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trigger? Why, when she had every intention of shooting to kill when the smiling face of that cowman looked at her between the prongs of the buckhorn — why had she let him live? Hilma did not find an answer to this question. Her anger but fed itself on answer denied.

She rode her sorry pony into the corral, unsaddled him and threw him an armful of hay, for the beast was her sole companion in much lonesomeness and there was love between them. Then she carried her rifle to the doorstep and, sitting there, fired many shots at the rusty butt of a tomato can a hundred paces away. Every shot missed and at each miss her anger increased — that curious double anger linking the smiling stranger and her own self for its object. Hilma only stopped her savage practice shooting when the growing clutter of empty shells at her feet suddenly aroused her to the waste. Rifle cartridges cost money; her father would fly into one of his rages when he discovered what she had done. Then they would quarrel; perhaps he would strike her, as he sometimes did, and she would strike back. All that would not be worth while.

Hilma carefully cleaned the rifle, reloaded the chamber; then gathered the empty shells