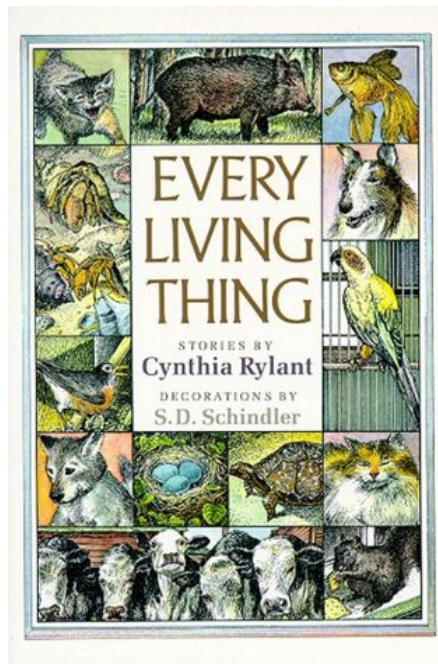




Every Living Thing

Cynthia Rylant , S.D. Schindler

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Here are twelve deeply moving short stories from the perceptive pen of Cynthia Rylant. Each captures the moment when someone's life changes -- when an animal causes a human being to see things in a different way, and, perhaps, changes his life.

Every Living Thing Details

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From Reader Review Every Living Thing for online ebook

Jonathan Peto says

I read this to a class of fourth graders over a few months. Although all the stories demonstrated the importance of animals in our lives, the stories were usually bleak to me, because the humans were bleak. I may use some of the stories with future classes to highlight some aspect of writer's craft, but I don't think I'll ever read all of it to a class again. I'm too fragile, even if they aren't.

Melki has a more positive spin on the whole thing though. See her review, because you may be in her camp:

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Vicki says

This book was stop-the-world sit on your couch curled up with a blanket good times. Each short story was a poignant tale involving humans and animals that was so sweet to read. I love this author!

Linda Lipko says

This is a small book filled with wonderful tales of the way in which animals change the lives of young and old. I very much enjoy Rylant's works. She is one of my favorite authors. There are twelve stories in this book in praise of the gentle way a pet helps us see the world in an entirely different way.

Emily says

In life, things can take a rough turn and still be ok. Like in the story "Spaghetti" by Cynthia Rylant when the boy finds a kitten at a bus stop and the text said that the kitten sounded like chalk nails. The title "Spaghetti" makes everyone think of the food but it is about a kitten, NOT...THE...FOOOOOOD!!!!!!!!!!!!!! At first I was surprised by the title, but the theme makes sense because it is about to listen closely and hear the small and quiet details instead of the most obvious. This shows that you can give good to the things around you if you listen to the cry.

The boy heard a raspy cry on the street so quiet you probably would have kept walking like it was not there. Then the kittens raspy cry got louder. The boy picked up the kitten and the kitten started to prrrrrr. This is my first support about when the boy heard a raspy cry so quiet you would have kept on walking like it was not there but the boy heard it just enough to look over his shoulder. The kitten was probably not loud because it was hungry and thirsty, but I could be wrong. The boy described the kitten as skinny, smelt like pasta, and was gray. He did not give a lot of description about the kitten or what the boy was like but I still got a picture in my head about what the kitten would sound like and look like because you can almost imagine a boy sitting at a bus stop heard a sound and looked over his shoulder to see a kitten crying and looked gray, skinny and it smelt like pasta.

This is my second support about when the kittens raspy cry got LOUDER!!!!!! A kitten normally cries when

it wants its mom or it wants food. It almost sounded like the kitten wanted the boy to hear him and pick (him or her) up but it also could be a coincidence. The title “Spaghetti “ is the kitten's NAME not the food so keep that in mind. This shows that life can take a rough turn and it could change your life for the better and that is the theme to.

This is my last support and this one will be about when the boy picked up the kitten and it started to prrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Maybe the kitten felt safe with the boy and prrrrrrrred because it liked how the boy petted its back or how the boy did not yell at the kitten because you do not know what the kitten could have been though to get itself on the street.

The world has stopped and just because it is the end of my opinion doesn't mean I can't remind you that the title is named after a kitten NOT...THE...FOOD!!!!!! Also it would be great if you read the book and think to yourself and say "Was this a good story? Did I understand the story? Will my friends like the story or should I read it again?"

Jacqueline says

This was a sweet book. It was a quick read, full of short stories that you can read a little at a time or all at once. I had heard one of the stories, "Papa's Parrot" read out loud in a classroom, and it inspired some excellent journaling by the students. I can see how the the other stories could be used in the same fashion in a classroom.

Peacegal says

This is a lovely collection of short stories about the interaction of human and animal, and the ways in which animals can change and improve people's lives.

True, some of the stories present outdated norms--reptile advocates will cringe at the scene of a boy taking a turtle out of the wild to keep as a pet--but its heart is in the right place, and overall the effect is a very positive one.

Melki says

“Until one has loved an animal, a part of one’s soul remains unawakened.” ? Anatole France

Sheesh - I am becoming such a maudlin old broad! I don't know . . . maybe it's just raging hormones, but nearly every story in this collection moved me to tears. Rylant presents twelve very short stories, most are just a few pages, about people and animals - how they bonded, and how the humans became better, stronger, and braver people from their encounters with these creatures.

We meet Jack Mitchell, who can't wait to check himself out of the Veteran's Hospital, and resume drinking himself to death. But, then . . . who will feed those squirrels?

Then there's a retired schoolteacher who's given up on the things that made her happy. She inherits an elderly dog who's missing having children in her life. Together they discover new experiences by revisiting old haunts.

And here we have a grieving young man, forced to live with his Aunt Esther, a virtual stranger. It's stranger still how they manage to bond over . . . hermit crabs?

And, don't forget Emmanuella, the ten-year-old girl who has wanted a pet for so very long. She dreamed of a dog or cat she could play with and pet. Imagine her disappointment when her parents presented her with a "used" goldfish who was old and blind. Yet, she became devoted to that fish, and, when he died, she was finally able to pet him.

Sob!

You may not need a box of tissues to get through this book. It's probably just me, and the stage of life I'm in right now. It's probably the fact that my dog is now almost thirteen-years-old, and that's the high end of the life expectancy scale for Golden Retrievers. But, if you've ever had an animal - a dog, cat, fish, bird, lizard, horse, guinea pig, etc. - who somehow managed to touch something inside of you, then maybe these stories will have special meaning for you.

“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That’s the problem.” ? A.A. Milne

Stacy Stoker says

This was a different kind of book. It is a book of short stories about the impact a particular animal had in the life of a person. Some stories were better than others.

Matthew says

A beautiful collection of touching stories about the bond humans and their animal companions can share.

Siobhan says

A little preachy, but great short stories for teaching character traits, symbolism, and theme.

Jacquie says

Short stories for kids, with an animal theme.

Evelyn Comte says

For the part Shells

Imagine you are living with your aunt who doesn't talk to you and no one else wants you. Well in the story Shells by Cynthia Rylant a kid named Michael has that problem. He has to live with his aunt because his mom and dad died. I think Shells teaches you that if you share your feelings you will feel better. For example Michael's Aunt, Esther tells her feelings then Michael feels like Aunt Esther is like his mom and then Esther feels better about what Michael says, and Michael comes out of his shell too. Here are my three reasons why I think that sharing your feelings makes you feel better.

One reason, Shells teaches you that when you share your feelings you will feel better is when Esther and Michael were sitting on the couch and Esther felt bad about what she said. The author then said "Michael smelt a familiar smell, his mother's talc." I think that talc means perfume so that's why I think it means he felt like Esther was like his mom. I think this is important because it shows Esther is getting closer to Michael .

The second reason Shells teaches you that when you share your feelings you will feel better is when Michael felt like Esther was family and Michael said " No Aunt, Esther, he shook his head solemnly I don't hate you," he said that because Esther whispered "I am sorry Michael, Oh you must hate me." Michael then looked at Esther and that's when he said, " I don't hate you Esther." This shows that when Esther told her feelings she felt better because specifically about what Michael said about her feelings.

The last reason Shells teaches you that when you share your feelings you will feel better is when Esther and Michael where looking at their hermit crabs and the author said, "The crab was coming out of his shell." This is important because the crab is representing Michael, so this shows that Michael feels better about sharing his feelings with Esther and he can trust her more. It also shows that Esther will feel closer to Michael and he won't be so mean to Esther any more.

As you can see, sharing your feelings makes you feel better. I have learned this lesson too. I think that a lot of people don't share their feelings. I found a quote that said " They may forget what you said but they will not forget how you made them feel." I hoped this makes you remember to share your feelings and it will make you and maybe someone else feel better too. Sharing your feelings also doesn't just make you feel better, but it make you feel like whoever you talked to you can trust them more so don't forget to share your feelings so you feel better, and other people will feel better too, and you will feel like you can trust the person you talk to about your feelings. Also, the person you talk to will feel closer to you.

Carlee says

The world can be hard when you have to make a big decision like the character in Cynthia Rylant's "Spaghetti" did. This story is about a boy named Gabriel who could think and imagine things so clearly, that he almost missed the cry from the street, and when he saw where the cry was coming from, he made a big decision. "Spaghetti" is mostly about how Gabriel is rational. This story shows this when he imagined what it would be like to live outside all the time, when he was thinking so deeply that he almost missed the cry from the street, and when he decided that it would be better to stay where he was.

The first time the story shows that Gabriel is rational is when he imagined what it would be like to live outside all the time. I found evidence when the text said,"He imagined himself carrying a pack of food and a few tools and a heavy cloth to erect a hasty tent. Gabriel saw himself sleeping among coyotes. But next he saw himself sleeping under the glittering lights of a movie theatre, near the bus stop." This evidence supports the text because it shows how clear he can imagine things. This proves that Gabriel is rational.

The second time it shows this is when Gabriel was thinking so deeply that he almost missed the cry from the street. I found evidence when the text said, "He thought about things so deeply, so fully, that on this evening, he almost missed hearing the cry from the street. The cry was so weak and faraway in his mind that, for him, it could have been the slow lifting of a stubborn window. It could have been the creak of an old man's legs. It could have been the wind." This evidence supports the text because it shows how deep Gabriel can think. This proves that Gabriel is rational.

The final time it shows specifically, that Gabriel is rational was when he decides that it would be better to stay where he was. I found evidence when the text said, "Gabriel no longer wanted to live outside. He knew he had a room and a bed of his own in the tall building." This evidence supports the text because it shows how Gabriel can make his own decisions since he can think about things clearly. This proves that Gabriel is rational.

As you can see, Cynthia Rylant's Spaghetti is mostly about how Gabriel is rational and the story shows this when, he was imagining what it would be like to live outside all the time, when he was thinking so deeply that he almost missed the cry from the street and when he decided it was better to stay where he was. I think the theme of this story is take care of something besides you because Gabriel had to take care of something beside himself. I learned that you should think about something before you do it.

Jennifer Whitefield says

Great book for teachers that are looking for short, complex text to teach close reading!

Kimberly Klaus says

I read several of these short stories out loud to my fourth graders every year. Great resource for writing with details.
