



NORTH WALES TALES

The Stone Giant of the Great Orme, Llandudno

Great Orme, Llandudno, North Wales

Long, long ago, before there were any towns at all, a kind giant named Gogarth lived on the north coast of Wales.

Gogarth was as tall as the clouds and as gentle as morning rain. When the great storms rolled in from the sea, he would lie down along the coast, north-west of where the town of Llandudno stands today, and shelter the little bay behind his broad back.

The people loved him. A poet of long ago even sang songs in his honour. But Gogarth had one secret friend that nobody else knew about, a small, shy sea serpent who lived in the waves below.

Every evening the serpent curled up by the giant's hand, and Gogarth would hum an old tune until they both fell asleep.

One autumn, a storm raged for nine whole days. Gogarth lay so still, sheltering the bay, that grass grew over him, and flowers, and then bright limestone bloomed across his shoulders. By the time the sun came back, the gentle giant had quietly turned to stone, becoming the high green headland we now call the Great Orme.

The little sea serpent could not understand. Every night she searched the rocks, calling softly, but her friend never hummed again.

Manys years later, a girl named Seren came on holiday with her family. They rode the Victorian tramway clackety-clacking up the steep slope, and floated back down on the swinging cableway. Seren loved every minute.

On her last evening, she wandered a little way along a quiet walking path. That was when she heard a small, sad sound coming from the rocks below, like someone crying into the sea.

There, tangled in seaweed, was a serpent no bigger than a garden hose, with eyes like two wet pebbles.

"Oh, you poor thing," said Seren kindly. "Are you lost?"

The serpent only sighed. "I am looking for my friend. He used to hum me a song, but I have forgotten how it goes."

Seren thought hard. That morning, in the little mining museum, a guide had taught her a tune the old folk used to sing on this very hill. Softly, Seren began to hum it.

The serpent's eyes grew wide. "That's it! That's his song!"

And then something wonderful happened. As Seren hummed, the whole headland seemed to breathe. The wind whispered through the grass exactly in time, as if the great stone giant were humming along with her at last.

The serpent laughed for the first time in a hundred years. "He's still here," she whispered. "He was always here."

From that night on, the little serpent was never lonely again. She curled up by the giant's stony hand each evening, and the wind hummed their song across the bay.

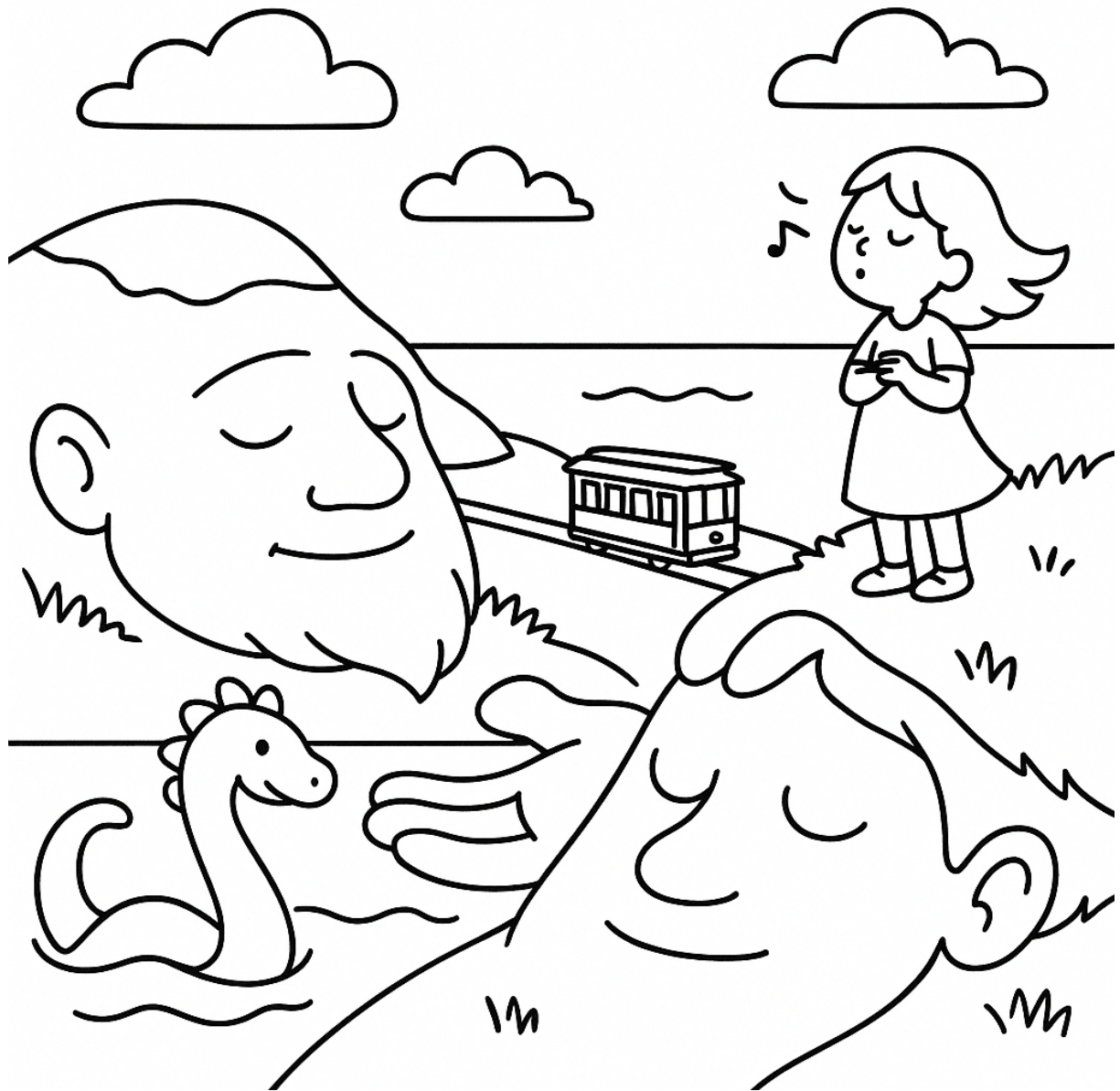
And if you ever visit the Great Orme and feel the breeze move just so, listen closely. That is Gogarth, the gentle stone giant, still keeping his friend company, and still watching kindly over everyone who comes to climb his green and lovely hill.

The end.

What's real?

- The Great Orme is a limestone headland on the north coast of Wales, north-west of the town of Llandudno.
- The English name of the Great Orme comes from the Old Norse word for sea serpent.
- The Great Orme is known in Welsh as Y Gogarth, and the 12th-century poet Gwalchmai ap Meilyr called it Cyngreawdr Fynydd.
- The Great Orme in Llandudno has a Victorian tramway, a cableway, walking routes and a mining museum.
- The Little Orme is a smaller limestone headland on the eastern side of Llandudno Bay.

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