

GOLDIE: That wouldn't make sense, you know that.

BERTHA: Sure it would. Hello from Bertha to Charlie with all her love. Don't that make sense?

GOLDIE: No!

BERTHA: Sure it does.

THE MIRACLE WORKER

by William Gibson

ACT II

The play is based on the early life of Helen Keller. Helen was blind, deaf, and mute; she was wild and uncontrollable. As a last resort her parents hired Annie Sullivan, trained as a teacher of blind children, to work a miracle. The play focuses on Annie's efforts to break through the sensory barriers that have kept Helen isolated and uncivilized. Annie comes to believe that Helen can learn if she is properly disciplined. Helen is used to poking her hands in everyone's food at dinner time. When Annie prevents her from doing this Helen has a tantrum and begins to kick the floor. The family members ask Annie to let Helen do as she pleases so that they might have some peace and continue their conversations. Annie demands that they leave her alone with Helen. Just prior to the following scene the family has exited reluctantly. Annie locks the door behind them. She is resolved: Helen will learn to eat in a civilized manner and show respect for others.

Annie meanwhile has begun by slapping both keys down on a shelf out of Helen's reach; she returns to the table upstage. Helen's kicking has subsided, and when from the floor her hand finds Annie's chair empty she pauses. Annie clears the table of Kate's, James's, and Keller's plates; she gets back to her own across the table just in time to slide it deftly away from Helen's

pouncing hand. She lifts the hand and moves it to Helen's plate, and after an instant's exploration, Helen sits again on the floor and drums her heels. Annie comes around the table and resumes her chair. When Helen feels her skirt again, she ceases kicking, waits for whatever is to come, renews some kicking, waits again. Annie retrieving her plate takes up a forkful of food, stops it half-way to her mouth, gazes at it devoid of appetite, and half-lowers it; but after a look at Helen she sighs, dips the forkful toward Helen in a for-your-sake toast, and puts it in her own mouth to chew, not without an effort.

Helen now gets hold of the chair leg, and half-succeeds in pulling the chair out from under her. Annie bangs it down with her rear, heavily, and sits with all her weight. Helen's next attempt to topple it is unavailing, so her fingers dive in a pinch at Annie's flank. Annie in the middle of her mouthful almost loses it with startle, and she slaps down her fork to round on Helen. The child comes up with curiosity to feel what Annie is doing, so Annie resumes eating, letting Helen's hand follow the movement of her fork to her mouth; whereupon Helen at once reaches into Annie's plate. Annie firmly removes her hand to her own plate. Helen in reply pinches Annie's thigh, a good mean pinchful that makes Annie jump. Annie sets the fork down, and sits with her mouth tight. Helen digs another pinch into her thigh, and this time Annie slaps her hand smartly away; Helen retaliates with a roundhouse fist that catches Annie on the ear, and Annie's hand leaps at once in a forceful slap across Helen's cheek; Helen is the startled one now. Annie's hand in compunction falters to her own face, but when Helen hits at her again, Annie deliberately slaps her again. Helen lifts her fist irresolute for another roundhouse, Annie lifts her hand resolute for another slap, and they freeze in this posture, while Helen mulls it over. She thinks better of it, drops her fist, and giving Annie a wide berth, gropes around to her mother's chair, to find it empty; she blunders her way along the table upstage, and encountering the empty chairs and missing plates, she looks bewildered; she gropes back to her mother's chair, again touches her cheek and indicates the chair, and waits for the world to answer.

Annie now reaches over to spell into her hand, but Helen yanks it away; she gropes to the front door, tries the knob, and finds the

door locked, with no key. She gropes to the rear door, and finds it locked, with no key. She commences to bang on it. Annie rises, crosses, takes her wrists, draws her resisting back to the table, seats her, and releases her hands upon her plate; as Annie herself begins to sit, Helen writhes out of her chair, runs to the front door, and tugs and kicks at it. Annie rises again, crosses, draws her by one wrist back to the table, seats her, and sits; Helen escapes back to the door, knocking over her mother's chair in route. Annie rises again in pursuit, and this time lifts Helen bodily from behind and bears her kicking to her chair. She deposits her, and once more turns to sit. Helen scrambles out, but as she passes Annie catches her up again from behind and deposits her in the chair; Helen scrambles out on the other side, for the rear door, but Annie at her heels catches her up and deposits her again in the chair. She stands behind it. Helen scrambles out to her right, and the instant her feet hit the floor Annie lifts and deposits her back; she scrambles out to her left, and is at once lifted and deposited back. She tries right again and is deposited back, and tries left again and is deposited back, and now feints Annie to the right but is off to her left, and is promptly deposited back. She sits a moment, and then starts straight over the table, dishware notwithstanding; Annie hauls her in and deposits her back, with her plate spilling in her lap, and she melts to the floor and crawls under the table, laborious among its legs and chairs, but Annie is swift around the table and waiting on the other side when she surfaces, immediately bearing her aloft; Helen clutches at James's chair for anchorage, but it comes with her, and half-way back she abandons it to the floor. Annie deposits her in her chair, and waits. Helen sits tensed motionless. Then she tentatively puts out her left foot and hand, Annie interposes her own hand, and at the contact Helen jerks hers in. She tries her right foot, Annie blocks it with her own, and Helen jerks hers in. Finally, leaning back, she slumps down in her chair, in a sullen biding.

Annie backs off a step, and watches; Helen offers no move. Annie takes a deep breath. Both of them and the room are in considerable disorder, two chairs down and the table a mess, but Annie makes no effort to tidy it; she only sits on her own chair, and lets her energy refill. Then she takes up knife and fork, and resolutely addresses her food. Helen's hand comes out to explore

and seeing it Annie sits without moving; the child's hand goes over her hand and fork, pauses—Annie still does not move—and withdraws. Presently it moves for her own plate, slaps about for it, and stops, thwarted. At this, Annie again rises, recovers Helen's plate from the floor and a handful of scattered food from the deranged tablecloth, drops it on the plate, and pushes the plate into contact with Helen's fist. Neither of them now moves for a pregnant moment—until Helen suddenly takes a grab of food and wolfs it down. Annie permits herself the humor of a minor howl and warming of her hands together; she wanders off a step or two, watching. Helen cleans up the plate.

After a glower of indecision, she holds the empty plate out for more. Annie accepts it, and crossing to the removed plates, spoons food from them onto it; she stands debating the spoon, tapping it a few times on Helen's plate; and when she returns with the plate she brings the spoon, too. She puts the spoon first into Helen's hand, then sets the plate down. Helen, discarding the spoon, reaches with her hand, and Annie stops it by the wrist; she replaces the spoon in it. Helen impatiently discards it again, and again Annie stops her hand, to replace the spoon in it. This time Helen throws the spoon on the floor. Annie after considering it lifts Helen bodily out of the chair, and in a wrestling match on the floor closes her fingers upon the spoon, and returns her with it to the chair. Helen again throws the spoon on the floor. Annie lifts her out of the chair again; but in the struggle over the spoon Helen with Annie on her back sends her sliding over her head; Helen flees back to her chair and scrambles into it. When Annie comes after her she clutches it for dear life; Annie pries one hand loose, then the other, then the first again, then the other again, and then lifts Helen by the waist, chair and all, and shakes the chair loose. Helen wrestles to get free, but Annie pins her to the floor, closes her fingers upon the spoon, and lifts her kicking under one arm; with her other hand she gets the chair in place again, and plunks Helen back on it. When she releases her hand, Helen throws the spoon at her.

Annie now removes the plate of food. Helen grabbing finds it missing, and commences to bang with her fists on the table. Annie collects a fistful of spoons and descends with them and the plate on Helen; she lets her smell the plate, at which Helen ceases

banging, and Annie puts the plate down and a spoon in Helen's hand. Helen throws it on the floor. Annie puts another spoon in her hand. Helen throws it on the floor. Annie puts another spoon in her hand. Helen throws it on the floor. When Annie comes to her last spoon she sits next to Helen, and gripping the spoon in Helen's hand compels her to take food in it up to her mouth. Helen sits with lips shut. Annie waits a stolid moment, then lowers Helen's hand. She tries again; Helen's lips remain shut. Annie waits, lowers Helen's hand. She tries again; this time Helen suddenly opens her mouth and accepts the food. Annie lowers the spoon with a sigh of relief, and Helen spews the mouthful out at her face. Annie sits a moment with eyes closed, then takes the pitcher and dashes its water into Helen's face, who gasps, astonished. Annie with Helen's hand takes up another spoonful, and shoves it into her open mouth. Helen swallows involuntarily, and while she is catching her breath Annie forces her palm open, throws four swift letters into it, then another four, and bows toward her with devastating pleasantness.

ANNIE: Good girl.

THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE

by Frank Marcus

ACT II, SCENE 1

As the curtain rises, June enters her flat; she is agitated. She lights a cigar and says to her roommate and lover, Alice (nicknamed Childie): "They are going to murder me." But we are not about to encounter one of those tense British murder mysteries: June is a well-known character in a soap opera—Sister George, a gentle and good-hearted nurse—and she suspects that Sister George is about to be written out of the story. In contrast to her kindly BBC character, June is, in real life, domineering, acerbic, and extremely possessive. She is also wonderfully witty

and terribly frightened of losing her job and losing Alice to a man. As it turns out, she does, in fact, lose both (although she loses Alice to another woman).

The following scene takes place at 4 A.M. June has been up all night, drinking and going over her scrapbook of memorabilia on Sister George. Alice has gotten up early to wait on line for tickets to the ballet. At this point in the scene Alice is dressed and about to leave. They have just exchanged some serious words about their relationship: about June's jealousy and Alice's remorse over not having a baby. (The Mr. Katz referred to in the scene is Alice's employer.)

ALICE: There's a performance of *Petrushka* on the nineteenth. I might try for that.

JUNE, rising; suddenly: Shh! Shh! *She pauses and listens.* Was that the post?

ALICE: At this time in the morning? It won't be here for hours yet. You really ought to go to bed.

There is a pause.

JUNE, crossing below the table left center to left of it; seriously: What am I going to do? They're driving me round the bend.

ALICE: You're driving yourself round the bend. *She crosses to center.* Why don't you go to bed?

JUNE, sitting left of the table left center; desperately: Because I can't sleep.

ALICE, moving above the table left center: Shall I get you some hot milk?

JUNE: Urghh!

ALICE: You'll catch cold, you know, sitting up like this.

JUNE: I've already got a cold.

ALICE, moving above June to left of her: Well, keep your throat covered up, then. *She arranges June's collar.* Put your dressing-gown on properly. It's time we got you a new dressing-gown—this collar is all frayed. I'll put some new braid on it tomorrow. There, better?

JUNE: Thanks.

ALICE, moving above the table left center and indicating the gin bottle: Shall I put this away?