

REPORTER. A testament to the tonic's potency?  
 MARTLAND. Or to the seller's creativity.  
 BAILEY. Radithor! It is perpetual sunshine!  
 REPORTER. And a perpetual money machine for its inventor.  
 SOB SISTER. Is there no end to what science can do?

*(Cross to:)*

### SCENE 7

*(The health department. A clock ticking, the tick of an interminable wait. GRACE waits. TOM waits. KATHRYN paces.)*

GRACE. Maybe we shoulda made an appointment.  
 KATHRYN. Don't need no appointment.  
 GRACE. But it's a busy place, Kathryn. If you don't have an appointment, maybe you should make one.  
 KATHRYN. I shouldn't need no appointment for this!

*(CLERK enters.)*

CLERK. I'm sorry. I don't find anything under Schaub.  
 KATHRYN. No. It's under Rudolph.  
 CLERK. Rudolph?  
 KATHRYN. The girl I'm askin' about—Irene Rudolph.  
 CLERK. Did she file the complaint?  
 KATHRYN. NO! The dentist did!  
 CLERK. The dentist?  
 KATHRYN. Dr. Knaf. Irene's dentist. He said she might have phossy jaw and he was going to complain to the

health department about it. But when I asked him, he said he hadn't heard nothin', and it's been more than six months now!  
 CLERK. Phossy jaw, you say?  
 KATHRYN. YES! *(CLERK exits.)*  
 GRACE. Kathryn. It coulda been like your doctor said. A blood infection.  
 KATHRYN. Yeah, but what gave it to her? That's the thing. What was it from?  
 TOM. From dirt. You get infections from dirt.  
 KATHRYN. From dirt? Her face puffed up like a pumpkin. Her jaw rotted so bad, she couldn't eat nothin'. You think you get somethin' like that from a little dirt? You get it from phosphorous. They're tellin' everybody it's radium in that paint, but it's really phosphorous that makes it glow!  
 GRACE. Oh honestly, Kathryn. You can't really believe that.  
 KATHRYN. You saw her, Grace.  
 TOM. Kathryn, if it was like you say, they'da never let you work up there in the first place.  
 GRACE. Sure. They'da shut the place down.  
 KATHRYN. Shut it down? Who? Who's gonna shut it down?  
 GRACE. I don't know. The county?  
 KATHRYN. Honestly, Grace, you are such a ninny.  
 TOM. Hey.  
 KATHRYN. How they gonna shut it down if they don't know about it? EVER THINK OF THAT?  
 TOM. Now come on!  
 GRACE. It's all right, Tommy.  
 TOM. She got no business talkin' to you that way.

GRACE. She's just upset.

TOM. Upset? She's gone around the bend. She probably thinks they're dumpin' arsenic in the drinkin' water, now. Next it'll be they're kidnapping babies and using them to stoke the furnace.

KATHRYN. Go ahead and laugh. You won't laugh so hard when it's you comin' in here six months from now askin' after Grace.

TOM. Aw fer cryin' out loud.

GRACE. Kathryn. It's just a toothache!

KATHRYN. Yeah? That's how it started for Irene. Just a toothache. You wait, Grace. You wait, you'll wake up one morning, your gums hurting so bad you won't be able to open your mouth. So weak and sick ya won't be able to stand up—

TOM (*overlapping*). Stop it, Kathryn.

KATHRYN. The pain so bad you won't be able to sleep. And your face so swollen you won't be able to stand the sight of yourself—

TOM. I SAID STOP IT! (*She is silent.*) Grace is fine. Right, Gracie?

(*CLERK enters with a file.*)

CLERK. Irene Rudolph?

KATHRYN. That's it.

CLERK. She worked at the radium plant?

KATHRYN. Yes ma'am.

CLERK (*studies the file. Then*). Nothing.

KATHRYN. Huh?

CLERK. The company is in full compliance with all state health and labor regulations. They ordered an analysis of the paint—

KATHRYN (*grabs the file*). Let me see that!

CLERK. Miss! Really—

KATHRYN (*looking at the file*). Who's Miss Young?

CLERK. That's the health officer. Miss—

KATHRYN. ...paint is harmless compound of radium and zinc...??

CLERK (*getting the file back*). As I was saying, the analysis shows there's no phosphorous in the paint. There's no phosphorous anywhere in the plant.

GRACE. There. You see, Kathryn?

CLERK. Miss Young toured the plant herself. She found nothing amiss. I'm sorry. (*Exit CLERK with file.*)

TOM. Well. Guess we can get some lunch then.

KATHRYN. I'm gonna file another complaint.

TOM. They already did an investigation!

KATHRYN. I WANNA FILE ANOTHER COMPLAINT!  
(*She turns away.*)

TOM. Oh, brother.

GRACE. Kathryn. These folks. They're awful busy here.

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.