**Use the Force, Fool!**

**-By Misium #14017**

 The small shuttle gave its familiar shake as it closed the gap between the ground and the landing skids. The craft’s feet sunk into the dirt firmly, as dust kicked up in swirls and the ramp lowered from the back, revealing the small group of darksiders standing ready inside. Silently, the Plagueians exited the ship and began to set about the task they’d been sent to accomplish. They’d touched down a few miles south of their target so as to avoid being shot out of the sky, but they knew odds were slim that they’d gone unseen. Still, a haphazard selection of ranks made up their group and all were confident that they’d overcome whatever forces they might stumble upon as they made their way into the hostile territory to raze the small outpost that served as a communications terminal, passing messages from other posts to the larger communications array. Taking out this post would cripple their foe’s ability to coordinate with their allies or call for help, as most of the posts around the territory fed through this one before reaching the large post that was much more heavily guarded and capable of getting signals off world.

 The long-haired warrior began to head north towards their objective, not bothering to wait for the others to finish reporting in or scan the area for opposing forces. A misanthrope and an introvert, he would have preferred to go it alone, but that isn’t the way it works when you’re the member of a massive military force. Still, that didn’t mean he had to be polite or conceal his contempt of being part of a group.

 “Misium! We’re not ready to leave yet!” Came a voice from one of the faceless beings that had accompanied him. He hadn’t been interested in keeping stock of who had been with him. He merely sought to get the raid over with in the hopes he could find himself in the comfort of solitude, perhaps grinding a captive into a pulp, just for fun.

 He trod on, ignoring the irritant behind him. They would be going in on foot, as the distance was deemed short enough not to need to pull speeders from someplace they may have been more necessary. The trek wouldn’t have bothered him had he been alone, but he was dreading the extended period of time he’d be stuck with that nagging voice that accompanied the hurried footsteps drawing nearer to his back.

 One quick twirl and that voice would stop forever. He thought, pulling at his strength of will to keep his lightsaber quiet.

 “Come on, buddy, you don’t want to leave your pals behind, do ya?” The irritating voice manifested in the form of a hand clapping down upon his shoulder. He was certain this torment was intentional.

 Without gesturing, an impact of force power knocked the hand and “attacker” back a few feet. The response that came was laughter and more insufferable noise.

 “Aw, you’d think after all this time you’d have learned to love your pals here.” There was a pause for response, but none came. “So serious. So angsty. You know, your face is gonna get stuck that way.” Still no reaction came from the moody one, but the next assault could not be ignored.

 He leapt suddenly to the left as a bolt of blue shot through his previous position and struck the ground a fair distance behind him. The rest of the group had caught up, and all immediately took cover behind a large boulder that jutted cleanly from the ground. Further bolts shot past them, some hitting their cover and sprinkling dust upon their heads. A single marksman resided somewhere up ahead. Risking a glance over the side of the rock, his eyes followed the trail of blue pulses back to their origin from atop a tall cliff in the distance overlooking their path forward.

 Ducking back behind the cover, again avoiding a shot passing through where his had had been moments ago, he was about to solve the situation when he suddenly noticed the force-sensitives beside him were engaged in deliberation. He was struck with confusion and disbelief as he listened to the various suggestions from his comrades, some of whom were even more highly ranked than he was.

 “We must spread out and run for his position. He can’t target us all,” came one suggestion.

 “If we rush out as a group, we can deflect his fire and protect each other as we move,” came another.

 It seemed somehow mesmerizing to watch them discuss the matter as if they faced a challenge and he didn’t know how long he should indulge his curiosity. On one hand, it was fascinating to hear the nonsensical plans, but of course on the other, their task was an important one and they couldn’t afford to sit idly while the enemy was free to transmit their messages.

 He shook his head in disappointment and turned his back on them. Closing his eyes, he reached out with the force and plucked the gunman from his perch. As the impacts around them stopped, the chatter came to a stop and the men stretched their necks out beyond their cover to see what was happening. Off in the distance, a terrified man hung just beyond the edge of the cliff he’d been shooting at them from moments ago. With his mind, he let go, and turned to join the rest of the Plagueians in watching as the pretty splatter mark appeared and grew on the ground beneath the cliffside. He continued his march forward as the rest of the group eyed him silently.

 It never ceased to amaze him, in all the many times he’d witnessed it, how, without fail, force sensitives would suddenly forget their abilities in pivotal moments. He had watched allies fall to their death, valuable contraband drop and get left as irretrievable, and so much more, as if those involved hadn’t been highly trained to levitate things with their mind. It was almost as if they were secretly trying to incite drama for some unseen audience. Absurd, of course, but what other explanation could there be for a highly trained force user to allow their teammate to fall from a ledge to their death, when a simple push with the force would have been all that was necessary to keep them both alive and in the fight?

 The crew rejoined him on the march toward the outpost. To his pleasure, they remained silent, even the noisy one from before. No doubt they were embarrassed by their failure. As they should be. For a moment he felt like a disappointed parent with a group of children. Perhaps they’d redeem themselves in the moments to come, as they finally broke the perimeter of their target.

 The area was small, with only a couple of buildings standing before them, but what it lacked in scale, it made up for in oppositional force. In an instant, lightsabers flashed and blaster bolts sparked through the air. Their foes were many, but they lacked the might that Plagueis had brought forth. Twirling arcs of red spun through the air as cry after cry came from the freshly deceased. He had hoped for a lengthy, drawn out battle with which to quench his blood-lust, but sadly the fight was over within only a few minutes.

 Crouched over a dying man, he lost himself in play. While the others had gone in to disable the com array, he sat with the tip of his lightsaber blade embedded a short distance into the man’s chest. Screeching and shrieking of pain and agony echoed through the area, as the lightsaber moved slowly around the man’s body with no particular design in mind. His face was expressionless. He seemed almost to be a thousand miles away as he drew images of pain and suffering upon this simple plaything. The eyes rolled back in the skull and the noise stopped as the pain finally tripped the switch in the nervous system and left him passed out.

 “It’s no fun when they stop screaming,” he muttered to himself. He paused for a moment, taking in the mutilated mess before him before finally standing to walk away. The man would die with certainty. With any luck, he’d wake up first to endure what was left of his nightmare for a little while. He could only hope.

 He headed off, back towards their shuttle, and was shortly joined by the rest of the team. They chit-chatted lightly, their morale bolstered by some successful playtime on the battlefield. All had forgotten their earlier failing, as he expected they would.

It didn’t matter to him, though. Their chatter might as well have been miles away, none of it reached his ears. He was deep inside his own head. His mind hung on the memories of the dying man. The scene played over and over in his mind for the duration of their walk back. He listened to the screams reverberating across his memory. He drank in the images of burnt, shredded flesh. And as he stepped back aboard the Plagueian shuttle, for just a moment, an almost imperceptible grin appeared upon his face.