

# ENGLISH

## CHAPTER 7: THE LAST LEAF



# THE LAST LEAF

~Summary~

**-by O Henry**

## The Two Friends Sue and Johnsy

Sue and Johnsy are two friends who live in a small flat on the third floor of an old building. They are artists and make paintings for living. Once Johnsy falls ill of pneumonia. She keeps looking out of the window while lying on the bed. She thinks that she is going to die.

## The Doctor's Visit

Although the doctor comes everyday but the condition of Johnsy does not change. One day, the doctor asks Sue if anything is bothering Johnsy. The doctor tells her that it is difficult for Johnsy to get well as she has made up her mind that she will not get well. He also tells her that in this case, the medicines will not help her.

## Sue Tries to Make Johnsy Interested in Things

Sue tries her best to make Johnsy interested in things. She talks about clothes and fashion but Johnsy does not respond. She brings her drawing board in her room and starts to paint but Johnsy does not look at her. She also starts whistling while working but Johnsy just does not notice and keeps lying still looking outside the window.

## Sue Gets to know about Johnsy's Strange Belief

While trying to get Johnsy's attention, Sue notices that she is counting backwards. She comes to know that Johnsy is counting the remaining leaves that are on the Ivy creeper outside the window. Johnsy tells her that the leaves are falling rapidly (speedily) in the autumn season. She also informs her that she would die, once the last leaf falls from the creeper.

## Sue Tries to Convince Johnsy

Sue tries to convince Johnsy that she is foolish in thinking that she would die with the falling of the last leaf of the ivy creeper. She even lies to her that the doctor is confident that she would get well soon. But, Johnsy does not change her mind and keeps on counting the remaining leaves on the creeper.

## Behrman Arrives at their Flat

A neighbour named Behrman arrives at their home. He gets to know about Johnsy's condition and sees that there is only one leaf remaining on the creeper which could fall anytime. He goes back to his house and paints a leaf that looks identical to the creeper's leaf and sticks it on the creeper while Johnsy is sleeping. In the process of doing so, he gets wet as it is raining heavily and it was icy cold. He falls sick and gets pneumonia.

## Johnsy Starts Getting Well

Johnsy keeps looking out of the window and notices that the last leaf is not falling. Even wind and the rain do not make the leaf fall. She realises that she was wrong in supposing that she would die with the falling of the last leaf and starts getting well.

## Sue Informs Johnsy of the Mystery

When Johnsy gets well, Sue tells her the mystery of the last leaf. She informs her that she has got well due to the efforts of Behrman. Behrman, looking at Johnsy's condition, did a wonderful thing. He painted a similar Leaf of Ivy creeper, used a lantern and ladder and pasted it on Ivy creeper. It was raining heavily and he got wet completely. He was struck with pneumonia and died after two days. Behrman had painted a masterpiece (a leaf that looked identical to the leaf on the ivy creeper) and in the process of helping her he had fallen ill and died.

### Conclusion of The Last Leaf

The chapter – The Last Leaf teaches students that they should not lose hope on anything so easily. They need to face tough times courageously and support people who need their help on time.

## NCERT SOLUTIONS

### Questions (Page No. 48)

#### (Think about it)

Question 1. What is Johnsy's illness? What can cure her, the medicine or the willingness to live?

Answer: Johnsy is suffering from pneumonia. Her willingness to live can cure her. Her doctor says that it seems as if she has made up her mind that she is not going to get well. He says that medicines won't work if she does not want to live.

Question 2. Do you think the feeling of depression Johnsy has is common among teenagers?

Answer: Yes, I think the feeling of depression Johnsy has is common among teenagers these days. Teenagers today are in a constant run to make the most of their lives. They live a lifestyle that is burdened by pressure to be the best in every aspect. They tend to care more about their professional lives and give less attention to their personal nourishment.

Question 3. Behrman has a dream. What is it? Does it come true?

Answer: Behrman is a sixty-year-old painter. His lifelong dream was to paint a masterpiece. Yes, it ultimately comes true when he paints the last leaf on an ivy creeper and that painted last leaf seems to be a real one.

Question 4. What is Behrman's masterpiece? What makes Sue say so?

Answer: Johnsy had said that she would die when the last leaf on the ivy creeper falls. When Behrman heard this from Sue, he secretly painted a leaf on the creeper when the last leaf had fallen.

Unaware that the leaf that Johnsy was looking at was a painting, Johnsy felt motivated to see that the last leaf was still clinging to the creeper. She felt energetic and developed a willingness to live.

Thus, the last leaf painted by Behrman was a masterpiece. It rekindled Johnsy's willingness to fight her illness and live. That is the reason why Sue says that the last leaf is Behrman's masterpiece.