

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Drama Club I

Unit 6 of 8

The Miracle Worker, by William Gibson, is a play about the journey of the famous Helen Keller, a woman who grew up blind and deaf. This play shows the ability to create a scene that probably happened in real life. The audience must believe that the Helen Keller they've heard about and perhaps read about is portrayed accurately on stage. In the scene below, the doctor has just told Helen Keller's mom and dad that though Helen has suffered a terrible sickness, she will live. Helen's parents are grateful, but soon realize that their daughter is deaf and blind. Since this is a true story, the audience already knows what is going to happen. It is up to the playwright to keep them on the edge of their seats and turn a reality into a stage scene.

DOCTOR: Main thing is the fever's gone, these things come and go in infants, never know why. Call it acute congestion of the stomach and brain.

KELLER: I'll see you to your buggy, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I've never seen a baby, more vitality, that's the truth.

(He beams a good night at the baby and KATE, and KELLER leads him downstairs with a lamp. They go down the porch steps, and across the yard, where the DOCTOR goes off left; KELLER stands with the lamp aloft. KATE meanwhile is bent lovingly over the crib, which emits a bleat; her finger is playful with the baby's face.)

KATE: Hush. Don't you cry now, you've been trouble enough. Call it acute congestion, indeed, I don't see what's so cute about a congestion, just because it's yours. We'll have your father run an editorial in his paper, the wonders of modern medicine, they don't know what they're curing even when they cure it. Men, men and their battle scars, we women will have to --

(But she breaks off, puzzled, moves her finger before the baby's eyes.)

Will have to -- Helen?

(Now she moves her hand, quickly.)

Helen.

(She snaps her fingers at the baby's eyes twice, and her hand falters; after a moment she calls out, loudly.)

Captain, Captain, will you come --

(But she stares at the baby, and her next call is directly at her eyes.)

Captain!

(And now, still staring, KATE screams. KELLER in the yard hears it, and runs with the lamp back to the house. KATE screams again, her look intent on the baby and terrible. KELLER hurries in and up.)

KELLER: Katie? What's wrong?

KATE: Look.

(She makes a pass with her hand in the crib, at the baby's eyes.)

KELLER: What, Katie? She's well, she needs only time to --

KATE: She can't see. Look at her eyes.

(She takes the lamp from him, moves it before the child's face.)

She can't see!

KELLER: [Hoarsely]: Helen.

KATE: Or hear. When I screamed she didn't blink. Not an eyelash --

KELLER: Helen. Helen!

KATE: She can't hear you!

KELLER: Helen!

(His face has something like fury in it, crying the child's name; KATE almost fainting presses her knuckles to her mouth, to stop her own cry.)



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The Miracle Worker

By William Gibson



OLEAN COMMUNITY

1. Would you rather write a play based on a true event or a play that is completely fictional and why?
2. If you had to write a play based on a true event/person, what/who would you want to write a play about?
3. How do you think you can keep an audience interested in a play when they already know the story/ending?

4. Write a scene (twenty lines or more) of any topic of your choosing.

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

Appendix Drama Club I: Unit 6 of 8

Citations:

http://chs.mesa.k12.co.us/departments/Language%20Arts/thomas/miracle_worker.gif

http://www.octnow.com/OCThMiracle_Worker_07b.jpg