

Voices From The Radium Age: Uncovering the Human Toll of the Atomic Century

In the early 20th century, radium was hailed as a miracle cure-all, promising to treat everything from arthritis to cancer. Women, eager to join the workforce, flocked to factories across the United States to work with this radioactive material.



Voices from the Radium Age (MIT Press / Radium Age)

by Joshua Glenn

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting: Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 220 pages



But radium's deadly secret was soon revealed. The women who worked with it began to suffer from a mysterious illness, which doctors initially dismissed as a form of hysteria. As the illness spread, it became clear that radium was poisoning their bodies, leading to horrific deformities and death.

The story of the radium girls is a tragic and forgotten chapter in American history. It is a story of corporate greed, scientific ignorance, and the exploitation of women workers. But it is also a story of courage and

resilience, as the radium girls fought for justice and helped to raise awareness of the dangers of radiation.

The Radium Girls

The radium girls were young women, mostly immigrants, who worked in factories painting watch dials with radium paint. The dials glowed in the dark, making them easier to read at night, and the women were told that radium was harmless.

But radium is a radioactive element, and it emits harmful alpha particles. When the women ingested radium dust or paint while they worked, the alpha particles damaged their cells and DNA. Over time, this damage led to a variety of illnesses, including anemia, bone necrosis, and cancer.

The radium girls began to get sick in the early 1920s, but it took years for doctors to realize that radium was the cause of their illness. By the time the truth was revealed, many of the women were already dying.

The Fight for Justice

The radium girls faced an uphill battle in their fight for justice. The radium industry was powerful and well-connected, and it did everything it could to downplay the dangers of radium.

But the women refused to give up. They formed a union and hired a lawyer to represent them in court. They testified about the horrific suffering they had endured, and they demanded compensation for their injuries.

In 1928, the radium girls won a landmark settlement against the United States Radium Corporation. The settlement included medical care,

compensation for lost wages, and a public apology from the company.

The Legacy of the Radium Girls

The radium girls' story is a reminder of the dangers of industrial accidents and the importance of protecting workers' health.

It is also a story of courage and resilience. The radium girls fought for justice against all odds, and their victory helped to raise awareness of the dangers of radiation.

Today, the radium girls' legacy lives on in the form of occupational health and safety regulations that protect workers from exposure to hazardous materials.

Voices From the Radium Age

Kate Moore's book, 'Voices From the Radium Age', tells the story of the radium girls in their own words. The book is a powerful and moving account of the women's suffering, their fight for justice, and their ultimate triumph.

Moore's book is a must-read for anyone interested in science history, women's history, or the history of industrial accidents. It is a story that will stay with you long after you finish reading it.

Buy 'Voices From the Radium Age' on Our Book Library



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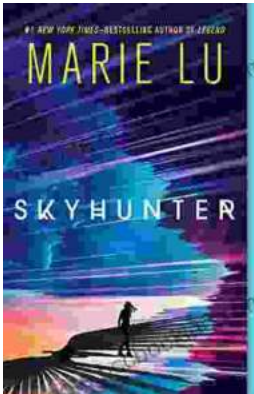
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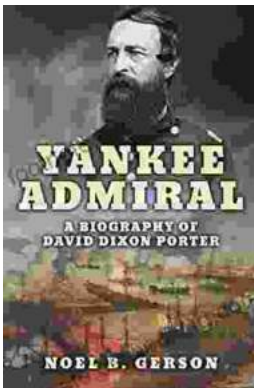
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