



Marie Curie and Her Daughters: The Private Lives of Science's First Family

Shelley Emling

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A new portrait of the two-time Nobel winner and her two daughters

Focusing on the first family in science, this biography of Marie Curie plumbs the recesses of her relationships with her two daughters, extraordinary in their own right, and presents the legendary scientist to us in a fresh way.

Although the common image is that of a shy introvert toiling away in her laboratory, highly praised science writer Shelley Emling shows how Marie Curie was nothing short of an iconoclast. Her affair with a younger and married man drew the enmity of a xenophobic French establishment, who denied her entry to the Academy of Sciences and tried to expel her from France. But she was determined to live life how she saw fit, and passed on her resilience to her daughters. Emling draws on personal letters released by Curie's only granddaughter to show how Marie influenced her daughters yet let them blaze their own paths. Irene followed her mother's footsteps into science and was instrumental in the discovery of nuclear fission. Eve traveled the world as a foreign correspondent and then moved on to humanitarian missions.

Emling also shows how Curie, following World War I, turned to America for help. Few people know about Curie's close friendship with American journalist Missy Meloney, who arranged speaking tours across the country for Marie and Eve and Irene. Months on the road, charming audiences both large and small, endeared the Curies to American women and established a lifelong relationship with the United States that formed one of the strongest connections of Marie's life. Without the financial support of American women, Marie might not have been able to go on with her research.

Continuing the family story into the third generation, Emling also interviews Marie Curie's granddaughter Helene Joliot-Curie, who is an accomplished physicist in her own right. She reveals why her grandmother was a lot more than just a scientist and how Marie's trips to America forever changed her. Factually rich, personal and original, this is an engrossing story about the most famous woman in science that rips the cover off the myth and reveals the real person, friend, and mother behind it.

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