

The Devil's Library Episode 9 – “Winter Tide”

[Intro Music]

Leraje

Welcome to another episode of the Devil's Library. Uh, with me tonight, I have got Pike.

Pike

Hail Satan.

Leraje

And Ligeia.

Ligeia

Hail Satan.

Leraje

And, uh. Lithos.

Lithos

Yeah, Dagon, Hail Satan.

Leraje

Not a random quote there by Lithos, because today we are talking about the book Winter Tide, uh, by Ruthanna Emrys. I'll give you a little bit of introduction about the book before we start. Winter Tide is a sequel to H.P. Lovecraft's novella The Shadow Over Innsmouth. In that novella, there is a race of amphibious humans called the Deep Ones who lived in the fictional Atlantic coastal town of Innsmouth in New England in 1928.

Following the events of Lovecraft's novella, Innsmouth's inhabitants are rounded up by the United States government and imprisoned in concentration camps in the interior of the country. Standard Lovecraft difference equals grotesque and evil and must be punished. Emry's Winter Tide. She reframes Lovecraft's xenophobic take on the Deep Ones, presenting them not as inhuman monsters, but as sympathetic members of the human family, equal with the rest of humanity.

And instead of Lovecraft's evil cult, Emrys changes their worship of the mythos entities to a religion known as Aeonism. When Winter Tide takes up their story, the captured Deep Ones have been joined by Japanese Americans who were actually not fictionally interred in concentration camps after the attack on Pearl Harbour.

Pike

It looks like we have a bit of a 50, 50 split in how we feel about the book.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Pike

And quite possibly the critics are even divided on what they're critical about, although I don't know that we shall find out. Let's start with something nice.

Lithos

Well, as, um, someone who has read an awful lot of Lovecraft, especially when I was younger, and has enjoyed the whole kind of mythos and the universe he created, um, and later on found out that he was a thoroughly unpleasant racist and seen the bigotry in his stories. In hindsight, I. I really enjoyed the take on, um.

On, um. On taking what. What was his universe expanding on it? Because it's quite a long book and Lovecraft only ever, I believe, only ever wrote one thing that would count as a novel, and even that was fairly short. I think the case of Charles Dexter Ward was the only thing he wrote that counts as a novel.

A lot of it is short stories or novellas. Um, so she's taken all of that mythos and expanded on it and actually made. Made it from the point of view of the. In Lovecraft's view, and I, uh, used Lovecraft's words here, the degenerate half breeds that the fish people were. So in his universe, there's an awful lot, and you mentioned it earlier, there are an awful lot of creatures that are, um, sort of semi human or non human, uh, and they are all sort of treated as disgusting, filthy people who just want to bring about the downfall of all of humankind by calling on elder gods.

It kind of wasn't obvious to younger me at the time when I read it, but like, looking at it now, yes, it is rife with bigotry and racism. All of his writings. It was nice to have someone actually take that the good parts that the imagination, the mythos, the wild ideas, um, that the good parts of Lovecraft, the idea that humanity is nothing in the greater scheme of the cosmos and will eventually disappear and it won't make much difference to take all of that and actually turn it into something which is not rife, uh, with bigotry.

Leraje

Yeah, I mean that's, that's what I like about it as well. It's, um, it's nice to be able to enjoy those kind of like cosmic ideas and settings and races and people without thinking, oh God, this book was written by a fucking massive racist and his fucking massive racism is really, really apparent and just kind of like redeeming and looking again, not even redeeming, re examining, uh, one of those races that he wrote about. In the Shadow Over Innsmouth was really nice. It was really good. And I really like the idea of bringing in what happened to Japanese Americans during the Second World War as well and tying those two things together just to make the point, you know, fairly obvious that, uh, it wasn't just the Nazis who had concentration camps, it was other people too.

Yeah, I thought that was really clever.

Lithos

So now the less positive aspects. Come on, hit us. Who didn't like it.

Pike

Do we agree that it's a young adult novel? Uh, that it's aimed primarily at teenagers?

Lithos

I can, I can see that.

Ligeia

Like that it did feel to me. I'm not sure what it's being presented, if it. Is it being sold like that? I don't know.

Leraje

No, it's certainly not categorised as young adult. No.

Ligeia

Well, we make our.

Leraje

But I think it's, it's entirely right that it could be seen as that. Yeah, I can see what you, you would think that, Pike. Yeah, definitely.

Pike

I, I do read some young, uh, adult literature. I don't. I'm not automatically critical, uh, of that, but this, this definitely felt like that. And another

thing that it felt like to me was fanfiction. I wonder if the author, uh, dabbled in fanfiction because there are a lot of, um, moments here. A lot of fan fiction tropes such as, um, you know, the way the characters are introduced.

There aren't a lot of dimensions to each character. They're kind of. This is a main character. This is their group of merry sidekicks. There is this person. You can describe each character in one sentence. They represent some particular idea. And you see that a lot in fanfiction because there just isn't enough space to do that.

But in a novel this size, I thought that was. I didn't think that was a great thing. Also, the way, uh, people have to, uh, find something for themselves to do, like jobs or something at the end that gets resolved and some relationships have to get resolved. There have to always be running some kind of, like, strands of romance.

I see that both in fan fiction and in young adult literature, you always have to have the storylines built in and they felt a little artificial to me here.

Leraje

I do take your point about the second one, um, the romance. However, I would. I would disagree with you very strongly about the protagonist being one dimensional.

Pike

Okay.

Leraje

To me, anyway, I, I thought her grief and her lack of confidence and her unsureness about how to proceed and her constant questioning of herself. I mean, there was this part, uh, of the book, one of the. I do think you're right about the sidekick characters, by the way. They aren't very well developed.

But, um, one of the sidekicks, uh, whose name is Audrey. No, it's not Cecile or Celeste, but maybe it should have been, uh, Audrey, it gets revealed, is a, uh, member of a race that have got a particularly bad rep. And all the other characters are like, oh, shit, she's. And then somebody.

And I can't remember which character is. I think it might have been Charlie Day sort of like says, yeah, but you. That's what the FBI think about the deep ones. So who's really in a position to sort of like, judge? Um, yeah, I do agree with you, pike, that some of the. Well, most of the sidekick characters were literally sidekick characters or caricatures.

Like the dean of the university was a caricature. Dawson was a bit of a caricature, but no, I thought Aphra was particularly well developed.

Pike

On all the politics, um, and issues of political correctness, for want of a better phrase. She was very deliberate and I did very well. I think she was deliberately trying to be the opposite of what Lovecraft, uh, was sometimes. Um, I think the only moment where. Where I thought a bit what was, um, when they are discussing, um, childbearing and sort of continuing the, um, race and how they had got to procreate.

And then Caleb says, oh, yeah, and then if Dawn gets pregnant, she can quit her job. That was the only moment where I.

Ligeia

Yeah, I had to put it down at that moment for a second. I'm like, no, I can't do this. This is upsetting me.

Leraje

This was 1940s America.

Lithos

Yes. Yeah. I think a lot of it has to be put in the historical context, which I understand that, but, yeah, that. That's not necessarily what the author believes, but that's.

Ligeia

I know, I know. I think she was really trying to actually criticise everything that was wrong with Lovecraft. And for me, I struggled exactly with that point. She was trying too hard. For me, it was just like, basically the whole book to me. Felt like she made a lot of points before she created the, uh, plot and everything.

What exactly was wrong with Lovecraft? And she covered each of them and it felt a little bit too straightforward to me. I struggled with, like, okay, what is actually new? Because I'm not sure if I'm saying it right. Like, if I take somebody's work and I just take what's wrong or what I hate and react to that, that's not really bringing that much newness.

You know, it's more reacting. And I felt like that. And I struggled to read it, uh, to finish it, because there were too many characters for my little brain. I couldn't follow them completely. I was getting a little bit sidetracked every time there was a new name and I didn't connect to her.

I don't know why I couldn't connect to this. I really tried. I tried. But maybe her reaction to what was going on was so different from what, how I think, uh, which obviously that book was not meant for me, but do you know what I mean? Like, there was not one situation where she would.

She would react in a way. I would be like, yeah, okay, I understand why. No, I always had to go like, but why are you questioning this now? There are Russian Russians and you are. You're dealing with this. And I'm like, what the heck? Do you know what I mean? There was a big threat and it was never actually that.

That was very weak to me because that was a threat.

Pike

It didn't go anywhere.

Ligeia

It didn't go anywhere. And I was waiting for that to, like, okay, that. That's a threat. Everybody who came close to Russia or, like, politically or Being threatened. I can come from a country that is very close to Russia. Maybe that's why I'm overreacting or something. But, like, that's a threat.

Pike

Hello.

Lithos

Yeah, but. I know.

Ligeia

Questioning.

Lithos

I think the point of view here is that from her point of view, she doesn't give two fucks about Russia or the States or anyone else.

Ligeia

Why was it there then? You know, like it didn't really go.

Lithos

Anywhere to kind of present.

Leraje

Spectre as an FBI agent is interested in that and he thinks he can use. I know, I know, but Lithos is right. I mean, the. The deep ones, the Marshes, the rest of the and all the other entities they don't give two shits about.

Pike

She does. She gets really excited about it, about. She's not at the beginning. But then once she realises, uh, what the implications could be of, um. Body thieving.

Ligeia

She.

Pike

That's where she. That's where she gets very invested.

Lithos

Yeah. Because she's also worried that the Americans are going to use it. She's equally worried that the Americans are going to use it as well as the fact that the Russians are. Could use it. And it's more to do with. No, this is. In. In their culture, this is completely forborn. This is like.

You do not do this. There are severe penalties like death to. To actually using that kind of magic. So she gets. The way I saw it is she gets very involved because she. She doesn't want the Russians or the Americans or any other people of the air. Ah. I. E. What we would call humans, to.

To use it. Uh, and that's why I think it's quite interesting because I think that the thing here is, uh, a question I'd like to ask. How many of us were sort of really into Lovecraft before he was not.

Pike

Really into, but familiar.

Ligeia

I was. I love his work. It took me a few years to understand all the. That was hidden there. I was not really paying attention. But then once you see it, you see it, it's everywhere. So I felt a little bit bad. But I still think he created. If we forget about all that absolute disaster of a man, the world he.

Worlds he created are. That's a beautiful horror for me. It's dreadful, it's atmospheric, it's. I want to go back and I. I know this book was not a horror book. I understand. Or I hope nobody thinks this was a horror book. Would you agree with me? It wasn't.

Pike

It wasn't.

Lithos

No. No.

Ligeia

It was definitely weird fiction, right?

Lithos

Yeah. Yeah. It's.

Ligeia

Maybe that's why I struggle, because Taking Lovecraft. And I was, you know, I was still in that Lovecraftian dreadfulness and I was hoping to get like, okay, get a revenge in his style. Hell make me shake and you know, like spit blood please. And it was just so kind. That book was so kind.

It was, I need to say it was really nice how people, uh, or these beings were trying to be nice to each other and respect each other and like they build a little family. But for me, I couldn't believe it. It was too pretty. It was very pretty. It was maybe. The book was maybe more poetic for me, like as a little piece of poetry.

I would, I would give it that. Like it was pretty. It made me feel good about people, about the goodness in, in people and how they can connect and like follow the same good aim goal that was not greedy or not destructive or whatever. But I just, I just couldn't see the Lovecraft anymore.

Leraje

I suppose in one way you could look at it as a kind of like thought experiment. What would happen if.

Ligeia

Absolutely, yes.

Leraje

What would happen if you took, uh, the Lovecraftian roots of something and spun it on its head?

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Uh, and I think that's, that's probably what this is.

Lithos

Mhm.

Leraje

One thing you, I think it was, uh, who said you were kind of like, uh, annoyed by Aphra's kind of like indecision and sort of constant questioning.

Ligeia

I don't know if I'm saying the right words, what I'm feeling. But I really think if I and my brother, if we were the last two beings of one race with all these secrets and all that absolute disaster that happened to my race, I would just be going ballistic. I wouldn't be asking anything.

I would be going and doing stuff. I'm not even sure if to. To help my race. I don't know. I don't know. She was very kind and very slow. It was a slow book for me. I wanted to be like, okay, this is happening, come on.

Pike

It wasn't a thriller that you might think it is if you read the back cover first.

Leraje

Yeah, no, it's certainly not fast paced at all. I think for her a lot of that is down to the fact that she's massively, massively traumatised.

Ligeia

But that would create the engine in me like of fucking hell, you know, but we would.

Lithos

Would it though? If you'd been in concentration camp for 20 odd years and. And then had to hide your identity because you are still looked down upon, I. I think that would kind of like drive the spark out of most people that I think that's the way I saw it. It was like a book, you know.

Yeah. She was. She'd been locked up for, you know, a couple of decades in there, uh, and seen all her people die and then finally got out. And, you know, maybe it was trying.

Ligeia

To be more realistic. But then if you take how they were still getting these night missions into the library, that was so unrealistic to me. I had to actually smile like, no way, guys. This is a no way second time. And you are getting in there like, what do you mean?

Pike

It was very Harry Potter.

Ligeia

So, you know.

Lithos

Yeah, that was a bit balance. Yes. The night. The night kind of rage.

Ligeia

I. I think a book can go a little bit more crazy. And she was really kind. There's, uh. It's a great book. I haven't written a book. I still think it's great. I struggled because maybe of my, you know, I have a hot head. I react in a way. Maybe it's not healthy, probably.

I feel fucking. No, no. I really just think we need it.

Leraje

Ligeia, just think of her as one of those Ligotti type characters who likes to morosely wander around, um, doing nothing.

Ligeia

You know, I wrote a little note about how I compare it to Ligotti, if you want to know. Uh, so people, readers who come to weird Fiction for the philosophical unease of someone like Thomas Ligotti, may find this novel operates in a very different register. Where Ligotti strips away comfort and meaning, Winter Tide is invested in restoration, belonging and moral coherence, which.

Fair enough. Maybe I was just not expecting that because I think this is more. This book is creating a world where everything is actually very peace oriented. Oriented, orientated. Everybody says it differently.

Leraje

Well, I think that the kind of like the dichotomy there is. You've m. Got in the two siblings, you've got Aphra, who very much wants to do things quietly and, uh, approach things slowly and think about things and is too, possibly too indecisive and doesn't actually get much done. And then on the other hand, you've got Caleb, who's like, I'm gonna fucking rip everything.

Ligeia

Maybe I'm Caleb. I'm Caleb, actually.

Leraje

Hey. But. And by the end of the novel, you know, their own granddad had said to them, look, maybe it's best if the books just stay in the fucking university because at least they'll look after them. How are you going to look after thousands and thousands of books so even that doesn't get resolved.

Ligeia

Yeah, and that was so sad. I was hoping for this library to be there and like. But then they asked, okay, so how are we going to protect and which books are going to be like separated and secured and how. Oh, didn't think about that. Hm. I just really wanted that library.

Leraje

I just felt very sorry for Aphra all the way through that book. I just thought she, she was so deeply traumatised by what had happened to her that she, and all she really wanted was a set of people around her who would legitimately share her religion.

Lithos

Or accept her religion. Yeah, accept, yeah, just accept her uh, as another human, effectively. Because the three races that are mentioned in the book are the People of the Air, who are short lived and what we would call humans. So us and then the people of the Deep, um, uh, who, who then they kind of start out as humans and then it comes to the point where they, they evolve or they transmute into people that then go and live in the water and live for an awfully long time.

Ligeia

Which is fucking cool, by the way.

Pike

Yep.

Lithos

And then there's the People of the rock, the mad ones who, who kind of like live under the earth and are completely insanely, um, kind of violent and uh, unsteady and unreliable.

Ligeia

Can I just ask, when you are saying it, are we sure that these People of the Rock or whatever, are we sure we know that the Earth, they are actually really bad or is this a misconception? I never understood that was kind of the point.

Leraje

The accepted wisdom of the mythos is that the people of the Earth are completely insane and glory in dishing out pain and misery. But like I said earlier, I think, I think it was Charlie Day. Well, I think that's one of the points of the novel. They're kind of like saying, here we are presenting this as a redemption of Lovecraft's work about not judging people and even the main characters are judging people.

Ligeia

Exactly.

Leraje

Yeah.

Lithos

Yeah, but that's the point.

Leraje

That's not kind of like, that's not a failing in the book.

Ligeia

So I'm not, I'm not completely crazy. Okay, good.

Leraje

No, no, no, no, not at all. I mean I think they, definitely, they deliberately draws that parallel. She says, she's saying, look, uh, we should not judge the Deep One so badly because it's just their religion. But then even they, even Aphra and Caleb are judging the people of the Earth badly. Yeah, but until one of the other characters says something like.

And I can't remember the exact query, but it's something like, well, you know, that's how the FBI and Everybody else looks at you. So maybe we should think again.

Lithos

Yeah, yeah. It's um. And I think if there's one, the, the main issue I had with this book is it does really spring out as the. The first serious novel that the author has written and that maybe she tried a bit too hard because there are too many seams in there. Right. There's the.

The US government are absolute fucking bastards. There's a Second World War, there's the treated Japanese, there's. Then there's all the Lovecraft mythos. Then there's um, there's all. You know, it's just like.

Pike

10 identical rituals where they sit in a room.

Ligeia

They're quite similar. Yeah.

Lithos

But it's like almost like trying a bit too hard to fit all this in, you know, and it's like just pick a couple of those themes and elaborate on them rather than trying to stuff them all into this book. Which I really enjoyed. I really enjoyed the book and my feeling from it is this is an author with a lot of a promise who has put too much subject matter into the first novel.

She's obviously got a lot of ideas and has tried to put them all in and it's like sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. However, I like the book. I really enjoyed it. I like her style and I kind of like look forward to seeing what she's going to do next is the way I feel about it.

Leraje

Well, uh, there's a precursor short story and there's a sequel. Um, and she's also written other non, uh, Innsmouth related books as well.

Pike

People who liked it. Um, I understand you enjoy the fact that you were able to brush against Lovecraftian universe and not cringe and that's pleasant. What would you say was something that you got from it, you know, for yourself, that that was a value?

Leraje

Um, for me I saw it, you know, without wanting to sort of like touch upon a cliche here, but I saw it in terms of our type of Satanism. To be honest, uh, everybody thinks Satanists are baby sacrificing. You uh, know, evil awful people. And uh, we're not, we're just not people who believe in God basically.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Leraje

And that kind of like deliberate reversal of uh, the accepted norms of a particular universe is something that I particularly enjoyed.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Pike

Mhm.

Ligeia

Okay. That's very pretty.

Lithos

Yep, I got, that's very pretty. Kind of got much of the same thing from it in, in the sense that what she is looking for is acceptance of her race, uh, of

people and her uh, religion and everything else. There's a lot. Sorry, There's a lot of birds being flipped here between two other participants.

There's rude gestures being exchanged.

Leraje

Sorry, sorry, sorry.

Ligeia

With all my love. You know what I meant?

Leraje

Yeah, yeah.

Ligeia

It is a. It is a very pretty feeling that you created with this. Like, associating that with us didn't occur to me, so I thought it was pretty and, uh. Maybe it's like, too weak a word.

Leraje

No, no, it's. It's right. I knew what you meant. It just made me laugh the way you phrased it.

Ligeia

Yeah, it's fine. I don't mind it. We can laugh at me.

Lithos

Oh, that's awfully sweet. Oh, dear. Dum. Yeah.

Leraje

I think what I'm taking from this chat is that Lithos and I are both evolved emotionally enough to appreciate the underdog story. Whereas you two.

Ligeia

I will tell you, you know, what is the problem? We are just women. We don't get it.

Pike

Yeah. We are not in touch with our feelings.

Ligeia

If it's not about procreating and giving birth to kids, I'm not interested. I don't understand anything else, so.

Leraje

But it kind of.

Pike

But this was about propaganda.

Leraje

Kind of was, yeah.

Ligeia

I understood those parts. I understood those lines in the book. Hell can we see?

Lithos

I don't. I don't think.

Pike

Uh.

Lithos

I didn't think Aphra was even remotely interested in procreating. That was something that was forced on her by. By her grandfather who came from the deep. And, you know, all the people in the deep who were kind of like her brother was more keen, you know, being the sort of archetypal male character of the time.

She. She wasn't interested. Like I say, she was looking for acceptance and. And somewhere to live her life the way she wanted to with people who understood and accepted her. And I saw the same parallel between that and. And modern Satanism, which is. I don't want everyone to become a Satanist. I'm not really that mad about spreading it all over the world or whatever.

Satanism is what Satanism is. I just want us to be accepted for what we are and for people to stop making assumptions. And I saw the parallel in that. You know, it's like. However.

Leraje
Oh, God.

Ligeia
Continue. Continue. It was very pretty.

Leraje
Ligeia has nailed the patronization tonight.

Lithos
Yes, she has. She has. Yeah.

Ligeia
I didn't mean to. I didn't. No.

Leraje
Oh, dear.

Lithos
I, uh, mean, apart from that. What I got from it was. Oh, it was entertaining. I. I don't think it's a deep book like that. Explores Deep seams. It is what it, what I think she intended to be, which was entertainment, you know, for people who like Lovecraft. A bit of like, there's a bit more Lovecraft and a bit, A bit of a different spin on it.

And that's the way I read it and that's the way I thought it would be and that's the way it was. And I did not look for anything particularly deeper in it. Didn't expect anything and didn't get it. It entertained me. Uh, and there's nothing wrong with that. Some books can just be.

No, of course, you know, imaginative entertainment. And I would honestly say Lovecraft is exactly the same. There's nothing particularly deep about Lovecraft. It's entertainment.

Ligeia
Yeah.

Leraje
I mean there were definite parts of the novel that were quite clearly spinning their wheels quite a bit. Um, the bits with fucking off to the library every night was getting a bit trying. But like Lithos says, this is not something. The premise of this book is. Like I said earlier, it's a thought experiment.

What would happen if we took the situation as real but turned the perspective on its head, um, based on that presumption. But going back to, uh, this idea of the procreation thing, I thought that was quite well handled. Her grandfather and the rest of the elders were saying to her, look, you've got to procreate.

Cause we've got to keep our race going. We've got to keep, you know, we don't want to die out. And she felt the enormity of that and sort of like, said, I'll think about it. But by the end of the novel she'd come to a kind of like, compromise with them where she was going to seek out other people, uh, who may be kind of like half deep ones or, you know, and might be scattered around the country.

And I thought that was quite well done.

Lithos

Semi fishies, semi fish.

Ligeia

Less deep.

Leraje

Only one webbed hand.

Lithos

Yes.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Lithos

Only slightly weird eyes or whatever. Yeah, she definitely. That was it, you know, that she. I saw her as the sort of strong character in the end who actually in, in. And it was made clear that in, in their society you respect your elders, especially if they've gone into the deep. And she argued with her grandfather, she argued with the archpriest.

Well, she, she, she kind of like was not as respectful to the archpriest as she should have been. And in the end she was like, like Leraje has said, she went, well, I, um, know I'm not going to shag any of these dirty air people just to Procreate our race. I'll try and find if there's any others.

Pike

What did you make of. I think it was Aphra. I'm not 100 sure, but I think it was her. There's a moment where she says, oh, um, or whoever was reading Plato there and go, oh, Plato says, uh, children should be brought up by the state.

Leraje

Yeah.

Ligeia

Where did that come from?

Lithos

Like, I couldn't understand.

Leraje

That was a bit random.

Ligeia

It was because they never came back to that. And I don't know. Like, yeah, it takes a village to raise a child, which is not the same.

Lithos

But, like, I think it comes back to, you know, what I was saying about. She was trying to fit too many things in.

Pike

Right.

Ligeia

Yeah. And this is what I. What I think, like, if we compare it in a way to, uh, Annihilation. I think if she made like a trilogy or more books that will go deeper and slowly, slowly, like, introduce these worlds and all the conflicts, I think I would have enjoyed it much more.

Or make it shorter and just like, get, uh, rid of some of that. Because for one book it was too much. I. Well, I was able to follow, but it was a little bit like, I would like to linger on this little conflict more. And she already went somewhere else. And I'm like, well, okay, I.

Are we coming back to that? And we didn't. So you know what I mean? But, yeah, like. Like Annihilation, like, the descent to that was slow. And that worked. It was.

Leraje

Yeah. Annihilation gave up its secrets slowly and carefully.

Ligeia

Yeah.

Leraje

Whereas this book tends to go and just go. And there they all are. And you've got.

Ligeia

Yeah. For all that was going on, I think that would have worked. More books, probably shorter.

Leraje

Yeah. But I think that might be the fault of whoever edited it rather than.

Ligeia

Okay. Yeah. Editors.

Pike

I wonder. I wonder if it's the editor or the author. But my actual major, my main complaint was the writing itself. So I found it hard to read. Because of the writing. M. It reads like somebody, um, using one of those programmes where you write, you know, you write and then you can click on the word and it gives you simple synonyms and then you select a synonym.

Because there is a very wide, very rich vocabulary, but it's sometimes misused. Sometimes the way it's used is not how it's used in, um, normal speech. And then there are. Occasionally a word will crop up. Like there's, uh, a point where a word sojourn, uh, as a verb, crops up and when it happens again, couple of times in one paragraph and then it's never seen again.

So it's like the way, um, those words are used as well felt a little artificial to me.

Lithos

Yeah, I did, I did have to get the dictionary out on more than one occasion. But I think this was actually a reflection of Lovecraft's style in some ways because he was heavy on the weird words that. What the fuck is that? And just chucking in words that weren't in common usage, you know.

Did anyone ever heard of Eldritch before or after Lovecraft? You know, uh, there's kind of like. So I saw that, I saw that kind of as a deliberate using certain Lovecraftian tropes in the writing. I, uh, could be wrong. I think you're probably, it's probably more likely that you're right on that front.

Pike

Like a couple of times I did shout at the book. I was like, you can't say that. That's not where it's like, I don't know. Uh, I can give you an example of some sort where it says, for example, I delivered Audrey to her dorm just before curfew, hoping that I appeared a reasonable facsimile for a chaperone.

But you can't use the word facsimile that way. Facsimile is a copy. Or say another one where she says, um, Neko or Nico met us, found the aspirin, opined that we illustrated every possible reason to avoid practising magic and pro forma invited Audrey to sleep in our room again. I understand what she's saying, but you don't use the word pro forma in that it doesn't.

I don't think that collocation exists.

Leraje
Mhm.

Lithos
Yeah.

Pike
And I don't know, it doesn't seem sometimes language, you know, can be used that way. You mess with it for creative purposes. But it was in such, um, sort of run of the mill sentences that it felt more like a mistake.

Leraje
Um, so yeah, it kind of like jarred you out of the story.

Pike
Yeah, yeah, it did for me.

Leraje
That's valid. I mean, that's valid criticism. I think, you know, people, an author's word choice is often something that can jar me out of a book as well. Um, I think you're right about the pro forma thing, but I think you're wrong about the facsimile thing.

Pike
Okay.

Leraje
I've seen other authors use that phrase a lot of times. And even if the word doesn't have.

Pike
Its literal meaning to mean replacement rather.

Leraje
Than replica or as a stand in to sort of like just indicate you know, I mean, sometimes we're. Particularly when a novel is sort of like, written in first person. I. I don't think we can assume that, ah, all first person characters, uh, are as eloquent as Humbert Humbert in, um, uh, Lolita.

You know, maybe they've not been taught very well. Maybe they're using the wrong words and the author's deliberately making the wrong words. I don't know. Maybe that's just an excuse. I've just made up on the spirit of the moment. Who knows? Probably that last one.

Lithos
I think the stylistic choices I did not have any problem with, with her writing style. I quite enjoyed it. Um, but I see what you're saying, because that's a very personal thing. And it's like one of the issues I had with Rosemary's Baby is I thought his writing style was terrible. Um, I did not like it at all.

Now a lot of people disagree with me. I think that's where it's very personal and an author's writing style can put you. It didn't put me off, but I can see why it would put you off. Yes.

Pike

And it was the opposite of Rosemary's Baby. Right. The language there was very bare bones, whereas here it's quite verbose.

Leraje

Yeah. I think that the language choices in, uh, and the word choices in Rosemary's Baby, as we said at the time, were used because he envisaged it when he started writing it as a screenplay, uh, or something for the theatre or something like that. Whereas I think the word choices in this were faulty at times because the author was trying, as Lithos said, to kind of like, emulate that kind of like Lovecraftian over-verbosity.

That kind of like, over description. That kind of like what Ray Bradbury used to call purple prose. You know, when it. When it's just too much.

Pike

Another young, uh, adult fiction trope is where every sidekick gets some kind of secret powers. Let me develop. Yes, develop.

Lithos

Yeah, it is.

Leraje

Yeah.

Lithos

I mean, there is certainly something to be said that it is, uh, a type of fanfic. It's a type of fanfic to. To Lovecraft. Yes.

Pike

Oh, that's right. I haven't thought about it that way.

Lithos

M. But of course that's. That's what. That's what I took from it. You know, this is. This is a Lovecraft fandom thing. And this is. Yeah, I. I think I'm gonna enjoy reading it. And I did. Just taking it as that. Literally, just as that. This is the Lovecraft universe expanded and looked at from a different direction.

By a completely different author. Hell, uh, give me more Lovecraft stuff of this type. I'll lap it up.

Leraje

There's a whole subsection or sub genre of writers that do Lovecraftian stuff, which by that definition are also fan fiction writers. And um, you know, I'm talking about fairly well established and well respected authors. Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Ramsey Campbell, Thomas Ligotti. You know, they're all Lovecraftian in origin.

Ligeia

Nothing compares to Ligotti.

Pike

I'm sorry, I've never heard of the Thomas. Ligotti. How can I find out more about.

Ligeia

Okay, say no more. Okay, okay, okay. How much time do we have? No, okay.

Pike

Perhaps there is a podcast somewhere I could listen to.

Ligeia

Yes, yes. You might find if you scroll down.

Leraje

Scroll down the page. There's lots. I don't necessarily have an issue with the idea of something being fan fiction as such did I think I, uh, used to, I used to have all kinds of preconceptions about what it is. But I think there's, there's a difference between somebody knocking out 200 pages of shit on wattpad and you know, somebody making a conscious effort to, to sort of like address a particular point.

Pike

I was a voracious reader of fan fiction and I would print it in massive stuff stacks that are uh, still at my parents house. And I will tell you that the best stuff came in like 30 chapter series that was perfectly set in a specific period and was very well written.

Leraje

Did you write it, Pike?

Pike

I wrote some. It wasn't good.

Ligeia

Next time. We are people just like us.

Lithos

I mean if it was proper fanfic, you'd have to have Dagon banging Nyalathotep or something like that.

Pike

Yeah, I think in this type of book they would be holding hands would make me happy.

Ligeia

Maybe that's what I was missing. I'm gonna jump out of this window.

Pike

Maybe that's what you'll find in the second part of this series. You can update.

Lithos

Oh, right. Okay, okay.

Leraje

I'm saying nothing.

Lithos

The sexy sequel.

Leraje

I'm not going to say anything, but I wouldn't hold your breath. Yeah, I was interested in what all of your thoughts were on, um, using the plight of the Japanese American people as a kind of like literary device. Sort of introduce the ideas of Aphra and Caleb being imprisoned as well.

Pike

I think it was meant well, but because of how little time it was given, you know, because of how sort of secondary it was to the main story, it felt a little bit like it was used as a tool which to me felt a little disrespectful. But you know it's. It's important to talk about it.

Was talking about it.

Ligeia

This is why I think that could have been one book just about that. Because I think it's really not often talked about which is sad. I would like to know more. It was a very refreshing. I don't get to see it in many books. Maybe I'm not reading books about that. That's also true.

Fair enough. But it could be one book just about that really. It was a little bit lost for me. I needed to actually really be trying to hold those thoughts somewhere while other things were happening. And uh. That's like maybe in the next book she will do.

Leraje

More focused?

Ligeia

Yes, because it deserves like all of those thoughts. Could be. Could be really nice and good and she meant it really well and I think she's very talented and I will read another book.

Leraje

I think. I think you both. Both of Ligeia and Pike are right that there are too many separate story strands.

Lithos

Well, so did I.

Ligeia

Consensus between Satanists. This is unheard of.

Pike

That's how the Deep Ones operate.

Leraje

Have you body swapped?

Pike

Yeah.

Ligeia

With. With the Trumble girl.

Leraje

I loved her.

Ligeia

I was sorry for her. I loved her but I was so sorry at the end like oh my God. Like her body travelled through the world uh, did stuff and she doesn't even know anything. That was horrible.

Pike

She was a cool character.

Ligeia

Yeah. I liked her.

Lithos

But not the Yith. What do you mean? Do you like. I mean I thought the yes was an absolute shit.

Leraje

Yeah. To be honest they're not the greatest.

Pike

I've read some short stories from Lovecraft and I played a role playing game that was set in Lovecraftian universe. But I'm not very closely familiar with his stuff. So that was. I assume that's his thing and that was new to me and that was very interesting.

Lithos

Yeah. The Yith do appear in I think a couple of his stories. It did match up with his storey. Anyway, um. The way the Yith appeared in this. And there are several stories of his. The. The thing on the doorstep where. That was the one about the original body swap and the guy who ended up in the um.

In the mental hospital again to kind of like cramming just too much of the different strands of fiction in along with other things. I think. I think we're all pretty much agreed on that one.

Leraje

Yeah. I think the whole book could easily have been two, possibly even three separate books.

Ligeia

Yeah. Either it should have been going a little Bit faster or much slower.

Leraje

Right, let's do pitchforks then. Pike.

Pike

My mother always told me that when you're rating out of 10, you should give four points just out of Christian Feeling. But since I don't have that, uh, I'll give it a three.

Ligeia

I love your Mum.

Leraje

What about you?

Ligeia

Um, I will go for four.

Leraje

Lithos?

Lithos

I'll give it a seven and a half. Um, and I think there is better to come. Yeah, I thoroughly enjoyed it. And the only reason it's not more than that is because it. I, uh, just read it as entertainment. It's just sort of like. Yeah, just fun.

Leraje

And I'll give it a 7 as well. I thought it was a good. It was good escapism. And I really like the idea of bigging up the underdog.

Ligeia

Mhm.

Leraje

So that's our take on Winter Tide. Uh, right, who's next?

Lithos

Me.

Leraje

Oh, uh, what are we reading?

Ligeia
Uh-huh.

Pike
Second part of Winter Tide.

Lithos
Play Nice by Rachel Harrison, which promises to be a haunted house type storey. So we're back on horror. It's been well reviewed, so I'm hoping that we all enjoy it.

Ligeia
Is it the first time read?

Lithos
Yes, it's the first time read. Yes.

Ligeia
Yeah. Okay.

Pike
Have you read other stuff by the, uh, author?

Ligeia
I think I have.

Leraje
I think I have as well. All right, that's it from us. I've been Leraje. Hail Satan.

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

Leraje
Bloody Body swappers. Ligeia.

Ligeia
I've been the mad one. Hail Satan.

Lithos
Hail Satan.

[outro music plays]