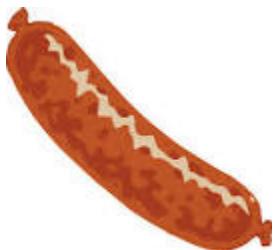


Class 10, Footprints Without Feet

Ch. 1 - A Triumph of Surgery

Text and explanation (with word meanings)

I was really worried about Tricki this time. I had pulled up my car when I saw him in the street with his mistress and I was shocked at his appearance. He had become hugely fat, like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner. His eyes, bloodshot and rheumy, stared straight ahead and his tongue lolled from his jaws. 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.” “And did you cut down on the sweet things as I told you?” “Oh, I did for a bit, but he seemed to be so weak I had to relent. He does love cream cakes and chocolates so. I can’t bear to refuse him.” I looked down again at the little dog. That was the trouble. Tricki’s only fault was greed. He had never been known to refuse food; he would tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night. And I wondered about all the things Mrs Pumphrey hadn’t mentioned. “Are you giving him plenty of exercise?” “Well, he has his little walks with me as you can see, but Hodgkin, the gardener, has been down with lumbago, so there has been no ring-throwing lately.”



Mistress- a woman in a position of authority or control.

Bloated- excessive in size or amount.

Sausage- an item of food in the form of a cylindrical length of minced pork or other meat encased in a skin, typically sold raw to be grilled or fried before eating.

Bloodshot- (of the eyes) inflamed or tinged with blood, typically as a result of tiredness.

Rheumy- watery.

Lolloed- sit, lie, or stand in a lazy, relaxed way.

Hastened- be quick to do something.

Listless- lacking energy or enthusiasm.

Malnutrition- lack of proper nutrition

Cod liver oil- oil pressed from the liver of cod

Relent- become less severe or intense.

Lumbago- pain in the muscles and joints of the lower back.

The narrator starts telling us that how he was worried about Tricki, a pet dog. The narrator, Mr. Herriot stops his car as he sees Tricki with his mistress on the road as the narrator is shocked to see Tricki because he looks like a bloated sausage. He has become very fat, his eyes are red and watery. Mrs. Pumphrey, Tricki's owner starts giving explanations. She told Mr. Herriot that she thought that Tricki was malnourished because he did not have any energy and excitement. She told him that she used to give him malt, cod liver oil and a bowl of Horlicks at night, apart from his regular meals so that he could sleep at night. Although she gave him so much to eat, she says that she doesn't give him much to eat.

Then the narrator asks her if she had cut down on his sweets as he had asked her to do to which she replies that she did it for a while but she felt that he was getting weaker because of which she had to stop being so harsh with him. Also, she says that she is unable to refuse him cakes and chocolates as those were his favourite things. Then the narrator understood Tricki's problem. The dog was very greedy and could eat at any time of the day. He did not know how to say no to food when his stomach was full. The narrator also thought to himself of all the things that Mrs. Pumphrey would not have mentioned which she fed Tricki. Again the narrator asked Mrs. Pumphrey whether Tricki was exercising to which Mrs. Pumphrey replies that she does take him out for walks once in a while but he is not playing his ring throwing exercise as the gardner who takes him out to play is not coming these days because of pain in his lower back.

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." Mrs Pumphrey wrung her hands. "Oh I will, Mr Herriot. I'm sure you are right, but it is so difficult, so very difficult." She set off, head down, along the road, as if determined to put the new regime into practice immediately. I watched their progress with growing concern. Tricki was tottering along in his little tweed coat; he had a whole wardrobe of these coats —for the cold weather and a raincoat for the wet days. He struggled on, drooping in his harness.



I thought it wouldn't be long before I heard from Mrs Pumphrey. The expected call came within a few days. Mrs Pumphrey was distraught. Tricki would eat nothing. Refused even his favourite dishes; and besides, he had bouts of vomiting. He spent all his time lying on a rug, panting. Didn't want to go for walks, didn't want to do anything. I had made my plans in advance. The only way was to get Tricki out of the house for a period. I suggested that he be hospitalised for about a fortnight to be kept under observation. The poor lady almost swooned. She was sure he would pine and die if he did not see her every day. But I took a firm line. Tricki was very ill and this was the only way to save him; in fact, I thought it best to take him without delay and followed by Mrs Pumphrey's wailings, I marched out to the car carrying the little dog wrapped in a blanket.

Severe- very great; intense.

Regime- a system or ordered way of doing things.

Tottering- move in a feeble or unsteady way.

Tweed- a rough-surfaced woolen cloth

Wardrobe- a large, tall cupboard or recess in which clothes may be hung or stored.

Harness- a set of straps and fittings

Distraught- very worried and upset.

Bouts- a short period of intense activity of a specified kind.

Rug- a floor covering

Panting- breathing with short, quick breaths; out of breath.

Fortnight- a period of two weeks.

Swooned- a partial or total loss of consciousness

Wailings- crying with pain, grief, or anger.

Marched- walk quickly and with determination.

The narrator tried to talk seriously to Mrs. Pumphrey that if she did not control Tricki's eating habits and increased his exercise, he would soon fall ill. He told her that she should stay strong and strict with him and put him on a diet. Mrs. Pumphrey accepted that although she knew that Mr. Herriot was right but it was too difficult for her to refuse him for anything. But then she left the place as if she was now ready to follow the new routine properly. Mr. Herriot was watching them go and looking at Tricki walking unsteadily. The narrator was also looking at the tweed coat that Tricki was wearing. He had a wardrobe full of these coats and also raincoat for the rainy days. This line also suggests that Mrs. Pumphrey was a rich lady as she had a lot of money to spend on her dog. But the narrator knew that soon he would be receiving a call about Tricki falling ill and it came. The call came after a few days. Mrs Pumphrey was very upset as Tricki was not eating anything, not even his favourite dishes and was vomiting frequently. He didn't even want to do anything.

Being a veterinary doctor, the narrator knew that the only way to get Tricki well was to get him out of the house for a few days. He then suggested to Mrs. Pumphrey that it would be good to get Tricki hospitalized and keep him under observation for 15 days. Upon hearing this Mrs. Pamphrey nearly fainted. She was sure that if Tricki did not see her everyday, he would surely die. But the narrator kept his words. He told her that this was the only option as Tricki was very ill. The narrator thought it would be best to avoid any delays and get him to the hospital as soon as possible. He went to their house and even though Mrs. Pumphrey was crying because she did not want her dog to go away from her, he took the dog, wrapped it in a blanket and put him in the car.

The entire staff was roused and maids rushed in and out bringing his day bed, his night bed, favourite cushions, toys and rubber rings, breakfast bowl, lunch bowl, super bowl. Realising that my car would never hold all the stuff, I started to drive away. As I moved off, Mrs Pumphrey, with a despairing cry, threw an armful of the little coats through the window. I looked in the mirror before I turned the corner of the drive; everybody was in tears. Out on the road, I glanced down at the pathetic little animal gasping on the seat by my side. I patted the head and Tricki made a brave effort to wag his tail. "Poor old lad," I said. "You haven't a kick in you but I think I know a cure for you."

At the surgery, the household dogs surged round me. Tricki looked down at the noisy pack with dull eyes and, when put down, lay motionless on the carpet. The other dogs, after sniffing round him for a few seconds, decided he was an uninteresting object and ignored him.



I made up a bed for him in a warm loose box next to the one where the other dogs slept. For two days I kept an eye on him, giving him no food but plenty of water. At the end of the second day he started to show some interest in his surroundings and on the third he began to whimper when he heard the dogs in the yard. 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. Later that day, I was present at feeding time. I watched while Tristan slopped the food into the bowls. There was the usual headlong rush followed by the sounds of high-speed eating; every dog knew that if he fell behind the others he was liable to have some competition for the last part of his meal.

Roused- cause to stop sleeping.

Maids- a female domestic servant.

Rushed- done or completed too hurriedly; hasty.

Supper- an evening meal, typically a light or informal one.

Despairing- showing loss of all hope.

Glanced- take a brief or hurried look.

Patted- touch quickly and gently with the flat of the hand.

Wag- (especially with reference to an animal's tail) move or cause to move rapidly to and fro.

Surged- move suddenly and powerfully forward or upward.

Motionless- not moving; stationary.

Sniffing- the action of drawing in air audibly through the nose.

Whimper- make a series of low, feeble sounds expressive of fear, pain, or unhappiness.

Trotted- run at a moderate pace with short steps.

Engulfed- sweep over (something) so as to surround or cover it completely.

Slopped- spill or flow over the edge of a container, typically as a result of careless handling.

Liable- likely to do or to be something.

The maids were then woken up and asked to get out all of Tricki's stuff. His stuff included things like his day bed, night bed, favourite cushions, toys, rubber rings, breakfast bowl, lunch bowl and his snack bowl. Mr. Herriot knew that so much stuff won't fit in his car, so he started rushing things. As the doctor was leaving with Tricki, Mrs. Pumphrey threw a lot of coats that Tricki used to wear in the car. As the narrator was turning the car, on the turn he saw through the rear mirror that everyone was crying. He patted the little helpless animal who responded by wagging his tail. The narrator then thought and told Tricki that he knew that Tricki did not have any energy but he surely had a way to get him better.

As soon as they reached the hospital, all the other dogs gathered around the doctor. Tricki looked at all of them and when the doctor put him down on the carpet he couldn't even move. The other dogs then sniffed him and thought to themselves that he was a very uninteresting object and that there was no use standing there and left. Then the narrator made the bed for Tricki in a warm box along with the other dogs. For two days the narrator kept him just on water and nothing else. On the second day, he roamed around looking at the place around him and on the third day he was also making noise to let the people in the hospital know that he too wanted to go out with the other dogs. When the narrator opened the door Tricki quickly came out and was surrounded by Joe who was a greyhound and his friends. Again after sniffing him for a moment, all of them left for the garden where Tricki followed them. Later in the evening, the narrator was present at the dinner time and was watching all of them, specially Tristan as he was slopping the food. All of them were eating with great speed because they knew that if they didn't finish quickly, then the other dog, after finishing his meal would come to eat their meal.



When they had finished, Tricki took a walk round the shining bowls, licking casually inside one or two of them. Next day, an extra bowl was put out for him and I was pleased to see him jostling his way towards it. From then on, his progress was rapid. He had no medicinal treatment of any kind but all day he ran about with the dogs, joining in their friendly scrimmages. He discovered the joys of being bowled over, trampled on and squashed every few minutes. He became an accepted member of the gang, an unlikely, silky little object among the shaggy crew, fighting like a tiger for his share at mealtimes and hunting rats in the old hen-house at night. He had never had such a time in his life. All the while, Mrs Pumphrey hovered anxiously in the background, ringing a dozen times a day for the latest bulletins. I dodged the questions about whether his cushions were being turned regularly or his correct coat worn according to the weather; but I was able to tell her that the little fellow was out of danger and convalescing rapidly. The word 'convalescing' seemed to do something to Mrs Pumphrey. She started to bring round fresh eggs, two dozen at a time, to build up Tricki's strength. For a happy period my partners and I had two eggs each for breakfast, but when the bottles of wine began to arrive, the real possibilities of the situation began to dawn on the household. It was to enrich Tricki's blood. Lunch became a ceremonial occasion with two glasses of wine before and several during the meal.

Licking- pass the tongue over (something) in order to taste, moisten, or clean it.
Pleased- feeling or showing pleasure and satisfaction,

Jostling- push, elbow, or bump against (someone) roughly, typically in a crowd.

Scrimmages- a confused struggle or fight.

Trampled- tread on and crush.

Squashed- flat, soft, or out of shape as a result of being crushed or squeezed with force.

Shaggy- long, thick, and unkempt.

Hovered- remain poised uncertainty in one place or between two states.

Anxiously- feeling or showing worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.

Dozen- 12 in number

Bulletins- a short official statement or broadcast summary of news.

Convalescing- recover one's health and strength over a period of time after an illness or medical treatment.

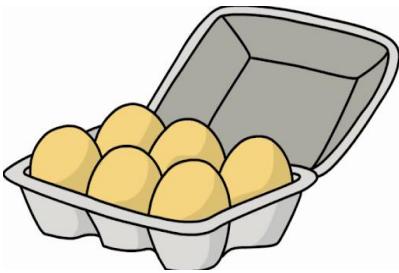
When everybody finished their food, Tricki went around looking at the shining bowls and also licked a few bowls. The very next day, an extra bowl was put for him and the narrator was happy to see him running towards his bowl. Then he started getting better really quick. He did not require any medicines and started playing with the other dogs the whole day. They all used to play with each other, bump into each other, walk over each other and squash each other. All of the other dogs accepted him as a family member although he was very different from others as he was very well taken care of by his owner and the others were not. He also used to fight for his meals with his fellow dogs who were much larger in size than him. At night, he would also hunt rats in the hen- house. He was enjoying as he had never done such things before.

All this while, Mrs. Pumphrey used to call more than twelve times a day to inquire about Tricki. Mr. Herriot used to avoid questions about the coats, beds etc. But he told her that Tricki was doing very good and was recovering very fast. Mrs. Pumphrey wanted Tricki to recover fast. She started sending two dozen eggs everyday for him but Mr. Herriot and his partners would have 2 eggs each for Breakfast. Then, to improve the quality of blood, Mrs. Pumphrey started sending in bottles of wine. Then it became Mr. Herriot's habit to have two glasses of wine before lunch and a few along with it.

We could hardly believe it when the brandy came to put a final edge on Tricki's constitution. For a few nights the fine spirit was rolled around, inhaled and reverently drunk.



They were days of deep content, starting well with the extra egg in the morning, improved and sustained by the midday wine and finishing luxuriously round the fire with the brandy. It was a temptation to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest, but I knew Mrs Pumphrey was suffering and after a fortnight, felt compelled to phone and tell her that the little dog had recovered and was awaiting collection.



Within minutes, about thirty feet of gleaming black metal drew up outside the surgery. The chauffeur opened the door and I could just make out the figure of Mrs Pumphrey almost lost in the interior. Her hands were tightly clasped in front of her; her lips trembled. "Oh, Mr Herriot, do tell me the truth. Is he really better?" "Yes, he's fine. There's no need for you to get out of the car — I'll go and fetch him." I walked through the house into the garden. A mass of dogs was hurtling round and round the lawn and in their midst, ears flapping, tail waving, was the little golden figure of Tricki. In two weeks he had been transformed into a lithe, hard-muscled animal; he was keeping up well with the pack, stretching out in great bounds, his chest almost brushing the ground. I carried him back along the passage to the front of the house. The chauffeur was still holding the car door open and when Tricki saw his mistress he took off from my arms in a tremendous leap and sailed into Mrs Pumphrey's lap. She gave a startled "Ooh!" And then had to defend herself as he swarmed over her, licking her face and barking. During the excitement, I helped the chauffeur to bring out the beds, toys, cushions, coats and bowls, none of which had been used. As the car moved away, Mrs Pumphrey leaned out of the window. Tears shone in her eyes. Her lips trembled. "Oh, Mr Herriot," she cried, "how can I ever thank you? This is a triumph of surgery!"

Brandy- a strong alcoholic spirit distilled from wine or fermented fruit juice.

Constitution- the composition of something.

Reverently- with deep and solemn respect.

Temptation- the desire to do something, especially something wrong or unwise.

Compelled- bring about (something) by the use of force or pressure.

Awaiting- wait for (an event).

Gleaming- reflecting light, typically because very clean or polished.

Chauffeur- a person employed to drive a private or hired car.

Clasped- grasp (something) tightly with one's hand.

Trembled- shake involuntarily, typically as a result of anxiety, excitement, or frailty.

Fetch- go for and then bring back (someone or something) for someone.

Hurtling- move or cause to move at high speed, typically in an uncontrolled manner

Midst- in the middle of.

Lithe- thin, supple, and graceful.

Startled- feeling or showing sudden shock or alarm.

Swarmed- move somewhere in large numbers.

Shone- a quality of brightness produced

Mrs. Pumphrey started sending in brandy. At that time Mr. Herriot was not able to believe that Mrs. Pumphrey actually wanted them to give brandy to Tricki. They shared it amongst themselves. Some days, Mr Herriot used to feel very happy as he would start his day with extra eggs, then he would have a few glasses of wine in the afternoon and then ending the day with

brandy in the evening. Because of all the things that were being sent for Tricki, Mr. Herriot was really tempted to keep him as a permanent guest at the surgery. He really wanted that Tricki should stay with them forever but then he realised that Mrs Pumphrey who was like a mother to Tricki was really suffering and really wanted Tricki to come back soon. After 15 days, Tricki was ready to go back home and Mr. Herriot called up Mrs. Pumphrey to come pick him up. Within a few minutes a long black car came outside. When the chauffeur opened the door Mrs. Pumphrey was sitting inside really nervous as well as excited. She was asking with a nervousness in her voice that was Tricki really better to which the doctor replied positively. Then Mr. Herriot went inside to get Tricki

When Mr. Herriot went to the garden behind the house, he saw all the dogs moving around in the garden, and Tricki was sitting between them. He had recovered wonderfully in two weeks. He was looking much healthier, playing with the other dogs and his chest was touching the ground. He had become a good muscular dog within two weeks. When Mr. Herriot took Tricki to the front of the house he saw that the chauffeur was still holding the door of the car and as soon as Tricki saw his mother like mistress he was overjoyed. He ran away and jumped into the lap of Mrs. Pumphrey and started licking her face, barking in excitement. While all this was happening, the chauffeur and Mr. Herriot got all his stuff out to the car which had not been used during the treatment in the last 14 days. When Mrs. Pumphrey was leaving she leaned out of the window and said to Mr. Herriot with tears of joy in her eyes that she could not thank him enough for what he had done. “This is a triumph of surgery!” meant that the treatment that was given to Tricki had been successful.
