

Class 12th English Flamingo Chapter 4 The Rattrap Question Answers Gujarat Board

Think as you Read (Textbook Page No. 34)

Question 1. From where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap?

Answer:

The peddler had been thinking of his rattraps when suddenly he was struck by the idea that the whole world was nothing but a big rattrap. It existed only to set baits for people. It offered riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing in the same manner as the rattrap offered cheese and pork. As soon as someone let himself be tempted to touch the bait, it closed in on him, and then everything came to an end.

Question 2. Why was he amused by this idea?

Answer:

His own life was sad and monotonous. He walked laboriously from place to place. The world had never been kind to him. So, during his gloomy ploddings, this idea became his favourite pastime. He was amused how people let themselves be caught in the dangerous snare and how others were still circling around the bait.

Question 3. Did the peddler expect the kind of hospitality that he received from the crofter?

Answer:

The crofter served him porridge for supper and tobacco for his pipe. He also played a game of cards with him till bedtime. This hospitality was unexpected as people usually made sour faces when the peddler asked for shelter.

Question 4. Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler?

Answer:

The crofter's circumstances and temperament made him so talkative and friendly with the peddler. Since he had no wife or child, he was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. Secondly, he was quite generous with his confidence.

Question 5. Why did he show the thirty kronor to the peddler?

Answer:

The crofter had told the peddler that by supplying his cow's milk to the creamery, he had received thirty kronor in payment. The peddler seemed to doubt it. So, in order to assure his guest of the truth, he showed the thirty kronor to the peddler.

Question 6. Did the peddler respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter?

Answer:

No, the peddler did not respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter. At the very

first opportunity that he got, he smashed the windowpane, took out the money and hung the leather pouch back in its place. Then he went away.

Think as you Read (Textbook Page No. 37)

Question 1. What made the peddler think that he had indeed fallen into a rattrap?

Answer:

The peddler realised that he must not walk on the public highway with the stolen money in his pocket. He went into the woods. He kept walking without coming to the end of the wood. Then he realised that he had fallen in the rattrap. He had let himself be fooled by a bait and had been caught in.

Question 2. Why did the ironmaster speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home?

Answer:

The ironmaster walked closely up to the peddler. In the uncertain reflection from the furnace, he mistook the man as his old regimental comrade, Captain von Stahle. He addressed the stranger as Nils Olof, spoke very kindly and – invited him home.

Question 3. Why did the peddler decline the invitation?

Answer:

The peddler knew that the ironmaster had mistaken him for his old regimental comrade. Secondly, he had stolen money-thirty kronor on him. Going to the ironmaster's residence would be like entering the lion's den. So, he declined the invitation.

Think as you Read (Textbook Page No. 41)

Question 1. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation?

Answer:

Miss Edla Willmansson looked at the peddler quite compassionately. She noticed that the man was afraid. She assured him that he would be allowed to leave just as freely as he came. She requested him to stay with them over Christmas Eve. Her friendly manner made the peddler feel confidence in her and accept her invitation.

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Understanding the Text

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

Answer:

The different ways in which the peddler repaid the three people corresponds to the way he interpreted the kindness of the three people. The peddler realised that for the crofter it was his craving for company that led him to offer his hospitality. The ironmaster's hospitality apparently is limited to his acquaintances.

It was only the daughter who genuinely offered warmth and goodness to the peddler. He was touched by Edla's kindness and it made him want to act differently. He repaid her good treatment with a gesture of true gratitude.

Question 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?

Answer:

The ironmaster misunderstood the peddler for an old acquaintance, whereas his daughter could make out that the man was afraid, which was suggestive of him having stolen something. Though the father and the daughter express compassion for the vagabond both do so for different reasons. The ironmaster was sure to help the vagabond get over his tramp manners because he had mistaken the latter for his old comrade.

The daughter however wishes to feed him and welcome him in spite of knowing that he was not Captain von Stahle. The father acts impulsively and casually and invites him

without confirming the stranger's identity. On realizing his mistake, he recklessly wants to hand him over to the sheriff. Only when he is threatened to be ensnared by the rattrap of this world that he thinks otherwise.

Edla on the other hand shows a strong sense of observation. She rightly judges him to be a tramp without any education. She persuades her father to let him stay because they had promised him Christmas cheer. When the blacksmith's daughter infects the protagonist with her true altruism the peddler's inner soul experiences a rapid transformation from an ugly duckling to a dazzling swan.

Question 3. The story has many instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to others' behaviour. Pick out instances of these surprises.

Answer:

The first instance is that of the crofter's hospitality to the peddler. The rattrap peddler, used to being shooed away, was surprised at the friendly behaviour of the crofter. The peddler was also surprised at the sudden invitation given by the ironmaster, who was himself shocked to realize his mistake in recognizing the peddler, the next day. Another unexpected reaction, for both the peddler and the ironmaster, is Edla's intervention to seek peddler's presence for Christmas. However, the most unexpected reaction is from the peddler when he leaves the package and the letter for Edla, showing gratitude to the girl's hospitality and respect for him.

Question 4. What made the peddler finally change his ways?

Answer:

Edla Willmanson treated the tramp in a friendly manner. She was nice and kind to her. She interceded on his behalf when her father was about to turn him out. She still entertained the peddler even after knowing the truth about him. She offered him the suit as Christmas present and invited him to spend the next Christmas with them. Her love and understanding aroused the essential goodness of the peddler and he changed his ways.

Question 5. How does the metaphor of the rattrap serve to highlight the human predicament?

Answer:

The metaphor of the rattrap signifies that the world exists only to trap people by setting baits for them. Whenever someone is tempted by the luxuries, he ends up being caught in a dangerous trap. The author, thus, makes a much deeper comment on the woeful plight of those in pursuit of the worldly pleasures, which often lead them to unfortunate situations.

The story helps in realising the importance of general goodness and kindness. The peddler is saved from the snare of the huge rattrap called world only when he appreciates the kindness to him by Edla.



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

Answer:

The peddler doesn't come across as a humorous person, although one can locate a subtle sense of humour in the way he thinks about the world as being a giant rattrap. He is singularly pleased by this thought of his because it provides him with the opportunity of thinking 'iir of the world that is not kind to him.

It is clearly visible that whenever he gets caught unaware, in the web of deceit spun by his scheming mind, he hides behind the thought that the world is a rattrap and he merely a prey. Thus, he lightens the mood and theme of the story and makes us endear him.

Talking about the Text

Discuss the following in groups of four. Each group can deal with one topic and present the views of your group to the whole class.

Question 1. The reader's sympathy is with the peddler right from the beginning of the story. Why is this so ? Is the sympathy justified?

Answer:

The peddler wins our sympathy for his way of life and how the world treats him. It is an admitted fact that the underdog always runs away with sympathy, so does the peddler with the ratttraps. He begs the material like wire for his ratttraps. His business not being specially profitable, "he resorts to begging and petty thievery to keep body and soul together.

His life is sad and monotonous. He plods along the road lost in his own meditation. The world has never been very kind to him and he feels happy in calling it a rattrap. Whenever he asks shelter for the night, he meets sour faces. He,, is an unwelcome, unwanted and undesirable figure. The blacksmiths at forge glance at him only casually and indifferently. The master blacksmith nods a haughty consent without honouring him with a single word.

The old and lonely crofter finds him an enjoyable company. The ironmaster mistakes him for an old regimental comrade. Only Edla Willmansson behaves with him in a kind, friendly manner. Her nice treatment arouses the tramp's goodness. He redeems himself by returning the stolen money and wins our admiration. Thus, we see that the sympathy is not only well earned but well justified too.

Question 2. The story also focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others.

Answer:

There are at least three characters in the story who suffer from loneliness and express the need to bond with others. They represent three strata of the human society as well. The peddler with the ratttraps, the old crofter and the ironmaster all suffer from loneliness. The



peddler is called a tramp, a vagabond and stranger at various points of the story. He moves wearily from one place to the other.

He is lost in his own thoughts. He seeks shelter for night and people look at him with sour faces. Even the blacksmiths look casually and indifferently at him and nod a haughty consent. The old crofter suffers from loneliness as he has neither wife nor child with him. Hence, he feels happy when he gets the peddler to talk to in his loneliness.

The ironmaster is also lonely in his manor house. His wife Elizabeth has died and his sons are abroad. There is no one at home except his oldest daughter and himself. His requests to Captain von Stahle to accompany him show his need for human bonding. He admits frankly that they didn't have any company for Christmas. The stranger turns down the request not because he is against bonding with others but because he fears being caught with stolen money.

Question 3. Have you known/heard of an episode where a good deed or an act of kindness has changed a person's view of the world?

Answer:

Yes, I know how the kindness of a Bishop transformed a hard-hearted beastly convict into a man again with faith in God and human values. The story is presented in the form of a famous play 'The Bishop's Candlesticks'

The Bishop provides food and shelter at midnight to a runaway convict who threatens him with a knife. Long years of imprisonment and harsh treatment in the prison has transformed the man into beast and he is devoid of all human feelings now.

The convict runs away with the Bishop's silver candlesticks but is caught by the police. In order to save the convict from further punishment and torture, the Bishop tells the police officer that the fellow is his friend and he had himself given him the candlesticks. This kind act of the Bishop melts the hard heart of the convict. He sobs and weeps. He promises to be a man again.

Question 4. The story is both entertaining and philosophical.

Answer:

The story entertains us by providing glimpses into human nature and how people react to various situations. The actions of the peddler after stealing thirty kronor are quite amusing. The reactions of the blacksmiths to the tramp's request for shelter show how casual and indifferent human beings can be.

The U-turn in the ironmaster's attitude towards the stranger reveal how selfish and ignorant human beings can be. Mistaking the vagabond for his old regimental comrade, whom he thinks he has run across unexpectedly, he asks the stranger to accompany him home and spend Christmas with them. When the stranger refuses to go with him, the ironmaster sends for his daughter. With her better persuasive power she makes him follow her.



The ironmaster is annoyed on seeing the stranger in broad daylight. But instead of realising his own mistake, he puts the blame on the man. He talks of handing him over to the sheriff. The metaphor of the world being a rattrap saves the situation for the tramp, but the ironmaster wants to turn him out.

His daughter’s comments are quite entertaining and philosophical. She wants the tramp to enjoy a day of peace. Secondly, she does not want to chase away a person whom they had invited home and had promised Christmas cheer.

Working with Words

Question 1. The man selling rattraps is referred to by many terms such as ‘peddler, stranger’, etc. Pick out all such references to him. What does each of these labels indicate of the context or the attitude of the people around him.

Answer:

Labels	Contexts
1. Peddler	As he peddles or sells the rattraps
2. Vagabond	Used to describe his nomadic lifestyle
3. Stranger	Used to refer to the peddler when he was at the crofter’s place, possibly to emphasize the fact that the crofter was compassionate to an unknown man
4. Guest	He is treated with compassion, especially at the ironmaster’s house where he was invited to spend the Christmas
5. Intruder	When the peddler trespasses and enters the iron mill
6. Tramp	When the peddler asks for lodgings at the iron mill; also when the ironmaster, mistaking him for his old regimental comrade plans of helping him drop his tramp ways and begin a new vocation
7. Ragamuffin	When the ironmaster first notices him wrapped in rags and in the state of utter destitution
8. Old regimental comrade	The ironmaster mistakes him for his old friend when he first meets the peddler at his iron mill

9. Poor hungry wretch	Used only once when the author mentions the fact that Edla was excited about the prospect of getting a chance to help an unfortunate fellow on Christmas
10. Rat	The peddler calls himself a rat and thanks Edla for helping him escape the rattrap with her kindness and compassion

Question 2. You came across the words, plod, trudge, stagger in the story. These words indicate movement accompanied by weariness. Find five other such words with a similar meaning.

Answer:
Five other words with a similar meaning are clomp, lumber, lurch, reel, stumble.

Noticing Form:

1. He made them himself at odd moments.
2. He raised himself.
3. He had let himself be fooled by a bait and had been caught.
4. A day may come when you yourself may want to get a big piece of pork.

Notice the way in which these reflexive pronouns have been used (pronoun + self):

- In 1 and 4 the reflexive pronouns ‘himself’ and ‘yourself’ are used to convey emphasis.
- In 2 and 3 the reflexive pronoun is used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.

Pick out other examples of the use of reflexive pronouns from the story and notice how they are used.

Answer:

Examples	Usages
“...would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion’s den”	Used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.
“... except my oldest daughter and myself”	Used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.

"... he laughed to himself."	Used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.
"... better powers of persuasion than he himself"	Used to convey emphasis.
"stretched himself out on the floor"	Used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.
"He could not bring himself to oppose her."	Used to convey emphasis.

Thinking about Language

Question 1. Notice the words in bold in the following sentence: "The fire boy shovelled charcoal into the maw of the furnace with a great deal of clatter." This is a phrase that is used in the specific context of an iron plant. Pick out other such phrases and words from the story that are peculiar to the terminology of ironworks.

Answer:

Words and phrases that are peculiar to the terminology of ironworks are given below: hammer strokes, smelter, forge, rolling mill, coal dust, furnace, pig iron, anvil, iron bar, big bellows, coal, charcoal, shovel and sooty panes.

Question 2. 'Mjolis' is a card game of Sweden. Name a few indoor games played in your region. 'Chopar' could be an example.

Answer:

Some indoor games are chess, ludo, table tennis, playing cards, billiards, etc.

Question 3. A 'Crofter' is a person who rents or owns a small farm, especially in Scotland. Think of other uncommon terms for 'a small farmer' including those in your language.

Answer:

The uncommon terms for 'a small farmer' are: peasant, plower, cultivator, tiller, ploughman, husbandman, rancher

Some other terms in our language are: Krishan, Kisan