

## Supplementary Reader (Footprints Without Feet)

### A Triumph of Surgery

#### Introduction

The story has been written by James Herriot. In the story, the author recounts his experience with a pet dog Tricki who was spoilt by his rich owner Mrs Pumphrey.

#### Summary

Tricki was a pet dog of Mrs Pumphrey. She was a rich lady. She overfed him in spite of repeated warnings from Tricki's vet. Due to overeating and not exercising, he fell seriously ill. He had become hugely fat, and looked like a bloated sausage. His eyes were bloodshot and rheumy. His tongue lolled from his jaws.

Tricki's vet, Dr Herriot suggested that Tricki be hospitalised for a fortnight to be kept under observation. He brought Tricki to his surgery. His day-bed, night-bed, toys, bowls, little coats, etc. were sent to the surgery, so that Tricki is not discomforted or feels homesick there.

The vet did not give Tricki any medicinal treatment. For two days, Tricki was given plenty of water to drink but no food. On the third day, he started moving slowly. From then on, his progress was rapid. He ran about with the other dogs and joined in their friendly scrimmages. He became active like other dogs. Meanwhile, Mrs Pumphrey rang the vet a dozen times a day for the latest bulletins. He informed her that Tricki was convalescing. To speed up his recovery, Mrs Pumphrey started sending fresh eggs, bottles of wine and brandy. The vet and his colleagues had good days. They started their day with an extra egg, drank wine with their lunch and the brandy was drunk at night while they sat around the fire. It was a temptation to keep Tricki, as a permanent guest. But the vet knew that Mrs Pumphrey was suffering and after a fortnight, he called her to inform that the little dog had recovered and she might collect him.

Within minutes, Mrs Pumphrey arrived at the surgery in her car. When Tricki saw his mistress, he took off from the vet's arms in a big leap and sailed into Mrs Pumphrey's lap. The little dog swarmed over her, licking her face and barking.

As the car moved away, Mrs Pumphrey cried happily, 'Oh, Mr Herriot, how can I even thank you? This is a triumph of surgery!'

#### Message

The author wants to convey the message that animals should be kept in natural surroundings and should be given proper exercise. Only then will they be healthy and happy in the true sense.



#### Extract Based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow:

1. 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) Who was listless?

(b) State whether the given statement is True or False.  
Mr Herriot was a psychologist.

(c) What did Mrs Pumphrey think about Tricki? What did she do?

(d) Which phrase would correctly substitute 'hastened to', in the given sentence from the extract?

Mrs Pumphrey hastened to explain .....

#### Answers

- (a) Tricki was listless.  
(b) False

(c) Mrs Pumphrey thought about Tricki that he must be suffering from malnutrition. She started giving him some little extras between meals like some malt, cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks at night.

(d) hurried to/rushed to

2. I tried to sound severe: "Now I 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) Who is 'I' here?

- (i) Mrs Pumphrey                      (ii) Mr Herriot  
(iii) Hodgkin                              (iv) None of these

(b) What was the advice?

(c) Who is 'you' here?

- (i) Tricki                                      (ii) Mr Herriot  
(iii) Mrs Pumphrey                      (iv) Hodgkin

(d) Where is this conversation going on?

#### Answers

- (a) (ii) Mr Herriot  
(b) The advice was that his diet should be reduced and he should be given more exercise. He must be kept on a very strict diet otherwise he will be really ill.

- (c) (iii) Mrs Pumphrey  
(d) This conversation is going on in a street.
3. When I opened the door, Tricki trotted out and was immediately engulfed by Joe, the greyhound, and his friends. After rolling him over and thoroughly inspecting him, the dogs moved off down the garden. Tricki followed them, rolling slightly with his surplus fat.
- (a) Who opened the door?  
(b) State whether the given statement is True or False.  
Tricki was surrounded by Mr. Herriot's friends.  
(c) What happened when the door was opened?  
(d) Complete the analogy with a word from the extract:  
immediately : instantly: : completely : .....

## Answers

- (a) Mr Herriot opened the door.  
(b) False  
(c) When the door was opened, Tricki trotted out. He was immediately engulfed by Joe, the greyhound, and his friends. They rolled him over and thoroughly inspected him and then moved off down the garden. Tricki also followed them.  
(d) thoroughly

## Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. What was Mrs Pumphrey's reaction when Tricki showed little enthusiasm for exertion?

OR

What did Mrs Pumphrey do to bring Tricki back to normal health? Was she wise?

Ans. When Tricki showed little enthusiasm for exertion, Mrs Pumphrey assumed he had no energy and that he was suffering from malnutrition. She gave him some malt and cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks at night to supplement his food to bring him back to normal health. She was not wise as this made Tricki ill. He was already overfed.

Q 2. Why was Mr Herriot shocked at Tricki's appearance?  
(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Mr Herriot was shocked to see Tricki's appearance when he came to check on him. He had become hugely fat. He looked like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner. His eyes were bloodshot and rheumy and his tongue lolled from his jaws.

Q 3. What excuses did Mrs Pumphrey make about Mr Herriot's advice?  
(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Mr Herriot's strict advice was to cut down on the sweet things. But Mrs Pumphrey did not pay heed to his advice. She made an excuse that Tricki seemed so weak that she had to relent and could not refuse him.

Mr Herriot also advised to give Tricki plenty of exercise. Mrs Pumphrey made an excuse that Tricki had his little walks with her but there had been no ring-throwing as the gardener was not well.

Q 4. Why did Mrs Pumphrey make a frantic call to Mr Herriot?

Ans. Mrs Pumphrey made a frantic call to Mr Herriot because Tricki had been eating nothing. He had refused his favourite dishes, had bouts of vomiting and had been lying all the time on a rug, panting.

Q 5. What immediate step did Mr Herriot take to save Tricki?

Ans. Mr Herriot suggested Mrs Pumphrey that Tricki be hospitalised for about a fortnight as it was important to keep him under observation. This was the immediate step that Mr Herriot took to save Tricki.

Q 6. How did Mrs Pumphrey and her servants behave when Tricki was about to be hospitalised?

OR

How did Mrs Pumphrey and her servants behave when Tricki was being sent to the surgery?

(CBSE 2018)

Ans. When Tricki was about to be hospitalised, Mrs Pumphrey felt very sad. She had tears in her eyes. Her staff was also anxious. Mals rushed in to bring Tricki's bed, cushions, coats, bowls, etc. Everyone was in a state of panic.

Q 7. How did Mrs Pumphrey treat Tricki?  
(CBSE 2023)

Ans. Mrs Pumphrey treated Tricki like her son or her own child. She pampered him by giving him a luxurious life. She served him with cream, cakes, chocolates and cod-liver oil. But she also overfed him leading to him falling ill.

Q 8. Why was Tricki an uninteresting object for other dogs at the surgery?

Ans. At the surgery, when Tricki arrived, he was quite ill. He lay motionless on the carpet. The other dogs sniffed round him for a few seconds. Tricki did not respond to them. So, they decided that he was an uninteresting object and went away.

Q 9. Why was Dr Herriot tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest?

Ans. Dr Herriot was tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest because Mrs Pumphrey used to send dozens of eggs, wine and brandy for Tricki. However, Dr Herriot and his staff used to consume all this. Therefore, he was tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest, for the staff there who enjoyed the food. It was a great thing for them.

Q 10. How do you know that Tricki had an affluent life?

Ans. Tricki led an affluent life. His owner, Mrs Pumphrey was exceedingly rich and she pampered Tricki beyond imagination. He was given cream cakes and chocolates. To supplement his food, he was given malt, cod-liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks. He had his day bed, his night bed, cushions, toys, rubber rings, coats, etc. All this lead us to the conclusion that Tricki led an affluent life.



## Long Answer Type Questions

**Q 11. Why does Mrs Pumphrey think the dog's recovery is 'a triumph of surgery'?**

**Ans.** Mrs Pumphrey thinks that Tricki's recovery is 'a triumph of surgery' because when he was admitted to Mr Herriot's clinic, his condition was very critical. But, now he was hale and hearty.

**Q 12. Do you think Tricki was happy to go home? What do you think will happen now?** (CBSE 2016)

**Ans.** Yes, Tricki was happy to go home. When Mrs Pumphrey comes to the clinic to take Tricki home, he jumps into her lap. He swarms over her and licks her face. This shows his happiness.

I think that Mrs Pumphrey will again give Tricki a lot of food. He will grow ill again due to overeating and no exercise.

**Q 13. Was Tricki suffering from any ailment in reality? If not, then what made him inactive and lethargic?**

(CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** No, Tricki was not suffering from any ailment. He was a victim of over-indulgence and greed. His mistress Mrs Pumphrey used to feed him with rich food and Tricki's greed forced him to overeat. Also, he was not given any exercise. This made him fat. His excess body weight made him inactive and lethargic.

**Q 14. Dr Herriot knew his patients as well as their owners really well. Discuss.** (CBSE SQP 2022-23)

**Ans.** Dr Herriot was a veterinary surgeon. He could understand the problems of his patients just by observing. He saw Tricki and he understood that the dog was in pathetic condition and required change in diet and regular exercises. He also figured out that Mrs Pumphrey, who was a rich lady, was responsible for his problems. Thus, we can say that Dr Herriot knew his patients as well as their owners very well.

**Q 15. The story, 'A Triumph of Surgery' is a powerful example of the importance of saying 'no'. Explain**

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

**Ans.** The story is a powerful example of the importance of saying 'no', when it comes to making decisions that affect the health and well-being of others, whether it be for pets or for people.

Mrs Pumphrey's love and indulgence for her dog, Tricki, leads to the dog becoming severely overweight and unhealthy. Despite Herriot's advice to put Tricki on a diet and exercise regimen, Mrs Pumphrey is unable to say 'no' and abstain from overfeeding the dog. Tricki becomes seriously ill due to his weight and unhealthy habits. The story, thus, highlights the fact that sometimes, the best way to help someone is to say 'no' and steer him towards a

healthier lifestyle. Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki is a double-edged sword.

**Q 1. How can you say that Mrs Pumphrey was a rich lady?**

**Ans.** Mrs Pumphrey was a rich lady. She had a chauffeur-driven long, black car. She had many servants—maids and nurses in her household. She spent a lot of money on Tricki. She gave him a rich diet comprising of eggs, malt, cod-liver oil, bowl of horlicks, cream cakes and chocolates. She had bought day-bed, night-bed, cushions, toys, rubber-rings, coats, etc., for Tricki. During Tricki's stay at Mr Herriot's clinic, she sent dozens of eggs, wine and brandy so that Tricki recovers speedily. This leads us to the conclusion that Mrs Pumphrey was a rich lady.

**Q 2. Herriot enjoyed the lavish meal during Tricki's stay but still he felt compelled to inform Mrs Pumphrey about the recovery of Tricki. Why did he not keep Tricki for a longer time? Did he feel concerned for Mrs Pumphrey? Did he break the trust of others? Discuss the values he possessed.** (CBSE 2020)

**Ans.** By profession, Dr Herriot was a veterinary doctor. So, it was his moral duty to send Tricki back when he got well. He could have kept Tricki for a little longer time. He could have enjoyed the good food which was being sent by Mrs Pumphrey for Tricki. But he chose not to stoop so low in his profession. He was aware that Mrs Pumphrey was suffering. So, he decided to send Tricki back to his home. In this way, he upheld the moral and professional values that are synonymous with the medical profession. Today, there are a large number of professionals who can go to any extent to make some extra money. The values of status, self-respect, true professionalism are rare. But, there are still good people like Dr Herriot who uphold these values.

**Q 3. Why did Mrs Pumphrey thank Mr Herriot?**

(CBSE 2019)

**Ans.** Mrs Pumphrey had thoroughly pampered and spoilt Tricki. She overfed him until he fell sick. Tricki had become hugely fat. He was like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner. His eyes were bloodshot and rheumy and his tongue lolled from his jaws. When Dr Herriot took Tricki under his care, he controlled his diet and gave him a plenty of exercise. In two weeks, Tricki was transformed into a flexible, hard-muscled animal. When Mrs Pumphrey came to take Tricki, he took off from the doctor's arms in a tremendous leap and jumped into Mrs Pumphrey's lap. He swarmed over her, licking her face and barking. Mrs Pumphrey was astonished at Tricki's recovery. She was overjoyed and thanked Mr Herriot

for his help.



**Q 4. Comment on the aptness of the title of the story 'A Triumph of Surgery'.**

**Ans.** Surgery is the hospital for the sick dogs which is run by Dr Herriot. It also refers to the treatment of injuries or disorders of the body by incision or manipulation, especially with instruments. The title of this story refers to both of these meanings. Tricky is the dear dog of Mrs Pumphrey. It falls ill because of being overfed and not given exercise regularly. Mrs Pumphrey was quite disturbed and called for his vet Mr Herriot. He suggested that it was imperative that Tricky be shifted over to surgery. He takes Tricky to the surgery. He regulates Tricky's diet. He makes him run with other dogs. Tricky recovers fast at the surgery. So, the importance of the surgery is made clear in the chapter. So, it is appropriately titled. The title is the main idea of the story. It runs through it.

**Q 5. 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?**

**Ans.** I think that people like Mrs Pumphrey are over indulgent because of loneliness. She can be called silly also because she lacks common sense. Everyone knows that overeating and no physical exercise can make a dog sick. Yet, she feeds her dog with umpteen delicacies and does not exercise him daily. This leads to Tricky being terribly ill. It was only the good sense of Dr Herriot that saved Tricky. Such

people can cause harm to others as Mrs Pumphrey does to Tricky.

**Q 6. Do you think there are also parents like Mrs Pumphrey?**

**Ans.** Yes, there are parents like Mrs Pumphrey. They are over indulgent and they spoil their children. They provide everything for their children on a silver platter. They do not teach their children the virtue of hard work. All this actually harms their children. They do not appreciate what they are getting and take all this for granted. If left on their own, they are not able to fend for themselves. Then the parents repent. But by that time it is too late to undo their doings.

**Q 7. 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?**

**Ans.** (i) If I were a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household, I would have politely advised to cut down on Tricky's food and give him exercise.  
(ii) If I had been her neighbour, I could have advised her more emphatically that Tricky can become ill because of the rich food given to him.

As a servant and as a neighbour, my life would have been just as well. I don't think that Mrs Pumphrey is a bad master or a bad neighbour. She is actually a rich and silly lady who loves her dog dearly. ●

