HALO WINS

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INT. PUMPKIN - DAY

Slimy orange inside.

A family of earthworms, MOM, DAD, GAS, CHRISTINA and ZEKE gathered for a family meeting. All are at places except for Gas who--

Meanders around, exploring, in and out the slimy holes.

DAD
All comfy? Next stop is garden.
Soil! I can’t wait. Gas, keep close, we don’t wanna loose you.

GAS
Dad, what if they decide to eat this pumpkin?

DAD
Gas, it’s Halo Wins, they don’t eat pumpkins, they make halos from them.
Now to the lesson. People--

Gas, Christina and Zeke respond in sync, Christina and Zeke sound ready and excited, Gas - bored.

KIDS
--People are the enemy.

DAD
What kind?

KIDS
The one you never fight but avoid.

DAD
What do we do if they look straight at us?

CHRISTINA AND ZEKE ONLY
Pretend we are snakes to scare them away.

They wriggle and writhe to resemble snakes.

Dad nods content.

ZEKE
Have you seen my latest move?
Zeke coils up in the most cool way. Straightens up, swift.

CHRISTINA
Wow! That’s cool.

GAZ
You guys are stupid.

He crawls up to Dad.

GAS
Dad, I think we need to plan for emergency.

DAD
You think? We can’t think. Remember, worms have no brains.

Gas looks down, and as he does, his face is just as featureless as his tail end.

GAS
I have a brain.

DAD
Gas, turn around, I wanna see your face when I’m talking to you.

GAS
You are talking to my face.

DAD
Oh, is it the face? See! It’s hard enough to tell the face and the rear end apart, much less to suspect brain in one.

Tears appear in the corners of Gas’ eyes.

MOM
Look what you’ve done.

She drags her body up to Gas, embracing him as tightly as her armless body allows. Rubs her face against Gasses.

MOM
Dad is just being silly. We may not have a brain but we all know that YOU’RE special. Brainy... and...

DAD
--Feminine... I mean... We’re not sure about your gender really.
Dad senses that he said too much, bites his lip and scuds aside under Mom’s glare.

MOM
What’s the matter with you? Don’t listen to him, Gas. A worm’s gender is often a puzzle...

Christine and Zeke titter, point to each other.

CHRISTINA AND ZEKE
You got ours straight.

Gas bolts for the nearest hole, hiding, distressed.

The pumpkin begins to shake.

DAD
Oh, they are about to unload.

EXT. ANGEL’S HOUSE - DAY

The truck pulls at the curb, human MOTHER and human FATHER step out.

Their children, REBECCA, 4, SID, 10, and ANGEL, 8, run up to the truck loaded with an assortment of candy and pumpkins.

Rebecca is lovely, Sid is a wimpy kind, dressed as a pirate and Angel – a chubby redhead, Jan Brady type, in an angel outfit – the least becoming for her, with a halo on her head.

Kids BUZZ delighted. Angel grabs a pumpkin.

ANGEL
I love this one. Let’s have this one inside, huh?

MOTHER
Okay, honey. Whatever you want.

Angel squeals with pleasure, skips towards the house, hugging the pumpkin tight to her chest. Bangs on it, happy.

Sid and Rebecca run behind.
INT. PUMPKIN - DAY

ANGEL (O.C.)
(sotto)
This one goes inside, this one goes inside...

Sprawled on her back, Mom BREATHEs, as the kids and Dad hold her down, consoling.

DAD
In and out. In and out. It’s okay. “Inside” is not as bad as it sounds.

The worms wince and pant, reacting to Angel’s banging.

Mom’s belly looks slightly bloated. Dad notices.

DAD
Is this gas? I mean gas - gas, not our Gas... I mean not an egg with another Gas in it...

ZEKE
Hehehe. They thought Mom was passing gas when Gas’ egg came out.

Zeke laughs. Mom rolls her eyes.

Gas stares, bitter realization registers.

GAS
It’s true, isn’t it? That explains my name.

Dad diverts his eyes. Mom throws Dad and Zeke a reprimanding look.

Gas spins towards Zeke with an angry GRUNT. Huffs and puffs, ready to hit him.

Dad sprouts between them.

DAD
Guys, guys. We ain’t got time for this.

Gas pulls himself together.

GAS
Sorry, I guess. Dad, maybe we should start thinking how to--
DAD
--Thinking again? We have no brains.

The children’s voices are heard inside the pumpkin.

ANGEL (O.C.)
On the table, perhaps.

Worms trade glances – their fear grows by the minute.

GAS
Dad, start working on a hole for us to get out.

Panicking, Dad obeys, nibbling on a pumpkin, working through it fast.

Gas glances at the seeds. Stuffs his mouth with them.

MOM
Gas, these may kill you, stop.

Gas disregards. Starts swallowing. When--

BAM

INT. ANGEL’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY
The pumpkin hits the table.
Angel places it in the middle.

The room is dim and ghostly, overly decorated for Halloween.
A bird cage, with an old SQUAWKY, the parrot, stands in a corner.

Squawky squawks. Angel hisses him down.

Sid and Rebecca follow, hands full of candy. Angel snatches some, decorates around the pumpkin.

Her eyes widen as a tip of Dad’s head emerges out.

ANGEL
Oh, look. What can it be?

Squawky squawks, no less excited.

As Dad’s head completely forms out, Sid grabs it with his two fingers and pulls Dad out.
SID
Whoa, it's a worm. Stupid warm. I know, let’s fry it. They did in that movie...

Angel catches his hand and presses on it until Sid releases Dad. Angel pushes Sid aside.

ANGEL
It’s mine.

Her attention switches to Dad.

ANGEL
Look at him. He’ll be perfect for my collection.

INT. PUMPKIN - DAY
The worms gape at Dad being pulled out of the pumpkin.
Petrifying silence, then... Gas mans up. Heads out.

GAS
The only way to survive is to stick together.

Excited, Zeke follows.

ZEKE
Let’s show them the snakes!

INT. ANGEL’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY
Kids watch the worms one by one glide out.
The worms writhe and wriggle.

SID
Oh, look, the stupid worms are dancing. Break-dancing. Never seen anything that stupid.

Angel frowns. Sid squirms under Angel’s glare.

Angel baby-talks to the worms.

ANGEL
Wait till you meet Robin, my lizard. She’s lovely. Let me bring her.
She runs out of the room.

Sid squints. Forming an evil idea.

He walks up to Squawky. Opens the cage. Squawky produces the happiest squawk and shoots towards the worms.

Angel appears with a glass container filled with soil.

    ANGEL
    Noooo...

Angel drops the container which breaks. Robin, the green lizard, appears. Sneaks away.

Fast, Gas spews up the seeds.

Squawky lands on a table, pauses, deciding which worm to grab first. Dark orange pumpkin seeds appeal to him and he goes for one.

Angel leaps towards the table, just in time – Squawky is about to start on Gas. She grabs Squawky by the neck.

    ANGEL
    You really getting on my nerves.
    (to Gas, in baby-talk)
    Oh, look at you, you’re scared aren’t you? Oh, look... I’ll call you Isolda.

Sid gets away from her immediately. Squawky gawks at her.

Angel’s eyes glimmer with suspicion. Sid winces with fear.

    SId
    Mom, mom, mother. Angel’s scaring me. Mom.

    MOTHER (O.S.)
    Play nice, Okay.

TABLE

Zeke laughs.

    ZEKE
    Isolda, a girl name. I’ll call you Isolda too.

Gas jerks towards Zeke. Butts him right in the stomach with his head.
GAS
Try it once. Just once.

BACK TO CHILDREN

Angel watches the worms’ grapple.

ANGEL
What do you know, Isolda, you’re just like me. A born fighter.

Excited, she accidentally loosens grip of Squawky who slides his head out, pecking on the table immediately, hot in pursuit of Gas.

Gas scuds aside. The next peck will definitely get him.

Angel’s hand dashes for Squawky. She seizes him right on time.

ANGEL
Say goodbye, evil bird.

Her grip tightens. CRACK. Squawky’s neck breaks.

His head hangs to the side. Angel’s lips curl into an evil grin.

Rebecca quietly cries. Sid freezes scared, mouth agape.

TABLE

GAS
Whew! The crazy girl saved us. Look at her halo – she must really be getting into all this Halo Win mood.

DAD
Son, watch your grammar. It’s Halo Wins, not Halo Win.

Gas peers at Angel. Ducks under one of the seeds and lifts it. The seed on his head resembles a halo.

BACK TO CHILDREN

Angel notices, stares.

ANGEL
She’s just like me. She likes angel stuff.

She shows off her new costume to Gas. Readjusts her halo.
Sid turns around, searching for mom. Backs a few steps away from Angel.

SID
Mom. Angel just killed Squawky and is talking to worms now. She’s crazy.

Mother appears. Checks on Squawky.

MOTHER
What’s going on? Rebecca, what happened? Squawky is not well?

Rebecca stops crying.

REBECCA
Squawky was eating pumpkin seeds when Angel...

MOTHER
Oh, poor Squawky. He choked on the seeds. These are deadly for him.

She takes Squawky away to the kitchen.

MOTHER (O.S.)
We’ll have a ceremony for him. But only after the FESTIVAL, okay.

As soon as Mother is out of sight, Angel flashes a clenched fist at Sid.

TABLE
Gas’ mom gives Gas a hug.

MOM
Poor you. That bird almost got you.

DAD
Hey, Gas, take that stupid thing off your head.

He knocks the seed off of Gas’ head. Gas ducks under the seed, getting it on his head again.

GAS
Dad, you don’t understand. She likes this.

He dashes for Zeke and pounds him in the stomach.
GAS
Sorry Zeke. I’m doing this for us.

His mom frowns at first, then her face wises up.

MOM
I know what he’s doing. We’ll explain it to you all later. For now, just go with it. Please.

BACK TO CHILDREN

Angel’s face cringe in awe. She claps her hands when Gas pounds Zeke in the stomach.

ANGEL
You’re my hero, Isolda.

She points at Gas’ mom.

ANGEL
And I’ll call you Tristan.

TABLE

MOM
See, she’s got us all wrong.

Mom and Gas share a happy laugh.

BACK TO CHILDREN

One by one Angel picks up the worms.

ANGEL
If you’re anything like me you need your freedom.

She steps out to the backyard.

Sid and Rebecca watch her from the living room. They see her release the worms and talk to them.

SID
She’s cra-zy! And evil. E-vil.

As Angel becomes very animated with the worms:

REBECCA
And angelic. Look how good she’s with them. A true angel.

Sid sneers, squints at Rebecca. Steps away from her. Just in case.
EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Dad, Mom, Zeke an Christina dig deep into the soil.

The last one to be set free is Gas.

He rests on Angel’s hand. She brings her hand close to the soil.

ANGEL
Bye, little darling. Love you.

Gas ducks under a tiny piece of leaf, lifting his head, balancing the leaf on his head.

Angel laughs. Tears in her eyes.

ANGEL
Never thought worms were smart. But you are, I know you are. And... I think I can see your eyes. You’re looking at me aren’t you? Yes, you do, yes, you do. Bye, little one. Bye, bye, you’re free to go.

Gas digs into the soil.

Angel rises, walks back inside the house. The door squeaks shut behind her.

Gas lifts his head, looks after her.

Dad, his mouth very much at work, stumbles upon Gas.

DAD
Oh, Gas. I guess you saved us. Thank you. And... maybe some worms do have a brain. I think YOU do, the way you saved us and all... Awesome, son... Daughter... whoever you are...

Dad digs back into the soil busily. Gas rubs his brain.

GAS
Dad? Dad? Halo won. It’s halo that set us free.

DAD
It’s Halo Wins, not Halo Won, Gas.

GAS
I mean halo won - as in ‘won Angel over’. Oh, what’s the point. Dad? Dad?
Dad is busy, munching. Annoyed, he lifts his head. Again.

DAD
What now?

GAS
...Call me Isolda, Dad.

DAD
Will do... Isolda. Honey. Love you no matter how weird... Hmm... Now let’s eat, shall we.

INT. ANGEL’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Angel wanders around, her eyes on the floor. Sid sticks closer to the kitchen. Rebecca explores the pumpkin.

ANGEL
Anyone seen Robin, the dart lizard?

SID
Huh? Dart? Dart as in ‘dart frog’?

The lizard tickles Sid’s foot. Angel grabs it fast by its tail.

Sid turns pale. Slides down, down, down and falls quietly on the floor.

Angel grins. Rebecca quietly cries.

REBECCA
Mom, I think Sid is not well.

ANGEL
Yeah, mom. Can we have a ceremony for Sid too? I mean after the FESTIVAL?

FADE OUT.