

Caliph Industries

Full Time Employee Orientation

The room was full of murmuring. Around several tables sat an array of different beings dressed in diverse interpretations of business casual. Some featured slightly anthropomorphic characteristics, while others appeared to be wholly human.

All had a handbook in front of them bearing the words "Caliph Industries Employee Handbook."

Many were chatting with their neighbor, about the selection process, their future jobs, what they'd heard about the company and other vocational topics. The conversations immediately died when the door to the small conference room was kicked open, slamming violently into the wall and the whiskered face of a cat girl poked in.

Her expression was ranked far beyond mischievous, more in line with nefarious, a feline grin splitting across her face from cheek to cheek while her whiskers twitched. She let out an involuntary purr of hungry promises as she then walked into the room.

The entrance, coupled with the cat girls attire would have deafened the room to silence had it not already been as quiet as a tomb from the violent manner with which the door had been opened.

The cat girl wore a men's dress shirt, two sizes too big for her, which still didn't disguise the ample bosom which jutted out from the feline chest. A cartoonish tie was around her neck, bearing a caricature of a crude ichthyoid skeleton. Her paws were barely visible at the end of the overly long sleeves, but this was hardly noticeable due to her lack of pants.

Instead of any lower garment, the feline wore nothing below the waist but for a tight cherry red pair of latex underwear, which bulged at the crotch with far more than expected..

The catgirls strawberry blonde hair curled about her head and feline ears, completely different from her brown fur and swishing tail, while she eyed the room with a predatory slinking grace.

The overall effect of her movement, appearance and dress was that of a particularly Machiavellian trollop of a secretary who had spent the entire morning bouncing with glee upon a CEOs member.

Almost forgotten due to the catgirls natural exuberance and magnetism, were two other personnel who entered the room on the cat girls heels. A very meek female doe, with antlers and who appeared to be blushing profusely; and a male hairless male feline who looked thoroughly annoyed with the proceedings and formality. Both of the followers appeared to share, or be forced to share the ebullient cat girls disdain for clothing on the waist.

The smiling cat girl spoke.

“Good morning new full time employees of Caliph Industries and welcome to your first day! I am The Assistant, we might have met before. These are my Interns, Cashoo-

The doe waved meekly before looking down at the floor.

“-and Nicodemus.”

The glum Sphynx male made no acknowledgement of his name whatsoever.

“Now then, let's go over some quick guidelines before we get you sent off to your respective departments for other duties.”

The Assistant stationed herself behind a podium slightly too tall for her at the front of the room, and leaning suggestively into and onto it.

“As full time employees of Caliph Industries, you are expected to adhere to all the guidelines outlined in the handbook in front of you. Specific departments will have other rules as well, but for now please follow these simple rules.”

The Assistant opened a copy of The Employee Handbook.

“First, any order given by a department head, those with a “The” in front of their job title, will be obeyed without question unless that order conflicts with one given by another department head. In this case you are to comply with the order given by the department head which you serve under. Should both the conflicting orders come from department heads outside your department, you will consult your department head.”

“Second, any problems you have with fellow employees should go up the chain of responsibility. Your immediate supervisor first, then your department head, and then to The Administrator or to myself.”

The Assistant blithely flipped a page, then another while muttering under her breath.

“Boring, boring, blah blah-AH! Okay, turn to page twelve for the cool stuff.”

She held up her handbook to the room so they could see.

“You have all be fitted with your nanolatex safety and security collar. At your fitting your collar was programed with a default nanolatex transformative that will trigger if it detects a lethal event impending. This transformative may also be triggered as a punitive measure if Caliph Security

or a Caliph Department Head discerns disloyal behavior from one of you. A list of disloyal behavior that would qualify for immediate activation of the collar may be found in the appendix of your manual.”

The Assistant turned the page.

“On page twelve you will all find a form you may fill out and submit today after this orientation to change your collars programmed transformative as well as where you would like your transformed self to be delivered or sold. Feel free to consult me after if you need help deciding. Also, our lovely intern Cashoo has brought several Caliph Industries Nanorubber Perma-change catalogs that you may peruse for inspiration or decision.”

She looked out at the assembled novice employees.

“Are there any questions?”

There was a pause before a svelte male with cheetah fur, ears and a tail in the front row raised his hand along with several others in the group. The Assistant nodded in his direction.

“Yes, Clyde?”

The cheetah nervously spoke.

“Uhm, when do we get to use our Caliph Transformatives that were part of our employment contract?”

The Assistant nodded in an exaggerated sagely fashion.

“A very astute question Clyde. That will be the day your probationary period ends, which for all of you will be thirty days from today, that will be the 12th of next month.”

The majority of the hands dropped. One still remained up. The Assistant couldn’t quite see who it belonged to, but an effeminate voice spoke up.

“When you say punitive measure for the activation of our collars, do we get to defend or explain our actions?”

The Assistants smile didn’t waver in the slightest.

“No.”

Her reply had the same cheerful tone as before.

“All of you signed a document acknowledging the precedence of company disciplinary actions over any perceived violation in rules or laws on company property. Every employee of Caliph industries is subject to the same rules.”

The Assistant was gesturing to her nearby cervine intern, Cashoo, for something while she continued to address the room.

“If you had questions or objections to that method or function of corporate discipline, the time to voice those concerns was before you were hired.”

The voice spoke back up.

“Well I don’t think that’s fair.”

There was a pause, The Assistant looked towards the back of the room over her glasses.

“What is your name please?”

The female voice spoke up.

“Melody Clarke.”

The Assistant rifled through some sheafs of papers on her podium in a dramatic fashion before selecting one and reading down its length, running her finger down the page. The Assistant's finger was a mix of feline and simian appendages, possessing sharp claw like nails and pads, but with the opposable humanoid thumbs and other dexterous fingers.

Her index finger paused on a name, highlighted in pink from all the other names on the list with a smirking smiley face drawn next to it.

The Assistant looked up, a hungry almost infatuated expression behind her glasses. She repeated the new employee's name, rolling the r's in an indulgent purr.

“Ah yes..Miss Melody Clarrrrrke.”

As The Assistant continued to speak, her voice took on a condescending tone, as she stepped out behind the podium and retrieved a personal computer tablet from the waiting arms of the subservient Cashoo.

“Did you addrrrrrrress these questions during yourrrrr interview process, Miss Clarrrrrke? Werrrrre they something you saw as a prrrrrriorrrrity? Actually, don’t answeerrrr that. Instead please rrrrread page eleven parrrrragraph fourrrrr please.”

The Assistant appeared to be truly enjoying herself now, and her behavior was having a pronounced effect on Melody Clarke. Nervously she flipped through the employee handbook to the appropriate passage, then looked up at The Assistant with an expression of fear and defiance. The Assistant met Melody's gaze with naked contempt and an air of complete control.

"Aloud if you would please."

Melody cleared her throat and read aloud the passage, looking up at The Assistant occasionally.

"Violation of the Non Disclosure Agreement / Corporate Espionage Clause. Should an employee of Caliph Industries be found to be in violation of company policy involving unauthorized distribution of intellectual property, or have entered employment under false pretenses including but not limited to the falsification of the employment application and omission of information during the background check; that employee-

Looking up Melody saw The Assistant making a particularly unctuous gesture to continue reading.

Melody resumed, albeit haltingly.

"-ahem. That employee shall forfeit all rights and privileges afforded to full time employees. This includes their final disposition and transformation, along with all property and company credit. As per government regulations regarding corporate sovereignty, no appeal in a civil or criminal court is required of Caliph Industries. Final fate of-

Melody looked up at The Assistant.

"Please, you don't understand, I-"

The Assistant held up one paw and gestured to Nicodemus, who locked eyes with the timorous employee. He didn't speak. Instead he raised his own tablet, upon which he'd written,

(Your real name isn't Melody Clarke, is it?)

Melody's face was flushing red as she looked around the room, seeking some escape, her fellow employees were slowly edging away from her. There was a snap as The Assistant flicked two of her digits together.

"Focus 'Melody' on what Nicodemus is asking."

Melody looked back at the uncaring Intern.

"I-, uh. No. It's not."

The Assistant rapidly typed words onto her tablet while speaking under her breath.

"Employee number 556801 admits to falsifying employment application. Summary punishment to be administered."

"No! Wait, I can-

Melody stopped talking at an upraised paw from The Assistant. The room was deadly silent as all the other new employees stood watching in apprehensive stillness. The Assistant walked back to Cashoo and Nicodemus and appeared to confer with them quietly. For her part, "Melody" waited sweating nervously while seated in her chair. She could feel her clammy palms slick on the polished material of the desks surface as she pondered what to do.

Running was out of the question, the game was up. She wondered if maybe she could overpower The Assistant, but ruled that out because of her two minions on either side of the podium. Melody was just considering trying to seize the tablet from the still smirking cat girl, when The Assistant spoke.

"Are there any other questions?"

No one in the room moved.

"Very well. We will adjourn for today. You will all be emailed instructions for your training schedule. In the meantime feel free to explore the sculpture garden and the Health and Wellness center. Once again, welcome to Caliph Industries!"

No one moved, everyone seemed to stay frozen to their desks until Nicodemus made a subtle shooing motion behind The Assistants back. Several employees stood and made their way to the door. Melody rose just slightly as though to join the exodus when Cashoo of all people spoke up.

"Uhm, Miss-Miss Clarke? Could you stay please? The Assis-uh-WE have some questions for you."

It took all of Melody's willpower to not sprint from the room. But something in the timbre of Cashoo, the female doe intern made her think that staying would be the right thing to do. As the last employee left, Nicodemus closed the conference room door behind them, then locked it.

The Assistant hopped up into a seated position on one of the tables, then reclined, languidly stretching her arms and legs. She then looked at the lone quavering employee seated alone in the middle of the room.

“Oh, Melody. You’re so fucked. Like wow. It’s almost like you wanted to get caught. Surely you know how thorough all our background checks are, did you think we wouldn’t find out who you really were? Samantha Torres?”

Samantha blushed crimson, as began to weep. Her voice came out in halting gasps and stutters from the fear of what would happen to her.

“I-I didn’t have a choice! They said they’d k-k-kidnap me if I d-didn’t spy for them!”

Samantha plunged her face into her hands and bawled.

“What was I supposed to do?”

The Assistant spoke.

“Who?”

Samantha looked up. The Assistant had gotten up from the table and walked next to her. The predatory expression was gone, replaced was one of remote concern. Feeling as though she might have a slim opportunity at still saving herself Samantha hurriedly answered.

“They said they worked for United Chemical Manufacturing. They told me that they wanted to get info on you and in exchange they’d pay off my debts! If I didn’t help them they said they’d send me to collection! It was the only choice I had!”

The Assistant reached forward and began to paw the top of Samantha's head, in a gesture that may have been intended to be soothing but really came across as a velvety threat.

“There there.”

The Assistant said.

“It’s alright. It’s all alright. Cashoo, please open up our file on United Chemical Manufacturing.”

Cashoo paged through her tablet. Samantha felt a spark of hope, were they going to cut a deal? She was beginning to wonder what such a deal would entail when Cashoo spoke up, with a hint of apology in her voice.

“United Chemical Manufacturing, raw materials production and procurement company in the nanolatex field. Produced compounds essential in many Caliph Industries transformatives prior to Caliph Industries purchasing a controlling stake in the company in the spring quarter of the last fiscal year.”

Samantha's blood turned to ice.

"What?"

The Assistant smiled down at her, one paw rolling from her head to wipe away a tear streak that had run down her face.

"We bought them last year silly. You can't really spy on us for a company we own now can you?"

Samantha laughed nervously.

"I-I guess not?"

The Assistant laughed along with her.

"Of course you can't!"

She patted Samantha's shoulder.

"Now get going, you have a lot to experience."

Samantha got shakily to her feet, wanting to cry all over and made her way to the door, looking back she saw the Assistant taking Cashoo's tablet and beginning to swipe through various apps, as Samantha walked out the door, The Assistant glanced back up at her.

Samantha swallowed in fear. The expression was a hungry one, an expression of longing and avarice etched across The Assistant's cat-like face.

Samantha hurriedly turned the corner and began to walk down the corridor, thankful for what she viewed as a narrow escape.

Inside the conference room, Cashoo looked over at The Assistant.

"Was-was that really necessary? You said that she wasn't a threat when you were reviewing applications and to just let her in anyway. Wouldn't it be easier to have just denied the applicati-EEP!"

Cashoo let out a startled yelp as The Assistant smacked the dog's rump, making her hop up in embarrassed alarm. Watching the proceedings Nicodemus simply rolled his eyes.

"Come on Cashoo. We now have the most loyal employee ever. She's never going to leak a

single piece of information to anyone after we put the fear in her. I can't wait to follow her career, says here that she's signed on to work in the Health and Wellness center. I think we'll have to pay a visit to "Melody" once she's achieved a job title. I bet we'll get the royal treatment."

The Assistant pulled up a different app on the tablet.

"Ooooo! Come on, they're serving Quiche Lorraine in the cafeteria today! Then we might have a little bit of fun elsewhere, I'm always hungrrrrry on orientation day."