

Remy

“Change *is* Nature.”

—Remy the Rat, a.k.a. Little Chef, *Ratatouille*

My husband and I have a good system going. I find the dogs and they fall in love with him. It's not that they dislike or mistrust me, it's just that they *adore* Tom. They go to him to be cuddled, whispered to, their ears scratched, their butts rubbed.

When an eight-year-old German Shepherd mix named Smiley came home with me from the Valley Animal Center, a no-kill shelter in Fresno, California, I thought the pattern would repeat itself, but he made it imminently clear that I was his favorite human. I waited for him to shift alliances, but he has steadfastly stayed within my orbit.

Our grandson, Kuiper, suggested we re-name him Remy from the animated movie, *Ratatouille*. Since Remy was the cutest pudge-ball you ever saw, I could see him living outside a French restaurant, eating scraps of Coq au Vin, ratatouille, and finishing his meal off with a misshapen chouquette.

He's under my desk as I write this. If I get up, he'll follow me. If I'm slow to put my shoes on for the morning walk and Tom's already outside, Remy will race back to make sure I'm coming. He's my supervisor when I vacuum, the only dog I've ever known who is not afraid of that noisy monster. When I have to leave the house, he'll stare at the door to the garage until the sound of my car disappears.



It's been so long since I've had a dog who favors me first. I feel special, chosen and deeply adored. He's a wonderful dog to have in my corner.



Remy is fearless, funny, loving and loveable. He has the eyes of a mystic philosopher and the grin of a goofball. He loves his pack and welcomes new members easily. Every day's an adventure and he lives by the adage Remy the Rat espouses, who when told he can't change nature disagrees, “Change *is* nature.”

Remy went from a stray to a shelter, to the Valley Animal Center, to our home with multiple dogs, to a different name, and has taken it all in stride. Happily. He's never let his life—whatever it was before—bring him down. He exemplifies what Chef Auguste Gusteau says in *Ratatouille*—something we should all emulate: *If you focus on what you left behind, you will never see what lies ahead.*

Postscript: We are fostering a new dog, Ava, and she loves Tom best.