



Halo: Ghosts of Onyx

Eric S. Nylund

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Continuing the saga of the award-winning Xbox(TM) 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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Halo: Ghosts of Onyx Details

Date : Published April 3rd 2007 by Tor Books (first published 2006)

ISBN : 9780765354709

Author : Eric S. Nylund

Format : Paperback 383 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Games, Video Games, Fantasy, Sports and Games, Novels, War, Military Fiction, Space, Space Opera, Science Fiction Fantasy

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Cindy says

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Dirk Grobbelaar says

Ghosts of Onyx is a bit of a return to form for Nylund. I found the characterisation in Halo: First Strike a bit tepid, especially that of Spartan John-117 (Master Chief). *Ghosts* is reminiscent of Halo: The Fall of Reach in some aspects, notably the training of a new generation of Spartans. The book also dispenses with featuring Master Chief as the protagonist. It's a fairly solid novel, and a continuation of the Halo story-line, albeit parallel to the arc featuring Master Chief.

I suppose it has always been the intention that the novels serve as a supplement to the game, and that becomes apparent here. There are sequences where the Covenant are being fought on Earth, but I can't seem to recall any real back story as to how they got there (I was under the impression that their efforts were thwarted in *First Strike*). Turns out it isn't the same *Prophet* (or *San 'Shyuum*) as the one responsible for the threat to Earth in *First Strike*, and that most of the events leading up to this scenario was dealt with in the second Halo game, in conjunction with the previous novels. The same applies to the events depicted here concerning the *Great Schism* and the subsequent fall-out between the *Sangheili* and the *Jiralhanae*. This is only a problem if, like me, you are reading the novels but not playing the game. And if, like me, you let *too* much time pass between reading them. The best way to read these books is probably in rapid succession, unless you have an eidetic memory.

I take note of the reviewers who dismiss this as derivative tie-in fiction. They're not wrong, although I disagree with some of the negative feedback. A lot of thought has gone into fleshing out the *Halo* universe, and if you can suspend disbelief for a time there is no reason you shouldn't be able to enjoy this. Bear in mind, though, it wouldn't be completely inaccurate to label this as Young Adult Military Science Fiction. Also, I refuse to believe that an author like Greg Bear would associate himself with sub-standard derivative fiction (see Halo: Cryptum). I *will* agree that there isn't a lot of tactical consideration given to military engagements and that most of the action consists of Spartans wading in with all guns blazing and slaughtering Covenant by the dozen (this, fortunately, has been toned down in this novel to make room for fleet engagements, which is a welcome reprieve).

The Forerunner technology on display showcases quite a few of the ol' Sci-Fi conventions, such as artificial planets, Dyson Spheres and, most obviously, the Halo structures (on loan from Ringworld – although Larry Niven's structure is **much** larger) so there are some sense-of-wonder moments as well.

In conclusion: despite its shortcomings, *Ghosts of Onyx* is one of the better Halo instalments and actually quite a bit of fun. Also: the novel introduces SPI (Semi-Powered Infiltration) armour in addition to the MJOLNIR armour.

Chris D says

This is being written for Ms. Oronas English IV class. The book I read is called Halo: Ghosts of Onyx by Eric Nyuland. It is 383 pages and was published by Tom Doherty Associates. I chose this book because I am a fan of the author and I like all Halo related literature. Anything that is fantasy appeals to me because pretty much anything the author wants to happen can happen.

The main character is Spartan 051, or Kurt. Kurt is a member of the Spartan II program and was chosen by ONI to train the new group of Spartans, called the Spartan III's. The Spartan III's are basically suicide soldiers for the war against the covenant. Kurt has always been trained to leave the emotions out of everything but he starts to really care for each Spartan and it is getting harder and harder for him to send them to their death. He starts to become one of them due to the fact he spent over 20 years training all of them. Gamma company is the last company left and he will do anything to protect them.

Kelly, Will, Linda, and Fred are other Spartan II's that come to help Kurt of the planet Onyx. Tom and Lucy are the only survivors of Beta company and are Kurt's NCO's. CPO Mendez is the original trainer of the Spartan II's and helps train the Spartan III's. Dr. Halsey is the scientist assigned to all of the Spartans and oversees them. Team saber is the last group of Spartan III's left and is stuck on the planet Onyx. Colonel Ackerson is the man responsible for the creation of the Spartan II's and also responsible for keeping them a total secret.

This book is a military fantasy. It is set in the shield world of Onyx in the year 2134. This book is very fast paced with a lot of action. Kurt is pulled from a space mission by faking his death. He is asked to train a new group of Spartans that are designed to go on extreme high risk missions and are meant to be expendable.

While training of the world of Onyx, the Spartans have uncovered a shield world left by the forerunners. The technology can help turn the tide of the war which is why the covenant are also after it. Dr. Halsey managed to find the world as this is going on and she brought Kelly. Together they sent a message to Fred, Will, and Linda to come and help them fight the sentinels of the shield world and the covenant. Kurt must get this tech and somehow try and keep all of his Spartans alive too. While this is happening, he also comes to the realization that this war is not winnable. The shield world can protect him and all of his fellow Spartans. He must decide whether to cut his losses and try to rebuild or to fight and die with everyone else.

My final thoughts on 'Halo: Ghosts of Onyx' was it lived up to its potential. Halo books are always fast paced with deep characters and this is exactly what was in this book. It is not just action, there are many twists and turns and nobody seems to tell the whole truth all the time. It adds to the ever expanding plot of Spartans in the war and sets up well for another. I learned what happened to most of the remaining Spartan II's and what the Spartan III's were. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone that enjoys fantasy action novels.

Pika says

The thing about this, the fourth book into the Halo series, is that Master Chief is not the main character in "Ghosts of Onyx". I like that because in the other Halo books, many Spartans were mentioned, but none were really talked about. In this book, Eric Nylund finally tells the tale of what happened to the "MIA" (missing in action) Spartans. This was a great book and left me a bit teary at the end. It's a good thing I have this book.

"Don't you get it? Spartans never die." -Kurt, Spartan 051

Krissys says

In Ghosts of Onyx John takes a back seat and Kurt takes the spot light. Onyx continues right where the last book left off only this time we get the history and beginnings of the Spartan 3 program as well as Kurt's beginnings. Another player we get to see more of is Ackerson and his involvement in the Spartan 3 program. Onyx is a goodie bag full of information that is important to the additional history of the Halo world and is worth checking out.

Melisa Ramonda says

Five f***ing amazing stars, nonetheless. Abso-lutely loved it!

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Liam says

Not as good as I remembered it being unfortunately, but still quite good - I really wish Nylund had written the follow on from this, as by all accounts Halo: Glasslands and Halo: The Thursday War are steaming piles of shit. Nevertheless I'll probably try them at some point just for completion's sake.

I really wish the novel had spent more time with the Spartan III's - they were the most interesting part of the book, and they feel almost glossed over. The last two thirds is predominantly pretty dull action, but Nylund's creativity within the Halo universe is without question. Some really neat ideas.

Luken says

In Halo: Ghosts of Onyx, humanity's military, the United Nations Space Command, starts training advanced super soldiers known as SPARTANS on the planet Onyx. The planet contains ruins of the Forerunners, an ancient race of highly advanced beings. When soldiers go missing near the ruins, the ruins are declared off-limits. Aliens known as the Covenant as well as Forerunner drones keep attacking the SPARTANS. Dr.

Catherine Halsey, the creator of the SPARTANS, who is on Onyx, messages Earth for assistance when a Covenant fleet arrives at Onyx.

Being a big fan of both science-fiction and video games, I loved the book. My favorite character was Dr. Catherine Halsey because I like her sense of independence. The characters felt real, developed, and the book kept me guessing the whole way through. My favorite parts of the book were all the battle scenes because Nylund described the battles so well I felt like I was fighting alongside the SPARTANS. The story was very gripping. I found the book very difficult to put down once I picked it up. If I was forced to put the book down, I thought about it until I started reading again.

I really don't have very many complaints about the book. I personally hate cliff-hangers, as good as a marketing strategy as they may be. Once I finished the book, I immediately started searching for another one that would continue the story; but hating cliff-hangers is just me. I think that Nylund wrapped up the novel nicely, although not knowing what happens next was antagonizing to me. So I do not really have any real complaints.

I gave Halo: Ghosts of Onyx five stars because I think it is truly worthy of a perfect score. This book may not be as appealing as it is to sci-fi fans or people who have played the games. You may not be a sci-fi fan and may never have played the games and may still find this to be an excellent read. I recommend it to everyone. I enjoyed every page of this book and I am excited to read more from the series.

Oscar says

Halo: Ghosts of Onyx is one of the books in the massive Halo franchise, in this book it shows the development of the Spartan 3 program, this program featured children being genetically engineered when they were children instead of the Spartan 2 program which was to train them when they were children and when they reached near adulthood then they engineered them.

The new Spartan 3 program proved to be more successful than the Spartan 2 and with each batch (about 300) there were only 2 or 3 casualties and faults. There were 3 main battle companies made from the Spartan 3 program, Alpha (300 all KIA) company was the first made, but after their first engagement mission they were all KIA, the second company produced was Beta company (300 produced 298 KIA 2 Survivors) Beta company was produced shortly after the death of all of Alpha, after Beta's first engagement only 2 survivors were found from that campaign Tom-B292 and Lucy-B091 (B stands for Beta) these 2 became the trainers of Gamma company, after Gamma company was produced they were sent around the universe to defend all of Earth's colonies.

Overall I think Ghost of Onyx is an exciting book that features multiple twists that you weren't expecting, also it has many exciting things that you would expect from a big Halo fan. So yeah I recommend this book to anyone that enjoys Halo

Casey Biernacki says

The moment I walked in to Borders and saw that this was the new Halo book that just came out, I was initially disappointed. I truly judged this book by its cover. I had read the previous 3 books and that was the story that I wanted. I wanted to continue the story about John, Halsey, and the other surviving Spartans. Well I sucked it up and I bought it anyways.

I was very surprised after about 4 chapters. I was captivated by the new characters (and the ways that they tied into the main story) and the story that they followed. Until the end of the book, I thought this was a spin-off in the Halo universe. However, once I realized that this is a major advancement in the story that I loved, it became one of my favorite in the series.

Liew Shuang says

Halo is originally a sci-fi video game, which later produced novels that was adapted from the game. However most of the novels were more on what happened beside the main storyline, Halo:Ghost of Onyx was no exception.

Halo: Ghost of Onyx tells a story of a Spartan from Spartan-II program: Spartan-II Kurt-051. One time when his team went on a mission to "investigate" a ruptured Shaw-Fujikawa Translight Engine which is a human spacecraft that propulsion system that enable humans to travel faster than light. When he approaches the engine his gear went insane and he fainted. After waking up a month later he found himself in a different location, and was assigned to be the trainer of the new Spartan -III program, where they concentrate on quantity instead of quality when training their spartans. Kurt was given the fake name "Ambrose" to hide his true identity. Years of training with them and seeing them die he grew attached to his students, when one day his former teammates who thought he died reunited with him and they fought the war together. Kurt died at the end of the book, but it's a very heroic death.

I love this book, or generally I like this arthur. His way of describing the environment and the situations were simple but really precise. This book tells more of a side story than the main story line but was somehow related to each other. Also in novels they work in teams with other spartans which I personally prefers than the main story line in the game where the player fought alone. The phrase they used " Spartans never die, they're just MIA (missing in action)" was really cool in my opinion. Overall I recommend this book, it's cool and narrates the scenes and builds the mood really well, however one problem I faced while reading was that it's kind of confusing because for some scenes it's written at the top of the chapter, but he didn't spend much time to describe the scene, so sometimes I found myself having a hardtime imagining the scenes. But that's just my opinion, overall this book is great and I recommend it.

Terence says

Mindless but not very entertaining; really a rather dreadful little book. If I were reading a hardcopy I would have dropped it after about 50 pages.*

It makes one appreciate the skills of Heinlein or Haldeman (or - by hearsay, in my case - Bujold and Scalzi) when it comes to military SF. Aside from the extraordinarily clunky writing style, the greatest sin Monsieur Nylund commits is not being able to tell a story well. He has no conception of pacing (or he doesn't evidence it here). Novels have rhythms: Sometimes there's a throbbing urgency that demands edge-of-your-seat, heart-pounding writing and sometimes there's a quiet, deliberate interlude that demands equally calm and introspective writing. A good, recent example of the former is the 70+ pages of the battle of the Spire in Steven Erikson's *The Crippled God*; a good example of the latter is Tolkien's build up throughout the first half of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, with its birthday parties and detours to Farmer Cotton's.*

But *Halo: Ghosts of Onyx* takes place entirely in 2nd gear, trundling along at about 20 mph from disc 1 to disc 9.

And don't get me started about the unexamined assumptions and implications of turning 12-year olds into sociopathic killing machines...

* "Why," you may ask, "did you continue to listen to this dreck?" A fair question. The answer: My tolerance for audio-visual dreck is far greater than that for prose, and it's not like there's much better on the radio (remember, I'm listening to this on the way to and from work).

** It's a shame that many modern readers of Tolkien find the "slow" parts of LotR interminable. And he's perfectly capable of action: The charge of the Rohirrim at the battle of the Pelennor Field in *The Return of the King* or the equally tense and gripping scene with the Mouth of Sauron (book version not - repeat NOT - movie version).

I need something mindless but hopefully entertaining for the ride in the car....

Tina says

3.5 really. I think these books are starting to blur together so this is the last one I'm going to read for a little bit! Anyway, it was nice to read one of these that focused on someone other than Master Chief. Kurt was a good choice. He had less confidence than MC and that gave him a bit more personality. The inclusion of the young Spartans was really neat as they have a lot more depth to them, because they didn't have as long of a training period to become the near automatons like the other Spartans. That is one thing about the series, girly as it is, that I really wish was incorporated. A love story. Or at least a tight relationship between two people. I mean, the Spartans are a cohesive unit because they grew up together and are a team, but they never really DO anything to show it. They don't joke with one another, they don't banter, they don't even have conversations unless it's about the mission. Granted, that's the way they are trained, but seriously, there are other novels where highly indoctrinated/skilled soldiers still manage to have personalities and romances. Even if it's subtle - locking glances across the room, a couple private conversations, maybe even a couple tears when someone dies? I by no means want *drama*, but a little emotional weight to the story would be nice.

Anyways, this is a highly enjoyable read regarding action, pacing (if you like something that propels you at break-neck speed), and plot. If you liked the other books, you'll enjoy this one.

Jared Shilts says

Halo: Ghosts of Onyx is the sequel to *Halo: First Strike*. It has been 26 years into the Human-Covenant War. Many planets have been burned, billions of lives lost. Humanity's military force, the U.N.S.C. has expended most of their strengths. Battle after battle, the secret SPARTAN II program is almost cleared of the legendary fighters, but deep within the Office of Naval Intelligence, a new breed of warriors emerges. On the Human stronghold of Onyx, these SPARTAN III's are being developed to hit the alien occupied planets with speed and aggression. Now, the Covenant arrives at the planet to destroy any human occupants, only to find the humans in combat with strange mechanical beings. These artificially intelligent things are only the beginning

of what's in store for Onyx, the universe will never be the same!

The main character in the book is Kurt Ambrose, formally Kurt Trevelyan, and he is also known as SPARTAN-051. Kurt was abducted at age six like all other SPARTAN II's to begin extensive training for the unbearable task at hand, defeating the terrorist organization known as The Insurrection. Strangely his faked "death" was secretly an inscription to the SPARTAN III program. Beginning training shortly after, he couldn't believe the similarities and differences between SPARTAN II's and III's. When the Covenant arrived to the planet of Onyx, the only thing he and the survivors could do was to retreat into the underground caverns of the planet. Kurt as a person was brave, smart, and always believed in doing what was best for the better of the human race.

This is my favorite Halo book so far, I really like it's personal story and the combat scenes. If I had to recommend it to anyone I would say that this book would be good for people around 13-16 years old, and people that are in to science-fiction literature. The book was filled with action, suspense, drama, and many other things that make it a good story.
