

The background is a vibrant blue sky with several yellow stars. In the center, a yellow and orange rocket ship with a blue nose cone is flying upwards, leaving a trail of orange and red streaks. The bottom of the image shows a stylized sunset or sunrise landscape with orange and red hues and black outlines of hills or clouds.

# The Flying Gherkin

Episode one:  
First Flight

Foster + Partners



It was a quiet morning. The usually bustling streets were eerily silent. The shops were closed, the cafes shuttered. It was as if the clocks had stopped for everyone at the same time and no one knew they had to go to work.

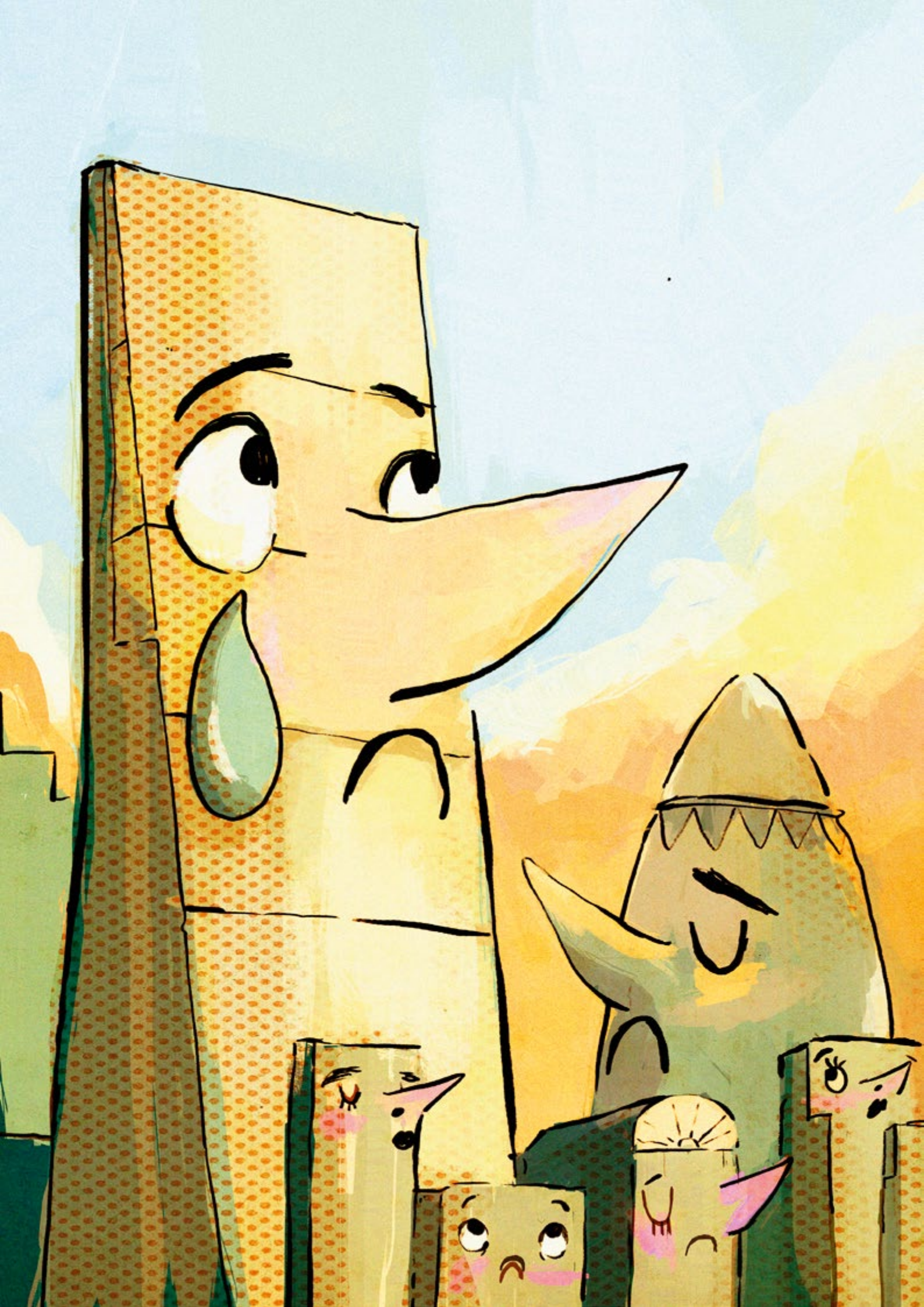
It had been like this every day for the past few weeks. The wind blew right through the streets without resistance. The sun shone brightly but warmed no one. Even the rain didn't bother a single soul.

“They've all left and they're never coming back” declared The Royal Exchange building, looking forlornly towards the Bank of England.

“It's never been so bad in the last three hundred and twenty-three years” said St Paul's Cathedral. “I was speaking to the spirit of the previous cathedral and even it agreed that the City hadn't ever been so empty – even during the Great Plague and after the Fire of London.”







“I’m bored” sighed the Cheesegrater.  
“No one comes to me anymore. I hate not  
having anything to do. I didn’t sign up for this.”

The other buildings murmured in approval.  
But soon, silence descended on the city  
once again. They were all rooted to their  
spots. Unable to do anything to change their  
circumstances.

Around the corner, the Gherkin stood  
silently. It had always been a pathbreaker of  
sorts. When it was built more than 16 years  
ago, it stood out on London’s skyline and  
there wasn’t a building like it for miles. It was  
and is special, and it knew this. If there was  
one building that could change things, it was  
the Gherkin.






The wind blew across the plaza. The aerodynamic shape of the Gherkin had helped create a comfortable public space around it. At lunchtime, the plaza would have been full of office workers enjoying the rare spring sunshine. Not anymore. The comfortable workspaces inside, cooled by the outside air, would have been filled with people doing important jobs. Not anymore. The Gherkin had a purpose that had mysteriously been taken away from it. Not anymore. The pioneering building had always had a rebellious streak. Today, it was going to put it to good use.

“I’ve always dreamt it, but now I will do it” the Gherkin said with steely determination. “I need a holiday and since no one is coming to work anymore, this is the perfect time for me to go.”

“But we buildings don’t move!” laughed out the rest its friends.

“I’m different” retorted the Gherkin. “And I’m going on holiday to see my friends.”





The Gherkin slowly closed its eyes and imagined itself lift off like a rocket. At first nothing moved. All the other buildings around it began to smirk and snigger. This would never work, they all thought in their minds. But then something absolutely amazing happened. Slowly the Gherkin began to hover over the ground. Its eyes closed tighter and tighter as it concentrated and focussed all its energy on moving up. Suddenly, it shot into the sky and disappeared from view like a shooting star.

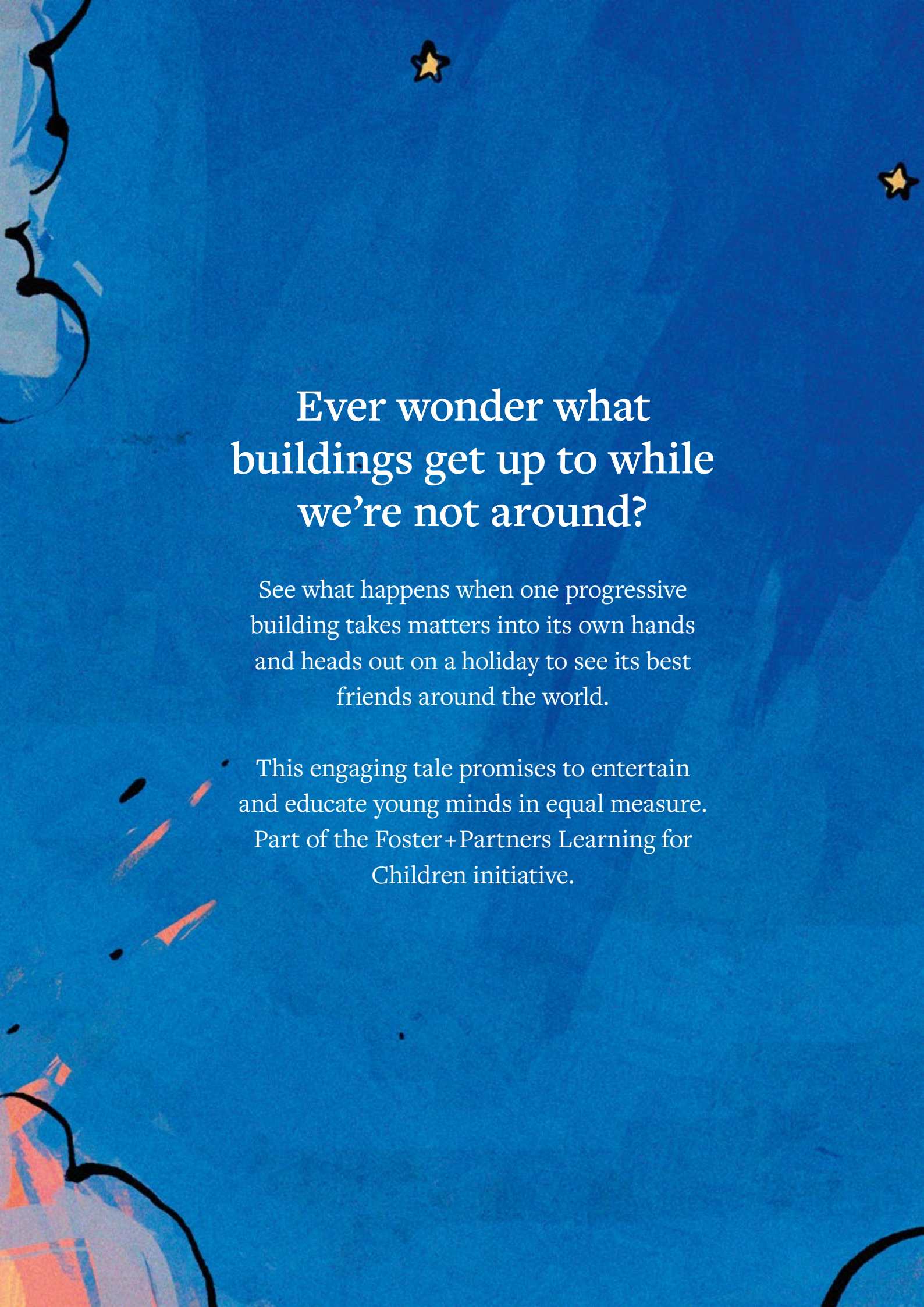


The other buildings looked on in disbelief. They could not believe what they had just seen. The Gherkin had once again proved everyone wrong. As it streaked across the sky, they all wondered where the Gherkin was headed. Which one of its friends would it visit first?

Find out next time!







## 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.