

Angela's Business

"You are dreadfully mysterious. How *does* she react?"

"Of course, she marries."

"Then it's not a story — work at all?"

"Hardly at all. It's an old-fashioned romance."

"I see — told from a new-fashioned point of view?"

Charles laughed. "The description was suggested to me — very recently. Up to a point, it fits. You see, I'm still learning."

"You know," said Mary, after a step or two, "you like to picture yourself as one who can't be restrained from talking about himself and his work, on the smallest provocation. In reality . . . Tell me honestly, do you object to being cross-examined this way?"

His gaze kept straight ahead.

"By you? — oh, no. Of course, I . . . I've wanted to tell you my story some day."

"Then I'll continue my quiz now. I know it's usually a stupid question to ask — but have you decided on a title yet?"

But that happened to be the one thing he did not care to tell her now.

"You can't fix the title till you're done, you know," he evaded lightly. "A story changes so. But I have a sub-title in mind . . ."

She asked if his sub-title was a secret, and he said no.

"I'd thought of — 'A Comedy of Temporary Spinsters' — something like that," said the author, and, unseen, colored abruptly.

"That's *good*!" Mary exclaimed after a moment. "It suggests — so much! Temporary Spinsters. . . . Only — I hope you don't mean to be cruel to your heroine?"

"Oh, no."