

Chapter 1: A Letter to God

Complete Chapter Notes • NCERT Answer Guide • Exam Revision

Author

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Genre

Short story with themes of faith, hope, nature and human kindness.

Central Idea

Lencho's crops are destroyed by a **hailstorm**. His absolute faith in God leads him to write a letter asking for money. The postmaster and his colleagues secretly help him, but Lencho misunderstands their kindness.

1. About the Story

"A Letter to God" presents a poor farmer named Lencho whose livelihood depends completely on his crop. After a destructive hailstorm ruins his field, he turns to God with complete faith. The story contrasts faith, human kindness, nature's power and human misunderstanding. The ending creates a strong irony: the people who help Lencho are the very people he suspects.

2. Setting & Main Characters

Character	Role / Quality
Lencho	A poor, hardworking farmer with absolute and unquestioning faith in God.
Lencho's Family	They live with him and depend on the harvest for food and survival.
Postmaster	A kind and generous man who is deeply moved by Lencho's faith and tries to protect it.
Postman	The employee who discovers Lencho's unusual letter and takes it to the postmaster.

3. Detailed Summary

Lencho's Hope: Lencho lives in a **solitary** house on a hill and looks at his ripe cornfield. He desperately needs rain for a good harvest.

Rain Begins: Rain finally comes. Lencho is delighted and compares the raindrops to new coins because the rain promises a profitable harvest.

Rain Turns into Hail: The weather suddenly becomes destructive. A strong wind brings huge hailstones that continue for about an hour.

The Crop is Destroyed: The hailstorm destroys the corn, flowers and leaves. Lencho's hopes of a good harvest disappear.

Lencho's Faith: Although devastated, Lencho believes God will help him. He writes a letter asking God for one hundred pesos.

The Postmaster Reads It: The postmaster is amused at first but becomes deeply moved by Lencho's faith. He decides to answer the letter.

Human Kindness: The postmaster collects money from employees, contributes part of his own salary and receives help from friends. They manage to send seventy pesos.

Lencho Receives the Money: Lencho is not surprised because he fully expects God to answer him. But he becomes angry when he sees that only seventy pesos have arrived.

The Irony: Lencho believes God sent the money but thinks the post-office employees stole the remaining thirty pesos. In reality, those employees were the people who helped him.

4. Story Flow at a Glance

Ripe crop	Needs rain	Rain arrives	Hailstorm	Crop destroyed
Faith in God	Letter to God	Postmaster helps	70 pesos sent	Lencho blames post office

5. Major Themes

Faith in God: Lencho has complete faith that God will help him even after his crop is destroyed.

Human Kindness: The postmaster and his colleagues help a stranger without expecting anything in return.

Nature vs. Human Life: The hailstorm shows how natural forces can suddenly destroy a farmer's livelihood.

Hope: Lencho does not surrender after the disaster; he turns to God for help.

Irony & Misunderstanding: Lencho accuses the very people who helped him.

Simplicity of Faith: Lencho's unquestioning faith is powerful but also makes him unable to recognise human goodness.

6. Character Sketch - Lencho

- **Hardworking:** He is a farmer who works for the success of his crop.
- **Hopeful:** He eagerly waits for rain and believes it will bring a good harvest.
- **Faithful:** His faith in God is absolute.
- **Simple / Naïve:** He accepts the arrival of money as God's direct response without questioning the process.
- **Unquestioning:** He never suspects that human beings may have helped him.
- **Suspicious:** When the amount is short, he immediately suspects the post-office employees.

7. Character Sketch - Postmaster

- **Kind-hearted:** He is touched by Lencho's faith.
- **Generous:** He contributes part of his own salary and collects money from others.
- **Empathetic:** He wants to protect Lencho from losing hope.
- **Helpful:** He helps someone he does not personally know.
- **Selfless:** He does not seek recognition for his good deed.

8. Important Literary Features

Irony: Lencho calls the post-office workers dishonest even though they are the ones who collected and sent him money.

Contrast: Lencho has absolute faith in God but almost no faith in human beings.

Symbolism: Rain initially symbolises hope and prosperity; hail symbolises sudden destruction and hardship.

Personification: The story uses human-like qualities and actions to make natural elements vivid.

Metaphor: Raindrops are associated with coins; hailstones with frozen pearls; Lencho with an ox.

9. Important Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
Solitary	Alone; isolated
Crest	Top or highest part of a hill
Ripe	Ready to be harvested
Downpour	Heavy rainfall
Hailstones	Balls/pieces of ice falling from the sky
Locusts	Insects that can destroy crops in large groups
Plague	A destructive outbreak; a large-scale disaster
Conscience	Inner sense of right and wrong
Amiable	Friendly and pleasant
Contentment	A feeling of satisfaction
Charity	Voluntary help given to someone in need
Resolution	A firm decision
Crooks	Dishonest people or criminals
Naïve	Simple and lacking worldly experience

10. Important Questions & Answers

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

Answer: His crop was ready for harvest and needed rain. He believed the rain would produce a good harvest and therefore bring him money and prosperity.

Q. Why was Lencho devastated after the hailstorm?

Answer: The hailstorm destroyed his entire crop, leaving him and his family without food or income for the year.

Q. Why did Lencho write a letter to God?

Answer: He had complete faith in God and believed that God could see his suffering and help him. He asked for money to sow his field again and survive until the next crop.

Q. How did the postmaster help Lencho?

Answer: He collected money from his employees and friends and contributed part of his own salary. He sent seventy pesos to Lencho in an envelope signed 'God'.

Q. Why was Lencho not surprised on receiving the money?

Answer: His faith in God was so strong that he fully expected God to answer his request.

Q. Why did Lencho become angry?

Answer: He had asked for one hundred pesos but received only seventy. He believed God could not make a mistake, so he suspected that the post-office employees had taken the remaining money.

Q. Why is the ending ironic?

Answer: The people Lencho suspects of stealing the money are actually the people who helped him. The reader knows this, but Lencho does not.

□ Exam Focus

Remember the contrast: Lencho's faith in God = complete but his faith in human beings = absent. This contrast creates the central irony of the story.

11. NCERT – Oral Comprehension Check: Answer Guide

1. What did Lencho hope for?

Answer: He hoped for rain because his ripe corn needed a shower for a good harvest.

2. Why did he call the raindrops ‘new coins’?

Answer: A good rain would help his crop produce a profitable harvest, so he imagined the drops as money.

3. How did the weather change and what happened to the field?

Answer: The rain turned into a violent hailstorm. Large hailstones destroyed the corn, flowers and leaves.

4. How did Lencho feel after the hail stopped?

Answer: He was deeply sad and saw a bleak future because his crop was completely ruined.

5. Who did Lencho trust, and what did he do?

Answer: He trusted God completely and wrote to God asking for one hundred pesos.

6. Who read Lencho’s letter?

Answer: The postmaster read the letter after the postman brought it to him.

7. What did the postmaster do?

Answer: He decided to answer the letter, collected money from employees and friends, added some of his own salary and sent seventy pesos.

8. Was Lencho surprised by the money?

Answer: No. His faith was so strong that he expected God to send him the money.

9. What made Lencho angry?

Answer: He received seventy pesos instead of the hundred he had requested and suspected that the post-office employees had taken the rest.

12. NCERT – Thinking about the Text

1. Who does Lencho have complete faith in? How is this shown?

Answer: Lencho has complete faith in God. His decision to write directly to God, his confidence that God sees everything and his certainty that God cannot make a mistake all demonstrate this faith.

2. Why does the postmaster send money, and why does he sign the letter ‘God’?

Answer: The postmaster is deeply moved by Lencho’s faith and does not want it to be shaken. He therefore arranges money and signs the letter ‘God’ so Lencho will believe that his prayer has been answered.

3. Does Lencho try to discover who sent the money? Why?

Answer: No. He never considers that human beings might have helped him. His faith in God is so complete that he accepts the money as God’s answer.

4. Who does Lencho think took the missing money? What is the irony?

Answer: He thinks the post-office employees took it. The irony is that these same employees actually collected and contributed the money that he received.

5. Are people like Lencho found in the real world? What kind of person is he?

Answer: Yes, people with unquestioning faith can be found in real life. Lencho is best described as naïve and unquestioning. His faith is admirable, although his suspicion of the helpers shows a lack of understanding.

6. How are the two conflicts in the story illustrated?

Answer: The conflict between humans and nature is shown by the hailstorm destroying Lencho’s crop. The conflict between humans is shown when Lencho suspects the helpful post-office employees of stealing his money.

13. NCERT - Thinking about Language: Key Answers

A. Names of storms

Description	Answer
Violent tropical storm with winds moving in a circle	Cyclone
Extremely strong wind	Gale
Violent tropical storm with very strong winds	Typhoon
Funnel-shaped violent storm	Tornado
Very strong storm in the western Atlantic	Hurricane
Fast-spinning, damaging strong wind	Whirlwind

B. Relative clauses

- I often go to Mumbai, which is the commercial capital of India.
- My mother, who cooks very well, is going to host a TV show on cooking.
- These sportspersons, whose performance has been excellent, are going to meet the President.
- Lencho prayed to God, whose eyes see into our minds.
- This man, whom I trusted, cheated me.

C. Negatives used for emphasis

- Trees lost all their leaves → Not a leaf remained on the trees.
- The letter was addressed to God himself → It was nothing less than a letter to God.
- The postman saw the address for the first time → Never in his career as a postman had he seen that address.

D. Metaphors

Object	Metaphor	Quality compared
Cloud	Huge mountains of clouds	Mass / hugeness
Raindrops	Coins	Money or prosperity expected from the crop
Hailstones	Frozen pearls	Brightness / round appearance
Locusts	A plague of locusts	Destructive effect of a rapidly spreading plague
Lencho	An ox of a man	Great strength and capacity for hard work

14. NCERT - Speaking / Writing / Activity Guidance

Speaking Activity

This is a personal-response activity. Students may share an experience when they faced difficulty and felt that only a miracle could help. A good response should briefly describe the problem, the help received, the outcome and the lesson learnt.

Listening Activity

The textbook provides a separate listening task based on a personal letter. It is best completed while listening to the teacher/audio so that students can fill the required details accurately.

Writing Activity - Water Conservation Poster

Prepare a poster encouraging people to save water during summer and harvest/store excess rainwater. Include a clear heading, a short slogan, 3-4 practical actions and an attractive layout.

15. Quick Revision - 10 Points

1. Lencho is a poor farmer whose livelihood depends on his corn crop.
2. He eagerly waits for rain because the crop needs a shower before harvest.
3. The rain turns into a destructive hailstorm.
4. The hailstorm completely destroys his crop.
5. Lencho has complete faith in God.
6. He writes to God asking for 100 pesos.
7. The postmaster is moved by his faith and arranges 70 pesos.
8. Lencho believes the money came directly from God.
9. He suspects the post-office employees of stealing the remaining 30 pesos.
10. The ending is ironic because the accused employees are actually Lencho's helpers.

□ Final Exam Line

The story shows that faith can give a person hope, while human kindness can quietly provide the help they need; however, blind or unquestioning faith can also prevent a person from recognising goodness in others.

END OF CHAPTER 1 • A LETTER TO GOD