

THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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EPISODE

Mission III - Part 4

BY SCARLETTT — 2026-05-20



In [part 3](/mission-iii-part-3/), Ruby and Saaz arrived in the skies above 'The Cathedral' and began their descent through the Venusian clouds. In this fourth part of the seven part series, they begin their solemn march towards the mysterious structure.

Mission III: Venus - Part 4: Procession

They had landed, as planned, 200 meters in front of the entrance to The Cathedral's façade. Ruby and Saaz had climbed out of the rotorcraft and now were forming the line as they had rehearsed. The procession would have Ruby at the front, then Saaz, then the two accompanying human-sized spider-bots.

Ruby still strongly felt the apprehension and awe as they were now standing so close to The Cathedral, the real one and not a VR image. Now, however, the 'performance' of the procession was beginning and her professional instincts cut in, calming her.

A corner of one of Ruby's faceplate screens now showed the view behind her. Ruby knew she would have no difficulty matching the pace of her steps to the inferred tempo of the music, but she'd have to keep her eye on Saaz. After all, even though Saaz's sense of timing was excellent, she was not an experienced dancer and Ruby had noticed Saaz's small timing imperfections during the rehearsals. Ruby would compensate as needed. The spider-bots would not be a problem of course, as the devices would keep perfect timing unless they spotted a danger to the humans, or even suspected a danger, in which case they would instantly leap forward to assist.

Satisfied with the formation, Ruby reached out with her left arm, holding vertically the ceremonial staff Saaz had designed. She pressed a button on the shaft of the staff with her thumb, and it telescopically expanded to twice its height. A small holographic projector at the top of the staff started to show a rotating tesseract just above it. Various colours flowed through the frame of the tesseract as it rotated, which, in a nod from Saaz to possible extraterrestrial observers in the past, present or future, also included colours outside the spectrum of human vision. The environment suits' faceplates compensated for this to keep the tesseract visible for Ruby and Saaz.

The music for the procession started at the same time, subtly looping part of its intro phrase. Ruby double checked the formation. They would start the procession.

"Release intro loop," Ruby instructed in her steady, crisp dance leader's tone. The music player responded and its heads-up display in the suits' faceplate screens switched to showing the number of seconds to the first drop, where the marching section of the music would start.

"Start march at zero zero," Ruby instructed the team.

Perfectly timed with the start of the first dramatic bell chime of the music's march phrase, the team lifted their legs and started the slow, rhythmic march towards the entrance of The Cathedral. The terrain between them and the entrance was flat with a sandy appearance littered with numerous small weathered stones. There was nothing to hinder the solemn ceremony of their march, as the soundtrack music's bells chimed and the choirs chanted.

The façade and its towers still loomed over them but Ruby felt that they somehow seemed slightly less intimidating and somehow more... welcoming.