

= The Halo Graphic Novel =

The Halo Graphic Novel is the first graphic novel adaptation of the military science fiction video game Halo , published by Marvel Comics in partnership with Bungie . The Halo series began with the award @-@ winning popular video game Halo : Combat Evolved , which spawned several books as well as video game sequels , and is focused on the story of future humanity fighting against a powerful collective of races called the Covenant . The Halo Graphic Novel is the series ' first entry into the sequential art medium , and features aspects of the Halo universe which until then had not been discussed or seen in any medium .

The majority of the book is divided into four short stories by different writers and artists from the computer game and comic industries . Each story focuses on different aspects of the Halo universe , revealing stories that are tangential to the main plot of the game . Apart from the stories , the book also contains an extensive art gallery compiled of contributions from Bungie , Marvel and independent sources .

Released on July 19 , 2006 , The Halo Graphic Novel was well @-@ received , with reviewers noting the cohesiveness of the work as a whole , as well as the diversity of the individual material . The success of the novel led to Marvel announcing a new limited comic series , which became known as Halo : Uprising .

= = Background and publication = =

Bungie Studios ' and Microsoft 's original concept of the graphic novel was to bring the Halo series into new media beyond that of video games , with sequential art being the main focus . The comic was originally pitched by the head of Microsoft 's Franchise Development Eric Trautmann , who led the assembly of a draft comic written by John Ney Rieber and illustrated by Adi Granov . However , Lorraine McLees , the art director of Bungie , disliked the comic , calling it " a lump of coal " . Bungie also disliked Trautmann 's comic team and requested to be able to choose their own artists and writers instead . Pete Parsons , the studio director of Bungie , wanted to hire Alan Moore and Joe Kubert for the graphic novel , though Trautmann was highly skeptical that such high profile artists would deign to the project .

After many unsuccessful negotiation attempts , Lorraine suggested that Bungie Studios finance and edit the novel itself before pursuing a publisher , allowing the studio to maintain control over the content and pursue the venture unencumbered by outside intervention . Lead designer Maria Cabardo created a " dream team " roster of writers and artists Bungie admired , and through a period of negotiation Bungie was able to gain contributions from many of those named on the list . Buoyed by their success in approaching those in the medium that they respected and admired , including British comic book artist Simon Bisley and French artist Jean " Moebius " Giraud , the progress of Halo Graphic Novel was described as a " cool morale boost for our team to see their universe , their characters , realized by people that we idolize in the comic industry . "

The novel was completed after a two @-@ year development cycle and Bungie sought out a publisher , eventually approaching Marvel Comics . Bungie cited Marvel 's " passion for Halo " and " reach in the comic and publishing industry " as the main draws to the company . The studio worked alongside Marvel director of development Ruwan Jayatilleke , an early champion of the project , to assist in the distribution and publication of the novel .

The stories themselves were designed as glimpses into the Halo universe , including information on the inner workings of the alien Covenant , as well as details regarding elements of the back @-@ story that were hitherto undisclosed . Jarrard explained that " The stories that happen off camera , the parallel events to the arcs that our fans know from the existing mediums , are the stories we really wanted to tell . " Jarrard further described this as an attempt to move away from the story of the Master Chief , the central character of the franchise , and focus instead on what they believed to be the core themes that lay behind the game universe , such as maintaining hope in the face of overwhelming odds and humanity 's struggle for survival ; themes that extended beyond " ... a genetically enhanced super soldier picking up two guns and kicking some alien butt . " The four

stories that ended up in the final publication were " the most interesting to [Bungie] , and the writers of [the novel] " . Although Bungie created the story arcs present in the Halo Graphic Novel , the studio described the importance of providing a framework for each story that the various artists and writers could tell without jeopardizing their own voice . Artist Simon Bisley said that " the stress was to make the characters look very much as they do in the game . Beyond that point I was given free rein to interpret the script and the action " based on what was given to the artists and writers .

= = = Supplemental = = =

Located after the main body of stories is a selection of art pieces that represent interpretations of the Halo universe from a number of comic book artists . These contributors include Doug Alexander , Rick Berry , Geof Darrow , and more than twenty @-@ five others , both freelance and from Bungie Studios ? including lead composer Martin O 'Donnell .

A few promotional pieces were created before the Halo Graphic Novel 's release date , including a sixteen @-@ page preview , released May 31 , 2006 , which contained Bungie 's introductions to each story along with short excerpts of each story . A full @-@ color poster of the book 's cover was released on June 28 , 2006 .

= = Stories = =

The novel is split into four stories ; each has an introduction by the creators of the work detailing their thoughts about the plot or their experiences adding to the Halo lore .

= = = The Last Voyage of the Infinite Succor = = =

" The Last Voyage of the Infinite Succor " takes place during and after the sixth mission of the video game Halo : Combat Evolved . During the game , players discover that the ringworld on which they are trapped , dubbed " Halo " by the enemy alien collective the Covenant , is in fact a super weapon designed to wipe out all life in the galaxy to deprive an intergalactic parasite known as the Flood of their food source (their food source being all sentient life in the galaxy) . The Flood are accidentally released by the Covenant from stasis and begins to spread across the ring . Halo was built by an ancient alien race known as the Forerunners to contain and study the Flood , but also as a weapon of last resort ; faced with the prospect of the Flood consuming every thinking being in the universe , the Forerunners activated Halo , destroying themselves but also starving the Flood .

In contrast to the player 's point of view in the game , " The Last Voyage " focuses on the Covenant . In Halo : Combat Evolved 's sequel Halo 2 , players experience some of the plot through the eyes of the Arbiter , a Covenant warrior . The Arbiter is aided by a fellow Covenant Elite who is never named in the game itself ; fans called the character " Half @-@ Jaw " due to the Elite missing his mandibles on one side of his face . " The Last Voyage " names the Elite Rtas ' Vadumee , explains his injury , and describes events during Halo that the player did not see .

In " The Last Voyage " , Elite Special Operations Commander Rtas ' Vadumee and his team respond to a distress call and board the crippled supply craft Infinite Succor , which the Covenant believe has been attacked by humans . The only crew member still alive , a Covenant Prophet , tells ' Vadumee that the Succor has been infested by the Flood , which escaped Halo on a Covenant dropship and crash landed in the Succor 's hangar . Currently stuck on the ship , the parasite intends to activate the Succor 's slipspace drive to escape the star system and find new planets to infect . Fighting waves of Flood , including the reanimated remains of his fallen soldiers , ' Vadumee plots a slipspace course that will destroy both the Succor and the Flood , then escapes via a Covenant shuttle .

The central premise behind the story of " The Last Voyage of the Infinite Succor " was to showcase both the true danger posed by the Flood and the inner workings of the Covenant military machine , to dispel the image that the Covenant " simply stand around waiting for the Chief to blast them " . The story was written by Lee Hammock with art provided by Simon Bisley . Hammock described the

process of writing the story as a " heady task " since he had to respect Halo fans ' knowledge of the characters and canon , ensuring that " characters that [the fans] know as a part of themselves are portrayed aptly " . These difficulties were mitigated by the knowledge that fans were not as intimately connected to the history of the character of Rtas as they were to the likes of the Master Chief ; this allowed ample room to expand ' Vadumee ' s background in sync with the Halo canon while permitting the writer to " bring something new to the table " .

= = = Armor Testing = = =

In the Halo universe , Earth and humanity 's various colonies are governed by the United Nations Space Command . Faced with the technological superiority of the Covenant , humanity 's chief hope is the tenacity of the SPARTANs , elite supersoldiers equipped with special armor . The protagonist of the Halo series , the Master Chief , is one of the few SPARTANs in active service by the events of Halo : Combat Evolved . " Armor Testing " takes place shortly before the opening of Halo 2 , as the UNSC field @-@ tests a new version of the SPARTAN 's armor in a series of exercises which prove to be a challenging endeavor for all involved . A lone SPARTAN puts the armor through its paces by dropping from Earth 's atmosphere and engaging in a mock battle against UNSC special forces . This SPARTAN is revealed to be a woman , Maria @-@ 062 , who has come out of retirement as a special favor to test the new equipment before it is sent to the Master Chief .

The concept of the story was inspired by the book Skunkworks , a memoir of the testing of military projects at Lockheed ; highlighting the rigorous experimentation the SPARTAN equipment goes through before it ends up in the hands of the Master Chief was an idea that Bungie originally wanted to pursue at the beginning of Halo 2 . Bungie instead opted to communicate this background information at a later time . " Armor Testing " was written by Jay Faerber with pencils by W. Andrew Robinson and colors by Ed Lee .

= = = Breaking Quarantine = = =

Like " The Last Voyage of the Infinite Succor " , " Breaking Quarantine " deals with the Flood outbreak that occurs during Halo . While " The Last Voyage " tells the story from the Covenant perspective , " Breaking Quarantine " highlights the escape of the human soldier Sgt. Johnson from the Flood . Johnson is a minor personality in Halo : Combat Evolved who becomes an important character in the following two games ; while the novel Halo : First Strike explains that Johnson resists Flood infestation due to a medical condition , no other story up to that point explained how Johnson escapes . " Breaking Quarantine " is an example of Bungie 's attempts to expand the story arcs of secondary characters that would have no opportunity to go explained in the main storyline . Unlike the other stories , " Breaking Quarantine " contains no dialogue , only weapon sound effects , which are rendered in Japanese . Both art and story were provided by Tsutomu Nihei , a manga artist and architect who based his illustrations directly on the structures found within the game .

= = = Second Sunrise over New Mombasa = = =

Near the beginning of Halo 2 , the Covenant stumble upon humanity 's best @-@ guarded secret ? the location of Earth ? and launch a direct attack on the city of New Mombasa , Kenya . By the time players arrive at the city in Halo 2 , it is deserted ; " Second Sunrise " , which takes place during the attack , explains that this was not always the case . The story is told through the eyes of a reporter who creates propaganda for the UNSC . When the Covenant invade the city , the reporter and fellow citizens take to its defense , until they are forced to flee as the city faces ruin .

Bungie described " Second Sunrise " as an attempt to put a human face on the conflict by illustrating the effects of war on the common citizen . The story was written by Brett Lewis with art provided by Jean " Moebius " Giraud . Giraud explained that his son 's enjoyment of the game series ultimately compelled him to accept an invitation to contribute his art ; before writing , he had never played the video games .

= = Reception = =

Critical reaction from both the gaming community and the comic book community was positive . UGO Networks praised the novel , citing the wealth of contributions from recognized artists and the strength of the material in fleshing out the Halo universe as the work 's greatest strength . They gave it an overall grade of B + . Mike Deeley of Comics Bulletin lauded the book for the diverse range of storytelling and art styles that lent the Halo Graphic Novel the feel of an anthology yet still retained a cohesive whole . Other areas that received particular attention included Tsutomu Nihei 's work on Breaking Quarantine for its vivid imagery and its focus on visual storytelling in lieu of any dialogue .

Some reviewers expressed their disappointment at the novel 's focus on minor characters and events , with the presence of the Master Chief ? the central character of the Halo series and its most iconic figure ? limited to featuring in artwork and a brief appearance in the first story . On the other hand , GameTrailers praised Bungie for having the moxie to not focus on the major character . Each publication had their own opinions on the weakest story in the collection ; both IGN and GameTrailers thought that " Armor Testing " had the least emotional impact , although its surprise ending and art were well done .

Upon release , the Halo Graphic Novel proved to be a " rare hit " for the games @-@ to @-@ comics genre , debuting at No. 2 on both the Nielsen BookScan and Diamond sales charts . At least 100 @,@ 000 copies were rumored to have been published , and the comic continued to be one of the top @-@ selling graphic novels months after its debut . The success of the novel led Marvel Comics and Bungie Studios to announce a four @-@ issue monthly Halo comic series at San Diego Comic @-@ Con 2006 called Halo : Uprising . Despite delays , the first issue of the limited series was released on August 22 , 2007 .