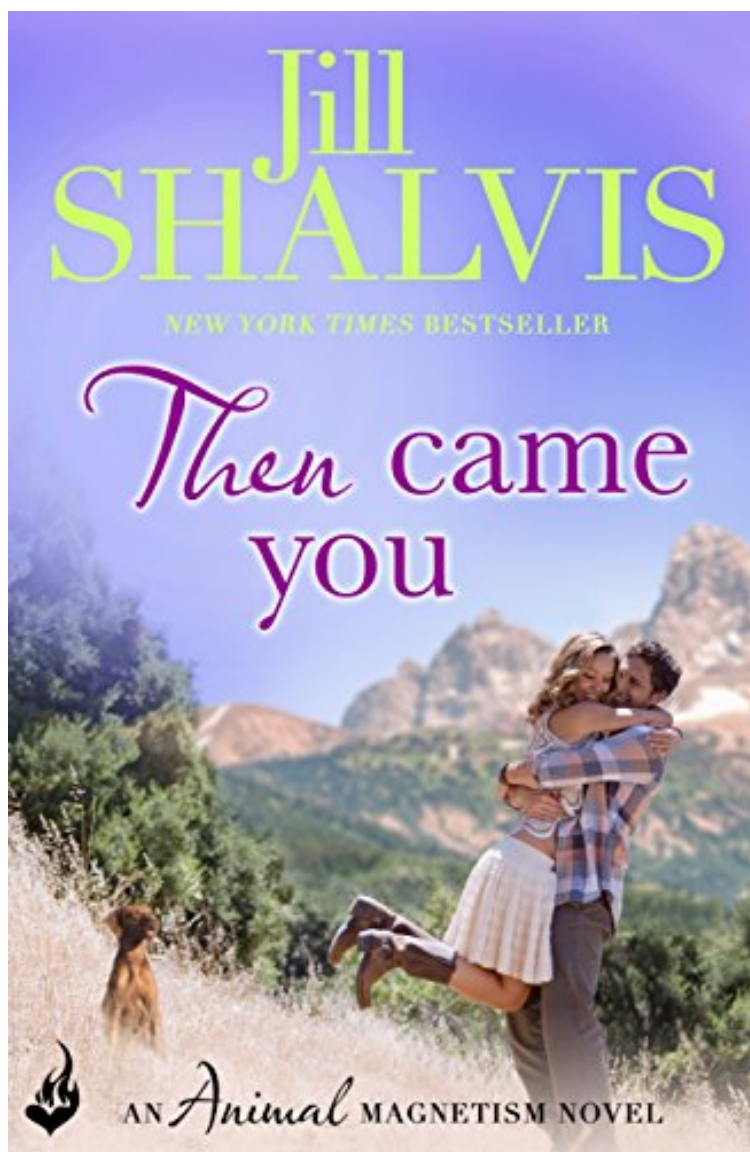


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Then Came You: Animal Magnetism Book 5



Par Jill Shalvis

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe fifth in the sexy, heartwarming Animal Magnetism series from the New York Times bestselling author of the Cedar Ridge and Lucky Harbor series. Fans of Bella Andre, Robyn Carr and Rachel Gibson will adore these romances with Jill's irresistible combination of humour and romance. Veterinary intern Emily can't believe she wound up in the small town of Sunshine, Idaho, instead of the Los Angeles clinic she had always imagined. Now she has to put her plans to move to LA on hold for a year while she fulfils the obligation of her vet school scholarship. Then Wyatt, her gorgeous one-night stand from a Reno vet conference, introduces himself as her new boss. And Emily is just as drawn to his seductive looks and quiet strength as she was on that very steamy night. She soon learns that Wyatt isn't just a laid-

back doctor, but a delicious alpha male tempting her away from her carefully laid-out plans...Want more sexy, fun romance? Return to Sunshine, Idaho for more of the captivating Animal Magnetism series, visit spellbinding Lucky Harbor or take a trip to Cedar Ridge's unforgettable Colorado Mountains in Jill's other bestselling series. ExtraitOneI wanted to thank you for having me, Dr. Connelly Emily Stevens broke off and shook her head. Not quite right. She tightened her grip on the steering wheel in the parking lot of her new job. I really hope to make a positive impact Nope, even worse. No one liked a brownnoser. She cleared her throat, looked into her rearview mirror and forced a smile. Im thrilled to be stuck in West Nowhere, USA. Your own fault. She drew in a deep breath, applied lip gloss because everyone knew that was the same thing as courage and got out of the car. It was early autumn, and the chill in the early morning air only served to remind her just how far from Los Angeles she really was. She looked around, taking in the towering, intimidating Bitterroot mountain range, backdropping what could only be described as a vast, wide open valley of the most pristine, remote land of meandering rivers and lakes shed ever seen. Emily figured it was filled with bears and wild mountain lions, and probably Bigfoot for all she knew. Having come from the land of freeway overpasses and interchanges, the wildest animals shed ever seen were of the two-legged variety. In front of her was Belle Haven, a wood and glass building housing an animal center run by Dr. Dell Connelly and his two brothers, Brady and Adam. If only Belle Haven had been her number one choice on her list of dream jobs. Or even last. But it hadnt been on her list at all. She sucked in a breath. She could do this.

She had to do this. In her first year of vet school, shed accepted one of only two available grants. The repayment was a year of internship at either of the two animal centers whod donated the money, and she always paid her debts. Shed hoped for L.A., not Sunshine, Idaho, but thats what happened when your moms multiple sclerosis flared up right before you left for college and you ended up doing school half-assed while trying to keep the rest of your life together the other scholarship recipient got their first choice. Shit happened, and Emily knew that better than most. Shit happened, people got sick and died, you picked yourself up and kept going. What was one year anyway? And besides, by tonight it would only be three hundred and sixty four days left . . . Pulling out her phone, she accessed her calendar, the one shed labeled The Plan. It kept her sane, listing everything that had to be done, including her goals. More recently shed added a list of the pros and cons of Idaho, though so far only the con column had anything in it. Under todays goal shed typed: make a good impression. Huh. Not nearly as helpful as shed hoped. Next time shed have to be more specific. She slipped the phone back into her pocket and kept moving. The property was immense. Besides the big, main building, there was a barn, and pens off to the side. There were three guys in the first pen, two of them working a few horses, one leaning against the fence taking notes. All looking like theyd walked off a Marlboro Man photo shoot. Not something she saw in L.A. every day . . . She pulled back out her phone and added her first check to the pro column hot guys. She was still smiling when she entered the front doors to a large waiting room area. Sprawled out in various positions on the floor were a golden retriever, a collie mix, two pissed off cats in carriers, and . . . a Shetland pony. The pony stood next to a chair, calm as you please, while the woman holding his reins sat flipping through the latest Womens Journal. Not something you saw every day . . . The front counter was a wide half circle, behind which was a woman working two computers and her phone at the same time. She was a strawberry blonde, beautiful, cool as a cucumber as she ran her world. A parrot was perched on her printer and a cat dozed in her lap. This tugged another smile out of Emily. Animals owned her heart, always had. Hot guys and animals . . . a damn fine combination. Feeling better, and far more confident, she moved toward the counter. The biggest St. Bernard shed ever seen came around from behind it and gave her a friendly wuff. Emily patted it on the head, and the St. Bernard wuffed again. Gertie wants you to pay the toll, the receptionist said, nodding to the jar of doggie treats on the counter. Emily gamefully pulled one from the jar and offered it to Gertie. The dog took it, slobbered her thanks, and lumbered back around the counter, where she thudded to the floor, making the ground shake. Graceful Gertie, the receptionist said with a laugh. Wuff, said Gertie. Wuff! said the parrot in a perfect imitation of the dog. The receptionist smiled. No cookies for you, Peanut. Boner, Peanut said. The woman slid the parrot a long look. Weve discussed your language. Peanut gave a startlingly human sounding sigh and fell silent. The receptionist turned back to Emily with a smile. How can I help you? Im Emily Stevens, the new intern. Oh good. She looked vastly relieved. Dells been asking every five seconds if youre here yet. Its been chaotic since Olivia left to have her baby last month. A man stuck his head in from a hallway off to the left. Emily recognized him as one of the guys from out front, the one whod been taking notes. She here yet? he asked. As a matter of fact, the receptionist said, and pointed to Emily. Emily, meet Dr. Dell Connelly, she said. Great to have you, he said. He had the coloring of a Native American, with dark eyes that cut straight to

hers. Sorry ahead of time, but were jumping right into the fire this morning. This only made her feel even more comfortable. I live in the fire, she said. Perfect. We need two extra hands in delivery. Ill catch up with you later on everything else. He gestured for her to go down the hall. So down the hall she went. She passed a few exam rooms, an x-ray room, what looked like a staff room, and then a surgical room. The back door was opened, flapping in the wind. Hes in the last pen, someone in scrubs said, pointing outside. Feeling a little bit like Alice in Wonderland must have after shed fallen down the rabbit hole, Emily headed out the back door and to the last pen. A man was there, on his knees, at the back end of a sheep. He wore cargo pants and a doctors coat over broad shoulders, his wavy sun-kissed brown hair a few weeks past needing a cut. There was something oddly familiar about it, something familiar about him. The sheeps head was down, her belly was clearly swollen with pregnancy, her sides heaving. Youre doing great, Lulu, he murmured, stroking her sides. Such a good, sweet girl. Lulu bleated weakly. I know, baby, the man said. Almost there, promise. His tone changed then, still low, but now he was talking to Emily. Welcome, New Girl. Can you come closer, or are you going to help by osmosis? At the sound of his voice, Emily felt the shock of familiarity reverberate through her as she moved into the pen. Glove up, he said, still not taking his eyes off his patient. Back pocket. Keeping his hands on the sheep, he elbowed his jacket off one hip. Emily stared at his butt, now revealed. It was a great butt, as far as they went. Really great. Um We doing this today? he asked. Biting her lower lip, she reached out and snagged the gloves from the back pocket of his cargoes, doing her best not to cop an accidental feel while she was at it. Good, he said. Now get ready to help catch. She pulled on the birthing gloves as the sheep emitted another bleat, this one sounding so pain filled that she winced in commiseration with mama sheep. Hurry up, New Girl, the guy said. Find your sea legs. Poor Lulu here isnt going to wait for you. Emily eyed the muck in the pen, and then her new pants suit, which had been bought with the Beverly Hills clinic in mind, where shed envisioned herself treating the pets to the stars and looking glam while doing it. Shit happened. He moved over to make room for her and she kneeled at his side in time to literally catch the baby sheep and lower it to the ground. The next half hour was a bit of a blur. The second lamb arrived in the wrong position, so she found herself up to her elbow in sheep. Literally. Close your eyes, her mentor instructed. She did, and he was right. It was much easier to see with her hands when her eyes were closed. The uterus tamped down hard on her arm, hard enough to bruise for certain, but she managed to guide the baby out. She stared down at the wiggly mass of goop and felt her heart stutter with the miracle of birth. They helped Mama get her babies cleaned up, helped the babies get on all four wobbly, stick-thin legs, watching as they took their first sips from Mama. Covered in hay and muck, and sweating like crazy, Emilys eyes misted with the beauty of it all. Then she became aware that the man next to her had gone still. She felt the weight of his gaze. Yeah. At some point in the past half hour hed figured it out, too. Taking a deep breath, she looked up and met his familiar whiskey-colored eyes, which were narrowed at her in a squint. He was as filthy as she, but somehow he still looked hot as hell. He opened his mouth to say something just as someone joined them. Dr. Connelly crouched low at her other side, grinning at the sheep. Nicely done, Lulu. No longer in pain, Lulu bleated happily at the praise. He turned to Emily next. Sorry we didnt get acquainted before we threw you to the wolves. Im Dell Connelly. Extremely aware of the man still on his knees next to her, staring openly at her now, Emily started to thrust out her very messy, still-gloved hand to Dell. Oops Sorry. Dell smiled. No worries. I wanted to thank you for having me here, Dr. Connelly, she said, struggling to remove the gloves. She was about as graceful as Gertie. Dell, he corrected, and eyed her new and now filthy business suit with a quirk of his lips. Were pretty casual here. Try jeans tomorrow. He nodded to the man on the other side of her, the one whod carefully settled the new lambs with their mother. Emily could see his T-shirt beneath the opened doctor coat now, stretched over his broad chest, loose over his abs. The shirt said: Trust Me, Im a Vet. So you met Dr. Wyatt Stone, Dell said. Hes going to be your immediate supervisor for the duration of your internship, and youll be shadowing him. Id trust him with my life, and certainly to have my back in any situation that arises here, and you can, too. Oh boy. With no choice but to actually finally face this head-on, she looked Wyatt in the eyes. Oh yeah, it was him. Her one and only one-night stand from her one and only vet conference three months ago in Reno. Two Wyatt was exactly as Emily remembered flat-out, dead sexy. Dammit. He was built all big and rugged and tough. Great eyes, great smile, both of which advertised that he was up for anything, especially trouble. While he squinted those mesmerizing eyes at her, Dell snorted and shook his head. You lost your glasses again? Man, Jades gonna staple them onto your nose. Theyre in my coat pocket, Wyatt said, his voice sliding with smooth heat over Emilys every single female nerve ending. She hadnt forgotten the gruff huskiness of it in her ear, whispering all sorts of naughty promises of what he planned to do to her next. And hed kept every

promise. Every. Single. One. All night long . . . She must have made some sound because both men raised their brows. She bit her lip and shook her head. Nothing. Or at least nothing she wanted to share with the class.

Especially since she was remembering how her supervisor felt buried deep inside her body. Dell reached forward and patted Wyatts pec, pulling out a pair of glasses, shoving them on for him, adding a face shove while he was at it. It was a guy thing to do and spoke volumes about how well they knew each other. Wyatt blinked, presumably putting his world into sharp focus. Then he took another long, careful look at Emily and his mouth went grim. He could join her club. This was the stuff nightmares were made of. Going to school in your Spiderman pjs. Giving a public speech naked. And discovering youd accidentally slept with your boss. She got to her feet and backed up, right into the fence. Yep, graceful to the end, that was her. Dell rose to his full height. You okay? Yes, I just have to . . . She put her hands out, letting the two men one a little confused, the other completely flummoxed assume she needed to wash up. Which she did. And then she needed a quick escape out of here and a one-way ticket to Timbuktu. She hustled into the clinic and straight into the first room she came to. A small bathroom. Perfect. There she scrubbed up, staring at herself in the mirror over the sink. Good going, Doc. You slept with a perfect stranger for the first time in your entire life and now you have to look at him every day for a year. Not that that was going to be a hardship. She tapped a second round of soap out of the dispenser and scrubbed up some more. It was Reno, Nevadas fault, she decided. It had been her first vet conference, and shed loved it. Shed just graduated, been high on that and the joy of her future, and for the first time since her mom had died, shed decided to let her hair down. And oh boy had she done just that. Shed had the night of her entire life; hot, torrid, amazing sex, but the next morning when shed left his hotel room and made the walk of shame back to hers, wearing her clothes from the night before, heels in hand, shed been embarrassed at her lack of control. She, the woman who had to interview dentists before choosing one, she who couldnt buy a new pair of shoes or an outfit without thinking about it at least overnight, had slept with a perfect stranger. Except now he wasnt going to be a stranger at all. Karma was such a bitch. Behind her, the bathroom door opened. With a surprised squeak, she quickly whirled around. Im in here! I know, Wyatt said. The room was so small that his body bumped into hers when he closed the door. The last time this had happened, shed ended up in his bed. Naked. Step back, she said in a voice that wasnt nearly strong enough. He didnt step back. To be fair to him, he couldnt. But he didnt have to get closer which is exactly what he did. So much closer that she could have taken his pulse. With her mouth. He was wearing glasses and though shed never given it an ounce of thought before, a guy in glasses was sexy as hell. Or maybe it was just this guy. He dropped his birthing gloves in the trash, and then washed and dried his hands, his gaze holding hers prisoner in the mirror the entire time. Then he turned to face her and backed her into the wall. One of his hands settled beside her head, the other by her hip, trapping her in. Its really you. She gave him a little push, but did the big lug move? No. Im using the facilities here, Wyatt. Good to know. That Im using the facilities? That you remember my name. It was just about the only thing she did know about him, and that hed pointed it out only emphasized how big a mistake shed made. And if she was regretting it, sleeping with him, how must he feel? She knew why shed done it, but why had he? What kind of a guy picked up a woman in a hotel bar at a vet conference? Okay, so just about every guy on the planet would be up for that. But still . . . She was close enough that when she tilted her head up to stare at him, a strand of her hair stuck to the stubble on his jaw. She stared at it, at the way his mouth quirked slightly, revealing an easy humor. And she realized maybe she knew a little bit more about him than just his name. Thanks to the past hour, she also knew he was a vet like her, and a really good one at that. He was early thirties-ish, definitely young enough that the faint lines fanning out from his eyes were clearly from the sun and laughter, not age. This wasnt the problem. The problem was the other stuff she knew about him, things no one should know about people they worked with. Like the fact that he kissed amazingly. And he did . . . other things amazingly too. He liked to talk when he was in bed. Dirty talk that had shockingly turned her on. With nothing more than his voice, hed been able to coax her into forgetting everything except what hed been doing to her. And shed liked what hed done to her. A lot. Hed been an intuitive, giving, demanding, fantastic lover, and now she worked for him. Good sweet baby Jesus. Those whisky eyes on hers, he hit the bathroom lock, the sound of the bolt sliding into place as loud as her accelerated breathing. Oh, no, she said, shaking her head. No way. They werent going to have a second one-night stand no matter how hard her nipples had gone. Hed already wielded his magic over her, with nothing more than that low-pitched voice and sex-on-a-stick smile. They were over and done. Done. Done. Done. Absolutely not doing it again. He grinned. It? You know what I mean. She poked him in the pec, momentarily distracted by how firm it was. And how is it you work here? Are you stalking me? She gasped as another thought occurred to her.

Did you guys take me on because of Oh my God. Is it because Ishe lowered her voice into a horrified whispergot naked with you on the first date?His lips twitched. Sweetness, that wasnt a date. His voice went a little dry. But yeah, I found you so irresistible in Reno that I hired a PI, got your last name and where your internship would be, and then applied to the same place to have a job as your supervisor all in order to continue having sex with you.Okay, she said slowly, staring up at him. Youre right. Im being ridiculous. Now that she was thinking again, logic thankfully took over. Shed accepted this internship long before shed ever gone to Reno. Sorry about that.Yeah, you almost overreacted there for a minute, he said on a smile.Ha. But she was overreacting to his smile, holy cow. He hadnt shaved that morning, and she had good reason to know that the stubble on his sexy jaw wasnt too soft or too rough, but juuuust right. She closed her eyes and tried to shake off that memory, but it was far more difficult than shed have thought possible. I have a plan, she said. A life plan. And this isnt on it. You arent on it.Getting back home to L.A. was on it. Marrying her college study partner John was on itthough probably it would help if she was actually dating him for real instead of their vague promise to maybe reconnect in Los Angeles once hed passed the bar exam. Paying off her college debt and buying her dad a house was also on her plan. As was getting herself a nice, comfortable, stress-free life. The only thing regarding Idaho on the plan was the three-hundred-and-sixty-four-day countdown she had going.Wyatt had been watching her think too hard and his smile faded at whatever he saw on her face. Your academics and work ethic earned you this internship, Emily. What happened in Renostays in Reno? she asked hopefully.He stared down at her for a long beat, and then nodded slowly. If thats how you want to play it.So . . . its my call? she asked, needing the verification.Your call.Really?Im a lot of things, he said. Not all of them good, but if I give my word, then its gold.She nodded, and some of her relief must have shown because he cocked his head at her, looking genuinely surprised. What did you think I was going to do? he wanted to know. Take out an ad in the newspaper about our night?Oh God. Sunshine has a newspaper?Well, no, he said. But theres a bulletin board outside the Stop And Go. Good as gospel.She dropped her head and laughed a little, and then realized her forehead was on his chest. His hard chest. She quickly lifted her face. Im sorry. I shouldnt have touched you.His eyes darkened a little bit, and she knew he was remembering the other things shed touched that night.And kissed . . .Oh this was bad. Very, very bad.

We have to go back to being strangers, she said.He just stared at her.We are strangers, she said.Yeah. Strangers who know what each others O-face looks likeShe covered his mouth but it was too late. And great, now she was sweating again. We wouldnt know that, she said through her teeth, except someoneinsisted on keeping the lights on!He smiled, wrapped his fingers around her wrist and pulled her hand from his mouth. I like the visuals.And there went the bones in her legs. Okay, she said shakily. Were going to need rules.He grinned. Like?No. No smiling! These arent fun rules.Damn.She forgot about the no touching, and poked him in the sinewy pec again. Her finger practically bounced back. One of the rules is that you cant look at me like that, she said. We arent going to repeat what happened in Reno.He laughed softly. Itd be hard to repeat it since you cant even say what it is.Im serious! I work under you, thats it She broke off at his wicked expression and realized that shed sounded . . . dirty. You know what I mean! She said this in no uncertain terms, firmly, and she meant it. Or, more accurately, she wanted to mean it. Shed have to work on that. So you can just keep those sexy looks to yourself.Sexy looks?Like he didnt know. Yes!All right, he said in his slow, warm voice. Ill stop giving you sexy looks. Anything else?We ignore what happened in Reno. It never happened. We stay professional because Belle Haven is my job, my livelihood.His smile faded. Were in accord there.She let out a breath of relief. They could do this. Okay, good. Ill go out there first. She started to turn to go around him, but there wasnt room.Here, he said, and his hands went to her hips as he turned, too, trying to make space.Now they were sandwiched up against each other and she sucked in a breath.Were going to have to stop meeting like this, he said, good humor in his voice.If you werent so big, it wouldnt be a problem.He gave another sexy low laugh and she replayed her words, heard the unintentional innuendo, and blushed. Well, hell. He was big. Everywhere. And in spite of being knees deep in muck not fifteen minutes ago, he smelled good. Really good. Warm and sexy good, which was just damn unfair. Are you doing this on purpose? she asked.He gave her a look of utter innocence. Doing what?Blocking the door!Why would I do that? he asked.She closed her eyes, sucked in a breath, and squeezed past him, brushing her breasts against his chest, her thighs to his, and everything in betweenall of which contracted hopefullyas she finally got to the door.Emily.She didnt look back. I think weve said everything there is to be said, Dr. Stone. I really think its best if we completely ignore each other for now.I get that, but youve got a . . .She felt the brush of his fingers at her ass, and she craned her neck and glared at him in disbelief. Are you serious? We just agreed that thisshe waggled a finger between themnever happened. God help her but she couldnt do this without his

cooperation. That's the plan. Remember the plan. Stick to the plan. He stared at her for a beat through those sexy glasses, then lifted his hands in surrender. Turning away, she peeked out the door. Seeing no one, she stealthily slid out and took a deep breath. Shook it off. Just a minor setback on The Plan she told herself. Just a little hiccup, and a huge mark in the con column of Sunshine. About six-foot-two-inches huge. Trying to be cool, she walked down the hallway, and had just passed the staff room when the woman from the front desk stuck her head out. Hey there, she said. I didn't get to introduce myself before. I'm Jade Connelly. Emily shook her hand. Are you related to Dr. Connelly? Married him. Did you know you have a birthing glove stuck to your ass? Three Bemused, feeling a little bit like he'd been hit by a tornado a cute, feisty, sexy-as-hell tornado named Emily, Wyatt stepped into the hallway. He was just in time to catch sight of Jade pointing out what he'd tried to tell Emily that she had a birthing glove stuck to her very sweet ass. Her own hands on that sweet ass, she was twisting around to try to see herself. She went still, and then yanked off the glove. She stared down at it, and then, from the length of the hallway, lifted her head and caught his gaze. He raised a brow. She blushed. Someone should probably point out to her that in order to ignore someone properly, you didn't blush every time you caught sight of that someone. But it wouldn't be him, since they weren't going to talk. Not about their personal lives, and certainly not about that night. And yet he remembered it, every detail. Sometimes he'd flash to the feel of her lips on his skin, her breath warm on his neck, her bare legs wrapped low and tight around his back, hardened nipples pressed to his chest as she arched up into him. And the sound of her sweet, needy gasp in his ear on that first thrust. . . He blew out a breath and shook it off. He knew what she wanted from him, and he agreed. They needed to ignore what'd happened in Reno, for lots of reasons, not the least of which was that like her, working at Belle Haven was everything to him. No way in hell would he put it in jeopardy. He knew how to be professional, and for both of their sakes, that's exactly what he'd be. The center's tech, Mike, came down the hall, his eyes going to Emily. Pretty, he said to Wyatt. A good vet, Wyatt said. Mike smiled. Even better. He handed over a file. Exam room two. First timer. Has a . . . unique problem. Wyatt slid him a look. Care to share? From exam room one came the sounds of a scuffle, and then Dells voice calling out for Mike. Oh shit, Mike said. Gotta go. Hey, what's the unique problem? But Mike was gone. Instead, Emily was moving back toward him. Someone, probably Jade, ruler of their universe here at Belle Haven, had given her a lab coat to put on over her suit. He wasn't sure why she'd been in a suit in the first place when her job was wading knee deep in questionable shit all day, but hell, he had sisters, two of them, both bat-shit crazy, so he knew better than to question a woman's clothing choice. Besides, she'd looked sexy as hell in her fancy suit, with her pretty blazer offering peek-a-boo hints of some lace thing beneath, as she helped Lulu give birth. In general, Wyatt didn't have a type of woman. For him it was about a certain gleam in her eye, a spark that said she knew life was hard as hell but that it could also be fun as hell, and she could make it work in either scenario. Right now the look in Emily's eyes was bring it on, and damn if he didn't like that, too. He tore his eyes off her and opened the patient file in his hands. He read Mike's pre-report and smiled. What is it? she asked as he came to a stop before her. Gonna be fun. He handed her the file and walked into the exam room, hearing Emily's sharp intake of air behind him. She was a fast reader. Lady was a year-old Tibetan mastiff. She was sitting next to her owner, Sally Feinstein, humping Sally's leg. Sally was calmly ignoring this behavior, thumbing through Facebook on her phone. At the sight of Wyatt and Emily, Sally put her phone aside and gestured to her hundred-pound dog who looked twice that at least, thanks to her crazy, thick fur. I'm on a road trip to my parents house down south. I've only had Lady about two weeks. They've never met her before, and I can't take her there while she's doing this to . . . everything. Lady had switched from Sally's leg to the table leg. Wyatt crouched low and introduced himself to Lady by offering his fist for her to sniff. Lady took a polite sniff, licked his knuckles, and went back to her humping. I try to ignore her, Sally said. I didn't want to reward this embarrassing behavior by bringing attention to it. Jade must have briefed Emily on protocol because she pulled a pen from her coat pocket and began to ask Sally the usual questions about their patient. What did Lady eat, had Lady been exhibiting any odd behavior lately, etc. I call trying to screw my mailbox odd behavior, Sally said. You've got to fix this. Emily made a note. She even humped my pastor, Sally said, distressed. She humped the little old lady who lives next door. She humped my other neighbors prized gardenias, and her husband nearly shot Lady. Emily made some more notes. Wyatt listened to the ongoing conversation with one ear while he sat next to Lady and began to examine her. He found the problem in about ten seconds. Could it be some sort of odd vitamin deficiency? Sally asked hopefully. That seems unlikely, Emily said, and put down the file. She crouched at Wyatt's side, meeting his gaze. He gestured for her to go ahead and make her own assessment. She looked at him for a long beat, and he knew he hadn't completely hidden his good humor from her because her eyes narrowed. Smart girl. He

waited as she turned her attention to Lady, examining her in the same manner he had thoroughly. So he saw the exact second she realized what he'd already discovered. Her mouth curved, then her teeth chewed into that bottom lip to try to hold it back, but her hazel eyes were laughing when they met his across the length of Lady's body. The moment was brief but oddly electrifying, broken when Sally dropped to her knees beside them. What is it? she asked, sounding deeply concerned. Mrs. Feinstein, Emily said. You said you adopted Lady two weeks ago? Yes, I've got a friend whose got a cousin whose sister-in-law's brother breeds Tibetan mastiffs. Lady was the last in a long line of winning show dogs. I don't have her paperwork yet. It's been delayed for some reason. It doesn't matter. I'm not going to show her, no matter how expensive she was. I just love the breed because they look like teddy bears. No ugly reproductive parts showing all the time. She shuddered distastefully. Emily bit her lip harder. Wyatt rubbed Lady's tummy, and the dog went boneless on its back, spread eagle. Lady did indeed resemble a teddy bear. In fact there was so much hair everywhere the dog might have been a stuffed animal from a child's room. Except for the huge erection between its hind legs, sticking straight up in the air. Sally stared at it. What in the Sam Hill is that? A penis, Wyatt said. I was really hoping you were going to say tumor, Sally said. She paused. Why does my girl dog have a penis? Lady isn't a female. And there doesn't appear to be a thing wrong with him other than he hasn't been neutered. Sally shifted her shocked gaze from dog to vet. Lady's not a she. Not in the slightest. Tired of being flat on his back, Lady leapt to his feet and panted happily at them. Then he tried to hump Emily. Wyatt rose, pulled Emily up with him, and then Sally. Lady wasn't bothered by being disrupted in mid-hump. He went back to dating the chair. We could take care of this for you, Wyatt told Sally. Dr. Connelly is doing the surgeries today, I could check and see if there's an opening for Lady. Good gracious, she said faintly, a hand to her heart, still staring down at Lady like she'd just discovered she was the owner of a green-striped pig. Yes, please. I'd like to get this . . . taken care of. * * * Wyatt took Emily through two straight hours of patients before giving them a moment to breathe in the staff room, where they inhaled the plate of sandwiches Jade had put out for them. They stood at the counter, and though Wyatt didn't know about Emily, he was giving the whole ignoring her thing a good ol' college try. Mike broke their uneasy silence when he poked his head in and held out their next file. Wyatt gestured for Emily to take it. She reached out for it and a birthing glove fell from beneath her white lab coat. Mike grinned. You don't have to hoard those, Doc, we keep 'em in every exam room. When he was gone, Emily looked at Wyatt. You could have told me I had another stuck to my butt. That would've suggested that I'd looked at your butt. She pulled off her coat and one last glove fell from her. She made a noise from deep in her throat that suggested she blamed him. This wasn't a surprise. Something else having sisters had taught him blame was easily assigned to the nearest male in the room. They went back to work and saw twenty-seven more patients before the end of the day. He sent an exhausted Emily home with the rest of the support staff, and then went to Dell's office, where Dell and Adam were waiting on him. Adam was Dell's brother, and while not a vet, he helped run Belle Haven. He was a search and rescue expert, an SR instructor, and taught all the local dog obedience classes. How did the new girl do today? Dell asked. She's smart, Wyatt said. Dell nodded. And? Sweet. Cute. Hot . . . Good with people and animals, he added. Dell smiled. We already know all that, it's why we took her. Tell me something I don't know. She's a quick thinker, and knows her stuff when it came to the domestic animals. Dell nodded. Adam hadn't moved. He remained sprawled back in his chair, as still as a cat, just as intelligent as his brother. But? he said. I already know, Dell said. We all know. She's not used to this kind of work, she's a city vet. She startled when you treated Sergeant and he nearly took off her hand. Sergeant was a bad-tempered sheep who'd come in today with a stomachache. Sergeant has nearly taken off all our hands at one point or another, Wyatt said. How about Crazy Charlie? Dell asked. He throw her off her game? Crazy Charlie had come in with his even crazier parrot who tended to shout all sorts of racial obscenities. Like owner, like parrot. Turned out, Emily wasn't all that good at corralling her emotions. Annoyance, embarrassment, fear. Wyatt had seen each and every one of them as she felt them. So had everyone else. She was going to have to do better there. She's finding her footing, he said. Adam arched a brow, but didn't say a word. Dell smiled. You're defending her. Wyatt shrugged. You like her, too, or she wouldn't be here. You already know she was worth it. Dell nodded. But it's good to know you feel the same. Yeah, Wyatt said. I feel the same. Aware of Adam's quiet, knowing gaze, he left and went to his office to handle the mountain of paperwork waiting for him. He was still at work at seven o'clock, stomach growling, hunched over his computer when his cell phone buzzed an incoming text from Zoe, his older sister. So as it turns out, the gas stove isn't working. No worries, the fire department said all is well now. Jesus. He grabbed his keys and headed out. Someday in the near future, home would be the house he built on the land he'd purchased earlier in the year ten acres out near the lake on the outskirts of town. For

now, home was the place he and his two sisters Darcy and Zoe shared, the house that the three of them had inherited from their grandparents. And home might actually be the wrong word. Money pit. Yeah, money pit was definitely right. The huge, rambling old Victorian was falling off its axis, but it was the only home the three of them had ever known. The plan was to fix it up just enough to get out from beneath it. They'd divide the profits, and each would go on their merry way with their lives. But it had been a year and they were still stuck with each other. Zoe was the oldest at thirty-two. The classic oldest, she was driven, bossy, and a perfectionist. Wyatt, the middle child, was only eleven months behind her, and the baby, Darcy, had just turned twenty-six and . . . well, she was as crazy as they came. Not three-day-emergency-hold crazy so much as . . . uncontrolled, uninhibited, and scary as hell. The three of them had grown up quickly, and at the mercy of their foreign diplomat parents, whose jobs had taken them all over the world. Liberia for two years. Bolivia for three. Jordan. Hungary. Indonesia . . . It was mostly a blur now, but the lifestyle of being ripped away from everything you knew every few years, or even every few months, had left its toll in varying ways on each of them. In Wyatt's case, all he'd ever dreamed about was putting down roots and staying somewhere long enough to be on a sports team, and maybe get a pet while he was at it. The bright side to his early years had been his grandparents. Born and raised in Sunshine, they'd never left. He and his sisters had often been sent here for summers. Though both grandparents were gone now, they'd left their legacy the deed to the money pit. The deed was worth squat. The house was worth squat. But the memories of the time spent here was deeply rooted, and as the commercial went priceless. After all the years of forced upheaval, Wyatt was here in Sunshine to stay. He pulled into the driveway just as the sun was setting behind the Bitterroot mountains. There was nothing like fall in the mountains. A brilliant cornucopia of colors in every hue flashed beneath the last of the sun's rays. He parked his truck and noted that there were no fire trucks. A bonus the house was still standing. Well, somewhat. All good signs, he figured. Zoe opened the door as he hit the top step. Bout time, she said. Fire? he asked. There was no fire. I just was getting tired of waiting on you. He glared at her, but she was unaffected. It was hard to intimidate someone who'd seen him wear a Superman cape to bed until he was eight. Dammit, she said. You look exhausted. I'm fine. If fine was half a minute from falling asleep on his feet. She narrowed her eyes and studied him, her fingers clutching a pad of paper that he knew held the dreaded to-do list. The list had to be tackled, was being tackled, one item at a time. Nightly. By the person least done in by their life that day. He and Zoe had a little who-was-busier competition going. She was a pilot at the small, local airport, and worked long hours. Wyatt worked long hours. So usually, it was a toss-up. How was your day? she asked casually. Too casually. But this wasn't his first rodeo. He knew how to stay on the bull. Delivered two baby sheep, expressed anal glands, cast a leg, cut the nuts off a shepherd, he said. You? Crop dusted, and dropped the mayor at Yellowstone for an interview. They stared at each other, waiting to see who would crack first. Jesus, came a disgusted voice from the couch. Whose penis is bigger? Zoe hugged the list to her chest. Mine is. Wyatt snatched the list from her for pride's sake, for his entire male race. Darcy, prone on the couch, cackled. Wyatt pushed his way in and stood in the center of the living room, hands on hips as he studied his baby sister, still recovering from her accident nine months earlier, and the five surgeries she'd required in the time since. Thought we agreed, you're using your powers for good these days, he said. But evil is so much more fun. Four Emily was hanging upside down from the pull-up bar across the foyer doorjamb when her sister walked in the front door, stifling a little scream. Jesus, Sara said, hand to her chest. You look like a vampire. Vampires don't sleep in the open daylight, Emily said. How do you use this thing every night? I've only managed one stomach crunch. That's because your idea of exercise is reading in bed until your arms hurt from holding up your Kindle, Sara said. Unfortunately true. She righted herself and jumped down. But I want a stomach as flat as yours. Then you need to do more than hang upside down, Sara said. Burn some calories. Calories, Emily said on a sigh. The evil tiny creatures that live in my closet and sew my clothes a little tighter every night. Sara laughed and pulled off her sweatshirt, shedding a layer of sawdust as she did. Hey, Emily said. Did you hear anything funny when you drove up? Like the sounds of my sister vampire snacking on the mailman? Ha-ha, Emily said. No, I mean I keep hearing some odd howling. I don't know if it's a dog or coyotes. Sara dropped her sweatshirt to the couch. She wore cargo shorts, heavy-duty work boots, and a men's wife-beater tank that showed off her tats. Her short, spiky hair was still dusted in sawdust as was most of the rest of her. She'd come to Idaho with Emily as a show of support, the both of them putting on a show of being psyched for the wild, wild west that they'd imagined Idaho to be. Emily was still missing Los Angeles. Sara, not so much. She'd recently had her heart run over and backed up on and run over again. She was open to the idea of staying in if it turned out that Sunshine, Idaho had a place for a rock chick, broken-hearted lesbian who'd

collected degrees like some women collected shoes and yet chose to be a carpenter instead of using any of those degrees. Sara kicked off her badass boots and more sawdust flew everywhere, drifting slowly to the floor of their rental house. Meow. This came from Q-Tip, the ancient fuzzy gray cat who came with the rental. She appeared out of the shadows on move-in day, looking deceptively sweet until she bit both Sara and Emily within the first half hour for having the audacity to try to pet her. No one wanted to claim the old cat, and the landlord had suggested they take her to the shelter. Sara, who wasn't crazy about cats, and bleeding from the bite, had been on board. But Emily had looked into Q-Tip's eyes and known the truth. Q-Tip was old, grumpy, and set in her ways. No way was anyone going to adopt her, which left only an incomprehensible future ahead of her. Emily had refused to do it, and so they now owned a cat. Correction, they were now owned by a cat. Sara, a forgiving soul, reached down now to pet Q-Tip hello. The cat accepted this like it was her due . . . for about three seconds. Then she bit Sara's hand not too hard, more like a warning and then, head high, the feline moved a few feet off and began to clean herself. Queen to peasant, Sara said, shaking off the bite as she looked at Emily. We feed her again why? Because when we don't, she yells at us. *Revue de presse* Humor, intrigue, and scintillating sex. Jill Shalvis is a total original (Suzanne Forster, New York Times bestselling author) Anyone remember those funny, fluttering butterfly feelings you get when you're in love for the first time? [T]hat is what I felt while I was reading *Animal Magnetism*. If you love a true romance with amazing characters that leave you wanting more, go out and grab a copy of *Animal Magnetism*. It is so worth it! (Joyfully ed) From beginning to end, *Animal Magnetism* is a captivating story that will have you laughing out loud, rooting for a happy ending for Lilah and Brady, and hoping that this won't be your last visit to Sunshine (*Romance s Today*) I loved the sexual tension, the great dialogue, and the well-developed characters. Any book by Jill Shalvis is guaranteed to be a hit! (The Romance Studio)