

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

AN INDEPENDENT 3DXCHAT NEWS PUBLICATION.

2026-04-29

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EPISODE

Mission III - Part 2

BY SCARLETTT — 2026-04-29



In [part 1](/mission-iii-part-1/) after the end of a magnificent dance performance at Venus' prestigious SkyTheatre, Ruby is invited to join Saaz on a trip to the dangerous surface of Venus, so they can stand, for inspiration, inside The Cathedral. In this second part of a seven part series, Ruby and Saaz meet with the Librarian to further plan this dangerous endeavour.

Mission III: Venus - Part 2: Meeting

The following day, after enjoying a long lazy breakfast-in-bed with Gemma and Jade, Ruby got up, showered and went into the living room area of their dancers' quarters on New Aphrodite. She donned a VR headset and joined the meeting with Saaz and the Librarian in cyberspace.

They were meeting in a virtual open area, which was a simulation of part of the cloud deck nearby New Aphrodite. Their avatars gave the impression they were standing on a glass platform with the sun high in the sky behind them. Saaz had dressed her avatar in a latex catsuit, but the Librarian, like all of the central AIs, was dressed in a classic Bunny Girl outfit. The Librarian's long black hair was swept back into a ponytail, and she wore thick rimmed glasses.

Ruby smiled. Glasses rotated in and out of fashion as accessories, but always gave a bookish look to the wearer. She remembered from pre-history lessons that glasses had once served an actual practical purpose, as they had held glass lenses as a crude attempt to compensate for vision defects.

The Librarian made a gesture indicating an area in front of them. A model of the Venusian surface anomaly known as 'The Cathedral' appeared there, so they could study it from the outside. Ruby took a deep breath. It was impossible not to feel awe on seeing this structure. She imagined how it must have felt for the first person to see it on a radar surface survey image. It had immediately been given its famous name.

The Cathedral was a large structure of mostly greyish crystals. It was about the size of one of the prehistoric, and now carefully preserved, cathedrals on WRS-Earth, but the similarity was far from over with the size. One could make out what could be the façade, complete with the flanking towers and spaces for ornate doorways. At the other end of the structure was what could be a towering spire. The Cathedral's origin and shape could still not be explained. Was it a 'natural structure involving some currently unknown Venusian geological process', or, as people liked to discuss in hushed tones late at night, was it 'an artificial structure', erected by extraterrestrials 100s of millions of years before humans evolved.

As they looked, the Librarian was giving some facts about the structure. *"...mainly consists of silicon carbide, which can theoretically withstand the surface conditions on Venus for more than 500 million years. It's located on the Lakshmi Planum, a large highland plateau on Ishtar Terra. This area is considerably less likely to be resurfaced by volcanic activity, which may explain why it has not been buried. But it's still considered unlikely that there would be other similar structures buried elsewhere on Venus because silicon carbide is not abundant in the Venusian crust and any found may have arrived from space via meteorites."*

Saaz leaned forward, studying the structure in more detail. The Librarian continued. *"There are 53267 listed references to The Cathedral in popular media. Two examples are, firstly, a mention in the comedy VR series 'Orange Colossus', where it is suggested for comedy purposes that The Cathedral was created by accident by the main protagonist trying to manually operate an Entanglement Drive, and, secondly, in the trance club classic tune 'Dreams of The Cathedral' for which there are 9632 listed remix versions. Would you like me to play you a selection of them?"*

Ruby knew that tune well and had danced to it both professionally in gigs and 'off duty' on the dance floor in some great clubs. She would not have minded listening but did not want to break Saaz's concentration.

The Librarian went on. *"We propose to fly you into The Cathedral through this opening here," she said indicating an opening in one of the towers, "and then land on one of the flat structures inside."*

Saaz looked thoughtful and then slowly shook her head. *"No,"* Saaz responded. *"I'd prefer to walk into The Cathedral through this entrance here."* She pointed out what could be a space for a doorway in the centre of the façade at ground level. *"I want Ruby & I to enter as if it was part of a ritual procession..."*

There was a barely noticeable delay in the Librarian's response, but a delay long enough for Ruby to think to herself that the Librarian was probably making an extensive series of consultations.

"OK," replied the Librarian. *"We've just designed a suitable environment suit to facilitate this. We'll land just a few hundred meters in front of The Cathedral, and you will be able to walk to the entrance."*

"Excellent!", exclaimed Saaz. *"Please send me a VR image of the environment suits so I can design the outer costumes!"*