

The Flying Gherkin

Episode two:
French connections



Foster + Partners

The Gherkin had been flying over land for a while now. Crossing the English Channel was a rare feat for buildings of any kind, and it was bursting with excitement, streaking through the sky at speed to meet its first friend.

The air was turning warmer and the sun had a more permanent presence in the sky.

“I’m sure she said this was where she was going to be...” it thought aloud.

The ground below was a patchwork of green and brown, like a giant jigsaw stretching all the way to the horizon. Curving streams and rivers meandered along straight roads that crisscrossed the landscape. The Gherkin searched frantically for its friend.

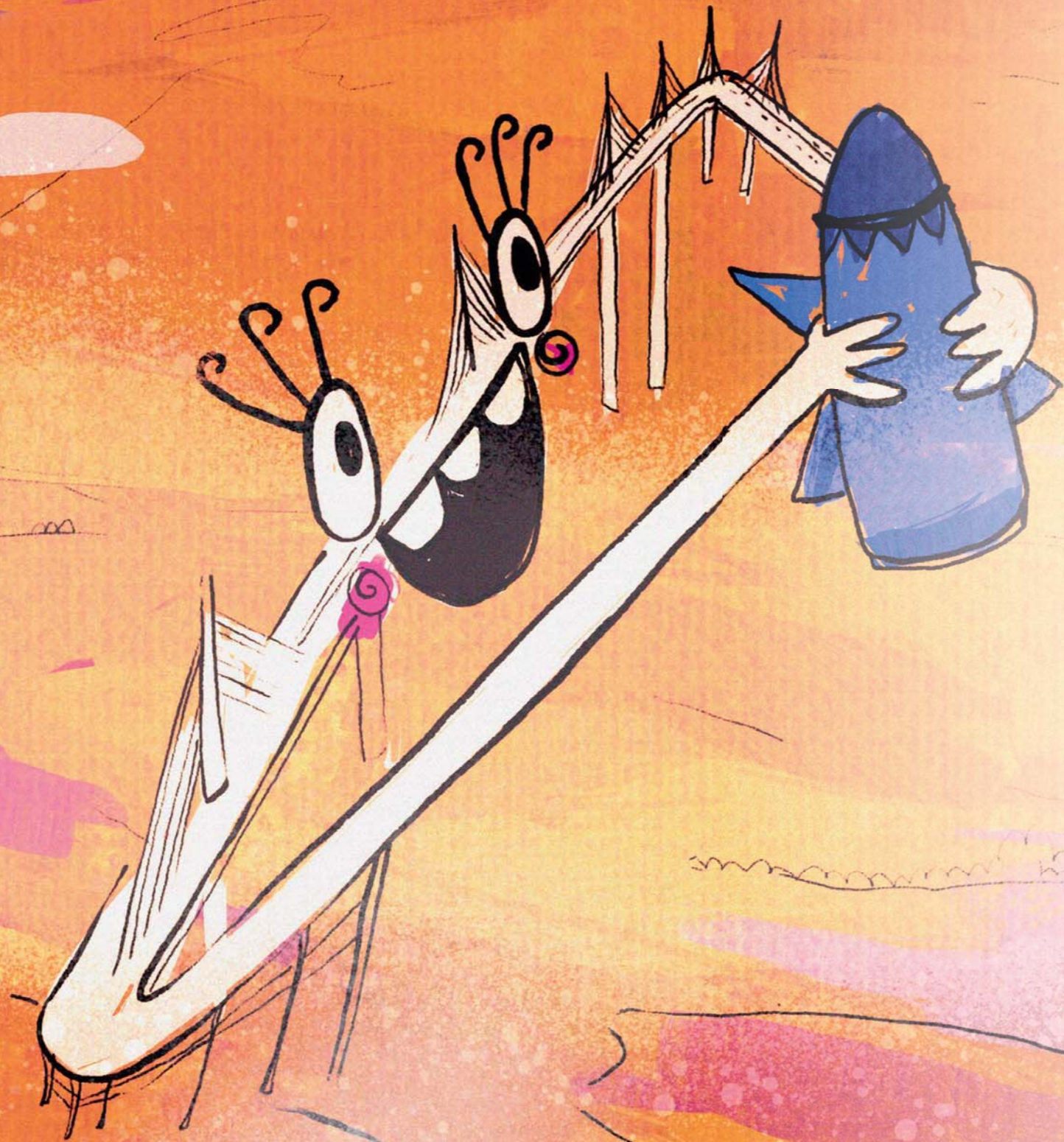




Just then it saw those distinctive masts. The brilliant white cables sprayed out from them like a Japanese fan, delicately holding up the s-shaped bridge below.

“MV!” the Gherkin exclaimed.

The bridge looked up, startled, and a split second later, lifted itself off the ground to catch the hurtling rocket in mid-air. She wrapped herself around the Gherkin as tightly as possible, like a well-meaning but overly enthusiastic python.



“Stop it, you’ll strangle me alive!” the Gherkin snorted, laughing as they tumbled to the ground like long lost friends.

“My G! What are you doing here in Millau?”

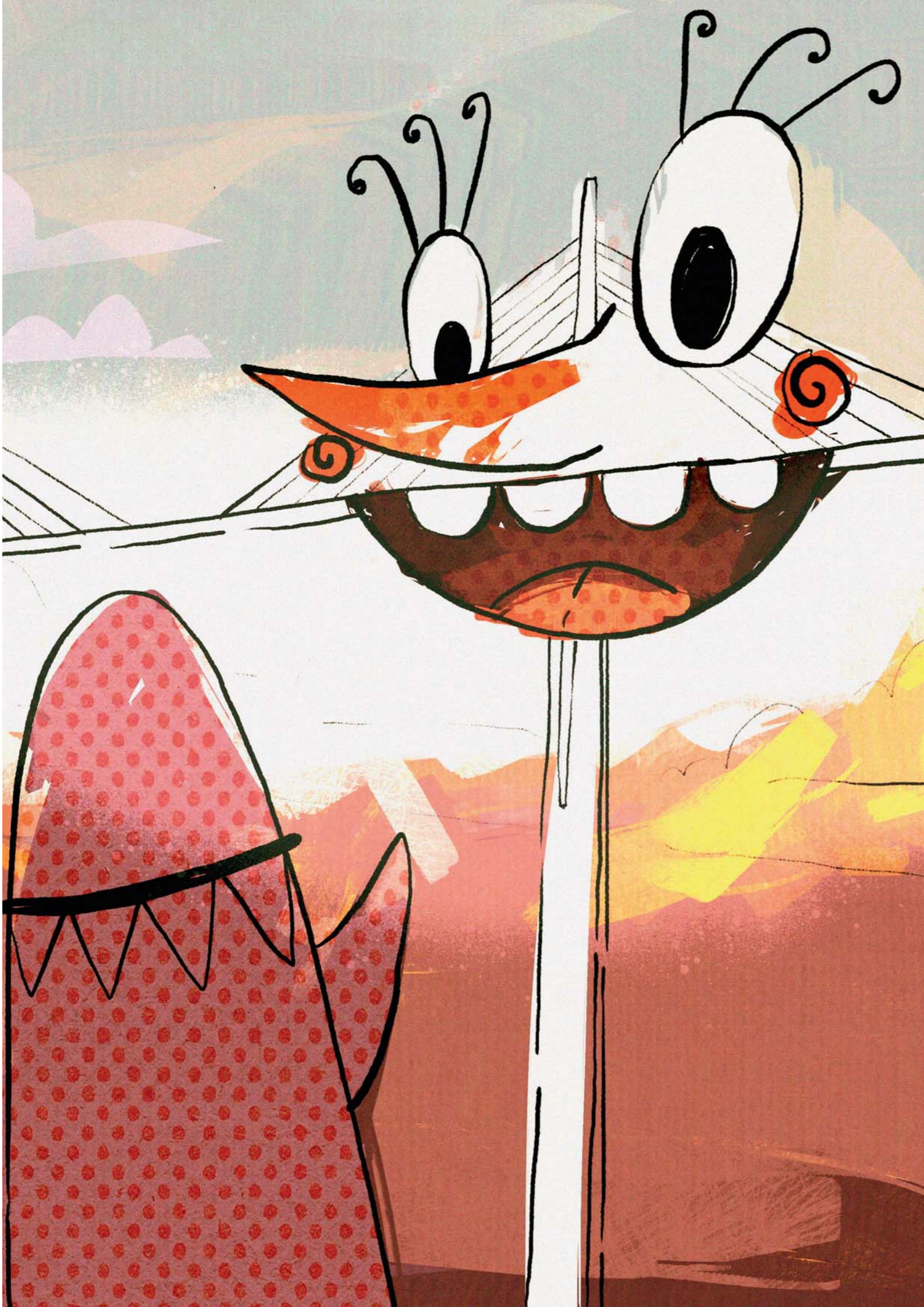
“I told you I’d come visit! Plus, it seemed like the best time, given that everyone has been told to stay at home.”

“Gosh! How long has it been? Sixteen years since we last saw each other.

“Yeah, both of us were being designed at the studio at the same time. I remember those intense design sessions and late nights as we came to life. Those were the days.”

“Absolutely. Although, life has been pretty good since I’ve been here in France. As the highest cable-stayed bridge in the world, many of the other crossings in the world look up to me. Plus, it’s great to be able to reduce the regular traffic jams that used to take place here. Just last week, the A75 thanked me for the millionth time for taking that back-breaking load of vehicles off him. He can’t stop smiling.”





“I’m sure the trees and animals nearby are thankful too – you’ve managed to stop a whole load of stationary cars from spewing dirty air while stood in traffic too.”

“Yeah true, but I’ll tell you who’s still sore? The Eiffel Tower. It still can get over the fact that my masts are taller !”

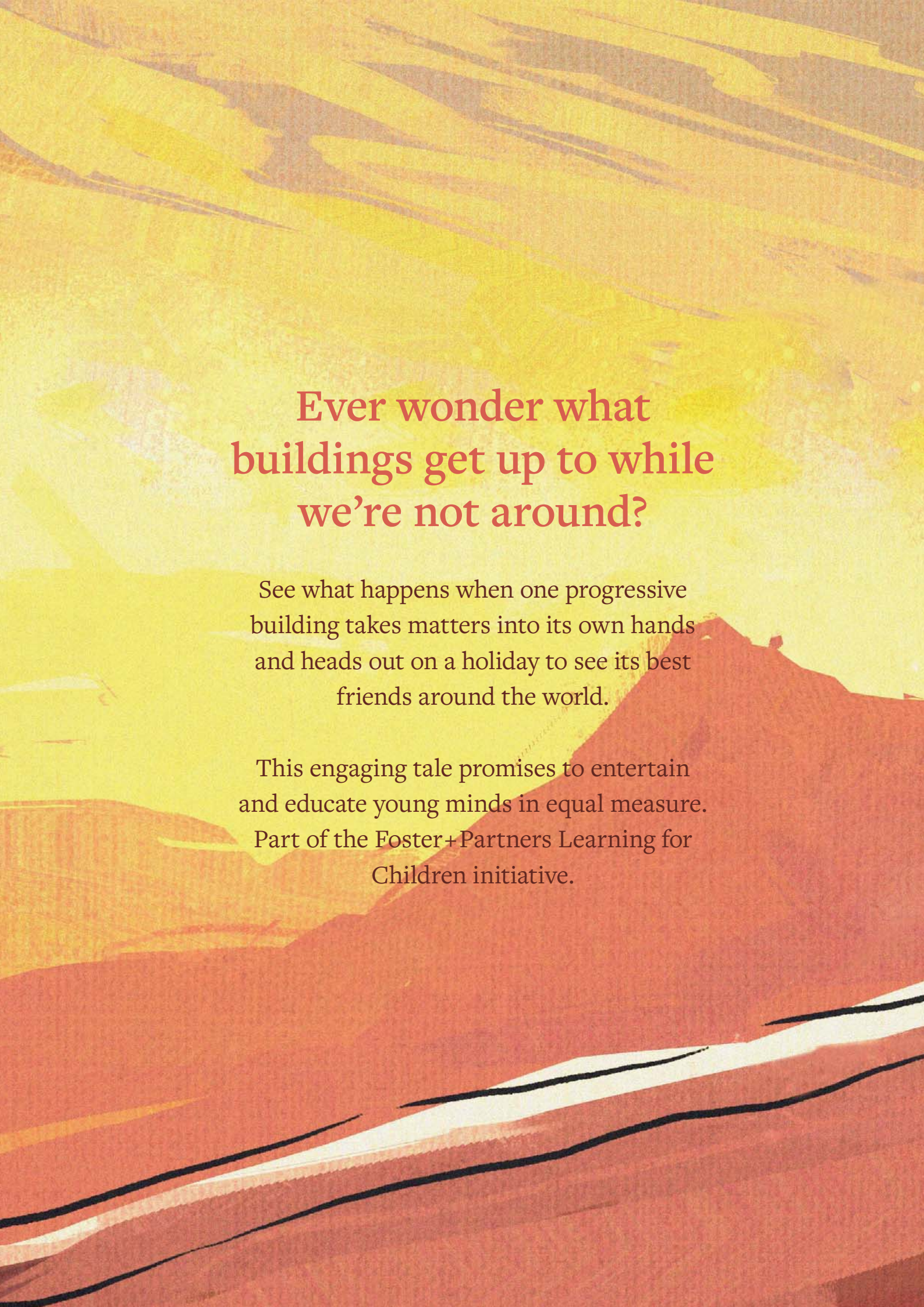
Both the Gherkin and Millau Viaduct broke away in peals of laughter. They spoke as if they’d never been apart. Finishing each other’s sentences, ready with a follow up story one after another. It was heartening to see two friends reunited after such a long time. Time and distance had made no dent in their relationship.

After a couple of hours and countless recounted stories, the Gherkin sighed contentedly and said, “I wish I could stay MV, but I’ve got to make the most of this time off. There are so many places I want to go to. Are you sure you can’t come along?”

“If I could, I would, G. But I need to be here for the odd emergency vehicle that comes by. Important work, I’m afraid.”

With that, they said their goodbyes and the Gherkin once again, shot off into the sky. Its heart filled with love and a head full of stories. It couldn’t wait to get to the next destination, and it wouldn’t be long getting there!





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