

"LUMORIA"

Episode 2:

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OPENING CUTSCENE:

Characters present: May, Brandon, Captain, Dr.

FADE IN.

On board the Endless Horizon in a dark room with a large holo display in the center (a la Halo Wars), which is the only source of light other than tiny monitors and displays on the walls. It casts a blue glow. Dark and ominous looking.

May stands on one side of the holo tank, leaned over the display, examining data. The SCIENTIST. stands on the other side, using the controls to bring up various images and diagrams.

SCIENTIST

Lumoria is not, in fact, a planet littered in ancient ruins. It's really an artifact. It's an artificial construct of alien origin.

Brings up diagram of the planet.

SCIENTIST

As you can see, the planet is honeycombed with interconnecting passageways.

Brings up a diagram of a building.

SCIENTIST

In one expedition, we discovered this ancient interface terminal. We studied it for weeks, and learned that this planet was constructed by an ancient

race of beings which existed over a hundred thousand years ago.

(alternate paragraph)

[In one expedition, we discovered this ancient interface terminal. We studied it for weeks, and learned that this planet was constructed by an ancient race of beings which existed thousands of years before man walked erect.]

Our AI translation software could only interpret their name as "Antecedent", (ant-de-cede-dent) although that didn't seem right in context. The only other descriptors we discovered were "Precursor" and "Librarian".

Shakes his head.

SCIENTIST

But I digress. This world is what the terminal referred to as a 'Canon World', built apparently, for some sort of religious purposes. We found many references to "Mantle". Our best translations gave the impression that Lumoria served as some sort of religious commune for the followers of this "Mantle".

Brings up image of the Map room Structure.

SCIENTIST

From the terminals we learned that there is a central computer system here, around which the rest of the structures on this planet were arranged. It seems that the computer was to serve as a repository for a map room of the entire galaxy. A map of EVERYTHING! everything including Earth. It'd be my guess that this is why the

Covenant are here on Lumoria.

BRANDON

So, you're telling us that they want to get their hands on Earth's location through the map in a centuries old computer terminal located on a planet which was built by a race of beings which no one has ever seen or heard of before?

SCIENTIST

Essentially, yes. Is it so hard for you to believe?"

May looks at Brandon.

BRANDON

Sir, every day this war makes a lot of things easier to believe; I've seen what those Covenant assholes do when they invade a planet. All I need to know is where we can find this.. "atlas", and how to stop those bastards from getting their hands on Earth's location.

May looks back at Scientist.

MAY

Agreed. All other objectives are nonessential.

SCIENTIST

I figured you would say as much, and I wholeheartedly agree. How to keep them from this data, however, is the real question. I've been thinking about it, and have decided that the best course of action would be to...

Room goes dark and red emergency lights blare to life. Room tilts slightly and all characters present struggle to shift their weight to stay upright.

CAPTAIN

The two of you, get two drop ships and get to the surface. We've already lost one bird, I'm not going to lose another. This LZ is risky, but I know we can pull it off. (changed to an order)

The Captain points to Scarecrow.

CAPTAIN

Scarecrow, once their LZ is secured, you follow closely in with reinforcements. (changed to an order)

The captain walks by May and touches her on the shoulder

CAPTAIN

We'll do what we can but I am depending on you to make sure the Covenant don't get their hands on Earth's location. (changed to an order - removed reference of failure - ore direct)

He walks away without looking back at her. She looks after him,

MAY

(solemnly) Understood.

END OF FIRST PORTION OF OPENING CUTSCENE.

CUTSCENE AT BEGINNING OF FIRST LEVEL:

First setting: Troop bay of Pelican drop ship. The whole scene, including the camera and the characters bounces

occasionally as the drop ship descends from orbit. Troop bay is closed with no view of the external environment.

Characters present: May, Brandon, ODSTs

AI

The electro-magnetic pulse originated from a complex of structures farther inland. They are likely to be the same type which your scientist described. By his estimations, this complex was some sort of barracks or housing area. The EMP disrupted my communications with the forward scouting team. I have since reestablished communication.

MAY

[insert AI name here], get us a secure line to them.

Static noise as connection is established.

AI

Connection established.

SCOUT

(with static) This is forward recon team Kilo. LZ is hot. Repeat, LZ is hot. Recommend alternate site...over.

MAY

Recon Team Delta, what is the enemy presence at the LZ?"

DELTA

Two commanding Elites on foot, appear to be low ranks. Lots of cannon fodder, grunts and jackals. Got multiple turrets set up at defensive positions. As for heavies, Banshees spotted flying low - two unit patrol, and one AA Wraith. Repeat, Alpha-Alpha-Whiskey, over.

BRANDON

Copy recon.

Looks at May.

BRANDON

May, that AA Wraith will tear us to pieces, any chance we could find another landing zone? We can't risk losing our asses on a mission this important.

He shrugs

BRANDON

(sarcastically) Captain's orders.

May and marines land on beach, ascend up it and neutralize AA wraith and other enemy forces.

Scarecrow comes in and hovers above the beach.

SCARECROW

May, it seems like one of those covie's got word out that we were hitting them hard. They know you're here, and have dispatched a convoy to neutralize you and the rest of our forces. I spotted a good location for you to get the drop on those bastards while their convoy moves through the valley below. These

marines will show you the way.

Marines are deployed out of the back of the pelican.

SCARECROW

Good luck.

Scarecrow flies off.

MARINE

(uncertain) This way, uh... ma'am. If you, uh... if you want my sniper, it's yours.

(uncertain about how to talk to a Spartan or even about gender, offers rifle to make up for it)

Move camera to small ridge overlooking convoy, with gentle slope leading down to the bottom of the valley.

Convey rolls in.

CRASHED PELICAN PILOT

Mam! Intel reports incoming covenant armor, we've got longsword air support for the initial blunt, but well have to deal with the rest of 'em our self.

LONGSWORD PILOT

ETA Imminent. Rolling out the carpet.
(made short and sweet - no time frame)

Carpet bomb destroys majority of heavy vehicles. A few survivors start returning fire; a small complement of vehicles, and a lot of infantry.

MARINE LEADING CONVOY

We'll mop up the vehicles, the infantry
is yours May.

Gauss warthogs roll in, followed by a scorpion, and destroy
the surviving vehicles while May and the marines charge
down and take out the remaining infantry.

After enemies have been wiped out

TANK OPERATOR

This is scorpion MBT operator, [**insert
callsign here**]. We'll roll ahead and
clear a path. (made less awkward - just
say call sign)

Scorpion rolls out, along with one warthog, leaving two
behind. Brandon is in one.

BRANDON

May, we've got that scorpion's six. You
can take gunner seat or passenger.
There's a rocket over there.

point at either a drop pod or a downed marine, or this
could be rewritten so that he just gives you one

BRANDON

Reconnaissance images of the area ahead show some sort of ancient city structure. Apparently the Doctor thinks that's our fastest way to the map room.
(no need to say anything about pictures) -

BRANDON

(Alternate) Reconnaissance images of the area ahead show some sort of ancient city. Apparently the Doctor thinks that's our fastest way to the map room.

BRANDON

The tank's clearing a hole, but he's rolling fast and hard. There's sure to be a lot of stragglers. What do you say we mop them up?

IF PLAYER LINGERS TOO LONG

BRANDON

May, what're you doing, that tank is gonna be toast if we don't get in there to support it!" and "May, let's move!"
(voice actor can just improvise some stuff for this, but it'll be good to urge the player to get moving.)

Hogs roll out up the valley toward the structures. Along the way, a flock of sentinels can fly over the valley very high up... it's a huge flock, 50+ units.

MARINE

Woah! Look up there.

BRANDON

What are those things?"

MARINE:

This is just great. Aliens, ancient civilizations, the risk of humanity's extinction... and now ROBOTS!!!"

MAY:

Stay focused.

Hogs roll up to entrance to Forerunner city. Tank is destroyed and smoking, blocking entrance to the city.

BRANDON:

That tank is blocking the entrance. We'll have to move in on foot."

Player should still have the rocket launcher at this point, so it will be good to design the encounters in the city to appeal to a few high explosive shots.

Before Brandon and May move in to the city, a marine runs out

MARINE

Ma'am, this city is owned by the covenant. They set up shop here long before we showed up; they're dug in pretty good.

MAY:

Not for long.

MARINE

We're behind you ma'am.

City consists of lots of Forerunner structures with a vast majority of temporary Covenant technology set up at key points. Lots of opportunity to pick up weapons and create a unique look of the Covenant having lived in these ruins for a while using temporary supplies.

Once the player reaches the top:

MARINE

Woah! Check out that mean looking bastard!

points to an Elite wearing an armor color never seen before, visibly infused with more Forerunner technology. (Think an ultra elite combined with some of the Arbiter's armor, maybe a different tint of blue to the white armor)

Rogue elite (what I'm calling him due to his armor being self-infused with Forerunner technology for his own selfish desires, rather than for the Prophet's will) is ordering around some grunts who can be seen messing with a strange Forerunner structure (an inactive Forerunner holotank). Elite will be invincible and will escape in a Spirit dropship which flies up from the city below. Elite will jump into the troop bay from the edge of a platform.

BRANDON

I didn't like the look of that. It seemed like that Elite has used some of the technology from these ruins in his armor. The son of a bitch was tough. I'm guessing he's in charge of this whole shindig. Something tells me we'll be seeing him again..."

As a Covenant Cruiser fly's by, the Captain can be heard over the radio:

CAPTAIN

(Think about deleting this paragraph - makes captain seem weak)

(confused basically, like how the heck did it just get past them) What the hell? That Cruiser just broke right through our defenses.

Alpha Fox Trot... engage enemy cruiser. We'll move the Horizon closer once Sierra Zero-Seven-Three has breached the coast line at the map room.

CUTSCENE

May approaches the holotank and it glares to life, pulsing between blue, green, and red. A strange machine similar to a strato-sentinel can be seen (I imagine a cross between an enforcer, a strato-sentinel, and one of the sentinel factories from Halo 2).

AI will have two personalities due to rampancy. First one is like 343 Guilty Spark, but deeper voice, and the other is more like the Gravemind or Sovereign from ME1. Hologram will glow red when the second voice speaks, indicating rampancy. AI predates even the Human-Forerunner War, and had managed to avoid rampancy for so long by splitting its rampant side into another personality, and allowing its more functional side to deny the passage of time, so that it still thinks it is the same time at which it began to go rampant.

AI-1(VOICE 1):

A sample. Here. In front of me.

AI-2(VOICE 2)

My form is not yet complete.

AI-1 (V1)

All samples are to remain in their designated environs.

AI-2 (V2)

Your destruction is the will of the gods.

AI-1 (V1)

Punishment for refusal to follow orders
is deevolution. Please return to your
designated environ.

AI-2 (V2)

I shall grind you into dust.

AI-1 (V1)

The Librarian shall be arriving soon,
and I will have all my facilities
appropriately arranged before that time.

AI-2 (V2)

You know nothing.

Hologram promptly terminates following the last comment.
May cocks her head at the display, looks down at her
assault rifle (as if reminding herself that she can take on
anything), then moves on.

[END CUTSCENE]

After cutscene, Sentinels begin to fly throughout the
structures in the Forerunner city, but are neutral AIs. May
moves through the structures with Brandon. A few puzzles.
After moving through the structures, the player will come
towards an exterior ledge. A few wombats will fly past
overhead towards the map structure, which is visible in the
distance, across a vast valley. Giving you little time to
admire the view, a sentinel enforcer flies up from below
the ledge, after a few seconds to look at the friendly
forces moving towards the structure. Enforcer is
accompanied by three sentinels, and from this point on in
the campaign all sentinels are hostile AI.

A marine comes out of a doorway further down the ledge
(grassy ramp leader down to doorway platform) and shoots at
the enforcer with a rocket launcher.

Once the enforcer is destroyed,

MARINE

This way to the valley ma'am!

runs inside. Following the marine will take you through a few internal Forerunner structures where you fight sentinels and maybe a few more enforcers.

Exiting the internal rooms puts you down on the grassy plain where in the distance tanks and warthogs can be seen moving towards the map structure. AI can be seen above the map structure clearly. Would be cool if the marine exits the door ahead of you, but the second he does a hunter melees him from the right side of the door where it was previously out of sight, creating a startle moment for the player. Player will then fight the hunter pair and a few ghosts, before a tank rolls in accompanied by a warthog, declaring

VOICE ON RADIO

Artillery has arrived!

Either a wombat crashes, or there is already a downed wombat in the area immediately around the vehicles, but lots of supplies for the upcoming battle are scattered around its fuselage.

Proceed to largest battle in the campaign in any manner the player wishes. Sandbox gameplay FTW!

After fighting through the valley (which gently slopes downhill until ending up at the map room), enjoying memorable encounters and great dialogue from marines (great opportunity for improvised lines to be used), May and forces ends up at the foot of a giant Forerunner structure similar to the ziggurat from CE and Halo 3, combined with a little bit of the control room where Truth is killed on the Ark in H3. Floating above the structure is the giant strato-sentinel/sentinel factory AI. It is tethered to the structure by a metallic cord, drifting as if it were a balloon on a string (the designers can go nuts with this one. Make the cable look as if it were beyond human technology, yet still archaic for what we've seen of Forerunner structures. Would be really cool if the AI could have a spotlight-like eye beam that shines down on player, similar to Sauron from TLOTR. Would make AI more intimidating, and make the players feel watched. If this is a possibility, make the beam flick consistently between red

and blue.)

[CUTSCENE]

Overhead shot of May as she walks up to entrance of structure. Frontal shot of May, showing the battle still raging behind her, as Brandon runs up. He looks up and nods at the AI.

BRANDON

What do you figure that is?

MAY

Not sure... but I have a bad feeling.

Eye-beam hits her, and she lapses into a Gravemind moment sorta thing, but with blue and red colors instead of green.

AI-1 (V1)

The samples are beyond control. No one could have predicted how quickly they could spread their virulent destruction."

AI-2 (V2)

(quickly spoken) Grind them! Crush them! Kill them!

AI-1 (V1)

Sample exhibits organized intelligence far beyond any previous assessment. Organized under martial leadership. Must eliminate leadership."

AI-2 (V2)

They're coming for you May.

May puts her hand to her head and shakes it, her other hand on her knee. She is bent over from the exhaustion. Scientist runs up behind her after being dropped out of a

Pelican.

SCIENTIST

(concerned) Ma'am, are you okay?

[The following can be added if it is deemed acceptable for gameplay to go through the structure without energy shields]

BRANDON

May... your shields.

May stands up straighter and looks at her arm, then at her body. She taps one of her armor plates, checking for the slight viscosity that the Mark V shields generate on the surface of the armor.

MAY

They're gone. That AI must have done something to my armor.

May's vision flashes again.

AI (V2)

More than you know

May gasps, again bending over from the strain.

MAY

(breathing heavily, directed at other two) You're not, uh... you're not feeling this?"

BRANDON

(concerned) No May

SCIENTIST

It must be your neural implants. They are allowing the AI access directly to your mind. I wonder if the captain is experiencing the same thing... (don't see significance of this line)

SCIENTIST

(alternate) It must be your neural implants. They are allowing the AI direct access to your mind.

MAY:

Yeah, maybe. Let's just finish this.

May walks into structure without giving Brandon a chance to respond. Brandon and scientist follow closely behind.

[END CUTSCENE]

I'm going to leave gameplay here entirely up to the rest of the team. Randomly throughout the structure (which I'm going to assume is very extensive), May will get more flashes, similar to the Cortana moments. To avoid the annoyance that this caused in H3, make sure they occur during long passages through the Forerunner structure without any fighting. The following conversations can be inserted appropriately.

[AI MOMENT 1]

AI-1 (V1)

Sample, you have thus far disregarded all efforts to forewarn you of the

consequences of abandoning your assigned environ. If you do not return, swift measures will be taken to ensure you are properly subdued.

All sentinels, augmented sample using a class 2 combat skin is top priority for termination.

AI-2 (V2)

Melt her armor. Burn her skin. Crush her bones!

AI-1 (V1)

Anomaly detected. Rampant AI is suspect. Is it possible there is another with me?

[END AI MOMENT 1]

[AI MOMENT 2]

AI-1 (V1)

Rogue AI, identify yourself or suffer immediate lethal response.

AI-2 (V2)

I am all that you could never be.

AI-1 (V1)

I? I am 735 Antecedent Sage. You are an intruder, and therefore must be purged. Your location has been marked. A ballistic energy projectile is incoming.

An explosion shakes the facility

AI-1 (V1)

Intruder, eliminated-ed-ed-ed
(begins to stutter because it just shot itself) 7-3-4 Antec-ec-ecedent Sage.
Intruder purged.

[END AI MOMENT 2]

[IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AI MOMENT 2]

BRANDON

This is Sergeant Kieffer, requesting
priority channel to Endless Horizon!"

CAPTAIN

Go ahead Brandon! (alternate) Go ahead
Sergeant - (reminds viewer of Brandon's
rank)

BRANDON

Sir, we have a priority target down
here. We could use some assistance.
(shortened - more direct)

CAPTAIN

We'll do what we can. Coordinates?

BRANDON

The giant robot out near that lake,
sir. Hard to miss. I need it taken out
now. (what out near the lake - added
structure)

CAPTAIN

We're inbound. ETA: eight minutes.

BRANDON

(to May) Let's push it May! The
Horizon's gonna be raining down all
kinds of hell, and you know that we
don't want to be here when that
happens! Let's get the scientist to the
terminal so he can do his job and get

out of here!

[AFTER ~ 5 MINS OF FIGHTING THROUGH STRUCTURE, CUTSCENE]

May, Brandon, and scientist reach the central map room, similar to map room from Halo Wars, combined with final area of first Lumoria episode. Cutscene shows Rogue Elite at top of stairs/pyramid structure, looking at a hologram of Earth and tapping buttons on a Forerunner device on his arm. He looks at May, snarls (similar to movement Elite from first Halo demo makes after activating its shield within the Forerunner tunnels, and then barks a command at some Grunts, who carry and set up two shielding platforms, placing a plasma shield around the map structure and the Elite, as he continues to download data about Earth. And then, a blue shield incase's him and the terminal.

BRANDON

Let's get him!

May and Brandon kill all enemies leading up to Elite (lots of them, and the toughest large-scale encounter in the game).

BRANDON

Nothing's getting past that shield!
Ideas?

SCIENTIST

Brandon, it looks like three Covenant auto-turrets are on those ledges above. If you and May can activate them, I can hack into them and target the shield. That should take it down. (re-written more direct)

[CUTSCENE]

May, Brandon, and the scientist run up the steps and end up on the platform. Elite roars at them and activates a shield, then touches a button on the Forerunner device on its arm.

AI-1 (V1)

Leader of rogue organic samples located and contained.

Forerunner shields encircle the area, creating a caged arena, and Sentinels fly out and begin to attack May and Brandon.

CAPTAIN

Brandon, the target's got some kind of energy shielding. Our fighters can't get through. We are charging the MAC cannon...

MAY

Doctor, access that terminal now! See if you can purge all data about Earth! We'll take care of the Elite...
(more direct and on point)

Thus begins final boss battle between Rogue Elite (tougher because of Forerunner armor) and Sentinels. Periodically, room and player's vision should shake as MAC round hits the AI's shielding. Also, the following lines could be spoken by the scientist during the battle, as he's working on the computer:

SCIENTIST

This might take a moment, applying
algorithm translation software...

SCIENTIST

This thing is ancient! It's a wonder
it's still running. It's genius...
(more like talking to oneself)

SCIENTIST

My god... there's so much more
information in here than I had even
imagined... Not just Earth, but
thousands of other worlds...

SCIENTIST

Precursors... AI rebellions...
Mantle... This is all so fascinating. I
have a feeling that ONI and I are going
to be working VERY closely... (again
more like talking to oneself)

[NEXT CUTSCENE, AFTER ELITE TAKES ENOUGH DAMAGE]

Brandon is shooting at the Elite excessively, doing a lot
of damage as May reloads.

CAPTAIN

May, Brandon, the MAC isn't
penetrating. The shields are still
holding! (more direct)

SCIENTIST

Wait! I saw it somewhere, I can over
ride Sage's shielding, hold on! (not
sure about this name - where does it
come from - not mentioned before)

SCIENTIST

(alternate) Wait! I saw it somewhere...
I can over ride the shielding, hold on!

Rogue Elite hears this and taps another button on its arm, then runs off for a bit while sentinels come in.

BRANDON

May, he's calling more of those robots!"

SCIENTIST

There! I've over-ridden the shield controls. (more direct)

CAPTAIN

That did it May. Shields are down, making our final run. We've got limited ammo so we're going to make this shot count!

May looks satisfied, before camera reveals the Elite sneaking up behind her with its energy sword out. It grabs her around the neck and pulls her back onto the blade, clearly showing the twin blades protruding from the other side of her stomach. She collapses to the floor, the Elite bending down over her and snarling... before Brandon sneaks up behind it and stabs it in the neck with his combat blade. Its energy sword deactivates and drops onto the floor next to May. The Elite staggers backwards, clutching at the knife, before pulling it out of its throat and lunging at Brandon with it. The two have a quick hand-to-hand fight, where Brandon is slashed across the chest a few times and stabbed in the leg. Finally aware that he is not going to survive, he full on tackles the Elite, ripping the Forerunner components of its armor off before the Elite takes Brandon's combat knife and stabs him in the heart. He drops to the floor, dead instantly. The Elite stomps on Brandon's body (as a triumphant posture, or to crush his skull completely, you and the animators can decide which),

then turns around. This is when he (and the camera), sees May for the first time, standing behind him clutching the stab wound in her torso, but holding the Elite's energy sword in her other hand.

After ending of this battle, May should look at Brandon, kneel down, and shake her head. She should then look over to almost dead Elite, who is slowly crawling to her. She picks the elite up and stabs him with his own energy sword.

MAY

(Almost whispering into the elites ear)
Feel that? That's for Brandon, and every other human you've murdered.

The elite drops to the ground, and May hurls it over the side of the structure to the rocky beach and ocean below. She looks back up, and watches the Endless Horizon tear Sage to pieces with her MAC Cannon. After this a few scenes of marines fighting sentinels and the sentinels falling to the ground, and Major Kallis surviving (if you got him to survive) while helping some marines while music plays.

May then heads back inside, where the scientist is kneeling over Brandon's lifeless corpse, silent. He slowly looks up at May, standing rigid with the energy sword at her hip and the assault rifle in her hands.

SCIENTIST

What do you want to do?

MAY

We get him back to the ship.

May stoops down and picks up Brandon's corpse. The knife remains lodged in his skull. Fade out as the three of them slowly exit the building.

(play alternate speech:) May shown looking out in the distance while at the beach... she throws off her helmet into the sand, but you can only see the backside of her. Slowly pan backwards, showing the surviving marines, Major Kallis,

Scarecrow, and the Scientist, (back near structure) all looking over to her, waiting, for what will happen next.

MAY

(consider striking this speech - to much new information and not on point)
Not many people know this, but when we began our training, we were only children. Taken from our homes, we were given the choice to fight... well, I think it was supposed to appear as a choice. In reality, we were abductees. I realize that now. At the time it didn't make sense. All there was was the desire to make it through one more day. The training was brutal, and afterwards... Not all of us made it. It was hard. We've all led tough lives.

Later, my friend John was attacked by ODSTs... he killed them. I'm sure the brass loved it, but it cemented a terrible reputation for Spartans in the eyes of the ODSTs.

In spite of this, Brandon was the one person who gave me a chance, decided to look past the reputation from the beginning. It was tough for him, I'm sure... surrounded by his comrades who hated the sight of me. But he held through, and now I feel privileged to have been able to call him my one true friend outside of the Program.

In basic, my friend - our leader - was told the difference between a life spent, and a life sacrificed. After the mission, I wanted to know that Brandon did not die in vain. There was far more than Earth at stake, I knew that. I had read some of the Terminals. So what had his sacrifice been for?

It took me a while to find out. Lots of plying... more than they had ever expected from one of us. But eventually they yielded.

That information changed the entire course of my life.

Many sacrifices were made on Lumoria. And now I understand that each of them was worth every single drop of blood." (have voice actors place extra emphasis on "ever. single. drop.")

MAY

(alternate speech)

Many sacrifices were made on Lumoria, this place now stained by the loss of many brave warriors who gave their lives fighting for what they believed was just.

But their deaths were not in vain. The terminals held so much more information than the location of Earth; if the Covenant had secured them... (short pause) but they didn't.

So much blood was spilled, but I know Brandon and every other marine here knew, it was all worth every - single - drop.

END