



## Anyone Can Cook

Chef Auguste Gusteau's motto in *Ratatouille* is "anyone can cook." This means that everyone is capable of being a great chef. While some Parisians in the story accept Gusteau's sentiment, there are many who scoff at the idea of an unlikely cook. In fact, a brutal review from Anton Ego, a food critic, caused the death of Chef Gusteau. Unfortunately, that resulted in his 5-star restaurant losing 2 stars. The employees that were left behind in the wake of his death are reluctant to uphold Gusteau's famous expression. Remy, the protagonist of the story, is presented with an opportunity to prove himself in Gusteau's restaurant kitchen. Even though Remy is a rat, he influences the people around him and proves that truly anyone can cook. His arrival in Paris shows everyone involved with Gusteau's that they cannot be quick to judge. *Ratatouille* demonstrates that individuals should not change who they are to gain approval from their peers, but they should always be true to themselves.

Emile, Remy's brother, accepts him for who he is. At the beginning of the story, Remy spends a lot of time with Emile. Remy appreciates that he does not need to change himself for Emile to enjoy his company. While describing his relationship with his brother, Remy says, "He doesn't understand me, but I can be myself around him" (*Ratatouille*). Even though

Remy is different from the rest of the clan, Emile embraces his quirks. Even when it is dangerous and out of his comfort zone, Emile helps Remy with his food creations. Through everything, Emile is loyal to his younger brother. On the other hand, Django, their father, does not support Remy. In fact, he is anti-human. He disapproves of Remy's fascination with them, and wants him to be a "normal" rat. In contrast, Emile's acceptance is an encouragement to Remy throughout the entire movie.

When Remy falls into Gusteau's kitchen, he must escape in order to survive. He eventually sees an opportunity to flee the restaurant, but he cannot resist fixing the soup that Alfredo Linguini, the garbage boy, ruined. Remy remedies the soup, but gets caught and banished from Gusteau's by Chef Skinner, the new owner. Linguini is ordered to dispose of the rat before anyone finds out. He is not sure what to do with Remy, so he takes him to the outskirts of town. While conversing with Remy, Linguini hatches a plan. If they could only work together, Linguini could keep his job. Remy is obviously on board with this scheme because it allows him to continue cooking. However, Remy was not required to help Linguini. He could have returned to the lifestyle of rat and tried to find his clan. In making this alliance with Linguini, Remy shows that he trusts Linguini as a person. How could Remy know that Linguini would not give him to Chef Skinner? In addition, Linguini is an unskilled person. Remy could have let Linguini make a fool of himself in the kitchen. Instead, Remy chose to help him keep his job.

After understanding that Remy deeply cares about and enjoys cooking, Django accepts that his son is different. When all of the cooks leave and Anton Ego is waiting for his meal, Django gathers the clan to help Remy. He says, "We're not cooks, but we are family. You tell us what to do, and we'll get it done" (*Ratatouille*). This quote shows that Django cares about Remy. Although they do not know how to cook, Remy's clan supports him by helping to maintain Linguini's reputation. They all pitch in to make a meal for Ego. Remy directs them through the process of making ratatouille, and the dish is completed. This support from his family and friends allows Remy to shine in his true passion.

Colette, the only female cook at Gusteau's, gradually accepts Linguini and Remy as they are. She likes Linguini even though he befriended a rat and brought him into Gusteau's. As Colette is riding away from the restaurant, she sees Gusteau's book, *Anyone Can Cook*. This makes her reconsider her harshness in the situation. She returns to the restaurant to show her support for Linguini and Remy. When Colette enters the restaurant, Linguini is ecstatic and starts to ramble. She hushes him and says, "Don't say a word. If I think about it I might change my mind. Just tell me what the rat wants to cook" (*Ratatouille*). Remy pulls out an old recipe of Gusteau's for ratatouille. Colette immediately replies that it is a peasant dish and questions Remy's desire to serve it to Ego. After Remy insists, she aids him with the cooking of the dish. In both of these instances, Colette abandons her first instincts. By helping Remy with the recipe, she shows her trust in

Linguini. Colette learns to appreciate both Linguini and Remy for who they are.

Anton Ego learns that anyone can cook. Eating Remy's interpretation of ratatouille takes Ego back to his childhood, when his mother made him the same dish. After finishing his meal, Ego says, "I can't remember the last time I asked the waiter to give my compliments to the chef. And now I find myself in the extraordinary position of having my waiter be the chef" (*Ratatouille*). Linguini explains that he did not make the ratatouille, and Ego asks who he can thank for the meal. Linguini consults with Colette and she tells Ego that he must wait until the restaurant closes to speak with the chef. After waiting for hours to meet Remy, Ego is shocked that a rat cooked the delicious meal he experienced. Ego does not disclose his opinion until his review is published the following day. He writes, "In the past, I have made no secret of my disdain for Chef Gusteau's famous motto: 'Anyone can cook.' But I realize only now do I truly understand what he meant." Additionally, he states that Remy is "nothing less than the finest chef in France" (*Ratatouille*). Even though he was previously critical of Gusteau's sentiments, Ego recognizes that Remy is a talented chef. He accepts the great cook for what he is: a rat.

The examples of individualism in *Ratatouille* display the importance of staying true to oneself. Although people may not initially accept someone for being different, one should never change who they are. It is not healthy for someone to change who they are to gain approval from their peers. Emile accepts Remy for who he is, even though he is different from the rest of the

clan. Remy befriends Linguini despite his lack of skill in the kitchen. Django learns to understand his son's passion for cooking, and it bonds them as a family. Colette grows to love Linguini in spite of his odd choice for a best friend. Finally, Anton Ego abandons his past criticisms of Chef Gusteau and learns that anyone can cook. In all of these instances, *Ratatouille* shows that everyone should embrace their true self.

## Works Cited

*Ratatouille*. Dir. Brad Bird, Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios, 2007. Film.