

Script info

CHARACTERS

CATHERINE DONOHUE — Plays only herself.
FRANCES — Also plays Reporter 2, an Official.
CHARLOTTE — Also plays Reporter 1.
PEARL — Also plays Daughter, Judge 2.
TOM DONOHUE, her husband — Also plays
Dr. Rowntree, Dr. Dalitsch.
MR. REED — Also plays Radio Announcer,
Company Doctor, Son, Judge, Leonard Grossman.

Everyone is in their mid- to late twenties. Mr. Reed can be older.

PLACE

Chicago and Ottawa, Illinois.

SETTINGS

Catherine and Tom's home.
The Radium Dial work room.
Courtroom.
The shore of Lake Michigan.

All may exist minimally, perhaps more
as a state of mind and imagination.

TIME

1920s and 1930s.

4

STYLE

This play is at times choral, at times docudrama, at times just a play. It should be delivered with spirit, energy and verve — and the women are the embodiment of this. DO NOT play these women as victims in any way. They have more strength than that. They never sink into sentimentality or weakness.

TRANSITIONS

Although individual scenes are indicated, it's mostly for the sake of organization. The play and its transitions need to be absolutely fluid, like music, like a song.

SOURCES

Mullner, Ross, PhD, MPH. *Deadly Glow: The Radium Dial Worker Tragedy*. American Public Health Association, 1999. (Specific information was used with permission from Dr. Mullner.)

Also:

Clark, Claudia. *Radium Girls: Women and Industrial Health Reform, 1910–1935*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

Chicago Daily Times

Chicago Herald and Examiner

Chicago Tribune

New York Times

New Jersey World

The Journal of the American Medical Association

The Journal of the American Dental Association

NOTE

This play, although inspired by real people and actual events, is a work of creative nonfiction. It moves between fact and fiction, between reality and imagination, to create a theatrical world.

5

20 Scenes in show

Summary of Show

This show follows the live of Kathrine, and her coworkers/ husband. When Katie gets the job she meets a group of vibrant and fun women who quickly become confidants and friends to her. Katie and her husband bond and change with their relationship as a result of Katie's new job. The we see Katie deteriorating. Between a company doctor that is lying to them and the boss, who they don't trust the women seem to all be losing their health and hope. One after another, they all get fired by the company for their poor health. Then they go see the city doctor who is finally honest with them and tells the women that they all have radium poisoning as a result of ingesting and using radium in their work. Then the women decide to take matters in their own hands and take the company to court. The shows ends with Cathrine winning her case at the supreme court. She weighed only 65 pounds, and her case changes Illinois law to make companies responsible for the safety of their workers.

Language Analysis

Scene 1 (p 9-11)

Visual

- *"Darkness... The ticking of a clock... Stars sparkle across the night sky... The ticking continues... Lights up on Cathrine..."*
- *"Ticking from the clock turns into music, Som thing from the time period, a slide appears."*
- *"Slide: Chicago in the Gulided Age: The roaring 20's"*
- *"The other women appear..."*

Descriptive

- not a fairytale, though it starts like one, not a tragedy, though it ends like one

- We're just girls who wanted* to work
 - *past tense
 - I'm Cathrine Woolfe Donohue and I'm telling you now
 - you see your story... and when you've told it you can rest
 - A company opened in the Marshall Field's Annex, The Raduim Dial Company
 - women worked*
-

Scene 2(p 11-13)

Visual

- *"Cathrine at home, getting ready for first day of work"*

Descriptive

- kissing, guess the time game for katie and Tom
 - Cathrine: *"trying to get dressed despite of his very active.... affection"*
 - "You could stop a clock"
 - "we need to do better than barely"
 - *(looking for a clock)*
 - making good money doesn't come cheap...cost you something
-

Scene 3(p 14-19)

Visual

- *Perl Frances and Charlotte sit at their desks, painting watch dials*
- *all wear smocks over their dresses.*
- *from a radio on their table, music...*
- *point the tip of their paint brushes between their lips, dip the brush in the paint, paint the dials. They paint, sing, hum, happily. They love the companionship, comradery .*

- Mr. Hughes keeps cutting off the women introducing Katie
- Katie has a bob\
- *Charlotte is a brilliant painter. An artist really.*
- *Slide: Dr. Rowntree: In the journal of the American Medical Association*
- Pulls out alarm clocks, pocket watches, and wrist watch faces to paint.

Descriptive

- She is young
- Painting the dials
- why does it shine?
- It tastes.... awful
- Is it okay?... Getting this stuff in our mouths.
- Mr. Reed: its more than okay, it's medicinal.
- Small glowing vial of radium
- How many watches painted a day:
 - Frances: about 100,120
 - Pearl: Same more when theres something i want to buy
 - Charlotte: On average about 150, On a good day, 200.
- one of the stars of Radium dial
- Bones of an artist
- twos were swooped and dipped, fives were flawless, eights could've been in a museum
- girl walks different when she's making money
- Your hair... is shining Your dress, your hands, your eyelashes, your mouth, you glow
- sparkling like an angel
- Time and hope were different, one was a mystery and the other was hope, But now I know they are the same.

- you, the girl with the face of time
 - Pulls out alarm clocks, pocket watches, and wrist watch faces to paint.
-

Scene 4 (p19-22)

Visual

- *Its now a few months later*
- *the women at work towards the end on the day*
- *the trays of watch dials are next to each of them, as they work, they fill the trays with painted watches*

Descriptive

- work does cost you something
 - we made good money, we made a good team
 - i dont see hours or minutes... i see dollar signs
-

Scene 5 (p 23-24)

Visual

- *Cathrine and Toms Kitchen*
 - *Tom is setting the table for dinner. He's not thrilled about it. Cathrine enters*

Descriptive

- you're late
- glad you got time for that
- my late is different than your late
- remember you said: be careful because work can cost you something

Scene 6 (p 25-26)

Visual

- *a radio announcer standing at an old fashioned microphone on a stand, or from a ceiling, as if he's an MC on a radio show of the era, a suave pitchman.*
- *frances, pearl, and Charlotte stand at a microphone near him,... sort of like the andrews sisters*

Descriptive

- things that shine
- time in our eyes, at our feet, on our dresses, in our hair, in us
- wasn't supposed to be so easy
- wasnt supposed to go so fast
- right on time

Scene 7(p 26-28)

Visual

- *Slide: 1978*
- *Cathrine and Tom's house*
- *He pours 2 cups of coffee*
-

Descriptive

- we make a good team
- story of how Tom and katie met

- She saw his eyes, between the blue and green flecks of light she saw she saw her past, present, and everything swirled together, like in a crystal ball, His eyes were like that. They held her world, they held her future.
-

Scene 8 (p 28-33)

Visual

- *The shore of lake michigan*
- *the sound of waves*
- *of people*
- *As Cathrine, Pearl, Charlotte, and Frances approach from the distance, we hear Pearl singing "By The Sea" as they walk onto the beach, carrying an umbrella, picnic basket, and blanket.*
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Descriptive

- alcohol is illegal
 - 6 year anniversary on monday
 - more things that shine:
 - the sand
 - this water
 - this day
 - to 6 years more, and more
 - time passed... before our eyes... before we noticed
-

Scene 9(p 33-35)

Visual

- *Slide: 218,723 watches later...*

- *Cathrine and Tom's kitchen*
- *Cathrine enters, worried and distracted*
- *Katies palms are glowing... other women appear. Light shines from all of their hands*

Descriptive

- how many watches painted today? ... 175
- look at me
- it wont come off, cant come off, never come off
- tom is scared but covers it
- this is my *body*
- I ache Tom, my bones, my legs, my back, Im scared
- theres something wrong
- lets not go borrowing trouble
- you're hands are dirty... so what?
- Thats what people like them pay people like us for. So we ache! So we're tired! They get their moneys worth and we get some cash.
- Im steady as the day is long
- I. Am. Scared.

Scene 10(p 35-39)

Visual

- *Slide: 1978*
- *Cathrine and Tom's house*
- *He pours 2 cups of coffee*
- *Slide: The Women of Radium Dial Company were painting 4,300 watch dials each day, more than 1 million each year.*

Descriptive

- definition of a company doctor? a doctor who takes care of the company
- Ive been taking aspirin... it docent work
- at work they gave us a test, had us breathe into a machine
- You could you know, tell me
- He knows who butters his bread, and its not us
- The party might be over

Scene 11(p 39-41)

Visual

- *In the middle of the night.*
- *Cathrime sits in her kitchen, in the dark*

Descriptive

- it hurts
- lies
- these girls... they broke the mold
- I cant leave them

Scene 12(p 41-44)

Visual

- *Lights up on women at work. Lip, dip, paint, talk*

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Descriptive

- Is anyone listening?
- Im scared
- Am i the only one?
- i need to tell you
- theres been gossip
- harmless
- Lies to your face.

Scene 13(p 44-45)

Visual

- *Cathrine approaches Mr.Reed in his office.*

Descriptive

- Things that stopped shining
 - our days
 - our nights
 - our sleep
 - our dreams
 - our time
 - our selves
- *Why?*
- This is a place for healthy girls
- Offer you a weeks pay
- You'd didn't rock the boat... i suggest you not start now

Scene 14(p 46-48)

Visual

- *Slide: Chicago 1931*
- *Slide: Dr. Dalitch*

Descriptive

- Liar
- risk his name
- only problem, he was honest
- Has anyone said this to you before?
- Did they warn you?
- Did they protect you?
- Did they ever tell you...
- Irreversible
- incurable
- terminal... in all your cases
- They knew didn't they?
- Did they ever test you?
- What can you give us.... the truth
- They did this to us and they knew it.
- a few watches.. that's what we're worth
- Whos gonna take care of my mom?

Scene 15(p 49-50)

Visual

- *Cathrine is at home with her son and daughter*
- *Actors playing children should not act childish, only innocent*

Descriptive

- i cant
- find every clock, every watch, and smash them to pieces
- i dont want time to know you are here, i want it to leave you alone
- What does time look like? the scariest thing of all
- like a child
- Ill take away the clocks... make them stop
- mothers heart breaking
- her falling apart
- time tuning out
- I am going to die

Scene 16(p 51-)

Visual

- *Cathrines kitchen*
- *Cathrine, Charlotte, Pearl, and Frances playing poker at the table*
- *Cathrine finishes dealing a hand*
- *Slide Leonard Grossman Attorney at Law*

Descriptive

- words failed
- complete silence

- we can keep whining or actually do something
- Mabey we should make a little noise fight
- They'll put you through the wringer
- are you up for it?
- what I'm afraid of... being invisible Disapearing. Withought anyone knowing the truth
- im not a fighter
- nothing will fix this... but someone has to let people know it's broken

Scene 17(p 46-61)

Visual

- *Slide Of Masthead: Chicago Daily Times March 17,1936*
- *Slide of Headline: Women Workers cry Wolf?*

Descriptive

- disgruntled women accusing a beloved company
- flinging their accusations
- press on in spite of community pressure to step aside
- you find out who your pals are at a time like this
- i feel like I'm taking you down with me
- neighbors aren't talking to me
- when did everyone we know become strangers?
- You're my hero

Scene 18(p 61-62)

Visual

- *Night*
- *Cathrine in a chair*

Descriptive

- this is me dying
- you feel this
- your still here
- Dont let the kids forget me
- dont you forget me
- Im nit afraid of death, I'm afraid of how ill get there

Scene 19(p 62-64)

Visual

- *Slide of Mathead: chicago, Herald and Examiner February 123, 1938*
- *one health and alert she weighed only 71 pounds and could hardly stand alone*

Descriptive

- mr Donahue wept
- How many watches did it take to buy all that?
- im so tired, i don't even care you are lying to me right now
- you knew
- talk about a miracle
- pulled bones while she was still alive
- i was going to die with her... maybe i have

- what am i gonna do with all this goddamn time?

Scene 20(p 65-67)

Visual

- *We hear the ticking of a clock*
- *the ticking becomes a heartbeat*
- *for a few beats*
- *then it stops*
- *for a few beats, then the sound of waves on a lake*

Descriptive

- I won my case 6 times, The Radium dial Company Appealed 6 times, Then to the US Supreme Court
- The Illinois Industrial Commission awarded katie \$5,661 on July 6,1938
- she died 21 days later
- after fighting the company for 7 years
- Her case changed Illionois law so companies were responsible for workers
- ahe weighed 65 pounds
- There is a god, he's made of time.
- there is a devil he's made of time.
- Angels, miracles and sins, are all made of hours.
- A million clocks stopped in the city

- Watches closed their eyes
- for a moment while time turned its face, we were all there.

Visit to a Small Planet

Subject

- Etiam sit amet est
 - Aenean iaculis laoreet arcu
 - Curabitur vulputate viverra pede
 - Nulla rutrum commodo ligula
 - Sed tellus suscipit in aliquam
 - Nunc ut lectus
 - Donec quis nunc

Read #1

4-10-19

- I just read this as a story, no notes taken during read.
 - My reactions/ first observations
 - I cried 3 times
 - emotional show
 - wanted to talk about it
 - women driven show
 - time as theme (clocks, projections of time passing, time changing)
 - things that shine/ things that don't
 - Kathrine starts by speaking to audience
 - projections?
 - says it can be minimal is script
 - stars/ galaxy at end of show

Initial thoughts

- Proscenium style, possibly with thrust/ deep thrust?
 - Katie addressing audience in show then joining scenes
- Galaxy at end?
 - Conversaion with Brandon about lighting and changing aspects of set to light up
- Projections?
 - Setting projections onstage for script settings
- Using time, and destructing set throughout show

- Set begins to wear throughout, maybe actors slightly alter/ things don't get put back cleanly/ things get messy onstage like storyline

Brandon Phone Meeting

5-15-19

- time and isolation as themes
- tungsten lighting?
- Sepia color scheme
- thinking about LEDs and placements for lights of sky at the end.
- when painting the floor and determining final circular playing space checking with Brandon for lighting
 - maybe going to sit in a rehearsal together and talk with Nikki if alterations need to be made
- Coming up with a few samples of greens to use. And let Brandon check appearance under lighting

Scene breakdown

Scene number (pages)	What happens?	script notes	projections	time
1 (9-11)	Cathrine and girls introduce the show	-the ticking of a clock - stars sparkle across the night sky - the ticking continues SLIDE: Chicago in the Gilded Age: The Roaring 20's	- clock ticking, numbers of years fade into view Chicago in the Gilded Age: The Roaring 20's - on a picture of the 20's	- 1920's? - 1922
2 (11-13)	Catherine gets ready in her bedroom with tom they flirt and banter. Cathrine is nervous about her first day	- n/a	none or one for first day	- 1922 - What year did cathrine start work at radium dial?
3 (14-19)	The girls at work, Mr. Reed introduces Katie	SLIDE: Dr. Rowntree In the Journal of American Medicine	- one of factory? Dr. Rowntree In the Journal of American Medicine	- 1922 - What year did cathrine start work at radium dial?
4 (19-23)	Women at work	Its now a few months later, women at work towards end of day	- clock ticks down? to rep time changing	1922-23 months after Katie starts work
5 (23-24)	Cathrine and Tom fight gender roles	Cathrine and Toms Kitchen, the same night	- slide of kitchen?	1922-23 night of scene 4
6 (25-26)	list of things that shine	radio announcer for radium	- radio?	1925

These Shining Lives
Scenic Design Paperwork
By: Scenic Designer, Maggie Shivers

Scene number (pages)	What happens?	script notes	projections	time
7 (26-28)	love story	SLIDE: 1928 NIGHT Cathrine and Tom's house	SLIDE: 1928 NIGHT Cathrine and Tom's house	1928
8 (28-33)	girls at beach	The shore of lake Michigan		1928
9 (33-35)	Cathrine shows Tom her glowing	cathrine and toms kitchen, tom comes home from work	- house, what year, clock ticks	1934 3.9 years? 218,723 watches later
10 (35)	company doctor, and girls discussion	SLIDE: the women of Radial Dial Company were painting 4,000 watch dials every day. More Than one Million each year	- doctors office SLIDE: the women of Radial Dial Company were painting 4,000 watch dials every day. More Than one Million each year	1934 same year?
11 (39-41)	Cathrine tells tom she's in pain for the first time	in their house - kitchen		1934 same year?
12 (41-44)	girls discuss pain, and reed reads letter from president of radium dial	in factory	letter on screen?	34-35?
13 (44-45)	list that stopped shining, Katie is fired	in factory		fired 39?
14 (46-48)	girls go to doctor, learn their fates	SLIDE: Chicago 1931 SLIDE Dr. Dalitsch	SLIDE: Chicago 1931 SLIDE Dr. Dalitsch	1931

These Shining Lives
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Scene number (pages)	What happens?	script notes	projections	time
15 (49-50)	Cathrine and kids... protect you from time	at katies home	time running out p.50... clock spins out?	1931?
16 (51-55)	poker game, girls decide to fight	Katie's kitchen, grossman's office, lake SLIDE: Leonard Grossman Attorney at Law	SLIDE: Leonard Grossman Attorney at Law	fought for 7 years (p.65) 1931? year they went to court?
17 (56-60)	newspapers trying to ruin KATIE Women bring her groceries and company	Katie's kitchen SLIDE OF MASTHEAD: CHICAGO DAILY TIMES March 17,1936 WOMEN WORKERS CRY WOLF?	SLIDE OF MASTHEAD: CHICAGO DAILY TIMES March 17,1936 WOMEN WORKERS CRY WOLF?	1936
18 (61-62)	Katie thinks she is dying	katie's kitchen		1937?
19 (62-64)	court, Tom confronts reed	SLIDE OF MASTHEAD: CHICAGO HERALD AND EXAMINER February 12,1938	SLIDE OF MASTHEAD: CHICAGO HERALD AND EXAMINER February 12,1938 tom crying?	1938
20 (65-67)	end speech, stars in sky, katie wins and dies	moon clock (p.66) star numbers?	picture of katherine before she died? women faces?	1938