

A Letter to God

Summary: This story is written by G L Fuentes. This is a story about the great faith of a simpleton in the God. The story begins with Lencho hoping for rains so that his crops would give a better yield. The rain does come but is followed by a devastating hailstorm. Hailstorm destroys all the standing crops and leaves Lencho staring into the bleak future ahead. But Lencho is a strong believer in the God and decides to write a letter to the God; asking for some monetary help. Lencho also wishes to repay the debt when the next crop would give him enough money. After seeing Lencho's letter, the postmaster is deeply touched by the strong faith of Lencho in the God. The postmaster collects money from his colleagues and sends some money to Lencho. But the money sent by the postmaster is less than what the Lencho had demanded through his letter. Lencho once again writes a letter to the God in which he expresses his doubts about the honesty of post office employees.

Question 1: What did Lencho hope for?

Answer: Lencho hoped for rains; because the crop in his field needed rains.

Question 2: Why did Lencho say the raindrops were like 'new coins'?

Answer: As raindrops would have helped in getting a better harvest, resulting in more prosperity, so Lencho compared them with new coins.

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

Answer: The rain changed to hailstorm. All the crop in the field was destroyed.

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

Answer: After the destruction caused by hail, Lencho was shattered. He could see a bleak future for him and his family. He was worried about lack of food for the coming year.

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

Answer: Lencho had faith in God. He believed that God could see everything and would help him out.

Lencho wrote a letter to the God, explained his situation and asked for some money from God.

Question 6: Who read the letter?

Answer: The postmaster read the letter.

Question 7: What did the postmaster do then?

Answer: Postmaster was deeply touched by Lencho's faith in the God. The postmaster asked his colleagues to contribute some money so that they could send that to Lencho.

Question 8: Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Answer: The following sentences explain Lencho's faith in the God, "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."

Question 9: Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter 'God'?

Answer: Postmaster was moved by Lencho's complete faith in the God. So, he decided to send money to Lencho. Moreover, the postmaster did

not want to shake Lencho's faith in God. So, he signed the letter 'God'. It was a good ploy to convey a message that God had himself written the letter.

Question 10: Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why/Why not?

Answer: As Lencho had complete faith in God, so he did not try to find out the actual sender of money.

Question 11: Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation?

Answer: Lencho had all his doubts on people working in the post office. The irony of the situation is the finger pointing on those who had tried to help out Lencho. In real life also we come across such situations. Many a time you would have tried helping someone and he may get a wrong message.

Question 12: Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Answer: Lencho was not surprised to get the money.

Question 13: What made him angry?

Answer: The fact that he received half the amount he had requested for, made him angry.

Question 14: 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 list to answer the question.

Greedy, naïve, stupid, ungrateful, selfish, comical, unquestioning

Answer: In the real world it is almost impossible to find people, like Lencho. Lencho seems to be naïve and unquestioning. Naïve in the sense that he doesn't even bother to think about who sent the money or if God would actually send the money.

Probably his naiveté comes from his unquestioning belief in the God.

Question 15: There are two kinds of conflict in the story: between humans and nature, and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Answer: In the initial part of the story the episode of rainfall turning into a hailstorm shows the conflict between man and nature. When it is a rainfall the man is very happy dreaming about happy days ahead. But once the rain turns into hail the man is ruining the happening of hailstorm. The way Lencho is feeling sad and gloomy after the storm appropriately projects the conflict of the nature and the man. In the later part of the story when Lencho blames post office people for stealing part of the money then it is showing the conflict between humans. Although nothing is written what happened after that, but anybody can imagine the mental situation when postmaster read the letter.

There are different names in different parts of the world for storms, depending on their nature. Can you match the names in the box with their descriptions below, and fill in the blanks?

gale, whirlwind, cyclone, hurricane, tornado, typhoon

A violent tropical storm in which strong winds move in a circle: _ _ c _ _ _ _

Answer: Cyclone

An extremely strong wind : _ a _ _

Answer: Gale

A violent tropical storm with very strong winds :
_ _ p _ _ _ _

Answer: Typhoon

A violent storm whose centre is a cloud in the shape of a funnel: _ _ _ n _ _ _

Answer: Tornado

A violent storm with very strong winds, especially in the western Atlantic Ocean: _ _ r _ _ _ _
_ _

Answer: Hurricane

A very strong wind that moves very fast in a spinning movement and causes a lot of damage: _

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Answer: Whirlwind

Dust of Snow

The way a crow

Shook down on me

The dust of snow

From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart

A change of mood

And saved some part

Of a day I had rued.

ROBERT FROST

Question 1: What is a “dust of snow”? What does the poet say has changed his mood? How has the poet’s mood changed?

Answer: The snow falls like cotton flakes and settles on trees. When fresh it is having a powdery consistency. The dust of snow falls on the poet as a crow shakes the branch. This pleasant snow shower changes the poet’s mood. Poet was feeling negative

because of some reasons and after the snow dust he is feeling happier.

Question 2: How does Frost present nature in this poem? The following questions may help you to think of an answer.

Answer: The poet Robert Frost explains a vivid picture of the nature. For him a crow is playful creature hopping from one branch to another. The hemlock tree is a poisonous plant with small white flowers. This explains the coexistence of diverse moods in nature. The poet's initial mood can be compared to that of a hemlock tree, and the later mood is like that of a flower. Snowflakes are explained as something which should be enjoyed. Moreover, the contrast of black crow with white snow is also mirroring the bad and the good mood of the poet.

Although, the poet has mentioned just three things; but with the limited number of things and limited number of lines; he has explained a pleasant passing memory of a day to day life.

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire

Some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire

I hold with those who favour fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction ice

Is also great

And would suffice.

ROBERT FROST

Question 1: For Frost, what do 'fire' and 'ice' stand for?

Answer: The word 'desire' in the poem indicates towards all type of greed and lust. In today's world also humankind's greed is endangering the very existence of the planet earth.

The word 'hate' in the poem indicates towards hatred and indifference which is as cold as ice. If we compare this with people's attitude towards each other in modern times we can see the hate for each other among different communities. Hate

between two nations is a surefire way to hasten the end of this world.

Question 2: What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? How does it help in bringing out the contrasting ideas in the poem?

Answer: Desire propels us in hot pursuit of something, hence a good comparison with fire.

Hate makes us cold towards other's progress and we try to shut our eyes towards that progress. The coldness of ice can numb your senses; that is why hate has been compared with ice.