

Readers' Theater

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Helen Keller



GRL: K
DRA: 20

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Each reader's part is highlighted in color.

List of Characters

(in order of appearance)

Group 1: Green

Group 2: Blue

Group 3: Orange

Helen Keller: Light Blue

Annie Sullivan: Purple



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Group 3: During her life, Helen Keller received many awards and honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1964.

Group 1: Her life story inspired plays and films. Her image is on the Alabama state quarter, and Ivy Green has been named a historic landmark.

Group 2: Helen Keller died June 1, 1968. She had showed the world that knowledge gave her love, light, and vision.



Helen Keller

Group 1: Helen Keller was born in a small town in Alabama on June 27, 1880. Her family lived in a simple white house nicknamed Ivy Green.

Group 2: Helen's father grew cotton and edited the local newspaper. Helen's mother helped run the small plantation.

Group 3: Helen was a beautiful and healthy infant.

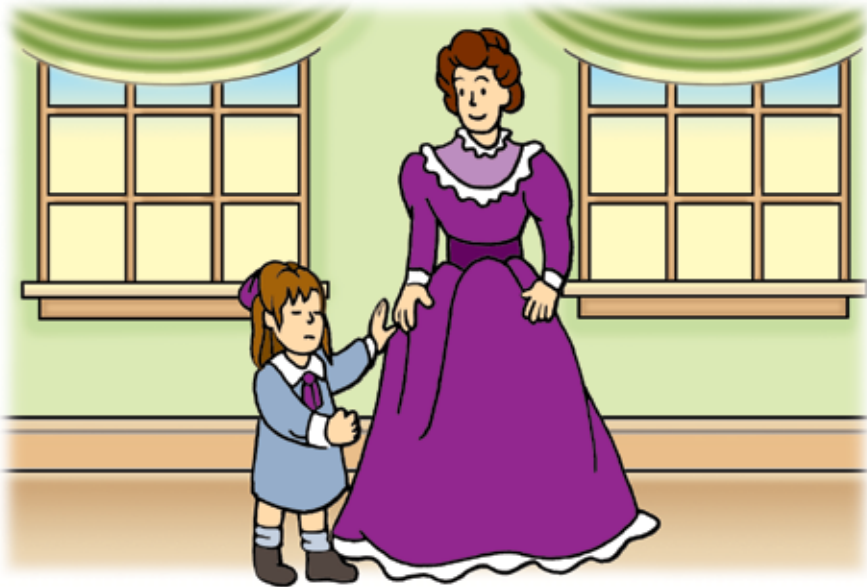


Group 1: Then Helen got very sick when she was 19 months old. The fever left her deaf and blind.

Group 2: Young Helen lived in a silent and dark world.

Helen Keller: I broke dishes and lamps. I put my hands in everybody's plates when they were trying to eat. I screamed and cried.

Group 3: Some people called Helen a monster. They said she should be sent away to live in an institution.



Group 3: Helen began working for the deaf-blind. She dedicated herself to improving the lives of deaf-blind people everywhere.

Group 1: She traveled around the world, raising money for education and better medical treatment. She helped create libraries for the blind.

Group 2: She met with wounded soldiers who had lost their sight or hearing. She met with presidents, kings, and queens.

Helen Keller: But I believed the visits to the soldiers were the best experience of my life.





Group 2: Helen graduated from college with honors in 1904. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a degree.

Group 3: She kept writing and started giving talks. She wanted everyone to learn about blindness and how to prevent it.

Group 1: Annie would interpret each and every word. Then she would help Helen answer questions from the audience.

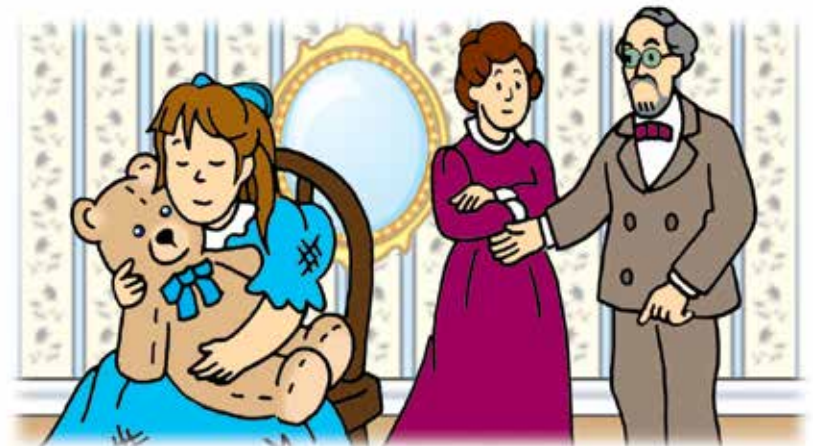
Group 2: Everyone wanted to meet the woman who had overcome so much.

Group 1: By the time Helen was six years old, her parents were desperate. Doctors said that Helen would always be deaf and blind.

Group 2: But her parents knew Helen was very smart. She had made up her own sign language.

Helen Keller: If I wanted ice cream, I would shiver. If I wanted my father, I would pretend to put on glasses.

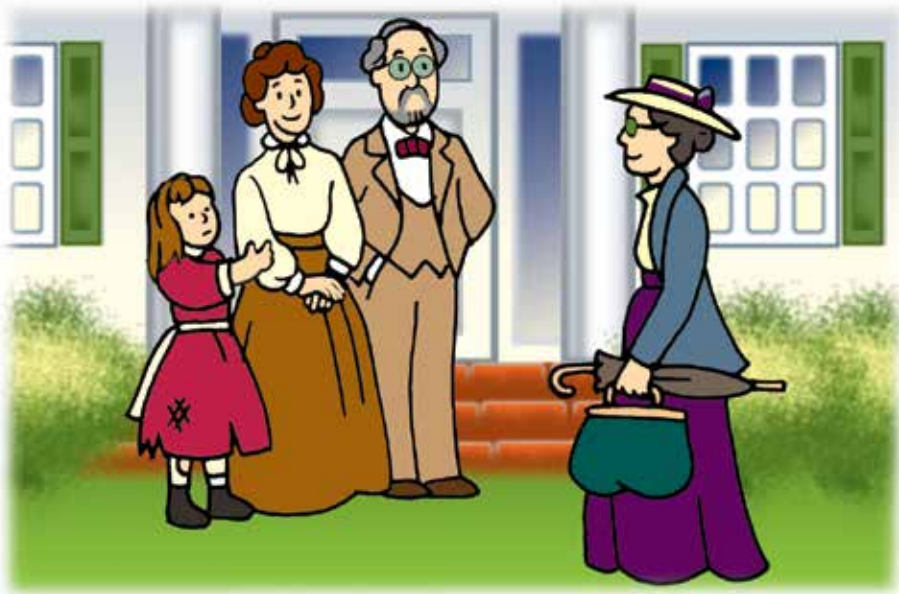
Group 3: So the Kellers searched for a special teacher for Helen. They needed someone who knew how to work with a little girl who was deaf and blind.



Group 1: On March 3, 1887, Annie Sullivan arrived at Ivy Green. She was going to be Helen's special teacher.

Group 2: Annie had graduated from the Perkins School for the Blind in Boston, Massachusetts. She was the top student in her class.

Group 3: Annie wasn't blind, but she had limited vision. Because she knew a special finger alphabet, she could talk with someone who was deaf and blind.



Group 2: In 1900, she entered the women's college at Harvard University. Helen studied hard, but she also had fun. She swam, played chess, and rode a two-seater bicycle.

Group 3: Annie continued to be Helen's eyes and ears. She went with Helen to every class and finger-spelled the words that the teachers spoke.

Group 1: While Helen was at college, she began to write about her life. Her first book, *The Story of My Life*, was published in 1903.



Group 2: Helen learned how to finger-spell well. She also learned how to read and write in braille. She learned about the world through her fingers.

Group 3: With Annie at her side, Helen eventually went away to school. She learned how to type, how to play chess, and how to ride a horse!

Group 1: But Helen wanted to learn more things. She decided to go to college.



Group 1: When Annie arrived at Ivy Green, she tried to hug and kiss Helen, but Helen turned away. That didn't discourage Annie.

Group 2: Annie was strict with Helen. She wouldn't let Helen grab food off people's plates. She made Helen sit in her chair and eat with a fork, spoon, and knife.

Annie Sullivan: But to understand the world, Helen needed to learn words. So I traced the letters of a word in her hand. When I gave her a doll, I spelled d-o-l-l. When Helen ate cake, I finger-spelled c-a-k-e.

Group 3: Helen thought the finger-spelled words were a game. She could spell *doll*, but she didn't connect the word with the object.



Group 1: This all changed on April 5, 1887.

Annie Sullivan: I took Helen to the water pump. I held one of Helen's hands under the water. Then I finger-spelled w-a-t-e-r into Helen's other hand.

Helen Keller: Suddenly I knew that w-a-t-e-r meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand.

Annie Sullivan: Finally, Helen understood that everything had a name. There was no stopping her. By nightfall, she had learned 30 words!

