

## A Triumph of Surgery

### Read and Find Out (Page 1)

**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 too.

**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.

### Read and Find Out (Page 3)

**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, 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.

## Think about it (Page 6)

**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 real-life incident. It is quite obvious for rich people to overfeed their pets due to love and affection, just like Mrs Pumphrey. 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.

## Talk about it (Page 7)

**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:**

1. 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 thinking of 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 like toys and cushions to the hospital.

2. 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.