

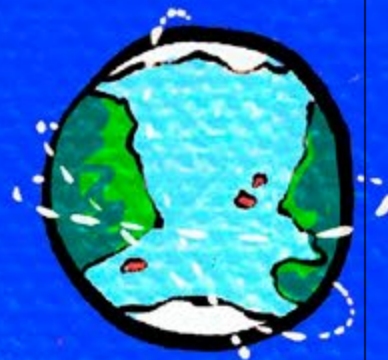
The Flying Gherkin

Episode four:
Frolicking in Florida



Foster + Partners

Zooming through the skies, the Gherkin looked like a building making up for lost time. The speed with which it was clocking the air miles was astonishing, and understandably so. There was only a matter of time before people would start going back to work and find a great big hole in the middle of the City of London. That would not be a good thing. But there was time for one more stop.



After leaving Hong Kong, it had been flying further east across the Pacific Ocean. The Gherkin was sorely tempted to stop by in Tokyo to meet its old friend Century Tower, but it sped on through and was now over the desert somewhere between California and Texas.



Sliding the sunglasses up its nose to soften the sun's glare, the Gherkin began to wonder about what its next meeting will be like. It had never spoken to a museum before. They always seem old and stuffy, a bit arrogant, as if they knew everything about the world. It always felt a bit uneasy around buildings who thought they were better than the others.

“Even if we're all a bit different, there's something special about each one of us. Everyone's got a story to tell,” the Gherkin wondered aloud.



“Too right!” said a loud voice from below, startling the Gherkin. The Floridian drawl was unmistakable. The voice continued: “I've been around a while, so I got a few more stories than most. But that doesn't mean you can't teach me a thing or two.”

“Are y-you...?” stammered the Gherkin in surprise.

“Too right, I am. I give you, The Norton Museum of Art. The finest museum in West Palm Beach since 1941.”

“Wow! You look—“

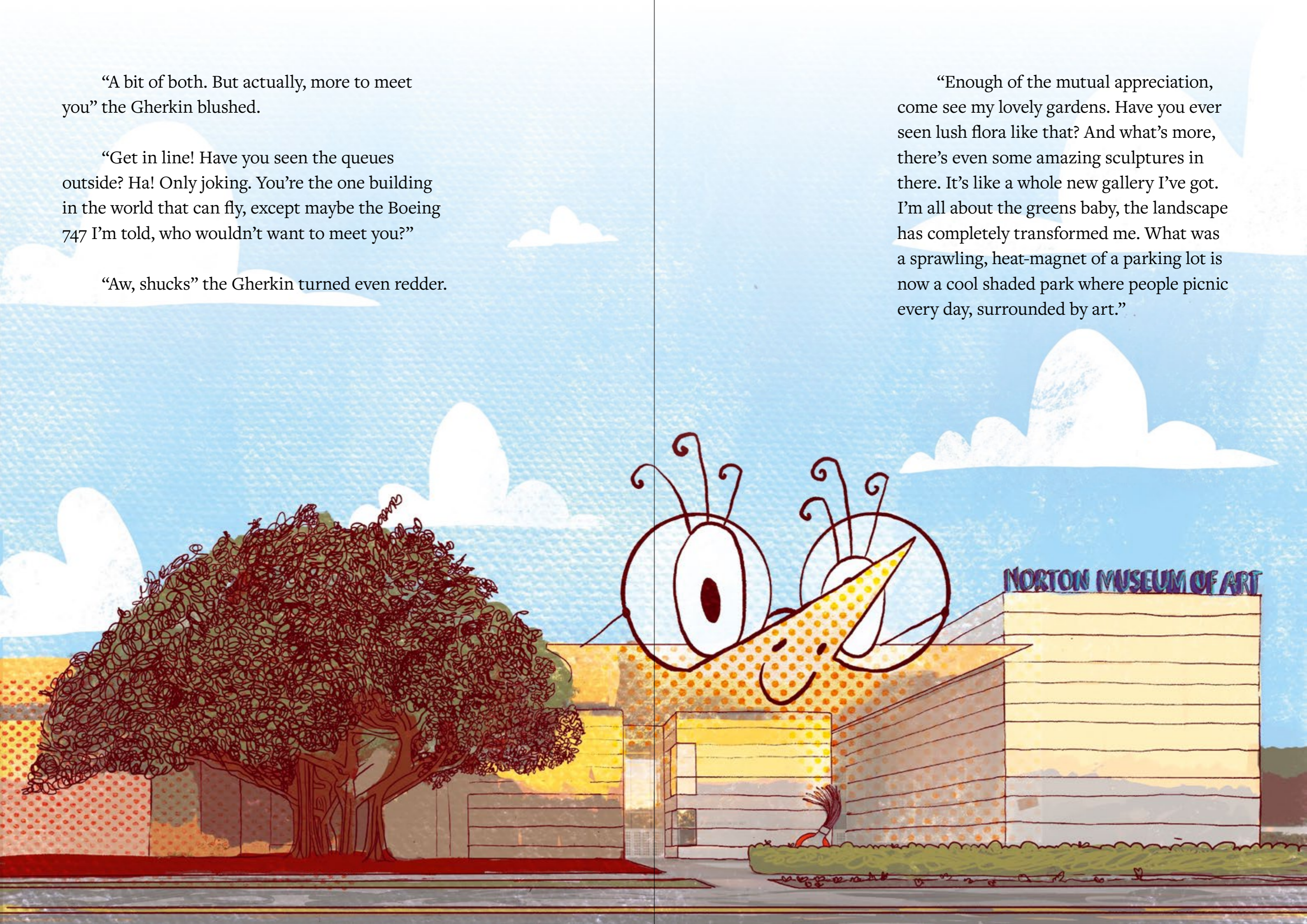
“Amazing. I know. People tell me all the time. They can't all be wrong. Ha! Tell me, what brings you to these parts. Is it the fine weather or is it just me?” she teased.

“A bit of both. But actually, more to meet you” the Gherkin blushed.

“Get in line! Have you seen the queues outside? Ha! Only joking. You’re the one building in the world that can fly, except maybe the Boeing 747 I’m told, who wouldn’t want to meet you?”

“Aw, shucks” the Gherkin turned even redder.

“Enough of the mutual appreciation, come see my lovely gardens. Have you ever seen lush flora like that? And what’s more, there’s even some amazing sculptures in there. It’s like a whole new gallery I’ve got. I’m all about the greens baby, the landscape has completely transformed me. What was a sprawling, heat-magnet of a parking lot is now a cool shaded park where people picnic every day, surrounded by art.”



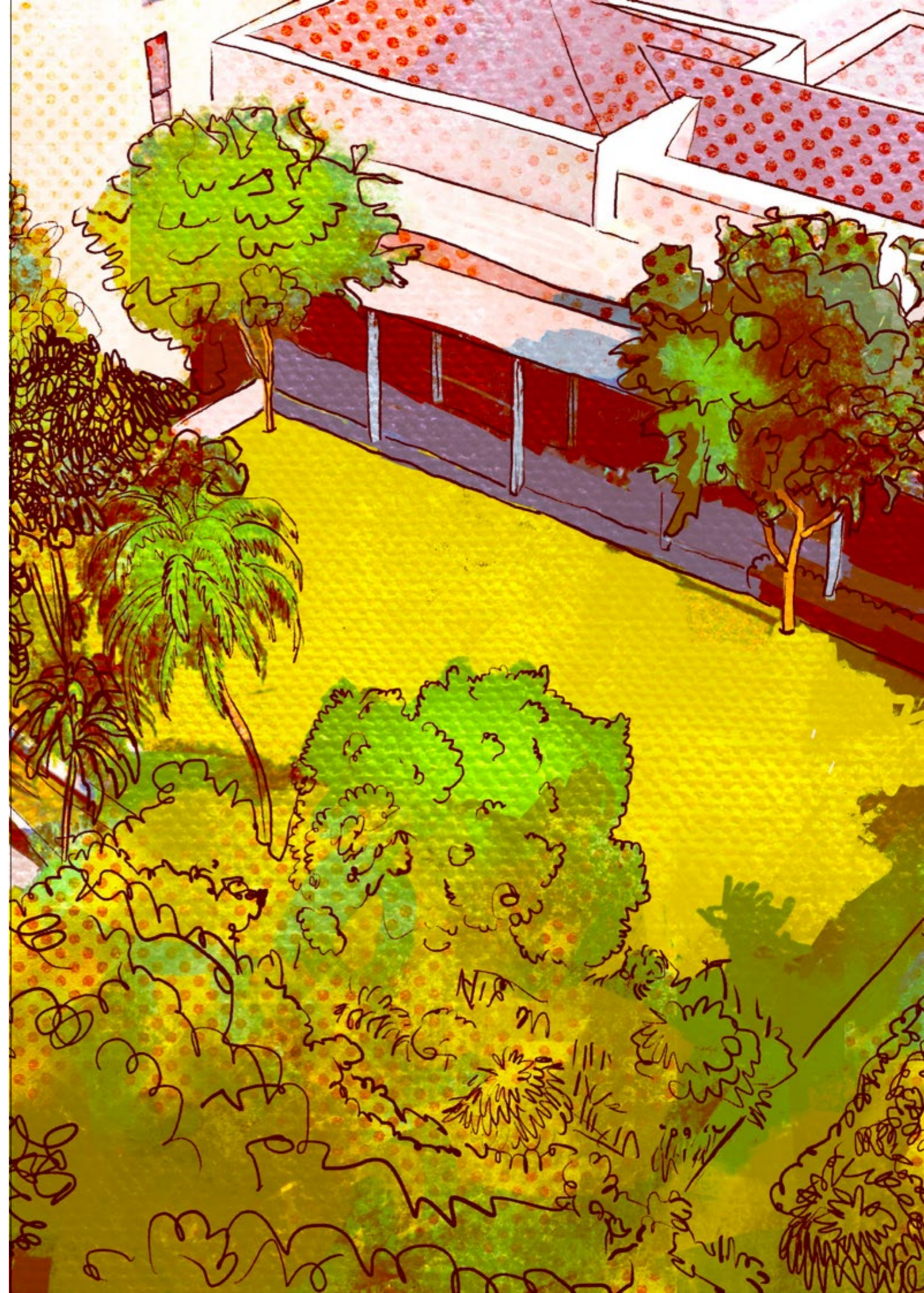
“That’s so cool” said the Gherkin in awe.

“Cool is right. You wouldn’t know it, being from London, but it gets so hot here. These colonnades you see? Amazing for shade. Keeps me cool. Anyway, enough about the outside. There’s some amazing stuff inside too. I’ve had a complete makeover and it’s like 1941 again inside me. The new bits that have been added fit like a glove with the old, you know what I mean? It’s amazing. I told you I’m amazing, haven’t I?”

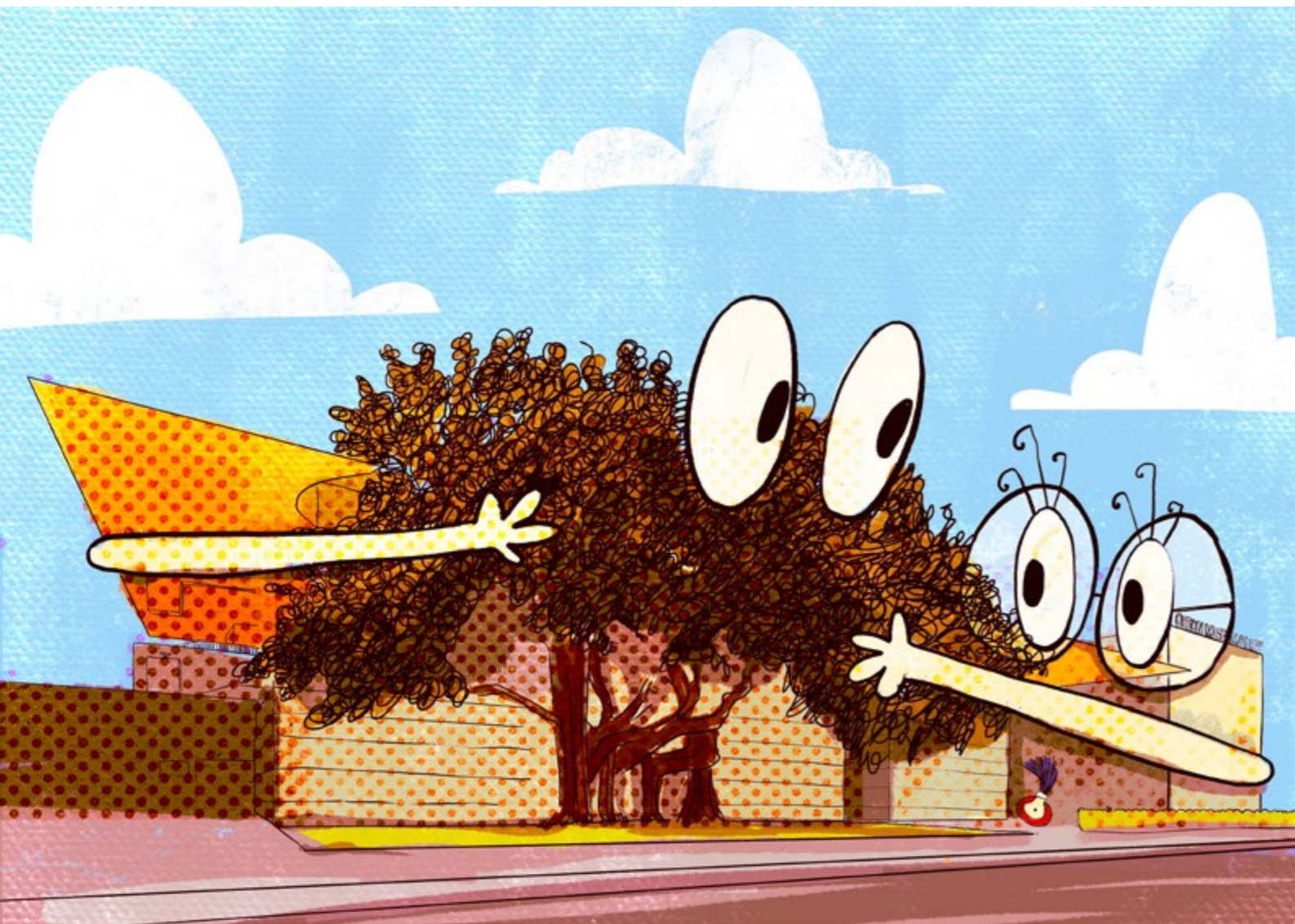
“Multiple times, Ms Norton” replied the Gherkin.

“What’s with the Ms – you Brits, I tell ya. Call me Nor.”

“Okay Nor, what’s that big tree out in the front?”



“Oh my god, the stories I can tell you about that big banyan tree. He’s been here longer than me. We’re such great pals that we’d be incomplete without each other. You see my new canopy? See how that curves around his crown? That’s how much I love that tree. I’m shaped in a permanent hug around him. Aren’t I sweet?”

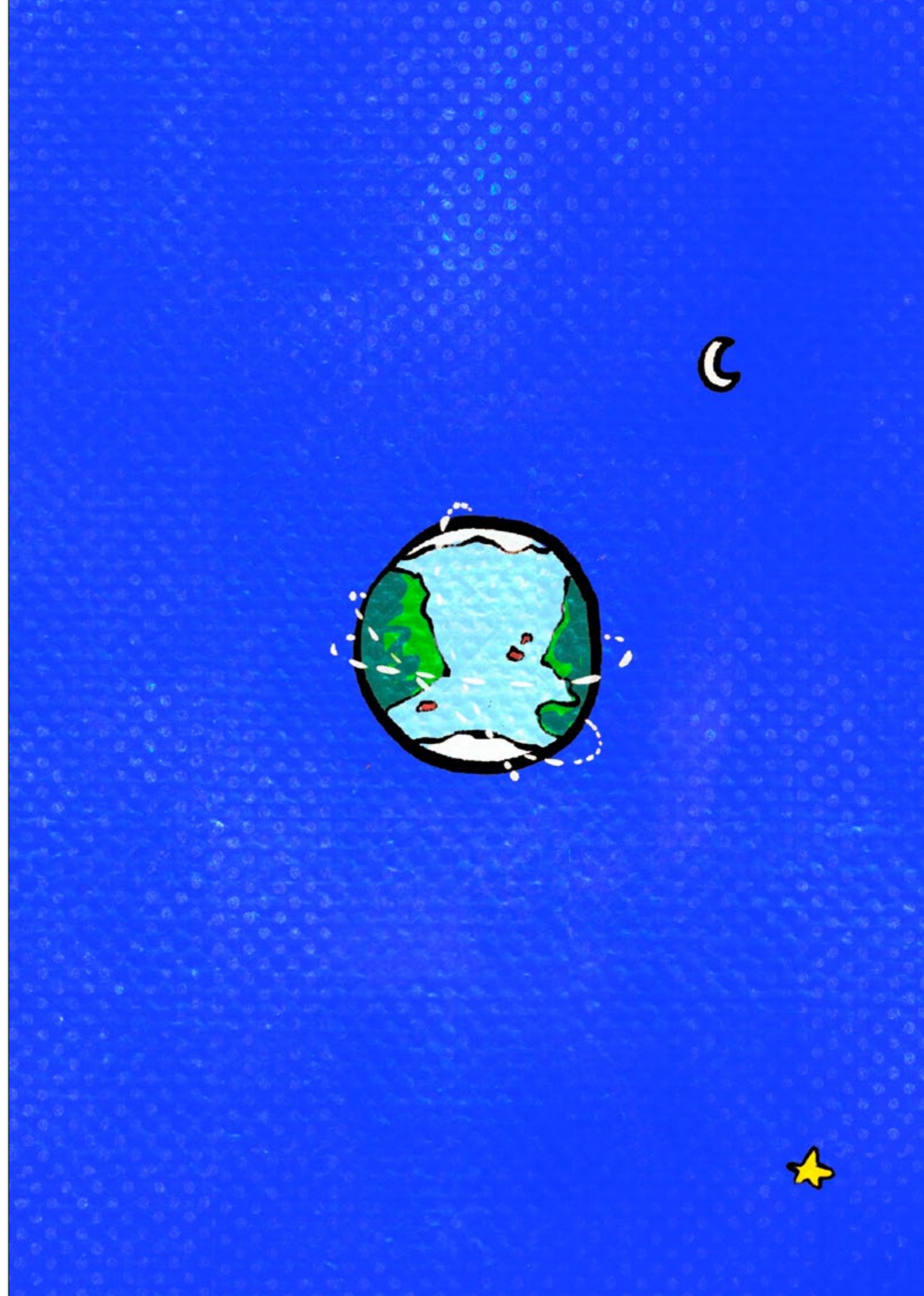


The Gherkin and Nor spent the rest of the afternoon trading stories. The Gherkin told Nor all about London and his trips to Millau and Hong Kong. Her exuberance and extravagant reactions only spurred him on to tell more stories. She took him on a tour of the artworks inside until it was dark. Later they then watched a movie together in the lawns, loudly munching their popcorn and slurping their drinks.

“It’s a real shame I have to leave”
moaned the Gherkin.

“You can come back any time. The weather is always fine. Except in hurricane season. I’d avoid that.”

With that, they said their goodbyes and the Gherkin was on its way. Flying was amazing fun. But also tiring work, especially for a building that had never even moved from its spot previously. By now, the Gherkin had flown more than halfway around the world and was looking forward to a rest. It wouldn't be long before it was back at its day job, sheltering people who were busy at work. But it would always have amazing memories from these trips to look back on, and who knows, maybe in the future there will be a time when all buildings will be able to fly. Wouldn't that be amazing?





Ever wonder what buildings get up to while we're not around?

See what happens when one progressive building takes matters into its own hands and heads out on a holiday to see its best friends around the world.

This engaging tale promises to entertain and educate young minds in equal measure. Part of the Foster+Partners Learning for Children initiative.

