

Synopsis for 'The Fundraisers' **by Mark Allen**

Logline:

'Tripod' is a charity dedicated to providing prosthetic limbs for three-legged animals. Despite the noble cause, their fundraising abilities are hampered by a stunningly apathetic Managing Director, an incompetent new volunteer and petty in-fighting between the veteran recruits. Will they ever reach the grand total needed to fund a new limb for a three-legged elephant?

Series Outline:

Leonard Moss has decided to set up Tripod - a charity that attempts to raise money to provide prosthetic limbs to three-legged animals. Tripod has been running for nearly two years and has raised a total of £147.14, which almost covers the cost of a replacement limb for, say, an otter or a cheap monkey.

Leonard isn't entirely selfless however, as his main motivation for the success of Tripod lies in his desire to raise more money than his successful brother, Glen, who has just set up his own charity for stressed cats. Fortunately, Leonard has managed to recruit several people to help him with his bid to outdo his brother.

His "team" hold regular meetings to discuss fundraising ideas, which usually end up with bickering between the two factions. On the one side, are Jack and Dorothy are a retired couple who have been with Tripod the longest. They are very much part of the old school of charity fundraising and their car boot sales, community discos and charity open days never manage to fulfil their wild expectations. In fact they often end up costing the company more money than they manage to raise.

Suzy and Niall believe in more radical measures to raise awareness for their cause and see themselves as revolutionaries. Rather than trying to raise a few pounds through local charity events, Suzy, with Niall following blindly as a result of his infatuation with her, set Tripod's sights higher. They go to extraordinary lengths in order to raise awareness of the plight of three-legged animals. Unfortunately, their ambitious attempts to raise the profile of the charity through bizarre publicity stunts and efforts to enlist celebrity endorsement of Tripod are always met with apathy, ridicule or criminal prosecution.

After allowing the in-fighting to go on, mostly out of a sense of amusement, Leonard eventually attempts to unite the volunteers, as he is failing in his attempts to outdo his brother's charity. With everyone pulling in the same direction, they should be able to achieve some success, but when even that fails, Leonard decides to use the sabotage skills of Suzy (and Niall by default).

For once, Suzy and Niall succeed in their mission, but only when the dust has settled do they realise that Leonard used them to destroy his brother's charity once and for all, in order win his personal battle. After this, the previously warring volunteers finally call a truce and conspire to bring about Leonard's comeuppance.

Character Breakdown

Leonard Moss is in his early fifties. He inherited half of his father's fortune and set up Tripod not to give something back to the community, but to get one over on his brother, Glen, who set up a charity previously. Leonard is a bafflingly hate-filled man and, although he generally tries gets on well with the volunteers, he sits on the fence too much to be particularly liked by any of them.

Jack Wassall is a pensioner, who still has plenty of life left in him. He distrusts anyone younger than 55 and is incredibly competitive, often trying to prove himself against "youth", by challenging them to an arm-wrestle, a drinking competition, or by firing trivia questions at them. He sees his method of fundraising as another way to prove the superiority of his experience.

Dorothy Wassall is Jack's wife, who used to work alongside her husband. She is used to Jack by now and knows how to shut him up with short, sharp, verbal attacks. She gets on well with everyone and tries to mother them all, often bringing in cakes, but she's a lot more devious than anyone (including Jack) realises.

Suzy Brindley is in her late-twenties and is a staunch vegan. She sees herself as a revolutionary and is willing to sacrifice anything for the cause. She uses her femininity to achieve what she wants, but will never be "owned" by any man, least of all Niall, who makes his infatuation with her obvious. Suzy believes that her way is the only way.

Niall Grayson is in his mid-twenties and was delighted to be offered a position as a volunteer at Tripod. He was less delighted when he realised that volunteers are unpaid, but still works there because he thinks it will get him closer to Suzy. Although he isn't very bright, Niall is hard-working and genuinely wants to do well for Tripod, though nothing he ever does turns out as he expects.

Glen Moss is in his early forties and is Leonard's younger brother, who has also set up a charity. He is a very amiable man, who often pops into the Tripod offices to say hello to his brother and the other volunteers. He is well liked by everyone in the office, something which always irks Leonard and intensifies the rivalry between the two charities (of which Glen is entirely unaware).