

The Rattrap

1. What did the peddler say in his defence when it was clear that he was not the person the ironmaster thought him to be ? (2024)

Ans.

- made no attempt to hide / cheat
- never pretended to be anything but a poor trader
- had pleaded and obeyed to be allowed to stay in the forge
- was ready to put on his rags and go away

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

SA I (2 marks)

1. Why did the iron master compare Edla to a parson? (2023)

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

3. What made the rattrap peddler resort to begging and petty thievery? (2022 C)

4. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain Von Stahle? (2022 C)

5. What Christmas present did the peddler give Edla? Explain its significance. (2022)

6. Explain the metaphor of "The Rattrap" as explained by the peddler. (Term II, 2021-22)

7. The iron master accuses the peddler of not being quite honest. What does the peddler say to justify the situation? (Term II, 2021-22)

8. How did the Crofter entertain the peddler? (2020)

9. Why did the peddler derive pleasure from his idea of the world as a rattrap? (Delhi 2014)

10. Why did Edla plead with her father not to send the vagabond away? (AI 2014)

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

(Delhi 2014C)

12. Why did the peddler knock on the cottage by the roadside? How was he treated by the owner of the cottage? (Delhi 2014C)

13. What conclusion did the ironmaster reach when he heard that the crofter had been robbed by the peddler? (AI 2014C)

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

(AI 2014C)

SA II (3 marks)

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

(Delhi 2016)

16. What hospitality did the peddler receive from the crofter? (Delhi 2016)

17. Why did the Crofter show the thirty kronors to the peddler? (AI 2016)

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

(AI 2016)

19. How could the peddler enter the forge without being noticed by the blacksmith? (Foreign 2016)

20. At the crofter's home, why did the peddler feel very happy? (AI 2015C)

SA III (4 marks)

21. In the lesson "The Rattrap", the narrator takes an empathetic approach towards the rattrap seller. Considering the above statement, discuss the narrator's portrayal of the peddler. (Term II, 2021-22)

22. In Edla's dealing with the peddler, she was compassionate and generous. Discuss with reference to the story 'The Rattrap'. (Term II, 2021-22)

23. Read the extract given below and briefly answer the questions that follow.

But just as he laid his head on the ground, he heard a sound - a hard regular thumping. There was no doubt as to what that was. He raised himself. "Those are the hammer strokes from an iron mill," he thought.

(i) Who is he?

(ii) Where was 'he' at that moment?

(iii) Why did he lay his head on the ground?

(iv) Did he feel comfortable on hearing the thumping sound? Why? **(2020)**

LA I (5 marks)

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

LA II (6 marks)

25. A good deed or an act of kindness can change a person's view of the world. What characteristics of Edla's conduct inspire the peddler to redeem himself and change his ways? **(2020 C)**

26. How does the story, 'The Rattrap' show the redemptive power of love and compassion? **(AI 2019)**

27. 'The Rattrap' focuses on human loneliness and the need to bond with others. Comment. **(Delhi 2019)**

28. The peddler thinks that the whole world is a rattrap. This view of life is true only of himself and of no one else in the story. Comment. **(Delhi 2017)**

29. The peddler declined the invitation of the ironmaster but accepted the one from Edla. Why? **(Delhi 2015)**

30. Edla proved to be much more persuasive than her father while dealing with the peddler. Comment. **(Delhi 2015)**

31. Why did the crofter repose confidence in the peddler? How did the peddler betray that and with what consequences? **(Delhi 2015)**

32. Why did the ironmaster invite the peddler to his home? Why did the latter decline it? **(Foreign, 2015)**

33. To be grateful is a great virtue of a gentleman. How did the peddler show his gratitude to Edla? **(AI 2015C)**

CBSE Sample Questions

SA I (2 marks)

1. 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.

(2022-23)

2. A mistaken identity led to a discovery of a new one for the rattrap peddler. How did this impact him? (Term II, 2021-22)

3. Explain the metaphor of the rattrap in context of the story by Selma Lagerlof.

(2020-21)

LA I (5 marks)

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

(2020-21)

ANSWERS

Previous Years' CBSE Board Questions

1. Edla refuses to allow her father to kick out the peddler from their house on Christmas Eve. She reflects the Christian value of celebrating Christmas and sharing the love, care and joy of the festival. She felt that to drive out a human being whom they had asked to come and to whom they had promised to celebrate Christmas with them, would be inhuman on their part. She wanted to spread the joy and cheer of Christmas even to the peddler who was a complete stranger.

2. The prospect of spending the night in the ex-army estate of the ironmaster of the Ramsjö Ironworks terrified the peddler. When he was mistaken for an old friend, he did not make an effort to correct the ironmaster. Accepting the offer "would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den," he thought, feeling uneasy about the fact that he was carrying the stolen thirty kronor bills. As a result, the peddler decided it would be preferable to turn down the invitation.

3. The peddler would go around selling the small rattraps of wire that he made at odd moments. These rattraps were a product of his begging in the stores or at the big farms. But even so, since the business was not especially profitable, he had to resort to both begging and petty thievery to survive.

4. 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 truth was known. The peddler got a chance to redeem himself from the dishonest ways by acting as an honourable captain, befitting of the person he was mistaken for.

5.

Ans 1) The Christmas present by peddler to Edla consist of a small rattrap, with three ten kroner wrinkled notes and a letter of gratitude in jagged writing which was a testimonial of vagabond's transformation into a noble soul. It is special and worthless because the peddler didn't ~~deserve~~ ^(invaluable) trust, Edla had reposed on him and love, sympathy shown by Edla to Peddler made his day as well as her day. Christmas proved to be a field day with full of relation for both of them. The peddler had elevated himself to the rank of captain with Edla's attraction nature.

[Topper's Answer, 2022]

6. According to the peddler, the whole world around us, with the lands and seas, cities and villages, is nothing but a big rattrap. The sole purpose of its existence is to set baits for people, offering riches and joys, shelter and food, heat and clothing etc. Like a rattrap offers cheese or meat as bait and then captures the intended victim, so also, anyone tempted by the world's baits are caught in a trap. This then becomes the end of the world for that person.

7. In his defence, the peddler expressed that he had never pretended to be the ironmaster's friend. Nor did he make any further effort to try to deceive him. Also, he admitted that it was not his fault but rather he was compelled to come to the house. He reiterated that he had declined the ironmaster's invitation repeatedly. He then expressed that he was ready to put on his rags and go away.

8. The crofter fed the peddler porridge for supper and gave tobacco to smoke and even played a game of cards with him. He also allowed him to stay at his home in the night. He was so carried away in entertaining the peddler that he even showed his earnings and where he kept them.

9. The peddler handcrafted rattraps and sold them to earn a living, besides begging and stealing. His life was sad and monotonous; no one treated him kindly.

He often felt gloomy because of his loneliness and at such times it gave him unwanted joy to think that the world was a giant rattrap, which lured and entrapped others in it by offering temptations, just as a rattrap would offer treats as bait. As he enjoyed thinking ill of the world, it pleased him that he was free from the rattrap; the temptations of the world could not ensnare him in the trap.

10. Edla had a kind and sympathetic heart that was pained by the plight of the poor peddler. She pleaded with her father not to send him away because first, it was Christmas and Edla wanted to keep the spirit of Christmas alive and second, she wanted the peddler to spend a day of comfort and solace as a respite from his visual struggle.

11. The peddler handcrafted ratttraps and sold them to earn a living, besides begging and stealing. His life was sad and monotonous; no one treated him kindly. He often felt gloomy because of his loneliness and at such times it gave him unwanted joy to think that the world was a giant rattrap, which lured and entrapped others in it by offering temptations, just as a rattrap would offer treats as bait. As he enjoyed thinking ill of the world, it pleased him that he was free from the rattrap; the temptations of the world could not ensnare him in the trap.

12. The peddler knocked on the cottage by the roadside to ask for shelter for the night. The crofter, who was a lonely man, treated him with kindness. He not only offered the peddler shelter in his cottage, he also gave him food, played cards with him and shared tobacco.

13. When the ironmaster heard that the crofter had been robbed by the peddler, he said to his daughter that the peddler must have stolen their silver spoons and other valuables and left the manor house.

14. As Christmas gift, the peddler left a package for Edla Willmansson. It contained a rattrap, three wrinkled ten kronor notes and a letter. In the letter, the peddler had expressed his regret for robbing the crofter and his gratitude towards Ms. Willmansson for treating him like a captain.

15. The peddler handcrafted ratttraps and sold them to earn a living, besides begging and stealing. His life was sad and monotonous; no one treated him kindly. He often felt gloomy because of his loneliness and at such times it gave him unwanted joy to think that the world was a giant rattrap, which lured and entrapped others in it by offering temptations, just as a rattrap would offer treats as bait. As he enjoyed thinking ill of the world, it pleased him that he was free from the rattrap; the temptations of the world could not ensnare him in the trap.

16. The good natured crofter was a lonely man. So, when the peddler knocked on his door, for shelter the crofter welcomed him with open arms. He served him porridge for supper and offered him a big slice of tobacco for his pipe. He also

played a game of cards with the peddler till bedtime. This hospitality was unexpected as people usually made sour faces when the peddler asked for shelter.

17. The crofter showed the thirty kronors to the peddler because the crofter felt proud of the cow that gave him enough milk to support him. The peddler was not convinced that the crofter could possess so much money. The only way to convince him was to show it to him. Besides, the crofter was a lonely but trusting man, who was happy to share his feelings generously.

18. The ironmaster saw the peddler in rags, sitting close to the furnace. He mistook him for an old acquaintance and expressed his joy on meeting him after a long time. The ironmaster wanted to spend the Christmas Eve with his old friend. Moreover, seeing the man in dishevelled condition, the ironmaster felt pity for him. Therefore, he spoke to the peddler kindly and invited him to his home.

19. The blacksmith and his workers did not notice the peddler entering the forge because it was dark and they were busy doing their work. Besides, there was a lot of noise in the forge due to iron bar being hammered on the anvil and the heavy storms outside.

20. At the crofter's home, the peddler felt very happy because it was for the first time someone had welcomed him into one's house. The lonely crofter fed the peddler warm porridge, shared tobacco with him, played cards and treated him very nicely. The crofter shared his secrets with peddler and even showed him where he kept his money. The crofter also gave him a comfortable bed to sleep in.

21. The author Selma Lagerlöf portrayed the peddler as someone that everyone can relate to. In using an unknown third person narrator, the author was able to present an insight into the lives and thoughts of all the characters.

The term "empathetic" refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. This can be clearly seen in the narrator who was the voice through which we hear the whole story. Through the narrator's perspective, we are able to understand how the peddler was, and how he turned out to be. At the same time, while presenting the rattrap seller as someone who steals, we also saw the change in the man after being shown or treated with kindness and compassion by the ironmaster's daughter.

The peddler may seem like someone who's barely surviving, but at the same time, his line of thought about life, the whole world as a rattrap also shows his inner being. Though he's living a life of begging and at times thieving, he changed after being shown respect and compassion, love and care by the ironmaster's daughter as well as the old man whom he robbed.

Through these two encounters, the peddler was able to change and mend his ways. And through the portrayal of the peddler as a man capable of change, the narrator also takes an empathetic approach towards his depiction of the man.

22. Selma Lagerlof's "The Rattrap" revolves around the story of a rattrap peddler who survived on begging and sometimes thieving. At the same time, he also had an insightful realization of how the world truly is. He also believed that there is not much to desire in the world as everything has their downsides.

The peddler was encountered and mistaken to be an old friend by an ironmaster. Though reluctant to comply with the man's invitation to come to his home, he complied and went along. The truth about his identity came out when he was bathed and shaved. But despite the ironmaster's anger and desire to kick the peddler out of his house, his daughter Edla acted quite the opposite.

Edla, against her father's wish, requested the peddler to stay as a guest for it was Christmas Eve and the spirit of Christmas cheer must be applied. He was also treated kindly and even given gifts during his stay. The kindness shown by the young Edla encouraged the peddler to mend his ways and returned what he had stolen from the old man. Edla's compassion and generous heart resulted in a changed man.

23. (i) He is the rattrap peddler.

(ii) He was trapped in the forest at the moment.

(iii) He saw no way out being trapped in the forest. He thought that his last moment had come that's why he laid his head on the ground.

(iv) Yes, he felt comfortable hearing the thumping sound because it was the sound of hammer strokes which meant people were nearby and he might get some help finally.

24. The character of Edla Willmansson and that of the iron master are in stark contrast to each other. Despite being young, the daughter displays a better sense of maturity than her father who acts impulsively and behaves casually. He jumps to conclusions without thinking. First, he mistakes the peddler to be an old regimental comrade and without confirming his identity, he instantly invites him to the manor house, and again on realising his mistake he refers the matter to the sheriff thoughtlessly. Edla, on the other hand, displays a keen sense of observation. She rightly judges that her guest is a tramp and has a sympathetic attitude towards him. She persuades her father to allow the guest to stay, leads him courteously to the dining table and makes him eat despite her father's protest. It is because of her compassion and generosity that the peddler undergoes a change of heart and redeems himself from dishonesty. He leaves

behind thirty kronors to be given back to the old crofter and a Christmas present for Edla.

25. The peddler, who has never been treated with kindness and compassion, first comes across it when the lonely crofter welcomes him into his house. Next, it is the ironmaster and his daughter Edla, who are seen showing compassion towards the weary peddler. Although, the ironmaster expresses concern towards him only until he realises that he has mistaken the peddler for an old and close friend, Edla's attitude towards men and matters is different from her father's attitude.

The ironmaster behaves rudely with the peddler and questions him about his dishonest behaviour, he even threatens to inform the sheriff about the peddler's actions as he does not want the vagabond in his house anymore. However, Edla empathises with the tired and dishevelled looking peddler. She invites him to celebrate Christmas with them and enjoy the Christmas feast. She is more persuasive than her father; she seems firm yet polite in her approach when she insists that he should stay with them for as long as he wants. She asked him to keep her father's suit, which is given to him to wear and invites him to come back next year for Christmas. The peddler used to be someone with a grudge against the world. However, compassion and understanding shown by Edla transforms this selfish thief into a man with conscience. He not only returns the crofter's money, but also leaves a letter and a gift, a rattrap, for Edla. In the letter he thanks Edla for treating him like a true gentleman, with great honour and respect and assures her that he shall change his old ways. This shows that kindness pays, rudeness never. The peddler was not bad at heart but only a victim of his circumstances.

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27. The poorly dressed, starving peddler wanders from place to place, making small rattraps, which is a way to earn his living other than begging and stealing. He has never been treated with kindness because of which he has a grudge against the world. To imagine others ensnared in the giant rattrap that the world is, gives the petty peddler a sense of satisfaction. However, when first the crofter and then Edla, show kindness towards him, it affects his conscience to quite an extent. The old crofter's loneliness is clearly evident in the story. It is because of his loneliness; he invites the peddler into his house to spend the night. The peddler is amazed by the old man's hospitality and soon starts to feel at home. The crofter too, finds a companion in the peddler; and shares his food, tobacco and some of his secrets as well. The ironmaster and his daughter bring the peddler home thinking him is an old friend. It is Christmas Eve and they don't want him to be lonely on Christmas. So, they ask him to stay for the Christmas feast. Realising the peddler's real identity, the ironmaster threatens to inform the sheriff and also asks him to leave. However, Edla insists on him staying and treats him like a guest, like the regimental officer as initially assumed by her father. She offers him food, clothes and shelter. Being treated so, it brings about a total transformation in the peddler. He resolves to pull himself up, to live a life of respect and dignity. Ultimately, 'The Rattrap' is a story focussing on human loneliness and the need to bond with others.

28. Being ill-treated and rejected by the world, the peddler derived pleasure from the thought that the world was a huge rattrap; all its joys and comforts were merely baits to entrap people. However, he failed to realise that this view of life was true only of himself and of no one else. The peddler believed that as soon as one yielded to the temptations being offered to one, it brought one's doom. His own actions proved this point. For the peddler, the baits, which the world offered were food, a comfortable place to sleep and above all, money. Since he had neither of those, he engaged in petty thefts and was in constant fear of getting arrested. When the crofter welcomed the peddler into his house, treated him with kindness and made him his confidant, the peddler could not help but give into these momentary pleasures. Instead of expressing gratitude towards the old and kind-hearted crofter, who felt comfortable enough to show the peddler his thirty kronor, the latter absconded with the former's money. Later, when the peddler got lost in the woods, tired and hungry, the thought of the world being a rattrap reoccurred to him. The only difference was that it was he who was trapped this

time, unable to find an escape. He felt caught in the worldly-rattrap once again when the ironmaster threatened to inform the sheriff about the peddler and his dishonest behaviour. The peddler finally realised that all good things in life were a bait used to entrap people and nobody was spared.

29. The ironmaster, mistaking the peddler as an old acquaintance, invites him to his house for the Christmas celebration. He seems to be a sympathetic person in the beginning, trying to persuade the peddler as much as possible. However, the peddler refuses to accept the invitation because he was afraid to go to the manor house as he had stolen money from the crofter. Although the ironmaster leaves, he allows his daughter, Edla to bring the peddler home. Edla seems more persuasive than her father, being firm yet polite in her approach. She comes with a fur coat for the peddler and assures him that he is free to leave whenever he desires after the Christmas celebration is over. Edla is not conventionally beautiful. But she, with her polite confidence, friendly and compassionate attitude is able to win the peddler's trust and persuade him to accompany her to her house for the Christmas celebration.

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31. The crofter reposed confidence in the peddler because he lived alone in a cottage and wanted to enjoy human company. He was generous, kind and often felt lonely. Having found a likable companion in the peddler, the crofter opened up to him and talked about his work and his saving. Since the peddler seemed incredulous, the crofter took the leather pouch and without any inhibitions showed him the thirty kronor notes. Being a petty thief and always in need of money, peddler took advantage of the crofter's loneliness and planned to steal the thirty kronor. It did not matter to him that by stealing from the crofter, he would be betraying his trust. Knowing where the old crofter kept his money, the peddler returned when the crofter left his house to milk his cow. He broke the window pane, took the leather pouch, took the money and absconded with it. At first, he felt quite pleased with himself and had no guilt of conscience. However, he soon realised the danger of being caught by the police. He switched to the path, which

ran through the forest, became lost eventually. Tired, dejected and unable to find his way, he felt trapped in the rattrap of life just like others.

32. When the ironmaster of the iron mill came for his routine, visit the peddler, who was lying close to furnace, caught his attention. Mistaking the peddler for Nils Olof, a close acquaintance belonging to the same regiment, the ironmaster, invited him to spend Christmas Eve with him and his daughter. Although the peddler did not disclose his real identity to the ironmaster, he politely declined his invitation. The ironmaster's invitation made the peddler think he was going to fall into a trap. After stealing from the crofter, the peddler thought that it would be safer to go through the jungle to avoid getting caught. However, it was a cold and stormy night; the peddler soon lost his way in the jungle. Tired and dejected, the peddler had sneaked into the iron mill for shelter. The crofter's money was still with the peddler. He thought that to go to the manor house with the money would be like throwing himself into the lion's den. It occurred to him that the world was a rattrap, offering him the temptation of shelter just as the rattrap would offer cheese and pork as bait.

33. The Rattrap is the story of a peddler who used to earn his living by selling small rattraps of wire. But, since his business was not profitable, he often indulged in begging and stealing. He had a grudge against the world because no one was ever kind to him. He took pleasure in imagining others in pain and misery as much as he was. This is why he did not mind absconding with the old crofter's thirty kronors even though the crofter treated him with kindness. However, Edla's sympathetic behaviour and understanding nature transformed the thief into an honest man. Edla's father wanted the peddler out of his house immediately when he came to know that he was not his old friend. But Edla insisted that the peddler should spend the Christmas Eve with them and stay for the Christmas feast. She fed him, gave him clean clothes to wear and a place to sleep for the night. The peddler was not expecting to be treated with so much respect, almost like a gentleman. Edla's humbleness and compassion won over the peddler and brought about a change in him. He not only left behind the thirty kronors notes to be returned to the crofter, the peddler also left Edla a rattrap as her Christmas gift. In the letter, the peddler thanked Edla for her kindness and hospitality. He signed the letter as Captain von Stahle because Edla made her feel so honoured. The peddler's transformation proves that basic human goodness can be brought out by understanding and love.

CBSE Sample Questions

1. In the story, 'The Rattrap', it can be said that Edla Willmansson is the embodiment of the Christmas spirit that is about selflessness, forgiveness and becoming 'better' versions of ourselves among other things. Even after Edla knew the truth about the peddler, and it was Christmas eve, and since she wanted to keep the spirit of Christmas alive, she let him stay and enjoy their hospitality. When her father wanted to send him away, she pleaded with him to let him stay.
2. The mistaken identity provided the peddler with the chance to clear his conscience and act or behave in a manner befitting that of a real 'Captain'. It gave him the eye-opening experience of seeing the goodness of people and brought out his latent goodness, thereby resulting in his apology as well as returning of the stolen coins. This opportunity to change his life became a turning point for the peddler.
3. The metaphor of the rattrap is that the world exists only to trap people by setting baits for them. Whenever someone is tempted by the luxuries, he ends up being caught in a dangerous trap. The author, thus, makes a much deeper comment on the woeful plight of those in pursuit of the worldly pleasures, which often lead them to unfortunate situations. The story helps in realising the importance of general goodness and kindness. The peddler is saved from the snare of the huge rattrap called world only when he appreciates the kindness to him by Edla.
4. The story 'The Rattrap' shows that how a thief with little moral compass who robbed an old crofter can change for good if given the chance to mingle with society and be included as part of a community. All he could think was of money and fooling the people around him. 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 iron-master'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. It beautifully showcases how being included in society, being a part of a community acts as redemption arc for a flawed character like the peddler.