

Summary

The Last Leaf

Sue and Johnsy, two young artists

Sue and Johnsy were two young artists. They lived together in a small flat. It was situated on the third storey of an old house.

Johnsy caught pneumonia

Johnsy fell seriously ill in November. She had pneumonia. Sue was worried. She sent for the doctor. But the doctor told Sue that Johnsy had lost the will to live. Medicines will not help her.

Sue comforted her

Sue tried her best to make Johnsy to take interest in things around her. She talked about clothes and fashions. Sue brought her drawing-board into Johnsy's room and started painting. She also whistled while painting.

Johnsy's strange fancy

Johnsy looked at an ivy creeper outside on the wall. It was shedding its leaves because it was autumn. Johnsy was counting backwards from twelve onwards. Sue asked what it was all about. Johnsy told her that she would die with the falling of the last leaf. It would happen in three days. Sue called it nonsense. She also told her that she would be all right soon. But it had no effect on Johnsy.

Sue met Behrman

Behrman was an old painter. He lived on the ground floor. He was sixty-years old. He had a dream that one day he would paint a masterpiece. But he had no success so far. Sue told Behrman about Johnsy's strange fancy. Both he and Sue went to Johnsy's room. Johnsy was sleeping. They saw that the ivy creeper had only one leaf left on it. It was raining. It seemed that the last leaf would fall any time.

Johnsy saw the last leaf

Johnsy awoke from her sleep. She looked out of the window. She looked at the last leaf. She asked Sue to look at it. It was green and healthy. Johnsy looked at the leaf every hour. But it didn't fall even in the stormy evening. This revived a will to live in Johnsy.

Johnsy accused herself

Johnsy accused herself. She called Sue. She admitted before her that she had been a bad girl. She told Sue that she was very wicked. The last leaf had shown her that. Now she felt that it was a sin to want to die. She then asked for a mirror. She had lots of hot soup also.

Sue told Johnsy of Behrman

Next morning Sue told Johnsy about Behrman. Behrman was ill for only two days. The guard found him on his bed. His clothes and shoes were wet. He was shivering in the stormy night. He had painted the last leaf on the wall in that night. He had caught pneumonia and died. Sue asked her if she hadn't wondered why the leaf had not fluttered. She told her that the last leaf was Behrman's masterpiece. He painted it the night the last leaf fell.