

# Radium Girls

## Synopsis

In 1926, radium was a miracle cure, Madame Curie an international celebrity, and luminous watches the latest rage—until the girls who painted them began to fall ill with a mysterious disease. Inspired by a true story, *Radium Girls* traces the efforts of Grace Fryer, a dial painter, as she fights for her day in court. Her chief adversary is her former employer, Arthur Roeder, an idealistic man who cannot bring himself to believe that the same element that shrinks tumors could have anything to do with the terrifying rash of illnesses among his employees. As the case goes on, however, Grace finds herself battling not just with the U.S. Radium Corporation, but with her own family and friends, who fear that her campaign for justice will backfire. Written with warmth and humor, *Radium Girls* is a fast-moving, highly theatrical ensemble piece for 9 to 10 actors, who play more than 30 parts—friends, co-workers, lovers, relatives, attorneys, scientists, consumer advocates, and a myriad of interested bystanders. Called a “powerful” and “engrossing” drama by critics, *Radium Girls* offers a wry, unflinching look at the peculiarly American obsessions with health, wealth, and the commercialization of science.

## CASTING ROLES

ACTOR 1: GRACE

ACTOR 2: KATHRYN/SOCIETYWOMAN/HARRIET/SHOPGIRL/BOARD MEMBER# 1 /

ACTOR 3: IRENE/MISS WILEY/BOARD MEMBER#2/MRS. MICHAELS

ACTOR 4: SOB SISTER/MACNEIL/CLERK/MRS. FRYER

ACTOR 5: MRS. ROEDER/MADAME CURIE/CUSTOMER/BOARD MEMBER#3/

ACTOR 6: LEE/BAILEY/DRINKER/LOVESICK COWBOY/MALE SHOPPER/COURT

ACTOR 7: BERRY/MARTLAND/FLINN/STORE OWNER/

ACTOR 8: TOM/REPORTER/KNEF/VENECINE SALESMAN

ACTOR 9: MARKLEY/VON SOCHOCKY//ELDERLY WIDOW/PHOTOGRAPHER

ACTOR 10: ROEDER

## CASTING DESCRIPTIONS:

**Grace (F):** The heroine; starts out shy and then dramatically fights for justice

**Roeder (M):** Ambitious and driven to success but not overtly mean-spirited

**Tom (M):** Grace’s supportive blue-collar fiancé; however, he is not steadfast in the end

**Markley (M):** Legal representative of the company. Has moral reservations about the case

**Lee (M):** Malicious vice president of the U.S. Radium who has given everything to preserve the company

**Sob Sister (F):** Gritty and determined yellow journalist pushing her ideals of justice to sell papers

**Miss Wiley (F):** Inspiring to say the least, the executive director of New Jersey’s Consumer League. She is realistic but blatantly strong-willed and unwavering.

**Kathryn (F):** Grace's feisty coworker. She begins the battle Grace later resumes. Has several heartfelt moments.

**Von Sochocky (M):** Inventor and extremely genuine. He carries the burden and feels accountable for countless deaths.

**Mrs. Roeder (F):** Virtuously supports her husband until her own doubts make her question her faith in him.

**Mrs. Fryer (F):** Grace's hardworking mother. She is a balanced and sensible person who eventually falters in her faith of her daughter's plight.

**Knef (M):** A dentist. Seems genuinely interested in the girls' problems but then becomes manipulative and devoid of convictions later on

**Berry (M):** An attorney; an honorable and ethical man. He tends to be sympathetic and candid at the same time.

**Reporter (M):** A balanced reporter who works in conjunction and in competition with Sob Sister and tells the news to the audience

**Flinn (M):** An academic industrial hygienist. He is easily bought off.

**Irene (F):** Pretty and kind; another dialpainter who becomes the first victim

**MacNeil (F):** Supervisor at U.S. Radium who believes her career is no joke.

**Madam Curie (F):** First woman Nobel Prize winner in physics. Discovers radium

**Society Woman (F):** Very polished and refined lady; an attention-seeker

**Clerk (f):** Court clerk, overworked.

**Court (M):** The judge

**Drinker (M):** Industrial hygienist. His work reveals the truth but is covered up.

**Board Members 1-3 (M/F):** U.S. Radium's board members

**Mrs. Michaels (F):** A lover of medicinal therapy. Hooked on Radithor

**Harriet (F):** The fashionable daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roeder.

**Martland (M):** County medical examiner

**Lovesick Cowboy (M):** Kind and rugged

**Venecine Salesman (M/F):** A charlatan door-to-door salesman

**Elderly Widow (F):** Religious widow

**Male Shopper (M):** A gossip on the sidewalk

**Customer (F):** Another gossip on the sidewalk

**Store Owner (M):** Works hard; cynical of the girls' problems

**Shopgirl (F):** Dislikes her job very much; a daydreamer

**Photographer (F):** A newspaper photographer

**Bailey (F):** An ardent Radithor manufacturer.

For questions contact director Carey Nigh. [csnigh@gmail.com](mailto:csnigh@gmail.com)