

## Chapter 1: A Triumph of Surgery

## Read and Find Out

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## Question: 1

Why is Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki?

## Answer:

Mrs Pumphrey is worried about Tricki because he is unwell. He has refused to eat food and had bouts of vomiting. She feels that he is suffering from a serious health issue such as malnutrition.

## Question: 2

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

## Answer:

Mrs Pumphrey starts giving him extra snacks like malt, cod-liver oil and Horlicks, apart from his main meals, to improve his condition. She also continues to satisfy his sweet tooth with cream cakes and chocolates. She does not give him any exercise, considering his listlessness as well. She is not wise in doing so because overfeeding Tricki is worsening his conditions instead of improving it. It has made him very fat and lazy.

## Question: 3

Who does 'I' refer to in this story?

## Answer:

'I' refers to the narrator, Mr James Herriot, a veterinary doctor.

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## Question: 4

Is the narrator as rich as Tricki's mistress?

## Answer:

No, the narrator is not as rich as Tricki's mistress, Mrs Pumphrey. We can say so because the narrator seems fascinated by how lavishly Mrs Pumphrey spends on the well-being and maintenance of her pet. He is unusually surprised by the enriching items she sends for Tricki, as he cannot afford them for himself.

## Question: 5

How does he treat the dog?

## Answer:

James Herriot treats Tricki just like he would treat an overweight and lazy dog, which Tricki is. He cuts down his food intake and keeps him under strict observation for the initial days at hospital. He gradually increases Tricki's food and sets him free for physical activities to improve his health.

## Question: 6

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

## Answer:

Mr Herriot is tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest because of the good food and wine he is enjoying in Tricki's name. He does not want to lose the luxurious inflow of fresh eggs, wine and brandy.

## Question: 7

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

## Answer:

Mrs Pumphrey thinks that Tricky's recovery is a triumph of surgery because his illness was very serious. She was of the opinion that there were very few chances of Tricky to improve and he needed immediate medical attention. Thus, his revival without any medicinal treatment was a great achievement, according to her.

### 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, is a capable and wise doctor. He handles Tricky properly which shows that he is sincere about his profession.

He does not operate upon the dog unnecessarily and cures him by altering his diet and activities.

He is a tactful person as he knew exactly how to convince Mrs Pumphrey to hospitalise Tricky for a surgery. His decision to inform Mrs Pumphrey to collect Tricky supports his sensibilities even though he was tempted to keep Tricky as a permanent guest.

#### Question: 2

**Do you think Tricky was happy to go home? What do you think will happen now?**

#### Answer:

Tricky was happy to go back home as he really loved his mistress and the comfort of his lavish life. He didn't have any friends at home like in the hospital, but he seemed equally excited at the sight of Mrs Pumphrey. I think that Mrs Pumphrey will now be careful about Tricky's diet and health. She may also give him exercise daily as prescribed by the vet earlier.

#### Question: 3

**Do you think it is a real-life episode or mere fiction? Or is it a mixture of both?**

#### Answer:

The story seems to be a mixture of both. It may be possible for rich persons to overfeed their pets due to love. It is not unusual for them to maintain a vast wardrobe for them either. But it is unlikely for a veterinary doctor to go out of the way and lie in order to save an animal. It is also unusual for anyone to consume food which is given in the name of a pet's health.

### 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 actions had a harmful reaction on Tricky's health. She was overparenting' and overfeeding Tricky in the name of love. This worsened his condition to an extent that he had to be hospitalised. People like Mrs Pumphrey are not just merely silly but their actions can definitely have dangerous consequences for others.

#### 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 pampering them. They overfeed their children/pets despite being aware of the harmful effects on their health. Parents like Mrs Pumphrey should maintain a healthy lifestyle of their family and pets.

### Question: 3

**What would you have done if you were :**

1. a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household,
2. 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 command to feed Tricky blindly. In fact, I would have fed him according to the vet's advice. I would have also skipped sending the unnecessary stuff like toys, cushions etc to the hospital. My life would have been a very busy one, as I would have had to take care of the household chores and meet Tricky's demands on time.
2. If I were Mrs Pumphrey's neighbour, I would have advised her to consult a vet and follow his advice strictly keeping in mind Tricky's deteriorating health. I would have also been supportive in their hard time when Tricky was hospitalised. My life as Mrs Pumphrey's neighbour would have been full of surprises and gifts as Mrs Pumphrey was a loving lady.

### 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 Tricky with a similar amount of compassion and love. I would have been equally caring as Mr James Herriot towards Tricky. I would have just been a little more stern while advising Mrs Pumphrey to put Tricky on a strict diet knowing her way of showing love. I would have also not consumed Tricky's share of eggs, wine and brandy sent by Mrs Pumphrey.