

BERRY. This is a case in equity, sir. The chancery court will come to a different conclusion.

MARKLEY. The chancery court can't rewrite the law. And the law is clear: two years from the date of injury. Your clients are out of time.

BERRY. Two years from the date the *cause* of injury is discovered.

MARKLEY. Very creative, Mr. Berry. Very clever. I have to admire your imagination. But you've a long way to go before you convince the judge.

WILEY. And in the meantime, Mr. Markley—the press will continue to take a great interest in this story, and in the company's complete indifference to its workers.

MARKLEY. No doubt that will prove to be good press for the Consumer's League. And you accuse us of exploiting these girls.

WILEY. You're the one hiding behind the statute of limitations—

MARKLEY. Hiding Miss Wiley?

WILEY. You know very well the law never anticipated a situation like this. These girls were dying years before anyone knew the cause—

MARKLEY. Before *anyone* knew? Does that include the U.S. Radium Corporation, Miss Wiley? (*Barely able to keep from laughing.*) When—or I should say if—this case goes to trial, I only hope that's your opening argument, Mr. Berry. You will have made our defense. See you at the hearing. (*Exit MARKLEY.*)

WILEY. The arrogance of that man!

BERRY. Tell me again the purpose of these articles, Miss Wiley?

WILEY. Public sympathy, Mr. Berry. That's the engine of reform.

BERRY. You are antagonizing the company.

WILEY. Then the strategy is working.

BERRY. And what about the girls? How does it help them, to read in a dozen different newspapers that they have so little time to live?

WILEY. Mr. Berry. Surely you can see. The U.S. Radium Corporation cares nothing about the girls it has poisoned—but the average housewife in Orange cares very deeply—and so do millions of other women across the country. These women shop. They buy watches. Markley can be as smug as he likes, but the Consumer's League campaign will lead to only one outcome—and he knows it. That is why he was here today.

BERRY. I only hope you're right, Miss Wiley.

WILEY. Public sympathy, Mr. Berry. Wait and see.

(*Cross to:*)

SCENE 3

(*Lights up on an ELDERLY WIDOW.*)

ELDERLY WIDOW. Dear Miss Schaub. I read of your sad story in the Boston Globe and am so sorry for your plight. It seems in this time of rapid advancement the well-being of the average worker is overlooked. I would like to share with you girls the key to my own good health at the age of ninety-two! It is called Christian Science.

(WIDOW freezes as lights up on:)

VENECINE SALESMAN. Dear Miss Fryer. I read of your woeful situation in the Atlanta Constitution and I am prepared to offer you a solution! VENECINE! A wonder tonic made from all natural ingredients, VENECINE will restore your health and vitality. We are prepared to offer you girls a lifetime supply of VENECINE in exchange for the *exclusive rights* to use your pictures in our advertisements.

(SALESMAN freezes as lights up on:)

LOVESICK COWBOY. Dear Girl. I read about you in the Billings Gazette. I run a hundred head of cattle up here and do very well by myself. I have always longed for a companion and am well equipped to offer you a comfortable home in your final hours. A girl like you has suffered so much— Don't you think you deserve a few fleeting hours of happiness? Sincerely, your admirer, Leonard F. Watkins. P.S. Enclosed is my picture.

(During above, scene has shifted to the hospital. When COWBOY finishes, lights go down on him and up immediately on GRACE, looking at the COWBOY's picture. She is in a hospital room, with KATHRYN.)

GRACE. Look at this, Kathryn! This man actually sent a picture. *(KATHRYN dabs her mouth with a handkerchief.)* Ya all right, Kathryn?

KATHRYN. Bleedin' again.

GRACE. Shall I get the nurse?

KATHRYN. It did this before. It'll stop.

GRACE. Maybe we should go.

KATHRYN. No, don't go!

GRACE. Don't ya need to sleep?

KATHRYN. Who can sleep? I never sleep.

GRACE. Well. You'll sleep tomorrow.

KATHRYN. Yeah. Might not wake up.

GRACE. 'Course you'll wake up.

KATHRYN. Not if it don't go well. Sometimes you don't come out of it so good...my mother's cousin, she went into the hospital for her appendix and she didn't come home again...

GRACE. Well, you just can't think that way. That's all. Look at this mail, Kathryn. Miss Wiley said folks would be on our side, and she sure was right. Here's one from California—

KATHRYN *(abruptly)*. What if we don't win?

GRACE. 'Course we'll win.

KATHRYN. But what if we don't? My father will lose his house. We'll be on the street. You'll be on the street, too. Yer father must owe thousands. And you and Tom, you won't never get married. How can ya stand it, Grace—

GRACE. Kathryn, please!

KATHRYN *(more agitated)*. How can Tom stand it? Don't ya ever wonder, Grace? I don't never hear him complain—

GRACE. Kathryn! As soon as the judge hears our testimony, he's gonna rule for us. All they gotta do is take one look at us. It'll be over in a day.

KATHRYN. Think so?