One Girl in All the World

 It has only been a few weeks since the fall of Zebes. The Space Pirates, a race of vile beings who would like nothing more than complete dominion over the galaxy, had set up a base of operations on that planet. I was commissioned by the Galactic Federation to put a halt to their plans; I succeeded with flying colors. My name is Samus Aran, although the Pirates prefer to refer to me as “The Huntress,” or a collection of vulgar alien words. I thought that the fall of Zebes would have sent the Pirates into hiding, at least for a little while. I was wrong, of course, as I found out when I traced a distress call to a derelict space vessel orbiting a strange planet. As I set foot on the station, I instantly knew the Pirates were stationed here. Call it a sixth sense, if you must. As I explored the station, I discovered many dead and half-dead Pirates. I don’t know what went on here, but it sure wasn’t pretty.

 I found my answer soon enough. Deep down in the core of the station waited a large, disgusting slug-like creature, which I like to call the Parasite Queen. Naturally, it attacked me like the unfortunate Pirates on this ship; however, I was far more capable than they were and easily laid the Queen to rest. Things didn’t turn out as planned, though: as the creature gave up and died, it fell into the very core of the station and triggered a self-destruct sequence. Not wanting to be fried in the ensuing explosion, I bolted back through the station like a bat out of Hell. As I pushed my way back, however, I made a chilling discovery: Ridley, a sentient dragon who serves as the commander of the Space Pirates’ entire force, was present on the station. I thought I had killed him back on Zebes, but apparently he is much sturdier than I thought. As our eyes locked, he gave an earth-shattering screech and escaped the station. Hatred bubbling through my veins, I dashed through the station in hopes of catching up. In the process, however, I was caught in an explosion that rendered many of my weapons and suit functions useless. Space Pirate karma, I suppose. Eventually I made my way back to my ship and followed Ridley down to the planet the station was orbiting, with the exploding vessel crashing down behind me.

 So that’s how I arrived here on the planet, which I’ve discovered to be Tallon IV; it’s an old home of the Chozo, the bird-like race that raised me and provided me with all of my equipment. They were extremely technologically advanced. Jumping out of my ship, I take a quick look around. No sign of Ridley. Slightly frustrated, I make note of my surroundings: I appear to be in a lush forested area plagued by constant rain. I take a deep breath and strike out into the unknown.

 Not far from my landing site I discover an elevator, obviously constructed by the Chozo. I ride it up to what appears to be some old Chozo ruins. Overrun by vines and small creatures, the ruins appear to have been abandoned for quite some time. Curious, I delve into the ruins. Not far in I run into a strange drone. After destroying it, I discover a missile upgrade for my power suit, the first step towards restoration. I realize that these ruins, and most likely the entire planet, contain various upgrades left behind by the Chozo. This is reassuring, as I can use them to increase my combat level. Further in the ruins I come across a rather large beetle. Destroying it reveals a Morph Ball upgrade, which allows me to roll into a ball and access small areas, much like a pill bug. The Chozo were quite creative with their technology, I must say.

 After losing my way for a bit, I come across another drone. Destroying it reveals yet another upgrade: Morph Ball bombs, which let me lay bombs while in my Morph Ball form. I feel like a kid at Christmas; so many wonderful new toys. Anyway, it has become increasingly apparent that these ruins are poisoned, and deep in the heart of the city I discover the source of the corruption: a giant mantis-like creature named Flaahgra. The creature easily dwarfs me, so what I do is use my Morph Ball ability to roll underneath it and lay it to waste with a plethora of bombs. After it dies, the poison goes along with it. I also discover another upgrade to my suit: the Varia Suit. This addition gives my suit further protection from damage, as well as the ability to withstand extreme temperatures; it also gives me a sleek, orange look. Pretty sexy, I say.

Satisfied with my accomplishment, I head back through the ruins, where I discover another elevator. With nothing better to do, I hop on. The contraption takes me deep down within the planet, apparently very close to its core. Let me just say I’m extremely grateful that I found the Varia Suit; this place is hotter than Hell. The air is so full of steam that I get a little claustrophobic. I can feel the heat pounding down on my brand new suit; I’m feeling a bit overwhelmed. This isn’t the time for weakness, though; I strike on through the Magmoor Caverns with the sound of a drum beat and a tribal chant in the background. Narrow passageways lead to giant grottos where dragons have taken residence; this place is far more dangerous than the Chozo Ruins. Deep down, I discover a giant Monitor Station; I know this isn’t the work of the Chozo. Could it be that the Space Pirates have set up company on this planet? Indeed, I discover that many of the computers in the station are filled with Pirate logs. Looks like I have a new mission. Near the station is an elevator; aching to get into some fresh air, I hop on and ride it back to the surface.

It appears that I traveled further through the caverns than I thought; I appear in a small cave covered with ice. As I exit the cave, a beautiful sight meets my eyes. The landscape is covered with frost and snow, and the mist in the air dances whimsically around my body. The area is desolate; I truly feel like I’m at the edge of the world. A soft piano melody accompanies the setting. I feel at ease here in the Phendrana Drifts. But I can’t afford the break; I’ve got some hunting to do. After some peaceful exploration, I discover more Chozo ruins, albeit on a much smaller scale. I run into a couple dangerous animals; scanning them with my visor, I learn that they are Baby Sheegoths: bipedal, raptor-like creatures with huge fangs. They’re only a little smaller than me; I’d hate to meet a full-blown Sheegoth. As I travel further, I reach a canyon where another upgrade awaits: the Boost Ball. This allows me to gain a quick burst of speed while in my Morph Ball form. I’m currently at a dead end, so I decide to head back to Tallon Overworld. Before I can, however, a curious event happens. Back in the first part of Phendrana, before I can leave, a huge shadow covers the land. I quickly dart behind some rocks when none other than Ridley himself shoots across the sky. He’s looking for me.

Once I make my way back through both Magmoor Caverns and Chozo Ruins, I set out to explore my landing site a bit more. Upon doing so, I discover the Space Jump Boots, which allow me to defy gravity and jump while in the air, effectively giving me a double jump. After realizing that there’s still not a whole lot for me to do here, I head back through the Magmoor Caverns. In the Monitor Station, however, I notice a door far above the Phendrana Drifts elevator. Using my Space Jump Boots, I make my way up and discover something peculiar: the Chozo Artifact of Strength. I have no idea what it is, but it seems important, so I’ll hold onto it for now.

Back in Phendrana Drifts, I’m able to reach new areas with my snazzy new boots. And wouldn’t you know it; I eventually discover a cave where a full-blown Sheegoth is waiting to devour me for lunch. It’s about three times my size, which is rather intimidating. After unleashing a barrage of missiles into its drooling face, I finally manage to take down the massive creature. In the back of the cave I discover the Wave Beam, which allows me to shoot a beam of electricity. Pretty neat, I must say. Anyway, I make my way through Phendrana some more until I reach a strange corridor. It’s definitely not natural. As I’m lost in thought, shots suddenly whiz past my head, inches away from giving me a huge migraine. I spin around just as a Space Pirate lunges at me with murder in his eyes. Shocked, I take aim and blast him into oblivion. Just then, I make the connection: I’m in a freaking Space Pirate laboratory!

Adrenaline is now pulsing through my veins like a geyser. My senses are on full alert. Cautiously, I enter the next room. It’s way too quiet for my nerves to handle. Swiftly, a security drone appears out of nowhere and sets off a loud shriek. In response, four Pirates barge into the room and attempt to fill me with holes. Well, I’ll have none of that, so I blast off their disgusting faces. Time to face the facts: the Pirates are aware of my presence on the planet. I have a feeling things are going to be a lot more difficult from now on. I take a deep breath, then dash into Research Lab Hydra, as they call it. When I’m not fighting for my life, I take the time to read a few of the Pirates’ logs on their computers. Apparently a huge meteorite crashed into Tallon IV 20 years ago, and upon impact unleashed a deadly poison known as Phazon into the atmosphere. The poison killed off a lot of the life on the planet, and those who survived were mutated and became much more vicious. Naturally, the damn Pirates want to harness this for their own ends, so they’ve set up mining operations on the planet. Bursting with newfound motivation, I rocket through the labs destroying everyone and everything I see. Deep within the lab, I discover the Super Missile upgrade, which is basically like a bomb that I can fire and obliterate whatever happens to piss me off.

Eventually I reach a control tower, which appears to connect Research Lab Hydra and another Pirate lab, called Aether. Up there I’m ambushed by Pirates with jetpacks, and after destroying them I plunge into the next lab. Here, I make a chilling discovery: Space Pirates have gotten their hands on more Metroids. These creatures are flying jellyfish-like creatures that suck a person’s life out of their body. The Pirates are interested in using Metroids for their own ends; in fact, my mission on Zebes was to stop this from happening. Shows how much I succeeded. Moving on, I reach a room containing a lot of Metroids; fortunately, they are trapped in tanks. Within the room I decide to steal some Space Pirate technology, which happens to be a Thermal Visor. I’m sure this will come in handy. Suddenly, though, the room goes pitch black. I guess I did something to the power. The sound of glass shattering fills the room, signaling the Metroids’ escape from their tanks. Damn.

Using my Thermal Visor, I’m able to tell where the annoying pests are by their body heat and destroy them before they suck my life out of me. As I leave the room, I realize that the whole lab has lost power. This is getting really freaky, really fast. To make matters worse, some of the Pirates have now donned cloaking suits. They really want to kill me. As I race out of the labs, I notice another Pirate log. This one in particular is interesting: it details Ridley’s recovery. Apparently a few Pirates discovered his charred body on Zebes with but an ounce of life still left. They took him to the space frigate from earlier and modified him with a crap load of cybernetic enhancements. My day just keeps getting exponentially worse.

After what seems like an eternity, I burst out of the accursed labs and back into the fresh air. Free at last! The Pirates’ forces are too crippled to follow me right now, so I continue on my journey. Not too far from the labs, I uncover a Space Pirate experiment. Evidently, they have been trying to infuse Phazon with inanimate objects such as rocks. And now these rocks have formed a giant rock monster that easily dwarfs my fragile body. After running around like a fool trying not to die, I switch to the Thermal Visor and scan the rock monster. I detect a tiny heat signature within its body; this must be the Phazon that is animating its body. Using the Wave Beam I penetrate its rocky exterior and destroy it from within, saving myself once more. I have had way too many near-death experiences in my life. Vanquishing my foe reveals another Morph Ball upgrade: the Spider Ball. This enhancement allows me to connect to magnetic rails and roll along them, even if they travel up a wall. I have quite a few new upgrades, so it’s about time to head back to the Chozo Ruins to see what I can find now.

This much is certain: the Space Pirates do not enjoy seeing me breathe. Traveling through Magmoor Caverns is even more difficult with Pirates trying to blow me apart; it seems they are hunting me now. After emerging from the caverns, I make my way back to the landing site. At least they haven’t discovered my ship yet. Hacking my way through a new part of the jungle, I come across a truly spectacular sight. A temple created by the Chozo has been erected not far from my ship on the edge of a huge cliff, and according to the engravings left behind its purpose is to contain the source of all of the Phazon. They sealed the temple with twelve Chozo artifacts and scattered them across the planet, hoping one day for a savior to collect them all and defeat the source of the Phazon. Well, I figure I’m the best person for the job. Now I have two missions: stop the Space Pirates’ operations and destroy the source of the Phazon. They also left behind hints as to where the artifacts can be found; finally, someone gave ole’ Samus a break! Before I leave, I notice that the Chozo left the Artifact of Wild here, so I nab it and continue on my quest.

With my new upgrades, I’m able to delve deeper into the Chozo Ruins. On my way, though, I arrive back in the chamber where I fought Flaahgra. The room instantly grows dark, and three ghostly figures fade into sight. They appear to be Chozo, though definitely not living. Immediately they attack, and with the ability to fade in and out of existence they dominate the battle. I’m only able to get a few shots on them at a time. After a tedious battle, I emerge triumphant and discover the Chozo Artifact of Wild. Using my amazing powers of deduction, I hypothesize that the Chozo left behind these ghostly apparitions in order to guard their artifacts. This means I’ll have to fight them at least nine more times; definitely not looking forward to that. Deeper in the ruins, I discover the Hall of Elders, which I remember from the artifact hints. To confirm this, two more Chozo Ghosts appear and are subsequently destroyed by my beam cannon. Unfortunately, this artifact is sealed, and I can’t acquire it until I recover my Plasma Beam function. Deeper still I discover the Ice Beam function, which is basically a beam that freezes anyone or anything I want.

Done with the Ruins for now, I make the arduous journey back to Phendrana Drifts. Using my Spider Ball, I am able to scale a rocky cliff and reach a new area. This new area, it turns out, is Research Lab Aether’s backyard. Maybe that’s why my heart is racing now. Careful not to alert the Pirates of my presence, I sneak around and come face to face with a Hunter Metroid. Corrupted with Phazon, this Metroid possesses tentacles that increase its reach. Fortunately there’s only one of them, and it’s in a pitiful state. I guess the Pirates’ experiments are not all successful. As I spelunk in the Space Pirates’ yard, I discover an extremely useful upgrade: the Gravity Suit. Not only does it give my suit a purple color scheme, but it allows me to move through liquid environments as freely as I do on land.

Eager to get away from the Pirates, I dash all the way across the planet to my ship. Here, I discover yet another area. Suddenly, I’m face to face with two Space Pirates. I swear I must’ve killed at least a hundred of them so far. Behind them lies a sight I wasn’t quite ready for: the crashed Pirate station from the beginning of my quest. I knew it had landed somewhere on the planet, but I guess I didn’t realize it was so close to my ship. Crossing a small lake with my Gravity Suit abilities, I enter the frigate for a second time.

I don’t think I’ve ever been in a more depressing place. Sparks abound from all the severed circuitry, small fires ravage the station, and dead bodies litter the ground. The whole station is covered in twilight; it’s too eerie. It’s hard to believe I was responsible for this. I push my way forward; it is partially submerged, so I’m thankful for my Gravity Suit. I find nothing new; all I’m left with as I emerge from the other side is a melancholy attitude.

Melancholy quickly gives way to uneasiness. Not far from the wreck, my sensors pick up intense radiation levels. As I investigate, I discover yet another elevator. Two words appear on the monitor next to the shaft that send a shiver down my spine: Phazon Mines. This is where the Space Pirates’ main force is located. As I ride the elevator down, I grow increasingly nervous. I mentally prepare myself, but lose my cool once more when I reach my destination. The whole site is dingy, filthy, and infested with Pirates. This is going to be at least a hundred times worse than their meager research labs. I pause for a moment, collect myself, and dive right into oblivion.

I’m immediately spotted, so there’s no turning back now. Fighting my way through the mines is the most harrowing act I have ever attempted. They have highly advanced weaponry and defense systems, and it takes all of my effort just to wipe out a small group of them. Of course, I still take my time to read their logs. Their Phazon experiments are now directed towards themselves; they really are determined to be the strongest race in the galaxy. ‘Elite Pirate’ keeps popping up in their logs, which I can only assume are extremely strong Space Pirates. Another log has answered my burning question: the source of the Phazon. Its name is Metroid Prime, and evidently it is an extremely corrupted Metroid that easily overpowers the Space Pirates’ forces. And I’m trying to meet this thing face to face. I seriously think I might be crazy.

Further in the station, I’m attacked by a twelve foot tall Elite Pirate. These guys were over-hyped; two super missiles take him down no sweat. My victory is short lived; no sooner have I defeated an Elite Pirate do I read a log detailing an Omega Pirate. Will these damn Pirates ever stop? I press onward, determined to stop them once and for all. Deep within the mines I acquire the Power Bomb ability, which is basically a more powerful version of the Morph Ball bomb. Just beyond this room is a Metroid Quarantine. After killing all of the Metroids and Pirates present, I come across an impassable gap. Guess it’s time to turn back. As I dash back through the mines, I recover my Grapple Beam ability, which allows me to fire a rope-beam and swing across gaps, though smaller than the one in the Metroid Quarantine. After I burst through the rest of the filthy mines, I dash onto the elevator and get the hell out of there.

Back in the Tallon Overworld, I stand in the rain for a few minutes to cleanse myself. Those mines are bad for my health. After giving myself a brief break, I begin my final sprint through Tallon IV to pick up any remaining power-ups and artifacts. Not far from the Phazon Mines is an area housing the mighty X-Ray Visor, which lets me see invisible objects. This includes those annoying Chozo Ghosts, which can no longer fade out of view, allowing me to vaporize them a lot quicker. Great timing, too; those ghosts have appeared en masse throughout the Chozo Ruins, even in areas that don’t contain an artifact. Plowing through the Ruins yields the Artifact of Lifegiver. Afterwards my quest leads me through Magmoor Caverns where I finally recover my Plasma Beam ability; now I can fire a blast of searing lava. Popping back up in the Phendrana Drifts, I comb the area and acquire the Artifacts of Elder, Spirit, and Sun. Back through Magmoor Caverns for one final run, I stumble upon the Artifact of Nature. Now that I have the almighty Plasma Beam, I head back to the Hall of Elders in the Chozo Ruins to pick up the Artifact of World.

I stop to catch my breath. I had just been across the world twice, but it’s paid off. Preparing myself for the wretched Phazon Mines for one last time, I ride the elevator down the tall, gloomy shaft. The Pirates have prepared for my return, as I’m covered with a hail of bullets the moment I step foot in their domain. Dashing through the mines, my power cannon never seems to stop firing. They could send a warship after me, I still won’t die. On my way back to the Metroid Quarantine, I destroy another Elite Pirate and recover the Artifact of Warrior. I guess the Pirates were trying to get past the Artifact Shrine as well.

Another Elite Pirate falls to my wrath before I return to the quarantine. As if waiting for my signal, the power shuts down and releases a ton of Metroids. My Thermal Visor helps me make quick work of them, and the X-Ray Visor reveals to me some hidden platforms that allow me to make my way further into the mines. Beyond the quarantine is an elevator leading to Level 3 of the mines. Of course, I dive right in; I want to finish this as soon as possible.

My sensors skyrocket; practically this whole level is covered with Phazon. I suppose the Pirates do most of their experiments down here. Blasting my way through Metroids and Pirates alike, I happen upon a strange cavernous area. Ahead of me appears to be a 100-foot tall stasis tank. I wonder what could be insi—

My musings are interrupted by the ominous shatter of glass. There, in front of me, towers the infamous Omega Pirate. The Pirates had been raving about his combat abilities; well, I see that they were onto something as I dart around trying not to be completely obliterated by the massive monstrosity. Many Super Missiles find their target in a huge life or death struggle that, after an eternity, results in my narrow victory. As I’m about to leave, the enormous soldier teeters on his feet, cocks his head to look at me, and plummets to the ground where I happen to be standing.

Instead of having my life smashed out of my body, a curious event occurs. The Omega Pirate explodes upon impact, releasing an ungodly amount of Phazon around my person. The poison corrupts my power suit, and as I recover from the shock I realize I have somehow acquired what I refer to as the Phazon Suit: a sleek, jet black outfit that seems to be impervious to the effects of Phazon. Now that’s what I call a lucky break. I figure the Pirates’ forces have been crippled enough, so I nab the final artifact (Artifact of Newborn) from their feeble hands and get the hell out of there.

As I emerge into the cool rain, I wave of relief washes over me; I’m almost done! I practically skip back towards the Artifact Shrine. My excitement quickly gives way to wrath; there, waiting for me at the shrine, is none other than Ridley himself. Tension skyrockets as we stare each other down, breaking when he releases a foul screech into the air and takes off, flying around the arena in an attempt to take my life. I’ve accomplished far too much to let the damn dragon have his way, and a battle far more epic than the Omega Pirate ensues. Super Missile after Super Missile rockets into his chest, and he returns my barrage with his plasma breath. After our massive struggle, Ridley plummets to the ground far below the shrine, accompanied by an enormous explosion. Taking a quick breather, I turn my attention back towards the shrine, which has now opened a path to the Impact Crater. This is it. I dive right in.

The cavern is filled with pure Phazon, as well as a whole mess of Metroids. Fighting my way past them, I quickly find myself face to face with the monstrosity known as Metroid Prime. The creature looks like an enormous spider, and our battle starts off with a bang. After nailing it with every weapon in my arsenal, the pitiful creature falls to a cavern below, and I follow to finish it off. Waiting for me at the bottom is Metroid Prime’s true form: what appears to be a floating blue head with glowing red eyes and tendrils for hair. Moments into the battle, I quickly come to terms with the fact that none of my weapons can harm it. Dashing around the arena, I eventually figure out that if I stand in a pool of Phazon, my suit will activate a sort of ‘Hyper Mode’ that grants me usage of the Phazon Beam. Using this tool, I unleash a powerful barrage of energy into the foul beast.

A loud, piercing scream emits from Metroid Prime as it writhes on the ground. Suddenly, it lashes out with its tentacles and absorbs my Phazon Suit in an attempt to revive itself, leaving me with only my Gravity Suit; this wasn’t enough, it seems, and with the crater collapsing around me I flee through the caverns as the beast dies a pitiful death. Commanding my ship with a remote contained in my suit, I dash out of the crater just as it implodes. Standing on top of my floating ship, I remove my helmet to survey the damage. I have succeeded. Breathing one final sigh of relief, I enter my ship and rocket back into the depths of space and leave the pitiful planet of Tallon IV. With the Space Pirates defeated and the poison known as Phazon vaporized, maybe another, more peaceful race will discover the planet and rebuild it to its former glory. All I know is that I succeeded once more against all odds. Now, it’s time for a well deserved vacation. See you next mission!