

Marathon 1 story synopsis:

Durandal signals a Pfhor scoutship to Tau Ceti because he believes this is his chance to escape being a slave to humans.

The Pfhor arrive and attack the Marathon. Leela enlists the main character to fight the Pfhor and save the colony ship. While Leela tries to take control of the situation and turn the tide for the humans, Durandal kidnaps the main character for his own devices.

Durandal uses the main character to help free the S'pht and gain control of the Pfhor scout ship.

In the initial attack, Tycho is killed, but then the S'pht Compilers resurrect him using portions of Durandal's core image. He doesn't really do much in this game.

Durandal downloads himself onto the Pfhor ship, and escapes, leaving the main character behind. Durandal arrives at the S'pht homeworld which is an irradiated desert planet.

Marathon 2 story synopsis:

The previous ending is retconned: Durandal actually did take the main character with him and the S'pht homeworld is a habitable marsh world still containing life.

Durandal uses the main character and the humans previously abducted by the Pfhor to explore Lh'owon, the S'pht homeworld.

The S'pht were uplifted by an ancient civilization called the Jjaro and Durandal hopes that the S'pht ruins will contain information about some type of Jjaro technology that will be useful for him in surviving past the heat death of the universe.

Tycho arrives in service of the Pfhor. Apparently after M1's ending more Pfhor ships arrived at the UESC Marathon and captured it, along with Tycho and Leela. They sold Leela to Vylae merchants and kept Tycho for themselves.

During a battle, Durandal is killed.

The main character and the surviving humans activate an ancient Jjaro/S'pht AI named Thoth. Thoth begins aiding the humans against the Pfhor eventually summoning the lost moon K'lia and the lost eleventh clan, the S'pht'kr.

Durandal is resurrected, only having faked his death to make sure that the True Neutral Thoth would aid the human underdogs.

Durandal destroys Tycho and the tide of battle turns against the Pfhor. Thoth now attempts to aid the Pfhor but they ignore him. The Pfhor resort to using the tri xeam to blow up the sun. Durandal decides to escape the nova and travel to a rogue star traveling through the galaxy.

Now onto Marathon Infinity...

Prologue **(Durandal Timeline)**

We are shown events in a timeline that is different from what happened in Marathon 2 and different from any other timeline in this game.

Ne Cede Malis

Durandal arrives in the Lh'owon system. Without ever reaching Lh'owon, Durandal battles the Pffhor naval garrison and the Western Arm of their Battle Group Seven. He "slaughters" the Pffhor.

In response, the Pffhor use the tri xeem, a weapon Durandal thought the Pffhor had retired, to send the sun into an early nova. Tycho himself had tried to convince the Pffhor not to use this weapon.

Once the sun goes nova, it releases a destructive force of chaos from within.

An uncharacteristically doubtful and fearful Durandal expresses regret that there isn't time for the main character to explore the ruins of Lh'owon. He suggests that the S'pht ruins might have answered "how to stop this chaos, the purpose of the station on which you're currently standing, and why the chaos hasn't come here yet."

(The main character never set foot on Lh'owon, so presumably Thoth was never activated and that the S'pht'kr were never summoned.)

Durandal mentions that Tycho commands the only other ship that is nearby, and suggests that if the main character can make it onto Tycho's ship then the main character may be able to escape.

Location:

Jjaro station which is immune to the chaos coming from the destroyed sun

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Pffhor forces (Fighters, S'pht)

Differences from other timelines:

Tycho is unwilling to use the tri xeem. Lh'owon was never explored (presumably Thoth never activated and S'pht'kr never summoned).

Comments:

I genuinely believe this is Aye Mak Sicur station, but just shown in a different style of architecture.

The level ends with a terminal of white text similar to Thoth's in M2, but I do not believe this is Thoth. Mostly likely it is non-diegetic narration.

Presumably, the release of the W'rkncacnter causes main character to switch timelines at this point. Either this is a choice by the character or something caused by Jjaro technology.

I also believe that all of this is just part of the non-literal, abstract storytelling in Infinity. We're not meant to find a literal, "canonical" explanation that will tie everything together perfectly.

Another thing of note: Durandal suggests that if the main character can get onto Tycho's ship that the main character might be able to escape the chaos. In the very next level this turns out to actually be true, just not in the literal way Durandal intended.

Chapter 1: Despair **(Tycho's Mutiny and Coup)**

We are shown events in a different timeline, where at the end of M1, the main character remained on the Marathon and was captured by the Pffhor.

Rise Robot Rise:

The level opens as Tycho is in the process of a mutiny aboard a Pffhor ship. He awakens the main character to help. Tycho has forged orders from higher ranking Pffhor and has managed to trick lower ranked Pffhor into attacking castes still loyal to the ship's actual captain, R'chzne.

The main character, along with Tycho's Pffhor, go through the ship killing any Enforcers, who are a caste still loyal to the captain.

According to Tycho, the captain escapes to the surface of Lh'owon in a dropship and is hiding in "one of the S'pht ruins, where we detected signals that could be from an ancient AI". Presumably this AI is Thoth.

During this time, R'chzne is attempting to contact Pffhor High Command.

Tycho mentions that there are no compilers on board his ship, "Notice the lack of compilers on board? That's not by accident; my new ship has quite the effect on their collective unconscious."

Location:

fleet vessel 65-f cr'etz'ih

Allies:

Tycho's Pffhor (Hunters, Fighters)

Enemies:

Loyal Pffhor (Enforcers)

Success status:

Durandal is alive and approaching Lh'owon. Tycho is taking control of the Pffhor ship. Tffear is not present. Thoth is not activated, S'pht'kr have not arrived.

Comments:

We roll back to the original non-retconned ending of Marathon 1. Durandal did leave the main character behind on the UESC Marathon, and the main character was captured by the Pffhor, like Tycho, when Pffhor reinforcements arrive at Tau Ceti.

Tycho's statement that there are no compilers on board his ship might be contradicted in a later level, in another Chapter where Tycho has his own S'pht aboard his vessel.

Poor Yorick:

Tycho sends the main character down to the S'pht ruins where a signal is detected that could potentially be a S'pht AI. However, Tycho expresses no interest in the AI. Tycho just wants the main character to locate Captain R'chzne's transmitter and destroy its power sources.

Tycho reveals that part of why he needs to take over the Pfhor ship is because the Pfhor plan to capture Durandal using S'pht Compilers. But, according to Tycho, Durandal can turn the S'pht against the Pfhor, so the plan to capture Durandal would actually give him the tools for victory.

While the main character kills Troopers on the surface of Lh'owon (because "there is no room for them in [Tycho's] new regime") back on the ship Tycho has managed to trap the remaining Enforcers on the bridge.

Then all of a sudden, according to Tycho, "the captain attempted to use the bridge transporter to escape planetside, and was killed when the signal was redirected to nearby space". Presumably this "accident" was actually caused by Tycho in his attempt to eliminate the captain.

Back on the surface, Pfhor Leader Rr'pt manages to route R'chzne's Pfhor from the S'pht ruins and the defeated Pfhor retreat into the mountains.

Human commando units begin transporting into the area.

Tycho decides to let Durandal's human commandos enter the ruins so they can lead him to what Durandal is after.

Location:

S'pht ruins, where [Tycho] detected signals that could be from an ancient AI.

Allies:

Tycho's Hunters.

Enemies:

Native Life, Loyal Pfhor (Drones, Troopers)

Success status:

Durandal has arrived on Lh'owon and is exploring the planet. Tycho has taken control of the Pfhor ship and has possession of the tri xeem. T'fear is not present. Thoht is not activated, S'pht'kr have not arrived.

Comments:

Tycho states that R'chzne was on the bridge and was teleported out into space. Does this contradict the statement in the previous level that the Captain escaped to the surface in a dropship? Or did Captain R'chzne only send his transmitter down to the surface in a dropship to distract Tycho, while he himself remained on the bridge with his Enforcers?

If that second suggestion is true, then R'chzne is a particularly intelligent Pfhor, and it makes sense why he would be one of Tycho's allies among the command class (before Tycho's mutiny, of course).

Confound Delivery:

Tycho's Hunters track Durandal's humans to a flooded area beneath the ruins where they "were attempting to activate an ancient S'pht AI. They never made it back to the surface." Presumably this AI is Thoth, and presumably the humans were killed by the Hunters.

In orbit, Tycho engages Durandal in ship-to-ship combat, but Durandal's weapons have a longer range than Tycho expected and Tycho's ship is disabled. To gain an advantage, Tycho taunts Durandal with a message that only the three Marathon AI would understand.

Meanwhile, on the surface, the main character opens floodgates in the S'pht complex so that he can access the flooded areas and "access" the S'pht AI. According to Tycho, "the humans may have been partially successful" in activating the AI. It's not clear what "partially" means.

The main character finds Thoth's core completely submerged under water. He cannot access the core and does not seem to do anything to "activate" the AI any further. The core flashes erratically as though malfunctioning.

Back in space, Durandal's ship gets too close to Tycho, presumably because of Tycho's previous taunt, and Tycho uses this opportunity to make Durandal's S'pht go rampant. Durandal's ship goes offline.

Tycho sends Troopers to board Durandal's ship and intends to send the main character to help them.

At the same time a "massive structure [enters] a Lh'owon orbit", presumably this is K'lia which has been summoned by Thoth despite it being unclear if Thoth is fully activated and fully functional.

Tycho suspects that this massive structure is a trick of Durandal's, but reveals that his own ship carries the tri xeem: "One way or another, it ends here."

Location:

S'pht ruins, where [Tycho] detected signals that could be from an ancient AI.

Allies:

Tycho's P'fhor (Hunters, Juggernauts)

Enemies:

Native life, Humans

Success status:

The humans attempt to activate Thoth. Tycho is about to destroy Durandal and is prepared to use the tri xeem. T'fear is not present. Thoth may or may not be activated (it is genuinely unclear), but it seems like K'lia has arrived with the S'pht'kr so maybe he is?

Comments:

We see Thoth's core pillars flashing and I always interpreted this to mean that either the humans didn't fully activate him, or the flooding of this chamber damaged him in some way. But then it is implied that K'lia arrives at Lh'owon, so... who knows?

In the preceding level Tycho says that he has no room for Troopers in the new regime. His statements about boarding Durandal's ship using said Troopers seem to contradict that.

Tycho says that he is sending the main character onto Durandal's ship at the end of this level. In the next level this is almost true, but not in the way Tycho intended. The main character is back on Durandal's side, presumably having just left Durandal's ship to board the J'jaro scanning buoy of Acme Station.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PLAYER AND MAIN CHARACTER SPLIT:

The main character presumably continues living out this timeline until the W'rkncacnter is unleashed and he has to go back in time.

We, the players, however skip those events to go to the dream levels ("Electric Sheep One" and "Where are monsters in dreams"), with the option of seeing the end of a failed timeline.

Location:

Aye Mak Sicur station

Ai Mak Sicur: **(failure)**

The tri xeem is launched (if this is a continuation of the previous chapter then it is Tycho who used it, most likely).

Admiral T'fear boards the Aye Mak Sicur station. His forces battle "aliens" (presumably the S'pht'kr) on board the station as the tri xeem detonates the sun. His ship is "dying" due to the blast. T'fear describes his crew being killed by an "abomination" and that the abomination is "coming back".

Allies:

S'pht'kr

Enemies:

T'fear's forces (Hunters, Juggernauts)

Success status:

Durandal's status is unclear. Tycho's status is unclear. Thoth's status is unclear (although there are S'pht'kr in the level). T'fear has boarded the Aye Mak station. Tri xeem has unleashed W'rkncacnter.

Outcome of this timeline:

If we need to treat this as a canonical ending to the previous chapter/timeline then it seems that it fails because Tycho is in control of the situation and of the tri xeem.

Thoth may have been activated by Durandal's humans. When the S'pht'kr turn the tide of battle, Tycho panics and fires the tri xeem in an effort to ensure Durandal's death.

Tycho's hatred of Durandal is why timelines fail when Tycho is in control.

Chapter 2: Rage **(Durandal's Search For Answers)**

We are shown events from a timeline similar to Marathon 2, but which unfold a bit differently.

Acme Station:

Rather than going directly to Lh'owon, Durandal stops at a scanning station and sends the main character to disable it to "cripple [the Pfhor's] warning system".

Durandal mentions a scout ship has been tailing him for the last several years.

Durandal also mentions a Pfhor ship hiding near Lh'owon's South pole. Presumably this is Tycho, who is currently in the process of his mutiny.

The main character disables the station and they continue.

Location:

Jjaro scanning buoy in a deep Lh'owon orbit.

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Pfhor forces (Cyborgs, Fighters, S'pht), lack of oxygen

Success status:

Durandal is approaching Lh'owon. Tycho is waiting for him. Thoth is not activated. T'fear has not arrived.

Post Naval Trauma:

Durandal stops at a Pfhor armor platform which is used for putting down ground revolts.

The main character destroys the de-powered armor vehicles stationed there. The main character also destroys the coolant stations on the platform which disables the armor platform's engines.

As this is happening, Durandal sends "human strike teams... en route to the location of a S'pht AI whose memories I want to probe." The commandos begin their assault and "the first team has already infiltrated a deserted area of the planet and activated an ancient S'pht AI that I believe is the key to discovering the fate of the eleventh clan."

Location: massive Armor Platform of the Lh'owon Naval Unit

Allies: None

Enemies: Pfhor forces (Fighters, Troopers), lack of oxygen

Success status:

Durandal has arrived at Lh'owon. Tycho is waiting for him. Thoth is not activated, but Durandal is sending humans to try. T'fear is not present.

Comments:

I believe this is the first mention of the eleventh clan in Infinity. Apparently Durandal doesn't need to check the archives in the S'pht Citadel of Antiquity in this timeline. He just knows? I may be misremembering something from M2, here.

Where Some Rarely Go:

Durandal finally sends the main character to the surface of Lh'owon. The main character is tasked with flooding the Pfhor facilities, causing them to go into chaos, and thus allowing Durandal's humans to succeed in activating the S'pht AI.

The main character first finds the technical access to the water treatment plant.

Meanwhile in space, the Pfhor scoutship that was hiding near the South Pole makes its move and closes in fast on Durandal. Durandal's weapons have a longer range and he disables the scoutship "easily".

The rest of the Pfhor navy, Western Arm of Battle Group Seven, arrives in the solar system and Durandal intercepts a signal being sent to them from the disabled scoutship which leads him to believe that Tycho is in control of that ship (he is, as we learned from the previous Chapter).

Location:

Perimeter Station 7AF, water treatment/maintenance facility for Planetary Command, and all of the Eastern Emplacements

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Native life and Pfhor forces (Fighters, S'pht, Drones, modified S'pht)

Success status:

Durandal is at Lh'owon and is fighting Tycho.

Toth is not activated, but Durandal is sending

humans to try. T'fear has arrived in the system with his fleet.

Thing What Kicks...:

With the information and technical access to the water treatment plant, the main character is sent to destroy the dam system “opening the way for [Durandal’s] commandos infiltrating the Pfhor defensive perimeter”.

The main character disables the pumps of the water treatment facility and successfully floods Lh’owon command and other Pfhor facilities.

Durandal’s teams activate the S’pht AI, and Durandal is “...learning much about the final days of the S’pht, but the intelligence is reticent and inscrutable. It expects something, that is clear enough, but what is a mystery”.

As Durandal tries to communicate with the uncooperative AI further, “the S’pht AI... keeps acting confused and disoriented.” It is unclear whether Thoth(?) is malfunctioning or just being its cryptic self.

At the same time, Durandal sends some of his humans to an ancient S’pht citadel to “search for clues” and plans to send the main character to help them. Durandal also bombards the “Pfhor’s electronic approval system” from orbit to cause even more chaos for them.

In orbit, Durandal is losing his battle against Tycho’s scoutship as Durandal’s S’pht begin “behaving strangely”. The Western Arm of Battle Group Seven approaches quickly in command of Admiral Tfeare.

Durandal changes his plans and decides he needs immediate access to the Pfhor network. Instead of sending the main character to the ancient S’pht citadel, Durandal sends him to a command complex to insert some uplink chips.

Location:

Perimeter Station 7AF, water treatment/maintenance facility for Planetary Command, and all of the Eastern Emplacements

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Native life and Pfhor forces (Fighters, S’pht, Drones, modified S’pht)

Success status:

Tycho has disabled Durandal’s ship. Thoth is activated, but is not communicating with Durandal. S’pht’kr have not arrived. Tfeare is approaching Lh’owon.

Comments:

Presumably the S’pht Citadel mentioned here is the Citadel of Antiquity from Marathon 2.

Also, the command complex Durandal is about to send the main character to is clearly Warerloo Waterpark, the first level of Marathon 2.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PLAYER AND MAIN CHARACTER SPLIT:

The main character continues living out this timeline until the W'rkncacnter is unleashed.

We, the players, however skip all that go to the dream levels ("Electric Sheep Two" and "Whatever You Please"), with the option of seeing the end of a failed timeline.

Location:

Aye Mak Sicur station

Carrol Street Station: (failure)

Allies:

S'pht'kr

Enemies:

Pfhor forces (Hunters, Juggernauts), lack of oxygen

Success status:

Everything is unclear. It is even unclear as to whether the tri xeem has been used or whether the W'rkncacnter has been unleashed.

Comments:

The only thing we have to go on in this level are the events of the preceding timeline and the poetic terminal text which contains the words "fair k'lia dust/ lost home anew lost and lost/ my wriggling children's/ children children/ gone from the plan".

There's many ways to interpret this in context. In the previous timeline Durandal mentions that Thoth seems confused. 1) Perhaps Thoth is malfunctioning in this timeline and can't remember how to call the S'pht'kr?

2) Or perhaps K'lia and the S'pht'kr were summoned, but then both were destroyed by the nova from the tri xeem? Why this would be different in this timeline, I don't know.

3) Perhaps this failure is unconnected to any chapter we're shown, and represents a timeline where the S'pht'kr civilization collapsed and they died out centuries ago.

4) Perhaps Durandal merges with Thoth and they summon K'lia, but the main character isn't present (though the player is) on the station and they can't activate it without him, so K'lia is destroyed by the W'rkncacnter.

Honestly, anything could be true including the W'rkncacnter not being summoned.

What happens:

Unclear. This may be completely unconnected to the previous timeline and may be meant to establish mood or atmosphere.

Analysis:

This is a copy-paste duplicate of the previous Ai Mak Sicur level from before, except there's no oxygen. Other than that, it is identical in every way including a teleporter that takes you to the start of "Rage" again.

There is no explicit mention of the W'rkncacnter, the tri xeem, Thoth, Durandal, or the nova.

Nothing in the previous levels suggests what could have led to a failed timeline or whether the S'pht'kr were even summoned. Even though S'pht'kr do appear in this level, this may just be an artifact of it being an exact copy-paste of a different failure level.

The exit terminal contains green text which looks similar in style to the text associated with the Durandal-S'pht entity at the end of the game. Does this mean they merged together in this timeline? Or is this failure level not even connected to the previous timeline?

Quite simply, there is no clear suggestion of what this level means to the story, and probably is more of an atmospheric addition.

Chapter 3: Rage(2) **(Tycho and Durandal Timeline)**

(main character shows possible signs of free will)

We are shown events that seem like a direct continuation of the Chapter 1: Despair which ended with Confound Delivery. However, in that timeline K'lia had been summoned, but here there is no mention of K'lia, the S'pht'kr, or an activated Thoth.

Naw Man He's Close:

During the space battle, Tycho causes Durandal's S'pht to go rampant and his ship goes offline.

Tycho sends his Troopers and the main character to board Durandal's ship. The main character proceeds through the ship, killing any humans and S'pht that get in his way, and opens airlocks to allow more of Tycho's forces to board.

Cooperation between humans and S'pht dissolves as the infected S'pht become aggressive and attack anyone going near computer terminals.

The humans, led by Robert Blake, recognize that their ship is offline because the attacking ship (Tycho's) must have a "device that is pinning down [our ship's] engines". They begin powering up jump pads to teleport onto Tycho's ships and destroy the device. (Presumably this is a futile task since the "device" is Tycho himself?)

Tycho tells the main character that once he's done with his mission, Tycho will send him deeper into the ship to "join my hunters searching for Durandal's core".

However, when the main character finds the humans' jump pad he follows the humans onto Tycho's ship rather than going deeper into Durandal's core. There is no explicit reason given for why he does this.

Location:

Durandal's ship

Allies:

Tycho's Pfhor (Troopers)

Enemies:

Durandal's forces (BoBs, S'pht)

Success status:

Tycho has disabled Durandal's ship and is attempting to destroy him. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unknown. T'fear is approaching.

Comments:

This is the only "timeline shift" that isn't accompanied by it's own chapter screen (Rage, Despair, Envy). This is also where things start to get really confusing.

Some information, like how the player's goal is to open airlocks and that Tycho has made Durandal's S'pht go rampant, are confirmed in terminal text that is not accessible during gameplay. (Thank you Marathon Story Page, couldn't have done this without you. You're a treasure.)

Part of why this timeline begins to get confusing is the transition from level to level. Usually this has been explained by some other character giving the main character a mission to follow. However here, the main character does something that isn't based on any orders he received. Based on speculation I've read online, I think the most likely explanation is that the main character is exerting free will, although why he makes the decisions he does is unclear and will remain so for the rest of the game.

Foe Hammer:

The main character apparently ignores Tycho's orders and follows the humans teleporting onto Tycho's ship.

Once the main character arrives, the humans immediately treat him as an ally, despite there being no indication as to why, considering he was their enemy moments earlier.

Tycho immediately assumes the main character has betrayed him, although I am not totally clear as to why. It seems like an overreaction? Tycho transports the main character into the vacuum of space, as a warning not to disobey him. And then presumably transports him back onto his own ship again.

Durandal, like Tycho, reacts to the main character as though he has defected from Tycho's side. Durandal greets the main character as a friend "or, friend of a friend, as the case may be." Durandal expresses concern for his humans and states that he wants to give them a chance to escape to the surface of Lh'owon.

However, Tycho's compilers have a hold on Durandal's ship and he can't do much until their hold is weakened.

The main character and the humans kill Tycho's cybernetic forces including Tycho's S'pht. This allows Durandal to transport Robert Blake and the humans to the surface of Lh'owon.

The P'fhor, presumably Battle Group Seven, arrive with a "special unit of compilers designed by Tycho for [Durandal's] capture and confinement." In regards to this, Durandal tells the main character, "Don't let him win."

Location:
Tycho's ship

Allies:
Durandal's forces (Humans)

Enemies:
Tycho's forces (Hunters, Cyborgs, S'pht)

Success status:
Tycho has disabled Durandal's ship and is attempting to destroy him. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unknown. T'fear's arrival is imminent.

Comments:

Something to note is that in this Chapter, Tycho does have S'pht Compilers aboard his ship and uses them in his battle against Durandal.

This seems to conflict with the previous Chapter 1: Despair, where Tycho explicitly states in Rise Robot Rise that he does not allow S'pht Compilers on board his ship. Is this a contradiction, or proof that this is actually a different timeline than Despair, despite their apparent similarities?

Or is this a sort of Craig Mullins style of playing with what's canon? A way of telling a more abstract story that isn't concerned with sticking to a hard canonical plot?

The humans immediately treating the main character as an ally is probably non-diegetic, and is probably more of a limitation of the engine.

Marathon can't really have characters start as enemies and then switch to allies once you've proven you're on their side.

Hang Brain:

The main character transports back to Durandal's ship. Both Tycho and Durandal separately believe that the main character is helping them. The humans on board Durandal's ship (where the main character was killing humans just two levels ago) treat the main character as an ally.

Admiral T'Pol arrives and has boarded Durandal's ship with his "elite assault troops". They begin invading Durandal's core to capture him. T'Pol's troops immediately treat the main character as an enemy.

Tycho restates his belief that capturing Durandal would just give Durandal the opportunity to make the S'pht rebel.

The main character fights through T'Pol's forces and begins destroying Durandal's core, section by section, to keep him from being captured by T'Pol.

Right before completely destroying Durandal, the player is given an uplink chip, which presumably is the in-world representation of Durandal downloading a copy of his primal neural pattern into the main character for safe keeping (as is suggested in a later level).

The last terminal is white text, like dream level text. I believe this text is non-diegetic and only seen by the players, not by the character.

Location:

Durandal's ship/ in Durandal's core

Enemies:

T'Pol's elite assault troops (Hunters, Troopers, S'pht)

Allies:

Humans

Success status:

Tycho has disabled Durandal's ship. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unknown. T'Pol has arrived and is attempting to capture Durandal. Both Tycho and Durandal are attempting to destroy Durandal before he can be captured.

Comments:

Not much to say here. It's not entirely clear why both Tycho and Durandal believe the main character is on their side, considering the main character's actions for the last two levels.

The P'Pol in this level are immediately hostile to the player and this is probably non-diegetic and a product of the limitations of the engine. Marathon can't really start them as allies and then have some P'Pol Trooper go, "Hey, you're not authorized to be here" and then turn hostile.

A note on this timeline (Rage 2):

This is one of the most confusing parts of the story, and I think this is where people start to really get lost.

The main character switches sides multiple times without switching timelines/chapters. Different characters react to these switches in unclear ways. This timeline also seems like a continuation of the Despair Timeline, but there is no mention of Thoth, K'lia, or the S'pht'kr which did appear at the end of that timeline.

If we need a diegetic explanation, then the most logical would be that at this point the main character begins exerting his freewill in the story. Perhaps the first time where that's true in the entire series.

As for why the main character makes the decisions he does, then there's a few possibilities if we want a canon explanation.

If there is no Thoth: If Thoth has not been activated then the main character may be stalling Tycho until Admiral T'fear can arrive to takeover. As has been implied earlier, Tycho is over-eager to use the tri xeem if he thinks it's the only way to kill Durandal. But as we'll see in the next Chapter, if T'fear is in control, he allows Durandal to survive. So, the main character may be switching sides specifically to stall until T'fear arrives to take control and for Durandal to create a copy of his primal pattern.

If Thoth Is Activated: If this really is a continuation of the Despair Timeline then Thoth has been activated and K'lia entered Lh'owon orbit. There's no mention of that in this timeline. It's possible that since Thoth is True Neutral, that the main character is switching sides to keep Thoth from joining either. As long as it's unclear who is winning, Thoth will stay neutral and possibly keep the S'pht'kr from attacking anyone? This would also buy some time for Durandal and T'fear to get into their respective positions for the final success timeline.

A lot of uncertainty and doubt here.

Those are just some thoughts for if you want to try to interpret this timeline literally and canonically.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PLAYER AND MAIN CHARACTER SPLIT:

The main character continues living out this timeline until the W'rkncacnter is unleashed and then he starts a new timeline.

We the players, however, skip all that and go to the dream levels ("Electric Sheep Three" and "Eat the Path"), with the option of seeing the end of a failed timeline.

You're Wormfood Dude: (failure)

The humans have occupied the Aye Mak Sicur station. A "nova event" has occurred in the system. There is a hull breach in the station and many of the humans are not wearing suits capable of surviving in vacuum.

Chief Petty Officer Arthur Frain sends out a distress call from the station to any "USEC controlled ship in vicinity". (USEC is a typo?)

An intruder has been seen by human patrols, although it's unclear who/what the intruder is.

This failure level also doesn't seem connected narratively to the preceding three levels. Unclear what this has to do with preceding Chapter.

Location:

Aye Mak Sicur station

Allies:

S'pht'kr

Enemies:

Pfhor forces (Hunters, Juggernauts, Troopers) and lack of oxygen

Success status:

Tri xeem has been unleashed and has detonated the sun. The status of all other actors is unclear.

Comments:

This is the only failure level that has Pfhor Troopers.

Despite the terminal implying that humans are on board Aye Mak Sicur, we don't see any humans and we see S'pht'kr instead. (Unless we're meant to interpret the terminal message as being sent from a *different* station from the one we are on.)

This is another failure level that may not be connected to the preceding timeline/chapter at all.

The preceding timeline may not even end in failure and may just continue into the next Chapter (Envy), making this failure level a sort of "what if" scenario from another reality where the BoBs managed to board Aye Mak Sicur station.

Chapter Four: Envy **(Tycho's capture and the Rise of the Security Officer)** **(the events that end in success)**

We are shown events that seem like a continuation of the preceding Rage 2 Chapter.

By Committee:

The main character wakes up inside a Pfhor prison.

Tycho and the main character have destroyed Durandal and prevented the Pfhor from capturing him. After learning about this, and about Tycho's coup against Captain R'chzne (events that happened in Chapter 1: Despair), Admiral T'fear imprisoned both of them.

Admiral T'fear managed to do this with Tycho by using special S'pht Compilers who have spent years training specifically to contain Tycho.

Tycho and the main character were tortured for two weeks. During these weeks, Pfhor forces hunt down surviving humans on the surface of Lh'owon. The battles are still ongoing.

The level begins after these two weeks and the main character wakes up in prison. He is freed by a Drone. It is implied that this Drone was hacked through a terminal by Tycho, despite Tycho's containment.

Tycho offers to help the main character rescue the surviving humans if he cuts the power to Tycho's "containment unit".

After attempting this, the main character is messaged, not by Tycho, but by Admiral T'fear himself. T'fear congratulates the main character on withstanding torture by Enforcers. He then commands the main character to join T'fear's forces in attacking the surviving humans who are holed up in a volcanic crater.

Location:

pen13 Garrison, prison and dungeon complex

Allies:

Unarmed BoBs, a hacked Drone

Enemies:

Pfhor (Assimilated BoBs, Fighters, Drones, Cyborgs)

Success status:

Durandal is "destroyed"; his primal pattern is stored in the main character's brain. T'fear has arrived, taken control, and Tycho is contained. Main character is imprisoned by the Pfhor. Status of Thoht and S'pht'kr is unclear.

Comments:

It is unclear whether this whole prison break was a setup by T'fear or whether it was a genuine attempt by Tycho that just happened to be caught by the Pfhor.

There's some excellent storytelling done throughout the level (the Drone narrative, for example). Of note is that Enforcers are mentioned throughout the terminals and some Enforcer guns are found lying on the ground. But there are no actual Enforcers in the level. Hmmm?

Tycho suggests that the main character is carrying Durandal's primal pattern in his brain. Presumably, this was represented by the uplink chip we picked up at the end of Hang Brain in the Chapter 3: Rage 2.

If the main character has free will at this point, it is unclear why he goes along with T'fear's orders and kills all the humans in the next two levels.

One Thousand Thousand Slimy Things:

The main character leads T'fear's forces in assaulting a human base located in a volcanic crater.

After the main character clears out the humans, T'fear praises him for "subordinating" his instinctive desires in order to achieve his goal, "...the mark of a strong species."

The humans escape further into the volcano and are defending themselves using lava flows. T'fear sends the main character to route them so the P'fhor can take the humans as slaves.

A Converted Church In Venice, Italy:

While the main character assaults the human base, P'fhor dropships enter the volcano cone and attempt to destroy the base's field power generators. All the "transporter relays" belonging to the humans are destroyed. While some humans stay to harass the P'fhor and maintain the "containment fields", other humans try to escape through the magma tunnels.

Presumably these magma tunnels lead to a "huge alien fortress to the west", which the humans learned about from Durandal when he was still alive.

T'fear gives the main character an ultimatum: seal the tunnel and cause the humans to surrender; otherwise, T'fear will order his troops to release the lava into the tunnels and kill them all instead.

Afterwards, three hundred humans surrender while six hundred continue fighting.

Admiral T'fear prepares to transport the main character to "a place of confinement before coldsleep and transfer to conditioning unit".

The main character, however, transports to the huge alien fortress mentioned earlier, instead.

Location:

remote volcanic crater, Hagakure Base

Allies:

T'fear's forces (Hunter, Troopers)

Enemies:

Humans, S'pht

Success status:

Durandal is "destroyed"; his primal pattern is stored in the main character's brain. T'fear is in control of the P'fhor and the tri xeem. Tycho is contained. Main character is killing humans. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unclear.

Comments:

At one point, the main character has to use "jump terminal (7a)" to move forward. The terminal states "authorization key required, priority transports only". It is unclear how the main character can use this jump pad or where he could have acquired the authorization key. But this feels like something important to the story.

Location:

remote volcanic crater, human base

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Humans

Success status:

Durandal is "destroyed"; his primal pattern is stored in the main character's brain. T'fear is in control of the P'fhor and the tri xeem. Tycho is contained. Main character is killing humans. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unclear.

Comments:

I think it's fair to assume that the "huge alien fortress to the west" is in fact the structure we visit in Son of Grendel.

What doesn't make sense is how the main character travels to Son of Grendel instead of to T'fear's coldsleep unit. Yes, the main character is using free will, but this terminal is keyed to T'fear's location.

There's a lot to discuss here, and I do it on the next page.

A More Detailed Discussion On The Ending Of “A Converted Church In Venice, Italy”

So, at the end of the level, the main character exits through a terminal in which T Fear says he is going to put us into coldsleep. But then the next level takes us to “Son of Grendel”, presumably the “huge alien fortress” mentioned elsewhere.

So how does the main character do that?

We could chalk this up to the main character’s freewill. Except, he is still leaving through a terminal whose transport location is controlled by T Fear. Even with exerting free will, the main character isn’t able to change the transport coordinates of a jump pad, as far as we know. The last time the character (probably) used free will (transporting to Tycho’s ship), he still had to use a transport terminal whose coordinates were set by a different character, he didn’t change the coordinates himself.

Luckily, I think there is an easy, but long winded explanation for this.

The short version: There’s actually two exits from this level.

The first exit is also the first terminal you encounter when the level begins. It is also the last terminal you see, since the level ends where it begins. This is the one where T Fear says he’s going to put you in coldsleep; most players will use this terminal to exit the map and so this makes traveling to Son of Grendel confusing from a story perspective.

The second exit is the second terminal you encounter in the level, right after you travel through the long winding path you unlocked, and right before you descend into the cave where you activate the lava. At the end of the level, this second terminal has a message in white text, that seems to be from Thoth. (But is Thoth even activated in this timeline? We hear no mention of him or K’lia during this timeline, or the preceding timeline we came from. Also, it appears like we activate Thoth for the first time in the next couple levels. Could the white text be a different Jjaro entity? Or non-diegetic?)

Once players reach the end, they can only get to this second terminal by retracing their steps through the whole level. Most players have no reason for doing this and won’t. They’ll just exit through the T Fear terminal.

However, dutiful players will notice that in the cave basement there is a secret room behind a locked door. Once they activate the lava, the players can use the 3X charger that has suddenly been activated, swim back through the lava, and get into this secret room (this is a long known secret, so I’m not revealing anything new here). The ONLY way to get to any terminal at this point is to retrace your steps through the level, which makes the second exit (white text) the first and most convenient spot to exit the level.

So, players who are insistent on finding secrets will very likely exit through the white terminal, not T Fear’s.

I believe this second exit is meant to be the canonical exit to Son of Grendel. My theory is that Double Aught initially wanted there to be a split exit here like in the dream levels, where the secret, more difficult path leads to a new level the player otherwise doesn’t see. But in this context, it would mean Double Aught would have to make more levels to show you what happens if you follow T Fear, and they decided it was easier/made more sense to just have both exits take you to the same level. But, I believe that they nevertheless intended the white terminal to be the canonical way the main character leaves the level.

So, while we, the players, can exit the level through two different terminals, I believe that in the story, the main character ignores T Fear and exits through the second terminal through the urging of Thoth, or another Jjaro entity, or through his own instincts.

Alternatively. It’s possible that the player was meant to get to a second exit by swimming through the lava tunnels to get to the huge alien fortress (since that’s where the lava tunnels lead), but that didn’t work out so the white terminal was the compromise.

Son of Grendel: **(my favorite level)**

The main character travels to a S'pht/Jjaro fortress occupied by a Pfhor garrison.

Despite us having no indication that Thoth was activated in this timeline, the main character receives messages in white text that seem to be from Thoth (or possibly another Jjaro entity? Or maybe they're non-diegetic? Or they represent the main character's intuition?).

This Pfhor garrison has a history:

The Pfhor have been trying to excavate and understand the nature of an alien artifact. Presumably this is some sort of Jjaro technology. Because of frequent mishaps and deaths associated with the artifact, most Pfhor have been restricted from coming in contact with it.

For example: Pfhor scientists located an internal power source for the artifact. A survey team was sent to investigate it and were disintegrated. Then, based on the survey team's comm signals, they reappeared deep below the fortress and then were killed. The Pfhor bombarded the plateau with radiation and this seemed to extinguish the artifact's power source.

At some point, presumably after the above incident, the Pfhor buried and sealed the unearthed alien artifact.

The main character travels through the facility until he unseals the alien artifact and uses it to teleport below the surface.

Location:

unnamed Pfhor garrison located in a huge alien fortress/ location of alien artifact

Allies:

None

Enemies:

Pfhor (Fighters, Drones, Troopers)

Success status:

Durandal is "destroyed"; his primal pattern is stored in the main character's brain. T'fear is in control of the Pfhor and the tri xeem. Tycho is contained. Status of Thoth and S'pht'kr is unclear. Main character is moving towards activating Thoth(?) and resurrecting Durandal by merging him with the S'pht entity.

Comments:

There are no weapons or ammo in this level, which is a nice touch in terms of narrative and tone. Really represents how the main character has gone off on his own path without the permission or support of anyone else.

There is a white text terminal that takes you back to the starting spot of the level (kind of like the white text terminal from A Converted Church).

Something I find confusing is that there's two places in this level that can be considered "alien artifacts". One is to the Northwest and honestly seems to fit the narrative better. It's a light pillar hidden inside a stone cube, isolated in the center of an empty plateau; there's actually Troopers trapped inside the cube and you can get them to grenade themselves to death before you open it. The second place is a small light patch, barely restricted from the player, in a courtyard on the South side of map, and this is the one you use to teleport underground. Just thought this was strange. Expected the pillar inside the cube to be the artifact the first time I played.

Strange Aeons:

After interacting with the alien artifact, the main character transports into a chamber deep below the surface of the plateau.

The main character proceeds to activate what appear to be AI cores and thus activating, presumably, Thoth.

Then the main character uploads Durandal's primal pattern into the AI core, presumably merging the S'pht AI and Durandal into one entity.

The level ends with a terminal written in green, dream-like text.

The Durandal-S'pht entity (presumably Durandal-Thoth) is born, or at least they are "whole again", as they tell us.

Discussion:

So, this level adds to some more confusion that I believe has been brought up on the story page before. IS THOTH ACTIVATED BEFORE WE GET TO THIS LEVEL???

We get messages in white text on this level and the two preceding levels, which occur *before* we activate the AI cores here. We activate the cores in this level, like we did to bring Thoth to life in M2. So, if Thoth was sending us those messages in white, then what did we activate in this level? And, if we don't activate Thoth until this level, then what do all those preceding terminals of white text represent?

Are the terminals of white text a different Jjaro entity? Non-diegetic narration? Do they represent some sort of "intuition" the main character has due to his Jjaro implants?

Alternatively, if Thoth was activated before this level, then who activated him? The Pfhor (on accident)? The humans (on purpose)? Why was Thoth just hiding and biding his time?

A lot of uncertainty and doubt.

Location: chamber beneath the surface of the alien fortress and artifact

Allies: None

Enemies: Native life, jumping puzzles

Success status:

Durandal has been reborn by merging with a S'pht AI (most likely Thoth). T'fear is in control of the Pfhor and the tri xeem. Status of S'pht'kr is unknown.

Comments:

We do pick up a chip here, but I believe it is non-diegetic. I think the main character is meant to always have had Durandal's primal pattern, but Double Aught gives us the chip here since we, the players (not the main character) lost it by starting this chapter in prison.

Bagged Again:

The main character returns to the huge alien fortress to find the Pfhor garrison destroyed.

The S'pht'kr have arrived, presumably summoned by S'pht-Durandal, and are fighting the Pfhor. (Although this conflicts with the next level where S'pht-Durandal state "the S'pht'kr will arrive momentarily".)

The main character is not contacted by S'pht-Durandal, but by a very unhinged Tycho. Tycho seems more unbalanced than ever before. I'm not going to analyze everything Tycho says (this has been done on the story page), but I'll just say that we should probably take what he says with a grain of salt.

It is worth noting that Tycho refers to "this Durandal-S'pht entity", so we don't actually have confirmation that Durandal merged with Thoth. In fact, I'm not sure the name "Thoth" appears anywhere in Infinity.

Anyway, after making accusations and prophecies, Tycho sends the main character to be executed by T'fear's personal guard.

Location:

unnamed Pfhor garrison located in a huge alien fortress, now ravaged by battle

Allies:

S'pht'kr

Enemies:

Pfhor (Troopers, Fighters)

Success status:

T'fear is in control of the tri xeem. Tycho is contained. Durandal has been reborn as a Durandal-S'pht entity. The S'pht'kr seem to have arrived (maybe).

Comments:

So, perhaps this level best exemplifies how we can't treat Infinity's story as continuously literal and linear.

Here we clearly see the S'pht'kr in the level fighting the Pfhor. However, in the very next level, S'pht-Durandal state that they have just contacted K'lia and S'bhuth and that "the S'pht'kr will arrive momentarily". So, if in the next level the S'pht'kr haven't arrived, then what are they doing in this level?

Again, I think this just exemplifies the way that Infinity is trying to play with concepts and ideas in the story in an abstract and non-literal way. In Bagged Again, the tone and atmosphere of suddenly returning to a previous level that is now dramatically different is more important than rigidly sticking to some linear, literal representation of the canon narrative.

This level, right here, probably best sums up what Greg K. and the rest of Double Aught were trying to do with this entire game and why it is so hard to try and fit the story into a tight set of boxes.

We could also interpret the S'pht'kr as non-literal, as the only way the developers could represent S'pht-Durandal awakening and destroying the garrison above themselves, with the tools the devs had at their disposal.

You Think You're Big Time, You're Gonna Die Big Time:

The main character is captured again by Tycho/Tfear and sent to fight in a death arena.

The main character fights Tfear's elite guard while other P'hor place wagers on who will win. After the main character survives, S'pht-Durandal contacts the main character and explains the plot to us:

The S'pht have legends about the W'rknacnter: ancient, immortal beings that live in chaos and create chaos around themselves. The Jjaro, the aliens who uplifted the S'pht, once fought battles against the W'rknacnter, but couldn't kill them. The Jjaro could only trap the W'rknacnter, for example, inside the event horizons of black holes.

During this conflict, one W'rknacnter was trapped in Lh'owon's sun by Yrro "eons ago" with the use of an ancient space station.

S'pht-Durandal contact "S'boath", K'lia folds into orbit, and the S'pht'kr arrive (even though they were already present in the previous level). The S'pht'kr assault leads Tfear to "deploy the trih xeem" and board the ancient Yrro station. The tri xeem will unleash the W'rknacnter from the sun, so the main character is sent to Yrro's station to help the S'pht'kr "activate their ancient weapon".

Location:
arena/execution court

Allies:
None

Enemies:
Tfear's elite guard

Success status:
Tfear is in control of the tri xeem. Tycho is contained. S'pht-Durandal is reborn and active. Main character is imprisoned by Tfear/Tycho. The S'pht'kr, K'lia, and S'buth are about to arrive.

What happens:

I just want to say that this a bizarre level to put here. It does not fit the narrative flow of the story, at all; completely out of place. Honestly, this should have been a secret level. I think Bagged Again should have led straight to Aye Mak Sicur, but maybe that's just me.

I think this may be the first mention of S'buth/S'boath in Infinity up to this point.

Aye Mak Sicur:

(the most impressive map in the Marathon series)

As the tri xeem is launched toward the sun, the main character and the S'pht'kr battle Tfeear's troops on the Jjaro station. The station was originally used by the Jjaro to turn Lh'owon into a habitable planet. Importantly, it generates multiple gravitational fields which can be used to contain the nova that will be caused by the tri xeem.

To bring the station online the main character activates the powergrid as well as the spindle foci of the station by using "yrro(farcast) pattern chips".

Tfeear's forces have captured one of the chips and the main character defeats them to get it. He gets the second chip by walking through a containment field that apparently only he can physically move through.

Once the main character succeeds in activating the powergrid, S'pht-Durandal use the station to wrap the nova in the station's containment fields. They report that they do not see any evidence of the W'rkncacnter within the sun.

The S'pht'kr route the P'fhor and capture their flagship, but Tfeear escapes.

The sun, however, will still die and the S'pht begin evacuating Lh'owon. They begin transporting as much native life to K'lia as possible.

S'pht-Durandal thank the main character and state that they "release what little hold we might, as Durandal, have had on your soul. Go."

The game ends.

Location:
you know where

Success status:
Tycho is contained and out of the narrative. The S'pht'kr are routing the P'fhor. Tfeear has launched the tri xeem and boarded the Yrro station. S'pht-Durandal are present to take control of Yrro's station. The main character is present to access the chip only he can physically access.

Comments:

I know people have commented on this before, but I just want to say it again. Aye Mak Sicur is a seriously impressive and awe-inspiring example of map making in Marathon or in any game in the '90s. This outshines anything that John Romero ever made (no offense to John Romero). Playing through this again in 2020 just further blew my mind with the size, complexity, level of detail, and inter-connectedness shown throughout the level. This was a massive undertaking for Double Aught and they should have gotten some sort of award that no one was giving out at the time.

Also, why only Hunters? I've wondered this ever since I played Infinity. Why are there only Hunters on the Aye Mak Sicur station? Did anyone ever wonder about this on the Marathon Story Page?

There is one terminal here that is dreamlike, white text. I take this as further evidence that we are not meant to interpret the majority of white terminals as being Thoth, but as being something else.

I won't be speculating on the final screen text.