

*White Lace  
and  
Promises*



**PEGGY HERRING**

“A little more, baby,” Betina said as she urged Maxine to lean back as far as possible. “That’s it.”

Maxine loved the way Betina touched her when time and space were at a premium. They knew how to please each other in almost any situation or location, and could get right to the point at a moment’s notice. A fleeting thought flashed in Maxine’s head as she imagined sharing this story with her best friend, Elaine Marcaluso, at breakfast. *She’ll never believe Betina had her hand in my pants on a carnival ride*, she thought with a chuckle.

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Peggy J. Herring

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## *For Stormy*

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## About the Author

Peggy J. Herring lives on seven acres of mesquite in south Texas with her cockatiel, hermit crabs and two wooden cats. When she isn't writing, Peggy enjoys fishing and traveling. She is the author of *Love's Harvest*, *Hot Check*, *Those Who Wait* from Naiad Press and *White Lace and Promises*, *Calm Before the Storm*, *The Comfort of Strangers* and *Beyond All Reason* from Bella Books. In addition, Peggy has contributed short stories to several Naiad anthologies, including *The First Time Ever*, *Dancing In the Dark*, *Lady Be Good*, *The Touch of Your Hand*, and *The Very Thought of You*. Peggy is currently working on a new romance titled *Midnight Rain* to be released by Bella Books in 2005.

*Once More With Feeling* and *To Have and To Hold*, originally published by Naiad Press, will also be available from Bella Books in 2004.

# Chapter One

Maxine saw the chaos up ahead and slowed down. Cars on both sides of the interstate were stopping and a few people began leaving their vehicles, running toward the accident. Maxine scrambled out of her car as well and hurried to help a teenage girl and a cowboy get an older man from a wrecked, smoking pickup. The teenager, thin, blond and looking like a thousand other young girls her age, had been a passenger in the truck, but seemed to be moving around just fine. The man who had been driving, however, wasn't as lucky. The smell of gasoline spurred everyone to get the injured out of the vehicles and as far away from the accident as possible.

"Put him over here," Maxine said, and moved out of the way while a swarm of good Samaritans carried the man to a grassy area on the side of the road. Giving the teenager another quick visual inspection, Maxine asked if she was hurt anywhere.

"Not really. I had my seat belt on."

“You a nurse or somethin’?” came a deep male voice beside them. It was the cowboy.

“Not exactly,” Maxine replied, making it a point not to mention that she was a doctor. She had no desire to be held responsible for anything that happened here, whether it be good or bad. Lawsuits for malpractice under any circumstances were almost automatic these days, but Maxine chose not to think about that at the moment. To not render aid when it was needed was unthinkable; however, she did find it a point of contention that for a woman to know anything about medicine, she would have to be a nurse instead of a doctor. It had been a pet peeve of hers since medical school, but she had mellowed over the years and had long since stopped being vocal about it. She raised an eyelid on the unconscious man as blood oozed from a gash on his head.

“Thanks for stopping anyway,” the cowboy said as he knelt down beside her. “You act like you know what you’re doin’. I wasn’t looking forward to starting that artificial ’semination stuff on this guy.”

At a glance, Maxine took in the cowboy’s new starched Wrangler jeans, a turquoise western shirt, a black cowboy hat, and shiny black boots. His belt buckle was the size of a hubcap and caught the sun just right, temporarily blinding everyone around him. He had a kind face and didn’t seem to mind getting blood on his outfit, so Maxine welcomed his help.

“It’s resuscitation,” she said as she checked the victim’s pulse. “It’s artificial resuscitation, not insemination. Can you see if someone has called 911? And check on anyone else who might need help in the other cars.”

“Is he dead?” the teenager asked. Her eyes were wide and her young face had drained of all color. “Is my dad gonna die?”

“He’s got a nasty bump on his head,” Maxine said.

The man moaned and reached a hand out for his daughter. She grabbed it and held on tightly. The heat from the truck, which was now fully engulfed in flames, made the accident seem a lot closer than it actually was, and frightening in its intensity. People shouted

warnings all around them and cars honked up and down the highway while impatient drivers sat parked in traffic. The wail of a siren could be heard in the distance and made Maxine feel better. A fire truck finally pulled up and added new chaos to the scene.

“More help’s on the way,” Maxine said to the teenager. Taking off her windbreaker, Maxine used the soft lining of a sleeve to get some of the blood out of the man’s eyes. The laceration on his head would require several stitches, but the blood flow was easing and he was breathing on his own. Hopefully, things looked much worse than they actually were.

“There’s a lady in the other car that ain’t doin’ so good,” the cowboy said as he squatted down beside them and nodded toward a badly crumpled Ford Escort.

“Okay. Thanks,” Maxine said. She smiled reassuringly at the young girl and gave her shoulder a squeeze. “Talk to him. Keep him awake.”

Maxine jogged over to the other car to see if there was anything she could do for its occupants. A police officer had arrived and a few minutes later the firemen had the pickup’s fire contained. By the time emergency medical services roared to a stop, Maxine had both injured people in the Escort as stable as she could get them under the circumstances. Once EMS arrived, Maxine’s medical obligations were over. The paramedics were in charge.

“Well, look at you!” Junior Stevens said as he flashed Maxine his toothy grin. He jumped out of the ambulance and let his partner get their equipment from the back. “What have we got here, Doc? Did you have to put ’em all in stirrups before you could examine anybody?” Knowing Dr. Maxine Weston as a popular obstetrician and gynecologist, Junior Stevens snickered at his own silly joke.

“Cute, Junior. Don’t forget how much your wife likes visiting me in my office.”

He laughed and then they both became serious again. Maxine pointed toward the mangled Escort. “A broken clavicle on the passenger and a bruised chest on the driver from the airbag. A concus-

sion for the male on the ground over there. He and his daughter were in the pickup. All yours now. Good luck.”

*Okay, she thought. I've turned the trauma victims over to the authorities, but I'd better stay around in case they need me.*

Junior nodded and smiled. “Hey, Doc,” he said before lowering his voice and leaning toward her to whisper, “you give me a call the next time you and your girlfriend want another little ride in my ambulance.” He winked and she could tell by his expression that he was sincere. Maxine smiled and had a feeling she was blushing.

She stayed and helped until all the injured were transported and traffic was finally beginning to move around the scene of the accident again. Tow trucks maneuvered through flares and broken glass to get the vehicles out of the way. A while later she found her windbreaker neatly folded on the grass. The blood on the sleeve had dried already. She tossed it over her shoulder with every intention of throwing it in the washer once she got home.

“Looks like everybody’s gonna make it,” the cowboy said when he reached his truck. He had bloodstains all over his new shirt. “You done good, ma’am.”

“Thanks,” Maxine said. “So did you.” She opened her car door as traffic continued to crawl past them.

“Hey,” he called. “What’s your name? I’ve got a clean shirt in my truck here. Let’s get somethin’ to eat somewhere and pat each other on the back.”

“I can’t. Sorry.”

The cowboy touched the brim of his hat and grinned. “Artificial resuscitation,” he said, careful to pronounce each word correctly. “Not insemination. I got confused in all the excitement earlier and said the wrong thing.”

Maxine chuckled. “So maybe the guy didn’t have a concussion after all. Maybe he just passed out once he heard what you had in mind for him.”

The cowboy shrugged and laughed. “Yeah, maybe.”



“As long as you were out there saving lives, I guess it’s okay that you’re late,” Betina said in that teasing tone she had sometimes.

Maxine watched her lover walk around their bedroom with nothing on but black spiked heels and black bikini underwear. Betina’s breasts were large and firm, and Maxine could easily imagine herself spending the rest of her life propped up in bed watching Betina rummage through closets and dresser drawers looking for the right thing to wear. It literally took Betina hours to get dressed sometimes, and Maxine would bet money that Betina had been wearing exactly what she had on for a good part of the afternoon.

“Did you check your desk calendar at the office today?” Betina asked sweetly.

Maxine laughed. Betina had been in Maxine’s office earlier in the week and had written reminders about Valentine’s Day on her calendar. Maxine stuck her foot out when Betina passed close by the bed.

“I’ll remember. I’ll remember,” Maxine said. “I’ve got something interesting already planned for us.”

“Is Woody covering for you?” Betina asked as she let Maxine’s foot slowly work its way up her thigh. “I don’t want you getting paged while we’re out doing whatever it is you’ve got planned.”

“I’ve taken care of it already.” Their eyes met and Maxine could see that little twinkling look Betina always got when she was aroused. “But it means I’m covering for him on Easter, so no fair giving me a hard time when the Easter Bunny doesn’t bring you new toys in a timely manner this year, okay?”

Betina eased Maxine back on the bed and straddled her body. “Then I’ll just have to leave little bunny-notes on your calendar a lot earlier than usual, now won’t I?”

With those wonderful breasts dangling in front of her face, Maxine imagined she already knew what heaven was like. Heaven had to be a place with two giant breasts waiting there to greet you, with well-defined nipples and a collective softness that begged for the chance to nurture and comfort. *Yes, indeed*, Maxine thought. *Heaven will have big breasts there waiting for me someday.*

As Betina slowly lowered herself onto Maxine's eager body, she smiled down at her and then sighed heavily as Maxine's tongue showed its appreciation and outlined a nipple before taking it into her warm, moist mouth.

"Oh, baby," Betina cooed. "Tell me where you're taking me tomorrow for Valentine's Day."

"It's a surprise," Maxine said, slipping her hand inside Betina's panties. "But something you've always wanted to do."

Betina's smile was slow and playful. "Did your friend with the helicopter come through this time?"

"Uh . . . no," Maxine said. "I'm still working on that one. This is something else, but it's a surprise." She found her lover to be very wet and continuing to coo. Betina lay on her side and opened her legs automatically as Maxine kissed her. That was one of the things Maxine loved most about her—the way Betina was constantly ready to make love no matter what the circumstances were or where the two of them happened to be. Sex was more than a longing or craving or a bodily response. For Betina sex seemed to be the very essence of who she was—a primal need no different than eating or breathing. Everything she did and everything she said held a hint of sensuality laced with humor and a dash of theatrics. In her profession as a board certified hair colorist, cosmetologist, and barber, male clients were fascinated by her, and she could make them look their best in no time. On the other hand, most straight women tried hard to dislike her, but Betina was personable and disarmingly clever and down to earth. She had what some referred to as charisma. There was no way to explain what exactly it was that drew people to her, but everyone who knew her had to admit that Betina had a *something* that could not be denied. Dr. Maxine Weston had recognized it right away and in the beginning, had set out to learn as much as she could.

Opening her legs further, Betina whispered, "Am I wet?"

"You're always wet."

"Just for you, baby," Betina said. She pulled Maxine's head to her breasts and Maxine found a nipple.

Remembering that the blinds in their bedroom were open, Maxine felt a new surge of arousal.

Betina worked at getting Maxine undressed while keeping her fingers busy between Betina's legs. The two of them were perfect for each other and made a conscious effort to keep their sexual exploits as safe and exciting as possible. Maxine was certain there wasn't a neighbor within a four-house radius of them who didn't have a telescope focused on their bedroom most evenings. Their blinds were always open and lights were usually on whenever they made love, and as a result they had *very* friendly neighbors. Maxine and Betina weren't promiscuous per se, just uninhibited about showing off their bodies. They didn't care who saw them or what sort of pleasure anyone else derived from what the two of them did together. They were only there to please each other. Everyone else was on their own.

In a voice thick with arousal as she squeezed her legs together trapping Maxine's fingers inside, Betina asked, "If we're not doing it in a helicopter, then what's my surprise?"

Maxine eased her fingers in and out and renewed a gentle stroking as she nuzzled Betina's neck. "If I tell you now it won't be a surprise." She kissed her throat and bare shoulder. "But we'll be up in the air while we're doing it. How does that sound?"