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AUCTION
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Red Saunders
BY
HENRY WALLACE PHILLI
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[Cont.]
when I stand up straight, and I stood
up straight as the Lord would let me
and gazed down at that little man.
'Partner,' says I, 'I was raised on
cigarettes. When I was two years old
I used to have a pull at the bottle
and then my cigarette to aid digestion.
It may be conceit on my part,' I says,
'but I'd rather be a wreck like me
than a prize fighter like you.' They're
queer. You'd think that that little fat
man would have noticed the difference
without my pointing it out to him.
'Well, I don't have to mention that
Loys stirred things up considerable
around the Chanta Seechee and vicin-
ity. Gee! What a diving into wanne-
gans and a fetching out of good
clothes there was! And trading of
useful coats and things for useless but
decorating silk handkerchiefs and
things! And what a hair cutting and
whisker trimming!
'But Kyle was the man from the go-
in. And it was right it should be so.
If ever two young people were born
to make trouble for each other it was
Kyle and Loys.
'A nice, decent fellow was Kyle.
Nothing remarkable, you could say,
and that was one of his best points.
Howsoever, he had a head that
could do plain thinking, a pair of
shoulders that discouraged frivolous,
and he was as square a piece of
furniture as ever came out of a factory.
More'n that, he had quite a little
education, saved his money, never got
more than good natured loaded, and
he could ride anything that had four
legs, from a sawhorse to old tiger
Buck, who would kick your both feet
out of the stirrups and reach around
and bite you in the small of the back
so quick that the boys would be pulling
his front hoofs out of your frame be-
fore you'd realize that the canter had
begun. Nice horse, Buck. He like to
ent Jonesy up one morning before
Silver and me could get to the corral.
Lord, the sounds made my blood run
cold! Old Buck squealing like a boar
pig in a wolf trap, and Jonesy yell-
ing, 'Help! Murder! Police!' Even
that did not cure Jones from sticking
his nose where it wasn't wanted.
Why, once— But, thunder, it would
take me a long while to tell you all
that happened to Jones.
'One thing that didn't hurt Kyle
any in the campaign was that he was
most as good looking for a man as
she was for a woman. They made a
pair to draw to, I tell you, loping over
the prairie full of health and young-
ness! You wouldn't want to see a
prettier sight than they made, and you
could see it at any time, for they
were together whenever it was possi-
ble. Loys was so happy it made you
feel like a boy again to see her. She
told me in private that it was wonder-
ful how the air out here agreed with
her, and I said it was considered
mighty bracing and never let on that
they proclaimed their state of mind
every time they looked at each other.
I reckon old Smart Aleck Jonesy was
the only party in the township who
didn't understand. Kyle used to put
vinegar in his coffee and things like
that, and if you'd ask him, 'What's
that fellow's name that runs the cloth-
ing store in town?' he'd come out of
his trance and say 'Yes' and smile
very amiable to show that he thor-
oughly admitted you were right.
'Well, things went as smooth and
easy as bobbedding until it came time
for Loys to be moseying back to col-
lege again.
'Then Kyle took me into his confi-
dence. I never was less astonished in
my whole life, and I didn't tell him
so. 'Well, what are you going to do
about it?' says I.
'He kind of groaned and shook his
head. 'I dunno,' says he. 'Do you
think she likes me, Red?' I felt like
saying, 'Well, if you ain't got all the
traits but the long ears I miss my
guess,' but I made allowances, and
says I: 'Well, about that I don't think
I ought to say anything. Still, if I had
only one eye left I could see plain
that her education's finished. She don't
want any more college, that girl don't.'
'Think not?' says he, bracing up.
And then by and by they went out to
ride, for Jonesy was good to the girl.
I'll say that for him. He was willing
to do anything for her in reason, ac-
cording to his views. But Kyle wasn't
in them views; he was out of the pic-
ture as far as husbands went.
'They came back at sunset, when
the whole world was glowing red the
same as they were. I reached for the
field glasses and took a squint at
them. There was no harm in that,
for they were well behaved young
folks. One look at their faces was
enough. There were three of us in
the hull pen—Bob and Wind River
Smith and myself. We'd brought up
a herd of calves from Nanley's ranch,
and we were taking it easy. 'Boys,'
says I under my breath, 'they've made

'No,' says they, and then everybody
had to take a pull at the glasses.
'Well, I'm glad,' says Smithy, and
darn my buttons if that old hardshell's
voice didn't shake. 'They're two of as
nice kids as you'd find in many a
weary day,' says he. 'And I wish 'em
all the luck in the world.'
'So do I,' says I, 'and I really think
the best we could do for 'em would be
to shoot Jones.'
'Man! Won't he sizz?' says Bob.
And you can't blame us old codgers if
we had a laugh at that, although it
was such a powerful serious matter to
the youngsters.
'Let's go out and meet 'em,' says I.
And away we went. They weren't a
particle surprised. I suppose they
thought the whole universe had stop-
ped to look on. We pump handled
away and laughed, and Loys she
laughed kind of teary, and Kyle he
looked red in the face and proud and
happy and ashamed of himself, and
we all felt loosened up considerable,
but I told him on the quiet, 'Take that
fool grin off your face unless you want
Uncle Jones to drop the moment he
sees you.'
'Now, they only had three days left
to get an action on them, as that was
the time set for Loys to go back to
college.
'Next day they held a council be-
hind the big barn, and they called in
Uncle Red—otherwise known as Big
Red Saunders or Chanta Seechee Red,
which means 'Bad Heart Red' in Sioux
language and doesn't explain me by a
durn sight—to get the benefit of his
valuable advice.
'Skip,' says I. 'Fly for town and
get married and come back and tell
Jonesy about it. It's a pesky sight
stranger argument to tell him what
you have done than what you're going
to do.'
'They couldn't quite agree with that.
They thought it was sneaky.
'So it is,' says I. 'The first art of
war is understanding how to make a
grand sneak. If you don't want to
take my advice you can wait.' That
didn't bit 'em just right either.
'What will we wait for?' says Kyle.
'Exercise—and the kind you won't
take when you get as old and as sen-
sible as me. You're taking long
chances, both of you; but it's just like
playing cards, you might as well put
all your money on the first turn, win
or lose, as to try and play system.
Systems don't work in faro nor love
affairs nor any other game of chance.
Be gone. Put your marker on the
grand raffle. In other words, take the
first horse to town and get married.
Ten chances to one Jonesy will have the
laugh on you before the year is out.'
'I don't think you are a bit nice to-
day, Red,' says Loys.
'He's jealous,' says Kyle.
'That's what I am, young man,'
says I. 'If I had ten years off my
shoulders and a little of the glow off
my hair I'd give you a run for your
alley that would leave you breathless
at the wind up.'
'I think your hair is a beautiful
color, Red,' says Loys. 'Many a wo-
man would like to have it.'
'Of course they would,' I answered.
'But they don't get it. I'm foxy, I
am.' Still, I was touched in a tender
spot. That young woman knew just
the right thing to say, by nature.
'Well, what are you young folks going
to do?' I asked them.
[CONTINUED]

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