



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



Subject : English Lesson : The Ratrap

Date of Worksheet : August 2019

Name of the Student : _____

Date: _____

Class & Div : XII

Roll Number :

Summary

- The peddler was a vagabond who sold rattraps with a little thievery on the side to make both ends meet. Had no worldly possession to call his own, not even a name.
- It amused him to think of the world as a rattrap and all the material possessions as bait as the world, he felt was never kind to him. Moreover, he prided himself in the fact that he was out of it.
- Takes shelter at a crofter's cottage. The crofter welcomed him, gave him dinner, shared his pipe, played mjolis with him also confided in him about his income and showed him where he put it.
- Next morning, the Peddler steals the money and takes the back roads to keep away from people and gets lost in the jungle at night. While he wanders in the forest he realizes that he has also got caught in the rattrap and that the money was the bait.
- Finally reaches Ramsjo ironworks, where he takes shelter for the night. The blacksmith and his assistant ignore him but the master mistakes him to be an old acquaintance and invites him home. Though the Peddler does not correct the ironmaster, hoping to get some money out of him, he declines his invitation.
- The ironmaster then sends his daughter who persuades him to go home with her. She notices his uncouth appearance and thinks that either he has stolen something or he has escaped from jail.
- The Peddler is scrubbed, bathed, given a haircut, a shave and a suit of old clothes of the ironmaster. In the morning light, the iron master realizes he is mistaken and that he is not the Captain. He wants to call the Sheriff. The peddler is agitated and breaks out that the world is rattrap and he too is sure to be caught in it. The ironmaster is amused but orders him out. The compassionate Edla convinces her father that he should spend the Christmas day with him.
- The Peddler spends the whole of Christmas Eve eating and sleeping. The next day at church, Edla and her father come to know that the Peddler is a thief who stole thirty kroners from the poor crofter.
- Back home, they found a letter addressed to Edla, signed as Captain Von Stahl and a rattrap as a gift from the crofter. In the rattrap were the three ten kroner notes of the crofter.

I Answer the following questions in 30-40 words.

1. Where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap? 2
The peddler went around selling rattraps that he had made himself from wire he had begged or stolen. One day the thought occurred to him that the world was very much like a rattrap which offered men shelter, food, clothing and other comforts for entrapping them.
2. What was the peddler's philosophy about rattrap? Why did it amuse him? 2
The peddler's philosophy was that the whole world is a rattrap with several baits in it. As one is tempted to bait and touches it, the door is closed and everything comes to an end like in a

rattrap. The thought amused him because he has so far been selling rattrap; but not fallen in this world's rattrap.

3. Why was the peddler grateful to the ironmaster and his daughter? 2

The peddler was grateful to the ironmaster and his daughter as they empowered him to release himself from the world's rattrap through their selfless hospitality, love, sympathy, compassion, and understanding.

4. Why did he show the thirty kroner to the peddler? 2

The crofter told the peddler that he was comfortable and had earned a reasonable sum of money from his extraordinary cow that gave a lot of milk and he had earned thirty kroner last month. The peddler expressed disbelief and thus the crofter showed him the money.

5. In what sense was the world a big rattrap according to the peddler? OR Why did the peddler think that the world was a rattrap?

The peddler was a very poor man who earned his living by selling rattraps he made himself from the materials he got by begging. His mind, thus, was always preoccupied with rattraps. One day, he suddenly thought of the whole world to be a big rattrap. He felt that the shelter, food, clothes, riches and joys that the world provided were all baits set to entrap man just as a rattrap offered cheese or meat to entrap rats. As soon as one was trapped, everything came to an end.

6. Why did Edla plead with her father not to send the vagabond OR Why did Edla still entertain the peddler even after she knew the truth about him? (BOARD)

Edla had always thought the peddler to be a poor, homeless tramp. Therefore, she didn't feel cheated when his true identity was revealed. Instead, she felt very bad for him and his miserable condition, and pleaded on his behalf. She and her father had promised him Christmas cheer, and she felt that it would be wrong to send him away.

7. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation? 2

Edla Willmansson came to invite the peddler. She requested him to come home with such an apparent and genuine kindness that the peddler could not refuse. She instilled a certain confidence in him.

8. When did the ironmaster realise his mistake? 2

The ironmaster had first seen the tramp in the dim glow of the furnace. He had taken him to be his old regimental comrade, but when the tramp had come down cleanly shaven and dressed in a borrowed suit of the master, the ironmaster at once realized that it had been a case of mistaken identity. He had taken the tramp to be his old regimental comrade.

9. What was the content of the letter written by the peddler to Edla?

The peddler had written that since Edla had treated him like a captain, he wanted to be nice to her in return. He did not want her to be embarrassed at Christmas by a thief. He had requested that the crofter's money that he had stolen be returned. He further wrote that the rattrap was a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in the world's rattrap, if he had not been raised to the status of captain, which motivated him to reform himself.

10. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle?

The peddler was touched by the kind treatment Edla gave him. Edla, despite knowing his real identity, treated him like a captain. Now it was his turn to show her that the guest she had honoured was as honourable as the captain and not merely a petty thief. Latent goodness of his heart awakened, he behaved in a dignified manner. Signed himself as Captain von Stahle.

II Answer the following questions in 120-150 words.

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

The peddler feels absolutely no regret about accepting the hospitality of the crofter and then robbing him of his hard-earned kroner. He enjoys playing cards with his host all evening and then makes away with his money the next morning. When the ironmaster having mistaken him for a regimental comrade invites him to his house to share his Christmas lunch, he feels a sense of entrapment, having the stolen money on his person, and thus declines the invitation. He feels that to accept the hospitality of the ironmaster would be like voluntarily throwing himself into the lion's den. However, he does not at the outset disclose his true identity because he hopes to profit from the mistake, thinking perhaps a few kroner would come his way but now he only wants to rest near the forge at night and quietly slip away in the morning. The kindness of the ironmaster's daughter touches the tramp's heart making him feel more worthy. She makes him feel comfortable and raises his self-esteem. Even after his true identity has been discovered, she feels sympathetic towards him and convinces her father to let him stay and share Christmas cheer with them. She does not for a moment doubt his integrity and the tramp repays this faith and kindness by leaving behind the stolen kroner to be returned to the rightful owner along with one of his rattraps as a present and a letter addressed to the daughter thanking her for elevating his status to that of a captain and for the chance to redeem his mistake.

2. What made the peddler finally change his ways?

The peddler had lived a life of hardship and constant rejection. It had made him cynical and embittered. Self-preservation had become his sole objective and he could not sense the difference between right and wrong. He had lost his sense of self-worth, having lived in poverty with no home to call his own and not even a name to answer to. He had to resort to begging and petty thieving to survive and life offered no pleasure at all. The sadness and monotony of his life had convinced him of the fact that life was like a huge rattrap and just as the cheese and pork in the traps that he made were the bait, so also the riches, joys, shelter and the food that life offered were the bait. As soon as anyone let himself be tempted, it closed in around him and all came to an end. He took pleasure in thinking of all the acquaintances who had been caught in this trap. However, the meeting with the ironmaster's daughter was the turning point in his life. The kindness, the concern and the understanding that she showed him touched the core of his heart and transformed his way of thinking.

3. 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?

The peddler, with his subtle sense of humour was able to make an equation between the rattraps that he made and the world, which he likened to a huge rattrap, offering bait and then closing in, round those who fell for them. This was his way of consoling himself that no matter

what his lot, he was better off than those who fell for the worldly bait of joy, warmth, shelter and other such comforts. This makes the sad, the weary and melancholy tramp very human and real. He manages to arouse the sympathy of the reader despite his thieving ways and his dead conscience for he makes the reader examine the merits of self-preservation. His preoccupation with remaining undetected as the thief who has made away with the thirty hard-earned kroner of the crofter makes him refuse the luxury of spending Christmas at the fine house of the ironmaster. The kindness with which the ironmaster's daughter treats him touches the core of his hitherto hardened heart. The restoration of his dignity results in his transformation into a responsible human being, sensitive, courteous, grateful and gracious.

4. The story, 'The Rattrap' is both entertaining and philosophical. Do you agree with this statement? Why/Why not?

The story, 'The Rattrap' is indeed, both entertaining and philosophical. The fast-paced narrative in the third person, generous use of dialogue by the author and different characters belonging to different mindsets and locales make the story interesting and entertaining. Besides, the author has managed to keep up the suspense till the end. The incidents in the forge, with the ironmaster coming at midnight, hold our attention. The peddler's incessant(continuous) refusals to the ironmaster to accompany him, but his accepting Edla's invitation in one go, the ironmaster's realisation of his mistake, and Edla's sympathy and generosity, all make the story quite gripping. While all the above events make the story interesting, there is also an element of philosophy in the story. Somewhere, the peddler's theory of the world being a rattrap is true. One feels caught up like a rat in the entrapping's of the world. Some people fall into this trap never to come out of it again. The story teaches us that, as human beings, we are not above temptations.

Practice Questions (Board)

1. The Rattrap' focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others. Comment.
2. What made the peddler finally change his ways?
3. How did the crofter tempt the peddler to steal his money? How did it change the peddler's life?
4. 'The Rattrap' focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others. Elucidate.
5. Why did the peddler accept the invitation extended by Edla having declined the one from her father?
6. Why did the peddler decline the invitation extended to him by the ironmaster?
7. How did the peddler show his gratitude to Edla?
8. How does the story the rattrap show the redemptive power of love and compassion?
9. Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler?
10. Why was crofter so kind and generous to the peddler?
11. When and how did the peddler realise that he had fallen into a rattrap? How could he get out of it.?
12. How was the peddler received at the Ramsjo iron mill?
13. Give instances from the chapter the rattrap to show that most of its characters are victims of loneliness.

