

Chapter Review

- 'A Letter to God' is a short story by the Mexican writer Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes. It shows the unshakable faith of a poor farmer, and the kindness of ordinary people.
- Lencho lived in a solitary house in the middle of a valley. The only thing his field of ripe corn needed was a good shower of rain.
- Rain came, and Lencho said the big drops were new coins: the round ones were ten-centavo coins and the flat ones were five-centavo coins. He expected a rich harvest.
- Suddenly a strong wind rose and very large hailstones began to fall with the rain. Lencho called them 'frozen pearls'. The hail destroyed the whole crop and left not a leaf on the trees.
- That evening the house was filled with sadness. Lencho said a plague of locusts would have left more than the hail. His family had no hope of food for the year, except one: help from God.
- Lencho, who had been taught that God's eyes see everything, wrote a letter to God asking for one hundred pesos to sow his field again and to live until the new harvest.
- He wrote 'To God' on the envelope and dropped it in the letter-box. The postman took it to the postmaster, who laughed at first and then became serious.
- The postmaster was moved by the writer's faith. To save that faith, he collected money from his employees and from his own salary, but could gather only a little more than half the amount. He signed the reply 'God'.
- Lencho was not at all surprised to find the money. But he was angry when he counted it: only seventy pesos were there. He wrote a second letter asking God to send the remaining thirty pesos, but not through the mail, because post-office employees were a bunch of crooks.

- The postmaster's kindness is thus mistaken for theft. The story ends with irony: the very men who helped him are called thieves.

Key Terms

Solitary – Alone, with no other house nearby.

Ripe – Fully grown and ready to be cut or harvested.

Hailstones – Hard balls of ice that fall like rain.

Plague of locusts – A huge swarm of insects that eats up the crops.

Conscience – The inner sense of right and wrong.

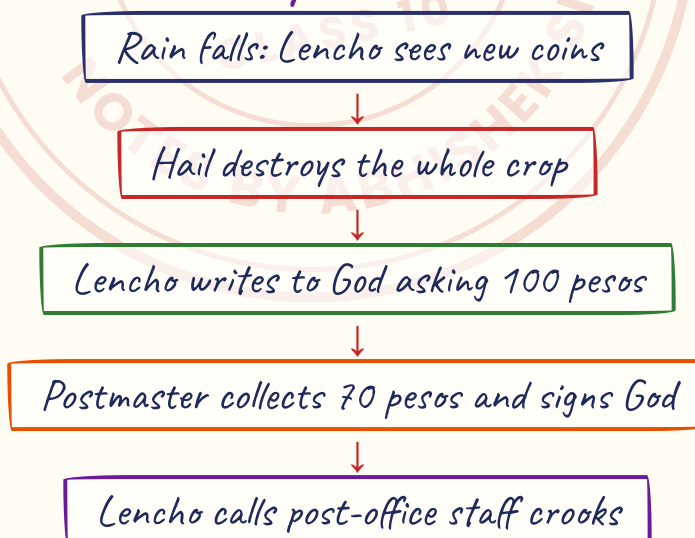
Peso – The money of Mexico.

Crooks – Dishonest people, thieves.

Irony – When the result is the opposite of what is expected.

Diagrams / Flowcharts

Story at a Glance



Lencho vs the Postmaster

Lencho

- Poor farmer, hard-working
- Simple and innocent
- Faith in God is complete
- Quick to blame others

Postmaster

- Kind and generous
- Imaginative, helps in secret
- Wants to protect faith
- Lovable but practical

Theme and Message

- Faith in God gives hope when everything is lost, but blind faith can make a person unfair to others.
- Kindness and charity matter more than words. The postmaster did good without wanting thanks.
- The story shows two conflicts: man against nature (the hailstorm) and man against man (Lencho's suspicion of the post office).

Literary Devices (Metaphors)

- Huge mountains of clouds: the size and mass of clouds are compared to mountains.
- A curtain of rain: rain falling like a curtain that covers the sky.
- Frozen pearls: hailstones are as white and hard as pearls.
- A plague of locusts: the hail brought destruction like locusts or an epidemic.
- An ox of a man: Lencho worked as hard as an ox in the field.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 Who or what did Lencho hope for? (Oral Comprehension, p. 5)

Ans. Lencho hoped for rain. His field of ripe corn needed only a shower, and he expected a good harvest from it.

Q.2 Why did Lencho compare the raindrops to new coins?

Ans. The crop was ready for harvest, and good rain would bring him a rich harvest and money.

So he called the round drops ten-centavo coins and the flat ones five-centavo coins.

Q.3 How did the hailstorm affect the field?

Ans. A strong wind rose and large hailstones fell with the rain. They destroyed the whole crop. Not a leaf was left on the trees and the corn was ruined.

Q.4 Who does Lencho have complete faith in? What does he do?

Ans. Lencho has complete faith in God. He believes that God's eyes see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience.

He writes a letter to God asking for a hundred pesos to sow his field again and to feed his family till the next harvest.

Q.5 Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Ans. The postmaster is moved by Lencho's faith and does not want to shake it. So he collects money from his staff and himself.

He signs 'God' so that Lencho continues to believe that the reply has come from God.

Q.6 Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money? Why or why not?

Ans. No. Lencho was not at all surprised to see the money, because he was sure God would answer him. His faith was so strong that he never doubted the source.

Q.7 Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony?

Ans. Lencho thinks the post-office employees have taken the remaining thirty pesos, as he is sure God cannot make a mistake.

The irony is that the postmaster and his staff, who helped him with their own money, are called crooks.

Q.8 What are the two kinds of conflict in the story?

Ans. Man versus nature: the hailstorm that destroys Lencho's crop.

Man versus man: Lencho's faith in God against his distrust of other people, whom he calls a 'bunch of crooks'.

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 Write a character sketch of Lencho. (Long answer, 100-120 words)

Ans. Lencho is a poor, hard-working farmer who works like an ox in his field. He has an unshakable faith in God and believes that He knows everything. When the hail destroys his crop, he does not lose hope but writes to God.

He is simple and innocent, so he does not think of the postmaster. He is also quick to blame others and calls the post-office staff crooks. His faith is admirable, but his ingratitude shows his limited worldly understanding.

Q.2 Why did the postmaster decide to help Lencho? Mention two qualities of the postmaster.

Ans. He was moved by Lencho's deep faith and did not want to shake it. He is kind and generous, and also resourceful, because he organised the money from his employees and added his own salary.

Q.3 Reference to context: 'God, if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year.' (a) Who says this? (b) Why?

Ans. (a) Lencho writes this to God. (b) The hailstorm had ruined the entire crop and he had no way to feed his family for the year or to sow the field again, so he turned to God.

Q.4 Why was Lencho angry when he opened the letter?

Ans. He found only seventy pesos instead of the hundred he had asked for. He felt God could not make a mistake and thought the post-office employees had stolen thirty pesos.

Q.5 What does the story tell us about human nature? (Value-based, 3-4 lines)

Ans. People show both goodness and faults. The postmaster shows compassion while Lencho shows blind faith and ingratitude. We should help others without expecting thanks and should not judge people without proof.