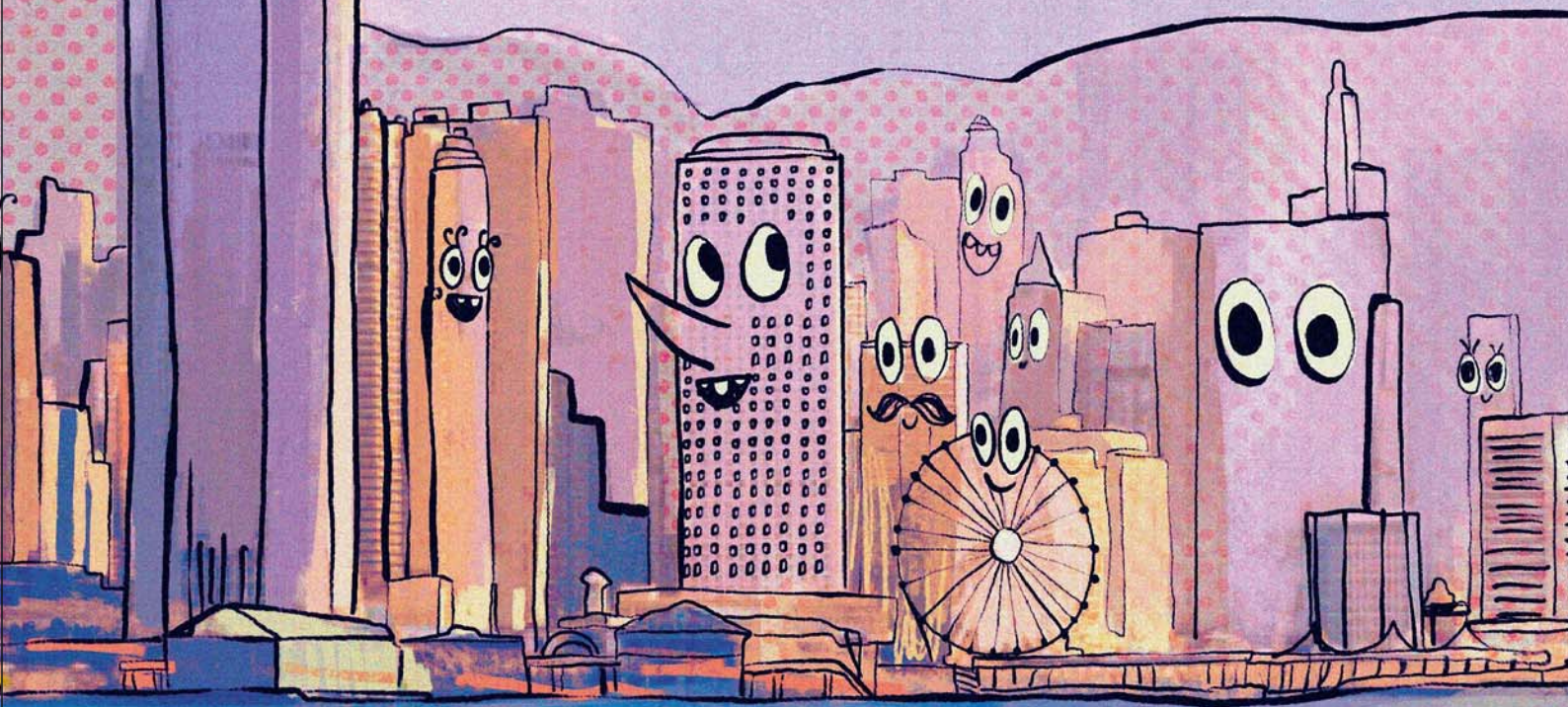
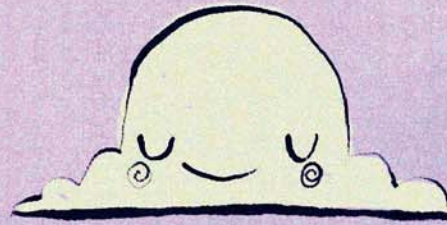
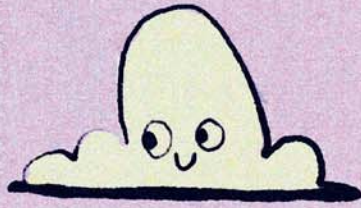


The Flying Gherkin

Episode three:
Good ol' Mr Murray



Foster + Partners

The Gherkin streaked across the sky at great speed. Discovering this unique ability to fly had filled it with a great sense of freedom and excitement. Never in a million years could it have imagined flying halfway across the world!

Leaving the south of France after meeting the Millau Viaduct was hard. Catching up with old friends was so much fun. Their friendship went back years and years and there were so many memories they shared. But when the Gherkin had left London, it was determined to forge new relationships and meet new buildings along the way. This is exactly what it was going to do – in Hong Kong!

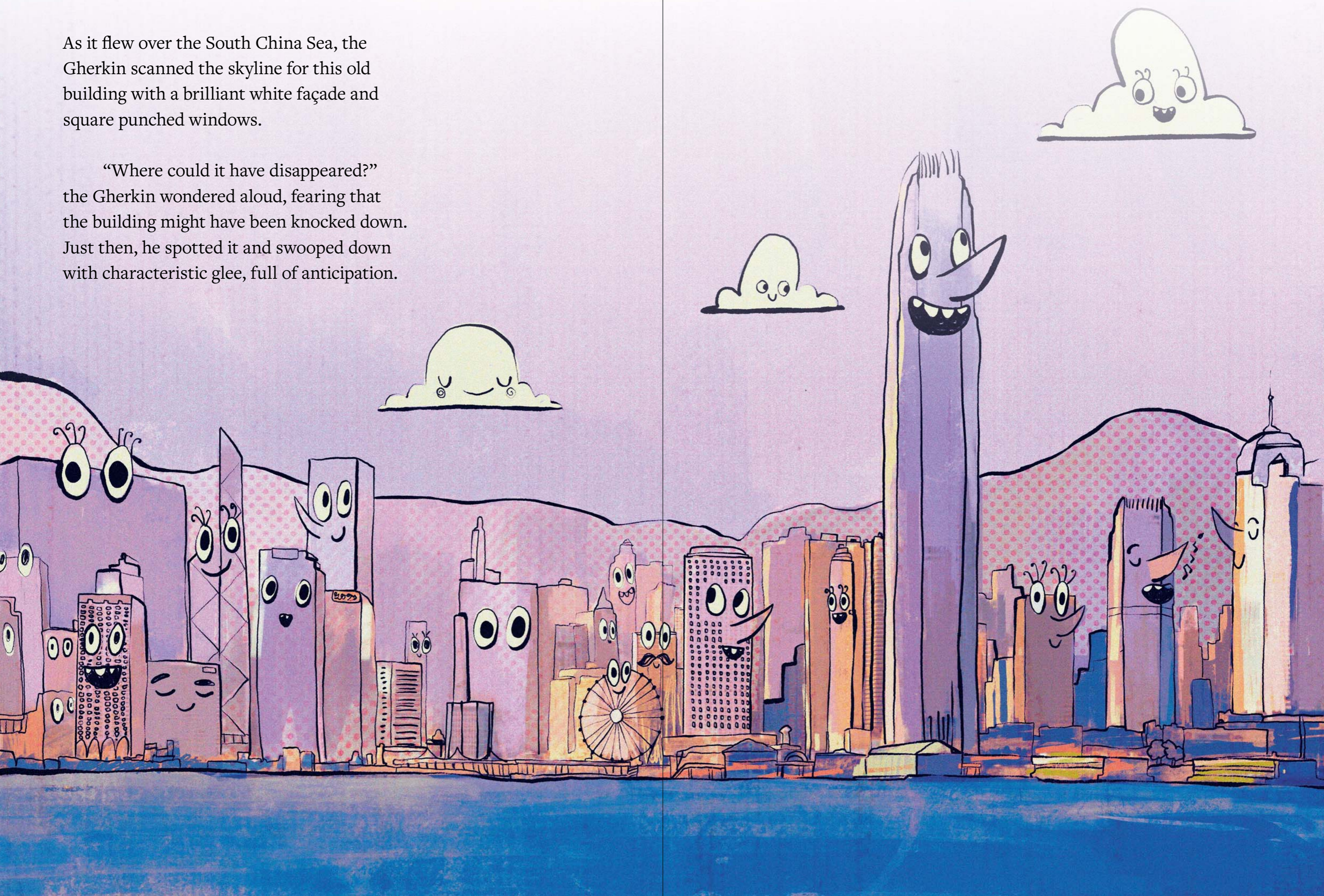




While the Gherkin was being designed in the Foster+Partners studio, it had heard many stories about the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Headquarters in Hong Kong. As the studio's first skyscraper, it was revered as a true legend. It had certainly proven so, having stood the test of time as a great symbol for Hong Kong. However, it wasn't the Hongkong Bank that the Gherkin was excited to see. It was another old building that it had heard about from its friend. An office building built in the 1970s that was designed to work with the natural environment. This was a time when sustainability wasn't such a commonly used term as it is now.

As it flew over the South China Sea, the Gherkin scanned the skyline for this old building with a brilliant white façade and square punched windows.

“Where could it have disappeared?” the Gherkin wondered aloud, fearing that the building might have been knocked down. Just then, he spotted it and swooped down with characteristic glee, full of anticipation.



“G’morning, Mr Murray.”

“Morning. To whom do I owe the pleasure?”

“Oh my god. You look just the way the Hongkong Bank described you. You haven’t aged a day since the day you opened.”



“Ha, that’s very kind. I’ve been lovingly restored only a few years ago, which is probably the secret to my youthful looks. I was a sight for sore eyes at the start of the previous decade, probably destined for the wrecking ball before the refurbishment. Now, I’ve been given a new lease of life and it’s amazing to feel young again!”

“That’s amazing. I wish I get to live as long as you do.”

“I’m sure you will. You look in great shape. You still haven’t told me your name though.”

“I’m sorry – how rude. I’m the Gherkin. I was told all about you by the Hongkong Bank who lives over there,” said the Gherkin pointing to the distinctive gleaming silver building.

“Ah, he did say a young whippersnapper may come along last night. But I didn’t expect to see you so soon.”

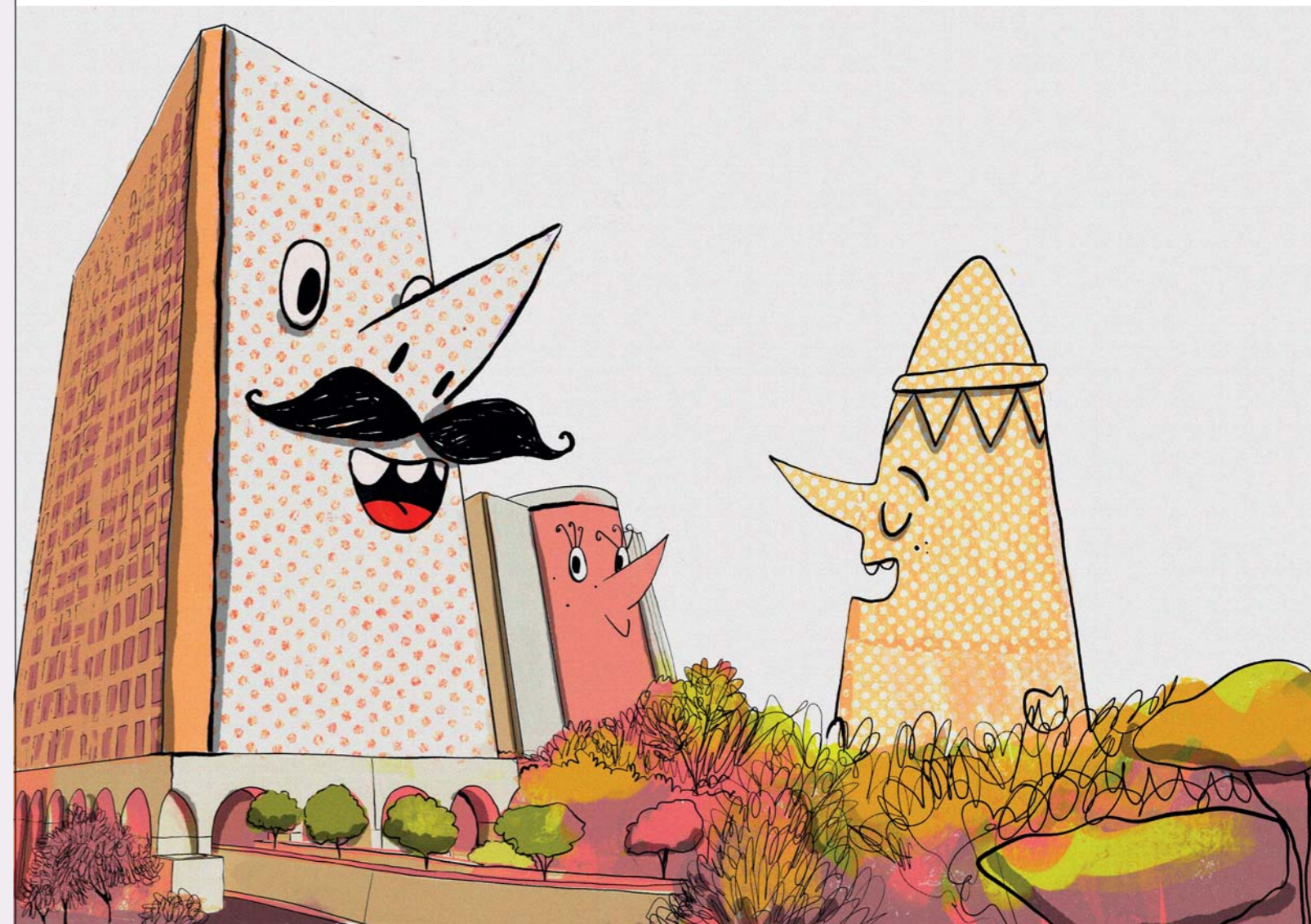
“I’ve learnt to fly.”

“I can see. A rare talent amongst buildings.”

The Gherkin beamed with pride. “The city must have changed quite a bit since you first came along Mr Murray,” he said excitedly. “Oh yes, a lot has changed. I was originally made when cities were primarily designed for cars, but now there’s a greater emphasis on more environmentally friendly transport. It feels great to be part of the city once again, creating new pedestrian connections between the green spaces that surround me.”

The Gherkin just sat there absorbing every word.

“Even my insides,” The Murray continued, “have been totally reinvigorated. Elegant hotel lobbies and restaurants occupy what was once a car park, old rooms with machinery have been replaced with banquet halls, pools and spas, and the offices have been reinvented as exclusive hotel rooms. All while retaining the original eco-friendly design of my façade. I’m glad I can still be around to teach young buildings like you a thing or two about being kind to the environment.”



The Gherkin spent the rest of the afternoon listening to The Murray in awe, talking about architecture and nature.

“I’m so glad to have met you Mr Murray. You’ve taught me so many cool things about how buildings should be kind to the environment. I’m sorry to have to leave so soon, but I have so many places to visit and not enough time to do them all.”

“Safe travels, young one, and don’t be a stranger the next time you’re in these parts,” The Murray replied.

With that the Gherkin waved goodbye and shot up into the evening sky, continuing its flight further east. There was time left for one more visit and another new friend to make. Where would it be?



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.