

Reading Group Guide

1. Compare and contrast the scenes in which we are introduced to Marie and Loie. What do they say about their shared traits, and their differences? Why do you think the author chose these moments to present them to readers?
2. Paris seems like the ideal backdrop for Loie's innovative art and for Marie's comparative scientific freedom. How important is landscape for shaping a person? What are examples you can think of from Loie and Marie's lives? From your own?
3. It seems that both Marie's father and Loie's mother supported them wholeheartedly in their endeavors. How did each parent's treatment of their daughters affect their trajectories? Do you think your parents had a similar effect on your life, whether they were a stern tutor like Marie's father or a faithful companion like Loie's mother?
4. Loie notes that she is often described as a "very pushing woman" but has never heard anyone described as a "very pushing man." There has certainly been much progress since Loie's time, but how can you see this insidious sexism persist today?
5. Why do you think Loie and Marie were drawn to each other? Have you felt under-appreciated at school or work? If so, how would finding someone with similar interests and mutual respect have affected your experience?
6. Why do you think the author chose to write Marie and Loie's story now? How does their friendship and success bear on the state of female friendship and women in the workplace today?
7. One might think that Loie and Marie were in very different fields. In what ways do their goals in art and science respectively overlap? How do their similarities inform their work?
8. Why is cultivating friendships so important to Loie, as a person and as an artist? Do you think Marie would have had greater success faster if she was less reserved, or do you think her reservations served a useful purpose as a female scientist?
9. Loie's work relied heavily on optical illusion, and as such she was often described as a "faker" due to the rigid conventions of her time. However, effectively "faking" is often considered the mark of a great performer. Given how vastly norms have shifted since Loie's era, do you think what was an insult then could now be praise? How does Loie's experience underscore the value of breaking from tradition?
10. *RADIANT* is centrally a story of powerful, determined, and intelligent women, but it is also a story of the importance of ally-ship. What are a few examples of people advocating for Marie and Loie when their voices were silenced by the establishment?

How can we continue to strive towards equality by applying these lessons to our present day lives?

11. How were Marie and Loie received in each other's home (or chosen-home) countries, as well as their own? Do you think their respective receptions indicates national feelings towards women, towards their professions, or both?
12. When the ills of radium become clear, Marie wonders if their work might have killed Pierre. Likewise, Louie partially blinds herself and may have given herself cancer from her work. Do you think the two would have continued their work early on if they had known the costs? Why or why not? What sacrifices would you be willing to make for your career or passion project?