Summarizing Exercise

Instructions:
1. Group 4-5 students.

2. Create a Google Doc., and help your friends summarize the story.

3. Submit the summary to Google Classroom.

4. Discuss about the story.

The Last Leaf

By O. Henry

Many artists lived in the Greenwich Village area of New York. Two young women named Sue and Johnsy shared a studio apartment at the top of a three-story building. Johnsy's real name was Joanna.

In November, a cold, unseen stranger came to visit the city. This disease, **pneumonia**, killed many people. Johnsy lay on her bed, hardly moving. She looked through the small window. She could see the side of the brick house next to her building.

One morning, a doctor examined Johnsy and took her temperature. Then he spoke with Sue in another room.

"She has one chance in -- let us say ten," he said. "And that chance is for her to want to live. Your friend has made up her mind that she is not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She wanted to paint the Bay of Naples in Italy someday," said Sue.

"Paint?" said the doctor. "Bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking twice about -- a man, for example?"

"A man?" said Sue. "Is a man worth -- but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"I will do all that science can do," said the doctor. "But whenever my patient begins to count the **carriages** at her funeral, I take away fifty percent from the curative power of medicines."

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and cried. Then she went to Johnsy's room with her drawing board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep. She began making a pen and ink **drawing** for a story in a magazine. Young artists must work to "Art" by making pictures for magazine stories. Sue heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting -- counting backward. "Twelve," she said, and a little later, "eleven," and then "ten" and "nine," and then "eight" and "seven," almost together.

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Sue looked out the window. What was there to count? There was only an empty yard and the blank side of the house seven meters away. An old ivy vine, going bad at the roots, climbed halfway up the wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken leaves from the plant until its almost bare branches hung on the bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy quietly. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago, there were almost a hundred. It made my head hurt to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear?" asked Sue.

"Leaves. On the plant. When the last one falls, I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such a thing," said Sue. "What do old ivy leaves have to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine. Don't be silly. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances of getting well really soon were, let's see, exactly what he said – he said the chances were ten to one! Try to eat some soup now. And, let me go back to my drawing so I can sell it to the magazine and buy food and wine for us."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another one. No, I don't want any soup. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, "will you promise me to keep your eyes closed and not look out the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy, closing her eyes and lying white and still as a fallen statue. "I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn, lose my hold on everything, and sail down like one of those poor, tired leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Mister Behrman up to be my model for my drawing of an old miner. Don't try to move until I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor of the **apartment** building. He was a failure in art. For years, he had always planned to paint a work of art but had never yet begun it. He earned a little money by serving as a model to artists who could not afford a professional model. He was a fierce, little older man who protected the two young women in the studio apartment above him.

Sue found Behrman in his room. In one area was a blank canvas waiting twenty-five years for the first line of paint. Sue told him about Johnsy and how she feared her friend would float away like a **leaf**.

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Old Behrman was angered at such an idea. "Are there people who are foolish enough to die because leaves drop off a vine? Why do you let that silly business come into her brain?"

"She is very sick and weak," said Sue, "and the disease has left her mind full of strange ideas."

"This is not any place in which one so good as Miss Johnsy shall lie sick," yelled Behrman. "Someday, I will paint a masterpiece, and we shall all go away."

When they went upstairs, Johnsy was sleeping. Sue pulled the shade down to cover the window. She and Behrman went into the other room. They looked out a window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other without speaking. Cold rain, mixed with snow, was falling. Behrman sat and posed as the miner.

The following day, Sue awoke after an hour's sleep. She found Johnsy with wide-open eyes, staring at the covered window.

"Pull up the shade; I want to see," she ordered quietly.

Sue obeyed.

After the beating rain and fierce wind blew through the night, one ivy leaf stood against the wall. It was the last one on the vine. It was still dark green at the center, but its edges were yellow. It hung bravely from the branch about seven meters above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall today, and I shall die simultaneously."

"Dear, dear!" said Sue, leaning her worn face toward the bed. "Think of me if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer.

When it was light the following day, Johnsy demanded that the window shade be raised. The ivy leaf was still there. Johnsy lay for a long time, looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was preparing chicken soup.

"I've been a bad girl," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how bad I was. It is wrong to want to die. You may bring me a little soup now."

An hour later, she said: "Someday, I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

Later in the day, the doctor came, and Sue talked to him in the hallway.

"Even chances," said the doctor. "With good care, you'll win. And now I must see another case I have in your building. Behrman, his name is -- some artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and his case is severe. There is no hope for him, but he goes to the hospital today to ease his pain."

The next day, the doctor told Sue, "She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now—that's all."

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Later that day, Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay and put one arm around her.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mister Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was sick for only two days. They found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs, helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were completely wet and icy cold. They could not imagine where he had been on such a terrible night.

And then they found a lantern, still lighted. And they found a **ladder** that had been moved from its place. I also needed art supplies and a painting board with green and yellow colors mixed in it.

And look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it is Behrman's masterpiece – he painted it there the night the last leaf fell."

Story Discussion

What is the story "The Last Leaf" about?

What does the last leaf symbolize?

What is the conclusion of the last leaf?

What have you learned from the story?

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