



**INDIAN SCHOOL MUSCAT
SENIOR SECTION
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
CLASS - XII**

Suggested Answers: Short Answers:

1. While plodding along the road, left to his own meditations, the peddler was struck by the idea that this world around him with its lands and cities is a big rattrap. It had never existed for any other purpose than to set baits for its people.
2. The peddler's life was sad and monotonous. Since the world had never been kind to him, he was full of bitterness and malice against it. He peddler experienced unwonted joy at everyone else's discomfort, pain at being ensnared by the devilish ways of the world. It gave him sadistic delight to see others caught in the snare and still others circling around the bait.
3. The peddler was accustomed to being greeted by sour faces or better still be refused help of any kind if he approached someone. The crofter, on the contrary was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. The crofter served him with porridge for supper and tobacco. He also played a game of cards with him.
4. The crofter was an old man without a wife or child. He was happy to get someone to talk to in his loneliness. He valued the presence of the peddler so much that he shared his confidences generously with him. It was probably a way for the crofter to infuse a sense of joy in his otherwise dreary life
5. The crofter told the peddler that he had earned a reasonable sum of money from his extraordinary cow that gave him so much milk for creamery every day and had earned thirty kronor last month. The peddler seemed incredulous to acknowledge this piece of information. So, in order to assure his guest of the truth, he showed thirty kronor to him.
6. Value Points: crofter offered hospitality - shared his secrets, showed him the money - next morning peddler smashed window panes - got the pouch, stole the notes - hung the leather pouch at its place - smartly walked away with the money.
7. When the peddler realized that he had been walking around in circles in the forest, he recalled his thoughts about the world and the rattrap. He felt that now his own time had come and the forest was like an impenetrable prison, a rattrap. Since he had taken the bait, the thirty kronor, he was caught and escape may not be possible.
8. The ironmaster mistook him for the peddler for his old acquaintance, the regimental comrade, Captain von Stahle. He was shocked to see that his old comrade had fallen on bad days. So, he invited him to his own house to give him company at Christmas and to make his future secure.
9. The peddler declined the invitation as he was afraid of being detected as a thief. He felt that by accepting the invitation to go to the ironmaster's house, he was voluntarily walking into lion's den. He only wished to sleep in the forge and sneak away as inconspicuously as possible.
10. Edla's kindness, persuasive nature, friendly and compassionate manner allowed the peddler to have confidence in her. Her assurance that he would be just as free to leave as he came left him with no option but to accept the invitation.

Long Answers:

1. The ironmaster misunderstood the peddler for an old acquaintance, whereas his daughter could make out that the man was afraid, which was suggestive of him having stolen something. Though the father and the daughter express compassion for the vagabond both do so for different reasons. The ironmaster was sure to help the vagabond get over his tramp manners because he had mistaken the latter for his old comrade. The daughter however wishes to feed him and welcome him in spite of knowing that he was not Captain Von Stahle. The father acts impulsively and casually and invites him without confirming the stranger's identity. On realizing his mistake he recklessly wants to hand him over to the sheriff. Only when he is threatened of ensnared by the rattrap of this world that he thinks otherwise. Edla on the other hand shows a strong sense of observation. She rightly judges him to be a tramp without any education. She persuades her father to let him stay because they had promised him Christmas cheer. When the blacksmith's daughter infects the protagonist with her true altruism the peddler's inner soul experiences a rapid transformation from an ugly duckling to a dazzling swan.

2. The story has many instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to others.

Used to being greeted by sour faces the crofter seems taken aback at the peddler's request for accommodation for the night. Then the peddler's act of stealing does not match the reader's expectations. The breach of trust comes as a bit of a shock. Then the ironmaster's sudden invitation to the tramp comes as the next surprise. The peddler's vehement refusal to accompany him and later on accepting the invitation at Edla's insistence all generate surprise. Edla's readiness to entertain the peddler even after knowing his reality was quite unexpected.

The most unexpected of gestures is when the peddler leaves for Edla a Christmas gift, a letter of thanks and the stolen money to be returned to the old crofter. His transformation is that which completes the chain of unexpected reactions.

3. 'The Rattap' tells us the story of a lonely peddler who has nothing and no one to call his own. He wanders from place to place mistreated and mistrusted by the world. Then we come across the old crofter who leads a solitary life and hungers for company. He accords a warm reception to the peddler as he views him as someone to talk to and pass a few lonely hours with. It is his need to bond that makes him trust the peddler and show him his money. Similarly, the ironmaster shows his eagerness for the peddler's company mistaking him for an old acquaintance. His wife is no more, his sons are abroad. And he has no one but his eldest daughter at home. He offers his hospitality to the peddler wanting some suitable company to ward off his loneliness. Even his daughter, a shy and modest girl, persuades the peddler to stay with them on Christmas Eve as she has no one to look after and make comfortable except her father. She looks forward to some company to make the occasion more festive. Finally the peddler is also enticed by the kindness of the ironmaster's daughter and the proposition of peace, rest, good food and excellent company for a change.

The theme of loneliness and the need to bond is projected strongly in all the characters in the story.

4. The narrative enthrals the reader toning down its philosophical didacticism. The fast paced third person narrative together with graphic description of characters, elements of humour, drama and irony make it an interesting read (Give examples). The element of surprise with regard to the flow of events holds our interest. This is true of being accepted as a guest by the crofter, breaking his trust, getting lost in the forest, being invited by the ironmaster and subsequent refusal together with Edla's insistence and peddler's final submission. The final acts of transformation and redemption make the narrative quite gripping and entertaining.

The author has used the metaphor of a rattrap to highlight the human predicament. Just like the rats are trapped by cheese and food similarly men are lured by land, food, shelter, clothing etc. these are baits. Those who touch them are trapped by material benefits. The rattrap brings home the fact that human goodness is an intrinsic part of one's nature. It can be forever kept alive through love and understanding. No one is infallible and in one's weak moments is susceptible to falling to temptation. There could be some individuals with the strength of character to break through the rattrap and discover the essential human goodness. Thus the story comes across as both entertaining and philosophical.

5. The peddler wins the readers' sympathy for his way of life and how the world treats him. The vagabond moves about selling small rattraps. As his business is not rewarding, he takes to begging and petty thievery to keep his body and soul together.

His life is sad and monotonous. He plods along the road lost in his own meditation. **He Considers the Whole World as A Big Rattap.** The world has never been kind to him and it gives him unwonted joy to think ill of it. Whenever he asks shelter for a night, he meets sour faces. He is an unwelcome, unwanted and undesirable figure. The blacksmith at forge glance at him only casually and indifferently. The master smith nods a haughty consent without honouring him with a single word.

His sympathy is justified not only because he was a victim of circumstances but also because he redeems himself in the end. Edla Willmanson's kind and compassionate behavior arouses the tramp's goodness. He thanks her for her sympathy and returns the stolen money.
