

Coraline

Chapter 1



Coraline found a door soon after her family moved into the house.

The house was very old. It had an attic under the roof and a cellar under the ground. The garden was big and overgrown, with huge old trees.

Coraline's family didn't own the whole house — it was too big. They only owned one part of it. Other people lived there too.

Miss Spink and Miss Forcible lived in the flat downstairs. They were old and round. They had many old dogs — their names were Hamish, Andrew, and Jock. Miss Spink told Coraline that she and Miss Forcible used to be actresses.

"We were famous actresses," Miss Spink said. She got Coraline's name wrong and called her Caroline. "We acted in plays a long time ago."

"My name is Coraline, not Caroline," Coraline said.

In the flat upstairs, there was a strange old man with a big moustache. He told Coraline he was training a circus with mice, but no one could see it yet.

"One day everyone will see my mouse circus," he said. "But now the mice are not ready. They don't want to play the songs I wrote for them."

Coraline didn't think the mouse circus was real. She thought the man was just telling stories.

After they moved in, Coraline started exploring the garden every day.

The garden was big. At the back there was an old tennis court, but no one played there. The fence had holes, and the net was broken. There was also an old rose garden with small, sad-looking bushes, a rockery with only rocks, and a fairy ring made of brown mushrooms. The mushrooms smelled bad if you stepped on them.

There was a well too. Miss Spink and Miss Forcible told Coraline the well was dangerous and she must stay away from it. So Coraline wanted to find it, just to know where it was.

She found the well on the third day. It was in a meadow near the tennis court, behind some trees. It looked like a low circle of bricks and was covered with wooden boards. There was a small hole in one board. Coraline spent an afternoon dropping pebbles and acorns through the hole and counting until she heard a plop when they hit the water far below.

Coraline also looked for animals. She found a hedgehog, a snakeskin (but no snake), a rock that looked like a frog, and a toad that looked like a rock.

A black cat watched her from walls and tree stumps, but it always ran away when she tried to play with it.

For the first two weeks, Coraline spent her days exploring the garden. Her mother made her come inside for lunch and dinner. Coraline had to wear warm clothes because that summer was very cold. She went out to explore every day — except when it rained.

One rainy day, Coraline asked, "What should I do?"

Her mother said, "You can read a book, watch a video, play with your toys, or talk to Miss Spink, Miss Forcible, or the old man upstairs."

"No," Coraline said. "I want to keep exploring."

"You can do anything you like," her mother said, "as long as you don't make a mess."

Coraline looked out the window. The rain was heavy and made the garden very wet and muddy.

She had already watched all the videos, read all her books, and was tired of her toys. She turned on the TV and looked for something interesting. She saw half of a programme about animals that hide to stay safe — they looked like leaves or twigs. She liked it, but it ended quickly, and then there was a show about a cake factory.

Then Coraline went to talk to her father. He was at home working on his computer.

"Hello, Coraline," he said without looking up.

"It's raining," Coraline said.

"Yes, it's raining a lot," he said.

"Can I go outside?" Coraline asked.

"What does your mother say?"

"She says I can't go out in this weather."

"Then you can't," he said.

"I want to keep exploring," Coraline said.

Her father gave her a piece of paper and a pen. "Then explore the flat," he said. "Count the doors and windows. Write down everything that is blue. Find the hot-water tank. And please let me work."

"Can I go into the drawing room?" Coraline asked. This room had expensive and uncomfortable furniture. No one ever went there — it was only for special days.

"Only if you don't touch anything and don't make a mess," her father said. Coraline took the paper and pen and started exploring the flat.

She found the hot-water tank in a kitchen cupboard. She counted all the blue things — there were 153. She counted the windows — 21.



She counted the doors — 14. Thirteen doors opened and closed. But one door was locked. It was a big, brown, wooden door in the corner of the drawing room. Coraline asked her mother, "Where does this door go?" "Nowhere, dear," her mother said.

"But a door must go somewhere," Coraline said.

Her mother took a set of keys from the top of the kitchen doorframe. She picked the oldest and rustiest key and opened the door.

Behind the door was a brick wall.

"This house used to be one big house," her mother explained. "This door used to lead somewhere. Later, they made the house into flats and blocked the other side with bricks. The other side is an empty flat that is still for sale."

She closed the door and put the keys back.

"You didn't lock it," Coraline noticed.

Her mother shrugged. "It doesn't matter," she said. "It goes nowhere."

It was getting dark, and the rain was still falling. Coraline's father stopped working and made dinner for everyone.

Coraline wasn't happy. "Daddy, you made a recipe again," she said.

He said it was leek and potato stew with cheese and herbs.

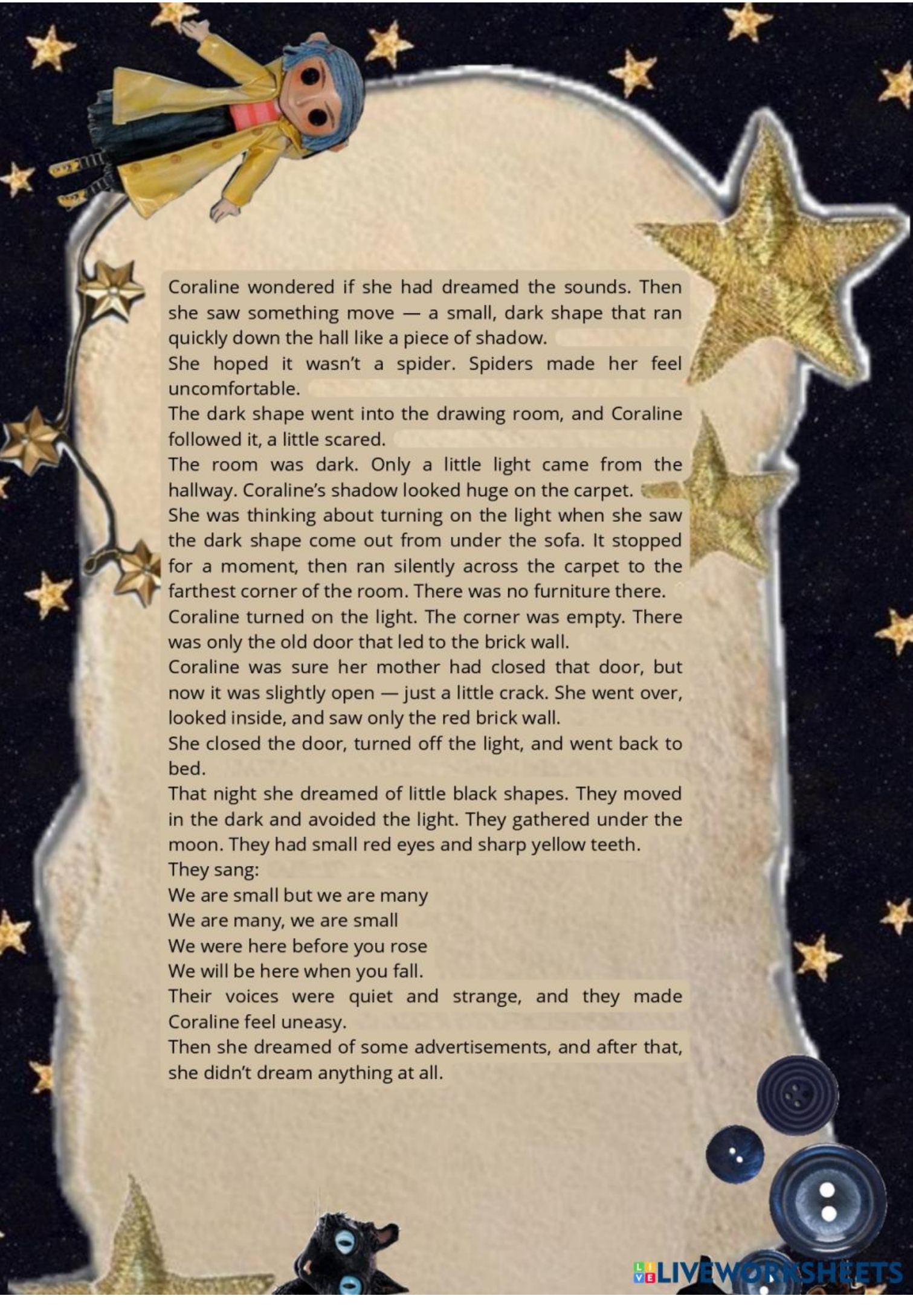
Coraline sighed and took some chips and a mini-pizza from the freezer. She put them in the microwave.

"If you try my stew, you might like it," her father said, but Coraline shook her head.

That night, Coraline lay in bed. The rain had stopped. She was almost asleep when she heard strange sounds: t-t-t-t-t and then kreeee... aaaak.

She got out of bed and looked down the hall, but she didn't see anything strange. She walked along the hallway. From her parents' room, she heard her father snoring and her mother making quiet noises while she slept.





Coraline wondered if she had dreamed the sounds. Then she saw something move — a small, dark shape that ran quickly down the hall like a piece of shadow.

She hoped it wasn't a spider. Spiders made her feel uncomfortable.

The dark shape went into the drawing room, and Coraline followed it, a little scared.

The room was dark. Only a little light came from the hallway. Coraline's shadow looked huge on the carpet.

She was thinking about turning on the light when she saw the dark shape come out from under the sofa. It stopped for a moment, then ran silently across the carpet to the farthest corner of the room. There was no furniture there.

Coraline turned on the light. The corner was empty. There was only the old door that led to the brick wall.

Coraline was sure her mother had closed that door, but now it was slightly open — just a little crack. She went over, looked inside, and saw only the red brick wall.

She closed the door, turned off the light, and went back to bed.

That night she dreamed of little black shapes. They moved in the dark and avoided the light. They gathered under the moon. They had small red eyes and sharp yellow teeth.

They sang:

We are small but we are many

We are many, we are small

We were here before you rose

We will be here when you fall.

Their voices were quiet and strange, and they made Coraline feel uneasy.

Then she dreamed of some advertisements, and after that, she didn't dream anything at all.

1. Reading check: выбери слово, чтобы дополнить предложение

Coraline found a door soon after her family _____ into the house.
a) moved b) run

The garden was big and _____, with huge old trees.
a) clean b) overgrown

Miss Spink and Miss Forcible used to be _____.
a) actresses b) doctors

The old man upstairs said he was training a _____ with mice.
a) school b) circus

Coraline spent an afternoon dropping _____ through the hole in the well.
a) pebbles b) toys

Coraline's mother took the oldest and _____ key to open the door.
a) shiny b) rusty

Behind the door there was only a _____.
a) brick wall b) new room

That night, Coraline heard strange _____ in the hallway.
a) sounds b) songs

The dark shape ran quickly across the carpet like a piece of _____.
a) paper b) shadow

In her dream, the little black shapes had small red _____ and sharp yellow teeth.
a) eyes b) ears



2. True / False: отметь, верно или неверно утверждение

- Coraline's family owned the whole old house.
- Miss Spink called Coraline by the right name from the first moment.
- The old man upstairs really had a mouse circus that everyone could see.
- Coraline explored the garden every day, even when it was raining.
- The well was dangerous, so Coraline wanted to find it to know where it was.
- Coraline found 153 blue things inside the flat.
- The big wooden door in the drawing room opened to another flat.
- Coraline liked her father's leek and potato stew and ate it with pleasure.
- Coraline saw a dark shape that ran into the drawing room, and she followed it.
- In her dream, the black shapes sang a cheerful and happy song.



3. Вставь слова по смыслу в пропуски

Используй слова из списка:

explored, found, heard, followed, saw, counted, opened, closed, moved, looked

- After they _____ into the house, Coraline started _____ the garden.
- She _____ a hedgehog and a snakeskin, but no snake.
- Coraline _____ all the blue things in the flat — there were 153.
- Her mother _____ the old door with a rusty key, and behind it was a brick wall.
- That night, Coraline _____ strange sounds in the hall.
- She _____ the dark shape as it ran into the drawing room.
- When she _____ the corner, there was nothing there except the old door.
- Coraline _____ the door, turned off the light, and went back to bed.

