



INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



Subject : ENGLISH	Topic : The Rattrap	Worksheet : 9
Resource Person: Jyothilakshmi Ranjit	Date : _____	
Name of the Student : _____	Class: XII Division : _____	Roll Number : _____

1. Where did the peddler get the idea of the world being a rattrap? 3
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? 3
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? 3
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? 3
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. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmanson's invitation? 3
Edla Willmanson 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.
When did the ironmaster realise his mistake?
6. 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. 3
7. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle? 3
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



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



dignified manner. Signed himself as Captain von Stahle.

Long Answer Question

1 6

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. 6

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

The tramp during his wanderings hit upon the thought that just as the cheese and the pork are the bait in the rattraps that he makes so also the joys, the warmth, the shelter and the comforts that life offers are the bait to trap humans in the huge rattrap of the world. It gave him immense pleasure to reflect about all his acquaintances who had fallen into the trap. Though these were the thoughts of an embittered man who envied those whose lot was better than his, yet the metaphor of the trap holds some truth when one thinks about life. The more one has, the more one wants and sometimes the reasons for wanting those things become secondary to the wants themselves. Jealousy and rivalry are the consequence of material acquisitions and the only motivation to possess things is to outdo another. The rattrap of the world entraps us and we are so occupied with chasing the state of fulfilment that ever evades us that we are again engulfed in despair and discontentment.



**INDIAN SCHOOL DARSAIT
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



3 What made the peddler finally change his ways? 6

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.

4 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.