HELEN KELLER IN HER STORY

PHOENIX LEARNING GROUP, 1953
BLACK & WHITE
GRADES 5–12
48 MINUTES

DESCRIPTION

Portrays all parts of Helen Keller's life. Shows her early life, her education, and work. Also depicts her travel experiences, showing the notables she met. Ends with her speech lessons and daily living habits. 1955 Academy Award winner for best documentary.

GOALS

1. To examine the life of a person who is disabled.
2. To dramatize life lessons that one person can give others.
3. To draw parallels between deaf-blindness as it existed in the past and exists in the present.
4. To aid in the study of the biographical form of literature.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. State the effects of the onset of deaf-blindness on a person at birth, or during infancy.
2. Obtain facts about Helen Keller's life.
3. Deduce what lessons of life Helen Keller taught others.
4. Examine the medical, educational, and vocational services available to deaf-blind people today.

BEFORE SHOWING

Review the SCRIPT for vocabulary and language concepts.

DISCUSSION ITEMS AND QUESTIONS

1. What happened to Helen Keller when she was 15 months old? What was the result?
2. How do you rate the medical treatment she received then?
3. How long did Helen have to wait until she learned to communicate, read, and write? Describe her behavior at that time.
4. Under what circumstances did Helen Keller begin to understand the communication processes?
5. How did Helen learn to communicate? How did she learn, to read and write? How did she learn to read lips?
6. Helen wanted to learn to speak and had a good speech teacher, but her speech never was good. Why did this upset her?
7. What kind of work did she want to do?
8. Who did she live with for fifty years? What was the name Helen gave this person?
9. How did Helen develop her senses of touch, smell, and taste?
10. What help did she obtain in her work and travels?
11. What countries did she visit?
12. What celebrities did she meet?
13. What unique experiences did she have?
14. Describe what you think were her greatest accomplishments.
15. Explain her philosophy of life as described in the media.
16. What were Helen's goals in life? Did she accomplish all of them?
17. How did Helen obtain friendship and love? Draw parallels between her methods and other people's.

18. People talk about being "free to be me." Did Helen have the freedom of choice or opportunities to exercise her free will? State instances to support your opinion.
19. What transforming factor was most important in Helen's life? Think positively, then negatively.
20. How did Helen feel about being deaf and blind? Why did she say she would choose blindness over deafness?
21. If you had to choose, would you choose blindness over deafness or deafness over blindness? Why?
22. People consider Helen Keller a legendary figure, but she was also a human being. Cite one instance from the media that shows how lovable and human she was.
23. Who was Louis Braille and what is the Braille alphabet?
24. Why was Helen such a good communicator?
25. How did the media portray Helen's disability in 1953? How would it be portrayed today? Do you think the media would be produced the same way? Why? Why not?
APPLICATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. List what and how we learn through our sense of hearing and by our sight.
2. Blindfold yourself and attempt to communicate with classmates and to move throughout the classroom.
3. Write a letter to Helen Keller as if she were living today.
4. Write a personality profile of Helen Keller, describing her physical, mental, and emotional characteristics.
5. Write a brief biography of Helen Keller.
6. Analyze the stages of adjustment to a disability: shock, disbelief, denial, anger, bargaining, mourning, and acceptance. How does this apply to you?
7. Visit a class for the deaf-blind in your community. Observe how they are taught. In what ways is it different from the way you are taught?
8. Determine if your school or community offers these accommodations to deaf-blind persons: accessible public transportation, interpreters for educational or social activities, assistance with shopping and banking, and opportunities for employment.
9. Invite a medical person to speak about the causes of deaf-blindness, medical improvements to save hearing and sight, and assistive devices for the deaf-blind.
10. Research the services available for the deaf-blind throughout the United States.

RELATED RESOURCES

DCMP

The DCMP Helen Keller Webpage
The Miracle Worker (with Melissa Gilbert as Keller)
The Miracle Worker (based on the play by William Gibson)
Tragedy to Triumph
Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan (1928 Newsreel Footage) & Helen Keller Meeting First Lady Grace Coolidge (1926 Newsreel Footage)

VIDEO


PAMPHLET

WEBSITES

The following websites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid-safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the DCMP do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

Helen Keller Kids Museum
Helen Keller Services for the Blind
The Time 100 profile for Helen Keller
Google timeline results for Helen Keller
Helen Keller Foundation for Research and Education
SCRIPT

This desk belonged to Helen Keller.

It is now in a room at the American Foundation for the Blind.

I'm Patty Duke Astin.

I have a special interest in Helen Keller.

I played her in *The Miracle Worker*,
in the play, and the film.

The uncontrollable child of *The Miracle Worker* grew to be world-famous,
bettering the lives of millions of blind and deaf-blind people around the world.

She is the subject of more than 400 books,
thousands of articles, and many, many films.

Here in the Helen Keller Room, along with her desk,
are many mementos of her life and work:
awards, medals, letters, citations, gifts from blind and deaf-blind people.

Of special interest is this Academy Award Oscar presented in 1955 to the best theatrical documentary of the year, the film you're about to see, *Helen Keller In Her Story.*

Produced by Nancy Hamilton and narrated by Katharine Cornell, both friends of Ms. Keller, the film is fascinating as a portrayal of an extraordinary woman and as a documentary at its best.

The film takes Keller's life through 1953, though she lived until 1968.

In the intervening years, she continued her work for blind and deaf-blind people, usually with the American Foundation for the Blind, which continues that work today.

Wherever and whenever there was an opportunity
to champion the rights of blind people,

the foundation and Ms. Keller were there.

She was the guiding spirit of the organization and continues so today.

To perpetuate that spirit, the foundation is reissuing this film.

We hope it will serve as a reminder that blindness, deafness, or any other handicap need not be a deterrent to a useful, busy, and happy life.

Ms. Keller had such a life.

I'm sure you will agree that this film preserves the indomitable spirit of Helen Keller.

I hope you enjoy this film as much as I have.

Thank you.

♪

(female narrator) In this room sits a remarkable woman.

She is Helen Keller.

She does not see the book she is reading.

She sees nothing.

She does not hear the rustling curtains behind her.

She hears nothing.

She is deaf, deaf and blind.

But if you enter her room, she will know.

Your footfall will tell her you are coming.

They'll tell her who you are as she knows Polly Thomson.

Polly has been with Helen 40 years.

For half of these, she's been Helen's only companion, Helen's eyes and ears.

She talks with Helen by a finger system in which each letter has a sign, like this.

In reaching out beyond her dark and soundless night,
Helen depends most on touch.

Two other senses remain:

There is taste, and there is smell.

The scent of objects and places and people tells Helen much that we learn with eyes and ears.

Her hand is her chief link with the world:

with Polly, with Anne, the part-time helper, with everyone she encounters.

With her hand, she reads Anne’s lips.

She answers with her voice.

It is an unnatural voice and her great sorrow.

Helen has never learned to speak clearly.

This isn't strange, for since she was a baby, she has not heard a word nor seen lips forming one.

Let Helen, with Polly’s help, tell you.

It is not blindness or deafness that brings me my darkest hours.

It is not blindness or deafness that bring me my darkest hours.

It is the acute disappointment in not being able to speak normally.

It is the acute disappointment in not being able to speak normally.

Longingly, I think how much more good I might have done if I had only acquired natural speech.

Longingly, I feel how much more good I could have done if I had acquired normal speech.

But out of this sorrowful experience, I understand more fully...

But out of this sorrowful experience, I understand more fully...

all human strivings...

all human strivings...

thwarted ambitions...

thwarted ambitions...

and the infinite capacity of hope.

and the infinite capacity of hope.
The story of Helen Keller has become a legend that belongs to the world. She was born in 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama, the eldest child of Capt. Arthur H. Keller and Kate Adams Keller. Born a normal, healthy baby, she had an illness at 19 months that left her blind, deaf, and mute. Until she was nearly 7, she lived in darkness and silence, alone beyond human reach, unaware, untaught. Then Helen’s mother read a travel book by a great Englishman. The author spoke of a school where a deaf-blind girl had learned miraculously to read and write. From the Perkins Institute for the Blind came Helen’s liberator, young Anne Mansfield Sullivan. Annie Sullivan, herself half blind as a child, her vision never fully restored, broke through the darkness and silence of Helen’s life. With minute, painstaking steps, she led Helen into realizing that around her was an unimagined world of sight and sound, that communication was possible between human beings. Once Helen’s quick intelligence was freed, it leaped ahead. She learned the meaning of reading. Within three months, with ruler and pencil, she had written her first letter. At 9, she was corresponding with a famous preacher, Phillips Brooks. At 10, she could call herself a published writer. With Annie always beside her, fingerspelling every lesson into her hand, Helen was going to school.
From Annie’s hand to Helen’s flowed the classroom lectures.

She learned to read in five languages.

Helen learned the seemingly impossible.

She learned to speak.

Now she and Annie both voiced one ambition:

that Helen should try for college.

Educators shook their heads as the two settled to their task,

summers and winters of tireless preparation

from Annie’s hand to Helen’s.

♪

In 1904, Helen Keller graduated cum laude from Radcliffe College.

Blind, deaf, but no longer mute, she was ready to face the world.

Now she began writing articles and books about the needs of the deaf and the blind.

She also wrote a poem in blank verse.

"Come walk with me, and I will tell

"What I have read in this scroll of stone;

"I will spell out this writing on hill and meadow.

"It is a chronicle wrought by praying workmen,

"The forefathers of our nation--

"Leagues upon leagues of sealed history awaiting an interpreter."

Helen was living now in a farmhouse near Boston.

Annie Sullivan had married John Macy, and they shared the house with her.

Old friends visited them: her classmates from college; great men who had long championed her:

Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, who had encouraged Annie during Helen’s early training;

Mark Twain, who called Helen and Napoleon
the most interesting figures
of the 19th century.

She was visited
by her sister, Mildred,
and by her mother.

Helen was working hard
to improve her voice
so that she might lecture
as well as write.

Of this first lecture
she wrote:

"I wonder if anyone has ever made
his first appearance

"upon the platform
with keener anguish.

"Terror invaded my flesh.

"My mind froze,
my heart stopped beating.

I kept repeating,
'What shall I do?"

With outward calm, she and Annie
went on the platform.

She spoke,
Annie interpreted,

and together they showed
how Helen had learned to speak.

For all Helen’s fears,
the audience rose to her.

It was the beginning
of a five-year lecture tour.

By now she was one of
the most famous women in the world.

With letters pouring in,

there began that bondage
to the mailbag

that Helen Keller
was never to escape.

Soon she and Annie
needed a secretary,

and they found one,
a young Scotswoman
named Polly Thomson.

1919 saw them in Hollywood.

They were welcomed
by Hollywood’s royalty,

Douglas Fairbanks
and Mary Pickford.

Helen had agreed
to make a picture.

♪

The movie was called
Deliverance.

With the exception
of a manufactured plot
to provide romance

and an elaborate Hollywood attempt
at symbolism,

the picture was a forerunner
of the documentary film.
It showed how Helen could type
and write braille
and how she could dance.

It showed her with her mother
and with her brother, Phillips Keller.
It showed her first aeroplane ride,
a daring feat at that time.

[engine roaring]
rrrr

Then, of course, the movie climaxed
with a typical Hollywood spectacle finish.

Many people were shocked that Helen would make a movie.

They were aghast at her next step, vaudeville.

♪

For two years, Helen and her teacher trouped the vaudeville circuit, earning their daily bread.

A part of their so-called act was later filmed.

It is the only existing record of Annie Sullivan's voice.

When I saw Helen Keller first,
she was six years and eight months old.

She had been blind and deaf and mute since her 19th month as the result of an illness.

She had no way of communicating with those around her, except a few imitative signs that she had made for herself.

A push meant "go," and a pull meant "come," and so on.

She had observed that we did not use the hands when we were talking to each other,

and I let her see, by putting her hand on my face, how we talk with our mouths.

She felt the vibration of the spoken words.

Instantly, she spelled, "I want to talk with my mouth."

That seemed impossible,
but after experimenting for a time, we found that placing her hand in this position--the thumb resting on the throat, right at the larynx, the first finger on the lips, the second on the nose--we found that she could feel the vibration of spoken words.

For instance, the throat:

She feels the g, the hard g.

[g] [g]

And on the lips, she feels, the uh--and the k sound.

[k], [k] [k], [k]

On the lips, she feels the b.

[b] [b]

And the [p].

[p] And with the second finger on the nose, the nasal sounds, the [n].

[n]

The [m].

[m]

The first word she learned to articulate was the little word it.

With the hand in this position, I made the vowel [i].

[i]

She felt it.

[i] [i]

Then I made the t.

[t], [t] [t]

She feels it with the finger on her lips--on my lips.

Then I put the two letters together to form the word it.

it
And the first word was learned.

After her seventh lesson,

she was able
to speak the sentence

word by word:

I

I

am

am

not

not
dumb
dumb

now.

now.

(narrator)
Calling attention to the needs
of the blind and the deaf,

Helen worked endlessly
to gain for their
more enlightened treatment,
more schools, more homes;
above all, to make people understand
that the greatest service
to the blind

is the prevention
of blindness.

In a day
when venereal disease
was not a topic for discussion
among women, Helen spoke out.

She was recognized
not just as a wonder,

but as a wonder worker.

Great men and women of her time
wished to know her.

She made Coolidge smile.

President Hoover received her
and her fellow members

of the First World Conference
for the Blind.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
befriended her

in her efforts
for the handicapped.

Like all the great, she was asked
to launch a ship.

Like all the great,
she was made an Indian.

♪

Writers wondered at her.

Artists sculpted her.

Poets drew inspiration
from her.

To the world, the miracle
was Helen Keller.
To Helen, the miracle was Annie Sullivan.

Then in 1936,

Helen's teacher, companion, and beloved friend

for nearly 50 years, Annie Sullivan, died.

Polly Thomson--

warm, devoted, well-trained for this unique job--

was there to take Annie's place at Helen's side.

From that day, she has never left it.

♪

Together they follow Annie's star,

from continent to continent they go.

To Britain, Italy, Greece, New Zealand.

Perpetual beggars, they call themselves,

in the cause of the handicapped.

The newsreels of the world have come to know Helen.

(male newsreel announcer)
Helen Keller arrives at Kingsford Smith Airport

to begin an Australian-wide lecture tour.

She has brought light and hope and courage to thousands of afflicted people.

Blind and deaf, Ms. Keller could never learn to speak normally.

When she addresses young students, her artificially acquired monotone is interpreted by Ms. Thomson for children with partial or aided hearing.

I know every step of the road you are traveling... I know every step of the road you are taking... and I rejoice at your cheer and determination... and I rejoice at your cheer and determination... because the obstacles you meet are many. because the obstacles you meet are many. And when you go out to life's struggles and adventures...
And when you go out to life's struggles and adventures...

you will raise a banner...

you will raise a banner...

for the deaf who follow you.

for the deaf who follow you.

(male newsreel announcer)
At Wahroonga School for Blind Children,

Helen meets Alice Betteridge of Victoria,

also blind, deaf, and dumb.

Today, Ms. Betteridge achieves a lifelong ambition

as Helen Keller speaks to her in the only language she can understand.

[indistinct conversation]

I'm glad to see you at last.

I'm glad to see you at last.

(male newsreel announcer)
If Helen Keller could see the excitement on Ms. Betteridge's face,

it alone would make the trip worthwhile.

(male newsreel announcer #2)
As guest of Israel, the famous Helen Keller visits a village set apart for the blind.

Keller's visit marks a new era.

When she explains segregation is bad for the blind, authorities act promptly.

Seeing inhabitants are being encouraged to settle there.

The name has been changed from Ha'ivrim, meaning "Village of the Blind," to Or Adonai, meaning "Light of God."

(male newsreel announcer #3)
In Johannesburg, the children of St. Vincent's School for the Deaf have been rehearsing their percussion band for weeks for the visit of Helen Keller, the deaf-blind American who surmounted her cruel handicaps to become world-famous.

The band is a triumph of patience, for none of these children can hear a single note they're playing.

[bells ringing]
[whistle tweets] 
tweet, tweet, tweet

[cymbals crash in rhythm] 
clang, clang, clang, clang

From the blind children of South Africa,
Helen Keller takes home a message in braille bearing cordial wishes to the children of America.

(male newsreel announcer #4)
For the first time since before the war, Helen Keller pays a visit to Japan as a guest of the United States government.

In Tokyo and other cities, the population turns out to cheer this American left blind and deaf by an affliction.

To the Japanese people,
Ms. Keller's life is an example of what hope and determination can do, for she has conquered darkness and isolation to become a world figure.

(narrator)
Nowhere is Helen more widely appreciated, more deeply honored, than in Japan.
The needs of their blind and deaf have been great, and twice she has toured their islands in aid of their afflicted.

Schoolchildren line each route she takes, singing songs especially written for her. Rich and poor alike cherish her.

She is respected as a woman and revered as a saint. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still recovering from the atomic bomb when Helen Keller went there on pilgrimage.

♫

In a lake of shrines, the Japanese created an everlasting shrine to the memory of the great teacher Annie Sullivan.

Helen lights the first candle.
The people of Japan will see that the light never goes out.

When Helen is not on public errands, she's at Arcan Ridge,

the Connecticut house built by friends

so that she and Polly might have

da roof and walls of their own.

Mornings at Arcan Ridge begin around 5:00.

For Helen, they begin as they end, with a Bible.

"The heavens declare the glory of God,

"and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

"Day unto day uttereth speech.

"Night unto night showeth knowledge.

"There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

Polly, meanwhile, has brought up the breakfast.

Sometimes something is missing from the tray,

and it is Helen who goes to fetch it.

Polly knows it pleases Helen to wait upon her.

Everywhere else, except in her own house,

Helen must be waited upon by Polly.

Here, where every table, every chair,

every dish in the cupboard is her friend,

Helen can move freely and independently.

♪

Though in this quiet house Polly need not speak aloud to Helen, she usually does.

It helps to drive back the silence.

The first concern of the day is the weather,

to know how to dress for the morning walk with her dog.

Clear but cold.

She checks with her braille thermometer.

She is right.

In her dressing, Helen is completely independent.

She knows her clothes and where to find them,
even to a stray belt.

♪

Every morning
Helen goes for a walk
along a thousand-foot handrail
built by a friend
to guide her.

A thousand feet where
she is alone and free.

The walk seldom varies,
but for Helen it is always full
of small, unexpected events.

♪

Helen has known
from childhood
what those with sight
cannot realize,
that one does not need eyes
to see the world.

♪

A patch of herbs that was here
last summer is gone.

By 8:00, Helen and Polly
have made their beds,
Polly has finished
household tasks,
and their business
of the day begins.

♪

Even at home, they carry the responsibilities
and obligations
of public figures.

Their desk is never clear.

The mail piles up
while they are away,
and every morning,
more comes in.

The bulky packages
are books in braille.

They must wait.

The letters will be gone through
after Polly finishes spelling out
the morning headlines.

Helen is emphatic about keeping
in touch with world events.

But the mail looms large.

A few of the letters
are personal ones,
but most of them are requests
for something.

From New Zealand:

(man #1)
"Would you send a message
to the Royal Blind Institute?"
(narrator)
From Massachusetts:

(woman #1)
"I have written a pamphlet
on teaching the deaf.
Please let me have
your comments."

(narrator)
From India:

(man #2)
"I am going blind.
Can you help me?"

(narrator)
From New York:

(girl)
"I have chosen you
as the subject of my paper.
Would you write me a letter
about yourself?"

(narrator)
After the mail, Helen goes
to her study to work.

There are reports
to be made,
speeches and articles
to be prepared.

So far as possible,
she does her own research.

She locates
her reference books
by the braille lettering
along the edge.

In her work,
she will not indulge herself
because she is handicapped.

"Everyone has his own handicaps,"
Helen says.

"It just happens to be
the handicap of the blind
that they cannot see,
for the deaf that they cannot hear."

She does her own typing.

Her speeches she does
on her braille typewriter
so she can go over them
herself for corrections.

The machine
has only six keys
because all braille letters
are made
by the combination and placement
of six raised dots.

For her letters, she uses
a regular typewriter.

She is fast and accurate,
but she has Polly
check her letters.

Being blind, she cannot
permit herself
casual mistakes
of the seeing.

If there are mistakes,
Helen types the letter again.
From the vibrations of a buzzer, Helen knows when it is time for lunch.

The glint of crystals is the one thing Helen thinks she remembers seeing before she went blind.

Flowers are among her greatest pleasures. Helen's home is not a sad place, because she is not a sad woman. She's extraordinarily gay.

She goes toward each experience with the joy of a child. On weekdays, there are only three for lunch, Helen and Polly and Anne, who comes in to help with housework.

Their days are too full for social engagements. But at teatime, they relax and catch up with their personal mail. Friends may come in.

The talk may turn to politics or world affairs. Helen has strong views and has the courage to express them, even when they're not popular. She also likes a good story and appreciates a joke as much as anyone else. So they spend their days at home. Scarcely a week goes by that Helen's calendar doesn't call them to a conference or lecture. In this case, it is to a meeting of the American Foundation for the Blind. Today, the foundation is submitting for her approval a device for communicating with the deaf-blind and for enabling the deaf-blind to communicate with each other. The keyboard activates little metal prongs that speak directly to the fingertips in braille.
It is perhaps the most
direct means yet invented
of making contact with those
who are both deaf and blind.

"Now," Helen types out,
"anyone can speak to us directly."

Helen is interested in a great deal
that is being done
to find new ways
of helping the handicapped.

At the Dyker Street Nursery,
they are experimenting
with placing sightless children
and seeing children together.

It is important to accustom
the blind
to normal, everyday life.

At the Lexington School
for the Deaf,
she watches children at play.

Today they have a new game.
From blowing a piece of paper,
they are learning to say
"who," "what," "when," "why,"
like ordinary children.

She follows the progress
of older girls learning to talk.

Watching their struggles
with speech,

we can perhaps
more easily understand
why Helen says if she had
a choice between afflictions,
she would choose blindness.

The deaf, cut off
from the world
by lack of hearing
and speech,

need all the encouragement
she can give.

But perhaps those to whom Helen gives
her time most gladly
are those who, like herself,
are both deaf and blind.

There are perhaps 25,000
of them in this country.

In the 50 years
since Helen graduated,
there is only one other
to have achieved a college degree,

Robert Smithdas of St. John's
in Brooklyn.

They enjoy life and work
like the rest of us.

Their fortitude should
make us recall,
in respect to our own
small difficulties,
a truth spoken long ago:
"I cried because I had no shoes
until I met a man who had no feet."

The newly handicapped young men who have come back from Korea disabled command as much attention as did their brothers in the Second World War.

Then, as now, she and Polly tramp the corridors of our military hospitals, bringing hope to the amputees, the blind, and the disabled.

Meeting Helen, seeing what she has made of her life, gives them more courage to reshape their own.

For her services, she was cited at the close of World War II.

Then the leader of our armies, later the leader of the nation, Dwight D. Eisenhower welcomed her to the White House and thanked her himself.

Helen Keller asked the president if she might have the privilege of seeing him.

Afterwards, of his face, she said, "I felt the courage and thought that carried him through such great years of the world's history."

From a life lived mostly for others, Helen manages to save some part for herself.

There are necessary things like shopping.

The excitement of the city, its vibrations under her feet, she loves.

She enjoys the labor of choosing and buying.

♪

She and Polly must shop with economy.

Though it is Helen's job to look well in public, they must also shop with care.

Helen's hats, back through the decades, are a minor footnote on the history of our times.

Like her hats, the artists she has encountered also summarize an era:
Joe Jefferson when he played Rip Van Winkle,

Caruso at the height of his fame,

Ethel Barrymore when she was in *Declasse*,

Melchior as Siegfried,

Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall.

Years ago, the young Heifetz played for her.

Years later, Gladys Swarthout sings for her.

♫ Bless the roofs and chimneys tall ♫

♫ Let thy peace lie over all ♫

♫ Bless us all that we may be ♫

♫ Fit in order to dwell with thee ♫

♫ Bless us all ♫

♫ That one day we may dwell ♫

♫ On high with thee ♫

That is beautiful.

It is like my daily prayer.

(Polly) That is beautiful.

It is like my daily prayer.

(narrator) When Helen takes time to relax, she is a merry companion.

She is interested in everything and everybody.

Spending an evening with Robert Helpmann, the dancer, and Guthrie McClintock, the director, she seizes the opportunity to catch up with the amusement world.

The theater gives her full measure, for she reads a play before she goes.

Dance forms she must feel, so Helpmann volunteers to show her the difference between classical ballet and the modern dance.

Mr. McClintock does not feel Mr. Helpmann made his point and suggests they take Helen to study modern dancing at close range.

Helen has been to Martha Graham's recitals, but this is the first time she has been to a rehearsal.

♪
Polly must spell the action into Helen's hand, but she is aware of the rhythm and movement through vibrations in the floor.

[resonating] bong, bong, bong

As Martha Graham realizes, Helen's hands need not even touch the drums to feel intensely their vibrations.

[lively piano music]

Though Helen has been to their performances, it is only in a rehearsal that she is able to discover the line of body and limb that is the living pattern of the dance.

Once Helen wanted to feel a lion. Annie Sullivan informed the zoo.

A lion was fed. Helen entered the cage and felt the lion from its head to its tail.

Obviously, Helen's sense of the world--its shape, its textures, its forms--comes to her through her sense of touch. But her knowledge of the world comes to her through books, and for books she is indebted, as are all the sightless, to a blind Frenchman, Louis Braille, by whose invention the blind of all nations can read.

It was to honor his memory that Helen, in 1952, went to France. At the Paris Foundation for the Blind, she writes the address to give on the 100th anniversary of his death.

"A notre maniere."

"In our way, we the blind are as indebted to Louis Braille as mankind is to Gutenberg."

Helen's speech is only a part of the world's tribute.
Today, 100 years after his death,
he is being taken to lie in the Pantheon,
the burial place of France's great.

Behind his coffin march the blind of Paris.

♪

And later, at the Sorbonne,
Helen Keller delivers the address in his honor.

[speaking in French]

[speaking in French]

(narrator)
Afterward, Helen Keller, Louis Braille's great disciple, is made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

[man speaking in French]

[applause]

♪

(narrator)
Then, from time to time, there is home again,
where they sit among familiar things with curtains drawn
and are simply old friends.

There is peace and quiet.
There is music.

[jazz piano tune plays]

There are also the dishes to be washed.

As Polly washes the dishes, Helen shells pecans.

Helen keeps a careful check on Polly.

But when the radio is playing,
it is hard to keep Helen's hands on her work.

Then there is bed.

"This then is the message which we have heard of Him
"and declare unto you,
"that God is light
and in Him is no darkness at all."

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