The Hammock and the Hummingbirds

My pen is my No — a novel by Karine Baridon · synopsis · version of 31 October 2026

How to read this synopsis: the narrative alternates between THE PAST — the story lived by Coraline and the Viking — and THE PRESENT — the author and the Viking interviewed by a journalist on the set of the TV show “Sunday Is Showtime!”.

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. Through bursts of laughter and moments of vulnerability, she turns her misadventures into creation, sets her boundaries and rebuilds her life. Blending comedy and introspection, the novel offers readers an immersive, funny, moving and participatory experience, in which humour becomes a tool for resilience and creativity a path to inner freedom.

The full synopsis

“BOOM”: Coraline sees that the Viking has viewed her LinkedIn profile (1). Angry, she decides to write, to let it out and to create. Flashback: she explores dating sites, facing her emotional boredom with humour and self-mockery, until a mysterious photo rekindles her interest (2). Their first date sparks love at first sight, while her parents keep calling and her astrological planets comment on the scene (3). On the road, Coraline acts as mediator between the Viking and an aggressive driver (4), then learns to sail a catamaran, amid adrenaline and linguistic misunderstandings (5).

She introduces her parents and her birth trauma, with humour and depth (6). Her family’s endless phone calls disrupt her daily life, and the Viking stands up for her in front of his friends (7). Their romantic road trip to the Far North blends wonder, complicity, humour and poetry (8). On the lake, they sail together, between teamwork, erotic tension and shared laughter (9). Coraline discovers the Viking’s chaotic family and his founding traumas (10), then his obsessive world, from the XXL drak-car to absurd preparations (11).

On a train, the Viking’s panic pours out over Coraline, who faces it with humour (12). Her job in the mountains brings family patterns to light (13). Confronted with 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 conceals his control (16). She asserts her boundaries and refuses to follow him (17), then holds out for six months against his barrage of voice messages (18).

The Viking’s obsessive monologues and his alcoholism reveal the codependency (19). Coraline refuses to follow him on his road trip to the Nord Ultima and chooses her safety (20); their dreams clash, and she asserts her boundaries (21). With raw humour, she exposes the Viking’s alcoholism and misogyny, and turns her anger into writing (22). Jazz reveals 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-sighted compassion (23). Faced with Kafkaesque administrative misadventures, she keeps her humour and her clarity (24). The Viking’s constant changes of mind force her to set her boundaries (25). In the middle of a job interview, her mother calls… 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 bursts into her workplace and wreaks havoc (29), and daily life in the drak-car forces deprivation and noise on Coraline (30). Caught between a tyrannical boss and the Viking, she loses a contract (31), then explodes with anger and breaks free from the Viking’s toxicity (32). A satire of the workplace (33) precedes the definitive end of the relationship (34).

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Coraline then reaches clarity and inner peace, and tells her world apart from the Viking's (35). She goes through burnout with the support of her family (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 boundaries 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 readers to create in their 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 Lurks in the Scrubland…

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

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

For the publisher: an effective opening, a modern and credible trigger, a strong narrative voice that engages from the first line.

Chapter 2 — My Gallery of Imperfect Gems

Coraline explores dating sites, writes a profile full of self-mockery and crosses an emotional desert, until a mysterious photo rekindles her interest.

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

For the publisher: a short, punchy chapter that brings the character to life and makes her endearing from the very first pages.

Chapter 3 — Code Rose

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

What moves readers: the liveliness of the scenes, the contrast between chaos and tenderness, the humour about cultural and linguistic differences.

For the publisher: an original introduction of the couple; the interviews reveal the author's psychology and creative process.

Chapter 4 — The Rear-View Mirror of Fate

First real conflict: on the road, Coraline mediates between the Viking and an aggressive driver, and heads off an escalation.

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

For the publisher: a comic chapter that reveals the power dynamics within the couple, enriched by the interview.

Chapter 5 — Hold on!

A catamaran outing becomes a metaphor for the budding relationship: adrenaline, linguistic misunderstandings and learning to "hold on" rather than to "grab".

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

For the publisher: a well-controlled extended metaphor, a sensory experience and a visual rhythm.

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Chapter 6 — Jet Lag

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

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

For the publisher: a masterly chapter, with outstanding dialogue and unforgettable characters, rich in emotion and comedy.

Chapter 7 — Ring ring, my parents

Her parents' endless phone calls interrupt Coraline's every activity, from yoga to salsa. For the first time, the Viking stands up for her in public.

What moves readers: visual and absurd humour, parental love, emotional protection.

For the publisher: a sound leitmotif that structures the chapter, well-controlled comic tension.

Chapter 8 — The Road to Lower Valhalla

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

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

For the publisher: a chapter that carries the reader away, between dream and realism.

Chapter 9 — Overstag!

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

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

For the publisher: a lively and 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 readers: the Viking's past, the double bind, the contrast between darkness and wonder.

For the publisher: a crucial chapter for understanding the Viking and the traps of the relationship.

Chapter 11 — The Unlabelled Viking

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

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

For the publisher: a precise psychological portrait, balancing tension and comedy.

Chapter 12 — Savage 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 readers: the absurdity of extreme reactions, Coraline's humour and compassion.

For the publisher: the conflict deepens and the repetitive dynamic emerges.

Chapter 13 — The Mountain Saga, Part 1

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

What moves readers: Coraline's clear-sightedness, humour amid tension.

For the publisher: a dynamic chapter in which the relationship grows more complex.

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Chapter 14 — The Mountain Saga, Part 2 — Roxanne, The Police

Faced with the police, the Viking's ego runs wild. Coraline tries to calm things down.

What moves readers: Coraline's courage and diplomacy.

For the publisher: a chapter both comic and dramatic, about power within the couple.

Chapter 15 — Antenna XXL

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

What moves readers: a painful clarity, an absurd and visual humour.

For the publisher: a powerful symbol of control and domination.

Chapter 16 — The Chestnut-Stuffed Turkey

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

What moves readers: a surface peace, Coraline's weariness and clear-sightedness.

For the publisher: the manipulation is revealed, without losing the comic rhythm.

Chapter 17 — A Stopover on the Presqu'île du Sel

Comfort versus adventure: Coraline asserts her boundaries. The Viking leaves alone; she regains her dignity and looks for a job.

What moves readers: self-assertion, survival humour.

For the publisher: a key chapter on the narrator's independence.

Chapter 18 — The Cold War

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

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

For the publisher: codependency, between dramatic tension and comedy.

Chapter 19 — Monolong

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

What moves readers: exhaustion, clarity, liberation.

For the publisher: an illuminating chapter on emotional dynamics, a narrative high point.

Chapter 20 — Heading for the Nord Ultima

The Viking imposes a road trip to the Far North. Coraline refuses, choosing comfort, safety and creation instead.

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

For the publisher: a reflective chapter on creation, humour and female independence.

Chapter 21 — Fridge on Wheels

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

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

For the publisher: a turning point towards the narrator's emancipation.

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Chapter 22 — Teeny Weeny the Worm and the Little Button

Raw humour about virility exposes the Viking's alcoholism and misogyny. Coraline turns her anger into symbolic revenge, through her pen.

What moves readers: writing as a weapon, a humour that is raw but intelligent.

For the publisher: a satirical chapter, with a strong and irreverent narrative voice.

Chapter 23 — Jazz... the Dark Side

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

What moves readers: Coraline's compassion, blending humour, tenderness and clarity.

For the publisher: a narrative breathing space, a musical metaphor.

Chapter 24 — The Ticket Puncher and Me

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

What moves readers: observational humour, self-assertion.

For the publisher: a funny and metaphorical chapter about resilience.

Chapter 25 — At the Court of Windmills

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

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

For the publisher: a chapter about manipulation and taking back control.

Chapter 26 — Job Interview

In the middle of the interview, her mother calls... and wins over the recruiter. On the set, the author and the Viking discuss the film adapted from the novel.

What moves readers: family comedy, the clumsy love of parents.

For the publisher: a short, funny chapter that opens the thread of the film adaptation.

Chapter 27 — On 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 De Funès.

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

For the publisher: a comic chapter, built like a film scene.

Chapter 28 — Shuffle Mode On

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

What moves readers: childish and insecure behaviour, a growing independence.

For the publisher: a comic chapter that reveals the toxic dynamic.

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Chapter 29 — The Viking Lands Among the Vegans

The Viking bursts into Coraline's workplace, leaving her caught between her tyrannical boss and his chaos.

What moves readers: the double pressure, a tension both comic and dramatic.

For the publisher: codependency and harassment, in all their complexity.

Chapter 30 — Love in 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 readers: the absurdity of an extreme everyday life, Coraline's resilience.

For the publisher: a key chapter about confinement, with visual and repetitive humour.

Chapter 31 — "It" and Snow White — Off to Work

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

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

For the publisher: tensions escalate, between drama and black humour.

Chapter 32 — The Viking Takes Flight

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

What moves readers: catharsis, self-assertion.

For the publisher: a pivotal chapter of psychological and narrative liberation.

Chapter 33 — Summit Meeting

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

What moves readers: black humour, social clear-sightedness.

For the publisher: a chapter of social critique, as the narrator gains her autonomy.

Chapter 34 — A Meteorite Fell... BOOM

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

What moves readers: liberation, boundaries finally clear.

For the publisher: the close of the toxic relationship, a 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 readers: inner freedom, the choice of peace.

For the publisher: a meditative and 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 readers: rebuilding, reconnecting with oneself.

For the publisher: a tipping-point chapter towards healing.

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Chapter 37 — Soft as a Feather — Out

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

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

For the publisher: psychological realism, the narrator's intimacy.

Chapter 38 — Hot and Cold… with Spin Cycle

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

What moves readers: acceptance, humour as a common thread.

For the publisher: a hinge chapter in the transition.

Chapter 39 — Enhanced Protection

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

What moves readers: inner safety regained.

For the publisher: a chapter of emotional maturation.

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 readers: understanding a family legacy, gaining creative autonomy.

For the publisher: 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, returns to the facts and turns it into creation and humour.

What moves readers: a survival mechanism transformed into creativity.

For the publisher: emotional maturity, managing anxiety.

Chapter 42 — My Everyday Heroes

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

What moves readers: family life seen through humour, emotional autonomy.

For the publisher: a comic chapter, between tenderness and irony.

Chapter 43 — Riiiing… 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 readers: roots understood, the turning point towards liberation.

For the publisher: a key chapter of awareness.

Chapter 44 — The Meaning of Life

Humour as a compass: it transforms chaos, regulates emotions and keeps the mind clear.

What moves readers: a concrete and universal practice.

For the publisher: narrative originality, playful resilience.

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Chapter 45 — A Matter of Conscience

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

What moves readers: creative freedom, personal sovereignty.

For the publisher: writing becomes protection and resilience.

Chapter 46 — Over to You

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

What moves readers: the reader becomes a player.

For the publisher: an interactive and innovative chapter, an 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 ending of her novel. She has not changed her nature; she has changed the way she sees. Her book becomes a playground open to readers.

What moves readers: peace regained, a calm and vibrant “no”.

For the publisher: a strong ending that opens the book onto its readers and onto what comes next.

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