

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 1: A TRIUMPH OF SURGERY



A TRIUMPH OF SURGERY

~Summary~

-by James Herriot

James Enquires about tricki

It was when James was driving that, he saw Mrs Pumphrey and tricki walking down the street. He stopped his car to see how Trick was doing. He was shocked to see that he had become fat like a sausage and was lacking energy. After enquiring from Mrs Pumphrey about Trick's condition, he advised her to immediately stop giving the dog extra snacks between meals. He also wanted her to make him exercise daily along with a strict diet in order to improve his health. Mrs Pumphrey confessed that it was very difficult for her to do so but she agreed upon giving it a try and walked off with tricki.

Herriot Received an Expected Call

Mrs Pumphrey called James Herriot, the vet, hurriedly, as tricki had refused to eat food. Her concern grew even more when he had bouts of vomiting. James drove to Mrs Pumphrey's house with a firm mindset that the only way to cure Tricki was to get him out of the house for some time. He suggested to Mrs Pumphrey to hospitalise him for a fortnight for observation so that the proper treatment can follow. Although it broke Mrs Pumphrey's heart, she allowed James to take Tricki along with him to his surgery. He carried the dog wrapped in a blanket to his car. All the house helpers started to get together the blankets, rugs, bowls, coats etc that they thought Tricki might need during his hospitalisation. James started to drive off as he knew that his car could not carry so many things. All that Mrs Pumphrey managed to put were a few of his coats. Tricki left for the hospital leaving his caretakers behind in tears.

Tricki's Stay and Recovery at the Hospital

Tricki laid motionless on the bed that the vet made for him on the first day. He was put on a water diet for almost two days. Even the household dogs didn't bother him as he seemed uninterested in anything. After two days, he started responding a bit. On the following day, he whimpered (cried in low and weak sound), trotted (walked briskly) and joined the hound (hunting dog) in the garden. Later on the third day, he ran with enthusiasm when the food was served. He also gulped (swallowed) down the extra food that was put out for him. His recovery was speeding up. He had



started running all day long and found joy in being bowled over and squashed. In spite of being a high maintenance dog, he had fitted in well with the gang of shabby and unkempt ones.

Mrs Pumphrey's Concern

Mrs Pumphrey used to phone the vet's clinic several times a day. She was keen to record his recovery and maintenance at short intervals. James brushed away her questions about Tricki's dressing, according to the weather but he didn't fail to assure her that Tricki was out of danger. Upon learning about Tricki's improving health, Mrs Pumphrey started sending additional food items, wine and brandy for Tricki, although this was not required. So the vet and his partner consumed these additional items themselves.

Tricki's Better Condition

After two weeks James called up Mrs Pumphrey to inform that Tricki was fit and could go home. Mrs Pumphrey reached the surgery within half an hour. While the chauffeur (driver) held the door open, she enquired about Tricki's actual condition. She was concerned about his well being and wanted to be sure about it. James found Tricki playing with the pack. He had become healthy and strong in his two weeks stay. As James carried Tricki out to his mistress, he jumped off his arms and landed in his mistress lap. She was very happy at finding Tricki as excited as he used to be. He licked her face and wagged (swung) his tail. The chauffeur and the vet settled the dog's stuff in the car while Mrs Pumphrey thanked the vet for the 'triumph of surgery'.

Conclusion of A Triumph of Surgery

In the chapter – A Triumph of Surgery signifies how rich parents indulge their children with expensive items, which prove harmful for their kids' health in the long run.



NCERT SOLUTION

Questions (Page No. 1)

(READ AND FIND OUT)

Question 1: Why is Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey was worried and upset about Tricki's health as he was not eating anything. He refused to eat his favourite dishes and had bouts of vomiting. He spent all his time lying on a rug, panting and didn't show any interest in going for daily walks either.

Question 2: What does she do to help him? Is she wise in this?

Answer: Initially, Mrs Pumphrey thought that Tricki had become listless, as he seemed to have no energy. She assumed that he must be suffering from malnutrition, so she started giving him some little extras between meals to build him up, some malt and cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks at night to make him sleep. She would also indulge him in cream cakes and chocolates unnecessarily and did not give him enough exercise. With all this pampering and indulgence, Tricki became hugely fat, like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner. It was absolutely not a wise decision on the part of his mistress to overfeed him that worsened his condition and made him more lazy and bulky. However, seeing his plight Mrs Pumphrey was distraught and consulted a veterinary surgeon, Dr. Herriot, to help improve Tricki's health condition.

Question 3: Who does 'I' refer to in this story?

Answer: In the story, 'I' refers to Dr. James Herriot, a veterinary surgeon.

Questions (Page No. 3)

(READ AND FIND OUT)

Question 1: Is the narrator as rich as Tricki's mistress?

Answer: There are some instances in the story that suggest Dr. Herriot was not as rich as Tricki's mistress, Mrs Pumphrey. This is evident from the fact that the narrator could not provide a luxurious life such as a cosy bed stuffed with favourite cushions, toys and rubber rings along with bowls for different meals of the day, rather he made up a bed for Tricki in a warm loose box next to the one where the other dogs slept. The doctor also could not afford an entire staff of maids and caretakers just like Mrs Pumphrey to take care of the sole well-being and maintenance of her pet, Tricki.

Question 2: How does he treat the dog?



Answer: Dr. Herriot did not indulge Tricki with unnecessary food items. He rather treated him like an overweight and lazy dog, which needed sufficient exercise with a controlled diet. He cut down his food intake and kept him under strict observation for the first few days. In due course of time, he increased Tricki's food intake with a balanced diet and set him free for physical activities to improve his health. Gradually, the dog health started showing improvement and he did not require any kind of medicinal treatment and recovered from his illness soon.

Question 3: Why is he tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey started to bring round fresh eggs, two dozen at a time, to build up Tricki's strength. Later even the bottles of wine and brandy began to arrive. The narrator along with his partners enjoyed having two eggs each for breakfast, wine and brandy that was meant for Tricki. They were days of deep content, starting well with the extra egg in the morning, improved and sustained by the midday wine and finishing luxuriously round the fire with the brandy. It was indeed a strong temptation for Herriot to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest to enjoy the luxurious inflow of all these food items.

Question 4: Why does Mrs Pumphrey think the dog's recovery is "a triumph of surgery"?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey thought that Tricki was seriously ill when she consulted Dr. Herriot, but her pet recovered from his condition completely within a span of two weeks. She was glad to see that he had been transformed into a flexible and hard-muscled animal. When Dr. Herriot brought Tricki to Mrs Pumphrey, he took a tremendous leap and sailed into his mistress's lap. His revival without any medicinal treatment was noteworthy and she declared that the dog's recovery was indeed "a triumph of surgery", to express her gratitude and happiness to the doctor.

Questions (Page No. 6)

(THINK ABOUT IT)

Question 1: What kind of a person do you think the narrator, a veterinary surgeon, is? Would you say he is tactful as well as full of common sense?

Answer: The narrator, a veterinary surgeon, was a very wise and tactful doctor. He handled Tricki properly with compassion as he understood that the dog was not suffering from any illness. From the dog's lazy condition, he could make out that he had become bulky due to overfeeding by his mistress. Thus, he did not perform any surgery on him, rather cured him by altering his diet and engaging him in physical activities. Under the doctor's supervision, Tricki recovered from his illness within a span of two weeks.

Yes, Dr. Herriot was a tactful person as he could convince Mrs Pumphrey to hospitalise Tricki for a surgery. He knew exactly how to treat her pet effectively and make him a lively animal. Upon the dog's recovery, he informed Mrs Pumphrey to come and collect Tricki even though he was



tempted to keep her pet as a permanent guest for the luxurious inflow of expensive food items sent by his mistress from time to time.

Question 2: Do you think Tricki was happy to go home? What do you think will happen now?

Answer: Yes, Tricki was happy to return home as he loved his mistress dearly and he missed the comfort of his lavish life. Although he didn't have any friends at home like in the hospital, he seemed equally excited to meet his mistress after two weeks. Given Tricki's laziness, we hope that Mrs Pumphrey would be careful about Tricki's diet and health going forward and would try to engage her pet to get some physical exercise as prescribed by Dr. Herriot earlier.

Question 3: Do you think this is a real-life episode, or mere fiction? Or is it a mixture of both?

Answer: The story seems to be a blend of fiction and a real-life incident. It is quite natural for rich people to overfeed their pets due to love and affection, just like Mrs Pumphrey did. We have observed how due to her pampering, the dog was overeating and became lazy and bulky. Similarly, it isn't unusual for rich people who try to provide a luxurious life to their pets and indulge them often. However, it might be unlikely for a veterinary doctor like Dr. Herriot who went out of his way and lied about a surgery to the owner in order to save her pet from unnecessary indulgences.

Questions (Page No. 7)

(TALK ABOUT IT)

Question 1: This episode describes the silly behaviour of a rich woman who is foolishly indulgent, perhaps because she is lonely. Do you think such people are merely silly, or can their actions cause harm to others?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey's silly actions of overfeeding Tricki had a harmful reaction on her pet's health. She was making Tricki overeat and indulge in fatty food in the name of love and affection. This worsened his condition in such a way that he had become very lazy and bulky to even go out for short walks. Rich people like Mrs Pumphrey often indulge their pets in silly actions such as overfeeding to improve their health, which can otherwise have dangerous effects on them.

Question 2: Do you think there are also parents like Mrs Pumphrey?

Answer: Yes, there are some parents like Mrs Pumphrey who spoil their children by over-indulging and pampering them. They try to overfeed their children or pets despite knowing the ill-effects of overeating on their health. It is imperative that parents like Mrs Pumphrey should keep a close check and maintain a healthy lifestyle of their family members and pets.

Question 3: What would you have done if you were: (i) a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household, (ii) a neighbour? What would your life have been like, in general?



Answer: If I were a member of the staff in her household I would have not followed Mrs Pumphrey's orders to feed Tricki blindly without considering its harmful effects. I would have, in fact, fed him as per the vet's advice and ensured that he gets enough physical exercise which helps him to stay active and healthy. Besides, I would have also given Tricki a balanced diet that is easy to digest and also would have skipped sending the unnecessary stuff, such as the toys and cushions to the hospital.

If I were Mrs Pumphrey's neighbour, I would have advised her to maintain a strict diet and engage Tricki in physical activities such as playing, running or going for walks. If his condition would have deteriorated, I would have asked her to consult a veterinary doctor and follow his advice strictly to keep her pet's health in check. Besides, I would have also been supportive and kind in such a critical situation when Tricki was supposed to be hospitalised. I would have tried to the best of my ability to be sympathetic and benevolent to Mrs Pumphrey.

Question 4: What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?

Answer: If I were in the narrator's place, I would have treated Tricki in a similar fashion with love and compassion. I would have been vigilant and caring just like Mr James Herriot was towards Tricki. However, I would have been a little strict while advising Mrs Pumphrey to put Tricki on a balanced diet knowing the love for her dear pet. Besides, I would have also not consumed Tricki's share of eggs, wine and brandy sent by Mrs Pumphrey and resisted my temptation from keeping Tricki as my permanent guest in my hospital.

