

MARIE CURIE AND RADIOACTIVITY

READER'S THEATER

Instructor's copy

Pick four students to perform aloud pages 16–19 from the book. Prior to a public performance, have students look through the pages and identify their character. Students can then use the scripts provided on this CD-ROM to practice their part. Suggested props: glasses for the man in the crowd.

Main Script

Scene One: Pierre and Marie Curie are at home . . .

Narrator: After their discovery, Pierre liked to keep a tube of radium in his coat pocket to admire.

Pierre: Look at my skin, Marie. The radium has somehow burned my skin just by being near it.

Marie: You should take more care when handling your samples. (*Then thinking to herself*) I wonder if this burning property could have any good uses.

Scene Two: Pierre is giving a presentation in front of a crowd . . .

Narrator: The Curies didn't worry about damage from radiation. Instead, they told the world of its possible good uses.

Pierre: You see, by burning unhealthy cells, radiation therapy could kill off harmful cancer cells.

Man in crowd: Amazing! This radiation therapy could rid the world of cancer!

Narrator: Soon, radium was in common use. People thought radium had healing properties. Department stores even sold lotions and shampoos made with radium.

Scene Three: The Curies are sick at home and reporters are knocking at their door . . .

Narrator: In 1903, the Curies and Henri Becquerel were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for their work with radioactivity. At the time, Pierre and Marie were too sick to attend the ceremony.

Pierre: These types of prizes create too much attention from the press.

Marie: I agree. One would like to dig into the ground somewhere to find a little peace.

Scene Four: A year later, in their home . . .

Narrator: In 1904, Marie gave birth to a second daughter, Eve. Marie continued to work in the lab and at home. But Pierre was becoming even more ill.

Pierre: I am neither very well nor very ill. I get tired easily. My wife, on the contrary, leads a most active life. She does not lose a minute.

Narrator: Only two years later, Pierre was struck by a horse-drawn wagon and killed. He was 47 years old.

Marie: Good-bye, Pierre. Your coffin is closed and I can see you no more.

Scene Five: Marie is shown teaching, accepting the Nobel Prize, and in a new laboratory.

Narrator: Despite her grief, Marie continued her work. She began to teach at the Sorbonne. In 1911, Marie's hard work paid off again. She won a second Nobel Prize. This time, the prize was in chemistry, for her discovery of polonium and radium.

Marie: I accept this prize in honor of my late husband, Pierre.

Narrator: Three years later, Marie opened the Radium Institute in Paris. She worked hard to raise money for a better laboratory with more assistants and lab workers.

Marie: Half of the Institute is used to study the medical uses of radium. The other half is the lab where we will be studying radiation.

Man in the crowd

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