

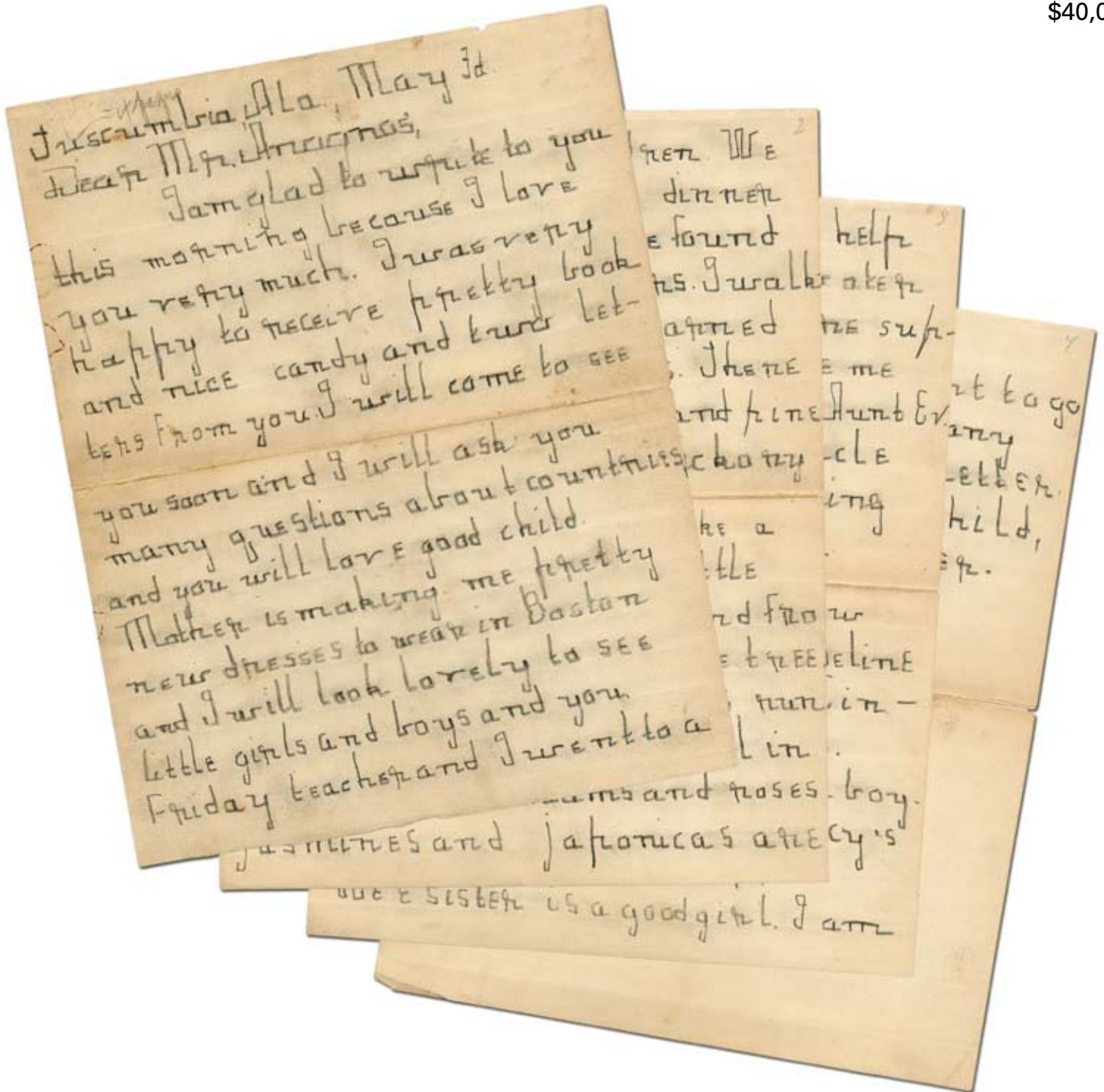
# BETWEEN THE COVERS RARE BOOKS

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## Helen Keller

Four Page Autograph Letter Signed, written to Michael Anagnos when Keller was seven years old

\$40,000



Four page Autograph Letter Signed ("Helen A. Keller"). Four leaves, each approximately 7" x 9" painstakingly lettered in pencil on rectos only. Old folds from mailing, a couple of folds have been lightly and professionally strengthened on the versos.

One of the earliest letters written by Keller, when she was just seven years old, sent from her Tuscumbia, Alabama home. The letter is written to Michael Anagnos, the Director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind. Anagnos had sent Anne Sullivan to Tuscumbia to teach Keller how to speak, read, and write. It was only the previous summer that Anne Sullivan had arrived at the Keller home to begin working with the young deaf and blind young girl. Within a few months of working with Sullivan, Helen's vocabulary had increased to hundreds of words and simple sentences. Sullivan taught Helen how to read Braille and raised type, and to print block letters.

This letter, dated “May 3rd, [1888]” is published in full in Keller’s autobiography *The Story of My Life* (p.154-155), which features a selection of her letters written between 1887 and 1901. Later in the same month that she wrote this letter, Keller left for Boston to study at Perkins, where she would stay until 1894.

The earliest of Keller’s letters are mere sentence-long fragments. This is the eleventh letter (including fragments) published in *The Story of My Life*, and the third that she wrote to Anagnos. As the text of her autobiography displays, it is one of the first fully realized letters that she had written. The full text of the letter, in large block print, as follows:

Tuscumbia, Ala. May 3rd.

Dear Mr. Anagnos,

I am glad to write to you this morning because I love you very much. I was very happy to receive pretty book and nice candy and two letters from you. I will come to see you soon and I will ask you many questions about countries and you will love good child.

Mother is making me pretty new dresses to wear in Boston and I will look lovely to see little girls and boys and you.

Friday teacher and I went to a picnic with little children. We played games and ate dinner under the trees and we found ferns and wild flowers. I walked in the woods and learned names for many trees. There are poplar and cedar and pine and oak and ash and hickory and maple trees. They make a pleasant shade and the little birds love to sing sweetly up in the tree. Rabbits hop and squirrels run and ugly snakes do crawl in the woods. Geraniums and roses jasmines and japonicas are cultivated flowers. I help mother and teacher water them every night before supper. Cousin Arthur made me a swing in the ash tree. Aunt Ev. has gone to Memphis. Uncle Frank is here. He is picking strawberries for dinner.

Nancy [inserted here in another hand are the words “a doll”] is sick again. New teeth do make her ill. Adeline is well and she can go to Cincinnati Monday with me.

Aunt Ev. will send me a boy doll. Harry will be Nancy’s and Adeline’s brother.

Wee sister is a good girl. I am tired now and I do want to go down-stairs. I send many kisses and hugs with letter.

Your darling child,

Helen A. Keller

A truly remarkable letter from the seven year old Keller who served and still serves as an inspiration for generations of Americans. Keller’s papers, including most of her early letters, are held in the Archives of the Perkins School. This is a rare exception. The only Keller letter of this vintage or earlier of which we are aware in the marketplace, is a considerably shorter letter sent to Alexander Graham Bell in November, 1887 (also published in *My Life*), which sold at Christie’s for \$41,125 in 2001. [\[BTC#399082\]](#)

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