

4

The Rattrap

Fastrack Revision

Main Points

- ▶ **The tramp/peddler**
 - Sells rattraps—takes to begging and petty thievery
 - The idea—the whole world is a big rattrap
 - Seeks shelter in the crofter's cottage
- ▶ **The crofter**
 - Gives the peddler a warm welcome
 - Food, tobacco, card game
 - Shares his secret
- ▶ **The peddler steals**
 - Steals thirty kronor
 - Escapes into a big forest
 - Gets lost
- ▶ **Ramsjö Ironworks incident**
 - The owner takes the peddler as an old acquaintance
 - Invites the peddler to stay with him
 - The peddler declines
- ▶ **Edla Willmansson**
 - Daughter of the iron mill owner
 - Persuades the peddler to come to their home
 - Requests him to stay for Christmas Eve
- ▶ **The ironmaster realises the truth**
 - The next day — in daylight the owner realises —the stranger was not his friend
 - Threatens to call the sheriff
 - Edla pleads for him and makes him stay back
- ▶ **The miraculous effect**
 - Edla makes the peddler understand — he needs rest and peace
 - Edla learns about the theft at church
 - She becomes upset
 - The peddler leaves a small packet for Edla
 - Edla finds a rattrap, the stolen money and a letter with a request to return the money

Summary at a Glance

- ▶ 'The Rattrap', by Selma Lagerlöf, is a story about a rattrap seller who leads a very poor life as his earnings are very

low. He has to resort to petty thievery and begging to make both ends meet.

- ▶ He is alone in this whole world and leads a miserable life. He thoughts that the whole world is a big rattrap. His views are that the world offers us various types of baits in the form of comforts of life. This in return traps us into the rattrap of the world and leads us to various types of miseries.
- ▶ The peddler has to search for shelter every night as he has no home. One evening he gets shelter in an old crofter's cottage. The next morning he steals the crofter's money which he has earned by selling his cow's milk. The peddler chooses the path through the forest which is secluded, but soon finds himself trapped in the forest as he isn't able to find the way out of the dense forest. Finally, he finds a way to a forge and takes shelter there. An unusual incident happens. The ironmaster mistakes him for an old friend and invites him to his house. The poor peddler rejects the offer due to the fear of being caught. Soon he is invited by the ironmaster's daughter. The next morning he is somehow stopped by the ironmaster's daughter for Christmas Eve, even after being caught that he is a peddler and not Captain Stahle.
- ▶ The next day when the ironmaster and his daughter visit the church, they come to know that the man is a thief who has stolen money from the old crofter. The ironmaster and his daughter repent for sheltering a thief and think that all things would have been stolen by that time. Here comes a twist, as instead of stealing, the peddler gifts the ironmaster's daughter a rattrap. She finds a letter of thanks and the stolen money inside the rattrap. The peddler thanks Edla for her kindness and requests her to return the stolen money to the crofter.

Theme

- ▶ This story gives us the message that understanding and love can transform a bad person into a good human being. Goodness can be awakened through good deeds.



Practice Exercise

Extract Based Questions

Directions: Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. "I am thinking of this stranger here," said Edla. "He walks and walks the whole year long, and there is

probably not a single place in the whole country where he is welcome and can feel at home. Wherever he turns he is chased away. Always he is afraid of being arrested and cross-examined. I should like to have him enjoy a day of peace with us here—just one in the whole year." (CBSE 2023)



(a) Complete the following sentence with the most appropriate option:

Edla wished the Peddler to have a peaceful day because

- (i) the Peddler had worked for Edla.
- (ii) the Peddler had not been released from jail.
- (iii) the Peddler had been staying at the forge.
- (iv) the Peddler had always been looked with suspicion.

(b) Select the suitable word from the extract to complete analogy.

single : multiple :: abroad :

(c) In the above extract, Edla comes across as:

- (i) conscientious (ii) pretentious
- (iii) compassionate (iv) selfless

(d) Based on the above extract, choose the statement which is true.

- (i) Relationships are rattraps.
- (ii) Money is important in the world.
- (iii) Criminal is not born but made.
- (iv) Christmas is a time of charity.

(e) In the context of the given extract, which day is referred to in the expression 'just one in the whole year'?

(f) What does the expression 'he is cross-examined' suggest?

Answers

- (a) (iv) the Peddler had always been looked with suspicion.
- (b) at home
- (c) (iii) compassionate
- (d) (iii) Criminal is not born but made.
- (e) Christmas Eve
- (f) The expression 'he is cross-examined' suggests that the peddler and his identity have always been questioned because of suspicion.

2. He made them himself at odd moments, from the material he got by begging in the stores or at the farms. But even so, the business was not especially profitable, so he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to keep body and soul together.

(a) Whom does 'he' refer to in the above lines?

(b) What did he make at odd moments?

- (i) Baskets (ii) Candles
- (iii) Rattraps (iv) Hand fans

(c) How was his business not profitable?

- (i) It did not help him save for future
- (ii) He could not keep body and soul together
- (iii) He could not buy a house to live in
- (iv) None of the above

(d) Name the author of the lesson from which this extract has been taken.

(e) A word similar in meaning to the word 'profitable' is

(f) Give an antonym of 'petty'.

Answers

- (a) 'He' refers to the peddler.
- (b) (iii) Rattraps
- (c) (ii) He could not keep body and soul together
- (d) Selma Lagerlöf is the author of the lesson from where this extract has been taken.
- (e) beneficial or productive
- (f) An antonym of 'petty' is enormous or significant.

3. No one can imagine how sad and monotonous life can appear to such a vagabond, who plods along the road left to his own meditations. But one day this man had fallen into a line of thought, which really seemed to him entertaining.

(a) What does the word 'vagabond' mean?

- (i) Worker in some factory
- (ii) Wanderer
- (iii) Someone with no complaints
- (iv) None of the above

(b) Who plods along the road?

- (i) The crofter
- (ii) Blacksmith
- (iii) Street cleaner
- (iv) The peddler

(c) What can no one imagine?

(d) Find a word from the extract which means 'dull'.

(e) The lesson from which this extract has been taken is

(f) What was the line of thought, he had fallen into?

Answers

- (a) (ii) Wanderer
- (b) (iv) The peddler
- (c) No one can imagine how sad and monotonous the peddler's life was.
- (d) In the extract the word 'monotonous' means dull.
- (e) 'The Rattrap'.
- (f) He had fallen into a line of thought that the whole world was nothing but a big rattrap.

4. The world had, of course, never been very kind to him, so it gave him unwanted joy to think ill of it in this way. It became a cherished pastime of his, during many dreary ploddings, to think of people he knew who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous snare, and of others who were still circling around the bait.

(a) What was the attitude of the people towards him?

- (i) Affectionate (ii) Sympathetic
- (iii) Indifferent (iv) Unkind

- (b) Who is being referred to here?
 (i) Selma Lagerlöf (ii) The crofter
 (iii) The peddler (iv) The ironmaster
- (c) What was his 'cherished pastime'?
- (d) A word from the extract which means 'uninteresting' is
- (e) What does 'snare' mean?
- (f) What does 'he' do?

Answers

- (a) (iv) Unkind
 (b) (iii) The peddler
 (c) His 'cherished pastime' was to think of people being trapped in the worldly joys.
 (d) dreary
 (e) 'Snare' means a trap for catching birds or mammals.
 (f) He sells small rattraps. He has to resort to both begging and petty thievery.
5. One dark evening as he was trudging along the road he caught sight of a little gray cottage by the roadside and he knocked on the door to ask shelter for the night. Nor was he refused. Instead of the sour faces which ordinarily met him, the owner, who was an old man without wife or child was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness.
- (a) What did the peddler see one dark evening?
 (i) Someone selling rattraps
 (ii) The iron mill
 (iii) A little gray cottage
 (iv) An old crofter
- (b) Why did he knock on the door?
- (c) How was he received by the old man?
 (i) Unwelcomed (ii) Welcomed happily
 (iii) With a sour face (iv) Coldly
- (d) An antonym of 'accepted' from the extract is
- (e) How was he usually treated?
- (f) Who was the old man?

Answers

- (a) (iii) A little gray cottage
 (b) He knocked on the door because he wanted shelter for the night.
 (c) (ii) Welcomed happily
 (d) refused
 (e) He was usually treated unkindly. People usually met him with sour faces.
 (f) The old man had been a crofter. He lived there without wife or children.
6. The stranger must have seemed incredulous, for the old man got up and went to the window, took down a leather pouch which hung on a nail in the very window frame and picked out three wrinkled ten-kronor bills. These he held up before the eyes of his

guest, nodding knowingly, and then stuffed them back into the pouch.

- (a) The stranger in the above lines is
- (b) What did the old man do after going to the window?
 (i) He peeped out
 (ii) Took down a leather pouch
 (iii) Closed the window
 (iv) Called the stranger
- (c) What did the old man show to the stranger?
 (i) Gold coins
 (ii) Ten-kronor notes
 (iii) Almonds and other nuts
 (iv) Porridge
- (d) Find a word from the extract which means 'unbelieving'.
- (e) Where is the stranger?
- (f) Did the stranger respect the confidence reposed in him by the old man?

Answers

- (a) the peddler
 (b) (ii) Took down a leather pouch
 (c) (ii) Ten-kronor notes
 (d) A word from the extract which means 'unbelieving' is incredulous.
 (e) The stranger is at the little gray cottage of the old man.
 (f) No, the stranger didn't respect the confidence reposed in him by the old man. He robbed the old man.
7. As he walked along with the money in his pocket he felt quite pleased with his smartness. He realised, of course, that at first he dared not continue on the public highway, but must turn off the road, into the woods.
- (a) Why was his decision to walk through the woods not a wise one?
 (i) He was robbed
 (ii) He lost his way
 (iii) He was attacked by a tiger
 (iv) None of the above
- (b) Who is 'he' here?
 (i) The author (ii) The narrator
 (iii) The peddler (iv) The crofter
- (c) The author of the extract is
- (d) Which money is being referred to in the first line?
- (e) How did he feel?
- (f) Why did he choose to walk through the woods instead of the public highway?

Answers

- (a) (ii) He lost his way
(b) (iii) The peddler
(c) Selma Lagerlöf
(d) The money which he stole from the old crofter's house is being referred to in the first line.
(e) Having robbed his generous host, the peddler felt quite pleased with his smartness.
(f) He choose to walk through the woods instead of the public highway because he was scared of being caught.
8. **All at once, he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. Now his own turn had come. He had let himself be fooled by a bait and had been caught. The whole forest, with its trunks and branches, its thickets and fallen logs, closed in upon him like an impenetrable prison from which he could never escape.**
- (a) The word, from the passage, which means 'that can't be entered through' is
- (b) He thought he could never escape from:
(i) prison (ii) forest
(iii) the crofter (iv) the iron mill
- (c) The name of the lesson is:
(i) Lost Spring (ii) Deep Water
(iii) The Rattrap (iv) The Last Lesson
- (d) Who is being talked about here?
(e) What did 'he' recall?
(f) Why does he say to himself that 'his own turn had come'?

Answers

- (a) Impenetrable
(b) (ii) forest
(c) (iii) The Rattrap
(d) The peddler is being talked about here.
(e) He recalled his thoughts that the world was a big rattrap.
(f) He says to himself, that 'his own turn had come' because he lost his way in the forest.
9. **Naturally, the first thing he saw the tall ragamuffin who had eased his way so close to the furnace that steam rose from his wet rags. The ironmaster did not follow the example of the blacksmiths, who had hardly deigned to look at the stranger. He walked close up to him, looked him over very carefully, then tore off his slouch hat to get a better view of his face.**
- (a) A word from the extract for a person typically in dirty tattered clothes is
- (b) Choose the synonym of 'tore off'.
(i) Stuck to (ii) Removed
(iii) Glued (iv) Attached
- (c) Who is 'he' in the first line?
(i) The peddler (ii) The ironmaster
(iii) The crofter (iv) The author

- (d) How did the ironmaster react on seeing the stranger's face?
(e) How did the blacksmiths react to the stranger's arrival in the iron mill?
(f) What did the ironmaster do?

Answers

- (a) Ragamuffin
(b) (ii) Removed
(c) (ii) The Ironmaster
(d) The ironmaster mistook the stranger for his old acquaintance.
(e) The blacksmiths ignored the stranger.
(f) The ironmaster walked close up to him to get a better view of his face.
10. **He thought of the thirty kronor. To go up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den. He only wanted a chance to sleep here in the forge and then sneak away as inconspicuously as possible.**
- (a) The antonym for 'reluctantly' from the extract is
- (b) The ironmaster took the peddler as a/an:
(i) stranger (ii) engineer
(iii) old acquaintance (iv) thief
- (c) 'Sneak away' means:
(i) encounter (ii) confront
(iii) expose (iv) escape
- (d) From where did he get the money?
(e) Why did he refuse to go to the manor house?
(f) Why does he refer to the manor house as 'the lion's den'?

Answers

- (a) voluntarily
(b) (iii) old acquaintance
(c) (iv) escape
(d) He stole the money from the old crofter's house.
(e) He refused to go to the manor house because he was afraid of being caught.
(f) He refers to the manor house as 'the lion's den' because there was the risk of being caught with the stolen money.



Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 1. From where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap? (NCERT)

Or

Explain the metaphor of 'The Rattrap' as explained by the peddler. (CBSE 2022 Term-2)

Or

Explain the metaphor of 'The Rattrap'. (CBSE 2023)



Ans. The peddler was a very poor man who made his both ends meet by making rattraps with the material, he procured by begging. He also had to resort to petty thievery. His mind, therefore was always occupied with the making of rattraps. One day he thought about the world and found a parallel between the two. To him worldly riches, joys, food and shelter worked as bait to entrap people.

Q 2. Why was the peddler amused by the idea of the world being a rattrap? (CBSE 2016, NCERT)

Ans. The world around him had never been so kind to him. So, it gave him unwanted joy to think ill of it in this way. To think of people he knew, who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous trap, he felt very amused.

Q 3. Did the peddler expect the kind of hospitality that he received from the crofter? (NCERT)

Ans. The peddler was not welcomed by people ever. He was virtually shooed away from wherever he went. No one treated him kindly. When he knocked at the cottage of the old crofter, he expected to be greeted with a sour face. However, he was very much surprised by the crofter's warm hospitality.

Q 4. How did the crofter entertain the peddler? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The crofter treated the peddler kindly and gave him shelter in his cottage and porridge to eat. After it he gave the peddler a big tobacco slice. The crofter played mjolis, a card game with him and disclosed his secret to him.

Q 5. Why was the crofter so friendly and talkative with the peddler who was a total stranger? (CBSE 2019, NCERT)

Or

Why was the crofter so kind and generous to the peddler? (CBSE 2019)

Ans. The crofter lived in his cottage all by himself. He had no wife and no children. He was sick of leading a secluded life. When he got some company, though of a tramp, he was overwhelmed with joy to receive a guest. He found pleasure in talking his heart out. So, he poured all warmth and friendliness on his guest.

Q 6. Why did the crofter show thirty kronor to the peddler?

Ans. Thirty kronor notes were the ones he had earned as the payment from the creamery. He had no one to share his joy with. So, when the peddler came to his home, he showed him the amount. Moreover, he suspected that his guest did not seem to believe him.

Q 7. Did the peddler respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter? (NCERT)

Ans. The peddler was extremely poor. He was the victim of hunger and starvation. This left him with no ethics in life. When he was shown the amount of thirty kronor, his mind started working on how to grab the money. So, he stole it by breaking the window pane and betrayed the confidence reposed in him by the crofter.

Q 8. Why did the ironmaster speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home? (CBSE 2016, NCERT)

Ans. In the dull glow of the furnace, the ironmaster mistook the peddler for Captain von Stahle who was an old regimental comrade. He was touched by the pitiable plight of the officer. To make him feel secure and comfortable, he spoke kindly to the peddler and invited him home.

Q 9. Why did the peddler decline the ironmaster's invitation? (NCERT)

Or

Why was the peddler hesitant to accompany the ironmaster to the manor house? (CBSE 2023)

Ans. When the ironmaster mistook him for an old regimental officer, the peddler did not try to tell him the truth thinking that he might get a couple of kronor in the bargain. But he did not either accept the invitation of the ironmaster to accompany him home due to the fear of being caught with the stolen money.

Q 10. Having once declined the ironmaster's invitation, why did the peddler accept Edla's invitation?

Or

What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation? (NCERT)

Ans. The peddler clearly declined the ironmaster's offer to accompany him home for the fear of being caught for stealing the old man's money. Still he accepted Edla's invitation, as her warmth, friendliness and compassion infused a sense of confidence and trust in her. He could not refuse. Her assurance 'you will be allowed to leave us as freely as you came' allayed his fears and he consented to ride to the manor house with her.

Q 11. Though still quite young Edla Willmansson had a good psychological insight and a keen observation. Comment.

Ans. In spite of her young age, Edla had a very keen sense of observation and a better psychological insight into the human mind than her father. On noticing fear in the eyes of the peddler when he was invited to the manor house, she at once concluded that he had either stolen some money or had escaped from jail. She also observed that he was not educated. Her father had overlooked all this.

Q 12. When did the ironmaster realise his mistake of mistaking the peddler's identity for the captain?

Ans. When in the morning the valet had bathed him, cut his hair and shaved him, he was truly clean and well dressed. The ironmaster looked at him and at once realised his mistake. The previous night he had seen him in the uncertain reflection of the furnace but now he stood in front of him in the broad daylight. It was impossible for him to mistake him for an old acquaintance.

Q 13. What did the peddler say in his defence when the truth of his identity came to light?

Or

What did the peddler say in his defence when it was clear that he was not the person the ironmaster had thought he was? (NCERT 2016, Set-III)

Or

The ironmaster accuses the peddler of not being quite honest. What does the peddler say to justify the situation? (CBSE 2022 Term-2)

Ans. The peddler told the Ironmaster that he had made no attempt to dupe the latter into mistaking his identity. He had neither pretended to be the captain nor accepted his host's invitation to come to the manor house readily. Rather he had repeatedly begged to be allowed to sleep in the forge.

Q 14. Why did Edla still entertain the peddler even after she knew the truth about him? (NCERT)

Ans. By heart Edla was a soft and compassionate girl who knew nothing about the rattrap peddler. She simply wanted to make the guest as comfortable as she could. Edla was saddened by the fact that the peddler had to walk the whole day only to be chased away wherever he went. Like a true Christian she wanted to be nice to him and wanted him to enjoy a day of peace.

Q 15. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler? (CBSE 2018-19, NCERT)

Ans. Edla was very happy to see the gift left by the peddler because this was the way the peddler had respected the faith shown in him by Edla as she retained him in the house even after knowing his real identity. Instead of walking off with their silver ware, his gesture proved that the goodness in his heart had been ignited and he behaved like a real dignified captain.

Q 16. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle? (NCERT)

Ans. The way Edla treated the peddler, touched him to the core. The girl, despite knowing his real identity treated him like a captain. It was now his turn to show Edla that the guest she had honoured was as honourable as the captain and not merely a petty thief. The latent goodness of his heart was awakened and he actually behaved in a dignified manner. So, he signed himself as 'Captain von Stahle'.

Q 17. The reader's sympathy is with the peddler right from the beginning of the story why is it so?

Ans. The miserable life that the peddler leads really moves the reader right from the beginning of the story. The sympathy is not ill placed as the tramp is facing such a life due to no fault of his own. He had been ill treated by everyone he went to. He was forced to take to begging and stealing to make his both ends meet.

Q 18. How does the setting of the remote forest location in 'The Rattrap' contribute to the overall tone and mood of the story? (CBSE SQP 2023-24)

Ans. The setting of the remote forest location in 'The Rattrap' contributes to the overall tone and mood of the story. It creates a sense of isolation and desolation, emphasising the loneliness and despair that the peddler experiences. The harsh winter conditions and the barren landscape add to the overall tone of melancholy and hopelessness. The setting serves as an important backdrop for the events that unfold in the story.

Q 19. Why did the ironmaster compare Edla to a parson? (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The Ironmaster compared Edla to a parson as she preached him to let the vagabond stay in the house even though he was not an acquaintance. She said that they must not chase away a human being whom they had asked to come and to whom they had promised Christmas cheer.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. How does the peddler interpret the acts of kindness and hospitality shown by the crofter, ironmaster and his daughter? (NCERT)

Ans. At the beginning of the story we meet the peddler as a man hit by hunger, poverty and starvation. So, he has no ethics of his own and he doesn't mind begging or stealing. At the crofter's house, he is tempted on seeing thirty kronor well within his reach with just a little bit of effort. Keeping aside the warm hospitality shown to him by the old crofter, he disrespects the trust reposed in him. He smashes the window pane, grabs the money and walks off with thirty kronor. The Ironmaster's hospitality too doesn't move his heart. When on finding his real identity, the Ironmaster shows him the door, the thankless peddler shouts at him and warns him that he too would one day be entrapped in the rattrap of the world. But yes Edla's warmth, love and respect transform him. The status to which the girl raised him enkindles the latent goodness of his heart and he encloses the stolen thirty kronor in the rattrap and leaves it as a Christmas present for Edla. In a letter enclosed with the money, he makes a humble request to Edla to return the money to the crofter. This way Edla's warm hospitality makes him turn a new leaf in his life.

Q 2. What are the instances in the story that show that the character of the ironmaster is different from that of his daughter in many ways? (NCERT)

Or

Edla is a contrast to her father, the ironmaster. Explain. (CBSE 2023)

Ans. After reading the story, we find that the father and the daughter are poles apart. The reader expects more maturity on the part of the ironmaster as he is the father of a daughter and master of an iron mill. But contrary to our expectations, the father is very impulsive and jumps to the conclusion without much thought to the issue at hand. While in the

forge. he mistakes the tramp for an old regimental comrade. Without confirming his true identity he insists him to accompany him home. Then again on realising his mistake, he thoughtlessly decides to hand him over to the sheriff. Still again, on learning in the church about the theft at the crofter's place, he starts anticipating about the theft of silver ware in his own house. But Edla, on the contrary, shows a strong sense of observation. She does judge the stranger as a tramp. She deals with the issue with a cool mind. She persuades her father to let him stay because they had promised him 'Christmas cheer'. Unlike her father she sympathises with the guest and holding him by the hand, leads him to the dining table and makes him eat in spite of her father's fear and opposition. It is due to her intercession and compassion that the peddler redeems himself from his evil ways.

Q 3. The story has many instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to other's behaviour. Pick out instances of these surprises. (NCERT)

Ans. The story has several instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to other's behaviour. First of all the crofter's reaction to the tramp's request for shelter is entirely unexpected as no one ever received the tramp with such a welcoming reception. The tramp himself got surprised because he was always greeted by people with sour faces. Secondly, the peddler's stealing the crofter's money by smashing the window pane is also totally unexpected. His being welcomed by the crofter with so much of warmth and then breach of trust comes as a shock. Thirdly, the ironmaster's unexpected invitation to the tramp comes as the next surprise. His refusal to accompany the ironmaster and later his joining him at the manor house is another such instance. Later on finding his real identification, the way ironmaster behaves with him and Edla's intercession are two more acts that fall into this category. But the most unexpected gesture comes from the peddler when he leaves a Christmas gift for Edla along with a letter of thanks and the stolen money which he wants Edla to return to its owner. Thus, the story is replete with several unexpected reactions.

Q 4. What makes the peddler finally change his ways? (CBSE 2019, NCERT)

Or

A mistaken identify led to a discovery of a new one for the rattrap peddler. How did this impact him?

(CBSE SQP 2022 Term-2)

Ans. Broadly speaking no one is wicked by birth. Only circumstances make him so. If he is properly understood he can be transformed into his original being.

The peddler rattrap seller leads a miserable life of acute want, hunger, poverty and starvation without ever coming across an angelic soul to love or guide him. Neither the crofter's warm hospitality nor the ironmaster's invitation to the manor house made any impact on him. Rather he repaid the crofter by stealing

his money and the ironmaster by giving him a piece of his mind in case the latter informed the sheriff.

However, Edla's warmth, understanding and genuineness touched him. She treated him like a captain, he spontaneously behaved like a captain. He was transformed to the extent that he abandoned the stolen money. In the end of the story when the peddler left, he left his rattrap as a Christmas present for Edla along with a letter of thanks and a confession in it with a humble request to return the thirty kronor stolen from the crofter's place. In this way, he redeemed himself from his unfair ways and emerged an altogether changed person.

Q 5. How does the metaphor of the rattrap serve to highlight the human predicament? (NCERT)

Ans. A rattrap is a device to catch rats by deception. The world is compared to a rattrap which snares people with its riches, joys, shelter, food and clothing. When one is trapped, everything comes to an end. The metaphor of rattrap reveals man's helplessness, restlessness, and powerlessness in the face of situations that pursuit of joys and luxuries land him in. Just as the bait of cheese and pork tempt and trap a rat, the peddler yields to the temptations at the crofter's cottage and then runs to escape. The only difference is that for the peddler the world is a big rattrap. Though one cannot see the bars and wires, this rattrap entraps the individuals like him so securely that one cannot escape at all once trapped in the bait, all his aims and ambitions remain unfulfilled. Several times one is not ever aware of having been trapped and thus goes on receding deeper and deeper into the trap and loses all chances of getting out.

Q 6. The peddler comes out as a person with subtle sense of humour. How does this serve in lightening the seriousness of the theme of the story and also endear him to us? (NCERT)

Ans. When we start reading the story, we hardly find any humour. The pathetic condition of the peddler only draws our sympathies. His outlook towards life is rather pessimistic. Yes, the foolish way in which he acts is quite humorous. He himself being a poor rattrap peddler considers the world a rattrap. This attitude of his, is certainly, humorous and entertaining. Then, his getting stuck in the dark jungle after his act of robbery at the crofter's, certainly compels us to laugh. Then, the dramatic way in which he is invited into the ironmaster's house and his true identity been exposed leaves a humorous touch. The comparison of temptation and sinfulness to a rattrap and bait is also very amusing. His temptation followed by contrition is the main focus of the story. His ability to require equilibrium makes him comical. His philosophy, his chain of thought, his guilt consciousness and his reformation at the end, make him truly human which is what endears him to us.

Q 7. What made the peddler think that he had fallen into a rattrap?

Or

How did the seller of rattraps realise that he himself was caught up in a rattrap after he left the crofter's cottage?

Or

The peddler believed that the whole world is a trap. How did he himself get caught in the same?

(CBSE 2017)

Ans. After the peddler had stolen the crofter's money, he feels quite pleased at his smartness. But soon the stolen amount became a nuisance for him. He had to move through the forest instead of the public highway lest he should be caught by the police. But the forest turned out to be so confusing that he got lost in its twisted paths. Even after hours of walking, he found himself in the same part of the forest. It had grown dark. There was no way to come out of the forest. That was when he realised that he had been trapped. Earlier he was amused by the idea of people getting trapped in the worldly bait, but now he realised it was his turn. Quite foolishly he had been fooled by the bait and got badly caught in the impenetrable prison of the trunks, thickets and branches of the forest. He felt like a helpless mouse trapped in the rattrap with nowhere to go.

Q 8. The story 'The Rattrap' focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others. Comment.

Or

How does the story, 'The Rattrap' highlight the importance of community over isolation? Support your rationale with textual evidence. (CBSE SQP 2021)

Ans. The story 'The Rattrap' is replete with the theme of loneliness right from the beginning. All the

characters—the peddler, the crofter, the ironmaster and his daughter are the victims of loneliness and desperately seek redemption from it. First of all the protagonist of the story—the peddler feels absolutely lonely. He has always met sour faces, cold words and unkind treatment. Each one he meets with is apathetic towards him. He has been plodding the dreary paths of life with hardly any one to share his woes. Even after having walked miles and miles day in and day out, he has never come across a single place in the whole country where he could feel at home. He is shooed away wherever he goes.

Now the old crofter, life has been kinder to him as at least he has got his cottage to live in, but in the absence of wife and children; he yearns for company. This is why when the peddler comes to his home he is overwhelmed with joy and extends his generous hospitality. Similarly, the ironmaster and his daughter too miss company of someone especially on Christmas. That is the reason the ironmaster wants to take the peddler home, he and his daughter are too excited to be hosts to the peddler whom the ironmaster mistakes for a former comrade. Their guest in this way helps them to show their Christmas kindness and hospitality.

Thus all of them have a strong yearning for bonding. Bonding with the peddler gives joy to the old crofter and he is full of life in his little cottage that night with his guest around.

This is only bonding which transforms the tramp and enkindles goodness of heart. Bonding again gives the ironmaster and his daughter an opportunity to discover and practise their Christmas virtues. Love and understanding of a young girl Edla gives the tramp an opportunity to rid himself of his dishonest ways.



Chapter Test

Extract Based Question

Q 1. That was not so badly said, my good fellow. 'Perhaps we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve. But now get out of here as fast as you can.'

(a) What does 'we should let the sheriff alone on Christmas Eve' mean?

- (i) We should keep the police out of the matter
- (ii) We should not help the sheriff
- (iii) We should not disturb the sheriff
- (iv) None of the above

(b) Who is the speaker of the above lines?

(c) Whom is the speaker speaking to?

- (i) Edla Willmansson
- (ii) The author
- (iii) The peddler
- (iv) The crofter

(d) 'Good fellow' refers to

(e) Who is the author?

(f) How many persons are there in this scene?

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 2. Why was the ironmaster keen to take the peddler to his home?

Q 3. What was Edla's reaction on seeing the gift left by the tramp?

Q 4. Why did the peddler decline the first invitation to the manor house and why did he accept the second invitation?

Long Answer Type Questions

Q 5. Discuss the metaphor of the rattrap according to the lesson 'The Rattrap'.

Q 6. The ironmaster and his daughter are poles apart. Comment.