



Lesson 13

WALT: make comparisons within a text *so that we can understand how and why characters react to events. This can help us to predict in future reading and even across different stories.*



Once inside, in her flat, or rather, in the flat that was not hers, Coraline was pleased to see that it had not transformed into the empty drawing that the rest of the house seemed to have become. It had depth and shadows, and someone who stood in the shadows waiting for Coraline to return.

‘So you’re back,’ said the other mother. She did not sound pleased. ‘And you brought vermin with you.’

‘No,’ said Coraline. ‘I brought a friend.’ She could feel the cat stiffening under her hands, as if it were anxious to be away. Coraline wanted to hold on to it like a teddy bear, for reassurance, but she knew that cats hate to be squeezed, and she suspected that frightened cats were liable to bite and scratch if provoked in any way, even if they were on your side.

'You know I love you,' said the other mother, flatly.

'You have a very funny way of showing it,' said Coraline. She walked down the hallway, then turned into the drawing room, steady step by steady step, pretending that she could not feel the other mother's blank black eyes on her back. Her grandmother's formal furniture was still there, and the painting on the wall of the strange fruit (but now the fruit in the painting had been eaten, and all that remained in the bowl was the browning core of an apple, several plum and peach stones, and the stem of what had formerly been a bunch of grapes). The lion-pawed table raked the carpet with its clawed wooden feet, as if it were impatient for something. At the end of the room, in the corner, stood the wooden door, which had once, in another place, opened on to a plain brick wall. Coraline tried not to stare at it. The window showed nothing but mist.

This was it, Coraline knew. The moment of truth. The unravelling time.

The other mother had followed her in. Now she stood in the centre of the room, between Coraline and the mantelpiece, and looked down at Coraline with black-button eyes. It was funny, Coraline thought. The other mother did not look anything at all like her own mother. She wondered

how she had ever been deceived into imagining a resemblance. The other mother was huge – her head almost brushed the ceiling of the room – and very pale, the colour of a spider's belly. Her hair writhed and twined about her head, and her teeth were sharp as knives . . .

'Well?' said the other mother, sharply. 'Where are they?'

Coraline leaned against an armchair, adjusted the cat with her left hand, put her right hand into her pocket, and pulled out the three glass marbles. They were a frosted grey, and they clinked together in the palm of her hand. The other mother reached her white fingers out for them, but Coraline slipped them back into her pocket. She knew it was true, then. The other mother had no intention of letting her go, or of keeping her word. It had been an entertainment, and nothing more. 'Hold on,' she said. 'We aren't finished yet, are we?'

The other mother looked daggers, but she smiled sweetly. 'No,' she said. 'I suppose not. After all, you still need to find your parents, don't you?'

'Yes,' said Coraline. *I must not look at the mantelpiece, she thought. I must not even think about it.*

'Well?' said the other mother. 'Produce them. Would you like to look in the cellar again? I have

some other interesting things hidden down there, you know.'

'No,' said Coraline. 'I know where my parents are.' The cat was heavy in her arms. She moved it forward, unhooking its claws from her shoulder as she did so.

'Where?'

'It stands to reason,' said Coraline. 'I've looked everywhere you'd hide them. They aren't in the house.'

The other mother stood very still, giving nothing away, lips tightly closed. She might have been a wax statue. Even her hair had stopped moving.

'So,' Coraline continued, both hands wrapped firmly around the black cat, 'I know where they have to be. You've hidden them in the passageway between the houses, haven't you? They are behind that door.' She nodded her head towards the door in the corner.

The other mother remained statue-still, but a hint of a smile crept back on to her face. 'Oh, they are, are they?'

'Why don't you open it?' said Coraline. 'They'll be there, all right.'

It was her only way home, she knew. But it all depended on the other mother needing to gloat, needing not only to win but to show that she had won.

The other mother reached her hand slowly into her apron pocket and produced the black iron key. The cat stirred uncomfortably in Coraline's arms, as if it wanted to get down. *Just stay there for a few moments longer*, she thought at it, wondering if it could hear her. *I'll get us both home. I said I would. I promise.* She felt the cat relax ever-so-slightly in her arms.

The other mother walked over to the door and pushed the key into the lock.

She turned the key.

Coraline heard the mechanism clunk heavily. She was already starting, as quietly as she could, step by step, to back away towards the mantelpiece.

The other mother pushed down on the door handle and pulled open the door, revealing a corridor behind it, dark and empty. 'There,' she said, waving her hands at the corridor. The expression of delight on her face was a very bad thing to see. 'You're wrong! You *don't* know where your parents are, do you? They aren't there.' She turned and looked at Coraline. 'Now,' she said, 'you're going to stay here for ever and always.'

'No,' said Coraline. 'I'm not.' And, hard as she could, she threw the black cat towards the other mother. It yowled and landed on the other mother's head, claws flailing, teeth bared, fierce and

angry. Fur on end, it looked half again as big as it was in real life.

Without waiting to see what would happen, Coraline reached up to the mantelpiece, closed her hand around the snow-globe, then pushed it deep into the pocket of her dressing gown.

The cat made a deep, ululating yowl and sank its teeth into the other mother's cheek. She was flailing at it. Blood ran from the cuts on her white face – not red blood, but a deep, tarry black stuff. Coraline ran for the door.

She pulled the key out of the lock.

'Leave her! Come on!' she shouted to the cat. It hissed, and swiped its scalpel-sharp claws at the other mother's face in one wild rake which left black ooze trickling from several gashes on her nose. Then it sprang down towards Coraline. 'Quickly!' she said. The cat ran towards her, and they both stepped into the dark corridor.

It was colder in the corridor, like stepping down into a cellar on a warm day. The cat hesitated for a moment, then, seeing the other mother was coming towards them, it ran to Coraline and stopped by her legs.

Coraline began to pull the door closed.

It was heavier than she imagined a door could be, and pulling it closed was like trying to close a

door against a high wind. And then she felt something from the other side starting to pull against her.

Shut! she thought. Then she said, out loud, 'Come on, *please.*' And she felt the door begin to move, to pull closed, to give against the phantom wind.

Suddenly she was aware of other people in the corridor with her. She could not turn her head to look at them, but she knew them without having to look. 'Help me, please,' she said. 'All of you.'

The other people in the corridor – three children, two adults – were somehow too insubstantial to touch the door. But their hands closed about hers, as she pulled on the big iron door handle, and suddenly she felt strong.

'Never let up, miss! Hold strong! Hold strong!' whispered a voice in her mind.

'Pull, girl, pull!' whispered another.

And then a voice that sounded like her mother's – her own mother, her real, wonderful, maddening, infuriating, glorious mother, just said, 'Well done, Coraline,' and that was enough.

The door started to slip closed, easily as anything.

'No!' screamed a voice from beyond the door, and it no longer sounded even faintly human.

Something snatched at Coraline, reaching through the closing gap between the door and the

doorpost. Coraline jerked her head out of the way, but the door began to open once more.

'We're going to go home,' said Coraline. 'We are. Help me.' She ducked the snatching fingers.

They moved through her, then: ghost-hands lent her strength that she no longer possessed. There was a final moment of resistance, as if something were caught in the door, and then, with a crash, the wooden door banged closed.

Something dropped from Coraline's head height to the floor. It landed with a sort of a scuttling thump.

'Come on!' said the cat. 'This is not a good place to be in. Quickly.'

Coraline turned her back on the door and began to run, as fast as was practical, through the dark corridor, dragging her hand along the wall to make sure she didn't bump into anything or get turned around in the darkness.

It was an uphill run, and it seemed to her that it went on for a longer distance than anything could possibly go. The wall she was touching seemed warm and yielding now, and, she realised, it felt as if it was covered in a fine downy fur. It moved, as if it were taking a breath. She snatched her hand away from it.

Winds howled in the dark.

She was scared she would bump into something, and she put out her hand for the wall once more. This time what she touched felt hot and wet, as if she had put her hand in somebody's mouth, and she pulled it back with a small wail.

Her eyes had adjusted to the dark. She could half see, as faintly glowing patches ahead of her, two adults, three children. She could hear the cat, too, padding in the dark in front of her.

And there was something else, which suddenly scuttled between her feet, nearly sending Coraline flying. She caught herself before she went down, using her own momentum to keep moving. She knew that if she fell in that corridor she might never get up again. Whatever that corridor was was older by far than the other mother. It was deep, and slow, and it knew that she was there . . .

Then daylight appeared, and she ran towards it, puffing and wheezing. 'Almost there,' she called encouragingly, but in the light she discovered that the wraiths had gone, and she was alone. She did not have time to wonder what had happened to them. Panting for breath, she staggered through the door and slammed it behind her with the loudest, most satisfying bang you can imagine.

Coraline locked the door with the key, and put the key back into her pocket.

The black cat was huddled in the farthest corner of the room, the pink tip of its tongue showing, its eyes wide. Coraline went over to it, and crouched down.

'I'm sorry,' she said. 'I'm sorry I threw you at her. But it was the only way to distract her enough to get us all out. She would never have kept her word, would she?'

The cat looked up at her, then it rested its head on her hand, licking her fingers with its sandpapery tongue. It began to purr.

'Then we're friends?' said Coraline.

She sat down on one of her grandmother's uncomfortable armchairs, and the cat sprang up into her lap and made itself comfortable. The light that came through the picture window was daylight, real golden late-afternoon daylight, not a white mist-light. The sky was a robin's-egg blue, and Coraline could see trees and, beyond the trees, green hills, which faded on the horizon into purples and greys. The sky had never seemed so *sky*; the world had never seemed so *world*.

Coraline stared at the leaves on the trees and at the patterns of light and shadow on the cracked bark of the trunk of the beech tree outside the window, then she looked down at her lap, at the way that the rich sunlight brushed every hair on

the cat's head, turning each white whisker to gold.

Nothing, she thought, had ever been so *interesting*.

And, caught up in the interestingness of the world, Coraline barely noticed that she had wriggled down and curled, cat-like, in her grandmother's uncomfortable armchair, nor did she notice when she fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Coraline - Chapter 11

Key -
relieved
frightened
anticipation
anger
smugness
fury



10

depth
of
feeling

0

C back in
the flat

C showed
OM the
marbles

OM opened
the door

C threw
the cat at
the other
mother

C and cat
ran into the
corridor

Door closed

sequence of events

Other Mother - Chapter 11

Key -
releived
frightened
anticipation
anger
smugness
fury



10

depth
of
feeling

0

C back in
the flat

C showed
OM the
marbles

OM opened
the door

C threw
the cat at
the other
mother

C and cat
ran into the
corridor

Door closed

sequence of events

I think that ... is feeling ... because in the text it says ...

I think that ... is feeling ... because the author has used the word which means ...

I would give this feeling a depth of ... because in the text it says ...

I would give this feeling a depth of ... because ... says/does ... which tells me ...

I would give this feeling a depth of ... because the author has used the word ... which means ...