
Cowboys make the best protectors—don't miss this sexy and suspenseful classic from New York Times bestselling author Jill Shalvis!

Haley Whitfield needed a place to hide, and the secluded Circle C ranch seemed perfect. But its owner, Cameron Reeves, could tell Haley was hiding something. Colorado Protector (Way Out West) The handsome cowboy sensed she Colorado Protector (Way Out West) was in trouble and promised her his protection.

Haley wanted to take it. In fact, she wanted everything Cam had to offer—his kisses, his touch, his body. But Colorado Protector (Way Out West) he believed in honesty. And sharing the truth with Cam might just put him in the path of a killer....

Previously Published as *Hiding Out At The Circle C*.

The woman was full of contrasts, Cameron thought. Fire and ice. Sweet and wary.

Haley's arms slid up his shoulders, glided around his neck, and he reveled in the abandonment with which she Colorado Protector (Way Out West) finally let go.

He wondered if she would do the same while making love.

The thought brought him up short. He preferred the slow, lazy route to getting a woman into bed. He liked the chase and the control. But right now, he Colorado Protector (Way Out West) didn't feel so leisurely, or in control. Haley had done funny things to his head, as if he'd had too much wine. He wanted to toss her onto the bed and bury himself in her.

Yet she was lying to him, hiding something, and he knew it. He badly wanted to believe in her, but he couldn't.

What if this woman he wanted so badly was a criminal on the run...?

Dear Reader,

It's autumn. There's a nip in the air, the light has a special quality it only takes on at this time of year, and soon witches and warlocks (most of them under three feet tall!) will be walking the streets of towns everywhere. And along with them will come vampires, perhaps the most dangerously alluring of all romantic heroes. (The six-foot-tall variety, anyway!) So in honor of the season, this month we're bringing you *Brides of the Colorado Protector (Way Out West) Night*, a two-in-one collection featuring vampire heroes who are (dare I say it?) to die for. Maggie Shayne continues her wonderful WINGS IN THE NIGHT miniseries with *Twilight Vows*, while Marilyn Tracy lures you in with *Married by Dawn*. Let them wrap you in magic.

We've got more great miniseries going on this month, too. With *Harvard's Education*, Suzanne Brockmarm continues her top-selling TALL, DARK AND DANGEROUS miniseries. Readers have been asking for Harvard's story, and now this quintessential tough guy is rewarded with a romance of his own. Then follow our writers out west, as Carla Cassidy begins the saga of MUSTANG, MONTANA, with *Her Counterfeit Husband*, and Margaret Watson returns to CAMERON, UTAH, in *For the Children*. Jill Shalvis, an experienced author making her first appearance here, also Colorado Protector (Way Out West) knows how great a cowboy hero can be, as she demonstrates in our WAY OUT WEST title, *Hiding Out at the Circle C*. Finally, welcome Hilary Bymes. This brand-new author is Intimate Moments' WOMAN TO WATCH. And after you read her powerful debut, *Motive, Means...and Marriage?* you *will* be watching—for her next book!

Enjoy! And come back again next month, when we bring you six more of the best and most Colorado Protector (Way Out West) exciting romance novels around—right here in Silhouette Intimate Moments.

Leslie J. Wainger

Executive Senior Editor

COLORADO PROTECTOR

JILL Colorado Protector (Way Out West) SHALVIS

JILL SHALVIS

When pressed for an answer on why she writes romance, Jill Shalvis just smiles and says she didn't realize there was anything else. She's written over a dozen novels so far and doesn't plan on stopping. She lives in California, in a house filled with young children, too many animals and her hero/husband. You can write to her at P.O. Box 1280, Chino, CA 91708-1280.

For the laughs, the companionship,
the acceptance, the fun. For all the love in our life.
Forever to David.

[*Prologue*](#)

[*Chapter 1*](#)

[*Chapter 2*](#)

[*Chapter 3*](#)

[*Chapter 4*](#)

[*Chapter 5*](#)

[*Chapter 6*](#)

[*Chapter 7*](#)

[*Chapter 8*](#)

[*Chapter 9*](#)

[*Chapter 10*](#)

[*Chapter Colorado Protector \(Way Out West\) 11*](#)

[*Chapter 12*](#)

[*Chapter 13*](#)

[*Chapter 14*](#)

Prologue

She had to hurry. Her very life could depend on it. Sprinting up the stairs to the tiny flat she and the other geologists stayed in during their stint with EVS—Earthquake/Volcano Studies—in South America, Haley came to a skidding halt.

Blood stained the open door. Just inside lay two very still bodies. Oh, God. Danyella and Frederick. Her colleagues. *Her friends.*

Haley backed up, feeling faint and stiff with terror. But for the grace of God, it could have been her lying dead on the floor. She slapped a hand over her mouth to stifle her panicked breathing and whirled, running as fast as she could Colorado Protector (Way Out West) back down the stairs.

The sharp pain in her abdomen told her that she needed the ulcer medicine in her purse, badly, but she couldn't stop. If she did, they'd find her, and Haley doubted she'd ever need her medicine again.

Think, think. She had to think, but it was all she could do not to scream in frustration and fear. Last week, she'd made *the* discovery. The one she'd worked on for so long. She'd created a system that would take some of the mystery out of earthquakes and volcanoes. But something had gone wrong—terribly wrong. Earlier today, she'd found EVS's office building destroyed by a bomb. And now she'd made the grisly discovery that two of her five-member team had been murdered. If what she suspected was true, Haley had no doubt she'd be next. The team would be systematically wiped out, one by one, because of greed.

It was simple. She believed her system priceless because of the lives that could be saved. But someone else Colorado Protector (Way Out West) cared more about the quick money to be made. With a strength she didn't know she possessed, Haley calmed herself and hailed a taxi, Colorado Protector (Way Out West) holding her breath in the oppressive heat as the insane driver sped into traffic, dodging through throngs of people, bikes and cars.

The taxi screeched to a halt at the international airport in Peru, and so did her heart. She had no family who would help, and nowhere to go except...home. The United States.

Watching her back, feeling desperate and more frightened than she'd ever been, she got on the first plane she could—to Los Angeles. She had little cash, but stopping at the bank just didn't seem plausible at the moment, so she used a credit card.

Haley had come to this continent with other brilliant geologists, to Colorado Protector (Way Out West) study earth movement. It had been Japan before that, and before that, Europe. Anywhere plagued by volcanoes Colorado Protector (Way Out West) and earthquakes. She'd been the

youngest on the team, but wasn't she always? Having finished her doctorate by her middle teens, Dr. Haley Whitfield had been quickly accepted into the elite group at EVS. Their goal: to predict earthquakes and volcanoes in order to save and preserve lives. She'd done her part—developed an undersea computerized system that would help anticipate those events—but she'd never in Colorado Protector (Way Out West) her wildest dreams thought it would be used to cause them. Yet, that's what someone had done. Used her ideas to *create* earth movement. To kill.

She knew this without Colorado Protector (Way Out West) a doubt. Knew that yesterday's tragic earthquake several hundred miles to the south, on an unknown and totally uncharted fault, hadn't been natural. Thousands had died—because of her system.

Motivated by adrenaline and fear, she rushed toward her departure gate, numb with shock. Work was her life, and everything—absolutely everything she'd worked for—she was leaving behind. The pain in her stomach twisted like a knife. Who knew where Bob and Alda, Colorado Protector (Way Out West) the other two geologists were, or if they were even alive? Or if Lloyd Branson, head of EVS, had escaped the bomb? Had the sweet, quiet, unassuming man been murdered, too? Her heart ached for those she'd known as her only friends, and she prayed they were safe, that they were right this minute fleeing as she was.

Somehow she made it through the flight to L.A. The minute she got off the plane, the pager on her hip vibrated to life, nearly scaring Colorado Protector (Way Out West) her right out of her skin. With shaking hands, ignoring the crowd jostling around her, she lifted EVS's high-tech, compact pager and saw she had two messages. The heavy turbulence on the plane Colorado Protector (Way Out West) must have masked the vibration.

The first printed message renewed her terror.
Colorado Protector (Way Out West)

It was from a South American number, and signed "Alda." "Haley, I hope you've gone. They think you're responsible! Run, Haley. If you haven't already, run!"

Haley swallowed hard. So she wasn't the only one left alive, thank God!

But the second message had her staggering to a chair, mindless of the crowd around her. It, too, was from South America, from Colorado Protector (Way Out West) another number she didn't recognize.

"Come back or you're next."

She was next.

What now? The U.S. government had its own program going at the United States Geological Survey, the nation's center for earthquake research. Studying plate tectonics and shifts in the earth's crust, they also searched for methods of prediction. The geologists there were also developing a way to reduce the effects of earthquakes, utilizing a method that would eventually Colorado Protector (Way Out West) approximate the system that Haley had already created.

But the USGS believed they were the brightest and the best. They'd never Colorado Protector (Way Out West) accept the fact that she'd developed a superior system—only to lose it.

Haley firmly Colorado Protector (Way Out West) turned off her pager, but couldn't bring herself to throw it away. Somehow, sick as it seemed, the thing was her only link to that insane world. She shivered and closed her eyes, willing herself not to cry. She could be thankful for one thing—that without her or the other geologists to recreate it, the system couldn't be used again. And without the notes and records destroyed in the bomb blast, she couldn't produce another system like it in less than a year.

So here she was, running for her life, a suspect in the bombing and the murders. Those were crimes for which, if extradited back to South America, she'd be executed swiftly. What to do?

Well, if she didn't want to die, she had to completely disappear.

Suddenly Haley felt three times her Colorado Protector (Way Out West) twenty-five years. Yet she was alive, wasn't she? So what if all she had was the twenty dollars in her purse and the clothes on her back? She was alive, she reminded herself again as she swallowed two pills for her ulcer. For however long, *she was alive*.

She blinked back tears and forced herself to remember that was a *good* thing.

Colorado Protector Way Out West

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