

## Contrarium: The Book Glasses Series: Book 2

**Arthur Bozikas**

Next Chapter

(298pp)

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*In the attention-grabbing adventure novel Contrarium, a woman with a powerful artifact travels around the world to protect her family.*

In Arthur Bozikas's mystery novel *Contrarium*, a woman uncovers the secret behind a powerful and deadly artifact.

Sam is only the latest person to acquire the book glasses, which allow their wearer to understand and retain everything they read, but for a price. Just owning such an incredible artifact—never mind trying to unravel the secrets behind it and its twin pair—puts Sam and her family in great danger. Sam's efforts to protect her loved ones take her around the world and drive her to take ever-greater risks in the name of security, justice, and knowledge.

Information about the previous series installment is incorporated into the book's early chapters well. Once poor and illiterate, Sam used the book glasses to gain wealth and social standing, including high-profile positions in the Australian government. Her easy success and past trauma make her arrogant at times: she assumes that she is the only one capable of resolving her problems and pushes away those who might be able to help her. If she is to succeed in her mission and live a happy life, she must overcome her difficult childhood and learn to trust others.

The story is breathless as it follows Sam's global travels to learn more about the power and history of the glasses—and about Ben, a handsome doctoral candidate whose path keeps intersecting with her own. Excitement abounds as, time and again, Sam fights off spies and mercenaries sent by Garza, a ruthless mob boss who will do anything to acquire the book glasses. Sudden deaths, revelations, and betrayals add to the omnipresent sense of danger, though the twists regarding Garza are similar and become repetitive by the end.

By the book's third act, Sam, who until now has learned much about the world but little about her inner workings, realizes the consequences of her past actions. Her change of heart opens new opportunities and forces her to think hard about what she wants from the glasses and from life in general. Other people, including Sam's loving family members and those whom she meets through her job, all serve their purposes. But Sam's final confrontation with Garza is summarized, diminishing the moment's impact and underemphasizing Sam's cleverness. Still, important duties and decisions await her in future series installments.

In the fantasy novel *Contrarium*, people are responsible for using their talents and gifts for the greater good.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (November 23, 2022)

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