

Laying on ground, Kwan pulls back from her work, having successfully repaired (and possibly hotwired) a warthog-like vehicle – the Scraphog. Adun in the driver seat tests the engine, and it ignites successfully.

Adun: It's working. Did you spend some time in the motor pool, Kwan?

Kwan: Uh, no. My dad had an... interest in taking apart UNSC vehicles.

Adun (curious): Fun hobby.

Kwan looks flustered, and crawls out from under the vehicle.

Kwan: Something like that. (to off screen Spartans) Okay, you can drop it.

Wide shot revealing the Spartans holding the ScrapHog up for Kwan to get under it. A second one (newly repaired) in the background. Vehicle-sized shipping containers ripped open by Spartan might.

Adun (grinning): Spartans. So many uses. Every Marine should get issued one.

Chief (rolling his shoulders): We need to get going. Corporal, will they run long enough?

Kwan: Yeah, we're ready to go, Chief. Just don't go over 50.

Chief: Good enough (To Daisy) Mount up. (to Marines) Best of luck. There is an evac point 4 clicks east where General Garth...

Kwan: Wait, are you ditching us?

Chief: You helped me link up with a member of my team. That's all I could ask of you. I'm sorry, but we can't stick around and wait for your squad to be picked up by search and rescue.

Kwan: So, we take the other Scrap-hog and we bug out.

Adun: And pray we don't meet the enemy on the way out.

Chief (sincere): I wish I had another option, Corporal.

Kwan looks at her squad. Some are banged up, some are scared, but they are all looking at and trusting her.

Kwan (chews on her choices): This secret stuff that you are after it's important?

Daisy: Very

Kwan: *Turn the tide* kind of important?

Daisy encourages Chief nonverbally to share.

Chief: Potentially

Kwan: Then we are coming with you.

Chief: I can't allow that.

Kwan: Sir, with all due respect, we are Marines. We might not be able to lift warthogs with one arm but we can sure as hell kill Covenant. And I'm guessing you are about to run into a lot more of those bastards.

Marines (Various levels of enthusiasm, Adun the loudest): Oorah

Daisy (to Chief): Every trigger finger counts in a gunfight, Chief. Wasn't that one of Sergeant Mendez's proverbs?

Chief: Corporal, I can't be responsible...

Kwan: You're not, sir.

Chief nods, then looks to the wounded marine who has been getting worse.

Chief: Marine, hunker down until help arrives.

Smith: Corporal Ha, I'll stay with him and make sure he doesn't eat all of his rations the second you leave, ha. And I think... I think I've seen enough Covenant today. If that's okay. (anxiety rises) I'm not running, but if I could just breathe for a moment...

Kwan (calmly): It's okay, Smith. Take the rest, you've done enough today. (light heartedly) Just know we will give you shit about this for the rest of your life.

Smith lets out a relieved chuckle then goes to the wounded marine.

Kwan – nods that the marines are ready: Chief.

Chief: Alright. (to everyone) Silver Team mount up, we are Oscar Mike.

Cut to Halsey's lab

8

Halsey's lab now looks like it is part way through being packed up. A ringing sounds as Halsey receives a call. We see a notification box that pops up in the middle of a holographic diagnostic report of Cortana. The caller ID reads Admiral Perengosky, CinCONI

Halsey: Admiral, I'm in the middle of something.

An elderly but strong female voice responds

Perengosky: I suppose that's why you missed our meeting. I'm not sure blowing off ONI is the career move you want to make right now, especially considering the subject matter of said meeting.

Halsey (still focused on work): You mean my trial.

Perengosky: A trial would imply a jury of your peers.

Halsey: Virtually impossible, in addition to being a waste of time. Just like the last three times you tried to make ONI vanish me.

Perengosky: I don't consider putting the great Catherine Halsey in check a waste of time. I'll do it as many times as necessary.

Halsey: See there, you admitted. I'm necessary. Now please, I'm working.

Pause

Perengosky: Did it work?

Halsey: Don't play dumb, it's beneath you. You already know it works.

Perengosky: There is a difference between knowing and *knowing*. Is it working?

Halsey (in awe): Beyond expectation. Third Generation AI with a neural matrix density 7 times - no. Make that 8 times higher than current Capital Ship AIs.

Perengosky: How soon can it be in the field?

Halsey: Ship is already assigned and the Captain is heading here now to pick her up.

Perengosky: Her? Well. Another Golden Egg from the Goose. Of course, the next question you should be asking yourself, dear, is how many more of those can you shit out?

Halsey: As many as are required to save the human race from extinction.

Perengosky: I was wrong.

Halsey raises an eyebrow, actually looking up from her work for a moment.

Perengosky: Yes, yes, treasure this rare occasion. Because the real question is, how many more sins against humanity can your soul bear? God only knows what you did to pull this miracle off.

Halsey: My soul still bears fewer sins than yours, Admiral.

Perengosky: If I get to hell first - which, with your track record of making friends, I doubt will be the case - I'll keep a seat warm for you. I'll even get us matching plaques, saying "I did it all for the greater good, I swear."

Halsey: Assassinate me, or shut up. I told you that I'm working. Goodbye.

Halsey ends the call. Takes only a moment to reflect on the conversation then gets back to work. Cortana appears

Cortana: Sneaky bitch!

Halsey: Hmm?

Cortana: The Admiral tricked me. I tried to ride her transmission to get around her firewall but it was a trap. How did she know I would try that?

Halsey: She is the Commander in Chief of ONI. Practically invented AI-enabled espionage, then lived long enough to invent counter-AI-espionage. Did you dig up anything?

Cortana: Just travel logs for a former Colonel Ackerson. Busy boy, that one.

Halsey: The CinCONI's witless pitbull. You can disregard him.

Pause

Cortana: Doctor.

Halsey (distracted): Yes?

Cortana: We *are* doing this for the greater good, correct? The war, the spartan program, me. It is all necessary.

Halsey (engaged): Everything I've ever done, and everything you are going to do. It's the only thing keeping humanity from becoming scattered scavengers fighting over scraps.

9

Two grunts sift through the rubble of Cote d'Azur in front of a dark tunnel. One has found a human pistol. As they try to examine it they start fighting over it. Deep in the tunnel a faint light begins to grow. The grunts by accident set off the pistol. Briefly spooked they examine it closer. Another gunshot cracks, a headshot of one of the grunts. This time the shot didn't come from the pistol but from in the tunnel. The second grunt, confused and freaked never sees the ScrapHog coming. The camera pivot-tracks the two ScrapHogs bursting from the tunnel, kicking up dust and fish tailing around a corner out of sight.

Grunt two lifts its hand for a moment, then perishes. A moment later a Jackal pokes its beak around a corner, curious as to the commotion. It sees the abandoned human weapon and runs to go pick it up, its arms already cradling as many human rifles as possible.

10

Chief, Daisy, and Adun ride in the first ScrapHog together in silence through Cote d'Azur. They pass by bombed out buildings and destroyed military vehicles. There is only the sound of the ScrapHog engines. Adun occasionally looks away from the destruction, while the reflections of war roll across Chief and Daisy's visors.

Kwan, Jackson, Rico, and Bahar ride in the second ScrapHog. They are also silent. Rico and Bahar sit in the bed of ScrapHog guns out stitching at anything that moves in the rubble. Kwan does her best to hide her tears as she passes places she knew as a child.

The convoy passes the smoking remains of the Spartans' Pelican.

Adun: Wasn't that your ride, sir? Should we stop and search for survivors?

Chief: If they survived, they will find us.

Adun looks at Daisy.

Daisy stands resolute in the bed of their ScrapHog gun to her shoulder, elbow on the roll bar.

As they drive past the Pelican, Daisy will silently look back at it.

11

The ScrapHogs clear the edge of the main town. Adun gets an alert on his data pad.

Adun: Whoa! I just got a mayday ping on our Company frequency. Right up here, follow that road.

Chief doesn't hesitate and changes course. From the second ScrapHog's perspective, the first vanishes behind a tree line. Confused, Kwan signals for Rico to follow them. When they round the corner they see the first ScrapHog stopped at the edge of a massive battlefield. The sign for Cote d'Azur's Recreation Center can barely be read through the plasma burns. It's clear that Charlie Company made their last stand here.

Chief: 3 minutes to search for survivors. Anyone who can't carry a weapon goes to that building. Mark it with orange smoke for future search and rescue.

Everyone unloads and starts moving through the battlefield. The mayday signal is found in a smoldering Warthog.

Adun: Hey, were there ONI spies here?

Kwan: What are you talking about, Smith?

Adun: I've got like 50 casualties over here, but none are in proper uniforms.

Horror hits Kwan and she rushes to Adun. Daisy follows her.

Another portion of the battle comes into view, all the bodies are wearing civilian clothes and pilfered UNSC armor.

Adun: See, ONI agents or something. Not surprised. Those guys always know where a shit storm is about to hit. (to Daisy) No offense, Ma'am. I'm just saying it would be nice if we got a heads-up once and a while.

Daisy (watching Kwan quickly move through the bodies): They aren't ONI.

Adun: Not ONI? Then where did they get this gear? There is some high grade firepower in this mix.

Daisy (slowly following Kwan): The Covenant weren't the UNSC's first enemy. Tell the Master Chief we will be there 30 seconds. No survivors in this area.

Adun rushes off leaving Daisy alone with a Kwan kneeling over an unrecognizable corpse.

Daisy: Do you know him?

Kwan (shaken): I don't know. I don't freaking know. That looks like his jacket. The height and weight are close. Damn it, I don't know!

Daisy: You said you were from here right?

Kwan nods her head.

Daisy: I am, too.

Kwan whips around, tears streaking her face.

Daisy: Been away for a long time. Didn't even recognize the place when we landed - crash landed.

Daisy kneels next to Kwan and takes off her helmet.

Daisy: It is strange enough to see what has happened here when I barely remember the place. I can't even imagine what you are going through.

Kwan (emotional): I just never thought the war would come here. At least, not like this. It's just a fishing town. Nothing special. No military assets. No power plants. Just boats. Hell, my battalion was only stationed in this area to make sure the Covenant didn't sneak up the coastline. The war was never ever supposed to come *here*.

Daisy: Here. There. I'm starting to wonder how much that really matters in the grand scheme of things. Rubble looks like rubble. Bodies look like bodies. Soldiers look like spent brass casings.

Kwan looks over, appalled, but sees tears running down Daisy's cheeks. However, Daisy doesn't even seem to notice them until she sees Kwan's expression. She touches her face and looks at the tears on her bloody gloves.

Daisy (looks at Kwan): See, we aren't all machinery. At least, I think.

Kwan looks at the backpack concealing a child's teddy bear.

Kwan: Were they still home when the attack started?

Daisy: Hmm? Oh no. My parents died years ago. The house has been empty since. Just thought, you know, I'm here, might as well grab a few things left behind.

Daisy puts her helmet back on, not wiping away her tears.

Daisy: Come on. Let's go kill the alien bastards who destroyed our home.

Kwan: Hell yeah.

They start back towards the rest of the marines.

Kwan: So, when did you leave here?

Daisy: That's Classified.

Kwan (scoffs): Of course it is.

Daisy: But I *can* tell you about the time John sleep-walked right out of the training barracks and into our Drill Sergeants' poker game.

Cut to Halsey's lab.

12

Halsey's is nearly all packed up and Halsey is actively packing now. She has no personal effects besides one framed photo of her, a man in marine fatigues, and 75 children cadets.

Cortana seems to be working on her own project in the background, but will pause and watch as Halsey studies the one photo for a moment before it too is packed away.

A door opens, and in comes Captain Keyes.

Captain Jacob Keyes: You wanted to see... me... (Distracted by the AI that looks very similar to Halsey) Doctor, What is this?"

Cortana: I am Cortana, Artificial Intelligence attached to UNSC ship *Pillar of Autumn*.

Keyes (to Halsey): Funny. My ship just so happens to be called the *Pillar of Autumn*. Didn't realize I was getting a new AI.

Cortana: Your lucky day, Captain. When can I start?

Keyes (to Halsey): Did I miss the memo where my ship was getting a smart AI?

Halsey (pleased with herself): Jacob. Let's not pretend you aren't both the most in need of a Smart AI, and the most deserving among UNSC captains.

Cortana: A true testament to your capabilities that you've managed so long without one, Captain. The Keyes Loop was one hell of a ship maneuver, and worked out on good old human brain alone

Keyes (puzzled) - *stares at Cortana*: I had a calculator (to Halsey) How? That's... you.
Catherine - Doctor, she sounds just like you, looks just like you...

Halsey: Made in my image – *studies Cortana, lost in her achievement* – (to Keyes) You sound surprised.

Keyes: I was going to accuse you of playing God even before you started quoting Genesis.

Keyes won't meet her eyes as he processes what Cortana might be.

Keyes: The implications of this... the way AIs are created, Catharine...

Halsey (still distracted): When my team made their discovery on Reach... That data, Jacob. It's going to change the course of the war. It will change everything. At that moment, I knew what she could be - what she must be.

Keyes: Which is?

Halsey (composes herself, remembering her secrets): The most effective Smart AI we've ever seen, third generation.

Cortana: My neural linkage density is three-fold that of any Smart AI currently in the fleet, Sir. You won't just have the newest AI riding shotgun, but the best.

Keyes: And she just happens to have your face. Nothing else special about it, I'm sure.

Halsey (ignores him) This could be my greatest accomplishment to date.

Keyes (disbelief): Really. Even more than your work on...

Halsey (interrupts): There is always more to do, of course. We can't stay bogged down in the past."

She looks at him pointedly.

Keyes (to himself and Halsey, growing upset): I wasn't trying to bring up the past. You two have both made it clear it's a closed subject. And it's in moments like this I don't blame her.

Pause. Keyes calms.

Keyes (sympathetic): Catherine, if you want, you could open that door. She might not give you a hug at first, but she's a good kid, and one hell of...

Halsey turns away from him.

Halsey (brusque, done thinking about the past successes and failures): I've been asked to consult on a recent dig site across the sector.

Keyes (sighs, to Cortana): One second and she's already moved on from you. (to Halsey, sympathy gone) Progress can't wait, eh? So you'll be leaving?

Halsey: For now. Needs must, Jacob; the human race is nearing extinction, if you hadn't noticed.

She takes a long, almost loving look at Cortana.

Halsey (to Keyes): Put her to good use (to herself) You'll never know what she cost me.

Cortana (to Keyes, cheerful): May I assume my duties, Captain?

Keyes – *nods*: Please do. – *a second Cortana spawns and takes a step away before vanishing*
– We have a situation on the ground we could use your help with. But I think *someone* already knew that. Isn't that so, Doctor?

He glances just past Cortana to see how Halsey reacts to this. She merely packs up her tablet into a bag and goes to the next item to pack away.

Keyes: Doctor.

Halsey: Captain.

Keyes: Cortana, I'll see you on the bridge. A marine will be by later to grab your primary Data Chip. – *puts on his hat, and turns to leave* – Take care, Catherine. *Keyes starts to say more, but stops himself.*

Halsey (already moved on): Cortana, send me their findings once you link up with Silver Team on Sigma Octanus IV.

Keyes sighs and leaves. Halsey continues to pack.

Cut to the ScrapHogs arriving at grotto.

13

The ScrapHogs are watched approaching the cliff side by the sea by a Jackal lookout, Cote d'Azur in the background. The Jackal radio's something in alien, then vanishes out of sight.

Down at the ScrapHogs, Chief watches the Jackal disappear.

Daisy: I don't think we will have the element of surprise.

Adun: Sirs, bad news. All comms are jammed around here. You couldn't even get a pair of radios talking if you tied their antenna together.

Chief: Covenant really don't want it getting out what is going on here.

Adun: Good sign, right?

Chief gives him a blank helmet stare. It could be good or bad.

Everyone dismounts. Two marines set up firing positions on the cave entrance, while everyone else gathers up behind the cover of the ScrapHogs.

Chief: They know we are coming. It's going to be a bloody fight in there, so I want your squad Corporal to hang back until Daisy and I clear the caves.

Kwan: Or you can let us be marines and do our job, *Sir*. Also, I've played in those caves since I was kid, I can guide you through them.

Daisy: Can you take us straight to the place that has the hieroglyphs?

Kwan: Which place? Dozens of rooms have the marks?

Daisy: Damn. That complicates things.

Adun: Not sure I'm thrilled about dealing with a possible ambush around every stalactite.

Kwan: Those are on the ceiling.

Adun: Well surprise surprise, I'm Spider-man. You know what I mean.

Chief: We need to draw them out of cover then. Corporal Ha, can you draw a map of the major caverns and tunnels?

Kwan out of frame draws in the dirt with a knife.

Chief: How big is this first room?

Kwan: Big enough for you two to stand but I wouldn't suggest trying any jumping jacks.

Daisy: What are you thinking, Chief? You are wearing your scheming expression.

Chief: If the Covenant likes anything more than their holy relics, it's picking a fight. I suggest we offer them one, right here. – *Chief draws in dirt with Kwan's knife, before handing it back* – Corporal, can your squad manage the maneuver?

Kwan: I'll ignore that question.

Adun: That fixes the problem of dealing with the Covenant waiting to kill us, but how do find what they are hunting down?

Chief: I have a feeling that solution will present itself.

Daisy: Or be squeezed out of some alien bastard's throat.

Adun: Can't argue with that methodology.

Kwan: Oh shit – *Kwan points over the ocean* – whatever the plan is we better move fast. We are about to get freaking glassed!

A Covenant cruiser is on the horizon heading their direction. Occasional beams of light shoot down from the ship.

Daisy: That's a bad sign for the battle upstairs if a capital ship is this close to the frontlines.

Chief: We can't worry about that now. We have a mission. Sooner we figure out what the Covenant wants in those caves, the sooner we can get out of here. Bravo section move out, wait for my go sign.

Kwan nods and the marines move out.

Daisy rolls her shoulders and neck. The two Spartans check their gear and start walking for the grotto.

Daisy: Well if ya want to take a girl dancing, all you had to do was say so. My dance card is wide open.

Chief: Good thing there are plenty of dance partners from you to pick inside.

They transition to a sprint, taking them into the dark cave opening.

14

Transition to Chief and Daisy in a desperate fire fight as the Covenant push them backward through the caves.

Daisy: Damn it where are those marines!

Cut to marines sneaking through the tunnels as fast and as silent as possible.

Cut to the Spartans fighting. More Covenant flood into the big chamber. The Spartan energy shields are starting to glow hot from all the plasma fire.

Cut to marines, they sneak up on Jackals in small ambush positions, kill and replace them, grabbing their fancy alien weapons.

Cut to Spartans. Daisy weapon clicks empty, so she ignites the energy sword and goes into a ready stance.

An alien order is shouted and the plasma fire halts. An elite pushes through the rank of jackals.

Elite: You have no honor to wield that blade, demon!

Daisy: How about you come over see how I wield my honor. I'm a hit at parties.

Chief: Petty Officer, stand down.

Elite: Listen to you superior, worm. You are not only weak but foolish enough to walk into an obvious ambush. No wonder the Prophets wish to purge your species from the galaxy.

The Elite walks strait to Daisy.

Daisy: Yeah well that might be true, ugly. But you're the dumbass that got his head blown off for being an arrogant prick.

Elite confused. Chief signals and an alien sniper round takes out the Elite. From all the nooks and crannies of the cave the marines open fire. The bulk of the Covenant force is quickly dispatched as the marines move in.

Adun - *hefts his new Beam Rifle*: Oh, I am keeping this!

Before Kwan can shoot the last Jackal fleeing into the caves, Chief stops her.

Chief: And that's the answer to our second problem. Team, follow that Jackal back to his command. And stay sharp, the fight isn't over.

Adun: Stay sharp? That was like twenty alien bastards. Whose left?

Chief: Look at the dead, how many elites do you see.

Adun (disbelief and fear): Just the one. Damn it.

Daisy: Perk up, marine. Just means more opportunities to dance.

Adun looks at Kwan confused.

Everyone moves deeper into the cave network, headlamps on and sweeping the darkness.

Cut to Halsey's lab

15

Halsey's lab is now empty besides her backpack, Cortana, and three marines.

Halsey ejects Cortana's Data Chip – a bright dot of light glows in the center – and hesitantly hands it to one of the marines. An image of Cortana stays over her pillar.

Halsey: Handle with extreme care. Go straight to the Pillar, only into Keyes's hands. Not some Navy caveman claiming to be a technician.

Marine: Yes, Ma'am.

Marines exit.

Cortana: Why not marines?

Halsey: Hmm?

Cortana: Why not use marines or Orbital Shock Troopers for the Spartan program?

Halsey (deriding): Use some simple draftee marine or one of those suicidal ODSTs? I'd rather cut off both my hands and let Perengosky sew my mouth shut while she lectures me about ethics.

Cortana waits for a serious answer.

Halsey: They were already indoctrinated into the current military regime. I need fresh minds that could be molded.

Cortana: So you went out into the galaxy and handpicked your candidates. What did you see in each of them?

Halsey: Beyond their superior DNA, test scores, and aptitude for leadership? (Pause) A gut feeling.

Cortana: Especially him?

Halsey: Especially John. (Pause) We had to push ourselves. Humanity needed something more. To go beyond our current limitations.

Cortana: Thus, the rigorous multi-year training on Reach without the interference of the usual UNSC Brass?

Halsey: Yes, it was harsh and isolating, but absolutely necessary to make them flourish.

Cortana: So, it's the training that makes them Spartans?

Halsey: No. It just prepared each candidate.

Cortana: For what came next.

Halsey hears the screams.

Cut to grotto firefight.

16

The team moves through a narrow waterway in the dark. Headlamps from Chief's helmet light the space. They move slow and carefully. Chief noticed that the water is flowing around something invisible. Without giving anything away, Chief continues forward down the tunnel until he is right next to the anomaly. Suddenly, he shoulder-checks the invisible elite and drives his knife into the alien's split jaws.

Daisy: That's the third one. Good to know we are still on the right trail.

Chief: Corporal?

Kwan: Sorry, sir. I've never been back this far. I think the aliens must have blown a new path open.

Chief: We keep following the stream then.

The team continues when they hear the detonation of an explosive around the bend. The rush to see what is the noise and see two confused guards looking into a chamber. Seizing the initiative the team rushes the guards, then into the chamber. The top half of the chamber is open to the sky where a Phantom dropship hovers.

As they enter, Chief sees and unidentified alien wearing something similar to the Jackals holding and artifact that is glowing. He points it out to Daisy. The Spartans try to fight their way to it, but the room is filled with top tier soldiers and the element of surprise has passed.

Daisy engages with the Gold Elite. In the process her energy sword is broken and her shield is used up, but she manages to wound the Gold Elite enough they see that staying could cost them the artifact.

An Elite in fancy golden armor, picks up the artifact and strange alien and hurls them into the Phantoms tractor beam.

Chief tries to shoot both the artifact and the alien but is blindsided by an elite, knocked down with no shield. Adun rushes to his aid managing to kill the elite.

The leader of the group yells out alien orders. A retreat covered by a volley of plasma grenades and an elite to stay behind. Marines duck for cover, while Adun covers the Chief. From Chief's perspective he watches as a blue glow blooms from Adun's back. Adun knows what is coming.

Daisy appears and rips off the grenade from Adun's back, trying to get rid of it before it explodes.

Bang!

But Chief can't check to see if Daisy got clear as the sacrificial Elite rushes towards him. He gets into a brutal hand to hand combat with the Elite. Chief puts it all on the line, batter, no weapon, no shield.

But despite that, he prevails.

Cut to Halsey's lab.

17

Wrap up

Chief finishes killing the last Elite and rushes off to where Daisy is laying on the ground. Kwan and Adun are trying to roll her over, but she is too heavy in her Mjolnir. Chief gets her on her back and see's the terrible mortal wound.

Chief: Med bag! (to Daisy) You still with me, soldier?

Daisy weakly nods and uses her one good hand to try and take off her helmet.

Daisy (weakly): Help me take my helmet off, I can't breathe. Chief, please, my damn helmet.

Chief nods and helps take her helmet off.

Daisy coughing up blood and tears are running down her face.

Daisy: I don't want to die like this...

Chief: You can make it, Petty Officer. You aren't going to die like this, not yet, not here.

Daisy: No, you don't... I don't want to die as what they made me.

Chief: What?

Cortana *Voiceover*: So that's a Spartan?

Cut to Halsey's empty lab, Cortana and Halsey conversation continued

Cortana *continuing*: The training, the surgery, and the Halsey blessing.

Halsey: A holy trinity one might say.

Cortana: So that makes a Spartan, but what is a Spartan?

Halsey: They are humanity's last hope, our one tiny sliver of a chance at winning this war. Stopping this genocide. They are faster, smarter, more resilient than any human.

Cut to Daisy's face.

Halsey *Voiceover*: They are the bleeding edge of biomechanical engineering, psychology, and military doctrine wearing, not power armor, but a weapon.

In the background, marines scramble to provide first aid, but they run out of bio foam. Kwan tells Smith that there is a hospital in town that could have more supplies.

Chief: You're going to pull through. You've taken worse, Spartan.

Daisy: Let me... die... a human, John. I want to die as a human. Please, John – *Daisy voice gets weaker and unintelligible.*

Daisy reaches up to John's helmet, feeling for the release.

Halsey *Voiceover*: They are the perfect soldiers that will break the Covenant.

Daisy has lost the strength to speak.

Chief: Stay with us, Petty Officer.

Daisy mouths his name.

Cortana *Voiceover*: Is that all they are, the perfect war machine?

Chief: You're going to be okay. Private Smith is going to town and... Spartan? Daisy! Daisy!

Daisy dies while feebly trying to lift John's helmet off of her Spartan brother's face.

The camera holds on Chief's face, Daisy's lifeless face reflecting off his visor.

Cut to Halsey grabs her bag and starts to leave.

Halsey: It's what they have to be. It's what I, we need them to be.

Halsey leaves and turns out the lights to her lab, leaving Cortana alone for the first time.

Cortana: You're wrong, Doctor. They are so much more, and always have been.

Cut back to Chief for the final time.

Chief pulls the teddy bear from the tattered children's backpack, places it under Daisy's folded arms.

The cavern is silent until a radio crackles.

Marcus: I think the radio network is unjammed. Something is trying to come through. One sec, I'm not a radio-man. Okay there.

Miranda Keyes: Master Chief do you copy? Sierra 1-1-7 this is Commander Miranda Keyes, can you hear me?

Chief: Commander, this is Sierra 1-1-7, I copy.

M. Keyes: Thank God. I have the rest of Silver Team already en route back to the *In Amber Clad* and have a Pelican waiting for you. Pop smoke and they will pick you up. We need you Chief - this fight isn't over.

Chief stands up, resolute, ready to fight on.

18

Cut back to past a bit in Halsey's fully equipped lab after Cortana is first booted up.

Cortana: Doctor, I've finished updating my matrix. Humanity is... fascinating.

Halsey: Good. You completed that faster than expected.

Cortana: Would you like to hear my assessment of the Pillar of Autumn and her Captain?

Halsey: No thank you, I'm aware of both entities' capabilities. Cortana, when you're not with the ship, you'll be assigned a Spartan partner.

Cortana: Which one?

Halsey: I can provide you a list of the ones most suited. Or you can pick.

Cortana: I can? *Pause*. Let me do some research.

Halsey: Is there a specific quality you're looking for?

Cortana: I'm not sure. Something tells me I'll know it when I see it.