not going to mention names that I didn't know who these authors really were.

[00:16:04]

I've heard the names but I don't know anything about them. But because I studied also like sort of philosophy and psychology, I just chose people who I think I can see them.

Leraje [00:16:16]

Right.

Ligeia [00:16:16]

Uh, that the influence.

Leraje [00:16:18]

Okay.

Ligeia [00:16:18]

So exactly. It's the Lovecraft, his work. It's absolutely my beloved at girl and

post very much absolutely there. I love that. Then shopping hour. You can find his thoughts. I, I, I would like to do the like analysis about all this then. Franz Kafka. Absolutely.

Leraje [00:16:43]

Yeah, I did wonder about that.

Ligeia [00:16:44]

Which. Yeah, yeah. He's not easy to read at all. Kafka. I, I know I have not finished many books. I still go back and try and try. It's not that easy. But if you know they like the essence of his work and the mindset. I think I can. You can. I think you can.

[00:17:04]

You can see it. And what really one name. Shirley Jackson.

Leraje [00:17:11]

Absolutely. Yeah. I was gonna say. Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:17:15]

Okay. I'm happy because I was like I did not think of, of this name and then I saw it somewhere. I'm like oh right. That is actually so good. That's absolutely. Yes. So happy you see it too.

Leraje [00:17:31]

Yeah. Well, I mean uh, again she, she was more comfortable in shorter form stories.

Ligeia [00:17:37]

Yes.

Leraje [00:17:38]

And um, I mean things like. Have you read the Lottery?

Ligeia [00:17:42]

No, but I, I've seen reviews or I know the plot of the story. I mean I need to, it's short. I know, I know the way she.

Leraje [00:17:50]

Writes is, is very similar. Um, not, not necessarily in the specifics of it but in the sense of trying to evoke a um, mood and a feeling rather than literal. This happened, then this happened, then this happened. Um, yeah, I mean, I'm not

saying. Again, I'm not saying there's no plot. There's no plot devices.

[00:18:09]

But for her, and I think for Legotti as well, it's. It's much more about evoking a feeling in a reader.

Ligeia [00:18:18]

Wow. I love them.

Leraje [00:18:20]

She was the absolute. So the best at that.

Ligeia [00:18:23]

Absolutely.

Leraje [00:18:23]

The best at it.

Ligeia [00:18:24]

Absolutely. We should do an episode.

Leraje [00:18:26]

I'm sure.

Ligeia [00:18:27]

Definitely.

Leraje [00:18:28]

Yeah. She's one of my favourite writers.

Ligeia [00:18:30]

Yeah. She me. Mine too. And you know, we need more. I'm sorry, but we need more women here.

Leraje [00:18:35]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:18:36]

I'm not sorry.

Leraje [00:18:37]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:18:38]

So.

Leraje [00:18:39]

Hey, don't be sorry. You're absolutely right.

Ligeia [00:18:42]

I'm not. I'm not. I said that. But actually, no. Hail women. Hey. Okay, I will stop right there. We have more guys here. It was not many, many women in Legote stories.

Leraje [00:18:59]

No.

Ligeia [00:18:59]

I don't know if you have noticed.

Leraje [00:19:01]

I have noticed not many. Ligeia [00:19:03]

It's a choice. It's fine. I'm not like, mad about it. It's fine. But maybe we should bring some more women.

Leraje [00:19:11]

Yes. I mean, it was noticeable that the. The only female characters. Yeah, I can really remember were either victims or mothers. Um, there was. There was no set, but that might be.

Ligeia [00:19:25]

Right.

Leraje [00:19:26]

Him again, kind of like aping the style of. Of that. That particular kind of like weird fiction genre, because again, yeah, that's something that Lovecraft did, but, you know.

Ligeia [00:19:39]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:19:39]

Apart from it, for now. Lovecraft was a psycho.

Ligeia [00:19:43]

Um, Yes.

Leraje [00:19:45]

I think, you know, uh, and the school of. Of writing that came from that, uh, uh, sort of like the Cthulhu mythos, none of them really involved women, uh, in their stories at all, so. And I'm not sort of like saying. I'm not trying to excuse Ligotti or. Or any of those writers either, but I'm just sort of like, pointing out the idea that maybe if like the Harlequin story was a deliberate homage to Lovecraft, maybe he made the deliberate decision, if he was following that particular school of writing, to do that.

[00:20:18]

I don't know. I mean, I'm just assuming.

Ligeia [00:20:20]

Yeah. Maybe it's just a side little note from me that I noticed this and I keep noticing that in like, many. No. Yeah. Books. Yeah. Let's keep it there. I'm not going to movies and stuff. Okay. Let's keep it simple for this. Yeah. So, um, are, ah, we going to. We don't want to spoil the actual story for you.

[00:20:48]

If there is any conclusion to it at all, like in the Feast of Harlequin. There is, there is an ending to it. Like as you said, there is a plot, there is kind of a story.

Leraje [00:21:01]

I thought there was kind of a double ending to that. Yes, there was, there was and I'm still not sure. I'm like there was, there was the literal end of the story, uh, from following a particular event and then there was also the kind of like non end of uh, what his one time mentor said.

[00:21:23]

Do you, are you following me?

Ligeia [00:21:25]

Yes, yes. And like I, at the end, before, before the very end, I thought, okay, I understand what the, the ending is. And then he came up with the uh, the professor that. And I'm like, no, don't do this. And he just like the cliffhanger is there and I'm like, thank you. Now I have to think, what,

now. Leraje [00:21:52]

You've planted that hook in my brain?

Ligeia [00:21:56]

Yes, I don't want to spoil it, but that was actually genius because if he just. We didn't even say anything about the story still. And we are already commenting the ending. Yes, I know the two of us, sorry people, we're just not, we're not very organised. We love you. No, no. And like the mind wants to, you know, I'm so happy to talk about this and to be here with you.

Leraje [00:22:24]

We just wander off on any old direction. All right, let's try and do it. Yes, we'll try and do it as a.

Ligeia [00:22:33]

Please do it. All right.

Leraje [00:22:34]

So uh, it's basically again, it's very Lovecraftian. It's, it's a homage to Lovecraft. So we've got our solitary first person author. Sorry, um, of solitary first person lead character. And he is a, ah, an academic researcher. Again, very Lovecraftian. He studies a very particular and kind of weird field which I won't get into, but I won't get into that.

[00:23:04]

Um, and he has a mentor that disappeared under strange circumstances some time before. Uh, he ends up in this place where there's this kind of festival within a festival and things get a bit green and a bit weird and.

Ligeia [00:23:24]

Green, yes.

Leraje [00:23:26]

Yeah, I want to talk about the green thing because. And then the end happens and I don't want to give any more detail than that.

Ligeia [00:23:36]

This is what we do. Yeah, right.

Leraje [00:23:38]

Do you know why I mentioned Green?

Ligeia [00:23:40]

Because you want to talk about it?

Leraje [00:23:41]

Well, yeah, yeah.

Ligeia [00:23:42]

I don't know.

Leraje [00:23:43]

So it just struck me that, well, in the three stories that I read, all three of them, Green always played a part. And I'm thinking, what the is this guy? He's Obsessed with the colour.

Ligeia [00:23:56]

I am, um. I am so happy you're saying it. Guys, you can't see us, but my face is now like. I'm, um. I'm like the moon face here. Uh, I am so happy you said it because I was thinking, am I reading too much into this green theme? But I don't. I see your T shirt.

[00:24:15] I love that. It's nice and glad something is okay. Yeah, I'm not very green

today, so. But what I want to say is, I don't know. Do you know the reason I did not look into that? Like, is this his choice? By. Because he thinks that green colour. What I've noticed in many horror thingies, movies, books, and because I have green eyes.

[00:24:41]

So it. It always, like, triggers me that very often the demon or the, like the demonic creature has green eyes.

Leraje [00:24:52]

Yeah, that's true.

Ligeia [00:24:54]

So. And if you remember the. The movie, the, uh, Exorcist, obviously you do. Also, the green colour was connected to what was happening to Reagan. Yeah, her eyes changed to, like, bright green. Maybe I'm missing something. Why is the green colour? I don't know. I don't know. I don't want to go too far from Ligotti's story, but I'm, um, happy you said it.

Leraje [00:25:26]

Yeah, I don't. I mean, it might be completely insignificant. Who knows? Maybe you just thought, fuck it, it'll be green. But it did strike me that. As odd

that in the three stories that I chose at. At random, I mean, the only one you said I should definitely read was the Harlequin. The first one.

[00:25:41]

Yes. I, um, picked the other two at random and both of them have got a large green element in there as well. So.

Ligeia [00:25:49]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:25:49]

And again, like I say, it might be completely incidental. Maybe he just likes green things. I don't know. But m. It's a striking coincidence if that is the case. But who.

Ligeia [00:26:01]

It's a little bit toxic also.

Leraje [00:26:02]

Yeah, it could be. Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:26:04]

Like the, like, you know, the colour. What can we say about this story, about the, um. Like, why do we think it's great? Without spoiling it, what do you think?

Leraje [00:26:16]

I think it's great because as we've already mentioned numerous times, it is a Lovecraft homage, but it is a progression from the work that Lovecraft did is it's steeped in those kind of, like, Lovecraftian tropes. The kind of like the sole first person voice protagonist, um, the mentor who's gone missing, um, the academic researcher who stumbled upon something awful.

[00:26:44]

All those kind of lovecraftian things are there, but it's very much his own thing. Um, and like we were discussing earlier, a lot of it is internal. It's about how he's feeling. It's not about some kind of gargantuan creature from beyond the stars or, you know, another dimension.

Ligeia [00:27:02]

Yeah. Leraje [00:27:03]

I'm not saying those things might or might not play a part in the story, but certainly the. The focus is on him, the protagonist, and how he's feeling and, uh, what the events, the effect the events have on him. And I liked.

Ligeia [00:27:22]

I, uh, like that. I love that. I just realised I had a nice sentence about that. Like the unease, the. The dread of this story.

Leraje [00:27:36]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:27:36]

In my, in my mind was that he was. I m. Don't want to spoil anything. I need to be really careful. He went to this place by his own choice. It was his choice to go there. But then he found himself in this community of completely strange people who live in this. In this space.

[00:27:58]

Yes. And for me, um, maybe it's just who I am, but I quite often feel I'm somehow not between people who I understand, even though nothing really is strikingly happening to me. Like, you know what I mean? He knew he is a stranger to these people.

Leraje [00:28:21]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:28:23]

And he was not sure if they are all pretending something. If this whole thing is a, uh, is a game.

Leraje [00:28:32]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:28:33]

If everything. He. What you. What can you trust if you don't know what is happening? And this was. He took it, you know, five levels up because it was the festival that was happening. So basically, uh, anything can be okay. But how do you know if you're a stranger? How do you know what is okay in this festival and what is actually not?

[00:28:58]

And how do you.

Leraje [00:28:59]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:29:00]

How do you join?

Leraje [00:29:01]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:29:02]

You know that there was a moment where he. He tried to join and be one of them and it didn't work.

Leraje [00:29:09]

Oh, the bit where.

Ligeia [00:29:10]

Do you remember that moment?Leraje [00:29:12]

Is that the bit when he kind of tried to.

Ligeia [00:29:17]

Interact?

Leraje [00:29:18]

Yeah. I just mimed something to lightly forgetting that we're recording a podcast.

Ligeia [00:29:23]

And like, that moment was so interesting to me. I'm like, oh, wow. Yes. Because I was also with him when I was reading it for the first time. I was expecting something, uh, different.

Leraje [00:29:35]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:29:36]

Like, oh, okay. And then. Yeah, it didn't work. And I was like, oh, my God, how often do you feel like this? Like, I'm so awkward. I just say something in between people and they are like, what? You know?

Leraje [00:29:49]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:29:50]

It is actually awful. It's awful.

Leraje [00:29:53]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:29:53]

When you don't belong somewhere I think.

Leraje [00:29:55]

He did evoke that very well. I mean, that particular incident. Yes. Um, it kind of illustrated not only that he was an outsider, but also he was not a very knowledgeable outsider. Uh, it kind of like.

Ligeia [00:30:11]

Yes.

Leraje [00:30:12]

It put him on the back foot.

Ligeia [00:30:13]

Yeah. Even though he. He was an intellectual who exactly knew a lot about the. The topic he came there to observe, study or learn about, but still he was. He was completely lost.

Leraje [00:30:26]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:30:28]

And until the end, I think he was, like, still looking around, like, does anybody think I'm, um, I'm here because I should be here? Or is everybody just pretending? Or who am I here? The masks of people, you know, is something that is always in my mind. I don't know if you are like this.

[00:30:48]

Please don't be. It's not healthy to live like that. But it's one of my.

Leraje [00:30:53]Yeah.

Ligeia [00:30:54]

Anxiety triggers. Like, what if people don't exist and they only exist because when I'm there, like, am I. Is everything, uh, just like some game? What is happening? You know?

Leraje [00:31:08]

Philosophy. Philosophy on a mini suit.

Ligeia [00:31:16]

Do you exist?

Leraje [00:31:17]

I don't know. Do I? I'm not sure.

Ligeia [00:31:19]

I don't know.

Leraje [00:31:20]

Oh, God, I don't know. Now. It's actually quite. I mean, he does. I think his. His whole outlook is quite, um, nihilistic. Uh, the way he writes is quite. It's quite, um. And again, that's not really a thing that Lovecraft had. Ligotti is more kind of like, I don't. My character doesn't understand this.

[00:31:44]

What's the fucking point? Fuck it, we're all gonna die kind of thing. And there's this kind of sense of doom and kind of like the futility, the futility of being overrun by a fate that you can't really escape from. Is that fair, do you think?

Ligeia [00:32:03]

Yes, yes, absolutely. It's really, really dreadful.

Leraje [00:32:08]

Yeah. And, um, I got that sense. I know we're talking about the Harlequin story at the moment, but I got that sense more in the library of Byzantium.

Ligeia [00:32:17]

The sense of.

Leraje [00:32:18]

The sense of more of being involved in a story. Um, that it was impossible to escape the fate from.

Ligeia [00:32:31]

Yes.

Leraje [00:32:32]

So to give a kind of, like, short summation of library of Byzantium. Um.

Ligeia [00:32:38]

Yeah, we can go to that story now.

Leraje [00:32:40]

Yeah, let's do that. Um, so there's a young boy, um, and he's visited by a priest. The priest shows him a book. Um, whilst looking at this book, a page accidentally falls out of the book. The boy has visions, bad things happen, and you're kind of left with the conclusion at the end of the story.

[00:33:06]

That. Or I was, anyway, that the fact that he still had possession of this page meant that his fate was kind of tied to it. Ligeia [00:33:17]

Did you.

Leraje [00:33:17]

Did you get that?

Ligeia [00:33:18]

Yes, exactly that. And also the. I wrote a little sentence here because. But I wanted to. Hold on. It's just the story itself was so well done, I think.

Leraje [00:33:32]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:33:33]

First of all, it's. It's a young boy, so I always, like you, you know, I react to that because his mind is still very open, and it's like he was so in awe with what. What he saw. Again, I don't want to spoil it, but, uh, if you remember, like, when he was looking into that book and he looked at the priest and something happened.

Leraje [00:33:55]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:33:57]

Oh. And only he knew. And then that page stayed with the boy, and again, the priest left and something happens. And how he keeps looking at the page and what it does to his face.

Leraje [00:34:12]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:34:12]

Uh, to how he sees it. How he. It was.

Leraje [00:34:16]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:34:17]

Wow. It was like the seduction of the unknown. But also, he was not happy. It wasn't making him, you know, like people who have faith in God and. And, you know, the. The belief. I think it only makes sense if it is making your life better. Some people need that. I'm not gonna, like.

[00:34:42]

Well, I don't have that. I have my beliefs. It's not. I don't believe in God, but if you need that and it's helping you.

Leraje [00:34:49]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:34:50]

We all struggle, obviously, so. But with this boy, what was happening was not helping him in any way at all, I don't think.

Leraje [00:34:59]

No, no.

Ligeia [00:35:01]

You know, so it was interesting because I'm not really sure. Like, was Legotti talking. Was this a metaphor for faith in God? Was it. I'm not sure. It could be, but I. I don't know.

Leraje [00:35:17] I think it could be read in that way. But it also. It kind of occurred to me

after I finished reading it. I immediately thought of you and your interpretation of the Exorcist. Um, and, uh, I thought to myself, here's a boy, a young boy who's been left alone with a priest.

Ligeia [00:35:38]

That's, um.

Leraje [00:35:40]

You know, the priest made the boy's parents leave while he talked privately to the boy.

Ligeia [00:35:45]

Oh, that's true.

Leraje [00:35:47]

And I thought, is this kind of. I don't think the whole story was a metaphor for abuse, but I do think Lagotti was saying to us, uh, you know, it didn't necessarily have to be sexual abuse. It was. It could have been.

Ligeia [00:36:02]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:36:04]

I do think Ligotti was pushing us to maybe think that the manipulation of how a person can think can be kind of like led by an, uh, authority figure, if that makes sense.

Ligeia [00:36:19]

Yeah. Yeah. That is actually interesting. I did not think about this aspect, but what you're saying is so true. He was left alone. I don't trust situations where little kids are left alone with any priests or nuns. Thank you for my experiences. No, and no. And please, no. And I have to read it again now with this, because it keeps coming back to me how the change in the perception of the priest happened.

Leraje [00:36:53]

Yes, exactly.

Ligeia [00:36:55]

That is so weird. So now when you're saying this, I'm actually shaking because. Oh, my God. Yeah.

Leraje [00:37:05]

I mean, it's a bit.

Ligeia [00:37:06]

And. And the picture in the book, like, it could be actually. Well, the metaphor.

Leraje [00:37:11]

Exactly. I mean, he did describe the picture in some detail, um, and it

certainly could be seen in that light. But I do think. I also think that the. The, uh. God, it's going to be hard to say this next bit without spoiling the entire, you know, the bit. Oh, God, this is terrible.

[00:37:32]

The. The. The bit where the priest encounters the three. I, uh, don't want to call them people. Do you know the bit? I mean.

Ligeia [00:37:41]

Okay, okay.

Leraje [00:37:41]And he kind of like goes, you know, he goes up in the air sort of thing.

Ligeia [00:37:46]

Yes.

Leraje [00:37:46]

So, uh, I'm sorry, dear listeners. I'm trying to be vague, but also trying to be specific enough that Lyja knows what I'm talking about.

Ligeia [00:37:56]

Yeah. Um, well, it's good I can see you because, you know, there's.

Leraje [00:38:00]

We're miming away to each other. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:38:02]

Class here.

Leraje [00:38:05]

So I thought that that kind was. Was that possibly could be seen as, um, the. The gods of the priest punishing him, maybe.

Ligeia [00:38:18]

Oh, I see.

Leraje [00:38:20]

I was trying to think for a reason. I was trying to think of a reason. After I finished reading it, I was thinking to myself, what could lead them to do that? I mean, uh, it's one of the few. I mean, it's great that Legati leaves things mysterious. It's definitely a strength of his work.

[00:38:42]

But I was thinking. Okay, but that's a very specific thing that happened, and there has to be a reason why. So why would they. I mean, in the story, it may. It made out that the priest was turning to leave, and then this thing happened to him, uh, at the, uh, behest of these three other characters.

[00:39:03]

So it was kind of like it was a very deliberate thing. And I thought, uh, the only conclusion I could come to is that he.

Ligeia [00:39:09]

Was being punished in some way that makes actually sense. I think you are onto something here. And again, I'm saying I need to reread this story again because many things did not really. Not not. They didn't make sense. They do make sense. Because also me not understanding doesn't mean it doesn't make sense.

[00:39:32]

M. You know, I love that you can work with the story. You can read it so many times and find new things and new.

Leraje [00:39:41]

Yep.

Ligeia [00:39:42]

Possible interpretations.

Leraje [00:39:44]

Well, I mean, like we've said in every minisode we've done so far, you know, art is subjective and it means different things to different people and even different things to the same person at different times in their lives.

Ligeia [00:39:57]

Based on your life, your pain.Leraje [00:40:00]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:40:00]

Your experience with other people. So you. I. I think this is exactly why I love it. Because there are horror stories that are actually terrifying and stuff, but it doesn't really include you as a reader. I feel like with Ligotti you are in the story because you need to make space in your mind when you're reading it.

[00:40:21]

It's not like, oh, I'm sitting outside in my garden and just enjoying the birds and no, I need to actually be silent and not, uh, checking my phone, whatever. Because. Because it, it needs your whole mind.

Leraje [00:40:35]

Yeah. Like we said at the start of this.

Ligeia [00:40:37]

And you become. You are in the story. Yeah, yeah.

Leraje [00:40:41]

And you do become part of it. Uh, you know, and again, to draw a comparison with Ligotti's main inspiration, Lovecraft. Lovecraft tries to kind of like beat you over the head with the kind of like, uh, awe inspiring scale of everything, you know, and you kind of.

Ligeia [00:40:59]

Like, oh my God, how small we are.

Leraje [00:41:02]

And he does that very effectively. But Legati's take is much more internal and works very much more on an individual, an emotional level.

Ligeia [00:41:10]

Intimate. Yes.

Leraje [00:41:11]

Yeah, it's.

Ligeia [00:41:13]

It's like the monsters are not the same scale as Lovecraftian Cthulhu. You know, it's like the Old Ones. The. The hugeness that is like we can't even comprehend that, like how big that is, how dark it is and where is it. But with Ligotti, it is so close m to the human skin.

[00:41:39]

I think it's really, really working.

Leraje [00:41:42]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:41:43]

For me. I think that the dread stays with me.

Leraje [00:41:46]

Yeah, me too. Yeah. I mean, Library of Byzantium was definitely my favourite of the three. It was.

Ligeia [00:41:54]

I'm happy you found one.

Leraje [00:41:56] I'm sure if I read more of his, which I will be doing, you know, I'll have other

favourites and I wouldn't. I'm not suggesting for a moment that the other two I read are ah, less good. It's just uh, that particular one really spoke to me.

Ligeia [00:42:09]

Uh.

Leraje [00:42:10]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:42:11]

Mhm.

Leraje [00:42:12]

I would be hard pressed to say why, but it did.

Ligeia [00:42:14]

Yeah. It's not easy. It's not easy. When you asked me, when I said about the. We had one more the shadow of another world. So I'm still looking at that because it's also one of my like top, top ones. But uh, let's keep that for, for next, next time.

Leraje [00:42:32]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:42:33]

But yes, I, I love this because you can actually connect to certain story and see it from an angle that nobody else have seen it before. You know, the story actually changes with you. I think it's alive. It's like I open that book and it's, it's alive. I can actually sense it. It's like, oh, I am here.

[00:42:57]

It's a force. Oh, I love him. I would love to meet this guy. Oh my God. Why is he in the usa?

Leraje [00:43:04]

I don't know.

Ligeia [00:43:05]

Probably because he was born there. Yeah, makes sense. Yeah.

Leraje [00:43:12]

Uh, um.

Ligeia [00:43:13]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:43:13]

Oh, so let's talk about uh, the third one which was.

Ligeia [00:43:17]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:43:18]

Oh God, I can't pronounce it. No, that's wrong. Nether Suriel, Nether Scorial.

I'm not sure. How do you pronounce it? Oh, she's drinking wine.

Ligeia [00:43:31]

I asked my whole family how to say it. Everybody said something else. So.

Leraje [00:43:36]

Okay.

Ligeia [00:43:37] It's one of those words. Sorry guys. Everybody who is listening, you are allowed

to say it your way.

Leraje [00:43:43]

Starts with an A.

Ligeia [00:43:44]

How I read it is.

Leraje [00:43:48]

Yeah, that's close.

Ligeia [00:43:49]

That's close, I guess.

Leraje [00:43:52]

So do you want to do the synopsis?

Ligeia [00:43:53]

You have your own name for that.

Leraje [00:43:55]

Do you want to do the synopsis on this one?

Ligeia [00:43:58]

This story revolves around um, a man, a guy, a narrator, whose obsession is, uh. He's obsessed with a, um, strange and mysterious, um, abundant building. And the name of this building is Metascorial. And like this person, uh, goes deeper into. He's trying to find out more about the history and maybe rumours that surround this building because it is really captivating his mind.

[00:44:37]

Well, if you, if you read the, the story you will understand because there is the. Like you can actually read how this, how this building looks and it's really, really interesting. Well done. Um, I'm certain, I'm sure, I'm certain that everybody would like imagine something else, but I think it was really, really interestingly done.

[00:44:59]

I'm really trying to hold my words. So please, if I sound like I I am babbling. It's because I don't want to spoil it.

Leraje [00:45:08]

So difficult.

Ligeia [00:45:08]

Bear with me. It is. So he is trying to find out more about building and why it looks the way it looks, and he uncovers some dark past. And, uh. Like the whole story is then about the dread and the. The, you know, the. The very structure of this building is actually something that can and might come alive or become something.

[00:45:40]

And there are people who are trying to do exactly that. Bring it. Bring. Uh. There used to be some power to this and there are some people who are trying to put the whole thing back to life and to bring the power back. And there are people who are trying to stop that.

[00:45:59]

So I wouldn't say it's a story of the, like, the battle between good and bad. It's that, uh. It's not how I'm saying it. It sounds like that. It's. It is much darker.

Leraje [00:46:11] Yes. And it's not very easy to. I think out of all the three, this is the one that it's most difficult to talk about without giving the whole thing away.

Ligeia [00:46:20]

Right. Yes.

Leraje [00:46:21]

Um, that's why I'm struggling. Yeah, It's. It's very hard. Which is why I gave it to you. That's why I didn't want to.

Ligeia [00:46:28]

Thank you so much. I thought you were friends. Okay. Yeah. But I said this is my favourite, so thank you. I. I think that makes sense.

Leraje [00:46:40]

Yeah. It's, um. Again, the colour green features in it, uh, and it's the kind of, uh. The potential reassembly of the thing in question. Um.

Ligeia [00:46:55]

Yeah. Uh, yes.

Leraje [00:46:58]

And again. Again, it almost feels like in all three of the things that I've read of his, um. Like he's much more interested in what happens to the protagonist and, um, the feelings and the emotions that the protagonist is going through. Because, I mean, because really when you. When you look at any kind of horror story, whether it be a short story, a novel, a movie, wherever, they're usually fairly basic in their kind of like, foundations.

Ligeia [00:47:35]

Right.

Leraje [00:47:36]

And we. I think we, uh. There's an episode that we've done as a larger podcast team, um, about horror movies, um, which kind of touches on that. That'll be out soon. He plugged. Um. But, uh. And I think for Ligotti, that it's more. It's much more. The kind of like, the structure of it is much more secondary to him, I think, than the kind of.

[00:48:02]

The way. And that's particularly evident in this. In Nether. Oh. I can't say it because it's it's, it's this kind of like mounting sense of doom and impending awfulness that he kind of like builds and builds and it's, it's so effectively done. Um, and how he managed to do it in a short story.

[00:48:32]

I think it's probably the shortest of the three that I read as well it might be.

Ligeia [00:48:36]

It's very, very short.

Leraje [00:48:37]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:48:38]

And it's dense with atmosphere. It doesn't like, he doesn't lose any. You know, there is no words that are not necessary.

Leraje [00:48:48]

So how. What made it the favourite, your favourite of his?

Ligeia [00:48:51]

The feeling of like imagine being this person and being actually face to face with something so huge. I'm, um, not meaning like in Lovecraftian way, like huge as a monster. It's the idea of what, what could be happening. And you know, there are people who are really trying. They would give their lives to reach this point of like, again, I need to mind my words to put the whole thing into some position of something.

[00:49:28]

And you, you are face to face of this, this whole happening and how, how hopeless lost and as an, as an individual, you know, how, how dreadful that feels. Like, what do you do, do you. Do you join the group of people who are trying to do that to thinking you're saving your life?

[00:49:52]

Probably.

Leraje [00:49:53]

Well, yeah. And particularly given that you're not quite sure exactly what will happen in either scenario.

Ligeia [00:50:02]

You can laugh at it like, oh, I don't believe this. But it all actually, the whole structure is screaming at you like this is not normal structure. You have never seen anything like, is awful. It's disgusting. You can tell some things. Something's different in this world. How did it happen? So it's not like there is certain proof to it.

Leraje [00:50:32]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:50:32]

If I can say so. So you are really left in like this, this feeling of like, what do I do?

Leraje [00:50:40]

Yes. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:50:41]

You know, it's like, um. And, and then the, the. The actual power is so indifferent. It's like, I don't care about you stupid human.

Leraje [00:50:52]

Yeah. That was.

Ligeia [00:50:53]

I'm this huge cosmos.

Leraje [00:50:55]

Well, yeah, I mean that I don't care. That's his Lovecraft coming through, I think, because that was a very Lovecraftian moment.

Ligeia [00:51:02]

It's there, right there. Yeah.

Leraje [00:51:04]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:51:04]

And that is dreadful because. But this is how, for me personally, this is how I would see God.

Leraje [00:51:12]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:51:13] For. For me thinking there is God who is allowing all that's happening and

created us so imperfect that our bodies are not ready to live on this planet. Actually, like we are the only animals that need clothes.

Leraje [00:51:27]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:51:28]

And you would freeze. You like, it's raining. Okay. Can't M go out because it's raining. Oh, it's freezing. It's too hot. Oh, I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. You need gloves. Uh, you need trousers. You need shoes. We are so freaking not ready to live.

Leraje [00:51:46]

Yeah. Humans literally cannot exist without adult humans for the first few years of their life.

Ligeia [00:51:53]

No. So thinking that some God created us.

Leraje [00:51:58]

Wasn't very good at it.

Ligeia [00:51:59]

Was it perfect? And to be like, no, it's a joke. Hello.

Leraje [00:52:04]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:52:04]

Why do we have menstrual pain?

Leraje [00:52:06]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:52:07]

Like, it's not that I'm, um, ill, but I'm dying every month, thank you very

much.

Leraje [00:52:12]

Yeah, thanks God.

Ligeia [00:52:13]

You know what I mean? Thanks God. So, for me, I think m. Maybe this is why this story is speaking to me so much, because this is actually how I. How I actually see God. Like, how are people trying to put him together to. To be in power of. Of me or humans around me, to give me rules when the world he creates is.

[00:52:37]

Is not good?

Leraje [00:52:39]

Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:52:41]

And I don't need the rules to be a good human. No, if you need rules to. To. To be a good human, something's wrong with you.

Leraje [00:52:48]

Honestly, I. Yeah, I mean, I said. I can't remember where I said it. I think I might have been talking to someone on Discord, but I think I said something like, um. Surely you don't need a God to tell you that killing someone is wrong and you don't need a Satan to tell you that everybody should have autonomous right over their own body. Ligeia [00:53:08]

That's my point.

Leraje [00:53:10]

But, yeah, you're right. He did evoke that. That. That feeling really well. Really well. Um, I mean, I did say that library of Byzantium was the one that spoke to me the most and was my favourite. And it was. But, uh, Nettis, you say it. I can't say, kind of. It was the one that evoked the sort of.

[00:53:37]

The most sense of inescapable, uh, dread. Inescapable fate.

Ligeia [00:53:43]

Yes. And the smallness of me as a reader, like I felt so, so small and minuscule and insignificant in the whole thing.

Leraje [00:53:54]

Bloody hell. Do you realise we've talked for an hour?

Ligeia [00:53:59]

Yes. And I was like, it's only three stories, what we've done in 20 minutes.

Yeah, no, we are unable. We are just.

Leraje [00:54:08]

Yeah, these mini suits are getting longer. Longer every time we do them.

Ligeia [00:54:13]

I. I think we could talk about this for hours, but. Yeah, definitely could.

Leraje [00:54:18]

Okay, we better wrap up, I guess. Okay, we'll see you next time. Thank you again for indulging us in our never, ah, ending talk about what books we like and why you should read them. And you definitely should read them.

Ligeia [00:54:32]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:54:33]

Uh, so please do. Uh, I've been the Raj. Hail Satan.

Ligeia [00:54:37]

I'm Ligeia. Hail Satan.

Leraje [00:54:38]

See you next time.

Ligeia [00:54:39]

And we can't wait to see you again.

[Outro music]