

THE RATTRAP

SUMMARY

The Rattrap story is about a man who is a peddler. He has a pessimistic attitude towards the world. The peddler has not always been like this and was a fine man before. However, due to misfortune, he now resorts to selling rattraps, begging and even stealing to survive. Moreover, he also views the world as a big rat trap. He believes that much similar to the cheese we put for mice, the world offers us materialistic things to lure us. So, when we fall for these things, it traps us and takes everything away from us.

One cold evening he reaches at a cottage to ask for shelter. An old crofter who lived there, needed company and so he welcomed the peddler. He shared his food and tobacco. Then they played cards and chatted. The crofter showed him three ten kronor notes that he had earned by selling the milk of his cow. The next day the peddler steals them. Then he avoids the main road and walks through the woods. He gets lost in the woods and is unable to find his way out. He realizes that he himself is caught in the rattrap of the world.

Hearing the sound of an iron mill he manages to drag his tired body to the iron mill. There he takes shelter. The ironmaster, who reaches there on his nightly visit, mistakes him to be his old regimental comrade and invites him to his manor for Christmas. He refuses. But when the ironmaster's daughter Edla insists, he accompanies her home. Once the peddler has bathed and put on clean clothes the ironmaster realizes his mistake and threatens to hand him to the sheriff. The peddler gives the ironmaster a piece of his mind and then the ironmaster tells him to get out of the manor. But Edla insists that he should stay as they had promised to celebrate Christmas together. The father finally agrees and they celebrate Christmas together.

Next day in church the ironmaster and Edla learn that the peddler was a thief who had robbed the old crofter. They return in a hurry thinking that he must have stolen all their silver. However, to their surprise, the peddler did not steal a thing. Instead he left a small gift for Edla. It was a rattrap with the stolen money and a note thanking Edla for her kindness which had saved him from the rattrap he got caught in and requesting her to return the money to the crofter.

The story shows that we can change the world with kindness and compassion. It teaches us that materialistic things never bring inner joy, only love and respect does.

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1. How did the peddler of rattaps manage to survive?

Ans: He made rattaps of wire and went around selling them. He got material for making them by begging in the big stores or at big farms. Since his business was not quite profitable, he would beg or steal in order to survive.

Q2. How did the peddler look? Was he different from people of his type?

Ans: He was a man with a long beard, dirty, ragged, and with a bunch of rattaps dangling on his chest. His clothes were in rags, his cheeks were sunken, and hunger gleamed in his eyes. No, he looked like the way people of his type usually did.

Q3. What idea did he get about the world? What were its implications?

Ans: He got the idea that the whole world was only a big trap. It sets baits for people exactly as the rattap offered cheese and pork. It offered riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing as baits. It closed on the person who let himself be tempted to touch the bait. Then everything came to an end.

Q4. Why did the peddler think of the world as a rattap? What became his cherished pastime?

Ans: The world had never been kind to the peddler. So, he got unusual joy to think ill of the world. His pastime was to think of people he knew who had let themselves be caught in the dangerous snare of the world, and of others who were still circling around the bait.

Q5. What hospitality did the peddler with rattaps receive from the old crofter?

Ans: The old crofter served the peddler hot porridge for supper and gave him tobacco for his pipe. He entertained his guest by playing cards with him. He also informed him about his prosperous past life and how his cow supported him in his old age now.

Q6. 'The old man was just as generous with his confidences as with his porridge and tobacco'. What personal information did he impart to his guest ?

Ans: The old man told his guest that in his days of prosperity he had been a crofter at Ramsjo Ironworks. Then he worked on the land. Now he was unable to do physical labour. His cow supported him now. He supplied her milk to the creamery everyday. Last month he had received thirty kronor in payment.

Q7. Where had the old man put his money? Why did he hold it up before the eyes of his guest and what did he do later on?

Ans: The man had put his money in a leather pouch which hung on a nail in the window frame. He picked out three wrinkled ten-kronor bills for his guest to see as he had a look of disbelief. Then he stuffed them back into the pouch.

Q8. 'The next day both men got up in good, season.' Why? Who are the men and what did they do after getting up?

Ans: The two men are the old crofter and his guest- the peddler with the rattaps. The crofter was in a hurry to milk his cow. His guest did not want to stay in bed when the host had risen. They left the cottage at the same time. The crofter locked the door and put the key in his pocket. The peddler bade him goodbye and thanked him. Then each went his own way.

Q9. Why did rattrap peddler return and how did he rob the old crofter?

Ans: The rattrap peddler was tempted by the thirty kronors he had seen in the leather pouch of the old crofter. He returned half an hour later, smashed a window pane, stuck in his hand and got hold of the pouch. He took out the money and thrust it into his own pocket. Thus, he robbed the old crofter.

Q10. How did the peddler feel after robbing the crofter? Why did he discontinue walking on the public highway?

Ans: At first he felt quite pleased with his smartness. Then he realised the danger of being caught by the police with the stolen money with him. He decided to discontinue walking on the public highway and turn off the road, into the woods.

Q11. Why did Edla plead with her father not to send the vagabond away?

Ans: Edla was kind and sympathetic. She was much pained by the plight of the peddler. Edla requested her father to let the pedler spend a day with them in peace as a respite from the struggle.

Q12. How did the peddler feel while walking through the wood? What did he realise?

Ans: During the first hours the woods caused him no difficulty. Later in the day, it became worse as it was a big and confusing forest. The paths twisted back and forth. He kept on walking but did not come to the end of the wood. He realised that he had been walking around in the same part of the forest.

Q13. What do you learn about the Ramsjo Ironworks from 'The Rattrap'?

Ans: The Ramsjo Ironworks used to be a large plant, with smelter, rolling mill and forge. In the summer time heavily loaded barges and scows slid down the canal. In the winter time, the roads near the mill were black from charcoal dust.

Q14. Why did the blacksmith fail to notice the entry of the peddler in the forge?

Ans: The forge was full of many sounds. The big bellows groaned and the burning coal cracked. The fire boy shovelled charcoal into the maw of the furnace with a great deal of clatter. A water fall roared outside. Sharp north wind made the rain strike the brick-tiled roof. Due to all this noise the blacksmith failed to notice the peddler's entry.

Q15. 'The blacksmiths glanced only casually and indifferently at the intruder', What prompted them to do so?

Ans: Usually poor vagabonds, without any better shelter for the night, felt attracted to the forge by the glow of light which escaped through the sooty panes. They came in to warm themselves in front of the fire. The intruder looked like other people of his type usually did.

Q16. What did the tramp ask? Was his request granted? What did he do then?

Ans: The tramp asked permission to stay. The blacksmiths hardly deigned to look at him. The master blacksmith nodded a haughty consent without uttering a word. The tramp too did not say anything. He had come there only to warm himself and sleep. So, he eased his way close to the furnace. ‘

Q17. Who was the owner of the Ramsjo Iron Mill? Why did he come to the forge that night?

Ans: The owner of that mill was a very prominent ironmaster. His greatest ambition was to ship out good iron to the market. He insisted on quality and kept a watch on the work both night and day. He came to the forge on one of his nightly rounds of inspection.

Q18. What did the ironmaster notice in the forge? How did he react then?

Ans: The ironmaster noticed a person in dirty rags lying quite close to the furnace. Steam rose from his wet rags. The ironmaster went near him and looked at him very carefully. Then he removed his slouch hat to get a better view of his face. He thought that he was an old acquaintance of his and said : “But of course it is you, Nils Olof!”

Q19. Why did the man with the rattraps not want to undeceive the ironmaster all at once?

Ans: The peddler thought that if the fine gentleman thought he was an old acquaintance, he might perhaps throw him a couple of kronor. So he did not want to undeceive him all at once.

Q20. What observation did the ironmaster make about the stranger? What did he ask him to do?

Ans: The ironmaster saw the stranger in the uncertain light of the furnace and mistook him for his old regimental comrade. He said that it was a mistake on his part to have resigned from the regiment. If he had been in service at that time, it would never have happened. He asked the stranger to go home with him.

Q21. What did the peddler think about going up to the manor house? How did he react to the ironmaster’s invitation?

Ans: The peddler looked quite alarmed. He still had the stolen thirty kronor on him. Going up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion’s den. He did not feel pleased to go there and be received by the owner like an old regimental comrade. So he declined the invitation.

Q22. What did the ironmaster assume to be the reason behind his old comrade s refusal? How did he try to reassure him?

Ans: The ironmaster assumed that his old regimental comrade felt embarrassed because of his miserable clothing. He said that his house was not so fine that he couldn’t show himself there. He lived there only with his daughter as his wife Elizabeth was dead and his sons were abroad.

Q23. What reason did the ironmaster advance in support of his invitation to the stranger?

Ans: He said that they didn’t have any company for Christmas. He thought it was quite bad. He requested the stranger to come along with him and help them make the Christmas food disappear a little faster.

Q24. ‘The ironmaster saw that he must give in.’ What made him give in? What did he say? What did the blacksmith think about the ironmaster?

Ans: The stranger declined the ironmaster’s invitation thrice. The ironmaster then told the blacksmith that Captain von Stahle preferred to stay with him that night. He laughed to himself as he went away. The blacksmith, who knew the ironmaster, understood very well that he had not said his last word.

Q25. Who was the new guest at the forge ? Why had that person come there and how did she look’? Who accompanied her and why?

Ans: The new guest was the ironmaster’s daughter. She drove in there in a carriage along with a valet who carried on his arm a big fur coat. She had been sent there by her father hoping that she had better powers of persuasion than he himself. She was not at all pretty, but seemed modest and quite shy.

Q26. Describe the scene at the forge when Edla Willmansson came there.

Ans: The master blacksmith and his apprentice sat on a bench. Iron and charcoal glowed in the furnace. The stranger had stretched himself out on the floor. He lay with a piece of pig iron under his head and his hat pulled down over his eyes.

Q27. What did the young girl notice about the stranger? What did she conclude? How did she make him feel confidence in her?

Ans: The stranger jumped up abruptly and seemed to be quite frightened. She looked at him sympathetically, but the man still looked afraid. She concluded that either he had stolen something or else he had escaped from jail. She spoke to him in a very friendly manner to make him feel confidence in her.

Q28. What did the peddler of rat traps think while he was riding up to the manor house?

Ans: While he was riding up to the manor house he had evil forebodings. He questioned himself why he had taken that fellow's money. He thought that he was sitting in the trap and would never get out of it.

Q29. Why did the peddler derive pleasure from his idea of the world as a rattrap?

Ans: The peddler was very happy with the idea of the world as a rattrap because he was never given kindly treatment by the world. He had quite different feeling for it and loved to think ill of it by comparing it to a rattrap.

Q30. How did the ironmaster try to convince his daughter about the stranger?

Ans: He asked his daughter to have some patience. She would see something different as soon as the stranger got clean and dressed up. Last night he was naturally embarrassed. He asserted that tramp manners would fall away from him with tramp clothes.

Q31. What impression did the well-groomed guest make? How did the ironmaster react and why?

Ans: He looked truly clean and well dressed. The ironmaster did not seem pleased. He looked at him with contracted brow. It was because he had made a mistake in identifying the person in uncertain light at night. He demanded an explanation from the man.

Q32. What did the ironmaster threaten to do after knowing the mistake? How did the stranger save himself?

Ans: The ironmaster threatened to call in the sheriff. The stranger reminded the ironmaster that a day might come when he might get tempted, and then he would be caught in the big rattrap of the world. The metaphor amused the ironmaster. He dropped the idea of sending for the sheriff, but asked the stranger to leave at once.

Q33. 'The daughter stood there quite embarrassed and hardly knew what to answer.' What embarrassed her? Why did she intercede for the vagabond?

Ans: The daughter had drawn plans to make things homelike and typical of Christmas, for the poor hungry wretch. She could not get away from this idea at once. She felt embarrassed when her father asked the man to get out. She interceded for the vagabond to persuade her father to let him stay for Christmas.

Q34. What arguments did the young girl give in favour of the stranger's stay there?

Ans: She said that the whole year long, the stranger walked around. He was probably not welcome or made to feel at home even at a single place. He was chased away wherever he turned. He was always afraid of being arrested and cross-examined. She wanted him to enjoy a day of peace with them-just one in the whole year.

Q35. "He only stared at the young girl in boundless amazement." What made the man with the rattaps react in this manner?

Ans: The young girl told him after the Christmas dinner that the suit he wore was to be a Christmas present from her father. He did not have to return it. If he wanted to spend next Christmas Eve peacefully, without any evil befalling him, he would be welcomed back again. This amazed him.

Q36. "The young girl sat and hung her head even more dejectedly than usual." What two reasons forced her to behave in this manner?

Ans: First, she had learned at church that one of the old crofters of the ironworks had been robbed by a man who went around selling rattaps. Second, her father taunted her and held her responsible for letting that fine fellow" into the house.

Q37. Sum up the contents of the letter addressed to Miss Willmansson.

Ans: The stranger did not want her to be embarrassed at the Christmas season with a thief. As she had been nice to him as if he were a captain, he would be nice to her as if he were a real captain. He asked her to return the money to the old crofter. The rattap was a present from a rat who would have been caught in the world's rattap if he had not been raised to captain. It was as captain that he got power to clear himself.

38 Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle?

Answer:

Edla Willmansson had been rather nice to the peddler and had treated him with the honour that was due to a Captain. The peddler, through this mistaken identity, got an opportunity to raise himself and get above the petty temptations of the world. So he signed himself as Captain von Stahle.

39 Why did the peddler think that the world was a rattap?

Answer:

The peddler considered the whole world as a big rattap, its sole purpose being to set baits for people. The joys and riches of this world are nothing but tempting baits and anyone who is tempted by them was captured by the rattap which completely closed in on him.

40 Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler?

Edla was happy to see the gift left by the peddler as he had respected her faith in him. Edla had retained him in her house even after knowing his real identity and he, in turn, had shown her that the guest she had honoured was as honourable as the Captain. The latent goodness of his heart had been awakened and he had been able to overcome the bait of the rattap.

41 Which act of the crofter surprised the peddler? Why?

Answer:

The peddler was always shunned away wherever he went. No one treated him with kindness and so he had lost all hope of being shown any kind of warmth. But when he approached the crofter's roadside cottage he was surprised by the latter's warm welcome and generous hospitality.

42 How was the peddler treated at the crofter's cottage?

At the crofter's cottage the peddler was welcomed warmly and received generous hospitality. The crofter was an old and lonely man and the prospect of getting the peddler's company overjoyed him. So he poured all his warmth and friendly courtesy on the peddler.

43 Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler?

Answer:

The crofter was lonely. He lived alone in his cottage without a wife, a child or any companion. Since he suffered from acute loneliness he was extremely happy when he got the peddler's company. That is why he was so talkative and friendly with the peddler.

44 Why was the peddler surprised when he knocked on the door of the cottage?

Answer:

At the crofter's cottage the peddler was welcomed warmly and received generous hospitality. The crofter was an old and lonely man and the prospect of getting the peddler's company overjoyed him. So he poured all his warmth and friendly courtesy on the peddler.

45 What made the peddler finally change his ways?

Answer:

The peddler was touched by Edla's kind treatment. She treated him like a Captain in spite of knowing his real identity. This awakened the latent goodness of his heart because he wanted to show Edla he was worthy of the honour she had given him. So he finally changed his ways.

46 Why did the peddler keep to the woods after leaving the crofter's cottage? How did he feel?

Answer:

The peddler discards the public highway and keeps to the woods after leaving the crofter's cottage because he wants to avoid being caught with the thirty kronors that he had stolen from the crofter's house. He walks through mazes of forest paths but lands nowhere. When he realizes he has been trapped he feels extremely tired and sinks to the ground in despair.

47 Did the stranger agree to go to the ironmaster's house? Why or why not?

Answer:

Initially the stranger declined the ironmaster's invitation. He had the stolen thirty kronors on him and thought it was like going into the lion's den. But then he accepted the ironmaster's invitation because Edla's sympathy and compassion allayed his fears and her friendly manner made him to have confidence in her.

48 Why did the peddler decline the invitation of the ironmaster?

Answer:

The peddler declined the ironmaster's invitation because he had the stolen thirty kronors on him. He feared that he would be caught there for stealing the crofter's money. For the peddler going to the manor house of the ironmaster would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den.

49 Describe the crofter's meeting with the rattrap peddler.

Answer: The crofter gave the rattrap peddler shelter for a night. He was very hospitable with the peddler. He gave the peddler supper, tobacco to smoke, played cards with him and even shared his confidences with him.

50 Why did Edla invite the peddler?

Answer:

Edla invited the peddler because she wanted to celebrate Christmas in the true spirit of the festival by having a guest over for Christmas supper. Moreover, she wanted to give the peddler a day of peace.

51. How did the ironmaster react on seeing the stranger lying close to the furnace?

Answer:

When the iron master saw the stranger lying close to the furnace he walked up to him and looked him over carefully. Mistaking him for an old acquaintance, a comrade from his regiment, he got very excited and invited him to come to his cottage.

52 Why didn't the stranger tell the ironmaster that he was not Nils Olof?

Answer:

When the ironmaster mistakes the stranger for Captain Nils Olof, an old regimental comrade, the stranger decides not to correct him as hopes to get a couple of kronors from the ironmaster. So he does not want to undeceive him all at once.

53 Why was the crofter happy when the peddler knocked on his door?

Answer:

The crofter was very lonely. He lived alone in his cottage without a wife, a child or any companion. Since he was suffering from acute loneliness he felt very happy when the peddler knocked on his door. He treated the peddler in the most kind and hospitable manner.

54 How was the crofter 'generous with his confidences' when he spoke to the peddler?

Answer: The crofter was generous not just with his porridge and tobacco but also with his confidences with the peddler. He informed the peddler that he had been a crofter but now his cow supported him. She would give milk for the creamery every day, and last month he had even received thirty kronors as payment.

55 What did the peddler do to keep his body and soul together?

Answer:

The peddler made and sold rattraps but his business was not really profitable so he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to keep his body and soul together.

56 Why did the peddler derive pleasure from his idea of the world as a rattrap?

Answer:

The world had never been kind to the peddler so it gave him unwanted joy to think ill of it by considering it as a rattrap. It became his cherished pastime 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 in the rattrap.

57 Why did Edla plead with her father not to send the vagabond away?

Answer: Edla pleaded with her father not to send the vagabond away as it was Christmas eve and she wanted to keep the spirit of Christmas alive. She wanted to provide the vagabond with a day of comfort and solace. She justified that they had invited him against his will and since he was lonely she wanted to do something special for him on Christmas eve.

58 In what sense was the world a big rattrap according to the peddler?

Answer:

According to the peddler the whole world with its lands, seas, cities and villages was nothing but a big rattrap. It only existed to set baits for people. If offered riches and joys, shelter, food and clothing as the rattrap offered cheese and pork and as soon as anyone let himself be tempted to touch the bait, it closed on him and then everything came to an end.

59 Why did the peddler knock on the cottage by the roadside? How was he treated by the owner of the cottage?

Answer:

The peddler knocked on the cottage by the roadside to ask shelter for the night. The owner, who was an old man, without a wife or child, greeted him warmly, served him supper and played cards with him as he was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness.

60 What conclusion did the ironmaster reach when he heard that the crofter had been robbed by the peddler?

When the ironmaster heard that the crofter had been robbed by a man who went around selling rat-traps, he sarcastically remarked to his daughter that she had let a fine man into the house and was wondering as to how many silver spoons were left in their cupboard by that time.

61 What were the contents of the package left by the peddler as a Christmas gift for Edla Willmansson?

Answer:

The package that the peddler left as a Christmas gift for Edla Willmansson contained a small rattrap which had a letter he had written in large, jagged characters and in it also lay three wrinkled ten kronor notes.

62 How was the peddler received by the crofter?

Answer:

The crofter was a lonely person who received the peddler warmly, gave him supper and tobacco to fill his pipe and played a game of cards with him. He was very friendly with the peddler. He shared the details of his life with him and showed him the thirty kronor notes he had received as payment.

63 What brought about a change in the life of the peddler?

Answer:

Edla's warmth, sympathy and compassion brought about a change in the life of the peddler. He is touched by the kind treatment Edla gives him despite knowing his real identity. The latent goodness of his heart is awakened and he actually behaves like a true Captain.

64 At the crofter's home, why did the peddler feel very happy?

Answer:

The peddler was received very warmly and received generous hospitality at the crofter's home. The crofter, an old and lonely man, served him porridge, treated him kindly and the two smoked and played cards. This made the peddler feel very happy.

65 Why was the peddler amused at the idea of the world being a rattrap?

Answer:

The world had never been very kind to the peddler. So it gave him unwanted joy to think of the world with its lands and seas, cities and villages as nothing but a big rattrap that sets baits for people in the form of riches, joys and other necessities, and as soon as one got tempted, it closed in on him.

66 What hospitality did the peddler receive from the crofter?

Answer:

Instead of the sour faces which normally met the peddler, the crofter who was an old and lonely man received the peddler most warmly and offered him generous hospitality. He gave him porridge for supper and the two smoked tobacco and played cards. The crofter also shared his confidences with the peddler.

67 What do we learn about the crofter's nature from the story, 'The Rattrap'?

Answer:

The crofter was an old man who was very lonely as he had no family. He was very happy when the peddler knocked on his door as he got someone to talk to in his loneliness. He treated the peddler most courteously and offered him food and tobacco. The crofter was as generous with his confidences as he was with his hospitality.

68 Why did the crofter show the thirty kronor to the peddler?

Answer:

The crofter was too happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness so he was generous with his confidences with the peddler. The stranger must have seemed doubtful, for the crofter took down a leather pouch hanging on a nail near the window and showed the thirty kroner notes to the peddler.

69 Why did the ironmaster speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home?

Answer:

The ironmaster mistook the peddler to be an old acquaintance Nils Olof, his old regimental comrade, so he spoke kindly to the peddler and invited him to his house. He and his daughter Edla did not have any company for Christmas so he wanted the peddler to join them for Christmas dinner.

Long Answer Type Questions (5-6 MARKS)

1 The Rattrap' highlights the impact of compassion and understanding on the hidden goodness in human beings. Substantiate with evidence from the story.

Answer:

The theme of the story 'The Rattrap' is that most human beings are prone to fall into the trap of material gains. However, love and understanding can transform a person and bring out his essential human goodness. The peddler had been treated very cruelly by the world. So even though the old crofter was kind and hospitable to him, he betrayed his trust and stole thirty kronors from him. He was not impressed by the ironmaster's invitation also. But Edla Willmansson's compassion and understanding brought about a transformation in his nature. Her human qualities helped in raising him to be a gentleman. He was easily able to overcome petty temptations. The peddler who always considered the whole world to be a rattrap finally felt released from this rattrap due to the sympathetic, kind, loving and generous treatment of Edla Willmansson that was able to bring out his basic human goodness.

2 Given his temperament, Edla's father would have failed in reforming the peddler. How did Edla succeed?

Answer:

Unlike her father Edla is a compassionate, sympathetic and understanding girl and because of these virtues she succeeded in reforming the peddler. The ironmaster, on the other hand, is impulsive and whimsical. He invites the stranger to his house without confirming the latter's identity and as soon as the peddler's true identity is revealed he decides to refer the whole matter to the sheriff. But Edla continues to be nice and hospitable to him and does not turn him out of their house on Christmas eve. She treats the peddler like a real captain and he too behaves like one. She thus awakened the potential goodness of his heart and before leaving the manor house he leaves behind a rattrap as a Christmas gift for Edla and the money he had stolen from the crofter's cottage along with a letter in which he confesses his crime and requests Edla to return the thirty kronors to the old crofter.

3 Why did the peddler accept Edla's invitation when he had already declined the ironmaster's to go home with him?

Answer:

The peddler first meets Edla Willmansson, the ironmaster's daughter, when on her father's insistence she comes to invite the peddler to their manor house for Christmas. The peddler who had earlier refused to accept the ironmaster's invitation could not decline Edla's invitation. She looked at him with compassion because she immediately noticed that he was afraid. So she spoke to him in such a friendly and warm manner that the peddler felt a kind of confidence in her. In fact the peddler even tells her that it would never have occurred to him that she would bother herself over him and he would come with her immediately. So he accepted the fur coat which Edla's valet handed him and followed the young lady out to the carriage.

4 To be grateful is a great virtue of a gentleman. How did the peddler show his gratitude to Edla?

Answer:

Edla knew that her father was mistaken when he invited the peddler home thinking he was his long lost friend. Later it was revealed that he was a complete stranger and not a straight forward man. Despite this Edla begged her father not to send him away on Christmas eve. She invited him home and gave him food, shelter and clothes. Her kindness, compassion and sympathy brings out the goodness in the tramp. He leaves a packet for her as a Christmas gift which contains a rattrap and three ten kronor notes stolen from the crofter. It also contains a letter in which he signs himself as captain. Edla's care and concern changes the peddler into a dignified gentleman.

5 The people we meet in life leave an impression on us. How is the rattrap peddler affected by meeting the crofter and Edla?

Answer:

The good people we meet sometimes leave an impression on us. Compassion and understanding can transform a person and bring out his essential human goodness. As is the case with the rattrap peddler whose meeting with the crofter and Edla bring about a positive transformation in his nature. The lonely old crofter was extremely kind to the peddler. Despite his hospitality the peddler stole his money and committed a breach of trust. Edla too treated him nicely, even after she came to know his true identity. The peddler who had always considered the world to be a rattrap that enclosed upon people finally felt released from this rattrap due to the kind, generous and sympathetic treatment of the crofter and Edla. He leaves behind a letter of thanks for Edla with a Christmas gift and the money he had stolen from the crofter, to be restored to its rightful owner.

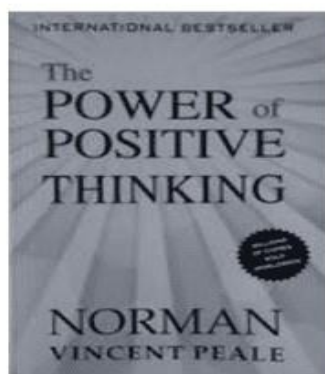
MCQs with answers

Q. No. 1) The writer tones down the philosophical load inherent in ‘The Rattrap’ with the inclusion of

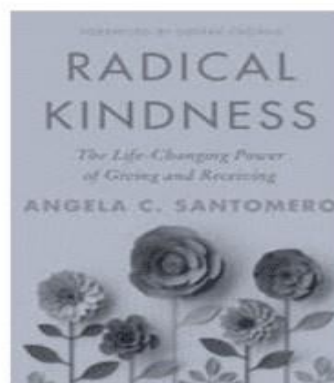
- a. ironical situations.
- b. satirical dialogues.
- c. classical references.
- d. humor and wit.

Ans. Option (d)

Q. No. 2) Imagine that the peddler from ‘The Rattrap’ turned his life around, and decided to write of his experience. Which of the following is likely to be the peddler’s book, from the popular books shown below?



(i)



(ii)



(iii)

- a. Option (i)
 - b. Option (ii)
 - c. Option (iii)
 - d. Option (iv)
- Ans. Option (b)

Q. No. 3) “Left to his own meditations”, one day the peddler fell into “a line of thought, which really seemed to him entertaining”. What does the peddler’s conception of the world as a rattrap, signify about him?

- a. The peddler had a lot of time on his hands, with nothing much to do.
 - b. The peddler was a reflective man whose wisdom did not depend on his status.
 - c. The peddler was a lonely vagrant trying to make sense of his fortunes.
 - d. The peddler was a rattrap seller, and his work deeply inspired him.
- Ans. Option (c)

Q. No. 4) “Yes, that was a fine fellow you let into the house,” said her father. What light does the given line throw on the ironmaster as a father?

- a. The ironmaster was disapproving of Edla’s decision to let the peddler stay.
- b. The ironmaster blamed his daughter for harboring a criminal at home.
- c. The ironmaster was playful with Edla and supported her decisions.
- d. The ironmaster loved Edla but thought her to be too naïve and idealistic.

Ans. Option (a)

Q. No. 5) Though the reader does not meet Captain von Stahle in person, they encounter the captain symbolically. How?

- a. The ironmaster misidentifies the peddler as his old friend, the Captain, and invites him home.
- b. The reader realizes the peddler is actually Captain von Stahle when he signs off the letter.
- c. Edla attends to the peddler as respectfully, caringly, and kindly, as she would have the Captain.
- d. The peddler accepts the error of his ways and displays the qualities expected of a Captain.

Ans. Option (d)

QUESTIONS BASED ON EXTRACT:

I 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. He had naturally been thinking of his rattraps when suddenly he was struck by the idea that the whole world about him — the whole world with its lands and seas, its cities and villages — was nothing but a big rattrap. It had never existed for any other purpose than to set baits for people.

- i. According to the extract, which of these words best describes the man?
- a. Reflective
 - b. impulsive
 - c. indifferent
 - d. Simpleminded

Ans. Option (a)

ii. Rewrite the given sentence after replacing the underlined phrase with its synonym.
It had never existed for any other purpose than to set baits for people.

Ans. It had never existed for any other purpose than to lure people.

iii. On the basis of the extract, choose the correct option with reference to the two statements given below.

1. The world offers living beings a life full of pleasure.
2. However, only compassionate people can enjoy those pleasures.

- a. (2) has been caused by (1)
- b. (2) is a hypothesis based on (1)
- c. (1) cannot be inferred from the extract but (2) can be
- d. (1) can be inferred from the extract but (2) cannot be.

Ans. Option (d)

iv. In one sentence, rationalize the given statement.

It is challenging for others to be able to understand the despair of a vagabond's life.

Ans. because most people's experiences are different from that of the vagabond/people typically live with others (family, friends, community) while a vagabond has no one to call his own and lives alone / because most people live a predictable and stable life while a vagabond lives a nomadic life

v. Replace the underlined word with its antonym from the extract.

The man who thought that the world was a rattrap lived a life that was interesting.

Ans. Monotonous

vi. The mood of the extract can be best described as _____.

- a. cautious
- b. malicious
- c. melancholic
- d. Apprehensive

Ans. Option (a)

2 ...it was a big and confusing forest which he had gotten into. He tried, to be sure, to walk in a definite direction, but the paths twisted back and forth so strangely! He walked and walked without coming to the end of the wood, and finally, he realized that he had only been walking around in the same part of the forest. 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.

i. How would you characterize the mood of the above extract?

- a. mysterious, restful
- b. ominous, despairing
- c. thoughtful, whimsical
- d. philosophical, anguished

Ans. Option (b)

ii. By what bait had the peddler been fooled?

- a. He had chosen to take the 'safe' forest route.
- b. He had decided to avoid the public highway.
- c. He had stolen money from the trusting crofter.
- d. He didn't realize the power of his rattrap analogy.

Ans. Option (c)

iii. The consequence of 'his own turn' having come was that the peddler had _____

- a. got irreversibly lost in the thick, warped forest.
- b. been fooled and imprisoned in a hopeless prison.
- c. been walking around the same part of the forest.
- d. walked the whole forest without finding the end.

Ans. Option (a)

iv. The above extract richly employs literary devices. Look at the table below.

Choose the option that correctly matches the instances/ examples in Column A with the literary devices in Column B:

Column A
1. The forest closed in upon the peddler like an impenetrable prison.
2. The big and confusing forest with its twisted paths, trunks, branches, thickets, and fallen logs.
3. The lost peddler was reminded of the world and the rattrap.
4. It was a big and confusing forest that he had gotten into. The peddler had been fooled and was trapped i forest.

- a. 1 - (i); 2 - (ii); 3 - (iii); 4 - (iv)
- b. 1 - (iv); 2 - (i); 3 - (ii); 4 - (iii)
- c. 1 - (iii); 2 - (iv); 3 - (i); 4 - (ii)
- d. 1 - (ii); 2 - (iii); 3 - (iv); 4 - (i)

Ans. Option (b)

3 "Since you have been so nice to me all day long as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you, in return, as if I was a real captain — for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers.

The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world's rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself.

"Written with friendship and high regard,
Captain von Stahle."

i. Which of the following CANNOT be attributed to the peddler, according to the above extract?

- a. indebtedness
- b. reform
- c. self-pity
- d. self-awareness

Ans. Option (c)

ii. Why did the peddler gift a rattrap as a Christmas present?

- a. It was all the peddler had that he could give away, and represented his turn to honesty.
- b. It symbolized his successful escape from entrapment as he returned the stolen money.
- c. It served as a reminder for Edla to be wary of the dangerous temptations of the world.
- d. It was a practical and convenient present that the lady of the house could effectively use.

Ans. Option (a)

iii. The word 'frame' has been used to indicate a rigid structure that surrounds something such as a picture, door, or windowpane. There are other meanings of 'frame' too.

- 1. a person's body with reference to its size or build
- 2. a single complete picture in a series forming a cinema, television, or video film.
- 3. a triangular structure for positioning the red balls in snooker.
- 4. a seal lid

Choose the option that DOES NOT list the meaning of 'frame'.

- a. Option (1)
- b. Option (2)
- c. Option (3)
- d. Option (4)

Ans. Option (d)

iv. This communication includes

- 1. a promise
 - 2. regret
 - 3. an apology
 - 4. shame
- a. only 4
 - b. only 1
 - c. 1 & 3
 - d. 2 & 4

Ans. Option (c)

4 Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you, in return, as if I was a real captain - for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers.

The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world's rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself.

"Written with friendship and high regard,
Captain von Stahle."

1. Which of the following is NOT a reason why the peddler left a Christmas present for Edla?

a To show his gratitude for her kindness

b To repay her for her hospitality

c To make amends for his past crimes

d To avoid embarrassing her at Christmas

Answer - d. To avoid embarrassing her at Christmas

2. What was the significance of the rattrap in the peddler's gift?

a. It was a symbol of his transformation

b. It was a reminder of his humble origins

c. It was a warning to Edla to be careful of strangers

d. It was a practical gift that she could use

Answer- a. It was a symbol of his transformation

3. Who is the intended recipient of the money mentioned in the passage?

a) The captain b) The narrator c) The old man on the roadside d) The thief

Answer- c) The old man on the roadside

Complete the Statement:

The peddler leaves Edla a Christmas present because he wants to be nice to her, just like she was nice to him. He signs the letter as Captain von Stahle to show her.....

Answer- that he has been inspired by her to be a better person.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the symbolic meaning of the rattrap and how does it relate to the concept of being raised to a captain?
- 2 How does the narrator's intention to protect the recipient of the pedler's gift from embarrassment tie into the theme of the passage?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1 If the world is “nothing but a big rattrap” as the tramp stated in the story ‘The Rattrap’, who might the rattrap peddler be? Discuss.

Ans. In the story "The Rattrap," if the world is considered "nothing but a big rattrap," the rattrap peddler could symbolize the individuals who manipulate and deceive others, trapping them in a cycle of greed and materialism. He represents the temptations and traps that lead people astray from genuine human connection and happiness.

2 Despite his philosophical insights, the vagabond fails to resist temptations. What would you attribute this to? Explain with reference to any instance from the text.

Ans. Despite his philosophical insights, the vagabond fails to resist temptations due to his deep-rooted desire for material comfort and security. This is evident when he succumbs to the allure of money and steals the ten kronor notes from the generous old crofter's house, disregarding his own principles and succumbing to the temptation of immediate gain.

3 What might be the significance of setting the story's events during Christmas? Justify your opinion.(HOTS)

Ans. Setting the story's events during Christmas adds a significant layer of symbolism. Christmas is a time associated with generosity, compassion, and the spirit of giving. By placing the events during this holiday, the author highlights the themes of redemption, kindness, and the potential for positive transformation, emphasizing that even those who are trapped in their circumstances can find hope and a chance for change.

4 Do you think the story reinforces a stereotype that women are more trusting, forgiving, and less practical than men? Comment with reference to Edla's actions in the story.(HOTS)

Ans. The story does not necessarily reinforce the stereotype that women are more trusting, forgiving, and less practical than men. Edla's actions in the story, where she shows kindness and compassion towards the vagabond, can be seen as acts of empathy and a belief in the potential for goodness in others, rather than solely based on her gender.

5 How did Edla persuade her father to let the pedlar stay in their home till Christmas?

Ans. Walks the whole year long/chased away/ no home that makes him feel welcome/afraid of being arrested/wants him to enjoy at least one day of peace/morally they ought not to turn away a human whom they have invited for Christmas and promised Christmas cheer.

6 How does the setting of the remote for (HOTS)

Ans. Serves as a significant backdrop for the events that unfold in the story.

- creates a sense of isolation and desolation, emphasizing 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 forest also represents the metaphorical wilderness of the human soul, highlighting the struggles and temptations that people face in their journey through life.

Therefore, the setting plays a vital role in establishing the mood and atmosphere of the story.

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

Ans.

- Gave him the power to clear his conscience
- Brought out his latent goodness
- Lent him the conviction to become a better human/ a chance at elevating himself from being a thief
- Allowed him the opportunity to behave in a dignified manner befitting that of a Captain.

7 If the Christmas spirit is about selflessness, forgiveness, and becoming 'better' versions of ourselves amongst other things, Edla Willmansson is the epitome of this spirit. Justify with two points of evidence from The Rattrap.

Ans. Edla - Despite knowing the truth about the peddler –

- gave him shelter and treated him with full respect. (forgiveness)
- even invited him for Christmas next year. (a better version of herself)

8 What did the gift of the rat trap signify?

Ans.

- small rat trap with thirty kronor and a note
- wishes money to be returned to the crofter
- confesses that he had made a mistake
- got caught in his own rat trap
- thanks for treating him like a real captain
- turns over a new leaf
- Life is one big rat trap, one gets trapped by own deeds
- everyone should get a second chance to improve oneself.

9 How does the story, 'Rattrap' highlight the importance of community over isolation? Support your rationale with textual evidence.

Ans.

- The rattrap seller undergoes a change in his personality as he experiences the shift from isolation to community.
- Rattrap seller is devoid of family and friends, he is depicted as a loner
- Instances that depict his engagement with the community
- the hospitality of the old man, the Christmas episode
- His experience of friendship leads to a change in his persona.

10 Edla is able to bring about a change of heart in the Pedlar. Justify this with reference to the story, 'The Rattrap'. What qualities helped her bring about this transformation?

Ans.

- Edla's kindness and hospitality awaken his conscience
- The ironmaster's daughter treats him with respect and shows compassion and understanding toward his condition.
- She does not force herself upon him but tries to persuade him to spend Christmas Eve with them.
- He reposes trust in her due to her friendliness.
- Later she persuades her father not to send the man away when his identity is revealed as they had invited him and promised him Christmas cheer.
- She also tells him that he is welcome again next year if he wishes so.
- This brings about a change in the man and he is reformed.
- Realizes that there is a way out of the trap.
- Returns the money through Edla.

11 Edla's empathetic and compassionate behavior changed the life of the rat trap seller. Do you think that an act of kindness can change a person's view of the world?

Ans.

- The peddler had been living a despicable life of poverty, despair, and frustration
- he repaid the crofter's hospitality by stealing his earnings
- he repaid the ironmaster's invitation to the manor house by giving a piece of his mind when the latter talked of taking the matter to the sheriff.
- the meeting with the ironmaster's daughter was a turning point in his life.
- the kindness, concern, and understanding that she showed him touched the core of his heart and transformed his way of thinking.
- the ironmaster's daughter understood that he needed security and succor
- she convinced her father to allow him to stay on in their house to share the Christmas cheer.
- she restored his dignity and self-worth.
- she treated him like a captain of the army though she was aware that he was a common tramp.
- when the girl treated him like a Captain, he spontaneously behaved like a real Captain.
- he left a rattrap as a Christmas gift for her and enclosed a letter of thanks and confession in it.
- leaving behind the stolen money to be restored to the owner, he redeemed himself from his dishonest ways
- he emerged as an altogether transformed person.

12 How would you compare the peddler's actions in relation to the crofter and Edla?

Would you say kindness does not always beget kindness, and that the conditions for receiving kindness are important for it to truly transform people? Elaborate.

Provide relevant textual details to support the analysis.

Ans. The peddler's actions in relation to the crofter and Edla highlight the complexities of human behavior and the transformative power of kindness. While the peddler initially approaches the crofter with dishonest intentions, trying to deceive him, the crofter shows kindness by offering him shelter and treating him with compassion. However, the peddler steals the crofter's money and escapes, demonstrating that his initial experiences of kindness did not lead to a transformation in his behavior. On the other hand, when the peddler encounters Edla, she treats him with genuine kindness and offers him a safe haven. She shows trust in him and believes in his potential for goodness. This act of kindness has a profound impact on the peddler, leading to a change in his attitude and actions. He feels remorse for his past behavior and decides to return the stolen money.

This suggests that while kindness has the potential to transform people, the conditions for receiving that kindness are crucial. Edla's unconditional kindness, trust, and belief in the peddler's goodness create an environment where he feels genuinely valued and worthy of redemption. In contrast, the crofter's kindness, although well-intentioned, is not enough to evoke a lasting change in the peddler.

13 Franz from The Last Lesson and the peddler from The Rattrap demonstrate the importance of learning from our mistakes to evolve into better people. Imagine that Shubhangi, your friend, feels as if she has made a mistake by not taking her academics seriously. Write an essay to Shubhangi in 120–150 words discussing instances from the two texts to give her an insight into the human tendency to make mistakes and learn from them.

You may begin like this:

Shubhangi, all of us have made mistakes at one point or another in our lives. After all, to err is human.....

Ans.

- Mistakes are common - all of us, whether old or young, may make numerous mistakes. For example, little Franz is careless, indisciplined, and unpunctual while the vagabond, who is much older than Franz, remains greedy and chooses to engage in petty thievery.
- If not corrected in time, our mistakes bring our growth to a standstill. As in the case of Franz, since he does not take Mr. Hamel's classes seriously, he is unable to learn French despite being present in the classroom. The man with the rattrap, on the other hand, is not satisfied by people's kindness to him. Instead, he steals from compassionate people like the old crofter who shared his meal with him and gave him a place to rest, without any remorse. He also greedily pretends to be the ironmaster's long-lost acquaintance, hoping for money from him.
- However, when they are confronted with their respective situations, they realize their mistakes. Franz attends the last lesson only to realize that he had lost the only opportunity to learn his mother tongue while the vagabond who pretended to be Captain Von Stahle was taken aback by the goodness of Edla.
- Upon this realization, Franz is filled with remorse and tries his best to recite the lesson. He is unable to do so and feels guilty, so he listens to the remaining part of the lesson with rapt attention. Similarly, inspired by Edla's kindness to him, the rattrap man returns the stolen money.
- Both of these characters thus realize their mistakes and take the initiative to fix them. They make the choice to evolve into better people by learning from their mistakes, something that makes a difference in their lives.

14 Imagine that you overheard the following snippet of an interaction between the valet and the housekeeper at the ironmaster's mansion at the end of the story.

Speaker 1 - Trust is a difficult choice, which may or may not be rewarded.

Speaker 2 – Yes, indeed. Ms. Willmansson really believed in that fellow, didn't she? And he didn't disappoint. She was so happy reading his letter, oh her tears of joy filled my heart with so much admiration for her. Such a kind, wonderful young lady.

Speaker 1 – Absolutely. But I wonder, what if that vagabond had run away with the silver spoons? Would you speak so glowingly of Ms. Willmansson then? Our master's daughter was a bit too gullible. Wouldn't you say?

Speaker 2 – But she did what was right. That must count for something. It's Christmas, and she helped that poor man. It didn't matter what he did. Surely the choice of right and wrong does not depend on the outcome.

Speaker 1 – Wouldn't it? I should jolly well think so.

How would you respond to the questions raised in this conversation in relation to the story? Write your response in the form of an entry in your daily journal.

Ans. Dear Journal,

Today, I overheard an intriguing conversation between the valet and the housekeeper at the ironmaster's mansion. They were discussing the actions of Ms. Willmansson, the ironmaster's daughter, in relation to the vagabond in the story "The Rattrap." The conversation raised thought-provoking questions about trust, kindness, and the choice between right and wrong.

Speaker 1 questioned whether the valet would still speak highly of Ms. Willmansson if the vagabond had stolen the silver spoons. The valet, Speaker 2, defended Ms. Willmansson, emphasizing that she did what was right by helping the poor man, regardless of the outcome. He believed that the choice of right and wrong should not depend on the result.

These contrasting viewpoints shed light on the complexities of moral decisions. While Speaker 1 seemed to question Ms. Willmansson's trust and labeled her as gullible, Speaker 2 argued that her actions were praiseworthy because she chose to do what she believed was right.

Reflecting on the story, I believe that Speaker 2's perspective resonates with the author's intention. Selma Lagerlöf uses the character of Ms. Willmansson to highlight the power of kindness and the potential for transformation. Ms. Willmansson's unwavering belief in the vagabond's goodness and her act of helping him symbolize the importance of extending kindness without expecting anything in return.

In the end, it is not solely about the outcome or whether the vagabond could have betrayed her trust. It is about the choices we make and the values we uphold, even when faced with uncertainty. Ms. Willmansson's compassion and kindness exemplify the true spirit of Christmas and the potential for positive change in all of us.

Yours contemplatively,
[Your Name]