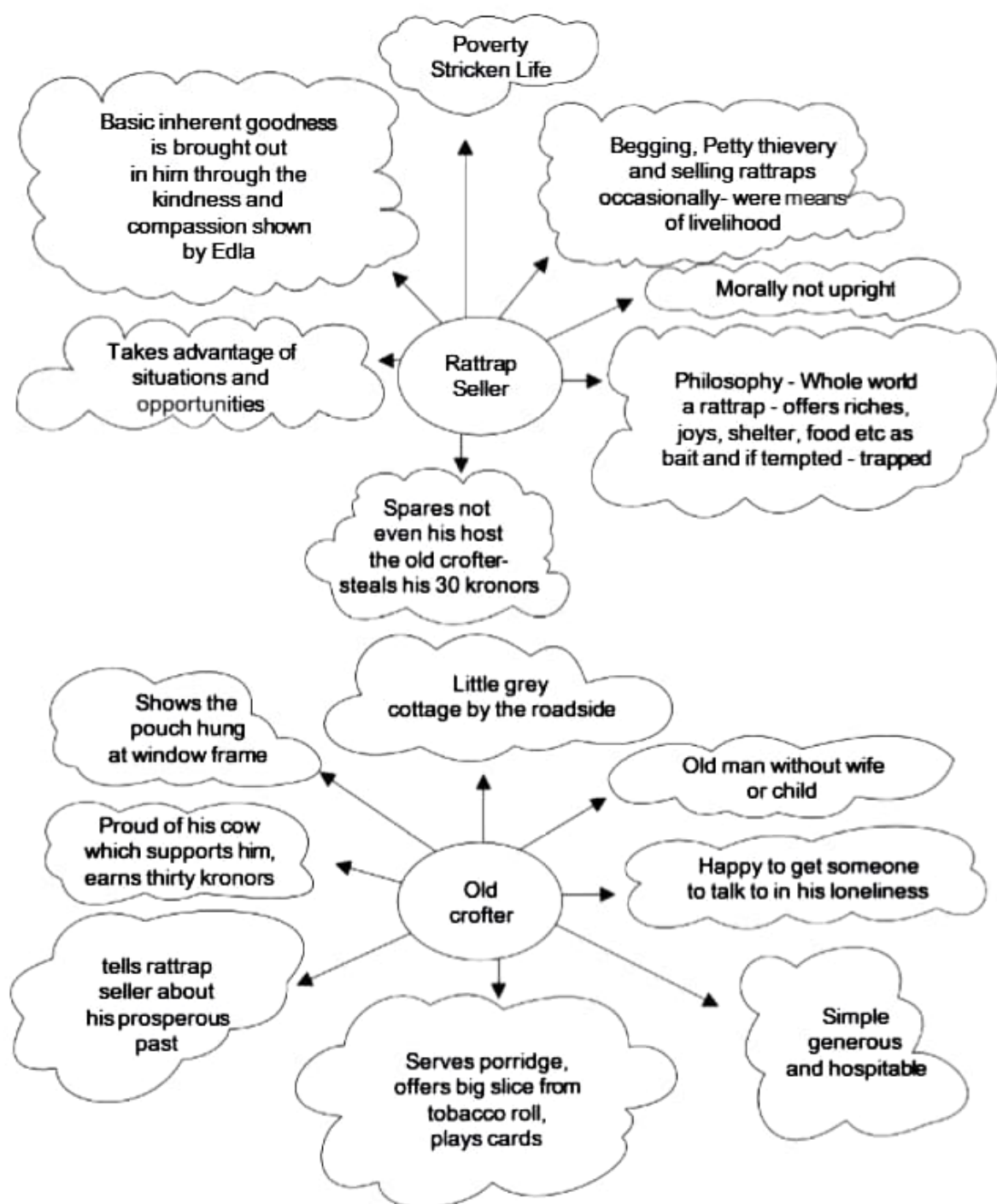
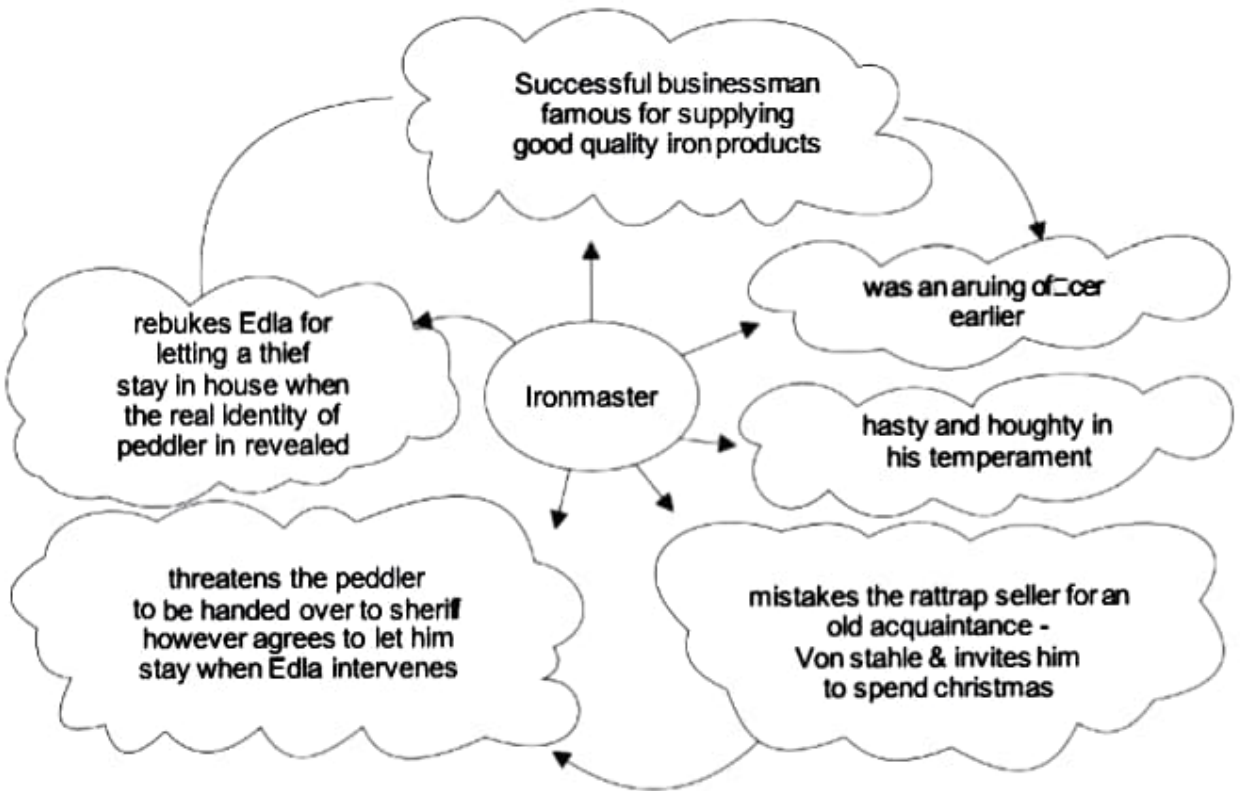
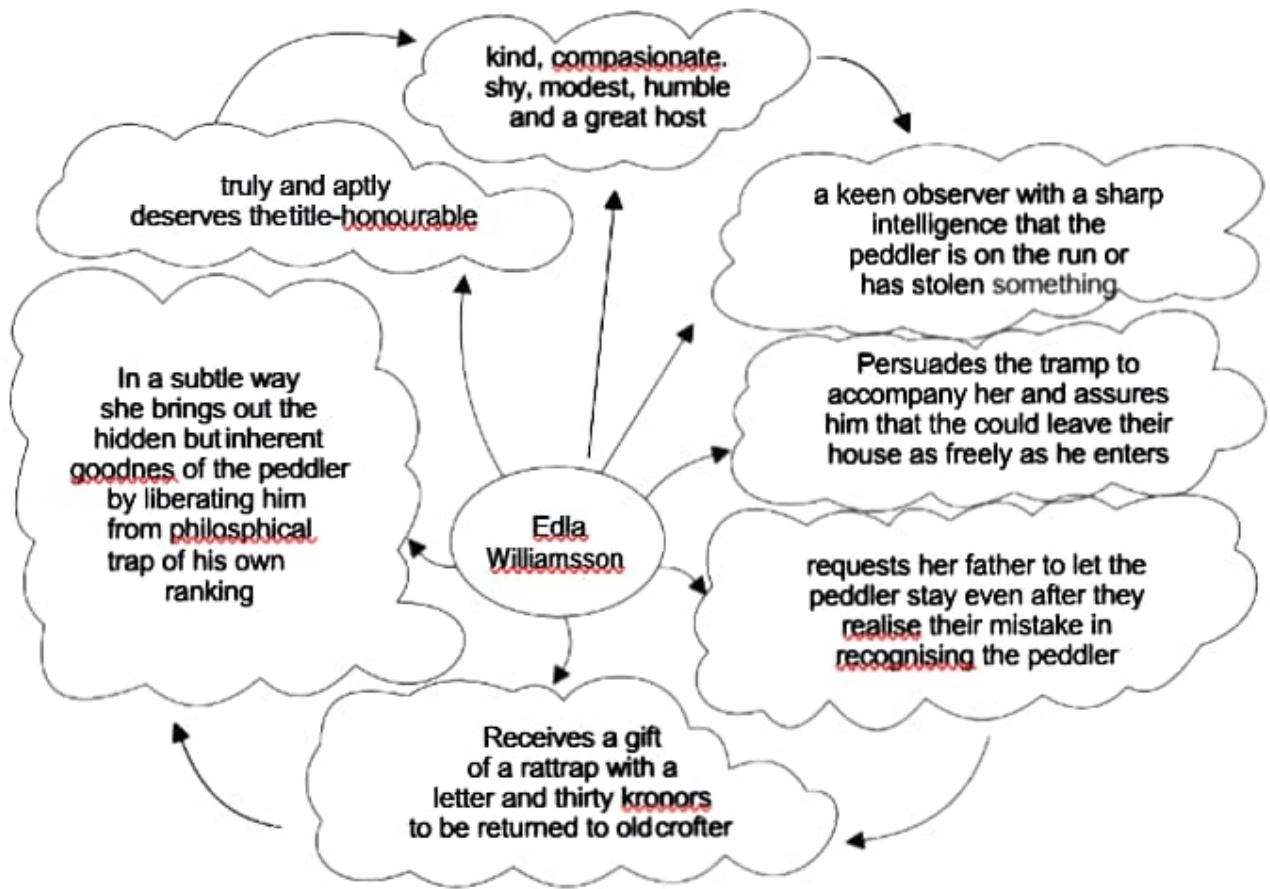


## 4. The Rattrap –Selma Lagerlof

Selma Lagerlof talks about the universality of human goodness that can be awakened through understanding love, compassion and belief. Experience is the best of school masters and the peddler was able to get a vital lesson after his encounter with situation and people both. Finally his goodness surfaces and temporary phase of his bad practices ends. The world turns to be a good place to live.

### Lesson at a Glance





## SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did the peddler earn his livelihood? What kind of life did he live?

Ans. The peddler earned his livelihood by selling small rattraps of wire, which he used to make himself from the material got by begging in the stores or at big farms. But this was not so profitable, so he had to beg or even to steal. He roamed about like a vagabond all alone. He lived a sad and monotonous life with no one to welcome him.

2. How did the crofter treat peddler and why?

Ans. The crofter was a lonely man without wife or child. He craved and desired human company to share his loneliness. He welcomed the peddler and offered him porridge for, supper and even tobacco. He played cards with him. He even showed him his earnings and let him know where it was kept.

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

Ans. No, the peddler did not respect the confidence reposed in him by the crofter. He broke his trust as the very next morning he picked the thirty kronors. The evil in him forced him to do so.

4. What made the peddler accept Edla Willmanson's invitation?

Ans. Edla started sympathising with the vagabond understanding that he was going through a hard time. She was compassionate and benevolent. Her manner was friendly that the vagabond felt confident. She insisted that he could leave at his will after spending Christmas with them. Because of her friendly request, the peddler accepted her invitation.

### Additional Questions

1. What strange idea about the world struck the peddler?

2. Why did the peddler decline the iron master's invitation?

3. Pick out two instances from the story 'The Rattrap' to show that the peddler realized that he himself was trapped?

4. What had the peddler left behind as a Christmas gift for Edla Willmanson? Why?

5. Why was Edla happy to see the gift left behind by the peddler?

6. Why did the peddler sign himself as Captain Von Stahle?
7. Which act of crofter surprised the peddler? Why?
8. Why did the peddler accept the invitation extended by Edla having already declined the one from her father?
9. How did the crofter tempt the peddler to steal his money? How did it change the peddler's life?

## LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What rattrap was the peddler trapped in? How did he come out of it?

### Key points

- the whole world a rattrap
  - world full of temptations
  - shelter food, joy and riches – are the baits.
  - the bait that he fell for was at the crofter's house
  - blamed the crofter for having tempted with his bait.
  - initially refused the offer of iron master thinking it to be another bait.
  - after meeting with Edla, he got reformed and returned the thirty kronors in a rattrap.
2. Describe how the story, "The Rattrap" shows that basic human goodness can be brought out by understanding and love.

Ans. The story 'The Rattrap' highlights the fact that compassion and concern can awaken the essential goodness in a man.

- The peddler, who had been resorting to begging and thievery all the time, never bothered to clear his identity befuddled the ironmaster too.
- But, Edla gave him a royal treatment, served him delicious supper, gifted her father's dress to him.
- This kind of unconditioned love and compassion from Edla made him realise his mistake and he confessed his guilt too.
- This way, she made a lot of difference in his life and he got transformed into a much better person.
- He left the stolen money behind, even a letter and a gift for Edla.

### Questions for Practice

1. The peddler betrayed the trust of the crofter and was caught in the trap of the world. Temptation to bait should be restricted at all cost. Write a note on "Strength of Character".
2. How are the attitudes of the iron master and his daughter different? Support your answer from the text.
3. The story 'The Rattrap' has many instances of unexpected reactions from the characters to others behaviour. Pick out

### **Reference to Context**

But one day this man had fallen had into a line of thought, which really seemed to him entertaining. He had naturally been thinking of his rattraps when suddenly has was struck by the idea that the whole world about him-the whole world with its land and seas, its cities and villages-was nothing but a big rattrap.

1. Who does "this man" refer to in the first line?
2. What does "this man" compare the world to?
3. Did "this man" ever get trapped in the "big rattrap"?
4. Who did help "this man" get out of the rattrap?

