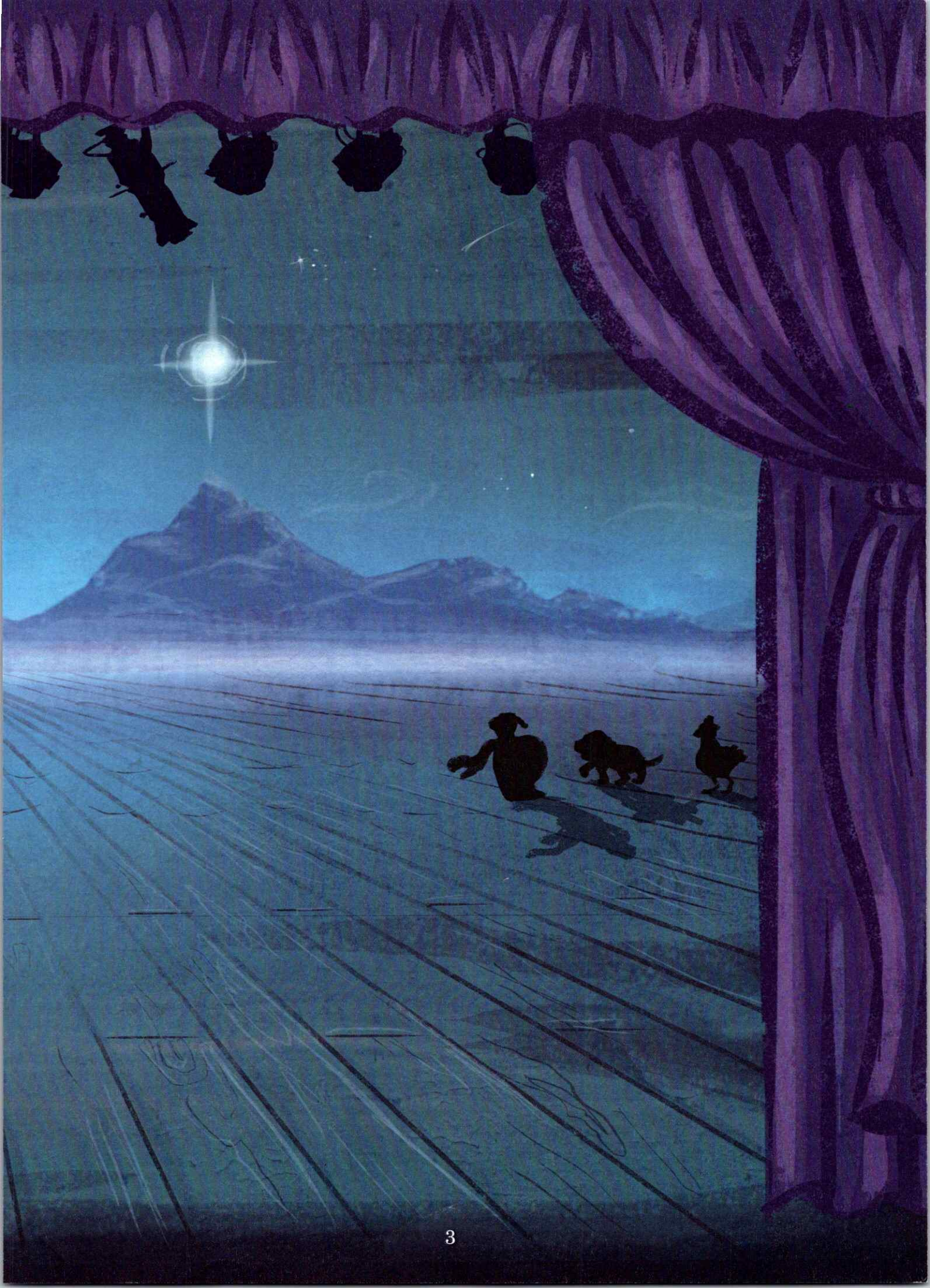






Prologue

[A vast blue plain. Enter Poodle,
What?, and Sidney, walking steadily
toward far blue mountains.

An unseen narrator speaks,
his voice booming mysteriously
from somewhere.]

You remember—I hope—
how Poodle’s legend ended. Nope?
Poodle and What?
and Sidney (I thought)
departed the land of the eight—
but wait—departed the eight parts of speech
and set out for the far blue
world of sentences,
searching for entrances
and hoping they could reach it,
and that is how their legend ended:
they walked off the final page
and blended into the distance, and
it was splendid, like a stage
on paper. Remember?
These were the final words:

It was a very good day.
As the good day wore on,
and the air got cool and intelligent,
the friends reviewed the shrewd
thoughts they had found.

They saw that, unlike birds,
there are eight kinds of words,
but the noun and verb
are the two main kinds,
the core of their minds,
and the other six just help.

They saw how
the picked words click
and whirl to make a sentence,
a world of words
like a beautiful brass brain machine.

The more they looked at words,
the more they liked them.
Words are irresistible.

