

RADIUM GIRLS

THEMES

Labor Rights // Commercialization of Science // Devotion to Family vs. Devotion to Self // Media and Journalism // Feminism, Capitalism and American Consumerism // Whistleblowing

An element as bright as the Roaring Twenties, radium can shrink tumors and illuminate clock dials. But as its industry grows, factory workers are dying from a gruesome disease linked to the nation's latest miracle cure. *Radium Girls* follows Grace Fryer and other dial painters suing for recognition from the company that made them sick. In this earnest and courageous work, the road to court is long, the clock is ticking, and Grace must decide between family or justice before it's too late. Through humor, heart, and haunting dialogue, D.W. Gregory's historical play reflects on labor rights, the commercialization of science, and the growing fixation on wealth and success, by any means.

Produced by special arrangement with THE
DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock,
Illinois

Originally produced by Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey
and developed with a commissioning grant from The
Ensemble Studio Theatre/Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Science
and Technology Project.

By D.W. Gregory

Directed by Jonathan Wilson

Thu–Sat @ 7:30 PM

OCT 28–30 & NOV 4–6

Sun @ 2:00 PM

OCT 31 & NOV 7



RADIUM GIRLS

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QUOTES

“Scientists! Government men! They have no idea what it takes to run a business...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?”

“I want them to look at me and explain how I got sick working in their factory!”

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 If some of the factory executives were unaware of the dangers of radium, should they be held responsible for the illness and deaths of their workers? Is any character in the show truly at fault for the girls’ radium poisoning?
- 2 What is the role of womanhood and feminism in this show? How does gender identity impact the power dynamics represented in the production?
- 3 Which laws and protections may have been sparked by the original *Radium Girls*? What similar debates about worker’s rights still exist in the United States?
- 4 What does the play argue about the ethics of whistleblowing?
- 5 As a history play, what does *Radium Girls* offer to audiences?
- 6 What reflections does *Radium Girls* render about capitalism and 21st-century business models?

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