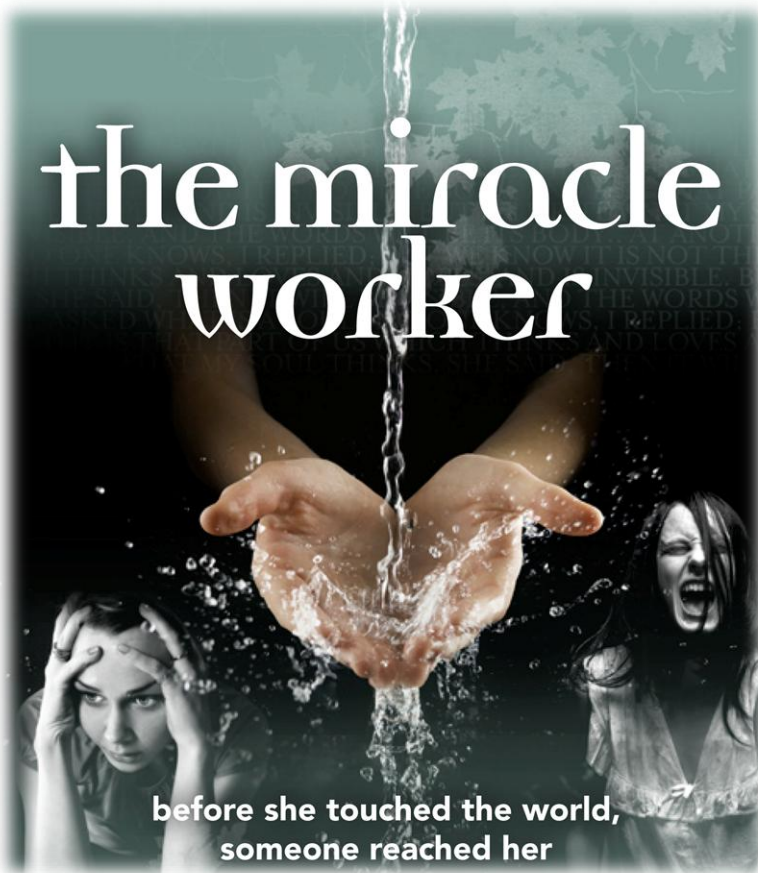


the miracle worker



before she touched the world,
someone reached her

OCT. 10 – 31, 2009

By William Gibson | Directed by Meg Roe

Co-sponsored by:

A PLAYHOUSE THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION



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PLAY GUIDE

PART 2: LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

6th SIGNIFICANT SCRIPT SEGMENT (Lessons Supplement)

Prepared by Dr. Warren McKinnon, UBC Continuing Studies, PTAB* Member

DOWNLOAD ACCOMPANYING LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES

AND OTHER PARTS (GLOSSARY, QUOTES, LINKS) AT [VANCOUVERPLAYHOUSE.COM](http://VancouverPlayhouse.com)

Created to provide you with explorations and insights into *The Miracle Worker* beyond the actual performance, this Play Guide includes information on its creators and characters, notable quotables and more:

You can download suggested practical lessons and activities linked to *The Miracle Worker* at vancouverplayhouse.com! As a teacher, you can adapt these to your classroom activities before or after your performance. As a parent, you can draw on some activities to enhance your child's theatre experience. And, as a patron at large, these activities might stimulate your own exploration or offer a new insight into the production.

***Playhouse Teachers Advisory Board**

THE MIRACLE WORKER – 6TH SCRIPT SEGMENT – ACT 3 (P. 89-93)

During the play, allusions to the “miracle segment” occur with references to death and resurrection, being buried and dug out, and awakening the immortal soul. Early in the play, when Perkins director, Michael Anagnos, advises her that her battle at Tewksbury is dead and to “let it stay buried,” Annie says, “I think God must owe me a resurrection.” Then, after the live-in, garden schoolhouse experience, the Anagnos advice and her response re-visits her. But she adds this time, “And I owe God one” (a resurrection). Later, after a dinnertime struggle and tiny triumph with Helen, Anne again recalls a text from the Perkins report that asked, “Can nothing be done to disinter this human soul? The whole neighbourhood would rush to save this woman if she were buried alive by the caving in of a pit, and labor with zeal until she were dug out. Now if there were one who had as much patience as zeal, he might awaken her to a consciousness of her immortal ... [soul].

Kate – *(Low.)* Take her, Miss Annie.

Annie – Thank you.

(But the moment Annie rising reaches for her hand, Helen begins to fight and kick, clutching to the table cloth, and uttering laments. Annie again tries to loosen her hand, and Keller rises.)

Keller – *(Tolerant.)* I’m afraid you’re the difficulty, Miss Annie. Now I’ll keep her to what she’s learned, you’re quite right there.... *(He takes Helen’s hands from Annie, pats them; Helen quiets down.)* ...but I don’t see that we need send her from the table, after all, she’s the guest of honor. Bring her plate back.

Annie – If she was a seeing child, none of you would tolerate one.....

Keller – Well, she’s not. I think some compromise is called for. Bring her plate, please. *(Annie’s jaw sets, but she restores the plate, while Keller fastens the napkin around Helen’s neck; she permits it.)* There. It’s not unnatural most of us take some aversion to our teachers, and occasionally another hand can smooth things out. *(He puts a fork in Helen’s hand; Helen takes it. Genially.)* Now. Shall we start all over?

(He goes back around the table and sits. Annie stands watching. Helen is motionless, thinking things through, until with a wicked glee she deliberately flings the fork to the floor. After another moment she plunges her hand into her food, and crams a fistful into her mouth.)

James – *(Wearily.)* I think we’ve started all over....

(Keller shoots a glare at him, as Helen plunges her other hand into Annie’s plate. Annie at once moves in, to grasp her wrist, and Helen, flinging out a hand, encounters the pitcher; she swings with it at Annie; Annie falling back, blocks it with an elbow, but the water flies over her dress. Annie gets her breath, then snatches the pitcher away in one hand, hoists Helen up bodily under the other arm, and starts to carry her out, kicking. Keller stands.)

Keller – Where are you taking her?

Annie – To make her fill this pitcher again!

(She thrust out with Helen under her arms, but Helen escapes up the stairs and Annie runs after her. Keller stands rigid. Aunt Ev is astounded.)

Aunt Ev. – You let her speak to you like that, Arthur? A creature who works for you?

Keller – *(Angrily.)* No, I don't.

(He is staring after Annie when James, on his feet with shaky resolve, interposes his chair between them in Keller's path.)

James – Let her go.

Keller – What?

James - *(A swallow.)* I said....let her go. She's right. *(Keller glares at the chair and him. James takes a deep breath, then headlong:)* She's right, Kate's right, I'm right, and you're wrong. If you drive her away from here it will be over my dead...chair, has it never occurred to you that on one occasion you might be consummately wrong?

(Keller's stare is unbelieving, even a little fascinated. Kate rises in trepidation, to mediate.)

Kate – Captain.

Keller – *(He stops her with his raised hand; his eyes stay on James' pale face, for a long hold. When he finally finds his voice, it is gruff.)* Sit down, everyone. *(He sits, Kate sits, James holds onto his chair. Keller speaks mildly.)* Please sit down, Jimmie. *(James sits, and a moveless silence prevails; Keller's eyes do not leave him.)*

(Annie has pulled Helen downstairs again by one hand, the pitcher in her other hand, down the porch steps and across the yard to the pump. She puts Helen's hand on the pump handle, grimly.)

Annie – All right. Pump. *(Helen touches her cheek, waits uncertainly.)* No, she's not here. Pump! *(She forces Helen's hands to work the handle, then lets go. And Helen obeys. She pumps till the water comes, then Annie puts the pitcher in her other hand and guides it under the spout, and the water tumbling half into and half around the pitcher douses Helen's hand. Annie takes over the handle to keep water coming, and does automatically what she has done so many times before, spells into Helen's free palm:)* Water. W.a.t.e.r. Water. It has a...name...

(And now the miracle happens. Helen drops the pitcher on the slab under the spout, it shatters. She stands transfixed. Annie freezes on the pump handle; there is a change in the sundown LIGHT, and with it a change in Helen's face, some light coming into it we have never seen there, some struggle in the depths behind it; and her lips tremble, trying to remember something the muscles around them once knew, till at last it finds its way out, painfully, a baby sound buried under the debris of years of dumbness.)

Helen - Wah. Wah. *(And again with great effort.)* Wah. Wah. *(Helen plunges her hand into the dwindling water, spells into her own palm. Then she gropes frantically, Annie reaches for her hand, and Helen spells into Annie's hand.)*

Annie – *(Whispering.)* Yes. *(Helen spells into it again.)* Yes! *(Helen grabs at the handle, pumps for more water, plunges her hand into its spurt and grabs Annie's to spell again.)* Yes! Oh, my dear....*(She falls to her knees to clasp Helen's hand, but Helen pulls it free, stands almost bewildered, then drops to the ground, pats it swiftly, holds up her palm, imperious. Annie spells into it:)* Ground. *(Helen spells it back.)* Yes! *(Helen whirls to the pump, pats it, holds up her palm, and Annie spells into it.)* Pump. *(Helen spells it back.)* Yes! Yes! *(Now Helen is in such an excitement she is possessed, wild, trembling, cannot be still, turns, runs, falls on the porch step, claps it, reaches out her palm, and Annie is at it instantly to spell:)* Step. *(Helen has no time to spell back now, she whirls groping, to touch anything, encounters the trellis, shakes it, thrusts out her palm, and Annie while spelling to her, cries wildly at the house.)* Trellis. Mrs. Keller! Mrs. Keller! *(Inside, Kate starts to her feet. Helen scrambles back onto the porch, groping, and finds the bell string, tugs it; the bell rings, the distant CHIMES begin tolling the hour, all the BELLS in town seem to break into speech while Helen reaches out and Annie spells feverishly into her hand.)*