

JONATHAN SANTAMARIA
Helen Keller
A Remarkable Woman

A Reader's Theatre Script

by Lisa Blau

Reader #1 Reader #2 Reader #3
Reader #4 Annie Sullivan Polly Thomson

Reader #1: Keller was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama on June 27, 1880.
Reader #2: When Helen was a year old she had a very fever. She was very sick.
Reader #3: The illness left Helen blind and deaf. She could not see. She could not hear.
Reader #2: Helen Keller lived in a dark and silent world.
Reader #3: Helen could not hear other people speak, so she could not talk.
Reader #2: Helen touched things to find out about the world around her.
Reader #4: Helen could not let others know what she wanted or how she felt. She would cry and scream in her silent, dark world.
Reader #3: Helen's parents took Helen to many doctors. No one could help them. One day they learned of a special teacher.
Reader #1: Helen's teacher was Annie Sullivan. She came to teach Helen when Helen was seven years old.
Annie Sullivan: I had to find a way to reach Helen. I find a way to help Helen communicate.
Reader #3: Annie taught Helen a special alphabet.
Annie Sullivan: I would give Helen a doll. Then I would spell the word into Helen's hand.
Reader #2: At first Helen did not understand.
Annie Sullivan: Then one day we passed by a water pump. I put Helen's hand in the water. I spelled the word "water" into Helen's hand over and over again.
Reader #2: At last Helen understood what Annie was to teach her!
Annie: Helen learned very fast. She learned words for "mother", "father" and "teacher".
Reader #4: In later years Helen Keller wrote, "the day I learned the word "water" was the day I discovered light, hope, and joy."
Annie: I taught Helen thousands of words. I taught her to read by feeling a series of raised dots on a page.
Reader #2: This system of reading is called Braille. Helen learned to read very fast.
Reader #3: Helen Keller became famous around the world. Everyone called her "the wonder girl".
Annie: When Helen was ten years old, she decided that she wanted to learn how to speak.

Reader #1: Helen could not hear any speech sounds. She could not hear the sounds that she was making.

Reader #2: Helen did learn to speak, but she could not always speak clearly.

Reader #4: When Helen Keller was twenty years old, she went to college.

Annie: I sat next to Helen and spelled everything that was said in each class into Helen's hand.

Reader #3: Helen was an excellent student. She studied many long, long hours.

Annie: While Helen was in college, she wrote her autobiography entitled, *The Story of My Life*. Once Helen wrote, "Knowledge is happiness."

Reader #2: Helen Keller graduated from college in 1904. By then she was even more famous. People wanted to meet this remarkable woman.

Annie: Helen and I traveled around the world. Helen lectured before large audiences. She told people about her life.

Reader #3: Helen Keller wrote many books and magazine articles about her life.

Reader #4: She worked hard to help other blind people. She worked for the American Federation for the Blind for many years.

Reader #1: In 1936, Annie Sullivan died. She had been Helen's teacher for more than fifty years.

Reader #2: Polly Thomson, Annie's secretary, became Helen's constant companion.

Polly Thomson: During World War II, Helen visited injured soldiers in the hospital.

Reader #4: Helen tried to help soldiers who had lost their sight. She gave them hope.

Reader #1: Helen Keller wrote that helping the wounded soldiers was the "crowning experience" of her life.

Polly: Helen Keller met many important people. She met kings, queens, and Presidents.

Reader #3: Helen Keller won many special awards. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson gave Helen the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Polly: Helen Keller died on June 1, 1968. She was eighty-eight years old. She had lived a full and rich life.

Reader #1: Helen Keller could not see or hear. She did not let this stop her. She wrote many books and she even learned to ride a bicycle!

Reader #3: Helen Keller loved to read. She enjoyed learning. She also enjoyed swimming.

Reader #4: Helen Keller brought love and hope to millions of handicapped people around the world.

Reader #1: This remarkable woman was admired and loved throughout the world.

All: The end.