



“Tucker” (Photo: tstockphoto, Big Stock Photo)

“Tucker just mopes around all the time.”

Tucker

Theodore Jerome Cohen

I never had been my intent to adopt a dog. But when Jenna left town with her yoga instructor, my world collapsed and with it, any interest in meeting someone new.

“Tell me about him,” I said to the woman at the pound.

“He’s been here a while. Very even-tempered, doesn’t jump on ya, and—”

“Why hasn’t anyone adopted him?”

“Most people want a dog with more spunk. Tucker just mopes around all the time.”

Tucker was perfect for me. We were two guys who, for whatever reasons, were left to spend the rest of our days alone in misery.

“I’ll take him,” I said, proceeding with the paperwork.

“Oh, by the way,” the attendant said, “the previous owner left this envelope when he dropped him off.”

I opened the envelope when I got home. In it was a long note, talking about what a wonderful dog I had just adopted, the tricks he could do, and the food he liked. But what caught my eye was near the bottom: “His name is not Tucker; it’s Rufus. Giving his real name just seemed so final. I couldn’t bear to do it.”

The letter was signed by Sergeant Tim Fitzgerald, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Army.

Then I remembered. A month earlier I had seen the sergeant’s obituary in the local newspaper.

“Come on, Rufus,” I yelled, throwing him a ball. And for the first time in what must have been months, the light came back into the little fellow’s eyes.