

## NCERT Solutions For Class 12

### English

#### Chapter 4 - The Rattrap

1. Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meanings from the context.

**(i) Keep body and soul together**

**Ans:** It means to keep yourself and your body in the best possible condition to survive or be alive.

**(ii) Hunger gleamed in his eyes**

**Ans:** It means that the peddler was starving. He could not have food for days and that was evident on his face.

**(iii) Plods along the road**

**Ans:** Since the peddler was tired and hungry, he walked slowly and with heavy feet along the road.

**(iv) Unwonted joy**

**Ans:** It means experiencing unusual happiness.

**(v) Impenetrable prison**

**Ans:** It means a trap or cage you cannot escape.

**(vi) Nodded a haughty consent**

**Ans:** It means an indifferent agreement.

**(vii) Eased his way**

**Ans:** It means to move away carefully, without disturbing.

**(viii) Fallen into a line of thought**

**Ans:** It means when your thoughts align and make sense.

**(ix) Things have gone downhill**

**Ans:** It means when things start to deteriorate .

**Think As You Read:**

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

**Ans:** While randomly plodding around one day, the peddler thought about the rattrap he made. He suddenly caught hold of the idea of the world being a rattrap and he grew fond of the idea. So, whenever he faced a demanding situation, he used to think of the world in that way to comfort himself.

**2. Why was he amused by this idea?**

**Ans:** The metaphor was quite amazing. He found the idea exciting of calling the world a rattrap and everyone as rats who get lured by the cheese, in case of human's material things, and then get trapped in the rattrap. Over the time he harboured feelings for the metaphor and used to think about it quite frequently.

**3. Did the peddler expect the kind of hospitality that he received from the crofter?**

**Ans:** No, the peddler never expected this kind of hospitality from the crofter. He was more accustomed to sour faces greeting him and shooing him away. For the first time he was greeted by a smiling face when he knocked for shelter.

**4. Why was the crofter so talkative and friendly with the peddler?**

**Ans:** The crofter lived all by himself in a little cottage. He deeply carved company since he had no friends or family. So eventually when the peddler knocked at his door, he was more than happy to have a guest to entertain and a company. He talked a lot with the peddler and treated him throughout his stay.

**5. Why did he show the thirty kroner to the peddler?**

**Ans:** The crofter was a lonely person in desperate need of companionship. So, when he saw the peddler at his doorstep, he was happy that he would have company for some time which made his heart content. While sharing the stories the crofter felt that the peddler did not believe him, so he got up and showed him the thirty kroner bills that he kept in the leather pouch.

**6. Did the peddler respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter?**

**Ans:** The crofter was a genuine person. He welcomed the peddler warmly because he craved company and trusted him. He narrated his stories and was very hospitable. But the peddler didn't reciprocate the confidence back. He stole thirty krone that the crofter had and left the next day. It was later, while living with the Williansons, he realized his mistake and planned to return the money back.

**7. What made the peddler think that he had indeed fallen into a rattrap?**

**Ans:** After being lured by the money he saw at the crofter's home, he stole them the next day before leaving his place. He walked past the highway since it would increase the risk of him being caught. While passing through the woods he realized that he had fallen for the bait, the money, and hence had fallen into the rattrap. He was hit by the same realization when the ironmaster threatened to get him arrested after he got to know about his real identity.

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

**Ans:** The ironmaster mistook the peddler for one of his acquaintances, an old regimental comrade, Captain von Stahle. Since the peddler was in a bad condition, he was willing to help his old friend and get him into better condition and new vocation. He was happy not just because he met an old friend but he would have company at home, along with his daughter during the holiday season of Christmas.

**9. Why did the peddler decline the invitation?**

**Ans:** The ironmaster mistook the peddler to be an old regimental comrade who was his acquaintance. The peddler knew the truth and had the stolen amount in his pocket and hence was alarmed at the idea. He tried to correct him but because of the greed of comfort and luxury, he gave up repulsing and went with him. He almost threw himself voluntarily into the lion's den and now his chances of being caught increased.

**10. What made the peddler accept Edla Willianson's invitation?**

**Ans:** By his frightened look, Edla guessed that the peddler had either stolen something or had escaped prison. So, she hinted at an assurance that he would be free to leave whenever he wanted. Reassured, he accepted the invitation.

**11. What doubts did Edla have about the peddler?**

**Ans:** Edla observed the peddler was scared when she went to the iron mill to get him. She had her suspicions about the peddler stealing something or escaping prison. His appearance and behaviour also left her in doubt whether he was an educated man, as claimed by her father.

**12. When did the ironmaster realise his mistake?**

**Ans:** The peddler was in a shabby state when the ironmaster saw him at the factory. He mistook him to be one of his acquaintances and brought him home to spend Christmas with him and his daughter. When the peddler was washed,

shaved and bathed by the valet, his real look showed up and the ironmaster could make out that he made a mistake because of the reflection that came from the furnace.

**13. What did the peddler say in his defence when it was clear that he was not the person the ironmaster had thought he was?**

**Ans:** On being accused, the peddler immediately said that he never told the ironmaster that he was captain or an acquaintance of his, and he also revolted coming to his home. It was the ironmaster who insisted on getting him home to spend the Christmas and wouldn't listen to what he was saying.

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

**Ans:** Edla had a kind heart. She spent most of the time alone since there was no one at home apart from her father. She was happy to have company for the Christmas eve, and asked him to stay. She also felt sad for the condition he was in and wanted to make him feel happy and comfortable for the occasion. It provided her delight and happiness to think of the ways she could help the tramp, and make Christmas special for him.

**15. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left by the peddler?**

**Ans:** Edla was happy to have the peddler stay for the Christmas dinner. When the peddler left the next day, unannounced about his departure, she was sad. They also got to know about the robbery at the crofter's home. On coming across the gift she was pleased and appreciated the small gesture of the peddler.

**16. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain von Stahle?**

**Ans:** The peddler was always treated badly by the people he came across. He was disappointed with humanity and called the world a rattrap. It was because of Edla he understood what respect meant, and it encouraged him to change his ways eventually. He signed himself off as Captain von Stahle because he wrote the letter as a dignified and respected man and not a peddler.

**Understanding The Text**

**1. How does the peddler interpret the acts of kindness and hospitality shown by the crofter, the ironmaster, and his daughter?**

**Ans:** The separate ways in which the peddler repaid the three people corresponds to the way he interpreted the kindness of the three people. The peddler realised that the crofter's desire for company was the driving force

behind his offer of hospitality. The ironmaster's hospitality is limited to his acquaintances. It was only the daughter who genuinely offered warmth and goodness to the peddler. He was touched by Edla's kindness and it made him want to act differently. He repaid her effective treatment with a gesture of heartfelt gratitude.

**2. 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:** Edla and her father had different approaches and outlook towards life. Edla was more concerned about an individual's feelings than her father. Even after his identity was revealed she persisted in inviting him over Christmas dinner. She had a great convincing power and made both her father and the peddler accept the invitation. She felt bad for the peddler and wanted to do her best to make the Christmas special for him. She did not think of the repercussions it might have which her father did. He was scared that he might steal something from the home since he is poor, but Edla did not submit to that. It was because of her efforts and pure heart that the peddler changed his ways and established trust in humanity again.

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

**Ans:** There are various subtle instances where the character gets unexpected reactions from other people he comes across. He was so used to being shooed away and hated that being well-treated was something he did not expect out of anyone. The crofter greeted the peddler hospitably, even though he just went in to get some warmth. Later he was also invited to visit the home by the ironmaster, which we eventually realize was a mistake. There at the home he met his daughter, Edla who invited him to stay over for Christmas even after knowing he was a peddler. It was Edla's compassion and hospitality that changed the peddler's outlook towards life completely. In the end of the letter to Edla he mentioned that he was now caught in the rattrap this world was.

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

**Ans:** The peddler's perception towards life changed after he had a random incident with the manor of Williansons. Since he was poor, he was always looked down upon and never treated well. This, over the years, made him conclude that the entire world is a rattrap, and the human luxuries and emotions are just like cheese to get one into the rattrap. On the contrary, he was warmly welcomed by him. He fed him well and took diligent care of him. Even though he still could not trust their pure intentions, it was Edla, who left

a deep impression on him and his life. Her genuine care and understanding of nature changed the peddler for better. He accepted the world and life with an open heart and started believing in humanity again.

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

**Ans:** The peddler used the metaphor of rattrap throughout the story. It signified that the world is a rattrap and we as mice, are provided with the baitS of wealth, emotions, and other human pleasures (symbolic of cheese). The ones who get lured by this greed end up being captured in the shackles of the world and cannot escape it forever. The entire world runs blindly behind the pursuits of these pleasures and forgets to enjoy what life can offer them. The writer focuses on making the reader realize that material pursuits are not the only things we should run after. Sometimes we should just slow down to enjoy the small gifts that life presents us that can leave a deep impact on us. The peddler, despite his negative outlook towards the world, is moved by the kindness of Edla.

**6. 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 endear him to us?**

**Ans:** The peddler did not hold good intentions even after being greeted with hospitality and warmth. The theme throughout the narration is serious and dark but we can see a subtle sense of humour under the darkness. The peddler thought about the world as a giant rattrap and did not have a positive outlook towards life. He never tried to change this outlook towards the world since he provided his brain with enough affirmative evidence to prove the same. This metaphor also makes the ironmaster laugh. The Christmas present he presented to Edla was evidence of his underlying humour and these instances help to lighten the darkness in the story.

**Talking About the Text**

**1. 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 reader sympathizes with the peddler from the beginning. He just roamed around on the streets, carrying the rattraps he made, searching for shelter at night during snow days. It was not only his miserable state that made the reader empathize with him but also the ideology he formed about the world. He was never welcomed at any place and often shooed away and considered a nuisance. This made him believe that the world was a rattrap and

all these human emotions and luxuries are the bait for the trap and he should avoid them. Hence, he detached himself from everyone and went through the suffering alone. I believe the sympathy is justified because even if he was a thief, he still harboured human emotions and the sufferings he went through broke him from deep within.

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

**Ans:** The peddler, for most of his life, wandered alone, selling the rat traps he made and surviving. He was often shooed away and never respected or treated with compassion. He ended up developing hatred towards other humans and labelled the world as a rattrap. Everyone in the story was alone. The crofter sat there near the fire by himself and Edla and her father were the only two at home. He was taken by surprise when someone treated him well. He was taken aback when the crofter, ironmaster and Edla cared for him and respected him, as a human. It was Edla's kindness and compassion that changed his outlook on life forever. She invited him for the Christmas dinner, despite knowing the fact that he was a poor peddler and was excited to serve him as a guest in the home.

**3. 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:** Good karma always returns back, multiplied many folds. We are often told stories by our grandmas about good deeds and that helps to change our perspective on the world. We might have a negative outlook on life because of the experiences we might have gone through but these small positive incidents in our lives change it for good. I haven't heard of an episode where a good deed has changed the person for good but I surely do believe in the idea.

**4. The story is both entertaining and philosophical.**

**Ans:** Throughout the story the peddler consistently calls and proves that the world is a rattrap is quite amusing. His continued repulsion for material things is entertaining and read and eventually him getting trapped in that rattrap is amusing too. The story grabs the attention of the reader not only by this amazing metaphor but also by the witty dialogues that force the reader to think about his outlook on life. The author not only crafted an entertaining piece but also brought into attention certain vital issues that are often brushed off by the masses. The storms we as humans face in our lives can often lead us to develop a negative outlook towards life which can be restraining after a certain point. The author wants to encourage everyone to come out of the

limited mindset and give ourselves a chance to experience life more fully. There is more to life than what the physical eye can catch, and it enriches life further. It also focuses on how kindness by someone can change their perception towards life and hence encourages everyone to be humble and respectful.

### Working With Words

**1. The man selling rattaps 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:** Since the peddler was a stranger to everyone, people judged him by his appearance and addressed him using different terms. Some of them are mentioned below:

Labels	Contexts
Peddler	He walked around and sold rattaps
Vagabond	Nomadic lifestyle
Stranger	Unknown person
Guest	A welcomed person at ironman's home
Intruder	Trespassed and entered the iron mill
Tramp	Roamed around for lodging
Ragamuffin	Ironmaster noticed him in utter disgust
Old regimental comrade	Ironmaster mistaking him for old friend
Hungry wretch	Edla inviting the person over dinner
Rat	Peddler called himself a rat

**2. 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:** Other words which indicate weary movement are lurch, stumble, slog, clump, traipse, and stomp. Lurch means to make an unsteady, uncontrolled movement; stumble means to trip; slog means to plod heavily; clump means to walk with heavy tread; traipse means to walk reluctantly, and stomp means to walk heavily and noisily specially to show anger.



### 3. 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: There are numerous examples of usage of reflexive pronouns. For example:

Examples	Usage
"...would be like throwing himself voluntarily into the lion's den"	Reflexive pronoun 'himself' has been in place of 'he' to show that it refers to the same subject.
"...except my oldest daughter and myself"	'Myself' is the reflexive pronoun used in place of personal pronoun 'me', referring to the same subject.
"...he laughed to himself."	Himself is the reflexive pronoun used in place of personal pronoun 'he' to refer to the same subject.
"...better powers of persuasion than he himself"	Reflexive pronoun 'himself' has been used in the sentence to convey the emphasis being laid.
"He could not bring himself to oppose her."	Reflexive pronoun 'himself' has been used in the sentence to refer to the same subject.

### Thinking About Language

1. Notice the words in bold in the following sentence.

"The fire boy shovelled charcoal into 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:** Other such phrases are as following:

1. 'a hard regular thumping'
2. 'hammer strokes'
3. 'a large plant with smelter, rolling mill and forge'
4. 'pig iron'
5. 'coal dust'
6. 'put on the anvil'

These terms and phrases are used for various steps of iron production.

2. Mjolis is a card game from Sweden. Name a few indoor games played in your region. 'Chopar' could be an example.

**Ans:** Indoor games can be fun and played with family and friends across the world. A few indoor games in my region are ludo, carrom, chess etc.

3. 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:** In Danish a smaller farmer is called a 'landmand' while in Dutch he is called 'boer persoon'. Locally in my country a person who owns a small land is called 'krishak' and 'kisan'.