

The holomage flickered.

“Help me, Howie ya fogley, you’re my only hope.” The whining voice of Idris pled.

The bear let out a deep throaty grumble. Taking this mission would require him to wear pants, likely several different pairs. Humans and other humanoids were known for their dependence on keeping their fleshy legs warm with pants. He found this restricting, incredibly uncomfortable, and down right unnatural. Humans weren’t born with pants. At least not to his knowledge, but in truth he had never done the necessary research to prove that hypothesis.

“I’ll do it, but not cause you’re asking. I’ll do it because I have to.” The deep throaty grumbled expressed his displeasure at being awoken at such an hour.

Idris knew better than to rouse the bear from his slumber. At 1430, nonetheless! That was in the middle of Howie’s third nap of the day. Everyone knows that the third nap is the best nap. It is the one that gives you all the energy you need to consume roasted meats and bed-down for fourth nap. Third nap was essential to the well being of any healthy bear.

“Thank you, Howie. You have no idea how much this means to me.” The Mandalorian said as tears of joy ran down his face.

The bear’s only reply was a litany of mumbled expletives. He rolled himself onto his paws and stretched out. After two minutes of stretching and tipping any remains from the two dozen beer bottles littered around his office into his throat, the bear stumbled out into the halls of the Dark Ascent.

The bear pushed through the stationed guard from the Iron Army, into the mess hall. If he was to participate in a mission full of espionage, he’d need a belly full first. The bear snatched half of a sandwich from a portly Commander that passed too close. The bear stopped the officer, poking his clawed finger into the Army Commander’s chest. He munched down the roast beef sandwich, slurping up the roasted peppers and stringy cheese. He grumbled and roared as he snatched the second half of the officer’s lunch. The look of abject terror on the commander’s face gave way to teary eyed sadness.

“Pull yourself together, man. You’re an officer. You can’t cry.” The bear rabbled.

His huge clawed mitt snagged the barrel shaped plastic drum that held the officer’s beverage of choice, root beer. He poured the sweet brown syrup down his throat, then belched in the officer’s face. Howie left the olive on the Officer’s tray as punishment for the officer’s insolence.

.....

Idris paced back and forth in the waiting room. Howie had been in the requisition room for nearly an hour. The Voice had laid out the entirety of the inquisitions spy tools for Agent Howie to use. He was being attended to by the Requisitions Officer, known only as U.

“Hello Agent Howie, I am U.” the old man said.

“You aren’t me, I am me.” The bear replied.

“No, that’s my name. My name is U.” the officer replied.

“Your name is Howie too?” the bear said, promptly confused by the conversation.

“No, my name is the letter U.” the officer said.

"Wait...if you are me...then am I you? And who am I?" the bear said, scratching at his chin.

"I is over there, in accounting. I am U and you are Agent Howie." The officer said, growing impatient.

"So you're Agent Howie from Accounting? Neat! I'm Agent Howie from...bear." the Master at Arms said.

"No...I don't think you're getting this." The officer said, shaking his head.

"Well of course I don't get it, you're over here saying you are me and you are in accounting but you look like a dweeb that works on gadgets. So, be straight with me dweeb who are you?" The bear said, poking the man in his chest.

"Just call me U." The officer sighed deeply.

"I will not call you me. There is only one bear. I am bear. You are dweeb." Howie said.

"I can see this is not getting us anywhere, Agent Howie. How about you call me...um...Ron." the officer said, attempting to corral the

"Ron...This is a good name. A strong name. I like you Ron." Howie replied.

"Umm...thanks...Here, let me get you your gear for this mission Agent Howie." The officer said, turning around to grab the crate of requisitioned items. He began to pull the items out one by one. The first item, an extraordinarily wide brimmed hat. "Here we are, one regulation Sombrero."

"Ahhh, Buenos Dias, my friend." Howie said, nodding to the large hat.

The requisitions officer pulled out the second item, a brightly colored serape. The colors ranged from deep indigo to bright pink. "One custom poncho." He added. He pulled the next item free, which appeared to be a dead small furry animal.

"One...I don't rightly know what this is..." the officer said pensively.

"Fake mustache, with recording devices." Howie said.

"Oh...Oh...I see what you've done here...This...Agent Howie...Is offensive." The officer said.

"Nonsense. This is the most authentic cover I can have." The bear replied.

"I don't think so..." the officer said.

"Hey man, quick harshing my vibe. I have a whole cover story here. I am gonna be Don Carlos Juan Francisco de Ursas dela Fajita-Lime Salsa Verde Carne Asada." The bear said, proudly donning the rodent-like false facial hair.

"Dank ferrik...We're gonna get sued." The officer said.

"No, my friend. You are in good hands. I don't always infiltrate crazy crystal cults, but when I do...I...uh...I'm still workshopping this one. Listen, something something something...I'm the most interesting bear in the Galaxy." Howie said, gathering the remainder of his requisitioned tools.

Idris went pale when he saw his new top agent emerge from the requisitions room. The bear was wearing a sombrero, a brightly colored serape, and a leather bandolier was strapped across his barrel

chest. Some of the patches of white and black fur were stained a bright orange with the dust of nacho cheese corn puffs, a customary snack for the requisitioning of items.

“Kriffing hell, Howie...you look...” Idris stammered.

“AMAZING, RIGHT?!” the bear bellowed.

“ABSOLUTELY AMAZING! THEY’LL NEVER EXPECT A THING!” the voice said, jumping and clapping like an excited teen girl.

.....

“Well, that’s the tour, initiate. The Children of Mortis welcome you. Did you have any questions for me?” the guide said.

“Jyes...de caffshop in de lobby...dey have de, how you say, blueberry scones?” the bear asked.

“Yes, as a matter of fact they do. Only the best here on Urikoth.” The guide said.

“Muy bien, Soy...hungry.” The undercover agent replied.

“Well, we do have training in an hour...So do settle in and meet us in the courtyard promptly.” The guide said.

“Jyes...ok meester.” Howie replied.

The bear set down his bag and looked about the modest chamber. The bunkroom was barren and boring. Howie didn’t delay. He began snooping around the Children of Mortis’ base. His first stop, of course, was the caffshop for the scones. He put down more than two dozen before the baker could chase him off with a broom.

His next stop, logically, was the mess hall. Where he buried his face in a ten-gallon pot of cheesy pasta, that had been covered in shredded barbeque meat. It didn’t take long for the authorities of the Children of Mortis to be alerted to his presence. At this rate, he would tear through their entire stock of rations in a matter of hours.

“You there! Cease this munching immediately!” came the woman’s voice.

Howie looked up from the deep pot. His long tongue licked the cheese from his lips. He stared at the woman. She resembled a human, except for the long antlers emerging from her head. Drunk on Macaroni, Howie lashed out at the woman. He moved with lightning speed, the unnatural enhancement of cheddar power allowing him to close the distance in less than a half of blink of an eye. His large paw bashed her in the head. She was a deer. Deer is food. Deer is good with macaroni.

The bear instantly mauled her and tucked in for his next meal. His primal nature took over as he consumed the deer-woman’s flesh. He started by eating her hindquarters first. This was portion of a bipedal creature had the most meat.

After several healthy chomps into the woman, another member of the Children of Mortis stumbled into the mess hall. When they saw the sight, they were instantly aghast. They turned around screaming. They broadcast their message to the entirety of the base.

“HELP! HELP! CARLOS IS EATING THE SEER’S ASS!” the other initiate screamed.

“Well, that’s not a drukking shocker. The Deer lady is a super freak.” One man casually remarked as he walked off to attend to his own business.

Several of the Greywardens rushed to the scene immediately. An assault on a high ranking official of the Shadowseers was a serious offense. The gruesome mix of blood and cheese sauce was coating the entirety of the floor of the galley. The Wardens couldn’t tell what was pasta and what was the Seer’s endtrails. They watched in horror as the massive ursine stood up from his meal and waddled to the chiller. He cracked open the door and pulled out a red bottle of ale. His claw popped the cap open and he poured the liquid into his mouth. The belch that followed filled the room with the hot stench of cheese and iron.

“By the Father!” one of the wardens exclaimed.

“Oh, hi there...feel free to help yourselves to what’s left. I’m plum stuffed.” Howie remarked.

“You must come with us immediately...You killed the Seer with such ease...The Father must meet someone with your power.” The Warden remarked.

“The Father? Meet me?” Howie said, putting a claw to his cheek and playing sheepish.

.....

“Please, help me...The Father put this thing inside me.” She screamed.

“Ewww dude...gross.” Howie said looking at the pregnant girl.

“No...It’s not lik-“ she said, panicking.

“I bet he has nasty old wrinkly balls, doesn’t he?” Howie said.

“What?” she said, confused.

“I know how babies are made. I read it in a picture book. GROOOOOOSS.” Howie gagged.

“No, that’s not what happened. Wait, you read it in a picture book?” She said, clinging to the gurney.

“Yeah. I found it under a bridge. Graphic, I tell you what.” Howie replied.

“No, listen...you must help me.” She pled.

“If you did what I seen in that fancy book...You naaaaasty.” Howie replied.

Just then the door slid open with a magnetic woosh. Three figures appeared before him. The three of them strode into the chamber to confront him.

“Hello, Carlos.” The first man said. “I am Loremi P’sum, The Arbiter.”

“Your name is dumb.” Howie replied.

“What?” The Arbiter replied.

“YOUR. NAME. IS. DUMB.” The bear said, placing his hands on his hips.

“YOUR FACE IS DUMB!” the Arbiter snapped back.

“Please, Loremi, contain yourself. Hello, Carlos...I am the Harbinger.” The second man replied.

“Harbinger? That sounds like a great name for a sandwich.” Howie replied.

“Please, Carlos...We have never seen a being of your power and appetite. You overcame the Seer with such ease, surely you must be our chosen one.” The Harbinger said.

“Uh-oh...I don’t feel so good.” Howie complained.

“We’ve brought you here to introduce you to the Father.” The Harbinger added.

The third man stepped forward, his eyes were wholly white. A croaking voice came from his mouth.

“Don Carlos Juan Francisco de Ursas dela Fajita-Lime Salsa Verde Carne Asada, I am the Father and you are my chosen child. You’ve come just in time to see the birth of your sibling...Together we will free the galaxy from its bonds and break the chains that bind us all.”

“Bruh, what is up with your eyes.” Howie replied.

“What?” the Father replied.

A deep rumble filled the room. Howie grunted slightly.

“Uh-oh.” He said, clutching his stomach.

“Please come to my side...Join me, the Father.” The voice said.

“Oh, you’re the guy with the nasty old balls. The one who put the baby in that girl.” He replied.

“Saira is chosen, like you, for greatness.” The voice replied.

“Oh boy, do I have something great for you.” Howie said, slightly lifting one leg.

The bear grabbed his false mustache, ripping it free from his face. The three men stepped back in shock.

“No, it can’t be!” one said.

“Compliments of the Brotherhood...” Howie said with a grin.

The sound started low, like the deep rumble of hyperdrive engines. The flapping sound of rushing air tightened and the pitch increased to a squeal. The sound went on for nearly a whole minute. The room began to fill with noxious green smoke.

The leaders of the Children of Mortis coughed and choked. Their eyes bulged from their heads. Saira let out a bloodcurdling scream. A small hand tore through her abdomen, clawing for any way to escape the horrible stench.

Agent Bear grabbed the baby by the wrist, pulling it free from the hole in the host’s body. In a quick flourish, he spun the bloodied infant under his armpit. The bear sprung into action, flailing the infant around by its limbs. The heel of the child impacted the temple of the Father, cracking open his skull. In a fluid motion, Howie spun bashing the next leader in the throat with the small.

“We fight one or all together!” Howie said, pounding firmly on his chest “KEEEEEYAAAAH!” Howie screamed.

As the light faded from Saira's eyes, she watched as the bear bash the three men to death with the spawn that had grown within her. The flurry of claws, sick-ass judo chops, and baby nunchucking was the raddest thing she'd ever seen. When Howie's assault stopped, he folded the limp infant in half and bowed to the dead leader of the cult.

"HWAAAAAAAAHHH!" Howie said, letting out

"Shit, that's cool..." She said as she rejoined the Force.

Howie paused, looking around the room. Everyone was dead; Seer, Harbinger, Arbiter, Father, Saira and the baby. Mission accomplished. The bear waddled out of the room, stopping back at the caffshop for more blueberry scones, before hopping the nearest transport back to Arx.