



The Radium Girls

by Kate Moore

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women by Kate Moore

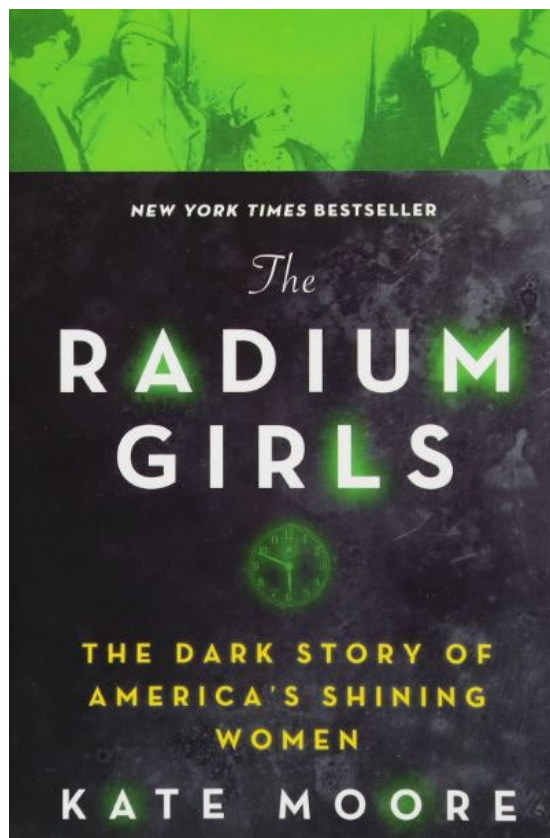
Included in the Kit:

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Book summary

The Curies' newly discovered element of radium makes gleaming headlines across the nation as the fresh face of beauty, and wonder drug of the medical community. From body lotion to tonic water, the popular new element shines bright in the otherwise dark years of the First World War.

Meanwhile, hundreds of girls toil amidst the glowing dust of the radium-dial factories. The glittering chemical covers their bodies from head to toe; they light up the night like industrious fireflies. With such a coveted job, these "shining girls" are the luckiest alive – until they begin to fall mysteriously ill. But the factories that once offered golden opportunities are now ignoring all claims of the



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gruesome side effects, and the women's cries of corruption. And as the fatal poison of the radium takes hold, the brave shining girls find themselves embroiled in one of the biggest scandals of America's early 20th century, and in a groundbreaking battle for workers' rights that will echo for centuries to come.

Source: Author's website. (kate-moore.com/the-radium-girls)





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Meet the Author

As a little girl growing up in Peterborough, England, Kate Moore dreamed of becoming a bestselling writer. She still has to pinch herself that her dream came true. After studying English Literature at the University of Warwick, Kate embarked on a successful career in publishing as a nonfiction editor. Over the next decade, she rose to become an editorial director at Penguin Random House UK. Her authors included Craig Revel Horwood, John Barrowman, Chris Tarrant, Francesca Martinez, Lucie Brownlee and Sarbjit Kaur Athwal. (To this day, Kate still offers occasional editorial services on a freelance basis.) During this time, she also dabbled in writing gift and humour books, and in 2008 had her first Sunday Times bestseller in *The Lovers' Book* (later republished as *Roses Are Red*).



On 4 July 2014 – her very own Independence Day – Kate took a leap of faith and left her full-time role to become a freelance editor, author and ghostwriter. On Day 1 of her new business venture, she had already secured commissions to write four books. She never looked back. Over the next three years she wrote eleven books, both under her own name and as a ghostwriter for some extraordinary people. Many of them became Sunday Times bestsellers.

In April 2017, one of those eleven books, *The Radium Girls*, was published in America. It became one of the bestselling history books of the year and was an



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instant *New York Times* bestseller upon publication of the paperback. It also won multiple awards, including the Goodreads Choice Award for Best History.

The book was a labour of love for Kate, who discovered the girls' story while directing a play about them. (Alongside her publishing career, Kate has always maintained her love of theatre, appearing as an actress in countless productions over the years.) Wanting to ensure her production of *These Shining Lives* by Melanie Marnich was as authentic as possible, Kate conducted lots of research on the radium girls and was amazed to discover that no book existed that focused on the women themselves. Feeling passionately that they deserved such a book, Kate decided to write it. Her research took her four thousand miles across an ocean to follow in the women's footsteps. She stood at the sites of the dial-painting studios, visited the women's homes and graves and met their families, and remembered the radium girls. She hoped, through her book, that readers would do the same.

Since publication, Kate has personally presented the story of the radium girls in close to thirty states. She has also been lucky enough to continue that writing career she dreamed of as a little girl; her latest book, *The Woman They Could Not Silence*, was published in June 2021 and became another commercial and critical success, placing second in the Goodreads Choice Awards 2021 for Best History and being named a 2021 Booklist Editor's Choice.

Her passion as a writer is to help people to have a voice, especially those silenced through injustice. With every book, she hopes to take readers on a visceral journey so that they too can experience the extraordinary lives of others.

She hopes you'll walk with her, one book at a time.

Source: Author's website. (kate-moore.com/about)



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Discussion Questions

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. Besides radium, what other world-altering discoveries can you think of that led to both advancement and tragedy?
10. 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?

Source: Author's website. (kate-moore.com/book-clubs)

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Recipes

Black and White Cheesecake Clock

- Cookies and cream layer
 - 18 oz vanilla cream filled chocolate sandwich cookies
 - 1 block (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- Cheesecake filling
 - 1 block (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
 - 1 cup marshmallow fluff
 - 1 tub (8 oz) frozen whipped topping, thawed



Cookies and Cream Layer: grind vanilla cream filled chocolate sandwich cookies to fine crumbs. Mix in a block of cream cheese until you have a thick dough.

Cut a gallon size zip top bag along two sides. Pinch off about 1/4 cup of the chocolate dough and place it the zip top bag. Roll it out to about 1/16th of an inch thickness. Freeze for 30 minutes to use later for decorations.

Line the bottom of an 8-inch spring form pan with non-stick aluminum foil or parchment paper. Press the remaining cookies and cream dough into an even layer in the bottom of the springform pan.

Cheesecake Filling: Beat cream cheese and marshmallow fluff until creamy and smooth. Add whipped topping and beat to combine. Pour on top of chocolate layer and smooth. Freeze for at least one hour.

Decorations: Using small cookie cutters or knife, cut the clock numbers and hands out of frozen cookies and cream dough. Re-freeze for 30 minutes. Or draw numbers in green icing.

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Remove cheesecake from springform pan. Set on a serving platter. Add the chocolate numbers and clock hands to the cheesecake.

Source: Hungry Happenings. (<https://www.tablespoon.com/recipes/black-and-white-cheesecake-clock/8234e87c-6ffa-4b17-9e3b-2198e4e64ed8>)

Glowing Green Margarita Mocktail

- 1 cucumber, cut into large pieces
- 1/2 cup pineapple chunks
- 1/2 cup cilantro
- 2 cups spinach
- 2 limes, peeled
- 2-inch piece of fresh ginger
- 2 cups coconut water
- Jalapeno for kick, optional
- Lime wedges and sea salt flakes for rimmed glasses



Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Place a nut milk bag into a large mixing bowl and pour the juice into the bag. Squeeze until the liquid is removed and you are left with dry pulp.

To serve, rub the lime wedge on the top of your glasses and coat in sea salt flakes. Put a few ice cubes in each glass and pour the green juice into the glass.

Source: Fit Living Eats (fitlivingeats.com/glowing-green-margarita-mocktail)

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