

Beyond Brandywine -- Synopsis

Swallowing his dislike for the English, Gillis MacLeod leaves his Scottish Highland home to join the Redcoats. His plan – to survive putting down the colonial rebels, then build a new life in America. Meanwhile on the banks of Pennsylvania’s Brandywine River, young Robin Parker schemes to keep her father, Richard, away from the revolt she knows he wishes to join. But, when the first major battle of the war unfolds at their door, Robin and her father are swept up in the chaos and violence. The battle lost, Richard commits to the rebel cause and takes Robin to live with his estranged sister, Catherine Simon, and her husband, William, on their tobacco farm on the Maryland coast. Abandoned and unsettled by life among Loyalist slave owners, Robin befriends Hannah, a young slave woman. Uncovering the family secret – that Hannah’s son is a Simon – Robin confronts her Aunt and Uncle and is expelled. Homeless and alone, Robin turns to Hannah for help and is taken to a barrier island inhabited only by a herd of wild horses.

Robin ekes out a solitary life on the island until a fierce Nor’easter deposits a near-dead Gillis on her island’s lonely shore. Unable to deny help, even to a hated Redcoat, Robin nurses him back to health and together they wait for a lull in the fighting. Catching and training two of the island horses, Robin and Gillis come to recognize their growing attraction. Unwilling to succumb to it, Gillis commits to see Robin home before travelling south to find his clansmen. To ease their travels, Robin is disguised as a boy, but their encounters with various colorful characters show her disguise has flaws. Arriving home, Robin’s neighbors are surprised to see the wild tomboy they knew turned into a formidable young woman. She is aggressively courted by Hans Kalm, a neighbor harboring a plan to take over the Parker smithy and lands. Hannah appears with news from Maryland. William has died, and Catherine has given Hannah her freedom but taken Hannah’s son to raise as the Simon heir. Robin asks Hannah to stay with her and Gillis leaves to journey south.

In Creek’s Bend, a Highland community on the banks of the Cape Fear River, Gillis is shocked to learn his clansmen plan to fight the rebels. Fleeing to the mountains, Gillis learns that Richard Parker is training rebel partisans nearby. Richard too learns of Gillis, and the two search for each other but fail to meet before Richard is wounded at the Battle of Kings Mountain. Gillis arrives only hours after Richard has died. Robin only learns of her father’s death when, during an early winter snowstorm, the stranger who seeks solace at her barn turns out to be Gillis and the horse he leads is King George, her father’s trusted mount.