



SUNRISE ON SANGHELIOS



A HALO WAYPOINT CHRONICLE

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HISTORIAN'S NOTE

Sunrise on Sanghelios takes place in the immediate aftermath of Halo 5: Guardians and concurrently with moments depicted in the novel Halo: Bad Blood.

SANGHELIOS
OCTOBER 28, 2558 (UNSC Military Calendar)

The Pelican landed in the Swords of Sanghelios camp, lit only by the fire of two braziers. A moment later, several Sangheili warriors clad in copper-crimson armor emerged from the main tent, and alongside them, Spartan Commander Sarah Palmer, Dr. Catherine Halsey, and Arbiter Thel 'Vadam himself.

Gathering at the landing site, they watched with anticipation as the rear ramp of the Pelican's troop bay descended. The unusual welcome committee quickly lowered their weapons as they saw who was disembarking alongside Spartan Jameson Locke.

Dr. Halsey approached, her expression a mix of so many conflicting emotions all at once—pride, relief, horror, guilt . . . but she held these feelings back as she approached the Master Chief, and simply said:

“It took you long enough.”

As the moment passed, Palmer snapped into action and ordered the Pelican’s lights to be shut down, as the rest of Blue Team and Fireteam Osiris exited the Pelican.

“Welcome,” the Arbiter addressed the gathering. “You have my thanks for all you have done. The Sangheili people owe you a great debt. Although none of us is in a position to repay it, we will do what we can. You must all be hungry and exhausted. I insist you join us for a meal and a rest before you depart.”

“We’re not leaving tonight,” Dr. Halsey interjected, ignoring the Arbiter tightening his mandibles. “I didn’t think we’d be able to make this work, but with your Pelican, it’s possible. I’ve already received a message from *Infinity*. They’re going to appear off the far side of Suban—this planet’s nearest moon—tomorrow at eighteen hundred hours military standard, noon local time.”

Dr. Halsey stepped away to coordinate further with Palmer and Locke, eventually agreeing on a plan for the rendezvous.

“We’re here for the night. We’ll fly out first thing tomorrow,” said the Master Chief.

“We have butchered and roasted a number of colo and kuscatu to celebrate our victory over the last of the Covenant and the end of our civil war.” The Arbiter turned to face the Master Chief directly. “We would be honored by your presence.”

As the night went on, the Arbiter took the Master Chief aside while the allied humans and Sangheili toasted to the victory they had shared against the Covenant.

“I was relieved when I heard that you had returned, Spartan. Even when our ship was severed in half as we escaped the great foundry of the Forerunners all those years ago, I had faith that you were not lost. I have heard many stories, but I would like to hear the tale from you.”

“Cortana and I were adrift in space for over four years. We ended up at a shield world called Requiem where we were led to awaken the Didact.”

The Arbiter’s eyes widened. “A Forerunner survived?”

“We fought. He lost,” said the Master Chief. “But now the galaxy is overrun with his Prometheans, and our victory came at a price . . .”

“Your companion—the AI. I remember you trusted her with the fate of all when last we fought together.”

“She . . . changed. I don’t know exactly what happened, I just know I failed her.”

In his mind, the Master Chief could still recall Cortana’s parting words to him after they defeated the Didact together.

“I’m not coming with you this time . . . Welcome home, John.”

But then, inexplicably, he had found her again—but not as she once was. Cortana had claimed that accessing an ancient quantum network known as the Domain had cured her rampancy, but she had somehow become driven by the same misguided logic that the Didact himself had sought to impose upon the galaxy.

“Our strength shall serve as a luminous sun toward which all intelligence may blossom. And the impervious shelter beneath which you will prosper. However, for those who refuse our offer and cling to their old ways . . . for you, there will be great wrath. It will burn hot and consume you, and when

you are gone, we will take that which remains, and we will remake it in our own image.”

There was much he had to process, but the Master Chief was brought back to the present as the Arbiter spoke once more, his voice carrying hard-won wisdom.

“We all fail, Spartan. We all make mistakes.”

The Arbiter paused for a moment, a silent war raging inside him as to whether he should continue.

“I served the Covenant as a destroyer of your kind. I have killed more than can possibly be counted, and though I now fight for peace and unity among our peoples, I know that there shall come a day where I must count the lives that have been lost because of my actions. You helped to turn me from that path. Perhaps there is still yet a chance you can do the same for your companion.”

The Master Chief recalled the first thing the Arbiter had said to him when they met on Earth, still uncertain about the nature of their alliance—still seeing this Sangheili, who had destroyed his home and that of countless others—as an enemy.

“Were it so easy.”

They continued their discussion long into the night, as the Arbiter recalled to the Master Chief all that had transpired over the years from his perspective—songs of loss and sacrifice, but also of victory and unity.

He concluded his tales with the hope he felt for the future, a grand project that would lift the species of the galaxy from their conflicts and bring about a prosperous new era.

“An alliance of species built upon a foundation of strength and unity that comes from honor and acceptance, mutual trust, respect. A Concert of Worlds in an age of peace.”

The Arbiter slumped slightly, knowing that an age of peace was a long way off. There were many factions and threats still out there, Cortana and her Created were just one of many. Were it so easy, indeed.

An hour before sunrise, preparations were made for departure aboard the Pelican as the UNSC *Infinity* arrived out of slipspace to make a quick pick-up.

“Farewell, Spartan. When we first met, we were enemies fighting to end each other. Now, as allies, I am confident we can face this new threat together once more.”

Dr. Halsey passed them and the Arbiter gave her a pointed glance, to which she returned a haughty sniff.

The Spartan and the Sangheili reached out to clasp forearms.

“Thank you.”

Though the Master Chief was never one for words, he found some resolve and semblance of hope in parting ways like this, and not through an act of sacrifice or betrayal.

The Pelican lifted off the ground and blazed through the atmosphere of Sanghelios at incredible speed as the light of Urs shone over the horizon, leaving the world to face an uncertain, perilous new dawn.