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Class-XII

English

Flamingo

Chapter-4

The Rattrap



Selma Lagerlof

Part - 5

Neha Rajvanshi

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wretch : बेचारा व्यक्ति
interceded : किसी का पक्ष लेना

The daughter stood there quite embarrassed and hardly knew what to answer. That morning she had felt so happy when she thought how homelike and Christmassy she was going to make things for the poor hungry wretch. She could not get away from the idea all at once, and that was why she had interceded for the vagabond.

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chased away: बाहर निकलना

"I am thinking of this stranger here," said the young girl. "He walks and walks the whole year long, and there is probably not a single place in the whole country where he is welcome and can feel at home. Wherever he turns he is chased away. Always he is afraid of being arrested and cross-examined.

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mumbled : धीरे से बोलना
cheer: खुशी

I should like to have him enjoy a day of peace with us here — just one in the whole year."

The ironmaster mumbled something in his beard. He could not bring himself to oppose her.

"It was all a mistake, of course," she continued. "But anyway I don't think we ought to chase away a human being whom we have asked to come here, and to whom we have promised Christmas cheer"

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preach : उपदेश देना
parson: फादर
regret : पछतावा
given in: स्वीकार करना

"You do preach worse than a parson," said the ironmaster. "I only hope you won't have to regret this."

The young girl took the stranger by the hand and led him up to the table.

"Now sit down and eat," she said, for she could see that her father had given in.

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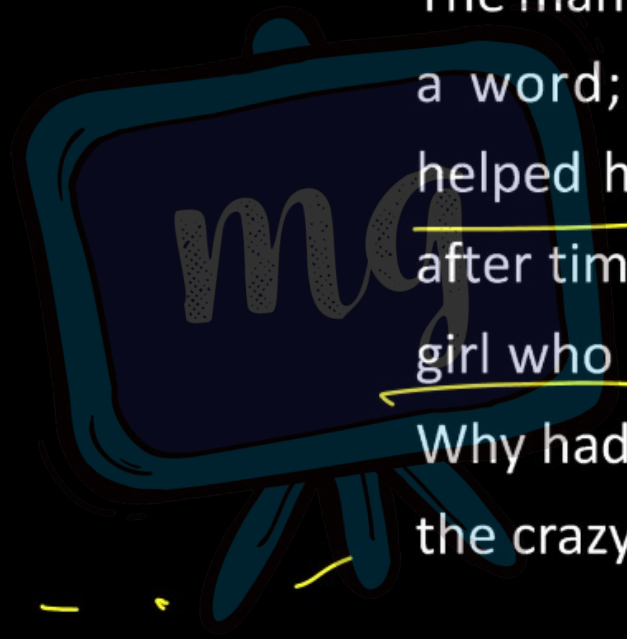

The man with the rattraps said not a word; he only sat down and helped himself to the food. Time after time he looked at the young girl who had interceded for him. Why had she done it? What could the crazy idea be?

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forenoon : दोपहर से पहले का समय

After that, Christmas Eve at Ramsjo passed just as it always had. The stranger did not cause any trouble because he did nothing but sleep. The whole forenoon he lay on the sofa in one of the guest rooms and slept at one stretch. At noon they woke him up so that he could have his share of the good Christmas fare, but after that he slept again.

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It seemed as though for many years he had not been able to sleep as quietly and safely as here at Ramsjo. In the evening, when the Christmas tree was lighted, they woke him up again, and he stood for a while in the drawing room, blinking as though the candlelight hurt him, but after that he disappeared again.

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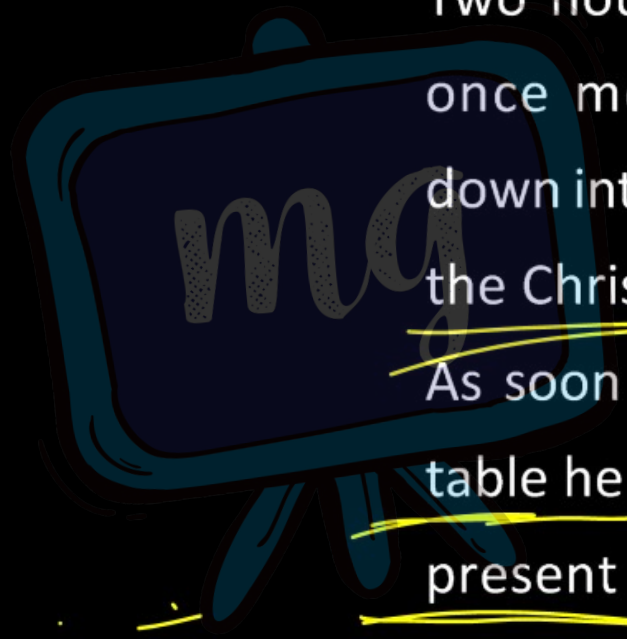

Two hours later he was aroused once more. He then had to go down into the dining room and eat the Christmas fish and porridge. As soon as they got up from the table he went around to each one present and said thank you and good night,

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intention : इच्छा

but when he came to the young girl she gave him to understand that it was her father's intention that the suit which he wore was to be a Christmas present — he did not have to return it; and if he wanted to spend next Christmas Eve in a place where he could rest in peace, and be sure that no evil would befall him, he would be welcomed back again.

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boundless : खत्म न होने वाला
amazement: आश्चर्य

The man with the rattraps did not answer anything to this. He only stared at the young girl in boundless amazement.

The next morning the ironmaster and his daughter got up in good season to go to the early Christmas service.

Their guest was still asleep, and they did not disturb him.

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dejectedly : निराशा से

When, at about ten o'clock, they drove back from the church, the young girl sat and hung her head even more dejectedly than usual. At church she had learned that one of the old crofters of the ironworks had been robbed by a man who went around selling rattraps.

"Yes, that was a fine fellow you let into the house," said her father.

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wagon : गाड़ी

"I only wonder how many silver spoons are left in the cupboard by this time."

The wagon had hardly stopped at the front steps when the ironmaster asked the valet whether the stranger was still there. He added that he had heard at church that the man was a thief.

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The valet answered that the fellow had gone and that he had not taken anything with him at all.

On the contrary, he had left behind a little package which Miss Willmansson was to be kind enough to accept as a Christmas present.

The young girl opened the package, which was so badly done up that the contents came into view at once.

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jagged : टेढ़े-मेढ़े

She gave a little cry of joy. She found a small rattrap, and in it lay three wrinkled ten kronor notes. But that was not all. In the rattrap lay also a letter written in large, jagged characters —

"Honoured and noble Miss, "Since you have been so nice to me all day long, as if I was a captain, I want to be nice to you,

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in return, as if I was a real captain — for I do not want you to be embarrassed at this Christmas season by a thief; but you can give back the money to the old man on the roadside, who has the money pouch hanging on the window frame as a bait for poor wanderers.

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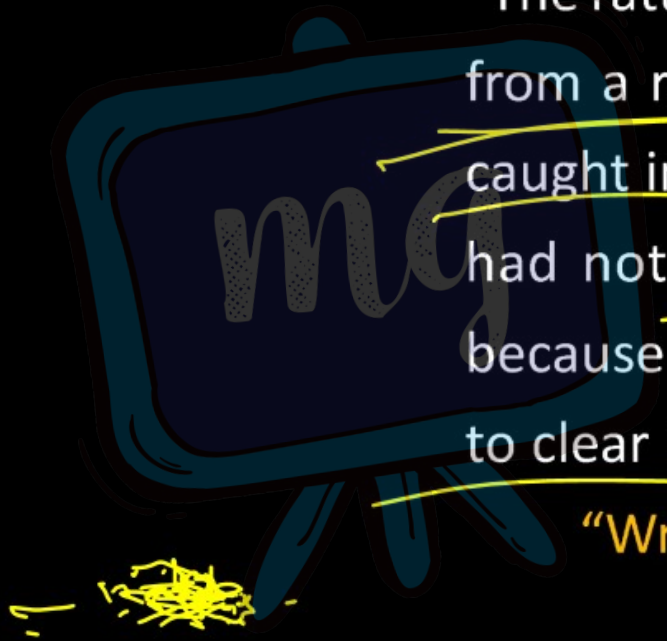

"The rattrap is a Christmas present from a rat who would have been caught in this world's rattrap if he had not been raised to captain, because in that way he got power to clear himself.

"Written with friendship
and high regard,
"Captain von Stahle."