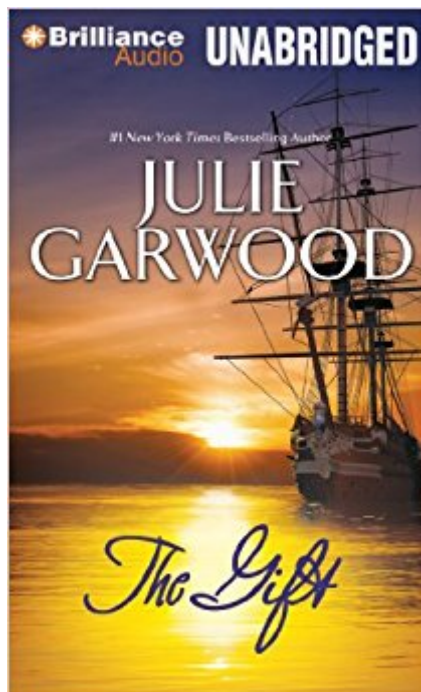


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The Gift (Crown's Spies)



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of *Ransom* weaves the delightful, sensual story of two lovers destined for high adventure and blissful rapture! A child bride, Sara Winchester had grown into a winsome beauty, joyfully anticipating the day when her husband Nathan, Marquess of St. James, would return to claim her heart at last. Charmingly innocent, she dismissed the ancient feud that divided Nathan's family from her own—and she was totally unaware of his past exploits as the notorious pirate, Pagan. The man who now stood before her was perplexing, arrogant and powerfully handsome—a warrior-gentleman whose gentle touch aroused her to the wildest, deepest pleasures of love. Nathan had never bared his soul to any woman, but he was soon utterly beguiled and exasperated by Sara's sweet, defiant ways. Aboard his ship, *The Seahawk*, she was brave, imperious and determined to win his heart completely—but yet upon their return to England, her love would be sorely tested as a vile conspiracy tried to tear them apart. With their future at stake, they would discover the true destiny of their passion—for all time!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This bland romance, which borders on formulaic, recycles a few elements from Garwood's earlier novel *Guardian Angel*. In 1802, in an attempt to bring peace between two warring families, the king arranges a marriage between the 14-year-old Nathaniel's son, Baker, marquess of St. James, and Lady Sara Winchester, who is four. Fourteen years later and now a pirate, Nathan wishes to claim his bride--and the property that comes with her--but the Winchesters aren't cooperating. Nathan

decides to indulge in a "clean, uncomplicated kidnapping" and spirits his wife out of England on one of his ships. In fact Sara, long infatuated with her absent, mysterious husband, settles into life at sea quite cheerfully, enlivening the voyage by accidentally destroying a couple of sails, giving the crew food poisoning and setting the vessel on fire. Despite it all, her determined affection for and faith in Nathan and his crew gradually wins her a place in their crusty, seafaring souls and a loyalty that is tested when, on their return to London, Sara's father threatens to expose an old scandal that could ruin the St. James name. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

"Rich in emotion . . . you'll cherish this book." -- Romantic Times Book Reviews --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

The Gift by Julie Garwood has always been one of my favourite historical romance novels. I haven't re-read it in years and when friends decided a Julie Garwood buddy read was in order, The Gift was chosen. We are introduced to Nathan at the age of fourteen and Sara at the age of four. The daft King decided to stop the feuding between each of their families by joining the young couple in marriage. Sara's family are despicable and throughout the story we see them at their worst. Nathan's is not much better, but they are loyal. When the couple finally come together to live as man and wife, it's not all plain sailing. I loved this couple. Sara is an absolute crack up. Her naive outlook on life and her unquestionable faith in her husband is sweet. Nathan is a gruff and impatient man who wants the contract fulfilled without his emotions getting involved. Their journey is filled with rough seas and dastardly parasols, but Sara's positive outlook and Nathan's determination help them survive the storms. Julie Garwood is one of the most brilliant historical romance authors and her stories always leave me with a smile on my face. She brings her characters to life and makes you fall in love with them. This was a great reminder to step back in time more regularly and enjoy the fun, excitement, sexy times and adventure that a good historical romance provides.

The plot was basically a good one but the whole of it just didn't do it for me. The heroine was an immature, clueless ditz. Although I liked the hero for the most part, his dealings with her dangerous stupidity just didn't make any sense to me. The final straw to me was her, and the entire crew going along with it, convincing the hero to let the pirates go. Although the heroine was sweet, I prefer a heroine to have more common sense and maturity to go along with the sweetness. She was just too childish in her behaviors and thought processes. She was also constantly bursting into tears. Quite

annoying. I have thoroughly enjoyed a number of Julie Garwood's books but this one was not her best.

Third book in a regency series, we've met Nathan in Caine and Jade's story from Guardian Angel. It's time for Nathan to go kidnap his bride •the baggage he's got to accept in order to get the king's gift of gold. He needs the money to grow his shipping business. In an attempt to stop a long standing feud between the Winchester and St James families, King George came up with a contract, forcing four year-old Sara Winchester to marry fourteen year-old Nathan St James. They'll be awarded a valuable strip of land that resides between the estates of both families. And when she gives him a child, the king's gift of gold. If either breaks the contract, the other family gets the land. The two haven't seen each other since being wed fourteen years ago and her family desperately wants Nathan to break the contract. Chaotic humor abounds as Sara is the cause of one mishap after another while aboard his ship, to the point where a sailor getting a wart also gets blamed on her. The two are as different as night and day. She's a dreamer who grew up with the fairy tale belief that her husband loved her and should protect her from everything. That faith gets put to the test. For his part, he's relieved that she's nothing at all like her despicable family in either looks or temperament and both he and his crew come to appreciate her. I love the characters. First read back in the 90s before I'd started reading so much urban fantasy with capable, kick butt heroines, today Sara seems like a wet noodle in comparison. But she's so charming and funny. Her backbone is obvious from the start, but we see growth in that area. Expect to shed tears in more than one place as it's easy to slip into Sara's head and feel her emotions. It's not necessary to have read Guardian Angel first, but it would definitely help with a better understanding of some of the relationships as well as an issue that comes up. The characters and storyline from the first book, Lion's Lady, have nothing to do with this third story.

This is the tenth Julie Garwood book I've read. The first nine were all 5-star but this one is lucky it's 2-stars. First, there were too many inconsistencies between this book and Guardian Angel (book #2 of the series). In this book Nathan was the pirate Pagan but in book #2 it was his sister, she did give him the name but only one-year earlier and it is never mentioned that Jade was Pagan. This book

makes it seem like it was always Nathan. The name of the ship changes without explanation. In book #2 it was The Emerald and in this book it was The Seahawk. It seems like it the same ship because it says Jade was the former mistress but maybe it is a different ship, I don't know because there was NO explanation!! Jade's husband's title change for no apparent reason and then back again in book #4. A lot of things just didn't sync with book #2 and that is frustrating to me. Second, Sara is the first heroine I really disliked. She cried non-stop! She had a few redeeming qualities but not enough to make me like her. She is too much like the typical woman of the time and the thing that makes great heroines is that they are different than the norm. I really have no idea what made Nathan fall in love with her. Third, the foreshadowing was a let down. Without giving anything away, there were things said that I knew would come into play later and was excited to see how it would play out, but then when the time came it was a total dud!! also felt like things were not well explained, I kept going "wait, what's going on? Did I miss something?" and don't know if it was the writing or my lack of interest. I usually hate putting books down, I hated picking this one up. I got through it just because it was part of the series. It wasn't completely horrible but it also wasn't very good. I didn't have the emotional connection and dreamy quality I usually feel with romance novels. I hope you enjoy it more than I did. Luckily there are many other GREAT Julie Garwood books for me to read.

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