

= Halo : The Flood =

Halo : The Flood is a military science fiction novel by William C. Dietz , based on the Halo series of video games and based specifically on the 2001 video game Halo : Combat Evolved , the first game in the series . The book was released in April 2003 and is the second Halo novel . Closely depicting the events of the game , The Flood begins with the escape of a human ship Pillar of Autumn from enemy aliens known as the Covenant . When the Pillar of Autumn unexpectedly discovers a massive artifact known as " Halo " , the humans must square off against the Covenant and a second terrifying force in a desperate attempt to uncover Halo 's secrets and stay alive . Though the book roughly follows the same events of the Xbox game , featuring identical dialogue , Dietz also describes events not seen by the game 's protagonist , the super @-@ soldier Master Chief .

After the success of the first Halo novel , Halo : The Fall of Reach , publisher Del Rey and Halo publisher Microsoft signed a deal for new books based on Xbox games , including another entry in the Halo series . Del Ray approached author Dietz to write the next book . Dietz incorporated his first @-@ hand experience in the military for the additional scenes of The Flood not found in the game .

Upon release , Halo : The Flood cracked the Publishers Weekly Top Ten Bestsellers List for Paperbacks , but critical reception to the novel was less positive than Eric Nylund 's Fall of Reach or other Halo novels . The repetitive fight scenes and dramatically different characterization of the protagonist compared to Nylund 's work were seen as major flaws , and Dietz 's style of writing was alternatively praised and lambasted . The next Halo novel , Halo : First Strike , would serve to bridge the gap between Combat Evolved and its sequel , Halo 2 .

The book was re @-@ released on October 12 , 2010 with new content and editorial corrections .

= = Background = =

The first Halo book , Halo : The Fall of Reach , sold more than 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 copies and prompted an extended agreement between Del Rey Books and Microsoft to produce more Halo novels . William C. Dietz , a Seattle @-@ based science fiction author , was approached to write the next Halo novel . Though he had never played the game , he immediately bought an Xbox console and a copy of Halo . When he learned that the game was selling rapidly at his local retailer , he agreed to pen the book .

Dietz , a former United States Navy Hospital Corpsman , incorporated elements of what he fondly called " The Green Machine " into his work ; despite being in the 26th century , the marines of The Flood are very similar to their modern counterparts . To assist Dietz in writing , Bungie provided what Dietz referred to as " a tremendous " amount of background information on the Halo universe . Once Dietz had finished his draft , Bungie checked it over to make sure it complied with the plot established in the games and novels , as Bungie considers all Halo novels canon .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Halo : The Flood is set in the year 2552 . Humanity has colonized hundreds of worlds across the galaxy , using faster @-@ than @-@ light drives and cryonic sleep to travel between worlds . Without warning , a collective of alien races known as the Covenant began attacking the outlying colonies , brutally exterminating all life by vitrifying the surface of the planets . Humanity , outnumbered and outclassed by the alien 's superior technology , wages a losing war against the enemy . After the human bastion of Reach falls to the Covenant , the human ship Pillar of Autumn jumps into Slipspace to lead the Covenant away from Earth .

= = = Plot = = =

The novel , like the video game it is based on , begins as the Pillar of Autumn exits slipspace , discovering an unexpected massive ringworld hidden by a moon in orbit around a gas giant . In the system are a host of Covenant , who notice the lone ship . A Covenant leader forbids the fleet to fire on the Autumn , for fear of damaging the ring . Instead , they board and capture the ship . Meanwhile , technicians on the Autumn prepare for battle and awaken a single soldier from cryo sleep ? a Spartan known as the Master Chief .

The Covenant board the Autumn ; deprived of defensive options , the Autumn 's captain , Jacob Keyes , tells the crew to abandon ship . The Master Chief is entrusted with the artificial intelligence Cortana ; given the wealth of tactical information the A.I. contains , Keyes cannot allow Cortana to fall into enemy hands . The Master Chief leaves for the surface of Halo in a lifeboat ; other soldiers , including a squad of shock troops led by Antonio Silva and his second @-@ in @-@ command , Melissa McKay , land by special drop pods , and take a strategic bluff from the Covenant to use as a base of operations . Captain Keyes is captured by the Covenant , and taken aboard the Covenant cruiser Truth and Reconciliation ; the Master Chief and a squad of Marines board the Truth and Reconciliation , rescuing the captain . Keyes has learned that the ringworld they are on has vast significance to the Covenant- they believe that " Halo " , as they call the ring , is a weapon of unimaginable power . Escaping from the Covenant cruiser , Keyes gives the Master Chief the mission of finding the Control Room of Halo before the Covenant . The Master Chief and Cortana discover the location of the Control Room , and with the help of some Marines , insert Cortana into Halo 's computer network . However , Cortana realizes that the ring is not a weapon as they understood at all- but before the Chief can press her with questions , Cortana tells the Master Chief to find Captain Keyes .

Dropped into the swamp where Keyes and his squad disappeared , the Master Chief discovers that the Captain has been captured and both human and Covenant soldiers have been turned into zombie @-@ like creatures by bulbous aliens . One soldier , Private Wallace Jenkins , is left still semi @-@ conscious and painfully aware of his predicament , unable to control his movement or actions as his former friends and he attack McKay 's troops . Jenkins intends on ending his life , but is instead captured by McKay for study . The Chief is approached by Halo 's resident A.I. , 343 Guilty Spark , who informs the Chief that the creatures he has encountered are called the Flood , a virulent parasite that infects hosts and converts them into either forms for combat , or for reproduction . To activate Halo 's defenses , Guilty Spark needs the Master Chief 's help . In Halo 's Control Room , Guilty Spark gives the Master Chief the key to activate Halo , but is stopped by a furious Cortana . Cortana explains that Halo is a weapon , but it doesn 't kill the Flood- it kills their food , meaning humans , Covenant , and any other sentient life . Realizing that they have to stop Guilty Spark from activating Halo , Cortana and the Master Chief decide to destroy Halo by detonating the crash @-@ landed Pillar of Autumn 's fusion reactors . In order to do this , they need Captain Keyes ' neural implants . Cortana discovers the Captain is still alive , held prisoner once again aboard the Truth and Reconciliation , now in the hands of the Flood who are trying to escape Halo . The Chief fights Covenant and Flood to the Captain , but finds out he is too late ? the Captain has been assimilated into the parasite . The Chief retrieves the implants and leaves the Truth for the Autumn .

While the Chief and Cortana head to the Autumn , Alpha Base is evacuated . Silva decides to retake the Truth and Reconciliation and pilot the ship away in order to avoid being on Halo when the Autumn blows . The ship is taken successfully , but McKay realizes that Silva is blinded by the thought of promotion and glory to the danger of the Flood ; if even one Flood specimen escaped containment on Earth , the entire planet could fall . Jenkins draws McKay 's attention to a vital energy line on the ship , and realizing that the destruction of the Flood is more important than Silva 's promotion , cuts the cable , sending the Truth and Reconciliation crashing into Halo , killing all aboard .

At the Autumn , the Master Chief is forced to destabilize the fusion reactors manually as 343 Guilty Spark and his robotic drones try to stop them . Once the countdown until detonation has begun , Cortana directs the Chief to a fighter still docked in the Pillar of Autumn hangar . Gunning the

engines , the Chief and Cortana escape the ring just as the Autumn explodes , ending the threat of the Flood . Cortana scans for survivors and realizes that they are seemingly the only two who have survived . Cortana tells the Master Chief that the fight is finished , to which the Chief replies , " No . The Covenant is still out there , and Earth is at risk . We 're just getting started . "

= = Reception = =

Reception to the book was mixed . Some reviewers found William C. Dietz 's style of writing subpar when compared to that of Eric Nylund . Dietz 's interpretation of the Master Chief was very different from Nylund 's . Other critics took issue with how the novel did not depart enough from the game 's storyline ; Fans complained about inconsistencies with the other novels and the game itself .

Responding to criticism about the book , including his interpretation of the Chief , Dietz replied : ... of [the book reviews] that I have read , the negative ones often say something to the effect that the book is just like the game , so why read it ? What those readers may not realize is that I was hired to novelize the game . That means taking the game and turning it into a book [...] or , put another way , I did what I was hired to do there must be some folks who feel that I wrote the Chief out of character . That 's news to me . All I can tell you is that the Bungie folks , who care deeply about the character and the universe never raised that issue , and approved the book as written . However , there 's no doubt that every author is different , and will approach characters differently . So if Nylund 's rendition of the Chief is different from my own in subtle ways that would be understandable .

Despite the less enthusiastic response The Flood garnered than its predecessor , the book still sold well . Soon after release , The Flood made the Publishers Weekly top ten bestsellers paperback list . The next book in the series , Halo : First Strike , would be written by Eric Nylund and bridge the gap between Halo : Combat Evolved and Halo 2 .