

Horror begins at home: An investigative study of the horror presented in Neil Gaiman's novel *Coraline*

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Abstract

This paper investigates the different horror motifs identified in Neil Gaiman's gothic novel *Coraline*, as the adventure takes place within the protagonist's home, leaving no room to escape the horror that comes. Children's literature traditionally features an adventure, followed by a safe return home. For example, in *Peter Pan*, the Darling children travel to Neverland but come home at the end. In *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, the Pevensie children return from Narnia. Home represents security and comfort in these novels. In *Coraline*, the heroine's home, her safe space, is invaded with evil, deception and 'other' beings. Examining peer-reviewed literature and studying interviews with the author contributed to my analysis of the horror tropes presented in the novel. Within the adult horror genre, the house can often be as much a character as the beloved heroes and monsters. In children's literature, the house is often the safe place where the children return to after their adventure. However, *Coraline*'s home is where the horrifying adventure takes place: evil lurks behind closed doors. This paper will outline how Gaiman has taken familiar horror tropes and employed them in a modern, terrifying way. He takes normal everyday objects and transforms them into something to be feared. It concludes with a suggestion of potential, future research on the topic of horror in children's literature.

Keywords: Horror, House, Family, Children.