Civil war had erupted within the Brotherhood and Misium wasn’t sure how he felt about that. What was more, Clan Plagueis had aligned with their long time enemy, Esoteric and the One Sith, and he wasn’t sure how he felt about that either. Obviously the summit wouldn’t have made their decision were it not the best option for the clan, but it seemed hard to imagine, at first, how this, any of it, could be advantageous.

The more Misium thought about it, however, the more it seemed to make sense. From what little he was able to discern of things, Muz had made some insane decision to sacrifice the Brotherhood headquarters on Antei as well as the lives of millions of people who lived on that planet, all for the sake of his own immortality. Of course, he claimed to do all of this for the sake of unifying the Brotherhood, but Misium couldn’t seem to wrap his mind around how destroying home base and killing countless allies all for one man’s immortality could possibly do anything to unify or strengthen the Brotherhood. If anything, it weakens it. Now there is no headquarters and countless supporters are lost. Not to mention the civil war that erupted in its wake that will cost the Brotherhood deeply.

Despite what appeared to be an obvious power grab by Muz and the fact that his destructive actions didn’t seem to jive with his words of unification, three of the clans had fallen to Muz’s side. Why would you support someone who had just laid waste to your own allies? Misium couldn’t understand.

And then you had Jac. The former Grand Master. Misium had come along long after Jac had been replaced and could only know about him from what few stories had happened to be told in general conversation, which was essentially none. Muz had accused him of scheming to weaken the Brotherhood so that he could overthrow Muz and regain control. It didn’t sound like this was inaccurate. Jac had talked about unifying and strengthening the Brotherhood as well, but in the same breath had also rallied 3 of the other clans to attack the rest of the Brotherhood for saying such things about them. That sounded petty to Misium, but more importantly, it contradicted Jac’s supposed desire to strengthen the Brotherhood. Here, again, actions seemed to contradict words.

Misium decided that these things were enough to side against all the rest of the clans who had backed Muz and Jac, respectively. But it seemed strange to be the only ones to do so. If these things were so evident, why was only Plagueis behaving accordingly? Perhaps his viewpoint was incomplete? Perhaps the other clans knew things he didn’t, or didn’t know things that he did? Perhaps Muz and Jac had managed to hide the truth from the other factions? Perhaps Plagueis and Esoteric had hidden the truth from Misium.?

Perhaps it didn’t matter. In the end, you can only act on what you know. You really can’t spend too much time wondering what you may not. Misium would act according to his analysis of the situation, which suggested that Clan Plagueis had taken the best of the three options that were available. As far as he could see, Muz was only interested in his own power and was willing to sacrifice everyone else to get it. Jac wanted power as well and was willing to let the Brotherhood weaken and destroy itself to regain it.

Of course, he wished they hadn’t sided with Esoteric, but really, even with their massive forces, their singular clan taking on all 6 of the others, plus the Grand Masters and the rest of the Dark Council, and all the rest, just seemed like suicide. Of course they’d need help, and who else was there to provide it? Naturally, it could be assumed that Esoteric was after power as well, but it felt different to Misium because Esoteric could be *expected* to sacrifice the Brotherhood for it. It felt different because Esoteric was not within the Brotherhood, destroying his own allies. Or perhaps he was. It wasn’t like anyone knew who Esoteric was. Really, he could have been anyone, even Jac or Muz. After all, Palpatine had operated both sides of the Clone Wars all those years ago, so it wasn’t exactly unheard of. Misium would work with Esoteric, but that didn’t mean he’d have to trust him. He would move forward *expecting* betrayal. It was the only option.

The shuttle shook as it began to reach Korriban’s atmosphere, for a moment shaking Misium back to reality. His battle team, Disciples of Dreypa, sat around him. Many of them had a worried or fearful expression on their faces. For most of the team, this would be their first experience with war. This included Misium, though he didn’t feel particularly afraid of the battle ahead. Or at least not of dying in it. His real concern was in that he was out of his element. Though he was the battle team leader, he was new to the position. He had only been taken in by Plagueis shortly before the end of the Nicht Ka engagement and was therefore too new and inexperienced for full-scale battle at the time. Now would be his baptism by fire, as they say. He fell back into his thoughts, diving deeper into this subject.

Misium was not a leader. In fact, he hated people. He hated people to such an extreme that it was actually his real desire to eliminate all sentient life in the galaxy. This included the Brotherhood and even Clan Plagueis, however his fellow clanmates didn’t have to worry. Clan Plagueis, to Misium, was in an “I like you, so I’ll kill you last” position. Of course, he wasn’t likely to ever eliminate all sentient life, which meant Plagueis was safe indefinitely. As long as they didn’t turn on him, of course.

Though he was strongly misanthropic, he was also very loyal to those who treated him well. Plagueis had taken him in, supported him, guided him on a path towards strength and power that he continued on even now. They had even granted him his position as battle team leader. Of course, leading people is the last place an introverted misanthrope wants to be, but he was smart enough to know not to let opportunities pass by. As many as he could kill on his own, a team of warriors would only increase the death toll. Though it meant having to be around a large group of people, it seemed that the trade off was worth it. He could suffer the presence of others if it meant that he could lay waste to large quantities of people all at once.

And so here he was, leading a team into war. Or he was about to. War wasn’t anymore his area than leadership was. He was no stranger to taking lives, but war was something else. He was a psychopath. The lives of others had no more value or meaning to him than what the guy down the street had for lunch. He had killed people in passing for no reason other than because the force made it as easy to do as breathing. A simple twist of the wrist, a broken neck, and the random passerby on the street stops breathing. There was no more thrill in it than the thrill of taking a breath often times, though he did like the idea that it put him one person closer to eliminating sentient life. He had been known to get carried away, carving up particularly irritating people and drawing out their pain and suffering for as long as he could. It became something like a scientific experiment, to see how much pain he could inflict or how long he could prolong a person’s death. But there were also plenty of other times where a simple crushed esophagus or a quick slice across the midsection, allowing the insides to spill out, were just little things to do to pass the time.

So little was his concern for life that even his parents hadn’t been safe from his misanthropy. In his mid teens, he’d reached a tipping point in his tolerance for his mother’s deep religiousness and his father’s incessant nagging and his uncanny ability to, without realizing it, prod at precisely the things that got under Misium’s skin the most. He killed them both. He made it quick. He made sure they hadn’t seen it coming. He owed them that much for having conceived and raised him. It just wasn’t enough to save them. He struck out on his own for years after that before finding his way into Clan Plagueis.

No, Misium had no trouble killing. But killing random people was not the same as killing on the battlefield. He didn’t know how this would play out. He really didn’t expect even to survive, but somehow that didn’t bother him. When you hate everyone, it can be hard to feel a strong desire to stay alive. After all, the fastest way to be rid of everyone is to die yourself. It was mostly for this reason that he didn’t fear death. Even still, he would fight to stay alive. Living was still preferable to death. He liked being alive, it was really just people that made it unpleasant. That was the one thing he looked forward to about the battle that lay ahead. War was a good way to eliminate a lot of people, it just wasn’t an area he was familiar with.

Misium again snapped back to reality as the turbulence grew more intense, the shuttle now approaching the planet’s surface. His would not be the only shuttle landing. Countless others from his own clan and all of the others as well would all be landing in the same general area on Korriban, all intent on the same goal; to take and hold the Valley of the Dark Lords, where some manner of secret, necessary for Muz’s Rite of Immortality, was waiting for whoever could survive the war to take it. When his shuttle door opened, it was Disciples of Dreypa’s job to pour out like an unstoppable torrent of death, eliminating everyone and everything that opposed them. Plagueis needed a secure landing zone and base of operations. This was what the team was made for.

As the shuttle slowed and neared Korriban’s surface, Misium released his harness and stood. Following his lead, the other members of the Disciples removed their harnesses and readied their weapons. Already the sounds of battle could be heard outside.

“I guess they decided not to wait for us.” Misium joked, his face remaining stern. There was a little bit of nervous laughter in response from a few of the fighters, but most remained silent, either too afraid or too focused to be interested in humor.

The shuttle’s landing gear met Korriban’s sands and in that same moment, the cacophony of lightsaber ignitions filled the shuttle, blades of mostly crimson stabbed sharply into the remaining space between warriors. The bay door dropped and death itself erupted outward in a flurry of swinging lightsaber blades and blaster bolts. The Disciples were not alone. Octavia was there as well with her Apostles of Syn, and there was no shortage of droids, Ravagers, or Wraiths to bring about the enemy’s demise.

The Disciples immediately fanned out, the fear of anticipation now replaced by only thoughts of action. Misium followed closely behind, deflecting blaster bolts with his lightsaber and sending tendrils of lightning at a nearby opponent who then shortly lost his head. His misanthropy burned and he could feel it pulsing through him. He almost felt like he could lose control of himself in the slaughter. His limbs felt as though they had a mind of their own, aching to lash out and slice the throats of anyone they could reach. As he tread across the recently deceased, he couldn’t help but grin. He wondered if Death was as pleased with his fresh harvest as he was.

Pressing forward, the Disciples left only mangled corpses in their wake. Misium couldn’t help but feel pride in the devastation his team wrought upon the opposing clans. Some fell, of course, but all-in-all, they ended more lives than they lost. Training in Plagueis was grueling, but this here, this tidal wave of death, was why, and he had a feeling they were beginning to grasp now why they had suffered so back on the Anchorage. It must have been clear to them now that the hard work they’d put in was what was allowing them to rip apart the other, lesser clans. It took only the field of bodies beneath their feet and the sprays of blood at the hands of the Disciples to prove that Plagueis was superior.

Something intriguing caught Misium’s attention out of the corner of his eye. He turned to find an opportunistic Plagueian had taken advantage of his abilities to use the force to control beasts. A pack of tuk’ata rushed forward from the darksider and began to devour still more of the enemy forces. The geysers of blood that erupted as the tuk’ata tore into soldiers, Sith, and Jedi alike, thrilled Misium greatly. Back in their respective clans, they were pretentious somebodies. Now they were literally dog food. He made a mental note to consider training to control beasts himself and to perhaps try to bring some of these glorious tuk’ata home with him. He was sure the term “man’s best friend” would hold true. What’s more friendly than a pal who rips out the throats of your enemies?

Ultimately, the battle was quick. With all of the clans vying for the same positions and the urgency of the situation at hand, the battle could only flash brightly and burn out just as fast. Forces erupted against each other quickly and the extreme nature of it all brought it to a violent, quick end. Plagueis’ superior forces devastated those of their enemies, though they were not without their own losses. The already red sands of Korriban had turned a much darker shade of crimson, though it was difficult to even see the sands beneath the fields of corpses and shredded droid parts.

In the end, Plagueis managed to secure their location, while the other clans fell into their own positions. The initial battle for position was incredibly bloody with an extreme death toll. The rest of the war would not play out this way. Each side would now be entrenched and the battles going forward would be much more tactical and drawn out. None of that sounded nearly as nice as this first battle, though. If only he could spread this plague of death across the galaxy. To swim through the seas of corpses, to feel the rain of blood on his cheeks as though the sky itself had been lacerated. Death was elation to a misanthrope. Misium hadn’t been sure how he’d like war, but if it could all be so totally destructive, it was definitely something he could get behind.