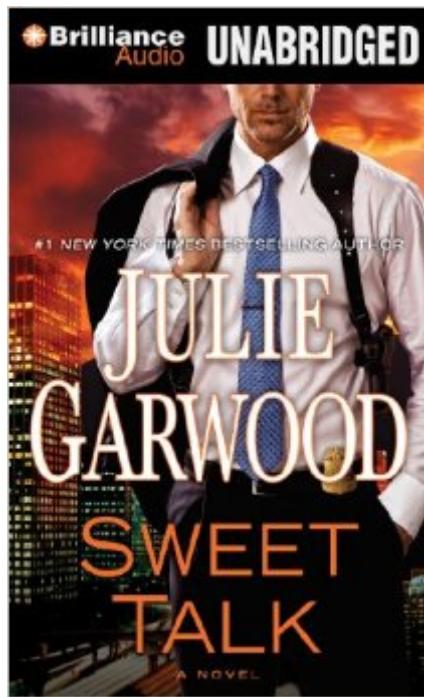


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# Sweet Talk



## Synopsis

When FBI agent Grayson Kincaid first encounters Olivia MacKenzie, she makes quite an impression. The beautiful, tough young attorney has stumbled into the middle of an FBI sting operation and reduced it to chaos. Months of surveillance and careful planning down the drain, Kincaid's partner is furious and lets Olivia know that she's ticked off the wrong guy. After all, he's FBI. But Olivia isn't intimidated by his partner's bullying because she's something even scarier: she's IRS. And working for the IRS is no picnic. She's on the trail of an elaborate Ponzi scheme, one that threatens to ruin the lives of naive and unsuspecting victims, and one she has personal reasons to be angry about. But after she asks the wrong people questions, her life is suddenly endangered. She's accustomed to looking out for others who are weak, but being vulnerable herself makes her realize she needs help. In desperation, she calls Grayson Kincaid. Together they join forces to fight corruption, but Olivia is also fighting the immediate and intense attraction she feels for Agent Kincaid, and that may be a battle she is bound to lose. As always, Ms. Garwood creates engaging characters who come alive page after page. The banter and interaction between Ellie and Max is beyond charming. Ellie is a spirited and strong heroine, and Max is charming in a stoic, gruff sort of way. • New York Journal of Books on The Ideal Man Julie Garwood creates masterpieces every time she writes a book. Indeed, she is the Rembrandt of romance novels. • The Kansas City Star Julie Garwood has become a trusted brand name in romantic fiction. • People's [Garwood's] timely subjects set against a timeless background that attract so many modern readers. • USA Today

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

So I think this is my last Julie Garwood for a while. At least, until she writes another historical. Since she branched into the contemporary market, I've found myself increasingly dissatisfied, to the point that I've struggled to finish books. If I hadn't been reviewing this book as an ARC, I would have stopped reading this book after about eleven pages. The same problems keep cropping up, and there are just better books I could be spending my time on. I'll always remember her earlier books fondly, but I know Garwood can do better. The prologue stops me dead. It's almost 15 pages of little girls running around, creating havoc. It's boring, and does nothing to move the story along. It's nothing that couldn't have been introduced into the main text of the story. I hate prologues that are useless. It took me a day to get past the prologue. And then you meet Olivia MacKenzie, all grown up. And perfect. And Grayson Kincaid. Who's also perfect. This is the problem I have with the leads in Julie Garwood's books. They're perfect physical specimens. So impossible sexy and gorgeous, other characters are bowled over by their looks. It's annoying and I'm tired of reading about it. The attraction between the two is also superficial. Garwood spends a lot of time telling us that these two are crazy about each other, but all I can see is lust and sex. The actual bare bones plot is mildly interesting, but the supporting characters are one dimensional and do nothing to prop up the leads, or even give the leads complexity. The villains have no depth. The family of the MCs are just there for wallpaper. The other FBI agent, Ronan, is mildly interesting, but disappears for pages at a time, and then does nothing interesting when he is around.

I usually enjoy Julie Garwood's books, but the last few (I wasn't a fan of Sizzle or The Ideal Man) have been clunkers. "Sweet Talk" has moved beyond clunker status however, and while I usually roll my eyes when reviewers insist a title is not actually written by the author, I have to wonder if they are correct on this one. I have read all of Julie Garwood's books (the great, the good, and the not so good), and this one really does not sound like her at all.<sup>1</sup> The writing is stilted and has a great deal of filler that does absolutely nothing to further the storyline. Things like, "Olivia walked into her apartment. She put her purse down on the table. She placed her keys next to her purse. She walked to her room to change her clothes. Then the doorbell rang."<sup>2</sup> The dialogue rings false. The conversations between the Pips as children are especially bad. They don't sound like children. Ten year old Olivia says, "My mother has caller ID. As soon as she sees it's the hospital calling, she won't pick up. My disease is too stressful for her....Mom has trouble coping." She describes her parents marriage, "Mom adores him [her father]. She's dramatic about it. I don't know how to explain it. She doesn't have room for anything else in her life." As this conversation progressed, I found it

sounded more like a bad self-help book than a group of 10 - 11 year olds.3. Olivia doesn't seem too incredibly bright. For a person who has gone through everything she has, she doesn't have a great deal of common sense. She flies off the handle a lot and sounds incredibly naive. Having her yell things, does not make her tough in my book - it makes her seem irrational and loud.

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