



# **The Radium Girls: They Paid with Their Lives. Their Final Fight Was for Justice.**

*Kate Moore*

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Ordinary women in 1920s America. All they wanted was the chance to shine. Be careful what you wish for. 'The first thing we asked was, "Does this stuff hurt you?" And they said, "No." The company said that it wasn't dangerous, that we didn't need to be afraid.' 1917. As a war raged across the world, young American women flocked to work, painting watches, clocks and military dials with a special luminous substance made from radium. It was a fun job, lucrative and glamorous - the girls themselves shone brightly in the dark, covered head to toe in the dust from the paint. They were the radium girls. As the years passed, the women began to suffer from mysterious and crippling illnesses. The very thing that had made them feel alive - their work - was in fact slowly killing them: they had been poisoned by the radium paint. Yet their employers denied all responsibility. And so, in the face of unimaginable suffering - in the face of death - these courageous women refused to accept their fate quietly, and instead became determined to fight for justice. Drawing on previously unpublished sources - including diaries, letters and court transcripts, as well as original interviews with the women's relatives - *The Radium Girls* is an intimate narrative account of an unforgettable true story. It is the powerful tale of a group of ordinary women from the Roaring Twenties, who themselves learned how to roar.

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