



To Have and to Hold (Annotated)

Mary Johnston

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Virginia Company, Jamestown, 1621. The once struggling colony is now thriving, and the arrival of a ship full of potential brides has all the single men rushing to put on their best and meet the ladies in hopes of finding wives. Captain Ralph Percy, hardened soldier, gentleman farmer, and avowed bachelor, watches from the sidelines, marveling as his comrades make fools of themselves over the women. He has no need of a wife and can't understand the sense in asking a perfect stranger to marry him . . . until he catches sight of Jocelyn Leigh.

Struck by her uncommon beauty, quiet grace, and regal bearing, he wonders why a woman such as she would need to brave the sea voyage and the wilds of the new world to find a husband. And then he finds himself doing the unthinkable, asking for her hand in marriage before another man can snatch her up! But he was right to suspect that Jocelyn was not as she seemed, and he soon discovers that his new wife fled England in a desperate attempt to escape an arranged marriage. Ralph vows to protect her, not knowing how soon he will be called upon to do so, or how dangerous it will be to him.

Jocelyn's jilted fiancée is coming to find her, and when Lord Carnal lands at Jamestown, he brings dubious tidings. A handsome lord with the wealth and power of the king at his disposal, he informs Ralph that he has married a ward of the king without the king's permission, a treasonous offense. But all will be well--all Ralph has to do is hand her over and Lord Carnal will sail away with her as though nothing ever happened. But if Ralph does not comply, he is to be clapped in irons and bound for England and the Tower, and Lord Carnal will take Jocelyn by force. The choice seems clear enough--who is Captain Ralph Percy to go against the King's orders? But one look at Jocelyn's fear-stricken face decides his fate. This solemn and stoic woman has woven herself into the fabric of his life, and he's not going to give her up so easily.

Ralph and Jocelyn defy the King's command and fight for their right to stay together, but it soon becomes evident that their only course of action is to flee. As they make their way through the dangerous wilderness, battling the King's men, Indians, and even pirates, what started out as a marriage of convenience becomes a true love match, and Ralph discovers that what is worth having is worth holding, no matter the cost.

Bonus Content: Introduction, Map, Glossary, Image Gallery

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