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***[STUDY MATERIAL]***

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***“The Rattrap”***

***@@Selma Legerlof***

**‘The Rattrap’ is a story that provides a psychological insight into human nature. The author highlights how greed for material things entrap human beings into this world. The story upholds the belief that the essential goodness of a human being can be awakened through love and understanding. It brings into focus the idea that the world**

**is a rattrap. Riches, joys, shelter and food are all lucrative baits to trap mankind.**

**The story begins like a fairy tale. The central character, the peddler, had been a man selling small rattraps of wire to make a small living. To get the two ends meet he had to make petty thefts too.**

**All around, he led a sad and monotonous life of a vagabond. It makes him reflect about his own condition and the world at large. He fancies that the whole world is nothing but a big rattrap. It offers various baits to people who bite on them and get trapped in the rattrap. The storyline unfolds gradually with the various baits being offered to the peddler. While**

wandering during his small work of selling rattraps,he knocked at the door of the house of the crofter,who was an oldman without wife and children.He showed kindness and hospitality unexpected to the peddler.Even then,the peddler betrayed the confidence reposed in him by the crofter by stealing his thirty kronors.

Next at the Ramsjo ironworks,while seeking shelter for the night,the tramp bites the bait offered to him by the owner,the ironmaster,of mistaken identity.Edla,the ironmaster's daughter, offers yet another bait of full-hearted generosity,comfortable living and magically peaceful Christmas for the

**tramp.Finally,the bitter truth dawns on the hosts.Edla is downcast when she learns that the peddler is a thief.The tramp undergoes a change of heart after experiencing her kindness.He returns the stolen money AND writes a letter to her thanking her for helping him escape the rattrap.**

**Thus,he redeemed himself this way from his dishonest ways and emerged as an altogether transformed person.In this transformation process he behaved like a real captain,the way Edla addressed him.**

**Thus,Edla's compassion,empathy and unconditional love and trust changes the heart of a vagabond and makes him**

**an honest and upright individual. The story ends with the victory of human goodness—“Compassion, love and trust for fellow beings, is important not only to change but also maintain the well-being of the society.”**

**L.P.SINGH , [PGT ENGLISH]**