Coraline

Disney · PIXAR

A lonely and curious young girl who wants a more exciting and loving family than her own, discovers a magical "Other World" that hides a deadly trap and she must outsmart its sinister creator to save herself and her parents.

Director: Henry Selick

Released: 2009

"This is one of my favorite films because it combines a unique storyline with expressive and creative shots"

Plot Synopsis and Diagram

START HERE

Coraline moves into the Pink Palace apartments with her busy and distracted parents and she feels lonely, bored and ignored. She discovers a small locked door hidden in the wall.

At night, Coraline follows a strange jumping mice and unlocks the little door, now a glowing tunnel and crawls into the Other World where she meets her Other Mother and Other Father who look like her real parents but more fun, although they have buttons for eyes.

Coraline chooses to keep going back to the Other World, treating it as her escape from her boring real life, and commits to exploring this Other World more deeply.

The Other Mother reveals the price of the perfect world: Coraline must let her sew buttons into her eyes to stay forever. Coraline refuses quickly, and the tone of the movie shifts from magical adventure to real danger.

Coraline is trapped and alone: the Other Mother imprisons her behind the mirror, her parents go missing in the real world, and she learns the truth about the ghost children, realizing she might become the next victim.

Coraline challenges the Other Mother to a “game” to find the ghost children’s eyes and her parents, then faces her in a final confrontation and escapes as the Other World collapses.

Coraline restores balance: she frees the ghost children, rescues her parents and symbolically accepts her new home and life-while also making sure the danger is truly gone forever.

Title Logo and Movie Poster

Color

The background is dominated by deep blues and purple (night sky, shadows, the ground). Coraline's raincoat and the moonlight are warm yellows. That warm-cool contrast makes her pop out instantly, so the audience is led to see her as the main character. The title "Coraline" is written in a pale yellow that matches the moon and Coraline's raincoat. This ties the typography into the image so the logo feels like it is apart of the world and not just slapped on top of the movie poster.

Space

The moon is placed almost directly behind Coraline, like a glowing spotlight. Since it's big and bright the circle surrounded by dark sky, it frames her silhouette and pulls attention to her. There's a lot of dark, empty space around Coraline and the cat, especially in the upper sky area. That emptiness makes them feel small and vulnerable in a huge, strange world-which is perfect for a story about a kid stepping right into danger. The heavy tree mas is on the left and the glowing house is on the right. The balance of shapes keep the image stable but slightly uneasy

Two Leading Characters

Coraline

Coraline Jones is an adventurous, curious 11 year old girl with a sharp tongue and a stubborn attitude. She gets bored easily and hates feeling ignored, which makes her both brave and reckless when something new and better appears. Coraline is very independent because she explores on her own, questions what adults tell her, and refuses to just "behave" if something is going wrong. On the surface, she can seem impatient and sarcastic which can be seen when she interacts with her parents but she really just craves attention, love and a sense of belonging. Ultimately, her curiosity is what leads her to the other world but it also helps her notice clues and how she defeats the other Mother. Throughout the story, Coraline shows a strong moral core: which is to risk her own life to save her parents and the ghost children, which proves she's loyal and compassionate, not just nosy. By the end, she is way more mature and appreciative, understanding that her imperfect real life has more love then her fake one.

The “Other Mother”

The other Mother is a shape shifting, spider-like creature who disguises herself as a "perfect" version of Coraline's real mom. At first, she appears warm, attentive, and cheerful, cooking elaborates meals and giving Coraline exactly what she wishes her real parents would provide. Beneath that friendly facade, though, she is deeply controlling and manipulative, using flattery gifts and fantasy to trap Coraline and keep her from wanting to leave. Her design gradually reveals her true nature: the more Coraline resists, the thinner, sharper, and more doll-like she becomes, with button eyes that show she wants to turn people into lifeless possessions. The other Mother is obsessed with ccontrol and perectin, seeing Coraline as a toy or a trophy rather than a person with free will. She is patient and calculating like a predator, luring children in with comfort and then feeding on their souls once they're too attached to escape. In the end, she represents the danger of "too perfect" worlds-places that are made just for you but only so the

Costume Designs

Texture

Coraline's sweater, jeans and raincoat all have a slightly worn look, like knitted fabric and scuffed boots. That rough, everyday texture makes it seem like she is a real kid and not a perfectly polished doll.

The contrast between soft, cozy fabrics like the sweater and more shiny materials (like the boots) create a textural contrast that mirrors the story's tension between comfort/safety and danger/control.

In the Other World, textures sometimes feel too perfect or too smooth, like the difference between the Pink Palace Apartments and doll clothes which hints that the Other World is more artificial and controlled directly by the Other Mother.

Color

Coraline's yellow raincoat and blue her instantly makes her stand out in her real world which is dull and grayish. The bright yellow feels energetic and curious which matches her bold and adventurous personality.

In the real world , her clothes lean more toward muted tones such as orange, brown and dark blues which emphasizes how boring her world is.

In the Other World, colors become richer and more saturated. The same basic costume feels more vivid under warmer and more "magical" lighting. This shows how the Other World can be seen as a more tempting version of reality at first.

Color also can help show danger. For instance, as the Other World turns creepy, the colors around Coraline darken and shift from cooler, harsher tones which make her bright costume feel more isolated.

5 PANEL STORYBOARD

Medium Close up Shot

Long Shot

Close up Shot

Wide Shot

Full Shot

Key Locations and Set Design

The Circus in the Other World

The look is bright, theatrical and almost too perfect. The stage is lit with strong and colorful spotlights, and everything is framed like it's a show. Mr. Bobinsky's mice perform in perfect synchronized patterns, forming different shapes and letters. The feel of this location is dazzling but slightly uneasy. On the surface, it's pure fun like the music, the applause and the show that was made just for Coraline. But the perfection in everything being set up perfectly hints at the Other Mother's control over the entire world. This location gives an example of the perfections that are featured inside of the Other

Flower Garden in the Other World

The garden is bright, saturated and designed just for Coraline. Plants grow and flowers bloom in impossible shapes, and everything curves and spirals in the right way. Many plants even move as if they are alive and perform like plants lighting up. At first, the garden feels magical, special and flattering like the world is paying attention to her. Emotionally it feels like a seduction almost because it makes Coraline feel important to the world around her. This location gives off the vibes and background that are featured outside of the Other House and helps establish the world beyond inside the house, giving the viewers and audience a sense of comfort and darkness in the Other

Theme and Motif

Theme
Temptation

The theme inside of coraline is the danger of accepting tempting deals that promise a "perfect" life. Coraline is frustrated with her real world such as her parents being busy, the house is dull and she feels ignored. The Other World appears as a magical escape: fun parents, delicious food, a glowing garden, and neighbors who perform just for her. This fantasy is designed to answer all her complaints, making the 'deal" feel like a solution rather than a trap.

The Other Mother's offer comes with a hidden cost though. Coraline myst let her sew buttons over her eyes to stay forever. The cost symbolizes losing her freedom, her identity, and her ability to see what's real. Through this, the movie suggests that "perfect" offers are actually manipulative, and that real love like her flawed parent's love does not demand that you surrender yourself just to be accepted.

Motif
Button Eyes

A key motif that brings this theme to life is the image of button eyes. Throughout the film, the Other Mother, Other Father, and the Other Neighbors all have button eyes. The repeated image becomes a visual representation of the deal that Coraline is offered. Buttons symbolize the loss of individuality and the choice to blind yourself to the truth in exchange for comfort and fantasy.

When the Other Mother lays out buttons, needle, and thread to ask Coraline to accept them, it turns the motif into a physical contract. Later, the ghost children with the button eyes show the final result of them accepting the offer: their souls are trapped and their identities erased. The repetition of buttons reminds the audience that this Other World has a price. Saying no to the buttons is Coraline's way of rejecting the false deal and accepting her true imperfect life.