

Watching your best friend pretend they're not a superhero

By: SleepyDreamyLullay

... = listener is speaking or general pause

[words] = sound effects and sounds

(words) = tone/mood/voice direction

{words} = replace with desired pronouns, subject, alternative etc. or do away with it as you please

***Speaker's Halo persona is the picture-perfect savior, a paragon of heroism: Caring, suave, confident--- The kind of person he's always wanted to be, and the kind of person he's always wanted to present himself as. However, his performance occasionally slips when matters edge too close toward his civilian identity. Speaker's Civilian persona is much more unsure--- comfortable with Speaker, yes, and finding his own sort of charm through familiar rapport and cute bumbliness, but at his core, deeply insecure.**

****Script Start****

[Speaker is flying through the air with Listener in their arms; The only thing Listener can hear is the whooshing sound of air whipping past their ears]

...

[Speaker and Listener land softly on the roof of a tall building, the distant sounds of traffic far below]

(Speaker carefully setting Speaker down)

Here you go.

(rushing forward to help as Listener wobbles)

Whoa there--- steady, steady.

You good?

...

Good.

... *[Slight Pause]*

(slightly suspicious; as if knowing Listener is prone to brushing things off)

You *promise*?

...

(relieved) Alright, then.

Hang tight. I'll come back up here in a few to get you when it's safe. I just have to---

[Walkie talkie-like blip]

[Slight static as Speaker presses a button to answer]

(to their mic)

Herald 3, Halo reporting--- what's up?

...

No--- I was the primary responder, but I left Herald 2 and 6 to handle the rest so I could whisk our... (considering what words they should use)

... *agitator* civilian to safety. How's it going down there?

...

(pleasantly surprised) Oh, that was quick. Okay then, good. I'll be back down for clean-up shortly.

Halo out.

[Slight static indicating Speaker has hung up]

...

(caught off-guard, baffled)

Hm?

...

Oh. *That*.

... Did I say 'agitator civilian'?

Sorry, I meant (playfully antagonistic; teasing) agitat-*ing* civilian.

...

No, no! No one's pointing fingers here!

... I mean, I *would* say you're the one that's responsible, but *clearly* you're anything but!

...

Whatever you say-- but a bit of advice?

When a *CRIME* is--- (notices Listener has tuned them out)

Whe— when---

Hey.

[Snaps to get their attention]

Hey.

[Snap snap]

When a *CRIME* is happening, you don't *provoke* said *criminals* by so *hilariously* pointing out---

(mocking silly voice) "I don't think you're allowed to do that 🤪👉" and---

(laughing) Are you seriously not going to listen to me?

...

Okay then--- I guess I'll just have to save you the next time you piss off some 'big-bad'.

Again.

Honestly, to *think*.

[Tsk tsk tsk]

(sighing, shaking their head) The lengths you'll go *just* to get my attention.

...

Oh? *Oh.*

Oh, *please.*

This is, what, the 4th? 5th time I've saved you?

...

You can't even deny it! I was there the night of the Orchid Club sweep, I was at the Delmaine family's house when you were trying to get that exposé, I was there when you were tracking old leads to the *3 hanged men* cold case and---

...

Following you??

(struggling to deny)

I wasn't---!

I didn't---!

[Awkward laugh; clearly caught]

(can't find the words/can't form a proper sentence)

You know, you *really*---!

[Extremely 'chalant' scoff]

You—y... you--- you...

... *[Slight pause gathering thoughts]*

(softly; enamored)

You.

[Shaking their head]

(light laughing) You know what? I'm not even going to engage.

...

C'mon. You *know* what I'm talking about. Turning all *this*---

[Emphatically gesturing between themselves and Listener]

Into one of your *exclusive* interviews? I'm not letting you do that to me.

Again.

...

You *can't* think I'm that dense. You're that investigative journalist extraordinaire: *Quill Hawke* for *The Messenger*?

...

Yeah--- I recognize you. How could I not? I know all about your little column. You *love* to criticize the *Heralds*--- especially me! "The biggest Her-L"? "Ha-loser"? "The Fallen-off Angel"?

I *know* who you are.

(smirking; smug about the “secret”; insinuating) I know a lot more about you than you’d think.

And sources tell *me* that you’re a curious, strong-willed individual with a burning passion for getting to the bottom of things and a frankly concerning willingness to do so the hard way--- which is *why* I was there all those times that you *inevitably* needed me.

...

Sorry. I like to keep my informants classified--- though I don’t need them to know that you’re *mean*.

(Boldly but smoothly) And cute.

(sighing) The mean ones are always cute, and the cute ones are always mean.

...

Hey, hey, hey--- Let’s make this fair: I get a question then *you* get a question. That way it’s not so one-sided.

What were you doing rifling around HAVEN’s manifest records?

...

(flatly)

Uh huh. “*Stuff*”.

And what were you planning on doing with that information?

...

(flatly)

Right. “*Things*.”

C’mon, Hawke at *least* tell me---

...

Alright, fine. I asked 2, you ask 2. Go for it.

...

(cheeky; giving Listener a taste of their own medicine)

Oh, you know...

Stuff.

...

That? Just because...

Things.

2 can play at this game, Hawke.

...

... [*Slight, playfully tense pause of Speaker and Listener sizing each other up; a stalemate*]

...

(cracking; conceding with a head shake and a smile)

Fine. But if *I* answer, you answer. Deal?

...

I'm always around because... *I* like to be the first one on site when you cause a stir. *I* like to be the one that's there when you need me.

There. Is that what you wanted to hear?

...

Your turn: What are you going to do with the records?

...

Hey! That's not fair! That's way too vague an answer.

"Following a story" is such a cop-out. That's what you do *every day*. That's your *job*.

At least tell me *what* you're doing research on.

...

Huh.

Well... HAVEN didn't tell the Heralds anything about this supposed "dangerous cargo"...

Do you think that's why the Little Thieves gang broke into HAVEN hall? To steal those records, same as you?

...

(sarcastic) Oh, right. *My bad*. What *you* were doing was light “trespassing” and “snooping”, right?

What the Little Thieves were doing was illegal, destructive, and, in your very wise words: “Not allowed.”

Completely different things, huh?

...

Well, I’m glad we cleared that up. In any case, your... *provoking* them thankfully set off HAVEN’s alarms before they could cause any real harm. I’m glad I got there in time.

Maybe you can make it up to me--- *The Messenger’s* next headline should be: “Herald of light? Or Angel of Love” or “Divine, Dreamy, and Drop-dead Gorgeous: Halo revealed”.

(sobering; growing serious) But uh...

Hawke...

I think you should know that this story... It might not be worth it. By the looks of it, following this trail might take you out of the bounds of the city, and I’m technically not authorized to operate outside the limits set by HAVEN. You’ll be alone out there.

Especially with that recent string of violent murders happening, I just...

I can’t... be there if something goes wrong, you know?

...

Okay then... if it’s only a few miles over a few days, I guess it’s relatively safe.

(always falling back on flirting) I knew you just couldn’t stay away from me for too long ;)

I’ll be on the lookout for the next couple of days. If trouble calls, I’ll know it’s you.

(with meaning beyond current context) It’s always you.

I’ll be there.

(can’t be genuine for too long) --- For the sake of my informant. Obviously.

...

[*Tsk*]

Can’t say, remember? It’s classified. The Halo story you write will be about Halo *only*. Isn’t that what you want? Halo fully... *uncovered* ;)?

...

Yeah? Then which other Herald are you going to do a story on? White Viper? Titania? Dr. Atlas? You don't even *like* them!

...

(emphatic; accidentally revealing they know way more about Listener than they should) No you don't! You think White Viper should've never been exonerated for his involvement in the Wen clan coup and you think Titania is just a mouthpiece figurehead of a leader! Don't get me *started* on Dr. Atlas. You're *always* going *on* about how he---

... [*Slight Pause of realization*]

(doubling back; trying to correct their slip)

I mean... so I've heard. So I've gleaned.

From the informant, of course.

Point is: I know *I'm* you're favorite. *Despite* the digs that you like to take at me in *The Messenger*.

...

I didn't get *heated* there, Hawke. I just wanted to keep the facts straight. What you do or think or say *off* the record isn't really any of my business.

But it could be ;)

...

There it is again--- why are you always so *interested* in getting me to divulge my secret identity? It doesn't exactly help with the 'obsessed with me' accusations, you know.

...

It's for the best and you know it. Sometimes it's just better to leave certain things a mystery, you know? (a little wistfully) 0 expectations, 0 repercussions...

(quietly; not meaning to voice aloud this insecurity) I mean.. If *this* isn't enough for you, how could the real me ever be?

(immediately going back to cocky narcissism) *This [gestures to themselves]*--- this is all you need to know. *This* is what you *want* to see.

Clearly.

Pull out every top-secret wonder-reporter method you have, but you're not getting a peep out of me.

...

An invitation? No--- more of a... *Challenge*, Hawke.

Try anything.

Literally *anything*.

Every dirty little trick in your book ;)

I won't say a word either way.

...

(laughing) Looking forward to it.

And for what it's worth? You're my favorite too.

Now--- I *do* think the Heralds are missing me right now. I've denied them the privilege of my company for far too long by entertaining *yours*.

I trust you know how to get down from here?

...

[Voice distant; already flying off]

(laughing; calling over their shoulder) I'm sure you'll manage!

See you, Hawke!

[Speaker enters the room softly singing 'Boyfriend' by Big Time Rush to themselves with the confidence one has when they believe they are completely alone, distracted and not expecting company at all]

And everyday I see you on your own~~

And I can't believe that you're alone~~

But I overheard your girls and this is what they said~~

That you're looking for a boyfriend~~ (boyfriend)~~

I see that, gimme time you know I'm gonna be there~~

Don't be scare---

(startled; scared shitless)

Jesus Christ!

What the *hell!*

How long have you been standing there?

...

I don't know--- You could've been---

You could've been, like, a robber (finishing lamely) or something.

Or that one guy that's been going around town eating people and tearing them apart, I don't know!

...

(flatly) Ha-ha. Glad you enjoyed the show.

I swear--- you're like a stray cat, you know?

Lurking around, showing up unannounced, spending a suspicious amount of time at the docks, always rifling around in my stuff---

Hey. Hey--- what is *that?*

...

(like talking to a cat who has something they're not supposed to have)

Hawke, what do you have?

Is that my---

Hey! *Hey!* Drop it!

Drop. It.

...

... *[Brief moment of Listener and Speaker eyeing each other]*

...

[Speaker shoots forward first, scrambling for Listener; A brief scuffle]

[The flutter of pages of pages as Speaker rips free the item]

God. I was genuinely afraid you were going to *bite* me, you freak.

You are the *nosiest* person to exist. I'd say *The Messenger* made you this way, but we all know that isn't true.

I've got nothing to hide, Hawke. You already know everything there is to know about me. You always have.

(waving the diary in Listener's face) This is just a *sketchbook*. It's not like it's my diary or something.

...

... [*Slight pause*]

...

(adding on hastily) which may or may not exist--- *please* do *not* go looking for it.

...

You are *such* a liar.

... I'm going to have to change all my passwords and locks again, aren't I?

...

Well, at least I got this---

[*Speaker shakes the sketchbook*]

---back before you could flip through it.

...

... [*Suspicious pause*]

...

(sighing) You already saw all of it, didn't you?

...

(embarrassed, exasperated groan) *Dude*.

I don't even know *why* I try to keep stuff from you anymore. You always figure it out eventually.

...

(insinuating; trying not to sound suspicious but failing; hiding their secret)

Yep... All my... Deepest, darkest secrets. All of them.

Not a single one... uncovered.

[Awkward clearing of the throat]

(hastily changing topics) Erase those sketches from your memory. *Please*. I'm *begging* you, Hawke.

There are artists out there who would claw your eyes out for merely *thinking* about looking at their sketchbook, you know.

...

(affronted, but in a bumbly, almost petulant way)

I--!

I--i could *totally* claw someone's eyes out.

I'm *strong*. I'm... you know... scrappy!

Fighty.

...

[Listener takes a step forward]

...

(closer; calling their bluff)

Yeah? Right here, right now. You really wanna go, Hawke?

...

[Listener takes another step forward]

...

(even closer now; very quickly losing their nerve and bravado--- i.e. fucked around and is finding out; stuttering)

You, uh, well, I, uh---

I wasn't, you know, expecting you to---

Right *here*, right *now*? Right *close*---?

Er--- *you*...

Close...?

...

[Listener takes one more step forward]

...

[Another tense, assessing pause; a Stalemate]

...

(Speaker cracks first)

[Speaker takes a conceding step backward, laughing awkwardly]

(with awkward clearly false bravado) I just remembered, I'm like, *super* sore today. From all the... um... push ups and sit ups and chin ups and... other... 'ups'...

That I totally do. All day every day.

I'll let you off with a warning this time.

...

Yeah. Yep--- very fortunate.

(without thinking) You're lucky I like you so much.

...

["Did I just say that...?" Pause]

...

[Awkward deflecting chuckle; trying to play it off]

[A light punch on the arm]

(adding on as a horribly 'save') --- *Pal.*

... Good ol'... Pal of mine...

...

Hey. We are not talking about them! Memory erased, remember?

...

They're just sketches! Studies, ideas, dumb little things I had in the works. Most of it was concept art for the DnD campaign I'm a part of anyway, stuff like that. Stuff you wouldn't be interested in.

...

Ummmm. No. No, you were *not* invited to this one.

...

Because--- you always treat the campaign like a story to investigate rather than a story to participate in: you like to find loopholes, you play the menace, you interview WAY too many NPC's with an excruciating amount of inane questions, and you focus so hard on unveiling the storyline that you spoil all the plot points and twists that the DM has in store!

...

I---!

I *have* other friends, you know.

...

I have friends other than *them*, too! Ones that you aren't *also* friends with!

...

(struggling; immediately caught in their lie)

You know---!

Like uh...

(accidentally listing off Heralds and quickly changing them to plausible names)

White Vi---

Um. Vi... Violet White.

Yeah.

Yeah, Violet White. And uh...

Ti--- tita--- Tatiana!

And uh... Alex. The doctor. Doctor Alex.

I've mentioned them before in passing here and there.

I'm just saying--- my entire world doesn't revolve around you. (without thinking) Only *most* of it does.

... Huh. That sounded a lot better in my head.

...

Why are you so fixated on the campaign? *Jealous* much?

...

What? *No*.

[flips through the pages of the sketchbook]

See? That's a completely *fictional* being--- a love interest for the backstory of my Paladin character.

...

Who says? *I* says!

Me says!

...

(stubbornly insistent) It does *not* look like you!

(noticing immediately; instantly mortified with embarrassment) Oh my god it looks like you.

...

Well that's just 'cause---!

It's- it's *only* because you--!

[Sigh; Giving up; The evidence in uncanny]

I must've done that unconsciously. The Paladin I'm playing *is* based on me and I guess...

Even in fiction, I still have to have you there with me. I can't imagine a world without you there.

...

[Immediately defensive; Lifting the sketchbook out of reach]

No--- *no*.

You do *not* get to further scrutinize the sketches of the character.

It was just a *coincidence*, okay? I wanted my character to have a love interest, and I unconsciously wanted you to be a part of my life. Two *completely separate* thoughts.

Speaking of--- not that I'm not *absolutely loving* this unexpected drop-in, what with you sticking your grubby little paws in all my business and mortifying me within the first 10 minutes of you being here--- but why, exactly, *are* you here?

You didn't call or text and I thought you'd be busy with that lead you've been chasing, so what's up?

...

... [*Contemplative pause*]

...

... If I go into the fridge and see that you ate all my food, I'm going to *lose* it.

...

(suspiciously)

A... "*Present*"

Uh huh.

And is this present going to mock me, embarrass me, or give me a heart attack in any way? Because you've already achieved all three of those and I'd have to give it a hard pass.

...

Alright, alright, I'm closing them, I'm closing them! Can't see a thing now.

[*Listener goes into a different room to get the present*]

You know it's never a good thing when you tell me to close my eyes *and* hold out my hands.

[*Sounds of Listener rummaging*]

(calling out to Listener from the other room) It's also never a good thing to keep me waiting so long!

[*Listener is still rummaging; Speaker is growing more and more anxious through the silence*]

Seriously--- the suspense is killing me.

Wait. Is this “surprise” going to be a bug?

[Groan]

I don’t know why I let you do this, it’s *always* a bug. I think to myself “maybe I should trust you” “maybe it’s something I’ll actually *like* this time ” and then suddenly I’m holding something with too many eyes or too many legs or too many eyes *and* legs.

Again.

...

[Listener steps back into the room]

[Speaker jumps and makes a startled noise]

[Listener places a hefty box in Speaker’s hands]

Oh god, is it a *box* of bugs? I’m not opening my eyes if it’s a box of bugs.

...

That is *not* convincing.

[Reluctant groan; Speaker begins opening the box anyway]

Alright. But if it flies at me---

[A loud, almost comical inhale of surprised delight]

Nowaynowaynowaynoway. You *didn’t*.

The episode 10 Unit-01 berserk jaw distortion key cut genga for Neon Genesis Evangelion?!?!

You are insane. You’re *insane*--- when did you---??

How did you---??

[Dumbstruck pause; at a loss for words]

There’s *no way* this is real.

...

Dude, Sadamoto is, like, one of my *biggest* inspirations.

...

(too stunned to speak properly)

Yeah, I know you already know that but this is---

I can't believe---

...

[Abruptly hugs Listener]

...

(muffled from the hug) Thank you.

...

[Speaker pulls away]

(still in awe of their gift; distracted)

You know, I should be suspicious due to the sheer magnitude of how truly *awesome* this gift is and be expecting you to, like, break some horrible news to me, but right now I think I'm too stoked to care.

Why'd you get this for me?

...

"Motivation"? I'll say.

I'm going to hang this right above my work desk. That way I'll have your *and* Sadamoto's disapproving spirits looking down at me at all times when I'm busy *not* drawing.

...

I'm *joking*.

...

Don't give me that *look*. I've been... busy, okay? Not enough time for art.

...

I have *not* "given up"--- those photos that I take of the Heralds for *The Messenger*? That's just a side hustle, something to make rent while I work on other projects.

Besides, you eat those photos *up*.

Especially the ones of Halo.

...

(shrilly defensive) He does *not*---

...

(trying to cover up outburst surreptitiously; with forced nonchalance) I mean... I, for one, think his new suit is cool and well designed and makes him look very official and heroic and muscular.

(adding on after a pause) and handsome.

...

Har-har. No, that isn't the reason I've been taking a break from art. At least, not... *exactly*.

I've just been... busy, is all.

...

Yes, "*busy*". With...

Stuff...

Things...

...

Yes, yes--- *secret* stuff and secret things.

Important secret stuff and things.

I've got to have *some* air of mystery.

(adding on a joke but hits closer to home than Speaker intended) If I didn't, I'd worry you'd get bored of me.

...

(recovering; trying to revive the light mood) So uh, what's with the sudden interest in my *artistic endeavors*? It can't be out of the goodness of your evil little heart. You looking to be a patron? A muse?

You've already always been both. Clearly.

...

(softly; disappointed) Oh. How long?

...

Ah...

... but it's... pretty dangerous this time, I'm guessing? That's why you think you need to come here with the motivational gifts?

Like a... "In case I don't make it" type thing?

...

Ah...

...

Well... being friends with you for so long, I knew there'd be risks.

Risks to my *pride*. My *dignity*.

My heart.

I'll be worried, but this is your calling. You can handle yourself, I'm sure of it.

But...

(trying to get all the words out; one rushed run-on sentence) I know you hate when I say this, and I also know that you know I *have* to say this, and I also know that you know that I know you're more than capable, strong enough, etc. etc.--- and you can hit me if you want after, but...

Just---

[A slight hesitant pause, as if rethinking what they want to say; Words on the tip of the tongue that they can't quite get out]

Be careful, alright? Stay safe.

[Listener playfully punches speaker's arm]

(not losing a beat; not actually in pain) Ow.

...

(laughing) I wasn't joking earlier. That man-eating-monster-beast-whatever guy in the news lately is genuinely beginning to worry the Heralds.

(as a "save" from revealing his affiliation with the Heralds) --- according to HAVEN. HAVEN's... Um... communication team.

So: Be careful.

You *promise*?

...

Good.

Okay, then. Tonight's plans have been *slightly* altered. I only have you for, what, a few more hours before you slink off to your super-cool-super-awesome-super-secret-super-detective mission?

...

Then *we* are going to binge watch a super-cool-super-awesome-super *show*. Every single episode of Evangelion so that you understand the significance of the genga you just gifted me.

...

It's *not*---

[oOoOoooo; a hiss; wagging their finger at Listener]

You're doing it--- You're baiting me on purpose, but you know what? I'm not going to fall for it.

...

... *[A couple beats of stewing in silence; "I'm letting it go..."]*

...

[Can't take it; Immediately falls for it]

(blurting; can't hold it back any more)

It's *Evangelion* and you know it. "Eva", as in "*Ava*". "gelion" with a "g".

"g".

This is *just* like when you kept saying the "x" in---

...

Wow. You really... wow.

You know, just for that I'm going to be pausing to explain all the lore, inspiration, behind the scenes trivia as *well* as point out the similarities and differences in narratives between the 1995 original and 2000s rebuilds every 10 minutes or so.

The *entire* time :)

...

[Laugh]

Yeah, yeah.

Love you too, Hawke.

****Script End****

Halo will return...