

Summer Assignment for Literature 7 (incoming seventh graders)

1. Read O. Henry's "The Last Leaf" and "The Cop and the Anthem." (The original version of "The Last Leaf" and a simplified version of "The Cop and the Anthem" are attached.) Write a summary of each story. You can include what you thought of the stories. **Each summary should be at least one-half page.**

2. Read Jack London's "Story of an Eyewitness," an account of the San Francisco Earthquake. Write a one-half page summary of Jack London's reaction to the earthquake.

3. Read Ted Kooser's poem "Boarding House," and write a half-page analysis of the poem.

- These assignments will be handed in at the start of the first literature class of the year.
- Attached are the O.Henry stories. The other selections can be found online.
- These assignments should all be word processed, proofread, and printed.
- They should be in an approved font: 12-point Times, Times New Roman, Helvetica, Arial, or Palatino.
- They should be double spaced and contain the correct heading.

Summary: a shortened version of a piece of writing, written in your own words.

Steps to writing a summary (and avoiding plagiarism):

- Read the original piece.
- Take notes on the content of the piece. Each note should be no more than four or five words.
- Close the original.
- Write what you can remember in a simplified form.

Analysis: an interpretation of a piece of writing which makes the meaning clearer and more understandable.

Things you can include in an analysis:

- What does the piece of writing say?
- What does it mean?
- What deeper message did the author intend to communicate?

The Last Leaf by O. Henry

In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called "places." These "places" make strange angles and curves. One Street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a "colony."

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. "Johnsy" was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine; the other from California. They had met at the table d'hôte of an Eighth Street "Delmonico's," and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy fingers. Over on the east side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown "places."

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by California zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, gray eyebrow.

"She has one chance in - let us say, ten," he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. "And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-u on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?"

"She - she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day." said Sue.

"Paint? - bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking twice - a man for instance?"

"A man?" said Sue, with a jew's-harp twang in her voice. "Is a man worth - but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind."

"Well, it is the weakness, then," said the doctor. "I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in-five chance for her, instead of one in ten."

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

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle of the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she 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 little later "eleven"; and then "ten," and "nine"; and then "eight" and "seven", almost together.

Sue look solicitously out of the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. "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."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie."

"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?"

"Oh, I never heard of such nonsense," complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. "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 street cars 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."

"You needn't get any more wine," said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. 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, bending over her, "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 to-morrow. I need the light, or I would draw the shade down."

"Couldn't you draw in the other room?" asked Johnsy, coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "Beside, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves."

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

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move 'til I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelo's Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along with the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in any one, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away, when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

"Vass!" he cried. "Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der brain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy."

"She is very ill and weak," said Sue, "and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn't. But I think you are a horrid old - old flibbertigibbet."

"You are just like a woman!" yelled Behrman. "Who said I will not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf been trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill, and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

"Pull it up; I want to see," she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last one on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from the branch some twenty feet 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 to-day, and I shall die at the same time."

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

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the 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 stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

"I've been a bad girl, Sudie," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and - no; bring me a hand-mirror first, and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook."

And hour later she said:

"Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

"Even chances," said the doctor, taking Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "With good nursing you'll win." And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is - some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable."

The next day the doctor said to Sue: "She's out of danger. You won. Nutrition and care now - that's all."

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

"I have something to tell you, white mouse," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia to-day in the hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn't imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette 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 fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it's Behrman's masterpiece - he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."

The Cop and the Anthem

by O. Henry

Soapy had a sure-fire way of getting a warm place to stay for the winter — warmer than the park bench he was now using as "home." Little did he know that he was in for a series of surprises.

On his bench in Madison Square, Soapy moved uneasily. When women without fur coats grow kind to their husbands, and when Soapy moves uneasily on his bench in the park, you know that winter is near at hand.

A dead leaf fell on Soapy's lap. That was Jack Frost's card, giving fair warning of his annual visit. Soapy realized that the time had come for him to find a warm place to stay during the winter.

Soapy's ambitions were not great. He wasn't dreaming of cruises or beaches. Three months on the Island — in Blackwell's Prison — was what he wanted. Three months of food, a bed, and good company was his desire.

For several years the prison had been his winter home. In Soapy's opinion the Law was kinder than Charity. The gifts of charity hurt his proud spirit. For every bed of charity he had to take a bath; for every meal of charity he had to answer all kinds of personal questions. It was better

to be a guest of the law, which did not pry too much into a gentleman's private affairs.

There were many easy ways of getting to the Island. The best way was to eat at an expensive restaurant, then say you couldn't pay the bill. A policeman would take you away quietly. A judge would do the rest.

Soapy left his bench and walked up Broadway. He stopped before a fancy restaurant.

Soapy had confidence in himself. His face was shaved, his coat was clean, and his tie had been given to him by a lady missionary on Thanksgiving Day. He just hoped he could reach a table before the head waiter could see how ragged his shoes and trousers were.

Roast duck, thought Soapy, was just the thing — with a bottle of wine, and then some coffee and a cigar. But as Soapy stepped inside the restaurant, the head waiter spotted his frayed trousers and an-

cient shoes. Strong hands turned him back out to the sidewalk.

Soapy turned off Broadway. This did not seem to be the way to get arrested. He'd have to think of another route.

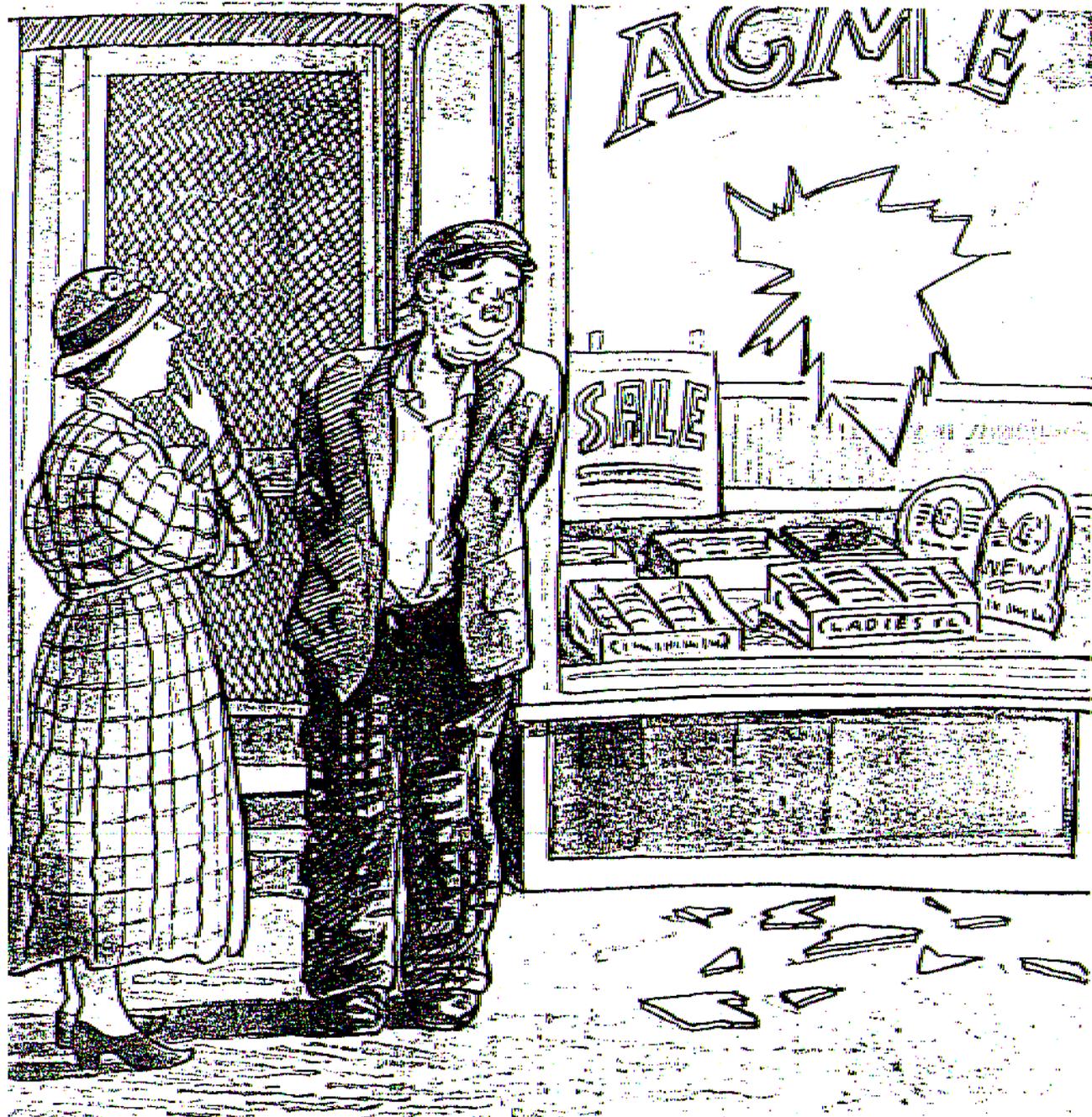
At the corner of Sixth Avenue a shop window glowed with electric lights. Soapy picked up a stone and hurled it through the glass. People came running around the

corner, with a policeman in the lead. Soapy stood with his hands in his pockets, and smiled at the sight of brass buttons.

"Where's the man who did that?" asked the policeman.

"Don't you think I might have had something to do with it?" said Soapy in a friendly way.

The policeman paid no attention to



him. Men who smash windows don't stick around to chat with cops. The policeman saw a man down the block, running to catch a cab. With club in hand, he ran after the man. Soapy walked on, disgusted.

On the opposite side of the street was a simple restaurant. Here you could get plenty to eat for not much money. The bowls were thick and the soup was thin, but no one stared at Soapy's old shoes and trousers when he went in. He sat at a table and ate beefsteak, pancakes, doughnuts, and pie. Then he admitted to the waiter that he and money were like strangers.

"Now call a cop," said Soapy. "And don't keep a gentleman waiting."

"No cop for you," said the waiter. "Hey, Joe!"

Two waiters tossed Soapy onto his left ear on the sidewalk. He got up painfully and beat the dust from his clothes. Arrest seemed a mere dream. The Island seemed very far away.

Soapy walked five blocks before he tried again. A pretty young woman was standing before a shop window, looking with interest at some shaving mugs. Two yards away stood a tough-looking policeman.

It was Soapy's plan to pretend to make a pass at the well-dressed young woman. She would be shocked and frightened, and the policeman would take him away.

Soapy straightened his tie, set his hat at an angle, and walked over. He made eyes at her. He smiled and smirked and made fresh remarks. He saw that the policeman was watching. The young woman moved away a few steps. Soapy boldly followed.

"Come on, cupcake," he said. "Don't you want to take a walk with me?"

The woman faced him and winked. "Sure, sport," she said, smiling. "I'd have spoken sooner, but the cop was watching."

Soapy couldn't shake her off until the next corner. Then he ran until he came to the theater district. Here, women in furs and men in overcoats moved gaily in the cold air.

When Soapy saw a policeman, he decided to try for "disorderly conduct." He began to yell drunken nonsense. He danced and he howled.

The policeman remarked to a citizen, "It's one of those college boys celebrating a football victory. He's noisy, but no harm."

Soapy stopped yelling. Wouldn't he ever get to the prison on the Island? He buttoned his thin coat against the chilling wind.

Then he saw a well-dressed man buying a cigar in a cigar store. The man's silk umbrella was set by the door. Soapy stepped inside, took the umbrella, and walked off with it slowly. The man with the cigar followed quickly.

"That's my umbrella," he said sternly.

"Oh, is it?" said Soapy. "Then why don't you call a policeman? There's one on the corner."

The policeman looked at the two men.

"Well," said the umbrella man, "you know how these mistakes happen. If it's your umbrella, I hope you'll excuse me. I found it this morning in a restaurant. But if it's yours —"

"Of course it's mine," said Soapy.

The policeman left to help a woman across the street. Soapy stamped off in a rage. He hurled the umbrella into a gutter and headed back to his park bench in Madison Square.

Soapy stopped when he came to an old church. Through a stained-glass window a soft light glowed, and sweet music drifted out to Soapy's ears. The church organ was playing an anthem that he had known in his younger days. He had known it when his life contained such things as mothers and roses and ambitions and friends and clean collars.

Suddenly Soapy had a change of heart. He viewed with horror the pit into which

he had tumbled. He wanted to be decent again. He would pull himself out of the mud. There was still time. He wasn't too old. The anthem had changed him completely. Tomorrow he would get a job. He would —

Soapy felt a hand on his arm. It was the hand of a policeman.

"What are you doing here?" asked the officer.

"Nothing," said Soapy.

"Then come along," said the policeman.

"Guilty of vagrancy and loitering," said the judge the next morning. "Three months on the Island."

