

Flamingo Chapter-4

The Rat Trap

“The Rattrap” brings up the idea that the latent spark of human goodness is inherent in each one of us and it can be stirred back through love, trust and understanding. No one is infallible and can succumb to temptation so one should think twice before judging, condemning and criticizing the sinner.

The peddler (hawker) was a vagabond (beggar /homeless) who sold rattraps with a little thievery on the side to make both ends meet. Had no worldly possession to call his own, not even a name.

It amused him to think of the world as a rattrap and all the material possessions as bait as the world, he felt was never kind to him. Moreover, he prided himself in the fact that he was out of it.

He takes shelter at a crofter’s cottage. The crofter welcomed him, gave him dinner, shared his pipe, played mjolis with him and also confided in him about his income of 30 kroners and showed him where he had put it.

Next morning, the Peddler steals the money and takes the back roads to keep away from people and gets lost in the jungle at night. While he wanders in the forest he realizes that he has also got caught in the rattrap and that the money was the bait.

Finally, he reaches Ramsjo Ironworks, where he takes shelter for the night. The blacksmith and his assistant ignore him but their master mistakes him to be an old acquaintance, Captain Von Stahl and invites him home. Though the Peddler does not correct the ironmaster, hoping to get some money out of him, he declines his invitation.

The ironmaster then sends his daughter who persuades him to come home with her for Christmas and assures him that he can leave anytime. To which he agrees but she notices his uncouth appearance and thinks that either he has stolen something or he has escaped from jail.

The Peddler is scrubbed, bathed, given a haircut, a shave and a suit of old clothes of the ironmaster. In the morning light, the iron master realizes his mistake that he is not the Captain. He wants to call the Sheriff. The peddler is agitated and breaks out that it was Ironmaster who had forced him to come to his place and also the world is rattrap and he too is sure to be caught in it. He offers to change the clothes. The ironmaster is amused but orders him out. The compassionate Edla convinces her father to let him spend the Christmas day with them.

The Peddler spends the whole of Christmas Eve eating and sleeping. The next day at church, Edla and her father come to know that the Peddler is a thief who has stolen thirty kroners from the poor crofter. They rush back home fearing a theft at their place also. But back home, the peddler had already gone and had left a letter addressed to Edla, signed as Captain Von Stahl along with a rattrap as a gift from him. In the rattrap were the three ten kroner notes of the crofter.

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- -Back home, they found a letter addressed to Edla, signed as Captain Von Stahl and a rattrap as a gift from the crofter. In the rattrap were the three ten kroner notes of the crofter.