



### *IT WASN'T MEANT TO END THIS WAY*

It wasn't meant to end this way. That was all I could think. *It wasn't meant to end this way.* I felt so ashamed.

My friend Donna told me whatever I felt, whatever I wrote to relieve myself, *not* to push send. But I'm a passionate person—all Latinos are. Something touches our heart and it all pours out like a *chorro*—love or rage or despair or joy. Of course, I didn't listen. Of course I pushed that button. I knew it was a mistake, an irreversible one when I did it. But you hope, you know. Even at your wildest, your most childish, you hope.

I had never expected to feel this way again. Sitting there, reading that message over and over on the computer screen, I wished I never had.

For the past year, my son Luis has been making plans to have me move to Orlando where he lives now with his wife Sharon. She is expecting. He wants me to take early retirement to help them with the baby. Sharon is a lawyer and will want to keep on working. I told him, "I'm not retiring without full benefits." My friends think that it is ludicrous that I'm even considering for a minute giving up my job in the clinic to play nanny for my grandchild. I am a family medicine physician and work in a county public health clinic. I don't make a huge salary, but it is nothing to laugh at either. But I can understand Luis's reasoning. It is customary in our country. And my son doesn't think I have that long to live, that my talking about retirement is actually a form of denial. He also does not like the habits I have fallen into in the last ten years, the way I go to bed by six in the evening, seven at the latest, then get up at four to watch the *telenovelas* I have TiVoed before going to the clinic at seven.

"That's despair, Mamí."

"I love my job, my little Cariño who treats me as the center of his