

A Triumph of Surgery

Summary: This story has been written by James Herriot. The subject of this story is a pet dog which is spoilt by its owner. The owner indulges her dog so much with food and other comforts that the dog has become overweight and cannot even walk properly. Finally, the dog has been taken to a veterinary doctor who treats the dog without using a single medicine. The dog is left with all other dogs so that it can play and get the much needed physical exercise. After a period of enough physical activities, the dog loses much of its fat and becomes hale and hearty. Apparently, this is a simple story with simple subject. But if we try to read between the words, the story has much significance for our life as well. You will see many kids who are overweight and spoilt because their parents just try to meet every demand of the kid. The kid develops into a couch potato which is not good for his life.

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 seems to be a practical person with lots of common sense. He is helpful to others as well. The way he treats Tricki without a single medicine tells us about his common sense. Moreover, the way he shares eggs, wines and brandy; sent by Mrs. Pumphrey; with his staffs, tells us about his practical mindset.

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

Answer: The way Tricki jumps in its owner's lap and the way it shows affection towards the owner indicates that Tricki is happy to go home. There can be two possibilities. Either Mrs. Pumphrey will mend her ways and make Tricki an agile and healthier dog or she may go back to her old ways of spoiling Tricki's habits.

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

Answer: This can be anything. This can be a real life story or fiction or a mixture of both.

Question 4: 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: These sort of people have disposable money with no avenues to spend. They probably don't inculcate a pastime. They can easily get bored so indulge in silly behavior. Some people dote too much on their child as well buying them more toys than they need and overfeeding them. These actions do more harm than good to the object of affection.

Question 5: Do you think there are also parents like Mrs Pumphrey?

Answer: Yes there are parents who are too much possessive about their kids. The sense of overindulgence can go in either way. There are examples of parents spoiling their child by meeting each and every demand of the child. There are also examples of strict parents who put unnecessary pressure on their child for study and particular behaviour pattern.

Question 6: 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: As a staff I would have no other way than to follow Mrs. Pumphrey's orders. Otherwise she would have sacked me on my job. As a neighbour I would have given her the proper suggestion. But the choice of following or refusing my suggestions is upto her. She is a rich lady who loves to splurge her money. So there is least chance that anybody can forcefully change her opinion about a subject.

Question 7: What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?

Answer: I would have done the same things which the narrator did. Maybe I would not have allowed Tricki back to Mrs. Pumphrey's house.

MCQs

Q1- Who is the author of the story "A Triumph of Surgery"?

- A) James Herriot
- B) Ruskin Bond
- C) Robert Arthur
- D) Victor Canning

Q2- Who does "I" refer to in the story?

- A) Tricki
- B) Mrs. Pumphrey
- C) Veterinary surgeon
- D) none of the above

Q3- What is the name of the veterinary surgeon?

- A) Tricki
- B) Mrs. Pumphrey
- C) Hodgkin
- D) Mr. Herriot

Q4- What problem does Mrs Pumphrey think Tricki has?

- A) diarrhoea
- B) malnutrition
- C) allergies
- D) all of the above

Q5- Did Mrs Pumphrey cut down on sweets as was advised?

- A) yes
- B) no
- C) only for a while
- D) she was not advised anything like that

Q6- Who is Hodgkin?

- A) dog owner
- B) gardener
- C) Veterinary surgeon
- D) Dog

Q7- What was the dog unable to play?

- A) ring-throw
- B) walk
- C) hide and seek
- D) all of the above

Q8- What did the doctor advise?

- A) cut his food
- B) give him more exercise
- C) keep him on a very strict diet
- D) all of the above

Q9- Was the narrator waiting for a call from Mrs Pumphrey?

- A) no
- B) yes
- C) maybe
- D) maybe not

Q10- What is the meaning of 'distraught'?

- A) bend
- B) worried
- C) upset
- D) both b and c

Q11- How was Tricki acting?

- A) refusing to eat his favourite food
- B) didn't go for walks
- C) vomiting
- D) all of the above

Q12- What was best according to the vet?

- A) to take him to the hospital
- B) to take him for a walk
- C) to let him have sugar
- D) both b and c

Q13- Why did the other dogs ignore Tricky?

- A) he was an uninteresting object
- B) he was ill
- C) he was furious
- D) all of the above

Q14- for how many days he was given no food?

- A) 1
- B) 2
- C) 3
- D) 5

Q15- Who was Joe?

- A) nurse
- B) pug
- C) greyhound
- D) cat

Q16- What did the dogs know about food?

- A) last ones will be liable to have competition for the leftover food
- B) there was no competition
- C) it wasn't good
- D) it was the best part of the day

Q17- what is the meaning of the word "jostling"?

- A) running
- B) struggling
- C) walking
- D) none of the above

Q18- What is the meaning of the word "scrimmage"?

- A) fight
- B) play
- C) run
- D) none of the above

Q19- What does the narrator refer to Tricki as, in the group of other dogs?

- A) silky little object
- B) shaggy little object
- C) he didn't say anything
- D) none of the above

Q20- What is the meaning of the word "convalescing"?

- A) condescending
- B) worsen
- C) disappointing
- D) recover

Q21- what did Mrs Pumphrey bring at first?

- A) two dozen fresh eggs
- B) four dozen fresh eggs
- C) wine
- D) both a and c

Q22- How did the staff benefit from Mrs Pumphrey's overdoing?

- A) breakfast with eggs
- B) lunch with wine
- C) dinner with brandy
- D) all of the above

Q23- What made the narrator call Mrs Pumphrey after a fortnight?

- A) Tricki got recovered
- B) Tricki got unwell
- C) he knew she is suffering
- D) both a and c

Q24- "In two weeks he had been transformed into a lithe, hard-musled animal" . What is the meaning of the word "lithe"?

- A) dirty
- B) graceful
- C) misbehaving
- D) rude

Q25- What did they use out of these?

- A) toys
- B) cushions
- C) coats
- D) none of the above

Q26- How would you describe Mrs. Pumphrey?

- A) loving
- B) over-doing
- C) intelligent
- D) rational

Q27- How would you describe the vet?

- A) tactful
- B) over-doing
- C) careless
- D) irrational

Q28- Was Tricki happy on seeing Mrs. Pumphrey?

- A) yes
- B) No
- C) maybe
- D) she showed no emotions

Q29- Who do you blame for Tricki's illness?

- A) Mrs. Pumphrey
- B) Tricki
- C) Herriot
- D) Vet

Q30- Why is the narrator tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest?

- A) because he loved Tricki
- B) he thought Mrs. Pumphrey wouldn't take good care of Tricki
- C) they would lose all Luxuries like eggs, wine and brandy
- D) none of the above

ANSWER KEY

1	A	11	D	21	B
2	C	12	A	22	D
3	D	13	D	23	D
4	B	14	B	24	B
5	C	15	C	25	D
6	B	16	A	26	B
7	A	17	B	27	A
8	D	18	A	28	A
9	B	19	A	29	A
10	D	20	D	30	C

Extract Based Questions [3 Marks each]

Question 1.

‘And did you cut down on the sweet things as I told you?’

- (a) What sweet things are being referred to in the extract?
- (b) Why does the speaker enquire if the sweet things have been cut down?
- (c) What is the meaning of the phrase ‘cut down’?
- (d) What is the opposite of ‘sweet’?

Answer:

- (a) The sweet things mentioned in the extract are cream cakes and chocolates.
- (b) The speaker enquires if the sweet things have been cut down because these were spoiling Tricki’s health and he needed to be put on a strict diet.
- (c) The phrase ‘cut down’ means ‘to reduce the quantity of something’.
- (d) ‘Sour’ is its opposite.

Question 2.

I tried to sound severe: “Now ! really mean this. If you don’t cut his food right down and give him more exercise he is going to be really ill. You must harden your heart and keep him on a very strict diet”.

- (a) Why did the speaker try to sound severe?
- (b) For whom was the advice given and why?
- (c) Find the word in the extract which is a synonym of the word ‘serious’.
- (d) What is the antonym of ‘hardened’?

Answer:

- (a) The speaker tried to sound severe to make Mrs Pumphrey take his advice seriously and act on it.
- (b) The advice was given for Tricki because he had become obese and listless. He was unwell and the speaker wanted him to be on a strict diet.
- (c) The word is 'severe'.
- (d) Its antonym is 'softened'.

Question 3.

As I moved off, Mrs Pumphrey, with a despairing cry, threw an armful of the little coats through the window. I looked in the mirror before I turned the corner of the drive; everybody was in tears.

- (a) Where was the speaker going and with whom?
- (b) Why was everybody in tears? ‘
- (c) Find the word in the extract which is an antonym of the word ‘cheerful’.
- (d) What is the opposite of ‘before’?

Answer:

- (a) The speaker was going to the hospital with Tricki.
- (b) Everybody was in tears because Tricki was being hospitalised as he was ill. Everyone was worried about his health.
- (c) The word is 'despairing'.
- (d) 'After' is its opposite.

Question 4.

“Poor old lad”, I said. “You haven’t a kick in you but I think I know a cure for you”.

- (a) Why does the speaker say “poor old lad”.
- (b) What cure did the speaker know?
- (c) What is the meaning of ‘a kick’ in the extract?
- (d) Write a synonym of ‘cure’.

Answer:

- (a) The speaker addresses Tricki as a poor old lad because he is unwell and listless.
- (b) The speaker knew that the cure for Tricki’s illness is to put him on a strict diet.
- (c) The phrase means ‘any alertness’.
- (d) ‘Heal’ is a synonym of ‘cure’.

Question 5.

I was really worried about Tricki this time. I had pulled up my car when I saw him in the street with his mistress and I was shocked at his appearance. He had become hugely fat, like a heated sausage with a leg at each corner. His eyes, bloodshot and rheumy, stared straight ahead and his tongue lolled from his jaws.

- (a) Who is “I” referred in the above extract ?
- (b) Why was he worried ?

- (c) Which word in the above extract means the same as 'excessively' ?
- (d) Why was the author shocked ? (1×4=4)

Answer:

- (a) "I" refers to the veterinary doctor who is the narrator of the story.
- (b) He was worried to see the appearance of Mrs. Pumphrey's dog.
- (c) 'hugely'.
- (d) The author was shocked to see Tricki in the street.

Question 6.

Mrs. Pumphrey hastened to explain, "He was so listless, Mr. Herriot. He seemed to have no energy. I thought he must be suffering from malnutrition so I have been 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-nothing much really"

- (a) What did Mrs. Pumphrey want to explain and to whom ?
- (b) Why was she giving little extra between meals to 'him' ?
- (c) Which word in the above extract means the same as Tacking energy and enthusiasm'.
- (d) What did Mrs. Pumphrey think ? (1×4=4)

Answer:

- (a) Mrs. Pumphrey wanted to explain the critical condition of his pet dog, Tricki to Dr. Harriot.
- (b) She was giving Tricki malt, cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks to make him energetic.
- (c) 'listless'.
- (d) Mrs. Pumphrey thought Tricki was suffering from malnutrition.

Question 7.

It was a temptation to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest, but I knew Mrs. Pumphrey was suffering and after a fortnight, felt compelled to phone and tell her that the little dog had recovered and was awaiting collection.

- (a) Why was it a temptation to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest ?
- (b) What was informed to Mrs. Pumphrey on phone ?
- (c) Which word in the above extract means 'a period of fifteen days' ?
- (d) Was Dr. Harriot a greedy Doctor ? (1×4=4)

Answer:

- (a) It was a temptation to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest in the hospital because Dr. Harriot and his partners didn't want to lose the treat, i.e., two dozen fresh eggs and bottles of wine sent by Mrs. Pumphrey.
- (b) Mrs. Pumphrey was informed that the doctor saved the life of her dog.
- (c) 'Fortnight'.
- (d) Yes, as he kept Tricki in temptation

Short Answer Type Questions [2 Marks each]

Question 1. What made James Herriot expect a call from Mrs Pumphrey?

Answer: James Herriot's encounter with Mrs Pumphrey and Tricki made him expect a call for help. He was sure that the extra diet and no physical activity would soon put Tricki's health in danger. And just as anticipated, Mrs Pumphrey called the vet a few days afterwards.

Question 2. What 'extra' did Mrs Pumphrey start to give Tricki and why?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey thought that Tricki was suffering from malnutrition, as he was weak and listless. So, she started to give him extra snacks like cod-liver oil and malt between the main meals and Horlicks after dinner to make him stronger. She also continued his cream cakes and chocolates.

Question 3. What made Mrs Pumphrey call the vet?

Answer: Tricki's condition made Mrs Pumphrey call the vet for help. Tricki had become fat and lazy. He just used to lie on his rug and pant. He also refused to eat food, even his favourite dishes. His bouts of vomiting added to Mrs Pumphrey's worry. That is why, she called James Herriot.

Question 4. How can you say that it was hard for Mrs Pumphrey to part with her doting pet?

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey treated Tricki as her own child. She loved him very much. It was very difficult for her to see Tricki in such a situation. She was distraught when she had to make the decision to hospitalise Tricki, for her love for him knew no bounds. It was a terrible and tearful moment for her but she agreed to Herriot's suggestion for the betterment of her pet.

Question 5. What kind of treatment was given to Tricki? Did it help in his recovery?

Answer: Tricki was given a non-medicinal treatment. His diet regimen was altered depending upon his body's response to it. He was kept on liquid diet for the first two days and then his diet was gradually increased. Yes, this treatment did help Tricki as it built up energy in him. He had transformed to an energetic, hard-muscled dog in just a fortnight.

Question 6. Was Tricki suffering from any ailment in reality? If not, then what made him inactive and lethargic?

Answer: No, Tricki was not suffering from any ailment. It was his greed for food and the love of his mistress that spoilt his health to such an extent. He was being overfed everyday and that made him obese and lethargic. That is why his health showed rapid improvement when his diet was controlled.

Question 7. Briefly describe Herriot's days of content.

Answer: The time of Tricki's stay at the hospital was a period of content for Herriot. He used to enjoy the treat that arrived in the name of Tricki, as he could

not afford all this for ,, himself. Herriogj used to relish the fresh eggs in breakfast, wine before and during lunch and brandy in the night.

Question 8. Do you think Tricki was enjoying his stay at the hospital?

Answer: Yes, Tricki was definitely enjoying his stay at the hospital. He had befriended the gang of shabby household dogs. He had found a new joy in being bowled over, trampled on and squashed. He had also become very energetic. He used to play and run all day long with the dogs. He was having a great time.

Question 9. Why did Mrs. Pumphrey make a frantic call to Mr. Harriot ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey had a dog named Tricky. Indirectly she was responsible for the dog's illness. She gave him little extra between meals i.e., malt, cod-liver oil, etc. He was not given any physical exercise. So, the dog fell ill and started vomiting also. It made Mrs. Pumphrey so much worried that she had to call the veterinary surgeon, Dr. Harriot for his treatment.

Question 10. How would you describe the behaviour of the rich woman Mrs.

Pumphrey's, pampering and overfeeding Tricky ? **Answer:** Mrs. Pumphrey behaved in a very silly and thoughtless manner by over pampering Tricky.

Indirectly, she was responsible for his ill health. It was totally a waste of money. But this behaviour is very common among rich people. It is a general problem of those who live alone.

Question 11. What suggestions were given by Dr. Harriot to Mrs. Pumphrey at the initial stage ?

Answer: Dr. Harriot suggested Mrs. Pumphrey to cut down on the sweet things and not to give extra food to him. He also suggested her to give him more exercises and keep him on a very strict diet.

Question 12. Why was Mr. Harriot tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey used to send lots of things like eggs, wine, brandy etc., for Tricki. But nothing was given to Tricki. All the things were consumed by the doctor and the other members of the hospital. Hence, Mr. Harriot was tempted to keep Tricky as his permanent guest.

Question 13. Why was the narrator shocked at Tricki's appearance ?

Answer: he narrator was shocked at Tricki's appearance because he had become very fat. His blood red and rheumy eyes gazed straight. His tongue lolled from his jaws.

Question 14. Do you agree that Tricki was in better hands of the surgeon who offered him no food but plenty of water, than with rich mistress ?

Answer: Yes, Tricki was in better hands as the surgeon treated him well. He gave him the diet as per his need. He avoided over-feeding as his affectionate and emotional mistress did.

Question 15. Why was Dr. Herriot Condident that Tricki will be in hospital soon ?

Answer: Dr. Herriot was shocked to see Tricki's condition. He knew that the latter would soon be hispitalised as he was unable to move.

Question 16. Why was Dr, Herriot worried about Tricki ?

Answer: Dr. Herriot was worried about Tricki, because the letter was overweight and unable to walk.

Question 17. Why was the entire staff of Mrs. Pumphery at work while Tricki was going to hospital ?

Answer: The entire staff of Mrs. Pumphrey was at work while Tricki was going to hispital, in order to supply all necessary items of Tricki to hospital.

Question 18. In the end of the lesson Mrs. Pumphery says "This is a triumph of surgery." Why ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey's dog, Tricki had fallen ill and had to be admitted for treatment to Dr. Herriot's hospital. Dr. Harriot gave him a lot of water and exercise which helped Tricki to recover. When Mrs. Pumphrey went to collect him, Tricki jumped into her lap and started licking her face. Seeing him fully recovered, Mrs. Pumphrey called it a triumph in surgery.

Long Answer Type Questions [8 Marks each]

Question 1. Excess of everything is bad. Comment in the wake of Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki.

Answer: Mrs Pumphrey was a rich woman who loved her dog very much. She loved to live a comfortable and lavish life and also wanted her dog to spend a similar one. She had maintained a wardrobe full of fancy fur coats, dresses, beds etc for Tricki. Apart from this, she used to overfeed Tricki out of her love and concern. She used to serve him cod-liver oil and malt between the main meals and Horlicks after dinner to give him strength. She never realised that Tricki was a greedy dog and this would spoil his health. She could not even refuse to answer Tricki drooling for cream cakes and chocolates. Her overfeeding worsened Tricki's condition. This made the dog lazy, inactive and obese. He used to lie on his rug and pant all day long. Mrs Pumphrey fed him excessively, spoiling Tricki's health to such an extent that he had to be hospitalised. Even in the hospital she continued to convey Tricki her love through eggs, wine and brandy. Her fondness and care for Tricki proved that excess of everything made him fall sick.

Question 2. Pen down incidences in support of values one should inculcate from Mr James Herriot.

Answer: Mr Herriot was a capable veterinary surgeon who treated Tricki. He was a very compassionate doctor and a wise and sympathetic human being. He showed

his capabilities almost immediately when he advised Mrs Pumphrey to put Tricki on a strict diet after understanding his symptoms. He can also be said to be an understanding and tactful person as he knew exactly how to free Tricki from the spoiling love of Mrs Pumphrey for his betterment. He does not operate upon the poor dog unnecessarily and adopts a practical approach to treat him. Mr James was a caring and polite individual as he successfully allays Mrs Pumphrey's anxiety about Tricki's recovery patiently. He was in all a good human being and a successful professional.

Question 3. Do you think parents like Mrs Pumphrey exist? If yes, is it a good thing to pamper children? Why or why not?

Answer: Yes, parents like Mrs Pumphrey definitely exist. These people spoil their children by making sure all their demands are met. They spoil their children in the name of love and care. They not only feed them junk but also spoil their social habits. This kind of a behaviour is very harmful for children. Such overprotective parental behaviour hinders their growth as adults. In fact it sows the seeds of greed and dependency in them. They become stubborn and do not learn to value anything. For them, hard work is a myth as they get everything easily. Over pampered children often fail to face the hardships of life later, as for them life has been a cakewalk. Pampering children in moderation is healthy, but excess of it is harmful. It is not just bad for humans but also for animals, as we see in the story 'A triumph of Surgery'.

Question 4. Mrs. Pumphrey was extremely fond of her dog. Elucidate with examples from the text ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey was very fond of her dog. She gave him five star treatment. She provided him with delicious food to eat. Rather she overfed him by giving him little extra between meals. She felt miserable when Tricki was hospitalized. She sent eggs and wine for his speedy recovery. Tears of joy were seen in her eyes after seeing the dog recovered.

Question 5. How can you say that Mrs. Pumphrey was a rich lady ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey was a rich lady who had a small dog, named Tricki. She had pampered the dog by providing him things like a raincoat for wet days, a whole wardrobe, full of tweed coats. There were separate bowls like breakfast bowl, lunch bowl, supper bowl etc. for his different meals. She had a lot of servants and maids to take care of him and to serve Tricki's favourite cushions, toys and rubber rings. Besides, she owned a chauffeur driven long, black car. All these things suggest that she was a rich lady.

Question 6. Distinguish between Mrs. Pumphrey's method and Mr. Herriot's method in looking after the dog. Whose method could be regarded the better of the two and why ?

Answer: Mrs. Pumphrey loved Tricki, her pet dog, very much. When she found

that Tricki was no more active and energetic, she tried to give more nutrients in his food to make him more energetic like malt, cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks, an extra diet of cream cakes & chocolates. But she was not giving him exercises. Infact, Tricki was not suffering from any disease. Mr. Harriot found out the main cause of his ailment, i.e., his greed for over-eating. Mr. Harriot gave him a controlled diet, recovered him from lethargy caused by overeating and excessive fat. So, Mr. Harriot's method could be regarded better of two as he understood the cause and remedy of the disease. He was able to treat the dog by being strict with him regarding diet and physical activities.

Question 7. Was Tricki also to be blamed in more ways than one ? How ?

Answer: Tricki was Mrs. Pumphrey's favourite dog. No doubt, she loved him very much and so, pampered him. But then it was Tricki's fault also. He was a greedy dog who wanted to eat anything and everything which was served to him. He had never refused to eat food and used to have meal at any hour of the day or night. He had become a glutton. He changed his system very easily according to the luxuries he got. Apart from all that, he never believed in going for exercises or walk. He rather tried 'to please his mistress by eating all the time, be it sweets or eggs. So, he was also to be blamed for his present condition.

Question 8. Why was Tricki happy in the doctor's house ?

Answer: In the doctor's house, Tricki was placed in a warm box next to the other dogs. He was given only water and no food. On the second day, he met the other dogs but showed no interest. By the fourth day he ran towards his food and joined the other dogs in their friendly, energetic struggles. He discovered the joys of being squashed and being an accepted member of the gang. He fought for his share at meals and hunted rats at night.

Question 9. What treatment was given to Tricki by Dr. Harriot ?

Answer: Tricki fell ill. Dr. Harriot was called upon. When he looked at the dog, he immediately made out that Tricki did not need any medicine. He was sick because he had taken excess food. So, he gave little food and stressed on lots of water and exercise which Tricki was not used to. He was served food with other dogs and was made to run and play also with them. He joined them in their friendly scrimmages. Gradually he learnt the art of hunting rats in the old hen, horse, fighting like a tiger for his share at mealtimes. In other words, he was leading a normal life which he never had done with Mrs. Pumphrey. Soon Tricki became normal without taking any medicine.