

Independent reading – book review: Coraline

This is a collection of work. Click through the chapters to see the full collection or download the attached standards file.

After reading all the books on the shortlist for a book review competition, Chas wrote a review of the book he enjoyed most, *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman.

Coraline: A review,

When you want to read a horror book, and beg your librarian “Are there any gripping spine-chilling books out there apart from the unsatisfying series 'Goosebumps'?” your librarian might be able to suggest that you read Neil Gaiman's masterpiece 'Coraline'. Undoubtedly, the surreal cover will put you off, and the atypical title. However, there is an old saying “You can never judge a book by its cover.” Obviously, I fixed onto the motto and I was underway reading Neil Gaiman's extraordinary book, 'Coraline'.

'Coraline' is generally a book which varies between a 'Chiller' and a 'Horror' tale. And in my opinion, there is no finer or advanced tale anywhere. Sorry, Alice in Wonderland we have a new King of tales. It has a mixture of judgement and belief, which blends in perfectly and simultaneously. Mr Gaiman has achieved and fulfilled his endeavour and aspires to present such a work of gripping art.

'Coraline' is about a gentle and timid girl who does no harm to anyone or anybody in this world, in fact, she is less than a pebble in the world, until her 'beloved' (as if!) mother goes absent and is replaced with a peculiar, eerie, duplicate. She keeps feeling uncanny jolts in her stomach; she gradually realises that something is not right about her mother. She rapidly finds out that this bizarre woman is masquerading as her mother but is actually a soul hunter, thirsty for an ever-expanding number of souls and Coraline knows her life is being gambled with, like a leaf blown about by the wind... and in truth, I just could not put it down!!!

In conclusion, 'Coraline' is a one-off special; dreamed up by the genius, all-star Neil Gaiman, which will be a sure hit for younger readers and adults! 'Coraline' is the novelist's first book, so it is not yet the most popular of all books, and until most recently, the book is not *quite* the so called, "top of the league" like 'Artemis Fowl' or the hugely popular "Harry Potter" series. Nevertheless, 'Coraline' will rise up

gradually and progressively to be ranked as one of the all time greats in the enchanted realm of Books.

1. Comments on well-selected presentational features ('surreal cover', 'atypical title') show awareness of effect on reader (AF6 L5 b3)
2. Attempts to relate *Coraline* to literary traditions (AF7 L4 b1)
3. Summary of relevant plot details shows understanding of key features (AF2 L5 b1) and comments on Coraline's mother develop inferential explanations about characters across the text (AF3 L5 b1)
4. Comparisons made with other popular texts, but comments not developed (AF7 L4 b1)

Assessment summary

In this book review, Chas explains his enthusiasm for the chosen text, and in his comments attempts to place *Coraline* in a literary context (AF7).

He selects relevant details (AF2) and shows understanding of the key characters (AF3) with some indication of the themes (AF6), although this aspect is not explained fully. There is also implicit awareness of the style of the text (AF5) in the observation that *Coraline* 'varies between a "Chiller" and a "Horror" tale', though again this point is not developed. This piece of evidence reveals Chas as a keen reader who enjoys a variety of books and is beginning to draw comparisons across a range of texts.