



## Before the Fallout: From Marie Curie to Hiroshima

By Diana Preston

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In 1898, Marie Curie first described a phenomenon she called "radioactivity." A half-century later, two physicists would stand before dawn in the New Mexico desert, slathering themselves with sunscreen-and fearing that the imminent test detonation might ignite Earth's atmosphere in a cataclysmic chain reaction and transform our planet into a burning star.

This is the epic story of Curie's quest to unlock the secrets of the material world; of the scientists-Rutherford, Bohr, Einstein, Oppenheimer-who built upon her work; of the day the first weapon of mass destruction dropped on Hiroshima, bringing both sudden terror and sudden peace, and of the new era of global uncertainty that emerged in its wake. With the clarity of great science writing, the vividness of historical narrative and the insight of biography, **Before the Fallout** is an unforgettable and sweeping account of the scientific discovery that changed the world.

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