

too. The trees are starting to turn, but it's still warm—too warm for a sweater. Not much of a breeze. A fine day to paint.

*(TOM enters carefully. GRACE sees him but continues to paint.)*

TOM. Thought I might find you up here.

GRACE. You were right.

TOM. Quiet up here.

GRACE. Yep.

TOM. Well, I guess if you can rest in peace, this is the place to do it, huh?

GRACE. I guess it is.

TOM *(looks at the painting)*. What do you call that?

GRACE. Watercolors. I'm a little weak when it comes to landscapes, though.

TOM. No, it's good, Grace. It's nice.

GRACE. First thing I bought with the settlement money was some paints. Got some oils, too.

TOM. Big spender.

GRACE. Then I bought a car.

TOM. I didn't know you could drive.

GRACE. I can't. My brother's gonna teach me. He drove me up here today.

TOM. Grace. You wanna learn how to drive, I'd teach you.

GRACE. You got other things to do now, Tommy.

TOM. You know about that.

GRACE. Tommy. Orange just is n't that big.

TOM. I meant to tell you myself, Grace. That's why I came looking for you—

GRACE. It's all right, Tommy. I'm happy for you. For both of you.

TOM. No hard feelings, then?

GRACE. Oh, Tommy. You think I have time for that?

TOM. I'm glad it worked out for you, Grace. Are you glad? I mean, you don't feel like you backed down too soon, do ya?

GRACE. We did n't back down. They backed down.

*(He takes his leave of her as ROEDER enters, much older now, dressed for a much colder day. He sees GRACE and stops. Enter HARRIET, a grown woman now. She is dressed in the style of the 1940s.)*

HARRIET. Papa?

ROEDER. It was over here.

HARRIET. Oh, not this again.

ROEDER. This is where I saw her that last time.

HARRIET. This is morbid, Papa.

ROEDER. I stood there for a long time. She didn't notice me at first. But then something made her look up.

GRACE *(looks at him)*. Oh my.

HARRIET. No wonder Mama won't come for drives with you anymore. If this is how you spend your Sundays.

ROEDER. I saw her looking at me. And I looked away.

GRACE. Just like at the courthouse that day. He can't bring himself to look at me.

HARRIET. You need to find another hobby. Retirement isn't good for you.

ROEDER. My heart started pounding, Harriet. I never knew what I would say to her if I had the chance, and suddenly—there she was. And I had the chance.

HARRIET (*lights a cigarette*). So what did you say?

ROEDER. I couldn't bring myself to speak.

GRACE. It's as if he's *afraid* to look at me. (*She looks back at him, finding strength in that discovery.*)

ROEDER. I had my chance and I couldn't speak.

GRACE. He's afraid of *me*.

HARRIET. Oh, Papa. That was years ago. Why don't you just forget about it? It's not like it was your fault. Nobody knew about things like that, then—science just wasn't as advanced, the way it is now. (*She takes a drag on the cigarette. As ROEDER speaks, lights fade on HARRIET, leaving ROEDER and GRACE alone.*)

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.

(*Fade to black.*)

**END OF PLAY**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Radium Girls* began nearly six years ago as an idea I pitched to John Pietrowski, artistic director of Playwrights Theatre of New Jersey, in Madison. It was a story that literally took place in John's back yard, and so he immediately said "yes" to my proposal and worked diligently to support what turned out to be a long process of research, writing and revision. My sincere thanks to John and his staff—literary manager Peter Hays, managing director Elizabeth Murphy, publicist Lucy Ann Saltzman and the original Dr. Von Sochocky, Jim Ligon, who doubles in the most essential role of box-office manager. Thanks also to Joseph Megel, who directed the premiere as well as a series of readings and workshops that led up to it. A number of other individuals also assisted me by providing encouragement, opportunity or access to essential information as I researched and developed the script. My thanks to John Eisner of the Lark Theatre; Mark Plesent of The Working Theatre; Chris Smith and J. Holtham of the Ensemble Studio Theatre; Mia McCullough and Brian Russell of The American Theatre Company in Chicago; Lois Densky-Wolff of the Harrison Martland Collection at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey; Dr. James Stebbings of Chicago; Dr. Gene Saraceni, now retired from Seton Hill University, Greensburg, Pa.; Shanga Parker at the University of Washington-Seattle; and Tom Donahue, Gail Beach and Grover Gardner at the Catholic University of America and Mace Archer and Lysa Fox of Venture Theatre in Billings, Montana. Particular thanks to Claudia Clark, author of the definitive work on the dialpainters, "Radium Girls: Women and Industrial Health Reform 1910-1935." Claudia personally directed me to materials at the Library of Congress and came to see several productions of the play, offering me a most helpful critique from a historian's perspective—and this during a time when she was battling a life-threatening illness. Her courage and generosity have touched me deeply. And lastly, my love and gratitude to my private cheering section: My husband Paul and my family and friends, particularly Dominique Cieri and Lucy Ann and Simon Saltzman, who housed and fed me during repeated visits to New Jersey to work on the play.

D.W.G.

Silver Spring, Md., April 2003