

The Devil's Library Episode 12.7 – "Piranesi"

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

[Intro Music]

Ligeia [00:00:00]

Hello everybody. Hail Satan. Welcome to a completely new episode or a minisode that we are going to record for you tonight. Uh, I have my dear friend Leraje with me here.

Leraje

[00:00:14]

Hail Satan.

Ligeia [00:00:16]

And I am Ligeia. Um, the book we are covering tonight or today is a book that I had no idea existed. Which is. I am a little bit ashamed. But I'm also very, very happy that I now do know about this book. So everybody who, who has heard about this book is going to like, oh, where is this girl living like under two fucking rocks or what?

Leraje [00:00:47]

Well, you can't know every book in the world.

Ligeia [00:00:49]

Yeah, but this one, I'm sorry. So the name of the book is Piranesi and it was written by Susanna Clarke in 2021. She won some a few prizes with this book. So it's not just like a random thing. It is a book that is well recognised, well known except of me. I'm trying to correct this in my life.

[00:01:18]

Okay. So please have mercy people. Yeah. So basically we can start.

Leraje [00:01:24]

It's her second um, sort of novel length work because she did um, Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell, didn't she as well?

Ligeia

[00:01:33]

Yes.

Leraje [00:01:33]

Which was a debut novel.

Ligeia
[00:01:35] That
was a big book.

Leraje
[00:01:37]
That's a big
book.

Ligeia [00:01:38]
I didn't read that one. I haven't. I guess you did.

Leraje [00:01:43]
I did, yeah. Um, but it's. Yeah, it's a real commitment, you know. You're going
to put in, be put in a few weeks aside to get through it.

Ligeia [00:01:52]
Uh, yeah. It's like more than thousand pages I think or something like that. So.

Leraje [00:01:56]
Yeah, it's massive. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:01:58]
Cool. After reading this book I am actually thinking about it because I really
loved this one but maybe I need a little time to just brew this one. Like I
really, really want to suck everything out of this one and maybe, probably I
will read this one two more times @ least.

Leraje [00:02:17]
So to be honest with you, uh, Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norell is best read in
the winter time, I think.

Ligeia
[00:02:24]
Okay.

Leraje [00:02:25]
When it's dark outside and you can hear the wind blowing.

Ligeia
[00:02:28] Okay.
I'm starting it.

Leraje [00:02:30]

Yeah, yeah. Anyway, but we're talking about Piranesi.

Ligeia [00:02:34]

Yes, let's. We try. We try every time. We try to keep it actually like scheduled or something. Structure. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. So this book is not that long. It's, it's uh, 248 to I think pages. So that's for me that's ideal. Like under 300 pages, doable, easy uh, to follow. I love that amount of pages.

[00:03:06]

I don't mind if it's if it's a little bit longer. But, like, I think this is when you have life and kids and stuff going on and you still want to enjoy a book or a story and you want to not just, like, run through it. M. I think this is perfect. So.

Leraje

[00:03:24]

Yeah, I agree.

Ligeia [00:03:25]

She did a great job. And because you mentioned the first book, uh, I just want to say there was 15 years between the two books she. She wrote.

Leraje

[00:03:35]

Yeah. Ah.

Ligeia [00:03:35]

Which is interesting, because I think she was very successful with the first one. For me, that's like, I, um, don't know, respect to this lady, because she wasn't pushing it. Like, oh, people love this book. I'm gonna write the book. Every year she waited until she maybe felt like this is the right time.

[00:03:55]

I love that. I don't know if that's true.

Leraje [00:03:58]

No, no, I think. I think that that's very much the case. But it's also true that she's, um. She's an Emmy sufferer. So, uh, I think it takes quite a lot out of her. I mean, writing Jonathan Strange must have nearly killed her because it is so big, such a commitment to write.

Ligeia [00:04:20]

Would you like to start, maybe?

Leraje [00:04:22]

So Piranesi is, on the face of it, a story about a person who's in, uh, a liminal space type environment. So here we are with our liminal spaces again, my dear.

Ligeia [00:04:37]

Yeah, we love that. Them.

Leraje [00:04:39]

Um, and it's kind. This liminal space is in the form of a grand house, which, in my mind, I don't know, I kind of envisage it as a kind of, like, Italian.

Ligeia

[00:04:54]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:04:55]

Uh, mansion. Do you know what I mean? That kind of like.

Ligeia

[00:04:58]

Like class.

Leraje

[00:04:59]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:05:01]

Beautiful Greek. Roman, sort of.

Leraje [00:05:05]

Yeah, that's a better description.

Ligeia [00:05:06]

Yeah, that's also in my mind. But that's what she describes, so I guess.

Leraje [00:05:13]

Yeah. Yeah. And, uh, the character is called Piranesi, but not by himself, because there is one person who is in the house alongside Piranesi, the other.

And the story is basically a slow reveal of Piranesi's backstory and how it is that they live in the house and, uh, what happens to them. We decided, I should say at this point, we decided before we started recording this episode, there's absolutely no way we can avoid spoilers, really.

Ligeia [00:05:54] It's impossible.

Leraje [00:05:55]

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I would say at this point, if you haven't read the book and you really want to stop listening, or.

Ligeia [00:06:04]

There are people who actually don't mind little spoilers, like, we're not gonna. Maybe I would avoid the ending, like, completely But I don't think doing the spoilers for this book is such a sin M. Because for me, I spoke to you and other few people about this book before I read it. And actually it helped me to get the motivation to read it.

[00:06:34]

Because if you just look at the. The COVID the end, the. The last page, like, oh, what is this book about? It's really difficult to. To understand what. Like, what is this book going to be? So maybe for some people it's not gonna be such a. Such a problem. We just want you to know it's going to be like, we are going to reveal a few things, but it doesn't change the.

[00:07:00]

Yes, I don't think. But if you don't want the spoilers, why are you here? Because we spoil every book.

Leraje [00:07:07]

We do. We always say we're not gonna. And then we go ahead and spoil everything.

Ligeia [00:07:11]

Yeah, it's just, you know, we are just too innocent.

Leraje [00:07:15]

We're terrible podcasters. That's the thing.

Ligeia

[00:07:17]

Exactly.

Leraje [00:07:18]
We're not good at
this.

Ligeia
[00:07:20] We do
what we do.

Leraje [00:07:21]

We do what we do. So here's Piranesi in the house. And the other. What would you say about the other?

Ligeia [00:07:29]

About the other? Um, yeah, that's the name in the book. It's actually the capital O. So people are not confused. Why do we not name him? Uh, so it's interesting to look at the relationship between Piranesi and the other from the point of view of Piranesi and then. And then like, include your own thoughts because this whole book is unravelling in front of you.

[00:08:01]

The whole story is not an action book. It is an. It is a piece of art. So please, people, if you are looking for, like, entertaining, um, battle or I don't know what, it's not there. You. You need to. It's a sit and read book. Which, um, that's why I said, like, the page amount is good because it's a book that you actually need to really enjoy.

[00:08:29]

It's not difficult to follow. It's not complicated. I love her writing style because it is really, really easy to follow the thoughts. But actually the story is based on. We don't know, like, the beginning is like. You don't know why we are in this enormous, gigantic house. There is description of the house, which is so unique and weird.

[00:08:58]

It's. The scale of it is enormous. But like. And then you have this one person, Piranesi, living there and you don't know, like, what. Of course, it's a fantasy book. So. Okay, yeah, yeah. You understand that you go into this book with that. Like, people who don't like fantasy books maybe don't, but still it is a unique space.

[00:09:20]

And then you have this other that somehow is some. Sometimes there and M. First 20 pages, you don't know why. And like, what is happening? Is this a dream? What's gonna. Like, I need to know more. You still want to know more. This story is so beautifully written. Like, uh, you want to.

[00:09:44]

You want to continue. Because it does change. The perspective shifts.

Leraje [00:09:49]

Yes. It's kind of like when we first meet the other. That's the first sign that things are not possibly as straightforward as we think they are.

Ligeia

[00:10:01] It's
a first little
knot.

Leraje [00:10:03]

Yeah. Because I think you're right. The initial feeling is, oh, it's a fantasy novel. We're in a fantasy setting. We're gonna have a fantasy story.

Ligeia

[00:10:11]
Yeah.

Leraje [00:10:12]

And it is a fantasy story, but it's also about one person's slow realisation that their reality is not actually, uh, based on truth. And the first hint of that we get is when offis kind of, ah, like Introduction to the Other. And, uh, it becomes fairly clear after that. I mean, Clark kind of spoils the story herself, uh, you know, by dropping little hints and outright kind of like, statements about what's going on.

Ligeia [00:10:46]

Um, but you don't know that. You know, I must say, uh, like the first few pages, I was like, oh, God, is this. Is this lady forgetting what she said before? Like, this doesn't make sense. I think she made a mistake. And I was like, oh, I will hate this book. And it's not true.

Leraje [00:11:06] Um.

Ligeia [00:11:08]

It was just my. My, I don't know, brain thinking I'm so freaking clever that I actually. That's not true. Hey, like, yeah, uh, it is not true. Just read.

Leraje [00:11:20]

Yeah, she was. She did do that very well.

Ligeia [00:11:23]

I loved it. But like, there were these few seconds of me being like, no, please don't. I want to enjoy this book. Why are you doing this? So I love that about that. The book.

Leraje [00:11:36]

And she does. She does that a few times.

Ligeia
[00:11:38]
Yes.

Leraje [00:11:39]

That kind of like, I. Okay, now I understand what's going on.

Ligeia
[00:11:43] She
did it so well.

Leraje [00:11:44]

30 or 40 pages later, and there's another little twist. And you think, actually, I'm. I'm still wrong. I'm still not quite sure what's going.

Ligeia [00:11:51]
And I was so humbled. Like, I thought I sorted out the universe. Nah. Okay. And also I would like to just, um, insert one thought about what you said about the architecture. And, like, you also thought it reminded you of, like, Mythology. And I think she was playing on this idea because of the phone, you know, uh, the COVID And also Piranesi, uh, which actually I think you know this, but maybe somebody doesn't like.

[00:12:23]

The name is not random. There was this, uh, artist called Giovanni Battista Piranesi, and he was famous for many things, but he also was drawing beautiful labyrinths and prisons, which are so confusing. And it's just. If you can just Google or whatever, you will find his. These drawings. And I think the labyrinth, the theme of maze.

[00:12:51]

Um, she knew. She knew why she chose that name.

Leraje [00:12:56]

Yeah. I sent you a. I sent you a, um. Uh, quote from an interview that she gave.

Ligeia

[00:13:02]

Yes.

Leraje

[00:13:02]

After Piranesi came out. Uh, and she talked about our old friend, uh. Uh, you say his name because I can't remember his name. Jorge. Um.

Ligeia [00:13:14]

Oh, you mean, uh, Borges.

Leraje

[00:13:16]

Yes, yes.

Ligeia [00:13:17]

I think that's how you say it. I forgot the m. Middle name or whatever. Borges.

Leraje [00:13:23]

And, uh. Because he wrote the short story that, uh, inspired a short stay in Hell. And Clark said in this interview that she had read his. That. That short story by Borges. Um, but then she remembered she'd read another one. Um, and she was shocked by the kind of like, similarity between this second story, which is directly about the labyrinth.

[00:13:50]

The kind of like, um, the Greek labyrinth myth with, uh. The minotaur.

Ligeia

[00:13:54] The
minotaurs, yes.

Leraje [00:13:55]

Yeah. And, uh. Um. Take on it in Piranesi. And she actually said. I think the line was, sometimes it isn't a new story. Sometimes it's a rediscovered old story that you've forgotten.

Ligeia [00:14:09]

Yeah. Which is actually. I don't know, it gave me goosebumps because, like, how does it even happen?

Leraje

[00:14:18]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:14:19]

It was so beautiful. It doesn't really matter if, like, the. You know, the inspiration comes from something you just forgot and you read when you were younger. Or it's just like somewhere there and some. Some minds just work in similar way and they might come up to some, like, certain similarity in their writing or painting, whatever.

[00:14:46]

And then it just, you know, it rings a bell when you see it and you go, oh, this is actually how I think this is the way my art comes to be. So it's interesting.

Leraje [00:14:57]

I think that's true. I think that's true. But I don't think anything. Any work of art can really exist independently of its. Of its roots or its inspiration.

Ligeia

[00:15:07]

It's language.

Leraje

[00:15:08]

So, yeah, we're all. We're all kind of like, uh, inspired by things, even if it's subconsciously and we've forgotten the original Source of the.

Ligeia [00:15:15]

Inspiration, or it just. It's something and in your life, in your mind twists to something new. But the inspiration was something that some. Somebody else wouldn't even recognise, that this is what gave birth to this. But this is my take on it. Or this is like. You know, it went through my body and my brain and now this is the result.

[00:15:40]

Thank you very much.

Leraje

[00:15:43] So

it's so the
house.

Ligeia
[00:15:45]
Yeah.

Leraje
[00:15:46] It's
a unique house.

Ligeia
[00:15:47]
Yeah.

Leraje [00:15:48]

Because it has clouds, it has rain, it has snow, it has an ocean in some floors, and in the ocean are fish and shellfish and the ocean has tides. There are, uh, stars outside the house and there is a moon. But the house is also the world as far as Piranesi is concerned, and as far as Piranesi thinks the other is concerned, the house is the world.

[00:16:15]
But, uh, to me, the sort of, like, defining feature of the house with the statues.

Ligeia [00:16:21]
Oh, yes. I can't stop thinking about that house. It's such a weird place. I don't want to forget how the book made me feel. I actually really felt like I have left this world.

Leraje [00:16:36]

Yeah. To be completely honest, I adored the house. I would love to have been there. Uh. Oh.

Ligeia [00:16:43]

I would love a movie. Or. I. I'm really scared if a movie exists, which I think somebody is making. Yeah, I know. I am a little bit scared because I want it to look like it looks in my mind.

Leraje
[00:16:57]
Yeah,
absolutely.

Ligeia [00:16:58]

Yes, I'm a little bit scared. But also, I never wanna. I never want to lose that. What she did. Like, it's a memory I want to keep and take care of, because the house, I have never read anything like it.

And she made it so, like, easy. Um, like, how do you do it in so, like.

[00:17:21]

Like 200 pages? And it sticks with you.

Leraje [00:17:25]

Her writing. Her writing style is very kind of, um. Matter of fact, it's very kind of.

Ligeia

[00:17:31]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:17:32]

This and this and this. Yeah, but there's. Which is not to say it's plain and boring, but it's very kind of like, this is what the house looks like. This is. And it's very kind of stylistically ordinary writing, but at the same time creates a mood and a picture that is beautiful.

Ligeia [00:17:53]

Um, it's beautiful and it's very kind. It doesn't make you feel silly, stupid small. Well, the house does make you feel small in other way. But she writes in a way that I, uh, think she's a very intelligent lady because she could have used many, you know, huge sentences, big words, which is.

[00:18:16]

Okay. You can show off like, that. Oh. I'm an educated person. I know how to use words. But the art is to write huge things, huge thoughts in simple, the simplest way possible. That makes her very lovable. And the whole, like, the Piranesi character is just lovable.

Leraje [00:18:38]

He is. He's lovable, kind, and he's. To a large extent, he's a very innocent person.

Ligeia [00:18:45]

Absolutely. I don't know how we ended. Uh, you asked me about the other. But, like, we are just. I think we're doing well. We are floating around it.

Leraje [00:18:53]

We are. We're kind of. This is what we do. We're just gonna have to accept the fact this is what we do. We start off with a plan, and then we just go off one.

Ligeia [00:19:01]

I just hope people can actually feel the love we have for. For what we do here. And this is how it looks. We are not. You know, I have some notes, but the love is just, like, overwhelming. And I want to share it so much. Uh, I just babble around.

Leraje [00:19:18]

Here's a quote from the book, um, which kind of, like, encapsulates the kindness, I think.

Ligeia

[00:19:26]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:19:26]

Ah. And it is. The beauty of the house is immeasurable. It's kindness infinite.

Ligeia [00:19:33] Yeah.

Leraje [00:19:33]

And that, to me, is just that. It's. It's. It's one sentence that sums up everything that's good about this book.

Ligeia [00:19:40]

Yeah. And it's open for so many ways. You can. You can just read it in so many ways. Like, the interpretation is open, I think. Like, what is the house? Is it the actual world? You can. Like, people who are. Who believe in God can see it, you know, as the gods, I don't know, created this world.

[00:20:07]

And, uh, this is, you know, his love. People who don't believe in God, like us. It is the beauty of the world we have and how we should probably think. Like, this book is. Has changed my views in many ways. I don't want to sound like a huge sentence that, um, I'm just saying, but it does.

[00:20:29]

It does. If you really want to take as much out of this book as you can, because it allows you. It offers a lot. It really can change something in,

like, the attitude towards, like, normal life situations that we have. It is also like, the love towards the house, because I don't know how you felt, but it was scary.

[00:20:57]

He was alone.

Leraje [00:20:59]

Yeah. There's this constant kind of tension between the fact that Piranesi feels lonely all the time, uh, but also absolutely adores the world in which he lives and is grateful to the house for providing him with, uh, food to eat. Via the sea and, uh, fuel in the form of seaweed that he can dry out and burn and all these things.

[00:21:25]

And of course, the other brings him things as well.

Ligeia

[00:21:28] Oh,
yeah.

Leraje [00:21:30]

Which we'll get onto in a bit. But, uh, yes, it's this kind of. I think there is a tendency to sort of, in some people's writing, some author's writing, to sort of like, introduce drama into every situation and make it dramatic and. And strong. Uh, and Clark, in my mind, does the exact opposite.

[00:21:54]

It is still strong. It's strong writing, but it shows, uh, it makes the world, the house, a kind of good, nice place to be. Despite the difficulties that Piranesi faces. Yeah, he's still. He's still very, very happy to be there.

Ligeia [00:22:10]

He's very happy and he feels like this is a blessing for him and he takes everything that the house offers as a huge gift and he wants to give back. So even though in, like, when I was reading it, I was like, oh, my goodness, you. You poor guy. Like, you are happy with, like, you.

[00:22:34]

You're hungry, you don't have shoes, and you're still happy that you can collect rainwater in these. In these plastic balls that the other brought for you. And he was happy to actually look for the best places in, like, the statues, like little niches where the bowls would be safe. And remember, uh, how he was happy that he had, I think, three of, like, really bright colours.

Leraje
[00:23:03]
Yeah.

Ligeia [00:23:03]

Because he couldn't find the ones that were white. It was really difficult for him. Like, if I could only find them. But he was never angry. He was just, how do I make it better next time for myself? Like, this house offers me so much. I wouldn't want to waste that water that is being collected for me.

[00:23:23]

He is not like, uh, oh, I hate this freaking place. It's awful. And I have to just walk around and everything hurts and I'm wet now. He never once he did that, which is. Which is my usual state. Like, oh, why is this like that? I hate it. Uh, and this book made me feel so bad about that.

[00:23:45]

Like, maybe I should start at least, um, at least five times a day. Maybe I should be Piranesi.

Leraje [00:23:54]

Be more Piranesi. A lesson for us all.

Ligeia [00:23:58]

But like it. You will not make anything worse. You can only make everything better for yourself and everybody around you. If you. If you are just not so like me, you know, like the response. Response ability. Responsibility, which is response ability. I have the ability to response. I can't control what's happening. Not everything, but I can And I should start thinking how I react to things, you know, and that's just like, one shift that can happen.

[00:24:36]

Small little stuff.

Leraje [00:24:37]

Yeah. I think that kind of, um. That sense that Piranesi is grateful for the world and grateful that he exists within the world. M. That again, speak. I mean, we said earlier that he's a very innocent character. Mm. And I think, you know, bearing in mind what you were just saying, we could all possibly stand to be a little bit more, uh, maybe not innocent to the point of being gullible or naive, but innocent in the fact that we can appreciate some things for what they are rather than the interpretation we put on them.

Ligeia [00:25:15]

The innocence at itself, I think it's largely. How do I say it? Misunderstood. Or used like. The. The term is used in, like, negative, um, way when it comes to adults. Like, oh, you are so innocent, as you said. Like, it connotates with being naive or a little bit dumb or ignorant, which we are all ignorant in at some points.

[00:25:44]

Like, you can't just constantly.

Leraje

[00:25:47]

Nobody knows
that.

Ligeia [00:25:48]

It doesn't work like that. So for me, the innocence with him is, like, almost childlike. M. It is enchanting. It's. It's absolutely pure.

Leraje

[00:26:00]

Yeah.

Ligeia

[00:26:00] And

he's not stupid.

Leraje [00:26:02]

Doesn't m. He describe himself at one point as a child of the house?

Ligeia [00:26:05]

Yes. Yes. I am the. How did he say it?

Leraje [00:26:09]

I'm the beloved child of the house. Yeah.

Ligeia [00:26:11]

He thinks the house loves him. And.

Leraje

[00:26:13]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:26:14]

Like, the statues are his friends. He. He makes notes about everything. He creates his own calendar. Like, at the beginning of. We don't. We still don't know how this started. Like, why is he there? But at the beginning, he was, um, putting, like, dates on, like, in the diary, whatever, and it was unusual date, you know, like, 28th of May.

[00:26:41]

I don't know, 2025. As. Ah. He was writing it. And he needed to create the whole structure of his life, of his days, of the tides, of the statues, of the. Like, the rooms are never ending. And he needed to, like, somehow survive. So he started to, like. He was just naming the years or the month, uh, according to what happened, which I thought is so beautiful and childlike.

Leraje [00:27:14]

Something like, was it, uh, the. The fourth month in the year that the albatross came? Ligeia [00:27:21]

Came. Yes. Well, the albatross that was actually, like. And he spoke to the birds, like, okay, you sound like St. Francis. It's a little bit weird, but it's not true. He wasn't talking in a stupid way. We all talk to animals or, um, you know, Like, I talk to my cats. Or if.

[00:27:46]

If, uh, if a bird is attacking you or is in your way or is annoying. Everybody said something. Yes. Like, oh, why are you here? What do you want? So we just need to be okay with it. Why. Why would that be stupid? And as I said, he was not stupid because not many people would survive what he was doing.

Leraje [00:28:10]

No. And that kind of, like, played into the eventual, kind of very, very slow reveal.

Ligeia

[00:28:18]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:28:19]

Um, of what was actually going on. I remember one of the first hints, apart from the word battersea, uh, um, one of the first hints that I got was he was talking about the statues.

Ligeia
[00:28:33]
Yes.

Leraje [00:28:34]

And he remarked upon a statue. One of the statues was an elephant with a castle on its back.

Ligeia [00:28:40]

People who are not from here.

Leraje [00:28:43]

Yeah. Yeah. If you're not from.

Ligeia [00:28:44]

Might not know. Or maybe not from London. I think UK people would know.

Leraje
[00:28:49]
Yeah.

Ligeia [00:28:49]

But like, specifically London, if you know, you know.

Leraje
[00:28:53]
Yeah.

Ligeia [00:28:54]

Yeah. I was like, am I reading this? People, if you don't know, please Google it. You will find a map.

Leraje [00:29:02]

There's. Yeah, there's this dual thing of Susanna Clark kind of like scattering these little clues through the book. But there's also the even more interesting question from my point of view was, are the statues pushing through from our world into the world of the house? Are they. Are some of them kind of crossing the dimension between the world that we, you and I, live in to the world of the house?

[00:29:30]

And if so, what does that mean? And, um, does that also mean that some of the other statues are pushing through from other worlds that are not the house and

not our world? Are there? And there's a section in the book, uh, where there's this kind of. Later on in the book, there's this kind of.

[00:29:51]

We get introduced to this. I wouldn't describe them as a cult exactly, but kind of they're people interested in how other, uh, dimensions, other spaces, uh, exist. Um, and they kind of mention the possibility that there are other. Not just the house and not just our world, but other worlds. And I. I was trying.

[00:30:16]

Because the statues are so such a big part of the book and the world of the house.

Ligeia

[00:30:22]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:30:24]

Where do they come from?

Ligeia [00:30:25]

They. Yeah, it's. It's a one, uh, of those things that I think you can use many ways of reading into that. One of which, one of which, for me would, uh, be psychological, maybe even a little bit of, like, mental health approach of being somewhere in between the real and the surreal, or somehow other.

[00:30:59]

Which is not. I don't want to see any mental. I Don't like issues or problems. I don't see it that way. It is just different. So it might be those, uh, corridors between. And something about the hypnosis, for example, or being able. Some people are able to manipulate the mind either by. Yeah.

[00:31:25]

Uh, you know, like using techniques which is real or even drugs, whatever. We don't know. We don't know what happened in this book. We don't know.

Leraje [00:31:36]

No, I mean, it's funny you should say that, because one of the things when we get pretty certain that we know what's actually going on. One of the first things that occurred to me was, was the house actually a manifestation of a kind of, like, mental illness from, um, Piranesi? And he's kind of like, did.

[00:31:58]

Was the house real? Did it actually exist? And. Or was it just something that Piranesi was kind of like projecting outwards from himself and he'd placed himself in. But then if that was true later on. Um. There's other.

Ligeia

[00:32:15]

Yes. Yes.

Leraje

[00:32:16] Can't

afford spiders.

Ligeia

[00:32:17]

Yeah, I know.

Leraje [00:32:18]

There's other characters. And you realise that, no, the house does actually exist. It is a real thing.

Ligeia [00:32:24]

And the other is coming in twice a day.

Leraje

[00:32:26]

Exactly.

Ligeia [00:32:27]

But that still doesn't disagree with the hypnosis or going into deeper layers of your consciousness, which you can't reach, uh, like on a daily basis, but there are techniques where you can. And maybe. What if, like the interpretations. What if Piranesi has been kidnapped and he is being held behind a wall and this whole thing is just him, his mind, protecting him, creating this world.

[00:33:00]

The balls with water. Maybe. Maybe his kidnapper is feeding him water and he has no shoes. He's thin. Maybe he doesn't even move, but he thinks he's walking. Maybe he sees these statues because he has not been out for years and these are things he just somehow creates. He doesn't know what the tree is.

Leraje

[00:33:25] No.

Um.

Ligeia [00:33:25]

He doesn't know what the river, like, river is there. But he doesn't really know what the nature looks like. He can see birds, but he. He has never seen a horse.

Leraje

[00:33:34]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:33:35]

That's just one way. I don't know.

Leraje [00:33:38]

Yeah, and there's that. There's that kind of disconnect. Purposeful disconnect. Not, not. Not an error by, uh, Clarke when he. When Piranesi talks about the fact that he knows certain words, but he can't associate them with something that he knows in his life.

Ligeia [00:33:55]

And he knows his name is not Piranesi.

Leraje

[00:33:58]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:33:58]

He knows it's not his real name. And he keeps asking Himself. Why is the other calling me this? I don't mind, but I know it's not my name. And he doesn't know his name, so there is something like. It's still, you know, he can't go to those places. Maybe he has been through some absolute horrific trauma and these things are just now obscured because his mind is so hurt.

[00:34:23]

M. Or maybe it's a real space, Maybe it's a real house. And maybe the statues are just interpretation of art, which is a question of, is the real world above the art? Are these statues lesser than the real people or the real trees? Or is the art above? Or are they equal? Or does the art change it?

[00:34:52]

Because if you have art, there was a person who created this vision of, I don't know, the Minotaur. And then that means this statue also has something from that one person seeing this M this way. So that is a value that nature doesn't have. Yeah, I don't know.

Leraje [00:35:16]

No, I think you're right. And I also, um. Clarke has got this writing trick that she makes Piranesi capitalise things. So that sentence I read earlier, the beauty of the house is immeasurable. It's kindness infinite. The words beauty, house and kindness are all capitalised.

Ligeia [00:35:34]

Yes, I wanted to get to that. Uh, I do have an opinion, because that was. That was amazing. It reminded me of German language, where they do concrete, uh, proper nouns, like, they capitalise. But. Yeah, I didn't know that. Yeah, but, like, in English, it was surprising to see. And as I was almost finishing the book, I realised, hope it's not a lie in my brain.

[00:36:01]

I hope this is true. But I think to the end, when the shift was happening. I will not spoil this. The capital letters slowly were disappearing. And I think that meant two things. The first one was the loss of the innocents, because Piranesi was in awe. He was in awe of everything. He was so grateful that he was naming things with, like, the capital, like water, house, bird, statue.

[00:36:38]

Everything was just, you know, like a child looking up to a mom or a dad. I've been there. When my kids were small, they used to see me as, like, everything is possible for me. I can actually bring the stars. Like mom, you know, when they are, like two or three, they really think that.

[00:36:58]

But, you know, like, I think he. His mind was so pure that he was even writing these words with capital letters. And as he was coming out of that, that shifted and he was learning stuff that was breaking that innocence. Yeah, in a sense. And it was losing that power, is.

Leraje [00:37:24]

It a possible interpretation that Piranesi, the book rather than the character. Is it a story about someone who is uh, getting worse and worse in terms of his mental health? Or is it a story of someone slowly regaining their sanity? Because to me either interpretation is possible.

Ligeia [00:37:47]

Yeah, I agree. It depends on how you. Not how you read it. My first feeling when I was finishing the book was the second option. I thought he is gaining back his consciousness, his. His memory. He didn't want to go there. He didn't. He wanted to stay in the house.

Leraje [00:38:08]

Yeah. And again, sorry, but.

Ligeia
[00:38:09]
Mhm.

Leraje [00:38:10]

Um, this has just popped into my head. He was kind of a third unnamed person that we didn't really know at the end. Because he wasn't really Piranesi. Because Piranesi lived in the house.

Ligeia
[00:38:22]
Yeah.

Leraje [00:38:22]

And he wasn't. He wasn't Matthew. Because Matthew was who he was before.

Ligeia
[00:38:27]
That's true.

Leraje [00:38:28]

So he's now this, this person we don't really know.

Ligeia [00:38:32]

New person. Which could also be. This is just now happening. I'm sorry if it wouldn't make sense. But like for example, the struggle struggles. I have no better word for. With um, self. How do I name it? You know, not even sexuality, but maybe just like, who am I?

Leraje [00:38:53]

Uh, self knowledge. Self awareness.

Ligeia [00:38:55]
Self awareness. Maybe even we could take it to like what pronouns would I identify as?

Leraje [00:39:03]

Uh, uh, a process of self actualization maybe, which.

Ligeia [00:39:07]

He never mentioned any gender issues. But like I could read it like that because Piranesi was somewhere and half of the book I was thinking he might be one gender and I was expecting something because he is only one person. So how does he know if he is a male, female or something?

[00:39:27]

Uh, could have been. It wasn't in the book, but I think I could, I could see it. Like the third person was something in between.

Leraje [00:39:35]

Yeah. I think. And to Piranesi in terms of the character rather than the story. Um, I think to uh, them it would have been. They wouldn't have really put a great level of importance on assigning a gender.

Ligeia

[00:39:49]

Absolutely
not.

Leraje [00:39:51]

Or sexuality or ah. Any of the things that we are intrinsically us.

Ligeia [00:39:57]

No, I just. Maybe because I am really interested in how people deal with these uh, things in this world that is so unfriendly towards, you know, how people identify. Which is something nobody else should even care like, you know. And so maybe I'm reading too much into this because it's a sensitive thing.

[00:40:20]

You are for me.

Leraje [00:40:22]

I don't think you are. I think it's true. And it goes to what you were saying earlier about Piranesi's innocence.

Ligeia

[00:40:30]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:40:31]

They exist in this kind of almost. I mean, you were saying earlier about a two year old. That's kind of like the emotional level that Piranesi is kind of, um, existing at in the first part of the book.

Which is why I say your average 2 year old, I, uh, don't think thinks about themselves in terms of being male, female.

Ligeia
[00:40:53] No.

Leraje [00:40:54]
Straight, gay, black, white. Uh, you know, they. They are just who they are if.

Ligeia [00:41:00]
It'S not injected from the surrounding people.

Leraje
[00:41:03]
Yeah.

Ligeia
[00:41:03]
Kids are pure.

Leraje [00:41:05]
Yeah. And um, I think that was Piranesi in the first third quarter of the book.

Ligeia [00:41:12]
Like, maybe I was thinking about that because of like he. They were saying how they were trying to look nice and the hair was so long and they were putting all the little things they found into their hair. Do you remember?

Leraje
[00:41:31]
Yeah.

Ligeia
[00:41:31]
Like little shells and fish bones and stuff like that. I thought this must have been so stinky and horrible. But Piranesi was so happy and he. And they were thinking, uh, I'm doing this because I really want to look nice and I want to carry this. Yes. I want to be pretty for the house and I want to have these memories of the house and how blessed I am.

[00:41:58]
And I was almost crying. This is so sweet. This is absolutely, uh. You don't have shoes, guy. You don't have shoes. You have almost no food. If you don't move your ass every day, you have no food.

Leraje [00:42:10]
But you've got fantastic hair.

Ligeia [00:42:12]

Yes. I couldn't. That was just absolutely sweet. Yeah.

Leraje [00:42:17]

Should we talk about Raphael?

Ligeia

[00:42:20]

Yes. Careful.

Leraje

[00:42:22]

Yeah.

Ligeia

[00:42:24] So

here.

Leraje [00:42:25]

There'd be major spoilers. In fact, I think I've. Haven't I actually said the word Matthew? I think I have.

Ligeia [00:42:31]

Yes. But I, uh, don't think you spoiled it.

Leraje

[00:42:35]

Okay. All
right.

Ligeia [00:42:37]

I don't think so. But I don't know how to not spoil this. So maybe I will be quiet for a second.

Leraje [00:42:45]

So. So one of the kind of like things that Piranesi, ah, definitely is. Is lonely. And um, he's. They say several times throughout the course of the. The first half to two thirds of the book that they wish there was someone else in the house with them. Not the other. The other comes and goes.

[00:43:07]

And Piranesi eventually realises that there is someone else. At that point, we don't know this. This character's name, Raphael, is a very important character in Piranesi's story. And, um. Is kind of the living embodiment of. Of what

Piranesi has been missing in numerous ways, both in terms of companionship and also in terms of a direct connection to their origin, is that you did so well.

Ligeia [00:43:38]

You did so well. I'm so proud of you. I was like, when you. When you started, like, shall we talk about Raphael? I'm like, oh, Satan. How. When you did so well. I will not. I will not add anything because I don't know how.

Leraje [00:43:59]

I mean, I'm kind of aware there's going to be people listening to this. You have read it. And if I thought. I thought to myself, if we don't mention it, then they're going to be like, we didn't even talk about Raphael. You didn't talk about this, that, and the other, blah, blah, blah.

[00:44:12]

So I felt like we had to at least mention.

Ligeia

[00:44:15]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:44:16]

That particular character.

Ligeia [00:44:18]

Yeah. And also I would like to still go back to the other. I don't know. Do we. We don't have to name him his proper name. It doesn't really matter.

Leraje

[00:44:28] No.

Ligeia [00:44:28]

Well, I. I will not. But I just wanted to, uh, see if you. If you felt this, uh. Or what is your opinion about how Piranesi, uh, was like his heart, his pure heart, for example. Piranesi, as I said many times, didn't have anything. He was almost naked in, like, really ragged, horrible clothes and, you know, struggling.

[00:44:59]

And then this guy coming there twice a week was always wearing completely new, uh, spotless, beautiful clothes, suit and a, uh, beautiful shirt and beautiful shoes. And he was holding a. How did. How did she call it? The sparkly, sparkling object.

Leraje [00:45:19]

Shining. Shining device or something like that. Yeah, yeah. Which was clearly a mobile phone.

Ligeia [00:45:25]

A phone. So that was. That was one of the alarms. Like, oh, Piranesi never seen a phone, or did he forget? So how long has he been there anyway? But, like, the way Piranesi saw this guy having so much and never once was he jealous or envied anything. I thought that was such beautiful, um, thought or.

[00:45:55]

Or way to see. Because you can compare yourself to your death with others every freaking day. It's a way to hell. Well, not hell. We love hell. I mean, to suffering. Uh, yeah, okay, let's do that. But you know what I mean? Like, if we compare each other or ourselves to people who have more, who are younger, who are.

[00:46:20]

I don't know, just in our mind. It doesn't. It doesn't really. It's not true. I would never change my life for anybody else. But we still do it.

Leraje

[00:46:30]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:46:30]

And I think the way he saw it was so beautiful because he was like, I am so blessed that I can actually I am able to take care of myself while, uh, this guy, the other, needs the house to give him all these things because he. The house needs to feed him because he's not able to do it.

[00:46:53]

Not everybody is. This is what Piranesi was thinking. Like, I am so happy that the house takes care of this, the other, that I don't have to because that would be a really huge job for me and I might be a little bit weak for that. I struggle with myself. But I'm so happy this house gives so much to him because they need it.

Leraje [00:47:17]

Well, yes, it's interesting that Piranesi realised that the other would not be able to survive in the house on their own.

Ligeia [00:47:24]

That was a, um. Really? But like, you know what I mean? Like, if I see somebody, if you go and if you want to suffer, just go on Instagram and check other people's lives or sort of lala blah, blah. We are old enough to know it's all lies, but still, sometimes it just hurts.

[00:47:43]

I don't know. Something. It happens.

Leraje [00:47:45]

But the. One of the things that interested me, there's a part in the book when the other asks Piranesi to do a task for him so they can, uh, find a way to access what the other calls the great and secret knowledge.

Ligeia

[00:47:59]

Yeah.

Leraje [00:48:00]

And Piranesi says to the other, I will do that, but I need to. I need to have shoes.

Ligeia [00:48:09]

Yeah. Um, because it's very far.

Leraje [00:48:11]

And it was striking that this was the first time that we'd heard or seen Piranesi actually directly asking the other for something.

Ligeia

[00:48:22] For something.

Leraje [00:48:23]

Yeah. And they kind of, uh. It was clear to me that Piranetti was a bit uncomfortable about having to ask.

Ligeia

[00:48:32]

Yes.

Leraje [00:48:33]

Did you get that impression?

Ligeia [00:48:34]

I did, I did. And I still not m sure how to read that. Maybe he thought. I think he actually did not really question how the other is having all these things.

Leraje

[00:48:47] No.

Never once.

Ligeia [00:48:48]

He was not really bothering his own mind with like, questioning, oh, hold on a minute. How is it that I suffer this much? And this guy. No, that's not the way he thought. So maybe when he had to ask, he maybe thought that the other will have to somehow not have those shoes because he will have to give them to.

[00:49:13]

I don't know. I really don't know how to read that little detail.

Leraje [00:49:18]

I thought it might be that by having to ask the other for shoes, Piranesi might feel that he was questioning the wisdom of the house in not giving him shoes. Piranesi might have felt, oh, no, I'm sort of questioning Questioning the wisdom of the house here.

Ligeia [00:49:34]

Yeah. I am not grateful enough. Um, right, that makes sense. Also the whole thing around the other and his motivation for coming to this house was in such a disbalance to Piranesi and his view of the house. Because there was this beautiful sentence where Piranesi was saying something like, the house is beautiful.

[00:49:59]

Just because it is, it doesn't need to mean anything. That's where it ends. The beauty is in its existence. And I'm not asking anything. We are, uh, like, I take care of the house. I worship the house. I. I love the house. And therefore I am like, blessed with the gifts from the house.

[00:50:24]

It's a. It's a harmony. It's a. It's a balance.

Leraje

[00:50:26]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:50:27]

But the other was coming there because he wanted to just get something m. The knowledge. Yeah, Some knowledge.

Leraje [00:50:36]

The great and secret knowledge. Yeah. The other saw the house as a resource to be kind of.

Ligeia

[00:50:41]

Yes.

Leraje [00:50:42]

Mined and the resource to be extracted from and used by him.

Ligeia

[00:50:48]

Just used.

Yes.

Leraje [00:50:49]

Whereas Piranesi, very much like you were saying earlier in that kind of childlike, uh, or even that toddler like stage of innocence, never questioned the house, never wanted anything from the house, was grateful for what the house provided. And um, never uh, thought about asking why the house apparently gave so much to the other but didn't give to him.

Ligeia [00:51:14]

Yeah. Never questioning why does he have more than me? Which is such a liberating thing to do in your own life. Like what is the question even like.

Leraje

[00:51:27] Oh,

yeah, exactly.

Ligeia

[00:51:28]

Hello.

Leraje [00:51:30]

One thing I wanted to ask you about. And then we better wrap up because we've been talking for nearly an hour.

Ligeia
[00:51:34] Of
course.

Leraje [00:51:35]
Do you think? Well, yeah. Minisode. We're just gonna have to stop calling them
minisodes, aren't we?

Ligeia
[00:51:40]
Maxisoast?

Leraje [00:51:41]
Maxis, do you think the end was sad?

Ligeia [00:51:45]
I do. I really want to reread and I'm actually going to try to see if I can see
the ending in some other way. There are ways to interpret the ending. It's not
like straightforward. I don't think so. It's not like everybody will think the
same. M. I think it was sad, which surprised me.

Leraje [00:52:09]
Yeah. Because we talked earlier about the fact that we were really dealing at
that point with a third character that we didn't really know that well.

Ligeia [00:52:17] Mhm.

Leraje [00:52:17]
It was fairly obvious that they were in mourning for both of the lives that
they'd lost.

Ligeia [00:52:25]
Yes. Well, I was in mourning for Piranesi. I wanted to go back to that house.

Leraje [00:52:34]
Is there anything else we should talk about, do you think? Before we wrap this
up?

Ligeia [00:52:38]
I just really thought about something now. And I will just say one sentence.

Leraje
[00:52:42] Yeah,
yeah. Go on.

Ligeia [00:52:43]

What about if the other is God? He just comes to gonna look at you.

Leraje
[00:52:49] Oh,
uh, no.

Ligeia [00:52:50]

Gives you a few things, and then he goes away and he keeps the freaking puppet going.

Leraje [00:52:55]

We have to talk about that now?

Ligeia [00:52:56]

Yeah, I just. Maybe it's stupid. I don't know. Wrap it up.

Leraje [00:53:00]

It's not stupid, people.

Ligeia [00:53:02]

Read it. Read it and let us know what you think. And I think there is a movie coming out. So maybe if the movie is out, I think we will. We will make a little episode about that, I think. I can't wait.

Leraje [00:53:17]

It's the same production company that did Coraline, isn't it?

Ligeia
[00:53:20]
Yes.

Leraje [00:53:21]

Yeah. So it should be good.

Ligeia [00:53:23]

I don't know the release date, if it's even this year.

Leraje [00:53:25]

No, I don't. I've got no idea.

Ligeia [00:53:26]

I don't. I don't know. But. So it's animated.

Leraje

[00:53:30]

Yes.

Ligeia [00:53:30]

Is that the word? Yes?

Leraje

[00:53:31]

Yeah.

Ligeia [00:53:32]

Yeah. So I can't wait. And I would like to then maybe compare the book and see how it goes.

Leraje [00:53:39]

Okay. So that's it for this episode. And we'll, uh, catch you again with another book that we both love or another book which is new to us. Uh, until then, hail Satan.

Ligeia

[00:53:52]

Hail Satan.

Leraje [00:53:54]

And we'll see you next time.

[Outro music]