

Radium Girls: Audition Packet

(Cuts Provided after Character Breakdown)

Radium Girls – Character Descriptions

*Actors may be given multiple roles except Grace and Roeder. This show can be done with only 10 actors, but we will probably cast more actors than that.

- **Grace Fryer:** Top notch dial painter, who is the heroine of this story. Must have innocence and naivety but also display strength and fortitude. Age 15-26
- **Arthur Roeder:** President of U.S. Radium Corp, ambitious/cold hearted but not malicious. Becomes president of the U.S. Radium Corp. after the founder, Dr. Von Sochocky, leaves the company. Being so enamored by the new possibilities of science and the future, his businessman-like nature is softened in comparison to Lee, though he'll fight for his business. Age 24-65
- **Kathryn Schaub:** Grace's co-worker and partner in battle. She experiences everything Grace does and does so with sincerity and humility. She is the most romantic of the three girls, always filled with ideas of love and beauty (and gossip). She provides contrast to her cousin, Irene. After Irene's death, Kathryn is the first to really sense the danger they're all in. She is the second of the dial painter girls to die. Age 15-20
- **Irene Rudolph:** Grace's co-worker who is one of the first to succumb to her illness. She is the more pragmatic of the three girls – down-to-earth, straightforward, almost cynical, and sometimes tactlessly blunt. Age 17-20s
- **Edward Markley:** U.S. Radium Corp.'s Legal Representative. Struggles with making ethical choices.
- **C.B. "Charlie" Lee:** V.P. of U.S. Radium Corp. Very committed to company and will support it no matter what
- **Dr. Von Sochocky:** Inventor of luminous paint. True scientist and validates everything with scientific fact but does so with

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humanity and caring in the end; Will require actor to speak with Ukrainian accent

- **Mrs. Alma MacNeil:** Supervisor, U.S. Radium Corp. The supervisor of the dial painter girls, and possibly Irish. She is a hard woman who is concerned with her work and its quality, likely to a fault. She promotes the idea that "it's not for us to be askin' questions ..."
- **Tom Kreider:** Grace's fiancé, and a postal worker. Though he is somewhat concerned about money, he is more concerned with getting married to Grace and starting a life with her. He lives in the moment, and wants to enjoy what life has to offer now. He's a simple man, but sweet, romantic, and generally "a traditional boy"
- **Diane Roeder:** Arthur Roeder's wife, she enjoys being the wife of a company president, and cares about her husband and his company (she reads the financial pages and other such publications). She believes in the good that her husband is able to do.
- **Anna Fryer:** Grace's mother, and the mother of many other children. She is a pragmatic woman, concerned with finances and all things practical.
- **Katherine Wiley:** Executive Director, NJ Consumer's League. She is a strong-willed woman with moral fiber, and works to help Grace go to trial against the U.S. Radium corp. It is through her influence that the story goes to the newspapers
- **Raymond Berry:** The attorney for the dial painters. He comes up with the loophole around the statute of limitations which had been preventing the "Radium Girls" from going to court.
- **Dr. Cecil Drinker:** Harvard Industrial Hygienist
- **Harriet Roeder:** Daughter of Arthur and Diane. Tree climbing gal. Doesn't hold back in her honesty. Age 9-30
- **Dr. Harrison Martland:** Chief medical examiner for Essex County, commented on the study of Radium as a cure for crippling arthritis, like Mrs. Michaels' case. He is skeptical

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of the cure-all effects of radium, always advising further study.

- **Dr. Joseph Knep:** First Irene's dentist, then Grace's. He advises Grace to go to the company for help on the grounds that the company should feel responsible. Later, he tries to make a deal with the company to come up with a "favorable diagnosis" for any of the factory girls who come to see him.
- **Dr. Marie Curie:** Polish by birth (she has the Polish accent), and French by marriage (husband is Pierre). She is credited with the "discovery" of radium. She believes in the healing qualities of radium, particularly as a cure for cancer. She dies shortly afterward.
- **Frederick Flinn:** Columbia University Industrial Hygienist
- **Reporter:** Jack Youngwood. He, like the Sob Sister, follows the story of the "Radium Girls" and gives them publicity.
- **Sob Sister:** Nancy Jane Harlan, a tabloid reporter – the New York Graphic's only girl reporter. She follows the story of the "Radium Girls" and gives them publicity, though the presentation of her stories tend to be a little more scandalous and outrageous.
- **William J.A. Bailey:** Entrepreneur, manufacturer of From Orange, New Jersey (the play's setting.) The inventor of Radithor, the Radium "cure-all" elixir.
- **Society Woman, Mrs. James (Cora) Middleton,** a "well-heeled, well-spoken woman of dignity. She takes a great interest in science." She is involved in the Woman's Club of Orange.
- **Other Roles:** Townspeople, Courtroom, Employees of U.S. Radium Corp

Character Sides/Cuts for Callback Auditions and/or Monologue

Please read through the scenes in which you've been called back.

Due to time constraints, we may not get to all these scenes in the call back.

Kathryn, Grace, Irene, McNeil

The girls have just returned from the funeral of their fellow worker Amelie, she is the first to die from the radiation, although the girls don't realize it.

KATHRYN. You shoulda seen it, Grace! The church was filled with flowers. Lilies and carnations and orchids.

You know how Amelia loved orchids.

IRENE. They weren't orchids.

KATHRYN. They were orchids, Irene.

IRENE. Flags.

KATHRYN. Orchids. I know an orchid when I see one.

Purple orchids. Oh, and that smell. Grace—that smell.

What was that smell, it was like, like—

GRACE. Flowers?

KATHRYN. No. It was like—heaven. I was gonna say, it was like heaven.

IRENE. Like heaven? Kathryn: It was just a funeral. Ya make it out like it was some Valentino picture.

KATHRYN. It wasn't just a funeral. It was Amelia's. And it was beautiful. Ya shoulda seen it. The church was like...the botanical gardens...and the company sent a big spray of flowers, too. Carnations.

IRENE. Mums.

KATHRYN. Yellow carnations.

IRENE. Those were mums.

GRACE. Well it sounds like a nice service anyhow.

(Enter MACNEIL.)

MACNEIL. Girls, girls! The whistle's already gone. Now, then. I've received new instructions this day. We're going back to the old way of pointin' the brushes. We was losin' too much paint in the cloth. *(She collects the cloth. As she does the GIRLS point the brush on their lips. GRACE hesitates.)*

GRACE. But—

MACNEIL. Yes, Grace? Something ya wish to say?

GRACE. Dr. Von Sochocky told me not to do that. He said it's—unsanitary.

MACNEIL. Unsanitary? Well, I can't hardly believe he'd say such a thing. We've done this as long as I've been here. Ya must've misunderstood him.

GRACE. Yes ma'am. *(GRACE surrenders the cloth and tips the brush on her lips.)*

MACNEIL. And you're not to get new brushes until you've done with the old. And they got to be so bad they can't get a point no more.

KATHRYN *(to IRENE)*. Ya can't make quota like that!

MACNEIL. Well, you'll do your best, then. Since I have my instructions.

IRENE. I need a new brush. *(MRS. MACNEIL looks at the brush, then gives IRENE another.)*

MACNEIL. It's not for us to be askin' questions, is it? It's for us to do the work. *(MACNEIL moves away, and the GIRLS set to painting, pointing the brushes on their lips as they proceed.)*

KATHRYN. I have my instructions, girls, I have my instructions.

IRENE. Here's an instruction for you, MacNeil: Let some of the starch outta yer corset. *(KATHRYN laughs.)*

GRACE. Was she at the service?

IRENE. MacNeil? Are you kidding? Y'think she'd cross the street for her own mother?

KATHRYN. Most everybody else was, though. You was about the only girl from the floor who wasn't there.

GRACE. I wanted to come. But Ma was workin' and I had to watch the little'uns.

KATHRYN. Ya coulda brought 'em.

Grace and Kate:

The moment before: Grace is visiting Kate in the hospital. Kate is thrilled for the company, but finally facing the reality of her own mortality and the potential loss of the case.

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KATHRYN. It did this before. It'll stop.

GRACE. Maybe we should go.

KATHRYN. No, don't go!

GRACE. Don't ya need to sleep?

KATHRYN. Who can sleep? I never sleep.

GRACE. Well. You'll sleep tomorrow.

KATHRYN. Yeah. Might not wake up.

GRACE. 'Course you'll wake up.

KATHRYN. Not if it don't go well. Sometimes you don't come out of it so good...my mother's cousin, she went into the hospital for her appendix and she didn't come home again...

GRACE. Well, you just can't think that way. That's all. Look at this mail, Kathryn. Miss Wiley said folks would be on our side, and she sure was right. Here's one from California—

KATHRYN (*abruptly*). What if we don't win?

GRACE. 'Course we'll win.

KATHRYN. But what if we don't? My father will lose his house. We'll be on the street. You'll be on the street, too. Yer father must owe thousands. And you and Tom, you won't never get married. How can ya stand it, Grace—

GRACE. Kathryn, please!

KATHRYN (*more agitated*). How can Tom stand it? Don't ya ever wonder, Grace? I don't never hear him complain—

GRACE. Kathryn! As soon as the judge hears our testimony, he's gonna rule for us. All they gotta do is take one look at us. It'll be over in a day.

KATHRYN. Think so?

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Grace Fryer

The Moment Before: Markley, legal counsel for the company, brings settlement papers for Grace to sign. She begins to question the terms of the settlement and Markely gives her 24 hours to sign the papers or the settlement offer is off the table.

GRACE. You're trying to tell me if I don't sign these now—but I came back a week from now and said I changed my mind, you'd still rather go to court? You'd still rather some judge get a look at me...and take your chances I won't win on sympathy alone? Twenty-four hours. You're just trying to bully me.

MARKLEY. Very well, then. Miss Fryer. I'll take that for a no. And we'll see you in court. *(MARKLEY packs up his briefcase and exits as MRS. FRYER sees him out.)*

GRACE. Yes you will! You will see me. If they have to carry me in there, you'll see me. You and Mr. Roeder both!

MRS. FRYER. You call that man back.

GRACE. I'm goin' to court, Ma.

MRS. FRYER. What are you trying to prove? You know you can't win!

GRACE. I want those people to look at me! I want them to look at me and explain how it's my fault I got sick working in their factory!

MRS. FRYER. And what will that get ya? What?

GRACE. Ma. All my life, I've done what other people told me to do. I quit school. Because you said I should. I put that brush in my mouth 'cause Mrs. McNeil said I should. I never said, please can't I finish school? I never said, I don't like the taste of this paint. I never argued. Even though I knew—Ma. I knew somethin' wasn't right. At night, I'd lie in bed, and I'd see my dress. Hanging on the back of the closet door. All aglow. My shoes on the floor. My hairbrush. And comb. On the dresser. So much light, Ma. So much light! And I never once questioned. I never once asked! Don't you see? They knew I wouldn't. *That's* what they were counting on.

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Grace & Tom

The moment before: Tom&Grace discuss their future as a married couple. Now Grace is fully aware that their plans of a home and family are not going to happen. She's trying to make him realize it too.

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Act II

down, not much, but it's a start. You'll like it. It's already got flowered wallpaper. And best of all—it's only three blocks from the school.

GRACE. The school? What do we need with a school?

TOM. Plan ahead for once. *(A beat.)*

GRACE. Tommy. What do you think is going to happen? After all this is over. D'ya think everything will just go back to the way it was?

TOM. Why wouldn't it? *(A pause.)*

GRACE. I gotta see the surgeon again.

TOM. Uh-huh.

GRACE. I got some fluid. He's gonna drain it.

TOM. Okay.

GRACE. And then, he says. There'll be more.

TOM. So we deal with it when it comes.

GRACE *(overlapping)*. —AND STILL MORE! and then more and still more—why can't you see that? How can you talk about buying houses and getting married when you know there's nothing—*(She stops herself.)*

TOM. Grace. I can't think about that. I just want for us to be together now. I want to come home to you at night. To my wife—my home. I'm too old to be living like this—this, in-between life. I promise, Grace. I'll do whatever it takes to make it easy for you. *(A silence. GRACE takes off her ring and holds it out to him.)*

GRACE. Here.

TOM. Grace. Come on.

GRACE. I shoulda give it back to you a long time ago.

TOM. I don't want it.

GRACE. Tommy. Please. Are ya gonna make me say it?

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TOM. You just need to get some rest. That's all. You're not gettin' enough sleep. I'll be back to see you tomorrow—

GRACE. Tommy!

TOM. You get some sleep.

GRACE. Tommy. Tommy! Don't you do this to me. TOMMY! *(He is gone.)*

SCENE 10

(The empty dialpainting studio. ROEDER sits alone as LEE passes.)

LEE. Arthur?

ROEDER. Ah, Charlie.

LEE. Aren't you headed home?

ROEDER. Charlie. I've been thinking it over. I think we're taking the wrong approach here. I think we should settle this case. We've got to make a reasonable offer to those girls.

LEE. No, Arthur. We agreed. We need a definitive victory. Otherwise we invite more of the same nonsense.

ROEDER. Things have changed.

LEE. Arthur. I know you and Dan were close. But you can't let that cloud your judgment.

ROEDER. Von Sochocky is going to testify.

LEE. We can deal with him.

ROEDER. How?

LEE. Put more money in his pocket.

ROEDER. Now you want to bribe him?

LEE. Not a bribe. Consideration.

ROEDER. Consideration.

Radium Girls

Kathryn

The Moment Before: The girls are working in the factory. Kathryn & Irene are telling Grace about Amelia's funeral and the boy from another department who they think was in love with her.

KATHRYN. And can you imagine? Can you imagine? If he loved her and he never told her, never could bring himself to say! Because...because she was *so* beautiful...and...and he was *so* shy. And now it's too late. It's too late, their love is forever thwarted. He didn't tell her, and he'll never get a chance ever again. *(They reflect on this realization somberly.)*

GRACE. Poor Amelia.

KATHRYN. Poor Amelia!

IRENE. Poor kid.

KATHRYN. Her family took it awful bad, Grace. Albina, Quinta, everybody. Everyone of 'em cryin'. Even her father, cryin' so bad. I never saw a man cry before and not like that—just bawlin' like a baby.

Kathryn

The Moment Before: Kathryn's cousin Irene has just died. The Dept. of Health says U.S. Radium Corp. is in full compliance with all state health and labor regulations.

KATHRYN. I wanna file another complaint.

GRACE. I just don't see what good this is gonna do, Kathryn. To make such a fuss this way.

KATHRYN. Grace. Three surgeries and they wanted to cut her again. She finally said no. She knew. What was left of her jaw rotted so bad, the smell was terrible. And, Grace. The worst of it is. I couldn't look at her. Irene was so afraid of being alone—but I left her alone. When she died it was the middle of the night, and nobody was with her.

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Grace and Wiley:

The moment before: Grace is asking Wiley for help with her case from the Consumer's League.

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fella—he says he don't care! He wants to get married anyhow. But I just wonder—what good would I do him, like this? Miss Wiley. If I could just get some compensation, I could settle my debts—and then maybe I wouldn't feel like I was saddling Tom with such a burden... I'm sorry to rattle on at ya about these things... I'm just so tired of bein' pushed around.

WILEY. I don't blame you.

GRACE. Miss Young at the health department, she said the Consumer's League has—what did she say? Clout?

WILEY. I'd like to think so. We've certainly had our share of successes.

GRACE. Can ya help us then?

WILEY. Tell me, Miss Fryer, just how far are you willing to go with this?

GRACE. Ma'am?

WILEY. Suppose I do find a lawyer to take your case. Someone willing to take it on a contingency—you wouldn't have to pay him unless you won. Would you be willing to sue?

GRACE. I want my compensation.

WILEY. Of course you do. Now suppose the company says, "Here. Here's some money for you, Miss Fryer.

Only—you are to tell no one what we've agreed to. You are to say nothin' about how you got sick."

GRACE. Keep it quiet, you mean?

WILEY. Yes.

GRACE. That don't seem right.

WILEY. It isn't right. But that's what they'll do. They will try to buy your silence. Is it for sale, Miss Fryer?

GRACE. No. No, ma'am, it isn't.

WILEY. Good.

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(TOM returns with a glass of punch for GRACE. Seeing her in conference with WILEY, he takes a seat and waits.)

GRACE. So you will help us?

WILEY. I think I can help you. If you're willing to take some chances.

GRACE. Chances?

WILEY. Miss Fryer. If you would be willing to set aside your own need—just for the moment, we can put a stop to that company. We can stop them dead in their tracks.

GRACE. What do I have to do?

WILEY. We start by putting you on page one.

TOM. Page one? You want her to talk to the newspaper?

WILEY. Not just one newspaper. Many, many newspapers.

TOM. Is that really necessary? All we want is for Grace to get her compensation—

GRACE. Tommy. Let her finish.

WILEY. I understand your concerns. But this company has already shown it's willing to go to extremes to protect itself. No, I'm afraid the only way we'll get to them is to hit them where it matters most. Their public image. When every newspaper in America tells your story. How you were sorely treated. How you suffered. How the company denied all responsibility! Believe me, Miss Fryer, when that happens, Arthur Roeder will come to the table with his hat in his hands. (GRACE looks to TOM. He nods.)

GRACE. All right, Miss Wiley.

WILEY. I know it's a little frightening.

GRACE. It's okay. Right now, I'm more angry than I am scared.

start

end

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Mr. Roeder

The Moment Before: Roeder has just been given a report by a Harvard scientist suggesting that Radium is the cause of the girls' illness. The Dept. of Health wants the report, and Roeder decides to give them only one page to buy more time.

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ROEDER. Scientists! Government men! They have no idea what it takes to run a business. Von Sochocky thought advertising was a dirty word. He laughed at the very idea of promotion. I can't tell you how many times I walked into that man's office and he turned a deaf ear to everything I told him. But, Charlie, we showed him. We showed him! Look at us. We are the world's largest single supplier of radium. The largest in the world. You know what it took for us to get here! Do you think I am going to stand idly by and let our good name be dragged through the mud? *(He holds out the paper to LEE.)* Trust me, Charlie.

Mr. Roeder

The Moment Before: Roeder is now retired and in his 60s. He reflects on the last time he saw Grace Fryer and the girls as the U.S. Radium Corp.

ROEDER. I think back on those days—and I try to think—how could it have happened? I remember so clearly climbing the stairs to the studio at Alden Street. At the top of the stairs, those wide, high windows, and the slant of light, the way it hit the floor, the way the floor creaked under my feet—the smell of the place, chalky, like an old schoolroom, and all those girls—schoolgirls, really—all bent to the task, in their plain green smocks, their delicate little hands moving so quickly. No man could work the way those girls did. So careful. So fast. Those brushes flying from the dials to the paint to the dials—to their lips. *(Beat.)* Try as I might, Harriet, try as I might—I cannot remember their faces. *(The irony strikes him.)* I never saw their faces.

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Flinn & Grace:

The moment before: Dr. Flinn has been hired by the Radium plant. to check on the sick girls and declare that they are fit and healthy, even though it's untrue.

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ROEDER. Scientists! Government men! They have no idea what it takes to run a business. Von Sochocky thought advertising was a dirty word. He laughed at the very idea of promotion. I can't tell you how many times I walked into that man's office and he turned a deaf ear to everything I told him. But, Charlie, we showed him. We showed him! Look at us. We are the world's largest single supplier of radium. The largest in the world. You know what it took for us to get here! Do you think I am going to stand idly by and let our good name be dragged through the mud? *(He holds out the paper to LEE.)* Trust me, Charlie.

(LEE takes the page and leaves. Shaken, ROEDER takes a moment to compose himself as crossfade to:)

SCENE 10

(Grace's house. Some months later. Her condition has worsened. She welcomes DR. FREDERICK FLINN, a fifty-something academic, warm and friendly, whose credentials are not immediately apparent to her.)

GRACE. Dr. Flinn, it's awful nice of you to come all this way.

FLINN. Not at all, my dear, not at all.

GRACE. I told the surgeon you was comin' over here, so he gave me the results of my blood work.

FLINN. Excellent! *(He looks over the papers.)*

GRACE. And, so?

FLINN. I must say, Miss Fryer. Your blood looks better than mine.

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GRACE. It does?

FLINN. That's what happens to an old man who smokes.

Now, tell me what else is troubling you.

GRACE. My feet and my back, mostly. I've had to wear a brace for a while.

FLINN. So I see. And this started before you left the company, or after?

GRACE. After I left. Dr. Knef says this all has to do with the radium plant. I know an other girl from the plant who died from it. Irene Rudolph?

FLINN. Oh, yes! Terrible thing. Vincent's angina.

GRACE. What's that?

FLINN. That's an ulcerated condition of the mouth, my dear.

GRACE. From the radium?

FLINN. Oh, no, no, no. An unfortunate and rare result of poor dental care. So let this be a lesson to you: Always brush your teeth.

GRACE. There was something else in the paper about this— About other girls who got sick—one girl I worked with for a while—she's in the hospital in New York and the doctors don't know what to do. They never seen anything like it—

FLINN. Miss Fryer! Don't tell me you pay any attention to the papers! Those stories are not scientific!

GRACE. But—

FLINN. Reporters are not scientific. They do not follow scientific methods. They write to sell, not to educate. The scientist is not concerned with what sells. He is concerned with the truth. He undertakes years of painstaking study to arrive at an understanding of intricate natural processes that most people could never presume to com-

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Sob Sister

The moment before: This little scene gives us a taste of the news and gossip being spread around town. The Sob Sister is trying to convince Grace to sell her story.

not get somethin' out of it?

SOB SISTER. He's right, ya know! Why give your story away when people are crazy to read it? Believe me, you girls could cash in big. The day we ran the feature on you—BANG! Sold out of every copy at every newsstand. Everybody can sympathize with the plight of some poor sick girl facing certain death—with no hope of fulfilment in motherhood. (*Her words are like a slap across the face.*)

TOM. Grace. At least think about it. (*GRACE wheels KATHRYN off as TOM follows.*)

SOB SISTER. Sure. Think it over. I understand—you're worried about what people will say. But hey—you gotta think about your own interests here. There's no reason you shouldn't get something out of all of this. Look out for number one, that's the way. Everyone else is out to get what they can. For sure. Why should ya sit back and keep your nose clean when everyone else is up to their elbows in it?

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Mrs. Roeder & Roeder

The moment before: The court case is becoming quite stressful for Roeder. He is starting to question his own complicity in the illness and death of the girls, and turns to his wife for support.

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ROEDER. Do you think I would ever do anything to hurt you? Or to hurt Harriet?

MRS. ROEDER. Certainly not.

ROEDER. Then?

MRS. ROEDER. Thirteen girls have died.

ROEDER. People die every day. The newspapers are full of death notices—young, old—infants. Children, younger than Harriet. Die every day.

MRS. ROEDER. But they worked for you!

ROEDER. They also worked other places. Diane. I have a report from Columbia University—an expert in industrial hygiene, just like Drinker—who says there is no connection between our plant and these illnesses. Would you like to see the report?

MRS. ROEDER. Then. What...what could the cause be?

ROEDER. I don't know. Diane. I really don't know. I've done everything I could to find out. No one knows. *(Beat.)* Please say you believe me. If you don't believe me, there's no point to anything.

MRS. ROEDER. Artie. *(She goes to him. With relief he embraces her.)*

ROEDER. You remember the day I told my father I wasn't going into the ministry? What you said to me that day?

MRS. ROEDER. You can do as much good in a boardroom as you can in a church.

ROEDER. You remember.

MRS. ROEDER. You think I would forget?

ROEDER. I was such a scared kid. And he—he was an icon. If it weren't for you. I don't think I could have stood up to him.

MRS. ROEDER. I'm sure you would have, Artie. I know you would have.

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Von sochocky and Roeder

The moment before: Von sochocky is finally honest with Roeder concerning the deathly effects of the paint and the evidence which proved it.

ROEDER. How—how long—

VON SOCHOCKY. But I've known for a while. Miss Wiley—from the Consumer's League—persuaded me to assist Dr. Martland in testing the dialpainters for radium exposure. There aren't that many people around, you know, who can measure that kind of thing. So she came to me. Knowing I had the equipment, and, of course, the skill. I didn't believe her either, Arthur. I didn't want to believe the girls could get sick from working with my paint. I wanted to show her it was a mistake. So I agreed to help. Dr. Martland and I conducted expired air tests on the girls. It was then that I found out. When my own breath registered radioactive. Then my fingers, they began to turn black. *(Beat.)* Now. You wish to have words with me.

ROEDER. I'm sorry.

VON SOCHOCKY. Well. Perhaps now you should make an appointment yourself with Dr. Martland?

ROEDER. Me, what for?

VON SOCHOCKY *(laughs)*. Arthur. You did not notice the glowing dust on your shoes when you went home at night?

ROEDER. How could I miss it? I tracked it all over the house...

VON SOCHOCKY. You can be sure that a good deal of it is now in your lungs. *(VON SOCHOCKY produces the*

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Other Members of the Public

Letters / Fan Mail to the radium plant girls during their legal battles. Grace reads them to Kathryn as she is visiting her in the hospital.

ELDERLY WIDOW. Dear Miss Schaub. I read of your sad story in the Boston Globe and am so sorry for your plight. It seems in this time of rapid advancement the well-being of the average worker is overlooked. I would like to share with you girls the key to my own good health at the age of ninety-two! It is called Christian Science.

VENECINE SALESMAN. Dear Miss Fryer. I read of your woeful situation in the Atlanta Constitution and I am prepared to offer you a solution! VENECINE! A wonder tonic made from all natural ingredients, VENECINE will restore your health and vitality. We are prepared to offer you girls a lifetime supply of VENECINE in exchange for the *exclusive rights* to use your pictures in our advertisements.

(SALESMAN freezes as lights up on:)

LOVESICK COWBOY. Dear Girl. I read about you in the Billings Gazette. I run a hundred head of cattle up here and do very well by myself. I have always longed for a companion and am well equipped to offer you a comfortable home in your final hours. A girl like you has suffered so much— Don't you think you deserve a few fleeting hours of happiness? Sincerely, your admirer, Leonard F. Watkins. P.S. Enclosed is my picture.

Radium Girls

Berry, Markley, and Court Judge:

The moment before: Berry is a lawyer, trying to convince the Court that the girls have a case and should be allowed to sue the Radium company. Markely is working as the lawyer for the Co.

BERRY. You don't recall it. What do you recall, Mr. Roeder? You're an awfully young man to have such a faulty memory.

MARKLEY. Objection!

BERRY. I with draw. No more ques tions.

COURT. Your witness, Mr. Markley.

MARKLEY. We have no questions for this witness, Your Honor.

COURT. All right, gentlemen. Please approach. I'm ready to issue my ruling.

MARKLEY. Your honor, we have yet to present our de-fense—

COURT. I realize that, Mr. Markley, but this proceeding is to determine standing. Now, I've heard enough these two days to make that determination. The radium in the bones of these girls is an ongoing source of poison in their systems. Nothing your witnesses can say will change that fact. Will it?

MARKLEY. Our witnesses are prepared to testify that the company could not have known about the danger.

COURT. Mr. Markley, in the interest of justice, I am asking that the defense rest without calling any witnesses. We can conclude this hearing today and schedule the case for trial.

MARKLEY. All right, Your Honor.

COURT. Fine. I therefore rule that the statute of limitations has not been exhausted and these girls have standing to sue.

Radium Girls

Society Woman

The Moment Before: Madame Curie is embarking on a tour of the U.S. and meets with members of the press. Societywomen introduces her.

Act I

RADIUM GIRLS

17

(MADAME CURIE steps up to the podium with VON SOCHOCKY and SOCIETYWOMAN. This is Cora Middleton, a well-heeled, well-spoken woman of dignity. She takes a great interest in science—and any other issue likely to place her at the center of excitement.)

SOCIETYWOMAN. Welcome all, welcome all! I must ask you, ladies and gentlemen of the press, please limit your questions! Madame Curie is about to embark on an exhaustive tour of the country. And she is under strict doctor's orders to rest—although, in the typical fashion of a scientist who can think only of her research, her life's work—she has refused to rest! *(Approval from the CROWD.)*

REPORTER. Madame Curie!

SOB SISTER. Madame Curie!

REPORTER. Madame Curie!

SOCIETYWOMAN. No more questions! Madame Curie is on a tight schedule! Mrs. Andrew Carnegie has sent a car—and will escort Dr. Curie personally—as will I—to Washington—where President Harding will present the gift—of one gram of radium! *(Cheers and excitement as MADAME CURIE and CROWD exits leaving ROEDER and LEE.)*

Radium Girls

Knef & Roeder:

The Moment Before: Knef wants to profit off of this Radium scheme, he comes to Roeder with a proposition, hoping to be paid to lie to the girls regarding their condition, as well as deceive court.

KNEF. I'd need ten thousand dollars—for my troubles so far, and for every girl I'd agree to see from here on out, two dollars for every visit, plus expenses for the x-rays. I'm suggesting a gentleman's agreement here—better off if it's not in writing.

ROEDER. No.

KNEF. All right, we'll put it in writing—

ROEDER. We'll do nothing of the kind. Your proposal is immoral and we'll have nothing to do with it.

KNEF. Immoral you say? You're a fine one to be talkin' about morals.

ROEDER. Mr. Lee—

KNEF. When you got your own hired guns, ready to testify—

ROEDER. Those are expertwitnesses.

KNEF. Expert witnesses? Paid lackeys is more like it. And none of 'em's got the dirt I got. If you're smart, you'll play ball with me. Believe me. There's plenty of other folks interested in the information...

ROEDER. You're threatening me.

KNEF. Just a business proposition, Mr. Roeder. Just lookin' out for my interests—same way you look after yours.

ROEDER. Mr. Lee! See Dr. Knef to the door.

KNEF. All right, all right! You don't want to play ball—Fine. But believe me. When all this shakes out, it won't be me holding the short end of the stick. *(Exit KNEF.)*

ROEDER. Gentlemen, I want you all to make statements on what happened this morning. We'll send them to the State Dental Society. Then Dr. Knef will see who's playing ball and who isn't.