

The sun was shining on Arx as Howie rolled out of bed. Today was his first day back to work after a much needed vacation. A week of lounging around, drinking beer and completely ignoring his datapad had done the Brotherhood's Master at Arms a world of good. He was relaxed, recharged and ready to get back to work. Pouring himself a large mug of caf, Howie sat down at his desk and turned the Do Not Disturb setting off on his datapad.

Beep. Beep, beep. Beep, beep, beep.

As soon as the datapad was on it exploded with notifications.

"What the frak?" he cursed under his breath. Howie knew he would have missed a few things during his vacation, but this was insane!

As he scrolled through the messages he saw a slew of angry messages from all across the Brotherhood, and they were all directed at...him? What had he done? He hadn't even touched his datapad in a week! As he read on he noticed that they were all responding to a one word message with his signature on it.

Denied. Denied, denied, denied. He had allegedly denied dozens, if not hundreds of requests. Well that was strange. Apparently he had even been denying responses to denials. There was no other feedback or notes, just that one word. Denied.

There was a voice message from Plagueis sitting in his inbox. He hit play.

"Hey Howie, you really are a piece of work aren't you?" the distorted voice of TuQ'uan Varick hissed through the speakers. *"Do you think you're better than us? My members have been busting their butts, and all you can say is Denied?! And then, when I ask you why guess what you said? That's right, Denied!! Well guess what. I'll deny you. Denied, denied, deni..."*

Howie quickly shut off the hysterical ramblings of the House Tyranus Quaestor. He had to fix this, maybe James would know what was going on.

He began typing up a message.

James,

Something strange is happening. I have been getting reports from all over the Brotherhood that I have been denying all requests. The problem is, it wasn't me, I haven't done any work for the last week! We need to fix this ASAP.

- Howie

Straightforward and to the point, just how he liked it. As he reached to push send, his screen suddenly went black and six red letters, all bolder appeared. **DENIED.**

Frack.

Pulling his holo projector out of his desk drawer, Howie pulled up James' contact information and hit the call button. The holo rang once before letting out an angry buzz.

DENIED! Appeared in the blue glow of the holo. Now this was getting out of hand. Throwing his cloak over his shoulders and clipping his lightsaber to his belt, Howie threw the door to his apartment open and stalked through the hallways. It looked like he was going to have to deal with this the old school way, face to face.

Howie burst into the Seneschal's office, not even pausing to acknowledge the protests of James' aide. A quick glare from Howie quieted the man down quickly. James spun around in his large plush chair, the wall behind him completely covered in terminals and monitors.

"Howie, what a surprise! How was your vacation?" James' calm voice was warm and friendly, the complete antithesis to Howie's mood.

"It was great, up until this morning," he growled like a bear ready to attack. A confused look was quickly replaced with surprise and Howie showed him the alerts on his datapad. "Do you have any idea how this happened?!"

"Howie..." James whispered under his breath, his eyes scanning back and forth across the screen.

"Who could have done this and how do we fix it?"

"This was Howie," his eyes lifted to meet Howie's.

"I don't care what it says, THAT WASN'T ME!" the Master at Arms roared.

"No, not you you! New you! Howie 2.0!" Now it was Howie's turn to look confused. "While you were away we came up with a great way to lighten your workload while retaining the essence that is Howie. An AI version of Howie, Howie GPT if you will."

Fury flashed across Howie's face, replace him? With a computer?! Holding his hand out Howie drew on the Force, his lightsaber leapt to his open hand, its icy white blade igniting as he brought it down in an arc fueled by all of the rage in his body. Again and again it came crashing down on the bank of terminals behind James' desk.

"Deny this!" Howie screamed as his blade tore through anything and everything he could leaving no terminal untouched. The mess of electronics sparked and sizzled as Howie reattached his lightsaber to its spot on his belt and turned to leave the office.

“Looks like your AI needs a bit of work.”