

Chapter 1 - A Triumph of Surgery

Read and Find Out Pg-1

Q.1 Why is Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki?

Ans.: Mrs. Pumphrey is worried about Tricki because it has become very fat. The author has compared Tricki's body with a bloated sausage. Tricki has been shown to be in a serious condition with its eyes red blooded and tongue lolling down from its jaws. Moreover, Tricki has become restless and seems to have no energy.

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

Ans.: Mrs Pumphrey takes Tricki's condition to be a result of malnutrition. To help him feel better, she starts giving him malt, cod liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks. When Tricki doesn't recover even after her constant efforts of feeding him, she calls Mr. Herriot, a veterinary doctor.

Mrs Pumphrey's approach is unwise as we must never medicate, underfeed or overfeed anyone be it human or animal as it may worsen any underlying condition. The real condition may get overlooked. It is always wise to consult the right doctor in any such condition.

Q.3 Who does "I" refer to in this story?

Ans.: 'I', in this story, refers to James Herriot, the narrator of the story. He is a veterinary doctor who describes his experience of treating a pet dog of a rich woman who unintentionally overfeeds him in affection and doesn't realize the monotony of his life.

Read and Find Out Pg-3

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

Ans.: No, the narrator is not as rich as Tricki's mistress. It can be inferred from various instances in the story that Tricki's mistress is very rich and leads a luxurious life. The author describes the kind of food she feeds Tricki, different accessories and clothes she keeps for Tricki, the servants in her house, etc. The narrator is not as rich as Tricki since at the end of the story when Tricki was almost fine and was about to go back to his mistress, the author mentions his slight intent of keeping Tricki so that he could get all the food the lady sends for Tricki. This shows that the narrator was not as rich as the mistress.

Q.2 How does he treat the dog?

Ans.: The narrator keeps the dog under keen observation for two days. He initially doesn't feed him food and keeps him only on a water diet. On the third day, Tricki starts showing some changes and begins whimpering. Over time, the narrator realizes that it is boredom and monotony along with overfeeding which has made Tricki bloated and dull. He keeps him with other dogs and gradually Tricki starts playing with them and gets better with time.

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

Ans.: Tricki's mistress, Mrs. Pumphrey was a very rich lady. She used to send eggs, wine and brandy for Tricki which were all savored by Mr. Herriot. Letting him go would mean no more eggs and drinks, thus Mr. Herriot was tempted to keep him on as a permanent guest.

Q.4 Why does Mrs. Pumphrey think the dog's recovery is "a triumph of surgery"?

Ans.: When Tricki was admitted to Mr. Herriot, its condition was so critical that it could not even walk properly. Mr. Herriot had told her that he would need a surgery to be fine. When Mrs Pumphrey got Tricki back he was absolutely fit and fine. This made Mrs Pumphrey believe that the dog's recovery was "a triumph of surgery".

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?

Ans.: Mr. Herriot, the narrator and a veterinary surgeon, is a man of good and noble character and one of those very few who help others in need. He advises Mrs Pumphrey to feed Tricki a balanced diet. When he sees that Mrs Pumphrey would not be able to get out of her affection for Tricki he takes the charge in his hand and goes to her house and takes Tricki to his hospital. He takes good and adequate care of Tricki. It can be said that he is tactful and has common sense for the way he treated Tricki. It was his tact to admit Tricki in the hospital and it was his common sense that he understood that Tricki was sick only because of overfeeding and that he needed less of pampering.

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

Ans.: Tricki was indeed happy to go home as it licked Mrs Pumphrey as soon as he saw her. The narrator states, "When its mistress came to bring it back, it jumped into her lap and started licking her." Tricki was very sick when he came to Mr. Herriot's hospital. After his stay in the hospital,

Tricki had changed, its muscles hardened and it could now chase other dogs and cats too.

It is likely that Mrs Pumphrey will understand the cause of Tricki's sickness and will start feeding him right and indulging him in more play than rest.

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

Ans.: According to me, it seems to be a real life episode because in present society it is more of a fashion to pet animals specially in the upper class families. The rich people usually overfeed their pets in affection and show off. In some households, pets are taken care of as little children. Such incidents happen often that overfeeding becomes a problem for the pet's health. So, it does not seem to be a mere fiction or a mixture of both in any case.

Talk about it

Q.1 This episode describes the silly behavior of a rich woman who is foolishly indulgent, perhaps because she is lonely. Do you think such people are merely silly, or can their action cause harm to others?

Ans.: Yes, it can be said that this episode describes the silly behavior of a rich woman who is possibly lonely and showers all her affection on her dog. Even after knowing that it must not be over fed she doesn't stop as she is unable to leave her over affectionate approach towards feeding her dog. It was for Mr. Herriot who could see through the real story and treated Tricki right. Mrs Humphrey's silly behavior can also be seen when

the dog is sent to the hospital. She packed cushions, toys, coats, bowls etc. to be sent along and even after that keeps sending eggs and wine for it. It is not just being silly. Such attitude can cause harm to others as in this case it did to Tricki.

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

Ans.: Yes, there are many parents like Mrs Pumphrey. It is not just the concern they have for their child's health, it is also their over affection which makes them over feed their children the amount and the type of food which they shouldn't.

This results in many diseases like obesity and the pampering the child gets in his early years leads to him being a cranky child later in life as well.

Q.3 What would you have done if you were: (i) a member of the staff in Mrs. Pumphrey's (ii) a neighbour? What would your life have been like, in general?

Ans.: (i) If I had been a member of the staff I would try talking to Mrs Humphrey once or twice about the over feeding but if she wouldn't stop I would not continue doing that as it would most likely cost me my job. I may at times not feed Tricki and fool her in such tricks.

(ii) Had I been a neighbor of Mrs Humphrey, I would have tried making her understand the cons of over feeding Tricki. However, I do not consider that my efforts would do any good because Mrs Humphrey was always involved in her own thoughts and ideas and would not pay me any heed.

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

Ans.: Had I been in the narrator's place, I would have done the same. Taking Tricki along was the only way the dog's life could have been saved. I would have adopted the same means and methods as the narrator to treat Tricki. The narrator was a man of strong heart as he never let emotions come in his way of treating Tricki which I am not sure I would have been able to do at all times.