

## Ch 1 - A Letter to God

- G.L. Fuentes

### Theme

"A letter to God" by G.L. Fuentes captures moral lessons on faith, greed and appreciation. The reader sees a poor farmer who sends a letter to God after his crops have been destroyed. His prayer is for one hundred pesos in order to buy more seeds and support his family until the next crop grows. The post office receives the letter and reads it.

One of the themes within this story is faith. The man is very faithful in his prayer to God for the one hundred pesos. God answered his prayers through the post office clerks, who sympathized with the farmer and collected the money themselves. However, they were only able to collect seventy pesos.

The next theme revolves around greed and appreciation. The man receives the seventy pesos but writes another letter to God asking him to send the other thirty pesos. He even goes so far as to claim the post office clerks have stolen 30 pesos.

Rather than being appreciative that he received the help at all, thought it wasn't everything he asked for, the man is ungrateful as he makes claims against the post office. He asks God to refrain from sending the remaining money through post office.

Read the Extracts and answer the questions that follow.

1 The house - the only one in the entire valley sat on the crest of a low hill. From this height one could see the river and the field of ripe corn dotted with the flowers that always promised a good harvest. The only thing the Earth needed was a downpour or at least a shower. Throughout the morning Lench who knew his fields intimately had done nothing else but see the sky towards the North-East. "Now we're really going to get some water, women. The woman who was preparing supper, replied, "Yes, God is Willing"

- (a) Where was Lench's house located?
- (b) What was Lench's wife preparing?
- (c) Find the word from the passage which means 'very closely'.

(d) What does 'crest' mean?

A (a) Lencio's house was located on the crest of a low hill.

(b) Lencio's wife was preparing supper.

(c) The word is 'intimately'.

(d) Crest means the top part of a hill.

2 It was during the meal that, just as Lencio had predicted, big drops of rain began to fall. In the North-East huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching. The air was fresh and sweet.

The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body.

(a) What could be seen approaching in the North-East?

(b) Why did Lencio go out?

(c) Give an antonym of word Big.

(d) Which word in the passage is a synonym of 'forecast'.

A (a) Huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching in the North-East.

(b) Lencio went out to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body.

(c) The word is 'small'.

(d) The word 'predict' is the synonym of forecast.

3. With a satisfied expression he regarded the field of ripe corn with its flowers, draped in a curtain of rain. But suddenly a strong wind began to blow and alongwith the rain very large hailstones began to fall. These truly did resemble new silver coins. The boys, exposing themselves to the rain, ran out to collect the frozen peta pearls.

- (a) What happened to the rain suddenly?
- (b) 'The frozen Pearl' refers to which thing in the paragraph.
- (c) Find the similar meaning of 'contended' in the paragraph.
- (d) Find from the passage a word which means 'to take after'.

- A
- (a) The rain suddenly changes into hailstorms.
  - (b) 'The frozen pearls' refers to hailstorms.
  - (c) The word is 'Satisfied'.
  - (d) The word is 'Resemble'.

Answer the following questions

1. What did Lencho hope for?

A Lencho hoped for a good rain as it was much needed for a good harvest.

2. Why did Lencho say the raindrops were

like 'new coins'?

A Lencho compared the raindrops with new coins because they were promising him a good harvest resulting in more prosperity.

3. How did the rain change? What happened to Lencho's fields?

A The rain changed into hailstones as a strong wind began to blow and huge hailstones began to fall along with the rain. All the crops in Lencho's field got destroyed because of the weather conditions.

4. What were Lencho's feelings when the hail stopped?

A Lencho was filled with grief after the hail stopped as everything was ruined and there was nothing that he could feed his family with. He could see bleak future for him and his family.

5. Who or what did Lencho have faith in?  
What did he do?

A Lencho had firm faith in God. He believed that God sees everything, even what is deep in one's conscience and help everyone in one's problems. He wrote a letter to God demanding him a hundred pesos to sow his field again.

6. Who read the letter?

A Postmaster read the letter.

Answer the following questions.

1 Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter God by on behalf of God?

A The postmaster sends money to Lencho in order to keep Lencho's faith in God alive and firm as he was completely moved by it. When post master reads the letter of Lencho to God, he becomes serious and does not want to shake his faith and decides to answer the letter. He gathers money with the help of his post office employees and friends on behalf of God and signs the letter 'God so that Lencho's faith does not get shaken.

2. Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why or why not?

A Lencho did not try to find out who had sent the money to him because he never suspected the presence of God and had complete faith in God. He could not believe that it could be -

anybody else other than him who would send him the money. His faith in God was so strong that he believed that he had sent money to him for his help in his problem.

3. Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation?

A Lencho thinks that the post office employees have taken the rest of the money as he had demanded a hundred pesos from God and in the letter there was only seventy pesos and God cannot make such a mistake. So, he assumes that they have stolen the money.

The irony in this situation is that Lencho suspects those people who helped him in his problem and tried to keep his faith alive in God.

4. Are there people like Lencho in the real world? What kind of a person would you say he is? You may select appropriate words from the following to answer the questions.

- Greedy
- Naiive
- Stupid
- Ungrateful
- Selfish
- Comical
- Unquestioning

A \* It is almost impossible to find a person like Lencho as he is an unquestioning and naive kind of person. He is not stupid if he doesn't know who has sent him money or a letter will reach God without any address. It is Lencho's faith in God. In real world, people are selfish and greedy and Lencho is ~~totally~~ totally lovable and different.

5. There are two kinds of conflict in the story between humans and nature and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

A Conflict between Humans and Nature :

The conflict between humans & humans and nature is illustrated by the destruction of Lencho's crop by the hailstorm as Lencho was expecting a good rain to have good harvest as that was the only hope he had for his earning. He worked so hard to feed his family, but nature turned violent and destroyed everything.

Conflict Between Humans and Humans :

The story also illustrated another conflict, between humans themselves as postmaster along with his friends and staff sent Lencho money that Lencho demanded from God although they didn't. Lencho blamed them for taking away some amount of money. He called them 'a bunch of crook'. This shows that man does not have faith in other man, thereby giving rise to this conflict.

6 "Humanity still exists", this is what we get to know after reading 'A letter to God' in which firm faith in God of a poor farmer and helpfulness of the post office employees are aptly depicted thought. Expiate.

A This lesson 'A Letter to God', tells us about a poor farmer who was anxiously waiting for rain but instead hail storms destroyed his crop. Then he turns to God for help and writes a letter to God.

### Existence of Humanity.

After reading 'A letter to God', our faith in Humanity gets very strong. We learn from the story that there still are people who help others without any self interest. The postmaster and the post office employees lay an example for everyone of us to be kind. Though they all laughed at his letter,

they were really moved by the grip of faith Lencho had in God. The way they all decided to help the stranger in his hard times restores our faith in the existence of humanity and motivates us to be a noble and kind person.

7. Describe Lencho's qualities in light of his faith in God. Do you have faith in God like Lencho? Was Lencho's reaction towards post office employees right?

A Lencho was a poor farmer who totally depended on the harvest to survive and fulfil basic needs of his family. Once his crops were destroyed due to heavy rainfall and hailstones and he was afraid to think how his family would survive. He believed that God would help him in this plight. He had ~~for~~ firm faith in God, he believed that God would not let him be hungry. Now-a-days faith in God like Lencho is almost impossible and unseen. People are very much aware that nobody is willing to help others without any self-interest. Lencho's reaction towards the post office employees was not right or justified but it was just because

of his innocence as he could not believe that God had done such a mistake. If were only the post office employees who had stolen money according to him.

8. Who was Lencho and what circumstances forced him to write a letter to God?

A) Lencho was a hardworking farmer who lived with his family on a crest of a low hill. He was very caring and God loving man. Though, he was a farmer he could read and write. Lencho eagerly waited for the rainfall in order to get good harvest and happy when it came. But the pleasing rain changed into hailstorm and destroyed his crop. He became sad and was worried about his family as they might remain hungry that year. His last hope was the help from God as he had complete faith in him. Hence, he wrote a letter to God asking him to send hundred pesos to survive and to survive and to reharvest.

9. How do you like the character of the postmaster in the story 'A Letter to God'? Give reason for your answer.

A) The postmaster himself gave a part of his salary and also requested his employees

and a few friends to contribute for charity. He felt happy and satisfied when Lencio received the money. This shows that he was a kind and empathetic person as well.

He loved to help others.

10 How did the ~~postmaster~~ postmaster and post office employees help Lencio? How did he react to their help?

A The postmaster and post office employees were very generous as they contributed for the ~~fact~~ act of charity. First they laughed when they saw Lencio's letter to God, but soon they were impressed by his faith in God.

They decided to send some money to Lencio so that his faith in God does not get shaken. They collected seventy pesos and sent it to Lencio.

When Lencio got the envelope and opened it to count money, he became angry. He again wrote a letter to God demanding the remaining thirty pesos. He thought that post office employees had taken away the remaining money and called them a bunch of crooks, which was not justified at all as they were the people who had helped him. But it shows his innocence and firm faith in God.

## Character Sketches

### Lencho

Lencho is the main character of the story "A Letter to God". He was poor farmer who was the sole bread earner of the family. He had faith in God. Lencho lived in a small house which was situated on the crest of a low hill in the valley. He was a hard working, caring and responsible person. Throughout the morning Lencho sat in his house and waited for the rain to come. He was hopeful for the shower for his field in which he had grown his crops. But a devastating hailstorm had destroyed his crops. Being a firm believer of God, Lencho wrote a letter to God. He was optimistic that God would be the one to help him in his bad times and would not let him die in hunger. He asked God to send him 100 pesos so that pesos so that he and his family can survive in such a difficult situation. He was not much acquainted with the outer world. He was a simple and innocent theist who didn't know that there was no such living person as God who could send him money. He was not surprised to have an envelope with money when the postman had given it. He believed that it was from God. But the way he was angry and

accused the post-office employees after receiving less amount of money, it shows Lencho's lack of experience and wisdom. He seemed to be naive. He was resolute and straight forward.

### 10. Postmaster

The postmaster was a fat and friendly fellow. He was a sensible human being. He first laughed looking at the letter which had a strange address. But soon he became serious. He was surprised at the faith that Lencho had in God. He wanted his faith not to be shaken.