

C. A. SALTORIS



The
Bridge ^{made} of
Moonlight



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THE BRIDGE MADE OF
MOONLIGHT

STORIES BLOWN IN THE WIND



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THE BRIDGE MADE OF MOONLIGHT



*M*y mother takes me to bed. An exception, because my father is not at home.

She puts me on the bed so carefully that she trembles; I make my body stiff, I make myself lighter so that she feels strong. But I don't tell her that.

She doesn't seem very strong to me lately. Her arms are thinner, her dark circles deeper, her hair colorless. And she used to be so beautiful. It's my fault. It always was. Mine and osteogenesis imperfecta, which controls my movements, which erodes my bones, which causes deafness, which breaks me.

"It's cold, Ulysses. Let's close the windows today, shall we? "

She stands before me and stares at me. Immovable, like a statue. A statue that was once colorful and, having taken on the burden of raising me, has become pale, like a plaster.

It is hereditary, the doctors say. She thinks it comes from her. She punishes us both with her sadness.

Her eyes are red, wet and dull, her voice weak and shaky. I feel sorry for her. I want to do something good for her, to make up for

all the bad things I put her through. But I can't let her close the windows. Anything but that.

"No, Mom, leave them open. Please," I ask, noticing her hesitation.

Finally, she leaves the windows open.

My mother doesn't understand how important this is to me.

I have given up trying to tell her about the bridge. The few times I tried, she said I should read less because my mind was imagining things. She also said that there are wooden bridges, some even made of iron, but that is all. There are no bridges of water, no bridges of air, and even fewer bridges of moonlight. But my bridge is a very concrete thing, and it shines as if all the stars in the universe had come together and held hands.

They even tried to convince me that the light belongs to the sun, but that is not true. Adults believe that because they all have to think the same way, in a common logical way, in a single direction. They do not have to, "must". But I know that the moonlight belongs to the moon and no one else. I know because I see it. Every day. Every night, with greater intensity.

My mother kisses my forehead softly. Her lips barely touch my skin. She is afraid of crushing my skull, but she never says so. We both omit what we think of each other to avoid more pain. Lying is a form of love. I learned that from her.

"Sleep well, little one," she whispers, her voice sounding flooded. Much more than usual today.

I feel that she doesn't want to leave me, I feel that she is restless. She looked at the window and at me. She smiles, her teeth frozen. A tear glistens in the darkness.

"I'll be fine." I say, smiling.

She leaves, closes the door. I hear sobs. I am sad, but happy, because when I go to sleep, the bridge is built. The big secret between the girl with the golden curls and me.

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I sit up straight and wait. Sometimes I'm afraid she won't come, but she always comes, more beautiful every night.

I see the exact moment when the moonbeam breaks free and forms my bridge. My favorite moment. It stretches out, developing its shimmering floor curves. It glides through the pitch. It touches the floor of my room. Steps unfold magically and silently.

She stands at the top of the bridge, my friend. She extends her hand to me and smiles. Her hair is long and smells of lavender. Over her dress, woven of clouds, she wears a cloak of darkness from which butterflies emerge. I think they are fairies, but I don't have the courage to ask.

I go to the door first to make sure everyone is asleep. My mother would be very worried if she found out about my night walks. So I keep it a secret.

The hallway is empty. The house breathes heavily, I breathe a sigh of relief. Joy shoots through my body in tiny comets of euphoria. I am almost not satisfied, such fear. I run to her, trip over my sweater, fall on the floor and laugh. She laughs with me. Nothing happened to me. No broken bones. Just a boy playing, falling and getting up. Healthy, fearless.

That's your gift to me, she says.

"Come, Ulysses." Her call sounds like the song of angels.

I climb the stairs, hold her hand, and we dance. We dance as I cannot, in my days full of limits.

I turn, I jump. I feel the cold wind on my face. The blanket of happiness envelops me and warms me.

Since the bridge was built, Mors comes to visit me. Every evening we walk a few more meters. She tells me that today is a special day, that I will finally see what's at the end of the moonlight bridge.

Mors takes me by the hand, the butterflies accompany me. I

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don't look back, she says that from today I will be able to turn,
jump, run and dance. Every day and every night. Forever.

The End

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

C. A. Saltoris writes beautiful and dark tales, like her soul.



