

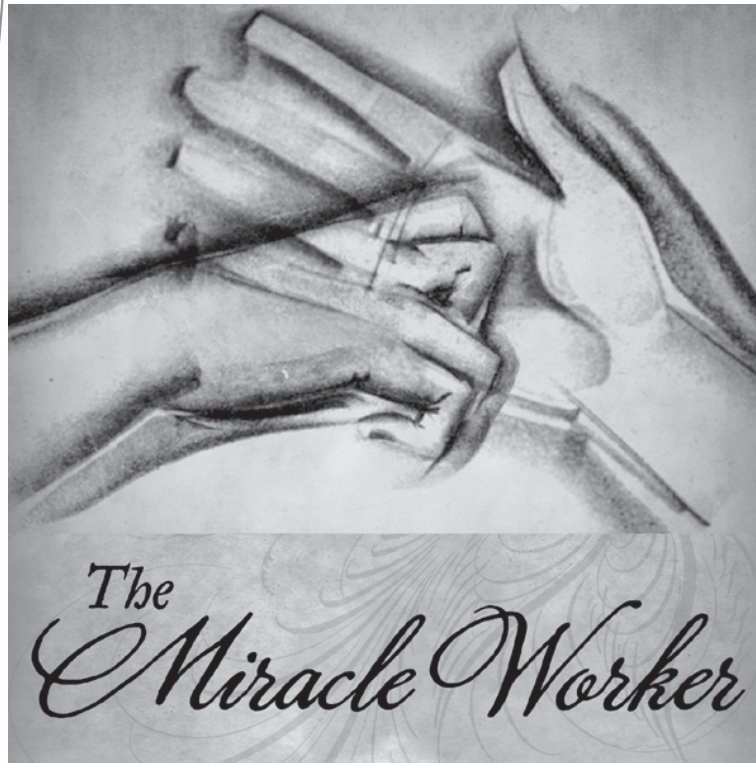
WU?[@]therep

THE MIRACLE WORKER by William Gibson Directed by Susan Gregg

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At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are

worth slowing down for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F2F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

CU@therep!



The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials accessible to students and easy for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, www.repstl.org, for additional information including educational games, activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

NEATO!

Show Me Standards: CA 2, 3, 5; FA 3, 4, 5; HP 6; SS 2, 6 and Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 2, 5, 16, 18, 22, 25.

MIHYAP: Top Ten Ways to Stay Connected at The Rep

10. TBA Ushers will seat your school or class as a group, so even if you are dying to mingle with the group from the all girls school that just walked in the door, stick with your friends until you have been shown your section in the theatre.

9. SITD The house lights will dim immediately before the performance begins and then go dark. Fight off that oh-so-immature urge to whisper, giggle like a grade schooler, or yell at this time and during any other blackouts in the show.

8. SED Before the performance begins, turn off all cell phones, pagers, beepers and watch alarms. If you need to text, talk, or dial back during intermission, please make sure to click off before the show resumes.

7. TMI Not to sound like your mom, but "if you need to go now, you needed to go then." Leaving the theatre during the performance is disruptive, so take care of any personal needs before the show starts.

6. RTM When you arrive at the theatre, read the production program. It's like a deluxe version of liner notes and a free souvenir, all in one.

5. P-ZA? NW! Though your ability to eat ten slices at one sitting may impress your friends, no one wants to listen to you chew, slurp or smack, so please leave all food, drink and gum outside the theatre.

4. TLK-2-U-L8R We know that you will be dying to discuss what you see onstage with your friends, but please wait until intermission. Any talking—even whispering—is very distracting for both the actors onstage and the audience seated around you.

3. LOL Without you, we really wouldn't have a show. It's your job to laugh when a scene is funny or maybe even shed a tear or two in a tender moment. However, since you are not the audience at *The Jerry Springer Show* please refrain from inappropriate responses such as talking, whistling, making catcalls or singing along with the performers.

2. SOP While it's great that you want a celeb picture of your day at The Rep, the theatre is off-limits to the paparazzi. Flash photography interrupts the performance and along with videorecording is prohibited by Actors Equity rules. You can sneak a peek at production photos on our website, www.repstl.org.

1. LLTA Let the actors know that you respect their work by remaining for the curtain call at the end of the performance. Show your appreciation through applause.

A/S/L

Blind, deaf and mute, HELEN KELLER is a little girl with limited outlets for communication with the outside world. Cute as a button and clever like a fox, she's got her entire family wrapped around her spoiled little finger.

Though a concerned and caring mother, KATE KELLER is near the end of her rope in caring for Helen. Often more concerned with appeasing Helen than attempting to teach her, Kate only reinforces a foul temperament in her daughter.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR KELLER, a savvy military mind and father to both Helen and James Keller, is more sure on the battlefield than in matters of the heart.

While no one can fully identify with Helen's unique set of limitations, ANNIE SULLIVAN may come the closest having once been blind herself. She has led a difficult life and she knows what could be in store for Helen if she cannot learn to behave and to communicate with those around her.

Son to the Captain and stepson to Kate, JAMES just can't seem to fit in with the Keller household. Ridiculed by his father and often subjugated by the rest of the family, James is on his own quest to find how he can break through and reach his family.

A true Southern matron, AUNT EV seems to have an opinion on just about everything.

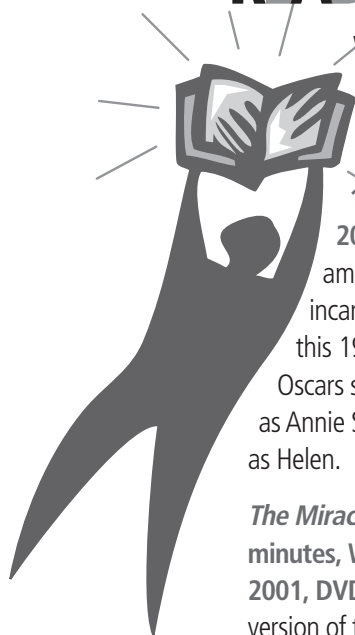
PERCY and MARTHA are both playmates for Helen and servants for the Keller family.

A mentor for Annie, ANAGNOS serves as the warm, reassuring voice for her when she feels backed into a corner.

A concerned member of the Keller clan, servant VINEY is close to the action as the primary house servant and cook.

READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to explore the following books, movies and websites for more information.



The Miracle Worker, 106 minutes, MGM, 2001, DVD. The first among many film incarnations of the story, this 1962 film won two Oscars starring Anne Bancroft as Annie Sullivan and Patty Duke as Helen.

The Miracle Worker, 90 minutes, Walt Disney Video, 2001, DVD. The most recent version of the story was made for television by Disney.

<http://www.afb.org/braillebug/hkmuseum.asp> If you want to know more about Helen Keller and her story, check out the Helen Keller Kids Museum.

<http://www.time.com/time/time100/heroes/profile/keller01.html> Think Helen Keller was no big deal? Think again! Even *TIME* magazine has recognized her as one of the 100 most influential people of her century! Check out the article on her, and while you're there see who else has had a great impact on our world.

Keller, Helen. *The Story of My Life*. Modern Library, 2004. Not only can you read about Helen Keller and see her onstage and in movies, but you can actually read her story in her own words!

Keller, Helen. *The World I Live In*. NYRB Classics, 2004. This is another of Keller's works, this time with a focus on the true inner workings of her world and how she sees the world around her.



AS *THE MIRACLE WORKER* begins, Helen fumbles about the servant children as they talk and play. Innocent imitation soon turns hostile, however, as a frustrated Helen attacks the servants because of her inability to see, hear or speak herself. As the family arrives to stop her (Aunt Ev, James, the Captain and Kate), they reveal their frustration and sense of hopelessness with Helen and her behavioral problems. They teeter on the edge of sending Helen away to an asylum, as they seem to have little recourse otherwise. They land on contacting a doctor to see if anything can be done for Helen, as they simply cannot go on in their current situation.

AS THE SCENE SHIFTS away from the family, we meet a battle-tested Annie Sullivan preparing to depart for the Keller homestead. Having been blind herself (her vision now restored through countless surgeries), she knows the harsh reality that someone with such a disability faces. Though afraid, she is ready to take on the challenge of getting through to Helen Keller and saving her from the grim fate that Annie herself faced.

UPON ARRIVAL at the Keller household, Annie isn't exactly met with open arms. Though Kate seems to have some enthusiasm for Annie, other members of the family greet her with skepticism. Their suspicions seem to have merit after Annie's early encounter with Helen goes awry, leaving Annie locked in her chambers and Helen gleefully hiding the key to her room. While the adversity doesn't shake her, it does remind her of her own trials as a youngster, and the loss of her brother while in an asylum.

DETERMINED TO INSTILL discipline into Helen, Annie makes a lesson out of breakfast the next morning. Annie denies Helen's

repeated attempts to finger the food on Annie's plate, and a war ensues. Though the family wishes strongly that she let the girl have her way, Annie kicks them all out and struggles with Helen into the afternoon. By the time she's done, she's broken through enough that Helen knows to fold her own napkin, a minor milestone that shows promise.

THE CAPTAIN has had enough, and he sets out to fire Annie. Annie appears to be at the end of her rope, as she continues to struggle to break through to Helen. The family's coddling and indulgence is an insurmountable obstacle for Annie. Summoned by the Captain, Annie stumbles upon a small garden house beyond the Keller home. Inspired, she demands two weeks with Helen alone in the house, and promises at least the miracle of Helen tolerating her.

OVER THE COURSE of these two weeks, Annie works wonders with Helen. Suddenly the child is well behaved, well groomed and well put together. But through all the attempts at communication, Helen still seems to only be mimicking Annie's little word games.

AS HELEN RETURNS to the family, Annie's worst fears are realized—Helen regresses under the pity of the family. Annie stands up for her work and attempts to discipline Helen. Taking her out to fetch a pail of water, Annie again plays her customary word game with Helen. This time, however, as she spells out W-A-T-E-R in Helen's hand, something clicks. Helen finally understands what the word game means—communication. She has connected with the outside world. She has connected to Annie.





OCULIST: a person who specializes in the medical treatment of diseases or defects of the eye; an ophthalmologist

IMPUDENCE: lack of due respect for another person

SIXES AND SEVENS: a phrase used to describe a state of confusion or disarray

ACUTE: present or experienced to a severe or intense degree

GOVERNESS: a woman employed to teach children in a private household

IGNORANT: lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated

DESICCATED: lacking interest, passion or energy; dried up

SPINSTER: an unmarried woman, typically an older woman beyond the usual age for marriage

OBSTINATE: stubbornly refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action, despite attempts to persuade one to do so

DISINTER: to dig up or discover

IMPORT: great significance; importance

IMPERTINENT: not showing proper respect; rude

INEFFECTUAL: not producing the desired effect; futile

ALMSHOUSE: a place built by a charitable person or organization in which poor or sick people can find help

BOON: a thing that is helpful or beneficial

CONSUMMATELY: showing a high degree of skill and flair; complete or perfect



EMPATHY V. SYMPATHY

The Keller family spends a lot of time feeling sorry for poor little Helen and for themselves. Annie, however, takes a completely different position, attempting to put herself in Helen's shoes and understand the frustration she must feel in not being able to connect with the world. That's the difference between sympathy (feeling sorry for someone else) and empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else). While we think sympathy may be what's most caring, it may actually be harmful for the person.

LANGUAGE & MEANING

In not being able to connect with the world around her, Helen was often at a loss as to the meaning of what was happening. For her, language was pouting or pointing to her cheek, but for those of us who speak

English, there are approximately one million words at our disposal, with the average vocabulary of the American adult being somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 words. Language is the key to understanding the world.

PERSISTENCE THROUGH ADVERSITY

If there's nothing else that you take away from a story like *The Miracle Worker*, remember that regardless of your circumstances and the odds stacked against you, there's always a way to come out on top. Regardless of your talents and natural abilities, persistence and drive to achieve your goals is the true key to success. From the tales of Michael Jordan to Bill Gates, modern success stories echo Helen Keller's rise to greatness—in order to win you must never give up.





WHILE *THE MIRACLE WORKER* is the story of Annie Sullivan’s triumph in breaking through to Helen Keller, the play is as much about the little miracle herself—Helen. While the story flows with all the action, intrigue and drama of a well-written, fictional play, the true strength of the work is that it’s based entirely on a true story.

BORN ON June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama to Captain Arthur Keller (a former officer in the Confederate Army) and Kate Keller (a cousin to Robert E. Lee, General of the Confederate Army), Helen Adams Keller was a strong and healthy child. She had full use of all her senses, including being fully able to see and hear. She even picked up on the early stages of speaking, vocalizing syllables and words (as the play alludes to, “Wah wah” for water).

SHORTLY AFTER turning a year old, however, Helen became sick with “acute congestion of the stomach and brain,” which today we speculate to have been scarlet fever. While her affliction didn’t last long, it permanently cut her off from the world, leaving her deaf and blind. From this point on, Helen developed an unruly and wild demeanor in response to the frustration of being locked out of the world around her.

IT WAS AROUND the age of seven that Helen’s life abruptly changed course—when teacher and lifelong friend Annie Sullivan arrived. As the play depicts, Annie tamed Helen’s wildness and eventually unlocked the world closed off so long by lack of vision and hearing. On the fateful day depicted in the last moments of the play (when it all clicks and Helen learns the name for water), Helen learned 30 words on her way to a newfound lifelong quest for knowledge.

QUICKLY MASTERING the alphabet and learning to read and write were not enough for young Helen. At age 10, she embarked upon a seemingly impossible task for a deaf-blind girl—learning to speak. After successfully conquering the endeavor, Helen moved on to college preparatory school, and then on to Radcliffe College where she earned her bachelor of arts degree *cum laude* (meaning *with honors*) in 1904. Over the course of her life, her accomplishments were recognized with honorary doctorate degrees from institutions like Temple and Harvard University.

WHILE STILL A STUDENT at Radcliffe, Helen began her career as a writer with work on her first book, *The Story of My Life* (first published in book form in 1903). She went on to write a host of other works, including but not limited to *The World I Live In*, *Out of the Dark* and *The Open Door*. Helen became a renowned speaker and author, remembered most for her advocacy of people with disabilities. She died in her sleep on June 1, 1968, just weeks before her 88th birthday.

HAVING DONE MORE in her life than many people without disabilities even attempt to do, Helen Keller served as an inspiration for us all. The next time you get down yourself and feel you are unable to achieve, remember the inspirational tale of Helen Keller and her undaunted pursuit of her dreams.





WHILE HELEN KELLER may be the miracle of the story, Annie Sullivan is no less the miracle worker. Were it not for her rigorous devotion to Helen and her education, Helen may never have become the inspiration that she is today.

ANNE SULLIVAN (also called Annie) was born on April 14, 1866 in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts to Thomas Sullivan and Alice Clohessy. Being Irish immigrants recently fleeing the potato famine (a time in Irish history running from 1845 to 1852 in which blight ravaged Ireland's food source), Annie's parents were optimistic but severely impoverished. While they both worked as cooks, there was little stability in the household as her mother was debilitated by tuberculosis and her father was an alcoholic.

IN MANY WAYS Annie's story mirrors that of Helen's—born with no disability, Annie was an exuberant and inquisitive child. While she did not lose her sight as an infant, Annie eventually fell victim to trachoma (a bacterial infection of the eye), which almost completely robbed her of her vision by the age of seven. Also like Helen, Annie was a hot-tempered child, perhaps lashing out at a world that seemed to unfairly persecute her.

ANNIE'S HOME LIFE was not as caring as Helen's, and Annie lost her mother to tuberculosis by the time Annie turned eight. Her father became increasingly violent, and by the time Annie turned ten, he abandoned both her and her brother Jimmie.

AS THE PLAY alludes to, Annie and Jimmie were sent away to the state almshouse. Like his mother, Jimmie also fought a losing battle with tuberculosis, leaving behind a guilt-ridden Annie. Though she promised

she would always be with him, his condition required their separation shortly before his death. Compounded by awful conditions at the almshouse and failed eye operations, Annie was at a low point of her life.

THE TIDE TURNED, however, when she was granted admission into Perkins School for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts in 1880. It was at Perkins that Annie could finally feed her ever-hungry curiosity, graduating at the top of her class in 1886. While there, she underwent several successful eye operations, granting her a significant improvement in sight.

FROM PERKINS, Annie landed with the Kellers, teaching young Helen discipline and opening up a world all but closed off to the deaf-blind girl. Annie's involvement with Helen did not end after her tutorship, however, as the two became inseparable. Annie went to Radcliffe with Helen, spelling out lectures, demonstrations and assignments and giving both women the benefit of a college education (though Annie would not officially be granted a bachelor of arts as she was not officially a student). While there she also met her husband, John Albert Macy, whom she married in 1905.

LIKE HELEN, Annie became known as a speaker and advocate for the blind. Though failing health took Annie in 1936 at the age of 70, she served as the inspiration to perhaps one of the most inspiring individuals of our time—Helen Keller.



THE MIRACLE WORKER isn't just a story about learning discipline and the great importance of teachers and language, it's a story about two women who transcend seemingly insurmountable odds to achieve great things. While both Annie Sullivan and Helen Keller serve as an inspiration to all of us, they aren't the only women in history to have accomplished great things in spite of incredible odds. There's a whole host of inspirational women in our history, below you'll find just a few of the many.



SUSAN BROWNELL ANTHONY (1820–1906)

A speaker and advocate for civil rights, Susan B. Anthony played a prominent role in the women's suffrage movement and the passing of the 19th Amendment.



MARY HARRIS JONES (1837–1930)

Also known as "Mother Jones," Mary Harris Jones was a self-proclaimed mother for the exploited laborer, especially children, and a key figure in the history of American labor.



CLARA BARTON (1821–1912)

Best known as a Civil War nurse who founded and organized the American Red Cross, Barton was also an innovative teacher and humanitarian.



HARRIET TUBMAN (1820–1913)

Perhaps best known as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman also risked her life as a spy for the Union during the Civil War.



MARY JANE CANNARY-BURKE "Calamity Jane" (1852–1903)

A famous frontierswoman and professional scout, Calamity Jane might be best known for her association with Wild Bill Hickok (a legendary gunfighter and lawman) and for fighting Native Americans.



ELEANOR ANNA ROOSEVELT (1884–1962)

The wife of president Franklin D. Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt was a socially conscious First Lady who advocated civil rights and fought for the rights of working women.



AMELIA EARHART (1897–1937)

Known for her exploits as a pilot and author, Earhart was the first woman to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross, awarded for "heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight."



ISABELLA BAUMFREE (1797–1883)

Known as Sojourner Truth, Isabella Baumfree was born a slave, before becoming a renowned abolitionist and Civil War nurse.



IRL

AS THE PLAY'S title denotes, Annie Sullivan is a miracle worker because of her devotion to her student, Helen Keller. While what she did truly is nothing short of miraculous, the truth of the matter is that teachers in all forms are modern day miracle workers, and always have been.

NOW I KNOW what you're thinking—you're too cool for school and you already know that seven times seven is 49 and that Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492, but where do you think all that impressive knowledge comes from? Even if your buddy Jack or best friend Suzie told you, chances are they found out from a teacher.

TEACHING IS OFTEN considered one of the most important and pivotal professions in modern society, as teachers play key roles in transmitting culture, history and the knowledge needed to move civilization forward. You might think all that malarkey is just a bunch of big words meant to put you to sleep, but it's actually all about helping you (and the planet) to realize your full potential.

THINK ABOUT IT—maybe you are a math wizard who doesn't need no stinking calculator. But what did you know before



somebody taught you those times tables? Before you learned what it was to add or subtract? How could your natural talent and flair for arithmetic be utilized before you even knew you had the talent? After all, everybody knew Helen Keller was smart, but until she could communicate no one really knew how smart she was.

THAT'S THE the cool thing—teachers don't just burden us with homework and facts. They unlock the potential for you and other students across the world; they unlock the potential for our civilization. You know all that math you're so good at? Well beyond that there's crazy hard stuff like quantum physics and engineering—the stuff that's shaping how we understand and utilize the very planet we live on. Don't worry—there are teachers for that stuff too.

EVEN THOUGH you might not be blind or deaf, I bet there's been a special teacher in your life, a miracle worker who has opened up the world to you in new ways. That's what it's all about—smashing the locks of ignorance that hold us back from achieving greatness.



- * Have you ever thought about everything you've learned since you started school?
- * What can you do because of your great teachers?
- * Other than in class, where else have you had people take the time to teach you something?



THOSE OF US lucky enough to have the use of our eyes and ears may take for granted the way we are able to live our lives every day. However, there are several ways in which those with hearing or seeing disabilities may keep in touch with the world around them. Here are just a few of the innovations that help those with disabilities communicate and connect.

READING & WRITING

Literacy (being able to read and write) is an essential tool in today's world. Can you imagine doing your homework, jotting down a note or even ordering some McDonalds without being able to read and write? Learning these skills in the traditional way is not possible if you are blind, but learning Braille can effectively give someone back this crucial skill.

Braille is not a language, it's just another way to read and write English—or any other language. Writing for people with low vision may also be possible with the use of various writing guides and bold line paper. There are templates for your signature, writing a check, addressing an envelope and writing a full page.

Modern technology has made many useful tools for people who read and write Braille. Electronic Braille note takers are portable devices with Braille keyboards that Braille readers can use to enter information. The text stored in these devices can be read with a built-in Braille display or the device can read aloud with a synthesized voice. A Braille display is a device that has a row of special cells made of plastic or metal pins. The pins are controlled by a computer and move up or down to display, in Braille, the characters that appear on the computer screen.

GETTING AROUND

Have you ever tried to walk around your house with your eyes closed? Now imagine trying to get around in the big, wide world without your sight. With the help of these and other tools, people with impaired vision can go anywhere they like and know they will arrive safely.

Guide Dogs

These carefully trained service animals are much more than pets—they're used as travel and safety tools by people who are blind. Dogs and their masters undergo rigorous training to work safely and effectively as a team. Guide dogs move only in response to directions from their masters and disobey commands only to avoid danger. Public and private organizations are required to admit these and all service animals into their facilities.

Long Canes

Designed primarily as a mobility tool, long white canes are used to feel obstacles in the path of a user. Cane length depends upon the height of a user, and traditionally extends from the floor to the user's sternum. Canes are typically made of either reinforced plastic or aluminum, and are either one full piece or are collapsible for easy storage.

DEAF COMMUNICATION

In today's world, there are some of the same options Helen Keller had for communication as well as several technological advancements that make communication easier. Sign Language is a commonly known practice in which people learn hand and arm movements which replace spoken words. Surgical advancements are also available for certain types of hearing loss. A cochlear implant is a device that provides direct electrical stimulation to the auditory nerve. While this does not "cure" hearing loss, it does allow for a hearing "sensation" to which people learn to respond.



TECHNOLOGY

Phones

One of our most popular ways to communicate are our phones and cell phones. While most phones aren't disability friendly right off the shelf, more and more phone companies are recognizing the need for accessible phone technology. For the

blind, tactile buttons and voice commands make using a phone possible. For those who are deaf, continued advancements with TTYs (tele-typewriters) and IP Relay help make phone conversations possible. Through either, a deaf individual may connect to a hearing individual over the phone through typed commands and a

monitor that displays the text from the other end.

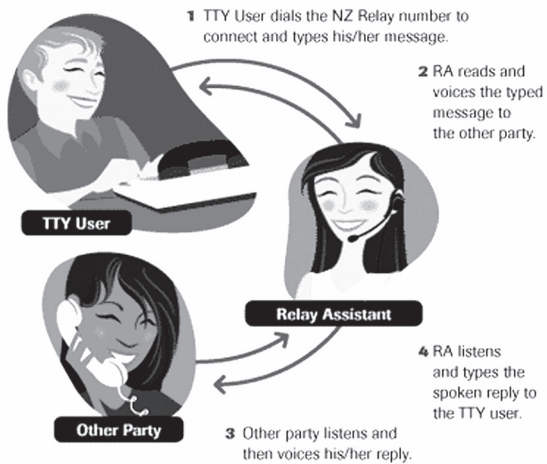
Computers

The only way to take full advantage of modern computers is to be able to see and hear them right? **WRONG!** Built in to nearly every modern PC and Mac are accessibility

features that allow the blind to hear what's going on onscreen and the deaf to see what they can't hear. These features are easily found within the Control Panel or System Preferences on your computer, and are usually labeled Accessibility Options (on a PC) or Universal Access (on a Mac). These features include scaling graphics and text on the screen to make things large or reading the contents of the screen aloud.

Alternate Commands

Though technology has come a long way, we still have to be able to tell it what to do in order for fantastic new inventions to work for us. On a computer, most people use a mouse, keyboard or joystick (only for the occasional game, of course!), but what about those individuals who are unable to use such devices? Built into some machines (and available as upgrades otherwise) is software that allows you to talk to your computer. Similar voice commands are also available on almost everything from your TV to your car to your lights and even your oven! And for those of us who can't hear these things, there are also visual cues available. Even things like doorbells and smoke alarms can be modified to alert people with flashing lights or vibrating mechanisms so that those with hearing loss can use everything they need.



- * Do you know anyone with a visual or auditory disability?
- * What tools does this person use to accomplish the day-to-day tasks we take for granted?
- * Maybe you have a disability. What would you like others to know about your life?



SWDY?!

"She is like a little safe, locked, that no one can open. Perhaps there is a treasure inside."

- * Dr. Anagnos explains to Annie that no one has been able to communicate with Helen—no one can get through to her, but there is a possibility that there is more to her than meets the eye. Many people wrote Helen off as impossible, but Annie was willing to try. Have you ever known someone who people wrote off before even trying to get to know them? Have you ever done this yourself? What might you be missing? Doesn't everyone have value?

"Is it possible, even? To teach a deaf-blind child half of what an ordinary child learns—has that ever been done?"

- * Helen's mother is worried that her daughter can't be taught, but there's a first time for everything. Have you ever decided against trying something new, just because you haven't done it before? What might you be missing? Most wonderful things are created because people are willing to try new things—things many say are impossible.

Annie: "I'm counting on her. That little imp is dying to know."

James: "Know what?"

Annie: "Anything."

- * So often we complain about school, homework, teachers—but have you ever considered what your life would be like if you didn't have the opportunity to learn what you know? If you couldn't read, couldn't write, couldn't even communicate with others?

"I'm sorry. Open my mouth, like that fairy tale, frogs jump out."

- * James doesn't mean to hurt Kate, but often he does without realizing it. He just says whatever he wants, without thinking about the consequences. James believes it's good to be honest about the situation, but sometimes honesty is painful. Is there ever a time not to be honest? Or is it just a different way of being honest that is needed? Can we always be honest without being hurtful?

"...to do nothing but obey is no gift, obedience without understanding is a blindness, too."

- * Helen's family wants their daughter to learn how to do normal things, but Annie knows it's just as important to teach Helen *why* to do something. Have you ever thought of what it would be like not to understand anything around you? Almost like being in another country, where you couldn't understand the language, it would be frightening. How would you cope? How would it change you?

"Mrs. Keller, teaching her is bound to be painful, to everyone. I know it hurts to watch, but she'll live up to just what you demand of her, and no more."

- * No parent ever wants to see a child in pain, but in Helen's case, her family's desire to keep her happy has led to a spoiled, unmanageable girl. Can you imagine what it must be like to have someone that dependant on you? Have you ever had to care for someone? Did you feel responsible for their happiness as well as their well-being?