

# CHAPTER- 4

## THE RATTRAP

### QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

#### THINK AS YOU READ

##### Q1. From where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap?

**Ans:** 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.

##### Q2. Why was he amused by this idea?

**Ans:** 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.

##### Q3. Did the peddler expect the kind of hospitality that he received from the crofter?

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

##### Q4. Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler?

**Ans:** 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 confidences.

##### Q5. Why did he show the thirty kronor to the peddler?

**Ans:** 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.

##### Q6. Did the peddler respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter?

**Ans:** 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 window pane, took out the money and hung the leather pouch back in its place. Then he went away.

#### THINK AS YOU READ

##### Q1. What made the peddler think that he had indeed fallen into a rattrap?

**Ans:** 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 befooled by a bait and had been caught in.

##### Q2. Why did the ironmaster speak kindly to the peddler and invite him home?

**Ans:** 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.

##### Q3. Why did the peddler decline the invitation?

**Ans:** 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

### Q1. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmansson's invitation?

**Ans:** 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.

### Q2. What doubts did Edla have about the peddler?

**Ans:** As Edla lifted the peddler's hat, he jumped up abruptly and seemed to be quite frightened. Even her kind looks, disclosure of her name and purpose of visit failed to calm him. From his fear, she thought that either he had stolen something or he had escaped from jail.

### Q3. When did the ironmaster realise his mistake?

**Ans:** Next morning, the stranger was cleaned and well-dressed. The valet had bathed him, cut his hair and shaved him. He was led to the dining room for breakfast. The ironmaster saw him in broad daylight. It was impossible to mistake him for an old acquaintance now. Then the ironmaster realised his mistake and threatened to call the Sheriff.

### Q4. How did the peddler defend himself against not having revealed his true identity?

**Ans:** The peddler explained that he had not tried to pretend as his acquaintance. He was not at fault. All along he had maintained that he was a poor trader. He had pleaded and begged to be allowed to stay in the forge. No harm had been done by his stay. He was willing to put on his rags again and go away.

### Q5. Why did Edla still entertain the peddler even after she knew the truth about him?

**Ans:** Edla did not think it proper on their part to chase away a human being whom they had asked to come to their house and had promised him Christmas cheer. She understood the reality of the peddler's life and wanted him to enjoy a day of peace with them. Hence, she still entertained the peddler even after knowing the truth about him.

## THINK AS YOU READ

### Q1. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler?

**Ans:** As soon as Edla opened the package of the gift, the contents came into view. She found a small rattrap with three wrinkled ten kronor notes and a letter addressed to her. The peddler wanted to be nice in return as she had been so nice to him all day long. He did not want her to be embarrassed at the Christmas season by a thief.

### Q2. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle?

**Ans:** The ironmaster has invited the peddler to his house mistaking him for Captain von Stahle. He was welcomed there and looked after as captain even after the reality became known. The peddler got a chance to redeem himself from dishonest ways by acting as an honourable Captain.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

### Q1. How does the peddler interpret the acts of kindness and hospitality shown by the crofter, the iron master and his daughter?

**Ans:** The peddler interprets the acts of kindness and hospitality shown by the crofter, the iron master and his daughter differently. He cheats the crofter as he provides him company in his loneliness and helps him pass time. He wants to get a couple of kronors from the iron master and is surprised at the contrasting style of behaviour of father and daughter. He is touched by the kindness, care and intervention of Edla on his behalf.

**Q2. 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?**

**Ans:** The ironmaster is impulsive\* whereas his daughter is cool, logical, kind and thoughtful. In uncertain light he (iron master) mistakes the stranger as his old regiment comrade. He invites him home and takes care of his feeding, clothing etc. When he sees him in broad day light he calls the man dishonest, demands an explanation and is ready to call in the sheriff. His daughter is more observant. She notices the fear of the stranger and thinks that either he is a thief or a run away prisoner. In spite of that she is gentle, kind and friendly to him. She treats him nicely even after knowing the mistake in identity.

**Q3. The story has many instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to others' behaviour. Pick out instances of these surprises.**

**Ans:** The peddler is surprised at the warm welcome, generous supper, cheerful company and intimate confidences by the crofter. The ironmaster addresses the peddler as Captain von Stahle. He is surprised when the ironmaster calls him "Nils Olof". The ironmaster assumes his declining the invitation a result of embarrassment caused by his miserable clothing. The peddler's comparison of the world to a rattrap makes the ironmaster laugh and he drops the idea of calling in the sheriff.

The peddler looks at Edla in boundless amazement when she tells him that the suit is a Christmas present. She also invites him to spend next Christmas with them. She does all this even after knowing the mistake about his identity. The crofter is robbed by his guest, the rattrap peddler, in return of his hospitality.

**Q4. What made the peddler finally change his ways?**

**Ans:** Edla Willmansson 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 in the peddler and finally he changed his ways.

**Q5. How does the metaphor of the rattrap serve to highlight the human predicament?**

**Ans:** The world entices a person through the various good things of life such as riches and joy, shelter and food, heat and clothing. These were just like the baits in the rattrap. Once someone is tempted by the bait, the world closed on him. The peddler was tempted by thirty kronor of the crofter. It makes him hide himself. He walks through the wood. He is afraid to go to the Manor house. He gets peace only after returning the bait (money).

**Q6. 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?**

**Ans:** The peddler has a subtle sense of humour, which is revealed during his interactions with the ironmaster and his daughter after the truth about him becomes known. He is neither afraid of being turned out in cold in rags nor of being sent to prison. He makes the ironmaster laugh with his metaphor of the rattrap. His letter with the Christmas present to Edla is a fine example of his capacity to make others laugh at him. Thus, he lightens the seriousness of the theme of the story and also endears himself to us.

## 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.

**Q1. The reader's sympathy is with the peddler right from the beginning of the story. Why is this so? Is the sympathy justified?**

**Ans:** 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 rattraps. He begs the material like wire for his rattraps. 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.

**Q2. The story also focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others.**

**Ans:** 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 rattraps, 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 haughtily at him and nod 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 Stehle 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.

**Q3. 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?**

**Ans:** 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 prisonship 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.

**Q4. The story is both entertaining and philosophical. Discuss.**

**Ans:** 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 reveals 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 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**

**Q1. 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.**

**Ans:** Initially, the man who went around selling small rattraps of wire is called a Vagabond' for he plodded along the road, left to his own meditations. He is referred to as "stranger" by the narrator while describing his meeting with the old crofter. When he leaves the next day he is described as "the man with rattraps.' When he returns half an hour later to steal money he is called 'the rattrap peddler.'

For the blacksmiths at the forge he is an intruder. The narrator now refers to him as a 'tramp'. For the rich ironmaster he is a "ragamuffin'. Since he had never seen the ironmaster or known his name, the man with rattraps is called a 'stranger'. He is described as 'stranger\*' while he stretches himself out on the floor when the ironmaster leaves. The label sticks to him during his stay at the manor house as a guest. These descriptions also suggest the degree of social difference ^between the persons and the peddler of rattraps and their attitude towards him.

**Q2. 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.**

**Ans:** 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.

Ans. 1.He had not come there to talk but only to warm himself and sleep.

2.To go up to the manor house would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den.

3.....there is no one at home except my oldest daughter and myself.

4.But he laughed to himself as he went away ...

5.....apparently hoping that she would have better powers of persuasion than he himself.

6. The stranger had stretched himself out on the floor...

7. It would never have occurred to me that you would bother with me yourself, miss.

8..... if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself.

In sentences 3, 5 and 7 the reflexive pronouns 'myself', 'himself' and 'yourself' are used to convey emphasis.

In sentences 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8, the reflexive pronoun is used in place of personal pronoun to signal that it refers to the same subject in the sentence.

## THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

**Q1. Notice the words in bold in the following sentence:**

**"The fire boy shovelled charcoal in 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.**

**Ans:** 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 bellow, coal, charcoal, shovel and sooty panes.

**Q2. "Mjolis" is a card game of Sweden.**

**Name a few indoor games played in your region. "Chopar" could be an example.**

**Ans:** 'Rang-kaaf and 'Turap Bol' are popular indoor card games in our region.

'Chukhal' is a poor man's substitute for Chopar.

'Goti-paar' is popular among young girls in rural areas.

**Q3. 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.**

**Ans:** The uncommon terms for "a small farmer" are:

tiller, plowman/ploughman, husbandman, rancher, tenant farmer and small holder.

In our language there are words like haali', 'bataai-jotta', 'jotta' etc.

## MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

### SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

**Q1. How did the peddler of rattraps manage to survive?**

**Ans:**He made rattraps 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 rattraps 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 rattrap 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 rattrap? 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 rattraps 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 Ramsjö 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 has seemed sceptical. 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 rattraps. 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? [All India 2014]**

**Ans:** Edla was kind and sympathetic. She was much pained by the plight of the peddler. Edla requested her father to 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 long lines of 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 deceive 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 deceive 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 Stjemstrom, 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 he/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? [Delhi 2014]**

**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 told him that the Sheriff might lock him up for dissembling. He 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 rattraps 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 rattraps. 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. She asked her to return the money to the old crofter. The rattrap was a present from a rat who would have been caught in the world's rattrap if he had not been raised to captain. It was as captain that he got power to clear himself.

### LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

#### Q1. What is the theme of the story 'The Rattrap' ? How has this theme been developed?

**Ans:** The theme of the story is that most human beings are prone to fall into the trap of material benefit. However, every human being has an essential goodness that can be awakened through understanding and love. A human being has the tendency to redeem himself from dishonest ways.

The theme is developed with the help of the metaphor of the rattrap. The peddler of rattraps calls the world a big rattrap. The material benefits like riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing are temptations that allure a person to fall into the rattrap of the world exactly as the bait of cheese and pork attract a rat to fall into the rattrap. Once someone takes the bait, the world closes in on him and then everything is lost.

The peddler is tempted by the thirty kronors of the old crofter. He steals the money. Now he is afraid of being caught and moves through the woods. It is the kind, sympathetic, loving and generous treatment given by Edla Willmansson that helps him get himself free from the rattrap of the world.

#### Q2. Give an account of the peddler's meeting with the old crofter. How does the peddler conduct himself? What light does this episode throw on human nature?

**Ans:** One dark evening the peddler reached a little gray cottage by the roadside. He knocked on the door to ask shelter for the night. The owner, an old man without wife or child, welcomed him. He was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. He served him hot porridge for supper and gave him tobacco for his pipe. Then he played cards with him till bed time.

The host told the peddler that in his days of prosperity, he worked on land at Ramsjo Ironworks. Now his cow supported him. He sold her milk at the creamery everyday. He showed the peddler the thirty kronor notes he got as payment that month. Then he hung the leather pouch on a nail in the window frame. Next morning the crofter went to milk the cow, and the peddler went away. However, he returned after half an hour, broke the window pane, took the money out of the leather pouch and hang it back on the nail. This episode shows that in loneliness, human beings crave for company, for social bonding. Secondly, temptations can overpower the greatest philosopher. The peddler who calls the world a rattrap is himself tempted by thirty kronor.

#### Q3. How did the peddler feel after robbing the crofter? What course did he adopt and how did he react to the new situation? What does his reaction highlight?

**Ans:** Having robbed his generous host, the peddler felt quite pleased with his smartness. He did not feel any qualms of conscience that he had abused the confidence reposed in him by the crofter. The selfish wretch thought only of his own safety. He realised the danger of being caught by the police with the stolen thirty kronor on his person. Hence, he decided to discontinue walking on the public highway and turn off the road, into the woods.

During the first few hours the woods caused him no difficulty. Later on, 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 only been walking around in the same part of the forest. The forest closed in upon him like an impenetrable prison from which he could never escape.

The reaction of the peddler highlights the predicament of human nature. Temptations lead to evil. The fruits of evil seem pleasant at first, but they deprive man of his goodness and push him into the maze of the world which holds a vice-like grip on him.

**Q4. (i) 'The blacksmiths glanced only casually and indifferently at the intruder.' (ii) 'The ironmaster did not follow the example of the blacksmiths who had hardly deigned to look at the stranger \* What do these attitudes reveal? How does the forge-episode help to develop the story? What is its implication?**

**Ans:** The blacksmiths display the typical attitude of manual workers and labourers for whom work is the first priority and parasites on human society are drags on the fruit of their labour. The master blacksmith nods a haughty consent without honouring the intruder with a single word. Evidently, he regards the tramp as insignificant.

The ironmaster, who is on his nightly round of inspection, behaves differently. He walks closely up to him and looks him over carefully. Then he removes his slouch hat to get a better view of his face. In the uncertain light of the furnace he mistakes the stranger for his old regimental comrade and requests him to go home with him. When the stranger declines the invitation, the ironmaster sends his daughter to persuade him to spend Christmas Eve with them. Thus the forge episode helps to develop the story.

The episode highlights the difference in the reactions of various persons to the same set of circumstances. This reveals the shades of human nature. It shows that even the person with best discernment may commit an error of judgement.

**Q5. Bring out the contrast in the ironmaster's attitude and behaviour towards the stranger before and after he realises his mistake.**

**Ans:** The ironmaster is moved to see his old regimental comrade in a pitiable state. He considers it a mistake on his part to have resigned from the regiment. He insists that his old comrade will go home with him. As the stranger declines the invitation, he thinks that the man feels embarrassed because of his miserable clothing. He explains that he does not have such a fine home that he cannot show himself there. He requests the stranger to provide company to him and his daughter for Christmas. When the stranger refuses thrice, he sends his daughter, with a big fur coat to persuade him. Just before breakfast on Christmas Eve, he thinks of feeding him well and providing him same honourable piece of work.

His behaviour undergoes a U-turn when he looks at the well-groomed stranger and realises his mistake. He expresses his displeasure with a wrinkled brow and demands an explanation from the man. Though the peddler defends himself well saying he never pretended to be someone else, the ironmaster calls him dishonest and threatens to hand him over to the sheriff. When the metaphor of world being a rattrap softens him a bit, he asks the peddler to quit at once.

**Q6. What impression do you form of Edla on reading the story 'The Rattrap' ?**

**Ans:** Miss Edla Willmansson is the eldest daughter of the owner of the Ramsjo Ironworks. She is not pretty, but modest and quite shy. She is quite obedient and visits the forge at the behest of her father. She has a wonderful power of observation and takes quick judgement. From the stranger's frightened looks, she concludes that he is either a thief or a runaway convict. She uses her skills of persuasion to make the stranger agree to accompany her home. Her compassionate looks, friendly manner and polite way of address help her. She tells her father that nothing about the man shows that once he was an educated man.

She believes in the spirit of Christmas and intercedes on behalf of the stranger to persuade her father to let him stay and be happy. She first makes a passionate plea and then argues that they should not chase away a person they had invited themselves and promised him Christmas cheer.

Her dejection on learning that the peddler with rattraps was a thief reflects her sensitiveness. The gift of the captain makes her happy. It is her noble action that helps a thief redeem himself. In short, she is an intelligent, affectionate and kind young girl.

**Q7. Comment on the ending of the story 'The Rattrap'.**

**Ans:** The story 'The Rattrap' has a very beautiful ending. It helps us to realise that all is not lost

for human beings who are prone to fall into the trap of material benefits. It is the protagonist of the story—the peddler with the rattraps—who coins the metaphor of the rattrap, falls himself in it on being tempted and ultimately redeems himself by renouncing the temptation. His admission that he had been the thief, and the treatment he got as a captain, show how love and understanding can transform even a depraved soul. The story thus comes a full circle with the ending. All questions are answered and no loose tags remain hanging. The ending also pays tribute to the goodness of humanity here exhibited through Miss Edla Willmansson. The happy ending also arouses our optimism and belief in the essential goodness of man and other human virtues. Thus it serves to inspire the readers to do noble acts.

**Q8. Do you think the title of the story 'The Rattrap' is appropriate? Give reasons to support your answer.**

**Ans:** The story has an appropriate and suggestive title. It at once draws our attention to the central theme—the whole world is a big rattrap. This metaphor helps us to understand the human predicament. All the good things of the world are nothing but baits to tempt a person to fall into the rattrap. Through the character of the peddler, the writer drives home the idea that most human beings are prone to fall into the trap of material benefits.

The story begins with rattraps and ends with a rattrap as a present for someone who has helped a rat to get free from the rattrap. Even the middle of the story revolves round the rattrap. The actions of the peddler after he steals thirty kronor of the old crofter reveal the inner conflicts, tensions and lack of peace of a person who touches the bait of temptation. Renunciation of the temptation helps in redemption. Thus, we conclude that the title is apt and significant.

#### VALUE-BASED QUESTIONS

**Q1. Honesty is considered the best policy for earning one's bread and butter. Stealing is a sin and a punishable act. Vagabonds tend to forget this essential goodness. Elucidate the dictum in the light of the following lines: "He made them himself at odd moments, from the material he got by begging in the stores or at the big 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."**

**Ans:** **Honest Means of Livelihood**

Every human being has to earn his bread and butter. Means vary from person to person, but one has to face many obstacles and odd situations in life. These means can be fair or foul, honest or dishonest. Unfortunately, the modern man hankers after money and has become commercial-minded. People are not afraid of the Almighty. They wish to accumulate riches by hook or by crook. They have no respect for humanity and moral values. The social norms and time-tested principles bemoan somewhere in a corner. The mortals of this computer age focus only on pecuniary gains. They are desirous of becoming rich overnight. And it is sure that no one can make easy money without resorting to corruption. One should always remember that those who are honest get respect in society and feel themselves satisfied. They don't have to feel guilty. But those who are corrupt hide themselves behind the veils when caught. A person should always be honest and sincere. The factory workers, farmers, teachers and poor artisans live an honest life and are appreciated everywhere. Freud rightly proclaimed in his letter to Wilhelm Fliess that 'Being entirely honest with oneself is a good exercise'. A few honest men are better than numerous bad ones.

**Q2. It is rightly said that the crown and glory of life is character. Alphonse Karr, a French journalist, said, "Every man has three characters: that which he shows, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has". Substantiate the saying taking ideas from the following expressions: "...It was quite honest, either. You must admit that, and I should not be surprised**

**if the sheriff would like to have something to say in the matter.”**

**Ans:**

**“The crown and glory of life is character  
When wealth is lost, nothing is lost;  
When health is lost, something is lost;  
When character is lost, everything is lost”.**

Charming said that the great hope of society is individual character. Character plays a pivotal role in the life of a human being. It is as significant for a man as a crown for a king. It is the glory of a man's life. Character reflects the traits and personality of a person. A man of character retains moral strength and faces the music of life bravely. A man is judged by his character. A person who has good character is respected and honoured in society. It is often said that our lot depends on our character. One rises in life in proportion to the strength of one's character. Character gives self-satisfaction to a person. He can lead a happy and contented life. He accumulates wealth in heaven instead of building treasures on the earth. It is only character that distinguishes man from beasts. Goethe .remarked that “Talent is nurtured in solitude; character is formed in the stormy billows of the world.

**“Not in the clamor of the crowded street,  
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,  
But is ourselves, are triumph and defeat. —Longfellow**

**Q3. Man is a gregarious animal. Aristotle wrote in Politics, “He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god”. Lonliness gnaws a man from within. Write an article on the topic mentioned above in your own words. You can take ideas from the following lines:“...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.”**

**Ans:**

#### **Loneliness: A Terrible Moment**

Enduring loneliness requires perseverance and strength of mind. The state of alienation may depress a person. He may become insane. Everybody cannot bear the pangs of leading a lonely life. Seclusion irritates a mortal as it is known to us that man is a gregarious animal. He needs company to share his views and thoughts. It is also said that solitude is the playfield of satan. Man gets diverted and takes recourse to illegal ways. The Bible says that ‘woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up’. An alienated person leads a miserable and pitiable life. Survival at a deserted place becomes next to impossible for a human being. Solitude gives vent to the feelings of enmity against mankind. A depressed person may go to any extent to avenge his seclusion. Solitude and melancholy are synonymous of each other. Mother Teresa has described loneliness in a fitting manner. She said, “Lonliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty”. Each individual needs love, affection and company. The victims of solitude and lonliness never feel themselves gratified. They never feel themselves the part of the main stream. It breeds negativity and animosity. They become hostile towards the fellow human beings. The repercussions of loneliness are catastrophic and disastrous.

**Q4. Voltaire has rightly remarked that ‘Love truth, but pardon error’. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. Sympathy is a divine virtue. It is indispensable for a philanthropist. Elucidate the dictum taking ideas from the following expressions.**

**“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..."**

**Ans:** The Bible proclaims that 'Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy'. Love begets love and hatred begets hatred. People in this world have a reciprocal relationship. They reciprocate the thing they receive. It is a universally accepted aphorism that 'To err is human, to forgive, divine'. Sympathy has a great power. A sympathetic person receives the blessings of the destitute whom he helps or forgives. People can't imagine the incredible power of sympathy. A person's kind acts and words may save many precious lives. One must not forget that those who sympathise with others get inner satisfaction. It awakens the affection of a human heart. It leaves an indelible impression even on the most rugged 'nature'. Its results are better than a king's power. It helps a man in his endeavour to elevate his fellow human beings from a state of poverty and distress. Dr. Samuel Johnson averred that the wretched have no compassion. When a man suffers himself, it is called misery; when he suffers in the suffering of another, it is called pity. Forgiveness is, undoubtedly, a divine quality. The philanthropists should inculcate the habit of forgiving others in their character.