

READING GROUP GUIDE

1. *The Radium Girls* is filled with both triumph and tragedy. Which part of the story affected you the most, and why?
2. Is there a person in *The Radium Girls* that resonates more strongly with you than others? If so, what part of their story or character stands out?
3. Even after radium was proved poisonous and the girls' illness verified as work-related, the radium companies stood fast by their convictions. Why do you believe they were so resilient? Can you imagine modern companies behaving with similar ruthlessness?
4. How do you believe the radium companies—and the press—would have reacted differently to the scandal had the workers been male? Considering the time period, how did the women's gender help and hinder their case?
5. How do you think today's world would be different had *The Radium Girls* not fought back against the radium companies?

6. It takes more than 1,500 years for the effects of radium to wear off. This means that the bodies of the women and parts of the towns in which they worked remain poisonous to this day. Considering the harrowing implications, why do you feel this story hasn't been widely explored?
7. *The Radium Girls* is told mostly through the eyes of the radium-dial workers, their families, and friends; however, previous research never focused on their personal journeys. How did it change your appreciation of or engagement with the story to know the smaller, personal details of the girls' lives?
8. Is there another historical event where you've noticed women being pushed to the sidelines?
9. Although radium can be seen as an evil entity in the book, it's also been used for the greater good. Explore how radium has changed the world in a positive way. Do you feel it was worth the sacrifice?
10. Besides radium, what other world-altering discoveries can you think of that led to both advancement and tragedy?
11. How were you inspired by the strength of the "shining girls," and how can you carry that onward to incite change in your own life?