

CHARLOTTE

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Pearl, Frances, and Charlotte sit at their desks, painting watch dials.

They all wear smocks over their dresses.

From a radio on their table, music ...

They point the tip of their paint brushes between their lips, dip the brush in the paint, and paint the dials. They paint, sing, hum, happily. They love the companionship, camaraderie.

START

→ CHARLOTTE. *(In a rush of storytelling.)* ... And I told him, "I absolutely intend to strike this match. And I can smoke if I want to. All the girls are doing it. You live in a *cave*? Haven't you picked up a *magazine*?" And I threw my *Collier's* at him, pointed to the picture of the girl in the Chesterfields ad and said, "There. Isn't she sharp?" Besides, if men can do it, so can we, right? I can smoke all night and all day if I want to except that I have to work and that's using my hands, which wouldn't leave them *free* to smoke, but if I *could*, I would. I'd smoke and drink gin and shimmy and he said, "Charlotte, you'd look like a harlot," and he didn't even think that was funny. That fella's so tight, if you put a piece of coal up his — *(Rufus Reed, the supervisor, has entered with Catherine right at the end of Charlotte's bit.)*

END

MR. REED. *(Cutting off Charlotte.)* If Mae West lived in Illinois and painted watches, she'd be Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE. *(Teasingly.)* I heard that, Mr. Reed.

MR. REED. You know I mean it as a compliment.

CHARLOTTE. You know I take it as one.

MR. REED. Morning, girls.

PEARL/FRANCES. *(Happily.)* Morning, Mr. Reed. *(Frances turns off the radio.)*

PEARL. Whatcha got there, Mr. Reed?

MR. REED. Girls, I'd like you to meet Catherine Donohue.