

Hawking System
In Orbit of Planet Bruno
Fuminsho Station
March 14 2321

“Hi! You’ve been detained by Fuminsho Colony Security for possession of Illegal Contraband!” A-somewhat-familiar pink-hair’d hologram happily announced. The feminine image had a barcode tattoo’d to one cheek and a number 9 on the other along with a black eye-patch that provided a rather striking asymmetry between both sides of her face. The image was wearing a [grey uniform](#) and cap with an equipment harness on over that... though there wasn’t much need for extra gear for an image created from light bouncing around a room. “During a check of your luggage, we found numerous weapons, and components that could be used to create weapons, that exceed the destructive-capability limits for devices onboard space stations. As an example, the primitive 30mm cannon with a linked ammunition feed and shoulder-mount emblazoned with the words ‘Avada Kedavra’ is capable of penetrating through the outer-shell of this station which could lead to serious injuries or death. You will be provided with a legal council who will be able to guide you through legal proceedings and assist you with scheduling your trial date. Your items will be returned to you, however we will be confiscating all Illegal Contraband until a decision is made at your trial. Furthermore as a person of interest a SLAP drone will be assigned to you for the duration of your stay on Fuminsho Station to ensure everyone’s safety. Do you understand the terms of your release?”

The hologram stopped talking, returning to a more neutral state where she had her hands resting in front of her with one holding the other’s wrist. She would patiently await Hilda’s answer, as there was not much else for her to do here in this room but answer. There was a single gunmetal grey table and a set of chairs in the center of the room, and surveillance equipment positioned in the ceiling. The walls were similarly gunmetal colored, with a door that was just as brutalist and oppressive as the rest of the room.

“No, I absolutely don’t understand what’s going on,” the golden haired woman replied. Arms crossed over her business casual, it was clear that the feline eared detainee was having a less than stellar day, her tail twitching with annoyance and frustration. “I was told that this place was a lawless, wild-west of a station where anything goes ever since these mysterious ‘bag people’ took over,” Hilda air-quoted with her fingers for emphasis. The arms manufacturer heiress hadn’t seen any of these ‘bag people’ she was told about, or even knew why they were called that, but just that she was supposed to call them that. “And more importantly, have we met before?” the German turned Daqinren woman raised an ear. “I think I saw you before...”

“This image is modeled after our Friend and Idol Z-9!” The Hologram exclaimed, showing a sincere tone of excitement in her voice, “She is an Echoni, treasured creation of The Magnetic Assembly. Her singing and other pleasing Waveforms may be obtained from your terminal. I’m certain she would be excited to meet you. Currently our Echoni reside in the Estate of Dorris Muller on Hawking if you wish to observe them!” The excited holographic image did seem to look similar to someone Midnight had passed by the last time she visited Hawking.

"I am not allowed to proceed without your understanding of the charges that you are faced with." The hologram said, switching from their more excited tone to one that was more calm and educational. She would then launch into her lecture on the legal system of the station, "Fuminsho Station is provided for use by The Magnetic Assembly as part of a joint partnership with its local government. Civil and internal matters are left to the local population while The Magnetic Assembly is responsible for maintenance, customs, and any other operation that is related to the safe and continued functioning of the Station. It is under the rules for restricting destructive devices implemented by The Magnetic Assembly that you are being charged. These rules are intended to protect the station against damage and protect the people from a possibly damaged station. The law specifically restricts the usage, creation, or sale of devices that could damage the pressure-vessel of the station. A full listing of the types of exempt equipment, specifics for 'a damaging device' and acceptable use cases for such devices is listed in appendix 2 of the Acceptable Behavior manual. Further consideration is provided for the intention behind the use, creation, or sale of such devices. Under our legal system you have the right to legal council, and corrective action can not be taken against you until a trial has occurred. However we will be impounding your equipment until the time a fair judgement can be reached regarding the specifics of your situation and your intentions. During your release period, a SLAP drone will be assigned to monitor you, and ensure you do not undertake destructive acts against the station. You are free to schedule your trial using your terminal so that a fair judgement can be reached. If you do not schedule your trial within a reasonable time frame you may be arrested again and face new charges.... Do you understand the terms of your release?"

"Not one bit!" Midnight replied, distraught. "I was told that this station was in the horrible, mecha-tentacled grasp of the insidious Magnetic Assembly and such, but this sounds like things are going...somewhat normally?" she replied, still very much confused. "There's no rage against the machines, or anything like that at all?" the blond haired woman's feline ears drooped. "And what's a SLAP drone even? It's not some inhumane device that hits me whenever I do something wrong, is it?"

"A slap drone is a small, flying, drone with a range of sensors and effectors designed to impede illegal action when observed," The hologram cheerfully responded, "Effectors are all non-lethal, and are intended only to..."

WHAM!

"MRS. HILDA OLANDER DON'T ANSWER ANY MORE OF THEIR QUESTIONS!" A rather nicely suited woman said as she slammed the door open from the outside. She confidently strode into the room and slammed her golden-brown briefcase on the metal table. The color perfectly matched her golden-brown hair, and the deep brown of her eyes certainly added a lot of color to the otherwise gunmetal grey room. A pair of floppy ears would hint that this woman had at least some Daqin upgrades installed, and the trio of buttons left unbuttoned on the top of her shirt indicated that she did prefer to flaunt those upgrades. "YOU AREN'T OBLIGATED TO

ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS OF THEIRS UNTIL YOUR TRIAL WHERE I WILL PROVE YOUR INNOCENCE AND SECURE AN APOLOGY FROM THE SECURITY STAFF HERE! I DEMAND YOU RELEASE MY CLIENT AT ONCE!"

The hologram would turn towards the newcomer, and politely start speaking again, "While I appreciate your concern, we have not established that you are her lawyer so I can not comply with your request. A ticket has been entered with the local security staff and..."

"Please... just say you understand..." A guard pleaded hopefully from where he was standing in the hallway. He certainly looked like a soldier, completely with the dull grey military outfit that was commonly issued to police forces of the Hawking Gendarmerie. His combat harness seemed to fit a little tightly, and it seemed that he had a few more pounds on him than was strictly needed. Certainly far short of the morbid obesity of some in the American Union but certainly heavier than what Midnight may have seen in Hawking. "I'm not trying to keep her here. But the automated system won't agree to release her unless she understands the legal proceedings."

Of course, while the guard was speaking, so too was the Hologram. The Z-9 look-alike was busy explaining the process of requesting assistance from the human security staff, and what legal protections were extended to complaints if either of them felt they were being improperly treated.

"T-three? I think three at once is a bit much," Midnight awkwardly remarked, nervously fidgeting about as she spoke. However, the words were ambiguous enough that they could just as easily have been referring to herself or the 'dumb AI' of Zee Two or whatever that was doing its best to follow through with its programming. "But I think I understand," the golden haired woman nodded, arms crossed as she gathered her resolve.

"Fantastic, you heard the woman, you can release her now!" The rather confident, suited, woman said as she looked at Midnight, and then over at the door way to find the guard was already on his way back to his little office.

"Just leave! You don't need me to unlock anything!" He shouted behind him as the guard left.

"If you have any further questions about our legal proceedings feel free to check our online case law repository, speak with a public defender online, or secure your own legal representation." The hologram said cheerfully, transferring over the contact details before flickering away. An 'Exit' logo would then appear above the doorway, along with a glowing trail along the walls that would point inward towards the colony.

"See? You don't have to worry about a thing Mrs. Olander. Your family can afford the best legal representation and once I get a down payment I can make all of this go away. You'll be in central Fuminsho in no time drinking exotic liquors from star systems earth hasn't even heard of! or is it you're looking for Companionship? Gambling? I've done some work for the high rollers in

the Neomi clan and if you know the right people you can get anything you want out here in Fuminsho!" The Lawyer offered.

"A-ah?" Hilda reached a hand after the retreating guard in confusion. "I really thought it was going to be three at once," she muttered, slightly baffled at the turn of events. The dumb-intelligence was set on its exit routine, the slightly obese and slovenly man had left, and that meant she was with the business-woman. "This is an absolutely awful day," Midnight remarked, her feline ears drooping in disappointment. She sighed, taking the hint, but one thing still bugged her. "Thank you for trying to help, though, what are you talking about?" the blonde tigress raised an eyebrow. "My family disowned me as a race traitor the moment I became Daqinren, and since then, I've been barely making ends meet, if even that," she explained.

"Y...Yeah... but you have something set aside for a rainy day? Or you could just call your family and explain the situation... I'm sure they wouldn't just leave you out in the cold like that? ... you're not broke right? You've got a friend who can loan you some money right? Maybe something you can sell?" The lawyer asked, her heart sinking, her feelings being completely laid out by the expression on her face. She was practically frozen in place as she tried to solve the impossible problem of 'How does she get paid for representing Midnight Olander!?!'. She had assumed the Olander name came with money.

DEEP BREATHS...

Relax your body....

Visualize yourself as calm...

"That is ok. Lets talk it over. I am sure we can find a way for you to pay your legal bills. Lets start with what assets you do have?" The lawyer asked, now refocused, her professional appearance once again restored as she got back down to business.

"Well, that's just the thing!" Midnight began. "They took it all! I had used the last of my money to make a starting selection of firearms and move here, so now I'm completely bankrupt!" she exclaimed. "All I have left are my CNC tools and metal stock, but all I know how to make are guns and gun related paraphernalia!" Shuddering as a dark thought crossed her mind, Midnight added, "If I end up selling those to make ends meet, or worse, pay for litigation, I'll have nothing left to sell. Other than..." The woman's voice ominously trailed off, only for her eyes to finally lock with the lawyer's with a look of desperation, lust and horror.

"Well, as your lawyer I can't suggest you break the law by offering your services to one of the local Yakuza gangs... either making guns for them or entering into their employ as a sex-worker. I can only give you strictly legal advice." The woman said, nodding intently as she affirmed her commitment to the law. "I'm certain you can make more than just guns. Your services as a metal-worker could be put to use on the station? Or perhaps you could work at a cabaret club as a hostess. I hear landing just one whale would be enough to keep you quite comfortable

even after the club manager's cut. This is Fuminsho station, there's a lot of money being thrown about by thirsty station-dwellers who only get to cut loose when they are out here!" The Dog-type Daqin's tail was wagging, proud that she was able to confidently guide her client in this legal matter while also considering if she should just apply for a public-defender credit to get the system to foot the bill... it wasn't nearly as much as she wanted to charge but it beat doing the work for free.

"W-well, you see..." Midnight cooly began, wiggling about in her seat with discomfort. "I've already tried all that before..." Pausing as her face slowly grew pink with blush, she went on, "If it's using my metalworking skills to build the station or repair ships, m-m-my co-workers start...start saying things, and slapping my bottom, and then I get fired for it! They say I'm distracting all the men and some of the women too much!" the blonde exclaimed. "It's absolutely horrible! And if I'm working as a Hostess, the customers start getting touchy, and the bouncers step in, and then they start getting tired of it, and I get fired from that too!" Looking at the woman, it wasn't hard to figure out why. Daqinren were made to be as perfect as possible, and this was something that even the floppy-eared lawyer could relate to.

The lawyer's tail swished decisively as she listened to Midnight's plight, "It can be difficult being so perfect," She replied, "Certainly part of the problem with using the Daqin enhancements is how often we draw the eye of perverts and neckbeards."

There was the question of what to do though. She did have some obligation to help.

Even if they were merely a second class Daqin.

"Well, you can take your chances working for someone who can help pay your bills. Or you can take your chances with bill collectors and the legal system." The lawyer offered.

Hawking System
In Orbit of Planet Bruno
Fuminsho Station
March 14 2321
... A few hours later

Midnight's new lawyer had been very accommodating, providing her with new clothing that would help accentuate her features, getting her setup with a job interview, and even providing her with her business card!

Elle Qián
Attorney at Law
The Legal Beagle!



It was questionable if she even had beagle traits though, as she looked mostly nothing like a Beagle, but one could assume that this was mostly an advertising ploy. What wasn't an advertising ploy was Elle teaching Midnight how to duck the SLAP drones following her: The small floating drones tried to stay up near the ceiling and it was easy enough to duck into a store front and close the door behind you. As the Legal Beagle explained "Its illegal to attack a slap-drone, but they can't charge you if their drone can't keep up with you!"

This was made all the easier by the layout of Fuminsho Station. The massive cylinder housed nearly 10 million people! The main walkways had a polished stone asthetic that helped reflect the dim glow of the main overhead light in the central cylinder axis and the millions of neon lights that drenched the streets in bright colors. Things were bright, but not too bright, loud but not too loud, the whole place had a vibrant energy just under the surface that was designed to make it hard to tell exactly what time it was.

And the station was ALWAYS like this.

They didn't even bother with a day/night cycle.

What they did bother with was the Grand Cabaret: A large neon covered palace in the center of the busiest place in the station's pleasure district... not that Midnight would get to see much of it as she was hurried in through a side door.

"So is this your girl?" Elle and Midnight were stopped by another woman with platinum blonde hair, a deep tan skin, and a muscled build that was covered in a glossy white suit with red undershirt. The sword on her hip and pop'd collar seemed to indicate that she was security for this joint (Or just some massive weeb).

"This is Hilda Oliander. She needs a job and she's got metalworking skills that your boss has been looking for." Elle replied.

"Huh..." The sword wielding woman seemed to know what Elle was talking about and it seemed to lower her opinion of them both. "I guess the boss gets what the boss wants. You ready to work right now?"

"W-w-work? At the Grand Cabaret?!" Midnight stuttered, turning to look at Elle with shock. "But I thought we were going to right the wrongs! Break the social order that punishes women for being ogled and groped! Bring down the patriarchy!" she exclaimed, looking to the guard for help. "You tell her! It's absolutely awful, men's

wandering gazes mentally stripping us of our clothing with their lustful eyes! We should do something, nevermind that we might suffer a terrible fate at the hands of perverts if we fail, right?"

"You're in Fuminsho, if you're not here to be seen then you're in the wrong place," The sword wielding woman said, "...Thanks for bringing her to our attention by the way, we'll talk business later. Feel free to have a drink on the house."

"Let me know when your boss has decided on taking a deal for her services," Elle said, leaving her client behind and at the mercy of this still unnamed swordswoman.

"Come on, we're heading down to the basement..." The swordswoman said.

"....kaaaaay," Midnight sighed, her ears and tail drooping in disappointment. Hilda knew that the money was at least, or more accurately, until she was booted out. Following after the sword wielding guard though, she couldn't help but have her curiosity perked by their weapon selection. "Wait. Why do you have a sword? We're not in some neon colored, cyberpunk dystopia after all," the feline eared Daqinren pointed out.

"Is this your first day here?" The swordswoman asked, opening a side door and taking Hilda down into the basement and through a dimly lit hallway with some VIP rooms on either side, into the back through a stockroom, and finally to a walk-in freezer, "OH... it is isn't it?" The realization took a moment to settle in her brain, as the swordswoman opened up the walk in Freezer, then shoved Hilda inside before joining her. At no point did her dominate hand ever leave the hilt of her sword. "The Assembly don't let us have Guns here, and that was all well and good when the Union was runnin' the place." She explained, waving at the security camera inside of the walk-in freezer. It'd take a moment, but soon a secret door would slide open, letting the two of them into a hidden room. The workspace was certainly small, and had a pair of safes in one corner, as well as some metalworking tools in the other.

"But the Union isn't here anymore which leaves us with two big problems," the swordswoman continued. "See, this is **FUMINSHO**, the single most expensive bit of real-estate in the Human Sphere. We're talking millions just for some small fucking closet to sleep in. We've got plenty of rivals gunning for us... just... you know... without guns. Since the Assembly doesn't allow guns here. The other problem is now the Assembly's got no one to keep them in check so they think they own the place. No one's exactly sure what the rules are now after the revolution so the Bossing thinks we need more firepower."

The swordswoman would walk over to the metalworking tools in the edge of the room, pointing to them with her free hand, "Are these tools going to be enough to make a gun?" She asked, clearly knowing little about what was here and what was needed. Between Lathes, 3d printers, and some stacks of sheet metal it was assumed that this is what was needed for 'guns'.

"I see, I see," the blonde Daqinren nodded in contemplative thought. Taking in the details, she remained mostly quiet, her mind going to work at the situation and the possibilities, but when she saw the tools, Midnight gave a bemused sneer that said everything. "Heh." In that brief moment, it was clear that she was not only unimpressed, it all might as well have been the equivalent of a 'small sword' for all intents and purposes. Just as quickly though, Midnight regained her composure, her tail and ears stiffening to try and maintain some level of decorum. "Krhmm! Well, they're a start. With these, the most simple and basic guns can be made," she began, blue eyes dismissing the set. "It'd all be hand-work though, so no real mass production. Low pressure things like pistols and shotguns." Her voice then picked up an excited edge, "Now, if you were able to get me my tools though," Hilda eagerly dangled the words.

The Swordswoman would give Hilda a stern, appraising, look. There seemed to be some consideration of her request... "I will keep that in mind. The Bossing's going to come down here in a few minutes. Bow politely, and when he asks you if these tools will work you say 'Yes Sir' Got it?"

"But what about wage negotiation?" the blonde naturally asked. "Benefits? Do I get dental? Premium bones are important!" she pointed out, perhaps almost oblivious to what was happening.

"You're not in a position to negotiate. Don't fucking ask for that, just say what you're supposed to say." The swordswoman responded, "Bossing will let you work upstairs for a few hours a week, it'll let us hire you and you'll get to hide where your income comes from... plus we got a doctor on staff. He'll keep all your bones together."

"Buh-buh-hu-whaaaaa?!" Midnight exclaimed, her feline tail standing up like a lightning rod. "But-but-but, I'm no good at dancing and hosting or any of that!" she began, face growing red with horror. "I-if it's not the customers, then my co-workers are going to get all hansom!" her lips quivered, glancing away nervously.

"It's part of the job, you'll get used to it..." The swordswoman said, clearly not all too happy about it either, "... Though if any of the guys get too handsy give me a call and I'll take their hands home with me. Can't really help you if the bossing gets..."

CLICK

“Stand up straight, Bossing’s here.” The swordswoman said, going to stand beside Hilda while facing the door.

The secret entrance into this secret room would open up again. This time a rather portly man walked through, dressed in a fine silk robe with Japanese stylings along with mirrored aviator shades. He was flanked on either side by two more swordsmen, each wearing their own colorful suits. “Hilda. The Gunmaker.” The boss said, pausing for a moment to get a good look at her, Cigar still in his mouth, “Someone of your pedigree can make some usable weapons with these materials. We need a dozen pistols by next week with some ammunition so the boys can start getting familiar with the new tools.”



“You really meant that?” the feline eared woman began, perhaps taken aback by the offer. “I couldn’t possibly have you put yourself on the line for me!” Hilda began. Despite her apparent appreciation however, the tip of her tail twitched, a detail caught. “Wait, the Boss? What do you mean, if the boss - “ Cut off mid-sentence and mid-thought by the door opening, she turned to look at the men who had entered as they inevitably looked back at her in turn. All Daqinren were perfect, but it was always a question of the how, or the style of the individual. With her, the moment her eyes met his was practically picturesque, like a scene from a movie with the way they sparkled like pools of blue.

A hand moved towards her lips with innocent surprise. Uncertain, perhaps nervous, this woman seemed as pure as the white business shirt that bound her chest. Of course, the boss wasn't The Boss without reason, and his senses tingled. Something wasn't right. Wide hips, narrow waist, and a very ample chest, the gunmaker looked like the perfect woman, and that was somehow off putting in and of itself, even though it shouldn't be. Then, there was the way her ears stood up on end. The way her tail tip twitched didn't feel....fearful. It was somehow....hungry. Predatory even. She at least wore an interesting shade of purple-black for her tie, shorts and stockings though.



It was subdued yet stylish, but also an odd choice as well.

“Wait, you’re not - “ Hilda paused, blushing as her mind rapidly crunched through the moment’s little details. “P-please call me Midnight! My real name is embarrassing! I sound like a fat lady in an opera!” she pointed out, hips wiggling about in discomfort. “But that aside, I can easily make guns with these,” she gestured to the machines, “ - but they’re not going to be particularly nice ones, and that’s not even asking what type of handguns you want yet,” Midnight pointed out to the boss.

One of the boss’s lackeys looked over at the Swordswoman, “It looks like the Gunsmith might not be taking our Hospitality seriously. She looks like she’d make us more money upstairs...” His own hand would brush his suit-jacket aside to make the sword on his hip just a bit more visible.

This seemed to worry the swordswoman, “She understands the task assigned to her...”

“It doesn’t matter what type as long as it is easily concealed. A gun’s a gun... its not like you can make a Masamune or Muramasa pistol.” The boss said, refocusing his conversation for the underlings.

“Ah!~” the woman reared back with shock, her cheeks glowing red with pain as the lackey’s words bit deep into her pride. “How cruel!” she lamented, her feline ears wilting with despair at such a horrible fate. However, with The Boss being deserving of his position, Midnight found herself quickly steered away from such a bad end. “Of course I can make you something like that!” Like a rising sun, she swelled with pride.

“Gunmaking has been passed down the Olander family line for generations! With the right tools, I can make you anything from a fine target pistol to pick off flies with, to a hand-cannon that’ll leave behind giblets, or a whisper that’s quieter than the body it drops!”

“Guns don’t get that quiet,” The swordswoman said, sounding a bit defensive that something might approach the value of her beloved blade. “Blades are silent, and you can trust they’ll kill your target. Guns don’t always work and even if you hit your target they still got a chance to scream... and silent guns are just a streaming-series thing anyways. You don’t see them in real life...”

“If she can make a silent hand cannon that’ll kill a high-cyborg, then she should make one.” The boss said, certainly sounding a bit more interested in this whole business than he was before.

“They definitely do get that quiet!” Midnight replied enthusiastically. “But I can’t make any of these things yet!” Gesturing over to the provided equipment she added, “With this, I can just make regular guns. The type you buy on discount in some shady back-alleyway. Hardly anything to be proud of.” Picking up one of the drills, she eyed its bit with a questioning glare. “And that’s all on top of this whole, ‘you can’t blow holes in the station’ mumbojumbo too!”

“That low velocity crap won’t cut it.” One of the boss’s men said, speaking up on behalf of his patriarch, “Anything that weak won’t work on High-Cyborgs or any Swordsmen worth a damn.”

The boss took a long drag on his Cigar and then pulled it from his mouth, holding it in his offhand as he spoke, “Make the guns,” His attention wasn’t even on Hilda at this point, his face turned towards the Swordsman that was with her, “Make sure she’s got what she needs.”

“And don’t let her out of your sight. You’re responsible for her while she’s here.” The underling added, letting the Boss say all the good things while taking the responsibility for the harsher words.

“Yes, of course boss.” The swordswoman responded obediently, hoping that Hilda would keep her mouth shut long enough for them to leave. It wasn’t until they had done just that when she did open her mouth.

“He doesn’t honestly expect me to make the top of the line stuff with this gear, does he?” the golden haired Daqinren pointed a finger at the equipment. Though all quite reasonable for what it was, it simply wasn’t up to the job of making some of the fanciest and most capable of her creations. “I can make regular pistols with this, but I need my own toolsets to make anything particularly impressive,” Midnight pointed out, inwardly just a little worried if they expected too much.

She tingled at the thought of such excessive expectations!

“They expect you to make enough to earn your keep, otherwise you’ll end up working with all the other girls full time. Worse yet, now I’m stuck keeping an eye on you and figuring out how to get your tools...”

