

The Devil's Library Episode 13 – “Songs of a Dead Dreamer and Grimscribe – Part 6”

[Spotify info from Lithos]

[Intro Music]

Leraje

Welcome to, uh, another bonus edition of the Devil's Library. I'm, uh, Leraje. Hail Satan. With me tonight, I've got Ligeia.

Ligeia

Hail Satan.

Leraje

And returning for this Ligotti themed episode, Chris from Buzzard. All right, how you doing?

Chris

Great. Howdy, Satan. Make it a folky doom.

Leraje

Folky, folky Satan. There we go, that's good. And we are going to be doing three more short stories from that harbinger of Happiness, Thomas Ligotti. Um, but this time we've tried. Is that not good Harbinger of Happiness?

Ligeia

It's correct this time.

Leraje

Instead of choosing three completely random stories, we've chosen three from a particular trilogy within Songs of a Dead Dreamer. The trilogy is called somebody help me.

Chris

Nyctalops Trilogy.

Leraje

That's right, the Nyctalops trilogy.

Chris

Nyctalops trilogy, yeah.

Leraje

So the three stories are The Chymist. Drink to me Only with Labyrinthine Eyes, and Eyes of the Lynx. We'll start off with the chemist spelled with a Y. The chymist, the chemist. So basic story of this short story is Simon is at a bar when he solicits Rosemary, a sex worker. Simon is a chemist and carries with him a brief case that Rosemary convinces herself is full of killer dope.

They go back to her place and she finds out she wasn't wrong. That's the basic of the basis of the story. Uh, what did we think of this one? For me, never having read much Ligotti before these stories, this one was a bit of a departure and set the tone for the other two.

Chris

Yeah, apparently this was his first professionally published story.

Leraje

Really?

Chris

Yes, his breakthrough in 1981 and it was published in that. In a, uh, Lovecraft zine, Nyctalops. So, which I will get to the themes later, I think, after we do the three stories. But, uh, that starts to get us a clue into the Nyctalops angle.

Leraje

But yeah, you can see the skeleton of his later short story writing career. Just in this short story, there's the kind of the theme like we talked about last time you were on Chris, those themes of stinky rot and decay. And, uh, there's. At one point Simon says this whole city is most certainly a pitiful corpse, while the neighbourhood outside the walls of this bar has the distinction of being the withering heart of the deceased.

And I am a devoted student of its anatomy. A pathologist, after a fashion, with an eye for necrosis that, uh, others overlook. I mean, that's just pure Ligotti.

Chris

Yeah, yeah, because it's a recognisable Trope, kind of. When we talk about the Frolic before.

Ligeia

Ah.

Chris

Uh, it's a serial killer from his monologue from a deranged killer, uh, who is not. Maybe has. He has supernatural powers. I definitely Eyes of the Lynx does, but which in a way is like you're inhabiting the John Doe serial killer frolic from that Persona's point of view, this demonic, supernatural entity who's a serial killer.

But, yeah, a monologue from his point of view and you immediately know this is not going to end well. Like, as you said.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Chris

Just the patronising tone. The. You know, the patronising tone of it.

Ligeia

The calmness of the person. The narrator is just so terrifying to me. M. And in the whole story, she didn't say a word.

Leraje

No. It's a very unique method of narration. It's kind of like you hear. It's him having a conversation with other people, but you never hear them. Which, again, speaks to the character's kind of like ego, I think. And, uh, it's kind of like arrogance.

Chris

Yeah. And that. Like, the theme of this and Eyes of the Lynx is Lynx is the killer who absorbs his victims. Like, the identity becomes dissolved and decayed, which is the fate of Rose. He. She becomes his dream. And from the very beginning.

Ligeia

Rose Bud.

Chris

Yeah.

Ligeia

At some point he kept. He kept, like, playing with her name.

Chris
Yeah. Like, let me tell you, Sub Rosa.

Ligeia
Oh, yes. Rosemary Mary. Rose. I'm, um. Like.

Chris
And the last line now. Rub Rose bloom.

Ligeia
Yes, yes.

Chris
Into here. Yeah.

Leraje
Because Decay. Decay has its own bloom.

Chris
Yes, exactly.

Ligeia
Yeah. So we can. We can sense the theme of domination in this story. It was mostly like the body, um,

Chris
concern, I think, utter negation of her identity from the beginning. Yeah.

Ligeia
Yeah. But M. I don't know why I. It was not his most terrifying piece, but because she didn't speak, I was just like, no, I don't know. Why. I don't know. Maybe because I'm a woman. I couldn't tell if she's already dragged. Like, at what point was she feeling uneasy? And he was just talking like she's talking back and she wasn't able to.

I don't know. I don't know. It was just so bad.

Leraje
Yeah. I mean, she's. She has a. A job that is kind of like, puts her at a high level of risk from men anyway. So. I mean, this.

Ligeia
When are you not at risk? Well, like, I just take a walk and it's.

Chris
Yeah.

Ligeia
It's just. Yeah.

Chris
But because he has this borderline supernatural power and like, the link serial killer definitely does. You sense he has this seduction power, like, like you said, the domination. But his force of personality, uh, his, his disdainful, condescending tone that completely again absorbs her identity. Just like the eyes of the lynx killer literally absorbs his victims.

I know, like a lot of horror stories. You, you, you're screaming at the future victim, like can't you see the signs? Like get out of there. Right. But, but here you, you're almost swept up by his narration because we only get his point of view, his facility with language. Yeah, he sings a seductive song like he's

got the briefcase, which is this totem of power and respectability which she's attracted to.

It's like this guy must be safe. He has the symbols of a safe guy.

Leraje
Respectability.

Chris
Yeah, M. Yeah, exactly.

Ligeia
He's got the confidence.

Chris
Yeah.

Ligeia
Mhm.

Leraje
I um, mean this idea of him M Of possibly being a supernatural. So the character Simon explains that when he was uh. Does he say a sophomore in college or a freshman? I can't remember what he said.

Chris
Yeah, he got a B.S. right?

Leraje
Yeah.

Chris
Age 12, college degree at age 12. He's got a genius. Right.

Leraje
But he described an instance when the chemistry of his brain or his mind changed and he said it was scary at first and then became better. And he introduces this idea of the grand chemists who are these kind of like faceless entities. It's very ambiguous.

Chris
Mhm.

Leraje
Is this idea of his brain chemistry changing when he was young, is that an instance of mental illness? Or is that him becoming possessed by. Literally possessed by actual great chemists? It's very ambiguous. This could be a madman killer or it could be a supernaturally possessed killer. Either is a viable option.

Ligeia
Supernatural. Supernatural. Psychopath.

Leraje
Yeah.

Chris
Or somehow magical.

Leraje
Both. Yeah.

Chris

Well you said it was a little bit ambiguous, but the spelling, uh, itself chemist is an archaic spelling of chemist which refers to the bridge, like an alchemist and which is the bridge to modern chemistry. So just the spelling speaks to that moment of transformation from magic to science. So he's half science, half magic.

Leraje
M. Mm.

Ligeia
Mhm. I did not realise that. That's such a good point. I like that.

Leraje
Okay, uh, well, we're going to wrap that one up. What you didn't hear is that we had some kind of Zencastr based timeout. We didn't lose the audio as you know, because you just listened to it. But ah, yeah, something happened. Anyway, so I think we just about talked that particular story to.

To death as a single story. Anyway, so ah Ligeia?

Ligeia
Yeah. So the second story is called Drink to me Only with Labyrinthine Eyes. If I'm not saying it right, who cares? This story was um. I would try to be short. There is a wealthy audience of people and there is a hypnotist and everybody in this room is hypnotised. We learn. So the, the biggest moment of this evening or this event or whatever this is, there is this absolutely gorgeous uh, angelic woman creature.

And the hypnotist is like performing theatrical magic, whatever tricks with her which are sort of like. Some of them are just like haha, uh, funny or interesting. Some of them are quite violent and the audience reacts to this and like the, the like the climax of, of the evening is when he makes them see this, this beautiful woman as, as actually becoming an angel or something supernatural.

Something that is absolutely out of this world. And like the story actually just like describes how everybody is absolutely. I don't know what the word is. Entranced. And they want to be close to her. They are admiring, admiring her and she doesn't really react. She's like just graceful and you know, moving around and cloppy clop with her heels, you know.

And like everybody's looking at her and they want to dance with her and just she's like there, you know. It was to me that part was just so incredibly funny. But the, the ending of the story is one of the most like, I would say like simple. This story is quite simple, I think.

I don't know why I chose it but it says a lot, you know, so. So it ends with him like sneaking out of the house. The hypnosis is still on, on everybody, everybody that and he, he leaves and then he rings a bell which is supposed to. And it does uh, end this spell.

And we learn that the woman actually is not this angelic creature. She's a corpse, Rotting, awful, stinky corpse of a person. And these people were just made to believe or they wanted to be made to believe. Yeah.

Chris
Mhm.

Ligeia
So. So this is how I understood like maybe we are just willing to not see the rot in.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia

When we decide to see the beauty, it's the beauty. So what did you think about this story?

Leraje

It's like you say it was quite a kind of like uh. It was a pretty. By the cottage standards it was a pretty straightforward story. But again there is these, the themes, just like in the Chemist. Um, theme. You know, there's a man controlling a woman against her will. It just so happens in this case she's dead.

But you know this right.

Chris

Her identity is already erased. Right.

Leraje

Um. And it's kind of like there's this very disquieting tone that he uses. I mean, it's just contempt for everything. Uh, just rolls off everything that he says and everything that he does. It's kind of a.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

The only person in that whole story that he actually shows some kind of like, respect for is a small child.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Who. Who he is at pains to tell. To tell. To tell us that children are less easy to hypnotise than adults.

Ligeia

Mhm. Because he. He's there and he's like asking the little boy, like, do you like her? And he's like, she's quite. What did he say?

Chris

Yucky.

Ligeia

Yucky.

Chris

She's yucky.

Ligeia

She's like, yucky.

Chris

Yeah.

Ligeia

I love him.

Chris

Yeah.

Leraje

It's a disturbing story rather than a horrifying one, I think.

Ligeia

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's simple to like, really quickly read through. It's not like some of the Ligotti stories like Chris, you will have the. The one of them. I think this was just like a classical gothic.

Chris

Yeah.

Ligeia

Atmospheric, um, short story. About again. Domination. But maybe a domination. Or, um. How the mind can be. What is it? Like pro. Programmable.

Chris

Yeah. Right.

Ligeia

Easily just not. Not existent.

Chris

Yeah.

Ligeia

No, like not there.

Leraje

It's like you said a few minutes ago. L. Though you do wonder how much of it is them being the audience that is being controlled versus them wanting to be.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Control. That kind of desire to see beauty in something that isn't necessarily there.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Yeah.

Chris

It takes two to tango.

Leraje

Exactly.

Chris

For the hypnosis to work. Sure.

Ligeia

I've never tried. I don't know if I believe in it. But how difficult it must be to hypnotise, uh, like a room full of people for such a long time. You know, like, come on. Ah, I don't know.

Leraje

Yeah. And in that sense it's not a supernatural story. But on the other hand, he's quite clearly a necromancer because he's managed to raise the dead. Literally.

Chris

Yeah. There's a reanimate. Well, like you're saying about him having contempt for the audience. I think it's true of all these stories. Ligotti's not concerned about the motivations of a serial kill. Like most horror stories dive

into the psychology of it. That's not his concern. Here is why? Just because they're malevolent demonic beings and just because the nature of the universe is to produce these dynamic demonic entities that want to destroy you.

Ligeia

Yeah. The pessimism.

Chris

Yeah.

Ligeia

It's it's already here. Like if you can be bad, you will be bad.

Chris

Yeah. And like you say it's kind of straightforward in the sense that it has a punchline, like there's a reveal at the end, like it was a corpse all along. That was. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's it. It's a powerful story in that sense.

Leraje

And yeah, yeah, it's, it's a story that uh, I mean m. Most of the time when they got you, like you say Chris, I mean, you know, people's, his protagonists and his antagonists have very clear motivations in that they just don't give a shit. Uh, they're just being evil for the sake of being evil.

But you kind of like wonder all the way through this story. I'm thinking to myself that it's kind of like who's the target here? Is it everybody? Is it both the woman that he's raised from the dead and ah, the audience? Or is it the audience? Because it's kind of like this huge, it's presented like this kind of like huge practical joke.

Chris

Right, right thing. Like a prank.

Leraje

Yeah, yeah. Because he's not actually getting anything out of it. He's not trying to rob these people or anything like that.

Chris

Uh, it's, it's like I just verge. If you've been punked. Gotcha.

Ligeia

Yeah, yeah. I think it's a, uh, mockery of this society or.

Chris

Mhm.

Ligeia

This group of people. And yeah, he's saying a lot.

Leraje

It's a good story. I did enjoy it, but uh, in a way it was kind of like. It's the one that left me the most uneasy and I don't really know why.

Ligeia

Yeah, okay.

Leraje

Yeah, it was just sort of like, God. I mean, they're all. I mean it's Ligotti, so they're all pretty sort of like, oh God, that's not great. But this one was, I don't know why, it's the most straightforward and yet for me it's the most unsettling one. It's like that one we read a while ago.

I'd say that one about the guy who lived in the room and he went out for a meal in that bar, pub, whatever it was, uh, and you never quite. It was a doctor somebody and the artist. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ligeia
Sketching. Yeah, yeah. Like that one.

Leraje
Yeah. And it's such a kind of like random. Why that story in particular affected me so much, I don't know. And I don't know why this one did, but it really did. Mhm.

Chris
I think it's very Poe-esque. This. I know a lot of people compare to Poe, but this at smacks of, you know, the mask of red death in the sense that there's this, this. This frivolous party with the 1% that are blind to the.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
The decay reality that they're actually all have crushes on. On a corpse.

Leraje
Yeah.

Chris
And, uh, and her glamour. I. Glamour, uh, has always been an interested word to me. Word for me. She's glamorous. Right. And glamour comes from the Middle Ages. It was like a magical spell. Right, Right. And so she's glamorous, she's casting a spell or he's casting a spell through her.

Ligeia
Through her.

Chris
And they're attracted to her glamour. Um, in a superficial sense. They don't respond to him elevating her as an angel or something celestial and. But they do. They. They think she's celebrity, you know, ah, she's beautiful and. But like you said, it's almost like a prank. And maybe that's part of what's disturbing about.

He takes this glee and. What's his end game? Yeah, just. He says at one point he just wanted them all to touch her. They. His end game was to have all. Basically have the 1% all kiss dance.

Ligeia
And uh, this is the ending of the story. Like now they all have that like dirt and. And the stinky.

Chris
The goo. He says goo.

Ligeia
Right on them. On their clothes, on their fingers. And like now they will see and have a look like what. But also what was interesting that they. The audience reacted mostly to the violent.

Chris
Yeah.

Ligeia
Part of the event. Like when she. She was folded into a little box and he was. What was he doing to her?

Leraje
Poking her and breaking apart.

Chris
Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia
Like, what are you doing? Hi, girl.

Leraje
M. Is this Thomas Ligotti exercising Class Warfare?

Chris
Um, yeah, it is a little bit, yes. Uh, yeah, it's got that P.T. Barnum thing too. Like you say you want. Want violence. I'll show you violence. But what the audience wanted to see was the thrill of narrowly escaping it and possibly seeing, uh, uh, carnage. But, uh, in the end, he's showing the reality.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
And Anthony, I love his choice for the last word. The word in the story is like, you'll be amazed. Yeah, Yeah. I think all of these stories have a mic drop at the end. Like, that was a. That was a nice.

Ligeia
Yeah. With this one I absolutely knew where it's gonna end. So it was predictable, but I still enjoyed it.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
The first one and the last one, I.

Chris
They're more surreal. And they're more. Yeah, they're. They're slipperier.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
Speaking of goo.

Leraje
Speaking of you. Okay, so yeah, yeah, let's talk about Eyes of the Lynx then. Chris, tell us about Eyes of the Lynx.

Chris
Well. Well, the capsule review, the summary. Right. So there's a supernatural serial killer who targets goth girls. And so he goes to a brothel like a BDSM broth. He enlists the services of the hostess immediately. Apparently had had her targeted from before. But he's left the body count of goth, uh, girls. Uh, he takes a tour and can view the transgressions and all the depravity, but he views it with a certain boredom and detachment because he's.

Again, he's demonic. He's. He's seen it all and done it all. This is nothing. And once his role play with the hostess commences, they enter a room. He basically the punchline here and is quite a literal body horror image. He reveals his demonic powers by unzipping his body to absorb her into hers.

Into his. Among all the other victims which are incarcerated in a very literal fashion. It's not like in the. In the Chemist where the. She's dissolving into his dream and it's suggested that the next day the police are going to find a mutilated dissolved corpse.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
But here to the point where I think this is wonderfully kind of comic image is after he's absorbed.

Leraje
Yeah.

Chris
Her into his body, zipped him up. She tries to escape and her arm shoots out.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
And a homeless guy comes up and shakes her hand.

Ligeia
Yes.

Chris
That belongs in a like uh, a Cronenberg or Lynch film.

Leraje
It does, it does. Again, it's another odd one really, but I can't imagine another author who could write something like that story and it be quite as authentic as it. Because I think in lesser hands it could, it could turn into total comedy all the way through and not. And not be disturbing at all.

Ligeia
Mhm.

Leraje
And it is disturbing. But he still, he does play with the comedy aspect of it, but it never kind of like becomes the focus of the story.

Chris
He's always adjusting the amount of surrealism because there's some parts are quite like disorienting. Like when he enters that role play where she's the wicked witch and he's the puppet, he starts writing it in the third person as if he's witnessing it. And it's a very blurred line between him reporting his experiences.

Leraje
Yes.

Chris
The willing participant in his S and M domination fantasy, but him also describing it in the third person and then when he finally reveals his, his knowledge of her interior mind because he's been able to read her dreams and then she finally pulls down her hood and said, I'm going to call security and get you out of here, all of a sudden he gets real.

Like actually this is happening in the real world. Uh, and there's also moments when he's touring around the brothel, he can see through doors, uh, he can see uh, all the scenarios and they're described in that. Yeah, this verse that right

on the edge of. Somewhat surrealistic but grounded, like this is a thing that's actually happening.

But he's describing it in these kind of fantastical terms.

Ligeia
Mhm.

Chris
Very, very descriptive.

Leraje
So that's, that's the three stories taken individually. I mean he put them together as a trilogy and it's not hard sort of like detect the commonality between the three of them. And they, they all touch on these, these themes of misogyny and um, control and rot and decay as a kind of like internal personal thing as opposed to.

In other stories of his. It's been about the landscape that might be rotting or decaying or the environment, but in this, it's kind of like the internal process. It feels like an internal process to,

Ligeia
to these people and three types of control. Yeah, I was saying like control of the body, then the perception and then the entire consciousness or reality. So it was actually this is why I suggested to take this as a one unit, this trilogy, because I think it makes sense.

Leraje
Yeah, it does.

Chris
And the idea of vision and darkness, you know. Oh yeah, right, yeah. Nyctalops, uh, night blindness. Um, though the Clark Ashton Smith poem Nyctalops is about what you see in the darkness and it's, it's kind of a description and a list of all of these mythical, um, fantastical and horrific creatures that lurk in the darkness.

And these stories are all about three different creatures that lurk, uh, in the night. Uh, to. To absorb you.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
I want to say one other thing because I was starting to think about the links because lynx is, you know, they're very symbolic creature of keen sight. And I started thinking about that with the idea of, uh, night blindness. And you know, the lynx is often a symbol of clairvoyance, uh, supernatural clairvoyance because the real lynx has extremely keen vision as a hunter.

And these are. All. These villains are all hunters in a sense. And I also did a little dive into the etymology. I didn't realise it. So there's the Greek, um, figure. Lynceus is where Lynx comes from. And the idea of being lynx eyed and having the ability to see in the dark. So he was a Greek mythological figure who could see in the dark.

And also something else I didn't know is that the lynx, uh, constellation is aptly called that because it's so hard to see. Like the stars are so distant that only a lynx could see them.

Ligeia
Wow, that's good.

Leraje

I did. I mean, on that. That note about, uh, entomology of things. The first story, the one I read was the one I proposed. It's spelt chymist. So C H Y M M I S T, which is, like we said here, is an obsolete version of the word chemist, but chemist. I did wonder, uh.

Because the story is about the bodies that change, in a way. And I wondered if that chi, chimaera, that kind of. If there's. If he deliberately chose the word chemist rather than chemist to sort of like suggest that link. I don't know, maybe that's putting a bit too much on the simple word.

But I did wonder.

Chris

I wouldn't put it past him especially that story in particular has so, so many puns in it. Like we're saying before, he's always punning on Rose and like she says. And then he says BS and then refers to the BS that he got as in college degree. There's so much wordplay in that story in particular.

I wouldn't be surprised if that was front of mind.

Ligeia

Yeah. And I was thinking about the labyrinthine eyes as well. I don't know if you guys, uh, have, uh, your connections. Like, why would that make sense? But then I was thinking maybe it's how in the. All. All these stories he's using certain spaces that are like. Like a labyrinth, like a maze of not just the rooms but the consciousness and the.

The, you know, the chain house, or was it called chains?

Chris

Yeah, the house of chains. That's very. That's a great point. Yeah. Very much like a maze. Yeah.

Ligeia

So that was cool. Confusing. There was up and down and stairwell and I don't know what. So, uh. And even in, uh. The story that my story, he was going through the house and he was looking for the, Like a, uh. Secret or whatever exit or. Is there anything else about the labyrinthine eyes?

Is that something you use in English?

Leraje

Not really like that. I'm not in that poetical, but I think, you know, I think you're right in the way that you suggested it. I mean, another way to look at it was, you know, there was a multitude of people that he'd hypnotised in that story. And so like a labyrinth of different possibilities of each of these people in that crowd.

Seeing that the dead girl, who is never named by the way, throughout the whole story, all of them might have seen her, uh, in a slightly different way. So there's possibly a labyrinth.

Ligeia

Oh, that's interesting.

Leraje

Of ways of viewing that girl. I mean, it's a possibility.

Ligeia

Well, that's interesting, right? Mhm.

Leraje

But they such an. I think. I know I said that one story was disquieting to me that the middle one. But I think these three taken together. I'm so glad you suggested it, Ligeia, that we did it like this way as a set of trilogy.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
Because I think what we've did before is fine. Taking random stories. That's great. Nothing wrong with that. But doing this has heightened the impact of uh, the. Of all of them, I think because they're all good individual stories. But taken together as that trilogy, it does elevate.

Ligeia
It's Ligotti. I just thought. Because maybe we should have been doing it like this the whole time.

Leraje
Maybe we should. Yeah.

Ligeia
They are in groups for a reason. And we are like, ah, yeah. I was choosing like.

Leraje
Yeah, I think that was me. Because I was completely ignorant of the whole thing. I didn't really.

Ligeia
It's good, it's good. But with this one, I don't know why I was like. Because I. I had a look in the uh. Like what. What that word means. Nyctalops. And I'm thinking maybe this would make sense. And it's three of us tonight, so.

Chris
Yeah. But this like mirrors the organic way we discover authors. We discover stories in isolation. And then at some point we tackle a group where there's a collection of stories and we see them as a piece of. Or we do what we did tonight and take loosely connected stories, uh, in a trilogy, um, and see them as a whole.

And they have a certain cumulative effect without having an explicit shared world, um, or through line. But for sure. And I think these three are, uh. Kind of have a. They have a punchline too. So it's like, boom. M. You know, she takes a drug dissolved into his dreams.

Leraje
Boom.

Chris
She was a corpse all along. And at the end unzip my body and. Which is super creepy. And they all have this erotic tone. And there's very much misogyny and violence against women, which is not a common concern for him. But they're more a means to the end of exploring these themes of domination and Cosmic decay.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
M. I mean, the decay is. Is present in each of those stories as well. There's the decay, uh. That quote I gave earlier in the Chemist about the decay of the city and how Simon liked to sort of, like, he really appreciates the changes that decay brings on. And then, of course, in the second story, she's fucking dead.

So, you know, she's literally decaying.

Chris
Yeah, yeah.

Leraje
And then in the third story is that, uh. There's the kind of. I don't know, the decay in that one seemed to be more about the loss, the decay of that, uh. Of the girl's autonomy through that.

Ligeia
Ah.

Leraje
The sort of, like, invasion of her mind, of her dreams. It's. That seemed to be more.

Chris
Yeah. And the dissolution and depravity that he feasts on, um, and then digests, as we learn at the end.

Leraje
Yeah. He, ah, literally eats her in a way.

Chris
Yeah.

Leraje
They.

Chris
They. He. Though he doesn't use a digestive analogy. They melt like icicles or something. Like, they. They melt into him. Um, and then come next season, he needs to replenish.

Ligeia
Yeah. Ah.

Chris
What the Is this thing?

Ligeia
Well, uh, yeah, I had to read it the last.

Chris
Yeah.

Ligeia
Few paragraphs I had to reread. I'm like, hi. Where are the zip. Now? Like, what. What are we zipping? We are. Which room? And then they're like, okay. People doing things. I'm, like, enjoying it. Pictures going on in my head. And I'm like, zip.

Chris
Yeah, yeah, okay.

Ligeia
That's new listening. But it was not pleasant.

Leraje
But that in itself, the. The act of unzipping. That's a very male thing.

Chris
Well, exactly.

Ligeia
I thought so.

Chris
It wasn't until I think the second or third reading that I saw at the beginning, it's like the second page, it was like he wanted to consume her right there. And he says something.

Ligeia
Yes.

Chris
I wanted to unzip right then.

Ligeia
And of course, course, I could have. I could have. He said that. Like, I could have. I had to go back to that.

Chris
Like, yeah.

Ligeia
What are you thinking? Like, yeah, like, I could have, but I wanted to have some fun, like. Right.

Chris
But then you realise.

Ligeia
Yeah, thank you.

Chris
But then you realise it's not what you thought it was. It wasn't that kind of zipping. You know, he's actually. His body is some kind.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Chris
Uh, interdimensional.

Ligeia
Yeah. He wouldn't do the small zipping like normal people. He would wait for the big zip.

Chris
Yeah. His entire. It started here, down his rib cage,

Ligeia
neck to scrotum, you know, like, climb in in that third story.

Leraje
Doesn't. I mean, I might have imagined this, but doesn't he talk about the labyrinthine chambers of his heart at one point?

Chris
Yeah, there's a few echoes. Yeah, you're right. Yeah.

Ligeia
He likes.

Chris
I really recommend experiencing this story if you. You folks are familiar with the Penguin, uh, audiobook version read by Jon Padgett. Jon Padgett, who's

another weird fiction author who's written some real classics. Um, and also, ah, a friend and associate of, Of Ligotti. And he read the audiobook through Penguin for this edition and I listened to them in preparation for this.

Um, and nobody knows Ligotti like Padgett does. And he reads them and renders them, uh, to perfection, both dramatically, um, but also in a deeper understanding.

Ligeia

Like you can tell he understands what.

Chris

Yeah, so he kneels, for example, in the Chemist. He, he really nails that voice, that self. Arrogant, patronising, contemptuous, and relishes the word play. Um, but when it comes time to get deeper, he can really. He can really pull out the thespian stops and make the, the drama work when he, when he hits the punchline, like Bloom at the end or.

You'll be amazed. Yeah, Rose, my Rose bloom. He also runs Grimscribe Press. Grimscribe, named after Ligotti, publishes a lot of great weird fiction and horror authors. I pretty much got every buy everything they put out, including a literary journal called the Vastarian, which for a few years, another Ligotti reference. Um, he also does the readings of Ligotti stories for cadaver records for that vinyl spoken word label.

Leraje

Okay.

Chris

They're. Yeah, they're phenomenal.

Leraje

Okay, um, I think we're just about talked out then on these three stories.

Chris

Ah, is that a dare? Because we could. I could probably go all night, but it's a labyrinth.

Ligeia

We can go forever.

Chris

It's Memorial Day weekend.

Leraje

Yes.

Chris

Uh, I could go do a three day bender. Let's just do all the.

Leraje

A day.

Ligeia

Yeah, A weekend recording. Like we should just meet

Leraje

how to lose listeners. It won't easy go do a whole day.

Chris

No, that's, that's great.

Leraje

Right, okay. So that was, uh, the Nyctalops. Am I saying that right? Nyctalops?

Ligeia
Yep.

Leraje
That was the Nyctalops trilogy from Songs of a Dead Dreamer.

Chris
Ah.

Leraje
Uh, by Thomas Ligotti. We will be back with some more Ligotti at some point, I suspect, because there's still loads.

Chris
So, so much more.

Leraje
So much more.

Chris
So much, so much more.

Leraje
Okay. Um. I've been li- I've been Ligeia? Fucking hell. I'm gonna try that one again. So, yeah, I'm assuming your identity. I've become a Legotian.

Chris
You're absorbing her already? You're becoming a Ligotti anti hero right now.

Leraje
Oh, God.

Ligeia
Sorry, Leraje.

Leraje
Sorry.

Ligeia
You're free again.

Leraje
I'll try. I'll try again. Uh, I've been Leraje. Hail Satan. Chris. Uh, thank you for coming on.

Chris
Um, anytime.

Leraje
And, uh, Ligeia?

Ligeia
Hail Satan.

[Outro music]