



The Miracle Worker

By William Gibson

Author: Adapted by K I D S I N C O based on a true story

CHARACTERS:

MRS. KELLER

MR. KELLER

DOCTOR

JAMES KELLER

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS

ANNE SULLIVAN

SCRIPT:

INTRODUCTION

On June 27, 1880, a girl named Helen Adams Keller was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama, in a white, frame cottage called "Ivy Green." Her parents were Captain Arthur Henley Keller and Kate Adams Keller.

Act I

(Helen is two years old. Mrs. Keller enters the bedroom)

MRS. KELLER: Helen, wake up, sweetie! It's a beautiful day!

(She tries to wake her up, but Helen doesn't open her eyes. Mrs. Keller touches Helen's forehead)

MRS. KELLER: Helen, what's wrong? Wake up! Oh, no you have a high temperature!

(Mr. Keller enters the bedroom)

MR. KELLER: What's wrong? Why are you yelling?

MRS. KELLER: It's Helen, she's burning up!

MR. KELLER: Again?

MRS. KELLER: I thought she was better, but the temperature is back.

MR. KELLER: I think we have waited too long. I'll send someone for the doctor.

(Mr. Keller leaves. A few minutes later he comes back with the doctor. The doctor approaches Helen and starts to examine her. Mrs. Keller and Mr. Keller look worried)

MRS. KELLER: What's wrong with her, doctor?

DOCTOR: First tell me, how much time did you wait before calling me?

MRS. KELLER: Well, I noticed that she was sick about two or three weeks ago, but the temperature disappeared, that's why I thought she was fine.

DOCTOR: You waited too long. Have you noticed anything different beside the temperature?

MRS. KELLER: What do you mean?

DOCTOR: Have you noticed a change in her behavior?

MRS. KELLER: Yes, now that you mention it, she's not doing what I tell her to do. She is not even trying to speak. She has become a quiet little girl.

DOCTOR: Did you also notice that she doesn't blink?

MRS. KELLER: No, doctor.

DOCTOR: Look, I'll show you something. Pay close attention to what I'm going to do.

(The doctor claps his hands in front of Helen's face. She doesn't react)

DOCTOR: She can't see or hear.

MRS. KELLER: But, why?

DOCTOR: She had a fever for at least three weeks. Whatever made Helen sick made her blind and deaf.

MR. KELLER: It can't be!

MRS. KELLER: Give her medicine, please. There must be something you can do!

MR. KELLER: What is it, doctor?

DOCTOR: It's called Brain Fever. I'm afraid I can't do anything for her.

MRS. KELLER: Oh, Arthur.

(Mr. and Mrs. Keller hug and cry)

Act I Questions:

1. Why won't Helen wake up when her mother tries to wake her?

2. What mistake did Mr. and Mrs. Keller make?

3. What does the doctor notice about Helen? What does he do as a "test"?

4. What does the doctor diagnose Helen with? What can he do for her?

5. How would you react if you were Mr. and Mrs. Keller?

6. How would it be different if Helen Keller got this illness today instead of in 1880?

Act II

(Helen is seven years old. Mrs. Keller and Mr. Keller are in the garden talking)

MRS. KELLER: I don't know what to do, Arthur. Helen is out of control. It's hard to discipline her.

MR. KELLER: What did she do today?

MRS. KELLER: This morning she refused to bathe. She doesn't want me to comb her hair, either. And she tried to feed the baby! Can you imagine that!

JAMES: She is a danger to her new baby sister.

MRS. KELLER: What are we going to do? She needs to learn to speak. She needs to express her feeling and emotions, that's why she is so angry. We must find someone who can help her.

MR. KELLER: She can't hear or see! How do you think she will be able to express herself?

MRS. KELLER: Oh, please, Arthur, she needs us. She needs help. Let's find someone, please.

MR. KELLER: I'll write some letters to schools for the blind. I hope they can send someone to help Helen.

MRS. KELLER: Thank you, Arthur.

MR. KELLER: Let me go inside and start writing those letters.

JAMES: You are going to need all the help you can get.

Act II Questions

1. How old is Helen now?

2. Why is it impossible to discipline Helen?

3. Who are Mr. and Mrs. Keller concerned that Helen will harm?

4. What does Mr. Keller agree to do?

5. How would you get Helen to behave?

Act III

(At Perkins school for the blind. The director Dr. Anagnos is sitting in his desk. He has a letter in his hands. Anne Sullivan enters the office)

ANNE: Did you want to talk to me?

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: Yes, Anne, please sit down.

(Anne sits in a chair in front of the Dr. Anagnos)

ANNE: They told me it was urgent.

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: It is, Anne. I received this letter from Arthur and Henley Keller. They have a seven-year-old daughter that is deaf and blind. They are desperate because they can't communicate with her, and she can't communicate with them or with anybody else.

ANNE: Oh, poor little girl. What does it have to do with me?

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: You are the best teacher I have. Remember, you were once blind.

ANNE: Yes, and I can see now after several operations.

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: Helen will never hear or see. That's the difference between you and her. She has no hope. Do you understand, Anne?

ANNE: Do you want me to go? Do you think I am qualified for this job?

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: Yes, you are, Anne, that's why I am sending you there. I already bought your train ticket.

ANNE: What? You should have asked me first!

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: I knew I could count with you, Anne.

ANNE: When will I leave?

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: You will leave tomorrow, and by March 3 you will arrive to the Keller's home.

ANNE: Tomorrow?

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: Yes, tomorrow. Go now, and get your things ready.

ANNE: I hope you are not making a mistake by sending me.

DIRECTOR ANAGNOS: I am not. I am sure you will bring light to Helen's life.

(Anne stands up. The Director Anagnos stands up and leads her to the door)

Act III Questions

1. Who is Dr. Anagnos?

2. Why does Dr. Anagnos choose Anne to help the Keller family?

3. Does Anne want to do this job?

4. When does Anne leave? How will she be travelling?

5. List three emotions that Anne may be feeling.

6. If you were Anne would you go?

Act IV

(Anne is at the Keller's home. Helen is sitting outside. The Kellers and Anne watch her from the distance)

MRS. KELLER: I am glad you came, Miss...

ANNE: Miss. Sullivan. My name is Anne Mansfield Sullivan.

MRS. KELLER: Well, Miss Sullivan...that's Helen.

ANNE: She's beautiful. I want to meet her.

MR. KELLER: I don't know how she is going to react. I mean, you are a stranger here.

ANNE: I know, but don't be afraid. I'm here to help.

(Anne approaches Helen. She sits beside Helen and touches her hair. Helen screams and pushes her away. Anne almost falls)

MOTHER: Oh, excuse her, please. Helen, don't be scared.

ANNE: I brought her something. Let me get it from my suitcase.

(Anne takes out a doll and gives it to Helen. Helen takes the doll while Anne fingerspells the word doll in her hand)

ANNE: D-O-L-L

(Helen fingerspells back the word doll in Anne's hand)

ANNE: Oh, you are very intelligent!

MR. KELLER: Do you think she will be able to communicate?

ANNE: I am sure she will.

MRS. KELLER: You must be hungry. Come Miss Sullivan let's go to the dining room.

(Mrs. Keller takes Helen's hand and walk toward the dining room. James, Mr. Keller and Anne follow them. They sit at the table and start to eat. While they talk Helen goes around the table and eats from every plate stuffing food in her mouth with her fingers. Anne watches her)

JAMES: How was your trip, Miss Sullivan?

MRS. KELLER: Did you enjoy it?

(Helen pauses by Anne's plate to eat the food, but Anne slaps her hand.
Helen smacks Anne back)

MR. KELLER: What's going on?

JAMES: This is normal. This is how she eats.

ANNE: She can't behave like this. She has to behave like other children.

MR. KELLER: She is not a normal child.

(Helen cries)

MR. KELLER: Look what you did!

ANNE: She needs discipline. She will not learn to communicate, until she learns to obey.

MRS. KELLER: You are right.

(Mr. Keller leaves the room angry)

ANNE: Mrs. Keller, would you and James please also leave. I need to be alone with her.

MRS. KELLER: Well...

ANNE: Give me the key.

(Mrs. Keller gives Anne the key and leaves. Anne locks the door. She goes to where Helen is, and pushes her to sit down. She gives her a plate and a spoon and shows Helen how to eat. Helen refuses and they start to fight until finally she learns how to eat using a spoon and not her fingers. Anne opens the door and they leave the room)

Act IV Questions

1. What does Helen do during meals?

2. What makes Mr. Keller angry?

3. What does Anne have the family do?

4. Will Anne Sullivan succeed in getting Helen to behave “normally”?

Act V

(Anne is in her bedroom talking to herself)

ANNE: This is a difficult job. I need to teach Helen sign language, but it's going to be hard while she is here with her father and mother always watching her. She has run wild here for too long.

(there's a knock at the door)

ANNE: Come in.

(Mrs. Keller enters the room)

MRS. KELLER: It's a beautiful day. I was wondering if you would like to take a walk in the garden.

ANNE: Sure, why not.

MRS. KELLER: Come with me then.

(They go out to the garden)

ANNE: Do you mind if I walk by myself?

MRS. KELLER: No, not at all. I have some things to do.

(Mrs. Keller leaves, and Anne walks about the ground of the Keller's home. She finds a small cottage away from the main house. She enters the cottage)

ANNE: This is just the place I need to work with Helen!

(She leaves the cottage and goes to the main house. Mr. and Mrs. Keller are in the living room)

MRS. KELLER: Oh, I see that you came back.

MR. KELLER: You look tired. Is there something wrong?

ANNE: I found a small cottage, and I want to move there with Helen.

MR. KELLER: Why?

ANNE: It would be better to work with Helen in another environment. And one more thing, I need to be alone with her, which means that you can't go and see her or talk to her. She must be left alone.

MR. KELLER: So, you wish to live there alone with Helen?

ANNE: That's right. She needs to learn to behave.

MR. KELLER: You can teach her here. She has everything she needs here.

ANNE: She takes advantage of you. She knows you love her too much. She can't do anything alone. I want to educate her while she and I are alone.

JAMES: You know she is right, Father.

MR. KELLER: I don't know, Miss Sullivan.

ANNE: Do you think your daughter must keep eating with her fingers? Please, try to understand, it's for her own good.

MR. KELLER: I understand you, Miss Sullivan. Very well, then, but only for two weeks.

ANNE: I need more time.

MR. KELLER: I said two weeks, and then you must bring her back.

(Anne agrees)

ANNE: I'll pack my things right away.

MRS. KELLER: Are you moving today?

ANNE: Yes, Mrs. Keller. I don't want to wait any more time.

JAMES: I'll help you Miss Sullivan.

MRS. KELLER: I'll get Helen.

(Mrs. Keller leaves)

MR. KELLER: Just remember our agreement.

ANNE: I will, Mr. Keller, we will be back in two weeks. Excuse me, I have to pack.

MR. KELLER: Sure.

(Anne leaves and Mr. Keller stays in the room)

Act V Questions:

1. Does Anne believe she can do this job?

2. Where does Anne want to take Helen?

3. What does Mr. Keller agree to allow Anne to do?

4. Do you think two weeks do anything for Helen?

Act VI

(Anne and Helen are in the cottage. Anne teaches her to fingerspell words in her hand and Helen enjoys it. Helen keeps eating with her fingers, then she learns how to eat using the spoon and how to behave on the table)

ANNE: No, Helen, you have to use the spoon to eat!

(Helen throws the spoon to the floor. Anne picks her up from the chair and makes her pick up the spoon. There's a fight and both fall to the floor. Helen picks up the spoon and Anne takes her again to the table. Anne makes her eat using the spoon)

ANNE: Well done, Helen, well done.

(Helen finishes her food. Anne takes her to the sofa where Helen's doll is. Helen takes the doll and plays with it. Anne takes Helen's hand and fingerspells the word d-o-l-l. Helen gets angry. She thinks Anne is taking away her doll and starts to fight. Helen breaks the doll. Anne picks up the doll and throws it to the trash. Anne hugs Helen)

ANNE: You broke the doll, that's fine, I know that now you feel relieved. Oh, Helen, I want to give you back your human soul as fast as I can. You have a big spirit and I want to help you. I was also blind, and I know how you feel.

(Helen takes Anne's hand and goes outside. They play for a while)

ANNE: You must be thirsty. Drink some water.

(Anne pumps out some water from the water pump, fills a cup and gives her to Helen. Anne fingerspells the word w-a-t-e-r in Helen's hand)

ANNE: W-A-T-E-R, W-A-T-E-R, W-A-T-E-R

(Helen wants some more water and gives back the cup to Anne. She fills it up again but some water falls from the pump. Helen feels the water in her hand and drops the cup. Helen starts to hit the pump. She wets her hands completely. She says the word water)

HELEN: W-A-T-E-R

ANNE: Helen! Helen!

(Anne shuts off the pump and takes Helen's hand and fingerspells the word water)

ANNE: Yes!. W-a-t-e-r, w-a-t-e-r, w-a-t-e-r

(Helen fingerspells the word water back to Anne. Helen lets some more water run into Helen's hands. Anne hugs her)

ANNE: Oh, Helen. You did it. You understand that everything has a name. Oh, Helen, this is the beginning. You are starting to know a world that is waiting for you.

(The Kellers approach Anne and Helen. Anne looks surprised)

ANNE: Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Keller, I didn't know you were here.

MR. KELLER: We came to get Helen, but we watched you, and we want to thank you.

(Mr. Keller hugs Helen. Helen takes his hand and fingerspells a word)

ANNE: She is spelling D-A-D.

MR. KELLER: Thank you very much, Miss Sullivan. But you have to teach her a very important word. Please, teach her how to fingerspell the word teacher.

ANNE: Yes, yes.

(Anne takes Helen hand and fingerspells the word teacher)

ANNE: T-E-A-C-H-E-R, T-E-A-C-H-E-R, T-E-A-C-H-E-R

(Helen fingerspells the word back. Mrs. Keller hugs Helen and Helen fingerspells the word mother)

ANNE: M-O-T-H-E-R

(Helen runs away and touches a tree. Anne takes her hand and fingerspells the word tree)

ANNE: T-R-E-E, T-R-E-E, T-R-E-E

(The Kellers and Anne hug Helen. Anne fingerspells the word Helen in Helen's hand)

ANNE: H-E-L-E-N, you are, H-E-L-E-N

(Helen fingerspells the word back to Anne. Helen cries and both hug)

THE END

Act VI Questions

1. What does Helen do to the Doll?

2. What is the first word that Helen is able to understand?

3. What words does Helen fingerspell?

4. What word does Mr. Keller ask Anne to teach Helen?

5. Why is the play called "The Miracle Worker"?
