

## Questions & Answers

# The Last Leaf

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CBSE Board  
Class : 8th



## Questions & Answers

**Q 1. Where did Sue and Johnsy stay? What was their profession?**

**Ans:** They lived in a small flat on the fourth storey of an old house. They were both artists.

**Q 2. Why was Sue Johnsy fell ill?**

**Ans:** Sue was worried because Johnsy would be worried when lie on her bed without moving, and would just gaze out of her window all day. Even though the doctor came every day, there was no change in her condition.

**Q 3. What illness did Johnsy have? Who looked after her?**

**Ans:** Johnsy was suffering from pneumonia. Her friend Sue looked after her.

**Q 4. What worried the doctor?**

**Ans:** The doctor was worried because there was no improvement in Johnsy's condition. He felt that Johnsy was not responding to treatment because she had made up her mind not to do so. He felt she had lost her will to live and hence the medicines were not going to be useful to her.

**Q 5. How did Sue try to revive Johnsy's interest in life?**

**A:** Sue talked to her about clothes and fashions. Then she brought her drawing board into Johnsy's room and started painting. She also whistled while painting, hoping to distract Johnsy's mind from her illness.

**Q 6. Why was Johnsy counting the leaves on the creeper outside her window?**

**Ans:** Johnsy had made up her mind that the day the last leaf fell off the creeper, she would die. So, she was counting the leaves as they fell off the creeper.

**Q 7. Why did Sue go to Behrman?**

**Ans:** Sue went to Behrman because she had to paint an old miner and she wanted him as the model for the painting.

**Q 8. Who was Behrman?**

**Ans:** Behrman was a sixty-year-old painter whose only ambition was to paint a masterpiece. He lived in the same building as Sue and Johnsy, and sometimes acted as a model for their paintings.

**Q 9. What did Sue confide in Behrman?**

**Ans:** She told him about her worries about Johnsy, who refused to recover from her illness because of her belief that she was going to die the day the last leaf fell off the creeper outside her window.

**Q 10. What did Sue feel when she saw the last leaf on the creeper? Who was at the window with her?**

**Ans:** Sue felt extremely worried that the leaf would fall off by the next morning, and if Johnsy saw that, she would not survive. Behrman, an old painter and her neighbour, was at the window with her.

**Q 11. Why was Sue nervous to draw back the window curtains?**

**Ans:** She was worried that the last leaf on the creeper might have fallen off in the wind and snow the previous night, and that her friend Johnsy would consider it as a warning that she was also going to die soon.

**Q 12. How did the sight of the last leaf affect Johnsy?**

**Ans:** The sight of the last leaf clinging on to the creeper in spite of the wind and snow revived Johnsy and gave her the faith that she would survive. She realised how much she had troubled Sue by her gloom and depression, and also thought of the fact that it was a sin to want to die.

**Q 13. How did the doctor react to Johnsy's recovery? What news did he give Sue?**

**Ans:** He declared that as Johnsy's will to live had been revived, she would recover soon. He informed Sue that their neighbour Behrman had fallen ill with pneumonia and that he did not expect him to survive.

**Q 14. How did Behrman die?**

**Ans:** He died of pneumonia. He had been out in the stormy night, painting a leaf on the creeper outside Johnsy's window. He came home soaked in the rain and fell ill there. The janitor found him there in the morning.

**Q 15. What did the presence of the paints and brushes near Behrman's bed signify?**

**Ans:** They signified that he had been out painting in the middle of the snowy, windy night.

**Q 16. Why had Behrman felt the need to paint the leaf on the creeper?**

**Ans:** Johnsy, his neighbour who had been suffering from pneumonia, had developed a strong belief that she would die the day the last leaf of the creeper outside her window fell. Behrman felt that he had to paint the leaf that night in order to save her life, as all the leaves had fallen off in the storm.

**Q 17. What impression do you get of Behrman?**

**Ans:** Behrman appears to be a selfless, caring man, who was fond of his neighbours, and put their welfare before his own. He is a great painter, because the leaf he paints is so realistic that no one can distinguish it from a real one.

**Q 18. What was Behrman's masterpiece? Why was it called so?**

**Ans:** The leaf that he painted on the creeper was his masterpiece, because it was realistic that Johnsy did not realise that it had been painted. As a result, she recovered from her illness. Even though it was not a famous painting, it was one that saved a life, and thus, it was a masterpiece.

**Q 19. Do you think Johnsy was a good friend? Give reasons for your answer?**

**Ans:** Either Yes or No is acceptable, as long as it is supported by sufficient arguments  
No, I don't think she was a good friend, because she did not respond to the love and care showered on her by Sue. She did not respond to the doctor's treatment just because she had decided in her head that she would die the day the last leaf on the creeper fell, and she ignored any attempts by her friend to help her. Yes, she was a good friend, as she did finally realise and appreciate all that Sue had done for her. She apologised and made an effort to recover, thereby showing that she cared about Sue's friendship.

**Q 20. What was Johnsy's illness? What ultimately cured her: medicine, or her will to live?**

**Ans:** Johnsy was suffering from pneumonia. She was not responding to medicines, because she had no will to live. When she finally made up her mind to get better, she recovered from her illness.

**Q 21. Do you think the feeling of depression Johnsy had is common among teenagers? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans:** Yes, feelings of depression can be common among teenagers. They are usually sheltered and protected from the ups and downs of life by their parents as children, and often find it difficult to deal with obstacles and challenges as they grow up.

**Q 22. Behrman has a dream. What is it? Does it come true?**

**Ans:** Behrman had a dream of painting a masterpiece. It did come true when he painted the leaf on the wall on which the creeper was growing. The painting was so realistic that it helped revive Johnsy who had been waiting for the last leaf on the creeper to fall.

**Q 23. What was Behrman's masterpiece? What makes Sue say so?**

**Ans:** His masterpiece was the leaf that he painted on the wall next to the creeper. Sue called it his masterpiece because it was so realistic that no one realised that it had been painted.

**Q 24. How long had Behrman been ill? Why did he die so quickly?**

**Ans:** Behrman had been ill for two days. He died very quickly, because he had gone out in the storm and remained in his wet clothes even after he returned to his flat. He was about sixty years old, and caught a chill very quickly. Further, he was found to be ill by the janitor, as he lived alone, which also suggests that he did not really have anyone to take care of him.

**Q 25. Johnsy calls herself 'wicked'. Do you agree with her?**

**Ans:** Johnsy can be called wicked, because she not only lost her will to live, she also ignored all the attempts by her friend Sue to help her. Even though Sue was going to great efforts to take care of her, Johnsy did not respond. In fact, it was because of her stubborn nature that Behrman ultimately lost his life.

### **The Last Leaf Extra Questions and Answers Long Answer Type**

**Q 1. Do you think Behrman was a great artist or a great human being? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans:** In my opinion, Behrman was a great human being. No doubt he was a talented artist, which is evident from his painting of the leaf on the wall. The painting was so realistic that everyone thought it was a real leaf, which saved Johnsy's life. Johnsy had made up her mind that she would die of her illness the day the last leaf fell off the creeper.

However, Behrman decided to help Sue, her friend, who was worried about the effect the falling of the last leaf would have on Johnsy. This shows how caring, selfless and concerned he was. He went out in the stormy and cold night to paint the leaf, and came back soaked to the skin, in no condition to even remove his wet clothes and shoes. He made the supreme sacrifice of his life to save the life of another human being.

**Q 2. Compare and contrast the characters of Sue and Johnsy?**

**Ans:** Sue and Johnsy were both artists and good friends. They shared a small flat in an old building. Sue was a very loyal and caring friend. She did everything she could to take care of Johnsy when she fell ill with pneumonia. She not only took care of Johnsy physically, but also helped by earning money by selling her paintings. She cooked and ensured that Johnsy received the best treatment. Johnsy on the other hand appears to have been a depressed and gloomy person, who is very self-absorbed. She did not have the will to fight against her illness, and did not respond to the doctor or to Sue's care and concern. She was highly imaginative and superstitious, as she came to believe that her life was linked to the number of leaves on the creeper outside her window. She believed that she would die the day the last leaf of the creeper fell.

It was because of this stubborn belief that Behrman, an older artist, lost his life when he went out in the storm to paint a leaf onto the creeper so that Johnsy would not realise that the last leaf had actually fallen.

**Q 3. This story shows the power of the mind. Discuss.**

**Ans:** Yes, the story reveals the power of one's thoughts and the mind in making us believe in something. In this story, we see that one of the characters, Johnsy, is suffering from pneumonia. She believes that she will not survive, and as a result even medicines have no effect on her. Even her doctor was worried about her chances of recovery. Later, we see the power of the mind once again when she recovers.

At this point, her belief was that she would only live as long as the last leaf stayed on the creeper. When she sees that the leaf does not fall off despite the wind and stormy conditions, it makes her believe that even she might be able to survive. Even though it is not a real leaf, and was just painted by Behrman, Johnsy draws inspiration from it, and slowly gains the will to live. Therefore, the story clearly expresses the power of the mind in changing the course of our lives.

**Q 4. Why has the story been called 'The Last Leaf'? Do you think it is appropriate? Give reasons for your answer?**

**Ans:** As the title suggests, the story revolves around the importance of a single leaf on a tree. The leaf is particularly important in saving the life of a girl, who had convinced herself that she would die the moment the last leaf fell off the tree. However, the leaf miraculously stays on the tree, giving the girl hope to survive. The title also refers to the fact that the leaf is the last artwork made by an out of work painter, which also becomes his masterpiece.

**Q 5. What is the theme and message of the story?**

**Ans:** The story explores the idea of the impact of true art, and what makes a painting a true masterpiece. It also highlights the themes of selflessness and the supreme sacrifice of self to save the life of another human being. It also explores the loyalties of a true friendship, and the levels to which we can go to help a friend. The story shares a message of the power of love and friendship. It reminds us that selflessness is the highest virtue one can attain.' `213

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