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Coraline

Karen Abbott

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Book Review

Coraline

Author

Neil Gaiman

Illustrator

Reviewer

Karen Abbott

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Primary, Intermediate

Pages

176

Year

2002

Publisher

HarperCollins

ISBN

9780380977789

Coraline is an explorer, so of course a locked door needs to be investigated, especially when it opens in the wee hours of night and appears to have lost its protective brick facade. Although she has been warned by tea leaves and given a protective amulet by her doughty old neighbors, Coraline sets off to explore the forbidden passageway. She finds her “other” mother who wants to keep Coraline and feed from her energy until she withers to a wisp of a ghost, like former victims who live sequestered in a closet. To escape, Coraline must rescue herself, her parents, and the imprisoned spirit children.

If you are looking for a good ghost or monster story to read to children on Halloween, this might be the one. Neil Gaiman is a masterful storyteller and this book is no exception. The story delivers a good mystery, some paranormal intrigue, and a truly independent and resourceful main character in Coraline. The story demonstrates how Coraline’s independent spirit works both for her and against her. Against her when she enters the realm beyond the locked door on her own, and for her as she discovers a way to free everyone. This is a wonderful book for any time of year, but a special “treat” at Halloween.