

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

AN INDEPENDENT 3DXCHAT NEWS PUBLICATION.

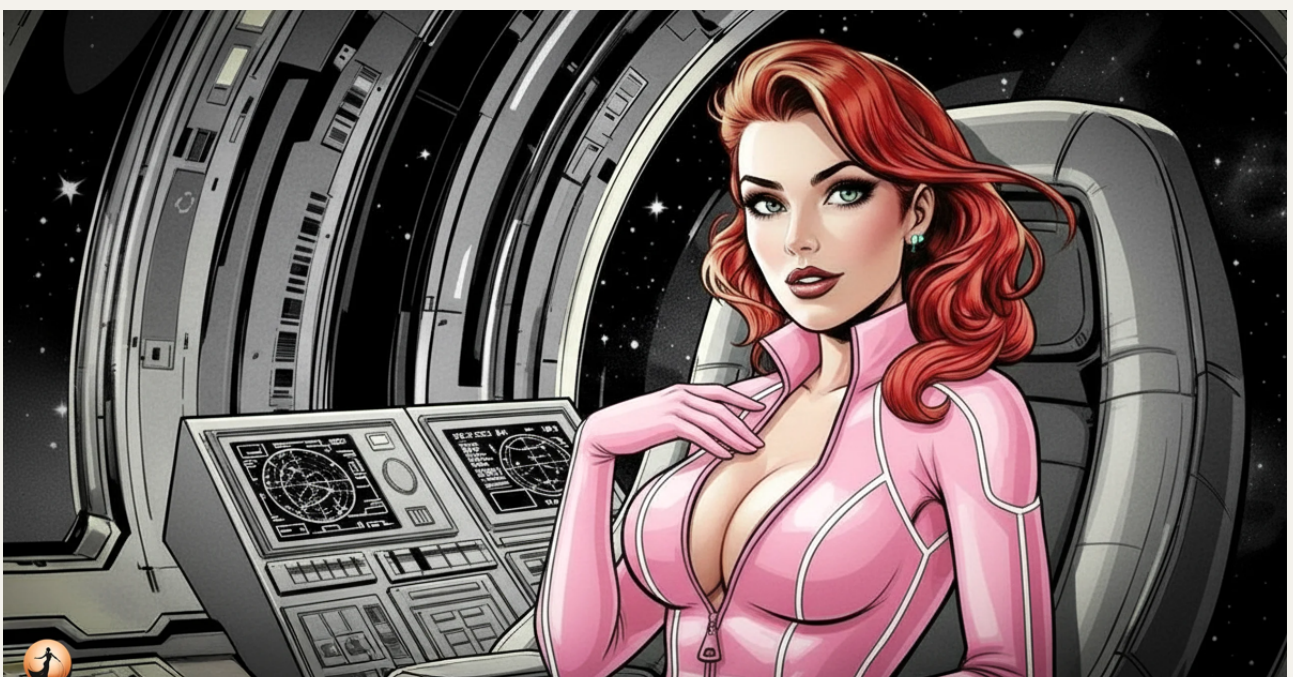
2025-12-14

ARTICLE CLIPPING — THEHIDDENCIRCLE.COM

EPISODE

Mission II - Part 2

BY SCARLETTT — 2025-12-14



In [Part 1](/mission-ii-part-1/), after a not-so-chance encounter in the park, Ruby finds herself leaving on a second mission. In this second part of the six part series, Ruby continues her journey, which does not end up exactly where planned.

Mission II: Stranded - Part 2: Arrival

An original story by Scarlett

The Entanglement Drive's locational gyros rumbled, a deep and not unpleasant bass. Ruby thought about what was going on... the 'jump', the leap across huge distances of space from one point to another. Were they still in orbit above WRS-Earth, already at the colonists' planet, or somewhere in between right now? Ruby smiled. They could of course be in ***all*** of those places at the same time...

Then.....

.....the whole ship lurched violently forward.

Ruby's chair had immediately deployed airbags, so she was uninjured but winded and shocked. As her breathing returned to normal, the lifting vehicle spoke.

"There has apparently been a disruption to the entanglement routing. The Entanglement Drive will have acted to protect its passenger payload by ejecting us on a trajectory for a safe landing on a habitable planet. Unfortunately such action results in the immediate destruction of the drive, so further details are currently not available."

"I can confirm we are otherwise undamaged and are on a course to reach a habitable zone on planet catalog number HD 250463c. We will land in about 26 hours which is no challenge to our life support capabilities. However, we will need to use most of our reserve fuel in deceleration and landing, so we will not be able to return to orbit without assistance."

"Our non-arrival at the expected jump end point will have been noticed and a rescue team will already be looking for us. Because of the large number of possible emergency ejection points, it may take up to 40 days for the team to find us, but that is again no challenge to our food synthesis capabilities. I have deployed marker buoys so our exact location will be known to the rescue team as soon as one of their probes jumps into local space."

"We apologise for any inconvenience."

Ruby looked out the window, then recoiled in horror. Their destination glared balefully at them, a huge disembodied eye with a dirty red iris, hanging in space.

"HD 250463c is an eyeball planet", explained the lifting vehicle. "It is tidally locked to its star, so one side is always day and the other always night. The night side is mainly ice covered whilst the day side is mainly hot desert with red iron oxide rocks. We will land in a 'perpetual twilight' zone near the border between the day and night sides, which has a comfortable temperature".

They landed a day later, and Ruby settled in to wait for the rescue team. The temperature was indeed comfortable, and it was possible to walk, run and exercise outside, only needing a small respirator mask equipped with a CO2 filter and an oxygen concentrator.

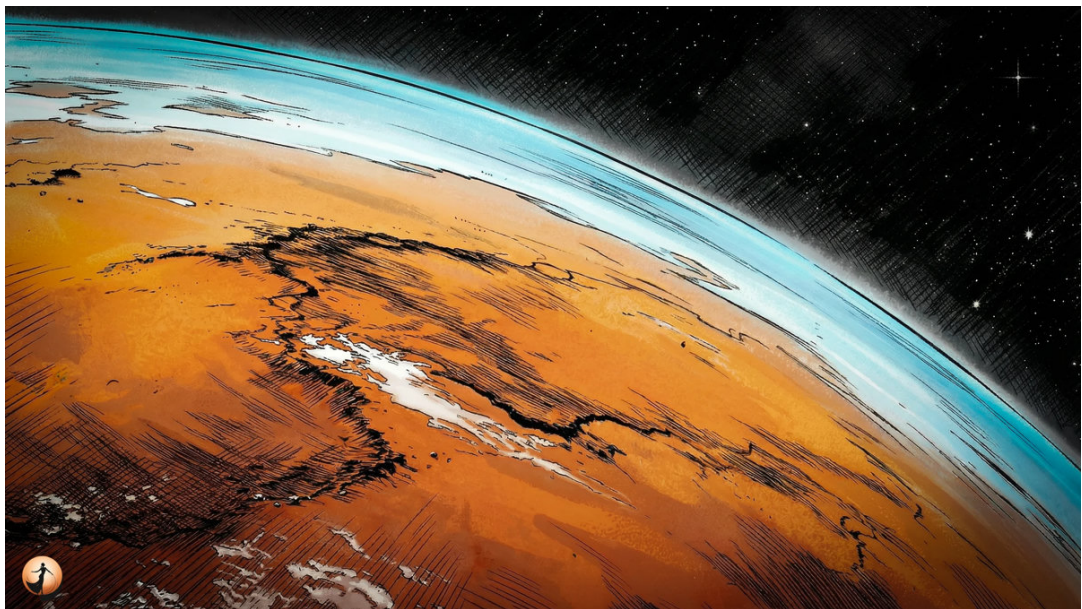
On the fourth day after landing, and on the advice of Shelley, Ruby's personal on board AI which ran on Ruby's neural implant, Ruby hiked to some rocky hills a few kilometres from the lifting vehicle. Shelley seemed to be pre-occupied with keeping Ruby busy with physical exercise, and so Ruby was glad to be doing something gentler like hiking. On reaching the hills, Ruby sat on a rocky outcrop, and took time to admire the hues of the permanent 'sunset'.

Out of the corner of her eye, Ruby saw something move in the distance. She squinted again in that direction. There was no known life on the planet; the conditions were not quite right to kick off the evolutionary process. She saw it again... it was definitely a figure and coming towards her...

She could see more details as the figure got closer. It was a human male and actually wearing an old fashioned suit but without a respirator mask. The suit also remained immaculate despite the dust, so Ruby was sure it was an AI holographic avatar. The figure drew closer, looking at Ruby all the time.

"Rescue team, I presume?", asked Ruby, standing up as the figure was almost up to her.

"I am afraid not, my dear", the figure responded. "At least not the official rescue team".



THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE