



# Halo: First Strike

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*The Human-Covenant war rages on as the alien juggernaut sweeps inexorably toward its final goal: destruction of all human life!*

Halo has been destroyed, and the threat it posed to sentient life, neutralized. But victory has come at a terrible cost for the UNSC. Thousands of valiant soldiers fell in the battle to prevent the alien construct from falling into the enemy's clutches.

Now, everything depends on the Spartan known as the "Master Chief." Yet even with the aid of the artificial intelligence Cortana, the Master Chief will be hard-pressed to rescue survivors and evade the Covenant ships patrolling the remains of Halo in debris-strewn space.

Ahead lies a dangerous voyage home, through a gauntlet of Covenant forces. For the sake of all, the Master Chief and his war-torn squad must not only survive, but take the fight to the enemy with a decisive first strike.

**This novel is based on a Mature-rated video game.**

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## Halo: First Strike Details

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Author : Eric S. Nylund

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# From Reader Review Halo: First Strike for online ebook

## Newton says

First Strike is one of the many books set in the Halo Universe to fill in the gaps of story between the trilogy of games. This story takes place in the time frame between the first two games. The book is set in the 26th century and describes a small part of a huge on-going war between the human race and an alien race, known as the Covenant. The Covenant have superior technology, allowing them to win almost any engagement. There is a small hope for humanity, and that lies in a group of super-soldiers known as SPARTANS that wear their MJOLNIR Armor. The story revolves around the remaining SPARTANS after most of them having been wiped out in a previous engagement. It details their efforts to return to Earth to bring news that the Covenant have found the location of Earth and are planning a full-scale assault to wipe out humanity. Every step of the way, they are met by the Covenant, so they must fight hard and long to make it back. This book was thoroughly enjoyable, with Eric Nylund demonstrating his great ability to write stories.

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## Marcus V says

The book, First Strike, By Eric S. Nylund centers in on the time gap spanning Halo: Combat Evolved and Halo: 2. The novel is centered around the stories of the Spartans John (the Master Chief), and Fred. The story tells the dual tale of how the Master Chief survived the wreckage of Halo and reunited with the UNSC and also how Fred and the rest of his team got off the vanquished fortress world Reach. The Author is very adept at piecing together the narratives while staying true to the Halo lore and all of the games that these novels concern. Never shying away from near suicidal plans, Master Chief manages to hijack a Covenant flagship, reunite with his team and capture a space bending crystal, and finally blow up a Covenant resupply station and a fleet of five hundred ships bound for Earth. The book never veers from intense combat, like all Halo novels, "Grace hit the floor and rolled away. Plasma bolts sizzled over their heads, and the Master Chief's shield drained as a shot hit too close. The barrage turned several of the blue tiles around him into a crater of blackened glass." (228) The novel also is very good about making sure to immerse the reader in the depth and technology of the Halo universe, "There-a jump to the Lambda Serpentis system to gather tritium gas for their reactors. And there-another jump to the Hawking system to meet with three dozen carriers and effect a transfer of Seraph fighters." (240) I would personally recommend this book to anyone who read the first two books, or anyone who has played Combat Evolved and Halo 2 and has been wondering what happened in the middle. This book is an excellent read, but only (in my opinion) will people who have read the first two books really appreciate this one (and that's fine. It's the third book in a trilogy).

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## Taylorpe says

The story in this book takes place between the events Halo: The Flood and Halo 2 and does a great job filling in the gaps. After the destruction of Halo, Master Chief has to evade Covenant searches in the debris field of the Halo ring. He is able to find other survivors along with the infamous Sgt Johnson. They then proceed in the capture of a Covenant flagship. The story also continues on Reach. The story of the Spartans that were sent down to the battlegrounds of Reach is explained which leads to the surviving Spartans finding Dr. Halsey in one of the mountain bases. A series of events happen in which they find an artifact, Chief comes to the rescue, they discover that the Covenant are massing for an attack on Earth in which other things happen and

they destroy a entire covenant fleet.

This book had a great story to help bridge the gap between the first 2 games. It also answers allot of questions. This is a great book in the series.

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## **Chris Gordon says**

Halo: First Strike is the third novel in the original Halo novel trilogy, taking place immediately after Halo: The Flood (and Halo: Combat Evolved) and right before Halo 2. For many fans of the Halo video games, that time period in-between the first two Halo games was always one of the franchise's greatest mysteries – Sgt. Johnson even relays that that information was “classified” in Halo 2, and so it was never mentioned in any of the games since. After Halo: Combat Evolved, so many things happened: the Covenant found Earth, Sgt. Johnson was alive and well, Master Chief got a new set of MJOLNIR armor, and new Covenant forces were introduced on the battlefield. For those, like myself, who had always wondered how such drastic changes took place between these two Halo games, this is the book for you; most of your answers will be answered in this novel...most, not all.

One of my biggest gripes with Halo: First Strike is how it attempts to tell the untold story of the interim time between the first two Halo games, yet it stops just short of giving us all the answers despite being the last in the original book trilogy. Since no further books were planned at the time, having an ending as ambiguous as the one this book gave us is truly dumbfounding to me. I was not lying when I said that most of your questions would be answered by this book, but it will also leave you with an entirely new set of questions immediately afterwards. Basically, we trade one mystery for another, arguably more interesting mystery. I won't divulge exactly what prompts these new sets of questions so as not to spoil the story, but the ending leaves quite a significant hole in the Halo trilogy of books and games that will always irk me when thinking about it. Hopefully future Halo novels clear things up, but since this was supposed to be the end of a trilogy, I would have expected all loose ends to have been tied up by now rather than having more crop up in their stead.

One thing I noticed about the Halo book trilogy is that each book's title references something major in the Halo universe on which their plots are predicated – the destruction of the Human colony of Reach in Halo: The Fall of Reach; the outbreak of the parasitic Flood in Halo: The Flood – and although Halo: First Strike falls into that category as well, I felt that, ultimately, what took place in this novel was nowhere near as significant or impactful to the Halo universe as those other two novels' plots. Despite what the title would suggest, the operation in question, First Strike, does not take place until the very last section of the book, which consists of only a handful of chapters; the rest of the book preceding this section acts as build-up to this moment and establishing chapters for all the characters and locations. Now, none of this would be much of a problem if I thought that Operation First Strike was as huge a moment in the Master Chief's saga as the destruction of Halo or losing planet Reach to the Covenant. Alas, nearly everything about the main plot of this book is thrown by the wayside as soon as Halo 2 rolls around, making these supposedly major events in the book nothing more than a detour to the main action. I find this to be very disappointing because the stakes were so high in this novel – stakes exceeding or on par with the previous two novels – that it becomes sad to realize that very little of what happens here carries on in the games. Perhaps future books made more use of these events, but since this was originally meant to be the last in a trilogy of books, I found it to be a semi-lackluster end for a franchise as (formerly) great as Halo.

I said this was a semi-lackluster entry, but only because of its significance in the grand scheme of things. As far as entertainment value, this is definitely a great read throughout. Everything from the introduction of so many new and great characters and the further development of returning characters like the Master Chief, to the epic set pieces where tremendous battles take place and the emotional weight of the story, Halo: First Strike is rivaled only by Halo: The Fall of Reach in its storytelling. Truly, Eric Nylund was made to write for this series, which is a far cry for what I can say about William C. Diets, author of the excruciatingly average Halo: The Flood. Unlike the previous novel in this series, there is nary a dull moment of which to speak; the constant action is reminiscent of that found in the video games, which makes me wish that this book was adapted into a mainline Halo game. With the baffling direction that the latest Halo games have been taking these days, they would be fools not to utilize great stories like these from their past to bolster their newest entries.

My favorite aspect of this novel is easily the characters, both new and old. Of course, the Master Chief is present throughout, and I felt like this was a return of the complex character introduced in Halo: The Fall of Reach. In Halo: The Flood, the Master Chief was barely anything more than a cold, unfeeling killing machine with only a few sporadic emotions and free thoughts sprinkled in here and there. Thankfully, Nylund knows how to write this character perfectly, balancing his drive to kill with his desire to protect everyone around him beautifully.

The new characters were also written very well, and I felt like these were characters I could get used to reading about in future books. Each one brought a unique perspective to the plot, having their own motivations and reasons for fighting, and they worked well in the context of the story. Some of the most interesting moments of the novel included long stretches of dialogue between all the character because there was so much personality brimming from each line thanks to the diversity of character types. Admittedly, some character tropes were a bit cliché (like the tough guy who is always itching to kill something), but none were so egregiously stereotypical that I ever felt annoyed by these exaggerated traits. Overall, the characterization in Halo: First Strike is top notch (for a Halo novel) and will surely impress even the most ardent Halo fans.

With such great writing present this time around, I was a bit let down that the Covenant perspective was virtually absent in this novel. I will give Halo: The Flood credit for actually exploring this intriguing aspect of the Halo universe, something that was not done seriously until Halo 2. Though a disappointment, I am at least glad that a vast majority of the time and attention was paid exclusively to the human side of this event, reminding readers how dire the Human-Covenant War truly is when people without super human enhancements and power armor are so intimately involved.

More so than in other Halo novels, or frankly even other Halo games, Halo: First Strike delves more deeply into the idea that every single life has immeasurable value in this war, even that belonging to a lowly marine. Every death has weight in this novel, whereas the games and other books can easily kill off a handful of characters without so much as missing a stride in storytelling. I appreciate that this book stressed the importance of fighting for every last person's life.

In the end, your opinions about this book will boil down to where your priorities for reading a Halo book lie. If you are the type of Halo fan looking for major revelations about the Halo universe that would impact future titles, you may be left wanting. However, if you are more inclined to just sit back and enjoy whatever the book throws at you, then I think you will have a much better experience with this novel overall. Halo: First Strike offers very little in the way of universe building, at least to any significant degree, but where it falters in that regard it excels elsewhere in storytelling and characterization. This is a highly enjoyable Halo novel, one that should not be overlooked merely because of its smaller scope overall. Though it had some

[illegible]

Memory loss aside, I flew through this novel and it was a lot of fun!

A lot of people play games for the killing, but others like the story. People who have played the game Halo for the story should read Halo, First Strike, and the other halo books by Eric Nyluno. This book (Halo, First Strike) and the others are about the famous super soldiers called Spartan IIs that are hopelessly defending the Human race from the evil Covenant and finding an ancient super weapon called Halo. This is a great book to read because the plot is interesting, the conflict is simplistic, exciting, and the writing style is easy to follow. All the halo books take place in the fictional future (about 500 years). This book begins and ends in the year 2552 near the end of the Human-Covenant war. Super human soldiers called Spartan IIs were created before the war to help quell a rebellion, but by the time they were battle ready the Human-Covenant war was in full swing. So they were deployed across the Human Empire. By 2552 the Covenant found the first Inner colony, Reach. This is where this book starts, aboard a ship called the Pillar of Autumn. Their leader (Master Chief)

is split between sending his teams down to save the planet and securing Navigation data on a satellite that could lead the Covenant to earth. He decides to split the team so they can do both. When getting the Navigation data, all the Spartans on that team die except Master Chief. When he gets back to the ship, he and the ship's crew assume the other team is dead and flee. What Master Chief doesn't know is that the other team is still on the planet.

The conflict is very simple. It is man VS man or man VS supernatural depending on who you ask. To be more specific Humans VS the collection of evil aliens called the Covenant. It always stays like this throughout most other books in the halo series. The Covenant is always shown as the greatest evil ever. Even the fearless Master Chief is "tensed as he watched the Covenant crowding on the galleries." (Nylund 200). The basic rule when near Master Chief is that when he is "tensed" you better be scared. This type of conflict is simple because you don't question whether the bad guy is really bad or not.

Most halo books have the same type of writing style. This style is what most people call the "godly" third person view. The idea behind the godly view is that the narrator knows everything, what they are thinking what the enemy is thinking everything. "Dr. Halsey concentrated on Kelly's internal scan" (124). This quote shows that the narrator knows what everyone is thinking, but is still talking in third person, because "I" is never said. Halo often switches between two different but connecting stories. One page the narrator is talking about "Fred's head up display and he saw a Covenant Wraith tank" (21) the next chapter "the Master Chief settled into the pilot's seat of the Longsword attack craft." (30). Switching between stories gives the reader a greater understanding of the big picture. In these ways the halo series set themselves apart from other sci-fi action books.

This book and the other halo books are excellent to read because the story line is exciting, the common adventure theme is easy to read, and the way he writes is interesting and simple to follow. The constant action makes you want to read more. It's easy to follow and goes hand in hand with the "godly" writing style to make a great book for sci-fi and action fans alike. If you ever want to know more about the halo story read this and all the other books.

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## **Louis says**

Excellent. I realize I might be giving the Halo books too much credit (they aren't exactly of a dazzling literary level) but wow. Just wow. Incessantly I could not help but feel involved, as if I was literally there, amongst the ranks of the spartans, lieutenant and corporal, ODST and marines alike. The detail with which Nylund describes the (space) battlefield, the assaults from each side, the emotional shock with the personas, it all adds up, and the whole just makes sense. This book also closed lots of plot holes left in between the games, seamlessly flowing into Halo 2. After reading Halo: the Flood I came to appreciate Nylund's style even more. Also, this book made a lot more sense. You get to read from the perspective of a lot of different people, not just Master Chief, which instantly augments the sense of reality imbued upon the reader from the storyline. A great read. I'll be coming back to this one later.

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## **The Fog Witch (Nikki) says**

This book was very refreshing after the underwhelming slog that was "The Flood". Mr. Nylund writes the Halo stories I *want* to read.  
Plus more Sgt. Johnson. <3

Master Chief is back to true form and is no longer a knuckle-dragging, gun-happy 'derp' that he was in The Flood. No more endless descriptions of ammo that never ends, no more uninspired and recycled battle scenes, and no more stereotypical military jargon spewing just because it's a 'military' book.

We begin the story with John and Cortana essentially stranded after the destruction of Halo. He soon finds allies and we are treated with all kinds of lovely character development. Along the course of the novel Master Chief works with various members of the UNSC, all of whom are well fleshed out for a relatively short book, and his fellow Spartans. All the interactions felt *real*.

All the action scenes were fun and well paced. Including (view spoiler)

I loved all the characters we were introduced to, especially Admiral Whitcomb, certified Four-Star Badass. Even the ODSST muscle head Locklear grew on me by the end.

All in all a very fun read and I'm looking forward to Ghosts of Onyx.

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### **Matthew says**

This is a great book if you are a fan of the Halo Universe. It is not a masterful piece of literature, but then again all of those Star Wars and Star Trek books aren't either. This book does exactly what it sets out to do, and that is fill in the narrative background between the two games in the series for the Halo universe. Eric Nylund did a wonderful job keeping with the canon of the series and produced a pretty good story out of a limited set of material.

Worth the read if you are a fan.

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### **Justin Schafer says**

I liked this book because it had fighting in it and battle plus its about one of my favorite video game series, Master Chief needs to get him and his team with the Covenant vessel with the crystal before the covenant reach earth and destroy humanity, Id recommend this book to someone who likes action and adventure but lots of action.

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### **Jared Shilts says**

plot: Halo has been destroyed, but the fight to get back has just begun! In Halo: First Strike we find the Master Chief adrift in the dark of space, having the company of only his artificial intelligence Cortana. After waiting hours, the Chief finally realizes that he is not alone. Out in the debris and wreckage of the Ring, survivors have managed to stay alive. Moving from beacon to beacon, the Master Chief finally finds a living survivor, one of his fellow SPARTANS. The super soldier eventually discovers more people, one of which is Sergeant Johnson. The Master Chief accuses the sergeant of being infected by the parasitic Flood, since the SPARTAN saw Johnson with the team assaulted by the monsters. Cortana declares Johnson is not infected, but not before a massive Covenant ship leaps into the system surrounding Halo. The group manages to fight their way through the ship with limited casualty. Embarking to Reach to rendezvous with any survivors, the

Chief's team discovers that Dr. Catherine Halsey has survived along with his fellow SPARTANs. Their reunion is brief because the Covenant Army begins to assault their position. Just before the attackers arrive, the humans escape and launch into slip space. As the ship arrives at a unknown location, the Master Chief and his SPARTAN companions carry out Operation: First Strike, a mission to capture and kill one of the Covenant's highest races, a prophet. The fire team attacks a Covenant refueling station and encounters large ape-like monsters known as Jiralhanae. The team is eventually separated when the station is destroyed which sends most of it's numbers to return to Earth and sending Dr. Halsey and SPARTAN Kelly to a secret UNSC Space station. In the next few weeks, the Covenant will find Earth and Halo Installation 05.

characterization: Spartan Frederic-104, known by his team as Fred, has been tasked with defending Reach in the wake of the Master Chief's disappearance. He and his fellow SPARTANs have to destroy a Covenant ship with little at their disposal oppose from a nuclear warhead. Right from the beginning Fred's plans fall apart, forcing him and his team to evade the main force. Throughout this section of the book, the SPARTAN's abilities are pushed to their limits and at the times when he can briefly rest, he tries to determine how his plans went so wrong, to that his conclusion is the Covenants ability to predict all of the UNSC's movements. Fred and his companions are eventually rescued from Reach by the Master Chief. Fred's character is described as that of "the second in command" he is a good tactical thinker, using the environment to his advantage. The super soldier is commonly known for his specialty with combat knives since he is described that way in this book and "The Fall of Reach" and by "The Ghost of Onyx" he is promoted to the leader of Blue team.

recommendation: Personally, I enjoyed the book for the reason of the dire time closing in on the characters constantly. It is my least favorite of the first four books, but that is not bad because the first four books are my favorite of the series. If I had to recommend it to any one, it would be readers that have read the first two books and fans that have a serious knowledge of Halo lore. Gender wise I can see any gender that has a love for the Halo books, boy or girl.

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## **Michael says**

This is the 3rd book in the Halo series. This one is by Eric Nylund. In this one Halo has been destroyed and the Master Chief is searching for survivors. After finding a drop ship with several survivors including Linda, a Spartan who was placed in cryo suspension after a serious injury he returns to Reach to search for survivors there and finds that more of his Spartan team along with Dr. Halsey have survived deep in an underground base. After a harrowing rescue they learn that the Covenant's fleet is massing around a distant star with a huge repair and supply base in preparation for an attack on Earth. The Master Chief decides to make a first strike against the Covenant in order to give Earth time to prepare it's defenses even though he knows that it is probably a suicide mission for himself and his team. This is a great example of Military Science Fiction and I recommend it to fans of Halo and of Eric Nylund.

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## **Melisa Ramonda says**

SPANISH: ESSSSSELENTE!!!

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ENGLISH:

SPARTANS never die.

And, apparently, they never eat, sleep, go to the bathroom or shower in weeks, either. I like Eric Nylund's writing on this universe VERY MUCH because he knows his trade and you can see that he likes these characters and respects them. He knows these characters. This is the MC I want to read about, obviously. Anyway, although I liked this book incredibly much, sometimes I open my eyes and wonder about how unbelievable some situations are -not much for the wounds, we know these guys are super-soldiers and they were made to take it. I really don't care about how many times the Chief eats or sleeps, but it would be more realistic at least to mention it from time to time. There's only so much you can do with your stomach empty. Alas, sleep deprivation it's a really, really bad thing. No wonder why this guy gets grumpy :P

I understand that not mentioning these things helps to settle that atmosphere about the SPARTANS being trained to be efficient war machines, but, come on. Although, seeing how long it takes to attach or deattach pieces of the MJOLLNIR armor, maybe I'll hold my piss too. IDK.

I loved this book. I devoured it just as I did with Fall of Reach, and I'm going straight forward into Ghosts of Onyx, so wish me luck. I know GOO characters are different, but hey, it's Mr. Eric Nylund. I'm sure I'll have fun.

PD: In this book, I think John has a thing for Linda xD he's just too aware of her, something that doesn't happen with Kelly.

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## Dirk Grobbelaar says

This book kicks off with two story arcs, being continuations of the events depicted in both The Fall of Reach and Halo: The Flood. As such, the first three novels in the Halo series form a fairly cohesive whole. There are a few reasonably spectacular action sequences, especially the events concerning Master Chief in the early chapters of the book. However, that's about as good as it gets this time round. A few new characters are introduced, but I didn't particularly care much about any of them or what happened to them. Even some of the familiar characters were written a bit weak this time round. For example, in The Fall of Reach Nylund took pains to flesh out Master Chief's character development. Not so this time round. Master Chief *only* follows orders. Master Chief is a military poster boy. Master Chief is apparently unable to think or reason for himself. Oh, and Master Chief is *extremely* lucky. Still, it's not a major problem, considering. If you're a Halo fan or looking for a tactical military sci-fi roller coaster ride, you could do worse than the Halo books.

I will probably continue following the series, as I am VERY keen to see what Greg Bear is going to do with the source material. He is the author of a new Halo novel titled Halo: Cryptum, being the first in a trilogy. A real hard sci-fi author and a fascinating universe. It can only be good!

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