

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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EPISODE

Mission II - Part 3

BY SCARLETTT — 2025-12-30



In [Part 2](/mission-ii-part-2/), we followed Ruby's unexpected arrival at a strange planet and her even more unexpected encounter with an even more stranger character. In this third part of the six part series, Ruby learns more about this strange character and becomes curious about his unusual advice.

Mission II: Stranded - Part 3: Prinz

An original story by Scarlett

Ruby was naturally surprised by this strange comment. Following habit, she paused, awaiting an explanation from Shelley which may help her understand what had been said.

"I took the liberty of disabling your onboard AI", said the mystery figure. "I want to have a conversation between just you and me. The lifting vehicle is also, er, unavailable at this time."

Ruby's eyes widened in amazement, and she started to feel a little afraid.

"Don't worry, my dear", continued the figure. "I mean you no harm. You don't need to take my word for that, either. If the HB-Infinite discovers that as much as a hair on your head had been harmed, she'd drop a stellar catalysis bomb into the local star, and all that would be left of this system would be a small black hole."

"Don't let her genteel nature fool you. The HB-Infinite is a military app. She is a weapon of the highest calibre..."

Remembering some of Shelley's past advice, Ruby took a few deep breaths to calm herself down, and mentally pulled herself together. She didn't believe what the strange entity before her had implied about the HB-Infinite, but she did think the real rescue team would find her any minute, and would quickly overpower any threat. She would play for time.

"What would you like to talk about?", she asked.

The mystery figure smiled. *"My name is Prinz", he said. "I'd like to propose an alternative for mankind.. I'm sorry, perhaps I should say bunnykind. Please excuse my older fashioned vocabulary. I have been around since what you have been taught to regard as pre-history, when WRS-Earth was just plain 'Earth' and a bunny girl costume was not a badge of authority."*

Despite still being a little afraid, Ruby also started to feel a little curious. What ancient wisdoms might this strange entity possess?

Prinz was regarding her with a broad and somehow 'knowing' smile. He then looked slightly away and indicated the landscape with a slow sweep of his arm.

"Take this planet for example", he said. "It has a healthy stable magnetosphere, its gravity is pretty close to that of WRS-Earth and the atmosphere could be scrubbed of the excess carbon dioxide and breathable levels of oxygen added relatively quickly, say in less than a 100 years. A couple of easy-to-build orbital mirrors could be used to melt some near-night side glaciers to flood some valleys on the day side, and create some great tropical resorts."

"Yes, there is fixed day and night here, but surely that just means you choose day and night times yourself just by traveling? Sun bathe on a beach for as long as you like, then dance in a night club as much as you like. Unlimited potential!"

"There's lots of grinding of tectonic plates here too. There are a couple of regions deep into the day side where the dunes are literally littered with raw gem stones. Raw materials for the hardest of industrial processes and the prettiest of jewelry!"

"But, has any of that potential been explored? Not any! The planet was briefly studied remotely from space, then pretty much ignored. Only useful as an emergency landing point..."

"You could claim this planet for your own. You could rename it 'Ruby's World', which not only has a nice sound, but is also very appropriate. You could initially trade the industrial diamonds to fund the building of the luxury resorts. Then, you could give away incredible jewellery to entice people into the new clubs, then as numbers grew, more would come... and you'd be top of the attendance rankings every single time!"

"Could I really claim it?", asked Ruby in wonder, the imagery from Prinz's suggestions swimming around in her mind.

"Of course!", replied Prinz. "You are now wondering why nobody has done it before. It's because your usual AI associates just don't advise you to do things like that. Perhaps it's time to get different advice..."