

# The Devil's Library Episode 3.5 – “Grimscribe” & “Songs Of A Dead Dreamer”

[Intro Music]

Ligeia

Foreign. Hello, everybody. Hail Satan. This is Ligeia, and I'm here today with Laraj.

Leraje

Hail Satan.

Ligeia

Hi. So we have a new episode for you. And today we decided to maybe follow up with more stories by Thomas Ligotti. Why, you ask? Well, because we love them. We love him. And there is so much. So many more and so much work that he has done that we thought we should.

We should probably go back and do some more. Um, and we chose three. Again. The way we choose stories is I choose one, Lerash chooses one, and then there is, like, the third one is, like, randomly chosen, so there is no bias. And we hope you like it. We hope you're interested in this.

If you have never read these stories, maybe you will. They are short. Uh, like, you can do this in. In an hour. You can read all three of these, I think.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And so. I don't know. Let's start.

Leraje

All right, so, uh, your choice was, uh, Music of the Moon.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

So should we start with that one?

Ligeia

Okay, then. So, because I chose it, maybe I will just give it like, a little.

Leraje

Like, set the scene.

Ligeia

Set the scene. Um, so this story, why I chose it. I remembered this one after my first read of this whole, like, collection of his stories. Reasons unknown. I can't tell you why I remember this one, but, like, even the name the Music of the Moon is just stuck with me because, I mean, we all know the moon.

We see the moon every night. And, like, the connection between music and the moon and the nightmares and maybe, like, you can't sleep. Many of us can't sleep at night. Uh, I'm a night owl.

Leraje

Yes. I identified personally very much.

Ligeia

I know. But it just was very beautiful and poetic. So I was like, I need to read this one. And it stuck with me because it is a little bit maybe different from, uh, other Legatus stories. And it's not very difficult to. To read. It's kind of short and simple read. Not a simple understanding.

It's a simple read, I would say. So, uh, we have one main character here. His name is Trezor. And this guy is suffering with insomnia, like, terrible insomnia. He can't sleep, and he chooses to take long night walks in a city. We don't know the name of this city. Um, he's just walking through the streets.

And I really, really enjoyed the description of the city of the streets the Ligotti gave us here. It is so liminal. I don't know. The way he describes the streets.

Leraje

M. Yeah, no, I completely agree.

Ligeia

I love liminal spaces. Like, it is sort of familiar to you also. It gives you the feelings of dread.

Leraje

Yeah. I think in that story, you're right. Liminal is the right word. And there's that kind of, like you say, there's that kind of familiarity. And I think it's the familiar, uh, the familiarity of the feeling. I mean, obviously we're not familiar with the city that it's set in.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

You know, that kind of like, feeling of being almost being a stranger in the city, but knowing. Also knowing it. It's very. It's a very odd mood he evokes in that story.

Ligeia

Very odd, but also very familiar. I don't know if you feel that, but I do. So I really connected to this treasure guy in this moment. Like in the browsing the streets and feeling. Sort of like the space is uncanny, but also, you know, it. Like, you kind of get lost and m. You feel uncertain of where you're going, what's happening, what are you seeing, but also you.

You don't want to leave that feeling. You linger there and you go deeper and deeper into this unknown feeling. And like, I really. This is maybe the point. I. I chose. Why I chose this one.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Because it really gave me that. And I really enjoyed the description of the city. So if you guys are interested in that, please go and read it.

Leraje

I, uh, mean, what you said earlier about it being different kind of story than the other ones we read. The first three, I completely agree with you. All three of these seem to me to be much more. I don't want to use the word mainstream in relation to Ligotti stuff, but they were much more kind of like, accessible than the first three that we read.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

And, um, I am not certain in my own mind if that's a good thing or a bad thing or if it doesn't even really matter, but they're much more. They're much more, uh, straightforward than the first three that were read. Is that fair, do you think?

Ligeia

Yes. I know what you're trying to say. It's not easy to describe what you are saying. I am trying also to put it in words. I don't want to judge anything. So I'm not going to say if it's better or worse. I. I enjoy all his stories.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

In some way. And maybe this is just the proof of his genius. He's able to write this way, that way. Also, he was a human being. He is a human being. So obviously what he's going through in his life, in his. In his head, is gonna show in. In his story. So maybe he was in this space in his head in that case, you know, so.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Or maybe this was on purpose. I don't know, and I don't really want to know. I think it's beautiful to keep the mystery of it. Like, okay, this is also Legati's work, and why not?

Leraje

Yeah, absolutely. He's perfectly entitled to write however he wants. You're absolutely right.

Ligeia

Yeah. Yeah. So I don't know how we chose exactly, like, three stories that, as you say, are a little bit different from the previous three ones. That was just a random thing that happened. So it's not like, oh, we chose these because we feel like these are different. No, it didn't happen like that.

Leraje

No, not at all. Um, it was just a pure. A pure accident, I think.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Okay, so let's just continue. I will say the story shortly. So he is an insomniac. He's walking the streets at night, trying to, like, maintain, uh, entertain his mind, his brain to see something new. He has been through many things that helped him to survive. But, like, you know, you get bored with things.

One night he. He goes for this walk. He. He comes to a building. Not inside the building, but he's walking by a building, and there is this stranger just standing there, looking at him or looking around. This stranger hands him a paper, like a little note. So he reads it, and it's an announcement of some, um, performance happening that night, later that night.

And he just leaves. But obviously he's intrigued. So he comes back and he enters the building again. I loved how, um, he describes the building first of all, like these strange, uh, semi circular windows. They are so completely different

from anything else, which I think was already like a, uh, sort of like connotations with the moon maybe.

I don't know. I don't know. That's how I chose to see it.

Leraje

That's how I saw it as well. I thought he was making a deliberate allusion to me.

Ligeia

Yeah, yeah. He wasn't hiding. He wasn't hiding. Like, what is like, you know, you didn't know what's gonna happen, obviously. But okay, so he enters, he is going through the floors. It's dark, of course. It's like moody and a little bit atmospheric, maybe scary. Nothing is really happening. And then he stumbles upon a room where, again, this.

In this part, I saw his genius when he entered that room. And he was such a teasing guy here, Ligotti. You know why? Because he was like, oh, these are shadows in the corner. And you are getting ready for some, you know, And. Oh, it's just spider webs. I'm like, okay, first one, jump scare in the book.

Okay. And then he continues with this. Oh, I see these. And this. Oh, it's just like your musical instruments cases, Legotti. And he did this in one paragraph, like, maybe three times. He was teasing me.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And like, oh, it's nothing. It's actually nothing. I absolutely loved it. Actually made me laugh because I could see, like, oh, you are just playing with our minds. I love it.

Leraje

Yeah. I mean, you did that as well towards the end of it when.

Ligeia

Yes, because the.

Leraje

The sort of like the first performance, uh, the protagonist actually leaves the room. The performance room. So all you can do is kind of like through the. The protagonist, you kind of like, hear the music through the door. You don't actually. You're not in the room.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

And there's that. So there's always these. These layers of being hidden from you.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Teased, as you just said. So it's. Yeah, yeah. It was very well done.

Ligeia

I found it also funny in a way, you know, because I could tell, like, oh, uh, this is. He deliberately wanted to do this to my brain and it worked. Thank you very much. I wouldn't say this story was really scary, but the, like, Ligotti's horror is usually very interesting. And I found this one interesting because I don't want to say everything, you know, I want to know what you think, but.

Okay, I will. I will. I will keep this for. I want to hear from you. I will. I will keep this. So what do you think about the story? I don't know. Maybe you want to say how it.

Leraje

Continued, uh, without sort of like completely spoiling it. I'll give it a go. So as L. JS Says, we kind of like, start off in the city, which is eerie. Then we go into this kind of like, house type thing, which is a little bit eerier still. Then we go into this room, which is another step up in eeriness.

And then he leaves the room and you hear the music through the door, which is another step up in a bit weirdness. And then eventually he does, uh, he goes home and then kind of like gets his. His curiosity drives him to the point where he has to go back and has to kind of like, be in the room while the music is playing.

Um, I won't kind of like completely spoil the ending, but. Okay, it's good.

Ligeia

Okay, so we are not spoiling it. Oh, well, I mean.

Leraje

I mean, I guess I don't know. Do you want to? Shall we? I mean we might as well.

Ligeia

I don't want to. I never want to spoil anything.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Okay. I will just say my opinion what this story was actually about. Like what is the horror based on? So I think as I saw it, it is about. I don't want to say it in an incorrect way but maybe certain boredom that we can find ourselves in.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And how we are trying to entertain ourselves and it can come to a point where we reach a cliff or an edge and we know that we are reaching a point of maybe a disastrous breaking point for our mind but we are so bored that we just choose to linger in there until you know, we are reaching out and reaching into this entertaining something that we, we find like uh, it's not even that great.

But also once I'm here, let's see what happens.

Leraje

I mean I think he does that with a lot of his, his, his protagonists and I mean we said it in the first episode but it's very, it's very Lovecraftian.

Ligeia

There's these very much.

Leraje

There's these people, these usually men who are um, kind of like as you say, bored with their ah, lives or you know, looking for something or they're going through in this case insomnia or you know, some kind of like academic nue or something like that.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Leraje

And like you say they kind of like this thing pops up and it's obviously weird and wrong and yeah, they are so kind of like hummed that their own existence is so humdrum and ordinary that they ignore all the warning.

Ligeia

Signs and carry on all the warning signs. Because it was obvious like when he entered that room and he saw what he saw the other, the others.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

It was not singing beautiful song of like oh, you will be happy. Um, no, like this is a good place. M. No, really don't m. You want to leave. And he's like, let's see what happens.

Leraje

Let's see what happens. And in fact I'm going to go.

Ligeia

Back, you know, so I think that's the point. And actually the ending, I'm not gonna, I hope I'm not gonna spoil it. But I think the ending is, that's the actual horror. Like you choose all this, you go through little steps. It's not like something, something really happens in one second. No, you go deliberately, you go there, you follow, follow up and you choose to continue on um, this way to an uh, ending that is not pretty.

And like the ending is that the mind, the whole personality might end up completely Emptied out.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

That's all I'm going to say.

Leraje

Yeah. And he's. I think he does. He does that, um, a lot. I mean, just to make another. Yet another reference to Lovecraft. A lot of Lovecraft stories are structured in a way that the final paragraph or the final sentence is kind of like a, uh. Supposed to be a kind of like punchline.

It's supposed to make you get oh my God. But Ligotti does do that, but almost doesn't do that as well. It's kind of like. It's more like. It's a gradual step up of like horror rather than this kind of like final sucker punch of horror. Of horror.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Um, and it's quite, uh, In a way the Music of the Moon. M. That short story is quite similar to the one that I chose. In the Shadow of Another World. Yeah. And certainly in the way that they're structured.

Ligeia

We can, we can go there now because I don't think if we don't want to spoil this one. I don't know.

Leraje

Yeah. It's up to you.

Ligeia

If you have anything.

Leraje

Yeah, no, not really. I mean, we can sort of go back and forth between the two because they are quite similar.

Ligeia

Nobody's gonna tell us what to do.

Leraje

No, we do what we want, damn it.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

So in the Shadow of Another World is. That was my choice.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Leraje

And I chose it just because I really like the title. Basically. I've not. Before we did the first Gotti episode, I'd never read anything. No, I think I had read something by him, but it was a very long time ago, so I wasn't familiar with his work at all. And in the Shadow of Another World just sounds like a really cool story title.

Yeah. So I thought, yes, I'll choose that one. So the basic premise is again, we have our, uh, typical Lovecraftian Legotian. I don't know, I like it. Style of protagonist. It's a. It's a lone man who has, as Lige said earlier, is kind of like, maybe not bored of his life, but kind of like looking for something to fulfil him.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Um, and he hears about this place and it's. Historically it was, um. I don't know how to describe it, the lair. I don't know, the research lab somewhere in between the two. Uh, of this, um, occultist whose name I can't remember and stupidly didn't make a note of. Can you remember?

Ligeia

I will have a look. I know the new new owner's name is spare.

Leraje

Yeah. Yeah. SP. Yeah. Which is a great name.

Ligeia

Yeah, it's a good name.

Leraje

Just to describe the scene for you listeners. Ligeia has got a uh, paperback copy of Grimscribe and Dreams of a Dead Dreamer. And it is covered in post it notes.

Ligeia

All colours possible, all different colours. Like I will need a new book. I think so.

Leraje

Yeah. Uh, uh. Our uh, protagonist hunts down. Um. Well maybe hunts down is the wrong word. It's not necessarily a secret.

Ligeia  
Um.

Leraje  
This. This kind of like uh. It's uh. It's not quite a flat or a block of flats. And it's not quite a house either. It's got this kind of like strange. It's like a house but it's got this tower built into it. And it's a multi level tower. It's got lots of windows.

So he goes in and um, the current occupier, um, is a guy called Spare. And we gradually learn that the windows of this house are kind of like tuned to a shadow world, uh, or another world, hence the title, I guess. Shadow of Another World. And if their protective element is removed, then this other world starts to stream through the windows and starts to sort of like occupy the reality of this, of this house.

We're also kind of like led to think that this is in some way. That the process of doing this is in some way kind of like almost addictive. And that it kind of like imposes this other world, imposes its will on the people who live there and um, makes them want to remove the protective element to the windows so that this other world can manifest.

And this is great kind of like passage, uh, towards the. Towards the latter stages of it where Spare is kind of like um, ascending from level to level and removing the element, the protective element from each of these windows. Uh, and the narrator is describing the emergence of this other world level by level.

And it's just brilliantly written.

Ligeia  
Yes.

Leraje  
I don't think it's not within my powers to really describe exactly what it is, but it's. It's uh. And I wouldn't want to anyway because that's why we read these things. But um. It's very well done. But the reason I said that it's kind of similar to Music of the Moon is the setup, you know, the lone protagonist, the kind of like room or rooms in this case, uh, and this kind of like other world reaching out in some way to this world.

So in Music of the Moon it's via the music. In Shadow of Another World it's via these kind of like portals. Portals, Windows, whatever they are whatever they really are. It's possibly my favourite legotted story that I've read so far.

Ligeia  
I love it too.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
I. I think it's absolutely brilliant. Excellent. Fantastic. I have so many like. I think I would like to like underline the whole story. So we're taking away the like the purpose of the underlining but. Yeah. Oh, so many paragraphs that I. I just can't. Art to picture it is absolutely brilliant.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
It's so dreamy. Uncanny. The way he uses words to describe things. It's. It's a level that like really he deserves to be. To be celebrated for this. It's not



common. It's. It's like, you know, without him um, using those words, it could still be a horror story. But that's. It's just. He's a.

He's a mastermind. Absolutely brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. I love this story. I enjoyed it. I. I absolutely needed to go back and forth and read the descriptions of, you know, when the uh, the protection was taken from the windows and how slowly. It was not a jump scare. It was not like this action movie.

Oh now though, like the whole hell is gonna enter the room, which we know we're not scared of hell, but you know what I mean? It was a slow approach of something. You. You can't even tell what it is. It's like if you put a. Not a 3D or 5D glasses on you, but maybe 50D.

M it's so distorted and in so many realities at once. It's like. Oh, so this world we can see with our own human eyes is something, but the actual real world we can't see is something else. Um, and what we, what we live in is just a little dot at the. On the edge of a huge abyss.

Leraje

M if you ever read um, the short story from beyond by Lovecraft.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

Because it remind this one but in particular reminded me quite a lot of that.

Ligeia

Uh, very much very Lovecraftian. I don't know. I prefer this one though.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Because it's like more intimate. It's an. It's a house or whatever. Like it's a building and I really love horror that is. That is in a building. Like doors and rooms and they don't behave in the normal way. You know, when architecture becomes actual element of horror. So really interesting to me.

Leraje

Yeah. The mood it evokes or the way I sort of like, sort of experienced it in my head was kind of like inside the house while the protection was still on the windows. It was kind of like dusk everywhere.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

And then when the protection is removed, it's like the sun going down on a summer's evening. It's like this very slow.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Leraje

Progress towards darkness. But in this case it's not darkness. It's kind of like the, the imposition of this other world.

Ligeia

Yeah. That also, how you said it just now, I had this realisation that maybe the slowness of that is also very scary to me because it gives you the feeling of. Again, very Lovecraftian, like you are so small that this other world, that world's, um, aim is not you. Like, oh, oh, the protection is off.

Oh, we need to get this girl or this guy. No, it's just there. It's coming for you.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
Ah, whatever. You can't stop it. Whatever. Like we will get there when we get there. It's not like we are too big.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
To care about you. You. You are done. And we can take our sweet time. We are coming very slowly. And.

Leraje  
He does, he does that a lot. Ligotti. And he did it in the, um. Oh, I can never remember the name of it. The, the. The clown story that we read in the first.

Ligeia  
The Harlequin.

Leraje  
Yeah, Harlequin, um, was, ah, the, the.

Ligeia  
Last feast of the Harlequin.

Leraje  
Something like that.

Ligeia  
Hold on, hold on, hold on. We need, we need to. The last feast of Harlequin.

Leraje  
Yes, that's it. Yeah, yeah. And he did. He does that, uh, as you say, that kind of like slow reveal of this whole other universe, this whole of a world, this whole other reality which doesn't care about you or me or anybody else. It simply is there. And if we do a subterranean ritual, as in Harlequin, or if we go to this house, then this other world starts to leak through into ours.

Ligeia  
Yeah. Yes. Yeah. So you know what I mean? It was really scary. It's like, oh, now, now it's coming.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
Slowly. It's just.

Leraje  
Yeah. And that was kind of like there was. There was that. There was that point in the story when you realise it doesn't really matter. They can't really put the protection back on the windows at this point.

Ligeia  
Yeah.

Leraje

Uh, and that, that whole house or that kind of like that turret area of the house or whatever, however you want to describe it, is kind of like now permanently part of that other world.

Ligeia  
Yes.

Leraje  
And, um, there's no real going back.

Ligeia  
No. And the way that the guy, the despair guy, he knew. He was, he was a housekeeper, whatever. He knew exactly. And he still couldn't help himself. This is, this is also connecting somehow. With the, uh. The moon.

Leraje  
The music of the moon. Yeah. Yeah.

Ligeia  
Person.

Leraje  
Yeah. I mean, yes. Like we were saying in the music in the moon story, it's kind of like this. This. They. They've got this. It's not. I don't know if it's an addiction, if addiction is the right word, but it's kind of like this. This compulsion. They can't stop themselves.

Ligeia  
No. And they know. And they know they are going to something that is not going to end up well for them or for anybody around them, and they just can't help them. And it's very human. I think it's a very human. It's any addiction, you know, you struggle with. It's if you're drinking, if you like drugs, if you like smoking or even just like gaming, whatever addictions.

I guess we all have them. Maybe not. Maybe there are some lucky people. I do struggle with my sort of stuff, and I know how it feels. Yeah, I know. I have. I have my vape right here. Yeah.

Leraje  
Here we are with our vapes puffing away.

Ligeia  
Yeah.

Leraje  
So the third one that we chose at random is called Alice's Last Adventure.

Ligeia  
Yes.

Leraje  
Um, now this. Very different. I mean, that was. It's not. If I'd read that and not known it was Ligotti, I would have struggled to think it was a Legati story. It's. It's so different from his usual type of thing.

Ligeia  
As far as we know. I. I feel. Yeah, we. We haven't read all. I feel the same because it's not cosmic horror. It's not liminal. There is no building that is, um. Yeah, it's. It's. I'm happy that this one came about to be red because I was really. It got me thinking, what is this story about?

I was happy because I am a big lover of Alice in Wonderland, the whole story, like, since I was a child. But this story took it to a level that scared me.

Leraje

Yes. This is. This is Alice in Wonderland, the nightmare version of.

Ligeia

Oh, yeah.

Leraje

I mean, yeah, it's not the original. Is not the most comfortable and safe of stories, but this. This is definitely a step up, but, uh, just the way it was written. Well, I guess we should start with the fact that for the first time in my Ligotti reading experience, the protagonist is a, uh, female.

It's a. It's a woman.

Ligeia

It's a woman. Yeah.

Leraje

So, uh, it's written in a very modern style.

Ligeia

There's more story going on.

Leraje

It's almost like a traditional haunting style of story.

Ligeia

Elements of It. Yes.

Leraje

Yeah. So like you said, it's not about spooky windows or you know, cursed musical instruments or kind of like a room or a space. It's all centred around this person. Yeah, yeah. And her experiences. Yeah, I did enjoy it a lot.

Ligeia

Yeah. It's, it's a very interesting story and it brings up uh, very uncomfortable topics to think about in my opinion. This woman is middle aged, she is a writer, she writes books for children. She's kind of burned out at the point where supposedly she, she's writing this story. It's, it's written in like her voice and she feels burned out and she's struggling with reality blurring um, of it and with the stories she wrote and especially with one main character of her book which was inspired by her like childhood friend M or a person that was at that time he was a like child.

So she is at the point where she, she doesn't even enjoy reading her own work to kids anymore because she is really uncomfortable with herself where she is. And I think as I understood the story, she is going back uh, to her past when she was a child. She was a little girl and her dad was obsessed with Alice, the Louis Carroll's Alice.

And he was treating this daughter of his as Alice.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

And he was absolutely relentless. I would say like she actually lost an opportunity to, to get herself, to know herself and uh, like develop her own identity as her. All she, she was was this Alice figure that she was entertaining for, for her father.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia  
And since this point she was forever confused he. Her up.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
Completely up.

Leraje  
Yeah. I think it was kind of. I uh, completely agree with everything you just said about the relationship between Alice and her dad. This is not ever kind of like laid out literally, but it's kind of like uh, this is how uh, this is very clearly how it's kind of like intimated to their relationship.

Ligeia  
Sounds very sweet. It looks very sweet.

Leraje  
Yeah. But it's almost like she gets kind of like assembled by her dad to be a kind of like Alice, uh, standing. Then she kind of like moves away and almost becomes somebody else.

Ligeia  
Yeah.

Leraje  
And then towards like the, the latter half of the story is kind of like her being almost dismantled or taken apart very slowly.

Ligeia  
Yeah.

Leraje  
I think it's probably the, Although it's the most kind of like accessible and modern of his stories, it's almost the hardest to describe without giving everything away immediately.

Ligeia  
Yeah, yeah, yeah. But you know, the topics I, I, I uh, think are clear.

Leraje  
Absolutely.

Ligeia  
Dealing with. So I don't think we are giving it up completely, saying it's about ageing and the denial of death. Especially when you are struggling to. To actually understand who you are. And that, uh, everybody is gonna aim, age and get old or change and transform. And if you struggle and you are stuck.

I think they used a, uh. Great. I mean, he. He used, uh, this. He said it's a state of arrested development. I absolutely think that's on point. That's exactly what's going on.

Leraje  
Definitely for her. That's her to a T. Yeah.

Ligeia  
Yeah. So that's a horrible thing. And I don't think, like, there is any person who has this, you know, perfectly. How do I say it in their hands. We all struggle, uh, to some extent. But if you take it like this, like, let's say this was a real person. And like, remember in this book when she moved out and she was.

Her face was changing because she was becoming a woman. And her dad used to call her moon phase. My little moon face, because she was still, like, chubby little baby. And that starts changing. And she was so actually happy that her dad was not there anymore because she was like, I am not gonna disappoint him that my face is not a moon face anymore.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
Like, I'm so happy he can't see me. That was awful.

Leraje  
It was a, uh. Very disturbing. I don't think there was any. Was it? I don't know. I mean, we talked a lot, um. When we did the Exorcist and the Legion episodes. And we touched on it again when we did the first Legati episode.

Ligeia  
Yes.

Leraje  
I don't know if it's fair to say it was an abusive relationship.

Ligeia  
Yeah.

Leraje  
But it certainly wasn't very healthy for her.

Ligeia  
I think it was abusive. Maybe not sexual.

Leraje  
No.

Ligeia  
We don't know. There was. No. I don't think m. But there is. You know, there are many faces. To abuse and not, uh. To. To have a child and not allow them to be who they are and not support.

Leraje  
Yeah, that's true.

Ligeia  
Their personality and their gifts and their ideas, even physical appearance. To. To become who they are.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
And to put a mask on them and celebrate only that part of the child that wears the mask.

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
Appropriately. That's. I think that's awful.

Leraje  
It's kind of sad, isn't it, to think that the ultimate horror for her was not so much what was happening to her, but what her dad would think about what was happening to her.

Ligeia  
Yes.

Leraje  
She's kind of like, Jesus Christ, you can't even be scared on your own behalf.

Ligeia  
No. Well, Because I don't think she. You know how the umbilical cord exists. I think she had something like that with her dad and it was his fault.

Leraje  
Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia  
And he was never able to cut that. Like she was nobody. She had no mature identity, uh, of her own. And this is maybe when, you know, those little moments of spookiness were starting to happening. I think that was her part of her brain realising, okay, we are getting older. We are not able to wear that Alice mask anymore.

We are not a child. And there are other Alice's like, children.

Leraje  
Yeah. Ah.

Ligeia  
And they can be the Alice because there are still children. They can wear a mask because they are still. You're developing that. It's for a while. But in her case it wasn't for a while. It was forever.

Leraje  
Yeah. Yeah. And I think that that kind of. I don't know if she would have seen it this way, but certainly, uh, it was my opinion that the reason she wrote children's literature was to keep herself in that childlike state and sort of like, maintain that relationship with her father in that way.

Ligeia  
That was the safe space for her, I guess. Remember when she went and she saw the funeral happen and she saw the guy dead and she was actually a little bit angry that he has changed so much and he was not that, like, she was like, disappointed in him. Like, why are you looking like this now for?

She was awful. And how easy. Sorry. How easy it was when. When those people at the funeral started to, like, they confused her with somebody else and she didn't push back. She was like, oh, whatever. Another mask.

Leraje  
Yeah. That was very kind of jarring, that bit that, that kind of refuse, not a refusal. But there, uh. She was perfectly fine with being thought of as somebody else.

Ligeia  
She played along.

Leraje  
Yeah. Just to the. Even to the point where anybody else, I think most people would sort of like, just simply say, oh, sorry, you've made a mistake. I'm not actually here. I'm this person. But she was so comfortable at the idea of being somebody else.

Ligeia  
That was those. Those moments made this story really stand out for me.

Leraje

Um, yeah, I mean, I said the Shadow of Another World is my favourite Legati story so far. And it is. But I think. I think Alice's Last Adventure is certainly the most interesting Ligotti story that I've read so far.

Ligeia

So far? Yes. The, uh. Like it. It brings up questions that, well, each of us are going through. You know, we all age every year. You gain a year. It's like, okay, at some point in your life, you start actually noticing that, oh, uh, my birthday means plus a year. Slow down.

Leraje

I've reached the age where I've stopped counting.

Ligeia

Yeah. Ah. You know, like when you're 16, 17, it's like, yes, I'm gonna be one year older. It was so good, good. And then you reach like, oh, first, like, what is this? My last 20 something.

Leraje

I mean, for her, that was. That was literal, though. That was literally how she saw. I think she saw every. Every increment, uh, in her own age as kind of like a step further away from her dad and simply by being a step further away from her childhood.

Ligeia

Yeah, Very scary state of mind. So I think she just started seeing the mask cracking. That's what visions and stuff, or she's just. The sanity was not really.

Leraje

That's something I wanted to ask you about.

Ligeia

Yeah, that.

Leraje

That kind of what you just said about the mask of sanity there. Do you think this. What was happening to her was literal, or do you think she was just going slowly mad?

Ligeia

I think she was going slowly mad and also very sad. That's what I'm seeing. Like, maybe she. She. She actually saw it in her mind, you know, but it wasn't happening around her, I don't think. What do you think? I don't know. Maybe.

Leraje

No, no, I. I completely agree with you. I thought again. And, uh. A marked difference from Legati's usual stuff that. Well, of. Of the stuff I've read so far, anyway. This was something that was happening completely internally to that person. Um, so it wasn't like Shadow of Another World where, you know, there's another reality overlaying this one, or Music of the Moon, where there's another reality coming into this one, or even Harlequin, where they awaken another reality or, you know, etc.

Etc. Yeah, the old one, this one could almost be described as a psychological horror.

Ligeia

Very psychological. Yeah, I would say, like, completely psychological, because I don't think anybody around her had any problem. You know, this was happening to her, in her. And it was awful because I don't know how she was supposed to help herself, really. I don't know. It was so sad. Like, the last three words are, uh, help me, Father M.



It completely broke me, you know, I just wanted to help her, even though she might be, like, she was quite annoying.

Leraje

Yeah. I mean, on one level, you could read those last words as the words that any child. There's that famous scene in Saving Private Ryan when the, uh, medic is dying and he's calling out to his mum. So maybe on one level that's a natural thing for someone to say. To call out to a parent to help them.

But for her it was direct. I think, I think what you're implying is that it's kind of like a direct reference to someone who throughout their whole life has been totally incapable of dealing with life on their own terms and um, only been able to see things through the ability of their father to kind of like influence their life.

Ligeia

Yes.

Leraje

Is that fair do you think, or am I over?

Ligeia

No, no, no, it's exactly that. And I would. I took it a little bit further because I thought it's her saying she's giving up. Yeah, help me father. Um, that's it. Like M. You know, I just. Maybe I can read a few sentences from where she is describing. Exactly.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

What I think is the point without, I don't know, we spoil it already. I think she says something like he would have. Like her father. He would have perceived that my maturation was only skin deep. That I just superficially picked up the conventional behaviours of an ageing soul, which is nervous breakdowns, divorce, remarriage, alcoholism, widowhood, stoic, uh, tolerance of a second rate reality without destroying the Alice he loved.

You know, it was only skin deep. She really tried to live life but nothing was really going good.

Leraje

No, it seems, it feels like that, that that statement is kind of like her saying, oh yeah, I just put on this mask of adulthood.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

But really I just wanted to stay.

Ligeia

My dad's Alice and you know, Laraj, I don't know what your experience is with people, but what scares me is that I know people who are stuck forever in their child's brains. I don't know what you call it. I think there is a um. There is a term, maybe it's not really nice term for men who are.

What do you. I think it's very common now. M. It's not a crybaby. You know what I mean? Like um, person that is physically adult but they are still stuck somewhere and it just is weird.

Leraje

That sadly describes a lot of men. Um, you mean like.

Ligeia

Yeah, I know women are like that. It's not just, you know.

Leraje

Like an incel type of person.

Ligeia

Not only that, but like it's not easy for them to become adults and they're constantly looking for adventure and just like every day they need to be like the. The young version of themselves. Which is fine, is good. But if you don't have the balance like uh, okay, I'm 40 now. Maybe. Yeah, I could just calm down and accept it, and it's fine.

It's not because I. For me, I am trying to see this middle age. Not crisis, but climax. You know, it's good. Just be yourself, and you don't have to prove the world that you're not ageing or.

Leraje

Yeah, it's. It's. I mean, I know on, um, Gospod an episode or two ago, you talked about, um, the substance. It's kind of like the same basic message of being unable to accept not just ageing, Grace, the idea of ageing gracefully, but just change in general.

Ligeia

Yeah. Transformation, changing your opinions, whatever.

Leraje

Yeah. I mean, it's inevitable. We're all gonna age. We're all gonna. You know, I mean, you can slap on as much night cream and sunk and day cream and.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Uh, you know, under eye concealer, uh, or whatever. You know, you can do all these.

Ligeia

Things, but, you know, you know, the mask is gonna slip one day.

Leraje

Well, that, you know, time marches on. Regardless of how much plastic surgery you've had, uh, you're still gonna get to, uh, you know, your 70s. That's still gonna happen.

Ligeia

Yeah. Um, it doesn't see the difference between people. It's just happening to everybody. And as you said, I. I think I. I made a note. Like, is the. I made a note here. That is the complete unravelling of the. We tell ourselves and others about who we are. And so I think this was the visions she had.

And, you know, we. We all have to have certain. We enter some Personas. You can't, um, function without that. But no, you, um, know. You know, and you can still go and be yourself. It's not that. What I mean, but if the mask is the only reality you can actually function with, that is a scary, scary thing.

Leraje

I think you're right. I mean, all of us have, uh, maybe present different things to different people in our lives, and that's completely normal. Yeah. Yeah. Uh, as you. As you say it, that. That inability to present any kind of element of truth to the world, no matter who it is you're talking to, is not healthy.

Ligeia

It's not healthy, and it's gonna kick your ass at some point. You know, it's nothing wrong with mask. I love masking myself and like, entering other personalities. I love playing with this idea, you know?

Leraje  
Yeah.

Ligeia  
And it's been with people. It's very human. Like Venetian mask or like, you know, any culture, Asian, ancient cultures, they all had masks. And we play with this idea.

Leraje  
Yeah. I mean, we are Satanists do that.

Ligeia  
Oh, every day. Yes. We do we do?

Leraje  
Yeah. Literally and metaphorically. That is the kind of like that. That is a very normal thing that, you know, that that voluntary assumption of a temporary mask is kind of like, I think, pretty normal.

Ligeia  
That's normal. And when you do it with intention, you know, there's intention. There is some ritual. Yeah. Something that has some time limit. Okay. I'm gonna wear this mask for this occasion to do this. I have this intention. I want to feel certain way. I want to do certain thing. And I want to enter.

Enter some other parts of me that I don't feel comfortable with sharing. When I don't wear a mask. It's normal, I think.

Leraje  
Yeah. But she was unable to. Everything to her was a mask. Apart from her childhood with her dad, I think.

Ligeia  
Yes. Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Leraje  
And that's unhealthy.

Ligeia  
That's the only personality she was supposed to have, and she couldn't keep it. Oh, this story really is something.

Leraje  
Yeah. Yeah. It's certainly, as I said earlier to me, his most interesting. I enjoyed in the Shadow of Another World more as a story, but I. But I did think Alice's last adventure was certainly the most interesting. And it's definitely the story that I've. That I've thought about and stayed with me of his the longest so far.

Ligeia  
Maybe it's also because it's very realistic. Like, it could happen. It is happening to people. Not in this. Like, they're not Alice, but you know what I mean. How often do you enter a house with, uh, you know, protection? You know, that story is very, like, fantastical. And, you know, it's not real, but this is sort of real.

Leraje  
So Lytia and I are going to kind of, like, make it a sort of ad hoc, when we feel like it, thing to do short stories a bit more often. Um, and it'll probably

be just the two of us. Um, and we'll. Obviously, we'll still be doing the main books as well, which we'll do with, uh, the other folks.

But, uh, yeah, I think we're gonna. We're gonna try. Because I think you and I particularly both really enjoy short stories.

Ligeia

Yes, we do. So we found this interest in certain books, certain authors we're gonna explore more. Maybe something we haven't read. And we want to continue doing this. Like, you know, our little duo.

Leraje

Okay. Right. Well, I think we've. We've exhausted all the possibilities for these three stories that we could possibly talk about.

Ligeia

So wait for another one. We don't know yet what's gonna be read.

Leraje

Uh, we'll get it when we feel like it.

Ligeia

Yeah. We have to sit and decide.

Leraje

All right. Okay. So there'll be, uh, another main episode coming out at some point in the next couple of weeks, and that'll be.

Ligeia

Left Handed Darkness, which we're still reading. Yeah. So I think we said everything. We hope you enjoyed listening to this. Uh, rumbling. I hope you could feel our love and passion for these stories, for the author, and for doing this podcast for you. And if you have any suggestions or I don't know what, leave a comment somewhere.

Leraje

We'll get to it.

Ligeia

Yeah. Follow us. And please come back. We have more to come. And hail Satan.

Leraje

Hail Satan. From me, too. Bye.

Ligeia

Bye.