



An Unforgettable Christmas

Ginny Baird

Elena initially had been pleased by her daughter's employment at Singleton's Jewelers. But before long, she'd started questioning aloud whether the job was the right fit. Sam Singleton worked extremely hard. Those who worked for him were expected to work hard, as well. Which would have been fine, in Elena's opinion, if that didn't sometimes entail extra hours. Extra hours without extra pay, since Angie was in a salaried position. Then, there were the additional hours Angie put in processing her accounting reports at home.

Angie honestly didn't mind her demanding schedule. She slept better at night when her tasks were wrapped up for the day and not lingering overhead to be tackled tomorrow.

She sighed and buttoned her coat. "I'll try to be home by seven, okay? We can all have a nice dinner together then."

When Angie turned to go, her mother said, "I don't

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know why you continue to work for that man. We don't need the money that badly. I can take on extra shifts until you find something else."

Angie knew that Elena was just being proud—and protective. The truth was, they did need the money. She and her mom were both saving up to purchase a house: some place really nice for Pepe to grow up in.

"I don't *want* another job, Ma." Angie turned from where she stood on the threshold. "That man' is my boss. And in many ways, he's a good one."

"Ha!"

"I mean it," Angie insisted. "He pays me well, and the hours aren't bad." She winced at her amendment. "Normally."

"Maybe if you explained you have a family—"

"I can't risk being unprofessional," she countered. "Not with so much at stake." Her gaze flitted to the refrigerator crowded with magnets and a combination of Pepe and Alma's artwork. Pepe's latest report card hung there, too, and he'd received very high marks. They were all settling in here. What's more, Pepe was *thriving*.

"Besides, Sam's not really *that* awful. Not really. Not once you get to know him." Angie shrugged. "He has potential! You know, like a diamond in the rough."

Elena studied her daughter and then her tone took on a teasing lilt. "And just who do you suppose will do the shaping and polishing? You?"

Angie blushed hotly. "Me? No! That's...that's not how I look at Sam. He's my *employer*. I wouldn't dream of—" She paused and drew in a breath, surveying Elena. "Just what are you hinting at?"

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Elena's mouth dropped open. "I can't believe it. You actually *like* him."

