



The Lucid Tide:

Calm Stories to Carry You Into Awareness

Chris DeYoung

Table of Contents

A Glistening Sky Bridge.....	3
The Misty Forest Clearing	7
Softly Glowing Meadow.....	11

A Glistening Sky Bridge

High above the clouds, an elegant bridge of pale crystal arches through a tranquil sky. Soft gusts create a gentle hum beneath your feet, and the horizon stretches out like a watercolor painting.

A gentle hush enveloped the glistening sky bridge, a quiet marvel suspended in the endless expanse where blue merges into dusk. Pale crystal arches rose from the clouds in delicate curves, glowing faintly with each step, as though the bridge itself responded to the warmth of curious feet. The air was lightly perfumed by something sweet and intangible—perhaps the breath of distant stars—and whenever a breeze passed by, it hummed against the translucent floor, carrying a soft murmur that resembled the sigh of a sleeping ocean. Beyond the graceful railing, the sky unfurled like an infinite watercolor that shifted through a spectrum of gentle hues: pastel pinks blending into lavender swirls, all dissolving seamlessly into the tender gold of the late-afternoon sun. At times, wisps of cloud floated so close you could reach out to touch their feathery edges, each one reflecting subtle rainbows in the low-angled light.

Standing there was Oriah, a quiet traveler entranced by the air's warmth and the hush of unspoken possibility. She rested one hand on the cool crystal railing and felt a soft vibration beneath her palm, as though the entire bridge lived and breathed in tandem with the sky. A light gust teased her hair, lifting it around her ears and caressing her neck like a gentle whisper. The clouds billowed far below, forming ethereal continents and drifting palaces that changed shape whenever she blinked. It was hard to say where the bridge ended or began, but something about its presence invited her to keep walking, to trust its slender curves and embark on a journey that transcended the ordinary boundaries of footpaths and roads. She let her breath settle into a steady rhythm, inhaling the faint scent of the high atmosphere and exhaling any earthly concerns she had carried into this rarefied realm.

She took a moment to perform a small test of her surroundings, raising both hands and counting her fingers slowly—one, two, three, four, five. All seemed normal, yet there was a fleeting second when her fingertips glimmered like stardust against the crystalline surface. Oriah blinked, wondering if the reflection had been a trick of the shimmering light or something else entirely. A tranquil excitement blossomed in her chest. She had once read about reality checks—rituals to confirm whether one was dreaming or awake. The lines here were blurred: each breath seemed to bring her closer to a space where weight and worry dissolved, replaced by curiosity and awe.

Rather than question it further, she smiled softly, letting the moment linger like a gentle note held in the sky's silent tune.

Continuing onward, she noticed that the arches rose higher with every few steps, as though the bridge itself was gently winding its way to an unseen apex among the clouds. Translucent railings curved gracefully on either side, and subtle patterns appeared beneath her feet—delicate filigree that pulsed with a slow, steady glow. When she gently placed her hand against one of the arches, it felt warm and smooth, like polished stone that had been left in sunlight, yet it also felt incredibly light, as if composed of crystallized air. A pulse of wind moved through, and she closed her eyes, savoring how the breeze murmured against the crystal, producing harmonics that reverberated like an otherworldly harp. It was a lullaby in motion, persuading her thoughts to drift and her heart to soften.

As she made her way across the bridge, the horizon opened further, a grand panorama with no visible edge. The sky was both vast and intimate, tinted by the soft glow of the late sun. The faint swirl of pastel clouds in the distance created dreamlike shapes—floating islands, lofty spires, and playful drifts that shimmered with opalescent undertones. She found it soothing to observe how these forms rose and fell, dissolving gently into new shapes, as though the sky engaged in a slow, thoughtful dance for anyone patient enough to witness. Leaning over the railing, Oriah glimpsed her reflection in the smooth crystal: a faint silhouette tinted with the bridge's luminosity. For a split second, it appeared her reflection wore a different expression—eyes slightly wider, lips curved into a secretive smile. When she blinked again, her reflection returned to normal, a gentle reminder that on this bridge, reality might be as malleable as the passing clouds.

A short distance ahead, she noticed lanterns strung along the archway, hovering at varying heights without any visible support. Each lantern emitted a soft, comforting glow, the light faintly pulsating as though in time with a quiet heartbeat. As she passed them, Oriah felt a gentle warmth radiate across her face, like the comforting sensation of hands brushing her cheeks. The lanterns appeared to guide her down the path, each step leading her deeper into the hush of this skyborne realm. She paused under one glowing orb, gazing into it. Within the lantern's curved glass, tiny motes of light sparkled like distant constellations, reminding her of nights spent stargazing on a quiet hillside below. Here, in this lofty corridor of clouds and crystal, it felt as if the sky had lowered itself into reach, merging with the land of dreams.

Oriah's thoughts felt soft and fluid, no longer weighted by the ordinary day. She lowered her gaze to the floor of the bridge again, noticing its sleek surface shimmer as though reflecting a gentle moonrise. Another breeze wafted past, and a faint, melodic hum emanated from the rails, as if the entire structure was singing a lullaby only the wind could interpret. She gently placed both hands on the railing and, drawing a slow breath, repeated her quiet reality check—this time counting her fingers twice, carefully. Once again, all appeared as it should, but the very act of checking felt

tender, like a gate opening between two worlds. With each steady step, she relinquished just a little more of her hold on everyday logic, ready to accept that in this realm, magic and reality were simply threads of the same tapestry.

Far ahead, the bridge curved upward in a sweeping arc, leading to a grand platform crowned with the same translucent crystal. The gusts grew hushed as she approached, gathering around her like a gentle embrace. Arriving at this lofty terrace, Oriah found a low crystal bench gleaming under the sky's pastel glow, beckoning her to sit and rest. She sank onto it, running her fingers across its smooth, cool surface. The bench warmed slowly beneath her palms, a subtle reassurance that reminded her of dipping her toes in sun-warmed ocean sand, or nestling into a pillow just before sleep. A faint haze formed around the perimeter of the platform, swirling with a quiet presence that felt strangely inviting.

Looking out at the endless horizon, Oriah noticed a small flock of white birds gliding in graceful arcs above the clouds. Their feathers glowed in the gentle light, trailing shimmering streams of color with each tilt of their wings. As they dipped lower, they disappeared into a tuft of cloud, only to reappear moments later with no perceptible motion of passing through anything solid. She found their presence comforting, like silent companions of the sky. Briefly, she closed her eyes, letting her imagination slip into the hazy boundary between lucid thought and drifting reverie, where the wind's lullaby merged seamlessly with her own steady heartbeat.

Eventually, she rose and stepped beyond the bench, noticing a second archway leading away from the platform. Before following it, she let her gaze linger one last time on the panoramic vista. The interplay of twilight colors set her heart stirring, a gentle melody of wonder at how peaceful and ethereal the world could be when seen from such a serene vantage point. Each moment felt elongated, trailing off with a sweet resonance that lulled her toward deeper contemplation. In the quiet, she became aware of her breath once more, each inhalation lengthening in the delicate air, each exhalation carrying away any remnants of tension lodged in her thoughts.

She set foot onto the new path, feeling the subtle shift as this portion of the bridge began a gradual descent through the clouds. Every so often, she reached out to touch the railing or run her fingertips along a glowing lantern, reminding herself of the delicate boundary between the real and the dreamlike. A second reality check beckoned, and she couldn't resist. Counting her fingers in the filtered, dusky light, she noticed the edges of her silhouette shimmer faintly, as though it, too, belonged to the realm of drifting clouds. Yet the warmth of her hand in her other palm felt tangibly real. She smiled, comforted by the notion that she inhabited two realities simultaneously—awake enough to savor the journey, dreaming enough to welcome its miracles.

By the time the bridge reached another small landing, Oriah could see faint lights beneath the clouds, the distant glow of a world she'd left behind. She paused, resting one final time against the

gentle slope of the railing, gazing through the breaks in the gauzy mist. The swirling vapors parted occasionally, granting glimpses of a landscape far below—shadowy hills, winding rivers, and pockets of light where night had settled over the towns and valleys. In that diffused glow, she felt the tender pull of sleep; a sense that her time on this crystalline path was nearing a delicate transition. Yet there was no need to hurry. She lingered, letting each breath merge with the hush of the clouds, aware that this bridge was less a place to cross and more a threshold between the ordinary and the wondrous.

Softly, as though guided by an unspoken signal, she stepped away from the railing and continued on, her footsteps making only the faintest taps against the crystal floor. The path meandered into the mist, and soon all she could see were swirling shades of white, pink, and gold. The hum of the wind rose again, wrapping around her like the final notes of a lullaby. She glanced down at her hands, and for an instant, she saw them both shimmering and real—ten fingers, but outlined by a gentle glow that pulsed in tune with her beating heart. Without fear, she closed her eyes, sensing that the Sky Bridge stretched onward in the silence, inviting her to slip into a realm where the boundary between dream and wakefulness would grow ever more subtle. In that hush of clouds and crystal, she found a comforting truth: that every journey can become a dream, and every dream can lead quietly back to a place where the horizon—like the story itself—opens to infinite possibility.

The Misty Forest Clearing

*At dawn, tree branches drip with twinkling dew that reflects the first rays of sun.
The swirling mist lends every shape a dreamlike glow.*

A pale morning light gently crept through the Misty Forest Clearing, turning each droplet of dew into a tiny star. The entire grove felt alive with a soft shimmer, as though the trees themselves exhaled a silver breath that curled around every branch and leaf. Tendrils of mist wove through the undergrowth, blurring the contours of rocks and fallen logs, shaping and reshaping them until they seemed more like fragments of a dream than solid objects. High above, streaks of dawn's light pierced the canopy at playful angles, giving glimpses of leaves still heavy with dew. Now and then, a water droplet fell, releasing a quiet sound akin to a muted bell that resonated through the hush of early morning. It was as if the forest was rousing itself in slow, graceful gestures, cherishing every delicate moment before waking fully to the day.

In the heart of this luminous stillness stood Silven, a traveler drawn by stories of a secret place where night's magic lingered into dawn. Fingers drifting across the mossy bark of a tall oak, Silven felt an undercurrent of warmth pulsing through the tree's ancient trunk. Each breath tasted faintly of pine and cool mist, a mingling of sensations that made the forest feel both vibrant and hushed. The light brushing of wet leaves against well-worn boots let Silven know this place was alive, welcoming in its quiet way. A single birdcall punctuated the hush—a gentle note that seemed to drift slowly across the clearing before melting into the silver haze. With a half-smile, Silven closed tired eyes, allowing thoughts to settle like dew, letting the forest's calm lull the mind toward peaceful wonder.

When the traveler's eyes opened again, a soft awareness arrived, reminding Silven of the fluid boundary between dreams and waking life. Curious to test the moment, Silven held up both hands, counting the fingers methodically. One, two, three, four, five—just as they should be—yet for a fleeting second, the tips of each finger sparkled with prisms of light, as though they carried the afterglow of starlight that had no place in a sunlit morning. A gentle laugh escaped, colored by a hint of wonder. Was it merely the reflection of dew on the skin, or a subtle sign that dreams and reality interwove here more than usual? Silven welcomed the ambiguity, finding comfort in the gentle mystery rather than any sense of alarm.

Venturing further, Silven parted the gentle curtain of mist with each step. Tall ferns framed a narrow path, their fronds beaded with droplets that shimmered with gold where dawn's light

found them. Overhead, slender branches dripped with dew, releasing occasional bursts of tiny droplets that fell in a sparkling cascade. The delicate patter they made against broad leaves had a meditative rhythm, as if nature were quietly applauding the morning's arrival. Silven paused to rest a hand on the trunk of a leaning cedar, its bark damp and pleasantly rough to the touch. Something about this moment felt exquisitely real, and yet the shifting fog gave every movement and shape a fleeting, dreamlike quality. Breathing slowly, Silven let the breath become one with the soft hush enveloping the clearing.

Through the mist emerged a solitary stone, its surface worn smooth by countless seasons of wind and rain. Resting upon it was a large drop of dew, magnifying the forest in miniature. Silven crouched beside it, peering into that tiny world. A reflection came into view—dappled leaves and a single curious eye gazing back. The reflection wavered with the slightest movement, as though it belonged to another realm that could vanish at any moment. For a heartbeat, Silven thought the mirrored eye flickered differently from the real one, holding a mischievous glint before blinking away in perfect unison. A trick of the light, perhaps, or a quiet invitation to question the boundaries between what is seen and what is only imagined.

Rising again, Silven noticed how the mist curled around a stand of tall birch trees just ahead. Their white trunks resembled silent guardians watching over the clearing, each adorned with slender shadows cast by the low sun. As the traveler approached, the moist earth softened underfoot, and a faint glow of pale morning light filtered through the birches, creating flickering patterns on the ground. Each step released a gentle, earthy aroma, a perfume blending the sweetness of wet leaves with the mineral whisper of dew. The occasional rustle of a small creature nearby added a quiet accent, reminding Silven that the forest was a tapestry of subtle lives all stirring to greet the day.

Beyond the birches, the forest floor opened into another clearing where a circle of smooth stones formed a natural ring. Thin shafts of sunlight broke through the swirling veil of mist, illuminating the stones as though they possessed a quiet radiance. Kneeling at the circle's edge, Silven felt a soothing warmth emanate from the ground, as though the earth itself carried a memory of sunlight from the day before. Curious, the traveler picked up a small pebble, holding it up to the light. Within its cloudy interior shone flecks of crystal, tiny sparks that danced with rainbow facets. Running a thumb along the pebble's surface, Silven sensed a reassuring solidity that gently contrasted with the ethereal mist swirling overhead.

Drawn by the stillness of this enchanted place, Silven settled onto one of the larger stones, letting the body relax into its cool surface. The hush was comforting, like the anticipation of a whispered story about to unfold. Closing both eyes, Silven listened to the forest's subdued symphony—the faint drip-drip of dew falling from leaves, the low sigh of the wind brushing through evergreens, the distant call of a solitary bird. With slow, measured breaths, the traveler sank into a state of calm

awareness. Here, in this cradle of mist and morning light, thought drifted freely, untethered from the usual constraints of daily concern.

Another reality check gently surfaced in Silven's mind, a nudge to see if this clearing obeyed ordinary rules. Opening eyes again, the traveler counted fingers once more. All was as it should be, yet the shapes at the clearing's edge still wavered ever so slightly in the haze. No alarm rose, only a sense of grateful acceptance. For Silven, the knowledge that this realm might be part dream, part tangible life, felt like an invitation—to wander further into its shimmering embrace and trust it as a guide toward gentle insight. Something about the ephemeral quality of the morning world here seemed to say that everything was in harmony, balanced softly between what is real and what we dare to imagine.

Rested and gently renewed, Silven stood, noting how the mist had thinned somewhat, as if the clearing itself had decided to reveal more of its subtle beauty. Smooth tree trunks glowed faintly in the dawn light, their bark etched with patterns that resembled ancient calligraphy. A path unfurled gently from the circle of stones, a narrow trail through lichen and fern that beckoned the traveler onward. Silven followed with unhurried steps, drawn by the promise of deeper wonders hidden in the morning hush. Small motes of light drifted in the air, tiny orbs that might have been dust or dew, or perhaps wisps of dream essence that had somehow found their way into the waking world.

Near the clearing's far side, where the sun shone more boldly through the thinning mist, an old log lay across a shallow creek. The creek's water sparkled as it caught the early rays, its gentle trickling sound echoing softly among the trunks. Silven approached, placing a hand in the water and feeling the cool rush against the fingers. The reflection that appeared there shimmered with surreal color—greens, golds, and silver all at once—yet the water's chilly reality was unmistakable. A quiet thrill stirred inside; the world was so alive in this fragile moment of dawn, so open to possibility, that Silven felt the boundary between waking and dreaming dissolve even further.

Stepping across the log, Silven paused on the other side, gazing back at the clearing now partially unveiled by the rising sun. The swirl of morning mist had receded like a gentle curtain, revealing the forest in clearer detail. Dewdrops along the leaves still glinted in soft, prismatic hues, and the entire scene held a hush that whispered of serenity and exploration. Breathing in the cool morning air, Silven whispered a silent thanks to the forest for offering this moment suspended between dream and day. Warmth spread in the traveler's chest, a sense of belonging that promised more discoveries just beyond the soft glow of dawn. And so, without urgency or fear, Silven carried that gentle awareness forward, into a world where mist and waking wonder intertwined, leaving the forest to stand as a gentle reminder that sometimes, the doors to dreaming remain open long after the night has passed.

Softly Glowing Meadow

Blanketed in moonlight, the tall grass appears to shimmer with faint luminescence, as though each blade is dancing in silver light.

Moonlight drifted across the softly glowing meadow, gathering in silver pools among the tall grass that shimmered with a quiet luminescence. Each blade seemed alive with a subtle radiance, gently bending and swaying in the night's hush. A calm breeze wandered over the field, carrying the faintest hint of sweet wildflowers on its current, while the distant chorus of crickets rose and fell in a comforting lullaby. Above, a clear sky stretched into the horizon, dotted with stars that trembled like whispered secrets. From time to time, a thin cloud slid across the moon, and the meadow's glow would momentarily soften, then brighten again when the moon emerged in all its gentle splendor, reminding anyone who wandered here of the delicate interplay between darkness and light.

Standing near a cluster of wild daisies, Varis felt as though he'd stepped into the luminous space between waking and dreaming. The soft glow of moonlit grass kissed his ankles, and every breath carried a sense of calm that sank into his heart like warm honey. He raised a hand to the night air, spreading his fingers to catch the moonlight between them. For a moment, the tips of his fingers flickered with silvery halos, as though responding to the meadow's gentle energy. A question of reality fluttered in his mind—was it simple reflection or a subtle sign that this place transcended the everyday? Though he couldn't say for sure, a serene acceptance washed over him, easing the day's tensions and leaving curiosity in its wake.

He ventured deeper into the meadow, each step a quiet crinkle in the moonlit grass. Streaks of pale luminescence flickered whenever he brushed past a tall blade, and the sensation against his skin felt akin to silk ribbons sliding softly along his calves. Wanting to steady his thoughts in this strangely enchanting world, Varis performed a small reality check, counting the fingers of one hand against the other. One, two, three, four, five—all normal—and yet the fleeting brightness at each fingertip hinted that here, normal might still hold room for the marvelous. A delicate smile touched his lips, and he carried on, aware that every breath encouraged him to drift further from the solid grip of logic and into a gentler realm of boundless possibility.

Further on, the grass gave way to a winding path marked by faint, glowing stones. Their soft radiance guided him like miniature moons resting at his feet, outlining a gentle curve across the meadow's rolling contours. Varis stooped to touch one of these stones, feeling an unexpected

warmth emanate from its surface, as though it stored the tender glow of day and released it under the moon's watchful gaze. The breeze stirred again, drifting over the grass with a hush of sound like a distant, whispering tide, and he closed his eyes briefly, letting that velvety hush wash through him. In that soft vacuum of thought, he could almost hear his heartbeat blend with the meadow's pulse, a faint vibration that reassured him he was part of its quiet magic.

Rising to his feet, Varis continued along the path, noticing how each step seemed to sync with the night's natural rhythms. Star clusters glittered overhead, and he marveled at the clarity of their light—each twinkling point distinct, as though etched upon a canvas of deepest blue. A thin band of clouds drifted under the moon again, and for a moment, the meadow's glow seemed to surge, each blade of grass brightening as though stirred by an unseen hand. He lifted an arm to wave gently through that luminescent field, watching the grass part and then reunite, leaving behind faint trails of glimmer that slowly faded back to normal. He found himself wanting to linger on each detail, each quiet shift in light, confident that the meadow had no intention of rushing him along.

Eventually, the path led to a solitary willow tree, its drooping branches decorated with countless tiny lights that hovered like fireflies suspended in slow motion. As he drew near, Varis realized these lights weren't insects at all, but softly pulsating orbs, each flickering in tune with its neighbors as though sharing a singular, gentle breath. The low-hanging branches swayed in the breeze, tracing graceful arcs against the moonlit sky, and he walked beneath them, feeling the cool, feather-light brush of leaves across his shoulders. The orbs' glow cast dancing spots of silver on his skin, and he couldn't help but attempt another reality check—this time by placing his palm flat against the tree's trunk. It felt solid and reassuring, but when he glanced up, the orbs seemed to mirror his every subtle move, flickering in time with the quiet rhythm of his heartbeat.

In the sheltered circle under the willow, Varis discovered a small wooden bench, its surface polished smooth by time. He lowered himself onto it, sliding his fingertips along the wood's gentle grain, and let out a slow breath. The hush of the meadow enveloped him like a soft blanket, and for a moment, the worries of the day seemed no more substantial than shadows drifting across the grass. His eyelids felt heavier, encouraged by the mellow sway of the breeze and the subtle hum of living quiet that underscored the entire scene. A gentle sense of gratitude welled up in his chest—for the meadow, for the moonlight, and for the tranquil reminder that within the stillness, it was possible to feel entirely at peace.

He turned his gaze beyond the willow's branches, noticing how the meadow's glow extended to the edges of distant hills, meeting the horizon with a faint shimmer. It was as though the meadow wished to keep shining into the night, merging with starlight so delicately that only an observer looking closely would see the boundary. He let his mind wander, drifting between the memory of past adventures and the longing for dreams yet to be explored. Reality checks, illusions, and

subtle magic all felt interwoven here, conspiring to invite him deeper into a place where questions lingered in gentle acceptance, unhurried by the need for certainty or explanation.

After a while, Varis stood up, feeling the bench's smooth wood give way to the soft, springy grass beneath his boots. Though a part of him was ready to rest, the meadow's gentle allure coaxed him onward. Step by unhurried step, he left the willow behind, returning to the tall grass that seemed to glow even more brightly in the moon's unwavering gaze. Pockets of mist gathered near the lower slopes, forming wispy curtains that drifted in and out of sight. Walking through them, he felt a refreshing coolness brush his skin, and the faint hush of crickets created a melody that accompanied his every movement.

Eventually, a shallow stream appeared, winding its way through the meadow. The water's surface reflected the moon in perfect clarity, rippling gently whenever a passing breeze traced its path. Varis knelt at the stream's edge, letting the grass cradle his knees. The moon's reflection trembled like a second world trapped in water, and for a playful moment, he counted his reflection's fingers just to see if they'd match. Indeed, they did—yet a hint of silvery glimmer lingered around each fingertip, as though some element of this place refused to be completely ordinary. He exhaled softly, feeling the tension of daily concerns slip away like pebbles dropping into the current.

Rising one final time, he allowed his gaze to travel back across the meadow, eyes lingering on the soft luminescent waves of grass. The hush of the moonlit night seemed infinite, wrapping every hill, every blade, every possibility in a gentle glow. A sense of profound calm settled in his chest, and as he began to walk again, he sensed that sleep was beckoning—an invitation to drift across the threshold between conscious wonder and the expanse of deeper dreams. Yet even as the edges of the meadow receded into the gentle darkness, he retained the warmth of its silver glow in his heart, a quiet reminder that the boundary between reality and dream is as soft and fluid as moonlight upon the grass.

With the meadow's luminous magic still shimmering at the edges of his vision, Varis let his thoughts slow, each breath a bridge between the world he could see and the one waiting within. The final glow of the tall grass guided his steps as the breeze caressed his cheeks, coaxing him gently toward rest. Perhaps he would find himself here again when he closed his eyes for the night, or perhaps the memory would carry him into some new, uncharted dreamscape. Either way, he felt a comforting assurance: these hushed moments of moonlit peace would remain a part of him, reflecting an unspoken truth—that sometimes, in the quiet shimmering of night, the path to wonder is as close and welcoming as the soft glow of silver light dancing in the grass.
