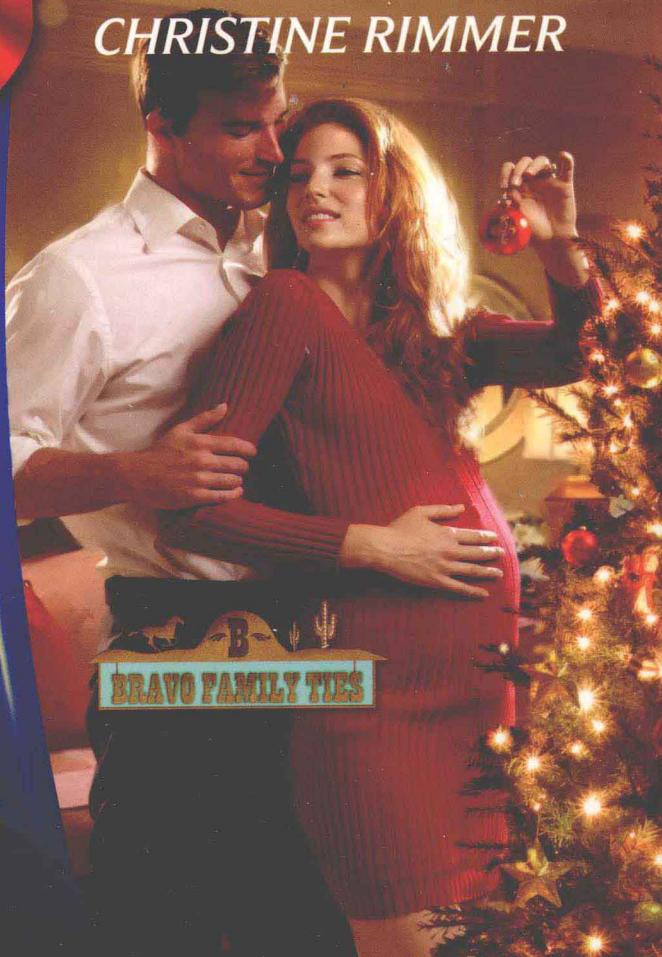


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MIA caught sight of Jarrett when he walked into the open lobby. It was hard not to notice the man. In a charcoal business suit with a crisp white shirt and striped tie covered by a dark trench coat, he looked more Wall Street than small-town Colorado.

Mia couldn't blame him for keeping his distance. He was probably tired of taking care of her.

Besides, why would a man like Jarrett McKane be interested in her? Why would he want to take on a woman expecting a baby? Yet he'd done so many things for her. He'd been there when she'd needed him most. How could she not care about a man like that?

Heart pounding in her ears, she walked up behind him. Jarrett turned to face her. "Did you get enough sleep last night?"

"Yes, thanks to you," she said, wondering if he'd thought about their kiss. Her gaze went to his mouth, then she quickly glanced away. "And thank you for not bringing up my meltdown."

Jarrett couldn't stop looking at Mia. Blue was definitely her color, bringing out the richness of her eyes.

"What meltdown?" he said, trying hard to focus on what she was saying. "You were just exhausted from lack of sleep and worried about your baby."

He couldn't help remembering how, during the night, he'd kept going in to watch her sleep. How strange was that? "I hope you got enough rest."

She nodded. "Plenty. And you're a good neighbor for

coming to my rescue.”

He tensed. Neighbor? *What neighbor kisses you like I did?* “That’s me, just the full-service landlord,” he said, trying to keep the sarcasm out of his voice. He started to leave, but she put her hand on his arm.

“Jarrett, what I meant was you went beyond helping me.” Her eyes searched his face. “I’ve asked far too much of you.”

“Did you hear me complain?”

She shook her head. “You should. I feel like I’ve taken advantage.”

“Like I said, I haven’t minded.”

“And I’m grateful for everything...”

Grasping her hand on his arm, Jarrett leaned forward. The memory of last night’s kiss had him aching for another. “I didn’t do it for your gratitude, Mia.”

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## *The fizzy, bright feeling was back.*

And getting stronger. He kept on looking at her. Admiringly. Almost hopefully. She stared at his mouth and wondered what his lips would feel like touching hers. She thought about how she really would like, someday, to find out.

And then the phone rang.

Dax didn't answer it. And for a moment there, he'd almost thought that Zoe was about to make a move on him. And being human and male, he'd wanted her to. A lot.

Which made him pretty damn stupid, right? If the phone hadn't rung, if she had made a move on him, he would very likely have taken her up on it.

And then, one way or another, he'd have wound up losing the best assistant he'd ever had.

He wasn't sure if he was relieved. Or furious.

Dear Reader,

Zoe Bravo is beyond tired of being called the “free spirit” of the family. She wants a job that holds her interest and she wants to gain her family’s respect.

Working as billionaire bachelor Dax Girard’s assistant seems perfect. Constant variety, travel to exotic locations and a chance to get a start in magazine publishing. What’s not to love?

Well, the boss first of all—yes, he’s dreamy and all the women are after him. But when it comes to his assistant, he wants to keep things strictly professional. That’s fine with Zoe. The last thing she’s after is a hot date with Dax. If only she could convince everyone else in the office that there is no way she’ll be like all his other assistants. She will not be falling for the boss.

But then again, Dax is a very exciting man. And when he looks at her with those bedroom eyes of his, well, sometimes it’s hard to remember that it’s the job that matters. Sometimes it’s hard not to yearn for one long, tender kiss. Sometimes it’s hard not to wonder if Dax might be trying to tempt her into breaking the rules *he* made in the first place....

Happy reading everyone,

Christine Rimmer

# EXPECTING THE BOSS'S BABY

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*CHRISTINE RIMMER*



**SPECIAL EDITION**

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EXPECTING THE BOSS'S BABY

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## CHRISTINE RIMMER

came to her profession the long way around. Before settling down to write about the magic of romance, she'd been everything from an actress to a salesclerk to a waitress. Now that she's finally found work that suits her perfectly, she insists she never had a problem keeping a job—she was merely gaining “life experience” for her future as a novelist. Christine is grateful not only for the joy she finds in writing, but for what waits when the day's work is through: a man she loves, who loves her right back, and the privilege of watching their children grow and change day to day. She lives with her family in Oklahoma. Visit Christine at [www.christinerimmer.com](http://www.christinerimmer.com).

For you, the reader.  
May your holiday season be filled with love and light  
and the joy of family togetherness.

## *Chapter One*

“Can I lay it right out for you?” Dax Girard asked.

Sitting across his wide black desk from him, Zoe Bravo answered earnestly, “Yes, of course. Please do.” She did want this job. She wanted it bad. She had things to prove—to herself and to her family.

He arched a straight dark eyebrow. “You’re really pretty.”

Oh, please. Was he going to hit on her? Right here, during the interview? Euuu.

He wasn’t finished. “And if I were to meet you under other circumstances, I would be only too happy to have sex with you. But I need good staff, above all. So I have a house rule. You work for me, that’s *all* you do with me.”

Zoe stifled a burst of inappropriate laughter and sat up straighter in the chair. Somehow, she managed to

reply with a straight face, "Seriously, it's not a problem. I've known you for what, two minutes?"

Had that sounded sarcastic? Maybe a little.

But he *had* just told her he wouldn't sleep with her—when she hadn't even asked him to. He deserved a dose of attitude.

If he noticed the edge to her tone, he let it pass. "I think your mother is a wonderful woman."

"She certainly is." Zoe's mom, Aleta Randall Bravo, was from an old San Antonio family. Aleta knew *everyone*, including the great adventurer and magazine publisher Dax Girard. It was her mom who had recommended her to Dax for this job, which meant Dax would most likely want to give Zoe a chance. People generally tried to please her mom. And not only because of the social connection thing either. There was something about Aleta that made you like her—and want *her* to like *you*.

He said, "And you seem...bright. I have a good feeling about you. I want to make this work."

"Great," Zoe answered, trying to sound positive and upbeat. "I do, too."

"But I just need to have this clear with you, straight from the gate. Sex is absolutely off the table."

She didn't groan—but she really, really wanted to. Enough about sex already. How many times did she have to promise not to put a move on him?

Okay, yeah. He was hot—in that rich-guy, lean, preppy way. He looked like he played a lot of tennis. He probably jogged with his shirt off and gave all the women he wasn't going to have sex with a thrill.

And she'd heard the stories about him, about how women found him irresistible. But not Zoe. She wanted