

talk
to
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

Footprints without Feet **1**

A Triumph of Surgery

1. Watch and listen to the story

Click on the link below to watch a video of the story being read. Note the pronunciations of the words and read along using the subtitles.

[\(82\) A Triumph of Surgery - YouTube](#)

2. Summary

The Triumph of Surgery is really a story about the triumph of common sense over the foolishness of excessive love. It revolves around Tricki, a cute dog. Tricki lived with his mistress, a lonely rich lady, in her big house full of servants, all of whose lives revolved around Tricki – his toys, bedding, clothes and food. He was spoiled rotten and slowly became greedy, lazy and so unhealthy that he needed to be taken to a Veterinary Doctor

The Doctor took Tricki with him to his clinic, stopped over-feeding him and pushed him to run around and play with the other dogs. Within a few days Tricki recovered his energy and began to look healthy again. He was thrilled to see his mistress Mrs. Pumphrey when she came back to fetch him.

Mrs Pumphrey expressed her thanks to the Doctor. She went away believing, wrongly, that Tricki's recovery was "a triumph of surgery"; it was due to some operation that the Doctor had performed on Tricki. She was unaware that all the Doctor had done was to use good common sense!

This story also reminds us that sometimes, without intending to, parents can also harm their children, who they actually love so much, by giving them too much of everything. Children too then become greedy, lazy and unhealthy.

To see a dramatization of the story click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2O6yBIJAoI4>

3. Vocabulary

1. **Pampered** – indulged too much, spoiled
The guests at the hotel are so **pampered** that they return every year to stay there.
2. **Mistress** – a lady who is in charge of other people or institutions, for example, running a home; also used for school mistress
The **mistress** of the house insisted that the fruits should be delivered to the doorstep.
3. **Consults** – goes to an expert, or to a book, to get information or advice
Whenever I cannot find a book in the library, I **consult** the librarian.
4. **Veterinary** – connected with the treatment of sick animals
Ram plans to study **veterinary** medicine after completing school.
5. **Bloated** – puffed up, swollen, with liquid, wind, or air
I feel **bloated** after eating rice.
6. **Sausage** - finely minced meat stuffed into long cylindrical cases, typically made of soft animal skin. These are then divided into short lengths by twisting or tying
Sausages are eaten regularly with an English breakfast.
7. **Bloodshot** – red eyed
His **bloodshot** eyes scared the children and they ran away.
8. **Rheumy** – a watery discharge from a mucous membrane especially of the nose or eyes
The beggar's **rheumy** eyes watered constantly and his hands twitched nervously.
9. **Lolled** – to sit or stand around lazily, stick out tongue so it hangs loosely
The dog was panting and his tongue **lolled** out in the heat.
We **lolled** around the swimming pool during the summer holidays.
10. **Hastened** – quickened, hurried
He **hastened** to tell the police that his shop had been robbed.

11. **Listless** – lacking energy and enthusiasm
After her fever subsided, she was **listless** for a long time.
12. **Malnutrition** – bad health due to not having enough food or right food to eat
The Government wants to tackle **malnutrition** in children in a systematic way.
13. **Relent** – to change one's mind about a course of action and be more forgiving
If you ask your father nicely, he will **relent** and allow you to go out.
14. **Tackle** – to begin working on; to deal with a difficult situation; in football, to force the player with the ball to fall
Presently, his focus is only to **tackle** the semi-finals of the boxing championship.
15. **Lumbago** – muscular pain in the lower part of the back (lumbar region)
Meera's grandmother's **lumbago** becomes worse in winters.
16. **Wrung** – to press and squeeze out, twist and rub your hands together because you are very worried, upset or anxious
After I washed my clothes, I **wrung** them out and hung them out to dry.
Seema **wrung** her hands in despair when her son met with an accident.
17. **Regime** – prescribed course of exercise and diet, a particular government or a system of government
The doctor put him on a strict diet and exercise **regime**.
The old **regime** was thrown out and a new elected government came into power.
18. **Tottering** – to stand or move unsteadily
The baby's first **tottering** steps soon became steadier.
19. **Tweed** – thick woolen cloth with a rough surface
My **tweed** coat keeps me warm in winter.

20. **Wardrobe** – a person's collection of clothes, a large cupboard to hang clothes
Her **wardrobe** consists of both Western and Indian clothes.
The sisters shared the large **wardrobe** in their room.
21. **Drooping** – hanging limply
The flowers were **drooping** in the May heat.
22. **Harness** – set of straps and links around a horse's head or body to pull a carriage, to mobilize or control something
The **horse's harness** was so tight that it left a wound on his body.
Windmills are used to **harness** wind power to produce energy.
23. **Distraught** – extremely worried
Mahesh was **distraught** when his little brother went missing.
24. **Bouts** – periods of time spent suffering from an illness, a contest or fight specially boxing or wrestling
She has frequent **bouts** of coughing which leave her feeling weak.
25. **Panting** – breathing quickly and loudly because of heat or because of exercising
Aslam was **panting** after having run all the way home from school.
26. **Swooned** – fainted
Rama **swooned** at the sight of what she thought was a ghost.
27. **Pine** – to feel sad for someone who has gone away or died, a tall tree which has thin sharp leaves
If I leave my dog for a long period, he will **pine** for me.
The **pine** forests in the mountains around Shimla are a beautiful sight.
28. **Wailings** – prolonged loud cries as if in grief or pain
The **wailings** of the children when their father died were very painful to hear.
29. **Roused** – caused a feeling or emotion in someone; woke someone up
The speech **roused** a lot of anger among the crowd of people gathered there.
I **roused** my son because he was still asleep at one in the afternoon!

30. **Supper** – a light meal that is eaten in the evening, often used synonymously with dinner
We are having soup and sandwiches for **supper**.
31. **Glanced** – took a quick look
The teacher **glanced** up and down the corridor to make sure that all the children were in their classrooms.
32. **Pathetic** – pitiful, miserable
The beggar at the end of the road is a **pathetic** figure.
33. **Gasping** – to take a short quick breath through the mouth because of shock, surprise or pain
When Suresh boxed his brother in the stomach, he was **gasping** with pain.
34. **Surgery** – a place where a doctor, a dentist or a veterinary surgeon treats patients; also when an operation is performed by a surgeon
We went to consult Dr. Gupta outside his **surgery**.
His uncle is recovering well after the brain **surgery**.
35. **Surged** – to move forward with great strength; to increase very quickly
The crowd **surged** ahead and broke down the gate of the palace.
The prices of vegetables have **surged** due to the drought.
36. **Motionless** – still, not moving
She lay **motionless** in bed when she heard a suspicious sound at night.
37. **Sniffing** – breathe in, try to smell something
The police dogs were **sniffing** around the neighborhood where a murder was committed.
38. **Uninteresting** – not interesting, boring
Gopal found the lecture **uninteresting** and fell asleep in his chair.
39. **Surroundings** – the area around a particular place
The hotel in Shimla is set in beautiful surroundings.
40. **Whimper** – soft, painful cries
I heard a **whimper** at night and found a wounded dog in the garden.

41. **Trotted** – going somewhere in a quick or busy way
The entire class **trotted** out to the playground and started exercising.
42. **Engulfed** – completely covered by something in a sudden, unexpected way
The flames **engulfed** the top floor of the office.
43. **Thoroughly** – completely, very much
I cleaned the room **thoroughly** and threw out all the trash.
44. **Inspecting** – looking at something or someone carefully to check their quality or condition
The team from the Department of Education went around our school **inspecting** all the facilities.
45. **Surplus** – extra
It is wise to store **surplus** grain in case there is a drought and the crops fail.
46. **Slopped** – caused liquid to flow over the edge of a container
She banged the soup bowls down on the table and most of the soup **slopped** over.
47. **Headlong** – with great speed or without thinking
The car skidded and fell **headlong** over the cliff.
People rushed **headlong** to buy the latest iPhone.
48. **Jostling** – to push or knock around roughly, to make way in a crowd
The large crowd was **jostling** the speaker as he made his way to the stage.
49. **Casually** – in a way that is not formal or not suitable for a special or official occasion, calmly, coolly
She **casually** mentioned that she had won a scholarship and was going to study in America.
50. **Medicinal treatment** – treatment using medicines
There was no need for any **medicinal treatment** for her – a fortnight's bed rest and a healthy diet cured her.
51. **Scrimmage** – rough or confused struggle
There was a short **scrimmage** between her cat and my dog before we pulled them apart.

52. **Bowled over** – knocked someone to the ground by running into them
The small child was **bowled over** by the huge dog.
53. **Tramped** – to walk with slow heavy steps especially if on a long walk or hike
We **tramped** for four hours before reaching the camping site.
54. **Squashed** – to crush something into a flat shape
The ball came under the car and was **squashed** flat.
55. **Shaggy** – having or covered with long, rough, and untidy hair
The huge **shaggy** dog came out of the water and shook itself and drenched all of us.
56. **Crew** – a group of people who work together, especially all those who work on and operate a ship, aircraft, etc.
The **crew** helped all the passengers leave the damaged aircraft first before deplaning themselves.
57. **Bulletin** – an official statement about a situation, short news reports on radio, television
The news **bulletin** at 9 pm has the highest viewership.
58. **Dodged** – to avoid or escape being hit, to avoid something unpleasant
He **dodged** aside quickly to avoid the speeding car.
59. **Convalescing** – recovering from an illness
Sita is **convalescing** after her surgery.
60. **Possibilities** – some things that can be done or achieved, or that can exist
Several **possibilities** opened up in front of Aruna, when her rich aunt offered to pay for her education.
61. **To dawn on** – to become known or obvious to someone, often suddenly
It finally **dawned on** Ashok that he had been cheated by shopkeeper.
62. **Enrich** – to make richer, to improve the quality, flavor of something
Eat healthy to **enrich** the quality of your life.
If you add some cream, it will **enrich** the taste of this soup.

63. **Ceremonial** – connected with ceremony
The Army has a **ceremonial** lowering of the flag at the end of each day.
64. **Constitution** – here, the general state of health, or a person's physical condition
My grandfather had a strong **constitution** and recovered quickly from the fever.
65. **Inhaled** – breathed in
A lot of people around the factory fell ill after they **inhaled** the poisonous gas that leaked from it.
66. **Reverently** – with deep and solemn respect
She bowed her head **reverently** before the idol of God Ram.
67. **Sustained** – supported, constant
The theory about the boy's murder could not be **sustained** by any evidence.
I got a headache from the **sustained** noise of hammering on the construction site next door.
68. **Luxuriously** – in a very comfortable and expensive way
She is living **luxuriously** in a huge house on the outskirts of Delhi.
69. **Temptation** – the wish to do or have something that you know you should not do or have
I could not resist the **temptation**, and finished the entire bar of chocolate.
70. **Suffering** – physical or mental pain that a person or animal is feeling
There was no end to the migrant labourers' **suffering** as they journeyed back home.
71. **Compelled** - forced, urged forcefully
The army was **compelled** to take action against the terrorists.
72. **Gleaming** – shining
He hated anyone touching his **gleaming** new car.
73. **Chauffeur** – highly paid driver who wears a uniform
Her father worked as a **chauffeur** for the head of the company.

74. **Clasped** – to hold somebody or something tightly
I **clasped** my bag tightly as I walked down the dark and lonely road.
75. **Hurting** – to move with great speed, to rush violently
The huge rock came **hurting** down the hill.
76. **Flapping** – a bird moving its wings up and down, to be agitated or to panic
She was **flapping** her hands nervously when the principal called her to his office.
The baby was startled when the bird flew away **flapping** its wings loudly.
77. **Transformed** – changed
His life was **transformed** when he won the lottery.
78. **Lithe** – flexible, supple, agile
We managed to photograph the **lithe** and graceful movements of the tiger.
79. **Hard-muscled** – having strong and tight muscles
The boxer was tall and **hard-muscled** and could not be defeated easily.
80. **Bounds** – moves quickly with large jumping movements
As soon as the car door opens, the dog **bounds** out of it, and rushes into the house.
81. **Tremendous** – very great, inspiring awe
Her **tremendous** talent in acting will soon make her a super star.
82. **Swarmed** – move somewhere, specially insects in large numbers; flocked, crowded together
During the hot weather, people **swarmed** to the beaches.
The locusts **swarmed** over the farms and fields doing a lot of damage to the crops.

4. Questions

I. Read and Find Out

- 1. Why is Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki?**
- 2. What does she do to help him? Is she wise in this?**
- 3. Who does 'I' refer to in this story?**
- 4. Why was the Veterinary Doctor worried when he saw Tricki walking with his mistress?**
- 5. Was Tricki getting enough exercise? Why not?**
- 6. What did the Doctor mean when he asked Mrs. Pumphrey to 'harden her heart' and put Tricki on a strict diet?**
- 7. 'The expected call came within a few days' - why was the Veterinary doctor expecting the call?**
- 8. What plans did the Doctor make in advance to help Tricki?**
- 9. Is the narrator as rich as Tricki's mistress?**
- 10. How does the Doctor treat the dog?**
- 11. Why is he tempted to keep Tricki on as a permanent guest?**
- 12. Why did the narrator not give in to his temptation and keep Tricki permanently? What does this show us of his character?**
- 13. Why does Mrs Pumphrey think the dog's recovery is "a triumph of surgery"?**

II. Think about it

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?**
2. **Do you think Tricki was happy to go home? What do you think will happen now?**
3. **Do you think this is a real-life episode, or mere fiction? Or is it a mixture of both?**

III. Talk about it

1. **This episode describes the silly behaviour of a rich woman who is foolishly indulgent, perhaps because she is lonely. Do you think such people are merely silly, or can their actions cause harm to others?**
2. **Do you think there are also parents like Mrs Pumphrey?**
3. **What would you have done if you were: (i) a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household, (ii) a neighbour?**
4. **What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?**

5. Suggested reading

- **'Rikki Tikki Tawi' by Rudyard Kipling**
- ***Dog Stories* by James Herriot**
- **'A Zoo in My Luggage' by Gerald Durrell**
- **'A Tiger Comes to Town' by R.K. Narayan**

Time

***The butterfly counts not months but moments,
and has time enough.***

***Time is a wealth of change, but the clock in its
parody makes it mere change and no wealth.***

***Let your life lightly dance on the edges of
Time like dew on the tip of a leaf.***