

KNEF. Once they see what kinda shape yer in...

ROEDER. This is impossible!

KNEF. ...They gotta feel obligated to help ya out.

DRINKER. But in view of the material in the literature...

ROEDER. It's a mistake.

DRINKER. ...and the facts disclosed by our investigation...

KNEF. I don't see how they could refuse!

DRINKER. We recommend immediate—and drastic—remedial action. (*Lights down on DRINKER.*)

KNEF. Look, if you want, I'll write to 'em for ya. They can work through me, just pay my bills directly.

GRACE. You think they'd do that?

ROEDER. CHARLIE!

KNEF. They got a moral obligation, don't ya think?

GRACE. I guess so.

KNEF. We'll do it right now. I'll get some paper. (*Lights down on GRACE and KNEF. ROEDER flips through the report looking for anything hopeful.*)

ROEDER. He has to be wrong, that's all. He's wrong.

(*Enter LEE.*)

ROEDER. Charlie. (*He shows him the report.*) He has to be wrong.

LEE. He must have overlooked something.

ROEDER. If we're suffering from a new ailment caused by radium it should occur generally throughout the plant.

LEE. One would expect.

ROEDER. Several hundred milligrams are in solution at all times in the big vats, several hundred milligrams in the ore, several hundred in crystallizing.

LEE. The entire back yard is filled with tailings.

ROEDER. Radium is present in good amounts all over the property.

LEE. If it's the radium, then the incidence of illness should be highest in the laboratory.

ROEDER. And no one there is sick.

LEE. Then perhaps it's some combination of the radium with the zinc.

ROEDER. Or something peculiar to our plant alone.

LEE. Some kind of bacteria, perhaps? In the brushes?

ROEDER. It can't be the radium. There are dozens of application plants across the country. And none has ever reported anything like this.

LEE. The Department of Labor wants to see the report.

ROEDER. Yes I'm aware.

LEE. What are we going to do? This tears us to pieces. How do we answer them?

ROEDER. They want to see the report. *(ROEDER flips through, looking for a particular page that shows the company in the most favorable light. Then he tears the page out of the report and holds it out to LEE.)* We'll send them this.

LEE. One page?

ROEDER. The most important page. *(His meaning slowly sinks in to LEE.)*

LEE. Drinker will never stand for this.

ROEDER. Drinker works for us. This is a proprietary report. What we do with it is our business.

LEE. But the Department of Labor, Arthur.

ROEDER. We just need time, Charlie. Just a little time.

LEE. They could shut us down for this!

ROEDER. Scientists! Government men! They have no idea what it takes to run a business. Von Sochocky thought advertising was a dirty word. He laughed at the very idea of promotion. I can't tell you how many times I walked into that man's office and he turned a deaf ear to everything I told him. But, Charlie, we showed him. We showed him! Look at us. We are the world's largest single supplier of radium. The largest in the world. You know what it took for us to get here! Do you think I am going to stand idly by and let our good name be dragged through the mud? *(He holds out the paper to LEE.)* Trust me, Charlie.

*(LEE takes the page and leaves. Shaken, ROEDER takes a moment to compose himself as crossfade to:)*

### SCENE 10

*(Grace's house. Some months later. Her condition has worsened. She welcomes DR. FREDERICK FLINN, a fifty-something academic, warm and friendly, whose credentials are not immediately apparent to her.)*

GRACE. Dr. Flinn, it's awful nice of you to come all this way.

FLINN. Not at all, my dear, not at all.

GRACE. I told the surgeon you was comin' over here, so he gave me the results of my blood work.

FLINN. Excellent! *(He looks over the papers.)*

GRACE. And, so?

FLINN. I must say, Miss Fryer. Your blood looks better than mine.