

Curative Shorts Questions

The Last Leaf

By O. Henry

Notes About Answering Questions Curatively: These questions are meant to deepen your understanding of the story and its curative aspects for you, others and the world around you. They are also meant to spark recall and cognition. All questions will not be reviewed in the group and answers do not have to be shared. Curative Reading goes beyond understanding a story from a literary perspective to a place where your imagination gets to reshape a meaning that supports you and inspires you to move forward through challenging change. There are no right or wrong answers, only curiously curative ones.

Which character in the story is from Maine and which one is from California?

We all bring experiences from our real lives (including situations and places) into a text while reading it. According to researcher, Nikolajava from University of Cambridge, this is known as a “life to text” experience. Select a Life to Text Moment that stood out for you while reading this story and write it down.

Did you have any COVID Life to Text Moments while reading this story? If so, write a sentence or two about one.

“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.” How do you interpret Sue’s feelings about men in this statement? Does anything else stand out for you in this sentence?

Select a line that really stands out to you from reading this story and write a sentence or two about why you selected this particular line.

“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.” Write a sentence or two about your thoughts on the interplay between science and belief for Johnsy.

Describe some defining characteristics of Old Behrman from your imagination and recall of the story.

“The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey.” Does this bring anyone in real life who you have known when they were facing death? Write a sentence or two about them.

The doctor tell Sue that Johnsy has a 50 – 50 chance of living and that she will win with good nursing. When he comes back again he says it is now all up to nutrition and care. Reflect on the role nutrition and care play in your own beliefs for a healthy body or a healthy society. Write a line or two about this.

Write your thoughts about Behrman and the life he lived as an artist.

Has reading about death or art in this story been curative for you in any way? Write a line or two about why this is.