



## Savannah Purchase

*Jane Aiken Hodge*

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## **Savannah Purchase** Jane Aiken Hodge

As children, Juliet and Josephine often played the innocent game of impersonation. They were cousins, but they looked enough alike to be twins.

Life and war separated them, but the years didn't dim the astonishing resemblance.

Now Fate suddenly threw them together again -- two beautiful, desirable women playing out a deadly masquerade.

Set against the elegance, splendor and gentility of the early 19th-century South, this is a suspenseful tale of high intrigue and dangerous deception.

## **Savannah Purchase Details**

Date : Published July 12th 1979 by Fawcett (first published 1970)

ISBN : 9780449240977

Author : Jane Aiken Hodge

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Genre : Romance, Historical, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Gothic, Regency, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Savannah Purchase for online ebook

### AJ says

Chapters: 15 // Pages: 205

I happen to be a fan of Jane Aiken Hodge. I've, thus far, read six of her books (if memory serves) and have liked each one. She's a truly good 20th-century authoress, who weaves great, entertaining stories with well-researched eras in history, and has a way with creating a brand of romance between hero and heroine that sometimes leaves you wondering if they'll get together in the end.

This book is set in 1800s Savannah, Georgia. Two cousins, who pass for twins, get themselves embroiled in a messy situation rife with mystery, intrigue, and a love triangle as one falls in love with the other's husband and the other tries to rescue Napoleon from incarceration on the island he's sent to after Elba.

Really great story! As always. Also, great action, suspense, and a twist ending.

As with all her books, I can hardly put them down!

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### Jayne says

This is vintage Hodge: a classic, classy Society adventure of the kind Jane Aiken Hodge did best.

Formerly published as 'Savannah Purchase', it reads as smooth and speedy as if written yesterday, except that the heroine's inner angst-ing is less pronounced than modern novels would have it in similar circumstances. The look at Southern US society and politics of the 1830s feels thoroughly credible even though the central feature of the plot is a bit less easy to swallow.

The tropes are familiar to anyone who read romantic suspense in the 1960s to 1980s. A 'good' woman and a 'bad' woman, a 'good' man and a 'bad' one.

I liked the way Hodge handled the eventual revelation of deception. All the clues were there leading up to it, and I found the story most satisfying to read.

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### Peggy says

Loved it--I'd give a sixth star just for the Jane Austen references if I could! :)

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### Jan says

recommended by Constance, whose recommendations I never ignore!!!

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### **Emma says**

3.5 stars. This is a solid book. Well written with no major flaws. Well other than the ludicrous notion that one cousin could replace another and not have anyone notice simply because they look identical. But if that set-up is too ridiculous for anyone then they should not be reading this book.

I quite liked the husband and how he dealt with all the circumstances he found himself in. Juliet was likable and I enjoyed her troubles as she tried to pull off the charade. Josephine is less well drawn but fortunately she was not in it too much.

An all round pleasant read but not probably something I will remember in a few months hence keeping it at 3 stars for GR.

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### **Margaret Sullivan says**

I forgot that I read this shortly before I went to Savannah/Tybee Island, and realized while I was walking around a museum that one of the scenes took place in the house I was standing in!\* So that was weird. The book was okay. A twin (actually a lookalike cousin) takes her "twin's" place in her loveless marriage, the inevitable ensues. A quick read, I had some issues with it (the other "twin's" husband genially slapping her around to get her "under control," presented with apparently no irony whatsoever), but it was an okay read. *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* was a better preparation for a Savannah visit.

\*It's now the Ships of the Sea Maritime Museum, and the scene was the one in which Juliet hosted the Scarbrough party, with President Monroe attending.

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### **Jypsy says**

Savannah is my favorite city, so I immediately liked the story. All For Love is a tale of two nearly identical looking women, one rich, one poor, switch lives. It's a cute story with fun and engaging characters and romance. The setting you can imagine is just beautiful, especially for the time period. It's a good read overall.

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### **Alice says**

#### **Identical Cousins Switch Places**

Lovely Regency Romance set in Savannah, where the rich Mr. Hyde Purchis has married the very french Josephine. Josephine married for wealth and is immensely bored and quite shallow, but she does have one plan. She's planning to use her husband's money to buy a ship and free Napoleon from St. Helena. To do this she talks her cousin who is her twin in looks, to temporarily take her place at home. The rest of the story takes off from there. Absolutely great, as poor Juliet tries to cover for her with the little information her thoughtless cousin provided. Great story and a very satisfactory ending.

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### **Diane Lynn says**

Two cousins, alike enough to be twins, switch places. From the plantation Winchelsea to the grand house on Oglethorpe Square in Savannah, these two hatch quite a scheme. Josephine, the older of the two, is the brains behind this plot. Or is she? Can they pull it off and at what cost? I really liked this book, the descriptions were wonderful. I think, by the description, the pride of India trees must be what we know as crape myrtles. Love those live oaks with spanish moss.

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### **Anne says**

[I also liked that Hodge made it real. They didn't fool Hyde for a second. That was too good. It kind of cracked me up. Oh, that and the fact that Josephine was a bigamist! And that's how they ended up being together. Well done. (hide spoiler)]

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### **Jane Mercer says**

Jane Aiken Hodge does write some very good books Savannah Purchase was not one of her best though I did enjoy it. The plot hinges on the resemblance of two cousins alike enough to be twins in looks. Juliet is penniless and recovering from the death of her father Josephine rich, flighty and selfish both of French origin now in New Orleans. Josephine decides she is going to rescue Bonaparte from St Helena but needs to be away from home and her husband to do so, she persuades Juliet to take her place, the marriage is one of convenience and she need not fear advances on that score. Reluctantly Juliet agrees, she is the timid of the pair and this would probably have joined my to collection if I had liked her more, I found Josephine thoroughly unlikeable but since she hardly featured that didn't matter. Juliet was too timid, too nice with not enough depth to her, she falls for her friends husband as expected and I did like the way Hodge solved that without having to eliminate Josephine

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### **CLM says**

This might be my favorite of all Jane Aiken Hodge's work. I have always loved impersonation stories, and this one is the story of cousins Josephine and Juliet, brought up in Napoleon's France, but now living in America. Josephine is married to Hyde Purchase, a Savannah landowner, but is determined to finance a mission to rescue Napoleon from imprisonment. She asks cousin and practically twin Juliet to take her place so her husband won't know of the rescue mission. Penniless, Juliet accepts, only to fall in love with her cousin's husband.

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### **Teresa says**

A good read. I've read other books by JAH but they were all follow ons for Austen novels. This is my first of

her own stories if you like.

Josephine and Juliette are two cousins who could be twins they are so alike. In looks that is, in temperament and character they are poles apart. When Josephine wants to execute a hair brained scheme she ropes Juliette into changing places with her. Juliette is in great need at the time so agrees to it reluctantly. Josephine tells her she and her husband live separate lives more or less and fills her in on details. However, these details fall short and Josephine fails to mention there are also other men in her life to be considered.

I was very interested to see how everything would pan out. I felt for Juliette at times as she was put in impossible positions. You have to suspend your disbelief at times especially towards the end. Things did fall into place rather easily and once or twice I thought 'oh really'!

But all in all a good read and fans of Austen or Heyer will enjoy it. ( Austen's novels feature in it).

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## **Emilia Barnes says**

Me while reading this book:

Oh book, how I hate thee, let me count the ways...

So I'm on a train, it's quiet, dull, and I've an hour and a half ahead of me to while away. I have with me one book. You'd think I could read basically anything at this point, but the book happens to be this little gem, and even though I am somewhere about half way in, I pick it up and then I put it back down. I can't. I can't do this to myself. This is getting to the point where I feel like I'm doing homework. I stare out of the window instead. That is this book in a nutshell.

This is a historical romance, so of course one goes in with certain expectations. I think the basic role of this kind of literature is threefold:

1. To transport you to another time and place, and set you up in a romantic situation.
2. To give you a hero to fall in love with, or at least to cheer on when the heroine falls in love with him.
3. To amuse you

On all of these fronts this book fails spectacularly. This is generally recommended to fans of Georgette Heyer, but instead of the expected historical romp, with funny repartee, misunderstandings, silliness, growing on the part of one of the MCs, lively secondary characters, historical detail that colours the world in which this takes place, this turd delivers a milquetoast heroine; a hero who is a non-entity, whose character and looks are so nondescript that I wondered if perhaps the author just left that space as a placeholder until she came up with an actual person, only forgot to then do so; a premise that is preposterous in the extreme; and a cartoonish villain. There is no plot. The dialogue is wooden, graceless, boring and lacks even a hint of an attempt at wit. To recommend this to fans of Georgette Heyer is like recommending panto to fans of Shakespeare.

Here is the premise. Two cousins who look alike decide to do a switch, so that insane, villain cousin, whom our moral, just, beautiful and perfect heroine somehow still likes, can go away and do something stupid somewhere, it doesn't matter what (although whatever she is up to sounded much more interesting than anything that was happening with holier-than-thou cousin, but anyway...). So the good twin, Juliet, impersonates her stupid twin, Josephine. Josephine is married, but neither her husband, Hyde, nor the servants suspect anything even though Juliet is kind, considerate, intelligent, caring and seems to give a damn about the husband, unlike his actual wife. Somehow this tips nobody off, because Juliet says

something stupid once in a while to remind everyone that she is the stupid twin.

Time passes really quickly, there is the requisite duel, which seems pointless anyway, but the husband is wounded, and Juliet saves his life (of course). But then, before the husband is recovered, Josephine returns, and of course all the servants love Juliet at this point, and Josephine goes to parties instead of taking care of her husband, because she is a cartoonish villain.

As you read on, questions start piling up in your head, and not the good kind of questions, the answers to which you wait for breathlessly, no, it's the frustrating sort of questions, which make reading this book impossible, because they are the fundamental building blocks of this story, and without a good explanation you've no reason to care for anything that happens:

1. Why the hell does Juliet agree to the scheme? Josephine said she'd help her out financially one way or another, so Juliet has exactly 0 motive to do something so stupid!
2. How does nobody recognise the switch? They are *cousins*, not identical twins. It's impossible that their voices are alike, their mannerisms, the way they laugh, the way they smell, eat, drink, dance, the sort of things that make them laugh... a thousand things! The notion that a husband wouldn't recognise that his wife had switched places with her cousin is beyond preposterous, especially since though they are estranged they do see each other every day!
3. Why the hell did Hyde marry Josephine in the first place? He is a saint (described so in the book, I kid you not) and she is a selfish moron. They have nothing in common, don't seem to like each other, aren't even attracted to each other... what the hell?
4. Why does Hyde duel Fonseca? It's implied of course that Josephine had an affair with him, but Heyer heroes who dealt with similar problems were able to do so without bringing a whole lot of scandal on their heads, why can't this guy? Stupid mofo.

Ugh, so many things that annoyed me, but these are the main ones because they are the pillars on which this story rests, and the motivations here are just... just absent really. I mean why? Honestly, author, why?

Mostly what was missing was a firm narrative voice – something to describe the scenes to you, to explain the motivations, whether they are real or perceived, something to guide you through the story, keep you hooked with a central mystery or a central problem that needs solving, while little things happen around it. Instead, you have the dull, pre-Austen era heroine (in terms of characterisation), who is competent at all things womanly, who has no personality, whom you are supposed to root for because she is virtuous. Also a pre-Austen era hero, who is also virtuous and wonderful and has all the charisma of a wet sponge. Juliet falls in love with him the moment she sets eyes on him (pretty much), so there's no relationship development. Essentially they are perfect for each other and Josephine's in the way.

I guess I was kind of attracted to the setting of this novel, but actually this turned out to be a big mistake. The attitude to black people in this book is straight from *Gone With the Wind*. Sure there are black people who are servants, but don't you, reader, worry your pretty little head over them, they're all there voluntarily, because our hero had freed them all and they all stayed because they just lurved him so much. Ugh. Sure. Who wouldn't want to clean this guys poop out of his chamber pot? Sign me up! In Georgette Heyer social inequality is there, of course, and there are servants, as is period-appropriate, but they had personalities, and they had a purpose in the plot of the novel. I am not saying that Georgette Heyer's attitude to them in her stories is progressive, I am only saying that from the perspective of story telling they are treated like people, with agency, who affect things, who have their own problems, their own families, wants, needs, lives, pasts, ambitions, likes and dislikes etc. Here we just have a bunch of smiling faces, whose only care in the world is their Master and the Missus. And it's worse than in Heyer's world, of course, because they are former slaves. It is said that Hyde freed them, but there is no mention of whether he paid them for their years of free

servitude, and if their lot had in fact improved in any material way. It's just a side issue, and, more insulting than anything else, it's a side issue used solely for the purpose of emphasising our hero's goodness.

The writing isn't bad, as in the sentences are grammatical and clearly the author is a literate person, but it is bad in the story-telling sense. It completely misses the point of these kinds of stories, and delivers nothing of what could reasonably be expected of it. Worst of all, it is just a chore to read.

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### **Nikki says**

If you're a fan of stories like Georgette Heyer's and Mary Stewart's romances, Jane Aiken Hodge's *All For Love* should be right up your alley. Featuring a historical setting and context, it follows two cousins, alike enough to be twins, who switch places while one executes a madcap scheme to rescue Napoleon, while preserving her reputation and giving herself an alibi in the form of her cousin's presence. Of course, it stretches credulity a bit, as all such plots would — but it doesn't stretch it too far; actually, a fair number of people figure out that Juliet is only impersonating Josephine.

The process of Juliet's relationship with Josephine's husband is sweet; the way he carefully provides for her without ever pushing boundaries too much or letting her know that he knows she's not Josephine, and the way they come to care for each other and refuse to do anything about it, because of course, he's married to Josephine. Then, of course, someone from Josephine's past shows up to overturn things once more...

It's all reliant on heaps of lucky coincidence, of course, and Josephine is such an unpleasant person in some ways that you know, really, how it's going to end — I never really had any tension that it wasn't going to work out, though I did find myself wondering how it would work out. The writing isn't as witty as Heyer's, nor is there a sense of place evoked as in Stewart's work, but all the same I got quite invested and very much enjoyed the read.

Oh, and if duels and secret plots entertain you, there's plenty of that alongside the romance.

Originally reviewed here.

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