# A Little Less Sky

## A reader's companion

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Written with ChatGPT · GPT-6 Astra

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A few ways into the conversation: the people, the work, and the things they cannot yet explain.

This companion is optional. The story contains everything needed to follow it. Questions 1-4 discuss only the prologue and Chapters 1-3. The remaining questions and the science guide reveal later developments and the ending. Save them until you have finished the novel.

# Before you read further

### Questions for the opening · prologue and Chapters 1-3

**1. A useful objection.** Ada begins by explaining why a project cannot proceed as proposed, then offers a way it might. What do you learn about her from that change? At what point does professional interest become personal ambition?

**2. The work behind the job.** Mateo notices a legal problem that a more confident system has missed. What does this scene make you value about his work? Does being useful necessarily mean being secure?

**3. Two people at dinner.** Which small action makes the attraction between Ada and Mateo believable to you? When do their practical conversations begin to mean something neither quite says?

**4. Permission to keep looking.** Ruth records a signal; Okonkwo protects the conditions needed for observations. How do the opening chapters distinguish an interesting suspicion from evidence? Who gets to decide whether a question deserves more time?

# After the final page

**Full-book spoilers from here onward.** These questions mention relationships, identity, illness and the scientific discovery.

**5. Lives that are not waiting rooms.** Camila and Jonas make choices that do not serve Ada and Mateo's eventual reunion. Which moment gives each the strongest independent presence? How does the novel change if you read either of them as the central character?

**6. A payment and a place.** The dividends make some lives materially easier. Which losses do they address, and which remain? In the fictional *Decommissioned* interview, why is it difficult for the speakers to find a place for their anger?

**7. Who pays for speed?** Compare the disputed investment advice, the blackout decisions and the later negotiations over infrastructure. When do you find Ada's willingness to act persuasive? When do you side with someone asking her to wait or make a promise enforceable?

**8. Knowing a history, inheriting a claim.** The later Ada has memories of intimacy. What, if anything, do those memories entitle her to expect from Mateo? Which acts of asking, refusing or choosing make their renewed relationship possible?

**9. The thing measured and the meaning assigned.** The investigators establish evidence of deliberate construction, but the constructors' motives remain harder to know. Where do the characters cross from measurement into interpretation? Did the limits on their knowledge make the discovery more or less moving for you?

**10. Enough time.** Mateo makes a finite choice; others have different possibilities. How do you read his decision without turning it into a rule for everyone? Return to the title, the family ledger and the final beacon: what is each preserving, and for whom?

For a one-hour group: let everyone name one image they kept, choose any three questions, then finish by asking which character another reader understood differently. Disagreement is useful; there is no answer key.

# Where the science ends and the novel begins

**Full-book spoilers.** “Established” below describes a physical principle or observed result. “Extrapolation” names a possibility that still depends on assumptions. “Invention” identifies this novel's particular people, devices, chronology and discoveries. A real principle does not make the invented future a forecast.

## Electricity, computing and useful work

**Established / observed.** Data centers consume electricity, and their construction depends on equipment, finance and grid capacity. The IEA's 2026 assessment estimates 485 terawatt-hours of data-center electricity use in 2025; this includes uses beyond AI. Its roughly 950 TWh figure for 2030 is a projection, not a measurement. [1]

**Extrapolation.** Demand could keep growing, but its pace and location depend on technical, economic and policy choices. The novel stretches that pressure into a much larger transformation of infrastructure.

**Invention.** Auric, Redfield, Casaverde's particular deal and the later blackout decisions belong to the story. Existing power lines do not by themselves resolve permissions or engineering constraints.

**The human comparison.** One Danish study found widespread changes in tasks while estimating effects close to zero on average earnings and recorded hours during the first two years after ChatGPT. It ruled out average effects larger than 2% for the workers and workplaces studied. That result neither predicts every country nor settles the future. Mateo's repeated displacement and the dividend institutions are fictional choices, not findings from that study. [2]

## Computing beyond Earth

**Established / observed.** Space systems must contend with communication limits, orbital motion and radiation. Google Research's Project Suncatcher investigates these problems for solar-powered computing satellites. It is research toward an architecture, not proof that all computing is cheaper in orbit. [3]

**Extrapolation.** The novel assumes progress in launch, manufacture, repair and heat rejection. Its economics depend on those assumptions. Vacuum does not carry heat away by ordinary air convection; equipment needs a way to radiate energy. [8]

**Invention.** Ada's orbital program, its commercial success and the later autonomous industrial system are part of the imagined future.

# The distant and the personal

## Warm stars and persuasive patterns

**Established.** Warm objects emit radiation. Infrared instruments can detect sources our eyes do not see. An excess of infrared light is a measurement to explain, not a diagnosis of an alien civilization. [4]

**Extrapolation and active investigation.** Researchers have searched survey data for possible stellar-energy collectors. Project Hephaistos reported seven candidates in 2024; a July 2026 JWST follow-up found that two candidates' excess infrared light came from background galaxies. This is why contamination checks and independent observations matter. [5-6]

**Invention.** The novel's interval systems, successful prospective tests, maintained openings and extraterrestrial builders are fictional. The real candidate list does not establish them. Even inside the story, evidence of construction does not provide a translation of its makers' intentions.

## A reply that cannot arrive in a lifetime

**Established.** A light-year is a distance: how far light travels in a year. Messages cannot cross interstellar distances instantaneously. [7]

**A calculation within the fiction.** For the novel's source 124 light-years away, light received in 2014 left around 1890. An Earth transmission in 2081 arrives around 2205. Even an immediate reply reaches Earth only around 2329. These rounded dates follow from the invented distance and ordinary light travel, without a faster-than-light exception.

**Invention.** The source, the message and the family's beacon are invented. The local visible marker and the directed interstellar transmitter serve different purposes in the story.

## A remembered life and a continuing person

**The novel's assumption.** Reliable mind reconstruction, the later Ada's forms of existence and the story's radical longevity are speculative capabilities. They are not presented here as demonstrated technologies.

**The unresolved question.** Even if a system reproduced a person's memories and behavior, a technical description would not by itself settle what survival means, or what another person owes that system. The book gives its characters different answers. Its medical choices belong to those characters; no reading of the ending requires treating one choice as universally correct.

# Follow the questions further

Sources checked 16 September 2026. Each link supports the corresponding factual background above. None endorses the novel or its imagined chronology.

**[1] International Energy Agency.** *Key Questions on Energy and AI*, executive summary (2026). Data-center demand and constraints. Read the report.

**[2] Anders Humlum and Emilie Vestergaard.** *Still Waters, Rapid Currents: Early Labor Market Transformation under Generative AI.* NBER Working Paper 33777; revised March 2026. Read the research summary.

**[3] Google Research.** *Exploring a space-based, scalable AI infrastructure system design* (4 November 2025). Read the research account.

**[4] NASA Science.** *Infrared Waves.* Physical background for thermal observations. Read the explainer.

**[5] Matías Suazo and colleagues.** *Project Hephaistos - II. Dyson sphere candidates from Gaia DR3, 2MASS, and WISE* (2024). Read the paper.

**[6] Erik Zackrisson and colleagues.** *Project Hephaistos - IV. James Webb Space Telescope Observations of Two Dyson Sphere Candidates* (July 2026 preprint). Read the paper.

**[7] NASA Science.** *What is a light-year?* Distance and the time required for light to travel. Read the explainer.

**[8] NASA Small Spacecraft Systems Virtual Institute.** *Thermal Control.* Heat transfer and spacecraft design. Read the technical overview.

# About this book's creation

*A Little Less Sky* is an AI-written novel conceived and directed by David Hawig, developed primarily with ChatGPT (GPT-6 Astra). Claude generated the original manuscript. OpenAI's Codex supported research, editorial development, substantial revision and production under David's direction. The selected cover artwork was generated with OpenAI's image generation tool; typography and publication layouts were composed separately. The book's creation note provides the fuller account.

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