

# **Metroid Prime 4: Story, Theories, Critique**

December 29, 2025

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This paper discusses the narrative of *Metroid Prime 4*, discusses some theories on the plot, and provides my own critique of this game. Note that I have not read any other critique at the time of writing this, so I may get some things wrong or overlook other things!



## Narrative

I generally start my video game critique essays by first examining the narrative -- after all, the games I tend to favor are ones with strong narratives; I am often enamored by games like *System Shock 2* and *Deus Ex* solely on the grounds of their strong narrative, and was attracted to the Metroid Prime series for the same reason. So, then, allow me to expound on this unusual game!

The game starts out in the same vane as the Planet Norion sequence from Metroid Prime 3: you are thrust into a world at war, dodging Space Pirate forces as they try to shoot down both you and your Galactic Federation comrades.<sup>1</sup> You eventually manage to land on the planet Tanamaar, right in front of the UTO Research Center. The battle is thick, and Gal Fed soldiers are going down left and right. As you trudge through the facility (most definitely using your Scan Visor, which seems to be able to scan way more than it could in the predecessor games), you see not only the Pirates' implements of combat, but also the Gal Fed's own: massive mechs, advanced ground and sky weaponry, and more. Your battle is somewhat fierce until you make it to the Hangar room at the end of your trajectory.

With a blast and a shock, none other than Sylux enters!<sup>2</sup>

Sylux is a troubled figure from the world of Cylosis. Though he would become one of the fiercest bounty hunters in the known world, his origins were rather quaint: he started out as a Gal Fed Marine. He had achieved a high enough rank to command a decently-large unit of Marines into battle against some Space Pirates -- this would be the battle that broke him. You see, the Pirates were not ill-prepared or flailing around as they usually are; this time, they had a new advanced weapon. When the Pirates activated their new weapon, it totally obliterated Sylux's unit!

His commander ordered him to originally wait for Samus Aran to arrive (carrying with her some very-needed reinforcements), but he blew off that order... as a result, he faced a near-death scenario. Eventually, Samus would arrive with her reinforcements (consisting of herself and seemingly others), but Sylux had already taken a hit. He managed to survive (along with a few other Marines) by jumping in a hole when the Pirate weapon activated, and Samus tried to help him up; when he did, he slapped his hand away.

Years later, he would find himself reminiscing on the events, still shaking his arms with rage as he sat in the psychic healing pod.

Sylux has arrived at the UTO Research Center for some kind of alien device they seem to have found; it is metallic, and features a metal core. Armed with his tamed Metroids, he fired at the alien device...

Upon the device being damaged, it activates. In a bright flash of lightning, everything stops for a moment; all of a sudden, Samus wakes up (seemingly after a significant amount of time had passed) on the precipice of some alien tower in a desert of some other planet. Upon waking up, she realizes that she has lost most of her items in true Metroid Prime fashion. She tries to use her Scan Visor, but it's useless; it knows nothing about what is here. A strange flying robot comes out to scan her, approves her, and the door blocking her trajectory into the Chrono Tower dematerializes before her.

Upon reaching another room, she is teleported to some other alternate dimension; there, she is greeted by some alien ghosts of some unknown race and collects some kind of crystal. Upon picking it up, she realizes she has acquired a Psychic Stone -- with it, she can interoperate with the alien technology and can now scan the various devices in her environment. In that moment, she realizes that the alien ghosts nearby are talking to her, and refer to her as their Chosen One.<sup>3</sup> She is teleported back to the Chrono Tower and ends up in another room she saw before could not enter;

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<sup>1</sup> I shorten this to "Gal Fed"

<sup>2</sup> Sylux was originally seen in *Metroid Prime Hunters*, but his backstory was not espoused on until this installment of the franchise.

<sup>3</sup> The aliens in this world have an entire language, and refer to her as "shadim halom"

upon scanning the alien statues that line the edge of a chasm, the name of the alien species is revealed: *Lamorn*. After activating an elevator and riding to the pinnacle of Chrono Tower, she is given knowledge by Chatoyant Vooloon, the last surviving priest of the Lamorn. Sadly, they tell us that all of the Lamorn cease to exist; they give us a mission: to carry the knowledge and story of the Lamorn to another world via way of the Master Teleporter located above her -- its activation requires five keys scattered across the world.

Upon touching a ball of light the statue that played the psychic recording emitted, she is teleported to some form of jungle: Fury Green. She is to acquire a teleporter key here at the Garden of Remembrance, but is interrupted by several things. First, she notices a massive tree in the distance -- scanning it reveals that it has absorbed massive quantities of psychic information. She runs into some kind of Gal Fed distress signal, and it leads her to some wreckage teleported to Viewros (along with the rest of the base) by the sudden activation of the artifact: there, she finds Myles MacKenzie, a Gal Fed engineer. The two venture towards the Great Tree, and find themselves in a temple; after clearing it of Grievers (which will be explained later), the two set up a base camp in a room with some alien data system. Just before that room, Samus and MacKenzie encounter an “old” Gal Fed mech, whose name was presumably Betsy and either maintained or piloted by MacKenzie.

Samus progresses through the temple and eventually makes it to the Garden of Remembrance; she fights a boss (Carvex, very reminiscent of Flaahgra from *Metroid Prime 1*) and acquires a Teleporter Key. She ventures to another area, but encounters a Green Energy Crystal along the way: these crystals contain large amounts of teratogens and therefore interfere with cellular growth (perhaps in a good way, or perhaps in a bad way; at the time of the initial scan, it is not yet revealed what the significance of these crystals is or why they should be collected). Back within the temple, she activates a device that consumes those Green Energy Crystals to grow something called a *memory fruit*, and this is the thing that carries the entirety of the Lamorn experience. She finishes circling back through the temple at the base of the tree and activates a cargo pod launcher.

The cargo pod launcher misfires, resulting in her being dropped into the desert outside Chrono Tower somewhere; it is not clear if she can go anywhere (she can), but she chooses to go forward to another statue. There, she learns of Vi-O-La, a neural-interface bike apparatus the Lamorn built in the Machine Era; the various scans to that point hint at there being three eras:

- The Ancient Era, before any technology
- The Machine Era, started by the creation of Vi-O-La and many other machines
- The Psychic Era, when the supply of nature<sup>4</sup> was running out

She opens some kind of transit tube (after fighting some robots from Chrono Tower and entering the maintenance era to get inside the transit tube), and begins running towards the endpoint. Once she arrives, she finds herself amongst the stormclouds she once saw in the giant crater back in the desert; three large towers are visible in the distance. Volt Forge is the factory for Vi-O-La, but everything has been powered down. She will need to progress to the big tower to get the Key, but is being stopped by a lack of power; fortunately, the entire facility runs on lightning for an electrical supply.

After MacKenzie briefs Samus on the objective, she enters an elevator and observes that it is powered not by some conventional means of generating electricity, but instead collects lightning strikes on two lightning rods. She activates it, and proceeds to trudge through the deactivated factory; eventually, she makes it to the generator floor (which sticks out on the side of the building). There, she must move a lightning collection apparatus into position.

After activating the collector and dodging the jets of electricity travelling up the long lightning rod, Samus fights a miniboss and proceeds up through the now-activated factory. There, she can gain the Vi-O-La suit to use a Vi-O-La, and proceed to the second tower.

The second tower is more of the same, although the tower is mainly used for storage instead of manufacturing. The second tower is filled with battles all throughout, but Samus can see outside of the elevator shaft as she goes deeper; there appear to be several

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<sup>4</sup> energy

density-layers of storm clouds around the Volt Forge, all providing enough cloud volume to elucidate plentiful lightning strikes.

After activating the second tower's generator, she is ambushed by what appears to be Sylux, but is actually a Psy-Bot mimicking him.<sup>5</sup> Once making it to the top, she can proceed to the third (big) tower. After scanning the map hologram at the top of the third tower, she takes an elevator down into the facility. This tower is a test and certification building, and she must now complete several Vi-O-La test drive trials; these include maneuvers and vehicular combat sequences. At the bottom, she finds a hole has been blown open in the side of a wall to a lower level. Upon entering that, Samus battles Xelios.

Upon collecting the resultant item it drops, Samus returns back to Sol Valley. There, she is faced with a crossroads of choice of places that are now accessible to her:

1. Ice Belt, a frozen mountain far off in the distance containing some kind of research lab
2. Flare Pool, a smoldering volcano with a hazy background containing some kind of power plant
3. Great Mines, marked by a large drilling apparatus in the distance that might first evoke memories of the Vesper Defense Outpost from *Metroid Prime Hunters*

After trudging into Ice Belt and realizing she cannot progress until she acquires some way of removing a large amount of ice, Samus goes to Flare Pool. She cannot progress very far due to her needing some form of upgrade (the game is so on-the-nose about this that a non-diagetic message of "upgrade required to traverse lava" is shown when you attempt to cross a lava chasm). Alas, she diverts to the side of the entry path -- a room with some kind of thermal cutting laser that she salvages a Fire Chip from. After taking this chip to MacKenzie, she gains the Fire Shot alternate fire mode; with this, she is now able to return to Ice Belt.

As she makes the drive across the Sol Valley desert, Upon exiting from Fury Green after gaining her new upgrade, she notes that something shoots off in the

distance, flashes green, and it then begins raining a green rain. This is a *Green Energy Shower*, and these were responsible for the strengthening and evolution of the existing Grievers (as well as the strengthening of the other animals in the Valley). She encroaches on the frozen wasteland as the storm subsides; after taking the transport apparatus to her destination, she clears the ice blockage and progresses outside to a clearing. There, she encounters a pack of Snow Wolves encircling her: this battle seems unbeatable, until a gun turret in the distance activates by some unknown means and clears out the wolves.

After venturing into the facility, she gains entry into the room where the gun turret is controlled. There, she finds Reger Tokabi; she acquires the area map by scanning the console.<sup>6</sup> She goes down a floor by way of a staircase seemingly carrying some kind of cryopods on a conveyor system, scanning these reveals that they are carrying some form of preserved lifeform. The entire place is severely frozen, and mostly everything is out-of-operation with the main generator being offline -- it is this that is the focus of her first prerequisite objective. The eerie and atmospheric journey through the frozen lab's first sublevel reveals that there are not only no enemies to be seen, but a record recorded by Tahrguh of something called "**The Great Tragedy**."

As Samus progresses through the facility and gradually downwards, she can collect more of these scan logs up until the generator room, revealing the following:

- The Great Tragedy seemed to coincide with the holographic recording outside of Ice Belt's story, wherein the Lamorn priest tells that the Lamorn individuals that gained psychic abilities through the implantation of a Psychic Crystal in their forehead became monsters during the first Green Energy shower
- Green Energy was tried as a treatment scheme for the mutated Lamorn (who have become the Grievers) to no avail
- The lab is frozen because the main generator has stopped, rendering many electronics inoperative
- Any experiments the researchers wish to perform must be done so while the patient is fully reconsti-

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<sup>5</sup> This shows up again in Volt Forge during a revisit.

<sup>6</sup> The map displayed on the console is both visually corrupted and slightly different from the actual area layout

tuted and not frozen, so proper sedation is a requirement

- The Grievers are completely natural, and the researchers discovered that Green Energy modulated the function of an unused region of the brain; the Green Energy itself did not cause any genetic alterations, but the stimulation of the brain region did<sup>7</sup>
- The researchers discovered that, to the above point, they had synthetically pushed the Lamorn down one of several evolutionary pathways; as such, they evolved and engineered their own extinction
- Any attempts of gene modification were not productive and only resulted in further damage to the specimens (and worse, instant reversions)

After getting the Psychic Grapple Lasso upgrade, Samus proceeds through the rest of the lab. She encounters a room with some cryopods that were used to hold specimens that had experiments performed on them, and some of the cases are broken open -- an otherworldly noise can be heard emitting from them. Further progression leads her to a chamber containing a Balsallae System that was capable of performing autopsies and surgeries.<sup>8</sup>

While Samus explores the lab for TK Code fragments to remove a Psychic Lock in the lab area, she eventually defeats the lock and makes it to the generator. Restarting it requires the use of the Psychic Beam, but once activated... a challenge presents itself, and a formidable one at that.

When Samus returns through the lab, the entire place is melting. The room before the generator allows Samus to see a recording of the last-ditch attempt (described earlier) to save the Lamorn species, but its playback would have been better-suited when the lab was powered down. Tokabi notes that a security alarm has been triggered when Samus crosses the frozen

chasm, and upon entering a room with cryopods along the wall, the newly-warmed lab gives birth to a massive army of Grievers. These have lost their skin pigmentation from the cryo-preservation fluid in the tanks, and are more aggressive than the Jungle Grievers seen back in Fury Green. The escaped cryopods emit otherworldly sounds as Samus passes by them, and ends up defeating all of their contents.

Tokabi radios Samus to tell her that the Grievers are in the walls!<sup>9</sup>

Struggling with a lack of ammunition resources, Samus ends up falling back to her Charge Beam to combat the foes; their quick movement allows them to dodge her missiles and Fire Shot rounds. Racing against the Grievers trying to break into Tokabi's safety point, she traverses some narrow passageways adjacent to the cryopod conveyor all while Grievers eventually make their way into Tokabi's position.

Samus activates the elevator at the top of the labs and can proceed down to the lowest level of the facility. She blows open the gate, and inside is Keratos. A quick dispatch of the crusty creature gives her Psychic Boost Ball, and a return up the elevator reunites her with Tokabi. After crossing the chasm with a Boost Ball-powered cannon, she finds herself back in the entry area.<sup>10</sup>

She drops a cryopod on the floor that just so happens to have its control circuitry exposed, and she collects the apparatus responsible for its cryogenic capabilities: the Ice Chip; MacKenzie turns it into a useful device for her suit, and she gains Ice Shot. She can now freeze a lava fall at Flare Pool, so that's where she goes.

Sadly, her trajectory is still blocked by the lava-encrusted chasm! However, with her new Boost Ball ability, she can return to the Volt Forge to gain a Vi-O-La upgrade (by, naturally, activating a Boost Ball spinner in Tower 3's lobby; Tower 3 is the big one).

<sup>7</sup> The Earth biology parallels are impressive, to the tune of life on Viewros functioning seemingly the same way: oxygenated atmosphere, chromosomes that pack DNA, gene transcription and protein synthesis pathways, and evolution are all present on this strange alien world (this raises questions about some kind of time-loop theory and what caused the evolution of Viewros to occur such that it is hospitable to Earth life)

<sup>8</sup> A view of this machine operating can be seen after the generator has been reactivated, wherein some Lamorn researchers try (for the last time) to restore a Griever by injecting it with refined Green Energy, to no avail

<sup>9</sup> This is a reference to *Aliens*, wherein Apone and Hicks exclaim that the aliens are coming out of the walls

<sup>10</sup> The ball cannon seen here is seen again later, and is approximately identical to the ones seen on the pods in Skytown, Elysia

While there, she collects several other ancillary items and the Vi-O-La IC Suit. Finally, she can cross the lava chasm.

The IC Suit transfigures her Vi-O-La bike into a flying apparatus that can sit above lava indefinitely -- its thermal insulation prevents the scalding of the rider. Flare Pool is some kind of factory where they pump Green Energy out of the lava -- it originates down deep within the planet, but rarely comes to the surface unless pumped. Since the Lamorn wish to distribute it across the landscape of Sol Valley to reinvigorate it with life, they have opted to build an energy facility that fills massive cannon capsules with Green Energy liquid; the capsules, upon being launched into the sky, open up over Sol Valley and cause a Green Energy Shower.<sup>11</sup>

Within a room off to the side, she meets Ezra Duke: he got trapped in the control room when the teleporter activated, but could not escape due to the only way out being blocked by a boiler that Samus disables using her Boost Ball. Duke tells Samus that Nora Armstrong is trapped in one of the mount legs of the cannon; they must traverse the facility and arrive at these legs through way of a transport gondola.

As usual, there's always some kind of obstacle. After an elevator ride, Sylux activates the bots in the area with a psychic control signal; this same control signal is picked up by Samus, causing her to have a dissociative flashback to Sylux's past.<sup>12</sup>

Alas, her and Duke fight through the bots and eventually make it to Armstrong's position. When Armstrong meets Samus, she is a total fangirl!

On the return route via the gondola, a psy-bot transporter damages the transport; the trio crash-lands in the landing after cranking it to maximum speed. Surviving all of that, they return back to the ground floor where they entered -- the trio must now face the troop transport commandeered by Sylux. After the transport is destroyed, Samus drops into the area under the cannon to fight Pheneoros.

Samus battles this boss entirely on the upgraded Vi-O-La IC vehicle, and ends up "donating" it to the creature where it explodes. During the battle, Duke

and Armstrong are trying to stabilize the facility after disconnecting the cannon from its mounts. Samus acquires the Psychic Boost Ball from the ordeal, but neither Gal Fed soldier can stabilize the facility. Samus grapples her way up to the control in a timed escape sequence, and eventually makes her way up to it -- sadly, she cannot activate the escape pod automatically and escape with the other two, so she launches the escape pod and manages to somehow survive the energy plant's massive blast. Just as the place explodes, Samus rockets out on her bike while the place is irreparably destroyed.

Samus returns once more to Volt Forge; at the bottom of Tower 1, there is an inaccessible control room that she can access if she uses her grapple. Upon entering the lowest level of the tower, she observes the power-storage equipment for the factory -- bolts of lightning fill the room as the smell of ozone makes the place inhospitable to normal life. One of the power cells is nonoperational, and she can remove a Thunder Chip that made the device function. It disconnects from the lightning feeder, and none other than Sylux appears!

Just like the previous encounter, this too is a Psy-Bot mimicking Sylux -- this is given away by the insinuation that the bot itself was blocking Samus's ability to scan it with her Psychic Visor. With that ability gained with the help of MacKenzie, she is now free to return to Ice Belt to acquire Psychic Spider Ball. She does this by activating a Shock Blocker door lock, and encounters something interesting in the Equipment Storage room of the lab.

She notices some Gal Fed technology in the room, and a scan reveals that it is a Gal Fed Battle Android with the designation VUE-995. Its battery has 58% charge left, and it can be activated by either manually flipping the startup switch or with an electric shock. Samus takes the latter of the two, and the bot awakens. He realizes that Samus not only has a new suit, but is naturally allied with her; he notices that there are no control signals from the UTO Research Center base, but is unaware of what happened.

With VUE's help, Samus breaks through some barriers and is able to journey out to some Lamorn ruins behind the lab. There, she learns once again of what

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<sup>11</sup> As stated before, this is what caused the conversion of the psychic-crystal-implanted Lamorn into the Grievers; the Flare Pool operators noted that there were issues with Green Energy purity and quantity, but pushed forwards anyways.

<sup>12</sup> This scene can be viewed in full if the player completes the game with 100% completion

happened to the Lamorn people and activates another statue; activating it gives her the Psychic Spider Ball and allows her to make an escape.

She can now use this ability to cross the massive deactivated bridge leading to the Great Mines; all of the other Gal Fed soldiers opted to come with her, so she activates the bridge to give them entry. The group makes it across the gap and activates the elevator, but it has yet to arrive.

Tokabi looks off into the distance with his helmet-mounted scope and sees tons of second-generation Sand Grievers inbound -- the squad would have to hold them off.<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately, VUE has a rocket launcher that can fire a volley of rockets! VUE and Tokabi stay back on the surface to prevent the Grievers from going down into the mines, but their ride down was blocked by the activation of a security system that braked the elevator to a standstill.

The trio exits the elevator and arrives at some kind of control room, wherein they get a real-time map of the facility courtesy of an ultrasound-based mapping system. To progress down through the mines, the trio has to bore a hole in the ground; sadly, activating it transmits tremendous vibration through the facility, naturally, summoning an army of Grievers to the task. Any time Samus uses her missiles, the shock of the impact results in the shrieks of the Grievers echoing through the mines.

Armstrong and Duke hold off the Grievers long enough for Samus and one of the two (Armstrong) to progress downwards through the facility; Duke stays behind to take out the army of Grievers.<sup>14</sup>

Alas, Samus and Armstrong power through the second layer of the mines; Samus must use her missiles to clear some Broyrall Ore, but that attracts Grievers due to the massive audio incurred by the crystal's explosion. The mine Grievers crawl out of the ground (somehow) and nearly overrun the duo as they progress through the mines, and they eventually make it to a room where they must utilize a rock-cutting machine to progress.

When Armstrong drives the very noisy rock cutter, Samus holds off the Grievers; just as the cut is made, Samus egresses out of the kill-chamber and Armstrong is buried inside. She, too, is presumed to be lost as a result of this. On her own, Samus proceeds down to the third layer of the mine -- there is nobody but her to help her out, or so she thinks. After working through a tight turn in the elevator shaft, she returns to the caves; not too long after opening the door, she rounds the corner of another room filled with a crystal deposit to see a Maul Griever cocoon. This cocoon holds an "unusually large being," and it appears to have absorbed Green Energy from the cave system somehow.

The cocoon busts open, revealing a Maul Griever Brute... this creature is 10 times stronger than any brute she has encountered thus far. During the battle, the loud noises emitted by the creature summon not only tons of Grievers to aid the big creature, but also VUE; he blows down a door, enters hand-to-hand combat with the brute, and kills it. Some Koornicite Ore blocks the exit, VUE destroys it to allow Samus to continue.

After all of the commotion fighting the brute, the two find a somewhat-quiet room where, presumably, blast mining was performed by a machine bearing a Super Missile apparatus did the work. Samus knocks it to the floor, fights off Grievers from the noise, and collects the item; with it, she can return to the earlier kill-chamber and blow the ore deposit away.

The two continue their fighting through the mines (now on the 4th depth level) where they encounter another brute (while VUE attempts to remove a blockage). The brute glue him in place, so Samus must dispatch the creature on her own. With that out of the way, they proceed... until they are overwhelmed by Grievers at a cliffside. VUE tells Samus to morph, and he throws her across the gap. VUE takes heavy damage from the ensuing combat sequence, but ultimately survives.<sup>15</sup>

At this point, Samus is on the final leg of the journey. At the base of the great elevator back to the surface, Samus lowers a barrier to witness something rather

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<sup>13</sup> "Second-generation" refers to these Grievers being energized by a second Green Energy shower

<sup>14</sup> Stay tuned.

<sup>15</sup> At the expense of losing an arm, which MacKenzie repairs

intimidating. A massive cocoon, much larger than anything seen yet, lies on the other side of the door; Green Energy streaks line the floor leading towards the final boss for the area.<sup>16</sup> The hallway leading to the kill-chamber is lined with not only the liquid, but freshly-cut Viewros Crystals: these were the crystals, dug out at this deepest portion of the world, that gave the Lamorn their non-natural-born psychic abilities. A Save Station just off the path has an entire wall made of these Viewros Crystals, and they can be seen lodged in a delivery pipe.

Samus battles the Omega Maul Griefer and eventually acquires not only the Psychic Power Bomb, but the final teleporter key in the process. This creature, though, is so fierce that its tongue has a mouth on it!

<sup>17</sup> After picking up the key, she returns to MacKenzie's base camp to formulate a plan. She has three tasks to do before the squad can blow the force field down on Chrono Tower:

1. Acquire any and all ammunition/energy pickups she needs beforehand
2. Collect Gal Fed combat mech parts scattered throughout the Sol Valley desert and a few other locations
3. Secure the Memory Fruit, which will contain the entire summated story and history of the Lamorn and their trials, tribulations, and successes

Samus must now drive around Sol Valley and harvest those Green Energy crystals.<sup>18</sup>

While on the hunt, she visits various Gal Fed debris sites to teleport (by way of small teleporter patches that MacKenzie fashioned up from Lamorn technology) the various mech parts into place. Once the mech is assembled, Samus returns to the hall where a machine that deposits Green Energy into the Great Tree lies; upon depositing enough Green Energy to grow the Memory Fruit, it materializes in the machine and she is free to carry it to a new world. In the

process of collecting the fruit, it bonds to her suit and gives her an upgrade: the Legacy Suit.

Some of the mech suit pieces are rather hard to acquire; one is in a storage room underneath the entry of Flare Pool, and must use her newfound upgrade (Super Missile) to even access the room. Furthermore, she must defeat the Behemoth miniboss to acquire the part safely.<sup>19</sup>

With all of the parts in place and the fruit acquired, Duke comes up with a plan. VUE controls the mech suit, and the others arrive on a truck (not unlike those seen in Ice Belt and the Great Mines). VUE's exosuit cannot output the maximum amount of power required to shatter the force field, but he overdraws the supply and the mech suit blows up. Alas, VUE is fine and the force field is blown away from the tower.

Upon riding up on the tower elevator, the squad finds themselves in a position where only Samus can operate the tower's equipment. On the ground floor, a statue plays a recording produced by the same priest at the start of the game. They tell us that the twelve Lamorn who were sent to locate Samus have not returned, but not even they know if Samus is there to listen to them. The final Lamorn to live tells Samus of the dire straits of the situation, of how little hope there is, and the squad proceeds with the flying Guardians.

The main elevator is unshrouded by a psychic control. At the top, enough time has elapsed for the weather of Viewros to change to a rather overcast day, and it appears that the sun is setting. Samus materializes a Psychic Spider Ball Rail, and she manages to make it into the pinnacle that holds the Master Teleporter. Inside the pinnacle, there are several psychic healing chambers... one of which is occupied.<sup>20</sup>

The pinnacle opens and the Master Teleporter docks on the ground of the top; the healing pods also land on the ground. Samus proceeds to the Master Teleporter, and installs the keys. The control console pops up

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<sup>16</sup> I say it's Green Energy, but it could just as well be blood; the blood color of these Grievers is not outright stated

<sup>17</sup> This, too, is likely an *Alien* reference; the Xenomorphs of that series have jaws that extend from within their outer jaw for a two-nested-mouth solution

<sup>18</sup> Yes, this will be discussed later in the "Criticism" sections

<sup>19</sup> Really? They couldn't think of a better name?

<sup>20</sup> Sylux is in this one, and this is what is seen in the flashback sequences where Sylux appears connected to something at the end

while the Teleporter rotates vertically; Samus tries to select a destination, but is met with a psychic hallucination wherein Sylux slaps her hand down before looking down at his present-day hands. The healing pod opens, and Sylux bursts out.

Sylux has commandeered the nanotechnology of Chrono Tower as well as three (which turns into more than that) nano arms that connected him to the healing pod; these transfigure into dragon heads that operate with the three elemental powers Samus has acquired up to this point (fire, ice, and lightning). Samus weakens Sylux enough that he has to resort to creating a portal to some alternate dimension. While flying through the interdimensional space, Samus must dodge his lasers and gradually wear his health down.

The exit to the dimensional-travel tube opens, and Samus is deposited in a world of worlds: the sky is dotted with the bubbles of other universes, and the two stand upon a platform that resembles some kind of infinitely-flat 2D accretion disc. During the battle, Sylux creates miniature black holes, and only the Psychic Beam (and, as such, the will of its user) can resist the pull and strike Sylux. By using her weapons, Samus ultimately harms Sylux enough to end the fight. If Samus is ever struck by Sylux in his alternate form, he will gain some Energy Tanks (though, these can be stolen by using the Boost Ball).<sup>21</sup>

Sylux falls off the battle platform (presumably into the interdimensional space below), and Samus uses the same kind of portal to return back to Viewros. She immediately moves to prime the Teleporter with a destination, and the squad sees the Viewros system, its host galaxy, and ultimately the plane of existence they are in (of which there are seven total). She selects the second plane of existence, zooms in on the galaxy and system containing Tannamar, and a solar system that looks remarkably similar to the Viewros system is shown; she selects Tanamaar as the destination, and all is set.

As the Teleporter spins up, not all hope is good. A green light emits from the Teleporter, and it's none other than Sylux. He incapacitates Samus and the Teleporter spins down, and all the Gal Fed soldiers restrain Sylux. Samus activates the Teleporter, and just as she is about to leave, Tokabi throws her a relic of

his past and an honor to his god (Solan). The Gal Fed squad is presumed to have dispatched Sylux.

Back on Tanamar, Samus lands in a foggy place with some green ground. She finds a spot, plants the Memory Fruit, and enhances its growth with her Psychic Crystal. Though Samus loses the Legacy Suit, the Memory Tree proliferates at a stunning rate... and Samus hangs Tokabi's pendant on it.

The last Lamorn manifests in front of her, and the future of the once-magnificent alien race rests entirely in the growth of a tiny tree in a universe totally foreign to their own.

## Narrative Speculation/Criticism

I, personally, found the game to be absolutely terrific, except for a few things. I will discuss these things shortly, but I would like to start beforehand by analyzing the worldbuilding of the planet Viewros, the solidity of the narrative, and give my general thoughts on the matter.

First and foremost, the team at Retro Studios has always been very apt and skilled at crafting convincing alien worlds. The planet of Viewros is, likewise, decently convincing: they're home to an alien race who managed to use their collective brainpower in synchronization (thanks to the psychic abilities they added to themselves), but, just like any alien race who overtaxes their resources (twice over, in fact), they too would fall. The three ages model of Lamorn history is interesting, and the various shrines (of which there are six) that dot the landscape provide an interesting view into not only the Ancient Era of the race's history, but also the complex relationship between the two universes that the game takes place in.

It is my opinion that the authors of the narrative intended there to be some kind of time loop at play here: the future of the Lamorn is dependent entirely on Samus coming to save them (which is why they had the prophecy), but the planet itself also appears to be found in a system that matches the system Tanamaar is in to a staggering degree -- this may just be a simple reuse of a model, but the planets even look similar from a geographical standpoint. The views of Tanamaar all appear to show a world with:

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<sup>21</sup> This alternate form is the Lockjaw, and it is inert to attack

- Gray sandy soil with the same composition as that on Viewros but with a color change (as seen by the smooth blending at the Gal Fed debris sites)
- Sharp cliff-like geography (seen on the edge of the hole Volt Forge is in, as well as all over Sol Valley)
- Possessing early-evolution plant life, whereas Viewros possesses late-evolution plant life
- Both possess a breathable atmosphere that is hospitable to not only Lamorn life but also human life

When Samus plants the Memory Fruit, it will presumably grow into a massive tree later. Depending on how old the Lamorn is, this tree could have had its growth augmented or possibly (as I think to be the case) already been big by the time of the Lamorn's stable evolution, allowing the Lamorn to already access an existing psychic library of information to aid them on their development. After all, they seemed to go from no technology hardly at all to having built the Vi-O-La as their first invention (not to mention having built Volt Forge shortly after to mass-produce the thing). As such, the Lamorn would have evolved to produce a handful of individuals with natural psychic abilities.

Once the Lamorn got a taste for the psychic powers and managed to discover the Viewros Crystals, they began to get ahead of themselves and access more and more of the psychic information stored in the tree (if my theory is correct) -- it is at this point where they build the energy extraction system at Flare Pool in an effort to revitalize the desert of Sol Valley.<sup>22</sup>

Likewise, all of the Gal Fed debris appears to be rather old (at least, the structure that MacKenzie finds himself on is not only old-looking, but it looks like plants have strategically grown around this) -- this hints at an uneven time distribution for the portal arrival, and the humans were the last to arrive. Of course, to teleport across space is to teleport across time in conjunction too. By the time you arrive (going at light speed), a terrific amount of time has passed with respect to your departure; if you travel somewhere faster-than-light, you would have arrived some-

where in the past as the light from the events you have transported yourself to have not yet made their way to your point of departure.

Confused? Good. This is always tricky to explain, but here's one shot at it: our universe is expanding faster-than-light. If you go outwards into space, straight off the ground of Earth, you will never ever make it to the edge of the universe and hit a wall -- the universe is moving away from you faster than you could ever possibly go. If you instantly teleported to some far-off location (like the recently-observed extreme-redshifted galaxies the James Webb Space Telescope has revealed), you would find yourself not only burning up from the denser and hotter universe, but that the sky is also partially opaque; the Epoch of Reionization has yet to fully complete and transparent-ify the universe (or so we think)!<sup>23</sup>

Another interesting point is that the word the Lamorn use for their planet is generically Viewros. In other words, any time they refer to their world (on the subtitles), the word they use is Viewros -- do they not know of any other planet? No, I believe the writers meant this to be used in a generic term like people used to use the word "earth" to refer to ground, and would later know our own planet as the planet Earth.

Throughout the game, Samus fights various bosses that, for some reason, are fused with Metroids -- these creatures are never seen anywhere else except for Sylux carrying them at the UTO Research center. Since it obviously takes time for Sylux to go around and implant Metroids in the boss, this further hints at there being an unequal time distribution at play here.

Furthermore, why is there so much Chozo-adjacent technology seen on Viewros? Was this a simple abstraction of gameplay, or did it have narrative significance? There are two possibilities here:

- The Lamorn travelled to the dimension that Tanamaar and the rest of the known Metroid universe is from with their Master Teleporter, met the Chozo, and exchanged technology

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<sup>22</sup> Was Sol Valley always a desert? I am not sure, and a review of the narrative reveals seemingly-conflicting information on the matter. It is possible that the Lamorn were reading psychic recordings stored in the tree and mistook the jungle of Fury Green for "The Desert," as they understood that they themselves (in a past existence, of course) once inhabited that world but seemingly did not transmit that knowledge orally

<sup>23</sup> Reionization is a cosmological process, examine further on Wikipedia for the significance of this if you are curious.

- The Lamorn have already encountered Samus several times before, and have successively designed technology (bomb slots, spinners, and the Vi-O-La Suit) that works and is compatible with her (after all, she is their saving grace)

The game makes it obvious that Psychic Crystals augment the memory-storage capabilities of the Lamorn (as they can only make the Psychic Recordings if they have the crystal, and therefore the psychic abilities); it is entirely possible that when Samus fertilized the Memory Fruit with her Psychic Crystal, she transmitted the understanding MacKenzie

had of the shot chips (and other Lamorn technology) to the “next generation” on Tanamaar.

The final nail-in-this-coffin for why I believe this theory is correct is because religion in the Metroid Prime series always appears to be some kind of otherworldly force that has a tangible impact on the existence of the Chozo, Luminoth, Alimbics, and now Lamorn. The Chozo seem to not have had any failed prophecies per se, and the Lamorn have succeeded in the same vane. While I do not believe the narrative writers were thinking it through that hard that long ago with Prime 1, I do believe they have put more than a passing thought into it.

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'.EDF#ISIL' WAS IMBEDDED AT LINE 540 OF '.EDF#INIT'
'.EDF#INIT' WAS IMBEDDED AT LINE 360 OF '.EDF#MAIN'
'.EDF#MAIN' WAS IMBEDDED AT LINE 177 OF 'EDFPRF40'
'EDFPRF40' WAS IMBEDDED AT LINE 0 OF 'PRIME4'
STARTING PASS 2 OF 3.
STARTING PASS 3 OF 3.
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