



NORTH WALES TALES

The Sea Giant Beneath the Menai Suspension Bridge

Menai Suspension Bridge, North Wales

Megan lived in a little house that looked out over the Menai Strait, the swirly stretch of sea between the island of Anglesey and the mainland of Wales.

Every morning she waved at the Menai Suspension Bridge, with its tall stone towers and long iron chains. Her grandad called it *Pont y Borth*, its proper Welsh name.

"A clever man named Thomas Telford designed it," Grandad told her. "It was finished in 1826, you know. One of the very first great bridges of its kind in the whole world."

Megan loved that bridge. But Megan had a secret. She knew *why* the bridge had never, ever fallen down.

One misty evening, she heard a slow, rumbly sigh come up from under the water. The waves wobbled. A pair of enormous, kind eyes blinked open in the deep, green strait.

It was a sea giant.

He was as long as a hundred boats, with seaweed in his hair and barnacles on his shoulders. And, very gently, he was holding the middle of the bridge upon one huge, careful finger.

"Hello," said Megan, not at all afraid. "Are you the one who keeps it safe?"

"I have held it since the builders went home," the giant rumbled softly. "Telford built strong towers, but I like to help. I steady it when the storms come dancing down the strait."

But tonight the giant looked worried. "My arm is growing tired, little one. I have held this bridge for so long. I am afraid to let go, in case it tumbles."

Megan thought hard. She looked up at the great iron chains, gleaming in the moonlight.

"Grandad says this bridge was built to hold *itself* up," she said kindly. "It was the second bridge ever made to carry carts and horses across, after one called the Union Chain Bridge, way back in 1820, over a river called the Tweed. They're clever bridges. They don't need holding. They only need *believing in*."

The giant blinked. "Truly?"

"Truly. Lift your finger, just a tiny bit. I'll watch. I promise I'll tell you the very second it wobbles."

Very slowly, holding his breath, the sea giant lifted his finger away.

The bridge did not wobble.

It did not creak.

It stood proud and strong against the stars, exactly as Thomas Telford had planned all those years ago.

The giant gave a great, happy laugh that made bubbles rise all across the strait. "It holds! After all this time, it holds on its own!"

"It always could," smiled Megan. "Now you can rest."

The giant sank down into the cool, deep water with a contented sigh, curling up like a sleepy whale beneath the waves.

"I shall still watch over it," he yawned, "but now I can sleep too. Thank you, little friend."

And to this very day, the Menai Suspension Bridge still carries cars and buses and bicycles across the strait, just as it has for nearly two hundred years.

If you ever cross it, look down at the green water below. You might see a few sleepy bubbles rising up.

That's just the sea giant, dreaming happily, knowing his bridge is perfectly safe.

What's real?

- The Menai Suspension Bridge in Anglesey, North Wales, was designed by Thomas Telford and completed in 1826.
- The Menai Suspension Bridge spans the Menai Strait between the island of Anglesey and the mainland of Wales.
- The Menai Suspension Bridge, known in Welsh as Pont y Borth, is a Grade I listed structure that still carries road traffic today.
- The Menai Suspension Bridge was one of the world's first major suspension bridges, and the second built to carry vehicles, after the Union Chain Bridge of 1820 across the River Tweed.

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