

Chapter – *The Last Leaf*

Author: O. Henry

◆ Summary (Easy Language)

“The Last Leaf” is a story of hope, friendship, and sacrifice. Sue and Johnsy are two young artists living together. Johnsy falls seriously ill with pneumonia and loses the will to live. She believes that when the last leaf on the ivy vine outside her window falls, she will also die.

Sue tries to encourage her friend but fails. Their neighbour, Behrman, an old painter who dreams of painting a masterpiece, learns about Johnsy’s belief. On a cold and stormy night, when the last leaf should have fallen, Behrman paints a leaf on the wall.

Seeing the leaf still there, Johnsy regains hope and starts recovering. However, Behrman catches pneumonia that night and dies. His painted leaf becomes his long-awaited masterpiece. The story shows that hope and selfless love can save lives.

◆ Characters

1 Johnsy

- Young artist
- Weak and pessimistic
- Loses hope due to illness

2 Sue

- Johnsy’s friend
- Caring and supportive
- Tries to save Johnsy

3 Behrman

- Old painter
- Kind-hearted and selfless
- Sacrifices his life

◆ Theme / Central Idea

- Power of hope
- Selfless sacrifice
- True friendship
- Importance of mental strength

◆ **Important Incidents**

- Johnsy falls ill with pneumonia
- Her belief about the last leaf
- Sue's concern and care
- Behrman paints the leaf
- Johnsy recovers
- Behrman's death

◆ **Symbols Used**

- **The Last Leaf:** Hope and courage
- **Ivy Vine:** Life and death
- **Behrman's Painting:** True art and sacrifice

◆ **Literary Devices**

- **Irony:** Behrman dies to save Johnsy
- **Symbolism:** Leaf represents hope
- **Imagery:** Cold weather and falling leaves

◆ **Message / Moral**

Hope can heal even the gravest illness. Selfless love and sacrifice are the greatest forms of humanity.