

First Flight

(Class X – NCERT English)

Chapter 1: A Letter to God – G.L. Fuentes

Detailed Summary (Expanded, Exam-Oriented)

The story "A Letter to God" by G.L. Fuentes is a tale about unwavering faith in God and the irony of human nature. It revolves around Lencho, a hardworking farmer who writes a letter to God asking for help after his crops are destroyed by a hailstorm.

Lencho is a poor but hardworking farmer who lives with his family in a small house on the crest of a low hill. He depends entirely on his corn crop for survival. The family needs rain for the harvest, and Lencho watches the sky constantly, hoping for rain.

One day, as Lencho predicted, it begins to rain. The whole family is delighted because the rain means a good harvest and prosperity. Lencho compares the large drops of rain to new coins, showing his simple but profound connection between nature and livelihood.

However, the rain soon turns into a violent hailstorm. Large hailstones begin falling, destroying everything in the field. The corn is completely ruined - not a single leaf remains on the trees, the flowers are gone, and the whole year of work is destroyed in less than an hour.

The family is devastated. They have no food and no hope of income for the entire year. The children are hungry, and Lencho's heart is filled with sorrow. However, despite this complete disaster, Lencho maintains his faith in God.

That night, Lencho thinks about his only hope - God. He believes that God sees everything and knows everything, and God will surely help them in this difficult time. His faith is so strong that he decides to write a letter directly to God.

On Sunday, Lencho goes to town and writes a letter addressed simply to "God." In the letter, he explains his situation - how the hailstorm destroyed his crops and how his family will suffer hunger if God does not help them. He asks God to send him one hundred pesos so he can resow his field and survive until the next harvest.

Lencho puts the letter in the mailbox with complete confidence that God will receive it and respond. The postman who collects the letter is amused when he sees the address "To God." He shows it to the postmaster, expecting him to laugh as well.

But the postmaster does not laugh. Instead, he is deeply moved by Lencho's simple, childlike faith. He does not want to break this man's faith in God. The postmaster decides to help, but he knows he

cannot collect the full hundred pesos that Lencho has requested.

The postmaster talks to his employees and friends, and together they manage to collect seventy pesos. The postmaster himself contributes part of his salary. He puts the money in an envelope addressed to Lencho and signs it simply "God" so that Lencho's faith remains intact.

The following Sunday, Lencho comes to the post office to check if there is a reply from God. When he receives the envelope, he is not at all surprised - he had complete faith that God would answer. He opens it with absolute confidence.

But when Lencho counts the money, he becomes angry. There is only seventy pesos instead of the hundred he asked for. Lencho is certain that God could not have made a mistake and would never send less than what was needed.

Without any hesitation, Lencho concludes that the post office employees must have stolen the remaining thirty pesos. His faith in God is so absolute that he does not question God for even a moment. Instead, he immediately blames the people who handled the letter.

Lencho writes another letter to God. In this second letter, he asks God to send the remaining thirty pesos, but he adds a crucial request - God should send the money directly to him and not through the post office, because the post office employees are "a bunch of crooks."

The story ends with this ironic twist. The very people who helped Lencho out of compassion and respect for his faith are now accused of theft by the same man they helped. Lencho's faith in God is unshakeable, but his faith in humanity is completely absent.

Central Themes

1. Faith and Belief

The story celebrates Lencho's unwavering faith in God. His belief is so strong that he can write a letter to God with complete confidence that it will be answered. This simple, childlike faith is both admirable and central to the story.

2. Irony and Human Nature

The central irony is that the post office employees, who helped Lencho out of kindness, are accused of being thieves. The story shows how humans are often unappreciated and how good deeds can be misunderstood.

3. Innocence and Simplicity

Lencho's character represents innocent, simple faith. He does not question or analyze; he simply believes. This simplicity is both his strength and his limitation.

4. Kindness and Compassion

The postmaster and his colleagues show genuine kindness in helping a stranger. They are moved by Lencho's faith and work together to preserve it, showing the good side of human nature.

5. Lack of Faith in Humanity

While Lencho has complete faith in God, he has zero faith in his fellow humans. He immediately assumes the worst about the post office employees, showing a dark side of blind faith.

Character Analysis

1. Lencho

A hardworking farmer who is the protagonist of the story. He is simple, honest, and has absolute faith in God. He is also naive and quick to judge others negatively. His character shows both the strength of faith and the danger of blind belief without reason. He represents simple rural folk whose entire life depends on agriculture.

2. The Postmaster

A kind, compassionate man who is moved by Lencho's faith. Instead of mocking it, he respects it and takes action to preserve it. He shows leadership in organizing the collection and demonstrates true humanity. He represents educated, empathetic people who help others selflessly.

3. Post Office Employees

Represent ordinary working people who are willing to contribute their hard-earned money to help a stranger. They do good without expecting any recognition or thanks, showing the best of human nature.

Important Vocabulary (With Meanings)

- **Crest** – the top of a hill or mountain
- **Hailstorm** – a storm with falling ice pellets
- **Downpour** – a heavy rain
- **Locusts** – large grasshoppers that destroy crops
- **Pesos** – currency of several Latin American countries
- **Resow** – to plant seeds again
- **Contentment** – state of happiness and satisfaction
- **Correspondence** – exchange of letters
- **Amiable** – friendly and pleasant
- **Goodwill** – friendly, helpful feelings toward others

Exam-Ready Key Points

- Lencho is a farmer who depends entirely on his corn harvest
- A hailstorm completely destroys his crops, leaving the family with no food or income
- Lencho has such strong faith in God that he writes a letter asking for 100 pesos
- The postmaster is moved by Lencho's faith and collects 70 pesos from employees
- The money is sent to Lencho in an envelope signed by God

- Lencho receives the money but becomes angry because 30 pesos are missing
- He immediately accuses the post office employees of stealing the money
- He writes another letter asking God to send remaining money directly, calling postal workers crooks
- The story shows irony - those who helped are accused of theft
- Themes include faith in God, lack of faith in humans, irony, and kindness