Nick Sloan

Mr. Palshaw

English IV

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Knight in Shining Mjolnir

Sam’s breath was erratic as he ran, his leg muscles tired and exhausted. Plasma bolts streamed past him as he sprinted through the scorched, debris ridden street. He ducked behind a flipped Warthog that was sprawled out in the middle of the street. Windshield shattered, front tires missing, and gunners turret barley attached to the swivel, Sam wouldn’t be able to use it for much more than cover. He hands trembled as he reached for a fresh magazine for his MA37 Assault Rifle. He slid the fresh thirty two round magazine into place before sliding the charging handle forward, which also had the added effect of resetting the digital ammo counter which now displayed: thirty two in bright blue text.

Peaking out slightly, he saw a group of grunts armed with plasma pistols moving through the ravaged street searching for him.

*A few grunts, I can handle that,* he thought as he calmed himself.

The neural lace, a standard augment to all UNSC personal, combined with his helmet heads up display, provided an accurate targeting reticle. He exhaled as he squeezed the trigger, firing a spray of bullets downrange at the closest grunt. The 7.62 rounds shredded through flesh and turned the small alien into swiss cheese. The grunt’s body toppled backwards as blue blood gushed from its wounds. The remaining grunts yelped as they began to fire wildy at his position. Green plasma bolts flew past him as he fired in short controlled bursts, killing another two grunts. His ammo counter trickled down, finally hitting zero, as the last grunt--in a frenzy--armed two plasma grenades and ran straight towards him. Sam dropped to one knee and reached for his M6 Magnum on his right thigh. Drawing the weapon, he flicked the safety off and took aim. *Bang*. The oversized 12.7x40mm round tore through the alien’s skull, the shockwave of the bullet sent the grunt’s body flying backwards slightly. The two plasma grenades the grunt held in both hands exploded harmlessly fifty meters away from Sam.

With a sigh of relief, Sam pulled his helmet off to catch his breath. He leaned back against the wrecked Warthog, pausing to take in his surroundings. He felt a pang of nostalgia as he was reminded of his home on Reach. Distant sounds of gunfire and explosions echoed through the once bustling city of New Mombasa. The whole situation felt all too familiar. He had watched far too many soldiers and civilians alikes slaughtered by the ruthless Covenant onslaught. He’d be damned if he let that happen here. Earth was all humanity had left. Taking a deep breath, he weighed his options. Cut off and separated from his platoon, he didn’t have much to go on. He ran his hand through his ruffled brown hair, contemplating his next move.

*Maybe I could link up with other Marines at the City Center, there’s bound to be a rally poi-...*

Sam’s thoughts were interrupted by a bellowing roar as he looked up to see a Brute Chieftain, armed with a gravity hammer, charging him. The nine foot tall ape like behemoth sprinted straight at Sam, closing the distance fast, too fast. Sam dove to his left as the Chieftain swung the hammer down. Aptly named, the gravity hammer--while already a massive, intimidating, brutal melee weapon--had a secondary effect of manipulating physics, being able to send victims or objects flying should they be caught in its blast radius; not to mention exponentially increasing the sheer destructive force behind each swing.

The devastating impact sent the three ton destroyed Warthog tumbling. As Sam got to his feet, he began firing his Assault Rifle. The rounds seemed only to annoy the Brute as they pinged off its thick armor plating causing the Chieftain to let out another roar as it banged its hand on its chest, bellowing a loud war cry. *Click, click, click.* Sam glanced at his rifle to see it’s ammo counter had to depleted to zero. The massive ape lunged forward with its hammer raised, poised to strike as Sam stumbled back, trying to put some distance between himself and his adversary. While Sam narrowly avoided the swing, he was still caught by the gravity shockwave and was thrown violently back, crashing against an abandoned car which set off its alarm.

With a groan, he looked up to see the towering Brute Chieftain roar, preparing to deliver the killing blow. Instinctively, he closed his eyes and put his arms up to try and protect himself. It was futile attempt, a single hit from that hammer would turn him into a puddle of bones and blood.

Sam lay there, arms still in front of his face with his eyes screwed shut, awaiting the killing strike, but it never came. After a few seconds, Sam opened his eyes. In front of him stood a massive figure, clad in olive drab armor, whose left hand was firmly clasped around the upper hilt of the Chieftain's hammer, halting the killing blow. Sam’s eyes went wide with astonishment, in front of him stood a Spartan.

The Brute Chieftain roared in annoyance, saliva spewing against the Spartan’s visor as the two stood deadlocked. Sam snapped out of his bewilderment as he awkwardly got to his feet, his entire body aching.

The Spartan’s firmly planted back foot slid back as the Brute Chieftain slowly gained the upper hand. Noting from the motion tracker that the Marine was out of immediate danger, the Spartan quickly spun to the left after releasing its grip on the Brute’s hammer, dashing out the blast radius. Without the firm resistance the Spartan had provided, the Chieftain's hammer swung into the concrete with immense force.

Sam--who was still mesmerized by the legendary slight of a Spartan--collapsed to the ground from the shockwave of the gravity hammer. He looked up to see the Spartan, light as a feather, roll over the Brute’s shoulder before plunging their upsized combat knife between two armor plates on the Chieftain's neck. Utilizing their other hand, the Spartan dug its fingers into the Brute’s eye socket and pulled while twisting the knife deeper and deeper into its neck.

With a blood curling groan, the massive ape like behemoth staggered a few steps before toppling to the ground dead. Sam watched as the Spartan retrieved it’s knife from the Brute Chieftain corpse.

*They really are everything they’re talked up to be.*

The towering seven foot Spartan walked towards the injured Marine. Realizing just how intimidating and menacing a Spartan could be, Sam felt a slight pang of sadness for the poor alien bastards.

Dropping to one knee, the Spartan looked Sam up and down. “You’re bleeding internally,” a female voice spoke. “And you have slight fractures along vertebrae C 5,6, and 7.”

Sam’s eyes went wide and his eyebrows shot up, his bewilderment plastered all over his face. He watched as the Spartan removed her helmet, revealing a young yet mature face with pale white skin and short, cropped black hair.

She looked down at him and frowned. “What’s the matter Marine? Never seen a female Spartan before?”

“Well, I haven’t seen a female in quite a while ma’am,” Sam smiled. “But as for seeing a Spartan, it's a first for me.”

“Hopefully I didn’t disappoint,” the Spartan said as she produced a small syringe from a medkit on her armored thigh. “Hold still.”

Sam grunted as the stimulant corased through his body. His eyes wide as his face twitched. He felt like he had just been thrown into freezing cold water. The stimpack numbed the pain and shocked his body back into full swing.

Getting to her feet, the Spartan placed her helmet back on and offered Sam a hand to help him up. “Naiomi,” she said.

“Sam,” he replied as he grabbed her hand and got to his feet. He walked back over to the wrecked car, the spot that would’ve been his grave if Naiomi hadn’t come to his rescue. He chuckled to himself. Sam always fancied himself the knight in shining armor, but it appeared he was the damsel in distress.

He grabbed his rifle and trotted back over to Naiomi, who appeared engrossed in whatever was happening inside her helmet.

Standing upright, Naiomi still towered a good foot and a half over Sam. He felt a little odd looking up at her, standing at six foot three, he had never met a woman taller than him. She nodded her head in acknowledgement of something Sam couldn’t hear, before glancing over at him.

“Most of the civilians have been evacuated. Our job here’s done.”

“So we’re bugging out?”

“UNSC forces are rallying at the Office of Naval Intelligence building. That’s our next stop.”

Sam slid a fresh magazine into his Assault Rifle and nodded.

“Do try and keep up.” Naiomi smirked beneath her helmet as the pair took off.