Haruka Sugano

Ruthless businesswoman, she/her

"You seek a security solution that will fully eviscerate potential intruders, leaving behind not a trace of their former existence? Of course, I have just the thing. It is in a higher price range than the security solutions you currently purchase from us, but I guarantee that the investment is worth it."

- **Physical characteristics**: 49 years old. Her style combines tradition and modernity.
- **Personality**: Ambitious, orderly, snobbish.
- **Strengths**: Business, leadership, persuasion, manipulation, politics, and magic theory.
- **Behavior**: She finds out what people are good at and then praises them for it. Her thoughts are always partly on her business – for example, she will likely interrupt her conversation with PCs to order supplies via one of the assistants that hover around her.
- **Weaknesses**: Obsessed with work. Overconfident with overly complicated schemes. Although she loves her children, she is unable to show it properly.
- **Usual combat approach**: She hides behind her bodyguards or hedromatons (*in the final book*), and casts advanced spells from magical items.
- **Companion**: Taldaron, a longhair blue cat (he/him) capable of sensing the magical potential of those around him.
- **Introduction**: e.g. "**Haruka's vaults**" (*in the final book*).

Ambitious and intelligent, Haruka inherited a renowned workshop that produces magical locks and traps. As she herself has only a slight magical talent, she hires mages to do the manufacturing while she runs the business side.

She also maintains alliances with the city's thieves. She has realized that thieves can and will sooner or later break through any security measure but in the end are in it for the money. So she keeps most of the city's good safecrackers and catburglars on her payroll, and sells "security that no thief will break" for a fat premium.

Despite her wealth, the ruling class looks down on her – the custom in Kalusa is that the person who leads a magical business is also its most capable mage. A magical business led by a non-magical boss is generally viewed as untrustworthy.

Haruka is too ambitious and proud to formally place her enterprise in the hands of somebody else, and she seeks a change in the social structure of Kalusa so that magical talent is not a prerequisite for reaching the top. She is working towards a coup that would transform Kalusa from a magocracy into Haruka's vision of a meritocracy (which would be more of an oligarchy, where those with sharp elbows, fewer scruples, and good self-presentation prevail). With the help of informants and frequent social events, she is building a network of loyal followers – she prefers to win over rather than coerce.

Her children Nagi (*in the final book*), Akiko (*in the final book*), and Madoka (*in the final book*) also did not inherit any magical talent. Only her son Mikoto (*in the final book*) has it, but his magic is "defective," which has an even worse stigma. She tells herself and the world that all she does is so her children do not have to experience the same social rejection she did. However, she has never stopped to ask them how they feel about the topic. She sternly instills in her children the importance of building and protecting the family reputation.

