

A Reading and interaction

The Last Leaf

(Adapted from O. Henry's short story "The Last Leaf")

Pre-reading activity

1 Discuss the quotes in pairs. Which quote do you like best? Why?

- (1) "Big words seldom accompany good deeds^①." (Charlotte Whitton)
- (2) "How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world." (William Shakespeare)
- (3) "A good deed is never lost." (Alexandre Dumas)

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2 Good deeds are often the result of some kind of sacrifice. Discuss the reasons for this before you read the story.

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① deed /diːd/ n. 行为; 行动

② storey /ˈstɔːri/ n. 楼层

③ pneumonia /njuːˈmɒniə/ n. 肺炎

④ ivy vine /ˈaɪvi vaɪn/ 常春藤

A At the top of a three-storey^② brick house Sue and Johnsy had their studio. In November Johnsy was struck down by pneumonia^③. She lay, hardly moving, on her bed looking
5 through the window at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the doctor told Sue something privately. "Johnsy has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. I will do all
10 that I can. But unless she changes her mind, chances are 50 / 50 whether she will pull through or not."

In the room, Johnsy whispered to Sue. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago
15 there were almost a hundred. There goes another one. There are only five left now."

"Five what, dear?"

"Leaves. On the ivy vine^④. When the last one falls, I must go too. Didn't the doctor tell
20 you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue. "I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves. Try to sleep, dear," said Sue. "I want to draw and I must call
25 Behrman up to be my model. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move till I come back."

B Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor. He was past 60 and was a