

Chapter Review

- This story is by James Herriot, a veterinary surgeon, from his book 'All Creatures Great and Small'. It is a humorous tale about a pampered dog.
- Mrs Pumphrey, a rich widow, has a Pekingese dog named Tricki Woo. She loves him too much and feeds him cream cakes, chocolates, malt, cod-liver oil and Horlicks.
- Tricki becomes fat like a bloated sausage, lazy and breathless. He refuses to eat, vomits and lies on a rug panting.
- Mrs Pumphrey is worried and calls Dr Herriot. He understands at once that the dog is only overfed and has no exercise.
- He tells Mrs Pumphrey that Tricki needs hospital treatment, and takes him to his clinic. He cuts down the food, and the dog gets exercise and the company of other dogs.
- Meanwhile Mrs Pumphrey keeps sending gifts like eggs, wine and brandy, which Dr Herriot and his partners enjoy. He is tempted to keep Tricki longer.
- In two weeks Tricki becomes lean, active and fit. When he is sent home he leaps into Mrs Pumphrey's lap.
- She is delighted and says it is 'a triumph of surgery', though no surgery was done. Dr Herriot only used common sense.

Key Terms

Pampering – Treating with too much indulgence.

Listless – Without energy or interest.

Pekingese – A small breed of dog from China.

Bloated – Swollen with too much food.

Veterinary surgeon – An animal doctor.

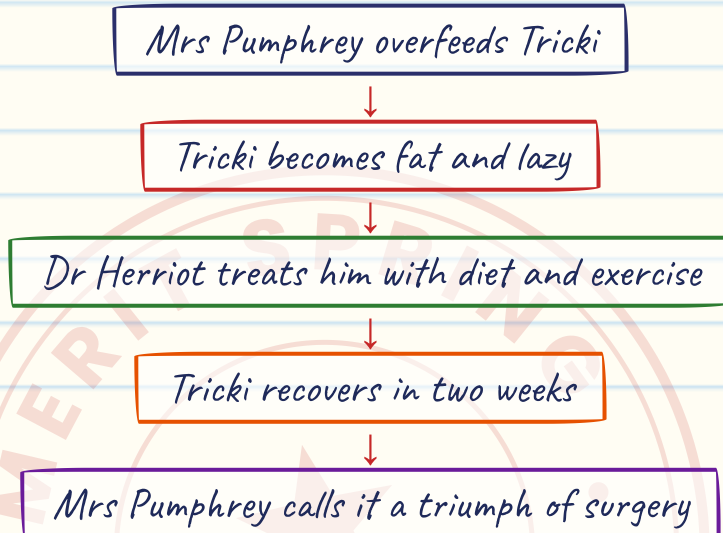
Tactful – Careful not to hurt others' feelings.

Distraught – Very upset and worried.

Indulgent – Too ready to give what is asked.

Diagrams / Flowcharts

Tricki's Story



Dr Herriot vs Mrs Pumphrey

Dr Herriot

- Wise and tactful
- Not as rich
- Uses common sense, no surgery

Mrs Pumphrey

- Rich, lonely, loving
- Foolishly indulgent
- Spoils Tricki with food

About the Author

- James Herriot (1916-1995) was the pen name of Alf Wight, an English veterinary surgeon and writer. His books about country vets are very popular.

Theme / Message

- Too much love and pampering can harm. A balanced diet and exercise are best for health, whether for pets or children.
- Tact, kindness and common sense can solve problems without hurting anybody.

Humour in the Story

- The title is ironical: there was no surgery at all.
- Descriptions like 'a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner' are funny.
- The doctor enjoying the eggs, wine and brandy is a light humorous touch.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 Why is Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki?

Ans. Tricki was not eating anything, even his favourite dishes. He had bouts of vomiting, lay panting on a rug and showed no interest in walks.

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

Ans. She gave him extras like malt, cod-liver oil, Horlicks, cream cakes and chocolates, and gave no exercise. This was not wise: Tricki became fat and lazy and more ill.

Q.3 Who does 'I' refer to?

Ans. 'I' refers to Dr James Herriot, the veterinary surgeon.

Q.4 Is the narrator as rich as Tricki's mistress?

Ans. No. He could not give a luxurious life like cosy beds, toys and bowls, or an entire staff. He made a bed for Tricki in a warm loose box next to the other dogs.

Q.5 How does he treat the dog?

Ans. He cut down his food, gave a controlled and balanced diet, and let him exercise. Tricki recovered without medicine.

Q.6 Why is he tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest?

Ans. Mrs Pumphrey kept sending eggs by the dozen and bottles of wine and brandy for Tricki. The doctor and his partners enjoyed them, so they were tempted to keep Tricki longer.

Q.7 Why does Mrs Pumphrey think the recovery is 'a triumph of surgery'?

Ans. She thought Tricki was seriously ill, and when he came back healthy and leapt into her lap in two weeks, she thought it was due to surgery. She praised the doctor.

Q.8 What kind of person is the narrator? Is he tactful and full of common sense?

Ans. Yes. He understood the dog was only overfed and cured him without surgery, and without offending Mrs Pumphrey.

Q.9 Do you think Tricki was happy to go home? What will happen now?

Ans. Yes, he loved his mistress. We hope Mrs Pumphrey will now watch his diet and give him exercise.

Q.10 Real-life episode or fiction?

Ans. It is a mixture. Rich people overfeeding pets is real, but a vet telling a story of surgery to save the pet is likely fiction.

Q.11 Are such people merely silly or can they cause harm? Are there parents like Mrs Pumphrey?

Ans. Their actions can harm. Mrs Pumphrey nearly ruined Tricki's health. Yes, some parents spoil children with too much food and pampering.

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 Write a character sketch of Mrs Pumphrey. (100 words)

Ans. Mrs Pumphrey is a rich, lonely and kind-hearted widow who loves her dog Tricki Woo very much. But her love is foolish and blind. She overfeeds him and gives no exercise, so he falls sick. She is a worried but grateful lady, and trusts the doctor completely. Her story shows that love without sense may harm.

Q.2 Why is the title 'A Triumph of Surgery' ironical?

Ans. No surgery was done. Tricki was cured by a simple diet and exercise. Mrs Pumphrey believed it was surgery, so the title is humorous.

Q.3 How did Dr Herriot handle Mrs Pumphrey? What does it show about him?

Ans. He did not tell her that she was at fault. He told her that Tricki must stay for treatment. It shows his tact and understanding.

Q.4 Reference to context: "Mrs Pumphrey was a rich, lonely woman..." Why is she called lonely?

Ans. She had no family except her dog, and gave all her love to Tricki. That is why she over-pampered him.

Q.5 Value-based: What lesson does the story teach about love and care?

Ans. Real love means care, not indulgence. Proper food, exercise and discipline are necessary for health.