

Growing up with (ir) replaceable parents:  
Neil Gaiman's The Day I Swapped My Dad  
for Two Goldfish, Coraline, and The  
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## Article

**Title:** Growing up with (ir) replaceable parents: Neil Gaiman's The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish, Coraline, and The Graveyard Book

**Variant title:** Dospívání s (ne)nahraditelnými rodiči: Den, kdy jsem si otce vyměnil za dvě zlaté rybky, Koralína a Kniha hřbitovních příběhů  
Neil Gaimana

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**Source document:** Bohemica litteraria. 2015, vol. 18, iss. 2, pp. 83-92

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**Extent:** 83-98**ISSN:** 1213-2144 (print); 2336-4394 (online)**Type:** Article (English)**Stable URL:** <http://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/135004> [PDF](#) (0.18 MB) | [Feedback](#)**Abstract(s):**

One of the most popular fantasy authors today, Neil Gaiman has been representing children's ambivalent perceptions of parents and creating stories of child's fantasies of replacing parents with better or kinder ones. This essay discusses two of his books, *The Day I Swapped my Dad for Two Goldfish* (1998/2004), *Coraline* and *Graveyard Book* (2008) as narratives in which this desire is sublimated, alluring the reader to vicariously experience the empowerment and the danger of replacing, getting rid of, or exchanging one's parents. I demonstrate that in these books Gaiman confirms the child's perception of parents as potentially replaceable. This suggests that this awareness serves a vital developmental purpose. First, the protagonist outgrows dependence on the parents and, often in rebellion, moves toward emotional and psychological independence. Second, it leaves the child with a more mature understanding of the parent-child relationship – a re-imagined agency they seek is spurious when achieved by finding parents who would fulfill one's desires. In struggling to come to terms with their parents' limited imperfections, Gaiman's protagonists learn that lasting human relationships exist despite the absence of but despite our own and other people's shortcomings.

Neil Gaiman, jeden z nejpůvodnějších fantasy autorů současnosti, prošel rozpurným vnímáním rodičů a vytvářením příběhů založených na předstávě vlastních rodičů jako jaké lepší nebo laskavější. Tato studie nabízí texty o vyměnění otce za dvě zlaté rybky (1998/2004), *Koralína* (2002, první vydání) a *hřbitovní dívka* (2008, české vydání 2008) jako vyprávění, v nichž je tato touha vyplněna, a zprostředkovaně zažívá pocity moci a zároveň nebezpečí, které vzešly z nahrazení nebo výměny rodičů. Ukazují, že v každé z těchto knih Gaiman potvrzuje děti jako potenciálně nahraditelných, ale naznačuje, že toto povídkové hraje roli v vývoji dítěte. Za prvé, pomáhá dětským protagonistům překonat závislost na rodičích, a to prostřednictvím vzpoury proti nim, je vedle smutku a psychického utrpení. Za druhé, opouští protagonisty s vyspělejším pochopením vztahu rodičů a dítěte, že cíl, jehož se snaží dosáhnout, se ukazuje jako falešný v okamžiku, kdy rodiče, kteří jim splní všechna přání. Ve snaze vyrovnat se s omezenými nedostatky svých rodičů Gaimanovi hrdinové poznávají, že trvalé lidské vztahy existují navzdory našim i cizím nedostatkům, nikoli díky jejich absenci.

**Keywords:**

Neil Gaiman; parent-child relationship; child development; identity formation; literary experience; desire; *The Day I Swapped my Dad for Two Goldfish*; *Coraline*; *Graveyard Book*

Neil Gaiman; vztah mezi rodiči a dítětem; vývoj dítěte; formování identity; zprostředkovaná literární prožitek; touha; Den, kdy jsem vyměnil otce za dvě zlaté rybky; *Koralína*; *hřbitovní dívka*

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