

An old woman, Bette, works at the library where she is stacking books on the shelf. She pushes a cart full of returns to a tall shelf. One at a time she slowly unloads each novel back to its rightful position.

One book is just to be placed on a shelf above Bette's head, this is not very high, the years of standing as a nurse have shrunk her. She raises her arm to slide the book into position when a young child runs up and tickles her.

BETTE

OH!

She slowly turns to see who is tickle attacking her

BETTE

Was that you?

CHARLOTTE

What's your name

BETTE

Bette Straut.

Bette eyes this child with uncertainty

CHARLOTTE

My name's Charlotte Stills. You're much fatter than I thought, I could barely tickle you through all of it

BETTE

I've built up a thick layer of protective tissue, it's saved me from getting tickled quite a few times over the years.

CHARLOTTE

Why don't you have a wedding ring? Are you a widow? Or even worse, are you a divorcè?

BETTE

Worse still, I was never married

CHARLOTTE

Genuine

Cool. Anyway, I'm actually writing a research paper.

BETTE

Oh?

CHARLOTTE

Yup it's on cheese and I have to sign up for a library card so I can research.

BETTE

You want a library card?

CHARLOTTE

That's right. Where do I sign?

BETTE

Not so fast my darling. First, you have to pass the library card test

CHARLOTTE

Groans

A test?!

Bette pulls out a dictionary and a stopwatch

BETTE

I need you to find the word Anchovies in three two one GO!

Charlotte starts tearing through pages

CHARLOTTE

There!

BETTE

Very good. Now Retirement!

CHARLOTTE

Easy!

BETTE

Diabettes!

BETTE

Arthritis

CHARLOTTE

yawning

Light work.

Bette jots her results down on her notepad

BETTE

impressive

CHARLOTTE

Why did you never get married? Do you ever think it was because you were too ugly?

BETTE

I've never mistook the lust of physical features for love.

CHARLOTTE

Said the ugly woman

BETTE

Maybe. Here is your next test.

CHARLOTTE

Another?!

BETTE

Another. Please place this book back on the shelf

She hands charlotte a book next to a ladder and points to the top where an empty hole awaits the book

Charlotte ascends the ladder quickly and shoves the book into place. Without turning she continues to berate Bette

CHARLOTTE

How many years do you think you have left?

BETTE

It's hard to say

CHARLOTTE

I'd imagine not very many

BETTE

It's ok to be scared, darling, just don't be rude. Listen to my voice, lower your left foot down slowly until you feel the next wrung.

Charlotte lowers her foot slowly and strikes the next wrung

BETTE

Ok now hold tight with your hands and lower the left foot

With the help of Bette, Charlotte lowers herself down off the ladder. When her foot hits solid ground she runs over

to the librarian and entraps her in a hug. Bette pats
charlotte on the back

BETTE

Come on now we don't cry is very
unbecoming, we're proud yankee
women, not dandies

CHARLOTTE

I'll cry if I need to

Bette pries charlotte off her leg

BETTE

Come on now. Get yourself
together, you have one more test.

Charlotte Wipes a tear from her eye.

CHARLOTTE

determined

I'm ready

BETTE

Alright let me hear you say: would
you mind keeping it down

CHARLOTTE

kindly

would you mind keeping it down

BETTE

You're not asking,
you're demanding! Give me a:
excuse me, this is actually the
quiet floor

CHARLOTTE

Confidently passive

aggressive

Excuse me, this is
actually the quiet floor. Do you
mind??

BETTE

Wonderful. Now, finally, give me a
shhhhhhhhhhh

CHARLOTTE

Shhhhhhhhhhh

The two begin to shoosh each other in a progressively sassy
manner

BETTE
SSSHHHHHHHH

CHARLOTTE
SHsshSHHssshhhhHHHH

BETTE
SHshSHsh

Bette and Charlotte start SHHHHing to the tune of Crazy Frog until they break down laughing.

BETTE
Congratulations! You've passed.
Come along now, let's get you your
very own library card. Plus, I
have a whole stack of books on
Parmesan for you.

CHARLOTTE
I think I'm gonna focus on
cheddars.

BETTE
Mmmm, good call

The two begin to walk off stage

CHARLOTTE
So what's it like to get old

BETTE
The possibilities fade away... and
your breasts get saggy.

CHARLOTTE
What if I don't become a pirate
when I grow up?

BETTE
You don't become a pirate, you
convince yourself you enjoy being
a librarian

CHARLOTTE
I would like to be a librarian

BETTE
It's quite a lovely job