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The Last Leaf

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The next morning, when it was light, 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 kind of an 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 said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now – that's all."

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 only two days. They found him 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. And art supplies and a painting board with green and yellow colors mixed on 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 that the last leaf fell."

(350words)