

In this mini-scene Johnsy, a young artist, has contracted pneumonia and thinks she will die when the last ivy leaf falls off a vine outside her window. Her roommate, Sue, is trying her best to care for her. The author, O. Henry, serves as a narrator. (This piece may be used royalty free for auditions or classroom work.)

SUE: What is it, dear?

JOHNSY: Six...They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now.

SUE: Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.

JOHNSY: *(Breathlessly.)* Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?

SUE: Oh, I never heard of such nonsense. What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were -- let's see exactly what he said. He said the chances were ten to one! Why that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the streetcars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self. *(SHE offers JOHNSY the mug which sits on the bedside table.)*

JOHNSY: You needn't get any more wine. There goes another. *(Her attention drawn again to the window.)* No, I don't want any broth. *(Waving it away.)* That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go too.

SUE: Johnsy, dear, 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. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down.

JOHNSY: Couldn't you draw in the other room?

SUE: I'd rather be here by you. Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly leaves.

JOHNSY: Tell me as soon as you have finished.

O. HENRY: ...said Johnsny, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue.

JOHNSY: ...because 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 go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.

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