

# THE HIDDEN CIRCLE GAZETTE

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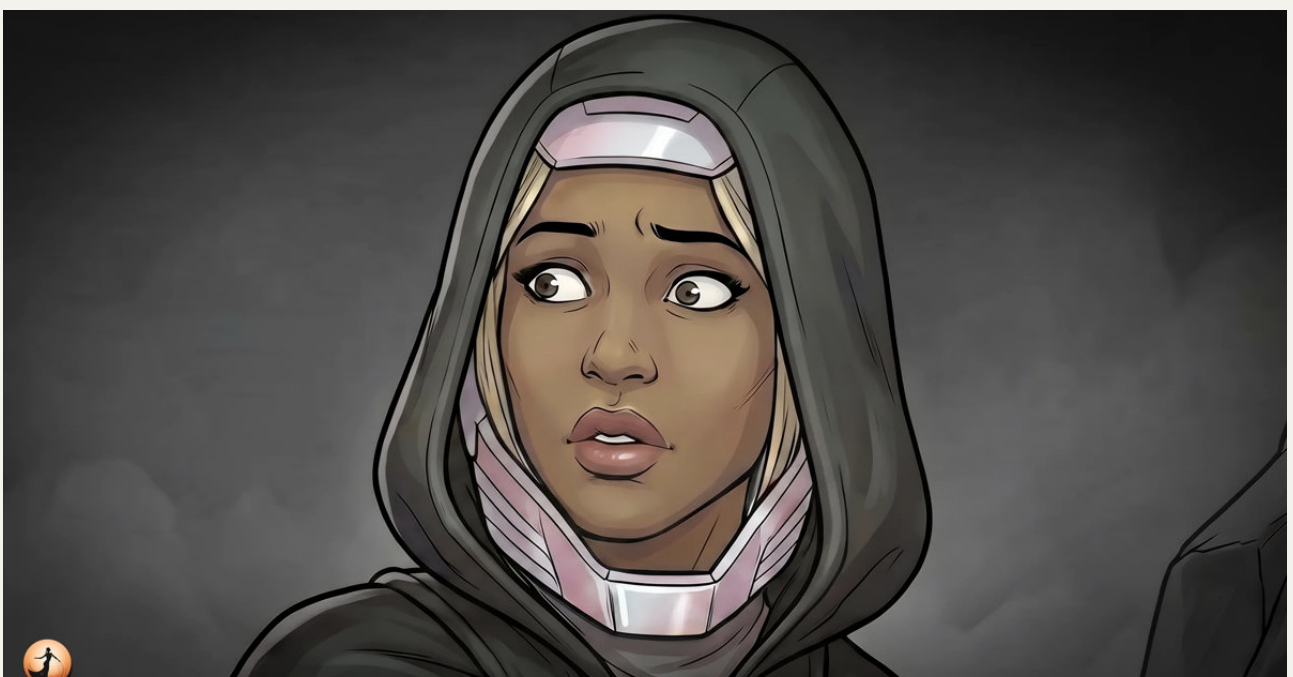
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EPISODE

## Mission III - Part 5

BY SCARLETTT — 2026-05-27



*In [part 4](/mission-iii-part-4/), Ruby and Saaz landed on the perilous Venusian surface and begin their ceremonial procession towards the enigma known as 'The Cathedral'. In this fifth part of the seven part series, they enter the mysterious structure, and things just start to get even stranger.*

### Mission III: Venus - Part 5: Entrance

**T**hey had reached the entrance to The Cathedral and with no change in pace, they passed through and were advancing down the central clearing along the length of the structure, a sort of aisle. To either side, the crystals formed long flat surfaces in rows. When looking at these in VR images, it was just so easy to imagine these as pews, but now, being here, there was also such a strong feeling that the pews were occupied, and that there was a congregation sitting there.

Ruby knew that there was no congregation really there, and that there were no artifacts from the suits' faceplate screens, but the feeling of presence was so strong. What's more, the feeling was very much that the congregation

were sitting to normally face forward down the length of the aisle, but right now they were turning to watch the procession. They were watching with what felt like a cautious optimism.

As they proceeded down the aisle, and deeper into The Cathedral, the feeling grew stronger. Ruby was certainly used to audiences and well-tuned into how they were feeling, but she wondered why she felt this so much now. Was it because she was so used to audiences that now the pressure of the situation made her imagine one?

Now another strong feeling cut in, one even stronger. Ruby felt that ahead of her, one member of the congregation was actually standing out in the aisle to the side, and was looking back down the aisle towards them. And this member of the congregation, although she could see that there was really nobody standing there, was her father...

Ruby's eyes widened in amazement and she took a deep breath. Why would she remember her father right now? She had been close to him as a girl as he had frequently visited the home of her two-mother family. Ruby's biological mother and her partner had decided to each have a child with him at the same time, so Ruby and her 'half-twin' had grown up together. They had enjoyed their father's visits, when he had brought his daughters special presents and took them on special trips.

But... he actually lived on another continent in a couple with another woman and only visited once a month or so. Then the visits had abruptly stopped. He had died in an accident in a diving trip to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, when for some reason he had not heeded some safety advice from his onboard AI.

There it was... a deep feeling of loss and a loss that could have been avoided. Loss from a mistake that could have been prevented. If only she had *warned* her father more to always listen to his onboard AI. Tears formed in Ruby's eyes and she felt she was going to cry as she had when she had heard the terrible news as a girl.

*"R-R-Ruby..."; said Saaz, her voice trembling. "I have this incredibly powerful feeling of the presence of my sister. She died 60 years ago in a freak flying accident..".*