**[Luna](https://substack.com/app-link/post?publication_id=1360838&post_id=146345911&utm_source=post-email-title&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=false&r=bbdwi&token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjoxOTAwNzAxMCwicG9zdF9pZCI6MTQ2MzQ1OTExLCJpYXQiOjE3MjAzNTc0MjIsImV4cCI6MTcyMjk0OTQyMiwiaXNzIjoicHViLTEzNjA4MzgiLCJzdWIiOiJwb3N0LXJlYWN0aW9uIn0.9NJz3G3A4bRmShEh8K1TjmHk8MA-ot9VvlUtk42sDlA)**

**Episode 3: Home**

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**Kino MacKenzie and Solomon Tang walked off the cool luxury airship into the cool refuge of Gate Nine of Tucson’s International Airship Port, which was also home to fleets of small planes, because after eco-terrorists, led by a zealous cyber genius named Stanley “Willy “Robinson, hacked enough airliners down from the sky to kill the industry-as well as thousands of people, rock the global economy for two years and force humans to slow down their travel and trade to the pace of elegant electric dirigibles that ruled the sky. When electric passenger planes flew nearby the great airships they resembled insects flying among flying blue whales.**

Both men agreed to meet again and tap-exchanged contact information as they walked beneath the western kitschy *“Welcome y Bienvenidos a Tucson”*sign welcoming travelers to “Too hot Tucson” with a “Too hot Tucson” jingle as lethal weather alerts flashed over everyone’s heads and traffic news crawled across multiple screens on all sides of them about a “…a police action underway involving a Tucson Rainwater tanker.”

Sol stopped at the base of the escalators, brushed aside his Bedouin scarf, held out his hand and shook Mac’s smaller hand. Sol grinned and said, “This is where we part. Love to chat but I’ve got a woman waiting,” and happily headed to ground transportation. “Good luck, Sol,” Mac said quietly as he headed up the escalator to the light rail station. Halfway up Mac turned and yelled, “What woman? You never mentioned a woman.”

As Sol melted into the crowd below he turned, smiled and politely yelled up at Mac,“Your sister.”

The next light rail car arrived, dinged, emptied itself of its passengers. Mac chose his seat and emptied his travel weary head as he sat in the empty car bound for town as it silently rolled on into the blinding daylight and then back under the endless shade offered by the patchwork of canopies, solar panels, paths and shade sails that provided Tucson residents the relief of dark shady streets, avenues, boulevards, alleys, malls, roadways and neighborhoods that made too sunny Tucson bearable.

Mac passed giant humming carbon sequestration towers and rain water tanks of every size and shape and the forest of windmills up on the foothills that outnumbered the few remaining Federally protected saguaros. He passed the landmark neon signs that poked above the city of shadows, up into the daylight, making Tucson’s skyline distinctive. By day they were drab, colorless fixtures looping a rainbow of color across the sky. For reasons that mystified Mac his daughter Luna loved mastering the dead visual language of cursive, a typeface that evoked Route 66 nostalgia celebrating the promise of the 19th century internal combustion machine that poisoned the planet. He read the neon names aloud to himself as the electric train flew by them. The Arizona Hotel. The Roundup Bar. The Apache Inn. The Saguaro Inn sign signaled the approaching stop was Mac’s stop. He stood and stepped into the sun to remember what the world felt like at the time of day when he was always fast asleep.

Mac found his locker in shade, fished in his memory for the storage security code, unlocked his electric bike and groaned when another alert appeared in front of his imagination. “…hostage situation developing…avoid the Picacho Peak area where water raiders struck a water tankers…in other news 3-visitors were found dead on Tortoise Peak Trail..according to the Life Zone coroner, heat was the probable cause…The weather alert remains in…”

Mac tapped off all notifications, wrapped his Bedouin scarf around his head, wheeled his electric bike out into position, plotted the shadiest path home, gripped the handlebars, lifted his caftan robe, threw his right leg over his bike as it buzzed to life and lurched into the homeward flow of mid-morning traffic, swarming with thousands of other Tucsonans buzzing home before the sun bullied the valley into throbbing stillness, save for the shimmer of mirages at the edge of the world in all directions.

As he rolled home on his bike Kino MacKenzie felt proud of the Mandatory Siesta ordinance he authored despite being called an “eco-fascist” by radical outsiders and one teenaged daughter named Luna MacKenzie who was sure to outgrow the phase she was going through, according to Mac and Calypso, and all their friends who were also the parents of teenagers. “Ever since her first period she refused to be babied by us.” Calypso would brag. “No meds, thank you, she’d say, as my baby rocked.” Mac would say, “Luna has her mother Calypso’s I-can-tough-it-out attitude about just near everything.” Luna is as fearless about mountain biking and mountain climbing as she is about wearing dark eye make up these days which unnerves Mac and Calypso because Luna is looking like a young woman.

The Mandatory Siesta ordinance warnings had worked. Mac rode his little electric bike across an empty city. He saw empty shops, empty trail heads, empty paths, empty sidewalks, empty ball fields, empty roadways and he was nearly home. The bank near his home was long gone but the neon sign remained with its digitalized news crawl. It was 9:37 AM and already 104°. In 4-hours it would be 118°. Mac could feel his body reassigning blood to his skin to cool off, taking blood and oxygen from his belly. Clotting, multiple organ failure and death would follow if he remained out in this heat much longer. Every Tucsonan memorized the warning signs. “Clotting can cause heat stroke which starves the brain, heart… and what were the other two?” Mac thought on this trivia question as his overheated mind furtively calculated his ETA home. He wiped the sweat from his brow that was draining salt into his eyes. He felt the hot wind flapping his long white robe and headdress behind him. He remembered, “clots can starve the kidneys. And muscles.”

He bounded down the few remaining miles of potholed asphalt until it became gravel and then became a rutted dirt road taking him into his desert neighborhood of old adobe haciendas, rammed earth homes, dome homes, and seven earth ship homes with uncommonly lush desert front yards. He turned into the arching driveway of his Creosote Green home, parked his hot bike and watched a star ship launch in clouds of smoke in the broad daylight down in the valley. “Godspeed. Whatever the Hell that means. Gods and Moons, it’s good be home.” Mac tapped the security code and slipped inside the front glass entrance of his home where Calypso, Luna and Calypso’s dad were all sleeping soundly as bears in a cave. Mac plucked a fat fig from the indoor garden, set his things on the floor, tiptoed to the back of the house and tapped on their bedroom door and slowly opened it, said, “Calypso. I’m home” and found his Calypso awake. “Mac, baby. I missed you. I’m Mind-talking to Cass.”

Out of view of the camera Mac mouthed lusty scandalous words to his partner, playfully suggesting he’d like to be alone with her as soon as humanly possible and then he caved to the reality of family life and cheerfully spoke aloud, “Cassius! My boy! How’s our son?”

“He’s good,” said a grinning Calypso, patting the empty spot on the bed next to her. “Come say hello.”

Mac hopped onto the bed next to her. She added him to the Group-talk.“How’s life at McMurdo? Any news on Thwaites?”

“Hey, pop. No matter what they do the glacier keeps calving. The alliance has spent trillions drilling the water out from under the damned thing. Now we’re building a second 50-mile curtain. After Florida, Texas, New Orleans, Manhattan were submerged you would have thought…”

“We have good news. Listen to your dad.”

“The Council announced a medic was leaving the Life Zone so there’s an opening. You can come home.”

“What? No way-”

“Before your dad left for Paris he submitted your information and well, native born get priority, so… compared to the citizen you’re replacing you’re much more qualified what with your Medi-Vac experience. You can come home.”

“You’re kidding.”

“You served your time.”

“And my mountains. Are they still there? Does my sister know?”

The conversation ended twenty minutes later and it was long past their daytime bedtime.

On that morning across town Maya Montaño was singing to herself and tending her farm, an interlocking assemblage of burbling rainwater tanks, koi and tilapia tanks, and acres of rainwater fed greenhouses when Sol arrived at her door. “Hey. Maya! Open up. Maya! It’s hotter than New Delhi out here.“

“Sol! Come in. Come in!”

“You stayed awake for me! What’s for dinner- besides you, my-my-Maya?”

“Rain check, Mr.Tang. I have to secure the farm before the next heat wave.”

“This heat wave could last for days. Weeks. Months. Centuries. Last time I checked you had a cold dark bedroom where we might be safe. And it is bedtime. You can work tonight.” Sol reached out to tickle her. Maya laughed at Sol’s persistence as she led him into her kitchen where they embraced and kissed between tasks. “Hungry? You had a long flight.” Sol nodded as she showed him the prepped foods. “Here at Maya’s kitchen we’ve got roasted cholla fruit, mesquite flour biscuits, roasted corn, nopal salad, scorpions dipped in mole. You can chop that cilantro. And the tomatoes.” As Maya stirred the pans on the stove Sol wrapped his arms around her, rested his head on her shoulder and forgot the heat and the time. “Guess who I met on my trip here? Your brother-in-law. Kino MacKenzie. The sustainable cities guru. Don’t worry. I didn’t tell him I was into his sister-in-law. Or about all the wild kinky things she was into.”

“Very funny.”

The surprising knock at Maya’s door called her attention to a familiar face and voice. “Maya?!”

“Marvin. Come in! Come in. It’s my cousin. Mars.”

“You didn’t tell me you had a cousin. A cousin who was DPS.”

He walked in smiling. “Public Safety. Mars. Mars Montaño.”

“Mars? Seriously?”

“Seriously. Name’s ‘Marvin’. Which would you go by? And you are?”

“Sol Tang.”

“A pleasure, Mr. Tang. Cousin, did you hear? Space Force has dispatched nano drones to the Picacho area. Every agency west of the Mississippi Playa is there.”

Sol wanted to know the details. He had yet to learn it was a mistake to ask Mac or Mars or anyone in this family to tell him more about anything.