The Devil’s Library Episode 19.5 – “Songs of a Dead Dreamer and Grimscribe – Part 10”

[Intro Music]

Leraje
Welcome to another edition of The Devil's Library. I'm Leraje, Hail Satan, and tonight I'm here with my satanic bestie, Ligeia.

Ligeia
Hail Satan.

Leraje
And tonight we are going to take another deep dive into the- well, I was gonna say twisted, but I don't think he is a twisted mind.

Ligeia
Twisted writing, maybe.

Leraje
Nihilistic mind of Thomas Ligotti.

Ligeia
Uh,

Leraje
we're gonna do 2 stories tonight. I chose Miss Plarr, and what was your choice?

Ligeia
I chose The Glamour.

Leraje
Yeah, so this is gonna be the last 2 episodes from Grimmscribe.

Ligeia
Yeah, from Grimmscribe, yes. Not not by Ligotti.

Leraje
No.

Ligeia
We are not finished.

Leraje
No.

Ligeia
So this is us finishing Grimmscribe tonight.

Leraje
Yeah, and it's our 10th uh Ligotti recording as

Ligeia
well. Yes. How lovely, right?

Leraje
How very lovely. Okay. So should we start with The Glamour?

Ligeia

Yes, of course. So I will do a short summary, plot summary, and we talk about it. So an unnamed narrator is wandering through an unfamiliar part of a city and he discovers a like abandoned cinema. The theatre seems to be operating still, even though it's like empty and closed, but somehow it seems to still be working under mysterious new management, right?

Leraje
Mm.

Ligeia
We are reminding reminded of that for some reason. So inside he encounters an unsettling environment filled with strange light lighting and Hair-like threads.

Leraje
Mm.

Ligeia
The film being screened depicts grotesque bodily manipulation, while the boundary between the film and the audience gradually collapses. And the theatre itself appears to be a trap controlled by a sinister old woman. The narrator escapes, but the surrounding streets suggest that her influence may extend beyond the building.

Leraje
Yeah, yours was better.

Ligeia
I don't know.

Leraje
Your dramatic music was better than mine.

Ligeia
It was all very abstract. Yes. So, what did you think? Did you enjoy this one?

Leraje
Yeah, I did. It's um, I said to you when we finished reading it, It feels like one of the most kind of- I hesitate to use the phrase straightforward, but it's very- for the Goethe, it's very clear and unambiguous in some ways and quite linear.

Leraje
Do you think that's fair or is that-

Ligeia
I think that's very fair. I think we both agreed. We didn't talk uh about what we think about these stories, but this was mentioned because I- is this very brave of me to say this? But I I think out of these two stories that we are doing today, this one is a little bit easier to somehow grasp and maybe analyse, even though I might be completely wrong with everything I'm gonna say.

So, you know.

Leraje
Well, I mean, if you compare this to something like uh Dr. Thoss.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
You know, I mean, that was like fucking ambiguous to the point of being inscrutable. Very much.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, I, my thought about this one were that this cinema, this whole theatre, the building is like a metaphor for existence. Mm. I don't know. Because, so as he enters and obviously there is this movie going on and watching a movie, especially in a cinema, uh, like the image of that is that you are passively sitting and watching something.

And I thought it might be a metaphor for us humans uh being not in control of our own existence and life.

Leraje
Ooh, I like that.

Ligeia
The the hair, the threads of hair reminded me again of the puppets that he likes to bring in.

Leraje
Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia
So maybe that was a metaphor or some image for some other force or forces that are manipulating our lives, our existence. And I don't know, I have a note to this.

Leraje
I'm sure, reams of paper.

Ligeia
Yes, yes, you know me, I need my paper notes. I'm just like that. So, as we sit in the darkness and observe the events or the movie, and we cannot influence any of that, the nightmare of this story is to be helpless and out of control, even though we are actually observing it.

So you have some sort of knowledge of what's happening, but you can't really do much about it. And we as human beings are spectators and also victims of our own existence as we watch our like lives unfold in front of us. So that was my first thought.

Leraje
Yeah, I had that thought too. The whole, the whole thing of sitting down in a, in a, you know, air quotes, cinema as a metaphor for watching your life.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Sort of like go by with Not much control over what happens outside of your own personal sphere of influence. I agree with you. That was it.

Ligeia
Yeah. So that's that's awesome because I was really insecure about this one, but okay. If if I have a kindred soul thinking the same, I'm happy. I'm so happy. Okay. And do you agree with me thinking about the the old woman being like the The puppet master or the strings.

Leraje
I mean, he didn't, he doesn't, I think he does mention a mannequin once in that story, but it's it's kind of incidental.

Ligeia
Mhm.

Leraje
But that I think that maybe that was him planting a seed of the idea. There's an element of control, of possession almost.

Ligeia
Of of her.

Leraje
By her.

Ligeia
By her.

Leraje
Mhm. Yeah, she's and even the phrase "under new management." You know, she's taken possession of the cinema. Yes, the new manager. Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia
And somehow, to me, it also felt like this was probably the last act of the cinema, which I'm not sure how that works in this metaphor.

Leraje
Well, I think it ties back to what you said a minute ago about, you know, her sphere of influence moving beyond just the cinema into the surrounding shops in this case, but Maybe they're in time. The world, who knows how far her influence can spread.

Ligeia
I had a note about the horror of this story isn't confined to the cinema, as you just said. So the cinema seems to reveal something about existence itself. We as spectators in a performance we didn't choose, and perhaps even the puppets who mistake their movements for free will. That's all like in this in this enclosed environment of the cinema theatre.

But maybe that cinema and the theatre is there only for this specific person to realise that. And after that happens, it can just spread out.

Leraje
One of the things that I noticed about this story was the repetition of the phrase, "that part of town I had never visited before." He says that 4 or 5 times throughout the course of what is quite a short story. I think it's only about 9 or 10 pages long.

Ligeia
10 pages, yeah.

Leraje
So I'm thinking, why that? Did it have almost like a fairy tale feel to you?

Ligeia
Very much.

Leraje
Mm. Yeah.

Ligeia
I'm not sure if fairy, but a tale.

Leraje

Myth, mythology. Yes. Kind of like Hans Christian Andersen, Brothers Grimm type feel to it.

Ligeia
Yeah, very much.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And also because it's a theatre, so maybe, you know, like a-

Leraje
Exactly. Yeah.

Ligeia
Otherwise, I don't know. Maybe there was another meaning to it. Why this sentence?

Leraje
Well, I thought about that, but he he also uses the phrase uh after he uses that phrase, I think for the second or third time, he then goes on to say that the area he was in that he has never visited before has, and this is a direct quote, "a fine aura of fantasy." So I do think he's trying to evoke that particular feel to this story.

I do think he's trying to say This is a myth, this is how- and maybe this is kind of like, so the myths that we know are stories from our past, so maybe this is a story from our possible future that has happened in the past. I don't know, maybe. But you you also said that the cinema, the the the movie theatre, could be a metaphor for existence.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Might it also be- I mean, I agree with you, but might it be more, even more specific than that, and a metaphor for a body? Because there's direct allusions to heart and brain, and he uses the descriptors "bloodshot" and "liverish" uh quite a few times when the typically Ligotian nameless narrator again is entering the theatre.

He uses the, "Oh, it was the colour of a an exposed heart," or "It was the colour of a brain," or "It was bloodshot," or "It was liverish," you know, and he goes on to to describe it as an operating room where a torso lies open on the table, its entrails a palette of pinks and reds and purples.

So I think he was trying to- the the idea that you you raised of existence, and it is possibly even more specific than that. So yeah, I think it I think that could be very specifically a body, because I think this is a story that has an element of possession. The old- the mysterious old woman inhabits the body.

In real time, as as the people are watching the movie, that's the movie that's taking place. Yeah, I think him, the nameless narrator, entering this body, taking- maybe not taking possession, maybe that's something the old lady has done, but he is also entering this body that is also a cinema.

Ligeia
I love that. You are right, it was absolutely clearly he was showing that direction. With those descriptions of the- not veins, but yeah, the colours and this. So in that case, what is the movie then? What are we watching?

Leraje

So as I understood it, I think, and this picks up on the idea that you mentioned a moment ago about people watching their lives play out in front of them, uh existence that you didn't choose. He, on his way into the actual screen room of the movie theatre, the cinema, he bumps into a guy, and uh the guy goes into the restroom.

And I want to come back to that idea of restroom in a moment, but later on we see that same guy on the screen being taken over and inhabited by the this elderly old woman with the cobwebby, strandish, mannequin-controlling hair. Yeah. So that's what they watch on the screen. That's the direct thing that they watch on the screen.

And restroom.

Ligeia
Yeah, I can't wait.

Leraje
So, I hope it's not too disappointing. So Americans use restroom as like loo, toilet, bathroom, whatever. But rest in connection, in reference to a body, which we've both said this theatre could be a metaphor for. a human body existence. And what happens to this man is that he goes to his eternal rest.

He dies. He enters the restroom where he is attacked, for want of a better word, and possessed. And he he as a person is no longer in existence. He has gone to his eternal rest, his death. Which is what happens in the restroom.

Ligeia
Oh my God, that is amazing. I think you're right, and I did not spot that one. at all, but it makes sense.

Leraje
Mark this on your calendars, dear listeners. Something I spotted something.

Ligeia
I'm gonna give you one pink good point.

Leraje
Thanks very much. I mean, I don't think it's something to spot. I think it's just a possible, you know, interpretation. I don't think it's necessarily right or wrong.

Ligeia
Yeah, but it's awesome because I because I didn't spot it. So. I did think about it. I forgot about it when I was like, I went another direction about the cinema thing, and then I got lost in the story about Miss Pilar and I completely forgot about the body. So I'm really glad you brought that up because it was a big part of the story actually, which I'm now sorry that I didn't think about more.

Leraje
Uh, well, you know, there's loads of things I've missed. in previous stories. So what do you think about- I mean, you, you, you raised the idea earlier that the, the, these, what he first, the narrator first thinks of as being cobwebs. It doesn't entirely abandon that idea, but he also says that they're hairs.

Could they be both?

Ligeia
It doesn't need to be completely clear what, what that was. For me, at least, I thought it's there to create the atmosphere of Some sort of, you know, when you have either cobweb or tiny, long, like fluffy hair, that that is something that when it sticks to you, it's really hard to get rid of and to get out of.

So if it's in like a big amount, it is something that can hold you down or like the threads of the puppet or-

Leraje
Yeah, like the strings of a mannequin.

Ligeia
Yes. So I saw it as that. And it didn't need to be either that or that. I don't know. You have your-

Leraje
I thought maybe cobwebs because they reinforce the idea of the the the kind of like antagonist of this story being an elderly lady. I don't think the lady thing is particularly significant in this particular context of cobwebs, but maybe age is.

Ligeia
So you would think that cobwebs And age go together?

Leraje
I think they can. I mean, if you think about the way cobwebs are usually used in a traditional horror story, it's used to denote a kind of like shadowy, dark, ancient, old, not very well-kept space.

Ligeia
Decaying buildings.

Leraje
Yes, yeah, yeah, exactly.

Ligeia
Caves.

Leraje
So, I think there's that kind of- I don't think it's a direct link, but I think it can- one can be used to suggest or support the other.

Ligeia
Could be. Also, The same can can be said about if she was really, really, really old and she had this white hair. That could also be something.

Leraje
Well, it's just a case of mistaken identity and they're not really cobwebs. It's literally just hair.

Ligeia
Mistaken identity of the hair.

Leraje
Mistaken hair for cobwebs.

Ligeia
By the narrator?

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Hmm. Yeah. Could be. That's what I'm saying. Maybe it is there to confuse us.

Leraje
Mm.

Ligeia

Because he was confused. I

Leraje
think he was, yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia
Mr. Ligotti likes to confuse.

Leraje
He does. It's true.

Ligeia
That is for sure. Yeah.

Leraje
What did you think about this, that that that part of this story that goes into- I'll I'll read a quote.

Ligeia
Mm-hmm.

Leraje
In other words, this movie theatre was merely a virtual image, a veil upon a complex collage of other places, all of which shared certain qualities. that were projected into my vision, as though the things I saw were possessed by something I could not see. And that's just after the bit where he talks about the the aisleway of the cinema being like an open sewer, or the screen of the cinema being like an opaque mirror.

He said that he could see that what they were, but he also got the feeling that they were something else as well. I did I I must admit I didn't really Yeah, where he was going with

Ligeia
that. That is my feeling when I'm reading his stories. Well, yeah. All the time, like, hmm. Ah, what is happening?

Leraje
Yeah. It's a beautiful set of descriptions, but I'm not quite sure how they tie into our-

Ligeia
I, with my limited small brain, I thought it might be- That's

Leraje
a lie, by the way, listener.

Ligeia
I thought that's exactly how we see things about our lives and existence. But when we see through how he- ah, okay. So I think I think when he entered this this area, this zone, this state, whatever that was, he somehow learned something he didn't know before that about his own life and existence.

How he is not in control of majority of that, what is happening in front of him, around him, in him. So he saw the stage, the, I don't know, the hallways, the signs, the lights, but nothing was making much sense and it wasn't what he thought it was. So he saw it with new eyes or with new knowledge, with something new that changed in him.

And he realised that everything he was thinking about his human existence and life is so different from the actual truth that it just doesn't make sense anymore. So it's it's that it's that new knowledge that Mr. Ligotti always brings like, yes, the horror is when you learn something that You might not even be looking for, but somehow you stumble there, or you just now see this and you

can't get out of that new knowledge, or you know, you can't go back to that stage before.

Now this is your truth and you will never understand it.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Because it's so different from everything that you were thinking.

Leraje
And interestingly, the the actual truth of what was going on was playing on a movie screen. Yes. Where usually fiction is shown to people, which is a nice little inversion.

Ligeia
It is inversion. And also what we think our lives are or other people's lives are when we are not with them or anything like it is also just fiction. When you look at it, it's-

Leraje
A fiction we create for ourselves.

Ligeia
Yeah. Yeah. So this is how I understood that. Nothing else. So you asked, now deal with it.

Leraje
I will.

Ligeia
Okay.

Leraje
I think that's really good though. I like I like that idea a lot, and I do think it's supported by the things that happen during the course of the story, especially towards the kind of like the last third of the story when this mysterious elderly woman is revealed as the kind of like, for want of a better phrase, puppet master.

That's uh yeah, and the idea, the what you've just talked about there, that kind of idea that things are not what they seem, and the the truth is more damaging than the reality, the comfortable reality, the comfortable fiction we invent for ourselves.

Ligeia
And this is very Eliotian. As you mentioned, this might be a metaphor for a body. So I just thought, what if it's a metaphor for your brain?

Leraje
Go on.

Ligeia
Like What if something is actually happening to this person?

Leraje
The narrator?

Ligeia
They are in a- yeah, they are in a coma or something is happening to their brain. That's why we see the, you know, the livery. I don't know how you said it.

Leraje
Livery.

Ligeia
Like the colour of blood and-

Leraje
Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia
I don't know how that would make sense, but I just thought I will say it because because it could be. It could be something that is happening to this person's brain. They might be having trouble.

Leraje
I mean, it could be. I mean, the phrase, the repetition of the phrase, "that part of town I had never visited before," could refer to a mind that was suddenly in a coma, or a mind that was undergoing psychosis, or a mind that was undergoing some form of mental trial. Or a nightmare.

Or just a nightmare. Yeah,

Ligeia
yeah. And the Glamour, I would think the name is also kind of like a joke or something. Like funny a little bit, because it's, I think the first thing that you would like connect with glamour is beauty, is something with grace, uh something that people want to have, to be. Well, in this case, that is like very attractive.

It's something that is supposed to lure you in. So it's very sounding like luxurious, beautiful.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
But it's hiding something that is, hmm, I want to say ugly or monstrous, but it's only that these words I'm using only because it is so different from what we want to see our lives to be.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
So, I don't think it's meant to mean that the actual truth is ugly, but for us, when we realise how wrong we are about what we think, it seems ugly because we tend to think so much better about ourselves and what we mean and how important we are, how good and beautiful we are.

Leraje
Do you think there's a particular significance to the fact that the antagonist in this story is a woman?

Ligeia
Old women, old hags are used in stories to be bringing the bad news, the spell, the curse. The ugly truth.

Leraje
Right.

Ligeia
So that's the only thing I I can think of. Um, and because we agreed on the on the like fairy tale-ish atmosphere of the story, I thought that's why that was an old woman.

Leraje
So a bit like the witch in Hansel and Gretel?

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
Yeah. That's good. I like that.

Ligeia
Because because old women used to mean also quite a lot of wisdom, knowledge, you know, uh sort of like the pagan sort of education about nature and life and the underworld and gods and whatever. To me, that makes sense.

Leraje
Okay. Do we have anything else we want to say about the glamour?

Ligeia
No, maybe at the end when we can compare the two.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Yeah. So we can go to Miss Plarr.

Leraje
So yeah, Miss Plarr was the second story that uh we read, and that that was my choice, so I'll give a little bit of a rundown on the story. So Miss Plarr is this is a story, again a very short story, by Lagomarski. In this story there is a young child, a boy I think, I'm assuming.

Ligeia
I

Leraje
don't think it's ever explicitly said that he's a A male?

Ligeia
I think it is obvious from a few words. I can't really um quote anything, but yes, it is a boy.

Leraje
And uh this boy uh is summoned to the knocking of a door one evening. Um when he opens the door, Miss Plarr is standing there. Miss Plarr has been employed by the house as the housekeeper, um because the boy's uh mum is ill, possibly. And after Miss Plarr enters and becomes part of the household, Uh, she, the the the the protagonist, the the young boy, often hears her walking about, but he finds it difficult to actually find where she is, but he can hear her walking about.

She then begins to tutor him, and she lets slip that she can hear things that maybe other people cannot hear. There are things, she uses this particular phrase, "a sound that scolds the air." Stings

Ligeia
the air.

Leraje
Stings the air, sorry, that's right.

Ligeia
Sound that stings the air.

Leraje
Yeah. And during the course of the story, Miss Plarr seems to pass on that gift to the young boy, and she then uh exits the story. The story ends with the young boy now in possession of this same gift that Miss Plarr had. Does that sound- I'm trying not to give like all spoilers.

I'm just trying to give a kind of like- Yeah.

Ligeia
Yeah. Yeah. The ending is quite ambiguous. Quite foggy. If you ask me.

Leraje
I do ask you. Did you enjoy this one?

Ligeia
I love this story.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
When we finished reading both stories, we had a tiny little chat. I wanted to ask you, which one did you enjoy more? And I think I said I enjoy the first one more. But it was- when I started thinking about this story, I completely forgot to go back to The Glamour. Because there is so much in this one that actually I changed my mind and I have to say I really enjoyed this one.

And I think this is probably one of the stories by Ligotti that is so out of everything else that I have read by him.

Leraje
Yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely.

Ligeia
I don't want to say it's different because it is still his writing, but it is quite different in my opinion. And I enjoy that when he when he does that, you know.

Leraje
So what made this one different than the the sort of like archetypal Ligotti story for you?

Ligeia
The idea of bringing this very uh specific uh gothic horror persona, which is a governess who is mysterious. We don't know much about her. She appears at the door. The way he described her from the point of view of this little boy- we don't know how old this boy is, by the way.

It is quite weird. And this whole story, I think, is like a play with uh the Turn of the Screw, which of course Mr. Ligotti can take and do whatever he wants. And I I I just don't know. I think it must be that there is something from that story in in the in here because it is a similar situation, even though we only have one child in this story.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
But if we just take Miles from The Turn of the Screw, that boy was weird. He was a small boy. He was maybe 8 or something. But the way he behaved towards this governess was so adult, and he was actually trying to be seductive somehow and flirty.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia
It is so disturbing when it's a child. So I want to go back to to Miss Plarr. So when she arrives, we know that this boy is a boy, it's a child, but we don't know his age.

Leraje
No.

Ligeia
And we only know that he's a child because he is he needs somebody to teach him, of course. And, you know, so we know the situation. But also there is a mention of his small hand opening the door or something. That is the only- and and also the furniture in the classroom, it's like it's tiny chair.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
So we know. But the thinking process and how he thinks about her, how he looks at her, is not supposed to be happening in a child's head. Which is like Mr. Ligotti never ever have written so far, uh from from what I have read, anything that would be openly sexual. It's not explicit in any way, but there is a certain vibe in this story.

It is there. It can't be unseen. I don't-

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
You have seen it as well, right?

Leraje
Yeah, I mean, it's amazing to me that you mentioned Turning the Screw because that was exactly where my mind went as well. The the kind of like almost an adult mind in a child's body, or more accurately, a child imitating an adult's mind in a child body, or trying to imitate an adult.

He would uh both the the young boy in M.R. James' story and and this story as well are kind of They are trying to be older than they actually are. Uh, they are or trying to give that impression.

Ligeia
The mind is a little bit corrupted for some reason.

Leraje
Possibly, yeah.

Ligeia
You know, like in the movies of The Omen, Damien's mind is- I'm not saying there is like any sort of suggestion of being possessed or anything satanic, but, um, you know, Some people are born with a strangeness in their brains. Uh, whatever. We don't know what what is happening to this boy, but I saw this story as like a very mind reminding me, very much reminding me of The Turn of the Screw.

And I also, for me, the beginning, right? So she she arrives and he's staring at her and there is this detail of how he is fascinated by her beautiful black hair in uh big bun on her head, and it's all tidy and beautiful, and it's like a lot of words describing the hair.

Leraje
Raven black.

Ligeia
Raven black, beautiful hair that is- she really tried to make it tidy and beautiful, and still there are little uh hairs that are escaping it.

Leraje
Yeah, because it's misty and foggy and damp and-

Ligeia
It's misty and foggy and damp and moist.

Leraje
There's a lot of dampness and moistness throughout this story.

Ligeia
Yeah, also, yeah. But I saw that's like um repressed sexuality.

Leraje
Definitely, yeah.

Ligeia
That was like the bun. She was trying to be very tidy and proper, and there was a lot of repression repression in her, and it couldn't be hidden. And he saw through it because his mind was also on the same frequency, or he wanted to see it that way.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
So that was really beautifully done because- I don't know, it's just Ligotti and his writing, right? But so that's the beginning. And then that game of pretending they don't care who is where. And it is such a- if he was a, you know, like a young boy, maybe 18, 19, it would be more acceptable, but because he was a child, this was really disturbing in the story.

Leraje
It was very weird. Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia
Because it sounded like two people who are being very attracted to each other, trying to look like they ignore each other, even though they knew exactly where the other person is. What is when you are falling in love with somebody and you don't want the other person to know? You are paying attention to everything that's happening.

So he knew exactly where she was in the morning, which rooms, and she knew where he was. And it's so weird because he's a freaking child. What are you doing?

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
And it's this game, you know, it's like the dance of seduction and it's very like a romantic situation. What is happening here? And then he sees her at night standing in front of that big window and her hair is all untidy and It's like, I think that's where he finally understood or got really attracted to her because he saw her as something else, and that inspired the drawings.

Leraje
That's right. I mean, I think it's worth saying at this point that it is a very kind of like sexually- it's not explicit at all, but yes, charged. That's that's that's a good word, sexually charged. But Miss Pilar doesn't really initiate any of this.

Ligeia
You think?

Leraje
I don't think she does.

Ligeia
Hmm. I have a quote for you.

Leraje
Go on.

Ligeia
And also there is that moment where she is destroyed or has destroyed his drawings and he wakes up and she is sitting on his bed and her hair is in his face and she's very close to him. And I did not feel comfortable about this situation at all. But also, hold on. So when she was teaching him upstairs, right, she had that little attic room created for for the teachings.

Interesting fact, she was teaching him stuff that was not in any curriculum.

Leraje
Right. Yeah.

Ligeia
We don't know what that means. But so the quote, I will try, okay? If I make a mistake, you can read it in the book. So, she drew close to me. Laying her rubber-tipped pointer across my shoulder. When I looked up, I saw only those eyes glaring down at me and a black bundle of hair outlined in the dismal light, drifting through the attic like a glowing vapour.

So this happened when he asked something and she was using that freaking pointer to touch him.

Leraje
Mm.

Ligeia
And he looked at her. And she was staring back at him. And then she said, "In a room such as this," she whispered, "whispered, one may also learn the proper way, the proper way to behave." You can't tell me she didn't. She did. She absolutely did.

Leraje
Yeah, I think you might be right.

Ligeia
I mean, I I saw it like this, but continue, please, because maybe I'm wrong.

Leraje
I don't think you're wrong. But I think Ligotti gave her a kind of like an out, a kind of possible alternative explanation, which is this kind of sound that only she could hear. Well, for for for most of the story, only she could hear.

Ligeia
But he could hear that as well later.

Leraje
Right. Later on in the story, he could. So there is this transfer of knowledge. There is this kind of like or or awareness.

Ligeia
Is it knowledge though?

Leraje
Maybe knowledge is not the right word. Awareness. I'm not sure.

Ligeia
What if it's something else?

Leraje
Such as?

Ligeia
Lost of innocence?

Leraje
Yeah. Well, yes, because he is innocent. He's completely unaware of the sound when she arrives. And she she kind of passes that knowledge on to him. Corruption. Oh God, the more I'm saying it, the more I'm the more I'm coming around to your view. Yeah, you're right. Yeah.

Ligeia
I don't need to be right.

Leraje
No, you are right. I think you are.

Ligeia
No, no, no, no, no. I just think because Again, the sting is something that has a pointed, you know, like a wasp or something. It stings the ear. The sound, I don't think it's a pleasant thing. I don't think it's a thing that is good, is supposed to be.

Leraje
It does have the air or the sound of something that is not really what a child should be dealing with.

Ligeia
Yeah. And for her, hearing that is probably the temptation. That's how I understood it, the temptation to teach him. And uh his mind went to those landscapes that didn't make any sense. Who knows what that was, you know, the drawings. But she then destroys these because probably she doesn't want to face her own ugliness.

Leraje
And she definitely doesn't want other people catching sight of them. So this is a story about corruption.

Ligeia
I think.

Leraje
Mm. God, that's that's dark.

Ligeia
So she disappears.

Leraje
Well, she arrives in a load of mist and fog. Oh, she does. Yeah. The narrator, or the Gothic 3 narrator, makes a big point of saying the mum is out of the picture. She's "ill" in air quotes. And then he says towards the end that her illness is uh invented.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Or he thinks it's invented.

Ligeia
Yes. Pseudo illness.

Leraje
Right, yeah. So Miss Plarr might have caused this illness so she could gain entry to the house and to him, and then once she leave- left, sorry, uh the mother made a fairly miraculous recovery.

Ligeia
That could be one option. And I just thought now, what if Miss Plarr doesn't exist and the boy is alone in the attic? And he was abused by the mother.

Leraje
Dear God. That's pretty fucking dark, even for Ligotti. That's dark. I'm not saying you're wrong.

Ligeia
So like, you know, and he is- his mind is trying to understand something he was never supposed to be exposed to, so he imagines this governess and she becomes this personification of the female something that happened.

Leraje
Or the personification of this new loss of innocence. Yeah, the knowledge of- And a new knowledge that he now has of of human sexuality.

Ligeia
Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Leraje
Which obviously, because he's a child, would scar him terribly.

Ligeia
Yeah. But I don't think this is how it should be read. I just had this idea. It doesn't- But it can be, I think.

Leraje
And in the same way, do you remember one of the very first episodes that you and I ever did was The Exorcist?

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
And we both agreed that, you know, the demonic possession in that could easily be a metaphor for sexual abuse of-

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
—of Regan.

Ligeia
I still think that-

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
—that she, the doctor-

Leraje
Oh no, the director.

Ligeia
Director?

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
Director, not doctor.

Leraje
The movie director, Chris Neils. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, I do. I definitely think it's possible.

Ligeia
I don't want to be seeing, you know, abuse, sexual abuse in every single thing. I mean, it's not completely impossible.

Leraje
I don't think it's something that happens often in Ligotti's stuff, and I don't think it's something-

Ligeia
Not with Ligotti, no, no. Yeah, I mean, it's just something is bothering me around that, how she appears and then just disappears, and he keeps going to that attic.

Leraje
Right, after she's left, yeah.

Ligeia
I revisited its draughty spaces on several occasions over the years, especially on afternoons in early spring when I could not close my ears to certain sounds that reached me from beyond a grey mist or from skies of hissing rain. "As if somewhere the tenuous form of spirits were thrashing in a dark and forsaken world." So it's either that he is revisiting his memories of what happened.

That's the attic.

Leraje
Or he is literally in the attic.

Ligeia
Or he's actually visiting the attic.

Leraje
Where the abuse happened.

Ligeia
Yes. It's a really sad thing. Of, you know, the child's consciousness becoming aware of something It's not designed to perceive.

Leraje
Yeah, experiences that a child is not capable of processing and shouldn't be exposed to.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
No. Yeah.

Ligeia
Did I actually effed it up for you now?

Leraje
What do you mean?

Ligeia
You look very sad.

Leraje
No, no.

Ligeia
Is this how you saw it? I don't think so.

Leraje
It was quite obviously sexual in some way. This kind of like both of them transgressing boundaries by going into the other's personal space a lot.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
There was definitely an air of uh sexuality throughout the whole thing.

Ligeia
Him leaving out the drawings-

Leraje
Right.

Ligeia
—was a like invitation for her to come and see them.

Leraje
Oh yeah, he wanted her to see them. No question about that.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
My mind did not go as far as abuse, but the more I think about it, the more that you've you say what the interpretation you put on it. I'm not saying it's definitely 100% correct, because I don't think you can ever say that about any story, let alone the Gubbins stuff.

Ligeia
No.

Leraje
No, but it's certainly plausible. Even what I mentioned a minute ago, this kind of like, he can hear her walking, but he can't ever truly locate where she is, is being able to hear something that disturbs you, but, and hear it coming closer, but not knowing.

Ligeia
There is a lot of sound in this story.

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
It's the hearing the the footsteps, it's also the sound that stings the air.

Leraje
Right. And he he says at the end, that bit you just quoted, you know, he he that's how he that's the primary way he relives this in his head is through the sound. Yeah. So I do think that's a very plausible uh interpretation of this story. Yeah. It's a good story. As a story, it's very good.

Ligeia
It's a very good story.

Leraje
Yeah, and like all of Ligotti's stuff, it's incredibly well written. It's very evocative. It's a much more ambiguous story than The Glamour, but uh dark. Very dark.

Ligeia
Very dark, like her hair.

Leraje
Right, yeah, exactly. So, we said when we finished The Glamour, we were gonna try and sort of like find a way, if there was a way, to maybe tie these two together. I think I know where you might go with it.

Ligeia
Really?

Leraje
Yeah, go on.

Ligeia
The hair!

Leraje
Of course. Yeah, the hair.

Ligeia
That's like the first kind of obvious thing. Of course. I don't think it's like connecting the two stories in any way. Just that it's it's it's it's a key element

Leraje
of both.

Ligeia
Yes. And it's interesting because it's a very human thing. hair, but once you take the hair and it's not attached to the human and it's just somewhere else and it's not just like, you know, being on your head and being a part of, I don't know, your style or your beauty or whatever, it's a dead sort of material that is not connected to any any living thing and it becomes a little bit weird in a way.

Leraje
A little bit creepy?

Ligeia
Cobwebby, and also I think he found her hair in the drawings. So it can be also part of like the seduction and romantic stuff. Like when you are in love and you find your loved one's hair somewhere, it's like reminding you of, oh, this is this is a part of him or her.

I love this hair, of course. But it can be also quite sinister. If you look at it like, oh, this abusive person was here and now this hair is here and it's all over me or it's on my body somewhere where it's not supposed to be.

Leraje

Right. And it's possible to interpret both of the women in these in both of these stories as abusive abusers.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Certainly in The Glamour, overtly so. And the hair played such a big part in both stories that I think that's the obvious tie. I mean, the other obvious tie, of course, is that they're both women. That in itself is is kind of like an intriguing thing for Ligotti, because that's not something he does a lot.

Ligeia
It doesn't happen quite a lot in his stories. Yeah. I mean, there have been a few stories where there was a woman, but it's not very central to his to his work.

Leraje
Not so much the idea of a woman being in the story, but a woman or a female character of some kind being the antagonist of the story, being the like-

Ligeia
Uh-huh.

Leraje
chief baddie of the story or the the abusive. Um, I mean, the Les Fleurs, for example, the women in that story were very much, you know, victims of this.

Ligeia
Yeah. Or the Labyrinthine Eyes.

Leraje
Right. Yeah.

Ligeia
You know, that corpse was a woman. And then, which story was that with the house of like the BDSM?

Leraje
Oh, the BDSM place. Yeah.

Ligeia
Yeah, I keep forgetting what that was, which story. Anyway.

Leraje
Yeah, I can't remember either, but yes. Yeah. So this is really the first story I can remember, I can remember where there are, in both of them, women are kind of like the primary, well, I say women, are they, are they actually humans? I don't know. It's up for, it's up for interpretation.

Female characters, let's say, because they might not be human at all. They are the kind of like chief antagonists of of both stories, which is very rare for Ligotti.

Ligeia
Very rare, yeah. And maybe this is a very cliché thing, but usually, usually, not always, but hair is long hair is quite often something that women have or want. It's quite a feminine thing to want to have long hair. For the benefit of a listener, Leraje is touching his hair, which is very beautiful and very long.

So I'm not saying long hair is is feminine, but it is quite a thing. It can be used as a something that, you know, is very- in these two stories, there are two female uh characters and the hair is being mentioned quite a lot. So I just thought maybe-

Leraje
Yeah.

Ligeia
It's like a-

Leraje
And the hair as a signifier of abuse and the hair or of kind of like, don't really like using this word, but deviance of some kind of attack.

Ligeia
Yeah. Attack and seduction as well, because it's beautiful, it's pretty, but it can also tie you up, tie you down.

Leraje
Okay. Uh, do we have anything else to say about Miss Plarr or the glamour or the links between the two?

Ligeia
I think I am happy.

Leraje
Okay.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
Okay, so that's our take on two more Ligotti stories, "The Glamour" and "Miss Plyar," which you can find in Grimscribe. Um, we will do more Ligotti, of course, and more Poe, more Barker, more anything else.

Ligeia
Arthur Machen.

Leraje
Yeah, Machen, yeah. So, anything that we choose to do, we shall do.

Ligeia
Yes.

Leraje
Yes. Uh, I've been Leraje, Hail Satan.

Ligeia
I've been Ligeia, Hail Satan.

Leraje
See you next time.

Ligeia
Bye.

[Outro music]