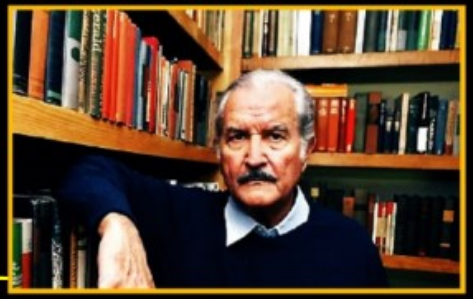
Class-X

English

First Flight

Chapter-1

A Letter to God



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BEFORE YOU READ

- They say faith can move mountains. But what should we put our faith in? This is the question this story delicately poses.
- Lencho is a farmer who writes a letter to God when his crops are ruined, asking for a hundred pesos.

1. Does Lencho's letter reach God?
2. Does God send him the money?

- Think what your answers to these questions would be, and guess how the story continues, before you begin to read it.

crest : शिखर

downpour : तेज बारिश



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.

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intimately : घनिष्ठता से

Throughout the morning Lencho — 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, woman."

supper: शाम का खाना

The woman who was preparing supper, replied, “Yes, God willing”.

The older boys were working in the field, while the smaller ones were playing near the house until the woman called to them all, “Come for dinner”.

predicted: भविष्यवाणी की

approaching: पास आना

It was during the meal that, just as Lencho 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.

pleasure: खुशी

The man went out for no other reason than to have the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body, and when he returned he exclaimed, ‘‘These aren’t raindrops falling from the sky, they are new coins.



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The big drops are ten cent pieces and the little ones are fives.'' 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 along with the rain very large hailstones began to fall.

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These truly did resemble new silver coins.

The boys, exposing themselves to the rain, ran out to collect the frozen pearls.

"It's really getting bad now," exclaimed the man.

"I hope it passes quickly." It did not pass quickly.

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destroyed : नष्ट होना



For an hour the hail rained on the house, the garden, the hillside, the cornfield, on the whole valley. The field was white, as if covered with salt.

Not a leaf remained on the trees.

The corn was totally destroyed.

plague of locusts :
टिड्डियों का प्रकोप



The flowers were gone from the plants. Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. When the storm had passed, he stood in the middle of the field and said to his sons, "A plague of locusts would have left more than this. The hail has left nothing.

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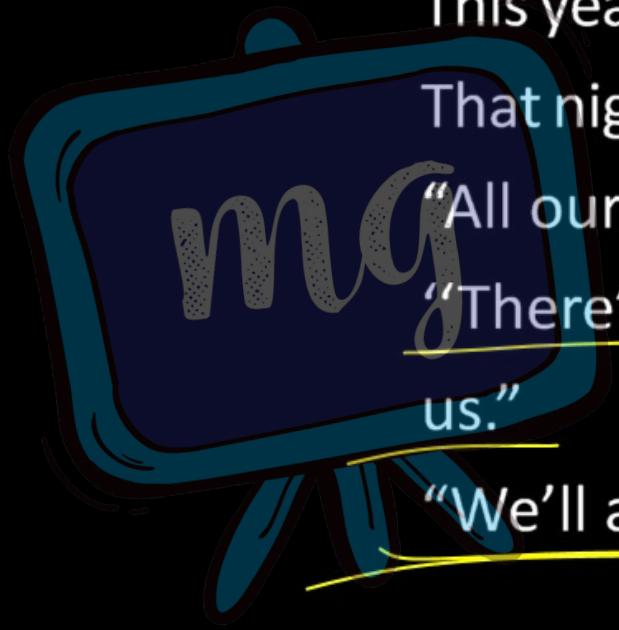

This year we will have no corn.''

That night was a sorrowful one.

"All our work, for nothing."

"There's no one who can help us."

"We'll all go hungry this year."

solitary : एकमात्र

But in the hearts of all who lived in that solitary house in the middle of the valley, there was a single hope: help from God.

"Don't be so upset, even though this seems like a total loss. Remember, no one dies of hunger."

"That's what they say: no one dies of hunger."

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conscience: अंतःकरण

All through the night, Lencho thought only of his one hope: the help of God, whose eyes, as he had been instructed, see everything, even what is deep in one's conscience. Lencho was an ox of a man, working like an animal in the fields, but still he knew how to write.

daybreak: सूर्योदय

The following Sunday, at daybreak, he began to write a letter which he himself would carry to town and place in the mail. It was nothing less than a letter to God.

"God," he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year.

sow : बीज बोना

I need a hundred pesos in order to sow my field again and to live until the crop comes, because the hailstorm....”

He wrote ‘To God’ on the envelope, put the letter inside and, still troubled, went to town.

employees: कर्मचारी





At the post office, he placed a stamp on the letter and dropped it into the mailbox. One of the employees, who was a postman and also helped at the post office, went to his boss laughing heartily and showed him the letter to God.

amiable : मैत्रीपूर्ण

immediately : तुरन्त

Never in his career as a postman had he known that address. The postmaster — a fat, amiable fellow — also broke out laughing, but almost immediately he turned serious and, tapping the letter on his desk, commented, “What faith! I wish I had the faith of the man who wrote this letter.

correspondence : पत्र व्यवहार

shake : हिलाना

evident: स्पष्ट

goodwill: सद्भावना

Starting up a correspondence with God!" So, in order not to shake the writer's faith in God, the postmaster came up with an idea: answer the letter. But when he opened it, it was evident that to answer it he needed something more than goodwill, ink and paper.

resolution: दृढ़ निश्चय

charity: दयालुता

But he stuck to his resolution: he asked for money from his employees, he himself gave part of his salary, and several friends of his were obliged to give something 'for an act of charity'.

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It was impossible for him to gather together the hundred pesos, so he was able to send the farmer only a little more than half. He put the money in an envelope addressed to Lencho and with it a letter containing only a single word as a signature: God.

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contentment : संतोष

The following Sunday Lencho came a bit earlier than usual to ask if there was a letter for him. It was the postman himself who handed the letter to him while the postmaster, experiencing the contentment of a man who has performed a good deed,

slightest: थोडा सा भी
denied : मना किया

Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the money; such was his confidence — but he became angry when he counted the money. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.

express : व्यक्त करना



Immediately, Lencho went up to the window to ask for paper and ink. On the public writing-table, he started to write, with much wrinkling of his brow, caused by the effort he had to make to express his ideas.

licked : जीभ फेरना
affixed : चिपकाना
fist : मुठ्ठी

When he finished, he went to the window to buy a stamp which he licked and then affixed to the envelope with a blow of his fist. The moment the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said:

rest : शेष

crooks : बेईमान

"God: Of the money that I asked for, only seventy pesos reached me. Send me the rest, since I need it very much. But don't send it to me through the mail because the post office employees are a bunch of crooks. Lencho."