

# **FOOT PRINTS WITHOUT FEET**

## **LESSON 1**

### **A TRIUMPH OF SURGERY**

by James Herriot

#### **GIST**

The story 'A Triumph of Surgery' revolves around an ill dog named Tricki and his mistress, Mrs Pumphrey. The pet dog Tricki is overfed with copious amounts of energy food by its owner. She provides all kinds of luxury and comforts to her dog. This makes him very obese and his overweight body finds difficulty even to walk and move around.

One day Tricki stops eating. On seeing his pathetic condition, Mrs Pumphrey takes her pet dog to a veterinary doctor who treats the dog without using a single medicine. Tricki is hospitalised and the doctor gives Tricki nothing to eat for the first two days except water.

Moreover Tricki is left with all other dogs to play and get the much-needed physical exercise. This helps him to lose all his excess fat.

On the third day, signs of improvement are seen in Tricki. He starts taking food properly. Tricki starts running around and playing with the other dogs cheerfully. Soon, he recovers completely. Mrs. Pumphrey continues enquiring about Tricki over phone and feels gratitude towards the doctor for her pet's cure. She is

overjoyed and eyes are filled with tears of happiness when she comes to discharge Tricki from the hospital. She calls this the magical recovery as ‘A Triumph of Surgery’.

### **SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (30 - 40 words)**

1. What made Mrs. Pumphrey call the vet?

Ans. Tricki had become fat and lazy. He used to lie on his rug and pant. He also refused to eat his favourite dishes. His bouts of vomiting added to Mrs. Pumphrey’s worry and hence she decided to call Dr. James Herriot, the vet.

2. What was the cause of Tricki’s ailment?

Ans. Tricki was overfed by Mrs. Pumphrey. He became hugely fat and inactive. He was pampered with a lot of cream cakes, chocolates and Hotlinks. This was the main cause of his illness.

3. How does Dr. Herriot treat Tricki?

Ans. Dr. Herriot cut down Tricki’s food and made him exercise. For the first three days he was not given any food but was kept only on fluid, that is, water. He did not receive any medical treatment but was kept in the company of other dogs. Tricki discovered the joy of being bowled over and tramped on. Finally he recovered from obesity and was overjoyed.

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (100-150 Words)**

1. Write the character-sketch of Mrs. Pumphrey.

Ans. Mrs. Pumphrey was a very wealthy lady. She was very loving to her dog. She pampered and overfed him. She gave him lots of nutritious food. Tricki was very greedy. He never refused food. This made him hugely fat and lazy. Mrs. Pumphrey was worried about him. She thought that he was suffering from malnutrition and so she eventually gave him more energy food. She almost swooned when Herriot told her that Tricki must be hospitalized for a fortnight. She thought that Tricki would pine and die if he did not see his even for a single day.

Mrs. Pumphrey is impractical but very compassionate and caring. She and her staff members arranged and provided all possible comforts such as beds, cushions and toys to Tricki. She regularly enquired about his health from Dr. Herriot. She gratefully thanked Dr. Herriot for saving Tricki’s life and called it “A triumph of Surgery.”

2. Write the character-sketch of Tricki.

Ans. Tricki was a small dog. He was pampered and overfed by his mistress. He was fed with excessive nutritious food. He was greedy enough to refuse food at any time. He liked eating cream cakes and chocolates. This made him hugely fat. He looked like a bloated sausage. He had bloodshot and rheumy eyes. He became dull, flabby, lazy and listless. He was seriously sick. He had bouts of vomiting. He was taken to Herriot's surgery. There he was given no food for two days. He was made to do a lot of exercises. This changed him and he became fit. He loved his mistress very much. His mistress remarked that Tricki would pine and die if he did not see her even for a single day.

3. Write the character-sketch of Dr. James Herriot.

Ans: Dr James Herriot is a competent veterinary surgeon. He is really worried about Tricki. He understands that the real fault of the dog is his greed for food. Dr Herriot instructs Mrs Pumphrey to keep Tricki on a very strict diet.

Dr James Herriot is practical and pragmatic. He doesn't give any medical treatment to the dog. He feeds the dog with only water. His method works. The grateful mistress thanks Dr Herriot and calls his feat "A triumph of Surgery!" Dr James is clever enough to enjoy the best of both the worlds. He is tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest. It was a happy period for Dr Herriot and his friends. He used to enjoy eggs for breakfast and wine and brandy for lunch.

## **UNSOLVED QUESTIONS:**

### **SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (30 - 40 words)**

1. How did Mrs Pumphrey show her concern for Tricki when he was at the surgery?
2. Do you think Tricki was enjoying his stay at the hospital?
3. What was the main cause of 'Tricki's ill-health'?
4. Why did Mr Herriot ask Mrs Humphrey to admit Tricky in a hospital?
5. Why is Mr. Herriot tempted to keep Tricki as a permanent guest?

### **LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS (100-150 Words)**

1. Excess of everything is bad. Comment in the wake of Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki.
2. 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?
3. The chapter shows the silly and negligent behaviour of rich people like Mrs. Pumphrey who may harm their near and dear ones by their extra caring nature. Trick's declined health was the outcome of Mrs. Pumphrey's over-caring nature. Do you think such people's actions can prove to be fatal for the

health of their kinds? What values would you suggest to such people to emulate in themselves and why?

4. “He had never been known to refuse food; he would tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night.” Herriot believed that Trick’s problem was his greed. Did he lack tolerance? What values would you like Tricky to imbibe? Elucidate