

*300 Arguments*, by Sarah Manguso

rev. by Cassidy Adams

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Sarah Manguso is the author of six other books, which include *Ongoingness*, *The Guardians*, and *The Two Kings of Decay*. Manguso defies the ordinary, mundane book, by turning her – you guessed it – three hundred arguments into word puzzles. While this book of nonfiction claims to be arguments, I could not find much to argue with, as her book was surprisingly applicable to my life. Each argument seemed more and more like a caption or a quote found in a life book.

Manguso's *300 Arguments* is honest philosophy. Each page contains 3-4 arguments, with dashed lines in between. This separates each thought, yet she retraces her thoughts, and often revisits them in other arguments. Manguso brings the audience into her very head with a first person point of view and truthful details of her life are revealed when she, for example, informs the audience of a dead friend and her mental illness. Manguso is unafraid of telling the audience how it is, or rather how she views it. While giving life advice, she also recalls moments she has experienced with others, whether that be a conversation with a friend on why they did a pornographic film, or her fifth-grade self wanting to master a project; for example: "People like to tell my very successful friend that they, too, intend to write some books. He always answers, with big eyes and a ghoulish smile, *How hard could it be?*" While the argument may not seem like advice, or even be classified as such, each statement holds an undeniable truth to it that can change one's mindset of an entire situation., each moment gaining the audience's attention. The characterization of the book brings one's darkest thoughts to life; Manguso captures these thoughts with a simple sentences, like "The most likable person you know just might be a sociopath." She ultimately sets the tone by admitting exactly what her book is: "Think of this as a short book composed entirely of what I hoped would be a long book's quotable passages." While the book could be exactly that, the simplicity proves that less is more. A drawn out passage might ease the reader's mind, but Manguso instead leaves the audience thinking.

Those looking to question their everyday thoughts would find this book interesting. This book also fits with those looking for a personal connection to a book, as there is plenty of room for people to find themselves in Manguso's stories. *300 Arguments* is perfect for readers with wild thoughts and creative minds. Sarah Manguso's poetic writing could interest a variety of readers, as long as the reader is ready to be honest with their arguments.