

Cynthia Rylan's short story, Spaghetti, teaches readers that people have a need to belong.

Early in the story, Gabriel felt like he didn't belong.

Later in the story, Gabriel was searching for a way to belong.

At the end of the story, Gabriel found a way to belong.

Cynthia Rylan's short story, Spaghetti, is about how the unexpected can change our fortunes.

Early in story, Gabriel was feeling very alone. All around him people are talking, yet he sits alone on the stoop of his apartment thinking. He doesn't think of friends or good times though, but instead he remembers the loneliness of being the only kid in class that day with the right answer to a question the teacher had asked. When he's done remembering, he daydreams. His dreams aren't of fun-filled times with friends surrounding him, but rather of a life of solitude. He daydreams of living outside in the woods alone, sleeping under the stars in a tent, with his only companions being the coyotes. He is so focused on his unhappiness and loneliness that he nearly misses the sound in the alleyway.

In the middle of the story, he heard something that caused him to take action. It came from far away and Gabriel at first dismissed it as the wind, a window, or possibly even an old man's creaking bones. Were Gabriel truly content with his loneliness he may have stay glued to his stoop, but he wasn't, so he picked himself up and slowly walked toward the sound. His snail's pace was a product of his unhappiness, but the fact that he was doing something showed that he longed for more. When he heard the sound again he quickened his pace, hopeful for something, anything. Eventually, he found the source of the noise, and of hope - a frail little gray kitten.

At the end of the story he had a new outlook on life. When he lifted the kitten up into the air he began to see the world differently. No longer was he alone. He now had someone in his life to care for and who needed him. With Spaghetti, a name he gave the kitten because of its smell, in his hands, he walked home. Not the slow walk of an unhappy boy, but the brisk walk of a boy who now had found a reason for joy. With this newfound attitude he returns home to his stoop and no longer dreams of a life alone outside. With his companion by his side, his thoughts are positive and full of hope - he has a home, a room, and a friend.