

The Devil's Library Episode 15.5 – “Books of Blood – Part 1”

[Intro Music]

Leraje

Welcome to another edition of The Devil's Library. This time it's just my dear friend Ligeia and I. Hail Satan!

Ligeia

Hail Satan!

Leraje

You all right?

Ligeia

I'm okay, yes.

Leraje

Good. Today we're going to take a small diversion from our usual Ligotti fare, and we're gonna look at 3 different stories from Clive Barker's Books of Blood series of short stories. There's 6 compendiums of stories at all. I seem to recall they were released in books 1 to 3 first, and then a few years later, 4 to 6.

I think that's true. I'm not 100% sure. I've read them before. You haven't read them before. Is that right?

Ligeia

Yeah. You have the advantage here. Very fair. Very fair of you. But yes, it's my first read.

Leraje

Well, you've got the Ligotti advantage.

Ligeia

I've got— yes. Now it sounds more fair. Sorry, I forgot.

Leraje

And we're sticklers for fairness here. That's the most important thing.

Ligeia

Yes. Oh, I'm sorry.

Leraje

So as we usually do, we chose 3 stories. Ligeia chose one, I chose one, and we chose one at random. What was your story, Ligeia? Which one did you choose?

Ligeia

So I used my usual key. What name do I like here? Right, fair enough. So, the story's name is Hell's Event.

Leraje

Okay.

Ligeia

Yay!

Leraje

And I chose Jacqueline S., Her Will and Testament, which coincidentally comes immediately after Hell's Event in the series.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
And the random one we had was Revelations.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Okay, uh, should we start with Hell's Event?

Ligeia
Let's do it.

Leraje
What did you think?

Ligeia
Yeah. So this story, the plot. Okay. I will set the scene.

Leraje
Okay.

Ligeia
We are in London.

Leraje
Yes.

Ligeia
I forgot if there was like a year mentioned, maybe, probably. And there is a marathon going on.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Which is like a charity event. Uh, so we have, um, few names here, like people who are actually running. And it's quite a lot like a slowly, slowly burning start.

Leraje
Mm-hmm.

Ligeia
A few pages, we just like have names and, and the commentators are say- saying something like, who is where, who is first, and I don't know. So that part of the story was for me a little bit boring. I'm not gonna lie. And I, because it was the first one, I'm like, what am I gonna do with this book?

Leraje
Did you think, oh no, what story are you reading?

Ligeia
Yes. Because it's like, and it like even felt a little bit like older times. Yeah. I don't know, '50s, '60s. That's how I imagine it. I don't know if that was true. And you know, like, okay, people run marathons, but is it really so much fun to watch it on TV or listen to a commentator?

I don't know. It's not for me. Yeah.

Leraje
People do, don't they?

Ligeia
I know, I know they do. So we followed this and I was looking forward to see where we are going with this. And then it happened. So basically this one runner—

Leraje
Maybe we should tell our listeners why the race is important from a kind of like theological—

Ligeia
Okay. So we jump straight there. So Barker uses this sporting event, which is sort of like an ordinary thing. It's nothing that unusual. People do this all the time, you know. And he uses this event to present a really huge, like, extraordinary battle that is going on underneath the whole thing. So what that means is there is a runner that is from hell.

Leraje
Mm-hmm.

Ligeia
It's a demon. And the idea is that if, if this demon wins, then hell is gonna reign on earth or maybe in the universe, whatever that is. So it is kind of funny and unique and bizarre that he chooses such an ordinary thing. It's not a, you know, like—

Leraje
No, it's not a titanic war.

Ligeia
Cthulhu, whatever. Yeah. It's like, ooh, this is, it's like people running and like, yeah, commentators. And now we have some media. people, there are taxis, there's just like normal London streets, normal, normal day, people going around and shops. And so, and now we have this situation. You can help me with how it actually continues.

Leraje
There's about 5 or 6 runners in this race, one of whom is a representative of Hell.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
As Ligeia said, if the Hell Runner wins, it's Hell ascends to the earthly plane, and, you know, that's it. If any of the other runners win, then things carry on as normal.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
But the sort of like mechanism by which Barker invokes the spirit of Hell chasing the runners is, it's that kind of Lot's wife thing of if they look behind them, then they see Hell after them and it kills them, basically. So they drop out one by one, basically, until there's only 3 left at the end.

And then one of them dies on the line and the other, the slowest one wins.

Ligeia

So there are really nice descriptions of the demon and the, like, as you mentioned when we spoke before this, there is this inspiration with Dante. Yeah. That was really nice. Yeah. And the description of that room Yeah, I'm not going to spoil it, but that was really interesting. But yeah, you know which room?

Leraje
The frozen room.

Ligeia
The frozen room. Yeah.

Leraje
Yeah. I mean, it's not— I know it's kind of like a bit of a trope, the whole Dante and the Inferno and all that and pandemonium and all that. But I thought it was quite a nice different take on the way it might work.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Which was quite original. But I'm kind of sensing that maybe this story was not You weren't the biggest fan of it?

Ligeia
No, it was interesting. As I'm saying, like, I might probably remember the, the idea of that being so funny. And I understand there was a lot of layers into that. Like, it's not a stupidly badly written thing. It's, it's a well-written piece of literature. It's a good story. It just didn't really grab me because there was nothing really scary.

it was more satire style of, I don't know, dealing with this.

Leraje
Well, I remember when we were talking about it, oh, I think it was the other day we were talking about it, you and me, and you said you thought it was kind of like, um, a kind of satirical look at the influence that politics can have on—

Ligeia
Yes, that's what I think. I don't know if you saw the same thing.

Leraje
Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia
I was trying, I was really trying to sit down afterwards and think What was this about?

Leraje
What was Barker saying with this?

Ligeia
Yes. Like I, and probably I didn't get the actual answer.

Leraje
I think that's pretty close to the actual answer.

Ligeia
Yeah. Why he chose this ordinary thing to, there must be something I'm missing. That's what I'm feeling. But I wasn't intrigued enough to go back and— To really care. Yeah.

Leraje

Sorry. No, no. I agree with you, to be honest. I mean, it's, It's a fun little story, makes you smile now and then. There's a couple of good turns of phrase in it.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
But that's about it, really. At the end of the day, it's not one of his most memorable.

Ligeia
So I guess we can go to your story, maybe.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Your choice was much better. Maybe because you knew. Yes.

Leraje
I mean, I had read it a long time ago. You Satan. Satan.

Ligeia
Yeah, yeah, see?

Leraje
It is one of my favourite stories in the whole collection, Jacqueline S. It's just so unique and dark, but also it's got this rich sensuality running all the way through it. It's a very sexually open book— story, sorry. It's basically the story of a woman who has reached the end of her fucking patience with just about everything.

When we join her in the story, she's just about to kill herself.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
And she actually does make the attempt. She is found by her husband and stopped. She then goes to see a doctor. She then, after a couple of events happen to both the husband and the doctor, she decides to live her own life and sort of like goes off on her own way. So that's the basic sort of like introduction to the plot of this story.

Did you enjoy this one more?

Ligeia
Oh, I absolutely love this one. I keep enjoying it because I'm still there. It's such a, and again, as we spoke before this, we found so many metaphors that can be used in other relationship situations that sometimes you talk about. And we started to use this as an example, like, oh, you are, they are like this I don't know who from this story.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And now it's like a shortcut to understand what, what you mean. Yeah. So, yeah, that is awesome, I think.

Leraje
Well, we do that a lot anyway with all the stories that we read. I think you and I kind of do that quite a lot.

Ligeia

It means the story worked for me, maybe for us, I think, because, because if you can do that, you are actually keeping that story alive in your own world and you're using it in so many ways. Like, if you tell me now, like, oh, she was such a Jacqueline, Jacqueline, yeah, I would absolutely see that person like, oh, okay, tell me more.

Leraje

So, so you had a theory. I know you're not particularly keen on the phrase, but you sort of like said to me with a bit of a not sure I like this look on your face, you used the phrase feminine rage.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

You sort of, you're not quite 100% on board with that phrase, I take it.

Ligeia

I think it's, it has become so overused and therefore the meaning is not deep enough for me anymore. Yeah. It's like people using word psychopath or narcissist. It's like, it doesn't mean anything anymore. Everybody's a narcissist. Everybody's a psychopath. And with this, like the female rage. It exists. It can be portrayed. I think it was, but I would like to come up with something that would describe it a little bit more sophisticated.

Leraje

Yes. I think in terms of Jacqueline's story, it feels rude.

Ligeia

It feels rude to, to, to this story and how it was written and what the message is. It feels like I am taking it to this TikTok situation here. Mm-hmm. You know what I mean? Female rage. But just to explain what happened to her, that she was saved.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

But like, she was almost gone, and but then she was saved. So I understood like something happened at that moment. Probably she was dead for a while and then she came back, back, and she had the supernatural— natural— supernatural, I will say it, supernatural, uh, Yeah. Ability, which was that she could, if she focused her mind and her will, she was able to actually manipulate the flesh, the bones, the bodies, the physical bodies of basically anybody.

But we only saw males.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

I don't think there was any, and there was no woman. So this is what, because she was so unhappy with her husband and So, it felt like something in her broke, like she was not even allowed to leave on her own terms, which I'm not saying is the correct thing to do. People, please stay here.

Don't go. But in this story, it felt like even that was taken from her. Like, the control was absolutely absolute. So, the rage came in this way, like, fuck, I'm gonna Okay, let's watch now. I'm done.

Leraje

The husband and these other men were massive dicks, basically. It is hard to have any kind of, like, sympathy for their fate, really. I mean, obviously, you know, you don't kill people, but—

Ligeia

Yeah, but it was so grotesque that it wasn't really bothering me because it became just interesting. Yeah, it was an allegory.

Leraje

There's this great line that after the first death, she kills her husband by basically folding him up and turns him into what she calls a suitcase. And then she reels off this line that she's like, "this can't be my husband, he's never been as tidy as that". Yeah, I thought it was fantastic.

Like, it really made me laugh.

Ligeia

It made me also laugh. It was like horrifying. It was well written. The description of like how it was happening to his body was kind of gross. And then, then he comes up with this line like, what the hell? Okay.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

We have everything there. It's, it's, it's horror, it's body horror, it's gross, but it's also psychologically really deep.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

And then he comes up with these little moments of really like dark fucking humor. Yeah. So, ah, I love that. I really do too. That's my favourite combination.

Leraje

So I said at the start when we started talking about this particular story that there was a sensuality to it. And that really sort of like became— was introduced with the character of Oliver Vassi, who, I'm sorry, I just adored the man. I thought he was wonderful in all ways.

Ligeia

I love him. Why do you? Why do you adore him?

Leraje

He was just so good. I mean, so after Jacqueline kills her husband and after Jacqueline kills this doctor, she goes out into the world and she takes a series of lovers, and one of them is Oliver, Oliver Vassi, and he is utterly obsessed with Jacqueline in all ways. But it's never creepy, it's never stalkery, it's never— but, and he just respects her so much.

He's the only one throughout the whole story who literally, who calls her by her actual name, Jacqueline. He doesn't shorten it. She's not Jay, she's not Jackie, she's not Jack.

Ligeia

Which the other men did, yeah.

Leraje

And she didn't like, and she said she didn't like. So he, but he was the only one who did it, and he never had to be told or reminded. He just did it. I've got a couple of quotes. So this is Oliver talking about Jacqueline. "I had never met a more enchanting woman.

It was none of my business how she'd lived with Ben, what the marriage had been like, et cetera, et cetera. That was her history. I was happy to live in the present and let the past die its own death." Which is just— it's so good because it's just kind of like him saying, whatever.

Ligeia

Yeah, I'm not judging you. I don't need to know. It's important for me that you are here now and I'm ready to love you.

Leraje

And his kind of like testimony in this short story really introduced the sensuality between him and Jacqueline.

Ligeia

What do you mean by that?

Leraje

There was that— I remember you telling me when we talked about this before we started recording, there's that bit when she's asleep.

Ligeia

Like the first moment he realised that something is not completely right. Like, yeah, she was sleeping and he was— I don't remember if he couldn't sleep, or he just wanted to be awake and watch her sleep, which is a little bit creepy to me. But anyway, it is—

Leraje

It's a bit creepy, yeah.

Ligeia

Okay, but he was a good guy, so I understood that this is just him being just so happy and just enjoying that moment of like, oh, I have this beautiful woman and she's here, she's sleeping. And as he was looking at her face lovingly, thinking about her face, like, Oh, she's mine. She's here.

He started to see something was happening under her skin.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

Like some movements.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

Which really made me feel really sick. 'Cause I don't know how he described it, but it was like almost like insects.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

Oh, something crawling. Mm. I, yeah. So basically he was like, yeah, I saw that. And he was surprised, but he, didn't even question her.

Leraje

No. Through that whole passage though, which was grotesquely written by Barker, Oliver's concern was that his beloved was having a nightmare and she was upset. That was the thing that he was primarily concerned about.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje
Which is lovely.

Ligeia
So, so, so sweet.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And that was the sad thing because we know how the story ends and how Nothing good is coming out of this thing.

Leraje
So, and there's that bit shortly after that when she reveals her powers to him and she sort of like, she plucks out individual hairs from his head, but it's described so sensuously the way that she sort of like, her hold over her own power is so good she can like reach into his head.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
And just pluck out individual hairs one by one.

Ligeia
Yeah, terrifying.

Leraje
terrifying, but I don't know, maybe erotic is the wrong word, but it was somehow, it almost was the way Clive Barker wrote it.

Ligeia
It was.

Leraje
From Vassi's perspective.

Ligeia
Yeah, it was. There were moments where openly I could see that that was the aim. I thought maybe I'm just seeing it everywhere. That's possible. Because if you remember, the first folded man, or what, like mangled man, was the doctor.

Leraje
Yes.

Ligeia
Yeah, that was really interesting because I still— that was like the first moment where we were like, what is she doing? And he was disrespectful towards like what a body of a woman does and, uh, problems that—

Leraje
Oh, it was awful.

Ligeia
Yeah, it was awful. And she was thinking like, okay, so like, what, what am I gonna do to you? So she actually was changing him into a woman.

Leraje
That's right.

Ligeia

In a really grotesque, horrible way.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Well, he died obviously, but like, she was like, I'm gonna make you— you will have breasts. So I think he's back like was broken or something and his legs were falling or opening or something.

Leraje
Yeah. She gave him a really thin waist to the point that his spine and his hips—

Ligeia
Yeah. And he was still alive.

Leraje
Yeah. He survived through all this. Yeah.

Ligeia
So that was exactly what I'm trying to name that female rage. Like, oh, so you are talking like this about, you are not a female person. You don't know. You are a doctor. You learned something, but You don't know. So if I am a woman and I'm telling you this about my body that I actually am in, and you disrespect that—

Leraje
Oh, he was incredibly patronizing. He really was.

Ligeia
Absolutely awful. So that actually made me happy, what she did to him. Am I a horrible person?

Leraje
No, no, not at all. I mean, that's like I said earlier, it's very difficult to have sympathy for any of the victims, really.

Ligeia
Yeah, yeah.

Leraje
They were all terrible people.

Ligeia
And she never hurt Oliver.

Leraje
No, not once.

Ligeia
So she was not just like blindly hating all men, just the real assholes.

Leraje
Which I think is like when you said it's not quite— it is anger, but it's not quite that sort of stereotypical feminine rage because it wasn't ever indiscriminate. It wasn't ever a kind of like lashing out. But poor, you know, I mean, this relationship, this beautiful relationship was entirely one-sided, at the time anyway, and couldn't last.

Jacqueline wanted to learn to have power over her own power, so she left Oliver and took up with a rich billionaire-type CEO-type person, Titus Pennifer, because she thought, he knows how to wield power, even if it's not the same sort of power, he can teach me how to do that.

Ligeia
Mm-hmm.

Leraje
And that And he did. And it turned out that one of his employees, a guy called Lyndon, was blackmailing him because he was married. And Titus and Jacqueline were fucking. Sorry, they had an affair of the heart. Is that better?

Ligeia
Just the way you said it. I'm sorry. Well, they were. They were.

Leraje
They were. Yeah. I don't think there was any feeling in it.

Ligeia
There was a little bit of fuckage there.

Leraje
There was, yeah. So Jacqueline ends up mangling both of them too, and then she kind of like disappears from the story in the first person, and we go back to Oliver, and he's searching for Jacqueline, and he's getting increasingly desperate because he can't find her. Then he gets a— he hears a rumour that she might be in Amsterdam.

Ligeia
Where she decides to become a prostitute of sorts.

Leraje
Mm-hmm.

Ligeia
And so he knows and he wants to find her. So he's like walking and looking into these windows with these women advertising their bodies. And he, he's deciding, am I like, what am I doing? Um, and he can't, he can't walk and have sex with these people there. He just wants her. So, yeah, it's really sad, but also I love him so much more.

Yeah. Because it could have been a part of the story. It could. But he didn't. He's like, nothing. I know.

Leraje
I think from his point of view, it would have been like cheating on her.

Ligeia
Of course.

Leraje
In a strange way.

Ligeia
Yeah. Well, it would be. Yeah. Yeah.

Leraje
He was so— I mean, they weren't married, but he was absolutely wedded to her in every way that matters. I'm not— she didn't feel the same, but he definitely did.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
And I think he would've felt that doing that with going to use a sex worker would've been—

Ligeia

Yeah, he was not interested. So he finally finds her. She was in like a weird house.

Leraje

Very Liggotian setting.

Ligeia

Very, very hidden in like a silent, tiny little street. It was not between these lights of other sex businesses, but she, she was somewhere else. So that, that was really nice how we went to this darkness and there was this door and he learns that she's there in one room. And so he's told he needs to bring all his possession or like every— he needs to sell everything and bring all the money.

Leraje

Money.

Ligeia

And only then he will be allowed in be with her and he will never leave. I think he's told. Yes.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

He's told he will never leave. And this was a lie cuz she actually wanted him to be allowed in without any—

Leraje

Yes.

Ligeia

Any, any problems. But this happens, so he does it. He doesn't even think he wants to go in. And because I think he feels like, I'm gonna die anyway without her, I, I don't want to be without her. So whatever, we'll sell it and I will go in and at least I will die with her.

Leraje

I mean, it's interesting to me. We did— we talked about Bloom in a different episode and we all— that was all 4 of us, that was you, me, Pike, and Lithos— and we all said that the kind of like the obsessive nature of Ro was a bit kind of lukewarm. But just in this short story, Barker managed to generate Yes.

A million times the kind of like level of obsession in Oliver then.

Ligeia

Yeah, that is exactly like you— we— I know, I know that— I think it was me and you, we were saying like, I wish the Bloom was a little bit longer so we could get some more depth. But as you can see, it's not only that. This story was short and he was able to really bring so much depth into this relationship.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And the character of him.

Leraje

I've got another quote from Oliver which I just love this.

Ligeia

Okay.

Leraje

"She was liquid, a boundless sea in a single body, a deluge in a small room, and I will gladly drown in her if she grants me the chance." And it's just so—you're just like, oh, Oliver.

Ligeia
Okay. I feel you so much.

Leraje
I mean, it's beautiful, but it's also kind of so sad.

Ligeia
It is very sad. The whole story is sad.

Leraje
Utterly obsessed with this woman.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
But even then, if she grants me the chance, he's never, throughout the whole story, he's never forced himself on her at any point in any way. It's always been if she lets me, if she wants me to, if she grants me the chance. Do you think she loved him at the end?

Ligeia
I think she loved him all the time.

Leraje
Did she?

Ligeia
She was broken. Yeah.

Leraje
Right.

Ligeia
I think maybe that was the reason why she wants— she was trying to learn how to use the power.

Leraje
Right.

Ligeia
Maybe control it a little bit more.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
But she realized, I can't connect with people. It's done. It's like she was damaged.

Leraje
She was very damaged.

Ligeia
I saw that. It's maybe not true. I don't know. Maybe. See, you didn't see it like that.

Leraje

So, I don't know. I didn't know. I think, well, I mean, We both know you're smarter than me at stuff like this, but I didn't pick up on the fact that she might have always loved Oliver. She was never horrible to him.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
And I think she kind of liked him quite a lot, but I don't know that it ever became love for her until the— but I do think she loved him at the end. And their kind of mutual death scene was kind of like the glorious, dark, bloody, sensual climax of their relationship. When she takes both of their bodies and they just flow together to become one.

Ligeia
Yeah. I want that.

Leraje
Why is it so hot?

Ligeia
It was fucking hot.

Leraje
I mean, it's horrendous, but it's also really, really hot.

Ligeia
I mean, it was tragic, you know? So obviously it's not a pretty romantic scene of roses and candles and drinking wine. But I think it actually describes the visuals of the tragic fucking love when it's— when you have no ways of saving it, having it, living it.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
It's like, I thought it was absolutely gorgeous, the ending. And it reminded me, I hope you will not hate me for this, it just now came here, the one, like the scene in the new Nosferatu when he is with her in bed.

Leraje
And— Yes.

Ligeia
I just saw it that way.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Because there is this, like, the image of looking—

Leraje
Yeah, down.

Ligeia
From— yeah, looking down at them. I thought that picture, it was not the same story, but that's how I saw it. Because how, how he was finally at peace.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia

Both dead, but I don't know. It was gorgeous. I don't want that. I want just the hotness of that. Thank you very much. I want to still continue living, but yeah, it was fucking hot. It was, it was hotter than *The Whole Bloom*. Yes. Which I was expecting to be a little bit more because it was a sapphic novel, novella.

So I thought, hmm, I will feel something. And this story did make me feel a lot. Yes.

Leraje

Well, yeah, I mean, there was more emotion packed into this short story than—yes, more genuine emotion, maybe.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

And maybe it's not fair to compare a writer to someone who's as good a writer as Clive Barker.

Ligeia

Of course it's not. But I mean, we are not comparing it to, you know, gain anything for anybody. No, it's just because it's maybe because it's fresh in my mind. I know this was a topic that we talked about. Yeah, I did, because I always have to come up with the sensual stuff.

So yes. Yeah. Anything else?

Leraje

No, I think that's, uh, I think that's pretty much it, isn't it? Did you want to talk about anything else to do with that story?

Ligeia

I don't have anything.

Leraje

No, my notes are done as well. Right. So the 3rd, uh, story that we chose from *The Books of Blood* was *Revelation*. Would you like to tell us a little bit about it?

Ligeia

So I think this story was interesting. Still, the story about Jacqueline was my favourite out of, out of these 3, but this one was entertaining in a way. Mm—hmm. Uh, I think I would, if I have to just say one sentence, I think it was interesting because the, the villains of the story were not the ghosts.

We have ghosts and we have people in the story. And usually it's the ghosts that are the villains of the story. Like they are haunting places and they are being bad. They are, you know, people are frightened. They're trying to escape. This is not that.

Leraje

No.

Ligeia

So we have a few characters. I don't remember all the names. I will just say there is this Uh, married couple. It's Virginia and she's married to, uh, evangelist. Is it that like a pastor? I'm not sure what the difference is. Like something like that.

Leraje

I think he was one of those American—

Ligeia

Television.

Leraje
Who go around.

Ligeia
Yeah. Preacher. I'm not very sure what they do.

Leraje
They sort of go from state to state.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
Sort of do.

Ligeia
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They were actually on their way through the states. And so he was very famous and obsessed with this religious preaching.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And she travelled with him because they were actually showing this face of a good marriage. And of course it was helping him to be more famous and seen as a good man, a family man, if you want.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And so They come, like, they, they, um, make this little stop for one night in the motel because Virginia is not feeling that great. So they stop and there are other people with them. I forget. I think it's like, uh—

Leraje
There's another guy, isn't there, who's kind of a driver?

Ligeia
A guy. I can't remember his name for the—

Leraje
Is it Earl, maybe?

Ligeia
Oh yeah, Earl. Earl. I guess it's a weird name for me. It doesn't sound the same. Okay. That guy.

Leraje
What does it sound like when you read it in your head?

Ligeia
No, it's Earl, but every time I say it, it sounds different. So it's like, maybe not Earl. It sounds like a noise you make, like you're upset, like a little cat, like Earl. Sorry, everybody. If your name is Earl, I'm so sorry. It's a beautiful name. It's just me being me. Yeah, so this guy is also there.

And anybody else? I don't think so. And so they stop, stop here. And we see like, introduction to this relationship they have. So he is a controlling bastard.

Leraje
Hmm.

Ligeia

He controls everything about Virginia. She can't take a pill. She is suffering with anxiety, probably other things. She, she can't sleep. She has insomnia. She's tired, uh, and she, she snuggles in some pills.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

And she is thinking, okay, I'm taking these pills, but she can't do it in front of him because that will be like she doesn't have enough faith in God.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Because, because she's taking medication. Uh, anyway, so yes, so they come here and then, um, we see another couple coming back. which is funny because these are ghosts. Buck and Sadie.

Leraje

Sadie, yeah.

Ligeia

Yes. So they were married, but they both died 30 years ago, and they come back on this specific night because of what happened to them. So he was like a really bad husband, cheating, and she was unhappy with him and blah, blah. Yes, we can imagine. So one night she shot him dead.

Bye-bye. Yeah.

Leraje

Fuck.

Ligeia

Go to bucksters. And so, and then she was, she didn't fight the police or whatever. She actually never said she was sorry. She was like, yes, I did it and I would do it again. Kill me. So she was executed. So they are both dead and now they are ghosts and they are still together.

It's actually so funny. That was a funny aspect of this. So they are coming back because this happened exactly 30 years ago.

Leraje

Mm-hmm.

Ligeia

And for some reason they want to go into this room where this other couple are. This whole story was like, where are we going with this? But I think what happens is this confusion that I'm now telling you, like, okay, we don't know what's happening. This confusion was so necessary to actually go to where we are going.

Because you can see these 2 men were not, not good men.

Leraje

No.

Ligeia

And so we are thinking, okay, so where are we? Uh, Sadie was pushed, was probably pushed too far. So I'm not for, for murder or anything, but probably she was really suffering and she killed her husband. So she was a victim, then he was also a victim. Nobody deserves to die like that.

So that's a little bit of like conflicting situation. And now we can see this living couple and they are still in a process of this. And I was starting to see, because the revelation after— you can talk about what he— why is this called a revelation? But for me, the revelation was that Virginia, in her state of mind, was actually seeing what's gonna happen.

Leraje
Hmm.

Ligeia
And there was this connection between Sadie and her, because she started seeing these ghosts. She could hear them, she could see them. And that was where it started to be really, really interesting for me. Where is this going? And I will speak to you now, because it feels like I'm here alone.

Leraje
Hello?

Ligeia
Are you here? Hi.

Leraje
Sorry. I think that there was a deliberately drawn parallel between how Sadie reacted in the past and how Virginia was probably destined to react. I think if the situation had gone on, she would have shot her husband dead.

Ligeia
Well, she did.

Leraje
No, no, but I mean deliberately, kind of like, you know, sort of in the same way that Sadie shot— what was his name? Buck, was it?

Ligeia
Buck. I don't know what that name is. B-U-C-K? Buck?

Leraje
Yeah. Buck.

Ligeia
Yeah. I know what that is.

Leraje
It's not common. I don't think you're going to find many British people with the name Book. It's very American. So there's definitely a parallel between what happened to Sadie in the past and what's happening to Virginia.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
I think one of the interesting things to me was the kind of like similarity between this story and Jacqueline S. You know, all the male characters in those stories are basically, with the exception of Earl, and Oliver Vassi in the Jacqueline Ess story are basically dickheads.

Ligeia
Oh yeah.

Leraje
Not good people.

Ligeia

Yeah, true.

Leraje

Clive Barker puts a distinct emphasis on empathising and sympathising with his female characters that he creates. But I think the interesting thing— I mean, it was interesting, the progression of the kind of like abuse between Was it John, the name of the—

Ligeia

John, yes.

Leraje

The preacher, yeah. And Virginia. But I found that kind of like sub-story, the kind of secondary story of Sadie and Buck, fascinating. Because it was said that they had been sent back to discover what had gone wrong in their marriage to the point where Sadie felt she had no choice but to kill Buck.

Ligeia

Yeah, but did you understand why What, like, what were they hoping for? Why were they going back? Maybe for her to feel sorry, to say sorry? I don't— I didn't understand why this was happening. To celebrate how she killed him? I don't know.

Leraje

Yeah, it wasn't very clear, but I think whatever the intended purpose was, Sadie was quite happy to go through with it. But I think Buck just saw it as another chance to bang his dead wife.

Ligeia

Oh, we didn't get to that point. Yes, she was like, okay, we can do that. But he was actually trying to rape her.

Leraje

Yeah. And then later again with Virginia.

Ligeia

Oh yeah, that was— and she took some pills, right? She took some pills.

Leraje

She took some pills and she was kind of like suddenly presented with the idea that she could see these dead people.

Ligeia

Yeah, she thought she was just—

Leraje

And it was just like, what the fuck is going on? What's happening to me?

Ligeia

Yeah. Well, obviously this ghost old person was raping her and holding her and she couldn't move. And she was, I think she was staring at something and she was like, okay, I don't actually want that to be there.

Leraje

It's just, I did enjoy it a lot more than Hell's Vent. I didn't enjoy it as much as Jacqueline S.

Ligeia

Jacqueline was a surprise to me because it was everything that I like. It was so dark. It was sensual in a really horrifying way. It was not like—

Leraje

But he's good at that. That's what Clive Barker is good at, finding that line between beautiful, sensual, and horrific.

Ligeia

Yeah. Like the Cenobites. Like the idea of that was like, if you just know the premise, you will go like, ooh, this sounds so freaking cool. Like to have all your senses exaggerated, whatever. Like, oh, pleasure forever. Yes, I'm all in. Yeah. And then you read the story and like, oh, maybe I don't want this.

Yeah.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Please no. So yeah, I see. I see it's his signature. But, but this story was also kind of cute in a way because, oh, well, it was horrible. It was horrible. There were 2 murders. 3. Did the guy, the Earl guy, did he die? I forgot now, but—

Leraje

No, no, no. She missed him.

Ligeia

She missed him. And there was this whole little side story about him going to fuck that girl.

Leraje

Oh yeah. What was her name? Was it Laura?

Ligeia

I think Laura Ray, really something weird. Hold on, do you want that name?

Leraje

I have— no, no, it's fine. No, she's a very minor character.

Ligeia

Yes, well, she is, but she's there, and I think it was there for a reason, but I can't really tell you what.

Leraje

I think she was there to give us the history of the hotel, sort of like—

Ligeia

Oh, that could be. I, you know what I thought? To, to like have this, this like them, her and Earl, who just met and they were okay, they're allowed to have sex, strangers, why not? Okay, it's nothing wrong with that. And they were really nice to each other.

Leraje

Hmm.

Ligeia

So I thought we see this, these 2 couples who have been together for years and years and they are just absolutely horrible to each other. And then we saw these 2 people who just met and—

Leraje

Had a nice, healthy, consensual sexual encounter.

Ligeia

Yeah. And then he was nice to her even after he, he got what he wanted.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

So, so it was like he was a nice guy. Probably he wanted— the way he was thinking in the story looked like this might have been going somewhere. He was like, I mean, Probably, maybe they would be dating and happy together. I had the feeling that this— she really wanted him. That was clear.

Leraje

And then she definitely—

Ligeia

she asked him, she asked him to, yeah, do what they did. So I don't know, maybe also that, maybe the history of the, of the place, maybe probably both.

Leraje

I think when I say she was there to provide the history, I just meant from a kind of like storytelling perspective, you know, because yes. She had all that memorabilia and then—

Ligeia

So what was the horror of the story?

Leraje

The behaviour of the men. For the benefit of the listener, Ligeia just dropped her vape.

Ligeia

I dropped everything and my dignity. Okay, good. I'm here.

Leraje

The horror was the behaviour of the male, the 2 male characters, John the preacher and Buck, the dead husband, because they were both foul people.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

Really, with no real redeeming qualities at all. I think you're right. I mean, obviously you're right, you know, you don't fucking murder someone. But yeah, it was very difficult to have any kind of sympathy for Buck at all, and it was even less easy to have any sympathy for the preacher.

Ligeia

Oh, couldn't stand him. You know, funny thing that was really bothering me, So there were 3 people in one room, or even if there was just like him and Virginia, and this bastard locks himself in the bathroom to pray. I'm like, hello, why are you occupying the only room that can be locked?

Can you go pray in the freaking parking lot?

Leraje

He was jerking off.

Ligeia

She couldn't take a shower, she couldn't do anything. Like, what are you doing? He was kneeling on like between the toilet and the sink. I'm like, not sink, whatever.

Leraje

He was in there jerking off for Jesus. That's what he was doing.

Ligeia

I, that's what I was thinking. Really? Like Revelations? Yes. Yes. I don't know. I did. I do like this because all 3 stories are proving to me that I'm gonna

like the other stories in the books because, because there is this aspect that I always like where the, the author has trust in the intelligence of the reader.

There is not overexplaining. We do get a space where we can just like think and analyse and make theories. And I don't know, I really like that. I hate when you get overexplained.

Leraje

Yeah, so do I. I don't like it at all. It's funny though, because like, you know, we did Bloom the other week.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

And one of the things I criticised about that was the fact that there was that subplot with the missing girls, and it just went nowhere and was dropped. And I found that annoying because I think there's a difference between deliberately not explaining something and leaving it up to the reader to make their own interpretation, and just forgetting about a key part of the story or a part of the story you think is gonna be key.

Ligeia

I did, did you also think like maybe these parts of, we are going back to Bloom, but sometimes it is in a book, like you get these weird paragraphs that lead nowhere.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And I, I, I was thinking about it. Do you think it's probably like there was, there was a thought that it will go somewhere and then they were, either lazy, they forgot, or it's just they forgot to take it out.

Leraje

I don't know.

Ligeia

It doesn't make any other sense.

Leraje

No, I think Pike said something about that as well at the time, and it's kind of like that thing with the Jessie character. It's like, okay, she gets mentioned, and then Ro goes to see her at her school, and then that's it.

Ligeia

And it's like, well, that's it. Yes.

Leraje

The story would not have been worse for her, the Jessie character, not being in it at all.

Ligeia

We did not need that. No, I don't know, just like to see how she was upset with, um, Ro.

Leraje

Ro. Yeah, we're doing the wrong episode.

Ligeia

Yes. Okay, sorry, sorry, people. Sorry, people. Sorry, everyone.

Leraje

Go back, and if you're wondering what the hell we're talking about, go back and listen Yes, please.

Ligeia

This has not been an easy week for us, guys. Forgive us, we will get better. We will get better. We are both a little bit all over the place. So if we do sound weird, it will get worse.

Leraje

Yeah, definitely.

Ligeia

Um, I wanted to ask, what do you think about the name of the story? Do you have any opinion?

Leraje

I didn't really understand why, other than the fact that he, the preacher, was heavily into that particular chapter of the Bible. I didn't really— sorry, book of the Bible, not chapter of the Bible. I didn't really understand why the story was called Revelations, unless it was the kind of like revelation in the sense that things happened which changed situations.

Ligeia

Mm-hmm. Well, yeah. What the, the word, what it means in English, I think it has been chosen because of that. I don't think John, we, we don't need to think like John. We think like the author of this story, I think. So I thought it's more symbolic, like John thought the revelation is coming from God, so he was the chosen one.

Leraje

Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia

To understand the words. And the more he was repeating them, the more he thought he's connected and he, he is something better. And, and he is the one who, who knows how to explain these words and everybody else needs to listen to him.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And then Virginia had her own revelation. So—

Leraje

Of course.

Ligeia

You know? So I thought it's like he was playing with that word. And then Sadie had her own revelation about like, okay, this bastard, we are dead and he wants me to say sorry, but he goes and fucks a human being that is still alive. You know what? We are done. So everything was about the revelation of something.

Leraje

Hmm.

Ligeia

So I thought, am I right? Can, can this be true?

Leraje

Yeah, I think you're definitely right. And dear listener, if you enjoy these podcasts in any way, then thank Ligeia because she is intelligent and makes good points. And I just bumble around like a fucking idiot, missing the entire point of the story.

Ligeia

Did you see— did you say bumble around? Me? Yeah. Bumble. Bumblebee. I love that.

Leraje

Bumblng about like an idiot.

Ligeia

It is not true, people.

Leraje

It is true. Right, so is it— have we kind of like mined all the gold out of Revelations, do you think? Is there anything else we should need to say?

Ligeia

I think it's good. Yeah, yeah, it was a nice story. We will continue reading our beloved Ligotti, and also these books Clive as well.

Leraje

Yeah, okay, so we will do more Clive Barker, and we'll sort of like do— obviously we'll go back to Ligotti as well. And, uh, okay, until next time, uh, hail Satan.

Ligeia

Hail Satan.

[Outro music]