

The Boss

Andrew O'Keeffe

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Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (4/09)

In the preface to “The Boss” the author, Andrew O'Keeffe, explains why he decided to write this book and in doing so, lists some statistics. According to the Human Synergistic study, ninety percent of the people work in a negative culture of blame, indecision, or conformity. If they could, thirty percent of people would sack their boss. Of people who choose to change jobs, some eighty percent do so because of their manager.

It has been a while since I've been employed in a corporate environment and had to deal with a “boss,” but when I took a little trip down memory lane, I had to agree with the importance of a safe and friendly work environment and the impact one's “boss” has on that. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support any efforts to educate the managers; and I found Andrew O'Keeffe's approach to this endeavor, through a fiction book, to be quite interesting.

Lauren Johnson's boss is toxic – Deadly Di as a nickname suits her real well. She drives Lauren to unbelievable depths of misery, so Lauren's decision to look for another job comes as no surprise. After a relatively brief search she's approached by a headhunter and recruited for a position that sounds real good to her. Best of all, it will give her a chance to work with Meg Montgomery, who has a stellar reputation in the professional circles. After meeting with Meg, Lauren wants the job even more, realizing what a nice change it would be to work with a different kind of a manager.

Having been offered the position, Lauren accepts it gladly and is looking forward to her new career. But bad news hit on her very first day on the job. Obviously, Lauren's days with lousy bosses are far from being over. In fact, it seems that her saga has barely begun.

Although a novel, “The Boss” by Andrew O'Keeffe is based on true stories from real corporate environment and as such could and should serve as a teaching tool for aspiring as well as current managers. One of my favorite parts was the fables, which the author cleverly incorporates in the narrative to draw parallels to the events described in the book. Overall, I found the book well written, believable and insightful. While I could not really call it funny – it is a bit too scarily real for that, it certainly made me chuckle in amusement a few times.