

**The Last Leaf**  
**by O Henry**  
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**MJC – 05**

**Unit -3**

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"The Last Leaf" is a short story by O. Henry that tells the story of two young artists, Johnsy and Sue, who live in a boarding house in Greenwich Village, New York City. Johnsy becomes ill with pneumonia and becomes convinced that she will die when the ivy vine outside her window loses its last leaf.

Her two friends, Mr. Behrman and Mr. Peney, are also artists and decide to make a bet that they will paint a mural on the wall opposite Johnsy's window to cheer her up, with the last leaf of the ivy vine as the subject. Mr. Behrman starts the mural but he died before he could finish it. Johnsy becomes increasingly convinced that she will die and that the ivy vine's last leaf falling is an omen of her death.

As the days pass, the ivy vine loses all of its leaves but one, and Johnsy becomes more and more resigned to her fate. But one day, she wakes up to find that the last leaf is still on the vine, painted on the mural. It is revealed that Mr. Peney, who was known to be a bit of a recluse, painted the last leaf before he passed away from pneumonia. The surprise ending shows that Mr. Peney who was thought to be an uninvolved person, was the one who helped Johnsy to fight the illness and to keep hope alive.

The story is a commentary on the power of art and the human spirit, and the idea that even in the face of death, hope can persist, and that actions of even the most unlikely people can make a significant impact. It also showcases the power of true friendship and how it can help in difficult times.

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