

Chapter 1 A Triumph of Surgery

READ AND FIND OUT

Q 1. Why is Mrs. Pumphrey worried about Tricki?

Answer 1: Mrs. Pumphrey notices that Tricki appears somewhat lethargic and less lively. She believes he may be undernourished and requires more energy.

Q 2. What does she do to help him? Is she wise in this?

Answer 2: To help Tricki feel more energetic, Mrs. Pumphrey starts giving him extra treats between meals, including some malt, cod-liver oil, and a bowl of Horlicks at night. However, I don't think this is the best approach. Dogs don't need such rich foods in large amounts, as it can make them overweight, sluggish, and even unwell. They benefit more from regular exercise and active play.

Q 3. Who is the 'I' in this story?

Answer 3: In this story, the narrator, "I," refers to Mr. Herriot, who is a veterinary surgeon.

Read and find out (Page 3)

Q 1. Is the narrator as rich as Tricki's mistress?

Answer 1: The narrator isn't as wealthy as Tricki's owner. This is evident from how he indulges in the luxury of expensive wine, brandy, and eggs.

Q 2. How does he treat the dog?

Answer 2: For the first two days, Tricki isn't given any food—only plenty of water. By the end of the second day, he begins to show interest in his surroundings. On the third day, he watches as the other dogs are fed, following them but still isn't given any food. After they finish eating, he eagerly licks one or two of their bowls. By the fourth day, he is finally offered his own meal, which he enjoys.

From this point on, Tricki's recovery speeds up. He starts playing, wrestling, and happily mingling with the other dogs. Mr. Herriot doesn't give him any special treatments like medicine, brandy, or eggs that Mrs. Pumphrey sent. Instead, he focuses on exercise and a regular diet, just like the other dogs.

Q 3. Why is he tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest?

Answer 3: Mr. Herriot informed Mrs. Pumphrey over the phone that Tricki was beginning to recover. In response, Mrs. Pumphrey began sending eggs, wine, and brandy to help build Tricki's strength. However, since it wasn't appropriate to give these treats to a dog, Mr. Herriot and his friends enjoyed them instead. They had such a good time with these treats that Mr. Herriot even considered keeping Tricki as a long-term guest.

Q 4. Why does Mrs. Pumphrey think the dog's recovery is 'A Triumph of Surgery'?

Answer 4: When Mrs. Pumphrey brought Tricki to Dr. Herriot's clinic, he was in terrible shape—very ill, vomiting, and clearly in pain. He even ignored his favorite foods, which made her think he was seriously unwell.

In reality, Tricki's condition was due to Mrs. Pumphrey's excessive pampering. She had been feeding him a rich diet with tonics like cod liver oil and Horlicks, giving him extra food between meals, and allowing no exercise. Dr. Herriot recognized the issue and decided on a different approach. For the first three days, he gave Tricki only water, withholding all food. By the fourth day, Tricki's appetite returned. He was then gradually introduced to regular food and began joining the other dogs in active play, which gave him much-needed exercise.

Without any medicines or the additional treats Mrs. Pumphrey sent, such as eggs, wine, and brandy, Tricki steadily regained his health. After two weeks, Mrs. Pumphrey returned to find a strong, healthy, and energetic Tricki, calling it the "triumph of surgery" to celebrate his full recovery.

THINK ABOUT IT

Q 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 1: Mr. Herriot, the narrator and a compassionate veterinary surgeon, is known for his wisdom, understanding, and practical common sense. When he noticed Tricki, Mrs. Pumphrey's pet, becoming overweight, lethargic, and out of shape, he advised her to reduce his rich diet and increase his exercise. Unfortunately, Mrs. Pumphrey didn't take his advice to heart; she continued to indulge Tricki without cutting back on his food or encouraging him to be active.

As expected, Mr. Herriot soon received a call from Mrs. Pumphrey—Tricki was seriously ill. He was vomiting, refusing to eat, and in visible distress. Understanding that Mrs. Pumphrey would never be able to follow the strict treatment Tricki needed, Mr. Herriot admitted him to his hospital, affectionately called 'Surgery.'

For three days, Tricki was not given any food. On the fourth day, when his appetite began to return, Mr. Herriot fed him regular dog food alongside the other dogs. This approach was something Mrs. Pumphrey could never have managed to do herself.

Throughout Tricki's recovery, Mr. Herriot skillfully avoided discussing the need for different coats and bowls and continued to accept the delivery of eggs, wine, and brandy for Tricki. He knew that if he had stopped these treats too soon, Mrs. Pumphrey, in her concern, might have insisted on taking Tricki home before he was completely well.

All the above facts show Mr. Herriot's tactfulness, common sense and understanding of human psychology.

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

Answer 2: I believe Tricki was thrilled to return home because he truly loved Mrs. Pumphrey. His excited tail wagging and enthusiastic licking show just how much he missed her. It's clear that he enjoyed her affectionate care, too. He probably longed for the comfort of home, including his favorite ice creams, chocolates, and other tasty treats.

However, I worry that Tricki may soon find himself indulging in too many of these comforts again, leading to the same problems as before with overeating and lack of exercise.

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

Answer 3: I believe the story blends elements of both fiction and real life. It's common to see people spoil their pets, treating them to a variety of foods, including chocolates, cakes, and fruits—basically whatever they enjoy themselves. However, I've never encountered anyone giving cod-liver oil or Horlicks to their dogs.

While it makes sense for a dog to have a winter coat or a different bed for summer and winter due to the changing temperatures, having separate bowls for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, along with various cushions, seems a bit far-fetched. This exaggeration likely serves to highlight the absurdity of overindulgence and poke fun at those who pamper their pets excessively.

TALK ABOUT IT

Q 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 1: Many people choose to keep pets primarily for companionship. In this case, the woman is feeling lonely and perhaps lacks anyone to care for or receive care from. To find emotional fulfillment, she pours all her affection into Tricki, treating him more like a son than a dog. She indulges him with her wealth, showering him with love and attention.

However, the overly doting behavior of such individuals typically doesn't harm anyone except the pet itself. For example, Tricki suffered when he fell ill due to an unhealthy diet, overeating, and lack of exercise.

Q 2. Do you think there are also parents like Mrs. Pumphrey?

Answer 2: I believe there are many parents, like Mrs. Pumphrey, who enjoy showing off their wealth by buying their children expensive clothes and toys, and by catering to their every wish. While they may have good intentions, this often leads to spoiling the children and undermining their character. As a result, these kids can become stubborn, arrogant, bossy, and overly dependent on others.

Q 3. What would you have done if you were,

(i) a member of staff in Mrs. Pumphrey's household,

(ii) a neighbour? What would your life have been like, in general?

Answer 3:

(i) If I had worked in Mrs. Pumphrey's household, I would have spent my days bustling around to cater to the needs of her spoiled dog, Tricki. My tasks would include changing his coats, refreshing his bedding, and filling his bowls, keeping me busy throughout the day. However, I would take a break from these chores by taking Tricki out for some much-needed exercise, especially after his surgery. We could have enjoyed playing games like ring toss and fetch in the garden, which would have been beneficial for both of us.

(ii) As Mrs. Pumphrey's neighbor, I might have felt a bit annoyed by her excessive pride in Tricki. Whenever I was busy tending to my garden, she would come outside with her dog, eager to chat. Each day, she would greet me and often ask, "What do you think of Tricki's new coat or collar?" Even if I wasn't particularly interested, I'd have to respond, "Oh, it looks lovely and suits him perfectly." Then she would go on to describe his meals and how much he ate that day.

Though it could be tiresome, I would try to listen patiently with a smile. Over time, my irritation would fade, replaced by a sense of compassion. I would be grateful that Tricki brings some joy into her otherwise lonely life. On Tricki's birthday, I would consider gifting her some helpful books, such as "How to Care for Your Pet Dog," "Nutrition for Dogs," or "Keeping Your Dog Healthy."

Q 4. What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?

Answer 4: If I were in the narrator's shoes, I would have treated Tricki the same way he did. It was the most effective method to help him recover. However, there are a couple of things I would have done differently.

First, I would have made sure to store all the supplies—like the eggs, wine, and brandy—that Mrs. Pumphrey sent for Tricki in a safe place. After about two days, once Tricki was feeling better, I would have returned them to her.

Secondly, I wouldn't have taken all the credit for Tricki's recovery. Instead of boasting about the 'surgery,' I would have emphasized the importance of a strict diet, which could have been more impactful.

Additionally, I might have gifted her some high-quality dog food or suggested that she purchase some. To ensure Tricki received proper care, I could have arranged for one of my staff members or hired a part-time trained dog caretaker to provide him with regular exercise and timely meals.