

# Red Saunders

... By ...  
**HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS**

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(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

"I made one more bad break on the home trip.  
"Jonesy will be powerful glad to see you," says I.  
"Jonesy?" says she, surprised. "Jonesy? Oh, is that what you call Uncle Albert?"  
"Well, it does sometimes happen that way," says I, and then my anti-George Washington blood rose again. "You see, he was kind of lonesome out there at first, and we took to calling him Jonesy to cheer him up and make him feel at home," I says.  
"Oh," says she. And I reckon she didn't feel so horribly awful about it, for after looking straight toward the gulf of Mexico for a minute suddenly she burst right out and hollered. It seems that Jones cut a great deal of grass to a swine when he was back home in his own street. It's astonishing how little of a man it takes to do that in the east. We had an argument once on the subject. 'It's intellect does it,' says Silver Tompkins. 'Oh, that's it, eh?' says Wind River Smith. 'Well, I'm glad I'm not troubled that way. I'd rather have a forty-four chest than a No. 8 head any day you can find in the almanac.' And I'm with Smithy. This knowing so much it makes you sick ain't any better than being so healthy you don't know nothing, besides being square miles less fun. Another thing about the eastern folks is they're so set in their views, and it don't matter to them whether the facts bear out their ideas or not.  
"Here, take a cigar," says one of the board of directors to me—a little fat old man, who had to draw in his breath before he could cross his legs—'them cigarettes 'll ruin your health,' says he. Mind you, he was always kicking and roaring about his liver or stumnick or some of his works. I'm a little over six foot three in my boots when I stand up straight, and I stood up straight as the Lord would let me and gazed down at that little man. 'Pardner,' 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 vicinity. Gee! What a diving into wannegans and a fetching out of good clothes there was! And trading of useful coats and things for useless but decorating silk handkerchers 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 friveling, 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 before you'd realize that the canter had begun. Nice horse, Buck. He like to eat 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 yelling, '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 youngness! 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 possible. Loys was so happy it made you feel like a boy again to see her. She told me in private that it was wonderful 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 clothing store in town?' he'd come out of his trance and say 'Yes' and smile very amiable to show that he thoroughly admitted you were right.  
"Well, things went as smooth and easy as bobbedding until it came time

for Loys to be moseying back to college again.  
"Then Kyle took me into his confidence. 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, according to his views. But Kyle wasn't in their views; he was out of the picture 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 bull 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 the rifle.'  
"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 shogt 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 stopped 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 behind 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



"Red, you're a brick. You're the best fellow alive," says Kyle.

language and doesn't explain me by a darn 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 stronger 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 hit '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 sensible 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 today, 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 woman 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.  
"They decided that they'd think it over until next day, but that turned out to be too late, for what must Kyle do but get chucked from his horse and have his leg broke near the hip. You don't want to take any love affairs on to the back of a bad horse, now you mark me! There was no such thing as downing that boy when he was in his right mind.  
"Now, here was a hurrah! Loys, she dasn't cry, for fear of uncle, and Kyle, he used the sinfulest language known to the tongue of man. 'Twas the first time I'd ever heard him say anything much, but he made it clear that it wasn't because he couldn't.  
"What will we do, Red? What will we do?" says he.  
"Now," says I, 'don't bile over like that, because it's bad for your leg.'  
"He cursed the leg.  
"Go on and tell me what we can do," says he.  
"When you ask me that, you've

pulled the right bell," says I. 'I'll tell you exactly what we'll do. I go for the doctor. Savvy? Well, I bring back the minister at the same time. Angevine, he loses the Jersey cow over in the canebreak, and uncle and Angevine go hunting her, for not even Loys is as high in uncle's mind alongside that cow. The rest is easy.'  
"Red, you're a brick. You're the best fellow alive," says Kyle, nearly squeezing the hand off me.  
"I've tried to conceal it all my life, but I knew it would be discovered some day," says I. 'Well, I suppose I'd better break the news to Loys. 'Twouldn't be any more than polite.'  
"Oh, Lord! I wonder if she'll be willing?" says he.  
"No reason I shouldn't turn an honest dollar on the transaction. I'll bet you a month's wages she is," says I. He wanted to do it, thinking I was in earnest, but I laughed at him.  
"She was willing all right—even anxious. There's some women, and men, too, for that matter, who go through life like a cat through a back alley, not caring a cuss for either end or the middle. They would have been content to wait. Not so Loys. She wanted her Kyle, her poor Kyle, and she wanted him quick. That's the kind of people for me! Your cautious folk are all the time falling down wells because their eyes are up in the air, keeping tabs so that they can dodge shooting stars.  
"Now, I had a minister friend up in town, Father Slade by name. No, he was not a Catholic, I think. They called him 'father' because it fitted him. His church had a steeple on it, anyhow, so it was no maverick. Just what particular kind of religion the old man had I don't know, but I should say he was a homeopath on a guess. He looked it. 'Twas a comfort to see him coming down the street, his old face shining in his white hair like a shriveled pink apple in a snowdrift, God blessing everything in sight—good, bad or indifferent. He had something pleasant to say to all. We was quite friends, and every once in awhile we'd have a chin about things.  
"Are you keeping straight, Red? he'd ask when we parted.  
"Um, I'd say, I'm afraid you'd notice a bend here and there if you slid your eyes along the edge.'  
"Well, keep as straight as you can; don't give up trying, my boy! he'd tell me, mighty earnest, and I'd feel ashamed of myself clear around the corner.  
"I knew the old man would do me a favor if it could be done, so I pulled out easy in my mind.  
"First place, I stopped at the doctor's, because I felt they might fix up the marrying business some other time, but if a leg that's broke in the upper joint ain't set right you can see a large dark completed hunk of trouble over the party's left shoulder for the rest of his days. The doctor was out, so I left word for him what was wanted and to be ready when I got back and pulled for Father Slade's. The old gentleman had the rheumatism, and he groaned when I come in. Rheumatism's no disease for people who can't swear.  
"How are you, my boy?" says he. 'I'm glad to see you. Here am I, an old man, slipped by the leg and much wanting to talk to somebody.'  
"I passed the time of day to him, but felt kind of blue. This didn't look like keeping my word with the kids. I really hated to say anything to the old man, knowing his disposition; still, I felt I had to, and I out with my story.  
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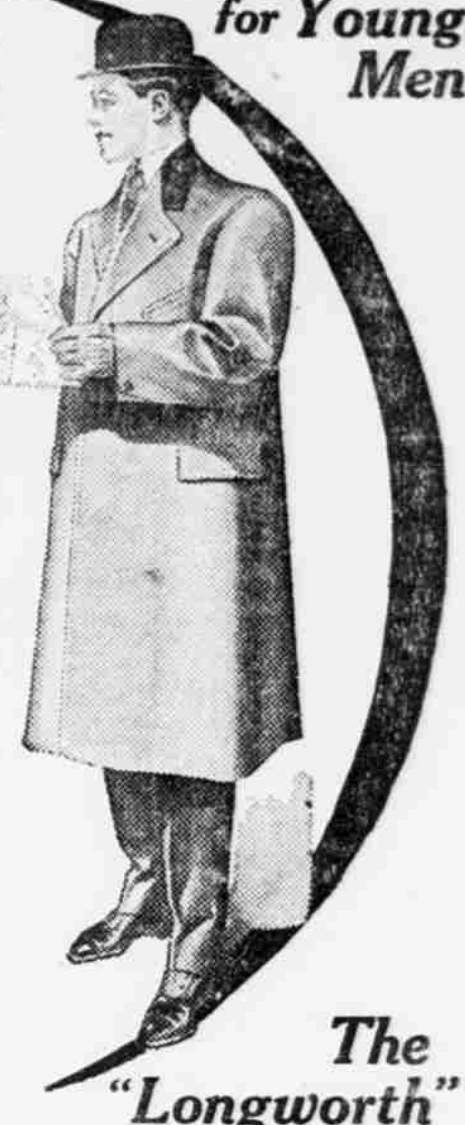
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