



Ghosts of Onyx (Halo)

By Eric Nylund



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Continuing the saga of the award-winning Xbox™ game!

The Spartan-II program has gone public. Tales of super-soldiers fending off thousands of Covenant attacks have become the stuff of legend.

But just how many Spartans are left?

While the Master Chief defends a besieged Earth, and the myriad factions of the Covenant continue their crusade to eliminate humanity, an ultrasecret cell of the Office of Naval Intelligence known as "Section Three" devises a plan to buy the UNSC vital time. They're going to need hundreds of willing soldiers, though . . . and one more Spartan to get the job done.

The planet Onyx is virtually abandoned and the perfect place to set this new plan in motion. But when the Master Chief destroys Halo, something is triggered deep within Onyx: Ancient Forerunner technology stirs, and fleets of UNSC and Covenant race to claim it to change the course of the Human-Covenant War. But this reawakened and ancient force may have plans of its own . . .

This novel is based on a mature-rated game.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Crackling with action, techno wizardry and sexual tension, Nylund's novel also features an unlikely mix of cyberpunk sensibility and a heartening focus on character and humanity.” *Publishers Weekly*

“Mind-bogglingly inventive, with astounding special effects and a headlong, pulse-pounding, do-or-die narrative.” *Kirkus Reviews on Eric Nylund's A Signal Shattered*

About the Author

Eric Nylund is the author of *Halo: The Fall of Reach* and *Halo: First Strike*, as well as the epic mythology series beginning with *Mortal Coils* and *All That Lives Must Die*, and *The Resisters* series for middle grade readers. Born in the Los Angeles area, Nylund grew up in the mountains and pine forests of Truckee, California, and the Joshua trees and rattlesnakes of the Mojave Desert. He earned degrees in chemistry at U.C. Santa Barbara and U.C. San Diego before leaving his Ph.D. program to become a writer. Besides writing his novels, he is the Director of Narrative Design at Microsoft Game Studios. He lives near Seattle on a rain-drenched mountain with his wife, Syne Mitchell, and their son.

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Chapter One

1647 HOURS, MAY 1, 2531 (MILITARY CALENDAR) 111 TAURI SYSTEM, CAMP NEW HOPE, PLANET VICTORIA

John, SPARTAN-117, despite being encased in a half ton of angular MJOLNIR armor, moved like a shadow through the twilight forest underbrush.

The guard on the perimeter of Base New Hope drew on a cigarette, took a final puff, and tossed the butt.

John lunged, a whisper rustle, and he wrapped his arm around the man's neck, wrenching it up with a pop.

The guard's cigarette hit the ground.

Nearby crickets resumed their night song.

John pinged his status to the rest of Blue Team. Four green LED lights winked on his display, indicating the rest of the extended perimeter guards had been neutralized.

The next objective was a delivery gate, the weakest part of the rebel base's defense system. The guardhouse had two men outside, two on the rooftop, and several inside. Past this, however, the base had impressive security even by Spartan standards: motion and seismic sensors, a triple layering of guards, trained dogs, and overhead MAKO-class drones.

John blinked his status light green: the signal to proceed with the next phase.

The setting sun just touched the edge of the horizon when the guards on the roof of the bunker twitched and crumpled. It happened so fast, John wasn't sure which Linda had targeted first. A heartbeat later the two on the ground were dead as well.

John and Kurt ran for the gatehouse.

Kelly sprinted ahead, covering the three hundred meters from the forest in half the time, and leapt to the roof in a single bound. She opened the roof's vent and dropped flash-bang grenades.

Kurt posted outside the door, and swept the aft side for any targets. John waited on the other side of the steel and bulletproof-glass security door, one hand on its handle, one foot braced against the wall.

Inside three muffled thumps sounded.

John pulled, wrenching the door and frame from the steel reinforcing in the wall.

Kurt entered, his M7 submachine gun burping three-round bursts.

John was in a moment later, and assessed the threats in the blink of an eye. There were three guards already down. Behind them, banks of security monitors showed a hundred views of the base.

Seven other men sat at a card table, shaking off the effects of the flash-bangs. They stood with their sidearms halfway out of their holsters.

John calmly shot each man, once in the head.

Nothing moved.

Kelly dropped outside the door, rolled inside, her weapon leveled.

"Security system," John whispered to her and Kurt.

Fred and Linda appeared a moment later, and together they pulled and wedged the heavy door back into its twisted frame.

"All good outside," Fred told them.

Kelly sat before the bank of monitors and pulled out a touch pad, booting the ONI computer infiltration software package.

Kurt tapped on the keyboard, nodding to the sticky note under one monitor. "Password's posted," he said, shaking his head.

"Okay," Kelly muttered. "We can do it the easy way, too. Running monitor-looping protocol, now. I'll get a clean path to the target."

Kurt meanwhile flipped through various camera angles and subsystems on the displays. "No alarms

raised," he reported. He paused and watched a group of guards unloading ammunition canisters off a Warthog. One man fumbled and dropped a can; along its side was stenciled: MUTA-AP-09334.

John hadn't ordered a subsystems sweep, though he hadn't specifically forbidden it, either. Kurt's actions could trigger a red flag at the base's command and control.

John had mixed feelings about using SPARTAN-051, Kurt, as Sam's replacement on Blue Team. On the one hand, he was an extremely capable Spartan. Chief Mendez had routinely given him command of Green Team during training exercises, and Kurt had often won when facing John's Blue Team. But on the other hand, he was, for a Spartan, undisciplined. He took time to talk with every Spartan, and even the non-Spartan personnel that trained and supplied them. As a professional soldier in the middle of two wars—one fighting an entrenched rebellion, the other taking on a technologically superior xenophobic alien race—Kurt spent a considerable amount of time and energy making friends.

"Camera system and detectors looped," Kelly announced and made a tiny circle with her index finger. "We have fifteen minutes while dogs and drones are rotated and refueled. So just guards to deal with."

"Move," John told his team.

Kurt hesitated, eyes still fixed on the monitors.

"What?" John asked.

"A funny feeling," Kurt whispered.

This worried John. Everyone had performed flawlessly, and there were no signs the enemy had reacted to their presence. But Kurt had a reputation for sniffing out ambushes. John had been on the receiving end of Kurt's intuition several times during training.

John nodded at the monitor, still devoid of anything but normal activity. "Explain."

"The guards unloading that Warthog," Kurt said. "They look like... they're getting ready for something. Security systems and machines can be fooled—or easily rigged to fool," he stated. "People? They're not so easy."

"I understand," John said. "We'll stay sharp, but we have to stick to the schedule. Let's move."

Kurt got up, casting a glance back at the monitor as they exited the gatehouse.

The Spartans melted from shadow to shadow, skirting around a warehouse, under officers' barracks, and finally, at the center of the base, they approached the edge of a warehouse. The building was surrounded by three fences posted with warnings that the gravel yard beyond was mined.

Eight guards patrolled the perimeter. Parked on the side was a modified Warthog; it had been cut in half and a new midsection had been welded in place that looked like it could carry ten men into battle. It would suffice.

John withdrew a tiny rod and pointed it at the building. The radiation counter flickered to a hundred

times normal background level for this planet.

That confirmed that their primary target was inside: three FENRIS nuclear warheads.

Recent battles with the Covenant had depleted UNSC stockpiles of fissile materials in this sector to almost nothing. Insurgents had heard of this (which indicated they also had a considerable intelligence capability), and they had contacted the regional CENTCOM to boldly offer a trade. They said they had stolen warheads. They claimed to have people with Borren's Syndrome, and wanted the expertise and medicines only UNSC doctors could provide.

CENTCOM said they'd consider the matter.

They had considered it, and sent in Blue Team to get those warheads, and if presented with the opportunity, they were to target any rebel leaders.

John signaled his team to move out, disperse around the bunker, and take up positions to snipe the guards.

Green acknowledgment lights winked on. Kurt's was last, with a palpable hesitation.

John gave Kurt a short hand wave, and then pointed at the Warthog, indicating that he get the vehicle ready to move.

Kurt nodded.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Larry Hunter:

What do you think of book? It is just for students as they are still students or the idea for all people in the world, what best subject for that? Merely you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has several personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't would like do that. You must know how great and important the book Ghosts of Onyx (Halo). All type of book are you able to see on many sources. You can look for the internet sources or other social media.

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