

RS#4 Marie's Monologue

Start



MARIE. (*Holding, investigating the substance itself.*) Radium is a cold heat, a dark light, a force of nature. I have it with me now. *A vial in my pocket. I take it out. I hold it.* It glows. Turn down the light and one sees a watery, green...fire. No. It's more constant than a flame. A gaze. Like it can't take its eyes off you. Like the love of your life.

This is why I keep it with me. It reminds me of Pierre. Husband. Together we shoveled small mountains of pitchblende heaped in a sooty shed, dissolved it in acid, boiled it down, scraped the black bits to purify this element. Ten tons of the rock we shoveled distilled into just enough Radium to sprinkle on your fingertip. *That's* a certain kind of marriage, don't you think?

"Radioactive" is my word. I coined it. That was me. So...

Now it is *only* me. Pierre is dead, gone six years now, and I am alone and our girls are alone, and it is only me and the glow and the gaze of the element in my pocket.

You see radiation is the process by which an element changes itself entirely. As it radiates, Radium decays to Radon which decays to Polonium which decays to Lead, all of these metals shedding themselves to the point of abandonment. I empathize.

Half-life. The moment an element transforms so fully that it is more other than self. That's what we call it. Half...life.

We hear a low ticking...

Do you hear it? Radium and its half-life approaching.

Not everyone can hear it. But I can. I do. ← End