NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th
Subject : English
Chapter : 4
Chapter Name : The Rat Trap

Q1 How does the peddler interpret the acts of kindness and the hospitality showed by the crofter, the ironmaster, and his daughter?

Answer. The peddler was a sad man who leads a sad and lonely life. He went around the city selling rat traps of wire. He knocked at a door where an old man lived without his wife and children. The old man showed sympathy and affection towards him, which he did not expect. But Peddler broke his trust by stealing thirty kroner.
The ironmaster, taking him as an old acquaintance showered kindness on him and invited him to celebrate Christmas evening with him.
Edla Willmansson requested the peddler to go to her home in a very compassionate and friendly manner. But while he was moving to the manor house, he felt very guilty about everything he did. His guilt forced him to improve his mistake. He did that by leaving a gift for Edla in which there were thirty kroner which he had theft from the crofter's house. He had written in the note to return the money of crofter back.

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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?

Answer. The ironmaster mistook the peddler for an old comrade, and his daughter could sense that something was not appropriate. Both the father and the daughter express kindness towards him. The ironmaster was determined to help tramp. The daughter wanted to provide him food. The father is initially unaware of the identity but on realizing his mistake he wants peddler to leave his home. But Edla, on the other hand, displays kindness. She knows he is a tramp without any education. She persuades her father to let him stay.

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

Answer. The first instance is that of the crofter's hospitality to the peddler. The rattrap peddler did not think he would be allowed to stay in the cottage but crofter welcomes him with hospitality and he is surprised by it. The peddler was also surprised when ironmaster offered him to stay and ironmaster was himself shocked how he didn't recognize a peddler. Another instance was, for both the peddler and the ironmaster, when Edla's consent to seek peddler's presence for Christmas. At last, peddler left a gift for Edla in order to thank her for the hospitality.

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Q4 What made the peddler finally change his ways?

Answer. Edla's treatment changed poor peddler. She was kind towards him and when her father realized he mistook him for someone else; it was Edla who requested her father to let him stay. She treated him with understanding and kindness. And even invited him for next Christmas.

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

Answer. The peddler believed this world was nothing else but a big rattrap. The only purpose is to set bait for people in the form of luring offers. Peddler lost his way in the forest. It was trapping him now. He believed stealing was a rattrap in his case. The forest took him as a prison from which he could never escape. The peddler also told the ironmaster that the world is nothing but a rattrap and all the luxuries are the piece of cheese.

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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 endears him to us?

Answer. Peddler doesn't encounter any humorous person in his way the only humour seen is in the way he thinks about the world. His thoughts are his rescue and comforts him when the world is not kind towards him. Whenever he is attacked by the scheming minds, he says this world is a rattrap and he is prey to it. Its his thoughts that lit up the mood and provide little humour.

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

Answer. Peddler is a victim of poor circumstances and he had to choose beggary and stealing to make his ends meet. His life forces him to steal and beg and strays away from the road of kindness. In the end his real self shines when he presents gift to Edla. When he receives respect he pays it back. These things show he is a good person at heart who have been dusted by being a beggar.

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

Answer. It focuses on human loneliness and need to bond with others. There are many other characters like crofter, ironmaster, Edla those emphasize that. Crofter is a lonely man who is looking for a company he gives shelter to peddler but ends up getting robbed. Edla is the one who shows kindness towards the peddler that forces him to change. Iron master is also lonely and he is looking for a company when peddler arrives he is excited to serve him as his guest.

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Q3 The story is both entertaining and philosophical.

Answer. The story is like a modern day happy ending tale. The story has various turns and twists to entertain readers and to keep them hooked. The plot develops gradually showing a peddler moving from stealing to showing kindness. The philosophical element is visible in the plot when peddler compares whole world to a rattrap and feels he is the prey, while all things and joys are a piece of cheese.

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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.

Answer. Peddler: As he peddles or sells the rat trap
Vagabond: Who wanders from one place to another.
Stranger: When peddler was at crofters place.
Guest: He was treated as guest and asked to enjoy christmas
Intruder: When the peddler trespasses and enters iron mill.
Tramp: When peddler asks for lodgings at the iron mill.
Ragamuffin: When the iron master watches him wrapped in rags.
Old regimental comrade: The iron master mistakes him for old friend.
Poor hungry wretch: It was used once, when Edla was shown excited to help poor people.
Rat : The peddler calls himself a rat and thanks Edla for helping him escapethe trap with kindness.

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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.

Answer. Different words are lurch, stumble, slog, hike, and clump, traipse and stomp.

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