



Learn English Through Stories

E Series

E50

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1. A Letter to God

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, next to the corral, the field of ripe corn dotted with the kidney bean flowers that always promised a good harvest.

The only thing the earth needed was a rainfall, or at least a shower. Throughout the morning Lencho – who knew his fields intimately – had done nothing else but scan the sky toward the northeast.

“Now we’re really going to get some water, woman.”

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

The oldest 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...”

It was during the meal that, just as Lencho had predicted, big drips of rain began to fall. In the northeast huge mountains of clouds could be seen approaching. The air was fresh and sweet.

The man went out to look for something in the corral for no other reason than to allow himself the pleasure of feeling the rain on his body, and when he returned he exclaimed: “those aren’t raindrops falling from the sky, they’re new coins. The big drops are ten-centavo pieces and the little ones are fives...”

With a satisfied expression he regarded the field of ripe corn with its kidney bean flowers, draped in a curtain of rain. But suddenly a strong wind began to blow and together with the rain very large hailstones began to fall. 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, mortified. “I hope it passes quickly.”

It did not pass quickly. 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. The flowers were gone from the kidney bean plants. Lencho’s soul 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: this year we will have no corn or beans...”

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.”

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....”

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. The following Sunday, at day break, after having convinced himself that there is a protecting spirit 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. I need a hundred pesos in order to re-sow the field 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. 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. 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. To believe the way he believes. To hope with the confidence that he knows how to hope with. Starting up a correspondence with God!”

So, in order not to disillusion that prodigy of faith, revealed by a letter that could not be delivered, 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 good will, ink and paper. But he stuck to his resolution: he asked for money from his employee, he himself gave part of his salary, and several friends of his were obliged to give something “for an act of charity”.

It was impossible for him to gather together the hundred pesos requested, so he was able to send the farmer only a little more than half. He put the bills in an envelope addressed to Lencho and with them a letter containing only a signature: GOD.

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 – looked on from the doorway of his office.

Lencho showed not the slightest surprise on seeing the bills – 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!

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. 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 that the letter fell into the mailbox the postmaster went to open it. It said: “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.”

2. Summary

Lencho was a poor but hardworking farmer. His house was on the top of a hill and that was the only house in the valley. He hoped for a good yield but his fields needed rain or at least a shower. He waited for the rain and it did come. One day, it started drizzling. In the beginning, Lencho felt the falling rain drops as 'new silver coins' falling from the sky. But gradually, the rain transformed into a hail storm. The hailstones fell for an hour. It destroyed his crops completely. Lencho's soul was filled with sadness. He thought that his family would go hungry for the whole year unless they found someone who could help them. Suddenly his heart was filled with hope. He had firm faith in God. Lencho knew how to read and write. The following Sunday, he wrote a letter to God mentioning his destroyed crops and asked him for money so that he could sow his field again. Then he put the letter in an envelope, addressed it to 'God' and went to the post. He affixed a stamp on it and dropped it in the mail-box.

The postman, who took the letter out of the mail-box saw the letter and showed it to the postmaster. Everyone in the post office had a hearty laugh. But immediately the postmaster realised the man's predicament and unshakable faith in God. He decided to help the man. He discussed with his colleagues and all of them decided to part with some money for an act of charity. They collected money, put it in an envelope and addressed it to Lencho. This letter contained a single word in the form of a signature: God.

The next Sunday, Lencho went to the post office. The postmaster handed him the letter. Lencho was not at all surprised on receiving a letter from God. He had unshakable faith that God would reply in the form of money and he did receive it. He opened the envelope but became angry on counting the money. There were only seventy pesos in the envelope, whereas he had asked for one hundred. He knew God could not have made a mistake. Immediately, he wrote another letter to God, put it in the mail-box and went out.

The postmaster took out the letter from the mail-box and opened it. Lencho had requested God to send the rest of the money i.e., thirty pesos as he had received only seventy pesos. Lencho had a feeling that the people at the post office had cheated him by taking out some money from God's envelope. So, he wrote that God should not send money through mail as according to him, the post office employees were a bunch of crooks.

3. Questions and Answers

Question 1: What did Lencho hope for?

Answer: Lencho hoped for a good rain as it was much needed for a good harvest.

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

Answer: Lencho compared the raindrops with new coins because they were promising him a good harvest resulting in more prosperity.

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

Answer: The rain changed into hailstones as a strong wind began to blow and huge hailstones began to fall along with the rain. All the crops in Lencho's field got destroyed because of the weather conditions.

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

Answer: Lencho was filled with grief after the hail stopped as everything was ruined and there was nothing that he could feed his family with. He could see a bleak future for him and his family.

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

Answer: Lencho had firm faith in God. He believed that God sees everything, even what is deep in one's conscience and help everyone in one's problems. He wrote a letter to God asking him a hundred pesos to sow his field again.

Question 6: Who read the letter?

Answer: Postmaster read the letter.

Question 8: Was Lencho surprised to find a letter for him with money in it?

Answer: Lencho was not surprised to find a letter with money from God as he believed that God will help him.

Question 9: Who does Lencho have complete faith in? Which sentences in the story tell you this?

Answer: Lencho has complete faith in God as he is instructed that God knows everything and helps us in our problems. There are few sentences which show this:

1. "God", he wrote, "if you don't help me, my family and I will go hungry this year."
2. He wrote 'To God' on the envelope, put the letter inside and still troubled, went to town.
3. God could not have made a mistake, nor could he have denied Lencho what he had requested.

Question 10: Why does the postmaster send money to Lencho? Why does he sign the letter God?

Answer: The postmaster sends money to Lencho in order to keep Lencho's faith in God alive and firm as he was completely moved by it.

When postmaster reads the letter of Lencho to God, he becomes serious and does not want to shake his faith and decides to answer the letter. He gathers money with the help of his post office employees and friends on behalf of God and signs the letter 'God' so that Lencho's faith does not get shaken.

Question 11: Did Lencho try to find out who had sent the money to him? Why or why not?

Answer: Lencho did not try to find out who had sent the money to him because he never suspected the presence of God and had complete faith in God. He could not believe that it could be – anybody else other than him who would send him the money.

His faith in God was so strong that he believed that he had sent money to him for his help in his problem.

Question 12: Who does Lencho think has taken the rest of the money? What is the irony in the situation? (Remember that the irony of a situation is an unexpected aspect of it. An ironic situation is strange or amusing because it is the opposite of what is expected).

Answer: Lencho thinks that the post office employees have taken the rest of the money as he had asked a hundred pesos from God and in the letter there was only seventy pesos and God cannot make such a mistake. So, he assumes that they have stolen the money.

The irony in this situation is that Lencho suspects those people who helped him in his problem and tried to keep his faith alive in God.

Question 13: 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 box to answer the question.

Greedy; Naïve; Stupid; Ungrateful; Selfish; Comical; Unquestioning.

Answer: It is almost impossible to find a person like Lencho as he is an unquestioning and naive kind of person. He is not stupid if he doesn't know who has sent him money or a letter will reach God without any address. It is Lencho's faith in God. In real world, most people are selfish and greedy and Lencho is totally lovable and different.

Question 14: There are two kinds of conflict in the story between humans and nature and between humans themselves. How are these conflicts illustrated?

Answer: Conflict between Humans and Nature: The conflict between humans

and nature is illustrated by the destruction of Lencho's crop by the hailstorm as Lencho was expecting a good rain to have good harvest as that was the only hope he had for his earning. He worked so hard to feed his family, but nature turned violent and destroyed everything.

Conflict between Humans and Humans: The story also illustrated another conflict, between humans themselves as the postmaster along with his friends and staff sent Lencho money that Lencho demanded from God although they didn't know Lencho. Lencho blamed them for taking away some amount of money. He called them "a bunch of crook". This shows that man does not have faith in other man, thereby giving rise to this conflict.

4. Grammar Page

7 Adverbs and Adverb Phrases

Adverbs are words that tell you more about verbs, adjectives and other adverbs. Many adverbs end in **ly**. You make these adverbs by adding **ly** to adjectives.

She writes **neatly**.

The traffic was moving **slowly**.

We waited **patiently** to see the doctor.

They waved goodbye **sadly**.

David sings **beautifully**.

The children walked **quickly** into the classroom.

Notes

Some words that end in **ly** are not adverbs. Some **adjectives** end in **ly** too. For example:

Sam was feeling very **lonely**.

She was wearing a **lovely** dress.

It was a very **lively** party.

Adverb phrases are groups of words that functions as single adverbs to describe the action of the verb.

Are you sitting in **a comfortable chair**?

Mr. Dickson always dresses in **fashionable clothes**.

He draws cartoons like **a real cartoonist**.

The train arrived **on time**.

Adverbs of Manner

Some adverbs and adverb phrases describe the way people do things. They answer the question "How?"

The girls answered all the questions **correctly**.

He was driving **carelessly**.

The plane landed **safely**.

Katy plays the piano **skillfully**.

Sam is behaving like **a baby**.

Please speak in **a clear voice**.

She writes in **a very grown-up way**.

You can buy fruit **very cheaply** in this shop.

They sell everything **at very low prices**.

David sings like **a professional singer**.

