

With fright, "It's a tiger, and he'll eat our lamb!"

"No, he won't," said Ann. She threw up the window and violently shook her nightgown at the animal. "Get out of there!" she called. "Get out this instant, before I come down there with my Uncle Henry's gun!"

Whether it was from the noise she made and the light behind us, or whether the beast was satisfied, I do not know; but, with the lamb in his mouth, he crouched where he was, and in one bound cleared the fence. That was the last we saw of him that night.

Ann went back to bed, loudly declar-

ing it wasn't a tiger at all, "just nothing but an old mountain lion." But I do not believe either of us slept any more that night.

In the morning we let Shep remain out for a while before venturing forth ourselves. In the corral we found twelve sheep dead and dying. Even the black goat, Billy Butta, the leader of the flock, had a long gash down his flank, an injury which, however, he seemed not to mind.

At breakfast Sister Ann was thoughtful. We both knew in reason that Uncle Henry must think there was someone with us, and so we might be alone for a number of days. The nearest neighbour was eight miles away. We knew neither road nor direction.

The loss of the sheep would be a serious loss to Uncle Henry, as he had contracted to return the original number. Inexperienced as I was, I thought the lion would return, and Ann was sure of it.

"It's just as easy as fallin' off a log," Sister Ann finally announced. "We'll put the flock in the barn."

After breakfast we dragged the dead sheep to the river and threw them in, Sister Ann saying she didn't want any lion-bait about her; besides, she reasoned, the ranchmen below might see the bodies and come and lend a hand. I never at any time heard Sister Ann admit that she needed protection.

We took the sheep out to graze, but we kept well within sight of the house and went only about the low, open ground beside the river.

Sister Ann brought out Uncle Henry's rifle and carried it about on her shoulder. When I timidly questioned her ability to shoot, she looked unutterable scorn. She said all you had to do was to "just pull the trigger" and hinted at renown gained with the rifle long before I was born. At that time I was glad to believe it, but I have since reflected that Ann must have been hitting bull's-eyes at the tender age of two years.

We drove the sheep home early. There was some difficulty in getting them into the barn. They could not all crowd in on one side; and, as there was no open-

ing in the pole partition, we had to drive part of the flock around to the other door; but we finally accomplished it.

Then Sister Ann knocked some boards from the corral fence and nailed one across each door. She said that lion had all of Uncle Henry's sheep he was going to get, and she would nail up the house windows, too.

There was a ladder leading up to the barn loft, but it was too heavy for us to move. So we brought out a table and put a chair on top. I handed up the nails and kept looking at the side of the mountain back of the corral, where the lion had disappeared, while Sister Ann stood on the chair and nailed up the boards. She nailed up the attic windows on the inside, leaving plenty of room to see out.

The sun was still above the mountains when we took Shep into the house and locked the doors, but the boards on the windows made the rooms so dark that we had to light a lamp.

After supper we dressed up in Aunt Emma's clothes—that is, Sister Ann did. I just sat still and tried to hear what was going on outside, while Ann played piano on the kitchen table and sang very loud.

When it came bedtime, Sister Ann said it was really more healthful to sleep in the second storey. So we dragged our bedding up the ladder into the attic, shut down the trap-door, and put two trunks on it.

It seemed as though I had just fallen asleep, when I was awakened by Ann nudging me. "He's out there," she whispered. "Let's go to the window and watch him."

Downstairs Shep was growling.

We slipped out of bed, and I held tight hold of Sister Ann while we peeped from the window. Pretty soon we saw the lion padding softly round the barn. He was sniffing at the chinks and trying to put his paw through. When he came out into the moonlight, he stopped and looked around. We could see the tip of his tail curl and bend. Then he gave a terrible scream. We rushed and jumped into bed and covered up our heads.

"O Sister Ann," I sobbed, "why didn't you shoot him?"

"I will," she said, "if he fools 'round here much more."

We heard nothing more that night. The next morning we let Shep remain out about an hour before we pried the boards from the barn doors.

"I wish that lion was a bear," I said. "Why?" asked Sister Ann, straining vigorously at her pry.

"Because we might catch him with the bear-window in the barn."

Sister Ann turned and looked at me. "I guess other things could get in that bear-window besides bears," she said.

Then she dropped her tools and stood



"Sister Ann knocked some boards from the corral fence."



"I handed up the nails."

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