

MR. REED

know. Cures just about everything.  
DR. ROWNTREE. Sciatica, neuralgia ... *(Then a rapid listing of diseases cured by radium.)*

MR. REED. Lumbago ...

DR. ROWNTREE. Bronchitis.

MR. REED. Pneumonia.

DR. ROWNTREE. Arteriosclerosis.

MR. REED. Gout.

DR. ROWNTREE. Vasomotor disturbances ...

PEARL. People who can afford it are lining up.

DR. ROWNTREE. ... And chronic constipation.

MR. REED. Nothing short of miraculous. *(Light out on Dr. Rowntree.)*

PEARL. Then again, you don't *have* to put the brush in your mouth.

FRANCES. You can just roll it on the edge of the dish.

PEARL. But it's faster if you do.

MR. REED. And since you get paid by the watch ...

CATHERINE. How many watches do you paint a day?

MR. REED. Tell her, girls.

FRANCES. About ... one hundred, one-twenty ...

PEARL. Same here. More when there's something I want to buy.

CHARLOTTE. An average day, about one-fifty. A good day, two hundred.

MR. REED. Believe it or not, Charlotte's one of the stars of Radium Dial. She's got fast hands.

FRANCES. She's fast in general.

CHARLOTTE. Just a natural, I guess, Mr. Reed. Born with the gift of — *(Mr. Reed drops a box of clock faces on the desk, cutting Charlotte's hair much to her irritation, which lasts about a second.)*

Start →

MR. REED. Here's the routine. You start with these Big Ben alarm clocks. Big Ben, big faces, see? Think of them as your *large* canvas. Get good at those, we move you to these ... *(He pulls out a box of pocket watch faces.)* Pocket watches. Think of these as your *medium* canvas. After those, you're onto these ... *(He pulls out a box of wristwatch faces.)* The *fine* art. The wristwatches. You get one month. End of the month, if you're good, you got a job. If you're not, you don't. That's the way it works. Think you can do it?

END

CATHERINE. Oh, I can do it.

MR. REED. You sure?

CATHERINE. I'm sure. *(Charlotte reaches for Catherine's hands,*

**MR. REED**

FRANCES. I can't find a doctor who will listen.

CHARLOTTE. (*Singing softly, starting to work.*)

*I love to be beside your side, beside the sea,*

(*They all start working.*)

*Beside the seaside, by the beautiful sea ...*

(*Charlotte continues to hum.*)

PEARL. (*Losing it.*) CHARLOTTE! (*This stops Charlotte's singing cold.*) You said once, you read bones.

CHARLOTTE. I do.

PEARL. What are they saying now?

CHARLOTTE. It's in my arm. What you have. It's in my arm. (*She tries to hum again. Stops. Then starts again. Mr. Reed enters, carrying a handful of letters. The women all start painting.*)

Start →

MR. REED. Good morning, ladies. (*A lackluster chorus of "good mornings" from the women. He registers this ... and then plows on.*) You know — and I know — that you ladies have had a few concerns lately. There's been some gossip. Harmless, but gossip has a way of getting around. And the company wants to let you know — They want to say — Well. Here you go. (*He hands out the letters to the women.*)

~~FRANCES. What's this?~~

~~MR. REED.~~ Clarification. From the company. In response to said gossip, misguided chatter, et cetera, et cetera. An official promise you can hang your hats on, girls. Listen up and put your minds at ease. They want you to know they're careful. That we use nothing that could cause you harm. (*Reading from the letter.*)

"In the best interest of our employees' safety, Radium Dial does not compromise its product or the health of our workers by using materials of low quality. Radium Dial uses material that contains pure radium *only*. If we at any time had reason to believe that any condition of the work endangered the well-being of our employees, we would have suspended operations. The health of the employees of the Radium Dial Company is always foremost in the minds of its officials. Most sincerely, Joseph A. Kelly, president."

There it is. The truth in black and white. So you can rest easy. This company, it's a good company. I know you girls know that. Take a few extra minutes at lunch. Relax. It's a beautiful day out there. Enjoy. Have a good day, girls. (*And he leaves.*)

END

~~FRANCES. A good day, girls.~~

~~CHARLOTTE.~~ Yes.

~~FRANCES.~~ Don't do it for me. Not any more.