



Doukakis's Apprentice

By Sarah Morgan

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Damon Doukakis has just fired his latest assistant. This ruthlessly driven billionaire has such devastating good-looks that he proves impossible to resist. So much so that secretary after secretary has lost her head...then her heart...and then her job!

Polly Prince is determined to make a lasting success of her new position...even if it does end up being far more compromising than she could ever have imagined! Because it's not long before Damon has whisked her off to help broker an all-important deal in Paris—where she learns that her workaholic boss can put pleasure before business...

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Editorial Review

Review

"..I loved this book. Sarah Morgan continues to hang out on my autobuy list, and each book of hers that I discover is a treat..." Sarah Wendell from Smart Bitches, Trashy Books

"..this book lived up to its billing..." Jane Litte from Dear Author (October Recommended Read)

"...file this under must read. It's a warm, witty, wonderful story..." RT Book Reviews (October Top Pick)

About the Author

USA Today bestselling author Sarah Morgan writes lively, sexy contemporary stories for Harlequin.

Romantic Times has described her as 'a magician with words' and nominated her books for their Reviewer's Choice Awards and their 'Top Pick' slot. In 2012 Sarah received the prestigious RITA® Award from the Romance Writers of America. She lives near London with her family. Find out more at www.sarahmorgan.com

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'He's here. He's arrived. Damon Doukakis just strode into the building.'

Woken by the panicky voice, Polly lifted her head from her arms and was blinded by sunlight pouring through the window. 'What? Who?' The words were slurred, her brain emerging slowly from the shadows of sleep. The headache that had been part of her life for the past week still squeezed her skull. 'I must have dozed off. Why didn't anyone wake me?'

'Because you haven't slept for days and you're scary when you're tired. There's no need to panic. I'm doing that for both of us. Here—I brought sustenance.' Balancing two mugs of and a large muffin, the woman kicked the door shut. 'Wake yourself up with carbs and coffee.'

Polly rubbed her eyes and squinted at the screen of her laptop. 'What time is it?'

'Eight o'clock.'

'*Eight o'clock?*' She flew to her feet, sending papers and pens spinning across the floor. 'The meeting is in fifteen minutes! Were you hoping I'd just walk in there and talk in my sleep or something?' Polly hit 'save' on the document she'd been working on all night, her hand shaking from the sudden awakening. Her heart pounded and deep in her stomach was a solid lump of dread.

Sleeping didn't make any of it go away and reality pressed down on her like a heavy weight.

Everything was about to change. Life as she knew it had ended.

'Stay calm,' Debbie swooped across the office and put the plate and the mugs on the desk. 'If you show him you're afraid, he'll walk all over you. That's what men like Damon Doukakis do. They sniff out weakness and they move in for the kill.'

'I'm not afraid.' The lie wedged itself in her throat.

She *was* afraid. She was afraid of the responsibility and of the consequences of failure. And, yes, she was afraid of Damon Doukakis.

Only a fool wouldn't be.

'You're going to be fine. I mean, we're all depending on you, *obviously*, but I don't want the fact that you have the future of a hundred people in your hands to make you nervous.'

'Thanks for that calming thought.' Polly allowed herself a quick gulp of coffee and then checked her BlackBerry. 'I've only been asleep for two hours and I already have a hundred e-mails. Don't these people ever sleep?' She scrolled through them quickly, scanning for anything important. 'Gerard Bonnel wants us to move our meeting tomorrow back to the evening. Can I get a later flight to Paris?'

'You're not flying. The train was cheaper. I bought you a non-flexible ticket on the seven-thirty out of St Pancras. If he's moved the meeting then you'll have most of the day to kill.' Debbie leaned forward and stole a large chunk from the muffin. 'Go and see the Eiffel Tower. Make love to a delicious French guy on the banks of the Seine. *Ooh la la.*'

In the process of replying to an e-mail, Polly didn't look up. 'Public sex is an offence, even in France.'

'Nowhere near as big an offence as your non-existent sex-life. When did you last go on a date?'

'I have enough problems without adding a sex-life to the mix.' Polly pressed 'send'. 'Did you sort out a purchase order for that magazine promotion?'

'Yes, yes. Do you ever stop thinking about work? The fearsome Damon Doukakis just might have met his match in you.'

'The rest of these e-mails are going to have to wait.' Polly put the phone down on her desk and glanced at the clock. 'Damn—I wanted to take another look at the presentation. I need to brush my hair—I don't know what to do first—'

'Hair. You slept with your head on your arms and you look like Mohican Barbie.' Debbie whipped a pair of hair straight-eners out of Polly's drawer and plugged them in. 'Hold still. This is an emergency.'

'I need to go to the bathroom and do my make-up.'

'No time. Don't worry. You look great. I *love* that look. You're so good at mixing vintage with current.' Debbie slid the irons down Polly's hair. 'The hot pink tights really work.'

Keeping her head still, Polly reached out and unplugged her laptop. 'I can't believe my dad still hasn't rung. His company is being decimated and he's nowhere in sight. I've left about a hundred messages.'

'You know he never switches his mobile on. He hates the thing. There—' Debbie unplugged the irons '—you're done.'

Polly twisted her hair and pinned it in a haphazard knot at the back of her head. 'I even called a few of the London hotels last night to see if a middle-aged gentleman and a young woman had rented a suite with them.'

'That must have been embarrassing.'

'I grew up with embarrassing.' She retrieved her boots from under the desk. 'Damon Doukakis is going to rip

us apart when he realises my father isn't showing up.'

'The rest of us will make up for it. The whole company came in early. We're all busy bees. If Doukakis is looking for slackers, he's not going to find them here. We're determined to make a good impression despite your father's absence.'

'It's too late. Damon Doukakis has already made up his mind what he wants to do with us.' And she knew what that was. Panic gripped her. He'd taken control of her father's company. He could do anything he liked with the business.

It was his revenge. His way of sending a message to her father.

But it was a crude weapon. The scorching blaze of his wrath wasn't just going to burn up her father—it was going to burn up the innocent staff who didn't deserve to lose their jobs.

The weight of responsibility was suffocating. As her father's daughter she knew she had to do something, but in truth she was powerless. She had no authority.

Debbie ate a piece of muffin. 'I read somewhere that Damon Doukakis works a twenty-hour day so at least you'll have something in common.'

After three nights with virtually no sleep Polly could barely focus. Drugged by tiredness, she struggled to shake the clouds from her brain. 'I've put together the figures. Let's just hope Michael Anderson can work the laptop. You know what he's like with technology. I've backed up the entire presentation in three places because he managed to delete the thing last time. Are the rest of the board here?'

'They all arrived at the same time as him. Not that they said anything to us.' Deep lines of disapproval bracketed Debbie's mouth. 'None of them have the bottle to face us since they sold their shares to Demon Damon. I still don't understand why a rich, powerful tycoon like him would want to buy our little company. I mean, I love working here, but we're not exactly his style are we?'

Polly thought about how hard she'd worked to try and drag the company into the twenty-first century. 'No. We're not his style.'

'So did he buy us for the fun of it?' Debbie finished the muffin and licked her fingers. 'Maybe this is billionaire retail therapy. Instead of buying shoes, he blows a fortune on an ad agency. He offered the board a whole heap of money.'

Polly kept her mouth shut but the dark dread turned to an icy chill.

She knew why he'd bought the company. And it wasn't something she could share with anyone. Damon Doukakis had sworn her to silence in a single chilling phone call that had come a few days earlier. A phone call she hadn't mentioned to anyone. She didn't want it to be public knowledge any more than he did.

Polly forced herself to breathe slowly. 'I'm not surprised the board sold. They're greedy. I'm so sick of booking their long lunches and their first-class airfares and then being told we're not profitable. They remind me of mosquitoes, sucking up our lifeblood into their fat bodies—'

Debbie recoiled. 'Pol, that's gross.'

'They're gross.' Polly mentally ran through everything she'd put into the presentation. Had she missed anything? 'If I were the one giving the presentation, I wouldn't be so worried.'

'You should be the one giving it.'

'Michael Anderson is too threatened by me to let me open my mouth. He's afraid I might actually tell someone who does the work around here. And anyway, I'm just my father's executive assistant, whatever that is. My job is to keep everything running behind the scenes.' And she was horribly conscious that she had no formal qualifications. She'd learned by watching, listening and trusting her instincts and she was savvy enough to know that for most employers that wouldn't be enough. Polly pressed her hands to her churning stomach, wishing she could stride into the boardroom wielding an MBA from Harvard. 'Doukakis already has a super-slick successful advertising agency in his organisation. He doesn't need another one and he doesn't need our staff. He's just going to snap his jaws around us like—'

'No!' Debbie held up her hand and shuddered. 'Don't tell me what it will be like. No more of your blood-sucking-mosquito analogies—I just ate your breakfast.'

'I'm just saying—'

'Well, *don't* say. And if Damon Doukakis wants your father's business that badly, well—that's sort of a compliment, isn't it? And you're assuming he'll make us all redundant, but he might not. Why buy a business and then break it up?'

Because he wanted to be in control.

Instead of being a helpless passenger like her, Damon had put himself in the driving seat. While her father was living the life of a man half his age, his company was being savaged by a ruthless predator. And she was fighting that predator single-handed.

'Cheer up.' Deb...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Now a day people that Living in the era just where everything reachable by talk with the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not demand people to be aware of each information they get. How people have to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the solution is reading a book. Reading a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information specially this Doukakis's Apprentice book because this book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the data in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

Homer Simon:

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