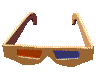


**Darryl Hollis**

**Markie Crum**



**Print Information**

* **Title:** Coraline
* **Narrative Voice:** Not Coraline, told from some adult voice (Like Liminy Snicket’s Series of Unfortunate Events)
* **Author:** Neil Gaiman (British), New York Times Best-selling Author
* **Illustrated by:** Dave McKean
* **Publishing By:** Scholastic Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 by arrangement with Harper Collins Publishers (January, 2002)
* **Genre:** Horror/Fantasy/Modern Fairy Tale?
* **Suggested Reading Level:** Publisher claims age 8+
* **ISBN:** 0-439-57688-1
* **Awards:** Hugo Award for Best Novella (2003), Nebula Award for Best Novella (2003), Bram Stoker Award for Best Work f,or Young Readers (2002), and more including Best Animated Female
* **Juicy Tidbits:** It has been compared to Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland and adapted into a 2009 stop-motion film directed by Henry Selick. A graphic novel interpretation was created by P. Craig Russell in 2008 and lettered by Todd Klein. A musical was also made in 2009. It is also available via e-reader and audiobook with illustrations.

**Summary**

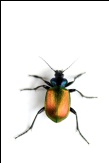
Coraline Jones and her parents move into an old Queen Anne style house that has been subdivided into three flats. Her parents are kindly, but they are preoccupied with work and Coraline is often left to entertain herself and for sensible things like eating and getting to bed. The other tenants in the house include Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, two elderly women retired from the stage and Mr. Bobo, who is training a jumping mouse circus. During a rainy day she discovers a locked door in the drawing room, which has been bricked up. Coraline decides to unlock the door when she is home by herself. In its place is a long passageway, which leads to a flat identical to the one she just left, inhabited by her Other Mother and Other Father; replicas of her real parents but with button eyes. In this “Other World”, Coraline finds everything to be better than her reality: her toy box is filled with animate toys that can move and fly, the Other Miss Spink and Miss Forcible forever perform a cabaret show in their flat. She even learns that the feral Black Cat that wanders around the house in the real world can talk.

The Other Mother offers Coraline a chance to stay in the Other World forever, if Coraline will allow buttons to be sewn into her eyes. Coraline is horrified and escapes back through the door to go home, much to the disappointment of the Other Mother. Upon her return to her apartment, Coraline finds that her real parents are missing. Mother has kidnapped them. Though frightened of returning, Coraline goes back to the Other World to confront the Other Mother and rescue her parents. Coraline is prompted by the Cat to challenge the Other Mother to a game because it is her weakness. Coraline does just that and in the end she defeats the Other Mother and her parents return home, oblivious to the danger they had all been in.

**&**

**3-D**

**2-D**

**Film Information**

* **Title:** Coraline
* **Producers:** Laika (American animation studio) working with Pandemonium, Henry Slick & Claire Jennings
* **Distributor:** Focus Features
* **Director:** Henry Selick (& Screen play writer)
* **Director’s Other Works:** Nightmare Before Christmas, James and the Giant Peach
* **Rated:** PG

Techniques and Cinematic Effects

* **Long Shot**
* **Close-ups (Zoom)**
* **Low/High & Dutch Angles**
* **Dolly Shots \***
* **Low/High and neutral lighting**
* **Original Music**
* **The Dissolve (“Around the World Scene” (“Under the covers”)\***
* **Run time:** 101 minutes
* **Released:** February 6, 2009
* **Starring:**
  + - Dakota Fanning as Coraline Jones
    - Teri Hatcher as Mel Jones (Mother)
    - John Hodgeman as Charlie Jones (Father)
    - Keith David as the Cat
    - Ian McShare as Bobinsky
    - Dawn French as Forcible
    - Jennifer Saunders as Spink
* **Music (written by):** Bruno Coulais
* **Production Notes:** At its peak, the film involved the efforts of 450 people,including from 30[]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coraline_(film)#cite_note-wweek-6) to 35animators and digital designers and more than 250 technicians and designers. One crew member, Althea Crome, was hired specifically to knit miniature sweaters and other clothing for the puppet characters, sometimes using knitting needles as thin as human hair. *Coraline* was staged in a 140,000-square-foot warehouse in Hillsboro, Oregon. The stage was divided into 50 lots, which played host to nearly 150 sets. Among the sets were three miniature Victorian mansions, a 42-foot apple orchard, and a model of Ashland, Oregon including tiny details such as banners for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

The film's creators used three 3D printing systems from Objet in the development and production of the film. The characters of *Coraline* could potentially exhibit over 208,000 facial expressions.

The soundtrack for *Coraline* features songs composed by French composer Bruno Coulais.  Coulais's score was performed by the [Hungarian Symphony Orchestra](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hungarian_Symphony_Orchestra&action=edit&redlink=1) and features choral pieces sung by the Children's Choir in a nonsense language.  *Coraline* won Coulais the 2009 Annie Award for best score for an animated feature.

**Critique of Film**

The novel and the film adaptation do not match up directly. The director used the best parts of Coraline and transformed them into something that best fit the medium and the viewing audience. There are parts from the book that were not explicitly touched on in the film, but were there, derived somehow from the original text. Though the changes are noticeable they do not affect the way the reader interprets the spirit of Coraline or how it makes them feel while they’re reading it. Coraline is brave, yet frightened, self-reliant, yet doubtful, too young for dolls, but too young to be without mom and dad and it comes through in the film. The music in the film, written specifically for the film adaptation of Coraline, rightfully won awards. It carried the film from the regular, boring world to the mysterious, dark Other World and back; escalating, exciting and soothing, or supplementing the dialogue and action of the characters. The 3-D effects helped create the warm, enveloping mood of the Other Flat by adding depth (and also helped play up the eeriness). It’s a wonderful interpretation of Gaiman’s modern day fairy tale. Coraline encourages the reader to question what they see and are told to believe, surely a good tip for anyone to follow. Like many young adults, Coraline is aching to have an adventure and experience what else there might be out there.

**Classroom Uses**

Some critics have said that it belongs to an emerging “Kid Goth” literary category. I like this and I think using Coraline as an introduction to gothic literary techniques would be an excellent way to bridge young adult literature and classical cannon. I could definitely see using this book as a class read, especially around the fall time (Halloween). Being aware of Gothic literacy techniques while watching the movie can help students form an appropriate perspective of how the characters, settings, and situations all play off of each other and why it works. The book and film also both use creepy humor, which may be interesting for some writers. A possible objective could be “Student will be able to incorporate working Gothic elements into an original creation of their own (video, short story, poem, art work).

Gaiman’s use of quote at the beginning of Coraline was very effective and reflected the spirit of the text, film and of Coraline. It might also be worth showing students (perhaps in a mini–lesson) how to pick quotes that will add quality, supplemental value to their overall work, or reflect a theme or spirit of a work or character. Prior knowledge could be built upon by referring to quotation usage in social media or other literary pieces. The use of the quote below could lead to a class discussion/free write on how it may have played a role in setting the stage, literally, for the Cortina film production. What would this kind of fairy tale look like on screen? What feelings will the film try to evoke in the viewer, did they, and how (techniques, focus, angles, lighting, music)? They could even incorporate this into a final assessment project like the one mentioned above.

Fairy tales are more than true; not becausae they tell us that dragsons exist, but because they tell us dragons can be beaten – G.k. Chesterton

There could be a lead in to theater and screen play production introduction (i.e. create a screen play from a book you like and/or do a class project, better yet, a drama club project. How do we transform text into images?