

The Hammock and the Hummingbirds

My pen is my No — a novel by Karine Baridon · chapter-by-chapter synopsis

How to read this synopsis: the narrative alternates between THE PAST — the story lived by Coraline and the Viking — and THE PRESENT — interviews with the author and the Viking by a journalist, on the set of the TV show *Dimanche c'est Show*.

The novel in a few lines

Coraline meets the Viking: charismatic, unpredictable and... utterly chaotic. Between absurd road trips, explosive family gatherings and small everyday traumas, she learns to survive the chaos with humour and clear-sightedness. Between bursts of laughter and moments of vulnerability, she turns her misadventures into creation, sets her limits and rebuilds her life. The novel blends comedy and introspection, and offers the reader an immersive, funny, moving and participative experience, where humour becomes a tool for resilience and creativity a path to inner freedom.

The full synopsis

BOOM: Coraline sees that the Viking has looked at her LinkedIn profile (1). Angry, she decides to write, to let it out and to create. Flashback: she explores dating sites, with humour and self-mockery in the face of romantic boredom, until a mysterious photo rekindles her interest (2). Their first date is love at first sight, while her parents ring and her astrological planets comment on the scene (3). On the road, Coraline plays mediator between the Viking and an aggressive driver (4), then learns to sail a catamaran, between adrenaline and linguistic mix-ups (5).

She introduces her parents and her birth trauma, with humour and depth (6). Her family's constant phone calls disrupt her daily life, and the Viking defends her in front of her friends (7). Their romantic road trip in the far North blends wonder, closeness, humour and poetry (8). On the lake they sail together, between cooperation, erotic tension and shared laughter (9). Coraline discovers the Viking's chaotic family and his founding traumas (10), then his obsessive world, between an XXL drak-car and absurd preparations (11).

On a train, the Viking's panic spills over onto Coraline, who faces it with humour (12). Her job in the mountains reveals family patterns (13). Facing the police, she shows diplomacy and courage (14), and watches the Viking build a giant antenna (15). At New Year he imposes a truce that hides control (16). She asserts her limits and refuses to follow him (17), then holds out for 6 months against his harassing voice messages (18).

The Viking's obsessive monologues and his drinking reveal the codependency (19). Coraline refuses to follow him on his road trip to the Nord Ultima and chooses her own safety (20); their dreams clash, and she asserts her limits (21). With raw humour, she exposes the Viking's drinking and misogyny, and turns her anger into writing (22). Jazz shows the traumas he cannot put into words, and his extreme tastes, from vintage cars to herring, underline his duality; Coraline responds with tenderness and clear-sightedness (23). Facing Kafkaesque administrative misadventures, she keeps her humour and her clarity (24). The Viking's constant changes of mind force her to set limits (25). In the middle of a job interview, her mother rings... and wins over the recruiter (26). In summer, the Viking turns up

at the campsite with his drak-car, and every manoeuvre becomes a comedy scene (27). His whims and XXL projects are cancelled within 48 hours (28). He turns up at her workplace and sows chaos (29), and daily life in the drak-car means deprivation and noise (30). Caught between a tyrannical boss and the Viking, she loses a contract (31), then explodes with anger and breaks with the Viking's toxicity (32). A satire of the world of work (33), before the relationship ends for good (34).

Coraline then reaches clarity and inner peace, and tells her world apart from the Viking's (35). She goes through burnout with her family's support (36 to 38) and finds her inner voice again. Therapeutic work with the Pen allows her to deprogramme her traumas and learn inner safety (39). She moves beyond codependency and family patterns, and protects her autonomy and her creativity (40). She turns her fears into creation and humour (41), learns to set limits with her parents, with humour and tenderness (42), and identifies the founding traumas of her codependency (43). Humour becomes her therapeutic tool: it regulates her emotions and guides her creativity (44). Fiction replaces the fight, and she asserts her sovereignty (45). Finally, Coraline invites the reader to create in turn, with exercises (46), and returns to her hammock and the hummingbirds: her pen is her no (47).

Chapter by chapter

Chapter 1 — The Viking prowls the scrubland...

Coraline discovers that the Viking has looked at her LinkedIn profile: *BOOM*. She chooses to write, to turn her inner chaos into creation.

What moves the reader: the Viking, charismatic and unpredictable; the liberating power of writing; a lively, poetic style.

Why it matters: an effective opening, a modern and credible trigger, a strong narrative voice that engages at once.

Chapter 2 — My Gallery of Imperfect Jewels

Coraline explores dating sites, writes a self-mocking profile and crosses the romantic desert, until a mysterious photo rekindles her interest.

What moves the reader: Coraline's humour, vulnerability and authenticity; a precise rhythm, with suspense.

Why it matters: a short, punchy chapter that makes the character alive and endearing from the very first pages.

Chapter 3 — Code Rose

First date with the Viking: love at first sight, family and astrological mix-ups, comic inner dialogues.

What moves the reader: lively scenes, the contrast between chaos and tenderness, humour about cultural and linguistic differences.

Why it matters: an original introduction of the couple; the interviews reveal the author's psychology and creative process.

Chapter 4 — The Rear-View Mirror of Fate

The first real conflict: on the road, Coraline mediates between the Viking and an aggressive driver, and prevents an escalation.

What moves the reader: the mix of humour and tension, the cultural gap, Coraline's quiet self-assertion.

Why it matters: a comic chapter that reveals the balance of power in the couple, enriched by the interview.

Chapter 5 — Hold on!

A catamaran outing becomes a metaphor for the budding relationship: adrenaline, linguistic mix-ups, and learning to "hold on" rather than to "catch".

What moves the reader: the poetry of the scene, fear and trust, letting go.

Why it matters: a well-controlled extended metaphor, a sensory experience and a visual rhythm.

Chapter 6 — Jet Lag

We meet Coraline's parents: Mum, perfectionist and caring, and Dad, a pragmatic, protective anchor. Her birth trauma, told from the newborn's point of view, explains her chronic lateness.

What moves the reader: humour and depth, a lively and endearing family portrait.

Why it matters: a masterful chapter, exceptional dialogue, unforgettable characters, rich in emotion and comedy.

Chapter 7 — Ring, my parents

Her parents' constant calls interrupt every one of Coraline's activities, from yoga to salsa. The Viking defends her in public for the first time.

What moves the reader: visual, absurd humour, parental love, emotional protection.

Why it matters: a sound leitmotif that structures the chapter, well-controlled comic tension.

Chapter 8 — The Journey to Bas-Valhalla

A romantic road trip: Coraline lives her dream of adventure, up against the Viking's rigorous organisation.

What moves the reader: Coraline's joy, the humour of practical situations, the poetry of the landscapes.

Why it matters: a chapter that carries the reader away, between dream and realism.

Chapter 9 — Overstag!

On Lake Submersheim, the cry "OVERSTAG!" sets the pace. Coraline and the Viking repair the broken catamaran together: closeness, humour and erotic tension.

What moves the reader: the Viking's strength, Coraline's gentleness, their shared complicity.

Why it matters: a lively, visual chapter in which the couple takes shape.

Chapter 10 — The Viking in Game of Thrones

Coraline discovers the Viking's chaotic family and the founding trauma of his childhood, which sheds light on his extreme behaviour.

What moves the reader: the Viking's past, the double bind, the contrast between darkness and wonder.

Why it matters: a crucial chapter for understanding the Viking and the traps of the relationship.

Chapter 11 — The Viking Without Labels

The Viking's obsessive world: his drak-car, his XXL hangar, his need to control and plan everything.

What moves the reader: the Viking's strength, absurdity and humanity.

Why it matters: a precise psychological portrait, balancing tension and comedy.

Chapter 12 — Scandalous National Chaos of France

On a train, the Viking's total panic sets off an avalanche of phone calls. An old trauma comes to light.

What moves the reader: the absurdity of extreme reactions, Coraline's humour and compassion.

Why it matters: the conflict grows, and the repetitive dynamic appears.

Chapter 13 — “The Mountain” Saga — Episode 1

Seasonal work in the mountains: the Viking rages against Coraline's boss. His anger replays old family patterns.

What moves the reader: Coraline's clear-sightedness, humour in the midst of tension.

Why it matters: a dynamic chapter in which the relationship grows more complex.

Chapter 14 — Song: Roxanne, The Police

Facing the police, the Viking's ego runs away with him. Coraline tries to calm things down.

What moves the reader: Coraline's courage and diplomacy.

Why it matters: a chapter both comic and dramatic, about power within the couple.

Chapter 15 — XXL Antenna

The Viking builds a giant antenna, somewhere between heroic DIY and a child's game. Coraline understands his repeated projections.

What moves the reader: a painful clarity, absurd and visual humour.

Why it matters: a strong symbol of control and domination.

Chapter 16 — Turkey with Chestnuts

New Year: the Viking imposes a truce. Coraline gives in, but senses a trap.

What moves the reader: a peace for show, Coraline's tiredness and clear-sightedness.

Why it matters: the manipulation is revealed, without losing the comic rhythm.

Chapter 17 — Stopover at the Salt Peninsula

Comfort versus adventure: Coraline asserts her limits. The Viking leaves alone; she regains her dignity and looks for work.

What moves the reader: self-assertion, survival humour.

Why it matters: a key chapter about the narrator's independence.

Chapter 18 — The Cold War

The Viking harasses Coraline with endless voice messages. She resists, looks for work and holds firm.

What moves the reader: resilience, humour in the face of the absurd.

Why it matters: codependency, between dramatic tension and comedy.

Chapter 19 — Monolong

The Viking's endless monologues, the drinking, the repetition: Coraline finally understands codependency.

What moves the reader: exhaustion, clarity, liberation.

Why it matters: a chapter that explains the emotional dynamic, a narrative high point.

Chapter 20 — On the Road to the Nord Ultima

The Viking imposes a road trip to the far North. Coraline refuses, and chooses comfort, safety and creation.

What moves the reader: fantasy versus reality, a reflection on life and creation.

Why it matters: a reflective chapter about creation, humour and female independence.

Chapter 21 — Fridge on Wheels

Their dreams clash: the Viking wants extreme isolation; Coraline wants warmth, the sea, creation and living bonds. She refuses to be swallowed up.

What moves the reader: autonomy, two paths that part with respect.

Why it matters: the pivot towards the narrator's emancipation.

Chapter 22 — Tiddly the Maggot and the Little Button

Raw humour about virility reveals the Viking's drinking and misogyny. Coraline turns her anger into symbolic revenge, with her pen.

What moves the reader: writing as a weapon, a raw but intelligent humour.

Why it matters: a satirical chapter, a strong and irreverent narrative voice.

Chapter 23 — Jazz... the Dark Side

In his garage, between vintage cars and Radio Jazz, the Viking lets the wounded child behind the giant show through. His extreme tastes reveal his duality, between elegance and savagery.

What moves the reader: Coraline's compassion, between humour, tenderness and clarity.

Why it matters: a narrative breathing space, a musical metaphor.

Chapter 24 — The Ticket Punch and Me

Kafkaesque administrative misadventures: Coraline punches little holes in ready-made ideas, to let the light through.

What moves the reader: observational humour, self-assertion.

Why it matters: a funny, metaphorical chapter about resilience.

Chapter 25 — Counsel for the Prosecution — At the Windmill Court

White Monday, black Tuesday, grey Wednesday: the Viking changes his mind every day. Coraline writes everything down, word for word, and sets her limits.

What moves the reader: the absurdity of the situation, the balance between humour and confrontation.

Why it matters: a chapter about manipulation and taking back control.

Chapter 26 — Job Interview

In the middle of an interview, her mother rings... and wins over the recruiter. On the TV set, the author and the Viking talk about the film based on the novel.

What moves the reader: family comedy, parents' clumsy love.

Why it matters: a short, funny chapter that opens the thread of the film adaptation.

Chapter 27 — Manoeuvres

In summer, the Viking turns up at the campsite with his 12-metre drak-car. Every manoeuvre becomes a comedy scene somewhere between Bourvil and Louis de Funès.

What moves the reader: visual humour, the tenderness beneath the barked orders.

Why it matters: a comic chapter, built like a film scene.

Chapter 28 — Shuffle Mode Activated

Whims and U-turns: the Viking's XXL projects are cancelled within 48 hours. Coraline understands that she must protect her peace rather than adapt.

What moves the reader: childish, insecure behaviour, a growing independence.

Why it matters: a comic chapter that reveals the toxic dynamic.

Chapter 29 — The Viking Gatecrashes the Vegans

The Viking bursts into Coraline's workplace; she is caught between her tyrannical boss and his chaos.

What moves the reader: double pressure, comic and dramatic tension.

Why it matters: codependency and harassment, in all their complexity.

Chapter 30 — Love in a Drak-car

Daily life in the drak-car: absurd constraints, chaos, deprivation and noise. A song by Stephan Eicher sets the rhythm of the story.

What moves the reader: the absurdity of an extreme daily life, Coraline's resilience.

Why it matters: a key chapter about confinement, with visual and repetitive humour.

Chapter 31 — "It" and Snow White — At Work

Coraline faces a tyrannical boss, "It", while the Viking alternates between threats and declarations of love. She loses a crucial contract.

What moves the reader: two tyrannies, professional and romantic, in absurd situations.

Why it matters: tensions come to a head, between drama and black humour.

Chapter 32 — The Viking Runs Away

Coraline explodes with anger at the Viking's toxicity. Humour becomes her survival tool.

What moves the reader: catharsis, self-assertion.

Why it matters: a pivotal chapter of psychological and narrative liberation.

Chapter 33 — Summit Meeting

A satire of the world of work: Coraline reports a malfunction and faces a collective, cynical brutality.

What moves the reader: black humour, social clarity.

Why it matters: a chapter of social criticism, in which the narrator gains her autonomy.

Chapter 34 — A Meteorite Has Fallen... BOOM

A summons orchestrated by "It" and her henchmen. Coraline ends the relationship with the Viking, clearly and with humour.

What moves the reader: liberation, limits that are finally clear.

Why it matters: the end of the toxic relationship, the transition towards rebuilding.

Chapter 35 — A Message in a Bottle...

On the beach, Coraline sees clearly: her world of beauty and peace is not the Viking's.

What moves the reader: inner freedom, the choice of peace.

Why it matters: a meditative, poetic chapter.

Chapter 36 — The Great Reset

Total exhaustion. Her family steps in. Coraline lets go, learns to say NO and to protect herself.

What moves the reader: rebuilding, reconnecting with oneself.

Why it matters: the turning point towards healing.

Chapter 37 — Soft as a Feather — Out

The diagnosis falls: burnout. Humour and denial give way to reality.

What moves the reader: vulnerability, the need to slow down.

Why it matters: psychological realism, the narrator's intimacy.

Chapter 38 — Hot and Cold... with a Spin Cycle

Break-up, burnout, disorientation: Coraline finds her inner voice again and decides to stay true to herself.

What moves the reader: acceptance, humour as a common thread.

Why it matters: a pivotal chapter of the transition.

Chapter 39 — Reinforced Protection

With the Pen, Coraline deprogrammes her grief for her aunt and her guilt, with a simple technique: feel, name her fears, come back to reality.

What moves the reader: inner safety, regained.

Why it matters: a chapter of emotional maturing.

Chapter 40 — The Sun King

Coraline explores the codependency and guilt rooted in her family. The Pen helps her create while taking care of herself.

What moves the reader: understanding the family legacy, gaining creative autonomy.

Why it matters: a psychological synthesis, between legacy and self-assertion.

Chapter 41 — Switching Off the Siren...

Coraline becomes aware of her fear of losing her parents. With the Pen, she names the fear, comes back to the facts and turns it into creation and humour.

What moves the reader: a survival mechanism turned into creativity.

Why it matters: emotional maturity, managing anxiety.

Chapter 42 — My Everyday Heroes

A funny, tender portrait of her parents. Coraline sets clear limits, without guilt.

What moves the reader: family life seen with humour, emotional autonomy.

Why it matters: a comic chapter, between tenderness and irony.

Chapter 43 — Riiing... my Fears

The founding traumas: the fear of losing her parents, the grief for her aunt. Her fears, personified, explain why she cannot say NO.

What moves the reader: the roots understood, the turn towards liberation.

Why it matters: a key chapter of awareness.

Chapter 44 — The Meaning of Life

Humour as a compass: it transforms chaos, regulates emotions and keeps one clear-sighted.

What moves the reader: a concrete, universal practice.

Why it matters: narrative originality, playful resilience.

Chapter 45 — A Matter of Conscience

Two years after the burnout, Coraline learns that her dismissal was unfair. She chooses writing over a legal battle.

What moves the reader: creative freedom, personal sovereignty.

Why it matters: writing becomes protection and resilience.

Chapter 46 — Your Turn

Coraline invites the reader to create: writing games, exercises, total freedom.

What moves the reader: the reader becomes an actor.

Why it matters: an interactive, innovative chapter, added value for readers and for promoting the book.

Chapter 47 — My Pen is my No

In her hammock, facing the hummingbirds, Coraline writes the end of her novel. She has not changed her nature; she has changed how she sees. Her book becomes a playground open to readers.

What moves the reader: peace regained, a calm and living “no”.

Why it matters: a strong ending that opens the book to the reader and to what comes next.

Karine Baridon · contact@lehamacetlescolibris.com · lehamacetlescolibris.com

Working translation: the English text will serve as the basis for a final professional translation.