

The Lord God Made Them All Study Guide

The Lord God Made Them All by James Herriot

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Plot Summary

In *The Lord God Made Them All*, country veterinarian James Herriot shares stories of his veterinarian practice in post World War II England. Among his stories Herriot writes of his personal experiences with the many advances in veterinary medicine during this time, his adventures with travel as a veterinary attendant, and the love of his growing family. Through all of his trials and adventures, Herriot includes the warm humor and positive outlook that makes his writing joyful and victorious.

While Herriot's book is largely a collection of unrelated story of his life and work, Herriot scatters throughout his writing entries from a journal he kept during a trip to Russia and a trip to Istanbul. Although they are not included consecutively, these chronological journal entries serve as a backbone for the entire book. These two trips are perhaps Herriot's greatest adventures while serving as a veterinarian. In his first trip Herriot serves a veterinarian for a flock of sheep headed by boat to Russia. This trip is made in gale force winds and stormy seas. In his second trip, Herriot heads to Istanbul with forty head of cattle. This adventure takes place in a dilapidated airplane in which one of the engines actually catches on fire during the trip. While each of these trips could have easily been considered disastrous, Herriot presents them in his signature outlook of joy and adventure.

While he enjoys the adventure of his trips, Herriot's writing shows that his favorite place is his home town of Darrowby, England. It is here that he shares a thriving country practice with another veterinarian, Siegfried Farnon. Herriot enjoys the English countryside as he travels from farm to farm, often with his children, tending to the veterinary needs of various farm animals.

Along with his memories of his developing veterinary practice and the many developments made in the field of veterinary medicine, Herriot shares stories of his everyday life. He writes of the birth of his daughter, the help he receives from both his children when making his rounds, and his overwhelming pride in his children. Most of all Herriot shares through his writing the joy that comes from being able to perform a job that he loves.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary and Analysis

In the novel *The Lord God Made Them All* country veterinarian James Herriot shares stories of his veterinarian practice in post World War II England. Among his stories Herriot writes of his personal experiences of the many advances in veterinary medicine during this time, his adventures with travel as a veterinary attendant, and the love of his growing family. Through all of his trials and adventures, Herriot includes the warm humor and positive outlook that makes his writing joyful and victorious.

In Chapter 1 Herriot recalls a time when a gate falls on him during one of his veterinary visits. This situation reminds Herriot of the times he visited the farm before he was active in the military. The farmer had promised time and again to get the gate, which was the last in a series of progressively difficult gates through which Herriot must pass in order to get the farm, replaced. Herriot was on his way to the farm to castrate some calves. On past trips the farmer had produced full grown bulls to castrate, a job that is made much more difficult by the animal's size. Once, Herriot had hoped to make an impression on the farmer by having him help with the castration. When the farmer tried to help, he realized the difficulty of the job when dealing with the larger animals and promised to call the vet before the calves got so big.

This memory is fresh on Herriot's mind when Mr. Ripley, the farmer with the gates, calls Herriot away from Sunday dinner to see a sick cow. The farmer believes the cow may have broken her leg but when Herriot arrives he finds it is just a hobnail that has become embedded in the cow's foot. However, the farmer asks Herriot if while he's there he could castrate a bull for him and produces a bull to be castrated. Again, Herriot scolds the farmer for his procrastination, and again the farmer guarantees it will never happen again. Knowing the promise won't be kept, Herriot finds himself standing in front of the bull, laughing.

In Chapter 2 Herriot deals with a dog owner who imagines his dog is suffering from a horrible disease each time he leaves it and goes to watch the races. This happens several times before Herriot puts his foot down and refuses to go see the animal, whom he believes is completely well. As he mulls the symptoms the farmer listed, however, Herriot begins to believe there really is something wrong with the man's dog and pays a visit just in time to save its life. In an ironic turn of events, however, the remedy is so quick the dog's owner believes there was nothing seriously wrong with his animal at all.

In Chapter 3 Herriot begins to talk about the many changes in veterinary medicine that he has had to adjust to since his stint in the armed forces. Penicillin and steroids are now in use and many of the familiar older medicines are a thing of the past. In addition, there are not as many small farmers as there used to be. These small farms are being pushed out of business by technology and big time farming. Also, veterinarians have



begun to specialize in small animal practice; they are no longer just thought of as doctors for large animals.

When Herriot returns from his jaunt, his partner is fuming because his car is not running. For this reason, Siegfried has decided to get a second car as a spare for the practice. A car salesman brings a car for him to try and all three men pile inside. Although the salesman has said the brakes are good, they apparently aren't as good as he indicated because the man appears uneasy each time Siegfried speeds up. In a final test of the brakes, the car lurches badly to the right. Siegfried decides not to buy the car but confides in Herriot that he enjoyed getting a rise out of the salesman. It is at this point that Herriot realizes that not everything in his life has changed.

Herriot writes this novel about events that happened to him just after he returned from serving in the military. He is in the process of transitioning from military life back to civilian life. In addition to these changes, Herriot is faced with the changes that progress has made upon his career; however, he finds not everything has changed. He still has clients that refuse to follow his orders, those who over dramatize their animals' illnesses and those who take advantage of the on-call vet.

While Herriot's stories could be dry, humdrum recollections of everyday life and work, he puts into them a life and humor, which makes the reading thoroughly enjoyable, although the reader realizes these serious situations, such as being stuck under a gate with no help in sight, were probably not humorous to Herriot at the time they were happening. However, Herriot is able to look back and capture the humor and ironies in each story so they are both hilarious and uplifting.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 4 Herriot records the activities of the first day of a voyage to Russia. He has been hired to go along on this voyage to look after the medical needs of a herd of sheep being sold to the Russians. The trip was set up by a former veterinary student of Herriot's. Notice that in the beginning of this chapter Herriot points out that this novel records the events he experienced immediately following his time in the R.A.F. Herriot's first journal article is dated in October of 1961, a hint of when these events have taken place. Note also that when he left his internship with Herriot, Crooks filled a bottle with the air from his surgery. This act insinuates a great deal of respect on the student's part for the way Herriot and his associates did business.

On his first day on the ship Herriot looks over the accommodations both for himself and for the sheep. Although the boat is a little small for his tastes, he is pleased with the space and feed that has been provided for the animals. He is also happy with his cabin, which he finds quite adequate. Most of the rest of this first entry details the specifics of the ship and the events of launching. One sailor who has been assigned to help take care of the sheep, asks Herriot's advice on the proper way to feed the beasts. Herriot gladly shows him. This entry ends with Herriot looking forward to a good night's sleep in his bunk being rocked by the sea.

In Chapter 5 Herriot recounts memories of his son, as a young child, going on farm calls with him. In this particular story Herriot writes about his son wanting a pair of hobnail boots like that farmers wore. Despite their doubts in being able to find work boots so small, Helen, Herriot's wife, finds some boots that will fit the boy. Jimmy is extremely proud of his boots. One day while Herriot is trying to extract a thorn from a dog's paw, Jimmy decides to climb the wisteria tree outside the window of his father's surgery. Although he can see what the boy is doing, he is unable at the time to stop him. In his horror, just as he finishes with the dog's paw, Herriot watches as his son falls from the tree. The boy is unharmed, but his father tells him that if he doesn't start behaving better he will not be allowed to go on any more calls; Herriot will find another boy to help him. Jimmy does not seem too concerned about this; he is fearful only that the other boy will be allowed to wear his boots.

In Chapter 6 Herriot writes about the Mongolian Russians who were captured by the British as prisoners of war. Although it does not seem these captives would have been very useful to Herriot, he soon learned they were of great help to him on his farm calls. Many of these men had been forced to fight in the war and were actually happy to be taken as British captives. While working on the British farms, they were given plenty to eat and treated well.

Herriot was called to one farm to tend to a cow that had dislocated its hip. Herriot writes that this type of dislocation is very serious and generally the injury is not able to be



repaired. Herriot tells the farmer that animals in this condition generally have to be put down. He instructs the farmer to call upon some of his strong neighbors to help try to put the bone back in place. Instead of calling on neighbors, the farmer points to the four heavily built Germans who are living with him. With all four of them pulling, they are able to repair the cow's hip joint.

In another instance Herriot and Siegfried are called to remove a tumor from a bull's stomach. The veterinarians suspect they will have trouble dealing with this animal. It takes a bit of work to get the animal contained in a stall. Then the men have no idea how they are going to catch him to work on him. At this point one of the prisoners of war steps forward. He catches the bull by the ear and with this hold keeps him still while the surgeons remove the tumor. Although they tried in other situations neither Herriot nor Siegfried ever had any success in catching and containing a bull by its ear.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 7 Herriot continues his story of his Russian voyage. This story will resurface with additional journal entries throughout the book. In this chapter Herriot largely discusses the food he is served while on board the ship. After a hearty and savory breakfast on the day of this particular journal entry, Herriot treats one of the sheep for foot rot and another for an irritated eye. Before lunch, he is shown the ship's galley and by the diminutive size of the kitchen, he assumes the remaining meals that he receives on the ship will be more sparse than the breakfast he was served earlier. Surprisingly, however, he continues to receive chef quality meals from this tiny kitchen. Herriot regularly shows his gratitude to the ship's cook, who seems tickled by the praise. After lunch he checks the sheep again and discovers that some of them are showing signs of having husk.

In Chapter 8, Herriot decides to perform a cesarean section on a cow. Herriot has a student studying with him who has mentioned how easy the operation is when compared to helping a cow through a hard labor. His current patient, Bella, is a small cow trying to give birth to a huge calf. Herriot puts the cow to sleep, then begins the operation. It is only after the student has cut open one of the cow's stomach, believing it is the uterus, that he realizes how little his student actually knows about performing a cesarean section. After much guess work, Herriot finally births the calf, who interferes with the stitching of the uterus because he is wanting to nurse. Herriot closes the cow but is sure that between the stomach fluid and contents that leaked into her stomach, as well as all the dirt and straw the calf deposited into his mother's incision, she will surely die.

Surprisingly, the next time Herriot goes to this same farm, Bella is doing well. She even recovers enough to give natural birth to eight more calves. Note that in this section Herriot becomes outraged with his student and talks badly to him when he first learns that the young man knows so little about the operation he is trying to perform. It is also important to notice that once they are out of pressure of the situation, Herriot apologizes to his student. Although the student really was at fault for leading Herriot to believe he knew more about the operation than he actually did, Herriot still apologizes to him for his own bad behavior. This action speaks for the character of this doctor.

Chapter 9 contains Herriot's journal entry from the day of October 10th of his voyage. On this day the ship passes through the lock gate at Kiel Canal. Raun, the sailor who is Herriot's assistant is very affectionate with the sheep. They find the one with they eye irritation is better, but the foot rot is worse and the sheep is isolated in its own pen. After they finishing checking the sheep that night Raun and Herriot have a beer together and share conversation. Herriot learns that on one of the past voyages, five head of cattle died because there was no vet to care for them. Herriot hopes he will earn his keep on this voyage by taking good care of the sheep.



Chapters 10-12

Chapters 10-12 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 10 Herriot writes about a time when he accidentally killed an animal while trying to treat it. A pharmaceutical representative introduced Herriot to an injection proven to cure foul of the foot, a disease in cows that was up until that time, difficult to treat. The drug rep promises the injection will cure this foot disease in just a couple of days. The only precaution is that the medicine must be injected directly into the vein. An abscess could result if the medicine is injected in any other location.

Although the injections do work, Herriot describes the initial reaction of farmers to this cure. These farmers were accustomed to the doctor applying medicine directly to the foot; they didn't believe an injection in the neck could cure a disease in the foot. One farmer, Robert Maxwell, had a cow with an unusually bad case of foul of the foot. Herriot uses the injection, which cures the foot, but a large swelling in the injection area of the cow's neck occurs. Herriot examines the cow and finds that a blood clot has formed in the vein where he performed his injection.

On his way home from Maxwell's farm Herriot tries to figure what he had done to cause the clot. Since he is confident the cow will recover, he is surprised when Maxwell calls him the next day to inform him that the cow has died. Herriot firmly believes the farmer thinks he is a bad veterinarian and will never call him to treat another animal. He is again surprised when Maxwell calls him to examine another sick cow. Herriot discovers this cow had inflamed kidneys and begins a treatment with sulphonamides. While these antibiotics help, they aren't strong enough to cure the cow. It is at this point that Herriot first experiments with injecting penicillin into an animal. His experiment works, however, and the cow recovers.

After they are positive the cow will recover, Maxwell, who has always been quiet and unobtrusive during his time with the vet, complains because Herriot has left empty penicillin bottles all over his barn. When Maxwell first mentioned to Herriot that he had a complaint, Herriot was afraid Maxwell would bring up the dead cow. He is relieved the man is only kidding him about his lack of housekeeping skills. At the conclusion of this chapter Herriot stresses what a lesson he learned from this uncomplaining farmer. Even when circumstances could be blamed on another person, Herriot writes that he tries to treat others as Maxwell treated him by not placing blame or pointing fingers.

In Chapter 11 Herriot writes about Miss Grantley, a beautiful, single, goat-lover who depended upon his practice for her veterinary work. It is a joke among Siegfried, Tristan and Herriot that Miss Grantley shows her favor by sending the vet who is her choice favorite of the day a can of goat droppings on which tests need to be run. Most often this can of droppings is addressed to Siegfried's attention, but sometimes it appears with Herriot or even Tristan's name on it. It is Herriot's writing style that allows him to tell this type of story without belittling the person about whom he is writing. Although it is a



humorous story, and he is obviously poking fun at the lady for choosing which vet she feels is most qualified on that day to deal with the goat droppings, he does not ridicule her actions, only uses them as a way to color his humorous memories of her actions.

Herriot returns to his journal entries from in Russian voyage in Chapter 12. In this entry Herriot describes the storm at its height. Things are being thrown around his cabin and he finds it nearly impossible to stay in his bunk because of the tossing. At breakfast the next morning, Herriot is the only one able to eat well, a phenomenon noticed by the crew, but not by Herriot himself. As the ship's captain is commenting on Herriot's sea worthiness, Raun comes to tell Herriot that the sheep are sick. After observing the animals for a few moments, Herriot decides they are suffering from the effects of stress and gives them prednisone injections. These injections soon put the sheep back right, an effect that awes Raun.

One of the themes Herriot addresses often in his writing is the amount of change that has occurred in the practice of veterinary medicine, just since he has become a vet. Injections, such as the one for foul of the foot, as well as antibiotic and steroid injections are just gaining popularity. These new medicines are allowing vets to cure diseases that were once incurable. Note also Raun's surprise when the sheep recover so quickly after being injected with the prednisone.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary and Analysis

Josh Anderson, the local barber, is the topic of Chapter 13. Herriot first introduces his reader to Josh's unusual habit of giving free, but really bad haircuts, when he gets drunk. These free haircuts always take place in the local bars; those visiting Josh in his shop during business hours know their haircuts will be performed properly as Josh does not drink while in his shop. Josh is also well known for the pain he causes his clients because he does not cut the hair, but instead pulls it out. He also has the odd habit of rubbing his customer's hair between his finger and thumb.

On his current visit to Josh's shop, Herriot meets Josh's new dog, a hound of questionable breed, named Venus. A short time later Josh brings his dog to Herriot's clinic because the dog has a chicken bone stuck in its mouth. Herriot is unable to remove the bone while the dog is awake so he decides to anesthetize the dog so he can remove it more easily. Josh is told to come back in an hour to collect his pet. Herriot administers the anesthesia and removes the bone. The dog, however, stops breathing and does not resume breathing. Herriot tries an old trick in which he whirls the dog around his head to restart the breathing. This not only causes respiration to begin but also entertains Herriot's son in the process.

When Josh comes back for his dog, he makes the comment that the anesthesia must have felt to the dog like it was flying through the air. Herriot is startled at this comment because he has not mentioned the episode to Josh. It is at this point that Josh tells Herriot that when he rubs people's hair between his fingers, it gives him the ability to hear their thoughts. Herriot vows to himself never to think about Venus' procedure while in Josh's barber chair.

In Chapter 14 Herriot returns to his story about his voyage to Russia. On this day the ship docks at the port in Klaipeda and Herriot describes much of the action of this day. Three notes of interest include the supervisor who takes samples of all the sheep food the Russians will be given so they can determine that it is not tainted. A second character of interest is the lady who takes five hours to take all the sheep's temperatures. A third interesting feature of this article is Herriot and the captain's trip to the Russian club where they are almost attacked by a guard dog when they try to find a shortcut to the club.

In Chapter 15 Herriot recounts a time when he became too emotionally involved in a patient. The patient is named Amber, a dog that Sister Rose, a local animal enthusiast, has adopted. Unfortunately, this dog shows signs of having demodectic mange, a disease caused by mites. Although Herriot treats the dog both at Sister Rose's then later at his own home, he fails to see that his treatment is not working and the dog should be put to sleep. It is only one day when he sees the dog in the full beam of his headlights

that he realizes how bad he has let her become in his attempt to cure her. Although it saddens him, he realizes he must put her to sleep.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 16 Herriot uses his memory of a farmer's reaction to a cow letting down her milk as he cleansed the cow of her afterbirth to save a girl's pet pig. In the story, Herriot receives a call from Bert Kealy that his daughter's pig has just given birth to piglets but has no milk. At this time Darrowby is buried under more snow than they have ever seen before. It is so bad that helicopters have been called out to drop food and supplies to some distant farms.

Although Kealy lives on a farm situated far in the country, Herriot decides to try to make the trip to the farm since he knows a shot of pituitrin will cure the problem. Herriot drives as far as he can, then tries the rest of the journey on skis. Since the snow is so deep, he can't see any of the usual landmarks and is afraid he will get lost. A blinding snow flurry helps him realize what a bad decision he has made and he heads back to his car. Once he is safe at home, Herriot calls Kealy back and suggests he try stimulating the uterus to get the pig's milk flowing. The suggestion works and although the farmer has to continue his stimulation periodically for several days, the piglets get enough milk to help them survive until they can eat on their own.

Herriot recounts the birth of his daughter, Rosie, in Chapter 17. He and his wife Helen were watching a movie in a theater when her labor pains begin. When she tells Herriot that it is time to go, he believes she intends to go to the doctor. Helen surprises him, however, by insisting they go home. He spends a restless night aware of Helen's pains. The next morning he is overly-anxious and is surprised by Helen's calm as they prepare to go to the hospital. As soon as he hears the baby has been born Herriot makes the mistake of going to the hospital too early. Although he is shocked at his daughter's bloated appearance, he manages to please the nurse by praising the baby's beauty. It is interesting to note that despite the veterinary procedures Herriot carries out on a daily basis, he believes he would have passed out had he been allowed to watch his own wife give birth to their baby.

In Chapter 18 Herriot finally has the opportunity to explore the Russian town of Klaipeda. He writes that he is especially interested in visiting a Russian school. Herriot has been elected chairperson of the parent-teacher association; the headmaster of the school has expressed an interest in the way school is taught in Russia. Herriot plans to use his time to collect information about this topic so he can tell others in his area what he has learned.

Once again, the captain of the ship offers to go with Herriot on his exploration. They find a school but since no one is around to ask permission to visit, Herriot goes right inside. The building is quiet, but Herriot opens doors and looks into rooms until he steps into what appeared to him to be a meeting of the teachers and administration. The man who is in charge of the meeting calls for soldiers to handle the intruders, but luckily for



Herriot, the captain knows some Russian and is able to explain what they are doing and why they are there.

The lady who teaches English at the school is finally called forward. Like Herriot, she is excited to learn what schools are like in another part of the world. Soon the other teachers and administrators are engrossed in the comparison of English and Russian schools. Although the experience turns out to be a positive one for both sides, it could have turned rather badly for Herriot had he been alone with no one to explain his reason for being there. The administrator could have easily had him put into jail, an action of which the people of Herriot's home town had warned him.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 19 Herriot introduces his readers to Mr. Biggins. Mr. Biggins has been a client of Herriot's for years and has the habit of calling the vet only as a last resort. He appears not to want to pay the vet to work on his animals and also does not seem to trust the vet's advice. The first experience with Mr. Biggins that Herriot writes about concerns a cow that has been so sick for so long that she is now laid out on her side. Although Herriot shares with his reader he knows there is no way to please Mr. Biggins, he responds to the call anyway. When he reaches the farm, the cow is indeed dying. He attempts to leave the farm, knowing that Mr. Biggins already has it in his mind that the cow's death is his fault. Mr. Biggins urges him to do something, so Herriot gives the cow an injection of stimulant. As Herriot assumes, the cow dies anyway.

After accusing Herriot of killing his cow, Mr. Biggins demands Herriot tell him what it really was that caused the cow to die. Herriot pulls his microscope from his car to test for anthrax and though the man wants to know why his cow died, he complains about the cost of the test. The farmer follows Herriot through the motions of carrying out his test, complaining and making snide comments at every move. Herriot finally determines the cow didn't die of anthrax, a diagnosis that brings another round of complaints from the man.

In a separate incident, however, Herriot seems to get even with Mr. Biggins. This victory is scored with the help of Herriot's partner Siegfried. This time Mr. Biggins has a cow with wooden tongue and wants iodine for the disease. Although Siegfried gives Mr. Biggins sulphanilamide tablets, the current cure, free of charge, Mr. Biggins refuses to use them. Instead he uses the iodine. In a spark of genius, Siegfried gives the cow an injection which he tells Mr. Biggins will kill the cow if he does not give her the sulphanilamide tablets also. In reality the injection is a harmless combination of vitamins. However, the vet's words scare Mr. Biggins into giving the cow the tablets and it is cured. Although it may seem this was a cruel way to deal with a client, it seems it was the only way for the vets to get Mr. Biggins to cooperate with them. Herriot notes that this was the only time he remembered ever getting Mr. Biggins' cooperation.

In Chapter 20 Herriot writes an account of two brothers who unwittingly begin to perform insurance fraud. Herriot witnesses the origins of this fraud as he carries out testing on the brothers' cows. An insurance salesman happens to drop in on the farm while Herriot is there. The salesman talks to the brothers about getting an insurance policy and lures them in with the amount of money they will be given if they have an accident while covered by the policy. The brothers decide the policy is a good idea. Although they had never had accidents before, they suddenly become very accident prone. Instead of using the money to hire extra help while they are healing from their "accidents" the brothers do the work themselves and pocket the insurance money.



Although the brothers can't seem to understand why the first insurance company drops their coverage, they go to another company. In time they report to Herriot that this company raises their rates and then seems leery of paying their many claims. In the conclusion of the chapter the brothers, who had claimed at first not to believe in insurance, assert that they have suddenly become strong believers in insurance.

It is hard to believe from reading Herriot's account of these two country brothers that they intended to defraud their insurance carriers. They seem to simply see their accidents as a money-making venture. Even after one insurance company drops their coverage and another raises their rates, they don't seem to realize they are doing anything wrong.

In Chapter 21 Herriot recounts his trip as the Iris Clausen makes its way back to England despite the gale force winds and high seas. Once again, Herriot is not seasick by the boat's violent rocking and tossing. Even some of the seasoned sailors are feeling the effects of the storm. Once again Herriot credits his seaworthiness to his bloodline which include several seafarers. During this time of rough seas Herriot finds nothing to do but lie in his bunk and read. Nielson, the ship's cook, keeps Herriot well fed during this time by bringing him a steady stream of delicacies from the kitchen.



Chapters 22-24

Chapters 22-24 Summary and Analysis

Herriot devotes Chapter 22 to tales about his young daughter. Not only does Herriot enjoy the little girl's singing and her help around the farms, he is thrilled that he is having the same experience with his daughter that he had earlier with his son. Although not many men would have the patience to take a small child with them to work day after day, Herriot seems to have a very patient spirit. He not only puts up with his children; he enjoys them.

Herriot goes on to explain that Rosie developed her interest in singing when he purchased a new radiogram. Although he intended this new machine to be for his use only, he soon learned Rosie had learned to operate the machine and enjoyed the music as much as he did. The afternoon he finds her playing records, he spends hours with her watching her change the disks carefully. She is able to tell him what song is on each record even though she is not yet able to read.

On one of his calls with Rosie, Herriot goes to visit a cow with an abscess. The cow is mean spirited, and Herriot has his young daughter stand at the end of a passageway in the barn, far away from the angry cow. Just as Herriot finishes his work, the cow pulls away from the farmer's restraint and runs down the passageway toward Rosie. Herriot hears the girl softly call the word "mama," then nothing else as the cow stares at her, then turns and goes the other direction.

While Herriot is relieved the girl was not hurt, the incident brings into focus some differences between his children. He wonders why Rosie was not afraid of the cow and why she called the word "mama" when that was not even the name she called her mother. In a similar experience, Jimmy had run screaming from a cow that he thought was chasing him. Like Jimmy, Rosie thoroughly enjoyed her time on the farms with her father. When time came for her to go to school, she worried aloud to him that he would be overworked without her to help him out. Although both children showed an interest in becoming veterinarians, Herriot admits that he discouraged Rosie from this career. He writes that he could not stand the idea of her having to deal with the kicks of large animals and the muck of the farms. Instead, Rosie chooses a career in human health care while Jimmy becomes a veterinarian.

Even as he thinks back over his decision to discourage Rosie from being a veterinarian, he thinks about the capable female assistants who now help him in his practice. Though Rosie seems to enjoy her job, he admits that he wonders if he made the correct choice in discouraging her from the field of veterinary medicine. By sharing these thoughts with his readers, Herriot shows his own ability to change his mind about a particular situation. He is not opinionated to the point he is unwilling to accept change when it comes.



In Chapter 23 Herriot writes about an amusing experience he had when he tried to talk about world events with a very unworldly farmer. The famous playwright, George Bernard Shaw, has broken his leg and the mishap is widely covered by the newspapers. About the same time, Herriot is called to treat a calf with a broken leg. Herriot is made uncomfortable by the farmer's lack of conversation, so he tries to strike up a conversation. He mentions that the calf breaking its leg is similar to Shaw breaking his leg. Unlike Herriot, the farmer is obviously not well read so he has no idea who Shaw is. In fact, he thinks the man must be someone who lives near Darrowby. Herriot tries to explain who Shaw is without much luck. He leaves the farm feeling as if the farmer believed Herriot was in some way close friends with this Shaw person and thought the farmer should know him also. Herriot is sure there was discussion of this conversation around the farmer's dinner table that night.

Herriot's journal of his trip to Russia continues in Chapter 24. The first thing Herriot mentions in this chapter is that the tablecloth in the mess hall has been wet with water. While Herriot at first believes someone has spilled something, he soon learns this procedure keeps the cloth from sliding about on the table as the boat tosses. Herriot writing about the tablecloth shows how much time Herriot spends eating in the mess hall while many of the other men aboard the ship are too sick to eat.

On the day of his wedding anniversary, the ship docks in Poland to pick up a load of pigs. Herriot asks permission to explore the land and receives this permission. The captain is not able to go with him, so he sets out alone. He enjoys his exploration and exercise and returns to the ship at the appointed time. When he is able to check on his new charges, Herriot is happy the pigs are peaceful and are not fighting each other, as pigs are in the habit of doing.

Herriot writes that the other men aboard the ship have been particularly kind to him on this particular day because it is his anniversary. There has even been a special meal of English foods prepared in his honor. This ship's captain offers to let Herriot telegram his wife but Herriot elects not to for fear it will cause her to worry. On November 6, the ship lands back in Darrowby and Herriot says a fond farewell to all his new friends. Of all the people he met, Herriot believes it will be the cook, Nielsen, who will miss him most because Herriot was such a big fan of Nielsen's cooking.



Chapters 25-27

Chapters 25-27 Summary and Analysis

Herriot begins Chapter 25 bemoaning the fact that he has been summoned to a call on Sunday evening. He is upset that the animal has been sick for more than a week, yet the owners wait until Sunday to call for the vet. He plans in his mind the speech he will give the owner about how a veterinarian likes to rest on Sunday evening also, and that they should have called during the week if the animal had been sick that long. As soon as he enters the home, however, Herriot loses much of his gusto and never makes his prepared speech. He learns the dog is the companion of bedridden Ron Cundall, a man who was injured working as a miner. The dog, a dachshund, is suffering with the beginnings of paralysis of his back legs. Although Herriot is afraid the situation may become permanent, he leaves the dog's owners some medicine.

On his next visit the little dog is no better so Herriot takes him back to the office to perform an x-ray on him. He sees signs of a disc protrusion in the dog's back, the ailment with which he had suspected the dog suffered. Herriot returns the dog to his home where the dog's condition continues to deteriorate. On one of his visits Herriot notices a strange odor in the house and discovers the dog's owners have been giving the dog what Herriot considers quack medicine. Though Herriot doubts the medicine will help the dog, he cannot bring himself to dash the owners' hopes. Almost miraculously, about a week later, the dog's reflexes begin to come back in his back paws and legs. In several weeks, the dog is walking normally again.

Although Herriot believes this "miraculous" healing of the dog was simply spontaneous recovery and not a miracle caused by the quack medicine, he never mentions this to the dog's owners. He has befriended the paralyzed man and his wife and cares more about their feelings than his does about his own pride. To show how willing he is to play along with the idea that it was indeed the quack medicine that cured their dog, he offers a toast at the end of the chapter to the man who suggested the dog's owners try the medicine.

In Chapter 26 Herriot writes of one of the newest advances in veterinary medicine, artificial insemination. Upon the assumption that country veterinarians would be called to do much work in this field, Herriot's clinic invested in an artificial vagina. This vagina could be used to collect semen from stud bulls. Herriot's first chance to try out this contraption comes when he is asked to test a farmer's bull for fertility. Herriot describes how the bull is led to an in-season cow. As the bull mounts the cow and prepares to do his business, Herriot tries to guide him into the artificial vagina instead of the cow. Herriot makes several attempts to collect a sample and on his third try, the bull retaliates against Herriot. In order to keep from being mauled by the bull, Herriot smacks the animal over the nose with the artificial vagina, which he still has in his hand. After beating the bull with the fake organ long enough, Herriot finally is able to get away from the animal.



After this experience, Herriot decides to call in a specialist to collect a semen sample. Unfortunately this specialist is Herriot's old friend Tristan who has a good laugh over Herriot's original attempt at semen collection. Tristan decides to show Herriot how the job should be completed. Unfortunately for Tristan, the farmer fills the artificial vagina with boiling water instead of warm water. Once he comes into contact with the heat, the bull pulls out of the artificial vagina without leaving a sample. Tristan corrects the temperature problem, and he and the bull try again. This time the bull falls and jerks the artificial vagina out of Tristan's hand. The farmer and Herriot watch in horror as the device soars across the barn, but then lands in a pile of straw. Tristan has successfully gotten his sample.

At the conclusion of this chapter, Herriot indicates that this experience is much like his friend. Although it was a difficult procedure with a difficult animal, Tristan manages to carry it out with grace. Herriot notes this grace is typical of his friend. This chapter highlights one of the medical advances of Herriot's time that is still carried out by modern veterinarians. The practice of artificial insemination has, as Herriot notes, made it possible for farmers and animal lovers alike to improve their stock or even raise purebred animals without having to buy a male animal or pay an expensive stud fee.

In Chapter 27 Herriot highlights animal lover Jack Scott. Scott is affectionate with even the most cantankerous animals. The most interesting aspect of his personality is that he believes in giving all his animals, even those which Herriot considers to be hopelessly injured or sick, a chance. The first example Herriot gives of this trait of Scott's is some lambs that are suffering with copper deficiency. This deficiency cannot be corrected and Herriot suggests the two lambs that are partially paralyzed be put to sleep. Scott rejects this suggestion and tells Herriot that if the animals aren't in pain, he will nurse them and give them a chance.

On one of Herriot's next visits Scott reports that his dog, Rip, appears to be injured. Herriot discovers the radial nerve is damaged, causing paralysis of the leg. Although Herriot believes Rip's nerve tissue might regenerate, it doesn't and he is left with a permanently bad leg. Later Rip breaks the back leg on the same side of his body as his paralyzed leg. Herriot and Siegfried set the break in a cast but the bone does not heal. After two attempts, the bone is still not healed. Herriot and Siegfried both tell Scott his dog will not be able to walk but the man decides to give the dog a chance. In a few weeks Herriot is back on Scott's farm and is surprised to see the dog running cattle just as he had always done, except he was doing it only on two legs.

Herriot is back on Scott's farm to see a calf that has been going around in circles. Herriot diagnoses the calf as suffering with listeriosis but tells Scott he may be able to save the calf. While the antibiotics he gives the calf bring down the temperature, the calf continues its circling. Herriot fears there has been irreparable brain damage and that the calf will never be normal. Scott, again, wants to give the calf a chance and chooses not to put it to sleep.

Slowly over the next two years the calf improves until there is only a small hint of her former disability remaining. The calf has a tendency to jerk its head and eyes to the right



in a kind of flirty, come hither motion. Scott enters the calf, which he has named Bramble, in a cow show. After the field of competitors has been narrowed to three cows, the judge carefully examines each animal. The judge drops his monocle in surprise as he studies Bramble. Although Herriot cannot see her, he suspects the cow has given the man her flirty jerk. After the judging is complete and Bramble has received the first place spot, the judge tells Scott his cow reminds him of someone he once knew.



Chapters 28-30

Chapters 28-30 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 28 is a collection of memories from various people and patients in Herriot's practice. The first story Herriot writes is of the Derrick's goat and the tomatoes. Mrs. Derrick calls Herriot because the goat has eaten all her husband's prize tomatoes. Once he arrives, Herriot feels as if he has been called in to referee a marital spat because the goat seems perfectly normal. Despite his uncomfortable position, Herriot writes that he can't help feeling some sense of admiration for goat who can still nibble cabbage even after eating nearly 300 tomatoes.

Herriot goes on to include a story of two brothers who fight and degrade each other constantly while he is on their farm. One belittles the other for naming the cows such ludicrous names when the other's names he has given the cows aren't much better. In another story Herriot leaves the farm of one man who is well schooled in animal husbandry. This farmer knows what disease his animal is suffering with and even gives Herriot suggestions on how to treat the disease. On the next farm, the unstudied farmer there simply tells Herriot he believes his cow needs a shot in the rear. Herriot includes this particular story as a way to demonstrate the differences that he finds intriguing in the people that he meets.

Johns Crooks sets Herriot up on another adventure in Chapter 29. This time he promises Herriot a leisurely voyage to Istanbul with some cows. When Herriot signs up for the trip, however, he learns he will be flying with the cows, not exactly what he had in mind. When Herriot arrives at the airfield to depart for his trip, he finds he will be traveling in a dilapidated, old plane. Although the plane is scheduled to depart at 8 pm with its forty head of cattle, it is nearly 11 pm before all the cows are loaded and the crew is ready for take-off. Herriot writes that he is surprised how calmly the cows take all the commotion of loading and flight.

Herriot wakes the next morning to a commotion in the cockpit of the plane. He looks out the window in the direction of the crew's anxious glances to find that there is oil spewing out of one of the engines. As he looks closer, Herriot discovers this engine is also on fire. The crew manages to put the flames out, but Herriot still breathes a sigh of relief when the plane reaches Istanbul. Herriot remarks in his book how different this trip has turned out from the trip that Crooks tells him he would be taking. While Crooks described a luxurious, leisurely journey, Herriot has been transported in a dangerous, old, and uncomfortable airplane.

In Chapter 30 Herriot writes about one of his son's piano recitals. He tells about the parents' raw nerves when their children failed to perform their best. Unfortunately, the worst performance is given by Jimmy, who cannot get past a certain point in his recital piece. Jimmy's piano teacher, Mrs. Livingston, gives Jimmy a second chance to play his piece at the end of the recital. Although his father almost passes out, Jimmy plays his



piece successfully. The irony Herriot includes at the end of the story is that although his nerves are shot, his son comments that he enjoys music because it is soothing. Almost anyone who has ever attended a children's piano recital, dance recital, speech contest, or any other forum where children must perform in front of an audience have probably felt the same emotions Herriot writes about in this particular chapter. This ability to connect with his reader is one of Herriot's endearing qualities as a writer.



Chapters 31-33

Chapters 31-33 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 31 Herriot depicts the love that even a crotchety person can feel for an animal. Herriot is surprised when scrap metal dealer Walt Barnett calls him to see about a cat with a cut on its leg. Herriot tends to the wound, but Barnett calls him back a few days later when the cut is no better. When Herriot examines the leg more closely, he discovers there is a rubber band wrapped around the cat's leg. He removes it, and suggests to Barnett someone must have put it there on purpose. A few weeks later Barnett calls Herriot back to look at his cat. This time Herriot finds a rubber band has been placed around the cat's neck.

About a year later Herriot is called to treat the cat again. This time Barnett believes his animal has been poisoned. It turns out, however, the cat is suffering with distemper. Although Herriot does what he can for the cat, it dies from its disease. As Herriot tells Barnett the cat has died, Barnett begins to cry. Although Barnett seems to think this show of emotion for the cat will lower Herriot's opinion of him Herriot writes that he actually thinks more of the man after this experience.

Herriot makes several important points in this chapter. First he states that animal cruelty is widespread and senseless. Second, he shows how even a seemingly heartless man can grow to love an animal. Third, Herriot depicts how his opinion of a person can change when he discovers that this person does care deeply for something, even if it is just a stray cat.

In Chapter 32 Herriot's Istanbul experience continues. He believes that once he lands in Istanbul, his real adventure will begin. He plans to explore the town. He is also looking forward to the first rate accommodations that Crooks described to him. Unfortunately when the now-disabled plane lands, there are no wagons into which to unload the cattle. When the wagons do arrive an hour late, they begin to unload the cattle only to find that the hoist is jammed. An electrician is called in to fix the hoist. Nearly four hours after landing the hoist is finally working and they are able to unload the cows.

After the cows are safely unloaded, there is a disagreement about one of the cow's tag numbers. While there is a cow tagged number 15 in the lot, there is not tag number 15 included in the buyer's paperwork. While the buyers insist that Herriot have this offending cow taken back, Herriot tries to explain to them this is impossible. One of the cow handlers that made the trip with Herriot takes over with the buyers and simply and calmly tells them that the cow won't be taken back. The buyers are resigned and finally leave with their cows. It is now 5 pm.

Even as the men look forward to their hotel rooms and rest, Captain Birch, the pilot of the plane, confronts them with even more bad news. There is no one at that airport who can fix the damaged engine on the plane. The plane must be flown to Copenhagen for



repairs but because the aircraft is considered unsafe, they can take no passengers with them. The captain also tells the men he has been unable to find a hotel for them; however, there is a minibus waiting to take them to find a small hotel that will put them up. There is no phone at the hotel so Herriot must go to the post office to use the phone. The lady at the post office explains there is an hour wait for the phone; she will send a taxi when it is free. Herriot goes back to his hotel and is about to eat when his taxi arrives to take him to the phone. Once he gets to the post office, however, he finds that the person on the other end of the phone cannot hear him. He is left to find plane reservations on his own. For the remainder of this chapter Herriot continues with his description of his ill-fated time in Istanbul. He and his friends wander the streets looking for a pub and finally wind up crashing a wedding reception. The hotel is also noisy with sounds of a party until late in the night and the men are unable to sleep.

In Chapter 33 Herriot changes gears and writes about the new trend in cattle farming where farmers have their bull's horns removed. Although Herriot is in favor of this change, he finds the actual removal of the horns gruesome. As an added bonus, an old friend of Herriot's rides along with him on a call to dehorn some bulls. The friend begins the day by claiming to be jealous of Herriot's job, his freedom and his ability to be outside in his job. By the end of the day, however, Herriot is covered in blood from dehorning bulls and has had to deal with several very cantankerous animals. As the friend watches the drama being played out from a safe distance he admits that he really does like his own job. Herriot uses the chapter not only as a way to introduce to his reader the practice of dehorning bulls, a new veterinary practice, but he also develops his partner's personality. As Siegfried tests hedge clippers to see if they will work to cut off horns, he shows his desire to fully test a product before he buys it. Herriot describes how bamboo sticks fly like shrapnel as Siegfried tries out the clippers.



Chapters 34-36

Chapters 34-36 Summary and Analysis

Herriot introduces his readers to Brandy, the Labrador Retriever, in Chapter 34. Brandy is a dog who is full of life. Brandy is well-known by his veterinarian for getting his nose stuck in empty food cans his family has discarded in the garbage. Herriot finds Brandy's personality and temperament make him an interesting and amusing creature to watch. Unfortunately Brandy becomes ill with pneumonia, a disease from which he almost doesn't recover. Even after the pneumonia gets better, Brandy is a different dog from the playful animal he was before his sickness. As the weeks go by and Brandy does not improve, Herriot tries to put the animal out of his mind.

One afternoon when he has gotten surprisingly few hours of rest, Herriot is shocked to see a lively Brandy come running into his office. Herriot has just finished examining a poodle that walked on its hind legs like a person so he is already feeling a bit shook up from that experience. When Brandy runs in, Herriot is sure he is hallucinating. Brandy's owner assures Herriot that he is not seeing things and that Brandy has really gotten better over the course of time. In the course of time the natural healing process has taken over and Brandy is now his lively self again.

Chapter 35 is the final journal entry Herriot includes in his book. He wakes after little sleep in the hotel and decides to try to buy airplane tickets home for himself and his two friends using a personal check. Unfortunately the airline will not take personal checks. While Captain Birch suggests Herriot go to the British Consul, Herriot is afraid the consul will not be able to do anything and when he returns, the Heracles will be gone and he will be stuck in Istanbul. In a moment of desperation Herriot and his friends decide to sign waivers and fly on the unsafe aircraft.

Although the flight is an anxious one for Herriot and his friends, Herriot finds himself enjoying the scenery from the air immensely. There is a large panel on the plane that has been left open so the air can circulate. Since the plane is flying so low because of the bad engine, Herriot is able to sit by this opening and look out over the landscape going by beneath him. Even with the scenery to keep him occupied, Herriot still breathes a sigh of relief when the plane lands safely in Copenhagen.

Several months after his trip, Herriot learns through rumor that the Heracles crashed into the Mediterranean Sea. Although he was never able to get a factual account of the crash, he also heard that all the plane's crew was killed. Although he is fairly certain the news was probably correct, Herriot writes that he chooses to cling to the hope that the rumor was not right.

In Chapter 36 Herriot recalls two terrible little West Highland Whites with whom he had to deal. When speaking to his partner one day about the dogs' bad behavior, Siegfried tells Herriot it is the way the dogs are pampered that makes them so mean. Their



owners will not allow them to be taken to the veterinarian's office and will also not allow Herriot to muzzle the dogs to keep them from biting. Herriot wonders that these dogs are so feisty even in their advanced age. They try to bite and claw the vet at every opportunity.

After these two Whites die, their masters replace them with another pair of puppies and the cycle starts all over again. When Herriot first sees the puppies, they are friendly. At the next visit a year later, however, he is met by a series of growls and teeth showing. This time, however, when Herriot asks the owner to hold one of the dogs, the dog bites the owner. The owner's reaction is so violent that Herriot states at the end of the chapter that he believes things might finally change with these two dogs.



Chapters 37-38

Chapters 37-38 Summary and Analysis

In Chapter 37 Herriot tells the story of Lionel Brough. Lionel is a traditional English farmer with a hodgepodge of animals he keeps in a makeshift pen made of all sorts of materials. From this start, Lionel decides he wants to become a full-time pig farmer. He spends the money he has and builds a fine piggery. Unfortunately Lionel's first batch of pigs is struck with swine fever and many die. Those that don't die must be sold at a reduced rate before they are at their prime. Despite this bad luck, Lionel decides to try again a few months later after his piggery had been cleaned and disinfected.

During his second attempt at pig farming, the pipes to the piggery are damaged and the pigs go without water for a short amount of time. When Herriot is called to look at the ailing animals he decides they have salt poisoning caused by the lack of water. Once the pigs get some water in them, they begin to recover quickly. Although there is no financial loss this time, Lionel decides after this second scare that he is done with pigs. He rents out his piggery and returns to small time farming.

Throughout this story, Herriot comments on Lionel's emotional state. While he had only a small bunch of assorted animals, Herriot noticed the man enjoyed his livestock. When he began to run the piggery, however, Lionel began to be more and more stressed about the welfare of his pigs and his financial responsibility. When Lionel returns to his lifestyle as a small time farmer, Herriot notes that once again, the man is happy with his life.

In Chapter 38, the concluding chapter, Herriot recalls a discussion he has with Siegfried, his friend and partner. The two remember Herriot's first day to visit Skeldale House when he applied for the veterinary job. Although it doesn't seem like much time has passed since then, much has happened. Siegfried comments to his partner that right now they are enjoying the best times of their lives. They are watching as their families grow up around them, and they are also seeing great advances in their professions. Although Siegfried describes this as the "best" time of their lives, he comforts his friend with the idea there are still good times ahead.



Characters

Herriot

James Herriot is the narrator of the novel *The Lord God Made Them All*. The novel is a collection of memories and experiences from his years as a country veterinarian in the English town of Darrowby and the nearby Yorkshire Dales. The most striking aspect of Herriot's character is his love for his job as well as the humor he finds in his work experiences and the people he meets while on the job. Even situations that could be deemed disastrous or embarrassing become hilarious when viewed through Herriot's point of view. As a writer, Herriot also has the ability to capture the personality of a character, whether person or animal, in just a short amount of time. Herriot also provides beautiful descriptions of his beloved Yorkshire Dales as well as the landscape of Russia and Istanbul.

As a person, Herriot depicts himself as one who is willing to learn from his own mistakes. For instance, in the chapter where he first attempts to take a semen sample from a bull, Herriot tells his friend Tristan his attempted procedure even though his procedure was completely incorrect. Had he saved himself the embarrassment and not told Tristan exactly how he got himself into the mess he did, Tristan could never have told Herriot what he should have done differently. Herriot also acknowledges and tries to learn from the positive characteristics he sees in other people. For instance, when Robert Maxwell could have blamed Herriot for the death of his cow but instead chooses not to mention this detail, Herriot decides to follow this man's lead and try not to be quick to point out others' faults. Although Walt Barnet is not well liked by anyone Herriot recognizes the love that must exist in the heart of a man who can love a stray cat. It is Barnet's tears caused by the death of his cat that cause Herriot to respect the otherwise hateful man.

As a veterinarian, Herriot has a true love for both his patients and their owner. When he is unable to cure an animal, whether it is a farm animal or a pet, Herriot is deeply disturbed and shares in the sorrow of the animal's owner. For example, when the vivacious Labrador, Brandy, is sickened with pneumonia and is not able to recover, Herriot finds it difficult to deal with the idea the young dog has had the life taken out of him. When the dog does recover his vitality over time, Herriot rejoices with Brandy's owner that her pet has returned to normal.

As a family man, Herriot is proud of his growing family. At the beginning of the book, Herriot and his wife Helen have a young son, Jimmy. During the time frame of the book they add a daughter, Rosie, to the family. Both children join their father on his veterinary rounds and help him with his calls. Probably as a result of their experiences with their father both children pursue careers in the medical field as adults. Jimmy becomes a veterinarian while Rosie becomes a medical doctor. At the conclusion of this book Herriot rejoices with his partner Siegfried that he is now enjoying the best time of his life. Herriot loves his family, his job and his life, and this love flows through his writing.



Helen

Helen is Herriot's wife. She is also Jimmy and Rosie's mother. Although Helen does not play a substantial role in this novel, she is featured in Chapter 17. It is in this chapter that Herriot writes about the birth of his daughter. While Herriot runs around in a panic, Helen acts in a very calm and patient manner as the birth of her second child approaches. Throughout the remainder of the book, Herriot mentions Helen in ways that show how important she is to him. For instance, when treating Amber, the dog suffering with mange, Herriot does not let Helen know he has the dog at their home because he knows she will become emotionally attached to the dog. Also, when Helen and Herriot's wedding anniversary occurs while he is on the voyage to Russia, Herriot chooses not to telegraph her for fear it will alarm her. Another example of Helen's love for her family is found in the section where the couple's young son Jimmy decides he wants boots like he sees the farmers wearing. Although Herriot believes they don't exist, Helen manages to find a pair of these work boots in Jimmy's size. Helen also helps her husband in his practice by answering the telephone and taking messages for her husband.

Jimmy

Jimmy is Herriot and Helen's son. He grows up to be a veterinarian like his father. As a young child Jimmy particularly enjoys helping his father on his farm rounds. One of his obsessions during this period is the hobnailed boot the farmers wear. Luckily Helen is able to find her son his own pair of diminutive boots. They are Jimmy's most prized possession. Jimmy is a prankster and enjoys being overly dramatic. This tendency to dramatize is seen both during his piano recital and his reaction to shots as described by his father.

Rosie

Although she is given the proper name of Rosemary, Herriot's daughter's name is soon shortened to Rosie. Like her brother, Rosie enjoys accompanying her father on his veterinary rounds. When she prepares to start school she worries that Herriot will be overworked because there will be no one to open gates or fetch his instruments. Rosie shares her father's love of music and sings for him often while they are traveling in the car. Although Herriot had hoped his children would not play with the new radiogram he bought himself, he soon discovers he cannot keep Rosie away from it. She enjoys listening to music on it as much as he does. Rosie's father discourages her from becoming a veterinarian. She instead pursues a career in human medicine.

Siegfried

Siegfried is Herriot's partner in his veterinary practice. Siegfried and Tristan are brothers. Before they were married all three men lived together in the Skeldale House, where Herriot's veterinary practice is located. Siegfried is most well-noted in this novel



for his tendency to give items a good test for their worthiness before he buys them. The first example of this tendency comes when Siegfried test drives a car that he hopes to keep as a spare car for the veterinary practice. By the end of the test drive even the man who owns the car is a nervous wreck. Siegfried, however, stays calm and complains only that the car pulls a little to the right when braking. Since the car actually hurtled to the right when Siegfried braked, this is an understatement. Siegfried also carefully tries out the hedge clippers he hopes to use to dehorn small calves. Both the shop owner and a customer are forced to take cover from the barrage of bamboo pieces flying about from Siegfried's clipping trial.

Tristan

Tristan is the brother to Siegfried, Herriot's business partner, and a good friend to Herriot. Like his brother Tristan has the personality trait of never getting ruffled or excited, no matter what the situation is. This is displayed when Tristan is called to take a semen sample from a bull. The bull is uncooperative and the sample taking does not go as planned, but Tristan handles the situation calmly and in the end successfully collects his sample even though it appeared that he, like Herriot, would have no luck with the bull.

Norman Beaumont

Beaumont is one of Herriot's veterinary students who introduces Herriot to the idea of performing a Caesarian section on a cow. Although Beaumont talks as if he has seen many of these operations and perhaps even assisted in a few, it soon becomes obvious he doesn't know as much as he said he does. Although the two feel they have messed up the operation totally and the cow will surely die, she goes on to not only survive but give birth to other calves normally. Like Herriot, Beaumont has a love of literature and the two discuss books often.

Robert Maxwell

When Herriot treats one of Maxwell's cows with an injection for foul of the foot, the cow develops an embolism in its neck and dies. Though Herriot feels as if the farmer should hold this accidental death against him, Maxwell never says another word about it and continues to call Herriot to care for his animals. After observing Maxwell's behavior, Herriot decides to try to be more like this man and not pass blame or hold grudges against people whose offenses were unintentional.

John Crooks

John Crooks is the former veterinary student who sets Herriot up on his Russia and Istanbul trips. While Crooks describes the trips, especially the one to Istanbul, as being relaxing, leisurely trips, Herriot finds them to be anything but relaxing and leisurely.



During his Russia trip, his ship sails in gale force winds while he is almost arrested in Russia. Herriot's trip to Istanbul takes place in a dilapidated plane that is deemed unsafe once they reach the airport in Istanbul. Herriot literally takes his life in his own hands when he decides to sign a waiver and ride back in the damaged aircraft despite the danger.

Miss Grantley

Miss Grantley is the beautiful, single woman who keeps goats. On a regular basis, she sends stool samples in to Herriot's office to be checked. The veterinarian upon whom her favor rests will be the one whose name appears on this package of droppings.

Rasmussen

Rasmussen is the captain of the Iris Clausewitz. Although he sometimes seems irritated at Herriot, he agrees to accompany him on his tour of the city of Klaipeda in Russia. Herriot is lucky this man goes along with him since the captain's knowledge of the Russian language keeps them both from being arrested when Herriot enters a Russian school without permission.

Josh Anderson

Anderson is the local barber who often gives free, but bad haircuts when he is drunk. He claims he can read people's thoughts by feeling their hair. Herriot treats Anderson's dog, Venus, for a bone stuck in her mouth. The dog stops breathing while under the effect of the anesthesia and Herriot is forced to take unusual measures to restore the dog's breathing.

Captain Birch

Captain Birch is the gruff but capable pilot of the plane that takes Herriot and the Jersey cows to Istanbul. Herriot is impressed that Birch is able to land the plane safely after losing an engine on the way to Istanbul. He believes in Birch's piloting skills so much that he rides in the plane over the Alps even though there is a chance the plane may not make the trip safely. Herriot later hears through rumor that Birch's plane crashed and all the crew killed.

George Bernard Shaw

Shaw is the writer who breaks his leg at about the same time that one of Herriot's farmer's cows breaks its leg. Herriot tries, without success, to strike up a conversation with the farmer about the similar situations.

Sir Alexander Fleming

Sir Alexander Fleming is the man who discovered penicillin. It is this discovery that revolutionized the practice of veterinary medicine and made many once-fatal illnesses curable. As a result of penicillin, however, many older veterinarians also had to adapt to new treatments and leave their old treatments behind.



Objects/Places

R.A.F.

The Royal Armed Forces is the branch of the military Herriot has just finished a stint with when he writes this novel.

Yorkshire Dales

The Yorkshire Dales is the area in England where most of Herriot's patients live.

Skeldale House

Skeldale House is the house where Herriot, his wife and young son live. It is also the location of the veterinary practice where Herriot works.

The Dispensary

The dispensary is the location in Herriot's veterinary offices where the medicines are compounded and mixed.

A 1933 Morris Oxford

Siegfried test drives this car with the idea of getting a spare car for the practice. After his thorough test drive, however, the car is found unacceptable.

Iris Clausen

The Iris Clausen is the ship upon which Herriot sails when he goes to Russia as the veterinary assistant for a herd of sheep.

Kiel Canal

The Kiel Canal is a canal through which the Iris Clausen passes on its way to Russia.

An injection of M & B 693

This injection is promised to cure foul of the foot in cattle. Although it does cure the disease, it is also capable of causing embolisms, one of which killed Robert Maxwell's cow.



Predsolan

Predsolan is a steroid injection that Herriot gives the sheep on board the Iris Clausen when they show signs of stress during the storm at sea.

Russian Port of Klaipeda

It is at the port of Klaipeda where the Iris Clausen lands and unloads her herd of sheep.

Odylen

Odylen is the cream that Herriot gives Sister Rose to put on Amber's mange.

The Murphy Radiogram

This radiogram is a record player that Herriot buys. He unsuccessfully has the intention of keeping his children away from the expensive machine.

Iron Curtain

The iron curtain is a description used to describe the line of division in the European countries after the conclusion of World War II. If one was behind the iron curtain, this generally meant they were in Russia, or another eastern European Communist country.

Asafoetida

Asafoetida is a quack medicine that Ron Cundall believes has cured his dog.

Istanbul

Istanbul is the country to which Herriot accompanies the forty Jersey cows.

Heracles

The Heracles is the dilapidated Globemaster airplane that takes Herriot and the Jersey cows to Istanbul.



Themes

Change

One of the major themes of Herriot's writing is the change that has come about in veterinary medicine since he became a doctor and the improvements these changes have made in animal care. One of the most important changes in veterinary medicine is the discovery of penicillin. This discovery allowed veterinarians to successfully treat diseases that had once been considered incurable. Veterinarians are also now able to perform Caesarian sections on cows, much like on people, instead of having to deal with trying to birth a too large or breach cow naturally. Although Herriot feels he had made a mess of the first Caesarian he attempts, he learns this type of surgery can be a valuable asset.

Artificial insemination is a major development in the veterinary field that not only allows the doctors to branch out into new specialties, but also benefits the farmers as well. Artificial insemination allows these farmers to breed their cows with high quality bulls without spending the money to buy these expensive animals. This type of procedure also gives farmers the ability to integrate a variety of different bloodlines into their stock, an option that was not necessarily available to them with traditional breeding.

Along with the benefits of change come some drawbacks. Herriot discovers one of these drawbacks when a cow he has injected with a new medicine for foul of the foot causes an embolism and the cow dies. The new procedure of dehorning bulls is another trend in veterinary medicine that has its positive aspects as well as negative ones. While Herriot is glad he doesn't have to deal with horns anymore, he does not enjoy the often gruesome way these horns must be removed.

Travels

One theme in Herriot's journal entries is the idea of travel. Fellow veterinarian John Crooks talks Herriot into signing up for two voyages to foreign countries as the veterinarian in charge of a load of livestock. While the first voyage is relatively smooth, the second is not. As luck would have it, it is not the animals that give Herriot the problems, it is machinery and forces of nature. During his sea voyage the ship carrying Herriot and his charges is pummeled by gale force winds. The ship tosses so badly on the return trip the Herriot finds it nearly impossible to walk about the boat. On his second trip, which is a voyage by plane, the airplane is markedly aged. The wheel mechanisms don't retract properly; the hoist to lift the cows into the plane breaks and must be fixed, and one of the engines catches on fire enroute to their destination. At the airport in Istanbul the plane is deemed unsafe and Herriot is almost abandoned in this strange country with no way home.



Although Herriot could have considered each of these trips a disaster, he instead adopts a positive outlook and shares the good points of each voyage. While on shore in Russia, Herriot has the opportunity to discuss with a group of Russian school teachers and administrators the differences in Russian and English schools. Although he doesn't get the time he hoped he would to spend exploring Istanbul, he thoroughly enjoys what time he does get. In fact, he and his friends accidentally crash a wedding reception while looking for a restaurant that serves beer. Although it is obvious they were not on the guest list, they are greeted warmly by the bride and groom, and given a token from the bride as a keepsake.

Miracles

Herriot includes many stories in the novel where in miraculous ways, animals either get better without his assistance, or learn to deal with some ailment that might otherwise be disabling. Herriot chooses not to portray himself as the perfect doctor who is able to rush in and pull an animal from the brink of death. He instead seems to have the opinion of himself as being a fumbling, imperfect doctor who, with the help of modern medicine, is able to do the best he can for his patients. It is his loving heart that one sees most when Herriot cares for the animals.

Perhaps the chapter that most strongly explores these "miracles," is the one where Herriot writes about Jack Scott. Scott is one who often tells Herriot that he likes to give animals a chance to heal themselves, as long as they are not suffering. As a result of his patience, Scott's now two-legged dog is still able to round up cows, and Scott's calf with circling disease winds up winning first place in a cow show. Another example of an animal that got better all by itself without medical help is the dachshund, Hermann. Although completely paralyzed in his back legs, Hermann spontaneously regains the use of these limbs. Finally, the dog Brandy is another animal that overcame a series illness to become a lively dog again. This is worth mentioning because even after Brandy recovered from his pneumonia, he still acted like an old, worn out dog. Given time, however, his old vitality returned.



Style

Perspective

Herriot is a veterinarian who works in the English town of Darrowby and the nearby Yorkshire Dales. This novel is a collection of experiences he has had while working with the animals and people of the English countryside. He writes as a way to share his experiences and his positive outlook on life with his readers.

This book is one that is broad enough that it could appeal to nearly any audience. Perhaps those most interested in the book would be those wishing to enter the field of veterinary medicine or animal lovers in general. There are few people who could read this novel and not find some aspect of it that applies to their life or the lives of those around them. Herriot's humorous tone in which he tells his stories make them an enjoyable read for anyone who recognizes the ironies of life and complicated behavior of those around us.

Herriot's main intention for writing the book may simply be to share with others how satisfied he is with his life. He has a loving, growing family that adds joy and variety to his life. He enjoys his job. He obviously loves the animals and even cares for their owners not matter how crotchety or disagreeable they may be. Through his novel Herriot shares with his readers that he is, indeed, enjoying the best days of his life.

Tone

Herriot is very subjective in his writing. He shares with his readers what he is feeling about each situation he faces whether it brings him happiness, sadness, fear or embarrassment. Although there are places in the book that deal with the death of an animal or Herriot blaming himself for the death of an animal, the material never becomes depressing or negative. Even through his biggest trials and hardest times, Herriot manages to keep a positive outlook and share the good of each situation. For example, in the story where Robert Maxwell's cow dies after receiving a shot to cure foul of the foot, Herriot decides that instead of being down on himself, he will try to adopt Maxwell's attitude of not condemning others.

The material in this book leaves the reader with a fresh outlook on their lives and the behaviors of others. Herriot teaches that even the most gruff people, such as Walt Barnett, can have love in their hearts. Herriot also reminds us that there are some professionals who care about the patients with whom they work. For example, Herriot takes the time away from his Sunday evening at home to drink a beer with a paralyzed man. Just a few moments before Herriot had been raving to himself that he'd even been called out on a Sunday. When he realizes the situation, however, Herriot's feelings about the couple who had called him out on such short notice changed. At the end of



the story, he is even able to celebrate with the couple who believes it was a quack medicine that cures their dog.

Structure

Herriot arranges his novel into 37 different chapters. Most of these chapters tells a story about a particular experience, animal or client. The exception to this is the backbone story of the book that consists of Herriot's trip to Russia and his trip to Istanbul. During each of these trips Herriot kept a journal in which he detailed the experiences of his trips.

He inserts journal entries sporadically into the novel. The journal entries are sequential but not consecutive. For instance, the reader may read one journal entry, have two or three chapters on a different topic, then read another chapter that is a journal entry. This continues throughout the novel.

The positive idea of this structure is that it allows Herriot to include his journal entries, which wouldn't be quite enough to fill a book by themselves, in his work. The sporadic entries also lend some variety to the book. For instance, a section just containing the journal entries then another with the rest of his stories might have seemed disjointed. In the manner in which he presents his work, Herriot uses the journal entries as a backbone for his other stories. Possibly the only negative feature of this format might be that some might find it a little confusing. Although Herriot presents his entries in a clear manner, some might find it confusing to suddenly come upon a journal entry if they don't remember what the journal is detailing.



Quotes

"We were old foes, this gate and I, and we faced each other for some moments in the silence. We had fought several brisk rounds in the past and there was no doubt the gate was ahead on points." Chapter 1, pg. 2

"Most of the time Humphrey was a normal conscientious pet owner, but after a large intake of alcohol his affectionate feelings degenerated into glutinous sentimentality and guilt. I invariably went out when he called me because I knew that he would be deeply distressed if I refused. I was treating Humphrey, not Myrtle." Chapter 2, pg 22

"I leaned back against the car and the wind blew the cold sweet air around me. I had been back in civilian life only a few weeks, and during my time in the R.A.F. blue I had thought constantly of Yorkshire, but I had forgotten how beautiful it was." Chapter 3, pg. 27

"Suddenly I began to feel good. So many things were new and different, but the Dales hadn't changed, and Siegfried hadn't changed either." Chapter 3, pg. 33

"This was my first experience of injecting an antibiotic, and even though the method was bizarre, I learned something from it. But I learned more on that farm about the way to live than I did about veterinary science. Over the following thirty years I knew him, the farmer never alluded to that disaster which he could so easily have laid at my door." Chapter 10, pg. 91

"In those days it was unheard of for the husband to be present at the birth, and though it is now the in thing to observe it all, I marvel at the fortitude of these young men. I know beyond all doubt that Herriot would be carried away unconscious during some time during the proceedings." Chapter 17, pg. 154

"It is interesting to note that the only time I felt strange was when I struggled up to the deck for some fresh air and stood for some time looking out on the crazily swinging sea. After a while, as I hung onto the rail, I began to experience a sort of dizziness. It was a visual thing, brought on somehow by watching the constant lifting and falling of the world about me, but it wasn't pleasant and I went back to my cabin." Chapter 21, pg 200

"At best, they could only regard me as an amiable fathead, and all the explanations and protestations in the world would not alter that. But though my ego had been bruised, I did not really care. I was witnessing a happy ending instead of a tragedy, and that was more important than self-justification. I made a mental resolve never to say anything that might spoil their picture of this triumph." Chapter 25, pg. 234

"I have often wondered since that day if I am the only veterinary surgeon to have used an artificial vagina as a defense weapon." Chapter 26, pg 238



"So, by and large, the disappearance of the dangerous and largely useless appendages was a great blessing but, oh dear, there was one tremendous snag. The horns didn't go away by themselves. They had to be removed by vets, and that removal wrote a gory and ham-fisted chapter in veterinary history that still hangs like a dark cloud in my memory." Chapter 33, pg. 311

"My words brought home to me the fundamental sadness of a country vet's work - that so many of our patients are ultimately destined for the butcher's hook, and no matter how attractive farm animals may be, all our activities have a commercial foundation." Chapter 37, pg. 360

"Look at all the new advances since the war - drugs and procedures we never dreamed of. We can look after our animals in a way that would have been impossible a few years ago, and the farmers realize this. You've seen them crowding into the surgery on market day to ask advice - they've gained a new respect for the profession and they know it pays to call in the vet now." Chapter 38, pg. 372



Topics for Discussion

Consider Herriot's voyage to Russia. Research the political tone and situation of Russia immediately following World War II. Why was this trip considered to be such a dangerous trip at the time that Herriot went?

Discuss the way Herriot presents himself in his writing. What does he convey about his personality, work ability, etc.?

Discuss the way Herriot presents the people whom he meets in his writing. Is he judgmental of them? Does he paint a fair portrait of their actions and personalities? Do you believe any of his characters would be offended by the way he presents them in his stories? Defend your answer.

Do you approve of Herriot's decision to discourage his daughter from becoming a veterinarian? Why or why not?

Consider the scene where Herriot is trying to remove a thorn from a dog's paw when his son climbs up the wisteria outside his office window. Would you have handled this situation differently? Overall, what is your opinion of Herriot's involving his children in his veterinary practice?

Consider the Hudson brothers and their accident insurance policy. Do you believe these brothers' accidents were staged or real? Do you think they knew they were doing anything wrong by cashing in on their policy so often? Give reasons for your answers.

Consider the idea that the time of his life that Herriot writes about in his book is the best time of his life. Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

Identify at least two advances made in veterinary medicine that Herriot mentions in his book. Examples include the discovery of penicillin, etc. How did these advances make Herriot's job easier? In what ways, if any, did they make it more difficult?