

Class X - English

A Triumph of Surgery

CBSE NOTES

A Triumph of Surgery - Practice Worksheet

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Practice Questions

1. Why was Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki? Describe his condition when the narrator first saw him.

Hint: Focus on Tricki's physical appearance and Mrs Pumphrey's actions that led to his condition.

Solution: Mrs Pumphrey was worried about Tricki because he had become listless and seemed to have no energy. She thought he was suffering from malnutrition and had been giving him extra food to build him up. When the narrator first saw Tricki, he was shocked at his appearance. Tricki had become hugely fat, like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner. His eyes were bloodshot and rheumy, staring straight ahead, and his tongue lolled from his jaws. This condition was a result of overfeeding and lack of exercise, as Mrs Pumphrey couldn't refuse him his favorite cream cakes and chocolates. The narrator noticed that Tricki's only fault was greed, as he would never refuse food at any hour. This overindulgence led to his poor health, showing the consequences of pampering pets without considering their health needs.

2. What advice did the narrator give to Mrs Pumphrey to improve Tricki's health? Did she follow it?

Hint: Consider the narrator's professional advice and Mrs Pumphrey's emotional response to it.

Solution: The narrator advised Mrs Pumphrey to cut down Tricki's food right down and give him more exercise. He warned that if she didn't do this, Tricki was going to be really ill. He emphasized the need to harden her heart and keep him on a very strict diet. However, Mrs Pumphrey found it very difficult to follow this advice. She had initially cut down on sweet things but relented because Tricki seemed so weak and she couldn't bear to refuse him his favorite treats. This shows the challenge of balancing love and discipline in pet care. The narrator's advice was based on his professional understanding of animal health, highlighting the importance of diet and exercise for pets. Mrs Pumphrey's inability to follow the advice strictly led to Tricki's condition worsening, underscoring the need for firmness in implementing health advice.

3. Describe the treatment given to Tricki at the surgery. How did it help him recover?

Hint: Focus on the natural and non-medicinal aspects of Tricki's recovery process.

Solution: At the surgery, the narrator made up a bed for Tricki in a warm loose box next to the other dogs. For the first two days, he gave Tricki no food but plenty of water. This fasting period allowed Tricki's system to reset. By the third day, Tricki started to show interest in his surroundings and began to whimper when he heard the other dogs. The narrator then introduced Tricki to the other dogs, who after initial indifference, accepted him into their pack. Tricki began to participate in their activities, running about, joining in scrimmages, and even hunting rats. This active lifestyle, combined with a controlled diet, helped Tricki lose weight and regain his health. The treatment emphasized natural recovery through exercise and socialization, rather than medicinal intervention. Tricki's transformation from a lethargic, overweight dog to an active, healthy one showcases the benefits of a balanced lifestyle for pets.

4. How did Mrs Pumphrey contribute to Tricki's recovery, even though he was away from her?

Hint: Consider the indirect ways Mrs Pumphrey's actions supported Tricki's recovery.

Solution: Even though Tricki was away from her, Mrs Pumphrey contributed to his recovery by constantly worrying about him and sending gifts to the surgery. She rang a dozen times a day for the latest bulletins on his health. To build up Tricki's strength, she started bringing fresh eggs, two dozen at a time, which the narrator and his partners enjoyed for breakfast. Later, she sent bottles of wine and even brandy, intended to enrich Tricki's blood. These gifts, while not directly used for Tricki's treatment, provided comfort and luxury to the narrator's household, indirectly supporting Tricki's recovery by ensuring he was in a happy and well-cared-for environment. Mrs Pumphrey's actions reflect her deep love for Tricki and her desire to contribute to his well-being, even if her methods were unconventional and more beneficial to the humans than the dog.

5. Why did the narrator call Tricki's recovery 'a triumph of surgery'?

Hint: Reflect on the irony in the title and the actual methods used for Tricki's recovery.

Solution: The narrator called Tricki's recovery 'a triumph of surgery' because it was achieved without any surgical intervention or medicinal treatment. Instead, the recovery was brought about by a simple, natural approach: fasting, followed by a controlled diet and plenty of exercise with other dogs. This method was so effective that Tricki transformed from a bloated, lethargic dog into a lithe, hard-muscled animal in just two weeks. The term 'triumph of surgery' is ironic, as no surgery was performed; the real triumph was the success of natural healing and lifestyle changes. This highlights the narrator's belief in the power of nature and proper care over medical interventions for certain conditions. Mrs Pumphrey's exclamation at the end of the story underscores her amazement at the dramatic improvement in Tricki's health, attributing it to the narrator's skill, hence calling it a 'triumph of surgery'.

6. What does the story reveal about the relationship between Mrs Pumphrey and Tricki?

Hint: Analyze the emotional and behavioral aspects of Mrs Pumphrey's care for Tricki.

Solution: The story reveals that the relationship between Mrs Pumphrey and Tricki is one of deep affection but also of overindulgence. Mrs Pumphrey loves Tricki dearly and wants the best for him, but her way of showing love is through pampering him with food and luxuries, which ultimately harms his health. She cannot bear to see him unhappy or deny him his favorite treats, even when she knows it's for his own good. This dynamic shows how love, when not tempered with discipline, can lead to negative outcomes. The story also highlights Mrs Pumphrey's dependence on Tricki for emotional support, as seen in her distress when he is hospitalized. Their relationship is a classic example of how pets can become surrogate family members, with all the complexities that human relationships entail, including the potential for overprotectiveness and spoiling.

7. Compare and contrast the life Tricki had with Mrs Pumphrey and the life he led at the surgery.

Hint: Focus on the differences in diet, activity level, and overall health in both environments.

Solution: With Mrs Pumphrey, Tricki led a life of luxury and indulgence. He was overfed with cream cakes, chocolates, and other rich foods, had a wardrobe of coats for different weathers, and was pampered with extras like malt, cod-liver oil, and Horlicks. However, this lifestyle made him fat, lazy, and unhealthy. In contrast, at the surgery, Tricki's life was simple and disciplined. He was given no special treatment or extra food; instead, he fasted initially, then ate regular meals with the other dogs. He exercised vigorously, playing and running with the pack, which helped him lose weight and regain his health. The surgery offered him a more natural and active lifestyle, which was starkly different from the sedentary and overindulgent life with Mrs Pumphrey. This contrast underscores the importance of balance and moderation in pet care, showing that love and luxury are not enough if they compromise the pet's health.

8. What role did the other dogs at the surgery play in Tricki's recovery?

Hint: Consider the social and physical interactions between Tricki and the other dogs.

Solution: The other dogs at the surgery played a crucial role in Tricki's recovery by providing him with companionship and encouraging physical activity. Initially, they ignored Tricki, but once he showed interest in them, they accepted him into their pack. They engaged him in friendly scrimmages, bowled him over, and included him in their activities, which helped him become more active and lose weight. The presence of the other dogs also provided Tricki with social stimulation,

which was a stark contrast to his isolated, pampered life with Mrs Pumphrey. The competitive environment during meal times encouraged Tricky to eat heartily and regain his strength. The other dogs, therefore, were instrumental in Tricky's physical and social recovery, demonstrating the importance of socialization and exercise in a pet's health and well-being.

9. Do you think Tricky was happy to go back to Mrs Pumphrey? Justify your answer.

Hint: Analyze Tricky's behavior upon reunion with Mrs Pumphrey and consider the implications for his future health.

Solution: Yes, Tricky was happy to go back to Mrs Pumphrey, as evidenced by his enthusiastic reaction when he saw her. He took off from the narrator's arms in a tremendous leap and sailed into Mrs Pumphrey's lap, swarming over her, licking her face, and barking. This behavior shows his affection and excitement at being reunited with his mistress. However, it's also important to note that Tricky had thrived in the active, social environment of the surgery, becoming a healthier and more vibrant dog. While he was happy to return to Mrs Pumphrey, there's a question of whether his return to a life of indulgence would be beneficial in the long term. His happiness at seeing Mrs Pumphrey underscores the strong bond between them, but it also raises concerns about the potential for his health to decline again if old habits resume.

10. What message does the story 'A Triumph of Surgery' convey about pet care?

Hint: Reflect on the broader implications of the story for pet owners and the balance between love and discipline in pet care.

Solution: The story 'A Triumph of Surgery' conveys that proper pet care involves more than just love and pampering; it requires discipline, a balanced diet, and adequate exercise. Mrs Pumphrey's overindulgence leads to Tricky's poor health, while the narrator's simple, natural approach restores him to health. The story highlights the importance of understanding and meeting the actual needs of pets, rather than projecting human desires onto them. It also shows that sometimes, tough love is necessary for the well-being of those we care for, including pets. The message is clear: responsible pet ownership means making sometimes difficult decisions for the health and happiness of the animal, rather than giving in to every whim. The story serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of overindulgence and the value of a balanced, active lifestyle for pets.

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